



C & R Bass Anglers
Watertown, Wisconsin
Established 1985



The Oklahoma 2010 Spring Trip

You never know exactly what to expect on a spring fishing trip. Will the fish be active, will the weather be good, will the winds blow you off the lake etc. This year the weather and fishing here in Northeastern Oklahoma have been exactly what you would hope for.

While it was cold and snowing in Wisconsin, a long day's drive to the West Southwest in Cookson Oklahoma on Tenkiller Lake Ferry, the sun was shining, the winds were light and the quality bass were slamming just about anything placed in front of them. Largemouth, Smallmouth and Kentucky's have all been active this week. Even the big White Bass have been on the move the last few days. This has been just about as close to a perfect week of fishing as you could possibly get.

However, when the fishing and weather are this good you just know something has to go wrong. After all, there is a universal truth which states "Everything Must and Always Will, Remain in Balance"...the Yin and the Yang, Good and Bad, Highs and Lows, Chaos and Calm. It seems there is a price to pay for the good times we experience...a little bit of bad must tag along just to balance things out.

We are all paid up here this year and man oh man have we ever had a balanced trip.

Cliff, who arrived several days ahead of the others, made it a couple of days without any trouble. It wasn't long though till he began to have problems with his trolling motor. Back at the cabin, Charlie Meyer began taking things apart looking for the problem and found the 6 gauge cable lugs for the 24 volt jumper wire had almost completely disintegrated. Corrosion had eaten them away.

We were lucky enough to have some 6 gauge ring connectors in our parts boxes though and we managed also

to find a small torch to solder things together. After Charlie cleaned all the terminals and connections and replaced the 24 volt jumper, the batteries were charged they were ready to get back out on the water.

However, the gremlins were having a party in Cliff's boat and the next trip out uncovered a new problem. The partiers had drained the life from Cliff's batteries and nothing would bring them back to this life...they were toast.

After a trip to town and \$150.00 worth of new power cells (Ouch), Cliff and Charlie were back on the water with Cliff's universe in balance.

Tom had a dance with the gremlins too. Even though he pulled his boat out early this year to correct any known problems and had it in top shape when he arrived at the lake, nothing could keep calamity from his doorstep.

Tom's throttle cable snapped on his second day of fishing...which happened to be a Saturday afternoon when nothing could be repaired. That would put Tom out of commission till Monday.

Tom was fortunate though. We found a mechanic on Monday who not only had the cable but was willing to install it that morning. In fact, he would do it right then. "How quick can you get here" was his only question. And the cost for this kind of same day service? At a marina, on the lake, and for vacationing out-of-staters (and they are "Yankees" too!)? A whopping \$60.00 which included the cable! That is what I call really great luck! But wait, that begs the question, are things in Tom's universe really in balance now with this kind of good luck? And if not, what is next"?

The answer; just as the fishing swings into high gear, Tom's trolling motor dies. Checking all the wiring, circuit breakers, connections, plugs, switches and resistors proved the problem was in the motor. The motor is only a year old and did not loose a seal, it just quit on him. That put Tom's boat down for the count and now Tom's universe is balanced!

As for me, I suffered a temporary lapse of sanity one morning which sent the gremlins into a fit of hysterical laughter. I failed to put the drain plug in the boat one evening after coming off the lake (Aaron David will like this). Because of extensive work performed on the live wells this past winter I wanted to know if there was a problem with my handiwork. So I pulled the plug one evening. I was happy to see the bilge was

dry...no leaks, problem solved. However, the real problem was, I didn't replace the plug right then and there.

Of course the next morning I launched without the plug. Although I thought the boat came up a little slow (I must not have drained the live wells last night, that's it) she did come on plane OK and really hauled down the lake after I got her going. It's kind of funny though, the further I went the faster the boat ran (imagine that) and the better I felt. It was going to be a great day!

Then, after about 20 minutes of fishing on our first spot, Charlie Grim noticed some wave action in the bottom of my boat. Wave Action? That's not supposed to happen! Wave pools in the bottom of your boat are just wrong! It turned out the water was a good 4 inches deep at the back of the front casting deck and that is bad, very, very bad! My eyes popped wide open when I looked at the stern and saw water creeping over the edge of the transom and into the splash well.

