

Valley Angler Summer Reading by Bill Thompson

By now most of you should have completed your required summer reading list. I know that some of you have probably procrastinated to the point of no return. If you don't mind I would like to add one more book to your list. I am sure that I just heard a collective sigh from all of you. The good news is that you are going to want to read this book.

The title of this book is *Catamount* by local author Rick Davidson of Freedom. As readers of this column well know Rick is a long time fishing buddy and has been mentioned here on more than one occasion. As you might suspect fly-fishing does have a place in the book. Most Valley residents will probably know Rick as the former proprietor of Rick Davidson's Photography Shop in Conway. Some of his former students at Kennett may also remember him as well as his current students at Kingswood.

You don't have to be a fisherman to appreciate this book, however, if you love northern New Hampshire, have an interest in local Indian lore and love a good mystery this is a must read.

As you might guess from the title, the story revolves around a rouge catamount that is terrorizing the North Country of New Hampshire. A catamount is, of course, a wildcat or a panther long since removed from New England, unless of course you believe the rumors that circulate from time to time in the North Country.

Interwoven into the story is an old Abenaki curse that is loosely based on the story of Metallak "The Lone Indian of the Magalloway". The story of Metallak is one of the more intriguing stories of the North Country. I rarely ever fail to make the pilgrimage to his grave in Stewartstown when on my way home from fishing the Connecticut River.

The main characters in the story are Ed and Marty Rollins, their two young children, Cindy and Josey and their heroic dog Virgil. The local Conservation Officer, Rob Schurman also plays a vital role. I might add, in all modesty, that a character based very loosely on myself makes a cameo appearance. I am not sure that it is all that flattering a mention as I am referred to as the "OLD GUY" that owns the fly shop in town. All I can say, Rick is just waiting until I write my first novel.

Without giving up to much of the plot the catamount runs amuck, the children get lost in the swamp and most of the North Woods become engulfed in a raging forest fire.

I just got my copy a few days ago and I am still reading it. I had the pleasure of reading an early draft a couple of years ago and I am having just much fun rereading it now as the first time. Aside from the fact that Rick is an old friend this is a good read and should be added to your summer reading list. This may be the perfect "beach book". Like I said if you like a good mystery with a lot of local lure this is the book for you. It doesn't hurt if you like to fish too.

I know that the book is available at White Birch Books in North Conway; one of my favorite places in town. We should have it at the shop by the end of next week as well.

On a more personal note, Janet and I will be out of town this weekend attending the wedding of the year. Our son Andy will be getting married this Saturday to Meaghan Sheehan of Hampton, New Hampshire. Needless to say the Thompson's are pretty excited at the prospect of adding Meg to the family. We think she is a pretty good kid and a good match for our boy. As the wedding is being held at Rye Beach State Park there may even be a little striper fishing thrown in for good measure. Nate will be running the shop so if you need anything stop by.

See you on the river.