

**Glimpses of Brillion Part 1**  
**22 October 2020**  
By Frenchy Corbeille

We enjoyed a few weeks of glorious autumn colors, and to a lesser degree, we are enjoying some still, but relentless near-gale force winds several days last week ripped most of the leaves from their moorings and they now decorate the forest floor and some lawns. When I glance out a window, I see a lot of naked limbs silhouetted against the sky, eliciting thoughts of the weather in store for us during the season upcoming. The twenty-three-degree temperature Monday morning fostered those same thoughts. If Duck is affected or influenced in any way by temperature or weather conditions, no one can tell by his behavior. He greets every outing with the same level of exuberance, exhibiting no indication that he cares what goes on in the weather world. His example is a good one to emulate and doing so provides a lot of serenity and eliminates angst, especially angst over things that are outside my control.

In our part of the world people who operate wheeled vehicles adhere to the right-hand side of the road, including bicycles, motorcycles and automobiles. Therefore, it is fairly natural for folks who are on their leg-o-mobile to prefer to walk on the right-hand side of the road also. That, however, is exactly the wrong thing to do. Up until about seventy years ago there were signs along Wisconsin highways stating "Walk on Left. Face Opposing Traffic." I believe the signs were put in place mainly because it was illegal to hitchhike in Wisconsin back then and walking on the left made hitchhiking more difficult. No matter the reason, the advice was sound back then and it is still sound today. When walking on one's left, facing opposing traffic, it is easier to make an escape onto a shoulder or across a ditch, should the vehicle fail to provide clearance. Pedestrians always come out second best when contesting with a motor vehicle, so, as one who walks, on average, about 1,200 miles each year, I go to great lengths to avoid confrontation. Walking on the left side of the road keeps me safe from all but the idiots, and I am quick to abandon the road in favor of a ditch should the need arise.

A few years ago I walked over a new fallen snow in the early morning, before the snow plows had cleared the back roads. I was homeward bound, trudging happily along in the six inches or so of untrammelled snow when I heard a rumbling behind me. I quickly identified the noise as being made by a snow plow and thought that after it passes, I may switch over to the right-hand side of the road. The rumbling grew louder and the angel that customarily rides on my right shoulder told me to turn around and take a look, which I did. A wall of white was coming at me, on the LEFT side of the road, and was only about fifty feet away. There was no time to get fancy so I just leaped the ditch and ran into the adjacent field. My heart beat gradually returned to normal and I walked along on the newly plowed roadway, thinking how close I had come to being killed. Not a pleasant thing to consider. The snow plow disappeared into a parking lot, turned around, and then went west on the south side of the road (left side to him). I continued on and turned north on Sunset Road, walking on my left on an unplowed section of road. As I continued along, I eventually heard the rumbling noise in my wake and did not wait for my angel to poke me. I turned around to check, and sure enough, here it comes again, on my side of the road! Once more I took to the field and hurled some choice epithets at the passing snow plow. I believe one could say I was at this juncture seething with anger and wasted no time after arriving home in contacting the supervisor in charge of the snow plow operator. His admonishments to refrain from walking in the early morning after a snowfall elicited some unprintable expletives and the conversation ended with his agreement to keep his snow plows on the right-hand side of the road. He did determine that I am the guy who writes a column in the Brillion News and that may have had something to do with his quick cooperation. Since it was a near-death experience for me, I wrote about it anyway, and have never encountered another snow plow on the wrong side of the road.

I have yet another example of Midwest kindness. A man I have never met receives my weekly treatises by having them forwarded to him by a friend. The gentleman crafts walking sticks, for fun or profit I know not which, walking sticks that are unique in design and highly functional. He decided I should have one and the friend brought one over to me Saturday. It is a work of art, sturdy yet lightweight, and it will serve well in keeping me upright, especially when traveling in a dark forest and going along on snowshoes. I say "Thank You," trusting that this missive will be forwarded to him also.

