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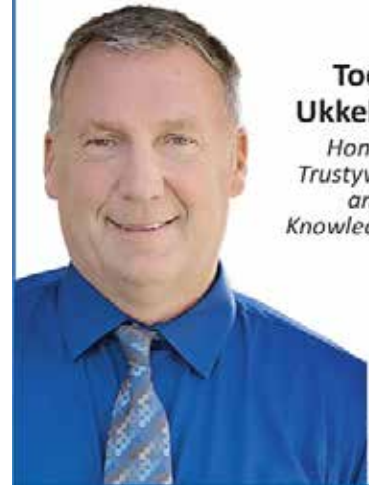
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BY ED PAWLENTY



OTC

Otter Tail County

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NURSE PRACTITIONER - LAKE REGION HEALTHCARE PSYCHIATRY
PHOTOS COURTESY OF LAKE REGION HEALTHCARE



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Otter Tales



It's summer! As usual for Minnesota, the weather is odd again. Temps are cool then hot, lot more rain than normal, which is too much for some of our area farmers. I guess odd is the normal for us here in the state.

I hope all of you had a great 4th of July. It fell perfectly on a Friday, which is nice for making a three-day weekend without using vacation. The weather was hot and lots of fireworks were canceled due to rain coming in at the wrong time but most made it up on Saturday, which was a nice evening.

The pic at right is not Boomer, it's Archie his brother who was up for a visit from Florida with his parents, my daughter and son-in-law. Archie is a rare guy since he doesn't like thunder, but as you can see, he loves fireworks. Boomer is not a big fan and was trying to sleep under my chair in the pontoon, tired from a long day of chasing balls off the dock. As always, it is good to see family from close and afar.

We have a great summer issue for you again. It starts off with a great history piece about swimsuit fashion in the old days here in Otter Tail County. Funny to think they could actually swim in some of those bulky suits, but modesty was the motto back in the day.

Next up, we get to see the brilliant flowers of summer with a photo trip to the Northern Plains Botanical Garden in Fargo. The stunning colors will definitely make you feel better with your early morning coffee.

Learning at any age is a good thing. In this issue, you can learn about caring for your trees during the summer to keep them healthy, along with tips to improve your own mental health – which may be much needed sometimes. Of course, relaxing by a lake has to be on this list somewhere!

A summertime favorite is always pizza...maybe the whole year. We have a real tasty recipe that makes it easy to enjoy them in a quick hurry. I think I gained five pounds just reading it.

Welcome to summer folks, it plans to be an odd (normal) one for us and that is what makes it great to live in our part of the world...you never get bored here for sure. Enjoy!

— Ed Pawlenty, **OTC** Publisher



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STORY & PHOTOS BY PAM LARSON

Miniature Alice in Wonderland scene along the path in the Children's Garden



If you want to take a calming break from the flurry of summer activities, the **Northern Plains Botanic Garden** (NPBGS) is a delightful destination. It is a collection of gardens located on six acres of Fargo Park District land at Yunker Park in North Fargo. Displayed are a variety of environments including cool woodlands, open prairie, hot, dry, or even watery habitats. The garden also features a variety of walking trails, educational programs, and interactive exhibits. (To view an aerial virtual tour, go to: <https://www.npbgs.org/>)

Northern Plains Botanic Garden Society Inc. is a non-profit organization based in Fargo, North Dakota, and founded in 1998. The society is run by a board of directors and a team of dedicated volunteers who promote education, research, and conservation of plants in the region. Some of the main garden areas are: Edible Forest, Woodland Garden, Japanese Garden and Children's Garden.



