The “Harriet Corner” as we think of it today is the intersections of County 79, County 118 and Minnesota Highway 84. This was the hub of activities for many local Lake Ada folks.

At that corner was the Harriet Store and gas station that was built in 1928 and was run by Otto and Mabel Able. In the northwest corner of the intersection was the Harriet School. It remained as a school until late 1930’s when it was consolidated with the Backus / Pine River District. Then it became a private residence and remained until the 1980’s.
The Lake Ada DockPost • Special Insert

LAKE ADA LOCAL HISTORY

Ponto Lake Township
T139 R29

Schools
There were four school houses to serve the early residents of Ponto Lake Township. The Lowe School, the Ponto Lake School located in Section 9, Harriet School, located in section 32 and Herder School was located in the NW corner of Section 2 and was built in 1905 for $650. It was also used for social gatherings, elections, church services and even funerals. The last school to close was the Herder School in the late 1930's. The three other schools were closed and used as private residences.

The Harriet School, also known as the Parker School which was the original name, and the name changed from Parker to Harriet in 1909. The Harriet school building was destroyed by a wind storm in September of 1909 and a new Harriet School building was built in 1910. It was located in the SE corner of the SE 1/4 of section 32.

Ponto Lake Township
Ponto Lake Township was organized on August 10, 1906 by the Cass County Board of Commissioners. The very first meeting of the Ponto Lake Township was held at the Ponto Lake School on the west side of Ponto Lake on August 25, 1906. They elected people for the offices of supervisors, treasurer, clerk, justice of the peace and constables.

After the township was organized, work began on the roads. Teams of horses and equipment were provided by local residents. Wages, if paid, were not more than 25 cents per hour.

The next major project, with limited funds, was the telephone system. On May 28, 1920, bids were opened for the first telephones and batteries. In the beginning, the main use for the phones was for fire protection. There were only so many telephones and no money to buy more. You put your name on a list and waited until someone moved away or forgot to pay their switch fee.

Ponto Lake Town Hall
Our present Ponto Lake Town Hall was built in the early 1950’s. Money was raised by donations, barn dances and box socials. Labor was donated by township residents. The first building was destroyed by a wind storm. Due to the lack of funds, a roof was built over the basement and remains that way today.

Ponto Lake Cemetery
Ora and Herman Siltman donated two acres of land for the Ponto Lake Cemetery. John Henry Siltman was the first burial in the cemetery on December 25, 1899. Many improvements have been made in the cemetery over the years, including a Veteran’s Memorial, which was built with donations.

Lakeland TV did a special program on the 2011 Memorial Day Service, which included many special guests and a great program to honor the fallen military personal.

The Country Stores
Pontoria Store
Country stores were a vital part of life in the Ponto Lake Township, allowing residents to avoid long trips to town. The Pontoria Store was owned by Ted Albricht in the late 1890’s and later it closed to become a home and still can be found in its original location along Highway 84 North. It served many purposes over it’s time as a place for locals to meet and share local news and information.

Long Pine Corner Store
The Long Pine Store began as a general store, established by Albert and Maggie Smith in 1905. Back then, flour, sugar or tobacco was doled out from large sacks with metal scoops, pickles were transferred from wooden barrels into jars brought in by customers, who might linger to share gossip around a potbellied stove, or who sometimes offered stacks of cordwood in exchange for basic supplies.

It was a time when there were no delivery trucks, and bulk goods were picked up from the train station or some distant warehouse. Its name - Long Pine - indicates that it is located exactly halfway between Pine River and Longville.

The Long Pine Store was heated only with wood until just eight years ago, when Cindy Bussian became its latest proprietor and then switched it over to gas heat.

Despite being located on a well-traveled state highway, Bussian stated most of her business is made up of locals, regulars and families. And for those local folks and families, she has carried on many traditions of the past that are important to them.

One of the most popular annual events is the Long Pine Store wild game feed, which involves local families bringing in a potluck array of venison, bear meat, bear sausage, squirrel, rabbit - if it runneth or creepeth in the north woods, it may end up on the dinner tables of the Long Pine.
Former owners, Judy and Carl Jepperson, bought the place from Dave Hecker in 1973. Judy was the main keeper of the Long Pine Store for 27 years. She had the Long Pine Store open seven days a week year round, even on Thanksgiving or Christmas.

