

February Musing



Calling for Owls is a Hoot

February is a great month to get outdoors. From February 1, until leap day February 29, we will gain 80 minutes of daylight. I like to be outside on a sunny day, and see the shadows from the trees moving upwards as they streak out over the hard packed snow. The sun is now so high in the sky, that it melts snow, even if the temperatures remain slightly below freezing.

I hope to be lucky enough to see moon shadows from the full moon on Sunday, February 9, when it rises at 6:08 PM, 36 minutes after the sunset, at 5:32 PM.

Once it gets dark, a fun thing I like to do is call for owls. This time of year, owls are very active at night. Early Winter is their breeding season. They are very curious birds, and if they hear what they think is another owl hooting, they will often fly over to see what's going on.

Barred owls are especially curious, and often respond quickly to other owl calls. I like to mimic their calls, and lure them to my location. I have been successful on numerous occasions calling owls to come and pay me a visit. Some have landed less than 30 feet away. When our kids were young, they really enjoyed this, especially as the hooting owls came closer and closer to our location.

Speaking of owls, if you are looking for a great read aloud book, try Farley Mowats *Owls In the Family*, published in 1961. It is the true story of a young Farley, raising two owls in the Saskatchewan plains. It is one of my favorite all-time books, for both children and adults. Some of the true stories he shares are hilarious. I read this to my children when they were young, and they squealed with glee.

Another wonderful thing about February is, as the days get longer, it gets closer to summer time at the Eau Claire lakes, and I can daydream of swimming and snorkeling in my beloved Sweet Lake.

Enjoy the longer days and the owls at night!
Thom Storm