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**Gene McDonald VE3IJD** )

A couple of months ago my wife Randy asked me what I would like to do for my 70th birthday. As most of you know every day is a party day in Honey Harbour. Most every weekend we have neighbours and family gathered around the campfire so for something different I suggested we try to travel north a bit and see if we could visit some ham buddies that I've talked to for a few years but never met. Well a couple of hams turned into 9 hams and one work buddy that I haven't seen in almost 20 years. My birthday was September 5, Labour Day and usually a first day of school...boo hoo....

The trip started the next day and off we went to visit Steve, VA3SO in Rosseau where I was introduced to my first Birch Beer,,a non alcoholic beverage from Muskoka...great stuff. From Rosseau we headed for Huntsville and east on highway 60 we found our way to Ken VE3YK and Diane's (Disi) beautiful home where Randy delivered some home made Zucchini loaf. After a couple of hours we made our way back to Huntsville to our Holiday Inn room and dinner at East Side Mario's where we both over ate. By the way if you are looking for good food in Huntsville there's a little restaurant called the Algonquin Cafe and Deli....on the very south end of Main St. W...great beef brisket and fish & chips along with all the deli fare.

Day 2 found us heading towards Burks Falls on Highway 11 where we met my fellow worker from days gone by. A great visit and walk on his 42 acre hunting grounds. Off to South River where Russ VE3HR was busy helping Kevin VA3KGS with his new home. My trip to visit Russ was to deliver an antique fishing reel that I had picked up from Wain VE3DX in Orillia the week before. Lunchtime found us in Powassan at a place called the Wagon Wheel on the south end of town. Again,,great food and service and close to the exit/entrance to Highway 11.

Off to Callander and a chat with Chris VE3CEA. We met at a nice park with lots of shade and an hour or so later we found our way east of North Bay towards Mattawa to meet Wayne VA3WAB and his wife Lorna. We spent a couple of hours there too talking about float flying and his ATVing with his neighbour. Now back in the truck for the drive from Mattawa to North Bay and through to Sudbury.

Day 3 found us waking up at our Hampton Inn's full breakfast with great food and coffee. A text message was sent to Rolly VA3CRE and Mike VA3MYK and a meeting was set up after we had the grand tour of Rolly's QTH. We knew Rolly was the guy with a hand in the cookie jar so a loaf of zucchini bread was dropped off for he and his wife . By then we were ready to meet Mike at Timmies not far from Rolly's so we all made the trip and enjoyed a nice cup of java together. Turns out I had been a good friend of Mikes co-worker when I worked in Owen Sound who worked for Unitel, small world. Randy and I got some nice pictures of the Big Nickel and the tall smoke stack. We spent the afternoon in Science North and a walk through Bell's Park. Back to the Hotel for a hot tub and pizza.

Day 4 found us heading south towards John's place VA3DU. He had a bad lightning strike a few weeks ago and showed us the antenna he lost to the hit. After the grand tour it was time to leave St. Charles and find highway 69 south and 400 south to Honey Harbour.

What a great time the two of us had. I had arranged to meet with everyone via phone, text or email and it worked out the best I think to prearrange it all. We had booked the two hotels ahead of time too. 73 Gene some stats...

864 total kms, 13 hours in engine run time, \$798 for hotels, \$260 for food, and \$100 for gasoline.

P.S. \$19 for hot tub wine