

Hayward Fishing Hall of Fame

Music from Zenith City by Woodblind

Marie: You're listening to The Fish Dish, brought to you by Eat Wisconsin Fish, a campaign of the Wisconsin Sea Grant Program. Are you fish-curious? Or are you a fish expert who wants to learn even more about Wisconsin's fisheries and cooking fish? We'll give you the latest "dish" on fish.

Your hosts are . . .

Sharon: Sharon Moen

Marie: and Marie Zhuikov

Together: Two friends who have been working for Sea Grant seemingly forever and who know a thing or two about fish.

Marie: But that's "forever" in a good way.

Sharon: Sharon runs the Eat Wisconsin Fish campaign

Marie: and Marie is a science communicator.

In this episode, Sharon and I take "The Fish Dish" on the road for a trip to the Fresh Water Fishing Hall of Fame, where we meet Emmett Brown, its executive director. Then, in the "Fish-o-Licious" part of the show, we'll be cooking a rainbow trout recipe called "Dad's Mushroom Masterpiece." We'll also have a special surprise guest joining us to taste it!

From inside car with road noise in background.

Marie: Sharon and I are on the road, on our way to Hayward, Wisconsin.

Both: Road trip! Road trip! Road trip!

Laughter

Marie: We're on Highway 27, near Barnes, I believe. Somewhere in the forest. We just stopped at a bait shop to pick up something to drink. We are on our way to the Hayward Fishing Hall of Fame!

Sharon: Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame.

Marie: Freshwater. . . is it international?

Sharon: I'm not sure if it's international yet. We're going to find out.

Laughter

Marie: As you can tell, we don't know a whole lot about it, which is kind of fun.

Sharon: Right.

Marie: So, we're open to this new experience. It's about fish.

Sharon: What inspired you, Marie, to choose this as our road trip destination today?

Marie: Well, it's summer and it's nice. When we were planning out this show, it came up as a topic. I've never been there before. So, this seemed like a good excuse for an episode of the Fish Dish to come here. Sharon, I know you did some research before our trip on the biggest freshwater fish ever caught.

Sharon: Right, right, so I did, and that was a fish that was caught in Thailand and it's a Mekong giant catfish. They said it was as big as a grizzly bear and weighed 650 pounds and was 9 feet long. It was netted. The biggest fish ever caught in the U.S. on a rod and reel was a white sturgeon. That weighed over 400 pounds.

Marie: Well, I assume we'll see lots of pictures of big fish and probably some taxidermied big fish.

Sharon: So, I know the taxidermied record muskie was burnt down in a tavern fire. So, we can't see that anymore. But I bet there's some other fish that will be available for show and tell.

Marie: Okay, well cool. Onward to the Hayward Fishing Hall of Fame!

When we were putting this episode together, we learned that a new record freshwater fish was caught in the Mekong River in Cambodia. It was a 660-pound stingray and it took more than a dozen people to haul it to shore. (Yes, stingrays are considered a fish.) The 13-foot wide female was released back into the river after being electronically tagged to allow scientists to monitor her movement and behavior. Now that's a big fish!

As long as I'm setting records straight, Sharon asked me to say a few more things about that white sturgeon she mentioned -- the one caught in the U.S. with a rod and reel. That whopper is not the biggest white sturgeon that has ever been landed. It's just the largest one caught in the U.S. that was weighed on a scale certified by the International Game Fish Association. Most white sturgeon are released alive after being caught. They never get near a certified scale. For the want of a certified scale, the International Game Fish Association's white sturgeon fishing record, set in 1983, stands at 468 pounds. According to uncertified measurements, white sturgeon can grow to double that weight.

Sound of wind blowing across mic

Sharon: We're here!

Marie: The Fishing Hall of Fame! The sign it says it's like a peek into your grandad's tackle box. Okay, we gotta go buy our tickets.

Sharon: Here we go.

Marie: There 's a lot of fish you can see -- a lot of big models of fish and then there's ..

Sharon: The parking lot's pretty crowded, too, for a small town like this.

Marie: on a weekday. Of course, you can see the big muskie. We'll talk more about that later.

After we bought our tickets in the gift shop, we walked through that small building. In the back of it is a memorial garden full of memorials to deceased anglers and flower beds and then models of different species of fish.

Sharon: We're talking about models. They're gigantic models. They would be more like whale size.

Marie: Yes. So, there's a huge sunfish, there's a rainbow trout...

Sharon: Bass, a walleye. A couple of bass around....

Marie: Salmon. But the largest one is a muskie. How big do you think that thing is?

Sharon: Oh my gosh, I don't know, but it's so big, you can walk inside of it and go up into its mouth and look out through its mouth.

Marie: Yeah, there's a viewing platform in its mouth. And then, inside, I think it's a museum. There's also a Hall of Recognition next door with the saying, "Give a man a fish, feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, feed him for life."

