

Hummer's **ARCTIC LURE**

2020 SPECIAL EDITION

In This Historic Issue:

Great Guest Stories
2020 "Guest" Round Up
Our Aviation Legend
Lodge Notes
and More...



2020

2020. Even if it weren't such a symmetrical number, I think we'd all remember this one.

I was flying to Edmonton for a trade show, listening to a podcast, when the severity of the pandemic started to sink in. Sure enough, four hours into the show, the announcement came across the PA system telling everyone that the show was cancelled effective immediately... and that was that. The official "beginning" of 2020 and the end of what everyone took for granted as normal.

Once the American/Canadian border closed for tourism for the first time since 1867 (before even Chummy's day), we all started to get nervous. All eyes were on that border and the monthly announcement of another extension to the closure. As I write this it is still closed for non-essential travel. Another border, one that most people were not focused on, was equally important; the NWT border. They took a hard stance to stay safe up there and locked it down, tight. Even now, Canadians cannot travel to the Territories for the purpose of tourism (also called fishing).

So, mid-May we were forced to postpone the 2020 season. A tough-to-write email and a few hundred phone calls later, we had basically everyone rescheduled for 2021 (that sounds easier than it actually was). However, talking to all of the guests and receiving their overwhelming support and encouragement was perhaps the highlight of the spring. Everyone knew that we were all in this uncontrollable situation together, regardless of what side of the border we lived on. Flights were cancelled, hotel rooms rescheduled and promises to "See you on the Strip" were made.

But that airstrip does not pack itself, so arrangements were made with the NWT government and special permission was granted for Chummy and an elite group of highly skilled workers (...guides...) to "quarantine" at the lodge and get some seasonal maintenance done. There may have been some confusion on how much "boat testing" our work crew would be allowed to call "maintenance", but in the end the boys did make it out on the water more than some had predicted.

You'll see that this 2020 edition of The Arctic Lure is a digital version. Under our current circumstances, it seemed like the logical route to take. Normally, we print short letters and testimonials and have all brand-new photos from the summer past. This year we have been forced to take a different approach; instead we went down memory lane with some of our willing guests. Digital format provides room for some longer submissions, and some even include fascinating hyperlinks to even more entertainment ([and future bookings](#)).

From the gang at Plummer's, we wish you all the best, hope that everyone stays healthy and safe, and can't wait to once again "See you on the Strips" next summer.

Hug & Release,

Chuk Coulter

General Manager





Sharing *Indelible Memories*

Legendary Guiding

Twenty-three consecutive years at Plummer's. We are now officially going through withdrawal. The other night Doc and I were reminiscing about the endless memories of those twenty-three years.

As bummed as we were, the fishing stories led us down a road of rich memories. Certainly, there was a lot of great fishing, big lake trout, big pike, grayling, inconnu and certainly the Char at the Tree River. All of them more fun than the next, though Doc's 62-pounder was truly the highlight of them all. My forty pounder wasn't that bad either, even if we didn't get a good picture.

We have also been blessed with a great group of guides over the years. Starting with Steve Gardner; he could make a four course meal with one log. Pat Alexander was next. He spent thirty years guiding on GBL and was a guide's guide...started each day with the enthusiasm he had on his first day of guiding. His nickname was Big Fish Patty and he lived up to it. Next was Chuk Coulter. He guided like it was his first day fishing... not guiding. Just kidding! But always was cool to exploring for tent rings, birds and wildlife. Nick Laferriere was our youngest guide ever and has hidden talents. Not only a great guide on our numerous camping trips but an extraordinary artist. Our current guide, Chris Ireland has been guiding on GBL for nearly forty years. Great trophy hunter who would fish till dark every night if he could. Only one problem, he is not afraid of big water and waves. Doc and I have made him sign an insurance waiver before each trip.

We have missed the fishing, guides and staff this past year and Chummy's cheery outlook. We miss the sound of Chummy saying, "Why the hell do you have to go that far?" Plummer's wouldn't be Plummer's without Chummy.

The memories of years past will hold us over until 2021! We're like little kids going on that once a year summer vacation. See you next July.

Tom & Doc



Hooked for Life

I've been fishing with Plummer's since my first trip to Great Slave Lake in 1972. I believe my father and I flew up to Great Slave Lake that year in a DC-3. I didn't return to Great Slave Lake or Great Bear Lake again until 1992 as I was growing a family manufacturing business. Since 1992 I have fished one year at Trophy Lodge on Great Bear Lake, Neiland Bay on Great Bear Lake for 12 years and Great Slave Lake for 5 years. In total I have been fishing with Plummer's for eighteen (18) years and currently have reservations to fish Great Slave Lake in 2021, 2022 and also the Tree River in 2022.

I have been very fortunate to have caught some big fish but fishing for me is only part of the adventure. It's the people who you work with (Plummer's), the staff, the guides, the shore lunches, the people you meet and fish with on a daily basis and the environment you live in while in camp, etc. I have been blessed to have fished in many different parts of the world for various species of fish and will always come back to Great Slave Lake as it's the highlight of my summer and has become part of my life. In closing I would like to state that as one who has fished both Great Slave Lake and Great Bear Lake, I think anyone who is thinking about fishing either lake will find it is truly a unique and wonderful experience.



Jim R.

Fully Equipped For Monster Fishing

As I watched my fishing trips disappear from my calendar, my annual and favourite trip of the year was now next in line. When I finally got the call from Lodge Manager Chuk Coulter that Plummer's had decided to pull the plug on the 2020 season, to say I was depressed was an understatement! Another casualty of Covid, and the strange times we live in now.

I have been fishing with Plummer's Arctic Lodges on Great Bear Lake for some time now. It has become my favourite trip of the year and I've become addicted to chasing monster Lake Trout! My second year I managed to land a 51-pound Laker in the afternoon of my first half day fishing! The following year I landed a 50.5-pound Laker. Two 50 pound plus fish two years in a row! I've hooked and lost even larger ones. It's awesome!

