

Looking ahead to future generations of swimmers—while looking back at the old Pelican ‘swimming hole’

More frightened of water than German bombshells, as an Army nurse in WWII—‘non-swimmer’ Marcy Korda endorses Pelican pool project so kids have opportunity to learn

Unsurprisingly, swimming was not a priority for an Iowa farmgirl.

This might have been a life-saving skill—if Marcy Korda had gone overboard when the hospital ship was bombed and on the verge of sinking to the bottom of the Mediterranean in World War II.

“I didn’t learn to swim,” recalled Marcy Korda. The Second World War veteran celebrated her 100th birthday on Feb. 22. As a taskmaster, from MASH field tents in Italy to community involvement in Pelican, she’s not only reflecting on the past—but she is also considering future generations of young swimmers.

Moving to Pelican Rapids after the war with husband, Dr. Henry Korda, there were a few new reasons to learn to swim:

- She was surrounded by lakes.
- The Korda family would grow to five children.
- “All the kids could swim like fish,” said Marcy.
- “I took lessons with the kids, off and on for about five or six years,” said Marcy, “I tried for years.”
- Finally, time came for the big test: Swimming out to the raft and back. “I got so far, until I realized I couldn’t touch bottom. I froze.”

From My VIEW POINT

by Louis Hoglund,
 Managing Editor



The young Pelican swimming teacher at the time saved her from the depths; looked at her; and concluded “Marcy...give it up. Forget it.”

True confessions: The Army nurse that kept her cool during enemy shelling in Italy, 1943-44 was afraid—of water. So, she spent most of her time at the family’s Pelican Lake getaway “floating around on a rubber raft.”

She’s especially enthused about the present campaign for a new Pelican Rapids swimming pool.

“The pool project seems to be going forward like it should. That’s a really good deal,” said Marcy in a recent phone conversation. “This will give kids coming up a chance to learn to swim. Not everybody can live on a lake where they can swim often.”

The Kordas owned a place at two different locations on Pelican Lake from about 1947 to 1975, first near Haugen’s Point and later in the Broadwater Beach neighborhood.

Dr. Henry Korda, who died in 1990, was Pelican’s Family doctor from 1946 to 1981.

For the most part, Marcy retired from active nursing after the war—though she assisted the Korda family practice in the early years, and mostly in the background in later years.



A parade, and 100 roses for Marcy Korda’s century birthday

It was a memorable day for Marcy Korda, and the community, as World War II veteran Army nurse celebrated her 100th birthday. She has been a resident of Pelican Rapids since 1946.

Members of her church, Trinity Lutheran, organized a drive by birthday “parade” past her Pelican home, pictured here. Family members ordered 100 roses, which were delivered by “Petals from the Heart” on her Feb. 22 birthday—and also gave her a handcrafted pillow, with the inscription “1921 to 2021...Marcella Koda,” from John and Gayla Huston.



A lifesaving memory of Mill Pond

By Steve Frendin
 Special Contributor

The recent story in the Pelican Rapids Press about Gene Bailey and memories of the old town swimming hole, brought back a memory of my own. It goes back 55 years, during swim lessons at Mill Pond.

But first, a shout-out to Gene Bailey: The last time I saw you Gene was decades ago at Morris and Mamie’s residence in Bertha, MN. You and I took on your sister Irene and your brother Wendell in a badminton match. How is your brother Roger aka Steve Mudd?



The old Pelican Rapids “swimming pool” was Mill Pond, with dock and raft installations. Swimming lessons were also taught in the backwaters of the Pelican River city dam. Among those taking lessons were a young Steve Frendin, who recounts a story from his youth here.

Also taking lessons, with rather unsuccessful results, was Marcy Korda—who recalls her fear of the water in accompanying column.

My remembrances of the Pelican Rapids swimming ‘hole’ are not bad, I do not remember the water as murky. (I probably drank plenty of it.)

As I recall, I was in the 9th grade in the Swimmers class. One of the girls in the class, I will call her Beckey. Beckey was very slender, in fact skinny, but to be politically correct, lets stick with slender.

One facet of the final test was the 100 yard swim. This was accomplished by starting from the shore near the dam’s outlet (the waterfalls), swim around the diving tower and the raft twice, and back to shore. That day was not the test, but practice. Becky was ahead of me on the

first lap somewhat close to the raft, about 30 feet from shore. At that point she quickly struggled saying “Help, I can’t make it!”

The instructor, a young woman in Sr. High, or early college said, “Beckey, are you fooling us?”

I was the closest person to her, but fearing the possibility of being dragged under myself, I got behind the raft and pushed it to Beckey. Since I could not be seen from shore—it appeared that the raft magically moved to Beckey. A friend of mine was sitting on the dock at the north end of the pool. He yelled, “Steve, you saved her life!”

