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Newly landscaped Rotary Dining Lodge

Major Project Completed

We all remember where we were the tragic morning of Tuesday, September 11, 2001. Jon Andrew will always remember being at Camp Mattatuck, digging a curtain drain along the top rim of the amphitheater. While others decided to use their skills to cause destruction and death, Jon chose to take a small corner of his world and make it a little better.

The project started during the final week of summer camp when a group of troop leaders met with Chris Moon and discussed how to solve the erosion problem in front of Rotary Dining Lodge. Howard Gates, a construction supervisor, was called in to give advice. He recommended curtain drains and re-grading. Bruce Monahan suggested thinning the trees around the area to allow more sunlight so grass will grow. September 1st a team assembled to clear about 20 trees. As soon as Bruce would down a tree, Jon Andrew and his mini-excavator would pick it up and carry it toward the flagpole, where chainsaw-wielding men would cut the trunks to pieces while it was being held aloft. Gerry McClellan and his gang took the limbs and ran them through a powerful chipper running off the drive on Jon's tractor. The chips were used to fill in the foundations at the Christmas Tree Farm. Despite the production-line action, cutting trees took all of one Saturday and part of another. The landscaping occupied the next three weekends and even a few weekdays. Soil was removed from against the dining hall and replaced with crushed stone. A simple retaining wall was built on the East Side of the dining hall to hold soil near the barbecue pit. A pipe was buried so that at a later date we can run electricity to the pit. The aforementioned curtain drains were installed. The large stump in front of the dining hall was removed (no small feat) as well as two more on the East side of the flagpole. The entire area was graded and the parade field enlarged.

September 8th the Order of the Arrow welcomed the Volunteers on their weekend. More grading was done, the Grover Bell was returned to its position, loam spread, and more stone was spread and packed with a special machine. Grass was planted and straw spread on top. More work was done on September 15, 19, and 22. If we can keep feet off the new grass until after the mud season in the spring we should have a very attractive, clean area surrounding the Rotary Dining Hall. Besides being pleasing to the eye, this work will reduce the amount of dirt tracked into the dining hall, will be safer to walk on, and will eliminate erosion that allowed silt to run into the stage of the amphitheater. Our sincere thanks to everyone who helped. Special thanks to: Jon Andrew, who put in a number of 12-hour days and contributed materials and equipment to the project; Bruce Monahan, for skillfully felling the trees; and Earthmovers of Danbury, for donating materials. We also thank all the members from across the country who donated funds to make this project possible.



In Memoriam

Don Hogan, 35-year Postmaster of Plymouth, Connecticut, and former Scoutmaster, Commissioner, and distinguished Mattatuck District Chairman, passed away September 22 at the age of 65. Don was a dedicated supporter of Camp Mattatuck and was involved in numerous civic and political organizations. His family listed Camp Mattatuck as an option for donations in his memory.

At left: Don Hogan, Ed Hicock, Les Hawley at 1999 Council Recognition Dinner. All three wear the Silver Beaver Award.

Spotlight on...

Peter Dey

The word "tradition" is usually associated with older people, but it's a part of life for the men of the Dey (pronounced 'die') family. Visiting camp on a Thursday evening, I was greeted at Tuttle Lodge by a fourteen-year-old Volunteer Staff member named Peter Dey. Tonight he's filling in for a friend as Junior Officer of the Day. Manning the sign-out desk and the camp phone, his quiet confidence belies his fourteen years of age. Tall and ramrod straight, his crisp uniform and posture make him look right out of a Rockwell painting. His goal is to be a marine officer like his brother, and upon meeting him you're convinced he'll meet his goal.

Ever since he can remember he has wanted to work at Camp Mattatuck. A second-generation Scout (his dad was Camp Director of Camp Sinoway in New York), Peter follows three older brothers who served the camp. Erik served a stint as Ranger's Aid, and now directs the Scoutcraft Department. Mark and Sean were on staff years before.

Peter is serious about his work at the shooting ranges, where he divides his time between archery and rifle. Unlike most young men his age, when you ask him a question he answers while looking directly into your eyes. "Safety is the most important part of my job, because the shooting ranges are the only places in camp where someone could lose his life in an instant". The most difficult part of the job, he says, is dealing with the attitudes of some of the Scouts. He respects and enjoys working with Ray Hanley and Greg Gubitosi, the shooting range directors.

