

# Manitoulin Island

Our camping trip this summer included three days on Manitoulin Island. We tented in the Providence Bay Tent and Trailer Park, (705 377-4650) where there was a long sandy beach on the south shore of the island, about a half hour from the ferry landing in South Baymouth and NO MOSQUITOES !! There was also a long boardwalk and at one end of the beach was a marina and at the other end, a community center with a lunch and ice-cream counter. At the marina, we saw two young "Northern girls" bring in their catch of salmon from Lake Huron, including two 9 lb and 12 lb monsters. "See what Northern Girls can do!" they bragged, as we took their picture. And for my birthday dinner, the Old School House Restaurant in Providence Bay provided an elegant meal of fresh whitefish with scalloped potatoes and fresh asparagus.

That was good, but even better were the excursions to Gore Bay and Mindemoya to the island's two quilt stores. Mind you, they don't say anything about quilts in the store names, so when you go there, look for these two fine shops.

In Mindemoya, on the shores of a warm inland lake of the same name, right beside Farquhar's dairy (and ice cream bar) Sharon Watson operates Wool 'n' Things, which still sells yarn and knitting patterns, but now has a large selection of fabrics and quilters' notions. (705 377-7140).

On the north shore, in Gore Bay, we went right past Life's Simplest Pleasures, which looked like a gift shop in a large barn of an old wooden building across the road from the Fish Hatchery and beside an excellent restaurant with German and Swiss cuisine, run by the son of the owners, Lutz and Elvira Hermann, If you're looking for a lighter meal, just down the road beside the marina, there's an octagonal log building with a red roof that houses a café upstairs and an art gallery downstairs. And there are lots of B & B's!

When we noticed the ad for Life's Simplest Pleasures in the local newspaper, that said they had over 300 bolts of fabric, we went right back and sure enough. through the gift shop at the front and into the back of the shop, we found Elvira and her fabrics, including lots of flannel and fleece as well as a formidable selection of quilting cottons, threads and notions. (1-800-305-2048 or 705 282-2437).

Elvira also sews children's clothing that is for sale in the shop as well as teaching classes and told me of the 35 ladies who had just finished a quilter's retreat at Timberlane Lodge. There are two quilt shops and two guilds on the island and you can have your pick of Quilter's Retreats to suit your taste and budget. Elvira says that the next 4 day retreat at the lodge with all meals included will take place in the fall and will cost \$350. And according to the notice I saw on a bulleting board, for \$35 dollars, you can bring your sleeping bag and air mattress along with your sewing machine to the Little Current Community Centre for a weekend quilter's retreat. I'm sure both Sharon and Elvira could fill you in on the details if you're interested.

For a wealth of information about all that Manitoulin has to offer the boater, fisherman or family with small children, you can ask for Manitoulin's magazine, published by the Manitoulin Expositor, P.O Box369, Little Current, Ont. POP 1KO.

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