

The Woodlawn Guide  
Contents are in alphabetical order, mostly

## The Woodlawn Guide.

Lots of information about Woodlawn Resort. Somewhere here, most of your questions about our Blanche Lake Eden probably are answered, sometimes briefly, sometimes lengthily, sometimes with historical notes.

Bud (who is the "I" in the following pages) wrote the first edition of the Woodlawn Guide in 1993. Since then a lot has happened. Each year we have had to add a page to the front of the Guide with new information for the current year. Finally, in Spring of 2006, we revised the Guide, incorporating into the main text relevant information (we hope) from all those yearly pages. We hope you find the result enjoyable and useful. If you notice any sins either of commission or omission, we'll appreciate your letting us know.

We also took out the page numbers, having learned that we will have to insert new items from time to time. Except for the first couple of items, the ones about the cottages that we think you might want to consult first off, we enter items alphabetically, and we hope you find that convenient. As ever, suggestions are welcome.

The suggestions and comments offered to us by our guests have helped us make and keep Woodlawn the attractive and desirable vacation spot you now enjoy. We are grateful. Please let us know both what you like and what you'd like to see improved. There is a special page at the end of the Guide where we invite you to make written comments, for which we will also be grateful.

### **Supplementary note for 2009:**

Thanks to daughter Martha and her husband Rich Ingram and two boys Tom (12) and Quinn (9 1/2), Bud and Phyllis are now living in No. 9 and enjoying retirement, more or less. They are leaving management of the resort to the Ingram family. Rich and the boys are here full-time, and Martha, a lawyer in Minneapolis, is here Thursday night through Sunday each week.

**Teflon oven liners.** There's one in each oven. They are better than aluminum foil for catching oven drips. They are easily cleanable. Rinse under a faucet or just wipe them. Please don't throw them away!

**Paneling in Rec Building.** Last fall we used maple and basswood paneling, made from our trees felled in the storm in June 2006, to panel the Rec Building.

**Lower level of No. 1** has been refinished with new floor and ceiling and repainted walls. The result is less moisture and more light. There's also new linoleum, an exhaust fan and a more rust-free shower stall in the bathroom.

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**About your cottage**

Because you have rented a "housekeeping cottage," some things are furnished, some you will want to bring, some you will want to buy locally, some things will be done for you, and some things you will have to do for yourselves.

In general, the expectation is that you will leave the cottage in about the same condition as you found it when you came. (More at "Housekeeping.")

**What's furnished in your cottage?**

The inventory varies a bit from cottage to cottage. There'll be proportionately more furnishings in the larger ones, for example. Some kitchen items that are less frequently used, but convenient on occasion, you can borrow from the office. We remember when Carl Post caught a very large snapping turtle while fishing from a bridge and needed a very large kettle to cook the turtle in. He borrowed a canning kettle.

(He kindly gave us some cooked turtle--an honor, no doubt.)

Here's an inventory for Cottage No. 2, as an example:

Bedrooms:

2 bedrooms with queen beds--mattress, box spring, frame  
1 loft with mattress (three quarter size)  
6 blankets  
6 pillows  
3 ea. mattress covers and pads  
6 sheets,  
6 pillow cases  
3 spreads  
or comforters  
2 mirrors

Bathroom:

bath rug  
toilet paper  
hand soap

Livingroom-kitchen:

table and 6 chairs  
sleeper-sofa  
rocking chair  
end table  
refrigerator-freezer  
range  
microwave

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toaster

coffee maker (When we added electric coffee makers in the cottages, we retired the old aluminum percolators, which are now collector's items.)

pots and pans

iron skillet

(Helpful hint about iron skillets: Not everyone is familiar with these devices nowadays. They are great for frying things, for chilis, and for other top of the stove cooking. They should be kept "seasoned" or they will rust. After washing, leave a light coating of cooking oil in the pan, wiping out the surplus with a paper towel, and let the pan dry upside down on top of the stove. )

can opener

dishes--8 place settings

drinking glasses--set of 8

flatware--8 place settings plus serving pieces

knives--butcher and paring, plus peeler.

The good-quality Chicago Cutlery knives belong in the cottage--please leave them.

water pitcher

broom

carpet sweeper

kitchen cleanser

**What to bring (if wanted):**

Example of things you might want to bring: a laptop computer with wireless access, or a small tv and a good radio. We could furnish those latter, but our added costs, for the equipment and maintenance, and for security during the off season (tv's and radios are a favorite targets for thieves), would raise the rent for everybody.

Good things to bring or buy:

(We welcome your suggestions for this list)

Recreational equipment--We have a lot (see elsewhere in this Guide) but some you'll need to furnish yourselves.

Fishing Tackle

Golf equipment

Warm clothes:

Sweat shirt

Sweat pants

Sweater

Windbreaker

Rain gear

Swim clothes

Bath towels

Dish cloths

Dish detergent

Good clock

Camera

Roll of kitchen towels

Facial tissue

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Toiletries  
Sun screen  
Mosquito lotion

Good things to buy:

Examples of things you'll probably prefer to buy locally--groceries, live bait for fishing, and souvenir clothing. There's no point in our trying to list the ordinary things. We'll list a few special things:

Fresh produce:

Strawberries (you pick 'em)  
Green beans  
Sweet corn  
Tomatoes  
Young potatoes

Local postcards  
Souvenir Woodlawn sweatshirts and tees

(From here on, the entries in the Guide are in alphabetical order.)

### **Activities--Things to do**

In ancient historical times of the resort--back in the late 40's and early 50's when it was called first "Bud's Resort" and then "Bud's Woodlawn Resort"--people fished, and that was about it.

Nowadays, experienced Woodlawn guests know a wider range of ways to spend their time, and have more to do than they can hope to work through in one week. Those early fishermen would have had no time for a lot of this, in both senses of that phrase.

Before going into these more complex matters, let's describe the schedule of the dedicated fishermen and golfers who still make up a sizeable percentage of Woodlawn guests, God love them.

Saturday: afternoon: arrive, unpack, organize tackle, buy bait, reserve tee times.

evening: fish

Sunday: morning: fish

afternoon: golf

evening: fish

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday: same as Sunday

Saturday: pack and leave.

Variations occur, caused by rain, wind, exhaustion, and less single-minded people in the party.

Few parties nowadays hew to so single-minded a schedule.

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The list of pastimes people pursue is long and open-ended. If you have a favorite pastime that isn't on the list below, we invite you to add it, because someone else may want to try it:

Lie on the sundeck.  
Swim.  
Walk to the outlet dam and back.  
Feed chipmunks.  
Attend rigging review (Sunday).  
Go sailing or windsurfing.  
Eat smorgasbord brunch (Sunday) at one of the local eating places.  
Drive the "Ottertrail" and admire the spectacular scenery.  
Play tennis.  
Walk the nature trail.  
Walk to Ottetail Lake (three-mile walk).  
Jog.  
Make a fire in an outdoor fireplace. Sit and look at it.  
Sit and look at the lake.  
Look for birds, wild flowers, trees, insects, stars.  
    Borrow guides at office  
Shop for fresh produce.  
Pick strawberries or raspberries.  
Learn to sail.  
Learn to windsurf.  
Play cards.  
Play a board game.  
Visit a flea market.  
Work a crossword puzzle.  
Play chess.  
Borrow a book, sit and read.  
Cook something unusual.

### **Air Compressor**

You'll find it in the motor house (or if not, ask). It has an attachment for filling your flotilla of rafts and your menagerie of aquatic animals. Plug it in and it starts, unplug it when you have finished using it.

### **Animals (alphabetically)**

**Ants.** At Woodlawn, the ones that interest us come in basically two types: sweet-eating ants, and carpenter ants. Sweet-eating ants eat sweets and are a pesky nuisance, but are easily got rid of. All you do is borrow a bottle of Terro, a syrup consisting of sugar, poison, and water, from the office, lay out a couple of pieces of cardboard with a dollop of Terro on each, and the ants are soon terminated.

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**Carpenter ants** are different. These continue the process of carpentering from where the builders leave off. They chew their way into wet wood. They are not termites. They do not live on wood. They live in the wood. You'll perhaps see them exploring your cottage, looking for wood they can chew.

Mostly you won't see them, but you may see their piles of sawdust that indicate they are invisibly at work on the rafters and studdings. Don't worry, the building won't cave in yet, but someday it would if ants are not evicted.

We don't know of any poison that will infallibly get rid of carpenter ants, the pesky creatures. Sometimes they develop a yen for Terro; more often they don't.

One time we found tell-tale sawdust piles in a bedroom in No. 9, and put out some Terro, more in hope than in confidence. When new guests arrived for No. 9, we explained that the Terro was there and why. Some time later we noticed them still sitting in their car, not unloading or moving in.

They said they were afraid of moving into a building with "carpenter rats."

Oh-oh! We all need sometimes to articulate more carefully, don't we?

Once we cleared up that misunderstanding they moved in--still a bit suspiciously--and soon relaxed and had the usual Woodlawn good time.

"Carpenter rats" is a lovely concept, but to the best of our knowledge, no such creatures exist. Beaver, being rodents, could be called such. They build houses, though, rather than chewing them up.

**Bats.** Yes, you'll see them swooping around of an evening. Bats are great insect eaters, and help keep the mosquito population down. We need more bats. Farmers in Europe put up bat houses. Maybe we'll try that someday. For now, we have lots of dead hollow trees in the woods. Bats feel at home in them. Once when we cut a dead hackberry, the trunk cracked open and several stunned bats fell out. They recovered and flew away. Bats used to get into No. 4; very embarrassing (no fear--they don't anymore.) And one got into our bedroom one night. I managed to whack it down with a badminton (or batminton--yuck!) racket, poor thing.

Bats, by the way, do not entangle their feet in people's hair--the scare story we were told as kids. We often wonder where that story started.

Bats do, on the other hand, unlike birds, flap their wings alternately, one wing going up when the other goes down. And that is weird.

**Beaver.** These have made a remarkable comeback. More beaver live in this country now than when Europeans first came. You'll see evidence of past beaver activity along Blanche Creek down from the dam. There are beaver lodges along the creek between Mollie Stark and Annie Battle and between Annie Battle and Blanche. Sometimes we see a beaver swimming by the main dock, and one year a beaver chewed bark off some cottonwood logs by the No. 9 dock. Beaver hats have not come back into style, however.

**Chipmunks.** They get pretty tame if you feed them. They'll eat out of your hand, even climb up in your lap, if you encourage them. They like peanuts, peanut

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butter, sunflower seeds, unpopped popcorn. We've been told salt isn't good for them, so try to choose unsalted food. Chipmunks are born cute and unlike kittens or puppies, they stay cute when they grow up. But keep in mind that they are wild, and will react in panic, using teeth and claws, if you grab or hold them.

**Clams.** You'll find these in abundance in shallow water. Their flesh make first-rate sunfish bait. Take a plastic bucket, wade, or wear a face mask and swim along the bottom, pick a bucket full.

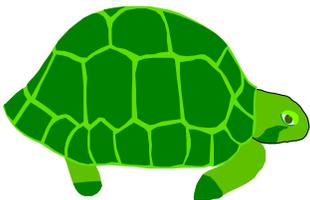
**Deer.** If you visit Glendalough toward evening, you'll see cars parked all along the drive, and off the road in the fields you'll see the attraction--dozens of deer. You'll also see them along the shore on the far side of the lake, generally in morning or evening. Occasionally you'll see them in our woods or on the trails. It's a delight to see a deer in the wild. The sight always gives a lift to the spirits.

**Fox, mink, weasel.** They're around. We saw a weasel, dead white in its winter clothes, in the well house one winter. Karl saw a fox one winter, too. It was in a trap, poor thing. There was nothing he could do for it. One summer we saw foxes regularly, right out by the mailbox.

**Frogs.** Some mysterious disease has nearly wiped out the local frog population. No more do we see them by the thousands on the asphalt highways on cool nights, soaking up the lingering heat of the day. They make excellent bass bait. We miss them.

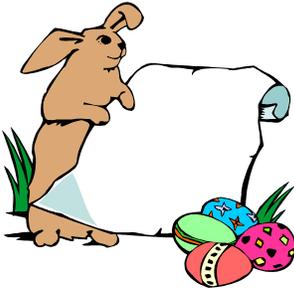
**Mice.** Oh, yes, and **shrews and voles.** Mice will get into buildings when they can. We caught eleven in the office one year, before we found the hole. They used to get into No. 4 and No. 2, but our remodeling has cured that. One year a barber from Kansas City staying in No. 6 before it was remodeled came to the office and reported that there was a mouse "under the pillar," or so I thought he said. I went to look, mystified, and he pointed to the "pillar" on the bed. The mouse was gone.

Once, using a live trap, I caught thirty mice in thirty days in the workshop. Each mouse was smaller than the last, which was a tiny runt indeed. There must have been a pecking order, and his turn was last. We think all the buildings are mouseproof at the moment. Please tell us if we are deluded about that. We don't ask you to put up with mice.



**Painted and mud turtles.** Much in demand for the Wednesday turtle races in Battle Lake and Perham. But like other wild creatures, they are best enjoyed in the wild. You'll often see several on one dead log along the creek from Annie Battle to Blanche.

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**Rabbits.** These often feed on the lawn in broad daylight. Little ones, like little almost anythings, are cute. The fully grown ones are scruffy and not very cute. We tolerate rabbits, but feel indifferent toward them, except when the rabbit population explodes. The rabbit population explodes periodically, and they become nuisances, especially in winter, when out of hunger they gnaw the bark off young trees, girdling and killing them. If there are enough foxes, they'll keep the rabbit population under control. If there are too few rabbits, that'll keep the fox population under control. Rabbits do not lay Easter eggs.

**Raccoons.** They're around. If you hear a rattling of trash cans during the night, it's probably not the help emptying them. It's probably a raccoon. Raccoons are attractive creatures, even if nuisances. They wear black masks, like cartoon bandits, and have jolly ringed tails. We've seen them in the trees near the dock, and around the trash cans. But sometimes in winter, snowmobilers have hunted them down ruthlessly for the fur, and for a year or two we won't see many. The numbers seem to fluctuate with the price of fur.

One year, three young raccoons hung around by the trees in front of Cottage No. 3. They were hungry. They must have lost their mother. We have some good closeup photos.

Another time, a guest smelled a strange smell when he started his car. He opened the hood, and there on the engine were four young raccoons. He managed to encourage three to leave, but one hid down deeper and stayed. It stayed for three days, then must have gotten hungry and left.

Most of the raccoons we have seen of late have been lying beside the highway, dead. Too bad. And one, or more, has been making a mess of garbage, wherever it can get into a can.

To avoid finding your trash strewn about the lawn, please put it in the can in the morning rather than at night.

**Skunks.** These are fairly numerous, but very shy, and normally you won't see them. If you meet one, give it a wide berth. It won't seek you out, but has a very smelly way of defending itself if intruded upon. Chances are you won't see one, except dead along the highway. Keep the lid on your trash can, or one may come visiting you in the night. Another reason to put out the trash in the morning rather than evening.

**Snakes.** No poisonous snakes in northern Minnesota. We have a few garter snakes, harmless unless you are a frog or a toad.

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**Snapping Turtles.** There is a big one by the dock occasionally. Snappers will eat fish if they find them hanging on a stringer. We've never heard of anyone around here being bit by one, but they are mean critters and we don't recommend messing with them.

