

The Camp Waupaca 2000 Reunion Time Capsule

(as told by Paul Warshauer)

...It is August, 1998 and Mike Lurie and Paul Warshauer are saying goodbye to many campers and their families after a successful reunion on site at Camp Waupaca...Dick Garb wonders if people would attend a reunion if it were held in Chicago?...We all start thinking...

...Discussions are held during the next year...Howie Fleischer says that many of his friends would NOT make the trip to Waupaca but might go to a bar or bowling alley in Chicago...Todd Laff offers help and finds a few bowling alleys on the north side of the city...We hear from Ray Krysh and others that a local reunion will be a good thing...We also heard from other alumni that Joe Rosen helped Irving "Skipper" Kukin build the camp. How come he didn't come to the last reunion?...We immediately spring into action and contact his son through Steve Kuklin...

...Paul comes to town in August, 1999 and has lunch with Marty Behn, Steve Prebish and Steve Reitmeister near the Sears Tower...they are excited about another camp reunion. Mike and Paul even visit Abby Levine at Camp Waupaca to ask about the 2001 reunion.... "Way too early," she tells us but we put the bug in her ear...

...It is October, 1999 and decisions must be made...Karamath Khan agrees to look over some bowling alleys in the northern suburbs..."On line" we begin finding many campers and we also find out that Mark Weber, a former camper, might have a relative involved in Thunderbird Lanes in Mt. Prospect, Illinois....Phone calls are made and we secure Feb 20th, 2000 as a potential date...Paul Warshauer calls to make arrangements and is informed that bowling tournaments are being held and that many lanes will not be available..."It's Ok, we just need the conference room"...

...Dick Garb continues to locate many campers and some staff...we hear from Mark Miller...He will attend if we send info to every FAX machine he owns to make sure...Thanksgiving comes and goes and it looks like we have over 300 campers and counselors on our list...Mike Lurie mails out "317 postcards at a cost of \$63.40"...Our finances are in good hands...

...By January, 2000, a call from Thunderbird Lanes comes in telling us that Feb 20 is out and Feb 27 is in...another round of postcards go out and we are set for Feb 27, 2000...Dick Garb underwrites the expenses for these mailings...

...Paul calls Joe Rosen and we agree to interview him before the reunion starts...Mike Lurie calls Loretta Kuklin, Skipper's wife for the same...Dick Garb's wife Lynn tries to convince Ron Lavine to attend...

"Forever and forever, Waupaca!"

© the Camp Waupaca Reunion Group. All Rights Reserved.

The Camp Waupaca 2000 Reunion Time Capsule (cont'd) (as told by Paul Warshauer)

...February 1 comes and goes and we start calling some of the "party loyals"...**Warren Metzdorff** will attend, **Howie Fleischer** will attend and will bring a scanner for pictures...**Kenny Lapins** agrees to bring a regular camera...we are set...

...**Lurie** and **Warshauer** arrive in Chicago on Friday, Feb 25 late afternoon from Minnesota and Oregon, respectively...Mike has made name tags, a roster of all located thus far...Saturday Mike and Paul attend the Mee-Ow Show at Northwestern University and leave messages for **Kenny Saunders** and **Paul Rosengarten**...Late Saturday night **Rob Gerowitz** dreams of camp again and of swimming naked lakers, then calls **Cathy Weasner-Lurie** to see if she'll be there!...some other alumni dream of taking the bus ride from Old Orchard to Waupaca...

...SATURDAY AFTERNOON, FEBRUARY 26: Mike and Paul interview **Loretta Kuklin** regarding her perspectives of camp...Loretta invites us to her home in Skokie and is a very gracious hostess... She tells us that Skipper was desperate to purchase a camp during the fall months of 1950 and that he saw many sites in Michigan...Loretta had clipped a real estate ad for a wooded spot in Waupaca and Skipper kept the ad in his wallet...At the end of a weekend trip, Skipper went to see the Waupaca site after the Michigan sites proved untenable. Some folks in Michigan had told Skipper that only the "right people" should live there. Skipper probably felt like telling them that "they were probably not the right people" for his campers...Skipper fell in love with Waupaca and **Joe Rosen**, Loretta's aunt and Skipper were the original investors and partners. They cleared land, brought in surplus buildings and built a commercial kitchen based on a pamphlet they received from the US government. Loretta remembered that a man named Caldwell dredged an area for a swimming area...April 1951 brings a huge snowstorm, delaying the erection of cabins, dining hall, and rec hall...parents of campers have faith that all will be ready for the first season, and all goes well...

