

April 8, 2000

Attached a copies of letters that I composed and mailed to the La Valle Town Board and Lake Redstone Property Owners Association. These letters express my strong opposition to the idea of changing the water skiing and personal watercraft hours of opposition.

It amazes me that in our society we have laws in place to protect the rights of minorities in almost all aspects of life except for the use of our natural resources. Our society requires public buildings to have handicap access and companies to hire employees without regard to race or sex. But this subject has come up because water skiers and personal watercraft users are the minority on this lake and most lakes in Wisconsin.

You will likely here today that the majority of the property owners have returned a survey saying that they would like to limit the hours. But this survey was only returned by less than half of the property owners on our lake. This means that over half of the property owners don't care. And this survey did not give an option to also limit fishing boats from making a wake before 10:00 a.m. which I would support since I do not fish. Those who composed the survey and sent it out are well aware that the water skiers and personal watercraft users are the minority on the lake. It doesn't take a genius to realize that the majority of the people who do not participate in these sports would support limiting them.

The lake is meant for all to enjoy. We must protect the rights of the minorities on our waterways. We must realize that by passing this law for the convince of some property owners you are sacrificing the safety of our kids who water ski on this lake. The reason that they are skiing in the early morning is because the water is calmer and the boat traffic is less, making it both safer and more enjoyable for their sports.

Sincerely,

Rodney 

March 27, 2000

[REDACTED]
La Valle Town Board Lakes Committee
[REDACTED]

Dear Calvin,

I'm sitting here on my 30th birthday writing this letter and wondering how I became so old so fast. You see, my father informed me of a La Valle Town Board Lakes Committee meeting that was going to take place on April 8th to discuss a proposal to limit the hours of water skiing and personal watercrafts to between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. And all that I could think of was that I couldn't possibly find time to go to it. After all, I'm attempting to start my own business and needed to get my houseboat ready in Fox Lake, Illinois, so that I could live on it for the summer. And then I remembered this little boy that I once knew.

This little boy was one of the lucky few to grow up living in this little slice of heaven known as Lake Redstone. Most people probably thought he was crazy as they heard the stories of this little boy water skiing in March, water skiing at 6:00 a.m., water skiing in the rain, and occasionally breaking the law and water skiing at midnight. And these people were right, this little boy was crazy, he was crazy about water skiing. He really did not have much athletic ability, and was quite clumsy for a boy his age. Most of the time he couldn't even see what the passengers in the boat were signaling to him because he wore glasses when he wasn't water skiing. But he truly loved to water ski, and he water skied way beyond his athletic ability.

And one day this little boy joined the Lake Redstone Water ski Club, and he found that there were others on the lake who also loved to water ski. The only thing that these kids had in common was the fact that they water skied on the same lake. They came from different states, different schools, and were all raised different. But they all pitched in, and put on a pretty good show. Ski practice was usually early in the morning in order to have smooth water. Although the kids were tired and complained quite often, they still showed up at 7:00 a.m. on most Saturday and Sunday mornings to practice. And boy were they noisy. On top of the normal yelling and screaming of kids their age, they were also known to get a boat up to 60+ mph with 6 skiers in an attempt to have enough speed to perform a 6 person multiple barefoot run.

And back then nobody complained to them about skiing so early. And nobody should today either. The noise generated by a water skier or personal watercraft user should be a welcomed sound in the early morning. It signifies a person that has the same love for their sport that this little boy once had. It signifies a person who is willing to get up and

enjoy the sunrise. And most of all, it signifies a person who is enjoying the lake to the maximum.

Those of us who live on a lake seldom realize how lucky we really are. I was lucky enough to have parents who introduced me to this lake before I could even walk, and most likely I went for a boat ride or two before I was even born. I can't remember a summer in my entire life when I didn't spend time on Lake Redstone. I will never be able to give enough thanks to my parents or to those who designed and built this wonderful lake. Many of the friends that I met 15 years ago through the club remain my closest friends. The memories of those friends and the innocent days when water skiing meant everything will always be as close to my heart as the memories of my family.

What we should realize is that there are unfortunate people in this world who have never been able to enjoy a day of boating or water skiing. I have been lucky enough to be able to introduce some of these unfortunate people to both water skiing and boating. And the smiles that come across their faces are truly priceless. We should also realize that those people water skiing or riding personal watercrafts early in the morning are the lucky minority on this lake. They are the lucky few who still go to sleep at night looking forward to waking up at sunrise and water skiing or barefooting across a glass calm lake as the fog has just lifted. And from my experiences as a youth, the feeling of barefooting the length of the lake on class calm water is about as close to heaven as you can get on earth.

The State of Wisconsin laws allow water skiers and personal watercraft operators to enjoy their sports between sunrise and sunset and at specified distances from shore, piers, and other boats. These laws do not discriminate against the type of recreation that may be enjoyed on the State of Wisconsin waterways. The State set the hours of operation for water skiing and personal watercrafts based on safety and visibility reasons. There are also additional laws for the distance that water skiers and personal watercraft users must stay away from shore, other boats, and each other. We do not need to limit the hours of operation, we must instead educate the users and enforce the laws that already exist.

