

Destination: Lake in the Clouds

A Boat Tour of the Lake in the Clouds

By Anonymous

Poconoidian visitors to The Lake in the Clouds may observe such varied mammals as otters, deer, beaver, red fox, gray fox, fishers, coyotes and duck billed platypus. Looking up in the sky one may see eagles, ospreys, red-tailed hawks, peregrine falcons, great blue herons, swallows, kingfishers, geese and ducks. Should your boat sink or should you fall out of it, under water you'll see large mouth bass, pickerel, yellow perch, crappies (well fed anglers are full of crappies), sunfish – aka blue gills, and catfish or, painted turtles, snapping turtles, water snakes and the occasional anaconda. In the deepest depths of the lake, the LITC Marianas Trench, a 3-6 ft. wide underwater trench that runs down the center of the lake and makes a right turn towards the dam with depths that can range from 8 to 11 ft. deep. There are rumors of piranha, hammerhead shark, giant squid, tuna, and swordfish. So, we'll need to keep our eyes and ears open as we enjoy our sojourn around the Lake in the Clouds.



We begin our circuit on the sandy shores of the Lake in the Clouds Beach. Some say it reminds them of Waikiki Beach in Hawaii in that they both have sand. The beach offers a breathtaking panoramic view of the lake. Off in the distance we see the magnificent Cloud Raft, a challenge for the strong but determined swimmer yet offering a relaxing respite after a strenuous Australian crawl where one can lie down, sit, or even stand up. It may be tempting to pass the rest of the day on this tranquil, man-made oasis but the lake and some exciting sites beckon us to be on our way.

Since boat launching is forbidden from the beach (the surf is too treacherous), we must set sail from the right corner as you face the lake for we have promises to keep and miles to go before we sleep. We'll set off to our right in a northerly (we think) direction taking us in a counter clockwise direction around the lake.

First on our right is the J&S Yacht Basin, home to the J&S (mostly J) flotilla of boats. One of our favorite touring activities is "Count the Boats at or near the Dock" and the Basin is a great place to start. If we're in luck we may witness the annual Terrapin Regatta in which Commodore J will sail all of his boats at once. Check your local papers



for time and date. Leaving the J&S Yacht Basin we pass the House with No Dock, it does have a nice little stone patio though. More than making up for no dock is our next sight, the House With the Big Dock so, you see, it all evens out. Make sure you and everything in your craft is secure as we now approach the Fredbonnie Palisades. These man-made cliffs rising to heights of 12-18 inches can cause tricky tides and huge swells so try to sail 4ft. or so from the shore.



Having survived our harrowing journey past the Fredbonnie Palisades, we approach the Sea of Reeds beyond which is the domicile of Kilty the Wonder Dog. Kilty will fetch for you and continue to fetch for you long after you've left the dock. Kilty's "parents" have both sustained major rotator cuff injuries. Leaving Kilty to his fetching we pass in order, a dock, the Storage Shed on the Lake and the Empty Gazebo, one of several empty gazebos we'll marvel at during our tour.

But now, get your cameras ready, we're nearing BevenJeff's Boat-a-Rama, home to the most eclectic boat collection at the Lake in the Clouds. Here you'll see the exceedingly rare, duck shaped paddle boat. This, the only duck shaped paddle boat in Northeast Pa., is a source of wonder to young and old as well as to *Jane's Battleships of the World*. Also to be seen are a large, self pumping fishing boat, a canoe and the JoeMarcie Camouflaged Pontoon Boat. It may be difficult to find the camouflage pontoon boat in the dappled sunlight of a late afternoon so don't get



too close to the Boat-a-Rama lest you bump into it.



Leaving the Boat-a-Rama, we'll catch our breath as we pass The Dock With No Boats (don't bother to count) and on to the precision engineered Leaning Dock of the Clouds, designed by Leonardo DaVinci, the dock supported on three sides but not on the crucial fourth (on the water) – DaVinci had a painting of La Gioconda to finish and the dock was neglected- so that the dock lists at a 40° angle on that side and would therefore send anyone attempting to sit on it rolling into the dark depths of the lake. Take a picture at an angle so it looks like you're holding the dock up.

