



BLOG TRAFFIC ON WISCONSIN POINT POSTING

by Allen Raffetto

A blog is a mechanism for reaching out and touching people with opinions but doing so diplomatically. Nonetheless I am making entries on our blog and the one about Wisconsin Point did draw a comment. I quote: "If Wisconsin Point is a burden, why not give it back to the rightful owners, Native Americans!!" It was an emphatic statement, not a question. Feel free to deliver your opinions in person or online. My response follows.

"Thank you for your comment on the Wisconsin Point posting. I knew the topic could be a touchy one and I wondered if anybody read or cared about blog listings on the issue. I appreciate your concern even though I have a rather different view than what you expressed.

You see I grew up on a river and near an ocean. I guess that upbringing imprinted upon me the need to be near land with water. Consequently, that was one major reason I moved up to a place where the largest body of water comes in contact with the State of Wisconsin. Being on or near Lake Superior feeds my spirit, mind and body. And it's darn hard to stay alive without good water. So for me land with water always is something to be treasured.

Growing up out West I also witnessed the treasured nature of water for the folks wanting to live wherever they wished. You only need to stumble over water rights issues or look at the huge projects that artificially moved water from one place to the next to grasp the measures people will undertake to gain possession of this critical, treasured resource. You might want to search "Water Wars in the Western U.S." or "How Los Angeles got (some say stole) its Water from Northern California".

Over the years I've also learned that the treasures you come to possess always carry with them some burdens. The "treasure-burden" question can't be either-or as my title asserted. The harsh reality is accepting that any land with water will always be a treasure AND a burden. How about a couple of personal examples?

I grew up on a river that provided us with beauty, non-motorized recreational fun, great fishing (at times) and water that we could drink (if we chose to) and irrigate our small orchard. It is still a treasure in my memory, but I also recall the burdens as well. Each year it flooded in the Spring destroying property and occasionally taking lives. For us the burden was to win the fight against the river's power and live for awhile without its drinking water and the comforts from its "indoor plumbing". At the ocean we'd see beautiful homes built on beachfront property so that the owners could fully enjoy the visual and acoustical abundance of the sea. Even the smell of the ocean is a pleasure that lingers on in my brain. But then there were the unavoidable burdens associated with what ocean waves do to a shoreline. And with the right storm conditions you could watch these expensive dwellings fall into the ocean. Those homeowners sought the treasures of land by water and yet were foolish enough to ignore or discount the burdens of storms and erosion.

My point is that every treasure will have some kind of burden associated with it. And the reverse also is the reality, meaning that a burden you encounter contains some treasure in it. The trick is to handle the burden and figure out where the treasure is. And this truism doesn't grant exemptions for designated groups of people.

Frankly, your suggestion that, if it's a burden, give Wisconsin Point back to the Native Americans, is irrelevant. It doesn't matter if you have it, I have it, the City of Superior/State of Wisconsin has it, the Native Americans have it, or some big, Donald Trump-like developer has it. The problem remains the same: How will you effectively work with the burdens and the treasures of Wisconsin Point? Folks who have written about this call it wise stewardship (another topic to check out on Google). Wise stewardship should be the first principle for anyone responsible to the land and water that is Wisconsin Point."



Blog Posting on November 25

by Allen Raffetto

Note: The blog title is "SILOS" and the content stems from my thoughts after the board's meeting with our DG, Roly Turner

