



# THE OCTORARO LOOP

The Horseshoe Scout Reservation Alumni Association (HSRAA) News  
Issue No. 3 - Volume 6 - October 2005 On Line - WWW.HSRAA.ORG

## The purpose and mission of the Horseshoe Scout Reservation Alumni Association

*"To preserve and promote the spirit and heritage of Horseshoe Scout Reservation and its camps (Camp Horseshoe and Camp John H. Ware, III), to be a benefactor to the Reservation and to promote the brotherhood of Scouting among the alumni of the Reservation."*

## HSRAA PARADE FIELD PROJECT NEARS COMPLETION

In October the final phase of the Horseshoe Scout Reservation Alumni Association's (HSRAA) major parade field renovation nears completion at Camp Horseshoe. This is the third year of the renovation under the management of Dick Bensing and the HSRAA.



Earth Mover takes first bite

Phase I was the construction of the stone headwall for the Parade Field with new troop flagpole stanchions. This was followed by the construction of a corresponding stonewall and steps along the Horseshoe Loop Road and the Trading Post/Office area.

Of the three projects, the last phase was the most challenging. The parade field had to be excavated, leveled by heavy equipment and rock removed in the process. Then, topsoil was trucked to the site and distributed up to 18" in the upper portion of the Parade Field. Once this



Leveled and being readied for seed and straw

was completed, Dick Bensing's crew of volunteers raked and seeded and placed hay on the entire field. The field's grass seeding is now providing an attractive sward of grass that will mature over the winter. Recent rains resulted in practically no run-off from the field. Meanwhile the other part of Phase III is taking place at the wall and steps near the Allen



Stonewall construction at end of field

Memorial Dining Hall. Here new stonework in the leader line/cedar grove area will complement the old wall and stone steps will lead off the field to the Loop Road and the dining hall.



Steps descend to Allen Memorial

This major work sponsored and paid for by the HSRAA will serve to highlight one of Horseshoe's memorable traditions for Scouts and visitors alike – the evening Retreat Ceremony. Members of the HSRAA can take pride in this and other improvement projects for both Camp Horseshoe and Camp John H. Ware 3rd in which they have had a vested interest.

## THE HSRAA 6TH REUNION COMEBACK OF "SUMP PUMPS" EXCITES – DELIGHTS!

July 16, 2005 is a date that may long be remembered in the annals of the Horseshoe Scout Reservation Alumni Association Reunions! This affair brought together campers and staff members of Camp Horseshoe and Camp John H. Ware 3rd from earlier generations.

HSRAA member Jim Matthews, Master of Ceremonies, introduced the "Sump Pumps" with these stirring words:

*"...Scouts, former scouts and non-scouts, this is the moment you've been waiting for. If you've never seen the Sump Pumps before, thank your lucky stars. But tonight be prepared to be dazzled and thrilled by Horseshoe's own, world famous, Sump Pumps. Tonight they've taken time out of their enormously successful Lil Freezes Over Tour to perform here at the camp to commemorate their roots here. Because they are so successful and loved, I don't need to tell you about the Sump Pumps, but I will. The Sump Pumps performed at Camp Horseshoe from '66 to '81 and then went on world tours. The Sumps have been together for 40 years now...however, most of that time they've been separated. You could say the group has evolved after being together so long. You could say it but it wouldn't make it true. They are just as fresh and immature as they were when they started."*



2005 Sixth Annual Reunion Group



Lil Freezes Over Tour...Performs



Jim Goudie "chats" with Rusty Morgan



John Souder, Dave Cline, George Gruss, Bill Grubb tune up

Returning "Sump Pump" alumni from 40+ years ago included: Rev Jim Goudie and his "friend" Rusty Morgan, Dave "Yogi" Moyer, Dave Kline, John Souder, Bob Berhle, Fred Page and Jim Matthews. The instruments were finely tuned – a wash board, tub with broom handle and rope, pans, and you name it! Yes, there were guitars, harmonicas and other traditional musical devices.