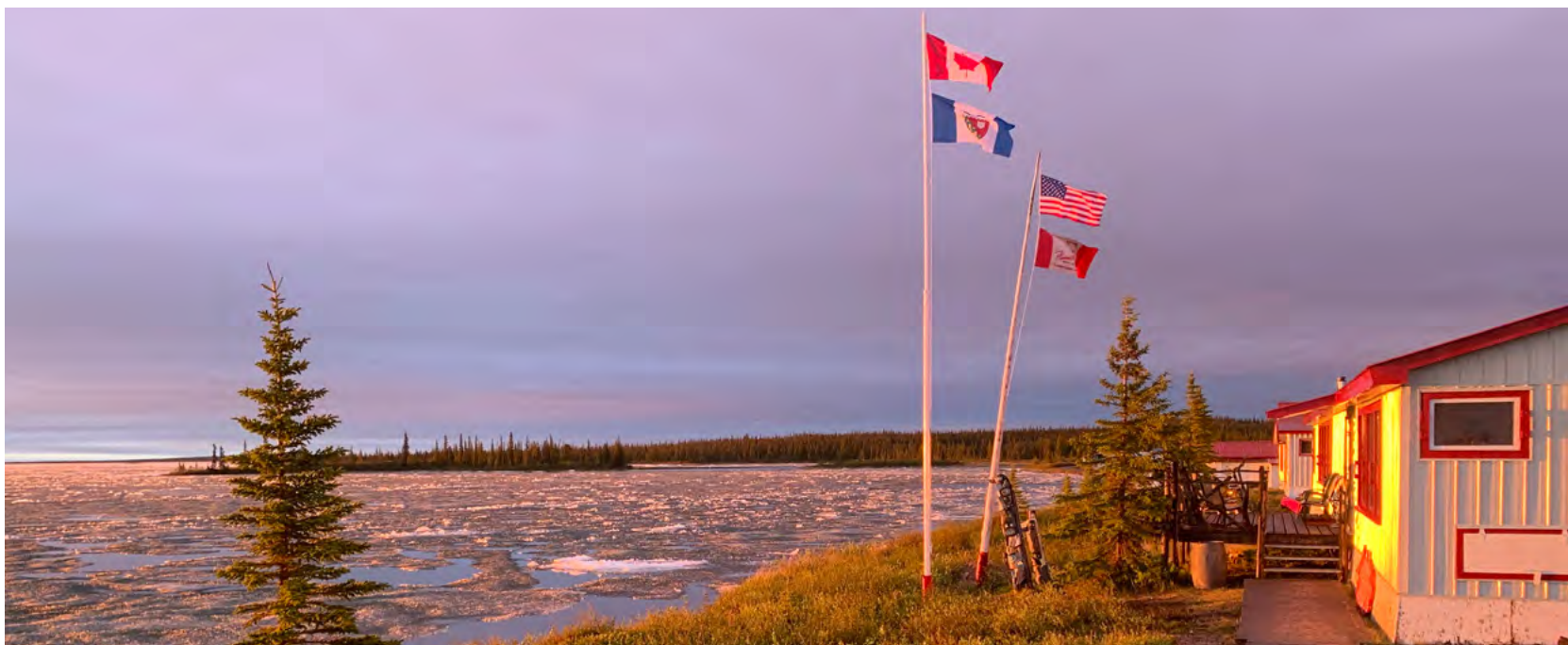
The lodge is incredible. Hard to believe it's so far from the nearest road. There is a phenomenal amount of equipment at Plummer's. There is heavy equipment to maintain the 5,600' runway which Chummy, the owner built himself. The boats, 20 plus, and all the outbuildings.

What really makes Plummer's such a special place are the people. They're super friendly, helpful and hard working. I always feel like family while I'm there. In all it's hard to beat a trip to Plummer's Arctic Lodges! (I'm counting the days till my 2021 trip :)

Eric A.



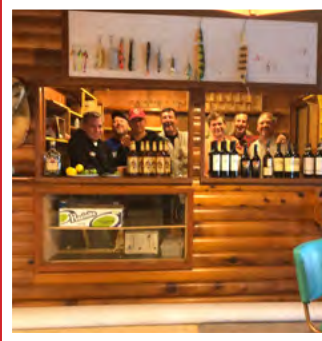
I have been blessed and very fortunate to have fished in many different parts of the world for various species...and will always come back to Great Slave Lake...



Sharing *Indelible* Memories

“No Brainer”

It's a reminder to never take things for granted. It's been 35 years since a bunch of guys met at Johnson & Johnson and decided to head up into Canada to catch some fish. None of us had ever been on a float plane. A few of us had caught a walleye or two and I think one guy had caught a pike. A couple of us were avid bass fishermen. But other than the fact that we worked for the same company, we all barely knew each other. Amazing what a fishing trip can do. We hadn't missed a year since.



I was thinking about that as I was sitting at my desk in my den looking at all my gear still on the shelves and rods and reels neatly organized in the cabinet. It should have been packed and by the door with orange, 'Arctic Circle' tags on them by now. In fact, normally it would have been sitting by the door weeks ago.

I rolled my chair around and looked at the pics behind me. Thirty-five years of them. I zoomed in on a few with a vaguely similar backdrop. We'd settled in at Arctic Circle in 2014 and locked in our booking for every year through 2050 shortly thereafter.

We figured after years of working on finding a great outpost camp with an excellent bar, what fool would leave that behind?

It was also hard to argue with the bonus of our each having our own room with hot showers. Sure beat the mandatory every-other-day jump in the lake we'd enjoyed at past outposts. Especially after a late ice-out. Not to say that wasn't stimulating but... eh.

And then there was the fishing. If I could ever manage a proper hold that passed the muster of Chuk & Company, I'd share more... but I'm working on it.

