

Valley Angler Casting for Boy Scouts by Bill Thompson

This past week has been a very busy one. With the official end of trout season this Sunday Janet and I have been trying to cram in as much fishing as we possibly can. However, I did take some time away from fishing this past week to participate in a couple of events that did not include actual fishing, but non the less just as important.

The first event was at the Fryeburg Fair; tying flies at the Fiber Center. For the second year in a row I was asked by the Center's director Gale Yohe to tie. As one might expect most of the exhibitors are engaged in weaving or spinning of some kind. Well, for the one thousands time flies are tied with fibers and a great many of these fibers come from the same natural sources as used in weaving and spinning. This year I tied some large salt water streamer flies made from yak hair and rams wool. O.K. I cheated a little and used a synthetic fiber to complete the fly, but I don't think anyone was wise to what I was doing. This year the Center had a mens day and several other gentlemen took part. As usual I had a great time and hope that they ask me back next year.

The second event was held this past weekend at T. L. Storer Scout Camp in Barnstead, New Hampshire. To back up a bit, last year I was asked by the Federation Of Fly Fishermen to head up a project devoted to linking up Boy Scout Councils with Federation members for fly casting and fly tying clinics. As you may know the FFF was instrumental in developing the fly fishing merit badge for the scouts. Last spring the Federation held a very successful event at the West Point Military Academy. At this event Cadets and Federation members held fly casting clinics for over a thousand kids. This winter the Federation will be hosting fly tying seminars at just about every major fishing show in New England. Our event at Camp Storer was a little smaller than the West Point event, but not by much. Camp Storer is owned by the Minute Man Council of Boston. There were well over 600 hundred scouts in attendance as well as up to 400 adult councilors and staff. I think that during the two days that were there we had as many as 200 scouts come by for casting instruction. These kids were from Cub Scout age all the way up to Explorers. We even had a number of the adult leaders stop by for a quick lesson.

It would be hard to describe how much fun I had doing this. I gave up a chance to take a drift boat trip Sunday and as much as I would have liked to have gone I would not have missed this event for anything. The minute I walked onto the camp ground I was flooded with the memories of my own Scouting days. Hundreds of excited kids were assembling

their camping gear and registering for the weekend. I was given a staff ID lanyard and was hauled off in a golf cart to the site for the casting event. All along the camp roads troops were walking to their designated camp site; I must admit I had a lump in my throat as I was transported back 45 years ago. It did not take a lot of imagination to envision the faces of boyhood friends embarked on the same road. Needless to say I had a great time and I think we may have found a few future fly fishermen. Both of these events were fun, but more important, maybe in some small way I just might have pushed the right buttons and a new fishermen was born. Sad to say fishing is not a growing sport and anything that any of us can do to encourage others to join us is of the upmost importance to the future. I would urge any hunter or fishermen to seek out a club or organization that seeks to promote our sport to others. A good start for any local angler would be to join your local Trout Unlimited Chapter. Please feel free to call me should you be interested. I would also offer the invitation to any local Boy Scout Troop or Cub Scout Pack to call me should they have any interest in putting together some kind of fly fishing program.

See You on the river.