These skilled musicians sang such rousing songs like – Mountain Dew, Dirty Lil, Washington at Valley Forge, their "Full Medley (If you sprinkle, she's got freckles, Laredo), Papa's On The Housetop, Beetle Um Bum, among others.

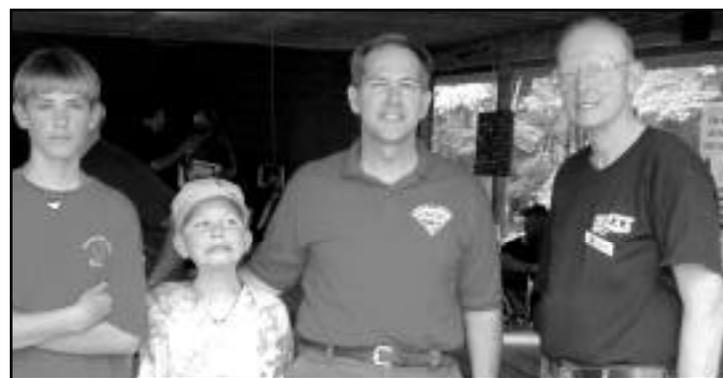
Alumni commented: "This brought back many old memories of the opening campfires at summer camp of those days in the 1960's, '70's and '80's." "...fun times...not necessarily politically correct in today's world!" "Let your hair down, boot kickin' music and fun!" "One of the best reunions we had!" "Bring 'em back...!"

Will they return? Check the coming issues of the Octoraro Loop about happenings on July 8, 2006.

George Tzanakis and Chris Minshall were the Reunion Committee leaders and set up a great time for all. Special HSRAA reunion T-Shirts were available. There was song and food – great barbecue for attendees – opportunities to tour both Horseshoe and Ware and the official business meeting.



Joe Eagan, Tom Minshall and Mike Arliss on scene



Brett Barraclough of '80's staff with kids and Ernie



"MC" Jim Matthews and Stu Watson reunite



1930's Edgar "Gumps" McComsey and Roland Minshall



From the 1970's many remain active



1940's Eight stalwarts assemble



1980's are there for the show and the fun



1950's generation convene for Reunion



1990's are among the newest members of HSRAA



The 1960's group swell the ranks for Sump Pumps



The '0's are the future



Marching for the "Trophy"

## Chairman Hammond '79 Writes:

Dear Fellow Alumni:

I'm happy to report that I made it down to Camp Horseshoe twice this past summer. On both occasions, the camp looked great, the staff was friendly, and the Scouts appeared to be enjoying themselves.

My first visit was for the HSRAA's 6th Annual Reunion, held at Camp Horseshoe in the Goodman Pavilion. It was absolutely fantastic! It was a truly memorable event, with over 100 attendees and the first live performance, in well over 20 years, of the Camp Horseshoe jug band—The "Sump Pumps".

Watching the "Sump Pumps" perform, including Jim Goudie and Rusty, was definitely one of the highlights of my summer. Watching the camaraderie of these old friends, all who worked on the camp's staff together, helped to remind me just why the camps are so important. Kudos to Bill Grubb for the yeoman's work in pulling them together.

I think it's impossible to have attended Camp Horseshoe without having at least one memory associated with the Parade Field, whether it was marching as a summer camper, watching an OA tap out, or just horsing around with your buddies at winter camp. As attendance of the Saturday night retreat has grown dramatically over the last 25 years, the Parade Field has increasingly become the visible manifestation or symbol of the camp to our visitors.

The HSRAA began discussing upgrading the Parade Field over five years ago. In this issue's arti-

cle, the third and final phase of the Parade Field project will be completed this autumn. We believe that this project really helps show the camp in its best light. While we are very happy with the results and feedback we received regarding the first two phases of the project, we believe that completing the third phase will truly tie everything together, and that the whole will be greater than the sum of the parts. We hope you agree.

