



THE  
ROOT BEER LADY

# BWCA

## PHOTO ALBUM

h history theatre



# BWCA

PHOTO ALBUM

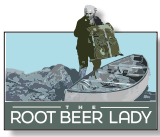


ANTHONY PETER

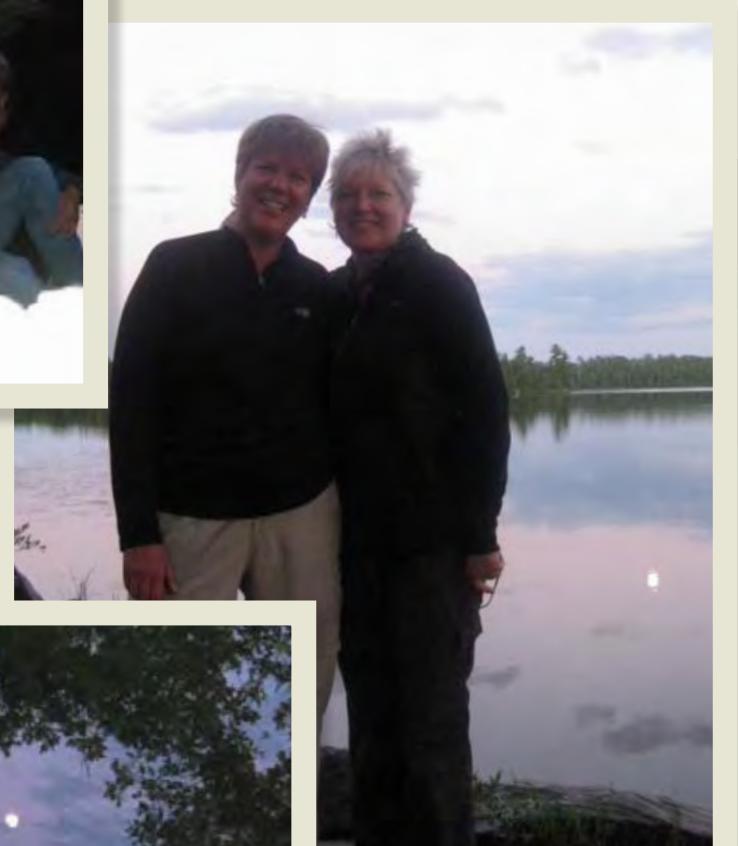
ANTHONY PETER



BECKY SCHEIBEL



# BWCA PHOTO ALBUM



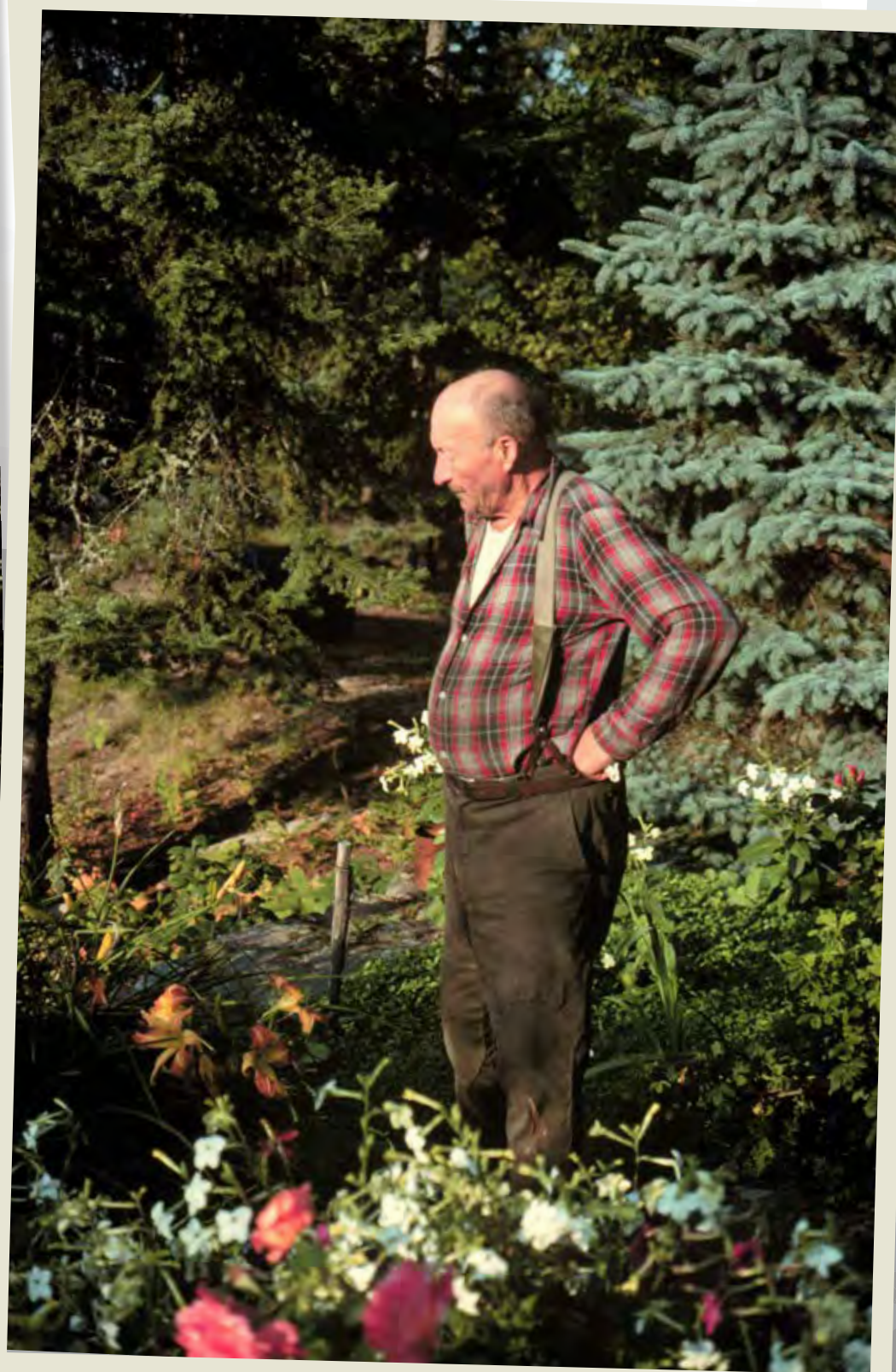
BETSY PAULSON  
CHERYL FARBER



One of Dorothy's friends that lived on the eastern end of Knife Lake was Benny Ambrose. Here is Benny in his later years still living in the Boundary Waters until his death. Dorothy and Benny were two of the last remaining residents of the BWCA. Unfortunately, the Forest Service came in and burned Benny's place down instead of someone being able to remove it. Chik-Wauk Museum & Nature Center has one of Benny's canoes on display as well as stories from his daughters that grew up in the BWCA.

*-Bonnie Schudy, Campus Director, Chik-Wauk Museum & Nature Center*

BONNIE SCHUDY





# BWCA PHOTO ALBUM



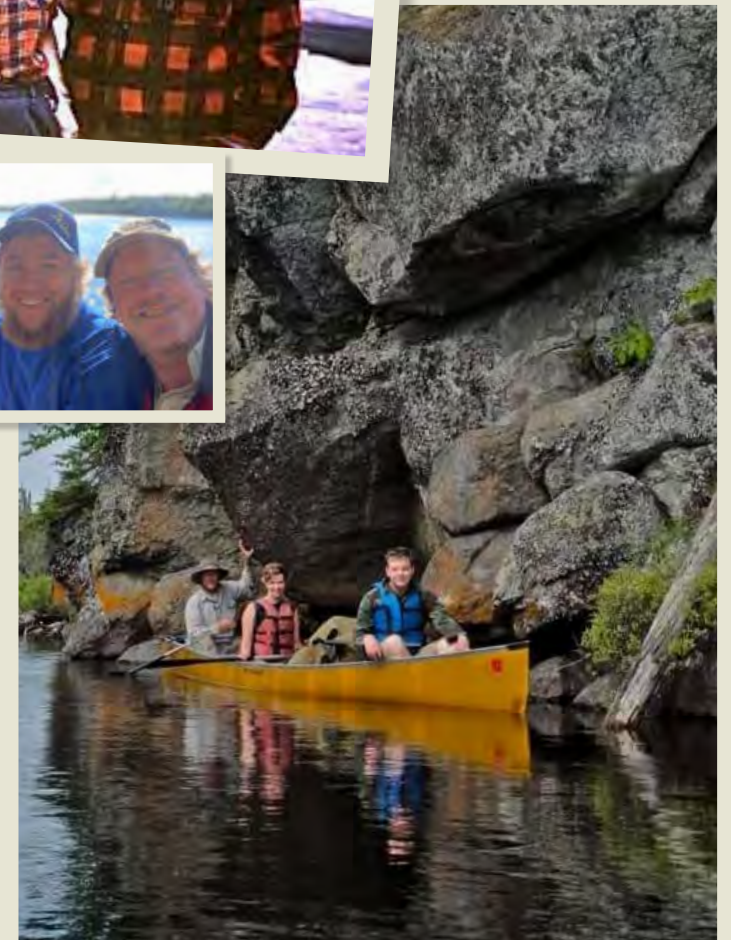
My grandpa, Jerry, and his friend Dick Gilyard when they visited Dorothy Molter while winter camping.



I fondly remember my first BWCA trip with my parents and grandparents when I was 5 years old and my middle youngest brother, Andy Kimball, was 2 years old. A picture of 5 year old me from that trip.



There's another of my grandpa cooking - cooking and eating is one of our favorite activities in the boundary waters and we always enjoy trying new and old recipes.



