



shorelines

*Published By The Balsam Lake Homeowners' Association
A volunteer, non-profit organization serving the lake community since 1974.*



AUGUST 2016

Avg. Temp67°
Avg. High78°

Avg. Low55°
Avg. Rain4.3"

For Current Weather:
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Makin' Memories at the Lake



Jillian and Owen Haight practice the fine art of dock fishing.

SHORELINES NEEDS EDITOR FOR 2017!

(See next page "Farewell to our Friend Sue" for information on becoming the editor of Shorelines.)

Farewell to our Friend Sue

First of all, we would like to thank Sue Duerkop for the last three years of expertise on our Shorelines. She came to us a retired English teacher and became our Editor and Creator. She gave us more photos, great articles and a way to share our stories of Balsam Lake. Sadly (for us) she is leaving us once our August edition of Shorelines is done. Happily (for her) she is celebrating the birth of her first Grandchild and wants to be available to her son and daughter-in-law to help as only a Grandma can.

This leaves us in a position that we were in 4 years ago. We need to replace the person who was the lifeblood of our Shorelines. We are asking all of you reading this, **do you have an interest in gathering information and writing that information into a story? Would you like to take a list of contributors and set them up to take a place in one of the three Shorelines newsletters published each summer?** If you would like to hear more, let us know. Contact us at editor_shorelines@balsamlake.com

We would love to hear from you!
The BLHA Board

And Parting Thoughts from Sue

Just wanted to say a bit about my stint as editor of Shorelines. When I began, I didn't have a clue what I would be doing. But with encouragement from Ron Ward, help from Debbie Irestone, Dave Turbenson and my teacher friends, support from the board, and the creativity and patience of Gayle Olson, I managed to put the three issues together. In year two, with the prompting of Dave Turbenson and those e blasts, more and more homeowners began submitting material. I really enjoyed the email exchanges with those who submitted pictures, answered questions, and wrote up something for Shorelines. I think of you all as my cyberspace friends! I wouldn't recognize you on the street, but feel a connection with you anyway. Another benefit, is that I learned so much about the history of the lake, of the village, of the area. I talked to people I never would have otherwise. Even though I really enjoyed the whole process, sometimes life piles up and something has to go. In my case, that means Shorelines had to go. My thanks to the BLHA for putting their trust in a newbie.

If you are interested in being the next editor, you will have a strong support system, myself included if you want it. I have a ton of ideas, a list of contacts, and I'd even be willing to write a (short) article or two! – SUE

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2016 August article contributors: Gordon Hansen, Nichole Reed, Balsam Lake Public Library Staff, Dave Turbenson, Debbie Irestone, Interfaith staff, Mary Skaret, Julie Bever and Sue Duerkop.

Special Thanks: My husband Al, who has been my sounding board these past three years.

Layout: Gayle Olson. **Editor:** Sue Duerkop.



Keep at it Owen! There are big ones out there!

Teddy Glasby caught this keeper, a 24 inch, 9 pound 4 ounce large mouth bass by the bridge on Friday, June 10, 2016.



A Clarification...

In the May 2016 issue, one of our writers wrote the following, "we could picture the church services that used to take place preached from that rock to all the boaters in attendance." That comment supposedly referred to Rev. Clifford Nelson and his time living on what became known as Preacher's Point. However, in a later interview with the Nelson family, they explained that he never preached from the rock but did love to fish from there. He did hold church services in the porch/living room in their cabin.

That got me thinking about oral history. And memory. I know for certain that I ask myself more and more, "Did that really happen?" or "Is that how that happened?" I find myself telling my sons stories about my parents and grandparents, but the details are pretty fuzzy. Interesting thing our memory. Here's a brief excerpt from "Our Brains Rewrite Our Memories, Putting Present In The Past" from NPR: "The brain edits memories relentlessly, updating the past with new information. 'Our memories aren't perfect,' Joel Voss, an assistant professor of neuroscience at Northwestern says. 'They're not like tape recorders. There's a small current of thought that thinks these failures aren't necessarily a bad thing. Memory is not intended to allow you to remember what you did last week, or remember your childhood.'

"It can be disturbing to realize that cherished memories may not be true, Voss agrees. But plenty of other studies have shown that memories are indeed often faulty. This doesn't keep you from recalling memories and treasuring them, Voss says. "But they might not be perfectly accurate."

Because we are reporting personal memories, they will reflect our individuality but they still are genuine to our feelings about the lake.

It CAN Be All Fun and Games!



"Balsam Lake Beach Boys AKA the Frog Band - band plays nightly on Stump Bay" Photo: Marge Zabel



Water balloon preparation for the annual Boat Parade and water balloon fight in front of Cedar Island. Photo: Janine Terhaar

Summer Scavenger Hunt

(Sue and Julie)

The scavenger hunts I remember being a part of as a kid always involved finding and hauling unusual objects to some central location. But I found out last winter that cell phones can add a new dimension to the hunt, making the lists even more imaginative and flexible. My husband and I had dropped in (uninvited) on our friends right before Christmas to find them preparing for a Christmas Scavenger hunt. With our unexpected arrival, the teams switched to adults versus kids. Luckily, the kids included one who could drive. Each team had the same list, a 45 minute deadline, and a few cell phones. Off we went, looking for things such as lighted candy canes, an inflatable Snoopy, a yard with all white lights, a Santa on a roof, a house that had Christmas music playing outside...and so on. We drove around the neighborhoods, hopping out of the car and taking a photo of the found item. We didn't violate any property laws or speed limits and were back at the house just in time. Then we went through the lists and showed the photos of the found items. I don't remember who "won" because we all such a good time! that was treat enough.

Perhaps as the summer winds down, your family could challenge each other or your neighbors to a friendly scavenger hunt. You could make a list of items for the kids to find and bring back to the deck. Or you could load up two pontoons and go your merry ways looking for the following:

For the Whimsical: A Mermaid, a Dolphin, a Starfish, a Flock of Flamingos, an Alligator, A Frog band...

