

Camp  
Opens  
For  
65<sup>th</sup> Year



(and it  
never  
looked  
better!)

No.14

Mattatuck Messenger

Summer, 2003

### Gannon Elected Chairman

Joe Gannon of Waterbury, who recently retired as Scoutmaster of Troop 41, was elected Chairman of the Mattatuck Volunteers at the May 4<sup>th</sup> membership meeting at the camp. Joe's professional and Scouting experience prepares him well to oversee the volunteer group whose budget and project workload increased under the leadership of past chairman Frank Rodrigues and Camp Director Chris Moon. Elected Vice Chairman is Jon Andrew of Watertown. As Vice Chairman Jon will focus on projects. Robert Reed of Terryville will continue as Treasurer, and our Secretary is Pat Sheriden of Naugatuck. Officers will serve a two-year term and can be elected for a maximum of one additional two-year term. Many thanks to Nominating Committee Chairman Paul Hoffman for recruiting strong leadership.



### Who Are the Mattatuck Volunteers?

By Joe LeClair

A few weeks ago, the questions were asked, "Who do the Mattatuck Volunteers think they are", and "do they think they OWN Camp Mattatuck?"

- 1. Who we are...**The Mattatuck Volunteers are Scout leaders, camp alumni, camp staff and staff alumni, and their friends and relatives. Like our brothers in the Order of the Arrow, camp staff, and Campmaster Corps, we have taken it upon ourselves to support the camp director in providing the finest facility and program possible. In 2002 the Volunteers invested over \$20,000 in camp. The value of the work done is many times that figure, however, because the majority of the labor is volunteer. We try to enhance the facilities with improvements and new features, since it is the Connecticut Rivers Council's responsibility to provide routine maintenance; but there are times when we do provide routine maintenance nonetheless. We hope to see camp enjoyed by as many youth members as possible. Our membership stretches across the country. Members contribute time, money, talent, and combinations of the three.
- 2. Do we own camp?** Yes. Everyone in Scouting does. When you invest greatly in something, you have a sense of ownership and responsibility toward it. Many of us have camped at Mattatuck since we were children. Others have adopted the camp since bringing their troops there in the summer. We don't make policy, but if camp is abused, or if we feel a policy or practice is not in the best interest of Scouting or the camp, we work through the proper channels to make change. We invite anyone who feels strongly about Camp Mattatuck and its value to Scouting to join us by sending a contribution or by working on a project.

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

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

## Camp Opens For 65<sup>th</sup> Season

The creaking of the oarlocks, the distant echoes of the rifle range, the singing in the dining hall. Camp is filled with the familiar sounds of summer. The Order of the Arrow did the bulk of the setup in mid-June, and the camp staff spent the better part of a week fine tuning the program areas and training themselves to "be prepared" for another great summer of Scouting.

The season is off to a fantastic start. Final campfire is Saturday, August 16<sup>th</sup> at 8:15 PM. Over 1200 Scouts will experience life at Mattatuck this summer.

### What's New

*News from our Camp Director, Chris Moon*

- As soon as the ground dries from the wet spring **Peter Vorvis** will install the five poles for a new **climbing tower** to be built on the west side of the pond. Construction will continue throughout the summer. Peter will also install five poles for four new high **COPE** events: a "gap step", "Space walk", "Flying squirrel" and "Pamper Pole" will be added to an already impressive course. We hope to build them in time for use this summer, if the weather permits.
- We added **two 17' sliding seat sculls** to the rowing program. They are very challenging. Scouts who can achieve a time trial in the rowboats will be given the opportunity to use the sculls. We may even take a morning trip down to a 4/10 of a mile flatwater section of the Naugatuck River for a timed course.
- We bought **10 new Mountain Bikes**. Many thanks to **Keith Nappi** of Suburban Sports in Berlin, CT for giving us a very good deal.
- The **Coffee Cart Courier** will continue to deliver coffee and the camp newsletter to the leaders in the sites.
- Last summer a scoutmaster asked if we could add a shower to rinse off near the waterfront. That great idea has progressed (with the help of **Jon Andrew and Matt Downey**) into the **Waterfront Hospitality Area**, (pictured) featuring a shower, three foot washing spigots and benches on a cement slab with drains.
- Memorial day weekend was spent taking down trees and branches in the sites. Select branches and trees were removed to allow more sunlight or eliminate dangers.
- We anticipate a check from the **National Rifle Association** for **\$4000** to purchase processed gravel for the road from the boat docks to the Rifle Range. Last year a grant from the NRA allowed part of the road to be done as well as purchase the storage buildings at the Archery and Rifle Ranges.



