

COM-MENT-CARTOONS



End of 
 Year '99

By Jayson +
Nathan Paulson

Mini-School Overview

Mini-School is an alternative program located within Minnetonka High School where tenth, eleventh, and twelfth graders are working together with a group of teachers to change their attitudes and perspectives. The students come to Mini-School with a history of not succeeding very well in traditional school. Many of them are dangerously close to dropping out of school. Some have dropped out and are returning to give school one more try. They are tired of failing, tired of breaking rules, tired of being identified as negative people in the mainstream school culture.

At Mini-School they begin to put their lives together—in school and out of school. They become part of a school family where they can be themselves without fear of recrimination. In Mini-School they set goals, share responsibilities, solve problems, learn academic and basic living skills, and have fun.

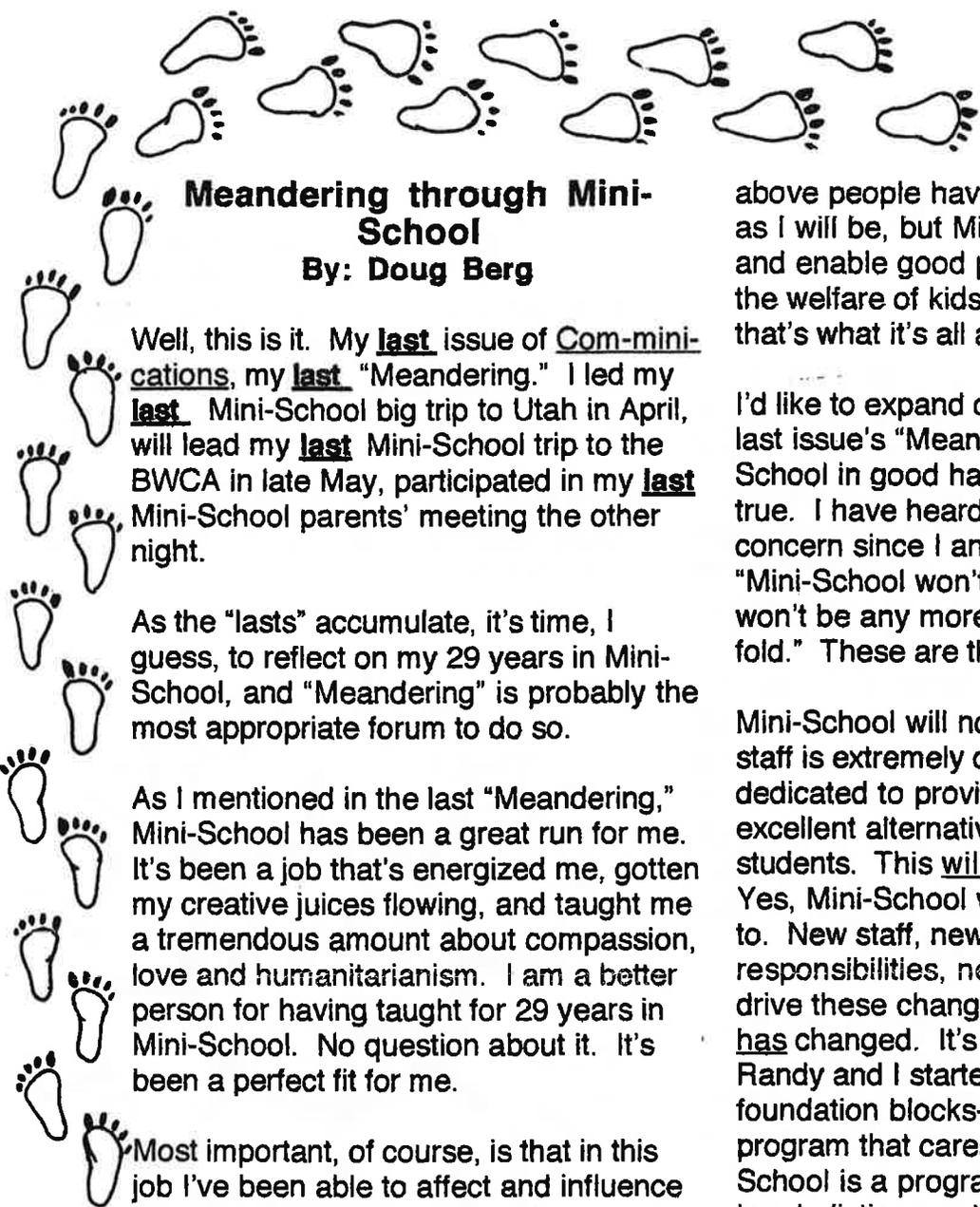
This supportive family atmosphere encourages students to develop responsibility, accountability, and positive self-esteem. Students are encouraged to view themselves as learners in the holistic sense of the term—intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual.

Mini-School began in the 1970-71 school year and is still meeting the needs of many students. Mini-School now serves not only the Minnetonka School district but neighboring districts as well, due to its affiliation with the larger Area Learning Center.

If you know of a student in need of Mini-School, please contact us at 401-5920.



**"We the unwilling
Led by the unqualified
Have been doing the unbelievable
So long with so little
We now attempt
The impossible
With nothing."**



Meandering through Mini-School

By: Doug Berg

Well, this is it. My last issue of Com-minications, my last "Meandering." I led my last Mini-School big trip to Utah in April, will lead my last Mini-School trip to the BWCA in late May, participated in my last Mini-School parents' meeting the other night.

As the "lasts" accumulate, it's time, I guess, to reflect on my 29 years in Mini-School, and "Meandering" is probably the most appropriate forum to do so.

As I mentioned in the last "Meandering," Mini-School has been a great run for me. It's been a job that's energized me, gotten my creative juices flowing, and taught me a tremendous amount about compassion, love and humanitarianism. I am a better person for having taught for 29 years in Mini-School. No question about it. It's been a perfect fit for me.

Most important, of course, is that in this job I've been able to affect and influence kids in a positive way. Since I've made public my intention to retire, many people have called and written me to express their thankfulness for what I've done. While this is very gratifying, I must stress that my efforts, my contributions are only possible because of the Mini-School concept, a concept that is larger than any one person and that, to a great extent, has a life of its own. I've played a part in developing that concept. So has Randy, so have people like Walt Bromenschenkel, Pete Hegrenes, Leo Razidlo, Norm Garneau, Lester Hughes-Seamans, John Eiden, Larry Smith, Joanne, Ramona, Pauline and hundreds of students and parents. Many of these

above people have been here and gone, as I will be, but Mini-School will continue and enable good people to contribute to the welfare of kids in a positive way. And that's what it's all about.

I'd like to expand on a statement I made in last issue's "Meandering." "I leave Mini-School in good hands." That is really true. I have heard many expressions of concern since I announced my retirement. "Mini-School won't be the same," "There won't be any more trips," "Mini-School will fold." These are the main fears I've heard.

Mini-School will not fold. The remaining staff is extremely committed and dedicated to providing a continued, excellent alternative program for its students. This will happen. Count on it. Yes, Mini-School will change. It's bound to. New staff, new ideas, new responsibilities, new expectations will drive these changes. But Mini-School has changed. It's not the same program Randy and I started in 1970. Yet the basic foundation blocks- that Mini-School is a program that cares about kids, that Mini-School is a program that educates people in a holistic way, that Mini-School promotes a family concept of people caring about people, that Mini-School fosters an attitude of stewardship of the environment- are still in place and as long as they are, Mini-School, however much it changes, will continue to meet the needs of its students.

Trips. Trips have been a great way for me to educate kids, counsel kids, bond with kids, give kids direction. For me, I've never found a better learning/teaching environment.

For whomever follows me, trips may or may not work as well. Trips take a

tremendous amount of time, a tremendous amount of effort, a great deal of coordination. Trips often put the students and teacher in an environment over which they have little control. Trips can bring about an element of physical risk for the students and teacher, a risk which some teachers may be reluctant to assume. Nevertheless, Mini-School is committed to doing trips, will continue to offer wilderness adventure as a key part of its curriculum, and will seek to hire a teacher who is qualified and comfortable providing wilderness adventure experiences for his/her students. There may be different trips, there may be fewer trips, there may be shorter trips, there may be longer trips- but there will be trips. Count on it.

So, that's about it. It's time to go. I'm looking forward to retirement as an adventure, not as a rocking chair, not as a cessation of activity but as an opportunity to pursue new and varied activities. And 29 years of Mini-School have gone a long way toward teaching me this. There's an old saying that goes "If you really want to learn something, teach it to someone." Well, my efforts for the last 29 years have gone into teaching kids how to set worthwhile goals, pursue those goals, solve problems, stay focused, keep a good perspective, challenge themselves, have fun, get along with each other and live in the now. Have I learned anything from this? I think so. Thanks to everyone that's ever been in Mini-School for helping me.

Addendum:

"Meandering" is supposed to be an overview of Mini-School. Since I monopolized this column with my reflections, I thought I'd give an overview

in this addendum.

