

The Camp Waupaca 2016 Reunion Time Capsule

(September 2, 2016 by Paul Warshauer and Mike Lurie)

The 65th Anniversary of the Founding of Camp Waupaca (1951) and

The 20th Anniversary of the First Camp Waupaca Reunion (1996)

...AUGUST 15, 2011 and **Lurie** and **Warshauer** are exhausted after yet another all-camp reunion... “Never again,” they both say...then over the next three years, informal gatherings in Waupaca featuring **Warren Metzdorff**, **George Lamm**, **Rick Passman**, **Howie Resnick**, **John Schmitt**, **Bob Mowen**, and **Errol Grisard** occur...the embers of a fire start to warm up...

...BY AUGUST 17, 2013 the CWRG Council agrees to pursue a full-on reunion on site for 2016...the word goes out...concerns about the food are primary, contract negotiations with Camp Young Judaea Midwest (the current owner of the former Camp Waupaca) go very well and a date is selected....optimism is high... postcards, Facebook posts, and e-mails go out. The response is lukewarm...have we done these too many times? Is there still an interest? ...the die-hards say GO GO... The phones light up... Mike and Paul set the fees...very reasonable for a resort in Wisconsin for a family...

...JULY 2015, three hearty men gather in Waupaca to vacation and enjoy the Portage County Fair...Little **Ricky Passman** got his wish last year when it was decided to gather informally this weekend in July 2015 so he can go to the fair like in the old days...**Rick Passman**, **Mike Lurie**, and **Howie Resnick** all enjoyed the crazy weekend together...

...FEBRUARY 2, 2016, on behalf of the Camp Waupaca Reunion Group Council, Big Chief Warshauer signs the contract and we are a go!... Registrations start slowly and remain sluggish but those who plan to attend are excited... It’s been five years... **Rick Passman** signs up early, so do brothers **Kenny** and **Ralph Saunders**...

...JULY, **Paul Warshauer** enters a contest to win tickets for a Leinenkugel/WDUX Beer Cruise on the Chain O’ Lakes...he has to get more likes on Facebook than anyone else, and he wins!!...now all we need are 4 more tickets for the rest of the “advance team” to go on the cruise with Paul and his chosen guest...letters to WDUX radio go out but to no avail...

...WEDNESDAY AUGUST 10, Little **Ricky Passman** boards a flight from Reno, Nevada...he arrives at the Central Wisconsin Airport near Wausau...**Paul Warshauer** picks him up and the reunion “officially” begins...**Mike Lurie** leaves St. Michael, MN with a car loaded with SWAG, (Camp Waupaca hats, t-shirts and sweatshirts)...by 3 pm, **Mike**, **Rick** and **Paul** are having the official first drink at Graffiti’s on the Square in Stevens Point...

...Back in Chicago, men and families prepare for the BIG event...Wives again ask “Why are we going to this thing?”...**Ricky Weinberger** takes planes, trains and automobiles from Miami to get to the reunion. He borrows an old car to finally get to the Ramada Inn, our HQ for a while...

...On Wednesday night a nice dinner at T-Dubs, an upscale Irish pub on the Waupaca River...off to the DQ for a dessert nightcap...on the way to the Dairy Queen **Ricky Weinberger** is stopped by the local constabulary for a bad tail-light. He has a borrowed car, a Florida driver’s license so the cop gives him a warning as the paperwork would take hours...

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...THURSDAY AUGUST 11 ...plastic tub and a shopping bag of memorabilia are spread out in the Ramada Board Room and reviewed...**Ricky Weinberger** is enthralled by a counselors manual prepared by **Ron Lavine** in 1981..."Mike, I MUST get a copy of this, seriously!"...**Rick Passman** tells the group, "I have never been to New London"...so we abandon the traditional Thursday morning shopping trip to Fleet Farm, Piggly Wiggly and lunch at Brainard's Bridge...after all the Official Itinerary says, "Subject to minor or major change at any time"...Mike and Paul begin to use the word, "Protocol" for any changes or decisions we make on behalf of the CWRG...We pile into a red Ford Fusion Titanium courtesy of **Michael Gordon** and we drive to New London and have great burgers and 1919 Root Beer...Back to hotel then to the Harbor to see if we won any additional Leinenkugel Cruise tickets...we drink several barley pops which give us more entries to the last chance raffle...no luck comes our way and **Warshauer** gives his winning tickets to **Errol Grisard** and **Rick Passman** who go on the Chief Waupaca paddle wheeler for a 3-hour cruise, a 3-hour cruise. The rest of us go to dinner at Simpsons...we are saddened to learn the historic restaurant, in the family for 4 generations since 1932, is now for sale by the family!...