As our new membership chairman, Jon "Deaver" DeVirgilio writes, renewal notices for membership in the HSRAA will be sent within the next month. Memberships are available on an annual (calendar year) basis, and membership dues are the backbone of our ability to perform projects for the good of the two camps. I hope that you enjoy the benefits of membership in the HSRAA, including the reunion, our newsletter The Octoraro Loop, and the knowledge that you are helping to support the Reservation and make the experiences we all shared available to continued generations of Scouts.

We are looking forward to an exciting year, and we encourage your involvement in the organization. We are staffed solely by volunteers, and have numerous areas where assistance would be gladly accepted. The Horseshoe Scout Reservation had a tremendous impact on developing my character, and I hope that you will join me in ensuring that it continues to do so for the youth of today and tomorrow.

Chairman, *Mark Hammond '79*

## IN MEMORIAM

Matleen Cole, beloved wife of Roy Cole, passed away September 17, 2005.

She was a member of the HSRAA and had worked at both Camps Horseshoe and John H. Ware, 3rd before she and Roy retired and moved into the Lane Farm house. She was always along side of Roy in his capacity as Camp Ranger and supportive of the Scouts. She was a devoted wife, mother and grandmother.

We ask all to keep Matleen in your memories. We extend our deepest sympathies to Roy and the family during this time of grieving.



Explorer Base becomes Jubilee

## Evolution of Horseshoe's "Older Boy Program"

Training young men to be leaders and providing them opportunities to lead are two ideals held by Scouting. Based on these ideals, most troops subscribe to this endeavor. Simply put, the troop is run not by the adult leaders or committee; but by the boys. The troop does not function without its youth leadership.

In the early 1950's there was a push by the Boy Scouts of America to retain youth leaders by providing them with further opportunities and challenges – namely the Explorer Scout program. Chester County Council was, of course, on the forefront of bringing these opportunities to our boys.

This original older boy program, the Explorers, had its humble beginnings at Camp Horseshoe. According to Ernie Heegard, the program's original director, it started by creating a small program area near the current "Staff City" where older boys from the troops would meet to plan activities for the week. Early activities included canoe troops on the Susquehanna River, hikes to the old Chrome mines near Rock Springs, MD and dinner dances with the Girl Scouts of Camp Tweedale. This program attracted the older boys in the troops.

After a meager start, the Explorer program took on a new life with the opening of the new

Explorer base (now Camp John H. Ware, 3rd) on the reservation. Ernie Heegard was the director of the base with the help of Pete Tobiessen. The site had a zip line that went in both directions for crossing the Octoraro, propane lights, there was a springhouse for water, and a burro equipped with Philmont-style saddlebags for hauling equipment. This base was the site for canoe trips to Camp Rodney (on the Chesapeake bay) and Broad Creek, trips to islands on the Susquehanna, and, of course, the dances with the Tweedale girls!

Unlike its predecessor, Explorer Posts, not older boys in the troops, used this new Explorer base. They stayed on the base for the week and participated in the trips. According to Ernie, this program was short-lived. "There was only so much that could be done with limited facilities and resources. Scouts would enjoy the first year there, but did not return for other years as they do with the Camp Horseshoe program." In 1960, the



Base buildings take place

year of the Golden Jubilee of Scouting in America, the Explorer Base was named Camp Jubilee and became an outpost-style camp, the way it continues to serve Boy Scouts (however now called Camp Ware) to this day and now Cub Scouts.

For much of the Ernie's tenure as Camp Director at Horseshoe, the older boy program ran on the periphery of the regular Scouting program. Special programs around camp were provided for the older boys. For instance, the boys would get to have a special black powder rifle shoot or possibly SCUBA dive at the pool.

The older boy programs of today got their roots when then-program director Matt Christenson learned how to operate a rappelling wall at National Camp School. A rappelling wall was raised in Campcraft where it would remain

until the mid-1990's.

