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"Warshauer, Have You Ever Ridden a Jet Ski?"

*Famous entrances and exits by Paul Warshauer
For the Camp Waupaca 50th Anniversary Reunion Yearbook*

I came to the woods a shy homesick little boy. When I left, 22 years later, I had become a teacher in Los Angeles, written plays, directed musicals and nearly bought Camp Waupaca. I had done a camp at Anshe Emet Day school but nothing could prepare me for Camp Waupaca theatre!

My early years at camp could have been catastrophic for my career in theatre. However, just like other parts of life, when someone gives you lemons, you make big juice!

One of my earliest recollections of "performing" at camp was when I was told that I would be performing in the talent show for Terry Rifkin's cabin. I had no intention of performing and thought it all a clever joke. When Al Schaeffer, as Emcee, called up other poor schlubs, I laughed along with everyone else.

Then he announced, "And now for something a little different. Paul Warshauer from Cabin Ten will sing, "Edelweiss!" No one had asked me. It was my turn to perform. Here was my chance. What did I do? I ran out of the mess hall in embarrassment, determined never to return to Camp Waupaca. I think it is the only time that I ever ran a marathon anywhere. I ran to the basketball court and out to the far fields around the perimeter of the property past the "White House" and finally back through the woods to what was then cabin Ten and is now Cabin 12. Terry calmed me down and told me to "cool it." Somehow this consoled me.

Wally and Allan Schaeffer directed all of the shows at camp so I decided to face my fears and try out for "North Terrific," a take off of South Pacific set in a summer camp setting. Songs like,

"*Sam and Janet Evening, how was your trip up here... how was your trip up in you air conditioned car?"

(*Sung to the tune of "Some Enchanted Evening.")

Later I decided to go into theatre (dramatics) and played some great parts including Cinderella's stepmother, Fagin, Paul Revere, The 2000 Year Old Man, The Big Chief of the Waupaca Tribe, Hollywood Squares Quizmaster, musical chairs' referee, Darth Vader, and my favorite, Zeus to open the camp Olympics!

I had seen several counselors play Zeus to open the Olympics. It was quite a sight. Wally Tomchek in costume standing on the top of the ski shack. But year after year this routine bored me. I was determined to make a better entrance when my time came. I suggested a white horse. The local stable would be happy to provide one. Thus began a tradition. Manny would ask, solemnly, "Warshauer, have you ever ridden a horse?"

"Yes Manny. Yes, I have."

Manny would ask me to sign a waiver. I did so.

The next year I wanted something more exotic so I think I arrived on a mini-bike. Manny asked again.

"Warshauer, have you ever ridden a mini-bike?"

"Yes Manny. Yes I have."

Manny scrounged in the desk and found the previous year's waiver. He turned it over and wrote some new words copying the language from the other side.

The following year jet skis had just been introduced. Same routine.

"Warshauer, you ever ridden a jet ski?"

"Yes Manny. Yes I have." Sign the waiver. Manny sprung for a new piece of paper but all the previous waivers were still in that top drawer of the desk in the office. They might still be there today!

I arrived by rowboat as Poseidon, covered with real seaweed. I arrived as Apollo on water shoes and as Hercules behind the ski boat on a Para-sail. Zeus was a great role! I played it for at least 18 years of my career at Camp Waupaca.

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Fenster Schmidt - Ice cream cone
Demo derby at Portage and Fair