



Early Morning Salmon fishing on the Naugatuck River

The Newsletter of The Connecticut Fly Fisherman's Association

***OCTOBER MEETING
BILL KEISTER
LAKE FISHING***

DICK WEMMELL'S FLY BOX



**FROM THE VEST OF THE
PRESIDENT**



From the vest of the President

"Boats, like whiskey, are all good."

R. D. Culler



I used to treat my wife like a trolling motor. We used to paddle a two-person canoe and when I became serious about fishing I started spending more time with the rod in my hand than with the paddle. With my focus on fishing, I would bark orders to her such as, "Turn left! Hold this position! Back us up!" The decision to buy separate kayaks probably saved our marriage.

Christine now commands a Wilderness Pungo 120 sit-inside kayak, which is quick, nimble, and an excellent value. I pilot a Hobie Revolution sit-on-top kayak that affords me the option of pedaling instead of paddling, leaving both my hands free to fish, except when one hand is needed for a quick rudder adjustment. Conditions permitting, both yaks are at home on rivers, lakes and inshore salt waters. We especially enjoy tidal rivers where the scenery changes from that of a trout stream to that of a marine environment in just a few miles of travel. We do at least a dozen kayak outings together every year. Together, but separate.

Kayaks are great for covering a lot of water while scouting for fish by sight and by trolling or drifting a fly. They can also transport an angler to fishing spots that are inaccessible to others. I've become comfortable casting shorter distances from the yak, such as when working a shoreline, but the seated position is less than ideal for fly casting. I like to get out of the yak to cast whenever possible. Standing up to cast from either of our yaks is not a safe option.

Many traditional kayaks can be retrofitted with outrig-

gers that supposedly allow anglers to safely stand up and cast, but I would not recommend them. Outriggers are cumbersome to transport and deploy, plus they add weight and resistance to wind and water. They cannot be mounted in the middle of the yak, where they would do the most good, because that area needs to be clear for fishing activity. Wherever they are mounted, outriggers could interfere horribly with the line when fighting a fish.

There is a new wave of single hull kayaks aimed at anglers who want to stand up to cast and fight fish. Don't confuse these stand up kayaks with the stand up paddleboards or SUPs that suddenly seem to be everywhere. An SUP looks like little more than a surfboard. Stand up kayaks look a lot like regular kayaks, and upon closer inspection they usually look like fishing machines.

While visiting Florida last winter I was able to use three different types of kayaks specifically designed to allow standing while fishing. Push poles or long single-bladed paddles are often used to propel these boats when standing, while normal two-bladed kayak paddles are used when seated. Most have a strap in the front of the cockpit to facilitate pulling yourself out of the seat to stand up, and some have railings at thigh height for leaning on. Every feature designed into the hull of a water craft has inherent trades-offs. Paddling long distances in these stand up kayaks is not easy, and they won't win a race when paddled against a traditional kayak. But they are gaining popularity among anglers, especially those who like to sight fish on the shallow flats. Standing provides a better angle to see into the water, and it's a better posture from which to launch the long, accurate casts often required on the flats.

That's exactly how I caught ladyfish on flats during that Florida trip. I had rented a Jackson Coosa kayak which allowed me to stand up in it. The Coosa also had a seat that could be positioned at three different heights, which enabled me to sit high off the deck or, as conditions changed, to sit low like a normal kayak seat.

I also caught my first ever redfish from the rented Coosa, although that was not exactly a flats sight fishing scenario. I was paddling in a saltwater creek when a school of baitfish erupted about sixty feet off the bow, making me want to cast to that spot, even though I could not see a predator fish. I put the paddle down and picked up the rod that was trolling a small red and white seaducer fly. As the yak continued to glide for-

ward, I stood up with the help of the strap. The fly line stretched out behind the boat had enough water resistance to load the rod for a false cast, followed by one back cast, then a forward cast that put the fly on target. Without the ability to stand up, I could not have executed that cast so efficiently. Also, it didn't hurt to be standing when the hooked redfish circled my yak a couple of times before coming to hand.

During my stay on Florida's west coast I had the great pleasure of fishing and hanging out with CFFA member Ed Mitchell who now lives there. Ed let me use his Diablo Adios stand up kayak, which I found to be more stable and more responsive than the Coosa. He has really tricked-out his Adios for fly fishing, as you can see if you visit his website edmitchelloutdoors.com. Ed's extensive website contains a handy index in the right hand column where you can scroll down to the "Categories" heading and select his articles on Diablo kayaks.