Absquatulating from the Leaning Dock with our tilted memories, we next approach the Captive Chair Dock. The Captive Chair Dock is cleverly set up as a boxing ring with rope from post to post across the three lake facing sides. In the center of the boxing ring are the two captive chairs – trapped forever in the rope, doomed to be empty unless either someone climbs through the rope or someone takes them away. As we skeddadle to our next sight, fearing imprisonment at the Captive Chair Dock, we come to the second of the lake's Empty Gazebos. This one, seemingly placed there at random by a giant hand since it is surrounded by woods, far away from the next port of call, The Dock With the Semi-Submerged Fishing Boat. This is the Lake in the Clouds own semi-sunken Titanic. This vessel which may or may not be bailed out on occasion seems to be perpetually almost filled with water so that barely $\frac{3}{4}$ inches of boat remain above water....a nautical lesson for us all. Lean down close to water level for a torpedo's eye view.



Next, get the abacus ready. We're coming up to the Buckhorn Lane Piers, home of a 10, 12, 14, a lot of boats and another great boat counting experience. Actually there aren't any piers but one can peer at a plethora of pleasure craft. Other favorite visitor pastimes at the Buckhorn Lane Piers include guessing which boat has been there the longest? Which boat(s) will sink when launched? and Which boat has Jimmy Hoffa buried underneath?

Exhausted from our experience at the Buckhorn Lane Piers, we advance to the Peninsula House, largest source of goose guano on the lake. We note that LITC geese are both exceedingly prolific at producing more geese and at bowel evacuation. You'll note the fruits of their labor as you circle the lake. As we follow the shoreline of the Peninsula House we pass a covered dock, a floating dock, and the third of our Empty Gazebos. Making a right turn into Cherry Cove as you pass by the Empty Gazebo keep a sharp eye for the ancient Park Bench originally used by the first local Quaker settlers kicked out of Philadelphia for being too violent. Behind it is the medieval fire place used for, some believe, either human sacrifices or drying pants.





But be alert, we're approaching another hazardous highlight, the Rock of Lake in the Clouds. Yes, it's the Lake in the Clouds' Rock of Gibraltar. The rock, rising up to 3ft. above the water is covered with snow during the winter. The skilled mariner can navigate the dangerous Straits of Phildonna Land between the Rock and Phildonna Land on the right. Deceitful swells and waves render this passing fraught with peril.

Leaving these turbulent waters we come to the Upside Down Kayak Dock and the latest of

several lake front domiciles for the Upside Down Kayakers. Keep your eye out for attacking swallows based in the new home. Look ahead, it's another Count the Boats Dock and take time for a snack as you leisurely count the boats and total them up. Vesseling past a dock and another, smaller Waikiki-like beach, we come up the other side of the cove and we have another Count the Boats Dock and....but

wait....sometimes there may be floating golf balls in the water as they are hit back and forth between Phildonna Land and Fredjudy Park. Continuing beyond yet another Count the Boats Dock and rounding the bend of the cove, to the right we wave at a gray house and come upon the Suzal Rock Garden, home to a variety of rocks, a larger variety of flowers and some bird condominiums as well as chickadee time shares. We're now going west (we think) and the sun may be blocked out by the aircraft carrier/trawler docked ahead of us. The ship, used to transport war brides from Europe after WW II makes occasional forays into lake highlighted by much noise and crashing into the dock upon returning.



Leaving the Leviathan of the Lake behind we near Tomenkate's Pokey Patch, another boat counting highlight of our tour. But quick, put away your calculators as we pass another gray

house with paddle boat, for there, just past the house, under the big tree we find The Abandoned Beaver Home. This lodge, begun by beavers with a no money down, and flexible interest rate mortgage had to be cast aside when they lost their jobs at the lumber company and Ipana Toothpaste had layoffs. Keep your eye out though because there have been several otter sightings in this area.



