

THE CHAIN LETTER

August 1999 Volume 3, Number 4

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 Editor: Bill Downing, 38067 Forest Lane, Grand Rapids, MN 55744, 218-326-4730. wdowning@uslink.net. The *Chain Letter* is a means of communication among Association members, and it will work best if you contribute. Please send your comments, letters, historical notes, and news to the Editor *now*.

We plan to publish additional issues of *The Chain Letter* in September, November, and February; and resume monthly publication in April. All paid-up members will receive copies, as well as additional addressees requested by members. If you plan to submit copy, please check with the Editor about deadlines.

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Minutes of the Wabana Chain of Lakes Association, Regular Meeting, August 14, 1999

Opening. Chair Jon Rowe introduced the Itasca County Underwater Dive Team. Dan Bibeau, Jon Arsenault and Dan Miller represented the 23 active members. In existence for a year and a half, the Itasca County Sheriff can activate the team for recovery situations. Recovery efforts were explained by the team emphasizing that the "last seen point" is the most important information witnesses could provide to assist in a successful recovery. A floating flag is the marker used for an underwater diver who can be no further than 50 feet from the flag. Boaters must stay at least 100 feet from the flag by law. Assistance from the Blandin Foundation has enabled the dive team to continue their education on public safety diving, working with fire, sheriff and other emergency services. Comments and questions were discussed about historical finds and myths, lake clarity and clean up. Emergency recovery situations can call the Itasca County Sheriff's Department. Personal item recovery, i.e. anchors, motors, historical investigation can be done by direct contact of the individual divers.

Call to order. Chair Jon Rowe opened the regular meeting at 10:00am

Minutes. Minutes of the June 12th and July 10th, 1999 meetings were approved as mailed.

Treasurer's Report. Cathy Rudolph submitted the following report:

Balance as of 7-10-99	\$2,792.55
Received:	
membership dues	\$ 440.00
T shirt sales	\$ 24.00
Total Received	\$ 464.00
Paid Out:	
picnic food	\$ 42.29
picnic paper goods	\$ 43.06
picnic balloons	\$ 8.00
Total Paid	\$ 93.35
Balance in checking	\$3,163.20
Savings	\$2,043.64
Balance as of 8-14-99	\$5,206.84
Paid members 1999	74

Water Quality. David Lick noted a dramatic increase in algae on August 6th, giving Wabana Lake a green hue. Secchi disk clarity readings decreased nearly five feet since mid July in Wabana Lake. David reminded members the value of pumping and improving septic systems and not fertilizing lawns near the lakeshore. An inquiry to the Itasca County Zoning Department was made to understand the

process of inspecting existing lakeshore septic systems. Zoning suggested that the association should ask the township board to ratify a resolution to inspect septic systems located on the chain of lakes. If the board passes the resolution, the lake association could hire an independent contractor to inspect the waste water systems on the lakes. This process could mean presently functioning systems would need to be upgraded to meet current zoning codes. Discussion included options: aerial photography, stronger education efforts for voluntary compliance, water sampling areas of concern immediately due to previous large rains, reinforce current septic pumping service agreements with chain of lakes residents, a letter in *The Chain Letter* asking for input at the next meeting, previous to a membership vote.

Eurasian Milfoil alert. Jon Rowe updated members that of the two lakes in Grand Rapids that have milfoil, McKinney Lake is being chemically treated more intensely than the adjoining Ice Lake which has a more recent and less dense infestation. Although the Department of Natural Resources is treating McKinney Lake aggressively they do not think it will eliminate the Eurasian Milfoil from the lake entirely, thus a continuous maintenance program of chemical treatment will be necessary. Jon Rowe contacted Bob Moore of the D.N.R. requesting the milfoil alert signs at the public accesses be posted in a more visible location, as was recommended at the last association meeting. The association's advisory committee recommended that as members we monitor the north and south public accesses on Labor Day weekend, providing chain of lakes users with handouts on milfoil and how to check their boats and equipment for potential milfoil transfer. A sign up sheet passed around for members to schedule one-hour public access monitoring sessions during morning and evening hours. Jon reminded that milfoil can live up to one week out of the lake stuck to boats, in live-wells, trailers, seaplanes and other water craft and equipment.