## The Camp Mattatuck Staff A Formation for Life

By Paul Bernetsky

When we were first made the trip down the hill to the dining hall to meet our fellow staff members for staff week – we could have never believed that this experience would have such an effect on our lives – forever. The formation we received would carry us to new levels of responsibility and leadership that continues in our everyday lives. To illustrate this point, I share some personal reflections on this formation in my life. I am sure many of you will relate to and can add much more to this list of formative experiences:

Staff Interview: For many of us, this was our first experience to interview for job – yes, a unique experience but still a “job interview”. Nervous, dressed properly? Will I be on time? Answering “real life” questions on an application.

Reveille: Our first alarm clock was a bugle or a record player - based upon the musical talent available...making it to flag raising on time, dressed in the uniform of the day and awake if possible. A parent was not there to get you out of bed to make the bus. How many of us realized later on that “early risers” got the job done, was the best time to plan for the day and in the real world some meetings happen *before* breakfast!

Flag Ceremonies: Especially important today – our duty to God and Country.

Remembering those that made the “ultimate sacrifice” How many of you get chocked-up when you hear the National Anthem? We learned to respect the flag and how to fold it in and call the camp to attention as officer of the day *in front of hundreds of people...*

Leading a Song at a Campfire or in the Dining Hall: The mere fact we could be called upon to lead a song or cheer on a moments notice in the dining hall could cause great panic in a first-year staff member – including this writer. Being prepared to get up in front of a group and project your voice to be heard above the din of chewing and gulping is truly a valuable experience. How many of us have been asked to “say a few words about... or get up in front of a public or workplace forum to make an announcement? No problem – we did it all the time at camp *without a microphone - in front of hundreds of people*

*Personal note:* When I had to emcee my first black-tie dinner in New York City I was a bit nervous, but as soon as I realized it was like leading a campfire I calmed right down and just had fun... *in front of hundreds of people*. The only thing I couldn't do was put up the scout sign to silence the room of dinner guests...

**Support camp. Send a check today to Camp Mattatuck Volunteers, PO Box 257  
Plymouth, CT 06782-0257**

Continued...

Class A or Class B? The proper uniform. At camp you wore it all the time, not just at a weekly troop meeting. The famous line “you can only make a first impression once” speaks volumes as we saw our roles as troop guides representing the camp with new troop leaders or scout families. We were representing Camp Mattatuck, fellow staff, staff alumni, our family, home troop, heck, – the Boy Scouts of America! Do I wear business suit or executive casual? Is my “casual Friday” too casual? Doing laundry is not just something your mother asked you about...

***Teaching a New Skill To a Boy: No need to say much here. If and or when you become a parent you will understand the extreme value of teaching a child a skill – tying a shoe, showing a new executive on how to use the phone system, a son or daughter how to swim, tie a knot or cook over a flame. KISMIF. (keep it simple make it simple fun)***

Tuesday Scoutmaster Planning Meeting: What an experience to learn customer service, the client comes first, patience, charity and marketing. We had to represent the camp and it's programs. We had to articulate the mission of our department and goals for the week and highlight the benefits of what we offered.

Sales and marketing to our prospective clients continues to this day within the walls of the dining hall and in the picnic grove during merit badge sign-ups. If you could not make the “Edible Plant Hike” sound exciting and know the facts about when and where things were happening you lose and so do the scouts, period.

Camp Songs: You remember the words to teach new scouts now and use the softer sounding songs to lull your children to sleep. I still sing: “Scout Vesper Song”, “Neath the Summit of Mt. Tobe” and “T’was On A Summer Morning Coo, Coo Song” to my children – I have six. The songs work wonders – gets ‘em to sleep all the time!

