

OUTDOORS

TIMBER LINN PARK WHERE ANGLERS AND OSPREY SHARE THE TROUT

Henry Miller Special to the Statesman Journal

ALBANY – An osprey broke from a swirl of three companions, hovered about 20 feet above Timber Linn Lake, then locked in on its prey and dove with a loud, inelegant splat. • “She got one,” May Grillone said as the large raptor known as a fish hawk tried to take off with a smallish fish. • “Nope, dropped it,” Grillone said as the now-fishless osprey soared back to join the others to continue the search for a meal. • “That’s why we come here. It’s beautiful out here. We love it,” she said about fishing trips, weekly lately, with her companion, Colleen McCarthy, from their home in Jefferson.

▲ Neither rain, nor snow ... when the trout-stocking trucks roll during the winter, starting around Halloween, so do the anglers, as this snowy scene at Timber Linn Lake illustrates.

▼ May Grillone, front, and Colleen McCarthy of Jefferson are weekly visitors to Timber Linn Lake in Albany, with the birds, critters and the setting making for a delightful day. HENRY MILLER / SPECIAL TO THE STATESMAN JOURNAL



Both were comfortably ensconced in folding chairs, rods propped on holders. Grillone had a pair of binoculars in a case slung over the back of the chair that she occasionally took out to scope out the action.

Fishing for trout, Grillone and McCarthy were having about as much luck as the beleaguered bird.

The lake was scheduled to be stocked with 1,000 rainbow trout, but the truck apparently hadn’t arrived before the pair arrived.

Neither seemed to mind. The setting, and the birds, were entertaining enough until a trout showed up.

“Usually when you come here, there’s balds (bald eagles), or osprey, or golden eagles,” Grillone said.

From observation and experience, both rated the fishing prowess of the birds that frequent Timber Linn Lake.

“The osprey usually never catch anything, but the cormorants sure do,” McCarthy said. “They’ll just dive down there and come up with a trout.

“The bald (eagle) every once in a while will come down and perch in that tree right there,” she said, gesturing to a tall tree on the opposite bank. “And occasionally she’ll come up with something.”

Smiling, Grillone chimed in, “oh, the good

times.”

Among the avian anglers, she had to agree with McCarthy.

“Cormorants do pretty good out here, catch a lot of small fish, she said. “That’s a good sign, usually if there’s prey out here, little fish” there’s bound to be bigger fish.

McCarthy waxed philosophical about the early spring day, the wheeling birds of prey and the abundant but wary ducks, along with the budding and blooming trees.

“It’s relaxing, even if we don’t catch anything it’s still time out here watching wildlife,” she said, then smiled. “And there’s always the hope and chance that you might catch something, which adds to the excitement.

“We don’t come with any expectations that we’re going to catch anything. It’s just that’s what fishing people do.

“You’re going to sit, and you’re going to wait.”

And sometimes, like the splash and takeoff of one of the osprey across the lake with a fish, you get lucky.

“That’s a good sign,” Grillone offered.

So was the arrival of several other anglers, perhaps a portent of a stocking truck on the way.

According to the Oregon Department of Fish

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How fishing is passed from one generation to the next



Fishing
Henry Miller
Guest columnist

Like father, very much like sons.

“We were all into fishing really heavily,” Travis Sowers said about growing up in Keizer.

“Our father got us into fishing. He would carry us on his shoulders to these fishing ponds. That was the way he went.”

Brothers Travis, Mike and Ted, the latter named for their father, grew up with fishing rods in their hands.

“He would take all of his boys with him,” Travis said. “And we would go to all of these rivers and stuff.

“And he would go back and forth, taking us on his shoulders across these rivers trying to get to better fishing spots. So there were a lot of memories like that.

“It was unbelievable. I mean we went fishing every chance we were able to go, and we caught a lot of nice fish. And definitely had a nice childhood fishing”

The longtime apprenticeship turned the pastime into a passion for all of the brothers.

But nobody swallowed the hook

deeper than his brother, Ted, Travis said.

“Well, Ted would take off early in the morning, and he was only 10 to 12 years old, and he’d take off really early in the morning, and he wouldn’t come back until really late in the afternoons.”

He rambled and angled most of the fishable waters in and around Keizer, Travis recalled.

“Those ditches that run through McNary Golf Course and into Clear Lake, all of those. He’d walk all of those lakes, And he’d walk all of those ponds, all of those rivers.

“I tell you what, sometimes he would scare us because he’d be gone for 10 to 12 hours a day fishing.”

The brothers’ angling apprenticeships paid off big-time when Travis, the owner of Batteries Northwest in Salem, bagged a 21-pound, 5-ounce bull trout, less than 26 pounds off the state record, on March 26 at Lake Billy Chinook while fishing with Ted. You can read the full story online at First trip for bull trout on Lake Billy Chinook almost nets a record (statesmanjournal.com)

My phone interview with Ted for the big-trout story was something of a happy reunion.

I first learned about his fishing prowess more than a decade ago when he lived in Salem and worked for Travis at



Ted Sowers with a hefty largemouth more than a decade ago when he schooled me about bass fishing on the Willamette River. HENRY MILLER / SPECIAL TO THE STATESMAN JOURNAL

Batteries Northwest, with a side gig as Salem’s then-only bass guide.

Ted took me out for a story about slough fishing on the Willamette River, sort of an angling version of a Ted Talk. It was one of several memorable trips.

He was something of a largemouth

whisperer, pulling bruise after bruise from the backwater between Minto Brown Island Park and Riverfront Park.

So when Ted sent me a picture of Travis and himself with the monster bull trout, it was a welcome opportunity to reconnect, with a side of friendly ribbing.

I couldn’t resist commenting on his luxuriant beard.

As with all tales told by avid anglers, even about facial fur, there’s always a back story.

“No-shave November (a national fund-raising competition) started in October, and I just decided to grow it out. That’s the first time I ever grewed it out,” Ted said.

He didn’t make the top 25 on the national finishers ... but wait, there’s more.

“What’s funny is that we went to a Scottish party, and I got a pipe and glasses and one of those little (tam o’shanter) hats,” Ted said, then let loose with trademark, infectious laugh that he and Travis share. “And I ended up taking first place.”

Again, the laugh.

“No kilt. It was just from the waist up.”

I can’t wait to get together with both brothers the next time Ted’s in Salem

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