

Ten Mile River Scout Camps hosts alumni weekend

By IAN PUGH

NARROWSBURG, NY — The Ten Mile River Scout Camp (TMR) comprises a 12,000-acre area, a site selected for the Boy Scouts in part by Franklin Delano Roosevelt during his tenure as president of the New York City Boy Scout Foundation. The campsite has served more than half a million Scouts since its inception and boasts such distinguished alumni as Tito Puente, Tony Curtis, Antonin Scalia and Bernie Sanders. On Friday, August 4 through Sunday, August 6, the camp will celebrate that illustrious past with a 90th Anniversary Alumni Weekend. The public is invited to the camp on Saturday to enjoy the celebration—which will include an open pool, a midway, tours and other activities—while alumni are invited to spend the weekend. Among those present for the event and a special alumni banquet will be Tito Puente Jr., boxer Boyd “Rainmaker” Melson, and journalist Rafael “Ray” Suarez Jr.

Making the occasion especially memorable is the fact that the Ten Mile River Scout Camp Museum has just undergone a major renovation, featuring a group of new exhibits by Johannes Knoops, a Harvard-educated award-winning architect and instructor at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City.

“The museum really has two focuses—one is obviously TMR, but the other focus is on the local history of the area,” says David Malatzky, associate curator of the museum. “...anything that happened in the neighborhood of the camp, on the camp property before the Boy Scouts arrived in 1927. We’ve had exhibits and have exhibits on local archaeology, arrowheads, stone tools that were thousands of years old found on camp property... local wildlife... exhibits from the bluestone and the rafting era from the 1830s, 1840s,” and much more.

Malatzky is very pleased with Knoops’ presentation of this material: “What Johannes did—and he did a tremendous job—is he took what we call a ‘Mom and Pop’ museum, and then he applied to it high-quality, professional standards, materials and so on. Johannes is a professional; he does this stuff for a living, and so he was able to take a lot of the same content—the mission of the museum hasn’t changed... he just presented it all in a much more appealing and much more professional way than before.”

Knoops is also chair of the Ten Mile River Alumni Association, himself an alumnus and staffer.

“[I]t’s such an important property... it’s larger than the island of Manhattan, and we just want to keep it alive in a way,” says Knoops. “As a national trend, there are fewer Boy Scouts. But FDR was very dedicated to this, before he was even governor, and it would be a shame that it doesn’t get used more often, and that people aren’t more aware of the place. As kids, it was majestic and meaningful in our lives....”

“I started this alumni search, and it was incredible just



This photograph, dated 1937, depicts a bus full of Scouts.

A special patch celebrates the Ten Mile River Scout Camps, its alumni and its 90 years of service to the community.



Contributed photos

who had camped at TMR,” continues Knoops, who cites Nobel and Pulitzer Prize winners and other successful individuals from all walks of life. “I think what it does is indicate how, as a Scout, and the leadership roles one takes on as a Boy Scout, helps inform a career path or an ambition or a moral focus.”

Regarding the new displays, Knoops says, “Personally, I had been away from Scouting, and when my mom passed away the previous November, I wanted to make a small gift, and I got introduced, and one thing led another, and I overcommitted myself,” he says with a laugh. “So I had professional experience doing exhibitions, so I committed myself to that, and then I got involved with chairing the 90th anniversary itself, so it might have been too much at once, but it came together. And there was a lot of help, obviously, there are people out there, and there’s a huge committee for this anniversary—it certainly can’t be a one-person thing.” The whole event, and the very fact of 90 years, stand as a testament to that piece of wisdom.

For more information about and registration for the event, visit the Ten Mile River website at www.bsa-gnyc.org/90tmr, or the anniversary celebration’s Facebook page at facebook.com/90TMR. The Ten Mile River Scout Museum’s own website can be found at www.tmr-museum.org.



The Ten Mile River Scout Museum, situated at TMR’s Headquarters Camp, features many glimpses at Ten Mile River’s past.

