

Spring ~ 2000

Memberships

\$15.00

The
Thames River Angler
"Newsletter of the Thames River Anglers Association"

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Best-selling
Author!**

Committee Cuts

**Are You
Pesticidal?**

**Plus All of the
Usual Stuff!**

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President's Report

Bucks for Bubbles & More!

Randy Bailey

The application for funding from the Trillium Foundation for the Fanshawe lake Bubble Project has been tendered with the TRAA as the lead applicant. The collection of information and files, the production of various drafts of the application and the publication of a final presentation copy to be considered by the review panels was exhaustive. Everyone involved let out a collective sigh when the document was finally delivered. Paul Noble, John Small (University of Western Ontario Industry Liaison) and I were telephoning, e-mailing or faxing each other almost daily for two weeks. John Small did the lion's share of organising all of the information that we threw at him and should be commended for his effort. The funding requested was half of the original budget, kept just under \$25,000 to help speed up the review process. The savings will be realised by having the prototype used in the Fall of 1999 retrofitted. This unit will be deployed during an oxygen sag in Fanshawe Lake so that its effect on water quality can be monitored. TRAA members will be involved for a minimum of 10 man-hours of work.

We have received the remainder of the 1999/2000 grant from the Ministry of Natural Resources' Community Fisheries Involvement Program. We will now be able to complete a number of projects that have been on hold. Some work parties have been scheduled for the Rehabilitation, Trout and Warmwater Committees. The TRAA also received approval for another \$1,000 from the CFIP program for fisheries enhancement. Although projects have been designated for most of these funds, we are open to suggestions from our members and partners.

Members of the TRAA Executive and the Committee Chairpeople will be meeting to review the functions of the various positions within our organisation. Some of our newer members have pointed out that there are no clear definitions of what each position entails. This could also be the very reason many people don't volunteer for these positions. In other words, if you don't know what the job is, why volunteer for it? Drawing on the experience of some of the established folks and using ideas from new members will keep the TRAA moving ahead!

Editor's Note Paul Noble

I love the spring-time almost as much as the autumn. Pseudo-Canadians come staggering out of self-imposed hibernation, blinking at the bright sunlight whining about how cold it is. True Canadians have been outside all winter and appreciate the smorgasbord of weather this country has to offer. But Spring is a special time of year in this part of Canada because the numbers and variations of fishing opportunities blossom with the wildflowers. Trout season begins. The walleye run is on in the Thames River. The pike move into the shallows. The crappie swarm the structure. Every organism wakes up in the warming waters to eat or be eaten. And I'll be right in the middle of it, casting into the buffet. Life can be great!

Fumbling with an Interview

The TRAA Talks to the Author of
Fumbling with a Flyrod

I was supposed to meet Ian Colin James in a smoky little jazz club/dry-cleaners to interview him about his Canadian best-selling book *Fumbling with a Flyrod*. Unfortunately, the smoky-ness turned into flame before I had my notepad out and so we sat in a bus shelter across the road as the club/cleaners burnt to the ground. Ian, inspired by the inferno, told me he would now like to be addressed as **Flame**, the author formerly known as Ian Colin James.

P. Ian, I mean **Flame**, what is it like being a best selling author?

Flame. I am speechless.

P. So you are stunned then?

Flame. Absolutely.

P. Will the fame and fortune associated with being a Canadian best-selling author effect your lifestyle in any way?

Flame. I can now afford to purchase full riot gear to fish with Les Howey and a set of water wings for trips with Dave Jeffries. I have fallen under the influence of everyone's favorite Italian "gear pig" Rick Ornato, so I'll be hitting all the on-line auctions as soon as

the royalties start rolling in. I should then hire some sherpas and llamas to carry all my new gear to and from the river.

P. Okay, moving right along. What was your greatest influence in writing *Fumbling with a Flyrod*?

Flame. The back of cereal boxes. No

particular variety though. I love the way they are laid out (the way any opposing soccer hooligan at a game should be) and the text is always presented in a clear and concise manner.

P. You actually understand cereal boxes?

Flame. Nah I fake it. That's the trick, you know: Act affected, stare into space and sigh a lot. People that hang out at book signings and readings will think your brilliant even if your a spun dumpling.

P. I see. I must admit that *Fumbling* brought back many memories. In *Fumbling* you weave a great tale and in every page of *Fumbling* there were bits of sheer brilliance.

Flame. Quit groveling or you'll get a job offer from the CBC! And, the name of the book is *Fumbling with a Flyrod, Stories from the River*. I've never used a nickname like *Fumbling*.

P. How about **Flame**, the book formerly known as *Fumbling with a Flyrod, Stories from the River*?

Flame. I like that!

P. Is there any truth to the rumour that you have had to beef up security in your personal life?

Flame. No. But when I saw the organisers of the "Outdoor Don Carpathon" were looking into a first annual "Author Hunt," I was a wee bit worried.

P. **Flame**, thank you for this.

Flame. The pleasure was all yours. Hey, you got change for the bus?

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Rehabilitation

Rick Ornato & Dave Jeffries

The willow stakes that were planted upstream from the cornfield bend on Komoka Creek in December of 1999 were checked out by several TRAA members. Amazingly, these "sticks" have rooted and are sporting some very healthy foliage. Unfortunately, only a few of the spruce seedlings planted in the same area are doing as well. Heavy field grass growth is robbing them of their fair share of water and sunlight. A half hour out of a regularly scheduled work party should remedy the situation.

Work continued on the O'Neill Drain Sunday, March 19th. The turnout wasn't quite as good as our first outing but there were plenty of hands and the work went quickly. We revisited the first section because the snow cover on our first outing was too heavy and prevented a thorough debrushing of the waterline. George Hoy and I had hippers on so we worked in the stream cutting and clearing while Archie Graham, Mark Biesinger and John Jackson worked their rakes and provided colour commentary from the bank. As there were sharp objects involved, Les Howey comprised a team of one at a safe distance downstream. We cleared all the way down to the culvert where George exited the stream with an drained mickey of rum, which he claims he found empty. After a short break we continued to clear down to the first 90-degree bend in the cornfield. At this point the water levels appeared to be too high to continue. Archie volunteered to test the depth of the water by attempting to cross the stream. Sadly, his brave journey was halted at the edge of the

stream when he slipped and landed on an area just slightly north of his hip waders. He did, however, confirm that the water was indeed cold. The depth of the water was due in part to a beaver dam further downstream. Even after the removal of the beaver dam, further work by the TRAA was made impossible by the wetland conditions. Altering the flow in this area would also upset the natural flood control afforded by the wetland. The O'Neil Drain #1 project has been deemed completed by Jim McConnell of the Township of Middlesex Centre.

