



MISSISSIPPI MADAWASKA LAND TRUST CONSERVANCY

Official Newsletter

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Lanark Wild Food Club Banquet

By Hilary Barrett

Peter Fischl, President of the Lanark Wild Food Club, presented a cheque for over \$4000 to Howard Clifford of the Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust Conservancy (MMLTC) -- monies raised from a wild food banquet and silent auction held for 160 guests at the Lions Club in Perth on November 24th.

How on earth did the Lanark Wild Food Club, founded less than a year ago, provide a fabulous seven-course meal of wild food for 160 people? With a lot of effort by a great many club members who hunted, fished and gathered the ingredients from all over Lanark County over several months. A key volunteer was Erik Kafrissen the Banquet Chef and co-star of the Heeb and Rob Show, a wild cookery show on the Hunting and Fishing TV network. "If you know what you're looking for" comments Erik, "its free for the taking -- there's a million types of mushrooms and all sorts of plants." Erik led a Club foraging walk in June, and put fifty foragers to work gathering wild sumac tips, cattails, milkweed and digging up burdock -- some of which was saved for the banquet.



From left to right: Howard Clifford, Peter Fischl, Eric Kafrissen, Barbara Gibson and Glenn Drover.

Before dinner, guests were served various wild game hors d'oeuvres, garnished with wild fruit sauces and handed round by the volunteer servers. Once everyone was seated Peter Fischl took the stage to talk about the Club and introduce Erik and the sous chefs who explained the ingredients used in each course as it was served. The first dish was wild mushroom soup, served with black walnut buns -- and therein lies a story. One Club member patiently gathered a bag of walnuts every other day for a month which Peter collected

and, with some helpers, bashed with a hammer so they could pick out the nutmeat. Another member caught the bass for the next course, absolutely delicious quenelles garnished with fiddleheads and other wild greens. Tony Durant provided much of the wild fruit and preserves, including the ingredients of the mid-meal fruit sorbet, and many other people contributed to the remaining courses. Venison tourtière with a sauce made from local tomatoes followed the sorbet. Not every ingredient was wild -- but all were local. Next came moose and wild rice casserole, served with baby milkweed pods washed down with Sumac tea. The finale was a medley of wild fruits in maple syrup. A meal that will linger long in the diners' memories!

Volunteers not only provided the ingredients, but helped with food preparation, sold tickets, served and cleared up. Barb Gibson was the main organizer of these aspects of the banquet. Peter points out that "all in all the success of the Wild Food Dinner reflects the philosophy of the Lanark Wild Food Club, which is to share knowledge, fellowship -- and food -- with those interested in wild game, fish, plant edibles and anything from nature".

Door prizes and a silent auction, organized by Mary Vandenhoff of the MMLTC, added to the fun and contributed to the funds the Club was able to give the Land Trust. Howard Clifford -- a director of both the Wild Food Club and the MMLTC -- believes a love of wilderness is good for the body, mind and soul, and the activities put on by the Wild Food Club are a "delightful way for children and older people to come to a deeper understanding and appreciation of nature". "What both the Wild Food Club and the Land Trust have in common", says Howard "is a passion for the outdoors, and a desire to conserve it for future generations".

For more information check out the Wild Food Club website at www.huntfishgather.com.

TRIBUTE TO THE EIGHTY PLUS CLUB

by Howard Clifford

I stepped outside early on September 30th to drizzling rain. This was the scheduled day for MMLTC's fund-raising autumn walk and in disappointment I prepared for a small turnout. By 8:30 a.m. the rain had stopped and although the sky remained overcast a steady stream of cars continued to appear until we reached a count of over 80 people, including 8 who were 80 years of age or older.

At the top of Blueberry Mountain, the 80 plus year olds were gathered for a photo. I felt a sense of pride that neither age nor inclement weather had deterred them from this nature outing. There were some I had known for years and others I had only recently met, yet they seemed like family.

A number of thoughts flashed through my mind. Surely they would admit that they physically could not do what they had in their prime years. Their physical strength might have decreased but one thing that hasn't decreased is their love of nature. If anything their understanding and appreciation of the natural beauty around them has only deepened with the passing years. I thought of the ancient proverb that said, "A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit under." As I looked past them to the scenic beauty beyond, I felt like changing the proverb to say, "A society grows great when the elderly envision and support a primeval, pristine, ancient forest that they themselves will never see."

Another thing I noticed was that they seemed to share a spirit of gentleness and kindness. There are studies that show when very young children have ongoing exposure to loving grandparents they seem to escape the prejudice against ageism that is so much a part of our culture. As I looked at this group I wondered, "What child would not feel secure and happy at being introduced to wilderness by any in this group?" I thought back to the story of a mother who had been taken on rambles through the woods by John Muir when she was a toddler. Some thirty years later she visited him and told of how she still vividly recalled those walks and the wonderful, lasting impact they had on her life.

As I took a photo of this group of eight, I fought back a tear as I recalled my own grandmother. As an eight year old I would take her for walks. Sometimes when she was up to it, I showed her my favorite haunts in the forested river valley not far from our home. This was our little secret because both of us knew my mother did not want me going near the river. I could see the happiness in her face as she stopped to examine a flower or a berry-bush and I knew she approved of my desire to commune with nature.



The first inductees into the 80 Plus Club: Gary Hanes, Stan Errett, Ann Hamilton, Ted Mosquin, Ankaret Dean, John Kerr-Wilson, Gray Merriam and Aileen Merriam.



Director Michael Macpherson presents certificate to Noah Crampton

NOAH CRAMPTON BECOMES FIRST KID'S CLUB MEMBER

By Michael Macpherson

In November 2012 Noah Crampton received his certificate of membership in the Blueberry Mountain "Five and Under Club", for having climbed to the top of the Mountain with his grandmother, Janet Duncan in tow.

Noah participated in the walk on September 30, 2012 in support of the Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust and, of course, to see what is on the other side of the mountain. It was Noah who asked Howard Clifford, President of the Land Trust, "Why don't you start a club for kids?" This was shortly after Howard had presented certificates and, it should be stated, a delicious cake, to the 8 members joining the 80 Plus Club, after they had climbed to the summit. Howard took Noah's idea back to the Land Trust Board and the Directors agreed that it was an excellent idea. Not only that, they agreed to start both a Five and Under Club, and a Twelve and Under Club. Howard gives full credit to Noah for proposing such a good idea, and notes that all three clubs already have a growing membership. Perhaps next year when the MMLTC holds another walk up Blueberry Mountain we can have a cake for the members of these two clubs. If Noah can make it, we would like to have him help cut the cake so everyone will know that these two wonderful clubs came about because of his request.

If you have questions or would like to be added to our mailing list, please contact Susan at ssentesy@mmltc.ca or 613-267-4200, Ext. 3403.

Office Hours: 8:30 – 4:30
Monday to Friday