



BLUFF LINES



Second Edition: August 2023

The journal of the Camp Orr Alumni Association and Friends of Camp Orr, remembering and preserving the legacy of scouting summers in the Buffalo River Valley.



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Well, the Camp Orr Alumni Association has survived to this, its second edition of Bluff Lines. Thanks to those who have contributed memories and articles to this edition - keep em coming, sit down right now and hammer out your favorite yarn or memory and send it in. And, based on positive response from our first Edition, ***we have reserved Camp Orr for November 3-5 for a reunion of Camp Orr Alumni. Mark your calendar!*** More will be forthcoming shortly, but you can count on a relaxed tour of the Camp, hikes as you wish, climbing tower and canoeing, brainstorming for future activities and events, a show and tell display of scout/camp memories, time and opportunity to reminisce, and the tale told around the campfire, once again, of Smokey Joe!

As a reminder, the Camp Orr Alumni membership requirements are 1) treasured memories of scouting summers in the Buffalo River Valley and 2) a desire to preserve and share them. Since we obviously have your email address, you are now a member, until you reply requesting removal from the mailing list. No dues, no attendance requirements, no dress code, no uniform requirements, no secret passwords nor handshakes. Sit back and enjoy, participate when it suits your fancy – but understand that this effort is nothing more or beyond your participation. We need your memories, your ideas, your participation as we move forward. It will not exist without you contributing one way or the other.

FACEBOOK UPDATE:

The Camp Orr Alumni Association Facebook page is up to 294 members as of the writing of this publication. If you have not done so already, head over there and join the page in order to stay in the loop with all of the happenings/ updates of our group! Be sure to review the Community Guidelines prior to posting or commenting on the page. There are still plans in the works to create a page on Westark's website for those of you not on social media; however, priority at this time has shifted to planning the Alumni Reunion Weekend in November. When registration opens up, there will also be an event page created on the



Facebook page where you can connect with others who plan to attend and ask any questions you may have quickly and easily. You are always free as well to email any of us on the committee with questions or concerns.

THE BOOGA BEAR TROOP ANTICS

By Wade Colwell, Camper, Fayetteville Troop 190, 1973-1978; Scoutmaster, Fayetteville Troop 116, 1996-2003



When I was a scout in the mid-seventies if you were not able to go to Camp Orr with your troop or if you wanted to attend additional weeks, you could go by yourself and you would be placed in a troop made up of other scouts in the same situation. This group of scouts formed what was known as a Booga Bear Troop. One summer I ended up in the Booga Bear Troop.

My best buddy and next door neighbor Max Timmons was my tent mate for

that week. The Scoutmaster for the Booga Bear troop that summer was a young man named Tim, who was also the camp Chaplain and I believe in seminary school as well. Nice guy, unassuming, quiet guy. Tim was not the best candidate to be the Scoutmaster for such a troop of so called misfits, especially a guy to ride herd on Max and me for the week.

Every afternoon Tim would come into camp before dinner and hand out the mail and toss his mail on the small picnic table in the middle of our campsite. Tim seemed to always have mail and would sit down at this small table and write a letter or so every day as well.

I need to now describe the totally inadequate and dangerous picnic tables that had made their way into the Orr campsites. They were probably an Order of the Arrow Ordeal weekend project from many years ago that were designed to use the least amount of lumber and nails. Sorry OA members, don't take offense. These picnic tables were about 4 x 4 feet square with the benches attached to the legs. They were small, and if you went to sit down on the bench with out having your arms stretched across the table as you sat, the table would lift up and somersault you backyards when you sat down. They were so tippy. We loved them in some ways. If two guys were sitting side by side and another fella rose across from them quickly, the table would flip over on the other two. Quite comical, but not fun to be dumped on the chunky chert ground with square rocks that we called home for a week.

Well the only table in the Booga Bear site was one of these fine specimens of carpentry. My guess was that it was the last one in the camp at the time as it was very weathered, the boards very weak with age and about rotten all the way through. Now Tim kind of liked that table, it was his quiet spot at the end of the day as he read and wrote letters. He knew how to approach



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the table with care and to gently sit on one side to prevent being spilled onto the forest floor. Max and I decided that for the safety of all concerned, that this table needed to go.

