

Setting aside a day to cast and blast

Admittedly, I haven't engaged in the following activities in a dozen years or so but it's a viable and enjoyable pursuit and I know there are still practitioners out there.

I used to call it my "hunting and fishing day" but in common parlance throughout the US it's now known as "cast & blast" and, very simply, it involves a day in which one both hunts and fishes.

Here's how I did it. Several times every October a few hunting buddies and I would head for one of several favorite spots we had permission to hunt, primarily along Great Sacandaga's northeast arm between Batchellerville and Conklingville, planning our arrival time for shortly after dawn.

The mornings this time of year are normally a tad chilly so I'd dress appropriately, grab my Browning Sweet 16 and a box of 6's or 7 1/2's, and head uphill for some grouse hunting.

Movement, however slow, generates heat so climbing the often steeper hills kept me pleasantly comfortable. On a good morning we might bag several grouse but even if we didn't it was still a good way to spend three or four hours afield. By 10 or 11 a.m. we'd begin heading back to the car, usually arriving there around noon. By then the sun was high and the temperature had risen by 15 or 20 degrees. We'd grab a bite to eat, have a cup of coffee from the thermos we had left in the car and then put away the shotguns, stow the grouse (or partridge - whichever you prefer), in a cooler I had brought along for that purpose, and then I'd shuck my heavier outer togs

Great Sacandaga Lake OUTDOORS

by Ron Kolodziej



for something more comfortable.

We'd then grab our fishing tackle, a bucket of night crawlers, the remains of the lunches we had brought along and head across the road for Great Sacandaga's nearby shoreline. Then we'd proceed to fish for walleyes or bass, using the basic techniques I described in last week's column. If we were even moderately successful we'd catch at least several eating-size walleyes of 18 to 20 inches and then head back for the car around 4 pm or so. The fish would go in a separate plastic bag and be placed in the cooler with the birds taken that morning (if any) and I'd head for home, normally arriving before dark so I could filet the fish and prep the grouse for the freezer.

These "cast & blast" (or blast & cast) trips also offered an excellent opportunity to do some pre-season deer scouting while hunting grouse and the only reason I eventually did fewer of these jaunts was because my hunting partners eventually decided any hill-climbing they were going to do would be reserved for deer hunting.

As one of my buddies put it, "I don't know if the hills are getting steeper or my legs are getting shorter." We continued these hunts for several more years but concentrated on benign, more easily areas along Schoharie Creek in

Montgomery County and my prey species then became smallmouth bass and cottontail rabbits, with an occasional squirrel thrown in for good measure.

In speaking with other sportsmen at fish and game club meeting I've learned there are still people out there making these cast & blast forays in the Great Sacandaga

area but not as many as did before. It's unfortunate in a way because our October weather is ideally suited for both fishing and small game hunting but most people now prefer to do one or the other on any given day.

In other parts of the country that's not the case and many lodges and outfitters now offer and advertise these cast and blast trips for a variety of fish and game species, including fall turkeys.

The statewide squirrel season opened on September 1; as did the cottontail rabbit season in the northern and southern zones. The ruffed

grouse season in the northern zone opened on September 20 and it opened in the southern and western zones on October 1. The bass season remains open through November 30 and the walleye and northern pike season remain open through March 15. Trout may be taken in Great Sacandaga all year.

There's no limit to the year-round outdoor recreational opportunities available in and around Great Sacandaga Lake. It's truly a four-season playground for lovers of the outdoors. J



Carla Kolbe

Four paragliders from the 2008 Fall Fly in are captured flying along the Great Sacandaga Lake towards the Batchellerville on Saturday.

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The flight started at the Edinburg Airport, across to Seven Hills Road, up the GSL to Northville, through Northampton, zig-zagged around Mead Island and the Kenyon Islands, over Sinclair Point, across the lake to Fish House, down and around Sand Island, and back up the lake to the Edinburg Airport. The ride takes about an hour and a half.

"You get to see the lake in a way people have never seen before," said Saupe of the flight. "You almost want to tear up-- it's so beautiful."

"The planes use an engine that powers the parachute behind us," explained Saupe regarding the experimental aircraft. "It's like a hot air balloon with a destination."

The similarities of parachute planes and hot air balloons extends to the conditions necessary for flight.

"Like a hot air balloon, it's necessary to have low-wind conditions-- less than ten miles-per-hour," said Saupe. "That's typically achieved either in the morning or late afternoon, which is why we scheduled the fly at 5 p.m."

"Powered parachutes are one of the safest forms of recreational flying," according to Ram-Air Skyways, a powered parachute retailer. "Because of the nature of the vehicle, it is virtually impossible to stall, roll or dive."

"Low and slow' is the saying," continues the Ram-Air Skyways Web site on the flight of a parachute plane, that offers "a great leisurely flight enjoying the open-air freedom of the aircraft, the sun and sky, and the great view."

The club preceded the flight with a barbecue for the members and their friends and family, serving hamburgers and hot dogs, salads, snacks and desserts.

"Fall Fly-In 2008" was "one of the club's three or four events of the year," said Saupe. "It's not an annual event, but we'll most likely hold it again next year."

According to the group's Web site, the EAA's Adirondack Chapter is an "organization whose membership is focused on aviation and a broad range of aviation activities including education. Areas of interest include designing, building, restoring, maintaining, flying or simply enjoying airplanes, and the people who fly them."

Saupe joined the EAA in 2003, shortly after purchasing his parachute plane from the Blue Heron manufacturer in Delanson.

"I was operating out of the Plateau Sky Ranch, where the EAA Adirondack Chapter is run, and they pulled me into the fold," said Saupe. "I'm now a technical counselor for the club. I hold seminars, teach classes, and help advise people who are building planes. It's all about knowledge and learning."

"ADK Chapter 602," as the group refers to themselves, has 60 members. They meet on the last Monday of every month at 7:30 p.m. at the Edinburg Airport. Meetings are open to the public and to anyone who is interested in a membership. Membership is on a yearly basis and is open to anyone wishing to join.

"It's a good core of people who love to fly," said Tim Kravis of Benson, an experienced pilot of forty-five years. J

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CROSS COUNTRY

Both the Broadalbin-Perth boys and girls cross country teams put in spectacular performances Saturday to claim the overall championships in the Burnt Hills Invitational at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center.

Gina Cristaldi led an inspired effort from the Lady Patriots, finishing the 3.05 mile course in 18 minutes, 55 seconds to take second place overall.

B-P placed four runners in the top six, with Opal Jessica Bogdan (fourth place, 19:47), Emily Baker (fifth, 19:49) and Juliana Mendez (sixth, 19:59) rounding out the spectacular quartet.

On the boys side, Andrew Goodspeed, Andrew Bogdan, Trevor McConnell and Adam Rasefske paced the winning effort, although official times and places were not available.

FOOTBALL

**Hudson Falls 40
Broadalbin-Perth 14**
Cody Menge had 85 yards on 14 carries, scoring on a four yard run. Corey Caswell threw a 27 yard touchdown pass to Shane Hathaway. Caswell's efforts brought him 6-for-18 passing for 64 yards and rushed 57 yards with nine carries. Andrew Weeden received a couple of passes for 25 yards. J