Covering 15 feet of my boat length in a single step I reached for the bilge pump switch and flipped it on. As the pumps kicked in, another look at the transom caused my jaw to drop to the deck. My additional weight in the back of the boat (light as I am) actually caused the water to come over the splash well and onto the back casting deck! I looked at Charlie (Grim) and told him "we are going down"! That convinced Charlie to head for the high ground at the bow which actually helped stem the flow of incoming water slightly. Well, it leveled us out some anyway and made us feel a little more hopeful.

Cranking up the engine I set a slow course for shallow water at a moderate idle. We didn't need to be in a deep creek channel at a time like this but I couldn't move to fast either. Too much throttle might cause a tsunami under the deck. After all, that much water rushing to the back of the boat all at once might pull her down by the stern.

Fortunately, the capacity of the pumps combined with the forward movement of the boat was greater than the flow of water into the boat. By the time we reached shallow water the tide had turned and we were riding a little higher on the water. The wave pool was disappearing too and after another 15 minutes or so of pumping water at a fast idle we were able to put her on plane and head for the ramp. Once on the trailer and with the water drained, we replaced the plug and went back to fishing. Now my universe is balanced.

Then there was Chuck Rolfsmeyer's tap dance with the gremlins. Chuck brought his boat this year as an extra, a spare just in case one of the others broke down.

However, on his very first day of fishing the boat began to run poorly. The distinctive odor of raw fuel lingered on a light breeze and a slight oil slick trailed the boat as a threesome of boaters discussed the problem.

Although the engine acted as if it were starving for fuel the consensus opinion from amongst the trio (Chuck "Fireball" Rolfsmeyer, Tom "Nitro" Haynes and Charlie "Methane" Grim) was; "the engine must be flooded" as they could smell the excess fuel.

The chosen course of action? Take it to the ramp with the trolling motor (good idea). The result? This was way to slow (what's the hurry, you have lots of time). The solution? Methane (Charlie) can pump the bulb slowly while Fireball (Chuck) cranks the big motor and Nitro (Tom) stays on the trolling motor till the big 200 comes to life (bad idea).

Come to life it did...with a ROAR...a really big one. One that ripped the hinges from the engine cowling and launched it into in a 20 foot high arching trajectory directed toward Nitro in the bow of the boat. Imagine Nitro's surprise when he turned to see that tumbling blue mass of an Evinrude logo hurtling toward him from a ridiculously high altitude.

Imagine also Methane's surprise as he cringed from the roar of the blast while pumping the bulb. The confusion of the situation, evident in his wide eyed stare, was compounded as he looked up questioningly only to see Fireball quizzically observing the arching trajectory of the engine cowling with whimsical intrigue.

When Methane turned his attention back to the engine he was aghast to see it had disintegrated, leaving a jagged flaming mess where the engine once sat (or so it appeared to him at that moment).

Methane is now worriedly scanning the boat for signs of a fire extinguisher but with no luck. Methane's big question? Where the @!** is the fire extinguisher? FIRE(!?), that jolts Fireball back to reality and he answers "in the glove box"! Who the @!** keeps the fire extinguisher in the glove box?

So, as Nitro throws a forearm block deflecting the tumbling engine cowling overboard, Methane launches himself toward the glove box to retrieve the extinguisher. Pulling the pin from the extinguisher and employing his extensive United States Postal Service training in fire suppression techniques, Methane expertly extinguishes the flames as Fireball is back to watching an expensive engine cowling bounce from the gunnel of his boat and into the lake.

Fortunately Nitro was able to retrieve the bobbing engine cowling before Neptune could grab it and Fireball seeing the flames were out, sighed with relief while Methane and Nitro wanted to know "what the @!*** just happened"?!

After Nitro, Methane and Fireball decided fumes from a fuel leak had been ignited by the ignition resulting in the explosion and subsequent conflagration, the dynamic trio determined a new plan of action for their return to the launch was in order...use the trolling motor to get back to the launch (good idea).

The big question remaining as they trolled into the distance was...did anyone on the lake see the fireworks/comedy show and if so, did they notice the Wisconsin (Yankee) boat numbers?

Now you know some of the peripheral "Universal" costs that can be associated with an excellent week of fishing.

However, you should know also, great friends in combination with lots of laughter and a week of excellent meals (that you won't see on a fishing trip again till next spring) make up for a good many problems.

Oh yes, before I forget...once again, Fireball's universe is "In Balance".

Good Fishing