What does Peter like best about camp? The fun! Campfires and the archery field course (where you walk through the woods from target to target) are among his favorite activities. Outside of camp his hobbies include rock climbing and paintball.

The more you know about the staff of Mattatuck, the more you're impressed.

Toasted Almond

A scene at Cub Scout Day Camp...

At swimming, the boys play a game called "Toasted Almond". First they get completely wet. When given the word, they roll around on the dry sand to see who can get the coated the most! After the allotted time is up, they line up to see who the winner is. The boys are covered from head to toe.

"Let me see your fronts", says the judge, Waterfront Director Jamie.

... "Now your backs".

After a pause one of the youngest Cubs asks, "What about armpits?".

... Guess who won?



Joe George

By Louis B. Ercoli, Middlebury
Printed in "Poetry Nook" of Waterbury Sunday Republican,
Nov.29, 1981

Standing by the parking lot,
Directing in the cars...
Sitting watching campfires,
Beneath the gathering stars...
Pushing mowers, cutting grass,
Before the dining hall...
Making toast, or helping boys,
Dear Lord, he loved it all.

Working with his church or friends,
And with his family, too...
This little guy with one big heart,
Touched all of those he knew.
His "arguments" and constant jokes,
Were known to one and all...
He helped them in his own quiet way;
Dear Lord, he loved them all.

But now the time has come for him,
To take his well earned rest...
For he has always given,
Not a little, but his best.
And Lord, I'm sure that you were there,
And that he heard your call...
Now he is in the Promised Land,
For Lord, he earned it all.

Trailblazer

Unforgettable Joe George



During the Second World War many men left home to serve their country. Those who were left in Waterbury worked long hours in the brass mills to supply munitions for the war movement. At Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Scouting did not suffer thanks to a father figure named Joe George. Upon Carmen DiMaria's induction into the service in 1943 Joe succeeded him as Scoutmaster of Troop 26, one of the largest and most successful Boy Scout troops in the Mattatuck and its successor councils. During the war years he brought a huge group of boys (60+) from Waterbury to camp. He was Scoutmaster for almost twenty years, and a leader for almost forty. It was routine for the troop to have ten patrols, and for several years it had an Explorer unit of fifteen to twenty boys. Troop 26 always provided color guards or large groups of scouts at public events like parades, district dinners, council shows, UCF campaign rallies, Catholic scout activities, and camporees. The troop established a grassy shaded campsite ("26 Site") just north of Whip-poor-will Pavilion and camped there in the off season for decades. (Today the site is used in the summer and is called "49'ers".

According to former Scout and Scoutmaster Dick Barone, Joe's big secret was to handle administrative duties like registration, financial and parish support, and a large part of the recruiting of boys and his large troop committee from his church, neighbors, and relatives. Joe and his committee were electricians, carpenters, builders, cooks and other skilled men. The troop never lacked help for patrol boxes, derby sleds,

bridges and towers for scout shows, large suppers and breakfasts, transportation, fund raising, and for adults at the meetings and in camp. He developed the right young men to plan the program and direct the activities of the troop. Greg Lupone, Bob Graham, Dick George, Dick Barone, George Pettinico, Vin Ferri, Bob Piola and a steady stream of Eagle Scouts assured continued success. The boys always ran the troop. Joe was known for his patience, long hours in scouting, short twisted cigars, insistence on good uniforming, dry sense of humor, love of good food, and (among the leaders) for his snoring in camp. He was extremely generous. For example, he loaned his car to Dick Barone so that Dick could take exams at Fairfield University.

A Scoville retiree, he became a member of the Volunteer Staff the year Tom Horan was appointed Camp Director, 1973. He also became one-half of the comedy team of "George and Giacin". Joe and Dick would fight while making toast in the kitchen in the morning, then while cutting grass. They got the lawns looking sharp. On Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays they ruled the parking lot along with Joe LeClair, Jr.

Many of us think of Joe when remembering some of the difficult work we'd do at camp. He'd walk up to the muddy ditch we were in, give some light-hearted encouragement, and suddenly we'd regain our energy.

Joe was very active at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, and was a long-time member of the Catholic Committee on Scouting. He wasn't just a funny little man. The message he constantly spelled out clearly for us was that "the camp is for the kids" or "the work is worthwhile because it's for the kids". As a staff member it's easy to forget whose camp it really is. Joe made it very clear.

