

# The Chain Letter

of the



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

# September 2009

Volume 12, Number 5

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Updates noted in **Red** – please update address books!

Visit our

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Add your items to it by sending to Mark Miner,

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## SEPTEMBER 2009 LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Due to health issues, I missed nearly all the month of August at the lake, so I missed the orderly transformation of the days from spring to midsummer to autumn here in the north. But I'm not too late for the coming of fall, with its magical color brushes in the forest. When I left, the forest looked to be all of one piece, all green and tall, with some texture variation between the needles of conifers and the leaves of deciduous trees, but a single Forest.

Late August brings the time for individuality. Peeking from behind that big white pine is a brilliant red branch of some eager maple. See that birch, so different from the other birches, turning yellow, beating out all of its neighbors, and pretty proud of it, too. That young red oak tree beside the road has turned that elegant deep leathery red color that oaks prefer. And see the sumac—an early stripe of bright red along the road against the still-green forest.

Then comes September. One decent frost will accelerate the riotous changes that we love to see, to photograph each year as though it had never been photographed before, and to tell our southerly friends about. Every leafy tree is now itself, turning at its own pace and taking on its own mix of colored leaves. The once-single forest becomes a neighborhood of colored leaf bouquets, each tree telling us that it is itself, is unique. Each stand of young poplars—all from a single root system—turn that rich poplar gold-yellow.

The wild forest and prairie flowers are at their most bounteous now. Mostly yellow, with patches of pale lavender, white, deep blue, purple and orange, they make the open ground around our lakes as rich below as the leaves are above. I maintain that our driveway stand of the sunflowery Heliopsis is a special species (though the expert John Latimer says it probably is not), but whatever its species, it appeals to me.

So I'm happy to be back here at autumn time, to enjoy with you our splendid fall color season. Friends who live here year-around tell me that after the fall our area becomes ever more appealing: the big globs of snow falling, the lakes freezing, the freezing edge sounding like bacon frying, the loons gathering and molting before they fly south, those eagles that stay here soaring over the ice, the otters having fun on the snowy lake banks, and all the marvelous camaraderie among the residents of our

community. Roads on the ice. Cross-country skiing all the way to and from the north end of Trout. I'd love to spend at least part of a winter here, though in my summer cabin I get tired carrying wood and stoking the fires (central heating is pretty appealing to octogenarians).

My son John said in his WCOLA program last summer, that he has seen lakes all around the world, and for him, this is tops. How glorious that we can be here. How singularly blessed we are. We resolve again to pump our septic systems, plant wild species along our shores, avoid runoff water from eutrophication of our pure waters, continue Secchi disk readings, continue testing and analysis for our base line, and be the force for careful development and the bulwark against careless and unlawful building. Our Association has a lot to do, and we can do it.

See you next year.  
With affection, Bill

### Upcoming Meeting Dates for 2009

SUMMER 2009 Meeting Dates (3rd Saturday)

#### **Saturday, Sept. 19**

9 a.m. Program: Keith Matson, retired Chippewa National Forest Technician, speaking on early logging in our area  
10-11 a.m. Meeting

**All Meetings will be at the Wabana Town Hall and will last 1 (one) hour!**

### WCOLA Meeting Minutes – August 15, 2009

(Gail Olijnek, Secretary - August 15, 2009)

**9:00am Program** - Bill Berg from the WCOLA Program Committee announced that next month our program would be on logging history given by Keith Matson, retired from the US Forest Service. Jessica Colburn was not able to be with us today. Bill Berg introduced John Downing, limnologist, University of Iowa Professor. He graciously volunteered to update us on what Jessica has been doing, and share with us projects that have been going on to learn, maintain, and protect the water quality of our lakes here and in Itasca County. It was an excellent program.

**Meeting** - Bill Downing, President, called the meeting to order at 10:10am with 38 members present. He asked for any additions to the agenda; none were made; a motion was made and approved to adopt the agenda.

**Secretary Minutes** - Dick Chambers made a correction to the June 20, 2009 minutes that the \$400 to be used for WCOLA gifts is for "all members", not just "new members". It was also noted that Barbara Zimmer's name was incorrect in reference to the spring road clean up. Motion made and approved to adopt the minutes as corrected.

