



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

As I write this letter the lake is still cloaked in snow and ice. Everyone I spoke to who spent the winter at the lake, remarked on the many snowstorms and the depth of the snow throughout the winter. I am sure the anticipation for the first signs of spring are growing as the snow and ice slowly melt away.

2019 is our first year to ask all members to renew their membership dues in January. I think we had a good response, with almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of our members submitting their dues in the first few weeks of the new year.

As I discussed in the fall, Hubbard County increased the hourly inspector rate charged to the various lake associations from \$18.50 to \$21.00 per hour. The State of Minnesota did increase the number of inspection hours they provided to Big Sand lake from 396 hours in 2018 to 432 hours for 2019. This plus a grant from Lake Emma township in the amount of \$3,300, left us with a balance due to Hubbard County in 2019 of \$10,724, versus \$9,724 in 2018. Hubbard County requires the various lake associations to fund the full inspection cost annually by 1/31.

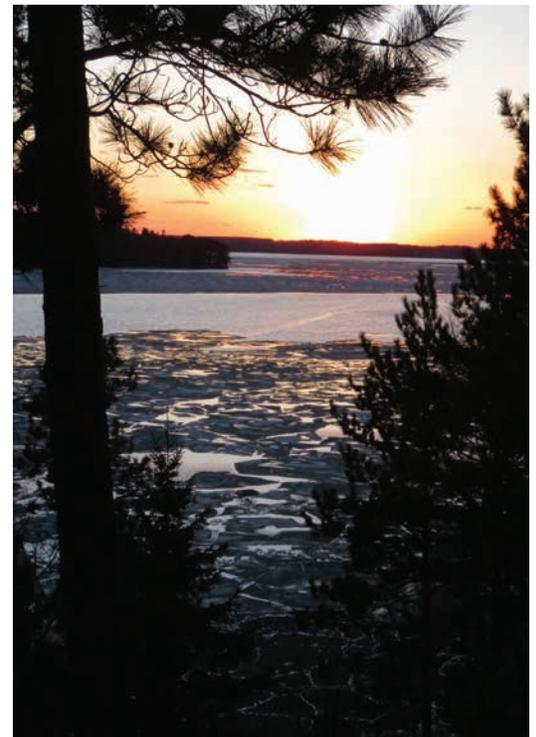
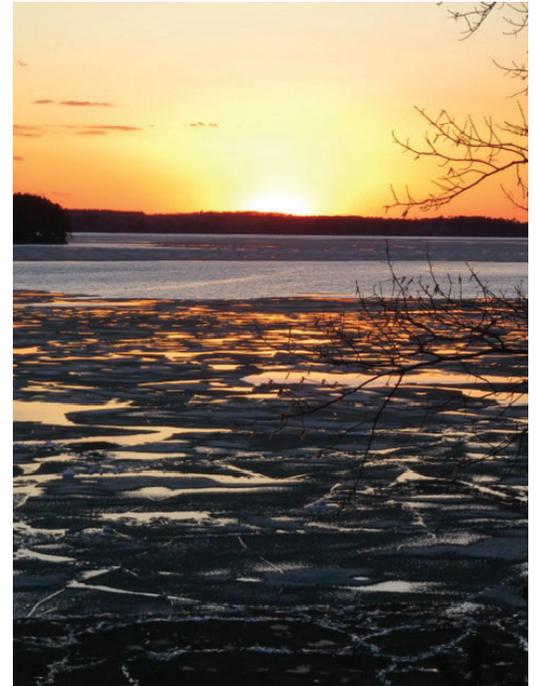
The Charitable fund, as managed by the Northwest Minnesota Foundation (NWMF), is an invaluable asset to all members of the Big Sand Lake Association (BSLA). The Charitable fund reimburses the BSLA for our inspection costs. NWMF rules require board approval for disbursements over \$10,000, board approval can take as long as 30 days. The State of Minnesota didn't provide information on the number of inspection hours until late December. So, having enough funds in our account this year to initially pay Hubbard County for our inspection costs was extremely helpful. We were able to wait for the NWMF board to approval our funding request and replenish our account without the fear of not receiving the funds before the 1/31 Hubbard County payment deadline. Please support the Charitable fund!