My love of the boundary waters was passed down from my grandpa, Jerry Kimball, and my grandma, June Kimball. My grandparents met through a shared love of the boundary waters - my grandma leading canoe camping trips for girls through Widjiwagan YMCA camp and my grandpa exploring with friends - which led to a lifetime of trips together and with friends in the wilderness. They instilled that love for the BWCA in us too. I've made my own memories in the BWCA, trips with my dad and brothers, with high school friends, and with my husband, Will Matchett.

BRITTANY KIMBALL



My brother-in-law's family has a cabin off the Gunflint Trail on the edge of the BWCA on Hungry Jack Lake. I find the cabin a place to recharge my batteries. Highlights always include hiking area trails, discovering the wildflowers, canoeing the lakes, and falling asleep the sound of the loon call. On more than one occasion a group of us have portage to Rose Lake to take in the beautiful waterfall there.

My first trip to Rose Lake and the waterfall we had three canoes in our group. On the way there my sister and I were the last canoe in at every landing even though we might have started before the others. It didn't help us that my sister doesn't have the best sense of direction. We would be heading to what we thought was the portage only to hear our names being called from behind and yelled to paddle in another direction. Good thing the group wasn't depended on us finding the portage.

On a different trip my daughter and I decided to make the trip to Rose Falls – she really wanted canoe and portage. My daughter has experience portaging, so I was excited to head out with her. My daughter felt it best if we take the aluminum canoe rather than the lighter Kevlar because she didn't want to risk us scraping the bottom of a Kevlar

canoe on rocks along the shore. We got to the first portage, and I thought we would both carry the canoe but my daughter waved me off. Now at first glance you wouldn't think my daughter would be up to the task because she is quite petite. Don't let that fool you – she can carry a canoe with the best. The best part of the trip was on our way back to Hungry Jack Lake. We approached our next landing and portage but there were already other canoe groups at the landing. We were prepared to wait on the lake but those on shore insisted we come in. We watched as two more groups brought their canoes down the portage to the landing. One man was struggling with his canoe and only too happy to set it down. Then my daughter proceed to pick up our aluminum canoe and head right up the portage. It was something to see the look on the other men as she easily headed up the trail with our clearly heavy canoe and I simply smiled and said, "that's why I'm with her!"



# BWCA PHOTO ALBUM

CATHY STEFFENS



Ryan and I ventured up to BWCA the summer of 2011. A few weeks before that we found out I was pregnant with our first child. I will never forget how it almost looks like you can touch the stars. It was a beautiful adventure!

JACI HANSEY





CLAUDIA WATERLOO



# BWCA PHOTO ALBUM



A few old photos of friends and I when we were young and on a canoe trip in the BWCA.

Those who have visited Dorothy's place are familiar with the parking meters she had on her dock. People would put money in those meters thinking that was necessary. Dorothy also had a telephone on her desk in her tent cabin. It was the an old dial model. I was there when a man came in, saw the phone and smiled broadly. He said: "Hey, you got a phone, Dorothy!" "Yep, I do!" She replied. "Can I use it?" "Gotta call my broker!" "Sure!" She says. So the guy picks up the receiver and listens for a dial tone. Nothing. He clicks the receiver switch several times and listens again.

Nothing. He becomes frustrated and yells, "Hey, Dorothy, this phone doesn't work!" Dorothy turns to him with a big smile and says, "I never said it did!"

The parking meter was a fixture at Dorothy's place. She laughed when I asked her about it—said people thought they needed to put money into it in order to "park" at her dock. I remember she said that they had recently done a story about her—said she was the "loneliest woman" in the country. She replied: "Lonely, hardly; I gotta be up and about by 7 am every day because the canoeists will be here by then. Then, it's one canoeist after another, all day long."

It was around 1974 when my wife Sharon and I stopped to visit the Root Beer lady. We were on a canoe trip, cruising down the river when we spotted her tent cabin. Sharon's face was chapped from the wind so she asked Dorothy if she had any face cream. "Yes, I do," she answered and told her nephew, who was about 14 at the time, to take the boat to her nearby cabin and get it. The cabin was a few minutes away by motor boat. The boy soon returned with the face cream. "What do I owe you, Dorothy?" I asked. "Fifty cents," she replied. I said that wasn't enough—that the boy had probably used that much gas to power over to the cabin. Her reply: "Fifty cents is what I paid for it, so that's enough for me!" I paid her 50 cents.

CLIFF JACOBSON



Our canoe trip to Knife Lake was the summer of 2012. My daughter Moriah and I had worked as tour guides at the Dorothy Molter Museum for a few summers and were excited to take this trip to see where Dorothy had lived. The trip up was calm and beautiful. Once we were on Knife Lake we couldn't find a campsite but fortunately found one on a smaller lake near by. We heard rumors of bears raiding campsites in the area. The next day on our way back it was quite windy which made it an exhausting paddle. We also misread the map and were anxious about meeting our tow back to Moose Lake. Fortunately the boat was waiting for us even though we were late. The trip was a wonderful way to end our summers of being tour guides at the museum.

