

Mary's last roads of summer, part two

By Mary Hubelit
(Continued from last week)

When we came out onto Highway 11, 14 kilometres east of Longlac, we looked for gasoline for Mitzi and propane for us. We had heard about Wild Goose Lake Resort a few kilometres west of Geraldton and a mile off the highway. We found the setting beautiful, the people friendly, and the facilities pleasantly varied. We would go back there.

Mushrooms? What mushrooms? Oh yes, I did say we were hunting them also. It seems we missed the first flush, but after a couple of frosts, may catch the second. Shaggy Manes abound at Wild Goose, but it was raining too hard when we camped to pick some to go with our bacon and eggs, and of course they don't keep.

3:30 p.m. Sept. 18: This is the place where N. and the moose calf walked together along the lakeshore one misty morning. I took pictures of the miracle, oblivious to the layers of blackflies on me and my jacket, until the calf ambled up the beach into the bush and we returned to the camper.

This is the place where we watched three long, long, southbound flights of geese in one day, over 100 birds in each "V."

This is the place we swam and bathed one very hot day with a friend we hoped to bring into our circle of 'naturhythms,' to coin a 1986-type word. So what if you can't see where the sandy floor drops away? When you're up to your chin and the toes don't touch anything, you stop wading and start swimming, don't you?

This is the place where a great big healthy skunk decided to research our camper area, to the consternation of three adult humans wanting to take a walk in the bush right after breakfast!

This is the place where a group of Indian people have a semi-permanent camp--whether for fishing, berry-picking or hunting, I don't know, and I don't know who they are. We never set foot within that circle of trees, but respectfully backed off a short distance before "setting up camp"--parking the vehicle, if you prefer a more prosaic term.

This is mile 15, or 22 km off Highway 17 on the way to Little Bear Amethyst Mine, itself a fascinating place. With three huge culverts where the old timber bridge used to be, the sandy shoreline has changed, but to me it will always be the place where N. walked and talked with a young moose.

5:30 p.m.: On the way up here, we were treated to another ever-lovely kaleidoscope of Fall colours--pincherry trees with leaves like Chinese lanterns, such a fiery red on almost expected them to burst into flame; high-bush cranberry bushes with leaves like eastern maples, coloured to match those historic beauties, blueberry plants reflecting the hot red of the pincherries, and poplars and birches proving that yellow and dark green can be compatible colours, in the right setting.

At one point, a five- or six-year-old bull moose stepped onto the road, stopped and looked at us, loped on ahead, turned and IToked at us, trotted to the other side of the road, turned and loked again (giving me my second picture through the windshield) and disappeared into the bushes.

Three spruce hens ambled across our path. N. had no room to pull over and stop, so we had supper from the Magic Pantry agsin! We expect more productive results from our walk this evening--sun doesn't set till 8:04.

5:30 p.m. Sept. 19: And suddenly we are home again, still dazzled by the exciting colours of fall and the winding, twisting roads that presented them to us. Another blue heron, a family of blue-winged teal, and a nosy young skunk are all punctuation marks in this story of northwestern Ontario in September.



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