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5114 Cedar Lake Road, Minneapolis, MN, 55416

Contact Norton Stillman (952) 546-6300 / Fax (952) 546-6303

nstill4402@aol.com

Tucker Lake Chronicle

Thirteen Months in the North Woods

Joan Crosby

Fifty years ago, Joan Crosby and her husband, Dick, moved from the Minneapolis suburbs to spend a winter on the outskirts of the BWCAW in a primitive one-room cabin without road access or modern conveniences. She baked pies in a Dutch oven while Dick kept the woodpile topped up. They heard the wolves howl and the loons call, watched the seasons change, entertained occasional visitors—invited or not—and made periodic trips across two lakes and a connecting portage to their vehicle, then on into Grand Marias to do laundry and replenish supplies.

They also blazed a trail through the woods to the road in anticipation of those difficult weeks when the lakes would be half-frozen, hence impassible. Dick added a room to the structure, doubling its size, but they dropped the idea of erecting walls around the privy. Why bother? The arrival of a new stove revolutionized their meals. Visits to new-found friends at nearby lodges and wildlife adventures stirred up by their malamute, Nooky, punctuated days that were more often filled with household chores, woodcutting, and pine-scented lakeside reveries.

It was a good life. But when the money began to run low, they realized the time had come to make some difficult decisions about what form their future would take.

Novelist Faith Sullivan writes, “Crosby relates it all with grace, humor, and by golly, gumption!” and Cary Griffith suggests “this book should be required reading for anyone who has considered living a year in the wilderness. It’s seriously entertaining and also instructive.”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Joan Crosby lives near Grand Marais, Minnesota, with her husband, Dick, and her beloved pug, Mr. Magoo. She has been a columnist for the *Cook County News Herald* for the past two decades.

paperback / 250 pages / ISBN 978-1-947237-17-9 / \$19.95

◆ NODIN PRESS : MINNEAPOLIS ◆