

An Outdoorsman's View On The River

by Mike LaDue, Contributing Writer

Sunday, Sept. 11, 2016

We had a whirlwind week. Visitors came to the cabin to get in one last taste of the summer season. An old friend who wanted to fish contacted me. I knew it would be a chore to take him out in my little boat, so I set up a fishing charter. Brian and I exchanged numerous texts prior to his arrival. He could not contain his excitement. We were going to fish a section of the river where he had not fished before. One of our favorite guests also made the trip to see us with her parents. Yes, our little princess spent the weekend spreading joy and happiness. It took little coercion to convince her family to join us on the fishing charter. Who wouldn't want to spend a day on the river! I contacted

Brian one last time to make sure he would be comfortable adding others to the outing. "Sure thing, the more the merrier; it will be fun!"

At 7 a.m. we met Captain Dave Cortright (a member of the Alexandria Bay Guides Association) for our morning adventure. He handed our princess a fishing rod as we began the first drift. "Chloe, all you have to do is hold the rod like this and make sure that you feel the bottom." The rig went down and Dave turned around to set up another rig.

Chloe said, "I think I have something!" Sure enough the youngest inexperienced angler held a bent rod in her small hands. Dave swung around for a net, while helping Chloe hold onto the rod. Aww... the smile on her face was evident that the day was already a

huge success!

That was not the only smallmouth she caught. As a matter of fact, she caught the majority of fish. Brian said, "I can't believe I'm being out fished by a third grader!"

Chloe caught so many that she took several breaks... as we all vied for her spot in the boat. Each and every one of us caught at least two nice bass, and lost a few, too. Everyone marveled at the river's beauty from Alexandria Bay to Chippewa Bay. It was a perfect morning. Captain Dave catered to us like a concierge at a fancy hotel. He was polite, concise and personable. We ended up keeping six bass. Captain Dave took photographs of us with our catch and then filleted them. I'd make proper use of those fillets in my smoker later in the week.

Saturday I stoked up the smoker to cook a batch of baby back ribs. Smoking requires time and patience. While we waited we all took a dip in the river. Our little princess was adamant, "We have to go swimming, come on everyone... to the river!" Chloe was the first in and she had a blast. It was almost too much fun to watch her having fun. "Dad and Pa-Due, you have to come in, too." As soon as we got wet she decided it was too cold to stay in. She snuck out to get warm in the sun on the dock. Their visit ended too soon on Sunday afternoon. Chloe doled out huge hugs before leaving. The big difference this time was the lack of tears as she left, much to our delight. Our little princess is maturing quickly.

The second big event on Sunday was over to my neighbor Ed's house. He invited my bride and me to his annual chowder-rama. A big pot of fish chowder brewed alongside a pile of toasted cheese sandwiches. Various side salads and desserts covered another table. We spent the afternoon eating with delightful company. Many we had not seen all summer as is always the case. We all had families to welcome to the river and the summer season is always too short. Ed and I chatted about fishing. "How about we get out and catch some perch? I'll take a day off of work and we will put on a search for perch." He agreed. I look forward to getting my first ride in his classic wood beauty 'Miss Sue.' Perhaps there will be a story to share relating to our trip...

September has turned on the perch in this end of the river. I caught 11 keepers on Monday, eight on Tuesday and 33 yesterday. What began as a walleye hunt turned into the best perch outing of the season. I motored across the river to the Ironman under a starlit sky at 5 a.m. One other boat was there when I arrived fishing the interior bay. I dropped a worm tipped bucktail and leaned back to admire the sky. It was a clear morning for star gazing. A breeze blew from the south making for a quick drift. I made several under the stars with no success on the walleye. Dawn emerged cascading a shimmer of light, devouring the stars. I switched up to a rod with a diving plug and trolled. Another boat came to the marker and trolled, too. I trolled toward the sun to the east as the sun rose over Carleton Island. A freighter, American Mariner, passed in the channel shortly thereafter.

After the ship waves subsided I motored downriver to jig for perch. A bit after 8 a.m. I caught a scrappy perch and then another. My goal was a dozen then it changed to 20 and then increased to 30. I had such a good time catching perch on the ultralight rod. Every now and again a rock bass came along and then a small largemouth. I caught more rockies than I have in the last 10 years combined! The largemouths ranged in size from 3-8 inches. Smallmouth bass were also taking my jig. I caught and released several of them in the same (size) range. What amazes me most about the day was the fact that I caught them all on an old worn-out Berkley minnow. Well more than 100 fish came to the boat on that jig. It is ready for the next trip, too. It just goes to show you that on days when a feeding frenzy occurs, anything will work. I ended the week with a scotch over seven pounds of fresh perch fillets.

A good shower occurred while I was filleting perch yesterday. My boat got a much needed rinsing. I took advantage of the wet soil in our raised beds to pull the melon plants and sow some seed for fall. I planted a row of radishes and a row of spinach. My yellow beans are about to blossom and I'm excited to see the results. The weather has been conducive for their success. By late afternoon I took a swim just ahead of a storm. While I was neck deep in the river I watched dark clouds roll overhead and heard booming in the distance. I dried off and went to the boathouse deck. Oh what a show I saw! Lightning streaked downward over Canada through the clouds, to the islands. Even with the sun gone the sky was fully illuminated. Lapping waves caressed my ears almost causing me to slumber right there on the deck next to the river. A quick rain shower perked me up and drove me back into the cabin for another evening. I needed rest, to prepare for the oncoming week and all of the adventure it holds...

Mike LaDue is a Cape Vincent resident who observes and writes about river life. To contact him email: outdoorsman@twcny.rr.com.



Over 100 fish on an old jig



Saturday morning perch



Chloe in the river



American Mariner Saturday morning



Sailboat passing Carleton Island



Sunrise over Carleton Island



Freighter passing Wolfe Island



Fishing charter gang



Captain Dave with one of our bass

Mike LaDue photos



On your feet all day?

Do you experience leg discomfort, pain or swelling?
Do you have varicose veins?

Dr. Kiri Brandy, general surgeon, and River Hospital is hosting a FREE vein screening event:

Thursday, September 29, 2016 4:30-7:00pm
Urban Nature Spa & Salon
159 Mullin Street | Watertown, NY 13601

Call (315) 393-3194 to learn more and schedule an appointment!





Holland Street, Alex Bay NY
(315) 482-2526 - 1-800-955-4511


Inside and Outside Winter Storage
Available, but selling fast
Please Call for Availability
CALL US For Your Winter Storage Needs


Winterizing & Shrinkwrapping
Call For Quotes
800-955-4511
315-482-2526
Ask For Norm or Carol

PRE-SEASON SPECIAL






LASER 300



LASER 560


LASER 730

VENT KIT INCLUDED





EX-22


ES-38

VENT KIT INCLUDED

OFFER EXPIRES 12-1-16

OUR RATES ARE LOWER THAN OTHER COMPETITORS
Full Service Dealer with products in Stock
Monitor Parts & Service Still Available
MONITOR



703 Brooks Dr. Clayton
315-686-2160
Serving the 1000 Islands region