

Buckshot Anderson, who writes for the Lakeland Times recently stayed with us. His article appeared in *The Lakeland Times* on Sept. 21, 2012. Thanks Buckshot!

Traveling Trails Less Traveled (Sept. 21st) Back to the 1950s!

It has often been stated that it's not possible to go back in time – back to a time George Bush # 40 once suggested, was "...A quieter and gentler time." But you can! And from Vilas County it only takes two and a half hours by auto or truck!

Our mini-vacation had been planned and reservations made in early June. The four of us had waited all summer for the event to take place. Peggy, Robin and Mike Franks, plus their driver, departed St. Germain about 3:30 on the afternoon of Labor Day for the 120 mile journey north and west into the lake region of Bayfield County. Our lodging of choice was Delta Lodge, a historic resort that opened its doors for vacationers in 1940. My last visit to this charming location was in 1982 and during our leisurely drive north I wondered how much the accommodations may have changed. My wife, friends and I were not disappointed as not much was different!

We were greeted by our hosts, Andy and Marilyn Einspanier, who gave us the keys to cabin # 1, which like the other eleven cabins, overlook forty acre Delta Lake. (note: the cabins actually overlook Everett Lake - Marilyn's edit.) Being the cottage furthest west along the lakeshore and nestled among a grove of ancient white pine and oak, it offered us maximum privacy. It was a "Back to the 50s" cabin that reminded Peggy and I of our own rental units at Kasomo Lodge in St. Germain that was in operation from 1943-1975. The interior of the two-bedroom dwelling included knotty pine walls, linoleum floors in the kitchen and bath, with carpeted floors in the living room, bedrooms and screened in porch. The porch stretches fully across the lakeside of the cabin and was almost close enough to the water one might have been able to fish from the deck!

The kitchen is fully equipped, 50's style, with everything one would need to whip up a gourmet meal, except a micro-wave, which didn't exist in the 50s. Hot water is available via a thirty gallon hot water heater, which guarantees everyone a refreshing shower. The living room and screened- in porch contain comfortable stuffed chairs and couches plus a dining table on the porch if folks are inclined to eat close to nature rather than in the kitchen.

A sandy beach borders a gin-clear (I love this description - Marilyn's comment), sand bottomed swimming area, which was a welcomed addition as the daytime temperatures during our first two days hit the mid-80s. Nine kayaks and a canoe are available at the beach for use along with life jackets (no additional charge) for those who wish to paddle the pristine shoreline of Delta Lake.

Each cabin is furnished with a row-boat for those who would like to fish or exercise like folks used to do in the 50s. There were no water-ski boats or motor driven pleasure boats on the lake, plus no whining sounds of jet-skis – which was a huge bonus!

Each cabin has an outside, lakeside, picnic table and 50s style wooden lawn chairs next to a fire pit. Campfire wood is free of charge-all you have to do is drive to the woodshed and help yourself.

Anglers can fish for panfish, bass and pike in 1950s peace and quiet. On day two Mike quickly produced a before-dinner appetizer of freshly caught bluegills using a fly rod and popper off our cabins dock, which I filleted in the lodge's fish cleaning house.

Our first evening meal of T-bone steaks and baked Idaho potatoes was prepared on a Weber charcoal grill outside the kitchen door. The remainder of our meals was prepared in the kitchen on a modern electric range.

For those who may wish more luxury than "50s style" there are cabins available with washer/drier, gas fireplace, sauna and there are cottages available that will accommodate from two to twelve people. And even those who can't live without WiFi can breathe a sigh of relief as that too is available at the game room! (Visit www.delta-lodge.com) Pets are welcome but naturally must be kept under control, out of the swimming area and clean-up of do-do is expected.

Those who need to shop for food-stuff or whatever can find it in Iron River, WI, which is only 14 miles from the lodge. Historic Bayfield is only a half-hour drive, which the four of us visited on day three. We played tourist tramping the concrete from shop to shop, dined at Maggie's and bought tasty smoked trout and whitefish at one of the three "fish stores" in Bayfield.

Just north of Bayfield is Red Cliff, where those seeking their fortune can attempt the impossible at the casino. We spent an hour there and contributed to the local economy. The area surrounding Delta Lodge has changed little in the past half-century. The landscape is dotted with well-kept farm fields separated by miles and miles of mainly hardwood forests. Dozens of small lakes dot the region and it is also home to some of the finest trout streams in Wisconsin.

Anglers may wade or canoe streams with names such as the Sioux, Onion, Brule, Fish Creek and the White to name a sampling. Also, the "Big Pond", Lake Superior is nearby should one wish to try for the big ones from charter boats.

The winding county highways are scenic and traffic is minimal. Wildlife is abundant, deer, wild turkey and most any other native species might be viewed in field or forest as folks explore on foot, via vehicle, four wheelers or - snowmobiles in winter.

Robin and Peggy were clamoring for a fresh trout dinner, so reluctantly (NOT) Mike and I set out to attempt to secure the main entrée to satisfy their dining desires. My choice of waters to produce said fresh trout dinner was the historic White River, just a hop, skip and a jump from Delta Lodge.

My experience on that scenic and famed body of water was somewhat minimal, as I had only fished it about a dozen times over the past thirty years.

The White originates in several different branches from headsprings and cold water lakes in western Bayfield County and generally flows in an easterly direction to its union with Bad River east of Ashland. My experience has been on the west branch of the White, which includes five trips through a huge wilderness area known as the Bibon Swamp. This adventure takes a minimum of two days, three is better, to complete the twenty-two miles of winding stream where canoeists and kayakers will not encounter another road, see a building or hear any human generated sounds except aircraft overhead!

Mike and I took a much shorter stretch of the river, a roughly seven mile section between Pike River Road and Sutherland Bridge, a float of six hours.

Robin drove us to the put-in point and helped us launch my canoe, which was loaded with the bare necessities. Hopefully, our cell-phones would be able to summon her to retrieve us at the end of our journey!

Our day on the river began at 8:40 a.m. The weather was a trout angler's nightmare! Sunny skies, no breeze, gin clear water and temperatures heading upward. During our first three hours we caught but four brook trout – all little dinks well below the legal size limit. Our spirits were also below normal but at least the scenery, peace and quiet was a plus!

But Lady Luck began to smile on us! A hazy cirrus sky cut the sun's rays and a southwest wind rippled the water and whispered through the alders, ash and cedar that line the banks. And the trout began to feed!

During the next two hours we boated eight trout, two more undersized brookies and six legal browns from 10 to 15 inches! We reached Sutherland Bridge at 2:40, our cell-phone worked and Robin arrived with my truck fifteen minutes later.

Later that evening we dined on charcoal baked potatoes, fresh trout fillets lightly floured in "Buckshot's Not-So-Secret Breeding" and simmered to a toast colored brown in olive oil, butter with a dash of salt and pepper. This created smiles and an occasional "Oooooohhhh, it's soooooo good", evidence Mike and I had completed our mission!

Yes sir – it's nice to be able to head back to the 50s and re-live the good old days once again!