

PHILNEWS

JUNE 7, 2019

ISSUE 1

Yurt Day: an exercise in teamwork

Liz Harper
PhilNews Writer

As a caravan of Philburbans and commissary trucks crawled up the road toward Seally Canyon, the excitement was palpable.

“We’re home!” yelled one staff member, jumping out of the vehicle and running over to hug another staffer when the vehicles came to their final stop.

The group assembled in the Valle Vidal on June 2 was a mix of full-time staff, seasonal staff and a few volunteers, all gathered for the annual Yurt Day. Their job was straightforward but not easy: set up yurts at Whiteman Vega and Seally Canyon for the coming summer.

The yurts serve as the main structure in each camp. While other Philmont camps have cabins, the Valle Vidal area is different. Philmont’s land use agreement with the



ABOVE: Staffers work together to place the “ring of death” that stabilizes the yurt. Photographed by Monica Dunn.

Forest Service requires that structures erected in the Valle be temporary.

Land use agreements also require Scouts to follow special rules while hiking and camping.

“In areas such as the Valle Vidal, Chase Ranch and UU Bar, we require low-impact camping by crews,” Backcountry Manager Olivia Starich said. In turn, our infrastructure needs to be relatively low impact as well.”

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ABOVE: A member of Philmont’s interpretive staff gets into character. Photographed by Alex Fields.

History comes to life at Philmont staff camps

Mark Cordeiro
PhilNews Writer

Laughter and song breathed life into the previously uninhabited Rayado ranch when over a hundred Philmont staffers came for specialty training on June 2.

Each camp worked to improve their acting skills by expanding their historical

knowledge and learning more about program activities for visitors. Philmont brought in historical experts and actors to give staff a guiding hand in their studies.

Tim Crofton, an actor and instructor, mentors staff at Living History Day each year. Crofton watches each camp’s opening skit at the Backcountry Town Hall, where interpretive staff clad in costumes from the 1800s perform for Philmont staffers.

Crofton carefully watched each camp’s performance, giving them helpful advice on their acting style or skit content. Crofton said their performances were some of the

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Phil Discounts

Monica Dunn
PhilNews Writer

Being a member of the Philmont Scout Ranch staff definitely has its advantages, whether that's hiking in the backcountry or ice cream socials on Steve Nelson's lawn. Some local and national businesses even offer discounts for Philmont staff members.

Cimarron Mini Mart is located at 31023 U.S. Hwy 64 and offers a 10 percent discount for Philmont staff members. The gas station has Charley Biggs' Chicken 'n Sauce inside as well as typical gas station goods.

Cimarron Art Gallery offers a 10 percent discount, but not for the soda bar. Rangers get a \$3 credit if a crew member mentions the ranger's name. The gallery is located at 337 Ninth St.

Cimarron West is located at 256 E Ninth St. and offers a 10 percent discount. It sells western apparel and boots.

Frontier Music Shop is located at 456 E. Ninth St. and offers a 10 percent discount. You can get instruments like guitars or drums along with strings, picks, capos and tuners.

ArborWear offers a 40 percent discount online at arborwear.com with the code

philmont40.

Free movies are available the first Friday of every month at the park in Springer, New Mexico.

While you are out in the town supporting the local businesses, don't forget to show your identification badge to score some special deals.

In addition to those discounts, as a staff member of Philmont Scout Ranch, you qualify for professional deals from various companies. You can apply on the website: outdoorprolink.com to receive various discounts. Chacos has its own perks for professionals on its website.



ABOVE: Frank Tantsits gives a tour of Villa Philmonte to staff. During the tour he points out the stained glass window in the stairway, touching on some of the creative liberties the artist took.. "The wagons," says Tantsits. "As big as the wagons would've been, as heavy as they would've been... horses wouldn't be able to pull them."

Villa Philmonte in photos

Alex Cenci
PhilNews Photographer

If you drive down State Road 21 toward base camp, you may notice a very distinct building among the uniform administration and classroom structures. It's a building with wrought iron gates, terracotta shingles, large arches and a vast green lawn in front.

This is Villa Philmonte, the old summer home of Philmont's benefactor, Waite Phillips. The Villa was used as a classroom for Boy Scout and advisor training until 1976 when the Boy Scouts started working to preserve the history of the building.

After the restoration, the Villa was converted into a museum so people could learn about the Phillips family. But the Villa is more than a place to display the life of Waite Phillips, it's also a part of the Philmont story.

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ABOVE: Philmont staff members take a look around the bedroom of Waite and Genevieve Phillips.



LEFT: Ian Chamberlin looks through the window in the library. The window was added to the villa so Waite Phillips could look out and see the mountains. Window Rock got its name because it can be seen from the window in the villa.

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Alex Cenci
PhilNews Photographer

Frank Tantsits is dedicated to preserving this story. He works as a tour guide for Villa Philmonte and embraces the spirit of the home wholeheartedly.