Actually we viewed this thought as an opportunity... Max and I grabbed a bow saw and cut every board on the table within a quarter inch of breaking. We were proud of our work and resolved to watch the outcome of our endeavor from the security of our canvas wall tent as we could peer out through the tent flap. (Remember how those tents smelled with the flaps closed?) We had just settled into our tent when we were then mortified to see the pile of saw dust accumulated under the table. We quickly ran down to the Quartermaster and grabbed a broom to sweep away any indication of the clue. As predictable and reliable as Tim had become, true to form, he wandered up the path to camp and tossed the mail on the table. The table swayed under the light weight of the mail as we held our breath fearful that we had been too zealous in our cuts to bring about the desired outcome. Tim returned from his tent with a coffee mug that he sat on the table. A little more swaying. Tim gently threaded his legs under the table and as he made purchase with his bottom the whole table collapsed like a pile of match sticks into his lap as he traveled the additional two feet to the ground.

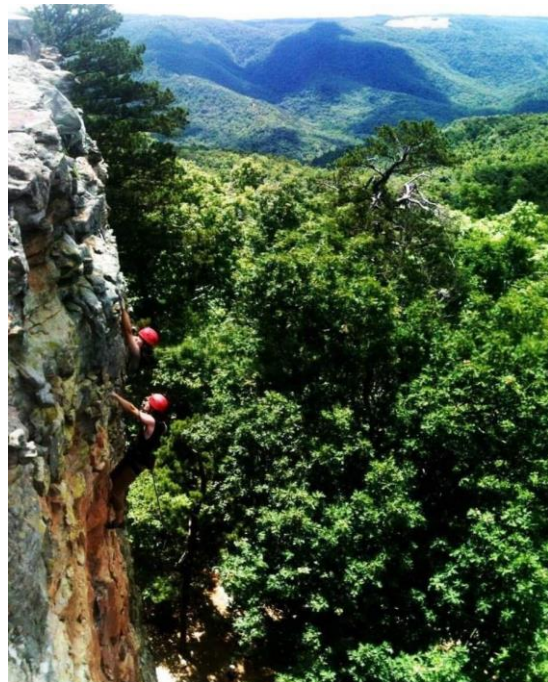
I don't know if he heard us snickering from behind the tent flap or he knew immediately who the culprits were as he shouted out "Wade and Max get over here!". We tried to act surprised as to what had just happened to our fine table and our Booga Bear Scoutmaster. I suggested termites or that he had gained weight overnight. Max wasn't saying anything other than laughing as he knew this was all my idea but he did make a few of the saw cuts as well. "a few added for good measure" I believe I remember Max saying. The look on Tim's face, the dismay at how a table could completely turn into kindling before your very eyes, was priceless. We could have won thousands if America's Funniest Video had been around back then. We did finally get Tim to favorite table and personal retreat was extinct.

THE COOLEST THING I'VE EVER DONE: AN ANTENNAE PINE RESCUE

By MariBeth Harris Graham, Staff 2010-2017, 2023

In 2012, I was working my third summer at Orr, and my first on Climbing staff. Prior to May of this year, I had almost no experience with anything climbing/ropes related. Paul Mosley was the director; Nick Flocks and I were his staff. It was a super busy summer for climbing and our merit badge class was full or near full each week.

The way the climbing program ran at that time, we had the same scouts for every single merit badge slot all week. Monday was introductions, gear intro, and first aid. Tuesday was intro to belaying and tower in the morning and (I THINK) blueberry hill in the afternoon. Wednesday was the crack climb and Ranger's bluff rappel, then camp-wide night climb on Wednesday evening. Thursday was our field trip



to Horseshoe Canyon Ranch where we spent the whole day. Friday the scouts got to choose whatever they wanted to do, and we would provide the program for them. Some chose to free water solo at Castlerock. (This is a type of climbing where you climb up on the rock and then fall into the water below). Some chose to do nothing.

