

Fishing and Outdoors in WNY: The smelt are running

COLUMN AND PHOTOS BY CAPT. FRANK CAMPBELL

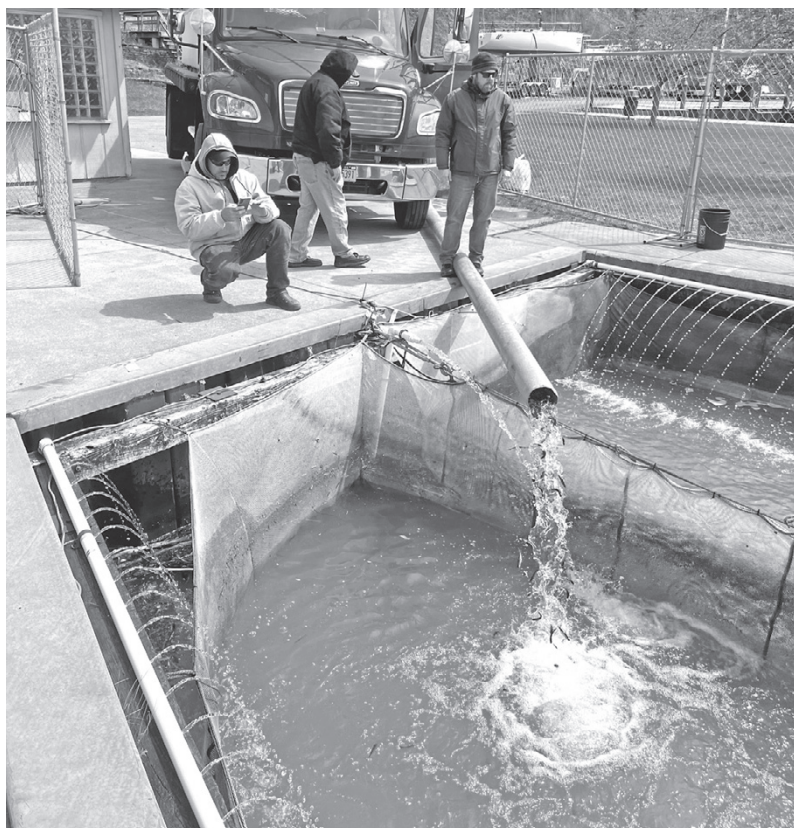
Director, Outdoor Promotions
Destination Niagara USA

The smelt are in! "What the heck is a smelt?" you ask? Smelt are invasive baitfish that entered Lake Ontario many years ago through the St. Lawrence Seaway. As it often occurs with non-native species, smelt numbers really climbed during the first few years after introduction, and they soon became Lake Ontario's second-most-populous baitfish behind the alewife.

Lake trout loved them as they often occupied the same areas of the lake bottom; both species prefer colder water. But the lake trout were not the only consumers of this small, tasty fish, as anglers seemed to fancy them, too. People in the know love a good smelt fry, and eating them was only part of the enjoyment locally, as catching them seemed to be just as popular for the locals on the lower Niagara River.

Smelt spawn in the spring, shortly after ice is out when the water temperatures reach about 40 degrees. They make the journey from the depths of Lake Ontario to run up the river and use its nearshore waters to spawn. Most of the spawning action takes place under the cover of darkness, as the smelt are light sensitive.

Anglers line the shore. Using their lights to shine into the water to confirm the presence of schools of smelt, they swing their dip nets through the water with the current downstream as the fish swim upstream and right into



The Niagara River Anglers Association penning project of trout and salmon into the lower Niagara River is now underway in Youngstown. Here, fish are put into pens and fed into the Niagara on a daily basis – a process that takes three to four weeks.

the net. There is an art to timing the swing and moving it through the water to trap the smelt into the net. Some are more skillful than others in this "art of smelting."

Although the numbers are nowhere close to what they used to be, there are still enough smelt around to make it worth the effort. The best smelting areas on the lower Niagara River are the Lewiston Landing area (often referred to as the sand docks), Artpark, and the dock at Joseph Davis State Park.