Video taping shorelines. The association advisory committee requested volunteers to video tape the present chain of lakes shorelines as base line documentation in case of future changes, alterations or damage. If rehabilitation of shoreline is needed, Itasca County offices need the video comparisons for documentation, Chairman Rowe asked for volunteers. Harold Unger volunteered to help. Jon Rowe will write up a request for volunteers in *The Chain Letter*.

The Chain Letter. Chairman Rowe read a letter from a seasonal resident to the association, thanking them for the quality of *The Chain Letter*. Bill Downing suggested contributions to the newsletter be sub-

mitted as soon as possible to him, preferably by E-mail or mail.

Membership directory. Members discussed the pros and cons of a chain of lakes association membership directory. Cathy Rudolph stated that Ann Radecki has an updated list on her computer with changed addresses and new members.

Potluck Picnic. Betsy Downing led the association in thanking the members who volunteered to make the association sponsored annual potluck a success.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45am by Chairman Jon Rowe. **Next meeting September 11, 1999, 9:00am** coffee, 9:30am program and meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Lick, secretary.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

From Wabana Chain of Lakes Association President
Jon Rowe.

I've always liked the expression "Think globally, but act locally." However, maybe we need to think locally and act locally. Perhaps it is time to "get our own house in order first."

Certainly we should all follow our state and county laws. We should all have our septic systems up to code. We should all follow zoning restrictions. We should all follow fishing and hunting laws. Is just following the minimum that our government set forth enough? Are we good stewards of our land and water? Are we ethically doing what is right?

We have some very dedicated people that act locally on our chain of lakes. Here are a few examples: clean campsites, test water, take Secchi disk readings, monitor lake levels, put chain of lake brochures in boxes at the landings, pick up trash on the trails to and at the Joyce Estate, help write grants and seek grant funds for longer projects, serve as a lake association officer on the advisory committee, encourage neighbors to join the association, discuss with visitors and neighbors the danger of exotic plants and animals and how to keep our lakes clear of exotics, and last and certainly not least help with this publication.

What have you done to get our own house in order? Let's all get more involved and dedicated to not only keep our lakes clean, but also improving our local environment.

LETTERS

*Editor's note: The Agenda for the September 11 Wabana Chain of Lakes Association meeting will include a subject-- septic system inspection--that may raise discussion among the membership; and the democratic way is to notify members in advance about subjects they may want to discuss, before action is taken. Therefore President Roe asked Dave Lick to write a letter arising from his concern over the algae bloom he observed and reported at the August meeting, and its relationship to Phosphorus in our lakes, lawn fertilization and septic system malfunction. With Dave's permission I have omitted the parts of his letter that are covered in the Minutes (see **Water Quality** on page 1).*

At its August 14, 1999 monthly meeting, the Wabana Chain of Lakes Association heard reports that the Secchi disks readings have decreased drastically in the last two weeks, and an observation of abundant amounts of algae suspended in Wabana Lake was also reported. The members talked about what makes the algae grow: (a) nutrients such as phosphorus from fertilizing lawns, and (b) inadequate waste water systems; promoting the growth of algae, which decrease the visibility through water.

An idea was suggested that a thorough inspection be done on the residential and commercial septic systems throughout the lake chain. It was brought to the attention of attending members that there are probably two ways of doing the inspection, by air, with infrared photography; and the manual way where an inspection service would be contracted by the Association to do each property on the lakes. A combination of these methods could also be done. There may be grant money available to help defray the cost to the Association.

In order to get the inspection started, the Zoning Department suggested we approach the Town Board to get a resolution asking the Association to initiate this undertaking. After the resolution we could then have a number of independent contractors give us bids on the cost to complete the task of determining which systems are in compliance and which ones are not. A member mentioned that after the information is received from the firms doing the analysis, it would be best to have a member of the Association approach the owner, rather than getting the government entity involved.