A neighbor tells us that he used to cut a hole in the ice out over the channel where the water is fifty feet deep, and wearing scuba gear dive down to where huge snappers hibernated in the mud. He says he'd take out several hundred pounds of snapping turtle each winter and sell it for a handsome price to a New York restaurant. A fisherman caught one on hook and line, cooked it, and gave us some of it. It was a tough old turtle with a rather fishy taste. We'd just as soon let them swim, thank you.

You sometimes see snappers in the lake. They'll sometimes eat fish left hanging on a stringer by the dock.



**Squirrels.** We have red ones, gray ones, and black ones. We don't much like them. They rob the bird feeders. But we have learned to frustrate them by coating the shepherd's crooks with vaseline. Try that at home!

**Toads.** Lots of them around, including tiny ones that kids like to catch. Toads have warts, but that they can give you warts is a bad rap they've had to suffer for generations, like the story, equally libelous, that bats tangle themselves in your hair.

**Turtles.** The common ones in these parts are mud turtles and snappers. Mud turtles, also called painted turtles, have upper and lower decks. The underside of the lower deck is patterned and brightly colored. Mud turtles are harmless. Snapping turtles, on the other hand, have powerful jaws and could do someone damage, no doubt, though we have never heard of a turtle running people down and biting them. The turtles you see up in the inlet are mud turtles.

**Woodchucks.** You'll see them around the brush piles back by the woods. There's no harm in a woodchuck. They'll run away from you as you approach. They'll duck down into their burrows, and if you stay still, they'll come up and look at you warily.

### **Babysitters**

Since our own girls have grown up, we have to look abroad for baby sitters. We keep a list of young people in the area who are often available, and can help you arrange for them to come.

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**Bait**

See "Clams." Other possibilities are minnows, worms, nightcrawlers, and frogs, all available at local bait shops.

We used to sell **minnows**. I started selling them in 1949, the year my father and I installed an electric water pump. In those first years the minnow tank was down by the fish cleaning house. A steady stream of water fizzed into the tank, keeping the water aerated. But if not sold quickly, the minnows grew furry with fungus and died. In 1960, when Karl was born, we added our present bedroom and livingroom to the office, and from then on, we had the minnow tank behind the office, by our bedroom windows. The water continually flowing into the tank soothed us to sleep. Minnows were brought to us by bait wholesalers, who sold them to us by the gallon. I enjoyed watching the bait delivery man measure a gallon of minnows. He used a tall container with rings around the inside at one gallon intervals. He filled the container with water up to one of the marks. Then he scooped up minnows in a net and added them to the container until the level rose to the next mark. A good trick if you ever want to measure a gallon of something non-liquid and heavier than water--nails, say, or stones, or buttons--don't ask me why. We then sold our minnows by the dozen.

One faithful guest, Bill Baden, wanted his minnows early in the morning, before I was up. He'd scratch on the bedroom screen and call "Bu-ud" in a low voice that never failed to wake me. "I need a dozen minnows--shall I help myself?" Usually I said to go ahead. Sometimes I'd go to the window and watch. He never counted. He estimated. He ran the scoop through the tank and dumped the contents into his bucket. Some of those dozens must have had fifty minnows in them.

Bait shops undersold us by enormous margins, and as people gradually in the decades of American prosperity came to think nothing of driving eight miles or more to get the best price, our sales dropped until in the last year we sold bait, our season's minnow sales totaled \$37.20. We gave our cattle tank to a neighboring farmer and retired from the minnow business.

Nightcrawlers were a different story. They were a source of income for Karl, Kate, and Martha while they were growing up. We'd pick them in the evening, after a rain. The kids would cut off half-gallon milk cartons, fill them with dirt, and count out worms, thirteen to the dozen for each carton. They sold these at the going bait store rate. It was pure profit. These nightcrawlers were fresher and friskier than those in the bait shops, which went through many hands before reaching the fishermen. Those came in plastic containers that cost money, and in mulch that cost money. The cartons and dirt cost our kids nothing.

The crawlers are still there, and nights after a rain we often see the flashlights of savvy guests picking their own supply. Our children have grown up and gone to college and left that business behind them. So much for a college education.

Still, as a result of their early enterprise, they've got retail business experience. It could be something to fall back on.

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### Barbecue



A great way to cook, especially for the womenfolk, since it is a law of American life (as explained elsewhere) that the menfolk do it. Please do not use either charcoal or gas grills on decks (insurance regulations). And please place low grills on bricks, board, or bare soil. See under "Grills" and "Fireplace."

### Bicycling



We have a bicycle. Bud uses it sometimes to ride to the far ends of the resort, or back for the tools he needs and forgot to bring, or to bring messages. But you are more interested, we suspect, in opportunities for recreational riding. We don't have rental bikes, but can help you locate them. We wish there were some other dedicated trails besides the ones in Glendalough (which see). We urge caution in riding on Highway 78 out from the resort. Since a foot or so was added on each side a few years ago it's better than it used to be, and about two miles toward Battle Lake it gets a lot better. From there to Battle Lake the shoulders are paved to a width of about four feet on each side.

If you go the other way (toward Ottertail City), you soon reach County Highway 128. Then you are on the county road system, which is good, and lightly traveled for the most part. So if you have a bike, be careful along 78 and enjoy the county highways. You'll find the rides on the county roads rewarding and (as a rule) less heavily traveled. It still pays to be careful, of course, and to observe the usual safety precautions.

When Highway 78 was being rebuilt, we agitated for wide hard-surfaced shoulders to accommodate bikers, hikers, walkers, and runners. You never know what might nudge a bureaucrat. Our letter may have helped, because plans were changed to include wide shoulders. Below is a copy of what we wrote after attending a public hearing. Perhaps you can adapt part of it to your own use, if a similar situation occurs near you.

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July 8, 1991  
Ronald G. Hoffman  
District Engineer  
P.O. Box 666  
Detroit Lakes, MN 56501

Dear Mr. Hoffman:

When T.H. 78 north from Battle Lake is rebuilt, the shoulders need to be surfaced for safe bicycle and pedestrian traffic.

I spoke with you in Battle Lake at the hearing and you suggested I write you about our concerns.

While the T. H. 78 proposal looks good in general, showing sensitivity to the environment as well as traffic needs, we think it falls short in regard to accommodating bicycle and pedestrian traffic. The area from Battle to the county highway west around Otter Tail Lake would best have wide asphalted shoulders but our major concern is for the tourist traffic along and around the lakes.

Even as I write this, three cyclists just came in our road. They had to travel along 78 to get here. Each time we drive on 78 we meet or pass cyclists. Highway 78 is an extremely risky route for cyclists. Common sense tells us that only determined cyclists go on it. There must be several times as many cyclists who would use that route if it were safe. The experience in Iowa and other states has shown that bicycle tourism grows fast wherever facilities are provided for it. Our guests frequently express the desire for safe routes.

Tourism is the second leading industry in Otter Tail County. The county recognizes this by including wide asphalted shoulders on the rebuilt portion of County Highway 1 along the northwest side of Otter Tail Lake.

It would seem simply good economic sense, to say nothing of safety, to have a wide asphalted shoulder on the state portion of the route around the lake.

Your interest in our concerns is much appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

The letter worked! (Others wrote too, but shucks, why not claim ours did the trick?)

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**Birds**



Most people enjoy birds for their songs, their colors, their movements. We admire and envy their power of flight. Wouldn't we like to spread our wings and fly? They also eat a lot of insects, including mosquitoes. If you enjoy identifying the birds you see, we have printed guides to help you. You'll find them on a shelf in the office, along with guides to stars, flowers, trees, spiders and insects.

Some of the more interesting birds here that you may not have at home are **loons, barred owls, and pileated woodpeckers.**

**Loons** have that distinctive mournful, soulful cry that comes floating over the water in quiet times. As inhabitants of the open waters, they are easily seen. Please don't chase them with your power boat. They might decide you don't like them, and leave.

The **barred owls** can make a lot of noise at night. Sometimes they sound like the barking of a dog. You sometimes see them in the evenings. After a rain we have seen them back by the basketball court, picking nightcrawlers.

**Pileated woodpeckers** are big birds, the size of a crow, with a bright red topknot. When they hammer a tree, the blows are loud and slow, unlike the rat-tat-tat of smaller birds. We don't see them much during the summer, but as soon as all of you leave, these birds come to the trees around the cottages. Even in summer, though, you might hear them cackling back in the woods, sounding much like an angry chicken.

You might find it interesting to keep a list of birds you see while here, using the rest of this page and the next for the purpose. We'll start you off by listing some of common birds for you to date and check off. Then add your own sightings.

Barred Owl	Blue Jay	Catbird
Canada Goose	Bullhead*	Crow
Cuckoo	Flicker	Goldfinch
Great Blue Heron	Grebe	Hawk
Hummingbird	Loon	Nuthatch
Oriole	Pileated Woodpecker	Redheaded Woodpecker
Redbellied Woodpecker	Redstart	Redwing Blackbird
Robin	Sparrow	Wood Duck

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Wren

Yellow Headed Blackbird

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

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(\*Ah! you noticed something fishy!)

You may see other species as well, of course. We hope you will. On the blank page following this one, you are invited to keep a list of your sightings (notes about where and when are often interesting). Tell us about your sightings, and we'll add them to our own list of birds available in the area. Your record will be something of interest to take home as a souvenir.

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**Bird Sightings**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Species</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Observer</b>
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### **Blanche Creek Road**

City addresses tell you a street and a house number. Those are helpful to strangers looking for your house. We wanted at least a street address to guide people on their first visit. We petitioned the State Highway Department to name the road off Highway 78 "Blanche Creek Road," and it was so named. It helps. Later, our official postal address was changed from our postal box number to 40080 Blanche Creek Road. Though the number seems fancifully high, we are happy with the change.

If there is a Blanche Creek Road, there must be a Blanche Creek. Is there a Blanche Creek? There is, now that the State has put up official signs for Blanche Creek Road. If you ask the local people, the creek from Blanche to Otter Tail Lake is still Balmoral Creek. "Balmoral Creek Road" would not be helpful to us on Blanche Lake. Thus has Blanche Creek become the name of the Blanche Lake end of Balmoral Creek. Such is the power of a road sign.

### **Blanche Lake and others**

Look at the Otter Tail County map in the Otter Tail Country booklet and you see more lakes than you'll care to count--over a thousand out of the fifteen thousand in Minnesota. Blanche is (ahem) the jewel of them all. Look at its classic shape--close to that of an egg. It is 1328 acres in size, or just over two square miles of surface. Its low surrounding shores make it an excellent sailing lake. Its variety of depths and bottom conditions provide optimum conditions for bluegills, crappies, bass, northerns, and (in parts) walleyes. Its sand bottom makes for great wading and swimming. Because the whole southern shore belongs to Glendalough State Park (q.v.), we have the unusual pleasure of looking across at a completely undeveloped shoreline, and since only half of the shoreline is or will be built up, the number of speedboats on the lake is half what might be found on a lake of this size. All of which contributes to the pleasures one enjoys when contemplating the lake from the cottages and lakeshore sundecks at Woodlawn.

Blanche Lake is part of a group of five neighboring lakes with women's names. The others are (from east to south) Ethel, Emma, Annie Battle, and Molly Stark. We don't know how these lakes got their names, so we make up the story that an early settler named them for his five daughters. It could be. If so, perhaps he had a son named Otter Tail.

### **Boats (fishing).**

The fishing boats we use at Woodlawn are mostly 14 ft. aluminum, made either by Alumacraft or Lund, two of the most respected makers of fishing boats. We also have one 16 ft. boat with 25 h.p. engine, level deck, pivot seats, and other trimmings. Instead of envying those who bring their own fancy craft you can now rent this one from us and enjoy all the amenities for a fraction of the cost.

All our boats are inspected annually by water sheriff's deputies, and frequently by us, to make sure that they are in good and safe condition.

There are differences among our boats. The deeper ones make some people feel

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more secure, but are harder to row and to maneuver, and most annoyingly, have no places along the sides except a single oarlock to which one can attach lines. They are also heavy and hard to pull onto the racks. They also have only three seats.

One older Alumacraft is the easiest of our boats to maneuver and have convenient braces to tie to. It has aluminum seats, however, which are hot when it's hot and cold when it's cold. One wants a seat cushion when using this Alumacraft. Then we have three newer Alumacrafts with a slight V-bottom that makes them more stable and maneuverable than most.

With more of you bringing your own boats, and with more of you doing other things than fish, we don't need as many boats as we used to, and sometimes don't even keep all our boats down in the lake.

All the boats are good stable boats, and desirable from our point of view because easy to handle and practically maintenance-free.

Boats were not always like this. When I first started in 1948 I had cedar-strip wood boats with oak ribs and keel. The insides needed constant varnishing, and the outsides had to be scraped and painted each spring, and still they tended to leak if left out of the water for more than a few days.

Then I got some fiberglass boats. What a relief--no painting or varnishing. But I had a guest from Texas, Bill Baden, who came every year for six weeks or more, an avid fisherman, and a good one. He fished every day. He was a bundle of nervous energy and couldn't sit still. We had linoleum floors in those days, and when he played cards in his cabin, he shuffled his feet, and he shuffled a hole in the linoleum. He complained, rightly enough, when his boat started to leak. I examined the boat, and found that he had shuffled a hole through the fiberglass bottom of the boat. I switched him to aluminum, and that was fine, except that his wife Grace--he called her "Pussy"--complained that his constant shifting about on the aluminum seats blackened his suntans. "Please sit on a cushion," I said, but to no avail. He was too restless. He stood up in the boat most of the time, which is a no-no. He was a bad example, and being such a good fisherman, he made the example attractive. All you can do about the quirks of such people is enjoy them.

Bill liked to tell stories. His favorite was about the farmer with the little runty pig. The farmer brought this pig a big pail of slops. The pig ate the whole pailful. The farmer picked up the pig and put it in the pail and, Bill said, looking you square in the eye, "the pig didn't fill the pail. Now how do you figure that out?" He also liked to tell about the man who complained about the war to a friend. "Isn't this a terrible war?" he said. "I don't know," the friend said, "it's the best war we've got."

My brother Jack helped at the resort a couple of summers when Bill was a guest. Jack has a mole on his forehead, and every time Bill saw him close up, he'd reach out and say "Hold still and let me get that woodtick."

### **Boats and Water Toys of Other Sorts**

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By maintaining a large range of equipment--sailboats, canoes, kayaks, and hydrobikes, for example--, we satisfy the various desires of lots of people, and rather than charge you additional rent every time you use one of our water toys, we include their use in your cottage rent. Only when you rent exclusive use of a fishing boat or pontoon for the week do you encounter an additional charge.

### **Boat Lifts.**

If you own your own boat, it represents a sizeable investment, and it is best to protect it by keeping it on a lift. We now have a number of lifts of varying capacities.

We have six lifts. The largest will take boats up to 3400 pounds. On those few occasions where a boat is too large for our lifts, or there are more large boats here than lifts, we have two mooring blocks. Mooring the boat out is not so convenient as keeping it on a lift, but is equally safe. It is not safe to leave boats tied to the docks at night or in high winds. Our docks are not strong enough to hold them in severe weather.

In putting your boat on a lift, please take care to have the stern over the supports, and not ahead of them. On the older lifts, please do not let the wheel run free in lowering the boat. The cables and supports can be damaged.

