

### **Wilderness Words**

Nestled between iron black, yet pristine lakes of Minnesota, are thousands of richly forested acres known as the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. Tall majestic pines rise from leaf-like fronds in graceful ascent to cloudless azure skies. Their weathered bark, gnarled and aging, is clothed in tufted moss. Smaller evergreens crowd close hoping to catch a ride on their celestial journey. The berm, heavy-laden with pine needles, dampens all sound and pillows to quiet reverie. An occasional chipmunk scurries below to safer ground and the song birds flutter to their watchful perch. There is a blending of color and sound, barely separated or discernible, that shelters the steady buzz of carpenter ants feasting on damp decaying timber. Mosquitoes drone in their native tongue and wait for their next transfusion. On those misty mornings when steam rises from the earth's core, there is a hint of mystery and intrigue. The ghosts of Ojibwa Indians roam this hallowed ground. You can almost hear their ancestral chants, and smell the ash-filled smoke, resonating in puffs from hand-carved ceremonial pipes. Tart and juicy blueberries hide beneath the foliage, ravaged by great black bears at feeding time. Enough remain to stain purple where they fell. All the while, the sun leaks through casting it's golden hue across the canvas of God's masterpiece and I am left yearning for more.

*Submitted by Jan Hamilton an annual visitor from Gladstone, Missouri*