

A column is one person's perspective on any given issue, published as a regular feature. A column does not necessarily reflect the views of the newspaper.

STAFF VOICE

There's something special about being out on the water. Whether it's in a big white pontoon or a sleek and quiet canoe, a blown-up plastic unicorn, a bouncy aluminum fishing boat, a fast-as-hell ski machine, or a simple swimsuit and goggles, whatever water transportation you have available offers you a ticket to a nourishing break from land life.

I've lived on the water nearly my entire life. My father built our home of more than 40 years on a bank of Pokegama Lake. What was a pile of sand, became a beautiful perch after my parents worked hard to plant trees, create deck space and comb the beach below. On a map, our slice of Wendigo Arm was accessed from Sunny Beach Road.

We hosted numerous summer events, ladies group picnics, my aunt's wedding reception, "double-dip" birthday parties with ice cream cones and waterskiing. On a hot, summer day, we often spent hours in our swimsuits, running wild with bare feet calloused and tough from hours playing on the rocks. We'd enjoy our favorite sandwiches with lettuce and cheese at the water's edge until they got soggy when we put them down.

Like my siblings and I, our children would realize there was no need for flashy water toys - just a shovel and a handful of sand was enough to keep busy all afternoon. I have happy thoughts of my mother, sunning herself on a towel while drinking a Diet

Tab. Sometimes she'd bring a magazine or book to read but, mostly, she'd smile and laugh at us as we attempted underwater handstands among the crayfish.

"Mom. Mom. See what I can do?"

"I can do it too; now watch me."

"See how long I can hold my breath? Count for me, Mom."

"I can do it too; now count for me!"

My brother launched his fishing boat from the dock where our dogs would jump and splash. Youngsters with short legs could wade out several feet and still touch the bottom making it perfect for the doggy-paddle. On super hot days, we could almost guarantee that friends would show up - by boat or by car - for happy hour relief. Mom would bring down trays full of crackers and cheese, watermelon slices and bowls of chips.

It was never a flat, sand beach but rather a series of decks and retaining walls leading to the lake's edge. It was our hangout, our access to the sparkling blue frontier. Throughout the year, we watched as the cold North Wind covered the water with ice and, in the spring, we bet on when the ice would go out. We skied and skated November through March, never leaving the lake alone for that

Lake life

Britta Arendt



HeraldReview
barendt@grhr.net

quiet time. Come April and May, we helped our piece of Wendigo Arm open up by smashing ice edges with rocks.

We lost at least two good pets to the dangers of drowning while lake-country varmint and old age claimed the lives of others. We never took lake life for granted - most of our childhood friends lived either in the city or off the lake. We knew we were fortunate to wake up to the

sounds of the frogs and go to sleep to the singing of loons. The long rides home on the school bus were easier to endure knowing we could run down to the lake as soon as we were home. Or spend some time in the woods adding finishing touches to our play forts.

Our neighborhood was bound by the lake. Together, we cared for the lake and kept careful watch. I remember Fourth of July picnics hosted by the family on the point where dads would talk about water depth and fish count while moms would share tips on flower pot arrangements and making sun tea. Everyone was at ease with extra eyes watching us kids as we combed for turtles on the washed-up deadwood. It was inevitable that our sundresses would go home with dust and dirt from sprawling out on the docks to spy on little perch swimming in the shadows. I don't know why we

wore shoes to those parties.

When our cousins came to visit from the big city, they would remind us how fortunate we were to be "living like we were on vacation," at the lake. While they had to spend their Sunday evening in a four-hour car ride, we could jump in one more time before brushing our teeth.

We always joked about "where lake people go to be on vacation." For us, that meant going further north - further into the wilderness - further to larger lakes, more water. When families from near and far flooded Pokegama during the weekend, our escape was Canada. That's where we really let loose, where we caught real fish and jumped off real rocks. You could hear the loons more clearly on Lake Kakagi. With water as our route of transportation and our playground, time spent at the cabin depended on the lake. Days at the cabin gave us more appreciation of the natural beauty of the lake. That large body of water, much bigger than Pokegama and nearly, non-inhabited, made you feel small but never lost. I remember the pride we gained from knowing how to navigate around dozens of islands and reefs without a map.

So many more people have found peace on Pokegama - some louder than others. Still, no matter our differences in ideas and pastimes, the lake connects us all through its nourishment for body and soul.

