

Locals guide you can trust this fishing season

I used to be anti-guide. I thought I knew enough that I didn't need to fork over my hard-earned money to obtain the expertise of a professional guide. Over the years, I have learned the error of my foolish ways.

I'd go on a Wisconsin vacation for a week and stubbornly stick to my feeling that I was good enough not to need any assistance. The first couple of days would be very tough as I investigated the lake I was based on, with a map in hand, looking for prospective hot spots.

By Day 3, I'd start to catch a few fish. That kept up until Day 5, when I finally put things together so I could do pretty well for the last couple of days of my week's vacation. If I hadn't been too darned stubborn to hire a guide the first day, I would have probably been catching copious amounts of fish every day of the week, rather than beating the water to death with little to no results.

Now that I've figured things out about guides, I must urge you, wholeheartedly, to make use of the knowledge and talents of a professional guide.

Every year, I publish an updated list of the guides I like and hope, if you use any of them, it will be a memorable experience for you. Here are some of the guides I like within a short driving distance of our area:

- Spence Petros guides on Delavan and Geneva in May and June. Petros is the best fisherman around and can teach you so much in a day on the water in his boat that it is definitely worth the price. He tells me he is totally booked, and it doesn't surprise me. He is the absolute best. The man is a Hall of Famer, and you can call him at 815-455-7770 to put your name on his list if he gets any cancellations.

- Speaking of Delavan and Geneva, Carl Kaufmann of the Carl Kaufmann Guide Service is a close second to Petros. Kaufmann has stopped actively seeking new clients, but it's worth the call to see if he can squeeze you in on a cancellation. The man is a true gentleman and one of the best human beings on the water. He always catches fish, too. Call him at 815-245-4615.

- Chris Taurisano runs "T-Bone Guide Service" and is the man to call if you are interested in fishing the Fox Chain O' Lakes. Taurisano, who does the Chain fishing report for me right here every week, has attracted quite a large following. He knows the Fox Chain as well as any guide on the water, and if you are looking to do battle with a Chain trophy muskie, Taurisano is the guy to book. Call Chris at 630-330-9090 or go to www.tbonguideservice.com. Matt



OUTDOORS

Steve Sarley

Madlener, Lincoln Buchanan and Andy Schiera are the other members of the T-Bone Guide Service, and they are all top-notch. Walleyes, bass, panfish and muskies are some of the species they can out you on.

- My friend and co-host on our, "We Fish ASA" podcast, Dave Kranz from Dave's Bait, Tackle & Taxidermy is doing some guiding a few times a week. Kranz is a great teacher, and a half-day on Geneva, Vulcan Lakes in Crystal Lake or the Fox Chain will do wonders for your skills. You'll also catch a bunch of fish. Call him at 815-455-2040 or stop by his store.

- Phil Piscitello of Borderline Guide Service is a really good fisherman and guide. He spends his off-time studying the art of fishing, and he remembers everything. The guy is like a sponge when it comes to fishing information. He does a great job on the Fox Chain, Delavan and Geneva, along with lesser-known lakes. You can reach him at 847-638-7547 or by email at marbleyes66@yahoo.com.

- Mark O'Neill of www.structure-fishing.com is the best around when it comes to explaining and teaching all the intricacies of working with sonar and GPS. He also is one heck of a fisherman and catches huge smallmouth bass on Geneva on a regular basis. You can hire him to go out in your own boat, and he will instruct you in ways of using your sonar unit that you had no idea that it could do. He can also guide you to some prime bass spots. His number is 773-330-9702.

- Steve Everetts of Finseeker's Guide Service was my "go-to-guy" for Delavan and also has a lot of success on the Madison Chain. When I go out with Everetts, the results are always better than my expectations, which are high to begin with. He is a great guy to spend a day in the boat with. I've caught some of my best northern pike and largemouth bass from his boat. Give him a ring at 847-707-1827.

- Capt. Walt Koch of Red Rock Guiding Service states its mission as: To "assist you in catching fish; educate you about the latest fishing techniques; improve your fishing finding and catching skills; help you enjoy your day on the water." What more can I add to that? Walt is at www.redrockguidingservice.com or 847-710-5453.