Moving westward we come to another of the more treacherous areas of the lake. We know this because of the wrecked inflatable dingy and the

wrecked swing seats. It is believed that the dingy was originally used either by Native American beaver hunters before the French and Indian War or explorer Thor Heyerdahl in his search for the Tuamatu Islands in the South Pacific. The swing is of an Egyptian design (thought to be Cleopatra's favorite pattern) and was probably brought to America by Napoleon's troops after the Battle of the Pyramids in 1798 and later used as collateral for the Louisiana Purchase.

The current now carries us past a Dock With a Box Under It and entry to the swamp (called Zen Cove by some optimists and the lake lagoon by the geographically challenged). Here we make a right turn and pass another beaver lodge on our right. This one has been broken up into smaller units for tax purposes and features a mother/daughter extension. Paddling up the ~~swamp~~ cove we come upon the Northwest Passage, a waterway connecting the Lake in the Clouds and Timber Lake and its Dino Dome. Sought after by explorers for hundreds of years, the Passage was serendipitously discovered by fisherman Charles Schaeffer during his quest for the Perfect Perch and a decent Fish n Chips. The ~~swamp~~ cove was reduced in size during the Great Lake Drain of 08, an epic engineering event that revealed hundreds of petrified tree stumps, a refrigerator door, a card table, lost votes from the 1989 Association elections, and a complete tyrannosaurus skeleton.



So now we must undertake a broken u-turn and return to the main body of the lake. On our right we see the Upside Down Blue Boat. This boat, originally used by the pirate Edward Teach, Blackbeard, disappeared after his death in 1718 and mysteriously appeared on this spot in 2007 and has remained another of the Lake's enigmas.

Get those cameras ready, leaving the Upside Down Blue Boat behind we approach the Turtle Log where avid turtle watchers can see many painted turtles (note: if tourists become weary of

Counting the Boats at or Near the Dock, they can count turtles) and, if lucky a snapping turtle. Note keep fingers out of water at Turtle Log. Don't paddle, just drift towards them and they'll stay on the log. We're now at the end of the lake and can look to our left and have another panoramic view of the majestic body of water and environs. Swinging around we'll pass the Dock at the End of the Lake (or as the inhabitants consider it, The Dock at the Beginning of the Lake) and moving in a south



easterly (we think) direction on our right we find The Fishing Boat Sitting on the Dock, and then the Jerrymarie Kayak Klutch and Paddleboat Perch. The current now carries us to the Ronansue Parapet and Accompanying Dock. The Parpet, rising to heights of 3 ft. above sea level can be shrouded in fog due to its great height. It is festooned with ocean themes and a sign tells us we're at Lakeview Terr. (up on road it becomes a terrace). Don't forget to look for the tiny toy tugboat floating at the dock (another Count the Boats opportunity).



Pause here for a moment, collect your thoughts and sail on past The Land of the Blue Tarpaulins. Here, at this abstruce site, blue tarpaulins cover mysterious objects and fishing boats, one dented, seemingly grow out of the ground. This area may have been the site of ancient religious ceremonies of a long lost people who worshipped blue tarpaulins and upside down fishing boats.

In yet another camera moment (hope you brought a digital), passing some blueberry bushes we see, high on the hill, Castle Freudenberg, site of The

Largest Dock on the Lake. It may be best to go out about 20 ft. so the entire Largest Dock on the Lake can fit into your lens for the photo. On past more blueberry bushes you now come to the Sunset Bar Dock. This dock, is best visited after 5:00 p.m. when, if you're fortunate, you'll encounter the Sunset Bar Denizens (Mr. and Mrs. Anonymous) sipping dry, red wine or other libations. They may even offer you some in exchange for listening to Mr. Anonymous kvetch about the weather, roads, or anything else on the planet.

Refreshed from our stop at the Sunset Bar we sail into the Secret Fishing Site, a tiny cove. We know this is the Secret Fishing Site because no less than 40 fisherman have told Anonymous that this is his/her "Secret Fishing Site". Drop a line and catch some secret fish before venturing towards the Jananrich Duck Log and Fowl Singles Bar, a gathering place for ducks and others where all sorts of sordid activities such as flapping your wings in the water, quacking at passing females, and diving under the log occur as dusk falls.



