

Chuck Fisher Interview August 26, 2019

Many Point Staff Member, 43 Summers

Present: Chuck Fisher and Jay Wescott

Jay:

Were you a Scout before becoming a Many Point staff member?

Chuck:

For two years, I was involved with troop 168 under Dick Stromberg, the father of Phil and Skip Stromberg. He was a great guy. But, most of my friends were involved with the YMCA programs, so I drifted in that direction. I attended Camp Christmas Tree, Iduhapi, and Menogyn and was involved with Gray-Y, Hi-Y, etc.. They were wonderful experiences, advanced my love of camping, and especially my belief in the power of the camp program.

Paul Magnusson was my 11th grade English teacher, debate coach, and the Buckskin camp director in 1967. At one point, he approached me about working at Many Point. I pointed to my limited Scouting background and was worried I would not fit into the program. He explained that I had a great deal of outdoor background, that he knew I liked kids, and that I had a good heart and a positive attitude. That is all he wanted in a staff member, and the rest could be learned. He also hired Tim Pryor, another member of the debate team. It was helpful to me to have another friend on the staff as we started an unknown adventure.

Paul was like a big brother to me. We had a lot of traveling debate meets, and some of those meets took us to St. Olaf. That had been Paul's school, and it became my undergraduate school. Tim Pryor also attended ST. Olaf and so did Lee Lunder, both of which were Buckskin staff members. There were a lot of neat guys on that staff that helped me learn the Scouting way. Bill Dahlen was the Scoutcraft director and helped me a great deal. Mark Anderson, the program director, helped me, as did Lee Lunder. George Baldwin was a strong influence, and Greg Balke helped me earn my Red Cross Senior Lifesaving. That first summer gave me a steep learning curve, but it was also a summer of a great deal of growth. Sometimes, somethings are meant to happen and lead you down a road you did not expect.

Jay:

Oh, yeah, the good, the bad, and the ugly.

Chuck:

Exactly! Sometimes, even the bad times can make you better - if you learn from them. I learned from my mistakes at Many Point. In 1975 the Viking Council and Many Point were struggling, and Buckskin was closed.

Chuck:

I was involved in that decision as I fought to retain the Pioneer Staff, and other directors fought to save their respective staff members. Buckskin had fewer Scouts was our logic, and therefore that staff should be let go.

Knowing what I know now and what I have learned through Many Point – that never should have happened! If the entire staff took a percentage of a pay cut, the Buckskin staff could have been retained. We would all share the pain, but no one staff would have been let go. Instead of just working for our respective staff we should have worked for all staff.

That is a lesson I took into account as president of the teachers in Moorhead, as department chair, etc. Cooperation is needed – at all times. I am fortunate to have worked at Many Point and to have learned that lesson and many others...even if the lessons were learned the hard way.

Jay: What staff positions have you had at Many Point?

Chuck:

1967 – Buckskin program counselor

1968 – Buckskin assistant aquatics director

1969 - Buckskin commission and Frontier commissioner – the last half of the summer

1970 – Flintlock program director

1971 – Voyageur program director

1972 – Voyageur program director

1973 – Ten Chiefs camp director

1974 – Pioneer camp Director

1975 – Pioneer Camp Director

1982 – Special Projects Director

1983 – 2010 Reservation Program Director

2011 – 2014 Main Area Administration Helper

Jay: Say a few words about the various Reservation Directors.

Chuck:

Bob Burt: I was never at a level to have any contact with him. At the 50th Anniversary at Many Point, he called into question my long tenure at Many Point and wondered why I never wanted to do anything different. My response was, “Why would I stop doing something that I love? Would not all people want to love the job they have?” I did have a wonderful life to have teaching get me fired up for camp and for camp to get me fired up for teaching. Being at camp made me a better teacher. And being a teacher made me more useful in helping staff to grow.

Chuck:

Elwin Easton: I remember the phone call from Elwin inviting me to be the Ten Chief's director. He explained that he wanted a positive leader. Anybody could be a negative leader complaining about the eggs (his actual example) or some staff. He wanted positive leaders who could seek and find solutions to problems. He wanted leaders who could unite staff in a positive manner towards a positive goal. I have never forgotten that and used it in selecting leaders and in guiding others who might deviate from that model. When I found myself slipping, I was jogged back by Elwin's words.

Muriel Pederson: When not at camp, Muriel was a business teacher in Wayzata and a great guy! He got the brunt of the camp's and the council's financial stress. Paul Krueger was the Reservation Program Director – a teacher and wrestling coach from St. James. They were both good role models Paul taught me to speak straight and do not play games. He told it the way it was – with kindness and tact. Do not mislead people. I admire their sincerity and kindness. Those two men were great to work with, and Paul knew he would not return in 1976. In 1975 he and Muriel stated that they wanted me to be the Reservation Program Director in 1976. Paul was sharing with me what it meant to be the reservation program director. He gave me a rundown on each activity of the week and the summer with the idea that I would be the reservation program director in 1976.

I was the Reservation Program Director in 1976 and hired the camp directors. We met in October during the teacher's convention at the cabin of Lee Cornell and Paul Krueger to hire staff. We also determined to try an experiment in programming to meet the different needs of troops.

The idea came from discussions with Ron Nelson and Loren Mielke during the summer of 1975 when I was the camp director at Pioneer, and they were camped with their troop in either Cook or Carver.

The question was – How do we better serve the needs of troops, so they want to attend Many Point? The response was to meet the different needs of troops while staying true to the original Many Point mission – without any new money. It was suggested to vary the focus of each camp. Buckskin would focus on advancement and have a schedule centered on advancement – made more attractive with all meals in the dining hall so the focus could be advancement. Ten Chiefs would continue as the traditional camp of the time. Voyageur would work to nurture troop development by encouraging boy leadership, the use of the Green Bar, and work more through the SPL while nurturing the Scoutmaster. Flintlock would offer a variety of specialty programs. The camp directors bought into this model, and it received good feedback; however, it became apparent that the Buckskin model for advancement was the most attractive, and all camps adopted its schedule in 1977.

