

Dedicated to the care and preservation of our lakes, for the enjoyment and safety of all.

# July 2002

Third issue of the year

Volume 6, Number 3

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**COME to the meeting  
 July 20 morning  
 and the picnic  
 in the afternoon**

Letter from President Dick Chambers:

On Thursday June 27th the Lake Associations that participated in the Healthy Lakes Program last year, met at the Wabana town hall to re-view how each was doing with their plans. We had a good meeting and everyone seems to be moving right along.

On Saturday morning the Advisory Committee had a working session. We are trying to reduce the size of the document that came from the program of our members in 2001. We have a good start and will have another session July 13th. When we have a draft completed the membership will receive a copy for their review and discussion later. Then it will be voted on. We will continue to discuss this at our next meeting on July 20th.

Remember that is the date of our picnic. Hope to see you all there.

Dick

**The Wabana Chain of Lakes Association Meeting Minutes of June 15, 2002**

Maya Homaby, Department of Natural Resources Non-game Wildlife Specialist was introduced by Bill Berg. Maya's presentation was about loons; research information, slides and a video demonstrated the beautiful but fragile bird. The loon is used as an environmental indicator concerning pollutants like mercury from coal fired power plants. Lead ingested from fishing lures and shotgun pellets, other trauma such as fishing line entanglement and boat/jet ski wakes in nesting areas the loon's other eliminating factors. The department of Natural Resources has a volunteer "loon watch" program with a loon ranger on each lake keeping track of loons and identifying nesting territories. Volunteers

are always needed. The membership thanked Maya for an excellent presentation.

**The regular business meeting** and introductions were started at 10:10am led by Chairman Chambers.

**Minutes of May 18, 2002** were approved as printed in the June 2002 Wabana Chain of Lakes Association newsletter.

**Treasurer's Report**, read by Tia Pace:

Balance as of May 18, 2002	\$4,988.67
Received	
Dues	\$ 820.00
Contributions	\$ 135.00
Newsletter	\$ 20.00
Total Received	\$ 975.00
Paid Out	
Westford China Co. (lk. assn cups)	\$ 394.10
Minuteman Press	\$ 165.61
Total Paid Out	\$ 559.71
Balance as of June 15, 2002	\$5,403.96
Paid households as of June 15, 2002	59

The treasurer's report was approved as read.

**The Wabana Chain of Lakes Management Plan** was reported on by John Adams who reviewed the association's group planning process last year. John volunteered to provide leadership in an upcoming advisory committee's working session, in order to better understand the information generated and produce a working document for the general membership. Suggestions by John Zimmerman and David Lick were to invite county, state and federal government entities into the process following the working session.

Brenda ZumMallen questioned the plan's intent, not having been involved, asking if the association was creating new regulations and if there could still be input? John Downing suggested that the July meeting be devoted solely to review the plan. Joe Stevens questioned the interaction of residents into the plan as its impact may affect many individual interests. John Zimmerman clarified that the management plan was a whole group process and the brainstorm results were mailed to everyone in the township through the monthly Wabana Chain of Lakes Assn. Newsletter. Steve Bryant reviewed the history of the process and the intent of a chain of lakes management plan. Brenda ZumMallen stated that she felt the association's discussion of "getting the powers together" might be to create new regulations. John Adams clarified that

the management plan is not a regulatory document and we need a relationship with the DNR, county, state and federal agencies as the largest landowners on the chain of lakes.

Bill Downing reminded that on the mast head of the monthly Wabana Chain of Lakes newsletter is a list of the officers and advisory members and their phone numbers for input and information on the management plan.

**July 20<sup>th</sup> will be the next regular meeting** devoted to the chain of lakes management plan. To return in the afternoon for the association's annual picnic. Information will be in the next newsletter.

