

Valley Angler

The Year in Review

by Bill Thompson

The New Year is upon us at last. I would guess that most are pleased to say good-bye to 2008. Not that the whole year was a total loss, just maybe the last few months. The last few days all of the news shows have been airing “year in review” pieces. They go to great lengths to tell us what the major news events of the past year were and who died. I got my year end issue of Newsweek the other day. My favorite part is always the year's best political cartoon section. Political cartoonists have a way of getting to the meat of a subject without a lot of extra baggage. Keeping with the spirit of things I thought it might be a good idea to do my own “year in review”.

Without a doubt the top story of the year would have to be the great fishing we had right here in our own “Happy Valley”. The Saco River this year had perhaps the best season in recent memory. I am sure that there were those who were disappointed with the amount of rainfall we experienced this past summer. However, from a fisherman's point of view it was the best thing that could have happened. Cool water and good flows translates into happy trout and good fishing. In most years the Saco is too low and too warm in August to support decent trout fishing. This was certainly not the case this year. The river fished well right up to closing day in October.

The largest trout that we heard of taken this year from the Saco was a twenty-seven inch brown. Ron Mellady was the lucky angler. What should have been a joyous occasion turned sour when Ron dumped his cell phone into the river while attempting to photograph his fish. Although the phone was retrieved it was a total loss and no photographic evidence exists of the momentous occasion. Fortunately there were two reputable witnesses who saw Ron land the trout.

As far as Janet is concerned, her top story would be her trip to Newfoundland. Janet made her first salmon trip this summer and hooked and landed her first Atlantic Salmon. To date she has still not come down off the high. Not to be out done I too managed to squeeze in a salmon trip this year. Where as I did not catch as many, or catch one as large as Janet's I did get a couple.

Other memorable trips would have to include fishing with our good friends. John Buckley and I checked out some new water this past spring. We did not find the good fishing that we had dreamed of the winter before, turns out we were just a little early, but the trip was a success just the same. Rick Davidson and I had the same results when we explored a new pond. Again the fishing did not live up to expectations, but the results were just the same; we had a great time.

All that rain that produced such good fishing on the Saco had the reverse effect on the Androscoggin River. For much of the year, due to high water, the Androscoggin was unfishable. However, the late season was excellent and Janet and I managed to get in two very enjoyable drift trips with our friends Rick and Pat Gerber.

If there was anything to wine about it was probably the poor year we had at our favorite trout pond. All and all the late season pond fishing was on the slow side.

I don't know about you, but I am already dreaming of next season. In the last few days we have taken

out the maps and began to plot new destinations for the coming year.

See you on the river.