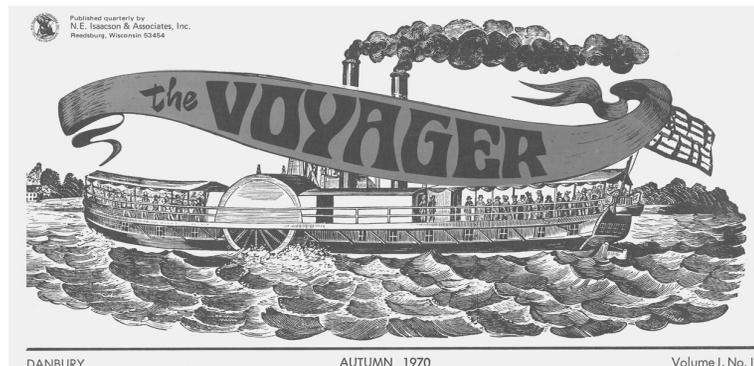


VILLAGE CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Golf and Dining News

Out and About



DANBURY AUTUMN 1970 Volume 1, No. 1

VILLAGE BUZZING WITH CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY



'Woody' Woodrell Is First Village Mayor

Project Manager and unofficial "first mayor" of Voyager Village is irreplaceable Harold "Woody" Woodrell. Woody is one of those rare individuals who takes his work seriously but at the same time can see the humor in almost any situation. As he puts it, "What I enjoy most is meeting people, talking to them and



"WOODY" WOODRELL

This month's ENews design references the very first news publication put out within Voyager Village, done by N.E. Isaacson & Associates Inc. 50 years ago.

This month, on September 23rd, Voyager Village turns 50 years old and celebrates the signing of the Covenants that officially brought Voyager into existence.

For the occasion, last year Voyager's marketing committee planned a year-long itinerary of activities for all seasons of 2020. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic that has swept across the globe, these activities had to be postponed. It is Voyager's intention to instead celebrate their 50th anniversary with a year-long celebration in 2021, provided that the conditions

are safe.

"Things just weren't feasible," said Brandon Johnson, Marketing & Communications Coordinator. "We had many big events planned that would involve large crowds, and once COVID-19 really hit hard we had to re-evaluate everything. Everyone sort of went into survival mode for a while, and resources had to be diverted."

While Voyager's staff are saddened that their plans for a 2020 bash were unexpectedly altered so drastically, they hope that we can all celebrate Voyager's big 50th next year.



BY RYAN CHRISTOPHERSON

I cannot believe it, but Labor Day weekend is here! That summer went by quick! Just a couple updates for you on the Tournament Calendar; we are adding back in the Couples Mixed Derby on September 20th. Quite a few of you have requested to see that returned.

We are also looking to do our own community fundraiser for the local Webb Lake 1st Responders. Steve Austin and his team could not get it going this year and we thought we'd help him out and try and still have the event because it is such a big help to the community. If you know of a way you can help to get raffle items or to sell raffle tickets, please let me know. We have a tentative date picked out in late September so be on the lookout for that event soon!

The Ladies Thursday Morning League and the Legends League have completed their schedules for the year, if you're thinking

about playing next year, please do so, a couple great leagues run but great members along with a good way to meet new people!

You will be seeing some new faces soon upstairs in the bar & grill; we have three new people starting this week to help strengthen our team. Please say hi and welcome them into the Voyager community! We have been getting busier and busier as the season has moved along and want to thank everyone for hanging in there during these difficult and ever-changing times. Please let us know how we're doing good or bad, we'd love to know how we're doing.

Looking for something to do this weekend after the Arts & Craft show? We have an acoustic band playing Saturday, September 5th on the new patio from 3-6pm. The "3-Putt Trio" will be entertaining you.



