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[00:00:00] **Speaker 1** I guess we'll start with some easy. Tell me the story of how you first started coming up here. When was that?

[00:00:08] **Speaker 2** Well, let's see, what year was that? It was, our daughter was one, Tyler was eight. So, I mean, that was over 30 years ago. And like I said, it was a friend of ours had said something about this place. And we decided just to come up and try it. So, my wife had called the resort and the resort owners at the time, she talked to the husband and he had a cabin, but it was really tiny cabin. So there was five of us in a tiny cabin. It was rather comfy and cozy, but it was kind of chaotic. But, and then at the very beginning, it was kinda like, is this really gonna work out? Well, the following year we called to see if we could get a bigger cabin, and well, that's when we ended up with cabin three here. And from that point on, it was just, we started meeting people up here that we knew could be good friends with, and it was one of those things where we would always come up at the same time every year so we could not only be up here but also be with those people as well. It was just, it was meant to be.

[00:01:16] **Speaker 1** Did you come up looking for fishing, or was it family time, or?

[00:01:19] **Speaker 2** It was mainly family time. I mean, fishing was a bonus. You know, I loved to fish, but the kids were kind of small at the time, so it was me out the boat most of the time by myself, but as obviously as they got older, then they were able to get out of here, but that was the bonus. Fishing was bonus.

[00:01:40] **Speaker 1** So did you grow up fishing?

[00:01:42] **Speaker 2** Yeah, kind of. I mean, my mom and my grandparents liked to fish. Fish bullheads on the Rock River over by Burnett when I was a kid. And so we started there. And then my stepfather was a big fisherman. I used to fish a lot with him, chalk fishing and all that kind of, and it just kind of evolved in that. Then I got, then as my brother started getting older. They started getting into muskie fishing, well then that's kind of hooked me on to muskie fishing and it's been that way ever since.

[00:02:16] **Speaker 1** So you came up here and did you kind of, were you looking to fill a freezer or was it just more of the action out there?

[00:02:24] **Speaker 2** In some cases it was to take fish home, yes, because nothing's better than having a fish fry at home in the middle of winter, it reminds you of the place. I mean, I would stand out in my deer hunting outfit on the grill, because we would do it on the grill, I'd take an iron skillet, fill it with oil and that's how we would cook so it wouldn't smell up the house. And I would stand out there in the middle of winter and cook fish, and it's like, there's nothing like it. It tastes, it's great.

[00:02:55] **Speaker 1** Brings it brings summer back

[00:02:56] **Speaker 2** Exactly, that's exactly right.

[00:02:59] **Speaker 1** So what was walleye fishing like up here when you first started?

[00:03:02] **Speaker 2** When I first started up here, it was kind of a hit or a miss. I mean, it was difficult, you know, you could hear people talking about it. It was, it wasn't, wasn't anything like it is now. It was, you were lucky. Unless you went with a guide that knew the, obviously the flowage better than you did and knew where to go, it was difficult for just the average Joe to find Wally. You go to the spots you would read about and so on but the chances of catching them And actually back in those days, there wasn't a size limit on a walleye. People were taking fish out that were eight, ten inches long and keeping them. So I don't know if that decimated the population, but it wasn't really good for it. And then, yeah, it wasn't t the greatest.

[00:03:50] **Speaker 1** Researchers talk a lot about you know opportunistic fishermen of like if one species isn't there you'll you'll find another species And if you wanted to be here and walleye weren't readily available, you're not going to turn into a die-hard walleye fisherman

[00:04:01] **Speaker 2** No, no, no. No, typically, I mean, we didn't specifically seek out walleye. I mean it was a bonus if you caught one. But we were up here for the panfish to take home. If you got a walleye, oh, awesome. But normally it was crappies and bluegills in the spring. And in the summertime, fishing is kind of tough, so you take what you get. And in the fall, well, we were typically up here in the fall if we come up for muskie fishing. And that was about it. We didn't fish anything else.

[00:04:32] **Speaker 1** So for some of the other people that were up here, was it kind of that same thing of just, you know, what's just nice to be on the water?

[00:04:37] **Speaker 2** Yes, pretty much. I mean, they did fish. Actually, our friend Burt, he was die-hard. He was over the top. And it really didn't matter what he caught. He just wanted to catch fish. When he was younger, he used to tell stories about how he was a diehard musk, a wildlife fisherman, but as he got older, and he's the one that taught me this place. If it weren't for him, I wouldn't know it.

[00:05:06] **Speaker 1** So as your kids got older, did you start putting the pole in their hand, or is the gas going to come out?