Add these for the Realists: A Set of Pink Chairs, 3 Tents in one yard, 3 Campfires in adjacent lots/cabins, a Building for each color of the rainbow (Red, Orange, Yellow, Green Blue, Violet)

And for those who enjoy fishing: A Perch, a Bluegill, a Largemouth Bass, a Northern Pike, a Walleye

Of course, this list are just starters. And to be fair, it's best to have a neutral party make up the list! Develop your own house rules and GO!

Pop Goes the Water Balloon, Ah!

<http://www.localfunforkids.com/home/20-of-the-best-water-balloon-games.html>

- The water balloon version of 'Hot Potato' is a great twist on the original. Get the kids to sit in a circle and start passing around a water balloon. Start playing some music and then, at random intervals, turn off the music. Whoever is left holding the water balloon or whoever pops it is the one out. The last child left in the game is the winner.
- Balloon Roll - For this game, you have to keep your water balloon on the ground. The child that rolls their water balloon the farthest, and does not pop it, wins!
- Water Balloon Relay Race - Set out one chair for each team and place a water balloon in the seat. Then, players take turns running to the chair, and sitting on the balloon till it pops. After they pop the balloon, they run and tag the next player. (You will need to put a new balloon in after each one is popped.) The first team to pop all their balloons and cross the finish line wins.
- Water Balloon Spoon Races -Use a plastic serving spoon or a wooden spoon for this simple summer game.
- Water Balloon YoYo - Cut a rubberband in half. Then, attach the rubber band to the water balloon. The kids have to yo-yo them up and down until the last one with their balloon in tact wins!

Keep These Dates in Mind!

AUGUST 6: BLHA Annual Meeting
8:30 am: Crickett's Bar and Grill

AUGUST 20: Exhibition Ski Show
6:00 pm: Skiing along Hwy 46. Request viewing from boats only.

SEPTEMBER 3: BL Water Ski Show Team
6:00 pm: In front of Sunnyside Marina

SEPTEMBER 3: Balsam Lake Fire Department Demo Derby

SEPTEMBER 3-4 : BL Corn on the Curb Days
Sweet corn served by the Girl Scouts. Live music and dancing at local establishments. Turtle Crunch Demolition Derby.

SEPTEMBER 10: Farewell to Summer Party
3-5 pm: Thirsty Otter. More good times and free appetizers!
Please bring a non-perishable food item for Ruby's Pantry

SEPTEMBER 22: Meet the Author Dinner: Ron Faiola, author Wisconsin Supper Clubs
6:00 Cocktails; 6:30 Dinner
Indianhead Supper Club, BL

SEPTEMBER 24-25: Baker Orchard Fall Festival
Centuria. The family-friendly atmosphere encourages visitors to enjoy miles of maintained trails through the woods, food from local vendors, free live music, local arts, apple tasting and sales.

OCTOBER 1: Cyclocross Race
Baker Orchard, Centuria. Come watch bicyclists ride through the orchard, jump over barriers and race to the finish!

OCTOBER 8: Gandy Dancer Marathon
(Half and Full), Luck

OCTOBER 8: Pumpkin Festival
Milltown



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"What makes a supper club a supper club? A night club might be defined as a supper club in a city, while supper clubs are typically farther out in the country, along a state highway. A roadhouse can crop up at any byway intersection, and driving along Wisconsin's backroads you're sure to run across some with great grill fare.

Many Wisconsin supper clubs claim fame as Prohibition roadhouses where gangsters stopped while traveling the state transporting Canadian-label contraband. After Prohibition was repealed in 1933, liquor licenses were first granted to establishments outside city limits that served food, thus giving birth to the supper club. A supper club in the olden days meant linen table service, liquors, entertainment, and dancing -- a destination for a night out.

The common denominator in today's notion of a supper club is simple American cuisine like surf and turf, shrimp cocktail on ice, charbroiled garlic toast, an ample relish tray, homemade salad dressings, and a signature dish à la 'sconi, from watermelon pickles, paté, or potatoes au gratin to whitefish livers, monster steaks, or pan-fried frog legs. A sour cream-style Roquefort dressing and a creamy coleslaw will rank way up there in my cookbook, too.

For the most part, gone are the days when a supper club meant an entire night out: a lounge with high-backed booths, highballs at low-ball prices, a piano bar, an orchestra, and a dance floor. It's still possible, however, to listen to jazz piano or fox trot to Sinatra at some of Wisconsin's ritzier supper clubs. And the one thing that's never gone out of style, of course, is simply prepared great food."

excerpted from travelwisconsin.com
 SAVORING THE PAST: SUPPER CLUBS
 Last Updated: 12/11/2015
 By Brenda K. Bredahl



Experience a Traditional Supper Club Meal

at Indianhead, est in 1939, an iconic Wisconsin Supper Club, featured in **Wisconsin Supper Clubs**

You're invited to try one of Indianhead's signature old-fashions or manhattans! Enjoy a classic supper club meal. The Balsam Lake Public Library, Friends of the Balsam Lake Public Library and Indianhead Supper Club have partnered together to bring Ron Faiola, the author of **Wisconsin Supper Clubs**, to speak at The Indianhead Supper Club on Sept 22.

The event will include a 4 course dinner including: relish tray, choice soup or salad, steak dinner including potato and vegetable, dessert. Cash bar available. The event will be held in the downstairs party room. 6:00 cocktails (cash bar); 6:30 dinner with speaker to follow.

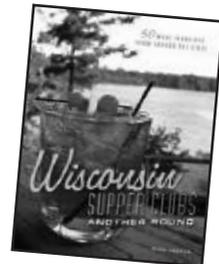
A limited number of tickets will be sold for the evening. The cost of each ticket will be \$40.00. The author will have his books **Wisconsin Supper Clubs: An Old-Fashioned Experience** and **Wisconsin Supper Clubs, Another Round** for purchase.

Check our Facebook page (Balsam Lake Library) or website for ticket info and updates or call 715-485-3215



About Ron Faiola

Ron Faiola got his start in the food service industry as a teenager, working at various fast food restaurants, then paid his way through film school at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee by making sub sandwiches and pizza. Faiola currently resides in the historic Village of Greendale.