Middlesex Centre has suggested another debrushing/cleanup site for the TRAA to tackle. Members of the Rehab' Committee are meeting at the trout hatchery at 6:00 PM on

Wednesday, July 19th We will then head out to the property of Mike Ready to review the situation and decide on the level of our involvement. This project is on tributaries of Komoka Creek and may provide access to its headwaters for future habitat work.

On a rainy Tuesday, May 16th, Paul Noble and I watched George Hoy and Randy Bailey broadcast ditch-bank grass seed upstream of the cornfield bend of Komoka Creek. George, looking like an organ grinder with the handheld broadcaster, gave up after he was asked if his monkey with the tin cup had fallen in the stream. Subsequent high water levels may have washed the seeds away so a re-application may be necessary.

Projects are being teed up as you read this!



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Trout

Randy Bailey & John Jackson

We have had very good success with this year's crop of rainbow trout eggs. There has been very little fungus encountered with this batch. The fry are in the "swim-up" stage, are actively feeding and will soon be strong enough to be transferred to the circular tank. The feeder has been working fine but members of the rotation must remember to check the timers to ensure the hydro is on and the time is correct. Also make sure that the drain standpipe is firmly seated in the bottom of the trough. The last couple of trips out, I checked it because the level of water in the tray was high. Turns out the drain pipe slips upwards. It was barely holding on. If it pops out, down go the rainbow fry into Komoka Creek.

We have not yet selected suitable recipient streams for this year's release(s) of the rainbow trout. Half of last year's batch of rainbows went into Dingman Creek and the rest went into Stoney Creek. Please let me know if you have any ideas.

On Saturday, July 8th at 8:00 AM we will meet at the trout hatchery to begin replacing the lower section of stairs to the hatchery enclosure. We will clear the area of potential deadfalls and pour the cement footings for the stairs. If time or manpower allows, we will be putting gravel around the spring source cistern to support the structure. The gravel will also create surer footing and alleviate the muddy conditions.

The following Sunday, July 16th at 8:00 AM we will start building the stairs on the footings. If all goes well, we should have them all but completed. Tony Vaessen will be lending his

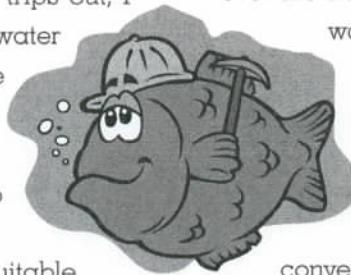
considerable expertise to guide us through this endeavor. (*Some of us think that this is just a tricky way to see Tony again -ed.*) The site of the trout hatchery is in need of some serious cleanup and possible maintenance. These chores will probably be executed as an add-on to existing work parties. The old stainless steel milk tank will be cut into manageable pieces and removed for its scrap value.

There are a number of dead trees leaning over the trout hatchery and the main spring water source pipe. These trees will have to be gingerly removed before they fall and create some expensive damage. Anyone with tree-felling experience should see me at their earliest convenience.

The hay bales that were stored in the rafters of the hatchery enclosure were removed because large colonies of mice had decided that these bales made great condo's. These infested bales are now outside, under the deck and need to be disposed of as soon as possible.

The walkway above the new stairs needs maintenance and some possible erosion controls installed to help hold the bank in place.

We need to rent a leaf blower to clear the area around Fred's place. This was supposed to be done last fall but it fell through the cracks. Now it's a bit of a mess. So, as you can see, we've no shortage of projects this year. Many hands mean easy work so we'll definitely be in touch to solicit your help!



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Public Relations

Paul Noble, Rick Ornato & Randy Bailey

When I look back on what this committee has done over the past few months, I can't help but be surprised.

I was invited by Cathy Wirick, a Grade 4 teacher at St. George's Public School to speak to her class on April 24th about the TRAA and more importantly, the Thames River. Her class was going on a field trip to Gibbons Park and really needed some insight into what to look for while they were at the river.

I took some of our existing slides from the River Rendezvous '97 presentation and made them the centrepiece of an interactive workshop. I created a glossary of terms to help with some of the words that I might use and also a checklist of riverine features to identify when they were at the river.

I was unprepared to find that another class, that of Giovanna Zanini's, effectively doubled the size of my audience. Even though they had to share the TRAA handouts, they were attentive and extremely well mannered.

Something else I was pleasantly unprepared for was the level of interest and the well thought out questions from these kids. My 30 minute presentation stretched to an hour and was a positive experience for everyone, including me. They gave me a St. George's pencil and coffee mug for my efforts but the real payoff came in the TRAA mail box. Every student in Ms. Zanini's class wrote down what they had learned from the workshop and most included really cool illustrations!

You should have noticed while reading this and the previous issue of the *Thames River Angler* that the publication has taken on a new look.

As I become familiar with the nuances of desktop publishing, you should see more improvements. However, nothing takes the place of quality content and I depend on everyone for that.

Submissions were slim to none for this issue and it shows.

The TRAA pamphlet has also been revamped and is ready for distribution. Retail outlets, other clubs, libraries, and any public places that will allow a small display of TRAA pamphlets are needed. If you have a place in mind, let us know!

There are still plenty of TRAA business cards for you to stick in your vest and/or wallet just in case you meet a like-minded individual on the water or at a cocktail party. Ask for some at a General Meeting.

The call is still out for any and all TRAA material that may be in your files, boxes, basement, garage...well you get the idea. If you have anything, bring it to a General Meeting.