Off to the right of all the Arctic Circle Lodge pics were some group shots. In 2015 I decided I couldn't think of a better team building event than a fishing trip to the Arctic Circle. Sure, 90% of the team had never fished. No one particularly seemed keen on learning how to fish up in the Arctic. So off to Trophy Lodge we went. A few things happened there I'll never forget. First, I'd never seen so many 40+ lb. fish caught on one trip – and by mostly people who had never caught a fish before. I also never saw such a happy and motivated group of people who were completely taken by not just the great fishing but everything else Trophy had to offer. By the end of the trip the unanimous consensus was that while fishing up at the Arctic hadn't been on anyone's bucket list going up, by the time it was over, it was a Top 3 on everyone's.

So the following year, when I asked where they wanted to hold their next Management Meeting – 'shocker'. Apparently it was a 'no brainer'. We were going back fishing up at the Arctic. This time they wanted to move from the great sand dunes of Trophy to the incredible cliff structures of Plummer's Great Slave Lodge...





That was last year. What a difference a year makes. It's hard to put into words what missing these trips feels like this year. Some of the team had actually planned their own trips w/their family and friends this year up to Plummer's camps. It's become that special.

I was talking with the guys who I've fished with for 35-years the other day. This year four of our boys were coming. So were two of the boys' grandfathers. We talked about how we all got here and what these trips have meant to us. How they shaped our friendships and our lives. I think sometimes it's too easy to take the things that mean so much for granted. I think we all realize just how special and important doing things like this is for so many reasons.

In about 5 months I suspect we'll start packing up the bags and setting them by the door. Might be a little earlier than in past years but then that can't come soon enough.

Tight lines...

Pat C.



I also never saw such a happy and motivated group of people who were completely taken by not just the great fishing but everything else Trophy had to offer.



"Guests" of the 2020 Season

The Arctic Lure's "Bragging Rights" centerfold has always been a huge hit with both guests and staff. Finding out that your trophy fish photo "made the cut" has been a sort of badge of honor for decades and worn copies from over the years are proudly displayed on bulletin boards, refrigerators and garage walls all around the world.

Normally this center spread is reserved for the best guest "Hug & Release" photos from the past summer. This year would be no different but for the complete lack of guest photos... So, we came up with a plan to try to keep some of our long-time guests in the action and some long-running Plummer's "attendance" streaks intact. We used these photos in a fall social media campaign, which brought a lot of great feedback and a lot of laughs.

I don't know how many of you have ever tried to tape a paper mask on your face while holding up a mature lake trout, but trust me when I tell you, it is not as easy as it sounds (does it sound that easy?). The COVID mask policy this last summer clearly stated that if you wanted to go fishing, you took the guest masks along! It should be noted that paper, wind and water do not always get along, and there was an unfortunate incident where a stack of masks blew into the lake (without wearing a proper PFD), were left unsalvageable and lost. So, if you don't see your photo in the center spread, it is probably because your mask sunk... sorry about that.

Chuk C.



Ryan L. - Caledon ON.



Jim R. - Williamsport PA.



Seth S. - Moorhead MN.



Max C. - Jefferson MO.



Adolfo G. - Hockley TX.



Eric A. - Anchorage AK.



Tim M. - Houston TX.



Andrea M. - Cameron ON.



Tom K. - Edinburg VA.



Steve & Jerry B. - Duluth MN.



Dave T. - Norwich UK.



Lee H. - Talladega AL.



Soliel L. - Caledon ON.



Harold B. - Whitby ON.



Pat C. - Greenwich CT.



The COVID mask policy this last summer clearly stated that if you wanted to go fishing, you took the guest masks along!



Jake H. - Toronto ON.



Graeme S. - Missoula MT.



Al A. - Winnipeg MB.



Chummy P. - Winnipeg MB.



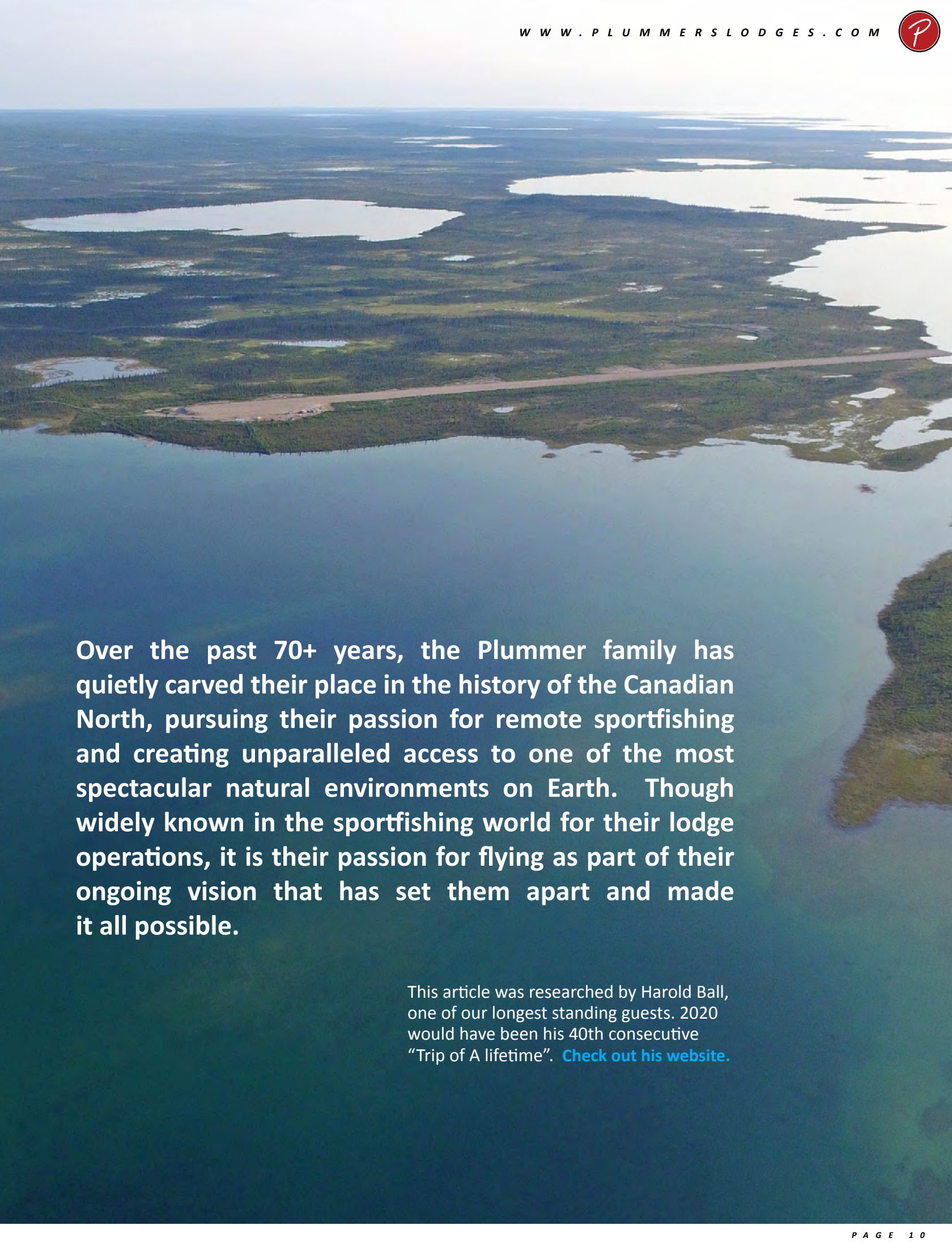
Kenny G. - Richmond Hill ON.