The trips which have gone out this late winter and spring have been superb. I'd be hard pressed in my 29 year Mini-School career to find a more collegial, focused, hard- working group of students than those who accompanied me on the Utah trip. Other trips have gone well too, blending the appropriate amount of physical and academic energy.

Classes have gone extremely well. The kids are working on a great end-of-the-year issue of Com-mini-cations. I must get my assignments done or editors Lacey and Leah will hang me. Randy and Pauline's newspaper classes are models of excellence.

Ramona is super busy with Independent study and has a record number of kids in the classes. Randy and I expect a big turnout for the summer trips. Recognition night will be better than ever. Mini-School gets better and stronger every year. This one's great.

Alumni News:

Josh Stinson {94} Just spent a month in Costa Rica and had great adventures

Terry Smith {late 70's} Just graduated from the U of MN with a B.A in accounting. He will take the state cpa exam in November. Terry also plans to bike across the U.S, from San Francisco to Portsmouth, N.H, in 52 days in June and July.

Jim Jensen {75} Just got into mountain biking in a big way. JJ also spends a lot of time in the Phillipines and Thailand.

Candy Barclay{88} Is working for Danka Services International as a mail service supervisor. Candy wrote a letter reminiscing about her trips in Mini.

Mike Heuerman {93} Lives in Salt Lake City, Utah. He works construction in the summer and skis 6 days a week in the winter.

Larry Smith not an alumni, but former MHS principal still lives in Iowa City and wishes Doug well in retirement.

Sue Ruffenach {81} Just graduated from college with her degree in nursing. Sue came in to talk with women's Issues on 5/11/99.

Matt Richard {Meatball} {94} Is on the honor roll at the University of S. Oregon. In fact, Matt's pulling down straight A's quarter after quarter in higher math and physics. He's even tutoring other students in math.

Doug Snyder early 80's- Doug works for the Star Tribune. He's married and has 2 boys, 2 year old Luke and a 4 year old Jake. He also has 3 step daughters aged 12, 16, and 18.



I remembered one morning when I discovered a cocoon in the bark of a tree, just as the butterfly was making a hole in the case and preparing to come out. I waited a while, but it was too long appearing and I was impatient. I bent over it and breathed on it to warm it. I warmed it as fast as I could and the miracle began to happen before my eyes, faster than life. The case opened, the butterfly started slowly crawling out and I shall never forget my horror when I saw how its wings were folded back and crumpled; the wretched butterfly tried with its whole trembling body to unfold them. Bending over it, I tried to help with my breath. In vain. It needed to be hatched out patiently and the unfolding of the wings should be a gradual process in the sun. Now it was too late. My breath had forced the butterfly to appear, all crumpled, before its time. It struggled desperately, and, a few seconds later, died in the palm of my hand.

The little body is, I do believe, the greatest weight I have on my conscience. For I realize today that it is a mortal sin to violate the great laws of nature. We should not hurry, we should not be impatient, but we should confidently obey the external rhythm.

I sat on a rock to absorb this New Year's thought. Ah, if only that little butterfly could always flutter before me to show me the way.

Nikos Kazantzakis
Zorba the Greek

A Neat Letter

Doug's note: After I announced my retirement in the last issue of Com-mini-cations, I have received many wonderful phone calls and letters. The following from Jon Clifford, Mini-School student in the early '80's and a strong supporter of Mini since then, is representative.

Dear Doug,

I received my most recent copy of Com-Mini- Cations this last week, and I have thought of little more than you, Randy, Lester, and Norm since reading it. First let me say how sorry I am to hear of Norm's passing. He was a great teacher and even greater man. Norm always seemed to have a calm wisdom about him. His family must feel fortunate to have had such a wonderful husband and father. I knew his son Tim in school, and he always seemed to have his father's spirit, very encouraging and a great motivator. May his smile live in all our hearts.

I am happy for you to hear of your retirement, of course it's a bittersweet happiness. The four of you, yourself, Randy, Norm, and Lester as well as the other Mini staffers in its history, have made such an enormous impact on so many people, I believe it would be impossible to objectively appreciate the vastness of your influence. I came to Mini at age 15 with little adult influence in my life, and of course at 15, even less common sense. Upon entering the program, I unknowingly was to encounter some of the greatest lessons in my life.

This gang of four {the unqualified} were anything but. They were pioneers of

education. They had a vision and saw that if they could know their students as people, as real human beings, they could teach them to **want** to learn, to want to invest in their lives. No easy task for the {unwilling}. We needed some other outsiders to identify with and you four fit the bill. You saw that there were no straight lines in nature, and taught us not only to appreciate that but to celebrate it...

I was always under the impression that you could play the student as easy as you could be the teacher. Every day was an adventure. To not learn is to not grow, and to not grow is to give up and die. Your influence has been a great part in my ability to face life's challenges straight on. Sometimes I do it right, sometimes wrong, but never from a lack of trying. You and the rest of the staff leave a legacy no one else can claim. You revolutionized high school education and proved the exception not the rule. I am proud to have been your student.

Thanks Doug
Thanks Mini

Jon Clifford

P.S Hope this wasn't too wordy!



Recognition Night Speaker By: Doug Berg

I am pleased and proud to announce this year's recognition night speaker, Walt Bromenschenkel. Walt was MHS assistant principal and acting principal from 1968-1971. From Minnetonka he went to various principalships and superintendencies in Korea, Colorado, South Dakota, Kentucky and Alaska.

Walt was the driving administrative force behind the creation of Mini-School. Without him, Mini-School would never have happened.

Walt, now retired in Wyoming, built a reputation as an educator who makes tough decisions, treats people directly and honestly, and really cares about kids.

Walt was here when Mini-School began. As I leave the program, it is very fitting, I feel, that he speaks at Recognition Night. Please attend June 7th. I guarantee you'll like what he has to say.

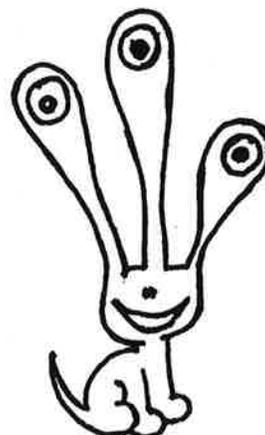
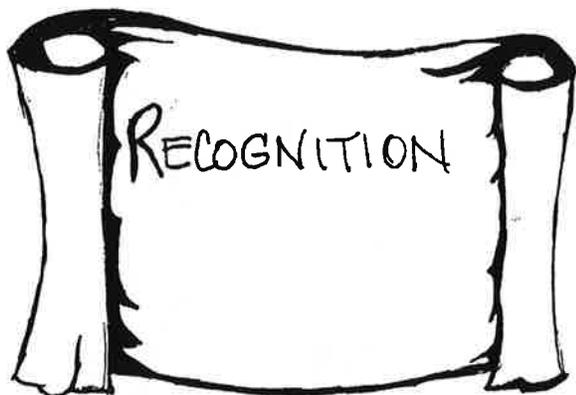
Recognition Night By: Audrey Lopez

Recognition night is a special little night at the very end of the year. A time for students to be recognized for accomplishments. It's also a less formal more intimate graduation for seniors.

Every year there is a featured speaker who has been anyone from a parent to a superintendent. This years speaker is Walt Bromenschenkel, whom Doug says without him Mini-School would not exist.

There is a slide show that will be shown with slides of trips that went out all year. It will give parents, friends, family and alumni who attend a chance to see what fun we've had throughout the year.

So please come to this years recognition night on Monday June 7th. The place has been changed it is not in the small auditorium anymore. There is a theater room that was built this year called the black box, it is by the new gyms. I hope to see you there.



Boundary Waters Winter Camping

By: Herman the Mouse

Hi-

My name is Herman the mouse. I've lived in the Mini-School trip room for a long time, hidden away among the Duluth packs. Occasionally I stow away on a Mini-School trip and write about it for Com-Mini-Cations. I'd like to tell you about the 1999 Mini-School Boundary Waters Winter Camping trip.

Actually, I thought I was going to Utah. Doug's been talking about that trip a lot, and I've been dreaming about the desert and visiting my cousins out there. Y'know, hot sun, hot chicks, cactus, beautiful desert scenery. But when I jumped in the van on March 10th and saw all the skis and snowshoes, I knew I'd made a mistake.

And then, when I realized who was going on the trip, I got scared. Some of the biggest, baddest, meanest, gnarliest, craziest Mini-Schoolers that have ever been- Mike Ayotte { the hunter}, Charlie Urbia {killer}, Matt Thompson {crabass}, Jake Anderson {loose cannon}, Matt Guffan {muffin}, Tony Wegler {chaos}, Josh Riesgies {rice cakes}, and J.J Day {the growler}. I felt a little safe with Rice cakes, and I knew I'd eat well because of all the food sloppy Wegler would drop on the ground, but I knew my life would be in peril if Ayotte or Urbia or Thompson ever saw me.

The trip left at 8:00 am and made its first stop at the Grant House Restaurant in Rush City. I sneaked in in Doug's jacket pocket and positioned myself right under Wegler's chair and had a good share of his omelet and sausage. Thompson's

bad disposition was not improved by the fact that his order got screwed up, one of several times this happened during the trip.

