

Fall 2011 Canyon Camp Staff Alumni and Friends Newsletter
September 1, 2011

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Woodcutters Ball -- October 8!

The thirty-third annual Woodcutter's Ball will be held at Canyon Camp on Saturday, October 8, 2011. The Monroe Kiwanis Club is again sponsoring this event and is inviting Scouters and friends of Canyon Camp to participate. This annual workday has the primary focus of cutting, splitting, and delivering the winter supply of firewood to the cabins used by Scouts throughout the winter months. Scouters are asked to bring chainsaws, splitters, and appropriate work clothes to work in the woods.

For those who cannot work in the woods, attendance is still encouraged as this workday is used as a time to do routine maintenance to buildings and to ready the camp for the winter camping season. Hammers, saws, and paintbrushes are all tools to be put to use this workday.

Fall is a great time to visit Canyon Camp. You will enjoy the clean fall air and enjoy the fellowship of others interested in perpetuating the Spirit of Canyon Camp.

Breakfast and lunch for all volunteers will again be provided by the Monroe Kiwanis Club. We'll plan to start at 9:00 a.m. and break for lunch at 1:00 p.m. Kiwanians, troops, Staff Alumni and Friends, and individual scouters are welcome to participate!

Contact Lee Binkley with questions or reservations: Home phone number 608/325-5540 or email leebinkley@hotmail.com

Lyle Novinski honored at Canyon Camp

Lyle "Ski" Novinski attended a week of summer camp with two sons, a son-in-law and five grandsons – this must be a new record for the number of biologically related people in Camp at one time since the Culhane's last attended as a family! Lyle received special recognition from several former Staff members for his leadership and friendship, and his contributions in creating many of the Canyon Camp traditions that are still followed today. Selected excerpts from some of those who honored Ski follow:

“Canyon Camp has provided a great lifetime of wonderful memories, and most of those, at least in my estimation, are due to Ski. It is wonderful to know the traditions continue!”
– Adrian Andree

“You can be assured that you were a positive influence on me; there are not many people that I reflect on from over 50 years ago – you are one of them. Thank you.” – Pat Butler

“Over the years I have returned to Canyon Camp more times than I can count. Ron Spielman and I have discussed many times the fact that coming through the twin pillars at the gate to Canyon Camp is like going through a time warp. The outside world does not penetrate the barrier formed by those pillars. For us it is a return to the memories of our youth and the spark that was ignited in those brief few weeks we spent at Canyon Camp with Ski.” – Bill Determan

“If one simply stands on the parade ground and looks in all directions, you will see Ski’s influence. From the physical beauty of the Camp itself, to Camp Program, the Wednesday Visitor’s night and Order of the Arrow Calling Out Ceremony, there is Ski.” – Roy Prange

“Every scout who camps in this Canyon is being influenced by the teachings of Lyle Novinski.” – Ron Spielman

“The effect life at Canyon Camp had on me, the friendships made there, the concept of team which was instilled there, and the appreciation for God’s wonderful creations is difficult to replicate. It was as if one man called Ski, gathered us all up and lifted us to height of human ability and understanding which many adults do not achieve, let alone a group of teenagers...Thanks Ski!!!” – Ed Laughlin

2011 Alumni and Friends Reunion Report

Approximately 55 Staff Alumni and Friends of Canyon Camp attended a very hot and humid 2011 Reunion on July 22-24. Thanks to Dick, Lee and the 2011 summer Staff for their extra efforts to make this reunion a success. Reunion events started with a picnic at Apple River Canyon State Park (the original camping site for Scouts prior to the purchase of Canyon Camp) and included tours of the newly acquired Wiley property, use of the program areas at Camp, lots of fond reminiscing by those in attendance.

Special presentations were given by Daryl Watson, a local historian, on the cultural, social and geological history of the region and Jerry Paulson, Executive Director of the Natural Land Institute (NLI), spoke of the successful collaboration between BSA & NLI to get the Wiley acquisition completed. Paulson also spoke to today’s camp staff and emphasized that they must take a strong interest in the future of Canyon Camp, and encouraged their direct involvement in land preservation and environmental education. Tom Howe also presented a project he has underway to capture the histories of those associated with the Camp, to provide for current and future staff with an oral history of

our traditions, and to produce a collection of words and images useful to support the Camp's future mission.

\$940 will be deposited in the Spirit Scholarship Endowment following a silent auction at the 2011 reunion of Staff Alumni and Friends. Twenty-six items were purchased by Scott Simenson, Marvin Fritz, Catherine Spielman, William Riese, William Determan, Bryan Wangnoss, Adrian Andree, Ron Spielman, and Richard Reynolds. Additional contributions by alumni and friends received after the reunion totaled \$1,300 – increasing the total new contributions into the Spirit Scholarship Endowment by \$2,240.

\$3,200 in Spirit Scholarships awarded to 2011 Camp Staff by Ron Spielman

The Canyon Camp Spirit Scholarship program began in 1992 with staff alumni contributing funds for the first scholarships. In recent years an endowment has been accumulated to generate a portion of the scholarship funding distributed each year.