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BLHA Annual Meeting & Breakfast

Watch your emails for an e-blast with breakfast reservation info and the annual ballot. Our 2016 Annual Meeting will be held at Crickets Bar and Grill on Saturday, August 6th. Crickets is located about 10 minutes from downtown Balsam Lake on Hwy H. (1361 100th ST) about 1 mile north of Hwy 8. All members are invited to a buffet breakfast at 8:30 a.m. with the meeting starting soon after. The breakfast buffet will cost \$10.00 person, paid at the door during registration. Watch your emails for an e-blast with breakfast reservation info and the annual ballot. The crew at Crickets have been great allowing us to have our meeting at their establishment. Members gave great reviews for their 2015 breakfast. We anticipate another wonderful breakfast buffet planned in their large restaurant.

Members who choose not to attend the breakfast are encouraged to attend the meeting. We are proud of our active membership and thank you for your ongoing support. Come on down and say hello to old friends and neighbors, possibly meet some new ones, and learn more about what the BLHA does for you.

Your Lake Association Needs You!

The BLHA board is looking for a few new board members. We are looking for some people with fresh ideas and good energy to help us with our ongoing efforts to continue making Balsam Lake one of the premier lakes in western Wisconsin. Meetings are a great forum to discuss what's going on around Balsam Lake and what the BLHA can do to maximize our lake area experiences.

Currently we only have 12 members out of a possible 18 on our board. Each board member serves 3 years, with the choice to run for re-election. Meetings are held the second Saturday morning of May through September. The majority of the current board have been active for 5 to 10+ years. Elections are held at the annual meeting.

If you have been on or around the lake, maybe it's your turn to give back to Balsam Lake. Most board members handle one particular responsibility, none of which are too time consuming. Please consider volunteering for a term as a BLHA Board member. Contact Dave Turbenson at daveturbenson@yahoo.com if you have any questions.

EDITOR NEEDED FOR 2017 SHORELINES



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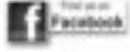
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- Sweep the kitchen floor?
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Josh helps Helen with a little tree trimming.

OPENING MY EYES TO EAST BALSAM

by Mary Skaret

The people who live on East Balsam have a lot of good to say about their 'Balsam' lake. It has a charm of its own and the good memories are strong.

Vern Tilton has lived on or across the road from East Balsam his whole life. He and his wife, Jean, now live on East Balsam Lake in a cabin they built in 1980 (but on land where Vern grew up, just past the "narrows" on the south side.) When he was kid in the early forties, there were only a few cabins on East Balsam, less than a half dozen. But four were right there on each side of their cabin built by the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corp, a public relief program from 1933-42 for unemployed, unmarried men as part of New Deal.) The Stone family bought one of these cabins and lived next door with two boys and a girl. All a perfect age match to the Tiltons so the six swam, boated, fished, played games from Memorial Day to Labor Day every summer (40's to 60's). The Tiltons lived up on road "I" but we had a worn path the 1/4 mile through the woods. Vern said, "We were there by nine in the morning swimming and playing "kick the can," then home for lunch, and back for the afternoon until supper and then we would go back and play 'hide'n'seek.' at night. My mother, Melba Tilton, had two huge gardens behind the Alexander cabin and at their house. She was proud to grow vegetables for the whole lake. Her "cottage friends" as she called them were always welcome to buy vegetables, eggs, and worms for fishing. She worked at Dixie Lodge too, cleaning and doing laundry for all the cabins once or twice a week and helping if they were short a cook. She kept a "log" of all the work we did for "lake" cabins. "She and her family were the East Balsam spring cleaning, storm clean-up and landscaping crew."

"I have been introduced to some beautiful parts of the lake I didn't even know were there. I think East Balsam is a well-kept secret." - Mary

Vern's dad, Gail Tilton worked for the county and was seriously injured in 1957 while mowing and died young in 1965. This just intensified Melba's need to support her two boys, 11 and 16 years old. "Mr. Stone from next door came for the weekend, and we walked up to the road to meet him, Once we got all the way to town (4-5 miles) before he came. The 'The Blacksmith Shop Bar and Grill up the road, showed outdoor movies for free every Wednesday night!"

Jean joined in, "There were the Holins, who owned a resort from the thirties to the sixties on the east side of the lake. They built about one cabin per year and then turned them into condominiums in the late '70's. There were the Alens too who had a farm with lakeshore on the east side. I always mixed up those two names."

Vern continued, "From the thirties to 1957 there was a Boy Scout Camp on the east side of the lake. One group of boys would come by bus for two weeks and then another group would come two weeks later. There were some cabins and mostly tents. And then the second week they would take a little canoe trip and camp on Big Island for the week. They came from Memorial to Labor Day from St. Paul."

He continued, "Not much was going on down here. The lake is only about fifteen feet deep, you know. And they say it used to be just a swamp with a river through it. (I think that must have been before 1916 when there was a rise in the whole lake because a dam was installed for a sawmill on the south end off the MILL Pond.) You know we mostly rowed or had 1 1/2 horse power motors so the other part of the lake was a long way away. The fishing was good though. I used to catch my limit of bass all the time."

In the late forties Jean had come here fishing with her dad from nearby Eureka. Even at that time, Balsam Lake was very well known for its fishing. As a young woman, Jean Theis was pretty impressed to be dating a young man who had a boat on the lake with a 35 horsepower motor. (George Alexander who owned property gave him permission to use the lakeshore.) "It was a beautiful, sandy beach. Vern was a good skier but his favorite thing was a flat, round, "disc". He would ride that around like "trick"



All bird photos on pages 10 and 11 submitted by James and Kitty Haight.

skies and would even put a chair or ladder on it. He was a member of the Balsam Lake Water Ski association for a couple of years. They were married in 1962 and lived in Blaine. The George Alexander family sold them the property in 1980 when they started building the house where they now live. After coming up most weekends, Vern and Jean have been permanent residents their since about 2006.