SCIENCE VOICE

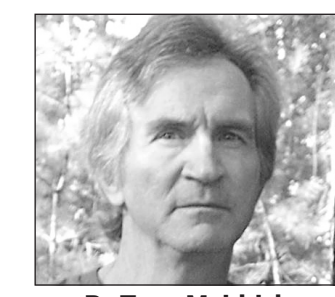
My grandson and I went to see the new Jurassic Park movie. Dinosaurs have escaped from the 'park' and spread throughout the world. There are those who want to protect the animals and those that want to exterminate them. But all agree they are spreading havoc wherever they go. The plot line follows a corrupt corporate CEO who has manipulated the DNA of locusts in order to bring destruction upon the world's food supply in order to control it. But the more important point goes largely unexamined: What would be the effect of resurrecting the Age of Dinosaurs and inserting it into Earth's existing ecosystems? Spoiler alert! The outcome would not be peaceful coexistence.

Is there a scenario in which dinosaurs and humans and the present day biosphere could coexist, as some people believe actually was the case a few thousand years ago. The short answer is no. The long answer is hell no. Consider just the most famous dinosaur, Tyrannosaurus

rex, or T-rex. It was nothing less than a massive killing machine. There is no land animal on the planet that could survive a confrontation and only man with modern weapons could take it down. And T-rex was just one of many predator species, and not even the most ferocious.

A population of predatory dinosaurs roaming unchecked upon the Earth and swimming the seas (Mosasaurs would have great white sharks for snacks) would very quickly decimate the existing animal population. Without present day natural enemies, they would again dominate the planet, and as in the Age of Dinosaurs, the mammal population would be reduced to rat-like animals scurrying around in the dark trying not to get eaten.

Injecting a new organism into an ecosystem where it does not belong always brings unintended and usually terrible consequences. A chilling example is the Burmese pythons released into the wilds of Florida by people who kept them for



By Terry Mejdich
Freelance writer & former science teacher

pets until they got so big they were not cute anymore. (Many would argue snakes are not 'cute' at any age.) The python population exploded because they have no natural enemies and Florida wild life became like a buffet. The largest caught so far was nearly twenty feet long and weighed two hundred fifteen pounds and would have been fully capable of swallowing a human. Eradication efforts continue but the Everglades is a big place and pythons are fast becoming the dominant predator eating even alligators. Imagine something like T-rex wandering the countryside unchecked. It would add

a new dimension to the term 'invasive species.'

Humans, of course, are the dominant invasive species on the planet. We originated in Africa, where the animal population evolved to be wary of us, and spread to Asia, then expanded from there to the rest of the planet. Wherever we went we found new animal populations that had never seen humans before and were easy pickings since they didn't recognize us as a threat. The new territories became like a smorgasbord for humans to exploit. And the existing animals in many places paid the price of extinction. Humans have driven hundreds of animal species to extinction because they were tasty, or competed for the same food, or were just a nuisance.

Evidence in the fossil record indicates the Age of Dinosaurs lasted a hundred sixty five million years. During that time they were Earth's dominant animal population. They survived at least two extinction events and it took a massive meteor

impact to end their reign. A few of their kind survived and evolved into the modern bird population. But the biggest and the baddest died out opening the landscape for the population of the tiny rat-like mammals to exploit all the new areas left vacant by the dinosaurs.

There are no friends between species in nature, only occasionally cooperative agreements. The bottom line for any life form is survival, and to live long enough to reproduce. What we term invasive species are just doing what they have been instinctively programmed to do. No different than any other species, no different than any dinosaur, no different than us. The only difference is humans have the capacity to understand what we have done or could do in the future and avoid mistakes, yet knowing and acting upon that knowledge are two entirely different things.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

1902

Aug. 9, 1902-Coroner Thomas Russell received word from Deer River that an Indian had been killed when hit by a train a short distance east of that town.

1912

Aug. 7, 1912-Lorn MacDougall, 11, Grand Rapids, was killed by an accidental discharge of a gun while on a canoe trip down the Mississippi River near Blackberry.

1922

Aug. 9, 1922-A bill recently passed by the U.S. Congress legalized the bridge built last year over Pokegama Lake, off the new Babcock Road south from Grand Rapids.

1932

Aug. 10, 1932-Proceedings have been instituted by a taxpayer in School District 1 to halt the election which had been called by a group of people from Cohasset for the purpose of changing the present organization as a common school district to an independent district in which six members would be elected as a school board.

Aug. 10, 1932-Charles Grabowsky, who has been general superintendent of the Oliver Iron Mining Co., resigned his position. Superintendent H.W. Plummer will now have charge of operations in the Canisteo District.

