

Letters from MRFY -- "The Hibernation Season"

*Superior autumn leaves are clinging to the last bits of hope  
Hidden among the frozen branches.  
Amber oaks and spotty maples against a background of pines  
Paint the silent island landscape reminding us all that  
The hibernation season has arrived.*

I arrive at work on these frosty MRF mornings before sunrise and there is a silence that is all encompassing. No birds are stirring. No cars are passing on the road. Even the distant morning rumble of the ferry is absent, and the only break in the stillness is the sound of my work boots shuffling across the frozen gravel. It's pretty special.

I open the office door and turn on the light, with the soft industrial fluorescent hum welcoming me. Soon, the pitter patter of morning coffee dripping through the filter reminds me that the workday has begun. The flow of recycling has slowed. Our neighbors have left for off-island destinations. Big hugs and one last punch of the ticket before the long road trip begins. A pan of beautifully baked fudge brownies has been dropped off, the frosting glistening in the office light, a show of appreciation for all the help this summer. I quickly wolf one down and it pairs very nicely with my "saddle brown coffee". That's what Mort Cushman used to call his coffee with a bit of milk in it: "Saddle Brown". I miss Mort.

The apples on the trees at the golf course have fallen and the deer are grateful for it. The hunters have taken to the woods for bow season and the island trade of *Wawakeshi* (venison) has begun. Later this month, after rifle season, the jerky trade will begin and recipes will be compared. My dad used to smoke his jerky in an old powder blue General Electric refrigerator at our farm in mid-Michigan. It was pure torture waiting two days for the process to be completed, but the day that the door was opened and the racks of meat were first available for grabbing, my 8-year-old hands seized three or four pieces and I hastily retired to our barn to sit on hay bales and savor those flavorful bits of meat. I still use his recipe to this day.

We are finishing up the year here at MRF Central. Michael is putting some serious miles on Woodstock to haul the last of the cardboard, plastic and other baled material. The lot here at 412 Big Bay Road is becoming sparse of activity. Electronics, fluorescent bulbs, copper wire, batteries will all be hauled to mainland destinations. The compost project is wrapping up for the season and, while we will still continue to accept food scraps, the summer volume is greatly reduced. It's being mixed off site with chicken manure and leaves, covered and left to "do its thing" all winter long. Next year, we will distribute to the community garden, school garden etc.



Speaking of school: We had the afterschool program here for a few days to paint tires and try their hand at paper-making. It's always nice to be able to have them help with the beautification here at the MRF. Special thanks to Samantha, Zak, and all the kids.

Be MRftastic.  
**Martin A. Curry**  
Recycling Supervisor

RECEIVED

NOV 8 2023

Initial: dg