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Autumn

By Bobbi Davis

Everyone has a favorite season; for me, it's autumn. One of the most enjoyable aspects of the fall season, of course, is watching the trees change colors to various hues of yellows, oranges, reds and browns. The air is cool, light, crisp, and dry. The sky is clear and deep blue. The fall season is the time of year to be outside enjoying great weather! Going for long walks, raking up leaves, (if you're a kid, jumping in piles of leaves!) wiener roasts, and visiting apple orchards are some of fall's favorite activities. Although I enjoy all of these things about the autumn season, I most enjoy watching the flowers, how they struggle to produce their last blooms and then hang on to their last blooms of the season. It seems to me that Mother Nature has planned fall better than any other season. Just as some flowers and shrubs are dying off for the season and can no longer provide us with colorful blooms, other shrubs, trees, and mums are coming to life with color, to fill the void. Who knows, maybe Mother Nature uses the beauty and splendid colors of fall as a diversion to help ease us into the winter season.

Costumes, Free Drink, and Music! Oh My!

By Vicki Strong

This year's fall meeting will be full of exciting and new social elements that will make for an entertaining evening for all. To celebrate Halloween, we are asking people to attend the meeting in a costume that would be a *treat* for us to see. We will be giving away cash prizes for the scariest, funniest, most creative and best female and best male costumes. The board members are exempt from the prizes, but have agreed to arrive in costume as well and will vote on the categories listed above.

The board would like you to have a drink on us. Each attendee will receive one free drink ticket redeemable for either a beer or mixed well drink. This is our way of thanking you for your support and contributions through the years. Cheers!

Lastly, we will be playing music after the meeting, 50/50, door prizes, and costume prizes are awarded. Stick around to dance or just chat with your neighbors! We want people to see this fall general meeting as a chance to better acquaint with fellow WMTLA members, or members-to-be.

And we *will* put photos on the website...

Jellyfish?

By Chris Strong

Received from IEPA:
Calling all Volunteer Lake Monitors --

Have you noticed any freshwater jellyfish in your lake-- or any other lake you visited-- this year? (See page 6 in the Fall/Winter 2008 VLMP newsletter for photos of and an article about these little jellyfish: <http://www.epa.state.il.us/water/conservation/vlmp/newsletters/fallwinter08.pdf>.)

A biology professor at Wheaton College, Nadine Rorem, is hoping to collect some live specimens to take photographs of for a book chapter she's writing. If you have seen, or believe you've seen, any of these little jellyfish in your lake this year, please contact your VLMP Coordinator or Nadine directly (Nadine.rorem@wheaton.edu; 630-207-6545) as soon as possible. These are very fragile little creatures and start to die off as lake water temperatures cool and food supplies dwindle in the fall.

If there are jellyfish in your lake right now, please try to collect some in a jar with water from the lake, and keep the jar of jellyfish in your house so they stay warm enough (keep the jar lid off to allow air exchange -- unless you have curious cats). We can then work out arrangements for Nadine to come pick them up from you.

Thanks so much for any help you can provide!

Best regards,

Your VLMP Coordinators

- Greg Ratliff, Statewide Coordinator (217-782-3362, greg.ratliff@illinois.gov)
- Holly Hudson, Northeastern Coordinator (312-386-8700, hudson@cmep.ilinois.gov)
- Kelly Deem, Lake County Coordinator (847-377-8030, kdeem@lakecountyil.gov)
- Travis Taylor, Southern Coordinator (618-997-9351 ext 22, travistaylor@greateregypt.org)

Message from the President

First of all, I would like to thank all of the members of the board for all of their help with the Wee-Ma-Tuk Landowners Association activities. I would especially like to thank Chris Strong for his work to maintain the internet site and for taking on new responsibilities this year by working with the Department of Natural Resources on setting a baseline for water clarity in Lake Wee-Ma-Tuk. When you see him at the fall meeting please make sure and thank him also. It really is amazing how much activity our website is creating.