1942

Aug. 5, 1942-Donald Dailey was officially named superintendent of the North Central School of Agriculture in Grand Rapids.

1952

Aug. 7, 1952-Jerome Fussey of Foley was killed in the St. Paul Mine at Keewatin when he was crushed beneath the wheels of a loaded ore car.

Aug. 7, 1952-John Saxhaug was selected commander of McVeigh-Dunn American Legion Post in Grand Rapids.

Aug. 7, 1952-Kaiervo Kallio, famed Finnish sculptor, was in the Grand Rapids area visiting an Indian pow-wow in Deer River, and then visiting Grand Rapids.

1962

Aug. 6, 1962-Floyd R. Madson, 65, county highway engineer, died.

Aug. 6, 1962-President Kennedy has directed the Department of Agriculture to extend the food stamp plan for needy families throughout Itasca County. Food stamps have been available only to residents of the Nashwauk area during the past year.

Aug. 9, 1962-School District 318 plans for an area vocational institute at Grand Rapids were given tentative approval by the state board of education.

Aug. 9, 1962-Vern Skallman of Grand Rapids was appointed county highway engineer by the county board.

Aug. 9, 1962-Probable starting date for the food stamp plan on a countywide basis in this area is Oct. 1.

1972

Aug. 7, 1972-Testimony ended in the case of Harold G. Hawkinson of Grand Rapids against Itasca County. Hawkinson contends that his 40-acre development on Sherry's Arm was "unlawfully" zoned residential, preventing him from continu-

ing plans for a "total recreation area) with campgrounds, trailer park, trout fishing ponds, boat harbor, snowmobile trails, lodge and motel.

Aug. 7, 1972-Ronald L. Jensen, 16, Nashwauk, was electrocuted when he apparently climbed onto an electrical substation at the Butler Taconite Plant.

Aug. 7, 1972-Strong reaction has come from area and state officials against the Department of the Interior plans for abandoning the Bureau of Mines Research Plant at Keewatin.

Aug. 7, 1972-Fred Chosa, 59, Ball Club, was killed in a one-car accident on Highway 2 about five miles west of Deer River.

Aug. 10, 1972-A Nov. 1 start is hoped for Blandex production in this area.

Aug. 10, 1972-St. Joseph's Catholic Church at Ball Club will honor Father Denis Parnell, O.S.E., for 50 years in the priesthood at its mission festival.

1982

Aug. 4, 1982-Harry O. Newton Jr. of Grand Rapids will be honored when he is marshal for the Tall Timber Days Parade.

Aug. 8, 1982-Fire destroyed the Danson Road house of Frank Holacek. While battling the blaze, Grand Rapids fireman Scott Cook was overcome by the heat and smoke and fell unconscious. Other firemen rushed to his assistance and helped him from the roof to a waiting ambulance. He was listed in good condition in Itasca Memorial Hospital later in the day.

Aug. 8, 1982-Former U.S. Sen. Eugene McCarthy outlined a six-point plan to aid the economy of northern Minnesota on a visit in the area.

1992

Aug. 5, 1992-St. Joseph's Mission at Ball Club is celebrating its 100th year anniversary at the church.

Aug. 5, 1992-Ken Hickman, former editor and currently Herald-Review columnist, has received the American Legion Stafford King Award as Conservationist of the Year.

Aug. 9, 1992-An Itasca County spray truck was attacked in the Bowstring area. Charges are pending against a man who broke the windshield and a headlight on the truck.

2002

Aug. 4, 2002-South Africa based Sappi Limited, which now owns the Pottlatch Paper Mill in Cloquet, reported a slight increase in earnings despite a weak market in North America. For the same period, Finland-based UPM-Rymmene, which owns the Blandin paper mill in Grand Rapids, reported a drop in earnings.

Aug. 4, 2002-U.S. Senate candidate Norm Coleman visited Grand Rapids and Deer River.

Aug. 4, 2002-Sam Miltich has been selected for membership in the Minnesota Music Educators Association All-State Jazz Band. Named to the All-State Band from Rapids are Miltich, Timarie Tatta Sura, Olivia Latimer and Erin Mauer.

Aug. 7, 2002-Rapids Power announced that it is no longer pursuing the construction of a 225 Megawatt co-generational facility in Grand Rapids. Economic forces, aggravated by construction and estimated product costs, lead to the conclusion of Rapids Power.