Sharon: For life, and that is so true.

Laughter

Marie: Where should we go next?

Sharon: I think we should go in the Hall of Recognition. Because we'll save the muskie for last. How's that?

Marie: Okay, sounds good.

So, when we came into the Memorial Hall, there's a carving of the world's record muskie. It's a 72-inch Chippewa River muskie donated by Ghost Lake Lodge in Hayward. That thing, it's like taller than us. (*Laughter*) I would not want to see that in a river.

Sharon: To be honest, muskies and pikes kind of scare me when I'm fishing. They have so many teeth. Evidently, they have teeth kind of like in their gills, too, so it's hard to pick them out. When I look at them, I think, "You're mostly teeth."

Marie: Yeah.

Well, this building has been a surprise. Not only are there memorials to anglers and noted people involved in recreational fishing here, there's a motor graveyard...

Sharon: Yes.

Marie: ...and there's mounts of all types of fish, both saltwater and freshwater. There's pictures of people with their world-record fish. There's even some mounts of primitive fishermen that look suspiciously like sasquatch.

Sharon: *Laughs*. That's true. I think it's fascinating to see the history of fishing laid out in this building. Again, the motor graveyard, and now we're looking at old muskie lures. There was a room dedicated to Laurie Rapala, who's famous for the Rapala line of fishing gear. I'm looking at a wall over here that talks about the history of fishing lines even and some of the knots. It's pretty cool. If you're a gearhead and like fishing, this is a good place to come.

So, we're recording from inside the muskie now. It kind of feels like Jonah and the whale experience, if the whale was a museum.

Laughter

Sharon: There are more fish and dioramas here and more about the fishing museum. They call it the Hall of Fame but it's way more than just a Hall of Fame. There's a lot to learn here. I'm even seeing a gas-powered spear gun that looks like an old military gun. That's interesting.

Marie: CO2 gas spear gun....

Sharon: It has a CO2 canister on it.

Marie: There's a lot of tributes to founders of the place.

Sharon: And also a tribute to Herman the Worm.

Laughter

Marie: Is that a book character? It must be a book character.

Sharon: I think so, yes.

Marie: And then there's a stairway that leads up to the mouth of the muskie. We can see the upper teeth coming down. And the muskie is surrounded by a pool of water. I don't know if you can hear it, but there's some bubblers going on. There's tadpoles in the pool and people have been throwing coins in there, too.

Sharon: Yep. There's some life-preserver-shaped styrofoam things put out there. So, they're encouraging people to toss their coins through the middle of the life preserver. That's kind of fun.

Marie: They even have an artist model for the fish we are now inside. And pictures of the sculptor and artist.

Sharon: I like how they say the spawning of the world's largest fish. They're talking about this particular building.

Marie: Yeah, they have pictures of how they built it. Okay, we're going up the stairs.

Sounds of feet climbing stairs.

Marie: Uff, my legs are getting tired!

Sharon: We did it!

Marie: It's humid up here. They must have air conditioning down lower. Wow! You can see Hayward from here! And the grounds. They also have four little houses on the side of the gardens. They cover boats – old-fashioned fishing boats. And even a 1952 snowmobile. That was kind of neat to see. This muskie has a lot of teeth.

After our explorations, we caught up with Emmet Brown, the director of this fine establishment. He shared the goals of the hall of fame with us, it's impact on the community, and why there's so much more to the sport than just catching fish.

Emmett: Our primary mission in the fishing hall of fame is the preservation of the historical artifacts, heritage and history of freshwater sport fishing. That, in a nutshell, is what we do. We're about

preserving the historical artifacts and history of freshwater sport fishing as opposed to saltwater fishing, commercial fishing. We don't do a lot with commercial fishing here although there is history here. Even in our museum we do have some commercial artifacts – nets and things like that -- that would have been used primarily in commercial fishing as opposed to sport fishing.

Emmett: Our awards program, our hall of fame program, covers the world. Not just North America, not just the U.S., but the world. The primary thrust of it, however, is North America. North America has 20 percent of the world's fresh water, for example. Because of that, there's going to be lots of freshwater representation. We've recognized about a little under 500 since 1980.

Sharon: How many inductees are recognized per year?

Emmett: 5-6 per year are recognized, 7 if we have a really good group. But certainly no more than that.

Marie: What do people have to do to be inducted, besides catch fish?

Emmett: Not necessarily catch fish. As a matter of fact, if the individual's only claim to fame is that they caught a big fish one time, they're not getting in. They have to give something back to the sport of freshwater fishing.

We have a lot of people that try to set a lot of different records. I think they've done it under the misnomer that, "I've had about 100 records so I should get in the fishing hall of fame." That doesn't work and we tell people this. I'm not sure they always believe it when we tell them. I'm not knocking people catching big fish. Everyone likes to catch a big fish, right? But you have to have contributed something.

