



Bill Murray (extreme right) supervises a hot dog eating contest at Camp North Star.

'Meatballs' romps at a valium pace

By BILL EDWARDS

Mention summer camp and chances are that many of you will conjure up visions of canoes streaming down still waters amidst a spectacular, technicolor sunset or perhaps, of bristling bonfires with content campers broiling weenies and singing along with mellow, guitar-strumming counsellors.

The scenes may well typify your summer camp experiences; they certainly don't mine, however. All I seem to recall are pillow fights, panty raids, and a wholesale pillaging of camp provisions in the heat of the night. To the mischievous and mighty went the spoils; all others slept with one eye open and one arm wrapped around their most coveted possession — a salami, a baseball mitt, or a Superman comic collection.

Summer dispatch

Camp was the place children — troublesome or not — were dispatched off to for the summer so that their parents may play their golf in peace. Of course, that's not what the kids were told. Oh no, camp was a training ground for man-or

womanhood. Cold showers and blackflies made for more moral fibre, or so they said.

Oh, those sharp screeches that would pierce the silence of the night. Perhaps a slow-moving serpent finally introducing himself to his bed-mate, or a sudden attack with shaving cream, or maybe just a confused camper waking up to find his cot tied to the bunk rafters or floating down the lake.

What, you might ask, does any of this have to do with the movies? Nothing really, except that if I were to make a film about summer camps, I'd probably include the above-mentioned escapades.

All of which is a very long and detoured way to bring up MEATBALLS, a film about a contemporary camp in Northern Ontario.

Hijinx forgotten

Directed by Ivan Reitman, (the Torontonion who brought us ANIMAL HOUSE), and featuring the wild Bill Murray, (of SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE fame), one would, to say the least, have high (or low, depending on your perspective) expectations. But such was not to be. Perhaps a little

fearful of repeating the hijinx and histrionics of ANIMAL HOUSE, Reitman is strangely sedate — almost like the entire camp was administered valiums at the infirmary.

Then again, it would take a dynamite dosage to suppress Bill Murray, and whatever authentic camp craziness there is in this picture is due to the unpredictable Murray.

At Camp North Star (that's what they call it), there are no pillow fights, panty raids, or wholesale pillagings of provisions. Mostly, MEATBALLS is a soft-core tease with nubile 16-year-old girls threatening — but doing no damage to — a group of pimple-laden, well-meaning young men. The laughs are sparse, and those that do succeed are usually a rehash of some of Woody Allen and Mae West's best.

As Bill Murray might say to himself if he were reviewing this picture on SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE: "Get out of here man; you can do better than that."