The Friends of Sharon Creek have invited us to participate in the Sharon Creek Family Day on Sunday, July 9th. They had a lot of positive feedback and some great photographs from last year. TRAA members helped kids with basic fishing techniques and had a blast doing it!

Want to be apart of any PR. activities? Let us know. We're good, but we can't read minds!



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Warmwater

Lawson Jones

Despite best intentions, the walleye hatchery will remain dormant for the summer. This is for a few reasons. There are some leaks in the roof of the trailer that have to be repaired. The hatchery apparatus in the trailer has to be upgraded to reflect some needed changes that have become apparent over the last couple of years.

The search for walleye is too difficult to maintain temperature in the existing tank. The pond will have to be an in-ground setup so temperatures remain stabilised.



is still on for a growth tank. It is difficult to maintain temperature in above-ground new tank or have to be an

There are two bass transfers coming up. The first will be on opening day, June 24th. We will be transferring largemouth bass from the ponds of Dr. Wilson to Sharon Creek Reservoir.

The second transfer will take place in August. We'll be moving smallmouth bass from the TRAA brood pond to the North Thames River near Plover Mills.

If our application to the Trillium Foundation is successful the Fanshawe Lake Bubble Project will be undertaken this summer. As a partner in the collaborative the TRAA will have to supply volunteers to help with the assembly of the device, assist in the water quality monitoring and help interpret the overall benefit to the aquatic ecosystem.

Social

Dave Jeffries

The TRAA Annual Walleye Derby took place on March 25th with many fish being caught but very few being walleye. Les Howey ended up as the winner after wandering all over the river. The breakfast was great, the jokes were good and nobody got seriously injured. That's more than could be said for a rod that Doug Jarmain borrowed from Paul Noble. As Paul took the broken pieces from Doug he was heard muttering, "Well, at least I didn't lend him my car." Rick Ornato had a stand-off with a large beaver and decided to back down.



The Bass Derby/Transfer on June 24th will have members meeting at the Sherwood Forest Tim Horton's, at 7:45 AM and car pooling to Dr. Wilson's property. Members wishing to fish the Bass Derby/Transfer in August will need to attend the July 12th General Meeting to get an exact date and more details.

As usual, these are baitless, barbless events for TRAA members only. You may want to bring a small watercraft such as a canoe or float tube to the brood pond because access from the shore is minimal.

Little interest has been shown in planning the weekly "fun" fishing trips. It could be because of the weather or the fact that we can't fish for bass yet. However these trips require some planning so let us know if you're into it!

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Living a Better Life Without Pesticides

Paul Noble

Herbicides

This article's headline is more literal than you think. You can live without pesticides and herbicides. Your children, their children, your pets and the inhabitants of the natural world will live a healthier life without these toxic chemicals.

Why should we care?

The current level of pesticide, herbicide and fertilizer use is damaging our ecosystem, our food and water supplies, as well as our general health.

These substances have been linked to cancers and other diseases in humans, particularly children. I've seen birds stagger around, disoriented, on areas recently sprayed. To me, this conjures up a "canary in the coal mine" scenario, a warning I'm willing to heed.

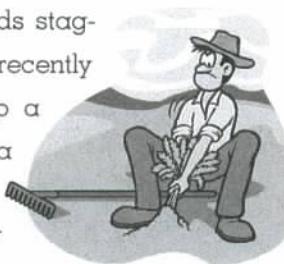
If you need more convincing, how about in the wallet? To illustrate where your chemical dollar goes, take out a couple of those orange or brown bills and burn them. As little as 1% of the chemicals applied by homeowners, golf courses and agriculture actually remain on the targeted area. The remaining 99% is dispersed throughout the rest of the environment.

As time goes on, many of the marked "pests" become resistant to the pesticides and begin to out-compete beneficial insects and micro-organisms. You then have to source more powerful and expensive toxins to battle the new "super-bugs" that you've helped create. There's the excuse that you're solitary little toxin-free corner of the world won't make a dent, but that's a tired and shaky reasoning.

You may be asking, "How do I cope without chemical landscaping?". Start small, maybe in the backyard. There will be a learning curve, so don't get discouraged. Get talking about it with the whole family, your friends and neighbours and involve them.

Change your thinking!

• If your lawn requires nutrients, try to use organic fertilizers and compost. Bone meal and blood meal, both organic nutrient sources, can actually repel some pesky mammals as well. Try to do this in the fall to maximise their retention.



• The best defense against weeds is a robust, healthy lawn. Seed it regularly with strong, drought-resistant strains of grass and mow only to a minimum of 7 cm in length to promote root vitality.

• If your lawn is chemical-free, you can depend on an increase in the number of beneficial worms, ants and other insects to naturally aerate the soil. This will especially be the case if you use compost and peat-mix soils to top-dress the area.

• Try some lawn "alternatives" such as ground covers, ornamental grasses, wild-flowers, spreading shrubs and bushes, etc. Incorporate other features such as rock designs and ponds to minimise the area of lawn.

Remember, all of the surface run-off from your property ends up in the storm sewers. All of the storm sewers lead to streams and rivers. You kill the fish, you kill your sport.

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Saturday, June 24, 2000

TRAAB Bass Derby/Transfer We'll be carpooling from the Sherwood Forest Tim Horton's at 7:45 AM to Dr. Wilson's farm. Largemouth bass caught will be transferred to Sharon Creek Reservoir.

Saturday, July 8, 2000

Work Party We'll meet at the trout hatchery at 8:00 AM to begin work on the lower section of stairs. See the Trout section of this newsletter for details.

Sunday, July 9, 2000

Sharon Creek Family Fishing Day Bring the whole family out to this fun event. TRAA members will be helping to show kids how to fish.

English Style Match Fishing Derby Participants will be meeting at the Fork of the Thames to draw positions at 7:30 AM. Fishing is from 8:00 AM until noon. Entry is \$6.00 and is used for prize money.

Wednesday, July 12, 2000

TRAAB General Meeting Details regarding the August Bass Derby/Transfer will be available at this meeting. Check the Hotline beforehand; the venue may change for this meeting.

