

FISHING BUDDIES*by Kevin Brennen*

We all have and love them, Fishing Buddies. This will be one of the guys that you wouldn't think twice about calling at three o'clock in the morning to see if he can call in sick to work because your wife gave you a kitchen pass for the day to go fishing. I have come up with four basic types of buddies with some falling into two categories.

Techno Buddy: This will be the guy that reads everything that was ever published about the sport. He has every new gadget, rod, reel, line, and fly that is on the market today because that old stuff couldn't possibly catch a fish. He is more than willing to tell you how to fish even if he spends more time getting ready to fish than he does spend actually casting. He will also have a pack on that contains a GPS, satellite phone, Laptop(to get the latest reports on the river he is fishing), and a PDA to take note on what you are doing wrong so that he can help you later. It is always a good idea to bring him along so that you can use his phone to call and order pizzas just make sure you know the closest mile marker so that you can tell them where to deliver it.

Stream Hog Buddy: This guy can provide much entertainment if you know how to correctly use him. He is a creature that can not watch anybody catch a fish without crowding them right out of their spot. Now to use him to his fullest it will require some knowledge of the steam that you are fishing. You don't have to worry about the hog they will blindly walk into what ever they think is holding fish. You start by calling out all the strikes that it takes to get him to move over to the bank that you are fishing. Now this sound odd but what you are doing is sending in a flushing dog. Into the deep holes, bad stickup and places that you don't want to walk. This will push fish out in front of you and given you something to laugh at. Just make sure that he is wearing a PFD.

Do Anything Buddy: This will be your buddy that can catch fish in a mud puddle. But he will throw or do what ever it takes to catch fish. He will be the guy that you fish with that carries five or six rods, three monster tackle boxes, cast net and a fifty pound fly vest. You know that them worms aren't light. The way he looks at it if the bait flies through the air it must be Fly Fishing.

Fishin Buddy: This will be the guy that I most enjoy fishing with. He is just a good guy to fish with you really don't care if you catch fish but if you do his is always bigger regardless what the rulers said. You are able to talk about what is every on your mind and not just fishing. This will be a buddy that would do anything for you except give you his last super special fly that he has been kicking your butt with all day. This is the guy that everyone likes to fish with and the one that we should all try to be a little more like.

Without fishing buddies it just won't be that great of a sport. Remember to never go fishing alone, it would be pretty damn boring.

rites of winter*by Mark England*

The holidays are over and it's time to get back to what's really important – fishing. No, I don't mean ice fishing. I hope I've got more sense than that. I mean getting ready for next season! This is the time to get to know your kids again. Introduce yourself to your wife. And pay some dues, because if you're a real fisherman, you probably have a long list of overdue chores. Catching up in January and February can free valuable time in the spring. I guess that means I ought to think about raking those leaves and putting the mower away.

I like to start my winter fishing rites with an inventory of my tackle – what rusted, cracked, fell apart, disappeared, or otherwise went to its reward? Doubtless, my inventory of flies has fallen below \$1000 and I'm really pretty sure a 7 wt. rod is needed to fill the gap between my 6 and my 8 wt. If Santa wasn't good to you and your wife didn't get you a Winston because she knows you don't smoke, it's time to spend a few hours with a stack of tackle catalogs.

Certainly, the old tackle deserves a good cleaning and inspection. Rod guides get bent feet and cracked inserts. Cork handles look like new after a little soap and water. Reels can be a bit of a challenge, but fly reels are easier than casting or spinning reels. Probably the best place to start is with the phone number of someone who can replace that tiny screw or spring you're going to lose. I like Dave's Parts and Service, (727) 942-8944 or www.fishingreelparts.com. They've got it all including rod components. I won't detail the how-to's of reel cleaning here, but it's not that hard and should be done at least annually.

January's a good time for resolving to improve your skills in the coming season. NKFF has a class for you if you want to learn to tie flies or build a rod or even make your own wooden landing net. We've probably got members who can teach you that side-arm double-haul into-a-hurricane cast, but I'm not one of them. It was one of my own resolutions - to learn to fly fish - that brought me into the club. This year I'm going to try to learn something about striped bass fishing.

I'll also make my annual pilgrimage to the fishing show in Cincinnati. I know it's call the Hart Sports, Travel, and Boat show, but it's the fishing show to me. Check out the latest and greatest. See those big boats that somebody buys. Mostly, I like to hit some of the travel booths. I come away with a sack full of brochures and dreams of pristine waters and a fish every cast. I try to plan my fishing trips for the year in January. Some will be with the club, some will be in conjunction with the family vacation, and some will be with my non-fly fishing buddies. Maybe this is the year I'll take that Canadian fly-in trip or make it to the Boundary Waters for that big smallmouth. Dream vacations don't cost you a penny.

Planning those great trips is the way to make them happen and a well spent winter will leave your tackle ready for that first warm day.