

**"FISHING WITH HARRY"  
REFLECTIONS BY THOMAS D'AQUINO AT THE  
ADLATOK RIVER, LABRADOR, JULY 21, 2017**

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My visit to the Adlatok River, nestled in the austere spectacular landscape of Northern Labrador, revived warm memories of events past and camaraderie never forgotten.

Sitting in the comfort of Camp Adlatok, overlooking beautiful saltwater Adlatok Bay, and following a hearty lunch, our fishing party of four drank a toast to our generous friend and host, Harry Steele. My fishing partner, Bob Foster, and I, also reminisced about our departed comrade and builder of Camp Adlatok, the legendary Craig Dobbin.

Thanks to Harry, over the decades I had come to know and fish some of the finest salmon rivers in the world - the Adlatok, Eagle, Hunt, Lewis, North, Tom Luscombe's Brook, and Sandhill.

The morning on the Adlatok had been productive - the fish were rising, six salmon and a number of grilse were taken and all but several grilse were released. My favourite fly, the Blue Charm, did not disappoint. A highlight of the morning was bringing to the net a hard-fighting 14 pound beauty freshly out of the ocean. Three runs and four jumps by this magnificent fish made for excitement.

Along with my friend Prince Edward Island Lieutenant Governor, Frank Lewis, we were assigned by Camp Director and helicopter pilot Greg Baikie to the north side of the falls.

I had the good fortune to fish the splendid President George H. W. Bush Pool, so named by Craig Dobbin for former President Bush Sr. on the occasion of his visit in 1993.

Over lunch, I recounted one of my favourite stories. Back in 1993, Craig and his wife Elaine, in the company of Harry, invited me to Camp Adlatok to fish with the President.

I had met the President on several occasions when he was in office and I was an admirer. Following his arrival and a fine dinner, he and I were paired to fish the following morning. At 6 am I was awakened to find the President at the door offering me a cup of coffee and urging me to gear up and get going. Startled, I remember saying "I'm not in the habit, sir, of being awakened with morning coffee by the Commander-in-Chief!"

Within the first hour on the river, and with the help of a Blue Charm, I had brought two grilse to the net while the President had no luck. I promptly complied when he suggested that we exchange pools. Within an hour or so later, I took two more grilse and the President still had not had a strike. En route to the Camp, he humorously remarked that "the George Bush Pool should be re named the Hillary Clinton Pool!"

Back at the Camp, Craig grinned and wondered if Canada United States relations were at risk, but assured the President that in the days to come his luck would change and it did.

Following brunch, I presented the President with a gift of newly created salmon flies. I joked that they had no official name yet but that I thought "weapons of mass destruction" might be apt. He laughed heartily. We all did.

Over the next days, we delved into momentous events of his time in office - the fall of the Berlin Wall, German reunification, the Gulf War, the Tiananmen Square massacre, the collapse of the Soviet Union, as well as his reflections on world leaders such as Mikhail Gorbachev, Boris Yeltsin, Margaret Thatcher, Helmut Kohl and François Mitterrand. He expressed his admiration for Brian Mulroney and his satisfaction at having negotiated the North American Free Trade Agreement. We all understood what a rare privilege this was.

I had the good fortune to meet President Bush on a number of occasions thereafter. The last time that we spoke at the conclusion of a church service on the Maine coast not far from his residence near Kennebunkport, he remarked fondly that fishing on the Adlatok was one of the high points of his fishing memories.

For this story and so many other good memories, I thank my good friend Harry Steele. He has taught me much about the grit, determination, good humour and generosity that characterize the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. In July, when the salmon are running, there is no place I would rather be.

Thomas d'Aquino