## **Glimpses of Brillion Part 2** **29 October 2020**

The autumn kaleidoscope is gone, replaced by stark naked limbs silhouetted against a gray sky. While it lasted, it was uncommonly colorful, more so than last year's autumn show. Many of us shall treasure the photos we obtained and will use them to remind ourselves of how great was the season, albeit shortened by relentless fierce winds. Now I must find beauty in the naked limbs, sometimes thrashing about wildly in a winter wind with snowflakes swirling about. It has been often said that beauty is in the eye of the beholder; I say beauty is around us always and needs only to be found in the mental-set of the sojourner.

Those who have been praying for rain can stop now; we collected just over five inches in about eighteen hours Thursday afternoon through Friday morning. The fields are once more dotted with miniature lakes, lakes that are rimmed with shell ice on these frosty mornings. I found myself sloshing through water on the woodland trail I have learned to navigate in the dark. With no moon nor starlight, under an overcast sky, I cannot see the water, even when I am walking in it. Fortunately, I winterized my walking boots and they are impervious to shallow water. I still marvel at Duck's ability to see in the dark. He dashes about, on the trail when he so chooses, racing through the forest with reckless abandon when off the trail, and he never ever runs into a tree. It would be neat to be able to see what he sees, in the dark. Friday morning, I passed near the rotting stump where I encountered the barred owlet back in May and I found myself spreading my upper arms just a little, emulating the behavior of the owlet that spread her wings to enlarge her image, with the intent to intimidate me. I had to chuckle over that just a little, but I did not click my teeth to simulate her clicking of her beak. The owlet became special to me over the ensuing two weeks as I passed through her part of the world every morning to witness her progression into adulthood. One day I saw her and both parents, and then I never saw any of them again. Life goes on, but the memory lives with me.

We were nearing home a half hour before sunrise, the time when it becomes legal to shoot waterfowl, when a fusillade of shotgun fire erupted from the Brillion marsh. Duck slammed to a halt and stared rigidly in the direction from which the reports came. He is bred for hunting and he soon looked quizzically in my direction as if asking "Shouldn't we be joining in on that action?" He was reluctant to continue on the hum drum walk down the road with all that potential for some real excitement. Fortunately, Duck is just as enthusiastic about coursing through upland cover on a quest for pheasants as he is about swimming after a dead duck and he overlooks that shortcoming in my behavior wherein I fail to pursue waterfowl. After several failed attempts to convince the head chef that ducks are really great table fare, I stopped hunting them and concentrate my efforts on things that are likely to appear on the dinner table.

If you drive Wisconsin byways, off the four-lane highways, you will eventually encounter a road designated as a rustic road. They are never designed for speed and generally provide a pleasant departure from the wild highway pace. I used to wonder how the roads come to acquire the designation "rustic," but I believe I have found the answer. They are roads that are of importance to only a few, that have become too expensive to properly maintain, but cannot be abandoned altogether. The agency in charge of maintenance, rather than to keep spending time and money, just changes the designation to "Rustic," thereby eliminating the need to make costly permanent repairs.

We have a road like that near us, just outside the southwest corner of Brillion. It is only about a quarter mile long, has only four residences on it, and is sorely in need of sound repairs. The sides are crumbling onto the shoulder and potholes develop in the middle. I choose my path carefully to avoid a twisted ankle by stepping into a pothole while walking in the dark. Perhaps the residents who live on that road like it that way, in that it may serve to keep traffic nearer to the posted 25-Kt speed limit. In any event, it has changed little over the years, getting a few shovelfuls of asphalt patted into a pothole from time to time and little attention other than that. All that remains is to hang out a sign on each end advising travelers that it is a rustic road. If such a sign should ever appear, I will let you know.

**Freedom Is Not Free**

**Frenchy Sends with Warm Regards**

Submitted by CAPT R. Claude "Frenchy" Corbeille, USN RET

## Going a-Nutting