

Angloholism (TGF 3/11/89)

You folks need help. It's time to confront the problem, not spare feelings, so I have an insult for everyone for everyone in the room.

This is something that started during my travels. Didn't spend all my time talking to trout, you know. Trout are sober compared to fishermen -- or even to fisherwomen, lately.

My conclusion is that we need a TGF (maybe even a TU and FFF) to preserve our streams and trout. To preserve anglers, we need an Angloholics Anonymous. Announce my candidacy for honorary Presidency of the organization. (Don't actually want any responsibility; just want to stand on the sidelines and criticize.)

Angling must be considered a form of substance abuse. Ask any trout. Ask most wives. Have to be careful here because some women these days fish better than the guys they hang around with. Still, haven't yet seen a male spouse sitting in his car slapping mosquitoes and reading a nurse novel while waiting for his wife to return from fishing.

Have seen the occasional wife in that situation, but it certainly never happened to anybody in this room . . . so I'll fill you in on what happens when the fisherman returns. "Did you have fun, honey?" she says (swatting). Snarl, he says. Maybe he snarls because the fishing was lousy. More likely because he resents the suggestion that he should have been enjoying himself.

To tell a fly-fisherman that he should be having fun is like telling Prime Minister Thatcher that she ought to be home cooking bangers & mash for her husband.

Pause to acknowledge help in my discoveries:

- 1) From the original AA, which worked out the guidelines for dealing with substance abuse. These include confession (which I'm providing right now) and a support group (which you are providing, whether you want to or not).
- 2) From my wife Anna, who isn't here tonight because she knew it was going to be about fishing. Again. She was the one who convinced me that I needed help. Happened when I started talking to fish. I thought it was field research and she thought it was one of the last stages.

(IRELAND)

Make clear that I have little experience with the original AA -- the one that's after Senator Tower.

Anna's Irish, and she married me because I was the first guy she'd met who did not need to dry out, except from rain. Never wanted much booze because it reduced my capacity for more active kinds of moral turpitude. Fishing, etc.

It was the Saturday mornings that made Anna start to wonder. Rode the train from her home in Cork to Dublin every weekend and the best thing I could find to do was take her fishing. Every Saturday morning. Except in hunting season. Nice enough when the cuckoos were calling and the calves frolicked in sunny

pastures. Anna would make friends with the calves while their mothers rubbed the paint off my BMW. It was very pleasant, and Ireland gets two of those days every May.

'Twas the days with rain blowing in horizontally from the North Sea that made her wonder. Why fish? Because it was the only day of the week when I could fish. She didn't fully grasp the force of the argument.

Believe Anna understood then that there are fishermen who deplore fun. Even Ireland has a few, but most Irishmen would rather catch a trout for fun and then get serious in the pub.

One Saturday she brought me a clipping on research into the motivations of golfers. Seems that they hit little white balls for all kinds of reasons, none of which has anything to do with enjoyment.

Believe she was trying to suggest that trout fishermen can be as compulsive as golfers, which is an understatement.

Anna had assumed that I was fishing for fun because her father did. 3 rods, 3 worrums. Afternoon in the pub. Dark liquid for her dad; lemondade & snacks & running around by the river for A. They both thought fishing was great.

I Tried to maintain tradition by stopping at the pub for a jar after fishing. Mostly made me sleepy. Did pick up some flavor. Explain Irish pubs.

Conversation in a "close" next to ours. Explain "close". Worrums vs. flies. Eventual loud words: "Da sooner I nivver see ya

agin, de better it'll be for da bot' of us when we meet."
Moral is important: You can stay out of the worst troubles if you actually go fishing; worst that can happen is drowning. The serious problems start when you don't fish and do talk about it.

This makes the point that in angling, unlike other kinds of substance abuse, cold turkey is not the best treatment. Abstinence just makes you worse.

NEW YORK

Consider, for example, that the three greatest fly-fishing cities in the world are London, New York, & Bozeman, & Bozeman doesn't count because only New Yorkers live there. It's a piscatorial suburb. New Yorkers go to Montana when they die & sometimes a few years earlier, thinking that they want to fish instead of talking about fishing. A great mistake.

Nobody really fishes in NY state. You don't fish because there aren't any trout. You talk about trout and maybe you fool your spouses but you don't fool me, because I went to school for four years in Ithaca and in my freshman year caught the last remaining trout in the state. 17" long, most of it head. Missed rowing practice while doing this and was thrown off the freshman crew. Have wondered ever since if it was worth it. Still don't know but expect to by the end of my treatment.

I concede that you folks do fish once a year, but not near here. Met you all last August on the Madison River, in the same

mile. (Actually only 3/4 of you -- other 1/4 in cars reading.)

