



THE FOUNDING YEARS

PASTOR HAM MUUS

# WILDERNESS WITNESSES



**THE  
FOUNDING  
YEARS**

**WILDERNESS  
WITNESS**

**"O God... from my  
youth you have  
taught me... and  
I still proclaim your  
wondrous deeds..."**

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**WILDERNESS CANOE BASE MINISTRY**

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# **WILDERNESS WITNESS**

**THE FOUNDING YEARS**

1956-1966



Perspective on the formation of  
**WILDERNESS CANOE BASE**

by

**PASTOR HAM MUUS**

FOUNDING DIRECTOR

Together with *Reflections* of some  
WILDERNESS Partners who shared in the  
very early years in shaping this  
camping/renewal ministry



## ALL CREATURES OF OUR GOD AND KING

All creatures of our God and King,  
Lift up your voice with us and sing:  
Alleluia! Alleluia!

O burning sun with golden beam  
And silver moon with softer gleam:  
Oh, praise him! Oh, praise him!  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

O rushing wind and breezes soft,  
O clouds that ride the winds aloft:  
Oh, praise him! Alleluia!  
O rising morn, in praise rejoice,  
O lights of evening, find a voice.  
Oh, praise him! Oh, praise him!  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

O flowing waters, pure and clear,  
Make music for your Lord to hear.  
Oh, praise him! Alleluia!  
O fire so masterful and bright,  
Providing us with warmth and light,  
Oh, praise him! Oh, praise him!  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

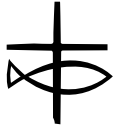
Dear mother earth, who day by day  
Unfolds rich blessings on our way,  
Oh, praise him! Alleluia!  
The fruits and flow'rs that verdant grow,  
Let them his praise abundant show.  
Oh, praise him! Oh, praise him!  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

O ev'ryone of tender heart,  
Forgiving others, take your part,  
Oh, praise him! Alleluia!  
All you who pain and sorrow bear,  
Praise God and lay on him your care.  
Oh, praise him! Oh, praise him!  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Let all things their Creator bless  
And worship God in humbleness.  
Oh, praise him! Alleluia!  
O praise the Father, praise the Son,  
And praise the Spirit, Three in One,  
Oh, praise him! Oh, praise him!  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

"... When I consider the heavens  
the moon and the stars that you  
have created... "





## WILDERNESS WITNESS: AN INVITATION...

The saga of *The Founding Years* of WILDERNESS Canoe Base is tantalizing. It is filled with countless stories of intrigue, dedication and surprise. It is a tale of trust and faith; of wisdom and adversity; of work and renewal. It carries the mark of God's Spirit. It yearns to be shared, to be discovered.

It was my privilege to be in the middle of WILDERNESS formation. I served as best I knew how as its Director for the first decade. In a sense, my WILDERNESS 'perspective' becomes highly personal. I can bear witness to most important aspects of its development. Yet I am keenly aware that there are dozens of others who were partners in the WILDERNESS metamorphosis. I was honored to walk alongside colleagues and friends. Collectively, we bear witness to virtually all of what transpired. We trust the Spirit greatly extends our mutual witness.

Webster notes that a witness is "a person present at some event and able to give information about it." I have invited a representative cadre of WILDERNESS partners--staff, surround folks and advocates--who were engaged during *The Founding Years* to comment on their participation. Their voices are heard throughout this document. It bears powerful testimony.

So, I invite you to share in this WILDERNESS journal. I will try to sketch a multi-faceted picture. My WILDERNESS partners will share their *Reflections*, the impact, and the special experiences of their WILDERNESS participation. *All bring first-hand witness. All were colleagues in The Founding Years.*

This mosaic is not intended to be the entire WILDERNESS story. It is distinctive and unique in that it manifests the creative energies of the historic beginnings. These years helped to lay a foundation for subsequent WILDERNESS mission. God has guided WILDERNESS ministry for five decisive decades... starting with *The Founding Years*. This document lifts out some of the details, the drama and the Spirit of those early days.

Let us begin...





## WILDERNESS WITNESS: MY PARTNERS

The inner city "Plymouth Project" ministry we initiated in the fifties had some distinctive characteristics to it. The cohesive "band of brothers" at Luther Seminary was emboldened by faith and the persuasion of their mentors. This was an effort complimentary to parish mission, to seminary training, to our Church's commitment to reach young people with the essence of the Gospel.

It was with confidence in the biblical assurance: I will be with you...always"...that we called for folks to join in this demonstration of faith. We began to experience the presence of a "company of the committed"...volunteers and mission-minded supporters who gave of self and substance to bring life and breath to the unfolding vision.

Many dozens...yes, hundreds caught a glimpse of the importance of this mission enterprise and responded. The mantra I valued so strongly was the expression from Hebrews: "We are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses."

In starting this writing on *The Founding Years*, it became clear to me that the historical record could be enriched by the "witness" of colleagues...partners in the WILDERNESS beginnings. I decided to ask others to *reflect* on their experience. Hence, the selection of the title WILDERNESS WITNESS for this journal.

This cross section of contributors covers the entire *founding decade*. These are some of the "partners" who are here sharing a testimony of faith.

Some of the *Reflections* are addressed to me in first person. Others are shaped in discourse. All come from the heart. All carry the hope that God used their presence and work in the WILDERNESS community to awaken or somehow touch lives. Here are my WILDERNESS WITNESS "partners."



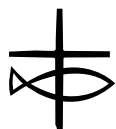
PEARL MUUS...my loving partner and best friend throughout a life's journey. OZ ANDERSON...a true brother and man in Christ. BOB NERVIG... who carried the Spirit of renewal deep within. DAVE JOHNSON... one of the very first Seagull pioneers. KAREN GULSVIG (JOHNSON)... our first female Guide/Counselor. DON RUDRUD... beloved counselor and gifted colleague. GEORGE MINER... strong small group advocate. BEULAH LUKASON... faithful pioneer and legendary cook. LYNN SWANSON... always ready with a helping hand. DAVE DOMINGUEZ...one of the very first and youngest Swampers. PAUL TRYGSTAD... chosen for inaugural Trails crew leadership. JERRY MANLOVE... mentor, advocate, friend and key consultant. DAVE BORRESON... brought a Frontier Farm perspective.



PAUL PREUS... brought a parish youth background. PHIL ANDERSON... a creative camp associate and positive leader. BOB HEWITT... well organized and durable. JIM GRONEWALD... a thirst for exploration of creation. WARREN SALVESON... enthusiasm coupled with great humor. MARSH PECHAUER... brought an open, pastoral presence. LOUISE FESKE... a Five Star nurse and advocate. RON FLUGUM... brings music wherever he is. DAVE NERMÖE... no one thrilled to adventure more. RAY RUNKEL... loyal colleague loaded with energy and Spirit. DUANE SWENSON... strong, athletic and great communicator. GLENDA ANDERSON... food service whiz and great teacher. ISAIAH HARRIDAY... his generosity, perseverance, and discipline were contagious. WAYNE THORNWALL... a devoted, trusted, early pioneer. MARK ANDERSON... very thoughtful, dependable, capable. LOREN HALVORSON... one of our strongest, most creative pastoral advocates. B.J. MUUS IV... my supportive, gracious cousin. SANDY KOSKELA... brought St. Luke's health service skills. THOR SKEIE... pastoral advocate and BCA leader. ROY NILSEN... joined with Mary to provide great Cove leadership. KEITH OLSTAD... no one more observant of our natural surroundings. PETER ROGNESS... multi talented and gifted. BROOKS ANDERSON... exceptional worker, woodsman and Oz's cousin. CARL FESKE... incredible craftsman with a host of skills. VERN ANDERSON... shared the Gospel and sons Mark, Phil, and Paul. MARY EKSTROM... carried a deep faith and desire to serve. ROLF SKRIEN... our Gunflint friend with the great family. MARTHA ROGNESS (VETTER)... a vibrant Spirit creates and captivates. NATHAN MUUS... leader of the "little people." MARGE GULSVIG... steady, delightful and dependable. WHITEY AUS... one who "talks the talk and walks the walk" of faith. JIM WIINANEN... a most faithful, devoted and gracious leader. JEFF BARROW... insightful explorer of woods, water and Word. NOLAN CRAMER... great punster, teacher, innovator, faithful leader. TOM SKOVHOLT... always ready to help, to serve. DAVID PREUS... a much valued advocate and counselor. KEITH CLARK... teacher, poet, athlete and songster. LUTHER DALE... loyal and steady leader and learner. DIANNE ANDERSON... a daughter of the north woods. ROGER NERMÖE... carried a gentleness others noticed. SHIRLEY DAHLEN... the consummate people connector. L. DAVID BROWN... an essential friend and consultant. DAVE BJORN... long of stature and faith-driven Spirit. MYRNA JORGENSEN... willing to do a lot of heavy duty clean-up work. CURT JOHNSON... my colleague, friend, spiritual brother and confidant. PAUL OBRESTAD... he of long portages and deep faith. KAREN DENNY... bright, of boundless energy, and willing Spirit. OLLIE HOFFMAN... one of the early, athletic leaders. CHIP SWANSON... sensitive and spiritually focused. HARRIET CLARK... carries a warm, open heart. SOL GIPSON (BIRD MOCKICIN)... strong spiritual center connects to earth people. KEN PETERSEN... born to serve, to reach out to others, to share. NANCY CAPLE (BORSON)... gifted daughter of the north. CHARLES ARNASON... steady leader in making key decisions. DAN O'BRADOVICH... trusted teen winter worker. LOIS RAMBO... creative, Spirit-centered, committed. DON WEIDENBACH... attentive, always willing to help meet needs. ANDREW ROGNESS... knows Boundary Waters to be awesome sanctuary.



It is a joy for me to be joined by  
these WILDERNESS partners.



## PROLOGUE: HOW IT ALL BEGAN

Helmut Thielicke, the noted German Theologian, marveled at the cosmic integration which God exercised in the birthing of our universe. *How The World Began* is a remarkable unfolding of God's intention and process.

I believe there was a special "cosmic happening" that brought together a cluster of brothers at Luther Seminary in the early 1950s. These were young men with rural roots who shared in avenues of urban service under the mentorship of Drs. Andrew Burgess, George Aus and Alvin Rogness... Oz Anderson (Wittenburg, Wisconsin); Curt Johnson (Lanesboro, Minnesota); Bob Evans (International Falls, Minnesota); Bob Nervig (Canton, South Dakota); Ed Roe (Stanley, Wisconsin); Paul Gabrielson (Glyndon, Minnesota); Jack Hustad (Helena, Montana) and Ray Runkel (Story City, Iowa). My home was Fergus Falls, Minnesota.

Each of us took on some point of volunteer urban ministry: St. Paul "Y"; Union Gospel Mission's Ober Club; Ramsey County Totem Town; Inner-City Youth Mentoring; Glen Lake Home School and Hennepin County Probation. Drs. Burgess, Aus and Rogness urged us on. Other seminarians joined this inner city discovery and service.

Liberty Lutheran Church, in North Minneapolis, owned an "old hotel" on Plymouth Avenue. They conducted street evangelism from that site. In late 1952, and early 1953, Dr. Burgess was approached to see if Luther Seminary would be interested in assuming operational responsibility for the "old hotel" as a focus for student outreach. Dr. Burgess counseled with us about a "Plymouth Project." Soon ideas and plans were stirring for a renewed mission; an extended concept of ministry with a Plymouth matrix. We were intrigued by the possibilities for outreach and education.

I was asked to lead the "Plymouth Project" renewal during my Seminary internship beginning in 1954. It was a huge leap of faith for all involved. At 24 years old, with wife Pearl expecting our first child, and with roots nurtured in rural--not inner city--environs, I was more than a little anxious. My Seminary brothers and professor mentors pledged prayerful support. Middler Ray Runkel agreed to serve as my associate. Vi Handahl, a gifted parish worker at St. Anthony Park Lutheran, was persuaded to join this "faith venture" leadership team. We all reached out for volunteer help at

Luther Seminary, St. Olaf, Augsburg, University of Minnesota, L.B.I., Fairview and Deaconness Nurses and assorted parishes. A remarkable mix of education, counseling, worship, arts, recreation, community outreach...and camping...emerged. The near North Side neighborhood was receptive--even enthusiastic--about our presence with a Spirit-based program. To many, it was a sign of hope and healing within a troubled, transitional community.



Ham Muus, Ray Runkel and Vi Handahl who will staff the Plymouth Center. 1954 PHOTO



This was a remarkably tense yet creative time. We were focused on the work in the inner city. We also had extensive mentoring relationships with troubled and at-risk teens. Involvement at Red Wing State Training School, Totem Town, Glen Lake and County Probation suggested that intensive camping experiences might be helpful in redirecting some lives.

*There was no doubt in our minds about the values of camping:* the time apart...new adventures...clean air and blue waters...sharing with friends...fishing...campfire singing and sharing...swimming, etc. Among seminarians, Bible Camp was frequently spoken about as a time of spiritual awakening and growth. Many said it was pivotal in their "calling" to pastoral work.



The Area. Plymouth Avenue N. on which the Plymouth Center is located. 1954 PHOTO

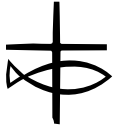
Bob Evans and Oz Anderson had pulled together a group of eight teens with diverse backgrounds for a week-long canoe expedition in 1953. Joel Anderson, Oz's brother, and Bob triggered another crew into the BWCA a couple years later. Two St. Olaf athletes, Ray Miklethun and Mark Reinertson, were Guide/Counselors for yet another pilot venture with troubled teens. All post-trip reports were positive. The kids were open to new learning and touched by the Spirit. Adventure shared in small groups with committed young adult leaders seemed to be a natural vehicle for connecting to kids at the edges.

The camping opportunities thru PCYC widened. Associate Ray Runkel was chosen to inaugurate the newly opened Camp Knutson, a Board of Charities site at Manhattan Beach near Brainerd. Dozens of inner city, younger PCYC kids were thrilled at their chance to be at Camp Knutson. Ray recruited volunteers to serve as PCYC/Knutson counselors. A most important connection.

In 1955 and 1956, Bergit Anderson brought yet another challenge to PCYC and its Board. This northside school teacher had a vision for summer outdoor education at an old family farmstead near Bigfork/Effie, Minnesota. Soon, FRONTIER FARM was serving inner city kids in "long term" adventure and work camping. Dave Borreson worked closely with our staff in launching a dynamic, "bootstrap" venture. The nearby Bigfork River served well as a water resource. Again, the Spirit moved thru a camping enterprise.

In what must be seen as an early providential journey, Pearl and I visited with Russell and Eve Blankenburg at Seagull Lake during the summer of 1954. We now know that our preliminary suggestion of an outpost for PCYC resulted in the identification of Fishhook Island as a potential site. The Lord certainly had a "huge hand" in it all. The Blankenburgs were open to further discussions... if in fact, there was a firm desire to launch a WILDERNESS program.

I am persuaded that convergence of Luther Seminary brothers and mentors, the Blankenburgs openness to the acquisition of Seagull lands, the collective energies of a dedicated staff, our campers, and the generosity of friends who enabled this ministry, did indeed have cosmic dimension. *God somehow brought it all together.* This is truly "how it all began."



## MY BROTHERS IN MISSION

There will be many short stories written by WILDERNESS participants. There are special events that had fascinating drama. There were high profile happenings. There were the ordinary days that carried exceptional meaning. There were profound meetings, which served to enable new relationships. There were moments of hesitation, even fear, redeemed by the infusion of unusual Spirit.

Following our Luther Sem graduation in May, 1956, seven "renewal" Seminarians took a long awaited, welcome canoe trip into Canada's Quetico Park. Our route carried us from big Saganaga to beautiful McEwen/Kawnpipi territory. Our week together again affirmed the strength, the bonding such small group adventure encourages.

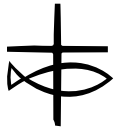
This was a unique crew. All seven of us shared common threads of youth outreach in a restless city. All were now facing new challenges.

Oz, Bob and I were joined in shaping dreams and plans for PCYC/WILDERNESS ministry. Colleagues Ed Roe and Al Langehough were pointing toward Air Force chaplaincy. Paul Garbrielson had been accepted for graduate study in counseling. Middler Joel Anderson, Oz's brother, was headed for an internship under David Preus in South Dakota. All were linked together in mutual support and Spirit.

This was, indeed, a "band of brothers."



We pause for a "before" photo on the shore of Lake Saganaga. The Crew: Kneeling... Bob and Gabe. Standing... Ham, Joel, Oz, Ed and Al. The ice had barely left Sag a few days earlier. That was great for trout fishing... not so good for swimming. Still... Thanks for these days together!



## LEGACY OF A FOUNDING PARTNER: BOB EVANS

The outdoors was “home” to colleague Bob Evans. He grew up with a fishing pole, paddle and hockey stick in his hands. The International Falls area is known as a sportsman’s paradise. Bob joined his Dad in taking full advantage of the abundant resources. His woods and water expertise was well known. So too, his skill as a hockey player and youth mentor. His family shared extensive camping adventures. As could be expected, Bob carried his passion for hockey, his love of nature and his commitment to spiritual direction throughout his St. Olaf College years.

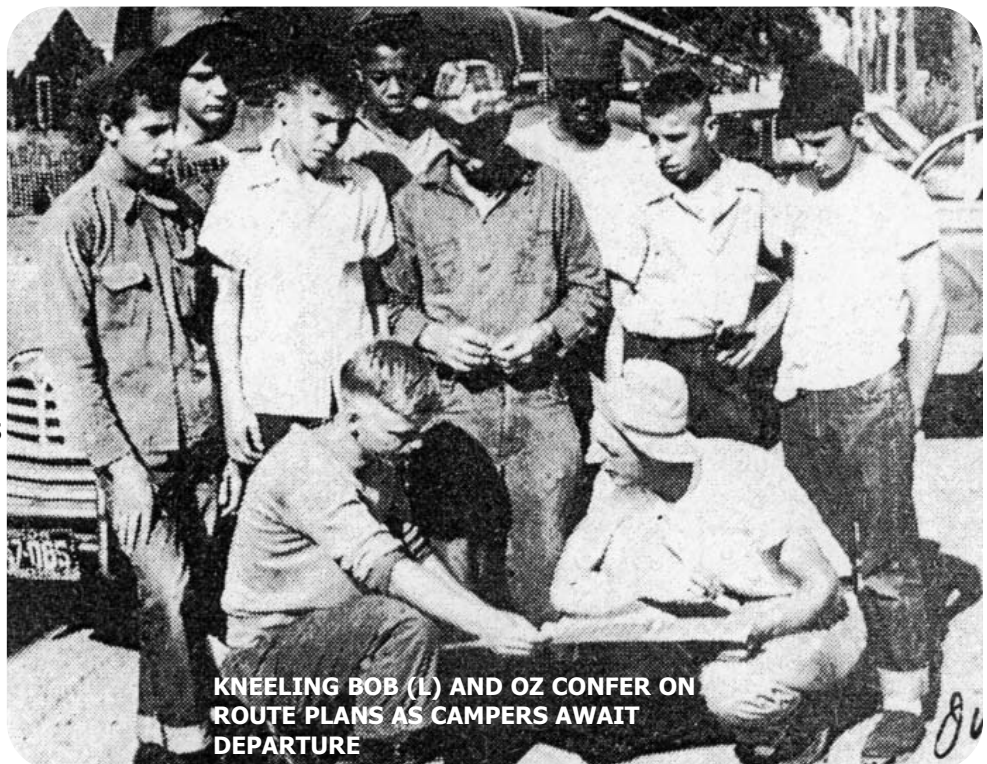
The Luther Seminary “cadre” that worked together on inner city mission outreach all brought varied backgrounds with similar consciousness. The passion included urban inquiry, justice, peace, care for the poor, one on one mentoring, civil and human rights, racism, environmental education and communication of the Gospel thru camping were arenas of common interest. The inner-city probes encouraged by Dr. Andrew Burgess helped to bring pastoral ministry into a more sustainable context. Bob brought his wide range of life experience, his redemptive work at Ramsey County Totem Town and his understated good humor to our renewal table.

It was quite amazing to see how many Seminary students brought their respective talents and interests into the outreach tent. Youth at-risk were being contacted; the Gospel took on legs. We were learning by doing...trying to share thru new opportunities, new avenues.

Bob and Oz put together a pilot canoe trip in 1953. They recruited a group of eight teens for their camping adventure. They shared their Christian faith.

This pilot expedition encouraged additional trips led by Ray Miklethun and Mark Reinertson, Bob and Joel Anderson. All helped to focus later camping conversations that would lead to our WILDERNESS commitment within the PCYC ministry.

Bob returned to the Seminary for the senior year following his internship in Montana. As you could expect, that western year was laced with Bible Camping and life outdoors. He had followed from a distance the growth of PCYC. An energetic “Plymouth Project” foundation was



**KNEELING BOB (L) AND OZ CONFER ON  
ROUTE PLANS AS CAMPERS AWAIT  
DEPARTURE**

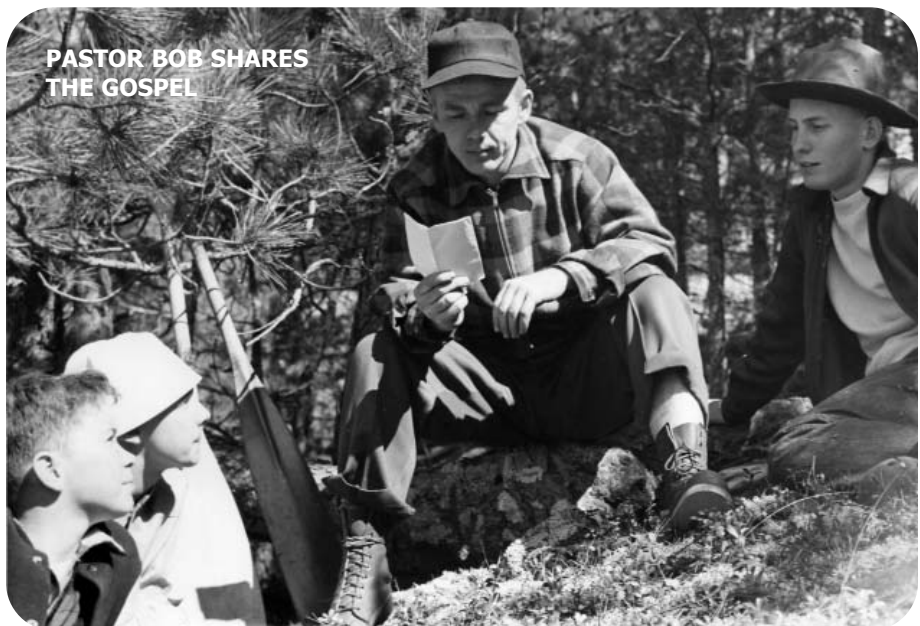


**FINAL  
DEBRIEFING  
WITH BOB  
AND JOEL**

being established to meet a variety of physical, education and spiritual needs. There was remarkable flexibility and potential for urban mission. Bob, Bob Nervig and Curt Johnson all returned to surround our PCYC team and the dozens of volunteers. Oz continued his Red Wing work and northside partnership. We all felt we needed to stay the course. PCYC and its many spin-offs were, we believed, making a dent...a renewal difference.

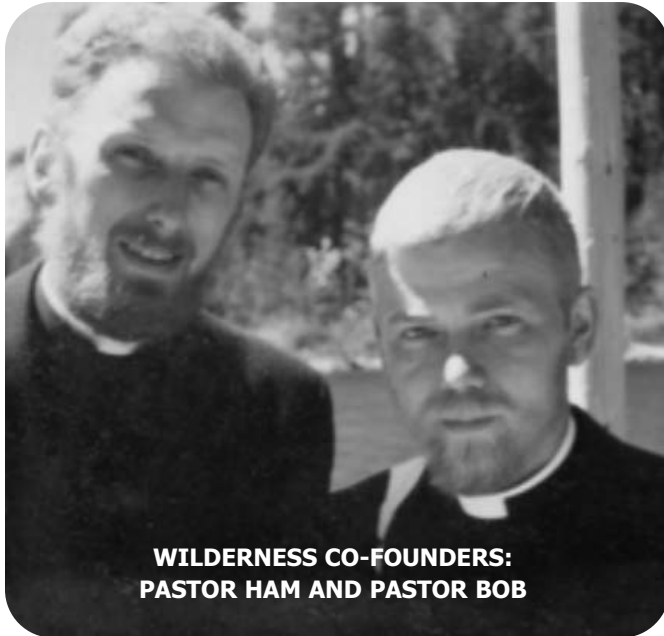
The American Lutheran Church agreed to issue ordination calls to PCYC for both Bob and me. It was a bold undertaking by the Board of Trustees. The Division of Charities, under Dr. Magnus Dahlen, signed off on the certification. We accepted this challenge knowing that it was truly a mission-filled "faith venture." To help make ends meet, we lived on the third floor of "the old hotel." We did what needed to be done so that this fragile but promising ministry could continue. With a poultry/chicken operation adjacent to our east and a liquor store adjacent to our west, our Center door was symbolically placed.

For almost four years, Bob and I shared leadership at PCYC. Our responsibilities and assignments were mutually shared. Our "Tent" expanded: one-to-one kin mentoring; Camp Knutson participation; the beginnings of our Frontier Farm at Effie; continued close collaboration with Oz at Red Wing State Training School; numerous small educational and spiritual direction groups; worship services; community-wide celebrations; family



**PASTOR BOB SHARES  
THE GOSPEL**

counseling; parish and Sem volunteer training. WILDERNESS emerged as an integral component in 1956 with the acquisition of Fishhook Island on Seagull Lake near the end of the Gunflint Trail. Bob was a consummate pastoral partner in all that transpired during those very complex, challenging years.



**WILDERNESS CO-FOUNDERS:  
PASTOR HAM AND PASTOR BOB**

The pastoral leadership shaping WILDERNESS beginnings was spirited, focused and determined. Bob and Oz brought special skills and experience. No one could handle a paddle or filet a fish with finesse like Bob Evans... and it was done with grace and gratitude. His primary camping responsibilities centered at Frontier Farm. His heart and influence were also clearly evident in WILDERNESS beginnings.

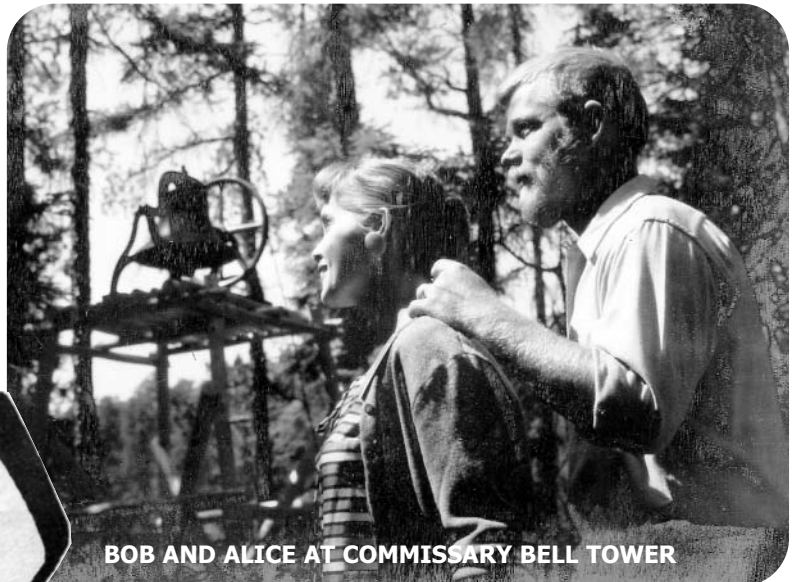
From International Falls ordination in 1956, to his call to the Prince of Glory projects parish in 1960, Bob was a faithful, beloved pastor and leader at PCYC. His imprint on the North Side and North Woods ministry was deep. He brought steady direction, creative

counsel and integrity to his service. His energy in the earliest of *The Founding Years* helped to establish a WILDERNESS future. He was blessed in partnership with wife, Alice...who undauntingly shared third floor "hotel" quarters, compassion for urban mission and maximum personal flexibility...in order to sustain and support their mutual ministry.

The gift of Bob's presence and passion are a WILDERNESS legacy to be long remembered.

I thank God for Bob... and his wonderful gifts for ministry.

*"...Great  
is your  
faithfulness..."*



**BOB AND ALICE AT COMMISSARY BELL TOWER**





## TOGETHER ON THIS FOUNDING JOURNEY: OZ ANDERSON



I believe with a certainty that PCYC ministry and its WILDERNESS outreach would not have unfolded as it did without the devoted energies of Oz Anderson. He is clearly one of the "founding fathers." His spiritual discernment, zeal for personal renewal and capacity to adapt in the face of formidable adversity were among the gifts he brought to our mutual mission.

His life history is telling. From earliest days, The Anderson family was a renaissance family. They knew Wisconsin woods and camped Minnesota's North Shore. They knew music and the arts. Father, Fritz was the pastoral director of the Homme Children's Home in Wittenburg, Wisconsin. Outings and campfire group activities were part of that educational framework. Together with brother Joel and Mark, sister Kristi and mother Lavinia they all developed deep love for people and the 'sacred earth.' Growing up in such an extended family sensitized Oz by osmosis and experience to the needs and aspirations of others...many knowing the pain of profound separation and loneliness.

Oz brought an impressive student and athletic resume to St. Olaf College. I first encountered him on the basketball court. Literally! He was a tenacious defender with sharp elbows...a fierce competitor. He was admired by his peers as a student and campus leader.

Some have college or university tuition expenses handed on a platter. Not so with Oz and his siblings. The Andersons worked their way through St. Olaf by owning and operating A & W root beer stands in Winona and Mankato. No small task. The ability to "make do" typified their work place. Oz provided a natural, oldest child leadership.

Some of the very characteristics needed on the canoe camp trails were evident in their personal and collective A & W discipline: cooperation, patience, loyalty, shared compassion. Oz embodied them all.

All three brothers made the commitment to ordained ministry. Oz led the way. He quickly joined peers in the renewal conversations regarding alternative mission approaches. Oz had a strong interest and connection with troubled youth. He brought a passion for reclamation nurtured in his Wittenburg roots.

At the Seminary, Oz and I did officiating of football and basketball games to help earn some money. Most were high school, but we had some college games as well. Never were we totally run out of town due to



STATE TRAINING SCHOOL

R. E. [illegible], Superintendent  
REDWING, MINNESOTA

controversial calls. A couple times, it came close.

En route, we talked about the “how and where” we could best serve the Church. He was clear in his decision to seek Clinical Pastoral Education certification. He had his internship and continued work at Red Wing State Training School. He was later called as Protestant Chaplain. He was deeply committed to the Lord’s renewal business.

Oz is intrinsically linked to the story of “How PCYC and WILDERNESS Began.” In this, we together honor the energy and direction of Professors Burgess and Aus and President Rogness. We were blessed to have them as available mentors and counselors. We needed their wisdom and clarity in sorting out options.

My internship year as *Founding Director* of PCYC needed the assistance of Brother Oz. He served on the Board of Trustees, made all the meetings and kept in touch with program dimensions. Oz

was wisely chosen as chairman of the Board and served as leader for several years. I regularly sought his counsel. Under his tenure, we shaped and ventured together to make decisions regarding WILDERNESS ministry. He was a consummate enabler... in WILDERNESS land acquisition, program design and on-site first “footprints” in 1957.

It was an intentional design of WILDERNESS to reach out to troubled youth... to youth at risk... to kids who knew the “asphalt jungle” of the inner-city. At the same time, we were aware that there were lots of troubled youth in and around our parishes...youth not served or under-served. We believed WILDERNESS could be a place of renewal for youth and adults regardless of status, color or cultural background. Both Oz and Bob were uniquely equipped to help shape these lofty goals.

The intentional collaboration we made helped to trigger trust relationships with several correctional programs. Invitations were extended. The credibility which Oz had at Red Wing helped make those invitations authentic. He did a great deal of administrative schmoozing at RWSTS to establish institutional participation at WILDERNESS. He secured necessary drivers within institutional staff. He worked with RWSTS food services to requisition much needed commodity supplies: flour, pinto beans, “rhino meat,” cheese, rice and bulgar “Russian wheat.”

Oz was on-site at Fishhook for our very first ceremonies at *The Big Green Tent*. He



BOB NERVIG (LEFT), CARROLL HINDERLIE, AND OZ (RT)... THE DAY OZ WAS INSTALLED AS CHAPLAIN AT THE RED WING STATE TRAINING SCHOOL. FOUNDERS: BOB AT KOINONIA, CARROLL AT HOLDEN VILLAGE, OZ AT WILDERNESS.

brought the historic first camp group from RWSTS to WILDERNESS in mid June...a group led by guide-counselor Paul Trygstad. He was pivotal in recruiting RWSTS "Trustees" to share *Operation Log Cabin*. He was the honored speaker at WILDERNESS Open House '57 and '59. He brought a marvelous homily at the dedication of *Band of Brothers* Chapel. His advocacy was heard in many parish and community circles as he told the PCYC and WILDERNESS story. Both Bob and I felt truly blessed by his presence.

His PCYC/WILDERNESS participation was shared with life partner, Jean. They had common pastoral commitments. We were doubly blessed in our personal friendship and professional service.

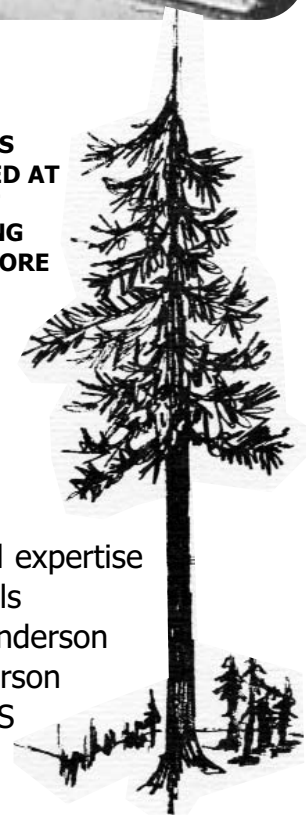
In the early years of PCYC northside work, brother Joel had important supervisory tasks. He, Dave Lee, Charlie Anderson and Norm Wick all played strategic Seminarian roles. Later, Joel and wife, Louise, served in pastoral work in the Four Point North Shore Lutheran parish. There they brought significant advocacy to WILDERNESS beginnings. Parish members were encouraged to offer their prayerful and material support. We knew Joel and Louise understood clearly the WILDERNESS mission.



OZ... THE  
CONSUMMATE  
OUTDOORSMAN



OZ WAS  
SKILLED AT  
TROUT  
FISHING  
AND MORE



JOEL...  
PASTOR,  
WOODSMAN,  
CRAFTSMAN

We had the participation of brother Mark during some staff training. His clinical expertise was particularly useful in WILDERNESS trails relationships. Wife, Donna, again shared Anderson WILDERNESS enthusiasm. The entire Anderson family holds a special place in WILDERNESS early history.

So, to the Evans and Anderson families...to brothers Bob and Oz, I offer this heart-felt "tribute."

We were One in Spirit.

# TO BE MINISTERS 'Pop' Buys Brothers Three Educations

MANKATO, Minn.—Three brothers will be ministers, as their father was, because of a root beer stand here.

Since 1949, the summer business has financed college and seminary educations for Joel, Mark and Orwoll Anderson.

Orwoll, who graduated from Luther Theological seminary, St. Paul, last spring, was ordained here Aug. 26 by Dr. Fredrik A. Schiotz, Minneapolis, president of the Evangelical Lutheran church.

The first of the three brothers to be ordained, he has become a Protestant chaplain at the state training school for boys at Red Wing, Minn., where he has done youth work for the past 18 months.

In two more years, Mark and Joel also will have completed their seminary training.

One of Orwoll's first acts after his ordination was to officiate at the wedding of Mark to Donna Aga, a Mankato girl who once was a carhop at the S & W root beer stand on North Front street here.

The stand is also providing a college education for the brothers' sister, Kristi, 20, in her third year at St. Olaf college, Northfield. Their mother, Lavinia, is assistant dean of women at St. Olaf.

Their father, the Rev. F. B. Anderson, who died in 1948, was superintendent of the Homme Children's home in Wittenberg, Wis., where the brothers grew up and attended high school.

Because of his father's work, Orwoll became interested in a ministerial career directed to juvenile needs.

After their father's death, the Andersons and a group of cousins sat down to figure out a way for all eight of them to get college educations.

"I tried working in the har-

vest fields of South Dakota one summer but it didn't take me long to see that the kind of money needed to finance \$32,000 worth of education for eight persons wasn't there," Orwoll said.

The Andersons and their cousins first bought a roadside stand in Winona. When they realized that one business wouldn't put them all through college, the Andersons pulled out and bought their Mankato stand.

In the summer of 1951, to get their business moving ahead faster, the brothers passed out 8,000 cards for free root beers.

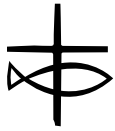
It has been booming ever since, providing revenue for the college and seminary educations.

During the six summers, the brothers have not had any vacations. But because of their goal, they haven't minded this in the least.

**Two interesting anecdotes:** The one "Pop' Buys" features the Anderson brothers in their determined work ethic. It is a great story!

The second (next page) sheds some light on family roots for the three of us named as "founders."





## ROOTS AND BRANCHES: FOUNDER'S FAMILIES

There is that ancient saying: "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree"... or "you harvest what you sow"... or "if you wish to discover something about the child, take a look at the family he/she comes from." All carry important insight.

The three principal WILDERNESS "founders" came from Lutheran pastoral ministry families. Oz Anderson grew up around Wittenburg, Wisconsin. His father, Fritz, was a pastor who shepherded detached, troubled kids living at the Lutheran Children's Home. Bob Evans was from International Falls in Northern Minnesota Lake country. His dad, Rudy, was parish pastor there for many years. For two decades, my Dad, Herman, served Bethlehem in Fergus Falls in Western Minnesota's Ottertail County... "A land of 1,000 lakes."



All three of our Dads studied at Luther Seminary during the same era. All three were very active over the years in Bible Camping. All three were excellent teachers and able communicators. All three had unique qualities and compassion for sharing the Gospel. All three had spouses who were active partners in ministry. All three families loved camping and the outdoors. Very interesting similarities.

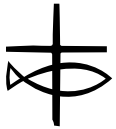
It is a fascinating happening that brought "the three sons" of these families together at Luther Sem at that particular moment in time. Together with some of our Seminary brothers and faculty mentors, we sought and found opportunities to expand pastoral presence in outreach to the City. We collectively shared a vision for WILDERNESS camping ministry. We were encouraged to try some flexible approaches to ministry. "Go into all the world" was the mission. All three of us had wonderfully caring spouses who shared as partners in ministry: Jean (Oz), Alice (Bob) and my Pearl.

I am honored to be PCYC/WILDERNESS "Founding Director."

We lift up and are grateful for all our faithful colleagues and friends who shared early WILDERNESS beginnings... *The Founding Years*. We join hands. We give thanks to God for the chance we had to share the Gospel in and through WILDERNESS.



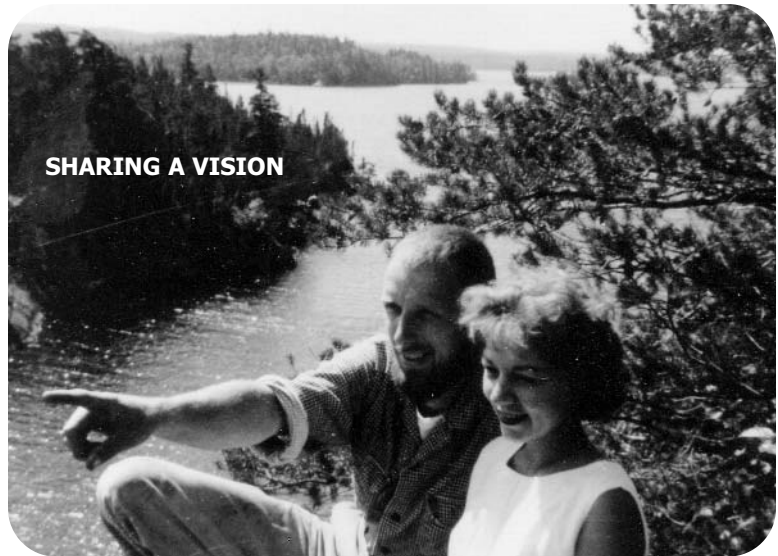




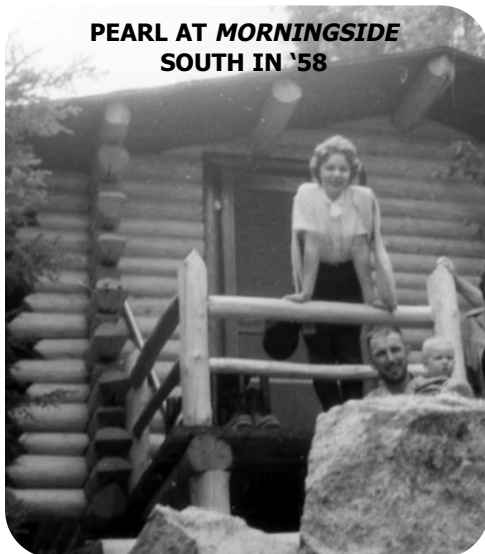
## MY LIFELONG FOUNDING PARTNER: PEARL MUUS

It seems to me that all too often historical reflection fails to identify or recognize the enormous importance of pastoral "partners in ministry." The tendency seems to be that spousal partners are routinely taken for granted. I sadly confess to some of that behavior. I want to clearly assert that my partner, Pearl, was essential to the initiation of PCYC and its WILDERNESS outreach.

We lived on Valentine Avenue just down the hill from Luther Seminary. It was a small house that my Dad, brother B.J. and I built. We felt fortunate to be there. It was close to the Sem and to Pearl's place of work at the Oliver Corporation.



SHARING A VISION

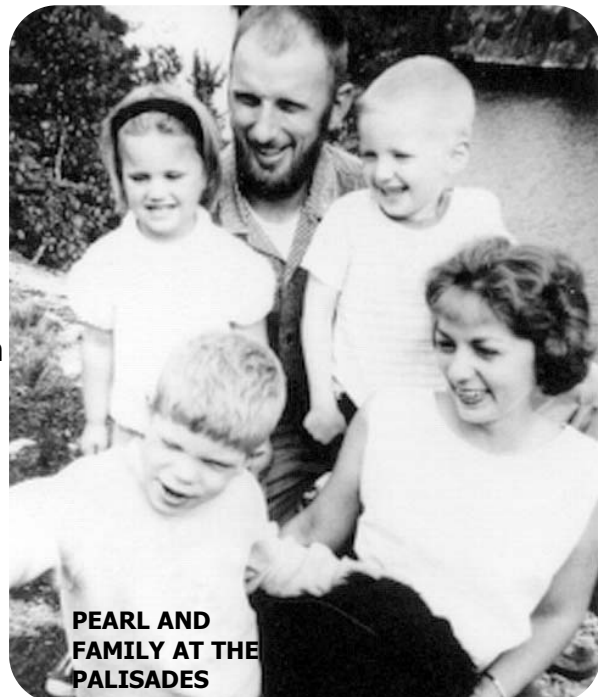


PEARL AT MORNINGSIDE  
SOUTH IN '58

During junior and middler years, we invited our Sem brothers who were working in the several institutional and urban ghettos to meet regularly at our home. As conversations started to heat up about taking on the "Plymouth Project", Pearl was there. Decisions and commitments had been made about 1954 internship assignments. I was being encouraged by peers and Sem professors to shoulder the ministry on the near North Side. Pearl bravely agreed to share that daunting challenge.

During those summer months of 1954, we camped on the North Shore. I had agreed to help out with interim pastoral assistance to the four congregations of the Lutheran parish: Grand Marais, Hovland, Lutsen and Tofte. I put on lots of miles in the preaching and teaching duties. It providentially provided an introduction to many folks in the area who later were to become WILDERNESS supporters.

One mid summer day, Pearl and I traveled the dusty Gunflint Trail to Seagull Lake. There we met and made friendship with Eve and Russell

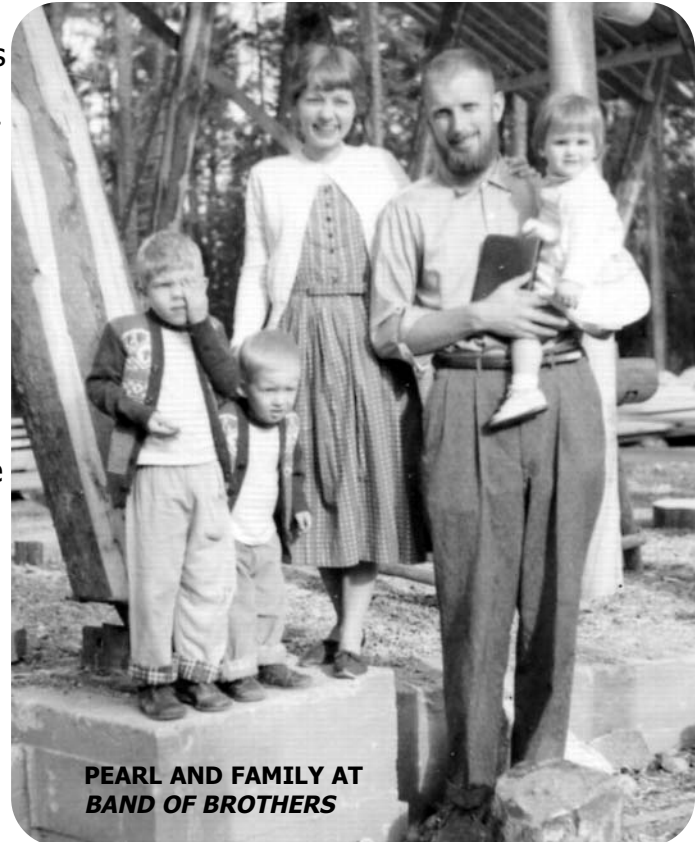


PEARL AND  
FAMILY AT THE  
PALISADES

Blankenburg. We shared a bit of our inner-city and camping "dreams." The Blankenburgs listened with interest. They owned considerable land on Seagull including part of Fishhook Island. Hints of our campsite interest and their open hearted response were definitely positive.

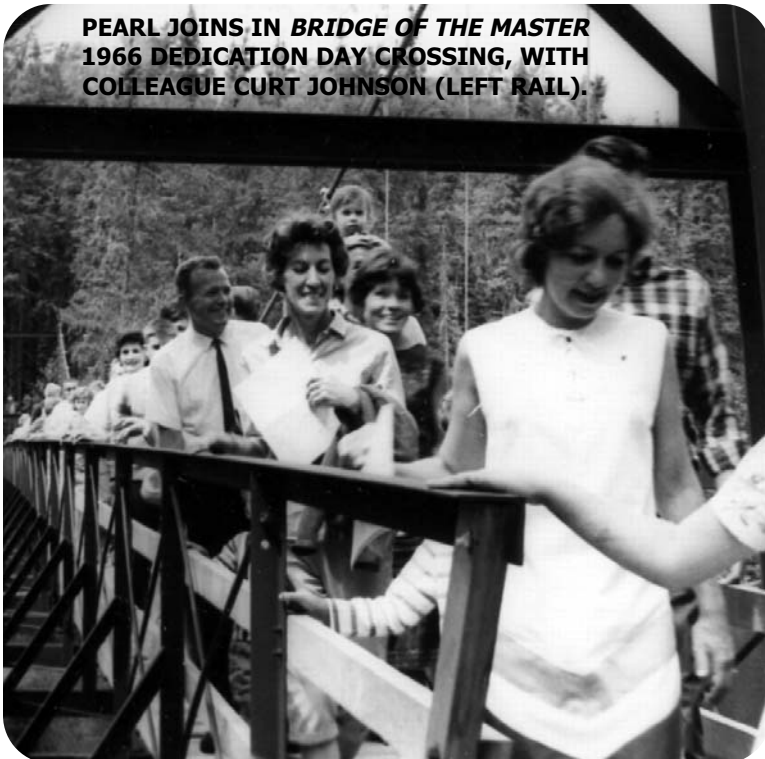
Pearl was an integral companion throughout our 13 year PCYC journey. Living on the third floor of "the old hotel" required maximum flexibility. She hosted staff, volunteers, guests and activity groups... some at a moments notice. She joined other staff residents in cooking turkey dinners at holidays, praying with troubled mothers and cleaning club meeting rooms. She watched over and raised our three small children... Nathan, Jeff and Solveig.

From the beginning, Pearl gamely offered WILDERNESS help. We needed canvas food bags. She helped facilitate parish sewing projects. We needed food. She helped facilitate parish "food roundup" in advance of the WILDERNESS season. She and young sons Nathan and Jeff joined Beulah Lukason on Fishhook in late 1958. That winter, Beulah, Pearl and Arla Mae Olson orchestrated all the



**PEARL AND FAMILY AT  
BAND OF BROTHERS**

**PEARL JOINS IN BRIDGE OF THE MASTER  
1966 DEDICATION DAY CROSSING, WITH  
COLLEAGUE CURT JOHNSON (LEFT RAIL).**



meals and bag lunches during the month long *Operation Log Cabin* for up to 60 hungry, cold workers. For the next eight summer seasons, together with our three young kids, she shaped life at *Morningside* with great patience, innovation and grace.

Island life in those early years was clearly simple... yet very complex. No electricity and no running water, (save that which you "ran" to get). We occupied the rebuilt South log cabin at *Morningside*. The 12 x 16' unit housed our family of five. The central, open-air cook shack served family and staff gatherings. Almost every Sunday evening was staff R & R at *Morningside* over those early years. Water was lifted from Seagull Lake via an

ingenious cable/pail/crank system up some 100 feet. Laundry was done outside with a gas-fired unit. Staffers Lynn, Vern and Phil helped with water and supply needs. In the summer of 1959, Solveig was one month old... our youngest and the first baptized WILDERNESS camper. Jeff was two and Nathan was four and a half. Pearl persevered.

*Morningside* was a place of hospitality. Pearl made it so. Staffer Mary Ekstrom and numerous guests came to lend a hand. She was a faithful helper in meeting various summer assignments. Drivers of camp groups were invited to *Morningside*. Staff felt welcomed. Board retreat families experienced Pearl's gracious hospitality. She gave counsel to staff as available friend and mentor. She shared in Guide orientation on the trails. She brought a strong and faithful witness to Christ.

I know that the ripples of her presence have touched and encouraged many. She has entered into every facet of my work... with enormous trust, hope, and determination.



**MORNINGSIDE  
CONSTRUCTION  
SUPERVISOR**



This *Reflection*... this tribute, may serve as a metaphor for what can be called "partnership in mission." I hope so. And I thank Pearl... as I thank God for her presence in my life.

"...My heart  
is glad and  
my soul  
rejoices..."





A strong like-minded colleague at Luther Seminary who was at the center of our renewal efforts was **Bob Nervig**. He articulated more clearly than most the urgency for testing a variety of outreach approaches to troubled youth. He, too, had roots in Bible camping. His passion for connecting the Gospel was contagious.

He shares something of his journey in this *Reflection*.

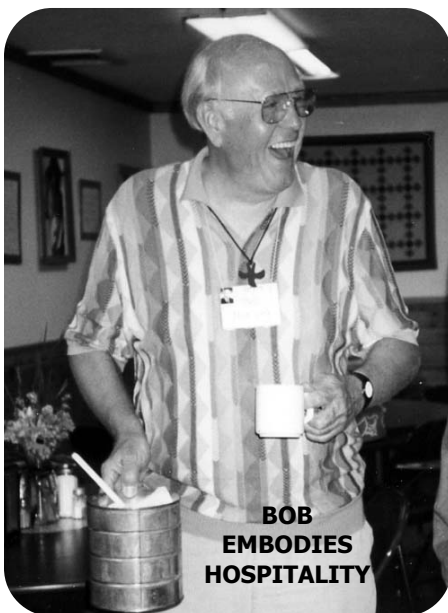


**Bob Nervig**



My life at Luther Seminary was shaped by many experiences and relationships. Nothing effected me more than the shared passion for youth ministry that drew a number of classmates together in common cause. This passion has continued for 50 years of outreach attentions.

For me, it began the first week of seminary. I was enrolled at Luther. During the summer of 1952, I worked for the admissions office of Augustana College. There, I met a kid from St. Paul at Bible Camp in Slayton, Minnesota. He was working there. He told me about his life in St. Paul. He said he and his friends were involved with a camp sponsored by the St. Paul Y. It helped keep them out of trouble, he said.



During the first week at the Sem, my "recruit" called. Together we drove out to Camp St. Croix. The director, Jerry Manlove, was in his cabin. He was sick and wrapped in a blanket. We had never met. It was to be the beginning of a life long relationship... a sharing of youth ministry.

My young friend was from downtown St. Paul. Jerry was also the boys work director of the downtown YMCA. He invited me to work with a group called Mechanic Arts Hi Y... 30 boys potentially. Many were tough street kids. Ray Peterson, Guidance Counselor at Mechanic Arts High School, told me: "Why waste your time with these kids"? "None of them will go to college." I met with them Monday nights for three seminary years. In my year of internship in New York, seminarian Warren Sorteberg met with them.

Those boys became *my* teachers... my kin... so I could come to know city kids. We took all of them to Augustana College for a weekend hosted by Paul Rogness, son of Pastor Al Rogness, then in Sioux Falls. Seven of them eventually graduated from Augie. I was a mentor for these kids.

Jerry Manlove recruited many seminarians from our class to work with Hi Y's and Jr. Hi Y's. Bob Evans worked with kids at Totem Town the school for troubled kids. Ham Muus, Oz Anderson and others became involved as mentors with Hal Mordh at the Union Gospel Mission. Dr. George Aus was very supportive. Dr. Andrew Burgess used his class to organize more Sem students to work in the inner-city. Over 50 seminarians were

involved “one-on-one” and with small groups: Ham, Oz, Bob, Curt Johnson, Phil Natwick, Warren Sorteberg, Jim Wylie, Ray Runkel and more...most unusual for ‘50s seminarians.

During our internship under Ham’s superb leadership, PCYC became the focal point and key to this “Outreach Vision.” Juniors, middlers and seniors rallied around. A significant ministry was founded at Plymouth...with camping an important ingredient.

During our senior year, we met with the District Presidents concerning future calls: Ham and Bob were called to PCYC...to help lead the church into a diverse inner city youth ministry...*Kinsmen* youth mentoring...camping experiences at Frontier Farm, Camp Knutson; and the launching of WILDERNESS Canoe Base.

Oz was called to the State School for Boys at Red Wing as Chaplain. He served as PCYC Board President and was a strategic founding WILDERNESS partner. I returned to Brooklyn, New York, as youth pastor at Trinity. There I had the opportunity to help launch *Koinonia* camp and retreat center serving metro New York. Our friend and mentor, Jerry Manlove, was called from the YMCA to become the first director of *Koinonia*. The ALC and its Bible Camp Association recognized WILDERNESS, *Outlaw Ranch* and *Koinonia* as three major programs that helped to expand outreach ministry. Ham, Bob, Oz, Curt and I all felt we were woven into a common fabric.

Many mentors, colleagues and friends surrounded all of us who shared in the “renewal” efforts of the ‘50’s and ‘60’s. WILDERNESS is a remarkable example of how God can bless lives... how Spirit sustains a vision... how folks linked in common cause can make a difference.

Bob’s encouragement to WILDERNESS came through regular personal contact in the sharing of youth work at the grassroots. We joined in mutual support of *Koinonia* and WILDERNESS. Each moved mission “outside the box.” The “Plymouth Project” ripples widened through Bob’s spirited action.

**MAKING SURE  
EVERYONE HAS  
A FAIR SHARE  
OF A TASTY  
TRAILS SUPPER**







## SOME FIRST STEPS FOR PCYC CAMP OUTREACH

In order to understand more fully the bold emergence of WILDERNESS, it can be helpful to place it in the context of camping ministry exercised by PCYC in the fifties.

Our very first PCYC summer, '54, we were presented with a lively opportunity to connect to families in our inner city northside neighborhood. My very able and energetic PCYC Sem associate, **Ray Runkel**, agreed to meet an extraordinary challenge. The ELC Board of Charities wanted to launch CAMP KNUTSON... as a haven for inner city and institutional kids. We were thrilled with what transpired in reaching out to often forgotten children.

Ray can bear "witness" to not only the emergence of *Camp Knutson*, but also its connection with PCYC's *Frontier Farm*... along with a pastoral word. Here are some of Ray's *Reflections* in his own words.



**Ray Runkel**

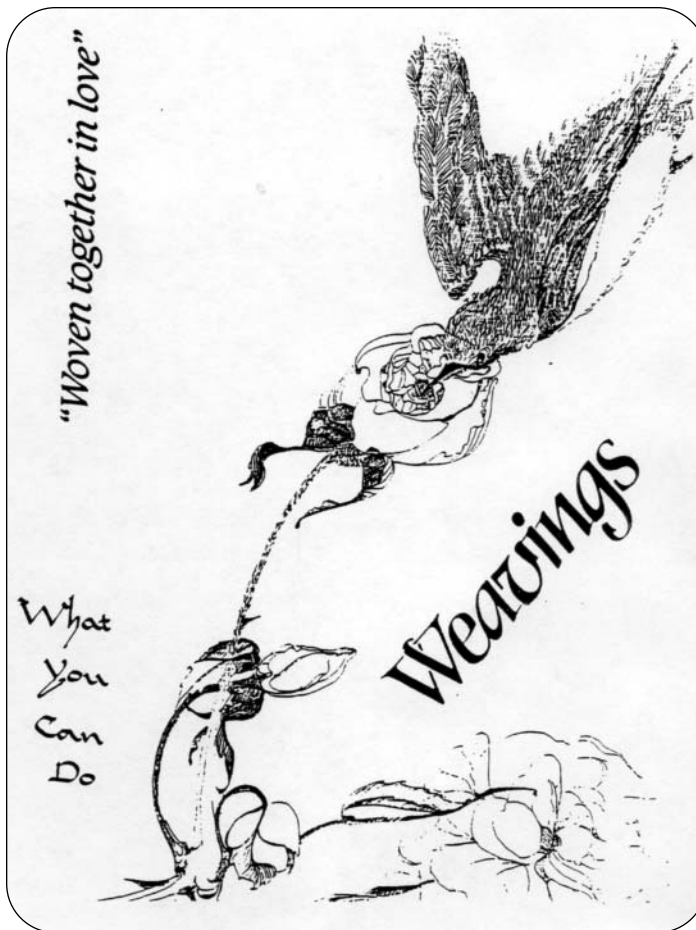


The development of camping ministry at WILDERNESS Canoe Base was integral to PCYC's mission. Camping was important to the "founders" from earliest days. I had the chance to have a part in helping to shape those camping commitments from early on.

My childhood was enriched by caring parents, a large extended family and by the summers spent at my grandparents' farm. My father was a forester and botanist who opened my heart to the wonders and amazing aspects of God's world of nature. I learned care and respect for the created order at the first Bible Camp in Central Iowa with Pastor Albert Bringle. I found church camping a great connection for me. Mountain climbing with my dad and outland camping in Iowa and Northern Minnesota, plus area Scout camps and National Boy Scout Philmont Ranch in New Mexico really helped me see the potential of a camping ministry.



I discovered the importance of inner-city work through the Ober Boys' Club. The summer of 1954, following my junior (first) year at Luther Seminary. I was persuaded to become the Camp Director and lifeguard at a new campsite, that had been given to the ELC in late summer 1953 by Representative Harold Knutson. It was near Brainerd, Minnesota on White Fish and Trout Lakes. Dr. Magnus Dahlen, head of the Board of Charities for the ELC, accepted the properties as a camp for neglected and deprived children. Plymouth Christian Youth Center, in Minneapolis, was starting up that summer too, with founding Director Ham Muus. He was assisted by Vi Handahl as Program Coordinator. I was to start as Associate in the fall. PCYC had two weeks for the kids



from north Minneapolis at *Camp Knutson*. There were campfires, Bible studies, nature walks, rock study, evening skits, swimming, boating, fishing, and arts and crafts. Vi, Pearl Muus and junior counselors from Minneapolis provided good leadership. We remodeled a four-plex garage into a dormitory for the kids. It was the hope of PCYC that we would gradually increase our use of the camp... which we did for several years.

The second PCYC camping opportunity came when a retired schoolteacher from the Twin Cities gave their family farm near Effie, Minnesota. The Big Fork River flowed through the property. Colleagues Ham and Bob worked out the details of the gift of the property. This was my internship year as Director of PCYC Ham was "my" Associate

his senior year. *Frontier Farm* was a great place for kids to be out in the woods doing work, studying and discovering the wonder and beauty of God's wilderness. Some canoe trips originated from the *Farm*.

The summer of 1956, Ham and Bob accepted calls from the Church as Director and Associate Director of PCYC and were ordained into the Evangelical Lutheran Church ... a REAL LEAP OF FAITH! Carla and I were married on June 17th and after a brief three-day "honeymoon" in Wisconsin, we returned to Minneapolis to help with the summer program. We took kids from PCYC for "vacations" with selected families outside of Minneapolis. We had a "second honeymoon" at *Camp Knutson* with about forty PCYC kids, staying in a stripped-down old house-trailer with just mattresses on the floor. I thought it was great to be at *Camp Knutson* again with all the swimming, hikes and learning about God's great outdoors. Rube Jessup was the *Knutson* Director that summer.

In 1957, WILDERNESS Canoe Base emerged from a dream into reality. I remember thinking; "I wonder how this could happen". Ham, Bob and Oz Anderson brought that vision to life. I took mascot Seegu up to WILDERNESS where wonderful things were happening. A rustic camp was emerging. The base camp was coming together. Amazing things were taking shape at the end of the Gunflint Trail. Campers from the "edges" were being served.

My first call after ordination was as Associate Pastor in River Falls, Wisconsin. I had the responsibility for the youth ministry as well as the Lutheran Students Association

at the Wisconsin State College. In 1958, we planned a canoe trip with the high school youth at WILDERNESS and had an unbelievable experience. Pastor Ham helped with our plans to go into Quetico Province Park. Lee Dybvig was our guide. Lee was a positive and energetic young man. Our kids responded and became eager workers because of his influence. He was of slight build but very strong. He usually carried his canoe and the food pack across the portages! We loved to paddle and amazed even him by covering 20 plus miles one day. One of our kids was so impressed that he signed up to become a "Swamper". It was a life changing experience for all.

Lee targeted Louisa Falls with its twenty to thirty foot pool of bubbling water about half way down. We pushed hard that day and arrived by Louisa Falls, on the shore of Agnes Lake, at a beautiful campsite. After a swim and as supper was ending, the kids yelled; "Hey, there's a bear and a cub, no, two cubs"! She started coming toward us. She then circled around toward our backpacks. Lee climbed up to our food pack, which was hanging between two trees. As Lee came down one tree, the bear started up the other. With lots of noise, we frightened her away. We decided to pack up and go over to sleep on the trail across the lake. Enough is enough!

My second call was at a two-point parish. We took a group in 1960 from Brodhead and Orfordville, Wisconsin to WILDERNESS. Isaiah Harriday was our guide.

The second crew from Brodhead, in 1961, also included kids from Duran, Illinois. In the summer of 1962, while taking CPE at Red Wing, Minnesota under supervisor Oz Anderson, I transported a group to WILDERNESS from the State Training School. The boys had been in a "sharing" group I co-chaired with the Psychiatrist. They had a wonderful time and made some significant changes in their lives. The head Social Worker at the Training School reported that he had interviewed all the boys who had gone to WILDERNESS that summer. They all felt it was "one hundred percent great." He could notice the difference. He said he had never known anything that had been "one hundred percent positive" for these kids. Lots of preparation by Oz contributed to their success.

I arranged for a group to go to WILDERNESS from the South Dakota State Training School, at Plankinton...where I was called as its first Chaplain. I was impressed by their positive and excited stories about their experience. Ham's leadership always tried to reach out... even to our South Dakota "kids at risk."

The vision at Plymouth Christian Youth Center included camping ministry: *Camp Knutson*, *Frontier Farm* and WILDERNESS Canoe Base. So many positive things have happened to all who became involved. It is still going on. These Spirit driven commitments have touched lives and changed hearts. I am so grateful to have had a hand in it.

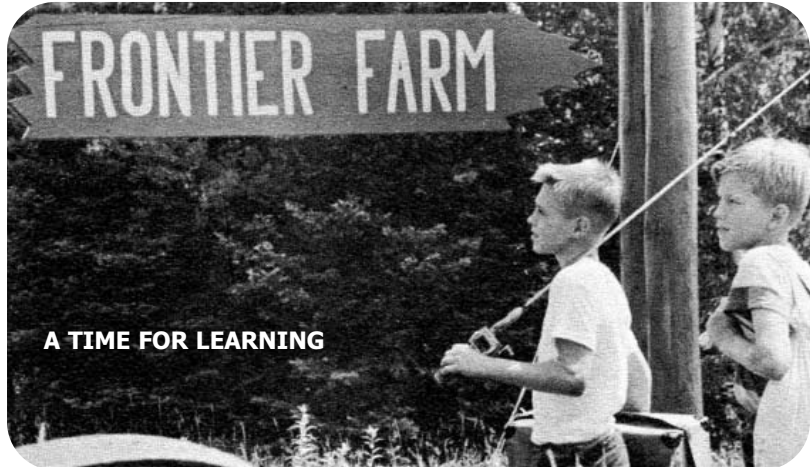


Those who knew Ray were amazed at his seemingly endless energy. He connected spiritually with all manner of folks. His leadership in early PCYC days was compassionate, determined and devoted.

While we were working on *Camp Knutson* recruitment, another arena of outdoor education presented itself. *Frontier Farm* was embraced. This was in the backyard of Bob Evans' home town, International Falls. He was able to generate strong support for its beginnings.

We called on **Dave Borreson** to be point man at *The Farm*. He was an avid outdoors man... an Eagle Scout. He worked as one of the Sem volunteers with the new PCYC scout program. Dave brought strong, enthusiastic, steady leadership to *Frontier Farm*... where proto-type canoe camping was one decentralized component.

Dave brings this *Reflection* to the PCYC camping table.

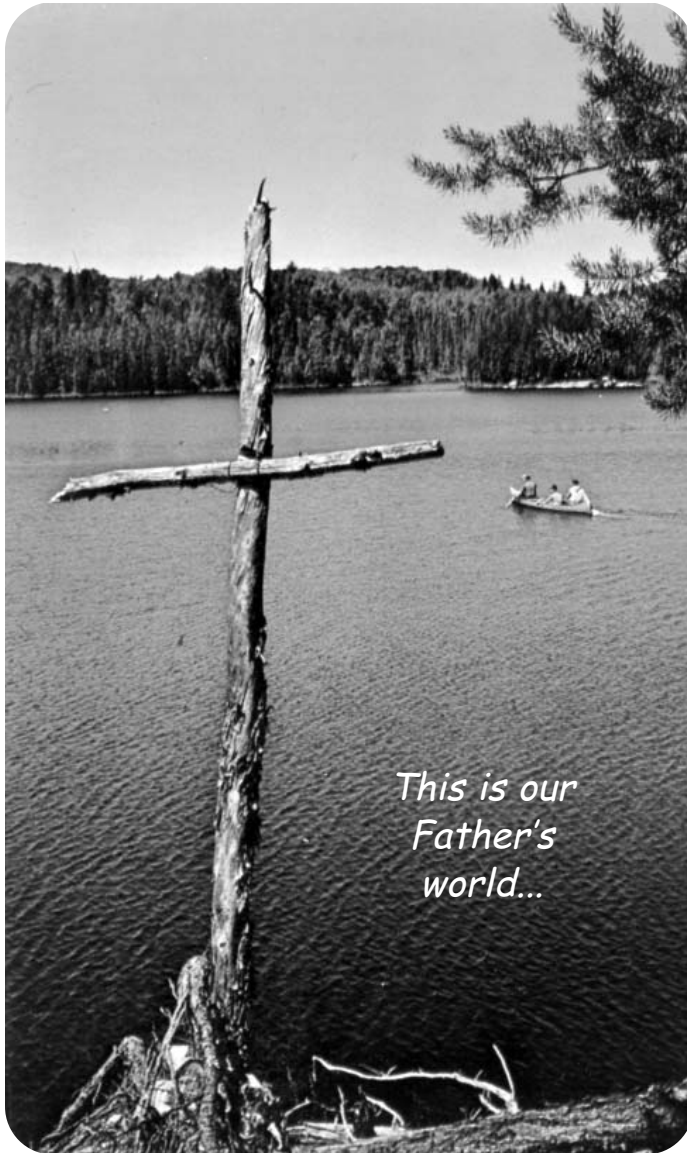


**Dave Borreson**

I recall fondly the ministry that I participated in while at the seminary in the late fifties. It was Professor Burgess who pointed me and many others to get involved in that “project” down on Plymouth Avenue. I was the assistant Boy Scout leader along with Arthur Dryver for some of those years. Sunday school and worship services were really a challenge. It was always enriching to visit with Pastor Ham over the years he was Director of PCYC/WILDERNESS. He and Bob Evans were wonderful “mentors.”

As a seminarian volunteering at PCYC, one thing after another developed. Bob said to me after my first year at Luther Seminary, that he and Ham wanted me to go to Effie, Minnesota to check out the Bergit Anderson *Frontier Farm* located on the Big Fork River. In about six weeks, a group of boys from Red Wing were scheduled to arrive. We could have a canoe trip on the river and do some other recreational things on the *Farm*. I was given a checkbook with a couple of hundred dollars and a blessing. As I think of it now – that certainly was a faith venture. I headed north of Effie, located the *Farm* with help from some Effie locals. I began solicitation of the surrounding community for help in the establishment of our rustic youth camp. Sharing the dream and raising funds, materials and lumber... I can still recall vividly how well I was received. The Rajala family members were all valued advocates and indispensable helpers.

Bob joined me after a few weeks as did Arthur Dryver and his wife, Verdi, with their two babies. They were brave souls. We put in some very long hours to say the least. Art had a large Dodge truck with a covered box bed. We used this truck to transport our campers to the Ely area Boundary Waters. *Frontier Farm* life seemed to reach the hearts of our kids. I recall my regular meetings with Pastor Bob as we planned everything from property maintenance to the spiritual program and strategy on the canoe trips. He was a very able guy to work with in every aspect of the *Frontier Farm* program.

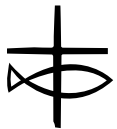


I participated in some early days at WILDERNESS Canoe Base. Operation "Breakthrough" was incredible. Pastor Ham's creative ministry and leadership formed one of the greatest endeavors the church has encountered. My concern for the future would be that this ministry and the legacy of WILDERNESS not be lost.

I still remember well the stories "on the trails" with the youth that I worked with... some who are now grown and have become key figures in their respective churches and communities. They relate how those northwoods experiences helped them mature. Through all of this, I feel blessed to have been a working "partner" in *Frontier Farm* and WILDERNESS ministry.

*"This is the most beautiful lake country on the continent. We can afford to cherish and protect it... In the end, we turn to nature in a frenzied chaotic world, there to find silence -- oneness -- wholeness -- spiritual release."*

SIGURD OLSON



In addition to *Camp Knutson* and *Frontier Farm*, we encouraged other decentralized, small group experiences. Colleague Bob Nervig drove the PCYC van filled with St. Paul "Y" teens he was mentoring to the Black Hills of South Dakota for a week of backpacking discovery. Several Lutheran rural families received inner city kids on their farms for "hands on" experiences. Numerous urban-rural connections resulted between "friendship" families. Pearl and I hosted campers at our North Shore cabin for a taste of life along the Big Lake Superior... Gitchi Gummi.

We saw the importance of Christian Camping, up close and personal. We were deeply committed to the dream of adding an outpost adjacent to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. Serious discussions among our staff and Board led to a consensus to explore the potentials at the end of the Gunflint Trail. The '54 exchange Pearl and I had with the Blankenburgs became reality in the late Fall of 1956.

**And Joshua said to the people,  
"You shall know that the living God is among you...  
when your children ask, in time to come,  
'WHAT DO THESE STONES MEAN?'  
These stones shall be... a memorial forever."**

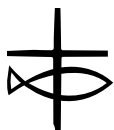
**JOSHUA 4**



**DR. GEORGE AUS... WILDERNESS  
DEDICATION DAY 1958**



## WHY BOTHER? WHY WILDERNESS? A Perspective on Purpose



One of our most faithful mentors and strongest WILDERNESS advocates was Dr. Alvin Rogness, President of Luther Seminary. He was also a much valued counselor and loyal friend.

In the 60s, Dr. Merton Strommen developed an entity called *Church Youth Research*, which did exactly what the name states. He invited distinguished pastors and scholars to address a wide variety of youth-interested topics such as: sex, life goals, personal moods, parental authority, etc. He asked Dr. Rogness to address this question: *Youth Asks: Why Bother About God?*

In his incomparable fashion, Dr. Rogness sorts out the question in a series of penetrating chapters. It is written in clear, down to earth, powerful language.

WILDERNESS staff were encouraged to utilize this book as a springboard for camper discussion. Many found it to be an extremely useful, devotional guide book.



In his "Forward," Dr. Rogness honors the fact that this book is "written in the context of the Christian faith." He further states this: "The purpose of the series (and this book) is to use points of established need to bring about meaningful contact between the *Gospel* of God in Jesus Christ and *Young People*...that youth...can be helped to see that the Gospel of Christ is the core of life in all its realities."

Why bother about God? Why bother about a WILDERNESS outreach? Stated in a Rogness-like assertion: "*The purpose of WILDERNESS is to bring about meaningful contact between the Gospel of God in Jesus Christ and Young People we serve...in order that youth may be helped to see that the Gospel of Christ is, in fact, the core of life in all its complexities and realities.*"

This is why we bothered...to reach out to the "edges." This is why we believed that a WILDERNESS experience might be a point of contact between the Gospel and camper. This is why we felt it was appropriate, even essential, to recruit young adult staff to share in shaping a place and program of faith. This is why we could boldly invite family, friends, and other compassionate folks "out there" to share in this ministry, this mission.

The conversations among our early "band of brothers," Oz, Bob, Bob Nervig, Ray Runkel, Curt Johnson and others, held up lofty goals... with a recognition there might be more modest realities. We held out the hope of "much"...knowing that for some the "connection to the Gospel" would be limited. Still, we believed that seeds of faith often are warmed by God's Spirit in ways far beyond our imagination.

We had a collective range of personal experience in camping which affirmed its impact in our own lives. This could be a useful vehicle for awakening the latent Spirit within others.

We believed that WILDERNESS held that potential.

So we wrestled with goals and purposes, objectives and outcomes... knowing that any set of words would be short of Spirit possibilities. I needed to try to articulate... to demonstrate a comfort of language which could help describe the "magical... the mystical... the spiritual... the soulful" in the WILDERNESS world.

Over a period of time...in those early years, I tried to shape a set of principles which could help in capturing something of our ministry... our mission. Here's what I identified and offered as a *Perspective For Staff* to consider.



## THE PERSPECTIVE FOR STAFF POLICY

There is much which makes WILDERNESS Canoe Base distinctive and important. To all who share work and camping life, there are new friends and happy memories, grand trees and blue waters, glistening granite and rustic cabins, sleek canoes and crackling campfires.

But there is much more which lies to the heart of WILDERNESS Canoe Base...LOYAL COMMITMENT TO CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY which provides occasion for camping experiences filled with thrilling adventure and deep devotion. The Christ who established and encourages what happens here is given feet and hands and voice by those who work here.

The yoke of responsibility is squarely placed on the shoulders of the WILDERNESS Staff. The several tasks which characterize total camp community are all interwoven and necessary. Each member enables the work of another in order that every camper and staff associate may experience in full dimension the delight of the Common, the creativity of Discipleship, the sense of Harmony, the wonder of Silence, the fullness of Worship, and the freedom of Faith.

The program dimensions at WILDERNESS grow out of and are developed within the framework of PURPOSE-ful philosophy:

...TO ESTABLISH, ENCOURAGE, AND PROVIDE FOR MEANINGFUL LIFE EXPERIENCES...addressed to the needs and potential of each camper... THROUGH SMALL GROUP, TRAILS CAMPING...where Christian Community is a reality...under trained, capable leadership

...FOR PROBLEM YOUTH...who have known isolation from family and/or community... AND PARISH YOUTH...who are seeking to explore new horizons as the Church

...IN RELATIONSHIP TO A CHRIST...who understands, who cares, who forgives, who directs, who strengthens, who renews, who gives life

WILDERNESS Canoe Base responds to social fragmentation with the firm belief that personal attitudes, actions, and awareness can be enriched in the wholeness of individual and group expression. Basic OBJECTIVES provide the continuity for this affirmation:

...TO PROVIDE EXPERIENCES...in depth...IN THE WILDERNESS UNDER A PERVADING CHRISTIAN ATMOSPHERE...where the wonder of God's created order, His claim to one's life, and His gift of forgiveness can be absorbed in the mainstream of camp life...APART FROM NOISY, OFTEN CONFUSING DISTRACTIONS...with anticipation and fulfillment of meditation and reflection

...TO ENCOURAGE RIGHT PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS...with peer and adult friends...WHICH WILL STRENGTHEN CONFIDENCE AND COMPANIONSHIP...as only healthy, disciplined "life together" can do

...TO GIVE UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY...for campers and staff alike...TO LOOK AT AND ATTEMPT TO UNDERSTAND AND SOLVE BASIC LIFE PROBLEMS...as experiences are shared, discussion is opened, and aspirations established...WHICH ARE PERSONAL AND POINTED...where fears, misinterpretations, and ill-defined images give way to positive, constructive alternatives

...TO EXAMINE LIFE...in relation to the Gospel...and the way through life which Christ makes known...WITH ATTENTION TOWARD PERSONAL RENEWAL...that it can and does make a difference what kinds of choices are made and decisions pursued...where faith unlocks freedom and obedience initiates belonging

...TO POINT TOWARD INTEGRATION OF THE CAMPER...in all that is done and said...WITHIN SOCIETY...where the spirit of democratic living the resourcefulness of participation, the expansion of personal skills, the



exploration of spiritual sensitivity, and the subtle strong whispers of unknown feelings are a part of camping experience...and are carried back as vital, natural parts of the person...REALIZING THE NECESSITY OF FACING STRESSFUL SITUATIONS...but better prepared for the encounter

...TO STRENGTHEN CHARACTER THROUGH EDUCATION...in the broadest possible sense...IN NATURAL AND PERSONAL CONSERVATION...where exploration replaces exploitation...IN COMMUNITY MINDEDNESS...where the good of others supersedes selfish aggression...IN SELF-DISCIPLINE AND CONTROL...where thoughtfulness surpasses the desires to be hurtful... IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE...where the vibrant past becomes real people, who were alive, not dates to be ignored and forgotten

THE UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS of WILDERNESS may be those of boundless fun or those of interpersonal anguish; of strenuous work or solid sleep; of carrying canoe or another's burden; of star-studded night or frightful storm; of kindly words or devotional Word; of awesome silence or shrieking loon. All find importance in relationship to faithful Staff who labor with enthusiasm in order that the very good becomes typical; the very excellent becomes attainable.

*"...now to Him...who by the mysterious power at work within us... individually and as a community...is able to accomplish far more than we dare hope...or even imagine...to Him belongs the glory... and the Thanksgiving."*

*"...I will tell of your  
deeds to my friends...  
in the midst of our  
gatherings, I will give  
honor and praise..."*





# Wilderness Canoe Base

Seagull Lake, Grand Marais, Minnesota

## THE WONDER OF IT ALL: WILDERNESS STAFF

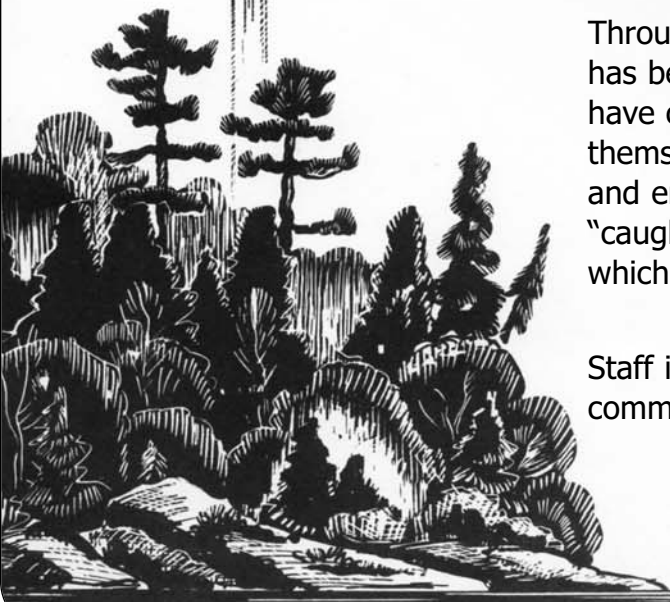
When encouraged in moments of reflection, each of us can lift up some hallowed saint, some attentive mentor, some probing counselor who has significantly enriched our life. It may be one who has spoken softly, persuasively; or one who pushed and prodded to evoke the best within; or one who could bring "tough love" with its often resultant pain.

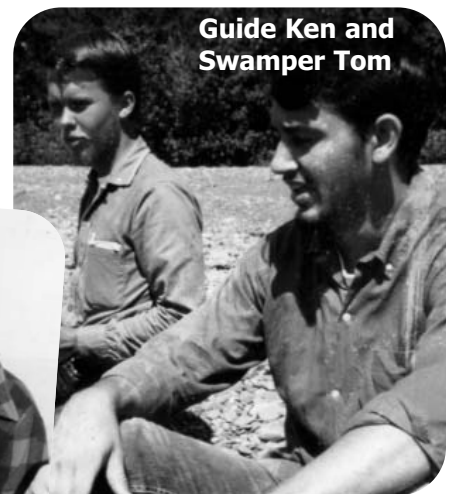
Those whom we call to memory are our teachers...our guide-counselors...our available friends. A community is built around those folks...our patient parents...that faithful aunt or uncle...that concerned Sem professor. It's exactly what Jesus identified..."come...be a disciple"...be a learner as you serve...live in love for others but don't forget to pay attention to what's going on in your own center.

There are writers who inspire to discipleship...to swampership...to kinship. Dietrich Bonhoeffer invites ideas and actions that may be "costly"...as Christ lays claim to one's heart. Reuel Howe, that innovative retreat master suggests that in order to fully know something of God we must experience it in our relationship to others... in Christian community. Paul Tournier boldly declares in his offering, *The Meaning of Gifts* that every single person has talents, abilities, actions to share. Every person has "gifts." Out of this mix, an intentional community, like WILDERNESS finds its direction, its reason for being.

Throughout *The Founding Years*, and beyond, WILDERNESS has been blessed with caring, serving, focused persons who have claimed its mission. Each of those who have offered of themselves have had others around who have encouraged and enabled their participation. I believe that campers have "caught" that Spirit...and many have "sought" that renewal which comes in a journey with our Mentor, our Guide Jesus.

These are those who fashioned WILDERNESS life as Staff in the first decade, 1957-1966... a company of the committed.







## STAFF

**Pastor Ham Muus**, Fergus Falls, MN

**Pastor Bob Evans**,  
International Falls, MN

**Fred Norlien**,  
Kensington, MN

**Dave Dominguez**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**Dave Johnson**,  
Mitchell, SD

**Lee Dybvig**, Dayton, OH

**Don Misner**,  
International Falls, MN

**Bob Miller**, St. Paul, MN

**Bob Knutson**, Janesville, WI

**Chuck Coon**, Hibbing, MN

**Thom McGowan**, St. Paul, MN

**Paul Trygstad**,  
Santa Barbara, CA

**Gene Ripka**,  
Owatonna, MN

**Clarence Baalson**,  
Esterville, IA

**Bob Robins**, Minneapolis, MN

**Chip Weiss**, White Earth, MN

**Danny Elliott**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**John Osterhus**,  
Brooklyn, NY

**Don Klopp**,  
Thief River Falls, MN

**Ted Ferrell**, Austin, MN

## MEMORABLE EVENTS

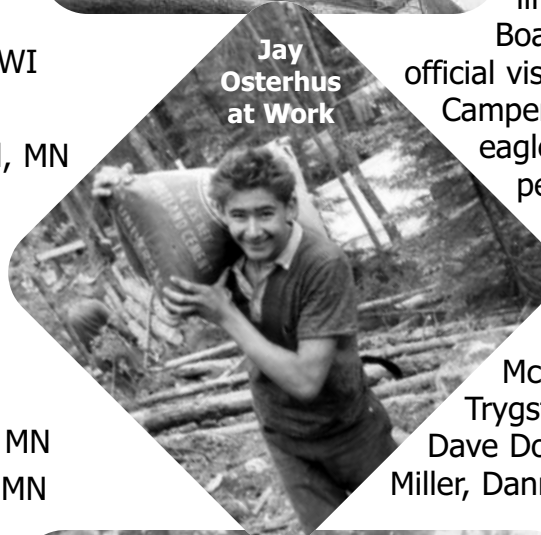
Fishhook Island was purchased for PCYC by *Wilderness Youth Builders*... Camp first established in late May on upper cliffs... *The Big Green Tent* served as headquarters... waters of Seagull were drinkable... Transitional "Master Plan" laid out for location of tent-top shelters, guidehut/trails shack, canoe staging area,

1957

outhouses... Main draw dock crib built of logs, stones... Twenty consecutive days of rain, mist and mosquitoes... First



Greeting  
the  
Blombergs



Jay  
Osterhus  
at Work



Seagu

Pearl

Dave  
Dominguez

Nathan

Ham

campers arrive June 18... Oz Anderson, boys from Red Wing STS arrive with needed surplus commodities... Paul Trygstad serves as Guide/Counselor for first crew... "First Word/Close of Day" worship/meditation times established... Visitors begin to notice camp development... Approximately 120 campers experience trails life... Dr. Magnus Dahlen, Board of Charities, makes official visit... Windfalls cleared... Campers discover 50-year-old eagle's nest and Palisade petroglyphs...

Seagull Sunday worship started... Historic first Staff ... Guide/Counselors: Dave Johnson, Thom McGowan, Red Baalson, Paul Trygstad, Lee Dybvig; Swampers: Dave Dominguez, Bob Robins, Bob Miller, Danny Elliot, Chip Weiss, Tony Ripka, Don Klopp, John Osterhus, Don Misner; Construction: Bob Knutson, Fred Norlien; I was Camp Director (with associate Bob Evans)... Christmas vacation ice harvest and ice house construction... First cedar strip Seliga canoes... Seagull access point only at Blankenburg/Public

Landing... Chaplain Oz Anderson gave Open House homily September 1st... Historic day featured Pastors Rudy and Herman, the fathers of founders Bob and Ham... Large local gathering paddled to Fishhook... Official Deeding Ceremony with Charities' John Mason... a base camp established.

**STAFF****Pastor Ham Muus**, Minneapolis, MN**Pearl Muus**, Minneapolis, MN

(Nathan and Jeff)

**Pastor Bob Evans**, Minneapolis, MN**Fred Norlien**, Kensington, MN**Duane Swenson**, St. Paul, MN**Ollie Hoffman**, Madison, MN**Tom Hughes**, Lakeville, MN**Milt DeJesus**, Minneapolis, MN**Lee Dybvig**, Dayton, OH**Warren Salvesson**,  
Battle Lake, MN**Ben Brunsvold**, "..."  
Fergus Falls, MN *...and on  
the wings  
of  
eagles..."***Dick Brynteson**,  
Minneapolis, MN**Beulah Lukason**,  
Paynesville, MN**Dave Dominguez**,  
Minneapolis, MN**Paul Trygstad**,  
Santa Barbara, CA**Tony Morales**,  
Minneapolis, MN**Bob Robins**, Minneapolis, MN**Nate Schiotz**, Minneapolis, MN**Bill Flittie**, Roseville, MN**Tom Zimmerman**,  
Princeton, MN**Whitey Aus**, St. Paul, MN**Fred Malle**, Minneapolis, MN**Duane Wollin**, Red Wing, MN**Warren Lee**, Williston, ND**Dave Biorn**, Northfield, MN**MEMORABLE EVENTS**

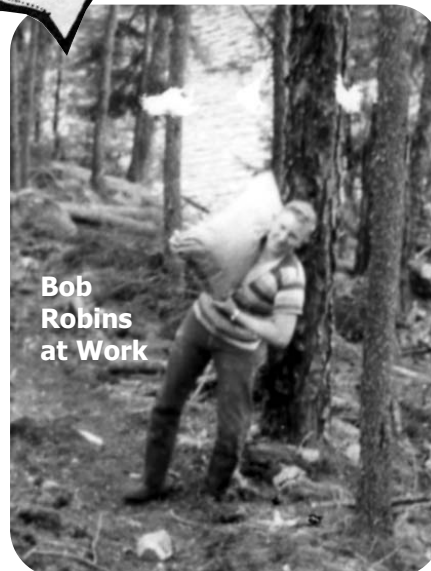
Thirty camper expeditions with over 280 campers... First Staff Training on the trails with Pastor Vern Anderson... Old

**1958**

International truck added for material hauling... Extensive *Parish Food Roundup* in Twin Cities, Western Minnesota... First female/on-site staffer is Beulah Lukason, Food Services... Agreements joined with Blankenburgs for acquisition of Dominion Isle... Three Miles Island log cabins purchased/disassembled/moved via raft to

Fishhook east side... Site for chapel chosen above Dominion's sheer cliffs... Trails/Kitchen unit completed... *US Forestry Service* auction of log buildings above Ely sets in motion *Operation Log Cabin*... Wife Pearl and two boys join at *Morningside*... Discussions begin with *Quiet Cove Lodge* at Brady initiation... Customs officers on Saganaga offer positive praise for Wilderness camper groups... Logger / Sawyer Otis Anderson begins cutting for additional trails building construction... Evangelical Lutheran Church

President Fredric and Dagny Schiotz visit camp... *Wilderness Day of Dedication and Open House* in August, with Dr. George Aus giving homily on Joshua 4: "What do these stones mean?" while standing on Seagull boulder... Winter crew assembled for *Operation Log Cabin*... Over 50 volunteers gather at Northernair Lodge near Ely for month-long drama... Ed Thoreson and crew tackle hauling dismantled cabins to Seagull... Breakthrough occurs... Camper response positive as community grows in maturity and service... Support strengthens for Wilderness outreach... Dominion Isle acquired.

Fred  
Norlien  
at RestBob  
Robins  
at Work

## STAFF

**Pastor Ham Muus**, Minneapolis, MN

**Pearl Muus**, Minneapolis, MN  
(Nathan, Jeff and Solveig)

**Pastor Bob Evans**, Minneapolis, MN

**Pastor Fred Norlien**,  
Pine River, MN

**Paul Whiting**, New York, NY

**Lynn Broughton**,  
Cottonwood, MN

**Dave Dominguez**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**Don Misner**,  
International Falls, MN

**Dennis Rafnson**,  
Minneota, MN

**Al Stanaitus**,  
Northfield, MN

**Mary Lien**,  
Northfield, MN

**Ken Root**, Madison, WI

**Tom Hughes**,  
Lakeville, MN

**Pat Adams**, Faribault, MN

**Gene Isakson**,  
St. Paul, MN

**Joan Peterson**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**Jim Slavik**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**Wayne Thornwall**,  
Red Wing, MN

**Dave Slavik**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**Lee Dybvig**, Dayton, OH

**Don Rudrud**,  
Van Nuys, CA

**Dave Croft**, St. Paul, MN

**John Gleisner**,  
Milwaukee, WI

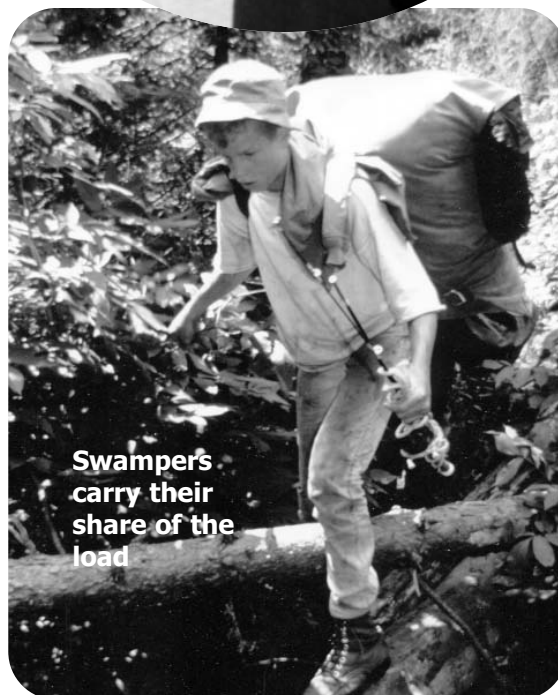
**Dennis Sullivan**, Minneapolis, MN

**Larry Higgins**, Red Wing, MN

1959



Perky Pearl  
hosts winter  
work retreat



Swampers  
carry their  
share of the  
load

**Beulah Lukason**, Paynesville, MN

**Lee Bohnhoff**, Orfordville, WI

**Ellen Docken**, St. Paul, MN

**Thom McGowan**, St. Paul, MN

**Dave Biorn**, Northfield, MN

**Keith Daniels**, Red Wing, MN

**John Glesne**, Fort Dodge, IA

**Jon Mostrom**,  
Mt. Horeb, WI

**Bob Robins**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**Jim Norlien**,  
Kensington, MN

**Steve Berg**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**Don Albertson**,  
LaMoure, ND

**Carol Albertson**,  
LaMoure, ND

**Bill Simpson**, Ottawa, IL

**Jon Lien**, Northfield, MN

**Ray Wallace**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**John Gunderson**,  
Twin Valley, MN

**Dave Lidstrom**,  
Rochester, MN

**Paul Obrestad**,  
Tracy, MN

**Chip Swanson**,  
Edina, MN

**Ron Lundeen**,  
Roseville, MN

**Art Nermoe**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**Rolf Skrien**,  
Grand Marais, MN

**Mary Ekstrom**,  
Minneapolis, MN

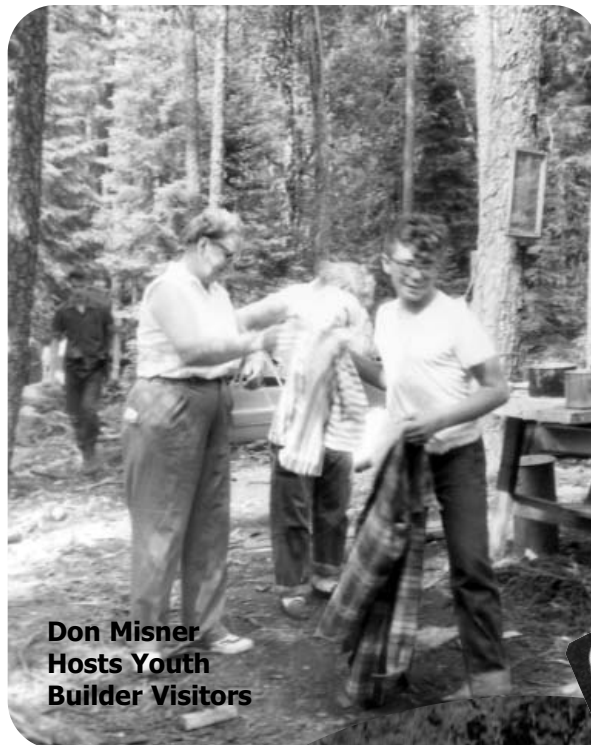
**Doug Lewis**, Spring Green, WI

**B.J. Muus IV**, Chisago City, MN

**Paul Trygstad**, Santa Barbara, CA

## MEMORABLE EVENTS

Winter crew and volunteer work campers provide heroic efforts to get *Operation Log Cabin* materials off ice before spring breakup ... Every camper/staffer works to re-build log cabins ... Ice roadway access Seagull allows Ed Thoreson to haul sand for island beaches ... Plans include expeditions for over 375 campers, including groups from parishes with pastoral/adult advisors ... First co-ed camper groups ... Additional female staffing ... Sunday Worship attendance increases at Dominion Chapel site ... *Pinecliff* Lodge under re-construction, signaling beautiful camp center in process ... Government commodities include cheese, bulgar (Russian Wheat), pinto beans ... Seven Seliga canoes added to fleet ... Work Campers with leader Brooks Anderson build temporary floating /barrel bridge from Fishhook to Dominion ... Extended Staff Training for all staff ... BCA (Bible Camp Association) and ACA (American Camping Association) become active partners in Wilderness attentions ... First baptism at *Pinecliff*: baby Solveig Muus ... US Forestry Service Supervisor J. Wesley White pays official Wilderness visit ... Conversations with *Quiet Cove Lodge* completed for major acquisition of mainland property ... Youth Builders program expanded ... First PCYC annual on-site Board of Trustees (family) Retreat ... Pastor Bob Evans



**Don Misner  
Hosts Youth  
Builder Visitors**

accepts challenge of Prince of Glory parish ministry ... Walk-in cooler sheltered at Blankenburgs ... Chaplain Oz Anderson again addresses Open House guests at worship service.

*"...and He  
departed  
into the  
wilderness..."*



**DEDICATION DAY 1958**



**Early  
Pinecliff  
Kitchen**

**Director  
on Duty**

## STAFF

**Pastor Ham Muus**, Minneapolis, MN

**Pearl Muus**, Minneapolis, MN  
(Nathan, Jeff and Solveig)

**Don Rudrud**, Van Nuys, CA

**Lynn Swanson**,  
Edina, MN

**Mary Flaten**,  
Northfield, MN

**Polly Lukason**,  
Paynesville, MN

**Keith Clark**, Ottawa, IL

**Harriet Clark**, Ottawa, IL

**Bob Arboleda**,  
Pine River, MN

**Pete Hustad**, Helena, MT

**Roy Nilsen**, Moorhead, MN

**Mary Nilsen**,  
Moorhead, MN

**John Lee**, Williston, ND

**Lee Dybvig**, Dayton, OH

**Don Ekstrom**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**Bob Rogness**,  
Lakeville, MN

**Mary Lien**,  
Northfield, MN

**Dave Croft**,  
St. Paul, MN

**Jeb Monge**,  
Tracy, MN

**George Dokken**,  
St. Paul, MN

**Rolf Hong**,  
Northfield, MN

**Clare Kiser, R.N.**, Omaha, NB

**Karen Jorgenson**, Rio, WI

**Dave Johnson**, Mitchell, SD

**Chip Swanson**, Edina, MN

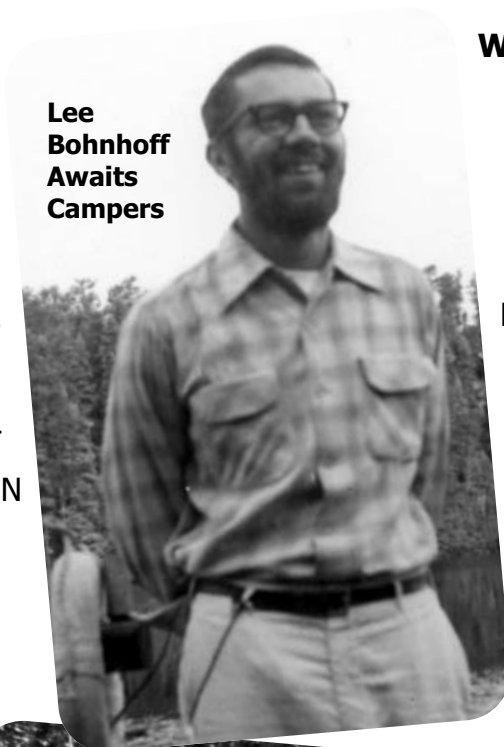
**B.J. Muus, III**, Ottawa, IL

**Marge Gulsvig**, Wanamingo, MN

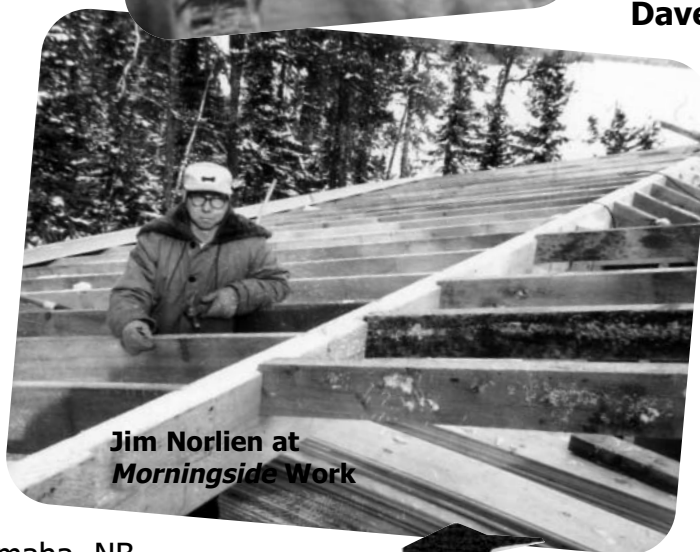
**John Hartje**, Shishmareff, AK

1960

Lee  
Bohnhoff  
Awaits  
Campers



Jim Norlien at  
Morningside Work



**Art Nermoe**, Minneapolis, MN

**Helen Stoltenberg**, Minneapolis, MN

**Gary Hoven**, Wanamingo, MN

**Beulah Lukason**, Paynesville, MN

**Jim Norlien**, Kensington, MN

**Wayne Thornwall**, Red Wing, MN

**Paul Allen**, Hopkins, MN

**Vern Borson**, Chicago, IL

**Lee Bohnhoff**, Orfordville, WI

**Roseann Everson**,  
Paynesville, MN

**Karen Gulsvig**, Wanamingo, MN

**Jerry Kjensrud**,  
Thief River Falls, MN

**Steve Person**, Northfield, MN

**Dave Graham**, Roberts, WI

**Mary Harvie**, Minneapolis, MN

**Ron Lundeen**, Roseville, MN

**George Miner**, Rochester, MN

**K.C. Clark**, Ottawa, IL

**Dave Biorn**, Northfield, MN

**Mary Ekstrom**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**Wayne Anderson**,  
Janesville, WI

**Karen Denny**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**Isaiah Harriday**,  
Woodbine, MD

**J.D. March**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**Dave Nermoe**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**Lowell Nelson**,  
St. Louis Park, MN

**Dave Dominguez**, Minneapolis, MN

**Jon Lien**, Northfield, MN

**Rich Miller**, Pierre, SD

**Tom Lynott**, Ottawa, IL

**Henry Hampton**, Hopkins, MN





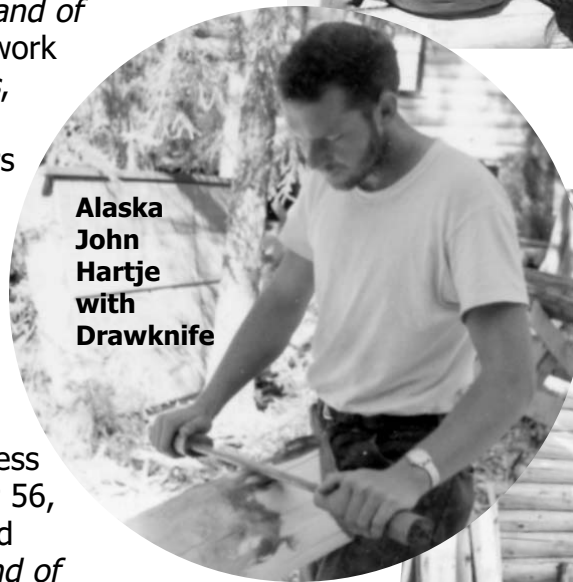
## MEMORABLE EVENTS

Camper program matures ... Extensive camper and staff handbooks developed ... First ACA Standards visitation at Wilderness with leader Whitey Luehrs ... Acquisition of Cove allows for critical road access to Wilderness ... Discussions with Schmid family results in agreement to purchase strategic mainland mile Timberlane between Cove and mouth of Seagull River ... Multi-faceted Summer Work Camps headquarter out of Cove... St. Olaf Professor Arne Flaten designs dramatic log structure – *Band of Brothers Chapel* ... Major work camps at *Band of Brothers*, Evergreen, *Pinecliff*, Trails Shack ... Over 420 campers share with Wilderness staffers on trails ... Resident Seminary Theologian Dr. Janis Rozentals enriches camp life ... Frequent parent, local area, church-wide guests experience Wilderness hospitality ... Staff number 56, from various locales around country . . .Harvesting *Band of Brothers* logs major undertaking ... Pontoon upgrades as transport craft ... Red truck added under Vern Borson's care ... Tragedy strikes – November 10, 1960, as nearly-completed *Pinecliff* burns to the ground ... Resolve tested ... Lutheran Herald writer Pastor Bill Gentz Open House guest speaker.

