

Fishing and Outdoors in Niagara

Want to become a better angler in 2023? Never stop learning



Mark Romanack from "Fishing 411" is a featured presenter at the upcoming Greater Niagara Fishing and Outdoor Expo. (Submitted photo).

BY CAPT. FRANK CAMPBELL
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As a charter captain in the Niagara Region for more than 30 years, I have made fishing a career choice. By spending more than 200 days a year on the river, I have been "cast" into just about every fishing situation there is on the water. Often in the pursuit of different species, the same scenario presents itself and, through experience, I can solve the fish catching puzzle. Even after spending more than a quarter-century pursuing a variety of gamefish in the area, I still try and learn something every trip.

I am a firm believer that becoming a successful angler requires that learning component. It just so happens the opportunity to become a better angler will present itself Feb. 16-19, at the Niagara Falls Convention Center, as the Greater Niagara Fishing and Outdoor Expo will commence for the first time in three years.

The show offers something for every angler to help lessen the learning curve, as the top fishermen on both a national and local level will offer over 300 seminar hours. There will be different levels of educational offerings that will fit any angler's quest for knowledge. The Salmon School and the Walleye School are the most intense offerings, with each covering a few days of in-depth teaching from experts in each respective fishery.

The Salmon School is already sold out at almost 200 participants, while the Walleye School still has openings as of this writing. The Walleye School instructors feature National Walleye Tour pro Craig Sleeman, who finished Top 10 on the circuit, along with teaching pro Ali Shakoor, local skipper Don Ruppert, and electronics wizard Lance Valentine.

The four will combine to dive deep into the Eastern Lake Erie walleye fishery. Over the course of multiple days, they will cover everything from fish movements at different times of the year to using your electronics to locate the right fish. The school is pretty involved and should be looked at as an opportunity to learn a lot about the walleye game in our end of Lake Erie. The cost of the Walleye School is \$100, which is an absolute bargain for what you receive in return.

Maybe not as much of a time commitment, but still a great opportunity to expand your knowledge of area fishing options are the beginner fishing schools. Attendees at these schools will cover things such as necessary gear, locations, techniques, and behavior of the sought-after species. The instructors will be members of local fishing community or organizations, such as Southtowns Walleye, WNY Chapter of Trout Unlimited, the Lake Erie Chapter of Fly Fishers International, Lake Ontario Trout and Salmon Association, and WNY Bassmasters.

In all, four schools are being offered, including beginner bass, beginner fly fishing, beginner salmon and beginner walleye. The goal of the schools will be to teach fishing to beginners or less advanced anglers. A \$40 fee will be charged for all beginner classes.

Plenty of options exist for helping mold attendees into more productive anglers for just the cost of admission, which is \$10 for a one-day pass or \$20 for a four-day pass. There will be seminars offered just about every hour throughout all four days of the event. The topics vary, but be assured there is something for every angler from novice to expert.

Want an opportunity to learn from two of the biggest names

in the outdoors world? Take in the Ultimate Walleye Clinic being presented by the hosts of the TV show "Fishing 411," Mark and Jake Romanack. There is no additional cost to attend their seminar.

Another popular learning opportunity is the visual seminars put on at the Hawg Trough. Many seminars will be offered at the 5,000-gallon fish tank loaded with bass. It is an excellent way to not only listen to what the presenter is offering in terms of guidance, but also to see exactly what the baits and lures look like and react like in the water.

In addition to a vast array of seminar opportunities, the expo also will feature over 170 vendor booths promoting both products for sale and manufacture representatives from the likes of Garmin, Daiwa, Okuma, Fish Hawk, Dreamweaver, Cisco Systems and A-TOM-MIK, just to name a few. The mix of education and the availability to purchase products that presenters talk about is a unique opportunity not to be missed.

Another big attraction that will be returning will be a DEC open house, giving attendees a one-on-one opportunity to meet with Great Lakes managers, fish biologists and people involved with inland streams, fish hatcheries and enforcement. You won't find this at any other outdoor show.

In addition, there will be much more of a focus on fly fishing, including a fly-fishing social on Friday night that will feature vendors, top-notch speakers, fly tying, and much more. Be sure to check it out.

I hope to see everyone at the Greater Niagara Fishing and Outdoor Expo Feb. 16-19.

For more information on the show, please visit www.niagarafishingexpo.com.

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WBA sets 2023 board of directors

The Wheatfield Business Association recently announced its 2023 board of directors.

Pictured, from left: the Hon. Gary Strenkoski, Tom Grimm (board member), Terry Vosburg (vice president), Jeff Taylor (president), Mary Sue Velky (treasurer) and Julie Dearstyne (secretary).

Not pictured: Mike Docktor and Kelsey Oliphant (board members).



AARP tax help in NT

With tax season underway, the AARP Taxaide Foundation reports free tax preparation will again be available for residents. Offered by appointment only, in-person tax preparation by IRS trained counselors opens Tuesday, Feb. 7, and continues to Tuesday, April 11, at the Knights of Columbus, 755 Erie Ave., North Tonawanda.

For more information or to make an appointment, call 716-243-2655.

Starpoint transportation

The Starpoint Central School District is requesting district residents who may have children attending a non-public school for the 2023-24 school year to submit transportation requests to the district prior to the April 1 deadline.

Students currently attending non-public schools must reapply for transportation each year. Forms are available at most of the non-public schools, or the Starpoint Central School District

business office from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The district advises that failure to apply by the April 1 deadline places each application on a space-available basis. Under New York State Education Law, the district is not obligated to provide transportation to non-public schools if an additional cost is incurred when a family files a late (after April 1) application for such transportation.

For more information, call the district at 716-210-2341.