One week however, we had a group that was very enthusiastic about hiking to Antenna Pine. Several of the scouts had already hiked up a few times that week with a staff guide because they wanted to talk on their phones and their scoutmasters refused to take them up the hill (props to that guy). So, for their Friday activity they decided they wanted to climb at the pine. Something, to our knowledge, that had never been done before. We had no idea what the set-up would look like or what gear we needed to bring. The kids were very convincing though and we collectively agreed that it sounded like a super cool challenge. So, we packed up what we thought would work for us, told the kids to meet us at sunrise, and planned to hike to the pine. I have no memory of the hike up other than being VERY glad the kids were there to help carry the gear. Once we got to the bluff line, Paul and I went up top to figure out how we were going to rig things with Nick (Mittins) at the bottom to tell us which routes looked do-able. I don't remember much about the set up, the routes, or how the kids enjoyed the climbs. I remember attempting the first ascent on one of the routes (if you are the first person to climb a route, you get to name it), but the route was super dirty, covered in moss and dirt with mayflies flying out at us from the handholds and nearby cracks.

As other troops started arriving at the pine, I started getting pulled away from the group to take care of First Aid "emergencies". At this time in my life, I was taking pre-requisite classes for nursing school but had only been in college for one year. I had no more medical qualifications than someone who had taken basic first aid/cpr. HOWEVER, as first aid needs arose, I was thrown the first aid kit and encouraged to go take care of them.

At one point, a camper started screaming from the trail. I ran back to check out what was going on and he exclaimed that he had been stung by a bee and was allergic. When I asked to see the site where he had been stung, we could not find it. I asked if he had an epi pen or what reaction he'd had in the past and he said, "I don't know, I've never been stung before". Come to find out he was NOT in fact allergic but saw several bees and got scared. After a short discussion and quick breathing exercise, he finished his hike up to the pine and back down without issue.

Where we had set up the climbs, troops had to pass us both coming and going on the trail. We started to notice that one group had gone up but had taken quite a long time to come back down. As I looked up the trail, I noticed a staff guide helping a limping man try to walk but was not making much progress. I walked over to see what had happened and how I could help. At the end of the pine trail, there is a spot where you have to do some minor rock climbing to get up to the top of the bluff. This particular adult leader had made it all the way to the top without much difficulty. However, on the way down he watched a young scout jump/hop down this section and he got the idea that he could use that same method to make it down. He was significantly less successful. Both ankles were injured, and he was having an incredibly hard time walking or standing at all.

We sat the gentleman down and attempted to splint his ankles as best we could (I want to say we used close to 13 bandanas and a Sams splint on one ankle, sticks and more bandanas on the



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other). After splinting them, he attempted to walk again. Over a period of 30 minutes, he was only able to walk MAYBE 50ft. Walking down on his own was not going to be an option. By this time there were several adult leaders from multiple troops present and brainstorming with us. A helicopter was a no go- where would they land? In the time it would take for a rescue team to get to us, we could be halfway down the mountain. Finally, we decided we would construct a stretcher from whatever we could find, call down and fill in the camp medic so that EMS would be waiting for us at the river, and that we would be carrying this man down. We found two skinny, straight-ish, dead trees and ripped/ cut the branches off as best we could. We pulled down one of our climbing ropes and used it to weave between the trees to create a stretcher. (We may have padded it with whatever jackets/spare clothes we could find but I do not remember clearly enough to confirm or deny that fact).

We loaded him onto the stretcher, stood up to make sure it would hold his 250lb body, and next thing I knew we were headed down the mountain. There was not much of a discussion, more like we picked him up and were OFF. There were maybe 8 of us on the carrying crew. One on each corner, one on each side, and then one walking ahead and one behind. We would go for a while, then rotate to a different position so that we didn't strain any one muscle more than the others. After we had gone quite a distance, it dawned on me that we had left Mittins up top with all of our gear and the rest of the climbing merit badge class. But it was too far to go back and each one of us was a necessary part of this machine. Paul and I decided that if we didn't see Mittins and the kids within a short time of reaching the river, we'd head back up for them.