BY STEVE JOHNSON

This year has been a roller coaster of a ride for most of us like we have never seen when it comes to making schedules. With all of the craziness of 2020, even the best planners are planning one day at a time on occasion. This is no different at Voyager Village. Our plans for how the season would go are radically different compared to how they were at the beginning of the year. This is what I know as of today, and feel free to take everything with a certain amount of tentativeness.

Arts and Crafts

- o The event is going on this Saturday 9am-4pm and Sunday 9am-3pm.
- o There will be as many vendors as normal with increased spacing between them.
- o Mask are required and everyone should practice social distancing.
- o Food and drink vendors will provide a host of options.

(Continued on Page 2)



The Voyager Village 2020 Arts and Crafts Fair is this labor day weekend, from 9-4pm on Saturday and from 9-3pm on Sunday. There are no parking or admission fees, and there will be over one hundred vendors selling arts and crafts. Made possible by Jackson Fire, the Webb Lake First Responders, Wisconsin Indian Head Country, Inc., and the Webster Spanish Club and Volleyball Team.

- o All eating will be outdoors in open spaces.
- o Shop for others and the whole family; it's better for the community to buy local.
- o You can still go online or talk to Linda in the POA office about Volunteering.

Docks

- o We will begin removing the docks on October 5 so please have your boats removed by then unless your slip is on a permanent dock. There are five permanent docks, which include both docks at West Cadotte, one at North Shoal, the right most dock on Birch Island next to Lodge, and right most dock at Little Bear. If there are spaces empty on these permanent docks and if you want to use your boat for one or two more weeks, feel free to do so.

Fall

- o Keep golfing and enjoy all the

- events left. Don't put those clubs away!
- o We have firewood to use, so let's use that pit by the gazebo every day.
- o Watch for the return of my nature hikes.
- Fall Fest**
- o October 16th & 17th will be the dates of this year's event.
- o The Lighting of the Pumpkins will go on Friday evening as in the past.
- o There will be a host of new ideas and events that are more COVID-19 friendly
- o If you need something to do, come volunteer to carve one of the giant pumpkins.
- Winter**
- o Yes, it's coming!
- o We want to start a snowshoe club.
- o Help us come up with new ideas to keep everyone engaged and be as safe as possible at the same time.

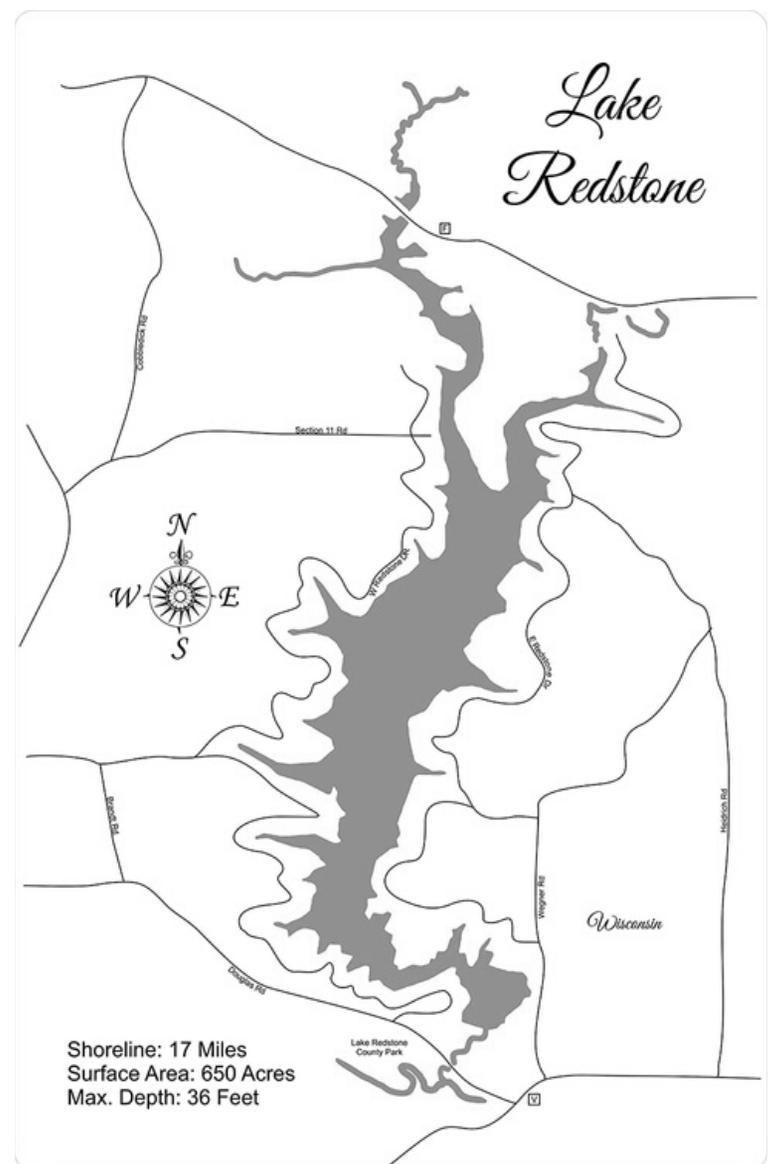
water, especially from out-of-state visitors and Wisconsin city dwellers. At the time, what Isaacson described as the "vacation and recreational sprawl" on the Wisconsin countryside was largely uncontrolled, often done on a small scale or using techniques that did not require review by the state. Isaacson saw this as problematic, and sought to create a new, orderly way to bring people and land together.

