

Mattatuck Messenger
Issue No. 5
Summer, 2000



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No.5

Mattatuck Volunteers

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Rodrigues Elected Chairman; Meeting July 27

Frank Rodrigues from Naugatuck, Scoutmaster of Troop 102 since 1976, was elected Chairman of the Mattatuck Volunteers on May 7. Frank succeeds another long-time Scoutmaster, David Monckton of Troop 54, Woodbury. Re-elected were Vice-Chairman/Treasurer Paul Lukens and Secretary Robert Reed. **Members are urged to attend a meeting at camp on Thursday, July 27, 7:00PM in the Cub Scout Pavilion. Make reservations for dinner by calling 860-283-9577 by July 25.**

Where is He Now?

Robert "Corky" Caulfield



One of our early members of the Camp Mattatuck Staff also had one of the longest tenures at camp. Robert "Corky" Caulfield worked at camp from 1942 to 1954, excluding his two years with the U.S. Marine Corps. Although he worked in the kitchen and as the leader of a provisional troop, most of his time was spent as Waterfront Director.

As a member of Troop 9, Washington Hill in Waterbury, Bob recalls that the troop cut one of the first campsites in camp, on the knoll overlooking the lake, near where the dining hall now stands. He rose to the rank of Eagle Scout, served as the fourth Order of the Arrow Chief (1946-47), and was later Scoutmaster of Troop 39 at St. Francis Church in Waterbury.

Mr. Caulfield married Carolyn Gemino in the spring of 1954, and returned to camp that summer. They raised four children while he worked two jobs; teaching Mathematics in the Waterbury school system and working in his wife's family business, Gem Manufacturing. After twelve years of teaching he had to decide one job over the other, and chose Gem. He rose to President of the company, a position he still holds.

Mr. Caulfield ranks his camp years as "the greatest experience in getting to adulthood". Among his Scouting memories are:

Participating in the 1950 National Jamboree at Valley Forge, PA... Canoe camping on Lake Candlewood for a week... Attending a reunion at camp in August, 1955, only to be stranded by the great flood! He and a friend walked home because the roads were impassible... the log cabin (no nails!, sod roof!) he and Ed Herbert built near the grove. It stood for twelve years... Breaking Camp Director Ed Butler's ribs during a wrestling match... developing campsites... Standing in a canoe with Native American head dress and trailer as Chief Tobe in the closing campfire... Helping Scouts advance from "non-swimmer" to "swimmer" was the most rewarding experience... The people who influenced him, including Ed Butler, David Babson, Arol Charbonneau, Pop Hirsch.

Today Bob spends three winter months in Florida and the balance in Waterbury. He's fit and energetic and enjoys playing golf. He and Carolyn have ten grandchildren, five of whom are active Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts.



Ken Conrad and Pop Carozza

Trail Blazer Ken Conrad

The Trading Post had an open porch spanning the length of the building, with a wide serving window. While jockeying for position to get served you would scan the display board of beautiful neckerchief slides carved and painted by local artist Ken Conrad. Plaster castings of the slides were sold there, and Scouts utilized the Handicraft Lodge to attempt to match Ken's painting skills.

Ken Conrad was born in the Allentown, Pennsylvania, learned nursing in Bellview Hospital, New York City, then moved to Waterbury. He served as Scoutmaster of Troop 1 at St. John's Church, Waterbury for eleven years



Final touches on Totem Pole

before becoming a commissioner, roundtable commissioner, and a member of the training staff. He was one of the original members of the Takachsin Staff

Ken's totem pole symbol, planted in front of Tuttle Lodge in 1955, was a symbol of camp. After a couple of reworks the pole is now displayed inside the dining hall to prevent damage.

In the early 1960's Ken carved a pair of Katchina Dolls for the entrance of camp (see photo). They were on display only a short time before someone stole them. In the 1980's Ken carved a new pair that is attached to the front of the Memorial Pavilion near the parking lot.

His best carvings were not at camp, but in his home. Comical caricatures of cowboys, animals, birds, and a myriad of other subjects. His favorite was Northwestern Native American art. And his favorite carving tool? You guessed it. A simple Scout pocketknife honed razor-sharp. If you took Takachsin many years ago you may recall the knife sharpeners that were made with emery cloth on one side of a board and suede on the other...Ken Conrad's method. Takachsin's current pewter neckerchief slide is patterned after the plaster one that Ken made years ago.

Skill, patience, and diligence marked Ken Conrad as a special person for all to admire.

Have a story to tell? Have a suggestion for a future article? Your input into this newsletter is most welcome. Contact Joe LeClair, 108 Chipper Road, Waterbury, CT 06704 ileclair@snet.net.

Our third installment of "The Lorenz File" will appear in issue No.6. For this issue, we have a recollection from Paul Bernetsky, former business manager at camp...

In our last newsletter we stated that your mailing label would show your membership status. It didn't happen, and we apologize for any confusion it may have caused. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to support camp and this newsletter. If you haven't sent a check, it's not too late. You can support our work by sending a contribution to :

**Mattatuck Volunteers
CT Rivers Council, BSA
127 Scott Road
Waterbury, CT 06705**

Final Campfire...Saturday, August 19...8:15PM

Tom Horan's Faith in God

Presented by Paul Bernetsky at a testimonial for Tom Horan May 31, 1996

Many staff men can remember Tom's commitment to his faith, especially his example. On Saturday night, without fail, Tom would stand up in the dining hall and remind the staff about church services and the Catholics about Mass. "Those who wish to go to early Mass can meet me in front of the Health Lodge at 4:30AM". It was not *that* early, but to the staff men who were committed to going, it seemed like 4:30AM!