Jepperson’s were keen hunters, bagging deer every fall. The wild game feeds were a major element of the Jepperson era. Hunting and fishing was a major aspect of the Long Pine Store tradition, both among customers and owners alike.

Many trophies once graced the walls of the Long Pine Store, and some remain today, including a gigantic elk head mounted near the front door.

Just ask any “local” and he or she will tell you that the Long Pine is haunted. “Everyone thinks it’s Maggie, the original owner,” said the current owner Cindy Bussian. Past owner Judy Jepperson confirms that the spirit of Maggie occupies the Long Pine Store, or at the very least, the signature of her soul is sewn into the fabric of this landmark.

The Store had several names in the past - Counters Store, Corner Store, Semmler Store, Mayers Store and now The Long Pine Store. Some of the earlier folks that ran the store were not the owners, they could have rented the store from the owner or hired by the owners to run the store. Below is what I have for years and owners.

1926-1959 - Albert & Maggie Smith / Owners
1959-1965 - Ted & Alice Semmler/Semmler Store
1965-19___ - Fred & Virginia Fetty / Owners
With L.S. & Virginia Chapin
19___-1973- David & Carol Hecker Owner Long Pine
1973-2001- Judy & Carl Jepperson Owner Long Pine
2001- Present - Cindy Bussian Owner The Long Pine Also - Ed & Mabel Mayers
195___- Girlie Grim Counters Store

Saxton’s Store / Larson Store or The Back Forty

This store was located a mile north of the Long Pine Store on Highway 84 at the corner just before the Ponto Township Town Hall.

It had gas pumps, small dairy/meat cooler and sold the normal north woods cabin needs. It was first owned by Archie Saxton and run later by his son Morris and they sold it in 1948 to Larson’s and then the name was changed to the “Larson Store.” Bob and Millie Osines were next owner and a name change then was to “The Back Forty.” With the last owners being Jack & Janet Nitke and in 2006 a fire destroyed most of the building.

Those stores were all located on the north end of Lake Ada and also served the Ponto Lake people as well.

Harriet Store / Harriet Lounge

In 1950 Al and Alice Arones bought the Harriet Store form Otto and Mabel Able and moved up north from Minneapolis on April 19, 1950 with their son Richard, who was eleven years old at the time. These are Dick’s memories of the Harriet Store back then.

The store and service station sold items that are different from todays convenience stores. Groceries and a meat cooler, dairy products, live bait and all kinds of fishing tackle, fishing and hunting licenses, ammunition, gas and oil, of course the original bar, had one of the few phones that people could make long distance calls from, and we had a huge bread counter in the middle of the store, and two booths at the end next to the window.

I don’t know how we got so many people into that small old room along with everything else. I guess we provided a “Watering Hole” and “Gathering Place” for people to meet and have fun.

“After graduation in 1956, Dick went to college and then into the army. Probably the biggest and best thing that happened around the Harriets Store was meeting my wife, of 51 years. She was 8 years when we met and we became childhood sweethearts. Her parents were the owners of “Dream of the Northwoods” resort on Ada. Ingrid and I married Jan 2, 1960, we have two children, and after moving many times and retiring from our careers in the communications industry, we are now back home, at the lake.” Dick Arones

After 27 memorable years of ownership my parents sold The Harriets Store/Lounge in 1977 to Bill Knoll and it was then Knoll’s Harriet Club.

In 1985 Bill sold the “Knoll’s Harriet Club” to David Petersdorff and it was known as “Little Davey’s” until 1996 when Carl Christensen purchased it and then sold it in 1998 to the owner, “said the current owner Cindy Bussian. Past owner Judy Jepperson confirms that the spirit of Maggie occupies the Long Pine Store, or at the very least, the signature of her soul is sewn into the fabric of this landmark.

“Dick’s best memories of Harriet Store - Harriet Lounge, I’d have to say meeting all the wonderful people from all over, but mainly having fun with our “Locals,” and just plain “People Watching.” Listening to and interacting with the “Local Old-timers”: Lyle McNames, George Martin, Oscar Theirs, Shorty and Swede Tollefsrud, Les and Kenny Hollingsworth, Ole and John Hagerud.

“Great Times-Great People!”

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now owners of the Harriet Club, Ron and Pam Siltman.

