

The Chain Letter

of the



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

June 2010

Volume 13, Number 2

WCOLA Policy Change Newsletter Distribution

**(Please Read This Announcement as it affects
all recipients of the WCOLA Newsletter!)**

The Wabana Chain of Lakes Association (WCOLA) newsletter has been a successful way to extend the mission, goals, actions, results and a good dose of information and history to the folks who live, visit and care about, the Wabana Chain of Lakes area. Following years of printing and mailing the newsletter to ALL residents of the Wabana Township and Balsam Township residents in the Trout Lake areas, WCOLA has utilized two additional options to reduce costs of printing by posting the newsletters on the WCOLA web site (wcola.org) and emailing the

newsletter to those who have given us their email addresses.

A proposal to the WCOLA organization will be made at the June 19th 2010 regular meeting as a necessary effort to further reduce the costs of printing and mailing the five yearly newsletters.

WCOLA members:

- To continue to send the newsletter electronically to those with email addresses and post newsletters on the wcola.org website and
- To Charge \$7 extra per year for membership for those only wanting printed and mailed hard copies.

Non-WCOLA membership:

- One other additional proposed option would be to print and mail only the 1st edition to non-WCOLA members each year to announce meeting times and invite membership.

This fund saving proposal will help WCOLA, an organization, made up of active, interested and concerned neighbors, continue to work together to:

- preserve clarity and quality of waters and watershed areas
- collect the history and provide a social community of the area
- educate and continue to pass along information
- pay attention to how the policies, practices and requirements of local agencies and offices might impact our chain of lakes
- speak and be heard as advisors who share the interest in the Wabana Chain of Lakes area so that it may be enjoyed now and in the years to come.

We hope this will encourage you to join the Wabana Chain of Lakes Association as new members and also continuing your membership by helping us with this effort.

WCOLA - OFFICERS

President: Bill Downing 326-4730 wdowningster@gmail.com
Vice President: Lloyd Adams 326-2130 ladams_94@msn.com
Treasurer: Jean Koewler 326-4302 djkoewler@g.com
Secretary: Arthur L. Merrill 327-5492 artgaro@northlc.com

ADVISORY COMMITTEE (includes officers above)

Bill Berg 326-4253 terblbrg@uslink.net
Dick Chambers 326-2809 dicknpat9@msn.com
Nancy Ellsworth 326-8056 nellsworth1@cox.net
Susan Hawkinson 327-2533 susanondoan@msn.com
David Lick 326-6837 SusanLick@msn.com
Susan Lick 326-6837 SusanLick@msn.com
Roger Linder 326-2266 mlinder@msn.com
Sherry Miner 326-0589 sjminer797@msn.com
Diane Rutherford bluefinger51@hotmail.com
John Zimmerman Sr. 326-1020 jzim29@comcast.net

Editor: Chris Friedlieb 326-8971 peterchris2@msn.com

Publisher: John Zimmerman Jr. 327-3188

jwzimmerjr@gmail.com

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

Visit our

web site www.wcola.org

Add your items to it by sending to Mark Miner,
mminer@minergroup.com

APRIL 2010 LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

June 2010 President's letter.

Summer Solstice again. June with all its beauty and activity in the forest and in the waters. In the past I have usually made quite a deal out of the Winter Solstice, in December, occasionally even getting our (Betsy's and my) Holiday Letter to family and friends written in time to call it our—now my—Solstice Letter. But I have paid much less attention to this glorious longest day in the year that will come up just two days after our WCOLA meeting, when (calendars tell us) "Summer begins".

This year it seems as though it's been Summer for quite a long time, what with the month-early Ice Out and the warming sun on our waters. I even went into the water in May! Well, not swimming, maybe, but rather deep wading, which seemed sufficient for that first-in-the-lake Photograph. I don't like the thought of what this early warmth will do to the fish, regarding water temperature and thermocline, especially the tullibee and lake trout. But we'll cross that bridge when we come to it, and meanwhile bask in the lovely long summer.

And what do I intend to do on that Solstice day? I am going to sit out on the end of our dock at Sandycarc, from about 5:00 p. m. until sunset, weather permitting, with an appropriate beverage in hand, and hope I can wish a Happy Solstice to as many people as possible. If you find yourself out cruising on Wabana around those times, won't you slide in, and join me in a quiet celebration of our mutual good fortune, being together in these

surroundings, on this wonderful day? I can provide some of our fine well water, or maybe a cooler of canned beverages, and I might pop for some kind of crunchies to go with the beverages.

