



THE OCTORARO LOOP

The Horseshoe Scout Reservation Alumni Association (HSRAA) News
Issue No. 3 - Volume 5 - December 2004 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."



"CASEY JONES DAY" -5TH REUNION

The highlight of the 5th Annual Reunion of the HSRAA was the welcome afforded Rev. Edward C. "Casey" Jones upon his return to the Horseshoe Scout Reservation on July 10, 2004.

Casey's tenure with Horseshoe as a camper and staff member spanned three decades beginning in 1941 and lasting until 1961. Many years have passed since Casey was last in Camp. He was taken by the marked changes in the physical parts of camp – new campsites, headquarters, Parade Field headwall, and many other items. However, he also noted that while the physical characteristics had changed, the spirit of camp and its mission as well as the Enthusiasm of the Scouts was as he recalled from his earlier days.

Many who attended Horseshoe as campers or staffers during his years in camp returned to greet Casey. Among them were Fred Gates, Len and Tom McCabe, Bill Lenker, JB Rettew, Bill Waxbom, Roland Minshall, Roland Smith, Bill Trowill, Herb Warner, Jim Dukovic and many others.

Casey and many others that day were treated to a tour of the new facilities at Camp John H. Ware, 3rd. As Casey recalled that part of the Reservation, it was called the "Explorer Base" in the early days and then Camp Jubilee. The new Cub Camp facilities were impressive as was the new Ware Staff campsite.

All had a good opportunity to tour Horseshoe before the evening Retreat Ceremony. This was the first opportunity

for many HSRAA alums to see the headwall for the Parade Field and the new troop flag standards that had been funded by the HSRAA membership dues and other contributions. Camp was filled to capacity and needless to say there was not too much more room on the field. The OA Tapout ceremony recalled the days when Casey Jones was a member of the Tapout team in costumes somewhat 'briefer' than those worn at the ceremony.

Following a fine meal arranged for by George Tzanakis, Reunion Chairman, HSRAA Chairman Bob Matje greeted the alumni and friends. Bob and the HSRAA with a commemorative certificate honored "Casey" Jones. JB Rettew and Bill Lenker were called upon and recognized the impact that Casey had on their lives and the campers during his tenure.

As part of the business meeting Chairman Matje presented special certificates of merit to Dick Bensing for his work in the HSRAA projects of the headwall and the gateways for both camps, and, to JB Rettew for his five years of work on the Octoraro Loop. Plans were reviewed for the further addition to the Parade Field project.

All are looking forward to the 2005 Reunion.



HSRAA's Matje awards "Casey" certificate



Good times and Casey recalled by "Doc" Lenker



Len and Tom McCabe celebrate Casey



Ware's Cubtown toured by Reunion group



HSRAA Gateway picture adorns Reunion cake

ANNOUNCING HSRAA OFFICERS FOR 2004 - 2005

At its November meeting, the Executive Committee of the HSRAA met and elected new officers for the 2004 – 2005 term.

Elected to Chair the organization was Mark Hammond. He fills the seat vacated by Bob Matje who recently was sent to Ireland for his company, Wyeth. Dick Bensing was elected to the post of Vice Chairman. Eric Lorgus and Donald Tyson were re-elected Treasurer and Secretary respectively.



HSRAA new Chairman Mark Hammond

MARK HAMMOND, CHAIRMAN WRITES:

Dear Fellow Alumni:

Thanks to the efforts of JB Rettew, Charles Buck and others, I was able to download and read the inaugural issue of The Octoraro Loop, originally published in March 2000, from our website. Its headline blared "HSRAA Organization Meeting Held", and announced that Robert E. Matje had been appointed as the Chairman of the Association. It's hard to believe that as we enter 2005, the HSRAA is five years old and thriving. Much of the association's success is a result of Bob Matje's direct efforts, and his uncanny ability to recruit, lead, and energize the executive board and members of the association.

We are not the only people to recognize Bob's talents. Bob's employer also recognizes them, and as a result he is now in Ireland, where he is the lead manager on a significant project. We'll miss Bob's leadership, dedication, and friendship, although we expect to see him return permanently in a few years.

