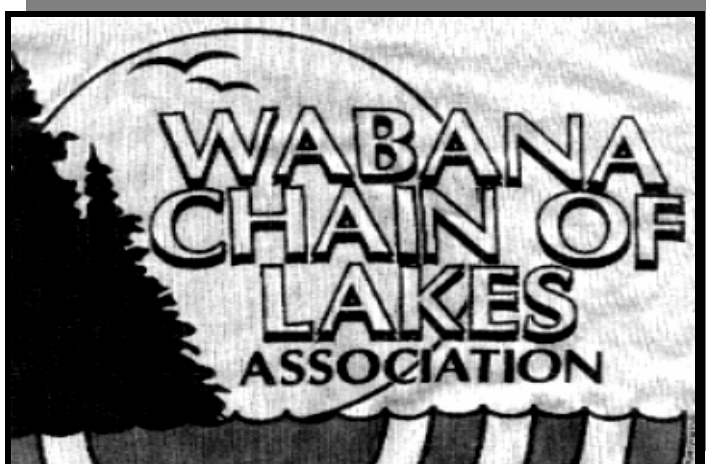


# The Chain Letter

of the



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

## August 2006

Volume 10, Number 4

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## CONTENTS

PRESIDENT'S LETTER	1
MINUTES OF MEETING JULY 15, 2006	1
LOON COUNT	2
IMPORTANT CONFERENCE	2-3
MOVING THE LOGS—BILL BERG	3-4
ASSOCIATION SIGNS	4
BETSY DOWNING	4
PROGRAM FOR AUGUST 19 2006	6

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Our thanks go out to Lynette Bryant and her picnic committee for another wonderful picnic.

For a long time now, we have had a committee working on the By-Laws for our organization. They have reviewed the past documents, and last August our membership voted for some of the necessary changes. The committee continued to work on further changes, and now the committee has a document for the membership to vote on for final approval. This document will be the rules for our organization to follow in the future. There has been a lot of time put into this and we need to recognize the people that put this together. Mary Uradnik, Sherry Miner, Bill Downing, Roger Linder, and Bill Bottoms, who really got this started, and deserves a lot of credit for these changes. A special thanks to all.

The Advisory Committee and By-Laws Committee have approved the changes, and we will put the new document up for the membership's approval during our August meeting.

Remember that is also the day for our election of officers. This year we have to vote for President and Vice-President. We hope to see everyone on August 19th.

Remember when out on our area lakes, be safe. Thanks,

*Dick*

## MINUTES OF MEETING OF JULY 15, 2006

Yes, of course, this is where you always look for the Minutes of the last meeting. Well, there was no meeting in July—we had the Picnic instead! So at the meeting of August 19, you'll be approving the Minutes of June 17, 2006. Does your memory go back that far?

## LOON COUNTS

*You will probably remember from last year's discussions in the Chain Letter that the "official" DNR annual loon count does not include Wabana Lake, so Bill Berg counts only the loons on lakes north of here. I do not pretend to understand the ins and outs of the loon count, so I will just report what I got on the email:*

### **Bill Berg's report:**

On July 10 & 11, I tallied loons on some lakes in DNR's special loon survey.

- Spider: 17 adults, 3 juveniles, including 1 set of twins
- Trout: 5 adults, 0 juveniles (by far the lowest total ever on Trout)
- Little Trout: 2 adults, 0 juveniles
- Sand: 3 adults, 1 juvenile (was a twin until an eagle got one)
- Sunrise: 0 loons

Except for the unusual low number on Trout, all other lake totals were in the "normal" range for each lake since data were collected beginning in 1994-95. The location of the traditional nest on the west side of the island at the south end of Trout Lake is very vulnerable to waves from a large boat wake, and I'm guessing that this is what happened this year.

### **Roger Linder's report**

I would like to add the subject report to the news letter. The 4th annual loon count for our chain of lakes was completed on the morning of July 17th, results are as follows.

