



Winnebago Alumni Newsletter

—Fall 2007

The Winnebago Alumni Association

12316 Spur Lane, Rockville, VA 23146

A Personal View:

The Scholarship Experience at Winnebago

- By Waciuma Maina

I first came to Winnebago having no idea what the place was. The morning of my first ride up to camp, way back in the olden days of 1999, my mother pulled me out of bed, gave me a quick breakfast and some snacks for the bus, and reluctantly handed me off to my father after a long hug. He drove me down to the Hayden Planetarium, and together we sat and waited for the bus; it was the only

time in my five years as a camper, and his nine years dropping a son off for camp, that we were early. But early we were and as we waited for the bus I looked around the crowd of kids, and did not see one familiar face; it was intimidating. The one child there I did vaguely know, Alvaro, went to school with me, but we had never talked much before. Both of us were introverts heading into a community entirely foreign to us. The returning campers were bunched up, reminiscing on previous summers and catching up on all the changes of the off-season. I warily

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Cousins, CW Alums, Are Broadway Producers

Many young performers have launched a career from the Winnebago stage over the years, but none have gone farther or higher than a couple of cousins who left that Fayette venue over 50 years ago, and are now found accepting Tony awards as producers of some of Broadway's biggest hits, including, yes, "The Producers."

Steve Baruch and Tom Viertel, second cousins, were campers in the early 1950's, and today form part of a partnership which started out producing small off-Broadway productions, but today count "Hairspray" and "Young Frankenstein" among their current Broadway projects.

Early on, neither had any intention of going into the business of theatrical production. Steve graduated from Yale and spent all of three days at Harvard Business School before realizing that this was not the path he wanted to follow. He joined a family business in commercial real estate. Tom, graduating from Harvard a couple of years later, joined him. That was the early 60's, and they contin-

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Winnebago on the Web!

- See photos of Camp
- Read the WAG
- Read the Echo online
- Find news of friends
- Post your latest news
- Watch the Camp video
- Take a virtual tour
- See Winnebago in winter

All of this and more at—

www.Campwinnebago.com

See also

www.Winnebagoalums.com

Steve Baruch, Tom Viertel Are Top Broadway Producers

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ued in real estate until 1985, when they stumbled upon a couple of performers called “Penn and Teller.” And the rest is history.

There was always the idea of theater in the background. Tom’s grandfather had been a builder of theaters; his father was a playwright; his brother worked full-time in theater. Steve recalls that he and Tom, who as children saw each other only at family get-togethers, would use those holiday occasions to put on puppet shows to entertain the parents.

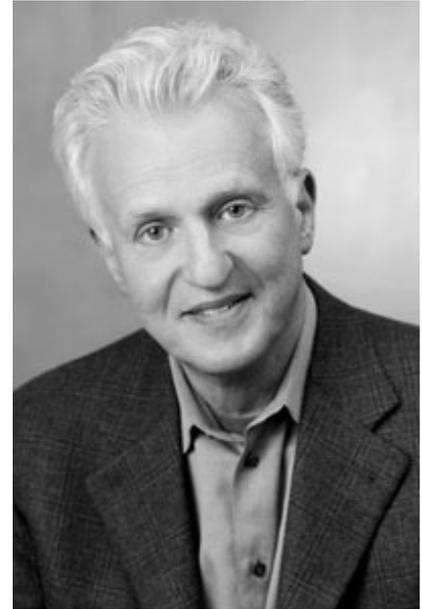
So the idea, after almost 25 years in real estate, to produce “Penn and Teller” in New York did not come simply out of thin air, but was an idea waiting to be born. They found Richard Frankel, then managing director of the Circle Repertory Company, who owned the rights, and a partnership was born. A string of small-scale successes followed, including “Driving Miss Daisy,” “Frankie and Johnnie in the Clair de Lune,” “The Cocktail Hour,” and “Marvin’s Room.”

The partners made quite a name for themselves, garnering awards and a great deal of publicity, and over the years the natural progression to larger ventures brought them to Broadway. “It was a natural evolution,” says Steve. “The nature of the business has changed. The audience has changed. You can’t do the same stuff,” he adds, referring to small straight drama. Smokey Joe’s Café cost \$4 million. The current “Young Frankenstein” cost \$16 million to produce.

