

# Musing-February 2018

## **Jan 2, 2018**

The new year starts out with the first of two full moons in the month of January, and the Milky Way Galaxy is visible in the night sky. We are so fortunate to live in an area with such clean air.

## **Jan 4-6, 2018**

We are in the depths of winter with bitter cold and lows near -20 each night. The birch trees pop and snap as the cold penetrates everything. Sweet Lake sings with the ice cracking and heaving as it pushes against the shoreline. Some of the booms echo from one end of the lake to another, like the crack of a rifle. Other sounds moan and groan in a deep cold struggle of water and ice.

By 4:30 the sun has set, and the long dark nights have set in.

## **Jan 11**

Fresh snow flakes fly out of the sky with wind gusts approaching 40 mph. The snow forms patterns as it slides across the ground and leaves ripples on the surface, like a windswept beach in summer. Tracks are covered within minutes by the swirling white madness. A few oak and maple leaves dance through the woods. I enjoy a good snowstorm.

## **Jan 12-14**

Another round of bitter cold brings the thermometer down to -20 again. The low angle of the sunlight makes silvery shadows on the snow, and it glistens with thousands of sparkling diamond reflections. As cold as it is, it is still a beautiful time to walk in the woods.

## **Jan 31**

The Blue Moon eclipse. What a treat!

## **Feb 7**

We have now gained exactly one hour of extra daylight at sunset, since the winter solstice. What a difference it makes to have longer afternoons. Even though the temperatures are only in the mid-teens, the sun is now so warm that it melts the snow on the south facing snowbanks. The late day shadows creep towards the east, and bring a promise of warming weather.

## **Feb 8**

A blue bird morning, with brilliant blue skies with small ice crystals suspended in the low morning light.

## **Feb 10**

Even though it has been below zero at night, there is 40 feet of open water off the shoreline of Sweet Lake by our dock. I saw two common mergansers and a female mallard swim by.

## Looking ahead...

The northeast corner of Sweet Lake is so full of springs, that there is open water all winter. Last February, nine Trumpeter swans visited for several days as they fed and rested before heading north again. I suspect that Sweet Lake has been on the migrating path of waterfowl for hundreds of years. Somehow these large magnificent birds must have it in their DNA that there will be open water and food waiting for them here.

O how blessed we are to be able to enjoy the simple, yet profound gifts from nature, that are abundant in the Eau Claire Lakes area. I am looking forward to the arrival of the swans, geese, loons, swallows and hummingbirds!

Thom Storm