

2019 Waupaca Reunion Time-Capsule

(Written by Mike Lurie and Paul Warshauer)

Sunday August 12, 2018...Little **Ricky Passman** suggests a reunion at Portage County Fair in 2019 ...AGAIN!...majority of board members agree that the 2nd week of August will allow us to walk through camp...AGAIN!...

March 2019, Sleepy Eye, MN...**Mike Lurie** drives through not-yet-planted corn fields to get to **Paul Warshauer** in beautiful southwestern Minnesota to see a unique, original murder mystery written and directed by the Big Chief...he stays to take care of important Camp Waupaca Reunion Group business...scanning pages from yearbooks and priceless photos and other documents pertaining to camp...they agree to see about a walkthrough of camp after the CYJ camping season is over...**Mike** wants to see the stash of videos that **Paul** has been schlepping around the country for 30+ years..."Next time Lurie, not now."

Early June, 2019, Sleepy Eye, MN... AGAIN!...**Lurie** goes to the southwest Minnesota headquarters of the Camp Waupaca Reunion Group to continue retrieving precious artifacts from our camping past...**Paul** has "organized" his video collection (strewn across several unmarked boxes in his basement)..."Where's the old stuff, Paul?"..."Uh not this time, Lurie. It's tucked away somewhere very special."...in other words, no clue where they are...**Paul** agrees the videos are somewhere within the headquarters on Maple Street...

Mid-June, 2019, Minneapolis, MN...**Lurie** takes the video archives that are on VHS and Super-VHS and other video cartridges and visits Two Squares Media in Brooklyn Park, MN...they are well equipped to sift through the video collection and capture only unique footage on the best tapes..."Have them ready by the end of July", demands **Mike**...our digitized video collection fits on a USB flash drive!!...

Tuesday August 6, 2019...Little **Ricky Passman** boards a plane in Reno, NV and flies to Waupaca via O'Hare in Chicago and Appleton...Ubers his way to the Ramada Inn in Waupaca...and thus puts our first man on the ground...he texts **Paul** and **Mike**, giddy at being in his happy place...we calm him down and explain the reunion will not officially start until he is joined by at least one more person...

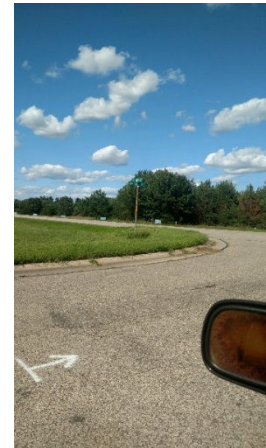
Wednesday August 7, 2019...the reunion officially begins when **Mike Lurie** arrives at Graffiti's on the Square in Stevens Point, WI, promptly at noon...**Rick Passman** is waiting, they embrace, and we're off and running!...and the same bar maid is still working there, even though she says this year is her last...off to Clear Water Harbor Bar for some additional refreshments...then to the seedy underbelly of Waupaca and a stop at Weasel's Bar for more beverages...with severe storms ("high winds") overhead, we walked across the street for yet more liquid entertainment and a bite to eat at Simpson's Indian Room Restaurant...back to the Ramada for or free drink served by bartender "Hawaiian Brian", who has been at the hotel for 15 years, and the recitation of Taps, followed by lights out...

Thursday August 8, 2019...**Mike Lurie** gets up early and walks downtown and back for his daily constitutional...**Rick** and **Mike** do a drive-by of camp, and head all the way around both Stratton

Lakes...they head down Spear road to see the duplex adjacent to camp, but the brush is so thick, they cannot see into camp...they head over to the Waupaca County Post to try to find an article from 1970 or 1971, in June or July or August, about the Nature Center, based on a photo provided to us by **Glenn Becker**...a less than enthusiastic receptionist tells them "we don't let people look through the books any longer, they are very fragile"...she takes our information and says "don't call us, we'll call you"...betting began to see if **Paul Warshauer** would really attend this year's reunion, since his excuse for not arriving on Wednesday was having to return some props from his last grand production of "Little Mermaid"...the boys go to the Indian Crossings Casino to sit out on the deck and revel in the beauty of the weather and surroundings in their happy place...eventually they end up at Chain O' Lakes Bar & Grill for a bit of lunch, and **Warren Metzdorff** says he is in town, and joins us for lunch...**Mike** and **Rick** eat while **Warren**