Lake	Adults	Chicks
Wabana	23	0
Bluewater	4	0
Interlachen	2	0
Trout	16	0
2006 Total	45	0
2005	45	8
2004	49	7
2003	54	9

While the number of adults remains the same, there were no chicks sighted. Bluewater had 1 chick earlier in

the season but it was not seen during our count. There can be many reasons for the lack of chicks, no nesting pairs, eggs destroyed in the nests, and loss of chicks from large fish, snapping turtles, and eagles. As all of the reports statewide are not in it is too early to know if this is a general trend for the year.

Ken Zimmer, Dennis Koewler, Paul Oberg, and myself are part of over 300 volunteers around the state who in 2005 counted 337 lakes, and reported 1583 adults and 425 chicks. Minnesota has the largest population of loons in the lower 48 with an estimated 12,000. Maine is second with 5,000 and Wisconsin third with 3,400. More information is available at the main DNR website by typing in "loon watchers" for our survey or "loon monitoring" for the survey that Bill Berg takes part in.

## **IMPORTANT CONFERENCE, REGISTRATION DEADLINE AUGUST 18!**

*Members who love lakes will find this conference very interesting. Those of us who have attended in the past have learned a lot from the many sessions and field trips. Take a look at the offerings!*

### **Join Lake Advocates From Around the State at the 2006 Lakes & Rivers Conference, September 7-9, 2006, Duluth, Minnesota**

Minnesota Waters invites your lake association and its members to attend the 2006 Lakes and Rivers Conference, September 7-9, 2006 in Duluth, Minnesota at the Duluth Entertainment and Convention Center.

The conference offers 48 sessions, 3 field trips, and 8 workshops on a variety of topics for people interested in protecting and improving Minnesota's lakes and rivers.

Especially for lake associations and individual lake stewards, there are conference tracks on Citizen Water Quality Monitoring, Building Healthy and Effective Lake Associations, Enjoying Shoreland Living, Lake and River Ecology, Watershed Stewardship, Lake Management Planning and more. On Thursday, September 7, special workshops offer training on Aquatic Plant Management, Designing a Rain Garden, Getting Involved and Being Effective in Local Land-Use Decisions, and Aquatic Plant Identification.

Networking, excellent speakers, new program opportunities, and fun are guaranteed in beautiful

Duluth, the world's largest inland seaport. Make the conference a weekend destination, wander up the North Shore or enjoy the Great Lakes Aquarium, the Omni Theater, the shops in Canal Park and many other attractions in Duluth.

Special conference registration discounts are available to Minnesota Waters members, both individuals and lake associations as well as special hotel rates. Or, join Minnesota Waters now for only \$15 to take immediate advantage of registration discounts.

For the complete agenda, online registration, and conference lodging information, see:  
<http://www.minnesotawaters.org/conference06.html> or call 800-515-5253 to request a conference brochure.

**See you in Duluth in September—Registration Deadline is August 18. Make your plans to attend the 2006 Lakes & Rivers Conference today.**

### **MOVING THE LOGS—BILL BERG**

*More wonderful history of the Wabana Chain of Lakes, from Bill Berg*

At one of last summer's Wabana Chain of Lakes Association meetings, the question was asked, "how did the loggers move the logs out of this country during the logging era?" Parts of the answer can be had by visiting the Forest History Center in Grand Rapids, or by reading books such as *Looking Back – The Early Years. A Pictorial History of Grand Rapids and Itasca County*.

But none of these sources get into local detail. As one who loves logging era history, here are some local tidbits on how the logs were removed from the woods, and then floated downstream. Wabana and West Balsam Townships were surveyed in 1872 and 1873, and logging of the pine forests began right away. The trees near waterways were cut first, as water was the main means of moving the logs. Several logging camps were established on Wabana, Trout, Little Trout, Bluewater, Murphy, Hanson, Sunrise, Spider, and Doan Lakes. Foundations of the camp on the west shore of Murphy are easily visible. With the Wabana, Spider, and Trout Lake watersheds being near the Continental Divide, everything was "down hill" to get to the water's edge, and logging grades had to be constructed. Many are still visible, and among these are the three sleigh roads between Spider and Trout, and single sleigh roads between Murphy and Wabana (part of which is Fring's Road today), between Ruby and Trout (easily visible from County 49 near Ruby Lake), and from Little Long to Spider. Besides these primary

sleigh grades, logs were sleighed and dragged down almost any hill or through any valley to get to the water. On occasion, logs were simply rolled down a steep hill into the water.