CYNTHIA BARKER



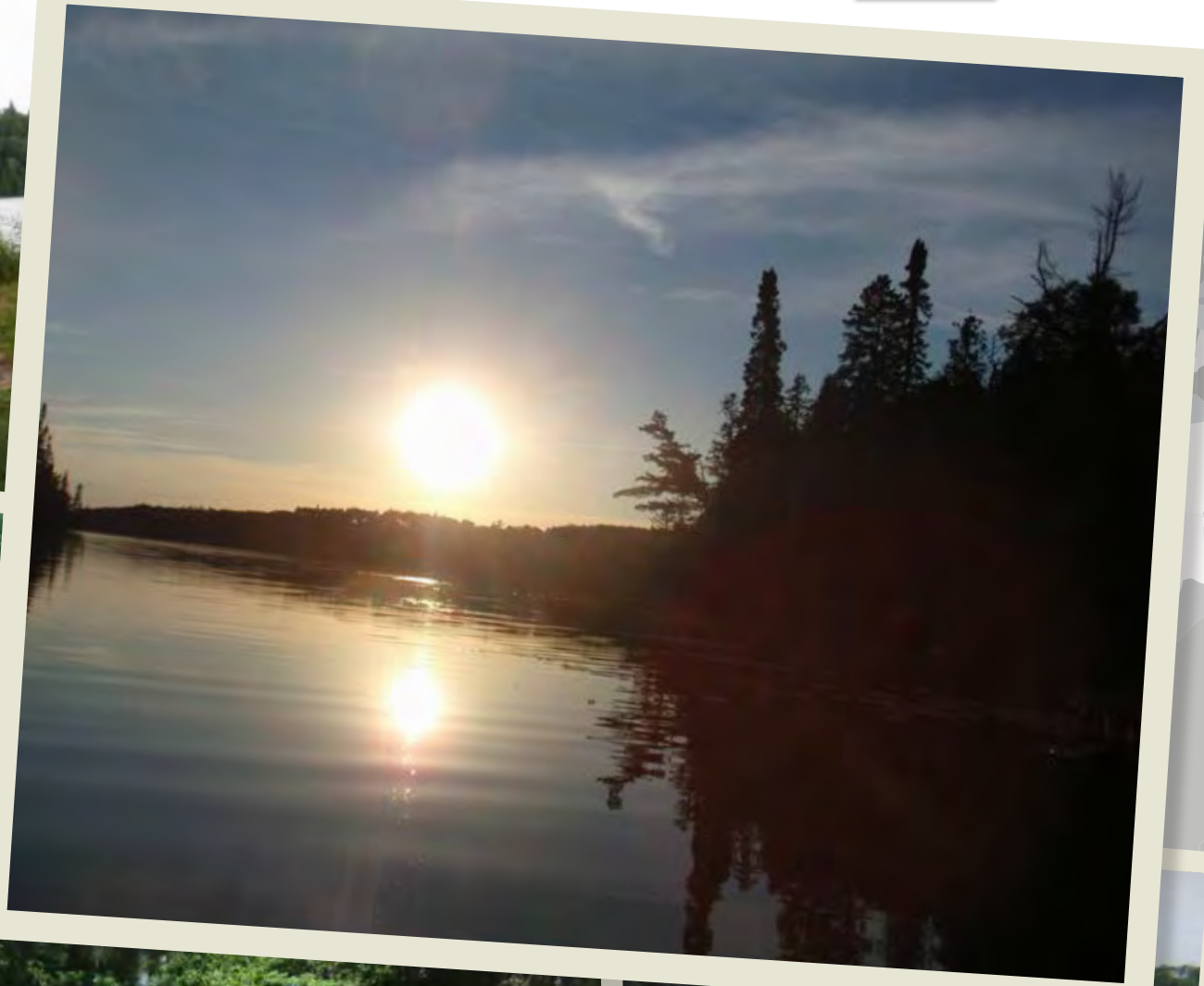
**BWCA**  
PHOTO ALBUM



2016 Bearskin



**BWCA**  
PHOTO ALBUM



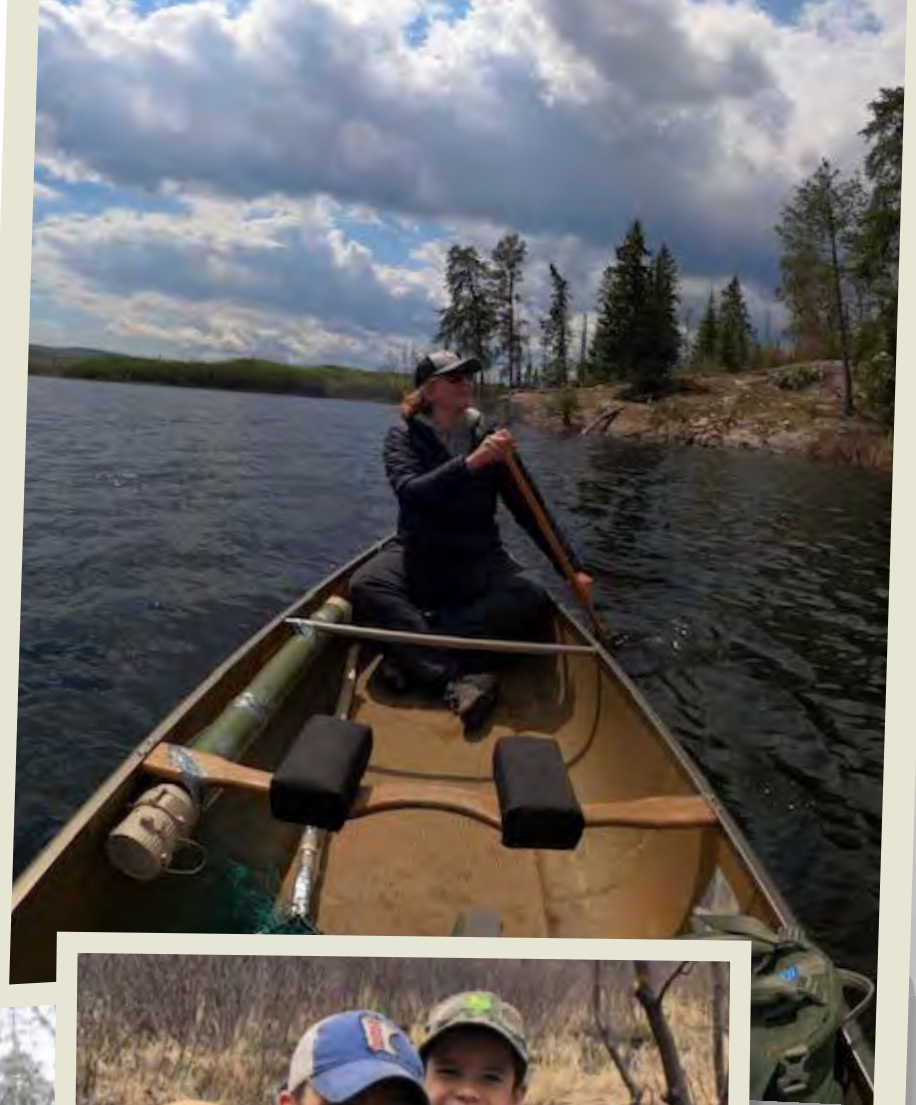
2014  
Caribou Lake



DEBORAH ZACHMAN



# BWCA PHOTO ALBUM



My family has been going to the Boundary waters ever since I was a baby. The tradition started with my father in 1967. Since then he has gone up there at least once a year- usually 3 times a year! This is a tradition that he has passed down to his children and now grandchildren who love the sacred space.

DEENA MAGNUSON



"The Girls' Trip" with my female cousins. We have been going to the Boundary Waters together every year since 2005.





Annual father/daughter canoe trip to the BWCA.







I met my best friends while on a trip to the boundary waters in early high school (2006). The trip created a bond that we still carry today. We learned how to work hard and appreciate the beauty of the land. Some my best memories are at the BWCA.

Learning how to plan and prepare, but also how to adapt to what the day brings you. And learning a little trail spice (dirt) isn't gonna hurt you.

GENEVA LYMAN



# BWCA

PHOTO ALBUM



Dorothy Molter Isle of Pines is where she lived. This is the famous ribbon rock on her island. We even had a bear visit us.

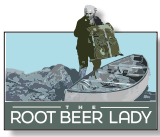
GREGG ZASTROW



James Dehn is leaning against the tree.  
Photographer credit: Victoria Trotter.

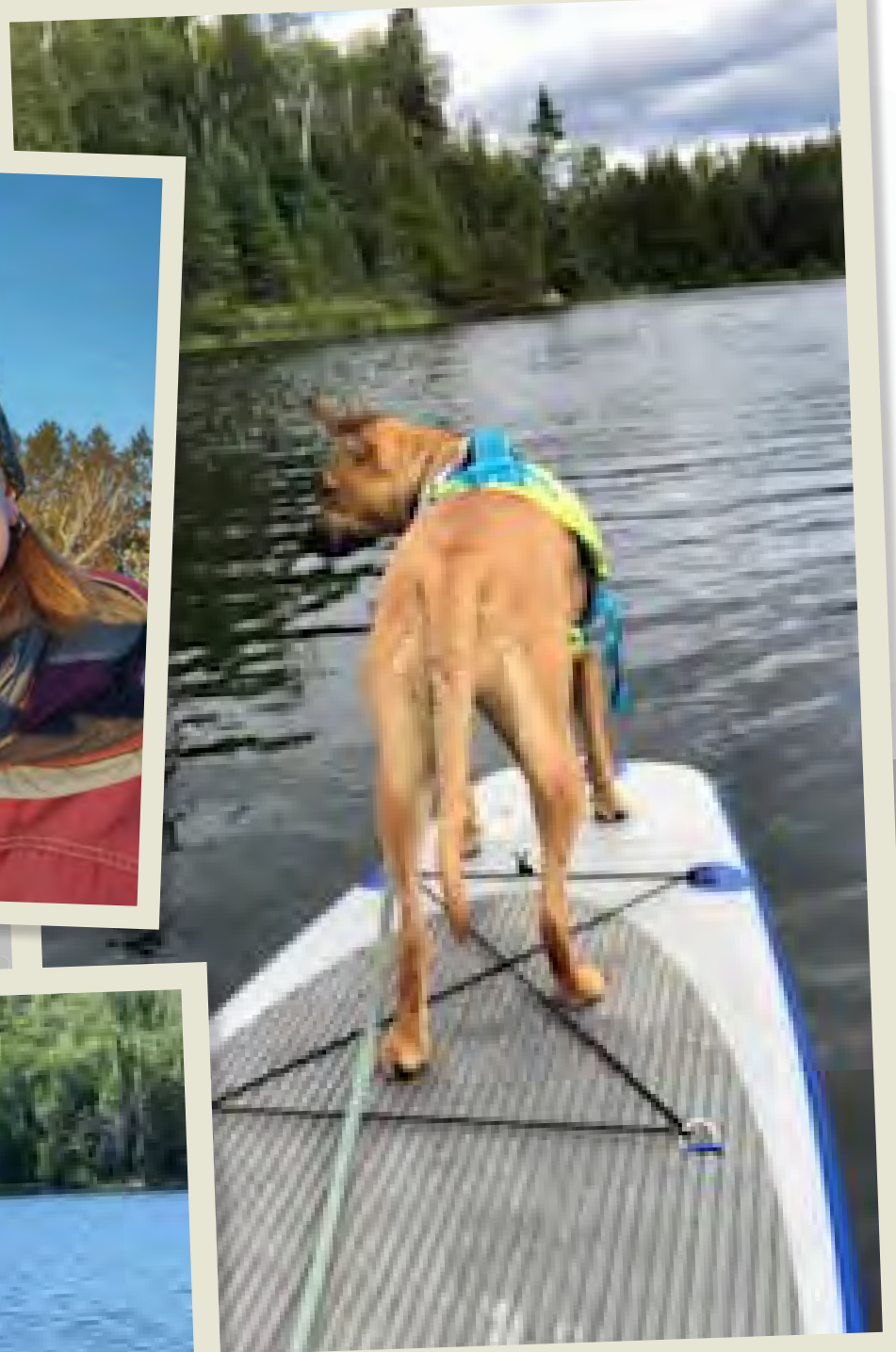


I have this photo duplicate to one currently in the museum) shot by my friend Dale Swenson of Braham, Minn. Dale passed away about 7 years ago. He told me that this was one of the last photos of Dorothy, still holding the dollar he gave her for a bottle of rootbeer.



# BWCA

PHOTO ALBUM





Jill Kufrin took the picture in 1986. Jill and Laura (in red on left) guided a group of Camp Birchwood girls - holding their root beer! -through the boundary waters. Obviously that is Dorothy in background.



Jill Kufrin and Dorothy Molter

*Excerpt from newspaper article written by Jill Kufrin for a newspaper in Benson, Minn.*

Who was this Dorothy? An old woman who lived by herself on an island and sold candy and homemade root beer we were told. Candy and root beer! Root beer and candy! Real food! We paddled on, despite our aching muscles, to reach this "store." So on my first canoe trip in the boundary waters, I equated Dorothy with filling my need for sugar and my need for some sort of civilization.