We have two docks out, giving plenty of room for quite a few visitors. You can't miss them: John added our WCOLA sign between the docks—the longer dock a cast-off from a resort on Deer Lake, bought and placed so I can have a lift out there for my Boston Whaler. I'm pretty unsteady in most boats, and wish I had a steady pontoon boat so I could get out on the water more often, but we get along with what we have, right? As we used to say in the Depression, "Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without."

Special WCOLA Events

Roadside Cleanup – Spring 2010. Thank you to the crew who cleaned up roadside trash in our township on May 19, 2010. The group spent the morning walking the roadways picking up cans, bottles, plastic bags, food containers and even a rooftop ventilator. Those who



gave of their time and energy were Bud Sage, Warren Chapman, Ken and Barbara Zimmer, George and Mary Klacan, Denny and Jean Koewler, Gib and Kathleen Willson. Photo by Lloyd Adams.

Upcoming Meeting Dates for 2010

Saturday, June 19 (coffee, treats, at 8:30 a.m.)

9 a.m. Program: **Patricia E. Navratil** - Some of you know Pat as the author of the great little book *Trails Through the Northwoods - A History of the Bigfork Trail*. Pat has done considerable research on local history, including the Joyce family, and is working on a second book.

10-11 a.m. Meeting

Saturday, July 17

Evening picnic

Saturday, August 21 (coffee, treats, at 8:30 a.m.)

9 a.m. Program: Mary Shideler, "Kayak Lady" who will talk on her completed goal of kayaking on every one of Itasca County's 1000+ lakes

10-11 a.m. Meeting
Saturday, Sept. 18 (coffee, treats, at 8:30 a.m.)
 9 a.m. Program: To Be Determined
 10-11 a.m. Meeting

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

WCOLA Meeting Minutes – May 22, 2010
 (Arthur L. Merrill, Secretary)

9:00 AM The meeting was called to order by President Bill Downing. The motion was made and seconded that the Agenda for the meeting be adopted. The motion passed.

Minutes of the previous meeting: The motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes as printed in the WCOLA The Chain Letter. The motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: Barbara Zimmer gave the report for Treasurer Jean Koewler. It was noted that the funding for the association was in jeopardy. The motion was made and seconded that the report be received. The motion passed.

Wabana Chain of Lakes Treasurer's Report
 May 22, 2010

Balance as of September 17, 2009	\$ 816.34
Receipts:	
Dues	\$ 1,720.00
Contributions	\$ 90.00
Dock Sign	\$ 5.00
Total Receipts	\$ 1,815.00
Disbursements:	
Postmaster – 260 - stamps	\$ 114.40
April Newsletter	
Treasure Bay Printing	\$ 552.05
August (\$157.39)	
September (\$197.33)	
April (\$197.33)	
Roger Linder – Hist Committee	\$ 236.37
Countertop display	
Township paid half	
Walmart – mailing labels	\$ 20.18
Grand Rapids State Bank	\$ 3.30
Maintenance Fee	
Total Disbursements	\$ 926.30
Checkbook Balance – May 18, 2010	\$ 1,705.04
CD (Renewal date – July 22, 2010)	\$ 5,235.40
Total Paid Households: 66	

Discussion was held on the need to hold down costs. One suggestion was that we push email of the newsletter. Another was to mail out a postcard with meeting dates, etc.

The motion was made by Gib Willson and seconded that we cash the CD and put it in a cash position and into the Association checkbook. The motion was passed.

Water Testing: The analysis of the Water Testing program was received from John Downing. It was moved and seconded that we accept the program to test in 2010 and 2011 with the cost of \$3068 per year. The motion passed.

The Standing Committee Reports:

Publication Committee: The suggestion was made that the Membership and Publications Committees be merged. The motion was made and seconded that the committees work on roles and functions and report back to the body what seems to be best for the Association. The motion passed.

Hospitality Committee: Its main functions are the Annual Picnic and the Ice Cream Social in conjunction with the Township.

Nomination Committee: The President asked for volunteers to work on this committee. There will be August elections of the President and Vice-President. Gib Willson volunteered to chair the committee.

Audit Committee: It was noted that members of the Advisory committee cannot be on the Audit Committee. Roger Linder volunteered to resign from the Advisory Committee and chair the Audit committee. Bud Sage volunteered to be on the committee.

