

# BUSINESS TODAY

## 18 Gemvara boss hooked on fishing

### Jewelry Web site nets \$10M

Babson College graduate Matt Lauzon has already raised more than \$10 million in venture capital for his Lexington-based online jewelry retailer Gemvara.com.

The Web site, which went live almost a year ago, lets users choose from more



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than 1,500 original designs and then fashion their own jewelry.

The Herald caught up with Maine-born Lauzon to talk about his other passion: fly fishing.

#### **How did you become interested in fly fishing?**

I grew up in Maine and my father was really into fishing as he was growing up and it became something that he and I did with my brothers on weekends or weeknights as a pastime.

#### **Do you fish in freshwater or saltwater?**

I fish in both. I certainly spend a lot more time fishing in freshwater, but in saltwater it can be great, too. There are areas in Cape Cod and where I grew up in Biddeford, Maine, where it can be great for striped bass or bluefish.

#### **What are some great places to fish where you grew up?**

The Saco River, which is right in Biddeford, has great striped bass and bluefish fishing in the summer. If you go a little north to the Rangeley-Oquossoc area, there's a place I used to go a lot called the Kennebec River or the Magalloway or the Rapid River. I also went a lot in North Conway, New Hampshire, which is actually where I first learned fly fishing, as opposed to some of the sort of regular spin-fishing I did growing up.

#### **Now, you're busy running this company, getting it up and going. Where do you go around here?**

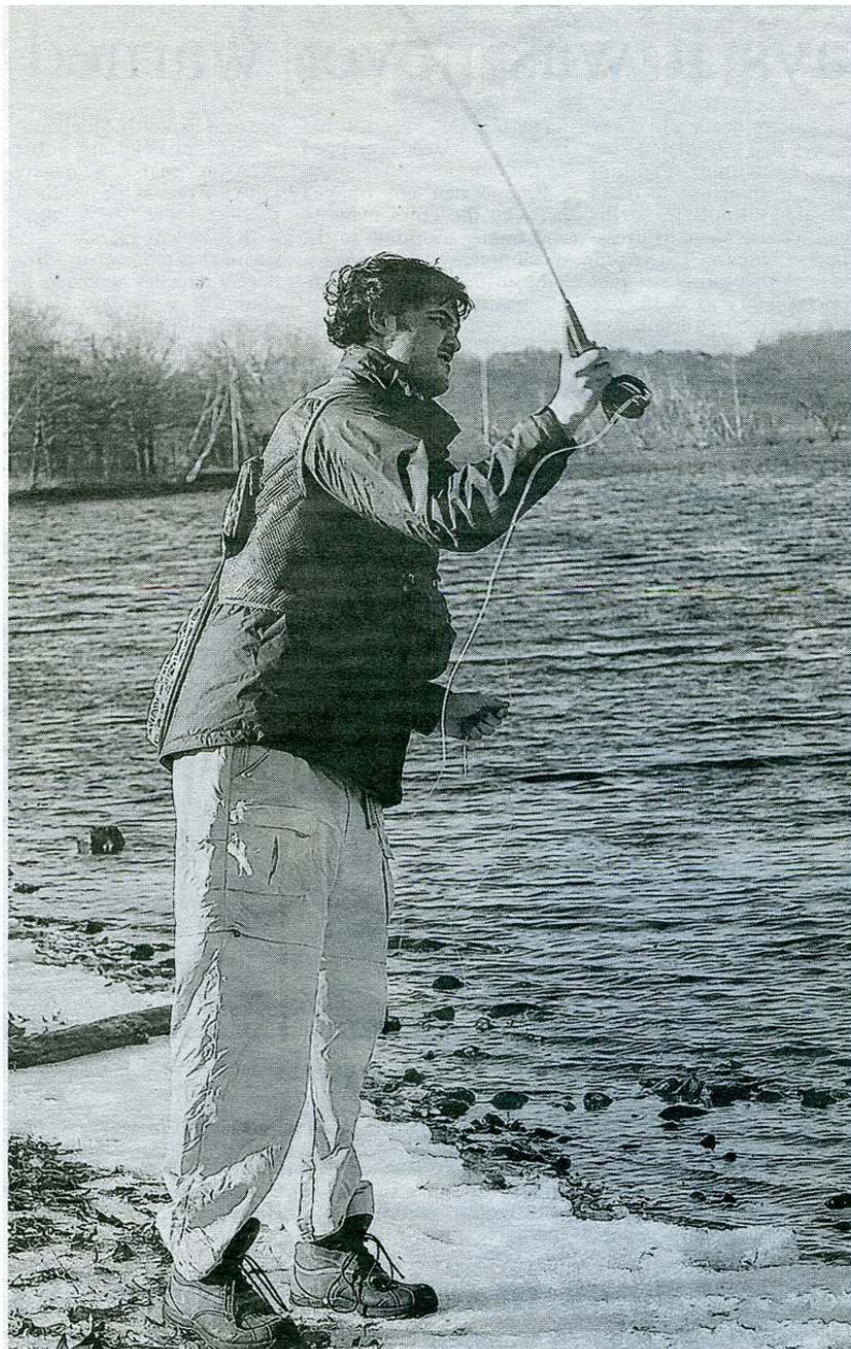
One of my favorite spots is actually in Ware, Massachusetts, right off the Quabbin Reservoir. It's called the Swift River. It's an area managed by Massachusetts Fish and Game. They do a great job keeping a great place for people to go fly fishing not too far from the city.

