



BLUFF LINES



Eighth Edition, Winter 2024-25

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.

Greetings, alumni and friends, from the depths of sub-zero temperatures in the Ozarks as we publish this Eighth Edition of Bluff Lines. **Mark your calendars for a one-day reunion, May 3, 2025, at Camp Orr!**

Our membership requirements are 1) treasured memories of scouting summers in the Buffalo River Valley, and 2) a desire to preserve and share them. Please send in your own memories, even if its a snippet or snapshot; we'll contact you and see if we can work it into an article. Forward this to your old Camp Orr buddies, and/or forward us their email address. Check in frequently and add informally to our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/CampOrrAlumniAssociation>

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TICK TOCK

Daniel Johnson, Russellville Troop 214, Camp Orr camper, 1991-1994; staff, 1995; Rogers Scout Reservation staff, 1996; Camp Orr Mountain Trek director, 1996; and Camp Orr High Adventure director 1998.



At Camp Orr summer camp, 1991, the Camp had an incentive to promote timely attendance to flag ceremonies. The Senior Patrol Leader of any troop that was late had to wear a big leather clock face on a leather strip necklace for the rest of the day...think Flavor Flav, but Boy Scout handicraft style. The staff would chat "tick tock, tick tock" the whole time the Senior Patrol Leader was called forward for troop tardiness and given "The Clock". Since we were a young troop, I was the Senior Patrol

Leader and we were indeed late to morning flag ceremony, in spite of my best efforts prodding

and cajoling to get the rest of the guys there on time. Thus, I was sentenced to wear that leather clock all. day. long.

When swim time came, our troop leaders said we could go, as long as we all went together, so for revenge (pretty sure that's a subpoint of the Scout Law somewhere) I piddled and took my time and burned up a good quarter of swim time getting ready since these jokers in my Troop had caused me to have to wear that silly clock. My friends were mad, but the point was made, and one of the Assistant Scoutmasters actually pulled me aside afterward and told me "Nicely done" for reversing the play on them and teaching them a lesson about being a team player when it comes to punctuality. At the evening flag ceremony, my sentence was lifted, the clock was passed to some other unfortunate Senior Patrol Leader, and we were on time the rest of the week.

STEWART'S SHORT ANECDOTES

(Stewart Noland, Troop 105, Fayetteville, camper 1963-1967; junior staff 1968, 1970)

Stewart's canoeing experience at Camp Orr expanded considerably as he grew up. He has rafted some of the United States' most challenging white water, and is credited with the first canoe descent of the Hailstone, the 20 miles of the Buffalo River above Boxley which was named by his description of it in that first descent when it hailed on him; and first descent of Buffalo River tributary Richland Creek, which two runs can only be accomplished at flood stage creating Class IV whitewater: "Difficult, with powerful rapids, large obstacles, and requiring advanced technical skills." - Editor

Antenna Pine

Antenna Pine has long been an iconic Camp Orr landmark. I first made the uphill hike from Camp Orr to Antenna Pine during my first year as a camper in the summer of 1963. There is a long-standing tradition for troops to place their flags on Antenna Pine. Some weeks only a troop or two would make the trek to Antenna Pine, while other weeks the competition was intense to see which troop's flag would fly at the end of the camp week.

During the summer of 1968, I worked on the junior staff, and one week the competition was keen to see which troop's flag would fly on Antenna Pine at noon on Saturday. At least one flag, and perhaps two flags were placed on Antenna Pine on Friday. Separately, two troops planned to hike to the site on Saturday morning. One was somewhat secretly in response to the announced plans of the other troop.

Occasionally, the staff would get involved in Antenna Pine shenanigans, and this was one of those times. There are several routes from Camp Orr to Antenna Pine, some shorter than others. As chance would have it, Curt Harris, an excellent 880 yard track runner from Fayetteville, also was on the junior staff that summer. The staff plan was to dispatch Curt early, before the other two troops left camp, hide in the woods behind Antenna Pine, remove the second troop flag, and high tail it back to camp via the shorter route. The plan worked to perfection.

At lunch on Saturday, the first troop presented the Friday flag, the second troop presented the first troop's flag, and after a pause, Curt presented the second troop's flag, much to the



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surprise of everyone. And yes, the staff flag flew on Antenna Pine that weekend. Another fun, memorable day at Camp Orr.