**Treasurer's Report** - The Treasurer's report was presented by Jean Koewler, and a motion was made and approved to receive the Treasurer's report as stated below. Our President reminded the members that dues are due on July 1, and if you intend to vote for officers in the Annual Meeting today to have your dues up to date. Details follow:

Balance as of June 19, 2009	\$ 1,637.36
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Receipts:

Dues	\$ 500.00
Contributions	\$ 10.00
Total Receipts	\$ 510.00

Disbursements:

Itasca Coalition of Lakes	
Membership (113 @ \$.50)	\$ 56.50
July Newsletter (240 @ \$.44)	\$ 105.60
Aug Newsletter (260 @ \$.44)	\$ 114.40
Walmart (Picnic supplies, cooler, address labels)	\$ 84.94
Forest Lake Restaurant (Gift certificate – door prize)	\$ 50.00
Carol Burkholder (Picnic supplies)	\$ 10.12
Dick Chambers (Picnic supplies – Ogle's)	\$ 102.44
Tom Chapin (4 Books – Picnic door prizes)	\$ 70.00
Kathleen Willson (door prizes – 2 fishing rods)	\$ 34.18
Total Disbursements	\$ 628.18

Checkbook Balance – 8/14/09	\$ 1,519.18
CD – Renewal date – 1/22/10	\$ 5,206.17
Total Paid Households: 119	

Standing Committee reports are as follows:

**Advisory Committee** - No meeting this month. We will have discussion on Bluewater Ridge Development later in the meeting.

**Hospitality Committee** - Kathleen Willson reported that at the Ice Cream Social Friday night we scooped 90 dishes of ice cream. Lake owners and

lots of non-lake people came, and everyone stayed and visited.

Membership Committee - Dick Chambers reported that last month WCOLA gave the membership committee \$400 to purchase gifts for members. They have discussed many things, but no decisions have been made at this time. Alida Zimmerman is a new committee member. A great concern of this committee is how to bring in new members, so if you have any ideas, please contact any of the members of the committee. John Downing commented on making sure that we were including seasonal along with permanent residents. The committee knows they have some work ahead of them to encourage people to become members, and feel they have a say in what is happening in our lakes. Swanny Voneida, as a non resident but coming up here for over 40 years, has volunteered to write a small article for the newsletter encouraging membership.

Environment Committee - Ken Zimmer reported that the committee has done a few things this summer. Brochures have been distributed to the resorts on the chain, and also placed brochures and maps in the box at the south access on Wabana. The committee will put up a box at the north access for brochures. Education has been on our list of things to do...today's program was excellent even though we didn't really have any input into making it happen. Ken shared that the committee has a brochure on where to go for help if you are planning to make changes to your shoreline.

Historical Committee - Sherry Miner reported that the last meeting was over at the island, and a lot of people had never been there so we toured around some. The first collage on the walls of the Township Hall will be of WaGaThaKa. The Township has given WCOLA permission to hang the pictures after the walls have been painted. The next meeting will be held September 3 at 4:00pm at the home of John Zimmerman, Sr., on Trout Lake.

Publications Committee - Susan Lick thanked John Zimmerman, Jr., publisher, and Chris Friedlieb, editor, for their great work on the newsletter, and to all the people who have been contributing. The committee has not met as yet, but will soon on creating a new brochure.

Outreach Committee - Lloyd Adams reported that the committee has not met. The Ice Cream Social was a first outreach to the community, a success, and we should do it yearly.

Audit Committee - Mary Klacan reported that the WCOLA books were in perfect order, but that we should do the audit more often. Because we are a non-profit organization it should be done every other year. Gail Olijnek will check the By-Laws, and Mary will check further as to how often it legally should be done.

Program Committee - No report.

John and Bill Downing have talked about having a gathering at the old Wabana Picnic grounds, possibly next year. It is where they live now, and there was much discussion in the past when they built their place on the picnic grounds.

New Business - Bluewater Ridge Development, NE side of Bluewater Lake. This is a six-lot development: 3 for family members and 3 for sale. They are looking for a road access that would be a private cart way to the Meyer's family and the future owners only. Bud Sage shared information from the Township.

John Downing asked what the process is to make sure that any development is proper...placement and environmentally. Itasca County is basically responsible, but Wabana Township and WCOLA are informed on these kinds of developments. After discussion, a motion was made that standard operating procedure for communiqués about development from the county be forwarded to the Environmental Committee for decision and recommendation in concert with the Township. The motion was seconded and approved.

Bud Sage suggested that as changes are made in WCOLA that we are diligent in changing WCOLA's address to the County to make sure that the documents get to the designated persons. A letter with address changes should be sent to Don Dewey, Head of Environmental Affairs at Itasca County.

