

Tomahawk Alumni Association Newsletter

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Halloran Takes the Helm at Camp

Brian “Swiffer” Halloran is the new Tomahawk Scout Reservation director. He succeeds Mark McCabe who has left Northern Star Council to become director of operations for Ramsey County Parks and Recreation.

Halloran was reservation program director in 2012. He served a total of nine years on the camp staff.

His jobs at Tomahawk also included Sioux

Beach staff, 2004-08; White Pine Beach director, 2009; and Sioux Camp director, 2010-11. He also is Snow Base director, a position he took over in 2011.

These past positions will serve him well as he steps into the camp’s top job and he will also benefit from the last two years he has spent in the Scout office helping with summer preparation including

tasks such as program planning, ordering supplies and staffing.

Regarding one of his first projects, Halloran said, “This young man is taking part in activities at the logging camp, new to Tomahawk in 2011. He represents what to me is one of the most important elements of my job with Scouting



and Tomahawk; continual innovation and improvement. With your help the logging camp will be even better this year. Please see the enclosed brochure and consider giving.”

Halloran is an Eagle Scout and a 2010 graduate of the University of Minnesota’s School of Architecture.

Of his new position he says, “I’m very excited to lead camp and be part of such a great place. I will work hard to do well, as those before me have.”

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Four Tomahawk staff persons, including its new director, through-paddled the Mississippi River in 2010. Making the 70-day, TAA-sponsored trip were (left to right) Eric Grapentine, Davin Grapentine, Brian Halloran, and Maggie Matthews.

Dates to Remember

Saturday, May 11—
Service Day at Camp

Sunday, July 28—60th
Anniversary Reunion

Monday, December 30—
Annual Meeting and Holiday Party

See you there!

From the President**BOARD CONFIRMS 2013 EVENTS AND SETS GOALS**

I am honored to serve as TAA president for 2013. In addition to keeping our great traditional events alive—camp service day and the holiday gathering—your board has established a number of goals for the year.

We will be actively promoting two new programs. First, building on the successful fundraising effort of five years ago to finance the camp welcome sign, the board decided it is again time to help the camp we all love with another project. We were asked to help fund and build a staff cabin for the logging camp.

This is in line with our mission to help the camp and its staff directly as well as promote our organization to future members in a meaningful and very visible way. To start, please join me in contributing (see the enclosed brochure for details). The goal to cover the cost of materials is \$8,000. Later, when the first goal is reached, finishing the new cabin this spring during the spring service day will have the highest priority.

The second event is our alumni reunion at camp for the 60th anniversary of Tomahawk. The new reser-

vation director, Brian Halloran, will welcome us as we reconnect at the event this summer on July 28. He will have opened up the camp and its facilities so that we can see programs in action. A complete schedule will be on the TAA website (<http://alumni.camptomahawk.org>) and will be published in the July newsletter. I encourage you to save the date.

The Tomahawk Alumni Association has many great members; I look forward to seeing us in action this year through fellowship and friendship. *Gregory Rohde, President.*

Service Day**Board's Lovett and Moser Head the Project**

Put Saturday, May 11, on your calendar and plan on participating in the annual TAA Service Day at Tomahawk.

It will be a good day to spend some time with old friends and others who care about Tomahawk while at the same time providing a real service to the camp. You are welcome to arrive on Friday and spend the night in one of the staff cabins (or bring a tent if you prefer). Breakfast will be provided for those who stay overnight or arrive by 8 a.m. Saturday; lunch will be provided for all.

This year, we will be staining latrines, building new dining hall benches, pressure washing the White Pine Program Building and other areas, assembling futon bunk beds for Family Island, putting caps on White Pine chairs, working on the logging camp cabin, cleaning the ceiling of Chipewa Dining Hall, taking down teepee poles and moving them to a new location, and painting various buildings.

Everyone is welcome to come and help out and of course socialize but we especially need you if you have skills useful for these projects.

Please let us know if you plan to join us. If you are interested in particular projects or have construction—carpentry, electrical, plumbing—or maintenance skills, let us know that too. Also, let us know if you plan to stay at camp Friday night or will be there for breakfast Saturday so we can have plenty of bunks and food.

