

Aggie and the Ice

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November 26, 2003
Email to Richard Cleaveland*

Sat. Nov. 15, we went up to Rice Lake and took trailer out to lake. It had some ice on the lake and Aggie ran out all the way over to that little Island straight out from camp and fell through about 35 feet from the other shore and couldn't get out. Clarence took off on the run and tried to cross at the first narrows (east) of the trailer and he fell through, but waded the rest of the way across, then had to cross over to the island and ended up breaking ice with his hands and swimming. He stood on the island and called to her as that was the shortest distance, but she couldn't break the ice. I had grabbed the 6 foot wood ladder and was running behind him, I also broke through and had to struggle to get across. I was terrified that Clarence was going to succumb to the cold. He kept swimming out and breaking ice trying to get to her.



I ran around the little bay and there is a small strip of land attached now that the water level is down on the lake. He swam out three times, and had finally gotten the ice broken. Then she crawled up on top of his back! He shoved her off and swam ashore with her behind him. By the time I got to him he was curled up on the shore and said he was dying. Aggie of course was just running around ready to go hunting. My jacket was dry on the top few inches so I wrapped it around his shoulders and neck and his hands were completely

numb. I took them and put them under my arm pits as I had on a wool sweater and that was the only place dry. He finally came around and we walked around the end of the lake back to camp. When he took off his wet clothes he looked like a cooked lobster. His hands didn't stop stinging until 36 hours later. He had a really bad case of hypothermia and it took a long time to warm up. I took all the wet clothes as I had no extras and put on my pajamas and hunting boots and went into Birchwood to dry at the Laundromat. He took Aggie hunting (away from the lake).

When I drove back to the trailer and got out I heard him holler NOOOOOOOOOO! I ran to the edge of the lake and aggie had gone across the little bay (west of the trailer) to that little island where the loons nest and had broken through again! I ran along the shore line around that bay while Clarence ran back to the trailer to get the inflatable raft and hook up the 6 vlt. inflator. Then I looked out and she was on top of the ice and creeping across on her way to the shore. She looked really scared, but made it.

Now I know where that expression "Stupid Bitch" comes from. We were wiped out all weekend.