

fishing GUIDE



By Charlene Peck
Photography by Cody Storm Cooper

Heading out of Shawanaga Bay, fishing guide Marilyn Longlade Capreol steers her familiar 17-and-a-half-foot Starcraft, commonly known in the area as the 'covered red wagon' towards Empress Island.

A curious passenger earnestly asks: 'Where are we?' but Marilyn's not giving in. "I don't know, I'm lost," she'll pretend, her apparent dismay, giving way to a grin. After all, fishing guides don't get lost – but they don't divulge the location of prime fishing holes, either.

Like the two generations of Longlades who guided the Pointe au Baril area before her, plus her brother and four sisters, who are all quite capable of guiding today, Marilyn has her own descriptive names for the 'really good' fishing grounds.

Her father's favourites were Bread Basket, Table Rock, Steam Boat Channel, 3 o'clock Shoal, Slaughter House, Shawanaga Pool and Chicken Channel. His children created some of their own like Bottle Neck, the Annette Tree and Sure Shot Bay. More recently, Marilyn had great fishing success in an area she refers to as Three Toes, where digit-like roots jut from the foot of a striking pine tree on nearby land.

For Nora and Nap Longlade who raised their six children on what was known as Longlade Island, teaching them to memorize and navigate the waters of Pointe au Baril on Georgian Bay, was as important a survival skill as walking.

Marilyn remembers it as a community without

telephones or bathtubs, and in the event of an emergency, two shots fired off represented today's equivalent of a neighbour's 9-1-1 distress call.

Growing up on an island meant the inlets and channels of Shawanaga Bay were their roads and the waterways of Georgian Bay became their high-ways.

Today, more than 50 years later, the feeling of her maiden voyage on Georgian Bay has never left her. She was just six, but mom needed bleach for her laundry business, so Marilyn hopped into the family boat, drove the half mile from the cottage to the general store at the Ojibway Hotel and proudly

returned with a bottle of Javex.

"I will never forget the sensation of that as long as I live – ever," says Marilyn, the baby of the Longlade brood. "It wasn't frightening. I remember the boat, I remember the lifejacket, and how fast I could go with that 5-and-a-half horse power motor. I was going just fast enough to make the boat go."

Jimmy, the eldest, remembers his childhood years as a time when "there was no need to be in a hurry to be someplace, and if you were, you had to row to get there, or paddle a leaky canoe".

To attend high school, they had their own boat to make the 7.5 mile trip into Pointe au Baril to catch the bus into Parry Sound. Whether on serious missions to collect cranberries, or other seasonal treats, or to fish, the Longlade children: Jim, Mona, Germaine, Donna, Ann and Marilyn, were always learning to navigate the waterways.

"We learned the waters and we learned to stay off the rocks," says Jim.

Another sister, Donna Longlade of Shawanaga, who has worked at the Ojibway for the past four seasons, says she's been guiding for as long as she can remember. For her, knowing where to go on Georgian Bay has always simply been a part of life, particularly when she was delivering laundry to her mother's water-access customers.

Without the navigational aids available to boaters in that area today, Donna learned from her grandfather how to drive following the tree line.