On the new lifts for heavier boats, please note the directions "up" and "down" on the wheel. After lowering your boat, please turn the wheel "up" until you hear the clicking. This will prevent the gears from locking in a sort of "neutral" position, as has sometimes happened, we don't know how.

### **Boat Racks**

The racks along the shore at the foot of the docks are designed for fourteen foot fishing boats such as belong to the resort. These racks go with the cottages if you want them. (If you don't wish to use one of our fishing boats, you have a lot of other options.) Your boat should be kept on its rack when not in use, especially at night and in threatening weather.

It isn't so easy, sometimes, to pull them up. It's easiest if you let the nose of the boat ride up as you pull it on the rack. Pull the nose down only after near or past the balance point. In pushing the boat off the rack, it is also easiest if you lift the nose well up.

If you need help with your boat, please let us know. If you have back problems, or other health problems, please let us pull up your boat.

### **Books (Lending Library)**

Books consist of pages printed on paper and bound together. They were a source of entertainment and information until for some people TV rendered them obsolete. Revisit the past: get a book from the Woodlawn Library and read it.

More seriously-- We have lots of cheap thrill type fiction, because people find it amusing stuff, though of transient interest. Most of you, when you finish a book of that type, leave it behind for someone else to enjoy, and we obligingly store it along with lots of others of its kind on shelves in the game room. We have detective fiction, we have sci fi, we have kiddie lit--you name it, we have it.

We have lots of more serious fiction, too, thanks to the "desk copies" Bud used to get free from publishers in his other life as an English teacher. Sometimes we even buy a

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book. A lot of the more serious stuff is on the shelves in our living room. You are welcome to borrow from that collection, too.

### **Campfire.**

Monday night is Woodlawn campfire night. We get together and roast marshmallows (we furnish the marshmallows). Some people bring chocolate bars and graham crackers and make s'mores. Then we socialize. Sometimes we sing songs. Not everybody comes, and nobody says you should or must. But so many people expect the weekly campfire that we wouldn't dare not have one.

That's the official planned campfire. From then on, some weeks, if there are teenagers in camp, there's an impromptu campfire almost every night. Being a teenager is a miserable business, as anyone who has been through it knows, and since misery loves company, teenagers are happiest with other teenagers, and never happier than with other teenagers around a campfire.

We furnish a certain amount of wood, free. Beyond what we furnish, teenagers are free to burn all they want, so long as they gather it themselves from the abundant brush piles of dried wood back on the edges of the clearing. The requirement that they gather their own wood is necessary to control the natural tendency of teenagers to profligacy. It isn't just money that teenagers think grows on trees. With wood, they are closer to the truth, but as with money, you still have to work for it, though not as hard.

### **Canoeing.**

We have three canoes. You are welcome to use them, but please let us know before you take them. We'll reserve them for you if you ask.

We recommend two routes for canoeing. The easiest is the West Battle to Blanche route, and it is a good route whenever (especially early in the season) the water in the stream is high enough. We have carriers and can help you mount one or two canoes on your car, or we can load the canoes on our old car and deliver you and them. Then you canoe through the creeks and lakes back to the resort. Most people do the trip in three hours or so. Speed is not the object. You'll see birds, turtles, a couple of beaver houses, maybe a beaver. With luck you'll see eagles.

The second trip is down the Otter Tail River from the County Hwy 1 bridge west of Otter Tail Lake to Phelps Mill. If you want more, portage around the dam at Phelps and continue on down to West Lost Lake, a pretty stretch of river. For this excursion you either use two cars, one of which you park at your destination, the other at your embarking point. Or else you have someone deliver you to one end and pick you up at the other. We don't charge for loading your own vehicle or for driving it, but we do have a modest charge for delivering you in our vehicle.

### **Car Rental.**

As former Midwesterners disperse across the continent, we find more and more people arriving by air and rented car. Cars can be reserved by the week from the national rental agencies. Call their 800 numbers to find which have offices at the Fargo or Twin Cities airports. There is also air service, now and then, off and on, to and from Fergus Falls, and rental cars can be had in Fergus. Ask, and we'll find the latest information on this for you.

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**Charcoal grills (see “Grills”)**

**Charred lawn.**

Here and there in front of the cottages you sometimes see yellow spots in the lawn. That's where someone set up a short-legged charcoal grill that cooked the grass under it. Please place your grill where it won't char the grass--on bricks, or dirt, or on a piece of plywood we'll gladly furnish you.

The lawn also sometimes is charred by sunlight focused through inflatable mattresses. We'll be grateful if you not leave these lying on the grass in sunlight.

**Chess.**

The most fascinating of games. Bud will be happy to play with you, whenever Phyllis will let him. Chess is a relatively harmless addiction. When Bud is playing chess, Phyllis asks him if she should do this or that, and does what she pleases, and tells Bud later that he said it was fine with him. He doesn't remember, so he can't deny he said it. This is what reconciles Phyllis to Bud's addiction to chess.

The down side, for Phyllis, is that if she asks Bud to do something, he'll say “sure,” but afterward won't remember that, either. It's a sure recipe for not getting something done.

Borrow a set and board from the office. Bud has a chess clock, but he probably won't lend it, unless to an experienced person. He recommends use of a clock. When he plays he insists on it

**Clams.**

People have eaten them. Not us, though. But fish eat them. They make splendid bluegill bait. And they cost you nothing but a bit of pleasant clam picking. Easiest is to put on a swim mask and a snorkle, carry a bucket out to the rushes, and dive for them. Generally you find a lot in a short time. Keep them alive in the bucket of water, open them as you use them, cut up the muscle, bait your hook, and prepare for the bluegills to fight to get on your hook.

**Cleaning fish.** See "fish, cleaning."

**Clothing.**

A basic rule for Minnesota, briefly stated, is: "Bring warm clothes." You'll want cool clothes, too, but you'll be pretty sure to bring those, especially if you leave home in 90-degree-plus temperatures. And you may neglect to bring the warm ones, which you may need, even in July. Maybe we shouldn't tell you this, because we certainly don't mind selling you sweatshirts to alleviate your shivering. A windbreaker is nice to have, also, and some rain gear.

And when it's cool, for pete's sake put on some clothes. Just because it's summer and you are at the lake, you don't have to go around in shorts and T-shirt, pretending that

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it's hot and the sun is shining, when actually it's cool and cloudy. Cool and cloudy is nice for walks. Dress for it and go for it.

Now here's a hint you'll find it hard to credit. In cool weather, dress for inside much as you would for outside. You'll be a lot more comfortable warming the space inside your clothes than you will warming the whole space inside your cottage, and when you do go outside, where you are more active, you won't have to add a whole lot of clothing. This is a message from the people who pay the heating bill, so of course you are suspicious. It's a sound idea nevertheless.

### **Coffee Makers**

We've added electric coffee makers in the cottages, retiring the old aluminum percolators. There should be a supply of filters in your cottage, and more are available at the office.

### **Cooking.**

Your gas range may have pilot lights, or may have electronic ignition. If it has pilot lights, the burners will light quickly after you turn them on. If they do not light quickly, and you smell gas, turn off the burner and check to see if the pilot is on. It's ok to strike a match and light the pilots, or if you prefer, to ask us to do it. The ovens also have pilots, but of a different sort. On these, a small pilot first lights a larger pilot, which warms up a control that when ready starts the flow of gas to the burner. It will be a minute or two from the time you turn on the control until the oven comes on. If the oven pilot is out, you'll have smelled gas before you turned the oven on. Don't worry that if the pilot is out, you could cause an explosion by turning the oven on. The gas for the burner won't flow if the pilot isn't on.

If you need a size of kettle, or a baking dish, that isn't in your cottage, you can probably borrow one at the office. Please don't hesitate to ask.

### **Croquet.**

We have a set in the motor house, and you are welcome to use it. The best lawn for croquet is between 1 and 2. In front of eight is ok, too. We used to play a lot of croquet on the main lawn, despite its slant, which made for some suspenseful play. But then some years back the nightcrawlers moved in and made the lawn so irregular that it became a game of chance instead of a game of skill. Someday we'll maybe build a regular croquet lawn, level as a pool table, thick short grass like a golf green, rolled daily for three hundred years with a three hundred pound roller that flattens the worm mounds. But don't hold your breath.

### **Day of Reckoning**

This is our portentous name for "it's time to pay your bill." On Friday evening Phyllis will have your bill figured up, and she'll be around the office to give you a copy

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and receive your payment by check, cash, or credit card. We appreciate it if you settle your bill then. The last evening of a memorable week.

If you wish to reserve your cottage for the same week next season, then is the time to arrange it. There is usually a waiting list for the most popular weeks, and if we do not know we should save your cottage for you, after you leave we'll save it for the first person who asked for it.

## **Docks.**

The main dock is well over a hundred feet long, the other docks are each about thirty to forty feet long. They are built in sections eight to ten feet long. Yes, they have to be taken up in the fall and reinstalled in the spring; otherwise the movement of the ice in winter would destroy them. If you look closely you can see how the ice has pushed the breakwaters and riprap into and up the shore. Think what that power would do to wood. Make toothpicks of it, that's what.

Why don't windstorms blow the docks away? Good question. It's because there is a flat piece of two by six fastened to the legs of each section and buried a couple of inches in the sand. These have tremendous holding power, and are easy to install and take out. Whenever the wind gets really strong--once every few years--some of the docks do get blown away. In 1980 we had a straight wind of nearly a hundred miles an hour. Martha, then quite young, cowered in the bathroom, terrified. The rest of us were down at the lake tossing the sections up the bank as they washed in. Thirteen trees went down that day.

Heavy boats tied to the dock in high winds and waves will jerk the docks apart. So we ask you to keep your boat on a lift or moored to a buoy at night and whenever the wind is up.

The dock sections have legs on the outer end, and the inner end of the next section rests on the outer end of the preceding one. The inner ends are not fastened down. That's why if you tie your boat too tightly to the dock, the section lifts up.

In the days before we had racks and lifts, we parked the boats on top the dock at night. We got behind them, aimed them at the side of the dock, pressed down on the stern until the bow rose, and slid them forward until balanced. It was a pretty classy sight. Sometimes when a strong wind came along, some of them blew off and drifted away. I've spent more than a few hours hunting lost boats. A fishing boat is hard to find if it drifts into the reeds on the far side.

Our docks have no posts above deck level. We like that. But without posts to tie to, we have to supply the tie ropes at intervals. The water at the end of the main dock is only two and a half feet or so deep, a bit shallow for very large boats. But on the other hand, a very safe depth for kids. Too deep, of course, for very little kids. Very little kids have to be watched, of course. Each of our three kids fell off the dock once, at the age of

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fifteen months or so. We didn't try to stop that from happening. We were just careful to be there to fish them out. Not one of them fell off more than once. Some things are best learned by experience. A dunking, under right conditions, is salutary. In teaching sailing we capsize the boat early in the lesson. This teaches that a dunking is not to be feared. It doesn't create a love of dunking, fortunately.

Boats should not be left tied to docks overnight, because the wind may come up, or in the day if the wind does come up. The banging is bad for both boats and docks, and worrying about them causes us to sleep badly.

### **Eating In.**

You save a lot of money by eating some of your meals in your cottage. We know a lot of recipes, we have a lot of cookbooks you are welcome to consult, we have cookware you can borrow if you need something that isn't in your cottage. The fish you catch are of course best eaten right when taken from the lake. And with all the fresh produce available in the area, there are lots of delicious and easy-to-prepare dishes that will bring on pretty universal salivation. Delicious foods can be cooked quickly and easily in the microwave in your cottage. And meals can be prepared on the charcoal grill--which, as we point out elsewhere, is generally the province of a male of the family.

We do believe that the person who does the cooking at home would in general like a break from routine while on vacation. The person who has to clean up will appreciate the use of disposable plates and cups; on the other hand, when you are on vacation there is time to make cleaning up a social activity. Many hands make light work.

### **Eating Out.**

You may also enjoy occasionally eating out. You have a lot of choices of places within thirty miles. Some provide local color and small town prices. Some have more commercial glitz and charge accordingly. Rather than make a list, we refer you to the list in the **Otter Tail Country brochure** that should be in your cottage--if it isn't, ask us for one.

### **Electronic noise (Radios, CD-or Tape-players, TV)**

Please keep such noise personal. We want our all our guests to enjoy themselves, and that means no one should have to listen to radios and tvs and CD-or tape-players unless they choose to. We encourage us all to extend the same courtesy to others that we'd like for ourselves. Please control the volume of your devices, keeping in mind that sound carries far and clearly in this quiet environment. We ask in particular that you use earphones if you play your radio or player outside.

We try to be pretty particular about this.

### **Email. For "Internet", see "Wireless Internet"**

The swift change Americans have made to email from US mail is astonishing, yet not surprising; for what could be swifter and more convenient? While not always so

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quick, perhaps, as a telephone call, it avoids the drawback of telephone tag. By all means let's use email whenever it is appropriate. Our email address is "woodlawn@woodlawnresort.com" (but without the quote marks). What's yours? If you'll write it on the "notes" page at the end of the guide, we'll add it to our address book, and now and then you'll get our information electronically (as well as by snail mail).

**Fax**

If you must fax, the Battle Lake Review will send and receive faxes for you.

**Fiftieth Anniversary**

We began the 1998 season with an open house celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Bud's acquiring the property that is now Woodlawn. For the full story of the beginnings, look up "History" in **The Woodlawn Guide**. We had anniversary cake, and lots of other good things, and the guests and friends from along the lake and in the area toured some of the cottages to see them in their present remodeled state. We wish you could have been here, too, but for most of you it would have been a long special trip.

**Fire extinguishers.**

You'll find a red fire extinguisher either in your cottage or nearby on an outside wall. We hope you'll not need one, but please note the location just in case. Before the days of the fancy pressurized extinguishers, each cottage had in it a can of some kind of magical powder that one was to throw on a fire. We never did have a fire to try it on, and don't know how well it worked.

I take that back. There have been a couple of fires. Someone spilled grease on the cooktop in one cottage, which ignited and charred the dish cupboard above before they could get the blaze extinguished. I think they threw a pan of water at it. In the other incident, an electrical outlet by the sink burst into flame, I don't know why. The people had presence of mind to throw the switch at the fuse box and, again, throw a pan of water at the fire and get it out.

There have been no fires for at least thirty years.

So our extinguishers still have not had a test in an actual emergency. They are tested, though, by a service company each second year, and we assume they will better than a pan of water.

**Fireplace.**

Fire and water both beguile us. Who is immune to their spell? Not us, and not the guests at Woodlawn. We log a lot of hours watching the lake by day and a campfire by night.

I first built our outdoor fireplace in the early fifties. When Phyllis joined me it was already there. I can still see me kneeling there, trying for the first time in my life to build a wall with bricks. I didn't get them very straight, and I used cement instead of mortar. Mortar would have held up better against the heat.

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I put in a bottom grate of iron bars for the fire to sit on. Bad idea. Intense heat makes iron bars writhe like slow worms, and they were soon all twisted. Besides, ashes soon covered them, and normally you couldn't even see them. The distance from the lower grate to the upper grate where the food sits was greater than in a charcoal grill, because I built the fireplace for use with wood. Wood doesn't lie flat like charcoal.