TGF: These initials are too obvious to be a Freudian slip.

Everybody in the country knows about Thank God It's Friday.

Means you don't have to work for money anymore. You can go off and work harder for a dumb fish and run no risk of making money. Not much risk of catching a fish either.

Now, fact that you don't catch much does not mean that you can do without Anglholics Anonymous. On the contrary. The less you fish, the more you need it.

Trout fishermen are more passionate where there are no trout.

Kind of like teen-age males in a boys'school. What do you suppose they think about? I could tell you but this is rated GP.

Once I spent two years in West Africa, which is even farther from trout than New York, and for the last twelve months of it thought about nothing but trout. Flew to the highlands and spent a day walking around the only stream in Angola that might have been able to accomodate trout if anyone had put them there.

The point is that the absence of trout liberates our energies.

Removes the need to congeal our creative juices in cold water or sweat them out into neoprene waders.

Frees us to concentrate on the pleasures of the mind. FF has more of those than any other sport. Our literature as a vast body of fantasy.

Reminds me of another piece of research. This one I called to my

wife's attention. The researcher examined the books that wives read while sitting in cars by trout streams, then coined a new term: pink porn. Seems that females have as many fantasies as males, but not the same fantasies.

I have no knowledge of pink porn but can tell you that trout fishing has a whole body of literature that is green porn, with worm-tracks on its back and speckles on the sides. Much better than reality.

Tackle catalogs are another example. Has long been assumed that we buy tackle to fish. Wrong. We buy it as a substitute for fishing. Fantasies aren't as good as they used to be in the days of bamboo & silk, but we do all right with plastic.

(MONTANA)

The most serious threat to angling is fish. People don't buy tackle in MT, or rather Montanans don't. They pick up the tackle that New Yorkers lose when they try to wade the Madison in salmon-fly season.

Blindfolded, couldn't walk a mile from my house without falling in water. Spring creek, river, unnamed runs & ditches, even a pond. Only questions are which kind of trout & how big?

This could ruin a good relationship, like getting married.

Montanans cope with the threat of fish by sequential monogamy: chase girls till they're 30, hunt till they're 60, fish till 90.

I do it by the seasons. Fish only from Jan - Aug, then go out

chasing grouse and Ph & Pa. This is a good treatment for trout abuse. Problem is that the fishing season is still too long & after a couple of months of it I feel like coming back to New York to talk about fishing.

If I have not already frightened you away from Montana, let me make another attempt. Montana is the last frontier. It has dangers even more serious than catching trout or falling in the Madison.

Not so long ago three friends of mine in brand new car were driving through Island Park on the way to the Henry's Fork (technically in Idaho). About to pass a Greyhound bus coming toward them. Follow this carefully. Moose. Thump. Splash. Ruminant with 7 stomachs, all full of processed pondweeds. Car coated several inches thick. New car. Could never get rid of smell; had to sell it. Could have been worse.

Leave this comforting moral with every fishing widow or widower. It could have been worse. But not much.

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Angling must be considered a form of substance abuse. Ask any trout. Ask most wives. Have to be careful here because some women these days fish better than the guys they hang around with. Still, haven't yet seen a male spouse sitting in his car slapping mosquitoes and reading a nurse novel while waiting for his wife to return from fishing.

Have seen occasional wife, but it never happened to anybody in this room . . . so I'll fill you in on what happens when the fisherman returns. "Did you have fun, honey?" Snarl. Because fishing lousy? Because he resents suggestion that he should have been enjoying himself.

To tell a fly-fisherman that he should be having fun is like telling PM Thatcher that she ought to be home cooking bangers & mash for her husband.

Pause to acknowledgment help from:

- 1) Original AA. Guidelines for dealing with substance abuse. Confession (which I'm doing now) and support group (which you are providing, whether you want to or not).
- 2) Anna. Not here because she knew it was going to be about fishing. Again. Convinced me that I needed help. When I started talking to trout. I thought it was field research and she thought it was one of the last stages.

(IRELAND)

Make clear: little experience with the AA that's after Senator Tower.

Anna's Irish. I was first guy she'd met who did not need to dry out, except from rain. Didn't booze because it reduced my capacity for more active kinds of moral turpitude. Fishing, etc.

Saturday mornings made Anna wonder. Rode train from Cork to Dublin & went fishing with me every weekend. Or I went fishing & she went along. Nice when cuckoos calling & calves frolicked in sun. Anna would make friends with the calves while their mothers rubbed the paint off my BMW. Very pleasant. Ireland gets two of those days every May.

Days with rain blowing in horizontally from North Sea made her wonder. Why fish? Because it was the only day of the week when I could fish. Failed to grasp the force of the argument.