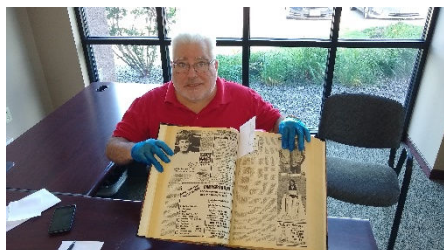


waits not so patiently for his lunch to arrive...off to Clear Water Harbor for a quick drink...back to the Ramada to wait for **Errol Grisard**, and check the odds on **Paul Warshauer's** arrival...**Paul** sends a text message at 4 PM with a photo of the road sign at Hwy 22 and Stratton Lake Road, says he will be here in 15 minutes..."That's a stock photo", exclaims **Passman**...in



walks Big Chief **Paul Warshauer** at 4:15 on the button!...we gather in the board room of the Ramada to view the newly digitized movies on the small computer screen..."Make it louder", demand the hard of hearing geriatrics...**Errol Grisard** joins the fun at 5:45, and we make plans to dine at T-Dubs downtown at 7 PM..."Someone make a reservation" bellows the Big Chief...phone calls are made but no one answers, so we take our chances...we enjoy a delicious meal and ample adult beverages in the spirit of camaraderie...off to DQ for a lite dessert for some, while others go to Simpson's for more liquid entertainment...**Warren** reminds us of an incident at the DQ during camp, when on a cabin night to town, some local teens make anti-Semitic remarks about our campers, "them Jew boys"...**Warren** reminds the hooligans that there are more of us than them, so to watch themselves...they flee in terror and **Warren** in our hero!...tonight at Simpson's, our boys are scared off by a rather busty, provocative, flirty woman, who was there with her husband...**Warren** becomes the hero again, saving the lads from a potentially inappropriate ending...the night ends at the hotel...

Friday August 9, 2019...breakfast at the hotel after flag raising...the boys adjust the official itinerary (subject to major or minor changes, with or without notice) and head to Fleet Farm...to gain access to the "fragile back issues" of the Waupaca County Post, **Paul** decides to bring a prop with him in the way

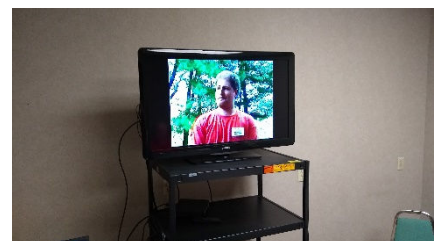


of latex gloves...**Mr. Passman** jumps into action to purchase 8 latex gloves for \$2 at Fleet Farm...the group splits and **Paul & Mike** head back to the Waupaca County Post while the other boys head to Piggly Wiggly to get their lunch...**Paul** and **Mike** approach the same receptionist that greeted **Mike & Rick** the day before...she remembers **Mike** and says she cannot find the book from 1970,

but did find the 1971 book...**Paul Warshauer**, equipped with sterile latex gloves, explains that he is a trained archivist, and is fully capable of looking through the book to find our hidden treasures...the receptionist hands over the book, reluctantly, and we sit at a desk in the corner under her watchful stare...as we thumb through the book looking for one picture in particular, we notice another article about Camp Waupaca, this one is a picture of **Mark Breslauer** of Canada...did we really have a “best smile” contest at camp back then?...evidently, because **Breslauer** won it in 1971...**Paul** rips a sheet of scrap paper to mark the spot, and the two poor women at the desk almost have heart attacks, thinking we ripped a page out of the book!...the 1970 book was not readily available, so off to the library to see if they have back copies of the Waupaca County Post (not on par with Pulitzer by any means, but they do have pretty girls on the cover each week during the summer)...the lovely librarian tells us that indeed the WPC is available on microfiche...we find the summer 1970 reel and start viewing – backwards!!...eventually we stumble upon the article we were looking for all along, with a picture of **Bob Mowen, Perry Becker, Kenny Robbins, Barry Robbins, and Larry Rubin**...we print it and realize the quality is no good, so we will wait for the receptionist at the WPC to find it for us...off to the Shell Station owned by **Sonya Wanty** to buy our lunch...we greet her warmly...on to Brainard’s Bridge in Waupaca for a peaceful lunch with **Warren, Errol, Paul, Mike, and Rick**...back to the hotel where we find that **George Lamm** and his new lady friend Lee have checked in, but **George** has come down with a mystery illness, and **Rosemary Clotiaux** is not available to help him...we know it’s not impetigo... some fellas go on a boat ride hosted by our own **Benjie Zalay**...and since Wheelhouse is just across from the marina, that’s where we have our dinner, joined by