By the early fifties when I built the fireplace I should have known that the prevailing winds in our part of the country are southeast and northwest. I had the illusion that they were from the south-southwest, and that's the way I faced the open side. It took a while for me to understand that only the north side should be open. Wind off the lake should blow over the top of a wall, creating an updraft for the fire. When I added the south wall, built with stone rather than brick, I used mortar, and I also repaired the other walls using mortar.

The concrete slab that we poured for the original fireplace is still there under the new circular wall built of concrete blocks designed for a retaining wall but frequently used for fire pits. The resulting circle is larger than is convenient for barbecuing, but few people barbecue over wood anymore, and we now furnish barbecue grills, leaving the fireplace for campfires, on the whole.

The official Woodlawn campfire is on Monday evenings. If you haven't yet met your neighbors at the resort, the Monday night campfire offers an excellent opportunity to do so. We all roast a few marshmallows, the youngsters generally torch a few. Then we sit or stand around and socialize. Sometimes we sing. Sometimes we pop some corn over the open fire, more for the pleasure of watching it pop than for efficiency. We have to admit that the microwaves pop corn more neatly. Efficiency and neatness aren't everything.

**Fish.**



In the 1950s, before Phyllis and I were married, when my brother Jack was here with me, he did a fair amount of fishing, and was pretty good at it. He had a fly rod and loved to fly cast. He was fishing off the dock one Saturday afternoon when four fishermen from Kansas City drove in just in time to see him shake an eighteen inch northern off his line and kick it off the dock into the

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water. One of the men nearly went crazy. "Hey!" he yelled, "what are you doing with that big fish?!"

That was good for public relations. It was also an early instance of "**catch and release.**" Instead of keeping the big ones, keep the small ones for eating, and return the big ones to the water (after taking pictures). There are reasons for recommending this practice: the big ones lay the most eggs, keeping the lake stocked; they don't really taste as good as smaller ones; you can give somebody else the same thrill of catching the big one that you had; you can even catch it again another time.

Fishing is usually very good in Blanche Lake. Experienced fishermen do very well. Knowing full well that some of you will find my attempt woefully deficient, I'll list and describe briefly where and how to fish for the commonly sought and caught species, leaving space for your additions and corrections, which please date and sign.

If you ask, I'll also do my best to help you find the best places to fish. And you might also get some guidance from the depth contour map of the lake. There's a copy here in the guide, and copies are available at the office.

**Crappies.** These are usually caught on small minnows or on artificial lures of the lead-head variety, or the two in combination (that's right!). You either drift with a light weight on your line, keeping your bait a few feet below the surface, or you anchor in a likely spot, cast out, let your bait sink, and reel it in slowly. Crappies don't fight much, but there's something exciting about the way they trail in toward the boat. They have soft mouths, and you have to be careful in netting them or lifting them into the boat. Get them headed your way before you lift. The fish shown here is not a crappie.

**Bluegills.** The easiest to catch, and excellent eating. Worms or clam are the best bait, though sometimes whole kernel corn works as well. Catch them in or near the rushes, or out farther in or near a bed of crappie weeds--the weeds that come just to the surface by mid-summer. For catching bluegills you generally want to be anchored, and fish at various levels, but if you get too near the bottom, especially in deeper water, you may start catching bullheads.

**Walleyes.** The fish Minnesotans prize. Named for its staring, milky eyes. These are generally caught using leeches or large minnows for bait, often in combination with a spinner. Look for them along dropoffs and gravelly ledges, near deeper water.

**Large Mouth Bass.** A fighting fish, caught both on surface lures in the reeds and shallow water, and on minnows and artificial lures in deeper water, often while fishing for walleyes or northerns. These are the fish that not uncommonly leap from the water to shake the hook. The late Al Kraus of St. Louis showed me how to fish for bass with frogs. You go out only two in a boat, one person rows among the rushes, the other stands in the bow and casts right into the thick reeds, using a frog on a weedless hook. The bass strike the frog as soon as it hits the water. You don't set the hook, you let the bass run. It

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stops. Al said it then turns the frog and swallows it. Then it runs again, and that's when you set the hook, fairly hard. Then the bass wraps itself up in the rushes, and the rower rows the boat over to the fish while you reel in, and hope the fish is still on the line when you get to the end of it. Four out of five times it has got off. This is very active fishing. I enjoyed it greatly when I used to do it. Frogs have been scarce in this country of late years. Some disease has killed them off. They are expensive at the bait shops. Sirloin is cheaper, but less fun.

**Northern Pike.** These get big, but most of them are small, and they have an extra row of bones that inhibit the prudent eater. So only the few bigger ones caught are worth keeping, in my opinion. The smaller ones are commonly called hammer handles, a derogatory term, for some reason, considering that the hammer is a useful tool. To catch northern pikes, especially in June, simply put on a minnow, leech, or artificial lure, and troll, fast, in rough water maybe six or eight feet deep.

**Rock Bass or Goggle-Eye.** They have a red rim around their eyes, as if perpetually hung over. Not a highly prized fish. Often in summer they have small black specks along their backs, and under each is a worm or grub. That destroys the appetite of many people, but why? it's all protein. You'll catch these while fishing for bluegill-same spots, same baits.

**Sunfish. See bluegill.** Bluegill is the most common variety of sunfish. The other variety also frequently found here is the **pumpkin seed**, more gaily colored, and with a distinctive red spot on the end of the gill tab. Pumpkin seeds don't get as large, but are just as good fighters and taste as good.

**Bullheads.** While most fish are referred to without the "s" in the plural, for some reason the plural of "bullhead" usually has the "s." Somehow I associate this with the disdain that Minnesota fishermen feel for bullheads, whose looks and lack of scales and nasty propensity to inflict wounds with their stickers are all held against them. Iowans, on the other hand, often prize them. Hence the Minnesotan's nickname for bullheads is "Iowa pike." Bullhead is actually ok eating, so there's no good reason for Minnesotans to be so snooty about them.

Fish for bullheads with worms or tough beef or some other favorite and often smelly concoction. Fish on the bottom, for these are scavenger fish. They often bite at night. There was an Iowan, an engineer, whose favorite on-land sport was ridiculing me for having attended the University of Chicago--(full of Communists, he said)--who came each August to fish at night just off the rushes out from the dam. He'd come in with a sackful. He'd clean them next morning. You don't have to worry about bullheads dying overnight, he said, and he was right.

### **Fish, cleaning.**

The fish cleaning house, next to the motor house/sail loft by the main dock, contains a metal cleaning table and a sink. Under the table, below a chute, is a garbage can for what in the trade is called "fish guts," even though what we normally think of as guts makes up only a small portion of what is thrown away when a fish is cleaned.

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A brush, designed for cleaning milk cans but ideal also for neatening up the bench and sink, hangs on the post above the cleaning table. Please use a minimum of water for cleaning. Much water in the gut can and it gets hard to carry out for dumping.

We bury the contents of the tub in a plot in the woods. Each day we dig tomorrow's hole and use the dirt to fill today's. There are fancier systems, such as a garbage disposal for grinding everything up and a septic tank to digest the results. Or, as is the practice at some resorts, the tub can be lined with a plastic bag, and when the bag is full, it can be placed in a freezer and stored until the garbage service collects the stored bags. But our simple system works for us.

### **Fish, freezing.**

In the old days, by the end of a good week, the freezer in the motor house couldn't accommodate any more white packages of neatly wrapped fillets of fish. Now, when each cottage has its own refrigerator with efficient freezer at the top, we don't even turn on the freezer in the motor house, and we have no idea how many fish are stowed away for transport home. The roll of wrapping paper on the table in the motor house still diminishes as summer passes, suggesting to us that fish are still being wrapped, though not in such quantities as in the old days.

There is, however, another explanation for the decreased use of wrapping paper. It has become popular to preserve fish fillets in cardboard milk cartons. Drop the fillets into a rinsed milk carton, fill the carton with water, and freeze. The plastic freezer containers that one can buy will of course work as well, if one prefers to spend the money.

I've never asked how the solid block of water and fish is thawed. Do people thaw the whole block at once, or maybe just saw off a meal-sized chunk at a time?

### **Fish weighing.**

When we finished having babies to weigh, we placed the baby scale on the wrapping table in the motor house. There you can accurately weigh your prize catches. Please place a piece of wrapping paper on the scale before laying the fish on it.

### **Flowers (wild).**

Lovely wild flowers bloom in woods and fields all summer long. The ones in bloom change week by week. Early in the year we see abundant Columbine, Trillium, Anemone, and Jack-in-the-pulpit, to name a few. Used to be that in mid-June, the Showy Lady's Slippers bloomed along Hwy. 78, a sight to behold. But one summer, poachers dug up all the plants, a great disappointment. If we tried to list all the wild flowers you might encounter, we'd have an index to Roger Tory Peterson's Guide, and instead of that, you may as well consult the Guide itself. You'll find it on a shelf in the office, along with guides to stars, trees, spiders and insects.

You'll find lots of wild flowers on the bank by the lake, around stumps in the yard, along the roads and the nature trail--almost anywhere you look. What you find will

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depend on the time of year.

Some wild flowers are not spectacular looking, but have delightful names. Bedstraw, for example, and Dogbane. Joe Pye weed, Jewel weed, Butter-and-Eggs. Goat's beard, Spiderwort, Sarsaparilla. And so on.

Borrow a guide and start looking. Record your finds on this page, and take the page home with you as a souvenir of your trip.

We suggest these headings. Happy hunting!

Date.	Species.	Location.	Finder.
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**Flowers (tame).**



The tame flowers are courtesy of Phyllis. That's an impatiens plant or a tuberous begonia in the old stump in front of the office. On our office deck you'll see some spectacular tuberous begonias, impatiens, and whatever else has captured Phyllis's fancy.

It's taken several years to establish the hostas on the west side of the office. On the east side of the office, Phyllis has planted perennials that do well in shade. In front of the garage are tiger lilies, day lilies, sedum, asters, and peonies, each in their season.

**Fresh Produce.**

One of the joys of summer is locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables. The local producers sometimes publish a guide. At Four Winds, a couple of miles up Hwy. 78, you can pick your own strawberries and raspberries. Lake Country Gardens across Otter Tail Lake as well as Four Winds and Bahr's Market up the highway at Otter Tail Village has wonderful green beans, new potatoes, tomatoes and sweet corn in season.

If you need a large kettle in which to boil your sweet corn, ask for one at the office. Careful, now. Sweet corn should not be overcooked. No vegetables should, for that matter. Our mothers used to cook all their vegetables mercilessly. We tried, after seeing the light, to enlighten them, but they were incorrigible.

But they made wonderful pot roasts, and lots of other good things. Different times, different fancies.

**Game Room and Games.**

The Game Room, also frequently called the Recreation Room, is the building with the double garage doors, the first building you see as you come in to the resort. In it we have books, television with basic cable and VCR, a ping pong table, a refrigerator with cans of pop for purchase on the honor system, a telephone for guest use, and several small tables for the board, card, and table games kept on the shelves along the along the walls.

Rules and regulations for Game Room:

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Hours 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., more or less.

No smoking, please!

Ping pong balls sold (and bought back) at the office.

Children under 10 years of age should be supervised by someone 16 years of age or older.

Please be considerate of others in playing music or TV.

Feel free to borrow games to take to your own cottage (but let us know you have them).

Most of the games have been spilled many times, and as a result there may be pieces missing. Let us know about incomplete games so that we can replace them.

This is a list of some of the games we have:

Bingo

Boggle

Checkers

Chess

Chinese Checkers

Clue

Cribbage

Exploration

Jigsaw puzzles

Monopoly

Parchesi

Pit

Playing cards

Scrabble

.

**Garbage and Trash Collection.**

It often seems to us, in our well-organized world, that things such as trash collection are done for us by magic. Actually, of course, a flesh-and-blood person comes around each day except Sunday to check your trash can and recycling bucket, and haul things away as needed.

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These obliging trash collectors tend naturally to judge people by the way they take care of their trash. They admire those who separate the recyclables. They respect those who make sure the trash goes inside the trash bag rather than on top of it. They tell indignant tales of the person who let the bag slip into the can, dumped ashes from a grill on top, and dumped a jar of mayonaise on top of that--yuck.

You'll find your very own trash can on a rack behind your cottage, and closer to your cottage a large plastic bucket for recyclables, its bottom drilled full of neat holes, in which to place aluminum cans, rinsed tin cans, and rinsed plastic containers Nos. 1 and 2 (most of you know about those numbers found on the bottom of most containers)--we'll sort them later. We will also recycle newsprint, if you leave it in a stack for us, preferably inside the cottage. So, cooperatively, you and we will contribute to saving the country from drowning in its discards.

Please collect all your non-recyclable trash and garbage in the large waste basket in your cottage, keeping it dry as possible, thank you. Most people use grocery bags, either plastic or paper, to line the wastebaskets provided, and transfer these to the trash can as they fill.

**Since, despite our best efforts, raccoons (or sometimes, less romantically, dogs) get into the trash cans, it is best if you carry your trash to the cans in the morning rather than in the evening.**

For longer than we can remember, we packed the collected trash and garbage bags into a two-wheeled trailer we kept standing back of the garage. Eventually we put up a screening fence to shield the trailer, and a lot of unsightly mess, from offended eyes. A plywood lid on the trailer kept chipmunks and raccoons out. A fairly nifty system, except that someone had to take the trailer to the landfill every few days.

Some years back, it was found that the Battle Lake landfill, like others in many places, was polluting the ground water. So, the landfill was no more, and became a collection point instead. There we, along with everybody else in the area, dumped the trash bags into a compactor, and the compacted trash went from there to the incinerator at Perham, or so we understand, where it is burned, producing steam used by the local industries, one of which used to be called "Tuffy's Dog Food." When Heinz bought that company out and renamed it Heinz Pet Foods, a great name was lost.

The trash still ends up at the Perham incinerator, but we no longer haul it to the collection point in our trailer. Instead, we have a dumpster parked demurely back in the brush, and a garbage truck comes and empties it once a week, just like uptown.

### **Glendalough.**

You've noticed that the south shore of Blanche is undeveloped--nothing there but trees. That's part of Glendalough, now a Minnesota State Park. Glendalough has a story

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behind it. In brief, the Cowles family, that owned the Minneapolis Star and Tribune, bought up over two thousand acres of wood and lakeland over the years, starting in the Great Depression of the 1930s, and a couple of years ago donated the whole thing to the state, no doubt in exchange for a handsome tax credit.

There are now a number of hiking and biking trails through the park. One, the walk around Annie Battle Lake, is about five miles long, a lovely up-and-down jaunt through the woodlands. There are also observation decks built out into some of the wetlands, and there is a place from which you can observe eagles nesting.

Along the lovely drive through the park you will frequently see deer even in the daytime, but especially toward sunset.

Annie Battle Lake has been designated a "heritage fishing lake." No motors or electronic gear are allowed, and catch limits are low. Some good sized fish are being caught. The canoe trail from West Battle to Blanche goes through Annie Battle, so when you make the canoe trip you might want to take along a rod and reel and a few worms.

We are assured that as the park is developed, the south side of Blanche will remain just as it is now.

### **Grills.**

There are a number around. We've been gradually adding more. If you see one not in use, feel free to use it. If you use a grill with short legs, the heat downward can kill grass under it. Please use this sort of grill on bricks or a board.

**We ask that you not use charcoal or gas grills on the decks, because of the danger of fire if they accidentally spill.**

It is a law of American life that men do the cooking that is done on outdoor grills. That's why women love them (the grills--and the men, too, of course). This law was not passed by congress. We don't know where it came from. But we rarely see it violated here at the resort. What force keeps it in effect? Tell us if you know. We're curious. (I think I hear the womenfolk chortling--they know.)