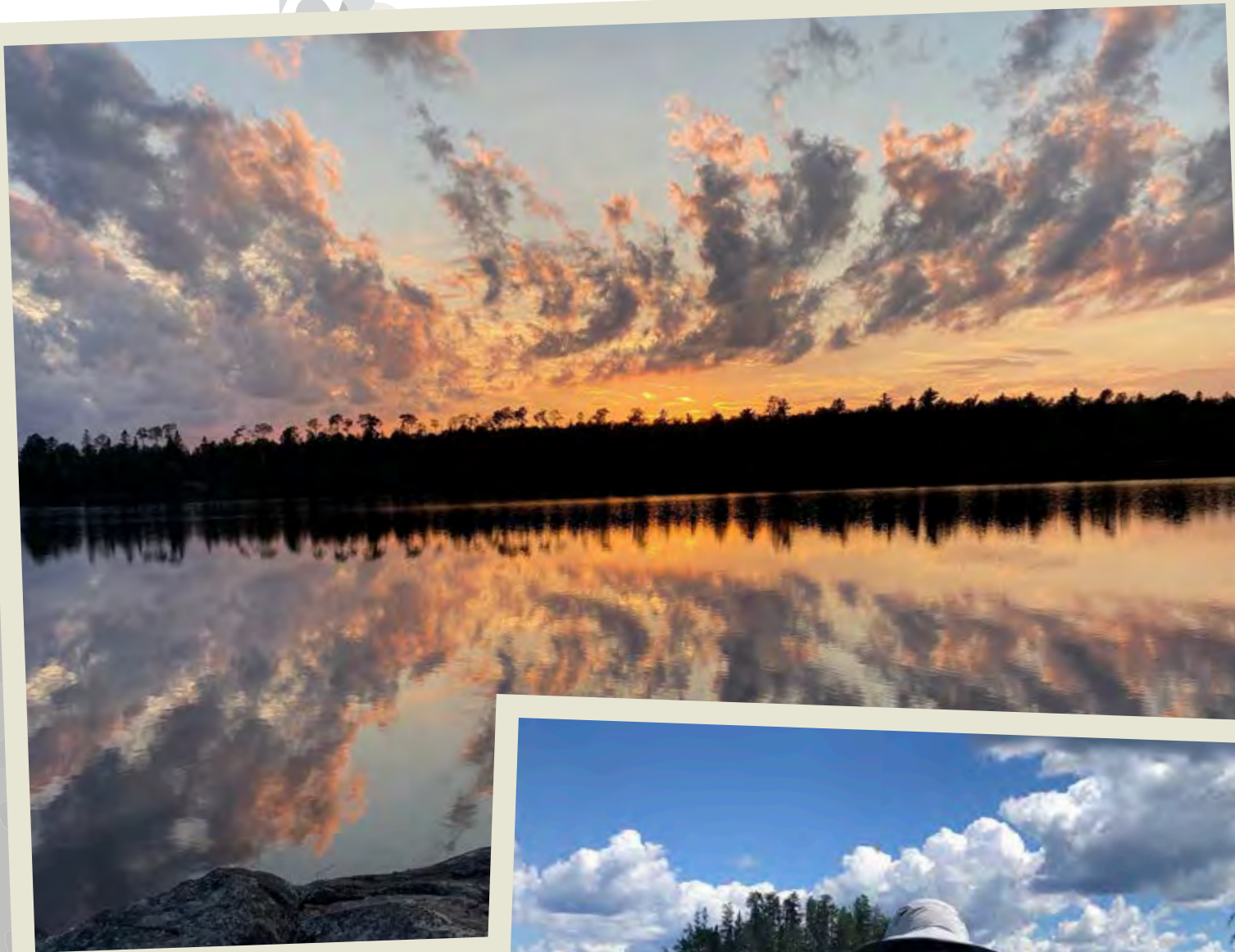
When we did finally reach Dorothy's island and canoed up to her stop sign on the dock, the candy and root beer weren't so important to me this time. Instead, Dorothy herself and her unique, colorful island captured my interest. I noticed her slow, stooping walk and her quiet, matter-of-fact attitude as she left us alone to read the painted canoe paddles and feed her tame birds and listen to the myriad of wind chimes. I tried to imagine her days in summer and in winter. I admired her inner strength to remain by herself on her island in an area where no other people were allowed to live. This time, part of me could understand Dorothy, legend of the BWCA, because I too, felt so content that I wanted to paddle on forever in this maze of lakes.

Dorothy Molter died last week, but the chance to meet her one last time and for the opportunity to canoe through her beloved boundary waters on two separate occasions, I whisper a "thank you-thank you for those blessed memories."



# BWCA

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I've been to the BWCA twice, 4-day canoeing trips with friends. I've traveled all over the world but never known another place of such peaceful stillness and complete immersion in nature. I can totally understand why Dorothy wanted to live there!

JILL SCHAFER



For years we went to the Boundary Waters as a group. We started in the early '70s!



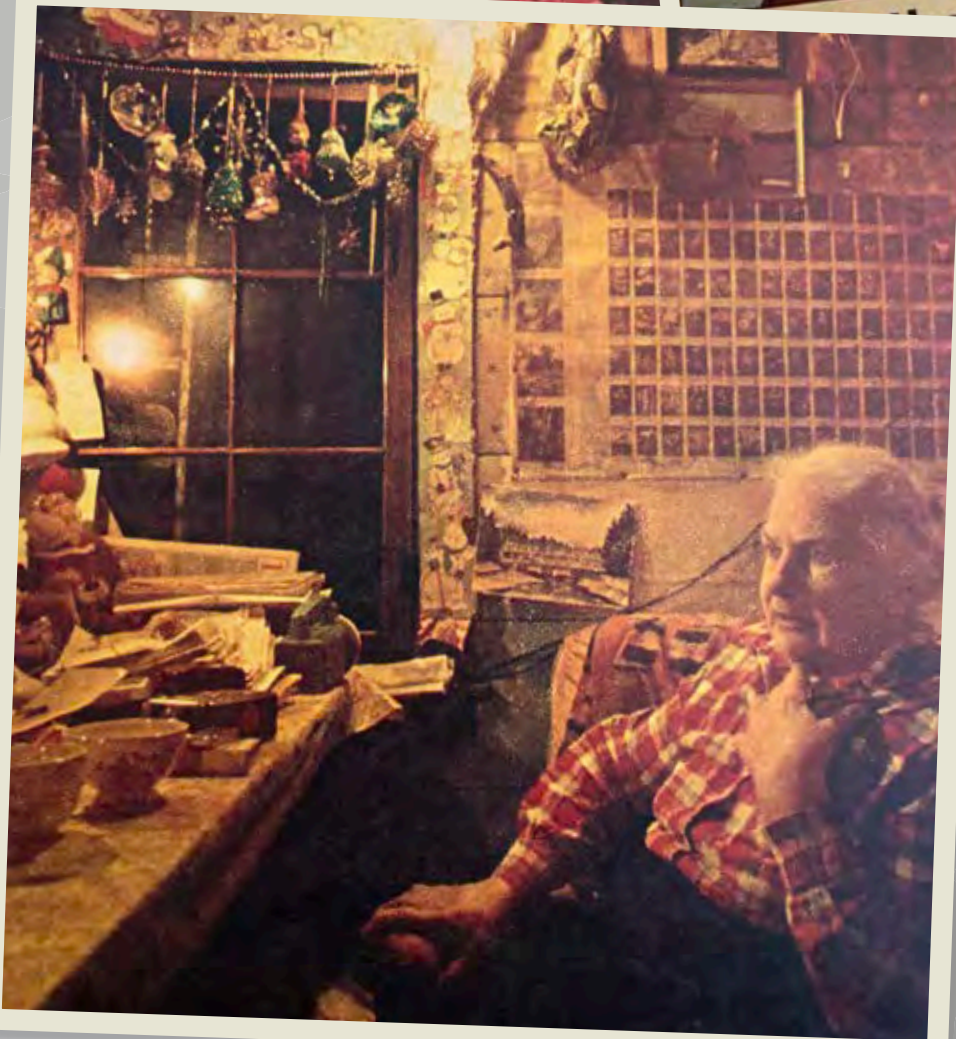


# BWCA PHOTO ALBUM



Growing up in Ely, MN I knew of Dorothy early in my life. Starting in the early '70s a group stayed with Dorothy when lake trout fishing over the Presidents Day weekend. We did that for many years staying in the point cabin or the honeymoon cabin. It became an annual tradition. Dorothy always had the coffee pot on and greeted us early in the morning. We usually arrived just at sunrise to set up our cabin for the stay. The cabins were furnished with everything but food and sleeping bags. One unwritten rule was the wood box was full when you got here, fill it before you leave.

Teaching in the Osseo School District I taught a summer school class on camping. Our final was a trip to the Boundary Waters and the Isle of Pines was on our list of must visits. My students got to taste that famous Root Beer. We had many great times visiting with Dorothy.



I also have two Christmas ornaments that Dorothy made. They are proudly displayed on our tree every year. One of the newspaper articles show some of the ornaments hanging above the window in Dorothy's cabin.

