

Valley Angler

Fishing Shows Cure Cabin Fever

by Bill Thompson

It is that time of year again when the various fly fishing companies start sending out their catalogs. The Orvis one came in the mail the other day. The cover photo is amazing. You have to look twice to really see it. The photo is a trout caught just as it is about to rise and take a mayfly. You need to take the second look to notice the mayfly, just above the trout's nose.

The catalog is full of new goodies for anglers to drool over. Of course that is the purpose of the catalog in the first place. For me the arrival of spring fishing catalogs is the first harbinger that spring will soon be here. I guess you could say that I am some kind of crazy optimist.

Another harbinger of spring is that the sportsman shows are starting up. The first of the year is the Rockingham Fishing and Hunting Expo. This event is held at Rockingham Park Racetrack in Salem, New Hampshire. The dates are the 11th, 12th, and 13th. I have never been able to attend, but I am told that it a nice show and very family orientated.

The show that fly fishermen from all over New England eagerly await for each year is the Marlborough Fly Fishing Show. Held at the Royal Plaza in Marlborough, Mass., this year's show will be on the 16, 17 and 18 of January.

The Marlborough Show has always been a must for me and I don't think I have missed one since its inception. The show dates, as they do this year, always coincide with my birthday so I have always felt that they hold the show just for my pleasure. There is probably some other more mundane reason. This show is always sure to have plenty of fly fishing celebrities. The one that peaked my interest this year is Ed Engle. Ed has written several books on fly fishing and I have always found his stuff pretty good. If you are a book collector, like I am, the show always offers a good chance to get one of your books signed.

Another favorite part of the show is the number of fly tiers that are in attendance, demonstrating their craft. There is always something new to be learned from these folks.

Most of the big name rod and reel companies have booths and will let you try out their new products. The casting area is always busy and sometimes you have to wait a few minutes, however it is worth it to get to cast the latest hot fly rod. Because it is way out of my budget to attend the Denver trade show each year I use the Marlborough Show as my own personal trade show.

The show is also a great way to meet up with old friends. The fly fishing world is a small one and it is surprising how many friends you meet at the show each year.

Considering the fact that I own a fly fishing shop and sell fly tying materials you might find it hard to believe that I always end up purchasing something new from the many vendors selling materials. I come home with a bag full every year. I just about always come home with a new book as well.

These shows are always a good way to cure cabin fever and there is always an off chance that you will learn something new.

See you on the river.