VAN VLIET NEWS

Spring 1999

(Photo by Tom Olson)

View of Van Vliet Lake and the rest of the Presque Isle Chain

1999 Annual Meeting Set for July 3rd at Presque Isle

The 1999 annual meeting of the Van Vliet Lake Association has been set for **July 3rd** at the Presque Isle Community Center beginning at **3:30 PM**.

We will have reports the proposed boat landing and lake aeration. We are still checking on additional reports from fish management on their recent studies of the lake. We will end the meeting by 5:30 PM.

Early Spring – Great Start

The lake froze late and the ice went our early this year. It was gone by mid-April according to Barb Novak.

Early indications are that the lake aquatics are off to a good start – at least at the Olson cabin where we are already doing some raking. The other indication is that it was an easy winter on the fish population. Lots of us are catching crappies and it is great to see them back.

A walleye tournament (catch and release) was conducted in the Presque Isle area. According to Matt Pachi, fishermen on Van Vliet won 4 of the top 5 places. That must explain all the rigs at the boat landing.

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"Gone Fishin" – By Al Smithson

Al Smithson – A Gentle Man

Al Smithson lost his long battle on April 21, 1999. He was 81 years old. The picture above is of one of many paintings by Al. Thanks to his family for sharing it with us. Al is survived by his wife, Mary Ann, and three children, Tom, Stephen and Jane. He also had 8 grandchildren.

Al cared greatly about Van Vliet Lake and worked hard to make 2 lake associations work. He was interested in improving the lake and concerned about both lake vegetation and fishing. For many years, he stored a weed harvester at his home.

I will always remember a weekend that he and I spent in Stevens Point in 1980. We attended a Wisconsin Lakes Association meeting and brought back information on a Lake District. The owners on the lake rejected that idea, but our current association is part of his legacy of interest in the quality of Van Vliet Lake.

I will also always remember his kindness, his shy smile, and his twinkling eyes. He was a friend to our family throughout our 22 years on the lake.

Mary Ellen continues to live in the home they built on Van Vliet. We all extend our sympathies to her and the family.

Part of Al's legacy to Van Vliet has been his son Steve's continuing interest in the lake association.

Our sympathies go to the entire Smithson clan. They have indicated that memorials may be dedicated to Dr. Kate's Lakeland Hospice, Box 770, Woodruff, WI 54568 or to the Frank B. Koller Library, Manitowish Water, WI 54545.

New Neighbors

There has been lots of sales activity on the lake since we last reported. Hope we have it all:

Jeff and Jorga Burke -- Milwaukee
Bill and Diane Schroeder – Prospect, IL
Peter and Joan Herr – Oconomowoc
Zane Bussler – Shabbona, IL
Bruce Nelson – Bloomington, IL
Jim and Noelle Niquit – Delafield

Many thanks to Barb Novak for tracking this information down.

Lake Aeration

This winter, Paul Specht did some research into lake aeration on behalf of the association. In addition to discussions with DNR staff, he and Tom Olson visited the Muskellunge Lake Association aeration project near Eagle River.

Muskellunge Lake is very much like Van Vliet in that it is 365 acres, 19 foot maximum depth and has both heavy vegetation and a good fish population.

They installed their aeration system 5 years ago and have been very pleased with the results and the impact on the fish population. The association members believe that fish sizes have increased.

The pump and materials were supplied through a DNR matching grant, but the key to the success of the program has been the volunteer efforts of the residents on the lake.

Paul will present additional information on his research at the annual meeting.

Boat Landing

Earlier this year, Mike Coshun of the DNR indicated that an engineering firm would likely be hired this year to begin the planning of the boat landing. Steve Frank will provide additional updates on the boat landing at the annual meeting.

Campfire on Novak's Island

On July 3rd, Barb Novak has invited all of us to join her for a campfire on Novak's Island. Plan to arrive anytime after 8:00 PM.

Please bring your own lawn chairs or cushions to sit on, your own beverages and some snacks to share. A flashlight is also a very good idea.

Thanks again to Barb for her hospitality.

Funk Cabin Burns

On Friday, May 7th, the Funk cabin on the northwest part of the lake burned to the ground. Tom and Barbara Olson were out in their kayaks late in the afternoon and were the first to see the blaze. By the time they were able to report the fire, the cabin was fully ablaze.

The Presque Isle Fire Department responded and was able to save the nearby cabin from damage. Although everything was very dry, there was little wind to cause the fire to spread.

As of last report, there was no determination of the cause of the fire.