

WOLF'S EYE



Isle Royale Natural History Association

Fall 1994

GENDRON JENSEN 1994 ARTIST-IN- RESIDENCE

Dear Wolf's Eye Reader,

My wife, Christine Taylor Patten and I left on the Ranger III early on June 10th, to take up residency on Isle Royale. We stayed until the 29th at the Dassler Cabin on Scoville Point in what was a gloriously stimulating experience.

I have drawn from the bony relics of wild creatures for nearly 30 years. I have searched for their relics in many places, and the sojourn to the Island was utterly harmonious with the pilgrimage in other places, artistically uplifting from the remains of water, land, and airborne creatures.

An exhibition of my drawings, titled Isle Royale has been shown at the Groveland Gallery in Minneapolis, MN. I placed writings from my residency journal with each piece. I would like to share some of those with you, herein, to give you a sense of what the experience of being there was for me:

....A raging wind of all one day, pulled thundering waves whose spin-drifts shot fully ten feet above the high basalt cliffs on Scoville Point. We nestled within our thin-framed cabin, hugging away the chilled droning night that followed.

....Beyond the cliffs, ravens utterly throaty, airborne proclamations whisked out from and into the doorless mists.

....Passing over and among boulders, the clear waters of Lake Superior welcomed gazings into its depths. The canoe flew silently, like



a great bird bearing us above an undulating shadow cast far below on the rolling bottom of Tobin Harbor.

....In thumping hush of first light, the great bull moose bore his ears close around the cabin, peering in at our dark, excited windows.

....The mantling spirit smell, so familiar from long years attending the decaying bodies of wild creatures, hung over Hidden Lake during retrieving the relics of the crippled cow moose who had drown there.

....I relished the predawn light over Edwards Island. The slightest of breezes took it in, playing out intricate patterns on the water's surface.

....Hiking alone over windfalls in from Merritt Lane, I swooned at the site of a wolf-killed moose, whose deathly fern-clad arena was widely carpeted with ghostly hair. All else but a broken shoulder blade and part of one leg had gone elsewhere.

....The June nights spun loon calls threading back along the rocky shorelines. Out of this, while I slumbered, my darling Christine, did wakefully

hear one timber wolf singing

.... Ahead of the filling moon that ruled most of our Island sojourn, we bundled outside into the wee hours of one shimmering night, greeted by the northern lights.

....Beside a woodland trail, the russet moose calf slowly rose blinking, summoned away by a mother's nostrilled warnings. Meanwhile, nearby, tiny magenta orchids seemed set about by courtly throngs of Canada dogwoods, festooning the forest floor.

....I dancingly floundered about the underbrush, in woods up from the shore of Bangsund cabin in the drizzling damp, gathering moose relics from a midden heap of research cast-aways. What jubilation! What uncountable glories!

The residency on Isle Royale left me with many impressions, the foremost of which is my heart made warmer from all the great people who work to sustain this unique, biosphere reserve. Greg Blust and his cheery staff on shore, and Bob

Whaley and his Rock Harbor crew all made the experience utterly gratifying. Superintendent Doug Barnard even made a social call on us at the Dassler Cabin, making sure everything was tip-top.

My deepest gratitude goes to Rolf and Carolyn Peterson and their sons, Jeremy and Trevor. Without Rolf's generous loan of the moose relics for my artistic use, my eventual series of drawings would not have been possible. I dedicated my group of ball-point pen and pencil drawings, forever to Rolf and Carolyn, who are surely fellow pilgrims of Isle Royale, from their many years of working with the timber wolf/moose study.

In closing I would urge everyone to go forth on uneven ground, whether in such sacred natural shrines as Isle Royale, or those nearer home, and look INTO instead of merely at the myriad and boundless wonders which await our eyes and spirits.

ISLE ROYALE

NATURAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

800 E. Lakeshore Dr., Houghton, MI 49931

A nonprofit membership organization that assists Isle Royale National Park by publishing and selling educational materials to park visitors. Gifts, bequests, memorials, and memberships are U.S. tax deductible.

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A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

The sun came up early that morning in late July - pushing aside the last of night and bursting forth in a glorious splash of gold and red. The usually turbulent blue water of Lake Superior was a flat mirror reflecting the display of colors and some white "marshmallow" clouds floating lazily in the sky.