Erbie

As a junior staff member in 1968, I worked in the campcraft area. Part of our responsibilities included hiking with those troops that requested a staff member accompany them on a hike. A troop from Ft. Smith showed up one week and informed us they planned to hike every day.



Most hikes were upstream from camp, Mud Cave, Indian Creek, Hemmed-in-Hollow, and Antenna Pine. One day, the troop planned to hike downstream to Erbie, returning by the same route. The route was along what was then called the Pioneer Road, which ran from Ponca downstream through Camp Orr. The scoutmaster for the Ft. Smith troop advised me to bring some money, but did not tell me why. I had never hiked to Erbie, so I looked forward to the hike.

It is about four miles from Camp Orr to Erbie, and the Pioneer Road was well worn in 1968 and easy to follow. Upon arriving in Erbie, we crossed the river and walked up the road on the north side of the river to the Erbie store (which is no longer open). Entering the old store, I knew why I was instructed to bring money. I bought a soft drink and several pieces of penny candy from the large Tom's jar with the red knob on top. It was not the first time I had purchased candy from a penny candy jar, but probably the last.

Besides the Ft. Smith troop, I wonder how many Camp Orr campers purchased candy from the Erbie store penny candy jar. This is another Camp Orr memory that stays with me.

Critter Crawl

One highlight of a trip to Camp Orr in the late 1960's was the critter crawl competition. It was held outside the mess hall, generally around supper and later in the week. At the designated time, a large white circle was drawn with lime and the contest began. The critter crawl pitted two critters at a time in a one and done format, until the winner was determined. The first critter of

the two entrants to completely clear the white circle was the winner of each heat.

Most critter crawls were surprising, exciting, and most of all unpredictable. The majority of the entrants were smaller creatures such as frogs, toads, lizards, crickets, crawdads, and grasshoppers. One particular week, word got out that a troop had a can't miss critter: one that could not be beat by any other entrant. As the scouts, visitors, and staff gathered for the critter crawl contest at the appointed time, anticipation grew.

Sure enough, the troop with the can't miss entrant brought a large white pillowcase, with an entrant that was writhing and trying in every way to exit its pillowcase prison. (No telling how long the captive had been secured by the pillow case.) Several contests ensued before it was time for the pillow case entrant. The critter crawl spectators crowded around the circle in great anticipation. The first contestant was placed in the center of the circle, while the



troop scout master carefully turned the pillow case upside down, then released an absolutely frantic four-foot black snake in the center of the circle. Cheers and squeals greeted the snake, who was moving at break neck speed as it hit the ground. Not deterred by all of noisy spectators, the delirious reptile carved a path through a panicky, screaming crowd that parted like the Red Sea, and slithered on to the safety of the woods beyond. The whole scene was hilarious.

I am not sure who won the critter crawl that day, but with respect to entertainment, the black snake won hands down.

Granny Henderson

Granny Henderson is part of the folk lore of the Buffalo River. Her long departed cabin still stands today not far from the banks of both the Buffalo and Sneed's Creek. She was one heck of a woman who lived for years in the Buffalo River country.

One of the first couple weeks at Camp Orr in 1968, it rained a significant amount early in the week. The Buffalo River rose quickly and reached levels that closed waterfront activities at Camp Orr for a couple days. By the weekend there was still plenty of water to float the river. Several staff members convinced the camp ranger to load canoes and haul us to Ponca to launch for a float back to Camp Orr.



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About 6.5 miles below Ponca on river left is Jim's Bluff, a well known landmark on the river. Jim's Bluff is just upstream from Sneed's Creek. As we approached the lower end of Jim's Bluff, out of the woods on river left appeared a lady wearing boots, a long cotton dress, and a bonnet. She was driving several hogs across the river. It was Granny Henderson. From the way the hogs responded to her commands, it was apparent that she and the



hogs had been doing this for a long while.

We held back in our canoes and watched in awe as they reached the right bank and headed into the woods. That was the only time I met or saw Granny Henderson, and I am grateful for that memory.

HOLD THAT LINE!