After breakfast we drove pretty straight to Grand Marais where we stayed at the East Bay Hotel. I bunked with Doug so Ayotte wouldn't see me. Everyone ate dinner, had a whirlpool, and turned in to get a good rest for the next day.

After breakfast at the South of the Border Cafe { Jake thought it was going to be a Mexican restaurant- The Canadian Border, Jake} everyone piled into the van for the ride out to the Kekekabic Trail. We got there loaded up, and headed into the woods.

It was a beautiful day, the trail was well packed and the group got into Bingschick Lake, the destination, by lunch time. Everyone got to work cutting wood, chopping a hole in the ice for water, setting up tents and making snow trenches for sleeping and getting camp organized. I moved right into Doug's tent and made my home in the pocket of his down jacket. I knew I had to get good and warm for it was going to be a cold night.

It was. Ten below. Jake, Charlie, Mike, Matt T, and Matt G made a big trench. They kind of forgot how Doug told them that a snow trench had to take advantage of the insulating value of the snow. Their trench was way too big and had no snow on the top of it. Jake got so cold that when he had to go to the bathroom during the night he went into a Hefty garbage bag. Ayotte said he'd never been more uncomfortable or cold in his life. Thompson was crabby, as usual. Charlie and muffin were more subdued but I could tell they were cold.

After a good oatmeal breakfast, work on quinzees {snow shelters} began. Doug hollowed one out for a couple of guys from a big pile of snow that J.J and Wegler had made the day before. It looked great. Snow is a super insulator- really warm. All of my country cousins live under the snow all winter, making tunnels and eating seeds they've stored from summer. I managed to visit some of them during the week- the kids sure are getting' big! The other guys made a big pile of snow and let it set up so they could hollow it out the next day.

In the afternoon Doug went for a snowshoe hike up to Jap and Rally Lakes. He was checking to see if there was slush on the lakes which would make it difficult for skiing and snowshoeing. There wasn't. When he got back he , J.J, and Charlie fixed up a super spaghetti dinner. Again, Wegler shared his with me.

We had quite a few critters around camp. Besides my cousins, there were several Canada jays, cousins of the blue jay, who are camp robbers and are always looking for a handout. In the evening we often heard the call of a barred owl - hoo- hoo- hoo; hoo- hoo- hoo- hoo. Boy I burrowed deeper into Doug's jacket pocket when I heard that! But what really scared me were the pine martens. A member of the weasel family, pine martens live mainly on red squirrels and mice! yikes. A couple were always hanging around camp, eating the food thrown away in the sump hole. One day Ayotte caught one under a sled. Boy was it mad! I thought it was going to attack Ayotte and everything else in sight, including me.

On Saturday morning some of the guys finished the other quinzee while others

wrote in their journals. The weather was not as cold, the big trench had been abandoned in favor of the quinzee Doug built and the tents, so everyone was more comfortable and happy- that statement is relative, of course, concerning Thompson and Urbia.

Around lunch time Doug decided to take Matt T, Matt G, Ayotte, Jake, and Rice Cakes on a ski up to Jap lake. Charlie, Wegler and JJ decided to stay back, lay in a good store of firewood, and clean up camp. They then were to snowshoe in the opposite direction from the above group and meet somewhere long the route.

Now I have to tell you, for an old guy Doug can ski pretty darn fast. On warmer days I like to hide in his fanny pack, stick my head out and watch the world fly by. We whipped across Honker lake, through a swamp, and across Jap lake where a bunch of men were fishing for lake trout. Up to now the big tough senior guys had thought that Rice Cakes was kind of a sally, even though he slept in a snow trench too the first night and never complained. They sure changed their minds when he left them behind on skis. He couldn't keep up with Doug, especially climbing hills, but he could drop loose cannon, Muffin, The Hunter and Crabass whenever he wanted to.

After we got back, Doug went on another 10 mile ski down to Gillis Lake. He planned to take the rest of the group on a ski there tomorrow and wanted to check conditions. He found Gillis Lake occupied by about 25 students and teachers from Blaine High School, also out on a winter camping trip. A Blaine teacher told Doug that this was a reward trip for their top students, that he'd never take any students who might misbehave.

When Doug got back to camp he ran into an old friend, Maury Reller, whom he'd met a couple years ago while winter camping in the BWCA. Maury is 78 years young, still winter camping and hiking all over. They had a good reunion, talking about retirement, tripping and all sorts of stuff.

Some of the guys, who had piled up snow that morning for a quinzee, began to hollow it out, Ole Crabass went at it with a vengeance and sure enough, it collapsed on him. Everyone rushed over to shovel him out, thinking he would suffocate. Doug just laughed and hollered, "Don't hit him in the head with the shovel."

On Sunday Morning Doug led everyone on the 10 mile ski over to Gillis Lake. It was a great day to be alive- not a cloud in the sky, no wind, bright sunshine. Some of the guys skied with their shirts off and got a suntan- JJ got a burn. Jake whined and didn't want to go, but when he heard about the Blaine school group up there he thought there would be some "hotties" so he came along. We had a great lunch by a pretty stream, saw where some otters had been sliding, and talked about the Native Americans who had lived here in the past and the story about them and the fur trade that Doug had been reading to us in the evenings. Really cool.

The Blaine group had left Gillis Lake by the time we got there but their "top students" had sure left a mess behind- fishing line, bungee cords, aluminum foil, plastic bags. They'd also built fires in bad places along the lake-shore and on top of nice bluffs. Doug was furious!! He gathered up as much of their trash as he could, stuffed it into his day pack and when we got home after the trip he mailed it, along with a nasty letter, to the teacher

in charge of Blaine's "top students."

Monday was a kick-back day where most of the group went fishing up on Jap lake. Muffin and Chaos Wegler each caught a trout and everyone ate the fish and most all the rest of the food that night. The weather was getting warm, too warm to walk on the quinzees as Doug and Charlie found out Tuesday morning.

We all left the BWCA on Tuesday morning, stopped and had a great pizza dinner at the Pizza Pub in Pine City, and got home that evening about 8:00 p.m. Everyone had a terrific trip, especially JJ, who wanted to stay and have Doug pick him up on the spring canoe trip. I got fatter, stayed warm, saw my cousins and avoided Killer, Hunter and Loose Cannon. It was good to get home to the trips room



A love letter to Mini-School

Joanne Elliott-Storlie Johnston says, "See ya, 'bye!"

It's a heart-wrenching experience to be leaving Mini-School. Unlike Doug, I'm not retiring, just changing jobs. It's been on my mind the last few years as my job, Mini-School, and the world has changed. Am I being true to myself? Or am I shooting myself in the foot? Is this decision best for everybody involved? I frequently suggest Mini-School kids ask themselves these questions about decisions they're making. And now I'm asking myself the same questions.

I'll never forget getting to laugh right out loud so many times a day because Mini-School kids can be so funny. Staff, too.

Being the Mini-School para has been the best job I've had in my 56 years. Well, maybe growing up in the river rafting business in California, and working ten summers as a white-water guide was more fun.

I'll never forget Lester's and my first woman-led big trip to the Grand Canyon with Mini-School.

Or maybe working for Outward Bound when I was first married. But when I had a family (daughter Kristin is now 28) I needed to be home and be more grown up and responsible.

I'll never forget all the ridiculous (and serious and sad) reasons kids couldn't make it to school.

Mini-School became my family of spirited kids. I've known hundreds of Mini-Schoolers over the years I've worked here. Maybe being a spirited kid myself in high school made it easier for me to fit in, I don't know.

I'll never forget doing Women's Studies with Lester, and the all-women canoe trips.

When I first came to Mini-School in 1978, I felt like I'd come home. I didn't know it then, but I still had some growing to do, and I needed a nurturing environment. Mini-School and Doug Berg, Randy Nelson, Lester Hughes-Seamans, and Norm Garneau provided that environment.

I'll never forget the munchy room, bringing our dogs to school, and the outrageous slide shows at Recognition Night.

I've been in the unique position of being able to really listen to kids and parents, play and work with kids in the Mini office, in the classroom and on trips. I could care about kids and their families, and generally get to know them as whole people.

I'll never forget my student office helpers, especially on Mondays. And I'll never forget the day that '79 grad Brad Johnston walked into the office to see his old Mini staff.

And they got to know me as a whole person, rather than as just the secretary/para who did the paperwork.

I'll never miss doing the monthly ALC report, that's for sure.

The Mini-School philosophy of taking kids where they are and working with their

positive qualities and characteristics seemed like such a humane way to live and work.

I'll never forget kids coming over to make flapjacks and do Com-Mini-Cations.

And being able to be with kids and other like-minded adults in the wilderness was such a blessing. The wilderness has been a healing place for me and hundreds of Mini-School kids.

I'll never forget all the Mark Warren trips to Doug's cabin on the St. Croix River. My personal favorite was on my 50th birthday, when I was paddling an empty canoe back from the sweat lodge island to pick up more kids. It was a gray October day, and as I came through the fog I heard the strains of a soft "Happy Birthday" being sung by the kids waiting on the shore.

