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Eagle River / St. Germaine Trips

Wally had a friend who had a cottage on the Flambo Flowage. While visiting the area he learned of a camp site owned by the Wisconsin Power and Light Company. The site is a sandy point on a river that the power company allowed groups to use at no cost. (The price was right). Boy Scout Troops used the site and improved it with a latrine. A resort up river brought its guests there for a picnic lunch every Wednesday. For four years Camp Waupaca used the site once or twice a summer for three or four days. Because of the tourist atmosphere of near-by Eagle River where the campers were allowed one afternoon of "freedom", this was a popular trip. It ended when competition and the distance from Waupaca became considerations.

Gear was loaded at 6:00 AM while most of the camp slept. The carry-all was parked in front of the mess hall while breakfast was gulped and the group was off. The vehicle swayed as it picked up speed and the canoes rattled on the rack of the canoe trailer. A tarp that was attached to a rack on the top of the carry-all always came loose about ten miles down the road. Once a knot broke and sleeping bags and tents spread for a mile along the highway. Everything was recovered and lashed down again. The only thing that ever lost was a life jacket which was recovered on the return trip just north of Wittenburg. Each trip this became a repeated ritual; a predictable part of the adventure.

In Search of the Elusive Musky

The first trip was billed a musky fishing trip. The river and reservoir were supposed to be the best walleye waters in the state, but who would be satisfied with walleye, (a most edible fish), when there were muskys, (a fish fit only for mounting as a trophy), nearby. With high hopes, minnows, and musky lures the group boarded the carry-all and traveled to a near-by "musky" lake. We fished all morning without anyone getting close to a musky. At lunch everyone had stories about possible strikes. Another two hours of working the waters without results ended any talk of Musky Fishing Trips. Zuckermans Ice Cream Parlor in Eagle River became a main attraction of this trip.

Michael Gordon's Mine

As usual fishing was poor (no one had even a hint of a strike) and the afternoon turned hot. The beautiful sand beach and clear cool water dictated that the menu for the evening meal would be steak instead of fish. With Wally life guarding from the top of the cliff beside the beach and Wayne guarding down on the beach the campers were covering themselves with hot sand and then washing it off in the river. Some of the boys were playing in the sand just around a corner from Wayne. A shout from someone in the water announced that Michael Gordon was buried in a cave. Wayne rushed to the scene and several boys were digging frantically with their hands. Boats on the lake began to converge on the spot where we were. Sand was flying in all direction. About five

minutes after the alarm, Michael's foot emerged. Wayne grabbed an ankle and pulled. Another foot became visible and he grabbed that and pulled again. Michael came loose from the sand. After the sand was cleared from his nose and mouth a slap on the back brought him to life. Grateful for his rescue Michael shouted at the top of his lungs, "Where to hell are my glasses?" The glasses were found unbroken. We celebrated life with a movie in Eagle River that night.

Out-door-smen Coleman Cuts Capers

Mark (?) Coleman found a new out door skill. Smity Smithart taught him how to split wood for the cooking fire. While we were finishing the breakfast meal Mark was busy splitting wood and piling it for the next campfire. He made a sharp cry of pain which caught everyone's attention. "What is wrong?" Smity asked. "I think I cut my toe." Coleman answered. Smity took a look and announced, "I've had worse cuts on my eyeball, but you are going to a doctor." Two hours later they returned with Mark's toe in a cast, the nearly severed toe reattached.

Dean Becker Saves

As we had loaded the canoes with most of the gear, a third of the campers had to hike to the camp site along the edge of the river. Erosion caused a tree to lean over the edge of the river in a horizontal direction. For some reason this bothered Dean and he tried to straighten it. The roots were spread out so that it was impossible. Later we went out to gather wood for a cooking fire and Dean asked to use the saw. Two days later we hiked down the path to have a day in town and the tree was standing straight and tall. Dean had cut it off and stuck it into the soft soil. He pointed proudly to the tree and announced, "Dean Becker saves trees.

The Boy Scout latrine was made of two 2X4's lashed to two trees. It was not the most comfortable accommodation, but it did work until.... Dean grabbed the roll of toilet paper and ran for the latrine. No one used it until they had to. Some waited until a trip into Eagle River. Rumored but never proven it was said that some swam out to the swift part of the river for a call of nature. Dean ran for the latrine. A few minutes later there was a scream of despair. With his pants around his thighs and the speed of a charging rhino, Dean ran through the campsite to the river. "This is not the time for a swim," Wayne called out, "we don't have any life guards posted." As Dean rolled in the water he shouted back, "I have to wash off all this shit." You see the Boy Scout bindings had broken.