While I was down there, a friend of Ed's who is in the paddle sports business asked us to evaluate the prototype of a new kind of stand up paddle craft named the Xfish, which is now being made by Rigid Boats. It's being marketed as a micro skiff, and we found the Xfish uniquely combined the comfort and versatility of a skiff with the convenience and portability of a kayak. Of the three types of stand up paddle craft I sampled, the Xfish provided the most stable platform from which to fly fish. It also had the greatest amount of uncluttered deck space to accommodate loose fly line. Charlotte Harbor was fairly choppy and windy the day Ed and I tested the Xfish prototype and we were quite impressed with its smooth ride, lack of hull-slap and true tracking despite the rough conditions. Several versions of Xfish are now available, along with lots of fishing accessories including optional small gas and electric motors.

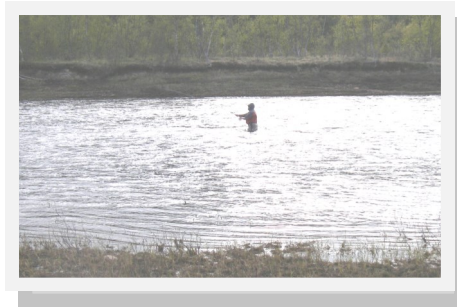
I don't know if stand up kayaks will ever become popular here in the northeast where there is not much flats fishing, but you may want to check them out if you are in the tropics. The addition of a motor certainly opens up more possibilities for them here, much like the folding Porta Boat did over a decade ago.

Most lake fishing here in the northeast is done from boats, and any of the ones I've mentioned here could be fun to use on a lake. Fly fishing lakes is the topic of our October meeting when Bill Keister will share his experience fishing lakes from Vermont to Chile. Anyone is welcome to setup their vise before the meeting and tie flies that are good for lakes.

><<)))*> Bruce

About our speaker, Bill Keister

Bill Keister's first trout was caught when he was 12 on a dry fly. He fished through high school and college years but stopped when he got out of the Navy in 1968. Contemplating retirement in just before Thanksgiving in 1998 he made an academic decision to come back to fly fishing. After making four fly rods, tying flies he caught nine trout on the first Sunday of the early Wisconsin early trout season. He is an FFF Certified Master Casting Instructor. He ties his own flies, has put together over fifty fly rods and keeps annually retentive records of each fish he has caught since May 6, 2002. Trout and salmon have been caught in Labrador, Newfoundland, Alaska, Kamchatka, the Kola Peninsula, three additional Canadian provinces and fifteen states. Bill has made eight trips to Chile and Argentina and will be back to Argentina twice this winter.



Lake Fishing

For a stream angler Lakes can be a mystery. If you can read the water streams have a lot to tell you. Lakes tend to keep their secrets. But there are ways to crack the code. Our October speaker has had lots of experience with trout club lakes in Connecticut and Vermont. He has also fished lakes in Argentina and Chile. You may not be able to fish in any of these sights but his experiences may help you to see below the surface of the next lake you encounter.

Bill Keister will talk about the basic nature of trout in lakes, how related to cover, light, temperature. He will touch on the predator/prey roles and how this affects the angler's approach. Food items will be covered. Methods of fishing dry flies on, in and trapped under the surface. Fishing various depths of water with floating, slow sinking and fast sinking lines casting and trolling will be discussed. Even the place of the lowly bobber will enter the discussion. Finally equipment will be covered.

Return to Big Eddy

By Robert Quinn Jr.

It had been 13 years since my last trip to Big Eddy on the West Branch of the Penobscot River with my Dad. I had promised my oldest son, Jack, that when he turned thirteen, old enough to understand the dangers of a big river that we would take him.

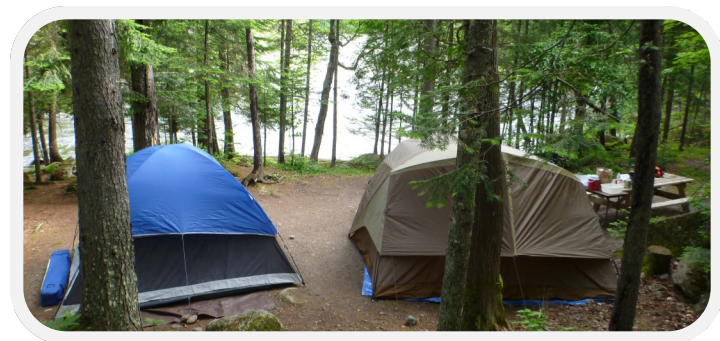
My Dad, Jack, and I made the seven and a half hour trek on a Friday in late June to Chewonki's Big Eddy campground. I was a little concerned as I caught glimpses of the river from the Golden Road. The river sure looked high. We arrived late in the afternoon. There were two notes on the campground office door. The first note indicated that the water flow was three times normal (6,800 cubic feet/sec versus 2,300 cubic feet /sec). The decision had been made earlier in the week that the water level in Ripogemus lake was too high and that a planned release from the dam was scheduled to continue until Monday evening, the day before we were planning to leave. The second note indicated that there was a black bear visiting the campground and advised campers to keep a clean campsite, store food in your car or up high, and to store your trash in their storage building.