I encourage everyone to review the BSLA website. There are several new tabs, on water quality, AIS inspection reports and fishing reports and information. The inspection reports contain a great deal of information on inspection hours, and inspection results. I think a review of the reports reveal how fortunate we are to have the support from the Charitable fund to provide the number of inspection hours we are able to fund each year. If you compare the inspection hours we fund at Big Sand versus the other lakes in Hubbard County you can quickly see that Big Sand is in the upper percentile of hours funded versus the other Hubbard county lakes. Long term, we need to facilitate increased inspection hours for the lakes that drain into Big Sand.

Great news from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources! Those who were able to attend the annual meeting last year will remember the presentation by Donna Dustin, Biologist, Minnesota DNR. Donna gave a presentation on shoreline vegetation and the importance of preserving native shoreline vegetation on the overall health of the lake ecology.

Donna recently advised me that she plans to conduct a survey of Big Sand lake vegetation this summer. Donna hopes to conduct the survey in July, she needs to let the aquatic vegetation mature, which is dependent on ice out and early summer weather. She also advised she has some new equipment to assist in the survey, specifically a scientific grade underwater sonar system to help map underwater vegetation. While certainly plans and schedules are subject to last minute changes, this is great news for Big Sand lake. The last vegetation survey on the lake as conducted in 2009. That survey in 2009 was conducted by Big Sand residents Don and Ivy Douglas.

Dan Dyre recently learned that DNR is planning to conduct a creel survey of Big Sand lake in 2020. It looks like DNR personnel will be on the lake, in a boat, speaking to anyone fishing on the lake to survey what fish they have caught during their fishing trip. I think the process may be a little more involved, but this is good news. This survey will hopefully help us to understand the state of the fish population in the lake and study the fish population trends over the years.



MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

ARE YOU A 2019 BSLA MEMBER?

We have had a wonderful response to the NEW TIMELINE FOR DUES PAYMENT: JAN, 2019 which will better match our fiscal year. At the time of this writing, April 18, we have 146 paid 2019 memberships — well on our way to matching the 165 members in 2018! Thanks to all who have already renewed.

We look forward to receiving renewals from the remaining 2018 members, plus new memberships from Big Sand residents/friends and family members who have never joined. To confirm your dues payment, go to www.bigsandlake.org, click on Resident Directory in the password protected 'Members Area'. Current members are identified with a loon symbol by their name.

BSLA is dependent on annual membership dues to fund its mission of preservation and enhancement of Big Sand Lake. A fiscally sound lake association and well-funded charitable fund are some of the best ways that together we can best protect our beautiful lake as well as the investments we make in our properties surrounding it.

The easiest way to renew or to join for the first time is to visit www.bigsandlake.org and click on the Membership tab to submit your dues with a credit card or PayPal. A downloadable membership form is available for those who prefer mail and to pay by check.

Strength is found in numbers. Thanks again to all that have joined – those others, please consider renewing or joining. Please call/email with any questions about membership.

Membership Coordinators:

Bonnie Brand bonnie@pineconelodge.info 320-491-6952

Barb Kimer barbkimer@gmail.com 612-267-7355

RESIDENT DIRECTORIES

In January copies of the BSLA Resident Directory were mailed to all lake residents. If, for some reason, you did not receive one please contact us at info@bigsandlake.org.

We do have 30 extra copies of the directory so if you would like an additional one they will be available at the annual meeting in June as well as the summer social events for \$5.00.

Don't forget that there is an online directory, accessible only to BSLA members, found in the members section of the Big Sand website. If any of your contact information has changed or needs amending please update on the website – www.bigsandlake.org. Click on Membership then click Update My Information.



ANNUAL PICNIC

*Nicole Kovar, DNR AIS Biologist,
scheduled to be Speaker at BSLA*

Ms. Nicole Kovar has agreed to speak at our annual picnic on June 22, at Pine Cone Lodge. Ms. Kovar is the regional DNR Aquatic Invasive Species specialist, she is based at the Park Rapids DNR office.