Nominating Committee - Bob Gephart presented the nominees for the Secretary and Treasurer. Art Merrill was nominated for Secretary, and Jean Koewler was nominated for Treasurer. Nominations from the floor were open for Secretary; being none, we cast a unanimous ballot for Art Merrill. Motion seconded and approved by the membership. He was secretary of the faculty to the United Theological Seminary in the Twin Cities for 30 years. Nominations from the floor were opened for Treasurer; being none, we cast a unanimous vote

for Jean Koewler as Treasurer. Motion seconded and approved by the membership. Thanks to the Nominating Committee for their hard work.

President Downing asked for comments from the floor regarding the timing of our August Annual Meeting. There is a concern that August may be too late for seasonal families because of school and college start-ups. Discussion included many options such as 1) changing it to July, still having our picnic in July; 2) moving it up one week; 3) changing all our meetings to the first Saturday of the month; 4) moving it to June; 5) leaving it where it is because each month has it's own concerns; etc. After much discussion for and against, Mary Lou Sage made a motion to leave the Annual Meeting in August, and the motion was seconded. After more discussion a vote was taken and it failed. President Downing ruled that the Advisory Committee would take up the matter of the timing of the Annual Meeting and make a decision, since we were over our allotted time for the meeting.

A motion was made to adjourn, and President Downing adjourned the meeting at 11:16am

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### **Committee Reports**

(If you are interested in participating in any of these committees, Please contact the Committee Chair)

**Environment** (Ken Zimmer) - We installed a box to hold information about "Aquatic Hitchhikers" at the north public access. We also distributed these brochures to resorts on Wabana.

We examined an area of erosion at the north end of Bluewater and are brainstorming with residents about how to alleviate this problem. It looks like there are several inexpensive possibilities to improve the situation.

**History** (Roger Linder) – We Want Stories about Area History

We have been fortunate to continue to receive stories and photos of the history of our area. The most recent was sent to us by Jean Whittington Popovich. She tells us the story and shares photos of her family beginning in the 1930's on the north end of Wabana. Future newsletters will include her writings.

The committee has decided to request support from WCOLA and the township to obtain a multiplex

display. This would be placed in the Town Hall and will allow everyone to view the material we are collecting.

Open those old albums, boxes etc. and send any photos etc. of the Wabana Township area to us at:

Historical Committee-C/O Roger Linder  
36542 Birch Trail  
Grand Rapids Mn. 55744

(We will scan your photo's and documents and return originals to you. We will also provide a disk with digital copies for you to use as a backup to your originals. Please include any information you can about the photo's you provide – including dates, names of individuals and location the picture was taken)

**Program** (Bill Berg and Susan Hawkinson) - We are extremely fortunate to have Keith Matson, retired Chippewa National Forest Technician and expert early logging historian, for our September WCOLA program. Keith will speak on early local logging, with emphasis on the Itasca Logging Company, and the Swan River Logging Company. Keith will have a special hand-out report that he prepared on the Itasca Logging Company.

Be sure to attend this one, and please bring anyone interested in local history.

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### **AN INVITATION**

The house on the hill at the south end of Bluewater Lake has evolved over the last 69 years from what Elmer and Vi Bekkedahl lovingly referred to as "the shack", into the larger house you might have noticed as you approach the channel from the north or west. Elmer and Vi's daughter Swanny first came here in the mid-'40s, and I joined 10 years later. Our 3 children, followed by our grand daughters in subsequent years, are now part of the annual family gathering during each July/August. We live and work, like so many other "summer people", in more southerly places during the winter, but 2 months of each summer are reserved for Bluewater.

At our August meeting, someone mentioned how nice it would be if more people who spend part of the summer here would join our Association. In a moment of weakness, and as part of a long term "summer family" I volunteered to write this "invitation" for our Chain Letter.

Members and guests of the Association meet monthly at the Wabana Township Hall. Following coffee and a short business meeting, we often have a guest speaker. Many topics are covered, including updates on lake quality, histories of the chain of lakes, and environmental issues, to mention only a few. We have a picnic in July, and this year there was also an ice cream social. All of these gatherings are wonderful opportunities for us to get better acquainted with our neighbors, in addition to becoming better informed about issues of importance to everyone in the chain of lakes area. Please consider this note, therefore, as an invitation to join our Association. The \$20 annual dues helps us meet expenses, the social interaction is great, and the old adage "there's strength in numbers" carries more meaning as each year rolls by. The more members we have, the more we are able to do to keep our lakes as healthy and as lovely as they have always been. Please do consider joining us – come to one of our meetings and see for yourselves. I think you will agree with Swanny and I that it will be the best \$20 you have ever invested. An additional feature, by the way, is our monthly "Chain Letter", which updates members about recent happenings in the area.

