

A Story about Kermit and Margritte Young

By Council Member Jeff Holm

Many Baldwin residents are familiar with Young Park. The park's name comes from the resident, Kermit Young who donated the land in 2005 to then Baldwin Township. Kermit and his wife, Margritte bought their 80-acre homestead from Kermit's parents, William and Cora Young (my great grandparents). In addition to homestead, they also purchased 120-acre tract of land in section 13 from his parents. Kermit and Margritte farmed the land and throughout the years enjoyed daily walks, cross country skiing during the winter months, and hunting in the fall. The couple were avid hunters particularly for deer and ducks. Considering there are many small ponds on the homestead, the 120-acre tract had part of large pond that bountiful with waterfowl. In the family we referred to it as the "Big Pond." Hunting at the Big Pond has been a family tradition for over a century and still continues today.

Prior to donation of park land, Kermit sold his remaining interest in the 120-acre tract. During the platting process as the developers made application to subdivide the land, it was discovered that the Big Pond was actually classified by the MN DNR as unnamed lake #71003400. The lake fell under the classification of "natural environment", or often referred to as environmental lake. It turns out that in recent decades the MN DNR reclassified any body of water within a municipality or township greater than 10-acres of surface water as a lake. Within that determination there are three classifications of lakes in Minnesota, recreational development, general development, and natural environment. Natural environment lakes are generally are shallow marshy lakes that come with the highest restrictions for development and have greater setbacks.

With this discovery of the Big Pond being recognized by the DNR as a lake, I informed Kermit of the fact and joking said "Kermit, the Big Pond, the DNR consider it a lake. It's unnamed lake number 71003400. Kermit, we should name it. What should we name Kermit?" without hesitation Kermit responded "Lake Margritte." This quickly went from a joke to I better make this happen. After having planted that seed in Kermit's mind, I set out to name the lake. It turns out there is a process to do such. It began with a petition to the county. The requirement included a minimum of fifteen signatures from county residents in support of the naming of said geographic feature. I decided to canvass the residents located near the lake. I figured they would easily understand what I was asking their support of. My first stop was at a residence to the Northeast of the lake. I had never met the occupants of this dwelling. The first signature on the petition was Tom Rush. This was

the first time I met Tom Rush. This detail we will have to save for another time in a future story. In addition to the petition, I asked the Baldwin Township Board of Supervisors to support the naming. It was not a requirement, but I felt it would carry weight with the County Board of Commissioner. At the time I was a member of Baldwin Park Committee. Kermit had requested me to join the committee to help steer the development of what became Young Park. During a joint meeting between the town board and the park committee on January 17th, 2006 I gave the pitch to Baldwin about naming a lake after Margritte Young who passed away in 1998. The board made a motion and approved supporting the measure. Board Supervisor Eleanor Rittenour took it a step further and drafted a resolution and placed it on the February 7th, 2006 agenda. The resolution was passed and adopted.

Lake Magritte Resolution

Whereas, Kermit Young, being a property owner in Baldwin Township, has donated 80 acres of his land to Baldwin Township for park and recreational purposes, with restrictions; and

Whereas, land formerly owned by Mr. Young nearby the aforementioned property contains an un-named Department of Natural Resources certified lake; and

Whereas, in honor of Mr. Young's wife; Margritte Young, born June 15, 1911 and died February 22, 1998, this governing body, Township of Baldwin, resolves and requests the County of Sherburne, a political subdivision of the State of Minnesota, to name and identify all future references to this un-named lake as:

Lake Margritte; and

Whereas, Margritte Young and her husband, enjoyed the natural aspect of the aforementioned lake, proudly planted many pine trees on the northwest corner of the lake, hunted deer nearby, shared her musical talents with local audiences, and made their home, located on the donated property nearby the lake, a favorite stop for many neighbors and the children of their neighbors, especially on Halloween; in addition to Margritte's service as fire warden in Baldwin Township for forty years; and

Whereas, Baldwin Township Supervisors recognizes the special relationship to the aforementioned lake to Margritte Young; and her husband, Kermit, and in dedication to them as outstanding citizens of Baldwin Township;

BE IT, THEREFORE, RESOLVED BY DECISION OF THE BALDWIN TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, BALDWIN TOWNSHIP, SHERBURNE COUNTY, STATE OF MINNESOTA THAT: THE AFOREMENTIONED UN-NAMED LAKE NOW BE IDENTIFIED AS

LAKE MARGRITTE

This constitutes the full and final decision of the Board of the Township of Baldwin, affixed and attested to this 7th day of February, 2006

Having the required petition signatures, the resolution, and prior correspondence with the MN DNR about my application, I took my case to the Sherburne County Board of Commissioners. In less than sixty days from the inception of naming the lake after Margritte, I found myself standing at the podium pitching what started as a light hearted comment and now a formal request. It turned out that I had additional support in my company that night. Glen Yakel from the MN DNR was in attendance and spoke to the board advising them that the DNR would support this petition if they approved it, and that he would take it to the next level. It passed, and from there Mr. Yakel promised to petition the United States Board on Geographic Names (BNG). That he did, Lake Margritte was approved and recognized by the federal government during the quarterly meeting of BNG in June of 2006. The joke turned reality inside of six months. It took a couple of years for the mapping services to catch up, but you can find Lake Margritte on Google Maps today.

The lake is surrounded entirely by private property and there is no public access to it, but you can see it from 103rd street and 98th street. During the spring and fall you can hear the activity from half mile away during migration periods. The lake serves as a vital feeding stop and a place to roost at night. During the warm months a nesting pair of trumpeter swans return prior to ice out to reclaim their brooding rights. On occasion when water levels are higher common loons will visit; in fact, one season a pair of loons successfully raised a chick past the twelve-week mark. The "Big Pond" or Lake Margritte is home to a vibrant community of muskrats. The muskrats are frequently a tasty choice of Bald Eagles. I've witnessed two successful captures of said rats. This type of shallow lake is very important to the ecosystem and adds to the diversity of wildlife we are fortunate to have in Baldwin. It is worth protecting and placing value on beyond our generation. My children are the 5th generation in my family enjoying the beauty and recreation that a simple pond in Baldwin can provide such as kayaking and ice hockey. I try to be a good steward of this lake and hope it remains unspoiled beyond my years.

Here are some other fun things about Kermit and Margritte. Kermit and his brother Mark Young farmed with teams of horses when they were young men. Both Kermit and Margritte

served as Fire Wardens for over 40 years. Kermit and Margritte planted many Norway Pines on their property including the Northwest side of Lake Margritte. They also grew and sold Christmas trees. Margritte was telephone operator in Princeton for many years. I believe she was one of three voices residents would hear when placing a local call. Margritte was born an Erickson from Greenbush Township. The Erickson's had a family band, and Margritte was a piano player. She often played the piano at the senior home in Princeton. Kermit and Margritte decorated their screen porch for Halloween every year and dressed up in costume to entertain trick or treaters young and old. Kermit loved to fish, he brought nearly everyone in the area fishing at least once. Margritte shot a big buck near the "big pond", it was bigger than any buck Kermit ever shot. The trail system at Young Park follows the routes they walked daily, however they each took their walks separately.

It is joy to me to see the many people using Young Park. It's fun to see all of the life moments captured by digital camera. I can easily recognize the Young Park beauty in the background of portraits taken there. I hope the popularity never fades and Kermit's vision is always cherished.