Judy Alexander Stewart just remembers ALWAYS going to the lake...East Balsam. Her Uncle George Alexander bought his cabin the year she was born in late '40's and then bought enough land and cabins to give to each of his two brothers and sisters. He wanted them to be all together. One was Judy's grandfather, Guy, and grandmother, Mini.

She remembers they would get to lake and her grandfather would turn over a little white boat on the shore so Mini could go out fishing. She would immediately go out on the lake while he unloaded the car and brought everything into the cabin. They called her "Mini the Fisher-Lady." She also had a wood cook stove on the hill outside her cabin. The men did not do much on the lake and but Judy remembers that her grandfather always wore a white shirt and tie for all occasions. They just all loved being together, old and young. "It was so fun being with your cousins every weekend. We just wandered all over; everyplace belonged to everybody. If there was an apple tree everybody could eat the apples." She can just visualize George coming over every weekend to see her grandfather and they would stand together on the shore of the lake and talk .

At some point, her grandfather thought they should get a bigger boat so they purchased a 33 horsepower Chris Craft. But he sold it right away because it was "Way too fast!" Judy thought he got a 15 horsepower after that. Sometimes the kids would go to the town beach or Big Island with their 7 /12 horsepower. It took all day but they didn't go into the Big Lake often. It was just too far, and they were happy where they were. "We really didn't go into the rest of the lake until our two kids took water safety classes. They got to know kids from other pars of the lake. That was about 50 years ago. That is also when people started really buying property, the mid-seventies. When I was a kid, I could only see one dock. Now they are everywhere. It is still very quiet here though."

I asked her if they ever went to the Blacksmith Shop, She said, "No. We never went left, just right!"

Sandy Launstein's family vacationed at Holin's Resort across the lake before her parents bought the property they are on now on the west side, just to the right of the narrows. Her dad and mom, Mildred and David Sullwold, bought a little, unfinished cabin called Rydel's Pot of Gold in 1957 when she and her sister were young teens. "My family had always rented a cabin in the summer on White Bear Lake or Forest Lake or Prior Lake and maybe he preferred the quiet of East Balsam to the big lake. My dad found this little cabin. It was the right price, so he bought it. Sandy married Fern in 1963, and at that time there were half a dozen old cabins on the west side which is higher and rockier. When the lake started developing more, the first lots and a few small cabins sold were on the east which is flatter, Fern said, "More preferable." 'Not too everybody,' I thought.

Mildred and David always caught a lot of fish. And they used to swim out to the island. It was bigger at one time and had a couple of trees where eagles would perch. Sandy said, "There were lots of places to explore because everything was not so built up. Fern added, "It is shallow. It is not busy, even now, and we always thought it was nice that boats had to go through the "narrows" to get here."

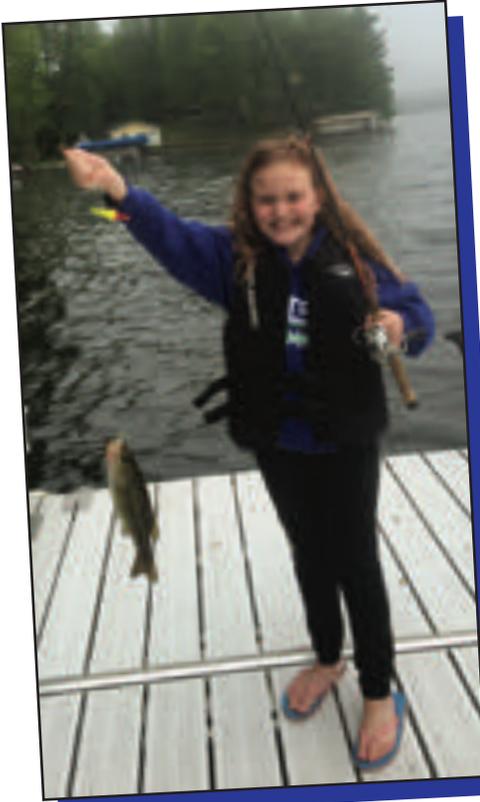
They both remembered their dad liking to go to The Blacksmith Shop on on the other side of the lake. "But it just had dirt floors, tree stumps for stools, and a board bar. And mother never went there."



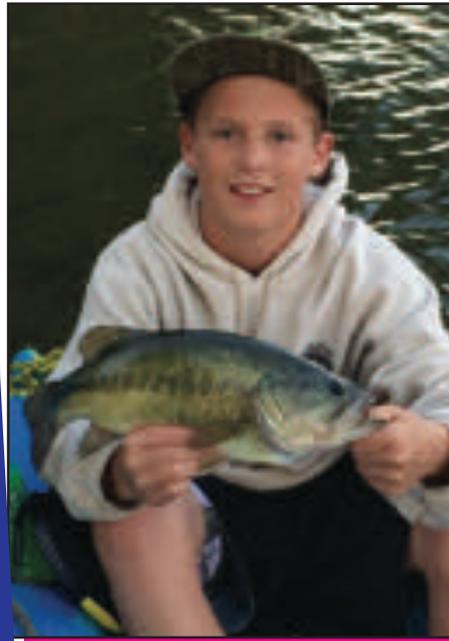
There is nothing in which the birds differ more from men than the way in which they can build and yet leave a landscape as it was before. –

Robert Lynd, *The Blue Lion and Other Essays*

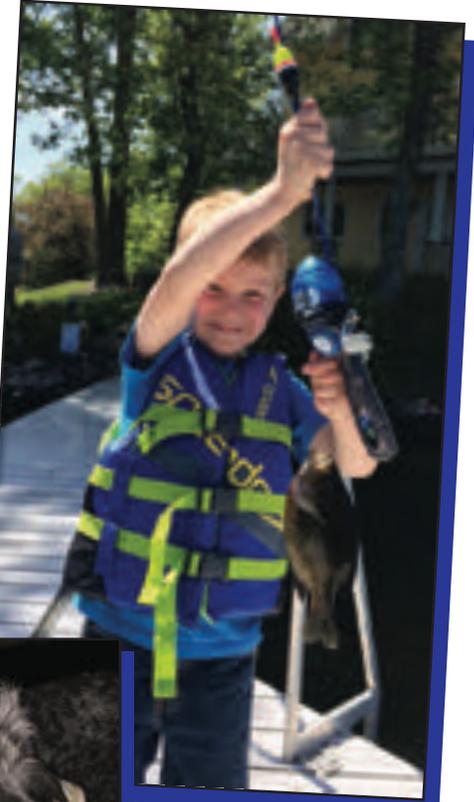
Who Loves the Lake Most?