### **Heater Pilots**

Some of our cottages have lp gas wall-mounted heaters. Normally, we leave these unlit during the summer, because a pilot can contribute unwanted heat to a cottage during warm weather. If the weather turns cool and you want to use your heater, we'll be happy to light it for you. Or it is simple for you to light it yourself, following the directions inside the cover. (continued next page)

The wall heaters have electric thermostats, and these are controlled by switches located above or behind the heaters. These switches have to be on before your heater will come on. (And of course the pilot has to be on.)

Most of the thermostats have a numbered dial. These numbers do not necessarily indicate the temperature very accurately, even if they may purport to do so. You'll have to use trial and error to discover the setting that is comfortable for you.

We find that running a ceiling fan when your heater is going circulates the heat

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and distributes it more equally from floor to ceiling. Otherwise you may find that your feet are chilly and your heads are uncomfortably warm.

All of our lp gas heaters are vented through a chimney. You need not fear to close all of your windows. Since we pay the gas bills, we grimace when we see windows open and heaters going. Please help us hold down costs so that we can hold down the rents we have to charge you.

**Heating (and cooling).**

Yes, it can be cold in Minnesota even in July. The standard Minnesota joke is that summer is on July 25 this year. People like to exaggerate. Actually, summer last year was on July 25 **and** 26.

Normally you won't want to heat your cottage. During the warm part of the summer, we leave the heater pilots off, so as to avoid unwanted heat in your cottage. If your heater is gas-burning, the gas controlled by a pilot and is vented. If the pilot is off, no gas flows. This is a safety feature. If you would like your heater pilot lit, feel free to light it yourself (directions are inside the covers, in most cases) or to ask us to light it for you.

If you have the heat on, please don't leave windows and doors open. Heat is expensive; conserve, and help us keep our costs--and hence our rates--down.

As we have remodeled the cottages, we have installed electric heat in many of them. To turn that on or off you simply adjust the thermostats, as you do at home.

We usually think of fans as being used for cooling, but if you have forced air heating at home, you also have a fan circulating the warm air. Circulation keeps the warmth more evenly distributed in rooms. This is equally true in the cottages. We recommend that for comfort you use the available fans, at low speeds, to circulate warm air when you are heating your cottage.

The ceiling fans are reversible. You will find a switch on the side of the motor housing. When the switch is up, the air blows up; when the switch is down, the air blows down. The recommended practice is to direct the air flow upward for heating and down for cooling (you don't want the draft hitting you if you are already cool).

Usually on a hot day we have natural air conditioning--a breeze from the south coming off a mile of water. Thus we have rarely felt the need for artificial air conditioning. To take full advantage of the wonderful cooling lake air, we have windows that you can open on at least two sides in every room where it is possible. Any additional cooling that is desired is generally well-provided by the use of ceiling fans.

**High water-low water**

The water level on Blanche Lake as a rule does not fluctuate very much from season to season or from year to year. A check dam by the public access helps to keep the level fairly constant. But it does fluctuate, rising usually in spring as the winter snows melt, falling toward fall when the rains diminish. The planks in the dam are set at the height that reads 1.6 on the gauges at the either end. The Department of Natural Resources asks me to report the level once a week, which I have done for several years

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and am happy to do.

In spring the water often rises to a reading of 2 or even as much as 2.2. In late summer there may be little or no water going over the dam.

During the extremely dry 1920s and '30s, the level of Blanche Lake dropped several feet, and the shore was out where you see the reeds out front off to the east a bit. By the time the level returned to normal in the early 1940s, trees several inches in diameter had grown up where our docks now are.

In 1977, I think it was, we had the most severe drought of any year during my time here, and the lake dropped quite a ways below the set level of the dam. By late summer we had fifty feet of sand out from the normal shoreline. We had to combine all our docks into one long dock in order to reach deep enough water for the motors and boats.

We had good snows the next winter, and the next spring the water level was back to normal. Not many years later I inserted this notice in the Woodlawn Guide:

“Water is at record heights, causing us problems. The docks and boat racks are nearly afloat. One consequence is that the docks are usually wet, and wet docks are slippery. Please be careful.”

When the water is unusually high, a strong wind from the southwest can tear our dock apart and bring the sections floating in. This has happened at least twice in recent years.

Change is constant. Who knows what the future will bring?

### **History of Woodlawn.**

In the spring of 1948, when I was seventeen and a senior at Moorhead High School, my father one day said to me, "How would you like to run a summer resort?"

My

father was then Registrar at Concordia College, and a graduating senior at the college had

told him that he had a resort he wanted to sell. His name was Paul Haaland. He was a WWII veteran who had bought an old cottage on a twelve acre tract of land on Blanche Lake. He had built four cabins along the shore and had begun renting them the previous summer.

I had worked summers on my Uncle Joe's farm for four years already, and was accustomed to the idea that I'd have to keep working summers to pay my way through college. Our family had never stayed at a resort, but we'd had a summer cottage near Bemidji, and we sometimes went to resorts on the Cormorant Lakes to rent fishing boats.

Compared to working on a farm, running a resort sounded like a clear winner, so

I

said "Why not?" "Fine," my father said, and arranged with Paul to go look at what he had. This was in March, snow still lay in the woods--I think we waded through snow to get to the lake--and the lake lay beneath a coat of ice. But we liked the space and the trees and lawn. I said it looked ok to me, and my father said, "I'll help you arrange the financing." He signed the mortgage, my uncles lent the additional sum needed, and there I was, not yet eighteen, owner of a lake resort, and up to my ears in debt. In May, as soon as school was out, my father and I put up a fifth cabin just like the others.

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Charles Beck, an artist from Fergus Falls and Paul Haaland's classmate at Concordia, had painted the resort road sign, which read "Paul's Resort, Interspring Mattresses." Rather than make a new sign, I began business with that one. People were rather more attracted than put off by the misspelling.

In 1948 people were still flush with money they had earned but couldn't spend during the four long years of World War II, and the roads in the lake country hummed with cars and people searching for places to stay. Even simple cottages like mine were in demand--four walls, a table and chairs, beds, a refrigerator and a two burner gas plate, a bucket for water and a dipper for taking a drink. There was an outhouse for each two cabins, and one well with a hand pump--that's it, on the main lawn, still there as a relic and plaything--where you went to fill the bucket. ("You need a bath? That's a lake there.") A fish-cleaning house. A freezer for fish. The old cottage for my office. Some boats, a dock, a lovely lake front, a lovely woods. . . .

The first person to build a cottage on the parcel of land that is now Woodlawn was E. T. Carroll, Superintendent of Schools at Wadena. He built, or had built for him, the old cottage that we now use as Cottage No. 4. He and his family traveled by train between Wadena and Battle Lake, and by horse and buggy between Battle Lake and Blanche Lake.

We're told he kept a cow to provide his family with milk (my father, also a superintendent of schools, did the same in the 1930s and 40s). They couldn't take the cow on the train, so somebody walked the cow from Wadena to the lake in the spring and back in the fall--30 miles each way.

During the nineteen twenties and thirties, drought dried up much of Blanche Lake. There was no check dam then. The water level went down more than four feet. Where the reeds now are was the water's edge. The Carroll family quit coming to Blanche Lake. I remember when the rains returned and the lakes filled again. It was in 1943 or so, during the war. We lived at Lake Park. Suddenly a slough north of town was a lake. So it must have happened at Blanche, too. Someday drought will return. Will the dam keep the lake from retreating again?

It didn't take long to discover that vacationers would not be content with the simple accommodations I had to offer. We soon embarked on a building program. When I say "we" in recounting the building we have done, I mean my father and I and my three brothers, all of whom have lent a hand over the years. My father loved to build, and nearly every structure on the place bears marks of his handiwork. My mother also played a major role, buying bedding, dishes, pots and pans, and sewing curtains for the windows.

Without their donated labor of love, I could not have survived as a resort operator either economically or psychologically.

In 1949 we built what is now the north end of the office. I lived in the half of the

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building that is now the resort store. The other half held two bathrooms with showers. And we now had an electric pump for a steady water supply--but still no running water in the cabins. In 1951 and 52 we added bathrooms and running water to the five cabins, remodeled the old cottage, adding the bathroom to that, and built the south addition to the office. I did the plumbing and wiring; my father, my brother Jim, and I did the carpentry.

In 1955 Phyllis charmed me into proposing marriage. We met in the fall of 1954 when I was getting my initiation into college teaching. I saw her at some social event, looked up her photo in the college annual for the previous year, learned her name that way, and called her and asked for a date. We were engaged next spring before the last snow had melted. She didn't yet know about the resort. She visited that summer, helped with the curtains on the new cabin--the present No. 8--that we were then building, and in spite of getting a taste of the grunt labor involved in resort operation did not break off the engagement. In 1956 she became my partner and has stuck with me ever since. Together we've raised three children and developed the resort into what you enjoy today.

In 1958 we built the garage. It had room enough in it for a small apartment, and that was fortunate, because in the winter of 1959 my sister Helen's husband Frank died in the crash of his small plane. My father made the apartment livable; in the spring of 1960 Helen and her three small children moved there and stayed until fall. As our children have

grown up, that apartment has given them space of their own that they, and now their spouses, have enjoyed and still enjoy whenever they are with us.

In 1960 our son Karl was born. Spurred by his imminent arrival we started constructing the west wing to the office. On the August day when Phyllis went into labor,

I and my brothers were busy pouring the concrete floor for this addition, a different kind of labor. In 1962, as a reward to me for completing my doctor of philosophy degree and taking a position as assistant professor of English at the University of Nebraska, we built what is now Cottage No. 9.

Our girls, Katie (later Kate) and Martha, came along in 1963 and 1966. The little houses near the tennis court were built for them by their grandfather (with their help).

In 1967 we added the tennis court and began the house that we rent in the summer

as Cottage No. 1. The house is the first building for which I hired workers. A jolly profane fellow put up the cement block basement walls and laid the concrete floor.

Three

local carpenters helped me enclose the structure. I did the plumbing and wiring, as usual, but did hire an electrician to connect to the power lines. My father and mother installed most of the basswood paneling. I designed and built the circular stair. I built the octagonal stairwell, and then discovered that the steps had to be twelve to a circle--in effect requiring a hexagonal stairwell. But it worked out.

The addition to the garage where we have our workshop, the linen storage, and what all, we added in 1974, I think. (I'm clearer about long-ago dates than recent ones, a common phenomenon of advancing age.)

Just when we thought we were done with building, we found that the cottages were aging to the point that they needed rebuilding. We started rebuilding the seven older

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cottages in 1987, doing one cottage every year or two, enlarging them in the process.

With the remodeling of No. 4, the original cottage on the property, built in 1905, we completed our major over-hauls. Remodeling this very old building was a big job.

We

began in September of 1998 by having the building jacked up four feet in the air so we could put footings and a block foundation under it. Then a crew of carpenters added a 4x10 ft. strip on the northwest so that we could enlarge the bathroom. We designed the new roofline to match the old and you can't tell anything has changed. Then we roughed in new plumbing and wiring. During the winter, the carpenters paneled the walls and bedroom ceilings, using the basswood paneling we had harvested in our woods the winter before. In the spring we finished the plumbing and wiring, had carpeting and vinyl flooring installed, and did the details of trim, cabinets, shelves, curtains, and the like.

In the process of remodeling, all seven of these older cottages were considerably enlarged. In many of them the roofs over the livingrooms were raised and lofts added above the bathrooms, in a style we call American hen house style. To save floor space, we

made the lofts accessible by ladder. Kids love this, as you probably have discovered.

Somewhere during this time (1993 we think) we added the game room along our entrance road just before you come to the office. The two newer buildings, Nos. 1 and 9, have also had extensive upgrading, the latest thing being a fireplace in No. 9, installed in 2001. More recently we've been replacing windows, raising bedroom ceilings, installing ceiling fans. Are we done? No way. We now recognize that improving is endless.

We began the '98 season with an open house celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Bud's acquiring the property that is now Woodlawn.

### **Horses--Riding Stables**

There is a riding stable only a couple of miles from Woodlawn. You can call and reserve a time for your trail ride. It happens to be a long distance call, but the cost is only a couple of dimes.

There is a second riding stable a little farther off. We have literature.

### **Housekeeping**

We are pleased that as part of your vacation you have rented one of our housekeeping cottages. In exchange for the comparatively modest rent you pay, it is part of your bargain with us that you will leave the cottage in much the condition in which you found it. This includes leaving the dishes, counters, stove, and refrigerators clean, the trash emptied, and the floors reasonably swept. To assist your efforts, we leave in each cottage a can of Comet cleanser, a broom, and a carpet sweeper.

Most guests are very good about recognizing their role in maintaining their housekeeping cottage. We are very appreciative that you help us hold down our cleaning and maintenance costs. We sometimes think rather hard thoughts on Saturday mornings about the few exceptions, and in the future will, in extreme cases, add a charge for cleaning, as is stated on our information sheet.

### **Hydrobikes**

Great toys, like bicycling on water, but without the need of balancing. We were the first in our area to acquire them. You'll be impressed at how fast they move, and how

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dry the rider stays. We used to rent them for \$5 per hour each or \$25 per day. Now they, like most of our water toys, are yours to use as part of your cottage rental. As with our other toys, please check with us before you take them, and return them to the rack when finished. Life jackets are on the handlebars. It is recommended but not required that you wear them, but you must have them along. Please return the bikes after an hour's use and check to see whether others would like to use them.

**Ice.**

First we discuss the kind you buy and put in drinks, then the old fashioned kind that a lake turns into so that Minnesotans can fish in winter.

About the first kind, you know what to do--fill the cube tray, insert in freezer, and wait; or go to the store and buy a bag full. For a bigger chunk, some people rinse a milk carton or other non-glass container, fill with water, and freeze it.

About the second kind-- Yes, the lakes in Minnesota do freeze over in the winter. The ice gets quite thick--two or three feet and more if it is a cold winter--and people drive cars and trucks out on it. A favorite sport is to drive out on the ice, get up speed, throw the car into a skid, and twirl wildly round and round until you are dizzy. Another is racing cars on the ice. As you can imagine, the trick to that is to find that fine line between traction and skid, and when you cross it and slide wildly out of control, the crowd, from a safe place, cheers wildly. The place to be as a spectator is inside the race course, not outside.

Blanche, being mostly a shallow lake, freezes over early in the fall and thaws early in the spring. Freeze-up usually occurs in early November. When the lake first freezes, the ice will often be smooth as glass. That's when it's fun to go out and skate for miles, especially by moonlight. Later on, the ice gets pretty rough. It expands and contracts with changes of temperature. On cold nights you can hear it cracking. It makes a loud booming sound, pretty eerie if you don't know what it is. Water comes up through the cracks and freezes into ice ridges, or if there is snow on the ice, the water spreads beneath the snow before freezing.

Larger deeper lakes, such as Battle or Ottertail, may not freeze until December. Break-up on Blanche can occur as early as March or as late as mid-May. If a good wind gets the ice-sheet moving toward shore during breakup, the damage to the bank and anything on it can be considerable. Ridges of sand on a lakeshore are the result of ice pushing the sand up.

Anything in the way of the ice is destroyed. That's why all docks and lifts have to be taken up each fall and reinstalled in spring.