I believe people are put on this earth to love and be loved. And that's what I said to the big roomful of kids when I came back to Mini-School in 1992, after working in corporate America for three years. I told 'em I needed to be in a job where I could be myself, would fit in, and still be loved.

I'll never forget the Mini-Schoolers and their families helping me move out of my house and past my grief as my 25-year marriage ended.

In that same Mini-School Tuesday meeting I also told them I would love them even when they were the most unlovable. Nobody laughed.

I'll never forget the guys in my Men's Issues groups, sitting on my deck in the morning sunlight, eating the Annual Breakfast with Brad the last week of school.

Most of our students are at their best when they're outside and at their worst when they're in school. They're just not school animals. But most are so giving, so smart, so funny, so excited, so happy, so comfortable, so beautiful, so confident, and so competent at their jobs, on trips, and outside of school. It's been a joy and a pleasure knowing them.

I'll never forget walking to breakfast at Perkins with the Men's Issues class. They were known to be Perkins' best school group to the school board members we would see there. Good tippers, too.

An era has ended. And it's time for Four Moons Otter Woman (*thank you, Mark Warren*) to move on. It's been an honor to walk alongside my students, their parents, the Mini teachers, and all the people who have supported the Mini-School Program. You've been so precious to me on this part of my journey. Thank you for letting me be part of yours. Let's keep in touch.



Book Review By: Doug Berg

A really good book I read this winter was King of the World by David Remnick, editor of the New Yorker.

King of the World is the story of Cassius Clay/ Muhammed Ali, particularly about his development as a boxer and as a personality who influenced not only the fight game, but politics, religion and the anti-war movement.

Remnick does a masterful job of weaving the various aspects of Ali's character, the political scene of the time and the conservative vs liberal elements of the sport of boxing in with the buildup to the first Ali- Liston fight in 1964, the fight in which Ali won the championship and established himself as a new force in boxing, a champion not ruled by the mob, a champion with the speed of a middleweight, a champion with a brain, a champion who was his own man.

The book was particularly interesting to me as I was a big fan of Muhammed Ali, but it's a great story and would be of interest to anyone, I think, with an interest in the 60's. I'd planned to pass the book along to my dear friend, Norm Garneau, who saw many of Ali's early fights in Florida and followed his career even more closely than I. But, as readers of Com-Mini-Cations know, Norm passed away in February.



Four Years and finally out By: Lacey Landt

Well I think this year could be the year I finish. After five years of High School, four years in Mini I am pretty sure I don't want to be here anymore. I have just been waiting for Doug to retire so we can finish together. My first year as a sophomore was what I thought was the last "good" year. All of my friends were graduating but as Mini kept going so did I. It was hard at first to adjust to the new kids but I was once that new kid. It was now my turn to be the "leader" and teach others about Mini.

I am glad that I chose to come into Mini. I have gone a lot of places with Doug. He has taken me to the Boundary Waters twice. Once was a canoe trip the other was winter camping. I also was fortunate to go to Montana with him as well as the Big Fork River. Without Mini-School or Doug Berg I probably would never have seen any of those places and I probably would never have known Mark Warren.

Being a super senior isn't so bad. If I was anywhere else I probably would have dropped out or gotten a G.E.D. Not to say that getting your G.E.D is a bad thing, it's just not what I have been going to school five years for. The students, staff and fellow alumni have really made me realize how much there is to experience. Mini-School has given me life long memories and friends.

Thanks Mini



Interview with Randy **By Kari Opheim & Mark Thole**

A lot of things are going on this year. It's an end of an era and a new beginning all at once. We decided to interview Randy to see his point of view on what will come for the future years of Mini-School.

Q: What was your goal when you guys started Mini-School?

A: The main intent was to provide an alternative program that focused mainly on kids who aren't successful in mainstream and help make them be successful.

Q: Do you feel like you guys accomplished it?

A: "It's great to see people succeed not with money but as people. They've been successful with their goals, but there's still so much that can be done. Are we successful with every student? No, but they've made it so a lot of students could get through school."

Q: Are you worried of what may come?

A: A lot of things are going to change. The whole format or curriculum is going to change. The graduation standards are going to be the biggest setback and because of it the trips are going to be less. They can be done, but the ways of doing things will probably change/alter. "It'll be different, but they'll try to manage."

Q: What are your thoughts of Doug leaving since you and he were pretty much the founders of the Mini-School program?

A: "It's hard! It's too

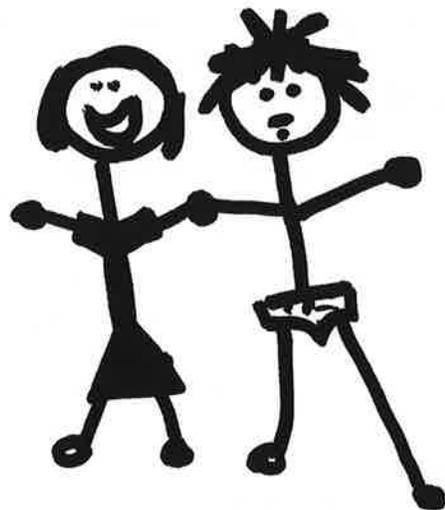
overwhelming/powerful that you can't express it in words. It's been a very psychological year for him. He's the best spokesperson for the program, which means the enthusiasm will be gone along with history. He's going to be a tough person to replace."

Q: Over the years what aspect of Mini-School are you the most proud of?

A: "Trips, helping kids, just being there!"
"We've been able to provide a meaningful education for kids that need an alternative. The things Mini does isn't good for just Mini, but also would be good for mainstream."

Q: Have you ever been so upset with Doug that you didn't even want to talk to him?

A: "Nope- he's not an impulsive person so the things he does or say are always thought out and rationalized, and you have to know that things he does have good meanings behind them. We see each other as equals, we just have personality differences. If it's good for the kids, then it's good for the program."



A Nice Gift....

Doug's Note- I wrote up the following story for the MHS faculty on 5/10/99. It still blows me away.

I was going to tell this story to you at the faculty meeting last Wednesday, but Teresa Rosen's presentation didn't leave me any time, so I thought I'd write it up for you.

I led a 16-day Mini-School trip to the Southwest (Utah) in April, the highlight of which was an 8-day desert wilderness canoe trip down the Green and Colorado Rivers through Canyonlands National Park, following (to a limited extent) the 1869 journey of exploration of Major John Wesley Powell.

When I lead a canoe trip by myself, I paddle a solo canoe, a Bell Merlin, which enables me to maneuver easily around the group, keeping tabs on everyone, setting the pace.

During the 8 days on the river our group saw only 5 or 6 other people. On the 4th morning, about 8:00, after loading my canoe, I drifted downriver 1/4 mile, pulled into an eddy and waited for the kids to get loaded up and underway. While waiting, I saw a man in a solo canoe paddling down the river. I decided to paddle out and shoot the breeze with him for a bit.

We introduced ourselves and I told him what I was doing. His name was Terry Kelly, from N. Sioux City, SD. He was paddling a solo Kevlar We-No-Nah canoe called an Encounter. We talked about boats a bit. He knew my friend, Ted Bell, builder of my boat. In fact, he owned one of Ted's boats, the Starfire. I also own two

We-No-Nah canoes, so I asked him how he liked the Encounter. He said he didn't like it real well, felt it was more boat than he needed. He said that after this trip he thought he'd donate it to the UMD canoeing and kayaking program. He'd taken a couple courses from them. I told him I thought that'd be cool. We parted company.

On Monday, May 3rd, a few days after I got back, I got a call from Terry Kelly. He'd tracked me down. He said he thought about it on the drive home and decided to donate his canoe to the Mini-School Program. He said it seemed like Mini-School was a program that did good things for kids and hoped this donation would further our efforts.

I met him in Faribault last Saturday and he gave me the boat. New, this boat costs \$1,500.00. It's in good shape and is worth at least \$1,000.00. It weights 38 pounds. It'll be a great Mini-School instructor boat.

Weird, huh, and heartwarming! I'd talked to this guy a total of 10 minutes and he gave me a thousand dollar boat. Now, I also could use a new sports utility vehicle.

Doug Berg

★
★ Thank you ★
★ MR. Kelly! ★

What the Future holds..... **By Leah Shoberg**

As the time of change approaches for Mini-School, we are all waiting, anticipating the possibilities. On one hand, people like J.J. Day hold high hopes for the future of Mini. But on the other hand.....some hopes have been suppressed by the myths and rumors of those not so optimistic. And that's why we're here; to set the people straight as to what the plans of the future are, with the leaders of the future of our beloved Mini-School Program: Ramona and Pauline.

Question: To start, could you tell us how both of you feel about this semi-sudden weight of responsibility?

Answer: We feel like there's a lot of people counting on us, and it's going to be quite a challenge to hold Mini-School to the high standard that past leaders have set in place.

Q: Do either of you plan any major changes in the basic way things are run around Mini--such as the schedule, the blocks, newspaper class, issues groups etc....?