Sign at entrance



Fountain in Pergola by entrance

Celosia Plant



Blue Fescue Ornamental Grass



Peppermint Zinnia



above: Lovely Landscape Arrangement

right: Whimsical Tree Trunk





Prickly Pear Cactus



above: Flowers near entrance



*left:
Day lily*



*clockwise: Birdhouse in Edible Forest,
Unusual 'Love Lies Bleeding' plant,
Seedless table grapes and blackberries
in Edible Forest*

bottom, l-r: Butterfly Garden, Edible Forest sign

The **Edible Forest** project provides educational opportunities about local food and horticulture, connects to nearby garden trails for walkers and bikers, and provides a haven for birds and native pollinators. The project started the summer of 2019 and has ongoing additions and revisions, depending on the viability of particular plants. This area includes native fruit-bearing trees, shrubs, and other pollinator-friendly perennial plants. A fence helps keep the wildlife from eating the fruits. There are educational tours that teach about the many plants, including trees such as apple, pear, apricot, plum, cherry, peach, hazelnut, and pecan. There are also grape vines, kiwis, and numerous berry cultivars that survive and thrive in this climate. Visitors are encouraged to sample the fruit, but harvesting is reserved for staff support sales at the Farmer's Market.



Crossing the bridge over the pond with water plants, you come to the shady **Woodland Garden**. Woodland plants such as ferns and hostas make you feel transported out of the city and into the woods as you stroll through the dappled shade of the trail. Benches along the trail give an opportunity to enjoy the coolness of the tree cover.



above: Water lily

right: Water Smartweed plant



above: Woodland Trail

below: Woodland Trail plants



Following the path out of the woodland, you discover the work-in-progress of the dry or **Japanese Garden**. Using native materials, this garden is created in the popular Japanese landscape style, sometimes called a Zen Garden. This plan creates a miniature landscape through carefully arranged rocks, water features, moss, pruned trees and bushes. Gravel or sand is raked to represent ripples in water. It is meant to be seen while seated and the gravel is only stepped on during maintenance. It is a tranquil place, intended to aid in meditation. Future plans include a gazebo, a tea garden and koi pond.



