

GLENCOE NEWS

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Water is life for Tom Weathers

BY KARIE ANGELL LUC | Contributor December 31, 2012 9:28AM

Glencoe, IL tap water is ranked among the best tasting in the Midwest, maybe the world.

Updated: January 28, 2013 6:21AM

While a champagne toast is traditional at New Years, Tom Weathers, Village of Glencoe water plant superintendent, could raise a glass of Glencoe water, ranked among the best tasting water in the Midwest. Weathers, who has been with the village since 1988, has done that. In 2011, the Illinois Section American Water Works Association ranked Glencoe water as the taste test champion. So raise a glass to Tom Weathers of Lake Villa whose workplace has the best room with a view.

Q. Tom, your window to the world sparkles, yes?

A. I feel truly blessed to be able to have this kind of facility, this location, to work in (he's standing behind the Glencoe Water Filtration and Pumping Station, steps below is the beach).

Q. How about those four-story green and white birdhouses on tall poles?

A. Those birdhouses have been here since the plant was constructed in 1928. I've got some pictures from the original construction showing older styles. They've been upgraded since then, but these houses are for purple martins, and they are like the Swallows of Capistrano. They return every year to their same place they were raised, and it signifies, to me, the ongoing longevity of a water system. They've been coming here for 83 years, we've been producing water for 83 years and hopefully for 83 years and more to come.

Q. Documenting a return date in log books each March that the Purple Martins have returned, what does that symbolize?

A. That summer's on its way!

Q. Does the azure blue hint of Caribbean waters?

A. When you look out there, you can imagine yourself being on a Caribbean island. If it wasn't for the Pine trees, maybe if they were Palm trees instead, it would be a little better.

Q. Glencoe water was a taste test champion. Bottled water?

A. Well, we're not planning on bottling water here, we had looked into that in the past, but economically, it's not feasible.

Q. You and your wife, Trish, will be married 40 years on March 3, 2013. You have a daughter, Stacy Griffiths, son-in-law Dean, and grandson Nathan, 12, is a Lake Villa sixth grader. What's on your honey-do list? Bringing home a gallon of milk?

A. I have to bring home the water, I don't get in the door! I do bottle water, in a sense. I put it in a gallon jug and bring it home. It does make a difference for the coffee (Weathers is a former chef) and tea and beverages, especially because my home has well water and imparts a funny taste sometimes. I do bring home small amounts, a couple gallons a week, here and there.

Q. And hardworking husbands bring home the bacon too, right?

A. That's true (smiles here).

Q. How does this (Lake Michigan) water speak to your soul?

A. It really not only speaks to your soul but creeps into your bloodstream. The water field is very rewarding in that, you know, you can feel good about doing a public service for the public good, where you have the health and welfare of thousands of people in your hands from the water that you produce, so it's a very gratifying situation.