By the time we got to the power line clearing we were met with what felt like the scrawniest, youngest group of staff they could find carrying a narrow plastic stretcher from the medic's lodge. By the time we met with them we were so close and full of adrenaline and determination that we kept with our original carrying team and sent the other staff on. (I do not remember if we moved him to the other stretcher or kept on with what we had.) When we got to the river crossing, there was a huge crowd gathered. Daniel Field, the program director and Travis Whisenhunt, the medic were sitting on the golf cart across the river waiting for us. There was an adult leader who asked to film us as we got to the bottom and started crossing the river because he wanted to show his first aid class. We trudged through the river and up to the closing campfire ring where an ambulance was awaiting us. Not long after, Mittins showed up with the rest of the climbing merit badge class and all of our gear.

Daniel instructed us to find food and then disappear to rest for the remainder of the evening. We were tired, but still too full of adrenaline to rest much. My muscles were sore, but I was amazed by how strong being on summer camp climbing staff had made me and how much I could push my 19 year old body. I was the only female on the carrying team; Paul and I being probably half the age of the other adult leaders. When we got word back from town, it turns out that this gentleman had broken both of his ankles and bruised a rib (although the rib may have been caused by our poorly lined stretcher and difficult terrain on descent). It may be a combination of 12 years of scouting first aid badges/training that came together + the physical and mental strength I found within myself that causes me to place this experience on so high a pedestal. In the years since then, I've gotten my Bachelors in Nursing and worked as a Cardiac nurse, ICU

nurse, and even a travel nurse. I've helped save numerous critically ill/injured people but to this day I still consider this to be one of the coolest things I've ever participated in and accomplished.

To my knowledge this is the only picture we have from that day. Mittins was climbing- Paul was taking a panoramic shot from bottom to top which is why it looks like there are two people climbing.

Yes Sir, I would!!

A Camp Orr Memoir.



Curt R. Rom, Troop 77/Post 200, Fayetteville;
Camper 1967-68; staff 1968-73

“Son, you seem to like it here. Do you?” he asked. “Yes sir, I love it.” “Would you like to stay the rest of the summer?”

It was late Friday afternoon in early to mid-June of 1968. I was in my second summer as a “camper” at Camp Orr.

That Friday afternoon conversation with Camp Director Burl White may have been one of the most important conversations in my lifetime because, quite honestly, it changed a trajectory for me, changed who I was to become, and it changed my entire relationship with Camp Orr, the Buffalo River, the Ozarks, Boy Scouts, and Arkansas.

The Camp Orr story really started a year or so earlier. I joined the Scouts in 1966, when I turned 11 – I couldn't wait. My father was an Eagle Scout and talked about summer camp in Wisconsin. In the spring of 1967, I was excited beyond belief about going to Camp Orr. It was all the older scouts talked about in the spring.

I was a member of Troop 77 of the First Presbyterian Church in Fayetteville. We were not as old or as prestigious as Troop 102 at the Methodist Church, but we were solid, had fun. We probably had a reputation for being a bit rowdier. Mr. Treffinger, a former military guy, and local business executive, was our scoutmaster. At meetings he would be sure we were in uniform, it was correct, our fingernails were clean, our shirts tucked in, and we did some good drills. In about February, we started planning the trip to Camp Orr in early June. I was excited – going to summer camp.

I am not sure of all of the details, but I think the cost was \$35/scout to the families. The deal my parents made with me was I had to raise half the money and they would match it. Done



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deal. The local dry cleaner, Ozark Cleaners, and its owner J.O. Hays made a deal with the troop that he would give us one-half cent for every straight, nonrusted white coat hanger we brought to the shop. Done deal. That is easy. I started collecting hangers everywhere. I solicited my dad's office. I put up signs at the church. I went around our small neighborhood (lived in the country). And soon I had piles of hangers that I was to untangle and put together in bundles of 10. I had not really done the financial calculus that one half of \$35.00 was \$17.50, and at one-half cent per hanger, I would need 3,500 hangers. I think I got to about 1800 or \$9.00. I also started mowing grass for Mr. Wilson down the road for \$1.00 a week. I saved my 50-cent per week allowance. I am not sure I got it all – but I DID get to Camp Orr for my first summer in 1967.

