

He-Man 2015

By: He-Man Todd

He-man 2015 in the north woods of Wisconsin... what more is there to tell? For more detailed descriptions of the activity routines, see earlier scribe entries (I personally recommend He-Man 2014, but I am biased) – suffice it to say this is a story of efforts of gents going out and experiencing the great outdoors in canoes.

Thursday's arrival has become the informal start for when some people arrive at the cabin, but the start of the official "gathering" is on Friday, when everyone arrives and the events officially commence. In order of arrival were: Ron; Dan and Doug; Garth, Todd, and Evin; George; Brady, Kyle and Dave; Boyd, Al and Zack; Kenny (very late Friday night or Saturday morning – he missed the log splitting).

Volleyball teams were clearly defined as the "pups" vs. the "those more senior"... and as part of the latter group I can state equivocally with unbiased remorse that we schooled the youngsters in every match.

The comradery is renewed with a fire and evening dinner of brats and drink. Doug christened the event with a flask that only a true Heman could appreciate – it must have held at least 40 oz. (it was big)!

Friday's Log Splitting

There were storms over the winter that required the downing of several large diameter trees for splitting. Ron was excited to have this wood not only chopped but also stacked. There were plenty of logs to choose from and wood to be split for this effort. The records are unclear, but it is believed these were the results:

Dave beat Ron (off year)

Boyd took George

Todd finished before Al

Garth outweighed Doug

Dan bested Jesse

Zach won over Kyle and Evin

The result of the splitting competition resulted in the following (Ron used the theme of the Furious 7 this year's nomenclature of jobs):

He-man Task Assignments						
Dom	Morning Cook	Dave		Qwen	Scribe	Todd
Brian	Evening Cook	Ron		Mr Nobody	Trash Engineer	Evin
Dechard	Cook Helper	George		Kiet	Wood Gatherer	Dan
Tej	Morning Dishes	Boyd		Jakande	Branch Obtainer	Jesse
Hobbs	Evening Dishes	Garth		Hector	Twig Gatherer	Kyle
Seara	Fire Keeper	Kenny		Hun	Wood Harvester	Zach
Shippard	Fire Starter	Doug		Jack	Camp Erector	Al

Each year there are things of significance... subjects that stand apart from year's past. Some lessons are learned through experience, some are learned from watching others, some are just common sense and you know better. A point of note at this juncture is that Kenny and Kyle bonded Friday night and decided to be partners. Kyle has a new fondness for most thing alcoholic, and will try most concoctions without fear. There was a group of Kyle, Kenny and Dan that stayed up most of Friday night keeping the fire going. This did not bode well...

Saturday Paddling:

We all started at Trout Lake to perform the Turtle Flambeau route. We all nervously anticipated the weekend's adventure with the chosen/selected partner. Garth and Todd had donned bib-overall's that were cut-off at the knees – their straw hats made them look like true amish redneck hillbillies, (note that this attire was the most comfortable duds worn on the Heman – and the front pocket will hold a beer).

There are He-Man rules that are not supposed to be broken and the associate cost of disobedience has often been severe. This year brought new tests to the fore-fathers of the He-man tradition. There is a rule in the by-laws that state electronic equipment should not be brought... the original intent was for devices such as radios and head-phones are not needed in the wilds of northern Wisconsin whilst canoeing with fellow comrades.

Kenny this year brought a mega-phone and was not afraid to use it. All creatures great and small were inflicted with Kenny's broadcasting torrent of blabbering utterances. The only saving grace was that Kenny's canoe was in the back of the group because his partner (Kyle) was too busy to paddle while he fed the fish from the canoe more than once. This process allowed everyone to paddle fiercely to keep distance and not have to suffer the ear blasting consequences of these incessant ballads.