In many ways, the association is at a crossroads. Bob was the only chairman the association ever had. The association is no longer new and novel, but at the same time it is still growing and is not yet mature.

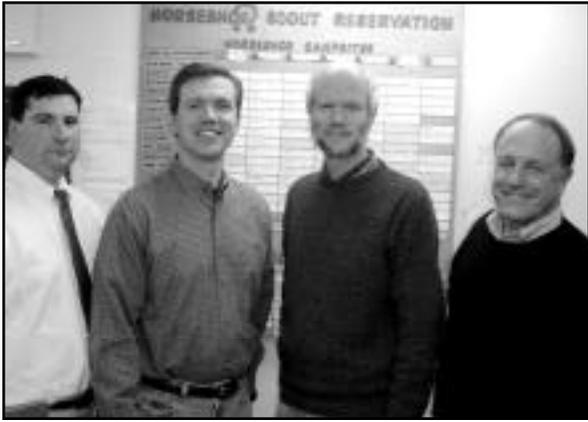
Our goals for the coming year are simple—continue doing what we have been doing, but better and bigger. Our 6th reunion is planned for Saturday, July 16th, and planning has already begun. Reunion chairman George Tzanakis, along with Chris Minshall, have promised a reunion packed with substance, excitement and numerous camp classics. Look in the next issue of the Octoraro Loop for a special announcement about the anticipated return of an all-time camp favorite (oddly enough, this group was mentioned in the inaugural Octoraro Loop).

Construction on the second of three phases in the Parade Field upgrade will begin this spring under Dick Bensing's watchful eye. This is an exciting project that we believe truly improves the quality of the reservation. For those of you who did not have a chance to see the results of the first phase, we intend to post pictures on our website in the near future.

Our dreams and goals for our website, database and virtual museum continue to stretch our resources. While we may have been naïve in understanding the efforts required for these endeavors, our goals remain lofty. And under the leadership of JB Rettew, there are no doubts that our newsletter will continue to be outstanding.

We encourage your involvement in the organization. We are staffed solely by volunteers, and have numerous areas where assistance would be gratefully 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.

Yours in the Spirit,
Mark Hammond '79



Officers Hammond, Don Tyson, Eric Lorgus, Dick Bensing

HSRAA OFFICERS 2004-2005

Officers - term expires September 2005:

- Chairman.....Mark Hammond
- Vice Chairman.....Richard T. Bensing
- Secretary.....Donald Tyson
- Treasurer..... Eric G. Lorgus

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS!

HSRAA is seeking to reconnect with former staff members and campers at Horseshoe and Ware. Anyone who knows of any former camper or staff member who would like to join the Alumni Association, please have that person contact the HSRAA Internet website <www.hsraa.org> for information. Interested parties may register for membership in the Association on the website or may contact the Chester County Council, BSA Service Center directly at 610-696-2900 to do so.



AJ D'Antonio and Bruce Balmat convene

"ERNIE SAYS"



Heegard stands with seated Herb Ellson, Casey Jones – 1950

Ernie Heegard, Camp Director Emeritus of the Horseshoe Scout Reservation, is the Honorary Chairman of the HSRAA. His column appears regularly in "The Octoraro Loop."

In this issue, "Ernie Says" – Ever have your senses create images in your mind?

CRITTERS

Each week at the Horseshoe summer camps, great hoards of wildlife descend upon the reservation. They are the hundred and two pound two-legged species. They have come to experience another wild and wacky captive group, the resident camp staff. However, several other species of wildlife also abound and have become a large attraction for the scouts.

Insects, reptiles, mammals, fish, and birds seem to thrive on the more than 1100 acres, and naturally the interaction of Scouts and wildlife creatures becomes fodder for camp stories. Harry Webber, Troop 114, Devon, and his assistant, Frank Rogers, related one such story. As they were sitting in their campsite one Sunday afternoon, two first-year Scouts arrived back in the site after exploring the woods nearby. They proudly displayed a long Scout sock dangling from a stick. The sock appeared to have something moving inside it and when they were asked what they had, the response was, "A snake!"

