



On the Water

Volume 6, Issue 8

August 2004

Mary and Paul

from Juris Ozols

Mary was taken away from Paul this summer. She left far too early, and she left many things undone, many plans unfulfilled, many Muskies not caught. Mary never got that really big one – the 50-incher – although she came close. But for sixteen years Mary and Paul shared many wonderful things, and many beautiful memories are still alive.

At Mary's memorial service in June, Tony Vold – a man with a heart of gold himself – drew me aside. "Write something," he said. Later, I got an email from Paul. "Write the story." The same request. Some things you don't turn down. I'm glad to do it...

A week after the service Paul and I met at the Beartown Bar and Grill in White Bear Lake. I listened, at times with moist eyes, as Paul reminisced. He talked for most of a couple of hours. He kept buying me beer, and wouldn't let me pay. Paul is not a fast talker. I could take notes easily. This is his story.

Paul chose our meeting place himself. Their house, in a wooded area of nearby Forest Lake, is not far. They fished the lake frequently in their years together. And a tradition: They would often stop at the Beartown after fishing and pick up dinner. Paul remembered how they would get off the lake, tow the boat into the parking lot at Beartown, and Paul would run in to pick up tacos. Then they would go home to their house in the woods.

Together they fished White Bear and got those tacos many times. But it slowly came to an end, after Mary was diagnosed with brain cancer. The doctor gave her six months. She fought it for three times that long. The battle took an awful toll of her. She still worked, still tried to fish.

But her strength dwindled, and Paul related how she "turned into a homebody." His voiced faltered, his own eyes no longer dry.

I broke in with a question. How did they meet? Well, they both worked at the US Post Office in Forest Lake. They met there in 1988, although Paul doesn't quite remember the exact circumstances. But they had "a torrid office romance." And here a smile. "I kissed her once in the elevator."

Paul remembers that their first date was June 28, 1989, although he's not sure what they did. Paul quickly steered them in his own direction. He's always been an "outdoor person," but Mary had never been fishing or camping. That changed. Together they grew into a shared love for the outdoors and nature that stayed with them their entire time together.

Here Paul started to tell me about their house. They were both crazy about it and the surroundings. It's on thirteen acres of former pastureland, now slowly going back to woods. Their yard is always full of "critters." Paul rattled off a list of wildlife that lived around their house – all kinds of birds, raccoons, deer, rabbits, everything that's a part of Minnesota outdoors.

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JT Doebler proudly showing this bass that will earn him an award at the annual Awards Banquet/Winter Picnic. Thanks to dad, Todd, for the photo.

Kids Contest

Keep track of your child's fishing successes this season. Children 12 or younger are eligible to participate in the Chapter Kids Only Fishing Contest. The rules are simple. All fish must be caught by using legal means and the fish must be witnessed by a parent or another adult.

An award will be given at the 2004 Winter Picnic/ Awards Night to every child who catches almost any fish of any size, including bluegill, perch, sunfish, crappie, catfish, bullhead, carp, smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, walleye, sauger, or northern pike. Muskies 30 inches or more caught by anglers age 12 years or under will qualify for the Junior Division of the Members Only Contest. Muskies less than 30 inches don't qualify for any contest.

One entry per child should be submitted for the entire fishing season. All entries must be received no later than January 10, 2005.

We welcome photographs with the entry. Photographs should have all pertinent information, such as anglers name, date of catch, size of fish, body of water, etc. on the back of the photo.

From Our President

August is the time for our chapter's annual summer picnic. This event is always a good time and I encourage you to come out and join us if you can. We will be serving up brats, burgers, and soft drinks. Everyone planning to attend should bring something to share with the rest of the group like a salad or a chip and dip thing or maybe even a dessert. The picnic takes the place of our monthly meeting. This year it's on August 10th and begins at 6:00 pm, an hour earlier than regular meeting time. Many members bring their maps and share information about lakes they have fished, and others ask for info about a lake they will be fishing. In either case if you're there, there will be something to learn or something you can share. Remember there will be **NO REGULAR MEETING** in August, the picnic is it.