The Fishing committee will be contacting the fishery soon to get a date on when the next stocking will take place. Please keep an eye out on the website for the date. I will be personally contacting those who have participated before. If you want to participate this year, please contact me and I will make sure you are notified of the delivery date of the fish. This is a great opportunity to bring your children and let them help stock the lakes. It is always a fun time.

Make sure and come to the fall meeting; we will try and keep the data dump to a minimum and focus on enjoying everyone's company. I'm sure Chris will surprise us with a cinematic review of the year.

Regards to all

Dave

Sounds of the Woods at Wee-Ma-Tuk

By Bill Phillips

Living at Wee-Ma-Tuk is like having your own orchestra playing beautiful melodies, complete with subtle sounds or startling crescendos from the *Overture of 1812*. Through all of this we are enjoying the rhythms of nature and the beauty that these sounds convey to our souls.

In the morning the gentle flops of fish in the lake can be heard as geese honk overhead. Songbirds sing and the wind whistles through the trees. Sometimes we are treated to bass drum complete with a light show. Toward dark the owls cry out "who cooks for". Later you can hear leaves crunching as the deer pass through your yard. Sometimes the subtle sounds of opossum climbing a tree, frogs croaking and crickets clicking can be heard.

Later, the baying of the coyotes is outdone by the violent shrieking of another prey. But have you ever wondered what is really going on when you hear those shrieks at night? Maybe these are the incredible sounds of an animal finding and preying upon another animal. Ouch ouch. Maybe these are just the unusual tones and bizarre sounds of birds talking in the night.

Over the years we have tried to look out the windows and see what is going on and which animals are prowling. So far nothing has been spotted.

So, we are starting something new. We installed an automatic deer spotting camera on one of the trees and pointed it at the spot where the terrible sounds emanate. This might work. The camera takes pictures automatically when its sensor detects motion or heat. We tried it pointing at our front door, and lo and behold, every time a grandchild went by, we had a new picture

So now we are trying to see who makes the shrieks at night. Who is preying upon whom. How big are these predators? We just started and don't know yet.

We plan to send any pictures we get to Chris Strong for posting on the Wee-Ma-Tuk website. If you have an interest in joining us, try your own camera and join us in seeing what the natural wildlife looks like, at night.

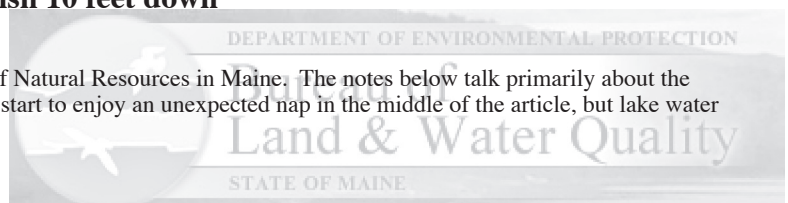
Wee-Ma-Tuk Water Quality Vision: "I can see fish 10 feet down"

By Dave Davis

I have stolen shamelessly from some articles from the Department of Natural Resources in Maine. The notes below talk primarily about the economics of lake water clarity and your property values. You may start to enjoy an unexpected nap in the middle of the article, but lake water quality and clarity is a topic we must address.

Water Clarity and Property Values

There is no single feature of lakes which affects people's enjoyment of the resource more than water clarity. Repeated nuisance algal blooms have been recorded on more than 53 Maine lakes and another 493 are considered at significant risk. One component of how people value lake water quality is reflected in what they will pay for property. The University of Maine recently completed the first ever definitive study¹ that clearly demonstrates one facet of economic loss when lake water quality declines. The information here comes from that study and from additional work by DEP.



Individual models were fit for 22 lakes in 4 regional groups which allow calculation of the component of property price which is affected by water clarity. For example, properties on China Lake sold for an average of \$107,070, of which 15 % (\$15,996) was dependent on water quality. One can compute the increase or loss in value if water clarity changes. If the condition of China Lake continued to decline, an additional loss of more than \$16 million dollars could occur. Current losses are probably several times that amount. These results show that these effects are very large and that they are greater for degrading water quality than for improving. Of 451 Maine lakes for which we have substantial water quality data, 191 are below regional expectations for lakes in undisturbed watersheds. The estimated property value loss for these 191 lakes is about \$256-512 million. It is clear from these estimates that the economic losses due to declines in lake water quality that have already occurred are real and very large.

