

And into yours. Stephen King once said if he didn't write things down, the stories in his head would drive him crazy. With that in mind, I'll share some thoughts from a recent excursion. This is the first in a series (hopefully) of stories from a Chesapeake cruiser.

Rising to the cast and casting to the rise... That's the flashy fun give-and-take that occurs between fish and fisherman. You throw something out there and wait for something to return, always hoping for the best. What were two Chesapeake Bay cruisers doing in the North Woods of Maine this June? Paddling canoes, catching brook trout (infrequently, at best), and enjoying some peaceful and relaxing timeout from our busy kids/work/play schedules. Twenty miles shy of the Canadian border, Aroostook County waters meander into a series of ponds that a bunch of brook trout call "Home, Sweet Home." Luckily, Red River Camps sit on the edge of a centrally located pond.

Like many such camps, the staff have a daily ritual of feeding trout dogs to a brood of at least 13-inch brook trout off the main dock. Anglers can't help but reason that one or two of these beauties will venture forth and be unable to resist their perfectly presented flies at dusk, as the middle of the pond comes alive with bugs rising to the surface and monsters from the deep lurking below. If you cast a fly and don't think, "There's a big fish under that," then you're not the fishing camp type.

PropTalk's Joe Evans would be proud; this year, we released every fish we caught save one, which—when perfectly encrusted with corn meal and butter—became a breakfast standout. And, most nights, we fished near our cabin and had to be pulled off the pond near 9 p.m. for "suppah."



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Out of My Mind

by Ruth Christie



My husband, Jim, has made the trip to this "Sportsman's Paradise" many years since he was five years old, and he perfected his casting as a teenager dreaming of becoming a guide for the camp. His family used to own and maintain the camp, and it has had its share of accommodating and friendly owners since then. The camp is in his blood. I started coming to the place in 1980. The diapered toddler in billowing dresses rambling around the dock that year now owns and operates the camp with her

husband. At that time, I was two years into dating Jim. The camp marks the start of our vacation escapades before and after we were married.

On our last visit, we brought the whole family and announced we were expecting our first child, now age 11 years. The place holds many other fond memories for us of fishing, hiking (and doing a bit of bushwhacking), reading, and making family adventures. Standout stories focus on putting frogs in an uncle's spring water and seeing him in a rocking chair sipping Scotch on the rocks (literally) in the middle of the pond.

Part of the fun of the Maine vacation is the trip itself. After leaving our kids with my sister and her husband in the middle of Pennsylvania for the week, we split the driving with stops in Kennebunkport and Sherman on the way up and Kennebunkport on the way back. We are drawn to the lobsters at Nunan's, the coastal scenery (there's a reason the Bush family compound is in Kennebunkport), and many memories of the place. We put 2125 miles on my car, but it was worth it. This year, we stayed in a cabin on an island almost exactly 20 years to the day from when we had last stayed at "Island Camp" with family.

The camp logbooks tell part of the story; the rest, you have to find out for yourself. If you listen, you can hear the loons, ducks, and moose as evening evergreens dance in the breeze and clear stone-soaked waters lap the shores.

All trips run together when you come to a place time and time again. Shared memories like these are sewn into the fabric of our nearly 25-year marriage.