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Local man has promise fulfilled, 68 years later Lost Boy Scout gets lifetime fishing license

By GLENN ADAMS
Associated Press

AUGUSTA, Maine — A governor's promise to a 12-year-old Boy Scout who emerged safely from the northern Maine woods after being lost for more than a week was fulfilled Tuesday — nearly seven decades late.

Donn Fendler, who now lives in Clarksville, got lost on July 17, 1939, while hiking with family members on mile-high Mount Katahdin. The search for the boy from Rye, N.Y., drew national media attention.



After Fendler walked out of the woods on July 25 by following a stream and telephone line to a sporting camp on the East Branch of the Penobscot River, then-Gov. Lewis Barrows invited him to the State House in Augusta and promised him a lifetime fishing license.

But the license never materialized — until Tuesday afternoon.

Fendler, who still spends part of every summer in Maine, mentioned the promise to Maine Conservation Commissioner Patrick McGowan when the two met last summer. McGowan told Gov. John Baldacci, who decided to make good on his predecessor's promise.

Welcoming him into his office, Baldacci presented the gray-haired Fendler with the lifetime fishing license. McGowan paid interest on the old debt with a decorative canoe paddle autographed by Baldacci.

Fendler, a retired Army lieutenant colonel, was taken slightly aback by the attention, saying he was "just a dumb kid who got lost in the woods."

Fendler gave the governor a copy of the book he co-wrote with Joseph B. Egan, "Lost on a Mountain in Maine," which tells about Fendler's 1939 adventure and is read by classes in many of Maine's elementary schools.

"It tells you what not to do if you get lost," said Fendler, who added that he has plans for the canoe paddle given to him.

"I'll be on the East Branch of the Penobscot next week," promised Fendler.

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As a Mainer (born in Augusta!)- I was delighted to see this story. I loved Col. Fendler's book as a child, and even as an adult it is one of my favorites. Congratulations sir - wishing you many long days of fishing! Sometimes we move a little slow in "Vacationland"! Ayuh!

Posted by: **curtsie** on Wed Jun 06, 2007 5:18 pm

Good luck to you, sir!!

Posted by: **donivan3** on Wed Jun 06, 2007 1:20 pm

I didn't know Lewis Barrows was still alive, after all these years!!!

Nice to know that people over 100 can still fulfill promises made 70 years ago.

Speaking of lifetime fishing license, how much lifetime does he have left with 68 years behind him?

Posted by: **skyfox37** on Wed Jun 06, 2007 11:42 am

Aawww! How sweet 😊😄

Posted by: **PopNoff** on Wed Jun 06, 2007 9:17 am

Better late than never, I guess.. 😊

Congrats and enjoy your fishing Colonel!!!!!!

Posted by: **JustMy2Cents** on Wed Jun 06, 2007 9:02 am

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