“To me it’s almost a breathing place,” he said. “It’s a symbol of his generosity, and because of his generosity we need to stay as true to the way it was as when he lived here.”

Waite Phillips’ choice to donate the villa and the thousands of acres of land it sits on is not just a part of Philmont’s history, it’s how it started. Scouts all over the nation and the world come to Philmont to gain wilderness experience, become good stewards and develop strong leadership skills. This is all thanks to Waite Phillips, whose legacy will live on forever at Villa Philmonte.

“If you don’t come to the villa and you don’t gain an appreciation for the generosity, then you might as well go to some national forest,” Tantsits said. “If you don’t come here and appreciate his generosity then you’re not getting the full experience.”



ABOVE: Tantsits takes the group to the sun room, where the Phillips family would relax by the fountain and enjoy the natural light coming through the windows.

BELOW: During a housewarming on July 4, 1927, Waite and his brothers carved their initials into a table. The reasons for the carvings are unknown, but it’s suspected to have occurred during an all night poker game.



ABOVE: Sherry Hamilton heads upstairs with the rest of the group to see more of the Villa.

Wanted: Philmont Chaplain's Assistants

Background - Philmont staff members have long been supportive of Chaplains and "duty to God." In 2018, there were more opportunities for staff and chaplains to interact, particularly with staffers who would normally be in the backcountry. One of the staff suggestions coming from this dialogue was to consider establishing the volunteer role of Philmont Chaplain Assistant. This suggestion has been received favorably by ranch leadership.

Responsibilities / Opportunities - As stated earlier, Chaplain Assistant is a voluntary role and is to be done with the approval of the person's supervisor. Moreover, it is understood that such service will not interfere with the job for which the person was hired by Philmont. Among the opportunities for a Philmont Chaplain Assistant are:

1. Assist with CHQ and PTC worship services in support of the Philmont Chaplaincy team.
2. Actively promote backcountry worship services to crew members passing through backcountry camps with existing chapel sites. (While weekly services have most recently been conducted at Cimarroncito and Beaubien, participation could be considerably larger. In addition, it is hoped that increased participation would lead to a renewal of chapel site usage in such locations as Ponil.)
3. Encourage crews to conduct trail worship services in the backcountry
4. Serve as an adult role model for fulfilling "duty to God" and "a Scout is reverent."
5. Encourage crew usage of Eagles Soaring High and completion of requirements for the "Duty to God" patch.

6. Encourage crew and staff participation in CHQ worship services as they lead by example.
7. For those serving in staffed backcountry camps, be familiar with resource materials in the "God box" and encourage usage of these tools.
8. Be an active member of their chosen faith back home.

Selection - Persons wishing to serve as a Chaplain Assistant are to visit with and secure the approval of a Philmont Chaplain.

Identification - Each Chaplain Assistant is to be clearly identified. Approved Chaplain Assistants will be provided with a blue staff name tag strap to replace the current clear one. (Blue has been chosen because of its correlation with the blue ink on the Chaplain Aide responsibility card and on the Chaplain logo affixed to the backcountry "God box.")

Benefits - Among the benefits of having Philmont Chaplain Assistants are:

1. Raise the level of awareness and appreciation for "duty to God" as a foundational principle of Scouting.
2. Provide opportunities for staff members to serve as role models to crews and fellow staff members.
3. Increase participation in camping HQ and backcountry worship services.
4. Enlarge backcountry worship services to additional locations.
5. Expand greater usage of Eagles Soaring High and other faith-based materials.
6. Introduce the religious emblems program to more youth and adults.

[Philmont Chaplain Assistants will also benefit. They will have opportunities to learn more about interfaith chaplaincy as they reach out to people of faith traditions which are different

Chaplain's Corner

Father Shawn Tunink
Catholic Chaplain

Cyphers Mine convinced me to become a Catholic priest. True story. It was 13 years ago, and the crew I was advising was staying at Cyphers. I had not been there before, and I was really looking forward to the Stomp. We got in early, set up camp and toured the mine. That's when the providential moment came. It started to rain.

The staff invited me to the porch of their cabin. As I listened to the rain falling gently on the metal roof, someone took out a guitar, then a banjo appeared and a harmonica. For the next hour, we just sat on that porch and sang songs while the rain dripped all around. It was one of the best hours of my life.

I remember thinking, "It really doesn't take a lot of stuff to be happy." Everything I needed I could carry on my back. I saw the simplicity of the little staff cabin, with candles for lights and wood stove. Sitting on that porch with nothing but the rain and some songs,

I experienced true joy and peace.