The producers used a strategy of attracting a large number of small investors in financing their productions, with an individual stake as



Steve Baruch



Tom Viertel

Winnebago Whispers—

—News and Notes from Alumni

Jimmy Carter and **Eric Schwartz** (Lodge '06) both went to Camp Sizanani in July of this year. The Winnebago Alumni News published an article in 2004 about the camp, Uncle Phil’s initiative to help children affected by HIV/AIDS in South Africa. For a full explanation, see globalcamps.org.

Steve Fefferman ('86-'90) was married this year to Liza Burnett. The wedding was two years after their first meeting, but the decision (and first engagement ring, made of a dollar bill!) was at their first meeting, a chance encounter when each was attending a different party at the same bar. Steve

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little as \$10,000. In a New York Times article ten years ago, Steve was quoted as saying, “The idea is that if a show fails, no one gets killed.” Today, the stakes may be higher, and they have no trouble attracting “angels.” When backing Mel Brooks’ “The Producers,” the partners had to draw names from a hat to pick the lucky 200 investors.

So, was there a hint years ago, back in Fayette, of what was to come? In the 1950 Echo, their first year, Tom’s saying was, “I’m a backstage man!”

Winnebago Alumni Association Board of Directors

President—Jim Astrove
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Alumni Newsletter
Photography, Tom Hoegeman
Editor, Paul Schwarz
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From the Association President—W-I-Double N...

We had a remarkably wonderful season at Winnebago. The lake was ideal, the loons in good spirits, and the boys enjoyed a full summer of Brown and Green, intercamp, selected activities and trips. Our campers played and camped, learned and canoed, had fun and hiked. They shot arrows, took photographs, and made videos. Across camp boys played tennis, sailed on the lake, and prepared to go on camping trips. So many varied activities; so many opportunities to hone a skill, be up on stage, find a smile.

All these great days and nights that our campers experience are intensely valuable. They enable and enrich growth, maturity. They allow our boys to enjoy, compete, learn and try new things in a safe and structured environment. How many places offer this chance? Few, at best. And this place we know. And this place we can choose to continue to support and be a part of each summer. So again, it's time to be a Winnebagan.

A Winnebagan *passes it along*, gives back, and makes sure that the times that we had are available for boys who otherwise would never have a swim in Echo Lake. Never climb the mountains of Maine and canoe its lakes and rivers. Never have the opportunity to share their lives as a camper at Winnebago. The summer at camp is both experience and springboard. We need to continue to give money to our association so that we can give these boys the experience and more importantly, the springboard to a life full of greater opportunity. We have the ability, the power to make this happen—and we should continue make it happen. Be that Winnebagan. Thank you. Sincerely, Jim Astrove, President

A Musical Update:

The Winnebago Songster—2007 Edition!

-By Uncle Paul Schwarz

It had been more than 40 years since the publication of "The Winnebago Songster," a little booklet containing the words of all the old songs and the melodies to most.

It had been almost 60 years since the newest of those songs, the Alma Mater, by Bruce Lewis, was added to the canon. But this past summer that long drought was ended with the addition of two new songs and a new songbook.

Former camper and counselor Dylan Ris was visiting camp during the summer of 2006 when the power failed, canceling the evening's drama production. Uncle Dylan, who is working on an advanced degree in music composition at Berkeley, in Boston, took over and, in a flashlight-lit assembly, had the campers provide the lyrics for his melody, and created "The Winnebago Way," a new "pep" song.

Over the winter, inspired to do a more serious number in the ballad style of some of the great camp songs, Uncle Dylan created "Whispering Pines." When he stopped by last spring and played it for me, I was floored. This

song is every bit as good as the old favorites.

We decided to put together an updated version of the Songster. Between Boston and White Plains, using Dylan's software, email, pianos and speaker-phones at each end, we set to work, even listening to the 1964 recording to correct the book's melodic and rhythmic errors, and improve the harmony.

Internet research provided missing information, such as composer's names for songs Winnebago had "borrowed."

The new "Winnebago Songster," in full-page format, with melody lines and chord structure for all songs, was presented this past summer when Uncle Dylan and I each visited camp.

How was it received? You will certainly recall that the Alma Mater and "In Hush of the Evening" have been sung on the final night of camp. This year to that tradition was added the singing of "Whispering Pines" at Final Banquet. Congratulations, Uncle Dylan!