...FRIDAY AUGUST 12...**Karamath Khan** debates "should I or shouldn't I attend?"...**Dick Garb** tells him he will drive if they leave Saturday morning but let's keep it a secret from his buddy, **Steve Prebish**...**Mike Lurie** prepares the sign to go on the post on Highway 22. Is the sign really 10 years old?...Everyone wants to get in early but the official start time is 4:00 pm... At 12:30, **Paul** and **Mike** pull into the gates at camp recalling **Leroy Clotiaux** guarding the same gate for Parents' Day...**George Lamm** arrives and the party is now in full swing...and the nostalgia fills us until we see a single wide trailer on the golf course!...It is the new temporary office. We meet new Camp director Robin Anderson and we agree that our group, although small, will have fun this weekend!...

...The CYJ staff includes Robin, Gabby, Paulina, Lee and Ben. Our cook is Sandy...we have already printed itineraries, releases, registrations...the staff helps us find the old pulley for the flagpole and although it is much shorter than before, it still works...supplies for tomorrow's Super Duper Relay are identified...**Mike**, **George**, and **Paul** get bedrooms in Barney Town, (**Manny's** old lodge and the former computer room)...Little left to do other than wait at the gate for our first arrivals...

...**Rick Passman** and **Errol Grisard** finish doing whatever they were doing in town and arrive at camp, followed by **Ricky Weinberger**...**Kenny** and **Ralph Saunders** arrive and set up their tents by the old rifle range...**Steve Shyman** and his wife, Vivina stake out the porch on the new Rec Hall facing the lake... Flag lowering and we introduce the first set of attendees by earliest year attended...**Rick Weinberger** lowers the flag...before we eat, we recite our traditional Camp Waupaca blessing: "Evening has come, the board is spread. Thanks be to him who gives us bread. Praise God for Bread . . ." everyone: "For these and all thy blessings, oh Lord we thank

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thee."...dinner of homemade pizza and salad bar...as it is a kosher camp, no cooking on Sabbath...still mighty good...Liquid Sunshine threatens, so after a quick look at Lake Stratton after dinner, we head to the newer air-conditioned Rec Hall and have a few beers while looking at the **Warshauer** collection...no one wanted to play softball anyways, and there are too few of us...**Steve Prebish** comes into the Rec Hall and is immediately immersed back into camp life...**Larry Lifson** and his bride Bebe are the last arrivals for the first day...Ricky W. provides liquid refreshment for the troops...some of us feel a little giddy actually drinking beer on camp grounds...taps...

...**Michael Gordon** and **Steve Prebish** take the CPAP cabin (Cabin 10) and **Ricky Weinberger** takes Cabin 9...the families arriving Saturday will get Cabins 7-8....The Levine family has reserved Cabin 15...