[00:05:11] **Speaker 2** Oh, absolutely, absolutely. Yeah, we started them off as young as we could. Where we used to live, there used to be some farmers' ponds that you could fish out of and that's how we kind of introduced them into fishing. We would just drive over to the farmers' pond and just sit along the edge and try to catch what we could catch and nine times out of ten we wouldn't take anything because God only knows what was in that pond. But you would catch fish and that is how they got going. And then yeah, when they got old enough to be in the boat and stuff like that. Yeah And my wife is always really good about. Making sure that we had things there that, if we were gonna go out fishing, that if they lost interest, that they had something else to do. Like whether it was a coloring book or a reading book or you name it, she had something them to do, and so it kind of bided the time, because if it's not, how's a kid's attention span gonna be if they're not catching fish? Understood completely.

[00:06:04] **Speaker 1** It's bad enough with panfish. Can you imagine trying to take a kid while I'm fishing?

[00:06:06] **Speaker 2** No, no, not at all, not unless you go to a lake that's just completely full of walleyes, yeah, no. Yeah, it's difficult.

[00:06:15] **Speaker 1** Tell me a little bit about the evolution of coming up here and what it's meant. Obviously, they started with little kids and then they've gone into adults. And now this is your first time with a grandchild.

[00:06:24] **Speaker 2** Right, right. It's just been amazing. I mean, it's kind of like you see the generations and you try to instill in them a sense of respect, obviously. We've always tried to instill it in our kids, but respect for this place. I means, these places are going away. You know, you go down where we live, you a lake there's houses on top of houses. You don't go on the lake during the weekends because there's no room for you or you go out there like as early as you possibly can in the morning and get off the lake before the crazies hit it. Not up here. I mean, especially on this end of the flowage where you hardly ever see boats. I mean they'll come flying by or the kids will be water skiing and stuff like that. There's no place like this. And so the kids have really understand that, yeah, this is a unique place. And it's just amazing how they've adapted to it. I mean, they love this place. And whenever we have the opportunity to have them all together, whenever we're up here, we try to make it so that they have the opportunity, if they can come, they can be here too. So it doesn't matter to us if we have to pay for it or not, it doesn' matter. The point is we're gonna be here, so why don't you come?

[00:07:49] **Speaker 1** You were talking before a little bit about some of the shift that's occurred with the fish population that are in here right and you've seen some of that change over the years right and like maybe some of uh the evidence that people are talking about what's being done

[00:08:02] **Speaker 2** Well, yes, absolutely. The walleye population, it's amazing, and a lot of it I see online. Basically, the guides are really good about posting stuff when they take guys out to fish. Obviously, they're promoting their business, but in the same token, it is promoting the walleye fishing. I mean, I would say five years ago, maybe, yeah, I'd say five years ago it wasn't like it is now. There were walleyes, there were a lot of what the guys called shorts, stuff that was under the slot limit, and so you could slowly starting to see the evolution of the fish starting to get to the point where, I mean, yeah, you'd catch a big fish every once in a while, but nine times out of ten, we always called them cigars, they were little bitty short ones, or they were just, they weren't big enough that really an average honest fisherman wouldn't. And it's just progressively gotten better and the slot limit seems to have made a big difference. Like I said, I think the lake association, the people that own the resorts around here that put all the effort into this stuff have really made a big impact on doing research and basically seeking out experts. How can we make this better? I mean, cause this is their livelihood. And so at the end of the day, it's a combination of all that. And I'm not really big into the Department of Natural Resources has done up here. I don't know all the things, but I know the changes that they've made, at least in the case of the walleye population, in my opinion, have made a huge, have made, have a big impact. And that's, that's a good thing. Now, my grandfather used to say everything's cyclical. Now, is this a cyclical situation? I hope not. Not for the, for the sake of the fishermen that like to fish walleyes all the time. For the sake the guides that make good money doing it. You know, it's like We don't have a lot of places like this in Wisconsin.

[00:10:08] **Speaker 1** Could you imagine a situation where you hear things are so good that you're like, no, today we're going to target walleye. We may have up here for a week, but day two or day three, like let's go walleye fish. Let's try and find.

[00:10:18] **Speaker 2** Maybe. Maybe I'm not that good of a wildlife fisherman. I don't really know the ins and outs as well. I've got a couple really good friends that have been trying to give me some ideas and stuff like that. But for the most part, it's kind of like, depending upon the time of year we come up, usually it's always been, this is what we're going to do. We've never really taken that input to make the decision that, yeah, we're just going to go fishing for wildlife. And maybe it's a good idea to try that. It doesn't hurt to try.

