

Straight TALK

by John A. Arway

Executive Director
Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission

Paying it Forward

We have all heard about the concept of “Paying it Forward”—doing something nice for someone as a way to repay someone else for doing a good deed for you. I often think about the many family, friends and even strangers in my life who were responsible for getting me outdoors and teaching me how to fish. I wonder where I would be if I hadn’t had these opportunities as a child, teenager and as an adult since they profoundly influenced my personal life and professional career. Collectively, these experiences continue to fuel my passion for the outdoors and provide personal motivation to conserve our natural resources so future generations can have the same opportunities that I did. The goal for all of us should be to leave our waters and fisheries in a better condition than when we borrowed them from our parents and grandparents. That is how I have chosen to “Pay it Forward.”

The concept of paying it forward has a foundation in history that dates back to a time when it was included as a key plot element in a play called the *Dyskolos*, “The Grouch,” performed in Athens, Greece in 317 BC. Benjamin Franklin conditioned a loan to a friend in 1784 by saying, “When you meet with another honest man in similar distress, you must pay me by lending this sum to him.” Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote in 1841 that “In the order of nature, we cannot render benefits to those from whom we receive them, or only seldom. But the benefit we receive must be rendered again, line for line, deed for deed, cent for cent, to somebody.” The concept was made popular in recent times when Catherine Ryan Hyde’s novel *Pay It Forward* was published in 2000 and then adapted into a film starring Kevin Spacey, Helen Hunt and Haley Joel Osment. The book and movie describe the notion as an obligation to do three good deeds for others in response to a good deed that one receives. The idea being that the practice of helping one another would multiply throughout society and make the world a better place in which to live (https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pay_it_forward).



photo-John A. Arway

Executive Director John A. Arway’s daughter Caitlyn with his grandchildren (left to right) Xander, Genevieve and Leif at Foster Joseph Sayers Reservoir, Bald Eagle State Park, Centre County.

Then, in 2007, Pay it Forward Day (the last Thursday in April) was founded by Blake Beattie in Australia. In 2015, people from 75 countries participated with official proclamations occurring in over 42 states and 48 cities. The intent of the day is to encourage people to do between one and three good deeds for others without asking for anything in return except to pay it forward to someone else in need. Since many of us get caught up in the rush of everyday life, we often lose sight of what is important to us. Pay it Forward Day is a great reminder of how we can use our positive energy to make a difference in the lives of others (www.payitforwardday.com). This is much like how our friends, family and even strangers have made a difference for us. The intention this year for Pay it Forward Day is hoping to inspire 10 million acts of kindness throughout the world.

By now, I hope you can see where I am headed with this since I believe that this day would provide a great opportunity to join with others around the world to make a difference with our sport. Much like we do during our annual staff “Thank You Campaign,” where staff and I thank anglers for buying a fishing license, we can use this day as an opportunity to introduce others to fishing or help out someone in need along the stream, river or lake.

What can you do?

1. Buy someone a fishing license.
2. Give someone a secret lure or fly to increase their success.
3. Buy or loan someone a personal flotation device (PFD).
4. Share a cold drink or half of a sandwich with someone.
5. Teach a child or another adult how to fish.
6. Help out a novice angler when you see them attempting to fish.
7. Bait someone's hook.
8. Give someone a tip on where to fish.
9. Invite a shore angler to go out on your boat.
10. Help another boater launch their boat.
11. Tow a stranded boater back to the dock.
12. Be creative!

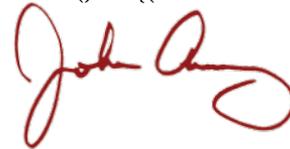
It can be as big or small as you would like to make it, but our aim should be to simply put a smile on someone's face and feel good about doing it. This is our chance to perform

some wonderful acts of kindness and show others how proud we are about Pennsylvania's fishing heritage. It can be as big or as small a deed as you would like to make it. You can Pay it Forward anytime you like.

Officially, Pay it Forward Day is Thursday, April 28, but I plan on taking my grandchildren fishing on Mentored Youth Trout Day on Saturday, April 9, as a start. I also plan on reconnecting with old fishing buddies throughout the year, renewing friendships and perhaps introducing someone to our great sport. Simply, I plan to do as many good deeds as I can in 2016 since I have lot of catching up to do. How about you? Together we can change the way others view our sport, one new angler at a time.

Your Director,

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Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission's Pay it Forward Challenge

Be the change you want to see in Pennsylvania!

Take time to report what you're doing to "Pay it Forward," and be part of Pennsylvania's fishing and boating heritage during 2016. Visit www.GoneFishingPA.com to share what you've done to meet the "challenge" by:

- Mentoring youth and adults on how to fish and boat in Pennsylvania.
- Working on habitat improvement and other conservation projects in Pennsylvania.
- Donating to a chosen cause that supports fishing and boating in Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC) will acknowledge these actions and make awards in each category at the end of 2016. Recognition throughout the year will be shared across PFBC's social media channels, its website and in future *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* issues. Final winners will be notified and recognized at a quarterly Commission meeting.



The mission of the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission is to protect, conserve and enhance the Commonwealth's aquatic resources and provide fishing and boating opportunities.