...SATURDAY AUGUST 13...**Scott Levine's** daughter, Addison Levine wakes up and yells, "It's today!"...many of us have dreams about our great times at camp...we remember **Manny** and **Lil Desnet**, nights out in town (**Rick Passman**), campfires...some dream about their legendary performances on the Flickerball Field (**Steve Prebish**), others their skills at waterskiing (**Steve Shyman**), but it all ends at 7:45 am, when **Mike Lurie** wakes up camp going from cabin to cabin, tent to tent yelling, "Good morning Men! It's another beautiful day at Camp Waupaca...flag raising at 8:30." It reminds us of **Skipper Kuklin** and **Manny Desnet** and **Mike Euer** who used to wake us up many years ago...Cabin reports, this time by distance traveled...**Mike** notices the assemblage is a bit sluggish this morning, so he brings out the **Manny Desnet** calisthenics...arm rolls, touch the opposite toes, etc...**Steve Shyman** raises the flag...breakfast...we remember the prayer, "Morning has come, the board is spread. Thanks be to him who gives us bread. Praise God or bread."...Everyone!..."For these and all thy blessings, oh Lord we thank thee."...We notice a toaster that says, GLUTEN FREE." 2016 has come to Camp Waupaca!... **Mike Lurie** sells preprinted 2-color t-shirts, sweatshirts, and embroidered hats, custom made for this event...Now it is a full day of GREAT WEATHER, when folks arrive, walk the grounds go swimming, skiing, tubing and just reminisce...**Larry Gordon** is able to make the reunion before driving his last child to college next week...**Karamath Khan** shows up and does surprise us... **Dick Garb** drove him up...**Aram Adler** arrives and goes right for the water...so does **Gavin Greene** and his family along with **Jared Palmer** and his crew...friends since childhood now coming back to camp for the first time since the late 1980s. Jared is sporting a big beard...who was that kid? It takes a while to see Jared the kid's face in the Jared the man now... lakers (swimming from our beach to a raft across the lake, and back again), water-skiing, boat rides...Lunch...paper plates and plastic forks do not have the same impact as crashing silverware to start other Blue and White Wars but Big Chief **Larry Gordon** for the White, and his little Chief, **Jared Palmer** square off against Blue team Big Chief, **Steve Prebish** and his Little chief, **Gavin Greene**. We meet at the horseshoe to divide into two teams and practice the various events...some of the boys go on a Crystal River trip but the rest get ready. Big Chief **Paul Warshauer** puts the secret ingredient into the #10 cans filled with water then the relay starts at 3:50 exactly. Although the names of some of the events are not known to everyone,

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the old timers recall...the sinking of three free throws (The **Ray Krysh** and Sundance Swish Event) ...it is close all the way through...canoe marathon, (The **Craig Fuller** Instant Tantrum Event)...pounding nails into a log (**Dick Garb, Jared Palmer, Michael Gordon**) by the Old Craft shop...(Erv Kasian's Most Powerful Craft Shop in North America Event)...“Where is that?”...Marathon running forwards (The **Rob Ezsak / Lori Huntoon** Kiss the Kitchen Girl and Run Event) and backwards and one event where someone (Addison) must quack while walking fast, (**Paul Ringel** Quack Like a Duck)...**Larry Gordon** and **Michael Gordon** throw horseshoes (The **Bob Mowen** Lucky Horseshoe Toss Event)...The kids have a great time as well, Big Jack, Little Jack, and Stacy, do more events than all the adults!... The wives do many events as well: Mrs. Lifson, Mrs. Levine, Mrs. Palmer, and Mrs. Shyman... then both teams arrive within seconds to start building their fires... **Steve Shyman & Steve Prebish** for the Blue, and **Jared & Lisa Palmer** and **Scott Levine** for the White team... ...The flimsy fire grate provided by CYJ collapses for the first time in Blue & White War history, but the water does not spill out so the boil water boil continues...(note to **Mike Lurie**: next time, we bring our own Blue and White water boiling equipment)...Blue wins it in 40:05 with **Steve Prebish** ringing the old bell (no wasps this year!) propped up on the back of a trailer in the space formerly occupied by the camp office which was torn down due to rot... White Team's **Jared Palmer** is not quitting. He finishes his fire and his Chief (**Larry Gordon**) rings the bell a little later...one camp again...everyone into the spring fed, crystal clear, sand bottomed, glacier formed Lake Stratton for a G-Swim....flag lowering by **Larry and Bebe Lifson** lower the flag.... And, as advertised, a “scrumptious chicken dinner.”...we thank the kitchen staff for the improvement in food quality...

...SATURDAY EVENING AUGUST 13...The Annual Meeting of the Camp Waupaca Reunion Group is called to order by Big Chief **Paul Warshauer** promptly at 8:15 PM before a roaring fire built by the winning B&W fire builders...roll call, proxy votes submitted by non-attendees **Warren Metzdorff, George Lamm** (had to get back home for family reasons), and **Scott Rubin**...the 2015 minutes are about to be read when a motion is made to forego the reading and go right to the approval...minutes approved as written...treasurer's report by **Mike Lurie**...he explains that he has several unreimbursed expenses and would like to keep the proceeds from the sale of all t-shirts, hats, and sweatshirts...board votes unanimously to approve **Mike's** request...**Larry Gordon** asks if we are planning to tip the CYJ staff...discussion, followed by cash flowing in for such a deed...excitement for a new plan proposed by **Larry Gordon** to have a few financially blessed alumni underwrite the next reunion in 2 years (instead of the usual 5) and have people pay what they feel the weekend is worth...under “new business”, **Mike Lurie** makes an impassioned speech extolling the contributions of **Dick Garb**, and requests that he be made an honorary board member...the motion passes unanimously with the proviso that this is an honorary position only, as he doesn't want any responsibilities (though he does more than most all throughout the years)...meeting is adjourned and we start telling stories...talk about camp

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dreams, heroic counselors, funny PA announcements...taps...some go to town for entertainment, others head to the far fields to watch the remainder of the Perseid Meteor Shower...

