

## Hello? Can You Hear Me Now?



“That will be \$270.00, sir.” “How much?” was my unpleasantly surprised response.

“You must be kidding me. Got any cheaper ones?”

“Oh, sure! I have this one for \$240.00.”

“Ouch. Why can’t I get a less expensive one since I just signed up for a two-year deal a few months ago?”

The day before, good friend Tom Parker and I had been angling for smallmouth bass in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin and had a terrific morning on the water. In just a little over two hours, we bagged 18 fish up to 20 inches, and only one was less than 16. They were fat, healthy fish, and dazzled us with their strength and acrobatics.

The spring bite had just begun, as the surface water temperature was around 50 degrees. The sun was out but thankfully the wind was brisk enough to create a chop on the water to reduce the clarity so the skittery fish wouldn’t be as easily spooked.

On this particular day, the most effective presentation was drifting the flats with live bait, in this case, medium golden roach minnows. We used spinning rods with 8 pound test line, and pinched on a medium-sized split shot about 18 inches above the hook. The roaches were hooked through the lips and allowed to swim freely as the boat drifted over rocky boulders and humps.

“You can’t,” said the sales clerk.

“All right. I’ll take the flip phone with the blue cover. I can’t believe you guys couldn’t give me a better deal. How much profit do you make on this stuff, anyway?”

“I dunno.”

You might think that since this is a fishing column and that I’m getting another cell phone that something might have caused the demise of the first one. Of course, fishermen drop cell phones into the water. Take, for example, my good friend Mike Orawiec of Zion.

He’s got cell phones at the bottom of lakes all around the country: Lake Michigan, Lake Geneva, Sturgeon Bay, and Bay of Quinte in Canada. So, it’s very likely you would think that I accidentally deposited mine in the cool, clear waters of Sturgeon Bay. Nope.

On that day, as Tom and I fished out of his Ranger boat, he caught more smallies than I did. It allowed me lots of netting opportunities, a practice I generally prefer my partner to get. I spent more time netting his fish than I did angling with my own equipment, and the whole thing became circular. The more of his fish I netted, the more pumped and focused he became, and the more fish he caught. And the more fish I had to net. See how it worked?

During the next few weeks, several different presentations will attract these “brown” bass. In addition to live bait, tube jibs, Kalin grubs, Husky Jerks, Smithwick Rogues, and spinnerbaits will all be productive.

Colors make a difference, and everyone seems to have favorites. In plastics, I like smoke, crawfish, and watermelon colors. For hard plastic crankbaits, try blues and greens with orange bellies. And for spinnerbaits, it’s hard to be a 3/8 oz. white one tipped with a chartreuse grub.

My cell phone? It met a very unsportsmanlike-like demise. For some reason, I placed it on the cap of the pickup truck in the morning when we left for the launch ramp and forgot to pick it up. It stayed there for a ten-mile ride but when we pulled up the boat ramp and applied the brakes to stop the truck and boat trailer, it slid to the side and off the truck, skidded along the pavement, took aim on a sewer grate, and took the plunge.

The cell phone clerk admitted that he had never heard a story like that. As usual during outdoor adventures there is always another story going on, sometimes \$270 ones.

You can contact Jim at [outdoors@zegar.com](mailto:outdoors@zegar.com) and follow his adventures in the monthly *MidWest Outdoors Magazine* column Postcards from Lake County.