**Fourth of July boat access monitoring** by the association was brought up by Chairman Chambers. Discussion of the volunteer effort to be at the sites representing the association created a lot of good ideas. David Lick, former coordinator, stated that the ideas were good but the past volunteer effort was poor and needs new people. Steve Bryant suggested the holiday idea was good for public relations but not really effective to reduce introduction of exotic weeds due to constant seasonal use of the landings. Nancy Ellsworth made a list for volunteers to sign up and chairman Chambers suggested if the list had volunteers on it the association would go ahead and be present at the boat landings otherwise we would not go forward.

**Lake association member's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday** this summer was brought to attention by Chairman Chambers. Elmer Bekkedahl has been coming to the Wabana area since 1946 from Ohio. Nancy Ellsworth and Dick Chambers will work with Elmer to get some of his thoughts and remembrances into the newsletter. John Zimmerman made a motion that the association purchase flowers for Elmer's birthday celebration. The motion was seconded and approved.

**Environmental efforts on septic systems** were described by John Downing, as their family along with the Schmidt's worked to replace an improper system on Wabana. John through investigation found that a directional boring method through a steep bluff was a more satisfactory method, in terms of less ground disturbance and expense than trenching. John will write up the scenario as an example of the options for system replacement in the upcoming newsletter.

John Zimmerman reminded the association that residents on the north end of Big Trout Lake are residents of Balsam Township and the county

needs to be aware of this for locating septic inspections. Also systems should be marked and cleared for inspectors.

**Next newsletter** deadline for information is July 6<sup>th</sup> to be sent to Bill Downing. (wdowning @ us-link.net or 38067 Forest Lane, Grand Rapids 55744).

**The John Rowe Memorial** was brought up by chairman Chambers suggesting that following the September meeting a memorial tree be planted and John's family invited for a brief ceremony.

**Boring samples of the bottom of Wabana Lake** was revisited by Joe Stevens asking when it will happen and if Bluewater will also be considered. David Lick reported the scientists will need to do the boring this winter and following a request to add Bluewater Lake, they do not feel they can add the lake even at additional funding from our association.

**Minneapolis Star and Tribune's article entitled, "Ecological Disaster"** was described by Chairman Chambers and suggested that the membership take the time to read the lakeshore development scenario as it is very pertinent to our process of developing a management plan. John Adams inquired with the newspaper about copyrights and was allowed to re-copy the text. John will go further by checking on photograph copying and printing costs.

**Little Wabana Lake shore land development violation** was reported on by John Adams and Dick Chambers. John described a current Little Wabana resident who requested a verbal ok from Itasca County Zoning Department to brush a former path creating access to the lake. The county verbally gave a go ahead to clear a small amount of brush. The owner used a chain saw and bobcat to blade off the bluff, dumping soil and material into the lake and was reported by lake residents. The DNR required the owner to take the material back out of the lake and the county zoning department gave a permit on site and a restoration order that the seven trees be replanted and the owner concrete or pave the newly created road. John stated that had the work already completed been requested by the DNR or county it would have never been permitted as it violated existing zoning ordinances.

Wabana Township Board Members and Dick Chambers were also called to do the site review of the violation. John Adams felt that all the facts were not clearly described by the owner in the original phone request. Joel Solomon asked what

the association could do? John Adams suggested that we take a stand, not be silent, as the lakeshore violator seemed to leave us these alternatives; do nothing, hire an attorney, appeal to the county board of adjustment to change the restoration plan. The best alternative according to John is to get all the parties involved together and work out an appropriate solution for the individual's need for access to the lake. Dick Chambers suggested we get together with the township board members concerning any further meetings or action. Joel Solomon stated that the quarrel is between the lakeshore owner and the county and the lake association go to the county board of adjustment meeting and intervene or the restoration order.

A motion was made by John Adams "whereas the Wabana Chain of Lakes Association take a position against the current restoration order and the association chairman represent this position at the upcoming county board of adjustment meeting next week."