One of the responsibilities for Rotary District Governors (DGs) is to visit every club in their Districts (our District is # 5580) during their year as Governor. Our District includes all of Minnesota, North Dakota, some of Ontario Canada and some of Northwestern Wisconsin. That's a lot of clubs, a lot of driving and a lot of chances to find out how well things are working in each club and why. Roly Turner, our current DG, shared some interesting observations with our board last week (11-17). He noted that collaboration between adjacent clubs is up, but collaboration is not generally widespread because it's difficult to establish and maintain. Of course collaboration or cooperation depend on people and how they behave when working together. DG Roly believes that two major factors dictate the success or failure of cooperative/collaborative efforts in clubs: 1) it takes two or three capable key players to drive the process; and 2) it takes club members who are willing and able to "drop their guard". Dropping ones guard implies the need to be trusting of one another (i.e., other clubs' members) and be able to tolerate the vulnerability that inherently accompanies trust situations. This is not a unique issue to Rotary clubs. You can see it in any group or team trying to work together to accomplish something special, meaning a success that could not be realized by one individual or club acting alone. The term "silo mentality" has been popularized in the business world. Silos symbolize free-standing, autonomous entities performing some job with a purpose, and there is little if any cooperation or collaboration between silos. They just stand there waiting for their next job oblivious to what the other silos are up to. People who think and act like that have silo mentalities. The silo metaphor is used to describe businesses that have departments or divisions or multiple locations that do not work together even though they could or should under the right circumstances. Here's the "so what" query: Why should the parts want to work together as a whole? You can hear the nabobs of negativism mutter: "Our business (club) has been successful without all this cooperation/collaboration nonsense. You know, eventually the stuff gets done whether folks work together or not, so long as we still have our overworked and underappreciated member, Joe or Sally. So let's not change! Let's resist or avoid doing anything differently. Besides it will just end up meaning more work for us, like always." Does some of that sound familiar to you? That's one hard cultural mindset to break! Again, why try? My answer comes from observing that not all tasks are created equal. There are individual tasks that people do by themselves without any help from anybody inside or outside their "clan". But every so often there comes a bigger job that one person can't do, and so he/she has to cooperate with one or more others to get it done. Note that each cooperating person does his/her own work and when the finished parts are done, they hopefully fit together as one job. More and more these days something comes along (often prompted by a consultant) that's a "BHAG", big, hairy audacious goal". The only way to successfully reach these goals is through collaboration with others. The difference between cooperation and collaboration is that, in the latter case, the individuals work together so that they actually multiply their energy/effort to achieve something they couldn't have done individually or cooperatively. To read more on this topic I suggest you search for "The Wisdom of Teams" by Katzenbach and Smith. What are the implications for Rotary Clubs? Historically our organizations use a "spawning process" where one club sponsors others and each of these "offspring" is charged with the goal of becoming an autonomous, free-standing unit that spawns still more offspring. What this model does is reinforce independent, autonomous thinking and behavior. This has worked for about 105 years so there shouldn't be some huge problem threatening Rotary Clubs. Yet maybe there is if you believe there is zero net growth in the district's clubs and/or membership. But remember, Rotary Clubs can and some do choose to collaborate on a special BHAG. That's what the Lake Superior Dragon Boat Festival (LSDBF) is, a big hairy audacious event now approaching its tenth year. The Superior Rotary club, the Duluth Harbortown club and the Superior Sunrise club have developed a collaborative process for our continued success. Since the three clubs meet in different places at different days and times we can't get everyone to come together for some grand, synergistic

happening. Instead we use something that sounds a bit crazy: 27 sub-committees, one executive committee, and a co-chairman arrangement that seems to join the co-chairs at the hip each year. The results talk and they say it works! We have the "few capable, key players and we continually work at "dropping our guard" and trusting one another. It ain't easy and when you add new folks (like me) to each year's mix, challenges do arise. But when LSDBG works as it did last year (and each of the previous eight years) collectively we are quite satisfied, we have a lot of fun in the process, and we accomplish something that truly is for the benefit of all concerned. Happy Thanksgiving!

WISCONSIN POINT: TREASURE OR BURDEN

By Allen Raffetto

[Photo] Tom Bridge (left) and Warren Bender with photos from Wisconsin Point. The posting was made on October 29, 2010

First I should note that Warren wears the dragon shirt to Rotary meetings because he is the co-chair of next year's Dragon Boat Festival. I don't think he wears it to City Council meetings but I could be wrong.

Wisconsin Point is a complex topic and thus difficult to describe or discuss in a short space, blog or otherwise. Tom Bridge got our usual 15-minute speaker space and he barely scratched the surface. Nonetheless there were many questions posed to him after his talk. The underlying issue seems to be how best to plan for the future of Wisconsin Point. Right now Wisconsin Point is *both* a treasure and a burden.

