



ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

Edition No. 5. Late Spring, 2011

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Editor

Late Spring 2011 News

Algonquin Campership Fund

Scott Forsyth reported on fundraising for the Algonquin Campership Fund, which ends its fiscal year on March 31. Scott reports, "We had a fantastic year, raising \$70,373! We made awards last year totaling \$28,164 to 8 campers (6 boys and 2 girls) and the Wilson Outing Club. The balance in the endowment is \$238,329. The fund, thanks to the Foundation, had an impressive investment return for the year of \$26,512."

Bald Eagle Sighting in Algonquin Park



Algonquin Outfitters reported a bald eagle sighting on their FaceBook page, "This rare sighting of a bald eagle in Algonquin Park occurred at an undisclosed location on Lake Opeongo. Out of concern for the bald eagles, the location will remain undisclosed and hopefully there will be another pair with a successful nest in the park."

Report from Spring Crew

Sladds is on island with a group of headmen. He wrote a report which is available from the Camp Pathfinder Web site:

<http://www.camppathfinder.com/news-and-notes/news-and-notes/>

Gill Stanley posted a film on YouTube on the construction of the new canoe facility that you can watch here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-fJ6H5CidYU>

Getting ready for the 98th Pathfinder Summer must be a lot like the pre-season preparations over many prior camp years. Probably in the distant past, the early crew got started later, more like mid-June. It was called “Advance Party.” In Mac’s day a cadre of four -souls arrived June 1 and did all the work. In recent years, projects and the advent of spring groups have caused the first staff to arrive early in May.

Think of it. For camp’s first five decades, all the “town runs” and “food orders” meant working with a railroad and paddling the supplies across Source Lake. An old Chief Norton manual was found, detailing the opening chores of yesteryear. Much remains unchanged today. This generation, however, does not have to arrange stove cordwood and ice blocks.

Alumni Interview with Mac Rand

In March, I traveled to Pawling, New York, to interview Mac Rand for this edition of the newsletter.

How did you first come to Pathfinder?

My dad, Stan, and my uncle Van Rand grew up in North Tonawanda. They started going to Pathfinder in 1927. Dad spent 10 years at camp, from camper through staff. When my brothers and I got to be camp age, Dad asked around and found that Pathfinder was still going strong. For a reason that is still a mystery to the whole family, my oldest brother never went to Pathfinder. However, my brother Digger went as a camper in 1959, with mixed results. He took several years off, then returned as a CIT in 1964 and I started the following year. Of course, back then virtually everyone was full season. I don’t recall even having a conversation about it. It worked out just fine. It was love at first sight.



Ann and Mac Rand (photo by Jim “Gyro” Coakley)

Tell us some highlights of your camper years.

I spent five years as a camper and went on, I think, 17 trips in that time. A few have been lost in the back recesses of my mind, but many still stand out. My first trip was to Linda - Burnt Island with Gyro, and I learned a valuable life lesson on the second portage: When your strap breaks in life, you don’t sit down and cry; you tie a knot in it and keep going. My second trip was with Gyro’s brother Bob, who for some unfathomable reason chose a bunch of new Crees to go bushing from Sunbeam to Grassy Bay. That instilled a love of the challenge of bushing that stayed with me throughout my camp career.

My third trip stuck in my mind because the headman, Sandy “Squat” Gage, told me I was “slow as molasses in January” while trudging out the garage door with a pack that well exceeded the “no more than half your weight” rule.

I spent a *lot* of nights on the trail with the three Coakley brothers, and every trip was challenging in its own way. I loved doing the western boundary when it was still bushing. You knew you’d really accomplished something. In 1969, I was with Bob Coakley when he successfully made it to Birchcliff, a lake that he had wanted to see for some time but had been stymied for various reasons.

When you were on staff what were your various roles, and what changes did you see at Pathfinder?



The western boundary ([Mac is on the far left](#))
(photo by Jim "Gyro" Coakley)

Just like for everyone else, the transition from camper to staff had its rough moments, but I like to think I grew from them. I remember doing the boundary as a third man with Tom Coakley. His trip report was right on target: he said I could be publicly tired, swore when I felt like it, but had potential. I remember my first trip as a second man the following year, going out to get firewood. The headman scoffed at the cedar I brought back, pointing out it was way too fresh. The thing is, back then we didn't have the training that the young guys get now. I learned quickly.

In the late 1960s or early 1970s we made the transition from canned food to freeze dried, not a minute too soon. What a huge change! A bit more bulk, maybe, but *so* much lighter. All of us from that time will remember soaking the freeze-dried pork chops!