On Sunday morning we met at the church at noon for the trip. The two-hour drive seemed to take 2 days because of my anticipation. The road from Kingston to Mt Sherman was all dirt and gravel and very much a washboard. Then we got to the sign at the top of Mt Sherman. It was a wood routed sign that looked like the sign at a national park! Then the descent down the mountain. Oh Man! I thought we were going to die. You could smell the brakes. We had to stop to let them cool about two or three times. Then finally at the bottom, crossing the creek from Twin Falls, you could hear the hissing of cooling hot breaks in the water and smell them.

Troop 77 ALWAYS, I was told, stayed in Rattlesnake campsite. I suppose we felt that matched our troop personality. I had just gotten First Class and was deep into working on merit badges. I loved the water – so that is where I focused some effort. I remember getting swimming merit badge but not being allowed to get lifesaving merit badge because swimming was required. I got Canoeing merit badge but lifting a swamped canoe out of the Buffalo for a scrawny 11-year-old was really tough – glad I had an older canoe mate who was probably in Junior high - an ‘old guy’ – who was strong. That merit badge ultimately becomes an important part of my Buffalo stories and my life. I got rowing merit badge. I also did the mile swim and finished about 3rd or 4th which I was proud of because I beat a lot of bigger and older guys (I was on the Fayetteville Swim team, had been for four years).

In other areas I got Archery merit badge and pioneering merit badge. I think I may also have gotten my first aid merit badge. I focused on things that were important to me. My family love camping, I loved sports and recreation, and loved developing skills. I loved the “games” competitions we had, and Troop 77 was stacked with some good athletes, smart guys, and pretty good scouts. We wanted the ribbon for our flagpole, and we got it. I think I was too small and scrawny to do much but never had there been a louder cheerer than me (probably very high pitched).

Sunday night vespers the first night was inspiring. I remember the chills going down my spine as the sun set, the vesper fire dwindled, and I looked west down the Buffalo river canyon. The week, of course, ended with the closing campfire and Joe Clay, program director, telling the legend of Smoky Joe. Wow, I am glad I did not have that information on the first night. I don't think I slept a wink that Friday night after the campfire. We were pretty “wired” and had to be told to quiet down a few times, but I sure did not want to sleep and close my eyes – Smoky Joe, could be lurking. I slept the whole way home once we got to the top of the hill. And so went my first year at Camp Orr. I KNEW I would be back.

I am sure I immediately started saving for next year, 1968. My second year at Camp Orr was about the same as the first – but seemed even better. I was an old hand at camp now. I knew my

way around. Although I was able to save money for my “half” of the cost over the entire year and feel certain I paid my half and had money left over for snacks. By the time I headed to Camp, I had achieved the rank of Star Scout and was well on my way to Life Scout. I needed about 2 more merit badges and then would be working on Eagle. I had already been elected, at 12 as assistant patrol leader and the badge was proudly on my sleeve. Troop 77 had Rattlesnake campsite for the opening week in June. It was going to be a great week. My energy and enthusiasm were as high as Big Bluff.

I was able to get Life Saving and several others. I did even better at the mile swim. The older brother of a girl at school was the head lifeguard at the waterfront – Mike Stephenson, about a sophomore in high school he looked like a tan, chisled Mr. Universe. I knew he was good at football as his sister told me. I spent every moment I could at the waterfront swimming, canoeing, and rowing. I am sure I was a pest to Mike and the other staff there. I completed Fishing merit badge. I cannot remember the others. I was all over the camp, doing everything I could, taking advantage of every activity. I think I showed up early for everything and still as a scrawny kid wanted to be at the head of every line for whatever there was a line for.

I loved Joe Clay leading us in singing at lunch and dinner. Joe had become a hero to me – a former Green Beret Marine, he was big and strong and booming voice and always cheerful. I thought he was amazing – the ideal Scout. The camp director, Mr. (Burl) White was so calm and seemed so kind. His tall skinny “Ichabod Crane” features were an interesting juxtaposition to the stout, muscular and round frame of Joe Clay. Joe absolutely could tell I idealized him. Because I sang so loud and was cheering so loud, at lunch one day he called me out to help him sing a song my dad taught me and was quite familiar, “I’ve got Six Pence.”