Tom L. & Doc S. - Dellwood MN.

Feature:
Getting Here
Plummer's Aviation Legend





Over the past 70+ years, the Plummer family has quietly carved their place in the history of the Canadian North, pursuing their passion for remote sportfishing and creating unparalleled access to one of the most spectacular natural environments on Earth. Though widely known in the sportfishing world for their lodge operations, it is their passion for flying as part of their ongoing vision that has set them apart and made it all possible.

This article was researched by Harold Ball, one of our longest standing guests. 2020 would have been his 40th consecutive "Trip of A Lifetime". [Check out his website.](#)



CF -Barkley-Gros
Sioux Narrows Airways Base Dock early 1950's
Plummer's Great Bear & Great Slave Lake Lodge

Barkley Grow





The Early Years

Beginning in 1938, when Warren Plummer was already flying fisherman to areas in and around Ontario's Lake of the Woods, a canoe trip with his father to the Taltheilei Narrows on Great Slave Lake inspired the start-up of Plummer's Arctic Lodges. That was the easy part.

Getting guests to Great Slave Lake, let alone a remote 'narrows' on the lake with an unmatched fishery was the real challenge. In 1949, Sioux Narrows Airways Ltd. was born and the Plummer's remarkable story of aviation pioneering, and innovation began.

Over the next seven decades, Warren followed by his son Chummy (who started flying at age 15), would create a world-renowned adventure lodge through feats of aviation, engineering and logistics – not to mention hard work in harsh conditions – that is now bordering on 'legendary'.

The trip from Sioux Narrows Ontario to Great Slave Lake in the NWT is over 2000 km – yes, 1300 miles – and the Plummers used some legendary aircraft to get there. As the business grew from the Lake of the Woods fixed base operation and a small bunkhouse at Taltheilei Narrows, a wide variety of small passenger aircraft were used: The Norseman, the de Havilland Beaver, the Beechcraft 18, the Grumman Goose and the Stinson Reliant (see photos) were all fitted with pontoons for water landings over the next 20 years to ferry guests to permanent lodge encampments on Great Slave Lake and later Great Bear Lake.

Even a rare Barkley-Grow, one of only 6 in Canada (and 11 ever built) was used at one point in the 1950s. Today, the Barkley-Grow (CF-BQM) and Stinson Reliant (CF-AZV) are considered historically significant with museum displays in Calgary's Hanger Flight Museum and the Western Canada Aviation Museum in Winnipeg.

Inheriting his father's passion for flying, Chummy too had a keen interest in aircraft. His first purchase was a Fairchild F-11 Husky (see photo), one of only 12 ever built in the 1940s. While this one never found its way to a museum, it was part of a long line of classic airplanes that the Plummers owned and operated as their 'workhorses of the North' throughout the years.



de Havilland Beaver and Warren Plummer



Norseman at original Slave Lake Lodge



Beechcraft 18



Grumman Goose



Stinson Reliant



de Havilland Otter



Beechcraft 18

Coming Of Age: If You Build It, They Will Come

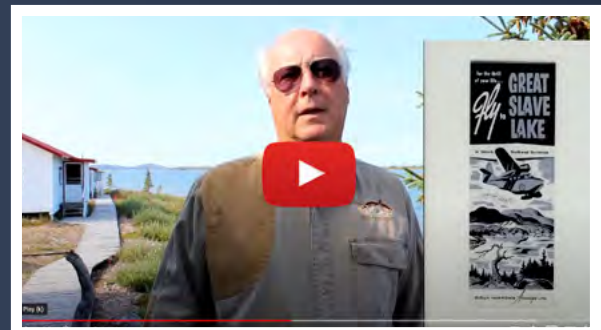
By the 1950s, the Plummers had a well-established world-class lodge on Great Slave Lake and went on to establish lodges on Great Bear Lake and on the Arctic coast (at Tree River) in the late 1950s and early 1960s. As anyone who's done it knows, building a successful business is tough and involves long hours and lots of work. Building a business in the Arctic including a proprietary air service, would be almost unthinkable for even the most fearless of entrepreneurs. The operating season is extremely short, the weather unpredictable and costs significant. Fuel costs alone bankrupted many northern lodges and increasingly strict regulations made owning and operating passenger aircraft a difficult business let alone government approved runways.