There are now three named scholarships awarded each year: Troy Larson Spirit Scholarship first awarded in 2005, Dennis Pratt Spirit Scholarship first awarded in 2006 and the Lee Binkley Spirit Scholarship first awarded in 2007.

At the 2011 Staff Dinner Lee Binkley and Dick Reynolds presented eight new scholarships:

Troy Larson to Ryan Tyler - Wabonsee Valley Community College
Dennis Pratt to Sean Nack – University of Wisconsin Milwaukee
Lee Binkley to Justin Kilburg - University of Iowa
Spirit Scholarship to Mike Hofmann – Illinois State University
Spirit Scholarship to Erick Bartel - Rock Valley Community College
Spirit Scholarship to Dan Kurth – Highland Community College
Spirit Scholarship to Sean Nadeau – Northern Illinois University
Spirit Scholarship to Michael Moore – St. Louis University

Through 2011 scholarships totaling \$29,900 have been awarded to 96 recipients. Scholarship funding comes from staff alumni, Scouters, and Friends of Canyon Camp. Individuals making tax-deductible contributions may select prints of pen and ink drawings of Canyon Camp scenes. To date, artist Elaine Bethke of Monroe has generated nine different prints:

Canyon Camp Bells
Held Nature Center
Stagecoach Trail Sign
Jamboree Cabin
The Chapel
Vickery Health Lodge
Rawleigh Headquarters Building
Hess Farmstead Barn
Founder's Lodge

If you are interested in supporting the Spirit Scholarship Fund contact Ron Spielman @ 608-325-6490 or spiel335@tds.net

Summer 2011 Canyon Camp Report by Lee Binkley

Once again Canyon Camp has experienced a very busy schedule through 2011. It has been a special year – the 75th anniversary year.

The 2011 camp staff worked together to once again help with the activities at the 56th U.S. Grant Pilgrimage this past April. Over 4,500 Scouts and leaders were in attendance. It is always a great way to get new camp staff members into the mode that we are there to serve others. On Sunday of the Pilgrimage weekend the staff again completed service projects at camp and we had our first staff meeting. It's always fun and exciting to see a new staff pull together and set the tone for the summer camping season.

Many staff members, past and present, Monroe Kiwanians, and friends of Canyon Camp came to camp the first weekend of May for our annual Kiwanis Work Weekend, which because of Mother's Day, was held as a work day on May 7th. Many projects to prepare camp for the summer season were completed including the construction of 11 tent platforms. This project was accomplished through the generosity of the Monroe Kiwanis Club, John Etter, and Bill Kubly. We were able to complete a two-day project in one day thanks to the prep work during the week prior to the workday by Monroe Kiwanians Randy Iverson, Bill Bethke, Ron Spielman, and Optimist member Bob Reffue. Thanks to the efforts of Ron and Jennifer Spielman the event was productive and enjoyable. It is hard to believe that 36 years have passed since the Monroe Kiwanis Club started its tremendous support of manpower and funding for this event. Over \$40,000 has been given to camp from this club to support programming for youth. Also in May camp was used by the Monticello and Benton School Districts for outdoor education programming.

We celebrated our 75th anniversary each week during the Boy Scout schedule. I closed each Sunday night campfire with a brief story conveying events that happened in 1936. I went on to explain that each year, for 75 years, a camp staff has been prepared to help Scouts reach their goals for their week at camp. Each Monday night Dick Reynolds and I, as co-camp directors gave a 30-minute presentation on the camp's history. The time line below was used as part of our presentation. We tried to cover the highlights by decades of the past 75 years. Many of our staff members and alums are not or were not aware of our very early history and how the Coon Creek site was chosen. I find the time line to be quite interesting as to where camping was conducted in the early years.

1912	Scouting established in this area
1927 - 1928	Camp Rotary near Rockford
1929	Camp Rotary (I-Kun-A-kaht-Si) near Beloit
1930	Apple River Canyon Camp – Millville site (now Apple River Canyon State Park) Millville was established in 1835 and totally destroyed by floods in 1892.
1931	Millville site – a visit from Paul Siple who at 19 was an aide to Admiral Byrd on an Antarctic expedition...later credited with the

invention of the wind chill factor. Learned of the State of Illinois purchasing the Millville site to establish Apple River Canyon State Park.

Clayton Chatters, Council Executive for U.S. Grant Council and camp director, proposed an exploratory hike to find a new location... a 3-day hike. Sites considered were Galena, Hanover, Mt. Carroll, Lena, and several spots in Wisconsin.

The canyon at the mouth of Coon Creek seemed to be the right place... with the canyon walls and a semi-flat area for programming it was very similar to the area that Scouts loved at the Millville site.

1932 Held at the Coon Creek site... attempted the construction of a dam on Coon Creek with dirt and logs... a horse powered scoop was used to assist in the project... dam failed... "lake" became known as the bathtub... swimming was done in the Apple River... drinking water was brought to camp in milk cans and a hand-cranked generator provided power for a telephone.