Ron and Pam Siltman had their wedding reception at the Club when it was “Knoll’s Harriet Club,” so their roots are deep in tradition at the Harriet Club and the local community.

In the past 13 years Ron and Pam have been a big part of the local community at the “Harriet Corner.” They have carried on the past tradition with their friendly ways, with many benefits that have helped the local friends of the community. For the past 12 years they have organized and funded a Christmas gift program for 30-50 local children from infants to early teens of need each year. With the assistance of Jody Tibbett’s they purchase clothing, toys and needed items for each child.

Then local men and ladies come to The Harriet Club one evening and wrap all of the gifts, label them and put them in a family bag for Santa. On the Saturday afternoon before Christmas the Harriet Club and locals have a big Christmas Party for the children than Santa comes and helps with the gifts. This is the big benefit that they sponsor each year and you can help by a donation into the jar for the “Christmas Child Fund.” In years past the proceeds from the August Pig Roast also went to fund this program.

They have helped in many other projects/programs in past years like “Food Baskets for Families,” benefits for family medical reasons, disasters to a family, Iraq military and whenever a local family or person is in need they try to lend a helping hand.

Harriet Club has had wedding receptions, gatherings after funerals, (Irish Tradition) birthday parties, graduations parties, and their guests have come from many different countries to enjoy the local atmosphere of the Harriet’s club. Their weekly schedule is Monday’s they are closed, Wednesday night is “Bingo Night,” Thursday night is “Taco Night,” Friday night is “Special Menu Night” and so it goes, just a fun place to meet people and catch up on the “talk-about-the-lakes.”

After 58 years the “Old Bar Room Walls” still ring with the stories of past hunting outings, big fish, life saving events, stranded folks, and just listening to the local old timers.

Back in 1945 Al Arones brought his friend “Les Kouba” up for a very successful deer and duck hunt. The photo of the hunt hangs behind the bar in the Harriet Club. Al was a metal engraver by trade and he taught Les the trade and that began a long friendship with many fun hunting trips and of images that would later be seen on Les’s famous outdoor paintings. A quote from the book “The Legacy of Les C. Kouba,” “It was up in the Pine River country near Lake Lizzie where I hunted bluebills,” and so it goes a small world with many valued memories inside the Old Harriet Club walls.

Ruby’s Bait Shop/Nellie Cafe
Ruby’s Bait Shop (Rubitschung) may have been south of the Ada Brook bridge on highway 84. This would have been back in the mid to late 50’s.

The building on the North side of Ada Brook bridge listed as first Joy’s Cafe, Owned by Russell Joy and that was in the 60’s. Nellie’s Cafe and Bait Shop was owned by Nelson in the late 60’s and 70’s. Then sold to Terry Meyer and he named it the Checkered Flag during the 80’s and early 90′s at this time it was closed and removed.

There are records of a Jake’s Restaurant in 1948 located on the west side of highway 84, between Smith’s Counter Store and the Saxton Store. The owner was Jim Terry and his wife who was a sister to Nelson’s wife the owner of Nellie’s.

Lake Ada Resorts
Ada Pine Beach Resort (1935 - Present)
When Leroy and Pat Invie first bought Ada Pine Beach Resort in August of 1971, there were four other resorts on Lake Ada. Now in 2011 Ada Pine Beach Resort is the only resort on the lake.

The Invies carry on their commitment to From L to R: Gene, Pat, and Leroy, daughters Denise, Danielle and Debbie

“It’s truly a family resort,” said Pat. The family is the center of our philosophy and operation of the resort.

Our own family grew-up here and now are still a big part of our family resort, as they return whenever they can with their families to help in many ways such as spring clean up, maintenance and just visiting with old guests and their families.

Pat said that one family group of siblings and their children visit every year and hold a talent show. Fishing and swimming are two of the biggest draws, but fish fries, campfires, sing-a-longs, old stories of the past and many other exciting family activities exist.

“It’s a job that you’ve got to love or we would not be in it,” Leroy said of owning Ada Pine Beach Resort for more than three decades.

Most of the resort families have been around for years and are now just a big part of our extended family.

We have had weddings on the beach, anniversary celebration, graduation parties and many other special events in our span of years as owners.