Environment Committee: Bob Gephart reported on the activities of the committee. Among the concerns of the committee are: The Fish Ladder on Wabana Creek; Erosion on the north end of Bluewater, Road Salt that leaches into the lakes, Invasive Species and Itasca Shoreland Buffer project.

It was noted that due to the shortage of funds the Betsy Downing Bio-diversity Scholarship has been put on hold.

Motion was made and seconded to extend the meeting to 10:30 am. The motion passed.

Publications The motion was made and seconded that we not send the next newsletter to the general public except to members and by email. The motion failed. The motion was made and seconded that we send one more newsletter to the general public and include a note that this would be the last one without membership in the association, email, or subscription. Motion passed.

Historical Committee: Roger Linder reported and showed the new display stand that was obtained with the help of Wabana Township.

Advisory Committee: The Advisory Committee will meet June 15th at 6:00 pm.

Membership Committee: Alida Zimmerman reported that the committee is developing a brochure on the Association which will not be mailed, but distributed by other means.

Road Clean-up: Barbara Zimmer announced that the next clean up will be Sept. 22, 2010.

Next Meeting: The next meeting on June 19, 2010 will have a program by Pat Navratil on the Joyce Family.

Catherine McLynn: Our county commissioner announced that the DNR has taken over the solution to the Canisteo Mine and that it will involve draining into the Prairie River.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:29 am by President Downing.

Committee Notes since Last Meeting

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

Membership (Alida Zimmerman) – The WCOLA membership brochures are printed and available for any of us to use to invite others to become members and learn about our lakes and WCOLA. Copies will be available at the next meeting.



Hospitality (Kathleen Wilson) - Get out your favorite recipe and plan to mix it up for the annual WCOLA Potluck Picnic on Saturday, July 17 at 6 p.m. After supper, we'll be mixing up some boot scootin' country dancing for some toe tappin' entertainment! Join us for fun and friendship!

Environment (Ken Zimmer) - Eric Raitanen, Fisheries Biologist, Chippewa National Forest, contacted the committee about fish passage work on Wabana Creek. He requested time to present information to the association about the project.

WCOLA History Series

ZIM'S ON WABANA RESORT (Ken Zimmer)

- 1941 Harlan and Mabel Zimmer sold their restaurant, The Frog Pond, in Indianapolis, Indiana.
- 1943 August 17, 1943 Harlan and Mabel Zimmer purchased land from J. A. Nichols and Vidla Nichols of Ramsey County, Minnesota
- September 10, 1943 Harlan and Mabel Zimmer purchased land from Deborah Meader and Amos Meader of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania.

1946 Harlan and Mabel Zimmer moved to Grand Rapids, Minnesota and opened a resort, Zim's on Wabana. Some of the first buildings were moved across the ice from property owned by Joe Rondelly.

The first winter Harlan and Mabel lived in a small one-room structure that they called "the shack" as they cleared the land to prepare for the building of the cabins.

During the early years of the resort, Harlan and Mabel remained at the resort for the winter. One winter there was



Mabel and Harlan Zimmer (Early 1950's)

a big snowstorm that made travel across the frozen ice very difficult. Harlan remembered that Ms. Sebo had decided to stay on the island for the winter. When the weather cleared, Harlan walked to the island on his

snowshoes to take her food. As Mabel told the story, Ms. Sebo was out of food and was sure happy to see him coming across the snowy lake.

Some of the first cabins were kits ordered from Sears, Roebuck & Co. catalog. In the early years after World War II, the cabins all had ice boxes for refrigeration. Ice, cut in blocks from the lake, was put up in an ice house. Sawdust was used to insulate the ice blocks which lasted all summer. Each morning Harlan would deliver ice to the cabins in a wheelbarrow. Pat, the camp Labrador Retriever, followed Harlan around camp as he made the deliveries.



The Lodge at Zim's on Wabana Resort (1959)

The cabins were equipped with gas hotplates for cooking and portable ovens were added later. Some meals were prepared by Mabel for all in the camp and served in the enclosed porch of the lodge. Mabel's Sunday chicken dinners were well known in the area. The menu was fried chicken, mashed potatoes, corn or beans, fresh rolls, and homemade strawberry jam. Fish fries were popular and Mabel's peach and rhubarb pies were delicious. Pies could be purchased if ordered a day ahead.