Most sleigh roads were slightly down hill, but some needed to be on gradual uphill slopes, as well. Snow on the grades were cut into ruts and frozen with a water tank on a sleigh to facilitate towing the sleighs piled with logs. On steep downhill grades, sawdust was placed in the ruts to slow the sleighs. Both horses and oxen were used for the work, and this area was mostly logged off before steam haulers came to be. A disabled horse or ox also provided fine table fare in the camp dining hall.

When a grade needed to be cut through a hill, it was either dug by hand, or with scoop shovels pulled by a single horse. One such cut is easily accessed from Trout Lake just north of the Joyce Estate, on the Day Lake Portage. Logs were sleighed from Day Bay on Spider Lake, through the woods, and then across Day Lake and through the cut on their way to Trout Lake. Some logs were sleighed considerable distances; examples are 1) from Little Long Lake and across Spider to Trout Lake, 2) from Ruby to Trout Lake, and 3) from Murphy to the southeast part of Buckman Cove on Wabana (where the logs were rolled off the sleigh downhill into the water).

But this was just the first part of the log's journey, on their way to the mill. To accomplish this, an elaborate system of dams had to be constructed. There were dams built at the outlets of Little Trout Lake (the dam timbers are easily visible in the channel), Bluewater Lake (where the Sage Bridge is now), Wabana Lake at Wabana Creek, and at Hanson Lake, the remains of which can be seen on the north side of County 59. Logging dams were operated by the timber companies, and some had a resident dam keeper living on site. Logs then floated through Wabana and Hanson Creeks into Clearwater Lake, whose dam regulated the flow of logs through Clearwater Creek and into the Prairie River. The stumps in the creek connecting Little Trout and Wabana suggest that in pre-settlement times, Wabana's water level was much lower than the present level maintained by the dam.

On the larger lakes like Trout and Wabana, logs were grouped in booms before being towed down the lake by a small steamboat. Booms were made of tree length logs chained together, and each held hundreds of logs. There are still boom logs on the shores of Little Trout and Wabana. Before sending the logs (most of which were 17 feet long) on their way downstream, each log was stamped on the ends with a stamp hammer that was identified that logging

company. Using the stamp mark, the logs were then again sorted according to their owners at the sawmill.

The destinations of most logs, once they reached the Prairie and Mississippi Rivers, were the sawmills at Little Falls, Brainerd, and Minneapolis. But it's estimated that about one-half did not get there. Many became waterlogged and sank in the lakes or rivers on their journey, as evidenced by the numerous logs still in Trout and Wabana Lakes, and in the Prairie River. Others were stolen by unscrupulous loggers on the way.

If you think you have the remains of logging activity on your property, I'd like to explore it with you. Examination of each site completes another chapter in the Wabana area's rich logging history.

## ASSOCIATION SIGNS

*Pictures of Gary Burkholder with the dock signs.*



## BETSY DOWNING

### **Mary Elizabeth (Betsy) Meader Downing**

passed away on August 4, 2006.

She was in her home, in the midst of her loving family.

Through the ministrations of Hospice of the Lakes, she was without pain and comfortable.

The family has set Saturday, August 26 at 3:00 P.M. for her Memorial Service.

It will be held at Unity Church—Unitarian, at the corner of Portland and Grotto in St. Paul.