Lake Race:

In every route of the Heman there is a lake race; an event that tests the partners ability to paddle their hearts out to go faster than the others. The test comes in which team cannot only paddle the fastest, but which team can paddle the straightest (Garth and Todd are

notorious for not meeting this challenge). There is usually a handicapping process where the Heman elders pick who gets to go first so as to insure there is fair competition. This year was very close and the starting process made for an exciting finish. The order for the finish in a pairing of canoes was the following:

Ron and Al

Dave and Doug

Todd & Garth

Jesse and Zach

Boyd and Dan

George and Evin

Kenny and Kyle

At the lunch break it was decided – no demanded – that Kyle and Kenny partnership be dissolved because of their slow pace. The batteries were confiscated from Kenny's megaphone also at this time. The weather was picturesque and warm enough that several people took a dip in the water (George, Garth, Todd, Al are the ones remembered). Meal note of significance is we had sushi (albeit non-fish laden sushi) for lunch.

There were many sightings of bald eagles; there was seen a snake on the golf course, there was no beaver dam on the golf course this year. There were many pontoon boaters out on lakes that we traverse, and sometimes it is better to go slow and enjoy the scenery that hard paddlers completely overlook – Dan completely missed the bikini clad women while the “old farts” enjoyed the view.

Dave ripped a hole in his canoe during the effort and had to patch it with the infallible, reliable, remedy of all sins... duct tape. There will be a long term solution found after the Heman.

Some of the quotes of the day:

“That smells so bad” – Dan

“I don't think I will drink any more beer” – Kyle

“Know what I am saying...” – group

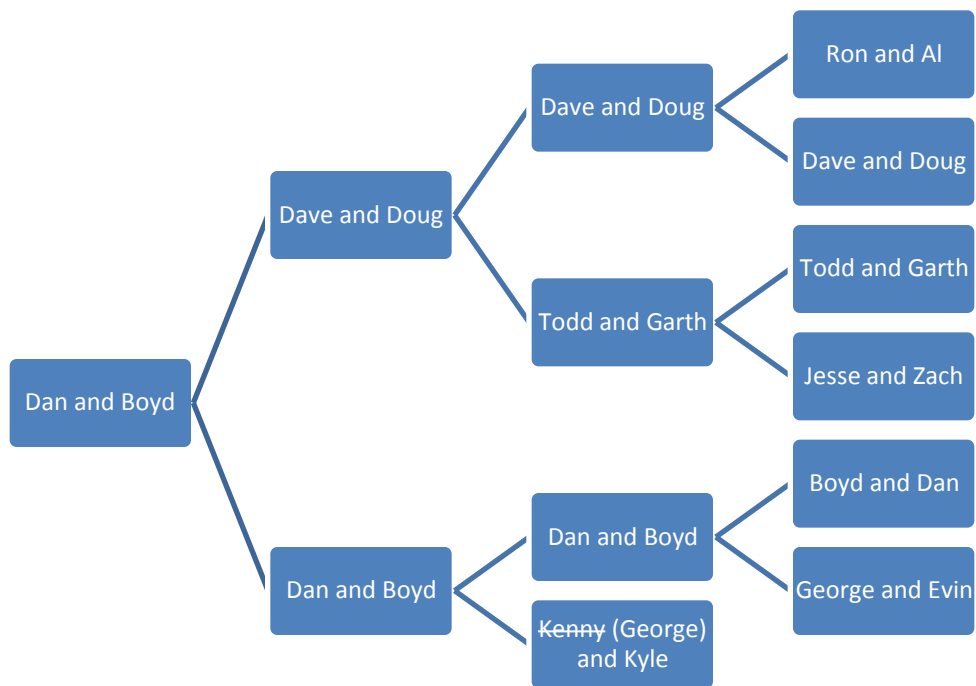
“Why isn't everyone out” – Dave

“Aspirin are good” – Todd

Saturday Canoe Tug-of-war

This tradition of paddling 2 canoes tied with a rope past a secured buoy is a feat of great effort and coordination. Kenny always adds a note of interest to every He-Man as was noted earlier, but I have to say his attempt at wearing the zero-gravity leggings (so he can hang upside down to help his back) was quite a unique addition to the camp. I don't think he ever got it to work properly, he backed out of the competition because he was not

feeling up to the task. This year has a competitive bout featured mixed teams of Founders vs. Irwin's (with the mixed team of Boyd and Dan) beating out the more senior team of Dave and Doug.



