

## The Dreams of 2011



The moisture in the oak log hisses as it bakes in the intense heat of the fireplace. The hickories pop with all their might. And just for fun, I throw in some chunks of pine with needles still attached. Not much for heat, but great for the sizzling, crackling, and snapping sound show.

I stare at the fire. It soothes me. It warms me. It somehow makes a complicated, difficult world easier to cope with. The fire is a friend, a good buddy, an acquaintance from long ago, a fixture in my comfort zone and a stalwart companion. I need this fire.

I drift into unconsciousness, mused by the sounds of the fire. I am asleep now and speeding into REM sleep, thinking about outdoor activities for 2011. The warmth of my friend puts me deeper into sleep, and I am now off for the new year's adventures.

January and February find me up in Langlade County, Wisconsin, snowmobiling with 40-year best friend Dick McNutt. We blast through the winding trails carved within the darkness of the old growth forest, passing hundred year old conifers and hardwoods. But what I long for is the wide open trails on the frozen lakes where I can rev up that triple pipe Polaris and peg the speedo at 100 mph. You talk about a rush.

Late in March, I'll be fishing the Mississippi River for walleyes up at Red Wing, MN. with good friend Tom Parker. Last year, Steve Kappel fished with us and boated a 9#8oz. fish on a jig and minnow. I have that one beat already!

In April, it will be more walleye fishing, some of it on Lake Erie with Capt. Bob Hesse aboard the RodBender. Good pal Eric Skell will be along, with a host of ten other ne're-do-wells and assorted hangers on. It's a fun trip. This is one to stock up on meat, so to speak, as catch and release dominates most of the other trips, but not on Erie. April also gives way to perch fishing on Lake Michigan off Waukegan.

Maybe I'll get Jeff Acerbi or Gary Schlapinski to take me to DePere for the early 'eye bite on the Fox River, pitching jigs up into two feet of water. I've heard that can be fantastic.

The month of May holds all kinds of adventures. Opening weekend will find me with Tom Parker fishing the Sturgeon Bay area for the Walleyes Unlimited outing. Last year, I bagged 10#, 8oz. walleye while rigging and Tom caught some nice pike on spinner baits. May also opens up Lake Delavan for pike and bass, and the month is topped off by a trip to Indy with Tim Terchek to watch the race. We started going to Indy the year Mario Andretti "had more STP in his car" than any other driver. I think that was 1968. I will also get out on Lake Michigan whenever I can to get some tasty cohos.

In June, one of the granddaddy months, I'll head to Minaki, Ontario, to fish the Winnipeg River system. Brother John goes along, as does the brothers Parker Tom and Tim, Chef Chris Kaminski and pal Steve Downey, and Jim Eveland and McNutt. Later in the month Brad Miller and I will fish wherever he wants to.

July finds me trolling on Lake Michigan for bigger salmon, cleaning out the garage, sighting in rifles with cousin Terry Zegar, and mostly doing nothing. Maybe some yard work. I will find some time, however, to do some sucker fishing for bass and pike on Delavan. Maybe I can find a way to get free trips from guides Walt Koch and Mel Christensen.

August? See July. I think I can get Mike Orawiec over here to clean and repack the wheel bearings on my boat trailer and I know Christensen is good to install a new Trollmaster on my kicker. When Orawiec and Christensen are done with their chores, we'll gather up Tom Parker and fly in to Great Slave Lake for the biggest pike you've ever seen. I might have to either win the lottery or get a real job so this trip is on the iffy side.

September might find me prowling the Chain O' Lakes for some walleyes or maybe even a muskie. Or 60 white bass and other assorted lesser fishes. Maybe I can get Steve Rusteberg out of muskie retirement to teach me a thing or two.

October is the bonanza month, the one we wait all year for. This is when the big fish get active and for me, it's the bays of Door County and also Chequamegon Bay for smallmouth. Big smallmouth. My biggest smallie so far is 6# 8oz. and my eyes are focused on a seven. My insurance agent, David Brown, is a big-time bass fisherman, and maybe I can get some tips on using plastics for those big fall fish.

In November, there is elk hunting and deer hunting, which reminds me to tell you that I shot a big cow elk in Colorado this November. This is the month to head to the Bay of Quinte to troll cranks for big walleyes. How do you spell "Reefrunner"? So many choices. So many places to go in the MidWest. So many decisions to make. So, in 2011, follow Postcards from Lake County and I'll take you along with me to all the great places I go. I want you to feel like you're there with me.

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