In the mid-1970s we went through the change, or should I say alteration, in ownership. Roy and Swifty had been partners, but reached a point that they decided to end that partnership. I remember several phone calls during the winter, speculating about who might buy camp. The following year Roy was solo, and honestly it really didn't feel like much changed. Swifty had never spent that much time on the island during the days because of his commitments with Algonquin Outfitters, so you really didn't miss seeing him. Personally, I was always a bit intimidated by the big guy!

I was fortunate to go to some new areas for Pathfinder. In 1973 I led the first Kipawa trip. That was real uncharted territory. Roggow and I spread the maps out on the floor of the PX to figure out a route, but we were really just guessing. It turned out to be a great trip. We ended the trip by going down the Ottawa, then up the Mattawa to North Bay. The following year I led the first Dumoine Trip, but that ended with a broken boat part way down. I still haven't finished the river! My dad died in 1975 and I was only up for second half that year. But in 1976 and 1977 I opened up a lot of new territory in Temagami. My final trip as a headman was outrageous: Smitty as my second man, and Mitch Anderson, GT Laub, Jamey Bumbalo, and Scott Aquilina were the campers. We powered through Temagami in warp speed. I remain close friends with almost all of them, and I credit it to the bonds that formed during those 19 days.

On the tripping front, Gyro and Bob Coakley were very influential. I think I spent something like 70 days tripping with them. They did tend to choose the "above average" campers! I liked that they led us to places no one had been to, and I always felt safe with them. I also loved Bob Roggow, who, along with being a fine tripper, was also an absolute blast to trip with. He was so much fun, always telling jokes, singing, and pulling pranks on us. The song "You Were on my Mind" by the Wee Five will be with me until the day I die, as we sang it over...and over...and over again paddling down a glassy smooth Cedar Lake very early one morning to wake up JJay's trip.

Roy Thrall was like a second father to me. When my dad died in June of 1975, I called camp and told Roy I wouldn't be able to come up for first half. (In truth, that was partly because of dad and partly because I had slacked off in college and needed to go to summer school!) Roy assured me I'd have a place when I was ready. He was true to his word even though there was an overabundance of staff that year and he really didn't need me. He just understood that I *needed* to come back to camp. What a dear, kind man. After I bought the camp he continued to come back every year and help out in any and every way he could. He never questioned what I was doing, even though I'm sure there were times he wondered. I didn't hear from him in the winter of 1993-1994, and he didn't

come up to camp. That August Karl and I won the Guide's Race---came back to camp, all full of ourselves---and heard the news that Roy had died. So sad. Roy was a helluva yigget.

In a male-dominated camp society, I have to say that Mary Chestnut was a wonderful friend and a real dynamo, although always behind the scenes. She made the rest of us look like we knew what we were doing by being so organized and on top of every little detail. Plus, I lost count of the times she told me to get the hell out of the office and go have fun with the kids. Not once in all the years I've known her has she put her interests ahead of camp, even when she deserved to. She is a great friend to both me and to Pathfinder.

Tell us about the 17 years that you owned camp.

After a couple of years of considering it, I bought camp at the end of the 1982 season with a handshake in the back room of the Forest Five! I was a bit on the young (28) and inexperienced side, so the first few years were definitely a growing experience. Working at camp and being the boss are two *very* different things. It's just a huge responsibility: all those kids out there on the trail (or flying down the zip line, or swimming in the lake), and you simply have to do the best you can to get the best staff and train them (something Sladds and Glenn are doing a terrific job at), plus have a bit of luck thrown in. I breathed a huge sigh of relief when the final trip arrived safely back at the canoe dock, and I knew that I had made it 17 years without a serious injury, or worse.

I think of my ownership years as evolutionary rather than revolutionary. Of course, I wanted to keep true to the programs and values that had made Pathfinder what it was, but I wanted to keep growing in a sensible way. Tripping is a prime example: I wanted the next generation to feel the same sense of excitement and pride as I had felt when I got to open up new areas. So, after briefly considering Quetico, I chose James Bay as our next target. In 1986 Simon Mortimer led our first Missinaibi trip. I joined up with them at Mattice, part way through, and it was an idyllic week for me as we went downstream past Thunderhouse Falls, the "swells," and stepped ashore at Moosonee for the first time. Now, of course, the tripping destinations continue to expand. I just hope that we never forget that there is a ton of great tripping to be done right on our back yard of Algonquin Park.

