

April 11, 2019

# The Big Thaw

## LOON HOOTS

*The Newsletter of the Plum Lake Association*



It began with average snow and then came a very cold stretch, this winter of 19. Frost is between 4 and 5 feet - more in plowed areas. Act two was the BIG SNOW of February. One 10-day period saw 28 inches fall - the month total was 61 inches. We started measuring snow in body parts - thigh deep soon became waist deep and matured to chest deep and we all then started looking uncomfortably at our roofs. News of metal buildings collapsing increased the level of insomnia. It wasn't fun anymore. It was too much snow to play in - even for the snowmobiles.

Meanwhile, snow-plowers were working 18 hour days and not answering their cell phones, which rang incessantly. "This voice mail box is full!" was a standard greeting. A local caretaking company had a list of over 100 buildings with roofs that needed to be cleared.

My roofs took 5 strong guys the better part of a day and a half to clear. The depth was over 6 feet in many areas. The snow was heavy - as it fell in January, it was interrupted by a day of sudden warmth and all day rain, freezing solid as the temps fell again. That snow/rain/deep freeze was repeated.

I slept much better after the snow was off the roof. Could be that the snow mounds that reached the roof and covered the windows had something to do with it - it was dark in many rooms for the coming weeks.

As we escaped to Florida a couple of weeks ago, the thaw was just starting, re-creating a skating rink on every driveway with a thin sheet of daylight water that froze at night. Ice spikes or baby steps were the order of the day.

In the warmth of the sunshine state, I started thinkin' about fishin' ...and golf. Fishing trips are now on the calendar, a checklist for boats is done, new line for the reels, new baits for the tackle box...the list goes on, all the while practicing my short game on the Florida links (this is not a complete assignment).

It is easy to get pretty excited about spring and we were... until we looked at the Sayner forecast. As I write this, a blizzard approaches and they are expecting 12 to 15 inches of snow and 50 mph winds.

There is a law against cruel and unusual punishment, right? Where **IS** the Sherriff when you need him?

I, for one, have really had my fill of the winter of 2019.

AJR



## *Dick Cochran*

The pontoons rocked gently as people moved from boat to boat. It was sometime in the very early 2000's and I was in a conversation with a new acquaintance - just introduced. We met over a cocktail and our talk quickly turned from the sunset to a range of business and management issues that we both had interest in. By the time we parted that night, an interesting connection was made.



It was the first of many talks between Dick Cochran and me. As time passed, I came to seek his thoughts on many forward-looking issues because his advice had a foundation I admired - one devoid of agenda and ego and supported by understated experience and wisdom.

Dick was the perfect mentor. He had a finely tuned sense of when to proceed with caution and when to charge into the fray. Like a good driving instructor, he had his own brake and knew when to apply it. He also knew that red lights only meant stop, not give up. He had a long view that seemed to come from an altitude that allowed him to see past obstacles. He lived this in every sense, every day.

Dick played a role in the expansion of Plum Lake Association and in the challenge presented in new, dreadful legislation that threatens the long-term health of our lakes. That part resulted in the formation of Wisconsin Shoreland Initiative as we charged into an attempt to spread the word and gather support among lake associations.

Staying close to people like Dick makes you better and a friendship is a gift. I took advantage and Dick was involved in many of our big decisions, and the chair of our strategic planning. I more than enjoyed our relationship - I treasured it. I will miss it. Our collaboration was important for me. I'd like to think it was enjoyable and rewarding for him.

Underneath it all, from our first meeting on the boat, literally and figuratively, was the water of Plum Lake. It was our unspoken common bond, that grew in both of us through our individual experiences and led us to the same place, on the waters and the shores of our lake, where we met.

Dick Cochran was a wonderful, insightful person who cared deeply for our lake and celebrated his good fortune to be part of its history. Plum connects us all, and our careful stewardship is what he would want to be part of his legacy.

Dick passed away this winter, after a long and courageous battle, at the age of 76. A memorial service will be conducted in Sayner on July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019.

## *SHORT CASTS*

The three year effort on the Plum Lake Lake Management Plan is reaching a conclusion this summer. Our plan will be introduced by Onterra, perhaps in time for a quick re-view at the annual meeting.

The annual meeting will be held on July 9th at the golf club at 9am. We will have a guest speaker at this event and another very special guest—stay tuned!

The state grant program is being revised and consolidated. NR 193 has been released for public hearings and comment and we have already been involved in revising this program for the benefit of lake protection.

Our state forest personel (NHAL) have declined to approve new I-LIDS cameras on landings in the state forest. Their concerns are in maintaining "tech free" landings with historical ambiance at the expense of protecting the lakes from invasive species. We don't agree and we are engaged in an effort to reorder priorities on these unpervised landings.

I-LIDS annual summary data for the last 2 months of the summer of 2018 will be highlighted at the annual meeting. We would be interested in connecting with volunteers for video monitoring of our Statehouse and Town landing cameras next summer. The video's are interesting and there is no set time or number that must be viewed by volunteers. Training is easy and videos can be viewed on your schedule as time permits, a filler for rainy days!

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*In Memoriam: Dick Cochran*