If you would like a PDF copy of this wonderful new song, or any of the other camp songs, please email me at pkschwarz@verizon.net.

Thank You!

Since the Spring 2007 Newsletter, the Winnebago Alumni Association has received contributions from the following alumni, parents, and friends:

Archie Abrams
 Melissa Allen
 Kent & Karen Allen
 Bill Beres
 Jean & Neil Birnberg
 Adele & Rick Carter
 Kim & Mark Cheiken
 Craig & Elizabeth Chumney
 George & Cynthia Cole
 Amanda & Ernesto De Losada
 John & Carol Drake
 Jim & Jane Felix
 Matthew & Sarah Forster
 Maureen & Andrew Gilbert
 Stephen & Dina Grant
 Jamie & Haim Handwerker
 Sheryl & John Hass
 Jane & Mark Hershey
 Anne & Robert Ivanhoe
 Marc Kaiser
 Mark & Hillary Kaplan
 Lina Katz
 Eddie & Bill Kaufman
 Richard & Betsy Keller
 Michael & Bettina Klein
 Adam & Stacey Konowitz
 Steve Lewent
 Dick Lewis
 Michael & Christine Lewis
 Stephen Lewis
 Ray Londa
 Ethan Mandelkern
 Peg & Lou Metzger
 David Newman
 David & Laurie Pauker
 Ira Riklis
 Charlie Rosenberg
 Rochelle & Mark Rosenberg
 Jordan Saper & Jill Rittmaster
 Tom Schwarz
 Pat & Rob Silverman
 Louis Stern
 Joshua & Alejandra De Losada Welch
 Mary Wiener
 Larry Zuckerman & Alice Gottesman

Personal Views of One Scholarship Winnebagan, Now on Staff

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stayed to the side, not knowing how I would fit into this new environment. I had gone camping before, but only for a few days with my family. Spending two months away from my family, in the woods of some foreign state (Maine, I think they called it) seemed, not daunting...terrifying, yes that's the word.

Eventually the bus showed up and I clambered on, waving goodbye to my father. I took a seat by the window and waited, wondering if anyone would sit down beside me. Soon enough, another first year camper moved in next to me. I had seen him hug his mom goodbye, and I knew he was as apprehensive about the whole experience as I was. After the bus started moving, we got to talking, and I was surprised by how alike this new boy and I were. He was in the division above me, but was just as new to the whole camping concept as I was. Soon though, we both decided to sleep our way to Maine. Imagine my surprise then, when after what I thought was several hours, I awoke to find the bus sitting in a parking lot. It seemed that the Westchester bus had broken down, and so the bus driver decided to keep it company while repairs were made. We sat in that lot for what seemed like an eternity, watching movies and passing around snacks. I kept trying to fall asleep, only to wake up moments later and find the bus had failed to start moving. Just as I was about to go stir crazy the bus pulled out of the parking lot and our journey continued. More hours than I could count later, the bus finally pulled into Winnebago. I sat there, barely comprehending the rhythmic chanting as the bus passed through the gate. Slowly I stepped out of my seat, said bye to my neighbor, and stepped out into the warm summer sun. It was there I met Uncle Phil, who seemed unnaturally pleasant on that hot summer day, with a "Hi, how are you?" for every camper stepping off the bus. That he knew my name was even more amazing, as he introduced me to Uncle Mark, who grabbed my obscenely huge pea green army duffel bag (which I never saw after that summer) and hauled it off to my bunk in the Circle. I dropped my stuff off on the first bed I saw, and we went off to pick up camp clothing. Soon I was changed into my brown and greens, and I had a moment to sit around in my bunk before heading off to dinner. By the time the food was brought out to me, I was catatonic. That night's assembly was a blur, and I hit my bed like a stone the moment I got back to the bunk.

The world of Winnebago took quite a lot of getting used to. As far as athletics went, I definitely was not

the boy who can, and I was not inclined to be the boy who will either. However, I came to camp wanting to make new friends, and so I was forced to try new things, like kickball, circle dodgeball, canoeing, and most difficult, swimming. I spend the first half of the summer in the shallow lane, with a friendly Australian counselor dedicated to see me do more than sink in the water. I had no experience swimming, and moreover, I had never failed at anything as grandly as I failed at swimming. I wanted to give up, but swimming was the gateway to the fun worlds of the diving platform, sailing, and those canoeing trips everyone in my division was going to go on. My swim counselor, Jesse, would not allow me to give up, so I kept at it, every morning, and after much hard work, I was able to swim in time for visiting day.