Friends and family are invited to attend

*Your Editor publishes the above notice with great sorrow, because Betsy was my beloved wife of sixty years. We met on Wabana Lake in 1932, when she was ten and I was eleven, and were great friends ever afterward; we married after WW 2, had a wonderful family, built our own lake cabin on Wabana lakeshore that her grandfather had bought and maintained since the 1890s.*

*Grandfather Thomas Harvey Simmons built "The Lodge" on Arrowhead Point in about 1904, and due to the hard work of the Richard Eldredge family—who have owned it for the past sixty years—it is still in good condition. Betsy's mother, Deborah Meader (née Simmons) started going to Arrowhead Point when she was nine years old, and Betsy spent every summer there from the time she was born.*

*Betsy always meant to write something of a historical nature about Arrowhead Point, so we could have that in the Chain Letter, but her life was so full of activities that she didn't get around to it, and then her blindness made it impossible. Let that be a warning to all of us—write it down while you still can!*

*I have written the following in honor of Betsy Downing, telling a little of life in the early days on Arrowhead Point. In future, I will try to recall other old history of the Point, before memory fails me.*

The people on Arrowhead Point had their origins in Bloomington, Indiana, where the Simmons families and the Adams families were all great friends and neighbors. When Thomas Simmons joined with a Mr. Lounsbury to buy cutover land here, after the logging was completed, he decided that he would make his headquarters on that Point, which he considered the most choice piece of all he owned. Great praise indeed, considering that he owned most of what is now the eastern half of Chippewa National Forest.

He built his Lodge at first to house prospective land-buying customers. Over the years he gave pieces of land to two of his brothers, his sister, and two Adams brothers. By the nineteen-

twenties, there were five houses near each other, as well as the caretaker's log cabin, a log barn, and several other buildings. A thriving community.

Put your mind back to that time, if you can. Most of the access to the Point was via a boat from the Wabana Hotel, at the south end of the lake. There was a dirt wagon road (an old logging road) that crossed a bridge over Wabana Creek, and then made its way through the woods to Arrowhead Point, but that road was used mainly for freight and big loads. Even when I came to know it, in the Thirties, it was pretty bad, not a route you would take easily.

The Simmons and Adams families would pack up in June, turn their businesses (bank, quarry, stores, law offices) over to others, take the train to Chicago, then Duluth, then Grand Rapids, then load onto buckboards and spend a day getting to the Wabana Hotel, then across the lake to Arrowhead Point. And over roads that were terrible even in the Thirties.

And there they stayed for the summer: fathers, mothers, many kinfolk and friends and visitors. Nearly everyone brought some kind of hired help, such as a cook, a maid, later a chauffeur. How could these prosperous people afford to take the summer off and disappear into the north woods? I can't answer that, but I can answer the "why" question, and so could anyone who had ever spent a summer in southern Indiana without air conditioning: the heavenly northern climate!

There were no conveniences such as we have now—no electricity, no electric lights, no running water, no bathrooms. In the early days, the whole colony did the laundry together; the men formed a bucket brigade, handing water up the hill to the boilers on outdoor stoves, but later, the caretaker's family were hired for that job. The men wore dark suits, with shirt and tie, while the women wore mainly ankle-covering dark skirts and white blouses. Betsy remembered that after swimming (probably called "bathing" in those days) in the afternoon, she was dressed in a clean dress, which she wore again the next morning.

The men went fishing a lot, rowing their heavy wooden boats, and fish was a staple food. Other meats were game, usually shot by local hunters, and preserved meats like hams, sides of bacon, and corned beef, which they buried on the ice under the sawdust in their ice houses. In the winter, each family would make up a list of needed preserved, tinned, and bottled foods for the whole summer, and put in an order to Montgomery Wards for rail and wagon delivery in the Spring when the dirt roads became passable. The caretaker had a garden, but grew only a few vegetables, and had little or nothing for the large number of summer visitors. Summer fruits were plentiful, with wild raspberries, blueberries and blackberries that had to be picked by large groups going out for picking wash tubs full in a day.

The women did a lot of cooking, even those who had brought a cook. Families often merged facilities and ate together. In the Thirties, Anna B. Adams built a kitchen and dining room building that would seat forty people with no trouble, and house the cook, maid and chauffeur as well.

