

Our City

“Ya got another think come’n.” I used to hear that from my grandfather and dad when I got too big for my britches or thought I knew something that as things turned out I didn’t. Ya, well I had another think come’n last Thursday and Friday. Possibly like some of you I was hoping probably more than thinking when the rains subsided and the temperatures nudged into the 40’s, less than 10 days ago, that spring was just around the corner. Humph, NOT!

Sadly too, even though I knew I should have, I didn’t slip down to the river to fish during the rain and wind. But then it has been a bit crowded and the fish have few places to escape contact with a nymph under a bobber; the preferred method of the hordes. So I was glad to get the text from Larry Jones letting me know that the release below the dam would bump up to 1500 cfs from its current winter level of just over 400 this Monday. Now, on this stretch of the Snake River 1500 cfs is not a lot of water but when you consider historical flows of around 2000 cfs it’s a lot more than 400; which is better for the fish, giving a reprieve and escape from their small holding areas at lower flows.

Make no mistake the Bureau of Reclamation isn’t bumping up the flows for the fish; no, flows are going up because the reservoir above the dam is at 84 percent of full in late February and as we experienced this past week winter snowfalls don’t seem to be done. Snow packs in the Snake River basin above American Falls Dam are at near record highs. Closer to home snowpack and snow water at the lower Pebble Creek Snotel site hasn’t recorded snow water levels like this year’s, 190%, since 1972, 1982 and 1997. If you are wondering the record snow water equivalent for this site is 236% recorded both in 1972 and 1982. If you remember 1997 and the problems that occurred with flooding the snow water equivalent at this time of year was 198%. I suspect releases below the dam will increase considerably above the 1500 cfs level as snow continues to accumulate throughout the basin and as spring really does begin to arrive. Long term forecasts for the month of March look more “normal” to recent years with clouds, rain, snow and wind but temperatures in the mid-30s to 40s; if you can wait until March 10th or thereabout, 60 degrees is predicted but so is rain. C’est la vie. It looks like this Monday and Tuesday might be our last real snow, but who knows? I don’t.

Beyond all the weather and water the only real news I have for you will happen on March 15. You may remember Friday night steak night? One of Sally’s favorites was the Sunday morning Eggs Benedict. My favorite lunch was the Cuban Ruben. Scott Ploussard will be opening the Willow Bay Café on March 15th. Scott was in town this past week and we had a chance to chat as he met with Clerk Robyn Herndon and me. Scott’s been working as a chef at the Red Lion in Elko, NV over the winter and he is bringing back some exciting new ideas.

When you get to the Café you will find the cash register in a new place on the front counter. I only mention that because an ice cream and milkshake station is going in where the cash register used to be. You will also find an espresso machine on the front counter as you come in; nice additions I think. More exciting for me at least are his plans to move steak night to Saturday and have a seafood (shrimp and crab, one pound each) on Fridays. And, somewhere in the week he will fit in Italian pasta night. Don’t get me wrong I have enjoyed Tres Hermanos, China City and L&J this winter; I always do. Sadly, I have only been to the Grill and Chill for ice cream and the like but I have heard very good reports.

The good news for everyone once winter is finally over is that we actually had a winter; one that hopefully will allow snow to melt slowly in the highlands and provide for boating and fishing on the reservoir and river below well into late July and if we are really lucky August. While we are all dependent on the water none are more so than our farmers and local businesses who thrive when the reservoir and river are at recreational levels. I “think” we are going to have that this year. I further hope that, “I don’t have another think come’n.”

Until next week...