- Pat Harrison is a fully insured captain who is one of the few guys who fishes in downtown Chicago on the Chicago River. If you want a mem-

orable trip that is unique, let him take you fishing in the shadows of Chicago's skyscrapers. Contact Harrison through www.patharrisonoutdoors.com or at 847-980-4640.

- Capt. Caleb Weiner is back again with his new boat at North Point Marina. This young man is a consummate professional and almost always sends his clients home with a cooler of tasty salmon fillets. He provides the Lake Michigan Fishing Report that you find here every week. I've had the pleasure of being on the Migrator and cannot recommend Weiner any more highly than I do. He can be found at www.migratorcharters.com or call 224-234-3704.

FISHING REPORT

Northern Illinois: Dave Kranz from Dave's Bait, Tackle & Taxidermy in Crystal Lake reports, "The dams at McHenry, Algonquin and Carpentersville are actually at low water levels. I am sure as soon as it rains, that will change. Some walleye, smallmouth bass and white bass are being caught on small spinners and crankbaits. A jig and minnow will work, too.

McHenry County Conservation has Lake Atwood. This is a put-and-take trout stocking lake. Use waxworms, Berkley Power trout bait or a spinner. You do need a trout stamp with your regular license to do this. Crystal Lake has Three Oaks Recreation Area. Some bass have been hitting Defender jigs, lipless crank baits and stick baits here. For more info on northern Illinois fishing, call 815-455-2040 for an updated report."

Fox Chain O' Lakes: Chris Taurisano of T-Bone Guide Service (www.tbonguideservice.com - 630-330-9090) sends word, "The Fox Chain has been great for panfish since ice out. Anglers are taking lots of crappies and gills on plastics and small hair jigs. Muskies are pre-spawn and we're getting a few nice fish. Walleyes are post-spawn and are a bit slow on jigs and minnows."

Lake Michigan: The Lake Michigan Fishing Report is provided by Capt. Caleb Weiner of Migrator Charters. "Fishing is finally here. With the unusual spring weather, it has been hard to get out on the water; however, for the few trips when the lake has calmed and the snow has stopped, fishing has been good. Some coho and numbers of lake trout have already started to make their way into our waters. Spin 'n Glos fished on the bottom with smoke-colored or chrome dodgers and little red dodgers with green Peanut flies seem to be doing the trick to start off the season. With any luck, the weather will break and the mother lode of cohos will be here

very soon."

NEWS AND NOTES

Ethanol fuel: With the Environmental Protection Agency moving toward permitting the sale of E15 (15% alcohol) fuels during the summer ozone season, Boat Owners Association of the United States is asking the EPA for an immediate halt of any expansion.

According to BoatUS, Ethanol in gas has proven to damage boat engines and fuel systems. Statistics show that if they had their choice of fuel, more than four out of five boat owners would choose ethanol-free fuel, if it was available. Because of the harm it causes, E15 is prohibited by federal law for use in recreational boat engines and voids many marine engine warranties.

BoatUS is asking recreational boaters to speak up now to stop the summertime sale of E15 and offers an easy way to contact the EPA by going to <http://bit.ly/2UyyMFV>.

Muskie tourney: From Fox River Valley Muskies President Dan Koniewicz, "The Fox River Valley Chapter would like to extend an invitation for you and a partner to fish the largest muskie tournament in Illinois. On Saturday, May 18, the FRV Chapter will be hosting our 24th annual 'Challenge on the Chain' Tournament. The tournament will be a one-day event held from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. The tournament will be followed by an awards presentation, dinner and a raffle held at the VFW in Antioch.

"The cost of the tournament is \$220 a boat. We are planning to pay out approximately 70% of the entry fees. Top 10 fishing boats will receive cash prizes. For information, please go to www.frvmuskie.com/ or call 847-682-9238.

"Mid-May can be a great time to fish the Fox Chain. The fish will be post-spawn and will be looking for some easy meals. Last year we had 70 boats registered for our tournament and 29 fish were caught.

"Proceeds from the Challenge on the Chain will be used to increase FRV's muskie stocking level for the Fox Chain. Last year FRV was able to fund stocking of 500 muskies into Chain, and we hope to beat that amount this year.

"Hopefully you can make our great event and enjoy some of the fun."

• Steve Sarley writes about the outdoors for *Shaw Media*. Write to him at sarfishing@yahoo.com. Steve does a weekly podcast about fishing called "WeFishASA." You can find it at www.wefishasa.com.