This will be a great opportunity to hear about the latest information on DNR efforts to confront the spread of AIS and what we can do as concerned lake residents to assist the DNR efforts to fight invasive species.

Please join us at Pine Cone lodge for this very timely and informative presentation.

WINTERPAST

By Liz Quaday

The woods in winter... or is it spring? It is hard to tell these days. We had temperatures in the 40's a week ago, and much of the snow melted. Yesterday the temperatures were in the low 30s with a gentle, wet snow falling – like living inside a snow globe – and a half an inch accumulated on the ground. Such is this time of year!

This season is a time for patiently waiting, a moment to pause and take a deep breath before the latent potency of the earth bursts forth into spring. When the tipping point comes, the changes to the world around Big Sand Lake will happen as swiftly as a stone rolling downhill – inevitable and unstoppable. Until then, the woods are in waiting mode. Steve has coined a phrase that accurately describes this time of year: fifty shades of grey. With the snow mostly gone, what is left to see is last year's dead grass, trees without their leaves, cloudy skies and the shrouds of deteriorating ice concealing what is normally a sparkling lake. But the birds know that spring is imminent. Canada geese have been flying north, along with robins and many other migratory birds. We have enjoyed seeing our favorites – the Trumpeter Swans – nearly every day this winter; sometimes in pairs, and sometimes in flocks – as they overwintered nearby, finding a bit of open water all season on the stream next to Zorbaz. With the leaves off the trees it has been easy to spot the many Bald Eagles roosting in wait for a small rodent to show itself against the bright snow during the cold season. They are as anxious to be back to fishing in the lakes as the fishermen are!

About four years ago Steve and I decided to “pull the trigger” and make the move from Morgan Hill, CA with the retirement goal of losing ourselves on a lake in Minnesota. When our California friends heard what we were up to, invariably the question would come: “Have you been there in the WINTER?” Steve, a native of North Dakota, could answer yes, but all I could do is look at them with as much false bravado as I could muster and say no. Everyone thought I was extremely foolish and short-sighted and were certain that I'd scurry back to the Golden State as soon as the mercury dipped below thirty. Well, we've had many days these past four winters where the temperature plummeted well below zero, and I am staying put. Perhaps my pants have frozen to my seat. I have found that, if you have the proper clothing on (and lots of it!), the weather isn't that much of an issue. Steve and I take regular walks out in the frigid weather and find it to be quite invigorating... once you get your nostrils unstuck. The six to eight inches of powdery snow that blankets the woods around us right now is lovely to look at, and when a foggy night awakens to a morning with the trees covered in a beautiful frosting of ice... well, that is a spectacular sight. It is a new world for me, and I am drinking it in!

One thing I wondered about before we moved to Big Sand Lake was the folks, both natives and transplants like us, who stay in the North Country year-round rather than flying south for the winter. What must they be like? How do they manage the weather, year in and year out, without going stir-crazy? What I have since found out is very interesting. The year-rounders appear to live by a code that is common

to all of them. It goes like this: no whining. Enjoy every season for what it has to offer – both for inside and outside activities. Know how to make your own fun, and don't neglect the crazy little activities and festivals sponsored by your own community. Meet your neighbors and take care of each other. Friendliness goes a lot further than grumpiness. Patronize the local businesses if you want them to still be around next season. Discussing the weather is always a safe topic of conversation, especially during the political season. Life is a process and not a goal; if you don't enjoy the trip you will have missed the point entirely. Summer is comin' and is always worth the wait. Cut everyone some slack. Don't be in such a hurry that your car ends up in the ditch, or you miss a rare showing of the Northern Lights. Keep an eye on your neighbor's house when they are gone – you'll want them to do the same for you. We are all in this together. And again: no whining!

We are now well along into April, and many of you exiles will be preparing soon to return to Big Sand Lake – our personal Paradise on earth. Until that time, enjoy springtime wherever you are, as we certainly will here at the Lake... as soon as it arrives. In any case, please keep warm and dry, and don't neglect the wisdom of the code!

(To read more of Liz Quaday's observations as a newcomer to life on Big Sand Lake, please visit her blog at postcardsfromlizblog.wordpress.com).