Entries for our chapter's International Muskie Tournament will go on sale August 1st. I'll be bringing some to the picnic so you can purchase them there. They will also be available on-line at www.twincitiesmuskiesinc.org or they can be purchased at Joe's in St. Paul, Thorne Bros. in Fridley, Reeds in Walker, or The One Stop in Longville. Entry costs are \$60 for an adult and \$30 for juniors. This year the Grand Prize is a Ranger 618-VS Fisherman boat with trailer, powered by a 125hp Mercury outboard. A trip to Birch Villa Resort on Cass Lake is included also. Prizes are awarded for 1st-10th place in the adult division, 1st-3rd place in the juniors, and for 1st and 2nd northern division.

I hope you will consider fishing the tournament. It is our biggest fundraiser of the year and its success sets the tone of the year for the Twin Cities Chapter.

The tournament is really more than just a tournament. Now in its 37th year, it has really become a tradition and significant social event. If you haven't participated, give it a try. Come out and experience it for yourself. You don't have to be an expert of any kind. Kids fish it, moms fish it, old hacks like myself fish it. Everyone has a chance to win and our favorite fish has a way of leveling out the odds of winning. Anyone could win the boat; all you have to do is catch one 40" fish.

I don't have any fish stories from this year yet but I hope to come home with some after my vacation on Vermilion.

Come to meetings; share your stories and ideas.

Joe DeMars

Tickets on Sale Now for International Tournament

The Twin Cities Chapter 37th Annual Frank Schneider Jr. International Muskie Tournament will take place September 10th, 11th, and 12th on lakes in the Walker, Cass Lake, Bemidji, and Longville areas.

The Grand Prize this year is a Ranger 618VS Fisherman, with a 125 hp Mercury and Minn kota trolling motor, and a one-week stay at Birch Villa Resort on Cass Lake. The Grand Prize will be awarded at the Sunday Banquet in Walker City Park by draw from the names of every angler who registers a fish in the tournament.

This is not a team event. Each individual who catches a fish, enters the fish for him/her self. The fish must be witnessed, but it doesn't have to be a boat partner. Entry fees are \$60.00 for an adult ticket and \$30.00 for a junior. Tickets are on sale starting August 1st. You can order tickets online at www.twincitiesmuskiesinc.com. If you order online, you must pick up your tournament packet and hat on Thursday, September 9 or Friday, September 10 at Reed's Sporting Goods in Walker. You may purchase tickets in person at Thorne Brothers in Fridley, Joe's Sporting Goods in St Paul, Reed's Sporting Goods in Walker, and Jerry's One Stop in Longville. If you purchase tickets in person before-hand, you will need to pick up your hat on Thursday, September 9, at Reed's Sporting Goods or Jerry's One stop in Longville.

Participating in the International Tournament is an excellent way to support our chapter. This is our biggest fundraiser of the year. If you have fished this tournament before, you already know how much fun it can be. We hope to see you there. It will be a great time.



Tom Lund with a fat 43-inch muskie caught during Canadian opening on Lake of the Woods. George Wahl, who was fishing with Tom, speculated the fish was more than thirty pounds, "easily out-weighting" the 50-inch fish he caught that same week.



Paul Hartman with the 51-inch fish he caught during the chapter outing at the Winnipeg River in July. He was led to the fish – caught on his A.P.Lure – by George Wahl.



Winnipeg River Outing

The chapter's July outing to the Winnipeg River was a great time for all. The group returned to Paradise Cove Resort for about the 10th consecutive year. The resort's quiet bay is a great setting to start and end every day. There is even a good cabbage bed around the docks that consistently hold big muskie and pike.

The trip started best for Mike Zollinger, who chose Dynamite Island as the first spot to take Candy, his girlfriend of four years. As she cast, he was sorting lures and building up his confidence to ask THE question. Candy happily accepted Mike's proposal and a beautiful ring! The next day they returned to the same spot by Dynamite Island and Mike caught a 40" muskie. His first day as an engaged man continued to be great as he also caught a 41" on a figure-eight, a 44" and a 35" hybrid! The day of his life – he caught 4 muskies and a fiancée in just 24 hours.