...Sunday February 27: Reunion Day arrives...Paul & Mike load up a rental car with camp stuff and head off for Thunderbird Lanes...we arrive at 1:30, set up and make a small easel sign out of a box leading people to the reunion...

...**Joe Rosen**, his wife, and son **Larry Rosen** arrive first and we conduct a video interview of the beginning of camp. We find out that camp was purchased for \$14,000 and that buildings were brought in from army surplus...it is a thorough interview... Joe's son tells us that he and **Steve Kuklin** helped plant 1,000 pine saplings on what's now known as the white pine trail at camp. Joe says they cost \$18.00 per thousand...Joe confirms the muck raking Clem Caldwell was the man who constructed the beaches...**Warren Metzdorff** gets excited because he also has met Clem and his son, Columbus Caldwell. Is Warren old enough to remember the original dredging in the 1950's? ... Well,

"Forever and forever, Waupaca!"

© the Camp Waupaca Reunion Group. All Rights Reserved.

The Camp Waupaca 2000 Reunion Time Capsule (cont'd) (as told by Paul Warshauer)

if Warren claims that he taught 10,000 skiers to ski then he MUST be old enough to remember Clem...Ironically, Warren tells us the Clem has just passed away, days before the reunion...We wonder where some of the other folks who had agreed to attend were - they appear to be AWOL! ...we agree to make a few phone calls...**Todd Laff** tells us of his many theatrical experiences at camp... There was much laughter throughout the afternoon as we remembered and reminisced about the good old days....wow, we feel old and young at the same time... Many bring photos but no one has a better collection than **Paul Ringel**. His pics go back to the 1950's. Entire camp photos. **Howie Fleischer** scans them all into a computer for download use later...sing the camp song - how does it go again?...*"We are the kids that come from Stratton Lake . . ."* - funny, we don't sound any better now than we did 30 or so years ago...

...Guests come and go and, of course, introductions are needed after many years....Hair lines moved back or waist lines increased but there was something familiar about a smile, a twinkling eye, or a funny laugh...Mike Hollobow, The Weiss brothers, Jordy Leff arrive and are greeted by campers who attended camp during their years...it seemed that everyone knew someone at this reunion...campers from the 1950s, 60s, 70s and 80s were all represented....Harlan Rips rearranges his travel schedule to be in Chicago for this reunion...tall tales were told, fond memories of **Manny Desnet**, **Wally Tomchek**, **Chuck Cooper** and even **Erv Kasian** were shared and embellished...**Steve Alex** explains how Froggy got his name...the braves program is examined and either vilified by those not in it or praised by braves of years past...Former CITs discuss **Ray Krysh's** beverage choices...the original polio scare of 1951 at camp is mentioned...Olympics, the Blue White War and **Bob Mowen's** lucky horse shoe toss...Paul introduces former owner **Joe Rosen** who makes a brief speech about how camp got started... all are impressed...

...By 5:00 people started to drift...bowlers finished (mainly kids)...and **Karamath Khan** arrives...he infuses some new life into the party...**Jon "Punky" Shulman** arrives and tells us how he got his name...

...6:00 PM rolls around, and the 2000 reunion is officially over...load up the car for the trip back to Minnesota, with a few less T-shirts and hats from previous reunions, as some folks paid \$10 for the opportunity to recapture the memory of previous reunions...**Todd Laff** treats Paul and Mike to a Chinese dinner at a nearby joint, Todd goes home, Paul and Mike start their journey back to their homes and we put to rest another memorable reunion...we agree to meet again during the summer of 2001, the 50th anniversary of Camp Waupaca...we agree to meet again as friends and as the "kids who come from Stratton Lake" ...we agree to meet again as the Trail's End...

"Forever and forever, Waupaca!"

© the Camp Waupaca Reunion Group. All Rights Reserved.