There were 7 cabins and an apartment in the lodge. Each cabin had a bathroom without a tub or shower. There was one shower in the lodge for anyone to use. Most of the guests would swim and not find it necessary to shower. The cabins did not have TV or telephones. Both were available in the lodge, along with candy, ice cream bars, popsicles, and pop for purchase. There were games at the lodge and Mabel was always ready to set up the Scrabble board for a game with guests. Every evening there was an open canasta game in the lodge.

The linens were furnished and would be exchanged each week for guests who stayed longer than one week. Monday was wash day and started for Mabel and her helper at 5:00AM. She would get the wringer going in the garage and hang the sheets on lines south of the lodge. Tuesday was ironing day and she would use a mangle to iron the sheets and a regular iron to do the dish towels and pillow cases.

Lorraine Long, daughter of Al and Millie Long, worked for the Zimmer's during the summer; living in one of the early cabins. Lola "Smokey" Hamlin was another local resident who worked at the resort.

A boat came with each cabin rental and most guests brought their own outboard motor. In those days of small 5 - 15HP outboards, Harlan would mix gasoline and oil by measuring the gasoline in a one-gallon glass jar. The gasoline was stored in a 55 gallon drum and the guests would put their gasoline purchases on a tab which was paid at the end of their stay.

Many guests would rent a cabin for two weeks and a few would stay for a month. Two bedroom cabins would rent for \$40-45 per week. Upon leaving, many guests would book their next summer's stay.

There was a main dock and a second one was added several years later. Most people pulled their boats up on



Sunrise Over Wabana (1959)

the sand. When runabouts became popular the boats were tied up to the docks.

Logs for birling, a raft and tubes were available for water

activities. Waterskiing soon became the favorite activity of the younger family members along with swimming and spending time in the sun on the raft and dock.

There were very few walleyes in Wabana in the 1950s and 1960s so if guests wanted to fish for walleyes Harlan

and Mabel would rent a launch and take the guests to Leech Lake.



Mabel Zimmer & Susannah Zimmer Hart (Left Side of Table - Late 1950's)

There were plenty of crappie, largemouth and smallmouth bass, sunfish and northern pike in Wabana to keep the fishermen happy. Harlan and Mabel would help the fishermen who were new to

Wabana find the good spots on the

lake. Harlan also kept a minnow seine for people to take to Wabana dam to seine minnows from the troughs for fishing bait.

The fish cleaning house, which still stands today (2009), was a popular gathering spot in the evenings. Fishermen would clean their day's catch and the other guests could stand outside and watch. There was a hand pump and sink for rinsing the fish as they were cleaned. The "drain" emptied into a large gut bucket which Harlan would take out each night. At one point he kept a pig to clean up the contents of the gut bucket. When there was no longer a pig he would deposit the guts in a covered pit.

Harlan enjoyed photographing the guests and their fish catches. He had a filleting license so guests could take fish home. Freezer space was available for \$1.00 per week.



Mable Zimmer & 21 lb Northern (June 1958)

In the 1950s the resort was open in the fall through the deer hunting season.

Early guests came from Indiana and Illinois. In later years there were guests from many states. Former guests and family who now have homes on Wabana are Stanley and Mary Lee Craig, Dorothy Hess Klinger, Jim Edwards, Susannah Zimmer Hart, Margaret Zimmer Morris, and Ken Zimmer Jr.

In 1966, Harlan and Mabel built a new home on the south end of their property and sold the resort business to Skip and Nettie Bjorkley. The Bjorkleys continued to operate the resort for several years after which they sold the individual cabins and the lodge.

The Chain Letter of the Wabana Chain of Lakes Association

June 2010

*There is a lot of great
material inside, a proposed
revamping of our newsletter
distribution, Zim's on
Wabana Resort history and
photos, May minutes, Bills
letter, committee
announcements and
upcoming important dates.*

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

June 19th, 2010

We have a great program featuring noted local historian and author, Patricia E. Navratil and an important business meeting immediately afterwards. Please be sure to attend this one, and bring a neighbor or two with you to the Wabana Town Hall. Times are as follows:

8:30 a.m. Coffee – Come early to enjoy coffee and treats and meet other members who live on our four lakes or in our surrounding community.

9:00 a.m. Patricia E. Navratil - Some of you know Pat as the author of the great little book *Trails Through the Northwoods - A History of the Bigfork Trail*. Pat has done considerable research on local history, including the Joyce family, and is working on a second book.

10:00 a.m. Business Meeting

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