Sunday, July 16, 2000

Work Party We'll meet at the trout hatchery at 8:00 AM to finish work on the lower section of stairs. See the Trout section of this newsletter for details.

English Style Match Fishing Derby Participants will be meeting at Springbank Upper to draw positions at 7:30 AM. Fishing is from 8:00 AM until noon. Entry is \$6.00 and is used for prize money.

Sunday, July 23, 2000

English Style Match Fishing Derby Participants will be meeting at Springbank Dam to draw positions at 7:30 AM. Fishing is from 8:00 AM until noon. Entry is \$6.00 and is used for prize money.

Note: Any of the above can change so call the Hotline or attend the General Meetings.

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You Can Still Join or Renew

...and it's still only \$15.00!

Yes! I want to be a member of the TRAA!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

*Tax receipts are issued for donations over \$25.00 (in addition to the \$15.00 membership fee!)

Summer ~ 2000

**Memberships
\$15.00**

The **Thames River Angler**

"Newsletter of the Thames River Anglers Association"

Inside this Issue

A New Place To Meet!

The TRAA Gear Pig

The TRAAtoon is Back!

A Photo of George's "Big One"

Plus All of the Usual Stuff

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President's Report

The Changes Continue

Randy Bailey

In the Winter~2000 edition of this publication I indicated that there were going to be some fundamental changes taking place in the year 2000. We initiated those changes with the streamlining of the Executive and Committee structure of the TRAA (these changes were reviewed in the Winter~2000 edition). This worked out better than we had hoped. The remaining Executive and Committee Chairpeople were able to pool all of the resources available within the TRAA to execute several "do-able" projects.

Making It "Do-able"

This sharing of the TRAA's resource base, be it monetary, labour related or otherwise, has resulted in some great work being done with a minimum of hassle. Recognising the realities of certain shortcomings actually helped us in planning and completing several projects.

The most glaring of the shortcomings has been the lukewarm involvement of the general membership. We have come to recognise this as a "normal" state of affairs within an organisation such as the TRAA. Projects that can be done by a minimal number of personnel are the only ones that are

worth accepting. By doing this, we save everyone the disappointment of not completing a project, doing it poorly or having the project drag far beyond its scheduled completion date. It seems to be working because the work parties are fun again, the results are impressive and we're being asked to do follow-up work. There are many other changes that have taken place and several more are "on deck".

Having said all of the above, there are some other areas that will be addressed in the short term.

Short Term Thinking...

We've always stressed long term goals so you may think that I'm contradicting myself when I endorse short term thinking. Short term thinking and making minor adjustments depending on current situations are necessary to keep us on track to realising those long term goals.

Most industries subscribe to some type of "continuous improvement" program and this thinking should apply to any organisation, including the TRAA.

TRAA members are always welcome to voice suggestions, comments and constructive criticism.

Editor's Note

Paul Noble



Many "normal" activities grind to a crawl as people begin doing what they do when the weather turns warm. Computer chairs are traded in for golf carts, hammers are replaced by gardening tools and the pen gives way to the fishing rod.

I'm guessing that this is the reason for non-existent newsletter submissions. It's not that I'm blaming anyone. I've been too busy fishing and enjoying the summer with my family to even think about putting this newsletter together on time.

However, next month the summer's over and the articles will start rolling in for the Fall edition, right? We've got a new column and the ability to add photos, drawings and other graphics so it should be easier for you to come up with something. Meanwhile, I'm going fishing!

A Sound Thrashing

A Lone TRAA Member Takes on the LACFG and Greenway's Carp

Paul Noble

The soft sound of a steady rain was shattered by the shrill staccato of Celine Dion on the clock radio. As my wobbly feet hit the floor I made a mental note to change the station when my wife wasn't around.

It was Sunday, August 9th and I was on my way to Greenway Park in London, the venue of the Annual Thames River Classic Derby put on by the London & Area Carp Fishing Group.

The car was already packed with all of the essential gear required to smarten up a large bag of fish. A 9 foot, fast-action spinning rod was mated with a state of the art reel loaded with brand new eight pound breaking strain monofilament. I had an older but reliable back-up spinning system in case it all went wrong with the fancy setup. My tackle bag had eight or nine types and sizes of hooks, split shot and egg sinkers, ball bearing swivels, a towel, hemostats and pliers. In a separate area of the car's trunk were the rain gear, the homemade custom rod holder, the collapsible chair and the camera.

Then, of course, there was the bait. That consisted of cornmeal dough laced with oil of anise, cornmeal dough laced with pure Mexican extract of vanilla, a bag of "Niblets" corn and a small container of the obligatory dew worms.

All I needed was a landing net and a long, tubular affair called a keep net.

The landing net wasn't a problem. There was one out at the TRAA trout hatchery that we used when collecting eggs from rainbows in Komoka Creek. The keep net was a problem. I had e-mailed George Allen hoping that he could source one for me to borrow. A keep net is a like a tunnel held open by a series of hoops. When this is staked to the shore and unfurled into the water it creates a sort of fish pen. This is important because only live fish are weighed at the end of the competition.

Upon arriving at the TRAA hatchery I was dismayed to find that the mice had been happily munching on the mesh of the landing net. Fortunately, George had sourced not only a keep net but also a genuine triangular, folding, landing net especially designed for coarse fishing in Europe. Now fully armed, I felt that no fish within 400 metres of my "peg" was safe. This exuberant rush of confidence bubbled over as I easily surrendered the optional five bucks extra for the big fish lottery.

My first fish, admittedly of small proportions, spat the hook indignantly back at me. The second and final hookup was a larger carp that wrapped the line around the end of the keep net before freeing itself.

As I handed George his still-dry landing net, I vowed to return. The next day, in the very same spot, in less time, Ian James and I caught over a dozen carp on exactly the same bait.

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Rehabilitation

Rick Ornato & Dave Jeffries

Sitting down to write about rehab' projects for the summer has been difficult. Quite frankly, not a lot has been teed up since the cleanup of the O'Neil Drain #1 was completed in March of this year.