We set up camp and had salmon cakes, rice and peas that my wife had prepared earlier that day for supper. My Dad was very tired and turned in for the night. Jack and I walked down to the Big Eddy pool to watch the fishermen in drift boats and the blizzard hatch of caddis flies and sulfur duns. Despite the heavy hatch, we noticed only a couple of landlocked salmon caught.

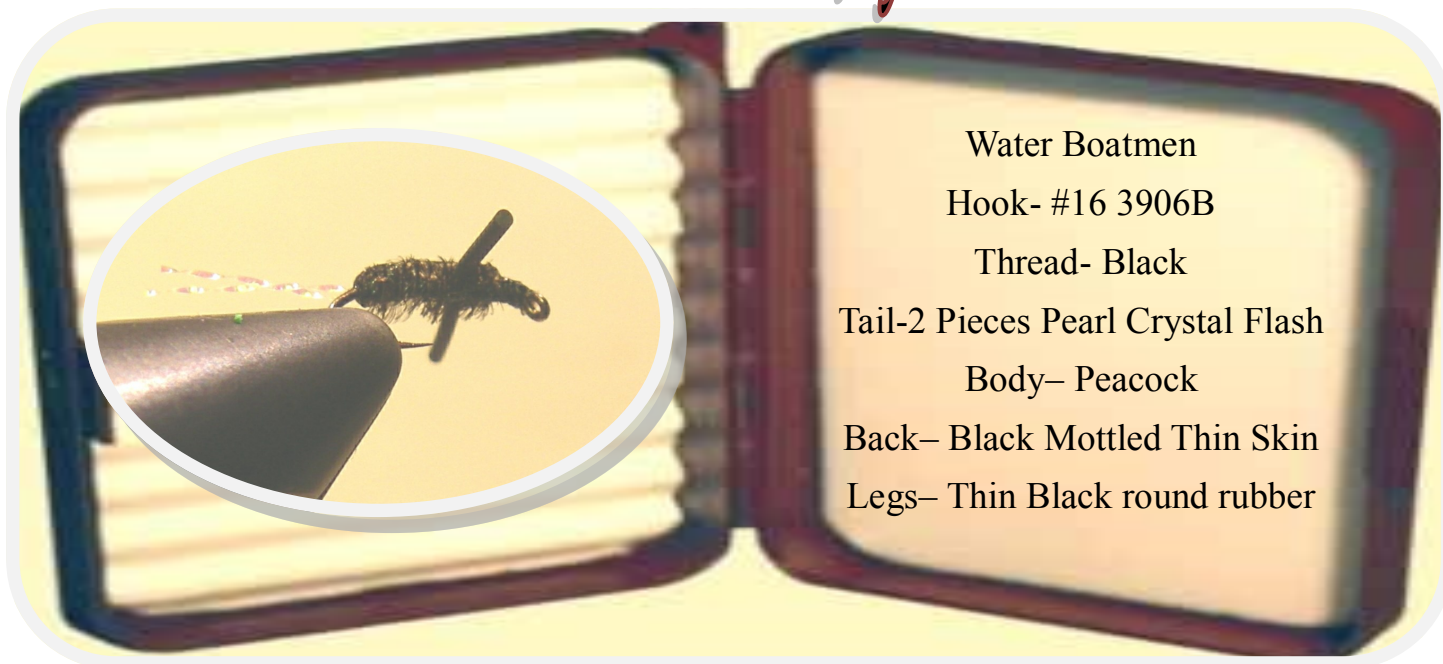
My Dad woke up Saturday morning at 5:30 AM and walked the 1/8 mile down the camp road to the main bathroom/showers. He was surprised by a black bear on top of the roof of a red pickup truck. The bear crouched down in the bed of the truck and played peek-a-boo with my dad. He made a wide detour around the bear and continued on his way. There were a few people near the bathroom and my Dad told them about the bear. One of them indicated that he came nose to nose with the bear earlier in the morning when he exited one of the out-houses. Apparently, the guy who owns the red pickup truck had a large plastic container full of food including sweet bread in the bed of the pickup truck. The bear got into the truck the day before we arrived. The bear was obviously back for more. Later on Saturday morning, the warden set up a bear trap two campsites down from us. The bear ignored the trap and went back to the pickup truck Saturday night and Sunday morning. The

warden had the bright idea to park the pickup truck next to the bear trap. The owner agreed and sure enough the bear went into the trap Sunday afternoon, pulled all the goodies out and then finally grabbed the bucket in the back causing the door to close. He was over 300 lbs. They carted him off and set him loose miles away, but I'm sure he'll be back.