But wait, on the shore, past the end of the log, under the darkness of the trees (cover the children's eyes) is the rarely seen Canoe Mating Ritual. Note the canoe is always on top during this watercraft sexual congress. Sometime in the fall this may result in the birth of a kayak. Leaving this x-rated portion of our tour, on our right we come upon the BoMa Plant Zoo. Pay



attention to the bushes, trees and shrubs fenced in to keep them from escaping or mauling visitors.

Yachting past the smallish Blueberry Court Peninsula we'll come upon first one and then another park bench, each facing in the opposite direction. From these benches, Native Americans laughed hysterically at the attempts of Pilgrims to dock their ship at a rock. The

benches were moved to the Lake in the Clouds during the War of 1812 to protect them from being confiscated by the British. The thinking at the time, as now, was no one can find Lake in the Clouds.

Moving along we pass the small Goose Guano (a continuing LITC theme) Peninsula, then, look carefully, it's close to the shore, A Rock With A Plant Growing Out Of It (the plant was planted by Charles Darwin when he left the *Beagle* to visit Mt. Airy Lodge for the Labor Day Weekend Herman's Hermits Imitation Contest). We now navigate our way making a right turn at the entrance to Raspberry Court Cove, home to two of the Lake the Clouds' great natural wonders, the Clouder Archipelago and Snake (Poop) Island.



Entering the cove we see a dock and have another Count the Boats opportunity and then comes Clouder Archipelago, islands connected by a footbridge. Swerve out and around, don't try to



cross under the bridge, and look for otters again (they like the Archipelago). Advancing around the edge of the cove, past another dock, our eyes leave the shoreline for just ahead, in the distance on the left is Snake Island (sometimes called Poop Island). Gliding towards this magnificent land mass, we see on our approach an ancient temple indicating that this is the site of a Native Burial Ground. The temple and the size of the island tell us the only thing we know about this long gone

mysterious people. They were very small.

Returning to our shoreline route we bid adieu to Raspberry Court Cove, round a point and pass the Dock That Nobody Ever Uses.....Ever. There's a house back there too but you can only see it during the winter when sailing is discouraged. Unique to the Dock That Nobody Ever Uses.....Ever is the



portion of the Dock known to locals as The Wandering Dock. The dock occasionally floats across the lake to the J&S Yacht Basin where a canoe is employed to tow it back.



Rounding a turn on the right, we're in the home stretch of our fabulous tour and there on the right is the Karcar Giant Dead Tree, great for pictures during the full moon. But don't look too hard at the tree as you need to be at your best to get past the Dam of Death. Many is the unsuspecting visitor who, while admiring the Richanjanine Lawn has been swept over the precipice and carried down the raging cataract to Skytop Lodge, frequently interrupting a wedding or Bar Mitzvah, several miles downstream. You can sail up within a few feet of the precipice but beware of the undertow.

Catching our breath from the excitement of the

Dam of Death we see the mysterious concrete structure that is Cloudingus Stonehenge. You can paddle right up and actually touch the ancient concrete set by Druids before recorded time. This edifice was also the site of the original landing at Lake in the Clouds by explorer Giovanni Verrazano during his search for the Northwest Passage (which is, as we now know, at the other end of the lake). And there, there, just beyond the rock slope that is home to a million or so snakes, is the beach and the



welcoming sand of Lake in the Clouds Beach. Beyond the beach are the volley ball, tennis, and basketball courts. Just past the beach and the port-o-san you'll see the Lake in the Clouds Pavilion modeled after the Parthenon in Athens. You're back.

And to make your Lake in the Clouds Aquatic Tour Experience complete, you may purchase Lake in the Clouds polo shirts, Lake in the Clouds magnets, Lake in the Clouds mugs, and the cooperative pamphlet written by LITC's most experienced anglers *How to Get Your Finger Out*

of a Bass's Throat.

We hope you've enjoyed your tour and please come visit us again here at Lovely Lake in the Clouds.