

Just "Not Thinking"
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by Nick Bower

Bob Best writes a column in this magazine that I certainly look forward to reading. He calls it "Just Thinkin". I have gained a lot from reading this column and have a great deal of respect for Bob and the ideas he passes on to us. As Bob does his best to get us to thinking, it did just that for me. I thought about all the times I was "Just NOT Thinking"? It didn't take me long to realize that I could probably draft an article of novel length on this subject.

Such as: I use some magnum 160's for mink, and as I like to start my triggers on these, it's not a real good idea to reach in between the jaws to move the trigger if you're not paying close attention! They do whack you pretty hard.

When using an ATV to aid you on your trap line, make certain that you stow your gear properly. There is nothing worse than getting to the set area, a long ways from the vehicle, get ready to make a set and discovering that your shoulder length gauntlets are not part of the equipment on the ATV! So you bite the bullet so to speak, slide down over the steep, high creek bank, pull up your sleeves and dive into the icy water. When finished with numb hands, you climb back up over the creek bank and to your delight you find the gloves you thought were left in the truck, laying on the ground with the ATV parked on them.

When carrying lure bottles on you, stow them in a convenient and secure place. I for one don't remember ever losing a bottle of lure, although I have stood in total disbelief holding an open 4 oz bottle of lure and watching the cap floating down stream in a fast moving, deep, current.

I've been using the CDR beaver traps now for a while and I love them. Carl had told me it was a good idea to drill holes in the setters and tie a string through them, kind of like idiot mittens I guess? I had made a couple sets in a rather remote spot, 150 to 200 yards from where I was able to park the vehicle. I had anticipated making a catch there as it was a hot spot. I'm not sure why, but I decided to take along the video recorder and the tripod so I could do some recording of my activities. I park, get out all of the video gear and pack basket with everything I'll need, and head to the location. The water was rather clear and I could see that I had made a catch. I went to work setting up the tripod and video equipment, turned the camera on, donned the shoulder length gloves, waded out into the water, pulled up the weight, beaver, and trap, all the time explaining my activities so the camera would catch all of it. I thought this is working out fine, until I reached for the trap setters and realized that I had not listened to some sound advice about stringing them together and that they were still back in the truck! Good thing we have some neat video editing programs available.

Distractions are not good. I enjoy the little things while out on the trap line. Like having a hot cup of coffee now and then. Or at the last stop of the day going for the last cup before heading in. Being in a bit of a hurry closing the tailgate, I set the thermos on the bumper, took a quick look at the ATV trailer making certain all was buttoned up there and something distracts me for a moment. Oh well, let's get headed home. Shortly after heading down the road you hear a noise and glance in the rear view mirror and see your favorite thermos bottle bouncing along the pavement and it's actually gaining on you!

I received as a Christmas present some time ago, one of those emergency battery pack things that are like a battery and jumper cables all built into one. Wow, are those things ever nice. It's compact and stows behind the seat of the truck nicely, and seems to hold a charge forever. They are especially handy when you're out in the boondocks alone and the battery in your vehicle fails you. Thinking I got this problem covered, as I reach behind the seat to get it, I suddenly remember that it's sitting on the work bench at home as I had neglected to return it to it's proper place after giving a friend at home a jump start! Another very useful item is the cell phone!

Ever use a chalk box? I do, a lot it seems. They have that special little fancy piece of metal on the end that hooks over or even onto the edge of a board or post, so that striking a line can be a one-man operation. Pretty slick. You just tie the end of the line onto this. You want to make certain the knot is one of your most favorite, most foolproof ones. A couple of times I have cranked on the handle and watched the end of the now bare string as it goes back inside the chalk box!

Perhaps after reading this, you will get into the habit of "Just Thinkin". ### Nick Bower, Box 181, New Athens, OH 43981