

THE CAMP SIDNEY DEW ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
CELEBRATEING 25 YEARS OF SERVICE TO CAMP SIDNEY DEW:
A BRIEF HISTORY
by Jim Parker, Historian

On a beautiful spring day in April, 1993, James E. Sutton visited Camp Sidney Dew and saw many things that were in need of maintenance or renovation. At that time there were rumors of a possible merger of the Northwest Georgia Council with either the Atlanta Council or the Chattanooga Council due to some council difficulties. If the property ceased being used by the Boy Scouts of America, ownership would revert back to the family. The donation of the original 80 acres of land by the Dew family had a condition clause stating that. Therefore, if such a merger occurred there was a real possibility that Camp Sidney Dew would cease to exist.

With this in mind and a desire to give something back, Sutton, with the help of Dr. O. C. "Buddy" Lam, contacted a number of "old scouts" whom they thought would be interested in preserving the camp and invited them to a meeting. Those who responded met at the camp on October 25-26, 1993. Meetings were held in Westin Lodge, the group stayed in old Hill Campsite (now Pawnee). Those in attendance that weekend were Sutton, Lam, Mr. Charles E. "Chuck" Camp, J.D., Mr. James H. "Jim" Scott, Mr. Fain D. Scott, Sr., Mr. Jerrell W. McCool, Mr. David W. Patterson, J.D., Dr. Charles A. "Buddy" Wimberly, Mr. James D. "Jim" Arp, Mr. W. Norris Gamble, Mr. Douglas D. "Doug" Hulsey, and Dr. James C. "Jim" Parker. These are regarded as our "Organizing Members." Many others when later informed of the existence of this organization were dismayed that they were not found in time to be at the organizational meeting, however, those who joined during our first fiscal year are regarded as "Charter Members,"

The setting was a picturesque fall backdrop; nostalgic stories were told; fellowship with old acquaintances began, and new friendships were made and old friendships renewed. It was an awesome beginning of what was to become an annual event. There were several meetings around the table in Westin Lodge. There were walking tours of the camp to view the additions which had been made since the early years of the camp and a survey of the needs for repair and renovations was compiled. Everyone had a grand time renewing friendship with old friends (some had not seen each other in about 35 years). The names of many former adult leaders were remembered and discussed with reverence. These included Scout Executive Carl Harold Westin, Divine Hubbs, Buford Hill, Robert Campbell, Erby Fuller, Joe Gittings, Ed Edmondson, and a number of others.

During these meetings it was first agreed that an organization was needed to provide support for the camp to insure that younger generations of Boy Scouts had an opportunity to enjoy the same camp experiences as those who came before them, and to help the council maintain the camp.

After a series of discussions, the name of Camp Sidney Dew Alumni Association was approved. A panel of officers was elected that included James E. Sutton as Founding President, Norris Gamble, Vice-President, Jerrell McCool, Treasurer, Buddy Lam, Secretary, and Doug Hulsey, Newsletter Editor. It was decided that the terms of officers was to be two years. A committee was appointed to work on By-Laws, and a dues structure was adopted. The attendees were encouraged to solicit new members. Plans were made to issue a newsletter by the winter of 1994, and to sponsor a work weekend in the spring of that year.

It was agreed that our first project was to save old West Campsite (now Choctaw) which was slated to be torn down. It was also agreed that the "Mission" of this organization was "...to protect and preserve the facilities of Camp Sidney Dew, to promote the use of the camp and its environs, and to foster fellowship and camaraderie among members as the Association seeks to perpetuate the traditions of our camp."

The organization is now in its 25th year of providing significant support to the well-being of Camp Sidney Dew. Every spring there is a work weekend devoted to one or more major projects and several minor ones where labor and funding for building materials are provided by members of the Association. Each fall an annual Fellowship Weekend is held to provide opportunity for former scouts and leaders (former and current) to reminisce about the old days, tour the camp, and plan future events. In addition, three full "camperships" are sponsored annually by the Association for underprivileged boys to attend summer camp, our donations for this now amounting to \$800 a year. Over the years many major projects have been completed at camp. The list includes the renovation of all leantos (=Adirondack shelters) in old West Campsite (now Choctaw), the old mess hall (now Handicraft Lodge and Order of the Arrow lodge) was repaired and painted, the roof on the Trading Post was replaced, a new valve was installed on the dam, the ceremonial pool behind the dam was drained, cleared of all debris and most of the sediment, several old leantos that were beyond repair were demolished, 16 new leantos were constructed in various campsites (this past year 6 were done to complete Chaparral Campsite which had been a tent campsite), and activity shelters in old South and old Hill (now Pawnee) campsites were built. Funding was also provided for other major projects such as the construction of a restroom facility between Pioneer and old North (now Muscogee) campsites and for the renovation of the Trading Post, and First Aid Cabin. Funding for purchase of equipment items such as nail guns and a lawn mower, for electrical power lines to the stage below Lake Goodyear dam, for construction of restrooms in the Dining Hall, etc. was also provided. There have been many smaller projects completed that are too numerous to mention, but one particularly memorable among these was the construction and dedication of a memorial to Scout Executive C. H. Westin who served the Northwest Georgia Council from 1943 to 1962. This construction and dedication occurred in 1997, the 100th year since his birth in Sweden.

[NOTE: the word leanto can be spelled "lean to" or "lean-to" or as "leanto." All are correct and refer to the Adirondack shelter design. Since we have built 16 leantos in camp over a 25-year

period we must wonder just how 18 lean-tos were constructed in one year (1943), using timber on site that had to be cut without chain saws, and debarked. But that is what happened under the direction of Scout Executive Carl Harold Westin, a native of Sweden, whose father had been a lumberjack in Canada.]

Over the years there have had more than 250 individuals who have joined the Association. The average annual renewal of dues-paying members is between 80 to 100. There is always an open invitation for new members. The only requirement is that the person must have had experience as a Cub or Boy Scout, Explorer, Adventurer or scout leader, and as such experienced at least one overnight stay at Camp Sidney Dew. Over 95% of the funds received as dues and donations are used toward camp projects, the rest is used for running the business of the organization..

The fiscal year for the Association is from October 1 to September 30 of each year. So a new budget begins on October 1st and that is when dues payments are due annually.

Since all of the projects are funded by dues and donations it is important for members to renew their membership each year by paying their dues. Many of our members are now getting older and less able to do strenuous work. This means that it is very important for the organization to constantly strive to recruit younger members. By doing this the Association should be able to be of great benefit to the Camp and Council well into the future. But for now, as we celebrate 25 years of service, we can be proud of what we have accomplished thus far in an honorable and meaningful way, that our mission is steadfast, and that our goals have been sound and reachable. We have adhered to the Scout Oath and Law, and have honored and respected the Council professionals and lay persons who are in authority. Sadly, however, along the way 58 of our members have passed away to date, leaving a void that cannot be replaced since they were so much a part of the spirit and memories of Camp Sidney Dew. We will not forget them and will continue to honor them in our memories.