#### **What do you fish for out there?**

There are rainbow trout, brook trout, brown trout and some salmon, but mostly the trout.

#### **When you catch something, what's a big fish, what's a prize catch for you?**

There, to catch a an 18- or 20-inch trout is a pretty great feat. And there are actually not a lot of places left in the world where you can



STAFF PHOTO BY TED FITZGERALD

**ON THE FLY:** Matt Lauzon, founder and president of online jeweler Gemvara.com, casts his fishing line in Brighton recently. For video, go to [bostonherald.com](http://bostonherald.com).



do that. One of the places I really love going is out in Wyoming and Idaho, where sometimes the fish can get bigger than that. But here, a 20-inch trout would be a trophy fish.

**Do you bring that home and stuff it and put it on the wall or cook it up and eat it?**

I almost exclusively catch all keep a fish if there's specifically someone I know who's interested in having trout for a meal and we could do that and share that together. But almost always I catch and release. It's more about sort of the relaxation and fun of it all that's of interest to me.

**Are you fishing with your brothers, with friends or do you just go out on your own to have some peace and quiet?**

It used to be I'd go out a lot with family and friends, but here it seems I wind up going more often than not alone as sort of a way to sneak away for a few hours from it all. It seems to be one of the only things I can do to completely tune out for a bit from the world and unwind.

**Is the best time to go fly fishing in the morning at the crack of dawn? When do you go?**

Usually early morning or right before dark is the best time to go, but the Swift River is interesting in that you can fish any time of day and it's still pretty good, but I tend to go early or late because then I can still spend a lot of the day working.

**Do you have your tale of the one that got away?**

One of the funniest stories I have was actually a completely different type of fishing, which was when we went out for tuna with one of the investors in our company. We had a huge — probably a couple hundred pound — tuna on the line, and it was going back and forth, back and forth, and 45 minutes into it, something gave and we lost the fish. There was a big debate about what had happened.

It turned out there was this little, tiny piece called a crimp and a crimp costs maybe 70 cents, 80 cents, and one guy had decided to make his own crimps to try save a couple dollars. And it turned out the crimp was the culprit, which was kind of a funny story to razz him about for a little bit.

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*Frank Quaratiello is the Herald business editor. Every other Friday, FrankTalk features a different Bay State business leader in an edited interview discussing an out-of-the-office passion or hobby.*