We are the go-to destination in northwestern Wisconsin. No doubt about that. We have about 50,000 people here annually. (April 15-Oct 31)

Sharon: Wow!

Emmett: It's a cross-section of, in the calmer months April, May, later in September, October, it's more serious anglers. A lot of guy groups. But that's not even necessarily universal anymore. A lot of gal groups too. I've seen a wonderful explosion of, there's a women's muskie tournament that they have up here now.

The first thing I like to tell people is that it's called fishing, not catching.

Laughter

Emmett: What I mean by that is, there's so much more to the sport of fishing than unhooking and throwing it back or throwing it into your livewell. To me there's more to it and I feel sorry and sad if you've gotten to the point in your life where you still don't see the mystery, the wonderment that we saw when we were kids when that bobber went down. I mean, to this day, I still get a kick out of watching a bobber either go sideways or go down. So, to me, that's what the sport is about. It's about fishing, catching, and getting the most out of it that you can. Passing the traditions along, the history, the heritage.

We update when we can. We're 80% of the way through a 10-year project to upgrade our infrastructure. These winters -- I don't have to tell you what these winters are like. You get 4 solid

seasons of different weather. The vagaries of those four seasons weigh heavily on our, especially since so much of it is outside.

We repainted the big muskie in 2008. That was actually step one. It was installed in July of 1978. We repainted it in May 2008. It cost greater to repaint than it was to build.

From inside car with road noise in background.

Marie: Sharon and I are back in the car again, heading back to Superior. We ate lunch before we left the town of Hayward. Somebody gave us a recommendation, saying there was good fish at the Angler Bar and Grill. Of course, with that name...

Sharon: With a name like Angler, you know it.

Marie: how could we refuse. But alas, they had fish, but it was not local fish.

Sharon: It was cod from Iceland.

Marie: It was cod. But we ate there anyway. The food was very good. The service was very good. If you like taxidermy décor...

Sharon: There were lots more dead things hanging on the wall.

Marie: That was very quaint, yes. But now, we're heading home and we're processing our experience at the hall of fame.

Sharon: Right, it was so interesting. One of the things—actually, Marie was up in the muskie mouth and an osprey flew by with a fish in its talons. That was pretty fun to see.

Marie: Yeah, very appropriate that it was a fishing bird at the fishing hall of fame. That was pretty cool. I was surprised that there was as much fishing equipment there. They had all the reels, and different types of fly-fishing rods over the years, different types of flies and lures. I wasn't expecting that there. How about you, Sharon?

Sharon: Yeah, I agree. It was much more of a museum than I was imagining it to be. I thought it was going to be a hall of fame where you go through and meet virtually some of the greatest fly anglers or anglers. But it was much more than that. It was so much more than that.

Marie: We really appreciated that the director took time to speak with us. That was really valuable getting to meet him and getting his viewpoint on things.

Sharon: Yes, I really liked what he said about – like if you have lost the wonder of watching your bobber tip over, maybe you should be doing something else because it's such a remarkable event to be attached to a fish that way. And he still finds that such a thrill. I think that's a great lesson.

I like that the setup was – for kids and adults and families and friend groups – it felt like a place where you all could have a good time at. I wish they had more recipes there. I didn't see any recipe books.

Marie: No!

Laughter

Sharon: That's why we're going to have to make a dish when we get home, right?

Marie: Yes, and we've been going back and forth on what fish to cook that would be applicable to this experience that we had and we kind of decided on rainbow trout right?

Sharon: I think it's going to be rainbow trout. One of the reasons I like the idea cooking rainbow trout is that you can catch it as an angler, but you can also go to a fish farm – there are many rainbow trout farms – you can find it in supermarket – so you don't necessarily have to be an angler to enjoy rainbow trout.

Music from "Zenith City" by Woodblind

Marie: And now it's time for the Fish-o-Licious part of our podcast, where we discuss fish recipes which, by the way, you can find on the Eat Wisconsin Fish website (which is eatwisconsinfish.org) along with photos. Plus, it's also on the Fish Dish podcast webpage (seagrant.wisc.edu/audio). What dish do we have today?

Sharon: Oh, it's Dad's Mushroom Masterpiece. I'm excited because we have a whole trout, head on, and a bunch of mushrooms, which I love, and it's going to be awesome!

Marie: Okay, Sharon's wounded. She has a kitchen wound on her hand, so, I'm doing the heavy lifting today. So far, I have cut the head off the fish.

Sharon: Right. And now we have to cut up mushrooms and also an onion. And I'll rely on Marie to do that also.