"What kind of a snake?"
 "A copperhead!!"



1930's Gumps McComsey, Roland Minshall, Bob Lorgus



1970's reunite in good form



1940's turnout for Casey's Big Day



1980's well represented



1950's there for Casey



1990's enjoy meeting "old timers"



1960's Chris Wagner and Frank DiMarzio



Mixed years captured after their class photo

CRITTERS - Continued



The "Bug House" for "critters"

The big question!! "How did you get that big poisonous snake in that little Scout sock without being bitten?"

The answer of course was, "Scout ingenuity!" Most of the copperheads usually leave camp when the scouts appear, as they prefer to be left alone. There have been very few poisonous snakebites at camp and only 3 that I can remember. Chuck Estel, Troop 78, went fishing one evening after dinner along the Octoraro just out from the swimming pool and had jumped down from the bank to a sand bar, when he surprised a copperhead, which proceeded to bite him on his foot. Chuck was treated at the hospital and was able to return to camp at the end of the week.

Another incident happened to Peter Motel's younger brother, Andy, from Troop 106. Andy realized that he had forgotten his neckerchief just before retreat and ran back to Dan Beard campsite to retrieve it. On the way back to the parade field, in great haste, he did not see the coiled copperhead in the middle of the road near the back of the Quonset hut. His foot must have landed very near to the snake and it struck him in the ankle. Again after a trip to the hospital, and a few days home to recuperate, Andy returned to camp to finish the week. That snake had a reputation as it had been seen in that area numerous times before. It had eluded capture each time it was sighted. Naturally each story had a bit larger description of the snake, and the snake became known as "JAWS!"

More recently a Horseshoe nature

director from Troop 50, got a small bite from a copperhead that was on display at the nature lodge. This occurred while cleaning the usually locked display cage. This incident brought on new restrictions, "NO LIVE POISONOUS SNAKES will be kept on display in camp, only pictures or mounted specimens can be shown."

Sometime back in the late 50's, while camp director, I kept a collection of snakes at home each winter to use in camp during the summers. The menagerie included a black snake, a copperhead snake, a red-tailed boa constrictor, an Eastern diamond-backed rattlesnake, a prairie rattler, and 2 corn snakes. All went very well, until the mouse population (which I had started to raise in order to feed the snakes) got a little out of hand! The reputation mice have for proliferation came true! I literally could not build cages fast enough to keep them contained, nor could the local pet store buy enough of my extra supply. I finally had to retire from the snake business and I gave away the snakes and their food.

One of the very earliest nature departments took over the little stone and slate-covered building just to the right of the White House, later to be known as the "Bug House". Nature study was a thriving camp program in the earliest forties. Displays lined the shelves of this tiny building, posters adorned the walls and door, and animal cages covered the flat wall outside nearest the dining hall. A raccoon, a snake, a ground-hog, and even a barn owl were kept on display. Several seasons in the late forties and early fifties, Walter Burkey, former Scoutmaster of Troop 7 and later committee chairman of Troop 78, added to the nature display through the loan of an observation beehive, which he placed in front of the White House. Scouts could approach the hive slowly and lift hinged sides exposing glass windows for closer looks inside. From time to time other animals and creatures would be loaned or brought to camp by staff members. Robert Lenker, grandson of Forrest Lenker who was the former nature director and long-time stalwart in Troop 50, would bring his

pet giant lizard to camp. Rob gained the nickname "Buggsy" for his devotion to the nature department at camp.

John Souder, headquarters director for a number of years, surprised us one summer when he showed up with his pet skunk! The animal was too young to be dis-sented and would occasionally give out a little smell if dropped or roughed up too much. John affectionately named it Baggly Hughey.

Bottoms, the burro, referred to in a previous article, was a very popular 4-legged loaner and was a big attraction for the campers until he made friends with a local mare. He became a little too hard to control and had to be left in his home in Malvern.

