

# Valley Angler

## The Season Past

by Bill Thompson

By the time this column is printed there will only be a couple of days left before Christmas day. Most of us will be caught up in the last minute rush in preparation for the holiday. In our haste to have a perfect Christmas it may not be a bad idea to take a little time out for yourself and reflect on the previous year. My suggestion is to get a good fire going in the fire place. Pour yourself a good scotch or bourbon or maybe a well crafted micro brew; you know the line, "One scotch, one bourbon and one beer". Pull up a comfortable chair, relax, stare into the fire and reflect a little on all the great fishing you enjoyed last season. It might help to bring out a favorite old reel or fly box to focus on while you enjoy this personal moment. Lets call it a Christmas present to your inner-self.

My season kicked off in April, as usual, at my favorite trout pond. The fishing was a little poor this spring, but it was good to see old friends again. Janet and I particularly enjoyed fishing from our pontoon boats: The Rachel and the Pequod.

The season really didn't kick into high gear until June when we enjoyed some phenomenal fishing on what I consider to be my home river the Saco. This was the first year in sometime that we had the good fortune to have good mayfly hatches, favorable water levels and big fish all at the same time.

We were able to enjoy some great fishing this past year on the Androscoggin as well. My first trip was a drift boat trip with my good friends Rick and Pat Gerber. I came down with a miserable cold, but we all caught some very nice trout. It's hard sometimes to know that you are having a good time when you're setting on the ground, in a cold rain, shivering in your waders and your sinuses are draining into your coffee. This is the stuff that memorable trips are made of, especially if one or two good trout come to net.

I also enjoyed a couple of wading trips on the Androscoggin with some new friends this year. It was fun to share the river with a couple of new guys who had never fished the river before. As many times as I have fished the Andro I always learn something new or find a piece of river that I have never fished before. With a little luck I hope that I get to spend more days on the river with these fellows this coming season.

Had one heck of a day on Mountain Pond this past July. An old friend and I spent the morning fishing from our float tubes. That morning rivaled my best day of fishing in Labrador. We did manage to get together one more time and this time we made the trip over to Maine to fish the Magalloway River. This time our luck didn't hold and we came away skunked.

Speaking of old fishing buddies, one of my favorites was out of action this year. He has been through a lot this year but he seems to be on the mend. Perhaps next season we can wet a line

together again. I think the Rapid River would be a good place, but I would settle for an evening on the Saco.

I guess the one disappointment is that we never got a chance to fish the salt this year. We had plenty of offers, but never had the time. But this, of course is why we have next season. So while you're reflecting on the past year start thinking about next year as well.

Janet, Summer and I hope that your last season was the best ever and that next season will be even better. We all wish you a very Merry Christmas and that next year will truly bring peace on earth and good will to all men.

See you on the river.