In former times there was a shed along the entry road to the resort, just east of the big trees where the mowed area ends. The long saw with huge teeth that was used for cutting ice from the lake is still hanging on the wall in the garage. I've never used it myself. Ice was stored in that shed. Buried in sawdust, the ice would last clear through the summer, and was used for refrigeration. I remember ice-boxes. My parents had one when I was small. That was in town. The ice man came everyday. So did the milkman. Life is different now. What will you be telling your grandchildren?

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I remember chipping bits off those big blocks of ice for use in cooling our drinks. If you want ice for drinks, beyond what your refrigerator makes, they sell bags of ice at Madsen's and in town.

### **Insex**

I spelled it that way to get your attention. Actually the subject is **Insects**, and more specifically, the kind of small moth that on certain humid nights come in (often in large numbers) and gather around any lights that are on. The best that can be said about these small moths--we call them "rain moths" because they usually come before a rain--is that they do not bite. The worst is that there's no way to keep them from getting in. They go right through the screens. What to do? The thing to do is to **turn out the lights**. Then the rain moths will go away, or at least no more will come in.

We have a request: Please **don't** smash them against the walls or ceiling. To repeat, the moths don't bite, they're just a nuisance.

We understand the desire to leave a light on, particularly in the bathroom; but if you do, you may end up with a large number of moths on the walls and fixtures. They'll soon die and you'll have their corpses all over everything.

If you do leave a light on, let it be a night light (if there's none in your cottage, ask us for one), or perhaps your outside light will provide sufficient illumination.

### **Inspiration Peak and other inspirations.**

Let's say the kids and you are restless. For some reason we at Woodlawn have difficulty appreciating that you want to get away from the resort for a while (though we know it happens). You have the wanderlust, say. Ok, take a drive, see some of the sights. We'll mention some close destinations first, then farther ones.

If you've seen a mountain, Inspiration Peak (eighteen miles away) may not inspire you. If you are a flatland midwesterner, though, you might get a thrill out of looking across the Red River Valley all the way to North and South Dakota. There is in fact a pretty view in all directions, and if you like walks, the walk up and down is pleasant. A simple, primitive picnic ground is the starting and ending point, right by a parking lot. We've enjoyed picnicking there. You might, too.

The same is true of Phelp's Mill (eight miles or so). The park there is a fine place to picnic.

There the climb inside the mill is interesting for the insight into old mill machinery.

We can also recommend Maplewood State Park (40 miles), as much for the drive to it by county roads as for the park itself, which is full of fine drives and walking trails.

Then there is Itasca State Park, about an hour and a half away from here, the source of the Mississippi. Astound the incredulous by telling how you walked across the Mississippi on stepping stones. You really can do that.

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**Internet.** See “Wireless Internet” or “Email.”

**Iron skillet**

Not everyone is familiar with these devices nowadays. They are great for frying things, for chilis, and for other top-of-the-stove cooking. They should be kept “seasoned” or they’ll rust. If the pan shows signs of rust, leave a light coating of cooking oil in it, wiping out the surplus with a paper towel, and let the pan dry upside down on top of the stove.

**Kayaks**

You will find a couple of plastic kayaks on a rack near the sailboats. Life jackets (required) and paddles are in the motor house. You’ll probably want to wear a swim suit when using one of these kayaks. They have holes in the bottom. Please put kayaks, paddles, and life jackets away when finished using them.

**Knives**

Yes, those great Chicago Cutlery knives really do belong in your cottage. Such excellent knives are not commonly found in rental units, and you might easily assume that these are some that you brought from home. Not so! Please take special care when you leave you leave us our knives!

**Laundry**

Laundromats are conveniently close in Battle Lake and Ottertail. Phyllis has an automatic washer and dryer, and would share them with you if we had the drainage capacity. Perhaps someday. It seems, however, that in this automobile age, most people enjoy combining shopping chores, laundry chores, bumming around, and other touristy activities all in the same trip.

Speaking of laundry, what happens to our mountain of soiled sheets and pillow cases each week? Like most resorts and motels, we have the mountain laundered, dried, and folded by a laundry service.

**Lessons--Learning to Sail or Windsurf.**

In an earlier edition of The Woodlawn Guide we wrote:

“We recommend sailing for anyone between the ages of ten and one hundred who enjoys the water and being active. Kate is our windsurfing expert: she offers (when she's around) a six-hour course in two three-hour blocks, with success guaranteed. If you're looking for basic sailing, Martha teaches Sunfish and Laser sailing in a four-hour course (when she's around). Both courses are sure cures for the "Too much wind for fishin'" blues. They also offer shorter courses that teach just enough to get you sailing safely.”

What do we do for sailing instructors now that our children are grown and no longer with us very often?

Unfortunately we can no longer offer complete sailing or windsurfing instruction. But

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that needn't stop you. I'm happy to take you out and show you the basics, enough to get you out and back. The rest you easily pick up with experience, or by talking with other sailors.

**Library.**

“There is no Frigate like a Book  
To take us Worlds away.”  
--Emily Dickinson.



You'll find a wide variety of reading material in the the game room and in office. You may borrow it. We have favorite novels we'll recommend if you ask, or come browse.

As a teacher of language and literature, Bud got a lot of freebies, called "desk copies." Those he didn't need at school, he brought to Woodlawn. Guests have also left a lot of books. Over the years, that adds up to a lot of books.

**Loft rail drapes**

If there is a loft in your cottage, you will find folded on a shelf a former door drape, probably of terry cloth, to drape over the railing for greater privacy and for darkening. Please leave in the loft when you leave.

**Mail.**



Mail is picked up and delivered at our mailbox at the entrance to our trail. If you bring your outgoing mail to the office by noon, we'll take it to the box along with our own. You can generally count on incoming mail being at the office by four p.m. (when we re-open after our afternoon hours off duty).

**Marshmallow roasts (See Campfires).**

We host one Monday night, along about dusk. We furnish the marshmallows. If you haven't met other guests, you will probably become acquainted with them here. We

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socialize, and tell stories, and sometimes we sing songs.

### **Martha's Junior Club House**

When our girls were small, their grandfather Narveson built each of them a play house. He used fine old hardwood lumber he salvaged when the old Moorhead High School (the one Bud attended) was torn down. Our daughters outgrew the play houses. One (playhouse, that is--not daughter) is now used for storing tennis court maintenance equipment. The other playhouse, located by the climber, is open for use by children of guests.

### **Microwave.**

Our dishes are microwave-safe, so far as we know. We remind you that putting anything metal in a microwave will cause sparking and will probably ruin the microwave, so please don't. Things like potatoes and eggs explode if cooked in a microwave. I learned the hard way.

### **Mosquitoes.**

Contrary to popular rumor, the loon, not the mosquito, is the Minnesota state bird. It is true, however, that Minnesota has more mosquitoes than it has loons. Where we keep the grass short, mosquitoes are not a problem during the day, except in rare conditions, such as very high humidity. If you want them, though, we know where you can find plenty. Just step back into the woods.

As evening approaches, the mosquito population yawns, stretches, and heads off in search of a meal. Now that West Nile Virus has become widespread, it is a good idea to avoid being bitten. The number of serious cases of the disease is quite small, but why take chances? Modern mosquito repellent is quite effective; we recommend it. We keep a few bottles at the office, and will sell it to you at cost. Far be it from us to attempt to profit from mosquitoes.

Citronella, and citronella candles, do not work very effectively as a repellent, but the smell is pleasant.

Electric bug zappers do not attract mosquitoes, so we don't use them.

Your average mosquito stays away from decks, apparently viewing decks the way your average person views the Sahara desert, as bereft of life-sustaining fluids. To minimize discomfort from mosquitoes, and still be outside in the free air, sit out on the deck. Not all mosquitoes are average. You'll still have to swat those that are non-conformists.

### **Motors.**

We usually have six outboard rental motors for the nine cabins, and that is normally more than enough. We keep various sizes: 6 h.p., 8 h.p., 15 h.p. and on our

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deluxe fishing boat and the pontoon 25 h.p. We used to buy only Johnsons and Evinrudes, but lately we've been buying Yamahas as well, because, among other reasons, they are four-stroke, don't burn oil in the gas, and hence don't pollute the lake or the air the way two-stroke engines do. We buy a motor every year or two, so that our oldest motor is usually not more than eight to ten years old, and we give the newest motors to those who ask first. The older the motor, the less pep it is likely to have. In that respect, motors are like people. I notice myself slowing down as I get older, too. But I'm not decrepit yet, and neither are our oldest motors.

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**Names and addresses.**

We have many guests who return year after year, but there is also about a 20 percent turnover each year. We rely on your good word as our best advertising to replace the 20 percent who will not return the following year (though many of those will be back in succeeding years). If you have a good time at Woodlawn, we hope you'll recommend us to your friends and relatives. We'll be happy to put them on our mailing list. There's space following this on which we invite you to list names and addresses to leave with us. We thank you for the vote of confidence.

Name	Address	Zip
	Email	

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**Nature Guides.**

It's satisfying to be on familiar terms with the world around us. When among strangers it is helpful if someone will perform the introductions. So it is also in encounters with natural phenomena. In the absence of a knowledgeable person, nature guidebooks do the introducing for us. Please feel free to borrow the guidebooks. We have guides to the following:

- Birds
- Fish
- Flowers
- Stars
- Spiders and Insects

**Nature Trail**

Running a meandering course through our woods is a lovely walking trail, along which you will see some of our native trees, shrubs, and plants. Where the trail starts, east of the tennis court, the sides used to be lined with a thick stand of stinging nettles (see "Nettles").

Back in the woods the mosquitoes are thick. Repellent and long clothing recommended.

The walk, if you don't hurry, will probably take you about ten minutes.

If you are curious about any of the trees, or anything else, please ask us.

**Nettles.**

There was a heavy growth of nettles in the woods just back of the cleared areas. We hated them, but they didn't go away on that account. If you let them touch your bare skin, they sting. That's why their fuller name is "stinging nettles." Fortunately the sting doesn't last long and causes no permanent damage. Still, best not to touch them. The nettles are scarcer now. Bud's been pulling them.

**On the Beach**

We don't have a wide sandy beach. No indeed. We have rich soil, and therefore grass and trees, right up to the bank of the lake. Sand builds up on shores which are concave, but not on ours which is slightly convex--meaning it protrudes slightly into the lake. We have a couple of short breakwaters that create a short concave stretch where sand does gather to create a beach for building sandhouses and parking sailboats. Off shore, we have a sand bottom clear of weeds, nice for wading and swimming. Farther out there are some small stones, and where there is no traffic the lake bottom will be rather soft and squishy. You can walk out a long distance before the water reaches your head. No dropoffs.

Since we don't have an expanse of sand for sunbathing, we have build sundecks at the

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water's edge, and these serve very well, in some respects better than sand (the surface is level).

### **Oven Pilot Lights**

Most of the ovens now have electronic ignition, and have no pilot to light. When you turn on the top burners, you hear a click, click, click, until the burner lights.

But suppose your stove doesn't have electronic ignition. You turn the oven dial. Nothing seems to happen. Is the pilot out? Is gas flowing? Will there be an explosion? None of the above. If the oven has a pilot, it also has a small safety pilot. When you turn the dial to start such an oven, this pilot begins to heat a thermocouple that controls a larger pilot. This pilot comes on in a minute or two. Only then does gas flow to the oven burner. If you are uneasy, stoop down and look through the broiler door. Far at the back you should see the little pilot glowing. If you see it, expect the oven to light soon. If you don't see it, if it is out, no gas can flow.

Let us know, and we'll relight the pilot. Or you can reach in with a match and relight it yourself.

### **Paddle boat**

Use of the paddle boat is free to registered Woodlawn guests. Please keep in mind that life jackets are required for any watercraft.

### **Parking for guests**

It is happening with increasing frequency that people arrive with multiple cars per cottage, and parking becomes a problem. We ask that no more than two cars and/or trailers be parked at each cottage (exception: three at No. 1). Extra cars and trailers may be parked in the triangle behind the well house and in the area east of the tennis court. Though limiting parking at the cottages may be a slight inconvenience for some, it saves the lawns and is more pleasant for everyone.

### **Pingpong (Table Tennis)**

Our table used to be outside, south of the garage, west of the office. It was ok, but hard on the grass, and wind and light had an effect on games. Now the table is in the game room. Paddles are there. Buy a ball at the office for fifty cents. Sell the (unbroken) ball back to us at the office, get your fifty cents back, when you finish, or, preferably, at the end of the week.

### **Playgrounds**

We have several play areas. The two on the main lawn have, respectively, a swing set and a climber. They are in areas with sand that reduce the likelihood of injury. These areas also serve as large sandboxes for anyone inclined to so use them. We have a few plastic trucks and such for use there or on the beach. Please return such toys to the "sand boxes" when finished with them.

There is another climber west of the tennis court and east of Martha's Junior Clubhouse. It also has a sand box, and a sliding pole and a climbing rope. And a steering wheel.

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**Poison ivy**

Yes, there's poison ivy around. Not near the cottages or beach. We've given the nasty stuff a taste of its own medicine and killed it off. But there's a lot of it on the walk along the bank to the dam, and out by the access road. If you don't know the three-leaved plant by sight, we will be pleased to introduce you to it, but skip the handshake. Poison ivy has white berries in the fall. Our daughter Kate thinks they are pretty, and once picked a bouquet. This was not a good idea.

**Pontoon**

Pontoons have become very fashionable. If a group wants to go out together for a cruise or to fish, a pontoon gives people space, and allows them to get up and move around. Our 20 ft. pontoon has a 25 hp Yamaha engine, and will comfortably carry up to fourteen people. You may rent it by the half day, day, or week, though weekly rentals have preference.

**Pop in bottles**

Alas, Woodlawn no longer sells soft drinks in glass bottles. Our local bottling company was one of the last in the country to bottle in returnable glass. But stores wouldn't trouble themselves with handling returnables. They did what they did for their own convenience, not yours or mine. It didn't matter to them that soft drinks don't taste very good in plastic or metal containers. If you have ever had the good fortune to drink a soft drink bottled in glass, you know that that's the way it tastes best. And glass bottles were returnable and created no waste to clog the landfills. So when you drank from a glass bottle you not only enjoyed a better taste, you also enjoyed feeling virtuous.

But no more. We're sorry.

**Postcards**

See also "**Unique Original Greeting Cards.**" There are scenic postcards on sale in the office, and stamps, and a basket to mail them in. Mail goes out at about 1 p.m. each day except Sunday.

**Public radio.**

Please forgive us our justifiable pride when we say that Minnesota Public Radio is the country's best radio. There are MPR stations all over your dial between about 89.7 and 91.7. Some of the stations broadcast serious music nearly all day and night. Others broadcast news and information twenty four hours a day. Others combine the two. They broadcast excellent news programs morning and late afternoon, and the best in serious music the rest of the time. The nearest stations are seventy miles away, unfortunately, but we pick up the signals on our small portable as well as on our stronger stereo receiver.

**Radios, Stereos, TVs and other Electronic Noise.**

We don't furnish any of these, mainly because to do so we'd have to raise our rates to supply you with something you probably already have in a form you can carry with you if you want. We assume you didn't come to the lake to watch TV. You can go

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to any motel for that. There are plenty of radio stations. And of course it's simple to bring along cds and videos if that's your pleasure.