In 1995, under the guidance of Camp Director Glen Runyon, Dave Franz, the Campcraft Director, began the COPE program. COPE is an acronym for Challenging Outdoor Personal Experience. Since the 1995 season, the program has grown immensely. The course now includes lower challenge elements along with high elements like a



COPE High Wire Elements

rappelling wall (though now 35 ft), a "giant's" ladder, vertical playground, and a zip line. The program is a nationally prescribed program that instills the values of leadership, self-esteem, teamwork, and physical challenge. Under the guidance of many dedicated staff members and volunteers, particularly "Uncle Jim" and Brendan Battenfelder, the COPE course at Camp Horseshoe has become one of the premier courses in the Northeast. Presently, former COPE director Jon DeVirgilio has now begun off-season COPE, where troops and other youth groups can participate in daylong COPE activities in the fall and spring.

During his first year as director at Camp Horseshoe, Mike "Berk" Berkeihiser was looking for even more ways to entice older boys to come to camp. While the COPE program filled the afternoon in the schedule of an older boy at camp, the

mornings were open to merit badges.

In 1998 a mountain biking program started, giving the older boys an opportunity to ride trails going throughout the reservation. In late summer 2002, a generous donor gave 12 kayaks to Camp Horseshoe so a kayaking program could be developed. The kayaking program is a daily program that gives boys the opportunity to learn kayaking skills, read the river, improve confidence and tour the reservation's 4+ miles of scenic waterway.

Whatever lies ahead in the future for the older boy programs on the reservation, they are sure to continue to attract many boys to return to the "Loop in the Octoraro Bend" for years to come!  
By – Joe Bradley



Joe Bradley enjoys Reunion Feast

## COUNCIL HAS REDESIGNED WEBSITE: [www.cccbsa.org](http://www.cccbsa.org)

In October, Chester County Council introduced a redesigned website portal to better serve the Scouts and Leaders. Eventually, the site will tie together all units, the Order of the Arrow and the HSRAA.

The site is so designed that authorized volunteers and Council personnel will be able to almost instantaneously update information on the site.

In the weeks ahead, see the HSRAA updated information on the Website! Check the Council's portal page [cccbsa.org](http://cccbsa.org). for Reunion updates. Issues of The Octoraro Loop, along with registration, membership data, etc. will be included on the newly designed site along with Rettew's Spirit of the Horseshoe book including on-page photos.



Totem Pole Circle Campfire greets campers



"Ho Chief!...How!"

## "ERNIE SAYS"

Ernie Heegard, Camp Director Emeritus In this issue- REMEMBERS:

### THE CLOSING CAMPFIRE

My first recollection of the original Totem-Pole Circle, as it was called in the early years, was one of mystery and awe. It was my first summer at Horseshoe, 1946, and I was assigned to the Carson campsite. During some free time early in the week, I struck out alone on an exploration walk behind the stockades. Soon I was hopelessly lost while following deer trails through the sea of greenbrier.

Off in a distance I heard someone chopping wood and followed the sound to its source. A staff member was cutting firewood. I waited there until he had finished and followed him back to a large campfire circle where he was stacking wood. There I got my first glimpse of a giant totem pole topped with an Eagle with outstretched wings. It

was placed at the foot of a large arrowhead seating area with a high platform at its tip. Three stone fire alters were positioned at each corner of the formed triangle. Another stone arrowhead fire ring dominated the center of the seating ring, and a very large oak tree rose near the center fire. It formed a canapé overhead, blending in with the other oak trees, which surrounded the wooden seats. I paused there only long enough to satisfy my curiosity and then walked back to camp before I would be missed.

It was not until Saturday night that I got the full impact of my earlier discovery. At dinner that



Skull Gate at old circle

night, we Scouts were told to wait in our campsite until the line of campers filed by, and to fall in behind them. We followed these instructions and walked a narrow back trail into the fire circle. The line stopped in front of the brightly painted totem pole, which was lighted by a flickering smuge-pot. Some Scouts in the line ahead of me were ushered through a rustic wooden gateway, which had many animal skulls adorning its top-most framework. We first-year Scouts were not allowed to go through the gate, but were seated on the back rows of benches.