As Troop 26 veteran George Pettinico said in Joe's eulogy, "Joe was not a man of spectacular deeds or beautiful speeches; rather he did what needed to be done in his slow steady way. He was small in stature but big in spirit. His gruff raspy voice and his constant joking did not hide the tender heart and soul that dwelled inside. If he complained, it was not because of injustices that he felt personally but rather of the injustices he perceived to the people, the organizations and the traditions he loved so much."

Joe George passed away among friends, wearing a Scout uniform, while visiting the 1983 National Jamboree in Virginia. *Many thanks to former Troop 26 Scoutmaster and camp staff member Dick Barone for contributing to this article.*



Photo of Brooks Lord taken by
Beth Horan

Editor's Note: The Mattatuck Staff is always seeking to challenge today's Scout with new adventurous activities. At the forefront of this effort is Chris Moon and friends. An example follows...

4855 Miles Later

by Erika Burns and Chris Moon

A gray van left Watertown, Connecticut at 9:17am on Thursday, September 13. The fact that their flights were cancelled didn't stop 9 members of the Camp Mattatuck staff from getting to Philmont Scout ranch in Cimmaron, New Mexico. After all, they had to be there since 6 of them were teaching and the other 3 were taking the largest Climbing Directors course in the country. On Friday afternoon they arrived at Pikes Peak, Colorado. From there a short 4-hour trip took them to Philmont Scout ranch where they met 2 other Camp Mattatuck staffers who are touring the country. You may be wondering how this all started....maybe not, but here it is anyway. In 1999, the BSA introduced it's Climbing Program which included "Climb On Safely" for unit activities and "Topping Out" for Council and District activities as they relate to Climbing and Rappelling.

In September of 1999, the first ever Climbing Instructors Course took place. It was held at Philmont and was the test run for the National Camp School Climbing Course. It included 4 students and was taught by Chris Moon. Chris is a long time Camp Mattatuck staff member who is also the council COPE/Climbing Committee chairman. In May of 2000, our council ran it's own Climbing Instructors course at JN Webster. Sixteen leaders participated in the 3-day program. Most of them were there to see that

their units were following the BSA policies when climbing and the rest worked at our council summer camps.

In September of 2000, 22 adults took the weeklong Climbing Directors course at Philmont. Included in this group were 6 people from the Connecticut Rivers Council. At this point there were only 125 directors in the country and 7 of them were from our council. CRC had more Climbing Directors than any one else in the country.....including the entire state of Texas. In May of 2001, another council Climbing Instructors course took place at JN Webster. Another 16 adults enrolled in this course which now became a 4-day program.

At this point our council had 43 Climbing Directors or Instructors. The September of 2001 course at Philmont had a waiting list of 8 people trying to get in. With flights being cancelled just before the course began, all of the students were allowed to enroll. 29 students and 8 faculty showed up making it the largest course ever held. As faculty introductions took place and person after person said that they were from Connecticut a voice quietly said in the background "Is there anyone left there". On the Climbing faculty were Chris Moon, Brian Shannon, Marc Moody, Erika Burns, Beth Horan, Jim Miller, all from Connecticut and Brooks Lord from Oklahoma and Alan Corneau from Texas.

On Sunday afternoon, the check-in took place during a rain and hailstorm. That soon stopped and "get to know one another" activities began. A welcome campfire was held Sunday evening. Monday morning the staff, participants and gear were caravanned in Philmont Suburbans up to Cimmaron Cito. Cito (elevation 8200' above sea level) is one of the climbing sites at Philmont and is the location where the course took place for the week. Every morning after breakfast classroom activities took place in the climbing gym cabin. As soon as classroom was over, the group eagerly hiked up 10 minutes to the climbing site where they applied newly learned techniques or shared old ones. After a day full of climbing, rappelling and learning, participants would hike back down to Cito cabins. After dinner another classroom session took place where thoughts of the days activities brought out the most pleasant sharing of emotions. One scouter exclaimed, "The staff gave me so much confidence. They believe in me more than I do. And now I'm starting to believe it too".

Another night someone said, I'm having so much fun, I feel guilty".

At the conclusion of the course, the faculty was treated to a Buffalo steak dinner. Dave Bates from the National Office gave a special thanks to the group from Connecticut that drove all the way out here.