More recent research on 36 lakes in 4 regional groups in Maine took another look at how water clarity changes property values². It was found that properties on lakes with one meter greater clarities have higher property values in the range of 2.6% (\$2,563) to 6.5% (\$9,271) depending on the market. Likewise, a one meter decrease in minimum transparencies cause property values to decrease anywhere in the range of 3.1% (\$3,084) to 8.5% (\$12,050). Similar effects were seen in New Hampshire and Vermont as well, and there are indication that effects such as these hold true in Minnesota. Like previous studies, properties were compared based on variables such as locational data items such as distance to nearest substantial town, paved road, density of other properties and cottages, property's lakefront footage, and lake surface area. Structural variables were also included in the property's value and include items like age and floor area of the unit, type of water supply and wastewater system, and presence of improvements (additions). Of these variables, lake surface area seems to have a large affect on the range of property values as it may affect individual perceptions of acceptable water quality. For example, smaller lakes in Maine tend to have lower clarities, and people tend to have the expectation that the clarity will be lower on these lakes. However, on a lake that already has a low clarity, a one-meter change is going to be more noticeable than it would be on a larger lake.

I enjoy all of my neighbors on Lake Wee-Ma-Tuk, and I am sure all of the Wee-Ma-Tuk residents on other lakes have similar feelings. I know all of us on the Landowners Association Board are passionate about this subject, and want to support all initiatives to improve water quality. Chris Strong has been working with the state to record water clarity all of this summer. I know many of us have also taken Shae Birkey's advice and used fertilizers with zero phosphate. These are just beginnings and there are many more things we must do. The vision for all of us should be: "In my lake, I can stand on the shore and see fish 10 feet below the water." If you can't do this in your lake, let's all figure out the solution.

Editor's note: a boat is required for clarity testing. Volunteers are needed to test the small lakes. Contact chris@weematuk.net.

¹*Water Quality Affects Property Prices: A Case Study of Selected Maine Lakes.* Holly Michael, Kevin Boyle, and Roy Bouchard. Maine Agricultural and Forest Experiment Station Misc. Report 398, Feb 1996, Univ. of Maine.

²Boyle, Kevin and Roy Bouchard, 2003. "Water Quality Effects on Property Prices in Northern New England," *LakeLine* Vol 23(3), pp. 24-27.

I'm Stuffed

By Kaylyn Kuzniar

(Originally posted April 26, 2011 at www.thehousefrau.com)

Upon hearing in the third grade from Mr. Howerter that mushrooms were not vegetables but, in fact, chunks of fungus, over half my classmates immediately refused to eat them ever again. I assume this was not the reaction Mr. H was hoping for, but as a brilliant beekeeper and nature enthusiast, he wanted his students to be informed of what was growing around us. Fungus or not, I was not fazed by this truth. It was as if I was now privy to some ancient, deep, forest secret that my my parents or my know-it-all cousin Nate didn't know.

On special occasions and holidays, someone would show up with stuffed mushrooms. Stuffed with what, I'm not sure, nor can I remember, but I was one of the only children brave enough to eat them. To be quite honest, they were ugly little parcels of mystery, which no kid would eat on a double-dog dare. Except me. After all those holidays and occasions, I never met a stuffed mushroom I didn't like, so when I came across this unique recipe, I had to try it. Since my Ginger is one of those non-fungus eaters, I snarf these up by myself or share them with other mushroom lovers. They are a success at our family Thanksgiving cocktail hours.