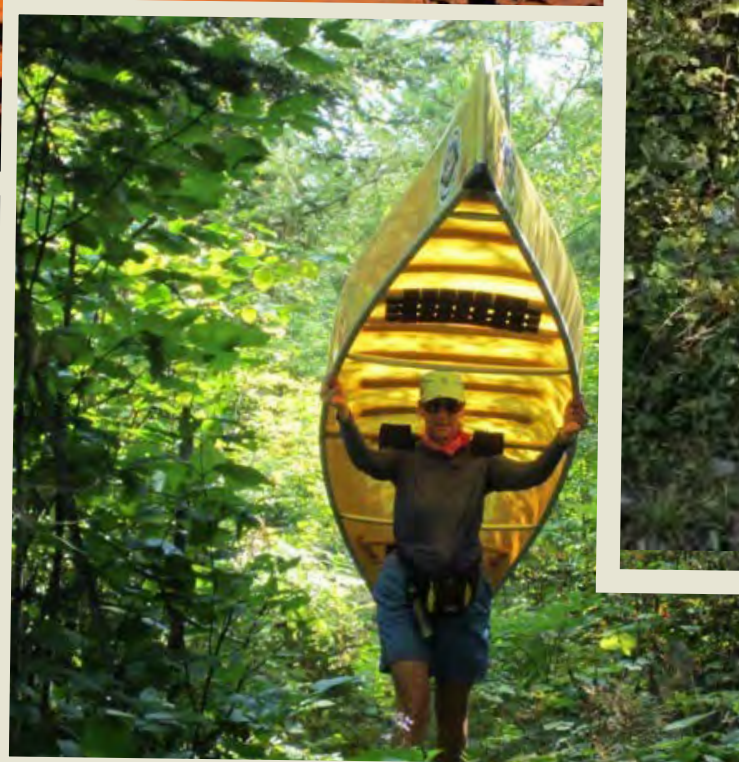
JUDITH LINDVALL





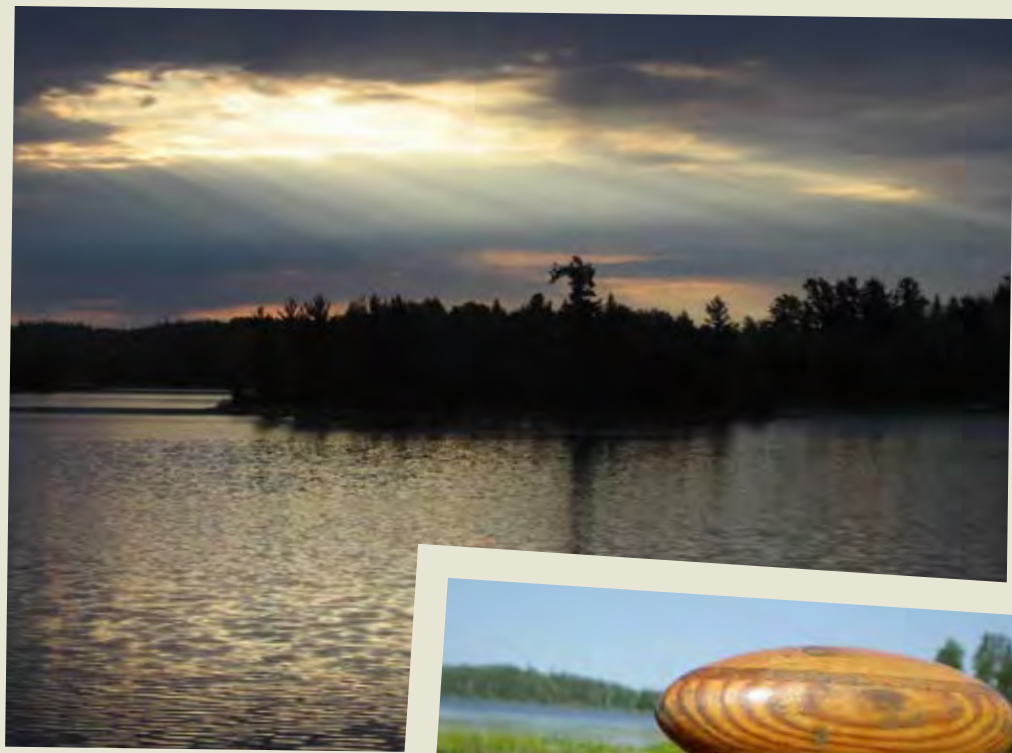
Dorothy and Russ Lindvall with summer school students.  
Dorothy in front of her summer tent.  
And Dorothy with Russ and Judy Lindvall.





I remember my first trip to meet the Root Beer Lady. We parked our canoe by her parking meter and walked the canoe-paddle-lined path up to her little canvas tent. I bought a root beer and a candy bar and signed her guest book. Jennifer Bunce at Dorothy's Rock.

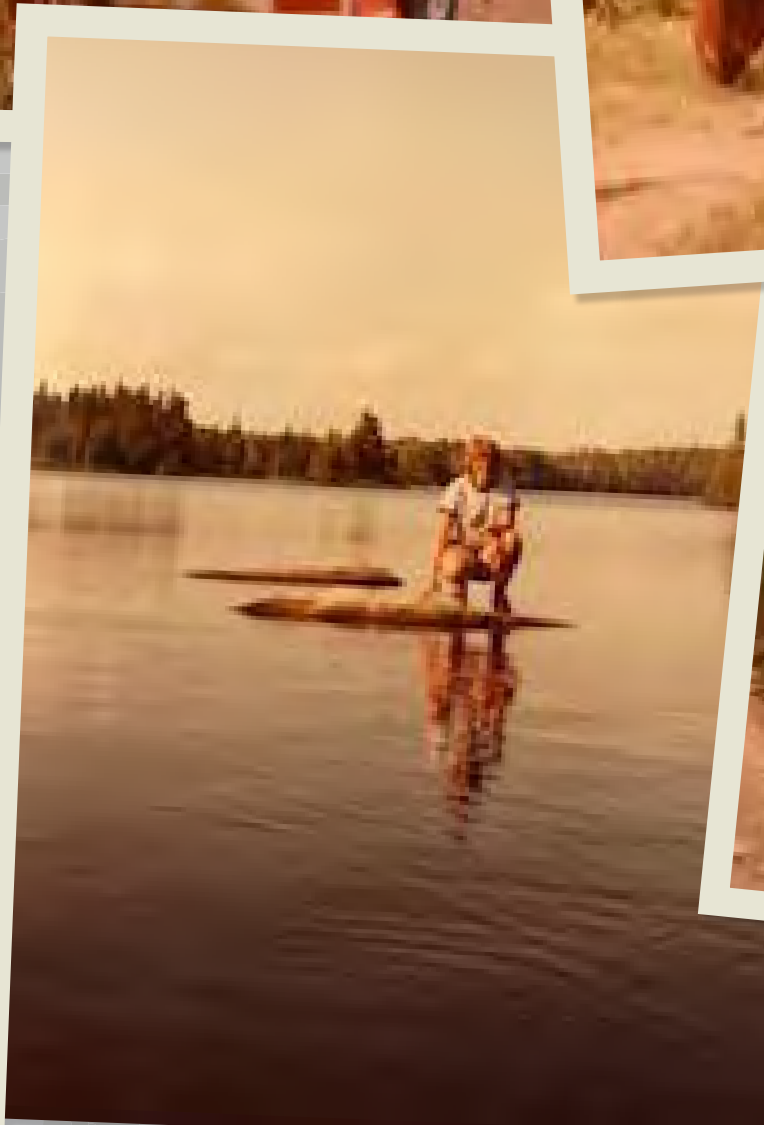
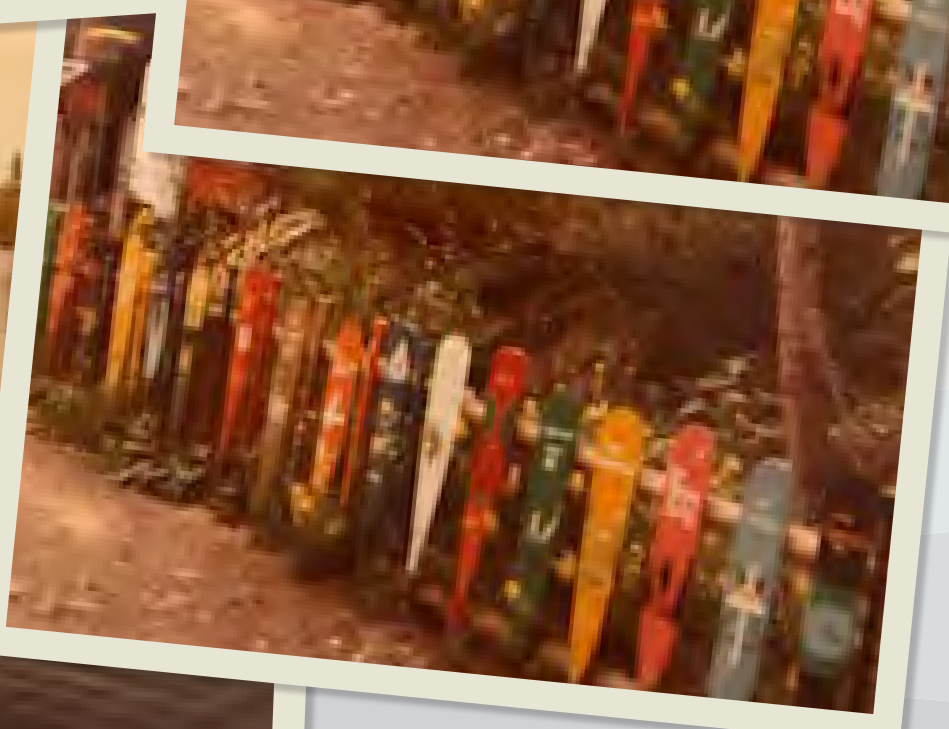
KAREN YLINEN



Yes, this  
creek is the  
portage

Most of these photos are from the BWCA trip (always all women!) for which one of the usual crew brought along a friend ill with a bone cancer who'd always wanted to see the Boundary Waters. We all agreed we'd carry her through our route if we had to do so! By that time, she didn't weigh much more than a filled Duluth Pack. We all had a wonderful trip including watching the sun rise over the island where the Root Beer Lady, Dorothy Molter once lived. We only use camp nicknames on our trips. The following year, "Red" could only join our crew in spirit.

KIRSTEN PARDOE



I got to stop at Dorothy's camp in 1978. She is pictured here with her sister Ruth. The fence of canoe paddles were painted by various camps that trekked thru each year.

The other photos are me at a canoe rest and in 1980 on my very own island on Grace Lake.

LESLIE KRONA



LORI NISSEN



# BWCA PHOTO ALBUM



MARCIA RAPATZ



Knife Lake June 2020.  
12 day trip from Rainy Lake to Lake Superior via the Voyageurs highway.



End of trip photo of youth group who took a trip in I believe a 17 foot North canoe, and me helping to build a log cabin at Wilderness Canoe Base at the end of the Gunflint Trail. 1975 or 76.



The picture of the youth holding up the North canoe was a group that visited Dorothy on her island. One of the campers had been injured and spent the night at Dorothy's receiving medical aid. I'm pretty sure it was Benny Ambrose that happened upon our campsite and took the injured camper to Dorothy's via motorboat. We paddled the next morning to Dorothy's to see how he was doing and got to meet and chat with Dorothy. It was an unforgettable experience.