above and right: Japanese Dry Garden

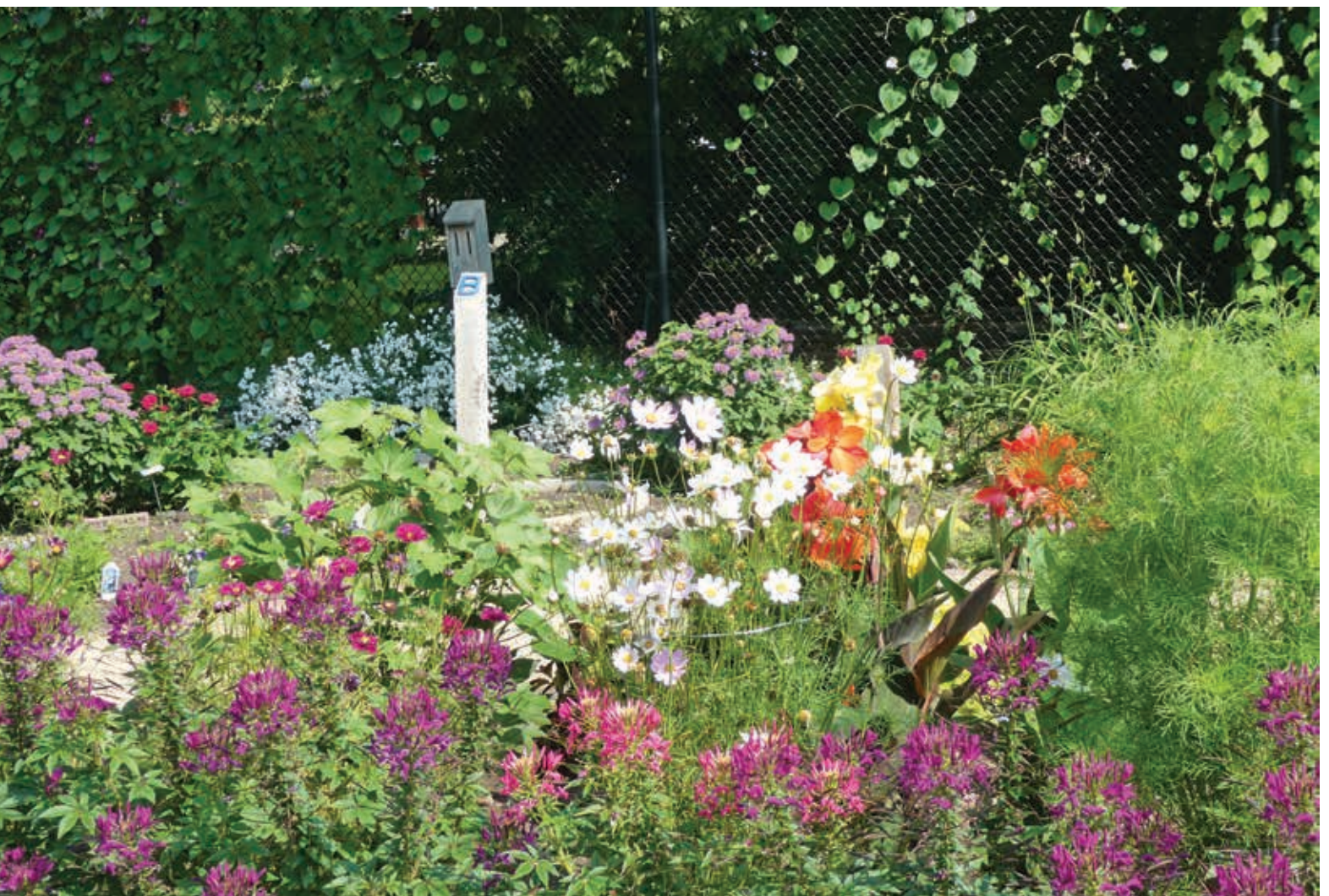




'Z' is for zinnias in the Alphabet Garden

Along the path in the Children's Garden

The **Children's Garden** is a charming section that includes the **Alphabet Garden, Kids Activity Zone** and **Fairy Garden**. At least one plant or flower in the Alphabet Garden starts with each letter of the alphabet, for example 'P' for petunias and 'Z' for zinnias. There is a small natural playground where kids can walk on balance logs, play hopscotch or hide in a vine-covered trellis tent. A fascinating Fairy Garden is hidden in the trees, and behind a fence to keep curious fingers at a distance. Small scenes, statues and percussive instruments are scattered throughout the space.



Painted Lady Butterfly on coneflower



Tiger Swallowtail butterfly on bee balm



above: 'U' is for Unicorn Plant

below: 'P' is for petunias in the Alphabet Garden



Yellow Snapdragons





Finding shade in the Vine Trellis Tent



Making music in the Children's Garden



*above and left:
Close-ups of sections in
the Fairy Garden*



below: Artwork in the Fairy Garden trees



These gardens are a wonderful place to spend an hour or two when you are in Fargo. The admission and parking are free. The hours are sunrise to sunset, every day of the year.

OTC

"To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow."
— Audrey Hepburn

Pam Larson, a retired school librarian, lives in Fergus Falls, Minnesota.





The Lakeside Gourmet

BY SANDRA THIMGAN, PHOTOS BY DAN THIMGAN



Bread Machine Pizza Dough

(Makes 5 - 7" rounds)

Put ingredients into your machine as directed by your manual. Use the "dough" cycle on your machine. This usually takes about 1½ hour, then your dough is ready to shape and grill.

¾ cup + 2 T. water

¾ tsp. salt

2 T. olive oil

2½ cups all purpose flour

2 tsp. sugar

1 pkg. or 2 tsp. active dry yeast

Fresh herbs of choice, optional

All Hands on Deck! Your deck, that is, and the entertainment is . . . **grilling pizza!**

Grilling season is here! Forget the humdrum brats and burgers. You can grill pizza — that's right, grill pizza — featuring that "stone oven" look and taste right on your deck with your gas grill. With grilled pizza, the crust is the star, so give the homemade dough a spin. Choose a few simple toppings to showcase the smoky flavor and the crispy crust! Once you see those grill marks and that charring on your crusts, you will be a grilled pizza convert and "take out" pizza may become a meal of the past!

Of course, you can use any dough you wish — refrigerated, frozen dough (thawed), or fresh dough from a local pizza place, but you really must give homemade a try! If you don't have a bread machine, you can make this same recipe with a mixer or food processor, let it rise until doubled and continue with the process.

