

Welcoming Dave Graybill To The Nickel Ads Classifieds

The Fishin' Magician

One of my favorite days of the year is Father's Day. I seldom get out fishing with my Dad, Dave Graybill, and my brother Rick, all three of us together. Every Father's Day weekend for years and years we have managed to take the day and go fishing somewhere. We went on Saturday this year. Last year we showed up for the family get together a little late, so to avoid the scolding we fished the day before.

This year we decided to try Billy Clapp Lake, which is east of Soap Lake. We had heard of some big kokanee coming from the lake. In fact my wife Eileen and I had caught some last summer. Both my father and brother Rick hadn't been to the lake for many years, and since the kokanee fishing at Lake Chelan was so poor, Billy Clapp seemed worth a try.

We hit a great day to be on the water. The wind was very moderate, and it never got too warm. The fishing never got hot either. Both my brother Rick and I have our Two Pole Endorsement Stamp, so we were able to offer the fish quite an array of different baits. We stacked lines on our riggers, and ran one line out with a snap weight. We figured we had every type of kokanee lure out there and had all the depths covered.

The fish weren't all that impressed with our efforts, however. We missed a few hits, lost a couple of kokanee near the boat and landed one small rainbow. One of the fish we lost near the boat confirmed what we had heard—there are some really big kokanee in Billy Clapp. We vowed to return later this summer in hopes of happening onto a better bite. The photo accompanying this week's column is of the three of us showing the size of "the one that got away".

One of the things that struck me about this particular Father's Day adventure was that we had probably the slowest day of fishing for these annual outings, but had one of the best times. Maybe because we weren't busy hooking and landing fish we had more time to just talk. I know that if the fishing is slow, I usually get pretty wound up. My wife Eileen has to suffer through the periods of sullen resolve while I tear through my tackle boxes trying to find "the answer".

This is one of the first times that it just didn't seem to matter. The day flew by while we chatted, laughed and snacked. It was very relaxing and well, just plain fun, even though we didn't have a bunch of fish to show for our efforts. What a great day.

I imagine many of you are checking the dam counts every day. Summer-run Chinook are making their way upstream and the Columbia River is going to be full of them. The forecast for this year's return is 88,800 and that is a whole lot of fish. Last season we got just over 30,000 summer-runs over Priest Rapids Dam. If we get half the number of fish that are expected this season, we will still have 10,000 more fish than we did last year!

I would start making preparations right now. If you wait you'll be wasting time standing in lines at your local tackle shop, and whenever a big return like this one is anticipated dealers just flat run out of things by the opening of the season on July 1st.

There will be a good crowd of anglers out

on the Upper Columbia on opening day. The stretch "between the bridges" in Wenatchee will be full of boats well before daylight. There will be a few boats below Wells Dam, and probably even more fishing the Brewster Pool, off the mouth of the Okanogan River.

One of the main focal points in the early summer-run season will be right below Wanapum Dam. I have been the guest of Shane Magnuson, of Upper Columbia Guide Services, here for the past couple of opening days. We have always been blessed with clear skies for the opener, but last year we had some pretty good wind and some fierce currents in the big eddy below the dam.

Boat handling was a real challenge and there were some near misses while navigating through the fleet. It didn't happen to us, but there were some tangled lines, some gear lost, and unfortunately a few fish lost due to the congestion. It won't stop us from being down there again, though. We caught some dandy, bright and feisty kings that morning.

Before the opening of salmon season arrives, there are a couple of things coming up that would be of high interest to area sportsmen. The first of which is the arrival of the Winchester traveling show at Hooked on Toys in Wenatchee on Friday and Saturday, the 25th and 26th. Similar to the Berkley Experience that vis-



ited here a couple of weeks ago, the Winchester group will have a bunch of shooting products on display, some real experts to talk to, and I suspect some really deep deals on their products, too. I understand that Shane Magnuson will also be presenting a seminar on fishing for summer-run salmon on Saturday at 11 a.m.

The following weekend, High Mountain Hunting and Fishing Supply is going to have some real bass experts in town. Read and listen to my reports and next week's column for more details on this.

The best weather of the season is on its way, so get out fishing and enjoy it!

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