As each remote outpost was established, countless flights with materials and tradesmen were needed. Up until the mid-1960s, all of Plummer's flight operations were based on float planes and water access. Guests were flown directly to the lodges, as well as to many other places throughout the Arctic using a wide variety of pontoon-equipped aircraft. In the off-season, a lot of the heavy freight was landed on winter ice strips.

It wasn't long after Chummy and his dad had moved their Great Bear Lake camp to its current location in 1967 (a separate but equally amazing story), that Warren kicked off the mammoth task of building a gravel airstrip adjacent to the lodge that would handle larger aircraft while improving speed and safety.



Taking turns



Chummy talks about how it all started in 1938 [CLICK HERE](#)



See The Great Bear Lake Lodge runway [CLICK HERE](#)



It is worth noting that private airstrips in Canada are rare, even today. Most runways in the Canadian North have been built and owned by governments or large industrial operations, not scrappy little family businesses ‘punching above their weight’. Yet seemingly not being content with having just one major project on the go, that same year Chummy – still in his twenties – began building a landing strip for Great Slave Lake Lodge as well.

Both were about 3000 ft. in length and originally built to handle DC-3s. As their business grew, the airstrips were lengthened to accommodate DC-6s – and eventually several types of jets.

The Next Generation: Go Big or Go Home

We might chalk it up to youthful exuberance, but when Chummy first floated the idea in the 1970s of bringing in jets, Warren thought that he was a little crazy. It is no small coincidence that Canada’s great aviation history is also a history of bush pilots. Take Fred Carmichael, Willy Laserich, Stan McMillan and the infamous Max Ward for example. Like them, Chummy persevered.

Under his supervision, the airstrips for both Great Bear Lake Lodge and Great Slave Lake Lodge were widened and lengthened to over 5200 ft. By the late 1970s, the family was writing a new chapter in their rich aviation history by bringing guests directly to both camps from Winnipeg by jet - first on a Fokker F28 and later on both Boeing 727s and 737s. Among the many guests from Canada, the U.S.A. and further afield, former President George H.W. Bush was a repeat guest and they named his favourite fly-fishing spot at Tree River after him: President’s Pool.



Easy Unload



“Get back to work”



Cat at the edge of Great Slave Lake



Chummy’s truck at the end of Great Slave Lake runway



Chummy Making Decisions

The Plummers' privately owned, and meticulously maintained airstrips became suitable for almost any aircraft that can land on gravel, including Falcons, Citations, King Airls and Hercules. When the Plummers acquired their own DC-3 (eventually named 'Tree River'), Chummy thought it would be useful for ferrying guests and supplies to "The Tree" as well, so the task of building a 3rd airstrip began.

It wasn't until Chummy took over all lodge operations in the early 1980s, however, that the Tree River airstrip was finally completed. Once again, a considerable engineering and logistical undertaking to build a gravel airstrip on the Arctic tundra. At the time, Chummy concluded a Hercules was the only way to get heavy machinery to Tree River, but the closest airstrip was in Kugluktuk, some 130 kms (80 miles) away – so Chummy figured they'd put the Herc down on the sea ice. With the massive plane on the ground in Kugluktuk, Chummy flew the pilot to Tree River in a Cessna 185.* They "... circled around until we found a spot that looked clear enough of snow and with thick enough ice (we needed at least six feet of ice to land the Herc)... ", and the rest is history. They somehow managed to get the machinery from the coast inland to where Warren had started building the airstrip years before and, once completed, guests were then able to "Take the DC-3 to Tree."



Boeing 737

Transporting heavy equipment to the Arctic coast was no routine task but the Plummer family had already spent over 30 years doing the impossible in the Canadian wilderness. If these men had let “impossible” get in the way of their plans, they might well have suffered the same fate as countless other sportfishing lodges that closed their doors when the mining companies (whose airstrips they relied on) ceased operations. Instead, they used their equipment, expertise, existing air access and grit to extend the Plummer’s Lodge network.

(Editor’s note: The Tree River is the world’s greatest Arctic Char fishery. Plummer’s established the first and only lodge there in 1959 and has operated it ever since.)



For perspective, a Hercules weighs 34,000 kg, or damn near 40 tons - empty.

Cruising Altitude: Maintenance and Safety

Over the last several decades Plummer’s Arctic Lodges has continued to adapt and manage its flight operations as the world has evolved. The weekly charters no longer start in Winnipeg, but now originate in Yellowknife, the capital city of the Northwest Territories. The 737s are no longer readily available, but a vast selection of turboprops are used on a weekly basis (Dash-7, Dash-8, Dornier 228, Basler BT-67, ATR-42 and the larger ATR-72) and recently an Avro RJ85 pressurized passenger jet.

The DC-3 was retired in 2005, and the two de Havilland Otters on floats received considerable upgrades. Their former radial piston engines were converted to 900 hp turbine engines, turning them into the ultimate Canadian bush planes. Both SMG and KOA spend their summers up at Great Bear Lake.

Despite the romantic notion that having your own airplane and sportfishing lodge means days filled with thrills and endless fishing, it’s actually very hard work featuring unique daily challenges. More often than not unless you’re lucky enough to be a guest, it involves long days of loading and unloading heavy, unwieldy cargo (including guests) and occasionally flying in fast-changing weather conditions. Plummer’s Lodges has long since mastered the logistics of providing high-calibre, fly-in adventures to some of the most remote and spectacular wilderness environments on the planet.

As Chummy, master of the understatement recently put it: “After so many years of flying, it’s just like driving a truck, so it’s really not that big of a deal.” It’s worth noting that over the years the Plummers and all their pilots have chalked up an **equal number** of successful takeoffs and landings.

Explore more of the amazing history of Plummer’s Lodges at www.plummerslodgehistory.com



Boeing 727

Special Packages



Family Week

Great Bear Lake Lodge: July 30 - August 6, 2022
Great Slave Lake Lodge: July 23 - 30, 2022

This is the 17th year offering Family Week where one family member gets 25% off the price of their trip. Fathers and daughters, husbands and wives and grandpas and their grandkids continue to make this a trip worth remembering.



