

**GABE-SHI-WIN-GI-JI-KENS LODGE # 374  
ORDER OF THE ARROW  
CHIEF OKEMOS COUNCIL # 271  
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA**

**THE OA CHAPEL PROJECT  
NORTHWOODS SCOUT RESERVATION  
APRIL 25-27, 2003**

**The History**

The OA Chapel at Northwoods Scout Reservation is visited each week during the Boy Scout and Cub Scout Summer Camping Season. Both youth and adults take time to participate in a religious service demonstrating that a scout is "Reverent". Every summer approximately 1200 youth and adults will spend at least an hour reflecting upon their religious commitments, thus fulfilling their "Duty to God".

The OA Chapel was originally built by the Lodge in the 1960's. That structure was maintained and widely used for nearly 20 year's before it was necessary to tear it down. A partial structure was rebuilt, but the large cement slab, that serves as the seating area has remained uncovered. On many occasions during the summer Camping season a decision is made to either hold the service in the rain or move the religious service to the dining hall.

**The Idea and Plan Development**

In recent years, the youth of the Lodge expressed an interest in improving the Chapel by building a new pavilion addition to cover the seating area. A youth chairman was appointed by the Lodge chief to lead the project. Shortly thereafter a committee was formed, a timeline was established, and the initial stages of the project were underway.

The youth chairman, a college engineering student, developed a design that incorporated the existing structure and drafted a scaled sketch of the proposed addition. From the drawings, a list of building materials was developed and a \$5000 cost estimate for the project was devised. The project committee then attended a joint meeting of the Council Camping and Properties committee to present the proposal and gain official approval to begin the project.

**The Fundraising**

Upon receiving initial approval, the drawings were used to create promotional materials. The project committee scheduled a Hike-a-thon to raise money for the project. A patch was designed as a recognition item for all who collected pledges and participated in the Hike-a-thon. Although, the Hike-a-thon was designed for lodge members, all scouts and scouters were able to participate and contribute.

The fundraising Hike-a-thon was a great success. The Lodge raised nearly \$3000 the day of the event. Following the event, additional money was generated through donations and the sales of the special patch. When the project committee had raised \$4000, a decision was made by the lodge executive committee to go forward with the project. Furthermore, it was decided that the remaining money needed to complete the project would be supplied by the Lodge's general funds.

### **Working the Plan**

Having secured the funds necessary to complete the project, the project committee was now prepared to obtain the final approval of the Council Properties Committee. The youth chairman used additional resources to create a professional blue print of the structure. The blue print was presented to the properties committee and subsequently approved. Following the meeting, two members of the properties committee, an architect and a builder, reviewed the blue prints to ensure everything was in order.

The project committee scheduled the actual work weekend and using the recommended adjustments, contacted the lumber company to order the building materials. Arrangements were made for the preparation of the construction site and the delivery of the materials. The project committee promoted the project to the general Lodge membership, inviting all to come and help in the construction.

Two weeks prior to the scheduled construction weekend, the site was visited to review the planned layout of the building and to identify any potential issues that would need to be dealt with during the week prior to construction.

The week prior to the construction was most critical. Materials were delivered on Wednesday and then moved closer to the project site. The builder and several members of the project committee arrived during mid-week to clear the area and prep the site. During these few days this group staked out the structure, cut-down trees, cleared the area of brush and debris, and dug the holes for the supporting posts. On Friday the cement was poured into the holes and the posts were set. That evening the remaining members of the lodge arrived. A meeting was held to discuss the plans for the weekend and to review safety rules while at the construction site. The much anticipated Chapel Project weekend had finally begun.

### **The Construction**

On Saturday, everyone awoke and had breakfast at 7:00 AM. By 7:30 everyone was at the site ready to begin work. The poles were checked to make sure they had set properly. The group began by placing the braces over the posts and nailing them in. Small teams were created to handle this task, as each brace required 2-4 people to lift and hold it in place and an additional 1-2 people to pound in the nails. Gradually the entire crew completed the basic frame.

Now the group was ready to begin setting the scissor trusses. Under the direction of the builder, several adults climbed onto the frame so that they could help place and secure the trusses. The youth broke into teams and carried the trusses inside the frame and then lifted them to the adults. Together the crew placed each truss into proper position while another pair of workers helped nail them into place. After all the trusses were in place, the entire crew worked together to lift, position and secure the two gables at each end of the structure. When this stage was complete the group stopped for lunch.

Following lunch, the work crew began assembling the roof. The adults climbed up onto the trusses and were now ready to receive each sheet of plywood. The youth worked in pairs lifting the plywood up to each pair of adults. Other youth cleaned the area or worked with adults that were on the ground preparing the customized section that would link the new building to the old structure. As the roof assembly work crews progressed, additional pairs of youth began attaching the metal drip edge on the overhang. Eventually the roof was in place and the drip edge completed.

With the roof now intact and secure, the youth were able to begin laying the roofing paper and shingling the roof. Some youth remained on the ground where they lifted supplies to the various teams above. The adults continued constructing the customized section that connects the new building with the old structure. This addition extends from the old structure out over the apex of the new roof in a perpendicular fashion. When the adults were finished building the customized section they began cleaning up the work site and putting away the leftover materials. Now that the adults were off the roof there was added room for the youth on the ground to join the shingling teams on the roof. Several adults replaced the youth teams on the ground to maintain the steady flow of supplies to the crews above. When the day was done, the structure was completely built and half of the roof was shingled.

On Sunday morning many of the workers headed home for the weekend while others stayed and continued working. Those who remained quickly resumed work on the roof. To protect the channel created at the perpendicular joint, a sheet of ice guard was put in place. The crew continued their work and finished laying shingles on another quarter of the roof before cleaning up and going home. Everyone was very satisfied with the progress that had been made. The decision was made to have Lodge members do the remaining work at the Councils semi-annual Eager Beaver Work weekend at Camp, the following weekend.

As planned the, Lodge members arrived and began finishing the final quarter of the roof that still needed shingles. Within a few short hours the shingling was complete and the apex of the roof was capped off. Now the remaining touches would be left to the general youth membership of the Lodge at the upcoming Spring Ordeal.

### **The Celebration and Beyond**

One month later at the Spring Ordeal, Lodge members stained the two gables at either end of the new chapel. They swept the cement slab and cleaned the area thoroughly before bringing in the benches that had been stacked away in storage. On Sunday morning of the Ordeal, each member was asked to bring a rock the size of his or her fist to the Chapel service. Everyone arrived for the much-anticipated service with their rocks in hand. Together everyone laid the rocks around the perimeter as a means to prevent erosion. Finally, the first service was held in the new Chapel. The pride felt by all was contagious as everyone was able to say that they contributed. Officially the new OA Chapel was complete.

The pride displayed at the Spring Ordeal carried into the summer camping season. Additional rock was brought in and added as part of the Weekly OA project at camp. And for the first time in many years, the Chapel was full each week of camp during the worship service.

The new OA Chapel marked the first major camp improvement project completed by the Lodge in years. Following this great experience, the youth of the Lodge are actively planning more projects for years to come.

### **Basic Statistics from the Actual Work Weekend**

**Total Number of Lodge Members present – 36**

36/293 = 12.3% of the Lodge membership present

**Total Number of Man hours – 504**

Average Number of Hours worked per member – 14

**Total Cost of the Project - \$4,525.00**

Cost of Building Materials - \$4,075.00

Cost of food for the weekend - \$200.00

Miscellaneous Expenses - \$250.00