The Township of Middlesex Centre has asked us to address the cleanup and de-brushing of a couple of tributaries of Komoka Creek's headwaters. Members of the Rehab' Committee reconnoitered the sites on the property of Mike Ready and were a little concerned about the amount of work required.

The actual real estate to be addressed is at least twice that of the O'Neil Drain #1. Both sections were heavily lined with various types of brush including stinging nettles and other noxious undergrowth. The top section had mature poplar trees growing right in the centre of what used to be the channel.

Although we are not being asked to remove the trees, we are still going to have to contend with them. All of the brush removed from the channel area must be neatly piled to expedite removal at a later date. This means that two or three of us will be in the channel with the de-brushers and/or chainsaws hacking down all of the obstructions. Another six to eight members will be needed to haul out the fallen debris and arrange it in neat piles.

The Township of Middlesex Centre was looking for a completion date of August 15th but we won't be able to even begin the project until mid-September. In addition we have asked

aproximately twice the renumeration that was paid for the O'Neil Drain #1. The Township has yet to respond.

If there is ample time, we may organise some quick and fun work parties to re-plant some of the ditch bank grass seed that was washed off the banks of Komoka Creek this past spring. The small spruce saplings and the willow cuttings near the cornfield bend still need relief from being overgrown by weeds. Stream walks to assess other areas in need of cleanup or rehab' will also take place this fall.

There have been major projects involving other Committees that have taken most of the available time slots this summer, as well as the few members who like to be involved in TRAA activities. Beginning this Fall, the Rehabilitation Committee start be scooping the limelight!



TRAA members (from foreground) Mark Ries, Dave Jeffries and Michael Mathews remove excessive growth impeding flow on Komoka Creek - Fall 1999

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Trout

Randy Bailey & John Jackson

The rainbow trout that were in our hatchery this spring and summer definitely gave us moments to remember. The first occurred during the aftermath of the incredible amount of rain that fell early this summer. The water temperature of the spring source that supplies the trout hatchery increased by almost 3 degrees C. While this does not seem that significant, it was enough to accelerate the metabolisms of the rainbow trout fry in the circular holding tank. This, in turn, increased the amount of food that they required. Some of the smaller, weaker fry began dying of starvation because they were being out-competed for the inadequate fish-food supply. Fortunately, we were able to figure out what was happening before too many died. The amount and frequency of the feedings were increased to compensate for the warmer water temperature and everything remained normal for the time being.

The release date for these rainbow fry kept being pushed back for various reasons. We had trouble deciding on a donor stream. Other projects were taking precedence over a "release party". Special interest groups were still coming out for tours (it's nice to have something going on when people visit). Unfortunately, the longer they stay in the hatchery, the greater the risk that something can go wrong.

During the last week in August, Fred Smithers came out on what was supposed to be a routine visit to find the holding tank overflowing and fish flopping all over the floor. After calling in the emergency he returned to begin

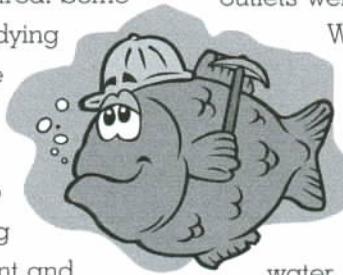
salvaging as many trout fry as possible. Paul Noble and Randy Bailey arrived in short order to help out. Judging by the log book, there were an inordinate number of days missed on the hatchery rotation. This resulted in a build-up of food on the drain screen. The rotting food produced toxins which in turn killed a few of the fry. The food, the fry and the resultant fungal growth plugged the drain and the tank over-flowed. Even the screens of the overflow protection outlets were plugged with dead fish.

While Fred and Paul worked at saving as many of the floor-bound trout as possible, Randy checked the stream temperature. It was found to be within 1 or 2 degrees of the hatchery

water. There was no alternative but to release the remaining fry into Komoka Creek. Surprisingly, only about one thousand of the remaining twenty-five thousand fry were lost as a result of the accident.

It took four work parties but the lower platform and stairs leading to the trout hatchery have finally taken shape. All that remains to be done on this section are the hand railings. The few who helped build this impressive structure are to be commended. There was a lot of clothes ruined by the muddy conditions and a lot of blood lost to the hordes of mosquitos. But when we stood on the hatchery deck and looked up at what we'd accomplished, we just had to toast each other with frosty beers that were cooling in 9 degree spring water.

Work parties will soon be called to do the remainder of the hatchery site cleanup.



Public Relations

Paul Noble, Rick Ornato & Randy Bailey

Although this is generally a slow time for this Committee, we had enough on our plates to keep us hopping throughout the summer. Archie Graham took a group of Rangers on a tour of the trout hatchery literally days after the new stairs were built. Randy Bailey and Paul Noble attended a "council meeting" of the Township of Middlesex Centre to listen to presentations from both the opponents and the supporters of increasing the concentration of hog farm operations in the area. Although the TRAA was not called upon to comment on the situation it was interesting to listen to many of the differing views on the subject.

There has been serious talk within the ranks of the TRAA Executive that the Hotline is underutilised, expensive and should be subject to discontinuation. When was the last time you called? Did you know or remember there was a Hotline? The decision to keep the Hotline will be the subject of a vote at the September 13th General Meeting. Speaking of which, read on!

Up until recently, the TRAA has been searching for a suitable venue to hold its General Meetings. Some of the places investigated were back rooms in bars, other legions and even the boardrooms of private businesses. The one decided on was a very appropriate room at Grosvenor Lodge on 1017 Western Road in London. This meeting place will seat up to 50 people and has facilities for coffee, etc. Although there is a monthly lease cost, the

benefits certainly made it worthwhile. The TRAA, being an associate member of Grosvenor Lodge, will be able to use their telephone messaging service (a Hotline replacement?), will have our mail directed to the Lodge address to be held for us to pick up (a replacement for the postal box?) and are eligible for a storage area for files, display goods, etc. All of this is in addition to the meeting room. You'll be able to check it out because the September 13th General Meeting will take place at Grosvenor Lodge.

