



PO Box 97
Houghton, MI 49931
www.isleroyale.org

Newsletter Winter/Spring 2014

- IRBA Update
- IRBA Member Passes Away
- 2013 Fishing Tourney Results
- Membership Dues
- Apparel Available
- Scheduled Events

A newsletter to inform the members of ongoing activities within the Isle Royale Boater's Association, promote discussion among its members on various IRBA issues and share members' experiences related to boating, sport fishing, hiking, canoeing, and kayaking.

IRBA Update by Dave Hand

We are approaching 300 inches of snowfall in the Keweenaw right now and it is seven below zero. The Keweenaw Peninsula has seen a record setting 75 days of below freezing weather. In addition, I have not seen open blue water for about one month now as it has been all white. Last week, on the news it was reported that one of the Isle Royale wolves, a female with a radio collar, was found dead on the north shore. Seems the wolves may be getting tired of this winter's cold woes too.

We recently lost the contacts to make the IRBA boat stickers. However, I searched around and found a company in Houghton, MI that could do the job for us. However, we decided to save about \$1,600 on the cost of the stickers over ten years by redesigning the stickers. The new stickers look like the one shown in the following picture.

You will receive the weather proof sticker with the years in which you have paid your dues. So instead of sending you a new large sticker each year, we will just send you the date sticker.



New IRBA Membership Sticker

For those who are life members, we will send you all the dates. If for some reason you need a new sticker, just let us know and we can send you one.

One project IRB may want to complete next summer is to re-stain the Johnson pavilion. I

will be scheduling a meeting with the park service sometime in late March or early April to have further discussion on these issues.

IRBA Member Michael 'Otis' LeClaire Passes Away - Barry Drue

Michael LeClaire passed away on October 30, 2013, with his children by his side.

I was honored to share a 10-year slice of Otis' life; not that long but it was the best of times. Aboard John Evans' "Miss Laurie" Otis, John "Spook" Messer and I made our pilgrimage to Isle Royale each July to fish for lake trout in the boaters' Association fish tournament. We were the Frostie Freeze Fish Team, a genuine piece of work! It will never be the same again.

It was quite the crew. Otie, Spook, and I were generally on probation for "Captain Abuse" of one form or another. Otis told people on the dock the captain had him on 'Double, Triple Lifetime Probation".

Otis took me under his wing from the moment I joined the crew, and we formed a bond. He was the only one who would get up every morning with me at 4 a.m. While the other sack rats snored we were shuffling on the dock in the dark making coffee on a propane stove and doing our morning ritual.

Otis would have his "korpu" which usually involved Trenary Toast and peanut butter. And then we'd hike off to the restrooms, following the trail through the woods in the dark. Otis would wash his face and carefully comb his thick head of hair. He loved to tell the ladies, "I'm a lover, not a fighter—I'm a Frenchmen!"

Together we watched morning's first light paint Isle Royale's rugged landscape many times. It was always special.

One dark morning we hoofed over the hill through the woods from Tobin Harbor to Rock Harbor. Otie was still hollering. The defibrillator in his pacemaker had gone off. I discovered later that Otis had walked too close to a major electrical panel that was hidden in the bushes. He gave that baby a wide berth from then on!

You'd think the elder statesman of the ship would get some measure of respect.

There was no mercy from the crew and we teased Otis relentlessly about that incident. The captain informed him of protocol should he croak on us while we were out fishing: "Otis we're not going back to the dock. "It's burial at sea!"

We also let him know that the Zodiac inflatable lifeboat on the roof was kind of small for four guys.

"Otis, if the boat sinks we figure there's room for three of us in the lifeboat. Since you're the oldest, you're going overboard. We'll give you one of those cheap orange lifejackets," we told him.

When he protested we added, "Otie, we already voted on it."

Of course, The Frenchmen had plenty to say about all of us, too. We've seen him laugh so hard he fell down in his corner of the boat and couldn't get up!

We knew Otie was struggling this year. He had more heart surgery and a tough winter. For the first time he passed the morning alarm clock duties to me. I knew he was slowing down when he didn't rise until 4:15 a.m.

Otis always told John, "You need a bigger boat. I'm old. I need a couch.!"

He found his couch aboard fellow boater Charlie Townsend's 42-foot steel huller, the "Sara JoAnn". Otis would curl up on the couch with John's giant fish pillow. He also loved the recliners down below and Charlie's wood stove (no Kidding) on chilly Isle Royale days.

The crew took great delight in waking all the sleeping boaters at 5:20 each morning as we left for another day of fishing in paradise. The blowers would go on and John would fire up those 351 Fords, the louder the better. Charlie would tell every one on the dock all day that we filled his boat with exhaust fumes and woke him up. Perfect!

For five years Otis has said every trip would be his last, he was always there one more year, joking, misbehaving and catching fish.

And he did catch fish. I saw Otis and Spook land a 20, 22, and a 28 pounder in an hour one day off Passage Island. Wouldn't you know, it wasn't contest day. We released them. We caught 56 lakers in two hours and 10 minutes one morning off Windigo. Those were truly magic days for all of us. There were many of them.

The theme at Otis' wake was "Gone Fishing" and that was just right.

Otis will be with us again next summer. We've got one of his rods; he'll be fishing once more. He'll forever be after another of those "Lu-Lu" Lake trout each July.