I was also excited about expanding the in-camp program. We started the first elements of the ropes course in 1984, and it continues to grow to this day. In a matter of one period, a boy can meet and conquer challenges that up until then he thought were beyond him. So cool. We also introduced mountain biking, and we cleared the trail on the old railroad tracks from the Madawaska culvert on the camp road to Highway 60, just short of the Minnising Trail. I'm not sure if they still use it, but I thought that was a good start to a bike trip because it kept the kids off the highway and maybe they got to learn something about the history of Algonquin Park.

One thing I am proud of starting is the ongoing tradition of the five-year reunions. We did the first one in 1988 to celebrate our 75th season, and it was arguably the best in terms of the breadth of years covered by those in attendance. We had guys from the 1920s onward. At the banquet I had a speaker for each decade of camp (minus the 1910s), and that was fun to hear their reminiscences. I well remember J.B. Walsh leading us all in camp songs from the 1940s. Great stuff. Then there was Simon "I haven't *been here* as long as most of you..." but he sure spoke longer than the rest of us!

Around 1997 I began to think about life after Pathfinder. Ironically, when I wrote *Paddles Flashing in the Sun* just a couple of years before, I said that I figured I had a lot of years left. However, being a full-time teacher, and being a full-time camp owner at the same time, got to be a bit too much. I dreaded the idea of staying too long and outlasting my welcome. Ann and I talked about it a lot that winter and during the following summer. We made the decision to leave after 1999. The timing was good, as we had the 85th year reunion at the end of 1998. I hoped that I would be able to do just as Roy had done and keep the camp "in the family" so I made the announcement at the reunion banquet with the hopes that someone in that room would be interested. Needless to say, there was a happy ending!

That last summer, 1999, was a great year for me. I really made a point of enjoying myself. I got out on a trip and took some Crees to Pathfinder Lake, which is named after us. Chief Norton had asked the park to name a lake for the camp. It's a spitpond, but it was still fun to see it. The last trip I sent out in 1999 was arguably the most challenging trip up to that point that had ever left Pathfinder Island: starting on Lake Superior and bisecting the entire province of Ontario, ending up at Moosonee. My son Matt was on that with his knot of close friends, and he grew from a boy into a young man on that trip.

On the personal side: Ann and I got married in 1992 down at the Chapel—her idea!—with the loons serenading us, and the best northern light show ever that night. Ann really enjoyed camp and working with the kids, and though she always supported my decision to sell, she would have gladly kept going for a long time. Finally, I was thrilled that Katie continued to go back to camp for several years. She just adores everything about Pathfinder and has made a good friend or two (or two hundred) up there.

One last thing: during my reign the Nine Old Men went 32-2. Not undefeated, but pretty good!

What have you been doing since then?

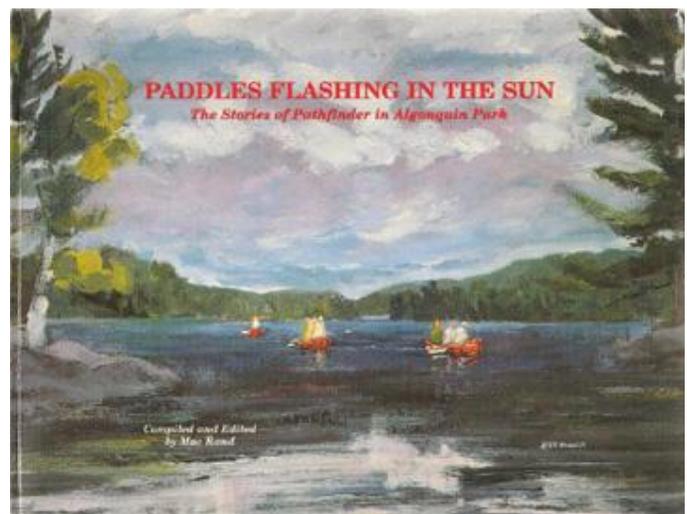
I continued to teach through 2008, but had an itch to be self-employed again. So, after recovering from a bike crash that could have killed me, I started Great Blue Outfitters here in Pawling, New York. We have some great places to paddle, the Appalachian Trail runs right through our town, and there are rails trails for riding, hiking trails for day trippers -just a ton of things to do. We're coming up on our third summer season, and (knock on wood) things have been going well. Last summer I started selling kayaks along with renting them, and that was quite successful. My nephew Chris, who spent a number of summers at Pathfinder, is my right-hand man. People quickly sense that we are not just some yokels working at Dick's or whatever, but that we truly have a passion for what we do and are very knowledgeable. The only downside (and it's a big one) is that our summer season is our busiest, so I don't get to our cottage on Cache Lake anywhere near as much as I'd like. I have to work on that! We were incredibly lucky to be able to buy the cottage during our last summer at camp. It is just wonderful to stay connected with the park, and to be so close to Pathfinder. But for sure, I need more time there!

