

**GRAMPA'S**

**BROWNS CORNER**

**BLAB**

**7-21-21**

# ***TURTLE REPORT***

Good Morning, Dear Campers

Today I want to tell a story which began two generations ago, about 67 years back. I'm starting with the back story which seems important, to me anyway, because turtles are an important part of how I came to be who I am today. It was turtles, you see, which led to me build my first boat when I was just a bit older than Tyler is now.

In 1954 I was lucky to have my mom and dad decide to move to Washington Township, New Jersey, part way through my year of second grade. It was a new house in a new development at the very edge of the suburbs. There was a stream in our back yard and it emptied into a pond nearby and then after going over the waterfall at the dam, it went down to Schlegel's Lake. Both the pond and the lake were man made; the pond provided water for Beuerline's Home of Flowers and the lake was created to provide water for farmer Schlegel's cows.

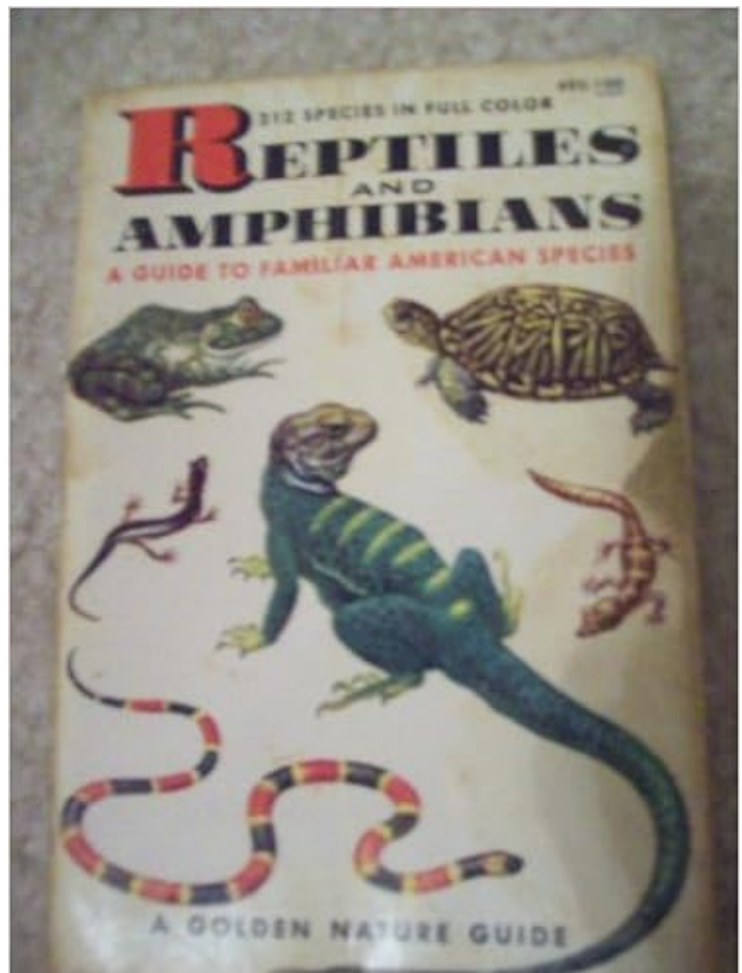
As a kid I spent almost all of my time exploring the woods, the stream, the pond and Schlegel's Lake, catching frogs, snakes, and turtles.

I did not have a grandfather who could take me in a boat to catch turtles. I didn't have any living grandfathers at all. So I built a boat to get out onto the lake to catch turtles. I became very familiar with turtles of many kinds.

Snapping turtles, painted turtles, and musk turtles were the most common inhabitants of my pond and lake. In the woods I would find box turtles and wood turtles. I occasionally found a spotted turtle, map turtle, Muhlenberg turtle, or a slider.

I had my copy of my guide book and pretty much knew it by heart. I kept a small turtle as a pet from time to time and caused a stir by bringing a huge snapping turtle to school for show and tell in sixth grade.

My adventures in boating progressed and I earned my degree in Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering, launching me into an early career in submarine design and construction.



But much more recently, my occasional dreams of turtles have become a reality. Of course you know about John and Larry, my pet tortoises. Here are the boys chowing down.







**They have been very entertaining, but not as much as my recent experiences with my intrepid granddaughter, Lila Rose Sweeney.**



**Arriving a day or two early for Browns Corner Camp 2021, Lila sweetly asked if we could go turtle catching. I of course said yes and we took the canoe to Urieville Lake a few miles up the road where I knew we would find lots of turtles.**

**With my favorite bow person, Nana, up front and Lila with her net in the middle, we went for leisurely cruise the length of the lake, another man made lake created in 1956 by building a dam across a stream.**

**We saw lots of turtles but the thick pondweed slowed us and we were not very successful.**



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**We saw a couple of blue herons, some deer, lots of frogs and fish. As we were heading back to the landing, Lila saw a large painted turtle sunning himself on a log. I didn't think we would be able to catch it and we weren't but as we approached, she**



looked down and saw a small turtle head poking through the pondweed. She quickly scooped and caught it! A few minutes later I also successfully scooped a fairly large painted turtle.

