

Valley Angler

The Waiting Game

by Bill Thompson

It is already the middle of the month and a lot of fishermen are beginning to come unglued. The tell tale signs are everywhere. To begin with the phone at the shop is beginning to ring again. For a while there I was beginning to think that it had been shut off. Most calls begin with the same inquiry: "Has the ice started to go out yet, or is there any place I can fish"?

March is a cruel month for anglers and April can be almost as bad. Take for instance last weekend. In case you have forgotten already, we had two days of sun and temperatures up around fifty degrees. Of course on Monday we had snow and freezing rain. This is pretty much standard fair for March; one day you're running around in your shirtsleeves and the next day you have your heaviest parker on. All of this tends to drive the fishing community nuts.

Cabin Fever is a terrible thing. This past week I had a fellow in with a broken rod. Seems he was so desperate to have a rod in his hand he had assembled his brand new seven and a half foot three weight fly rod in his living room. In the process of casting to large, imaginary rainbow trout he caught the tip in the ceiling fan. The rest of the damage to the rod came when he broke the mid section over his knee in a fit of rage. We are all hoping that the no-fault warranty offered by the rod's manufacturer will hold true.

I spent this past weekend at the New Hampshire Fly Fishing Show in Pelham. Janet was unable to accompany me this year so I was assisted by my good friend Nate Hill and the shop's web master, John Buckley. Needless to say, we all had a great time renewing acquaintances with old friends and meeting a lot of new friends as well. In the process we managed to do a little business as well, which is always a good thing.

The attendance at the show was down a little over last year. Funny thing about fishing shows, you dread that there will be a storm that will prevent people from coming to the show, on the other hand if the weather is to good folks will stay away too. I am not sure what the case was, but those who did attend had a good time and a few even parted with some cash.

The flies from the Pink Fly Contest were on display at the show and the winners were picked. This year's winners were: third place, Alan Graham of North Conway for his "Pink Mouse With Cheese", second place to Chris Clark of Lisbon, NH for a full dress Atlantic Salmon fly and first place to Ed McGarrigle of Cape Neddick, ME for a loop wing dry fly called "Pinkabell". There was a special prize awarded this year for a junior entry. Jake MereVarish won for a crayfish pattern. Every year it gets harder and harder to pick the winners. This year the competition was better than ever. Congratulations to the winners and to all who took part in this year's event. Your flies were all winners!

We do have a date and a location for this year's Saco Valley Anglers Trout Auction. This year the event will be held on Saturday April 11th at King Pine in Madison. Be sure to mark your calendars now and reserve the date. We already have some great items for the auction. The popular sailing trip has already been donated along with several guide trips including a drift trip on the Androscoggin River. We also have a few nice rods and lots of fly tying stuff like last year.

In the mean time hang in there, spring really is just around the corner.

See you on the river.