The week flew-by and it was right before dinner on Friday. I was outside the mess hall near the flagpole, waiting for the meal call. I think I had volunteered that week to work the flagpole in the morning and afternoon and was very dutiful about it. Mr. White walked up to me, and asked if I had a few minutes to talk with him.

“Son, you seem to like it here. Do you?” he asked. “Yes sir, I love it.” “Would you like to stay the rest of the summer?” “Yes SIR! I really would. Can I?” I replied probably stuttering and stammering at the proposition. “Well, one of the staff in the kitchen is too homesick and wants to leave. Are you willing to work in the kitchen?” “Yes sir. I will work anywhere if I get to stay. I would do anything.” “Well,” he replied you need to understand, you would be a ‘no-dolla’ staff member.” “A ‘no-dolla’?” I asked inquisitively.” “Yes,” Mr. White replied, “You get to be on the staff for no charge and you don’t get paid – you get No Dollars,” he said sort of laughing. “And you have to be at the kitchen at 5:30 am, stay until it is cleaned, after every meal, back at 11:00am to help with lunch, and at 4:00pm to help with dinner.” “Yes Sir, I can do that. I want to do that. When do I start?” “Don’t you think you should call and ask your parents?” he finished. I started Sunday afternoon at 4:00pm. And I was given 2 clean “STAFF” t-shirts. I never felt so proud.

There were no bunks available in the Staff campsite. But Joe Clay said I could stay with him, which I thought was very cool. His tent, almost a cabin as it had hard sides four feet up, was at the top of the hill of staff campsite, at the southwest corner. It seemed like a “camping mansion” compared to camper tents. He had electricity and a phonograph player - with dozens of albums, mostly classical and jazz. Joe made sure I got up at 515am every morning and got to work. He was an early riser too and did campsite inspections about that time – walked around the Camp



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every morning. I think it was good for me also. Joe was like a protective big brother to a scrawny 12-year-old when the staff age was minimum 14 – what seemed like much older guys.

Fast forward about 4 days, Thursday of my first week. Burl White checks in on me to see how I am doing. I love it, but it is difficult to get more merit badges. But I am still getting lots of free time at the waterfront. As we were talking Burl says he noticed I had archery merit badge, and I did pretty well at the competitions the previous week. He explained that the staff assistant to Uncle Frank got homesick and needed to go home. He asked what would I think about going to the Archery Range to help Uncle Frank as soon as I got the kitchen cleaned? I would not have to come back early to help with preparation. And I would be paid \$5.00 per week. I was the luckiest boy in the world. After 4 days I got a \$5.00 per week raise, and I got to be a program staff at 12 years old. I would get to work with the legendary epitome of Scouting himself, our northwest Arkansas Baden Powell, Uncle Frank Lewis. “Yes Sir! I will do that!” And I did and worked the Archery Range for 2 additional summers as the program assistant.

The summer passed quickly – perhaps too quickly. I hated Camp to end but was ready to go home. That Friday afternoon in June when Burl White asked me to stay for the summer changed a direction in my life and became important to who I would become. A quick conversation and the beginning of a deep experience in Scouting, with Camp Orr and serving on the staff 1968-1973, with the Buffalo River, and with Arkansas. Over the years from 1968 until 1980 when I went to graduate school out-of-state, I probably spent more time at Camp Orr than any other place other than my home and school. I felt Camp Orr and the Buffalo River belonged to me. There are many memories and many stories, some of them true, originating from Camp Orr which started that day.

CAMP ORR UPDATE: Camp Orr had another outstanding Summer Camp Season serving over 929 scouts and adult leaders and providing unparalleled program experiences to all of our campers throughout 3 weeks of camp! Great work to the staff, and our Camp Director Mike Boness for making it happen!

If you have questions, suggestions, stories, photos, please feel to contact any member of the alumni committee or send them to the Council email for alumni affairs at westarkbsa@gmail.com

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This effort is only what you as alumni make it. Sign up for the reunion, and send us your yarns, pictures, and ideas. Thanks! Jack Butt, Camp Orr Alumni Committee Chair