Jack Sheltmire Announces Retirement

After 37 years in higher education Jack Sheltmire will retire at the end of the winter session at Raquette Lake in 2010. Jack received his A.A.S. in agronomy from SUNY Morrisville, B.S. in recreation education from Utah State University, M.S. in outdoor education from SUNY Cortland and his Ph.D. in natural resource policy from SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry at Syracuse.

In 1973, Jack became a member of the Recreation Department at SUNY Cortland where he taught for the next six years. In 1979, Jack resigned his position and moved to the University of Maine at Presque Isle. While there, he was able to establish the first nationally accredited recreation curriculum in the state of Maine. He became a tenured full professor and chair of the division of education, health, physical education and recreation, which included supervision of the athletic director.

Due to family needs, Jack left Maine in 1993 to take the position of chair in the Health, Physical Education and Recreation Department at Morehead State University in Kentucky. He again earned the rank of full professor and was tenured. In addition to his departmental administrative and teaching duties, he also became the project administrator for the NCAA National Youth Sports Program and administered the operation of the university’s new wellness center, swimming pool complex and campus intramural programs.

In October of 2000, Jack returned to SUNY Cortland as the director of the Center for Environmental and Outdoor Education. The position was newly created and combined the duties at Brauer Education Center, Hoxie Gorge and Raquette Lake, along with academic expectations related to environmental studies. Unfortunately, a proposal to establish an environmental studies major at SUNY Cortland was rejected by the Chancellor’s Office in Albany. The directive for Raquette Lake was to increase use and revenue. Over the past 10 years, there has been a significant increase in both of these areas at Camp Huntington. At times there are as many as three different groups scheduled for the same time period, and there are rarely any operating days when it is not in use.

With the help of the outdoor education staff, support of the campus faculty, administration and alumni’s financial assistance, a great deal has been accomplished. A significant achievement was having Camp Huntington (Pine Knot) identified as a National Historic Landmark. SUNY Cortland is the only SUNY campus to have a National Historic Landmark as part of its campus. The recognition was awarded by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service in 2004.

Events that took place under Jack’s direction were: the creation of the Raquette Lake newsletter, renovation of the Kirby Camp, Theta Phi’s naming of the Glass Dining Room in honor of Louise Moseley, designating the Old Maid’s Cabin for Frank Coolidge, a new maintenance shop and a significant increase in the Raquette Lake endowment. Grants to upgrade equipment and complete building renovations were secured. Kayaks were introduced in 2001; a canoe replacement and recognition program brought 26 new canoes to Antlers and Camp Huntington. New boats, motors, along with summer and winter camping equipment have been replaced and upgraded. The challenge course has been externally inspected and accredited. The last historic building (the Coolidge Cabin) is slated for renovation in 2010.
Very Sad News for All of Us

On Sunday, Nov. 8, 2009, George Fuge ’49, age 85, passed away peacefully with his family by his side at the Masonic Care Community in Utica, N.Y. George fought a courageous battle with bladder cancer. He served as the director of SUNY Cortland’s Outdoor Education Center at Raquette Lake from 1962-1985. During this time he impacted thousands of visitors who came to Camp Huntington. I first met George as a graduate student attending winter camp in 1971. He was larger than life itself, and we all knew when George spoke you listened. He will be truly missed.

A memorial service, open to the public, will take place at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 5. It will be held at Niccoll’s Memorial Church in Old Forge, N.Y. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in George’s honor to the Raquette Lake Fire Department, State Route 28, Raquette Lake, NY 13436 or the North Woods Masonic Lodge # 849 F&AM, Box 639, Old Forge, NY 13420.

A Season’s Glance

Many might think that it would be the same old thing every day here at Raquette Lake. The truth is each new day brings observations and sightings that might include air, land and sea as the military would say. A stroll on the Waldbauer Nature Trail may possibly present wild flowers coming up in the spring or a flock of young turkeys running after their mother. A few years ago while on an interpretative walk we saw a pine marten running along a log.