Between 1960 and 1970, Isaacson built six artificial lakes that resulted in 2,316 acres of surface water, 91 miles of shoreline and roughly 10,000 lake lots. His projects included Upper Oconomowoc Lake in Waukesha County, Lake Redstone in Sauk County, lakes Sherwood and Camelot in Adams County, and the Lakes of the Menominees in Menominee County. What Isaacson brought to each of his projects were forward-looking concepts and a willingness to reach beyond minimum regulations set by the state. At Upper Oconomowoc Lake, Isaacson established a minimum building setback of 100 feet from the shoreline even though no state setback regulations existed at the time—a concept that would make its way into state legislature in 1966 with the Water Resources Act. Among other water pollution control programs, the act created one of the first shore land zoning programs in the United States.

When making the artificial Lake Sherwood, Isaacson drained and improved an existing man-made lake on the site to improve future fishing, with the cooperation of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Showing just how invested Isaacson was in ensuring these projects went above and beyond, in an excerpt from the 2016 book he coauthored, *Building Lake Redstone: An Illustrated History*, Isaacson said the following:

"My greatest joy is hearing about the impact Redstone has had on individuals, families and the community. Building Redstone was very personal for me. I met individually with each property owner, getting to know them and the obstacles standing in the way of their decision. Helping them solve those problems was mutually satisfying. I met wonderful people in every step of the development."

As he gained more experience, Isaacson continued to refine and add onto many of his ideas. This culminated in 1969; as the Lakes of the



Menominees were nearing completion, the then 42-year-old Isaacson turned his attention to an area of eastern Burnett County that would soon become the site of his single most expansive and unique project yet.

On September 25th, 1969, at a special session of the Burnett County Board in Grantsburg, N.E. Isaacson and Associates, Inc. outlined to the assembled Board members ambitious plans to begin a multi-million-dollar development in early 1970. These preliminary plans called for off-shore development of approximately 4,000 clustered recreational and vacation homesites throughout an extensive system consisting of eight natural lakes that contained 2,075 acres of water surface, and a proposed 636 acre man-made lake. During the meeting, N.E. Isaacson and Associates noted that the project could eventually encapsulate over 7,000 acres. At the time, the project was more expansive than his then-largest project—the Lakes of Menominees—which encompassed 5,170 acres.