You can let us know via Facebook (Tomahawk Scout Reservation—Camp Staff Alumni Page) or by email: alumni@camptomahawk.org. We will meet at the White Pine Program Building at 8 a.m. for breakfast and 9 a.m. for work assignments.

Co-chair Tim Lovett and I hope you can be there! *Larry Moser.*

Board News**MEETINGS PLANNED AND TASKS ASSIGNED FOR '13**

In 2013 the TAA board will meet April 10, Sept. 24 and Nov. 7. Meetings will generally start at 6 p.m. at the St. Paul Scout office and as in the past all association members are welcome to attend. Contact Brian Halloran (bhalloran@northernstarbsa.org) for confirmation of time and place.

Members and assignments are Dave Albrecht, Tom Creager, Bill Dorgan (membership), Joe Filipas (website), Matt Folsom (fundraising), Jim Frost (newsletter), Myron Jacobson (reunion), Carol Kelsey (secretary), Tim Lovett (service day), Larry Moser (service day), Greg Rohde (president) and Ethan Stevens; Halloran is an ex officio member.

Tomahawk's Beaches and Aquatic Programs*

Tomahawk now has four complete beaches for Scouts—Chippewa, Sioux, White Pine and Navajo—plus Lake Nielsen Marina. Campers' instructional and recreational swims take place at the beach nearest their campsites. There is also a beach at Family Island and over the years troop swimming has taken place at remote locations such as Seminole Island.

Today's campers learn canoeing, kayaking, lifesaving, rowing, sailing, snorkeling and swimming skills, and have the opportunity to play water polo and earn their mile swim emblems. Merit badge counselors for all aquatic badges are on hand

Chippewa Beach—originally was Main Beach, one of the

striped fencing and tower, it became known as the Peppermint Lounge or Peppermint Beach. A boathouse was added in the 80s.

White Pine Beach—Tomahawk's newest beach was opened in 1994 to serve what was then called White Pine Encampment. That summer four troops and two courses of Junior Leader Training Conference used the beach. When White Pine Camp was dedicated the following year the beach also became fully operational and a boathouse was added.

Navajo Beach—At Navajo Webelos Camp, fourth and fifth graders are exposed to water safety and other programs that are part of the transition from Cub Scout to



Chippewa (Main) Beach, Circa 1960

first two aquatic areas at Tomahawk. When it opened in the mid-50s it had a ponderous metal pier, which was scrapped about 1970. Another characteristic was a huge lakeside boathouse that stood from the late 50s until 2002 when it was torn down and replaced with the present shower and storage facility.

Sioux Beach—was actually the third at Tomahawk (see Beaver Point, below). It was originally called Beach 13 because it was situated near Site 13 before campsites were named. In its early days waterfront staff members came by motorboat from Main Beach to conduct troop swims. In the 60s, with its distinctive red and white

Boy Scout. They swim, boat and canoe with their parents at Navajo Beach, which was improved to its present condition in 1991. It is situated near the Central Service Lodge at a location established in 1960 as a beach for provisional Scouts.

Beaver Point Beach—was set up in 1954 for campers at sites along the east shore of Lake Nielsen. It was situated below what is now the Blackfoot campsite. Beaver Point lore is bizarre but captivating—a sample:

◆ *It was on a small lake that occasionally froze solid, ending all life (continued on Page 4).*

*This article is part of an ongoing series on Tomahawk's history taken from the exhibit in the Berglund Welcome Center at camp.

FIHN, FLOOD AND FOSTER—DAVE FIHN REMEMBERS

I was the first waterfront director at Tomahawk.

My first trip to Long Lake was in the summer of 1953. We rented a boat from Kunz Marine near what is now Prop's and crossed to the Fisher Cabin at what became Campsite 1 and then Cherokee. Then we hiked around a fair amount and got a feel for this wonderful place. I'm not sure if I fell in love with the property that was soon to become our camp right then or on the next trip later that summer.

