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Subj: Waupaca Memories
Date: Wed, 8 Aug 2001 12:21:23 AM Eastern Daylight Time
From: Robert Gerowitz <rgerowitz@mediaone.net>
To: Paul@CampWaupaca.com

Having gone to camp as a kid, counselor, and parent, I can look back and see how some of my earliest memories of Waupaca carried forward to in no small measure shape my life. I mean it's true, I never did find a use for the reverse-trudgeon crawl and I'm equally unsure why we thought raking designs in front of our cabins for cleanup held such overwhelming importance (except from a Zen garden point of view)but I'd like to share my top 10 most important memories of Camp Waupaca:

#10
As a 71/2 year old I was completely confused when it was pronounced at "Big stick, Little stick, Twig" that I would be kissed at breakfast by one of the kitchen girls(Sue) the next morning. Although I forgot all about it by that meal, it seems that everyone remembered. The surprise of that moment was matched only by the revelation that my co-counselor, Tony Edmunds and I were dating the same kitchen girl (Kathy) 25 years later!

#9
In 1970, Mark Goldstein, Steve Perlow, and I snuck out of CIT Village to sit out on the far fields to make popcorn. Mark had worked out all the details including a popper, popcorn, and what he felt would be a sure fire starter; gasoline. After collecting the wood, Mark grabbed a large branch, doused it liberally with gas, and Steve struck a match and threw it on. To three 13 year olds it looked as if the flames shot all the way up Mark's shirt. As we settled in on our newly made snack, some counselors who noticed our fire from the road drove up, hurried our evening along, and with us in our bunks again enjoyed the fire the almost immolated Mark. It seems to me that that evening could have been the start of what later became the late night tradition of counselors partying out on the mini-bike trails.

#8
My 14th birthday took place at camp the night of a horseback overnighter. Since it was a special day, I was allowed to call home from the stables while the rest of the riders headed out to the camp site. When I finished talking to the folks, I saw that my horse was all ready for me to take out. The stable hands told me just to ride across the field (off trail) and I would get to the others up ahead. My horse took off like it hadn't been ridden in a week and I was having the ride of my life until it rounded a turn and I noticed my perspective change as the saddle slowly slide sideways. As I passed by the horse's belly I let go of the saddle and rolled. I understand that riderless horse surprised everyone as it charge into the campsite. A short time later, I was

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picked up on the trail carrying my saddle along. As a riding instructor I felt a more controlled experience would be good for the advanced riders I was teaching. So in 1979, I set up a horse back overnighter and in homage to my escapade it was strictly bareback!

#7
I never did like those cook your own hotdog dinners that preceeded cabin night, but over the years one thing a camper learned was how to make a fire. This skill has come in handy too many times to recall except for the time I was given the job of prepping and making the fire for the end of the Super-Duper Relay in 1979. I felt this was probably one of the most special honors given to a counselor. After all I was walking in the footsteps of Chuck Cooper, Wayne Towne, Wally Tomczak, and Al Schaeffer. The wood was perfect; I sorted out the tinder, kindling, and large pieces. One match and a quick boil over later, I had made what Wayne confided in me as one of the fastest Boil Water Boils he had ever seen. It was also the first and only time I was on the winning team for the Blue and White War.

#6
No one forgets their first laker. The water gets cold in spots, you're looking for Big Moe's head, and when you finish you feel like Gary Rand. I also can't forget my first naked laker at the reunion of '98. Cathy Lurie may have been the only wife represented/exposed but Mike Chavin and I made sure we "saluted" our spouses from the raft.

#5
As kids we never knew the work involved getting ready for Gold Rush Day...it just seemed to happen. Though we could never figure out just what color the gold might be from year to year, this was one of the best days of the season. It had everything; a grizzled old prospector, a treasure hunt, a carnival, and a winning cabin. For me it was 1978 when Cliff Hawkins and I set up a tatoo parlor and painted our way into camp history. The plaque survives in our kid's downstairs playroom.

#4
Fourth of July, 1979. The night before I was told since I was the riding instructor I should be up at 6:30 to meet the stable folk out by the golf course. It really didn't register until I was given a cloak and hat the next morning that I was going to be Paul Revere! A very large and generally older horse (read:nag) was offloaded from a trailer and the stable owner said I should jump on and get the horse loosened up. I remember thinking about suggesting WD-40 but before I could get the words out we were off like a shot across the early morning mists that still hung over the golf course. For a Clydsedale reject that horse still had a little left to give and gave me a nice but short lived ride. Then I was riding down the camp road towards cabin 1 shouting "To Arms, the British are Coming!" Although I usually slept through Mike and Manny's wake up tour, being on the giving end in this manner was just too cool. My day ended almost as good. It seemed a lot of counselors were off that night and Manny gave myself and another counselor all the fireworks to take out to the raft to put on the camp show. Say what you like about Manny, when it came to pyrotechnics he had an ample budget and didn't skimp. Roger and I had a ball letting those things go!

#3
What can you say about Parent's Day? For us kids it gave us a chance to waterski, shoot, be in a play, and let our parents know how much we not only appreciated their being there but also that their hard-earned money spent on us wasn't wasted. Sure you can say they were getting rid of us for the summer but look where we got sent and what we got to do; sailors on leave should only have it so good. As a counselor, I never saw any of those famous tips I'd heard about, but Kip Poncher appreciated me and gave me his Early Bird jacket as a thank you. I still have it, thanks Kip.

#2
Paul, how in the world did you convince Manny to take the entire camp to a county fair to watch you in a demo derby? All I know is I came up late

to the parking lot and was greeted by 5 other counselors who couldn't fit in the bus. I loudly proclaimed "Staff Car!" and we were off in my white Caprice well known as a rolling party by many at that time. As if an extra night off wasn't enough, Manny gave each counselor $10 for refreshments. After the "Frogmobile" bit the dust we ducked out to the beertent for an evening on Manny! Truely remarkable, Paul.

My #1 Camp Waupaca Memory
Mike Chavin and I oftened bemoaned the fact that with the closing of camp we'd never get the chance to show our kids (and live through them again) the great times we had as campers and counselors. Thanks to the efforts of Paul Warshauer and Mike Lurie, we got that opportunity not just once but three times; 1996, 1998, and 2001. Watching my kids get excited as we get ready to go up to camp, giving them the freedom that we enjoyed to relax and be kids out in the open, showing them favorite places, and playing with them as kids again ourselves, well that's my #1.

Rob Gerowitz
1964,'65,'67,'68,'70,'78,'79

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