29th Annual Dental Seminar

Trophy Lodge: July 2 - 9, 2022

Join hosts Dr. Terry Donovan and Dr. David Hall as they head the annual dental convention. Earn up to 22 continuing education credits while fishing for Lake Trout, Northern Pike, and Arctic Grayling at one of the best fisheries on the planet. Only 22 spots are available for the best Dental Seminar offered anywhere and they fill up quickly.



Fly Fishing Week

Great Bear Lake Lodge: August 6 - 13 & August 13 - 20, 2022

This package includes TWO nights at the Tree River as well as a remote Arctic Grayling flyout in the price. The trip is scheduled to coincide with the Lake Trout moving up onto the shoals and the Arctic Char displaying their glorious spawning colors. NOTE: You do NOT have to fly fish to take part in this package.



Musk Ox Hunt

Great Bear Lake Lodge and Grey Goose Outfitters:
August 20 - 27, August 27 - September 3, 2022

Our annual Musk Ox hunt is fast gaining a reputation as one of the premier big game hunts offered in North America. With the limited number of hunts we offer and the remarkable size of the animals in the Sahtu region, discerning hunters from across the continent are leaving thrilled every year. Nothing is wasted on this sustainable hunt, as any meat that is not taken by the hunters is distributed in the local community of Deline. Call for details and availability.



Chummy's 3 Day
**CANADIAN
CHALLENGE**

Great Slave Lake



2022

4th ANNUAL

GREAT SLAVE LAKE LODGE
Aug 10-13, 2022

OVER \$5000 IN PRIZES

*Most 20 Pound Lake Trout
in 3 Days Wins!*

ONLY 36 ANGLERS - CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO

Sharing *Indelible Memories*

A Rocky Way To "The Bigs"

Back in 2014, my wife, Leslie, was peeved because she hadn't caught any real trophy fish. Mind you, this is the woman whose Dad had an outdoor show on the radio, and both of her parents had been tournament quality musky hunters in Wisconsin, so it's not like she was a rank beginner.

So, I said "OK", you've done a couple of seasons in the big leagues (to wit, Manitoba), so now you're ready for the World Series (or Cup Final, take your pick.)

Needless to say, she was ecstatic. She was getting good lakers, all the pike she could land, and incredible numbers of 18"+ grayling. But she still hadn't caught that 20-pounder.

So, Wednesday rolled around. We were down by Second Light and made the turn to the Crocochet. We were tooling around near the Grave watching a herd of musk ox. At this point we were going dead slow in eight feet of water some fifty yards from shore, with ice covering about half the distance.

Leslie was so immersed in watching the woolies that she hadn't reeled in her line, so she was dragging a huge pink (PINK! Is that a girly color or not? Still, lakers eat them) Dardevle when down went the tip. She got a solid set and after some arduous and high-quality rod work and expert boat handling by Chance, netted a thirty-pounder.

After her happy dance we pulled her back into the boat (Ha! Fooled ya!) and got back to business. Maybe fifteen minutes later, WHAM! here we go again. This one nearly spooled her, but she finally got its head turned. Then came the part where she made suggestions to it about coming in for a photo op and waited for it to make up its mind. Finally, she was able to pump and reel, but when you can only recover about a foot and a half at a time and there's a bit over a hundred yards of line out, it's time consuming.

Finally, it was close enough for Chance to get the net on it and I think she muttered something like "Lord, take me now!" It took most of half an hour to haul in a FORTY pounder. According to the GPS, the beast hauled the boat a quarter of a mile from hook-up to landing.



But wait, there's more!

Once Leslie was showing signs of recovery, we started off again, (in case you haven't figured it out yet, I was getting royally skunked.). We hadn't gotten much closer to the river mouth when, yup, tip went down again. Although all three of us could see the line vibrating and what looked like head shakes, it was coming pretty much straight in with only a few hesitations. You can imagine the consternation when she boated a six pound...rock. It had a hole eroded in it and the hook passed clean through it. Talk about a one in a million... We attributed this to the fact that she had retired her Lucky Pinky and was using a hammered copper Dardevle.

This time we did not practice catch and release. The rock now has pride of place on our mantle.

So, not only had she gone to the Series/Finals, she was the MVP. We've been back, since once you've been bitten by the Bear you can't conceive of going anywhere else. I've been to Trophy Lodge eight times, and though we were COVIDed out in 2020, we're on the books for '21 and time can't pass quickly enough.

Jay Z.

Guide *Corner*

Small Checks Bring Larger Hauls

Anyone who has fished has got a story, some of us more than one. While losing fish is inevitable, steps can be taken to try to eliminate some of the controllable issues that result in lost fish. Over the years I have been lucky enough to fish with some very good anglers, some of whom come from a tournament background. Needless to say, losing fish in a tournament situation can be the difference between finishing in or out of the money. In everyday fishing, the price you pay may not be financial, but you never know which bite could be the fish of a lifetime. What I've learned, and try to practice, is how attention to simple details can lead to more fish in the boat.

Whenever possible I try to use good quality, strong, sharp hooks. Often this requires swapping hooks out on your baits. One should definitely have a decent hook file, and pay attention to the condition of the hooks, sharpening when required. It's also good practice to check how the baits are running when you are releasing them. If they are not running true, they may need to be tuned in order to properly trigger the fish.

I always pay particular attention to every aspect of the line and reel. Making sure the reel is working properly and the drag is set correctly. Also, I always check to make sure the line is spooled on the reel tightly, if not it can bind and cause you to break off. Needless to say, the main line should be in good condition. Anyone who has fished with me knows that I am meticulous about checking the leader for nicks and frays, retying after almost every fish. If the drag is set and the line is in good condition the chance of having a break off should be greatly reduced.

Finally, it's important to inspect the condition of your net, making sure there aren't any rips or tears. Nothing quite like watching your trophy swim right through the net. I always carry a few zip ties in the boat in case you need to make repairs on the fly.