Until then we know our friend and shipmate Otis is finally at rest.

On his couch. With the fishy pillow.



Left to right, Spook, Otis, Charlie, John & Barry.

Annual IRBA Isle Royale Trout Fishing Tournament Results - by Dave Hand

The eleventh annual IRBA Trout Fishing Tournament was held at Windigo in Washington Harbor. The two-day event began sunrise on Friday, July 19, with weigh-in at 5:00 PM at Johnson pavilion and sunrise on Saturday, July 20, with weigh-in at 2:00 PM. Each boat was allowed to enter the three largest fish by weight. Many of the fish caught were donated for the IRBA Fish Fry after the awards presentation held at Rock Harbor.

Plaques were given to three boats with the highest total weight. The Dwane "Bear" Falconer largest fish award was also given to the individual with the largest fish by weight taken in the tournament. In addition, the "Wooden Herring Award" travel trophy was also up for grabs by either the Minnesota or Michigan fishermen for the three largest fish by weight.

This year's event was exceptional with over 50 fishermen entered in the contest. The boat 'Barbara Jean' (Joe Mecklin, Matt Mecklin, & Mike Cardinal) took the top spot with their

three largest fish totaling a whopping 63 lbs 6 oz. Congratulations !

The second place honors went to the boat 'Northeast' (Archie Abrahamson, Brian Chandler, & Nathan Skidmore with a total weight of 52 lbs. 11 oz. The 'Stranger' (Gregg Libby, Gary Youngquist & Bob Johnson) took the third spot with their three largest fish weighing a total of 51 lbs 4 oz.



The Barbara Jean Crew

The largest fish honors went to Mike Cardinal fishing on the 'Barbara Jean' weighing in at a massive 29 lbs 13 oz. Nice fish Mike !

The coveted Wooden Herring Award again went to the Minnesota Fishermen with a total weight of 77 lbs. 15 oz. Congratulations to the Minnesota Fishermen as they have extended their lead in the number of Wooden Herring Awards. Unfortunately, I do not have a picture of the wooden herring award but you know who they are. For some unknown reason I lost pics on my camera and the ones you see of the tournament were sent from Matt Mecklin - Thanks Matt.



Mike Cardinal with the Largest Fish Plaque

One more acknowledgement from the tournament is a nice 26 lb 5 oz whopper caught by Meredith Townsend right in Washington harbor.

The 2014 tournament to be held at Rock Harbor will be exciting. The rules for the fish tournament will continue to be the same.

There were about 140 people at the Fish Fry this year. IRBA appreciates all those who participated in the fishing event and helped with the fish fry.

IRBA Annual Membership Dues

If you're not sure about membership dues, please take a look at the mailing address on this newsletter. Underneath your name there is a line that shows 'Dues paid '14 '15 '16 Lifetime" your dues for 2013. If there is a check mark in the 14, 15, 16 or lifetime your dues are paid up. If there is not a check mark, you will need to pay your dues for this year. A donation is always appreciated! There is a membership form attached to the newsletter if

you need it. If not, then pass it on to someone you may know that would be interested in joining.

IRBA Apparel Available

Presently, we have a lot of medium, large and extra large sweatshirts, fleeces, and polo shirts. You can contact Carol during the day at (906) 482-9342.

IRBA Scheduled Events

IRBA Meeting Wednesday, March 11, 2014, 7PM, at the Range Snowmobile Club, South Range, MI.

IRBA Annual Dinner Meeting - Saturday, May 17, 2014, at the Ramada Inn in Hancock, MI.

Beverages will be served from 5:00 - 6:00 PM followed by a dinner buffet at 6:00. Cost is \$28.00 per person. Please RSVP by sending Dave Hand an email (dwhand@mtu.edu) with the number in your party or by phone at (906) 370 - 7354.

West End Fund Raiser, Thursday, June 19, 2014, 5 PM, at the former Lakeview Castle now under new ownership and renamed "Clearwater Grill and Event Center, Duluth, MN.

IRBA Fishing Tournament - Friday, July 18, 2014, and Saturday, July 19, 2014, at the Rock Harbor, IR. Meeting July 19, 2014, 5 PM, followed by the fish fry.

Isle Royale Boaters Association

Founded June 5, 1996

www.Isleroyale.org

Our mission is to educate, represent, and promote the interest of power and sail boaters, sport fishermen, canoeists, kayakers, backpackers, and all visitors of Isle Royale National Park. Membership is open to all interested people.

Renewal Membership ____ New Membership ____

Dues: (Check one)

____ 1 Year Family Membership ... \$ 35

____ 3 Year Family Membership ... \$ 90

____ Life Family Membership \$ 500

Additional contribution to support the IRBA mission:

\$ 25 __ \$50 __ \$100 __ \$ _____ Other

Name: _____

Spouse: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Fax: _____

How do you enjoy Isle Royale?

Power ____ Sail ____ Paddle ____ Hiker ____ Lodge ____

Name of boat: _____

Please print this form and mail it with your payment to:

Isle Royale Boaters Association

PO Box 97

Houghton, MI 49931

Contributions and dues paid to the Isle Royale Boaters Association, a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, are deductible for computing income and estate taxes.