Chuck

It should be noted in 1976 the Viking Council decided to have Scouting professionals take over the running of Many Point. Hence, the famous kneecake slide of 1976 was the Year of the Pro with a half of a whiffle golf ball glued to the background for the slide. Bud Frank was the Viking Council Camping Director, Bernie Fennel was the Reservation director, and Don Templeman was the Business Manager / Service Director. In essence, my role reported to Bernie Fennel, and Tom Holden reported to Don Templeman. It was a summer of dramatic change as Bud Frank attempted to remake Many Point in the image of his camps in New York (Massiwappi - sp). The changes did not go well with the staff, and it wrought a cultural revolution. I did not want to return to that Many Point, and they would not want me since I opposed their culture.

After 1976, I did not return to camp for five years. I was married in December of 1976. In the summer of 1977, I started a sabbatical leave from Moorhead to earn certification in Learning Disabilities and worked on reading administration. I did painting, roofing, and even taught at Moorhead State. In 1982 Tom Holden suggested I might like to return to Many Point and work with Bob Gagner. Kathy and I discussed it and thought we should explore it. In 1982, I called Bob and was offered the position of Special Projects Director. After that, the title would be Reservation or Camp Program Director.

Bob Gagner:

I worked with Bob for over two decades and have the most to write about that time. Times were grim. The camp attendance had dropped to below 2,000 Scouts, and funds were short. I credit Bob with saving Many Point. He achieved that goal by polishing what Many Point did, aggressively recruiting troops, and by changing the culture of Many Point. It was the change of culture that helped in reaching the other goals.

Bob refined and added to the mission of Many Point, increasing the focus of troop development to creating young people who could make ethical decisions and live by a system of values. I am paraphrasing but note that the mission as he defined it focused on the individual Scout as well as the troop. I remember him citing the American Camping Association belief that every camper should leave camp feeling better about himself/herself than he or she did before camp.

I include women in that adage because Many Point started to add women to the staff. The Mission applied to all staff as well as Scouts. Now, in 2019, girls join the Northern Star Council Scouting program. Over 160 girls attended Many Point in the summer of 2019! Bob continually asked the staff to answer the question of "Why are you here, and how do you achieve that goal? "

Chuck:

As a younger staff member, I heard repeated references to Jim Seeden asking how to develop patrols? When veteran staff from the 1950s and 1960s returned, they repeatedly asked the question of what was being done to build patrol and troop leadership. The answer included what was traditional and what was new and innovative.

As Bob expanded the vision from patrol and troop to the individual Scout, the staff embraced their job in a more personal manner with EACH Scout. A corollary to this was the need to use the fourteen points of the Goals of the Outdoor Program. With sharpened focus, the Many Point program operated in parallel with the Goals of the Outdoor Program. Bob explained that canoeing was not relevant because the world needed better canoeists. Appropriate because it needs people who can work as a team and communicate with one another. Similarly, the world does not need better archers but needs people who can learn from a "miss," readjust their sites and continue to work to hit a goal.

Also, the world does not need a better tower or rock climbers, but it does need people who can take a big job and break it down to digestible components. During Bob's tenure, each activity at camp was reviewed and defined with a purpose. Those written goals were at the beach, the ranges, the conservation areas, etc. Bob's primary focus was to get the staff to put the needs and goals of the Scouts and the volunteers as the primary focus. The Many Point program paired with the defined Boy Scouts of America Goals of the Outdoor Program.

Another salient feature was the advent of Ethics in Action. This program originated in cooperation with the University of Minnesota and with the Viking Council. It paralleled the Goals of the Outdoor Program and served to help Scouts and adult leaders understand the processes of their dynamic interpersonal interactions. It was powerful to have Scouts and adult leaders consider the impact of their actions upon others. During the debriefing, participants might find what they could have done differently to achieve a better outcome. This program did much to improve troop operation at camp and when the troop returned to their home community.

Staff such as Mark Richardson, Kent Lavene, Steve Stobbs, Joel Young, Aaron Welch, Mark Vonderharr, Steve Shanley, and Scott Miller did much to help the staff incorporate this program along with Initiative Games into the culture of camp and the culture of troops. Their actions helped to enhance the Many Point culture and provide a richer experience for Scouts and adult leaders.

It was a time of having staff continue to work at Many Point for more extended periods that helped bolster the emerging new culture of Many Point. I will address this, again, later, when mentioning the advantages of longer tenure at Many Point.

Chuck:

The expanded Mission bolstered by instruction in How to Handle Complaints, Leadership Courage, Contextual Leadership, and the observation that Many Point is a human resource industry. As such, the camp experience will only be as good as the staff. Valued are the Staff needs. The Loon Café was opened as a staff recreation center to give an option of staying in camp rather than “going south.” It was a way to bring staff together in a healthy environment while embellishing the Many Point experience for staff. It was part of making Many Point a place where people would want to work. Special meals were even created for the staff to reduce the monotony and make camp special. Addressed also were adaptations for vegetarians, allergies, and more.

Activities, for staff, were added, such as the egg drop from the fire tower, the layers contest, of wearing as many different Many Point items of clothing as possible, and the Family Feud. The Iron Staffer, the Volleyball tournament, and other activities were added to weekends so the staff could once again be together. The idea was to keep the staff together in a healthy environment. Of course, they would still go to DL (Detroit Lakes) or other places on a day off, but at least there was something worthwhile to do at camp with all staff being together before leaving. I feel it helped to create a greater sense of reservation rather than isolated camps. I enjoyed Buckskin for my first three years, and even after that, I rarely saw other parts of camp during my first nine years at Many Point.