As any Ranger will tell you, the secret to a good trek is often found not in the stuff you decide to take, but in the decision to leave unnecessary stuff behind. 13 years ago, I thought that I needed a lot of stuff to be happy. I knew that becoming a priest would mean leaving things behind, including plans I once had for my life. That day on the porch at Cyphers Mine convinced me that God wanted me to have abundant joy, and that it could be found not in holding on to more stuff, but in letting go.

What stuff do you need to let go of this summer? Do you keep seeking happiness in the same old ways, only to be left feeling unfulfilled? Maybe you need less, not more. If you empty out some room in your pack, you might be surprised how God fills it.

I'm so blessed to return to Philmont as a chaplain this summer. But I'm especially grateful to take the staff of Cyphers Mine out to their camp for Scatter. I haven't been back in 13 years. The staff is different, but the incredible musical talent is still the same. Best of all, that front porch is still there for me. I hope you find yours this summer.

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Liz Harper
PhilNews Writer

When it's set up, a yurt may look as if it's all one piece, but that's far from the truth. The yurt platform stays at its location year-round and all the other pieces arrive separately. The doors, the lattices, the oculus, the ring of death, the canvas roof, the canvas walls and dozens of two-by-fours are all needed to make a single yurt.

With so many pieces, it's no surprise that building a yurt is essentially an exercise in teamwork. Several people are needed to hold pieces together and make sure bolts are tight.

"The yurt manuals provided by the manufacturer suggest that a yurt might take 3-4 days to put up," Starich said. "Because we collaborate with different departments and different camps, we're usually able to get one yurt up in about three or four hours."

The first order of business in yurt building is to set up the doors and bolt lattices to them, creating the framework for the walls. The lattices support two-by-fours at the bottom of the roof, while the ring of death at the top holds everything together.

After a long process of bolting each two-by-four to the ring of death and attaching it to the wire strung along the top of the lattice, the canvas roof and walls can be pulled over the structure and tied together. Lastly, the oculus, the window at the peak of the yurt, is attached.

It may be finished for now, but staff will still need to dismantle the yurt it at the end of the season. Luckily the hard work comes with a reward: a place to call home for the summer.

"It's really exciting for these camps to go out to their 'homes' for the first time and have such a direct impact in getting their camp set up," Starich said. "I think having the year off from the fire only heightened the excitement and the satisfaction that comes with the

Activities Calendar May 29 - June 9

Friday, June 7	Saturday, June 8	Sunday, June 9
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Telluride Mountain Film Screening in the Hardesty at 8 p.m.

Monday, June 10	Tuesday, June 11	Wednesday, June 12
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Brat Day, 11:00am-1:00pm @ Baldy Pavilion

Ice Cream Night, 8:00pm @ Steve Nelson's lawn

Thursday, June 13	Friday, June 14	Saturday, June 15
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Movie night, 8 p.m. @ Baldy Pavilion

Music Jam Session, 8:00pm @ SSSAC porch



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ABOVE: A staff members practices handling on of the firearms. Photographed by Alex Fields.

Shooting staff completes extensive training before crew arrival

Mark Cordeiro
PhilNews Writer

Ready. Aim. Fire. The simultaneous crack of thunder from the six black powder rifles dwarfed the clap of thunder rolling in from the mountains.

The men of Black Mountain, Clear Creek and Miranda have been training for days, learning the history and safe usage of their muskets so they can become Philmont shooting instructors. The students wasted no time honing their marksmanship skills on metal targets downrange.

James Schneider, a second-year staffer soon to be portraying a Civil War soldier at Black Mountain, bounced between practicing his own firearm handling and being a safety observer for other staffers.

Being a safety observer requires staff to sit on one side of the firing line and monitor their fellow instructors while calling out reminders for safety concerns.

“I’m really big on gun safety and I’m excited to be able to teach young Scouts about it,” Schneider said.

In the days leading up to training staffers like Schneider are in the classroom learning an NRA course made specifically for the BSA. NRA trained instructors run through the modules for the staff. Mark Abramson and Ken Craft.

One of the instructors, Mark Abramson, has about 20 years of firearm experience and serves in his own council as an instructor. He’s currently teaching training at Philmont along with fellow shooting instructor Ken Craft, who has worked with firearms for about 31 years.

Their shared half-century of experience was put to good use during training. The instructors taught the Backcountry staff how to safely use a firearm and how to communicate their skills to others. Staff learned about firearm history, the mechanical parts of the firearm, shooting theory and more.

“There’s a greater depth of knowledge now that [staffers] are asking us the questions as students now,” Abramson said. “We think the classes will be run more smoothly, with greater knowledge, and with greater confidence so we can deliver a great program all summer long.”

With new training techniques and skilled teachers, Philmont’s shooting staff is one of the most highly trained teams in recent memory. Staff will have the chance use their skills after crews start to arrive on June 8.



We at the PSA want to wholeheartedly welcome you HOME for the summer!

Whether you are already an annual PSA member or just now learning what “PSA” and “HOME” mean, we want to extend an invitation to you to join the Philmont Staff Association!