A Time for Meditation



Alaska  
John  
Hartje  
with  
Drawknife



Ollie  
Teaching  
Trails Basics



"...Wilderness is sacramental..."



## STAFF

**Pastor Ham Muus**, Minneapolis, MN

**Pearl Muus**, Minneapolis, MN  
(Nathan, Jeff and Solveig)

**Nolan Cramer**, Wausau, WI

**Vern Borson**, Chicago, IL

**Mary Harvie**, Minneapolis, MN

**Bob Lindgren**, St. Paul, MN

**Trygg Hanson**,  
St. Paul, MN

**Marge Gulsvig**,  
Wanamingo, MN

**Mary Ekstrom**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**Ed Marquart**,  
Jackson, MN

**Mark Ylvisaker**,  
Moorhead, MN

**Arla Mae Olson**,  
R.N., Calamus, IA

**Jay Moor**,  
St. Paul, MN

**Chip Swanson**,  
Edina, MN

**Carolyn King**, St. Paul, MN

**Karen Gulsvig**,  
Wanamingo, MN

**Isaiah Harriday**,  
Woodbine, MD

**Dave Kvernes**,  
Howard, SD

**Ron Flugum**,  
Northfield, MN

**John Lee**, Williston, ND

**Ed Knudson**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**Dave Croft**, St. Paul, MN

**Beth Mickelson**,  
Crookston, MN

**Eloise Hanson**, Grand Marais, MN

**Trygg Hanson**, St. Paul, MN

**Beulah Lukason**, Paynesville, MN

1961

**Sam Kochel**, Janesville, WI

**Jim Christianson**, Mankato, MN

**Dave Dominguez**, Minneapolis, MN

**Dave Johnson**, Mitchell, SD

**Jeanne Fausl**, St. Paul, MN

**Ron Lundeen**, St. Paul, MN

**Chap. Herman I. Muus**, Grand Marais, MN

**Gladys Muus**,  
Grand Marais, MN

**Roy Nilsen**,  
Milwaukee, WI

**Mary Nilsen**,  
Milwaukee, WI  
(Per)

**Jerry Varland**,  
Ottawa, IL

**Dave Nermoe**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**Dave Graham**,  
Roberts, WI

**Diane Dahlberg**,  
Solon Springs, WI

**Scott Haasarud**, Van Nuys, CA

**Lynn Swanson**, Edina, MN

**Roger Nermoe**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**Eric Petersen**,  
Palo Alto, CA

**Ric Raymond**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**Bill Oberg**,  
St. Paul, MN

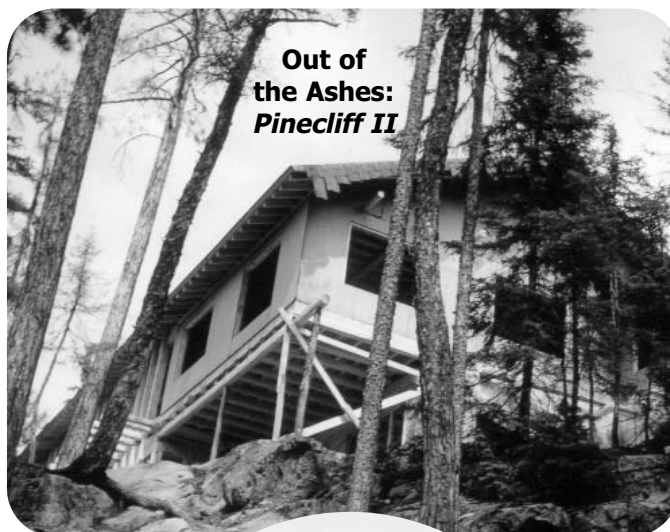
**Dick Kasch**, Freeport, IL

**Dennis Malarky**,  
St. Paul, MN

**Dave Monge**, Tracy, MN

**Peter Rogness**, St. Paul, MN

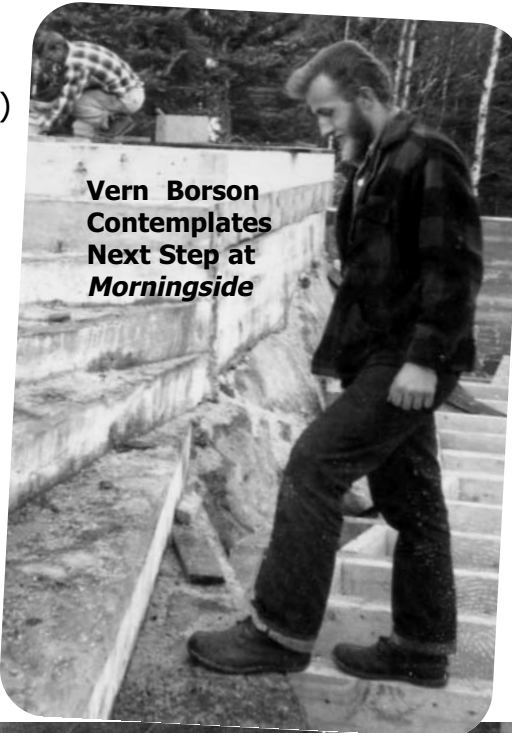
**Tom Tompte**, Park Ridge, IL



*"...in the beginning was  
the LOGOS..."*

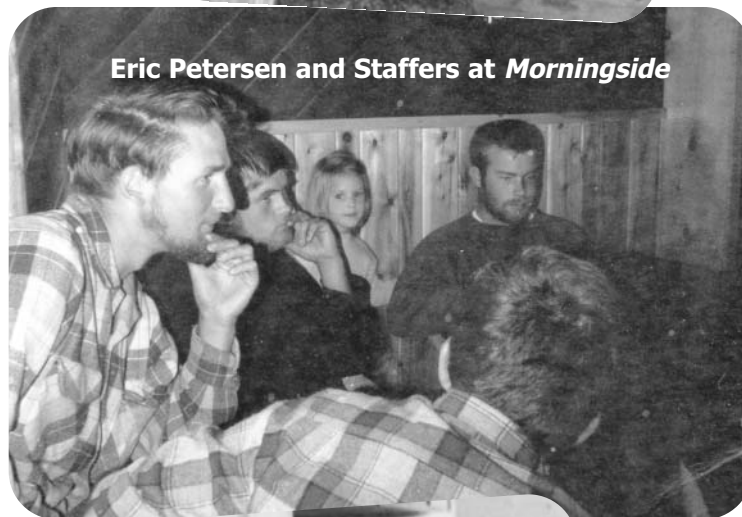
## MEMORABLE EVENTS

St. Olaf and Northfield architect Ed Sovik (Sovik, Mathre, Madson) helps design new *Pinecliff* destined to "rise out of the ashes" ... Parking lot developed north of Cove property with US Forestry Service and Ed Thoreson Construction Co. collaboration ... Extensive Work Camp (both winter and summer) ... Again, important Work Campers volunteer, headquarter at *The Cove* with Roy, Mary Nilsen coordinating ... Another 450 campers during summer season ... 50+ staff ... Staff Training resource, Pastor Vern Anderson ... *Band of Brothers* construction accelerated with Dedication Day in August ... Several trails groups "build community" over longer 10-14 day expeditions ... Special arrival campfire ceremonies included staff "song fest," sharing of the faith ... All campers received Wilderness New Testaments and camper "disclosure" crosses ... Food Service staff prepare turkey dinner for many returning Trails crews ... *Beulah Bread* remains as Wilderness symbol of hospitality ... Annual PCYC Board of



**Vern Borson  
Contemplates  
Next Step at  
*Morningside***

Trustees Retreat on-site ... Seminary President and our mentor, Dr. Alvin Rogness is Open House speaker ... Dr. A. E. Hanson, District President, assists in Dedication of *Band of Brothers Chapel* ... Chaplain Oz Anderson provided a spirited Board of Trustees honoring response ... Over 200 guests shared the day, including "shore lunch."



**Eric Petersen and Staffers at *Morningside***



**My Dad  
and  
Tom  
Tomphe**

*"...be of  
love a little  
more  
careful..."*



## STAFF

**Pastor Ham Muus**, Minneapolis, MN

**Pearl Muus**, Minneapolis, MN  
(Nathan, Jeff and Solveig)

**Nolan Cramer**, Wausau, WI

**Greg Bjornstad**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**Tom Everson**,  
Eau Claire, WI

**Mark Anderson**,  
Manitowoc, WI

**Gary Bergren**,  
Red Wing, MN

**Chap. Herman I. Muus**,  
Grand Marais, MN

**Gladys Muus**,  
Grand Marais, MN

**Doug Jordan**,  
Spring Green, WI

**Dave Hernes**,  
Longview, MN

**Larry Larson**, Mt. Horeb, WI

**Ken Petersen**, Atlantic, IA

**Art Kottke**, Minneapolis, MN

**Eric Petersen**,  
Menlo Park, CA

**Margaret Habeck**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**Dave Nermoe**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**Pete Hustad**,  
Edina, MN

**Tom Hewitt**, Fargo,  
ND

**Vic Trygstad**,  
Manhassat, NY

**Steve Larson**,  
Richfield, MN

**Ed Knudson**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**Dave Johnson**, Mitchell, SD

1962



Surveyors  
Borson and  
O'Bradovich



Portage  
Solitude

**Dan O'Bradovich**, Red Wing, MN

**Roger Nermoe**, Minneapolis, MN

**B.J. Muus, III**, Ottawa, IL

**Beulah Lukason**, Paynesville, MN

**Jeb Monge**, Tracy, MN

**Marge Gulsvig**, Wanamingo, MN

**Paul Haugh**, Faribault, MN

**Vern Borson**, Chicago, IL

**Sol Gipson (Bird Mockicin)**,  
Kansas, OK

**Frank Kalbing**,  
Milwaukee, WI

**Jeanette Thompson**,  
Eagle Grove, IA

**Lynn Swanson**, Edina, MN

**Dave Doran**, Minneapolis, MN

**Peter Rogness**, St. Paul, MN

**Tom Skovholt**, St. Paul, MN

**Ken Kelly**, Arcadia, CA

**Chip Swanson**, Edina, MN

**Nancy Caple**, International Falls, MN

**Marion Biel, R.N.**,  
Lime Springs, IA

**Lee Dybvig**, Dayton, OH

**Chris Clark**, Palo Alto, CA

**Elmer Jorgenson**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**Karen Denny**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**Lynne Jordan**,  
Spring Green, WI

**Don Rudrud**, Van Nuys, CA

**Karen Rudrud**, Rio, WI

**Scott Haasarud**, Berkeley, CA

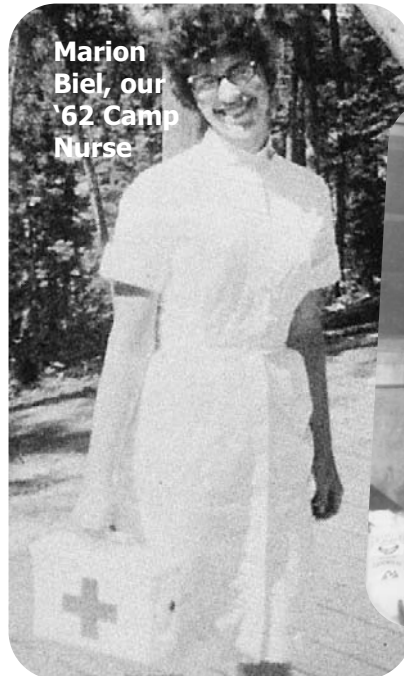
**Karen Gulsvig**,  
Wanamingo, MN

**Glenda Anderson**, Braham, MN

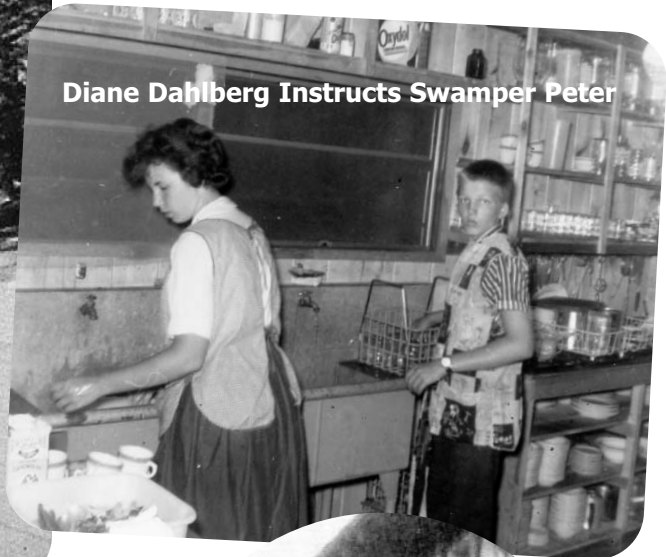
**Mary Ekstrom**, Minneapolis, MN

## MEMORABLE EVENTS

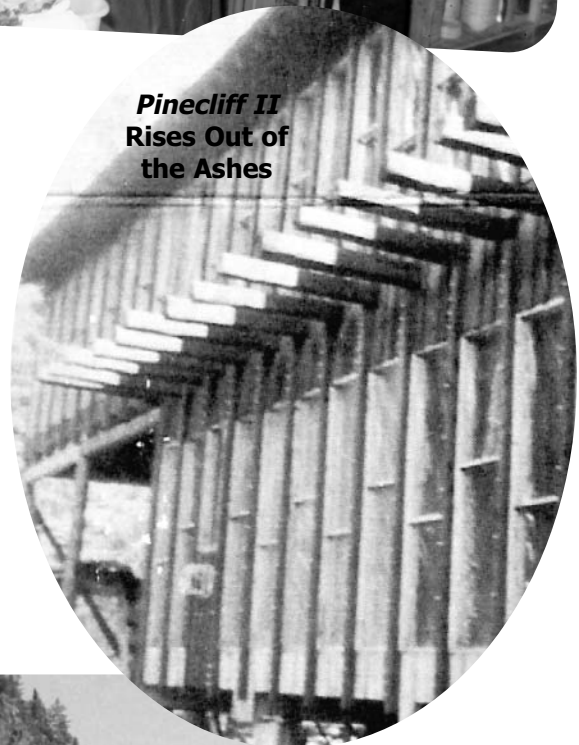
The Wilderness family was shocked and saddened by the death of Guide/Counselor Larry Larson (Mt. Horeb, Wisconsin) . . . Forty plus staffers served with almost 475 campers from seven different states ... Attentions intensified toward meeting the standards for accreditation with the ACA (American Camping Association) ... *Pinecliff* received "stained glass" windows from old Minneapolis Metropolitan Building (elevator doors) ... Wilderness hosted two significant retreats: The BCA (Bible Camp Association) and Youth Leaders plus the first Bishop's Retreat with Dr. Fredric Schiotz (inspired by Dr. Loren Halvorson and Bishop Hans Lilje) ... Chapel Builders are especially honored ... Reconstruction work at *The Cove* continues with an eye toward all-season usage ... Brauer & Associates (Paul Fjare, Don Brauer) start preliminary master plan for the four Wilderness properties ... *The Cove* in-drive is graded ... Les Blacklock and camera crew make Wilderness visit ... Disclosures by campers following return to camp become regular evening events ... Colleague Curt Johnson becomes integral part of Wilderness planning and operations. Dr. Paul Boe (ALC Division of Social Services) gives Open House address.



Marion  
Biel, our  
'62 Camp  
Nurse



Diane Dahlberg Instructs Swamper Peter



*Pinecliff II*  
Rises Out of  
the Ashes



Veterans  
Dave  
Johnson  
and Scotty  
Haasarud

"I know  
that my  
Redeemer  
lives!"

## STAFF

**Pastor Ham Muus**, Minneapolis, MN

**Pearl Muus**, Minneapolis, MN  
(Nathan, Jeff and Solveig)

**Nolan Cramer**, Wausau, WI

**Mark Anderson**,  
Manitowoc, WI

**Mary Hong**,  
Northfield, MN

**Ric Strot**, Del Rio, TX

**Luther Dale**,  
St. Louis Park, MN

**Brad Enerson**,  
St. Paul, MN

**Janet Baumann**,  
Mt. Prospect, IL

**Tom Hewitt**, Fargo ND

**Ken Petersen**,  
Atlantic, IA

**Luther Lund**,  
St. Peter, MN

**Dave Nordsletten**,  
Bloomington, MN

**Lois Rambo**,  
Ogdensburg, WI

**Keith Olstad**,  
Manitowoc, WI

**Phil Anderson**,  
Manitowoc, WI

**Lynne Jordan**,  
Spring Green, WI

**Glen Sorenson**, Springfield, VA

**Frank Kalbing**,  
Milwaukee, WI

**Jim Lund**, Mankato, MN

**Eric Petersen**,  
Menlo Park, CA

**Judy Riegel**, LeMars, IA

**Tom Skovholt**, St. Paul, MN

**Wayne Vetter**, Chicago, IL

**Lynn Swanson**, Edina, MN

**Eldon Swenson**, McCallsburg, IA

1963



**Beulah Lukason**, Paynesville, MN

**Greg Bjornstad**, St. James, MN

**Karen Denny**, Minneapolis, MN

**JoAnne Eggert**, Clyman, WI

**Sol Gipson (Bird Mockicin)**,  
Kansas, OK

**Pete Sethre**, Ada, MN

**Pat Craychee**, Arcadia, CA

**Dave Gisselquist**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**Jim Harbo**, Grosse Point, MI

**Walt Kruckeberg**,  
Faribault, MN

**Ric Raymond**, Richfield, MN

**Glenda Anderson**,  
Marshall, MN

**Sally Rafnson**,  
Minneota, MN

**Roger Roiger**,  
St. James, MN

**Chap. Herman I. Muus**,  
Grand Marais, MN

**Gladys Muus**,  
Grand Marais, MN

**Clint Christian**,  
Chicago, IL

**Vern Borson**,  
Chicago, IL

**Mary Dybvig**,  
Dayton, OH

**Dianne Anderson**, Hovland, MN

**Judy Engle**, Minneapolis, MN

**Steve Larson**, Richfield, MN

**Dave Doely**,  
St. Louis Park, MN

**Elmer Jorgenson**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**Dennis Adams**, Minneapolis, MN

**Peter Boe**, St. Louis Park, MN

**Sandra Overdahl**, Badger, IA

**Dennis Everson**, St. Paul, MN



## MEMORABLE EVENTS

Wilderness fulfills all the basic standards advocated by the ACA and becomes fully accredited ... I was elected Minnesota Section ACA president ... Almost 500 campers (trails and work) share with 45 staff ... Vigorous efforts made to meet capital indebtedness by *Chapel and Youth Builders* ... Spring retreat targets parish youth leaders in shaping camping/retreat ministry ... Regular Sunday evening renewal hosted by staffer Pearl at *Morningside* ... Chaplain Ron Henrickson continues Red Wing State Training School connections ... Discussions initiated with Board member Oscar Husby about possible bridge to link Fishhook and Dominion Islands ... Fall finds *Pinecliff* busy with retreatants ... WILDERNESS, together with *Outlaw Ranch* and *Koinonia*, serves as a "model for camping ministry outreach" at Bible Camp Association Workshop ... August Open House welcomes almost 250 guests for worship and fellowship ... My dad, Chaplain Herman I. Muus brings hopeful message.

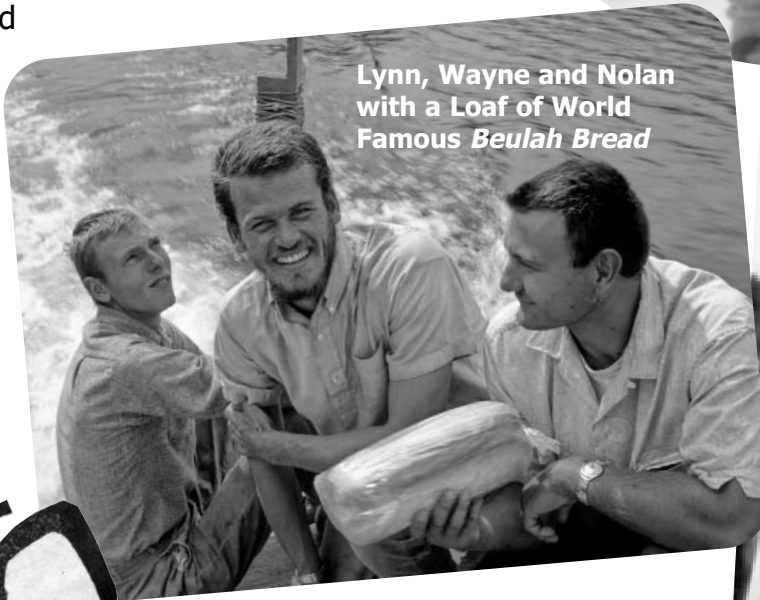
Counselor Greg Bjornstad and Crew at *Band of Brothers*



Black Hat  
Glen Sorenson



Lynn, Wayne and Nolan  
with a Loaf of World  
Famous *Beulah Bread*



Faithful  
Peter Boe





## STAFF

**Pastor Ham Muus**, Minneapolis, MN

**Pearl Muus**, Minneapolis, MN  
(Nathan, Jeff and Solveig)

**Nolan Cramer**, Wausau, WI

**Mary Ekstrom**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**Mark Anderson**,  
Manitowoc, WI

**Paul Preus**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**Lee Hill**, Hibbing, MN

**Martha Rogness**,  
St. Paul, MN

**Jim Johnson**,  
Grand Marais, MN

**Mike Helffrich**, Ottawa, IL

**Judy Olson**, Minneapolis, MN

**Cord Congelton**,  
Grand Marais, MN

**Vern Borson**, Chicago, IL

**Sol Gipson**  
(**Bird Mockicin**),  
Kansas, OK

**Peter Boe**, St.  
Louis Park, MN

**Doug Knudson**,  
Comfrey, MN

**Janet Baumann**,  
Mt. Prospect, IL

**Elaine Dale**,  
Moorhead, MN

**Jerry Gossel**,  
Spencer, SD

**Shirley Dahlen**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**Lynne Jordan**, Wheaton, IL

**Jeanette Burrack**, Arlington, IA

**Keith Olstad**, Manitowoc, WI

**Shar Weymouth**, Minneapolis, MN

**Lee Mesna**, Minneapolis, MN

**Carol Rhodes**, Watertown, SD

1964



Leave No  
Trace

**Phil Anderson**, Manitowoc, WI

**Karen Denny**, Minneapolis, MN

**Glenda Anderson**, Marshall, MN

**Bruce Harshberger**, St. Paul, MN

**Mary Ostenso, R.N.**, Willmar, MN

**Steve Boone**, Tucson, AZ

**Myrna Jorgenson**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**Elaine Voss**, Decorah, IA

**Dan Holm**, Sioux Falls, SD

**Sonja Christoperson**,  
St. Louis Park, MN

**Luther Dale**,  
St. Louis Park, MN

**Tom Hewitt**, Fargo, ND

**Elmer Jorgenson**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**Chap. Herman I. Muus**,  
Grand Marais, MN

**Gladys Muus**, Grand  
Marais, MN

**Brad Enerson**,  
St. Paul, MN

**Willie Olsen**, Chicago, IL

**Ric Raymond**,  
Richfield, MN

**Ric Strot**, Del Rio, TX

**Jim Carpenter**,  
Oshkosh, WI

**Ken Petersen**,  
Atlantic, IA

**Jim Harbo**,  
Grosse Point, MI

**Lois Rambo**, Ogdensburg, WI

**Dave Nordsletten**, Dallas, TX

**Wayne Vetter**, Chicago, IL

**Dave Gisselquist**, Minneapolis, MN

**Dan Ostergaard**, Elbow Lake, MN

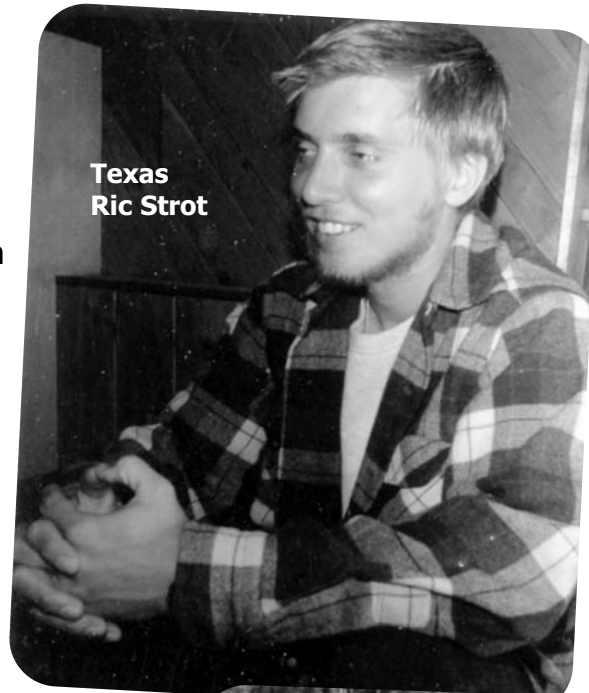
**Jerry Snustad**, Watertown, SD

**B.J. Muus, III**, Ottawa, IL

**Cliff Schmidt**, West Allis, WI

## MEMORABLE EVENTS

Together with veteran Guide/Counselors Ken Petersen and Nolan Cramer, two high adventure, long-term, month-long camping experiences emerged ... Both *Nor'Wester* (33 days) and *Yokefellow* (24 days) grouped at-risk and parish youth together for in-camp and trails life ... Two *Mary-Martha* (18 days) trips with girls from parishes and from Sauk Center Home School, led by Guide/Counselors Karen Denny and Lois Rambo ... with adult advisors Shirley Dahlen and Shar Weymouth (Hauer) ... Another season of almost 500 campers taxed both staff and facility ... An informal revisit by ACA leaders brought kind words for Wilderness program growth ... Dr. Paul Boe, ALC Division of Social Service, offered high praise for this unique ministry of outreach ... *Band of Brothers Chapel* becomes center for meditation and worship and is much photographed for its distinctive, lofty beauty ... Over three dozen drivers and trip advisors are regularly hosted at evening briefings at *Morningside* ... Dr. Janis Rozentals again serves as "Theologian in Residence" ... I was honored to provide shared authorship for *Guidelines for Church Camping*, published by ALC Youth Department ... Fall once again busy with retreatants ... Annual PCYC Board of Trustees Retreat proves to be important workshop for shaping PCYC ministry ... Dr. Boe again brings message at well-attended Open House.



Texas  
Ric Strot

"...and walk  
in love, as  
Christ  
loved us..."



Mike Helffrich (Far Rt) and Crew  
Ready for Trails Adventure



Janet  
Baumann  
Crowned

## STAFF

**Pastor Ham Muus**, Minneapolis, MN

**Pearl Muus**, Minneapolis, MN  
(Nathan, Jeff and Solveig)

**Nolan Cramer**, Wausau, WI

**Paul Anderson**, Manitowoc, WI

**Jim Carlson**, Waterloo, IA

**Mary Rollefson**, Rushford, MN

**Barb Forland**, Northwood, IA

**Bob Hewitt**, Hibbing, MN

**Paul Preus**, Minneapolis, MN

**Mike Helffrich**, Ottawa, IL

**Vern Borson**, Chicago, IL

**Martha Rogness**, St. Paul, MN

**Jim Gronewald**, Manchester, IA

**Mary Ekstrom**, Minneapolis, MN

**Andrew Rogness**, St. Paul, MN

**Harvey Pedersen**, Ruthton, MN

**Jim Abrahamson**, Akron, IA

**Sonja Christopherson**, St. Louis Park, MN

**Phil Anderson**, Manitowoc, WI

**Diane Aaserude**, Cass Lake, MN

**Marilyn Anderson**, Braham, MN

**Wayne Vetter**, Chicago, IL

**Sandy Christenson**,  
Minneapolis, MN

**Peter Rogness**, St. Paul, MN

**Ingrid Larson**, Hawley, MN

**Keith Olstad**, Manitowoc, WI

**Lois Rambo**, Ogdensburg, WI

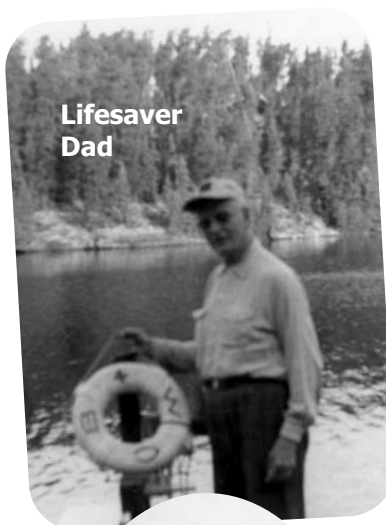
**Neal Reudisili**, Madison, WI

**Dave Sundt**, St. Louis Park, MN

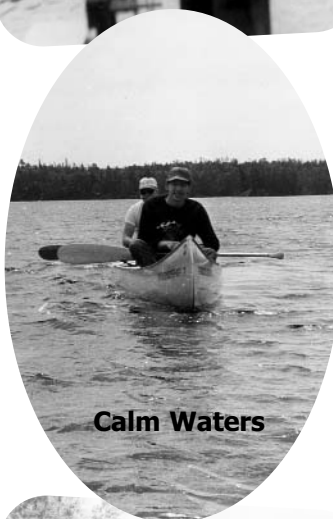
**Chap. Herman I. Muus**, Grand Marais, MN

**Gladys Muus**, Grand Marais, MN

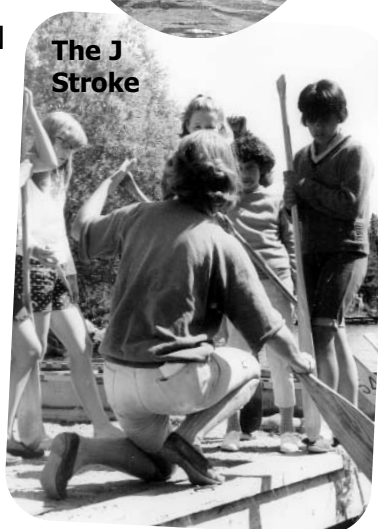
1965



Lifesaver  
Dad



Calm Waters



The J  
Stroke

**Glenda Anderson**, Marshall, MN

**Norm Anderson**, Hettinger, ND

**John Pierson**, Woodstock, MN

**Burnie Hernes**, Canton, SD

**Tony Sarsland**, St. Paul, MN

**Ken Petersen**, Atlantic, IA

**Andy Olson**, Heron Lake, MN

**Phil Solberg**, Fergus Falls, MN

**Steve Croft**, St. Paul, MN

**Sandy Doering**, Robbinsdale, MN

**Lucia Holm**, MacIntosh, MN

**Mary Beth Larson**,  
Watertown, SD

**Jan Peterson**, Minneapolis, MN

**Miriam Schultz**, Minneapolis, MN

**Lee Hill**, Hibbing, MN

**Jerry Snustad**, Watertown, SD

**Luther Dale**, St. Louis Park, MN

**Greg Bjornstad**, Minneapolis, MN

**Carl Feske**, St. Paul, MN

**Louise Feske, R.N.**, St. Paul, MN  
(Carl, Jr. and Charlie)

**Jim Wiinanen**, Iron, MN

**Lynn Swanson**, Edina, MN

**Jim Rye**, Huxley, IA

**Roger Harvey**, Ottawa, IL

**Ron Hanson**, Benson, MN

**Shirley Dahlen**, Minneapolis, MN

**Peter Boe**, St. Louis Park, MN

**Cord Congelton**, Grand Marais, MN

**Connie Hanson**, Benson, MN

**Gordon Saager**, Ottawa, IL

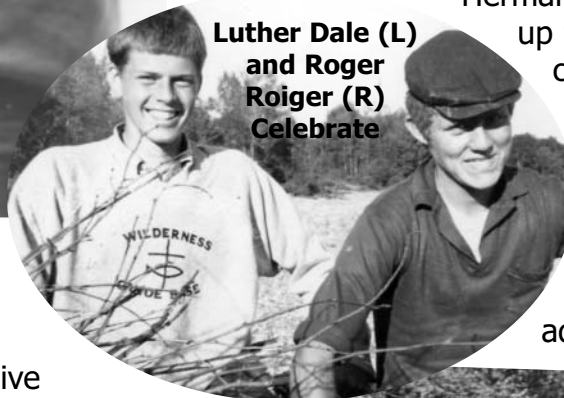
**Myrna Jorgenson**, Minneapolis, MN

**Wayne Thornwall**, Minneapolis, MN



**Burnie  
Hernes  
Carries**

sharing, historical-briefing ... Wilderness is recognized within BCA as one of the ALC's finest camping ministries ... Planning continues with the Oscar Husby "team" moving toward a full suspension bridge between the islands ... Permits are secured to facilitate ... Dramatic bridge winter work accomplishes almost "impossible" task with great success ... Oscar and Joe Husby, Vern Huso, Carl Feske, and Claire Timmons, together with Ed Thoreson, Larry Peterson, Harold Moe, Clarence Strand, Vern Borson, Herman I. and Gladys Muus, make up the on-site bridge



**Luther Dale (L)  
and Roger  
Roiger (R)  
Celebrate**

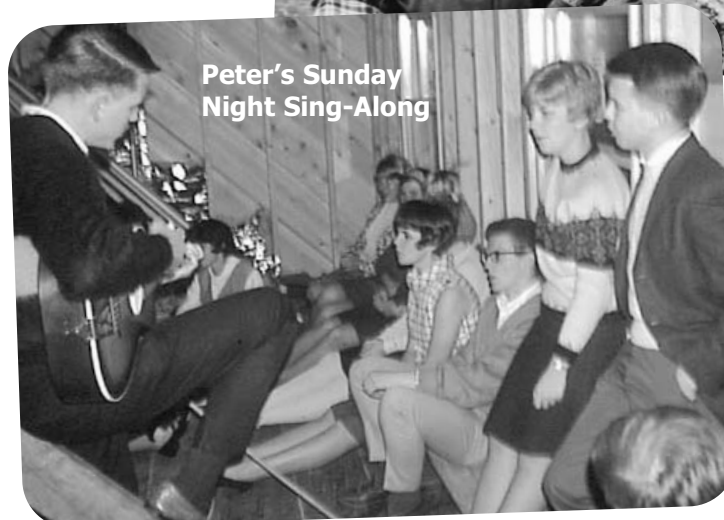
construction crew ... An incredible achievement ... "to the glory of God," entitled *Bridge of the Master* ... Pastor Leonard Klippen, (SE Minnesota ALC staff) gives challenging address at Open House.

## MEMORABLE EVENTS

The Camp Word: Psalm 51:10-12 ... All arriving Wilderness campers receive their own personal New Testament (a gift of The Shepherd Company ... John Allen) ... Each day, a fresh copy of the *Trail Blazer* is typed, mimeographed and made available to the entire camp community ... Program includes Doulos, Sauk Center Home School girls (led by Guide/Counselor Jan Peterson and Adult Advisor Shirley Dahlen), Voyageur Red Wing STS (20 days), led by Lee Dybvig, and Four Point ... plus *Nor'Wester* and *Yokefellow* again ... All are extended, cross-cultural, camper-oriented and involved ... More than 500 campers average just over two weeks this season ... In-camp orientation is expanded with nature and ecological discovery, group goal



**1965 Guide  
Orientation  
Meditation**



**Peter's Sunday  
Night Sing-Along**

*"...to you,  
O Lord, I lift  
up my soul...  
in you, O God,  
I trust..."*

## STAFF

**Pastor Ham Muus**, Minneapolis, MN

**Pearl Muus**, Minneapolis, MN  
(Nathan, Jeff and Solveig)

**B.J. Muus, III**, Ottawa, IL

**Nolan Cramer**, Minneapolis, MN

**Glenda (Anderson) Cramer**, Minneapolis, MN

**Phil Wangberg**, Duncombe, IA

**Phil Anderson**, Manitowoc, WI

**Phil Rovang**, Osage, IA

**Sheila Best**, St. Louis Park, MN

**Peter Rogness**, St. Paul, MN

**Karen Borg-Breen**, Shelly, MN

**Dave Putz**, Wells, MN

**Marianne Christianson**, LaCrosse, WI

**Andrea Pedersen**, Arcadia, CA

**Steve Croft**, St. Paul, MN

**John Lee**, Sioux Falls, SD

**Judy Eliassen**, Hovland, MN

**Sandy Koskela, R.N.**, Hibbing, MN

**Jim Gronewald**, Shell Rock IA

**Lucia Holm**, McIntosh, MN

**Burnie Hernes**, Canton, SD

**Mary Rollefson**, Rushford, MN

**Peter Boe**, St. Louis Park, MN

**Lois Rogen**, St. Paul, MN

**Lynn Swanson**, Edina, MN

**Vern Borson**, Grand Marais, MN

**Nancy (Caple) Borson**,  
Grand Marais, MN  
(Beret)

**Sandy Seim**, Crystal, MN

**Charlene Evers**, St. Paul, MN

**Larine Revord**, Minneapolis, MN

**Joanne Gronewald**, Shell Rock, IA

**Bob Peters**, Madelia, MN

1966

*"...The  
heavens  
declare the  
glory of  
God..."*



**Bob Hewitt**, Hibbing, MN

**Jim Wiinanen**, Iron, MN

**Jeff Barrow**, Billings, MT

**Sonja Christopherson**, St. Louis Park, MN

**Dave Sundt**, St. Louis Park, MN

**Marla Bockelman**, Edina, MN

**Sandy Senkpiel**, Evergreen Park, IL

**Cord Congelton**, Grand Marais, MN

**Denny Rike**, Tiltonka, IA

**Mary Ekstrom**, Minneapolis, MN

**Ginny Feder**, Madelia, MN

**Bruce Moortell**, Minneapolis, MN

**Jim Halvorson**, McIntosh, MN

**Mary Beth Larson**, Watertown, SD

**Lee Hill**, Hibbing, MN

**Fred Koskela**, Hibbing, MN

**Paul Anderson**, Manitowoc, WI

**Jim Ulrich**, Minneapolis, MN

**Marilyn Berge**, Dazey, ND

**Phil Solberg**, Fergus Falls, MN

**Mike Helffrich**, Ottawa, IL

**Diane Glesne**, Underwood, MN

**Tom VonFischer**, Springfield, MN

**Betty Winter**, Currie, MN

**Frank Kalbing**, Foley, MN

**Paul Muus**, Ottawa, IL

**Sam Larsen**, Fairmont, MN

**Dawn Lehman**, Minneapolis, MN

**Mark Anderson**, Manitowoc, WI

**Ben Aune**, Breckenridge, MN

**Wayne Vetter**, St. Paul, MN

**Martha (Rogness) Vetter**, St. Paul, MN

**Paul Larson**, Wittenberg, WI

**Jim Paulson**, St. Louis Park, MN

**Chuck Bishir**, Red Wing, MN

## MEMORABLE EVENTS

The completion of *The Founding Decade* ... ten years of struggle, satisfaction, and Spirit ... blessings abound ... An honoring year for all those who gave of self and substance to bring Wilderness into being ... a mission outpost ... Some 650 campers (the largest in history to date) ... almost 60 staffers ... claiming Hebrews 12:1-2 as the Camp Word ... "So great a cloud of witnesses" ... Program coordinator, B.J. Muus, threaded through the bulk of the summer while I was on special consultation assignment for the BCA (Bible Camp Association) ... The August dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony for *Bridge of the Master* ... Over 300 guests and campers shared Open House ... A grand day for the Husby-Thoreson-WILDERNESS team ... Construction of the Block House ... Dismantling of the old Trail/Guide Hut ... Fall retreats popular ... Co-ed camping opportunities are strengthened ... Late '66 transition plans begin to take shape for the next decade ... A foundation for the future has been established ... Calvary Lutheran's Pastor Henry Nielsen challenges Open House guests.



**Nolan Caught One  
Thiiiiissss Long!**



**Marla  
Bockelman  
Meditates**



**Marianne  
Christianson  
Counts Blessings**



The PCYC commitments through service within the turbulent northside inner city brought both fragile hope and promise. At the same time, determination to share camping opportunities was shaped with great expectations of Christ-renewal in the Boundary Waters ... and beyond.

WILDERNESS emerged with a PLAN and a conviction, a PURPOSE. It all rested in "the hollow of God's hand." There was a PHILOSOPHY rooted in the belief that action and life example could point to Christ ... and a more focused life. The PROGRAM developed and matured over the decade.



And, of course, the marvelous PLACE, on one of the nation's most beautiful lakes, brought inspiration. But it was the PEOPLE who caught the vision ... who were willing to serve and share the faith ... who worked and worshipped. The community of believers made *Wilderness* a special experience for all.

For ten decisive years, I was allowed the opportunity to bring what I could to the table. My partner through life ... Pearl ... was along every step of our often uncertain way. And to all who shared *The Founding Years*, my deep appreciation. It was an historic journey. Now, the challenge: "PASS IT ON..."

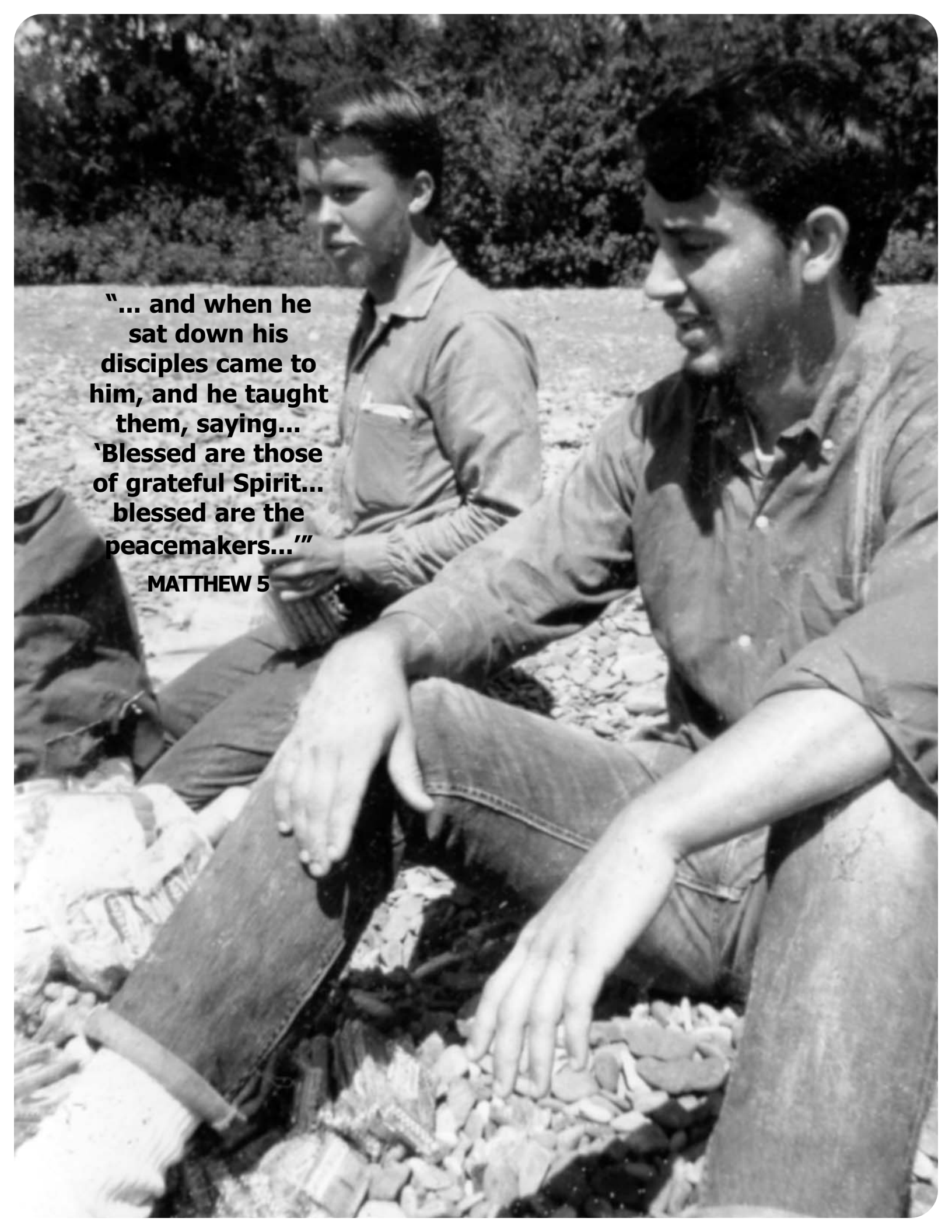
During the summer 1966 season, brother B.J. served as Program coordinator with the help of veteran staff. Nolan Cramer kept me posted with updates as I was consulting with other camps linked to the ALC Bible Camp Association. One brief note Nolan sent had these thoughts:

An experience which has been most meaningful for all and one which I am sure you would have been blessed by participation was our campfire Tuesday night. Tudy and Paul were in charge and offered moments for staff to share thoughts with the group. What an eye-opener it was to my faith as well as for others. Many staff gave reasons as to why they feel they are here. Some really didn't know for sure. Others expressed a real need for and desire to grow in the faith. And we felt (the whole community) the Spirit is at work. It is His Spirit which is enabling the staff to carry out this most unique ministry of the Church. Many expressed a real feeling of inadequacy for the task, but yet, each expressed a trust that God would enable growth in the faith. I understand even more now what you meant when you often said that His Spirit is present and enables us to be His witnesses and "run with perseverance the race set before us."

Nolan's memo addresses the very heart of the WILDERNESS mission in living together as "Community in Christ."



One in Christ... in Harmony with Creation



**"... and when he  
sat down his  
disciples came to  
him, and he taught  
them, saying...  
'Blessed are those  
of grateful Spirit...  
blessed are the  
peacemakers...'"**

**MATTHEW 5**



From the very first season, WILDERNESS was blessed with dedicated, talented staff. As a working camp community, we learned from each other...through Word and deed. Campers often seemed to "catch" the Spirit as they responded to their leaders.

One of those who made deep impressions on others was **Don Rudrud**. His buoyant faith, his ease of encounter was seemingly magnetic. We as staff loved to be around him. His campers frequently gave voice to his authentic faith.

He articulates extremely well the work and witness of WILDERNESS. His thoughtful *Reflections* are insightful.



**Don Rudrud**



In 1956, I was a junior in high school and enjoying life in sunny California. My camping was in the desert and I remember a hiking adventure to the bottom of the Grand Canyon in Arizona. I had only heard of Plymouth Christian Youth Center at a Luther League Convention in San Francisco. It was in that same year, 1956, that PCYC acquired Fishhook Island for an outreach program. I am one of many whose life was deeply affected by the experience of WILDERNESS. I am moved by the vision of the pioneers, the dedication of the builders and the mission and call to service that WILDERNESS continues to affirm.

### **The Vision of the Pioneers**

In the summer of 1953, two Luther Seminary students planned a wilderness canoe trip in the Boundary waters out of International Falls. They took eight boys on a pilot trip led by Bob Evans and Oz Anderson. In 1954, Ham Múús was asked to shape seminary



**SVEA AND  
MENTOR DR.  
GEORGE AUS**

internship in the founding of PCYC. The inspiration among Seminary men Oz, Bob, Ham, Curt Johnson and Bob Nervig was to work with boys that the Lutheran Church often forgot. It could be a program to help curb delinquency. These Luther Sem students drafted a "Plymouth Project" proposal for Dr. Andrew Burgess' Missions Class. Seminary professors George Aus and President Al Rogness encouraged the PCYC dream. An old hotel on Plymouth Avenue was made available. It became a vibrant Center for youth outreach and a worshipping community for the inner-city families.

Embracing a vision of faith with the dreams of young leaders like Ham, Oz and Bob, the Center involved dozens of seminary students. The outreach expanded to include a camping ministry at Camp Knutson, Frontier Farm and then WILDERNESS.

Fishhook Island on Seagull Lake, at the end of the Gunflint Trail, was purchased

for \$12,000. The pioneer development of WILDERNESS Canoe Base began in summer 1957. During the first season at WILDERNESS 120 boys used the facilities. They came from PCYC in the near North Side of Minneapolis, from the Red Wing State Training School, from Hennepin and Ramsey County probation, from the Glen Lake School for Boys and the Duluth Conservation Commission. By the summer of 1958, there were almost 300 teen campers. Their Guide/Counselors wrote a report on each and every camper for follow up work.

It was these pioneers that introduced me to WILDERNESS. I was alerted by one of the first WILDERNESS staff...Lee Dybvig. Camp Director, Ham Múús recruited me. I will never forget that first trip up the North Shore in 1959. Much of the Gunflint was gravel. We pulled into the Seagull Lake landing after dark and found some WILDERNESS canoes and paddles. We pushed off into the darkness to find Fishhook Island. There was no electricity or telephone. What I found in the morning light was a camp emerging. The pioneer staffers had already built fourteen sleeping units, a commissary, boat house, ice house, trail shack, three log cabins, a bunk house, two boat docks, a canoe staging area. There were over thirty canoes and equipment needed for the trails.

It is important to remember the DEDICATION AND HARD WORK OF THE BUILDERS. Whether draw knifing logs or carrying huge loads of sand or supplies or participating in *Operation Log Cabin* or building cabins, we worked. Ham set the pace and we tried to keep up. We pitched in and learned the work ethic. We were united in common purpose. Our breaks were for Kool-Aid or a quick swim to cool off or a sauna at the end of the day. We loved the *Beulah Bread*, baked by Beulah Lukason our cook. Sometimes we would sneak into the kitchen and eat it by the fist full like angel food cake. She was the second female member on the island. Pearl, Ham's wife, was intimately involved from the very beginning. The two women shared warmly together in those early campsite days.



**KAREN JORGENSON BALANCES ON POST AND AFFIRMS CONFIDENCE IN RUD... AS WORK CAMPERS MARVEL**

At the start, most of the staff were men. We imagined that we were pretty tough with our beards, Red Wing boots, stories of long portages, chasing away bears and long days of paddling many miles. The truth was that we preferred to be out on the trails with campers because it was a relief from the hard work back in camp! There were mythological stories passed around at campfires like doing Jap portage without a rest or paddling to Ely for a movie or riding the back of a swimming moose. Karen Gulsvig guided the first female trip in 1960. WILDERNESS kept growing and changing.

We worked hard. We believed we had a job to do. The "builders" sensed that we were establishing a special camp and special relationships. Often pushing their skill levels

to the limit and learning new construction and woods skills on the job. We often put together some rather unorthodox projects.

We not only built, but we rebuilt and cleaned up after fires and windstorms. There have been so many builders in the history of WILDERNESS. Ham inspired us to big dreams. We set high standards. We celebrated when we were fully accredited by the American Camping Association. But WILDERNESS was not just another camp.

WILDERNESS was an intentional Christian Community. *We had a common MISSION.* We were a community made up of staff, campers, volunteers and visitors. In 1961, Wilfred Bockelman wrote in an article in the *Lutheran Standard* magazine. He understood the “purpose of the canoe trip is more than just to provide a thrilling vacation experience for boys, for the canoes are intended to do more than carry boys across lakes; they’re also to carry Christ to boys.” This intentional sharing of Christianity is symbolized best for me by First Word and Close of Day disclosures around the campfire circle. Often in the starlit silence in the glow of a campfire the Gospel was shared. The *MISSION* was also about bearing one another’s burdens. Moved by the stories of the Voyageurs and Native People, we learned how to travel through the lake country using new skills in camping and group living. We helped one another to bear not only packs and canoes, but also real life problems and failures.

Our *MISSION* is to be a *WITNESS TO CHRIST*. The cross was evident at our camp and on our canoes. It reminds us that we are pointing to Christ who is able to guide us through the complexities of life. Every camper got a gift New Testament. We used the Bible in daily study of the Word. Spiritual truth was never to be isolated from the whole experience. As Pastor Ham told our campers... “Everything on the whole trip is going to be spiritual. Paddling a canoe, cleaning a camp site, fishing, washing dishes, working along with others in the group, enjoying the beauty of the North Woods – all of these





activities of the day are related to God and are spiritual.”

The *MISSION* was to experience the wonder and beauty in

God’s Creation... to learn to care for the earth and honor it. The writings of Sigurd Olson and the Psalmists of the Bible informed us. We experienced solitude and Holy special moments at “Listening Points” in the outback. It is hard for me to imagine anyone spending a week in the pristine beauty of the Boundary Waters without a new connection to the Creation and order of the Creator.

Finally, the *MISSION* was also for WILDERNESS to function as a kind of “training center.” Many have gone on to be teachers, pastors, social workers, youth leaders, scientists and leaders in their local churches. As Bockelman wrote and others have affirmed that WILDERNESS... “can easily become a pilot project and a training ground that will serve the whole country...a place where pastors, seminarians, and youth workers can receive special training and special insights in youth work....”

I realized after three WILDERNESS summers that I was called to long-term ministry in the inner-city. Eventually, I worked at the “old hotel,” then as a partner with Pastor Bob Evans at Prince of Glory Lutheran Church that grew out of the first worshiping community at PCYC. A host of others found encouragement for serving vocations at WILDERNESS.

As a parish Pastor of three urban congregations, I have taken campers from each on trips through WILDERNESS Canoe Base. Young Christians from each of these parishes have joined the summer staff at WILDERNESS. They brought much back to our congregation. At Our Saviour’s, we sent a work party to help open the camp in the spring. They have been doing that for over twenty years with wonderful stories to share. The WILDERNESS weekend is now a permanent part of spring at Our Saviour’s.

In more recent times, with colleague Lee Dybvig, we walked the camp lands. We visited the buildings, the familiar vistas and special places, and saw the symbols and memorabilia of WILDERNESS. We paddled to the Palisades. We took enough time to catch some fish. We visited the trail shack and the canoe dock. We meditated at Borderline, ate in *Pinecliff*, visited the solar sauna and shared a prayer in *Band of Brothers Chapel*.

Through it all, I “listened” to the silence. I took time to listen and let my imagination soar. I could hear young people from rural areas of the upper Midwest and teens from the heart of North Minneapolis. I could hear voices of every race and age talking and laughing, wondering and singing. I could hear and see it all in my imagination...and I knew it was good...and God was very close. He is at work... changing... renewing.

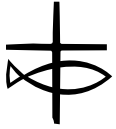




Each time I see this historic 1956 photo, my heart skips a beat. I am standing to the left... Russell Blankenburg is in the center...and Bob Evans is on the right. We had just finished shaking hands with Eve and Russell on the acquisition covenant for the upper half of Fishhook Island. It was a shared moment of unspeakable joy and nervous belief. They had given evidence of their trust in our mission objectives. It was our promise to fulfill.

Both Bob and I were touched by the Blankenburg generosity and attention. Some of their sensitive response may have been due to earlier conversations Pearl and I had with them in 1954. I know that God's Spirit was in and around our negotiations. We finished a meal of Eve's famous stew. We snow-shoed to the Seagull shore to observe the distant Fishhook landscape. We talked earnestly and hopefully. The Spirit moved on that frozen snowscape.

There is a linkage to all four major WILDERNESS acquisitions made during *The Founding Years*. The Blankenburgs were major 'partners' and Upper Gunflint advocates. Their spirit and significance in our camp beginnings was pivotal.



## PIONEER GUARANTORS: THE BLANKENBURGS

The footprints of Russell and Eve Blankenburg are found all along the Gunflint Trail. The very road was charted and largely shaped by the Blankenburgs. They were pioneers in establishing both resort and canoe outfitting business in several Trail locations. We name them as unique collaborators in our WILDERNESS beginnings.

I believe strongly that there was a special mystical connect with the Blankenburgs from our first meeting in 1954. They responded with open hearts. The invitation to acquire Fishhook Island carries a Spirit driven message.

When Russell died, Eve asked me to conduct his funeral service. It was special time. Some years later, I was asked to deliver a message at the dedication of *The Blankenburg Landing*... that very first public landing we used as a point of embarkation for the first three WILDERNESS seasons.

I was taken ill just prior to that historic day. I conferred by phone with Eve. I said I would send her my message. It could be read by another. Sandy Skrien was that person. I offer those words as one testimony of the Spirit and profound debt WILDERNESS owes to this pioneer couple.



*Eve...and other guests assembled at Seagull Lake.*

*This is an historic occasion. Literally and symbolically, this is a LANDMARK ceremony...for it is in the designation of this public landing that appropriate recognition is being given to Eve and Russell Blankenburg. It is historic in that it affirms two persons who themselves embody the very essence of the Gunflint Trail. It is significant and appropriate because it reminds us all afresh of the sensitive spirit and energy brought by these two pioneers to this northland wilderness.*

*It is a noble gesture for it directs specific attention to the two persons who, more than any other, blended their whole beings into the unfolding seasons of the Gunflint.*

*There is a powerful litany which emerges when names of this territory are invoked: Boostrom, Gapen, Powell, Kerfoot, Hedstrom, Cushman, Kirk, Rutstrom, Skrien, Waters, Griffis, Hoover, Brady and Smith. Visions of self-sufficient sojourners flood the mind; whispers from legends carried by long departed eagles and quaking aspen; spirits lofted in reverence by whipping snows and smoldering campfires. These are the very persons whose color and character has shaped the Northwoods mystique and give it an almost larger than life reality.*

*In the midst of this 'host of witnesses' are the two persons who have served like a heartbeat to this tautly connected body. Eve and Russell Blankenburg provided a kind of red thread which gave some pulse and purpose to many interlocking adventures...spanning decades of exploration and growth. Search carefully into the soul of this land and you will see the living reflections of the Blankenburgs.*

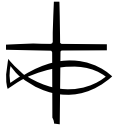
*My own experience with Eve and Russell now stretches back more than thirty years. Some of us more distant folk were captured by the mystery and renewing power of the canoe country. We sought to introduce its life-giving reality to troubled youth. Our quest for some place to develop this dream brought us to Seagull; to Eve and Russell. Lands on Fishhook and Dominion were acquired in order to provide both linkage and roots for our spiritual journey amidst spruce, portages, and campsite. In addition, we received a wealth of information, insight, and encouragement gained in countless encounters with Eve and Russell. Here connections were made between philosophy and reality; between visions and values; between campsite and community. Direct, unvarnished, straight talk sometimes measured...and always wrapped in blankets of loving concern.*



*"...Let all from the heart say 'Amen'..."*

This is now oft-repeated history: Bob and I shook their hands in the acquisition promise of both Fishhook and Dominion Islands. They believed in WILDERNESS outreach. They trusted. They opened their hearts and cabin home to WILDERNESS staffers. They demonstrated patience in some of our early clumsiness. Over *The Founding Years*, they brought advocacy to others on the upper Gunflint. Russell and Eve tempered some rumors about "delinquents" and "felons" which sparked concerns up the Trail. Never...not once did I hear of any second hand complaining or criticism from the Blankenburgs. We valued their counsel and suggestions. Their offers of help were many. They embraced us as worthy neighbors.

Their grace and hospitality came from compassionate hearts. We honor their legacy. They were very special partners within the WILDERNESS circle.



## THE FOUR WILDERNESS LAND ACQUISITIONS

### ***The Fishhook Purchase***

It was early in the spring of 1956 that Bob Evans and I covenanted to begin our pastoral work together at PCYC. The Division of Charities was ready to facilitate those calls-at-large from the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC).

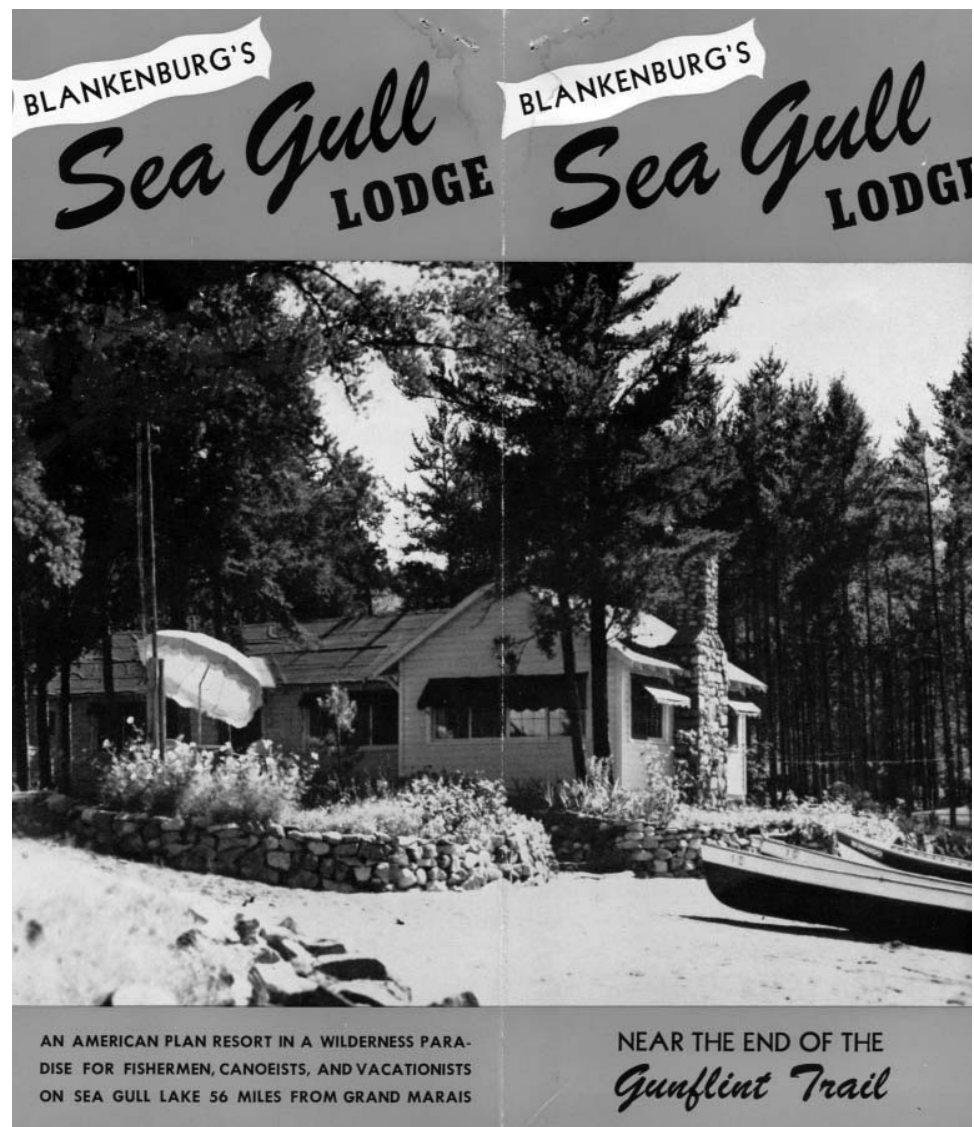
We were both ordained that summer. The Board of Trustees of PCYC agreed to the terms of call... including a very modest salary for each of us. In faith, we plunged deep into our ministry. For Bob, it was a new venture. For me, it was a continuation of 1954 PCYC beginnings.

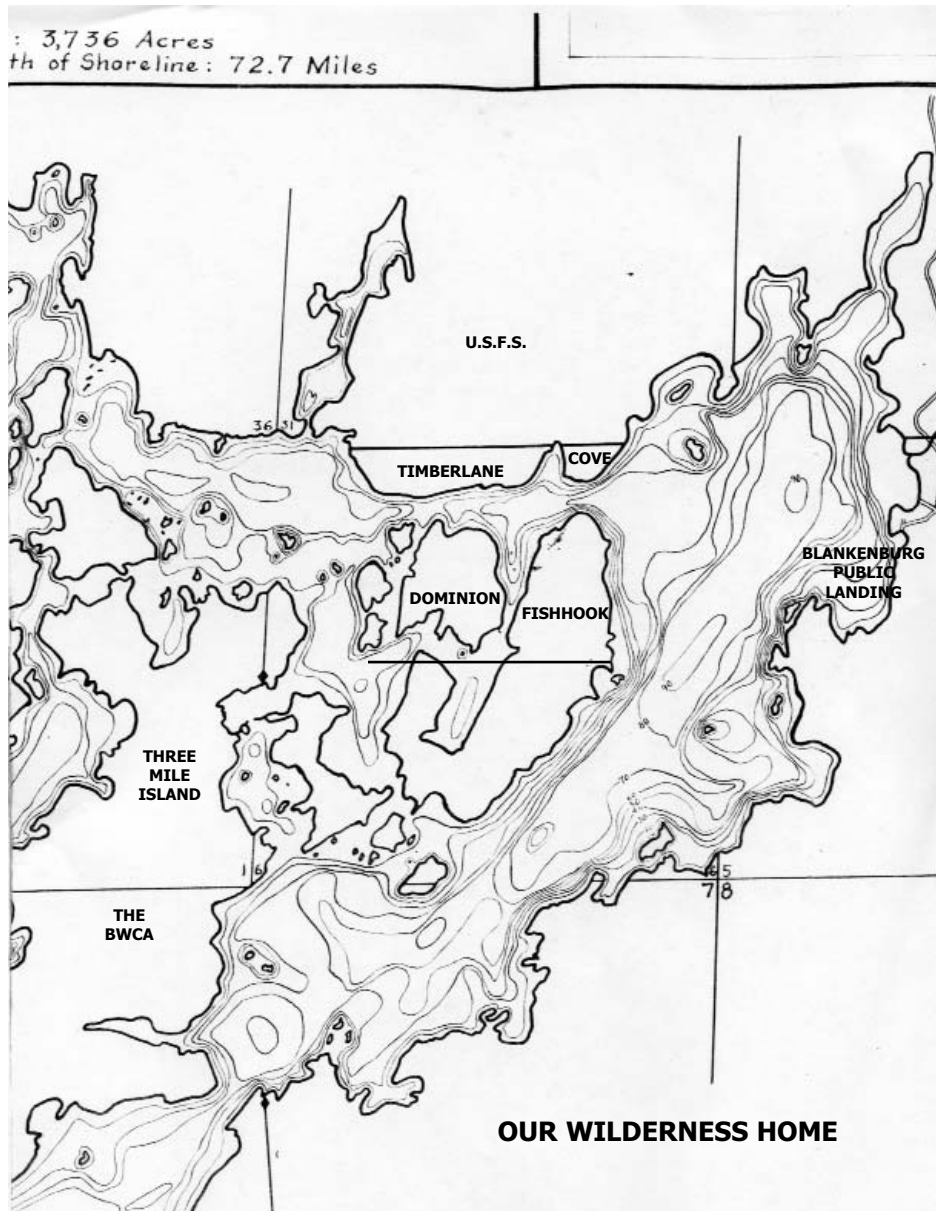
Early on, we wanted to explore the Blankenburg openness to the possibility of land acquisition on Seagull. We liked the more remote Gunflint Trail.

I contacted Eve and Russell and made arrangements for a late fall meeting at their Seagull Lodge.

The visit with the Blankenburgs was both philosophical and pragmatic. We sketched out some of our program hopes and aspirations. They were interested in our competency, experience and discipline.

After much discussion, we came to a common core of agreement. They expressed a remarkable level of trust in our ability to deliver. We snoshed to the public landing where Russell once again offered the opinion that Fishhook Island, the northerly half, could be available. We were elated at their responsiveness.





Eve had prepared a hearty stew and baked warm bread. I offered a table prayer. We continued our discussion throughout the meal. They were quite intrigued by our inner city mission. They were surprised by the considerable camping commitments that PCYC encouraged.

It was in the glow of kerosene lamps that Russell and Eve agreed to sell the Fishhook land. The four of us shook hands as the promises were exchanged. We said we would work hard at coming up with the \$12,000 purchase price. They were satisfied with our sincerity. We were elated to know that almost fifty acres of land bordering the BWCA would be a home base for canoe camping outreach. It was a remarkable moment.

Approximately 1½ years after acquisition papers were formally signed that Government Lot 8... the Fishhook parcel... was transferred by Torrens Title to PCYC... fully paid, September 8, 1958. The commitments made by WILDERNESS *Youth Builders* allowed us to keep our promises and meet these initial obligations.

## ***The Dominion Purchase***

I was keenly aware of the intense scrutiny that was directed toward WILDERNESS in its first season. There was considerable comment on the "Moccasin Telegraph" which traveled up the Gunflint Trail from Grand Marais to the Canadian border. It ranged from curiosity to fear. "Who were these people anyway? Who were these kids that were camping on Seagull? What do they have in mind?" It was a time for trust building.

I had served as an interim pastoral associate in 1954 to the four North Shore Lutheran

congregations. That provided an initial level of needed trust. We had developed both personal and business contacts during that time. Happily, Joel Anderson was called to the 4 point parish. He brought a solid PCYC background. He brought valuable advocacy to WILDERNESS. He encouraged Lutheran parishioners to support and directly involve themselves with this ministry. Joel's word and presence did much to allay initial hesitations.

We were likewise blessed with the presence of the Skrien family at *Way of the Wilderness* Outfitters. Rolf and Gail were persons of faith and great generosity. Rolf had a major hand in our winter '57 ice harvest. They sensed the Spirit was at work.

Importantly, the Blankenburgs occupied the lands adjacent to the public landing. Their outfitting building was a sentinel for all who passed by. They frequently expressed their satisfaction with the behavior and attitude of our campers... both arriving at Seagull for the first time and upon departure for home. Much credit goes to the advisors and drivers who accompanied campers. Their preparations and discipline made positive impressions all around.

Following the 1957 camp season, I approached the Blankenburgs about acquiring Dominion Isle... Government Lot 7 west of Fishhook. They were very receptive. We agreed with firm handshakes. A Contact for Deed was signed for the 40 plus acres for a purchase price of \$9,000. Once again, *Youth Builders* stepped up to the plate to consolidate this strategic acquisition. The Torrens title transfer was officially made December 30, 1966. Dominion was also debt free.

In a very gracious gesture, the Blankenburgs allowed us to build a small shelter for a walk in cooler on their land next to the public landing. After two summers of no and limited ice refrigeration, we needed to have adequate cold storage. The walk-in came from Midwest Refrigeration. The Blankenburgs arranged a drop line connection from their power pole. They even took care of all the charges incurred. It was yet another blessing for our expanding WILDERNESS program. Beulah was delighted, of course!

However, this arrangement was only a temporary solution. We needed both road and electrical access of our own.

### ***The Quiet Cove Purchase***

The *Quiet Cove Lodge* was located on the mainland point north of Fishhook. It had several small lakeside cabins, a rustic lodge and an easement road access off the Gunflint Trail. It was owned by Virginia Brady. Her teenage son, Norman, provided assistance in maintenance. He also





was their primary fishing guide. Much of their business was generated from repeat guests who liked its very deep woods look and simple accommodations.

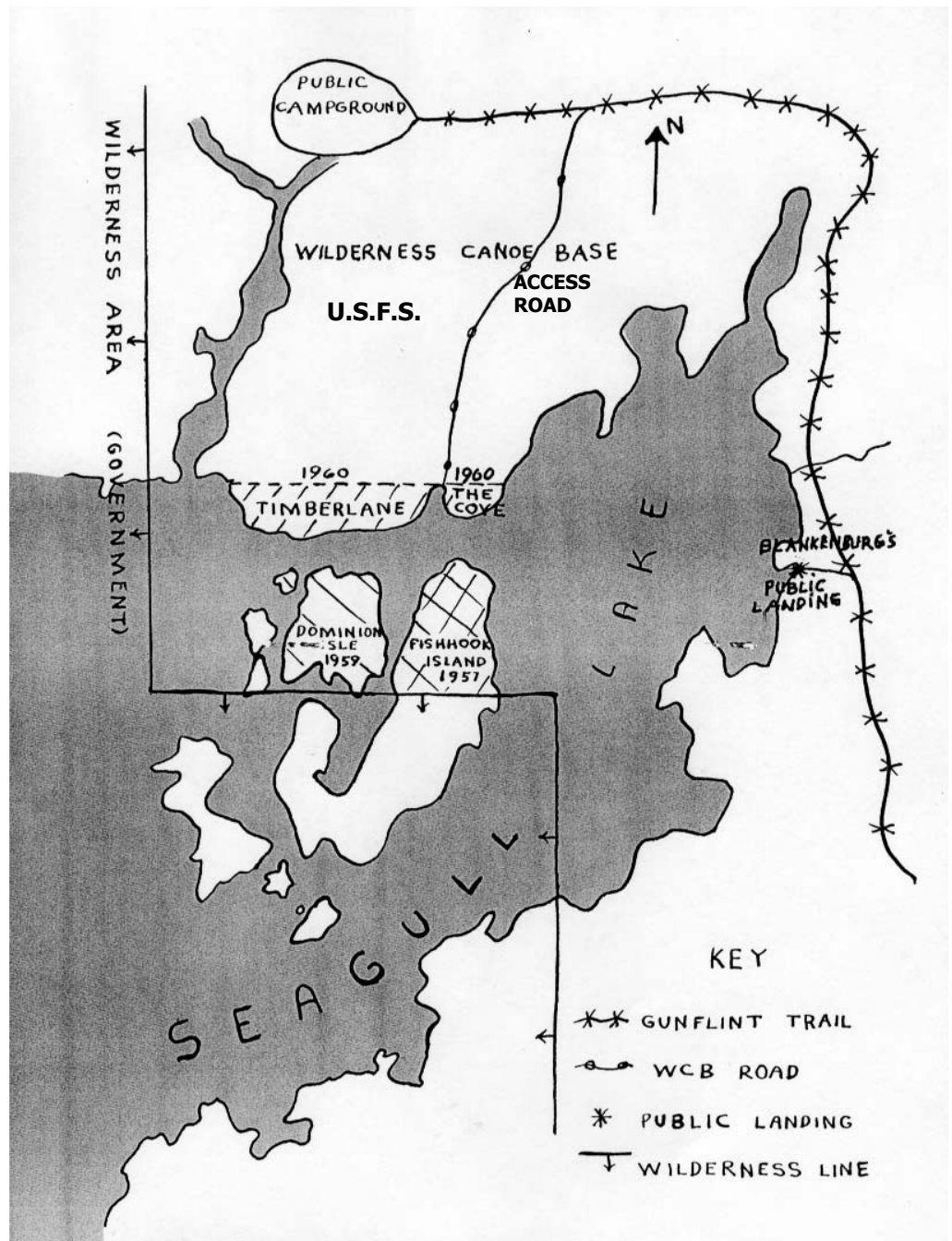
My early 1957 conversations with Virginia Brady helped acquaint her with hopes and plans for our camp. We wanted to be good, cooperative neighbors to *Quiet Cove*. She appreciated our attentions to her livelihood.

In 1958, we visited at some length about both WILDERNESS and *Quiet Cove* futures. She told me that if she ever felt a need to sell the *Quiet Cove* business that we would be the first to know. In 1959, she kept that promise. She came with a proposal for sale. I told her we were definitely interested.

Oz, Bob, and I discussed acquisition details together. We talked to PCYC Board members. There was consensus that it would be a fantastic addition... giving WILDERNESS its own road access, availability to electricity for refrigeration and more. John Allen, Ray Lundquist and other *Youth Builders* were excited by the possibilities and pledged support.

We all worked hard to solidify a financial base over that winter. In late April, 1960, we negotiated a Contract for Deed with Virginia Brady for this strategic tract. The price was \$32,000. It proved to be an indispensable and highly important acquisition.

We were committed to beginning 1960 construction on *Band of Brothers Chapel*. That



meant more work campers and other volunteers. Roy and Mary Nilsen were the first coordinators at *The Cove*. Vern Borson also headquartered there handling major hauling operations. Other staff and drivers were soon accommodated there.

## ***The Timberlane Purchase***

As a part of my professional growth, I began active participation with the Minnesota Section of The American Camping Association in 1955. The Minnesota Section had over 100 allied camps of various affiliations and organizations. It was the major standards group for insuring safe and quality camp experiences for children, youth and families.

Early on, I got to know Bob and Vi Schmid. Their family operated an outstanding private camp in northern Minnesota. Part of their decentralized program offerings for teenagers included canoe camping in the BWCA. Their informal base campsite was on Seagull Lake...near the mouth of the Seagull River flow to Saganaga. We had common interests.

I had frequent visits with the Schmid's. We shared program design and staffing ideas. They were keenly aware of our presence on the islands across from their property which stretched for  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile from the river to *Quiet Cove*.

At one point, Bob Schmid indicated to me that they were considering changing some of their teen program thus finding less need for the primitive Seagull encampment. I indicated that WILDERNESS would be anxious to know of any changes. He promised to advise me if any consideration of sale developed.

In February of 1960, Bob and Vi Schmid invited Pearl and I to their St. Paul home for coffee and some serious conversation. Bob's parents, Erwin and Myrtle Schmid, were also there. The result of these discussions was an invitation for PCYC to consider purchase of their tract... with the expectation that those Seagull shore lands would be incorporated into the WILDERNESS master plan for future camp purposes.

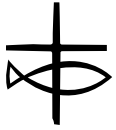
We had the *Quiet Cove* negotiation before us as well. These were critical opportunities for WILDERNESS. Once again, we arrived at a consensus to purchase the Schmid tract...held under Trail Properties, Inc. On May 3, 1960, the deal was finalized to add this beautiful shoreline acreage to WILDERNESS lands. The purchase price was \$19,000. The *Timberlane* property provided a marvelous buffer to the north of Dominion. It was accessible across the bay from *The Cove*. It gave an important land base for any potential retreat, hermitage, or outdoor education ministry.

Once again, WILDERNESS *Youth Builders* pledged to shoulder the financial load of this second 1960 acquisition. We were indeed surrounded by a great cloud of faithful witnesses.

This is the essential record of four strategic acquisitions which provided the base campsite for WILDERNESS outreach mission in *The Founding Years*.



## FIRST FISHHOOK FOOTPRINTS: *BIG GREEN TENT DAYS*



Reflect for a moment on your own state of being... when preparing for a long awaited holiday... or a camping adventure into new territory... or anticipating the arrival of special friends. The adrenaline rush at times like this is powerful. So it was for those of us traveling in late May '57 toward the Fishhook campsite. Lots of enthusiasm, mixed with considerable anxiety and uncertainty.

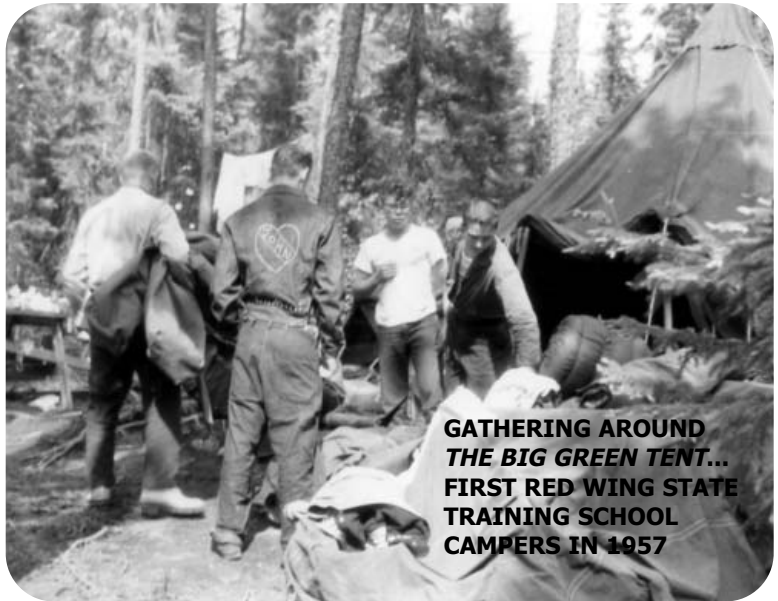
Bob Evans and I had previously been to our Seagull Island. Other crew members had only imaginary notions of what might lie ahead. The trip up the North Shore of Lake Superior and the winding, rolling ride up the 60-mile Gunflint Trail had its own drama. Bob's Lund Craft boat and a pair of canoes were readied and loaded at the public landing. Eve and Russell Blankenburg offered their generous welcome and wishes for "good beginnings." Fishhook Island was being embraced and established as "the base camp"... the home for WILDERNESS life and mission.

Over the next two days, we put together a working campsite. Little by little, our staffers arrived. Canvas Duluth tents were pitched at temporary sites. Our meager tools and supplies were hauled across the lake. Countless windfalls were cleared to make foot passage on the island possible.

Mosquitoes and black flies seemed extremely happy that we arrived. Smoke from our grated cooking ring helped make them

more bearable. The beautiful overlook at the head of the Fishhook main draw was readied for the heavy duty, 16'x16' army surplus *Green Tent*... our headquarters...our home away from home.

All who shared these initial WITNESS days can bear witness to the joy, the wonder, as well as the very primitive nature of our setting. Each person brought a special spirit to



**GATHERING AROUND  
THE BIG GREEN TENT...  
FIRST RED WING STATE  
TRAINING SCHOOL  
CAMPERS IN 1957**

WILDERNESS beginnings. There was much to be thankful for: our fantastic site...the blessings of those who encouraged and supported...the attention of caring families...the determination of a committed crew willing to work together and the grace of God...all combined to lift our hearts and energies.

This was the crew who shared these very early WILDERNESS days with me: Thom McGowan, Dave Johnson, Clarence "Red" Baalson, Paul Trygstad, Dave Dominguez, Bob Robins, Danny Elliott, Lee Dybvig, Don Misner, Fred Norlien, Bob Miller, Chip Weiss, Gene Ripka, Oz and Bob. A very diverse, interesting cadre ready to do "whatever needed to be done."



*The Big Green Tent* served as a point of refuge from the frequent daily rains. It served as commissary and workshop, storage unit and emergency quarters. Meals were prepared over open fire; water dipped from pristine Seagull Lake. A privy was built deep in the back woods. "The Bastille" was constructed of windfall log and recycled lumber. Many of our tasks paralleled life on the canoe trails. Things and times were simple, even sparse, but "spirited." Cooperation was magnificent for all the multiple tasks at hand. We had work to do in this mission undertaking.

We enjoyed getting acquainted with our island. We fashioned a simple Trail and Site plan. Locations for initial construction of tent-top units were chosen. Service areas gradually evolved. Discoveries were noted. Each crew member took some time to explore...bringing back data and insight. Fred Norlien and Paul Trygstad led in the exploration of Seagull bays for elusive fish...trout, northern...even whitefish. Their "contributions" were welcome.

For three weeks, each day's work seemed to be under demanding conditions. We had 22 days of pervasive rains. We were being tested...damp sleeping bags and all. Our soggy devotional gatherings around the campfire kept us focused on our larger mission. As our Canadian friends would say: "Watch what you pray for...eh?" Still, the Spirit was upbeat.

Once in a while we had a few curious BWCA paddlers swing by to speculate about our busy presence. The log crib and dock project at the Fishhook main draw attracted some attention. Guests at the *Quiet Cove* fishing camp noticed the echo of axe chopping on downed windfalls. One day, we were graced by a canoe visit from Eve Blankenburg and Justine Kerfoot...both true Gunflint legends. Eve, of course, was a familiar friend and neighbor. We felt we gained another advocate in Justine. Slowly but surely, WILDERNESS was becoming a recognizable reality. To a person, we were increasingly glad we were here. It was truly an historic adventure.

Indeed, those very early times were complex, difficult and demanding of everyone.



Still, they were days filled with signs of hope and promise. There was satisfaction in doing those jobs necessary for our own survival. It was doubly exciting preparing for the arrival of our first Red Wing campers. We all shared the aching muscles, the tired backs, the mosquito attacks. We also shared the joy of being locked together in pioneer "once in a lifetime" mission.

Founding colleague and spiritual brother, Chaplain Oz Anderson, brought the first Trails crew from the Red Wing

State Training School in mid June. The van was packed with the wide-eyed campers, some camping gear and a liberal supply of requisitioned Government surplus commodities. Guide/counselor Paul Trygstad welcomed and worked with this initial group. In the next days, they received canoe orientation, worked on in-camp projects, set some ground rules for Trails life, and packed out for their days on the Trails starting June 20, 1957...(my birthday!) We all gathered to see them off...offered a blessing...and watched them disappear zig-zag fashion around Dominion Isle.

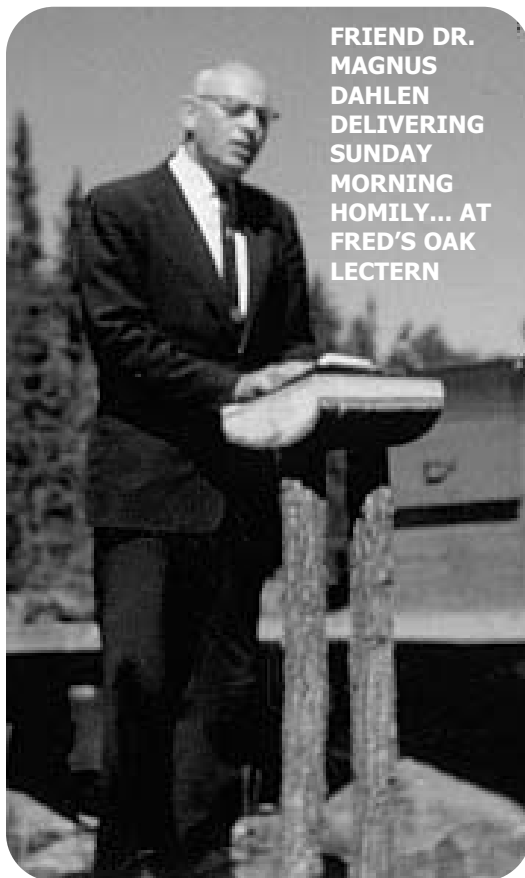
In advance of our first season, we sought out and received valuable counsel and advice from Whitey Luehrs, Camp Director of Camp Widjiwagan. "Widji" had a strong history in small group canoe camping. Whitey helped us recognize the need for establishing and meeting basic Trails standards. We adapted a basic "Widji" Trails food menu to fit our situation. Ours was maybe a "mite" meager. We expected our crews to catch lots of fresh fish. Little did we know...

Over those earliest of Trails experiences, our menu on paper was really not too bad: Breakfast; hardy and tasty pancakes, classic Billy Boy jam, mouth watering dehydrated fruit sauce, maybe oatmeal or gourmet Russian wheat (Bulgar) with plump raisins and cocoa. Trail lunch: Ry-Krisp, raisins, flame broiled cervalet, cheese, peanut bar, and Kool-Aid (all carefully served). Suppers: dehydrated soups with vegetables, rhino meat, an occasional "hoped for" fish fry or chowder, delicious back pack hunter's stew and bannock. Obviously, our meals reflected "the simple life." Campers and staff alike sensed that we all had to make do with what we had available. "Anyone for a seconds on pinto beans??"

As the '57 season progressed, WILDERNESS livability also improved. The hard work and good Spirit produced results. Campers began to arrive, share in-camp life, and depart for the Trails with some regularity. Guide/Counselors and Swampers assumed leadership and support roles. The occasional complaint about the hard work, dehydrated food, and wet sleeping bags gave way to expressions of appreciation for the chance to be at WILDERNESS. Drivers and supervisors were pleasantly surprised at the rapid developments. Every camper had a part in some in-camp work project. Most felt they had shared in something special... whether hauling lumber, pounding nails, mixing concrete or draw knifing logs. This kind of

collective effort marked early WILDERNESS years.

The center of Fishhook maintenance revolved around *The Big Green Tent*. When things needed storage, the *Green Tent* provided. One midseason visit by Pearl, my folks and a couple of friends included a fairly significant gift of "red meat." We had no refrigeration hence no reason to have "red meat". This gift, however, was special. By consensus, we decided to save it for a next day "feast." We carefully boxed and set aside the meat for our next day's event. Unfortunately our mascot Seegu made a midnight discovery and devoured the entire hamburger cache. Wrappings littered the *Green Tent* ground. Who's really to blame? – "Live and Learn" – they say.



FRIEND DR.  
MAGNUS  
DAHLEN  
DELIVERING  
SUNDAY  
MORNING  
HOMILY... AT  
FRED'S OAK  
LECTERN

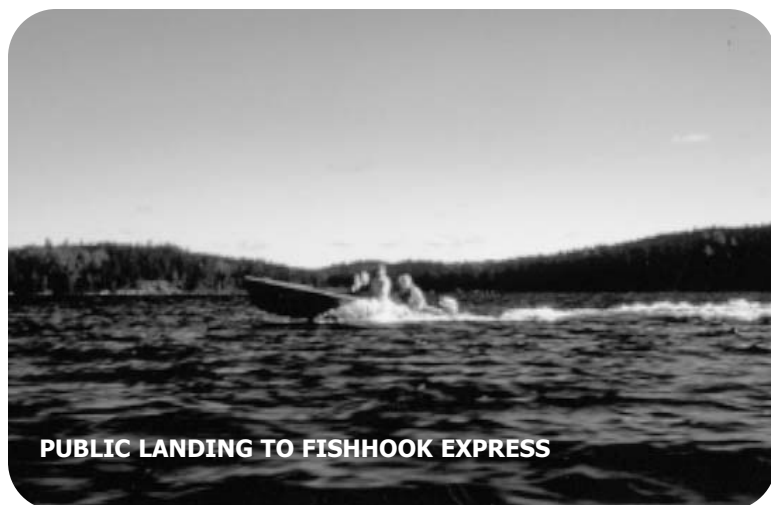
We were not forgotten. Dr. Magnus Dahlen of the ELC Department of Charities paid us a very thoughtful surprise visit shortly thereafter. He too, came bearing "gifts." We had a camper exchange that day. The bacon he brought helped feed a crew of forty campers and staff. Tasty pancakes grilled over our open cooking ring made a very festive breakfast. Dr. Dahlen was impressed with the hearty appetites. We shared some smokey devotional moments together. Before leaving, he expressed thanks for lives being renewed. He would return for the Dedication Open House the summer of '58 as a strong WILDERNESS advocate.

The *Green Tent* welcomed just over 120 teenage campers that first season. That in itself was quite remarkable. Supervisors and volunteer drivers became acquainted with WILDERNESS as they transported campers from PCYC, Red Wing, Glen Lake, Duluth Y.C.C. and Hennepin County Probation. We felt a viable partnership was being established. A healthy comfort level was growing as well with Customs on Saganaga and with many Upper Gunflint residents. Trust was building.

*The Big Green Tent* stood in triumphant splendor at Open House in late August. Visitors both saw and heard about the hard won progress that had been made. As staff, we were eager to share the story of WILDERNESS mission in this inaugural season. A pair of Trails groups returned in time to join this first Open House celebration. Appropriately, Chaplain Oz Anderson gave a passionate homily. Pastor John Mason, Dept. of Charities, assisted with an emotional Deeding Service...involving ownership of Fishhook Land. We welcomed the presence of a number of Cook County folks who had provided help, supplies, equipment and encouragement. All guests were transported from the public landing across Seagull waters to Fishhook Island.

Joel Anderson was now the parish pastor to four Cook County Lutheran congregations. His support was vital to local interest. Open House '57 Guests included: Abe and Bertha





Toftey (newspaper publishers); Sid and Betty Backlund (hardware and tools); Roy and Sophie Hedstrom (lumber); Roger and Elsie Scott (chain saws); Ted and Hannah Johnson (food supplies)... all material contributors. There were Upper Gunflint friends... Skriens, Blankenburgs, Kerfoots. There were family members of staff... Muus, Evans, Johnson, Dybvig. Bob and I were thrilled to have our Dads... Pastors Rudy and Herman I. participate in a "ceremony of blessing" at the canoe

staging area. Our luncheon servers included PCYC inner-city staff together with WILDERNESS summer staff. We all joined in gratitude to God for the opportunity to establish this faith-based mission outpost.

The Big Green Tent continued its essential service for several succeeding seasons. It held ground on the Pinecliff overlook thru the '58 season. It gave way to the advent of the "real" Pinecliff in that late fall. It found a new home between the Tool Shop and Bunk House where it "sheltered and stored"...doing what marvelous, durable Green Tents are supposed to do.

*"...For you were called to be free... love your neighbor as yourself... walk by the Spirit... embrace love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control..."*

FIRST ANNUAL: WILDERNESS OPEN HOUSE		
NAME	SEPT. 1, 1957	ADDRESS
Mr. & Mrs. Axel Rehnberg		Rockford, Ill.
Ired L. Npton		St. Petersburg, Florida
Loren M. Swens		Seagull Lake, Grand Marais
Adelma Olson		St. Ignace, Mich.
(Mrs) David Muus		St. Ignace, Mich.
Nathan Muus		St. Ignace, Mich.
Wladys Muus		St. Ignace, Mich.
Herman & Muus		St. Ignace, Mich.
Betty Johnson		Grand Marais, Minn.
Mrs. Ade Toftey		Grand Marais, Minn.
Mrs. Roger Scott		Grand Marais, Minn.
Mrs. Lillian Backlund		Grand Marais, Minn.
Judy Backlund		" "
Loren Backlund		" "
Diana Backlund		" "
Mr. & Mrs. J. J. Fetherston & Sons		" "
Mr. & Mrs. Norman Nelson		Bay View, Michigan
Mrs. Lillian Rasmussen		Grand Marais
Diana Rasmussen		" "
Jenny Rasmussen		" "
Leland Rasmussen		" "
Selma Backlund		Mrs. Carl Carlson Grand Marais
Mrs. Lillian Rasmussen		Grand Marais, Minn.
Evelyn Rasmussen		Grand Marais, Minn.
Adel I. Hertz		Grand Marais, Minn.
Jerry Scott		" "
Roger Scott		" "

OUR FIRST OPEN HOUSE  
SOME OF THE GUESTS - 1957

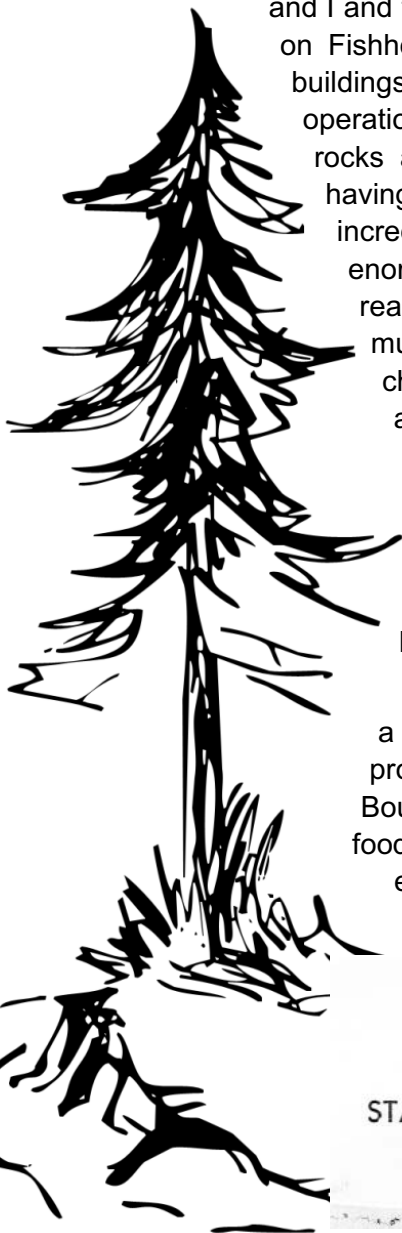
The impact which colleague **Oz Anderson** had on PCYC ministry and WILDERNESS outreach was remarkable... durable... passionate. His devotion helped shape every aspect of this work. WILDERNESS is part of his enduring legacy. He brings these *Reflections*.



**Oz Anderson**



In reflecting on the early days of WILDERNESS Canoe Base, I have many memories of events, people, facilities, circumstances, programs, conversations, challenges and accomplishments. Some of those memories are attached to the wonder and enthusiasm I felt when we first set foot on Fishhook Island and those feelings were repeated many times during the first few years as new developments appeared.



The first and still one of the most vivid memories was when Ham and I and four boys from the Red Wing State Training School arrived on Fishhook Island to begin clearing some sites where the tent buildings would be placed for the base camp in the first summer of operation. While there was nothing on the island but trees and rocks and moss, I well remember the excitement I felt about having this fantastic piece of real estate bordering on the incredibly beautiful Boundary Waters. I was also aware of the enormous challenge facing Ham and his skeletal staff in getting ready for the campers who would soon be arriving. It was muggy and buggy when we arrived and, of course, the boys chased around the island enjoying their unfettered freedom and ignoring our advice to put up their tents quickly as the rain clouds were gathering. Ham and I immediately put up our tent and were comfortably dry when the inevitable rains hit us. We did offer some quiet encouragement as the boys struggled to find a way to keep dry during the downpour. And so their first lesson in wilderness survival had been learned.

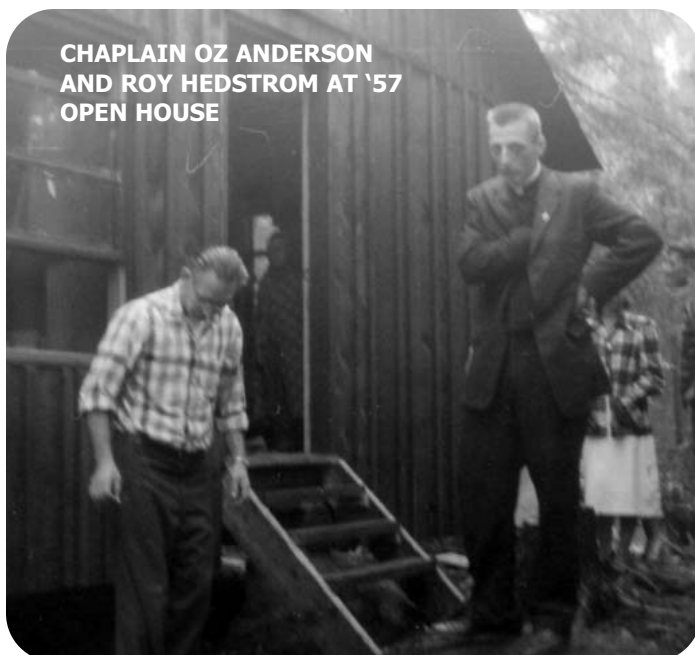
A couple of years earlier, Bob Evans and I had taken a multi-racial group of eight boys from several residential programs in Iowa and Minnesota for a week of canoeing in the Boundary Waters. Using borrowed equipment and donated food, we had a wonderful week of bonding and exploration. We explored lakes and rivers they had never seen nor even dreamed of. And we explored and discussed spiritual

and human values they had never been exposed to. Against that backdrop, I could imagine wonderful things happening in the lives of young people in the future at WILDERNESS



STATE TRAINING SCHOOL

R. E. [illegible], Superintendent  
RED WING, MINNESOTA



Canoe Base. But I could not even begin to imagine the facility and program that would quickly emerge from those humble beginnings.

At the time WILDERNESS was founded, I was Chaplain at the Minnesota State Training School for Boys at Red Wing, and also on the PCYC Board. As a Board member, I kept informed of the plans and developments at WILDERNESS. As the Red Wing Chaplain, I had the privilege of selecting and transporting about twenty boys to and from the Base that first camping season.

Emotions and enthusiasm would invariably be running high during the journey from Red Wing to Seagull Lake. The boys would be delighted to be leaving the restricted Training School environment, but also somewhat apprehensive about the unknown adventure awaiting them. A week later, the trip back to Red Wing usually began with an excited recitation of the highlights of the week in the wilderness. While that level of excitement could not continue very long, some good memories would certainly last forever. We believed that some of the boys would acquire an appreciation for God's creation. We hoped that some positive values would be learned. But we also believed that even if nothing good happened, other than the memories, that alone would make this investment in these boys worthwhile.