If I were to mark a change from working at Many Point in the 1960's-1970's until the 1990s and 2000, it would be that the staff did more together in a positive environment. I believed it works to break down barriers of one camp versus another and work to create a sense that no matter what your job or where you worked. You had value as a Many Point Staff member. Too many staff members, “Many Point was home.” Or Many Point was their “happy place.” Staff felt safe, valued, and there was a significant purpose to that which they did. They had the support of friends in whatever they did.

At the same time, there was an increase in staff tenure at Many Point. I recall, as director of Pioneer, we were excited that the average tenure of our staff was five years. Many Point moved into the 1990s, 2000, and 2000 plus it was prevalent to have staff with ten years of experience at Many Point. A look at the wall of former staff shows a large number who have 20, 25, 30, or more years at Many Point. Bob was a beneficiary of this as the central area team of Bob, Ron Schroeder, Joe Glacum, Arlene “Granny” Arvola, and I were together for so long. It helped to create viable systems of operation, so that one did not have to question how to do something each year - known was a periodically refined procedure in place - the process were in place that could be refined for merit badge kits, closeout procedures, inventories, adult leader feedback and more.

Chuck:

Flintlock Scouts provide feedback. With systems in place, greater emphasis on moving forward took precedence over how to do something each year. Plus, since the core four returned, they knew how to work with each other. Granny was the face of Many Point to thousands of adult leaders and Scouts. Joe found ways to save money and create systems that worked. Ron was a terrific problem solver and kept a steady focus. No matter how bad the staff might screw up, the worse that ever came from him was... "Oh, those guys!" His wife, Helene, was always willing to help staff or to help solve problems that confronted camp. It was a neat time at Many Point. Bob was able to focus on his vision for camp growth, culture, and program, knowing that the team would take care of the daily operation of Many Point.

Larry Underkoffler: The man is a gentle giant who loves kids and would do anything to help the staff do their job and be comfortable. He continued the Mission and Ethics in Action.

Bob Gagner returned to camp from 1993-2006

Travis Suttin: Travis worked hard to continue the Mission and the traditions of Many Point. His legacy is viewed all over Many Point with construction, innovative programs, and more. He introduced the Disneyfication of Many Point, making the camp look better, run better, and be even more customer service oriented. I think I am correct in writing that at one summer during the time of Travis, there were over 4400 Scouts that camped at Many Point, plus about 1600 adult leaders and 600-700 at Family camp – well over 6000 campers for a summer. Travis Suttin's tenure included:

**Facility Improvements** – facility enhancements were a priority because:

1. An influx of funding from the capital campaign allowed for significant projects.
2. View on service. Attention to Disney principles told us that a strong element of excellent service is ensuring that the physical plant is 'show ready.' After several years of ', just enough' funding, our physical plant (facilities) did not meet this 'show ready' standard.
3. Improved trading post operations (Profit increased by 40%) generated additional revenue invested back in camp.

### **Completed Projects**

- 19 Remodeled Family Camp Cabins
  - Full-size fridges, free-standing range/ovens, the addition of a double bed for couples, new flooring and paneling = met the more modern expectations for lodging for families on a weeklong vacation
- 2 New Shower Houses in Buckskin and Voyageur

- Tripled capacity and aligned with contemporary expectations for youth protection standards, outside single entry stalls that could serve any age or gender
- New Flintlock Lodge (Staff Headquarters)
- Dining Hall Central Kitchen Renovation
- New Ten Chiefs Trading Post and Storage Building
- New Buckskin Nature Center\*
- New Buckskin Handicrafts Building\*

\*These two projects included a storm shelters in the basement for safety. Also, placement shrunk the footprint of the Buckskin subcamp so participants wouldn't have to walk as far. A lot of improvements were made to Buckskin, attracting new increased numbers of new campers.

- Three Remodeled Trading Posts (Buckskin, Voyageur, Family Camp) - more attractive sales floor = stronger sales
- Four new campsites (Hartman, Rogers, Red Cloud and Two Harbors) = increased capacity on busy weeks
- Remodeled Buckskin Lodge (staff and volunteer area)
- Expanded staff kitchens in Ten Chiefs and Voyageur Lodges
- Renovations to both ranger residences
- Aggressive painting program of all buildings
- Original log building exteriors were all resurfaced

**Program Additions** – the goal of the core program retained campers and gave them reasons to return to camp.

- 45 Sit on Top Kayaks (15 for each subcamp beach)
- 3 - 44ft tall climbing towers (1 for each subcamp) – the roughly double height of existing towers
- 9 Throwing wheels and two kilns added for pottery program
- AM1610 Radio Station to broadcast Scout radio program broadcasts from each subcamp
- Mountain boarding
- Inflatable activity islands at each subcamp with rope swing attachments – doubled the capacity of popular aqua trampolines
- Sea-Doo personal underwater propulsion scooters
- 45 digital cameras for the photography program
- 45 GPS units for geocaching program
- Nine-hole disc golf course
- Gaga Ball Pits for each subcamp
- Red Lantern Brigade (updated scalps program)
- New Advancement (11 new merit badges): Archaeology, Radio, Geocaching, Fingerprinting, Photography, Cinematography, Engineering, Game Design, Journalism, Pottery, SCUBA Diving



- Senior Patrol Leader Leadership Team – a leadership program for youth leaders in Troops
- Frontier Outpost – a themed, period outpost focused on logging, mining and homesteading

**Older Scout Programs** – existing high adventure experiences like high ropes courses and climbing were now everyday experiences easily accessible outside of camp. A strong effort was made to identify new programs to attract and retain Scouts to return to camp for their 4th to 7th years at camp.

