

# Traditions toward success

It was to be a clandestine plain-clothes operation by two fishery officers and supervisor Wally, big and very tall, at 6 foot 5. The hot, dry pine scented sage-brush winds of July, combined with the churning turbid waters of the Fraser River, held the early Stuart run of sockeye salmon. Word had it that a load of some of those fish were destined for a small village up the North Thompson, from Boston Bar. The operation went fairly well, and came to a suspense-filled conclusion involving a vehicle chase, search warrants, and seized product. We had booked into the Clearwater Hotel for the investigation. But there was something amiss. Next morning, as Wally and I sat down for breakfast in the bustling café, I casually asked him how he had slept. “Not well.” He explained. The reason involved a worn and aged T-shirt his loving wife had given him years before – he had forgotten it when he packed, and he couldn’t sleep without it. It really bugged him not to have worn it. Wally was not alone. We all have our superstitions, and outdoor folks are not any different. Whether it’s our old, lucky, weathered fishin’ hat, with the flies and lures attached, or the lucky lure or fly we resort to when the fish refuse to bite anything else we tantalize them with. But wait a minute! What about that special lure? Flatfish? Some work right out of the box, while others, battered and worn, scraped and scarred, catch fish consistently! Still others have a mind of their own. But back up a bit. There’s more. Ever notice that one special flatfish catches more trout all the time? Guides call it “hunt off center!” Made of wood, that special one works normally, then suddenly will veer off or wobble; this is caused by a hidden painted over knot or wood grain imperfection. Some of Bill Helen’s flatfish of years ago, had that ability! Professional guides will sometimes spend hundreds of hours casting dozens of lures to find that special, very precious “hunt off center” lure. They are priceless to some of us, holding a special spot in that ol’ rusting metal tackle box, passed down from Gramps!



Maybe it’s those worn old Rocky or Cabala’s brand boots we’ve used for many hunting seasons, now stored in the corner collecting dust. Or, those ol’ huntin’ socks. That one old cane rod, when that new one just don’t cut it! Those Stanfields wool hunting pants; the ones with worn patched knees we refuse to throw away despite our new Rocky camos. Some of us use a daily routine or ritual when going after the every elusive creatures of the depth, like starting the day before the dawn with that worn, favorite coffee mug we use every day in a holder in the truck, ready for anywhere there’s a Timmy’s or other coffee stop! Or, that lucky coin we always take along. Years ago, while prodding with an iron rod at an old mining site collecting antique bottles at Greenwood, I uncovered a small rusted tin box with Chinese coins – the ones with the square hole in the middle. One now hangs around my neck, and is rubbed for good luck before the hunt, as well as a prayer offered beside the truck, thankful for the day, the animals and the woods I hunt & fish in. “Kissing the handles of our fishing rods before heading out” is a ritual that Darryl, a biologist with DFO, said would bring us good luck. His dad taught him this when he was 7 years old back in Ontario. It is now being passed down through the generations.



No matter what you need to help ‘keep the faith’ or belief toward your successful outing, “Just stay true and keep doing it!”

# Society is not all about “the Selfie” – The generosity of the British Columbia fishing community is refreshing.

Your average Selfie frequently trigger perceptions of self-indulgence or attention-seeking social dependence that raises the damned-if-you-do and damned-if-you-don’t specter of either narcissism or low self-esteem. It conceptualizes the notion of a very ‘Self-ish’ society that is all about “every person for themselves” perception.

“If you worship money and things, if there is where you tap real meaning in life, then you will never have enough. Never feel you have enough. It is the truth.” – David Foster Wallace



That couldn’t be further from the truth when it comes to those who are truly connected to the natural world. When it comes to the fishing community, in British Columbia, it has been ‘Self-less’ when it comes to the sharing and donating of knowledge and equipment toward getting youth connecting with nature. The majority believes and practices ‘passing the torch’ to younger potential enthusiasts.

The fishing and conservation program at Thomas Haney Secondary has been a major recipient of the generosity of the diverse selfless behavior of anglers across British Columbia. From the individual to small local businesses to large corporations, the welcomed support has flourished.

The only term to come to mind is ‘refreshing’. When you are bombarded by all aspects of the media with its portrayal of a world full of selfishness, it is not hard to follow that ignorance. Our program is appreciative to have taken a chance to engage and ask the community for assistance. We discussed that the worst thing that could happen is ending up with no assistance and being exactly where we started. However, our efforts found an overwhelmingly positive response to provide support for the program. It has come in the form of equipment, project ideas, field trip experiences and skill development. It all came flooding in.



All of this support and great role modelling is providing a platform for the participants to eventually “pass it on”.



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