When we asked the Invie siblings to react on growing up around the family resort, these were some of the comments. We were from the age of 17 to the age of 2 when we moved from Minneapolis and very excited to move to the country.

With the life of a resort family there were always surprises and new adventures. The cabins had knotty pine walls; the trees were harvested off the property for the pine lumber. The tree stumps were always a problem and we had to dig and pull them out. Spring raking was always a family affair with many loads of leaves, needles and pinecones without power equipment, it was work. Cleaning up the beach, stick and brush off the yard was always a job and then emptying garbage cans.

Saturday’s were always super busy with guests checking out, cabin cleaning, laundry and then new guest arriving and getting settled for the week, plus there was always maintenance needed of some sort.
Joys of growing up at the resort were when guest families came with their kids and had new games. We always had volleyball, basketball, badminton, horseshoe, talent shows and speed boating with a 30 hp motor. When our work was done we could play and have fun and made many life long friends. When our work was done we could play and have fun and made many life long friends.

As we grew older we couldn’t wait to leave and start our own life. Now years later we look forward to coming back to help out and be with our family and just meet our old friends and sit around the evening campfire sharing our stories of growing up. Telling all the fun we had when life was simple and now our families are enjoying life in the same way. What a nice way just to relax and enjoy friends and family.

The ownership history of Ada Pine Beach went like this, Dwight & Grace Cooley started the resort in 1935 and ran it until 1947, selling it to Charles and Rose Sherrill. They only owned it until 1949. The new owners in 1949 were Glenn and Irene Hines, who ran the resort until Glenn passed away in 1969. Irene, Britta is the oldest past owner of a Lake Ada resort at the age of 102 years young and was here several weeks ago with her daughter Ingrid.

Ted and Britta Strom had two young children, a son and a daughter when they bought the resort in 1946. They lived in the Twin Cities and would come north in the spring and return in the fall after the resort season was finished. Their daughter Ingrid was 4 years old when they first bought the resort and can remember changes that took place with the additions of 3 new cabins and the additional work involved helping clean the cabins, grounds and boats.

Meeting new guests weekly and having new friends and playmates was great and many friendships developed from the resort years. A very special friendship did develop from the resort years and that was meeting her future husband Dick Arones and they were married January 2, 1960. They just celebrated their 51st wedding anniversary and live in their retirement home a very short distance from the resort where she grew up.

Ray and Regina Ludwig bought the resort in 1960 and ran it as a resort until it closed 1972 and selling off the lots and cabins it was then sold off for lots individual lake cabins. They purchased it from George and Ruth Haugan, who ran the “Haugan Family Resort” for ten years 1950 - 1960 on the southeast beautiful sandy shores of Lake Ada. The history of the resort in this location was started back in 1932 when Hazel & Gustaf Johnson built cabins and ran the resort until 1940 when they sold to Bartlett & Ellen Westin. The Westin's ran it through the war years and sold it to Adrian & Bernadine Lindsten in 1944.

It is not for certain the number of cabins at that time or who built or added cabins along the way or the names that were used for the resort, but the Lindsten's ran the resort up to 1950 when it was sold to the Haugan's. The last two owners the Haugan's and the Kitzmann's had 9 cabins and used their last names as the resort names. Ron Kitzmann was 12 years old when his parents purchased the resort back in 1960 and as he grew older and stronger, so did his work details around the resort. The work details for a day went something like this, cleaning fish and the fish cleaning house, pumping cold water in a cattle tank which was used as a minnow tank. Mixing and selling gas to the customers, washing out boats, cleaning cabins and toilets at the end of the week before new guests arrived and pulling the boats up on shore each night.

Memory highlights, were meeting strangers at the beginning of the week and they would be your best friend for the rest of your life when they left. Pretending to be a fishing guide, the old '29 ford pick-up and garbage runs or just getting to drive about. Playing wiffle ball on our special diamond with my sisters and weekly guests. The resort store that sold pop, candy, ice cream treats, milk, bread and fishing tackle, but most of all dreamsicles and Cokes from the old Coke machine. Best of all for a growing boy was the smell of dad grilling chicken and texas toast at the end of a hard days work at the resort. Those were the...
LAKE ADA LOCAL HISTORY

days that we enjoyed as a family at the Kitzmann Resort.