MARSHA KURKA





We are a group of 6 Girl Scout volunteer women that have been travelling yearly to the BWCA since 1993.

MARY SELBY



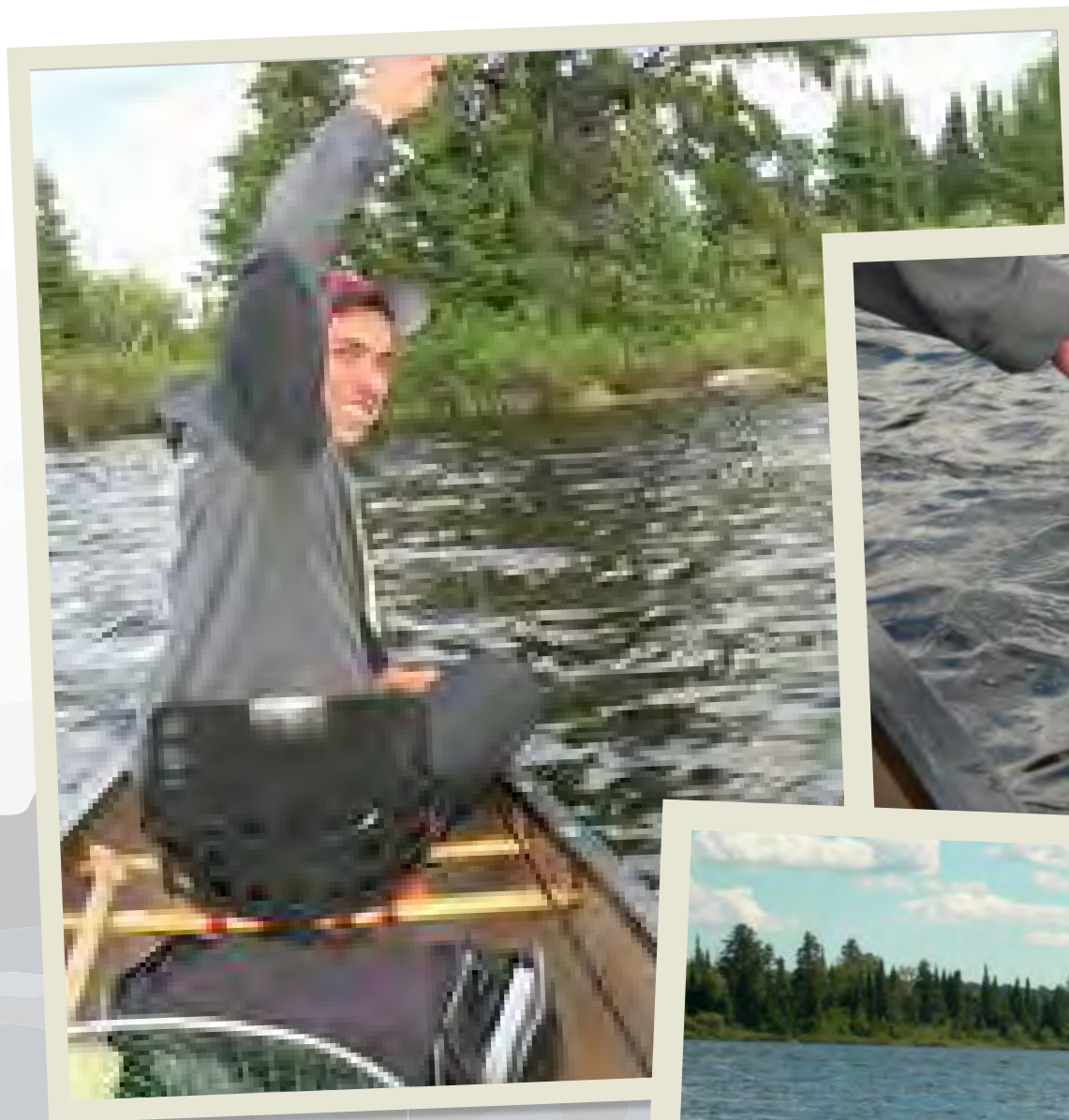
# BWCA

PHOTO ALBUM



My sons, Noah (15) and Caleb (12) and myself and my dad from Knife Lake. This 10-lb northern was caught in the Bay where Dorothy's island is on the south end of Knife. We went there summer 2021 as a bucket list trip before my dad and uncle were unable to make the trip (in their late 60's).

Pictured from left to right: Caleb, Noah, Matt and Greg Hayton

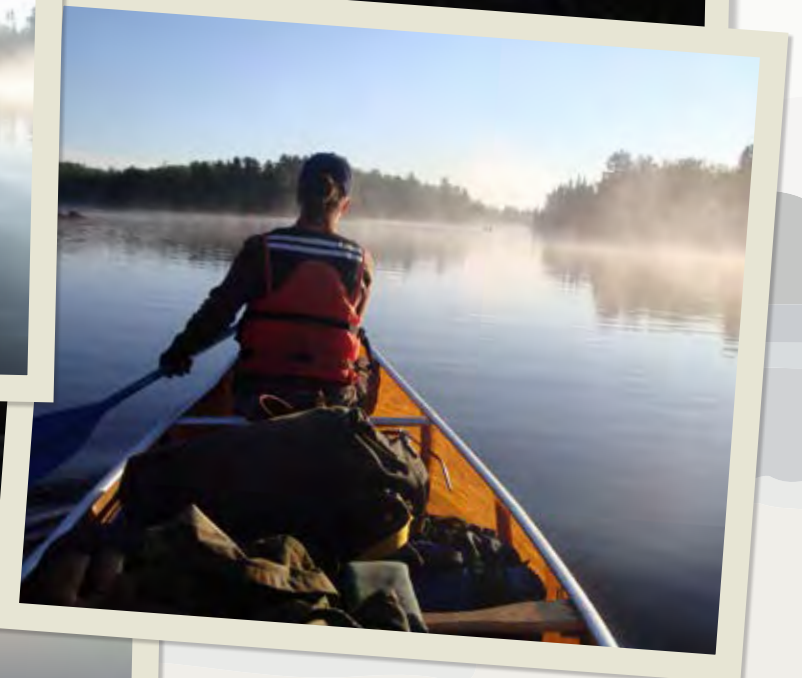
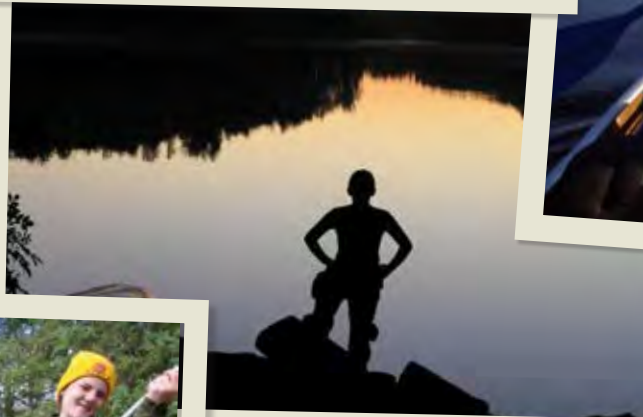
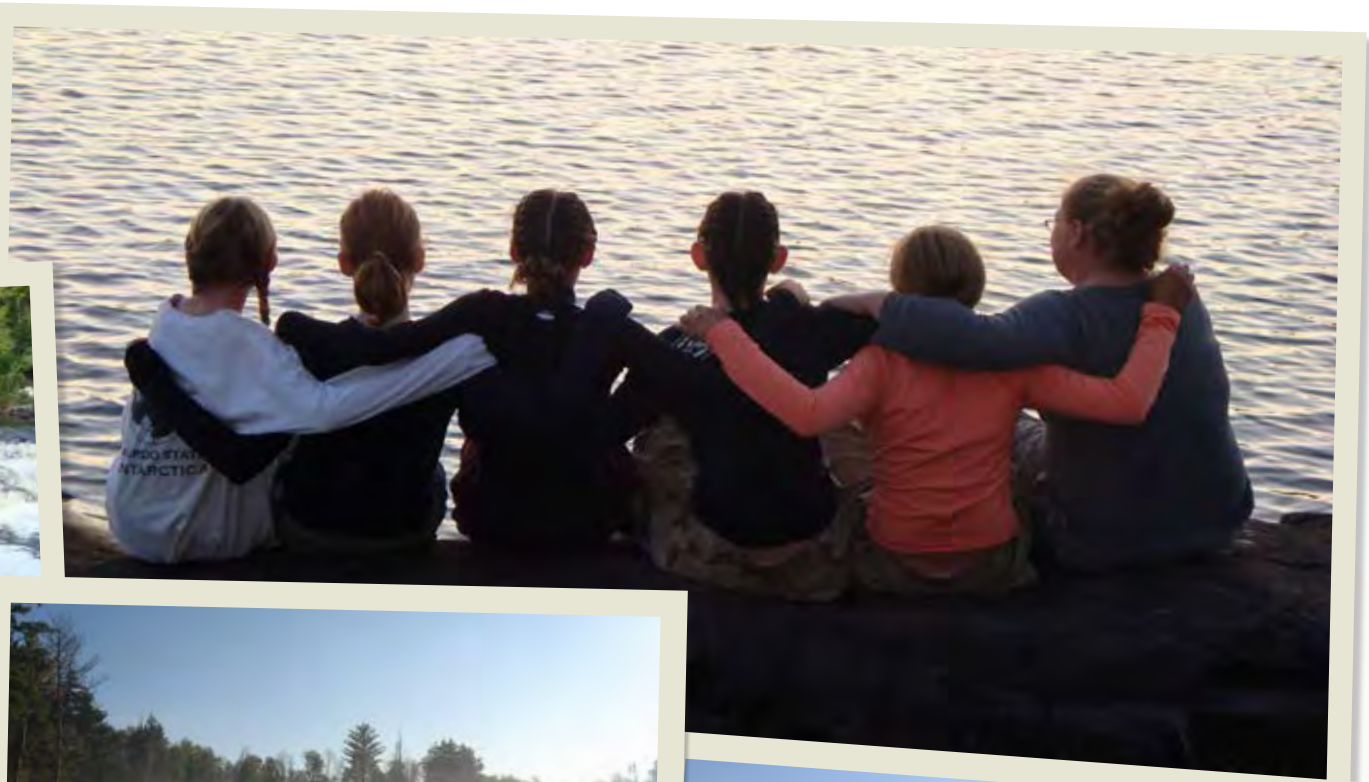


August 2013, in the vicinity of Sawbill Lake Entry Point 38.