TRAA members who helped out at the Sharon Creek Family Fishing day were welcomed by some fairly scary conditions. The morning was interrupted by a summer storm that dumped a lot of rain on participants in a short period of time. Just as things resumed, a more fierce storm arrived with wild wind and lightning that drove everyone to their cars. Although short, the time that they did have was worth the trip out to Sharon Creek Reservoir and all look forward to next year's Fishing Day. The kids will be heading back to school soon and that means that some may be looking for organisations such as the TRAA to do some in-class presentations. We are still getting mail from students who we visited last year. If you hear of an opportunity to talk to a school or special interest group, contact any of the Executive or Committee Chairpersons. We are also looking for members to help out in these presentations. Kids love this stuff and the impressions that are made can last a lifetime!



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THE TRAA

GEAR PIG

Paul Noble

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Gear Pig. This term was originally introduced to our little band of "rehab'ers" by Rick Ornato. It was a self-effacing term meant to deter the ribbing he was getting because of all the trendy gadgets he had on, in and surrounding his fishing vest.

Let's face it, almost everyone owns a fishing rod and some tackle. Archie Graham is the only TRAA member never to be seen with a rod in his hand. He is a man who is seemingly without a Gear Pig's temptations (that's a good thing, because he's the TRAA Treasurer). However, some of us figure we can stack the odds in our favour simply by accumulating enough Gear to overwhelm our quarry. Unfortunately, the fish remain unimpressed.

I've got a custom built state-of-the-art fly rod that cost me more than it did to get married. I need this to cast a line with a specially designed taper that set me back three times the money needed for a case of beer. To hold the line I dropped more than a car payment on a disc-drag reel machined from solid bar-stock aircraft grade aluminum. I've also had a seven year old kid offer me the rest of his dewies after he kicked my butt with a garage-sale pole and a Snoopy bobber. I smiled patronisingly and say that I never use worms. "The slime clogs the pores of my breathable waders."

"Guess you won't have to worry 'bout no fish slime doin' the same then mister," he says matter-of-factly and pedals off.

That story is only half true. Lots of us have really nice expensive stuff but we don't really

look after it all that well. I know a guy who probably has between five and ten thousand dollars tied up in equipment. He's also got an old Ford Escort that cost him about \$800.00. He's had the car for over a year and has already washed it once. That's more than he's cleaned *all* of his fishing rods combined! Come on fella, where's your priorities? You might be getting the gist of where I'm going with this pitch. I want this to be a regular column for people who collect fishing related Gear. All of you Gear Pigs must have stories, tips, recommendations and criticisms. We want to know how you come by your Gear. Do you buy it, trade it, make it, inherit it, take it (Bailey)? We want to know how you use it, abuse it, fix it, store it and service it. If I don't get stories, I'll just trash this column like a leaky old pair of waders. But, we all know that when a bunch of TRAA members get together we all gush or fret about our Gear like moms at a soccer game talking about their kids. Put pen, pencil or crayon to hand and tell us about that latest piece of sexy Gear that turned your eye or that expensive trinket that betrayed you. Relate to us the care you lavish on your Gear and the techniques you use to extend its life and functionality.

Think about it. You want to read about how I manage to keep my rods safe and functioning to their limits. Well, I want to know what vests are out there and what each design is best for what type of fishing.

You scratch my back and I'll have someone qualified scratch yours!

George Catches Fish of a Lifetime!

We'll just let the man himself say it all:

"The thing is that I was so excited and worn out that I could not hold the fish and Lonnie had to do it for me. I wish I had kissed it now."

"Took about 15/20 minutes to get on 15 lb. line so it really didn't fight too well."

"It was caught on waggler fished corn in about 8 feet of water on a size 6 Drennan Carbon Specimen Hook."

"Lonnie said it looked skinny but to me it was gigantic and I would like to get some more skinny ones like that."

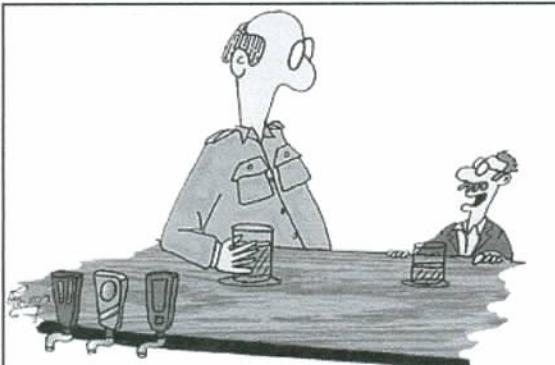
"It has taken me over 60 years to get a 'Twenty' and it was a thrill I shall never forget."

Quotes courtesy of London Area Carp Fishing Group
<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Bluffs/1194/lacfg.html>



Lonnie King helps TRAA member George Allen hold his first 20-plus carp in his 60-plus years of fishing for them. The behemoth actually weighed 29.44 pounds!

TRAA toon



"I'm a Big Fish model. When you see a photo of a guy holding a big fish... that's me."

The Quotable Angler

"What are you going to do this afternoon, old man?" he asked.

"Fish," I said.

"But you can't always fish," he said.

I told him I could and I was right and have proved it for thirty years and more.

"Well, well," he said, "please yourself, but isn't it dull not catching anything?"

And I said, as I've said a thousand times since, "As if it could be."

*Roland Pertwee
"The River God" (1928)*

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Monday, September 11, 2000

TRAAC Executive & Committee Chairperson Meeting

Grosvenor Lodge, 1017 Western Road, London

The meeting begins at 7:00 pm. Various refreshments will be available.

Wednesday, September 13, 2000

TRAAC General Meeting

New Location!!! Grosvenor Lodge, 1017 Western Road, London

The meeting begins at 8:00 pm so try to show up a bit earlier.

Coffee and soft drinks are available for modest renumeration.

Saturday, September 17, 2000

TRAAC Work Party

Members will be meeting at the TRAAC trout hatchery for a fall cleanup of the site.

Some of the dead trees that are threatening the hatchery and its source pipe may be coming down as well.

Saturday, September 24, 2000

TRAAC Bass or Rainbow Trout Derby

This is a tentative date that will be firmed up at the September 13th General Meeting.

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You Can Join or Renew Anytime

...and it's still only \$15.00!