To enjoy a night of smelting, you will need a valid New York state

fishing license, a net, and a bucket to empty your catch into. As with any fishing, you should know the regulations and limits, which in this case is 8 quarts per person. Also, an abundance of caution should be taken while spending time near the water, especially at night. It definitely can be dangerous, so take precautions such as wearing a lifejacket and enjoying the outing with a buddy.

If you are not up to climbing down the bank at Artpark or spending hours at the sand docks, don't lose hope for a fish fry. The Lewiston Smelt Festival will be

back again this year through the efforts of the Upward Niagara Chamber of Commerce, in cooperation with The Griffon Gastro Pub and DiMino's Lewiston Tops. The date is May 24 at the Griffon on Water Street. For a small fee, you can enjoy a plate full of tasty smelt that are cooked to perfection. Make plans to come down that Friday night. The hours are 4-8 p.m., but I suggest arriving early so you will not be disappointed if they run out.

Ever year about this time, the angling community embarks on a mission to help ensure the survival and imprinting of trout and salmon to the Niagara River. This year is no different, as the

NRAA pen project is underway in Youngstown. The CliffsNotes version of the process is that 10,000 steelhead and 90,000 chinook salmon are delivered from the New York Department of Environmental Conservation hatchery in Altmar in mid-April.

The fish are put into pens and fed on a daily basis for about three to four weeks. During this time, the trout and salmon will undergo a smolting process, which will guide the fish back into the Niagara River as adults. In addition to the smolting process, the holding pens serve as a safe environment for the young salmon and trout to acclimate to the water minus the threat of predation from birds and gamefish.

The fish will almost double in size during their confinement in the pens, and this translates to significantly better survival over direct stocked trout and salmon.

Next month, I will report on the release and exactly how the project works in more detail. I would just like to offer thanks to the Village of Youngstown and Mayor Rob Reisman and Niagara County Legislator Irene Myers for their help in securing the future of this important project.

I hope to see you enjoying the local outdoors. Every week, I produce a fishing report, Niagara County Fishing Hotline. You can access it online at www.niagara-fallsusa.com or by simply calling 716-282-8992, ext. 4, to hear what's up in the world of fishing. It is updated every Wednesday.

IN THE NEWS



Lewiston Democrats honor Sarah Roat Waechter

The Town of Lewiston Democratic Committee has selected Town Board member Sarah Roat Waechter as the 2024 Democrat of the Year. The annual award

recognizes individuals for service and contributions to the Lewiston community.

Waechter will be honored at a brunch from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Sunday, April 21, at the Niagara Falls Country Club, 505 Mountain View Drive, Lewiston. Keynote speaker will be New York State Sen. Tim Kennedy, candidate for the NY 26th Congressional District.

The public is welcome to the event. Reservations can be made and questions answered by texting 716-622-6275 or emailing lewistondemchair@aol.com.

Waechter was elected to the Town Board last November and took office in January.

"Sarah worked very hard to be able to represent the interests of all the people of Lewiston," said Diane Perri Roberts, chairwoman of the Lewiston Democratic Committee. "Sarah believes in

openness and full transparency in town government, and is already showing herself to be a courageous voice in trying to insure the actions taken by the town are in the best interests of its residents."

Waechter previously served on the Lewiston-Porter School Board, and is a small business owner. The honoree and her husband, Scott, have lived in Lewiston for 22 years. They have two adult daughters, both of whom were active in Lewiston-Porter school sports programs.

Democrats to caucus in Lewiston

A Democratic Party caucus to nominate candidates for two four-year terms as Village of Lewiston trustees will take place beginning at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, April 25, at the Red Brick Municipal

Building's Morgan Lewis Village Board Room, 145 N. Fourth St.

Only registered Democrats who reside in the Village of Lewiston are eligible to nominate and vote for candidates at the caucus.

Candidates selected must reside in the Village of Lewiston. Those wishing to nominate or vote at the caucus are asked to bring photo identification.