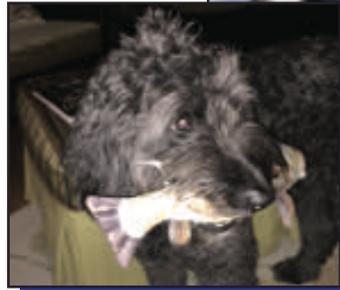
Granddaughter, age 10, caught her big fish off our dock near First Island." Photo: Linda and Denny Moll



"Carson Flynn caught this nice one while fishing off the paddle boat." Photo: Linda Flynn



"Reese Cullen caught the first fish of the season right off the dock!" Photo: Sandra Cullen



Looks like Cooper caught a fish too! Photo: T. Kelly

Because it's summer and the memories are just waiting to happen.

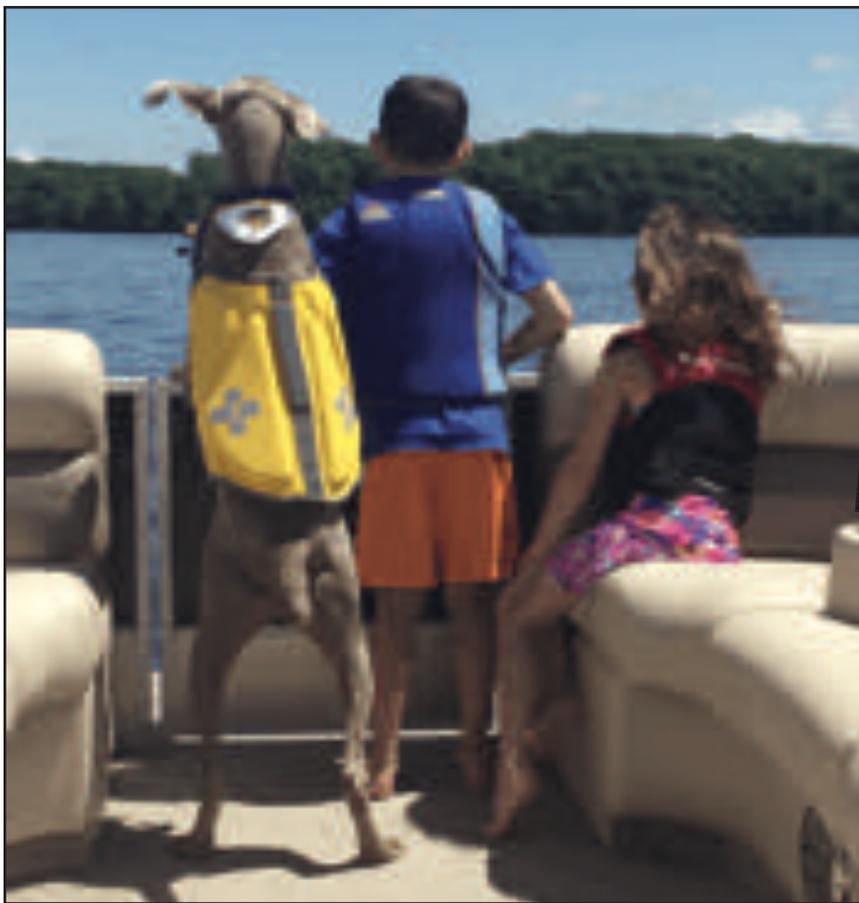


"Tess is entertained watching the fish." Photo: Jolene Patterson



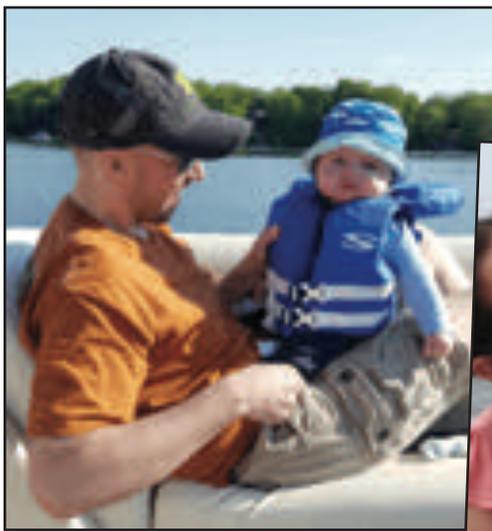
"Pretty in Pink! Enjoying a little splash time." Photo: Janine Terhaar

Kids and Dogs!

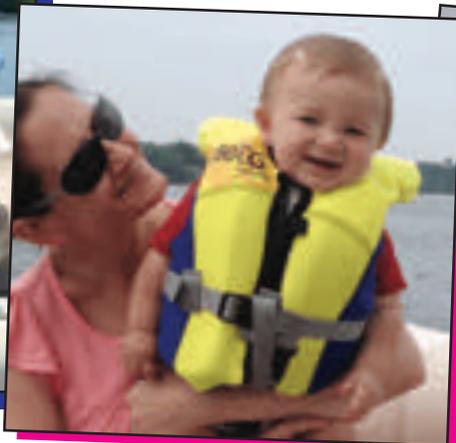


Everybody practices Safety First! And enjoying the view!