BIG SAND HISTORY PROJECT

The following excerpt, “I Wonder Why More People Don’t Go Ice Fishing?” is from a story that Tom Scott, current Big Sand resident and son of the author, submitted to the Big Sand History Project. This entertaining story by Jane Scott is about an ice fishing trip she and her husband took to Big Sand in 1958. To read the complete story and learn how the trip turned out, you will need to go to the ‘History Project’ page on the Big Sand website, www.bigsandlake.org. While you are there you, you will see other submissions of interesting stories and photos of life on Big Sand.

Jane and Ray Scott and their family first visited Big Sand in 1955. They stayed at Evergreen Lodge and by the end of the stay they had purchased a cabin on what is now Gunner Drive. Tom recalls that he, brother John and sister Kathy were fortunate to spend the next four summers at Big Sand with their mother while Ray came up for the weekends. The Scott’s sold that cabin in 1960 when the family moved but kept their ties to Big Sand. A few years later the Scott’s found a perfect place to build a new cabin on Cherry Hill Road, now Glenn Drive. The design of the new cabin was patterned after their previous neighbors’, the Can-dors, on Gunner Drive. After the frame of the cabin was in place, Ray and his son John did all of the rest of the construction. Unfortunately, Ray passed away in 1968 shortly after the cabin was finished leaving it for the rest of the family to enjoy.

Every family or resident on Big Sand has a story whether new to the lake or part of a ‘forever Big Sand fami-ly’. Please consider jotting down perhaps how you “found” Big Sand, or a memorable experience, or the background of your cabin, or?? — and email it to the History Project at history@bigsandlake.org. For more information, contact Betsy Crabtree, Big Sand Volunteer History Project chair - bcrabt541@aol.com / 952-270-6383. The narrative doesn’t have to be long, poetic and certainly not even a story of by-gone events. Current happenings are part of our history and the History Project is an excellent way to preserve both the old and the new. Note: let Betsy know if you are interested in being a part of a new Big Sand History Club (yet to be formed!)



I WONDER WHY MORE PEOPLE DON'T GO ICE FISHING?

by Jane A. Scott, c 1958

Picture, if you can, a day in February when the weatherman says the skies will be clear, the temperature a crisp 15 to 20 below zero, and a light snow will fall. That is the report we heard as we started out on our 4-day winter vacation – not to the sunny climes of Florida or Arizona as is the thing these days. No, we started a new trend – vacation in the north woods! What would be the attraction to lure anyone from the warmth of their abode in the city? Well, my city slicker friends – you guessed it – ice fishing.

Of course, I'll have to admit that I wasn't 100% sold on the idea at first. When I told our proposed plans to a friend, she queried— 'Why don't you do something exciting like going to Chicago and taking in some shows or night life?' That did sound a bit interesting. But surely, trying to cross State and Lake Streets would hardly be the therapeutic way of getting hubby away from it all.

So, one morning bright and early we started on our way. We arrived at Park Rapids, put snow tires on ol' Betsy, and proceeded to the farm of our friends, the Martins. They had so graciously made the arrangements to have the road plowed into our cabin, and had started the floor furnace the day before our arrival. We arrived at the summer abode and unloaded all the gear and groceries. It was the first time I had seen the place in the winter time, and it looked like a picture Grandma Moses could have painted. There was barely a mark on the snow. The absence of animal tracks was explained as being due to the extreme cold of the previous weeks – the furry creatures just didn't come out of their holes.

I didn't mention that I was well-encased in my red three-dimensional underwear. You probably would agree that wasn't such a romantic Christmas present to receive from a husband, but it surely kept me warmer than some fancy nylon tricot.



Now all we had to do was find a fish house. That didn't take long since the resort owner across the lake from us, and a friend, had one all set up and ready for some eager beavers. So, we drove out onto the lake to the shack. On the door was printed 31 Club, a name that will take on meaning as we go along. Of course, you know that an angling house, like the 31 Club, has windows, but a spearing house is completely dark.