As far as I know, he and I were the only ones who saw the raft move that day.

Pool fundraising campaign nears \$2.5 million mark

Michael (5th grade) and Ben (2nd grade) Honrud, celebrating the progress of the Pelican Rapids pool and water park fundraising. Nearly \$2.5 million has been raised toward the project—and the matching fund of up to \$500,000 is continuing, thanks to a generous donor with Pelican Rapids connections.

Donations to the pool fund, by check, can be sent to the West Central Initiative, the agency that is administering the campaign for the Pelican Pool Committee.

West Central Initiative
 Attention: Pelican Rapids Pool Fund
 PO Box 318
 Fergus Falls, MN 56538-0318

Information for online donations can be found at <https://www.pelicanrapidspool.com>



Pelican teacher Marie Johnson profiled in Press in 1971

100 years ago, February 24, 1921

• City Improvements (E.L. Peterson, editorial)
 Pelican Rapids is in need of a good many improvements. The streets ought to be cleaned, and kept clean. There ought to be some beautifying element in the city such as a park or a strip along the river where there could be a chance for tourists to stop during the day. The railroad lots and especially around the station ought to be cleaned up and fixed so that the first impression of a person coming here is not to think “Oh! What a hole,” but “I must have landed someplace now.” There ought to be public water system, and this would especially provide an adequate protection against any fire, or at least a more adequate one than at present. We have lately had an improvement in our creamery and a new bank has been built and there are prospects of better electric light power, which last is greatly needed.

75 years ago, February 28, 1946

• Fine Concert By School Groups
 Those who braved the icy streets and walks last week Wednesday night to attend the school concert were well paid for their efforts. The program was especially good. The band has made great progress during the year and the chorus also showed much improvement.

The concert was well worth a good admission fee but it was free to all. A free will offering was taken and this is to be used for the band uniforms which have been ordered.

There is a lot of fine music talent in our school and this is being developed nicely through the able instructors, the Misses Jean Erickson and Jean Stevens.

• Snow Removal from Streets

Good work was done last Thursday and Friday when the drifts of snow on Broadway, Main and Mill streets were removed. A highway rotary snow plow and other plows were used and the snow loaded on trucks and hauled away. Our

streets are now in fine shape and traffic can resume in the usual manner.

• Welcome Back... Men Receiving Discharge from Army and Navy

Capt. Herbert R. Borg has been discharged from the armed forces at Camp McCoy’s separation center after 42 months of service in the Army, part of which was spent in the Caribbean area. Dr. Borg will soon re-open his dental office here in Pelican Rapids.

50 years ago, February 25, 1971

• Retired Teacher Keeps Busy with Hobbies

“I have never known a minute of boredom,” Mrs. Marie Johnson says with a sincerity that cannot question.

A teacher at PRHS until asked to retire at the age of 65. She has since kept busy with her plants, fish, and birds in her large home across the street from the Pelican Valley Health Center.

She admits now that it was hard to retire at 65; that a person’s brain does not suddenly stop functioning when it reaches the age of 65 years. For her, the activities have been directed from her schoolwork to gardening, houseplants, aquarium, parakeet, and other projects.

Practically “born” a teacher, Marie Daprich grew up in Milwaukee where her father was headmaster of a German-English Academy, a school built by Milwaukee “Beer Barons” to educate children by traditional German methods of education. Her mother was also a teacher, as was her grandfather.

25 years ago, February 21, 1996

• Grocery Theft Intercepted at Local Supermarket

A scam involving two juveniles and a store employee at-

Looking BACK

by Paul Gubrud,
 Columnist



tempting to take nearly \$500 worth of groceries was stopped by a store supervisor last week.

When their fish house was demolished by one of the storms last summer, they intended to repair it. “It started out we were going to fix the old one,” said Hoadley. “Then one thing led to another...”

Their “new” shack is 8 feet wide and 16 feet long, a mansion in terms of fish houses. Knotty cedar paneling and several large windows make the place well-lit during the day and at night there is electricity supplied by a generator.

• Families Celebrate Vietnamese New Year 25 years ago, February 21, 1996

While most of the community’s East Asian population celebrate traditional American holidays, many celebrate their cultural traditions as well, including the annual celebration of Tet, the Vietnamese New Year.

This year’s celebration was February 19, but the areas Asian population will gather at the armory in North Moorhead on February 24 for a traditional Tet New Year’s party.

Author’s note: My wife and I were honored to be guests at this celebration of Tet. We experienced a Buddhist religious ceremony, the Dragon Dance, and enjoyed the abundance of a traditional Vietnamese potluck dinner.

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