Preparing Crusts for Grilling

- Divide dough into five equal portions (4 oz. each or about the size of a baseball), shape into rounds, either stretching them by hand or using a rolling pin. Each round should be no more than ¼ inch thick — the thinner, the better — and 7" is a good personal size.
- Make all the dough rounds at once. Stack together by coating parchment squares with olive oil, and layering the dough rounds between the papers. (Paper, oil, dough, oil: repeat).
- Heat the covered gas grill to 350°.
- Take your stack of rounds to the grill on a sheet pan, along with tongs or a spatula for turning. Open the cover, pick up the paper under each round, then flip the dough onto the grill, then remove paper. Put 2-3 crusts on at once, depending on grill size. Work quickly putting the crusts on the grill to conserve heat.
- Close the cover and grill about two minutes, rotate crusts 180°, grill another one-two minutes, until you have good "grill marks", flip, grill one minute on second side, and remove.

Dressing and Grilling Your Pizzas

- Have all your crusts, cheeses, cooked meats, and toppings at room temperature, laid out, and ready.
- You will be “dressing” the darker side of the crust that has the charred “grill marks”. Dress each pizza sparingly, as it will only be on the grill long enough to melt the cheese, heat the toppings, and crisp the crust.
- Return the dressed pizzas to a covered grill until the cheese melts and the toppings are heated through. Once they are back on the grill, watch carefully so you don’t burn the bottom crust. Charred crusts are tasty. Burned crusts? Not so much.
- Depending upon the heat of the grill and the size of your pizzas, this should take about three minutes. If you go longer, watch carefully, your nose will be your guide!

Throwing a Grilled Pizza Party!

Now that you mastered the technique, it’s time to throw an “event pizza party”! You will be this year’s creative hosts of the neighborhood, all without heating up your oven or your kitchen. Turning your deck into a pizzeria is a unique, interactive party idea where the preparation and grilling ARE the entertainment. The “hands on” technique of guests customizing their own “brand” of pizza provides unlimited opportunities for conversation, opinion polls, some friendly banter, sharing and/or judging the finished products. Prep can be done well in advance so everyone, including the hosts, can simply enjoy the fun and shout, “All hands on deck!” and start grilling those pizzas!

Pizza Party Hints

- Prepare as many crusts as needed in advance and freeze. Bring out the day of the party to thaw.
- Pre-cook toppings like sausage, grilled chicken, ground beef, onions, peppers and mushrooms.
- Have all crusts, cheeses, sauces, and other toppings at room temperature.

Dress crusts SPARINGLY!

Don’t overload or they won’t get hot before the crust burns.

- **Sauce ideas:** marinara, pesto, Alfredo, olive oil, or dipping oils
- **Unique toppings:** spinach, fresh herbs, olives, capers, or sun dried tomatoes.



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Olive Tasting Community

“Sharing recipes is part of our culture, enriching each one of us and binding us together.”

Sandra Thimgan lives on Silver Lake with her husband/photographer/taster, Daniel.



5 Evidence-Based Ways to Improve Your Mental Health



Mental health is a critical component of overall well-being, yet it's often put on the back burner in the busyness of daily life. The good news is that evidence from psychological and medical research shows us that some small and practical steps can support and enhance your mental health. Let's explore five scientifically backed strategies that can make a meaningful difference.



By Diana Tran, Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) – Lake Region Healthcare Psychiatry

1. Schedule Mental Health Breaks or Appointments Regularly

Making time for therapy or scheduled mental health breaks isn't just a luxury—it's a necessity for long-term well-being. A large body of research shows that psychotherapy, especially cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), is highly effective in treating anxiety, depression, and stress-related disorders. Even brief mental health breaks during the day can reduce cognitive fatigue and improve mood. Studies also show short breaks improve attention span and reduce mental exhaustion, especially during prolonged tasks.

Quick Tip: Block out time weekly for reflection, therapy, or mindfulness—even 10–15 minutes can be measurably beneficial.

2. Eat More Foods That Contribute to Brain Health

Nutrition plays a powerful role in brain function and emotional regulation. Diets rich in omega-3 fatty acids, antioxidants, fiber, and vitamins are associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety. The SMILES trial, a randomized controlled study, found that participants with major depression who followed a Mediterranean-style diet experienced significantly greater improvement in mood compared to a control group receiving social support. Key nutrients like omega-3s (found in fatty fish), folate (leafy greens), and polyphenols (berries, dark chocolate) have been linked to better cognitive function and emotional resilience.