An extra large gray wolf was seen around camp several summers during the nineteen seventies. It would only show up after dark and confronted numerous staff members. Louis Catchalone of Troop 56, Kennett Square, then a nature staff member, had a most memorable encounter at his tent site, near the Roberts Nature Lodge. This enormous wolf, lying in wait, pounced at him, just at dusk, and almost caused a serious heart attack. There were numerous night tent visits, usually to first year staffers throughout this period. In all cases the result was sheer panic and tremendous screams that were loud enough to wake the surrounding troop camps. One extreme sighting happened in broad daylight at the old staff shower during siesta. The wolf crept up on Carl Smith as he was showering. You may recall this portion of the building was open at the top and surrounded by 7-foot high cypress sides. Smitty, a member of the kitchen staff, heard some growls and could see the gray wolf crouching just outside as the side walls were open at the bottom. One more loud growl and story has it that he cleared the side walls in one tremendous leap and it was much later that day that he returned for his clothes. The wolf had a stark resemblance to the wolf skin used on some Saturday night Indian pageants. The wolf suddenly disappeared when the pageant wolf skin was locked up.



Ernie's Crow looking to swipe it all

For a couple of years around 1950, I brought a pal of mine to camp. We were almost inseparable as he depended on me to help him around camp. Jim had several bad habits, but the worst was his desire for small shiny things and this added to his kleptomania. When no one was looking, he would steal away with items and tuck them under rugs, items of clothing, or leaves, if nearby.



Aquatics Director Herb Ellson in 1948

The summer I was the boating director, I stayed with the aquatics staff in tents just above the pool. Jim and I were housed next to Herb Ellson, the aquatics director. Jim arose early one morning and crept into Mr. Ellson's tent. The next thing I knew, I was awakened by the crash of a metal cup being turned over and the sound of a large pocket watch being dragged slowly across the tent floor. This noise woke the director and he confronted Jim with a swat of his towel. This was not the first time something was missing, as his tooth brush and other items had disappeared in the same way. Mr. E. was somewhat understanding but patience was wearing thin. I promised to do a better job of putting Jim to bed. I guess I

haven't mentioned that Jim had to be caged and covered every night or he would find a roost in some nearby tree. Once roosting after dark, he was impossible to find and would raise havoc the next morning when the sun came up. Jim accompanied me to the 1950 National Jamboree in Valley Forge. This character was a full-grown black crow with a bum wing, a slight speech impediment, and a limited vocabulary. Jim and I had no problem communicating, but with Mr. Ellson it was toleration, not communication.

Wild turkeys were introduced into the barons just beyond and to the northeast of Camp Ware. They slowly found their way into the Horseshoe Reservation. Their numbers rapidly increased and the turkeys could be seen in flocks throughout the property. About 15 years ago, one rather brazen gobbler staked out the property around headquarters and the rifle range. This large male turkey would often confront Scouts with his head lowered, wings out, and tail up. He would literally chase smaller Scouts away from the parade field. This fearless turkey would on many occasions risk it all by brazenly strutting across the top of the impact berm at the rifle range during target practice. The temptation by the shooters must have been almost too hard to contain, but he was still around at the end of the year.

Turtles of many kinds can be found in camp, but the most popular and numerous are the common box turtles. They continue to be collected each week and raced each Saturday night. The Turtle



Dr. Dave Mellinger, past Jubilee Director, enjoys all

Derby has been around since the start of Camp Horseshoe as evidenced by articles in the camp newspaper in its earliest

printings. The Derby has gained in popularity over the years. The winners always capture a big award spot at the Sunday lunch awards ceremony. The common box turtle is now a protected species and must be returned to its pick-up spot. These slow critters don't get far after being set free Saturday evening as they are captured again the next Monday. Even the 3-legged turtle (Stumpy) seems to show up each summer, or maybe it's one of its offspring. These turtles must give a big sigh of relief at the end of 8 weeks of captivity.

The wild life at camp seems to run in cycles. Last year we had the year of the locust. We have had numerous plagues of the gypsy moths. One year they stripped every tree and bush, and started to work on the grass. We began to worry that the scouts in their green uniforms would be next. Fortunately, we had a population collapse of the gypsy moths due to the lack of food. Other years rabbits would be in great numbers, followed by skunks, deer and ground hogs. Even the American Bald Eagles have taken up residence down along the old camp road. It is a joy to return each summer and find old friends and maybe encounter a new or seldom seen rare species of wild life!