It is our estimate that we have seven pairs of loons on Raquette Lake. In May, Richard Fey, our caretaker, and I placed a loon nesting platform along SUNY Cortland’s south shore of Raquette Lake. A nesting platform is made up of four small logs that create an approximate two foot square. Hardware cloth is secured to the bottom of the logs and natural mosses and grasses are added on top for a soft nest. The platform is set a few feet away from shore and anchored by a chain. As you may or may not know, loons nest on the shore of islands. This is, in part, due to their aquatic nature but also to help prevent predation, as young loons and loon eggs are very susceptible. They will mate for life and live to an age of about 35 years. The platform was placed a little late and did not have any takers this year, but we are optimistic for 2010. We have four members of the weasel family that live on Long Point. As mentioned earlier, we have pine marten, fisher, the long-tailed weasel whose coat will turn white in the winter, as well as mink. Three other weasels not located on the point are the badger, the skunk and the wolverine.

Numerous groups and individuals have seen bald eagles on Raquette Lake this summer. For many, this is their first sighting. To see an eagle or two sitting in the dead pine located in the back bay at Camp Huntington is always special no matter how many times we have seen them. The bald eagle population has increased to such a level that they are no longer on the endangered species list.

Helping Mother Nature

Each fall a group of faculty and students from the Art and Art History Department come to Raquette Lake for their annual fall retreat. This year’s group was the largest yet, with students and faculty representing a variety of majors in the department. Martine Barnaby and five faculty participated in the outing.

The students, either individually or in small groups, were given a project to develop a natural work of art utilizing indigenous materials. Students created the projects along the red trail which parallels the lake going to the Kirby Camp. Others were created off the blue trail near the house boat. The students spent a great deal of time and energy on these projects. I do not know how, or if, these works were evaluated. They were all quite different, but like William West Durant, they utilized indigenous materials from Long Point. I am sure Mother Nature gave them a thumbs up and a high five!

Thank You Volunteers

Over the past year, Antlers and Camp Huntington have both benefitted from the hard work volunteers contributed to improve and maintain the facilities at Raquette Lake. Many hands make short work of certain projects. The volunteer efforts differ from one individual wanting to help to organized worked projects that utilize large groups.

Projects vary from painting a window frame to constructing new sections of trail over wet areas. Some jobs require a special skill set; such as John Carson and Joe O’Connor ’70 rebuilding the stair railings on the Chalet, while others require the willingness to help and the ability to operate a lawn rake. Historically, groups such as physical education and recreation, parks and leisure studies complete a service project for Raquette Lake. The sisters of Arethusa, Sig Rho and Theta Phi also have helped over the years. Many of the public schools and outside user groups have helped over the past year, and their
A New Roof

Over the past five or six years we have worked with the campus Facilities Planning, Design and Construction Office to replace a number of the metal roofs at Camp Huntington. I have worked with Nasrin Parvizi, associate vice president for facilities management, developing a roof replacement schedule for Camp Huntington and the Kirby Camp. To date, roof replacement has taken place on the Chalet, Hemlock Dorm, Metcalf Hall, Staff House and the new maintenance shop.

It is not an easy fix as you can well imagine. Like everything else, materials and equipment have to be brought across the lake. In some instances, the contractor has been able to utilize the ice road to bring supplies over, while others have had the additional expense of barging everything over to complete the project.

We have been very fortunate to have the support of the campus Facilities Planning, Design and Construction Office. Replacement of these metal roofs is very expensive. The Spruce Dorm and the Kirby Camp are next in line for replacement.

In an interesting side note, I would like to share a conversation that I had with George Fuge regarding the metal roofs. George was the director at Raquette Lake when the fire occurred in 1983. He told me that when he came down to the west end of camp, all of the building roofs were covered with embers from the fire in the dining hall and the ice house. The building complex of the director’s cabin, the library and the now Birch Dorms did not have metal roofs and all burned. Fortunately for us, the Chalet had a metal roof, which helped to save it.