A: Mini-School has been a great place for kids and we don't plan to change any aspect of the program except to make accommodations for the state imposed standards and allow the new people to add their touch to it.

Q: Will either of you be doing more trips? Will the annual Triathlon trip still go out next year?

A: With the both of us having two small children, our roles in the trips program have changed, making it difficult for us to

be away from home for extended periods. As our kids get older and more independent in the next year or two, we'll hopefully be able to take more trips. Some of the trips I (Pauline) would like to lead are Rum River, Michigan, Grantsburg, Mark Warren, Triathlon, BWCA....well, I'm getting a little carried away- I think you get the idea.

Q: What are your hopes or expectations of the people who will be taking over the positions of Doug and Joanne?

A: That they love teaching, learning, and our students. And that they have as much charm as their predecessors, and a good sense of humor-(it's necessary for survival in Mini).

Q: Do you think that the option of Mini turning more toward conventional mainstream teaching is a possibility?

A: Why do what doesn't (hasn't) worked? Someone once told me; "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing again and again and expecting a different result."

Q: Do you know where Com-mini-cations might be headed? Will there be any major changes there? A difference in the articles, the art work, the overall content?

A: I think the kids involved will determine the direction the paper will take in years to come.

L: Well, thanks to both of you, for your insight, I'm sure it will give more people hope and optimism about the future. Know that we are all here to help and support the both of you if you need us, and that we believe in your abilities to run our beloved Mini-School Program.

Seniors **What are they doing after graduation?**

By: Lacey Landt

Matt Thompson: Move out of Minnesota and work, maybe go in the service.

Matt Evans: Take over Doug's position

Dan Jensen: Making at least 6 digits a year.

Aaron Hoerst: Most famous radio personality in the world.

La'kaysa Bollig: Go to college and hopefully the Olympics.

Elissa Johnson: Work mostly maybe college.

Young Kim: Going to the U of M.

Leah Shoberg: Save all my money and buy more photography equipment, and be a photographer's apprentice.

Tom Miller: I don't have a clue.

Carrie Tiggas: Maybe go to college, I don't really know yet.

Alan Jampsas: Vo Tech, take auto body for 2 years.

Mark Thole: Travel around the U.S, maybe go to college when I get back.

Audrey Lopez: Travel.

Clare Meyer: Dakota county Technical college.

Katie Tierney: Moving to Iowa City with my man.

Dena Saveraid: Nothing for a long time.

Josh Reece: Work.

Brooke Woltalla: Moving into a house in Dinky Town and doing a lot of partying.

Mike Ayotte: I can't tell you.

Jake Anderson: Moving to Colorado.

David Larson-Hughes: Going to New York.

Matt Merriam: Going to Hennepin Tech.

Craig Schrupp: Moving to California.

Shaun Molland: Work, maybe college.

Laura Huberty: Live.

Kristin Cayo: Maybe College.

Charlie Urbia: Doing a lot of traveling.

Doug Berg: Travel, read, paddle, ski, write, get up in the morning have a cup of coffee, and say "What am I going to do today?"

A Great New Era of Mini-School **By Jeana Doecsher & Mark Thole**

After 29 years, Mini has come to the end of a great era, and the hopeful beginning of a new one. Most of us, of course, are sad about this strange transition, especially after Doug and Joanne, and maybe even Randy move on to different things.

But let us not despair, for we can look forward to the possible future of our beloved Mini-School, cross over that unknown void, float through unknown space, and throw caution to the wind- for the best new era, that we the kids, must create for ourselves.

One of the biggest parts of this transition is finding that new, young, smart outdoors man to take over Doug's job. We believe that is one of the biggest concerns of all Mini-kids: "What will become of our Mini after our founders retire? Will Mini fall apart?" Well, perhaps that would have been a concern in say, 1971, when Mini was only a year old. But today, it's not only the teachers that make the great Mini-School possible, but the kids as well. We were all a part of making Mini what it is today, and it's up to us to make Mini what we want it to be in the future, for the great new era

Mini-School Basketball

**By: Matt Evans
& Al Jampsa**

Every morning, between 25 and 30 Mini-School students gather in the gym to start their school day playing basketball. We are into our third year starting our school day this way and think these games have helped us in our school performance and in our lives. Besides improving our physical condition over the years, basketball provides much more for all the students.

There are usually two games going in the morning, one with high intensity and the other with more of a relaxed atmosphere. Several other students play shooting games, but no one is allowed to just sit (or else they are reminded there is a chair for them in the classroom!). Because there are more than ten players who like the high intensity game, showing up early is a priority to be one of the first ten there or else wait to sub in. Although no one keeps score, LaKaysa Bollig has been keeping shooting and rebounding statistics and figuring out shooting percentages for the players.

There is this guy with a graying beard and goofy-looking goggles who pretends to know something about the game and plays in one or the other every day. Actually, we like having him out there because he shows us that there's more to the game than scoring, and all the players benefit from his preference to pass the ball rather than shoot. As a result, all the players learn in time to move the ball with the pass rather than dribble -- in other words, teamwork. As competitive as the games are, players learn in time to compliment good play by opponents as well as teammates. As we learn to shoot

better, use screens, block out for rebounds, pass, play tough defense, etc., the games improve and the demands on our conditioning improve. We also have more fun.

We have also learned the ups and downs of the game. Recently, Josh Boudreau made ten shots in thirteen attempts one day, and three shots on sixteen attempts on the next day. Some days you're hot and the next day you're not, but you keep on working at it. We have all improved knowing that persistence and perseverance pays (not only in basketball).

We always have to end the game by making a three point shot before we can go on break. Some days it's made on the first attempt, but most days, several attempts are necessary, and occasionally, most of our break is used before we sink one. Although there are several long-range shooters like Boudreau, Nick Merchant, Ed Gudis, Jeff McGinn, James Froemming, Matt Evans, Shaun Molland, et.al., the last shot is just as often made by players who are more effective playing inside the arc, like Aaron Sapp, Al Jampsa, Sam Maeder, Matt Sherman, Matt Thompson, Matt Holler, Dan Jorgenson, Dan Jensen, Marti Norris, LaKaysa Bollig, et.al.

BEST INSIDE SHOOTER- JOSH B.

BEST OUTSIDE SHOOTER- NICK M.

BEST DEFENSE- ED GUDIS

SMARTEST PASSER- RANDY T. NELSON

MOST IMPROVED- MATT HOLLER, SAM M.

NEEDS TO PASS MORE- AL JAMPSA

LUCKIEST SHOT- DAN JENSEN

BEST REBOUNDER- SAM M. (he's a foot taller than everyone)

MOST STEALS- AARON SAPP

BIGGEST CHEAP SHOT- RANDY T. NELSON (he steps on your toes)

**BEST BALL HANDLER- MATT SHERMAN
NEEDS TO PLAY MORE- DAN JORGENSON,
JAMES F.
BIGGEST TRASH TALKER- LAKAYSA
BOLLIG
MOST COMPETITIVE- MATT THOMPSON
CLUTCH SHOOTER- MATT EVANS**



**The Matrix
By Tom Miller**

This is a high octane movie with stunning special effects and awesome action sequences. This movie, starring Keanu Reeves and Laurance Fishburn, is sure to entertain people for months. Keanu, playing a computer hacker named Neo, is the one who can bring people out of the Matrix and back into the real world. Laurance, playing a character named Morpheus, is the one who finds Neo (Keanu) and tells him his chosen fate. Throughout the movie you'll see tons of twists that keeps you there watching to see what will happen next. If you liked the movie Blade with Wesley Snipes then you'll love The Matrix because everything is heightened. The action scenes are impressive and the end is fitting for what happens during the first half of the film.

**Featured Alumnus: Lola Ulvog
By Laura Huberty and her Chillin'
Ghostwriter**

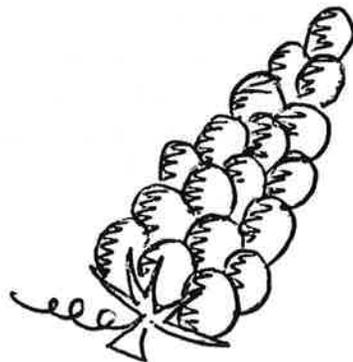
I first got to know our featured alumnus on the Utah trip. Lola joined our group for the canoe trip down the Green River.

Now, I'd heard about Lola. She graduated from Mini-School in '95, had a reputation as a great tripper and was editor of Com-Mini-Cations for some really good issues. She also used to work at the same place I do, Lakewinds Natural Food Store.

Still, by the time Lola joined up with us we had been together for a week and were bonding together as a really good group. All of us had a little anxiety about bringing a new person into the group.

As soon as Doug brought Lola into camp we all knew that she was going to be pretty cool to have along. She got to know us all in just a few minutes. When we got on the river we all could see that Lola was a strong paddler and a good camper. She was a great addition to our group. She added to all our activities, worked hard, and gave J.J. a lot of grief (which he deserved).

Lola lives in Seattle now. She took the train to Green River, Utah, to meet up with us. She's working and going to college, majoring in biology and English. She plans someday to teach in Mini-School, filling Doug's shoes. She'll be a great addition, as she was on the Utah trip.