Discussion of the reason for the lake associations action were: this violation and restoration order sets a very negative precedence going against the current statutes, paying a minimal fine or minimal restoration order still allows permanent damage to the lakeshore. Due to the fast-breaking timelines on this case the lake association needs to represent the motion without being able to first publish all the information in the newsletter.

A vote on the motion was called by Chairman Chambers, one no, the rest of the membership yes. The motion was approved.

**Property tax reform** was updated by Chairman Chambers. A survey was suggested in the Wabana Chain of Lakes newsletter asking residents to evaluate their situations and suggesting how and if the association can be involved.

**Lake association meetings to be posted on the Wabana Township Hall** outdoor message board was a request by Bill Downing. Dick Chambers will contact the township with this request.

**The association's annual picnic** will be held on July 20<sup>th</sup>. Volunteers are always needed call Pat Chambers to ask how you can assist.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 am.

**Next meeting** July 20th, 8:30am social time, 9:00am meeting.

**Respectfully submitted, Susan Lick, Secretary**

## LETTERS

### FROM DON BASISTA

*You remember Deputy Sheriff Don Basista's fine talk at our May meeting—well here is the follow-up letter that he sent. Unfortunately I was not at the address where he mailed it, so it did not get into the June Newsletter, but it is important to get it into this issue:*

#### **Itasca County Sheriff's Department "FROM THE WATER"**

I would like to thank the Wabana Chain of Lakes Association for the very warm welcome that I received when I spoke at their May 18th spring kick-off meeting and I commend the association for their pro-active approach to keeping our waters clean projects that they have in place.

The photographs that you see in the Grand Rapids Herald Review, film & development are paid by them, and I am returning the photos that I took at the meeting to the association. *[Don sent us several color pictures taken at our meeting, which showed the big turnout of members.]*

There are several things that I spoke about at the meeting that I will mention here: to begin with, Minnesota Law requires that each county sheriff's department have a Boat & Water Safety Program, being responsible for enforcing the laws on the waterways, marking waterways for hazards or removing hazards, searching for persons lost upon the waterways, and recovery of drowning victims, the inspections of rental watercrafts on an annual basis for safety, and the investigation of watercraft accidents where there is any one of the following three (1) total property damage of \$500.00 or more, (2) injury beyond 1st aid, or (3) a death.

Each year we make a report to the State on our activities, and for the year of 2001, we had 17 boating accidents, (3) drownings, conducted (12) search-rescue-recovery operations resulting in (7) rescues, spent (6,606) hours in the program, with (570) calls for service, with (198) verbal warnings, (382) written warnings, made (77) arrests or summons, gave (77) talks, had (91) displays, issued (39) marine permits, and (248) temporary structures for anything that isn't connected to the shore or dock and is left in the water overnight, such as swim rafts, swim or mooring buoys.

We get many inquiries on the life jacket re-

quirement, and in Minnesota it is as follows, everyone on board a watercraft, paddle boat-canoe-motorboat, must have a wearable & appropriate size US Coast Guard approved life jacket, it must be easy to get to, example: it can't be in a locked compartment or in the plastic container it was purchased in. On personal watercrafts (Jet-skis) the operator and passenger **MUST BE WEARING THEIR LIFE JACKETS.**

As of March this year there is a new US Coast Guard rule, when on **FEDERAL WATERWAYS, AND IN ITASCA COUNTY WE HAVE THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER, AND LAKES CONNECTED, SUCH AS WINNIBIGOSHISH, AND POKEGAMA, CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 13, MUST BE WEARING THIER LIFE JACKET,** unless they are in the cabin portion of the watercraft, and again, this rule is only for federal waterways, all other lakes in Itasca County are in the state requirement that I mentioned in the first portion of the paragraph.

There are many other things I could mention, but they would take up the whole news letter. Give us a call and we will send you a 2002 boating guide along with the boating laws, at the numbers listed below or stop by at our office.

