

RUMBLINGS FROM CHIEF SILVER CLOUD

A Lifetime of Memories

I hope you're enjoying summer. This is the time to take a break from the daily rigors of work, business travel and carpooling our kids. Federation Chief Emeritus, Keokuk, is no doubt off in the North Woods leading some Scout expedition right now. But let's all say thanks for his many years of service to our Federation: How, How, John! Keokuk, our Sachem, will be back periodically sharing his tips. But for now, please allow me to tell you a little story.

I was cleaning out the garage the other day and came across the kernels of corn we use in our campout ceremonies. Finding the corn caused me to pause and reflect on my experiences in both Indian Guides and Indian Princesses. I have so many memories, both recent and in the distant past.

My thoughts took me back to my first Indian Princess Campout at Camp Tecumseh. I have a vivid mental image of all the young princesses walking together, in front of the dads, with each proud father snapping pictures as the girls meandered toward the dining hall. I also recall the noise level at lunch. The cheers and chatter were so loud! Much noisier than anything I've experienced in Indian Guides. Boys seem content to just sit and eat, unlike Princesses who launch a thunderous barrage of cheers at mealtime.

Ironically, my first Indian Guides campout was also held at Tecumseh. I remember my neighbor Scott warning me that my son might be a little "clingy" at the first campout. How right he was! My then kindergarten age son, stuffed animal in hand, nestled up to me throughout the campout. After 15 campouts and Passage this year, William still enjoys "dad time," but he has learned to roam confidently through camps (and life) playing with buddies. His "clinging" to me is now a remnant of the past.

This past winter I was fortunate to spend both my Indian Princess and Indian Guides Winter Campouts at Camp MacLean. Being at MacLean really took me down Memory Lane. I showed my kids the cabin that I had stayed in as a boy with my father. Yep, that's right! Silver Cloud as a boy! It was 1968, a year of great turmoil in America. But what do I recall from 1968? On a sunny autumn day, the Hopi Guides stayed at Camp Maclean in the Cheyenne Cabin just off the main parking lot. We played baseball with our dads and the mighty Hopi won the Great Tribal Canoe Race. On the way home, Dad said he was tired from the campout (sound familiar, guys?) so we stopped for lunch. I had my first chocolate malted milk shake and enjoyed palling around with my Dad.

Then just a couple of years ago, I was a guest at a golf outing. My host introduced me to the rest of our foursome, one of whom happened to be from the old neighborhood and my childhood Indian Guides Tribe, the Mighty Hopi. I had not seen this childhood friend for more than 25 years. Over the next eighteen holes we shared memories of our old Hopi Tribe and the days we spent as young braves with our dads. We also talked about our families and the fun we now have as dads, as the Big Braves, in Indian Guides and Indian Princesses. My golf score that day escapes my recollection, but that round of golf ranks right up there as one of my most memorable walks down any fairway.

My sentimental journey reminds me that time marches on. And each year the speed of that march increases. So what do we do? It's simple. We enjoy ourselves and our children. We spend time with our children so that they too, years later while cleaning out their own garage, may recall fond memories of Dad and the friendships that come about from Guides, Princesses and Trailblazers.

Tell your neighbors about our wonderful programs. Sign 'em up! Enjoy the camaraderie of the campouts, and most importantly know that you are creating a lifetime of awesome memories for your children.

Tom Estey
Federation Chief Silver Cloud