(To be continued in November)



Dick Wemmell's Fly Box



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Half day guided trip in Alaska

By John Springer

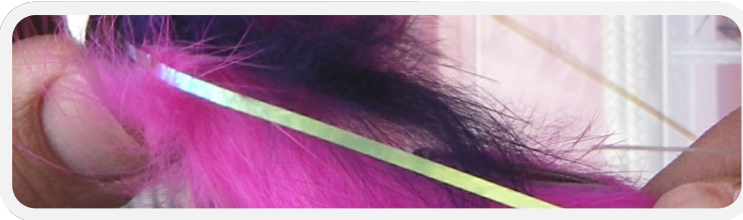
Perhaps you have heard about the 5 species of salmon in Alaska most have, this is a short story about my brief trip. In August I took my wife there for a trip of a life-time. We almost got killed but that's another story. During our brief stay I took a half day guided trip out of our lodge at Mt. McKinley. It was just as I expected it to be. They bused us to Talkeetna, a very small nice town with old time flavor nothing like Anchorage. The fellow who runs Kahiltan Bistro right across the street from where the bus drops you, does a great job running a fishing business as well as dog sledding excursion and his restaurant (which is top shelf), more on that later.

We got there a bit early so we got some lunch fresh Halibut sandwich, about half what they gouge you for in Anchorage. The owner took me and my fishing partner Jerry to a place about 15 minutes away where we met our guide, Buddy. Buddy served several tours in Afghanistan and decided he wanted to make a living doing what other people do for fun. He now guides fishing sports and does it well. Jerry was a spin fishermen so he set him up, then rigged a 8 wt. rod for me with a Dolly Lama fly. He does his own tying and was a bit reluctant to give me the fly I used to catch my fish because of some changes he had made in its design. I assured him I would

if he and his wife wanted to eat it they were welcome to it, so he stored the fish in our raft. We had been taken to the spot to fish in a power boat with the raft tied down in the bow. Buddy rowed us down river on the way back while we enjoyed the scenery. When we got back to where we started he told me that they would cook my fish at the Kahiltan Bistro, so I took 2 nice fillets back for Jerry and I and true to his word they welcomed



us in with our own fish. The chef cooked it up along with side dishes and we enjoyed my first silver salmon about 2 hours after I caught it. Buddy's future wife works in the restaurant and she and the rest of the people were great to me kidding around and making my day of fishing very memorable. If you are going to Alaska for a cruise and your spending anytime in Denali at the lodge I would highly recommend doing this give them a call or write them to set it up. 907-733-3355 or email at fish@talkeetnafishingguides.com www.talkeetnafishingguides.com



not share it but let's just say the fly never fouled while I fished it and in 3 ½ hours I hooked about 15 fish and landed 10 of them. My first fish was a big chum salmon on my first cast. They do fight well and are not half dead by any means. We were fishing the Clear River that went into the Talkeetna River. This river like many, runs cloudy and grayish with glacial run off. The fish are there but they can't see your lure or fly so you must have a clear stream to have success. I did notice one thing, I was the only fly fishermen out of a group of about 14 anglers and flies worked much better than lures. After an hour or so I hooked and lost a silver salmon but then caught one. It jumped and gave a different fight than the chum salmon. Buddy came over to help me land it and asked if I wanted it. I said no as I was going back to the lodge via bus and had no way of cooking it. But I said



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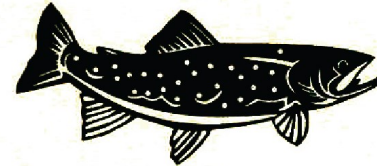


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Lines & Leaders

The Newsletter of The Connecticut Fly Fisherman's Association

SAVE THE DATE

Monthly Board meeting November 5th 7PM
at Club House

Monthly meeting October 8th 7PM

UPCOMING EVENTS

Arts of Angler Show Nov. 15-16

Ethan Allen Inn Danbury

Jersey Fishing Show Jan. 23-25

Garden State Convention Center Somerset NJ



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