Bob W.



According to the GPS, the beast hauled the boat a quarter of a mile from hook-up to landing.



Sharing *Indelible Memories*

The One that Got Away

Every fishing enthusiast has one – a story of the big one that got away. Sadly, in 2020, it was our big summer trip to Plummer's Lodge that slipped from our grasp, another casualty of COVID-19. Many reading this will be sharing our pain. Cancellation of the entire Plummers' season plunged us into mourning. But solace lies in savouring fond memories of previous trips and eager anticipation of another "Big Fish Friday" in 2021.

We are a father and son bonded by this modified version of a classic expression: give your son a fish, and you feed him for a day; teach your son to fish and you have a fishing buddy for life. So many fishing buddy memories spring from trips to Great Bear Lodge and our many fly-outs, particularly to the Tree River. Nowhere else offers these magical opportunities for father-son fishing under the midnight sun. Everyone enjoys memories of their biggest catch, but our best memories include the rest of the experience: hospitality from everyone in camp; the always personable guides, and the rare opportunities to enjoy the natural wonders and local history of this ruggedly beautiful part of the Canadian arctic. Here are just some.

John's Fly: In 2018, Jake and I were part of the season ending Tree River Char Exclusive, and got to know a fellow fly-fisher, and sharp dresser, John Ferrigamo. Over breakfast one morning, John told the story of targeting a sizable char buck at Relay, a favored lie just above some powerful rapids. After many presentations, John had inadvertently foul hooked his quarry on the dorsal fin. The buck turned into the powerful current, ran downstream and broke him off. We lightheartedly told John we would try to catch his fish and recover his fly.

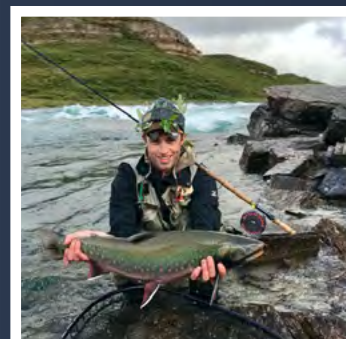
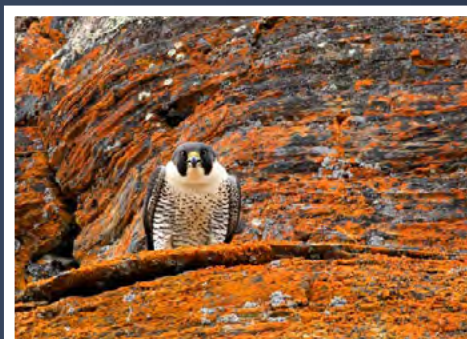
When we later fished Relay, Jake caught several char and resident lakereels, but I was skunked. On the way downstream, our guide, Dave Jackson, spotted a buck holding on an inside seam below the rapids. Feeling sorry for me, Dave told Jake to let the old man target this one. They watched my first swing with a streamer short side the fish, and directed me to let out another three feet of line on the next cast. They were spot on. As soon as I saw my chartreuse streamer meet the fish, I felt the take and set the hook. Then the heckling started. They could see a fly in the dorsal fin and shouted "snagger". But after fighting the fish into the net, I was vindicated. It was nicely hooked in the side of the mouth; the fly in the dorsal fin was John Ferrigamo's. Both single barbless hooks were easily removed. My trophy was released unscathed - a memorable catch with a bonus recovery.

Jake took a lovely slow-mo video of the release, which was posted on the Plummers Facebook page and later "poached" by the Instagram page just.fishing. A few weeks later it had over 422,000 views, proof that that it is hard to resist the sight of a beautiful red char swimming in the clear currents of the magnificent Tree River: [CLICK HERE](#).

Our trips have been punctuated with many, sometimes thrilling wildlife sightings. The best grizzly bear encounter was at the Tree. As we drifted downriver admiring a bald eagle overhead, guide Dave Jackson caught sight of a mother and cub right bedside us on shore. We marvelled at their size and speed as the startled pair took off in the other direction.

Every flight to and from the Tree River Camp is like a nature tour. Pilot Larry Zurloff will accommodatingly drop down for a good look at rugged escarpments and worthwhile wildlife, like muskox, grizzlies, moose and caribou roaming the rugged barren lands above the treeline.

An annual treat at Great Bear is watching the peregrine falcons flying around their nest at the Narkay Islands. The mother



peregrine becomes quite protective when the chicks are still in the nest, as evidenced by the intense peregrine stare-down we photographed in 2014, followed by some close flybys.

John's Fly - I won't get spooled again: Tree River guests are advised in advance to spool lots of line, or backing in the case of fly fishers. I now know why. One evening, super guide (and fisheries biologist) Chance Prestie got us into fish-fest at First Falls, high sticking egg patterns in the current. Chance thought my leader was too light, so he lent me one of his reels as he kindly took care of attaching a new leader to mine. He didn't want me to miss any of the action. His generosity was not rewarded. In no time I hooked into a huge fish, which turned sideways and headed straight down river. As it peeled off a couple hundred yards of backing, Jake and Chance furiously scrambled down the rocky shore hoping to net the fish or at least grab and save the line. Unfortunately, my luck and my line ran out. Snap! Chance graciously accepted my embarrassed apologies and prompt payment for the lost line.

One of the great surprises at the Tree River is the opportunity to catch multi-species with varied presentations. Swinging a spoon or a streamer on a sinking line is a traditional and popular way to catch char and a surprising number of resident lake trout. But we were delighted to be shown that fish holding tight to shore or in plunge pools can be taken by high-sticking an egg pattern or a bead. And during the end-of-season Char Exclusive in 2018, Jake found that a center pin works perfectly in long runs and in back eddies, like at Slippery Jack.

A wonderful bonus was discovering fantastic dry fly fishing in the shallows around the boat launch, just above camp. Regular hatches produce resident char, small lakers and even whitefish on tiny dark midges.