Facilitators Orientation

Each year Jim Clarke, Kevin Corcoran and Renee Gosselin deliver a safety orientation for all Camp Huntington challenge course facilitators. At this time, Jim and Renee are the only two ropes course instructors in Central New York who are nationally certified as Level 1 and 2 course managers. The certification was awarded by High 5 Adventure Learning Center. There is a national movement to certify and register ropes course facilitators through Association for Challenge Course Technology (ACCT) or one of their affiliates. ACCT is recognized as the leading professional organization for those who create safe and effective challenge course programs that facilitate learning and positive change individuals and groups. High 5 is an approved vendor member for ACCT.

Camp Huntington’s challenge course includes a tower and a high and low ropes course, which is inspected by an accredited ropes course builder each spring. Each element is inspected to ensure it is safe. In the event that there is a structural problem, the element is either repaired or taken out of service. In addition, all of the harnesses, helmets, ropes and hardware are individually inspected. The rope logs which record how much each rope has been used over the season are reviewed. Safety of our users is our most important concern.

Facilitators are required to attend a safety orientation once every two years if they wish to serve as lead facilitators on the Camp Huntington course. The orientation is comprised of class time where standards, in-service expectations (continuing education units) and opportunities are discussed along with proper procedures for tracking course and equipment use. In addition, participants must demonstrate skills necessary to safely facilitate a group, including evacuation procedures on each of the high elements.

Camp Huntington is very fortunate to have professionals like Jim, Kevin and Renee delivering the safety orientation each year. The trio also has helped set up the course in the spring and take it down at the end of October.

Thank you very much for your expertise and time.

U of B Environmental Studies

Sandy Geffner ’75, the founder and director of Earth Spirit and a faculty member in environmental studies at the University of Buffalo, has brought students to Raquette Lake for more
than a decade. Sandy was a recreation education major and one of the many students I had the opportunity to work with.

The course is a combination of classroom activities and hands-on direct learning experiences. The group took advantage of Camp Huntington’s 424 acres and Raquette Lake’s natural resources. The class studied aquatics on the Marion River and in Ferd’s Bog. They paddled over to Sucker Brook Bay and climbed West Mountain. Other activities included identifying plants and trees on the Waldbauer Nature Trail as well as traveling to the Adirondack Museum and Wild Center.

Sandy and his staff do a great job with this group of students. For many of the students it is their first visit to the Adirondacks, but I am sure it won’t be their last.

**Utica College Returns**

Last year there was a scheduling conflict with the dates assigned to Utica College and its homecoming weekend. Calendars were adjusted and their student leadership retreat was again held at Camp Huntington.

The students attending this event were from a variety of academic disciplines. The program is similar to the student leadership group from SUNY Cortland that came the previous weekend. The activities focused on individual and group leadership skills. Areas discussed were: what kind of leader are you; what leadership role do you play in groups; and how good of a communicator are you? Brainstorming sessions were held where students identified campus concerns and formulated new campus initiatives. Proposals and/or topics of discussion were identified.

The group participated in a variety of low and high ropes course activities. The morning session focused on the low ropes course. The elements provide opportunities for problem solving and team building for the group. Time was set aside for debriefing after each activity to discuss the end result, the team’s approach to the problem and how it could be improved. The afternoon took a different approach on the high ropes course. It was geared more toward individual challenge and growth. It was the first opportunity for some of the students and staff on a high ropes course. The students were very proud of their group and individual accomplishments.

On Sunday morning the students formalized and delivered their campus concerns and initiatives to Judy Kirkpatrick, provost, Ken Kelly, dean of students and Larry Bull, board member. The administrators had arrived earlier that morning for breakfast and to hear the students’ recommendations. I am sure the representatives were impressed with the students’ suggestions.