The idea is not to pit neighbor against neighbor on this issue, but to educate the landowners and have them update their systems, so that the quality of water in the Chain of Lakes remains pristine. The water quality in the lakes is a concern of everyone, and to prevent the degradation of the water best we can take all precautions before the problems be-

gin. This is an open invitation to members who would like to voice their opinion or provide solutions to the problems mentioned, to attend the September meeting so that the Association can ask for a vote of its membership.

--Dave Lick

1245 Archer Ln
Plymouth, MN 55447

To the *Chain Letter* contributors:

I want to send you my thanks & congratulations on an excellent job of communicating! I'm a seasonal property owner and really appreciate reading the newsletter to learn what's going on and I loved the history articles.

I like to attend the meetings when I am at "The Point", but too often the dates don't coincide so I can be there--all the more reasons to read the *Chain Letter*.

Thank you again, for your work--it is really appreciated.

Sincerely, Dorothy Myrick.

Thank you, Dorothy! We really like to hear from members to find out what's on your minds, what you like or don't like, what you wish we would include, what pleases or worries you-- so please send your comments along! --Editor.

38067 Forest Lane
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

One of the points raised by the Grand Rapids Dive Team was underlined by a personal experience I want to share. They mentioned the hazard of fish line disposed by throwing it into the lake. Some Team members have become entangled in fish line while diving, and were at some risk, fighting free of the line, which is not very visible under the water.

We saw a loon, belly-up, struggling to right itself, which we think it eventually did. We imagine it had run into line near Arrowhead Point. Please don't throw anything overboard--it is bound to impact something!

I also would like to comment on the Wabana Lake "Jet Skiers", who have been, it seems, careful in the duration of their "ski", though it is evident when they are using their equipment, they have not gone on and on; for which we on the east side of Wabana are most grateful!

--Betsy Downing

SECOND TESTING REPORT

In our June issue we published a report of the chemical testing done at ice-out in May. The Water Quality Committee plans four for 1999: ice-out, spring, summer and overturn. We expect our parameters to vary according to the time of year, so we have listed them so they can be compared with similar Spring data from 1991.

1991 AND 1999 COMPARED			
Reported in micrograms per liter (ppb)			
		SPRING	
YEAR>		1991	1999
DATES>		24-Jun	27-Jun
CHLOROPHYLL A			
TN	Trout North	3.5	1.8
TS	Trout South	2.7	2.4
IN	Interlachen	1.8	4.4
BN	Bluewater North	1.9	1.7
BS	Bluewater South	1.8	1.5
LW	Little Wabana	0.4	2.2
WC	Wabana Central	2.4	2.4
WS	Wabana South	2.5	2.5
WW	Wabana Wakeman	0.9	7.5
WN	Wabana North	1.3	3.1
TOTAL PHOSPHORUS			
TN	Trout North	13	9.6
TS	Trout South	9	10
IN	Interlachen	17	23.1
BN	Bluewater North	5	36.2
BS	Bluewater South	4	9.5
LW	Little Wabana	11	18.6
WC	Wabana Central	14	10.7
WS	Wabana South	10	10
WW	Wabana Wakeman	53	28.3
WN	Wabana North	10	17.5
TOTAL NITROGEN			
TN	Trout North	280	136
TS	Trout South	330	669
IN	Interlachen	320	276
BN	Bluewater North	340	202
BS	Bluewater South	170	282
LW	Little Wabana	410	549
WC	Wabana Central	400	205
WS	Wabana South	440	461
WW	Wabana Wakeman	1080	441
WN	Wabana North	390	308

In June we made some tentative remarks about ice-out May data, realizing that conclusions from a single set of numbers is risky:

- Chlorophyll and phosphorus appeared higher at ice-out in 1999 than in 1991.
- If the increase in phosphorus continues to show up during our 1999 testing year, it is not an encouraging sign, since more phosphorus means more algae.
- Nitrogen was generally lower at ice-out in 1999 than in 1991
- Reduced nitrogen will *not* limit the growth of *bluegreen* algae, since many bluegreens can take nitrogen directly from the air. A reduction in nitrogen is usually beneficial, but not *necessarily*—if phosphorus remains high, a reduction in N could discourage green algae and encourage bluegreens, which reproduce very rapidly, are slimy or ropy, usually smell bad, and many kinds of them produce chemicals that are toxic to other life in the water
- We said that the basins in our chain of lakes that we need to watch carefully during the rest of the testing are Wabana South and Little Wabana, since both of them show surprisingly high phosphorus.

