

## Easing the Spring A Salvage Operation

Turning on my Saturday morning fishing shows on Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup>, I got some good news; Al Lindner's *Angling Edge* show would be back for another year in its usual 10:30 time slot. And though the world in general seems on the verge of falling apart, a few of the good things endure, come hell or high water. And as Tommy Edwards sang it in that timeless 60's ballad, "It's only the good things I remember,/ Whenever I think of you."

It's over 40 years now that the great Al Lindner enthusiasm has inspired my life and the lives of countless other fishermen who have, marveled at Al's angling skills and his passion for teaching the world to fish.

Don't laugh; if the greatest fisherman, Jesus, not Peter, was into fishing, it has to be great. And the beauty of the story is that Al has discovered the power and majesty of Jesus for himself, and he's now enthusiastically spreading the "glorious gospel of Jesus' Grace" himself. Now after his children demonstrate fishing secrets, Al uses the last ten minutes of his *Angling Edge* program to tell the angling world about all that Jesus has been doing in his life and the lives of many others. After all it is we, the people, who are the fish both Jesus and Al are now looking to catch. Jesus told his disciples, "I will make you fishers of men."

All of this is a side-bar from the real subject I wanted to discuss, the present crazy weather marking this equally crazy year. A song from the great Richard Rogers has been dogging my mind. "I'm as restless as a spider spinning daydreams/ I'm as jumpy as a puppet on a string/ I haven't seen a crocus or a rosebud/ or a robin on the wing/.. But I feel so gay/ In a melancholy way/ That it might as well be spring/ It might as well be spring." But it isn't.

Here's the thing – with the snow long gone and the temps bumping the 40's, I keep driving out expecting to see early spring birds such as horned larks arriving. But to my horror, I see few birds of any kind. Something evil seems to be killing off the birds. On my feeders I see barely a dozen or so, mostly house finches a day. Even the sparrows have become very scarce. And that big flock of starlings that used to hang

around the waste disposal site has all but disappeared. I'm praying that the spring migration, usually on full blast by mid March, will change all this. The whole scenario is ominous.

I've mentioned earlier my belief in the old 16<sup>th</sup> century notion that, just as "the heavens declare the glory of God and the earth proclaims His handiwork," (Psalm 19), nature also is often the first to reveal omens, signaling impending evil, just as they do in *Macbeth*: "It's unnatural, even as the deed that's done ... last night a royal falcon, towering in his pride of place, was as by a mousing owl hawked at and killed." This picture perfectly foreshadows the murder of the gracious King Duncan by Macbeth, even as a dead canary in a coal mine tells the miners to get out quick.

All the unnatural things happening across our globe: undeclared wars, famines, earthquakes, floods, droughts, and pandemics, plus gruesome massacres, like the one against Israel Oct. 7<sup>th</sup> and the recent the beating of a policemen by a gang of illegal migrants; it's all truly ominous.

And with a government whose leaders seem either grossly incompetent or crooked, America needs prayer desperately. As for the Red River Valley, the absence of birds as well as the paucity of precipitation has me not a little worried. Winter might just be playing possum, but when will we see those peaceful days again, when one could have dreams of a prosperous future for his children, and have faith that those hopes and dreams could come true?

North Dakota, like the rest of the nation truly needs prayer. Pray "for those in authority" – law enforcement people, nurses, teachers, first responders, civic, state and national leaders. I avoided the word "politicians." In the worst sense of that word, too many seem to be "past praying for." Pardon the alarmist tone of this piece, but what in Heaven's name has happened to our birds? Are we in for a 'Silent Spring'?

I did see a stray nuthatch at our bird feeder today; I think he flew in either from Jamestown or Washington D. C. Your guess is as good as mine.