A came to understand that there are fishermen who deplore fun. Even Ireland has a few. Most Irishmen would rather catch a trout for fun and then get serious in the pub.

One Saturday, she brought me a clipping on research into motivations of golfers. Hit little white balls for all kinds reasons, none enjoyment.

Trying to suggest that fishermen can be as compulsive as golfers, which is understatement.

Anna had assumed that I was fishing for fun because her Dad did. 3 rods, 3 worrums. Afternoon in the pub. Dark liquid for her dad; lemondade & snacks & running around by the river for A.

Tried to maintain tradition by stopping at the pub for a jar after fishing. Mostly made me sleepy. Did pick up some flavor.

Conversation in a "close" next to ours. (Explain.) Worrums vs. flies. Eventual loud words: "Da sooner I nivver see ya agin, de better it'll be for da bot' of us when we meet."

Moral: You stay out of the worst troubles if you actually go fishing; worst that can happen is drowning. The serious problems start when you talk about fishing.

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Obviously in angling, unlike other kinds of substance abuse, cold turkey is not be the best treatment. Abstinence just makes you worse.

NEW YORK

Consider, for example, that 3 greatest fly-fishing cities are London, New York, & Bozeman, & Bozeman doesn't count because only New Yorkers live there. Piscatorial suburb. NYrs go to Montana to fish instead of talking about it. Mistake.

Nobody fishes in NY state. No trout. You fool your spouses but you don't fool me. Went school Ithaca. Caught last remaining trout in the state. Thrown off the freshman crew. Worth it? Expect to know by the end of my treatment.

Concede that you fish once a year, but not near here. Met you all last Aug on Madison River, in same mile. (3/4 on the river proper and 1/4 in cars, swatting & reading novels.)

TGF: too obvious to be Freudian slip. Everybody knows about Thank God It's Friday. Means you don't have to work for money

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anymore. Can work harder for a dumb fish and run no risk of making money. Not much risk of catching fish either.

Fact you don't catch much does not mean that you can do without AA. On contrary. The less you fish, more you need help.

Trout fishermen more passionate where there are no trout. Like
teen-age males in boys' school. What do they think about?

Once spent two years in West Africa, which is even farther from
trout than New York, and for last 12 months thought about
nothing but trout. Flew to highlands and spent a day walking
down only stream in Angola that might have had trout if anyone
had put them there.

Point is that absence of trout liberates our energies. Removes
need to congeal our creative juices in cold water or sweat
them into neoprene waders

Moose ran in front of bus. Picture moose: 1,000 pound ruminant with 7 stomachs, all bulging with processed pondweed.

Irresistible force (the bus) met not quite immovable object (the moose) at high velocity. Sound something like:

Splash. Car coated several inches thick with green effluent. Even went down the windows and into the doors. Bear in mind: New car. Could never get rid of smell; owner had to sell it.

All three got out of car without admiring new green paint job. Professor pondered, removed pipe from mouth, & at length opined: "it could have been worse." (Window down.)

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This could ruin a good relationship, like getting married.

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& Pa. Good treatment for trout abuse. Problem: fishing season
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make another attempt. Montana is last frontier. Has dangers
even more serious than catching trout or falling in Madison.

Sad case of three angloholics in brand new car driving through
Island Park on way to Henry's Fork (technically in Idaho).
Call them the owner of the car, the professor, and the
reporter.

Greyhound bus coming toward them at high speed. About to cross.

Reminds me of another piece of research. This one I called to wife's attention. Researcher examined the books wives read while sitting in cars by trout streams. New term: pink porn. Females have as many fantasies, but not same fantasies.

original research
No knowledge of pink porn but trout fishing has body of literature that is green porn, with worm-tracks on back and speckled flanks. Much better than reality. *1st edition has green cover,*

Tackle catalogs: another example. Has been assumed we buy tackle to fish. Wrong. Buy it as substitute for fishing. Fantasies not as good as in days of bamboo & silk, but plastic has to do.

*+ fur of Montanans +
father of unsundered Cuckoo.*

Lyphite. Polymorphic. Yuck.
It follows that
(MONTANA)

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*largest body of fantasy of
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from the Cook Examiner

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Extensive experience at fishing. No fish - except wrapped in paper.
Tried to maintain tradition by stopping at the pub for a jar after fishing. Mostly made me sleepy. Did pick up some flavor.

Conversation in a "close" next to ours. (Explain.) Worrums vs. flies. Eventual loud words: "Da sooner I nivver see ya agin, de better it'll be for da bot' of us when we meet."

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other 28

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my priorities reversed.

I'm sure

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Could not have worked out the treatment without them.

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