WILDERNESS, its staff and program were a tremendous blessing to my boys and my ministry at Red Wing. We had no funds to pay our camper fees, so we were there as

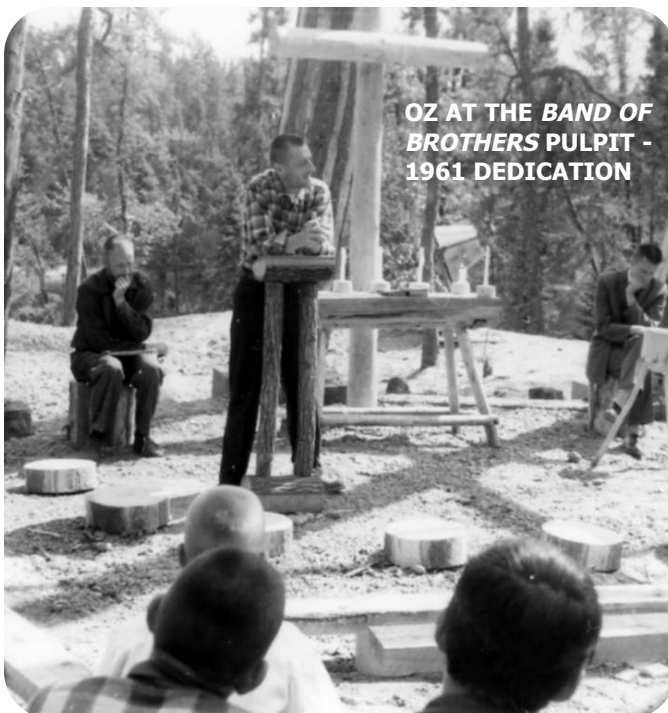


guests of PCYC/WCB and its many supporters. Our only tangible contribution was large quantities of surplus food such as cheese, beans and dried milk from the Training School larder.

Of course, at that time, the WILDERNESS campsite consisted of the upper half of Fishhook Island. We parked at the public landing by Blankenburgs and got to the island via canoe. Soon there were boats to get us to the Base, then a pontoon boat and finally the great addition of the Cove. Other significant events/additions of note were:

- ✧ Breakthrough... and the crews who disassembled the lodges and cabins and recreated them at WILDERNESS... a huge undertaking
- ✧ Acquisition of Dominion Island... and Timberlane mainland
- ✧ *Band of Brothers Chapel*... our worship center
- ✧ *The Bridge of the Master*... no other like it
- ✧ *Morningside* expansion
- ✧ *Youth and Chapel Builders*... great supporters
- ✧ Canoe and Camper Sponsors... pivotal help

All of these developments were the direct result of Ham's vision and persistence. Equally important to that early development was Ham's careful attention to public relations. He solicited the good will of all of the landowners on Seagull Lake and was very intentional about keeping the resort operators and outfitters at the end of the Gunflint Trail informed about what was happening at WILDERNESS. In addition, he established positive working relationships with Grand Marais contractors such as Ed Thoreson, who came to our aid many times. And, of course, he and his resident staff developed a mutual working relationship with Trinity and Bethlehem Lutheran Churches in Hovland and Grand Marais.



In the late '50's and early '60's, I was Chairman of the PCYC Board. I spent many hours with Ham planning the agenda, discussing finances and programs for both PCYC and WILDERNESS and dreaming big dreams about what could be possible. Ham's dreams always exceeded mine and frequently challenged reality. However, Ham's dreams that even exceeded reality, in my judgement, usually came to fruition. Even having been privy to the plans, and even though I was at WILDERNESS for short periods many times each summer, I was always amazed at the speed with which the facility and program developed.

## TRANSFORMATION TRANSPORTATION



One of the most impressive things about WILDERNESS in those early years was the competence and dedication of the staff. The Guides and Swampers were great role models for my Red Wing boys. It was always enlightening to speak with the guides after their trips with my kids. While we expected the experience could be life changing for the boys, it was also frequently life changing for the guides as well.

Ham and I had occasionally discussed the possibility of a three to four week "survival" trip into the Canadian Quetico wilderness. As I recall, it was finally done with Lee Dybvig taking five Red Wing boys. I believe the adventure went quite well, but not well enough to become a regular feature of the summer program.

One of my favorite memories was the Dedication of the *Band of Brothers Chapel*. I was given the privilege of speaking at the dedication service. One thing I remember about that homily is that I wanted to incorporate all the great themes of the Gospel of John. I thought many of them related to what WILDERNESS was all about:

"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." Yes the Word became flesh in Jesus. It also becomes flesh in the relationships between guides and campers on the canoe trails.

"I have come that they may have life, life in all its fullness." The canoe camp experience was life giving and life fulfilling in a very special way.

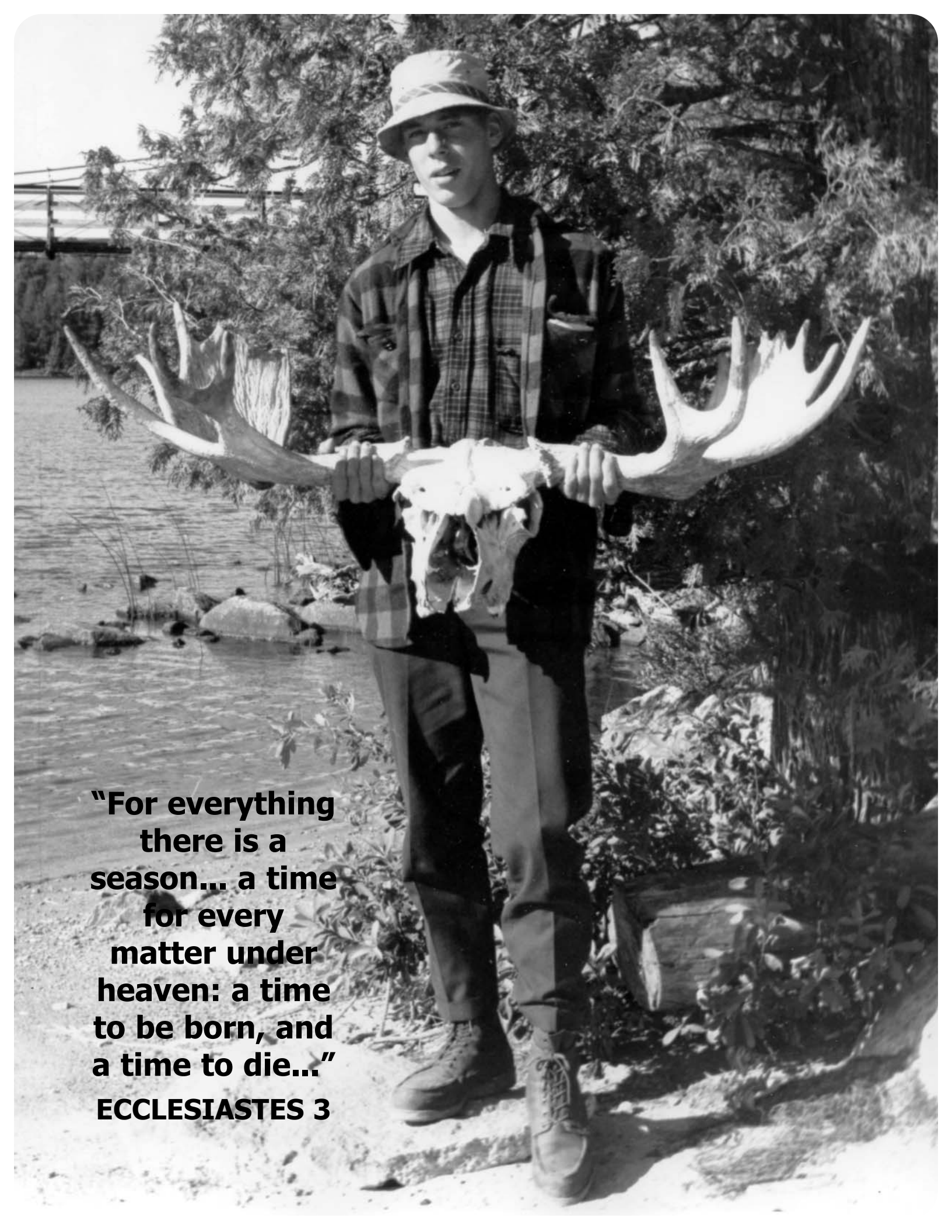
"Follow me." It seemed to me that WILDERNESS had become a reality because a lot of people had chosen to follow Jesus and this was an expression of that commitment.

"These things are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ and that believing you may have life in his name." Ultimately that was the motivation and energy that built and has sustained the WILDERNESS Canoe Base for half a century.



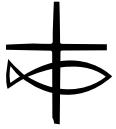
Our Lutheran tradition and practice places high priority on "confirmation." This is good and important. I also believe we can do more with "affirmation." This also is to be highly valued.

Throughout this mosaic journal will be a generous amount of "affirmation." I believe this is in keeping with WILDERNESS beginnings... the Spirit and intention of its community.



**"For everything  
there is a  
season... a time  
for every  
matter under  
heaven: a time  
to be born, and  
a time to die..."  
ECCLESIASTES 3**





## A CORNERSTONE MAN: FRED NORLIEN

The early *founding years* of WILDERNESS were marked by the steady leadership and devotional presence of Kensington, Minnesota native **Fred Norlien**. This highly skilled stone mason followed a calling to Parish ministry. As a student at Luther Seminary, he identified Plymouth Christian Youth Center (PCYC) for volunteer service. He came to help. For three years, Fred was significantly involved in the initial planning and on-site development of WILDERNESS. His insights, experience, skills and Spirit are all intertwined in early camp history.



Fred's roots were planted in western Minnesota farmland. There he gained a sharp sense of the web of life. Care of the earth was an essential ethic. Hard work and determination were core to his character. This was coupled with a deep Christian faith. All this he brought to the WILDERNESS community.

Some of the first foot prints on Fishhook Island are Fred's. He and I shared the initial tent top unit. By hissing Coleman camp light, I would frequently jot down shared ideas on scraps of shiplap for next day's projects. He joined creatively in facing the obstacles and meeting the challenges of a rugged, raw campsite. He loved the outdoors. His enthusiasm for accomplishing even small tasks raised the confidence of those of us less experienced. His Nordic humor helped carry many stressful moments. His presence evoked a kind of calm and trust. He pitched in to meet necessary early survival tasks. From the simple platform tent top units to the multi-purpose commissary, Fred both helped design and swing hammer.

Early WILDERNESS staff and campers remember Fred with affection and awe. His ability to draw knife logs, handle an ax, split stone, and engineer construction projects is legendary. His campfire chats and "devotionals" caught attentive ears. His life actions spoke volumes. His skill with canoe and paddle, rod and reel, and woodsmanship were widely admired; rarely matched. Throughout his parish ministry in Northern Minnesota and North Dakota, Fred embodied the heart of WILDERNESS... its Spirit and power.

Not all was heavy duty work, mosquitoes and rainy days. Fred and G/C Paul Trygstad "volunteered" to explore the many hidden reefs and bays around our Seagull islands. Fairly regularly, they located and landed some nice trout and northern. All of us enjoyed the tasty chowder or fish fry.

I found Fred to have a good eye for the landscape. We worked together in setting a preliminary camp "master plan."

As WILDERNESS staffers, we knew we carried special responsibility for our sacred "land trust." The writings and wisdom of Sigurd Olson made Fishhook Island our initial "Listening Point." We shared with Aldo Leopold the belief that we must "treat the land as community, not commodity." We believed in fostering a land ethic. Fred helped to fashion a strong environmental consciousness... wise use of land... clean waters... mutuality with all living creatures.

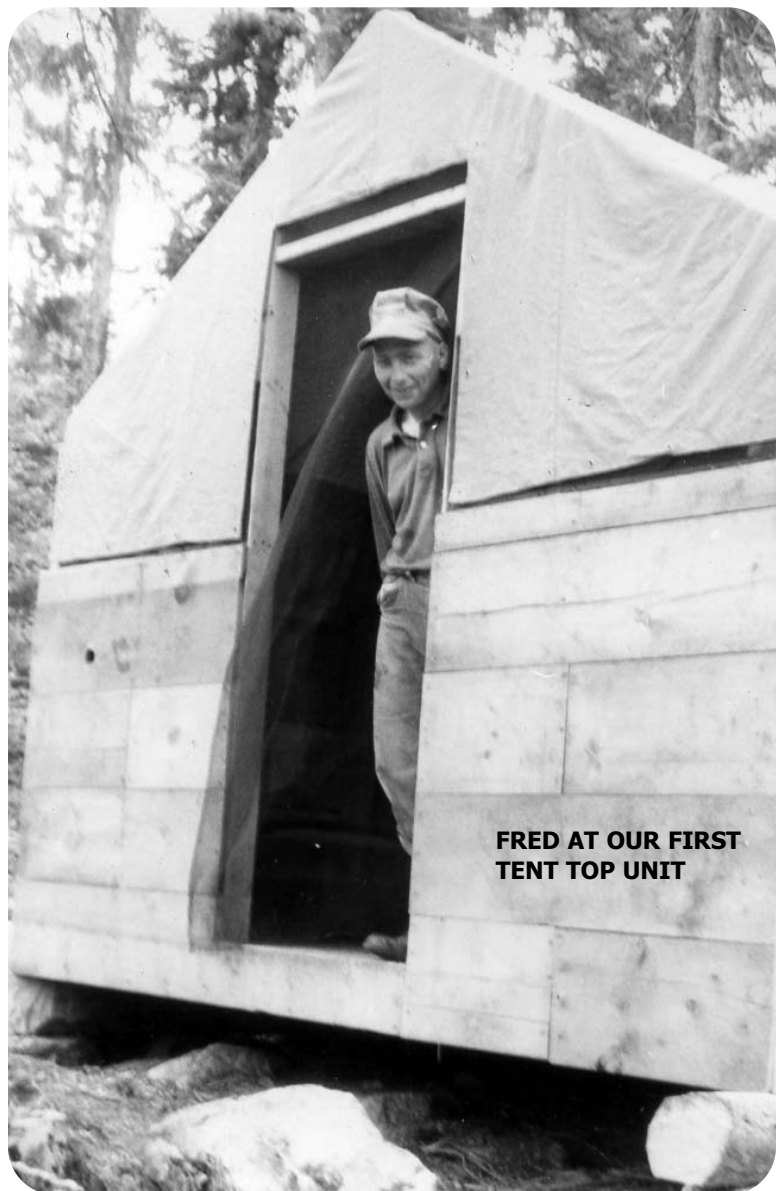
During *Operation Log Cabin*, Fred again was a most valued leader. Throughout those bitterly cold and stressful days, he was an example of faith and fortitude. He carried himself well.

Fred wanted to see genuine hand crafted tables and benches in our newly fashioned commissary. He set out to accomplish that task. He enlisted help back in Kensington and Mavey. Oak was harvested. Wood turning lathe work and considerable craft brought legs and tabletops to life. By the '58 season, we had the sturdiest, most attractive dining area in the north (we felt)!

Friendship with the Norliens was strong and secure. At one point in an early season, wife Edith visited to celebrate their 10th anniversary. Fred chose a Jap Lake trip for their anniversary 'outing.'

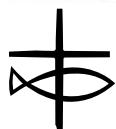
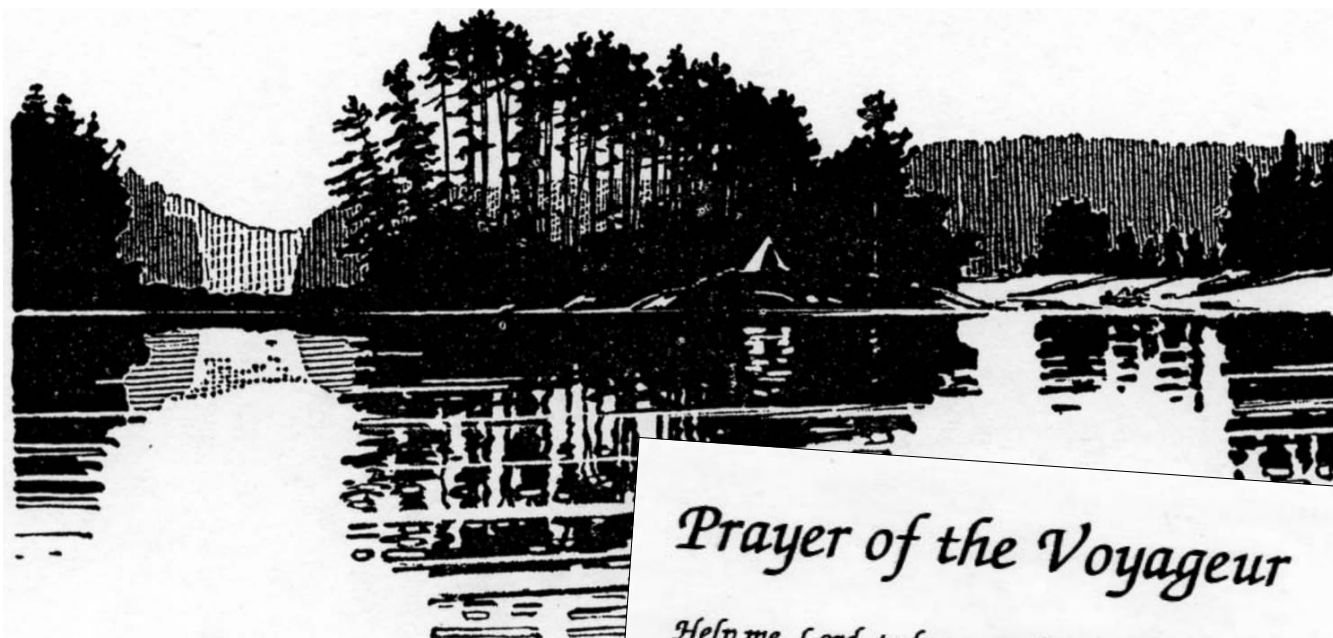
The portage was, of course, excruciating... a terrible tangle of windfall, creek crossings with swarms of black flies. To top it off, Fred claims I added an iron meat grinder in the bottom of a specially prepared day's journey "trail lunch" pack. Would I do such a thing? To Fred... my WILDERNESS roommate? (I just can't imagine how it got there.)

His life journey is quite an inspiration. It was sustained by the encouragement of his wife, Edith, who combined work as a registered nurse with the nurturing of their four children. The unseen and unsung "heroes" are often our spousal partners in ministry. By all of them, WILDERNESS was blessed.



**FRED AT OUR FIRST  
TENT TOP UNIT**

## DAVE JOHNSON AS WILDERNESS PIONEER



If you live in South Dakota, you customarily look to the Missouri River as a waterway of great strength. Still, some folks look to the east to Minnesota... "Land of 10,000 Lakes."

At Augustana College in Sioux Falls, **Dave Johnson** heard of PCYC and its WILDERNESS potential. He was drawn to the notion and the romance of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. He made his interests known. Dave was chosen as one of our first Guide/Counselors.

He brought along some active Augie enthusiasm, a student sponsored "The Vikings" canoe, and a wonderful way with words. For several seasons, Dave was an essential member of the WILDERNESS team... as Guide... Trails Coordinator... and Work Camp Leader. He caught the Spirit in marvelous fashion with his *Prayer of the Voyageur* (right).

### *Prayer of the Voyageur*

*Help me, Lord, to leave my hurried life behind.*

*Help me now the quiet life within Thy templed trees and lakes to find.*

*Give me eyes to see each task upon the trail.*

*Give me faith to know Thy eyes will never fail.*

*Grant me patience when the portage paths seem long.*

*Grant me grace to share with friends in word and song.*

*Plant clean wings upon my feet which now with laden shoes are shod.*

*Silence me, O Christ, I would be still and know that Thou art God.*

*Amen.*

When coupled with my brother B.J.'s music, it is a hymn of substance and beauty. He shares a few succinct memories in his *Reflection*.



## Dave Johnson

✧ **Arrival**...exciting is coming to WILDERNESS for the first time...summer '57...The Gunflint roller-coaster...Bob Evans drove...arrived at 2:30 AM...cold waters...a tipped over canoe...waiting. We paddled over in darkness...somehow found the right island site...Fishhook...home. Woke up in the morn with Ham over a fire...cooking pancakes for us all.

✧ **Living quarters**...tents & tarps...mosquitoes...*Big Green Tent*...our first cliffside HQ... mosquitoes... began to build tent top units... clear the windfalls... mosquitoes... rain...campfire smoke...meditation.

✧ **Dock**...at Fishhook... a week clearing out...nasty cold waters... built a log crib...loaded it with rocks... boulders... many hands... heavy work.

✧ **Staff**...all with willing hearts and hands. All male staff and campers in season one, working together.. Guides: Paul Trygstad, Thom McGowan, Lee Dybvig, Red Baalson, me. Swampers: Bob Miller, Don Misner, Bob Robins, Dave Dominguez, Don Klopp, Gene Ripka, Danny Elliott... Visits from Pearl & Nathan, Blombergs, Blankenburgs, Oz.

✧ **Getting settled**...lots to do... first three weeks very rainy... lots of mosquitoes... more mosquitoes... then black flies... food basic... some canned pork and gravy... dried beans...rice...slab bacon...bannock...Billy Boy jam.

✧ **Campers**...first crew with Oz from Red Wing... every body helped haul... build... learning skills... reading landscapes. Spirit at work... a looking inside.

✧ **Open house**...a "Deeding" service...Ham, Bob, Oz connecting...together... a dream emerging... gratitude... prayers answered.

✧ **Winter 1961**...went up with a work crew from Augsburg College...stayed for 22 months... cleared trees at Cove for parking lot... huge fires to burn logs... had a visitor, a red fox... wrote poem *The Bargain*...wrote *Prayer of the Voyageur*... it became a camp classic.

✧ **Summer 1961**...Ham put me in charge of camper orientation...trails direction... lived in a small cabin at Cove with Vern Borson...got engaged to Karen Gulsvig, guide... blessings abound.

✧ **Winter 1962**...Worked on inside of *Pinecliff* with Vern...and Ham's dad Herman... paneled walls...put down oak flooring on second floor... got a husky malamute...from Tempest Benson on Sag.

✧ **Summer 1962**...In charge of Work Camps...work...worship...witness... lived alone on Dominion...in tent top unit...solitude... tasks around camp...endless variety... Tor, my dog, ate up a bunch of cervalots left on the dock...Ham not impressed!

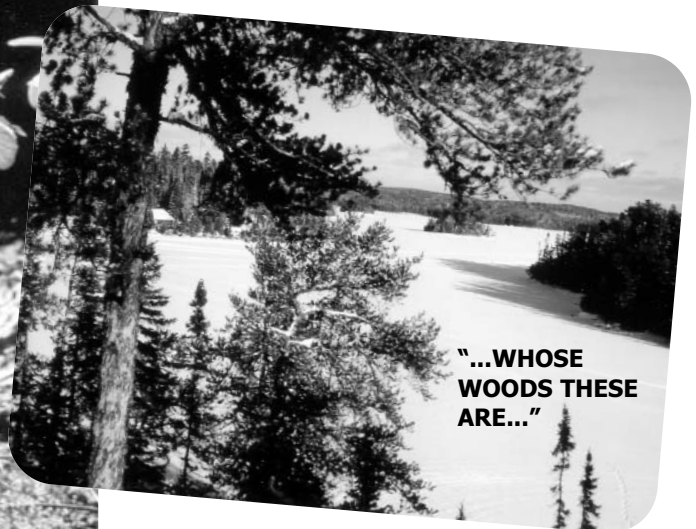
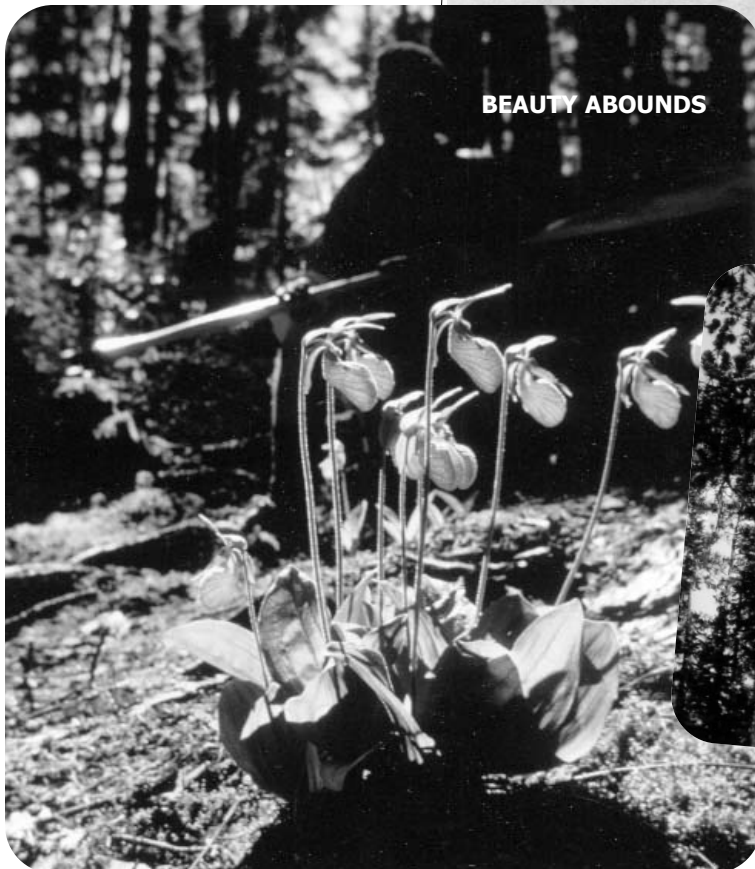
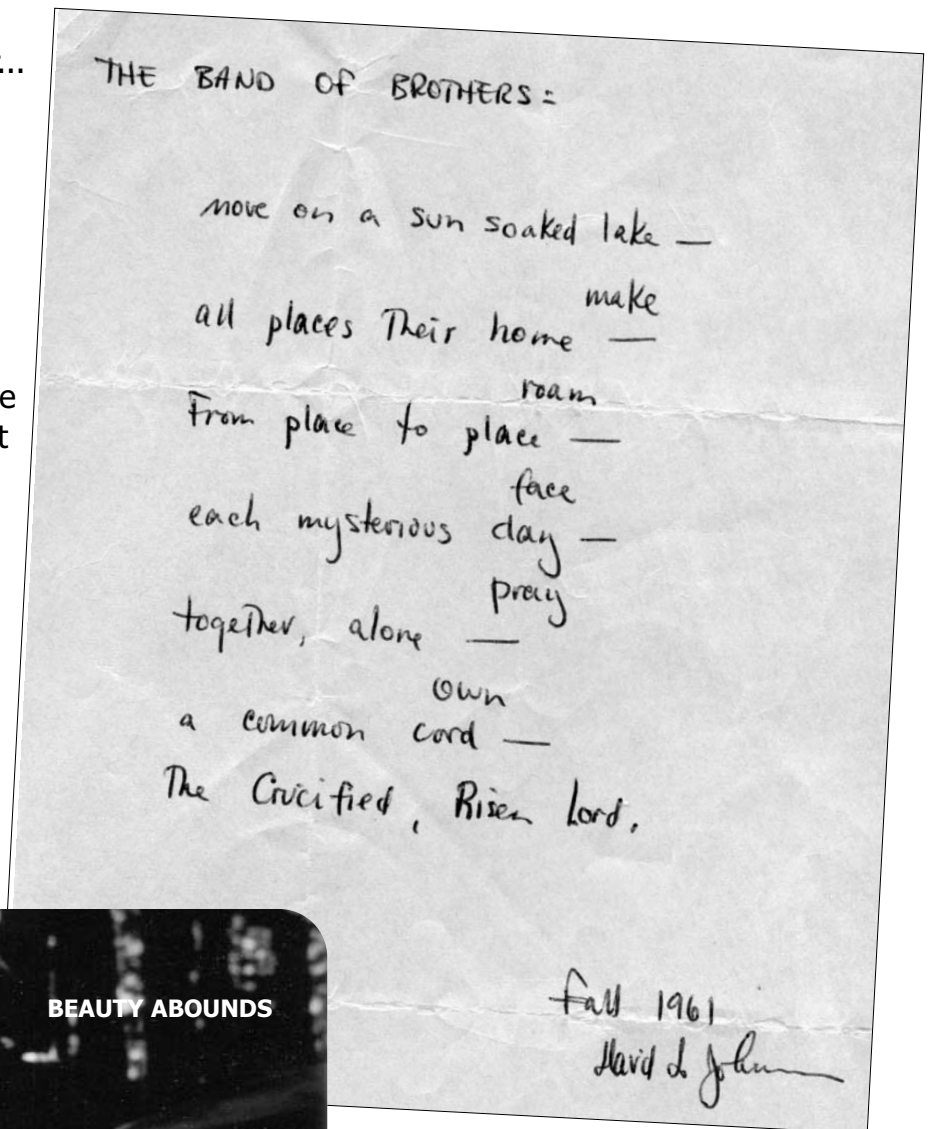
All in all...the outstanding time of my life...so much learning about my self and the world...and best of all, gained my life partner, Karen.



Dave had an ability to reach into his own soul center... to listen. His campers noticed the gentle interior which was fronted by a Nordic bearded, rugged Northwoods exterior. Faith active... often caught.

He focused one evening on the Chapel language and lifted out these words (above).

Dave has an enduring legacy.





DAYE JOHNSON

## THE PRAYER OF THE VOYAGEUR

B.J. MUUS

...THE WORDS

...THE MUSIC

HELP ME, LORD, TO LEAVE MY HUR-RIED LIFE BE - HIND.

HELP ME NOW THE QUI-ET LIFE WITH-IN THY TEMPLED TREES AND LAKES TO FIND.

GIVE ME EYES TO SEE EACH TASK UP-ON THE TRAIL.

GIVE ME FAITH TO KNOW THY EYES WILL NE-VER FAIL.

GRANT ME PAT-IENCE WHEN THE PORT-AGE PATHS SEEM LONG.

GRANT ME GRACE TO SHARE WITH FRIENDS IN WORD AND SONG.

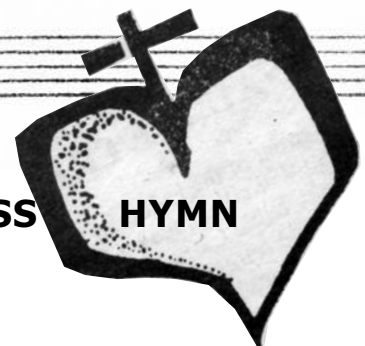
PLANT CLEAN WINGS UP-ON MY FEET WHICH NOW WITH LA-DEN SHOES ARE SHOD.

SIL-ENCE ME, O CHRIST, I WOULD BE STILL AND KNOW THAT THOU ART

GOD. A ——— MEN.

"...Make joyful  
sounds..."

OUR WILDERNESS HYMN







We got to know the Dominguez family early on in 1954. It was a large clan living within walking distance of the "Old Hotel." Pearl got acquainted with Sally Dominguez... mother of Manny, Mack, Mary Ann, Alex, David and several more. She was active in the Mother's Club. She also was very grateful for the camping opportunities her children enjoyed at Camp Knutson and Frontier Farm.

When WILDERNESS was launched, young David was very interested. His folks agreed it could be a great learning experience for him as he had not been out of the city before. So in a way, our first staff recruit at WILDERNESS was **Dave Dominguez**... a most valued "bi-cultural" addition to our life. But let David inform you on how it all seemed to him.



### Dave Dominguez

I was eleven years old the first time I went to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area.

The car ride there to 'Minnesota North Bound' was in May of 1957. That was the longest car ride this young boy ever took from Minneapolis. The car was a 1952 powder green DeSoto. I left behind a mother, father, one sister and seven brothers. Driving his DeSoto was Pastor Ham Muus. Besides myself, there were three other boys from the North Minneapolis Plymouth Christian Youth Center.

This was before there was a freeway going to Duluth. A single lane highway to Duluth and a four-hour drive. We stopped in Duluth to pick up a few items. Pastor Ham stopped to make some visits. This was the first time seeing Lake Superior – it was such a large body of water. I was a city kid up to this time.

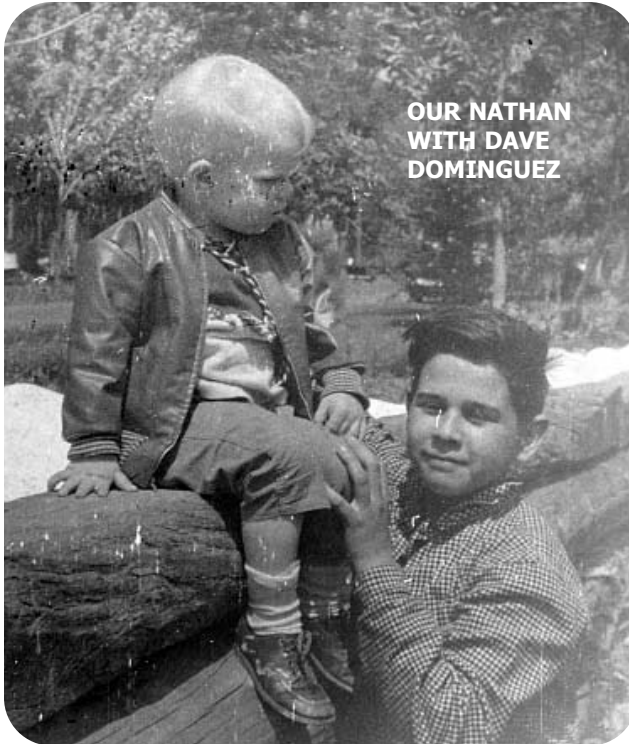
It took another four-hour drive to get to Grand Marais. The drive was too beautiful and breathtaking. I don't remember what I ate that day because there wasn't any McDonald's or Burger King back in those days.

The drive from Grand Marais to Seagull Lake was the most exciting part of the drive. On the Gunflint Trail I saw numerous deer, a bear and one giant moose and I am not talking about our Camp Director!

Finally made it to a mainland landing where I met Blankenburg Outfitters. From that moment on, I knew I was touched by God's World. We got organized that evening after our trip to Seagull Lake. We took a boat to Fishhook Island...arrived at sundown.

We crawled up the cliff...made a campfire. I have never seen so many mosquitoes in my life. I was noticing why everyone was staying close to the campfire because if you left the campfire and the smoke you would know that the mosquitoes were waiting for you.





OUR NATHAN  
WITH DAVE  
DOMINGUEZ

I had many firsts: Pastor Bob showing how to use an ax correctly... first time hauling water out of a lake to cooking area... washing pots and pans in the out doors... cooking meals over a campfire... learning to paddle a canoe... helping build the first building... first time got a pair of Red Wing boots and wool socks from Pastor Ham...sleeping in a bag in a tent (with mosquitoes).

Ham and Bob were the leaders of the group that first year. Tom and Dave were good, too.

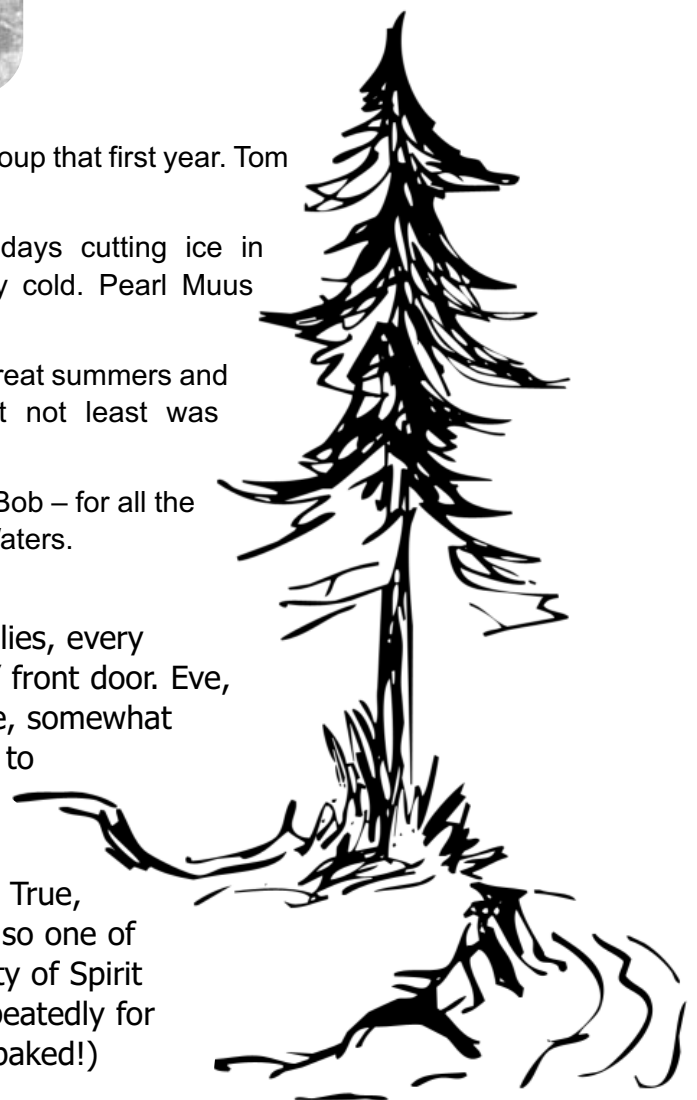
The first winter I got to spend ten days cutting ice in December/January winter break. It was really cold. Pearl Muus cooked warm food. I needed that!

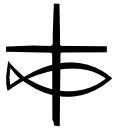
Ending here with my memories of five great summers and two winters at WILDERNESS. And last but not least was touched by God.

Thank you for the memories, Ham and Bob – for all the great times...in the city and in the Boundary Waters.

The first three seasons, every load of supplies, every driver, every camper passed by the Blankenburgs' front door. Eve, especially, took special interest in our own diverse, somewhat baffling but always interesting operation. She got to know all of us staff very well.

She told me one day that the person she "enjoyed" the most was young David Dominguez. True, he was our youngest staff member. But he was also one of our most appreciative and attentive. His generosity of Spirit showed through. (And I know he thanked her repeatedly for those mouth watering, north woods cookies Eve baked!)





One might think that the very first WILDERNESS campers would have a seasoned, bearded North Woods veteran to lead them into the unknown. Such was not the case.

By horsengoggle elimination, that honor fell to **Paul Trygstad**... a talented St. Olaf music and economics major from Santa Barbara, California. Don't let that fool you, however. Paul was an avid camping enthusiast, crafty fisherman, spiritually secure, and worthy leader.

His Swamper was Gene Ripka. His campers were from Red Wing... chosen by Chaplain Oz for this initial adventure. A couple days of work and camper orientation readied the crew for departure on June 20, 1957... an historic moment etched in distant memory. I can still feel the emotion even now as I recall that moment.

Paul jogs his mind for this witness... this testimony.



**Paul Trygstad**



What an honor it is to be numbered among the "Pioneers" from the very beginning of WILDERNESS in 1957. Some random reflections: *The Founding Year*...living in small tents...lots of rain...noseeums and mosquitoes...building tent top platforms...using lashed canoes for "freighting" from Seagull Landing to Fishhook Island...the government surplus...dried everything...canned butter...rhino meat...rice...raisins...food always measured out...never extra...a spartan, exciting life...



**PAUL SHOWS PEARL HIS TASTY TROUT CATCH**

I had the historic first trip out...three kids and Gene Ripka (Swamper)... June 20, 1957 (Ham's birthday)... a great start... cooperative campers. My second trip... tough going... lunch in a rainstorm at south end of Seagull before our Alpine portage... lightening hit our island campsite... knocked trees down... relief when storm passed... walking canoes up rapids to "Gabi"... flipped two Grummans... lesson learned... food, sleeping bags sopping wet... made pancakes from dried potatoes and dried milk... returned early wet and beat to camp... got needed TLC.

Every trip thereafter, I always secured extra rice from *The Big Green Tent*...a little extra food to go with raisins, brown sugar, and mosquitoes... The Deeding Ceremony on our camp dock the end of the first year was a very special occasion... guests and visitors probably did not really know the

sacrifice and hard work of everyone to get WILDERNESS Canoe Base launched.

It was fun casting with red and white daredevles for northern near our shore...also trolling with Ham or Fred Norlien in our Fishhook bay... "hammer handles."

This was our task: "Reaching out" to lots of different kids... we always had "good kids" but some troubled...from Hennepin County Probation...Duluth YCC...Red Wing Training School...and parishes. All were part of our WILDERNESS family. We cared for each other. "Outsiders" found it hard to believe...faith mattered.

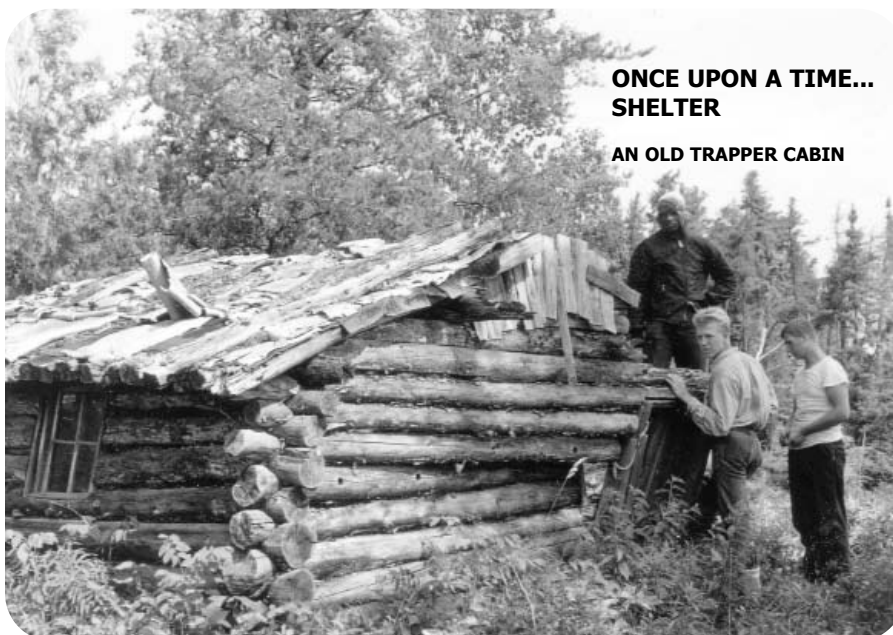
How we valued the arrival of Beulah, our cook, in year two... *Beulah Bread*... and Pearl's wonderful hospitality on the *Morningside*... great to have female grace... and stability.

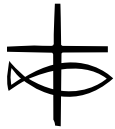
God had to be in the mix of all this highly charged activity... building, outfitting and the Trails life... during these dramatic beginning years... we worked hard... prayed hard... did our best... made mistakes... moved on.

The couple Saturday night trips to Grand Marais in the old International truck...ate in a real restaurant (hamburgers)... listened to Patti Page on the juke box sing "Old Cape Cod" and went to see *An Affair to Remember*. A great change of pace... yet happy to be back home again at Camp.

My seasons on the WILDERNESS staff left me with a lifetime of memories... and a heart of compassion.

Paul worked hard, gained the trust of others, and shared his faith without apology or insistence. I enjoyed having my cousin on staff. He never asked for or got preferential treatment. He was dependable and durable.





## AT THE END OF THE TRAIL: THE SKRIEN FAMILY

In those early days, we needed all the help, support and advocacy we could get. The Blankenburgs were solidly in our corner. Gradually, as WILDERNESS emerged as more than an idea, others began to pay attention.

There were a number of Upper Gunflint “neighbors” who were cautious about WILDERNESS as newcomer in their midst. All were curious to know who this “neighbor” was. Some expressed outright fear. Others adopted a wait and see position.

There was one family who immediately opened their hearts and home: the Skrien family at Trail’s end. Rolf and Gail owned and operated a respected canoe outfitting and guide service ... *Way of the Wilderness*. They were raising five young children: Sandy, Sally, Susan, Stanton and Stuart. WILDERNESS could have been seen as “competition” to their business. Rather, they embraced WILDERNESS gracefully, with warmth of Spirit.

We called upon Rolf frequently for help and counsel. The first winter ‘57 ice harvest was successful because he shared experience and equipment. He was an important member of the ‘59 winter camp crew that creatively catalogued and moved the Ely area dismantled cabins off ice onto Fishhook sites. His woods wisdom and Trails expertise was incorporated into our staff development. He knew the BWCA and Canadian landscape like few others. His many years living and guiding in the north gave him enormous knowledge and understanding of the lakes and portages and weather signs. He was a consummate outdoorsman.

Gail and Rolf were always generous to WILDERNESS. They were advocates who spoke kindly of WILDERNESS staff and program. They frequently participated as a family in WILDERNESS worship. I baptized twins Stuart and Stanton at WILDERNESS.

There were others on the Upper Gunflint who believed in WILDERNESS ministry. The Skrien’s faithfulness stands out. Their hospitality and grace were marks of their Christian commitment and life. By them we were blessed. Rolf shares these memories.



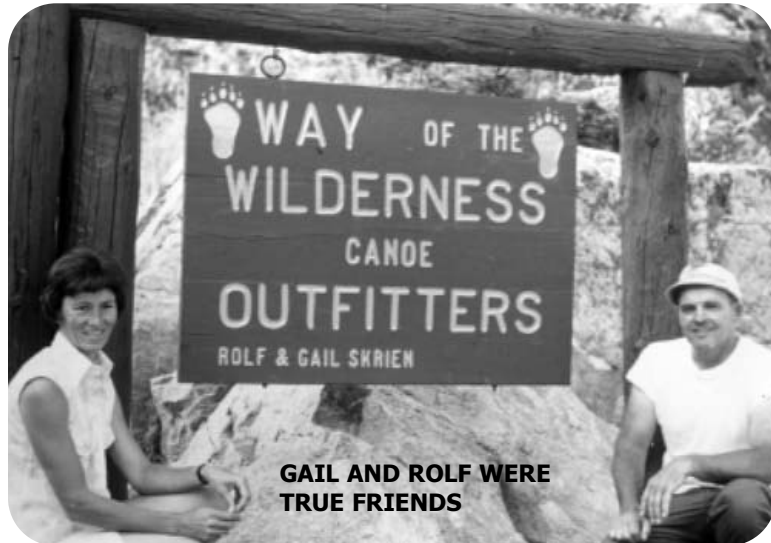
**Rolf Skrien**



My first major contact with WILDERNESS Canoe Base was in the winter of 1957. I met the Director, Ham Muus, during their beginning season. Ham came to our cabin to ask if I could give some assistance to their December ice harvest. They had no refrigeration that first season... and thought an icehouse would help in the coming years. They had no electricity on Fishhook Island.

I worked things out at home with Gail and the kids and agreed to help. Ham credits me with salvaging their winter ice harvest. Neither he nor Bob Evans were terribly familiar

with the process. In that way, I could help. I had done some harvesting work for others. The WILDERNESS crew was largely inner-city kids who were busy trying to keep warm! Ham's wife, Pearl, cooked hot meals, which helped a lot. In spite of lots of snow and cold weather, we got the ice field laid out and cut. Some of the crew built the icehouse of windfall logs... and hauled the needed sawdust up the draw. I'd say there was great Spirit and teamwork, which made the harvest successful.



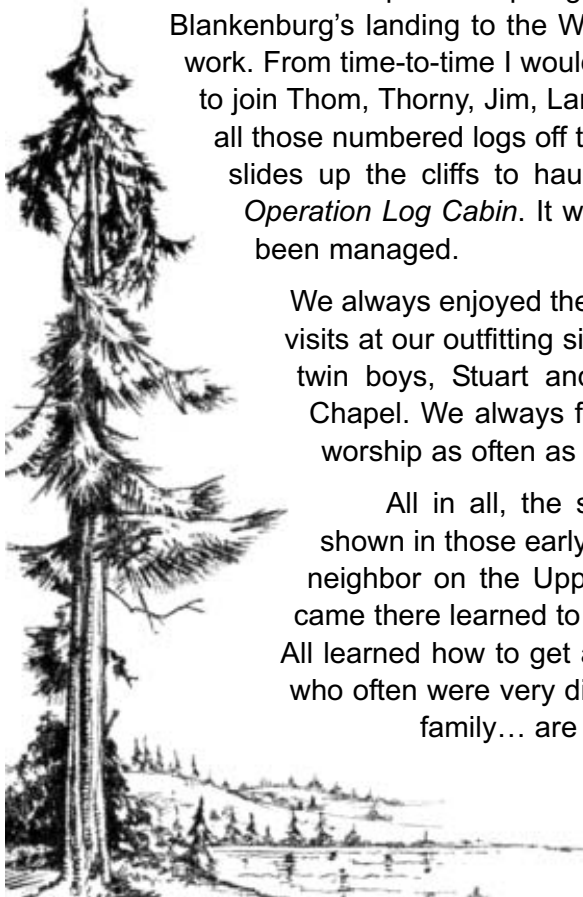
I watched with some curiosity how the staff and campers conducted themselves. I was impressed with their sense of responsibility. Those of us who lived at the end of the Gunflint Trail were pretty careful how the Boundary Waters were treated. WILDERNESS showed early on that they would be good users. That's a tribute to their staff.

The winter of '59/'60 was the big log haul from the Ely lakes to Seagull. Volunteer workers helped dismantle a cluster of cabins which Ed Thoreson's crew hauled up the Trail. As the temperature plunged, it became possible to make a roadway from Blankenburg's landing to the WILDERNESS islands. I agreed to join in the winter work. From time-to-time I would snowshoe over during those super sub-zero days to join Thom, Thorny, Jim, Larry and others. We had an enormous task... getting all those numbered logs off the ice before spring thaw. We made log "shoots" or slides up the cliffs to haul both the gravel for concrete and the logs from *Operation Log Cabin*. It was a modern look at how the pyramids might have been managed.

We always enjoyed the contact with WILDERNESS people. Often, we had visits at our outfitting site. We felt we were part of an extended family. Our twin boys, Stuart and Stanton, were baptized by Pastor Ham at the Chapel. We always felt welcome in their community. We got to Sunday worship as often as our business permitted.

All in all, the sensitive adventure and the rugged determination shown in those early years made WILDERNESS Canoe Base a friendly neighbor on the Upper Gunflint. It was very clear that everybody who came there learned to value hard work... even in extreme circumstances. All learned how to get along together in a different environment with folks who often were very different from themselves. Both Gail and I... and our family... are grateful for the WILDERNESS presence.

We were very fortunate to have Gail and Rolf and family as neighbors who cared.







## SEAGULL WEST PARTNERS: THE BLOMBERGS

It was mid-July in 1957 when we first became acquainted with Peter and Van Blomberg. They had a beautiful cabin westerly on Seagull Lake near the Alpine Portage. They built their cabin many years ago. Now it was within the restricted BWCA boundaries. A lifetime use permit allowed for occupancy. With their first WILDERNESS visit came an invitation to their cabin to get acquainted.

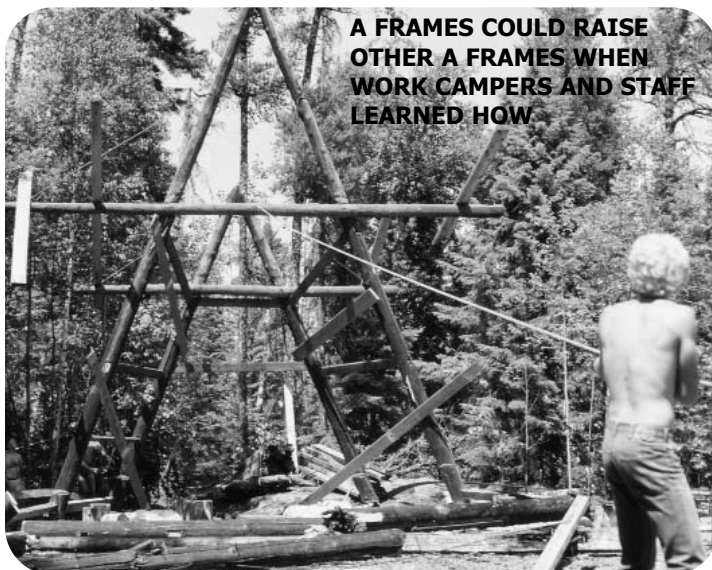
Peter was a distinguished retired engineer. For years he had studied in Sweden, Canada and the U.S. He worked for the Electro Motive Diesel division of General Motors. His extensive patents for railroad design included work on the experimental "Train of Tomorrow," a futuristic project that traveled across the country.

The Blombergs frequently asked Pearl and me to join informal fellowship. They became good friends and supporters of WILDERNESS. One of Peter's major contributions was the engineering assistance he provided in erecting the tall timbers required in the *Band of Brothers Chapel* design. He built scale models to show the way A-frame leverage could serve. He assisted staff in safety and the use of manual winches and coffin hoists. He was a regular "supervisor" during the construction phases of *Band of Brothers*.

While Peter offered his technical expertise, Van provided warm hospitality. They found WILDERNESS to be a place of spiritual strength. Both enjoyed the interaction with the WILDERNESS staff. They valued both WILDERNESS work and worship.



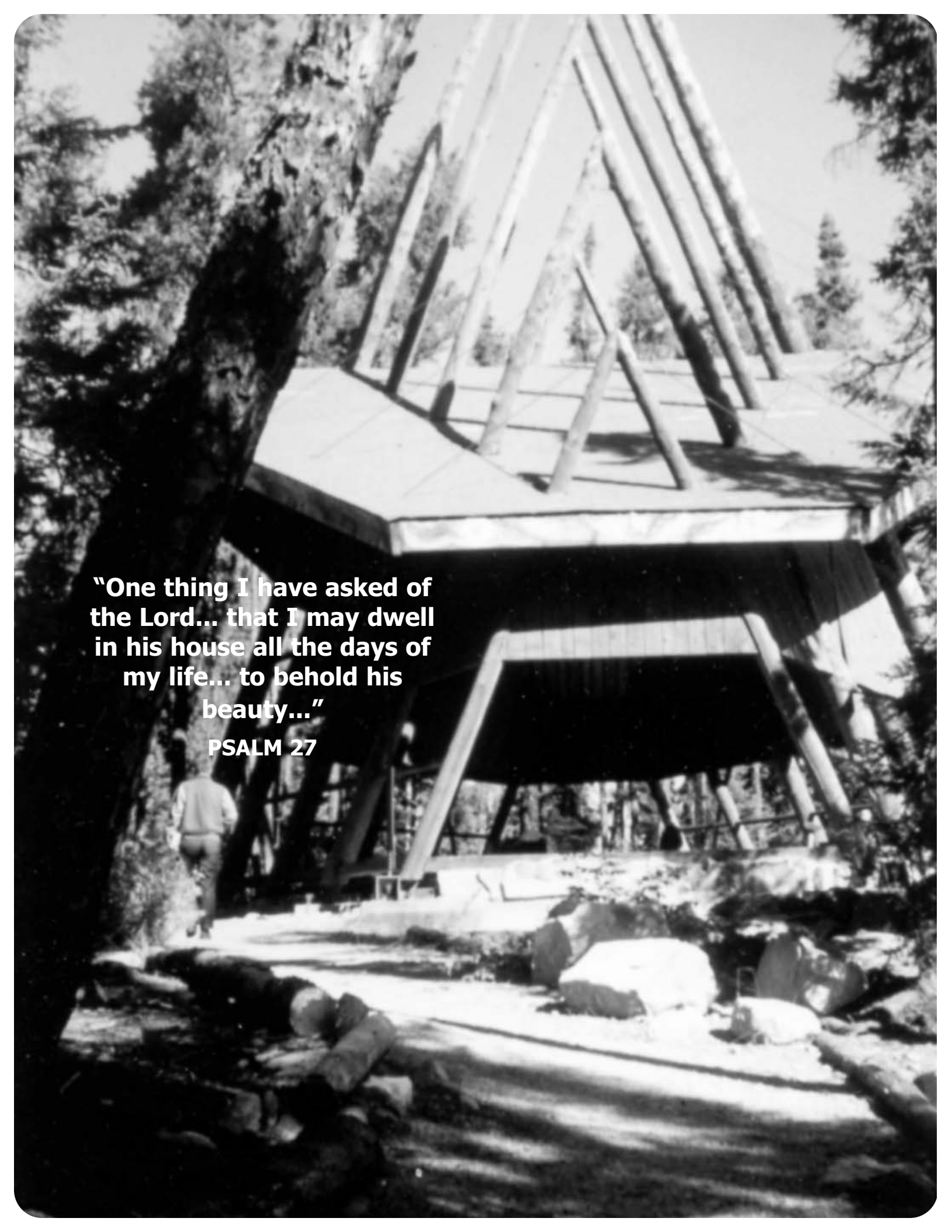
PETER AND VAN AT  
*BAND OF BROTHERS*



A FRAMES COULD RAISE  
OTHER A FRAMES WHEN  
WORK CAMPERS AND STAFF  
LEARNED HOW

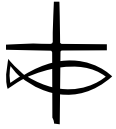
Peter was a firm believer in the WILDERNESS decentralized, small group and faith-based camping approach. His own woods and water experiences pointed to the redemption possible in the Creator's world. He challenged WILDERNESS staff to be leaders by example... to bring respect and honor to the sacred lands. Peter and Van felt included as valued partners in the WILDERNESS family.

By them, we were significantly blessed.



**"One thing I have asked of  
the Lord... that I may dwell  
in his house all the days of  
my life... to behold his  
beauty..."**

**PSALM 27**



## WINTER WORKSHOP 101: 1957 ICE HARVEST

An interesting adventure in early WILDERNESS

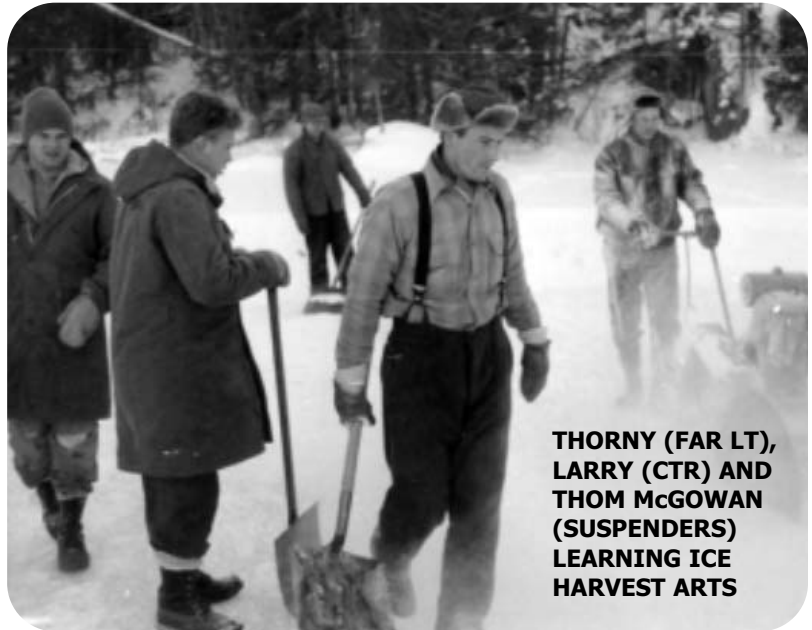
beginnings was the Ice Harvest adventure. After the '57 inaugural season, it was very obvious that we could not function another summer season without some kind of refrigeration. Since electricity on the island was totally absent, we figured we could lay up a supply of ice blocks...just like in the good old days. Let's see...thick ice, a saw, tongs, sawdust...and manpower.

As time would tell, Pastor Bob and I were a bit short on specific skills for this task. We were long on enthusiasm. We recruited an unsuspecting crew of Northside community teens and a few other volunteers. Pearl agreed to come along, brave the elements and handle the food service for a hungry crew. We headquartered in our multi-purpose commissary, (trail shack/kitchen/dining room/winter lodging unit) that we had almost finished in the '57 summer season. We had just enough heat to survive what turned out to be some bitter weather. We did some homework and book research on ice harvesting. We brought along a couple of large tongs, ice chisels and a large cross cut saw. We thought we were prepared.

We divided our crew into two working groups...one clearing an ice field...between the Fishhook main draw and Dominion Isle. The second group cut windfall trees to be used as

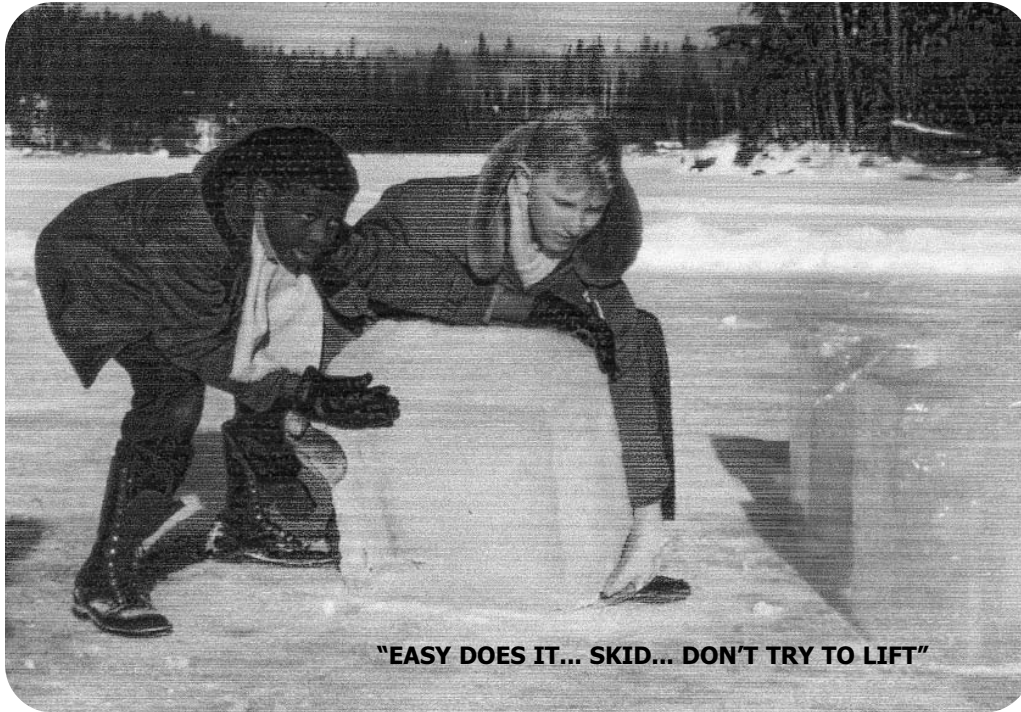


ONE SLIP AND ICY SEAGULL WATERS WILL SURROUND



THORNY (FAR LT),  
LARRY (CTR) AND  
THOM MCGOWAN  
(SUSPENDERS)  
LEARNING ICE  
HARVEST ARTS

the log cabin base for our new icehouse. While we were chiseling through more than 20" of beautiful blue ice, it was apparent we could use more expertise. We called upon our Saganaga friend, Rolf Skrien, who had experience cutting ice at the Mayo Cabin site on Seagull and elsewhere. Rolf skillfully helped lay out the ice grid. We learned the art of both power and hand sawing the thick ice. We cross cut the blocks, separated with ice chisels, and yanked block after huge block of solid "summer"



ice out of clear Seagull waters. Rolf was a "life saver."

Crew #2 did the craft work in laying up a log foundation. That went surprisingly well in the cold weather. A supply of sawdust was bucketed up the draw and unloaded. An icy, snow pack slide was fashioned up the main draw. Block after block of "summer

refrigeration" was pushed and pulled into the awaiting icehouse. Five days of outdoor education, hard work, great food, chilly sleeping on cold floors and reasonably good humor brought a satisfying closure to the '57 ice harvest. Let's see...blue ice blocks in place for the '58 season. Very cool deal! The Lord provides...

This was more experiential education... learning while doing.

## FROM STAFF CREATIVE WRITINGS

### FRIENDSHIP

A casual smile, a fear so real,  
Gratefully shared together;  
Sunshine breaks through, clouds,  
lightening, hail;  
And thankfully - fair weather.  
Struggle, tears, laughter, song -  
I'm glad that I can be along.

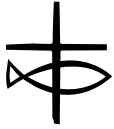
God speaks - I hear!  
God shows me - I see!  
God loves me - I feel!  
In His wilderness!

### GOD'S BEAUTY

Clean and fresh the breeze  
gently flows,  
While ripples are caused in  
the lake.  
Trees sway slightly in a  
peaceful laziness,  
And God's beauty shines on.

*"...May the meditation  
of my heart be  
acceptable..."*





## **BRAVERY... BREAD... BLESSING: BEULAH LUKASON**

It is amazing how the Lord provides... how He lifts up people who catch a vision and are willing to serve.

Meals at *The Big Green Tent* campsite headquarters our first WILDERNESS season were terribly "basic." Some might have called them just "tolerable." We were limited in resources, foods and facilities. The first major construction project was for an all-purpose commissary/kitchen/dining room. It took most of the summer to get it under roof. Therefore, our cooking "kitchen"...often rain sheltered by over head canvas...was an open fire on the Fishhook cliffs. There was a mix of dehydrated items...rice, beans, bulgar...and plenty of pancakes. No red meat, no refrigeration...a very predictable menu week after week. After campers started their Trails rotation, we had forty for breakfast on a couple occasions. But we managed.

I will never forget my visit to the St. Paul U of M campus...to Clovia House. There, I interviewed several interested Home Ec students for the 1958 WILDERNESS food service position. Only one seemed to understand how very basic and primitive our island facilities and conditions were. Most could not picture themselves in a true, distant, wooded world. It was Beulah Lukason who caught a glimpse of how she could serve and survive. She had a quiet confidence, a sense of purposeful adventure and willingness that set her apart. Little did we realize what a wonderful blessing she would be to WILDERNESS life for many years to come.

I tried to fairly describe the environment in which she would work. I'm quite sure it was understated. Sight unseen, she offered her ideas and suggestions as to how the WILDERNESS challenge might work. Thus, planning for the second season took on a whole different dimension with her anticipated participation.

Beulah was the primary female on the island for the early part of the 1958 season. Pearl and our two young boys joined as soon as *Morningside* was habitable. Beulah lived in a tent top unit, slept on a cot, shared long walks to the privy and shouldered multiple tasks feeding trail groups, hungry work campers and staff. The Commissary was equipped with a fairly decent cook stove, three-compartment sink, a few cabinets and necessary utensils. Fred Norlien crafted tables and benches for the dining area. Water was bucketed and carried from Seagull Lake. Trash was bundled, hauled to the public landing and then down the Gunflint to the landfill. Ice was available resting in the "ice house" courtesy of the last winter's harvest. She cooked, scrubbed, hauled...and baked her famous *Beulah Bread*. We never had it so good! Staff and campers alike obviously valued home cooked meals. She set a standard!

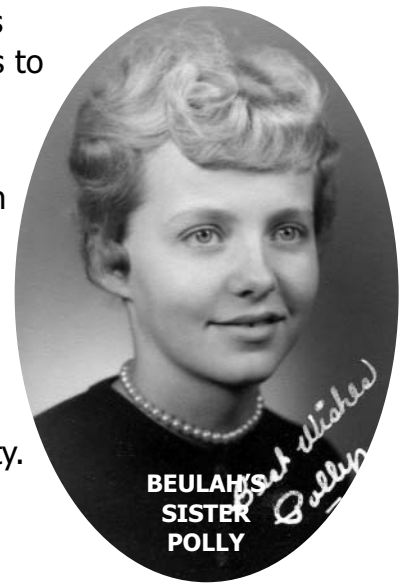


**BEULAH AT EARLY MORNING PINECLIFF  
BREAKFAST TASKS**

Our 1958 second season was very busy as campers moved in and out with regularity. Work camp volunteers came to help. The staff was increased to handle additional program. Beulah enlisted Swampers to assist in accomplishing the multiple tasks.

Beulah, Arla Mae Olson and Pearl shouldered the food service for *Operation Log Cabin*. Pearl often said that working with Beulah was "inspiring" because she had a Spirit which could not be conquered. We saw that in evidence for five WILDERNESS seasons. She consistently demonstrated a depth of faith which encouraged all of us around her.

In 1959, the Blankenburgs allowed us to shelter a walk-in cooler at the Seagull landing. It was a huge step in food availability. Then in 1960 we acquired *The Cove* property with its existing electrical service. Through all the improvisations, demands and challenges, Beulah prevailed.



In 1959 and beyond, Beulah helped enlist other food service personnel. Her sister, Polly, and friend, Roseann Everson, were great partners. Clovia colleague, Glenda Anderson answered "the call" and became "Food Services Director elect" before Beulah left. Year after year, our food service was called upon to improvise, to serve an increasing number of campers and staff, and to maintain its superb sense of hospitality. It was able to do all this and more.

For several seasons, WILDERNESS conducted a "Food Roundup" among parishes where we had friends. Several Twin City congregations responded. We even went out-state west to Paynesville and Fergus Falls. The result was a wide variety of small cans, #10 tins, lots of pasta... and turkeys. Somehow, Beulah and staff found a way to creatively prepare excellent meals.

Beulah was also called upon to teach cooking skills to Trails staff. Some had little experience in food preparation, especially using reconstituted dehydrated items. There were the surplus commodities for trails bannock, "Russian wheat" and rice. "What do you do with pinto beans? Can I really make lefse?"



One *Pinecliff* tradition was the festive meal upon return to WILDERNESS following a Trails experience. Many a turkey was stuffed, roasted and devoured along with real mashed potatoes and gravy. Then there was *Beulah Bread* together with Billy Boy jam. Talk about a pre-disclosure feast! All served on clean table cloths... punctuated with chocolate malts! This was coupled with some earnest singing and devotional readings at the table. Christ was here present in this "breaking of bread."

Over the years, we had dozens of drivers, adult advisors and pastors who came to experience WILDERNESS ways. It was an almost universal response: "We feel the warmth of the hospitality." Credit this to the WILDERNESS staff from *Cove* greeting to *Pinecliff* sharing, to *Morningside* grace, to *Band of Brothers* witness. Those who came experienced and they



left as advocates and WILDERNESS friends.

So in a special tribute, we affirm **Beulah**, with profound appreciation for her sensitive, steady work at WILDERNESS over *The Founding Years*.

Beulah has some interesting *Reflections* on her five adventurous WILDERNESS years.



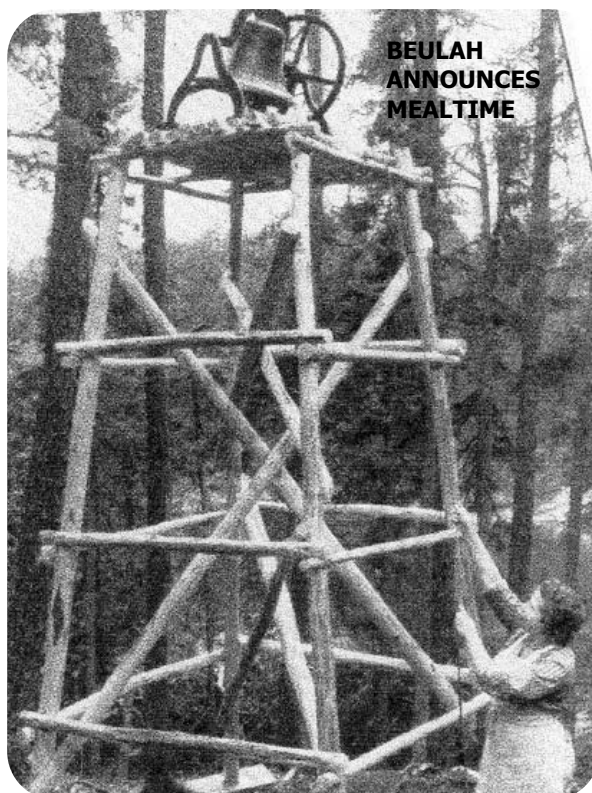
### Beulah Lukason

I was on the St. Paul Campus at Clovia House in my freshman year at the University of Minnesota. It was the spring of 1958 and I knew that it would be necessary to work during the summer in order to return to school in the fall. I read the bulletin board notices, but nothing struck me until I saw the note regarding the need for a cook at a summer camp. Having been raised on a farm in central Minnesota where my dad participated in a neighborhood threshing crew each summer, I had helped my mom prepare food and serve the meals when the crew was at our farm. Helping mom do food for large family gatherings added to my experience as well. A local 4-H program gave me the opportunity to participate in bread-baking contests, enter baked goods at the county fair, etc. As a result, my baking and cooking skills had been developed to some extent before I entered the School of Home Economics at the U. Anyway, I felt confident that I could fill a cook's position. Little did I know that it would be on an island and there would be no electricity... until I met Pastor Ham.

I remember a brief orientation from Ham telling me to bring warm clothes, boots, bathing suit and Bible. I did as he suggested, but I didn't know why until I got there. As I remember, I brought very little luggage: basic essentials including a Betty Crocker cookbook and a few favorite recipes from home...that's it.

I was the first on site female staff... except for Pearl Muus... and the only person hired specifically to cook that summer. Swampers took turns to wash dishes, set tables, etc. One of their most taxing jobs, I am sure, would have been hauling buckets of water up the hill for cooking and washing dishes. It was not a small hill. The Trails staff were given building and maintenance assignments after breakfast at which time a Swamper was also designated for kitchen duty. I remember hoping that I would have the same one for at least two or three days as it took a little time to "get into the groove."

Grand Marais was two hours away. Daily grocery shopping was not an option. Baking bread seemed the way to go. The bread was quite popular and was served three



times a day in one form or other.

My quarters was a small tent-top on the ridge up the hill from the kitchen. I spent long days in the kitchen cooking as well as planning and organizing to make things run smoothly. I was probably in bed within a couple hours of leaving the kitchen, since I would be out on the dock anytime around 6 a.m. dipping water to carry up the hill for oatmeal and coffee. That first year I also remember being asked to knock on the door of Ham and Fred's tent-top to wake them on my way down to the kitchen.



**OUR COOKS BEULAH AND PEARL AT THE NORTHERNAIR HEADQUARTERS DURING OPERATION LOG CABIN**

Many of our staples, such as milk and eggs were powdered government surplus, which required some doctoring to make them palatable. Whenever we could get fresh milk we mixed it in small amounts with a bucket of milk made from powder which made it more drinkable. Cocoa was also an option for breakfast. (Years later after *Pinecliff* was "wired" we found that allowing powdered milk to stand overnight in the cooler made it taste almost "real"). I also remember re-writing recipes to include measurements for reconstituting powdered eggs... as fresh eggs were initially in short supply.

I remember Warren Salveson quite well. Every time I walked within hearing range, I could hear him telling that the first thing he was going to do when he got home was to have a BIG STEAK and a BIG salad to go with it and that he would keep on eating steaks and salads till he got his fill. I didn't take offense, as my menu planning was based 90% on availability.

There was another guide, Nathan Schiotz. His mom came to visit carrying some dark bread made with molasses and other good stuff that she wanted to personally deliver to him. She stayed in the kitchen a while extolling on the heavy dark flour and nuts the bread contained and how it would be so good for him. I have no doubt it was healthy bread. Nathan was out on the trail at the time. It's a good thing she didn't know about our menu planned around macaroni, rice, canned soups and vegetables. We simply had to make do.

I never thought much about going anywhere that first '58 summer except to the kitchen, the lake, the bathroom or to walk across the island to see Pearl. I was too busy to think about it. I have no idea where I got toothpaste or shampoo. Maybe we sent a list with Salver on his errands to town. Maybe my mom mailed some stuff per my request. On the plus side, I didn't spend much. There was no need or place to spend anything.

It seemed like it would be highly beneficial to have continuity and help in the

kitchen staff besides me. My sister Polly and my cousin Roseann joined me in the spring of 1959. They quickly took over the bread baking as well as other food preparation and dining room duties. We also started working in a break during the workday for kitchen staff since the day started early and sometimes didn't end until twelve or so hours later. We would sometimes leave the kitchen for an hour and a half to two hours. Everyone was free to sleep, go to the lake or use the sauna. While the girls finished the dishes and set up the dining room for the next meal, I would take some time to do planning, making lists of food items needed from the mainland, plan menus and pick out recipes.



That summer, Polly started going along on the laundry run to Grand Marais. Before that time, I remember walking down to the lake in the evening with a tub to wash out some clothes and hang them on stumps or branches near my tent to dry. The main thing that I remember hearing about the laundry trip was that the locals and tourists were NOT happy to see our truck and staff coming, as washers and dryers were at a premium. The laundry crew were gone 9-10 hours and if they were not back my mealtime, I would set aside food thinking they would be very hungry on their return. Not so. After this happened a few times, someone finally told me that they had a stop at Dairy Queen in town. Enough said.

Everyone that was in camp threw in their laundry washables... reds, blues, darks and whites... and the machines were likewise filled. That was the summer Isaiah Harriday was a guide. He was very fussy about white clothes and cleanliness in general and paid Polly to hilex his white t-shirts and clean his cabin. He didn't like pink t-shirts.

Glenda Anderson joined me in the kitchen the summer of 1962. She was a fellow U of M Clovia House roommate and she had lots of experience with 4-H food projects. We worked together as part of a group that did some catering in the campus neighborhood. The summer she was there, we spent some of our "free time" making potato lefse...raised doughnuts and pizza. Her culinary skills were so good that she was whisked away to run her own kitchen across on Dominion Island the following summer for Work Camp crews living at Evergreen.



I rarely stayed up late in the evenings, as I needed to be rested to keep up with getting the meals out. Some of the staff sang and talked around campfires until late. One



**AXE WORK ON PINECLIFF II KITCHEN AREA**

moonlit night, some of the guides and other staff decided to go for a late night canoe paddle. I agreed to go...sounded fun. It was a nice evening for being on the water.

I got back to my tent-top about 4 a.m., which meant that my alarm would go off in less than two hours. I got up at my usual time and we got through breakfast, after which I left a list of stuff for the kitchen staff to do for the duration of the morning and I headed back to my tent-top for a morning nap.

About the same time, there was a work crew setting up to take down a huge tree no more than 15-20 yards from my quarters. Misery and agony! I crawled into my sleeping bag in spite of it, thinking the noise might not last long. Power saws should bring a tree down pretty fast. Wrong. Half an hour later there was no evidence of the tree coming down soon...so I crawled back out of my sleeping bag and headed back to the kitchen. So much for late night outings.

The second summer, one of the staff asked if it would be O.K. if her mom sent a favorite recipe from home. I said "sure". The recipe was for Pepper Steak. Meat was scarce. Since we rarely had meat that summer and I never saw a pepper, we never made Pepper Steak.

I took a teaching position during the winter of '61-'62 and returned to WILDERNESS in the summer of '62. Since I hadn't signed a contract to teach again for fall, I was persuaded to stay through the winter and cook for a very small crew and one or two retreats. I went home for a visit in the fall and to get some more winter things. One of the items I brought was a portable sewing machine so I could do some sewing.

Joe and Leola Nermoe spent part of that winter living on *The Cove* mainland. So did Ham's parents, Gladys and Herman. Leola did all our laundry, as we had no laundry facility on the island. All joined us for Sunday noon meals after services. We trekked across the ice every Sunday evening during the winter to have waffles at *The Cove*.

I also remember our guys cutting holes in the ice near the island so we could dip water out for drinking as well as for cooking and all that goes with it. Of course, those holes kept freezing over.

One of the first years, it was decided to put the canned goods that remained in the fall in garbage cans with fitted covers. The "goods" could be dropped deep into the lake below freezing level and still be usable the following spring. It was a good theory, but we never figured out how to keep the labels on. Many of them soaked off while they were immersed in Seagull waters. I remember opening a few at a time whenever we had a

large group and trying to use the can contents in such a way that it would seem “planned.” If it was vegetables, it could sometimes be added to a pasta or rice dish or to soup. Canned fruits could be added to jello. It was the WILDERNESS version of “Russian Roulette.

I remember that our only source of refrigeration, my first year, was an icehouse. I had never used that system before and it was indeed a challenge. We had to dig

through the sawdust to find buried items, such as butter. Returning staff said it was wonderful to have “our own” refrigeration.



Those early years were extremely eventful and interesting. They were a tribute to all who worked together to serve our Campers. That commitment made all the difference.

Lloyd Peterson was a turkey grower in the Paynesville, MN area. Two or three times prior to heading north I approached him and asked if he would donate turkeys, which he did. Vern, I think, got the task of heading out to the turkey plant to haul back a load of frozen birds for use at camp. We often roasted two good sized birds for the Sunday noon meal at *Pinecliff* and made lots of potatoes and gravy to go with it. Leftover turkey was great for casseroles, creamed turkey or soup.

Sunday breakfast was usually juice, cold cereal, and frosted cinnamon bread. The rest of the week was “you name it – we had it” with a plentiful dose of noodles, rice or macaroni. When meat was scarce, which was most of the time, government surplus cheese filled out the menu. It was soup with cheese and crackers at noon, macaroni and cheese for the evening meal, etc. Pancakes and muffins often filled out the breakfast menu in order to stretch the bread a little farther. Fifteen loaves at time was about as much as we could put out. It seems like we served only one cookie per person when cookies were served for dessert. I imagine some of those we served could have eaten 5 or 6...as “treats” were at a premium. One time someone did get their fill of cookies, however, as a huge can of cookies disappeared from the larder one night. I wonder...?



Many of the Guide/Counselors who began at WILDERNESS had little experience in handling food, especially preparing Trail meals. I often was called upon to offer very basic assistance such as how much water to add to oatmeal or macaroni; how long to cook, etc. The variables of the open fires and weather were factors. Some staffers became very efficient in making lefse or pizza crust rolled on a canoe bottom. Some became expert pie bakers with reflector ovens using fresh gooseberries or blueberries. A few, of course,



specialized in backpack stews! It was lots of fun to be able to teach the basics of cooking plus cleanliness around the 'kitchen' and how to improvise.

We had an especially busy month of July during my second season. In addition to groups from the city, Red Wing and County Probation, we had two work camp volunteer groups. Pastor Ham came to me in early August to say that our Open House guests might number 200 or so. I almost panicked. We were dependant upon our cooler at Blankenburg's Landing since our own ice house was running low. We had no electricity on the island, you know. For some reason, I decided to serve glorified rice plus some *Beulah Bread*, sliced salami, cheese, carrot sticks and a pan cake. I had never made any rice dish in that quantity. What an adventure it was! As the rice cooked, I filled every kettle in the kitchen, called for the large pots from the trail cook kits, and prayed for the best. Eve Blankenburg helped organize our cooked rice supply at the mainland cooler.


On the chosen Open House Sunday, I called on all available staff and early guest volunteers to stir up the mountains of glorified rice and crushed pineapple and whipped cream. It seemed like we served the "5,000" after the worship service with enough left to satisfy any rice desire for the balance of the summer. Happily, guests and campers all politely said, 'the best I've ever eaten.' I slept soundly that night!



THIS IS A GREAT PHOTO FROM THE 1958 SEASON. THIS ONE IS FROM THE FIRST COMMISSARY. YOU SEE BEULAH WITH APRON IN THE KITCHEN WITH SWAMPER BILL FLITTIE. SWAMPER ART NERMoe (PLAID - FACING CAMERA) IS SEATED WITH RED WING WORK CAMPERS WHILE DICK BRYNTESON SERVES. THE WOODEN SIGN ACROSS THE KITCHEN CARRIES THE TABLE GRACE... "BE PRESENT AT OUR TABLE, LORD..." AND NOTICE THE STURDY POPE AND OAK NORLIEN-BUILT BENCHES AND TABLE. TO THE LEFT IS A CANADIAN WOLF HIDE AND THE HEAD OF CHRIST ARTWORK. *BEULAH BREAD* IS ON THE TABLE!







### BEULAH BREAD


*Hundreds of campers every year left for home remembering this all-time camp favorite.*

½ cup warm water (not hot, about 110-115 degrees)  
2 pkgs. active dry yeast  
1¾ cups lukewarm milk, water or potato water  
3 T sugar  
2½ tsp. salt  
2 T soft shortening  
7-7½ cups flour

Measure warm water into a mixing bowl. Add yeast and stir to dissolve. Stir in milk, sugar, salt, shortening and half of the flour. Mix with spoon until smooth. Add enough remaining flour to handle easily. Mix with hand, squeezing dough between fingers. Knead dough until smooth and elastic and no longer sticks to board or counter top. Round up in greased bowl. Turn to bring greased side up. Cover with damp cloth.

Let rise in warm place (85 degrees) until double (about 1 ½ hours). When dough is doubled, punch down. Let rise again till almost double (about 30 minutes). Divide dough into 2 portions.

Shape each loaf, let rise and bake. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Bake loaves 25-30 minutes until golden brown and loaves sound hollow when lightly tapped with fingers.



The summer of 1960, Keith Clark wrote delightful lyrics for a song called "Beulah Bread." Brother B.J. wrote the music. As our camp folk song leader, Keith taught us all this tune, which became a real favorite. "We like the Beulah Bread... pass the marmalade."

### BEULAH BREAD

We like the Beulah Bread,

Pass the marmalade;

We like the Beulah Bread,

We like the way it's made.

Oh, it starts our hearts a-quaking

When we know that Beulah's baking--

It's the sunshine of our day.

We like the Beulah Bread,

Please pass the jam;

We like the Beulah Bread,

It's fleecy as a lamb.

Oh, the crust is most nutritious,

And the flavor is delicious--

It's the sunshine of our day.

We like the Beulah Bread,

Please pass the butter;

We like the Beulah Bread,

Our pulse is just a-flutter

When at work we think ahead

Of our eating Beulah Bread--

It's the sunshine of our day.

--KEITH CLARK

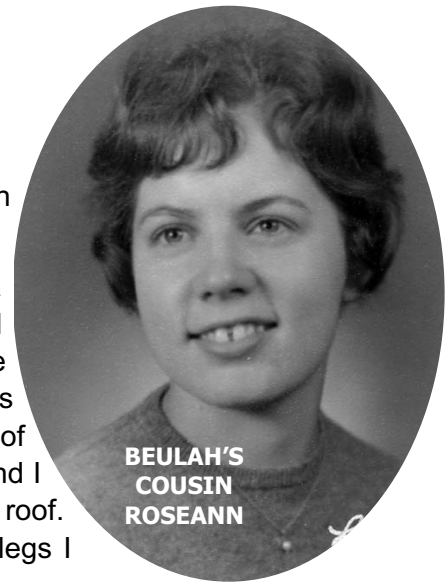
More memories from Beulah's faithful helper, **Roseann**, in the late '50s.



### **Roseann Everson**

Polly, Beulah's sister, and I were recruited by Beulah to help in the food services. We were best of friends.

I remember the summers at WILDERNESS as being a very special time in my life. I will always remember the good times spent there. It was so fun to live in the tent cabin in the woods. Polly and I spent a lot of time playing in the woods making playhouses when we were growing up, so it was kind of like having a "playhouse", I thought. I slept on the top bunk and I would lay there and look at the huge spiders that were on the roof. I could see them through the canvas – they had such long legs I remember. The tent-top was eventually named *Spiderville*.



Every morning we woke up at the crack of dawn to make bread (15 loaves almost every day). Polly and I would take turns every other day to make the bread, so on our day we would start about 5:30 a.m. We didn't seem to mind it too much – it was so refreshing that early in the morning. One day I had some trouble when one of the guys slammed a door or something and some of the loaves fell (almost ready to bake); that was pretty discouraging but I guess it rose again. Everybody loved the bread – they called it *Beulah Bread*. I recall one problem I had was making cakes with dry egg powder; sometimes they would get a funny hard layer on the bottom.

Polly and I and some of the other girls would canoe over to the sauna. We got so hot in there. Then we would jump in the lake to cool off. Sometimes on the way back to our island I would get a little light headed, guess I got too hot or cold – don't know which.

Another thing I remember is a four day canoe trip to Canada. That was great but oh those canoes were heavy to carry through the woods - good thing we were raised on a farm. We weren't even worried about bear or anything – we even baked cakes on the trail.

Polly and I would go once a week to Grand Marais to do the laundry with a guy from the camp that drove us in the pickup. We filled the back full of laundry bags from all the staff and drove down the winding gravel road lined with trees on both sides. I got a little car sick because the road was so long and bumpy but I always made it. We spent all day in the laundromat. While we waited for our ride back we would look in the stores but couldn't buy much because neither of us had much money.

I will never forget the huge kettles of potatoes we made and the huge blood suckers that chased us and the fun singing around the campfire at night and oh how the mosquitoes bit at night and the friends we made and taking canoes to the Chapel. Thank you for all the memories of this special time.



## GAINING MOMENTUM

It was vitally important to keep the WILDERNESS outreach in balance with all the other emerging work of PCYC. Bob, Oz and I spent many hours together reviewing... anticipating... consulting staff... prayerfully allocating time and resources.

The momentum at WILDERNESS seemed to energize the entire program. Maybe it was because it carried such a breath of fresh air and excitement, maybe because it held such promise of reaching out in special ways. Whatever it was served PCYC well.

Several PCYC Board members made efforts to be on site at WILDERNESS. When I advanced the potential of the Dominion Island acquisition, there was approval to proceed... again in faith that financial obligations could be met.

The second WILDERNESS season was very dramatic in many ways. While we were learning "on the fly," reports from supervisors at Hennepin County and Ramsey Totem Town were very positive. Minnesota State Connections Commissioner Morris Hursh wanted to see first hand this "unusual" reclamation project. He came to the Dedication Day 1958 Open House. He offered enthusiastic encouragement.

We had an energetic and talented staff assembled... including our prize recruit, Beulah Lukason. The Lord was raising up persons of faith... Guide/Counselors, Swampers, Campsite staff, volunteers. His hand was on our shoulders.

Fred Norlien described the success of those very early years as "nothing short of a miracle." He was, of course, in the midst of it all in a profound way.

**DR. GEORGE AUS PREACHES  
AT 1958 DEDICATION**



Our love for Dr. George Aus was very deep. It was a double joy to get to know his gifted son, Whitey, and St. Olaf friends Duane Swenson, Nate Schiotz and Warren Salvesson. Whitey embodied the essence of his dad's homily: *What Do These Stones Mean?* God was indeed present in and through this dedicated staff.

In his *Reflection*, **Whitey** bears witness to a deep and authentic faith.



### Whitey Aus



What a privilege it was to be a part of the history of WILDERNESS! Two friends (Duane Swenson and Nate Schiotz) and I went up to the canoe base just before our football practice began at St. Olaf College in the fall of 1957. The Camp was pretty rustic at that time. This was its inaugural summer. The facilities were being built and consisted of a commissary in progress, a few bunk units, a latrine or two and a waterfront/canoe area. Tents were still being used. Water was carried from the lake. You could see that a community was gradually taking shape.

Swens, Nate and I worked at WILDERNESS for a few days helping with the construction projects. We negotiated for the use of a canoe, three paddles, a tent, a couple of "Duluth Packs," a cook kit and grill, some trail food and a couple of maps. We had our own sleeping bags, some food, clothing and fishing gear. All three of us were eager to get out "on the trail." Our canoe camping experience was minimal.

We headed out on a raw Monday morning. What a great feeling! We paddled through Seagull, Alpine and Jasper, fishing as we went. We found the "perfect campsite" on Ogishkemuncie, made camp, cooked our supper and retired for the night. The next morning we headed southeast through Agamok and Mueller Lakes, aiming for Gabimichagami. The portages were long and tough, but we were young and adventuresome and loved the challenges we encountered. God's pristine outback was awesome. We were thrilled by what we were experiencing. In Gabi, we met a professional guide who was filleting some beautiful lake trout. He told us where and how to fish for lakere. We had a ball! Before we left Gabi, we enjoyed a pan-fried shore meal of trout. We then packed some of our catch in moss for our return trip.

We started back at about 6:00 p.m....not such a great idea! We were soon paddling in the dark. The return took much good fortune and lots of help from God. We were young, bold and terribly naïve. Seagull is full of islands. We traveled its entire length in the dark. Amazing!! A lesson hard earned. This introduction set the stage for future camp involvement. We wanted to be a part of WILDERNESS ministry!

It was interesting for me. I heard from my Dad about the "renewal" at the Sem. I sensed the growing awareness of WILDERNESS ministry on the St. Olaf campus. The Spirit was indeed at work!



The summer of 1958 brought Swens, Nate and me back to WILDERNESS. We had a taste of Trails life and loved the Boundary Waters. Pastor Ham recruited us to be “guide/counselors.” Our friend Warren Salveson signed on with us. Nate, Swens and I spent about half of our time in Camp doing carpentry work and odd jobs. The other half was as counselors on the canoe trails. It was a summer I’ll never forget! Hard work... important time...serving.

The scenery, wild life and mystique of the Boundary Waters held great appeal and fond memories. It was such a privilege to be part of those early years at WILDERNESS!

We all participated in the festivities at WILDERNESS “Dedication Weekend.” When the Camp was officially blessed, Pastor Ham had asked my Dad to bring the message. He spoke on Joshua: 4: “What Do These Stones Mean?” I was proud to be there. I knew my Dad was a special mentor to the founders of WILDERNESS. Besides the worship service, we had a picnic lunch, canoe races, a “watermelon fight” and other fun activities to help celebrate the day with the gathered Open House guests.

WILDERNESS was started so inner-city, at risk, and church youth too could have the unique opportunity to experience God’s creation and love in a pristine setting. Even after 50 years, the Gospel is still proclaimed and God’s word gives meaning to lives.



Ham Muus, Bob Evans and Oz Anderson were instrumental in shaping the Camp and formulating its mission. It was their vision, their sweat and energy, their response to God’s call and their prayers that enabled and empowered WILDERNESS. It is clearly a positive force in helping to bring about change and personal renewal in the lives of many campers, staff and adult advisors. God’s spirit was always there, directing the efforts. They were the “founding fathers” of a ministry that has served youth and adults in a special way. What a great legacy they have given us!

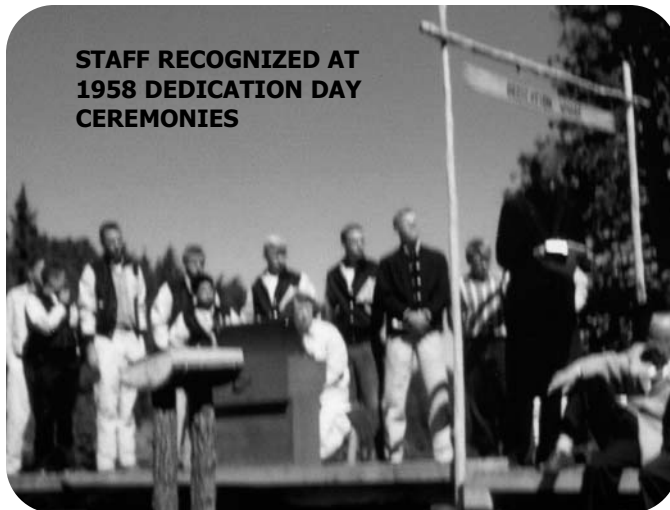


Thinking back to our tasks as guide/counselors, we had a wide variety of roles that each of us was expected to perform. It ranged from map-reader for the next portage; to head cooks who helped plan and prepare the meals; moderator and disciplinarian; counselor and nurse; storyteller and spiritual leader. What a huge responsibility it was on the shoulders of 20- 22-year-olds who were still trying to figure out the J stroke, not to mention the other challenges. Somehow, God still used us.



**MENTOR  
DR. GEORGE  
AUS**

All of the campers looked to us as “spiritual leaders”. Every camper knew this was a Christian camp. Each of us as guide/counselors was asked to study the Bible in preparation for our role as “spiritual leader” of the groups we took out on the Trail. It was a growth experience for me to share Bible principles and stories, to represent Christ, to pray with campers and to encourage them to look at their own lives as followers of Jesus. I tried to inspire them through God’s word and challenge them to grow in faith. In Luke 9: Jesus poses two questions to his disciples: 1) Who do the people say I am? (an easy one to answer) 2) Who do *you* say I am? (a tougher and more personal one to answer). These and



**STAFF RECOGNIZED AT  
1958 DEDICATION DAY  
CEREMONIES**

other similar questions were the focus of our Trails conversations. Getting to know God and His plan for our lives was our goal.

This was challenging, exciting business.

On the trails, nothing has ever tasted as good as a fresh fish meal from one of those clear Northern lakes, or biscuits baked in the reflector oven, oatmeal with raisins on a cool August morning, pancakes with pure maple syrup or home made chocolate pudding cooked

over an open fire! Yes, and even a trail lunch of cervelot, rye krisp, cheese, half of a Baker's semi-sweet chocolate bar and Kool-Aid tasted great.

The teamwork, fellowship, friendship and bonding that took place because of a shared ownership for each trip was often quite amazing to behold. Campers grew up over the seven to ten days they were on the Trail. "Me first" became a "We mentality." Work shirkers sometimes became the first to volunteer. Campers became aware of the needs of others and often offered to give a helping hand. There were enough dishwashers, wood gatherers and volunteers to portage canoes and food packs. A process of transformation had begun.

What else do I remember from my 1958 WILDERNESS days?

- ✧ The much appreciated, highly valued Beulah, our in Camp cook...*Beulah Bread!*
- ✧ Our "gopher," Dave Dominguez, was always willing to help
- ✧ "Swampers," who provided great support to the guides, guys like Tom Hughes, Warren "Hex" Lee, and Bill Flittie
- ✧ Dismantling, rafting and hauling the three Miles Island log cabins
- ✧ The big canoe race on "Dedication Sunday" (Swens and I lost)
- ✧ Dad's sermon on Dedication Sunday...with Ham and Bob's dads honored
- ✧ Our monthly trip to Grand Marais to see a Saturday night movie
- ✧ Fred Norlien's wisdom and great carpentry skills
- ✧ Dehydrated food – UGH!...but it sustained us
- ✧ The world's greatest latrine – "The Bastille" (it served us well)
- ✧ Skinny dipping off the dock at midnight
- ✧ Pastor Ham's guidance and omnipresence as Camp Director



**WHITEY  
THE ST.  
OLAF  
GRADUATE**





- ✧ Walleye on the Kekekabic River and BIG northern on Bear Lake
- ✧ The unmatched beauty of the lakes, woods and overall scenery
- ✧ Pearl's wonderful presence at *Morningside*
- ✧ Loons – the ubiquitous Loons
- ✧ Setting up sails on a windy day – traversing Seagull Lake
- ✧ Watching a moose swim across Bear Lake
- ✧ The total teamwork of our diverse staff

These are memories for which I will be forever grateful. The experiences, people and time spent at WILDERNESS Canoe Base have made an indelible imprint on my life, and on the lives of many others. Thank you PCYC Thank you Ham, Bob and Oz... and thank you, Lord, for sharing this place with me!

Whitey, Swens, Nate, Salver and Ollie were all terrific athletes. Each carried special talents and skills. They understood and communicated the basic values in teamwork and cooperation. Campers “caught” the practiced respect for each other.

We all need “mentors” we can trust and learn from. **Duane** captures this well in his *Reflections*.

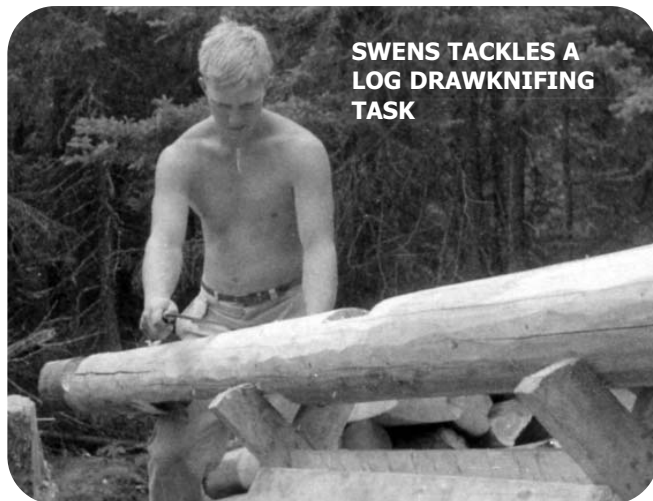


### Duane Swenson

How did it all happen? What drove “the founders” to move beyond their comfort zones to experience and accomplish things at and through WILDERNESS Canoe Base that has impacted generations? How did this synergism within a small group of individuals spread? It might be described as contagious, as it moved beyond the familiar to new territory with an excitement and satisfaction that comes with making a difference.

The concentrated time spent together in the magnificence and mystery of the Boundary Waters was dynamic and vitally crucial. Words were matched with actions, made possible in a setting with time spent in shared activity, a powerful factor.

The vision of the “founding fathers” was inspired. Ham, Bob and Oz were of one mind. Perhaps no one could really see all that was to come. There were a great many things about to happen. I relate particularly to the summer of 1958, with its significant St. Olaf roots.





The words synergism, guidance and direction are of special significance as I think of how we experience God's presence in our lives. I see the impact of the St. Olaf community on Ham, Bob, Oz and the cadre of mentors...persons like Ade Christenson, Cully Swanson, Mark Almli, Harold Ditmanson, Theodore Huggenvik and Ed Sovik...all remarkable. The connection at Luther Seminary...Dr. Andrew Burgess, Dr. George Aus, Dr. Al Rogness and others is woven into the fabric with the Husbys, the Husos, the Feskes and a host of others. It is a magnificent example of how all have a role in encouraging, leading and inspiring on this life journey.



The WILDERNESS summer of 1958 was unique for me. The staff was a special blend of recruits. The common ground of faith, the sense of adventure, challenge and mission were blended into a motivated and effective community. Campers pitched in. Experiences were mutually shared. We learned to capture a dream and live out faith convictions.

As guide/counselors, we embraced our leadership responsibilities. *With every camper, we tried to live out an authentic faith.* I expanded my love and respect for the complex, fragile north. I hoped to encourage campers to care for our environment. I also wanted campers to be successful in the simple tasks on the Trails. I honored them as persons of promise.

WILDERNESS was more than some islands on the edge of the Boundary Waters. The word spread that an exciting new ministry was emerging. WILDERNESS became known for who was involved and what was being done. The place and its mission became a source of pride. Dr. Aus, Whitey's dad, in his powerful "sermon on the Rock" for the WILDERNESS Dedication referenced the surrounding "cloud of witnesses." We were grateful to be partners... in work, faith and Spirit.

It was exciting for both Pearl and me when **Ollie Hoffman** came on staff. We knew what a natural leader he was. We knew something of his faith journey. He listened and learned... like a "disciple."



**Ollie Hoffman**



Where to start? Maybe at the beginning! When I first met Ham Muus he had just graduated from St. Olaf College. He and Pearl arrived in Madison, MN, my hometown. Ham was the basketball coach and I was an aspiring basketball player. When Ham and Pearl left Madison to go to Luther Seminary, I helped their family move to St. Paul.

