

.....**And we *live* here!**

It's a pretty safe bet that those who can afford a cottage at Bills Lake have also been able to enjoy traveling. Undoubtedly some have strolled the Champs Elysees in Paris, sipped cappuccino in St. Marks Square in Venice, strolled from small town pub to small town pub in the Cotswolds, and enjoyed views of scenic Irish countryside. To be sure, some have sailed on a cruise through the Greek islands or the Caribbean. How about a Viking River cruise down the Rhine River?

On a domestic vacation, many have visited the Magic Kingdom in Orlando or stayed at the Grand Hotel on Mackinaw Island. Yellowstone Park. Disney World.

But regardless of the scale of, say, camping out near the Sleeping Bear sand dunes, there is one thing in common: it's going to end. At some point in the excursion – one or two weeks, maybe – there will be the dread that the clock is ticking and that you will have to return to the real world of jobs, to-do lists, and promised obligations. The end of free time encroaches. You only have a few more days left. Then it's over.

But those of us who are fortunate enough to own property at Bills Lake don't have those same time limitations. An entire summer – sometimes with an entire spring and fall – stretches in front of us. We can take walks around the lake knowing that when we return to our dwellings, we won't have to pack up and go home, at least not anytime soon. We can spend leisure hours on our pontoons, especially during the evening hours, knowing that we don't have to check out of our rental tomorrow morning.

That's because we live here.

Even those who have to return to the Big City and the job that awaits them on Monday morning know that their cottage will be here next weekend. If "Happiness is anticipation of something good," they have five days of anticipation. Moreover, the drive to the lake on Friday night is delicious unto itself.

There are certainly downsides to owning rather than renting but at Bills Lake, it isn't even close in terms of worth unless your primary residence is located far away and you don't get to be here often enough to justify the inevitable problems that crop up with owning your own place.

Moreover, there is the discreet and admittedly selfish satisfaction at watching the rubber-necked visitors drive by, looking at your place and wishing it were theirs. There is also the quiet satisfaction of inviting friend and family "up to the cottage" where you can not only play consummate host because the toys and lake are so ever-present but also because they eventually leave while you get to stay. After all, the place is yours.

Yes, indeed, as you walk or boat amidst the beauty of Bills Lake, you might also exclaim (maybe to yourself). "This is so great.....and we *live* here!"