Thank you and have a nice accident free summer, remember **LIFE JACKETS FLOAT-YOU DON'T.** 326-3477, 1-800-458-8732, fax 218-326-4663, tip line 1-800-847-8763 ext 444  
Deputy Don Basista #730  
Deputy Paul Provinzino #72

### FROM JIM RIES

Bill, I wanted to let you know that I saw a Moose on Bluewater Lake at 6:15 am on Saturday June 22nd. I was out fishing in my canoe. The Moose was 200 feet from the bridge and in the shallow water (towards Sage's property). The Moose went back into the woods and came out into the water again 5 minutes later near Sage's house. It stood for a few minutes in the water and then proceeded to swim across the lake and exited on the South side of the lake near the Bottoms house. It was an exciting moment as I have *never* seen a Moose in this area.  
Jim Ries - Bluewater Lake

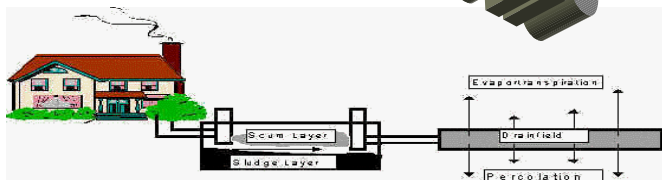
# Secchi Disk

FROM NANCY ELLSWORTH

Dear Bill: I do not believe I will have the Secchi Disk readings back in time for your publication, in July. However, you may want to note that we have some new readers. Having lost Betty and Harold Unger, and also Duane Amundson, after years of fine service—we now have Sherrie Miner, Gib Wilson, and Jean Koewler added to our numbers. Perhaps you can publish both June and July readings in the August issue.  
Nancy

*We all are very grateful to that great group of Secchi disk readers, who go out every possible week at midday and determine how far they can see the disk downwards into the waters of our lakes. It is a week-by-week determination of clarity of our waters. For myself, I look forward with even more than usual interest to the Secchi disk readings for this summer. The gully washer rains we had in June eroded very large amounts of sediment into our lakes, but even more serious is the nutrients that washed in also. They will probably provide a lot of new fertilizer for the algae, and we will probably see a large decrease in water clarity later in the summer. We'll see how accurate that prediction is, in August.*

## The Septic System



*In the June issue of the Chain Letter I asked those people who have installed new systems to write let-*

*ters describing their experience for the benefit of others who are just starting the process. We have received three so far, and have promises of several more for the August issue.*

FROM PAUL OBERG

Bill:

Re your request for septic system info from the June WCOLA newsletter, I have put in two systems in the last three years, one at our previous place which was sold to a friend and the second at our new home. I recently had our system pumped and I also arranged to have our friend's system pumped at the same time. As he was not here, I went with the pumper to show him where my friend's system was located. Both systems were installed by the same firm and both systems were to be the same type, i.e., pressurized systems which consist of two tanks and a drain field. When the pumper was pumping my system, he showed me a filter that sits between the two tanks, how it is removed and the importance of spraying it off periodically (at least 2-3 times per year) to remove the solids which collect on it. The purpose of the filter is to keep any small solids out of the second tank from where the water is pumped out to the drain field. Obviously, keeping small particles away from the drain field should result in a much more efficient drain/evaporation process by not plugging up the drain holes.

Cleaning this filter is a very simple procedure and takes only minutes to do. To my surprise, my friend's system, while it had the two tanks, did not have this filter installed between the two tanks. The point here is that this type system should have a filter and secondly, pay a little attention to what's going on when you do have a system installed...ask what the design is to be and be sure what is installed is what you are paying for. Secondly, system sizes/configurations are put in based on the number of bedrooms that exist in your structure. It makes no difference if you use your place just in the summer or year around...it is the number of bedrooms which will establish the size of the system to be installed. The septic fellow also told me that if you have a garbage disposal, the demands it makes on your system is roughly equivalent to having two extra people living in your home. The aforementioned filter also becomes a "must" with a garbage disposal.