**Science Academy**

Pine Bush High School held its first summer science academy at Antlers this past summer. Mike Strum, a ’95 biology major, along with Joe Sorrentino, chair of the high school science department, led the six-day event. The full course is two weeks long with the second week taking place at their school.

The school offers various academies throughout the summer for its honors students. The science academy was the first to be taught by teachers instead of administrators. Students in grades 9-12 were able to take the intensive course for college credit through Orange County Community College.

The group took advantage of the unique setting with morning readings on the beach and evening fireside discussions. The weather was good except for the 58 degree day when the group was on the pontoon boat collecting water samples - brrr. Areas of study included: canoe lessons, group studies, a hike to Brown’s Tract inlet, indigenous and invasive plants, nature photography, Waldbauer Nature Trail discovery and water testing among other things. The students were in awe when the author of the nature guide they were using, Gene Waldbauer, professor emeritus, biological sciences, stopped by the Casino.

A big thank you goes out to Joe and Mike for a seamless trip. The students were amazing, their depth and breadth of knowledge was impressive!

**Basketball at Raquette Lake**

Coaches Tom Spanbauer ’83, M ’86, and Bill Williams ’69 brought the SUNY Cortland Men’s Basketball Team to Camp Huntington at the end of October. It was the first time the team as a whole came to the center. Some of the players had been here before to fulfill physical education requirements with student leadership groups. The swim and volleyball teams have previously utilized the facilities.

The isolation of camp provided an opportunity for the coaches and team to focus entirely on the coming season. While the weather could have been better, it did not seem to faze them, as much of their time was spent indoors working on team-building activities. Team and individual goals, along with expectations, were developed and understood by all.

Coach Spanbauer said it was a great weekend and they had accomplished all they had planned. In fact, he was so pleased with the outcome that he has already scheduled a return visit in 2010.

Best wishes and good luck for a great basketball season!
Coolidge Cabin Renovation

Renovation of the Coolidge Cabin, also known as the Old Maid’s Cabin, is scheduled for 2010. It is the last major historical renovation at Camp Huntington, and we could use your financial help with this project. It will be a total renovation of the inside of the building as well as log replacement and building foundation. It is a major project. If you would like to help with this project, you can send donations to: Cortland College Foundation, Coolidge Cabin Fund, P.O. Box 2000, Cortland, NY 13045-0900.

I have spent the last six months working on the plans with our Facilities Planning, Design and Construction Office. The plans have been completed and the project is now ready to go out to bid. As I write this article, I am hopeful that the pre-bid meeting will still take place this fall. Temperatures are falling and ice will be forming on the lake soon.

As I had mentioned previously, the Coolidge Cabin will be the new location for the director’s office. An accessible bathroom and sleeping quarters will be housed in this cabin. The bathroom will require an addition located at the rear of the building. The plans have been reviewed and approved by the New York State Office of Historical Preservation. We are again working with alumnus Steve Abramson ’75, president and CEO of Pace Window and Door, on the window replacements for the cabin. The interior walls will be finished with the traditional wainscoting while the ceiling will be v-matched pine. The floor will be wood like in Metcalf Hall or the Staff House.

I am working hard to get everything in place for this major project before I leave Raquette Lake at the end of March. You know the status of New York state’s budget, so let’s hope we have the financial resources necessary to complete this project. Your gift will help to make this project happen. Thank you for your support!

Continuing Education

Kate Becker Hovey ’03, M ’05, and Sharon Todd continue to do an excellent job of coordinating the outdoor practicum experience for teaching physical education and recreation majors. The two programs are quite similar yet different and unique to each major. For the majority of students, the Raquette Lake experience is comparable to what they think they might encounter on “Survivor.” It seems fewer and fewer students come to Raquette Lake with any type of previous outdoor background, which in my mind, increases the importance of such an experience for these students. Not only do they learn about new skills and activities, but more importantly, about themselves and working with others.