- Organized older Scout programs into three tiers of adventure
  - Tier 1 = onsite day or overnight programs
  - Tier 2 = offsite adventure trips, aka Many Point outfitters
  - Tier 3 = weeklong older Scout programs that took the place of traditional camping with your Troop.
- Tier 1 New Programs
  - Challenge Outpost – loosely based on Survivor TV show, featured in Scouting Magazine
- Improved Tree House Program
  - Adjoined two existing villages with a central platform and walkways – could have campfire program in the trees
  - Blow Gun Paintball
  - Spar Pole Climbing
  - Cargo Nets
- International Target Sports Outpost – Blow Guns, Throwing Stars, Atlatls, Throwing Spears, Crossbows, Black Powder Rifle
- **Older Scout Programs continued:**
  - Adventure Cove (Aquatics) – Jousting on the Water, Iceberg Inflatable (14ft aquatics climbing wall and water slide), Saturn Inflatable, Stand Up Paddle Boards, Catamarans
- Tier 2 New Programs
  - Offsite biking on area trails (added 15 mountain bikes)
  - Ottertail Kayaking Trip (limited kayaking whitewater on Otter Tail River, 40 miles south of camp)
- Tier 3 New Programs
  - Water Sports Outpost – Jet Skis, Water Skiing, MN Watercraft Permit Instructors Course, Kayaking and Sailing
  - All Things Aquatic – Earn Red Cross Lifeguard Certification plus all aquatic-based merit badges and instruction on all watercraft at camp

- All Things Wilderness Response – Earn Red Cross Wilderness First Aid Certification, disaster and emergency training culminating in a mock plane crash role play at week’s end
- All Things SCUBA – Achieve PADI SCUBA certification and SCUBA Diving merit badge
- Transportation – Developed and provided an intra-camp bus route operated by the camp that would pick up participants at scheduled times to bring them to older Scout adventures. Troop leaders appreciated this added service.

Evan Yingst: I only worked with Evan one year as he worked with Travis in the transition. Evan has worked to continue the Mission and the Traditions of Many Point. I submitted his accomplishments to Dave Kenney and will include those in this text:

#### Merit Badges

Chess

Athletics

Personal Fitness

Signs, Signals, and Code

#### Physical Changes

New Outdoor Skills Kitchen for cooking

New Voyageur Trading Post

Build towards 2020 with improved structures at Outdoor Skills and programming

Added lakeside troop site – Tecumseh in Ten Chiefs

Added lakeside troop site – Vermillion in Voyageur

Enhanced the Counselor in Training site with better facilities and latrine

#### Program Changes

Historical Geocaches across Many Point

ATV Older Scout Adventure

Older Scout Adventure Blast!

Nine Square in the air (troop activity)

Older Scout Cot Surfing – trying all overnights at Flintlock

Five Stand Shotgun Outpost created

Later - Added Rabbit thrower that hops along the ground

Amazing Pace Day Program – camp ace from 2 pm until 9 pm around Many Point

Sports Outpost including Bubble Soccer

Bubble Ball Soccer at Flintlock

Sportsman Outpost – rifle, shotgun, fishing, and a five-stand shotgun during

Morning merit badges

Three more aqua trampolines

Battleship – canoes with buckets to try and sink other canoes  
Added drone to movie making merit badge to record troop activity  
Increased merit badge opportunities in the morning

### Troop Aides

How to be a Two Week Troop Guide  
Created a Commissioner's Guide

Continued Certification by the American Camping Association – one of the few Scout Camps to be certified by the American Camping Association

Evan continues to be the Many Point director and continues to seek the growth and improvement, of Many Point. There are more programs, merit badges, and facility improvements added every year to insure the vitality of Many Point.

Jay: There are probably too many significant changes at Many Point to mention them all. Would you suggest a few?

Chuck:

What I mentioned before regarding the Mission to expand the focus of the staff was monumental. It worked to combine the initial goal of Many Point with a focus on the individual Scout.

I am not suggesting that it was not there before, I am only observing that it heightened the focus of the staff in a meaningful manner. Bob told the story of a Scout who said to him, "This camp is different – they care about me." I am paraphrasing that, but that was the nub of the statement. There was a renewed emphasis upon flexible programming to meet the goal of a troop. If a troop wanted to go sailing four times – how can camp make that work? It was a can-do attitude. If a troop wanted to combine a canoe trip, a hike, and more, how can that be done? I think there was also a focus on growing staff.

When the directors got together to form a staff, I saw a movement away from trying to grab the perceived most influential possible staff member. A reservation focus on staff member growth, a specific job, in a particular camp all had value.

Collectively having the best for all staff, the term "draft" was drop. Another feature was to move from thinking as one camp being the best to thinking reservation wide. Rather than staff saying, "I will only work in Buckskin," it should be "I want to return to camp." Also, the staff experienced a more significant opportunity to have input. Outlines and kits were put together to help teach merit badges.

Chuck:

The guideline was that the staff should follow that guideline/syllabus. The policy became, if the change was good, let's make the change in all camps. Staff saw themselves as valued. Think of Mike McCollor bringing the Huck Finn raft to Many Point – it was a grand idea. It was tried and was so successful that Bob got pontoons for a new raft, treated lumber for the decking, and worked with Mike to institutionalize the program. Now the camp has two rafts! AC. Christensen created Ethics in Action elements, created a commissioner's guide, and more!

Mike Kuklok revolutionized the Nature Program and, when given one example of the trifold learning center, went on to create six more and then make one for each of the nature centers in the other camps. He created systems for opening and closed out that other camps copied. Many Point invites innovation and does not adhere to a structured formalism. The Mission applied to staff as well as Scouts and helped staff to grow. The point being is that camp is a cooperative enterprise of all stakeholders. Other camps have copied Many Point adding fire towers, treehouses, Aqua toys, and imitation is a good compliment.

