

Kydd

This We Remember January 2010 for Lake Report

George and Barb Kydd

Driving to the lake for the weekend is a common experience for many Minnesotans. The Kydds, tired of driving up to the “Range” for weekends, started looking closer to home for lake property. Barb was teaching school in Minneapolis, George working at Honeywell. Newlyweds in 1953, they responded to a newspaper ad for newly plotted land on Briggs Lake. They found two fifty foot lots, and thus began their lake and building experiences.

The fall and winter of 1953 were mild, allowing them to spend weekends in a tent clearing their land of brush and fallen trees. Like many other new lake property owners, the first structure they built was a

6 X 8 “one holer,” which in addition to its intended use also served to store shovels, saws, axes, rakes and other needed tools. Their plan: a walk out basement that could be added to in stages.

After a brief discussion with a contractor working on a close-by lot, George, always confident, decided to build the basement himself. At the cement block store he began figuring out what and how much he would need of the right materials to build his basement. The sales person, realizing George knew nothing about cement work did him a favor: he referred George to a contractor friend, who knew one of George's relatives. That led to a very good quote, which they accepted, and the work was done quickly and to their satisfaction.

Early on the Kydds had no electricity, but it soon came from Anoka Electric. George had been laid off in May, and was supposed to be looking for a job while Barb continued teaching. Construction continued, mostly on weekends, George sawing boards by hand and pounding nails to enclose the basement. Prior to the cement being poured for the floor, a tarp served as their door. Several times upon their arrival from the Minneapolis they would find sheep from the nursing home in their basement, seeking shade from the sun. According to George, “They used the sheep to keep the grass down and didn't build a fence until people complained.”

As other cabins were being completed, and water skiing becoming popular, they could count 19 speedboats in the bay pulling skiers, which led to the "Speedboat Bay" designation. The Kydds were the only pontoon owners. "Today, if you cruise the bay, you will see 18 or 19 pontoons either fishing or tied up. We don't have our pontoon anymore, but we have a speedboat."

Barb's fondest memories are all about children: theirs and the many neighborhood kids who would come to their naturally sandy beach to swim and hang out. For George, he spent many weekends over 20 years building and remodeling. Because there was not a lot of time to get to know people, he fondly remembers the pancake breakfasts at the Smiths on the north end of Lake Julia. Kydds had their pontoon, with a "crummy, crummy motor." The motor would often stop about the time they hit the channel on their way back to Speedboat Bay, and they would get out and pull the pontoon back home. That, of course, was before the Briggs Lake Improvement Association dredged the channel. That's a story for another time.

Water quality, according to George, was good at the time. One good indicator: they could see the bottom. The biggest change they see now is the growth in cabins and homes around the lakes and poor water quality.

Barb's one wish for the lakes: "Get the water quality back to the way it used to be. So you can see the bottom again. And bring the lake level up about 5 inches to the way it used to be." George, of course, is all for improved water quality. And his one wish: having a nice, quiet bed and breakfast on High Point.