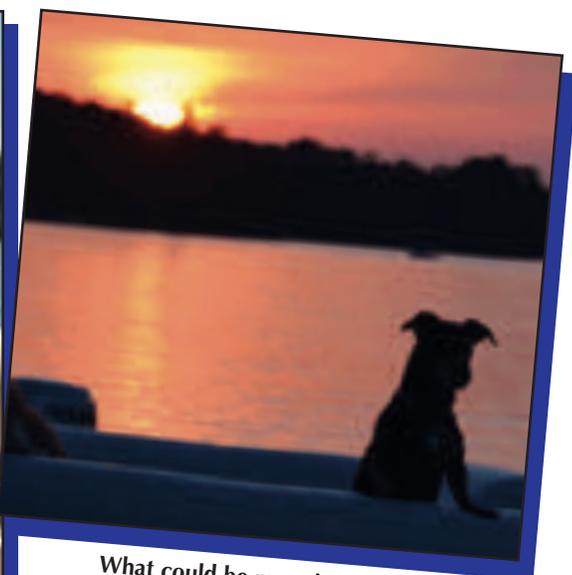
“Acquiring a dog, may be the only time a person gets to choose a relative.”



Little Quinn Larry Larson (6 months) with Dad Christopher on his very First Pontoon ride.”
Photo: Nancy Larson



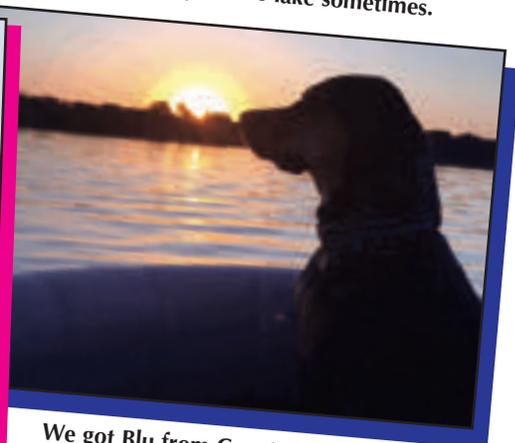
Mom Katie Haight with Levi.
Photo: Kitty Haight



What could be more interesting than the sunset?



It does get a little chilly on the lake sometimes.



We got Blu from Coco's Heart Pet Rescue and she loves Balsam Lake boat rides just like her owners! Photo: Laurie Dixbury

There's a History Here:

When my mom and dad, Sally and Gunnar Skalet, built our cabin in 1961, my fourteen year old brother, Johnny and I (sixteen), watched in with wide-eyed, city-slicker wonder as a skier whizzed by in his metallic purple hydroplane type boat with its big, black hundred horsepower motor. He was usually behind barefooting or creating huge sprays of water with his slalom turns. We soon found out he was the "legend" Ron Helms. He made such an impression that 35 years later my brother bought that original Carlson boat from a junkyard (and restored to its past beauty) and even found a big, black Mercury 100 horsepower motor to go with it. "Oh, did it fly!" – Mary

RONNIE HELMS: BALSAM LAKE WATER SKIING "KING"

by Mary Skaret

One year I was here for "Ice-Out" and there was a water skier skiing in and out through the ice flows between the islands and channels. I asked lifelong Balsam Lake resident Avis Mabrey if it was Ronnie Helms. She laughed and affirmed my guess, "Oh, he's been doing that every year on the first day the ice is out!" That was in the 1990s. I found out later that he went water skiing EVERYDAY, usually barefoot. But this year, I noticed he wasn't, and I commented on it. He said, "Well, now my youngest son, Herb, is taking over. He's only 51 years old! He and his family live in Luck, but he keeps his boat here."

Ron didn't start skiing himself until he was thirteen years old (1951). A guest at John's Resort, down the road, happened to have a 22 horsepower motor and a pair of water skis in his boat. The man took a couple of kids from the resort skiing, and Ron stood by with very obvious envy...until he was asked if he would like to go. "I knew, right then, it was something I would like to do a lot more of. Balsam was a fishing lake, but as a little kid, I was a little afraid of those great big fish flopping around on the bottom of my dad's boat." His dad had a wooden boat and a 3 1/2 horsepower Scott-Atwater motor. When I was 16, I bought my first boat with money earned by mowing lawns and other odd jobs. It was plywood from the Bingle Boatworks and had a 16 horsepower Johnson motor."

Ron married Julie DeRoma in 1958, who became a master boat driver! They bought a 33 horsepower motor that year and two years later put a 60 horsepower motor on their 14 footer. That was when the barefoot skiing started. "I had heard and read about it, mostly in an American Water Ski Association magazine that wrote about a guy in Florida, but I had really never seen it done, didn't know how to do it and had no one to teach me. They said 'never' with only a 60 horsepower motor and/or a 14 foot boat. That is what I had. But one Sunday night Julie and I went up to Little Balsam, and I tried over and over again. After one particularly bad fall, I said, 'Just one more time. And suddenly, I WAS DOING IT!' We went right through the Little Narrows to Boston Bay. No buoys then! My feet have never been so sore but that was the beginning of 60+ years of barefoot skiing. I was so excited I took the next day off work! I even had people ask me to barefoot past their cabins to impress their friends. People had never heard of 'barefoot skiing.'" Then they got the "magnificent" big black 100 horsepower Mercury motor. In 1968 he ordered a beautiful, metallic purple, hydroplane style Carlson boat from California. "Just hull and seats."



After Ronnie was born in 1938, he spent every summer with his grandma because his mother had a candy business in St. Paul. "I have been on Balsam Lake every summer of my life!" And most of it, he's been barefootin'! He was born in 1938. You can do the math!

Before the BLWSST...

by Mary Skaret

Ron Helms, Jerry Kuny and Rolf Nelson formed a Water Skiing Club in 1959 and called it the Balsam Lake Water Ski Association. Julie Helms said, "I think the dues were \$6.00 and our first show was down by Balsam Beach Resort. We used our own boats and equipment. We had about 15 members (and always a few 'hanger on-ers'). We met in a little building that was located in the current Balsam Lake library parking lot. We had a jumping ramp which was vandalized by the fisherman on the lake. They didn't like water skiers at all. 'This was a fishing lake!' We could never get a slalom course that worked right because of all the anchors. The best part is that we all became friends, and people were skiing with others from all over the lake. It was even the start of a couple of marriages. It was more of a social thing for me because I was already at home with little kids. The kids were brought up with the club. First they were on Ronnie's shoulders, then standing on the front of his skis, and then skiing themselves. Herb, our youngest son, started skiing at four years old, although at 2 he was 'pretending' with a log and a rope in the yard. Now both he and his son both barefoot."