On shore at the new Grand Marais, MN Marina, five yachts were tied up for the night, but a few "early birds" were quietly sipping that first cup of coffee, enjoying the sunrise, and contemplating the planned activity for the day - "Isle Royale," that magical place that beckons to all boaters.

Breakfast was leisurely and before long the little flotilla of boats, fondly named the "Rag Tag Navy" and flying their blue U.S.C.G. Auxiliary Ensigns, headed out of the Marina, rounded the breakwall and set course for Isle Royale.

There was the usual radio chatter among the Captains as they checked compass courses, time and weather reports which are given frequently to beaters on the Great Lakes. When all Captains reported "ok" the radio was still - not off - and everyone settled down to enjoy the beautiful day. About lunch time some changes in operators were made as even the women in our "Navy" took their turn at the wheel.

It was about 1500 hours, or 3:00 p.m., when the radios began predicting weather changes. The wind picked up and Lake Superior began to build with some whitecaps developing. The sky darkened but we could see Rock of Ages light (as welcome to us as it probably was to mariners years before). Quite a heavy sea soon picked us up and pushed us into the calmer water of Washington Harbor. We all smiled with the satisfaction of the day's accomplishment.

It was beautiful going up the channel to Windigo where two other boats had heard and heeded the weather reports. The Windigo area has a large dock and we all gathered

for our usual "Party Time" and discussed the day's trip and how glad we were to be in a good harbor - as of now the Gale Warning Signal had been raised by the Park Ranger and we could hear the Big Lake up to its usual "roaring". By 9:00 p.m. it got chilly and everyone decided it was "sack time," so we policed the area and slowly made our way to our respective boats.

Our boat, the "Nancy Lynn," was a 35 foot Chris Craft and the largest in our fleet at that time. We loved it but I couldn't sleep in the bow cabin where I felt "hemmed" in. I usually took my sleeping bag out on the back deck, which was all canvassed, and I was very comfortable. My husband, son and daughter were soon in their bunks with windows closed. My husband lit our marine pressure kerosene heater for heat. He always complained about how cold he was.

I was just dozing off when the "late" John Smith, Captain of 35 foot "Roamer" rapped on the cabin roof. He was very upset and said one of his friends had a heart attack. He could not find a doctor but someone told him I had some First Aid training. I spent several hours doing what little I could trying to keep the sick man calm and warm and he finally fell asleep. (He was airlifted off the Island the next day and he did recover).

It was still blowing when I walked down the dock to our own boat, but in the gray early light of morning, I could see two moose feeding in the swale near the dock. I didn't lose much time getting into my sleeping bag, leaving my clothes on in case I might be called back to "The Roamer" and I dozed off.

It seemed like only a few minutes later when my daughter Nancy, shook me and said, "Mom I don't feel good." I took her into the sleeping bag with me and she soon fell asleep, however, I didn't. Something bothered me. Something was wrong! I guess you could call it intuition. I got up and went down into the cabin. Then I saw it!! The heater had lost pressure but the wick was still sputtering, the oxygen was almost gone and carbon

monoxide was doing its worst! I knew then my intuition had been right. I shook my husband and with some difficulty and some complaining on his part, pushed him up the steps to the back deck where he dropped into a chair. Then I went back down and forward to the V bunks and tried to raise our son, Jon. He was almost unconscious! I pulled, dragged and pushed him through the boat and up onto the back deck. I tried to stand him up against the helmsman seat but his knees buckled and he sagged to the deck. I opened some curtains and air rushed in, both slowly sat up and were verbally upset that I had disturbed them.

"How come you woke us up?" I replied, "All the oxygen was used up by that d--- heater and none of you would have lasted much longer." At that time at Windigo, there were some motel units but they were no longer in use. When the Manager learned what had almost happened on our boat, he made a unit available, and my husband and Nancy spent most of the day sleeping - with the windows open. Unknowingly to me, Jon was a little wiser, and he took off up the trail and was gone for several hours. When he came back he felt fine with no after effects from his near brush with death.

All of the above happened some 20 years ago, but it is something that our family has never forgotten. Our near fatal experience was related many times when I was Flotilla Commander and Division Captain in the U.S.C.G. Auxiliary and I was teaching Boating Safety and Basic Seamanship classes.

Our experience didn't deter our family away from boating. We bought a bigger boat with a safe "heating" system and went back to Isle Royale many times over the years.