This shanty is about 8 x 8, made of wall board, very scientifically put together, bolted here and there so it will be easy to dismantle come February 28. And there is a floor. It is made of big planks and fits the place like a rug, instead of wall to wall carpeting. That leaves an edge around the room for the accumulation of cigarette butts, etc., and for an opening in each corner for a fishing hole. A large fuel oil burner, a modern version of the old pot belly stove, takes up a good share of the space. A shelf at one end holds quite a collection of things – about 9 coffee cans, only 2 of which contain coffee, one some money, and the rest are empty. Playing cards – a very essential part of ice fishing, a box of matches, and old gunny sack, and in general, a well cluttered shelf. The license for the fish house is tacked above the window, along with those of previous years.

The furnishings wouldn't be found in an ad by Mengel, but at least they are sturdy. The table is about 2 feet square and 2 feet high. Chairs are of various kinds – 2 camp stools, a box that had at one time contained the belongings of a sailor. In fact, the stamps were still on the box and I retrieved them for our Tom's collection. Another box or two – and for comfort? -- life preserver cushions to put on the boxes. Add a blackened coffee pot, 5 chipped cups that are sterilized by dipping them in the fish holes, two filthy towels, and you're ready to go.

To read the rest of this story go to the History Page at www.bigsandlake.org.

What Can YOU do to Halt the Spread of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)?



**Zebra Mussels
impact recreational
use of lakes**



**Zebra Mussels
attach to plants**



**Juvenile
Zebra Mussels
are small**



**Zebra Mussels on
a native clam -
Zebra Mussels
deplete food
supply for native
fish**

✓ Hire dock/boat lift installers who are DNR trained Lake Service Providers (LSP).

It's the law! Anyone installing, removing, renting, or leasing water-related equipment in state waters must be DNR trained. The business needs a permit and the worker needs DNR certification. (DNR website: www.dnr.state.mn.us, search **LSP**)



Ask to see the DNR issued certificate of the LSP dock and lift worker. Businesses and workers that are properly trained will be happy to show you their credentials.

✓ **Know that watercraft and all water-related equipment can spread AIS.** This includes fishing boats, jet skis, wakeboard boats, pontoons, sailboats, scuba gear, float planes, canoes, kayaks, all fishing gear, waders, docks, boat lifts, tools, trailers, and waterfowl hunting gear.

✓ **Learn to identify each aquatic invasive** (zebra mussels, Eurasian watermilfoil, spiny water fleas, rusty crayfish, etc.) Watch for any new AIS infestations that may allow quicker and more effective treatment options. Be aware of AIS not currently in MN but considered a threat such as hydrilla or northern snakehead. (DNR website, search **aquatic invasive identification**)

✓ **Know which waters are designated "infested waters"** in Minnesota and other states. And recognize that other lakes and rivers may also be infested and not yet designated. In all cases, take precautions when moving watercraft from lake to lake. (DNR website, search **infested waters**)

✓ **Educate your guests!** Make sure watercraft and water-related equipment of guests arriving from other lakes/ivers (including out-of-state) are free of zebra mussels and other Aquatic Invasive Species like Eurasian watermilfoil, spiny water fleas, and Flowering Rush.

Watercraft coming from other waters should follow recommended dry times or decontamination. The best: **140° water for 10 seconds to kill all AIS.** (100thmeridian.org, search **dry time estimator**)

✓ **Encourage resorts/campsites/hotels to train marina employees** on AIS and to use precautionary measures when working with water-related equipment arriving from other lakes and rivers. All arriving watercraft and water-related equipment needs to be free of AIS - **Cleaned and Drained** before entering the water. Water-related equipment that is **Dry** is less likely to spread AIS.

✓ **Public access inspection program** is available for public accesses - contact the DNR for training. Be "**Eyes and Ears of the Lake**". (DNR website, search **watercraft inspection**)

✓ **Promote good AIS relationships** among your lake neighbors, the DNR AIS Specialist and law enforcement by including DNR and law enforcement as speakers during your lake association meeting. (DNR website, search **aquatic invasive species contacts**)

✓ **Report suspected new AIS sightings to the DNR.** It's the law!