The combination of the water dropping 3 feet to near-normal the week before the group's arrival and perfect weather nearly every day on the outing set the stage for some great fishing action. The group caught a number of quality fish including walleyes to eight pounds and countless pike between 30 and 40 inches. But they were there for muskies.

Tom Kinnefick left satisfied with his first over 50" fish – a 51½", along with a 46", a 44" and two 41" fish, all caught while trolling 13-inch Grandma lures over deep water. Tom's big fish was the largest of the trip and won him the "Bib Box" donated by Pat McCalister for the accomplishment. Paul Hartman also caught five fish.

Other noteworthy catches include Russ Peterson's 40- and 44-inchers the first full day of the trip. It had been 9 years since he had a muskie in the boat. Bill Stetts added a few stickers to Jim Kroupa's boat scoreboard with 40½" and 43" muskies. The list of losses was also long with George Selcke taking the lead with several large connections not to be had.

A number of the 24 participants on this year's outing have already signed up to go again next year. If you're interested in joining the group, contact Paul Hartman at 651-488-9017.

Eurasian Watermilfoil Discovered in Leech Lake

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources recently announced that Eurasian watermilfoil has been discovered growing in Leech Lake. The non-native, invasive aquatic plant was discovered in several harbors from Stony Point to Rogers Point on the southern shore.

"Some bays of Leech Lake support stands of cabbage and other native submersed aquatic plants," said Chip Welling, DNR Eurasian watermilfoil coordinator. "As such, it's likely that the plant will take hold only in those parts of the lake where native aquatic plants are already growing."

Boaters who use Leech Lake are urged to be extra thorough when looking for and removing aquatic plants from their boats, trailers, nets, anchors and other equipment. It is unlawful in Minnesota to transport aquatic plants or prohibited exotic species on public roads or to launch watercraft with them attached.

The Eurasian watermilfoil was discovered by a citizen while swimming at a beach near the Whipholt Public Water Access on State Highway 200. He delivered the suspected Eurasian watermilfoil to the DNR. The DNR sent crews to Leech Lake to search for Eurasian watermilfoil and found rooted plants growing in the lake.

Eurasian watermilfoil can form dense mats of vegetation and crowd out native aquatic plants, clog boat propellers, and make water recreation difficult. Eurasian watermilfoil has now been discovered in 146 lakes and seven rivers or streams in Minnesota.

For more information, contact: Chip Welling, DNR Ecological Services, Saint Paul (651) 297-8021. Harlan Fierstine, DNR Fisheries, Walker (218) 547-1683

Members Only Contest

from Elaine Randolph, Contest Chair

As of July 15, I have entered 70 fish ranging from 30" to 52" that were released by 27 members. In 2003, 31 members had entered 103 fish and in 2003, 21 members had entered 65 fish. I love getting all these release forms in the mail and at the meetings!

BIG NEWS – After 10 hours of fishing on Cedar Lake, 7-year-old Megan Doebler released her first muskie – 33"! She caught it on a black and silver Slop Master. Andrew Hedensten released a 32" on White Bear. The bait was a black Viper. Evan Nicolai released a 46" and a 42" on Cass Lake and a 38" on Cedar Lake. All his fish were caught on crank baits.

If you heard a lot of noise like "YEA - I'VE GOT 'ER – SHE'S MINE" around 8:45 pm on July 3, it must have been Greg Randolph. With the assistance (?) of a cradle handler who had a few problems, he released a beautiful 52" on Eagle Lake, Ontario.

A few members went to Lake of the Woods and reported some success despite cold weather. Tom Becker released 4 muskies, John Olson released 3, and Tom Lund released 2.

Mark Sewald released a 51.75" on July 4 on Eagle Lake – Hennepin County and also 4 hybrids on Weaver Lake. Bob Culbertson is still (always) fishing Baby Lake – 7 releases using a variety of baits. One June 5 fishing Minnetonka, Shawn Kellett released a 51", 38" and 37". Not bad for a day's work. Peter Moller has 3 released on Waconia and a 50" on June 22 on Lake of the Woods.

Dianne Dahl out-fished Stu McIntosh and Joe DeMars on the St. Croix River. She released a 38" and a 39". Stu had a 39" and Joe a 38". YEA, Dianne!