Mac, I'm sure that we all saw the announcement about the book. Can you tell us a little more about *Paddles Flashing in the Sun, Volume II*?

I really enjoyed writing *Volume I* in the early 1990s and learned so much about Pathfinder's history. Plus, the stories were fantastic! I'm not convinced they were necessarily 100 percent accurate in every detail, but they were fun to read and really gave a good sense of who *we* are. With the 100th year approaching, it just seemed like the right time to put together *Volume II*. I know there are a lot of folks who didn't contribute to the first book, and of course there is a whole new crop of braves who have come up through the ranks with their own adventures to pass along.

Are you getting submissions from our alumni?

Submissions are just starting to come in now. It's a trickle at this point, but I know this is a process that takes a while to build momentum. I know Sladds will keep everyone informed on our progress, and as guys see



Cover of the first edition of *Paddles Flashing in the Sun*

their friends contribute that will convince them to do the same. The list of questions included in Sladds' announcement is just a starting point, and those questions don't have to be answered; they were just memory-joggers to get the ball rolling. Any story/stories that you think would be fun, interesting, and good reading are gladly accepted. The e-mail addresses to send them to:

shadypoint@hotmail.com or paddlesbook@hotmail.com

I'll look forward to hearing from people real soon.

I understand that you have been involved in a number of marathons and triathlons. What events are you currently training for?

Yes, that's true. My racing dates back to the early 1980s when I ran my first marathon, and 1985 when I did the Ironman in Hawaii for the first time. I've done three Ironmans with a fourth coming this summer, along with more marathons than I can easily count. I attribute a huge part of this to Pathfinder: you keep going even when you're dead tired and don't think you can take another step. You just dig a little deeper. Think of Al Chestnut and his Bataan experience and everything else looks easy.

Right now I am training hard for the upcoming Lake Placid Ironman, to be held this July 24th. An Ironman consists of a 2.4 mile swim, a 112 mile bike, and then finishes with a full 26.2 mile marathon. I was supposed to do this race in 2008 but had a terrible bike crash on my last long training ride, so spent the summer in bed healing from several breaks in my hips and vertebrae—hence the crutches at the 95th Reunion! I'm excited to go back and do it, but it has taken on a much greater importance this year as I am competing on behalf of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. I have run several races through the years for this cause. I lost an older brother to leukemia back in 1992, and this year I am running in honor of a 10-year old boy named Zach who has been battling this disease for three years. I give my Pathfinder tripping experiences full credit for allowing me to even consider doing a race such as this. I mean, when you're in the middle of a stinking long portage and hating it, you really don't have much choice but to keep putting one foot in front of the other until you see that lake. Doing an Ironman is the same: dig deep and keep moving forward. I honestly could not conceive of doing this race without having been to Pathfinder.

If folks would like to donate to the Leukemia Society and help me reach my lofty fundraising goal, they can go to my Web page at:

<http://pages.teamintraining.org/uny/lkplacid11/mrandt>

Folks can pledge whatever they can. No amount is too small or too big! It would mean so much to me. I know there will be times I'm going to be hurting during this race, and I can use all the support I can get to keep moving toward the end of this 140.6 mile portage. Lift a cold one on that Sunday afternoon/evening and send good thoughts my way!

Upcoming Events

The 98th Season: The calendar tells us that the 98th season is now approaching. Staff week starts on June 24. First half campers arrive July 1. As I have done for a number of summers. I'll be waiting at the car dock for their arrival.

Do You Know?

Reported above is the construction of the new canoe shop , located behind the PX along the trail to the trail to the ball field. What used to be in this location?

When did the last train roll through the park? This would be the CN line from Achray to Brent and on to Kiosk.

What was the last major building construction project before the new canoe shop?

Contact Information

We are all settled in New Hampshire. Our mailing address is PO Box 1915, Grantham, NH 03753. We are located about 500 meters from Eastman Lake, which is about two miles long, making it similar in size to Source Lake. I went for a paddle this morning. My email address is jcoakley@comcast.net.