Isaacson envisioned this Burnett County project as an innovative development concept that would become a complete self-sustaining community and recreational complex. To accomplish this, Isaacson outlined plans for additional facilities such as

commercial stores and services located in a service center, an airstrip, riding stables, a boat marina, beach clubs, separately planned permanent mobile home sites, and a golf course. He saw this as an opportunity to attract people from the Twin Cities into Burnett County. With its many lakes and woods, the area already had many vacation and second homes. When fully developed, the Burnett County project was expected to attract a population of about 10,000-13,000 people, nearly the total population of Burnett County at the time.

Isaacson realized that township and county support of the project would be especially important if plans for construction of an artificial lake were to be realized; most of the property for its construction needed to be obtained from the Burnett County Forest, and was enrolled under the special property tax provisions of Wisconsin's Forest Crop law. One of the first steps, should the board decide to accept Isaacson's proposal, would be a request to withdraw the county land from forest crop jurisdiction.

To gain such support, Isaacson emphasized the importance his project placed on developing around physical features and keeping in place the natural environment that

The Pre-History of Voyager Village

A LOOK BACK AT THE EARLY TRIALS AND EVENTS SURROUNDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF VOYAGER VILLAGE

BY BRANDON JOHNSON



N.E. "IKE" ISAACSON: 1927-2018

Voyager Village began as an ambitious plan of one man—N.E. "Ike" Isaacson.

A Wisconsin native, Isaacson grew up on a farm near Oconomowoc and joined the U.S. Marines during World War II. The war ended while he was in boot camp, and the young Isaacson found himself working on a Great Lakes freighter and driving heavy construction equipment on Drummond Island, Michigan. It was here that Isaacson first met Jim Cole, an experienced lake builder. It was through this connection that Isaacson went

onto become one of the leading lake and land developers at the time, responsible for numerous developments in Wisconsin.

In the 1940's and 50's, conservationists such as Aldo Leopold helped in formulating policies that placed a larger emphasis on land management not just for commercial uses, but also for the benefit of the wildlife that was a part of it. At the time, public attitude towards wildlife and land use had shifted, creating a growing demand for recreational land near

had existed in the area for more than 40 years. Isaacson proposed that rather than conventional subdivision of lake shoreline, his project would consist entirely of offshore development. The shorelines of all lakes and streams would be protected by a buffer strip of undeveloped land extending 200 feet back from the water, with a network of trails and open space providing easy access to the lakes. Building lines would be set back an additional 75 feet from the lot line, a provision that attempted to maintain water quality by moving septic systems farther back from the lakeshore. This 275-foot building setback differed drastically to the state guidelines for county zoning regulations at the time, which required only 75 feet from the shoreline. Other measures Isaacson proposed included streets being laid out in a cul-de-sac pattern—thereby avoiding the impact of a grid pattern along lakeshores—and keeping approximately 50% of the acreage in the entire development as green space.