Lake Ada Park Resort -
Lake Ada Park located on the west shore of Lake Ada. Isabelle Smith Darrington built three cabins in the summer of 1925. Two other cabins were built a year later. She sold the resort with the five cabins to Clarence Lesher in 1946 and he ran the resort until 1952 when he sold off the cabins and their lots to individuals. Today one of the original cabins is located along highway 84.

Spring Beach Resort
Our records show that Fred Bleise first started Spring Beach Resort with 5 cabins, located in the North Bay of Lake Ada in 1915-1928. It was then sold to Otto and Miranda Parlitz, who ran the resort from 1928-1945. In 1945 Forest Bolton purchased it and we have information from his daughter Jeanette Bolton Schauer. The Bolton family ran the Spring Beach Resort from 1945-1971, that bay is sometimes called “Bolton’s Bay.” Due to Forest’s medical problems they sold the resort in 1971 to Don Lundrigan who operated it for a couple of years before dividing it into lots with cabins and sold them as private cabins.

Jeanette grew up at the resort and can remember the changes that took place with each of the cabins, first each cabin got electric lights, then refrigerators, running water and finally flush toilets. Before that they had kerosene lamps for lights, iceboxes with blocks of ice to keep things cool and water buckets for the water. Of course there was the outdoor biffy or outhouse with the crescent moon cut in the door panel.

The cabin rental included a wooden rowboat and in the early years few guests had a boat motor.

Not all of the guests drove or owned automobiles at that time and many guests came from Chicago, IL and would arrive by the train at the Pine River Depot. Forest would meet the train and bring the guests to the resort for their one or two week stays and then return them to Pine River for their return trip home.

Spring Beach had many recreational things for the guests to do such as a shuffleboard court, croquet and many water activities including a raft and a diving board. The Spring Beach shoreline is deeper and not like the nice sandy beaches that are found in the main lake body. The white diving board platform was very impressive as you drove by in your boat.

Most of the resorts had their own little store with a few of the main staples and supplies that would be needed by their guests for the week. When guests were picked up in Pine River that was the time to replenish the supplies.

Old Point Comfort Resort
Sarah Carpenter was deeded the property in 1924. She and her husband Ralph lived in cabin 1 until the main house was built. In 1937 they sold the property to William and Mary Ann Henselin for $3800.00.

The cabins were numbered in the order in which they were built. There wasn’t any electricity or water in the cabins.

An outhouse was up on the hill near the Bauer cabin. A pump was near the Wallace cabin. Each cabin had an icebox and wood stove. An icehouse was on the hill by the fish-cleaning house. Ice was cut off the lake in the winter and packed in sawdust. The resort owner delivered ice to each cabin.
building up on the garage. They put hot water in each cabin and over a period of time they added showers and space heaters. Each cabin had a wood stove prior to this. The little store was enlarged and more items were added for the convenience of guests. Cabins were remodeled and maintained.

In 1974 the Weavers bought the adjoining resort, Whispering Pines making a total of eighteen cabins. As their children grew up, the Weavers decided to subdivide and sell the cabins individually. This required hiring a surveying firm to design it and it had to be approved by the Department of Natural Resources. Cabin 12 had to be moved down from its hill location, cabin 6 had to be sold and moved, cabin 2A and 3A were moved together and also cabin 4A and cabin 5A. A new well had to be drilled and a sewer system that could handle all of the residents had to be installed. Merle also hauled in a lot of black dirt to put on the common ground to get grass to grow. A lawyer was hired to write up the covenants and bylaws. In 1982 they began to sell the cabins individually. They continued renting until the last cabin was sold.

Memories were created here when Old Point Comfort was a resort and memories are still being created here by the residents and visitors. It is truly a point of comfort; the new established “Old Point Comfort Association.”

Bill Henselin put running water in cabin 2 and built on a bathroom. Renters paid $5.00 extra each week in order to use the indoor facility. A pad lock was installed on the door and removed if you paid the additional fee.

Bill and Mary Ann Henselin sold Old Point Comfort to Dan and Angie Doolittle in 1947. Dan and Angie first added running water to all the cabins and added bathrooms with showers to cabins 3 and 7. They build up on the garage, but that collapsed under the weight of the snow shortly after being built. Cabins 11 and 12 were once officer’s quarters at the World War II prisoner of war camp located near Remer. The Doolittle’s bought the cabins and had them moved to Old Point Comfort. Hulse’s own cabin 11 and Bauer’s owns cabin 12. Angie never owned a sewing machine and sewed everything by hand. She made curtains, mattress pads and even some blankets by hand.