So what additional information does our Spring testing give us? Again, one set of data give only partial knowledge, but we can see these:

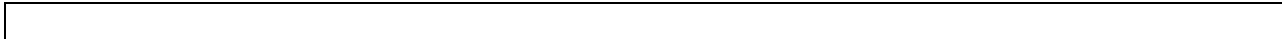
- Wakeman's Bay is the only basin in the chain of lakes that shows a significant increase in Spring chlorophyll—therefore algae—from 1991 to 1999. The phosphorus and nitrogen decreased markedly, since they were used in making new algae. These changes could be merely due to temperature differences between the two years.
- Again, 1999 Wabana South and Little Wabana readings show phosphorus increases over 1991, so we should continue watching.
- The surprising phosphorus increases are in Interlachen and Bluewater North, from 1991 to 1999. This could be just local anomalies, or it could be due to increased lawn fertilizers or soils washing into the lakes, or inadequately functioning septic systems. We will need to watch them carefully over time.

The Water Quality Committee took another set of samples on August 21, so perhaps in our September issue we will have further information.

JULY SECCHI DISK READINGS

Secchi disk readings are supposed to be taken when the sun is shining brightly, between 10:00 and 2:00 in midday, and when the water surface is still. How many days have we had like that during this peculiar summer? Cloudy, rainy, windy has been our diet. This has been a very difficult summer for Secchi readings. We are fortunate to have as many readings as we have!

Lake	Secchi Disk Readers	7/03-7/09	7/10-7/16	7/17-7/23	7/24-7/30	7/31-8/06
TN	Bill Berg		24			14
TS	Betty-Harold Unger	19	20	16	15	13
IN	Betty-Harold Unger	20	19	17.5	18	20
LW	Jon Rowe				18	15
BN	George R. Klacan	22	16.5	17.5	18.5	
BS	Nancy Ellsworth	25	18	19	18	
WN	Bill Downing	16		15		
WC	Mary Gephart		17		16	
WS	Susan Lick	17	17.5	15	17	
WW	Duane M. Amundson	13	13	13.5		



HELP WANTED:

People who have videocameras, to videotape the shorelines of Wabana, Trout, Bluewater and Little Wabana. The tapes will be put in the archives of the Wabana Chain of Lakes Association in the Town Hall, and held for reference. In the event that shoreline is modified or eroded, the tapes will provide base-line information for the return of the shoreline to its original condition. Those persons willing to serve, please call Jon Rowe at 326-3833.

REPRINT FROM THE *HERALD REVIEW*

Page 6 contains the last of an original two articles reprinted with permission from the *Grand Rapids Herald Review*, printed originally in the late Twenties or early Thirties. The "(to be continued)" at the end shows that the author and the paper intended that there would be at least one more article, but we do not have it. Warren Jewett found a photocopy of the first two in the Itasca County Historical Society's annals, and sent it to us as a matter of interest.

I was very much interested, and wanted to find the third article, so I spent quite a few hours going through the microfilm of the *Grand Rapids Herald Review* in the Grand Rapids Public Library, but could not even find the ones we have now, since I didn't know what date to start looking! If the *Herald Review* published the second of the articles, the third one would

probably have been printed a week later than the one we have.

Is there a member who is used to microfilm, and who is interested in publishing more historical articles in *The Chain Letter*, who could spend some hours searching through the film at the Library, find when our articles were published, and discover the third one? It would sure be a great contribution.

People who find this early history of interest will be drawn to a small book, *Trails Through the North Woods* by our Little Wabana neighbor, Patricia Navratil. It is a history of the Bigfork Trail, and contains maps and descriptions of the early days in this area. We have a copy of the second edition, published in 1976 by the Northwoods Press, Inc., Box 24, Bigfork, MN 56628, which we bought at the Itasca County Historical Society for \$3.25, and they probably still have copies.