But let's keep the volume down! Radios and stereos and TVs are wonderful amenities in their place. They can also be annoying when other people are operating the machines and we desire quiet. We think that especially on vacation you should be free of such annoyances. Our own rule is that electronic noises ought not be audible beyond our own walls. We try to be pretty particular about this. We want our all our guests to enjoy themselves, and that means not having to listen to radios and tvs and stereos unless you choose to. We encourage you to extend the same courtesy to others that you'd like for yourselves. Please control the volume of your devices, keeping in mind that sound carries far and clearly in this quiet environment. We ask in particular that you use earphones if you play your radio or tape player outside.

### **Raft**

The raft that we had until a few years ago was built before I got the place in 1948. For years it was supported by four 55 gallon drums. These rusted through, and after much patching we retired them to the dump ground and installed in their place two large blocks of styrofoam. There are creatures such as muskrats that like to burrow into styrofoam, so we had to cover the blocks with wire mesh. It wasn't handsome, but it worked.

The raft was anchored to a ring bolt in a slab of concrete about two feet on a side and six inches thick. Each spring someone had to reach down and connect the chain to the slab; each fall someone had to unsnap it. Like the docks, the raft had to be taken out of the lake for winter, or the ice would wreck it. We used to keep the raft anchored out as far as the reed bed seen off to the east, in about four and a half or five feet of water. But a then, terns started using it for a resting platform. These were very sociable birds, and we enjoyed hearing them gabble away. But they were not potty trained. They fouled the surface of the raft horribly. The smell was unbearable. We could think of no way to discipline the birds or to drive them away. We gave up and moved the raft in close enough to the dock to discourage the birds from using it. Sometimes still a tern or two would reconnoiter, recalling idyllic times.

But if they did alight, we heaved stones at them until they left again. We left no tern unstoned.

Then for a number of years we had a water trampoline. We gave the raft away to neighbors up the lake, where it still functions as well as ever. But then insurance on the water trampoline became impossible. We traded it in for the plastic raft we now have. The terns once again want to make it their own. Once again we leave no tern unstoned.

### **Rainy Day Excursions**

**Otter Tail County Historical Museum, Fergus Falls.** Fine displays, and even a large box of costume clothes for kids to dress in.

**Hjemkomst-Heritage Museum, Moorhead.** See the replica of a Viking ship. A

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few years ago this replica sailed across the Atlantic to Norway.

**The Otter Trail.** In the office or at tourism centers throughout the county, you will find brochures that guide you along “the Otter Trail,” a scenic drive through the county and to tourist attractions along the way.

**Finn Creek.** A museum park with buildings showing how Finnish pioneers lived. Includes a store with Finnish foods and art objects. Not always open. For information, visit or call the New York Mills Regional Cultural Center.

**Sculpture Gardens-Displays.** Whimsical sculptures and constructs by local artists. US Hwy 10 at New York Mills; State Hwy 210 at Vining.

**Reading (see also "Books" and "Library")**

Few other things stimulate mental activity as much as reading. You have to expect that a resort run by a couple of former English teachers would cater to people who enjoy reading. Every bed at our resort is equipped with a bed lamp, for people who like to read in bed. There are also wall lamps mounted above most of the sofas and easy chairs. Shelves here and there let you keep a book within reach. If you find in your cabin no reading material that appeals to you, we invite you to come look over what we have in our library.

**Recreation Room. See “Game Room”**

That’s where the ping pong table is, and where you will also find puzzles, books, games, cable TV, and a telephone for guest use.

**Recycling**

Minnesota has a serious waste disposal problem. Landfills that have been polluting the ground water have been closed. Otter Tail County now has an extensive recycling program. You can help. Please separate your aluminum cans, plastic, and glass from the rest of your trash and garbage. Rinse these items and place them in the large plastic bucket with holes drilled in its bottom. Newsprint can also be recycled, but please leave that inside your cottage. We'll collect all your recyclables and deliver them to collection points in Battle Lake or Fergus Falls.

**Registration**

We are trying to be more careful than in the past in complying with state regulations about keeping registration information on all guests.

As we all know, when we register at a motel or hotel, we are asked to present a credit card, of which an impression is taken, even though it is not processed until the end of our stay. At Woodlawn, since we ask for payment by check, we ordinarily will not process a credit card charge, but we will make an impression and keep it on file until your account is settled.

Credit cards are convenient, but they are also costly, and becoming more so. If you do choose to pay by credit card, we will add a service charge to help cover our cost.

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### **Renting at Woodlawn vs. Owning a Private Cottage**

Suppose you owned your own lot and cottage--on Blanche Lake, say--with comparable equipment to what you have here, how would that compare in cost? According to a now outdated report in Minnesota Monthly, you could expect to pay at least \$400 a month, year-round, in upkeep, taxes, and interest, and that was several years ago. Four thousand eight hundred a year! Plus your capital investment!

But won't you eventually recoup some of that cost through appreciation in property values? The article says yes, probably you will, though chances are you'd make a lot more if you invested the same money in a good stock fund.

So congratulations. You've made a wise economic choice by renting one of our cottages. True, we deprive you of the privilege of mowing and maintaining. That could be remedied, if anyone insisted. So far, nobody has. Sigh.

### **Sailing and Windsurfing**

As Woodlawn guests you enjoy the privilege of using our sailboats and boards. If you have never or rarely sailed and want pointers, just ask. It's not hard to learn to sail, and it is a very satisfying sport.

Sailors wanting to use equipment must have a supervised rigging/unrigging review. (Please don't try rigging or unrigging without instruction! We want to avoid chances of costly damage.)

Rigging/unrigging review sessions are free. Just arrange a mutually convenient time.

Before rigging or sailing, please report to office to have equipment assigned to you. (If all boats or boards are in use when you report, the first one due in will be reserved for you.)

Please take reasonable care of the equipment. You are responsible for any damage that occurs while a boat is in your charge. (You will not be liable for equipment failure occurring in normal use. You will be liable for equipment failure caused by accident, careless use, or use in conditions beyond your level of skill.)

After an hour of sailing, please notice whether the flag is flying at the end of the dock. If it is, someone may be waiting for your boat. You may immediately request another turn to sail the next boat that comes in.

When you have finished, please ask if you should unrig your boat and stow the equipment. Wet sailboard sails should be left rigged on the lawn until dry, then stowed. Windsurfer universal knobs should be returned to the office.

If you prefer, we will stow your boats and sails for you at the end of the day or in

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threatening weather. There is a charge for this service: \$3 for boats left in water, \$2 for sails left on the lawn. We will assume we should stow equipment still out (and charge the last users) at dusk or after 8 p.m, whichever is earlier.

Wetsuits are available for your use in chilly weather or water. There is a charge of \$1 per hour up to \$4 per day for each wetsuit. When you have finished, please rinse the suit and leave it hanging, inside out, on the railing by the motor house. Be sure to let us know so that your rent stops!

Happy Sailing!

**Settle up time (See "Day of Reckoning")**

**Sewers and Septic Tanks**

A few years ago, pollution from sewage was thought to be a growing problem in Otter Tail and surrounding lakes, including Blanche. Lakeshore residents organized and lobbied politicians, who appropriated a million dollars to study and solve the problem. In their report, the experts said that 99 percent of the pollution was "non-point" in origin, meaning that it came from the surrounding fields, not from faulty sewer systems. But once a governmental machine is set in motion, and once money is appropriated, that money will be spent. A sewer district was organized, new septic systems were built at extravagant cost, and lakeshore land owners paid only ten cents on the dollar for them. General tax revenues paid the other 90 per cent. Two of our systems were replaced, and new baffles and new covers were installed in all our septic tanks.

Our plumbing drains into septic tanks, marked by those white plastic lids you see here and there. Most of those tanks are poured concrete, built by my father and me back in the 1950s. They've always functioned flawlessly, but over the years we used to have a lot of trouble with the drainfields that the tanks emptied into. At first these were merely inverted troughs of board, open on the bottom, buried in the earth. These frequently clogged, and I'd be out there digging trenches while the sewer water flowed around me.

In time, we learned to fill the drainage ditches with small inch-and-one-half diameter stones that we can buy for the purpose from local gravel companies. In these stones we bury drainage pipe--plastic pipe four inches in diameter with two rows of half-inch holes along the bottom. We cover the ditch full of stones with tar paper to keep dirt from filtering down and filling the spaces between stones. The stone-filled ditches serve as storage for the waste water until it seeps away into the surrounding soil. We level over the ditches with a foot or two of dirt, plant grass, and relax.

These stone-filled drain fields have never overflowed. The sandy soil under them is very porous and quickly carries away the water, filtering out the impurities. The County Shoreland Management has tested, and finds no pollution reaching the lakes from systems like ours.

We do have a blockage in the lines to the septic tanks now and then. Roots grow

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into the older lines, and the lines have to be cleaned, or dug up and replaced. The occurrences are unpredictable. One August a few years back, Phyllis and I drove Martha to Michigan to begin her graduate work. The first night away, when we were in Minneapolis, we had a call from Kate saying that a line was blocked and what should she do. I described over the phone how to open a tank and push a rod up the line to clear the obstruction. She and our helper at the time, Pete, went to work, and under the admiring eyes of guests they found and corrected the problem. But the girls, especially, would rather I was here to do such things myself. Luckily these problems are few and far between.

The septic tanks themselves, most of them, are home-made. We built them ourselves in the early 1950s. We got the plans from the State Health Department. They were good plans, and we built well. We dug the holes by hand, each about the size of a grave and as deep. We built forms for the insides of the tanks and used the dirt walls for the outsides. You wouldn't think this sandy soil would hold its shape to let us do that, but it did. I'm still astonished. Then we mixed the concrete and poured it in. After the concrete dried, we removed the forms and poured the floors. Or maybe we poured the floors first.

Now, in more indulgent times, people get their septic tanks ready made. Pooh.

### **Shared Interests**

Would you like to get together with others who share an interest with you? Need a tennis partner? Chess partner? Bridge partners? Would you like to be notified when a volley ball game is being planned? Would you like others to accompany you on birdwatching expeditions, or canoe trips, or field hikes? Whatever interests or activities you would like other like-minded guests to know about, just let us know and we'll try to get you together with like-minded people. No guarantees of results. Lots of people come here to be anti-social, too. But many are happy to find birds of a feather among their fellow guests at Woodlawn.

### **Snakes**

There are absolutely no poisonous snakes native to our part of Minnesota. The handsome green and yellow striped snakes you sometimes see along the bank by the lake are mostly small garter snakes. These live by eating insects and small animals. You are in no danger whatsoever from these snakes unless you are a toad.

### **Soft-drinks--Soda--Pop**

You've probably forgotten how much better pop tastes bottled in glass. Our supplier, Fergus Falls Bottling Company, was one of the last three in the country to still bottle in glass. Alas, no more. So this note is of mere historical interest.

### **Stars**

They're more brilliant here, where the air is clear and there are few ground lights, than in the city, where air pollution and numerous ground lights combine to obscure the sky. Stand at the outer end of the dock and look back. You'll see the north star above the

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trees in a direct line with the dock. The milky way is clearly visible from northeast to south in summer. In the south end of the milky way is Saggitarius, one of the signs of the Zodiac. The bright stars form a shape like a camel with a hump. High overhead in the milky way is Cygnus, the Swan, also called the Northern Cross. Also high overhead is the Corona Borealis, a circle one half made of bright stars and the other half of dim ones. With the help of one of our star guides, you can identify other constellations. Or ask Bud to help you.

The stars that move across the sky while you watch are not stars at all, but are either airplanes or artificial satellites. The passenger jets flying between the Twin Cities and Fargo-Moorhead pass almost directly over Blanche Lake. Each time we take a plane going either way, we like to have a window seat and look down at the lakes, if the air is clear. The lakes look astonishingly like the way they appear on county maps.

Around midnight on August 11, and for a night or two before and after, watch for showers of falling stars as the earth moves through the orbit of a large comet that we understand may collide devastatingly with the earth in the year 3200 and cause an extinction similar to that caused by the heavenly body that hit the Yucatan penninsula a few hundred thousand years ago, they say, and wiped out the dinosaurs. There are more pressing things to worry about.

Actually, on a clear night, your chances of seeing a few shooting stars are very good, and if the company is right, you really won't care if you do or not

We have star guides in the office. You may borrow them.

### **Store Hours**

The Woodlawn Store, such as it is, is officially open for pop, ice cream, and souvenirs from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. For rentals of all sorts, or for gas for motors, we are open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Also, there is pop in the refrigerator in the Game Room for sale on the honor system. Help yourself, and place your money in the yogurt container.

### **Stumps**

Call it laziness, call it whimsy. Maybe we think stumps enhance the natural scenery. Whatever the reason, when one of our trees dies we like to leave the stump until it rots away naturally. A reminder, I guess, of our loss. Also, the stumps keep the lawn mower at a distance, and volunteer trees grow up around them to replace a tree that was lost.

Oak stumps, to be sure, rot very slowly. The one in front of the office has been slowly rotting away since before I got this place in 1948. It has hollowed out and now makes a fine stand for flowers. When that stump finally goes--if it doesn't outlast us--we'll miss it like a lost friend.

Other stumps have hollowed out as well. The hollows serve as convenient containers for flowers.

### **Sun Decks**

Since we don't have a wide sand beach for you to loll on, we have sun decks,

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equipped with chaise longues, by the water's edge.

**Swim Raft.** See "Raft"

**Swimmer's Itch**

There's an interesting pestiferous organism that lives part of its life in ducks, part in snails. After dwelling comfortably in a snail, it gets wanderlust, exits the snail, and swims about until a duck comes along, when it climbs aboard, penetrates the skin, and resumes a comfortable existence inside the duck.

The mischief arises because the poor dumb thing can't tell one warm-bodied creature from another. If it gets on an unsuitable host such as a human, it penetrates the skin, and because its host is unsuitable, it dies. Its decomposing remains cause the affliction known as swimmer's itch. A small raised spot develops, like a mosquito bite, and itches much like a mosquito bite, but lasts longer, about a week. A few such itches are tolerable if uncomfortable. On very rare occasions, someone gets a lot at once, and that is very uncomfortable, sometimes driving the sufferer to go to a doctor for a cortisone shot, which cures the problem.

Yes, unfortunately, on a few occasions, swimmer's itch does afflict swimmers, and more likely, waders, in Blanche--not often, but even once in a season is plenty, thank you. In many years, it doesn't occur at all. It occurs, when it does, in June and early July. The organisms live in the water for only a day or so. Then you can swim again undisturbed.

If you are in the water and start to feel itchy, leave the water at once and dry off with a towel, or take a shower. Don't let the water dry on you, because if the water has the critters in it, they then have nowhere to go except into the skin.

It will usually turn out that the itchy feeling was a false alarm, especially if your apprehension has been raised by reading this. That's fine. False alarms are much preferable to the real thing.

If someone does develop even a mild case of swimmer's itch, we can get permission from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to treat our beach with copper sulfate. That kills the snails from which the organisms come.

Treating our waterfront with copper sulfate does not guarantee that the organisms will not later drift in from snails beyond our area. So you still have to be alert for that itchy feeling.

Having warned you of the possibility, let us reassure you. Chances are good you'll not encounter swimmer's itch at all, and if you do, it won't afflict you worse than do a few mosquito bites. So don't pass up water activity except when you know or have good reason to suspect the presence in the water of the critters that cause it.