The surprise catch in the action shot taken from the back of the canoe was a Snapping Turtle that bit on a leech on a jig! The fisher you can see well is now a Fisheries and Wildlife Biologist, formed by outdoor experiences growing up here in Minnesota.



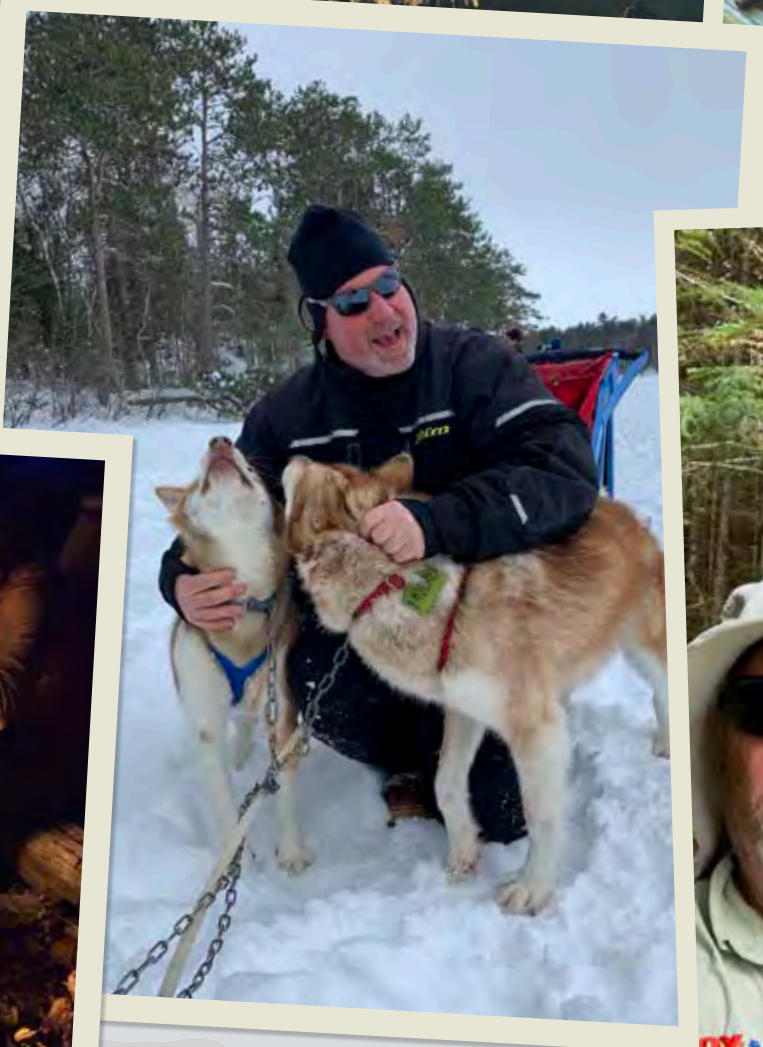
# BWCA PHOTO ALBUM



I have great memories of sharing a "root beer" with Dorothy in the early 1980s. Her spirit has been an inspiration to myself and I am sure many others who have paddled the BWCA.

I have been fortunate to have Paddled the Boundary Waters many times throughout the last 40+ years. I've shared the experience with my own children and friends but also have taken many school students on incredible trips over the years.

MIKE RAPATZ



MIKE WIEHE



# BWCA PHOTO ALBUM



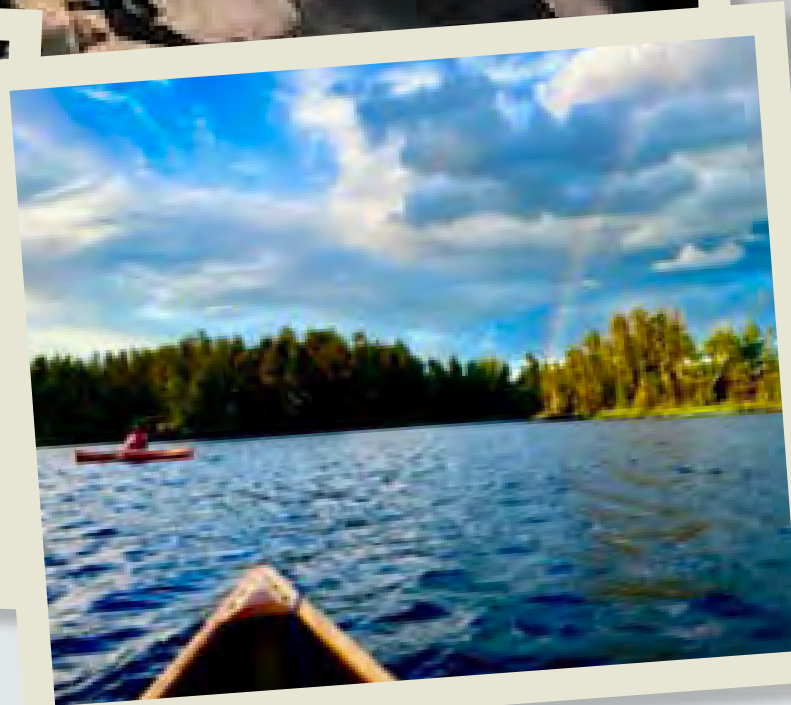
Our family of eight made the journey from Dubuque, IA to the BWCA once a summer for many years beginning in the early 1970s. While most of our trips were relaxing and involved card games, fishing and working on our tans, there was one summer that was different.



We were staying at a campsite on Big Knife Lake when early in the morning a bear pulled one of our Duluth packs down from its storage high between two trees (on a rope). The bear tore through the pack, ate all the contents including a full tin of Crisco. Luckily our parents were out on a hike since the bear made a swipe at their tent, leaving a 5 foot rip down the front.

Something either scared the bear away or it was sated with the stolen food since when my parents returned they found us still fast asleep. Not too much later my dad spotted a mother bear with two cubs approaching our campsite and that was enough to convince us we needed to paddle to Dorothy Molter's island and see if she had a place we could stay.

Dorothy was busy serving a Boy Scout troop root beer but she was, willing to answer our questions about her life in the BWCA. The root beer was sweet and her feather beds were like no other.



There's nothing like solitude and this special place.

Women's Wilderness Discovery  
BWCAW trip 2022.

PAM MEIER



# BWCA

PHOTO ALBUM



1975. My father and his brothers with Dorothy Molter.

PAUL CREAGER





An aggressive bear came to our boundary waters campsite back in the early 1980s. We quickly packed up our canoes and made it to Dorothy's cabin where Dorothy and her brother allowed us to sleep on the floor of her candy bar cabin - two couples and five children. We were so grateful, but thanks to the smells in the cabin, we bought lots of candy bars in the morning!

**MERIDETH CHELBERG**

I met Dorothy Molter at her cabin in the BWCA 4 different times. Our Explorer Post #2747 from Chicago, conducted canoe trips to the Boundary Waters in the summers of 1965, '67, '69, and '71. Our advisor, Capt. Jack Day, was a graduate of Calumet High School, class of 1937, where Dorothy also attended. We would put our canoes in at Moose Lake, go through 5 portages, and spend a week on Knife Lake. On each trip we stopped at Dorothy's cabin and enjoyed her delicious root beer. We marveled at her fortitude, and the stories she told about helping fishermen, providing basic medical services, and the rigors of life in the north woods. I remember the sign she posted on a tree that said "Kwitcherbeliakim," and liked it so much, I made one for our Explorer Post.

A few years ago, I toured the Dorothy Molter Historical Site in Ely, and may have seen that sign posted on a tree once again. I'm glad the history of this amazing woman has been preserved.

**BOB ALLEN**



Ensign Lake.  
."How many portages back did we leave the tent?"

**RITA GARCIA**



# BWCA

PHOTO ALBUM



1991. My son and me in 1991 when we took our first of many family trips. Usually entered in Seagull Lake and increased distance each year as the kids got older.

Here's our nephew (holding fish) with our 3 children.

**PAUL CREAGER**

August 11

Today we woke up to a blue sky (believe it or not). had breakfast and broke camp. we started down the Knife River. were able to paddle stern today. A wind came up so we decided (Everybody except Brian's canoe.) We sailed halfway down Knife at Dorothy Molter's Trading Post. Everybody stocked up on can 5¢ candy bars.) We went a little farther and made camp. Late to Dorothy's and talked to her. While we were preparing supper canoes of girls went by. Cha and I took a canoe and went out they were. (So did the Georgia boys who were camped near us.) to have supper. Afterwards Mike, Cha, and I went out and esco halfway back to their camp, about two and a half miles, with t and rapids. Phil, Steve, and Peewee went fishing with no luck tonight at sundown.