I certainly am not an expert on these things but I am simply passing on information I have gathered that seems to make sense to me. Hope this helps out someone who might be considering a new system  
Paul Oberg

**FROM GEORGE KLACAN**

Bill:

Mary and I replaced our old septic system in 2001, replacing the old, inadequately sized tank and drywell system with a 1500 gallon tank and 15'X38' pressure bed drain field.

S&S Excavating (Corey Salisbury) installed the system designed by Bob Leibfried. Since this installation also required some directional drilling work, it was a tad more expensive than a simpler system and total costs---design, drilling, installation, electrical --- were slightly above \$8500.00

In my estimation, Corey Salisbury did a fine job of installation. He was prompt, stayed with the job and competent. He and his help were extremely polite and neat. Installation was completed in less than a week and we were without plumbing for less than an hour.

The system is functioning beautifully and we are well satisfied.

George Klacan

**FROM JOHN & CHARLOTTE ZIMMERMAN**

Our new, "in compliance", septic system connects four houses with two large tanks, pumps and a drain field of 70' by 30'. The drain field was built on a mound, as the water table did not allow it below the existing ground level. We are very pleased with the system, which was put in last year. We were one of the first ten volunteers for the Chain of Lakes program. Ron Myers did the work.

Keeping our lakes clean and free of pollution is critical to the future enjoyment of our summer home on Big Trout Lake. We congratulate the Chain of Lakes Association for making this happen.

John and Charlotte Zimmerman

**FROM TED AND SWANNY VONEIDA,  
RE: ELMER BEKKEDAHL'S 100<sup>TH</sup>**

Nancy Ellsworth suggested that we try, with Elmer's input of course, to write a brief history of his 60 years at Bluewater, for the Chain of Lakes

Newsletter. Inasmuch as he will be celebrating his 100th birthday on July 11th, it seems appropriate. The following account is the result of that effort. We realize that it may be a bit long for the newsletter, but then 100 years, two-thirds of which include Bluewater, is a long time. Please feel free to edit it, however, as you find necessary [*I did not edit*]. It would be great if it would fit as is, but that is probably wishful thinking. At any rate, here goes:

Elmer Bekkedahl, a long-time member of the Chain of Lakes Association, will celebrate his 100th birthday on July 11, 2002. HAPPY FIRST CENTURY, ELMER! The following is a brief account of some of his 'chain of lakes' memories over the past 60 years:

Vi and I came to Bluewater in 1942, after purchasing the property and a cabin at the south end the lake from Harry and Ella May Nelson. Along with Jim and Swanny, we had recently returned from Hawaii, where I served with the U.S. Geological Survey as a civil engineer. We departed Honolulu at the end of November, 1941, on the last ship to leave there prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor. The Nelsons owned all of the lakefront property from Bayview on the southwest to the Sage property on the northeast, across the channel to Wabana. We were so impressed with the great beauty and wilderness character of this area that when Harry and Ella May offered to sell a piece of it to us, we jumped at the opportunity. And what a wonderful decision it was! This has been a gathering place for our entire extended family and friends for a full two-thirds of my lifetime.

In reminiscing recently about the way things were in the early days, I recall that the roads were terrible. We often got stuck in the mud, and after a large rainstorm the road became impassable. Boats were a major means of getting from one place to another in those days. All the heating was done with a wood stove. Vi termed the original cabin 'our shack', where bats occupied the chimney most of the time (when there was no fire), and mice played freely throughout the place. Vi would often race around the cabin vigorously flailing a broom at a wayward bat, which was frantically searching for some escape route. Later, we rebuilt the cabin (2 times) to its present state.