I then met Axel Nielsen who had sold the land to the Scout council and he became a friend and idol for me. What would we have had without Axel? I think we made a third trip that summer.

In the summer of 1954 a modest start at a camp was made. Fish Foster was camp/waterfront/cook etc. director that summer. Ben Flood would make a trip from Neibel each week to assist Fish with water activities. It was then that we decided to locate the Main Beach at its location in Chippewa (a camp name I did not know or use at the time).

The winter of 1954-55 during Christmas vacation, Ben and I hiked in and measured layout and water depths for the new pier.

The ponderous metal pier was a real treat after the terrible one at Neibel, where a large crew was necessary to put it in and take it out. The lumber was donated by the railroad. All bulky, creosote covered wood. Each section needed four to six guys to carry it to the water, a large plank at each section. The platform at the southwest corner took at least eight really lifting. Whenever it was warm the creosote would leak out; many swimmers would get burns and many swimming suits were ruined.

However, putting the metal dock (really a large Erector Set) together at Tomahawk that first spring of 1955 was still a chore. The water was very cold in June and Ben Flood and I were left alone after the first day. Shaking, chattering, and with blue lips we managed. It was actually pleasant to spend evenings, warm, and clearing campsites or nailing roofing on the dining hall!

Probably the most dramatic part of the move was changing from basically provisional camping to unit camping. This was a vast improvement over what I was used to when I worked for Minneapolis Viking Council five years earlier.

Tomahawk worked well that first year because all of the staff worked very hard and the directors were fantastic.

I was eager to return as I was privileged to for two more years. Already many changes were taking place. As troops were spread out a significant distance along the lakeshore we had to provide instruction and supervising was scattered. Most aquatic activity was at Main Beach.

A passing comment on how things have changed over the last 50 years: In 1956 I decided to grow a beard. It was a fine one but a parent saw me and complained to the office in St. Paul. Instructions came down that I would shave before I could be paid. We had a very understanding camp director and he suggested that he would hold my checks and if I shaved at the close of the season he would give me my pay. It was a forced savings plan.



At the 50th reunion several persons told me about being beached by me for two weeks! I'm sure that that was an exaggeration. But safety was paramount in my mind the summer of 1956 when a real nightmare occurred. A very experienced troop was camping independently on the island about a mile north of the main beach. One of the leaders was epileptic and during physical exams I was called up to the dining hall where they were being conducted. After consultation it was decided that he should sign a waiver. However, the last day of their week, while taking down flags, he had a seizure, rolled down a small hill and ended up face down in the lake. He was the only drowning at Tomahawk during my eight-year watch over St. Paul-Indianhead Council water activities. I will never forget it.

During my time at camp we had no boathouse on the beach. Spring and fall all boats and canoes had to be carried to the dining hall and a few to Lake Nielsen. It was no simple task. I devised a way to carry the 14-foot Alumacraft boats alone—like carrying a canoe. I don't think anyone else did it that way.

My real joy was teaching non-swimmers but also countless aquatic Merit Badge classes—rowing, canoeing, swimming, lifesaving and some sailing. It's a pleasure for me to recall all of the wonderful times and Scouters and Scouts that I had the good luck to work for and with.

Tomahawk's Beaches and Aquatic Programs (Continued)

- ◆ Starting at the deep end of the non-swimmers section its bottom was deep, thick muck.
- ◆ Hungry little fish nipped at slow-moving swimmers, especially during the one-minute float for swimming merit badge.
- ◆ Once every summer the Explorer drum and bugle corps set up shop at the otherwise little-used Black-foot site for a week of practice.
- ◆ A snapping turtle at least as big as a small boat regularly loafed its way through the swimming area.
- ◆ The pilings for its pier, stuck in the muck, were left in

all year. At the expense of the entire waterfront discretionary spending allowance for 1961, when the pilings finally gave out, it became a Styrofoam-supported floating pier. Sections were fastened together with eye bolts that had enough play to create a mini roller coaster effect as beach staff members and campers moved from one to another.

In the late 60s Beaver Point Beach was closed for good; Nielsen Marina was opened on the lake at a different location.