

Let's Give Thanks

By Steve Welch

Even though at the time of this writing I am still pulling in those big Shelbyville slabs my season is winding down. I guide through mid December and later if Mother Nature allows it and some of those last deep trips can be the best of the season.

I would like to take a minute to thank everyone that made this 2011 season my busiest ever. I ran 220 guide trips myself and another 25 through my second boat all in nine months. My lure business had a rough start but it is now off and running and we sold over four thousand Candystripers and twice that many Deep Ledge Jigs.

This was made possible first by all my clients but also my support crew. First of all I would like to thank Rob and Monty at Dupo Marine. They bend over backwards like no marine dealer I have ever seen. Not once did they make me wait for service. They would stay late and make sure I was back on the water the next day. I even had a new power head ordered and on the boat in four days. Second my partner and back up boat Alan Corzine or the girlfriend as the wife calls him. He will do anything I ask of him and the man never sleeps. He loaned me his boat on several occasions to keep me going and even the second day of the Crappie USA Classic. He came down there and side scanned all week and almost never fished so I could find new water that held bigger fish. He has helped in the design of our lures since he is a mechanical engineer and our lures are second to none. Third I would like to thank Dick Beals a friend since my child hood and we call him the pit crew. He has every tool know to man and parts for anything. He volunteered to help with the lure business and between him, my wife and myself we are swamped. They tell me I push to hard and they are my little worker bees for use of a better word. Lastly I want to thank my loving wife. After ten years with this woman she never fails to tell me how much she loves me every day and several times a day. She growls a little when I ask her to help with the fishing business but she always comes through. She runs the booth at the shows and helps with lure construction. She even got out of bed at 4:00 AM on her birthday and took my boat trailer to St. Louis to get the axles fixed so I could do a guide trip on that day. She is the love of my life and can't be replaced.

The show season will soon be on us and for me that starts with the Collinsville Show January 6,7 and 8 then the Bloomington Show January 27,28 and 29. Thanks to my partner we now have a fantastic power point presentation that will feature all kinds of info on the new Lowrance HDS electronic systems as well as great fishing tips and fishing destinations. We have been invited to do these presentations all over the state and now that I am off the water we plan on doing them this winter.

Christmas is just around the corner and my gift certificates for 2012 guide trips are a big hit as well as my custom lures for stocking stuffers. The angler in the family will light up with these products since you can't get anything like them on the market. We plan on having Pay pal set up in the next couple of weeks to make it easier to purchase these fine products. We are constantly changing and tweaking our fishing lures to make them better. We have redesigned the Deep Ledge Jigs to give them a better barb and to help hold the inset eyes on. We have changed the paint to make them more durable and added a tough clear coat exterior. The Candystripers are going through an entire transformation to stop others from imitating, as that has been a big problem all year. I should be honored that this product has taken off so well that others are practically giving them away to get their look alike in stores. We are geared up now to make 2012 a great year for the fishing products and the competitors will be left in the dust.