Flags fly over new HSRAA headwall

**NEWS FROM THE RESERVATION –
Reservation facilities benefit from
Chester County Council's "Today's
Youth...Tomorrow's Leaders" on-going
Capital Campaign...**

We are pleased to recognize the two individuals who are providing inspired leadership to the Campaign: James Macaleer and Robert McNeil who have devoted their time and talents in this on-going effort. Also, thanks to the members of the Council's Executive Board, Scouters, parents and Friends of Scouting in the community who continue to support the Campaign.



Neville Austin ready to "chow" down at BBQ



Dr. Pete Motel and Bill Trowill confer

HSRAA PROJECT SHAPES UP

Following the completion of the Parade Field headwall at Camp Horseshoe by the HSRAA, plans take shape for the next phase of the Parade Field project.

Thanks to the Chester County Council's on-going Capital Campaign, work is beginning on an expansion of the Camp Horseshoe headquarters building. In line with this expansion, HSRAA will tie in with that project by constructing a wall corresponding to that at the head of the Parade Field and paralleling the loop road.

The headquarters wall will be a field stone construction similar to the headwall with steps leading from the loop road to the headquarters area.

A rendering of the project along with an update will appear in the March 2005 Octoraro Loop.



Bensing, Jon Divirgilio and Joe Bradley view project plans



Bill Waxbom, Frank Rodgers and Bob Matje, Sr. with friend

HOLD THE DATE: HSRAA 6th REUNION - 2005 IS SET FOR JULY 16! BE THERE!!

Will The "Sump Pumps" of 1974, with their scintillating songs that enlivened opening night campfires as they clown singing about the "stills" at camp with that "Good Ol' Mountain Dew", return to the HSRAA Reunion for an encore?

See the next issue of the LOOP!!

PS - Back issues of The Octoraro LOOP may be viewed on the HSRAA website at: WWW.HSRAA.ORG



Jim Dukovic, Dick Bensing, Jim Montich and Adam Rogers

"...ARRIVING IN THE GREEN ROLLING HILLS OF CHESTER COUNTY WAS LIKE BEING IN PARADISE." *James G. "Jim" Dukovic, former Field Director for the Chester County Council, BSA, writes the following to the "Loop" editor...*

HORSESHOE REMEMBRANCES: THE EARLY DAYS.

I first saw Camp Horseshoe in spring 1954, as a new District Executive in the Chester County Council, B.S.A. Having just served as a professional for three years in an intercity assignment in Baltimore, where I could go days without seeing a tree, arriving in the green rolling hills of Chester County was like being in paradise.

It was traditional in those days for the

professional staff to pitch in at camp during the "setup" week. That was my first introduction to what would be a delightful chapter in my life. The only thing that I remember of the first event though was the advice given me by Chief (Scout Executive) Lou Lester...be careful when you pick up a tent platform...lest you irritate a slumbering "copperhead." I was cautious!

They say, "time embellishes the memories of the past." However, there are some things as vivid as if they happened yesterday. I recall a small valley, just after the turn off Route #1 towards what was then the "creek road" entrance to camp. One particular evening there must have been a convention of fireflies. I stopped the car just to stare at the flashing points of light. It's an example of small events making big memories. To a great extent, that's what camp experiences are mostly about.

Part of the adventure of camp in those days was just getting there. The camp road, and I use the term "road" generously, was called by some GI veterans, "The Burma Road." The original road followed the Octoraro Creek until it climbed to the hill where Kindness Center and Browning Memorial Lodge are located. There were times that the "creek road" seemed like you were driving in a streambed...rutted and rock laden...for the most part. Included in that road's history, before the "high ridge" road entrance was built, included chapters where optimists laid new macadam, only to have it washed down stream a week later. The "creek road's" history is another story and leaves only memories leading to our current "high ridge" road entrance to camp.

Believe it or not, when the "ridge road" was proposed, there was emotional resistance among some of our extreme Scouter traditionalists. Their position, with a view from the top of the mountain was embellished by the climb, had its proponents.