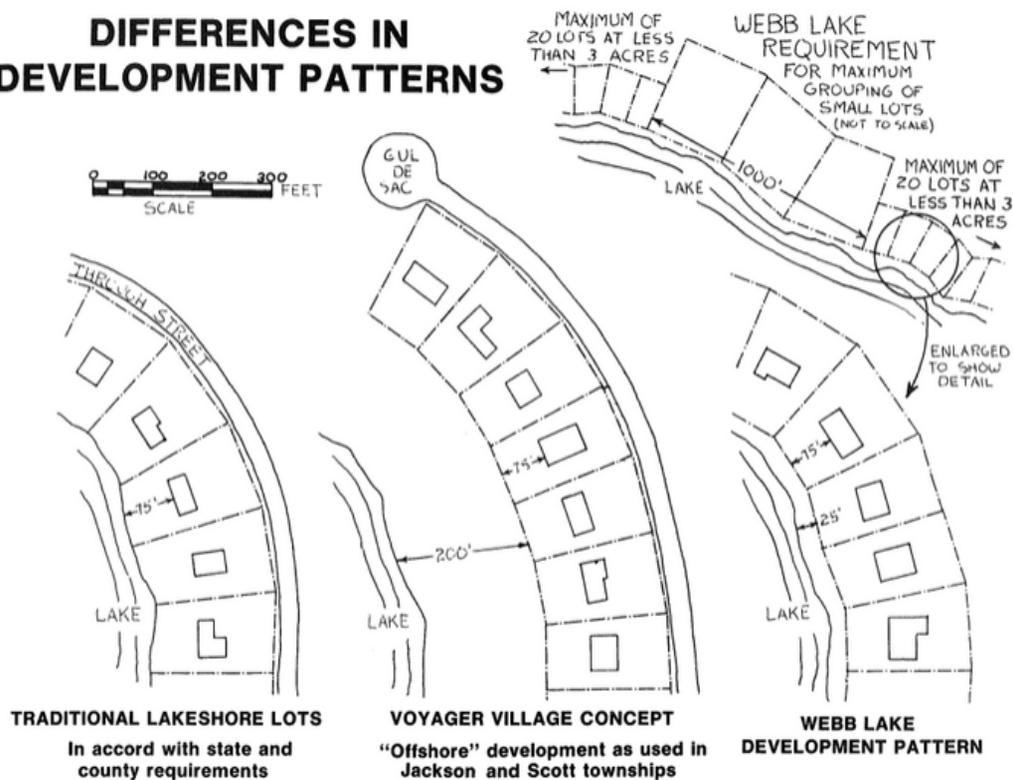
"This is in sharp contrast to the limited possibilities that are normally prevalent with lake land properties," Isaacson said, according to a newspaper. "What we develop will be much more than a conventional subdivision. It will be a complete recreational and residential system that will provide persons with a unique homesite and a wide range of recreational activity."

The special meeting adjourned following a resolution by its members to refer the proposal to the Forestry Committee for consideration. News of the project spread like wildfire throughout the county, dominating the headlines of local newspapers. N.E. Isaacson and Associates, Inc.



The "Cluster Development" concept used by Voyager Village's designers is evident in this aerial shot taken from the western edge of Jackson township in Burnett County. The body of water in the background is Shoal Lake.

DIFFERENCES IN DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS



A diagram displaying differences in development patterns between traditional lakeshore lots, and the two types of developments Isaacson would use when developing his Burnett County project.

quickly went to work, holding planning and information sessions with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, representatives of the University of Wisconsin, the Northwest Regional Planning Commission, the Forestry Committee of the Burnett County Board, the Burnett County Resource Agent, and interested conservation groups. Project planning, while still tentative in many areas, was refined and new ideas and alternatives were considered. Construction was projected to be completed within five years.

As with any large-scale projects, many challenges would rise to test Isaacson's vision of a self-sustaining community and recreational complex. It wasn't more than a week later when the first of these challenges would arise. Despite Isaacson's efforts to foster support for his project, as it gained public exposure it immediately attracted fierce

opposition. Neither the Burnett County Board nor the two of the three townships affected by the project raised major objections to Isaacson's project; issues came from Webb Lake township and opposition groups in the surrounding areas. On October 9th, 1969, a headline in the Spooner Advocate read, "Committee Opposes Sale of Burnett County Forest to Land Developer".

This committee, named the "Ernie Swift Memorial Conservation Committee" after the late conservationist, would rise to be a devoted rival to Isaacson's project, mounting sustained attack after attack on the land developer. The committee's intentions were outlined by Kent D. Dixon, a northern Wisconsin native and a longtime landowner in Scott township, stating that they were:

1. To keep ownership and management of the land public, rather than private;
2. To preserve the natural wildlife elements of these public lands, in the public interest, and
3. Bring to light heretofore unexplained facts regarding the negative aspects of the development and example setting dangers to communities and individuals now living in the general area.

