

1996

The group this year consisted of Dave (Hugh), Dick, Mike, Bob, Craig (Poo Poo), Mike (Bigg), Matt (Flyswatter Boy), and the rookie, David (Darrell). Darrell was quite an addition this year, adding good humor to an already colorful group. Our neighbors in cabin 3 were Rick Lahr (Mike A.'s brother-in-law) and two buddies, who would join us in the evenings for an occasional pop.

This year Mike flew into Fargo to Dick's and met up with Dave, Bigg, and Matt. From Dick's we took two vehicles and made record time, arriving camp at 1:30 Saturday afternoon. Bob and his family drove up to Minneapolis Friday night and then met up with Craig, arriving camp at 5:30 Saturday afternoon. We had planned on leaving the following Saturday, but ended up leaving early Friday because Mike had to get back to Dick and Mary Lahr's 50th wedding anniversary and Craig had his annual camping trip with Laura.

When we arrived at the cabin, we could see the water level was way up (42") from the past years. The whole sand beach area was underwater, and even the electrical box that runs the extension cords out to the docks had water just inches from the top. Probably the newest wonder of the world was how could a submerged electrical box not short out? Even Duane was amazed but thought what the heck, it works, doesn't it?

The weather was cool, rainy, and windy a lot of the days, which made the fishing conditions less than desirable at times. Temperatures would range from the mid 40's to mid 70's during the day, and evenings were great to be sitting out.

The fishing this year proved to be a challenge. We had three boats (one rented with welfare engine which broke down at Funk's Boathouse). So we had plenty of coverage when we fished the areas. As usual, Jim brought up the leeches, and we fished with them the first couple of days. Someone then noticed the guide boats were using white jigs and minnows and catching fish. This sounded like fun, so we went into the bait shop and bought minnows for the first time in many years. We ended up buying ten dozen medium minnows each day (and two airplane jigs) and had better luck.

We spent the first three days up north because we were told that's where the fish were, but ended up having our best luck south the last two days. The fishing was best in the resting areas close to the channel and deep (20-40 feet). Best areas we found were Funk's Boathouse, Brush Pile, The Entrance, and Cobalt Narrows. Although we didn't do well in any areas, we always had shore lunch. On Wednesday we picked up 19 walleyes, and finished off our limit on Thursday. One thing we did notice is that the majority of the fish brought in by others were northerns and bass, mostly from the Pistol Lake area.

Darrell did manage to catch all species of fish starting with a bass the first night (fishing with Uncle Mike) and a northern on the last day. Biggest fish go to Hugh (6 lb. 12 oz. walleye) and Bigg (7 lb. 2 oz. northern). Just for the record, Bigg had a mishap with his fishing pole. The story was told like this: "Mike broke his rod, when Matt was trying to get out of a snag, before Mike caught the northern earlier." You can take it from there, but this younger generation has quite a way of telling stories.

We did have a couple of great sightings during our week. First, just past Cobalt Narrows, two beautiful eagles were sitting in a tree about 30 feet above our heads. We must have watched them for 20 minutes before they took off. Darrell should have about 25 pictures, if anyone would like one! The second sighting was a large (100' x 40') floating bog heading down Lower Throat Rapids. According to the game warden, this will happen when the water level gets real high. The islands will float down and get caught up in a bay, and when the water level recedes, it's found a new home. A good example would be going to Adamson, just past the high-line wires, a large one settled in that bay.

As usual, Jim and Connie were up the same week, so they came over for Iowa chops and dressing. We forced ourselves to go over (except for Craig) for another feast of DDKK (duck, dumplings, kraut and kolaches). Connie made apple kolaches this year and, as usual, made extras for us to take home and eat on the way back.

Speaking of on the way back, just five miles east of town Hugh throws a bearing buddy from the boat trailer. Dick and Mike were following Hugh when it happened and saw the whole thing, even saw it go into the ditch. After looking for 30 minutes in a cold, damp ditch, Hugh finds another one in his boat. It was smaller, but that's the reason one carries duct tape. It worked, and we were on our way again and never had any more problems. Hugh did have one more problem, and that was with his eyes. It seems he saw a wolf alongside the road, but nobody else saw it!!!!

Other highlights of the week:

- Darrell's perfect Euchre hand, "three enhanced queens"
- New flavor of cooking oil, hazelnut and cinnamon
- Craig getting migraine from caffeine withdrawal and missing dinner at Jim and Connie's cabin
- Great meal at Jo's, and Craig finds out that he likes gravy on fries
- Bigg isn't driving this year due to a misunderstanding with the authorities
- Bob and Craig bring "Pig's Eye" beer. Not bad, and cheaper than Club
- Spiced rum and cream soda taste good together
- The blueberries in the pancake mix taste like Fruity Pebbles
- Craig improves his wardrobe with great new fishing coat
- Darrell NEEDS to improve his wardrobe or gain 100 pounds so the clothes fit better. As far as the hat Darrell wore, well, it will look good on him when he reaches ... well, forget it, it will never look good on him!
- Our friend the game warden stops by to visit and thanks us for helping to put his kid through college last year
- Minaki Lodge is closed due to back taxes owed to the government
- Dick's and Matt's official Iowa look
- Met Duane's son and grandson
- Played Canadian Trivial Pursuit
- Dave drove into Kenora to get maps on the way up
- Bigg and others go jogging together, even though Bigg was the only one to actually go

And Hugh, in his ever-so-gentle voice, told Darrell, "SIT DOWN AND SHUT UP!!!"