Yes! I want to be a member of the TRAAC!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

*Tax receipts are issued for donations over \$25.00
(in addition to the \$15.00 membership fee!)

Mail To:
1017 Western Road, London, Ontario N6G 1G5
Or just bring it to the next General Meeting!

Fall ~ 2000

**Memberships
\$15.00**

**The
*Thames River Angler***
"Newsletter of the Thames River Anglers Association"

**Inside
this
Issue**



Busted!

by Ian Colin James



**The TRAA
Gear Pig**



**The
TRAAtoon**



**Randy Bailey's
Trout Tricks**



CONTACT US

Messages

645-2845

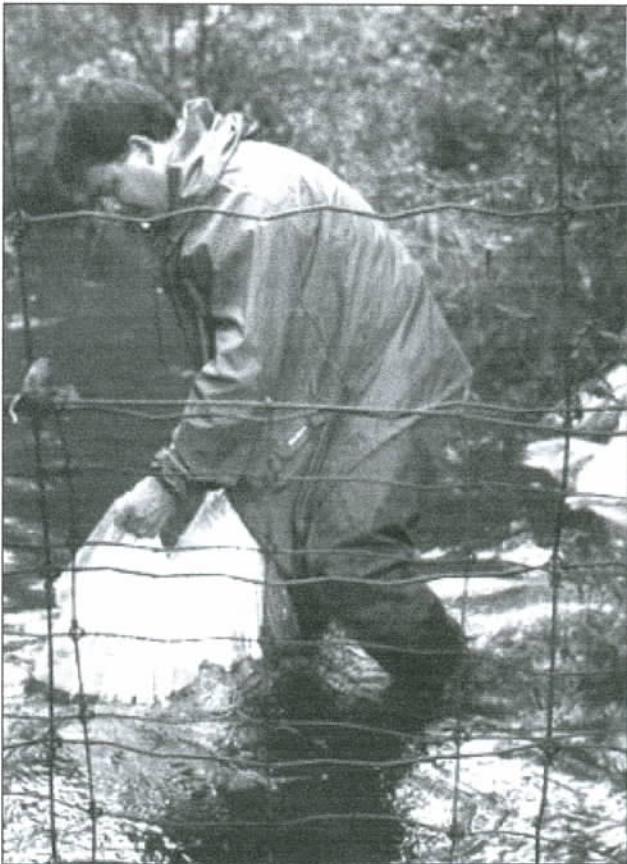
E-mail

traa@anglers.org

Web Site

www.anglers.org

Is This Man Poaching?



No!! TRAA member Paul Noble is releasing rainbow trout fry into Komoka Creek. The TRAA has been raising both brown and rainbow trout in their own hatchery and letting them go in area streams since 1988. Although we no longer believe in stocking as a long term solution for a healthy population of fish, the trout hatchery has been maintained for educational purposes. Students, resident's associations, kids and youth organisations and other special interest groups have all toured the hatchery facility. This allows them to see stages of the trout life cycle that normally take place on the stream bed. Contact us if you and your group are interested in a tour!

Editor's Note

Paul Noble

Many folks claim the fall as their favourite season but everyone tends to have a different set of reasons for doing so. For some it's the blazing colours of foliage, for others it's the respite from the summer's heat and still others have had enough of the lawn and garden thing. For my friends and I, fall signals new and uncrowded fishing opportunities.. The big chinook salmon make their way into our feeder streams with the steelhead right on their heels. The gizzard shad invade the Thames River by the thousands. At a time when most people have packed up for warmer climes, we're virtually alone with the river and the annual migration of the fishy "snowbirds". We've had some great submissions for this issue. I hope you enjoy it. Keep 'em coming!



Busted!

Another "Les Howey Adventure"

Ian Colin James

Place: A secret location on the Thames River, near a white bean field.

Mission: To catch big, pigging-out-before-their-keesters-freeze-up smallmouth.

Result: A trip to the hospital (So you know that Les Howey was involved!)

Jig Boy, with his new jig-o-matic bag of tube jigs, and I set out down the happy trail for a spot of fall bass fishing. Everyone knows that at this time of the year the bass pig out, porking up before the winter freeze-up. You can catch obscene numbers of the little critters if you can find a deep, slow pool with lots of structure. We found that pool, 3 km from the car at the base of an embankment which would scare the daylights out of your average mountain goat and make even the most sure-footed of them say, "Uh-oh!".

On his first three casts, Les landed two smallies, both around the 10-inch mark. "Not bad," I said to myself. "Looks like it's going to be a wonderful day in the neighbourhood." We fished a great looking plunge-pool and caught naff all. In case you didn't know, a plunge-pool is where anglers fall in. Then we fished the edge of some shallow riffles (where the plunge pool lads get out) - still naff all. Perfect water but no fish. Next we crossed over the river and started fishing a great looking pool. Les was casting upstream and doing the "high-sticking" thing. I was in the middle casting a black woolly bugger across and down. "Let's move up river," shouts Jig Boy, "there are some great big logs out there." Had I been looking to build a cabin... Anyway, just as I am starting to get out of the water my feet came out from under me. I thought I felt a shove, but it happened so fast I can't be sure. And down I went. Actually, I

came down full force on my right kneecap. Did my knee find soft, squishy mud? Nope! One boulder was sticking out on the muddy bank and my patella went straight to it. Crack! The pain was so bad that I almost passed out. I could feel the blackness creeping into the edges of my vision. It was worse than listening to a trout fisherman bragging in a tackle shop, so you know how bad it actually was. I could not wiggle my toes and my lower leg was numb. Jig Boy, who was suspiciously close by said, "Are you Okay?" As I am trying not to woof my cookies he follows with, "You sit there and have a rest. Mind if I fish through the pool?". I was waiting for, "You ain't gonna make it buddy, I'm gonna have to bash you on the head with a boulder to put you out of your misery."

As it turned out the kneecap was only cracked, not broken.

Here is part of the dialogue from the hospital x-ray room:

Doc - "How did you do it?"

Ian - "I tumbled out of bed while with a blond and a redhead."

Doc - "No, seriously. How did it happen?"