STANDINGS: (as of 7/15/2004)

JUNIOR'S DIVISION

- 1st Place – Evan Nicolai – 3 fish – 48 points
- 2nd Place – James Hedensten – 1 fish – 14 points
- 3rd Place – Megan Doebler – 1 fish – 7 points
- 4th Place – Andrew Hedensten – 1 fish – 6 points

WOMEN'S DIVISION

- 1st Place – Dianne Dahl – 2 fish – 25 points

MEN'S DIVISION

- 1st Place – Shawn Kellett – 5 fish – 68 points
- 2nd Place - Bob Culbertson – 7 fish – 67 points
- 3rd Place – Tom Becker – 6 fish – 58 points
- 4th Place – Peter Moller – 4 fish – 54 points
- 5th Place – John Olson – 3 fish – 52 points

MASTER'S DIVISION

- 1st Place – Mark Sewald – 7 fish – 87 points
- 2nd Place – Tony Sommerfeld – 5 fish – 75 points
- 3rd Place – Kurt Hostager – 5 fish – 62 points
- 4th Place – Larry Maronick – 2 fish – 23 points

RELEASE OF THE MONTH

- May – official – no entries greater than 45"
- June – unofficial – Shawn Kellett – 51" – Minnetonka – June 5
- July – unofficial – Greg Randolph – 52" Eagle Lake, Ontario – July 3

Remember, entry forms must be postmarked within 30 days of the catch. Several fish have already been disqualified this year. Don't let it happen to you!

Mail your completed forms to:

Elaine Randolph
1039 Wedgwood Lane N.
Eagan, MN 55123

Reporting All Fish, Big and Small

Mary and Paul *continued from page 1*



And in the last times, when Mary had to stay at home, she would sit at the window and watch nature's show. That love of nature quickly became a shared part of their life, and especially of their fishing trips.

Paul got her going on that. He remembers her first fish, a 3-inch Sunny, caught on bobber and worm from the dock of a small lake near Mille Lacs. Mary went beyond that very quickly. During the early 1990s they would go to Mille Lacs and drift sucker minnows over weedbeds. They fished northern pike because Paul hadn't figure out about muskies yet. And Mary got a super northern – a 38-incher. "That one's on the wall." And of course it's bigger than any pike Paul ever caught.

But the muskies soon came. Paul particularly remembers one September morning on Mille Lacs. They started out with a couple of small muskies. At the time Mary had yet to catch a big one. Then, after a couple of slow hours, Mary got a fish on – Paul could tell right away it was big one.

The fish did a power dive, and just took off, going where it wanted to. Of course, Mary was just jumping up and down with excitement. They had never seen a fish like this. Finally, she managed to get it up to the boat. Here Paul looked at me and said, "The current rage was cradles. This was my first time using it." (I sensed disaster as Paul's tale unfolded.)

Paul continued. They managed to get the giant muskie into the cradle, and followed the conventional wisdom of leaving the fish in the water. It started out

okay. Paul got the fish unhooked as Mary was scrambling to get the camera. In the process, the fish turned belly up, which wasn't going to make for a good picture. But as he opened the cradle to turn it right side up, the fish got its snout out of the end and started wiggling. Paul jumped up and ran down the side of the boat, trying to scoop it back in. By then Mary had found the camera, and turned around just in time to see the fish disappear. Silence descended on the scene.

Paul estimates the fish at well up into the high 40s. It would have been Mary's biggest yet. She was heart-broken, and of course Paul was devastated too. The cradle did not go out with them anymore.

By then they were both Muskies Inc. members. Paul joined in 1995 and Mary soon thereafter. As it happens, Paul belonged to the Twin Cities chapter and Mary to North Metro. So why was that? Well, they had problems with work schedules, and for a while Paul couldn't attend the TC meetings. Instead, they both went to North Metro, and got a family membership there.

When it came time to renew, Mary put her foot down. "No family membership," she commanded. "You're TC, I'm NM!" And Paul explained: Mary felt that the goals of Muskies Inc. were very, very important. It was important to her to support them as much as possible. And she felt that by belonging to both chapters she and Paul could contribute more.