Inventory Control Sheets: This was probably the first time we ever counted stuff to be held accountable for later for what was left. We learned the value of property (for me it was more apparent being business manager) and what it meant to be good stewards of the items purchased for camp to be used to help scouts. There is a cost to doing business. Bob Herbert taught us to buy quality not cheaply – in the end we saved thousands of dollars on replacements and repair.

***The Buddy System and Lost Scout Drills: No explanation necessary. Children in stores or shopping malls, going to a friend's house or visiting a museum or carnival. When and what to do when one is missing. It works.***

Grace before Meals and Prayer Bell: Four minutes total during the day to pause and thank God for our blessings. It may not have been a lot of time, but it was something we did to understand the need for prayer and faith in God. For three hundred or more voices to fall silent each night at 9:30 PM spoke volumes. We were saying, "This is important. This is what we do."

Continued...

This helped to form who we are now. Don't forget those who went before us and those that will follow. We may leave the shaded trails of Camp Mattatuck, but the spirit of all who walked the trails remain part of us today. For many us it was a combination of many men and the scouts themselves who helped form us. We will always be indebted to them.

Paul T. Bernetsky writes from Washington DC. Camp Staff '76 –'86. Paul@ytm.org

### Order of the Arrow News

The Order of the Arrow, Scouting's honor society, has served Camp Mattatuck for over 60 years. At the June 13-15 Ordeal Weekend the OA, comprised mostly of high school and college aged Scouts, set up most of camp in anticipation of the summer season. Tents, bunks, mattresses, and docks were installed. As a result, when the camp staff moves in to camp on June 19th, they can concentrate more on training and program areas and less on the physical needs of the camp. This is a tremendous service that has a positive affect on everyone in camp. Thank you, OA!

The Order of the Arrow also held chapter elections on the weekend with the following results:

Chapter Chief: Charlie Talmadge

Chapter Vice Chief: Mike Smith

Chapter Treasurer: Jason Crane

Chapter Secretary: Mike Casey

Lodge Representative- Alex Sardo

The Chapter Lay Advisor is Blair Albrecht of Bethlehem, and the Chapter Staff Advisor is Greg Latz, Blue Trail District Executive.

This summer the Order of the Arrow will conduct Brotherhood induction ceremonies at Camp Mattatuck on July 31st and August 7th. If you have been an Ordeal member for 10 months you can seal your membership in the Order. For further information go to the Order of the Arrow section of the Council website [www.ctrivers.org](http://www.ctrivers.org).



Assistant Camp Director Jeromy Nelson tries out one of the new racing shells

In the last issue we listed the following Mattatuck staff members who attended service academies over the years: Gordon Jackson of Waterbury (Naval Academy), Paul Weaver of Troop 115 Naugatuck (Air Force Academy), and Richard Livermore, Troop 93 Cheshire (West Point) and Chris Reardon (Naval Academy). One reader reminded us of Ted Studwell of Troop 450 Watertown (Naval Academy). Do you know of others? Please write.

### Campmaster Corps

More Scouts use camp from September to July than do during the summer season. They are welcomed by a volunteer Scouter who works to make their stay safe and enjoyable. The Campmaster checks in the unit, visits periodically during the weekend, and inspects the cabin or campsite at checkout time to ensure it is left in good condition for the next group. Paul Hoffman, an active Mattatuck Volunteer, is chairman of the Campmaster Corps. Each August he gathers the group for training and the individuals sign up for weekends. This is a terrific service to the camp and the council. We encourage all Scout units and districts to cooperate with the Campmaster Corps during their stay at camp. If you are interested in joining the Campmaster Corps please contact Paul. (860-274-0593)

### Officers 2003-2005

<b>Chairman:</b>	<b>Joseph Gannon</b>
<b>Vice Chairman:</b>	<b>Jonathan Andrew</b>
<b>Treasurer:</b>	<b>Robert Reed</b>
<b>Secretary:</b>	<b>Pat Sheridan</b>

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](mailto:ileclair@snet.net)

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

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*News from Camp Mattatuck for:*