[00:10:48] **Speaker 1** Talk to me a little bit about the change in the resort and what they've been pushing because you probably remember that I remember being as long time ago resorts would say we're a walleye resort or we're fishing resort come up here to fish and now it seems like the shift has been more to party or relaxation and less on like the other activities on the water.

[00:11:09] **Speaker 2** Well, you know, and I would agree with that. Yes, when we first started coming up here, it was like a family fishing resort. There wasn't, actually when we started, there was no bar. There literally wasn't a bar. It wasn't until the owner, after we first starting coming up, actually put a bar in. And, but it stayed calm. I mean, yeah, the guys would go up to the bar and you could have a drink and do this kind of stuff, but they didn't have music. They They had, you know, jukebox and stuff like that. And then it evolved to a different type of a. Thought process where yeah it's partying and bringing people in from off the floorage to setting it up so that you had something there for people to want to come whether it's music or whatever drink specials that was that was what changed and then now it's kind of gone back to it's it's kind of the the people that own it now in my opinion have figured out a balance they they have music certain days to bring people down here and then but yet in the same token 24-7 and and I personally think that to me that's the best way to go I completely understand that at the end of the day it's about making a dollar they got to keep this place going and you're gonna do what you need to do and everybody vacations differently so and we look we're quiet people we want we want things calm

[00:12:41] **Speaker 1** Your wife's not here this week, but you said she she's been supportive of you fishing How does that go into relationships of fishing if one does fish and one doesn't?

[00:12:51] **Speaker 2** What's the balance there? Well, she loves the fish. It's just about getting the time to be able to get out to fish. Now that we're retired and the kids are older and they're not in the house, when we're up here, we usually pick certain days. We'll go out for a couple hours to fish and catch fish. And she loves to fish present to me for my 40th birthday was buying a fishing license. She never fished up into the, I mean she didn't fish like she does now. And so that was, that was cool. And from that point on we've just been doing it. I mean we have our own thing. She loves the kayak. And she could be out there all day long on the kayak, but no, it really hasn't affected our relationship whatsoever.

[00:13:35] **Speaker 1** But that's that's a better right that people find if you know that way you hear about like fishing widows Yeah, guys are always gone finding that blend

[00:13:43] **Speaker 2** Well, and she's very understanding. She knows that, she knows that you need time by yourself, she needs time by herself. You have certain hobbies, I have certain hobbies. They don't always have to be the same. It would make life rather boring in my opinion. But yeah, I mean, she's always been supportive of all this stuff. And 99.9% of the time, she is the one that pushes a lot of it. She's a driving force in it all, let's put it that way.

[00:14:11] **Speaker 1** So you've been out the last couple of days? Yep. How's it been?

[00:14:15] **Speaker 2** It's been okay. The bluegills are starting to come in so we can get some pan fish and we've got some crappies. We haven't seen any walleyes yet, but again, we weren't strictly fishing. This is typically when we start fishing for these things. If we go out earlier in the morning, yeah, you may get lucky and get a couple of walleyies, depending upon where you're fishing on the flowage. But for the most part, it's been good. It's comfortable, let's put it that way. The last four or five years, the weather has just been incredibly weird up here. I mean in the Memorial Day weekend it's like 90 degrees, it's unheard of. I mean I used to come up here with my friend Burt this week typically and there were times we would literally have to have our deer hunting gear on to be out there fishing. It was so cold. Or we wouldn't be fishing because if the water temperature is at a certain temp you're not going to be catching fish.

[00:15:09] **Speaker 1** So, when you're out there, can you tell from the first bite when it's a walleye, does it hit a little different?

[00:15:14] **Speaker 2** Oh yes, yes, oh absolutely. Typically you're fishing much deeper water for walleye than and when you're fishin' panfish, this time of year you're usually fishing closer to shore because they're coming in to spawn. But yeah, walleye, you can definitely tell. It's a nice soft bite and it just goes really slow away. It's not one of those things where it's going to pull out of your hand. And you've got to be kind of cognizant of, yup, this could be what I think it is. And then, as a matter, you have to make sure that.

[00:15:44] **Speaker 1** What is the balance of bringing one in? Because my great uncle always says, don't horse it.

[00:15:50] **Speaker 2** Exactly. No, you've just got to make, first of all, you got to make sure you got it hooked and then the other thing is you just bring it in slowly. I mean it's not like a northern, it's not like muskie where they're just going to rip the pull out of your hand. No, not a walleye. It hits, you know it's there and you just slowly bring it back to the boat. If you could literally tear the bait out of its mouth and sometimes their soft mouth, they're just tasting it to see if that's what they really want. So it's just a matter of giving them time to get it and then you just bring it back slowly.