Let me note here that when Paul told me about that, I had to pause and think. Muskies Inc. has its share of internal bickering that surfaces from time to time. What did Mary think? "She led by example," said Paul. "And she often told me, 'We're all one Muskies Inc.' I've always been proud of her."

So those were beautiful

thoughts, but Paul kept coming back to their fishing. He wanted to talk "fishing stories."

In 1999 Mary got her biggest fish. As he told me about it, I could see that Paul was back in time, was reliving things...

White Bear Lake, a warm September evening, the sun is sinking. They're alone, the lake is flat. The full autumn moon reflects on the water, shimmering slightly in the ripples from their casts.

They've been casting fruitlessly all afternoon and are tired and hungry. It's time to get off the lake. They were troll back to the launch. But there's little hope. The muskies have been gone all day.

Then – "Fish!" yells Mary. And again, a louder voice, "Fish!"

"Yeah, right." Paul isn't about to slow down for a weed snag.

One more time – "Fish!"

Paul turns. There's a huge boil on the water, ripples already spreading out. Mary's rod is bent over almost in half. Hey! She isn't fooling!

Paul turns the boat toward the boil, frantically reels in his own line, and throws his rod down. He grabs their big Beckman net – the cradle is long forgotten.

"Don't blow this one!" Paul keeps the thoughts to himself, as Mary fights the fish. She finally gets it to boatside, but then the fish goes berserk,

thrashing and jumping. Paul yells at Mary to loosen the drag, to raise the rod tip, all kinds of useful advice: "Don't blow this one!"

She manages to back off on the drag, the fish makes another run, then back to boatside. Paul shoves the net into the water, under the fish, and they have it! It's way bigger than any fish she's ever caught, way bigger.

Paul keeps the fish in the water and looks at Mary.

"Keep it?"

"I don't know..."

But Paul is busy unhooking the fish. "Want to hold it?"

"No, it's too big. You hold it."

They measure it, and Mary snaps some pictures of Paul holding her fat 49-inch fish.

Again – "Keep or release?"

And Mary's mind is made up. "It goes back. I'll get a bigger one."

Paul slips the fish back into the waters of White Bear Lake, and they stand silently, watching it swim away...

That one went back into the lake, and they didn't even get a replica. "I'll get a bigger one," she said.

Some weeks later, in November of 1999, Paul also caught his biggest fish, a 46-incher, from the same spot on White Bear. And of course, there was no question of keeping that one. "She releases a 49-inch fish, I keep a 46-incher? No way." That fish, and indeed all their muskies over the years, is back in the water.

That year 1999 was a good one for Paul and Mary. They caught several other mid-40 fish, and Mary won the women's division of North Metro. However, things slowed down the next couple of years. They even fished "their" spot many, many times, but never saw another fish there.

But like always, there's one more fish story...

It's been almost exactly

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Mary and Paul *continued*
two years since Paul got his 46-incher. They're out on White Bear again, bundled up against the weather of a Minnesota November. Mary's casting a 6-inch Phantom, as is Paul.

At the end of a retrieve, as he's lifting his lure out of the water, he hears Mary: "F-F-F-Fish..."

And again, "Fish!"

Paul turns. Mary is standing straight up, rod out over the side of the boat, mouth open. She's frozen, eyes on her Phantom on the surface.

Paul looks down too. Two feet behind her lure is a huge fish. A really, really big fish.

"Figure eight!" Paul yells. Mary doesn't move.

Paul shoves his own lure down in front of the nose of the fish, starts a figure eight. The muskie follows slowly, one cycle. Then it turns, sinks down into the water, as Paul continues to figure eight. The last thing he sees is the giant tail of the fish as it disappears.

Paul sits down, his knees doing the obligatory shake. He looks back at Mary. She's also sitting, mouth still open.

"Just how big do you think that fish was?"

Mary doesn't reply. But when she can finally talk, they both agree they don't know how big it was. But her 49-incher? A tyke by comparison.

That was in November of 2001. Mary was diagnosed with brain cancer in 2002. The last time they fished



together was on the Twin Cities / North Metro summer trip to Red Wing Lodge on Sabaskong Bay a year later. Mary had been struggling ever so hard by then, and was very fragile. She couldn't get into their truck or boat. Paul had to pick her up in his arms and lift her in.