view newly digitized videos on a bigger TV with a \$2 HDMI cable found at the local Good Will...we watch the 1996 reunion video with amazing footage of **Manny Desnet** and family, **Wally Tomchek, Wayne Towne, Allan Schaffer, Jim Avery, Steve Kuklin**, and dozens of other alumni and extended families...one of the highlights was the extended interview of **Manny** and **Lill Desnet** as they discussed their history with camp from 1966 onwards...off to the hotel bar for our free drinks, served up once again by Hawaiian Brian...it seems that we end up with more than our fair share of free drink tickets,



supplied by our new “Den Mother”, Julie, at the front desk...**Mike** brings out his computer so we can take a look and update the “backpage”...

Saturday August 10, 2019...**Paul** spots a somewhat familiar face at breakfast...none other than camp nurse **Joy Lautenslager**!...what a coincidence!...a lively breakfast in the hotel lobby (we never did go out for breakfast anywhere else on this trip)...the entire group (except for **Scott Levine** who was camping) was in attendance: **Paul Warshauer, Mike Lurie, Rick Passman, Warren Metzдорff, Errol Grisard, and George Lamm** with is lady friend Lee...**Paul** and **Mike** head



downtown to the Farmer’s Market and learn about CBD

oils...purchase *tchotchkes* downtown...we all go buy our own provisions for our visit to camp...sandwiches, snacks, drinks, beer for some, dessert...”Meet at the gate at 12:45, boyssssss!”...we gather early...with sadness we remember **Leroy Clotiaux**, who used to guard the gate on parents visiting day...CYJ director Robin Anderson sees us and waves us

in and we know we are off to a good start...she tells us they came across a dozen or so boxes under Barney Town (the Lodge), and would like us to look through it and see if there is anything we want to take home with us...down to the top of the waterfront to enjoy our provisions at 2 adjacent picnic tables...the view of crystal clear,



sand bottomed, spring fed, glacier formed, muck raked (by Clem and Columbus Caldwell) Little Lake Stratton is magical...after lunch, we assemble at the horseshoe for our annual board meeting and election of officers (see official



minutes)...meeting starts promptly at 2:03 PM and ends promptly at 3:03 PM...BIG NEWS – 2 new board members are added: **Errol Grisard** and **Scott Levine**, who both promptly added value to our meeting...the group splits up to take individual tours of camp...we see where the trip shack used to be and see bricks from the fireplace at the old rec hall (**Mike** grabs a handful)...we see the basketball court/go-kart track, the old rifle range (“Yes, this is the backstop – here’s a shotgun shell with several 22 caliber holes in it, proving my point”, boasts **Mike Lurie**)...down the rifle path to where the old **Craig Fuller** theater in the swamp (Fuller’s Folly) was located, only to turn into lumber for **Ron Lavine’s** program shack...CYJ’s climbing wall and zip line starting point...the red and white rugby fields, and the flickerball fields are unrecognizable, with prairie grass and other native species growing tall and strong...around to the archery range with a new sand backstop (why didn’t we ever think of that?)...**Mike** points out the remains of a cistern pump that was supposed to provide fresh water to the thirsty boys on the far fields...past the tennis courts, where we are still debating how many tennis courts

we had at camp...**Mike** says there were 3 and **Manny** added a fourth, but **Paul** swears it was only ever