Dixon later cited several reasons why Isaacson's Burnett County project alarmed the committee; their most basic concerns were the project's impact in terms of increased population—such as traffic, loss of natural resources, crowding, service costs—and the impact on the area lakes themselves. The committee was particularly concerned

with potential pollution of the groundwater due to the large number of sewage systems that would be installed at lakeshore. They also strongly opposed the potential sale of property from the Burnett County forest, maintaining their belief that the land should be maintained by the public and left alone to preserve its natural state.

Isaacson fired back by saying that the committee was merely trying to maintain exclusive control of the area's resources and deny their use to others. He characterized them as "summer people" from the Twin Cities who had no right to halt Wisconsin developments, while continuing to push his desire to build around the landscape and bring economic gain to the "depressed region".

The conflict between Isaacson and his opponents grew to the point that each side sought out intervention by the state and other authorities. The Ernie Swift Memorial Conservation Committee raised the issue of sewage with Harvey Wirth, state sanitary engineer with the Department of Health and Social Services. They received a letter back in late October of 1969, stating:

"This agency is in complete agreement with the Ernie Swift Memorial Conservation Committee... In the interest of public health protection, the project in Burnett County providing for an ultimate 4,000 home sites should be served by a public sewerage system... The opportunity to pollute the ground water with this extensive development is more than just theoretical. Thus, even though a subdivision plat of the lands could receive the

clearance of this agency because the requirements of Chapter H 65, Wisconsin Administrative Code, have been met, we nevertheless would prevail upon local government to not approve any plans covering this proposal unless a public sewage system is to be provided."

Isaacson responded by pointing out that he had previously employed University of Wisconsin geologists and other experts to evaluate the water quality effects of septic systems on lakes in the development. The conclusion of the experts had been that the area's sandy soil made it ideally suitable for septic tanks and that the project's overall design would minimize any detrimental impacts. Isaacson sent a letter to the Department of Natural Resources in regards for their input on the situation regarding the sewage systems.

Before he could receive a response, Webb Lake took legislative action specifically targeting the project. At the time, Burnett County was in the process of considering its own zoning and subdivision ordinances—which had no major points of conflict with the general plan Isaacson was proposing. Dissatisfied with the ordinances under consideration on the County level, Webb Lake passed its own in early 1970.

Their subdivision ordinance was a direct attempt to limit large scale-development and to prevent Isaacson from developing on the land surrounding Little Bear lake—a particularly key body of water in the township. The ordinance required subdivisions exceeding 20 lots of less than three acres each to install central sewage systems, and that subdivisions of up to 20 such lots needed to be separated by minimum intervals of 1,000 feet to avoid the central sewage requirements. The ordinance stated that:

"The purpose of this subsection is to protect and preserve the lakes, streams and underwater water supply of the township... Available evidence indicates that private sewerage disposal systems contribute to the pollution of the surface and underground waters that the polluting effect is related to the concentration of such systems as well as other factors. This ordinance is intended to avoid the unnecessary expenditure of public funds in the future by anticipating and preventing the undesirable effects of a high

concentration of private sewerage disposal system."

These requirements meant that Isaacson's plans for clustered homesites would need a far more expensive central sewage system, and if he wanted to avoid such requirements, he would have to forfeit lot space to meet the minimum interval of 1,000 feet of separation. The Ernie Swift Memorial Conservation Committee immediately seized this opportunity to post skull-and-crossbones signs on trees in the project area, warning people about the pollution dangers that would allegedly result from the development's septic systems. They read:

"DANGER—Scott, Jackson, Swiss Townships have not passed safe sewage laws to protect us from pollution... as Webb Lake Township did! Save water, woods, wildlife. Protect your health. Get the facts now."



One of the skull and crossbones signs posted by the Ernie Swift Memorial Conservation Committee.

At the same time, Isaacson had proposed a deal to withdraw a parcel of land from the Burnett County Forest—allowing for the creation of the planned artificial lake—in exchange for an adjacent parcel of land owned by N.E. Isaacson and Associates, Inc. Ultimately, the deal was dropped. According to engineer Ken Carlson of N.E. Isaacson and Associates, Inc., "the county was going to own a fair amount of the shoreline, have a county park, and of course, public access." Isaacson's opponents, however, saw this as a major victory.