✓ **Know current laws and follow them.** Before leaving public accesses, water must be drained from all water-related equipment. All bait containers with lake water must be drained and watercraft must be transported with the plug out. (DNR website, search **invasive species laws**)



Minnesota DNR www.dnr.state.mn.us

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IN MEMORY

Bob Spolum



Bob Spolum, long time Big Sand resident, passed away on December 23, 2018, in Rio Verde, AZ at the age of 87. Bob first came to Big Sand when he was a sophomore at Washburn High School in Minneapolis. His parents were good friends with Howard and Linda Fletcher, who lived off Grouse Road on the Big Sand bay area for many years. Bob was intrigued that Howard had had a career as an FBI agent and had worked for, and had known, Herbert Hoover personally.

Bob continued to see the Fletchers over the years. Howard had suggested that Bob might buy their cabin when he and his wife were too old to live on Big Sand. Unfortunately, Fletchers were not ready to sell when Bob retired in 1993. When a realtor suggested to Bob that he look at a home only a few houses away from Howard's, Bob jumped at the chance and bought it as quickly as possible. If you were fortunate enough to attend the Big Sand social that Bob and his wife Laura hosted just a couple of years ago, you had the opportunity to see and enjoy the Spolum cabin on the westside bank overlooking the bay.

Bob was a well-known and respected businessman who helped establish the Bobcat skid-steer loader as a trade name known the world over. You may recall the Bobcat flag that adorned his dock over the years. To read a full obituary of Bob's extraordinary life accomplishments, google 'Robert Spolum Obituary'



THE 2019 CAMPAIGN for Watercraft Inspection Funding

A particularly frigid and snowy winter is releasing its grip, and the time of year has come for one of our most important annual spring lake activities: Raising money to support watercraft inspections at the boat launch!

To date, Big Sand Lake remains AIS free, thanks to the diligence of your Big Sand Lake Association. This year, they have planned for 1100 hours of summer watercraft inspection. After the receipt of grants from Hubbard County and Lake Emma Township, the net remaining cost to support the inspections will be \$10,728, and they have asked the Charitable Fund Committee to help raise this amount. Will you make a contribution toward this vital service?

Almost 1,000 lakes and rivers in Minnesota now have some form of AIS infestation. Twelve of them are in Hubbard County. Lakes infested with Eurasian Milfoil or Starry Stonewort are being treated with herbicides costing hundreds of thousands of dollars. When a lake becomes infested with Zebra Mussels, there is no effective treatment! Preventing infestation with watercraft inspection is our best option for protecting Big Sand Lake.

Please do your part to protect our beautiful lake by making an online contribution at the bigsandlake.org website. The "Charitable Fund" donation link is on the right side of the home page. Or, mail a check made out to The Big Sand Lake Charitable Fund to:

Northwest Minnesota Foundation
201 3rdSt. NW
Bemidji, MN 56601

Thank you!
Ann & Chris Hilger and Linda Lee
Big Sand Lake Charitable Fund Committee



P.O. Box 181, Park Rapids, MN 56470

BIG SAND LAKE 2019 CALENDAR

ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, June 22
Pine Cone Lodge
10:30 AM ~ Lunch immediately following

FOURTH OF JULY PARADE

Thursday, July 4
11:00 AM at Northeast end of the lake

LADIES COFFEE/HAPPY HOUR

May/June/July/August/September
TBD

SOCIALS

July, Date TBD
Hosted by Margaret Prahm and Tom Patterson
August, Date TBD
Hosted by Sheree and Randy Seavers
September, Date TBD
Headwaters Golf Club,
preceded by 3rd Annual Golf Outing

BIG SAND DINNERS AT LOCAL RESTAURANTS

Random and Casually Scheduled
Contact Linda Van Bruggen, freddie54mn@yahoo.com,
for email notifications

BSLA BOARD MEETINGS

Saturday, May 18th
Saturday July 20th
September TBD

DEADLINES FOR NEWSLETTER MATERIALS

FALL ISSUE - September 1

If you have an idea for an activity
or are interested in hosting an event,
please contact either
Adrienne Bray - adriennebray@gmail.com
Beth Krueger - wkrueger@paulbunyan.net