You can join by visiting the PSA Office, next door to the National Scouting Museum (Office hours 8am-5pm Monday-Friday & Sunday 1pm-5pm) or join online: www.philstaff.org



ABOVE:A shooting instructor explains the NRA guide course. Photographed by Alex Fields.

Continued from page 1: Rayado comes to life on Living History Day

Mark Cordeiro
PhilNews Writer

best he'd seen since he started working at Philmont. The stage, however, isn't the only place that Backcountry staff uses their acting abilities.

Doctor Richard Goddard, a retired professor of anthropology from Adams State University, shared his personal knowledge of the American Civil War with interpretive staff playing Union soldiers at the Backcountry camp Black Mountain.

"You can read books and books about what it was like to live in that period," he said. "But until you actually try to live in that period, you don't fully grasp what it's really like."

An avid reenactor himself, Goddard dressed in a Union officer's uniform for training. He informed staff of the active duty roles of officers, stories and songs they might share and other important aspects of a Civil War soldier's life.

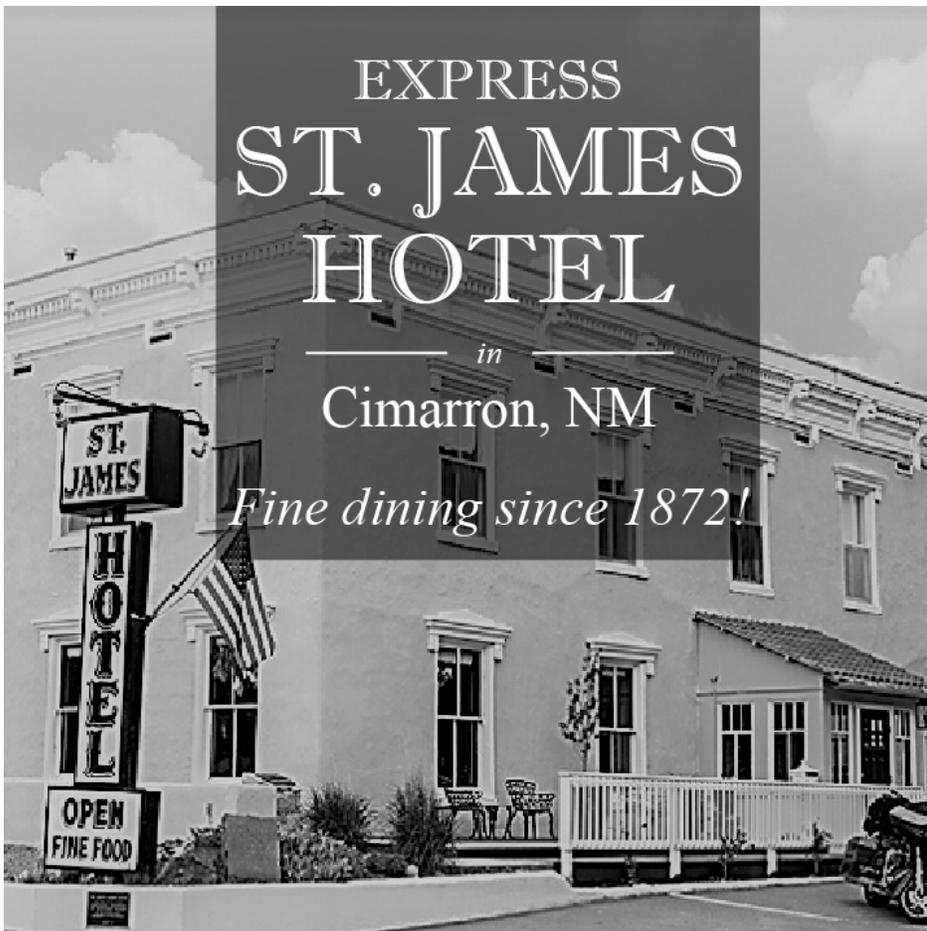
As Goddard spoke to the reenactors Backcountry manager Pete

Scifres stood off to the side, observing the staff of Apache Springs as they raised a full size, traditional tipi on the homestead's lawn. Though not an interpretive camp themselves, Apache Springs will be doing archery all summer with the tipi close by. During the summer season, Apache Springs and eight other camps will be under Scifres' management. Scifres has one simple goal in mind for the season.

"[The participants] should be having a great time out here and learning a lot," he said. "That's as simple as I can make it."

Scifres will be working with each his camps and serving their every need in hope that the 2019 season is the most successful on record. The staff participating in the interpretive camps know just how special their programs are.

"Living History is such a unique thing at Philmont," Tim Loosbrock, a Program Counselor at Cyphers Mine, said. "History gets so overlooked by people in school, and Philmont really makes history fun."



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Puzzle Page

Emily Adams
PhilNews Writer

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