All right, it's time for the onions and mushrooms in the simmering sauce that we're doing. So, here's a quarter cup of onions and then about two cups of mushrooms. They're kind of thick cut but I'm thinking that we have enough time to simmer them down so it won't be so bad. What we did is we did not fillet the fish. We're doing a whole fish with the head and tail cut off. We're going to simmer it on one side over a bath of water and a little bit of salt.

Marie: Yeah, Sharon has a special fish steamer. It's an oblong rectangular pot with a cover.

Sharon: A friend gave me it for Christmas.

Marie: I didn't even know there was such a thing!

Sharon: I think steaming is such a heart-healthy way to cook fish. The easy pan fry or saute that we've done on the Fish Dish before – left to my own devices it's how I would approach a fish but having a steamer is really a good way not to do that oil, get away from the oils. So yeah, a friend gave me this steamer and I'm lucky, but you can also – like last Fish Dish, we did kind of a steaming situation in the microwave.

Marie: Just like in a baking dish . . . poaching.

Sharon: Right. So, you can steam without a fancy schmancy extra tool in the kitchen. But I just happen to have this one.

Marie: Because you're fancy.

Sharon: Because I'm fancy. I'm one of those fancy people. *(Laughs)* It's been simmering for about five minutes on one side and I'm just going to flip this puppy.

Marie: With what?

Sharon: A fork. I'm going to find a fork in your kitchen. Two forks, in fact. There. Then with our mushrooms, about five minutes, stir in the flour, salt and pepper.

Marie: So, we put in a tablespoon of flour. For my purposes, it was rice flour.

Sharon: Somewhere the mustard and the sour cream come in.

Marie: Yeah. We did salt and pepper and a third cup of milk. It says, cook over medium heat until thickened, three minutes. Then we remove it and we stir in the sour cream, mustard and the wine.

Sharon: I think that's so cool that you make your own mustard.

Marie: Yeah. It's good, too.

Sharon: Is it? Can I have it?

Marie: You can, like, stick your finger in there.

Sharon: Yeah, that's good! The fish is done. That's one thing about fish. It cooks so fast.

So, I'm removing the skin. Because when you steam a fish the skin, if I was frying it or sautéing it, the skin gets crispy and kind of yummy but because it's been steamed . . .

Marie: It's not yummy.

Sharon: It's not *as* yummy. So, now we have skinned the fish. It's a whole fish so I'm going to try and make it elegant splitting it apart but it's never going to be as elegant as it would be if we had a fillet to start with.

Marie: Yeah, I don't have a fillet knife. I should not be on this show!

Laughter

Sharon: But I feel like it's important you know you don't need a fillet knife in order to eat a steamed fish, a whole fish. Just, it's going to be a little bit ugly. And, I haven't taken out the bones, right?

Marie: I just peel out the backbone then I...

Sharon: Then you serve it up?

Laughter

Marie: Now you know what to get me for Christmas.

Sharon: Right, a fillet knife.

Laughter

Sharon: All right, we have half a fish here and now we'll plate it up and I'll put some of the sauce on top of it, the yummy wine mushroom sauce.

Marie: Uh huh. Russ just pulled in.

Door squeaking.

Russ: Well, it looks like I'm just in time!

Sharon: You are, perfect timing, in fact!

Marie: Note to our listeners – our surprise special guest is Russ, Marie's partner. He just happened to come home at the right time to join us for the taste test.

Sharon: This is Dad's Mushroom Masterpiece with homemade mustard, rainbow trout and sour cream.

Russ: Oh, my gracious. Dad's?

Sharon: Yeah, I don't know who Dad was.

Marie: We don't know whose dad it was.

Russ: Oh, okay.

Marie: He was a smart man.

Sharon: MMMMMMmmmm!

Russ: Good cook. So did this recipe come from the...

Marie: Eat Wisconsin Fish website!

Russ: Oh!

Marie: So, what do you think, Russ?

Russ: Delicious. I like the steaming.

Sharon: It's such a heart-healthy way to prepare fish as opposed to frying or sautéing. Baking's good, too, but with steaming you just hold it over hot water or some sort of simmering sauce for about ten minutes, it's done.

Russ: So, Marie's probably shared this with you, but that whitefish recipe with Greek seasoning, it's become a big hit at our household.

Sharon: That's like your family favorite so far.

Marie: It's good with different types of fish, too. We've tried it with all sorts.

Sharon: Absolutely. I'm liking this.

Russ: Yes.

Sharon: It's mild compared to some of our other recipes. All the flavors are really subtle.

Marie: It's mellow. Dad's Mellow Mushroom Magnificence.

Sharon: Yeah (laughs).

Music from Zenith City by Woodblind

Marie: For more information and our rainbow trout recipe, visit Eat Wisconsin Fish on the web at eatwisconsinfish.org, plus Twitter and Facebook. Thanks goes to Emmet Brown for speaking with us and to Russ Maron for participating in the taste test. Thank you for listening!