3... what do you say, campers??...4 brave souls (**Mike, Rick, Errol and Scott**) head down to the Old beach to check it out...a tradition every time we get to visit camp...**Passman** and **Lurie** take the old nature trail back to the waterfront, but its heavily overgrown, and there are downed trees to dodge along the way...**Mike** takes a



picture of some pretty moss at the base of a tree to send to ailing camp naturalist **Bob Mowen**, who carved out that trail in the 1960s...at 4 PM, we gather at the Lodge to see exactly what is in these mystery boxes...a promise is made to the youngest (and most nimble) member of our party, **Scott Levine**, to make the dangerous trek to the upside down (remember Dustin and his Waupaca t-shirt from Stranger Things, season 1??)...Big Chief **Warshauer** appoints **Scott Levine** as a Pledge going down into the abyss, and promises him Brave status upon his successful return...we open the hatch to the crawl space, located in the closet of one of the units in Barney Town and we're hit with the unmistakable odor of mold & mildew...the spores start flying through the room!...lots of files from the 1970s, some of which we bring up for evaluation, and may be made available for posting...a health log from the



infirmary in 1987 reveals that **Kenny Lapins** had nasal congestion and a sore throat...upon a current inquiry, **Kenny** admits he was just trying to get out of swimming class, even though he was a counselor...the biggest treasure was retrieving hundreds and hundreds of slides, some badly mildewed which we will clean up and digitize in the coming months and years, some dating back to 1961!...one

box of slides is labelled "reunion 1967"...cannot wait to see these historical photos!!!!...we gather our treasures and load them into the



back of **Mike Lurie's** SUV..."These spores are going to kill me before I get back home on Monday!" exclaims **Lurie**...one last photo op in the CIT Village, in front of the last remaining Camp Waupaca CIT cabin...spots a signature on the rafter



of **Jason Charles** from 1986!...the group starts to head out, where we are once again greeted warmly by CYJ Director Robin Anderson...she tells us "I got a call from **Herb Beller** (camper and counselor from 1952-1965), looking to donate a boat to CYJ. He says he wants to have his boat on Lake Stratton."...back to the hotel to shower to remove the mold spores, and get ready for our annual banquet at Simpson's Indian Room Restaurant...some big talk at the dinner table...back to the hotel for our free drink and Taps...a long day with precious time spent at Camp Waupaca comes to a peaceful end...

Sunday August 11, 2019...“Lazy day has been declared”, announces Big Chief **Warshauer**...we sleep in...meanwhile, we wait for word from **Wayne Towne** to see if we will be granted an audience in Keshena...**Mike** and **Rick** head to the K-Mart to get a plastic tub and 10 cans of Lysol spray for the moldy treasures fermenting in the back of **Mike’s** car...we get ourselves (**Rick, Errol, Paul, Mike**) together and decide on our plans for the day...a leisurely lunch and drinks at Clear Water Harbor, with music by “A-Town Unplugged” acoustic band, with an eclectic set of music...off to the Indian Crossings Casino for a leisurely dinner and drinks...back to the hotel where there are no free drinks on Sunday night (the Lord’s day in Waupaca)...**Paul** and **Mike** start authoring this amazing Time Capsule in the board room of the hotel...

Monday August 12, 2019...“This reunion was ours” ...breakfast with the remainder of our group (**Rick, Mike, Paul, Errol**)...**Mike** and **Paul** continue on this time capsule before they forget all the details of our amazing reunion....getting ready to say our goodbyes for another year...memories made, memories recorded...

Tuesday August 13, 2019...the remaining reunion attendees, **Errol Grisard** and **Rick Passman**, head to Stevens Point to enjoy a beverage back where the reunion started, at Graffiti’s on the Square...and who can resist a tour of the Point Brewery while there...



Wednesday August 14, 2019...Little **Ricky Passman** heads back to Reno, full of memories from being at our collective happy place, Waupaca...4 hours spent at camp brought back lots of memories...we could almost hear doors opening and closing, voices in the fields, archery arrows hitting the targets, the ping of the rifles, the revving of the mini-bike motors, the splashing of the water in Lake Stratton, and the laughter of our youth...from the CWRG registered office of **Larry Gordon** in downtown Chicago to the CWRG business office of **Mike Lurie** in Minnesota...from the CWRG official archive office of **Paul Warshauer** in Sleepy Eye, MN to the CWRG California branch of the Wisconsin Law office of **Joel Kettler**...from the CWRG tripping division office of **Wayne Towne** in Keshena, WI to the CWRG waterfront office of **Warren Metzdorff**...from the CWRG naked waterskiing office of **Jeff Rissman** to the CWRG softball pop-up office of **Steve Prebish**...we are all the ones who gave Waupaca it’s rep...the memories from last several days and all our years at camp will have to last us until 2020, or until we meet again at “The Trail’s End”...