However, in hearing from the parents of scouts, with cars overloaded with camp gear, who viewed the road as one GIANT pothole, were rarely of that persuasion. But, I must honestly admit, years later,

when I saw the "Ridge road" being built, there were some mixed emotions. The exaltation of "We Made It!" (in or out of camp) would be forever lost.

Nevertheless, I recalled the many times Nature in a kinder mood, introduced the camp with the song of a gentle stream (In the Loop of The Octoraro Bend) as a companion to the main camping area. But, I found solace in Nature's victory, "The Octoraro always has its way."

Many other vivid memories keep returning as I reflect on my early days in camp. "Taps" sounding late at night followed by sound of the Lord's Prayer being sung in a rich baritone voice sifting through trees. Or, vying for sleep with the mating call of the Whippoorwill or other sounds of nature sounding in your ear. The memories are rich and many. I can only remind the reader to draw back on his own sweet recollections, distant or recent, and be grateful. We have a wonderful camp that nurtures our experience and memories and enriches our lives.



1940's staffers Jones, Rol Smith, JB Rettew and Bill Lenker, joined by Jordan Maria

"SPIRIT OF THE HORSESHOE" HISTORY DISK NOW AVAILABLE

The book commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the Chester County Council, BSA, by JB Rettew in 1994 has long been out of print. The book chronicles the history of the Council and its camps from 1919 to 1994.

We are pleased to report the "Spirit"

Book is now available in disk form for computers in 'PDF' and 'jpeg' file format.

Records and Honors of Council leaders, Vigil Honor members, Council Camp Directors, Lodge Chiefs, Awards, etc. have been updated as of Spring 2004 and are included on the disk. Pictures included in the original book are also shown.

The CD R disks will be available over the counter at the Horseshoe and Ware Trading Posts as well as in the Council Service Center Trading Post. The cost is \$17. Proceeds from the sale will be put towards the Horseshoe Reservation Capital Campaign Endowment.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE UNDERWAY

Your membership contributions directly support one of the HSRAA's main tenets: improving Camp Horseshoe and Camp John H. Ware, 3rd. Everyone who has camped at the Reservation for at least one night has fond memories of their experiences in a place that is known as a "Real Camp for Real Boys." Renewing your membership in the HSRAA will help preserve and improve the Horseshoe Scout Reservation so the youth of tomorrow can continue to have the experiences which taught so many of us about life and leadership.

When you receive your membership renewal letter, please consider renewing at the next level.

The HSRAA membership cycle is a calendar year. HSRAA has three levels of paid membership: Silver (\$30), Gold (\$100), and Platinum (\$250). All Scouts under the age of 21 are classified as "Youth" members and receive free membership, including the Octoraro Loop newsletter.

We hope that through our membership activities (reunions and newsletter, The Octoraro Loop) and the projects we have undertaken to improve the Reservation have helped strengthen your spirit of brotherhood in the Reservation. Our organization has been built one member at a time, and we hope to continue to enjoy your support. We are staffed strictly by volunteers, and over 90% of all membership dues are used for projects that directly benefit the camps.

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

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(HRSRAA website address: www.hsraa.org)

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**REGISTRATION FORM: Horseshoe Scout Reservation Alumni Association - send to:
Att: HSRAA % Chester County Council, BSA, 504 S. Concord Rd., West Chester, PA 19382**

Name: _____ Email Add: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, ZIP code: _____ Telephone (Home) _____

Occupation: _____ Telephone (Bus.) _____

Year of Birth: 19_____

I have camped at (please check): ___ Camp Horseshoe; ___ Camp John H. Ware, III (Jubilee); ___ Both.

Camper Year(s) Date(s): _____

Camp Staff Year(s) Date(s): _____ Position: _____

_____ Please send me further information about The Horseshoe Scout Reservation Alumni Association

The following Camp Horseshoe/Camp Ware alumni* may be interested in the HSRAA:

Name	Address
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

* We especially need names/addresses of people not currently registered with Council or Lodge 22 OA.