Since this is blueberry season, let me give you a recipe from that time. It is from Luella Simmons cooking notebook—try it if you are adventurous! It is from Retta Adams, wife of Will Adams, builders of Cliff House, the second cottage on the Point, torn down and rebuilt in the 1960s:

#### BLUEBERRY CAKE:

1 cup butter  
2 cups sugar  
5 eggs, separated  
3 cups flour (unsifted)  
1 tsp nutmeg  
1 tsp cinnamon  
1 cup milk  
1 quart blueberries coated with  
¼ cup flour  
1 tsp soda dissolved in  
1 Tbs hot water  
Whip egg whites stiff, and set aside. Cream sugar and butter, beat in egg yolks. Add milk alternately with flour and spices. Add whipped whites, then soda water. Stir in berries with wooden spoon. Bake in 9x13 pan, in medium oven for 60 minutes. Serve with blueberry cinnamon sauce and whipped cream.

#### BLUEBERRY CINNAMON SAUCE FOR BLUEBERRY CAKE

Makes about 2 cups

½ cup sugar  
4 tsp corn starch  
1 tsp grated lemon peel  
¼ tsp cinnamon  
dash of salt  
2/3 cup water  
about a pint of blueberries  
1 tsp lemon juice  
Combine sugar, corn starch, lemon peel, cinnamon and salt in a small bowl, and set aside. In a sauce pan, put water and half the blueberries, bring to a boil, simmer long enough to mash the blueberries. Add the sugar mixture, and bring to boil. Add remaining blueberries and lemon juice, simmer 3-5 minutes longer. Serve over blueberry cake.

Luella Simmons has a lot of recipes in her notebook from Macedonia, who was brought to Arrowhead Point by Elizabeth (Mrs. Cloyd) Head, Thomas Simmons's sister, who lived in Shadowwood, the last house built on the Point. Macedonia was an African-American from Louisiana, and a champion cook. She brought her little daughter, who was Betsy's constant playmate. The following recipe has a lot more directions than Macedonia usually gave, and is to be made using an ice cream freezer.

#### FROZEN PLUM PUDDING – from Macedonia

1. Melt 5 oz. chocolate with 1 Tbs water and 1 Tbs sugar until it is smooth and glossy.
2. Heat 1 pint milk to boiling.
3. To this boiling milk add 1 cup sugar and
4. 3 beaten eggs thinned with 2 Tbs milk.
5. Remove from the fire and stir in the chocolate and 1 pint of cream.
6. Let the custard cool.
7. Then, after putting it in the freezer, add
8. ½ cup each of seeded raisins, currants and candied cherries which have been soaked in a little water 1 hour to soften. A little sliced citron may be added if desired.
9. Freeze, re-pack, and let stand two hours.
10. Serve with whipped cream.

## PROGRAM FOR AUGUST 19, 2006 MEETING

From Bill Berg:

We have an outstanding program lined up for the WCOLA meeting on Saturday, August 19. We are fortunate to have Mr. Francis "Fitz" Fitzgerald, Conservation Director for the Northern Region of the Minnesota Land Trust (MLT). Fitz will describe MLT's work with Minnesota landowners in voluntarily developing permanent conservation easements on their land. MLT is a "private, non-profit land conservation organization dedicated to permanently protecting the land and waters that define our communities and enrich our quality of life." The WCOLA program will be of special interest to those who own tracts of land that have the potential to be sub-divided and developed. Feel free to invite friends and neighbors who are not WCOLA members.

*From Bill Downing: I'll try to have examples of marine radios at the meeting, to demonstrate to anyone interested.*

THE CHAIN LETTER OF THE  
WABANA CHAIN OF LAKES ASSOCIATION  
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# WABANA CHAIN OF LAKES ASSOCIATION

**The meeting on August 19, 2006, is the Annual Meeting of the Association, and will include the election of President and Vice President for the next two years.**

**We will also be voting on Amendments to the By-Laws. Please bring your Special Mailing, and be sure that your dues for 2006-07 are paid, so you may vote.**