In 1957 I was a student at the U of MN. Ham contacted me to work at Plymouth Youth Center and the Wilderness Canoe Base. At that time I was unable to help. We kept in contact. I was able to spend the summer of 1958 at WILDERNESS. It was a most memorable experience. Little did I know what an affect and imprint those months would make on my life.

The first staff member I met was Beulah Lukason. She is remembered as a "magician" and a chef extraordinaire! Where all of the good food came from probably will remain a

mystery. When the food packs were full of oatmeal, raisins, dry milk and all of the other surplus food, she would add a special treat of cookies, bread, doughnuts, or other treats. I have always remembered them. Thank you!!

Much of my summer was spent on the Trail. Many of my campers were from the Red Wing State Training School or special needs persons from Hennepin

County. These campers told many interesting stories around our campfires. They explained why they were in various difficult circumstances! I still remember some hair-raising stories. I tried to lift their hopes and spirit. Dave Biorn was a great help as my Swamper.

I also led a group from Central Lutheran Church in Minneapolis with Rube Groehler. My wife, Dorothy, and I are members there and still keep in touch with Reuben and Arlene. WILDERNESS shaped that bonding.

Beulah asked me about my cooking skills in the woods. We were very fortunate to be in the BWCA where there was an abundance of good water. For breakfast we added water to the oatmeal and hot chocolate. On pancake days we added water to the pancake mix and brown sugar. Lunch was adding water to Kool-Aid and sugar to go with salami, cheese and rye krisp. For dinner we would add water to rice, dried potatoes and dried fruit. Even without the water, the food pack was heavy! We did catch fish, on occasion, and that was always a great addition to the menu.

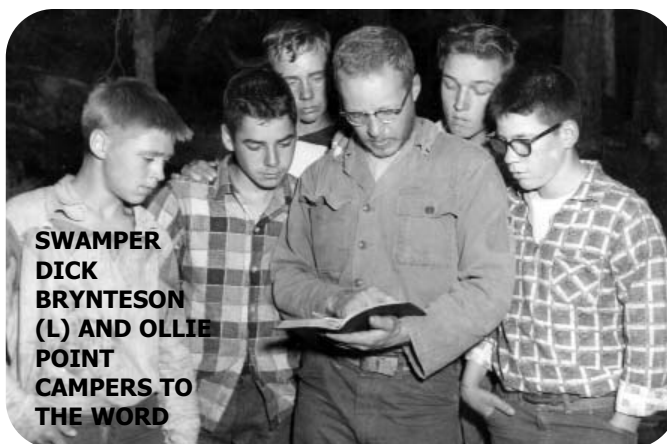
When I went to WILDERNESS for the first time, I rode with Pastor Ham. We stopped in Duluth at a plywood/sheathing plant. When Ham returned to the car, he was smiling. He had gained a donation of materials for a building or two. We also made a visit to the Hedstrom Lumber Co. in Grand Marais. They provided more building material. Over the years, countless people and places of business provided money, material, support and hope for a vision that became WILDERNESS Canoe Base.

Pastor Bob Evans also was a part of the foundation for the camping operation. Later in the '58 season, 3 cabins were being dismantled at the far end of Seagull to be moved and reassembled at the Canoe Base. My job, with Bob, Fred Norlien and other staff was to maneuver the logs back to camp on canoes lashed together. It was a floating marvel.

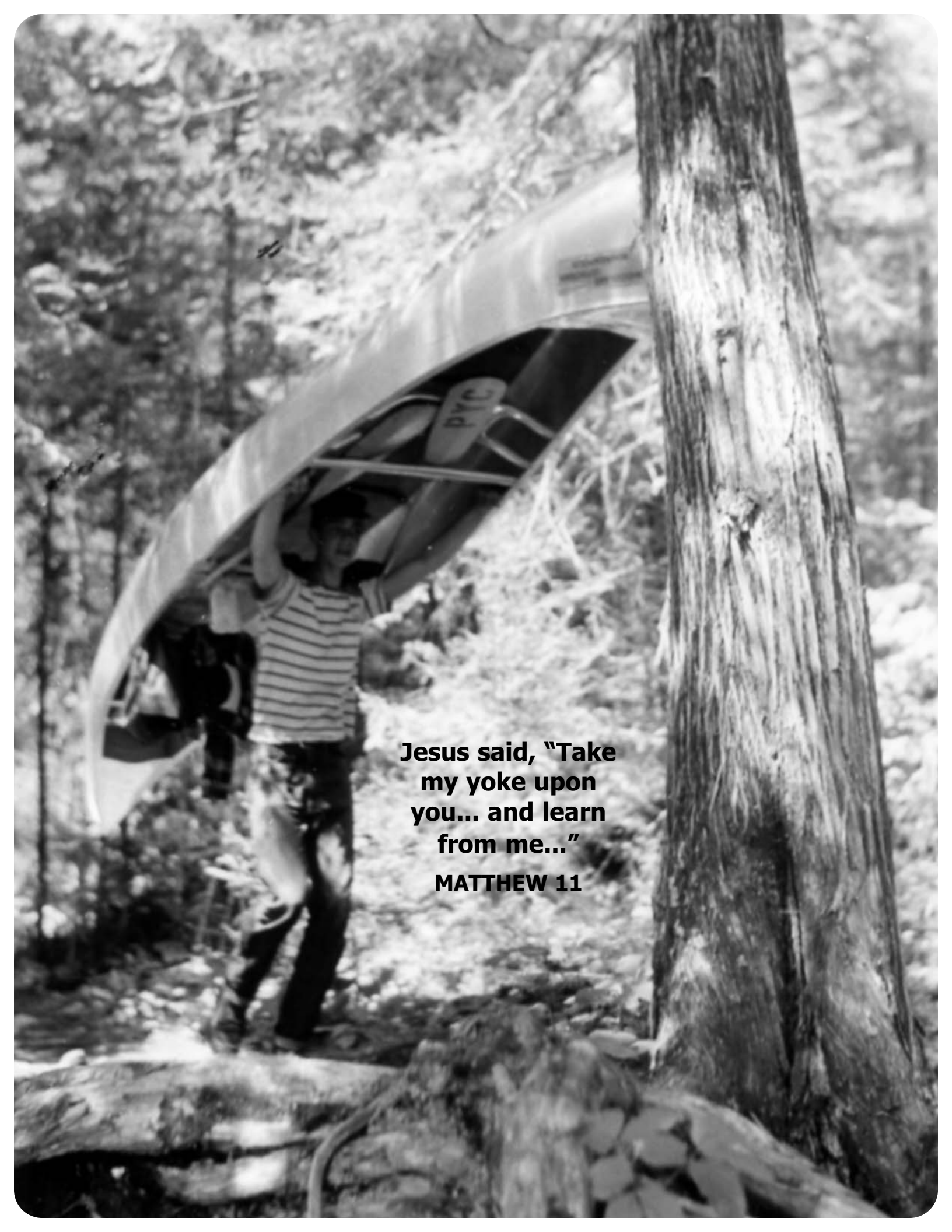
Bob's parents came to visit during an Open House late that summer. My future wife, Dorothy, and I went with them for a boat tour of Seagull Lake. Far down the lake, at dusk, the motor quit. To call for help, the Senior Evans made moose calls and lit matches. It worked. We were rescued!

My hope is that some of the campers and staff share with me the inspiration I gained that summer. Where there is a vision, hope, and faith in Jesus Christ, anything can be accomplished!

Our love of the north has continued. Over the years, we have returned to the BWCA many times with our own prized Seliga canoe. I am grateful for the WILDERNESS start.

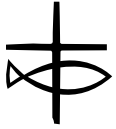


**SWAMPER  
DICK  
BRYNTESON  
(L) AND OLLIE  
POINT  
CAMPERS TO  
THE WORD**

A black and white photograph of a person carrying a canoe on their back through a wooded area. The person is wearing a striped shirt and dark pants, and is walking towards the left. The canoe is light-colored with a dark interior and has the letters "PYC" on it. A large tree trunk is on the right side of the frame. The background is filled with trees and foliage.

**Jesus said, "Take  
my yoke upon  
you... and learn  
from me..."**

**MATTHEW 11**



## THE UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE: J. WESLEY WHITE

I became increasingly conscious that we were but one of many organizational camping enterprises sharing the Boundary Waters. Our inspirational model was highly regarded Camp Widjiwagan on Burntside Lake near Ely. "Widji" Camp Director Whitey Leuhrs was a mentor who helped with many aspects of camp administration and philosophy.

Then there was the Minneapolis-based YMCA Camp Menogyn just down the trail. The Boy Scouts of America also had a major operational site at Sommers Canoe Base outside Ely. There were other organization users.

Add to that the independent private, commercial outfitters both on the Gunflint Trail and around Ely. This combination represented substantial camper impact within the BWCA. It was the responsibility of the U.S. Forest Service to manage designated wilderness areas. The protection of the fragile Boundary Waters received major attention through the USFS. Duluth office. I established early contact with the USFS. both to indicate our program plans as well as to receive their counsel and suggestions. We wanted to earn their respect.

The Fishhook Island acquisition from the Blankenburgs in 1956 made WILDERNESS a "next door neighbor" to the U.S. government. The lower hook of land is within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. It was important that we give an early promise to the USFS of our intentions and desire for cooperation.

My winter 1956 visit to the Duluth USFS office was highly beneficial. Ranger/Supervisor J. Wesley White listened carefully to thoughts and dreams about our start-up camping ministry. We reviewed the history and experience of other organized Trails programs. He spoke clearly about expectations for the care of the BWCA and the impact of more users in the coming years. It was a very cordial beginning.

One of the old time north woods trails practices was to dump emptied cans, even glass containers into the lakes. Bad practice. Ranger White was anxious to change this and other trash related behavior. We were eager to establish our commitments to responsible trail life. We accepted the challenge to "leave every campsite better that we found it." In addition, we pledged to "carry out" whatever could degrade the primitive character of the BWCA. This pledge to *Leave No Trace* was the start in forging a comprehensive BWCA trails discipline. It also helped fashion a personal and professional relationship with Ranger White, which was significant throughout *The Founding Years*.

In mid-summer of '58, Ranger White notified me of an open USFS auction for three small log cabins on Miles Island within Seagull's BWCA boundaries. Fred Norlien and I inspected the cabins and found all to be extremely well built 12'x16' units. We decided it



**Leave No  
Trace**



would indeed be a valuable addition to our facility if we were successful in our bid. We thought we could dismantle and move them, somehow, to Fishhook. It all proved to be a highly creative learning experience!

J. Wesley White advised us that we were the new “owners.” The Miles Island site had to be cleaned up following removal to as natural state as humanly possible. We were on notice to do a good job.

With dependable leadership from craftsman Fred, our WILDERNESS staff met the challenge. Each cabin was carefully dismantled, roof to foundation. Logs were clearly marked and coded to master plan. Roof and floorboards were cleaned for later replacement. All debris was eliminated. All the parts and pieces were painstakingly canoe rafted to Fishhook’s *Morningside*. There they found “rest” awaiting subsequent reconstruction on permanent foundations. This venture was the precursor to what came to be known as *Operation Log Cabin*.

Ranger White made an unscheduled visit to WILDERNESS and to the Miles Island sites. He was very pleased with what he saw. He expressed confidence in the manner that WILDERNESS met BWCA/USFS expectations. I felt we had gained an important advocate and “partner.”

The mission of WILDERNESS also seemed to touch Ranger White in a special way. He was a man of faith. He recognized the importance of the potential integration of a spiritual perspective to BWCA camping. He wanted WILDERNESS to succeed in its intentional “redemptive” outreach.

A second more inclusive auction was held in the Fall of 1958. Under the counsel and guidance of J. Wesley White, we entered into and had successful bidding for 13 other log structures in *Operation Log Cabin*. He arranged for an on-site cabin preview. He was also instrumental in providing some maps and other data, which supported our winter operational logistics. He significantly helped enable our beginning efforts.

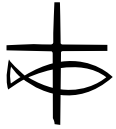
We deeply appreciated and honor the partnership with J. Wesley White... and others within the USFS... in *The Founding Years*. It was of generous substance and Spirit.



**Meet the Forest Service**  
“Caring for the Land and Serving People”







## A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS: OTIS ANDERSON

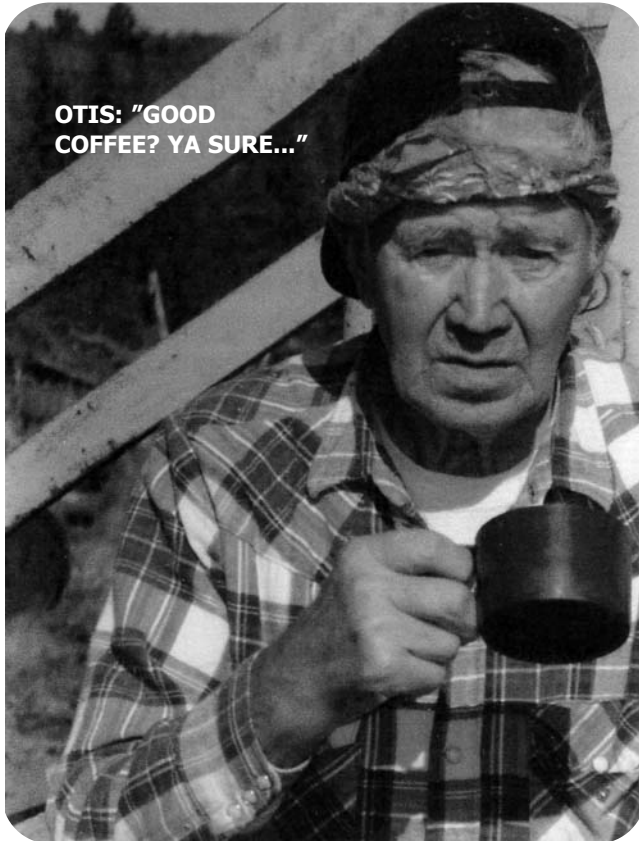
We greatly valued the interest and support of the Hedstrom Lumber family. Roy, Herb and Wes were helpful with supplying surfaced lumber at many points in our early years. They were generous with many significant donations of wood products.

Much of our construction required rough cut lumber and timbers. We were fortunate to have Otis Anderson as our incomparable custom sawyer. He was a loyal partner throughout *The Founding Years*.

It seems there are few places one can go to find a true Renaissance man. We found one in Minnesota's North Woods above Hovland. Otis Anderson: sturdy Norwegian with massive weathered hands and broad shoulders...a deep woods logger, timber sawyer, family man, avid Louis Lamour western reader, fiddle player, humorist... and vital Christian. The beautiful Trinity Lutheran Church in Hovland was where Otis, Inez and family worshipped.

Pearl and I first met Otis in the early fifties at his rustic, hand built sawmill on the Tom Lake Road. We were looking for a craftsman to harvest and saw logs for a North Shore family cabin. We quickly sensed his Nordic hospitality and gentle spirit. He invited us to the Moose Valley Anderson home to meet wife Inez, daughters Virginia, Dianne, and Susan. We were warmly welcomed. From then on, our two families were linked. Common interests were joined. The Anderson family became part of the extended WILDERNESS family.

Otis became our principal supplier of virtually all the rough-cut lumber used in WILDERNESS construction in the *founding decade*. He custom cut 2x4's to 12x12's; 1" cedar boards to 3" decking; 24' pine and 20' spruce timbers. Whatever lumber our projects required, Otis would custom cut. He carefully harvested his own trees...then bought saw logs from other loggers as needed. It was a joy to watch him skid timber...first with his horses...then small tractor. His eye for sawing straight and true was a well practiced and respected skill.



OTIS: "GOOD COFFEE? YA SURE..."

Otis enjoyed his WILDERNESS association. He really felt he was a "partner". His care and attention to detail was evident. I believe he saw it as an expression of his special Christian vocation.

Over the years, WILDERNESS drivers highly valued the contact and friendship with Otis. Vern Borson, Lynn Swanson, Warren Salveson, John Hartje, Don Ekstrom, John Glesne all shared his openness and understated Nordic humor. They spoke in hushed reverence of his incredible physical strength and gentle spirit.



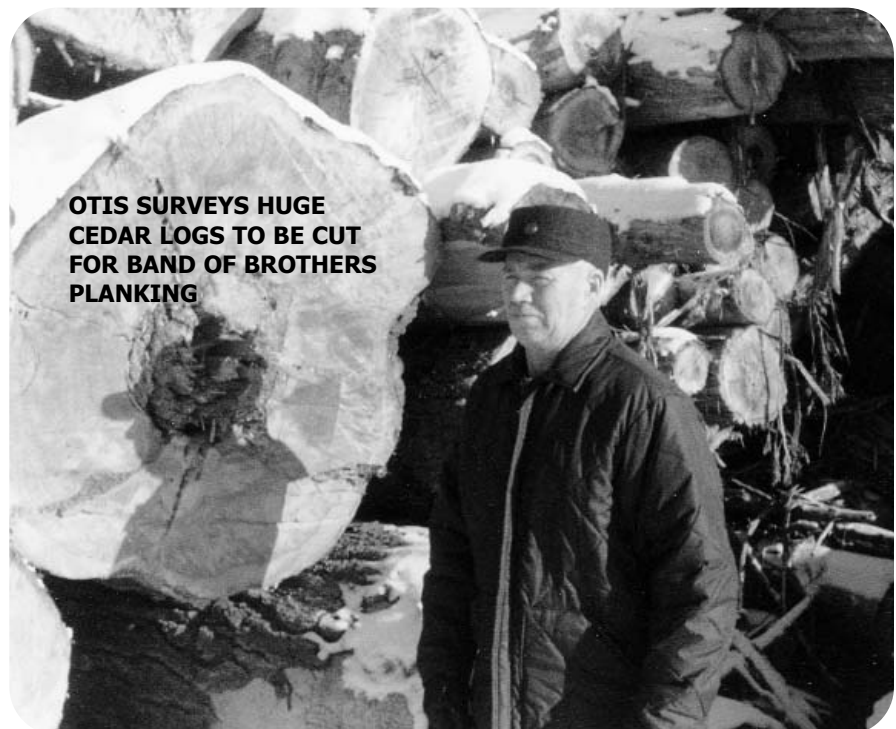
**OTIS' TIMBERS IN PINECLIFF II**

We were blessed one '60s summer to have daughter Dianne serve on WILDERNESS staff at *Morningside* with Pearl and our three young children. She carried the same brand of Anderson hospitality and goodness. She had learned a love of the earth and the forests at the feet of her Dad.

When

*Pinecliff* was burned to the ground in late fall 1960, we were understandably totally devastated. Some folks questioned whether WILDERNESS could even function in the upcoming season. In joint resolve, Otis shared my determination to rebuild *Pinecliff II*. With the creative help of Northfield architect Ed Sovik and associate Bob Warn, new plans were drawn. Otis said he would do everything humanly possible to provide the necessary timbers and lumber for reconstruction. Throughout that bitterly cold winter, Otis labored to provide dozens of long timbers and custom cut rough boards so that *Pinecliff* could be rebuilt. He also stockpiled the 3" thick cedar planking specified for the *Band of Brothers* cantilever roof designed by St. Olaf Professor Arne Flaten.

Otis valued WILDERNESS mission. He wanted WILDERNESS to succeed. His labors were "dedicated to the task of renewal." Through the Anderson family, WILDERNESS was blessed. We honor that storied legacy and witness.



**OTIS SURVEYS HUGE CEDAR LOGS TO BE CUT FOR BAND OF BROTHERS PLANKING**



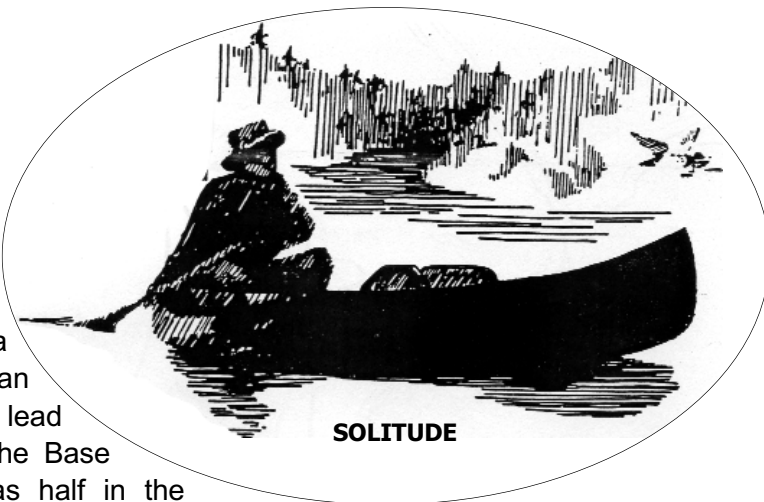
From Day One in 1957, we had hard working, committed teens serving as WILDERNESS Swampers. They were invaluable members of the team.

The tallest of the Swampers in those early years was **Dave Biorn**... affectionately known as "Bean"... because of his impressive height and wing span. He was a gifted athlete and deeply spiritual person. His roots were in Northfield, where he lived in a pastoral ministry family. His dad was another personal mentor for me.



**Dave Biorn**

Before my junior year in high school, I arrived at WCB in late May of 1958 excited to get started as a Swamper. I was full of anticipation about being part of a new venture. A Swamper was an assistant to a Guide, who was the lead faith counselor of the campers. The Base Camp was on an island that was half in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area and half that was outside. Ours was the north "outside" half.



The buildings on the island had been built the summer before. They were few in number. Conditions were still quite primitive but functional. We hauled water from the lake to serve our basic needs, shared the outhouses with the mosquitoes and slept in hard-sided tents. Bathing in late May meant jumping into freezing water, the lake having just given up the last of its ice. It was a breath-taking exercise. Gathering around a camp fire afterwards helped to warm up core body temperature.

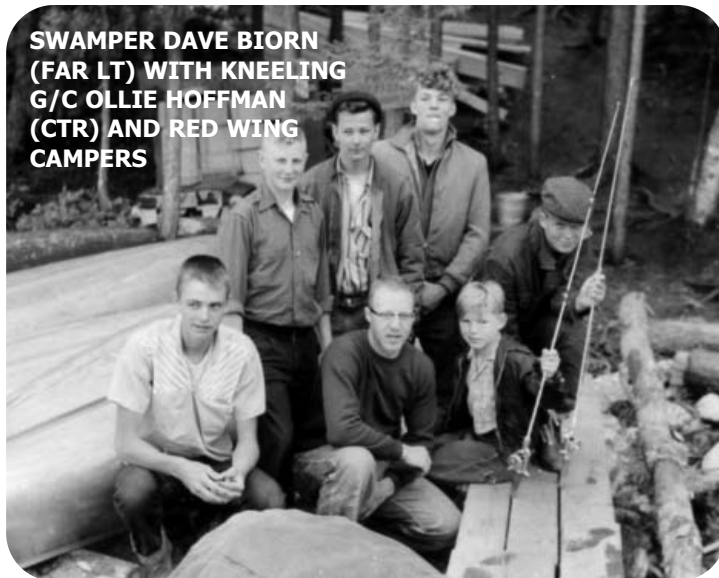
There was a commissary/kitchen where we were all well fed by Beulah. It also served as "mission control." It was a bit mind boggling to consider all the logistics and work that had already gone into the camp to that point and all the necessary work that was yet to come. Little did I know what I would be in for over the next three summers...the new things that I would experience, new friendships that would develop, the hard work, the fun, the spiritual growth and the sense of accomplishment that I would feel.



Pastor Ham, camp founder and director, had many talents. One that was very apparent was his ability to attract such a great bunch of people who shared his vision and who were willing to extend themselves in order to achieve whatever was necessary to get the job done. Every morning we would gather after breakfast for matins, to receive our assignments from Ham and then, off we'd go to carry out our duties for the day. Many of our crew were in college at the time, considering future life work. All brought a strong faith and a hope that a wilderness adventure could be an opportunity for the Gospel to come alive for all of us... campers and staff alike. We had the beauty and majesty of this wonderful setting as one place for discovery.



I was fortunate to be able to help reassemble the log structures that had been dismantled and brought to the island the previous winter. Sites were chosen and two by two we would carry the marked logs on our shoulders to that location. The logs were then stripped of their old surfaces by means of a draw knife, a curved blade about 18" long with leather handles on each end. Fred Norlien had these specially made. We kept these sharpened to a razor's edge out of necessity. The idea



**SWAMPER DAVE BIORN  
(FAR LT) WITH KNEELING  
G/C OLLIE HOFFMAN  
(CTR) AND RED WING  
CAMPER**

was to shave as thin a layer from the log as possible by drawing the knife toward you...being careful not to touch the "saddle" part where the logs fit on top of one another. This took some patience to master, to say the least. But after a while we got quite good at it. The logs looked brand new. It was exciting to see the structure take shape and look so fresh once they were finished. Another aspect to my education.

To preserve some of the board and batten frame buildings, a chemical brew was concocted made up of five gallons of wood tox with a pint of burnt umber and raw sienna. When applied by a 4" brush, it gave wood a beautiful amber brown color that blended beautifully with the setting. The problem was that by the end of the day, you were as covered with the brew as much as the boards were. It took many latherings and rinses to get clean. That tarry smell like creosote lingered long...a kind of aromatic badge of courage.

I put in many days "draw knifing" the logs that went into *Pinecliff*, a magnificent lodge that quickly became the center of activity at camp. I was devastated when I learned it had burned down during the winter of my freshman year at St. Olaf College. More creative determination was now needed.

There were many other tasks that I had an opportunity to do including painting the WCB logo on all of the canoes; making a large WILDERNESS sign with the use of a router to mark *The Cove* entrance; loading a raft made of three canoes tied together to float supplies over to the island...whatever was necessary, it's what we gladly did each and every day while in camp.

I also recall scraping dirt off the granite sub strata on Dominion Isle with a spoon and wire brush in preparation for the foundations of the A-frame chapel. Here was a special place...  
*Band of Brothers*... for sharing the Gospel in gathered community.

It was not all work and no play. There was lots of fun. The fishing was fantastic! With a Lazy Ike and a Daredevil, you could get your limit of walleyes or northerns in no time. Filet them on the end of a canoe paddle, fry them up on your campfire and you had yourself a feast! The menu on most of our trips included at least three fish dinners which

we caught a short time before making camp. Canoeing skills were a must. We all had to learn...and teach them. "Gunwale pumping"... standing up on the sides of the canoe and pushing up and down so the canoe would get moving, was a Sunday afternoon pastime. (I wish to remind any staff that my partner and I won the Dominion canoe race two years running during Open House festivities. This historical minutiae must not be lost!) The race around Dominion was no small thing. It was a grueling race that left us all exhausted. (And some thought "Bean" couldn't win, eh?)

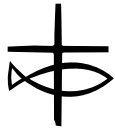
Being a part of WILDERNESS gave me a spiritual growth experience. I tried to share the faith by actions as well as words. Being on the "trail" often reduced things down to basics which opened up avenues to deeper meanings of what truly matters in life. I know this to be true because of the changes that I saw...and what I experienced. Around a camp fire, genuine feelings seem to emerge. I know people were changed by the WILDERNESS experience. I know I was.

In my second summer, a vacancy occurred in a Guide position. Pastor Ham asked if I wanted to be a Guide. I readily accepted. This was quite a 'leap of faith' on his part, but to me it was a turning point in my life from boyhood into manhood. Perhaps more than anything, it gave me the confidence to tackle difficult challenges. This has served me well throughout my life and work.

Fifty years of *ministry* is quite a wonderful legacy of WILDERNESS. I'm extremely thankful for the opportunity to have been a part of its early years.

### ...COMMUNITY SPIRIT





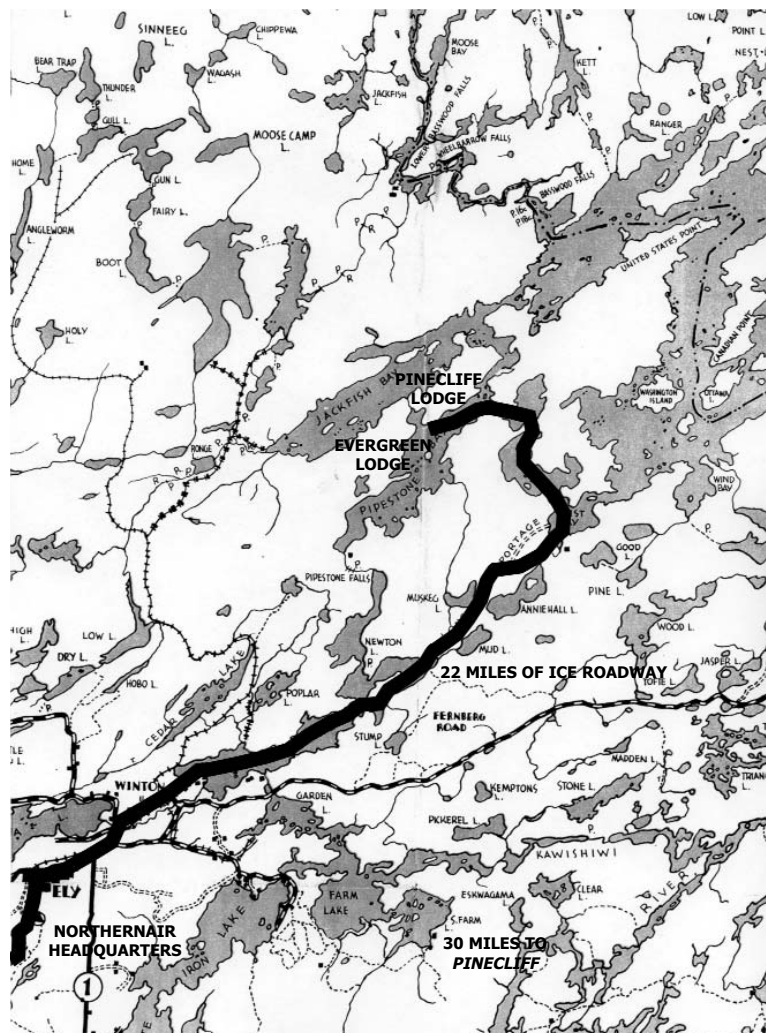
## A MEMORABLE BREAKTHROUGH: OPERATION LOG CABIN



The 1958 WILDERNESS summer staff will never forget all the energy required and the experience gained while working on the Miles Island log cabin project. It was a fascinating adventure. None of us had ever been involved in salvaging log cabins. Here we had a chance to save three small beautifully crafted cabins secured through USFS auction for reconstruction on Fishhook Island. We needed to work in reverse... starting with the roof down to hewn log floor joists. It needed careful attention. Boards and logs were numbered and coded. Windows and door entry secured. Every piece needed to once again fit in the rebuilding process. We needed to leave a clean natural site... "without a trace"... ready for USFS inspection.

Fred Norlien spearheaded the Miles dismantling. Guides Aus, Swenson, Schiotz, Trygstad and Hoffman became "experts" in rafting the precious log cargo. Swampers and campers joined at various phases of the recycling effort. It was one of those tasks where hard work was really "fun." We all were able to feel great satisfaction from a job well done. Dave Dominquez helped me pronounce the *benediction* when all was completed at the Miles Island site. We departed with "no trace" left behind. The site was returned to pristine condition.

This successful endeavor gave us the impetus for bidding on other log cabins targeted for removal from the BWCA. Forest Supervisor, J. Wesley White, counseled on the serviceable quality of several of the log lodges. He was particularly enthusiastic about *Pinecliff Lodge* on the Pipestone Bay of Basswood Lake. A crew of skilled Finnish craftsmen had built it in the 1930s. It was the "crown jewel" of the structures available within the BWCA, which needed to be moved or







**PAUL SUMMER (L), WHO PLOWED 20-MILE ICE ROADWAY WITH PEARL (C) AND BEULAH (R) AT ORIGINAL PINECLIFF LODGE**

destroyed. Evergreen Lodge was across the bay... and also available.

After consulting with colleagues Bob, Oz, Fred and others, I went to Ely for the USFS auction. We were the successful bidders on a total of thirteen log units. All seemed to fit our desire for North Woods log structures to meet expanded WILDERNESS needs. We were excited about the prospects. We had some confidence gained in the earlier Miles Island work. We felt there might be enough volunteers out there who would

be willing to share in a truly unique reclamation adventure. Old timers at the Ely auction were doubtful the job could be done...especially when led by naïve pastors! Oh, well... I firmly believe that the Spirit led us. Events that transpired later gave evidence that God tested, but also gave us the strength of faith to overcome considerable adversity.

By early December of 1958, things were pretty well in place for *Operation Log Cabin*. We were busy recruiting volunteers. Wife Pearl, Beulah Lukason, and Arla Mae Olson were planning a food service. Northernair Lodge and Resort was rented as a month long headquarters. It was five miles south of Ely on Mitchell Lake... over 30 miles to our farthest cabin site. Paul Summers contracted to do plowing to build up almost twenty miles of ice roadway and portage passage. The Zupancich Brothers offered a needed line of credit for food supplies. Joe Seliga, the legendary canoe builder, helped with removal logistics. Our friend Ed Thoreson scheduled his Cook County logging trucks to accommodate the dismantling schedule. He worked out a shuttle system to keep trucks hauling the 150 plus miles (over 300 miles round trip) from Ely lakes to Seagull. Fred Norlien called on a blacksmith friend to forge flat bars and curved drawknives. PCYC Northside staff adjusted their workloads to allow for those of us spearheading on site work to be fully involved. It was an unusual convergence of will, Spirit and the largely unknown.



**THE PINECLIFF DISMANTLING**

Beginning mid-December, Paul Summers began plowing the strategic 20 mile ice and portage roadway... across Fall Lake, across the "Four Mile Portage," up tricky Back Bay on Basswood, across the Back Bay humpback portage to Pipestone Bay. He did great work!

Remarkably, there were more than 50 work campers who came to Northernair. We had

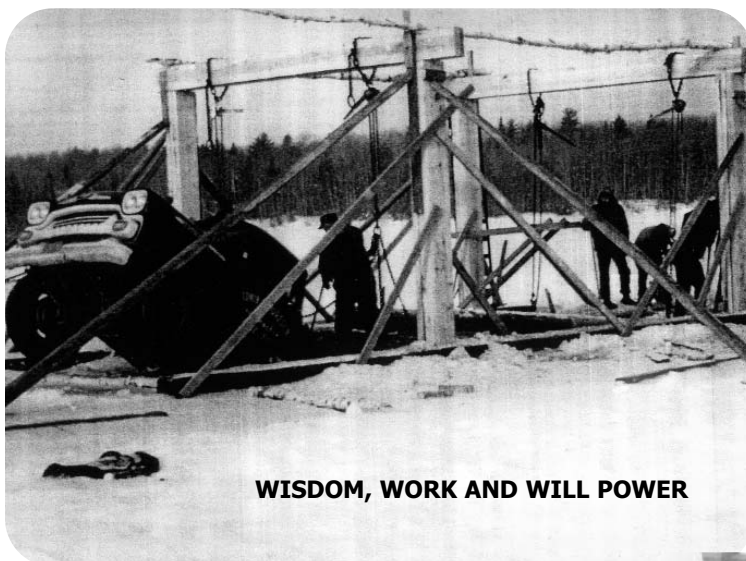
students on holiday break from Luther Sem, St. Olaf, Augsburg, Luther and Augustana. Oz Anderson brought a crew from Red Wing State Training School. There were Northside community volunteers and PCYC staff. All came prepared to give of themselves to whatever tasks were needed... some for a week; some for the duration.

It was a Spirit-directed crew. We were housed in the three large log cabins. After a cold night's sleep, the crew was aroused at 5:30, a hearty breakfast served at 6:00, cars loaded and off to work at 6:45. It took almost an hour to drive to Pipestone Bay. We followed this routine each day – off to work before it was light; returning to the lodge well after dark – exhausted from a hard day's work.

Day after long day... from before daybreak to nightfall... the dismantling work went on. We had hoped for cold weather so the ice roadway would freeze down deeply. Watch what you pray for! It turned bitterly cold! Temperatures dove to 56° below zero for several nights. Our cars and pickups needed to have oil pans thawed in order to start. Cabin floors were covered with sleeping bags holding weary workers. The cold came through the floor making nights restless. Evenings were a time for hot meals for very weary, hungry work campers.

There was some time for shared faith and stories of daily adventures while massaging nearly frozen toes. These were not days for the faint hearted.

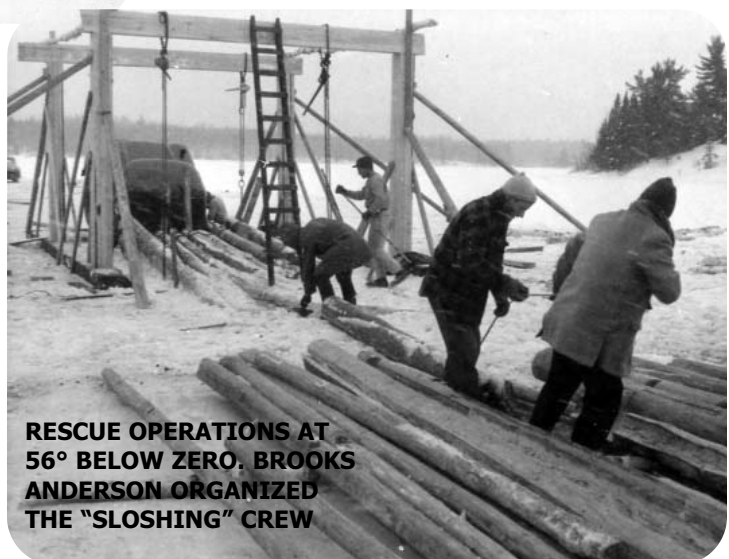
Still, we had wonderful moments of meditation and celebration. Singing was welcome. We had reason to rejoice. Cabin after cabin was being dismantled, coded to plan, ready to be loaded on Thoreson trucks and sent on their way to WILDERNESS. It became apparent to Ed that the haul up the Gunflint Trail would take too much time in order to



**WISDOM, WORK AND WILL POWER**

provide an appropriate shuttle. He worked out a deal with the Grand Marais schools to unload the logs on their football field in order that trucks could return for additional loads. This, of course, meant that they would need to be handled yet another time before moving up the Gunflint to the Seagull/Blankenburg Landing and across the ice roadway to WILDERNESS. Somehow, Ed and his drivers found the energy to make that part of it all work out.

We were thrilled with the overall



**RESCUE OPERATIONS AT 56° BELOW ZERO. BROOKS ANDERSON ORGANIZED THE "SLOSHING" CREW**



quality of the log cabins. We could envision their reconstruction on our WILDERNESS islands. We were working our way deep into Basswood Lake, crossing three portages to *Pinecliff Lodge*. Seminarian Brooks Anderson had a sturdy crew carefully dissecting this incredible building. It was almost 80 feet long. It had three major spaces: a large lounge, a

central meeting room with a porch and a very workable kitchen/dining area. A network of logs covered the porch. There were 42 rafters carefully notched into 12" to 16" plate logs. The entire structure was an architectural gem. Base logs were 12 to 20 inch diameter. We literally could dream of it being a magnificent place of WILDERNESS hospitality and welcome.

It took four Thoreson logging trailer loads to handle just the *Pinecliff* material. Windows, doors and cabinets were marked in the master plan. Three loads passed across Pipestone Bay and the Back Bay humpback portage. Brooks and crew finished the heavy lifting in loading the final *Pinecliff* logs. Nightfall had set in. *The weather was bitterly cold*. The loaded Thoreson truck began to roll toward the portage. Oz Anderson and I were waiting by the portage to offer a "blessing" for a safe journey back to WILDERNESS.

Suddenly, the truck began to stutter and labor. The engine roared as the cab lights began to slowly slant upward into the startled darkness. Something had gone terribly wrong! The cab lurched, the flickering lights shot 60 degrees skyward. A final grinding. The truck had broken through the ice!

As Oz and I rushed in panic toward the truck, we saw the silhouette of Buck, the driver, staggering across the ice. "My lunch bucket...my lunch bucket. I need to get my lunch bucket." He was in severe shock. We, too, were stunned. We caught Buck to reassure and establish at least his safety. Brooks joined us as slowly we inched our way together toward the stricken truckload. The awful truth became clear. The cab was half submerged in icy water. The log load had plunged through the ice snapping one of the heavy trailer binding chains. The near chain fortunately remained wrapped around the log load keeping the trailer from totally disappearing into Pipestone's watery depths. It was a sickening sight to behold...



*after all that work.* How could this be? It evoked a stunning, overwhelming sadness. The chaos was bewildering. Buck was safe...but what about Ed's truck? Could it be saved? Could the *Pinecliff* logs be salvaged? What would this mean to the completion of our operation? So many questions; so much confusion; so few answers. Obviously it was a time of intense testing...of will and wisdom.

By the time all of us in the Pipestone Bay crew returned to Northernair, Pearl, Beulah, Arla Mae and the forty other work campers were wondering why we were so terribly late for supper. We told the devastating story to stunned, disbelieving colleagues. We were united in our pain. We prayed together... both in gratitude for survival and for wisdom toward some positive resolution to this calamity.

The details of the next several days would take chapters to fully unfold. Some need to be spelled out to give evidence, once again, of "faith active in love." I immediately called Ed Thoreson to tell him what had happened. I reassured him of Buck's safety. Ed calmly said he would come over in the morning. He arrived with Thoreson mechanic, Clarence Martin. We traveled together to the breakthrough site for first inspection. Thoughts on rescue were explored. There must be a way.

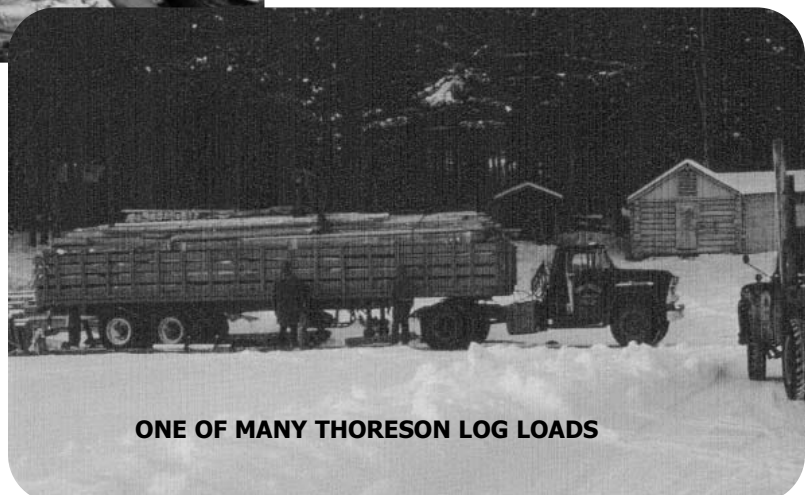
In the meantime, Dean Rajala called his dad and brother in Big Fork. He remembered

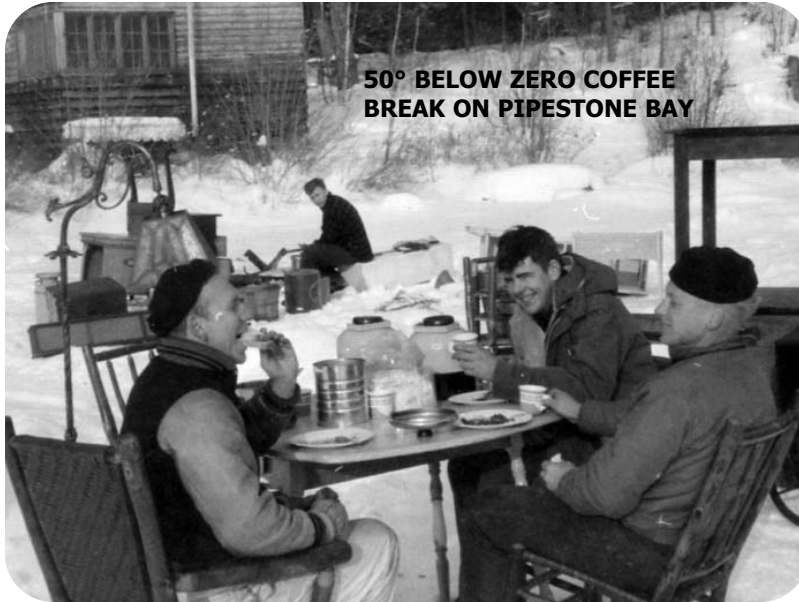
the Rajala Lumber and Logging Company had experienced a truck breakthrough on Red Lake in Canada. The Rajalas drove to Northernair from Big Fork. Father, Art and uncle, Ben, brothers Dean and Jack talked at length with us and the Thoreson crew. A plan was proposed. It involved three major components: 1) Find and place two 40' long heavy duty timbers alongside the truck trailer crash site, 2) erect two huge inverted U frames



capable of holding heavy duty coffin hoists, 3) build up a new ice field approximately the size of a football field, which could hold the timber span and the hoisting frame. A fourth component would be the willingness of our work campers to "stay the course" in this bitterly cold weather.

We appealed to Joe Seliga once again for help with coffin hoists and timbers. He worked with the





50° BELOW ZERO COFFEE  
BREAK ON PIPESTONE BAY

Pickens-Mather and Zenith mines while I contacted the State Highway Department to find suitable bridge timbers. We got the help we needed. The timbers and equipment were hauled some thirty miles to the Pipestone Bay site.

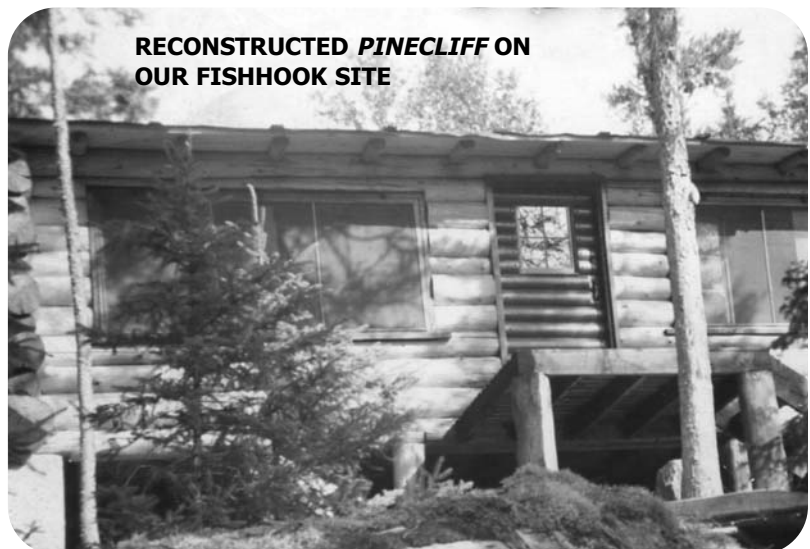
The USFS, with the assistance of J. Wesley White, provided us with four superb portable water pumps. These were used by Brooks Anderson and his "sloshing" crew to pump icy water onto the surrounding snowfield to build up sufficient ice to hold the timber recovery apparatus.

Our work campers tramped and slogged for three long days pumping icy water for the rescue ice buildup. Most looked like frozen moving icicles as they wearily returned to Northernair for a hot evening meal and body thaw. Greater commitment would be hard to imagine...in 50° below weather.

By the fifth day, the timbers, coffin hoists, chain link and ice field were deemed ready. The cab was secured for hoisting... then cut free from the ice by chain saw. It hung in suspended animation. The old green Muus DeSoto served as "pulling vehicle" with a long heavy cable rope and chain. The truck cab was lifted free and slowly dragged to solid ice safety. The mechanics of it all are only fully imaginable to those who were there.

The log load on the trailer was gradually chipped free of ice and removed. It was hazardous work. Coffin hoist and chain secured the trailer. It too was cut free. Slowly, cross-timbers were maneuvered beneath the trailer to insure that it stayed out of the now open water crash site. Chain hoists freed it enough to be dragged to safety. It was a triumphant moment!

But *one thing was missing*. The rear duals of the trailer had been sheared off! They were somewhere on the bottom of Pipestone Bay. Hopefully, we devised a rescue apparatus! A 28' slender log rafter pole served to hold an open pair of ice tongs. Chain was nailed to the rafters and secured to the tongs. We plunged the rafter-chain-tongs into unknown depths. On the first plunge, we hit something. Like deep-sea fishers, we "set the tongs." We stripped the chain from the rafter,



RECONSTRUCTED PINECLIFF ON  
OUR FISHHOOK SITE

hooked it to the coffin hoist and lifted. The Lord is good! On our first try, the tongs caught the axle and the duals were rescued from 20' deep icy, murky waters. Grateful praises and shouts of joy were offered! Incredible are your ways, O Lord!

A determined Ed Thoreson and Clarence Martin took the shattered trailer springs to Duluth and had new ones fabricated. They returned to work on the truck and trailer in the bitter weather. They worked on the truck motor. Behold! It started. The trailer was reattached. The entire *Pinecliff* log load was re-loaded. In story book ending style, driver Buck took the rig across the humpback portage to great cheers and much relief. That journey to WILDERNESS was nothing short of "miraculous." Later on, not a single log was found to be missing! What can one say?

Meanwhile, the dismantling operation continued and the log hauling by the two other trucks was stepped up to a furious pace. By Saturday, January 10th, we had completed all the work in Pipestone, and had begun work over at Indian Point. This meant that our longest ice roadway could now be abandoned.

Our cooks Beulah, Arla Mae and Pearl did a tremendous job. Up at 4:30... to bed late at night. Breakfast... packing a hot noon meal in Thermos containers... the wonderful meals after a hard day's work. No one could ask for more. Their spirit helped to sustain us all.

The work, the tenacity, the faithful perseverance of all *Operation Log Cabin* workers can only be understood as being led by the Spirit. So many served so long. It was another demonstration of the belief in the WILDERNESS mission. It is a story of faith and hope.

A few statistics: A total of over 5,000 person hours on the job itself... over 462 days, 66 weeks, 14 months. This does not include pre-operation time, cook's time, the hauling... just on the job time. A total of twenty pulp truck loads of logs and crated windows hauled to Grand Marais and on Fishhook Island in Seagull Lake. The largest log was 20" in diameter and 44' long.

The Winter Work Crew assembled at WILDERNESS had a huge task before them. As the log loads on the football field came up the Gunflint, they were unloaded on various Seagull ice arenas. All required hauling, skidding, and sliding to their several work sites. By late winter, the Grand Marais football field was finally empty and quiet. The log cabin components were on WILDERNESS ice awaiting the work of reconstruction. Staffers Thom McGowan, Wayne Thornwall, Jim Norlien, Rolf Skrien, Larry Higgins and Ray Wallace worked tirelessly. Theirs, too, was an incredible job, almost of mythic proportion. Great was this remarkable team effort.

Many are the stories of *The Founding Years*. Such is the nature of beginnings. *Operation Log Cabin* is a saga of unusual dimension. The scope and importance helped establish both much needed facilities and an indelible Spirit.

Our gratitude goes to God... and to all who shared in the incomparable drama of *Operation Log Cabin*.







## HEAVY DUTY ADVOCACY: THE THORESON "FAITH" FACTOR

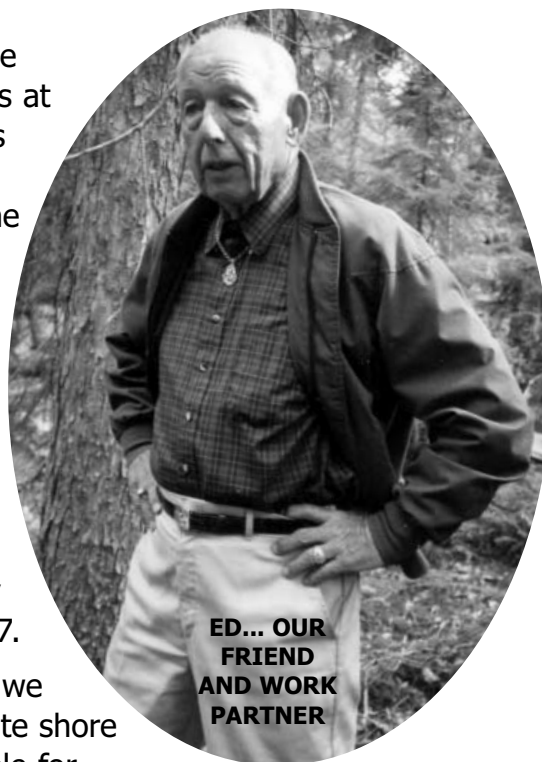
Pearl and I got to know Edwin and Mildred Thoreson the summer of 1954. I was doing the interim pastoral duties at the four point North Shore Lutheran parish. Mildred was the organist at Bethlehem in Grand Marais. Ed was an active layman. Both were strong community leaders. The Thoreson Construction business was well established. Their earth moving/logging/concrete trucks and equipment were at work throughout Cook County.

Through our shared friendship, the Thoresons took an early interest in the inner-city PCYC. work. This was substantially strengthened with the news of the emergence of WILDERNESS camping ministry on Seagull Lake. The Thoresons, including daughters Wendy and Randy, were avid outdoor enthusiasts. They were among the first visitors to our Open House in 1957.

It was obvious to our WILDERNESS staffers that we needed a more adequate canoe staging area. The granite shore in the mid-island Fishhook bay was the best site available for docking and training. It had a fairly gradual slope but was filled with jagged rock and boulders. We moved what we could, but needed a gravel or sand fill. We talked to Ed about a solution. He counseled with Russell Blankenburg. I checked on necessary permits. Russell agreed to provide sand from his pit mine down the Trail. Ed agreed to provide the equipment for loading and the trucks for the haul. It would need to be done in the dead of winter across an icy Seagull roadway...from public landing to the inner island. Ed was a man of faith! In early February, the trucks, heavily loaded, cautiously rolled across to the island...load after load. Beach sand was deposited at both the canoe dock and inner sauna site. This daring episode was but one taste of the Thoreson "Faith" Factor.

Before we acquired the log cabins in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area above Ely, I talked to Ed about logistics that might make it all work. He was a willing partner. "See what you can come up with and we'll help work it out." No one, of course, had any idea of the tense drama, which would unfold. He would provide the logging trucks and drivers...around the clock if needed...to expedite the long 320-mile round trip from Ely work sites to Seagull. He knew how fickle weather could be...possibly snow drifting to block access.

Working out of the Northernair Resort "base camp," some fifty plus volunteers organized into crews to begin dismantling the distant cabins. Temperatures dropped precipitously even as Ed's logging trucks made their way down the North Shore to Highway 61 up to Fall Lake and beyond. Amazingly, load after load was gingerly handled and dispatched back toward Seagull Lake.



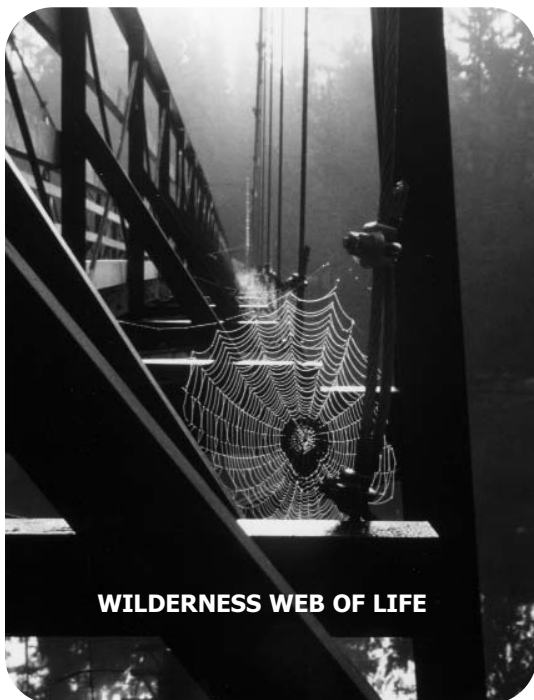
**ED... OUR  
FRIEND  
AND WORK  
PARTNER**

He came to me with an important suggestion. It had become clear to Ed that in order to keep pace with the diligent work crews and unstable weather, that a shortened route was necessary. He creatively negotiated with the Public School administration for use of the Grand Marais football field as interim "holding area" for the logs. It saved 130 miles of round trip Gunflint time. This decision proved to be crucial after the unscheduled "breakthrough" occurred on Pipestone Bay. It meant, however, a double unloading and reload by the Thoreson crew. Ed felt that was a small inconvenience measured against the other uncertain conditions. This was how the Operation proceeded.



The drama, which unfolded following the icy *Breakthrough* tragedy, demonstrated once more the Thoreson "Faith" Factor. He and Mildred rallied their team, set in motion plans for recovery and brought energy to a seemingly hopeless devastating task. The Thoreson confidence for a positive resolve lifted all our sagging spirits. Through all the gloom, I never heard a word of anger or judgment from Ed. Rather there were words of accommodation and mutuality. "Let's work together."

Mildred and Ed were again challenged in a major way a few years later. The proposal for a suspension bridge linking Fishhook and Dominion Islands was daring in scope and daunting in execution. The integration of tasks and responsibilities of the contributing participants was crucial. The Husby team set the pace. Engineer and "quarterback," Vern Huso at Paper Calmenson, designed and guided the entire technical planning process. Brauer & Associates surveyed the Seagull sites and spotted anchoring logistics. WILDERNESS core staffers Vern Borson and Herman I. and Gladys Muus shouldered Seagull duties. The Thoreson crew brought heavy-duty compressor, crane and other equipment. Ed, Larry Peterson and Clarence Strand had extensive winter work experience. The result of this collegial effort...this monumental undertaking...was the breathtaking *Bridge of the Master*. It points to the One who breathes energy into all WILDERNESS life.



During *The Founding Years*, Ed also served on the PCYC Board of Trustees. He made a point of driving the 600-mile round trip to be a participating member at regularly scheduled meetings. The Thoreson "Faith" factor is another abiding legacy of Christian commitment. Thanks be to God!



Each challenge WILDERNESS faced in those early years carried with it new opportunity. I could sense the commitment of our staff and volunteer work campers to address whatever the need. The foundation for an intentional Christian community of service was being built.

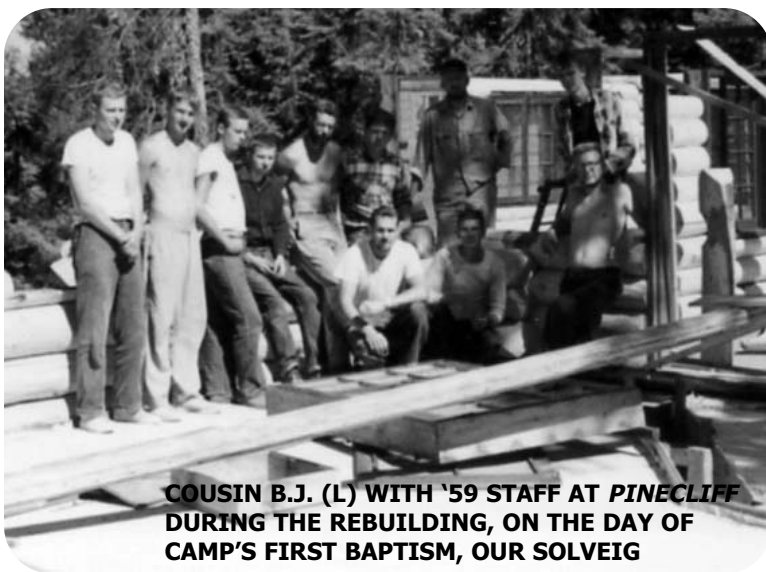
Read and listen to the voices of the gifted partners God raised up. My cousin **B.J.** had this *Reflection*.



**B.J. Muus IV**



First and foremost, I will be eternally grateful for the God-given opportunity to be a part of the beginning of WILDERNESS Canoe Base. As I reflect back, the number of outstanding people that had a lasting effect on my life is truly amazing to me. The work in the camp and on the canoe trail was very rewarding. It is hard to put into words just how great it was. There were the many times that were very trying but they turned out to be memorable moments.



**COUSIN B.J. (L) WITH '59 STAFF AT PINECLIFF DURING THE REBUILDING, ON THE DAY OF CAMP'S FIRST BAPTISM, OUR SOLVEIG**

I had the chance to be part of *Operation Log Cabin*. It was brutally cold. We slept on frozen cabin floors. The dismantling tasks were demanding. Yet the Spirit of all the volunteers was amazing. We all focused on the importance of our work. We shared a real sense of Christian community.

In the summer of '59, the same logs we handled on Basswood Lake above Ely were now on Fishhook

awaiting reconstruction. Once again, teamwork was the key. Each person pitched in to make things "new." My camp groups said it was the example of staff cooperation that made their own work seem important. I felt that it was all very "spiritual" in a sense.

We had one experience after another that made me, and I hope the campers, more aware of the need for a closer walk with God. In the little things were often hidden the larger truths. Our camp did indeed provide opportunity for some new resolve and directions.

A word that came through loud and clear was *respect*... for the clear waters... for the beautiful rocks and woods... for all God's creatures... for our equipment... for good food (even trail lunch)... for hard work and a good night's sleep... and especially for each person. I'm blessed with this lifelong learning.

WILDERNESS is truly a gift. I am very, very grateful.

Oz, Joel and Mark Anderson had a kindred spirit in their cousin, **Brooks**. He made an indelible mark on early WILDERNESS life.

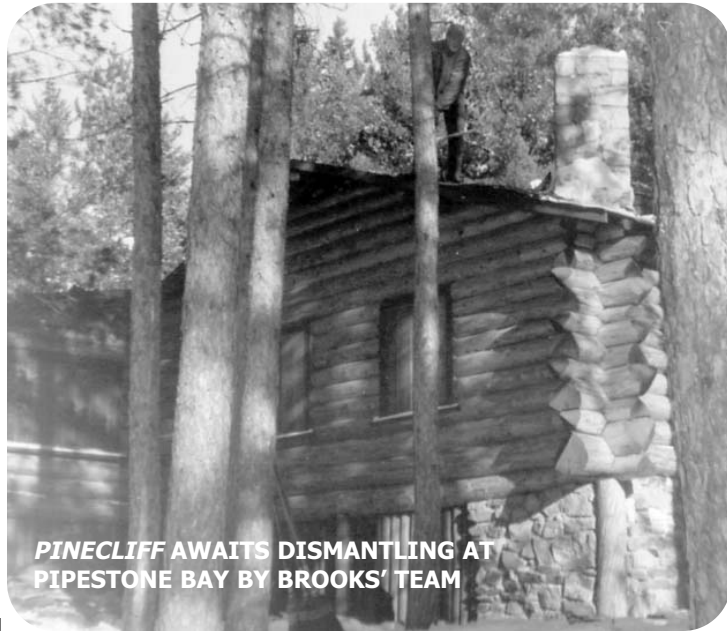


**Brooks Anderson**



It was good to chat with you, Ham, and blow the dust off some important WILDERNESS memories. We were caught up in something bigger than we realized while in the midst of those adventures. Maybe more important than the actual work was the knowledge of what can be accomplished when there is vision, high ideals, energy and staying power in the face of many hurdles.

My involvement began in 1958 with the big cabin-moving venture above Ely. It was my final year at the Seminary. I continued active participation through '62 with some Work Crews from my first parish in Mankato.



#### **Here's some things I remember:**

- ✧ Working on a windy 20° below day taking apart *Pinecliff* on Pipestone Bay. Didn't you and I take apart a water tower on that frigid day?
- ✧ Loading the last big, log truckload, waving in triumph to the Evergreen crew across the bay as the trucks left from both sites.
- ✧ The sick feeling as we watched our *Pinecliff* truck break through the ice. Getting to the truck and hearing Buck, the driver, tell calmly about the last seconds, how he gunned it when he heard the ice breaking, kept the door open and finally jumped. Then when others arrived he was incoherent and then speechless at his close call.
- ✧ Most of the 58 of us getting stomach flu while we were in the midst of the truck rescue operation.
- ✧ The stream of people from Ely and more distant places that drove on our ice roadway to see the plight of these naïve "outsiders." The most often heard advice was to cut the chain around the front of the log load and send the truck to the bottom. It couldn't be saved.
- ✧ 53° below zero at the Ely weather station on the night we needed cold weather to build ice around the truck. You asked me to lead the water pump and "Sloshing" crew.
- ✧ How well the consensus rescue plan worked. Big timbers and hoists from the mining company, smaller timbers for arches from the highway department...the Bigfork

Rajalas...Ed Thoreson

✧ Fishing the rear axle and wheels from 22 feet of water with ice tongs and chain attached to a long pole...your ingenious idea

✧ A bit of welding and other work to reattach the axle and the truck drove off to be reloaded at the portage...a tribute to practical persistence.

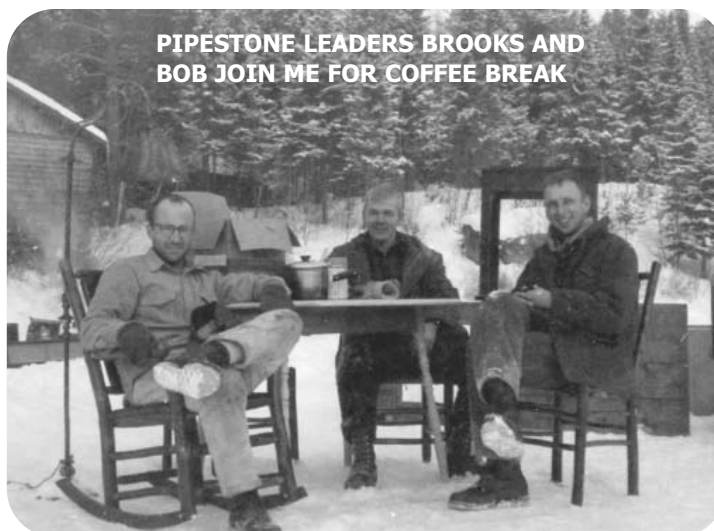
**Then I recall:**

✧ Coming back to WILDERNESS later that winter to help hoist the logs up a ramp to the site. I was laid low by severe back spasms trying to lift a huge log back onto the ramp.

✧ Bringing a Work camp up from Mankato to assist in reconstructing *Pinecliff* that summer of '59. Was that the year we helped construct a floating barrel bridge between the islands?

✧ I brought a second work crew from our parish that did mostly roofing work on *Pinecliff* II. We bonded together.

These were strenuous, bold ventures. It must have been a major challenge to those of you on the scene. Thinking about it brings me back to my opening thoughts. "The process was just as important as the product." We were contributing to a Spirit that I sense continues at WILDERNESS and in all the lives it touches. Thank you, Ham, for all you taught me and many others about having big dreams and hanging in there.



From time to time, we were in need of long term WILDERNESS work campers. Oz was conscious of our needs. He helped choose hard working "trustees" to join the WILDERNESS winter project family. One very valuable addition was **Wayne Thornwall**. "Thorny" reflects on his experience.



**Wayne Thornwall**



I first came to WILDERNESS Canoe Base on a canoe trip. Chaplain Oz Anderson allowed me to return later around the middle of August for the rest of the summer. There were not a lot of buildings for sure. There was a big green army tent and some tent top units. I helped out with some building projects...and lots of hauling.

In December 1958, I went up to Ely to help move some log buildings. It was quite the experience! It was very cold and a lot of snow. There were a few mornings it was 50° below. I worked with Bob Evans, Ham Muus and a lot of other brave guys. We had taken down some of the buildings and they were loaded on a flat bed trailer. Ed Thoreson & Co. from Grand Marais hauled them up to Seagull Lake where WCB was located. Big job.

I got the chance to continue with the winter Work Crew up at WILDERNESS. When I saw the location where the log buildings were going, I didn't think we would be able to move the logs from the ice to the spots before the ice melted. The winter work crew was assembled, Tom McGowan, Larry Higgins, Jim Norlien Rolf Skrien and me. Areas were cleared. We started carrying logs by hand off the ice to various sites. Pretty heavy work.

A new red Chev 2-ton truck was purchased. It had a plow to keep the road open to the mainland. It also had a winch. It really came in handy. We were able to use it a lot. At *Pinecliff*, a log and plank skid was built. A long rope was used on a block pulley. One end was tied to the truck. The other to the logs. The truck would head out toward Dominion and up the logs came. Amazing! I learned a lot of things that winter...especially from Rolf, Loren Sowers and Tom. Things I thought were not possible were happening. Ham had things pretty well organized. We had a lot of fun.

We had a few more people come up for a Work Camp Retreat, which helped. Construction went on ... cold or not. Ray Wallace was up later helping. This man sure was an artist. I have to say outside of a few misunderstandings, it was a tight knit group. By spring, all logs were off the ice! Lumber was stacked and ready to go. I learned a lot of the things I still use and are still in my life. I take pride in things I do. I have learned hard work doesn't hurt any one. There are so many things I am thankful about...especially Pastor Ham giving me the chance to be along.

I was up at WILDERNESS again in '63 and '65. One of the most important things I brought out of WCB was friendship, respect for the people I worked with, trust and hope for a future.

It was amazing how things went. Just about everything was carried by hand--logs, lumber, propane tanks, water, food, etc. Everyone worked together. We used to take turns cooking in the winter. And for the Saturday night baths, we found an old wash tub. We carried buckets of lake water up, put it on the old black stove, got the water nice and hot, then poured it over mixing cold and hot. It took about four hours for all of us, about half an hour each.

Tom did most of the running to Grand Marais for supplies, but some food was brought by the mail carrier as well. We all went to Grand Marais occasionally for a movie or church. Leng's Soda Fountain was a favorite place. The malts and ice cream sundaes were great. We even went up to Canada for the day a couple of times. Jim Norlien usually drove his car.



THORNY (CTR, IN PLAID) WITH G/C OLLIE  
HOFFMAN (LEFT - HAT) AND CAMPMATES

The people I really remember are: Pastors Ham, Oz and Bob; the Blankenburgs; Vern Borson; the Blombergs; Norm Brady (from *The Cove Lodge*, bought by WCB); our friend, Justine Kerfoot from Gunflint Lodge (she liked writing about us); all the winter work crew; and Beulah--could she cook!

My whole life turned around as a result of being a part of WILDERNESS Canoe Base. Thank God and everybody who made it possible.



The first parish pastor in the Twin Cities who came to 322 Plymouth North and offered to help was **Loren Halvorson**. He said he wanted PCYC to be in partnership with Victory Lutheran. He did help in many ways. He served on the Board of Trustees. He was an advocate for WILDERNESS. He led Work Camps. He helped to facilitate Retreats at camp. He generated interest at the Sem. His wife, Ruth, and family explored WILDERNESS life as well. They blessed our lives... deeply, repeatedly.

Loren shares this gracious *Reflection*.



**Pastor Loren Halvorson**



Returning home to the past is a kind of prodigal experience. Having lived in “far off lands”, i.e., long removed from the past, one can in later years gain a very different view of that past. When you go back home with a new perspective, the old landscape looks different. There is wealth there that we may only recognize after being absent and distant from it both geographically and chronologically. T. S. Eliot captured that in his poem, *Little Gidding*: what he said was that at the end of all our journeys we return home and “discover it for the first time.”

I have long believed that healthy and lasting change must come from one's own roots and not alien ones. If elders with their long-term memories would “go home” to recover not what they thought or felt back then, but what they think and feel now about the “back then”, they would prove to be one of our most valuable resources for a healthy, potential future. Reprocessing the past need not be mere restoration, but recovery of the potential futures “hidden back then”...that we did not recognize the first time around, but which we may see now – finally. In other words, to go back to the past can be liberating...especially if we have the chances to navigate the uncharted future with internal compasses rather than detailed maps.

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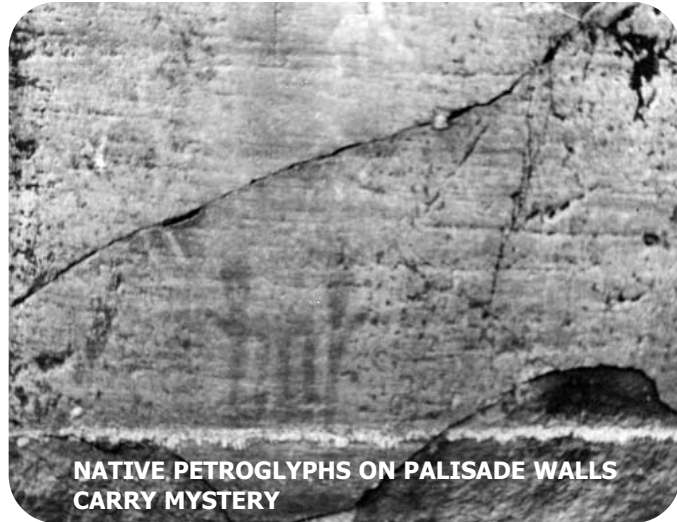


A good way to start this remembering process is through sharing our stories. It can be a spiritual experience. We can enrich each other's lives by sharing our most precious treasures that have nurtured us and fed our souls. It also provides a very natural way to share our faith tradition. Elders find great satisfaction and enjoyment in sharing their treasures. It's the kind of festivity and fun the New Testament calls *joy*. In recalling our legacies perhaps we may find personal resurrection and reconciliation and a common path to a healthy future. That would indeed be a spiritual ministry.

A personal aside:

During the time we were wrestling with the idea of starting the ARC retreat center, we received an invitation from our good friends, Ham and Pearl Múús, to attend a blessing ceremony for their home in South Minneapolis. The Múús' had been involved with Indian peoples for many years and had asked an Indian friend, who was a spiritual leader from Oklahoma, to come and perform a house blessing ceremony.

A fire was built in a fire box. The Kiowa spiritual leader looked around the room for someone to assist in the blessing. His eyes lit on my wife, Ruth. He asked her to come forward and waft the smoke with her arms and say a prayer. She was quite overwhelmed by the invitation. She addressed her prayer to the Great Spirit and asked that this home might receive a special blessing.

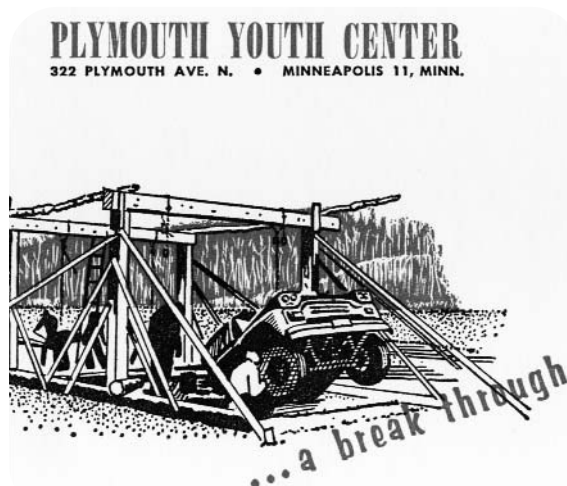


Afterward the Kiowa leader said to Ruth, "I saw that something special is going on in your life right now...and felt you were the one to offer the prayer." He had no idea of the ARC dream. Few outside our immediate family did. But this Kiowa's gift of discernment was so powerful. He knew something was going on. When we learned later that the land for the retreat center was adjacent to sacred Indian burial mounds, the experience at the Múús house became even more mysterious and meaningful. I firmly believe that special discernment happens when we are open and available to God's Spirit.

That openness had been clearly evident in the shaping of Plymouth Christian Youth Center and WILDERNESS ministry.

For a number of years in the early history of the Plymouth Christian Youth Center, I was on the Board. I was a parish pastor. The program was housed in an old hotel in one of the poorest parts of Minneapolis, on the near North Side. As one part of its outreach, WILDERNESS Canoe Base was initiated near the end of the Gunflint Trail in the Boundary Waters area of Northern Minnesota. There was never enough money for the program...but somehow it survived through the dedication and sacrifices of its staff...some of whom lived in the old hotel itself. Among them were the Director, Ham Múús and his wife Pearl. They were friends of mine from St. Olaf College days.

I was lifting up "discernment." Let me continue.



One fall, the opportunity arose to buy some log cabins from the Forest Service. They were marked for removal from land within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. Ham "discerned" the opportunity. He went to the auction and successfully bid on the log buildings. Many of them were built by Finnish immigrants...beautifully crafted. Among the buildings secured was a historic Pipestone Bay lodge, some eighty feet long, on Basswood Lake above Ely. The government required that those who bought the buildings had to remove them and return the site to pristine condition.



**ICE-COVERED LOGS RESCUED  
FROM TRUCK TRAGEDY**

Removing them was another matter. College and seminary students were recruited to use their Christmas vacation to help take the buildings apart and re-load them on huge flat bed trucks for transport up the Gunflint Trail to WILDERNESS. That January proved to be especially cold with temperatures plunging to fifty below zero. The smaller cabins were skillfully handled and sent off up the trail. The big lodge, *Pinecliff*, was another story. The final huge load was on its way. Ham and Oz Anderson watched it leave across the frozen surface of Basswood Lake in the growing darkness of that bitterly cold January eve. All of a sudden, to their horror, they saw the lights of the truck go straight into the sky. Its heavy load had broken through the ice. The chained load of logs prevented the trailer from sinking. How would one ever get out of this “disaster”?

When the locals heard what had happened they shook their heads and said it was hopeless. No logging truck had ever gone through the ice in those parts and been pulled out in the dead of winter. Ham and the crew of volunteers would have to find their own solution.

Many things had to be done. A small crew, led by seminarian Brooks Anderson, had the assignment of sloshing around the area in thirty degree below zero weather to build up a solid ice field. Some kind of hoist mechanism had to be devised to lift the truck out of the freezing water.

Ely native, Joe Seliga and the USFS provided strategic help. Two very large railroad trestle timbers were laid on each side of the truck and trailer. On top of these timbers an arch of heavy timbers was constructed and a winch attached. Heavy chains were then looped under the front part of the flat bed. The trailer cab was pointing up into the sky with its front wheels scrunched up against the ice. Supported by the chains, the logs were taken off the truck. With the aid of the winch the load was lifted out of the water and planks laid across the railway timbers underneath the truck. The truck was lowered on to the plank platform. The impossible was made possible. Enormous collaboration of creative energy.

It was then discovered that the back wheels of the trailer had been sheered off and lay at the bottom of the lake! Ham found some huge ice tongs. With these they snaked the wheels out of the lake. The wheels were reassembled by Ed Thoreson and Clarence Martin and fitted on the truck. The truck was loaded once again. The ignition was turned on; the motor sprang to life. Slowly the truck made its way off the temporary platform and across the ice and eventually all the way up to WILDERNESS over 150 miles away. That's a brief version of an important truth: when the Spirit is at work, powerful things happen.

The next summer *Pinecliff Lodge* was reassembled for use as the kitchen and main gathering center. This is almost too painful to recall: after the incredible efforts spent to bring a beautiful, functional log core facility to WILDERNESS, the entire building burned down. The entire WILDERNESS family and friends grieved that loss.

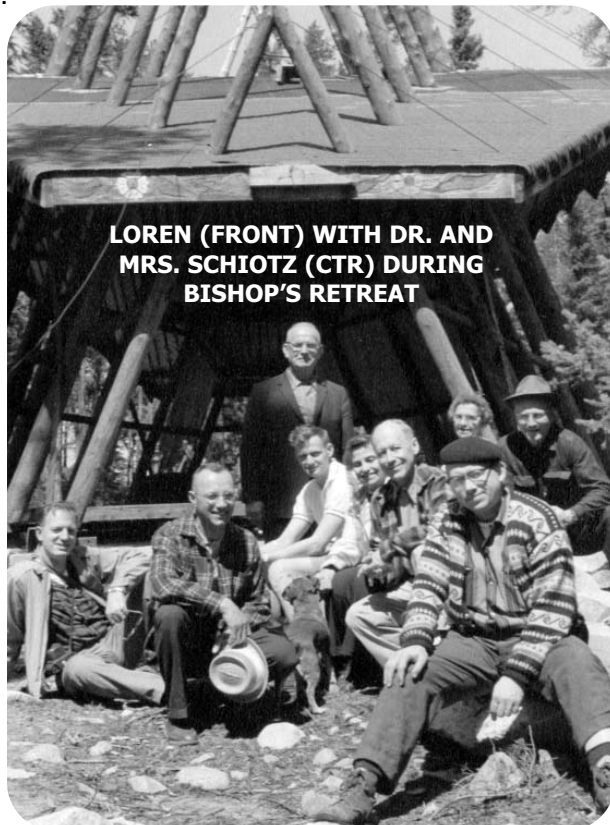


My story still is not quite over. When *Pinecliff Lodge* went up in smoke, I got a call from Ham the next day informing of the tragedy. I was crushed. I also knew we had no money in the PCYC treasury for replacement. Yet Ham was not overwhelmed by the loss. I asked him where he was calling from. "I'm up here at WILDERNESS with our logger friend Otis Anderson. We're talking about timbers for a new *Pinecliff*." There was something almost Biblical about this undaunted character. I think Ham operated from a different perspective that saw beyond, way beyond the immediate realities. He had "discernment."

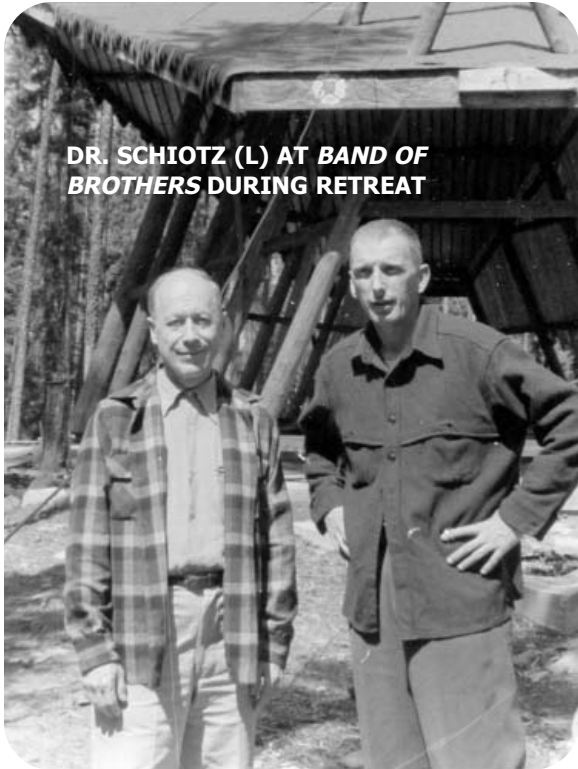
When I was working in the national offices of the American Lutheran Church in Minneapolis in the early 1960's, I explored a variety of ways to help people connect their faith to their daily life. I proposed to the President of the national Church, Dr. Schoitz, if he would be interested in spending some days on retreat with persons who, like him, held important positions of leadership in their vocations...and might appreciate a break to go on a spiritual retreat. That was a practice of Bishop Hanns Lilje in the Church of Hannover, Germany. He annually selected a group to spend Easter on retreat with him. Dr. Schoitz was delighted with the idea. Plans were made for a small cadre of a dozen to spend a week with Dr. and Mrs. Schoitz at WILDERNESS. It was in May. The ice had not yet gone out of Seagull Lake. We had to push the guests in canoes over the rubbery ice to Fishhook Island. No breakthroughs... fortunately.

The retreat consisted primarily of listening to Gospel stories as dramatized by Dorothy L. Sayers' *Man Born to Be King*... listening to each other, and to God's quiet whispers. We had time to rest, reflect and work on "sacred" projects. Each participant was asked to bring something at the end of the retreat that they had written, read, made, or discovered... and share why it was important to their faith life. It was modeled after the WILDERNESS camper "disclosure"... so powerful in its sharing.

In the group was a rugged rancher from a large ranch operation in Montana. He disappeared every afternoon after lunch. When the moment came for the disclosure of "gifts," he brought forth a primitive, carved



**LOREN (FRONT) WITH DR. AND MRS. SCHIOTZ (CTR) DURING BISHOP'S RETREAT**



**DR. SCHIOTZ (L) AT BAND OF BROTHERS DURING RETREAT**

Shepherds staff. As a rancher and Christian, he was touched by the image of Jesus, the Shepherd. He did not have great carving skills, but the way he handled his “gift” told what it meant to him...took on great beauty. That crude staff found a permanent place over the fireplace of his ranch home in Montana. The practice of “sharing gifts” is a powerful witness to faith. WILDERNESS bears testimony to this practice in extraordinary ways.

As a parish pastor, I was conscious of our congregational need to link with authentic programs where our members could be stretched in faith-action.

PCYC and its WILDERNESS outreach allowed us to find ways to serve...and to therein be blessed. Our Work Camps at WILDERNESS

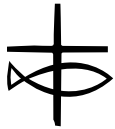
helped forge a youthful community where Christ was honored. The staff there taught us how to work, showed us an unusual depth of hospitality, and joined us in sharing a common faith.

This “looking back” does indeed inform a perspective for the future.



**DR. SCHIOTZ DEMONSTRATES PADDLING SKILL**





## **CRUCIAL MENTORING: AMERICAN CAMPING ASSOCIATION (ACA) AND BIBLE CAMP ASSOCIATION (BCA)**

*The Founding Years* were filled with all kinds of education. The Seminary was core. Clinical Pastoral Education integrated spiritual, mental and physical healing concepts. "Learning by doing;" "teachable moments;" "respect, loyalty, trust" and "stand where the winds of the Spirit blow." Mentoring from our Seminary professors. Listening to our peers. Counsel from valued administrators and probation officers. Growing through one-to-one relationships. These were rich, Spirit directed and Gospel motivated times.

As WILDERNESS emerged, we were blessed with an abundance of wise counsel. Professors Aus and Burgess plus President Rogness at Luther Seminary were invaluable. Camp Directors, Whitey Luehrs and Jerry Manlove were St. Paul YMCA advocates. J. Wesley White (USFS) and Milt Krona (Minnesota State Health) helped shape early growth. Magnus Dahlen and Paul Boe (American Lutheran Church (ALC) Charities and Social Services) and ALC President Frederic Schiotz took special interest. Upper Gunflint friends (Blankenburg and Skrien) provided immediate welcome support. These and many more helped give WILDERNESS early encouragement.



WILDERNESS sought affiliation with the American Camping Association (ACA) early on. This is the umbrella organization of camps and retreat centers across the country. The Minnesota Section of ACA had over 100 camps. We were received as a provisional member. This enabled us to more systematically meet the standards required by ACA: health, safety, facilities, personnel and program... all things necessary for successful camper outdoor education.

We were well received within the Section. My participation was surrounded by a number of veteran Camp Directors. I had known legendary John Rowe of Camp Warren from St. Olaf days. He introduced me to others who were willing to share knowledge and ideas.

Of special importance was the highly valued friendship with Director Whitey Luehrs of St. Paul Y's Camp Widjiwagan. He, more than any other, helped to shape our decentralized notions. "Widji" was a flagship camp in the YMCA constellation of programs. Whitey was the influential leader in its growth and development. His Christian commitment was clear. We were blessed to have his counsel and advocacy. We looked to "Widji" for inspiration.





By 1960, WILDERNESS was ready to receive its first standards "Visitor" team. Four accredited Camp Directors headed by Widjiwagan's Whitey Luehrs came to inspect and share. They made note of our "strengths and weaknesses." They helped target areas for improvement and growth. They were pleased with our initial efforts. In 1962, a second ACA visit resulted in a recommendation for full membership as an "accredited" camp. It was a marvelous testimony to all the hard work and attention to detail of WILDERNESS staff with lots of cooperation from our campers. It was a proud moment, indeed.

Over the first decade, WILDERNESS received and gave leadership direction thru a vital ACA relationship. I was very pleased to serve on the Board and to be chosen Section president for four years. It all made for increased visibility for WILDERNESS mission.

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There was another strong influence and dynamic at work during those *founding years*. It was exciting to find partnership with other faith-based Lutheran endeavors. WILDERNESS shared a substantial collegial partnership within the ALC Bible Camp Association. Across the country, our Church had many diverse Bible Camping ministries. Many reflected local parish educational and inspirational efforts. The Upper Midwest alone had over two dozen established Bible Camps...some with long, important histories. Bible Camping helped shape our own ministry commitments.



Under the skillful leadership of Director L. David Brown and Board Chairman David Preus, the ALC Department of Youth Activities brought direction to Bible Camp program and staff development. The Bible Camp Association became an essential vehicle for initiation, direction and encouragement of outdoor/retreat ministry. Decentralized, small group relational approaches under young adult trained staff emerged. *Koinonia* with Bob Nervig and Jerry Manlove, led the way out east; *Holden Village* led by Carroll Hinderlie, served as a pan-Lutheran national retreat center; *Outlaw Ranch*, under Dick Borrud, emerged as an exciting Midwest model; WILDERNESS took its unique place at the table as a valued partner in outreach ministry. These programs and many others made up a renaissance in the ALC commitment to reach out and serve through dynamic camping/retreat ministry.

Early BCA leadership included colleagues Ray Johnson, Paul Hanson, Thor Skeie, Joe Bash, John Schultz, Don Hamilton, Fred Lutz and others who infused Spirit through mutual assistance and care. The initial groundwork provided by Dick Borrud was sustained and expanded by Jerry Manlove. His wide experience, expertise, and compassionate communication brought a vitality to our faith-based camp communities. WILDERNESS was in this spiritual mix.

We were deeply conscious of our need to listen and learn. We were given opportunities to be taught by patient mentors and wise peers. We sat at the feet of helpful leaders who wanted WILDERNESS to succeed.

Our determination to "be where the spirit wind blows" was rewarded with counsel and friendship. Both ACA and BCA inclusion widened the WILDERNESS tent.

The creative, conceptual advocate who shaped and lifted up the ALC's Youth Ministry was Director **L. David Brown**. He surrounded himself with highly talented, prophetic, inspirational staff. He saw the enormous potential in the Church's camping ministries. He wanted to encourage new life... to open the doors for new approaches... to find new avenues for communicating the "Good News." He offers these insights.



**Pastor L. David Brown**



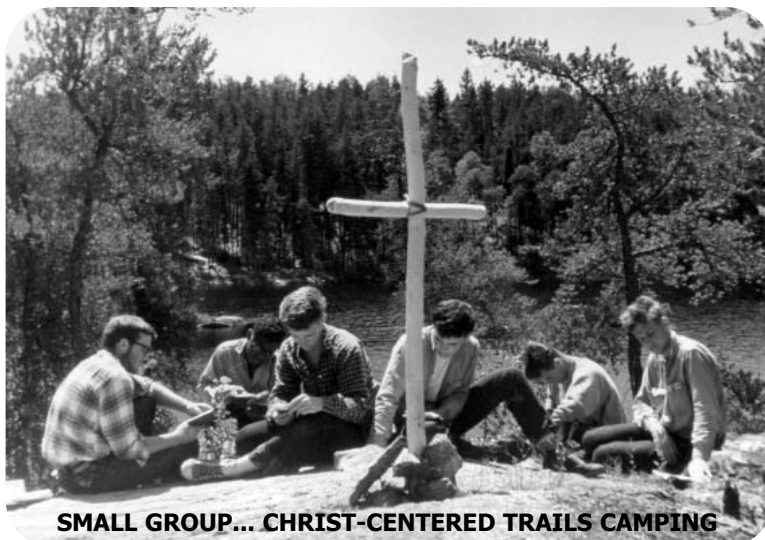
Change comes hard in the life of the Church, or so it seems to a great many people. There was one ministry that showed dramatic changes about a generation ago. That was in its Bible Camp ministry. Camping was more of a movement than an institution and thus lent itself to change and accommodation.



The style and format of early Bible Camp experiences were pretty much the same. It typically consisted of local pastors recruiting young people from a geographical area called circuits or conferences. One pastor came prepared with a series of lectures from the Bible. Another gave some review of missionary work in some part of the world. The afternoon was given over to free recreation on land or in the water. The evening featured an inspirational sermon and group singing. A campfire followed and then off to bed. The pastors, meanwhile, generally gathered in the kitchen for some snacks and to swap stories from their experiences in the parish. These often became joyous sessions of therapeutic healing.



In the fifties, there began to be some important changes in how Camping Ministry was done. One of the models of such camping was established by Plymouth Christian Youth Center, a mission in the inner-city of north Minneapolis. Ham Muus, Bob Evans, Oz Anderson and a few other seminarians saw the need and the possibilities of ministry for disadvantaged, troubled youth "at risk." Ham had enormous vision for any project he undertook. Bob and Oz had extensive experience in camping. Together they developed a concept for reaching young people from the "edges." WILDERNESS Canoe Base was born. It became a model for many others involved in Bible Camping... departing from the old format of formal lectures to kids while sitting in a chapel. WILDERNESS was established around small counselor groups. A



**SMALL GROUP... CHRIST-CENTERED TRAILS CAMPING**

holistic lifestyle emerged in a decentralized, more informal manner.

In 1957, Jerry Manlove and I took two months to travel to twenty well established Bible Camps. Jerry encouraged consideration of this new vision of Camping Ministry. He outlined for the pastoral leaders the way they might develop relevant experiences for their young people. There was considerable resistance to this kind of thinking – but still, many listened. Within four or five years, a majority of the ALC camps changed to this “new” form of camping outreach. *WILDERNESS*, *Koinonia* and *Outlaw Ranch* were prominent models providing important program leadership.

It was exciting for me to see camps begin to share with one another. The Bible Camp Association of the ALC was formed. The first gathering began with what was called a “Camping Sweatshop.” Representatives from nearly all of the ALC church camps attended. Paul Hanson was elected the first chair of this group.

Camping has had an enormous impact in the life of the Church. Our seminaries testify to the fact that most students credit camp experience as very influential in their “call” to pastoral ministry. The incredible diversity, which now exists coast-to-coast, found energy from a commitment to reach out to the “edges.” Children, youth and families have found that the Gospel comes alive through the Church camping enterprise. *WILDERNESS* can find joy in its “pioneering” role as one of our most challenging outdoor ministries.

The chairman of the Board of Youth Activities for a number of years was **David Preus**. He helped to frame a national youth ministry which was visionary, inclusive and rooted in the Gospel. He was an important, active member of the PCYC Board. By him and through him, we were blessed.



**Pastor David Preus**



Two things about what became PCYC captured me from the very start. One was the outstanding and passionate group of seminary students who were the primary personnel in launching PCYC. The infectious enthusiasm and obvious seriousness of Ham Muus, Bob Evans, Oz Anderson, Curt Johnson, Bob Nervig and others like them made others of us itch to be involved. The second was the need for church people to offer alternative opportunities for tragically deprived young people in inner-city Minneapolis. Comfortable congregational life that did not look across the city at great human need was not acceptable.

Success in engaging the support of Minneapolis congregations was always slow in coming, but there was at least significant financial and volunteer help that developed. Those of us on the Board attempted to give leadership in this congregational support facet of the work. Attending board meetings always served as a time to get “pumped up.” Listening to these talented seminarians tell of their work with young people on Plymouth Avenue gave Board members inspiration to back them up.



I especially remember the surprise and uncertainty when Ham put before the board the recommendation for a WILDERNESS Canoe Base. At Plymouth Avenue, work was still impoverished and we should talk about a camping outpost? However, board members were slowly won over, as the reasons for such an outreach were set before us. As far as I knew



then and know now there were no funds available when the initial site was proposed for purchase. The Board was enough involved, however, that enthusiasm made up for any lack of funds and the result was to move ahead with the project.

It was the same when it came time to purchase more land for WILDERNESS. The proposal was set before the Board with no funding in place, at least as far as I knew, but somehow it had worked before, so again the green light was turned on.

I was a new pastor at one of the city congregations (University Lutheran Church of Hope) when asked to serve on the PCYC board. That service was always a bit scary and very exciting. I have been glad ever since that those God-smitten seminarians asked me to serve. Their ideas kept pouring out and the stories of lives touched by God's gospel and human good kept pushing the effort forward. It was a shoestring operation, but the results were such that there was no stopping.

I have ever since been aware of and grateful for PCYC's ministry. As chair of the ALC Bible Camp Association and Board of Youth Activity, I kept hearing of PCYC's profound effect on young lives. I have always believed the work was God inspired. I have no doubt that this ministry will carry on indefinitely, and that is something to make our hearts glad.

When Dick Borrud determined that he needed to devote undivided energy to Outlaw and Atlantic Mountain Ranches in South Dakota, the Bible Camp Association leaders sought out **Jerry Manlove** to take the reins. He had exactly the experience, skill and spirit needed for this strategic transition period.

Jerry was a strong WILDERNESS advocate and mentor. His *Reflections* are significant and generous.



**Jerry Manlove**



The 1950's mark the beginning of the modern era in the life of Bible Camping (later to be called Outdoor Ministries), in the Evangelical Lutheran Church...soon to be the American Lutheran Church (ALC).



These years were a time of unrest, searching, looking for newer models, testing different ways to present and connect the Good News of the Gospel, moving out of old forms into new and vital forms. Great changes began to move into the camping agendas of our Church camps.

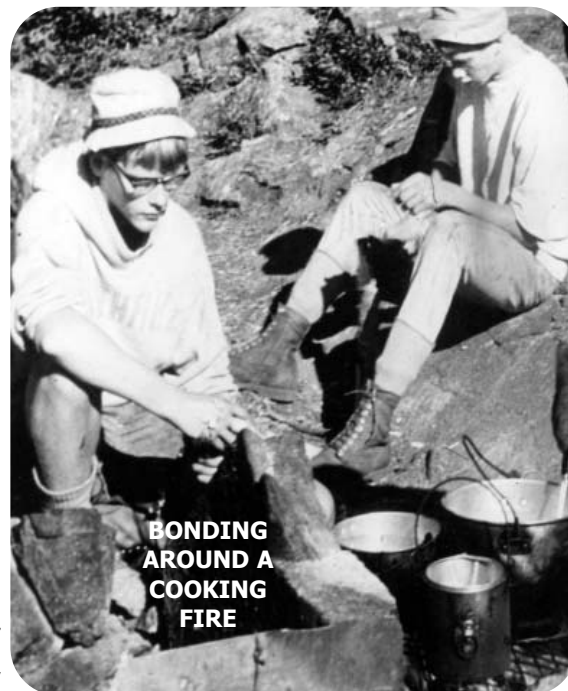
WILDERNESS Canoe Base was formed during that time. Within fifteen years another eighteen major camping ministries were added to the ALC. The entire shape of Outdoor Ministries radically reformed and moved forward.

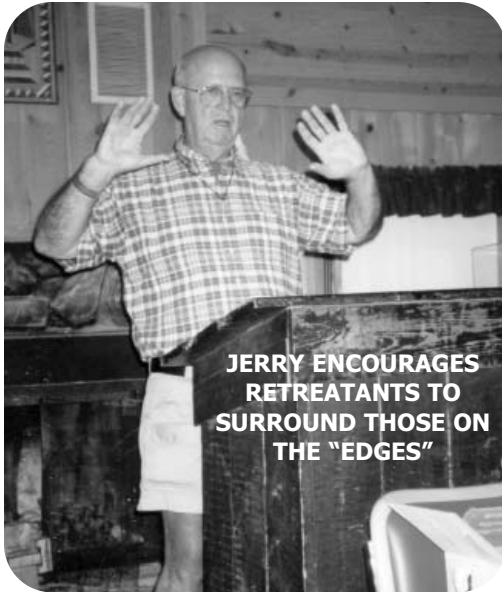
WILDERNESS Canoe Base was the first decentralized, tripping program in the ALC camping network. Teenagers and adult advisors came to the Base for orientation, were put into groups, equipped with tents, cook kits, shelters, canoes, paddles, lifejackets and food and then sent out on canoe trips...with their route maps and compasses. College or seminary age staff served as their leaders. This concept was totally fresh for camping in our Church.

One of the unique dimensions of WILDERNESS was that groups were most often made up of a mix of kids, i.e.: kids at risk...some from Red Wing, Totem Town, Glen Lake...some from the inner cities...and some from suburban or rural areas. This mix had never been attempted before, never in a wilderness setting, and never with college/seminary trained leadership. It was risky, visionary, and Gospel laden. Worship and Bible study were a natural part of the daily routine of the trip. All was in the hands and under the leadership of a specially trained staff.

WILDERNESS became a working model for others. Soon other camps were doing tripping: in other parts of our country, in the mountains, a 'pedpad' program in Michigan under the direction of former WILDERNESS staffer Warren Salvesson and sailing trips in Florida waters. The basics often were learned at WILDERNESS and were transferred to other places where they took on differing names. The leadership taught at WILDERNESS went out across the country through teachers, pastors, business folks farmers and doctors; all who had done their 'on the job' learning at WILDERNESS.

WILDERNESS was one of the first camps in the Church to have summer long trained staff. It was in on the beginning of enlisting young people to live out their





Christian faith as counselors...in small group settings, isolated places, high adventure. It called for long and tiring work, totally responsible commitments, in mixes of high school age cultures which would tax even the most mature of adults. They wanted to bring each group back in good health, sometimes through spiritual refiners fires of relationship building.

Such a camping trip was not only awesome with its natural beauty; it was also a testing ground. Did this Christ we followed and walked with as a brother hold us...as we struggled with headwinds, tiredness, discouragement, broken relationships and the like? Staff grew exponentially in these settings. They experienced the life changing that was going on around them.

They bonded with other staff in this mutual ministry, and their own vocational callings were many times clarified. And when they left WILDERNESS, they worked intentionally to see that this experience might also happen more often in other parts of the Church. As a result, WILDERNESS staff 'salted' the camping ministry of the Church. Many of these staff, now scattered across the Church, began to see the value of small groups and the intimacy of that relationship...the informality of conversation, the power of the young adult life lived out with searching young people.

Certainly, WILDERNESS was the first camp program in the Church to intentionally mix kids in groups...taking all of them out of their comfort zones...introducing kids to each other in a setting that nobody 'owned'. This was unique, sometimes frightening, in need of strong low key discipline, certainly risky at times. Yet it was, in reality, living out the Gospel of inclusivity before we even knew what that word meant. As it worked, as the stories were told, other camps in the Church gained courage and moved out in some of the same directions...with Blacks and Latinos, with mental and physically challenged...with teenagers at the "edge". We all grew in wisdom and knowledge as we shared mutual outreach.

WILDERNESS positioned itself to connect with institutional youth in their programs. Some of these kids later came on staff...which was another miracle of sorts. WILDERNESS helped us to be more inclusive...to reaching out as well as reaching in.