P.S. Food is getting worse each day.

August 12

Today Cha played Reveille. (I was fired). After a s we packed up and left for Sucker Lake (hoping to find the girl night). Mike had his clean football shirt on again. We ran f one after another. That was really great fun. We found the g and Jack ordered us to take a quick stop. We had to be getting civilization because of all the people we were meeting. We ma small, pretty island and later went swimming. Brian and Cha h throwing contest to see who would paddle stern the next day. t two out of two. Bob A. put the rock skipping contest up to 10 one throw. We layed around all afternoon while Phil, Peewee, a fishing. They came back with no fish, but many fish stories. some were very funny.) We had another pizza for supper. Jack. I went up to see some waterfalls and to check Canadian Customs. under the stars that night. (Jack guaranteed no rain).

August 13

Today is our last day out. We woke up to a sprinkle turned out to be a steady rain. We had a delicious breakfast packed and started down the lake. We did not realize the dist to paddle today. The rain consistently fell but we could care stopped at a Boy Scout Outfitters for a while. Then with a m from the bugle, we proudly paddles to the landf Angst, and Mr. Karulak were waiting. We made a building which was just recently opened. It w stopped in Mly for Hamburgers and malts, and t cars split up, and Jack, who was driving his o finally made it though. With many happy (and fun filled canoe trip.


**BWCA**  
 PHOTO ALBUM


I've attached a travelog from my 1966 BWCA canoe trip. This was an Explorer Scout group (older Boy Scouts) canoe trip from Cloquet, MN, when I was 15. Note in the first paragraph that we stopped at Dorothy's trading post and bought some candy bars. The photos are B&W taken with a very inexpensive camera. Great memories! Yes, we likely had some root beer. The adult standing in the second photo was our leader, Dr. Jack Tomhave, dentist from Cloquet. We did our own outfitting and provisioning.

ROBERT CHINNOCK



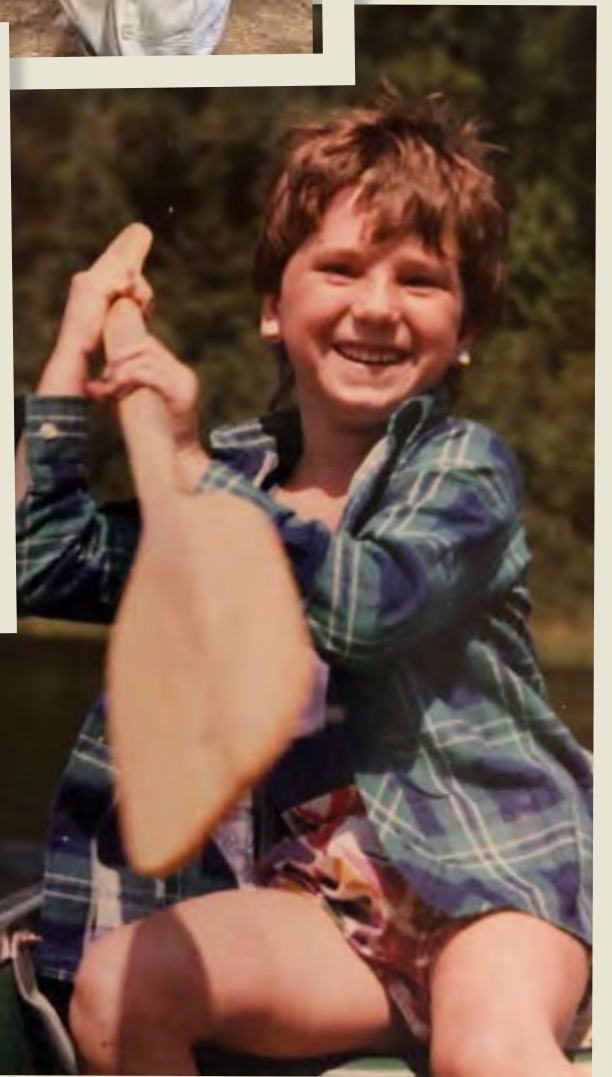
# BWCA

PHOTO ALBUM

Dave enjoying the sun and the bow, 1968.



My love for the BWCA started in 1967. A friend and I went to Camp Menogyn. I have been back many, many times throughout the years mostly heading to the Gunflint Trail or Arrowhead Trail.

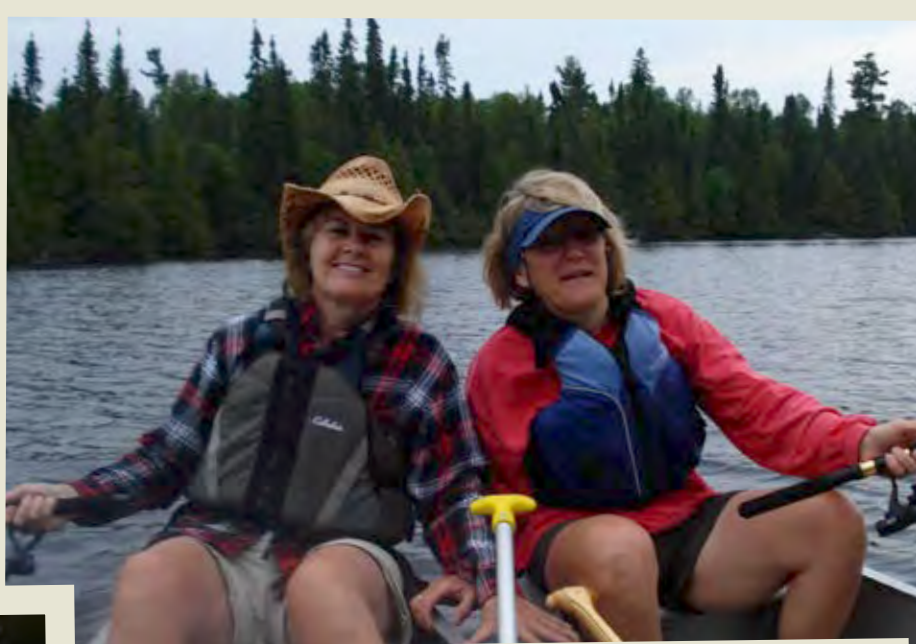


Kayla portages the canoe by herself for the first time to East Pike Lake, 2015.



My wife and I took daughter Amanda to John Lake in 1988 when she was six. A natural paddler.

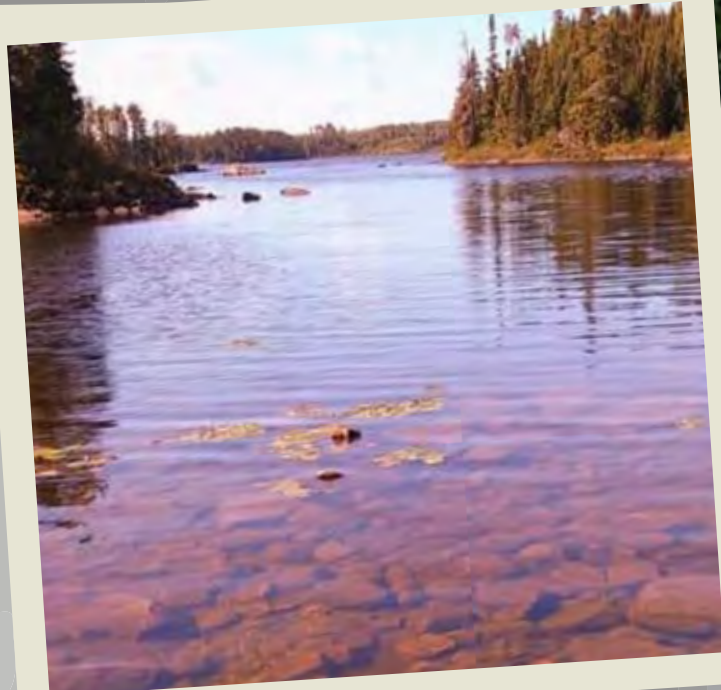
SCOTT KOHANEK



My groups trips to the BWCA for the Root Beer Lady. Last year was our 30th year.



# BWCA PHOTO ALBUM



STEVE GENRICH



This was a five day trip with my two brothers, John and David, and three sons. My son Phil and David's sons Owen and Luca. It was an exciting trip, since we had to help another camper that injured her foot. Phil and Luca had to transport her to the one portage of the trip. It was a one mile long portage. We also had to paddle out on the last day for five hours in a steady rain. It was a real relief to get back to our vehicles at the starting place.

STEVE POTYONDY



## BWCA PHOTO ALBUM

My sister Kris and I were on several Girl Scout canoe expeditions in the Boundary Waters, stopping at the Root Beer Lady, even though we hadn't brought money along to donate.

**NIKKI RAJALA**

I have seen the Root Beer Lady while on Canoe trips in the BWCA. The first time was on a portage and she was lugging a huge load. The next time was at her cabin. We had root beer and heard lots of great stories about her. One time has we were nearing her cabin and canoe came racing past us. Laying in the bottom was a guy who had been struck by lightening. He was standing in his canoe leaning on a rock during a storm. The lightening hit the rock. They were trying to get to Dorothys cabin for her to help him since she was a nurse. I never found out how that turned out but I am sure she used all her knowledge and experience to render aid.

**ELLEN FEULING**



**STEVE POTYONDY**





I spent several weeks in the Boundary Waters during the summers of 1975 and 1976. It was a teen group experience. I remember stopping by Ruth's place on both trips. The root beer was such a treat given we had been away from all sweets and treats for days. I have attached a photo that was of me on one of those trips.

Ruth was a unique woman.

TERI FRIGO



# BWCA

PHOTO ALBUM

My first time on the edge of  
the boundary waters at norms  
Fishcamp, 2019