...SUNDAY, AUGUST 14...Paul and Mike walk through camp waking everyone...Many are awake and already taking great photos of a mirror like Lake Stratton...so many good photos already posted on Facebook...Flag raising by **Ralph Saunders**, the youngest camper (up to that point – “I was so young, I spent 2 summers in Cabin 1!”) and those who stayed in hotels make it back to camp just in time to give their cabin (or hotel room) reports...breakfast and singing (Rise and Shine brings back such happy memories!) and our camp song....**Aram Adler** shares a reply to the question, “Why did you come to camp for this reunion?” His reply, “Life is too short. I wanted to come to camp to relive great memories and enjoy it before it’s too late.” Perfect...The Big Chief makes Addison Levine a Pledge...others grumble it will take another few years to make Brave...Hooray for all of us who hung in there for the entire weekend, including **Ralph** and **Ken Saunders** who traditionally disappear, tents and all, in the middle of the night...Last chance to build sand castles on the beach or go swimming once more...last chance lakers (swimming from our beach to a raft across the lake, and back again) were completed by **Steve Shyman** (twice!), **Ken Saunders**, **Ralph Saunders**, Vivina Shyman, **Aram Adler** and **Ricky Weinberger**. Thanks to **Michael Gordon** and CYJ staff for rowing boats to get them there and back safely...**Rick Passman**, **Mike Lurie** and **Errol Grisard** take a tour to see the Old Beach...it is still there although many more weeds and small tress now nearly totally obscure the path from the beach...a few brave souls go tubing behind the “fast boat,” but **Aram Adler** over does it a bit trying to waterski, and comes to shore limping...**Steve Prebish** sits on a picnic bench by the waterfront listening to great old songs like Harry Chapin’s “Cat’s in the Cradle”...we get a little teary eyed...we reminisce about music at camp, especially the Police’s “Canary in a Coal Mine” danced by so many CIT’s one summer at camp...we pack up our stuff...**Ralph** and **Kenny Saunders** pack up their tents by the no longer in existence rifle range while the **Shyman’s** pack up their tent on the Rec Hall porch...some look at the memorabilia (Yearbooks, flags, shirts, plaques) still on display in the air-conditioned Rec Hall...we buy a last hat, t-shirt or sweatshirt...one final walk to the tennis court, archery range, a trip to see the **Wanty** house, (which as a “For Sale” on it!) the far fields, and the mini-bike trail...it is still hard to see a giant new climbing wall on the far fields where many rugby records were made, but it is progress we suppose. The rest of the camp seems the same, cabins, Mess Hall, **Manny’s** House, and we try to take in as much as we can until the next reunion...last lunch of leftovers, last chance to recite our Camp Waupaca grace and sing our fight song...will there be another reunion? No one is sure but we know that our memories of Camp Waupaca are preserved and we will meet again...sometime before the **Trail’s End**...

P.S. ...after Paul and Mike tip the CYJ staff, they head to the corner of Stratton Lake Road and Hwy 22 to remove our sign and save it for next time...Mike and Paul and Rick head to town to visit

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The Widow Kramer, the widow of Camps former print shop provider...Paul heads to the Ramada for a nap while Mike and Rick and Ricky head to Clearwater Harbor for a corn roast and live music...too busy there, so we head to the old Roost, now a modern bar & grill for a late lunch...back to the hotel to rest, followed by one more dinner at Simpson's (may not be here the next time we come)...Monday we nosh at King's Table for breakfast before saying our good-byes for the weekend...heading back to jobs or decisions about jobs, and to sweetly remember our days at Camp Waupaca...in the days that follow, we hear from many attendees, telling us about the wonderful time they had...Paul sends out Pledge and Brave certificates mounted in frames, touching the hearts of many...Aram Adler says he has significant damage to his leg requiring surgery (I hope he signed a waiver)...

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