Many Point gets better each year by listening to the staff and the Scouters. In too many institutions an employees voice is muted. At Many Point, there was a sincere effort to listen to the voices, weigh the value, and then act as needed. That attitude helped staff to feel valued and want to return to a place where they felt valued.

Many Point is a human resource institution and only as good as the humans that work for Many Point. The feedback from troops and Scouts gauges the success of Many Point. If the staff feel good about helping the adult leaders and Scouts and feel as if they helped those groups reach their goals, then Many Point can feel successful. I think the physical changes speak for themselves. It is the institutional changes that go unseen that are so significant and transformational.

Jay:

What was it like being the Reservation Program Director?

Chuck:

I loved the job! My job was to help the area directors and the staff meet their goals of assisting adult leaders and Scouts. That meant helping the directors in hiring staff, preparing for staff week, getting them what they needed for their staff and their programs. At the same time, it meant working to advance the Mission of Scouting and the goals of the Reservation Director. I was fortunate to work with collaborative Reservation Directors.

Chuck:

In 1982 Many Point did not have an existing inventory, so I instituted an itemized list of cots, tents, tarps, patrol boxes, and patrol box equipment, boats, canoes, and sailboats. Is there enough equipment for the Scouts? My first summer, we had a cot hunt getting cots from the National Guard and other sources because we did not have enough cots. An inventory helped camp to be better prepared. In the late 1980s, early 1990s, that list was expanded to ALL program equipment. That meant an inventory down to the last wood carving knife, tie-dye color, and more. The offshoot was that by seeking a weekly stock from the staff, we could monitor the program. Why would one camp only go through so much tie-dye or ammunition when they had more Scouts? A greater sense of accountability was needed with the growing program, plus it was easier to anticipate needs and prevent a shortage. Working with the inventory lists and the trading posts ensured enough arrow kits or leather kits were available. Inventories enhanced accountability, provided for partial program oversight, and gave a basis for replacement should a building housing the equipment in the offseason be disturbed.

The job meant talking with area directors and staff to learn of their needs and make suggestions about the physical operation of their area. One-on-one conversations achieved the desired staff culture in the early years. In conjunction with the recommendations from feedback or the area director, it was an opportunity to observe some marvelous staff members working with Scouts and offering guidance to those that might struggle.

At times I might suggest that a struggling staff member should be made a "project," i.e., what could the area staff and I do to help this staff member grow. The truth is that camp takes a 15 or 16-year-old person and he or she is now living communally and working from 7:30 a.m. until often 9:30 at night. That is a considerable change from the summer at home. Plus, that person might come from a strong or weak Scouting background. I do believe there has been a decline in the Scouting skills of the staff – but that does not mean the person could not be a great staff person with guidance.

Also, there is truth to the adage that "we tend to teach in the way that we learned." Many Point does not want staff lecturing. Many Point should be a living laboratory where Scouts can learn by doing rather than being lectured.

Staff was encouraged to explore multiple ways for Scouts to demonstrate learned skills. When monitored, staff would be encouraged to follow the successful syllabus and merit badge outline. The staff was to make sure they used the necessary techniques to help the Scout, master the essential skills.

Chuck:

The Adult leader feedback forms were changed to a five-point Likert Scale, which allowed the ability to view trends within a camp and between camps. Hence, if a program or activity struggled in one camp but was successful in other camps, there was a venue for intervention. Again, the goal was to help and nurture staff – not penalize or berate staff. The same form asked for feedback, so the individual adult feedback was valued. Also, by using a Likert scale, coupled with numbers, Many Point could review changes in perception of programs from year to year. Many Point added, expanded, or dropped specific offerings. In this manner, Many Point could more readily respond to the need and ideas of the Scouts and adult leaders, e.g., showers, transportation to Flintlock, larger handicraft building in Buckskin, a nature center closer to Buckskin, etc. Many Point collected as much information as possible about the needs, wishes, and perceptions of the Scouts and adult leaders.

With the 1987 LDS (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Troops), encampment and their willingness to help with projects camp, added troop bulletin boards to each site and on the back were doors for storage of an axe, patrol shovel, and charcoal grill. Besides a bulletin board, it enabled the camp to clean up patrol boxes by not having ashes spill into the patrol box, reduce the number of axes in use (and accidents) and help with cleanliness in the patrol boxes. In seeking to meet BSA and American Camping Association Standards, the bulletin boards provided one place to find information about emergencies, Lyme disease, and more.

Invariably by week five, staff issues would emerge. Some behaviors would grate on other staff or it was obvious that a staff member was struggling. The hope was that interventions could improve the friction or bring about changes in behavior. You always began by helping the area director intervene. I only got involved if invited by a frustrated area director or if it was severe staff behavior.

Closeout becomes another task. The start of written closeout procedures has been helpful, and each year they become refined, but the process is a rush. I remember in my first years, Scouts would leave on Saturday, and we would close down camp on Saturday and leave as well! That was terrible! The change to close out on Saturday, Sunday, and going on Monday – if ready has been an excellent move and that started in the late 70's early 80's before I returned from my hiatus.

The job of the Reservation / Camp Wide Program director was to help the staff. The person supports, guides, and nurtures staff while working to implement the goals of the camping director. The job is rewarding as you create interpersonal relationships and get invited to Eagle Court of Honors, graduations, weddings, and events. You love watching young people grow into adulthood and become leaders. Essentially, the job enables you to help so many realize the goals of Scouting.

Jay:

Many of us would have liked to return to Many Point year after year. Something always got in the way. Share your thoughts.

