



October 2025 Musing
The Sweet Lake Journal
by Thom Storm
Sweet Lake

Back in May 1978, my wife Cindy and I drove from Duluth to the State Bank of Drummond to sign the closing papers for our vacant lot on Sweet Lake. After the signing, we celebrated by going out for pizza with our realtor. We decided that we wanted to keep track of our new lives as lake property owners, and I started the Sweet Lake Journal.

Cindy bought us a large blue three ring binder, with 150 sheets of lined paper, and our documentations began. Here are a few of the more interesting notations from the past 47 years.

The Sweet Lake Journal, Installment #1

Winter 1982-83

For the first time, we have hired the Town of Barnes to plow out our driveway. For a fee of \$30 a year, they plow us out after all the public roads and businesses are cleared. We can now drive right down to our cabin steps and enjoy XC skiing on the local trails. Sweet Lake never freezes over 100%. Due to all the springs, there is open water 50 ft out from our shoreline.

Memorial Day weekend 1989

We woke up to a temperature of 32 degrees. We discovered a newborn fawn within 40 feet of the cabin. We watched it all day with no sign of its mother being nearby. Our 5-year-old daughter Elsie was very concerned for the fawn's wellbeing. By the evening it was gone. A few days later we saw it happily prancing with its mother. They both stopped and turned around and looked our way and left us with a lasting memory.

August 3, 1996, 75 degrees

Today out of a cloudless sky, and without any warning, the towels on our dock started fluttering wildly and lifted up into the air. About 100 feet away our swimming raft, which was anchored down to the lake bottom with two large cement blocks, began to rock. Moments later, it lifted off the surface of the lake and rose about 8 feet in the air, flipped over, and crashed back down to the water. As quickly as this phenomenon started, it ended. Our neighbor, Ted Buck,

a commercial airline pilot at the time, witnessed the entire event and said we had been visited by a "microburst."

Friday, July 30, 1999, a day to remember!

I arrived at the cabin by myself at 3:30 pm to join our St. Paul friends Rose, Jerry, and Maddie. The air temperature was 96 degrees and the lake temperature was 84 degrees, the warmest I had ever seen it. We had a wonderful time swimming; we swam across the lake and back. At about 5:30 we finished swimming and started seeing lightning to the north of us. We thought the storm would miss us.

At 5:45 the power went out, 10 minutes later it got pitch black outside, and a fierce storm hit from the south. It blew like a hurricane for 20 minutes with sheets of white rain going sideways. The water came into the cabin through closed windows and doors. We put towels on the floor. Shredded leaves stuck to all of our window screens. We went from window to window watching trees fall all over. It was scary! We went to the middle of the cabin and held hands and prayed for our protection and were very grateful that our prayers were answered.

The wind finally subsided and we were not hurt, and neither was the cabin, but our children's tree house was demolished. On our 1.75 acre lot, we lost about 80 trees. On Saturday I cut wood with our chainsaw for about 5 hours, to clear our driveway and our path to the lake. Part of Smith Lake Road, where our driveway access is, was impassable, and Hwy 27 to Brule was closed.

Our dock got pushed three feet sideways. The roll-in dock directly across the lake from us was flipped over. The ropes anchoring our swim raft to the lake bottom were broken, and our raft had blown to the end of the lake. It had company. A pontoon boat, still in its lift, from the far north side of the lake, was flipped upside down nearby and stuck in the lake bottom. It would take several days to get it out of there, and the owner's insurance company totaled it out.

This incident was a wild testament of mother nature's immense power. Our electrical power wasn't restored for several days. It took me over a year to clean up all the downed trees.

Thom Storm
Sweet Lake

If you enjoyed reading installment #1 of the Sweet Lake Journal, [let us know](#) if you would like to read more vignettes.

Thom and his wife Cindy live six months of the year at Sweet Lake and the other six months in Duluth. While in Duluth, Thom enjoys alpine skiing and has been a member of the National Ski Patrol for the past 35 years.

While in Barnes, Thom enjoys gardening and tending his fruit orchard. One of his greatest pleasures is sitting quietly on the



cabin deck while watching the lake and seeing nature unfold.

Helpful Links:

Celebrate the season at the 63rd annual **Bayfield Apple Festival**, today and tomorrow, October 4 and 5, 2025.

The Friends of the Eau Claire Lakes Area **2025 Newsletter is available on our website** to view and download.

Mission: To protect, preserve, and improve the environmental and aesthetic qualities of the Eau Claire Lakes Area watershed including the lakes, rivers, shorelands, wetlands, forests and attendant wildlife resources.

BAYFIELD AND DOUGLAS COUNTIES, WI

Check us out on Facebook where we share photos, stories, educational events and other opportunities to learn more about the lakes, rivers, shorelands, wetlands and forests we treasure. Search for "Friends of the Eau Claire Lakes Area" or click on the blue Facebook icon below.

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