I must admit, that as a water skier I disliked anyone on a personal watercraft who was within my sight. Actually, I disliked anyone in any type of boat who was making a wake within my sight. But as a user of personal watercrafts I enjoyed the sensation of riding one and the unique view of the lake that one gets from a personal watercraft. As I have grown older I have seen the increase in the popularity of these machines as well as the impact that they have had on several different lakes. And even though it would make my water skiing and boating more enjoyable to me if they did not exist, the fact is that they do exist and they have as much right to enjoy the lake as any other boat or person. All that we should do is to work harder at educating all boaters so that we may safely and peacefully coexist and enjoy our waterways.

You may never again see this little boy water skiing in March, water skiing at 6:00 a.m., water skiing in the rain, or occasionally breaking the law and water skiing at midnight. But as this little boy just turned 30, you will see him at the La Valle Town Board Lakes Committee meeting on April 8th. He will be there for himself, so that he may preserve the opportunity to once again barefoot the length of the lake at sunrise. He will also be there for the kids of the future so that they will have the opportunity to enjoy the lake as he did. And he will be there for those lucky few that are still enjoying the lake to the maximum, who still get up at sunrise to go out on the lake, and who's enjoyment of the lake has sparked this debate.

And he encourages you to be there and show your support for keeping the hours of operation for water skiing and personal watercrafts at the State of Wisconsin's hours which are currently sunrise to sunset.

Sincerely,

Rodney [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

cc: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

April 5, 2000

[REDACTED]
Lake Redstone Property Owners Association
[REDACTED]

Dear Larry,

I am writing this letter to inform you of my strong opposition to changing the water skiing or personal watercraft hours of operation along with my strong disapproval that the Property Owners Association may even be taking a stand on this. Being a property owner who does not belong to your organization, I was not included in this survey. And as one of my college English professors pointed out to us, most surveys are as worthless as the paper that they printed on. He pointed out that most surveys are developed so that the outcome of the survey benefits the authors point of view.

I enter your survey as evidence that my professor was correct for the following reasons:

- It appears that your survey was sent to members of your association, and not to all of the property owners on Lake Redstone.
- Your survey only targets water skiing and personal watercraft users for the limited hours of operation. These are the minority of the users of the lake, and hence, easy targets. Why not limit all boat traffic to slow no wake except for the hours of 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m..
- Your survey does not ask the person why they feel this way. Is it because of noise, safety, or just because they does not participate in these sports.
- Your survey does not require the persons name. As our professor pointed out, no survey should ever allow the name to be optional. Those people who do not feel strongly enough about the subject to be held accountable for their opinions should not be answering the survey in the first place.
- Your survey does not ask what activities the person enjoys on the lake.
- Your survey does not ask if the person wants to totally eliminate water skiing or personal watercraft operation on our lake. Those people who responded that they would like to limit the hours obviously do not participate in these sports and may prefer that they be totally eliminated.

You state on the front page of your March 2000 issue of Redstone Views that “This is the time of year your Board is pushing for dues renewal and for new members. This part of planning is important as the Association works to protect your Redstone investment and the ambiance of the lake.”.

Part of the ambiance of this lake is that there are people who enjoy getting up at the crack of dawn to water ski on glass calm water. This ambiance has been there for the

last 15 years of so because I can remember being a teenager and fighting to have the hours of operation consistent with the State of Wisconsin's laws. Why did you send out the survey in the first place if you are working to protect the ambiance of the lake.

I would gladly join your Association if I felt that it would protect the rights of all property owners to share and enjoy the lake equally. And I am still thankful to your organization for its support of the Lake Redstone Water ski Club in the mid 80's. Without the association's assistance with the insurance for our ski shows we never would have acquired the necessary permits from the county. But I am disgusted that this association appears to have forgotten those kids that enjoyed this lake so much. Those kids have not forgotten this lake. Several of them still get together each year on the lake for a weekend to remember the good times. Their family has since grown and soon they will be teaching their own kids how to water ski. And hopefully someday their kids may be able to restart the Lake Redstone Water Ski Club and enjoy the lake as we did. The investment that you must protect is the quality of the lake and the right for all people in all sports to enjoy the lake. As an association you should fight to preserve our rights for all to use the lake.

The State of Wisconsin has set the hours of operation for personal watercrafts and for water skiing based upon safe hours of operation. And this is how it should stay. The Wisconsin Conservation Warden's Law Enforcement Mission states that they shall "Ensure the right of all persons to safely use, share and enjoy Wisconsin's natural resources through firm, fair and effective law enforcement.". Yes, our lake could use some assistance to safely use and share the lake. This can be accomplished through education and law enforcement.

But the enjoying part is already there. It was there 15 years ago when I mowed the lawn at 6:00 a.m. because my father would not let us go water skiing out until after the chores were done. It was there when we hit the lake at 7:00 a.m., and it was there when we came back from water skiing only to spend another hour raking up the clumps of grass created by mowing the lawn when it was wet. And it's still there today when someone is out enjoying the lake while the rest of us lay around in bed missing the best part of the day.

Sincerely,

Rodney [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]