The first formal gathering of Camp Directors from around the country was held under the leadership of Ham Muus, WILDERNESS Canoe Base Director. Not more than eight of us showed up. It was truly a small, "rag tag" outfit. But it was a beginning. Dr. Janis Rozentals was our presenter. We had a splendid interchange. We grew. We recognized that we needed each other in this ministry. We needed to learn from each other. We needed to be able to support each other in this often lonely ministry of the Church. And we agreed to gather each year since then. Now we have about 300 professionals on our camping rosters. We have formed and reformed many times since those early days. We have grown from movements into viable and valued programs of the Church. We will not forget those early seeds that were planted at WILDERNESS...as we celebrate those *founding years*...and beyond.



There are some who have personality and character which marks them for leadership. St. Olaf athlete... soon to be Seminary-trained pastor... **Warren Salveson** was one such early WILDERNESS staff member.

"Salver's" first parish call took him to Michigan. This is how he reflects on his WILDERNESS days.



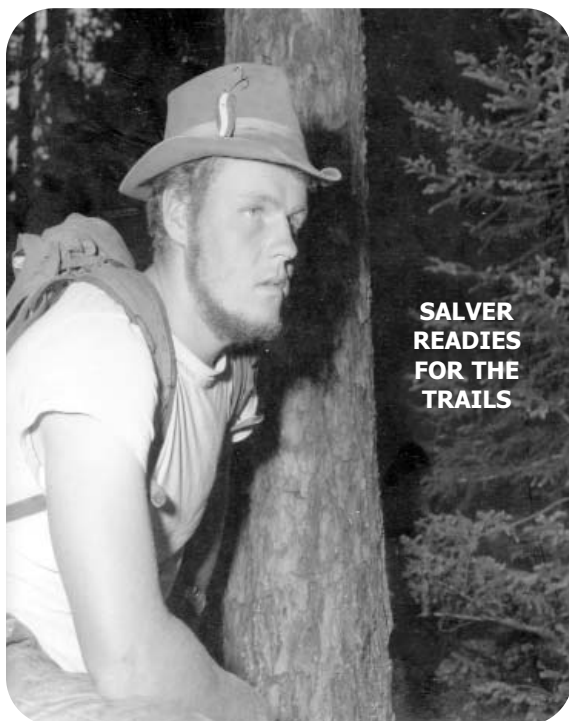
**Warren Salveson**



My experience at WILDERNESS Canoe Base has influenced my life. I think of all the ways it affected the way I approached youth ministry as a pastor. Those life experiences of pain, accomplishment, solitude, survival and conversation were key ingredients throughout my journey.

In my first parish in East Jordan, Michigan, in the northern part of the Lower Peninsula, I started the program of Biking and Canoeing called Ped-Pad. This became a part of the Michigan District camping program. Eight young men from the metropolitan area would bike three days from the Mackinaw Bridge to a chain of lakes and then canoe for three days. Volunteers in the congregation, plus three counselors who were a part of the District camping program staffed the program. The Ped-Pad program brought life not only to the young people who participated, but also life to the congregations who sponsored the program. Ped-Pad influenced their life together. Ped-Pad would never have happened without my experience at WILDERNESS.

As a parish pastor in Greeley, Colorado, youth ministry evolved around environmental experiences of hiking, skiing in the mountains and boat trips to the Grand Canyon. The Boundary Waters were again key to my ministry with senior high youth.



One special memory...two young men on one adventure. It rained and poured during the whole trip. The portages were muddy and slippery and the wilderness didn't look like the land of sky blue waters. They applied to colleges where they were asked to write papers on something that influenced their life. Both wrote about the demanding canoe trip during the summer and how they were forced to grow during that week. That was a great spiritual experience for me with the youth in the parish. Once again, I thank WILDERNESS for its influence in my life.

Most of all, it has affected who I am as a person. "Come apart for a while"... to be recreated, renewed and inspired to view the world with new eyes and new hope. It has allowed me a chance to look at life in new ways.

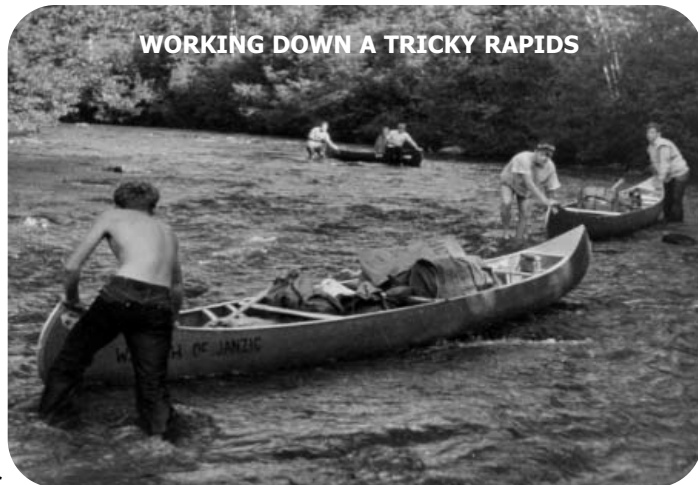
The decentralized WILDERNESS camp styles followed Guide/Counselor **George Miner** in his California parish ministry. The backpacking mode gave strong emphasis to Trails community bonding. George acknowledges his WILDERNESS roots.



**George Miner**

My experiences at WILDERNESS Canoe Base were in the summer of 1960. It was clearly a summer that changed my life and framed my ministry for 37 years.

First and foremost, it centered my focus on the forgotten or largely ignored. In working with teens from Red Wing and Glen Lake Home School for Boys, I encountered youth that society had nearly abandoned. Second, the style of our camp...spending twenty four-seven with teens in small groups in the outdoors...could be translated to a parish ministry. That I did in California where the context of camping was changed from canoeing to backpacking. I shared backpacking adventures with over 2,200 young people through the Emigrant Wilderness over the course of my ministry.



So, thanks to you Ham and Oz and WILDERNESS. What a difference you have made in shaping me and my ministry of outreach.

The concept of pastoral/adult advisors was initially received by WILDERNESS Guide/Counselors with mixed feelings. Some Guides felt the Advisor might get in the way; some Pastors felt the Guides lacked "maturity" in spiritual matters.

An accommodation was soon reached as roles were more clearly defined. It was important to have collaborative, not competitive, leadership.

We were blessed to have many pastors and adult advisors who facilitated growth in both leadership skill and spiritual depth. One early WILDERNESS parish leader was New York-born **Thor Skeie**. He was a greatly gifted pastor.



**Pastor Thor Skeie**



Camping Ministry in the life of our Lutheran Church has deep roots. WILDERNESS Canoe Base expanded the more traditional approach with its innovative, decentralized learning center...where conservation, care for the earth and all natural resources was a

major concern. Its ministry was like a “web.” It attracted not only kids from the inner city, but kids from small towns and farms...youth outside and inside the church. Its emphasis was upon faith and life... and how we exercise these in our daily living. Bonding between youth and counselors formed relationships. I was a parish pastor sharing in this wholistic experience.



For several years, I was asked to participate in the formation of the Bible Camp Association of the ELC. Those were exciting years... to see the growth of camping environments that reached out to youth... and families in fresh, creative ways. WILDERNESS (under Ham Muus) joined with *Outlaw Ranch* (with Dick Borrud) and *Koinonia* (Jerry Manlove and Bob Nervig) to blaze some “historic” new directions... always with the Gospel anchored in the center. The ordinary became extraordinary as “outreach” and “diversity” were embraced.

I can vividly recall one WILDERNESS day when we were helplessly “misplaced” in tangled, Boundary Waters back country. With care, prayer, wear and tear, we oriented our location, pulled together as a team, and found our way to “higher ground” at a distant portage. It provided wonderful “teachable moments” at our meditative campfire circle. “Faith... active in love”.

From time to time...even to this day... my campers from those WILDERNESS days recall the “bonding” and the “blessing.” As their pastor, and fellow camper, I value the fact that we shared together a truly common, “spiritual” time that left an indelible imprint. This is “gift,” indeed.

The availability of WILDERNESS gradually widened to include considerable “off season” camping and retreat opportunities. **Marsh Pechauer** was one pastor who highly valued both those Boundary Waters expeditions with youth as well as more solitary retreats for personal renewal.

Marsh shares poetic insight in this rangy *Reflection*.



**Pastor Marsh Pechauer**



Whether I ever get back there or not, WILDERNESS Canoe Base will always have a living space in my heart and memories. I’ve spent nights at “Listening Point”, transfixed by the mystery of the rising full moon over Seagull and been lulled into dream-filled sleep rocked in the cradle of lapping waves against the black rock of the shoreline. I’ve sat on the hillsides of Fishhook Island in frozen winters listening to the wind working its way over the frozen ice or through the majestic branches of jack pine and black spruce spared from the lumberman’s axe of another century. These moments are still teaching me about God and

creation, work and taking care of things, good lessons for celebration, witness, thanksgiving, life, death, promise, hope and fulfillment.

I pulled mightily on the ropes of block-and-tackle raising the 60 foot pine poles that became the A-frame of the Arnie Flaten designed chapel and sat on the hewn benches under the roof contemplating the carvings from a magical knife. I pounded nails on the roof of the second *Pinecliff*, having hauled the bundles of shingles on my shoulders and climbed the ladders getting them up there to begin with, shoulder to shoulder with men from Woodlake Lutheran Church who were giving up their Labor Day weekend to sweat, play, talk, sing and pray in a bonding exercise no one had yet fathomed.

In late November, Warren Sorteberg and I led retreats for several years at WILDERNESS for any church worker that was NOT a senior pastor. I remember the year we got out to Fishhook on a pontoon and four days later walked to the mainland on ice because Ham Muus told us that 4 inches of ice would hold a railroad locomotive. That's where I got to know John Schultz and Joe Bash, authors of what was being called the most heretical document in the ALC, "Called to Be Human." That's where John Ylvisaker came

into my life, claiming to be the only "male parish worker" in the Twin Cities.

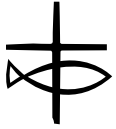


**MARSH HELPED RAISE  
BAND OF BROTHERS  
A-FRAMES**

Summer canoe trips added another dimension to my WILDERNESS Canoe Base memories. My earliest trips up the Gunflint were mostly over two-rut gravel road. It led me to see my first bull moose grazing in the ditch then running along side the car for what seemed like miles before he found a spot where he could fit his enormous rack of antlers between the trees...thus allowing him to get back into the woods and safety

from this invading mechanical "beast." At the end of that road, I once found three boys in the back seat of my car, green in the gills, as though they had endured a two hour ride in a state-of-the-art roller coaster...even though I had never driven over 15 miles per hour for the entire Gunflint Trail. All of that was only preliminary to the experience of being in the Boundary Waters themselves.

Paddling across Big Saganaga with the waves coming over the stern of the canoe, until your arms felt like they were going to drop off...catching lake trout on Thomas...sitting out a rainstorm on the Kawishawi River...Bible study, camp fires, blueberry picking and making a pie in a frying pan. How much more need I say? Maybe one more thing. Two weeks ago, I went to the funeral of a long-time member of Woodlake. Her son was there. When we had a chance to meet and share, his first words to me were, "I'll always remember being at WILDERNESS Canoe Base. It was the most important time of my life. It changed me forever." My only thought was, "Me, too."



## WILDERNESS: AN EXERCISE IN INVESTMENTS

During the early formation of the ALC Bible Camp Association (BCA), I was invited to share some reflections on the nature of our Church's camping enterprise. The thrust of my observations focused on investment in staff and the many facets available in sensitive, shared Christian "education."

I tried to identify as specifically as I knew how those ingredients which make up meaningful "education". All were born out of the WILDERNESS context. Here is a bit of what I wrote in the essay:

"WILDERNESS is a living community whose every impact on its members is an integral component of education in faith."

Some of the more important aspects of a learning process and experience are:

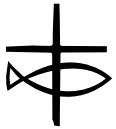
1. **Observation** – "See what God has done...See how they love each other...See how we love each other." The sensitivity to harmony and order
2. **Investigation** – The instinctive curiosity in life...adventure...lifelong search
3. **Cooperation** – The opportunity to share with others
4. **Correlation** – "What are the relationships? How do they fit together?" The quest for integration...connection with The Gospel
5. **Meditation** – "I Listen to God... I listen to another...I listen to my inner self" – The essential quality of tolerance
6. **Informality** – "Stay loose... play it by ear." – The fun of flexibility
7. **Creativity** – The generation of ideas...the knitting of relationships...the acquisition of useful skills
8. **Adaptation** – "How does it apply? Can I be different? How?" – The freedom to champion change
9. **Participation** – "We are involved... This is our idea... just the way we like it" – The importance of process
10. **Evaluation** – "What's happening?... What's happened?... What's next?" – The excitement of the unknown future ties with known past



THE WORD COMES ALIVE



I firmly believe that many WILDERNESS staff and hopefully many campers engaged in some way with such an "exercise"...asking the questions...searching for connections with the Gospel of love and salvation. WILDERNESS may have provided the occasion for the inquiry.



## SHARING THE LOAD: PASTOR CURT JOHNSON

In 1954, my Sem internship assignment was to initiate PCYC ministry. Colleague Curt Johnson headed northerly with wife, Ruth... to Nome, Alaska. That intern

assignment was a "first" as well in a young mission venture. We stayed in touch... following each other in Spirit. We held common outreach commitments.

Following Sem graduation and ordination, Curt pursued ministry as an active duty Chaplain in the U.S. Air Force. Assignments carried Curt, Ruth and family from Texas to Newfoundland. They followed from afar the scope of emerging PCYC work.

Ruth's brother, Lee Dybvig, was on the first WILDERNESS staff in '57. He was an enormously energetic and effective witness to the joy of a Christian life. Lee kept Ruth and Curt posted on what was happening at WILDERNESS.

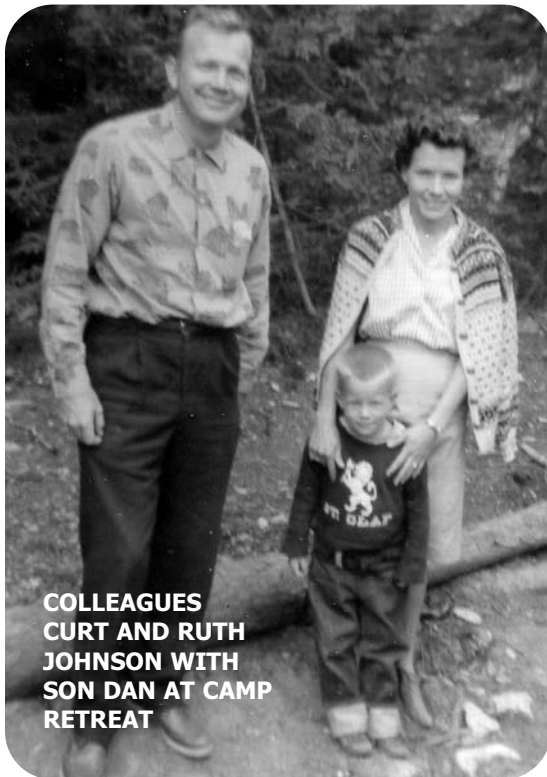
After Bob Evans moved to the northside Prince of Glory parish, I contacted Curt about potential interest in sharing at PCYC... with special emphasis on mentoring... a Christian, faith-based big brother/big sister approach to nurturing young lives in need of one-to-one friendship.

Curt was called by the Board as my Associate. It was another huge leap of faith all around. The Lord once again had touched shoulders. The *Kinsmen/Kinswomen* (later *Kinship*) ministry was in powerful hands.

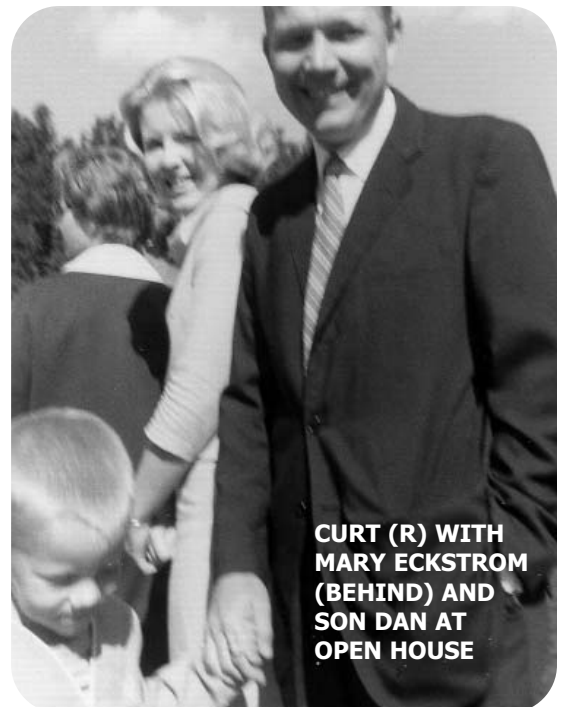
PCYC ministry grew. Seminarians continued to serve inner city youth. Parish volunteers gained outreach vision. The Johnson family had natural ties to the north. They knew and loved what was happening at WILDERNESS. Curt became a most valuable partner in staff training. He had sharp administrative talents which supported the multi-faceted PCYC outreach. Curt, Ruth and family blessed our family... and the lives of all those who shared their friendship.

I felt confident that PCYC ministry would flourish under Curt's direction when I accepted the call to Augustana Academy with Bob Nervig. He brought freshness that enhanced PCYC work.

Curt's presence was a blessing. I am extremely grateful.



**COLLEAGUES  
CURT AND RUTH  
JOHNSON WITH  
SON DAN AT CAMP  
RETREAT**



**CURT (R) WITH  
MARY ECKSTROM  
(BEHIND) AND  
SON DAN AT  
OPEN HOUSE**



In his *Reflection*, **Curt** shares his gracious spirit.



### Pastor Curt Johnson

My first memory is coming to work for PCYC in the early summer of 1962 after you, Ham, had been so good as to fashion a call to work with you in this most important ministry. Not only was there a call, but also marvelous assistance in finding a wonderful home to live in.

I was a bit overwhelmed with the task of trying to put together in some orderly fashion, the *Kinsmen Program*, but not only that you invited me to be along for the orientation for the staff at WILDERNESS. The Boundary Waters was a totally new experience for this small town boy from southern Minnesota, but having spent an internship year in Nome, Alaska, I didn't think that it was impossible to handle.

I really don't remember a lot about exactly who was along for the orientation, but I know that son Carl came along and was eager to meet Nathan. The setting was overwhelming. The *Pinecliff* structure was impressive and even more so when the history of how it came to be there and the work that went into saving *Pinecliff* from going entirely through the ice. Of course, the food was outstanding and who could but rejoice at the delicious *Beulah Bread* as well as all of the great things that came out of the kitchen. Canoeing was another thing, but with a bit of instruction and apprenticeship time in the bow, it became doable and fun.

Perhaps the first impressive thing at the island campsite was the size and intensity of the mosquitoes! This wasn't exactly our first encounter with those pesky things. When we traveled up the Alcan Highway to Alaska we found that everywhere we stopped and left the car we were swarmed. The setting up of a tent, making camp and preparing meals over the campfire were all challenging items for us all.

I am not sure who was along on that first of my many times of staff training. I think Ken Petersen was along, small, intelligent and quiet, but oh so capable. The incomparable Sol Gipson, Lee Dybvig, Nancy Caple, Karen Gulsvig... and so many more. The great thing was the shared tasks and teaching. Everybody was learner/teacher. Mutual ministry.

There were so many memorable staffers. The Swansons, Chip and Lynn were the salt of the earth. Chip, the more intellectual and perhaps serious of the two, but Lynn more than willing to help with whatever task was at hand. I recall it was impressed upon the Guides that they were never ever lost, only temporarily displaced, and the notion that all WILDERNESS life was "Spiritual." Great insights.

Who can forget the Rogness clan, starting with Tudy and going on through the boys? Whenever I meet Peter, he accuses you and me of thinking we taught him all that he knows. Hardly... but wonderful to feel that we had some part in shaping his ministry. Tudy, of course, had the creativity and 'can do' attitude that enabled her to do things with



groups that no one else seemingly could. Andy, I do not remember as well, but he was in the Rogness cut that meant doing well whatever was at hand. The influence of WILDERNESS in all of its aspects on life and ministry was often expressed.

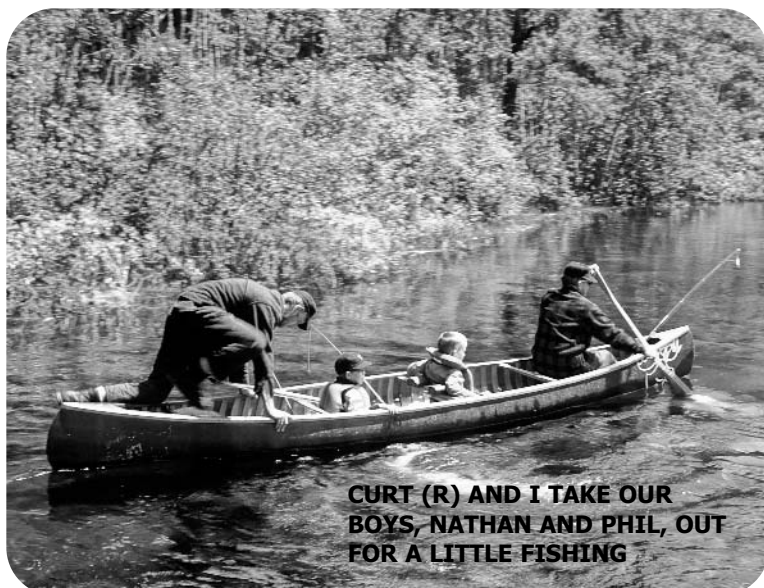
Then there was Nolan Cramer, who in his quiet irresistible way came up with all sorts of adaptations for any given situation. His determination to be able to serve his campers ice cream on the trail caused him to cash some away in the middle of winter and thus enabled him to “find” an ice cream shop along the trail the next summer. Nolan loved WILDERNESS with all of his being and would do anything to further its ministry. It was at WILDERNESS where he and Glenda met and then married. Glenda, with her expertise in the kitchen, kept staff and campers well fed.

I remember also Wayne Vetter...another quiet, capable person who grew and matured at WILDERNESS. He was indeed a learner, which is what you looked for in the staff. Eventually we asked Wayne to be the Director of WILDERNESS and with wife Tudy, they did a marvelous job.

What would WILDERNESS have done without the Borson presence? Vern, who it seemed could do almost anything in the maintenance and repair area. He was truly the quiet, but capable salt of the earth. Then there's Jim Wiinanen... the tall Finn, who knew the wilderness as well as anyone. His knowledge and 'stick to it' attitude enabled much to be done that seemed improbable.

The faces flood in, but the names do not. Suffice it to say that the original founder... the WILDERNESS designer, director and moving force behind all that was done there has to be recognized for the remarkable accomplishment that WILDERNESS has been and is. Ham, I cannot say enough about the high estate in which I hold you and the things that you were able to accomplish through this ministry. I recall often sitting down at the dining tables in *Pinecliff* when you would sketch out some design for a building or renovation that needed to be done and then recruit the necessary labor force to go out and do the job. You and Pearl should be extremely proud of the service the two of you have provided to the wider church and humanity through the witness of WILDERNESS. It has not simply been a spiritual ministry; it has been an ecological call for the church to see all of God's creation as a necessary place to be involved.

Through you and the resource people that you involved at WILDERNESS, I grew to understand the wholeness of the redemptive work of Christ for all of creation. That has certainly shaped what we have done over the years and what we continue to do at *Good Earth Gardens* here in Bayfield. For this, we thank you and praise God for the opportunity of having your friendship through all of these years.



**CURT (R) AND I TAKE OUR BOYS, NATHAN AND PHIL, OUT FOR A LITTLE FISHING**



## WILDERNESS MUSIC

"Make a joyful sound to the Lord...all people" writes the Psalmist. "Sing to the Lord a new song"...then offer praise and thanksgiving.

One of the great things about northwoods camping is the freedom to find music...everywhere. The rhythm of measured paddling... waves beating on canoe shell...song birds lending their cacophony... gentle winds moving quaking aspen leaves...glass smooth waters

inviting breathtaking silence... tired campers spontaneously singing a cappella around smoldering campfires...well worn guitars picked with care and passion... voices blending with their special passion... what an angelic choir... what diversity of orchestration... all offering a kind of Godly praise. Is this not what the Psalmist had in mind and heart? I rather suspect so.

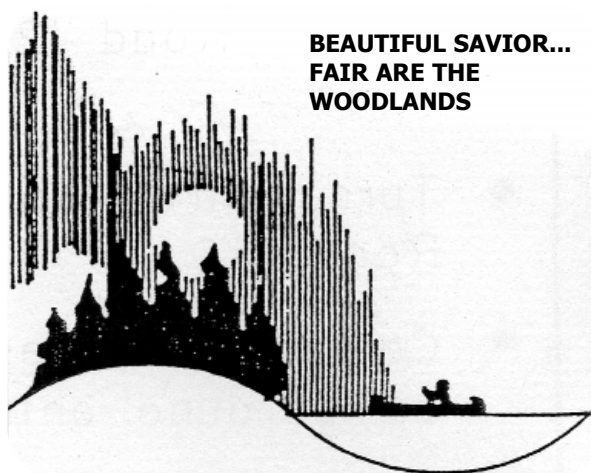
"All creatures of our God...lift up your 'voice'... let us sing... alleluia!" Great stuff!

It seems to me that on every early WILDERNESS staff we had musicians, singers, folk advocates, baritones, monotones and more. Flutes and french horns; guitars in differing shapes and sizes; recorders and crafted wooden drums... all offering music for the Lord to hear.

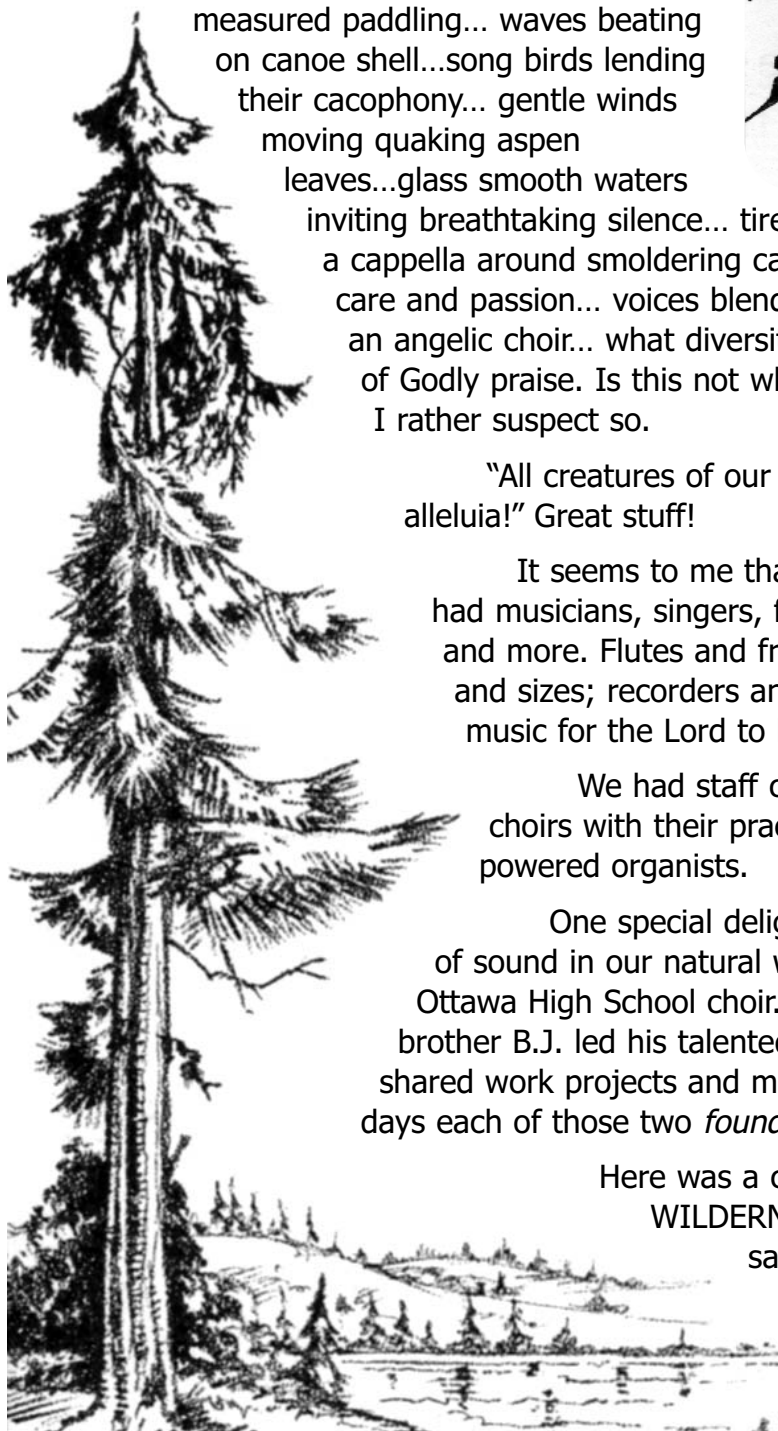
We had staff choirs and varied ensembles; touring choirs with their practiced harmonies; solo voices and foot powered organists.

One special delight that symbolized the sophistication of sound in our natural world about was the presence of the Ottawa High School choir. In late summer 1961 and 1965, my brother B.J. led his talented students to WILDERNESS. They shared work projects and musical presence for several enchanting days each of those two *founding years*.

Here was a cluster of forty who fit in perfectly with WILDERNESS mission. B.J. challenged them with sacred music which they executed with precision and power. They and us were mutually blessed.



BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR...  
FAIR ARE THE  
WOODLANDS





### **Choir Welcomed at Evergreen Campsite...**

Marilyn, Lois, Gomer, and Roger met the 40 Ottawans with Director B.J. Muus yesterday afternoon. A belated lunch, camper orientation, and welcome banquet preceeded the "Sing Across Seagull". Most of the Choir Campers seemed excited...and pleased to be here at WILDERNESS.

Lois Rambo presented Camp-Word Symbols to each member last evening. They are wearing them today as they move down Seagull (with 13 canoes, "The Spirit...", Trail Lunch, and their evening supper) to Alpine...and return.

Tomorrow, the Choir will sing at the Worship Service... plus a full concert at *Band of Brothers* at 6:30.

### **A Memorable Experience... An Evening of Beauty...**

The double campfire...at Dominion's *Band of Brothers* granite-site and at Fishhook's *Pinecliff* regrowth-site...was a marvelous experience.

The Ottawa Choir responded across the waters to the singing of the WILDERNESS camp-group and staff. For an hour the channel and bays resounded with glad sounds. There was the singing of "Beautiful Savior" and the choir's offering of "O Day Full of Grace", a flare-illuminated cross silhouetted against the waters. It was an impressive setting.

On Fishhook, G/C Mike and G/C Diane presented Camper Testaments to their new friends...as Lucia spelled out the Camp Word. Jim Gronewold, Bob Hewitt, and Paul Anderson helped with special preparations...(also Lynn and Phil). We will long remember this evening.

Reprint from *Trail Blazer*



**B.J. MUUS (FAR LEFT) LEADS THIS 40-MEMBER OTTAWA CHOIR**



The upper *Pinecliff* level was filled to capacity last night with campers, staff, and Ottawans. The evening was an exciting affair with the Ottawa Choir and Director B.J. providing a wide variety of folk music...ranging from "Music Man" to "Lonesome Train".

The Lincoln cantata..."The Lonesome Train"...featured Swamper Roger Harvey. It is a moving portrait of the spirit of our great president... "where you could hardly tell where people left off and Lincoln began."

B.J. Muus presented a surprise gift/memorial...a check from the Ottawa Choir for the purchase of a WILDERNESS canoe... to Camp Director Ham. It will be named THE MAC RAE SHANNON...in living memory of a great educator who always sought for ways to improve the caliber of teaching and with a sound balance of broadening activities...of which the choir tours were a part. We will proudly commission Joe Seliga to build a new canoe for our WILDERNESS fleet.

The choir departed this morning...after the glad sounds of "Speak To One Another" and "Praise To The Lord" echoed across our Seagull waters from Dominion Isle. It was a rare privilege to have this outstanding group of choir/campers here at WILDERNESS.

Reprint from *Trail Blazer*

### The Ottawa Choir

WILDERNESS welcomes the Ottawa, (Illinois) High School Choir...under the direction of B.J. Mus.

The forty members of the Ottawa Choir have been rehearsing regularly throughout the summer in anticipation of their tour through the midwest. They have been chosen (from a larger group of candidates) to bring the Word through praise and prayer...as an expression of their own life of faith.

This is the second occasion of Open House at WILDERNESS which the Ottawans have shared. B.J. Mus brought another group of choristers for the dedication of Band of Brothers Chapel four years ago.

The Ottawa Choir has distinguished itself in many ways over the past decade. It has achieved "superior" ratings as the top choir among Illinois schools in its class. It has been invited to sing for many events including the St. Olaf Spring Concerts and the Chicago Sunday Evening Club at Orchestra Hall. They have recorded a group of Christmas Carols (a 33 1/3 L.P. record available directly from the Ottawa Music Department) which has thrilled its listeners.

We are honored by their presence at WILDERNESS and are pleased that they are here to sing for and share with the entire WILDERNESS community.

### The Sunday Evening WILDERNESS Program\*

1. O MOST HIGH AND HOLY GOD.....J. Sweelinck  
 FLORATE FILII ISRAEL.....G. Carissimi  
 HIS VOICE AS THE SOUND.....Traditional  
 DROP DOWN, YE HEAVENS FROM ABOVE.....G.W. Cassler  
 HE NEVER SAID A MUMBLIN' WORD.....Spiritual  
 CHRIST BE THINE THE GLORY.....H. Schutz  
 HONOR AND GLORY.....J.S. Bach
2. SPEAK TO ONE ANOTHER IN PSALMS.....J. Berger  
 FIVE PSALM SETTINGS.....B.J. Mus  
     95 - O COME LET US SING TO THE LORD  
     62 - FOR GOD ALONE MY SOUL WAITS  
     92 - IT IS GOOD TO GIVE THANKS  
     90 - LORD, THOU HAST BEEN OUR DWELLING PLACE  
     96 - O SING A NEW SONG
3. PRAISE TO THE LORD.....arr. F.M. Christiansen  
 BEAUTY IN HUMILITY.....F.M. Christiansen  
 BLIND MAN.....Spiritual  
 SOON AH WILL BE DONE.....Spiritual  
 SONG OF MARY.....Fischer-Kranz  
 O DAY FULL OF GRACE.....arr. F.M. Christiansen  
 BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR.....arr. F.M. Christiansen



\*Dedicated to the memory of an esteemed friend and Ottawa H.S. Principal, Mr. MacRae Shannon, who died July 21, 1965 ...and to WILDERNESS friend and Custodian Mr. Elmer Jorgenson, who died August 3, 1965.

**WILDERNESS Concert ... Reprint from Trail Blazer**





We were blessed with the presence of folk historian Keith Clark and family in the early sixties. We will never forget Keith's toe-tapping renditions. His compositions and brother B.J.'s music to "Beulah Bread" and "The Sauna Song" echoed across Seagull waters.

Another folk legend who shared time on site was John Ylvisaker... a noted Spirit-moved musician. From all creatures here and about comes the sound of music. Praises to God...

## THE SAUNA SONG

When you're feeling tired and blue,  
And you don't know what to do,  
And you've listened to what other people say,  
When suggestions seem to fail,  
And it's all to no avail,  
A good sauna will invigorate your day.

### CHORUS

OH, IT'S SAUNA FOR ME,  
SAUNA FOR ME,  
IT MAKES MY LIFE SEEM LIKE A DREAM;  
LET OTHERS TAKE PILLS,  
AND PAY DOCTOR BILLS--  
I'LL KEEP MYSELF HEALTHY WITH  
STEAM.

Now the sauna's found indoors  
Where it opens up your pores--  
You can see the smoke a-trailin' in the sky;  
For you heat the little stove  
In the cabin in the cove,  
And it gets so hot I think an egg could fry.

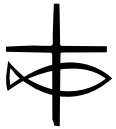
So if you want to boost yourself,  
Oh, you climb up on the shelf,  
And you lather up and let the heat sink in;  
Pour cold water on the stones,  
To let the steam warm up your bones  
And to loose the perspiration from your skin.

Then when you think you're 'bout to bake,  
Oh, you jump into the lake,  
And quite a change I think you will display;  
You'll no longer feel so blue,  
For I know you'll find it's true  
That a sauna will invigorate your day.

--KEITH CLARK

*"...Create in me  
a clean heart,  
O God..."*





We had a wonderful, versatile staff early on at PCYC. The northside ministry continued to mature. Karol and Don Hommen were important leaders. Pastor Bob was shaping things up at Frontier Farm. Vi Handahl, Ilene Knutson and Helen Stoltenberg worked their personal touch.

**Paul Obrestad** came on board in 1958 to facilitate comings and goings to three campsites: *Knutson*, *The Farm* and WILDERNESS. His ability to juggle many issues was amazing.

Map reading was apparently not one of Obe's specialties. He joined the WILDERNESS staff for the full 1959 season. His remembrances of some adventures are delightful.



**Paul Obrestad**



It is amazing what 47 years does to one's memory. The following is perhaps part truth and part fiction, but it is as I remember it today.

I remember the marvelous summer of '59 as being perfect in every way! I do not remember one cold or rainy day. It was absolutely incredible. Wind seems to stand out though. A good strong southwest wind just as you enter big Sag...using ground cloths as sails, canoes lashed together and flying home to the Base Camp.

My first camper group orientation comes to mind. With my group on the dock listening to my "lecture" about safety, loading the canoe, NO aluminum on rocks, how to get in and out of the canoe, how to carry etc., It was time for a demonstration. With the canoe in about one foot of water, I stepped into the stern and immediately flipped the thing. Soaked from the tip of my Herter's "best in the world" hat to the bottom of my new Herter's "best in the world" boots, I drippingly stood up and said "this was a demonstration of how NOT to get into a canoe" Laughter seems to travel very well over water as it echoed thru Seagull and big Sag. I heard laughter coming from the trees and the rocks. How could the summer not get better?



After a couple of 10 day Kawishiwi river trips, the memories of incompetence and inexperience faded and although I didn't know it, I was ready for a new adventure.

The break from the trails in camp was an educational "*Pinecliff* week" of draw-knifing, stuffing oakum, and trying to find log #1AOL17684270 to put on top of log #1AOL17684269.

One evening at Pastor Ham's table during supper, I casually asked him if anyone had been on the "Grand Portage" recently. I had been reading Grace Lee Nute's book titled *The Voyageur's Highway* and found it fascinating. Well, as you can imagine, by dessert time, the

trip was planned! The red Viking truck would take the canoes to Gunflint Lake, and drop us for the trip to the “big water”. We would then paddle from Grand Portage to Hovland where we would be picked up and return to camp.

After reviewing the maps, and finding an adequate map of the “Fur Traders Canoe Route”, in the Nute book, we set out using the book and its map as our guide. If you look at a map of the area you will see that this was not a difficult task.



After our trail devotions, I would read a chapter or two from the book and name the various portages we had done. Romantic names like Staircase, Height of the Land, Long Portage out of Rose Lake, Watrap, Big and Little Cherry, Moose, Fowl, Caribou, Big Rock and Partridge portage. There were 18 portages to Fort Charlotte and the Pigeon River.

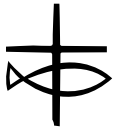
When we got to Fort Charlotte we were *in shape*. We got an early start on the Grand Portage and soon found out that this may have been a portage at one time, but in 1959 it was seldom used.

As we progressed, I kept thinking of how enjoyable draw knifing was, or a good stiff wind in your face. The bugs were the worst. We kept going with breaks for water and trail lunch. I'm sure there were some “discussions” going on ahead of me, but Nutes' descriptions of the strength and perseverance of those tough French, was now being experienced by our little group. We finally came to a logging road “highway” and continued to good old Highway 61. You can imagine our surprise and disappointment to find we were about a mile or two, south of Grand Portage. What little energy we had left enabled us to “portage” up 61 to the fort. It was a very long day!

One of the campers asked what that last “highway” portage was named. I didn't get a chance to reply as another camper piped up with the name “Guides Goof” Portage. To this day, every time I drive up to Grand Portage, I always smile with the memory.

Exhausted, we scrambled together what food we had left, had devotions of Thanksgiving and put our sleeping bags out on the shore to sleep under the stars on a beautiful clear night. In the morning we started the last adventure, canoeing on Lake Superior, to Hovland to meet the truck. It was fortunately a very calm and beautiful day. It was an awesome paddle along the shore to Hovland... on crystal clear water. We had done it with no mishaps! Eighteen portages plus the big one... with memories of a great experience.

That summer was the best of my young life. The trips, the fellow staff, and most importantly the young people, provided the opportunity to be together in sharing the wonder of God's Creation. Words fail in describing that wonderful, spiritual summer.



Staff training for chosen members really began with the agreements to serve. We tried to provide both informatoin and inspiration which would encourage all staff to "do some homework."

We offered a suggested reading list including Sigurd Olson writings, Helen Hoover's Gunflint Trail journals, Dr. Rogness' excellent book, *Why Bother About God?*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Life Together*, our own monographs and others. There was encouragement for Bible reading and study which could find application to camp experiences... "connection to the Gospel."

The practice upon arrival at camp was to have intensive orientation for Guides and Swampers plus in-camp workshops for everyone. Staff carried out special topical or skills assignments... from First Word to First Aid and everything in between. Trails experience was important and focused. "Learn by doing."

We were also fortunate to have willing pastoral resource persons who brought energy and insight. Paul Gabrielson, Mark Anderson, Thor Skeie, John Schultz, Janis Rozentals, and our own Curt Johnson were leaders. Shirley Dahlen, *Kinswomen* staffer, also shared.

One who gave strong initial assistance was Pastor **Vern Anderson**... who also brought future staff member sons along. We were blessed.

Pastor Vern looks back almost 50 years to single out a bit of his time with our staff.



**Pastor Vern Anderson**

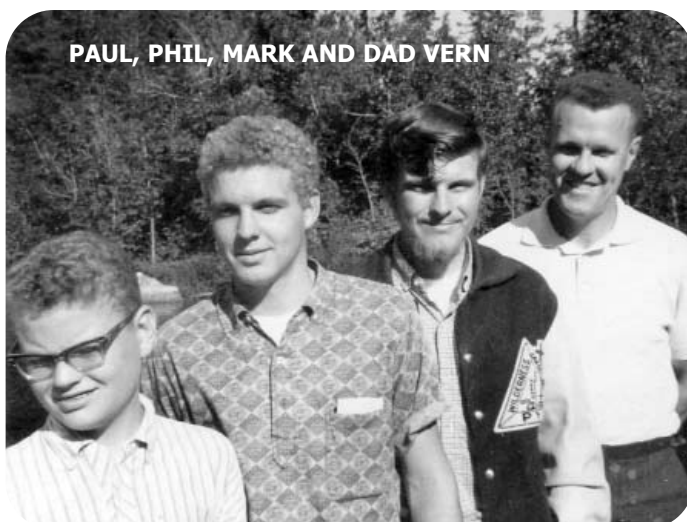


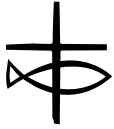
I remember working with the guides on their devotional leadership during Guide Orientation. We dug into the marvel of Creation as we studied Genesis: 1-3 and Psalm: 19. Then... for proper focus John: 1 and 3 and Acts: 2. God: Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier.

I took my sons Mark, Phil and Paul with me for those staff training days. They loved it all. We hold mutual fond memories of canoe orientation, camp building and sauna. Later, all three served on WILDERNESS staff. I am pleased with their commitments.

As parish pastor in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, we returned to WILDERNESS with Trails groups. I still have a clear memory of seeing my son Mark...

leaving with a Trails group as we were heading back to Fishhook. We paused in our paddling... exchanged greetings, blessings and granola off the paddle... and continued on. It was a special Spiritual moment for "Father-Son."





## **THIS IS OUR FATHER'S WORLD: *BAND OF BROTHERS CHAPEL***

We honor the truth that God is the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of this entire wondrous universe. Within our hearts, God's Spirit resides. We are invited by Christ to share the "Good News" of love and forgiveness with others...those like us and those who are different. Our journey is mission; our task outreach.

In this Spirit, PCYC extended its inner-city ministry. WILDERNESS became one more dynamic expression...based in faith; driven by hope; steeped in possibilities.

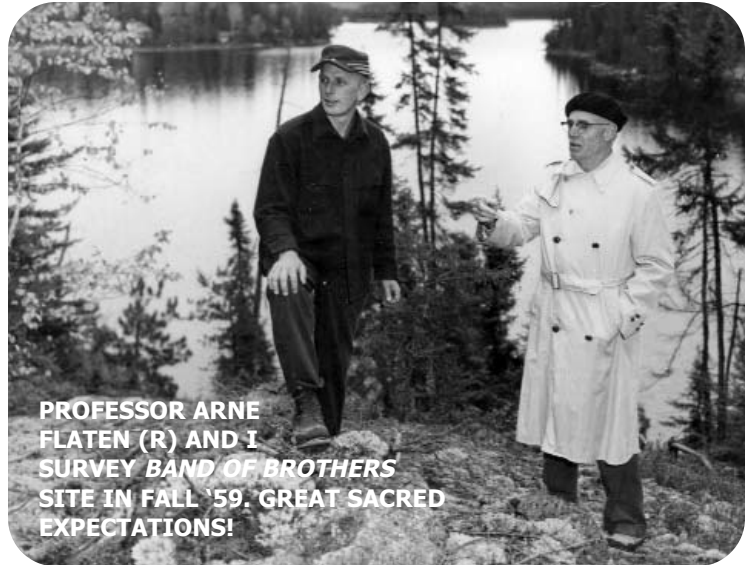
From the very earliest anticipatory conversations with the Blankenburgs to the initial footprints on Fishhook Island, we knew that this land, this mystical space was sacred. We stood in

awe of its rugged, wooded beauty. We knew that it was a God-given trust. It was a sanctuary... a "holy place." We took seriously the ethic to "walk softly" on WILDERNESS land...wherever sojourners would travel.

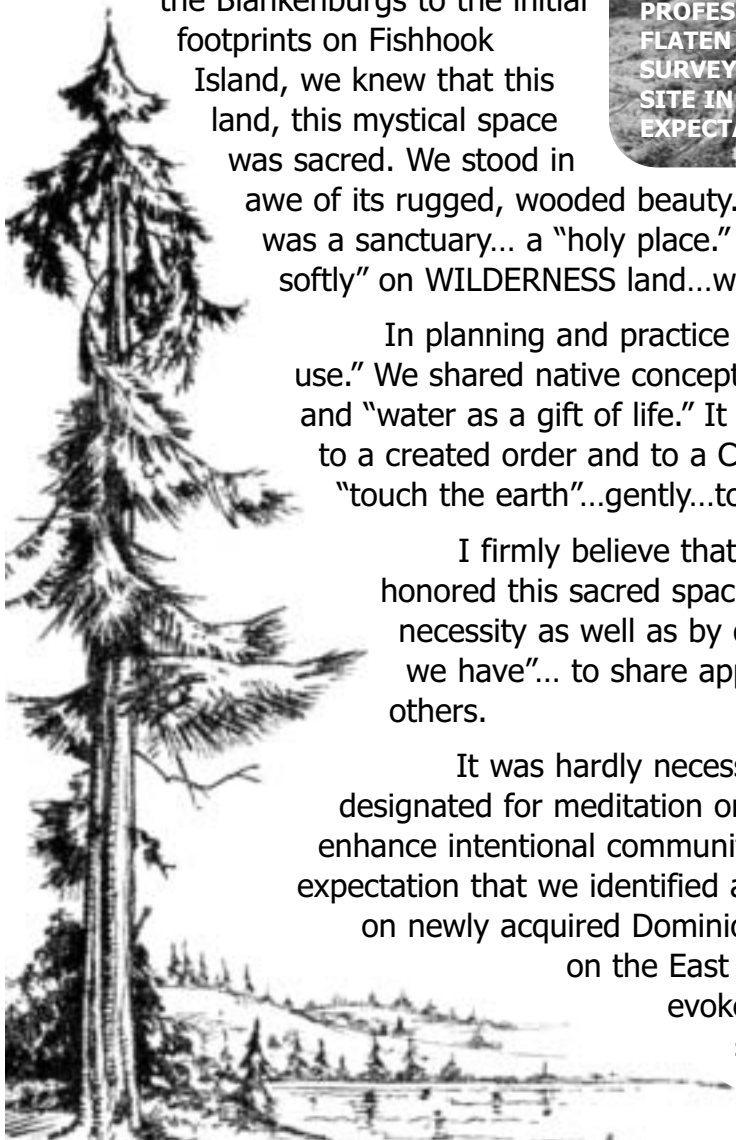
In planning and practice we spoke about "stewardship" and "land use." We shared native concepts and concerns about "care of the earth" and "water as a gift of life." It was our hope that we could both witness to a created order and to a Creator we loved. It was important to "touch the earth"...gently...to carefully live in the "teachable moment."

I firmly believe that WILDERNESS staffers and many campers honored this sacred space. We all learned to live simply...by necessity as well as by design. We learned to "make do with what we have"... to share appropriately... to be aware of the needs of others.

It was hardly necessary to have one area or facility designated for meditation or worship. Still, we felt a matrix could enhance intentional community spiritual expression. It was with great expectation that we identified a stunning location for our worship center on newly acquired Dominion Isle in 1958. The spectacular overlook on the East side sent chills up and down the spine. It evoked an awesome invitation facing the rising sun to honor the "Risen Son."



**PROFESSOR ARNE  
FLATEN (R) AND I  
SURVEY BAND OF BROTHERS  
SITE IN FALL '59. GREAT SACRED  
EXPECTATIONS!**

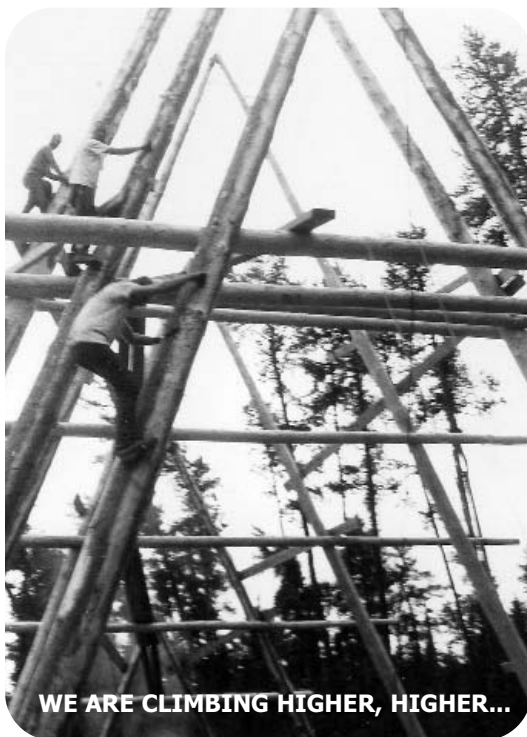


Professor Arne Flaten, legendary Art professor and sculptor at St. Olaf College, came to WILDERNESS in late fall of 1958. With winter staffer John Glesne, we climbed up to the Dominion overlook. Its compelling beauty instantly captivated him. The sheer scale of it all...the massive stone formations...the azure Seagull waters. It brought forth both praise and thanksgiving. We shared Spirit and dreams for this hallowed undertaking. Dr. Flaten agreed to help fashion a design, which could inspire worship and meditation. The raw natural beauty all around this unique setting supported that possibility.



Any student or friend of Professor Flaten knew he was both consummate artist and theologian. His paintings and sculptures graced parish chancels and private homes. His deep faith came through in both word and art. He loved to share, to communicate the Gospel in creative ways.

Together with St. Olaf colleague, Howard Hong, Dr. Flaten had organized a student work camp at Hovland, Minnesota in the late forties. The focus was to design and construct a functional cedar/stone worship center for the community. Trinity Lutheran members worked together with St. Olaf student campers. An inviting, warm, distinctive Parish unit was built utilizing native materials. It stands to this day as a witness to the blending of dreams, design, human devotion and dependency on God's Spirit.



We were thrilled to have Arne Flaten's energies and attention at WILDERNESS. The brilliant *Band of Brothers* design features a series of massive A-frames interrupted by a heavy cantilevered rough cedar roof. The timbers extend to the heavens accenting the rugged stone slope rising from Seagull waters. Following the Frank Lloyd Wright principle, "Bring the natural, outside beauty inside," Flaten offered open spaces to encourage open hearts. The *Band of Brothers* design fit with the land and our dreams. This was extraordinary architecture.

Our excited preliminary discussions turned to logistics and construction details: materials, hardware, equipment, personnel, and other support specifics. Dr. Flaten expressed great personal confidence when he wryly stated: "I'll have those things to you. I know you'll find a way." History records that "a way" was pursued...and found...through the tireless efforts of staff,





work crew volunteers and Trails campers. It was an exercise of "faith in action."

Here are some interesting details. The two tallest 60' timbers came from trees on the Van and Peter Blomberg land down the lake near the Alpine portage. A WILDERNESS work crew harvested, trimmed and moved the timbers. They used small log rollers and levers to inch along the heavy green "giants." Once in Seagull waters, they were floated gingerly around numerous islands and hidden rock outcroppings. The five-mile journey was in itself an adventure taxing staff creativity. At Dominion Isle, the logs were winched and skidded up the

perilous east slope. At the work site, bark was pulled and draw knifing completed in preparation for A-frame assembly.

All the additional A-frame logs came from trees harvested on our WILDERNESS islands. They were moved, floated, chained and winched up the east slope in similar fashion. It was a remarkable achievement of creative backwoods engineering.

The summer Work Camps of 1960-61 headquartered at Evergreen and

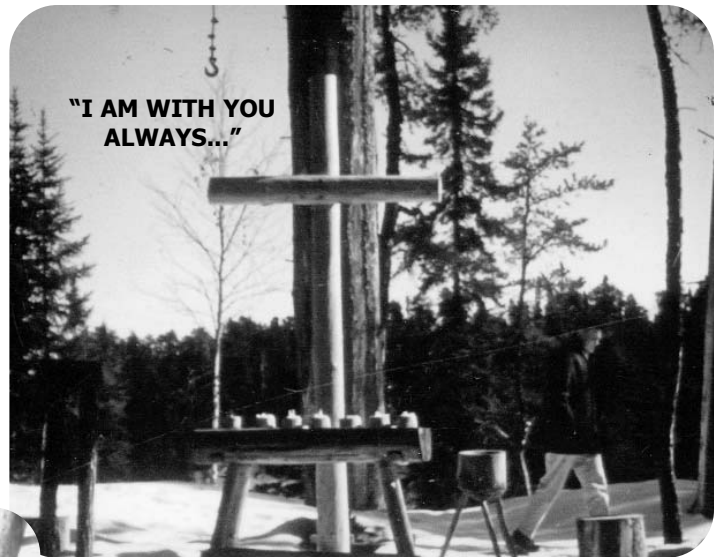
*The Cove*. Mary and Roy Nilsen provided WILDERNESS staff leadership. They welcomed Trails groups and worked with the many enthusiastic volunteers. The newly acquired Cove property was an enormous blessing. In addition to a place of gracious arrival and departure hospitality, it provided for additional lodging and supply. And there was electricity available for refrigeration. The St. Olaf crew found sheltered space at Evergreen. Mainland and island accommodations were rustic works in progress.



The many, many construction tasks needed at *Band of Brothers* were painstakingly met. There was endless digging required for solid foundation; sand, gravel and cement needed to be transported across the lake in buckets...then hand carried up the hill to the site. Concrete was mixed and poured demanding intensive labor. Iron re-bars were laid and wired throughout the Chapel's diamond shaped foundation. Steel bands and anchors were tooled at Duluth shops especially for the A-frames. Details by the

dozens challenged the collective ingenuity of WILDERNESS staff and Work Campers.

Our retired Seagull engineer friend, Peter Blomberg, taught us how to maximize necessary leverage by using small A-frames to raise larger A-frames. A pair of rugged manual Army surplus winches were purchased at Harris Machinery and pressed into heavy duty service. There was continuous "on the job" training. Eventually the A-frames were erected and safely bolted.

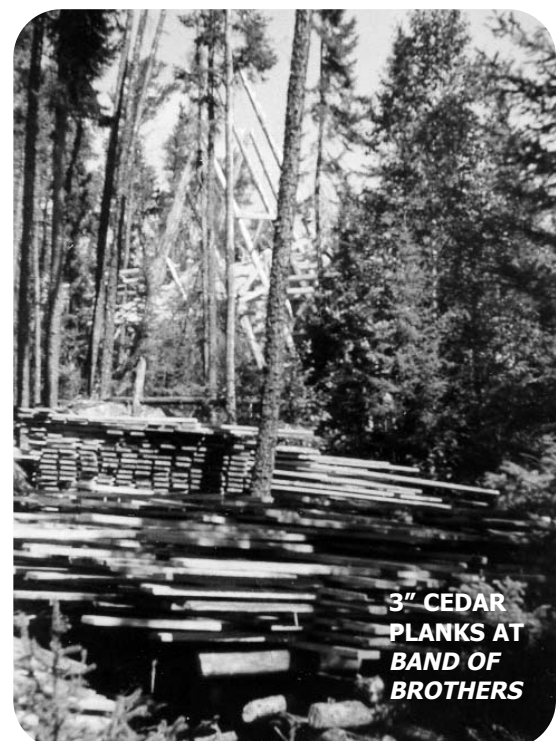


It all bordered on the unbelievable.

A small mill nestled alongside the Tom Lake road north of Hovland was where all *Band of Brothers* cedar was harvested and sawed. Our legendary friend Otis Anderson, bucked and custom cut the thick cedar planking. WILDERNESS staffer Vern Borson made several 170 mile round trips in our

Viking truck to pick up and deliver the required lumber. Dozens of pontoon loads brought material across the bay. Hundreds of trips on aching backs hauled the heavy materials up to the *Band of Brothers* site. Energies were further taxed in muscling heavy asphalt shingles for the roof covering. All this plus the work of "aerial artists" who deftly worked in breath stopping high places fashioning the spectacular cantilever canopy.

There was a special commitment...a moving dedication and discipline to this sacred venture. Those who gave of their time, energy and talents shared in establishing a worship environment of unparalleled beauty and grace. Those who provided financial and material help joined in enabling a holy enterprise. The very presence of *Band of Brothers* speaks to WILDERNESS mission and hope. It symbolizes the core of WILDERNESS community and inclusion. It leads to the strengthening of Spirit. It points to Jesus who understood and embraced "time apart." It speaks of "sanctuary"...it honors our Redeemer and Sustainer of all life...it draws us together: One in Spirit.



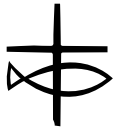


Come...  
To Pray...  
To Sing...  
To Meditate...  
To Worship.



What does  
the Lord  
require?





## A STONE FOUNDATION: CHAPEL BUILDERS

I suspect there are few worship centers in the country that can match the clean architectural elegance and awesome surroundings of *Band of Brothers Chapel*. Talk about inspirational!

The brilliant design of Arne Flaten was painstakingly brought to life by the thousands of hours of staff, volunteer, and camper effort. It was truly a labor of love.

As with other points of WILDERNESS need, a cadre of friends responded to the *Band of Brothers* dream. Their significant financial gifts of \$1000 or more helped to cover capital construction costs. These *Chapel Builders* share in an enduring witness to shared faith.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ✘ Mr. & Mrs. John Allen<br>Hopkins, MN             | ✘ Mrs. George Kemp<br>Ishpeming, MI                  |
| ✘ Mr. & Mrs. Martin P. Blomberg<br>Winter Park, FL | ✘ Mr. & Mrs. Bill LaBounty<br>Hopkins, MN            |
| ✘ C.B. Christiansen<br>Minneapolis, MN             | ✘ Mr. & Mrs. C. C. Lee<br>Aberdeen, SD               |
| ✘ Mr. & Mrs. Noel Dokken<br>Benson, MN             | ✘ Miss Elsie Melby<br>Duluth, MN                     |
| ✘ Mr. & Mrs. Edwin Dybvig<br>Dayton, OH            | ✘ Dr. Robert J. Meyer<br>Bethany, OK                 |
| ✘ Pastor & Mrs. Mel Frantsen<br>Savage, MT         | ✘ Mr. & Mrs. Bernt J. Muus<br>Ottawa, IL             |
| ✘ Miss Helen Harrang<br>Fergus Falls, MN           | ✘ Pastor Ham & Pearl Muus<br>Minneapolis, MN         |
| ✘ Pastor Donovan & Carol Hommen<br>Williston, ND   | ✘ Pastor Herman I. & Gladys Muus<br>Grand Marais, MN |
| ✘ Mr. & Mrs. Oscar Husby<br>St. Paul, MN           | ✘ Mr. William Sandstrom<br>Minneapolis, MN           |
| ✘ Pastor Curtis & Ruth Johnson<br>Lanesboro, MN    | ✘ Mr. & Mrs. Paul Wolk<br>Cut Bank, MT               |
| ✘ Mr. & Mrs. Emil Knutson<br>Gruver, TX            |  |
| ✘ Mr. & Mrs. Clarence Knudson<br>Comfrey, MN       |  |



Thanks Be to God!



The advent of summer season #4 in 1960 was especially exciting. We had completed purchase negotiations for the *Quiet Cove Lodge* earlier in the spring. We were thrilled to have our own mainland access. The logistics from shore to island were considerably more manageable.

It also made planning for work campers more possible. We were eager to continue work on the *Pinecliff* log reconstruction. We also were pointing toward the beginnings of *Band of Brothers Chapel* on Dominion Isle. *The Cove* facilitated both efforts.

In addition, we were expecting a record number of WILDERNESS campers... from the city, institutional centers, and parishes. A lot was on our summer agenda.

**Roy Nilsen** and partner, Mary came on staff to handle some of the duties around *The Cove*. Roy provides some interesting insight in his *Reflection*.



**Roy Nilsen**



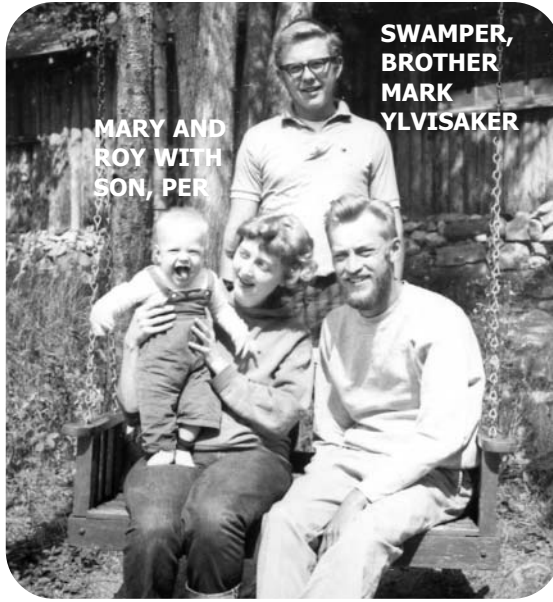
The WILDERNESS Canoe Base mission was about welcome; about hospitality; about building community as people explored the wonders of God's creation in the land and lakes of the Superior National Forest. We were welcomed by Pastor Ham and Pearl in early June of '60 and set up as managers of *The Cove*, a former resort PCYC had recently purchased.

Mary and I were usually the first folks new campers met as they piled out of the vehicles that brought them close to the end of the Gunflint Trail. A sense of expectancy greeted me in the eyes of the young campers: what would life be like for the week or two they would be canoeing and portaging and making/breaking camp; how would they do as they ventured through the lakes, set up their own tents, made their own grub, fought unending battles with mosquitoes, dug latrines, paddled endless hours in a day, swam and fished, talked and wondered? I could see delight – and anxiety too – as I led them to the dock to board the pontoon for the trek to the island, where this adventure would begin.

Some of the groups that came to WILDERNESS were from congregations in large cities, growing suburbs and mid-size towns, small villages and the open country of the rural Midwest. Some of these kids boisterously swaggered in; trying to make sure others knew how sophisticated they were. Others were tentative and quiet, letting the smell and grandeur of the pines, the whisper of the wind, the lapping of the waves on Seagull's shore, the sight of the lone eagle soaring overhead, lead them into a mystery that awaited.



Humble and silent was the way most of the kids from Hennepin County Probation, Glen Lake School for Boys or Red Wing State Training School usually came. Most of these kids had never seen such a place as WILDERNESS. It had its own power to still the soul, to produce "oohs" and "aahs," to teach the questing and not-so-questing kids things about life they never imagined.



MARY AND  
ROY WITH  
SON, PER

SWAMPER,  
BROTHER  
MARK  
YLVISAKER

Community was built, not only among the groups canoeing and camping together, but among the staff and adult volunteers, as they toiled, studied and played side by side out on the lakes and in the base camp itself.

The focus of the camp was on a spiritual life. It was only natural that WILDERNESS have a chapel. I remember, so well, cutting logs on the far end of the lake, floating them up the lake behind the pontoon, building a skid up the hill and winching (with human power) the 30, 40, and 50 foot logs that would serve as the A-frames for this Flaten designed house of God. I remember Peter Blomberg, an engineer who had a cabin at the far end of the lake. He

helped direct how we would raise those logs. I remember the applause we lifted and the cheers we offered when the first A-frame went up. Sore muscles, sweaty bodies, cuts and bruises marked us all; but that sense of satisfaction over accomplishing this task let our spirits soar. With renewed energy, we raised the rest of those A-frames. The inspired design of Professor Flaten, the energy of the Ole Work Camp, other staff and random volunteers made this an awesome adventure.

*Pinecliff Lodge*... the main dining and program center on Fishhook Island... was twice built. The horrible loss by fire gave way to the distinctive log and lumber *Pinecliff II*. It was a great place for food and community... where Beulah and her crew baked bread fit for royalty. The rest of us hauled foods to stock the pantry and set tables. Then after eating, we cleaned up, laughed, talked and came together as family.

Canned vegetables, canned fruit, 100-pound bags of flour, 50-pound bags of pinto beans and sugar, tins of Crisco and more. Wimoweh, the cabin right off the parking lot at *The Cove*, was our food storehouse. Vern Borson hauled basic foodstuffs from the Twin Cities. He often would pick up supplies at other small towns along the way to Seagull. We'd unload the truck that would come loaded. Mary and I would sort and sort those boxes, those crates, those bags and stack them high. Beulah would come, or send her emissary, with her order for the kitchen on the island. The next day I'd load her request into my boat or onto the pontoon and head out to the dock below *Pinecliff*. Swampers and campers would join in the 'food chain' up to the lodge where Beulah waited to work her culinary "magic" for the community.

Worship was always simple whether on Sunday morning or around a campfire at night. Familiar hymns or new folk songs, a biblical text and prayers. Our first summer, the camp had the great gifts of Illinois folk singer and songwriter Keith Clark. He taught us an appreciation for the music of the native tribes and the early settlers, always accompanying us on his guitar and getting us to sing with gusto.

Dr. Janis Rozentals, professor from Luther Seminary and a refugee from Latvia, was our theologian in residence those summers. In his heavily accented voice, he would open the scripture for us. Can one really lecture for an hour on one or two verses from





the First Letter of John? Yes, he could. And “Rozie” would hold us at rapt attention in those studies. “Johanine Theology”.

Dr. Rozentals was also a student of botany. He would take Guides and Swampers out for woods orientation helping them to identify as much of

the flora and fauna as possible. One afternoon, while he was doing the orientation, Mary and I entertained Mrs. Rozentals (Spodra) for tea in our cabin. She was a very quiet woman, typically European, always giving place to her husband. I asked her if she enjoyed botany too. Her delightful response: “I taught him all he knows.” It seems she had a degree in botany from the university in Riga, Latvia, but who would ever have known?

Life at *The Cove* was a rustic adventure for Mary. Pregnant the first summer; with six-month-old Per the second... learning how to dash up to the outhouse, how to avoid the bears and bobcats that thought our Cove was their home. Thankfully, Ham’s mother and father lived at *The Cove*. Gladys took Mary under her wing and taught her how to create home in the outback... much as Pearl with her three little ones managed life on Fishhook Island.

WILDERNESS was home for all of us those summers under the inspired leadership of Pastor Ham. It was the place where community grew, where many invested themselves in the mission to grow lives and to learn to appreciate and care for God’s good creation; where young and old, theologians and carpenters, musicians and cooks, staff and campers lived and worked together, taking pride in the labors of hands and minds and hearts.

Upper Gunflint and Seagull neighbors also embraced and cared for our WILDERNESS mission. The Blankenburgs, where I picked up the mail every day; the Blombergs, always so hospitable to our campers at the far end of Seagull Lake; the Bergstroms, who shared Finnish traditions and helped develop plans so WILDERNESS could build its own sauna; the Skriens, who were a great resource of information about all the lakes and portages; and the Cushmans, who lived next lodge north. They too, were part of our community.

We all had a stake in that place. Each one in the community, in her and his own way, contributed to its mission of healing and wholeness for so many through the early years. It was good to be along.

As WILDERNESS experience, program and facilities expanded, we had a much increased female presence. *The Cove* acquisition was partly responsible for the transition to a fully co-ed camping endeavor. It was an important sign of maturity.

**Keith and Harriet Clark** and family spent most of the '60 season at camp. Keith was a teaching colleague of my brother, B.J.... both at Ottawa, Illinois High School. Keith was a folk balladeer and skilled waterfront director. Harriet was a nurse who helped in our health service. Here are their *Reflections*.



**Keith Clark**

I have fond memories of the WILDERNESS Canoe Base. I was in charge of the Canoe Staging Area, when I worked at the camp for two summers in the early '60s.

We used to sing a lot. I remember singing two special songs that I wrote entitled "Beulah Bread" and "The Sauna Song." "Beulah Bread" was about our wonderful cook at Camp. The other was about the Sauna the staff built. Ham's brother, B.J., wrote the music for these songs. How it pleased me to hear the campers sing these songs. They were wonderful summers.



**Harriet Clark**

One of my earliest family memories is of camping in northern Minnesota with my parents and four older sisters, probably near Bemidji. Early on, love of the lakes and woods had been a part of me. Therefore, a chance to be at WILDERNESS Canoe Base, with Keith and the four boys, was a dream come true.



Things that stand out in my memory, after all these years are:

- ✧ Living in the Loon Bay cabin on the far east side of the island.
- ✧ The wonderful quiet and solitude of the pristine woods.
- ✧ Baking bread in the wood range in the cabin.
- ✧ Observing and enjoying the camp activities... the campers and staff.
- ✧ Braving the chilly waters of Seagull Lake for a swim or a bath, dodging the leeches..
- ✧ And, doing a bit of canoeing.



Our family canoe trip at the end of our stay at WILDERNESS was one of the landmarks (water-marks?) in our family history. It is recalled often when we are together.

We cherish the beautiful trophy rainbow trout, caught by Chris at Jap Lake. Properly stuffed and mounted, it rests complete and content on its special shelf. It remains a focus to be discussed.

Our attachment to the Gunflint and WILDERNESS remains strong. "Thank You" for making this possible. What a positive force it has remained for everyone involved.

The Clark's son K.C. was a WILDERNESS Swamper. We were blessed by the Clark presence.

Our first female Guide/Counselor was **Karen Gulsvig**. This remarkably gifted gal had rural Wanamingo roots. She challenged her abilities in a wide range of service work... including PCYC urban outreach. Her grace and Christian Witness was a steady inspiration to staff and campers alike. Karen brings freshness to this *Reflection*.



**Karen Gulsvig (Johnson)**



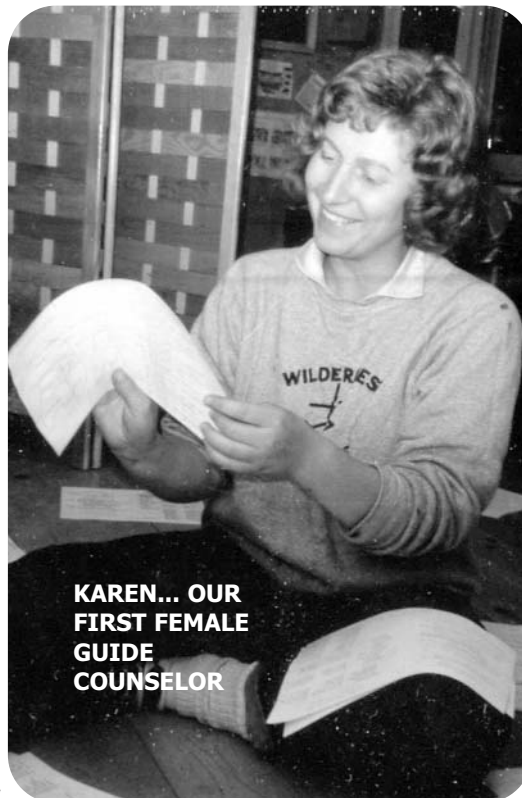
Being a “wilderness guide” has been my self-description throughout my life. I have grey hair and walk with a cane, but am still not worried about getting into the middle of things because I walk around in this world as a “wilderness guide”.

Ham, you were my counselor at Green Lake Bible Camp. The year I was a senior in high school you came to speak at Trinity Lutheran Church in Wanamingo where I lived. I talked with you afterwards and you hired me to work at the Youth Center that summer of 1957. I give my parents a lot of credit for agreeing to this. The real reason they agreed, I think, was that my Aunt Lillian Njus belonged to your Dad’s congregation in Fergus Falls and that made you okay. (Norwegians go by who you know and your connections still.)

In the winter of 1959-’60 you asked if I’d like to cook at WILDERNESS. I said I would, but I said: “You need to know that I don’t know how to cook.” “That’s okay,” you said, “Beulah will teach you.” That was great, but when I got up there, Beulah was delayed. I was designated to cook. I slept in the North cabin on *Morningside*. I walked across the island in the dark each night hoping I wouldn’t meet a bear. In addition, I carried a copy of the Betty Crocker Cookbook so I could figure out what in the world I would do the next day. I remember the first Sunday, we had 30-40 people for dinner. I couldn’t figure out how to make instant potatoes. So you, Ham, came into the kitchen and made the potatoes. I remember I made upside down cake for dessert after reading about that in the cookbook. We learn by doing.

One other thing I remember about cooking those first days. Jon Lien came back to camp after a solo trip. He was a sight to behold. He was starved and wanted breakfast including slab bacon. So I scraped off the somewhat unsightly bacon and cooked it for him. He was delighted. I used that same trick many times on the trails. It had a special look after a couple days in a food pack.

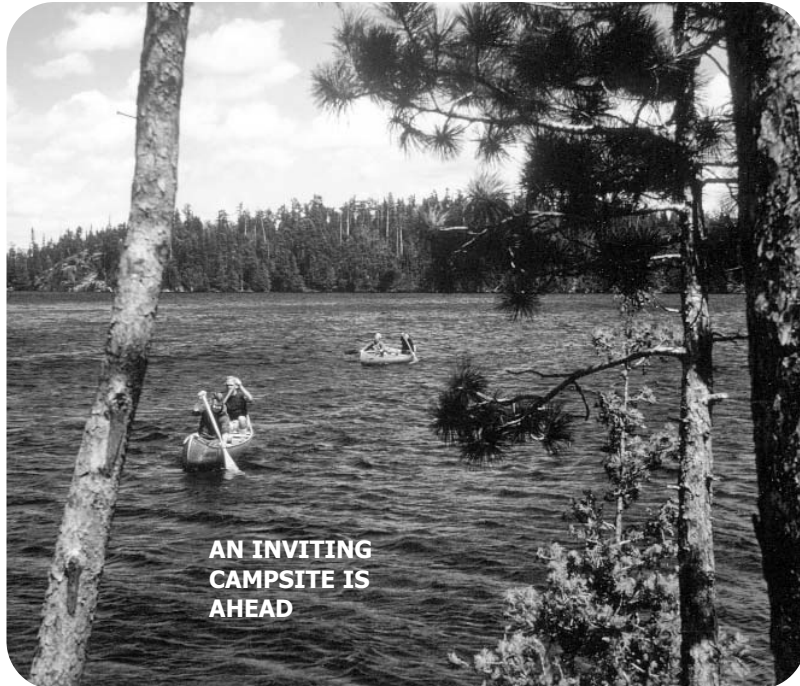
Beulah’s arrival was received with a sigh of relief from all of us. Her talent as a cook, her patience as a teacher and leader for the food staff, her creativity with the raw materials she had in her pantry was awesome. She set the standard for WILDERNESS



meals which continues to this day. Great meals... great hospitality.

Nolan Cramer was known for making caramel corn. He also kept trying to figure out a way to carry ice on trips. He made the caramel corn; he failed on the ice haul.

In the old *Pinecliff* there was a porch where we cooled jello.. Once Jon Lien's St. Bernard broke down the porch door and ate the jello. It was one time when I saw Beulah out of sorts.



I believe that WILDERNESS provided incredible opportunities for all us on the staff to develop... spiritually, physically and emotionally. The staff training, the on-going sharing in the community and the challenge of leading campers in a unique and special experience helped all of us to become stronger and better leaders. The alumni can be seen in leadership positions in the Church everywhere as well as in education, medicine and all other types of people-serving work. We are "connected." Even if we don't see each other for long periods of time, our common cause is celebrated.

The Work Campers that came from parishes, St. Olaf, and elsewhere were unique. Pastor Loren Halvorson brought a group of teenagers from Victory Lutheran in North Mpls. Wayne Anderson and I were their counselors. We took them on a trails overnight at the end of their five hard, work days. I have had occasion to meet former campers. The feedback from them is how important that WILDERNESS experience was for them. I felt privileged to serve.

In two different summers, I led groups of girls living at the Home of the Good Shepherd. The nuns in that Order focused on helping "delinquent" girls. The girls were a real challenge. I could see the growth and changes in them as the days went on. Chip Swanson, Dave Dominguez and I took the Good Shepherd girls on a 12 day trip. It was a long trip. One girl became ill. She ran a fever. We decided she had to be taken back to camp. One of the stronger campers and I paddled the ill girl back to camp through several lakes and portages. We stayed the night at WILDERNESS. Some nursing intervention and TLC turned things around. She had been terribly homesick. That expression of care and love made the difference. We rejoined our welcome "family".

The day came when you, Ham and your colleague Oz Anderson, decided that WCB was ready for an all-girl canoe trip. You asked Minnie Giewitz from the St. Olaf Work Camp and me to be the guides. We took 6 girls from Two Harbors Our Savior's Lutheran parish. We got teased ahead of time by the male guides who thought our trip up around

Red Rock Bay and back was far too tame. We wanted to bake brownies. Ron Lundeen gave us a lesson about using the reflector oven. The night came when we were going to bake. Neither Minnie nor I could remember exactly his directions. We had a vague recollection of having the fire as high as the top of the oven. So we did. We melted about a six inch hole in the middle of the oven. When we returned to camp, we had to fess up. The battered reflector oven hung on the wall in the Trail Shack as Exhibit A.

Some staff were “wilderness” experienced. I think more of us learned on the job. We never lost a camper! I worried about that at night sometimes when the kids were asleep. It was a huge responsibility. Once I had a group of girls from Hennepin County Probation on a trip without a Swamper. We were camped at the head of Red Rock Bay just before Sag. A storm came up. I spent the night holding the tent down so it didn't blow away. The girls were scared. One of them in a little voice asked, “Karen, do islands ever sink?” I assured her that the rocks went all the way to China on the other side of the world and that God was with us and would protect us. It was easy to talk about God's love at those “teachable moments”.

Those who served at WILDERNESS in *The Founding Years* know that Karen and veteran staffer Dave Johnson “connected” for a lifetime. Discovering a partner who shared common interests and faith was another WILDERNESS benefit!

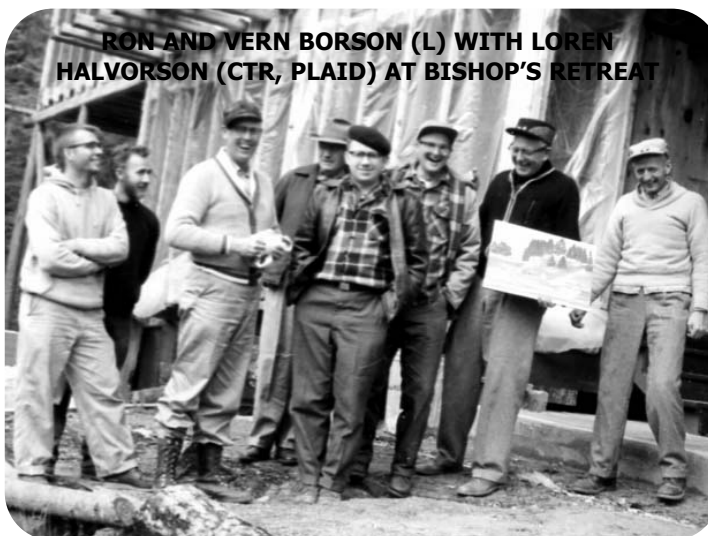


After the tragic *Pinecliff* fire in the Fall of '60, we needed help to recover. **Ron Flugum** was one who responded. Wherever Ron went, there was music from the heart. He loved to sing and to serve.



**Ron Flugum**

I spent some Seminary (I attended one year, you may remember) vacation time at WILDERNESS Canoe Base at the end of '60 helping skin logs and muscle them into place on *Pinecliff II*. After that I was with Jeb Monge at Frontier Farm for the first half of the summer of '61. I brought three runt pigs with me from my uncles' farms in Iowa, and they did pretty well when they didn't have competition for food. I also spent some volunteer time at PCYC on Plymouth Avenue during the academic year '60-'61. About midsummer '61, I moved to WILDERNESS and stayed on there through the fall of '61 to January '62.



I remember well the winter WILDERNESS days...the quiet Sunday afternoons

when I crawled up to the top of the chapel to take pictures after trampling the letters WCB in the snow on the lake...my last bath in Seagull in November '61 before the water froze... living with Dave Johnson and Vern Borson in Snoshoe cabin...Mary Lien, our cook for the winter, who lived in "Rotten Rock"...going to your folks Ledge cabin to listen to recordings of Brahms's Second Symphony and other music...skittering along with one foot in a canoe across Seagull as the ice froze around the edges of the lake before it froze completely across the larger open areas of water. Fascinating times as we worked to move along WILDERNESS projects.

Winter vacation break included a day's work pulling logs destined for *Pinecliff II* up the slide from the lake. One afternoon the Nermoe boys, David and Roger, and Lynn Swanson decided to hike down the lake and walk the portage to the next lake. They were very late returning, long after sunset. I drove my car around the frozen lake from *The Cove* to the other side of the lake to the public landing. I found them down the lake huddled around a bonfire on one of the islands. They got "disoriented" on Seagull. They knew they were "misplaced" and had prepared to spend the night trying to keep warm until daylight. They were glad to see me.

I also remember in the summer of '61 staining a lot of cabins with a preservative stain made by combining "Raw Sienna" and Burnt Umber" or was it "Burnt Sienna" and "Raw Umber?" I believe work was finished, or nearly so, on *Pinecliff II* that summer because we were using cleverly placed gas lights with propane piped over from the huge tank at *The Cove*. I also remember the Dr. Schiotz Retreat with a dozen church leaders, including Arley Bjella, which was held that fall of '61. Arley shared stories of the Nuremberg Trials, at which he was an attorney. Loren Halvorson and you used *Man Born to be King* as a study focus. Great memories.

I've known Ken Petersen for years, but I didn't know him while at WILDERNESS. He was three years younger than I was. He has lived out his WILDERNESS leadership here in Alaska as a respected pediatrician with native people. We have shared choral and parish activities. We sense our mutual WILDERNESS connection.

You thought you knew how to spell the word, A-D-V-E-N-T-U-R-E. Not so fast. It's really spelled DAVE NERMoe. Read on and you'll discover why.



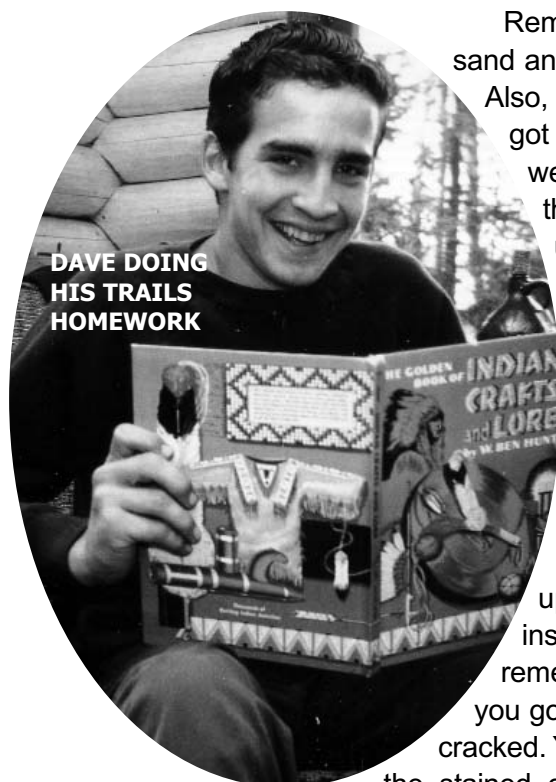
**Dave Nermoe**



A flood of memories comes to me as I recall the time I worked along at WILDERNESS Canoe Base. Can I just let my thoughts roll for a bit, Ham??

I remember hauling buckets of sand and gravel up the trail for the Chapel. We took turns lugging it up the hill, or shoveling it into the pails. We took turns a lot with many projects. In fact, that is true of everything we built. Working together. A crew for this, and a crew for that. You must have had fun delegating all the work. Of course, you were always there working or supervising!!





**DAVE DOING  
HIS TRAILS  
HOMEWORK**

Remember mixing the concrete....1, 2, 3. One concrete, two sand and three aggregate, right? I forget. But we mixed a lot!!! Also, we built the forms for the foundations. Remember, we got one of the central trees off of Mr. Blomberg's land on the west end of Seagull? We hoisted those great trees up in the air and held them in place with lines or propped them up till we got the next two ready to go up. Then braced them all... then put the steel band from one side up the center and down the other side. I think I remember you cutting the slots for the wire bands with a chain saw, right? We put up scaffolding. We sure had fun with all the ropes and lines, sliding all around like a bunch of monkeys in the trees... I can draw that Chapel in my mind... even now.

Then there was *Pinecliff II*. I remember coming up in the winter... and working on the floor joist installation and first flooring. Then the next summer, remember, from the old Metropolitan building in Minneapolis you got a lot of old elevator doors... the glass ones that were cracked. You sealed the cracks and had a creative time designing the stained glass windows. You took stories from the Bible and worked them into the windows.

Whenever we came in "off the Trail"... we all looked forward to *Beulah Bread* and good cooking. She did great...cooking for so many people. I used to like the routine we had at dinner. We first sang grace. "Be present at our table, Lord, be here and everywhere adored... these mercies bless and grant that we may strengthened for Thy service be." Then we ate like crazy, half-starved mountain men. Then after dinner...disclosure...telling the stories...the adventures from our trip. We all would "report in" and tell our tales...the highlights from the trips. It was great... and many times very funny.

I remember you and Nolan Cramer... often sitting at the dinner table in *Pinecliff*. You and Pearl always sat at the table by the front entrance. You and Nolan would sit and engage in sparring sessions... sometimes on theological issues, sometimes just trying to "one up" the other... or play on words. It was fun and in good humor.

Some great adventures I remember: the trip I took with a Red Wing crew... over Grand Portage. Ed Knudson was the guide... Ed was a special guide. He let me go for the adventures...the long trips. The new territory. The new lakes that I had not paddled. They beckoned me on the maps. I would work up new routes. What was there?



**DAVE (LEFT FRONT) AND ED KNUDSON (FRONT, PLAID)  
WITH CAMPERS AT MORNINGSIDE DISCLOSURE**

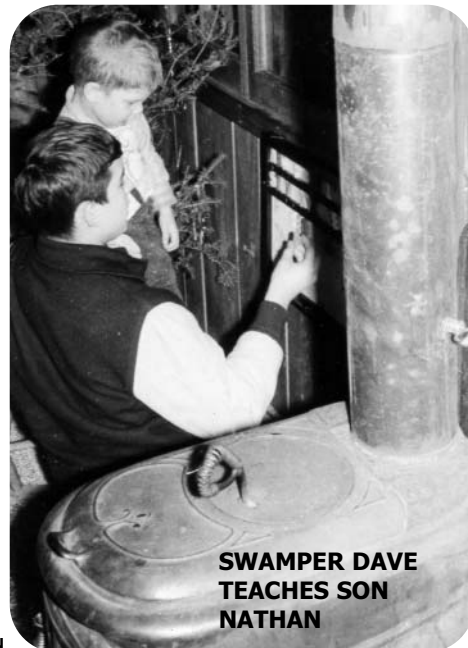
The Grand Portage was a tough haul. The Pigeon River was very tough that last mile or so, just prior to the portage. It was shallow and filled with rocks. Watch those rocks. Your canoe had to be protected... it was your way out. The falls at the northern edge of the portage was beautiful... and not that many people had seen it. Then the portage...just walk and keep on walking. Take turns. I had to carry the canoe the whole way. Remember, we learned that there are not always enough canoe rests. So one always kept an eye peeled for two small trees... very close together. You needed about 15 to 18 inches between them... and you just ran the canoe between them and you had your canoe rest!!

Getting to Grand Portage... then keeping the Red Wing guys from running. They thought about it, I know that. We paddled out to the big island in the middle of the bay... Pie Island...about a mile...maybe more out into Lake Superior. We could see it from the shore, but after a trail lunch... the fog set in. We went for it anyway. I remember paddling out into the fog. The island was gone... we had to keep close to each other just to see our fellows in the canoe next to us. We hoped we were not missing the island to the left or right...because if we missed it...it was a very long paddle to Wisconsin or the upper peninsula of Michigan!!

We would stop paddling and be absolutely quiet. We'd sit and listen to try to hear the waves breaking on the island. Finally we heard them and the island appeared... misty and light in the haze... and darker the closer we got. Then we paddled all the way around it... looking for someplace to beach our canoes. We found the best place we could and got wet getting out. We made do...cleared enough space for the tents and had hot soup. Adventure. Then, I think the next day...we paddled back to the stockade for the pickup back to WILDERNESS.

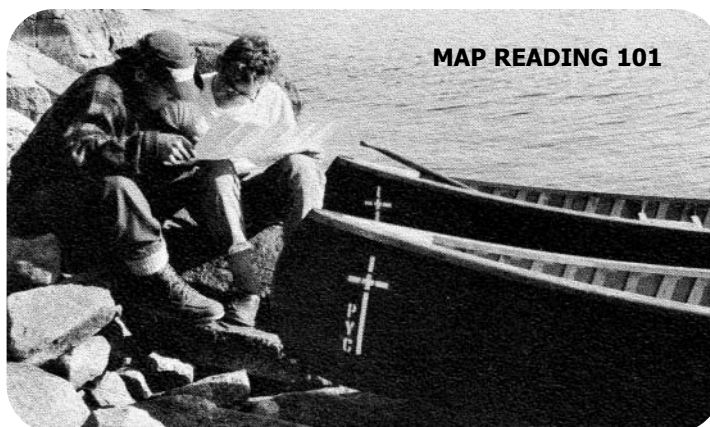
I loved getting into new territory. That to me was something that each trip had to have. New lakes... uncharted territory... someplace I had never been. What would we find? What was the fishing like? What new rock formations would we see? Could we find a nice campsite on an island? Sometimes the map held clues, but many times the maps were deceptive. That proved to be true on a trip down to the Kawishiwi River. I convinced Ed Knudson that we could take another route out... and showed him the plan on the map. Well... what we paddled into was a small river that very quickly got a whole lot smaller!! Ponds and one beaver dam after another. I bet we crossed 25 beaver dams that day... and we could not paddle the canoes. We had to push/pull them along in the muck... muck up to our knees... and worse if you hit a soft spot. Sweat and work... no clean water to drink. Tough. Tough. Had to push through weeds to get to shore. We were never lost... we always knew we were in Superior National Forest all the time!!

I remember the quiet times around the campfires and the Bible study... the discussions. Trying to talk about God and Jesus with the guys that had not had that chance much before. Talking with the guys in the tent, or sitting by the lakeside getting to know them. Where they came from, what they would do when they got out of Red Wing. Where would



**SWAMPER DAVE  
TEACHES SON  
NATHAN**

they go? Some had a father in jail, a mother that one could hardly call a mother and a brother in trouble with the law. Where are some of those guys now? The canoe trips were something new to them. Not a city street... not a hang out... not a gang. Just a different way of life. Was it possible? Maybe a few of them could see it. Maybe just a few of them could ever latch on to it.



But I remember, Ham, you used to say... many times... that if even only one boy or girl... only one... got something out of it... so that it changed their life and put them on a new course...that all of it was worth it. All of it. All the work, all the building, all the struggles, all the people... if just one was helped or saved...then it was all worth it. And, Ham, I just want you to know (in case you wonder), that I feel quite certain, that many were set on a new course and many were saved. We will never really know how many. The work, I know, still goes on, but you can remember the start and the struggle. The many talks that you had with so many people to get financial support (part of the project that I never saw). All those that helped. So many... a real Host!! The dream came true and still goes on.

Thank you Pearl, too...for those many summers in a land that is etched on my memory. I can close my eyes and see the Palisades on Seagull. I can paddle right under the outcropping of rock at the bottom. Did you ever do that? You could squeeze your canoe under that ledge and get out of the rain!!

I miss the canoe country. I cried halfway down the Gunflint Trail when I had to go home... that first summer. I remember my brother picked me up... I didn't say a word... just sat in the passenger seat looking out the window...keeping my tears to myself. I love that country and the Canoe Base.

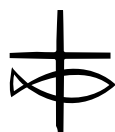
When I look back on my life, those summers on Seagull were just the best. What a great place to spend the summer... to live and to grow. To be of help to others while still being so excited about the adventure and challenge of it all. The building... what we learned about construction! The "hands on" part of everything. Ham, your strong faith and leadership...that seemed to make everyone believe that any project was possible. We could do anything. Like even pounding nails into wood that was 15 degrees below zero. Cold!

Good memories. Making the out houses. Remember the one we built off a small cliff? We used long trees for the sides. "A two holer." We used to consider everyone's (male and female) habits and needs as we cut out the holes. Many laughs.

Wholeness... complete... entire. That is what Jesus meant, I think, when He said "Be perfect, as your heavenly father is perfect." Not perfect as we understand it... but rather "Whole." Of one mind. That is a good thing. So hard to do. To just live simply... and not complicate everything.

The many campfires, on so many nights, on great campsites on different lakes, with different vistas... but always a broad vista. The Bible studies and the guides

sharing... the discussions together. I can't remember all that was said. But, I know that those summers brought me closer to my maker and my Lord.



I first noticed **Tom Skovholt** when he was a youngster. He attended St. Anthony Park Lutheran near the seminary. I had some youth work assignment there under Pastor Alvin Lewis. Tom was quiet... but as the saying goes, "Quiet waters run deep." There was a special quality about him that was impressive.

It was a joy to have Tom commit to WILDERNESS some years later. He brought a point of inquiry and solid faith to the staff mosaic. His *Reflections* are a slightly opened window to his inner beauty and strength.



**Tom Skovholt**

It was the quiet, the slowing down; the simple ways at WILDERNESS that brought this city kid such a gift. It takes time to get the pollution of urbanism out of the system; a few days can't do it. But weeks at WILDERNESS did. The beauty and natural noises of the north woods came alive at WILDERNESS. And for that I am so grateful.

As Trails Coordinator, teaching canoeing and having the new campers (Is that what we called them?) get out of the canoe before hitting land. That was a big deal. The boy got out of the stern; he had on a big hat and he went down and down and down and then popped up into the air with the hat on his head. He was a surprised guy!

When I was a Quartermaster, I would pack the food bags. The dried fruit was too difficult to resist until the day I followed the fruit with water. Suddenly, I had eaten four apples, five apricots, and three bananas. The freedom with dried fruit quickly moderated.

I was afraid of being called on to do the devotions at meal time. We were called on randomly. Fear of public speaking has been muted by years of college teaching.

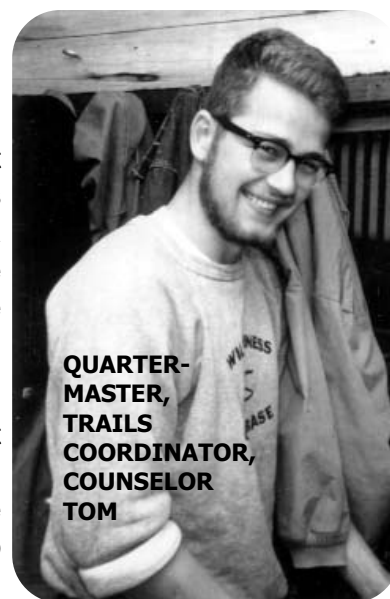
The 'being thrown in the lake with clothes on birthday celebration'. Maybe it was only a guy thing, I can't remember. What a great ritual!

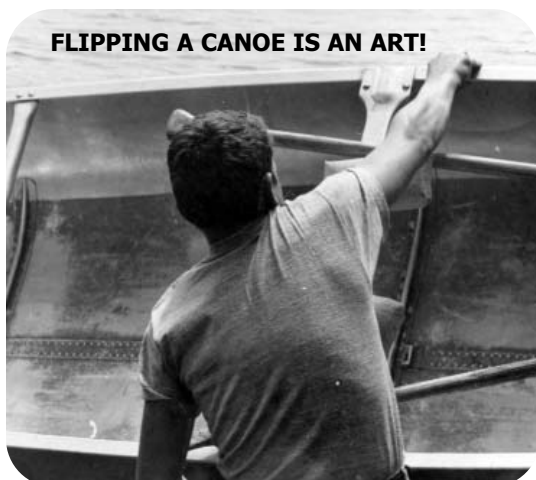
After teaching canoeing, the groups would go off on a multi-day trip. The canoes would go off zigzag, and then days later come back in a straight line and with effortless...make that much less effort...rhythm between the two paddlers.

Great food and music.

Paddling over to the End of the Trail in the evening to see the waterfall, hear the noise of trickling water, and visit with Rolf Skrien.

The rain as friend. Getting wet happened and so did drying off. It was part of being outside...not an alien force.





The marvel of seeing all the buildings at WILDERNESS for the first time and being told they were built with used lumber by college and Sem students. It opened up a new window for me of what was possible.

Meeting remarkable people...lots of them.

Meeting God and the power of the divine and the power of worship in the magnificence of nature.

I had never seen a face like that...a dying face. One day we hurried to the tent of Guide Larry. He was suddenly so ill. Vern drove him to Grand Marais as fast as Vern could go on that road. Then Larry was moved by ambulance to Duluth where he died in the hospital of Leukemia complications.

Playing basketball in the parking lot and, early in the morning, running on the Trail.

As Quartermaster, I soon realized that I needed to tell the Guides: "No more night ghost stories with the urban boys from the Homes!" Seems that the sleeping bags would come back smelling of pee. Lesson: Even tough city boys, out of their element, can get very afraid.

Watching the beautifully decorated pontoon boat slicing through the water taking Nancy and Vern to their wedding at the Chapel. This was after we had put the get-away car up on blocks.

Hitting the water when jumping off the rocks at the sauna and feeling enveloped by the change in temperature.

Being a businessman in running our little canteen store and ordering candy bars and wondering: will they like this one or that one or which one should I order? My commissary career was short but fun.

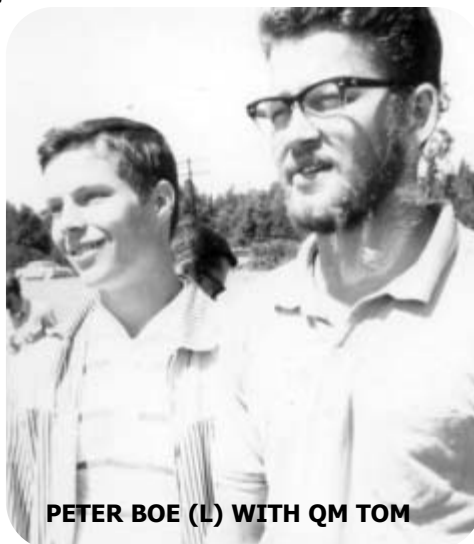
The appealing simplicity of hearing the morning bell and putting on the same jeans as yesterday and the day before.

The monster big city of Grand Marais...after weeks on the island.

Having my Mom, Dad and sister come up for a canoe trip. I planned a trip for a fit 22 year old male; not such a good idea. One hundred yards into the very long Jap Lake portage, my Mom said "are we half-way there?" I had two packs and the canoe and twisted my ankle but we made it. We slept out under the stars, for the first and last time. It was marvelous.

The canoe race at Fisherman's Picnic and swamping way, way, way out in Lake Superior and swimming in that freezing water back to land.

The glorious painted canvas of the sun in early morning and at dusk. God is good.



PETER BOE (L) WITH QM TOM



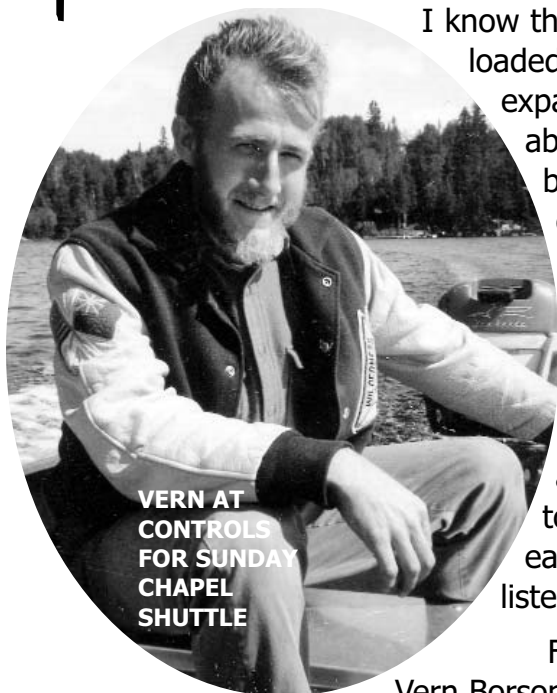
**"...Let all the  
earth keep silence  
before him..."**

**HABAKKUK 2**





## VERN'S LEGACY... AND TWO DEDICATED PARTNERS



VERN AT  
CONTROLS  
FOR SUNDAY  
CHAPEL  
SHUTTLE

I know that each of the WILDERNESS years had staff who were loaded with talent. Some came with exceptional skills. Other expanded special interests. Still others discovered hidden abilities which blossomed as challenges were placed before them. How great the joy of harnessing latent energy... and then to couple that with the Spirit of service.

Staff work is team work. Each task carries importance. Like the description of the Body of Christ. Writer Paul says all parts fit together. We need to be conscious of each part... each task... each person. We listen... work... sing... pray together.

For more than a dozen years, Vern Borson was a consummate

WILDERNESS servant. There was nothing Vern was afraid to tackle... from canoe care to construction to truck duty to trash hauling. His ultra quiet manner masked a deep commitment to serve. He was dedicated and durable.

Vern came from metropolitan Chicago. His WILDERNESS introduction has its own bewildering impact. He was a quick learner. He listened. He looked around. Vern soon was "one" with the woods and his work.

There was considerable transport needed in *The Founding Years*. The daily Seagull Shuttle... lumber hauling... food roundup... Gunflint Trail runs... and more. Vern became skilled at it all.

He lived at *The Cove*, all year 'round, for a number of years. The winter work was often heavy duty... in brutally cold weather. Operation Sand Haul... *Operation Log Cabin*... *Band of Brothers*... *Pinecliff II*... *Morningside*... *Bridge of the Master*... Vern was always there, helping. His versatility and skill made him easy and fun to work alongside.

Those who knew Vern recognized his loyalty and generous heart. Nancy Caple discovered his gentleness and his compassion. They celebrated their marriage vows at *Band of Brothers*.

The hymn says, "Great is your faithfulness..." in a song lifted up in praise to God. We lift up the same to Vern... a WILDERNESS legend and friend.



VERN (L)  
SURVEYS  
WITH DAN  
O'BRADOVICH

Two other multi-dimensional servants who blessed the WILDERNESS community in countless ways were **Lynn Swanson** and **Phil Anderson**. Faithful, spiritually alive... durable, dedicated to the task of renewal. So very similar in depth of Spirit... each with distinct personality.



**Lynn Swanson**



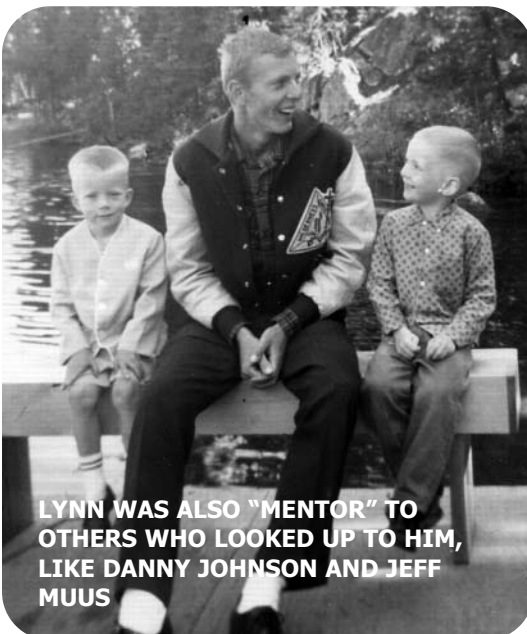
This exercise is a revealing challenge for me. Walking through the forest of my mind, I find myself pushing through the branches of time, seeking to grasp the power of the WILDERNESS past which to this day has such a grip on me. As I travel I am aware that my vision and my memory is not what it once was. Sometimes it seems I see things more clearly now. At other times things fog over. This journey of reflection may disclose yet again, portages I missed, lakes that need further exploration, and the awesome spectrum of creation which shouts out the majesty of God.

The WILDERNESS journey for me began through my trailblazer brother, Chip. We both enjoyed camping. Chip was four years older and thus the *premier* explorer. Chip was hooked. He applied to Pastor Ham and became a Guide/Counselor in this emerging camping ministry.

As family, we brought Chip to camp. We arrived well after dark and spent the night at Seagull Lodge. WILDERNESS had no phones, no electricity. We learned transportation to the island was by boat. Chip was off to his summer adventure. I must say I had more than a touch of envy. Forgive me.

His experience was a good one. When Christmas came he wanted to spend his break at WILDERNESS. I wanted to go too. We worked things out at Pastor Ham and Pearl's home in the city. I pledged best efforts at whatever work was on the WILDERNESS agenda. Show me the way. Chip's advice..."Be prepared".

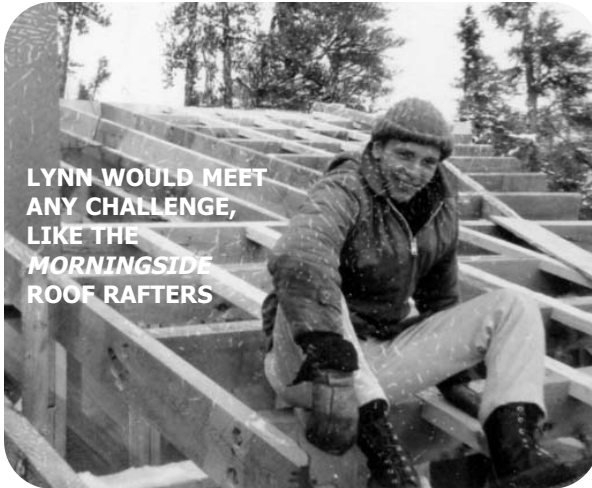
That WILDERNESS winter work introduced me to a Spirit which made all the hard work meaningful. Plus...I survived. We were all in a mood to accomplish great feats. I got to do dishes. *Doulos, doulos...* didn't Ham know I was ready to do a "man's" job?



LYNN WAS ALSO "MENTOR" TO OTHERS WHO LOOKED UP TO HIM, LIKE DANNY JOHNSON AND JEFF MUUS

In time I was granted my wish, poking oakum in the logs of first *Pinecliff*. Now as a mentor to others, I wonder if Ham ever realized the small seed he was nurturing and the life growth rings that were being formed. The environment was harsh; the nurturing brought growth and endurance. Those early days were full of the warmth shed upon me by many. The "rains", the wind, and the cold came bringing out strength of character. I can see it now.

I was at one point invited to join WILDERNESS staff as a Swamper. Using my mind's metaphor, I find myself at this point



LYNN WOULD MEET  
ANY CHALLENGE,  
LIKE THE  
*MORNINGSIDE*  
ROOF RAFTERS

paddling rapidly toward that ideal campsite. I wanted to prove my worth as a servant... *doulos*.

I carried within all kinds of feelings: joy, hope, anxiety, fear. Lot's of fear. Fear of the unknown; fear of rejection by not meeting the expectations of Pastor Ham, Guides, campers, God; fear of campers whose moms wore "combat boots" and bought clothes at "worn a bit shops" and wanted to gang snuggy me, or worse; fear of responsibility when the Guide was not near by. Many fears...real and imagined.

But I also had a macho streak in me. Was there anything I couldn't do better than anyone else in our crew? The need to prove myself seldom allowed fear to show itself. I worked hard to out-do others, to eliminate competition and to keep from being messed with.

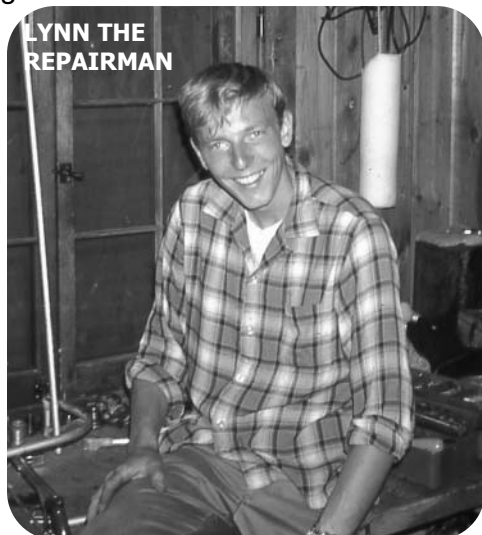
Martin Blomberg, a WILDERNESS friend who had a cabin near the Seagull/Alpine Portage, once told me of his growing up years in Sweden. His family was a part of the aristocracy. He experienced bullying by "lower class" kids in his neighborhood. He would do one arm pull-ups when he observed bullies watching him in his yard, thus avoiding conflicts should he meet them on the street. It worked for him.

Being a Swamper pushed me to grow and think. The patience others demonstrated toward me in the process of discovering a balance between dependency and interdependence; between strength and weakness; between enabling and serving. I was soaking up spoken wisdom and life action.

WILDERNESS was a real growing time for me. I remember experiencing the good life...*Beulah Bread*, a spirited camp community; lots of hard physical work. For me physical work meant affirmation. As a swamper I gave a lot without much coming back, I thought.

In my role as Cove pontoonist, I was working hard and giving a lot, but I also received a lot. The harder I worked the more strokes I got. I had lots of responsibilities. People were actually dependent on me and looked to me. I enjoyed meeting or even surpassing their expectations. I felt of "worth". We did some amazing things that pontoon and me. WCB was growing. Buildings were being erected, plumbing, electrical, gas installations occurring. Virtually everything had to be boated or pontooned to the islands. I wondered what part God, Ham, or I had in being pontoonist. Salvation by works! Or was it by grace?

Allow me to share. *Pinecliff*, *Evergreen*, *Morningside*, and *The Cove*, all in time had "water systems" – stock tank and plastic hose to a spigot. Most of these "systems" had small gas



LYNN THE  
REPAIRMAN

engine pumps near the shoreline. As the water supply ran out or was noticed to be low, someone had to go to the shore to start the pump. Of course, the correct amount of bleach had to be added to the holding tank. Lots could go wrong with these primitive deals, and often did. Water running out, Hilex-tasting water, pumps not starting, pipes and pumps freezing. These “systems” were an improvement to carrying 5-gallon buckets of water up from the lake, but they still needed lots of attention. That was part of my job.

So too was garbage removal and hauling. Ham had high expectations – “cleanliness is next to Godliness.” A dump run was established. The dump was about 5 miles down the trail, self regulated, with bear, crows, and seagulls, and all kinds of interesting stuff. The routine was rather simple. Pick up the full garbage cans from the several strategically located locations. Haul them to the pontoon. Haul them to the Studebaker pickup. Haul them to the dump. Return, haul the empty cans inland and wash with bleach. Return garbage cans to their strategic locations.

Apparently, on one of these runs a garbage can lid flew off and was found on the road. I always thought WILDERNESS was loved and accepted by all. Weren't we doing the Lord's work? In my youthful bliss I was shocked a bit to find WILDERNESS was *not* loved by all. The flying garbage can lid was met with terse words by one of the neighboring resort owners, and the local constable. Yes, I was summoned to answer charges for dust rising, driving too fast, garbage strewing, and more. Dutifully, bravely, Pastor Ham escorted me to our accusers. To say the least I felt like a failure. As the speeder says, “Everyone else was speeding,” when being accused. I felt the hammer was coming down on me unjustly. I wasn't the only guilty party and I knew it. I also knew it didn't matter. I was a part of bringing disgrace to WCB and Ham.



**WINTER WORK ON PINECLIFF II... OUT OF THE ASHES**

With fear, sadness, and a mortified spirit, I stepped into Ham's boat for the trip to Sea Island Lodge for “trial”. We motored in silence to the dock. The “trial” went surprisingly well, perhaps even beneficially. It became evident that dust or a garbage can lid, were not the real issue. WILDERNESS was an unknown. Some were afraid of the “new neighbor”. Pastor Ham and even I did well that night. The meeting led to understanding, a lessening of distrust. In time we became valued neighbors. A “soft answer” does “turn away wrath.”

One more lesson from the fine art of garbage hauling. The garbage detail was a “no brainer.” Perhaps that is why I needed to be “guided” again. The very fact that the garbage detail was such a no brainer, led me into thinking: Why was I selected to haul other people's garbage and then scrub out their garbage cans? Who knows why it came to a crisis, but there I was scrubbing away, when who should come for a visit. Today I had had it and Ham was going to know it.

After listening to me whine, the lesson began. Brother Andrew – you remember brother Andrew – the serving Saint. Pastor Ham often read about Bonhoeffer, Brother Andrew, and others at the dinner table. I was moved by their servitude, their love of God displayed in their service toward others. They were remembered for their selfless actions. Me? I was a garbage-hauling pontoonist. How about a Brother Lynn/Pontoonist, humble servant of my brothers and sisters and God?

I no longer remember the exact words. I do vividly remember the place, the warmth of the sun, and my mentors...God in the presence of the Holy Spirit and His servant, Ham. I could share countless memories of what I now see as God's use of WILDERNESS to mold, teach, guide, and imprint my life for more sensitive service. The incredible camp setting may have helped, but for me it was people...people led by His Spirit... WILDERNESS as a Christian community.

I now know that there is pain as well as pleasure in learning...in change. To "reflect" is very revealing. I can say this with certainty: One – my experience at WILDERNESS was life changing. Two – my experience changed me for the better, and indirectly others may have benefited. Three – I want to share as *doulos*... as servant. Four – I have a better understanding now of salvation by grace... not of works alone.

Here's what I remember of the WILDERNESS community. It certainly wasn't its affluence, prestige, or fancy buildings. The community I remember wasn't perfect, but the leadership within the community set standards for the community and sought to lead by example. PCYC's first seminarians were challenged into believing they could make a difference and with God's help they did! Pastor Ham was also my guide and mentor at WILDERNESS. It has made an eternal difference for me. I feel Ham knew what he desired our WCB community to be when he stated in the 1963 staff wilderness log: "We have much that ties us together in Christ. It is this common identity which gives life its' fullness. It is remarkable, as scripture says, how each member of the body functions for the growth and movement of the whole body. His Spirit will sustain that which is good."

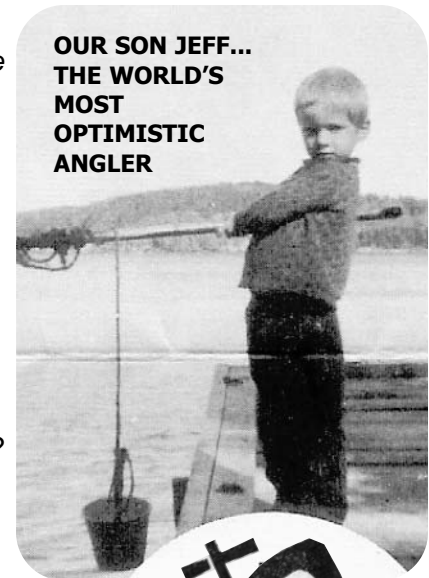
May Christ, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever, guide the WILDERNESS future. May its leaders direct swamper, pontoonists, cooks, campers to abundant life in Christ...to His honor and glory. May the community always be truly "dedicated to the task of renewal."

***Ham, do you remember when:***

- 1) The walk-in cooler was on the driveway at Blankenburgs?
- 2) Mail and food arrived at the main Seagull public landing?
- 3) Canned goods ferried by lashed canoe pontoon, lost in the lake?
- 4) A truck was partly through the soft ice in front of *Pinecliff*?
- 5) Toilet paper hung from some of the tallest trees around The Bastille?
- 6) We made skidway/slides to pull timbers up for cabins in the wintertime?
- 7) We draw knifed timbers and logs? Endlessly?
- 8) You fashioned elevator doors to make stained glass windows?
- 9) I got the job of rubbing hardened cement from the tile floor in *Pinecliff*? (I can still taste the fresh bread – a perk of the job.)



- 10) A generator was installed at *Pinecliff II*?
- 11) Sand, gravel and cement were moved over for *Morningside* footings, using our creative hauling system?
- 12) "Donut mittens" added warmth to the out house seats?
- 13) We cut fire wood for winter heat?
- 14) The Nermoes and your folks spent the winter?
- 15) Dignitaries overloaded the pontoon... a near disaster?
- 16) Bricks overloaded the pontoon... a near disaster?
- 17) A motor caught fire on the pontoon... another close call?
- 18) A motor came off the pontoon?
- 19) Christmas at *The Cove*... you and Pearl hosted at LEDGE?
- 20) We made Christmas cards at the Cove?
- 21) Solveig was baptized?
- 22) I was baptized?
- 23) I was allowed to drive with Pearl and your family?
- 24) You could name the people buried in the grave yards along old 61?
- 25) I was too tired to help you drive on the new 35W?
- 26) We cut deadheads and cleared trees by Evergreen?
- 27) We took the Grand Portage trip?
- 28) Butter on one's thumb was in...see Keith Olstad?
- 29) I needed a medical trip to Grand Marais for my foot?
- 30) You used warm ash from burned *Pinecliff* to keep fresh concrete pads from freezing for *Pinecliff II*?
- 31) Pearl caught her rainbow trout in Jap on your anniversary?
- 32) I got to work with your Dad?
- 33) You trusted me with our outboard motor repair? Sag Landing and Grand Marais men would teach me?
- 34) I was given the chance to work with and learn from plumbers, electricians, carpenters and propane gas people...skills I have shared around the world?
- 35) You allowed Chip and I to have "Duke" our dog at camp?
- 36) "Duke" died?
- 37) WILDERNESS staff climbed the Mt. Maude fire tower above Grand Portage?
- 38) You sent me to Chicago to pick up the *Voyageur* canoe?
- 39) I went again to Chicago to pick up the Montreal canoe?
- 40) We poured footings for the Chapel?
- 41) We moved huge trees from Blombergs with a rope, roller logs, and many bodies?
- 42) We floated those logs down the lake those many miles?
- 43) We set up the "A" frames for the Chapel? The winching process?
- 44) We dynamited rock? "Fire in the hole..."
- 45) The prayers we offered each day?



**OUR SON JEFF...  
THE WORLD'S  
MOST  
OPTIMISTIC  
ANGLER**



I was indeed blessed with life changing opportunities and endless memories!



**Phil** bears witness to his sensitive commitment in this *Reflection*.



### **Phil Anderson**

Memories abound from five years on staff at WILDERNESS. Serving for a year as a “Swamper,” and four years “in camp,” became some of the most formative years of my life (1963-1967). Beyond the nurture of my parents and family, who I am today was shaped by the community and the ethos of WILDERNESS. At WILDERNESS, I came to know people who have become life-long valued friends and mentors. I also learned a lot about struggle and hope and the meaning and richness of God’s diverse, amazing creation and people. Character was formed, shaped, molded in the experience such as I had over those years at WILDERNESS.



**Community** is high on my list of learnings and blessings. My “family” was extended to embrace people from many walks of life and from many different life experiences. Diversity and the unique gifts of each person were celebrated and intentionally blended; “Koinonia” implied many parts of one “body.” A “spirit” of cooperation, commonality, listening to one another, dialog, envisioning and building of programs and one another infused WILDERNESS. We shared the realities of “life together,” laboring at many tasks while “on-the-trail” or “in camp”...preparing and eating meals; enjoying sunsets or too much rain; singing and laughing and sometimes crying... searching and struggling with personal and collective transformations toward shaping a more just society.

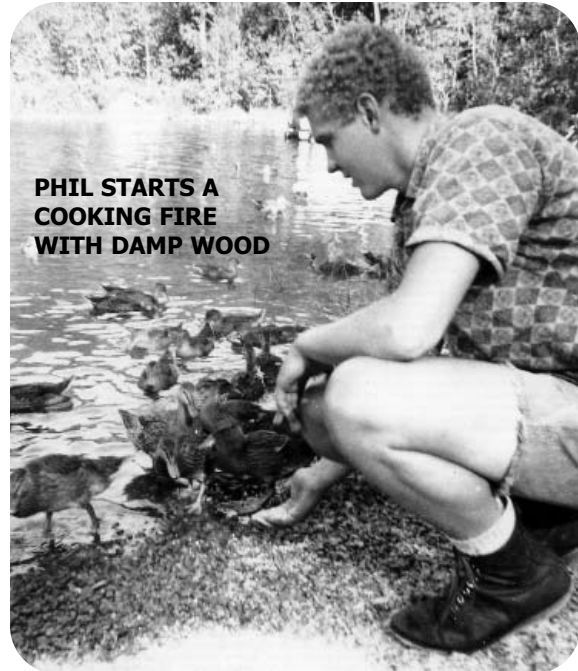
**Hospitality** - During those years I had a major task of running the pontoon boat back and forth from *The Cove* to Fishhook or Dominion Islands, transporting building materials, food and other supplies... and of course, people! Welcoming people to WILDERNESS was a real privilege and thrill for me. I knew generally when groups would be arriving to go out on the trail with Guide and Swamper. Often there were unexpected guests who simply wanted to visit WILDERNESS. It was a joy to receive these guests and campers and to introduce them to WILDERNESS. All were welcome.

All needed to reach the Islands. Everything and everyone had to “cross the waters,” either by canoe or by pontoon or boat. One journey ended at the end of the Gunflint Trail; another was to begin into the Boundary Waters... a transition was happening. It was the very nature and tradition of WILDERNESS to welcome everyone cordially, graciously, sincerely and openly into this community of people who embodied the WILDERNESS spirit. The spirit of WILDERNESS hospitality is an energy that welcomes, embraces and invites all who come.

**Work** was and is a key component of the WILDERNESS experience, as in life itself. We were all challenged physically and at times emotionally and spiritually with the

discipline of “life together” in which there is interdependence and mutual responsibility. We each were given tasks, pulling together for the common good.

Years after my WILDERNESS days, I was privileged to serve a Luther Seminary internship at a Benedictine Monastery... a community near Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico. This relationship was part of the Southeastern Minnesota District Cross-Cultural *Mexico Youth Encounter*. It was a direct outcome and extension of all that WILDERNESS was about... to reach across borders, cultures, languages... to explore a common humanity toward the shaping of a more just and compassionate world. The creative genius and willingness to learn and to risk that shaped WILDERNESS fashioned this relationship in Mexico under the guidance of Pastor Ham. He is one who has forever “pushed the envelope” of human potential and interpersonal relationships... toward a renewal of the world God desires for each of us... a world of peace, justice and harmony.



**PHIL STARTS A COOKING FIRE WITH DAMP WOOD**

The rhythm of life of the Benedictine Monks was to pray and to work throughout the day and night... “Orar y Obrar,” the blending of prayer and work to the glory of God. This was not new for me. At WILDERNESS, I had become accustomed to a rhythm of “First Word,” and necessary work throughout the day. God is glorified both in private and collective prayer and in our work. Our creativity, our energy serves others in order to provide for the essentials of life: shelter, food, warmth and healthy bodies. Work and prayer were woven together at WILDERNESS. Like the Benedictines, the Guatemalans, Colombians, Salvadorans, Hondurans and Nicaraguans from whom I came to learn so much in later years, I appreciate the interrelationship of all we do and are... bound together in Creation as people called to be stewards of the land, the air, the water and all living things.



**PHIL ENVISIONS A MORE JUST AND HARMONIOUS WORLD**

I give thanks to God for WILDERNESS and for all the creative minds, hearts and Spirit that made that a dynamic place. It has transformed so many lives, mine included. “Action springs not from thought, but from a readiness for responsibility.” (Dietrich Bonhoeffer). I was blessed to be a partner in this sacred place of action and reflection.



Listen now to these Voices who bear witness to their WILDERNESS service in *The Founding Years*.

Hospitality was a WILDERNESS objective... for campers, parents, guests, casual visitors. Welcome upon arrival... at *Pinecliff*... at *Band of Brothers*... wherever people came in touch with WILDERNESS community.

Hospitality also was found at *Morningside* on the east edge of Fishhook. It was the place where our family quartered. It was also much more.

**Pearl** begins with her *Reflections*; Mary Ekstrom and our son, Nathan, draw on their memories; and Dianne Anderson shares as well... a *Morningside Perspective*.



**Pearl Muus**



*"Morningside"* was such an appropriate name. It was so fitting... along with all the other meaningful names around camp. The sun rose across Seagull Lake. The cliffs at *Morningside* received the first bright rays. It seemed like long days were needed for survival living on the island.

The three Miles Island log cabins were all about the same 12' x 16' size. The cook shack was our kitchen-livingroom for the beginning years. It had half log

bottom and screen top so there was plenty of fresh air at all times. There were limited rough shelves in the kitchen. We had a 5-gallon Red Wing crock filled with drinking water... from the lake, of course. We sat at a rustic table with its hand made wooden benches.

I remember how exciting it was the day Ham's Uncle Ben came to visit his son, B.J. who was on staff. Of course he came to visit us, also. He was dismayed to realize there were no chairs to sit on... especially when feeding our baby, Solveig. Lo and behold if he didn't return to Chisago City and come back again to *Morningside* with two wonderful upholstered chairs! Later, Don Rudrud made a 2' x 2' tier shelf which held our personal items. Great improvements all around!

There was usually a cold breeze off the lake that hit our cook shack. I sewed some heavy green stripe canvas roll-downs and that did help. Nathan would generally wear his winter hooded jacket and Jeff would be put in his gray snowsuit with the red trim... to help ward off the early morning cold while eating breakfast.

South cabin was our summer bedroom. It was a very beautiful, well crafted cabin. North cabin was exactly the same. It was the last to be draw-knifed and reassembled.



Ham and Fred built log bunks for our boys. Personal items were limited to what an upper board shelf would hold. The corner gas heater helped keep our brood warm. It was close quarters for five people... especially on rainy days.

It would be quite easy to completely romanticize the first years at WILDERNESS.

All who shared in camp life

know there were both great times and struggles as well. Of course, we had the primitive outhouse... the carrying of water from the lake for drinking, for cooking and cleaning... the ferocious mosquitoes... no electricity. So it goes. We made it all work.



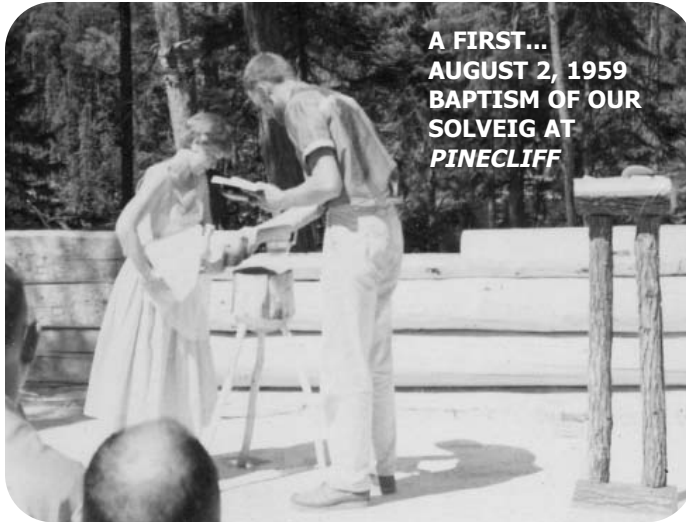
Lynn Swanson, Phil Anderson and Vern Borson became so welcome when one would come to ask if we'd like to have him haul water!! The guys rigged up a bucket on a pulley and cable system into Seagull which we tried for a while. Great idea. The only problem was there often was a scant half pail left by the time it reached to the top of the cliff. Never the less, we could still drink the water directly from the lake and feel it was not contaminated. A huge blessing.

For a while, I washed a lot of clothing by hand, even diapers for one. When we had two in diapers, we purchased the much appreciated gas machine. You yanked a cord as you would with a lawn mower. It stood in the woods just between South cabin and the cook shack. It was a big help. There were a few fumes from it... but not enough to keep all the mosquitoes away.

One day I threw in a load of Ham's pants and socks. When I came back to put them through the wringer, there were a few bills just floating on top... clean as could be. Ham forgot to empty his pockets when he changed pants. I forget to check pockets; hence a surprise money laundering.

Supplies and deliveries to *Morningside* were carried across Seagull waters by faithful staffers Vern, Lynn or Phil. These guys were real unsung heroes... hauling and helping all over our camp "territory." Vern always took time out to have coffee with me and the kids.

Solveig was only a month old when she arrived at *Morningside*. It is a beautiful memory. In advance of her coming, Ham, Fred Norlien, and Dennis Rafnson made a



small log crib for her... draw-knifing and all. Faithful Vern Borson had left a boat at Blankenburg Landing. When Ham and I arrived with our bundle of joy at four in the morning, we headed in the darkness to Fishhook and *Morningside*. Mist rose from the lake making visibility limited. The peacefulness of that moment... with the touch of the mist and a hint of daylight... told us we were blessed.

The first Sunday in August '59 was her baptism at the worship service held in a half-built *Pinecliff*. A baptismal font was carved and constructed of logs and branches for the special ceremony. (The font Ham and Fred made fifty years ago is the one which stands to this day in *Band of Brothers Chapel*.)

Mary Ekstrom was a wonderful teenage gift to our family when she joined as staff at *Morningside*. Mary toughed out some loneliness as did other staff. She proved to be a good scout at attending Nathan's creative plays out in the woods or listening to Jeff "preaching" at *Morningside*. She loved Solveig, too.

The staff and other volunteers who came to work on the expanded *Morningside* were such fun to have around. Lloyd Jensen did the lion's share on building the kitchen cupboards... even the pull-out drawers. Ric Raymond gained skill and learned patience in sanding the beautiful wood floors. Remember Ric Strot from Del Rio? We had many conversations in the kitchen while he was sanding and varnishing cupboards. Pete Sethre worked on bedroom closets. Basic grunt work, hard work was shared by many. There were masses of shavings from the draw-knifing and ax work. It was all a labor of love. *Morningside* was designed to be a place of hospitality... a "home away from home."

The memories of friends who visited remain deep to this day. PCYC co-workers, Curt and Ruth Johnson, would bring Carl, Phil, Dan and Becky... being of close ages to our Nathan, Jeff and Solveig. How they looked forward to the occasions.

Board member friends, Don and Charleen Weidenbach, brought their brood of five. In the cook shack we could line up eight small bodies... their five our three... on the floor for bedtime. Like sardines,

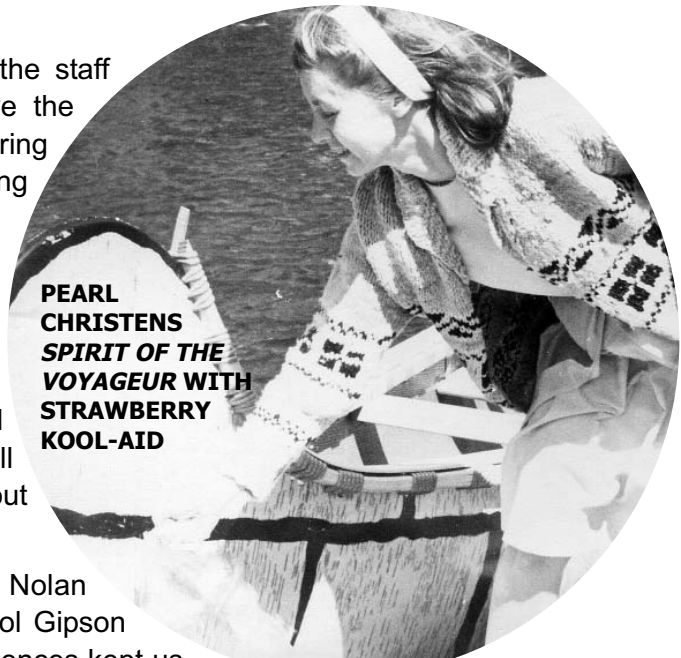


maybe, but they kept warm.

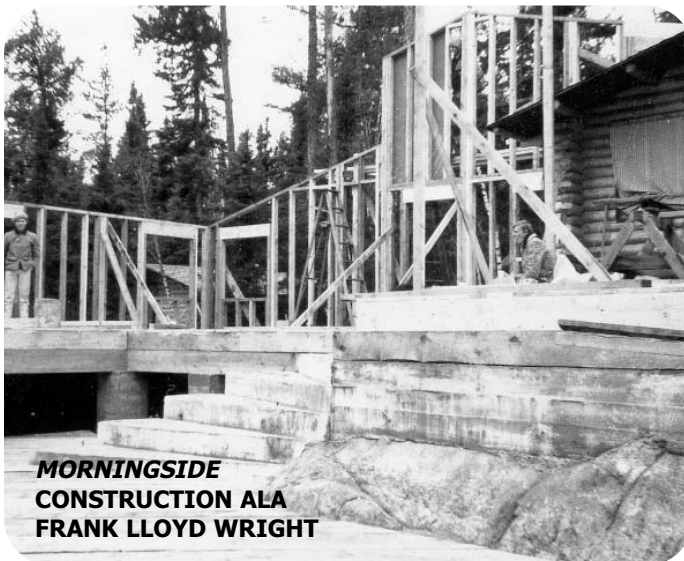
Sunday nights at *Morningside* for the staff were special. We did the suppers to give the cooks a breather. It was great time for sharing with camp friends. Memories remain strong around these evenings.

And how exciting it was to have group disclosures at *Morningside*! They were special. Remember the *Nor'Westers* with their trail tales? Ken Petersen with Mark Anderson led the one group; Ken and Luther Dale led another. Having them all back safe and sound and enthused about their adventures was memorable.

So, too, the *Yokefellows*... with Nolan Cramer leading the "pioneer" group and Sol Gipson leading another. Their long days and experiences kept us all involved as if we were along. *Mary-Martha* campers were fun and colorful with their Voyageur toques and tall stories. Lois Rambo led a group with Shirley Dahlen. Karen Denny and Shar Weymouth (Hauer) led another. All in all, long-term crews had much to share.



**PEARL  
CHRISTENS  
SPIRIT OF THE  
VOYAGEUR WITH  
STRAWBERRY  
KOOL-AID**



**MORNINGSIDE  
CONSTRUCTION ALA  
FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT**

Board Retreats were planned for members and their families near the end of the camper season. Every detail was planned ahead to make the weekends special. Staff were assigned for periods of time with the kids to ensure a safe and educational time for them while the adults had workshops.

As with Open House, this meant lots of extra baking all around the camp. It was extra work but very rewarding in that guests could gain better understanding of

WILDERNESS camp life and commitment to youth. The staff all pitched in. They showed what WILDERNESS Spirit was all about.

Those counselors and advisors who worked with the camper recruitment and preparation were important. Ham wanted them to know how much their efforts were appreciated. We hosted at *Morningside* virtually all drivers, advisors, and pastors who came to WILDERNESS. Our kids liked to get in on the "goings on" if they could. Our family just got larger.

*Morningside* was truly a sacred space.

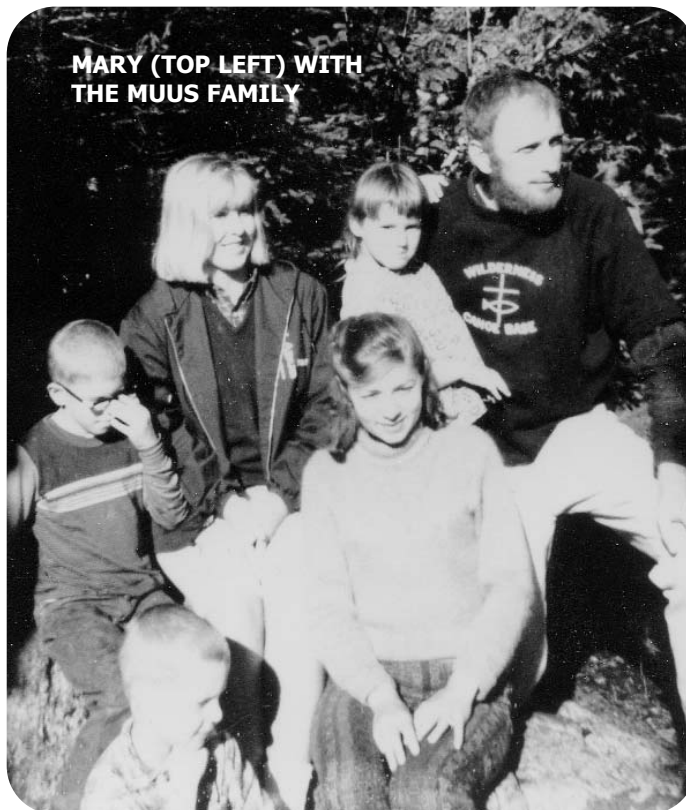
Listen now to **Mary's** *Reflection* from her early WILDERNESS service.



### Mary Ekstrom

It was 1961...the last day of 8th grade. I was 13 years old, looking forward to summer with my friends. Little did I know what plans God had for me?

My brother, Don, was working for this young organization, Plymouth Christian Youth Center at its WILDERNESS camp. He had spent the winter hauling logs on the ice to camp islands on Seagull Lake. He came to Minneapolis with the camp truck to pick up supplies. He called from the PCYC office asking if my parents, Carl and Edna Ekstrom, and I would like to meet Director Ham and Pearl Muus. We climbed three flights of stairs to their "old hotel" living quarters. I met their three children: Solveig, age 1, Jeff, 3 and Nathan, 6. Pearl shared with us that her niece had been planning to spend the summer with them, but had to back out. Would I like to take her place and spend the summer with them at WILDERNESS on Seagull Lake? Three days later, I was on my way up the Gunflint Trail. My life was changed forever.



*Morningside* was my home for the next three summers. I lived in North cabin and the Muus family, all five of them, bunked in South. What is now the kitchen at *Morningside* was where we gathered and ate our meals. We got all our water from the lake using a pulley system that lowered a bucket down a steep hill to the lake and then up again.

I have fond memories of Pastor Ham inviting staff over in the evenings for popcorn and "hooch." He was great matchmaker and often invited couples.

We did not have many females on staff in those early years. I remember that males and females were not allowed to swim together. The canoe beach was for male swimming only so the girls came to *Morningside* to swim.

I had a special staff task helping care for Pearl and Ham's children. I became part of their family, sharing both times of celebration and times of sadness and tragedy. They continue to play an important role in the life of my family. Pearl and Ham are like second parents to me.

I spent another four years on staff, working in the kitchen and as "spotless coordinator." I can remember driving to Grand Marais once a week to the Laundromat where we would spend the day doing all the staff laundry. In later years Queensview was



built as the camp laundry. There I would wash all the staff laundry and hang it out to dry...either inside or out, depending on the weather.

I have a vivid memory of the day when the A-frames for the *Band of Brothers Chapel* were raised. The guys had spent the morning raising the tallest center poles. While relaxing at lunch, we heard a loud "boom." All but Ham, who seemed to know all was well, rushed to the windows to look across to the Chapel, expecting to see that the poles had fallen. What a relief, they were still standing. We later learned that a squadron of the Canadian Air Force had passed over, breaking the sound barrier! Blessings abound!

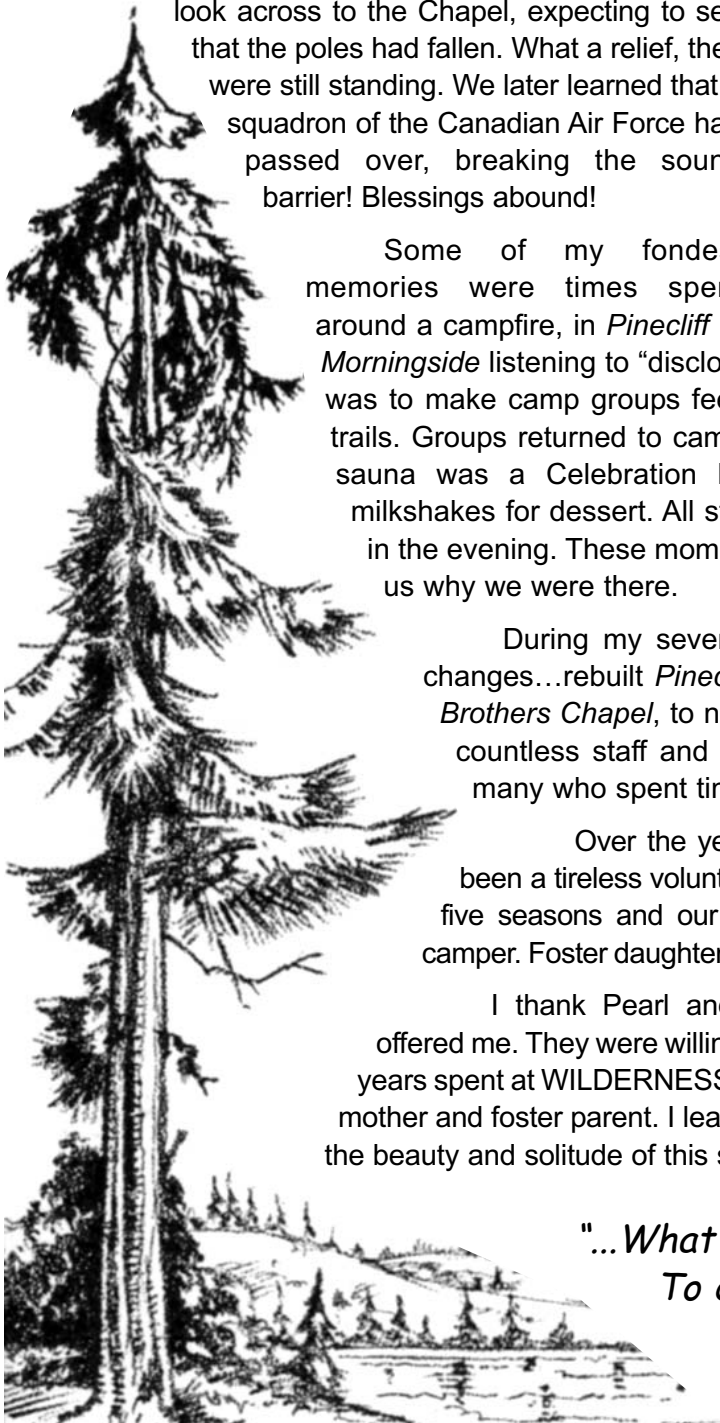
Some of my fondest memories were times spent around a campfire, in *Pinecliff* or *Morningside* listening to "disclosures." The tradition in those early years was to make camp groups feel very special when they returned from trails. Groups returned to camp in the early afternoon. Following their sauna was a Celebration Meal...including white tablecloths and milkshakes for dessert. All staff were expected to attend "disclosure" in the evening. These moments were a meaningful reminder to all of us why we were there.

During my seven years at WILDERNESS, I saw many changes...rebuilt *Pinecliffs*, *Bridge of the Master*, and *Band of Brothers Chapel*, to name a few. I witnessed the dedication of countless staff and the impact of this place on the lives of many who spent time there.

Over the years, my husband Jon-Scott Johnson has been a tireless volunteer. Our daughter, Solveig was on staff for five seasons and our daughter, Kjersten was a summer work camper. Foster daughter Melanie was also a summer work camper.

I thank Pearl and Pastor Ham for the opportunity they offered me. They were willing to take a chance on a city teenager. The years spent at WILDERNESS helped prepare me to be a more capable mother and foster parent. I learned to love the north woods. I appreciate the beauty and solitude of this special, spiritual place.

**MARY (R) RELAXES WITH  
BEULAH (L)**



*"...What does the Lord require of us?  
To do justice, love kindness, and  
walk humbly with our God."*

MICAH 6:8

Nathan weighs in with a perspective from the “little people” of those early years.



**Nathan Muus**



I was a child who grew up at WILDERNESS Canoe Base in the late '50s and early '60s as the son of the Director, Dad Ham Muus and Mom, Pearl. It was a unique experience to be sure. We, as family, were at Seagull Lake on the edge of the Boundary Waters every summer, and at times, long Christmas periods in the winter.

I was three years old our first family full summer on Fishhook Island. Jeff was not quite a year old. Solveig joined us one year later. Mom had her hands full. I can also say that the high school, college, Seminary and other adult camp staff were always friendly and helpful to brother Jeff, sister Solveig and me. We were the *little people* on site.

I remember accompanying many camper orientation sessions of health/safety preparedness, nature

trail walks, the history/naturalist cabin and how to use a canoe. I got to go along on Guide orientation several times. I have a fond memory of the frequent “disclosure” evening sessions, when returning camp groups recounted their adventures during the weeks they were in the boundary waters. There were often more than a few campfire songs, stories and surprises at all of these. They were great fun times, and more than made up for the fact that we didn’t have TV. Also I remember we often had the whole staff and other guests over to *Morningside*, our cabin on the other side of the island, for evening events. It was great to be able to listen in and be part of it all.

We at first lived in a 12' x 16' wood cabin heated by a gas stove with bunk beds. Our “cook shack” was the same size. They didn’t seem small to me at the time. We didn’t have electricity or running water. We eventually had a party line camp intercom.

A typical day: I would eat breakfast and



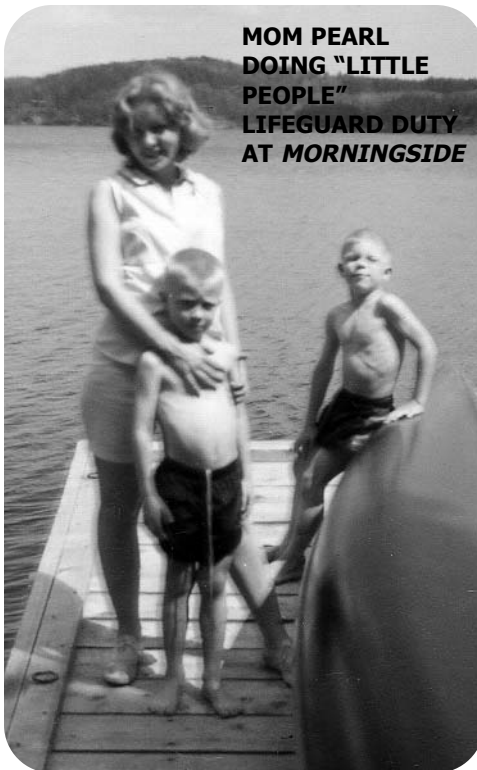
**NATHAN AND HIS  
FIRST CATCH**



**SISTER  
SOLVEIG AT  
LEDGE  
CHRISTMAS**



**BROTHER JEFF  
WANTED TO  
PADDLE HIS  
OWN CANOE**



**MOM PEARL  
DOING "LITTLE  
PEOPLE"  
LIFEGUARD DUTY  
AT MORNINGSIDE**

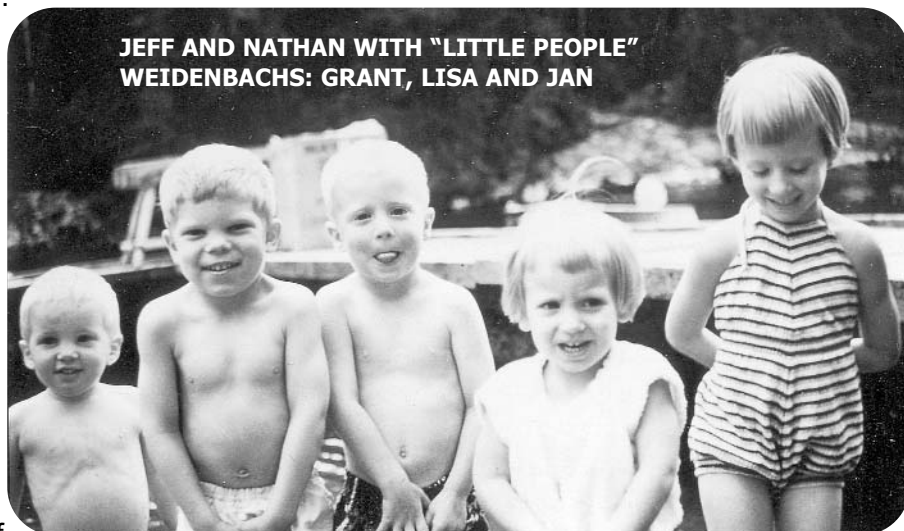
be turned loose to go "play in the woods," which is exactly what I did. We had many special places on those islands, many secret paths, forts, and stunningly beautiful vistas. We caught frogs; saw deer, ducks and rabbits on a daily basis. We helped raise a flock of baby ducks one summer. There was the occasional bear in the woods. We learned how to quickly exit without causing alarm.

It goes without saying that when anyone close to my age, cousins and friends, visited for a week or so, I had a great time sharing this majestic setting with them, and relating to kids my age for a while. Also on any day, I probably could find some staff to let me hang around while they prepared camp food, repaired equipment, worked on construction maintenance of buildings, or any of many other daily tasks. I visited my Grandpa at the tool shop often. He was good at keeping things sharp and in order.

There were special things I remember like skating on the iced Seagull Lake in the winter, taking saunas in a wooden cabin with fire heated rocks, and jumping in the cold lake, and occasionally fishing and canoeing while on a camping trip. I also was along on the entire *Operation Log Cabin* adventure. The -50° cold, the hard work, and the truck rescue are all strong memories. And who could ever forget the feeling of sitting in the *Band of Brothers Chapel*, with its wondrous design, that included the natural world of the woods as part of worship.

Then came *Bridge of the Master*. All pretty awesome for a little guy.

I'm sure that once in a while I must have tested some staffer's patience. I am grateful for many interesting memories over the 10 years that I was there. Much of



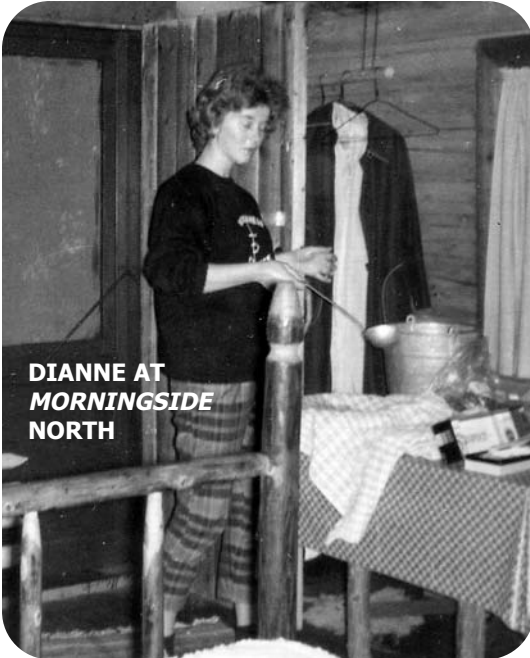
**JEFF AND NATHAN WITH "LITTLE PEOPLE"  
WEIDENBACHS: GRANT, LISA AND JAN**

that is due to spending time with a group of truly extraordinary people, the WILDERNESS community, and learning from them. Although each year, the staff changed some, there was a certain continuity that was evident. As I turned 15 years old, I too finally became a "Swamper" one summer at WILDERNESS. It was great to have a chance to really come full circle in my life growing up at this very special place.

Our essential lumber source was Otis Anderson. Daughter **Dianne** was on sustaining staff in '62... then later, a *Mary-Martha* crew member.



**Dianne Anderson**



A wilderness connection began for the Anderson family when Pastor Ham asked my father Otis to provide logs for a Muus family cabin on the North Shore. This led to a later request to saw lumber for WILDERNESS Canoe Base. Dad's 2 x 4's and 1 inch boards became part of just about every single building that wasn't dismantled and hauled onto the islands or the mainland. Cedar boards were sawn for the roof of the *Band of Brothers* (I remember well those thick planks)...timbers for *Pinecliff*...boards for docks and outhouses. Dad loaded the orders, readied them for delivery to WILDERNESS. Many, many, many truck loads. You could say that he got to know Pastor Ham and some WILDERNESS staff quite well over the years.

Dad got involved not just in the wood orders, but in the philosophy of the place. He could understand a connection between boards and service...what it meant to those who guided and swamped...those who built, cooked, cleaned, gave first aid. And, those who were the campers.

Dad really grieved when the hard-earned *Pinecliff* log lodge burned...then he made ready to help. *Pinecliff II* came to life with its recycled elevator-door windows and sturdy log timbers. Dad not only liked Pastor Ham, he loved Ham like a brother; he respected his creativity and vision. Dad would help with just about anything...because of this strong WILDERNESS connection.

The "connection" caught me, too. In the summer of 1962, I lived with Pearl and Ham's family at *Morningside*. I was an honored staff nanny for Solveig, Jeff and Nathan. I helped Pearl make meals; bake cookies; carry water from the unique pulley-pail system; clean the cook shack, my sleeping cabin, and the woodsy outhouse; and help hang out the laundry. The work was simple, northwoods, no frills.

I needed no alarm clock. Many mornings began with Jeff ever so quietly singing the beginning of "Hush, little baby, don't say a word". He would increase in both pitch and volume through the verses, ending loudly with "You'll still be the cutest little baby in town." Thanks Pete Seeger! By summer's end, I would be awake when Jeff ever so quietly began with the first lines of his favorite song.

I connected with the family and with the staff...and with the breath-taking sunrise across Seagull. Moonlit nights were peaceful; the thunder and rainstorms comforting.

Evenings were filled with loon calls and musical white-throated sparrows. Connection, connection, connection...with nature and with God.

Another significant connection opportunity came when I was invited to go on the *Mary-Martha* trip in 1965 with Tudy Rogness as the guide. This was one of the longer trips of the season. We all got tested and pushed to the limit as we double-packed a canoe over a portage, dug latrines, gathered wood, built cooking fires and pitched tents. We ate oatmeal for breakfast, drank "bug juice" and passed out rye crisp and peanut butter on paddles at Trail lunch. And, we fished and fished in attempts to supplement the evening meals of dehydrated whatever. Humor was important, songs were important, tempers could be short. We survived. We worked together...we connected with each other, with God. We were a mobile WILDERNESS community.

One day, I discovered a primitive stone hide scraper near a boulder by the shore. It had the look of a tool...an artifact, a connection to the past...maybe centuries ago. It was a thrilling find...and I connected with that ancient "camper". I felt the timelessness of places and events...stories of sharing and survival. I know that I was caught up in a mystical web...past, present...unveiling a most sacred moment. Through it all, I have been given a gift...a profound WILDERNESS connection.

I wrote this piece as part of the *Mary-Martha* experience.

## SOLITUDE

Solitude is sitting on a rock  
Ignoring any people you still might see;  
Turning your back on them.

It is forgetting  
And yet –  
Remembering.  
You can go through a lifetime in solitude

Solitude is hearing every sound.  
The dull lap of water against a shore.

It is hearing bird calls  
And wanting to identify.  
The breeze kisses my skin  
And whispers in my ear;  
It tells me  
That – alone  
I am I.

Lying on a rock  
One notices mosses;  
The cracks and veins  
Show age –  
And I remember

That once long ago  
Perhaps another human,  
Whose skin was copper-colored,  
Sat alone as I  
In solitude.

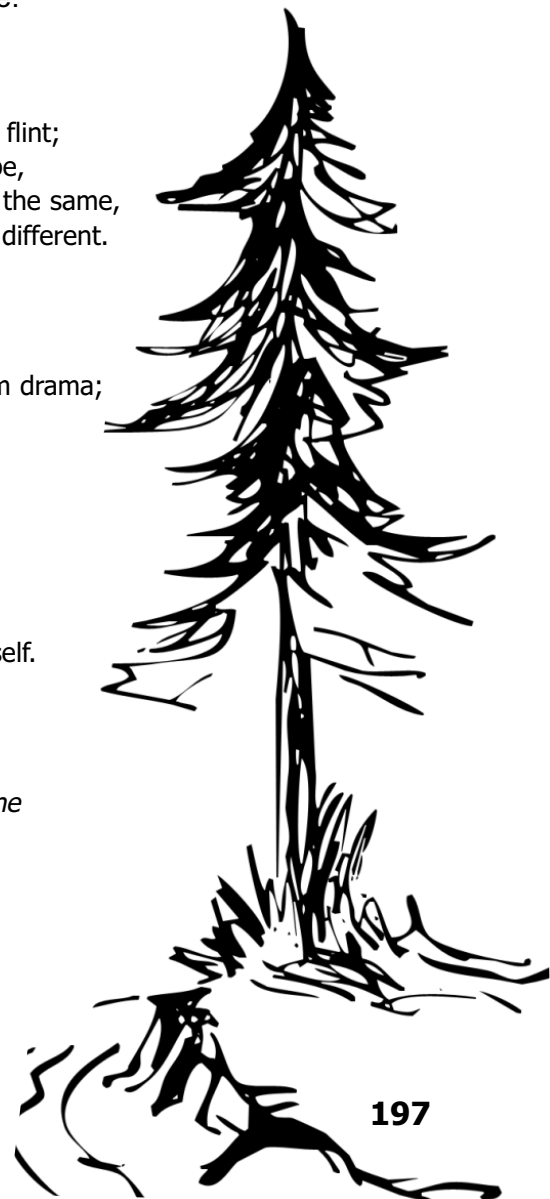
Perhaps he chipped on flint;  
I have a kettle to scrape,  
But our thoughts were the same,  
Though our languages different.

Solitude is driftwood  
Bleaching on a shore;  
It is comparing.  
Am I now stripped from drama;  
Stripped as the wood  
Has been peeled?

Lord, help me in  
This loneliness  
To find me.  
I must know myself

Solitude is finding oneself.  
It is knowing;  
It is growing.  
Solitude is peace.

--Dianne





WILDERNESS hospitality was extended as best we knew how to crew drivers, guest resource people, and Board members. We felt that these folks were important, essential guests who gave advocacy and counsel.

We were blessed to have insightful, gifted members on the PCYC Board. Names like Burgess, Hustad, Aus, Buchkosky, Preus, Halvorson, Blank, Hodges, Allen, Arnason, Brown, Gjerde, Anderson... to name a few. Many made the WILDERNESS journey... either as individuals or as part of scheduled Board retreats.

Two Board members share their now distant *Reflections*. **Don Weidenbach**, a pioneer computer engineer and developer, served many years and made many visits. So too, **Ray Lundquist**... a Hennepin County (MN) probation officer who recruited deserving client campers and frequently drove them to Seagull. He also recruited the largest number of *Youth Builders* in support of WILDERNESS development. Both Don and Ray and their families caught the WILDERNESS Spirit.



**Don Weidenbach**

I am not sure of the exact date that we first visited WILDERNESS. I believe it was when our family was invited to spend a weekend with Ham and Pearl's family one summer in the late '50s. As we were going up the Gunflint Trail, I do remember the kids got carsick. The Trail in those days had a rough gravel surface...a roller coaster profile. It was an adventure.

We stopped on the shore at the public landing of Seagull Lake and flashed our car headlights to let them know, at *Morningside*, that we needed to be picked up and taken to the island. We were late in getting there. It was dark. Charleen and I were somewhat dubious that our signaling method was going to work. If it failed, then what?

Our worries were put to rest when a short while later Ham arrived in a small boat. He had seen our signal. We piled in and proceeded excitedly to the island. The next day we were taken on a tour of the island and were amazed at how primitive and natural everything looked. When our kids went out to play with the Muus kids, Charleen and I were concerned that we might never see them again! Not to worry, Nathan knew the territory. We had a wonderful time while there. I even did a bit of work helping construct forms for concrete footings at one of the cabin sites.

Over the years, we visited WILDERNESS many times. We were always welcomed with gracious hospitality. We observed how the program had grown. What a wonderful experience it provided for young people. It was an investment that paid big dividends.

One WILDERNESS visit stands out in my memory is a trip that Dan Hallberg and



**CHARLEEN AND DON IN  
MORNINGSIDE COOK SHACK**

I made by small plane. We flew to Grand Marais airport in the winter. Dan was the pilot. It was a beautiful sunny day. It was a joy to see northern Minnesota and Lake Superior from the air. However, it was also below zero. We were concerned about landing at an unattended airport. We made the landing in good shape and parked the plane. Would we start it again days later? Vern Borson, resident caretaker, met us and took us to WILDERNESS. We had wonderful days there: doing some snow shoeing in the big Fishhook and Dominion woods, observing the beauty of the wild in winter. Vern took us back to the airport. We had no problem starting the plane and had a good trip back to Minneapolis. Once again, I was thrilled to be part of the extended WILDERNESS family.

We had several PCYC Board retreats at WILDERNESS. I always was impressed with the logistics and magnitude of the program and the skill and dedication of the staff. Both *The Bridge of the Master* and *Band of Brothers Chapel* were erected during the years of my Board service. It was very rewarding to see how major projects, programs and financial challenges were met by faithful supporters. God's Spirit certainly was at work.



### Ray Lundquist

In the early WILDERNESS years, dozens of teens on probation in Hennepin County were able to participate in BWCA adventures. As one of the probation officers, I helped prepare and frequently drove campers up the Gunflint Trail. Just a few of my many memorable moments:



To see Seagull Lake for the first time in its pristine state with the incredible islands was a thrill... The beauty of Fishhook Island with all the lofty trees and massive boulders... Helping a work crew doing whatever my limited skills would permit... Participating in Chapel worship services with all of God's beauty surrounding us... Trying to follow Pastor Ham in the darkness on the trail between *Morningside* and the mess hall... He seems to have seeing night eyes... Ham's leadership always amazed me as well as his skills with the tools... Hearing Oscar Husby affirm the need for a more convenient bridge access to the Chapel, then commissioning the footbridge construction to solve the problem... Devotions each evening and meditation time... The powerful night sky with all the planets and stars so visible... The caring attitude of the staff toward us volunteers and Board members... Never hearing any disagreements or harsh words among the staff or work campers... Always great food at *Pinecliff*... Transporting kids I had on probation both up and back... Our kids were among the first campers... I recall only very positive responses from all of them... Very different living... I like to think in some of their lives it was life changing... Almost hitting a moose on the Gunflint Trail... Attending a winter retreat with Board members which was very special... Simply going out in a canoe sharing with a staff member... Having my own children attend WILDERNESS with other campers from Calvary Lutheran... My son learned a lot of skills and later took a youth group from his church to the Boundary Waters... I have great admiration and appreciation for the spirit, strength and history of WILDERNESS.





The Board of Trustees leadership under Chaplain Oz Anderson was outstanding, invaluable. The transition to leadership under **Charles Arnason** was seamless. The two had worked together in setting Board policy. Chairman Arnason continued to encourage program development... always conscious of the need for me to stay connected to fiscal and operational realities. I am deeply indebted to Chuck for his wise, reasoned counsel.



**Charles Arnason**



It was a privilege to serve on the Board of Trustees at Plymouth Christian Youth Center. As a practicing attorney, it was often necessary to be buried in legal language with its "thus" and "therefores." Pursuant to the Plymouth invitation, I accepted the honor to serve.

I found meetings, deliberations, and enthusiasm for mission to be a stimulating change of pace. We wrestled with program concepts and staff support; we looked at a fragile financial base; we studied the implications of trying to do more with limited resources. Somehow, Pastor Ham Muus seemed to find and suggest creative ways to meet the challenges. It was impressive.

The advent of WILDERNESS Canoe Base is a saga of dreams meeting trust meeting God's guidance. It is a testimony to faithful action by so many... one answer to the calls for help and direction from many searching young people.

Fishhook... Dominion Isle... *The Cove*... Timberlane... *Pinecliff I and II*... *Band of Brothers*... *Morningside*... *Bridge of the Master*... all are symbols of the desire to reach out, to serve. That's the WILDERNESS legacy of *The Founding Years*. To Pastor Ham as Founding Director... associates Bob Evans and Oz Anderson... to all the staff... and to all supporters who have helped form the heartbeat and mission of WILDERNESS... and to our sustaining Savior... I join in expressing deep gratitude. This is indeed faith active in love.



### THIS IS MY FATHER'S WORLD

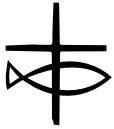
This is my Father's world,  
And to my list'ning ears  
All nature sings, and round me rings  
The music of the spheres.  
This is my father's world;  
I rest me in the thought  
Of rocks and trees, of Skies and seas;  
His hand the wonders wrought.

This is my Father's world;  
The birds their carols raise;  
The morning light, the lily white,  
Declare their maker's praise.

This is my Father's world;  
He shines in all that's fair.  
In the rustling grass I hear him pass;  
He speaks to me ev'rywhere.

This is my Father's world;  
Oh, let me not forget, that  
Though the wrong seems oft so strong,  
God is the ruler yet.

This is my Father's world;  
Why should my heart be sad?  
The Lord is king, let heavens ring;  
God reigns, let the earth be glad!



## SPECIAL PARTNERS: MY PARENTS

My dad was a parish Pastor throughout his long ministerial career, except for three years as a service Chaplain during WWII. In late 1960, he and Mother decided to accept the call from the PCYC Board to serve as Chaplain/Caretaker at WILDERNESS. We needed their presence as program and facility work was intensifying. They moved into the Ledge cabin at *The Cove*... grand piano and all. They served faithfully through 1965... summer and winter... doing essential maintenance, hospitality and pastoral duties of all kinds as needed.



**DAD AND MOTHER DURING A LEDGE COFFEE BREAK**

They were a tremendous asset to WILDERNESS. Winter staff especially got to know and appreciate their humble, spirited service. I was especially happy to share those years with them in common cause. Not too many pastoral colleagues are so privileged.

Their work during the building of *Pinecliff II*, *Band of Brothers*, and *Bridge of the Master* was steady. There was no tool left



**DAD AND MOTHER IN WINTER BEST**



**DAD (FAR RIGHT) HELPING WITH PINECLIFF II DRAWKNIFING**

unattended in Dad's tool shop duty. Drawknife and axe were sharp! And the winter work crew thought Mother's meals were special. So too, the Bible studies and classical music they shared. I honor their contributions.



## FAMILY TIES AT WILDERNESS

We had many family connections who shared WILDERNESS staff life.

Here are some that I can recall... staff and staff resource:

Pastor Vern and three sons: Mark, Phil, and Paul Anderson

Keith and Sue Olstad

Martha (Tudy), Peter, Andrew and Dr. Alvin Rogness

Lynne and Doug Jordan

Glenda and Marilyn Anderson

Beulah and Polly Lukason

Fred, son Dan, and Jim Norlien

Chip and Lynn Swanson

Karen and Marge Gulsvig

Curt, son Carl Johnson and brother-in-law Lee Dybvig

Oz, Joel and Mark Anderson and cousin Brooks

Dr. George and Whitey Aus

Roy, Mary, Per Nilsen and Mark Ylvisaker

Dr. Paul and Peter Boe

Professor Arne and Mary Flaten

Paul Preus and cousin John Glesne

Jon and Mary Lien

Jim and Joanne Gronewald

Rolf and Mary Hong

Mary and Don Ekstrom

Art, Dave and Roger Nermoe... and parents Leola and Joe

Dr. Arne and Mary Flaten

Elmer, Emma and Myrna Jorgenson

Sandy and Fred Koskela

Lee and Paul Hill

Dennis and Sally Rafnson

Keith, Harriet and K.C. plus family Clark

Cousins B.J. Muus, Luther Dale, Paul and Vic Trygstad

Brother B.J. and son Paul Muus

Dr. Janis, Spodra and Gunta Rozentals

The Muus Family... Pearl and Ham... Nathan, Jeff and Solveig

*All these connections in The Founding Years -  
- we were blessed!*

*"...With patience, caring for one  
another in love... for there is one  
body and one Spirit... one hope...  
one Lord... one faith..."*

EPHESIANS 4



**Marge** was the younger of the Gulsvig sisters. Karen paved the way as our first female Guide. Marge was a welcome and energetic second Gulsvig. A strong Wanamingo connection!



**Marge Gulsvig**

I was on the staff of WILDERNESS Canoe Base as an assistant cook during the summers of 1960, 1961, 1962 and 1963. One summer, when head cook Beulah Lukason attended the University of Minnesota to finish her degree, I served as head cook...only made possible by her collection of recipes and long-distance guidance, along with the prayers of family and staff members. It was a challenge I wasn't quite ready for, but with the help of other assistants and "Swampers," we managed to put together the meals needed pretty much on schedule.

No staff from the 60's will ever forget hearing the dreadful news of the burning of our beautiful log *Pinecliff*. That next summer we all pulled together and managed to feed staff and campers using the campfire area during clear weather and the "canteen" at other times... often in shifts. With a limited preparation area we somehow made it all work out. We even managed some bread baking but not on the scale usually enjoyed at *Pinecliff*. Needless to say the "veteran" staff missed the abundant supply of fresh bread... both plain and the specialty: raisin bread with a coat of buttery frosting.

One encounter I remember fondly is with Lynn Swanson. He was about to say farewell to his crew who had returned from their expedition. He came into the kitchen before his campers. They were to have breakfast before departing for home. He pleaded for the "raisin-frosting bread" they had raved about on the whole canoe trip. When I said we didn't have any made, he suggested we put some frosting on the plain bread and serve that to his campers. Needless to say, that would not have been very satisfying for them... nor our reputation as bakers. The hearty breakfast seemed to be appreciated anyway. I promised Lynn we'd make his favorite bread another time.

One event that the locals in Grand Marais must have dreaded was the "WCB Laundry Day." Since we had no laundry facility at that time, each staff member was allowed one laundry bag per trip into the Laundromat. Each had to place all soiled laundry in one single cloth laundry bag tied tightly. Clothes would be washed and dried together and then folded neatly in a clean bag. Most had blue jeans or other dark colored clothing mingled with the light and white clothing. When the load came out of the dryer, all had taken on the dominant color...usually blue. After complaints about "all blue wardrobes," it was suggested to staff they could share with another member by using one of their laundry bags for the light colored clothing and the other laundry bag for the dark clothing. Most accepted that solution to the problem. It meant sorting out what was whose. A few



**MARGE WITH  
OUR LITTLE  
SOLVEIG**

kept to their own method...using a solution of bleach, soaking, rinsing and then hanging out to dry in the sunshine and fresh air. Whatever works.

The duty of traveling the 60 miles of gravel road into Grand Marais and the task of making purchases requested by the staff fell to our truck driver...usually Vern Borson. Two assistant cooks, either Polly, Roseanne, or I took turns at the laundry. In we came...lugging the laundry bags into the Laundromat. Locals and vacationers began vying for the machines. We'd spend the rest of the day loading washers, transferring into a dryer and then folding the contents back into the clean laundry bag. When all the laundry was finished and the errands done, we headed back up the Gunflint Trail to WILDERNESS...very tired. If you have experienced washing 40+ laundry bags full of grungy clothing or kitchen towels while competing for the washers and dryers all day, you can know how physically demanding "Wash day" was in Grand Marais! Actually, the blue and pink colored "whites" were rather neat. Most of us just lived with the new WILDERNESS fad of colorful clothing.

Clean clothes did brighten a day. "Cleanliness is a part of Godliness..." Pastor Ham said. Each new day was a fresh start. We could give praise and thanks for the marvelous blessings...the beauty of the world God created...the joy of sharing fellowship and His Word with one another and with all the campers who sensed the love of God through their experiences at WILDERNESS.

How blessed we were to have the Swansons. **Chip** was the older brother of Lynn. He preceded Lynn as a WILDERNESS staff member. What a gift he was to our community. He offers a reflective testimony.



**Chip Swanson**



I remember curly hair but I don't remember the name! I remember it was by *Pinecliff* but I don't remember the year! I remember the fire circle and that it was Open House but I don't remember how many were there. In spite of my lack of recall, this moment in time has anchored my memories of God's glory and His whole creation crying "Glory to the Lord on High!" At WILDERNESS, it was an indelible moment by the campfire.

I realized recently that the Transfiguration of Christ text is found in Mathew, Mark and Luke's Gospels but not in John! An epiphany for me came in recognizing something about John. With spiritual eagle eyes developed over many years of reflecting on all that happened when our Lord was bodily on the earth, he wrote "We have seen his glory!" So all of John's Gospel is therefore written because he senses all of our Savior's life was 'transfigured!'

That special moment at *Pinecliff* with the curly haired man who told me I was his "spiritual father" is my anchor point for thanking God for all that is WILDERNESS.

I roasted a hot dog with this former camper. We began to recollect together. He told me he really enjoyed being one of my campers on a canoe trip. But, he said, that he frankly did not like the Bible studies and devotions. The very word he used was "bunk!" Now, the most amazing part of the story:



Pastor Ham asked that we Guide/Counselors send at least a postcard to all our campers at their homes as follow-up. My former camper, here at the Open House, said he was now a board member for PCYC and still had that postcard! The Spirit used that follow-up card to the WILDERNESS experience in powerful fashion.

The meaningful relationship between me as Guide and this camper helped inspire an authentic trust relationship with Jesus Christ. This camper was now studying to be a youth pastor. The card had inspired him years earlier to go see his own pastor and settle his relationship with Christ! I am thrilled to share this story.

I know that “prayer changes things.” This can be especially true when tempers are short and conflict arises. Here’s an example: Karen Gulsvig and I co-guided a group with David Dominguez, our Swamper. All was not well in River City. Harsh words were exchanged. On the shores of Ogish, we had a “give and take” ceremony. Prayers were offered for God’s kind of peace. Some reconciliation happened. We were put on a healing track.

God reveals himself in the Little Things, don’t you think? Like experiencing a kind of “glory” at pizza rolled out on a canoe bottom and baked to perfection... or the time I filled in for Lee Dybvig as a guide and inherited my brother, Lynn, as Swamper. We had a friendly competition... a brotherly kind of “who’s the greatest?” So I carried a heavily loaded food pack the entire trip so we could have a “last supper” of memory... or the sacred sharing of trail lunch drifting on the blue water or beside a portage path...or the worship gatherings at *Band of Brothers* with a sense of awe and openness... or the Trails expeditions which were accident free...Or Nolan’s ingenious moss cooler... even my first movie in a genuine theater in Grand Marais, *The Old Man and The Sea*.

Perhaps the greatest “glory” was seen in “Disclosure” time. What a joy to hear how the trails communities formed, worked and shared together. Some gave sincere testimony to a Spirit awakened life. All of us were touched by our Creator in some way for the eternal journey.

As WILDERNESS celebrates a half century of service, Covenant Bible Camp which I direct now, celebrates a quarter century of ministry. The “seeds” planted at WILDERNESS are now producing more “seeds” here in Alaska. See the glory of God?

In all of this I thank God for the three Spirit filled summers at WILDERNESS... for Pastor Ham’s trust and confidence... and for the sacred refining within me.

God’s extravagant “school room” is His wondrous Creation... where we share, and learn, and strengthen our faith. Soli Deo Gloria!



Another gifted brother connection. **Roger** was the younger brother of two earlier Swampers... Art and Dave. All three Nermoe boys and their parents Leola and Joe made wonderful contributions to WILDERNESS. It shows through in this *Reflection*.



### **Roger Nermoe**

In the two years I spent as a swamper ('61 and '62) I have fond memories of having trail lunch on the water. Hooking the different canoes together with paddles, being in a calm spot, drinking kool-aid, passing around the Ry-Krisp, peanut butter and cheese. I still consider Ry-Krisp a delicacy!

I can still feel the shock of running from the sauna, jumping off the rocks, and hitting the water.

I recall having many meals in the *Pinecliff* dining room trying to both pay attention to the conversation and watching for someone slipping the old "butterdish-in-my-thumb!" What an art... perfected by Pastor Ham. It's just not the same nowadays with tubs of margarine.

I had never been around people before who used puns. I remember Nolan Cramer and his puns, and everyone groaning when we finally "got it."

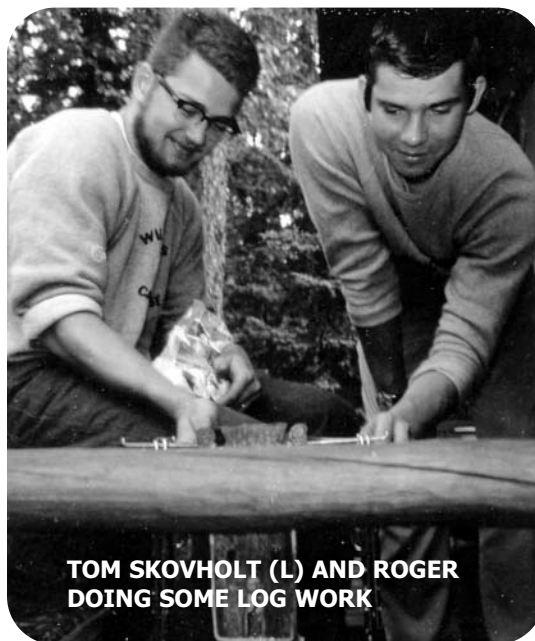
#### ***Lessons Learned While Camping:***

- ✧ Pay attention to the weather. If I do a lousy job of pitching my tent I shouldn't complain if the rain gets my sleeping bag soggy in the middle of the night.
- ✧ No matter where I sit around the campfire the smoke will follow me.

#### ***Lessons Learned While Paddling:***

- ✧ Sometimes you just have to keep on paddling. (If I just dig that paddle in deeper I can make it across the lake.)
- ✧ On the other hand, if the wind is too strong, I might not make it at all if I insist on heading straight across the lake.
- ✧ Therefore, the best way across the bigger lakes – from portage A to portage B – is not always a straight line. (Usually the people in my canoe trust me more if I don't take them out in the middle of the lake during a storm.) Common sense prevails.
- ✧ If we're quiet we'll see more wildlife.
- ✧ It is possible to get tired of singing *Michael Row the Boat Ashore!*

During the winter of '62 – '63 my Mom and Dad and brother Dave and I lived at WILDERNESS. My parents lived in Snowshoe. During the schoolweek, my brother and I lived in Grand Marais. It was a real adventure for all of us. Pastor Ham's folks were at



**TOM SKOVHOLT (L) AND ROGER  
DOING SOME LOG WORK**



WILDERNESS, too... at Ledge.

During the Spring Thaw, I recall one of the guys, Dan O'Bradovich, I think, who was working there came into Snowshoe – wet and shivering. He had jumped onto the ice to walk over to work on the island... same as he had been doing... but this time he plunged through into frigid water. Spring had arrived.

I remember my mother baking her cinnamon bread and it “disappearing” during the morning coffee breaks.

After a fresh snow, the road from *The Cove* mainland out to the Gunflint Trail was a beautiful sight. I have a great picture of my Mom, Dad, and brother posing in the snowy road. “Whose woods these are...”

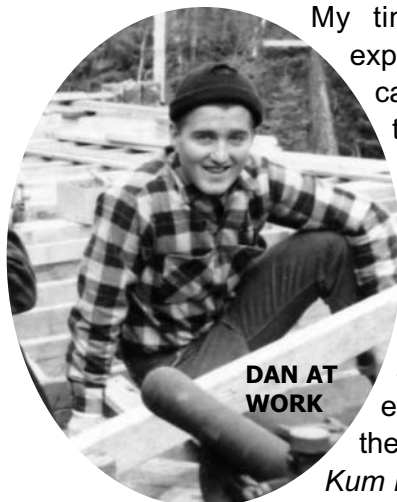
My Mom Leola solved the problem of using the Outhouse in -20 below weather by sewing a terrycloth “donut” for the frozen woodseat. She'd keep it by the wood stove and tuck it under her coat on the way out. Being a tough teenager I would always refuse trying it.

In a group I belong to these days, there is an older gal who urges people to “get off the fur-lined pity-pot”... when I hear the “lined” part I think of the “Terry cloth Solution!”

Winter work was never easy. Those who came to help were there because they wanted to make a difference. Young **Dan O'Bradovich** caught the WILDERNESS spirit. He found that his efforts were valued... and his life changed.

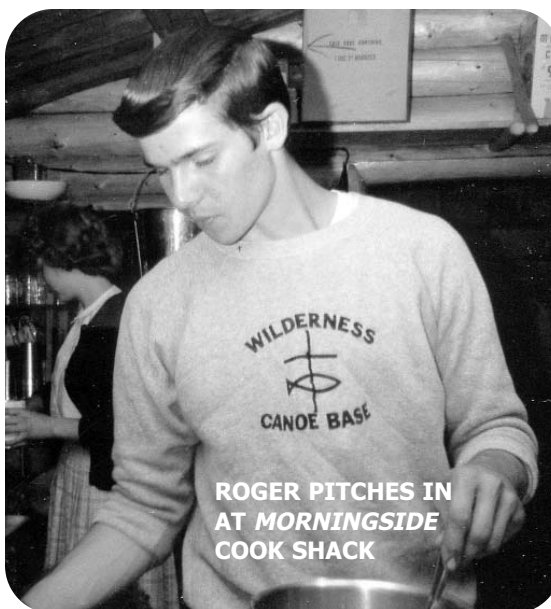


**Dan O'Bradovich**



My time at WILDERNESS was a life-shaping experience. I was 18 years old and going no place fast -- until I came in contact with Ham Muus and Oz Anderson. I spent a year there, in the most beautiful place that God ever created. I learned to be a carpenter. I helped build a lodge on the island. We worked throughout the winter. I came to believe that I was a worthwhile person.

I enjoyed the beauty and developed an appreciation for Nature that I have never lost. The friendship of others was something I would never forget. I learned to love working. This experience put me on the right road. I found that happiness is in the simple things. Your great parents, Ham, taught me how to play *Kum Ba Ya* on the piano, and lots more. I love the North. It's where I always go to find peace.





Who of the '60s WILDERNESS staff will ever forget the dynamic presence and strong Spirit of **Karen Denny**? No one will forget her coping abilities. She set the standard high. Her *Reflection* shows her versatility.



### Karen Denny



The first time I received a call from Ham Muus was through his friend, my pastor, Loren Halvorson. I think I was 15 and the teenagers at my church were being asked to take a work camp week at WILDERNESS Canoe Base in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. My older sister, Nancy, was going and they had room for another. Answering *that* call proved to be the proverbial 'road not taken' in my life. I had been all set to take math and science to become a scientist until my WILDERNESS Canoe Base experience.

It was 1958. We were busily building rustic units for campers on Fishhook island in Seagull Lake. At that time, there was a *Big Green Tent* in the place where *Pinecliff* stood. I painted and routed the table prayer for the memorable commissary building... where Beulah reigned.

The people I met at WILDERNESS had an unusual sense of purpose and worked tirelessly from dawn until dusk, virtually whistling while they worked to build this camp. I learned it was fun to work as a team toward a shared purpose. That purpose was easily embellished by the experience of cool dips in the crystal clear lake and campfire stories to end the day. The meditative experience of floating silently in a canoe on a moonlit night with stars above reflected on a glass-like lake was awesome.

Pastor Ham asked me to be a cook at PCYC's Frontier Farm after that, for three summers. He forgot to ask me if I could cook and I forgot to ask him if they were going to pay me. That didn't seem to matter, however, and when he noticed I could handle a canoe in a gusty wind, he asked me to be one of the first women guides at WILDERNESS Canoe Base. It seemed there was something calling me from those templed trees and rocks and the crystal waters of the wilderness. It was the adventure and the lesson I learned...that I could help people, along with myself, grow in wisdom and strength as we journeyed.

One such lesson came from the wind on a training trip. The wind can whip up mighty waves on Seagull. They are not always moving just in the direction you want. Fear was overtaking me when I looked up to find Ham had simply put up a sail. The wind and waves could be harnessed and used to reach the next portage.

My inaugural trip, as a guide, was also a learning experience. There were just two campers. Ruby, a delightful young African American, who seemed surround by an aura of

love and joy. She could always make you laugh about little things. Linda, a tall and lanky 16 year old African American with an air of cynicism, surrounded by an aura of pain.

We set out in one canoe: three people and four packs. Needless to say, the gunwales were only a few inches above the water line. Some fellow guides had given me instructions about finding their lake, a “secret place.” Finding the right turn to Bear Lake was another story. We took a wrong turn. The waterway was meandering through tall grasses and swamps. There were no signs of Bear Lake. My big moment and I was already hopelessly “misplaced.” At the edge of the swamp, I climbed a cliff and then a tree and could see nothing in all directions but more meandering waterways and tall grasses. It was getting late. We camped right there trying to keep our spirits up amidst the swarms of mosquitoes.

I decided to eat the “Banquet” food usually saved for the last night. Linda delighted us with a bouquet of five blooms she found. They were a rosy pink and shaped like ‘little slippers’. This little bouquet was obviously of great value!

The next day we returned through that meandering waterway and found a high and dry campsite on Gabimichigami Lake. We awakened the next morning to cyclonic winds. The wind picked up our canoe; tossing it into the lake. I needed to swim after it. Luckily, it was swamped and didn’t get far. We spent most of the day in the tent holding it down. We passed the day in a lively discussion on love. “Love, huh, I don’t know the meaning of that word!” Still, I think love is the only thing that kept us grounded that day.

The following day was calm and gorgeous. We paddled to Peter Lake, made campsite on a lovely spot just across from an island. At this site, a young black bear curiously began investigating this crew that had moved into his territory. After setting up our tent, we returned to the shore only to find our little friend, dubbed “Peter” pulling our entire block of cheese out of the food pack. Being a novice with bears, I bravely reported, “Not to worry, it won’t come into the tent because it’s only interested in the food.” Returning to the tent, I was proven wrong, as the three of us peered in to find the bear roaming around. “Peter” decided to take the rear exit through the non-existent back door. Later we saw “Peter” lying on his back on the next knoll with our long chunk of cheese in his paws, feasting happily. We decided to move the camp over to an island to get a little distance on that intruder.

Much later, my good friend and camper, Linda, told the story stating, “When I looked around that tent and counted four pairs of brown eyes, I knew something was wrong.” I was included and accepted. In spite of the color of my skin, at least our eyes matched. That is how we can look at the world. Linda and I were later in the *Kinswoman Program* for many years. Although her life has not been that easy, she now does know what love is.

Another special memory occurred that last of my three summers as a guide at WILDERNESS: the Frost River trip...a coeducational parish group. Everyone was excited





at the mouth of the Frost River when the pastor caught the largest Northern I had ever seen. The Frost River was more of a rivulet, with mud holes and beaver dams, which towered above us by a few feet. While pulling the canoes across one of these amazing structures, one of the girls dislocated her knee. The two adult men and the injured camper retraced our route and hurried to bring her to camp medical care. The rest of us ventured on into this maze of puddles and rivulets and dubious

portages.

The portage trails had not been serviced. Saplings grew up through the middle of the trail. The beavers had entirely changed the landscape. I learned a few things about orienteering during my years as a Guide. I faithfully followed my map and compass pointing directly at Frost Lake where we were to rendezvous the next day. These young teenage girls and boys grew mightily in stature and wisdom that day learning to help each other cross difficult terrain. As the sun set, we had not yet reached Frost Lake. The going was very slow. We found an alternate campsite.

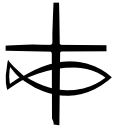
We crawled into our sleeping bags with simply a cold trail lunch that evening and no fire. The full moon rose on the primitive scene. With the moon reflected in the pond, a lone wolf howled its eerie song. Strangely, it was not frightening, but a comforting sound that assured us that all is well in God's universe. We felt encircled by His goodness.



Next morning, the last hidden portage led to Frost Lake. There we met an ageless old trapper who was heading in to check his beaver traps. His eyes widened in amazement to be met by this emerging group of teenagers led by a woman. None of us will forget the stories he told or the stories we tell about meeting unimaginable challenges. We can recall that God was with us then and continues to be with us through whatever challenges we face. One simply needs to harness the winds of God's Spirit... to stay the course.



Pastor Ham's phone call was an invitation to serve. It was a simple request. It seems now as if it was just yesterday when after one of Beulah's fine dinners, including her legendary *Beulah Bread*, Ham would ask us all, "By the way, before your return to your cabins, could you stop by the dock and transfer that pile of lumber up to the trail shack?" And, of course, with everyone cooperating, it was done in no time. Thank you, Pastor Ham, for guiding my faith down the path to forty years of clinical social work in Corrections, Mental Health and Rehabilitation for people with disabilities. I think I followed the right path. I am indeed grateful.



It was an educational experience for me interviewing **Isaiah Harriday**. He had a breadth of life experience which was interesting and intriguing. His vitality... his profoundly appealing witness to Christ... his availability of Spirit came through. I was thrilled to have Ike at WILDERNESS.

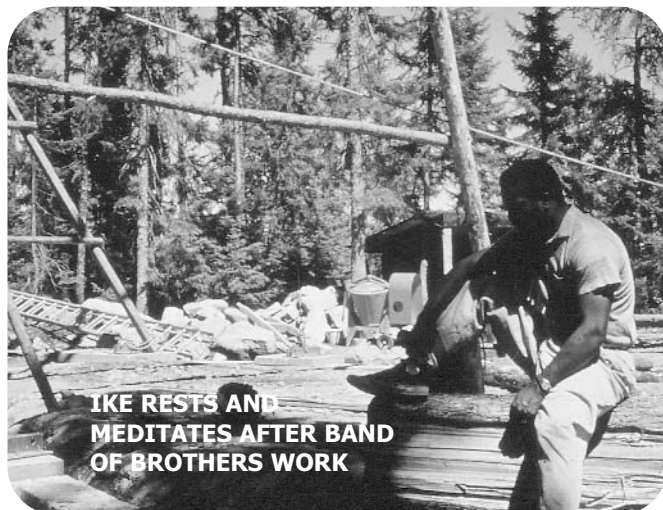
He was noticed from Day One... not only because of his African American roots. He claimed attention because he was a "learner"... one who was comfortable asking questions... searching for areas of growth. Ike gives us a look at his WILDERNESS experience.



### Isaiah "Ike" Harriday

I clearly remember protesting to friend Don Rudrud that I couldn't swim and had never been in a canoe. He convinced me that neither of those deficiencies were self-eliminating... that I could learn to handle a canoe, read a map and perform the Guide duty with a little training. (I never did learn to swim but I was never far from a life preserver.) My WILDERNESS introduction carried anxiety and hope... and Pastor Ham's encouragement.

The trip from St. Olaf up the North Shore was one of those amazing experiences I shall always remember. The drive up the Gunflint Trail was breath taking. The pontoon from *The Cove* to Fishhook Island was a great way to finish the day...with supper served up by Beulah. After supper we went to our cabin. I don't think most of us slept because of the excitement. The log cabins were fascinating. I had lived in tents in the military... hardly as unique as the log cabin.



The next morning we were down to the canoe beach to learn the dynamics of putting a canoe in and out of the lake with the instruction on becoming an excellent canoeist. The bonding between all the WILDERNESS staff was immediate. On the second or third day all the Guides were assigned canoes and down Seagull we went. It was very interesting locating those hidden portages.

I was the duffer the first day. At day's end I had a really good sunburn. I didn't think I could get sunburned because of my skin's pigmentation. Wrong! My face got a massive sunburn. The rest of the summer I always used sunblock and wore a hat. This was part of my northwoods orientation.

It was an interesting experience finding our lakeshore campsite. I think we had four tents. We had our food pack and cooking equipment. The food for each meal was all planned out. It seemed always just enough. The first couple days the heavier foods were used to lighten the packs. (After awhile I was able to carry two backpacks and a canoe

across a portage. Who would have guessed!)

Our first orientation campsite was an instructional necessity for me. Even deciding where to pitch the tents was a big choice. After setting up the tents, the task of getting supper was upon us. We had aluminum cook kits. The experienced Guides had the first cooking detail, which was okay with us new staff. The reflector oven proved to be a most ingenious device. Almost everything could be baked in it including cake or bars. More amazement.

After a hearty supper, campfire, and devotions, we were all very tired. Especially me! After a year in college I wasn't in good condition. And I was burned to a crisp... my dark skin notwithstanding. We bedded down early. The sleeping bag felt heavenly.



Early the second day we were up with the sunrise, preparing to break camp. We moved campsites each day that week which really gave great experience in setting up, packing and breaking camp. The most important thing: leave the campsite cleaner than we found it

with extra wood for the next group of campsite users.

On this trip with Pastor Ham and seasoned Guides, we learned the fine points of using the tools of the trade – a compass, good maps, and how to find a portage which was sometimes tough. We learned to troll for fish as we paddled from lake to lake. We had plenty of fresh fish. We also learned to pick the fresh fruits and were able to have some unbelievable desserts – blackberries, blueberries, and huckleberries, to name a few.

To this very day I am still amazed at the places we went with our campers. We had no way of getting in touch with anyone. We headed out for seven to fourteen days. I can remember trips into Canada, where we saw no one else. I cannot remember ever being really lost, but there were a few times we were inconveniently “misplaced.”

I remember the fellows from the Red Wing State Training School. Some of them were pretty macho until after we were across the first portage and heard strange, unfamiliar sounds! It was fun having Red Wing and parish boys together. This worked out really well. There was never a problem with “cliques.”

The wild life we saw was all new for me: bear, deer, beavers, and moose. I noticed that the further north we got the less frightened the wild life was of us. Still, we were always cautious. We secured food packs in a tree at night – away from our tents because of possible bears.

You could even have a real cold drink from a Boundary Waters lake. Can you believe? Also, I took a cold lake dip daily, every morning, and was refreshed for the day. One of the “funniest” things that happened to me was one morning while cleaning my moveable teeth. I knelt on my bridge and broke it in half. It was made of dental plastic.

Getting it repaired in Grand Marais was surprisingly simple, thankfully. Beware of where your teeth are.

We were always safety and fire conscious. There were some bad forest fires that came close to us a couple times. We were fortunate. I can only remember once having to return a camper to Fishhook because of an injury. I sent our strongest two canoeists... my Swamper and one other... to fulfill that mission.

I remember getting caught out in a few storms. We turned the canoes into the waves and headed to shore, built a warming fire and dried things out. Those were good times for discussion and counseling.

Worship was always a central part of our trip. We tried to have Bible study every morning before leaving camp and prayer before all meals. First Word... Close of Day.

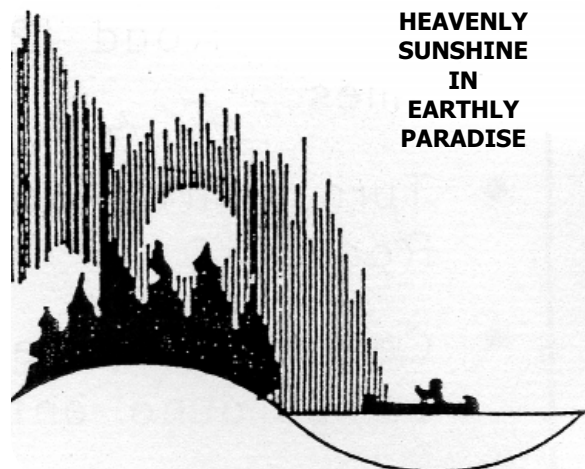
When I think back, I cannot recall ever having gone hungry. The sharing of the "fish and loaves" is still happening. In those early days there were only limited dehydrated and powdered foods available. We somehow seemed to be able to get fresh fish. The last night on the trail was a Hunter's pack stew – we used everything not needed for breakfast. I called it creative cooking.

The nights were made for gazing the starry skies – simply breathtaking. My faith was certainly strengthened by this experience. My two summers at WILDERNESS gave me a lasting awe and respect for all of creation, and gave me a great sense of coping and survival. My Seminary years and work as a Pastor got great foundation. The years of parish ministry were immensely enriched by these experiences. The Boundary Waters experiences were sacred... our camp life renewing.

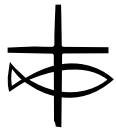
Memories and stories live on today. It was a great thrill to float big logs up Seagull, winching them up the Dominion cliffs and muscling them into place. Working with our staff and the work crews, was exciting. To see our collective efforts come together as *Band of Brothers* was profound.

For me, there was the anxious exhilaration of taking a sauna at the end of the day... with the plunge into frigid waters. In camp I was among the first ones up and usually serenaded the islands with a round or two of *Heavenly Sunshine*. It's a great starter-upper.

Many friendships still exist. I am in touch with the Nilsen family. Peter Rogness was a teenager when he was one of my cabin mates, now our St. Paul Area Synod Bishop. Thanks to Pastor Ham, to Oz Anderson, Bob Evans, Curt Johnson, and all who made WILDERNESS Canoe Base a truly memorable moment in the lives of both staff and campers. These experiences endure. God's Spirit surrounds WILDERNESS "life together."







For years, I had the wonderful benefit of contact with and counsel from Dr. Alvin Rogness. He blessed the lives of so many of us Seminarians who were trying to find ways to reach out to the forgotten and underserved. He would call me every so often to see "how are you doing, there in the old hotel? Nora and I are remembering you, Pearl and your family. Carry on!" Such thoughtfulness.

It was great to get to know the gifted Rogness siblings. I had grieved with the Rogness family from a distance when son and brother Paul died. I knew that in son, **Peter**, we were getting a young man who had been "faith tested." Peter was the first of three Rogness' to be WILDERNESS partners in mission.



### Peter Rogness

These are some *Reflections* of a Scared Stiff Swamper...

I remember the conversation well. It was in the winter of 1961, Dad came downstairs and said he'd been talking with a recent seminary grad (with what I thought was the highly unlikely name of Ham Moose). He told me that a few years earlier, while at the seminary, this guy and a few others had launched a youth center on Minneapolis' north side and with it, a canoe base on the Canadian border. (This vaguely rang a bell – our church youth group had done a trip there a year or two earlier, which I had ducked, preferring the comfort of our lake cabin, thank you.)



Dad said this Ham guy had agreed to have me up there for the summer. Fortunately, the room was dimly lit so dad didn't see the blood drain from my face.

In early June, I arrived at *The Cove* on a Sunday about dusk on a threatening evening with thunder clouds forming. After some time of wondering whether there were any living persons here, Ron Lundeen appeared and told me most of the staff was gone on guide orientation. He took me and my stuff to my cabin, Beavertail, home for the summer. I was alone from then on... homesick. I cried myself to sleep.

The place came alive midday Monday as the guides returned... introductions happened... and work started. Life changed... I don't mean simply the mood changed. Life changed. Mine. In the 45 years since then, this is the story I tell every time we're to summarize my life's journey.

I was never again homesick... not even for a moment. Beavertail filled the next few days... Sol Gipson (Sol Bird Mockicin), Ike Harriday, Davido Dominguez... for this Midwestern Norwegian Lutheran preacher's kid to have... all at once... Native American, African American and Latino American bunkmates began a widening of my life circles that hasn't stopped! I never worked as hard as I did that summer, or the five summers I was there. The endless supply of logs and lumber that we carried and drawknifed were to

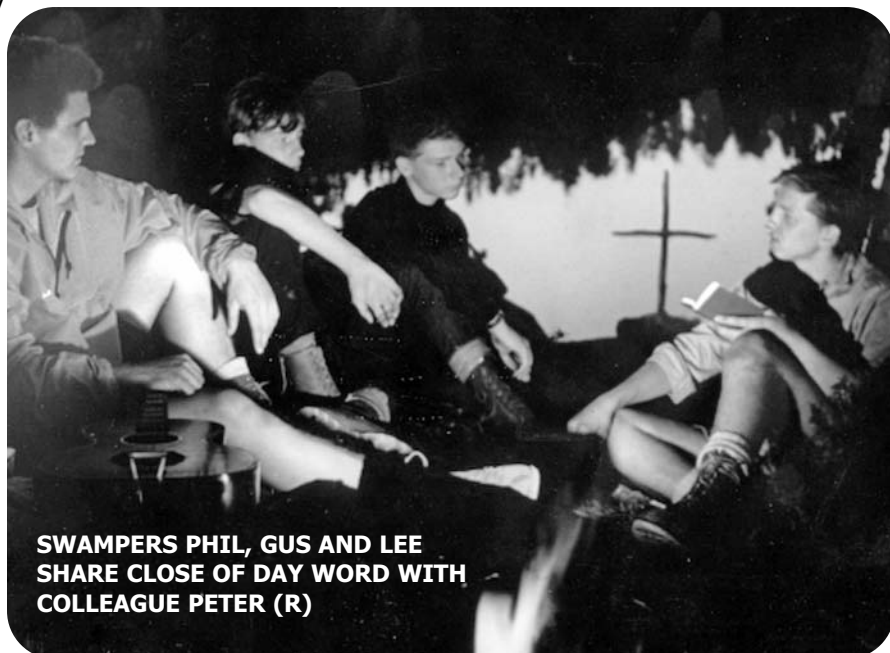
rebuild the lodge that had burned the winter before. But the intensity of the physical work was only a symptom of the intensity of our purpose in doing the work of this place. Ham Muus became, for me, one who modeled a “purpose driven life” long before the phrase began selling books. Particularly those for whom life had not been kind.

So our work was nothing less than the work of changing lives. In those early years, a large number of campers came from places like Red Wing State Training School for Boys... Glen Lake... Hennepin and Ramsey County probation offices... kids who made some bad choices... or... just as often... kids whose lives were in trouble because others around them were also making bad choices. We were enlisted to be agents of change. The shortest trips were twelve days... too short... we often felt... to accomplish what we needed to do. Thorough reports went back on each Camper... based on the assumption that we were... after all... in league with others in this work of shaping lives.

For me, it was the first time I saw faith and life really come alive in the intersection. I'd been raised in a solid family of faith. That was presumed for most who came here, but it wasn't the whole story. Here faith meant giving oneself over to the needs of the “other,” these for whom life had not been kind in their first dozen plus years.

In the process, of course, we also were stretched. Like others who came to the Boundary Waters, our lives were changed. Like Outward Bound, we tested and expanded what we thought we were physically capable of doing. Like the Boy Scouts... we grew in a sense of responsibility and trustworthiness and loyalty to each other. Like church camps... we were immersed in awe of the Creator. But in this place... it came together... an awareness that the Creator not only stretched the heavens like a tent over a marvelous creation, but put us in it with the intent that the love we knew in faith was a love that was to be lived in service... in lives that had purpose beyond ourselves.

I'll always treasure the endless string of “highlights” of those summers...doing the Grand Portage trip twice... circling Hunter's Island... stopping at Dorothy's on Knife Lake. Getting hospitalized after bathing in Penta wood preservative under the eaves of *Pinecliff II*... burning an ankle and taking two days to get out for help... having a Camper flown out with a pleurisy attack. We can all swap those kinds of stories. But amid the memories something more profound happened... for me anyway... and for that I have ever since thanked God and Ham and a whole host of others.



**SWAMPERS PHIL, GUS AND LEE  
SHARE CLOSE OF DAY WORD WITH  
COLLEAGUE PETER (R)**

Dad Pastor Vern Anderson and his three sons... Mark, Phil and Paul were all WILDERNESS servants. **Mark** came as a Swamper, and was chosen to join Guide Ken Petersen on *Nor'Wester I*. He proved to be a strong leader. He shares these insights.



**Mark Anderson**



My introduction to WILDERNESS Canoe Base was when I was about eleven years old, in the early summer of 1958. My father was assisting in the orientation of that summer's guide/counselors. I got to tag along. The wilderness and those big guys, the Guides, made a huge impression. The desire to return to this place and its endeavor took root.

My return started in the summers of 1962 and 1963 as a Swamper. I worked hard and learned much. In the summer of 1964 I became the assistant Guide of *Nor'wester I*. I continued as a Guide in the summer of 1966.

Those WILDERNESS summers were rich with adventure and close relationships with staff and campers. For me the summer as Assistant Guide in launching *Nor'wester* with Ken Petersen was particularly dynamic. *Nor'Wester* was a five week experience of work service, bonding among kids of diverse background, outback living and solitude. The service the *Nor'Wester* crews provided that summer was the dismantling of a log cabin on the west shore of Seagull Lake and rebuilding it on Fishhook Island in the vicinity of the Trail Shack. Typically, dismantling was faster than rebuilding. I've heard that the cabin's floor has a lot of bounce. We apparently did not adequately support the center of the floor from underneath. One detail we overlooked.

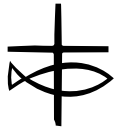
Our first *Nor'Wester* charted a trip north into Canada's Quetico Provincial Park. We traveled through Lakes Saganagons and Rose...marvelous territory. In the vicinity of Little Falls Lake, we broke into pairs on adjacent lakes and then sought out solitary encampments. Three days alone in the "unknown". We were each to make our own shelter..."live off the land".

Memories of those solitary days remain vivid. Just surviving took a lot of time and energy. I had a sense of urgency in establishing a shelter...made of poles and boughs. I was aware that living off the land required care. Creating shelter, gathering food, and building a campfire seemed almost disruptive to the place I found so beautiful.

The wilds do not readily offer much sustenance. Blue berries and rose hips are seasonal and very temporary. I got pretty hungry. Three days pursuing the basics of living was truly a unique experience. There were



few complaints about gathering back together in our group. Solitude underscored that it is basic to be part of a community. Being a part of and building small crew communities and a being a part of the larger WILDERNESS community has become for me the lasting legacy of these challenging summers.



There were three basic qualities that my Dad held up as marks of a “spiritually minded” person: Respect for others; faithfulness; and loyalty. We in the PCYC family had an example of that in the life/work of our custodian, Elmer Jorgenson. It was a sad, sad WILDERNESS community who mourned his passing. I learned much from “Jorgie”... a friend and mutual caregiver.

Those qualities were clearly evident in **Myrna**, Elmer and Emma’s daughter. She came... she persevered... she shared the faith.



### **Myrna Jorgenson**

In 1962, I was a high school sophomore looking forward to a summer spent hanging around Minneapolis with my friends. My father (known as “Jorgie” to everyone) was the custodian at PCYC in Minneapolis. When he announced that our family was to spend a month at WILDERNESS Canoe Base in northern Minnesota, I was appalled. My father, that ‘jack-of-all-trades-and-master-of-most’ (Ham Muus’ apt description), was delighted. My mother stayed out of the “discussions.” I relented when they agreed that my best friend could come along.

We drove for hours. We passed Grand Marais... the last bastion of civilization... at dusk. We had 60 miles to go and as we twisted and turned our way up the narrow, largely unpaved Gunflint Trail, my city-bred self felt increasingly alone and shut off. When we arrived, we walked on dirt paths in the dark, passing ramshackle buildings until we reached Wimoweh, a humble cabin that would be home for the next month. The bathroom, we were told, was “up the hill.” I was not happy.

The next morning, we took the boat to Fishhook Island for breakfast and I found my first sign of hope in the parentally enforced outpost. There, within yards of me... were dozens of college-age young men... tanned and toughened by a summer in the woods. Things changed in a hurry. My dad connected with Pastor Ham... who found tasks for him... and the rest of us too. My mother helped by baking sweet rolls every day. She was very popular. We made new friends quickly.

That was the first of my four consecutive summers at WILDERNESS. Here I began to understand community... my own limits and strengths... the discipline of hard work... the importance of caring for God’s creation... the refreshment of solitude... the rhythm of work and play... and the great gift of God’s love in Christ.



I learned:

✧ **Everyone's work matters.** As the camp "laundry girl" for two summers...I lugged dozens of laundry bags up the hill to Queen's View. By lunchtime, the clothes were washed and pinned to clotheslines. By dinnertime (unless it rained) staff received a bag of freshly laundered clothes. If it rained, it took days for the single dryer and clotheslines inside the building to do the job.



MYRNA (CTR) WITH  
G/C MARY  
ROLLEFSON (R) AND  
RAIN DRENCHED  
CAMPERS AT BAND  
OF BROTHERS

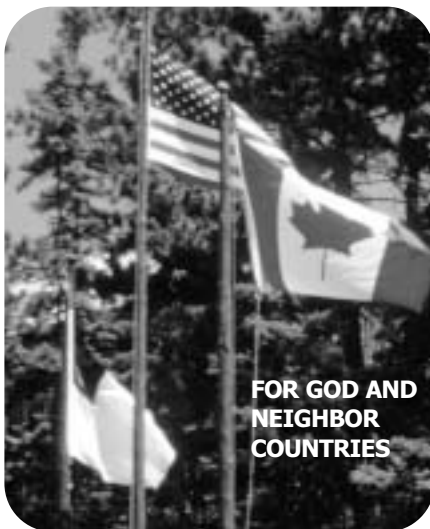
✧ **Fellowship matters.** Singing... campfires... saunas... Sunday evenings at *Morningside*... worship in *Band of Brothers Chapel*... chores... and conversations. Friendships were (and are) deep and enduring

✧ **Joy and fun matter.** Mealtime disclosures included everything from trip reports and skits to playful jokes. Birthday celebrations included an inglorious "baptism" in the middle of the lake.

✧ **Singing matters.** We sang often... at meals... First Word... Sunday worship... campfires... while paddling... and often in harmony. I remember singing "What Wondrous Love" after the sudden death of young friend and guide, Larry Larson. *I Shall Arise* became a powerful theme song.

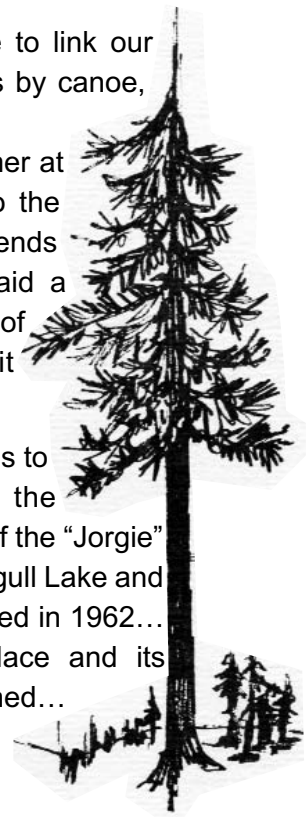
✧ **Water matters.** In the early days...there was no bridge to link our islands. The only way to get from island-to-island to mainland was by canoe, boat or pontoon.

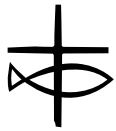
✧ **God's love matters.** My father died during my final summer at WILDERNESS. As I waited on the dock for a boat to take me to the mainland to start the journey home for his funeral, one of my friends joined me. Although he never said a word, I carry with me the memory of his presence and the love it conveyed.



FOR GOD AND  
NEIGHBOR  
COUNTRIES

Each time our family returns to WILDERNESS, we search for the canoe named to honor my father. If the "Jorgie" is there... we paddle out onto Seagull Lake and remind ourselves what I first learned in 1962... that WILDERNESS, both the place and its people... is a gift to be cherished... preserved... and passed on.





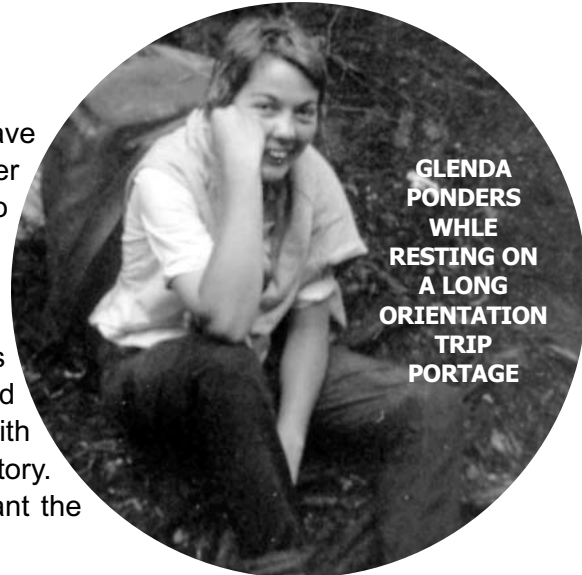
The “gifts” to WILDERNESS that came from the St. Paul University of Minnesota campus lived at Clovia House. This is where highly motivated Home Ec/Life Sciences majors lived in community. We were blessed... first by gift Beulah... legendary first cook... and then by housemate, **Glenda Anderson**. How could we be so doubly fortunate? God provides the best for us.

Glenda carried on and advanced WILDERNESS food service. Here she recalls something of her experiences.



### Glenda Anderson

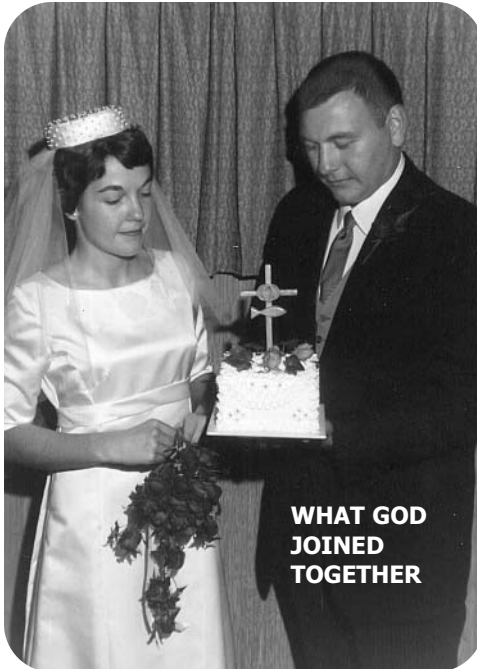
In response to my statement, “I’d like to have something to do this summer (of 1962 after graduating from the U of M) until I start to teach in the fall,” Beulah Lukason said, “Why don’t you come up to WILDERNESS Canoe Base and cook with me?” It sounded interesting. I had spent three previous summers cooking at girls’ camp so I agreed to do so. She put in a good word for me with Pastor Ham, I was hired, and the rest is history. Little did I know how different and significant the setting, program, and work would be!



Because my main assignment that summer was cooking for Work Camps...groups of teens from parishes who, along with their pastoral advisors, stayed on Dominion, worked on assigned construction jobs in camp, and had a trails camping experience, all under the veteran guidance of Dave Johnson. While in camp they ate at Evergreen, a log cabin with a simple kitchen and dining area. The kitchen was small but adequate. I cannot clearly remember how I managed...I had some help at times. They ate most meals everyday at Evergreen... volunteers always pitched in to get things done... to get things hauled. Always... lots of hauling.

My lifestyle was a bit complicated as I “commuted” between the islands depending on Work Camp schedules and in-camp activities. I recall having one of those little tent-like shelters all to myself and being the only girl living on Dominion. Because this was before the *Bridge of the Master*, I often traveled via canoe. When there were no work camps, I stayed on Fishhook and helped cook at *Pinecliff*.

The next four summers I was at WILDERNESS. My work was to lead the food service at *Pinecliff*. It was my job to plan the meals. I learned that menus had to be based on what was on hand and stored at *The Cove*. There were ample donated turkeys, a limited supply of eggs, assorted cans of food (much pumpkin), government surplus foods which included butter that was perfect for lefse and all the “scratch” baking we did for desserts and snacks. Cooking all those turkeys and being creative with the leftovers was a challenge. I can still see Judy Olson, the camp naturalist, being our chief turkey carver... a big help in handling the last minute dinner preparation rush.



A product of the WILDERNESS kitchen that will live forever in the memories of campers and staff is what is lovingly called *Beulah Bread*. Beulah started a tradition (out of necessity... no bakeries in the outback!) of making bread. Staff loved it. The campers were happy to have bread again after days without it on the trails.

Something else that was a part of WILDERNESS food service was using green tablecloths for the *arriving* groups at their first evening meal and then using red tablecloths for their tables at their special meal served the evening of *return* from their canoe trip. What made this meal extra special was the turkey dinners with all the trimmings and serving of chocolate malts to the honored campers. Guides would hear campers talking about how they missed

having malts as they were used to back home. Thus, the idea of serving malts developed. It was a special "touch." Campers could hardly believe it.

Lynn Swanson and Nolan Cramer fantasized often about burying malt ingredients in the winter to use on a trip the following summer for a real surprise for the campers. Maybe, if you went to a spot near the campsite on Lake Nawakwa and poked around, you still might find a three-foot hole... moss lined and ready for someone to fill with ice, ice cream and chocolate sauce. Creativity abounds, right?

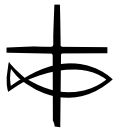
The tablecloths and malts were extra work for us and for the laundry. However, we were glad to do it and put up with the hassle. It gave a good hospitality message to the campers. It was another way for us to contribute to their special memories of WILDERNESS.

A fond recollection I have of my food service responsibilities is that of working with the teenage Swampers assigned to kitchen duty as part of their work when not on the trails. They brought a variety of personalities, work skills and humor that made their presence unique and enjoyable. I take great pleasure reflecting on our kitchen helpers of the '60's and hearing about some of today's pastors, church leaders, school teachers, social workers and coaches and saying to myself: "I remember him. He was my kitchen boy at WILDERNESS Canoe Base. He was so good at washing the pots and pans, shining up the range or scrubbing the floor." As Pastor Ham reminded us so often... "Every task is important...and spiritual."



Well, memories of WILDERNESS go on and on. It is hard to capture how it was "back then." Camp food service provided the unique opportunity to observe and participate in a total camp program and ministry. Many good memories, learning experiences, close friendships and a forty-year marriage to Nolan all had their start for me at WILDERNESS. For this I will be forever grateful.





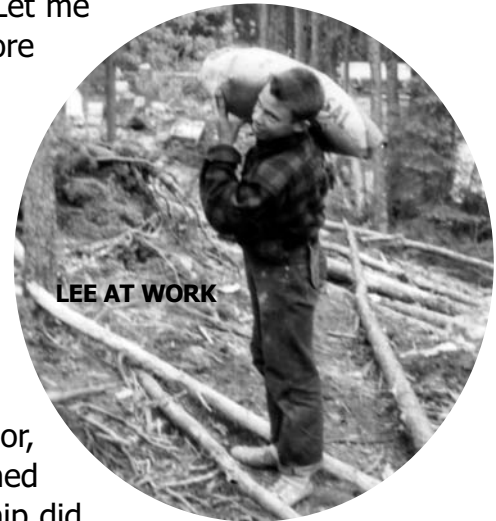
## DURABLE, DEPENDABLE, DEDICATED: LEE DYBVIG

There needs to be one in a group... or in a camp community...who embodies constant optimism. Someone needs to be there: "Let me give you a hand;" needs to say: "Aw, no... I've seen lots more mosquitoes back home;" needs to offer: "I've never done it before but I think I can make it work."

That's the Spirit and presence of **Lee Dybvig**. From "first footprints" on Fishhook in 1957 for years to follow, Lee served faithfully... tirelessly... loyally. Both Staff and campers "caught" the energy from Lee. All of us were "taught" how to extend ourselves especially when conditions suggested a time to give in or give up.

As a Swamper, Lee worked hard. As a Guide/Counselor, he worked hard and skillfully. Over the decade, no one earned more generous thanks from campers than Lee. His leadership did indeed make a difference. His compassion and faith touched all who were around.

We collectively honor Lee as WILDERNESS pioneer... one who helped fashion our early community life.



The early and mid sixties brought an exceptional mix of WILDERNESS staff. Great things were happening because God continued to raise up great people. Among them was **Keith Olstad** with his quest for discovery and love for God's created order.



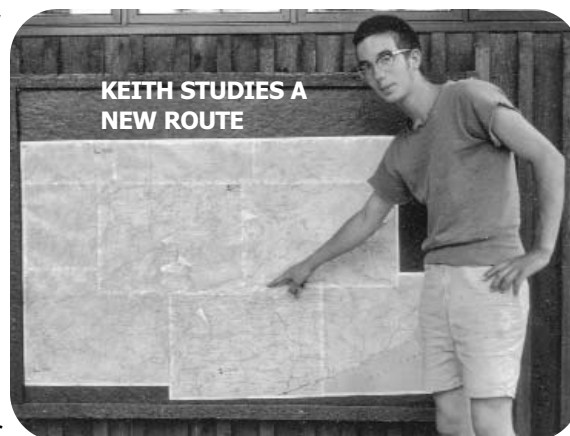
**Keith Olstad**

My relationship to WILDERNESS grew directly from my relationship with God. For several months after I sent in my application to be a Swamper, I prayed literally every night that God would grant me this gift. Pastor Ham's acceptance letter came to me as confirmation of God's grace. Hence, I began my work at WILDERNESS believing that God wanted me there. So the trauma of trying to fit in, the challenge of trying to measure up to the work physically and the strangeness of the country all complicated my faith, but never undermined it. To the contrary, especially through the Bible studies and conversations around campfires on the trails, my faith became deeply enriched.



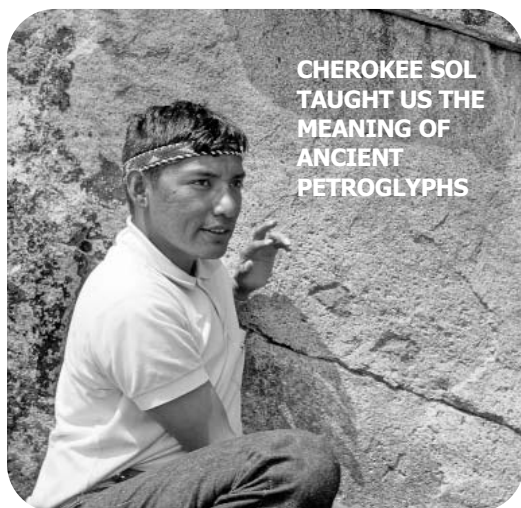
My faith was informed by the WILDERNESS impact on my understanding of

myself. Perhaps more than any other experience during my youth, WILDERNESS taught me about living in community... about working with and caring for others. I think about how someone with Ham's elegant authority would playfully jam a butter plate into my unsuspecting thumb. I think about mentors Greg Bjornstad and Ken Petersen taking me under wing: I recall crying myself to sleep that first summer convinced that I would die on the trail the next day. Yet later setting a camp record for taking the Jap portage carrying both canoe and pack.



My third summer, Phil Anderson, Peter Boe and I became the three musketeers of the trail shack, working and playing with the same intensity. I remember trying to figure out whether it was a good thing that Tudy Rogness said I had the best pair of legs in camp. I recall with awe Ricky Strot popping jalapeño peppers as though they were popcorn. I drool equally at the thought of *Beulah Bread* every other day and Dairy Queen banana splits in Grand Marais once a summer.

I could muse for a long time about the dozen or more groups for whom I swamped or guided. The bewildering experience of sitting in the middle of Northern Lights Lake on my first trip, watching the adult advisor paddle off with most of the group in one direction while my colleague Guide headed off in another. I remember Sol Gipson (Bird Mockicin) putting holy terror in our entire group as he spun legends about the Mayaguishi while camped above the Kawishiwi pictographs under a full moon. I recall paddling desperately back to WILDERNESS from Kekekabic transporting a camper suffering a psychosomatic appendicitis attack. I remember my campers lined up behind me as the sow bear sniffed my boots while her twin cubs licked spilled jam off a canoe.



WILDERNESS is where I learned my deepest appreciation for the raw beauty of God's creation. I invested an entire day hauling an extension ladder so I could tie my ancient Agfa camera to a tree next to the nest of a three-toed black-backed Woodpecker. I rigged a fish line from fifty feet away so I could take photos of the parents returning with grasshoppers. I cherish vivid memories of shimmering dawn water, of towering pines whispering above soft needle beds, of iridescent lichen against gray granite, the rosy sunset hues of Mountain Lake's cliffs viewed from Rose Lake bluffs and the intimacy of Jap Lake's layered hills after a misty rain.

Growing up at WILDERNESS was pure blessing.



## THE REMARKABLE SOL GIPSON (BIRD MOCKICIN) AND NOLAN CRAMER

We were blessed by Keith's incredible thirst for all things natural. We were also blessed by the life and presence of native Cherokee **Sol Gipson (Bird Mockicin)**. Sol was authentic... and carried well the mantle of his ancestors. He also carried well the hidden humor which baffled many of us more Nordic types. What a gift he was to our WILDERNESS community. Sol shares meaningful *Reflections*.



**Sol Gipson (Bird Mockicin)**



When I first arrived at the end of the Gunflint Trail at WILDERNESS Canoe Base in northeastern Minnesota to serve as a Guide/Counselor, I remember thinking, this place is awe-inspiring. Coming from northeastern Oklahoma, through Dana College in Blair, Nebraska, there was not a lot of water though there were man-made lakes. Minnesota's land of 10,000 lakes was a new, great, challenging and up-lifting experience.

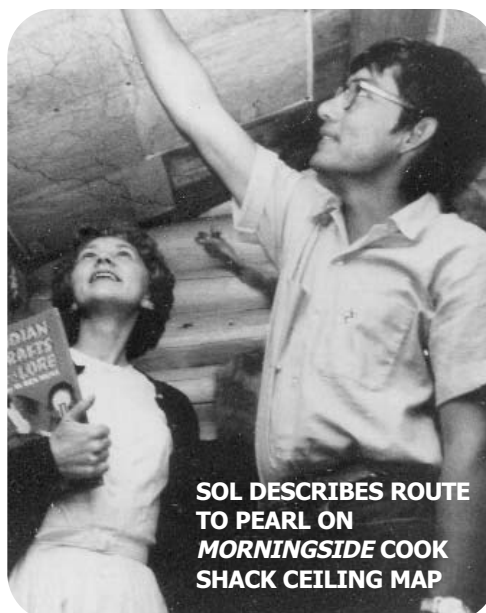
I came from a traditional Native American culture that recognizes water is the life-blood of Mother Earth. The beauty of land and water begins in sensing the power of our Creator God's gift of water in holy baptism. That's why I used the words awe-inspiring. What a place for God to claim His people. That was one of the wonders I could claim too. What an awesome responsibility to help camping groups come to that understanding.

Most of my canoeing experiences came on the Illinois River near home in Oklahoma. Portaging was to be a new experience. Though I had done lots of camping, none was like the total outdoor living I was to experience at WILDERNESS.

In these reflections the context of "wilderness journeying" is in my thoughts. I spent three wonderful seasons at WILDERNESS. Pastor Ham Muus, our camp Director of the "wilderness journey," made it clear that our task was to use our talents, gifts, and training... to help shape a unique Christian community...while enjoying this special camping opportunity.

My first season is still best described as challenging and scary! *Challenging* because of my own spiritual immaturity and *scary* partly because of my history in hearing and telling scary stories, usually at night. The good news is: I became more spiritually mature. The nights became more friendly. WILDERNESS helped with that.

Some campers were tough physically and mentally strong. Camping leveled the playing field between those who were physically strong but not necessarily emotionally mature. I remember one young camper from the State Training



**SOL DESCRIBES ROUTE  
TO PEARL ON  
MORNINGSIDE COOK  
SHACK CEILING MAP**

School. He was small and had some physical liabilities. He was bullied. I actually talked to him about returning to the base camp if need be. He would hear nothing of that. He walked with a shuffle, but he was determined. He participated fully. He chopped and carried fire wood, watched the cooking fire, scrubbed pots and pans, portaged canoe and tent. He earned respect as a “good servant” in all aspects of camping... a fantastic, hard-working attentive camper. By the time the trip came to an end, he was leading others by example. I didn’t do anything beyond trying to lift him up as a “good servant.” He gained strength and Spirit from within.



One other story of youth initiative: This special camper was from a parish in Iowa...a farming community. There was no task beyond his interest and energy. He was physically strong. At any given portage, he was busy helping someone else. He was usually the one who cut the extra firewood to leave for the next campers. He volunteered to dig rain trenches around the tents...just in case. I remember him most however as a “life saver”.

I had been warned by other Guides that while our chosen route was very beautiful, it was also somewhat “dangerous.” There was a waterfall that was split by a huge boulder. That caused a horrific undertow strong enough to suck a canoe under. My standing orders: the waterfall is to be admired and looked at; absolutely no swimming, fishing or canoeing underneath the falls.

After supper, three campers forgot the warning. Their canoe was just beneath the falls when another camper yelled, “They’re beneath the falls!” I threw off my shirt. As I jumped into my canoe, another camper alertly jumped in with me. We paddled out toward the falls. The distressed canoe was swamped and pulled under. When we got near the spot, I was poised to dive to search for the campers just as they bobbed up coughing and spitting water.

My ‘life saving partner’ camper dove in to secure the swamped canoe with three terrified campers hanging on. They all remembered a cardinal rule; if the canoe swamps, hang on to the canoe. It has flotation devices in the ends. Do not leave your canoe! A near tragedy became a moment for sobering, mutual learning.



This remembrance has another edge. The Pastor who accompanied our group was excellent. I suspect he provided fine pastoral care for his entire congregation. He was the kind of Pastor that Guides enjoy having as partners. He knew when to take leadership and when to step back. He instinctively could discern when to help me and the campers. He, too, was learning and growing in our intimate spirit-driven community.



I felt honored when they asked me to lead their group the following year on a second trip through WILDERNESS. I stayed in touch with my “life saver” friend and

stopped to visit on my travel through Iowa. We are mutually blessed.

When I began my third season at WILDERNESS, I felt I had grown spiritually and measurably matured emotionally. I was really honored when Pastor Ham asked me to lead one of the initial *Yokefellow* experiences. This was high drama. *Yokefellow* was a trip of at least 24 days divided into two sections: the first half on inland waters including the Pigeon River which forms part of the border of northern Minnesota and Canada. The Pigeon River empties into Lake Superior. You must portage the last nine miles. You carry canoes, tents, supplies and personal items those nine miles down to the historic Grand Portage Stockade at Lake Superior. You are given fresh supplies. A ferry boat takes you to Isle Royale where your trip includes hiking from one end to the other.

Isle Royale is a balanced island community of plants and animals. When a wolf was spotted, I lingered awhile to enjoy being a visitor on a different animal kingdom. We also saw moose and deer. There were many side trips to visit caves and ancient mining places. We had to carefully plan. We could only do so much.

This was a dream trip. Discipline is essential. Guides take pride in bringing back canoes with few scratches. The Pigeon River has many white water rapids begging to scratch or smash a canoe. It seemed that every time I rested on that nine mile portage, I checked again the number of scratches and hoped for the best.

All the WILDERNESS canoes were wonderfully named. My canoe was named *Imago Dei*, Image of God. It was a constant reminder for me of my humble task. It helped to keep a focus on my mission... *Imago Dei*.

At one point in my first season, I experienced a full "Mutiny on the Bounty." The leader of this uprising became dangerous to everyone when he got a knife in his hands. The group, from a county training school, followed him in revolt. I decided to bring the crew in early. After Director Ham intervened, an agreement was reached. It was my most difficult time on the trails, but we safely finished the trip. Again, adversity was met with a positive outcome. The Great Spirit was at work.



motorcycle accident. Tom is good medicine. Others surrounded me in Spirit.

Between canoe trips, staffer Jan Bauman would play the piano and beautifully sing for me. A big favorite was cook Beulah. Somehow she learned that I loved pumpkin cookies. After I came in off the trails, she would have a sack of home-made pumpkin cookies waiting. What a treat! I called Greg Bjornstad and Brad Enerson "Uncle Greg" and "Uncle Brad."



SOL (FAR LEFT) WITH HIS YOKEFELLOW CREW

**JOURNEY** In my Cherokee tradition, uncles have a strong role in supporting community. That's what I saw in Greg and Brad. Swamper Jerry Snustad came to visit me in Oklahoma and I visited him in his home. Swamper Peter Rogness was very articulate. I had problems with the English language. When I would mis-use a new word, Peter would tactfully tell me the correct usage. This sensitivity to protect my dignity boded well.

Guide Ken Petersen and I went winter camping together. In one way, it was the coldest experience I have ever had. I only had a thin summer sleeping bag. Ken had the correct gear including an extra quilt. I would have frozen had it not been for his extra quilt. I gave Ken the name Tsa-La-Gi, which means Cherokee Brother. I missed having other Cherokees around and Ken is a most excellent brother. Guide Nolan was the champion when it came to puns. I lift Nolan to respectability but not his puns!

WILDERNESS brought people together, in more ways than one. Community can also experience severe loss. I reflect on my warm relationship with Guide Larry Larson. He died, while on staff, of leukemia. I took *Imago Dei* and paddled to a quiet place on the southwest side of Fishhook Island. There I built a small stone altar. I prayed the traditional Native American Four-Directions prayer. For a personal liturgy, I recited Robert Frost's poem that Larry enjoyed, "Whose Woods These Are, I Think I know..." I believe Larry knows too. This brought closure. I never went back to that special holy place.

Reflection on relationships at WILDERNESS can't be complete without mentioning where I believe all was grounded. "My yoke is easy and my burden is light..." That *Yokefellow* context is a spiritual insight for human community. It was good to have such leadership from Pearl and Pastor Ham to help instill that in the staff of WILDERNESS. I feel deeply that Ham's passion for camping discipline is exceeded only by his compassion for WILDERNESS mission. I pray that this kind of leadership continues.

Sol's legacy is carried in many hearts. His integration of "all creatures are family; all things are interconnected" gave rise to awakened perceptions of how we fit within the Created Order. His faithful witness challenged us all.

One who powerfully and profoundly impacted WILDERNESS life... as Guide/Counselor, Trails Coordinator, Camp Photographer, Malt Maker, Proverbial Punster, Portage Explorer, and Program Advisor... was Wisconsin's one and only **Nolan Cramer**. His deep Christian commitment and influence ranged from northside city streets to northwoods secret campsites. His legacy is almost of mythic dimension.

Nolan sets "poetry" in motion in his *Reflection*.



**Nolan Cramer**

The wind overpowered my paddling forcing the canoe against the rocky shore along the northwest end of Fishhook Island. I was quickly learning there is a difference between a bow and a stern and how best to handle a wind blown canoe, solo style

I arrived at WILDERNESS Canoe Base toward the end of May, 1961. I was anxious to get to the island which would become my 'home base' as a canoe guide for teen age youth. Things were quiet at the mainland. *The Cove* available canoe challenged my adventurous spirit to "launch out into the deep". That's what I did. Here I was, a Sem student, in "God's country", wanting to participate in this Christian camping community.



I managed to port in on the Fishhook canoe dock. I connected with waiting Camp Director Ham Muus. I was glad to be here. This was the beginning of what proved to be a vital several years of shared ministry.

Life and learning at WILDERNESS was fast paced. It was on the job training. A good drenching of participation at WILDERNESS left no room for doubt about the camp handbook declaration of mission. It was rooted in the biblical revelation *Amazing Grace* can be experienced in "the land of sky blue waters"... and beyond. This I affirmed and eagerly embraced.

I was raised with three brothers in Wausau, Wisconsin. My Dad respected and valued the natural side of God's creation. The northern woods was a place where we could experience meaningful life together. Our deer shack, seven miles off the last dirt road at the end of an abandoned railroad track from CCC camp days, seemed like a good place of preparation for Fishhook island living.

I discovered there was no electricity on our Seagull island. There was lake water for drinking. I really enjoyed ice cold water. How could I manage this little "ice" pleasure? I had my doubts about satisfying meals without some form of ice.

To my surprise at one of my first suppers, I was presented a water-glass size chunk of ice. Pastor Ham noted, it was two years old. But there it was...clear and solid. Thanks to the Island Ice House and two foot deep sawdust, I had my ice cold water. No



wonder sawdust is what Grandpa poured between the walls of the house he built in Wausau, when they arrived from Germany in the late 1800's.

Throughout that first summer and others that followed, more than one pair of Red Wing boots imprinted my footsteps on surfaces of glacial rock of northeast Minnesota. The miles of paddling, and every heartbeat, circulated the gospel truth that *All of Life Is*

*Involved in Relationships*. From the First Word at the majestic A-frame *Band of Brothers Chapel* before breakfast, to meal-time table talk, the gift of God's design for purposeful relationships was clear.

As a Guide/Counselor for campers on the trails, our first task was to bring them back happy, healthy and alive. I never left camp without my compass or territorial map. Campers also felt the need for *a sense of direction*... wanting to know how and where they fit in this vast, natural mansion of creation. A blending of skills, creativity, sharing, support and communal "family" life together all helped to shape direction and *a sense of relatedness*. Ours was a task of trust building among us all. Often that was tested. So, too, was patience... as in the breaking of camp in the rain, sand in a sleeping bag, mosquitoes in the stew and the impact of glacial rock as mattress.

Trails life and adventure is a steady combination of nature's beauty as well as its capricious unpredictability. High winds and waves can join with the adversity of heavy rains. There is an ebb and flow of the BWCA dynamic.

What a joy when from the mouth of some of the campers can come a witness from the heart. Spontaneous testimony often brought a conviction of discovery: "I found God in the wilderness!" I felt no great need to inform that God was never really lost. I rejoiced in their witness to spiritual awakening.



I tried to provide campers with a *compass* and *map* indicating who this God is, where He is and how He relates to us. I hoped in their departure they would carry along with confidence a belief that the God they "found" will not remain only within the BWCA. Rather, He follows wherever they go.

How important it is to continue to bear witness to the spiritual core...to the sacredness of design of the WILDERNESS camping outreach. Many are the strident, forceful voices that claim that in



life there is no longer need for the *compass and map*, to aid in a search for the Living God. I strongly reject that false claim.

I am frequently drawn to the book of Genesis with its account of God's original "BWCA," with all the marvelous inter-relationships He placed within its boundaries. *All of life is involved in relationships*. Still, lurking within the majesty and mystery of life, there are voices bent on destroying this quality. How alert we must be! The message is "sky blue waters" clear: The *compass and map* of Christ directs our camping ministry at WILDERNESS.



Memories of my early WILDERNESS experiences flood into my mind. Many carry lessons which were important... even if they were bittersweet at times.

I admit that as a first time Trails Guide/Counselor I was as green as the BWCA forest and as transparent as the waters of the many spring-fed lakes. While understandably anxious, I wanted to be as fully prepared as possible... especially in how to work a compass and read a map without marked signs... road, caution, detour, muddy, unpassable or whatever. I felt I could handle the meal details...for on the trails, one eats what is available. We'd make it all work with a little creativity.

Here's how one "lesson" unfolded for me early on.

My Adult Advisor/Pastor and some of the youth from his parish had previously experienced WILDERNESS camp life. I wanted to present a competent, savvy, macho "woodsman" image... including all matters pertaining to maps, routes, survival and more. After our normal Trails orientation, five canoes and eleven contemporary Voyageurs briskly made wakes up the channel. High adventure lay ahead. I was fired up! Our objective: reach one of the most remote lakes beyond the Canadian border. Hearts and wills were strong.



**BOWMAN NOLAN (R)  
DIRECTS SPIRIT OF  
THE VOYAGEUR CREW**

The Canadian Customs agent issued our travel permit. Forward bound. I reminded my pastoral colleague we were heading for a tough first portage sequence of three which lead in turn to our outback "paradise"... a ten mile long isolated lake. Going this way, we bypassed a 576 rod back breaking portage. So, veterans and first-timers alike, off we go. En mass... like choir boys under trustful direction... we moved out with unity, excitement, cooperation... and, of course, unconditional faith in "my" leadership. The Pastor had endorsed the plan. Let's be at it! Bushwackers... that's us.

As Guide, I battled my way up a 45-degree incline to a lofty 25-foot summit to survey. There was no marked portage on this north Saganaga shore. I mean, no beaten path, no deer trail but plenty of knee high brush and tanglewood. Meanwhile, Pastor and one of the campers had pushed to a watery edge of what I had deduced from my map reading was the first of two ½ mile long inter-connecting lakes. Not so, it seems.



There we were, crunched together trying to find sufficient open shore line for our five canoes without punching their thin aluminum skin. This "lake" was infested with deadheads. Graciously, Pastor offered an affirmation of support allowing that "we" (not only "me") may have picked the wrong portage chain. With considerable gratitude, I accepted his hopeful and inclusive affirmation!

All of this exchange was taking place in the presence of my campers. At this point, they showed no verbal discontent directed my way. It was clear, *both* Pastor and I were mutually "leaders". Maybe to them, we both made a mistake with less than skillful map reading which led us all down this tortuous path.

Meanwhile, a tough mile to the east, a camper bowman spotted a giant v-shaped land wedge with a portage sign etched in yellow indicating our lake of next crossing. How respectful! No one in our crew trumpeted this "discovery" as if placed there mercifully for wayward Canadian travelers.

What a marvelous lesson this all was...the tolerance of a tested crew and the amazing gracefulness of a pastoral advisor who helped save face for a "misplaced" Guide. Such is the nature of true Christian charity.

Two bonding days later, we were again challenged by a capricious river leading to Trout Lake...our "paradise" destination of deep seclusion. Beaver dams a plenty and windfalls everywhere. We found a mini campsite. Pastor and I plus two campers forged ahead on an exploratory expedition. We proudly returned hours later with five beautiful 3 pound lake trout. We shared around a happy campfire meal the joys of our discovery. We found a dramatic, scenic, albeit challenging mile-plus river route to "paradise". We all rejoiced! Redemption!

(This very "discovery" would be a route that other WILDERNESS campers and staff would later experience... including my wife, Glenda, and I, on a trip some 10 years later.)

From paddling to portaging, campsite foraging and cooking, bible study and weary meditation, we bonded as a Christian community. We learned to forgive mistakes. We met adversity with hope. It was an exercise in mutual trust building. We learned together how the Spirit sustains.

It was to Nolan and Sol that the challenge was offered to lead the long term, diverse camper *Yokefellow* crews. Both Guides provided sterling, creative leadership.

Nolan led the first *Yokefellow* crew that traveled to Grand Portage and explored Isle Royale. His leadership skills became a working model for other WILDERNESS counselors. His mark as a Spirited, creative, faithful Guide will always remain.



## KEN PETERSEN: A SPECIAL LEADER

The longest *founding decade* WILDERNESS experiences were those of *Nor'Wester*. These month-plus adventures were led by the incomparable **Ken Petersen**. His work/service is described in superlatives. Staff and campers alike found this young man to be of deep faith, strong leadership, and extraordinary communication skill.

Campers in the '60S often thought Ken was either "another camper" or Swamper-in-Training... with his boyish face and slight stature. This simply provided an enormous surprise when they discovered his strength of personality, conviction, and leadership. Staff were drawn to Ken's thoughtful, inclusive, and compelling presence.

I was confident that Ken could handle the complex demands of any intensive camping experience. He had demonstrated his abilities time after time in Trails leadership. He knew how to fashion a functional community. His reports and analysis of group dynamics were praised by institutional and parish personnel alike. We can read, listen, and sense his gifts in these reflective perspectives. He starts with first WILDERNESS discoveries.



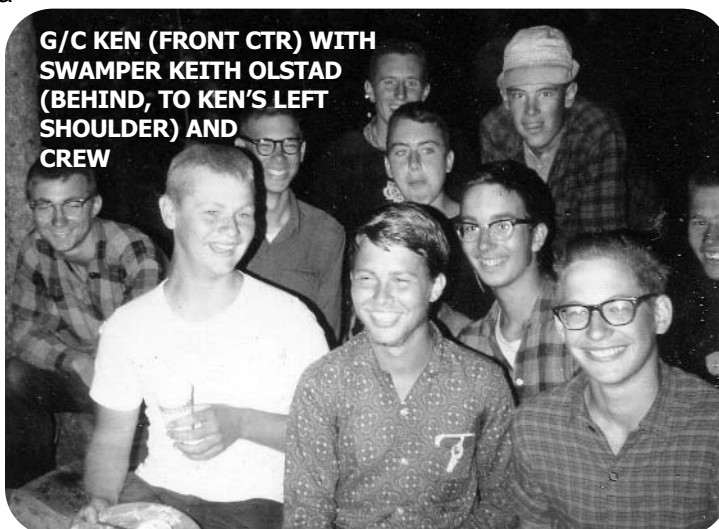
**Ken Petersen**



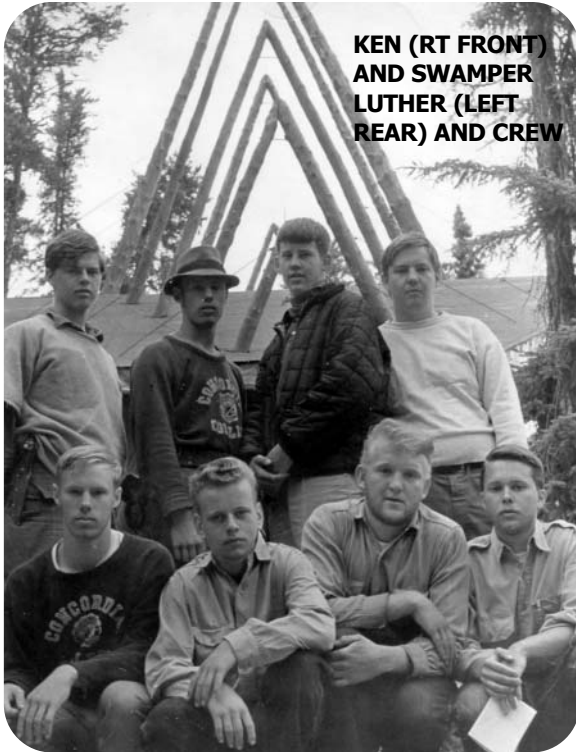
The day I graduated from St. Olaf College in June, 1962, I showed up at WILDERNESS Canoe Base for the first time in my life. Don Rudrud had driven Nancy Caple, who also had just graduated from St. Olaf, and me to camp. Don was returning for another season. He was so excited when he got to *The Cove* that he jumped out of his car and kissed the ground. Nancy and I looked at each other thinking, "What is with this guy?" Nancy said "I want to go back" and I said, "I do too."

I had many misgivings about this camp job. I had done very little camping in the past and did not know how to canoe. I had interviewed for the job the previous December just because I had heard so much about Ham Muus that I wanted to meet him. I really was not interested in a job but I had to give the appearance that I was. So I filled out the application but later sent Ham a lengthy letter telling him to tear it up. He called me up and suggested I take five minutes to reconsider that decision. Not one who says no easily, I said yes. So now I found myself reluctantly standing on WILDERNESS soil.

Just then Vern Borson walked over to greet us. Don greeted him with "Vern, are you still bored of sin?" Vern mumbled something about his name being Borson not Borsin.



**G/C KEN (FRONT CTR) WITH SWAMPER KEITH OLSTAD (BEHIND, TO KEN'S LEFT SHOULDER) AND CREW**



**KEN (RT FRONT)  
AND SWAMPER  
LUTHER (LEFT  
REAR) AND CREW**

It turns out that one of the best decisions I ever made in my life was to decide, albeit under pressure, to work at WILDERNESS. (Nancy, it turns out, met, stayed and later married Vern and lived for a time year 'round at camp.)

On my first canoe expedition—Guide orientation—I was rewarded with a green Seliga canoe, *The Oles*, which had my name painted on. I would call it mine over the next four years. I guess it did not matter that then at 115 pounds I had some trouble flipping the 90-plus pound canoe. I discovered over time that it was related more to mental attitude than to muscle.

My first Trails trip with campers was a disaster. The only thing that saved me was co-guiding the trip with Sol Gipson (Bird Mockicin), another first-time guide. We together took this crew from the training school at Red Wing. It was a ten-day trip through Knife and Alice. I was insecure and the campers knew it and challenged me. I also discovered that the study and devotional materials that I had worked on were not realistic. I had a lot to learn.

In fact, I really wanted to quit at that point, but I knew I could not just walk out. I was really hoping I would break a leg so I would not have to let the torture continue for the whole summer. My image of the true Wilderness guide was like the guys I saw there—the macho, flawless Paul Bunyan type. I felt in awe of the old-timers like Don Rudrud, Dave Johnson, Eric Peterson and Ed Knudson. I had a very rough time thinking that I could ever measure up.

My second expedition was an eight day trip to Titmarsh with a crew from Rake, Iowa. Art Kottke was Swamper. By then the Alpine portage was a breeze, compared to a few weeks before when I stopped at each of the three canoe rests and still barely made it.



After that trip I had a few days in camp when I worked along side G/C Larry David Larson. For two days he would describe the vivid dreams he was having and then a couple days later he died of leukemia. It was very quiet at supper that evening in *Pinecliff*. Then my heart sunk even further when Ham handed me the booklet for the evening's devotions. I knew that whatever I was to read would be irrelevant. When I opened the booklet to the appropriate day, the devotion was entitled, "No fear of death." Wow!



Larry was to have had the next crew from First Lutheran in Hibbing. I was asked to take it along with Pete Rogness as Swamper. Because of Ed Knudson's exciting disclosure about their Grand Portage trip, we were allowed to consider that route. I am sure when I presented the various options for routing to the new crew, I subtly persuaded them to choose the Grand Portage. The nine-day trip included not only the route from Seagull to Grand Portage, but also included a lay over day on Grand Portage Island and

then a paddle to Hovland.

It was a most challenging adventure. We were finding campsites in the dark and had nearly every supper in the dark. Food packs were really our bane on that trip. We left one on Height of Land portage and had to retrieve it on a dark night. But the worst occurred when we could not “catch up” to our food pack on the Grand Portage itself. Jim Wirtanen, the smallest guy on the crew, bounded over the nine mile Grand Portage trail without stopping half way (where Highway 61 then intersected the trail) as we had planned. He had the trail lunch on his back. So we had nothing to eat during that nine-mile portage.

That trip was well documented by one of the campers, Dave Wiehe. He counted every paddle stroke and every portage step he took on the entire trip. He also saved the last exposure in his camera for the “best picture of the trip”— his father coming to pick him up at camp.



My last camper trip of the summer of 1962 was with a great crew from Central Lutheran in Minneapolis. We spent eight days on the Frost River route. I had no swamper on that trip. In stark contrast to names I was called on my first trip of the summer, I now was called “Mother.” Talk about bonding!

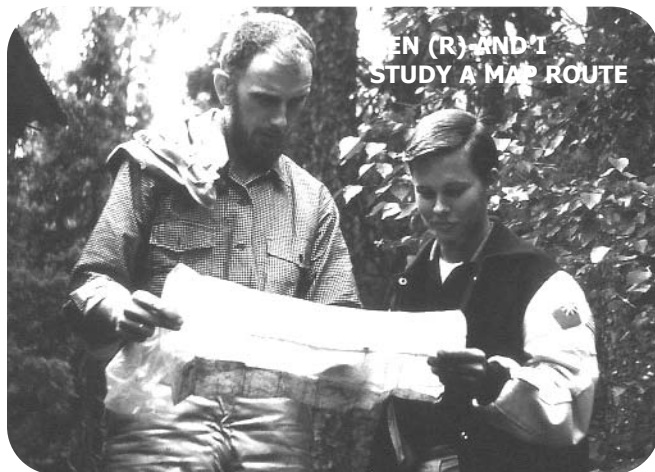
By the end of the summer I was glad I hadn’t broken a leg. I finally began to fully absorb life at WILDERNESS. I had gained ten pounds of muscle but more importantly I had grown emotionally and spiritually. I even thought I might pursue a second season at WILDERNESS.

I was enthusiastic about returning to Wilderness in 1963 for another summer. With my first trip, *Kinsmen*, I found myself picking up where I had left off the summer before. Steve Larson was my Swamper on this adventuresome 12 day trip to Alice and the Kawishiwi.

My second crew was unforgettable. This remarkable group of campers from Our Saviors in Hibbing included, among others, Lee Hill and Bob Hewitt, who would later return to WILDERNESS on the staff. Luther Dale was the emerging Swamper. Although he was new to the trails, the crew liked him. The standard phrase was, “Luther learns fast.” We did an eight-day trip to Peter and Powell. I had never enjoyed myself so much on the trails. For the first time, I really did not want to return to base camp. I had a lump in my throat as that crew left. There was not one complaint the whole trip. A “rarity.” I began to realize that “good” trips need not be long pushes but could be exceptional because they were real learning and bonding experiences.

Small group Trails leadership was a physical and mental strain. It was challenging and demanding but well worth it. A group from the training school at Red Wing with Luther swamping again, was the first crew from WILDERNESS to go into Greenwood Lake in the Quetico. I caught my first fish in two years!

I next had a crew with eight boys from Mr. Carmel in Milwaukee, four of whom were named Tom. We spent eight days traveling down the border lakes. On Rose Lake, Swamper Keith Olstad got stranded on a high ledge. We finally had to lower a rope to get him off. My final summer expedition was a group from Pine River with Roger Roiger swamping. Powerful times.



The summer, altogether, was very special in developing many enduring friendships. But it was a greater time of personal growth building on the experience of the previous season. Fellow Guide Greg Bjornstad and Swamper Luther Dale taught and lived the power of the word of God for me. I began to feel more self-confident... and to feel that my style of guiding was valid even though it was not in the image I originally had

of a guide. A spiritual awakening, principally under Ham's direction, caused me some agony about career choices. I was beginning my second year of medical school and for the first time in my life I was thinking seriously about the seminary. Where would God's Spirit lead?

I would eventually spend a total of four summers guiding at WILDERNESS...plus a couple more participating in orientation. With forty years of hindsight I now realize the my WILDERNESS experience was the most important event shaping my life especially in three areas...personal growth, personal faith, and wilderness appreciation.

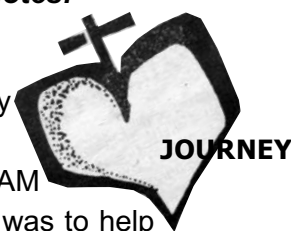
First of all, my self-confidence improved primarily because of the faith and confidence that Ham showed in me. Physically, I also was very tested but I grew to handle tougher challenges. Philosophically, I learned a new view of the world and its people based on the concepts of servant, enabler, and teacher. My personal faith was strengthened with the challenges of presenting a living Savior to campers. Finally, I developed a love affair with *wilderness*. I have indescribable warmth when I experience wild lands. If it had not been for my BWCA experience I would not have spent so much time in remote or wild areas nor thirty years as a physician in Alaska. The yardstick I still judge all other areas by is the Boundary Waters Canoe Area.

WILDERNESS had a major and lasting influence on my life allowing me to be more comfortable in the wilds, more confident of my own abilities, and a more expanded faith.

***So much to say...so many memories. A few WILDERNESS anecdotes:***

**In 1962...**

- ✧ My living unit was a tent top unit with candles being the only illumination at night. I was careful.
- ✧ After guide orientation, I worked around camp on a schedule of 6:30 AM to 10:30 PM with little time off for personal activities. One thing I did was to help Nolan Cramer run a cable from *The Cove* to Fishhook so we could have an intercom phone for the island. Worked hard... learned much.





✧ The same day the first crew left my second campers arrived which meant I would be back on the trails at 7 AM. In those early days the crew would arrive at 4 PM, have a brief orientation, pack out, and be gone by 7 AM the next day.

✧ On the first Sunday in August (8-5-62) I was in charge of putting on a water show as part of the Fishermen's Picnic in Grand Marais. This entertainment put on by our staff preceded the canoe and boat races. Art Kottke and Tom Everson won the canoe race (\$15). The town's people were extremely nice to the WILDERNESS staff, I remember, and also gave \$50 to the camp. Pete Rogness and I rode back to the Base in the back of the big truck that was full of laundry. (Laundry in those days was done at the Laundromat in Grand Marais.) I was so comfortable when we got back to camp that I slept the whole night in the back of the truck.

### **Then in 1963...**

✧ My living unit on Dominion this year was still a tent-top unit but I moved up to a kerosene lantern this year...one like Sigurd Olson had.

✧ Greg Bjornstad who had guided the previous season was also on Dominion. We usually tried to make sure there was a canoe left for the last guy on the island. But one morning Greg came down to paddle over to *Pinecliff* for breakfast but was left no canoe. He came into *Pinecliff* dripping wet from his swim to breakfast. No problem there. Greg was a powerful St. Olaf swimmer.

✧ We climbed several fire towers with staff and crew--Gunflint, Mt. Josephine, Kekakabec, and Plummes twice. Incredible vistas.

### **And in 1964...**

✧ I never will forget our guide orientation trip when Sol Gipson (Bird Mockicin) discussed the Indian rock paintings. We were alone in the lead canoe heading for the Palisades paintings. Knowing that Indian legends might be different in various locations, I asked Sol how he knew so much about Chippewa (Ojibway) petroglyphs if he was Cherokee. He said, "Don't tell Ham this, but I make it all up." As the trailing canoes pulled in with Ham in the lead, Sol said under his breath, "Well here goes" and started his lengthy description of the paintings, fascinating all of us. I often wondered how often those "authentic" stories were repeated by Guides to their interested campers.

✧ In 1966, I came back again to WILDERNESS and shared in staff orientation. It was a small expression of my commitment to "pass it on."

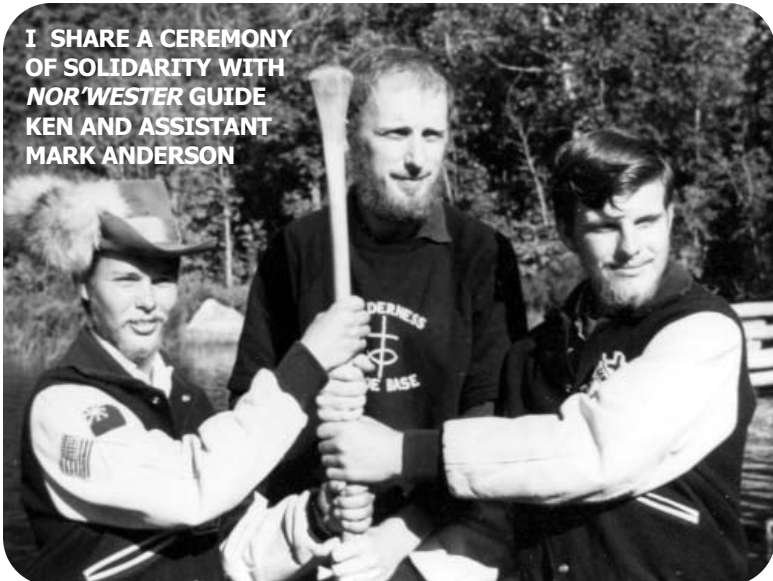




In 1964, WILDERNESS initiated the formation of the *Nor'Wester* experience. The life of the Voyageur of old was a demanding one. It involved personal and group discipline, self-control, acquisition of trails skills and wood lore, hard work, and a keen sense of good fellowship. When a young man had served his apprenticeship under the watchful eye of his 'bourgeois' (or trusted leader), and had been initiated by historic rite on the trails, he was given the coveted title of *Nor'Wester*—"a true son of the wilderness."

In Sigurd Olson's *Runes of the North* we are told "...in the days of long ago, it was the custom for the chief to send young boys approaching manhood into the woods to live alone and prove their strength and courage. They existed on berries, roots, and anything they could find, and were told to stay out many days. During these long and lonely journeys spirits spoke to them and they had dreams and visions from which they often chose a name. If they returned, they became hunters and warriors, and in time took their places in the councils of the tribe."

These tales found contemporary expression in the *Nor'Wester* program, the longest single group camping experience then offered at WILDERNESS Canoe Base. The five weeks were divided up into two equal phases. The first two and a half weeks (Phase One) was a time of work and preparation. The campers would commute from their down-the-lake campsite within the BWCA to base camp for a work-service project. The first year's project was disassembling the Blomberg cabin *Muk-a-kee*, transporting, and reassembling it on Fishhook; the second year's project was fixing up *The Cove*. The campers not only felt a sense of accomplishment in their physical work, but also recognized that it aided their physical conditioning and group unity. Their pristine campsite became the place to relax after work and the classroom for learning a whole new set of skills to really become 'expert' campers.



As these camping skills started to become second nature, we launched into our orientation and preparation for living off the land. We concerned ourselves with building shelters, identifying edible plants, catching small animals, and preparing these foods. During this initial phase, we also took a couple of weekend trips to nearby lakes to strengthen our skills in paddling and portaging and to reflect on our life as *Nor'Westers* collectively and individually. At the

conclusion of Phase One, we were physically and mentally pretty well ready for the next adventures.

Phase Two involved an expedition into some of the more remote areas of the Canadian wilds, testing our traveling and camping skills. We recognized our greater interdependence upon one another as well as greater

individual responsibility. We gradually increased our reliance on survival skills while we divided the group in half, in groups of two or three, and then solo. We were totally alone for a period of three days and two nights as we constructed our own shelters and gathered our own food.



Our life together in Phase Two was often thrilling. Once we hit the trails we pulled even more closely together and accepted each new challenge with renewed vigor. Each *Nor'Wester* crew was different. One thing they had in common was unique to my experiences at WILDERNESS: boys from very diverse settings, institutional and parish backgrounds constituted the group. This was not only challenging but it also deepened understanding for everyone on the crew. It was often surprising how well the unity of purpose and innate leadership evolved. By and large, the hard pushes and long days were taken without grumbling or short temper. The days of relaxation were treated as times of discovery. During the weeks together, campers became more and more aware of their own shortcomings, making a conscious effort to change, and more accepting of others. I felt these *Nor'Wester* crews experienced some of the finest examples of what "life together" on the trails could really mean.

This "life together" had a strong spiritual aspect to it. It was not that the Bible studies, devotions, campfire discussions or services that would mean the most; rather the attempt to live out love, patience, forgiveness and kindness that held the meaning. It was during the times being completely alone that many found life's meaning and their spiritual life deepened. For many, it was the most memorable time of their lives. Their desire for the basics of food and shelter during that time was not nearly so strong as their thirst for contemplation, reading the Word, and meditation. The truth that "man does not live by bread alone" was experienced with a depth that probably could not have been taught in any other fashion. As a result of this "life together", coupled with separation and reunion, many *Nor'Westers* had a beautiful and profound spiritual awakening.



My single most memorable experience

encapsulating this spiritual “life together” occurred during the last week of the *Nor’wester* expedition. We had a service...time for personal prayer and meditation with spontaneous expressions of commitment to God. What amazed me most was the sincerity of these teen-age boys in what followed. One by one, with nary a snicker, each washed the feet of another followed with the words, “because of my commitment to God, I am your servant.” Profound happenings.

The duration of the *Nor’Wester* trips, five weeks, was perhaps the most important, unique dimension of this program. *Time* is an enabler and often a worker of “miracles”. If problems arose, *time* was an asset by allowing the campers to learn new ways of handling conflict and then test them out. The dynamic process of “trial and error” is less possible in a shorter time. “New ways of life”...whether they are social, spiritual, or personal must be experienced rather than just heard. As Lord Byron said, “*Time!* The corrector where our judgments err; the test of truth and love; the sole philosopher, for all beside are sophists.” Evidences of spiritual life and growth began to shine through during our last few days together. Time enables.

My *Nor’Wester* experiences occurred over two summers, 1964 and 1965. Forty years later I am still in contact with friends I made on those trips. Forty years later I am still shaped and molded by my *Nor’Wester* experiences. What made this small group camping experience so extraordinary? I believe it was the *Nor’Wester* Spirit... and the combination of unique features: crew diversity, work-service, survival living, extended solitude, challenging trips, and the long duration. It was indeed exceptional.



Let me lift out something of these *Nor’Wester* dimensions: **SURVIVAL AND SOLITUDE.**

Two unique opportunities that the northwoods setting offers are a relatively undisturbed creation and the ability to experience *Solitude*. During the first half of our five weeks together as *Nor’Westers*, we started preparing for *Solitude and Survival* living. In addition to reading about *Survival* and learning from our Camp Naturalist, we also spent time practicing it. On one afternoon we gathered up some of the ‘fat of the land’ for supper and had very ample frog legs with wild onions. We also had snake meat that was really quite good. It was a big step in overcoming our fears about foods for survival living. A few days later, we portaged into Jap Lake where we had snails, arrowhead plant tubers, and a spruce hen for supper. I was not very happy about the catching of the grouse. I thought the campers’ enthusiasm for living off the land was getting a little too uncontrolled, perhaps; but my attitude about eating wild grouse changed when I was facing my own survival period later on.

The second phase of our experience involved a demanding expedition into some of the more remote areas of the Canadian outback. In the middle of this period we divided the group in half, in groups of two, and finally stood alone in the “unknown”. We constructed our own shelters and ate entirely off the land. We were alone for two nights and three days.

Our time alone, completely alone, was actually a culmination of the whole process of understanding the wilderness. In *Survival*, one is stripped down to almost nothing. The two basics of food and shelter are gone. Remarkably, it is during this time of seeking the basics that one discovers that he is not so isolated as he might think. Food-gathering is not an easy process. It takes many hours for a few mouthfuls of food. One begins to realize that finding an edible plant or animal does not necessarily mean a tasty dish or a full stomach, but means that food is nourishing.



During these times of digging for clams, chasing crawfish, stalking frogs, and burrowing for arrowhead tubers that one really becomes aware of the intricate natural setting about. *A keen sense of oneness with nature emerges.* Empathy, participation, and identification with nature becomes a reality. One could almost begin to see self as primitive being. In this process of really feeling more “one” with nature, the campers no longer feared the prospect of wild animals. Each of us looked forward to seeing one in their surroundings. There was no longer a need to “dominate”...rather a desire to be a part of it. This was a marvelous transformation.



realized that they need not be so self absorbed. Others demonstrated real humility. Some who may not have had as much confidence developed a much greater sense of security while living alone. Changes happen.

My greatest personal delight in the initial *Nor'Wester* experience was talking with each of the crew members as we came together after days alone. A response such as, “Oh, it was okay” would even have pleased me. To a camper, each valued the experience even more deeply than I had dared to imagine. It was a powerful affirmation of how God’s Spirit works in and thru our lives. I carry *Nor'Wester* memories deep within.

*Survival* living by itself was exciting enough, but coupled with *Solitude* the whole experience became even more thrilling. The big question I had about the solo experience was whether or not the *Survival* would overshadow the *Solitude*. For some, their real appreciation of others in the group came when they were alone. They saw themselves in another light. Some

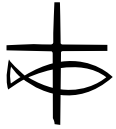
**"... and in that  
day a burden will  
be lifted from  
your shoulders...  
and a yoke will  
be removed from  
your neck."**

**ISAIAH 10**

**NOR' WESTER  
YOKE FELLOW  
MARY- MARTHA  
DUO LOS**







One first *Nor'Wester* was **Andrew Rogness**. His participation helped to forge a strong Trails community. He has carried his WILDERNESS camper and Staff imprint for a lifetime of grateful, sensitive service. He is an extremely gifted writer. His *Reflection* provides us with keen insight and compassionate understanding. Listen to the rhythm of his Spirit song.



### Andrew Rogness

I am told by those who climb mountains that when a person pauses to rest, it is wise to turn and look upon the ground that's been covered, rather than stare at what lies ahead. In this manner, one is more likely to gain strength for the remaining challenge through the satisfaction of seeing how much one has accomplished to that point.



The 50th Anniversary of WILDERNESS is one such moment. We look back upon what has been accomplished – lives blessed, friendships gained, comfort and joy found in pristine wilderness, faith in a loving creator God deepened. Some of this can be named and remembered. Most of it we know to be like ripples on the water, endlessly blessing God's creation in unseen ways, a deep reservoir of strength for tasks that lie ahead.

My own WILDERNESS encounter began in 1963 when I realized my older brother and sister were abandoning the usual summer ritual of a month at the cabin, for a summer in deeper woods. My folks and I checked on their well-being during July's open house, and Peter gave us a personal tour, proudly commenting on the temporary foot bridge joining the two islands that he helped build for the occasion. It may have been the last summer that such a rickety contraption of 2x4's was needed.

Peter returned home in the fall with Art Kottke, a former "baldy" gang member turned Swamper, who lived with our family that year and who became a permanent member of our extended family. They were both excited to demonstrate their cooking prowess, and cooked up a batch of bannock. I was not impressed. In spite of bannock's failure, I was hooked by their enthusiasm and wanted a greater taste of that.

My application to be a Swamper the next summer, after my sophomore year in high school, was turned down. It was the best thing to happen to me, because the alternative suggested was to be a part of the first *Nor'wester* group. Morris Wee and I arrived a day later than the rest of the campers, since his father wanted to take us up and reminisce about his summer work in the 1920's as a logger along the Gunflint Trail. There was still eight miles of the original road, a gravel and roller coaster ride that seemed to please him.



Pastor Ham didn't waste any time in sending us out to meet our *Nor'Wester* group.





With our gear thrown into a Duluth pack, he gave us a map, asked if we could read it (Mo must have feigned enough confidence) and, with a twinkle in his eye, shoved us off the canoe dock. No swim test. No life jackets. I still remember the whitecaps rolling by the gunwales as we made our way past the palisades. And I remember the relief I felt as we pulled into a bay north east of the Alpine portage where we met our group. Our job that week was pulling apart the cabin that was to become Mukakee.

There is a method of teaching the Apaches use called “coyote teaching.” You don’t do everything or tell everything to the student. You give a person enough to go on – hints, experiences, even misinformation at times – in order that the individual follows the clues, draws one’s own conclusions, and corrects the false teaching. This way, long-lasting learning takes place. *Nor’wester* was that kind of experience. When Ham set us loose on Seagull with a map and our naiveté, he was Coyote teaching. When Ken Petersen and Mark Anderson taught us the little they knew about survival skills, they were Coyote teaching (I don’t think they knew it.... It may have been more a matter of the blind leading the blind – but it worked!)

There were three lasting components and results of this month long experience for me personally. First, we were learning some survival skills for some *Solitude* in the wilderness – three days and two nights on the fourth week of our adventure. The skills we learned that summer were minimal at best, but the experience planted a seed of life-long hunger to learn more – to be able to feel that there is no getting lost in the woods, there is only a need to take a little more time to return to civilization.

The second learning came naturally from the *Solitude*. You cannot experience extended *Solitude* without experiencing the wanderings of your own mind. Most of our daily life has too much going on and too many distractions to pay much attention to those wanderings. In *Solitude*, we give ourselves space for the mind to make its tracks, and for us to observe our own mental footprints. More than that, we realize that God uses our stream of consciousness. Thought becomes a waking dream that makes sense. Instead of throwing words at God, wilderness *Solitude* quiets the mind and opens the soul to the “still, small voice” of God to be heard. I have wondered if, without *Nor’Wester*, I would have learned that.

And with the second learning necessarily came the third. That is, our Christian and Lutheran theology has within it a very dormant and powerful seed. It is our heritage that affirms the notion that God is everywhere-present (“omnipresent” was the word I remember written on the board in 8th grade confirmation.) Or another way of saying this is “the-spirit-that-moves-in-all-things.” We do not live with a deist notion of God out there as an absentee landlord. *Solitude* in the wilderness naturally brings a person into the reality of God’s ever-present nature. The concept can be taught in a classroom, but this truth is best experienced in the “deep woods.”

WILDERNESS staff has the good fortune of being present as these spiritual seeds are planted. Every once in a while we stumble upon how life changing a WILDERNESS trip can be – but rarely does that happen within the time-frame of the trip itself. In the summer of 1965 I had the good fortune to be a Swamper on a four-week *Yokefellow* adventure. One of the campers, Paul, began in a surly mood – I could imagine he was sent by parents who were both desperate for something positive for him and also needing a break from his belligerence. Since our Guide, Wayne, became quite ill the day after their arrival at camp, I took the group onto Seagull for a couple days until we could venture north with a healthy guide (since we were to travel beyond the Wawia River, bush-whacking between lakes that had no portages to join them). As we puttered around Seagull, Paul made it clear that he knew everything needed for living in the woods, and he was not about to abide by WILDERNESS “standards” – especially coming from someone his own age! We seemed to establish a truce. I don’t recall anything extraordinary in the rest of the trip for him. He returned home. The summer continued with other trips, and that was that.

Several years later my father and I were chatting about WILDERNESS and canoe trips. Perhaps he directed the conversation, wanting to share a little more about Paul. He knew Paul’s family. I can imagine these fathers may have conspired to send Paul in the first place. Months after *Yokefellow*, Paul’s dad had confided with my father that the trip had been a watershed event in Paul’s life. His anger and withdrawn spirit had abated. There was humor and gentleness again. He felt their son had been restored to them. Though Paul had mentioned to his father that the trail lunch reflections on the book of Romans were significant, I suspect that was an easy thing to point to, as a way to satisfy a parent’s curiosity.

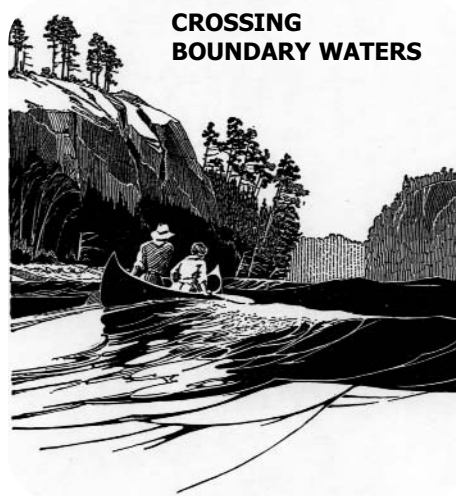


There is mystery below that surface explanation. How does one articulate spiritual catalysts that are transformative? How does one explain the moving of God’s spirit, when our deep longings are at last met by our heart’s desire? The ripples in a stream speak of the rock below. A changed life and a sense of vocation are the visible sign of God’s presence. Paul’s is one such story. It is one story that explains the 50-year vocation of WILDERNESS.



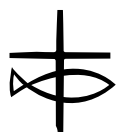
Mixed in with the nostalgia of WILDERNESS memories – of glorious beauty and gentle weather, of eager and helpful campers – are also the suppressed memories. To be truthful, we know of times when groups couldn’t start a fire for several days because it seemed the rain would never let up. We know there were thefts of candy bars and fights over wet cigarettes.

My first summer of guiding meant being teamed with Stan Olson and Ken Domke to be the guides for that summer’s groups from Red Wing State Training School. Since Red Wing was “into” group therapy, they insisted that their school groups travel together. Since there were no group size limits at that time in the BWCA, WILDERNESS went along with RWSTS insistence. Our first two trips were each



with 15 boys, Guide, Swamper, plus their staff counselor. Imagine finding sites that could handle 18 people with four large tents and 7 or 8 canoes. Imagine the headache of logistics and quantity of gear. Imagine 15 reluctant campers. Imagine chasing two of them down on the Alpine portage because they had taken a canoe and were trying to return to the Gunflint Trail, making a 'break for freedom'. I remember trying to stay awake after everyone else, so that I'd have a moment's peace. I remember not wanting to wake anyone in the morning for the same reason. Even Red Wing saw the folly of their design, relenting half way through the summer to split those groups into two of standard size.

Just as common purpose can create lasting bonds among staff, so too can common adversity. And when we leave the summer behind, when we are no longer on staff, we carry more than memories. We carry an awareness of the many kindred spirits that we know, who continue to live the faith and values we shared at WILDERNESS. The work of compassion, the value of "leave-no-trace" for present day global environmental challenges, faith in a loving God, these continue to be our common bonds, and we are heartened in knowing we are among the many who continue the ministry of WILDERNESS.



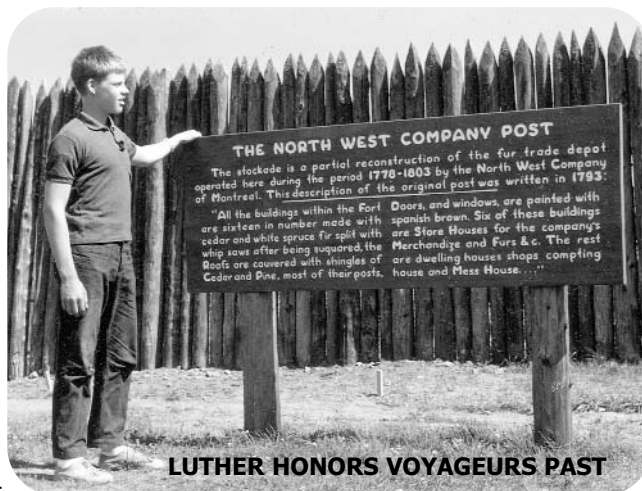
I had asked Ken Petersen about assisting leadership for *Nor'Wester II*. He sorted out the needs and chose **Luther Dale** as staff partner. It was an excellent choice. the two of them had a personal "chemistry" and Spiritual connection which was exceptional.

Luther, another of my talented cousins, had evidenced skill and strength as a Swamper. He briefly shares some of his WILDERNESS experience.



**Luther Dale**

WILDERNESS was one of the most significant and formative experiences of my life. I worked as a Swamper during my high school summers of 1963, 1964 and 1965. Of course, I gained a deep love for the Boundary Waters Canoe Area and WILDERNESS, its unique and transcendent beauty that seeps into the memory of the soul and colors it forever. That beauty was a portal into an appreciation of God as the living creator and redeemer of all that exists.



Because so much of WILDERNESS depended on community...both at the Base Camp and on the trail...I gained a rich sense of faith in one "Life Together" (Bonhoeffer). It moved me beyond personal piety to see that we depend on each other to grow and live the Christian faith...that WILDERNESS experiences of challenge...mystery...mutual support...and journey are metaphors for lively faith and communal worship. My sense of the world as a dwelling place for God was expanded and deepened.

WILDERNESS taught me so much about myself...my potential and my limits. Participating under Ken Petersen's leadership in the month-long *Nor'Wester* program, I learned I could endure difficult challenges while being resourceful. I found physical strength and endurance that I didn't know I had and confidence that flowed from accomplishment. I also realized my need for and dependence on others...especially diverse, searching, camper peers. I experienced acceptance and love...developing friendships that have endured and been mutually supportive and inspiring. I am grateful. What I learned at WILDERNESS has been part of what I have tried to pass on to my children. It has encouraged them in love for God's creation and creatures.

There is not doubt that the experiences and lessons of WILDERNESS pointed me to an understanding of ministry and "calling" in a broad sense. Experiencing a variety of people...whether inquiring parish kids or teens at-risk...made me aware that all of us are both "gifted and broken." We are all called to be servants of each other as both saints and sinners in whatever situation we find ourselves. Of the dozens upon dozens who have worked at WILDERNESS over the years, I'm struck by how many have lived lives of healing and service, and have been agents for building the common good in the various communities, in which they live and work.

WILDERNESS was a gift of grace and community for which I will always be grateful.



Hands down... our most prolific, skilled fish cleaner and filet preparer was **Nancy Caple**. She and Bob Evans were International Falls natives. Both could filet fish on a paddle. Nancy was the most expert! She demonstrated her skill before amazed staff observers.

She also was a talented Guide/Counselor. Her introduction to Support Staffer Vern Borson resulted in a celebrative *Band of Brothers* marriage ceremony. Nancy and Vern served WILDERNESS faithfully for many years. Nancy shares these early *Reflections*.



**Nancy Caple (Borson)**



It was the spring of 1962 when I first traded in my Chanel #5 for prized concoctions bearing the highest concentrations of DEET that could be found. I was among several new staffers that had been picked up in Grand Marais on that first day, and I've always remembered a comment made by Ken Petersen as we stood in *The Cove* awaiting a pontoon ride to the Island. Ken said something like, "What do you think? Should we try to get out of here while we can?" I just laughed. It was just another job, right? Wrong!

Little did we realize that our lives were about to change....forever. On that day we were making a passage into new world, much like the little children passing through the wardrobe door in the *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. We would learn, at WILDERNESS, to see our world in a whole new way: the manner in which we related to others would change in many positive ways, we would come to see the enormity of problems in the lives of disadvantaged youth in stark reality, our beliefs would change.

And little did I realize, at that moment, that I would one day marry Vern, the boat driver

who helped bring us over to the Island!

Some vestiges of my St. Olaf life arrived at camp with me, and it seemed only proper to arrive at church on Sunday mornings wearing gloves, nylons, and freshly ironed clothes. Even though that effort required learning how to get in and out of a canoe without putting a run in one's nylon (while still obeying the Wet Foot Policy!). And even though the only way to iron clothes was to throw them in a canoe and paddle over to *The Cove* on Saturday evenings where there was electricity....and an ironing board!

It was there, in *The Cove*, that my husband-to-be, Vern Borson, and Dave Johnson and his friend Karen would hang out on many Saturday evenings. Vern and Dave would tell the craziest of stories. They had shared many wild experiences during the early development of camp and its buildings. One of Dave's favorite stories was reminding Vern of the time, when the two of them were returning late at night from a trip to PCYC in the Cities in a truck with squeaky brakes, that Vern had commented, "It's time to get the 'Greeks braced' ." Vern and Dave were masters at getting others to roll in laughter.

Before I knew it, Vern was helping me paddle those freshly ironed clothes back to the Island (it helped if I could hold the clothes on my lap). And so it came to pass, that as the months went by, I came to realize that I would always want Vern by my side. We continued to meet through the following winter, and were married on July 27th of 1963 in the *Band of Brothers Chapel*.

My summer as a Guide for girls' trips was a powerful education for me. I had much to learn from these young girls. Early in the summer one of my campers had complained about the powdered milk we brought on the trails. She said that powdered milk was all she ever knew, all the welfare ever gave her family, and she wanted real milk. My first reaction was, of course, to wonder how she could be so ungrateful for gifts given. By summer's end, however, I began to understand, and came to see the 'diluted milk' as a symbol of diluted lives for so many disadvantaged youths. I would come to compare the deficiencies in their lives to that of plants that received insufficient sun, and water, and nutrients. They grew, but they were weakened and their roots were not strong. And, like plants, it is difficult to make them healthy again....one can improve the conditions of life, but without strong roots, a full rescue is difficult to obtain. Thus, a whole new reality began to creep into my own, 'advantaged' life. How I came to admire the staff at WILDERNESS who worked so hard to help, who cared so much, who filled the days with laughter and song and guidance for these young people.

Vern and I did make a couple of attempts at city living. We lived in Minneapolis for a year while Vern took business classes and worked for PCYC. I taught school at West High. We moved to Chicago for a time where Vern worked alongside his father building skyscrapers in the city. I found an office job. We did have great income in Chicago! But our hearts were not at home. In 1965, we were elated when Vern returned to WILDERNESS to join the bridge-building crew. This time we would stay for another 12 years and raise our three young children there... in the land of beautiful people and beautiful forests.



WILDERNESS had staff who were “disciples.” They were both “learners and teachers” willing to share...of themselves, emerging skills, and the Gospel.

It is no surprise that many, like **Paul Preus**, filtered their vocational choices through their WILDERNESS experience. Paul speaks to his gradual career teaching journey... with a WILDERNESS impetus.



**Paul Preus**

My first experience at WILDERNESS Canoe Base was as a camper from Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Minneapolis in the late 1950's. Our trip was one I will never forget. Our Guide/Counselor was Lee Bonhoff. Our trip was very demanding physically and mentally because of the distance that we covered.

The last leg of our trip proved to be very interesting. Because we were short of time, the decision was made to return to WILDERNESS via Jap Lake. We spent quite a bit of time trying to locate the portage from Jap to Seagull, but to no avail. We found the portage from Jap to Jimmy. Upon reaching Jimmy, we then decided that we had to compass across land to another small lake then on to Seagull.

After blazing a new portage, we eventually reached Seagull. At Seagull, we were confronted with a precipitous rock wall that required us to lower all our supplies, equipment, canoes as well as campers by rope. Talk about rugged adventure! Several years later on exploring this area, I located that very same ridge as well as our blaze marks on our portage. I still have the map from our trip with the route and campsites marked. It is signed by all the campers and adult leaders. It is a treasured keepsake.

One summer, between trips as a Guide/Counselor, two staff members and I were assigned the job of continuing to build the stone wall around the base of *Band of Brothers*. The three of us started to work together on the same section. Eventually, we each took a section and worked by ourselves. Several years later when I returned to WILDERNESS, I visited the Chapel. The stone wall was still standing. As I looked at our work, I saw that each of us had a different way of building the wall. One can see the differences in the appearance of the wall. Many different hands have helped construct and build WILDERNESS into what it is today. I think that is a wonderful metaphor. Later my experience at WILDERNESS helped shape a very successful outdoor education program at St. Louis Park working with teenagers.

One fall I remember working with a marvelous craftsman, Carl Feske. Our task was to start removing rock with dynamite on Dominion. Kaboom! This was the beginning of the *Bridge of the Master* between Dominion and Fishhook. I learned a lot from Carl.

All Guide/Counselors were assigned canoes that were designed and constructed by



**PAUL (3RD FROM RT) PAUSES WITH CAMPERS BEFORE HOMEWARD JOURNEY**

Joe Seliga. WILDERNESS had a mixture of fiberglass and cedar strip canoes. In the book *The Art of the Canoe with Joe Seliga*, Joe made reference to the fiberglass canoe era and how he returned to constructing only the cedar strip canoes. It was a joy to paddle a Seliga canoe. Herman, Pastor Ham's father, took special care of those canoes at our workshop.

I carry many strong memories of my experiences at WILDERNESS. My cousin, John Glesne, also speaks of those WILDERNESS summers... and winters... when we are together. We are doubly bonded together.

We were blessed with many dedicated talented WILDERNESS women in *The Founding Years*. All were important and made significant contributions to our community life.

In **Martha** (Tudy as she was so affectionately known) we enjoyed another from the storied Rogness family. Martha's Dad was a major "cheerleader" and mentor; Peter and Andrew were gifted staff members; and Tudy brought a very special energy and spontaneity which captivated us all. We were graced in major fashion by her presence.

Martha shares some delightful, insightful memories from her early participation.



**Martha Rogness (Vetter)**



Winter, 1963. My brother Peter told me that WILDERNESS Canoe Base was a great place to spend my summer vacation from my English teaching job at Osseo High School. He'd been a Swamper, and said that even though I was female, his boss Ham had finally hired girls to guide trips, rather than simply having them in the kitchen. He also said that there were lots of guys on staff. That phenomenon probably appealed to me more than the lure of the "lakes and streams" of the North country.



I knew how to paddle. I took WSI during the winter. Peter told me what kind of boots to get ... I was ready.

On to guide orientation...

I shared my two-bed staff cabin with a Swamper who was on a different rotation from me. Therefore, I was alone most of the time. I'd come from Minneapolis when it was about 80 degrees. On that first night, I was grateful that Peter had warned me about the temperature dip and we'd chosen a great sleeping bag. I basked in the feel of sleeping pretty much outside. However, it was a bit disconcerting that someone had painted a huge wolf spider on the underside of the upper bunk.

As all staff members know, the ice had gone out on Seagull about twenty minutes before we had to take the swim test... I do believe that was what was meant when we were encouraged to "plunge into" our training. Trails coordinator Mike Helfrich laughed gleefully throughout our agony. All of the Guides back then were given



cedar strip Seliga (hand made canoes specially crafted in Ely by Joe Seliga) canoes. They are works of art; however, they also weigh somewhere between 90 and 95 pounds. *Yikes!* After thawing out from the swim test, we learned to "flip" our own canoes. (I couldn't do it at first, but, hurrah, I did it by the end of the summer.)

With our two inches of skin still frozen, we ventured upstairs *Pinecliff II*, entering the Feske-Koskela nurse's station to watch with great rapture, *Breath of Life*, the film which would teach us—and entertain us—the method of "mouth-to-mouth" resuscitation. (Later that summer, we dropped a white sheet off the *Bridge of the Master*, put a projector on the pontoon, hooked it up with a long extension cord, and watched the movie - backwards—for a little "Paddle-In" party, complete with popcorn, of course). Another on our "Top Two" Oscar-winning list was the story of the voyageurs. We soon were to have the opening song, "La, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la," forged into our memories.

Our guide orientation trip took us to Alpine Lake; however, we first went up through Lake Saganaga to orientate us through many narrows, islands, etc. That first portage for any new guide is one shoulders and knees recall with mixed emotions: "What have you gotten us into?" All of the doubts were erased, for me, by the time our days of study, singing, cooking, laughing, praying, bonding... What could be finer?

I must admit I do get orientation trips mixed up from summer to summer. But, here are some highlights: I gave Guide Ben a cake mix to stir up, getting it ready to pop into the reflector oven. Around five minutes later I checked on him, only to discover that he was dutifully counting the number of strokes suggested on the box..."181, 182, 183...!!!" Pearl came with the girls—our campsite was separate from the boys—which was incredibly delightful to hear her stories about Ham. We were all quite respectful of our "boss." Pearl helped us humanize Ham, telling us secret stories about him. We used my dad, Alvin Rogness' book, *Youth Ask, "Why Bother About God?"*, as the basis of our Bible studies. After teaching English - without spiritual interpretation—it was incredibly rich to share thoughts with fellow Christians... First Word, lunch devotions, Bible study, and Close of Day. Our moments were filled with the "food" for the summer.

There is almost a desperation to know everyone during Guide orientation. We knew that we might not see each other for the rest of the summer! Thus, our conversations would often be filled with depth, sharing thoughts from the core of our beings. What an honor to know and learn to love such unique, talented, and dedicated Christians. We were instantly kindred spirits, not only rubbing our sore backs, but also realizing that we shared a faith that was kindling in the warmth of campfires, and the words of our hearts.

Stories, stories, stories! I have shared with my brothers Andrew and Peter about how much "mileage" we've gotten out of our guiding days' stories. Peter and Andrew in



their sermons, I in my classroom...Just a couple:

We girl guides would have campers come from the juvenile facility in Sauk Centre. Five girls would be delivered; five girls would be taken back. The first batch that was brought up that summer "ran" from their guide, flagging down boats on Big Sag. Before my trip Ham called me in to advise me to take my campers into remote areas. I was to have these ladies for 18 days, and Ham was anxious for me to make sure they didn't split from me. I decided then and there I would instill in the group major fear factor: they would know that the "lions and tigers and bears, oh my" were lurking around every corner. Snakes, spiders, meat-eating otters ... Whatever! It worked. They stuck to me like glue. Every night I would sleep by the door, and they would crowd in to be close to me.

An anecdote from that trip: The camp policy ruled that no campers or staff would smoke. Therefore, these five chain-smokers were stripped from their cigarettes prior to the trip. Needless to say, each of them was experiencing major nicotine fits, crabby as all get out! On our way into Ogish, one of the girls managed to buy a pack from a fisherman and, when we were getting ready for bed—in our jammies—suddenly the largest of the five snared the "smoker" in a head lock, demanding to know where she'd gotten cigarettes. If that wasn't bad enough, I realized that this out-of-control lady held my fish knife to her captive's neck. In absolute panic, I bawled, "Stop it! Stop it! I don't know how to handle anything like this!!!" In my fear-filled voice I tried to instill in them the fact we were hours—days—months away from a doctor, a hospital... Soon all the girls were crying, sobbing, in fact. I managed to get the knife, quickly hiding it. Trying to instill in them a calmness, which I did not feel, we sat down around the campfire. I slowly built up the flames, hoping that the warmth would bring some semblance of tranquility.

The first order of business was to figure out the whole cigarette agenda. I decided that each of the girls needed to have a share of the pack, advising them that they could buy more whenever they had a chance. Also, they needed to smoke around me, to avoid any chance of forest fires. Needless to say, they all puffed up their share that very night, looking forward to the eventual purchase of more. And, they did manage to get all sorts of tobacco products in the days to come! One particular "treasure" was a novelty cigar—shaped much like a sausage. When the girls smoked it—around the campfire—it was almost like a peace pipe ritual. Each passed it after inhaling a huge gulp of blue smoke. I did not imbibe, by the way.

Importantly, by the end of that trip the girls were very reluctant to leave the trails—as was often the case with so many. That scary night sealed the reality that colors all WILDERNESS trips: we must depend on each other to live... And, God's word is woven in that living.

I'm sure everyone from the "early days" recognized Ham's rugged "work ethic." The women guides on the staff, when not on the trails, were to be working on any needed project. Because there weren't a fleet of girl guides, I was always working along side the guys. That suited me just fine. But... I couldn't swim with the men because Ham was anxious not to have any fraternizing in the water, I guess! Yet, there was a camp policy that forbade anyone swimming alone. What was I to do? I presented Ham with my dilemma; he agreed that I could swim with the boys. I enjoy reminding him of his "narrow-minded" rules. Pearl thinks they're a riot!

Stories, stories, stories! I thank Ham for the gift of WILDERNESS, for his vision, for his abiding faith in all of us, and his God.



**Lois Rambo** brought another strategic dimension. Her rural roots, ability to bounce back from adversity, and solid witness of faith enriched the staff and camper community. Her *Reflection* touches many intersections of faith and action.



**Lois Rambo**



When I first arrived at WILDERNESS Canoe Base I was pretty green. I remember Sol Gipson patiently teaching me how to paddle a canoe, flip it and portage. Then came the first canoe venture with the new Guide/Counselors out for training. Alpine Portage seemed nearly impossible. I was only carrying my personal pack! That night, since I was the only new female guide that year, I lay in the tent alone wondering what in the world I had gotten myself into. Fortunately, others had confidence in me; I learned much and was soon having one of the greatest growing experiences of my life.



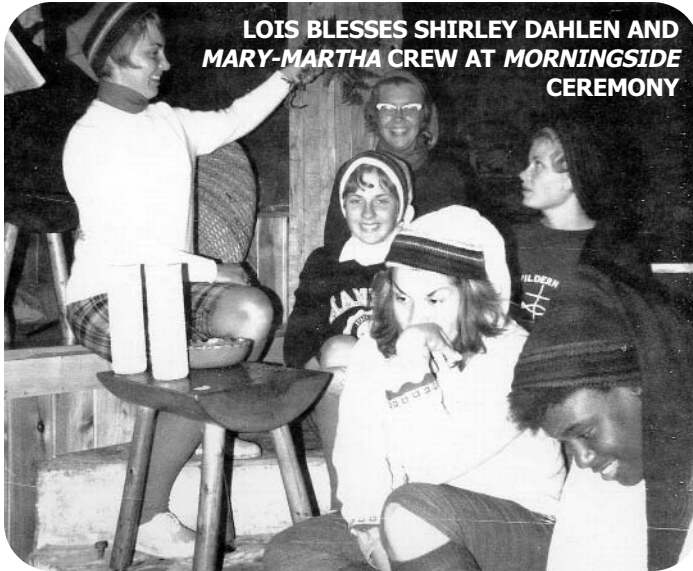
I remember especially an 18-day *Mary-Martha* Quetico trip in August of 1964 to beautiful Titmarsh Lake and its mile long sandy beach. *Mary-Martha* crews were a unique blend of campers from institutions or the inner-city and church youth. In this crew there were three girls from Sauk Center, one from a parish and one adult advisor. No other girls group from WILDERNESS had ever gone to this remote Canadian area.

The night before we left, Pastor Ham and Pearl invited our crew to *Morningside* for a ceremony dubbing each of us an official voyageur. We were called forward separately, decked with a toque (red woolen stocking cap) and sprinkled with water from cedar boughs. How welcome that toque would be in the cold, windy, drizzly days ahead.

Each day began with a *Nor'wester* hymn and devotions. We had all kinds of exciting adventures; going through Canadian customs, finding the Indian paintings in Northern Lights, paddling through wild rice with ducks, king fishers and blue herons flying, picking highbush cranberries for sauce on pancakes and seeing my first Bald Eagle on top of an old Jack Pine tree. A lay-over day in remote Axe Handle Lake closed with a campfire and singing on a beautiful sandy beach; then watching the moon, clouds and stars with their shimmering reflections on a calm, quiet lake. Awesome.

Tough journey followed. The marshy, boggy Weikwabinonow River where the air was full of mosquitoes and the banks full of moose, deer and beaver signs. Before entering Scorch Island Lake, we gathered a supply of clams, which were later enjoyed in clam chowder and dumplings on the promised spectacular mile long sand beach in Titmarsh Lake.

Over the days, everything went relatively well... but something seemed to be missing. There had been no real coming together of this mixed diverse crew. Then came the morning we were to begin heading back. We awoke to a cold thick fog. I remember warming up by running on the sand beach in fog so thick I could hardly see where I was



going. As the fog lifted, the wind picked up and so did our pace to break camp and cross the wide-open lake to the first portage.

The three girls from Sauk Center claimed one canoe, the food and equipment packs. Advisor Shirley Dahlen and I were quite apprehensive that they might run. The girls apparently figured if they paddled in circles waving a white dishtowel, they could be picked up by a sea plane.

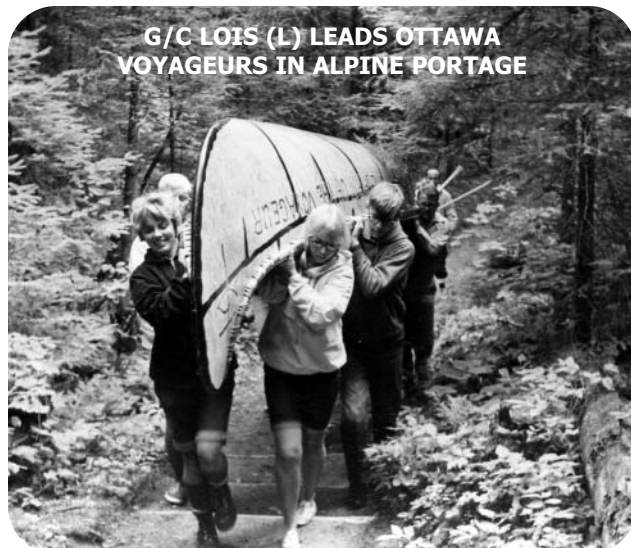
Shirley and I headed for the portage. We made the portage,

waited and watched. I wondered if we were doing the right thing. As the sun was setting, I heard one of the girls calling "Lois, Lois..." I called and waved my red toque to welcome them back. This was a real breakthrough. We camped on the portage that night. Everyone was thankful to be together. We processed the anxiety of the day. We gained an experience of being alone, very scared and separated. I believe a loving God had guided the "reunion." We returned to WILDERNESS as one crew, bonded together.

Another very memorable trip was a 14-day adventure with girls from Hennepin County Court Services. The camper's personalities clashed from the start. It was late July and very warm. We explored Red Rock Bay, Gold Island and Silver Falls. Then came a hot push day over Monument Portage down into Ester Lake. The girls were crabby and unhappy. When we arrived at our island campsite, I was very woozy from heat and overwork. One of the campers thoughtfully brought me a salt pill and water while I laid in the shade recovering from heat exhaustion.

The girls were on their own. They had to take charge. They set up camp and started cooking. They also began talking together. When I felt better, I helped them make a blueberry pie from the berries we had gathered earlier. One of the girls asked if their stubbornness made me sick. "What kind of report would I write about them?" They had changed attitudes.

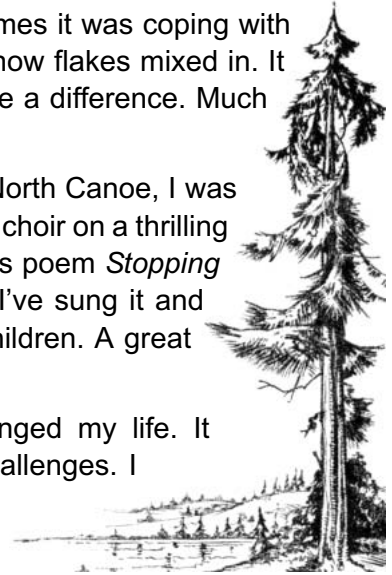
What a breakthrough!! The rest of the trip was long and hot, but tiredness and hard work no longer mattered. Bible studies and discussions were great and personal growth was evident. My exhaustion turned out to be an opportunity for the campers to look at their attitudes and to grow. This turned out to be a much-valued trip for all.



Each day at WILDERNESS was a new beginning. Sometimes difficulties made it possible to give up selfishness and dare to be self-giving. Sometimes it was coping with adverse weather: black flies, high winds or cold rainy days with snow flakes mixed in. It was important learning that what I do or don't do really does make a difference. Much was a matter of Spirit.

When WILDERNESS obtained the *Spirit of the Voyageur* North Canoe, I was given the opportunity to take B.J. Muus and his 40-member Ottawa choir on a thrilling singing trip to Alpine Lake. B.J. composed music for Robert Frost's poem *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*. It's a wonderful paddling song. I've sung it and taught it to all my campers and now to my children and grandchildren. A great experience and a lasting memory.

The three summers I spent at WILDERNESS truly changed my life. It helped give me the confidence and faith to meet a lifetime of challenges. I hope it did the same for my campers.



From earliest days, we tried to enhance our own... and campers... appreciation for our spectacular lands and the BWCA camping arena. We had much to learn. Gradually, our sensitivities were sharpened. Discovery, surprise, beauty beyond words, joining with creation... all took root in our collective heart.

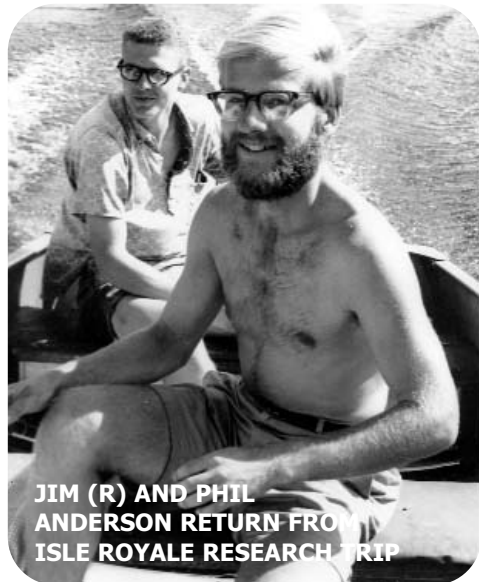
The Ice House was revamped into the Nature Nest. Well chosen staff brought expertise to WILDERNESS program. **Jim Gronewald** was one who extended awareness in an intentional fashion. A memorial gift by Ebba Janzig encouraged his work.



### Jim Gronewald

It was with great anticipation that I arrived at WILDERNESS Canoe Base from Wartburg College early in the summer of 1965. I interviewed with Pastor Ham for the position of Camp Naturalist. I was eager for the experience in the Boundary Waters before heading to graduate school in Texas. My scouting experiences, plus family trips to Minnesota instilled in me a love for the outdoors. I heard some exciting things about WILDERNESS.

The Nature Nest would be my home and center for welcoming the campers to the Boundary Waters. My special task was working on the Janzig Memorial Nature Trail, which we would lay out and construct throughout the summer. This stewardship of the earth was an integral part of the teaching and the practice at WILDERNESS. I still lean over and pick up a bit of paper or other "trash" that is out-of-place in the out-of-doors. This was so engrained in us: we are visitors to this area and it



JIM (R) AND PHIL  
ANDERSON RETURN FROM  
ISLE ROYALE RESEARCH TRIP

must be respected and cared for.

In preparation for the Nature Trail layout, I was privileged to travel to Isle Royale with Phil Anderson to check out their trails. This knowledge helped in designing our trail with as little impact on the environment as possible. We developed a “guidebook” that enabled hikers to do a self-guided tour. I accompanied campers on the 90 nature hikes of the summer. Hopefully, this introduction helped open a few eyes to what would be experienced on the trails.



The camp staff had both important support roles and memories: the welcoming of the new campers at the dock... the campfires... the wonderful food coming from the kitchen... the long walks at night back to a rustic cabin in the woods... the saunas... packing out groups with their food and supplies... and the worship at *Band of Brothers*. What a spectacular setting in which to affirm a God who is a part of all of life... showing us how to live with

one another and with the creation. We all felt that we were an essential part of the WILDERNESS experience... that every person's gifts were important... that we wanted to learn to live together and work together. This was Pastor Ham's theme.

I saw the changes that occurred with the Guide/Counselors, Swampers and Campers during their trips. They bonded. The campers were a mixture of kids from parishes and kids at-risk. So different, so similar.

During my second season, I was a Guide/Counselor. I grew quickly in leadership and wilderness skills. I was privileged to take five trips into the Boundary Waters, each of them on a challenging route. All of my groups were with boys... often accompanied by a Swamper. Most of the trips were twelve days in length.

I remember the first time I saw my name painted on the Seliga canoe I would have for the summer. What care I gave that canoe! The wet foot policy never allowed the canoe to touch the rocks! The canoe was special for me...another symbol of everything good... and respectful about WILDERNESS.

Memories of this second summer: the first day out with campers and the extra "miles" we traveled to get across the lake...the campsites on sandy beaches and rock peninsulas...the rapids which were portaged or walked...the lay over days and the reflector oven baking of cinnamon rolls and pizza...the canned "mystery meat"...the campfires at nights and the Bible studies in the morning. I cherish the loon calls and the moose sightings... the trail lunches of rye-crisp... cheese... cervelat... raisins and peanut bars... the sunsets... the fish that were caught and much more.

The challenges of having the campers work together... starting a fire with wet wood... a three day rain... the cleansing in the sauna after a long trip and the long

portages (once we did thirteen portages in a day) are memories I still have.

I tried to install a sense of history of the area... the Voyageurs... Native Americans and their petroglyphs... early trappers and lumbermen. Hopefully, the campers caught a bit of the awe and the beauty of the area... the waterfalls and granite cliffs... the wildflowers and blueberries... the stately pines and the glow of the embers of the campfire. The campers would sometimes share what was deep within... their concerns... their questions... their fears and their loves. We could talk about this and pray about this and sense that God was present and that the love of Jesus was here... as well as back home.

Coming off the trails and being back at base camp was a treat... a time of reconnecting and sharing stories and places we experienced. I remember sitting at the *Pinecliff* dining room table trading trail recipes and tips with one another. A major concern was that the campers get fed because the trail work was strenuous.

I was so appreciative for the guidance and support of the full time staff. They opened their lives to us; their families became our family for the summer. Ham and Pearl Muus knew what the WILDERNESS experience could be and they modeled this for us all. Lives can be touched and changed. God works in this very unique setting with special people who use their gifts and share their love enriched lives. What a privilege. I consider these two summers as one of the most significant times in my life.

From hard working Hibbing camper to valued WILDERNESS quartermaster. Such is the "journey" of Iron Ranger **Bob Hewitt**. He always presented as one who was well organized... with a large dose of determination and a touch of whimsy. He invites us as readers to share something of his Sixties *Reflections* in a "virtual" experience...frame by frame. These are some of his memories.



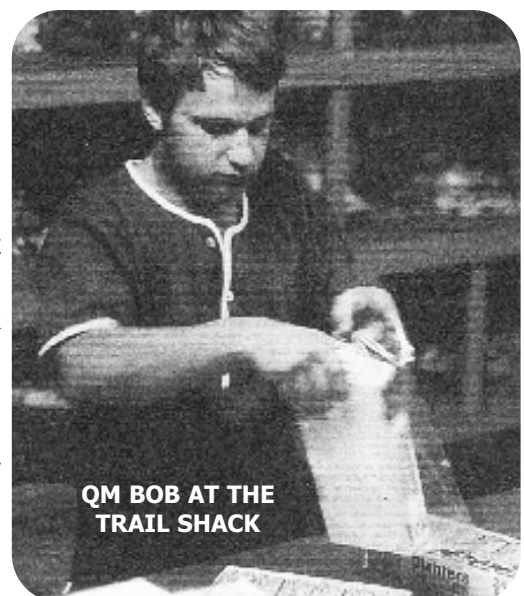
**Bob Hewitt**

#### **Frame 1**

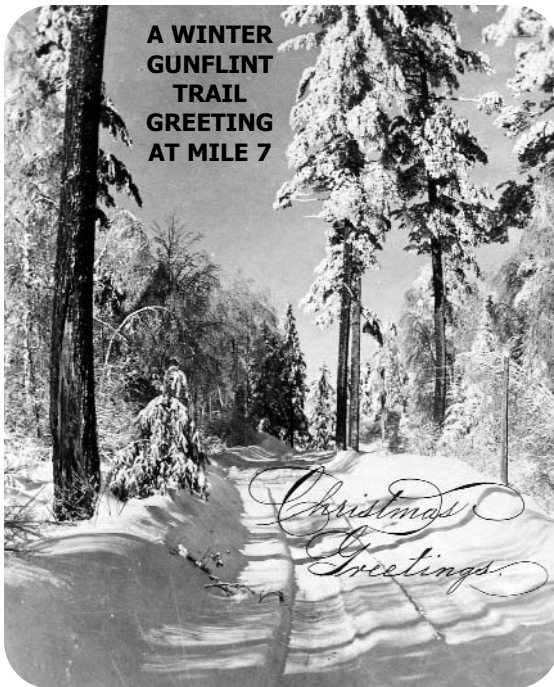
Ahead lies the delightful fishing village of Grand Marais. The squawking of seagulls, the smell of fish. A vibrant place where people are setting up their tents or pop up campers in the city campground. Wherever you look there are canoes on top of vehicles and fishermen talking about the big one that got away. Before you leave town you can catch a view of the commercial fishermen drying their nets or campers waiting in line at the Dairy Queen for their last taste of a curly cone.

#### **Frame 2**

The trip to Seagull Lake is on a picturesque road, much of it one lane, where the logging trucks roam freely, and autos beware. This is the fabled







narrow, twisting Gunflint Trail. The beginning is distinctly marked with hand carved bears towering over the entrance. We travel to Mile 7. Just like the postcards. Majestic white pines towering over the roadway. Dozens of them so close you could touch them while driving by. Deeper and deeper into the wilderness is your journey... another 55 miles to our Seagull waters. Vistas unfold. Millions of acres of woods and waters. A never-ending vision of grandeur. A place of natural order. A place to live, discover and respect. Few places are this unique.

### Frame 3

Your road journey turns to one-way in drive. This halts at *The Cove*. The islands owned by the Plymouth Christian Youth Center are in view. The dusty ride is in the past. The touch

of water lapping at your feet; the freshness of evergreens in the breeze; the call of the loons in the distance; the welcoming voices inviting you to this magical land. WILDERNESS is a unique place...a place where memories begin. This is an opportunity. This is a place for activity, working, planning, growing, and celebrating. This is a place to know life is real...that God is alive and great moments lay ahead.

### Frame 4

Staff greets you. *Welcome!* A short paddle to the islands suggests an opportunity to leave life's little niceties behind. Imagine... no phones, no running water, no radios, no showers, no flush toilets, no cruising the downtown, no soda machines, no electricity, no TV. This will be a stage for 'life together.'

### Frame 5

As you approach the islands there is another discovery. Few buildings can be seen. You will live within a rustic setting. Buildings are made with native materials and placed naturally. You never see more than one or two at one time. This will be a journey. Do not rush. Enjoy the trip. Listen and sense all that is around you. WILDERNESS is an experience.

### Frame 6

The main center for in-camp life is *Pinecliff Lodge*. Made with logs, wood products and stone locally found. The windows were constructed by using wired glass, many which came from old elevator doors that were once in the historic Metropolitan Building of downtown Minneapolis. Priceless scenic vistas for seeing the world in a new way. Sights, sounds and friendships abound in the lodge. Still, it's the aroma from the kitchen that pulls everyone to *Pinecliff*. Fresh bread baked daily. We give God thanks.... especially for the *Beulah Bread*, and the bakers.

### Frame 7

Your camp guide takes you thru the woods to your rustic cabin. "Where am I? Where is

everything else?" The guide will say with confidence "Every trip is a journey. Treasure the moment. You will find what you seek and much more."

### Frame 8

The sounds of activity and splashing will lead you toward the canoe staging area. Campers are receiving their group orientation. Young men are flexing their muscles struggling to hoist that 80 pound piece of shiny metal above their head. Swimming tests, carrying Duluth packs, packing canoes are all part of the planned routine. "J" strokes, "C" strokes, feathering the paddle will become the skills learned. The Trails Coordinator is a mentor for Trails preparation. Years from now campers will remember the basics that were practiced.

### Frame 9

A young "staff artist" with endless smiles puts down her paint brush, swats a mosquito, wipes the sweat from her forehead and says, "3 names done, 4 more to go. And tomorrow I get to work on the big one... *Alleluia*..." Every year supporters of WILDERNESS donate needed canoes. Names are selected to honor their generosity. The artistically talented are given the task of painting the name and camp symbol on the bow. Grumman are for the campers. Hand crafted cedar Seligas are for the Guides. Care is stressed. The canoes are to be valued. Over and over again the Trails Coordinator says, "Canoes are to touch water, not boulders."

### Frame 10

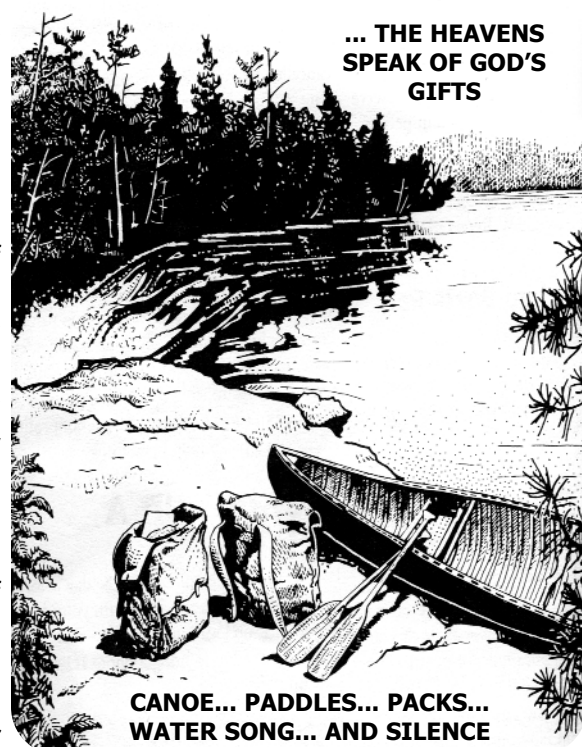
Across the water from Fishhook is another island... another place to explore. We cross *Bridge of The Master* or launch a canoe and paddle. Dominion Island... a very spiritual place. High above the water is the incredible *Band of Brothers Chapel*. Impressive, towering A-frame spires reach toward the heavens. From inside...look up and see the sky. Look forward...the cross is perfectly silhouetted in the beauty of creation. This was all built by staff, by volunteers, people with various skills, enormous energy, dedication and a vision guided by God's Spirit.

### Frame 11

In a remote part of Dominion is the place of spiritual cleansing... the sauna. A small log cabin with enough space for a tightly packed small group... together for soulful cleansing. This is a place for extraordinary visioning "as in a sweat lodge..." for exploring the inner self, science and the Spirit. This sacred space is ready any time of the year. Take the plunge...into the warm fresh summer waters or the icy crystals of winter's deep snow.

### Frame 12

The WILDERNESS journey is time for



sensitive discovery: Chatty Squirrels scramble between the pines. Canadian Jays look for a handout. Pileated woodpeckers carve up the old trees looking for an easy meal. Beavers feverishly gnaw at the birch. There is movement just to the right side of the trail... two black furry forms sitting, watching. Rare "guests" from the main-land. I've got other plans. Journeys to take. I'm going to slowly move my feet sideways... so slowly that you won't even notice them. Thirty feet, then forty. Eventually I bid both farewell, moving quietly. I quickly find refuge. "All creatures of our God..."

### Frame 13

There are actually staff responsibilities for those of us fortunate enough to be here. My "responsibility description" is "Quartermaster." This means that I can decide who gets to eat and how much. With a job like that I should be able to make lots of friends! "Those who bring back clean, shiny Mirro, dry tents, packs without mouse holes will be rewarded." You probably never knew about the long nights Jim and I spent packing out 5 or 6 groups at a time sometimes up to 35 day trips. Now, doing a little math...6 groups x 10 hungry campers/group x 10 days/average group = lots of dehydrated food, lots of Rhino meat, slabs of cheese, plastic bags and rubber bands. Imagine how much food was carried up to the Trail Shack... many helping hands.

### Frame 14

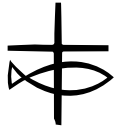
Some nights we were able to leave work at a decent hour and head over to *Band of Brothers*. These were important spiritual moments. These were times that we could listen to the campers disclose all the details of their trip. Some Disclosures were, shall we say, rather lengthy, lasting well past sunset. Some of us had adapted to the island paths could



feel our way back at night. It was an experience...night eyes...moments to treasure. How well we can "see" the path without seeing. All our senses awakened. Our body and Spirit become one. Truly a gift beyond words.

WILDERNESS is a very special journey. I treasure the thought of all who "walked the beginning walk..." who encouraged this spiritual quest. Thanks for WILDERNESS... my reality.





## A DISCIPLE IN EVERY SENSE

Very few WILDERNESS staff could match the understanding of the BWCA characteristics that **Jim Wiinanen** possessed. There are very profound and intimate connection between 'use and abuse' by campers. There are subtle relationships within the natural order. There is a fragile balance that needs scrutinizing, care and attention. Jim has all these insights and more flowing through his body.

He came to WILDERNESS as a "learner." He embraced the work and spiritual discipline. He grew in skill and Spirit. He observed... and listened. He took on increased responsibility. Jim's remarkable, quiet leadership is etched in WILDERNESS history.

It is a real "gift" to follow Jim's very early WILDERNESS journey. It gives us a clue into his dedication... his Spirit and Soul. It's a compelling *Reflection*.



**Jim Wiinanen**

Forty years ago I first learned about this place called WILDERNESS. I'd like to share my story.

But first...a couple of anecdotes: Our pastor, Karl Aho, encouraged our small, rural church youth group to have different learning experiences. We traveled north one winter to do some logging. By hand, we cut and hauled cedar posts out of swamps to raise money for other youth activities. He also encouraged those who were interested to go on canoe trips. That summer, my family decided to go on a trip. I supposedly knew what this canoe tripping was all about. We outfitted and headed out from Lake One. We did not make much headway, just getting to Lake Three. We camped and for two nights and days endured 90-degree sun, rain, hail and travel stopping winds. Tough journey.

In 1964, I went on another trip. Pastor Aho and three of my classmates made a longer loop trip from Lake One to Insula and Alice, then up to Thomas and Frazer. We returned to Insula via Kiana. A splendid trip: strapping young boys, an interested adult and a great adventure for everyone.

Now that I was "experienced," in the spring of '65, my classmates and I wanted to do our own trip on opening weekend of fishing season. We scrounged gear and food. We had a great time traveling the familiar "numbers" chain. Our destination was Alice, but we decided to stop at the far end of Hudson and base camp for two nights. We got into camp at dark. Fishing was the main activity. Some stayed up all night visiting around the campfire. We bonded as never before.

After the canoe trips, I entertained the idea that maybe I could work in the canoe country. Pastor Aho suggested that I write to a place in Minneapolis called Plymouth Youth



**JIM AT THE CAMPFIRE**



Center. He gave me the address and I wrote for an application to work at a place called WILDERNESS Canoe Base at the end of the Gunflint Trail. The nearest town to camp was Grand Marais. I filled out the application and sent it in. A few weeks later I received a call from Pastor Ham Muus. It was an exciting "interview."

I received a summer agreement to be something called a Swamper. I still did not

know much about this place called WILDERNESS, except for the brochure and some other materials that came in the mail.

My parents were a bit concerned. They suggested we take a family trip on Mother's Day weekend 1965 to visit the camp. This was a big trip for us: all the way to Duluth, then up the North Shore to Grand Marais and then the roller coaster Gunflint Trail. We had our picnic lunch near the South Brule River. Continuing up the trail, most of which was rough gravel, we encountered some quick short little hills that mom called "tickle belly hills."

We drove in the camp driveway. This was a quiet spring day. My heart was beating furiously. We pulled into *The Cove* area, by the lake. Using the sketch map provided with the literature from PCYC, we were able to identify Dominion Island, the peaks of the A-frame spires of the Chapel, a vague shoreline that must be Fishhook Island. No vehicles, no sound, no people. In true Finnish family fashion, we came, we stopped, we saw and got back in the car and headed back home (a ten-minute visit). "I will be back when school is out," I decided.

The pre-camp mailings were very thorough. Without a context of experience at the camp, the information painted a somewhat ideal, if not, romantic picture of a Christian community in the wilderness. Very helpful were the brief descriptions of the first years of camp. A pioneering spirit seemed to be at work at this place, both physically and spiritually. The suggested reading list included: *Life Together*, *The Art of Loving*, *The Long Shadowed Forest*, *The Singing Wilderness*, *Seasons of Life*, the *Red Cross First Aid Manual* and *The Web of Life*. Later these materials developed greater significance as they helped to describe the ministry and laid out a path for the journey we were all on.

On my return, we drove into *The Cove* area to a bustle of activity. As the pontoon arrived at the dock, Myrna Jorgenson, a gal with the brightest smile, greeted our family. The pontoonist helped us unload luggage. My parents' and sisters' gear was spirited away to a guest cabin; my stuff was loaded on the pontoon. We all rode the pontoon to the island and everyone pitched in to tote my belongings to a little cabin, not much bigger than a pup tent, named Driftwood. Man, I had a lot of stuff.



The wonderful, warm and friendly welcome by Myrna cemented it for me. This was a special place. They cared about my whole family and didn't let on about all the junk this rookie was bringing to camp. After moving into Driftwood on Knob Hill and meeting guide Harvey Pederson, my roommate, we were shown around the camp. I was quite "whelmed" by the tour. It seemed that the property went on forever. This was deep woods stuff with a surprise around each corner or over the next hill.

At supper, my family was seated at what looked like a guest table. The gaslights "hummed" and lent a soft subdued atmosphere to the room. *Pinecliff II* was a two-story combination of log and frame construction. Lots of paneling and an unfinished fireplace. The log posts and stained beams in *Pinecliff* were a connection to the land. The "stained glass" elevator windows were a tribute to the creativity of the people. Pastor Ham introduced my family by name to the "community." Everyone was so friendly and welcoming. The meal was wonderful. After the supper, a staff member read devotions and prayed from *Our Daily Bread*.

Morning started with First Word at *Band of Brothers*, requiring a short canoe paddle to Dominion Island. After breakfast, Ham rode with my family on the pontoon to *The Cove*. Time to say goodbye. As Dad got in the car, he turned to Ham and said, "Make sure you give him enough work to do." Ham smiled and nodded. Little would I know that the work of this ministry would still be filling my days thirty-nine years later.

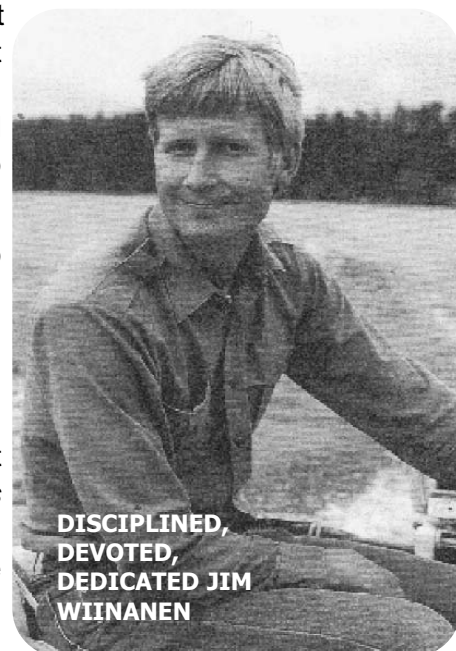
To me this place was remote... this is truly 'wilderness.' All the cabins and camp areas were important enough to have names and not just numbers. People here were happy to visit with you and get to know you and had great fun even while they worked. A new environment for a kid from a very reserved community of Finns.

I remember some of my early jobs. I remember scrapping off asphalt adhesive from squares of parquet flooring to be reused in the floors of *Morningside*. Stacks and stacks of this flooring were stored in an old army tent. This *Green Tent* served all sorts of camp functions before any buildings were constructed. Early on, I found myself helping out at the Trail Shack, mostly after supper. Bob Hewitt was the Quartermaster and Peter Boe the Assistant Quartermaster. Bob was in college to become an architect. Peter was in his fourth season in the Trail Shack. While Peter was deaf, he was a great lip reader and got along well with everyone.

Bob and Peter were always under pressure to mix and package trail foods for each camper group. My days were filled with various work projects and some nights helping out at the Trail Shack.

It seemed like half of the work was just moving stuff. And it is probably true. This was a great example of the ecology truism: *Everything goes somewhere*. At WILDERNESS, due to the island setting, lack of roads and machinery, people were the only real force available to move anything anywhere.

Orientation for Swampers was the same as for



campers. Swim tests, where I really struggled, but with the encouragement of staff, I was able to pass. Throwing or flipping a canoe. On previous trips, we used two or three people to awkwardly get the canoe on someone's shoulder. Here they encouraged staff to learn how to get the canoe up swiftly, efficiently and smoothly by yourself. Being able to throw a canoe seemed to be the consummate skill of the wilderness traveler. Can I throw the canoe? I studied the instructors every motion, every word.

First they showed the two-person method. That seemed straightforward and it worked. Now for the solo throw. Can I do it? I watched two or three others give it a shot. Some made it look so easy. Some struggled and tried again and again. Then my turn. This could be the crux of my day, my summer, and my life. If I can't do this, do I go home... again? If I do all the moves as demonstrated, the canoe should land on my shoulders. If I don't do this right the canoe could fall, it could land on my head, twist my back, bring me to the ground under 75 pounds of aluminum.

It worked! I could move forward. This early success opened the door to a world of wonders, skills and people over the next forty years!

The Swamper Orientation trip was great. My group included Swampers Andy Olson, Paul Anderson, Phil Solberg and Guide/Counselors Jim Rye and Burney Hernes. Everyone worked hard, talked lots and learned the ways of the wilds. We learned from the older, more experienced Guide/Counselors...our mentors. We learned camping skills, setting up tents, cooking over a fire, navigating by map and compass and baking in a reflector oven. Canvas wall tents and a new style tent call a Barnard tent. Portaging and paddling for days and then back to camp for the summer mission.

There is more to this experience. We were responsible for each other and needed to practice living out here in a way that did not impact the land. WILDERNESS was in the



forefront of 'leave-no-trace' camping practices. Years ago, campers simply dumped cans and bottles back in the woods or in deep lake waters. Now our camp practice was to wash or burn them out, crush the cans and carry it all out. It was great to be in the woods.

And now the new twist. All my canoeing on a handful of trips had been as a "learner" or participant. Now we were aware that we, individually and as a community, would be responsible for campers' health, well being, safety and learning. And the fact that some of these campers may not want to be here. We Swampers heard stories about previous trips, about working with campers from a variety of backgrounds. What did it mean if you were a G-Rat (an early teen at Red Wing State Training School)? Where is Lino Lakes, Glen Lake and Lake Park-Wild Rice?

Then on June 20 (Pastor Ham's birthday, I later learned), just after getting off trails, my summer changed. Someone passed on a message: "Ham would like to see you in the



office in an hour.” With only mild trepidation, I went to the office which was a two-room log building on a knoll overlooking the lake. As did many log buildings at WILDERNESS, this cabin came from *Operation Log Cabin*. One room was the front office with a small wood stove to take the chill off in spring and fall. Ham’s office was the small back room. A tiny stick and bark model of *Band of Brothers* hung as a mobile from a purline overhead. A rustic cross hung on the wall. Pine cabinets and shelves with interesting books filled most of the wall space around the small windows.

I am not sure how this all happened. Peter Boe had been in the Trail Shack for many summers. He wanted to do more maintenance and fixing things. What would I think about being in the Trail Shack? Hmm, the Trail Shack. I wouldn’t be on trails on a regular basis, but I am here in the woods. Let’s give it a go. That morning, I woke up a Swamper, that night I went to bed as Assistant Quartermaster.



Quartermaster Bob Hewitt was organized and a take charge guy. The hours were something. Usually two hours more after supper, working until 10 p.m. was not unusual and twice the day ended at 2 a.m. I think this was mostly a factor of trying to give campers choices. Camper groups would plan their trails menu, within some pretty liberal guidelines, and submit it to the Trail Shack on their first night. The food needed to be ready for packout the next day.

At the Trail Shack, 100-pound sacks of sugar would be repacked into one-cup bags of sugar with a packet of Kool-Aid added to the sugar. Flour by the hundreds of pounds was transformed into biscuit mix, pancake mix, pizza mix, bread mix, bannock mix, muffin mix, cornbread, cakes and more. While we were trying to achieve better methods and services, we were still a “young” camp. We looked at Camp Widjiwagan as a “model”. Little by little we were achieving.

The Trail Shack was also responsible for organizing and repairing all trails equipment. An old sewing machine was pressed into service to repair packs, tents and food bags. Tents and packs were canvas. Nylon was just beginning to make inroads in the recreation industry. Our canvas wall tents had separate canvas tarps for floors. The weight of a tent pack filled, rivaled that of a full food pack.

Drying wet equipment that came in off the trails was always a challenge. The Trail Shack relied on clotheslines strung between trees behind the building. Occasionally we would hang equipment inside, but the space did not allow for very much gear to be hung from the rafters.

It was decided that an area behind the Trail Shack would be cleared and leveled for an equipment drying space. Some rock was going to have to be blasted to lower it below the level of the floor joists. Plywood was nailed over the windows. Craftsman and dynamiter, Carl Feske set the charge by the huge boulders. After a loud holler of “Fire in

*the hole!*”, he touched the wires to the battery. The explosion rocked the whole area. We returned to the Trail Shack to survey the damage. Everything looked normal except for the fist size hole in the back wall with a rock lodged in the hole. No broken windows or other damage. A job well done...loudly. Good work, Carl!

Laundry service was provided for the staff. Bring your dirty laundry bag to breakfast and by suppertime you had the same bag returned with clean clothes. The laundry was housed in a cabin high on a hill at *The Cove*. “Queensview” contained two wringer washers. Clotheslines were strung inside for rainy days, but also out back to catch the breezes and sun on the hilltop. The water supply was a huge stock tank on a stand behind the building. This tank was filled with the fire pump almost every day. The water was fed by gravity into the building. This is where Myrna faithfully served.

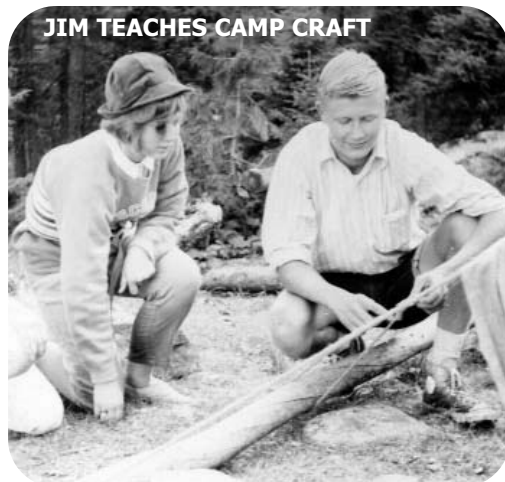
Nolan Cramer had several years’ experience at WILDERNESS. This summer he was the Trails Coordinator. He also assumed additional duties as camp photographer. One of the summer projects was the conversion of the old *Quiet Cove* store into the camp dark room. The building was aptly renamed *Photocell*. In order to ensure darkness for photo developing, Nolan would spend nights in *Photocell*. After supper, he would often saunter around the tables and tap various staff on the shoulder asking if they would like to learn how to develop pictures. When you agreed, you were looking at spending roughly six to eight more hours after your workday at *Photocell*. It was another special feature, though, of the WILDERNESS desire to excel. Campers got a photo memory.

This was a period in our early history when canned goods came to camp from “food roundup” drives at interested churches. The Camp Driver, Vern Borson, would make a swing around the state with the flatbed truck, the “Viking”, and return with all kinds of food and supplies for the summer. Women’s groups would also sew canvas food bags.

These were made by the hundreds in three to four different sizes. These years provided the camp with much valued support and visibility for our ministry.

There were many spiritual worship opportunities in addition to regular First Word, Close of Day and Sunday worship. On their first night, camper groups had individual campfires led by their Guide/Counselor or other staff. These moments introduced campers to new songs, Bible verses and encouragement. When paddling away from the canoe beach, the groups often would stop at *Band of Brothers* for devotion. Trails life offered many more “teachable moments.”

Coming off trails was truly a celebration. The evening meal in *Pinecliff* brought out the best. The tables had clean table cloths, cloth napkins, goblets and center pieces. The kitchen staff served meals all dressed in similar outfits. The dessert for campers was fresh made chocolate malts. What a treat! What an honor... and lots of *Beulah Bread*. Later in the



evening was the all camp campfire. We experienced song, prayer, devotions and testimonials. Disclosures provided an opportunity for each group to share their trip experience with the “community.” Many powerful expressions shared together.

I never did see the first *Pinecliff*. I learned that it burned just as construction was nearing completion in November of 1960. *Pinecliff II* was an inspiring building. From the outside, one noticed that it was two stories tall with an exterior of board and batten siding. The dining room had windows on three sides and log posts and stained beams to hold the second floor. Tables were arranged around the various posts and along the walls. Through a set of double doors, you walked down a ramp to the kitchen. To your left was the scullery or dishwashing area. This kitchen, quite modern by Gunflint Trail standards, produced the finest food on the Trail! The steps to upstairs *Pinecliff* brought you to a bright, expansive room with a hardwood floor throughout. The lake side wall was filled with a colorful bank of recycled “elevator” windows with Biblical symbols and stained glass designs... all done by Pastor Ham. Upstairs included the Nurses First Aid Room; a resource library, housing for female staff and a guide report room.



Another highlight of the summer, was the arrival of *The Spirit of the Voyager*, the 26-foot fiberglass replica of a North Canoe. Lynn Swanson made the trip to Chicago to get the canoe from Ralph Freise; a blacksmith turned canoe builder. On July 14, Lynn returned and amid much fanfare, the canoe was paddled to the island and appropriately christened by canoe donor, Pearl Muus, wielding a bag of red Kool-Aid. On the maiden voyage: Pearl and Ham, Carl and Louise Feske, Glenda Anderson, Wayne Vetter, Sonja Christopherson, Lynn Swanson, Phil Anderson and Nolan Cramer. The canoe was a beauty. A living connection with the fur trade history of the area and boon to the program. “She” was probably the most photographed canoe around the North Country.

I remember well... trail lunch was standard fare, day in and day out on the trail. The only variation was to skip trail lunch on a layover day and have double the next day. The lunch consisted of, per person: 3 Ry-Krisp crackers, ½ cup raisins, a 1” of Cervelat sausage, a 1” cube of cheese and 2 cups of Kool-Aid, a tablespoon each of honey, jam and peanut butter. For dessert a Peanut Block candy bar.



The high standards of the American Camping Association required a Health Care staff person. WILDERNESS complied with full-fledged RN's. With a nurse on staff, the community learned about health standards, expectations, first-aid training and sanitation practices.

Trips were twelve days or longer, attesting to the belief that time was needed to immerse oneself in the experience and be transformed by that experience. Special trails programs highlighted unique opportunities for campers and staff such as *Nor'wester*,

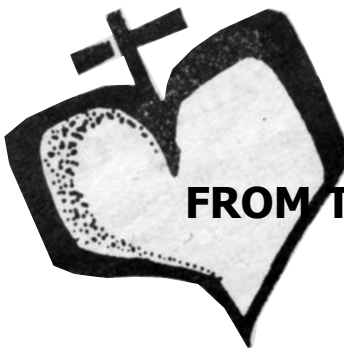
*Yokefellow, Mary-Martha, Duolos* to name a few. WILDERNESS led the way on trash removal out of the BWCA. No more dumping cans and bottles. Carry it out. It is a legacy now, mandatory for all BWCA Campers.



Cup to Fish. The route had not been used in years. We made good time and camped our first night on Holt Lake. The next day was exhilarating. We were able to follow the portages by looking for old blaze marks on trees. Some of the trees had fallen over, but the blaze marks were still there. We re-marked the trees and made the route a little clearer.

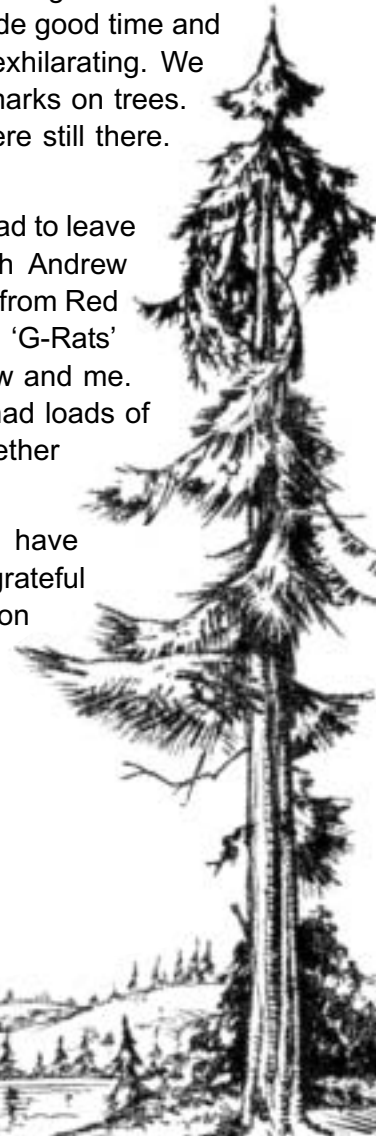
Later in the summer, one of our Guide/Counselors had to leave camp for a family emergency at home. Ham talked with Andrew Rogness and me about leading a 16-day trip of young boys from Red Wing State Training School. These early teens were called 'G-Rats' at the school. This was a great experience for both Andrew and me. We were a bit young for this leadership role, but Andrew had loads of experience on WILDERNESS canoe trips. We bonded together well.

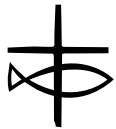
Finally... for me... WILDERNESS was a *calling*. I have been blessed with this opportunity to serve. For this, I am grateful and thank you, Ham, for your willingness to take a chance on a kid from the Range.



**FROM THE HEART...**

**Let all say Thanks...  
and Amen...**





Under colleague Curt Johnson's able leadership, the one-to-one friendship circle of *Kinsmen/Kinswomen* mentors grew. **Shirley Dahlen** answered the call to join PCYC staff... to expand the *Kinswomen* outreach.

As with most PCYC staff, she too was called upon to lend a hand in the camping ministry. She responded with openness and adaptability.

Shirley connects with people quickly. Her WILDERNESS experiences gave proof of that. She was a much valued Adult Advisor and special counselor. Her journey is revealing. She shares this *Reflection*.



### Shirley Dahlen

My first experience of Bible Camp was 1944, at Lake Koronis near Paynesville. I was a teenager. For the next 20 years, I spent at least one week of the summer at Bible Camp, first as a camper and later as a counselor. I was at Lake Shetek, Mount Carmel, Medicine Lake, Lake Wapogasset, and Luther Park. During the summer of 1962, I spent two weeks at Holden Village. What more could I possibly learn about "Bible Camps?" Let me share a bit.



From 1958 to 1963, I worked as Christian Education and Youth Director at Bethany Lutheran (Augustana) Church. Dennis was one of the junior high boys with whom I spent many hours in juvenile court. By the time he was 12 years old, he was a resident of County Home School, the "reform school" for Hennepin County boys. As his delinquent behavior became more and more serious, he was transferred from one facility to another. I visited him regularly, becoming acquainted with most of the correctional facilities in Minnesota.

By 1962, Dennis was at the State Training School in Red Wing. One day I received a surprise postcard from him. It was a picture of the Temperance River, one of the beautiful sites he had seen on his way to WILDERNESS Canoe Base. At WILDERNESS, he was a camper! Later, he told me about the good time he had there. He was touched. I wanted to know more about WILDERNESS! I wanted to see for myself what kind of place had the power to capture the attention and hold the interest of troubled teens.

I knew that WILDERNESS was part of the outreach ministry of Plymouth Christian Youth Center. I called PCYC and asked how I could make arrangements to visit the camp. They said they needed drivers to transport campers. I was assured of lodging "overnight" and meals at WILDERNESS. I agreed. With great anticipation I looked forward to my visit.

I was not disappointed! On a Sunday afternoon in September 1962 Wanda Anderson (Hernes) and I arrived at *The Cove* and walked to a nearby cabin. We were

greeted by Gladys Muus, mother of WILDERNESS Director Pastor Ham. She invited us in while she made an intercom call to the island. A pontoon boat arrived to bring us to Fishhook. That was my introduction to WILDERNESS. I had no idea just how significant that place would become for me!

The summer of 1963, I decided it was time to leave Bethany. I pursued a number of possibilities. None of them became that “right job”...that point of service my heart yearned for.

One day in November 1963, I received a phone call from the Director of Augustana Home, asking if I would consider becoming Volunteer Director for that agency. It sounded interesting, but was it the “right” job? That night I went home, knelt by my bed and prayed, “God, if the job at Augustana is that ‘right job,’ please let me ‘feel right’ about it. If it is not the right job, please have Ham Muus call me.” What happened next is absolutely true!

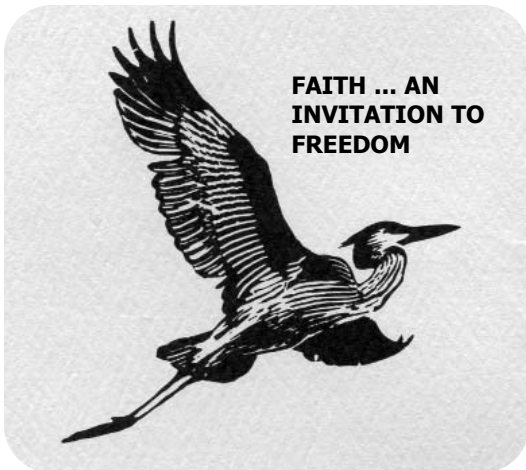
Twenty minutes later, my phone rang. It was Pastor Ham Muus. He asked if we could get together the next evening to talk about some possibilities. When we met, Ham outlined a potential position as *Kinswomen* supervisor. “One to One” mentoring had been in effect for a number of years. Chaplain Curt Johnson shaped the *Kinsmen Outreach*. PCYC decided it was time to add a program for girls. I was officially offered the position on December 3, 1963. I began my work with Pastors Ham and Curt on December 4. There was lots to do.

One of the roles that had not been discussed during my meeting with Ham was the possibility of serving as “adult advisor” on a canoe trip at WILDERNESS. I was invited to participate in this special adventure...an 18-day canoe trip with girls from the Home School for Girls at Sauk Centre. I told Ham that I couldn’t swim – and that I was afraid of water. His response was “Then you’ll be very careful!” I was!! What an incredible learning experience it turned out to be.

**LOIS RAMBO  
(FAR RT) AND  
SHIRLEY (IN  
STERN, 2ND  
RT) AND CREW  
PREPARE FOR  
MARY-MARTHA  
EXPEDITION**



One day as “learner” stands out in my memory. Camper Sheila and I were partners when a storm gathered. Together, we battled the waves. Eventually we reached calm waters. As we finally relaxed, knowing that the danger had passed, we were both singing, “Master, the tempest is raging; peace, be still!” Sheila seemed fearless as we confronted those stormy waters. She was a skilled canoeist. With her in the stern of the canoe, I felt



safe. "Camper comforts counselor." Am I learning anything?

Sheila was of Native American heritage. She had spent some time living with family members on a reservation and then moved to Minneapolis. Prior to her being committed to the Home School, she had been "working" as a prostitute.

At the time, I had very little experience in working with chronically delinquent girls. I sincerely believed that it was my Christian "duty" to remind them that they had been placed

at Sauk Centre because of their illegal behavior and that alone should change their ways. I "preached" at them. The more I preached, the less responsive they became. Sheila's face was sullen; she was quiet and withdrawn. She never smiled.

One day, Sheila revealed that she had also been on a WILDERNESS canoe trip the previous summer - and that their Guide had been very kind...very compassionate. Sheila said, "I never knew how selfish I was until I met Joanne." Seeds of love and grace had been sown. Thanks be to God!

When we returned to camp after 16 demanding days on the trail, we spent an exciting evening in *Pinecliff* "Disclosure," sharing our experiences with other campers and staff members. We sat in front of the Upper Room. All of a sudden, the door opened. Unbelievable. I glanced at Sheila; her face lit up and her beautiful brown eyes were sparkling. I then knew that friend and Guide, Joanne had arrived! That dramatic reunion moment changed my life!

Throughout our Trails days, I had been trying to say the "right words" that would somehow cause Sheila to promise to change her ways. Those "words" had not connected. Here Sheila had again come face to face with her former guide, a friend who had clearly demonstrated love and concern. That care now brought a beautiful response. "We find out who we are by the reflection in others' eyes." Again, thanks be to God!

A plaque on my wall reads, "If you want not only to be successful, but personally, happily, and permanently successful, then do your job in a way that puts lights in people's faces. Do that job in such a way that, even when you are out of sight, folks will always know which way you went by the lamps left behind." Kenneth McFarland captured a profound insight.

WILDERNESS blessings were many for me. In addition to my serving as an adult advisor on canoe trips, I "filled in" as camp cook at the end of the summer. I learned to bake bread – lots of it. I learned to do "quantity cooking." I learned how to wash clothes in rather primitive conditions. I also learned that I needed to be careful what I prayed for – because the prayers became reality.

Now I pray that WILDERNESS will continue serving the needs of youth and families... as a catalyst for adventure, education, relaxation, renewal, and spiritual growth. I am indeed grateful for all those WILDERNESS gifts.





I had a pretty good idea how **Paul Muus** would fit in WILDERNESS staffing. I had followed his growth and development from his day of birth. Brother B.J. and sister-in-law, Alice provided a nurturing, spiritually focused, musically inspired home for Paul. He brought all of these qualities, for they were part of his being. Paul carries a song in his heart... that gives praise to his Redeemer.

His athletic talents made Trail skills learning a positive exercise. He also found joy in double packing... or carrying a canoe plus a pack. Guides enjoyed having him as a Swamper.



**Paul Muus**

As WILDERNESS touched the lives of many people throughout the years, one group to experience its hospitality was the Ottawa Township High School Choir from Ottawa, Illinois, a rural community 85 miles southwest of Chicago. Ottawa is in a river valley surrounded by miles of flat farmland that produces corn and beans. Within *The Founding Years*, WILDERNESS hosted the 40-voice touring Concert Choir twice. These were unique, memorable experiences that have lasted a lifetime for some and have helped shape life choices.

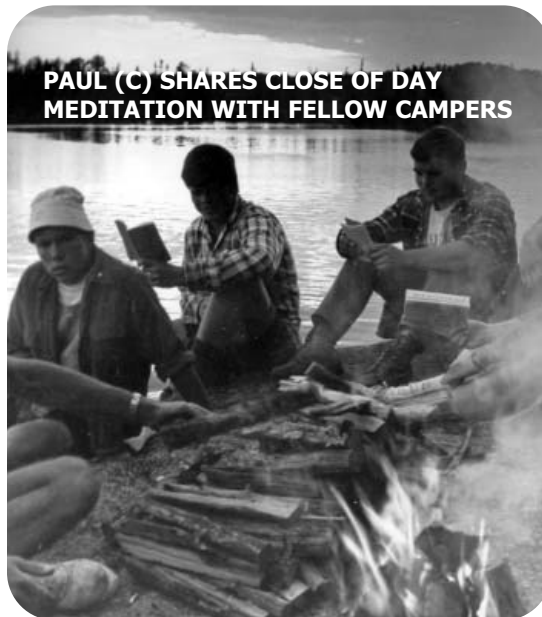
Back in 1961 and '65, the Gunflint Trail itself made for a remarkable, though sometimes queasy, 60 mile ride. Imagine our 46-passenger bus going up, down, and around on the gravel roller-coaster. I can still feel it in my memory.

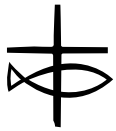
The waters of Seagull Lake were a most welcome treat and sight for us rural Illinois kids. It didn't take long for all of us to get right into the water. What a treat!

Here are a few highlights for the choir: that gracious camp experience interacting with the spirited, caring, creative WCB staff; hidden paths; fabulous *Pinecliff* dining; camp out-buildings; the majestic Chapel; homemade *Beulah Bread*. We also had a "trails" experience paddling a fleet of canoes and the 26-foot *Spirit of the Voyageur* canoe... singing lustily through BWCA islands. It was very special singing in *Band of Brothers* on the high rock cliff. There was both awe and delight within youthful singers and also my dad, choir director, B.J. He had a special place in his heart for WILDERNESS.

The harmonious sounds echoed across Seagull Lake. Especially exciting were the final chords of our sacred selections. God's praises truly resounded. Not only did those in *Band of Brothers* hear concerts, but also some across the lake! Many are the ways to thank God for WILDERNESS.

We join others in singing its praises.





Health and safety issues needed to have a high priority in our decentralized approach to ministry. We had great confidence in our excellent nursing corps over the early years.

**Sandy Koskela** followed in a line of talented WILDERNESS nurses. She was able to discern a tummy ache from homesickness, and treated each appropriately. She shares this *Reflection*.

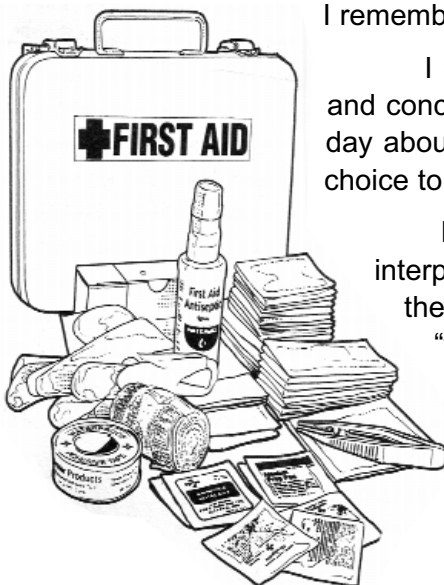


**Sandy Koskela**

My introduction to WILDERNESS Canoe Base was through taking two canoe trips with our Luther League from Our Savior's Lutheran in Hibbing. Hubert Kaste was our Youth Pastor/Adult Advisor... with wife, Helen. Our camp Guide Counselor was Karen Gulsvig.

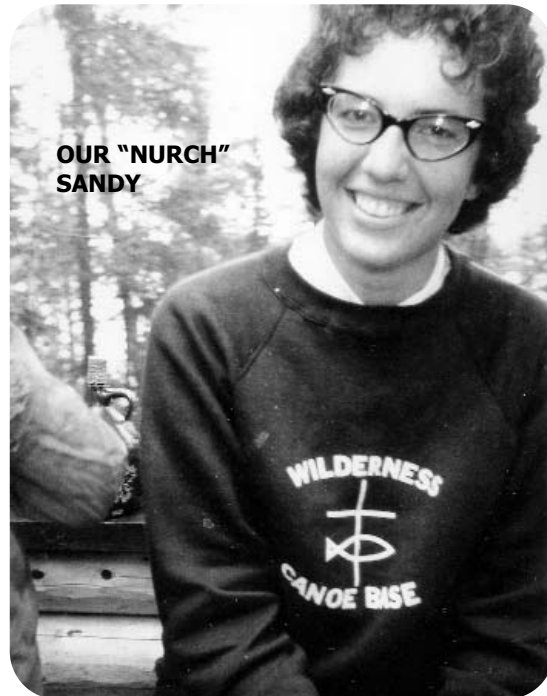
Because of my interest in good health and sanitation, I was elected the campsite "digger"... in charge of you know what. We paddled reasonably well...and had great experiences. We studied Ephesians as I recall. I think all of us got closer to God...prayer, meditation, and keen awareness of God's created orderliness. I remember well our camp "Disclosures," upon returning. It helped to be able to express the meaning of our time on the Trails.

When I graduated from nursing school, Pastor Ham recruited both my brother Finn and me. I was Camp Nurse in 1966 in charge of health issues, first aid, safety, sanitation, and the like. Of course, I had the daily outhouse lime routine. There was great enthusiasm for the "Breath of Life" mouth-to-mouth resuscitation techniques, I remember. I was on staff for four seasons, total.



I can also bear witness to how much staff-to-staff care and concern helped shape life. My brother Finn speaks to this day about how Peter Rogness influenced his life... and Finn's choice to be a special needs counselor to troubled teens.

I am proud to be known as "Nurch"... being interpreted: nurse who works for the church! I thank God for the vision and the determination of the WILDERNESS "founders"... and for all the campers and staff who have been served.



**OUR "NURCH"  
SANDY**



Every once in awhile while agate hunting on Lake Superior's shores, I would come upon a real "gem". That metaphor holds true in the recruitment of Montana native, **Jeff Barrow**... a real "gem."

There was a transformation which occurred with Jeff... from western cowboy to northwoods zealot. He learned fast; he shared deeply. His thoughtful *Reflection* gives us a glimpse into his soul... his search...his faithful service.



**Jeff Barrow**



The 1960's were a time of massive contradictions. It was a time of muscle cars and moon shots sharply contrasted by flower children and the news of classmates who would never come home from Vietnam. The dawning of the Age of Aquarius was announced amid the reality of race riots. It was seeing protestors swept away like nettlesome insects by giant water hoses. It was the one holy catholic and apostolic church locked arm and arm bringing races and classes together for social change. It was already teetering Christendom circling the wagons.

Throughout my life, my mother's voice had so consistently been the voice of assurance, the sound of hope, the image of God's unwavering strength. The morning of the Kennedy assassination, she could not mask her tears as she told me the news of yet another senseless death. She trembled as she confessed "I don't know what this world is coming to." For some reason, I have never surrendered my conviction that the world is basically good and its people basically decent. However, that morning reminded me that the ongoing search to embrace good and overcome evil could never be done amid simplistic questions and answers. The world and the solution to finding our way in it are always so terribly complex.

In the 1960's WILDERNESS provided a marvelous laboratory for many of us to begin to sort out those complexities. In many ways WILDERNESS in the '60s remained a pristine place. The sphagnum moss provided a luxurious green carpet beneath the near virgin forests of Fishhook Island. It was an incredible sanctuary, a holy place for sure, a great place to deposit the offering of our blessed naiveté. When I was recruited by Pastor Ham Muus to be a Swamper, I'd never been away from home. For that matter, I'd never been in any kind of boat. It was only years later when Paul Hill and I shared stories of our mutual fears and misgivings as Swampers, he convinced me there were many other contenders for the title of "the blankest script ever to be written on" in WILDERNESS annals.



If naivete was permitted in coming to WILDERNESS, it had to be surrendered rather quickly. It was still the great era of camp building in the country. The evolving needs of young people of the baby boom and the need for facilities to accommodate them were in the mode of simultaneous swelling.

If you weren't about the business of trying to master a J-stroke, flip a canoe, roll up a wet tent, remove a fish hook or pull

someone's leg, chances are you were about the business of pounding a nail, hauling heavy materials to distant places, mixing cocoa for hundreds, or repairing well used trail gear. For so many, WILDERNESS was the great plunge from relative security into the foaming waters of whatever seemed inconvenient, unfamiliar or likely to make your muscles ache. The goal was not only to survive the plunge, but also to discover joy (if not joy, meaning) amid the discomfort.



I have long since come to the conclusion that camping and the building of WILDERNESS have been only the blessed incidentals to the real purpose of our being there. The real challenge in the 1960's was to become what Bonhoeffer had earlier called "Christianity come of age." The challenge of Dr. Andrew Burgess to an enterprising group of seminarians in the 1950's was to find a way to witness to the troubled neighborhoods of north Minneapolis. Yet one can never separate the story of J-strokes and horsengoggles from what was clearly stated as the purpose of Plymouth Youth Center: to be "dedicated to the task of renewal."

WILDERNESS offered a creative difference vantage point to look at our world and its complexities. Externally, we were challenged to our outer limits... to paddle and portage with all the bravado of a voyageur. Internally, we were constantly challenged to find our center... not simply the center of our own soul, but to find the elusive "joy" of living in a community.

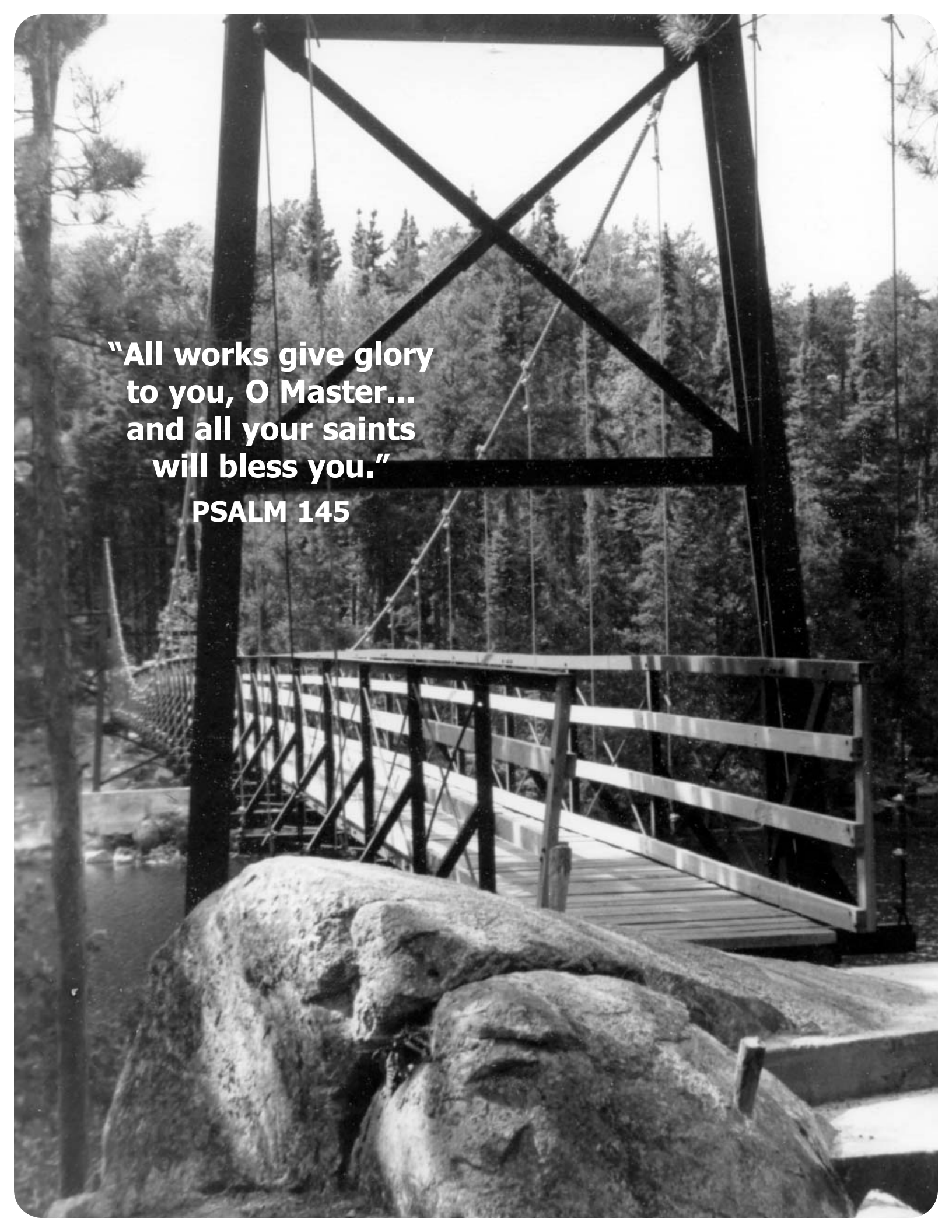
At WILDERNESS, the core of community emerged from daily life. If there were indeed answers to lofty cosmic questions, they were to be discovered against the test of life on the trails. The thought was: if we could make small intentional communities work, maybe we could make a difference in the world when we returned home.

For many of us, WILDERNESS was never simply an adjunct to the church, as we knew it. Instead it was the church's best shot in attempting to walk alongside with young people in a world where so many things seemed to be in flux.

Some of my very best memories of being a Swamper involved Sunday at WILDERNESS. After working long and hard during the week, Sunday became true Sabbath rest. It was about worship in *Band of Brothers* followed by fresh cinnamon rolls in *Pinecliff*. Sabbath was about blessed reunions with folks who had been on trail. Sabbath rest was about a spirited football game in the parking lot. Sabbath rest was about mile long walks to the Way of the Wilderness in pursuit of a solitary Dreamsicle. Sunday evenings were often spent at *Morningside* for sloppy joes followed by Bible study free-for-all discussion of topics like "Who is God?," "Who are we?" and "Who cares?"

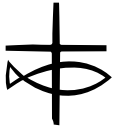
Sometimes Dr. Al Rogness would hold court at the Sunday night sessions. I came to see why many regarded him as one of the great leaders in the church. He seemed to be able to engage the imagination of scholars, welcomed any outsiders, appreciated the skeptics, found wisdom in unexpected places, kept us real about ourselves and centered in the promises of a God who loved us.

This was a time of discovery, the discovery of a God who dared accompany us into an uncertain new world. Thanks to WILDERNESS Canoe Base. For me, it was the best of times.

A black and white photograph of a suspension bridge over a river. In the foreground, a large, textured rock sits on the riverbank. The bridge has a wooden deck and metal railings, supported by a tall metal tower with a cross-brace structure. The background is filled with a dense forest of evergreen trees.

**"All works give glory  
to you, O Master...  
and all your saints  
will bless you."**

**PSALM 145**



## SHARING ABOVE AND BEYOND: THE HUSBY-FESKE CONNECTION

THE HUSBY BROTHERS, OSCAR (L) AND JOE (C) CUT THE *BRIDGE OF THE MASTER* CEREMONIAL RIBBON IN 1966



The WILDERNESS story is rooted in the outreach of the “old hotel” on Plymouth Avenue. The inner-city ministry had the flavor of a parish “settlement house.” Children, youth and adults in the Northside community responded to the wide variety of activities, services and social events. Others in the metro area joined the Luther Sem volunteers. Mentors worked with youth at risk. Neighborhood mothers joined together for mutual support. Tutors offered help to struggling students. Creative energies were at work living out the faith. Camping ministries were shaped at Camp Knutson, Frontier Farm and WILDERNESS’ Boundary Waters.

There are some in the household of faith who carry a special passion and ability to respond to multiple arenas of need. Como Park Lutheran in St. Paul nurtured Oscar and Pearl Husby and family in their embrace of mission. Luther Seminary, St. Olaf College, Lyngblomsten Home and PCYC/WILDERNESS were all identified by the Husbys for their significant attentions. Oscar chaired the Board of Trustees at St. Olaf.

He served for most of *The Founding Years* on the PCYC Board as an active member.

Brother Joe and sister-in-law Mary Husby shared many family common concerns. The entire Husby clan was motivated to faithfully share with others. Oscar and Pearl’s daughter (R.N.) Louise, husband Carl Feske and boys Carl and Chuck offered important nursing and construction services as WILDERNESS staffers in the mid sixties and beyond. This was an unusually spiritually committed family who sought and found significant points of service.

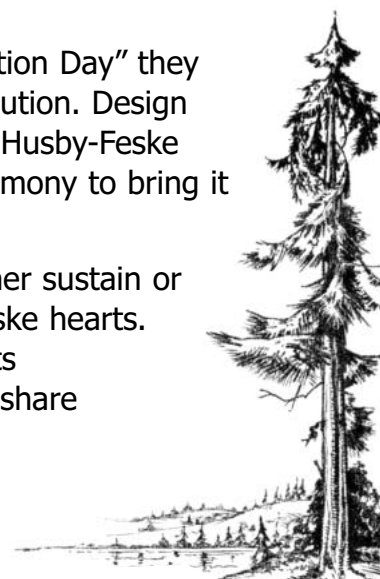
The early WILDERNESS *Founding Years* included two major development projects which carried the Husby imprint. First: The *Band of Brothers* undertaking involved a complex matrix of design, material, personnel, equipment, hardware and financing. The Husbys helped stimulate interest in this project. Supply resources were generated. Financial support was shared with other “Chapel Builders.” Needs were creatively met. The Husbys and others were moved to join WILDERNESS staff, Professor Flaten, and work campers in this important sanctuary project

The second, breathtaking effort: *Bridge of the Master*. The spectacular, suspension 220’ walkway between Fishhook and Dominion Islands is an incomparable, enduring legacy of



the Husby-Feske family. From its early conceptual roots to "Dedication Day" they provided the financial resources and under girded operational execution. Design engineer and colleague Vern Huso at Paper-Calmenson, the entire Husby-Feske team, the Ed Thoreson crew and WILDERNESS staff worked in harmony to bring it to completion. "There is no other like it... anywhere."

There are defining moments and crucial challenges that either sustain or submerge most fledgling programs. God's Spirit touched Husby-Feske hearts. Their commitments helped solidify and anchor PCYC mission and its WILDERNESS outreach. My heart felt thanks... and that of all who share WILDERNESS life... goes to the Husby-Feske families.



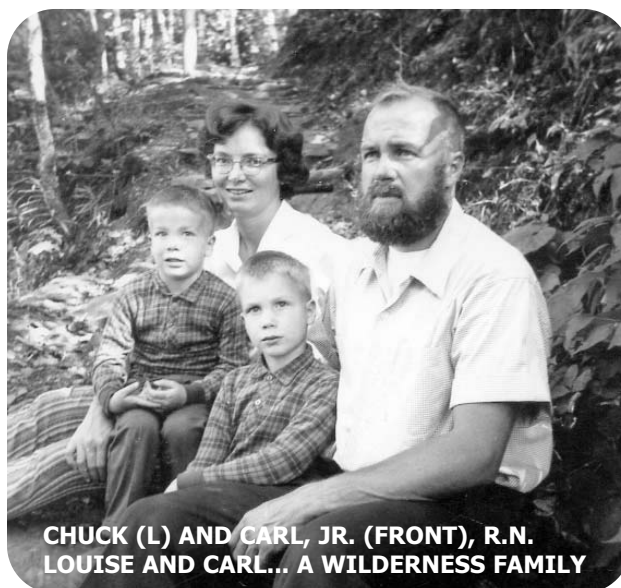
R.N. **Louise** and **Carl Feske** brought their boys Carl, Jr. and Chuck to WILDERNESS for the 1965 season. They were a wonderful asset to the staff and community.

The health services at *Pinecliff II* were ably managed by R.N. Louise. She addressed both camper check-ins and all other manner of scrapes, burns, blisters, aches and pains... with TLC. She shares this *Reflection*.



**Louise Feske**

We excitedly looked forward to our 1965 summer at WILDERNESS. Carl went up before the boys and I to get things ready. Our sons Carl and Chuck were four and six years old that summer. Because we would often be working at the same time, we had a teenager who lived with us to watch the boys when I was working. A neighbor boy of Ham and Pearl's, from Minneapolis, was with us for part of the summer.



**CHUCK (L) AND CARL, JR. (FRONT), R.N. LOUISE AND CARL... A WILDERNESS FAMILY**

We lived in Loon Bay, on the east side of Fishhook. Carl put skylights in the two bedrooms and the kitchen before we got there. He also put a wooden barrel up on stilts behind the cabin. We pumped water from the lake into the barrel. He fixed some piping into the kitchen so we had cold running water. We had a gas stove and a small kerosene refrigerator. It was a fun cozy cabin with a view to the lake. For bath time, we had a metal wash tub.

We fixed our own breakfasts. We had many of our evening meals in *Pinecliff*. Washing clothes was an experience. Behind *Morningside* I carried our dirty clothes to wash using the Muus' gas ringer machine and then hung them to dry on the clotheslines.





This was where Pearl did all their laundry. Then I went back when they were dry to take them down and bring them back to our cabin a couple blocks away.

Our boys had a really great summer. We had a very special island Vacation Bible School with our two

and Nathan, Jeff and Solveig Muus. The five kids spent a great deal of time together and built at least two forts out of logs and small tree branches. They loved to go down and explore along the lakeshore and, of course, swimming when the water warmed up a little.

I was the Camp Nurse. As nurses did in those days, I wore my white dress uniform with cap, white hose and white shoes. I checked in every group of campers when they arrived. We showed each group rescue breathing. They had to demonstrate how it is done on each other. I also checked the feet of each camper. These were important issues.

We only had a couple serious emergencies. We had one camper who was airlifted out of Jap Lake due to a panic attack. One of our staff came back with a severe infection in his hand and was taken to the hospital in Grand Marais. Sore throats were problems. My consultant, "Dr. Muus," always prescribed salt-water gargles. We used a lot of salt that summer, as I recall. It was a healthy summer, for the most part, and I was extremely thankful for that. The campers seemed to value a nurse presence.

One blessing of that summer was getting to know Ham and Pearl better and enjoying working with them. Pearl invited me to some of her cookie baking sessions at *Morningside*. We had many good conversations. Plus I got a few baking tips.

There was a christening of the first big North *Spirit of the Voyageur* canoe. Carl and I were on the maiden voyage. Our son, Carl, still remembers that Pearl christened it with a plastic bag of strawberry Kool-Aid. We enjoyed being around so many wonderful staff and still count some of them as our friends. It was a great time.



We had an extraordinary craftsman at WILDERNESS in the person of **Carl Feske**. Some staff thought I put in a long day. Well, meet Carl Feske. He was busy from sun up to dark of night... fixing, repairing, dynamiting, hammering, sharpening. It was a challenge to meet Carl's working standards.

He also was a key leader in the construction of *Bridge of the Master*. Carl followed closely the design work of Vern Huso. He was on site for the bitterly cold winter assembly. His ambition and drive, honed in his early Marine Corps training, helped keep the project on

schedule before an unexpected early ice breakup.

Much could be added to Carl's invaluable contribution resume. Reading his *Bridge of the Master Reflection* will give a clue as to his ability and necessary attention to detail. And all of this plus a rock solid faith in Christ.



**Carl Feske**

Engineer, Vern Huso of Paper Calmenson in St. Paul, came up to camp late in the summer of '65 to survey and explore for the bridge site between Fishhook and Dominion Islands. The 1¾" cable for the parabolic curve was delivered in the late summer of '65. We had no way of getting the spool of cable off the truck, so I built a log crib and we got it off onto the crib. It was a real privilege to work with Vern Huso, Ed Thoreson, his capable men, and WILDERNESS staff.



**CARL CONTEMPLATES HIS NEXT  
COURSE OF ACTION ON *BRIDGE  
OF THE MASTER***

**"... in the hands of a master builder  
there is purpose and Spirit..."**

Ed's men, Clarence Strand and Larry Peterson, did the drilling for the bridge anchors in 30° below zero weather in February of '66. They drilled 15 feet into the granite and set the rods in special epoxy that would work at 30° below and still hold at 120° above in the summer. When Vern Huso called Chicago to order the epoxy the man said yes he had a lot of it. Then Vern told him how much he needed and there was silence until Vern asked if he was still there. The man said, "I don't have that much but I can order it." No one had ever ordered that quantity before. It takes a lot of skill to drill in granite and not loose any holes for the pattern. Larry and Clarence did it.

By March of '66, the ice had been prepared by a lot of WILDERNESS' Vern Borson's plowing so that the ice was thick enough to carry all the weight of cable, steel and timbers for the bridge deck. The steel was loaded on a flat bed truck in St. Paul. Before we got to Duluth, the trailer broke down and we spent several hours in Duluth while the trailer was reinforced to adequately carry the heavy load. We had to spend the night in Grand Marais as it got too late because of the delay. The next morning, a Sunday, we left Grand Marais for camp. It rained and there was an inch of ice on the Gunflint. Joe Husby was driving the truck. I was with him. Art Rasmussen and Claire Timmons were driving a panel truck behind us. It was the old Gunflint with up and down and many curves. On one of the uphill stretches, the truck jack-knifed. So what to do?

We had the road completely blocked. So "Tim" went back to a nearby lodge and called Ed Thoreson, who was just ready to go to church. His first question was "Did you have chains?" We didn't. So he changed clothes, brought tire chains, tow chains and a truckload of sand. We sanded the road and put the tire chains on. Ed got the truck back on the Trail. He sent me ahead in his truck and said to keep out of the way. He followed close behind, driving the loaded truck with the steel. We got the load up to *The Cove* parking lot. Ed used the big crane to unload the steel. It was a great relief to have it this far.

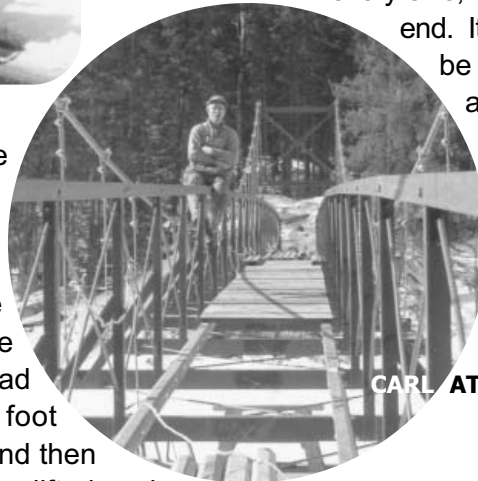


**THE TRUCK JACK-KNIFED  
ON THE GUNFLINT,  
FILLED WITH BAND OF  
BROTHERS STEEL**

The next day, the first thing we did was stretch out the big cable all the way across the lake to where the bridge would be and cut it in half. Then we put the two halves side by side so we could mark the heavy cable where the drop cables would be attached according to the blueprint. We had plywood on horses set up to work on when cutting the drop cables. There are four of

every size, two for each end. It needed to be done accurately.

Then we bolted together the towers. The Thoreson crane lifted them up. We set them in the holes that had been drilled previously in the granite. There were four holes by each of the four legs of each tower. The steel triangle plates were bolted to the rods that had been drilled into the granite. Four foot turnbuckles were attached to the plate and then to the end of the big cable. Then the crane lifted each of the two big cables up onto the top of the towers. We attached drop cables to the big cable as per the blueprint. All of this was done on the thick ice field.



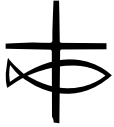
**CARL AT WORK**

We made up five-foot sections of the walkway and the crane lifted that section up one at a time. We attached them to the drop cables. We started in the center and then worked one section each way as we worked over to each tower. After that was completed, the bridge hung too low over the ice. We called Vern Huso. He told us exactly how many times to turn the turnbuckle to get the bridge to the proper height off the water. It took four of us using big timber bars to turn the turnbuckles. Finally, the bridge was ready for putting on the deck and the railings. It was all good teamwork.

Ham's parents, Herman and Gladys, cooked for us and served us wonderful meals in the Ledge cabin where they lived. We even had fresh lake trout caught by Herman. Our team all stayed in Snowshoe cabin. One day it snowed so hard that we had to quit working. The Hovland men, Larry Peterson and Clarence Strand, decided to go home to Hovland. It took them four hours to get there. "Tim" and I decided to take a break and drove to Grand Marais and stayed in a motel, had a shower and washed clothes.

This is the only suspension bridge I have ever had the privilege of working on. It was a once in a lifetime, wonderful experience. All of the crew was great to work with and we got along very well.

This project provided for both physical and program linkage. Needless to say... it was a tremendous job done with professionalism and good Spirit. The WILDERNESS community honors the builders and designers.



## THERE IS NO OTHER LIKE IT: THE **BRIDGE OF THE MASTER**

Living, working and building a camping ministry on island property is a wonderful, mystical challenge. There is the obvious open water expanse, which must be crossed. Winds, waves and changeable weather require flexible response. Seasonal transitions: fall to winter, winter to spring and ice break-up produce hazardous periods of icy transformation.

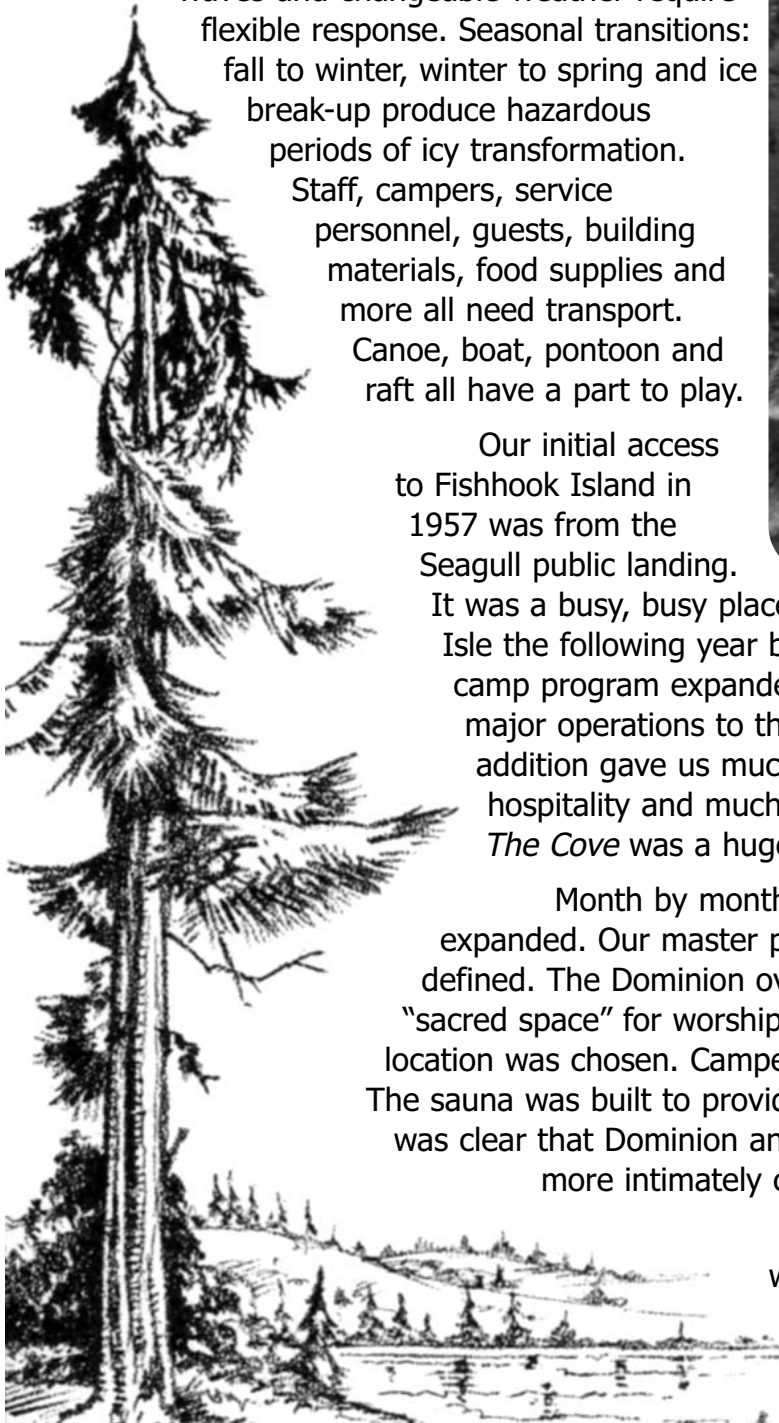
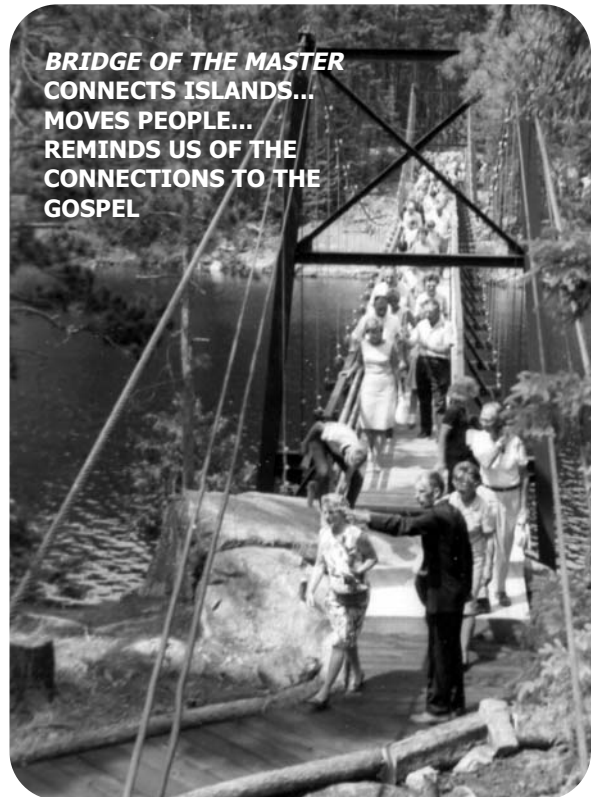
Staff, campers, service personnel, guests, building materials, food supplies and more all need transport. Canoe, boat, pontoon and raft all have a part to play.

Our initial access to Fishhook Island in 1957 was from the Seagull public landing.

It was a busy, busy place. The decisive acquisition of Dominion Isle the following year brought increased strategic issues as the camp program expanded. In 1960, we were able to transfer major operations to the newly acquired Cove. That pivotal addition gave us much greater security, a mainland port of hospitality and much shorter water passage to our islands. *The Cove* was a huge logistic and program boost.

Month by month, activity increased; programs expanded. Our master plan land use became more clearly defined. The Dominion overlook was identified as an integral "sacred space" for worship and meditation. The *Band of Brothers* location was chosen. Camper and staff housing also developed. The sauna was built to provide authentic Finnish style body wash. It was clear that Dominion and Fishhook needed to be somehow more intimately connected and accessible.

Not enough can be said about the work ethic and attention to detail of our WILDERNESS transport staff in those early years. Hospitality, availability and safe delivery marked the



efforts of Lynn Swanson, Vern Borson, Phil Anderson and others. Even seemingly excessive demands were met with tireless grace. They were among the first to champion and endorse the possibility of a permanent suspension bridge connecting our two major islands. It was a dream that made perfect logistic sense. But could it be done?

Over the years, Pearl and I had made visits to Jay Cooke State Park near Carlton. The wonderful suspension bridge there served the Park visitors so very well. Its grace and function may have quietly helped to inspire thoughts leading to a WILDERNESS island linking.

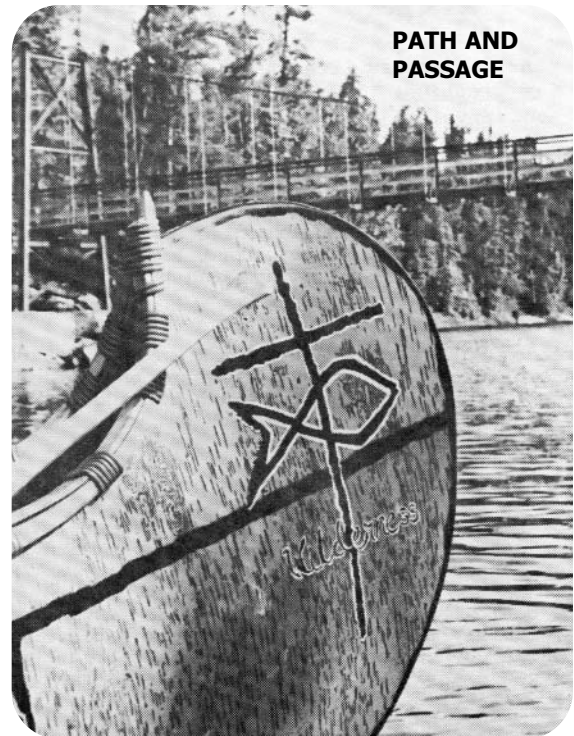
There were a couple short-term island “bridges” attempted at WILDERNESS. Seminarian Brooks Anderson devised a highly creative albeit somewhat wobbly floating “barrel and plank” walkway from the Fishhook canoe staging area to Dominion. It was intended to accommodate the 1959 Open House guests. Only a few courageous more athletic folks made it across without watery incident. It was a largely acrobatic attempt to provide inter-island passage. A second plank and post affair greeted Open House guests in the mid sixties. Some guests wryly observed that such crossing was indeed a “faith venture.”

The dream and hope for a full suspension bridge came alive when I proposed it to Oscar Husby, St. Paul business executive, Lutheran Church leader and PCYC Board member. He was open and very enthused about the idea. Oscar and wife Pearl enlisted brother Joe and wife Mary Husby in support of the project. They in turn presented the proposal to Vern and Jane Huso, longtime Lutheran friends. Vern was the principal design engineer at Paper Calmenson Steel in St. Paul. With the Husby backing, Vern Huso set out to design the incomparable *Bridge of the Master* which would connect our two WILDERNESS islands. This was an enormous commitment... a gift and project of enduring importance.

As project coordinator, Vern Huso developed all of the technical bridge detail. The 220-foot span over open water required extremely careful calculation. Anchor granite on each island needed to be structurally massive, solid and fracture free. Steel cable and anchors of size and high tensile strength were critical. Steel rods, brackets, nuts and bolts, cable towers, and pads needed precise sizing. Huso shared with the Husby brothers as plans progressed.

Don Brauer (Brauer and Associates) was enlisted to document land elevations and anchoring locations. This too, was critically important work. The U.S.F.S. and Minnesota D.N.R. were consulted about permits and clearance over Seagull’s waterway with ‘no-wake’ zoning. It was an intensive, and comprehensive planning effort producing brilliant technical achievement.

Vern Huso, at Paper Calmenson, was directing both the engineering detail as well as shepherding the fabrication of all the bridge steel components. Ed Thoreson and I worked



together on the Seagull North site preparations. As soon as he was able, Vern Borson gingerly plowed the Lake roadway and construction area to help thicken the ice. My Dad, Herman and Mom, Gladys took on the lodging and food service details. Thoreson selected his top experienced crew: Larry Peterson, Clarence Strand and Harold Moe to work on the project. They moved trucks, crane, heavy-duty air compressors and drilling equipment up the Trail. Cordy Congelton and Rolf Skrien added their considerable skills. This project was of historic proportion.

Skilled craftsmen Carl Feske and Claire Timmons led the on-site Husby team. They joined with Thoreson/WILDERNESS crew to execute this most remarkable task under severe, bitter, daunting conditions. Their work can indeed be called "heroic."

What a gift!

From Fishhook to Dominion, The *Bridge of the Master* arches in matchless beauty. Its presence helps identify the WILDERNESS site. Its name honors the Creator of this spiritual place. The mission and the message are symbolically linked together.

The saga of The *Bride of the Master* combines vision, Spirit, financial commitment, personal sacrifice, skilled design and superb craftsmanship. It is an enduring legacy to the Husby-Feske-Huso-Thoreson-WILDERNESS team. It serves as an inspiration, a challenge to all who catch its spiritual dimension.

The *Bridge of the Master* was officially dedicated with an Open House ceremony in August 1965. Almost all the principal "team members" were present for the Husby ribbon cutting. It was an exciting moment in WILDERNESS history!

## **THE BRIDGE OF THE MASTER PHOTO JOURNAL**

During the 1965-'66 winter, PCYC staffers Nolan Cramer, Sheila Best and I worked together to produce the following photo journal. Nolan was a superb photographer. While at WILDERNESS, he added photography to his duties over the years... Guide/Counselor, Trails Coordinator, Program Associate.

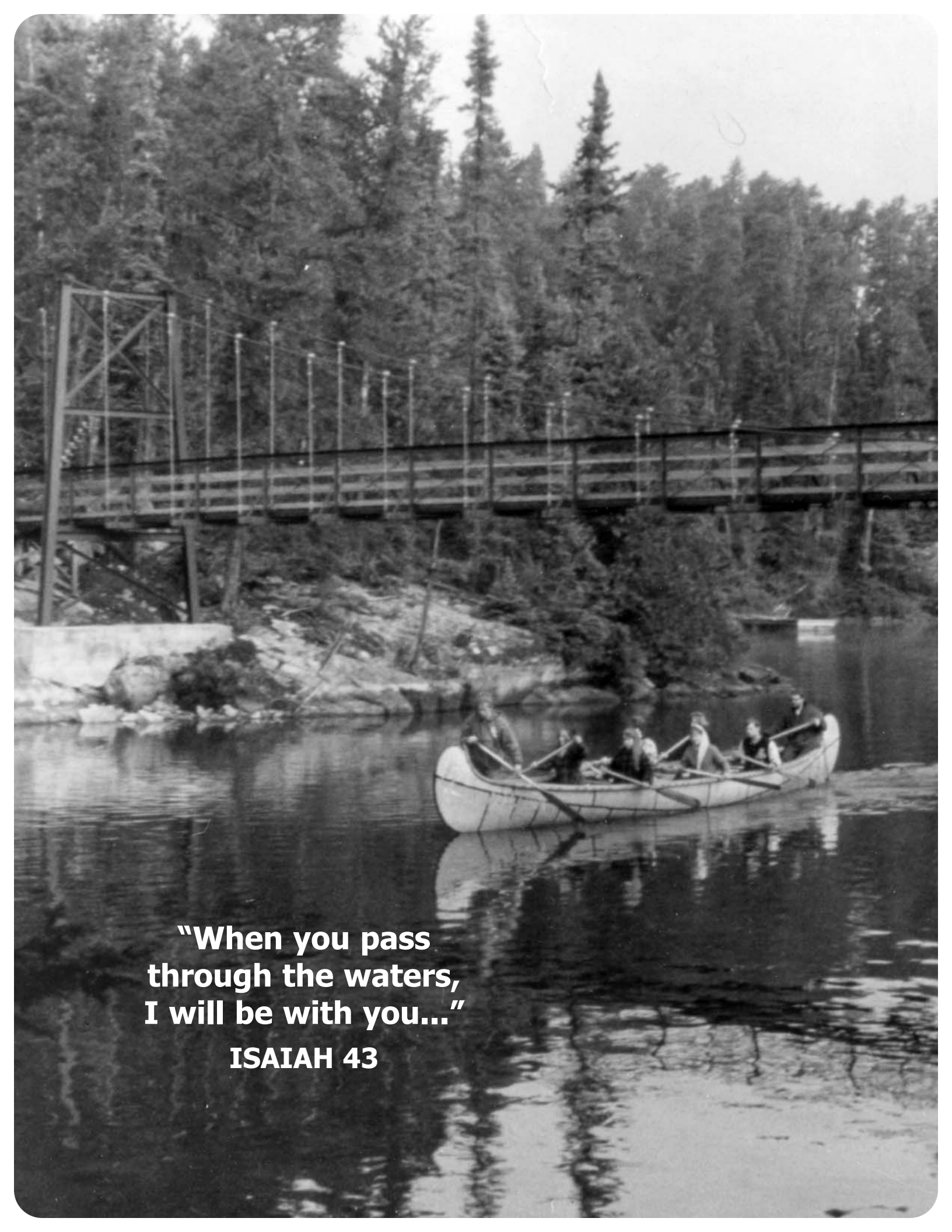
Sheila also had a keen photographer's eye. She took on the task of layout and design of this journal. She integrated the text which I wrote. Great work by both Nolan and Sheila.

Each of the principal project participants received a hard shell notebook copy of actual photo duplicates and text. Each was inscribed with an expression of deep gratitude for their mutual project work which brought *Bridge of the Master* to life.

This *Bridge of the Master* project stands as a working metaphor for WILDERNESS mission. It is worthy of remembering in a special way.





A black and white photograph of a group of people in a canoe on a river. The canoe is in the lower center of the frame, with several people inside. In the background, a suspension bridge spans the river, and the banks are covered in dense evergreen trees. The water is calm, reflecting the bridge and the forest.

**"When you pass  
through the waters,  
I will be with you..."**

**ISAIAH 43**



This is the story of  
**BRIDGE OF THE MASTER**



In 1956, an "idea" began to take shape on Seagull Lake near the end of the Gunflint Trail. The whole story begins with a camping program which had a purpose . . . to provide an opportunity for Christian camping experiences for teen-age youth . . . from correctional settings and parishes . . . for youth from the city slums and rural countryside . . . for white, black, red kids . . . whatever . . . where God could "come alive" in the life experience of youth.

With a *purpose* related *people*, WILDERNESS Canoe Base began its years of camping service.

The "BRIDGE OF THE MASTER STORY" began with the first land acquisition known as Fishhook Island. Someday, maybe a foot bridge could link Fishhook with Dominion Isle to the west . . . just maybe.



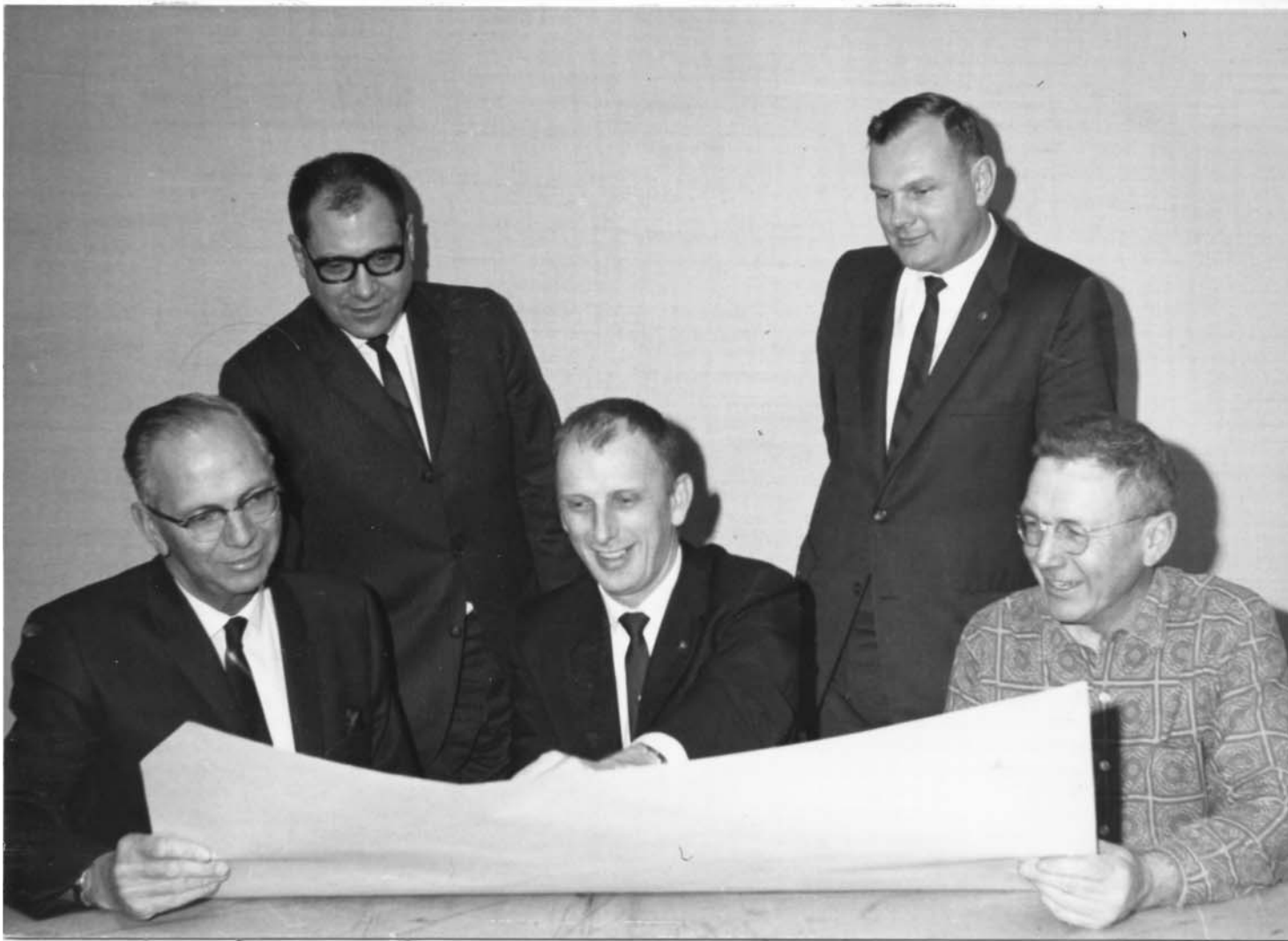
Years of dreaming . . . and years of campers in WILDERNESS program . . . reinforced the need for a link between the major camp islands. Pastor Ham Muus, WILDERNESS Camp Director repeatedly discussed the bridge idea with recently deceased WILDERNESS friend, Mr. Martin P. Blomberg . . . a superb mechanical engineer who summered down Seagull Lake. A full suspension foot bridge was a possibility . . . but it would take a massive effort to finance and complete the project.



For several years, the suspension bridge project lay relatively idle . . . as more and more campers placed more and more demands upon camp lands and camp program.

In 1964, BRIDGE OF THE MASTER began to come to life as Mr. Oscar Husby and brother Joe Husby caught the vision and pledged their interest and support to the project. These men in turn challenged others . . . men like Mr. John Thompson, a Husby business associate and friend . . .





The structural planning, engineering, detail, and basic coordination was assumed by Oscar Husby, Vern Huso (Paper Calmenson Steel), Director Muus, Don Brauer (Brauer and Associates . . . Camp Planners) and Joe Husby. Huso and Brauer had the strategic technical tasks of providing the exacting details for this monumental undertaking. This "team" functioned throughout the project period.



Don Brauer served as BRIDGE OF THE MASTER consulting engineer. He listens as Muus explains to Oscar Husby some of the problems which lay ahead . . . with construction scheduled for the dead of winter in 1966. "The ice must be right . . ."

Meanwhile, Ed Thoreson had been contacted in Grand Marais. If anybody could provide the necessary "know-how" and skilled men and on-the-job equipment . . . it would be Ed.

The materials began to roll. In January/February 1966, the "sub-zero" hour arrived. Bridge of the Master was under construction...in earnest.





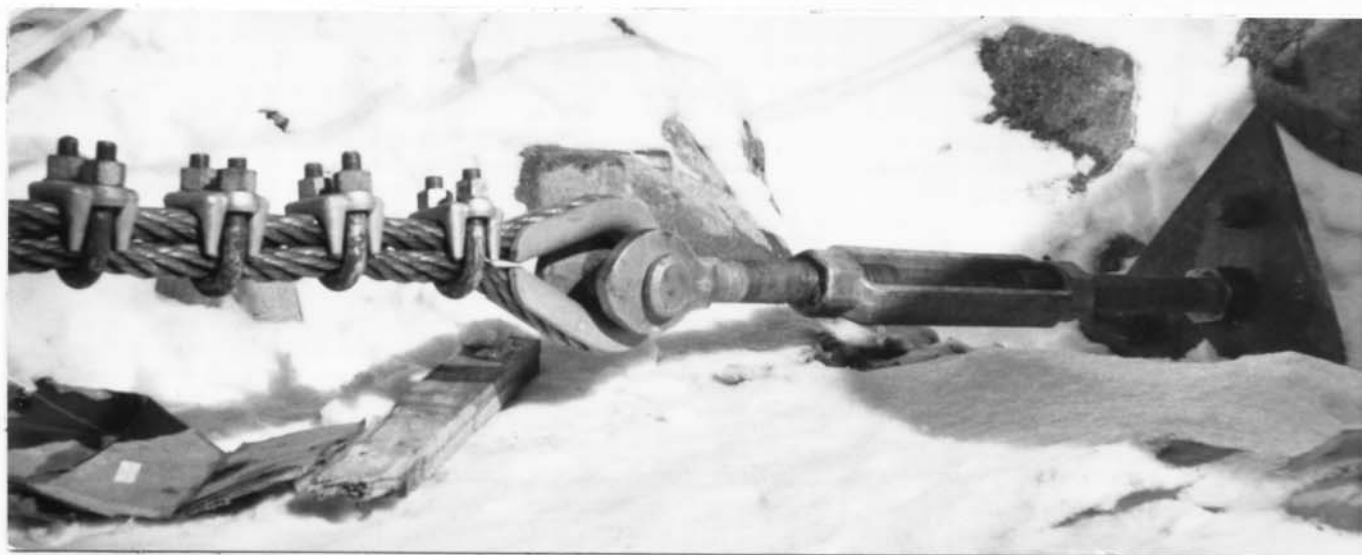
Nevertheless . . .  
work went  
on at WIL-  
D E R -  
NESS . . .  
in the bit-  
ter North  
cold.

But not without some tense moments . . . like when  
Joe Husby got hung up on the Gunflint Trail.



For days, Thoreson construction workers Clarence Strand and Larry Peterson drilled the solid granite. The exacting tasks were many . . . the hours long. Strand and Peterson were joined by Claire Timmons and Carl Feske . . . both experienced and able workmen.

The strategic placement of the anchors was essential. Three 15' holes penetrated the solid granite at each anchor. Full 2" special steel was grouted with a fantastic epoxy glue . . . which provided some anxious hours during the pouring. (Just ask the men who handled "that stuff.")



In early January, WILDERNESS staffer Vern Borson began the critical job of preparing the ice for the heavy equipment which had to be used if the job was to be done. Pastor and Mrs. Herman I. Muus (or Herman and Gladys to all) served as "cookie" and "cook" respectively . . . as "servants" in the finest sense. The workers will never forget the warmth of their concern and their steady work. Cord Congleton, summer WILDERNESS carpenter, also worked throughout the construction period.







Hour by hour, day by colder day, week after windy week the work went on. Snow, bitter cold, aching muscles were of no concern as the magnificent bridge began to take shape. The thrill of arching  $1\frac{3}{4}$ " cables joined to superbly detailed steel members kept spirits alive . . . and it was a labor of love which would serve WILDERNESS for decades to come.





Harold Moe (left) pauses after concrete had been poured (in March) for the tower bases. Claire Timmons, Vern Borson, Larry Peterson, and Clarence Strand all appear satisfied with the day's work.



Constructionist Carl Feske sits confidently on the BRIDGE OF THE MASTER handrail . . . and declares that "this one is built to last."





Finally, after months of hard work . . . and years of prayerful preparation . . . **BRIDGE OF THE MASTER** is a reality.

**WILDERNESS** Services worker Vern Borson sets the boardwalk for the Fishhook exit.

**WILDERNESS** summer staff complete the process of dismantling "the old Guide Hut" to provide for a more favorable entry/exit area. **WILDERNESS** staff also worked on the "rock-scraping" outlined by Brauer and Associates.

Waterfront Supervisor Lee Hill swings a paint brush in applying the final finish to **BRIDGE OF THE MASTER** steel.







On July 19, 1966, BRIDGE OF THE MASTER was officially dedicated as an integral part of WILDERNESS . . . "to the glory of God." Pastor Ham Muus pays tribute to all those who shared in this seemingly impossible undertaking. Pastor Henry Nielsen gave the dedicatory message at Band of Brothers Chapel on the 1966 WILDERNESS Word . . . Hebrews 12:1-2. Over 450 persons were at the 10th Annual Open House.

The silhouette of the cross with BRIDGE OF THE MASTER in the distance lends meaning to the name chosen for this magnificent structure.



The Joe Husbys (left) and Oscar Husbys were appropriately honored as the "key persons" who enabled BRIDGE OF THE MASTER. The kind of stewardship and supreme interest which they demonstrated through the BRIDGE OF THE MASTER gift is unparalleled in WILDERNESS history. It is a tribute to their belief in WILDERNESS program . . . and its impact on young lives.

WILDERNESS Swamper Marla Bockelman greets BRIDGE OF THE MASTER worker Cord Congleton on Dedication Day.





The "official" ribbon cutting was done by the Husby brothers . . . with Camp Director Muus lending his blessing. The Husbys were constantly in touch with all phases of the BRIDGE OF THE MASTER project. This ceremony culminated a most gratifying program for them . . . and for the WILDERNESS camp family.



Members of the Husby families and BRIDGE OF THE MASTER planning/construction workers led the "first official" walk across the Bridge.



WILDERNESS friends share the thrill of the "Master" walk. Some 650 campers in 1966 declared their enthusiasm for this WILDERNESS addition, too.





The WILDERNESS mood and the natural beauty of WILDERNESS lands and waters are appropriately preserved.

Camp Director Muus proudly joins his father in leading BRIDGE OF THE MASTER "principles" in a walk. Peterson, Strand, John Thompson, Joe Husby, Timmons, Thoreson, Huso, and Oscar Husby follow. It was an exciting day for all "enablers."





Even the creative spider finds a place for his fragile handiwork. This "web of life" symbolizes WILDERNESS program . . . with its "web of life in Christ."

BRIDGE OF THE MASTER brings forth that always curious question . . . "I wonder how it could be done?"



A full brigade of canoes and campers glide silently across WILDERNESS waters.

The BRIDGE OF THE MASTER story has a past . . . and a present . . . and a future.







From the air, BRIDGE OF THE MASTER is a graceful form . . . an awesome design *meant* for WILDERNESS.



The fabulous WILDERNESS voyageur canoes pass quietly under BRIDGE OF THE MASTER. Campers depart for the Trails . . . and return to WILDERNESS . . . with BRIDGE OF THE MASTER giving both benediction and greetings.



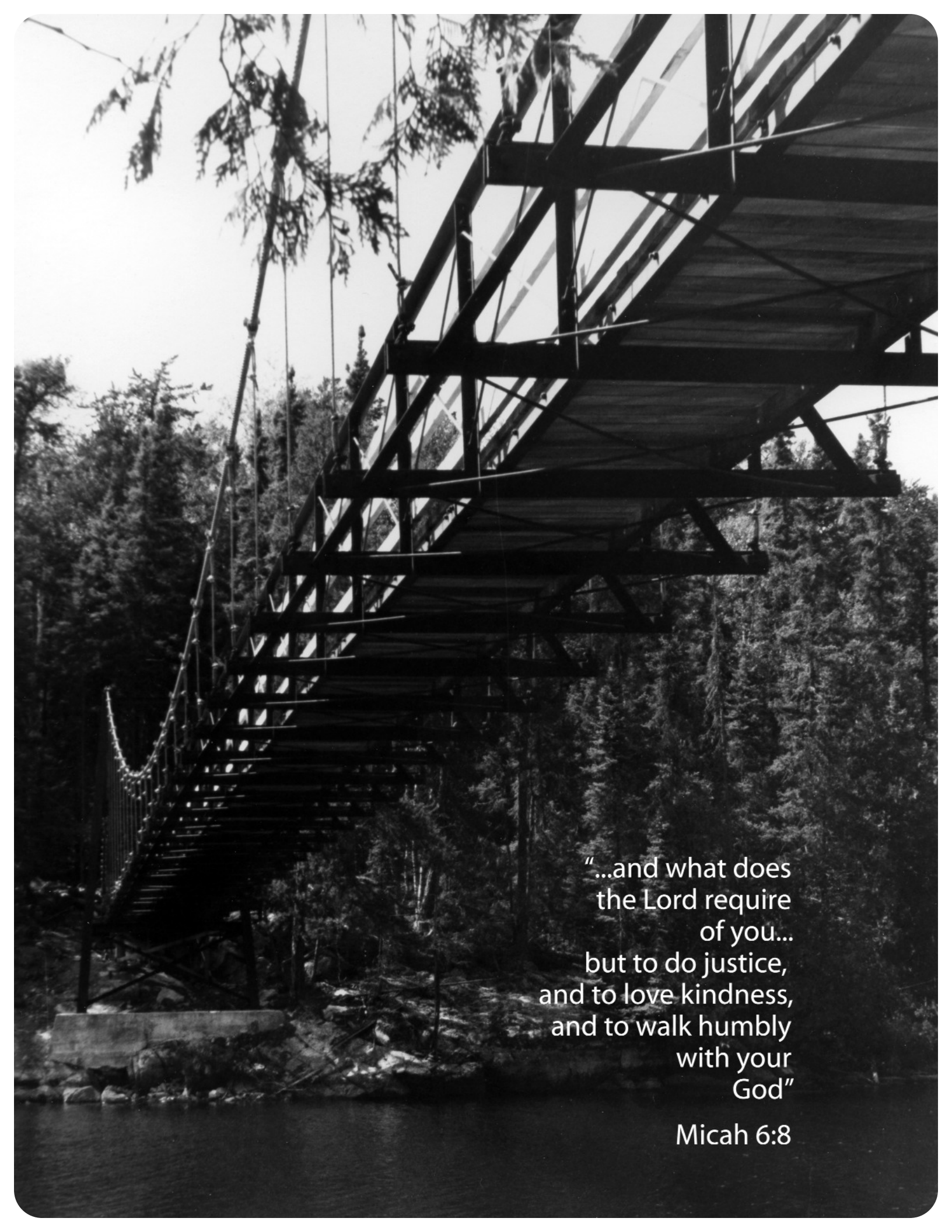


This is a bridge the Lord has made . . . a thing of beauty . . . a joy forever.



BRIDGE OF THE MASTER is a symbol of many things . . . for many persons. It crosses the “living water” . . . even as Christ *is* the living water. It joins Fishhook Island (a place of “equipping”) with Dominion Isle (a place of “worshipful exercise”). It moves campers and staff across to Band of Brothers Chapel . . . to a place set apart for Word and Sacrament. It symbolizes the kind of “link” which joins Christians together under the lordship of Christ.





"...and what does  
the Lord require  
of you...  
but to do justice,  
and to love kindness,  
and to walk humbly  
with your  
God"

Micah 6:8