Quick Tip: Incorporate more whole foods, especially fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, and lean proteins, into your daily meals.

3. Get Regular Physical Exercise

Physical activity is one of the most effective and accessible ways to improve mental health. According to a meta-analysis published in *JAMA Psychiatry*, regular physical activity significantly reduces symptoms of depression, regardless of age or baseline health.

Exercise helps regulate stress hormones like cortisol, boosts mood-enhancing neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine, and improves sleep—all of which contribute to better mental health.

Quick Tip: Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity (like brisk walking) on most days of the week.



4. Set Down Your Phone

While technology has many benefits, excessive screen time—especially on social media—has been linked to increased feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and depression. One study found that teens and young adults who spent more time on screens were more likely to report poor mental health outcomes. Taking “digital detoxes” or establishing screen-free hours can help reset attention, reduce stress, and promote healthier sleep patterns.

Quick Tip: Try tech-free periods during meals or the first and last hour of your day. Consider turning off non-essential notifications.

5. Use Your Vacation Time

Time away from work isn’t just about rest—it’s about mental recovery. Research shows that vacation time leads to decreased burnout and improved mood, with benefits that can last for weeks after returning.

Yet many people, especially in the U.S., underuse their paid time off. Prioritizing downtime and travel—even short local trips—can improve life satisfaction, reduce stress, and enhance creative thinking.

Quick Tip: Don’t wait for the “perfect time” to take PTO—plan mini breaks or staycations throughout the year to recharge regularly.

Mental health maintenance doesn’t require drastic changes—just consistent, research-supported habits. By scheduling regular mental health breaks, eating for brain health, staying active, reducing screen time, and actually using vacation time, individuals can support long-term emotional and cognitive well-being. Like physical health, mental wellness is built day by day, choice by choice.



Summer Tree Tips

BY BRANDON JOHNSON
CARR'S TREE SERVICE

Minnesota's summer climate, marked by rising temperatures, increased extreme rainfall, and drought, necessitates informed tree care for health and longevity. Proactive strategies are key to maintaining the health of your trees.

Watering is paramount, especially for newly planted trees. Those in their first three to five years need 15-25 gallons weekly when the ground is thawed, skipping if over an inch of rain occurs. New plantings require daily watering for the first 2 weeks, transitioning to every 2 to 3 days for the next 3 to 12 weeks, then weekly until established (up to two years). The goal is 6-9 inches of soil penetration, verifiable with a spade or metal rod. Water in early morning or late evening to minimize evaporation; nighttime watering (10 PM to 8 AM) is particularly effective. During drought, even mature native trees need weekly supplemental irrigation. Avoid frequent, light watering, which promotes shallow roots susceptible to stress.

Proper mulching significantly benefits tree health. Apply three to four inches of organic mulch, such as wood chips, extending 2 to 3 feet from the trunk out to the canopy edge. Mulch retains moisture, regulates root temperature, and suppresses weeds.

Crucially, never pile mulch directly against the trunk in a "mulch volcano," as this can cause root suffocation, bark decay, root rot, and attract damaging rodents.

Strategic pruning is vital for structural integrity and disease prevention. Prune young trees early to develop strong structures. However, pruning oak trees during the growing season (typically April through July) can cause the spread of Oak Wilt, a serious fungal disease transmitted by sap beetles attracted to fresh wounds. For complex tasks, consider a certified arborist.

Protecting trees from environmental stressors and biological threats is also essential. Use fencing or plastic tree guards against wildlife and sunscald.



above: Watering newly-planted tree
left: Proper mulching

right: Diplodia blight & canker
on pine branch

below: Emerald Ash borer



Be vigilant for common Minnesota pests like Emerald Ash Borer and diseases such as Diplodia. Adequate hydration is a primary defense against heat stress, as well-watered leaves show significantly less damage during heat waves.

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Brandon Johnson is a work planner for Carr's Tree Service and lead on the marketing committee. Outside of CTS he enjoys time with his family, officiating baseball, basketball, and football, as well as playing baseball for the Detroit Lakes Ligers



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Past Times in Otter Tail County:

Let's Go Swimming!