Chuck:

The first ten years were easy. I was in school or just started teaching and was single. The second shift of thirty-three years was more challenging. I was married. The first summer back, Kathy had charge of Nick, who was one year old and was pregnant with Becky. The movilla was ancient and a hotel for mice and carpenter ants. Ants with wings would fall out of the ceiling on top of Kathy at night. There was no air conditioning in the movilla, and it was stifling! Many Point was hard on Kathy, and to this day, I owe her a lot! As Nick and Becky grew, they loved Many Point and found it to be a grand adventure – until sports started. Kathy was a saint. She got over one hundred books from the library for the kids to read at camp and planned activities for them. The staff family beach was weedy and rocky, but Ron brought a load of sand for the kids.

Kathy missed the contact with family and friends. Plus, there was only one phone at an outdoor phone booth with everyone listening to the conversation.

It was stressful, and in retrospect, I probably should have stopped returning to camp. It was a struggle every year as to the right thing to do. It put stress on our relationship, and it was my fault. If I had it to do over again, I probably would not have been at camp as long as I was. It was not easy on Kathy, and I owe her a substantial debt.

Jay:

What was it like to raise a family at Many Point?

Chuck:

In many respects, it was a rich experience, but it did present several challenges that were stress. My wife Kathy was a champ. Our children were very young, and that meant long hours alone in the cabin for Kathy and Nick and Becky. Kathy was a trooper taking them up and down from the mouse infested movilla to the staff family beach. Once down there, if she needed something from the movilla, it became a tremendous undertaking. There were no other families. Ron's wife Helene was very nice, and so was Ron, and we did things with them. They were great!

One time I was working at the administration building and got a frantic call from Kathy. A squirrel had jumped through a movilla screen window and was running around the movilla. I hurried home, put on thick gloves, and grabbed the creature as it clung to a screen window. I went to throw it outside as it kept attacking my gloves with its teeth. I felt so sorry for Kathy and the kids. Again, Kathy had to endure very trying conditions.

Chuck:

As the kids got older, they would travel with me in the mornings as I visited the camps. The staff was like older brothers and sisters to them. Adult leaders were very kind, and it gave Kathy a short break.

When Becky was older, she loved going to the horse corral as the staff took her under their wings. She would scoop up horse droppings to clean up, and if there was an extra horse, she got to ride along. One time one of the wranglers got kicked by a horse and got a broken thumb! Little Becky, in third grade, led the ride! When a Scout got out of line, she said, "get back in line." The Scout exclaimed: "Why do I have to listen to her?!" The adult leader said, "Because she knows what she is doing, and you don't." Larry was so kind he hired Nick to help make the screen print clothing items. Granny teased the kids about drinking coffee and was always so friendly to them. Joe would joke with them. Ron took the kids fishing. Helene would fry the fish or make homemade pizza – those were great treats! It was an enjoyable experience for the kids, and it makes me feel good to see the Casellas, the Wachsmiths, the Manns, and others have the same experience. Kathy checked out over 100 library books for the kids each summer and planned activities for them. She was and is an outstanding mother. I still recognize the hardship it caused my wife and feel guilty. Again, if I had it to do over, I may not have returned for so many summers.

The whole family served on the staff. Kathy ran the trading post, served as the business manager, etc. She didn't have to do those things, but she did. Nick and Becky were both active in athletics, and it fell to Kathy to ferry them around and resulted in family separation. In time Nick worked as field sports director and aquatics director at Voyageur. Becky was a trading post person, commissioner, program director, and eventually a camp director at Voyageur.

Both speak well of their time at Many Point. I think they both developed more self-confidence from their time at Many Point. After being married to Travis, Becky would be the business manager or trading post manager, and Kathy would help her.

Another feature for our family was that we got one heck of a great son-in-law with Travis Suttin! Plus, I got to watch him grow up. I knew what a quality person he was before he even started to "date" Becky. Yes, for better or worse, Many Point was a family experience.

Jay:

Talk about the pit toilets to flush toilets and from bathing in the lake to showers. That whole infrastructure change has to be expensive for the camp.



Chuck:

When the Viking Council and Indianhead Councils merged to form the Northern Star Council, more money came to Many Point. The staff certainly benefitted from scholarship money. I think there was a capital fund drive that helped Bob Gagner, Travis Suttin, and now Evan Yingst. All directors have had a history of having a high regard for adult leader feedback. The feedback requested the items you listed and working with the council they pressed forward. It was the additional money from the Council, coupled with growing camper numbers that enabled the camp to make the necessary physical changes. There was proper fiscal management. Announced at the adult leader dinners, you could hear thunderous applause when the bath facility changes would be improved.

Also, with more female staff and female adult leaders, changes were made to allow for separate/individual facilities. Individual changing structures for Scouts, leaders, and staff enhanced the beaches.

Other enhanced facilities and programs evolved. Transportation to Flintlock; more massive climbing towers with different faces; a five-stand shotgun range; recurve bows, and more were added to provide further challenges for Scouts. Support from a dynamic council and good stewardship has made all of this possible. The Alumni Association has been a big help. I genuinely do not know how Bob navigated those early years financially.

Jay: In the sixties, Jim Seeden pointed out that all equipment has a shelf life. He thought Many Point should rotate campsites, giving some a rest. Today, Flintlock and Pioneer are needed rest and regrowth from overuse by troops.

Chuck:

The current inventory system allows for a change of equipment, and some are mandatory to meet standards, e.g., climbing ropes, helmets, etc. ATV has a rotation to them, and I believe that the camp is going to replace jet skis. The camp is very conscious of the need to improve equipment. The call for Scout equipment to rent has significantly dwindled.

It would be expensive to reopen program camps like Flintlock or Pioneer for several reasons. They would need, nature centers and trading posts coupled with the additional facilities of handicraft buildings, updated toilets, shower houses, beach facilities, and both the archery and rifle ranges. Heck, the lodges have been made more extensive due to more significant staff numbers and the need for much more substantial and improved kitchens.

