

Franklin Club is a piscatorial paradise

Don Wale recalled the days when he would jump in his vehicle and steer it in a northerly direction for a couple of hours just to reach his favourite fishing hole.

These days, however, the Aurora resident refuses to do that.

It's not that the fishing up north has taken a nosedive, although he acknowledged there were times when he didn't like getting up in the wee hours of the morning and driving frantically for three to four hours and returning empty handed.

But rather, he's found a place that's convenient in terms of driving distance.

And at the same time, Wale's honey hole harbours fish of trophy-sized proportions.

There are rainbow trout in the swim that tip the scales at 10 pounds and brook trout measuring 18-to-20 inches long.

Encompassed in a secluded 200-acre setting surrounded by forests, rolling hills and wildlife, the Franklin Club is just north of Newmarket near Hwy. 48 and Davis Drive.

The club was founded in 1909 by a group of doctors from Toronto who created a private weekend fishing get-away.

Since the 1960s though, the club has evolved into a year-round recreational retreat for its members and friends.

"It's a piece of heaven," said Wale, who's been a member for 10

years. "And it's a well-kept secret."

Members can wet a line without an angling licence year round in one of three spring-fed ponds that occupies the club's premises.

The main body of water is a 22-acre main pond known as Franklin Lake.

Here, piscators can throw in a line from shore or utilize one of 20 boats that are available.

The two-acre Harrison Pond and half-acre Douglas Pond are the other angling sites.

However, fly fishing is the only mode of angling that can be utilized on the ponds.

Not only are the three ponds well stocked by an on-site hatchery that can rear up to 80,000 rainbow and brook trout of varying sizes at one time, but they receive little angling pressure.

"The angling is fantastic," he insists.

"It's not too often you can get skunked."

As a long-time member, Wale said he used to pursue trout with a regular spinning rod and reel outfit.

However, as a means of seeking a greater challenge, he's now a converted fly fisherman.

Since taking to this discipline, he noted the club has provided him with a means of learning new techniques from other members.

In addition, Wale said the club will conduct fly fishing and fly tying seminars during the year.



Mike Hayakawa

While more members are now fly fishing converts, Wale is quick to point out the club doesn't place an emphasis on it.

At the same time, the club doesn't cater strictly to angling fanatics. Wale notes the club places an emphasis on providing a family-type of environment.

Besides fishing, there's a swim and play area for youngsters.

There's also picnic and barbecue facilities and overnight camping available on a year-round basis.

For those who don't like roughing it, the main building has five bedrooms that can hold up to 14 people for overnight accommodations.

For meals, the club has a dining area that's open Wednesday through Sunday for breakfast, lunch or dinner.

Here they can sample the delectable delights concocted by Laslo and Katie.

Members wishing to combine a little business and pleasure can do

so at the club as they have a board room on site.

Fishing at the club is not restricted to the spring summer and fall when the ponds are ice free.

During the winter months when Franklin Lake surface freezes over and is safe to walk on, members can utilize one of the huts the club puts out.

Members can also skate in a supervised area or utilize seven kilometres of a cross-country ski trail.

While the club caters to its members, it also does some charitable work by supporting Big Brothers and holding a fishing day for them.

"It's like a cottage without doing the work or travel," said Wale.

For further information on the club, call Jim Oosterbroek at (905) 473-1469 or e-mail at: frklnclb@neptune.on.ca.

The club also has a website: www.thefranklinclub.ca.

Shooting for charity

The Gormley Sports Shooting Club will hold its fifth annual charity open house fun shoot at its indoor range facility on Stalwart Industrial Drive (14 Stalwart Industrial Drive, one block east of Woodbine Ave., north off the Stouffville Road) this Sunday starting at 10 a.m.

Steve Pellicori, a club spokesperson, said those wishing

to attend to learn more about the sport of shooting will go through a quick safety instruction with a provincial certified range officer. Participants then go on the indoor range to shoot at reactionary type of targets.

In addition to learning more about the sport a series of fun raffles and draws will take place.

"We want people to come out and enjoy the sport and test their skills," he said.

Proceeds raised from the day go to colitis and cancer research.

Walleye transfer a success

In an effort to improve Lake Simcoe's walleye population, the Ministry of Natural Resources recently transferred 150 walleyes from Talbot River into Beaver River.

Over a three-day period, 30 volunteers from the Beaverton and District Conservation Club and Pefferlaw Anglers Club assisted the ministry in tagging 64 male walleyes and 86 females and collecting eggs and sperm for artificial rearing.

Walleyes can now pass through the Beaverton Dam, which was modified in 1998, to utilize 26 kilometres of potential spawning habitat in Beaver River.

The ministry encourages anyone who catches a fish with a tag to report it to the Aurora District office at (905) 713-7400.

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