Suddenly conflict was running high in 1970. Although construction had already begun in Jackson and Scott townships, opposition groups were urging them to take action similar to Webb Lake's subdivision ordinance, asking

surrounding local boards to make public sewer and water systems mandatory in larger developments. If such action was taken, it would mean many aspects of the project would need to be suddenly reevaluated.

There were hints that Isaacson might attempt to contest the ordinance in court. He reached out to the Northwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning and Development Commission to enlist support for county zoning and subdivision ordinances and against those passed by Webb Lake. Although the Commission did not see the need for individual town regulations, they were reluctant to give more than that token of support, likely due to lack of a mandate for active involvement.

For a moment, it would look like Isaacson's project would never be realized.

Then, finally, he received a letter back from the Department of Natural Resources.

"In general, the use of septic tank-soil absorption systems to serve individual homesites is an acceptable method of sewage disposal, providing the soils are adequate," the letter read. "When all the alternatives are weighed, it would appear to me that the best solution is properly designed and constructed individual disposal systems."

The letter was the support that Isaacson needed, and was a major blow to the argument being made against the impact of sewage on the area lakes and groundwater. Mr. Wirth, who had wrote to the Ernie Swift Memorial Conservation Committee to back them, wrote to Isaacson acknowledging the DNR's action, and agreed that his agency would conduct reviews of the individual sewage disposal systems on a case-by-case basis without an evaluation of their cumulative impact.

The DNR's decision was criticized by the Ernie Swift Memorial Conservation Committee and was accused of failing to thoroughly look into the Burnett County project.

"DNR officials are skating around the laws," said Kent Dixon. "They'll play their bureaucratic waiting game until pollution comes. Then they'll preach for a central sewage system".

Despite the Committee's efforts, no action against Isaacson came from Jackson or Scott townships, or Burnett County. With the tables now turned back in his favor, on

September 23, 1970, the Covenants were signed, and Voyager Village officially came into existence.

Shortly after, N.E. Isaacson and Associates, Inc. filed a \$1 million lawsuit against the Ernie Swift Memorial Conservation committee, naming the committee, 24 of its members and two Webb Lake town officials, as defendants. The suit claimed Isaacson has been subjected to "disgrace, contempt and public ridicule." It alleged that the signs erected on roadways and lakeshore properties of committee members, along with news releases, had deterred people from dealing with the firm at its "Voyager Village" development.

Ultimately, on March 7, 1972, the two groups settled out of court. Isaacson decided to conform with the Webb Lake subdivision ordinance, out of fear that the company wouldn't get a return on its investment and that an even more stringent board would regulate his development activities farther. Although Webb Lake's actions had delayed the project and diminished the number of total lots, given the large amount of land which Isaacson held in Webb Lake, the area's eventual development was inevitable. By the end of the summer of 1974, virtually the entire area around Little Bear Lake was under consideration for plat approval.

July Photo Contest Winners

Congratulations to our winners of the July Photo Contest, voted on by members like you! It was a fierce competition this month, but ultimately Michael and Michael claimed first and second place. Michael Stanefski and his photo of a sunset on the Muellner Trail won first place for this month, and Michael Hussey's photo of the bridge on the Par 3 course was the runner up. Congratulations to both photographers!

To view these photos in color, along with all of the previous winners, please go to www.VoyagerVillage.com. If you'd like to submit photos for entry, please email your submissions to the POA office at voyagervillage@voyagervillage.com.

To view and vote for the August submissions, visit our website. We got a ton of great photos, our judges had a difficult time picking their top three.



First place winner: Muellner Trail Sunset. Photo captured by Michael Stanefski.



Second place winner: Par 3 Bridge. Photo captured by Michael Hussey.