The remains of the last steamboat are now just west of the upper Wabana Brook bridge, north of Wa-ga-tha-ca, while east of the bridge are the remains of one of the large dams that were built by Day about 1866 and rebuilt by LaCroix in about 1883. The gates in all these dams were blasted out with dynamite about 16 years ago. The men were housed in wanigans, while some of the men stayed in an old dugout, which was located on the north side of the present concrete dam at Wabana. This dugout evidently is older than the memory of any of the old timers. Sluicing of the logs was considered a most difficult job. Wanigans and boats drawing four feet of water could easily pass through all the thoro-fares and streams such as Clearwater, Wabana creeks, and Bluewater and Trout lake thoro-fare in those days.

In 1903 T. H. Simmons of Cedar Rapids and Lounsberry came to Wabana regarding the Day and Washburn lands. Prior to this time it was very difficult to purchase small tracts of land as the loggers did not care to sell. It was thru their efforts that it was made possible for a small buyer to secure land. While on one of these trips Mr. Simmons decided to look the Arrowhead Point over, and seeing the wonderful plateau he called the rest of the party and immediately Lounsberry and Simmons decided for its acquisition and development. This development has continued to this day and it would be very difficult to find in this north country a prettier place with such beautiful improvements and the same time retain so much of the primitive beauty as there is to-day at Arrowhead Point. The families who have for so many years resided for the summer months at the Arrowhead Point on Wabana Lake have played an important part in the development of Wabana township by furnishing not only employ-

ment but also by buying vegetables, poultry and dairy products. In the early days the Point folks also gave at least one big party a year to the local residents, entertaining them with vaudeville, circuses and fireworks. After the local community club was established in 1921, they would frequently attend the meetings, and several times have entertained them with a dinner, dance, eats and a general good time.

Anton Hagalee homesteaded on the thoro-fare between Trout and, Interlachen in 1903, Anton has had a rather difficult time as far as roads are concerned, nevertheless he does have a fine home, and a fine family. In order to have a school available he purchased a home in Grand Rapids. Mrs. Hagalee and the children reside during the school season. Mr. Hagalee has a fine orchard. Some of the fruit are from seedlings which he developed himself, and an apple thus produced is of good size and excellent quality. Anton, as he is known by all the folks around the lake is an old timer, hospitable, a good worker in community affairs and has served several times as town officer.

S. Parry filed on his homestead on Clearwater Lake in 1903. This property has changed hands frequently, the last owner being A. K. Seckinger, who operated a fishing camp, poultry and dairy farm there.

Ernest Poland arrived in 1903 from Cheboygan, Mich. And in 1912 he purchased a piece of wild land, at present occupied by Frank Wakeman and family. In 1919 to 1921 Mr. Poland was caretaker at the Joyce estate on Trout Lake and in 1922 he purchased the farm on Wabana Lake where he now resides from Mr. Harker.

The Dwyer drive which is supposed to have been ten million feet of pine was taken out of Wabana in 1904. This was the last big drive from Wabana Lake. C. C.

Kelly, an old time scaler and author of fishing and hunting stories, now residing at the West Hotel, states Mr. Ruggles at one time owned 100 million feet of pine on Wabana Lake.

In 1904 C. V. Smith arrived in Wabana in a covered wagon and was the first caretaker of Arrowhead Point. The T. H. Simmons cottage was built this year as well as the Farm Cottage and barn. Mr. Smith remained here for several years and is now living on a fine farm on the Scenic Highway in Balsam Township. The present Simmons cottage was jointly owned by Lounsberry and Simmons, and was at first intended to be used as a central eating house with cottage to be built for guests. The place suited Mr. Simmons and his friends so well that no resort proposition was developed.

The year 1906 was evidently a busy one. C. L. Simmons and W. H. Adams built their cottages at this time. Oscar Symons of Minneapolis secured the present Wa-ga-tha-ca property and built one log house which he operated as a summer resort. He operated it for two seasons and enjoyed excellent patronage. It was sold about 1908 to John B. Harker who built a second log house for his sister-in-law, Mrs. Bristol. J. P. Thomsen secured the beautiful island in Wabana Lake in 1907. He made many improvements from time to time. More details of this will follow later. The island is now owned by "The American Girl", the girls camp conducted by Miss Mildred Sebo.