As remembered in reminiscences between James Anderson (camper 1958-1961; junior staff 1962-66, program director 1967) and Jack Butt (camper 1961-1964, junior staff 1965-66)

In the mid 1960's, the waterfront staff was composed mostly of Arkansas Tech football players; the two we remember were Lewis Wray and Billy Harris, both linemen, very large by any measure but humongous and of fearful size and physique from the perspective of a ninety-five-pound scout. Their presence on the waterfront was commanding, and they tolerated no horseplay or variance from the safety rules. But they had a sense of humor, were fair in their management of a water hole full of knuckleheaded adolescents, and were well-liked by the staff and respected by the scouts.

Their staff area where they tented was in a cleared campsite in the riverside woods, maybe a hundred yards upstream from the waterfront swimming hole, and was exclusive to the waterfront staff. Campers and even other junior staffers gave it respectful deference. Rumors were that they may have replenished on a weekly basis a supply of beer which they enjoyed after hours, when there seemed to be an unusual amount of singing and laughing going on, but they were all of legal age, if they were imbibing it was discrete, and the rumors may have been just that but added to their colorful reputations. The linemen generated a lot of interesting stories, here's one:

There was a two-hole privy proximate to their riverside camp to serve the staff campsite. In the staff workweek leading up to camp, an “all hands on deck” order was issued by the Camp Director for the full staff to report to the waterfront to finalize its preparations for camp. With staff swarming around bringing order to the waterfront, suddenly a loud, primordial scream was heard from the direction of the privy, followed by a thunderous crash. All there rushed to the terrible sounds, to find the side of the privy opposite its two functional holes, torn from the outhouse, flat on the ground, with Billy lying somewhat dazed on top of it. Frenzied inquiries of Billy determined other than being a little dazed and disoriented, he was fine. But in the process of sitting on the throne he discovered a spider in his lap, and being subject to extreme arachnophobia, he bolted blindly and desperately for escape - straight ahead - when in fact the door into the privy was to the right from where he was sitting. In what would have been an All-American block, he took out the entire side of the outhouse. Many of the slighter, less physically overpowering members of the staff took some unspoken satisfaction that while Billy may have been a monster of a man, his fear of tiny spiders exceeded theirs!

CAMP ORR PROVISIONAL TROOP: JUNE 15-21, 2025

If you know of a scout who wants to go to Camp Orr this summer but can't because their troop is not going, or not going at a time when the scout can go, a Provisional Troop has been formed, of scouts from various other councils, with 15 scouts signed up so far and 4 deep adult leadership, which is attending Camp Orr second week, June 15-21, which is eager to have any such scouts join the troop for that week. If you need information, please contact me, Jack Butt, 479-530-8847 or jbutt@dbtcfirm.com. .

ALUMNI REUNION, MAY 3, 2025

You will want to see Camp Orr and the Buffalo River Valley in its spring splendor, so join us for a one-day reunion on **Saturday, May 3, 2025**. We will start at 8:30 that morning, welcoming all whenever you get there, serving coffee and continental breakfast *al fresco* at the Smokehouse, just across the entry road from the Ranger's house, and proceed with what is hopefully the third and final phase of the Smokehouse renovation, rehabilitating the foundation, re-installing the dormer ends, and prepping for the pour of a concrete floor. Unskilled labor to dig, push, pull and carry is needed! We'll have a picnic lunch riverside and take some time in the afternoon to visit the Clemmons Hollow log cabin restoration, which was brought to Camp Orr in the mid 1970's as a dissembled hundred-year-old cabin and reconstructed to house the Living History program on a spectacular and unique bench just across the river. The Living History program has not existed for the last 20 years or so, but the cabin is still there, and we're hoping some of you who staffed or experienced that era will show up to share your memories. We intend to make that cabin and its Living History program the subject of an article in the Spring or Summer Bluff Lines. We'll discuss ideas for what our next project might be and then adjourn late afternoon. There is a \$20 registration fee.



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Register at <https://www.naturalstatecouncil.org/camporreunionspring2025>

NOTE: The entire troop campgrounds and buildings area have been rented for a wedding that weekend, so our presence will be limited to the Smokehouse area, river and waterfront, big field, twin falls and upriver hikes.

Please remember, the Camp Orr Alumni Association will grow and thrive based solely on your input of stories, pictures, and additional contacts. Please submit ideas, stories, pictures and comments to Maribeth Harris jersey_burn@hotmail.com

Until the next newsletter, yours in Scouting!

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