Members of the original club:

*Jerry Kuny, *Rosemary Ahrens Kuny, *Ron Helms, *Julie Helms, Gretchen Kline, Alice Hess, *Rolf Nelson, *Brent Nelson, *Danny Commers, *Ron Ward (not really a member because he was too young), *Mike Hurley, Roger Groth, *Mary Ellen Groth Hurley, *Vern Tilton, *Nikki Keisling Nelson (says she was not really a member. "I was just a 'hanger on' who was called to 'spot'." (* families still on the lake)

The club was legally dissolved in 1993 but the informal connection never dissolved. The new "club" is called the Balsam Lake Water Ski Show Team (BLWSST) and is comprised (not surprisingly) of many children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews of the original families interested in water skiing on Balsam Lake.

Water Skiing on Balsam

"IF YOU CAN SWIM, WE CAN DO THE REST"

by Mary Skaret

There is a definite connection between the old Balsam Lake Water Ski Association and current Balsam Lake Water Ski Show Team. The family names are still there ("...at least ten members are relatives of original water ski club.") Not coincidentally the same passion, interest, goals and results are still present, only much bigger, formally developed and intentional.

The three directors, Erika Nelson Robinson, Grant Robinson and John Gisel are all about water skiing. There is the passion. In 2010, they held "learn-to-waterski clinics" but that didn't really lead to anything...except it did introduce them to John, who came to a 'clinic' and offered his services, not just to teach or drive a boat (he even was a certified driver!) but to help in every way. They soon discovered the three were an incredible team. With that intense love of water skiing, they joined together to develop an organization for Balsam Lake. Erika explained, "We piggybacked on the background of Ron Helm's and Ron Ward's three event ski team that they had started decades prior to us. We thought it would be great to revive their legacy for the times we now live. To us, a huge part of our inspiration was to get SKIING, not tubing, back onto Balsam Lake." "We love it!" John added. "It is mostly about making a lot of new friends. The families are great, and we couldn't do it without them. I think we are making a positive impact on the lake."

New members can be any age, do not need to know how to ski or have any equipment. The only requirement for membership is that participants must be able to swim and become members of the U.S. Water Ski Association. The \$35 membership fee provides insurance coverage.) An individual membership for BLWSST is \$75 and a family membership is \$225 no matter how many people are skiers in the family. This all goes for fuel, equipment including skis, ropes, etc. BLWSST has their own dock, jump and Hydeodyne boat with double 200 horsepower Evinrude motors. At this point in the interview, Grant said proudly, "Recently we had 50 'pulls' in one practice."

All coaches, boat-drivers, and helpers are volunteer. There are now 45-50 members in BLWSST and 34 corporate sponsors. Practices for all members are held every other Saturday from 9:00 AM to Noon during summer months. Their dock and beach is at the west end of Balsam Beach Bay bordering 46. See website www.blwsst.com for details and contacts.

BLWSST had their first show at Paradise Supper Club in 2011. In June 2012 they did a fund raiser there for Team USA who were one of five (China, Canada, Australia, Belgium and USA) teams competing in the International Show Ski Competition in Janesville, Wisconsin that summer.

In 2012, 2013, and 2014 they did 2 shows each year. In 2015 Paradise Supper Club closed but Jeff Reed was a tremendous help moving 3 shows to Sunnyside Marina. This year there will be 2 shows at Sunnyside and 2 shows by HWY 46.

Erika shared, "We could not have done any of the shows we've performed without the support of the Balsam Lake Homeowner's Association (BLHA) board and its members. They were the most instrumental to our team than anyone. The sponsors are great and we appreciate them all. But the BLHA was there at the get-go to help us make this team for the community. Ronnie Helms, our local water ski guru, is announcing the shows for BLWSST (and is known to barefoot ski into position.) He said, "They are really an elite group and it is very impressive what they have accomplished for Balsam Lake."

"The most exciting part," Erika stated, "is we have kids coming from all over. John estimates "about 1/3 aren't from Balsam Lake. Unity School kids that don't live on the lake, people from other lakes, Amery, St. Croix Falls, Milltown, Osceola. White Bear Lake, Forest Lake and even the Twin Cities. They are all learning to ski together, Kids are getting to know other kids from all over the area as well as the lake. We have parents skiing with daughters and sons, even some grandparents. They are having fun, learning water safety, and nobody 'Sits on the bench.'"



BLWSST Shows

AUGUST 20:

Exhibition Ski Show

6:00 pm: Skiing along Hwy 46. Request viewing from boats only

SEPTEMBER 3:

BL Water Ski Show Team

6:00 pm: In front of Sunnyside Marina

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Even though I have lived on Balsam Lake summers since 1968 and full time since 1995, I still am learning about the rich background of the area. Although going to churches in Balsam Lake, it wasn't until 2013 I discovered Balsam Lutheran Church and its history. I wanted to share this history with you, so I asked three longtime members of Balsam Lutheran Church, Marge Hallquist, Rick Ashley, and Bob LaBathe to help me gather the information for *BALSAM LUTHERAN CHURCH: A GREAT JOURNEY*. The present Church is 1 mile south of Hwy 8 on County H and a block west of County H on Mains Crossing. - Gordon Hanson

BALSAM LUTHERAN CHURCH: A GREAT JOURNEY

submitted by Gordon Hanson

Balsam Lutheran Church started in 1872 when a group of Swedish immigrants who had settled in Chisago Lake community moved across the St. Croix River to make land claims in area called the Town of Balsam Lake. In 1873 they incorporated the Balsam Church. In 1875 they purchased the present forty acres from the railroad and completed the first church in 1878. Early in 1904 a decision was made to replace the old frame church. The new church would be 50 feet long, 32 feet high, and 16 feet wide with a choir loft, sacristy and steeple. The first English service was in 1915 and the annual meeting minutes were in Swedish until 1927.



