Tuesday.	July	16.	2013	2:44	PM -

Letter to the Editor:

Last Tuesday, July 9, our lake frontage on Big Stone Lake was hit by tornado-like wind around 6 p.m. We had just returned from celebrating July 4 in Three Lakes to our other home in Brookfield when our neighbor called us with the bad news.

They were kind enough to send us some pictures of what was happening by email. We were shocked as the damage to our shoreline was horrific. Our ski boat was lifted through the boat lift canopy and was floating across the channel. Our pontoon boat was also rolled across the lake and was floating upside down in another area of the lake.

Dock sections and the pontoon boat parts lie floating in the area between Big Stone and Laurel lakes channel. Other personal property was thrown from shore and inside contents of the boats were mingled in what one neighbor described as a floating debris field.

We sat devastated and in shock as we were helpless to do anything to salvage what was left. But what are neighbors for?

It seemed anyone who saw or knew of the destruction rallied to our aid. People came on personal watercraft, in fishing boats, ski boats, on foot, and immediately began a huge salvage effort on our behalf. Whatever could be saved was either placed on our shoreline or recovered and added to what was left of our boats and lifts.

Their efforts were quickly joined by first responders from the Three Lakes Police and Fire departments along with Department of Natural Resources officials.

Thankfully, no one was injured and the cleanup efforts prevented any later damage to watercraft passing through the channel area. Whatever could be returned, was returned as well. We are so thankful.

Writing this a day after returning from actually viewing the wreckage and talking to those involved, we realize what a tremendous effort was needed to salvage the boats and lifts.

The pontoon recovery was surely the toughest, as it had to be brought to shore and hoists used to flip it back over. We especially want to recognize Four Seasons Marine, who not only recovered our pontoon boat, but was thoughtful enough to drive their truck to our cottage, get its trailer and loaded the ski boat on to it, which obviously couldn't be started. And today, Friday, both boats were already at Watercraft Marine and they were handling the insurance adjusters for us.

Being avid readers of this newspaper, we certainly realize just how far apart residents can be on many community issues. However, when it came time to help a fellow resident in dire straits, it didn't matter if one was a bird watcher or an all-terrain vehicle proponent, everyone worked together. Once again, the people of Three Lakes have proven that we do have the Best Small Town in America.

Nick and Lori Kaye

Three Lakes and Brookfield

Dream lofty dreams, and as you dream, so shall you become. Your vision is the promise of what you shall at last unveil.

John Ruskin

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