Doug's Retirement Party

By: Lacey Landt

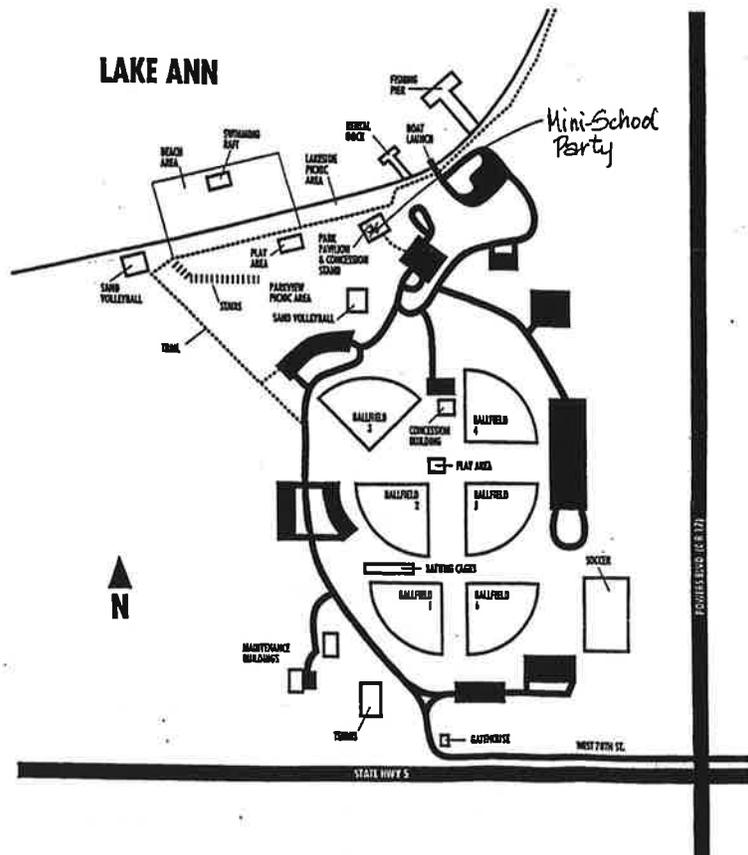
The end of the year is coming up and it gets closer and closer to Doug's retirement. We are having a party for Doug at Lake Ann Park. Lake Ann Park is off county road 17 {Powers blvd} and hwy 5. Tuesday June 1st from 4pm-8pm. Anyone and everyone is invited to come share their memories and celebrate with Doug.

Mini- School has had an all-school reunion every 5 years since it began. This is the 29th year, so a reunion is in order for the year 2000. Since Doug is retiring and a party is in order now, we're having the 30th Mini-School reunion a year early and combining it with Doug's party.

Other than the date and time, few specifics have been worked out yet. The party will be like the last one. Lake Ann is a big, grassy area where volleyball and softball can be played. There's a pavilion if it rains, no pets are allowed. There's also a swimming beach.

All current Mini-School students, former Mini-School students, parents, teachers, friends- anyone who knows Doug- is welcome. Bring your families. Bring something to eat and share. Some drinks and eating utensils will be provided.

Hope to see you all there. Let's give Doug a great send off into retirement. Spread the word!



Book Review: Catcher in the Rye

By: Jeana Doescher

Most of us at Minnetonka High School have read J.P Salinger's classic Catcher in the Rye due to it being an assignment when we were in 10th grade, but if for some reason you haven't read it I highly recommend this book.

The story is told through the eyes of a 16 year old boy named Holden Caulfield. He gets kicked out of prep school and spends days wandering through New York City because he's stalling to tell his parents. The story is basically what he does for these few days, and what his opinions are on people. Even though there really isn't a main point, Catcher in the Rye is easy reading for those who get bored easily and it's entertaining.

Utah Trip
By: Chris Hinrichs
& Marti Norris

It all started on an early morning of April 12th at about 6:00 a.m. as we packed up the van and headed for Utah. The first two days were driving through Iowa, Nebraska, and Colorado. The first night on the road we stayed in a town called Ogallala, Nebraska. We stayed in a church school type setting. The next morning we headed back on the road. It was a very scenic day in the van. We were often awakened by J.J. when a dual wheel pick up truck would pass by. He would say "There's a dueler"! Pretty much all eyes were out the window as we drove through the mountains of Colorado. Then after a few hours we approached the state of Utah. We were all relieved that pretty much of the driving was done. All that was left was going to Moab, Utah where our first stable campsite was going to be located. We arrived at a beautiful campsite called Hittle Bottom located right off the Colorado River, over looking Fisher Towers.

The next day was Wednesday the 14th of April. It was our first real day out with nature. We all ate a good breakfast then decided we were going to go on a hike up and around a place called Fisher Towers. It was a wonderful way to start the trip. There were many different rock formations in every direction, and also the La Sal mountains in the background. We ended up walking to a type of bluff and overlooked our new surroundings that we were going to be looking at every day. Then we headed back to the camp ground after a few hours to go eat lunch and hang out for the rest of the day, while Doug and Drew went to Moab to buy

groceries and check in with Tex's Riverways, the outfitter we would work with on the canoe trip.

On the 15th of April we were joined by a graduate of Mini-School from 20+ years ago, Melissa Quigley. Melissa lives in Salt Lake City where she works as a massage therapist. Melissa was accompanied by her German Shepherd named Barney, who loved to play stick with everyone until they could not throw a stick any more.

Today we were going to visit Arches National Park. Melissa was our guide. We saw many arches on our way up a narrow road which curved and narrowed through canyons and rock cliffs up a great incline to the magnificent rock formations. We all enjoyed looking at these amazingly tall and very awkwardly shaped arches, which have taken years for nature to form, built mostly by sandstone. The beauty of this land far exceeded our expectations. As much fun as we had it was also a very exhausting day. We did a lot of hiking.

The next morning, Friday the 16th of April, was a beautiful morning with a warming sunrise just coming over the plateau. Today Melissa was leading us on a journey to find many places to hike and admire our surroundings. We drove through winding canyons while trying to keep our food boxes in the back of the van from falling on the dog. Barney liked to eat the food as well.

After driving along a dirt road for a while we stopped in the middle of nowhere and looked up as we squinted to try and see what we were hiking to but most of us had no luck seeing it. So we all started climbing up the side of the huge bluff. As

we got closer we saw an incredibly well preserved ancient Anasazi ruins, and petroglyph. We explored the ruins for a while and found pottery and many other ancient Anasazi artifacts. Then sometime after being up there we got back to the van and headed down the road to a 4x4 road. We pulled over and walked down to some free flowing streams which carved many intricate designs in the rock which flowed down to a spectacular mini-waterfall.

After a while of walking around the desert, Doug received a delightful Back country massage from Melissa, which was a pretty nice thing to do. After a while of whining, J.J. also received a short back rub. We headed back to Melissa's truck because it was her time to depart from our group. We headed back to Hittle Bottom. Most of the group was either hungry or tired. It was a very good day.

We arose the next day later than usual because we got to rest until about 8 or so. But there was no food when we arose from bed. So we all started contemplating what it was we were going to do. Doug left early this morning to go pick up our new river companion Lola, up in the town of Green River, Utah. He drove off with the food. Soon enough Doug came flying in with our food to save our hungry bellies. Then he left right away to get to the train station to pick up Lola. We had the mid-morning and some of the afternoon to hike, do journals, and explore our surroundings. Then Doug and Lola came back and we all got to meet her. We thought she was going to be a wonderful addition to our already great group. Then we broke camp and headed to a campground right on the edge of the town of Moab.

On the morning of Sunday the 18th of April, we awoke early with everything we needed for the river. We loaded our stuff into the van and went down the road a couple of blocks to Tex's Riverways. They were the outfitters who were going to drop us in the river. We loaded up the trailer and headed to our drop in point called Ruby Ranch. We got there after driving for miles down this no service road and finally reached a dudes land which was the place. Before Darren the outfitter departed from us he gave us a lecture on how to use the "Growler" and to make sure the seal was tight. Once everything was completed we loaded up our canoes and got our partners and headed down our water highway, the mighty Green River.

After some getting acquainted with our paddles and the way in which we were going to maneuver our canoes, we paddled for a while until we reached our first camp on the river. It was called Trin Alcove Canyon. We started with lunch. We busted out the flapjacks, PB and J, and the chocolate bars, also the meat and cheese. We all feasted on lunch. Shortly after we all unloaded and flipped our canoes and scoped out our resting place for the night. It was a beautiful canyon. There were many places to explore and chill if you wanted. A few people from the group, J.J., Charlie, Chris, and Jeff, meandered around exploring our resting place for the night. They walked up upon a cliff where we saw a snake like figure pecked into the rock and another on to the left of it but it was not done by the Anasazi. It was a circle with a P in the middle of it. Maybe we thought it was done by a man named John Wesley Powell who traveled through this area in 1869. He wrote a journal description in which he told much about this canyon,

and also named it. Later that evening after dinner and clean up, Mr. Jeff McGinn gave a nice report on John Wesley Powell around the fire. Sometime after that we all got our stuff ready to go into a wonderful sleep under the stars. It was a great first night on the river.