This highly energetic and knowledgeable staff took a group of strangers from the entire country ranging from 23 to 63 years old and transformed them into a close-knit long-lasting family. Right now most of this family are exchanging photographs by email and making plans for next year.

Next September, there will be 2 completely separate courses running concurrently to allow for more climbers due to the popularity of the program. And as in the past most of the faculty will be from Camp Mattatuck and will be making a trip of about 5,000 miles to get there and back.

We have a new address. So if you hit the Lotto, make sure you send the check to the right place...

Mattatuck Volunteers, PO Box 257, Plymouth, CT 06782-0257

White Water Canoeing a Popular Merit Badge at Camp

White water? On little 'Lake' Kenosha? Yagotta be kiddin! But it's true. At the far side of the pond near the old Troop 9 site peninsula, are two sets of 'English gates' suspended from long ropes tied to trees. Pairs of canoeists work together to steer the canoes through the gates, simulating rocks in a river, in a series of maneuvers to practice for the real thing. The boys, usually thirteen years old and up, work Monday through Thursday to learn the strokes.



The test comes on Friday morning, early, when they go to the Farmington River to put their know-how to work. Kayaks as well as open canoes are used. This badge is challenging and fun, honing individual as well as team skills.

Order of the Arrow News

Mattatuck Chapter welcomed 27 new members at the September weekend. Elected officers were: Chief Devin Krevetsky, Vice Chief Sam Capoli, Secretary Will Sheridan, Treasurer Charles Talmadge, and Lodge Representative Mike Smith. Blair Albrecht serves as Chapter Advisor.

- The United Way Day of Caring was held in September at Camp and 5 volunteers from CL&P did the landscaping around Mohawk cabin. They put RR ties below the cabin and filled them in with dirt from above the cabin. They also rolled most of the tents that were still up. Thank you CL&P!
- Members of Troop 52, led by Jon Andrew, built and installed new countertops and storage areas in Mohawk Cabin. It looks great!

Upcoming Projects:

- Our next project is to strip and replace the roof on good ol' Barnum Cabin this Spring. Please come and help. If you are unable to get to camp, why not send a donation to help pay for the materials?
- Barnum Cabin needs additional work, including flooring, siding, windows, and cosmetic work to the interior. We need a carpenter to step up and take charge. If you have fond memories of time spent in good old Barnum (Hickory) Cabin, why not send a donation earmarked for this special use?
- The old Director's Cabin, AKA Tobe's Lodge, is in equally bad shape. Chris and the camp staff did some work during the summer, but more work is still needed to replace the windows and the wavy edge siding.
- Volunteers Vice-Chairman (and Assistant Camp Director) Chris Moon works at camp throughout the year. If you have a free weekend to work contact Chris to see if he has anything going on that weekend.



Bruce Monahan

Mattatuck Volunteers Officers
Frank Rodrigues, Chairman 203-723-2168
Chris Moon, Vice-Chairman (Projects) 203-723-2305
Robert Reed, Secretary/Treasurer 860-583-5977

Within a two-week period we heard from two people either asking about or supplying a photo of the camp cook William F Corbin, known as "Bassie". If anyone has information about or more photos of Bassie please loan it to Joe LeClair so we can write a full story and about this cook, musician, and pioneer staff member.

George Mason Retiring

Since Issue No.3 of Mattatuck Messenger, Elm Press of Thomaston, CT has graciously printed each issue at no expense to the Mattatuck Volunteers. Former Troop 109 leader George Mason, President of Elm Press, has been extremely generous to Scouting. George worked with Tom Horan with Troop 109 for years, and led Elm Press for more than three decades. He's now retiring and the new owner is his son-in-law, Victor Losure. We wish George a healthy and happy retirement, and Elm Press a successful future.

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Visit our website, built and maintained by Marc Moody... <http://matwreck.org/volunteers>

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

Camp Mattatuck Reunion...Summer of '02.

Saturday, July 27, 2002 from 2:00pm to campfire time. Bring yourself, family, photos and stories and relive a great part of your life. Swimming, Boating, Archery and other program areas of camp will be open for you and your family to use. A hot dog and hamburger barbecue will be running during the afternoon. Campfire at 7:00pm.

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News from Camp Mattatuck for: