

**Canyon Camp Staff Alumni and Friends  
2010 Fall Newsletter**

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**2010 Summer Camp Report – by Lee Binkley**

The Scouting calendar has been a very busy one this year. With the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary activities added to the regular calendar of events everyone has been given many opportunities to practice the “outing” in Scouting.

The 2010 camp staff worked together to once again help with the activities at the 55<sup>th</sup> U.S. Grant Pilgrimage this past April. Over 4,500 participated in the event. It is always a great way to get new camp staff members into the mode that we are there to serve others. (Yes, it rained at the Pilgrimage.) On Sunday of that weekend we again completed service projects at camp and had our first staff meeting. It's always fun to see everyone pull together to complete tasks that would otherwise be so challenging for one or two.

Many staff members, past and present, Monroe Kiwanians, and friends of Canyon Camp came to camp the first weekend of May for our annual Kiwanis Work Weekend. Many projects were completed including the construction of 10 new tent platforms. Canyon Camp has been truly blessed by the generosity of the Monroe Kiwanis Club. Ron and Jennifer Spielman have organized the event for 35 years. The club has donated over \$40,000 throughout the years to support programming for youth.

The summer camping season was one of many challenges. Staff week would be more appropriately called “rain week.” Campsites and program areas were set up in driving rains. Our senior staff quickly started several days of singing camp songs to make these tasks “fun.” (Reports of some mud-sliding seemed to be worked into the schedule as well.)

Camp had 905 Scouts and leaders participate in Boy Scout programming which was delivered by a camp staff of 40 members. The main focus of our camp schedule was the traditional offering of merit badges of which 36 were offered. The Canyon Ranger program and boat-building were once again popular activities for the first year campers. Older Scouts and adult leaders were very active and busy in the O.W.L. program. A new activity in O.W.L. was the addition of milk crate climbing. Participants wear a climbing harness and are suspended from a tree branch with a climbing rope. Climbers then start the challenge of stacking and climbing a tower of crates. An interesting event to watch! Additionally, Red Cross basic first aid, Kayaking

B.S.A., kayaking on the Apple River, and adult leader training were offered. Frisbee Golf and a Friday night dodge ball tournament were popular for all.

A very special activity was available during the first two weeks of camp. Through our collaborative efforts with the JoDavie County Conservation Foundation we were able to have Dan Wenny at camp to enhance Bird Study merit badge and other activities related to ornithology. Dan is a staff member with the Foundation and has earned his doctorate in ornithology. Through his efforts he secured D.N.R approval to set up bird nets in the vicinity of the nature center as well as flyways along Forest Trail. He conducted several demonstrations of bird banding. He worked with the Scouts to compile a detailed inventory of birds sighted as well as banded. He plans to return to camp next year with more and new activities. Scouts and leaders were given a special experience working with Dan.

The end of week 5 was the point where things got very challenging for the 2010 camp staff. Between Thursday evening and Saturday morning we experienced 2 major floods with more than 16" of rain. We witnessed water nearly 5 feet above the dam, trees uprooted in the front and back of camp, 17 canoes and 2 rowboats lost to Coon Creek and the Apple River, many picnic tables, shooting stands and benches, Scoutcraft equipment, Shooting Sports equipment, water nearly 6 feet deep in the archery building & 4 feet in the rifle range, 3 port-a-potties, and the list goes on. We were not able to get the Scouts out of camp until 2:30 on July 24<sup>th</sup> as the lower parking lot was under water and Townsend Road was closed. The devastation was so severe we faced the reality of not continuing with our final week. Although it is not one of the 12 points of the Scout Law...a Scout Perseveres!

Once the water receded we were able to set up an archery area in the flatland below the dam with equipment borrowed from Camp Lowden. Scoutcraft was moved uphill from the traditional location, and the rifle range was reopened on Tuesday afternoon of our final week. Our Wednesday night program was performed above Coon Rock. Boating was not available as trees had washed into Coon Lake. As I write this summary of the 2010 season our gate assembly on the dam is still inoperable as it was struck by a tree and bent 45 degrees to where it should be.

Everyone understood the conditions we faced were beyond our control. We were all thankful that no one was injured. The support of Camp Lowden was much appreciated as well as the extra efforts put forth by the camp staff to conduct a final, successful week of summer camp.

Although very challenging, 2010 was a good summer for Canyon Camp. Dick Reynolds and I were again pleased and privileged to serve as Co-Camp Directors. Know that the "Spirit of Canyon Camp" is alive and well. Plans are underway for the 2011 season, our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

### **Woodcutter's Ball at Canyon Camp – Oct 2**

The thirty-second annual Woodcutter's Ball will be held at Canyon Camp on Saturday, October 2, 2010. The Monroe Kiwanis Club is again sponsoring this event and is inviting Scouters and friends of Canyon Camp to participate. This annual workday has the primary focus of cutting, splitting, and delivering the winter supply of firewood to the cabins used by Scouts

throughout the winter months. Scouters are asked to bring chainsaws, splitters, and appropriate work clothes to work in the woods.

For those who cannot work in the woods, attendance is still encouraged as this workday is used as a time to do routine maintenance to buildings and to ready the camp for the winter camping season. Hammers, saws, and paintbrushes are all tools to be put to use this workday.

Fall is a great time to visit Canyon Camp. You will enjoy the clean fall air and enjoy the fellowship of others interested in perpetuating the Spirit of Canyon Camp.

Breakfast and lunch for all volunteers will again be provided by the Monroe Kiwanis Club. We'll plan to start at 9:00 a.m. and break for lunch at 1:00 p.m.

Kiwanians, troops, and individual Scouters are invited to participate! Contact Lee Binkley with questions or reservations: Home phone number 608/325-5540.

### **Reflected Knowing: The Collected Poetry of Lyle Novinski**

Be sure to checkout Lyle Novinski's newly published collection of poetry – *Reflected Knowing* (2010, Goldstone Press). Two poems in the collection were inspired by Lyle's experiences at Canyon Camp.

“There are a couple poems that refer to the Camp experience, page 72, The Bridging is about a day when Kevin Lamm, I and another staffer, Brian Kitelinger cut down a pair of locusts up on the hill, land snaked them down to the ford for a bridge. It rained in the afternoon and I stayed in my tent in Tall Timber, but I heard the tractor, and at dinner time met Kevin and Kitelinger all muddy and exultant at their success in getting the two poles securely posted across the creek below the Ford. The second is page 226, I walk Past. That one is recent, a couple of years ago when I visited the Ford again, and recalled using it as my personal bathtub before we had a Shower house. I sometimes bathed soapily in the lake below my tent behind the old trading post where I lived with Motsinger, 1952/53, and in the night we would climb down the rock ledges before bed and soak and scrub. Occasionally Jeglum and I would do the same when we were living on the Forest Trail too, made for great sleeping.”

A review of Lyle's book follows:

A stunning collection of highly unusual poems by Lyle Novinski, a renowned painter. This collection of poems, written over decades, will appeal to anyone who loves the celebration of small things, sensuously felt by the imagination pouring its perception of places, scents, touch, sounds into the body; world beauty, felt deeply. For years, Lyle Novinski took yearly trips to Italy and Greece, seeing those landscapes and people with ever more acute and subtle perception. He saw through the artist's eye - open, with wonder and the ability to completely surrender to whatever was present, allowing it all to flow into his soul, without prejudice, judgment, or speculation. Then, the matrix of scenes from that year would remain in memory, fermenting and distilling into poems that were written - as love poems to his wife as he would go off on another trip the following year. Each poem gives a sense of a possible future, present as though it had

just been happening. The writing elevates the world of time, the tapestry of past, present, and future, now endowed with love. Time intimate, overcoming the yearly space between him and his beloved. The way into this poetry is provided by, Glenn Arbery, astute literary and cultural critic. This introduction is not only instructive, it is in itself a masterful, creative piece, worthy of savoring slowly. Such a reading helps one enter the poems with care, with a sense of how to be with these words in such a way as to allow bodily perception of what Lyle was seeing. The secret lies in letting yourself become enveloped in stillness, the true subject, the bright theme whispering throughout this book. Such poetry educates the soul in how to move from intense but unruly emotion into the spirit-filled presence of feeling.

### **Spirit Scholarships awarded to six Staff members in 2010**

The Canyon Camp Spirit Scholarship program began in 1992 with staff alumni contributing funds for the first scholarships. In recent years an endowment has been accumulated to generate a portion of the scholarship funding distributed each year.

There are now three named scholarships awarded each year: Troy Larson Spirit Scholarship first awarded in 2005, Dennis Pratt Spirit Scholarship first awarded in 2006 and the Lee Binkley Spirit Scholarship first awarded in 2007. At the 2010 Staff Dinner Lee Binkley and Dick Reynolds presented scholarships to six recipients:

Troy Larson to Aaron Miller - Sauk Valley College  
Dennis Pratt to Alex Kennison – University of Wisconsin Madison  
Lee Binkley to Michael Hofmann - Illinois State University  
Spirit Scholarship to Jason Buss - Highland Community College  
Spirit Scholarship to Erick Bartel - Rock Valley College  
Spirit Scholarship to Mark Costello - Northern Illinois University

Through 2010 scholarships totaling \$26,700 have been awarded to 88 recipients. Scholarship funding comes from staff alumni, Scouters, and Friends of Canyon Camp. Individuals making tax deductible contributions may select prints of pen and ink drawings of Canyon Camp scenes. To date, artist Elaine Bethke of Monroe has generated eight different prints:

Canyon Camp Bells  
Held Nature Center  
Stagecoach Trail Sign  
Jamboree Cabin  
The Chapel  
Vickery Health Lodge  
Rawleigh Headquarters Building  
Hess Farmstead Barn

If you are interested in supporting the Spirit Scholarship Fund contact Ron Spielman @ 608-325-6490 or [spiel335@tds.net](mailto:spiel335@tds.net)

**Illinois Nature Preserves Commission and Blackhawk Area Council agreement finalized**

The agreement to manage part in the far back of Canyon Camp (85.1 acres) as a land and water reserve in exchange for our ownership of a portion of and access to the some of the Wiley property has been approved by the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission. This agreement creates an important buffer that will help protect the high quality natural features found in the reserve such as dry and wet cliff communities, dry prairies and 14 rare plant species in Illinois including the endangered Sullivant's Coolwort (*Sullivantia sullivantii*). Scouts and Scouters will now have access to some the Wiley property for hiking, primitive camping and nature study, and direct access to the Apple River just upstream from Thunder Bridge.

### **2011 Canyon Camp Staff Alumni Reunion**

A reunion for all Canyon Camps Staff Alumni, their families and Friends of Canyon Camp will be held July 22-24, 2011. Events will start Friday evening with a picnic at Apple River Canyon State Park, and a full slate of events on Saturday and Sunday at Canyon Camp. More details will be sent in the next newsletter.