Chuck:

Repurposing Flintlock has been a good move. With the right idea, Pioneer could reopen. Bob Gagner's idea of making Pioneer a place for independent camping was an idea to meet a need. I wonder if the Venture program could use Pioneer or if the Scouting program becomes more of a family program, could Pioneer be adopted for such a purpose?

I want to repeat; Pioneer is a prime piece of property. When I was director there in 1974 and 1975, there was a stellar staff. Sean Dooley was the aquatics director in 1974. He arranged for a more significant number of railroad ties to be donated to Many Point (42 maybe?), and then his vision was to improve and enhance the Pioneer beach. His idea was so strong and well supported that Ale came out with the CAT and cleared the beach after we had cleared brush and trees. The beach was beautiful, well-protected, terraced, with boat and canoe racks, including a sauna. In 1975 I think it was Al Thomas who had the vision to improve the rifle range in Pioneer. We cleared more land, added a solid base, and 4 x 4s to build a solid structure to hold tarps. Most field sports ranges did not have protection. And then in 1976, Pioneer was closed because of dwindling Scout numbers (though not in Pioneer) and because Pioneer was an extra run for the commissary.

Jay: After all of the improvements, it is sad to hear of its closing.

Chuck:

Pioneer had significant sized troops that did not return to Many Point. It was an unfortunate decision.

Jay: It is too bad that in decentralizing, they did not build a commissary in Pioneer.

Chuck:

Many Point enlarged each camp to have more than ten sites, and therefore each camp could absorb more troops and Scouts. I understand the logic and hope that in time, Pioneer will open.

I feel the role of the volunteers gets overlooked. From my observation, the volunteers are exceptional. I wish I knew more of their names. In 1995, after the storm, large numbers of Staff Alumni Association volunteers and others showed up to allow camp to stay open for the rest of the summer.

Daryl Tindle and Don Jacques were incredible. They came, wired pumps to accept generators, and did so much more. Kimball Anderson stopped his investment job and came to camp with his previous background as a lumberjack joined by so many more!

Chuck:

You fear to mention names for fear of omission. One gentleman had no connection with Many Point but heard about the storm and came out to help. His truck was set up for logging, so he even sharpened the chains for other people's chainsaws. Jan and Helene were repairing damaged staff tents. It was incredible. But even beyond the storm, Daryl and Don helped all the time donating materials and their labor. Phil Williams was a contractor who came to help build and repair things at Many Point plus bringing donated appliances to Many Point. Al Hase did much and Tom Bessler.

In working on this year's (2019) Outdoor Skills Area (Scoutcraft), not only did the Alumni Association donate \$15,000 or more, the former staff put in almost 600 hours of labor! Sue Stone had over 100 volunteers at the work party this spring and in the past! Former staff will come up for a week or more at a time to volunteer their help. Other staff will come up in the fall or spring to help in any way that they can. Jon Yearous is an animal. His work is incredible, and he tackles the biggest and hardest jobs - replacing all fire tower steps, roofing, building recycling centers, turning facilities into separate compartments. I can barely build a sandwich, and these people are incredible!

Dr. Bob Olson mostly paid for and redid much of Larkin Lodge as a place for doctors to stay. He donated the gazebo behind Larkin. He refinished and paid to have chairs re-caned. Greg Waltz and Mike Kuklok have done much to help out on weekends and other times.

Again, I feel bad because I am leaving out so many volunteers. Volunteers are significant to the accomplishments of Many Point, and I count the Alumni Association as a valued group of volunteers that have made considerable contributions to Many Point. If one goes into the dining hall, one would see plaques from the past work parties, but Scott, Paul, and Ron could cite the names much, much better than I could do.

Jay: Say a little about the Camp Rangers

Chuck:

I admire every one of them. In ways not even imagined, the investment in rangers pays dividends over and over again. Yes, they do their jobs - exceptionally well under what can be trying circumstances, but they go so far beyond their jobs! They are Many Point's ambassadors to the local community! They help staff and leaders with vehicles. If someone hits a ditch - or a tree - they are there to help.

The help they give to staff is beyond just for the job. The rangers can foresee problems and solve them before they become problems. They have local contacts for projects.

Chuck:

I remember Boots as the first ranger, and as a new staff, I knew nothing!! He was patient with me! I was given the task to clear the north commissioner site in Buckskin my first summer at camp. Plus, I was involved in pioneering projects. I asked Boots as to what type of trees I could cut – “Any damn tree you want,” was his response. I chuckled and set to work. I asked how to lead a hike to Juggler Lake, and he gave me specific directions and was very helpful. No other staff member had led that hike in Buckskin, so I was happy that Boots knew how to get there. When I had to dig a well (sand point type) in Frontier, he patiently guided me step by step in learning how to do it – until we got to the sand point and then he had Ale go with me. I think one of the happiest moments was in 1969 as a commissioner I was at maintenance, and he invited me up for a morning snack of lemonade and a bar with him and “mama.”

Ale was always so helpful, and as Pioneer director, he taught me how to repair the water lines so we would not have to wait so long for someone to get out there. He was patient with me and so kind. He cleared the Pioneer beach and along the way, taught us about landscaping and how to support the railroad ties. Later on, when I was Reservation Program Director, he helped me get stuff to the staff and repair damages. He had a ready laugh and was an excellent teacher.

Ron was like my older brother, and his wife was like a sister. Ron was so easy going and solved problems and helped the staff in so many ways. Whenever I had a question, he would patiently answer probably thinking it was a dumb question, but he never let on that it was.