[00:16:24] **Speaker 1** Is there a different feeling though, especially when you weren't expecting a wall?

[00:16:27] **Speaker 2** Yes absolutely absolutely yeah when you bring it up to the boat it's like yeah the first thing is you scramble for the net you don't bring the thing over the side of the boat without a net

[00:16:38] **Speaker 1** And I'm assuming you've kept enough walleye to eat?

[00:16:41] **Speaker 2** Yes, absolutely. Oh, yes, it's like fresh water lobster. Walei's the best.

[00:16:48] **Speaker 1** Why is that?

[00:16:49] **Speaker 2** I don't know, it's just a better fish, but tastes better. I mean, I'm partial to bluegills and crappies, but if I get a walleye, no, that's like, that's, like I said, it like lobster.

[00:17:01] **Speaker 1** Did you give those to the kids, or do you... Oh no, no!

[00:17:03] **Speaker 2** Oh, no, no. Oh, yeah. Oh yeah. Yes. Yes, absolutely

[00:17:07] **Speaker 1** I wasn't sure if that was, like, the inside tender where it never officially...

[00:17:09] **Speaker 2** No, no, exactly. No, everybody got everything. We've shared for everyone.

[00:17:17] **Speaker 1** Talk to me just a little bit more about what it means to you to have your grandson up here.

[00:17:21] **Speaker 2** Oh, it's just amazing

[00:17:22] **Speaker 1** This is his first time, right?

[00:17:22] **Speaker 2** Yep, yep, yep. It's third generation now. Hopefully, it will continue. Hopefully this place will be here, you know, with all the things that are changing in our world right now. I just pray to God that he has the opportunity to have the opportunity that his mom and dad have had and that we've had. You know, it's like, I guess sometimes people don't really appreciate how much that kind of legacy that you leave. What that really means, you know, at the end of the day. I'm hoping that the grandkids will be cognizant to this place, because like I said, there's no other place like it, in my opinion, here at least in the state of Wisconsin.

[00:18:05] **Speaker 1** I mean, when you go back home and they say, oh, what'd you do? Like, oh. Do you have a special name for it or how do you?

[00:18:11] **Speaker 2** We always call it the chip. Yeah, we're up as a chip. And everybody knows, people that we know know where we typically go when we're up at the chip, so it's like, yeah. They're very familiar with the things that we do. And yeah, and then my wife will spend weeks posting pictures on Facebook or whatever, so everybody gets a chance to see what we're all doing.

[00:18:32] **Speaker 1** And that's, I mean, that's one of those things that is almost universal for a lot of people in Wisconsin, like to say I went to a resort.

[00:18:40] **Speaker 2** One of the cool things about it too is then if there's people that don't really understand or really don't know or are interested in it, I mean you pass that on to them and the potential of them getting their kids and their grandkids involved in it. I mean it basically kind of snowballs into something because we've had friends that have come up here that have never been to a resort before and now granted they're not staying here anymore, they've found other places. But the whole point was that they were actually able to go up to the Northwoods, find a place to actually stay, and witness this kind of stuff. It's like, yeah, in my opinion, there's nothing better.

[00:19:18] **Speaker 1** And that's why up north means something.

[00:19:21] **Speaker 2** Absolutely that's exactly get what it was what's the up north north the highway 10 or something like that or something

[00:19:26] **Speaker 1** That's a debate over. I know that It depends on how far you went that the line goes north.

[00:19:32] **Speaker 2** You know, I always said it would be so much nicer if we were only, like, three hours away, but the kids always come back and make the statement that, well, if it was only three hours a way, it wouldn't be as special as it is. It's a good point.

[00:19:46] **Speaker 1** Alright, can I get you to say and spell your name for me just so I have it correct on tape?

[00:19:50] **Speaker 2** My name is Randy Maas and his last name is spelled M-A-A S.

[00:19:56] **Speaker 1** All right, and can you also give me the names and spellings of... Oh, okay, so... Just so we have it correct.

[00:20:01] **Speaker 2** All right, um...

[00:20:04] **Speaker 1** I won't ask you for birthdates or interviews. No, no, no.

[00:20:09] **Speaker 2** Her name. Her name is her name. Yes, Abby's name. Oh, first of all, it's Tyler, Mas, same spelling last name. And it's Warner is our grandson, Warner, W-A-R-N-E-R, Mas. And then it's Abigail. And I'm gonna mess it up, I know I am. It's A-B-I-G-A E-L.