I never became a good swimmer, but I am still proud that I learned to swim that summer. The dedication drilled into me at the swim docks served me well, as I had to deal with many other challenges that summer. On the athletic fields, my lack of prowess was quite discouraging; the fact that I had to participate, however, forced me to never give up. Much like my experience swimming, I eventually learned how to play the different sports, but I never became very good at them.

One would expect that these shortcomings made me an outcast, and maybe it would have anywhere outside of Winnebago. Instead, I found that despite my lack of athletic talent, the other boys were quite willing to make friends with me. I realized quite quickly that the other kids, who had seemed so strange and foreign the first day I arrived at camp, were actually quite like me, with the same bad tastes in music and silly jokes. No matter how you slice it, an eleven-year-old boy is an eleven-year-old boy. I made a lot of friends that summer, and began to make a name for myself. Year after year I came back, making new friends and having absurd amounts of fun. Even the sadness of the last night of camp senior year could not take away my love for Winnebago. That night, looking at the dying embers and saying tearful goodbyes to many friends of mine, I could not feel sad, because Winnebago had taken in a quiet little boy afraid to try and fail, and turned him into a man who made a B&G career out of enjoying thrown Final Week games. Camp had given me the strength needed to enjoy everything I did, no matter the outcome, and I was forever grateful. I returned to Winnebago three summers later as a counselor, determined to pass on that lesson to the new campers, and no matter where the summers to come find me, that flame in my heart shall never die.

The Gift of Camp:

Uncle Jim, in his message from the president, makes a compelling case for “passing it along,” and giving back by donating to the Association’s Scholarship Fund. The article by Waciuma Maina in this issue speaks for itself.

Can you help to give a boy a Winnebago summer? Please use this coupon to become a part of this important effort.



Yes, I'll Help the Winnebago Scholarship Fund!

I want to make it possible for minority scholarship campers to enjoy The Gift of Camp by attending Camp Winnebago. I enclose the following tax-deductible contribution, payable to The Winnebago Alumni Association:

\$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 \$25 \$_____ (any amount)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail Address _____

My years as a camper: _____ counselor: _____

News for the next Alumni Association Newsletter: _____

_____ (or attach a page)

Mail to: Jim Astrove, 12316 Spur Lane, Rockville, VA 23146

Winnebago Whispers—News and Notes from Alumni

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is an associate with Meister Seelig & Fein, a New York law firm.

James Goldfarb ('79-'85, Staff '88-'89) and his wife, Alyson Yashar, announced the birth of their third child, Andrew Yashar Goldfarb, in October.

The historic Henry Clay building in Louisville, Ky. was the setting last August for the wedding of **Ethan Lasser** ('87-'92, Staff '95-96) to Jessica Eileen Roth, of Louisville. Ethan is the curator of the Chipstone Foundation in Milwaukee, which has a decorative arts collection and publishes two journals. He is a candidate for a doctorate in the history of art from Yale.

Ethan Mandelkern (Staff '87-'88) earned a masters degree in social work from California State Hayward. He recently moved to Mt. Shasta, and now does school-based

counseling. Still an avid hiker, he writes, “I now regularly enjoy the outdoors in these far northern reaches of California and live less than a half-hour drive from the Pacific Crest Trail.”

George Preis ('28-'34) was moved to write to us after reading in the spring issue about the death of **Uncle Charlie Roth**, and recalls that he was, “The best of the best.” George adds, “I still have treasured memories. Being close to 90 has not taken away those happy thoughts of Winnebago.” **Leonard Horvitz** ('32-'40) echoed those thoughts in a similar note.

 Please send us your latest news so that we can publish it in the next (Spring 2008) issue of the Winnebago Alumni News. You are encouraged to use the form above, with your contribution. You may also send an email directly to the editor.

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Rockville, VA 23146

Save the Date!!

Mark your calendars—a chance to see old camp friends

5th Annual New York Winnebago Alumni Gathering

Saturday, March 15th from 2:30-5:00 p.m.

Appetizers on us—Cash Bar

At “Sutton Place” (2nd Floor Bar)

1015 2nd Avenue (E54th and 2nd)