During the horrendous storm of 1995, he just calmly went about addressing areas of need one at a time. During a period of flooding, he created a nifty bridge from large timbers. He helped me with my boat when it did not work and helped try to eliminate mice from our movilla when they ran rampant.

Ron took our kids fishing and taught us gentle lessons every time we made a mistake. Ron did much the same for other staff. He took a personal interest in everyone. No one was just a staff person, an adult leader, or Scout. Each person was valued and treated with respect. When talking to Ron, you felt valued and affirmed all of that, and he could solve any problem – any problem! I have so much admiration for him. He is someone for whom I have the ultimate respect. He is a kind and genuine person!

Paul Marcus – Paul and Scott were co-rangers. Paul was an astonishing craftsman and relentless pursuer of bats! He would always go that extra step to add panache to any project. His exceptional contributions included, additional bathrooms at Gaylords, the basement apartment at the ad building, the flush toilets at Buckskin, the addition to the climbing towers, and so much more.

Chuck:

I enjoyed working with him in the offseason when I had retired. Paul's wife, Elayn, added a layer of help. It was her idea to clean lost Scouting clothing after an appropriate wait and donate to the Goodwill. What a great idea, and we never thought of it. She sewed clothing for staff, always positive, helped whenever and wherever needed, and often took care of staff children. She and Paul were a great team in advancing Many Point.

Scott Hollerman and Megan – Holy smokes! Talk about a talented, fantastic couple that can do anything! Just look at the treehouse they built. The one made by Scott and Megan is better than the one constructed by professional carpenters. Scott brings so much program experience to the job that he offered poignant suggestions about the program as he helps staff ready watercraft, Scouting areas, and more. They carry on the can-do tradition. Scott just patiently goes about solving problems as they occur. He might have a million things thrown at him at once, and yet he patiently prioritizes the sequence of need. He helps staff prioritize what they should do during staff week and closeout. Scott maintains a growing fleet of motor vehicles from boar motors to cars and trucks, ATVs, jet skis, and a Mastercraft boat. What a great idea to add rangers to the checkout of camps at the end of the summer. Megan is an artist, a craft person, a master of the setup, removal, and repair of the vast number of Many Point's massive water toys. Megan is a craftsperson who builds cabinets with flair – and even have secret compartments! She is learning canning to repair chairs, and yet she will refinish floors, paint the lettering on signs in the offseason winter – there is nothing that she and Scott cannot do. Josh will have amazing teachers.

Every ranger with whom I have worked has been exceptional and represents the values of Many Point. They have a can-do attitude and do not point fingers of blame for a problem but rather seek solutions. They are team-oriented working with the Camp director, area directors, and individuals that approach them for help.

Jay:

Although retired, Camp Ranger Ron Schroeder volunteers weekly at camp during the camp session, and he even helps out in the offseason.

Jay:

What do you feel would be your Many Point legacy?

Chuck:

I would hope that my time at camp has heightened the spirit and the Mission of Many Point. I hope that I added an element of enthusiasm at camp – a verve powered by our Mission and goal. It never was the Coca-Cola that gave me energy – it was the sincere desire to want to help staff create great memories for the Scouts and adult leaders. It was a desire to have Scouts and troops reach their goals. I would measure my success by the success of the staff. If they were successful, then I was successful – just as they should measure their success by the success of the Scouts and adult leaders.

The staff is the biggest secret and asset to Many Point. There are many camps with lakes and trees. The Many Point staff, with its adherence to the Mission, goals of Scouting, and the American Camping Association, set it apart from every other camp. The staff is the secret to Many Point

It's a success when every Scout feels the staff take a personal interest in him or her – great! My job was to insert staff energy if they were feeling down. It was my job to help the staff refocus on the missions of Scouting – to renew their spirit in why they were there. I reinforced what they did well.

I hope I am remembered for my commitment to Many Point as measured by my energy, enthusiasm, and my spirit of Many Point in all that I did! I am very grateful for all that Many Point gave me, and I hope that I have given back much to a wonderful camp that is loved by so many former staff and Scouts!

Jay:

How can Many Point remain successful?

Chuck:

I think Many Point must remain faithful to its mission as it adapts to a changing profile of Scouts. The world and pattern of the Millennial Scout are different than the world and visibility of the post-World War Baby Boomer generation. Regardless of the next generation's name, it must also be understood. Look at how Many Point now addresses the STEM program. The acceptance of girls into the program is welcoming. These are great things. I believe that Scouting may well move towards becoming a family program. With the inclusion of girls, Scouting can address the entire family. The values for girls are the same for boys. The hopes and aspirations that parents have for their daughters are no different than those they have for their sons.

Chuck:

Scouting can embrace the entire family and offer rewarding and enriching family opportunities – how to be a better family, how to support each other, how to embrace differences within a family, and how to help each family member achieve his or her goals. In so doing, it would better support young people to prepare to be adults and to be parents. How many times have noted that there is no training to be a parent – Scouting could be that training and more! Scouting is transformational – ask the Many Point staff, and they will state that “Scouting made them the person they are today!” That concept is family magnified.

Many Point will be successful as long as it renews its energy, continues to meet the needs of its participants, and focus on the growth of each Scout! I have faith that Many Point will let its light shine for generations to come “...a spirit that is yours and mine....”

Jay:

I think John Andrews is the right Northern Star Council CEO (Chief Executive Officer) to accomplish those goals.

Chuck:

I have never seen another council CEO as involved with Many Point as John Andrews is involved. I have seen him at opening and closing banquets, which would be rare with past CEOs. The support from the Northern Star Council has been exceptional, and I believe that the Northern Star Council will move Scouting ahead.

Chuck:

Jay, thanks for this opportunity and for arranging and conducting all of these interviews! To date, I have relished reading several interviews. Thanks, Jay!

Jay:

Thank you, Chuck, for your years of service and help with this History Center project!