Camp Director Frank Beam later told us about some of the Indian traditions which were observed at this hallowed place. Silence was to be kept throughout the ceremony, and only those who were in council before could enter the skull-gate and sit closest to the chief, who was seated atop the high stand at the tip of the formed arrow-

head. Indians toe-healed into the circle wrapped in blankets with specially concealed flashlights shining up on their painted faces, which added much to the air of anticipation. Each Indian announced his presence with an arm salute and a loud, "HO, CHIEF!" The chief responded in a slow deep guttural voice, "HOW!" Soon the enormous center council fire was blazing, started by an Indian making sparks with rocks. The three outer fires soon added to the blaze and lit up the trees overhead. The painted faces of the Indians could now be clearly seen. The rest of my first closing campfire is just a dim memory of Indians dancing, awards, and shaking the hand of the Camp Director. It has been added to the many campfire experiences that have followed over the years, all of which bring back fond memories of that first totem-pole circle experience.

The closing Campfire consists of Indian Pageants, varying from one week to the next, with themes relating to various Indian relationships with their environment and fellow Indians.

As the camp attendance increased, so did the need to increase the seating in the circle. Each new row had to be higher than the row in front to provide visibility, and building continued this way until the back rows for first-year Scouts were six feet off the ground. The elements over the years had taken a real toll on the circle. The totem pole rotted off at the base and the top portion was moved into the dining hall where it is now used as a backdrop during rained-out indoor campfires. Its replacement also rotted away. It had been carved by Dr. Seth Pope, former Scoutmaster of Lionville, Troop 83. Erosion was a problem, and benches could be built no higher. It was apparent that another fire site was needed. In 1985, a new site was selected and work was begun and finished in 1988.. Clark Green, a former Camp Director,



Building new ceremonial circle in 1988

and his Scouts, carved three new Lenni Lenape totem poles for the new circle. Each pole had a spirit face painted half red and half black. Below each face is a carved totem representing three of the Lenape clans: the wolf, the turkey, and the turtle.



Achgeketum Ceremonial Circle

I retired as Camp Director in 1987 and as Order of the Arrow Advisor 2 years later. As a tribute to my service, the Council and Lodge wanted to name the circle for me. While it was embarrassing and at the same time flattering, I asked that my Vigil Honor Indian name be used. Thus today the new fire circle became the Achgeketum Ceremonial Circle. The Lenni Lenape word 'Achgeketum', translated means 'teacher'.

All the old traditions from the original circle were carried forward to the Achgeketum Ceremonial grounds: arrowhead shaped seating, chief's platform, outer fires, and skull gate. These traditions are now an important part of the Horseshoe experience. No matter how many fires I attend, I still enjoy looking into the faces of the first year Scouts as they stand circling the enormous center fire to receive their Horseshoe patch. Each face expresses the wonder and mystery of this unique place. It evokes those special feelings we all have experienced at our first closing campfire. That feeling returns even now as I recall the closing words of each Saturday night campfire spoken by the chief, "And now in the language of my people, I bid you rise, and before you depart to your lodges, I give you the blessing of my people. May the Great Spirit make the sun rise in your hearts. May Gitchee Manitou, the mighty, look down from his blue tepee above you and give you rest and pleasant sleep."

# OFFICERS



Ray Hadyn, Bill Taylor, Berk Berkeiheiser,  
Scouter & Jim Montich reunite.

Officers elected for a term ending July, 2006:

Chairman..... **Mark Hammond**  
Vice Chairman..... **Richard T. Bensing**  
Secretary..... **Donald Tyson**  
Treasurer..... **Eric R. Lorgus**  
Editors..... **JB Rettew and  
Joe Bradley**



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**THE OCTORARO LOOP  
HORSESHOE SCOUT RESERVATION ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

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West Chester, PA 19382  
*Return Service Requested*

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