BY MISSY HERMES, EDUCATION COORDINATOR, OTTER TAIL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE OTTER TAIL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY (OTCHS) AND MAY NOT BE REPRINTED WITHOUT PERMISSION

Temperatures are on the rise and folks with access to the heart of the Park Region's sparkling lakes can take their pick of the recreational bounty found in Otter Tail County. Fishing, boating, water skiing, tubing, kayaking – water sports provide tourists and residents with endless ways of cooling off in the water. In addition to lakes, several communities in the area have updated or newly constructed aquatic centers, swimming pools and

splash pads. The Otter Tail County Historical Society has a rich photographic archives collection and the swim-related pictures are some of my favorites.

The evolution of swimming costumes from the full-skirted bathing suit complete with stockings, to wool one-pieces to bikinis took just 60 years. A look in the 1902 Sears, Roebuck and Co. catalog shows a ladies' two-piece union suit with skirt, "made from good quality navy blue cotton fabric, with sailor



People in swimwear and a girl in a boat, circa 1905-1907, from photo album "Lakes", taken by summer residents from Iowa to the Battle Lake area © OTCHS [Accession No 2013.43]



*Four women and three men in swimsuits, circa 1905
© OTCHS [Accession No 2013.43]*

collar, blouse effect," cost \$2.50. The complementary male bathing suit, available in black or navy blue, set swimmers back just 75 cents while one with "fancy stripes" cost \$1.

Not everyone wanted to pay for a Sears swimsuit back in the day, preferring to jump into the Otter Tail River in their birthday suit. The July 3, 1924, Fergus Falls newspaper included a warning from the Police Department under the headline **MUST WEAR BATHING SUITS**. Apparently some Fergusites were unhappy about the lack of swimming apparel because according to the notice, "Complaints are being made that boys are bathing inside the city limits without bathing suits. This is contrary to the ordinance and unless stopped at once, arrests will be made."

Within a decade, the city had a swimming pool built on the river, funded by the American Legion and federal Works Progress Administration. In the summer of 1932, the American Red Cross held a swimming pageant and program there, promoting swimming lessons for children. The organization also provided swimming lessons for the troops of Boy and Girl Scouts who held their summer camps on Eagle Lake in the 1920s.

One of the first resorts in the county is located north of Eagle Lake township on Clitherall Lake. In the book, *Old Clitherall Story Book*, Elizabeth Tucker Corliss describes the origins of Camp Corliss where, "our children, growing to manhood and womanhood, always felt better for a summer at camp, and many other dear children learned their first lessons in fishing and swimming there."

At the same time that the Corliss family opened their resort, business and civic leaders began promoting Battle Lake as a resort location. Vacationers from the Twin Cities could take the Northern Pacific round trip for just \$6.90 in 1887. The *Battle Lake Review* extolled the virtues of the area, employing all the flowery language possible to describe "the lake breeze that comes to her like a gentle zephyr, tempered and soft as eider-down" and scenery "classed with the most picturesque and sublime in Minnesota." Furthermore, the author enthused, "...whatever we have dreamed of Eden is constantly realized in the surroundings of Battle Lake."

Formed in 1906, the Battle Lake Amusement and Navigation Co. capitalized on the growing



Boy Scouts summer camp 1921. The district executive is kneeling on the far left. © OTCHS [4414]

popularity of the area and built an attraction for lake visitors to enjoy. "**SHOOT THE CHUTES**" read the newspaper headline of an article describing the project to build "a toboggan slide near the boat-houses in this village. When completed the chute will be 125 feet long and will extend from the high south

bank of the lake into the water." Diving towers joined these large slides as a draw for swimmers.

The crowd estimates recorded at summer events in the 1930s are amazing. Imagine 10,000 people showing up for the 1932 Old Settlers Meeting (forerunner to the Otter Tail County Historical



*Ten Mile Lake Resort was named Prohosky's from 1906-1950s. © OTCHS [16113]
The white building over the lake was a dance pavilion that they later turned into a changing house for swimmers.*



Big slide on Battle Lake, c. 1910. © OTCHS [9807]

Society) at Battle Lake to “frolic, swim, picnic” and listen to an address by Minnesota Governor Floyd Olson, or 3,000 people traveling to Ten Mile Lake in 1938 for an outdoor sports program. The Fergus Falls Fish and Game Club sponsored the event held at Camp Prohosky, now called Ten Mile Lake Resort. In addition to other sports, it featured “trap and rifle shooting, swimming and horseshoe pitching,” plus the music of Al Otnes’s German Band.