On the way home, Lila told me the little turtle she had caught was a red bellied slider. I didn't say much because I had never heard of that kind of turtle. When we got home I looked at a couple of other books and did an internet search and found out she was absolutely right. The next day I took her to Tuckahoe Lake for another turtle outing, just the two of us. We saw hundreds of turtles and caught a couple or three painted turtles. What amazed me was the size of some of the turtles we were seeing, huge critters over a foot long. We caught another couple or three turtles as well as some minnows.





This is Helen, the little red bellied slider.





The next outing was with fashionistas Zoe, Elle, and Lila. We went to Wye Mills Lake and caught a couple more painted turtles.









**By this time we had quite a menagerie in our tubs. Eight or ten turtles, a mess of frogs, tadpoles, and minnows.**



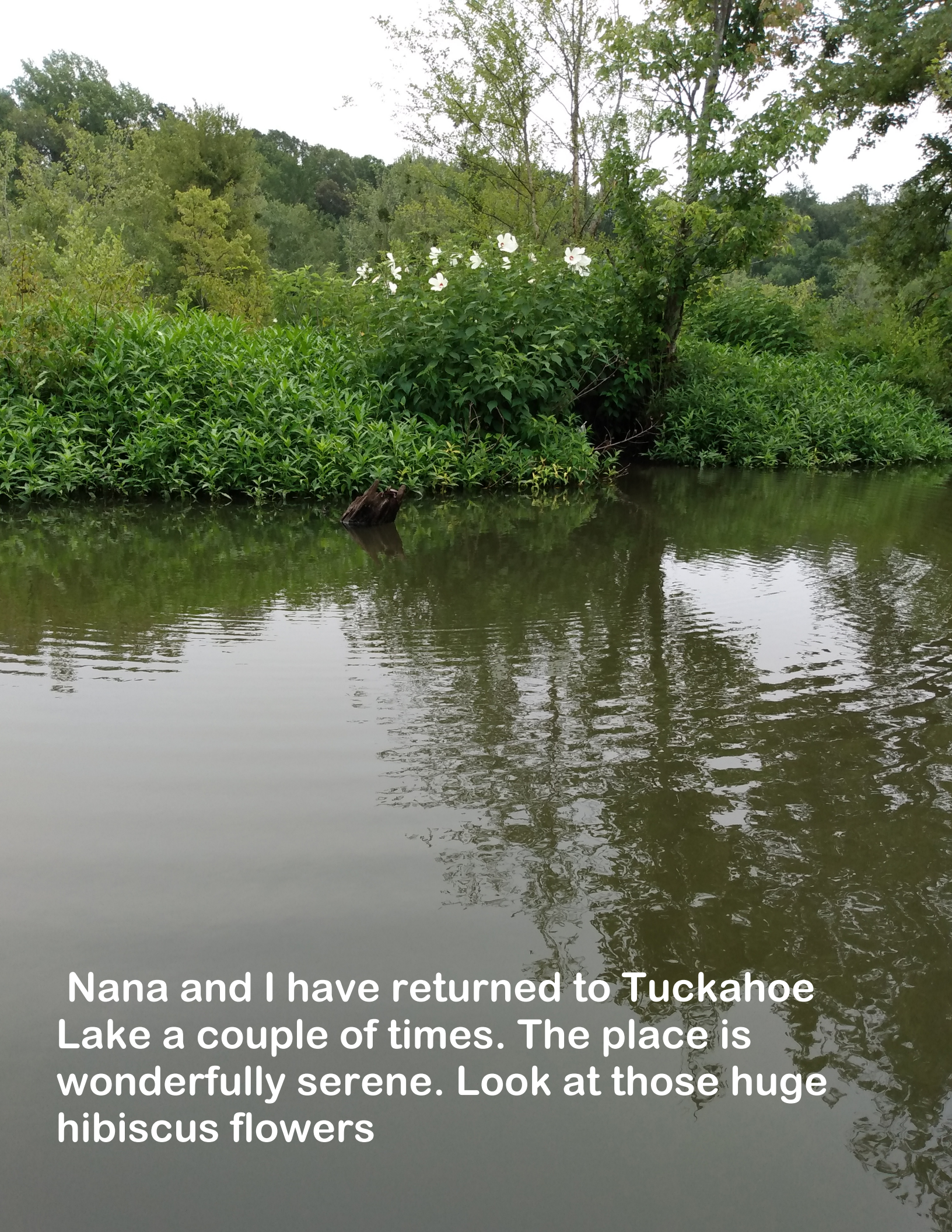
**And then Lila decided that she was going to make leashes for the turtles and train them to walk on a leash. But not just any kind of leash.**



Her leashes incorporated LED headlights. Here is Munchkin using her blue headlight leash!







Nana and I have returned to Tuckahoe Lake a couple of times. The place is wonderfully serene. Look at those huge hibiscus flowers



**Mr. and Mrs. Spirit, the Porch Snakes, are happy to announce the birth of their 2021 babies. I have seen two (or maybe the same one twice) but there probably are many more. Maybe up to twenty. The youngsters have beautiful coloring which turns to black as they grow up.**



**This little one is about a foot long and already training for service guarding our front door.**

**And out in the yard another youngster is standing watch...**



Lila Bunny says hello!



That's it for today.



*Grampa*