And the weather as is varied as the fishing. In 2017 we fished the legendary Coppermine River on a day so hot that Jake fished shirtless in his waders and I had to take a dip to cool off. The next year we fished the Tree in falling snow, after waking up to find the escarpment behind camp was snow covered.

Camp is full of characters. None more colourful than long-time guide Pike Mike Harrison, recently known for roles on "reality" shows Ice Lake Rebels and Life Below Zero - Canada. Mike can put you on fish and talk your ear off. He amusingly tells the story of Frank Bluch, of Australia, playing and eventually landing a 30-pound lake trout on two-pound tippet. Mike tells the story in just under the four hours it took to land the IGFA 2-pound tippet world record (one of many to IGFA records to Frank's credit): [CLICK HERE](#).

In 2018, Mike added brewmeister to his credentials when he home-brewed a batch of "Yellow Pail Ale", not to be confused with a traditional pale ale. The name derives from the yellow pail in which it was brewed. A verbal liability waiver was required of the intrepid guests selected to sample his handiwork (it was delicious, for a first batch arctic home brew).

There is always an opportunity to take a brief break from fishing, as we have, to visit some unique historic sites. They include: The cabin of John Hornby, on Hornby Bay, where the famous English adventurer spent winters before World War I (He and two companions would later starve to death on the Thelon River in 1926, after a brutal winter: [CLICK HERE](#)); Fort Confidence, where a few stone chimneys are all that remain of an exploration camp first built in 1837, and rebuilt in 1848 as a base of operations for the search for the lost Franklin Expedition; or the gravesite of RCMP Corporal William Doak and Hudson Bay Company employee Otto Binder, who were murdered by an escaped prisoner near where they are buried at the mouth of the Tree River: [CLICK HERE](#).

We can't wait for our next opportunity to make new friends and memories with the Plummer's crew.

Dave & Jake H.





Catching lunch for the boys

Lodge Notes:

Chummy's Thoughts

I don't have to tell anyone that 2020 has been a year unlike any that I've ever seen. I never in my life pictured a day when our southern border would not be open for our American friends and the NWT border would even be closed to our Canadian friends. I am hoping that life will get back to normal, just as quickly as it all changed for the worse. Spending this summer up North without many people was like a never-ending start-up that turned into a really long shut down. The lakes looked the same, but it was quieter than it is supposed to be. On the bright side, the fish all got a break. We did not get to spend a lot of time on the water, but the bite was on when we did sneak out for a fish.

I wish all of you the best, and a safe and healthy winter. Let's all look forward to a fantastic 2021 fishing season!

Hug & Release,
Chummy Plummer
3rd Generation Host & Proprietor



Chummy's 1st Plane 1967
WCP paid \$18,000 June
CP sold \$20,000 Sept.

Chummy's first plane - Fairchild F-11 Husky



Chummy still guides the charters in every Saturday morning.



**PLUMMER'S
ARCTIC BROWN BREAD RECIPE**

Dissolve 2 yeast cake in 1 cup warm water, add 1 tsp. sugar
let stand 10 minutes then add:

- 1½ c. cooking molasses
- 2 c. Red River Cereal (cooked)
- 1 c. Wesson oil or shortening
- 2 tbsp. salt
- 3 cups All-Bran breakfast cereal
- 1 qt. warm water
- 4 tbsp. brown sugar

Then add approx. 12 cups white flour, enough to make proper consistency

Let rise 2 hrs. Punch down and put into loaf pans for baking and let rise 1 hr.

Bake at 325° to 375° until done

Bread for the Ages

Back in 1959 at the lodge on Great Bear Lake, the gal that ran dad's kitchen was named Marge. Even back then, they served Red River cereal every morning. (The owners of that company were good customers of ours). Well Marge got tired of having to throw out the leftover cereal after everyone went fishing, so she decided she was going to try to make bread out of it. Turns out it was a hit, and we make it still to this day. Half the fishing camps in Canada will try to say they came up with the recipe, but it was invented by Marge in 1959 at Bear Lake.

Chummy P.



Our *Lodge Network*



Great Bear Lake Lodge

PLUMMER'S GREAT BEAR LAKE LODGE is on the Dease Arm of Great Bear Lake. Our two Turbine Otters are stationed here, making it the only lodge that offers daily fly-outs to otherwise inaccessible hot-spots around the region, including the Tree River. Seven-day packages (weekly) and four-day packages (select weeks).

The 2021 season here begins July 3, with the last week of regular fishing packages ending August 15.



Trophy Lodge

PLUMMER'S TROPHY LODGE is located on the Smith Arm of Great Bear Lake. One of the smaller of our lodges, Trophy Lodge only holds up to 22 anglers.

The 2021 season here begins with the Dental Seminar July 3 and is open for regular guests July 10. Seven-day packages only.



Tree River Outpost

PLUMMER'S TREE RIVER OUTPOST is located in Nunavut. This famed river flows into the Arctic Ocean, is home to the largest Arctic Char on the planet and has been featured in media worldwide. It is offered as an overnight trip from Great Bear Lake Lodge or as a seven-day package from Great Bear (five days at the Tree River).

The seven-day package is only offered at the very end of the 2021 season, August 21-28.



Great Slave Lake Lodge

PLUMMER'S GREAT SLAVE LAKE LODGE is the original Plummer's Lodge. Located in Taltheilei Narrows on the East Arm of Great Slave Lake, it is well known for consistently having some of the most amazing fishing in the NWT, often within sight of the lodge!

The 2021 season here begins on July 3 and ends early September. Three-, four-, and seven-day packages available weekly.



Arctic Circle Outpost

PLUMMER'S ARCTIC CIRCLE OUTPOST is on the McTavish Arm of Great Bear Lake. This is the only lodge that is self-guided. Guests are provided with boats equipped with 20 hp motors and sonar units, and there is a camp manager on site to ensure everything runs smoothly.

Space is very limited, as many groups do not give their week up. It is only available to groups of 6 – 12 anglers. Seven-day packages only.



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