Jim and his cousin Clifford also shared wonderful

adventures during summers on the lake. One family story which improves upon each telling is the time Swanny and Mary Fran Nelson decided to have an overnight camping trip on Sage Point. They loaded the canoe with tent, sleeping bags, and other paraphernalia, and set out. All went well until the middle of the night, when Jim, Nancy and Clifford quietly approached their campsite and made like a bear, with growls and all. The girls were, of course, frightened out of their wits, and didn't sleep for the rest of the night. Upon returning home the next morning, tired and upset, and reporting that they were scared by a bear, the truth soon became apparent. Ella May was livid, and as she read the riot act to the "three bears", she pointed a threatening finger at Jim and declared him "Big Bad Bear Bekkedahl". Giggles from the 3 intruders only added flames to the fire. As our family expanded, new faces began to appear at Bluewater.

Jim married Marge Kirk in the late 40s, having met her at the University of Minnesota, where they were both students. As their family grew, grandchildren added to our lakeside joys and fun. Swanny and Ted Voneida met while they were both at Walter Reed in Washington, DC, and were married in the mid-50s. Bekkedahl grandchildren Linda, Bill, Suzy and Larry, and Voneida grandchildren Dorianne, Jim and Audrey, brought our total family number to 12, with more new and exciting moments during each summer visit. I retired from the USGS in 1962, after 30 years of service, measuring stream flow and mountain snowpack runoff.

Anniversary parties, birthday parties, and parties just for the sake of parties were all part of the Bluewater scene. Memorable tales of days gone by were told and retold. Jim's "handmade" aluminum boat, the most unstable vessel ever to hit

the water, still occupies an honored position next to our garage. Then there was his "one person does all" water ski invention, in which the outboard was mounted on a floating platform with the skier behind, operating the controls while skiing. This actually worked amazingly well, and was even written up in the Minneapolis Star Tribune. Newly made friends began to appear as the Slyders, Kaukis's and Lokins built their summer places and homes on former segments of the Nelson property. Day-long picnic outings to the Joyce Estate were major events.

The lakes weren't as high as they are now, so the trip took a long time, with much pushing, poling, tugging and dragging the huge old Nelson Boat, the "Ock Louie", through the chain of lakes' channels. Part of the fun on these trips was to quietly approach the Joyce Estate to "spy" on whatever activity might be taking place. The unfulfilled hope was to catch sight of one of the reputedly "wild" parties that were rumored to occur.

As charter members of the Chain of Lakes Association, Vi and I, along with our entire family, have actively supported its concept and many worthwhile projects from the very beginning. Now, somehow, I have reached a major milestone in my life. After 60 wonderful summers at Bluewater Lake, we will be celebrating my 100th birthday with the entire clan, which has expanded from Jim and Swanny and their 2 spouses to 5 grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren. Vi, who passed away in 1999, at 94, will also be with us in spirit. All of the above and many dear friends will be descending on Bluewater for - you guessed it - another blowout party. This one should top them all!

**PAYMENT AND CONTRIBUTION COUPON**

**Dues for 2002-2003 were due on July 1, 2002.**

Regular 2002-03 Dues \$20.00 (Unchanged since 1988)  Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Testing, etc.)

Name(s) as you want to be listed \_\_\_\_\_

Permanent Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Which months of the year for mailing? \_\_\_\_\_

Seasonal Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Which months of the year for mailing? \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form and your \$20.00 check for 2002-03 dues, 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

# Twelfth Annual WCOLA Picnic

12<sup>TH</sup> Annual WCOLA Potluck Picnic

Saturday, July 20th

5:00 P.M.

Brats - Hot Dogs - Beverages Provided

Potluck Meal - Bring A Dish To Pass

Everyone Is Welcome - See You There!

. If you have any questions regarding the picnic you can contact Pat Chambers or Cathy & Tia Rudolph.

## **REMINDER TO ALL LAKESHORE OWNERS ON BIG TROUT LAKE:**

The agreement between the WCOLA and Itasca County was for inspection of septic systems on the entire chain of lakes, not just for those in Wabana Township. Therefore, though your lakeshore may be in Balsam Township, you are still included in the inspection schedule, and are eligible for the 3% loan money offer.

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