(To be continued)

[No, it will not be continued. This is all we have!]

A GREAT PICNIC!

We have had some splendid picnics through the years, beginning with the original "Boo-Ya" and extending through pot-lucks with live bands for dancing. Each one has been memorable in its own way, and all of them fun. Thanks to the picnics, we have all become familiar with a lot of our neighbors

The Ninth Annual Potluck Picnic on July 24, 1999 ranked right up there with the best. We owe a big "Thank You" to all those people who worked on it:

Nancy Ellsworth
Pat Chambers
Lynette Bryant
Cathy and Doug Rudolph
Mary Lou and Bud Sage

Nobody kept an accurate count, but there were about sixty-plus people there, enjoying the wieners and brats, and the delicious salads, hot dishes and desserts brought by the members. We have some great cooks around our lakes, and some grand people, and good friends we can greet out on the lakes.

JULY 1 STARTED A NEW ASSOCIATION YEAR— DUES HAVE NEVER INCREASED, STILL ONLY \$20!

→Are there family members or other Friends of the Chain, who should receive the *Chain Letter*? Please send their names and addresses to Cathy Rudolph, and we will include them in the mailing! This is a courtesy available to members of the Association.←

Dues Payment and Address Update Form. Please cut off and mail.

Address #1, Permanent Address:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code: _____

Which months of the year for mailing? _____

Address #2, Seasonal Address:

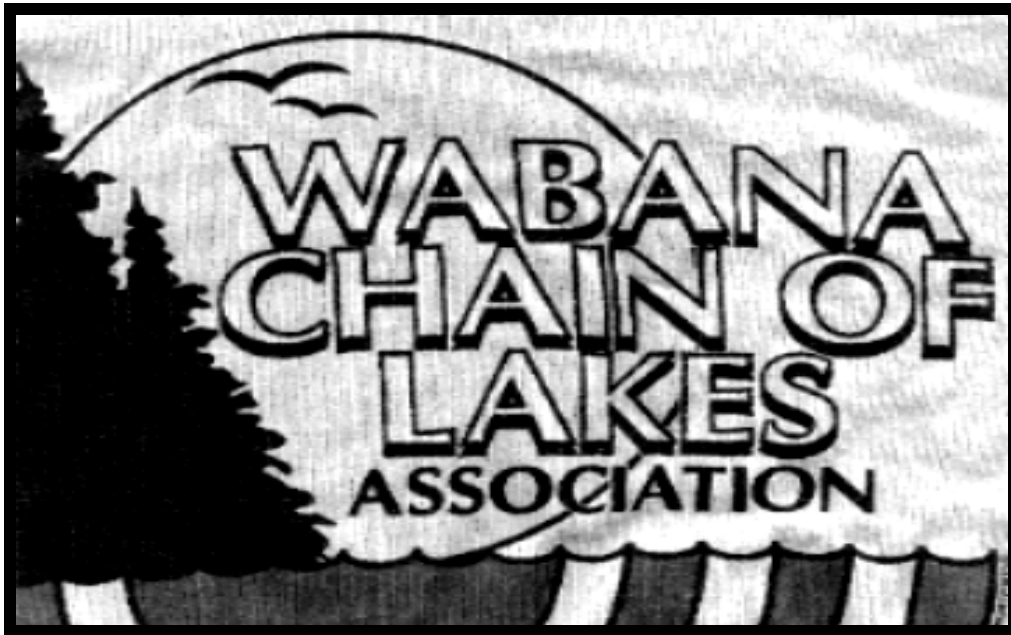
Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Which months of the year for mailing? _____

Mail this form and your \$20.00 check made out to the Wabana Chain of Lakes Association, to:
Wabana Chain of Lakes Association, Cathy Rudolph, Treasurer, 36542 Havenwood Drive,
Grand Rapids, MN 55744



THE CHAIN LETTER FOR AUGUST 1999

Wabana Chain of Lakes Association,
Cathy Rudolph, Treasurer,
36542 Havenwood Drive,
Grand Rapids, MN 55744