Prior to the six day trip, students are taught a variety of outdoor skills. Some of the trip itineraries consist entirely of canoeing; some are a combination of hiking and canoeing; while others still are strictly hiking and mountain climbing. Each of the trips have common elements including navigation using a map and compass, shelter and food preparation. Equipment selection is more specific to the trip. One skill that you may remember that is no longer taught is the use of wanigans and tump lines. How many of you remember tumping that kitchen wanigan? You will never forget the Indian Carry out of Stoney Creek Pond!

The extended trips outside of camp are still a major component of each program. Many of you can likely recall who was on your trip and where you went. Others also may recall the weather and the level of black flies or mosquitoes. When alumni get together, the Raquette Lake experience is one of the first topics of conversation.

In this age of new and rapidly changing technology, it is somewhat refreshing to know some things remain unchanged and will for decades to come.

Homer Junior High School

Every other year Jim Barry, a science teacher at Homer Junior High School, brings a group of students from the Science Club to Raquette Lake. The group also comes each winter. The club is so large that there has to be a selection process. Students are asked to write an essay as to why they want to go to Raquette Lake. Essays are reviewed by the staff and selections are made.

The spring session includes activities such as traveling to Ferd’s Bog to look at the flora and fauna, climbing Black Bear Mountain and hiking trails at Camp Huntington. They also participate in canoeing and kayaking, a first for many. The students develop their skills quickly as they travel up the Marion River or South Inlet.

A favorite activity for both Jim and the students is fishing. Gold Metcalf would have a smile on his face if he saw Jim delivering a fishing seminar to the students on the main dock at Camp Huntington. Once the instruction has taken place and the students are outfitted with their gear, they get to practice the theories learned. It seems students are always fishing ... followed by who caught the biggest, pictures and stories of the one that got away.

The students are very fortunate that Homer’s science program has the support of the school administration, teachers, and in some cases, parent chaperones. I am looking forward to seeing them again in February when it will be time to do a little ice fishing and go after that big one they missed in the spring.
**Nature Nook**

The North American mink is a carnivorous member of the weasel family and can be found from the Arctic to Florida. It is a semi-aquatic terrestrial animal that resides near water. Dens are made in log cavities, river banks, stumps, under tree roots or in vacated dens.

The mink's chocolate-brown fur is prized for its density and soft texture. Males are 23-28 inches long, while females span 18-22 inches and weigh an average of 2 pounds. A 5-9 inch bushy tail adds to their length. They are sleek-bodied mammals with small heads, beady black eyes, pointed noses with whiskers, and ears tight to their heads. Legs are short and have partially webbed toes for swimming and diving. Mink have a scented discharge that can be emitted from their anal gland similar to that of a skunk, which is used for mark territories.

The primary staple of the mink's diet is muskrat; however, they also eat fish, frogs, insects, mice, rabbits, snakes, and the occasional hen or water fowl egg.

Male mink are often solitary and have more than one mate. Breeding occurs between March and April with a 45-52 day gestation period. Females have one litter per year with four to six kits. Kits are born hairless, develop fur and open their eyes within 25 days. By six weeks kits are weaned, staying close to their mother until fall when they become independent.

Predators of mink are bobcat, coyote, fox, great horned owls and humans. Decreased population has been caused by the loss of natural habitat and the effects of pollution on their aquatic food supply. Average lifespan in the wild is three years.

**Board Honors Doug DeRancy**

At the annual SUNY Cortland Alumni Association Board retreat, Ronnie Silver, president of the SUNY Cortland Alumni Association, presented Doug DeRancy, executive director of alumni affairs, with a cherry bench for his birthday and many years of dedicated service to the College and the SUNY Cortland Alumni Association. The bench is located on the porch of the Carlson Classroom located at Camp Huntington. Doug had Marcia as a professor while earning his recreation degree.