Merle and Naree Weaver bought Old Point Comfort in 1971 from the Doolittles. One of the first projects was a sauna / shower building. The next building project was

A Timeline Of Resort Property Transaction

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Ada Memories

Our family was at our cabin “The Wright Place” hunting ducks with my dad and his 3 friends on the south east shore of Lake Ada on November 11, 1940. When we got up in the morning there was 3 inches of snow on the ground and when they tried to get out to the decoys on the “big grass reef” in the front of our cabin. The wind was too strong and waves were to high so they turned back. Everybody quickly loaded the car and we left and were very lucky to follow the snowplow to Brainerd and that is all the farther they would allow travel. We were then stranded in the hotel for the next days until they could get a single lane plowed for travel.

Chuck Wright

My memories of Lake Ada as a young girl of seven years old in 1945, was making my first long trip up to Minnesota and Lake Ada with my family and Grandpa Wrage. We left Davenport, Iowa and traveled to Austin, Minnesota on the Iowa/Minnesota border the first day and spent the night. They always packed a picnic basket lunch for us as we traveled and would stop along the way for lunches.

I will always remember that the trips took forever going up to the lake and at the time it was a several hour trip from the Twin Cities. During WWII gas was a problem for you had to have gas stamps to buy gasoline. Dad would bring the family up to the lake and we would stay for weeks at a time and he would go back to work and come back when he had saved enough gas stamps to come back and get us. That is where I developed the love for the lake.

My memories did not start at my first visit to Lake Ada, I was only four months old and I traveled in a baby basket, like the infant car seats of today, only I was just wrapped in a blanket.

I have had the opportunity to talk to and meet many people around the lake. There is a lot more information and I only gathered a few of the memories. But I hope that you enjoy reading about the history and your friends and neighbors. Thank you to all, that I had a chance to talk too, it was a great experience.

Dave Sohn

Acknowledgments

Old Pine River Businesses

Arrow Land Co.
Bradfield’s “V” Store
Carl’s Super Market
Carlson’s Texaco Station
CoastTo-Coast Store
Day Welding & Machine Shop
Don D. Lundrigan, Attorney
Griep Jewelry Store
Hill Hardware
Johnston Lumber
Ken’s Super Market
Lake Region Hotel
Land O Lakes Creamery
Marlow Theatre
Marshall Wells Store
Miller’s Garage
Northland Funeral Home
Pine River Bakery
Pine River Commercial Club
Pine River Journal
Pine River Launderette
Pine River Locker Co.
Pine River Motor Co.
Pine River Oil, Phillips 66
Pine River State Bank
Pfeiffer’s Drug
Red Owl Store
Severeid L. M. Agency
Sildough Dept. Store
Solar Bottle Gas Co.
Stimbrook & Barchus Imp.
Stimbrook & Barnelius Imp & Motor
Surplus Store
Triske Coffee Shop
Wilson’s Paint & Specialty

Pine River Journal
Lake Country Echo
Logsleds to Snowmobiles
Pine River, MN
Cass Co. Heritage
Cass Co. Historical Society
Cass Co. Records
Long Pine Playground Assoc.
Kitchigami Regional Library
LakeLand FTV
Kathy Virden
Ken Korczak
Bunny Witt
Ron Kitzmann
Cindy Bussian
Dick Arones
Ingrid Strom Arones
Jeannette Bolton Schauer
Jon Hansen
Merle and Naree Weaver
Leroy and Pat Invie
Ron and Pam Siltman
Gene Invie
Deb Zafike
Kathy Kob’s
Chuck Wright
Karen Benjamin
A Host of Local Folks

The Memories of Lake Ada and History has been a very interesting project. It started with a trivia game naming the old resorts around the lake with my wife Priscilla. Her parents bought their cabin in the fall of 1944, spent their first summer at Lake Ada in 1945.

I have had the opportunity to talk to and meet many people around the lake. There is a lot more information and I only gathered a few of the memories. But I hope that you enjoy reading about the history and your friends and neighbors. Thank you to all, that I had a chance to talk too, it was a great experience.