If you would like to accept this invitation – and join the Waban Chain of Lakes Association – please send your name, address, email and a check for \$20.00 to our Treasurer:

Jean Koewler  
32040 Wakeman Bay Trail  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744-1800

If you would like additional information, please contact Dick Chambers (326-2809 [dicknpat9@msn.com](mailto:dicknpat9@msn.com)) who chairs our Membership Committee. You can also email Bill Downing, our President, or any other officer listed on the masthead of this newsletter.

Ted Voneida

**August Program Highlights: John Downing**  
(Due to illness of the expected presenter, John Downing spoke about the Itasca Water Legacy Partnership)

Why is biological testing and monitoring important? John Downing, a water quality expert who has been key with David Lick in establishing the Itasca Community College ICC lab and the Itasca Water

Legacy Partnership (IWLC) spent an hour sharing with us how important this kind of research is and his observations about what the data that has been collected already on our lakes means and how it will be used. Biological testing and monitoring is the key to preservation and management of the Chain of Lakes water quality. Monitoring increases our knowledge of the biodiversity of our lakes. Buckman Cove on Wabana has one of the highest rates of biodiversity of anywhere in the world. This includes fish species, invertebrates and vertebrates, as well as plants. It is critical to have a base-line and then to continue to monitor the condition of our lakes.

We know that shore land development can significantly impact fish and wildlife habitat. We can mitigate this by learning how to keep our shores in as natural a state as possible. As we make lawns, beaches, and dock areas, we clean up the "mess" of plants, old logs, and mud. But these areas we don't like – and so "clean up" are really important for fish and wildlife for feeding, hiding and spawning. So, leave that old tree lying where it is, keep some part of your lakeshore natural or work to return parts of your cleared lakeshore more natural and supportive of fish and wildlife.

One reason an accurate baseline of water properties in our four lakes is critical to the future quality of life in and on these lakes is that the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) pays most attention to chronicled diversity and lakes that have a history of scientific data collection. We are competing with all of the other lakes in our state and those with the data will have a better chance of getting grants for research and improvements. The monitoring done by the IWLP programs is all done with scrupulous scientific collection techniques. The data is then certified by the Minnesota Department of Health which allows it to be included in the Federal Data Bank. Our lakes have a huge advantage in that we have been collecting the information in the appropriate manner and creating our baseline against which to assess future changes.

This summer, students sampled 182 lakes in Itasca County, 5 times each. The MPCA says that last summer the ICC lab monitored more lakes in this project than all of the rest in Minnesota! The ICC team members, while visiting the lakes and taking samples also took digital photographs around the lakes and so soon you will be able to see pictures of all 182 lakes at GoogleEarth.

One major point made by John Downing in his presentation to our membership was that by the time you get bad secchi disc readings from out in the middle of the lake, much damage has already been done. He stressed how important it is to measure shoreline quality so that we can monitor changes and make improvements before the permanent damage is done and shows up in the secchi disk monitoring program.

John ended his presentation by asking all of us to join the IWLP by contributing \$20.00 a year. As you know from prior newsletters – joining is simple. All donations are tax deductible. Please make your check payable to the Grand Rapids Community Foundation and write —For the IWLP on the comment line.

Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation  
350 NW First Ave , Suite E  
Grand Rapids, Minnesota 55744

The IWLP is in partnership with ICC, Itasca County, SWCD, the MPCA and the DNR.

Many individuals have already joined. The IWLP is also soliciting contributions from lake associations and is excited to report that The Deer Lake Association donated \$15,000.00.

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## History of Arrowhead Point on Lake Wabana Part 4 – The Cove, Boat House and Caretakers

(Written by Martha Gettinger in 1994 and appearing here in 4 parts this summer presented by the History Committee)

### THE COVE

The last house to be built was The Cove. It was built by Wickliffe and Jessie Ray in approximately 1926. Jessie Ray was the daughter of James Simmons and a niece of Thomas H. Simmons. Wick Ray was an insurance man from Indianapolis and helped get Forrest Sherer started in the insurance business. Forrest visited Wick in 1926 or 1927. That was the connection of the Terre Haute groups (Sherer, Hill, Johnson, Malone, Glascock, Eldridge, and Myers) to the Point. Wick was a hunting and fishing companion of Paul Hill and Forrest Sherer.

