

“SESQUI-CENTENNIAL” – THE LOWERING OF CRYSTAL LAKE (1873 – 2023)

CONCLUSION

01 October 2023

To my fellow Citizens, Visitors, and Friends:

I wanted to thank you all for your participation in the many varied community events held in 2023 in celebration of the 150th anniversary of the lowering of Crystal Lake, an epochal event impacting the continued development of Benzie Co., MI (*). We must now close the window of time to await its reopening by others for the Bicentennial in 2073 !

The closing ceremony for the Bicentennial was held in downtown Beulah on Labor Day (September 4, 2023) following the Cold Creek Bridge Walk. The program consisted of a reading brief history; the proclamation of a “Special Tribute” ; a reenactment of the “Pulling of the Plug”; a depiction of the “Meeting of the Waters of Crystal Lake & Betsie Bay“; and the singing of the Ballad of Archibald Jones (“Mistake at the Lake”).

I believe that Archibald Jones, Jr., my alter ego, would have been proud to witness the transmogrification of Crystal Lake, and the fulfillment of his legacy as a “*bootstrap engineer*” and his epidemy as the ultimate “*canawler*”, who attempted to build a canal but ending up creating a beach !

Special thanks are extended to our small “SEQUI” committee: Vicki Carpenter (Beulah Boosters & CLCBA); Jane Purkis (Benzie Area Historical Society); Bill Kennis) Business Consultant). and Jim Stamm (ATI Consulting); and numerous individuals in local schools, businesses, governments, associations, etc.; and esp. my family, and wife 60 years (2024), with humoring a long-bearded. lake-loving curmudgeon !

As a long-time "townie" and "lakeie", I am most pleased that so many took time throughout the summer to “rediscover” and share our local history. The unique story of the lowering of Crystal Lake, as told in “The Comedy of Crystal Lake” (2015), and reiterated in its supplemental “Commemorative Booklet“ (2023), is summarized at <http://www.crystalana.com/sesqui/htm>

It has been my distinct pleasure to serve as Grand Marshall for two Fourth of July parades; present a Benzonia Academy Lecture; start the Crystal Lake Team Marathon; and generally be allowed on other occasions to “toot my canal boat horn”, “pull the plug”, and “tell the story”.

Sincerely, Dr. Stacy Leroy Daniels, “President, *pro tem*, Benzie Co. River Improvement Co. (1873)”.

“I have more than once alluded to the collateral and unsought consequences of human action as being often more momentous than the direct and desired result. There are cases where such incidental, or, in popular speech, accidental consequences, though of minor importance in themselves, serve to illustrate natural processes ...”

- George P. Marsh, *Unforeseen Effects of Draining and Lowering Lakes*, 1865.



(Note small blue stick pin between my feet!)