A postcard from the resort’s earliest days shows a white building extending out over the water (bottom photo, opposite page).

Before the advent of the Salk vaccine in 1955, the words “infantile paralysis” struck fear into the hearts of parents and public health officials. Swimming beaches became danger zones, not because of drownings but for fear of catching polio.



The American Legion swimming pool with diving tower on the Otter Tail River in Fergus Falls. © OTCHS [9472]



Boating and swimming at Otter Tail Lake, Tanglewood Camp in Everts Township. © OTCHS [11101]

In 1946, the Otter Tail County Fair was cancelled, dance halls closed and all recreational swimming programs in the area ceased as cases of the debilitating disease rose. By October of that year the county had seen 32 cases and four deaths due to polio.

*right: Greetings from Fergus Falls
Women in bathing suits.
© OTCHS [9303]*

*below: Lee's Amusement on Wall Lake was owned
by Conrad Lee until 1930. © OTCHS [51846]*



*right: Red Cross
swimming instructors
Bernard O. Soukup
and John Boyesen
in 1932, modeling
swimsuits from the
turn of the century.*

*© OTCHS [18
Accession No 2013.43
Page 15. Upper left]*



Postcard for Old Town Camp on
Clitherall Lake, c. 1970s.
© OTCHS [16186]



Caption on the back: "OLD TOWN
CAMP On Beautiful Clitherall Lake"
This camp is located 1 1/2 miles
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Sunbathing on the beach at Camp
Balmoral on Otter Tail Lake,
Battle Lake, MN
© OTCHS [16145]



Swimming scene at Bass Lake, Underwood MN, 1938. © OTCHS [4173]
l-r: N. N. Pederson (barber), G. K. Haukebo (general store manager), Dr. W.A. Lee, Peder Ossander (farmer),
Edwin Sjoldal (butcher), and Odin Loseth (general merchant and dealer for "Indian" motorcycles).



Pebble Lake waterslide in Fergus Falls. July 1977. © OTCHS [7886]



*Vacationers at Minneha Resort on West Battle Lake, 1984.
© OTCHS [16797]*



Sarah Hefte (left) and Kersti Nelson headed for the state swimming and diving meet at Cooke Hall at the University of Minnesota, November 1982. © OTCHS [13612]

Those frightening days were long over when the siren call of adventure on Battle Lake captured the imagination of four teenage girls spending the summer of 1960 with their families at Camp Little Missouri on the south shore of West Battle. The daring teens decided to travel all the way around Battle Lake in one day. Twin sisters Janice and Jeannette McCarty, Patty Tucker and Gail Tucker arose at 5 a.m., packed lunches and set off, hiking, wading and swimming. Reaching Camp Napanee, the intrepid bunch had to "swim the channel at the point to the peninsula." Removing their blouses, they tossed their bundles across to keep them dry while swimming the narrow but deep channel. They completed the epic journey in just nine hours.

What epic adventure have you planned for the summer? Hopefully you will have a chance to dip your toes in the beautiful waters of Otter Tail County!

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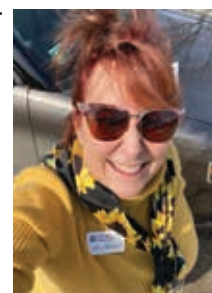
For more information on resorts and lake life
(including swimming suits), the Otter Tail County
Museum exhibit "Resorts" continues through the
summer of 2025.

The exhibit also includes a memorial to the
people who have tragically lost their lives in
drowning incidents in Otter Tail County.

Also wear a lifejacket when boating!



Missy Hermes has specialized in Otter
Tail County history and museum
education since moving to Minnesota in
1991. She is a Returned Peace Corps
Volunteer, writer, scrapbooker, avid
reader and mom. Missy and her husband
Paul live in Fergus Falls with their ginger
rescue cat.



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