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Newsletter

March 2008

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A newsletter to inform the members of ongoing activities within the Isle Royale Boater's Association, promote discussion among its members on various IRBA issues and share members' experiences related to boating, sport fishing, hiking, canoeing, and kayaking.

A line untied for the test of time

- Dave Miller

Cal Miller and Isle Royale have been friends for 42 years. The friendship started when Cal, his wife Carol and son Dave were invited to cruise up the North Shore from Two Harbors on an old 32 foot wood single engine sedan cruiser named "Restless." The guys the met girls in Grand Marias, fueled-up and headed on to the Island in the afternoon. As darkness came, so did the fog and if it weren't for Cal's deer-hunting skills with a compass, the ship and crew would have been lost. Late at night they finally found Rock of Ages lighthouse and the Coasties who manned it. The next afternoon the fog settled and Isle Royale was seen by all.

It was Dave who several years later got Dad to buy an old boat and the relationship continued. There have been countless fishing trips, family trips and work trips to the Island ever since, usually on his beloved boat "The Outlet," and Carol and sons Dave and Carl usually with him. Cal really treasured the friendships made on Isle Royale.

Cal was an avid supporter of access for all to see Isle Royale, supporting it with his presence and financially. He truly enjoyed working with fellow boaters and National Park Service employees on joint projects of the Isle Royale Boaters' Association (IRBA). Cal also served as Regional Director for the IRBA and with his wife, Carol, hardly ever missed the Annual Meeting in Houghton MI, or on the Island.

Cal started Northwest outlet in Superior, Wisconsin as a small surplus outlet store in 1954. It grew over the years to be the largest privately owned sporting goods store in the Northland and continues under Dave's management today.

Editors Note: Cal Miller passed away November 25, 2007.

Results of 2007 IRBA Member Survey

- Dave Hand

I have tabulated the results of the 2007 IRBA member survey which are displayed in newsletter table. A total of 83 members responded to the survey. The values in the table represent the

responses to the questions. For example, the first question states "Dock facilities on Isle Royale have been improved since implementation of the General Management Plan" and the results show that 2 members strongly agree with the statement, 24 agree with the statement, 24 are neutral with the statement, 13 disagree with the statement, and 7 strongly disagree with the statement. I have my own interpretation of these results, but I would like to hear your interpretation so please email me at dwhand@mtu.edu.

With respect to the questions on the back of the survey: 1) What can the NPS do to improve boating on Isle Royale? 2) What can the IRBA do to improve boating on Isle Royale? 3) Additional Comments? The questions were reviewed and ranked based on the member response. The overwhelming response with respect to question one was that more dock space, moorings, and maintenance for docks are needed at IR. Here are some comments: "Allow overnight mooring at the Passage Island Dock"; "Continue Rehab of Docks"; "We don't go there much anymore because dock space is an issue"; "Consider mooring buoys for larger boats"; "Add more docks and shelters not less"; "Increase the number of docks and campsite locations"; "Increase the number of docks for small boats"; "Add shelters"; "More Docking"; "Dock space, Hay Bay and Grace Island docks should have been longer"; "Do not take out Siskowit Dock"; "Put more protected docks on the north side"; "Need tent and camp sites for kayakers on perimeter of Island"; "A few more docks around the Island";

The second highest response from members dealt with treatment by Park Rangers. Here are some sample responses: "Relax law enforcement contact with all visitors as it seems to be an invasion of privacy in the wilderness"; "Follow-up on boaters' complaints with rangers"; "Unless

there is a dire emergency, rangers should follow their own no-wake rules"; "We have had no problems with the NPS but other boaters from the marina have told us of incidents in which park rangers have been discourteous or have hassled them when there is a misunderstanding about rules and regulations"; "NPS needs to change their negative attitude towards boaters"; "Be more friendly towards boaters"; "Why do rangers have to stop me every time I go to the Island?"; " Wardens are overdone. Rarely can you go more than a day without being checked either on the water or at a campsite"; "The NPS should become more customer-friendly - They should recognize more of the needs of the boaters and be more open to fulfilling those needs".

The third highest response to question one was with respect to the fuel pricing on Isle Royale. Here are some responses: "Shop around for better fuel prices"; "Get rid of transport fees on gas"; "Work on getting gas prices reduced"; "Decrease fuel prices"; "Lower gas prices"; "I quit going to IR because of high fuel prices"; "Fuel prices too high!"; "Gas prices a big factor".

The highest response to question two was that the IRBA was on the right track looking out and promoting boaters' interest in IR as well as helping the NPS improve visitor facilities at IR. Here are some responses: " Keep working to improve facilities on Isle"; "Continue joint projects"; "Continue to talk and negotiate with the NPS"; "Keep up dialog with NPS"; "Keep the park service honest"; "Maintain present course"; "Keep eye on NPS"; "Continue to work with the NPS on improvements and keeping the NPS informed of boating concerns and ideas for improvement."

The results of the survey will be shared with the park service so they can see the present concerns of the Boaters' Association.

IRBA Fish Bait Survey

- Dave Hand

In cooperation with IRBA the NPS is trying to evaluate ways to prevent the VHS virus from getting into Lake Superior and especially the waters within and around Isle Royale National Park. If the virus infects the fish population within the Isle Royale waters, it could devastate the fishery (especially the lake trout). As we all know this would be a tragic loss of a resource. The NPS is already taking steps to treat the ballast water of its boats that ferry to the Island. IRBA has a proposal pending for funds to put disinfection sprayers at all the boat launches on Lake Superior to disinfect boats before launching. We consider this a very serious potential problem in which immediate action is needed to protect the fishing on the Island.