Wick and Jessie had two children. Jim and his wife were the honeymooners who stayed in the

Hill House after it was first built. A daughter Betty was married but I don't know her last name. I might note that it was Jim Ray who made the Wabana Chain of Lakes maps hanging in each of the houses.

After Wick Ray's death, Jim sold the property, in 1949, to Dr. L.A. and Dorothy Malone and Joe and Helen Weber, of Terre Haute. Malones lived across the street from Hills and Sherers so the neighborhood just moved north for the summer. The Webers then sold to Doc Malone in 1960. Malones had two boys, Bill and Jim, and a nephew Richard, their sons' age. They made a lot of contributions to the Point. They opened the old trail to the houses, and the farm house. At that time, the only real, outside phone was at the caretaker's. Doc taught us how to ski and surf and encouraged all sorts of fun.

Doc Malone and his second wife, Mabel Anshutz Malone, sold the property to Dr. John Glascock and his wife Dorothy of Cedar Falls, Iowa, in 1979. John first came to the point as a guest of Wayne Sherer, in 1948. He lived next door to Doc Malone in Terre Haute. They have five children.

There are three buildings connected with the property built by Wick and Jessie Ray; two bedroom cabins and a woodshed (now, also a bathroom.)

### BOAT HOUSE

The present boat house was built in the winter of 1953-4. It replaces the old boat house (we have a picture) built quite early, but don't know the date. It is the only boat house on the lake, and now the laws forbid any new boat houses. Everyone in the "Colony" owns a part of the boat house, except Eldridges, who keep their boats in Murphy's Bay. A small boat house built by Cosler and Adams,



The Boathouse – house on left was torn down years ago.

who didn't want to be part of the big boat house, is now owned by Sherers and Lukens.

Also, all of the colony individuals own the caretaker's house and property and the Point jointly.



Photograph of the boathouse from the water.

## CARETAKERS

There have been surprisingly few caretakers. The first was C.V. Smith. The second was James Francisco. He injured his leg in 1919 and shot himself before he starved to death. We have a copy of the newspaper article telling of it. The third caretaker was Alex Kekkenon. He was the carpenter that built Sherers' first cabin. He retired and his family still lives in the area. The fourth were George and Blanch Willenbring. They were the caretakers from 1937 to 1986. George drove an iron mine truck and farmed besides doing all the work on the Point. George and Blanch had no children but raised a niece and nephew (Betty and Bob) and later had three foster sons. One foster son, Pat Elison was caretaker after George became too old to do the work. Then came Carl and Sharon Daniels. They were there for about three years. At this writing, Ross and Jean Burt are the caretakers. The caretaker's area has had a few changes also. The original house stood until a new house was built in 1951 and enlarged in 1968. The old log barn was

not replaced and stood in the hollow by Murphy's bay. In 1993-94 when the Burts came, it was completely redecorated and repaired.

In 1951, electricity was brought to the Point. Before that, candles and lamps were used and the cooking was done on a cook stove. Most of the houses still have the old lamps and stoves. Water was pumped with a gasoline pump.

At this writing, (February 1994), Alice Cosler still lives. I have a tape recording of her describing things. The grand-daughter of Thomas Simmons, Betsy Downing, still lives on Lake Wabana in the summers and furnished some information. Also, information was obtained from papers, from the research done by people when the Point was suggested for the National Register of Historical Places. Also provided by me, Martha Gettinger Sherer, to each property owner is a video tape of all the grounds and vocal description of Arrowhead Point.

*The Chain Letter of the  
Wabana Chain of Lakes  
Association*

*September 2009*

*There is a lot of pretty good  
stuff inside, Local History,  
Water Quality Presentation  
with a focus on shore line  
environments, Pictures, and  
Dates for Upcoming  
Meetings*

THE CHAIN LETTER OF THE  
WABANA CHAIN OF LAKES ASSOCIATION  
Jean Koewler, Treasurer  
32040 Wakeman Bay Trail  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

Our Next Association Meeting will be

**September 19th , 2009**

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Be sure to attend this one, and please bring anyone interested in local history. Keith will present at 9a.m. followed by our regular business meeting from 10a.m. to 11a.m. at the Wabana Town Hall.

Please email me (Bill Downing – President) with suggestions for Agenda topics for this or future meetings.