We awoke the day of 4-20-99 with a gleam in our eyes ready for the wonderful day ahead of us. After breaking camp we headed back down the river. We stopped at a place called Bowknot Bend, a place where the river turns and doubles back on itself for 7 miles. We got off the river, climbed to the top of the ridge and looked down at the river on the other side. From there we could see our campsite so we scurried back down to our canoes eager to get there. We paddled hard through the wind, and got to camp in about an hour and a half. Like usual, camp was a bit of a struggle to get into, but we finally got in and set up and set off on our usual outdoor adventures. Later, when dinner, school, and Charlie's report on the Mormons were through, everyone was pretty pooped out and crashed in their tents by 10:00.

Heading off down the river early in the morning, we paddled to Turk's Head, which had many old ruins and lots of chert, a flint type rock used by ancient Indians to make arrow and spear heads. We all hiked around there for a bit and explored through a cave we saw just above our canoes. Then we floated a half-mile down the river to our beautiful camp-site and watched the sunset on the cliffs on the other side of the river as we ate our delicious macaroni and cheese.

On the last full day of being on the river we woke up to a not very good looking horizon. It looked like the weather was

going to do something nasty to us. About 10 or 15 minutes after we got on the river it started raining on us pretty continuously. The wind was against us pushing waves against our canoes with white caps making it harder to paddle. After some time the rain let up and we pulled over to eat a very anticipated lunch. We chilled by some Indian ruins that were large enough to fit a person. Earlier we hiked up to a cabin where Butch Cassidy and the Sundance kid used to hide out. And up on the bluff is an Anasazi look-out tower from which you could see for miles.

After some more paddling through the wind we reached our campsite. It was an obstacle around branches and sand bars, but eventually we maneuvered around them. It was a beautiful camp site. There was a cliff you could climb or a little stream you could paddle down. Once you got to the end of that stream you could see an awkwardly shaped rock and some very clean pools of spring water all around a cliff. While we were exploring, we heard rain and thunder off in the distance, so we prepared for it. It came as quick as it went, but it rained very hard and it even hailed on us for a minute or two. Afterwards, there were about six or seven waterfalls coming down from the cliffs, which was beautiful. We had a nice evening together under a natural ledge in the rock so we didn't get wet. Eventually, we all conked out and went to sleep under a clear sky which we hadn't seen in a while.

On the last day of the river part of the trip we paddled down to the confluence which was pretty spectacular. The confluence is where 'the Green' starts to flow with 'the Colorado'. We paddled on the Colorado a couple of miles and stopped just short of some class 5 rapids. We got out, cleaned

out the canoes, and got everything ready to be loaded onto the jet boat. After a very quick lunch, Dirk, from Tex's Riverways showed up in a big jet boat and started hauling our stuff onto the boat. When everything was loaded on, we had Dirk take a picture of us with just about every camera that we had, and then we were off. A nice time was had by all as we looked at the scenery going up the river, except some, who fell asleep.

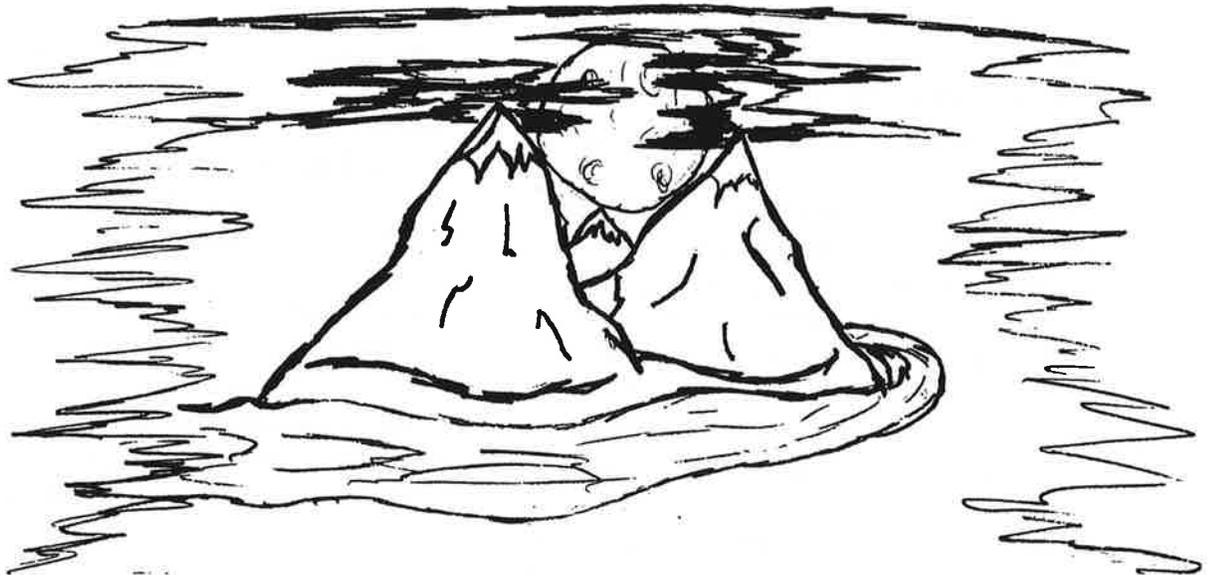
Eventually the boat stopped and we loaded ourselves onto an old school bus and the jet boat on a trailer behind us and headed back to Moab in the rain.

It was an amazing trip that everyone was very happy to be on. We even thought of just continuing on to the Grand Canyon, but figured we'd be missed so we headed back home, and had fun on the way.

Preview of Star Wars Episode 1 **By Tom Miller**

It has been 16 years since an audience has seen the opening scroll for a new Star Wars movie. Now on Wednesday May 19th movie buffs will be able to see the magic once again. It has enthusiasts scrambling to get the most merchandise and great seats in theaters. Some people have already been camping out at theaters for the past 30 days.

This movie is destined to break all present movie records over the first weekend. Presently it looks quite possible. On opening day many will see just how powerful the force is with Star Wars fans.



**Littleton, Colorado:
Could it Happen Here?
By Leah Shoberg**

When a tragedy such as this hits America, in a nice western state, in a quiet little town, we always ask ourselves the same question: "Could it happen to us?" That's a good question. I'm sure that the people of Littleton asked themselves the same when the last school shooting occurred, in March of 1998, in Jonesboro, Ark.

The newspapers and the media have torn this story apart, and made it to be the most talked about crime of the decade.

Attempting to get into the heads of the killers and their families, (and failing terribly), the media have resorted to making the lives of the two killers out to be one big conspiracy against the world.

Video tapes of the gunmen from six months ago, photographs of them at the prom, anything that will catch the public eye, have been released. Rather than being a time for grieving, the media has made it into a time of prying and questioning of the survivors.

I mean, do any of you see a pattern emerging here? This is the fifth, the FIFTH school shooting since October of 1997. What is it that we're missing?

Could it be the **parents**? The media claims that it should all be blamed on the parents, for not properly raising their children, for not communicating enough with their children. Because, as you all know, children that aren't over the age of twenty-five, are incapable of making decisions on their own....(note: sarcasm.)

Or could it be the **school**? I mean, since those teachers and other employees of the school are in the company of those children for seven to eight hours a day,

five days a week, should they be responsible for the choices of the students? It is, of course, their job to teach the students what they need to know to get along in the real world, they do get paid for it.

Maybe it was their **peers**. Pressure to be the coolest, the best, to push yourself to be better, not for the sake of success, but for the sake of being accepted. To be, not who you truly are, but the person everyone expects you to be. After sixteen or seventeen years of that.....Well, everyone has their breaking point.

Or was it the **media**? Making every tragic thing out to be some type of an elaborate, terror-invoking conspiracy that, for some reason, is justified through the media with its powerful words and influences? How is it that in the last two years, every time something like this occurs, we all look for someone to blame, someone to point the big pointer-finger of justice at, and condemn them for the crime? Can't the country see that it's not just one person or one group that is to blame? That it is everyone who has ever come in contact with anyone else that is to blame.

We are **ALL** to blame. One small thoughtless word or action from one person, could set off a huge chain reaction of influence. For some reason, parents, schools, even society, out there, have failed to teach their children **tolerance** and **acceptance** of people who are different. We, as individuals, need to **listen** to what we say, and **think** about what we do. That's how careless, thoughtless things like this happen.

Because no one is paying attention.