Niagara County Democratic Chair Christopher Borgatti has appointed village resident Fran (Francis) Flanagan as chair of the caucus.

The Village of Lewiston elections will take place Tuesday, June 18.

Real Help For Your Health

Presented by
Dr. Glenda R. Rose
Chiropractor



The Brain and Health

The brain is the command center of the nervous system, the body's vast, two-way communication system. Via the nervous system, the brain coordinates the numerous, complex interactions that occur within the body. Through the nervous system, the body tells the brain what is happening, and the brain tells the body what to do.

When the messages between the brain and the rest of the body go back and forth as they should, the body is healthy and functioning the way it was designed to work. We call this 100% Function. The body will be at "Ease" and good Health. What health problems would you have if your body functioned at 100%? NONE. So, when your health is not optimum, something must be interfering with the communication between the brain and the body.

The environment we live in is full of many factors that cause stress on the body, undermine health, and prevent healing. There are six common barriers to healing or "stressors" that Nutrition Response Testing® identifies and addresses in its analysis: Food Sensitivities, Immune Challenges, Metal Toxicities, Chemical Toxicities, Scars and Post-Pandemic Factors.

As a Clinical Master of Nutrition Response Testing, I have restored my own health and helped others with many previously unresolved health conditions. Rose Chiropractic, P.C. is located at 435 Ridge St., Lewiston. New patients are welcome. Call (716)754-9039

Business Blender

Thursday, April 25, 2024 • 5pm-7pm



200 Lockport St., Youngstown

Join the Chamber for a great night of networking with member businesses and community leaders!

Please RSVP
Suzanne@UpwardNiagara.com
or online at www.UpwardNiagara.com

UPWARD NIAGARA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
895 Center Street, Lewiston
716-754-9500

Enjoy hors d'oeuvres, cash bar and raffles!

Admission \$10.00

Sponsored by



Sanborn Historical Society Spring Flea & Vendor Show

Saturday, April 20th
Sunday, April 21st
9am - 3pm

Sanborn Farm Museum
2660 Saunders Settlement Rd.
Sanborn, NY

HOT FOOD AVAILABLE
\$1.00 Donation per person
For School House Restoration

LOOKING FOR VENDORS
\$20 per table & chairs

More information call 716-957-4851

The Youngstown Village Diner
425 Main St., Youngstown • 716-745-9858

~ WEEKLY SPECIALS ~
MON CLOSED
TUE 6AM-2PM - Spaghetti and Meatballs, Chicken Parm, Eggplant Parm, Penne Parm
WED 6AM-2PM - Turkey Pot Pie or Fish - Haddock: Breaded-Battered-Baked
THURS 6AM-2PM - Stuffed Peppers or Fish - Haddock: Breaded-Battered-Baked
FRI 6AM-2PM - Haddock, Fish Sandwiches, Tuna Melts & New England Clam Chowder
SAT & SUN OPEN AT 6AM - Eggs Benedict, Banana Walnut Pancakes, Spinach & Feta Omelet & Our Full Breakfast & Lunch Menu

With a View of Niagara River

Business Blender
Thursday, April 25, 2024 • 5pm-7pm

Enjoy hors d'oeuvres, cash bar and raffles!
Admission \$10.00

Join the Chamber for a great night of networking with member businesses and community leaders!

Please RSVP
Suzanne@UpwardNiagara.com
or online at www.UpwardNiagara.com

UPWARD NIAGARA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
895 Center Street, Lewiston
716-754-9500

Sponsored by
VISION FINANCIAL GROUP
NIAGARA FRONTIER PUBLICATIONS
Niagara County Tribune/Sentinel
Island Dispatch
Grand Island PennySaver
wnypapers.com

Sanborn Historical Society Spring Flea & Vendor Show
Saturday, April 20th
Sunday, April 21st
9am - 3pm

Sanborn Farm Museum
2660 Saunders Settlement Rd.
Sanborn, NY

HOT FOOD AVAILABLE
\$1.00 Donation per person
For School House Restoration

LOOKING FOR VENDORS
\$20 per table & chairs

More information call 716-957-4851