One of the ways that the virus can spread is through infected bait fish (dead or alive). Remember this virus is a cold water virus that can be frozen in dead bait fish for long periods of time and still survive. I have enclosed a survey for all the Isle Royale fishermen to fill out and **send back as soon as possible**. This information will be used to determine the use of bait by members of our organization.

Annual Lake Whittlesey Walleye Challenge 2007 - By Dave Turnquist

It's been an extremely long year away from the Island and all its' splendor, and an even longer time anticipating our return from the wilds of Alaska. Although Alaska was a great trip of fishing, fishing, and more fishing, there was something missing and we all knew what it was...walleye!

This particular trip was special as each of us hadn't seen the clear blue waters and striking

vistas we have come to know and love in almost two years. Having spent this time away researching new lures and techniques, we were all anxious to reacquaint ourselves with the lake and the loons. And in our usual fashion, we wasted no time getting underway on our hike into the interior, almost running in excitement of what lie ahead.

Before long, our agonizing wait had been rewarded with our first view of the lake as we crested the final ridge. Some of us stopped to take a breath, or more appropriately, to catch our breath before heading down. It's a tough hike from Chippewa Harbor, so a long look seemed appropriate on many levels. The descent upon the edge of the lake was sweet as we loaded the kayaks with our gear and headed out. This day the water was warm and the breeze was slight. Low winds fared well as it was a new experience for some to fish from kayaks, and it took a while to get the hang of handling the boat and fishing poles while seated at waters level. We were back on familiar waters!

This year, members of our walleye excursion involved the Captain and crew of the Dr. Trout and the Awggiedawg, all veterans of the walleye challenge. It wasn't long before the two-man crew of the "Awggiedawg remote" started hauling in walleyes and the trash talking of Brandan Wilson got things off to its usual start. Oh yeah, he was aching for the competition, but it didn't last long and each member focused on what we were really there for, catching and eating walleyes. So in the spirit of co-operation, everyone kept the others abreast of the changes in pattern, technique, and location. Although walleyes can inhabit many locations of a lake, and in most cases, all at the same time, they may not all respond to lures the same way and at the same time. So as in past years, everyone spread out to find what worked best for them. The Awggiedawg remote worked the

deeper waters near the base of points and drops offs. This worked well as long as the jigs were presented in a specific manner.

Dead drifting jigs about two feet off the bottom produced the most fish, while a few found fish jigging in open water. Dr. Trout employed a combination of both tactics and slow trolled along the deep water and the drop offs, paddling along with the many loons that inhabit the lake during summer. Fishing was fantastic, walleyes were biting very well in the deeper regions of the lake and everyone was having a great time. However, just as in past years, the action seemed to slow as the afternoon wore on, leaving everyone to ponder what changed. This is the time to explore other areas of the lake, different lures, varied presentations...in a nut shell, pattern. This holds true just about anywhere in the country, and on just about any lake. So having some basic general knowledge of how walleye behave can make it easier to locate fish on any body of water.

Eureka! We found fish in the middle depths adjacent to weed beds and it got hot, the bite was on again. Bruce caught fish, Tom caught many, and Bill...well, I think Bill enjoyed the lake and the paddling, but he always enjoys watching everyone have a great time. I am pretty sure Bill did well too, but he's pretty modest and wouldn't want to show anyone up. By the end of the day, the group managed to haul in 14 keeper walleyes and threw back dozens of little guys, not a bad day on the water anywhere in the country. Even with the fishing as good as it was, the reward had yet to be realized.

The next day, as everyone settled back to reflect on the adventures of the trip, walleyes were frying in the pan thanks to our own personal Emeril, Tom Kukulski. Fred and Betty Beiti from the Betty Mae cruised in to join us in a fine meal, and Fred shared a few of his secret

locations for lake trout. (Don't even ask where they are, we already forgot.) Phyllis Green paddled in from Mott Island to share in the fun, even sparring with Don Hannula in a game of cribbage. I am not sure how cribbage fits in with walleyes, but I guess that's what it's really all about, sharing a great time with great friends and the memories that will last for a life-time. So next time you are on our favored vacation Island, make sure to try fishing an interior lake for walleye, pike, or perch. There are lots of opportunities for walleye in many of the Island's lakes, and the adventure of getting there makes it that much more memorable.

IRBA Membership Renewal and Address Change

It is time again for some of us to renew our membership. A renewal membership form is enclosed for your convenience. In addition, there may be some members that have recently moved and IRBA does not have their forwarding address. If you know of a member that has moved and may know their new address, we would appreciate an address update and the form can be used for this purpose. Just write on the form that it is for an address update. **Place the membership form and payment in the self-addressed envelope with the survey and send back to IRBA. If the print on your mailing label on the envelope of the newsletter is black in color, this means that your membership dues are not up to date and need to be paid for the 2008 season. But if the print is red in color your membership dues are paid for the 2008 year. If you are still unsure then call Karen at 906 - 482 - 0001.**

IRBA Apparel Available

We have IRBA apparel available including: hats, sweatshirts, and polo shirts. We also have nice

jackets available by special order. You can order them by contacting Carol at 906 - 482 - 9342.

IRBA Scheduled Events

IRBA Scheduled Meeting, Tuesday, April 1,
2008, Range Snowmobile Club in South Range.

IRBA Annual Dinner Meeting - Saturday, May 17,
2008, 5 PM Keweenaw Star Cruise Ship,
Houghton MI

IRBA West End Fundraiser - Thursday, June 19,
2008, 5 PM Lakeview Castle, Duluth MN

IRBA Annual Island Meeting, Saturday 3:00 PM,
July 19, 2008, Rock Harbor Lodge on Isle Royale

**Articles for Newsletter consideration are
welcome. ----**

*Please support your IRBA
PO Box 97
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