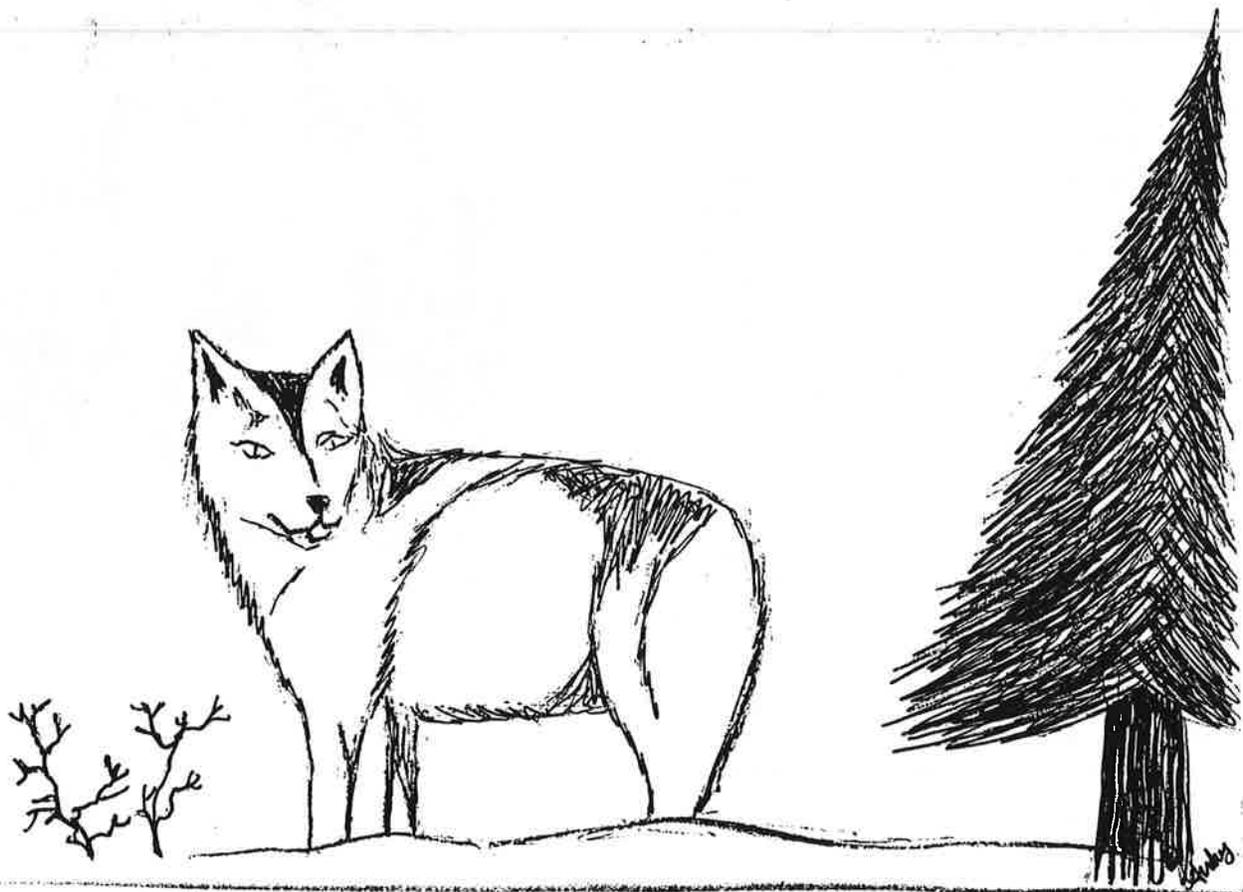
A distant howl...
echoing throughout lonely trees...
then the crunching of snow
as paws chase the cry

Gracefully, almost effortlessly-
they flow through the cold
to meet the curious call

and soon... their shrieks
join the howl of another's ...
covering the open forest
a bit eerie, but still comforting

I get the feeling of being alone...
with another's company close by
an empty forest, so full of a presence
without their being, this place would
be desperate.

By: Audrey



Mini after Doug **By Nate Paulson**

In this article I'm interviewing past Mini-Schoolers and receiving their personal feelings about Doug's retirement this year, and what they think the future holds for Mini-School.....

1) Jayson Paulson: 1991-94.

I don't think that Mini-School could ever be the same after Doug retires. I feel sorry for all the future Mini-Schoolers that won't get the opportunity to experience being in one of Doug's classes, or on one of his trips, or even just having him as a friend, a part of your life. To me, that's a big part of what Mini-School is. As far as Mini goes after Doug; well, I wish everyone luck and support with keeping it alive.

2) Mary Jo Seamans: 1972-74

I think Mini-School will never be the same again, because in my mind, Doug and Randy are Mini-School.

I hope the best in the future, but Mini-School and its students need teachers who are truly dedicated to the program and its needs and are ready to fight for them. I'm not sure if there's anyone else but Doug who's willing to stand so firm in their belief in the program. Doug, everyone will miss you.

3) Paul Seamans: class of 79

As this era comes to an end, I think about all the things I've done with the Mini-School Program: Winter Camping, when Doug lost his glove in the growler and had to fish it out with the ice fishing equipment, and other things that will remain nameless..... Mini-School will never be the same.

4) Nathan Paulson: 1998-99

I've had many experiences with Mini-School, But my most memorable one is still yet to come, on the BWCA Canoe Trip with Doug. This is the trip I've been waiting all year for. It's one of the traditional Mini trips, and that's why I want to be a part of it.

My thought about Mini in the future is not that good. I feel that the main school is starting to harass and smother our program, and in doing so will end it. I hope not though, and I'll do my best to keep it going strong.



A Letter to Next Years Mini-School Students

From JJ Day and Trevor Scott

Doug Berg is retiring. This is a fact. Other changes will also happen. This is inevitable.

Many people are worried that Mini-School is doomed. That it will become like mainstream. That it will become rows of desks and learning packets. That there will be no more trips. That teachers will be "Mr." or "Mrs." That students will become "student #1" and "student#2." That Mini-School will no longer be a family.

We asked ourselves, "What will it take to keep Mini-School going as strong as it has?" The answer is us.

Doug has always said, "Mini-School, first and foremost, is the students!" Now is our opportunity for us to act on this responsibility! We, as students, need to do our part and keep the program alive. We need to carry out the traditions of Mini-School, so in the years to come other students will have the same opportunities that we've had.

People who feel they owe something to Mini-School now have the opportunity to help keep it alive. It may just take a letter, or a phone call, or even an appearance at a school board meeting, expressing the importance of the Mini-School Program. We would like to see Mini-School continue being successful, even after Doug retires.

To those who want to see Mini-School succeed, think of what it has done for everyone who has been a part of it. Now is the time to give Mini the tools it needs to

keep going successfully. The things it needs to keep the trips program and the traditions of Mini going for another thirty years.

Think about it! Mini-School has helped all of us in such huge ways that most of us can't even put it into words. Please remember that, and try to it give back to the program we all love so much. You know it would be worth it.

Summer Trip

By: Laura Huberty

The summer trip involves five days of paddling down the Namekagon and St.Croix rivers. You are educated on the surrounding trees and plants, along with how the Ojibwe people used them hundreds of years ago. It also helps develop skills like fire building, group cooperation, canoeing and outdoor survival techniques. The homework involved would be: daily journal, a book to read, and assignments pertaining to the book all for a half a credit, which is well worth it.

If you are interested, it takes place this year on the week of June 14-18 and the following week June 21-25. A maximum of 14 kids are allowed per trip. With the affordable fee of 90 dollars, It's a great way to earn a half of a credit and perfect way to start off your summer. And besides, you get to spend 5 days with not just Doug, not just Randy, but Doug and Randy.



Contributors

Audrey Lopez
Lacey Landt
Leah Shoberg
Doug Berg
Laura Huberty
Mark Thole
Chris Hinrichs
Nate Paulson
Marti Norris
Joanne Johnston
Jeana Doescher
Kari Opheim
Herman the Mouse
Matt Evans
Al Jampsa
Tom Miller
JJ Day
Trevor Scott

Cover

Nate Paulson

Editors

Lacey Landt
Leah Shoberg

Lay-out and design

Leah Shoberg
Lacey Landt

Teacher/Editor

Doug Berg

Typists

Lacey Landt
Leah Shoberg
Chris Hinrichs
Audrey Lopez

Artists

Audrey Lopez
Leah Shoberg
Jeana Doescher
Nate Paulson
Aaron Sapp
Kari Opheim
Jeremy Latchem

Production

Nancy Christensen

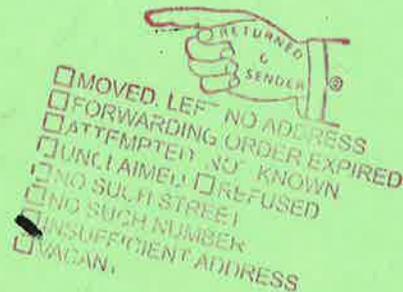


Com-Mini-Cations
Mini-School Program
Minnetonka High School
Minnetonka School District # 276
5621 County Road 101
Minnetonka MN 55345

Non Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Excelsior, MN 55331
Permit #66

May 1999

Address Correction Requested



Jan Taylor
double - see sibling

Chanhassen MN

55317

Put these dates on your calendar NOW!

Doug Berg's Retirement Party
Tuesday, June 1

After school and evening at Lake Ann Park

&

Mini-School Recognition

Monday, June 7, 1999

7:00-9:00 PM at MHS

See you there!