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**Table Tennis.** See Pingpong.

**Telephone.**

Part of the pleasure of staying at Woodlawn is not being easily reachable by telephone. If people call you, we normally will take messages for you. Please check daily at the office to see if there have been calls for you. When it is convenient for us, or if the call is urgent, we will even call you to the phone; but we will as a rule try to make it hard for people to bother you.

Of course if you are up-to-date and have a cell phone, you bear the inconvenience of having that convenience.

If you need to make a call, we have a line in the Game Room for your use. For long distance calls you will need your credit card unless you are calling an 800 number or equivalent.

Please keep calls reasonably short so that others may also use the phone. Thanks for your cooperation.

**Television.** See Game Room.

**Tennis**

We built our tennis court in 1967, and spent hours and hours spreading a mixture of sand and clay over it in a thin layer. This makes what is called a grit surface, quick to dry after rain, easy on the feet, but unfortunately inclined to be dusty in dry weather. We alleviate the dusting by using calcium chloride when needed.

The court needs an occasional rolling and relining, and those of you willing to do so may arrange to help with this. You may work out your rental charges in this way and it won't cost you anything to play.

Of course, you may not want to bother with this work when on vacation, so in that case we'll be happy to maintain it ourselves. Then you simply tell us when you start and when you finish and we charge you the modest per person rental fee.

Balls and rackets may be rented at the office.

**Tether ball**

Nicest thing about tether ball is that it is always there. Nothing to bring, nothing to set up. You see this ball hanging from a rope on a post, you can't resist giving it a swat as you go by.

Because it is so convenient, the tether ball probably gets used more than any other plaything at the resort. Of course it must also be fun to play, or just the convenience wouldn't attract people. I saw an eighteen month old toddler the other day trying to hit the tether ball. He could barely reach it, but he felt the attraction. I even feel the attraction myself.

**Thunderstorms, Windstorms, Hailstorms**

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We get some doozies. I love the crack of thunderbolts and I love catspaws ripping across the water like the wrath of God and the wind whipping the trees and the rain falling in torrents and creating rivers on the lawns. But I prefer to be inside where I'm safe, and so should you. By all means get off the lake if you see a storm coming. Here's a hint: If the wind is from the south or southeast, and black clouds are gathering in the northwest or west, get off the lake. Don't think "We've got plenty of time"--that's a mistake. The only boat of ours that ever capsized went over because the two men in it thought they had time for another drift. The fish bite insidiously well before a storm, and that's one reason people get caught on the lake. When you see a dark storm front moving in from the northwest, get off the lake. They come against the surface wind, and they come fast.

Most of the storms come from the west or north, sometimes we get storms of just plain straight wind out of the south. That's often the kind of wind that takes down our trees. One storm, in 1980, blew all day and took out thirteen large trees. It was in June, and we had just put in all the docks. The storm took them all out again. We were down in the lake catching the sections and the boats as they came in and tossing them up the bank. Martha, still in her early teens, hid in the bathroom, scared silly. Lawn benches and tables overturned. The northwest corner was knocked off #9 and a hole punched in the south wall of the living room. We covered the hole with duct tape--it lasted for years, but the hole has been fixed since.

We've had lightning damage only once, one year before the season opened, luckily. A bolt struck a cottonwood on the shore in front of #8. We had a floodlight mounted in the cottonwood. The bolt vaporized the buried power line all the way back to the cottage, knocked the concrete footing off at the southwest corner, blew the fuse box across the room, and knocked out smoke detectors in cottages all up the line. Martha and Kate were standing by the refrigerator in their apartment in the garage, and were knocked to the floor. I was by my radial arm saw in the workshop, and got a good jolt. We didn't know what had happened. We didn't notice until next day that a tree had been struck. There wasn't a lot left of the tree. I found the floodlight holder several years later on the bank in front of the lilac bushes.

The worst wind damage to our woods occurred on June 20, 2005. The wind came straight out of the north, and knocked down more trees than we could count, including many of the large maples and basswoods that made our road in so spectacular. I spent the next morning wielding a chain saw to make the Woodlawn entry road passable. We owe a great debt of gratitude to the young men staying at the time. They all pitched in and hauled away tree limbs as quickly as I could cut them.

The only building to suffer was the recreation building, on which both gable ends were damaged. We also lost the fence south of that building.

But the woods! After the season was over, we hired a logger and a sawyer. We harvested two semi-loads of logs--20 cords, for those who know what means--that we sold to a lumbermill, and we still had about a load of pulpwood left. In addition, the sawyer cut us two thousand feet of lumber for use on resort projects.

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### **Tornado Shelter**

There's never been a tornado here and we don't expect one. We just want to be prepared. Thunderstorms and windstorms are common, though--you can read above about some real doozers. TORNADOS, fortunately, are rare.

Still, tornados are possible in this country. In 1917 one nearly wiped out Fergus Falls. You can see great pictures of the damage if you visit the historical society. In 1956 (maybe '57--we can't quite decide) one ripped through Fargo. In 1985 or so, one struck Eagle Lake, wrecking a dozen cottages and killing one person.

In the unlikely event of a tornado warning, we advise that you take shelter in a basement. There are two walkout basements on the premises, one under Cottage #1 (enter the north door), the other under Cottage #9 (door is on the east). Neither basement door is kept locked.

### **Trees**



When pioneers arrived in the part of Minnesota that includes what is now Otter Tail County, they named it the Park Region, because the region's large hardwood trees, relative absence of undergrowth, and many lakes made it park-like. Though much of the land has been cleared for crops and pasture, Park Region it is still called.

If you've ever stayed in pine country, you know how much friendlier hardwood trees are--at least in summer. The trees at Woodlawn provide wonderful cooling shade while still permitting grass to grow under them. Pines provide less shade, and discourage grass. That's my bias speaking, I suppose, picked up in the years of my youth at a cottage in the pine country east of Bemidji.

Here in hardwood country, the types of trees vary with the types of soil. In the woods at Woodlawn, basswood and sugar maple dominate. Just a mile away along Ottertail Lake, the dominant species are oak and aspen. In fall the maples turn shades of glorious red and orange; oaks, on the other hand, turn a spectacular deep maroon.

You will find specimens of the following species of trees on the Woodlawn grounds: basswood (linden), sugar maple, hackberry, ash, oak, ironwood, boxelder,

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cottonwood, and even some young elms that with the bravado of youth are defying dutch elm disease, a disease even more fatal to an elm than is AIDS to a human.

**Unique original greeting cards**

Phyllis has made some of her outstanding photos into greeting cards. Since no middlemen are involved she sells these at half of what you pay for similar cards in stationery shops. See them on display in the office.

**Unique Tees and Sweats**

Kate has designed our tees and sweats, and has done an outstanding job of it, we think. T-shirts look good and make good low-cost gifts. The sweatshirts are not only good for keeping you warm on chilly mornings by the lake; they are handsome souvenirs to wear with pleasure when you return home.

**Upkeep and Improvements**

**Upkeep.** Does the roof leak? a faucet drip? a window rattle? Let us know.

**Improvements.** Back in '48 when I started operating the resort, the boats were wooden and the cabins were simple shacks without plumbing, paneling, or ceilings, to say nothing of niceties such as carpets, couches, armchairs, or lamps. All that we have changed, and more.

My father made the Adirondack benches and chairs that decorate the lawn, though over the years the original wood pieces have largely rotted away and been replaced. We gradually added recreational equipment such as canoes, sailboats, sailboards, the tennis court, and swings. Over the years we made the switch from wooden boats to aluminum. The docks have gotten longer and more numerous. We've added lifts to accommodate the large boats some of you bring with you. We've added sundecks by the lake and decks to the cottages.

Guests from Minneapolis suggested the climber back by the tennis court.

Guests from Jamestown said a cottonwood was shading the sun deck. Bud cut it down.

A guest from St. Louis wanted more towel bars in the bathroom. She has them.

Imagine having ten houses to keep spiffy and you'll have an idea of what we are up against. We do our best, but sometimes things escape our notice. So we have to depend on you to let us know when something is broken, worn, or missing altogether. It embarrasses people, particularly Minnesotans, to call attention to imperfections. We are grateful to you if you'll let us know what needs tending to, so if you prefer not to speak of it, do write us a note on one of the blank pages at the end of the guide. We'll find it and do what needs to be done.

We'll also appreciate your suggesting additional amenities or conveniences that you'd like to see us provide, and we'll take your suggestions seriously, even when (as may happen) we don't find it practical to act on them in the short run.

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### **Volleyball**

We used to have the volleyball net back between the tennis court and the basketball standard (the posts are still there), but it seems that people prefer to play in the water if conditions are at all pleasant there. So we filled a couple of tires with concrete and set pipes in them for posts, and rigged the net in the water. The ball is usually in the office or the motor house. Help yourselves.

### **Walks**

What exercise is simpler, healthier, or more enjoyable? Here in the open country, we mean, of course.

We enjoy walking to the control dam by the public access. Sometimes we walk the path along the lake. More often we walk out to the access road and around that way. Then the walk is one half mile each way. For a longer walk we go out to the highway and down to Madsen's, where we take the road across the highway from Madsen's north to Ottertail Lake. We follow this road to the right, behind the cottages, until we come to a road that leads back out to the highway. Then we follow the highway a short distance back to Blanche Creek Road. This is a three mile walk. It is also ok to walk across people's lawns between here and Madsen's or beyond (but please don't overdo it). When we do this we are crossing private property. We are grateful that the owners let us do this, and we try not to abuse the privilege. When we meet people we smile and say hello. Many of our neighbors are walkers, too, and you'll often see them strolling along our lake front. It's a reciprocal arrangement.

Be careful if you walk along Hwy. 78 with its narrow weed-grown shoulders. Walk on the left side, facing the oncoming traffic.

For a short, soothing walk in deep woods, go on our nature trail starting east of the tennis court. How fast you go around it may depend on how well you have prepared for meeting mosquitoes.

### **Water, bottled**

Many people buy bottled water for drinking, and that's their privilege; but it is totally unnecessary to do so here at Woodlawn. Our water is regularly tested by the State of Minnesota Health Department. It has no additives except those involved in softening, and we ourselves prefer to drink it unsoftened. You can do the same.

### **Water pressure**

Our water is pumped from the well into a pressurized tank. An air cushion in the tank compresses and expands, keeping the pressure fairly constant, even when the pump is off. If everybody uses water at once, the pump may not be able to keep up with demand, but this is not often a problem. The solution is usually to wait just a bit. If the pressure seems unusually low, let us know. Perhaps the filter at the pump is clogged. If the filter gets clogged with iron particles, water can't get through. We correct this problem by changing the filter.

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**Water, soft**

We have wonderful mineral-rich water, full of iron and calcium. Untreated, it would turn all our plumbing fixtures orange in a hurry. Untreated, it has a distinctive taste, enjoyed by some, detested by others. Untreated, it reacts with chlorine bleaches to turn clothes yellow. So we soften our water.

Softened water substitutes sodium for calcium. Sodium is not good for everyone. If you should not be drinking softened water, you have a couple of options. You can get our water, untreated, from the taps on the southeast corner of the office and on the west side of the well house. You can buy bottled water at grocery stores.

**Water, well**

We have a four inch diameter drilled well 110 feet deep. The water is tested by the State each year and has always been pronounced excellent. The water is hard, full of iron and calcium (but read on!).

The water that comes out of your taps has gone through a softener before getting to you. The softener replaces calcium with sodium, changing calcium chloride to sodium chloride. That's table salt, that some of you are supposed for health reasons not to ingest.

If you would like unsoftened water, there's a tap on the side of the well house across the road behind the office, and another tap at the southeast corner of the office.

**Website**

The Woodlawn website is at [www.woodlawnresort.com](http://www.woodlawnresort.com), as most readers of this guide will know. On it we keep photos, descriptions, and information about the current season. We get so few requests for brochures nowadays that we don't even have a current one--though we do print a new information sheet each spring. Almost everyone now has access to the internet, either from home or office, or at the local public library, and anyone who wants it can print a page or pages from the website. The biggest problem for us is keeping the website up-to-date, a never-ending task (sigh).

**Wireless Internet.** If your computer has a wireless card, we have Linksys wireless with open access. Reception is best near the office. Good access may usually be had in the Game Room.

**Woodlawn Metropolis, Inc.**

This fictive entity was an invention of our imaginative children in the days before maturity rechanneled their creativity. Life has lost a bit of its spice since those halcyon days. I'll try here to recover just a few of the enterprises of which the Woodlawn Metropolis was the umbrella organization.

**The Woodlawn Acting Company of Actors.** This thespian troop staged original dramas for enthusiastic Woodlawn audiences. There were, for examples, "The Rabbits" and "The Dragon's Dilemma." One particularly memorable performance took place back in the woods in a pit from which we had excavated sand as fill for the base of an office expansion. The spectators stood above the rim and punctuated the performance with

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vigorous applause, or were they slapping mosquitoes?

**The Woodlawn Weekly or Nearly.** This chatty newsletter, complete with scandalous exposes and sympathetic advice for the love-lorn lived up more closely to the latter part of its name than the former part.

**The Woodlawn Forced Labor Union.** The title of this organization reflected the philosophical convictions of its members (our children), who hadn't asked to be born into positions as (part-time) mowers of lawns, rakers of beaches, emptiers of garbage cans, buriers of fish guts, makers of beds, and cleaners of bathrooms and kitchens.

**The Woodlawn Sailors Guild.** A precursor of the Woodlawn Sailing Club, the Guild had a very exclusive membership made up of Karl, Kate, and Martha Narveson. Its primary purpose seemed to be to take Sunfish sailboats out in the wildest of winds.

Several other subsidiaries of the Woodlawn Metropolis, such as **The Woodlawn University** and **The Woodlawn Federated Industries**, existed only in name and in the fertile imaginations of the proprietors.

### **Wood ticks and Deer ticks**

These you do want to be alert for. Wood ticks, small flat black eight-legged critters with efficient jaws, are found in tall grass, --or rather, they lurk in tall grass and find you if you brush against them. The bits of these on rare occasions, so rare I've never heard on one, can cause a disease called rocky mountain spotted fever.

Recently a more serious illness called lyme disease has begun to occur in parts of Minnesota. This disease is carried by a smaller tick, the deer tick. We have never seen a deer tick, so cannot tell you whether they are a threat here.

Ticks, as mentioned, hang out in tall grass. Contrary to rumor and folk lore, they do not leap onto you out of trees. If you stay within the trimmed and mowed areas of the Woodlawn grounds, you will very likely never encounter a tick.

But if you are at all adventurous you will want to walk in less combed and curried terrain. And then you may wish to take the precaution of tucking your pant legs into your socks.

Even if you get a tick on you, it is not going to bite into you immediately. Ticks like to roam around and search out the likeliest place, and they invariable go upwards if given a chance. So there's a good chance you will feel the tick crawling around on you before it bites. When that happens, pick it off and flush it down the toilet.

It is also a good idea to inspect yourself for ticks before going to bed. Run a comb through your hair, too.

Once you have found a tick on you, you will have to contend with imaginary ticks. After we find a tick we keep thinking we have more. And these imaginary ticks are much harder (impossible, in fact) to find and pick off.

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**Afterword**

It would not do to let the preceding item stand last. So let me simply say thanks for reading, thanks for coming to Woodlawn, and at the end of your stay have a good trip home.

Bud

P.S Me too.

Phyllis