[00:20:30] **Speaker 1** Oh, epic deal, like a storm.

[00:20:32] **Speaker 2** Yes, yes, yes. Yeah, we changed. Yes, the Gaelic version. Actually, her mom's Irish heritage, so. No don't ask for

[00:20:42] **Speaker 1** I know you were amassed as well.

[00:20:44] **Speaker 2** She has a mask at this point, yes.

[00:20:47] **Speaker 1** Alright, that was great. Anything else you want to add? No, uh-uh.

[00:20:52] **Speaker 2** Yes, yes

[00:20:58] **Speaker 1** I learned that when you were the ones doing the fish fry yes the walleye cheeks went last I was like oh you can have it we're good we're good have some more yeah

[00:21:09] **Speaker 2** I forgot all about the wall light.

[00:21:10] **Speaker 1** What are you guys gonna eat? Oh, we've got these.

[00:21:12] **Speaker 2** I forget, I never forget that one year I had it was I was up earlier and then Tyler came up later and I had caught a was 20 22 inch walleye over in Scott Lake and two days later he came up and the third day he caught a 22 inch walleye on Scott Lake. That's the that's the limit that you can keep. Because it's based off of because it's the where they call it. I can't remember. Well, it's it's also

[00:21:48] **Speaker 1** or the trophy.

[00:21:48] **Speaker 2** Well, no, no. It's also set by the state for the tribal lands, too, for the indigenous people up here. So they've got this slot limit that you can... It's the seceded area, seceded territory it's called. So that's what this slot is part of what they call the secedid. So 22, I think it was, was the max you could keep. Because I will never forget, I had caught the fish, and I had it in the boat, And I had texted at the time the resort owner that was here at the time. What's the max that I can keep? Because I was actually on the water. Because I wasn't gonna put the boat, fish in the boat because that's possession. And she texted me back and said 22 when I measured. Got it. I was able to bring it back. So I knew.

[00:22:33] **Speaker 1** Did the tribe, did the quitter ray come out here?

[00:22:36] **Speaker 2** I, you know, I don't know. I've not seen them, I dunno. I mean, we see them on the flow edge. I mean they've got spots where they go and stuff like that, but as far as being on the water, I really wouldn't know, and I know they're out here, but.

[00:22:49] **Speaker 1** I mean, I know that back in the 80s, that was a big deal. That was probably around a little before your first turn.

[00:22:55] **Speaker 2** Oh yeah, way before, yeah, yeah.

[00:22:56] **Speaker 1** But have you heard of any tech? I mean, is that something that's still coming?

[00:23:00] **Speaker 2** I've never heard of anything, and in my opinion, I have an opinion on how the Native Americans have been treated in this country, so I'm not going to get into that.

[00:23:13] **Speaker 1** But that's not an issue that, you know, people are...

[00:23:14] **Speaker 2** It doesn't seem to be.

[00:23:16] **Speaker 1** Because that used to be the thing, like, there's no walleye that's ever speared him off.

[00:23:17] **Speaker 2** Well, you know, and it seemed to be, at least just from what I remember going back that far, it seemed to be a bigger issue over in the eastern part of the state up here. You know, when you're talking Eagle River, Rainlander, Managua, stuff like that, that seemed to the bigger area. I don't ever remember it being over here. It may have been when the spearing started to be a real big thing, but I don t know. You know and personally hey this was their land first so why not let them do what they're going to do you know as long as as long as the rules for them are the same if the rules for us are the Same for them i don't have a problem with that whatsoever it's when people take advantage of things which we all have a tendency to do that's when things get crazy

[00:24:08] **Speaker 1** So I heard that that got dug out of the muck.

[00:24:12] **Speaker 2** Yeah, that was a live, yeah. Actually, Burt, the guy that I used to come up with, he would bring that, we had to leave it up here every year. And then what he would do is, when we would come off the lake, instead of going up and cleaning the fish every day, well, that back in the day when you could keep, well, initially it was 50, then it went down to 25. We would put them in there so that you didn't have to clean every day and then they would stay alive because you don't want, obviously, dead fish. They don't taste good. And for whatever reason, this is last year, I forgot to grab it. And it just stayed up here, and somehow it stayed in the lake. And Abby found it, and so we're taking it back home. So it's coming home with us.

[00:24:59] **Speaker 1** All right, I think we're good here. So thank you.

[00:25:01] **Speaker 2** You're very welcome.

[00:25:01] **Speaker 1** Thank you for sharing your story.