Hatchet Throw

The hatchet throw competition tests skill/luck at the ability to stick a hatchet into a dead log. Each round eliminates contestant till there is only 1 left standing at the farthest distance.

After Round 1 (still in):

Ron, George, Al, Doug, Jesse, Evin

Round 2 (still in):

Ron, George, Al, Doug, Evin

Round 3 (still in):

Ron, George, Al, Doug, Evin

Round 4 (still in):

Doug, George, Al

Round 5 (still in):

Al, Doug, George

Round 6 (still in):

George, Al

Round 7: Al won it!

Comments about the hatchet throw: This was a long event that went into the dark while dinner was being slaved over by Garth and Ron. The evening sky was getting dark and food was ready... so the contestants were rushed, but Al was "on" and was hitting the mark well. The distance covered with the hatchet would have made Daniel Boone impressed.

Saturday Night's Dinner:

We ate dinner. Dinner was supplied by a George and Boyd combination and we all survived... unfortunately there were no pictures or scribe writings for this writer to recall the exact concoction consumed (but consultation with George agreed it was either a chili or burritos based meal). Ron and Evin were hurting and went to bed first; note that most others followed within the next 1-4 hours after dark.

Sunday

The general comments about this day was that it was long... we spent a loooong time paddling in the water. Estimates of over a 30 mile day were mentioned from the He-Man forefathers about our Sunday effort. There were many good natured escapades demonstrated on Sunday's outing: Doug donned an Afro Wig that looked quite fetching on him; Kenny and Kyle reunited as partners and were pirates for much of the day; Boyd and Dan needed more of a workout and completed several unnecessary portages on the river portion to try and cut corners.

The paddling on the Manitowish River is long and weaving. There were other campers that we passed while paddling and a barter exchange was performed to trade beers, "Canoe Paddlers" for "Duluth IPA – Bent Paddle" an enjoyable negotiation that was enjoyable. We started to get drizzle while paddling on the Flambeau flowage. The search for camp on the flowage was more of a challenge than expected. We had to paddle long and hard against excruciating side winds.

Upon reaching camp a steady rain was commencing. The first effort was to get each tent site established in as dry of a location as possible. There was a true heroic team effort to find wood and establish a fire in the wettest of conditions that this writer has experienced on any Heman before dinner time. The Camp Erector (Al) had more help and direction than normal because of the desire to have a dry eating and cooking area.

Quotes of significance:

"I can see your wiener" – Dave when peeing

"It won't rain long", and the complimentary statement "It looks like it is clearing up" – anonymous

Sunday Dinner

Everyone's focus was on getting warm and eating food from the long hard day of paddling. While anything that was edible would have been appreciated, Garth and Todd had assembled a macaroni dinner that was received with exceptional compliments. This was

not your mama's macaroni; it had all 4 food groups (3 for George's vegetarians demands). The sour dough bread, banana bread and brownies were devoured as a desert and the camp was contented. Kenny and Dan slept under/on the group picnic table to stay dry. The exhausted group retired early and several people commented – the mac 'n cheese hit the spot as the rain continued to fall. In fact it rained through quite a portion of the night – most tents stayed dry... some more so than others.

Monday

This is always a short day – but we woke to still wet weather. While the clouds were starting to break there was still a drizzle that made keeping a fire going a challenge. Wood was resurrected from a saved “dry” pile for morning usage, while there was a rotation of people aligned to fan the flames while the cooks endeavored to make pancakes that were devoured by those waking to the smells of food. A breakfast cook is always complimented to insure good quantities provided at meal time.

As camp was broken, Jesse was experiencing some difficulties. Ron and Jesse took off early in a relatively empty canoe to address an asthma issue – safety is a serious issue and everyone else took extra gear to clean the camp.

It was a short paddle to the finish, but recognition and awards have to be bestowed on this day of significance...

George was tossed for Heman of year

Doug was tossed for 10 year anniversary celebration

The final non-official event is to have a final meal together at Paul Bunyan's. This allows a final sharing and celebration of the Northern Woods of Wisconsin with our fellow Heman brethren.