1933 Camp was held at a location between Cassville and Lancaster, Wisconsin.

1934 Camp returned to the Coon Creek site... Pioneering theme was a highlight of the summer with Eugene Vickery (one of our founders) as the "Chief Pioneer."

1935 Camping was held at Fish Lake – Lodi, Wisconsin

1936 Coon Creek site was purchased by the Robert F. Koenig Family of Freeport... Scouts had a permanent home of 150 acres... Dedicated on July 12 in 110 degree heat... Paul Siple returned as the keynote speaker.

Over time the camp has had 3 additions of land to bring the current size to 330 acres.

At the conclusion of our camp history presentation troops were give copies of our 75th Anniversary Scavenger Hunt, invited into the camp museum, and given ice cream.

The 75th continuous season at the Coon Creek site saw nearly 750 Scouts and leaders participate in Boy Scout programming which was delivered by a camp staff of 45 members. Troops came from the 12 counties of our Council, Blackhawk Area Council, as well as Three Fires, Illowa, Winnebago, W.D. Boyce, Glaciers Edge, and Circle Ten Councils.

A highlight during the 5th week of summer camp was the attendance of Troop 21 from Irving, Texas of the Circle Ten Council. Lyle Novinski, who served as the camp director until 1960 returned with 2 sons, a son-in-law, and 5 grandsons to spend a week at camp. We talked about Lyle each week in our camp history presentation. It was fun for both campers and staff to meet one of the icons of Canyon Camp's history. The week was also one of special challenge with a heat index of 110 plus! Some programming was cancelled and replaced with pool time, a 1,500 balloon water balloon fight and nearly 4 hours of a giant slip and slide on the parade field.

The main focus of our camp schedule continues to be the offering of merit badges of which 36 were offered. The Canyon Ranger program for first year Scouts and

the O.W.L. program (Outdoor Wilderness League) for older Scouts and leaders again proved to be popular and well attended.

We finished the Boy Scout portion of summer camp with a bang. On Wednesday, July 27th, our final visitor's night, we were pleased to have Ron Spielman present a brief recap of our camp history to our guests. I am not sure if it was the weather or Ron's speech that caused the chain reaction, but we switched from a severe storm warning to a tornado warning to a flash flood warning. Programming was cut short and with guidance from the Apple River Fire Department we managed to get our guests out of camp safely. As the night progressed we again experienced another major flood. Most of the rock debris and dam repairs that were finished in May were undone overnight. Let's hope this does not become one of our many camp traditions!

Summer programming continued in August with nearly 70 Wolf and Bear Cub Scouts and parents coming to camp for Cub Resident camp. The Darlington, Wisconsin Cross Country teams came to camp for a 3 day team building and training mini-camp during the third week of August. The weekend of Aug. 21st camp hosted the Wulapeju Lodge #140 Order of the Arrow Fall Conclave. Well over 200 Arrowmen were in attendance and many work projects were completed including the re-roofing of the health lodge. Sixty Ordeal candidates provide quite a work crew!

As we move into September camp will be host to an outdoor education program for the Cuba City, Wisconsin Schools. October 8th will be our annual Kiwanis Woodcutter's Ball. Weekend reservations are coming in fast for troops to use our cabins for weekend fall and winter camping. Yes, camp remains a busy place for youth. It won't be long and interviews will be conducted for the 76th year of camping along Coon Creek. We are so fortunate to have the special place we know and love as Canyon Camp.

In the Spirit,
Lee Binkley, Co Camp Director

Remembering Ron Sime

Longtime Scouter and former Canyon Camp Staff member Ron Sime passed away March 19, 2011 at his home in Platteville, WI. Ron is remembered for his lifetime dedication to scouting and to the education of youth in Platteville as a school administrator for 25 years. He received the rank of Eagle Scout, the Silver Beaver Award and the Lamb Award. His obituary read, in part "he enjoyed being on the Canyon Camp staff and his many trips to Philmont Scout Ranch out in New Mexico." A contribution to the Spirit Scholarship was received from Frances Sime, Ron's spouse of 65 years. We cannot thank Frances and the Sime family enough for their gift to the Spirit Scholarship.

New Visitor's Latrine planned by Dan Betul

Do you think Canyon Camp visitors deserve a better bathroom? The Council Executive Committee does, and has approved a fundraising project to replace the Canyon Camp visitor's outhouse as the old building is unusable and the Camp has had to pick up the cost of portable toilets instead.

The project is projected to cost in the neighborhood of \$40,000, and the goal is to have the new bathroom in place by the start of the 2012 summer camp season. Informal efforts – including “passing the hat” at the recent staff reunion resulted in more than \$1,000 in donations. A more formal campaign will be getting under way this fall. Contact Dan Bestul for more information (608-214-4926 or flushfund@gmail.com).

If you would like to make a donation to this project please send a check, payable to Blackhawk Area Council to:

Canyon Camp Capital Campaign
c/o Blackhawk Area Council
P.O. Box 4085
Rockford, IL 61110