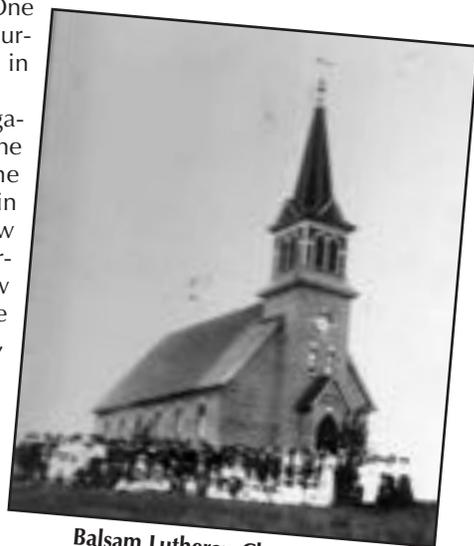
Balsam Lutheran Church 1882

As parishioners gathered for worship on January 20, 1939, fire destroyed the stately 1905 sanctuary. The foundation was ruined when the bell fell from the tower. Fixtures, furniture, even the organ and piano were quickly carried out by parishioners while Pastor Olson and others jerked out the 1910 pews, saving them all. One of those saved pews is in the current church that was built in 2007.

Unanimously, the congregation decided to rebuild on the same site, to leave off the steeple, use brick veneer, install six stain

glass windows on each side, and incorporate Gothic arches in the new structure. Every group and organization went to work, especially the ladies. The confirmation class was assigned to provide the stain glass altar (Jesus) window which is now located inside the entry of the 2007 church. Men worked with the contractor to reduce cost and the cornerstone was laid November 5, 1939 with the dedication July 1, 1940. The building was paid off by 1943.

During the coming years, the church saw a number of additions: a new Wurlitzer organ, a mimeograph to send out the annual reports, hymnals, and dropping every member canvas. Between 1980 and 1983 large projects were completed to add an office, entry space, and outside arches and steps. In 1991 a bell, new signage, a lighted cross, a redesigned kitchen,

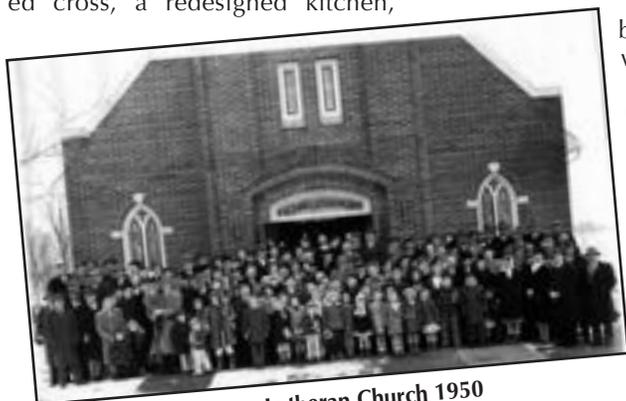


Balsam Lutheran Church 1905

black topping and a Peace window were added.

The decision to move from the historic building was made in 2006. The new structure, built in 2007 across the road and about 1/4 mile south, was designed on one level to include a new sanctuary, fellowship hall, expanded kitchen, offices, two conference rooms, and an education wing with five classrooms. In October 2007 the congregation moved into the new facility before it was finished. Members spent many hours putting on the final touches as they prayed and grew in their new building. The facility was completed and dedicated in 2008.

In December 2015, a difficult decision was made: it was time to take down the Old Balsam Lutheran Church. The unoccupied building had become unsafe, creating safety issues and enduring frequent break-ins. The high cost tearing down and hauling materials away led to the decision to burn the building and bury on site. After a many calls to the DNR, we knew

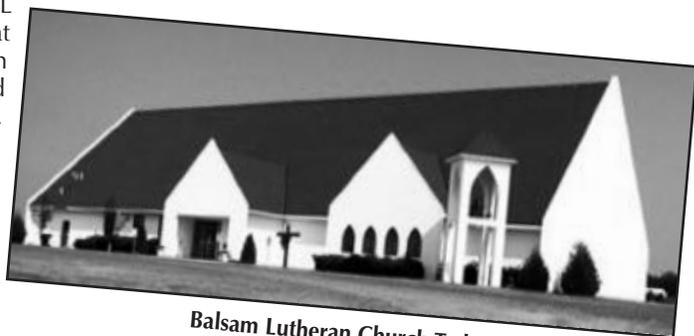


Balsam Lutheran Church 1950

the steps we needed to take. EMSL Analytical, Inc was hired to inspect the building to identify what materials needed to be removed before anything could be done with building. A local licensed contractor was then hired to remove and properly dispose of all materials identified by the inspection team. A DNR permit was obtained by the removal company with the conditions that it be used as a fire department training. Many of the local fire departments were eager to be involved as a larger building would provide training scenarios for their personnel.

The training sessions took place over two days, and the burn was completed on April 3.

THUS ANOTHER MILESTONE IN A GREAT JOURNEY.



Balsam Lutheran Church Today



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Tips for increasing curb appeal for your cabin.

Curb appeal is one of the most important things a home owner can master; it is meant to drive the buyer from the curb to the front door. If you are interested in selling your cabin in the near future, here are a few quick tips to consider to maximize curb appeal of your home while not investing a lot of money.

Home Maintenance and Cleaning

1. Clean gutters, down spouts.
2. Wash Exterior of Home and windows.
3. Paint home and front door if needed, stain decks.

Landscaping and Yard Work

1. Replace old mulch with new.
2. Create a sitting area at the lake if there is room and make sure your dock is in.
3. If weeds have blown into your shore, try to have them cleaned out.

The Finishing Touches

1. Add a bench with a pillow or a swing to make the entrance inviting.
2. Update your fixtures, add outdoor lanterns to sitting areas.
3. Cover any outdoor seating with cushions and have umbrellas up.

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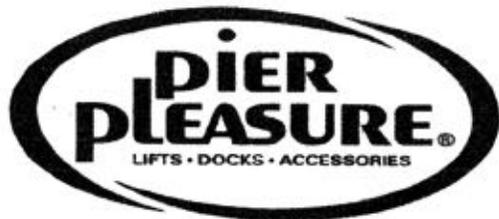


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