The standard, cultivated field mushroom, next to the slabs of portobellos, is what I consistently find in my local grocery, and use for this recipe. Cremini (if you can find somewhat large ones) work well, too. The addition of raisins adds a surprising, but not overpowering, sweetness that counteracts the saltiness of the cheese, olives and sausage. Keep them in the recipe, and tell no one, as the mention of raisins seems to scare people as much as the cold, hard fungus-y truth about mushrooms. And, I promise that the raw sausage will cook through completely, so please don't be tempted to pre-cook the sausage. The yummy, piggy juices seep into the mushrooms to keep them flavorful and plump. This is

critical, really, to the success of these little bites.

Stuffed Mushrooms

Adapted from *Eat This Book: Cooking With Global Fresh Flavors* by Tyler Florence

Makes 24 Mushrooms

If you are craving a creamy element in your stuffed mushrooms add 8oz of mascarpone cheese (or cream cheese) to the filling.

Handful of golden raisins

Half a jar of green olives, chopped

Handful of you favorite nuts, chopped. I use almonds.

A big handful of parsley, chopped

1 lb of fresh Italian sausage, out of the casing and crumbled into small pieces

1 cup of Parmesan or Pecorino cheese, freshly grated, plus more for breadcrumb topping

1 teaspoon of red pepper flakes

1 cup of panko bread crumbs

Kosher salt and cracked black pepper

Extra virgin olive oil

24 field (stuffing) mushrooms, stems removed.

Oven @ 500 (Yes, this is hot, but please trust me!)

To make the stuffing, combine the first 7 ingredients and lightly mix with your hands. Season with salt and pepper and drizzle with a bit of oil. Mix again with your hands. Prep the mushrooms by seasoning them with salt, pepper and a drizzle of oil. Stuff each mushroom with a little filling and place on a lightly oiled baking sheet big enough to hold all the mushrooms, giving them a little room. Use two baking sheets if necessary. Add some grated cheese to the panko breadcrumbs and sprinkle this mixture over each of the mushrooms. Drizzle with a touch more oil, slide in the oven and bake for about 17 minutes, but keep a close eye on them since every oven is different. Serve immediately, hot and steamy.

Board Secrets Revealed! By Chris Strong

Sorry—I couldn't resist an *Enquirer*-type title. This will not be an expose of any sort. It occurred to me, though, that anyone who hasn't served on the WMTLA Board might not know what's involved in such an undertaking.

We meet monthly, on the first Tuesday, at 7 pm. The Pro Shop (Wee-Ma-Tuk Country Club) generously provides the site, even in the off-season. We follow Parliamentary Procedure, with secretary's, treasurer's, and membership reports, old business, new business, and adjournment dealt with by motion, second, discussion, and vote. If we have a guest or concerned citizen, time is afforded before the reports begin.

Nothing new here, I grant you. Robert's Rules have governed something in everyone's past, be it FFA, Kiwanis, or the Post-Prom Committee. They are fair and effective.

A couple of years ago, the Board felt that an unofficial, agenda-less meeting in mid-month would allow us more time to kick around some wilder ideas: dreams, new initiatives, radical solutions to ongoing problems—without taking any action.

Thus was born Talk-O Tuesday. We met for several months at La Fiesta for dinner on middle Tuesdays before branching out to other restaurants. But, proud of my wordsmithing, I insisted on calling it the Talk-O, even if we met somewhere for egg foo yung. I'm for tradition, even if it's homemade. (Those keeping an eye on their dues money should note that we all pay for our own dinners.)

If the Talk-O produces a promising idea, we list it as new business and put it through the official process at the next regular meeting. It's effective, it's fun, and we've gotten to know each other better.

The Board takes a two-month hiatus in January and February, unless there is pressing business. Often we will do the Talk-O in those months, if only for the excuse to eat out. By March, we need to plan for a newsletter and Spring Fling, and the summer months always find us with full agendas. August brings the planning for another newsletter, fish stocking, and the Fall General Meeting.

And so goes the year.

Board service brings joy and occasional head- and heartaches; the satisfaction is in being with people who want only the best for the Wee-Ma-Tuk community, and are willing to work for it.

And the tacos are excellent.



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