

FEATURES

B1 WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2010

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COMMENTARY

Sunken logs, bass and Copper Falls

Susie and I sat in the truck with Chris Beeksma and watched the waves crash onto the shore of Lake Superior.

Ordinarily, this would be a beautiful sight, but not with a boat and trailer hooked to the truck and our scheduled fishing trip being dashed against the rocks.

We headed to Ashland, Wis., in early September for the Association of Great Lakes Outdoor Writers annual conference.

We had been given 20 to 25 choices of activities in and near Ashland by the local tourism ladies, Mary, Maribeth and Joanne. Our options included (but certainly were not limited to) bear hunting, canoeing, hiking, biking, wildlife

viewing, geocaching and fishing for a wide variety of species in nearby waters. We decided on a Lake Superior outing for fighting smallmouth.

After a 12-hour drive, we



RICH CREASON

arrived at the AmericInn Hotel and Convention Center, which sits right on the bank of the largest Great Lake. We checked into our room and then called Chris to work out the final details of our upcoming battle with some four- and five-pound smallmouth. He was to pick us up the next morning at the inn, take us to a nearby tackle shop to get our licenses, and then launch his boat into Chequamegon Bay. (That's pronounced she-wah-me-gon.) That's how we found

LAPEL GRAD

"It was so much fun and such a definitely hope to be involve

Lily Barker



RUNNING

the waves.

Chris decided it was unsafe to venture out into the big waters. He asked us if we would mind fishing some smaller inland lakes. Having the choice of possibly finding if our personal flotation devices really worked, or enjoying ourselves in some sheltered waters, we took the sensible option. He fired the truck up, and we headed to a chain of 10 lakes a few miles away.

He expertly backed his 19-foot Skeeter boat with a 200 HP Yamaha and a Minnkota trolling motor into the water next to the dock. The lake we had entered was Twin Bear, but we also fished in Millicent and Heart Lakes. Each held a wide variety of fish species including large and smallmouth bass, musky, northern and others. We began slowly cruising along the shoreline, casting to the edge of weedlines, sunken trees, and some hidden reefs. We used assorted diving baits and I threw some spinnerbaits. It didn't matter the lure or presentation. All caught one to two pound smallmouth with a few largemouth bass thrown in for variety. While we were expecting smallmouth more than twice that size on Lake Superior, any size smallie will give an angler a good fight. We released all we caught and finally had to head back to the hotel.

If you want to fish the big lake smallmouth we weren't able to try for, contact Captain Chris Beeksma, Get Bit Guide Service, 10595 Cedar Crest Road, Iron River, WI 54847. You can check his website at www.getbitguideservice.com, phone 715-292-4410, or e-mail Chris at getbit@cheqnet.net.

During our breaks between conference activities, we visited the local visitor's center on the west end of town (outstanding), walked the downtown to observe the fantastic murals painted on the business walls, found coins on the beach with our metal detectors, and picked up a quart bag of colored beach or sea glass polished by the waves, rocks, and sand and washed up on the shore.

LILY BARKER

Lapel grad heads up Ball State Ho

Amanda Matlock,

A recent Lapel Hi taken Ball State Committee by s one of the most homecoming to the nationa



Lily Barker displays the special bed trophies for the winners of the 2010 Ball State Homecoming Bed Races.

Photos provided by Kate Webber / Times-Post

Lily Barker, a 2009 LHS graduate, is a sophomore at Ball State University in Muncie and played a pivotal part in Ball State's yearly homecoming celebrations by planning the bed races.

Barker was the bed race chairwoman on the steering committee, and the bed races, which took place Friday, Oct. 8, were video recorded for Fox Sports and will be shown nationally at a later date.

"One cool thing about this year's bed races is that they're going to be on national television," Barker said. "It'll be televised sometime in late October"

Bed races have been a popular event at Ball State for a long time. In the races, teams of five push and steer beds with wheels down a street in Muncie during

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On our first night of conference, the group had dinner at the Bad River Casino and Lodge (www.badriver.com) just east of Ashland. Our ride back to the hotel left too soon for us to try our luck at the slots, but a lot of other folks seemed to be having a great time there.

We had one morning left open for a wide variety of trips throughout the area. We decided to go on the hike along the Bad

River where it goes through Copper Falls State Park. This was a two-mile trek along wooded trails which bordered the 60- to 100-foot deep canyon formed by the river plunging through the rock on its way to Lake Superior. The 29-foot drop near the start of the trail is called Copper Falls, which the park is named after. Gorgeous vistas appear through the trees showing the copper colored river slashing through the canyon. I took as many pictures on the opposite side of the trail where assorted fungus, late wildflowers, mosses and other plants grew abundantly. Given time, we

would have retraced our steps to see the same route from the opposite direction.

Our last visit was to a business called Timeless Timber. This name is the registered trademark of wood products manufactured from logs recovered from the bottom of lakes and rivers in North America. These sunken logs have lain on the bottom since the logging days of the northland more than 100 years ago. Made from old growth timber, with fine grain and unique color, these products are made from a piece of history. I watched the short video explaining the logging practices and how the sunken logs were salvaged to be made into beautiful furniture, musical instruments, flooring and more. I strolled through the extensive gift shop buying several items to bring home plus purchasing some lumber to make my handcrafted pens.

This small area of northern Wisconsin has a lot to offer any outdoorsman. Deer, bear and birds are numerous and the fishing opportunities are unlimited. Contact the Ashland Chamber of Commerce (www.visitashland.com) for all the information needed to plan your own trip.

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Joey Cole

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