Let's start with the facts about what Wisconsin Point is. According to the Official Website of Superior it:

- Has a total of 203 acres with 2.75 miles of beach
- Includes a lighthouse for the Superior entry
- Has an historical marker for a sacred Chippewa burial ground
- Has activities including bird watching, duck hunting, hiking and "beach use"
- Is described as a "Watchable Wildlife Area" and I don't know what that really means.

Along with these descriptors are ones for a handful of prohibited activities, from horseback riding to bringing in glass "beverage containers". When you think about it, the positive features and related activities can conflict very easily. For example, if you don't know the life history of John Audubon, you just might believe that hunting and birdwatching can't coexist. Actually, even today the two activities serve the same purpose. On the matter of prohibitions, some of them only apply when the smelt aren't running. Unfortunately, Tom's presentation included a collection of photos showing that the prohibitions aren't working (regardless of smelt run). Human intrusion will degrade any environment and does so faster when no one chooses to be responsible or personally accountable. Enforcement of the restrictions is nearly impossible under the present conditions.

So, what might be done? Two overlapping themes emerged from the questions. One issue is to define the goals of “protection” and ”preservation”. The other is to understand how ”conservation” can be applied to Wisconsin Point. Again these are more complex matters than can be casually addressed, but here are a few thoughts. Protection means to stop abuse and possibly all use, and the term is typically applied to living things that are challenged to survive naturally. Preservation also strives to stop abuse and/or all use but goes one step further. Preservation will intervene in the survival struggle and attempt to ensure that failure-to-survive is not an option. Unfortunately, living things and nature don’t cooperate very well. That’s why preservation works best with minimally disturbed dead things that nature has left behind. Ask any archeologist!

The spirit of conservation is that of “wise use”. Conservation will involve some protecting but will also recognize that all living things are in a state of continual use and are at their healthiest when used wisely. For more extended material on this topic, follow this link, <http://www.fieldmuseum.org/biodiversity/> , to The Web of Life concept. Conservation necessitates a perspective of longevity that expects us to know what we’ve got before it’s gone. What is unknown to us is what will replace that which is gone. You see, something always does become a replacement. More than a century ago, before protection and preservation, timber was clear-cut to feed the lumber needs of our growing country. What replaced the “barren harvested” landscape? A growing city of Superior and a vacation destination called Lake Nebagamon (formerly the Weyerhauser mill town). Who knew then what we now treat as worthy of saving.

BENTLEYVILLE TOUR OF LIGHTS, 2010

This entry was posted on October 21, 2010 by Allen Raffetto

Nathan Bentley, founder and driving force behind Bentleyville Tour of Lights, spoke at yesterday’s noon meeting. Bentley is easy to listen to when he describes what the Christmas/Holiday event accomplished last year, its inaugural year at Bayfront Park, and the plans for this year’s festivities. I think he taps into the “inner child”, both his and ours. For more on the history of Bentleyville go to: <http://www.bentleyvilleusa.org/Home/BentleyvilleHistory.aspx>.

“It’s cold down there!, Bentley exclaimed. You know, it wasn’t all that warm up at Cloquet in previous years for that matter. But the Big Lake does create its own special brand of chill, so much so that live entertainment won’t be a part of Bentleyville Tour of Lights, 2010. But here is some of what you can expect at the Tour of Lights:

- a new castle entrance
- a 40-ft building for storing donated food and toys
- new knit hats for kids who tell Santa what they want for Christmas (last year they gave away 10,000 hats)
- more hot chocolate and Famous Amos cookies (last year visitors consumed 6,000 pounds of hot chocolate)

- tunnels of lights that will add up to 3,000 ft of pure visual joy (incidentally, they are making the switch to more energy-efficient lighting).
- And there are a few new features that Bentley will announce next week. We promised not to tell.

Last year's event drew over 150,000 people and that's an actual head-count, not a guesstimate. Bentley and his all-volunteer crew began preparations on September 25, and they will be working Saturdays, Sundays and Wednesday evenings. If you are curious and/or would like to help out the cause, drop down there. I'm sure they'll be able to find a few strings of lights to put up.