Sunday morning, with the mist still rising off the lake, standing near Topside, you could here the little red Toyota coming. Tom would be there, in the driver's seat, trying to clean out the car as we tried to sit down. He would apologize as he threw Mixture #79 pouches, match cases, coke cups Resse's Peanut Butter Cup wrappers, newspapers, the four weeks of missing invoices from Cali's, Aljim, and countless bread slips the business manager had been looking for off the seats to make room for the Sunday Faithful. It is now 7:12AM, Mass to begin in three minutes! Not to worry, Tom will make it on time!

The innocent trip to Mass with the Camp Director was suddenly transformed into a serious time to reflect on your past life, present state of grace and future chance of surviving the trip to Thomaston for Mass! Once out of camp on Mt.Tobe Road, Tom makes up for lost time. At 63 MPH, going down the hill in front of the Christmas Tree Farm, Tom decides to light his pipe. Talk about faith in God! Picture this: Four staffmen crammed into this little Toyota watching Tom light his pipe by using his knees to hold the wheel, at the same time mentioning how he should trade this car in for a station wagon...scary, but efficient.

As a young man watching this, you learned many lessons which would stay with you for the rest of your life: Go to church; don't be late; don't smoke; go to confession more often; put on your seatbelt before the car moves; drive a big car; pray to your guardian angel; and above all, have faith in God.

Scoutcraft Corner.....

By Joe LeClair

A Campfire Should be Seen and Not Heard

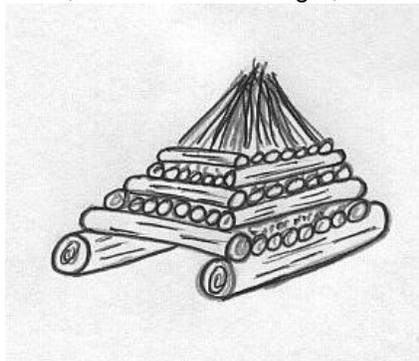
The Program Director strides to the center of the amphitheater to get the audience's attention and begin the program. Everyone is focused on him except for the unfortunate souls seated in the first couple of rows on each side. Their eyes, ears, and noses are distracted by the fire, topped with a teepee of red cedar, that is now crackling, spitting, and spewing an acrid smoke into the audience.

I don't know how the tradition of burning red cedar got started, but it's one habit that makes no sense. Few woods are more valuable than cedar. It's rot and insect resistant properties make it the choice for fence, sign posts, flag poles and other camp projects. Starting a fire with cedar is like burning ten-dollar bills...it's wasteful. A dry, split, clean hardwood like maple makes a decent substitute without the distracting fanfare.

The traditional Mattatuck fire is a big empty shell, with huge split logs stuffed with fine split kindling. The inside burns out very quickly, leaving a large unstable "house of cards" that provides more distractions for the audience.

When I was fourteen I was fortunate to learn how to build a council fire from one of Mattatuck's outstanding Scouters, Paul Hadzima of Troop 54 in Woodbury. A teacher, staff member, Scoutmaster, and trainer, Paul not only knew his stuff, but also could share his knowledge in such a way that you never forgot it. Paul's council fire doesn't need to be very large to produce a great deal of light and heat, because it is packed with fuel wood, not kindling. It is slower to get started, but once fully involved it produces flames shooting several times its height.

The key is to make each layer of inside wood slightly smaller than the outer logs. As the outer logs get smaller in diameter toward the top of the firelay, so do the inner logs. After all crisscrossed layers are assembled; every empty space is filled with fine kindling. Don't be concerned that the fire won't have enough air; it will have plenty. The upper deck is fine split wood, topped with the aforementioned hardwood teepee with an opening revealing whatever tinder is used. This top-lit fire will burn from top to bottom, and is thus more stable than the "house of cards". If built to the mammoth proportions of a typical Mattatuck fire, it would burn all night, so it need not be that large.



Chairman's Message

By Frank Rodrigues, Chairman 203-723-2168



Photo by Rockwell Photo

Our 1999-2000 camping year has seen some great work at Camp Mattatuck. Starting with the complete renovation of the interior of Hess cabin-new walls, insulation, complete rewiring, new counters and masonry work on the fireplace. Over to Mohawk cabin for masonry work on that fireplace, new roof, new siding where needed. Followed by the amphitheater, where new steps, railings and seats were installed. Both Hess and Mohawk were stained on Memorial Day weekend. Tree removal and wood chipping through out camp. ***With this work complete, our next projects are to renovate the cooks cabin, the kitchen in Mohawk Cabin, and then set our sights on Barnum cabin.*** It sounds like a lot of stuff got done this year and the answer is a big YES!!!! Due to the hard work and effort of many people. especially folks such as Ron Plourde and Troop 231, Wayne Malenda and Troop 102, Gerry McClellan and Troop 52, CJ Moon, Rob Reed, Dave Monckton and our Camp Director Alan Colangelo.



Left: Amphitheater's erosion controlled by new steps with safety railing.

Right: Hess Cabin refurbished inside and out.

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News from Camp Mattatuck for:

<http://matwreck.org/mattatuck/>