But she wanted badly to go on the trip. Sabaskong Bay, like White Bear, was one of "their places." They had been there many times, wandering the waters of Lake of the Woods, enjoying the beauties of the Canadian outdoors. Mary wanted to go.

On the Tuesday of the trip, Red Wing had its traditional "Walleye Feed." Afterwards, Mary and Paul went out one more time. Paul thought maybe he would cast a surface lure for her, hand her the rod to reel in. But Mary wouldn't have any part of that. She cast herself, and even had a fish blow up at the lure, although it got away.

They went back to the cabin. For the rest of the trip, until Saturday, Mary was too weak to go out in the boat, and stayed in the cabin. But as they were leaving, Mary had Paul stop at the Red Wing office and sign up again for next year's trip.

They took one more "up north" trip together, to the Twin Cities International Tournament in September, 2003. Mary couldn't fish. But they attended Frank Schneider's induction into the Minnesota Fishing Hall of Fame in Walker. I took the group picture. It shows a couple of dozen Twin Cities chapter members surrounding Frank. And there's one North Metro member – Mary Villnow – kneeling down in the front row, a Muskies Inc. hat on her head. There's a big smile on her face. Paul is standing behind her, also with a smile.

Mary passed away on June 23, 2004, at home with Paul, surrounded by her loved ones.

Memorial donations can go to both Twin Cities and North Metro chapters in the name of Mary Ann Linda Villnow.

MI TOURNAMENT LODGING AT LEECH LAKE: Housekeeping cabins. Protected harbor, boat slip included, gas on site. Centrally located on the lake for easy access to entire lake. Contact Loe's Resort 1-800-874-1999 or (218) 547-1241.

PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT: Office/secretarial. Approx. 20 hours per month. \$10/hr. Work at home. Must have computer and internet access. Contact Terrie DuBe' 1-888-710-8286 or secretary@muskiesinc.org.

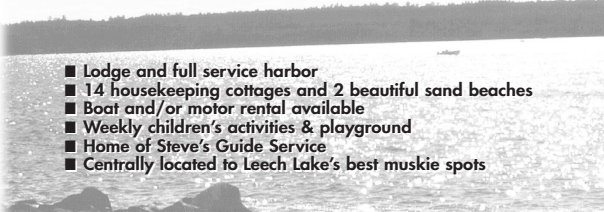
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www.twincitiesmuskiesinc.org

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calendar of events

*Muskies Inc. Twin Cities Chapter
General Meetings are held the second
Tuesday of every month at the
Knights of Columbus Hall, 1114 West
79th Street, Bloomington, MN (just off
I-494 & Lyndale Ave.) at 7:00 pm.*

AUGUST 10

Annual Picnic, Minnehaha Falls.

AUGUST 14-18

Chapter trip to Red Wing Lodge,
Lake of the Woods

SEPTEMBER 10-11-12

37th Annual Frank Schneider,
Jr. International Fishing
Tournament

SEPTEMBER 14

General Meeting. Speaker:
Steve Worrell

OCTOBER 12

General Meeting.

NOVEMBER 9

General Meeting. Nominations
for Board members accepted.

DECEMBER 14

General Meeting. Elections of
new Board members and
officers.

August Meeting

The Twin Cities Chapter August meeting will again be our annual Summer Picnic at Minnehaha Falls Park. This is an enjoyable night for the whole family so bring the kids. Everyone is invited to share fishing stories and good fun. Bring your maps to share some great fishing spots or just talk muskies! If you have questions, please call Joe DeMars at 612-861-8930.

Save Your Receipts

Just a reminder to save your receipts from Joe's Sporting Goods, Thorne Bros., or Reed's Sporting Goods. Bring them to the General Meeting and you'll get one free entry in the rod and reel drawing per receipt. Receipts must be dated within 30 days of the meeting.

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next meeting

AUGUST 10 ANNUAL SUMMER PICNIC

Come one and all to Minnehaha Falls Park at 6:00 pm and enjoy an evening of food, fun and fish tales. The club will supply burgers, brats and the soft drinks. Please bring a dish to share – salad, appetizers, beans, chips & dip or dessert.



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