Our daughter Nancy, joined the Navy and son Jon became owner of Nest Egg Marine in Marinette, WI with his own 42 foot Egg Harbor. So, with our crew gone, we reluctantly sold our boat. My husband and I still go to Isle Royale every year on the Ranger III. We watch the mainland

fade behind us and watch eagerly for the first glimpse of beautiful Isle Royale.

This year was our 29th time to go to the Island, and we still love it, the people, and friends we have made over the years.

All in all our experience retold here was truly "A Night To Remember"

Grace E. Kukuk, Life Member, Isle Royale Natural History Association, PD/SO-PR-U.S.C.G. Auxiliary 9-CR

IRNHA NEWS

The IRNHA has had a busy summer.

Summer began with an IRS audit. The two day audit was conducted by Exempt Organization Agent, David Torrence from the Detroit office of the IRS.

His informal findings are as follows:

"The Exempt Organization's Agent believes, after the audit and review of activities, that the organization should remain tax-exempt under Sec. 501(c)(3) of the IRC. Public foundation status is proper under Sec. 509 (a)(3) IRC as a supporting organization for the National Park Service, as a government entity, and in particular Isle Royale National Park. Items sold over the counter and via mail order were found to be interpretive material for Isle Royale; and not Convenience items which would generate unrelated business income necessitating the filing of Form 990-T. The records were found to be in good order."

The IRNHA will have an outlet store at the Copper Country Mall again at Christmas. It will open November 25th and be open until December 24th. The store will be located across from the Footlocker in the Mall. Stop in and say Hi.

THE LAST FISHERMAN

Stanley Sivertson passed away on September 13, 1994 at St. Mary's Hospital in Duluth. He was the last of the commercial fishermen on Isle

Royale.

Stanley was born in Duluth and before he turned one, was living on Isle Royale. His summer residence was on Washington Island.

Sivertson was well respected by all for his knowledge of Lake Superior and the fish in it. He was a commercial fisherman and a ferry boat captain, plus he was also known as a great conservationist. He tried to look out for the natural resources of the area. The DNRs in Michigan and Minnesota will miss this great resource. All of Isle Royale mourns the loss of this symbol of bygone days.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Thank you to all who responded to our membership drive and to our special plea in the Spring newsletter. We have had a good year and succeeded in passing the 1000 member mark. Mary Anderson, from Duluth, a member since 1984 received a logo sweatshirt when she and John renewed their membership. We have 1111 members from 46 states and the District of Columbia. Internationally, we have representation in the Netherlands, Canada and Italy. For trivia buffs the states most heavily represented are as expected: Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. The states where we do not have current members are Mississippi, North Dakota, Hawaii, and Idaho. Perhaps some of you can give a gift membership to someone from these states so we will have a 100% representation from the United States.

Special thanks to:

New Life Members:

Ronald T. Mitchell, Fraser, MI
Donald W. Jackanicz, Chicago, IL

Supporting Members

10 or more years:

Jane Schaack
Laurie & Joan Snell
Judy & Conrad Swanson
John & Phyllis Titmus

Supporting Members

3 or more years:

Claudia & Allen Balay

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their donations:**

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John Winn
Charles and Mary Ellen Finch (Artist-
in-Residence Program)

IRNHA Board Member John Dunn
for donating memberships to the six
SCA (Student Conservation) volun-
teers who worked at the Rock Harbor
and Windigo visitor centers for the
1994 season.

**Rock Harbor Visitor Center
donations:**

Hayden Ross Jameson
Karl Lawson
John & Phyllis Titmus

Thank you all for thinking of us!

DENNY LONG REMEMBERED

I met Denny Long in the summer of 1969, when I worked at the Rock Harbor Lodge. Denny was a Park Service maintenance worker at Rock Harbor.

He was a quiet, shy type of guy with a beautiful winning smile and he was cute.

August on Isle Royale is always a strange month on the Island and 1969 was no exception. On a beautiful August evening, Denny joined four of my friends on a walk out to Scoville Point. The water was *inviting* when they reached second beach so they all decided to go for a swim. A storm started to brew. Carolyn (my roommate) was somehow pulled out further into the lake. She was unable to get back in and the lake was kicking up. Denny went to help her. He succeeded and Carolyn caught a wave and made it to shore. Denny Long drown in his effort to save her.

The events of that day 25 years ago still lives with the people who knew Denny. Many of us still feel this great loss.

Gayle Pekkala, Executive Director

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