

The state is aflame in a blaze of color

By IRIS SANDERSON JONES

IRONWOOD, Mich. — Color was in its full autumnal glory in the Upper Peninsula this weekend, although the strong green present in the woods along Highway 20 indicates that travelers may be able to enjoy this world of flaming trees for another two or three weeks.

The timing and the quality of this traditional Michigan festival of the trees is as hard to predict now as it was when the fur traders entered the country centuries ago.

I have been driving two days through the fall color with fellow writer Mary Augusta Rodgers of Birmingham. We left Detroit last afternoon on the first leg of our trip in a drizzling rain and arrived in Ironwood, at the far western end of the UP, at the end of our second day of travel. Our color journey took us north on Interstate 75 to the Mackinac Bridge and west along Highway Two through 300 miles to the Wisconsin border on our way to Duluth, Minn.

COLOR DIARY: Day One

We drive out of the Detroit area in mist. The world is green with a light dusting of yellow, a few fringes of red sumac and an occasional burst of orange and green maples. North towards the Zilwaukee Bridge, the stubble is still on the cornfields, the roadside grasses are yellow, and bare white birch trunks poke through multicolored woods. By a roadside park, one brilliant yellow tree explodes against a stand of green.

Near Grayling, a brief detour down Highway 93 takes us to Hartwick State Park. We turn left at signs marked, appropriately, Bright Lake and Glory Lake. We follow a brilliant path past small orange maples to Glory Lake where we share a sandwich and a beer with ducks, bluejays and leaping fish in the autumn stillness of a Michigan sunset. Our destination for the night is St. Ignace.

Day Two

It is so quiet in St. Ignace that we must get up to look at the clock to know that morning is here. By 8 a.m., even under an overcast sky, the maple behind the motel swimming pool is purple against the Straits of Mackinac. Strangely, the grass is still green, the birches full-leaved, the petunias in full bloom.

Along Highway Two, we begin to hear complaints from people in the travel industry about what "the government and the press have done to tourism in the UP." Travel is a major industry and a main source of income here. The energy crisis, and public reaction to it, has reduced travel traffic substantially since last spring.

"THE PEOPLE IN Lansing told everybody in May that they should stay home on Memorial Day because there might not be enough gas to

get home from faraway places and nobody has been up here since." That was A.M. Della-Moretta, manager of the Straits Breeze motel in St. Ignace. His feelings were echoed by a waitress in the Ramada Inn coffee shop along the road in Manistique.

"This summer we had four busy weeks. Usually we have three busy months," she said. "We had a lot of free bad publicity we didn't need. The Auto Club and the newspapers told everybody not to come up here because of the gas shortage but we had gas stations open 24 hours a day."

"It was all over by Memorial Day."

Some parts of the UP were more seriously affected than others. Travel facilities on Highway Two, which are inclined to take their business for granted, and don't bother to advertise, may have felt the pinch more than others. Bob Helwig of the Upper Peninsula Travel and Recreation Association said that tourism was down by one-third early in the summer.

"By labor Day, we were about 18 percent below normal and it's getting better," he said. "We expect a good winter."

Why is business increasing even though the gas crisis remains?

"People adjust to anything after awhile, including the gas crisis," Helwig said. "Skiers and sportsmen are less likely to be deterred than families." The hunting season is already started and the ski season opens at Thanksgiving.

GAS STATIONS are open all over the UP, some 24-hours-a-day. Regular unleaded is selling for about \$1.02 per gallon.

Going west on Highway Two, the roadside parks we find in the Lower Peninsula are suddenly visible on every side. We drive down a hill into a rolling view of green and red and yellow treetops.

It is not full color yet here in the eastern end of the UP and there are enough evergreens along this stretch to keep green the predominant color.

Color seekers swap stories when they meet. Two families who circled Lake Superior report that the colors are yellow but that there is no red in sight along the Canadian highway.

"Everything is still yellow and green on the Wisconsin side of the Michigan border."

"Minnesota reports that color is at its peak."

"The trees west of Ironwood will be bare soon enough."

"Snow flurries are predicted in the UP."

BY NOW WE begin to understand the challenge of looking at something that we have always thought of in two words — autumn leaves — and seeing the many aspects of fall colors. We begin to see the landscape as a painter sees it. Not just in red yellow and green but in hundreds of shades in different circumstances.

