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## Between the Lines

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### Exploring Lake Superior: a Beloit author's memoirs

Longfellow immortalized it with his "Song of Hiawatha," as did Gordon Lightfoot and "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald."

Fodder for poets, song writers and artists, the pull of Lake Superior is undeniable to all who have ever been drawn to it.

For Beloit resident Tom Warren, the discovery of the greatest of the Great Lakes and its surroundings was a slow seduction, occurring over decades.

And beginning in 1970, when Warren and his wife, Mim, bought land on the shores of Lake Superior, their attachment has only continued to grow.

Its vast territory is still a compelling place for the Warren family, who early on adopted the western upper peninsula of Michigan as their second home.

In his new book, "Discovering Lake Superior and the Western Upper Peninsula of Michigan," Warren tells of time spent there and includes parts of a journal he kept.

Now emeritus professor of education and youth studies at Beloit College, Tom Warren moved to Beloit with his wife 1970. While his book has a Michigan setting, it was because of his Beloit connections he purchased land along Lake Superior, which he explains in the book.

The volume has the kind of scientific dimension you might expect from a professor, full of tidbits about weather, geology, lake depths, trees and vegetation, and always shining through is an insatiable sense of curiosity — about everything.

The tone of the book, however, is one of awe and inspiration and a deep longing for what today's society with all of its modernity seems to have lost: a primal connection to nature.

"America was once perceived as a place of endless wilderness. Those days are gone forever, and opportunities to live near wild things are few; but this part of the world offers them," he wrote.

He also writes about learning experiences in the wilderness and anecdotes about life on the lake. After all, city folks set loose in the woods are bound to increase their wisdom on the subject. Endearing is that the author also is not afraid to poke fun at himself.

Take for instance, the time Warren was on Lost Lake in the Porcupine Mountains and became upset when he discovered trees that had been hacked at about three feet up on their trunks by perhaps less than scrupulous outdoorsmen. Then he has an epiphany; it occurred to him the damage likely was caused by beavers, unable to finish what they started because of deep snow.

"My mood changed and I could feel my face get red with embarrassment. I had been exposed to myself as a naive greenhorn," he wrote.

His obvious appreciation for the beauty around him is never ending in his writings.

And that appreciation is the kind cast through years of observations such as: "One of my favorite

facts about Lake Superior is that in the summer, the sun sets thirty-five minutes later at its western end than in the east; but no matter when or where day turns into night, I find looking at sunsets over the lake inspiring . . .”

In the beginning, the Warrens engaged in tent camping on land they had purchased. Then, in 1978, they added a small cabin that has expanded over the years.

Those who don't necessarily embrace wilderness living will appreciate that Warren also acknowledges not everyone thinks like he does about pitching a tent and sleeping on the land, unwanted critters in the middle of the night and at least in the beginning, very modest accommodations.

Regardless, Warren can count himself among the lucky, among those who have pursued a dream, heeding the pull of a magnificent frontier.

And as he continues his exploration and enjoyment of one of the Midwest's most precious resources, he invites the public to sample it as well in his new book.

To obtain a copy or to learn more about "Discovering Lake Superior and the Western Upper Peninsula of Michigan," visit [thomasfranklinwarren.com](http://thomasfranklinwarren.com).

Proceeds from the sale of the book will go to the Friends of the Porkies, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, in cooperation with the Porcupine Mountain Wilderness State Park.

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