

Some are just born fishermen

First of all, let me tell you, I'm no fisherman.

Oh sure, I used to throw a hook in the creek in the back forty when I was a kid, but that's the extent of my experience.

That is, until Labor Day weekend.

My four daughters had been at me to take them fishing and I admit, I was getting the bug myself. After a couple of practice runs on Fairy Lake, we were ready to head to the fisherman's heaven; the Bruce Peninsula.

We set the canoe into the Sauble River and the three older girls decided to fish from the bank. I have a feeling it was something about them not wanting to be seen with me while wearing my hat, but I'm not sure. Anyway, my wife and I took our youngest and paddled in the quiet river to a secluded spot upstream from the bridge.

"This looks good," I said knowingly, "I'm sure the big ones are in here." After all, if I were a fish, it's the place I would want to be.

"Sure dear," echoed my wife, "Give it your best shot." She sounded sarcastic.

I fumbled and fought with the worm as it wriggled away from the hook and finally got the fat little critter on the hook, wriggling and ready for action.

A layer of weeds rested between me and the open water and I cast the unhappy worm out into the water. Kerplunk! Splash.

"Hmmm, not too bad a cast for a beginner," I congratulated myself.

I waited. Nothing. Not a nibble.

Again I cast out, and again, nothing.

I reeled the hook in slowly, thinking this river was making me look like an idiot to my wife and kid, so once again I cast out and slowly reeled it back in.

The sun warmed my back and I had sleepy thoughts while the light sparkled off the river and the birds chirped in the trees above. I could have easily dozed off.

Then it happened.

The rod lunged to life, and I gripped it tightly to prevent the thing from slipping through my fingers. The drag on the reel started clicking and my wife suddenly became interested.

"What is it?" she queried, "Gawd, it's bending the rod right down."

A TED BIT

By TED BROWN



I didn't bother telling her I didn't have a clue, but it felt like it would drag the canoe away. I had visions of waterskiing up the river powered by some monster fish, towed by three-pound test line.

It was at this moment my nephew paddled by.

I might add my nephew is 16 years of age and loves to fish. He is up on all the latest lures, baits, techniques and equipment involved in fishing. Beside him, I'm a fishing illiterate.

"Watcha doin' Uncle Ted?" he questioned with a smirk, "Catch a tree? Or some weeds?" More smirks followed.

I will be eternally grateful to that fish for giving the line a hellish yank at that precise moment. Perfect timing. It almost shook the teeth out of my head.

"Wow!" he yelled, "What have you got on there anyway?"

Translation: "How on earth did my non-fisherman uncle ever hook something like that?"

I had to remain cool.

"Oh some little fella, I guess," I replied nonchalantly, "Probably a throw-back."

Again the fish yanked the line and this time broke the water surface as well.

That was too much. My nephew had to see what was on the line.

He and his brothers paddled furiously over to my canoe as I hauled in the biggest bass I've ever

caught. Maybe it wasn't big to some, but it was to me. Like I said, I'm no fisherman.

It measured about 13 inches and after the initial shock wore off my nephew regained his composure and muttered something about "beginners' luck." He begrudgingly paddled away grumbling about "leaving his fishing gear at home this weekend."

But the real fun started when we got back to my older daughters.

They had lost a hook, line and sinker, several worms and generally had a run of bad luck. All they had done was feed minnows.

My wife and I paddled up to them as they complained about "no fish in this river."

I uncovered the bass in the bottom of the canoe.

With eyes like platters, they suddenly decided it was time to fish from the canoe.

Back to the same spot, and they tried their luck, and you guessed it, they drew a blank. Not a nibble.

Our fishing weekend wasn't a total loss. Two daughters caught a couple of bass themselves, but they kept reminding me they weren't as big as mine.

But I told them. It's simple. You have to know technique, the ways of the fish, proper bait and have all sorts of instinct.

Let's face it. Some people are born fishermen.

And others are just plain lucky.

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