

## THE ROCK STAR

No, not THAT kind of Rock Star. Not the guitar-pounding, amp-loving, hair-tossing, body-gyrating, lyric-screaming stage performer. This Rock Star would be more likely to be humming the theme from “Jaws,” complete with deep thumping tones and ominous rhythm.

It exists under water and has done so for thousands upon thousands of years, now hiding itself among the weeds in maybe 10 feet of water. Its surface is a mossy shroud. And like a submerged leviathan, it lurks beneath the surface, awaiting its prey.

As children in the early 1950s, my friend Susie Frook Dunlop and I had heard tales of “The Rock,” located WAY OUT off of the “Hotel” dock – a favorite destination of our parents and their friends during their own adolescence some thirty years earlier. In those days, the worry wasn’t that you would hit it with your boat motor; it was that you’d spend way too much time swimming around in circles until someone finally stumbled across it, pretty much literally.

The trick, of course, was FINDING it. The instructions were always way too general: swim straight out from Joe Cooper’s dock and turn left at the BIG PINE. [Joe Cooper’s home now belongs to the Watz family, next to the boat ramp, and the “Big Pine” was that gigantic white pine tree on the southern end of the island.] So once or twice every summer, Susie and I would wade out into the lake and begin swimming, pausing every few minutes to duck under the water to take a look around for that huge, white, spooky mass that would signal that we had arrived at our destination.

The journey, of course, was never quite that simple, since the instructions only put us in the ball park, leaving a substantial amount of watery territory to be searched before success could be had. When we had finally gotten to the neighborhood, my heart would begin to pound because I knew, just KNEW, that it would suddenly pop up in front of me like some dangerous denizen of the deep, totally without warning, an ill-tempered Moby Dick.

Finding The Rock was only the first part of the adventure, however. Once there, we got to stand on it, our feet gingerly resting on that slippery, squishy moss that somehow always seemed to be coating it. At that point there were only three things that could be done: 1) swim around it underwater and LOOK at it [way too creepy!];

2) swim back home [hey, we just got here!]; or 3) dive off of it. Have you ever tried to dive off of a platform while standing in waist-deep water? It was a tricky activity at best, particularly in the beginning before some of the slippery moss had been rubbed away. But that activity could keep a couple of young girls entertained for only so long. So soon enough, off we'd swim, back to the shore to seek out some new adventure. And, of course, each time we'd look around, carefully lining up The Rock with various landmarks to make sure that the next journey out would be much quicker and far easier, but to no avail. The next time, we'd start out at Joe Cooper's dock, just like we always had, turning left at the Big Pine, just like we always did, and would then swim around and around and around in circles until one of the other of us would finally spot it, hiding out in the weeds.

These days, of course, the adventure is gone. No need to search for it. All you have to do is to make your way to the buoy-marker and you're there, home free. No muss, no fuss, no swimming around forever. Is it any wonder that no one seems to go out to play on it any longer? In fact, I'd pretty much forgotten how much fun we'd had until I saw Jim Keiser's photograph in the "I Love Douglas Lake" section on Facebook. There it was --- THE ROCK--- just like it used to look as it loomed up before us all those years ago. Thanks, Jim, for bringing back those wonderful memories. And thank you also for that spectacular picture of our old friend, the ROCK STAR.



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