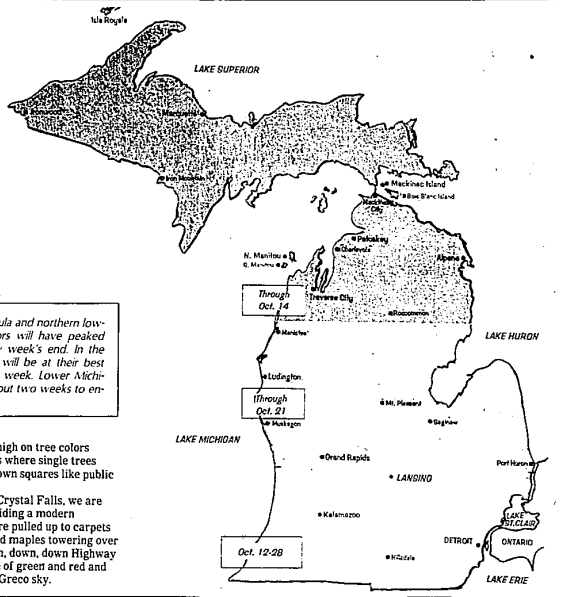
The color view differs with the light under

In the Upper Peninsula and northern lower Michigan, the colors will have peaked and begin to fade by week's end. In the central region, colors will be at their best through the following week. Lower Michigan residents have about two weeks to enjoy the scenery.

clouds and in full sun.

By Iron River we are high on tree colors especially in small towns where single trees light up backyards and town squares like public sculpture.

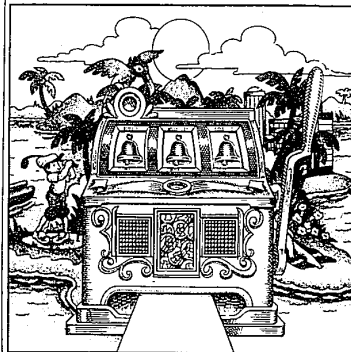
By the time we reach Crystal Falls, we are drunk on trees. It's like riding a modern rollercoaster, first you are pulled up to carpets of autumn leaves with red maples towering over you and then you go down, down, down Highway Two through a landscape of green and red and yellow against a blue El Greco sky.



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It's turkey day in Canada, minus parades and stuffing

Your calendar may say that today is Columbus Day, but for 22 million North Americans today is Thanksgiving. No, you didn't lose a month. Oct. 8 is Thanksgiving Day in Canada because Canada is further north than the United States and its harvest comes sooner.

As you travel around the world, you quickly discover that your traditional holidays are unknown in many parts of the planet and that people celebrate other national and religious events of which you never dreamed.

During the last week, we have all been aware that while Christians were celebrating the arrival of the pope, Jews were celebrating the ancient holy days of the Jewish New Year.

MANY YEARS AGO, in Singapore, I watched firecrackers light the sky during late January; that was the celebration of the Chinese New Year. In that multi-ethnic city, everybody celebrated Christian, Muslim and Hindu holidays. The most colorful was Thaipusam, an Indian religious holiday during which the faithful mortified the flesh to exalt the soul. We watched parades of people move down the street with long silver spears piercing the skin of their backs and their ears and tongues.

At the time, we were young enough to think of it as primitive, but we know now that it is part of a very highly developed religious culture. The same was true for us last fall in Nepal, when we learned that a man could go to jail for several years for killing a cow with his car. How can a person who eats beef relate to the sacred cow?

All of this has taught me that the world is a different place when you look at it from other people's viewpoint, and that we are much better off when we expand our horizons this way.

IT TAKES VERY LITTLE horizon-expansion to accommodate our thinking to Canadian Thanksgiving, but it's a start. To begin with, we must remove from that event the pilgrims and other strictly American Thanksgiving traditions. Thanksgiving is an ancient celebration held all around the world during harvest time. Harvest time differs in parts of Canada as it does in different parts of the U.S., but generally speaking it is several weeks earlier so it is logi-

cal that Thanksgiving should be earlier.

Canadians enjoy the holiday and the tradition, but it does not have as strong a national or family feeling there as Thanksgiving does in the United States. Nor is it the opening day of Christmas shopping. For that we can be thankful.

FROM THE MAILBAG — Writer-photographer Ken Lawrence wants to remind you that the "World Adventure Series" continues at the Detroit Institute of Arts even though George Pierron, Mr. Travel, has retired.

According to Lawrence, the phones have stopped ringing, giving the DIA the impression that people have retired this famous series from their thinking too.

The "World Adventure Series" was first of its kind in the country, and it is still one of the finest travel experiences you will find on this continent. We are lucky to have it here.

The brochures are ready and the new season is scheduled to begin Oct. 28. Call for information, 832-7676. This year two Stan Midgely films will be shown after the regular series is over so that season ticket holders can buy an entirely new series of adventures and new "WAS" adventures can still see the humorous travel photographer at work.

1979-80 SEASON

Oct. 28: "Yugoslavia, Strange and Beautiful" — Curtis Nagel.

Nov. 4: "Russia, Summer and Winter" — Dick Reddy.

Nov. 11: "Lakes of Switzerland" — Chris Borden.

Nov. 18: "Maritime Canada" — Arthur Wilson.

Nov. 25: "Britain Rediscovered" — Thayer Soule.

Dec. 2: "The Majestic Rhine" — John Roberts.

Dec. 9: "Spectacular Norway" — Jonathan Hagar.

(There is a four week break during the holiday season.)

Jan. 13: "The Spell of Ireland" — Bill Madsen.

Jan. 20: "Egypt and the Nile" — William Stockdale.

Jan. 27: "Cruising the Eastern Mediterranean" — Fred Belling.