Ian - "I slipped in the mud beside a river and landed on a boulder."

Doc - "No, seriously?"

Ian - "I tripped going up the stairs."

Doc - "Hai! That explains it!"

The mord: When I go steelhead fishing or night fishing I usually carry a whistle. Now I am going to carry one all of the time. Had I been alone, things might have been much worse. Had I needed to crawl through a cornfield to get back to the car, in the middle of the harvesting season amid those big red combines driven by sleepy farmers...

For the record, just before I went over, I still think I felt a push. It really was a great looking pool, wasn't it Les?!



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Rehabilitation

Rick Ornato & Dave Jeffries

The mouth of Komoka Creek remains blocked with dead-falls, cornstalks and other debris because the creek has backed up to the point where access to the problem area is impossible. Members of a September 17th work party were thwarted by high water and had to abandon all thoughts of clearing the mouth until water levels recede. The area will be reconoitered near the end of November to assess the feasability of another attempt in early December.

It took three work parties to clear the first and most difficult of two drains on the Ready property near the headwaters of Komoka Creek. TRAA members had to contend with dense growths of bullrushes, stinging nettles, wild grape vines, wild raspberry briars, willow trees, poplar trees and silty mud up to their thighs that threatened to suck the waders off of their legs.

Blood, Sweat & Fears

September 30th was the first day and those in attendance felt overwhelmed by the conditions and the slow progress. When it came time to quit, we were amazed at just how much we had accomplished and how good it looked! Almost 200 metres of the drain had been de-brushed and as we looked back at what had been accomplished everyone felt pretty good.

Then all eyes fell on what remained and our confidence wavered. We were suddenly aware of the sore muscles, the sweat and mud-stained clothes, the scratches from the raspberry brambles and the burning skin from the

stinging nettles.

The second work party of October 22nd managed to clear a much longer section of the same drain. We're still not sure if the conditions were better or if we were more prepared to tackle the task at hand.

October 28th was our third and last day on the first and most difficult drain. We were only about 100 metres away from completion when the chainsaw gave up. Fortunately, the Jokela family drove home to Strathroy and returned with their own chainsaw. Those that could stay finished the drain and are congratulated on doing so.

Work parties will be scheduled in November and December to complete the same job on the second drain. Members will be informed by the Telephone Committee for each date.



TRAA member Rick Ornato appears to be under attack by the dense undergrowth as he slowly works the de-brusher through the first section of the Ready drain.

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Trout

Randy Bailey & John Jackson

This fall has seen a lot of activity in and around the TRAA trout hatchery site. Movement to and from the hatchery has been vastly improved by the new stairway that was reported on in the Summer issue of this newsletter. Since then, handrails have been added to complete the project.

The first circular holding tank has been removed from the hatchery and will take on a new life as a growth tank at the TRAA walleye hatchery. The plumbing for the remaining circular tank has been re-routed to travel flush to the floor rather than at waist height. Both of these alterations will better accomodate the TRAA's educational tours and will also allow freedom of movement throughout the facility. The old sink-stand was dismantled and removed because its design was a perfect haven for mice. It was replaced by a new "open-frame" workbench that was built by Archie Graham.

The timers for the electric feeder system have been moved to the opposite wall between the workbench and the egg trays. This greatly improves access for members on the trout hatchery rotation and for those conducting educational presentations.

On November 19th there was a work party to remove the remainder of scrap building material, hay bales, plumbing rejects and other debris from the trout hatchery site. All that remains is the old stainless steel milk tank. This tank will be cut up where it sits because it is too heavy and cumbersome to drag up the hill. The pieces will be sold for their scrap value. After the junk cleanup, work party participants cleared the leaves from the

grassy area in front of and around the small house at the top of the hill.

TRAA members Dave Jeffries, Archie Graham, Tim Jokela and his father picked up over 30,000 brown trout eggs at the MNR Normandale Fish Culture Station on November 8th and transferred them to the TRAA trout hatchery. A hatchery rotation is in place but there are a few "alternate" spots open if you would like to get involved. Call Randy Bailey now if you are interested. There will be formal training for those in the rotation at every developmental stage of this batch of brown trout to hopefully avoid some of our past problems.

The South Thames River has been chosen as the release site for these brown trout because its mean temperature is cooler than that of the other branches of the Thames River.



Rainbow trout eggs in the upwelling trays at the TRAA trout hatchery. Note the white eggs are dead and still must be "picked".

Public Relations

Paul Noble, Rick Ornato & Randy Bailey

The call is out for any and all TRAA material that may be laying about members' residences and businesses. Anyone who still has files, pictures, videos, newspaper clippings, equipment or anything else belonging to the TRAA is urged to contact Paul Noble. You can drop the stuff off at my house, bring it to a meeting or work party or arrange to have it picked up. Once we've collected this material, it will be organised, inventoried and stored in the appropriate locations. This will enable us to track the whereabouts of all TRAA property so that it's accessible when needed.

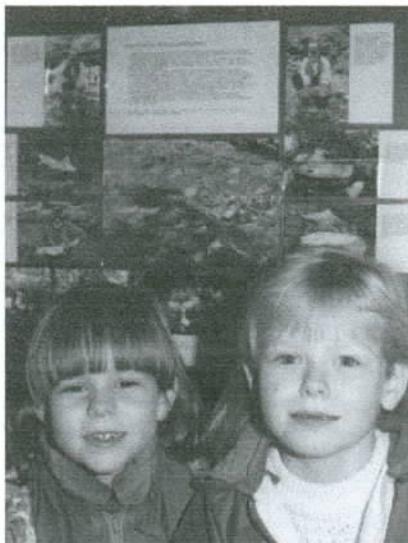
One project that has been held up by the disappearance of various photographs is the restoration of the TRAA display boards. These boards are required for booths at shows, for educational presentations in schools and other venues and for possible permanent display at Grosvenor Lodge.

New TRAA pamphlets will be ready for distribution before the end of the year so please consider where they could be displayed and let us know!

Quotes from printing houses were solicited to determine whether it was feasible to have the TRAA newsletters, pamphlets, membership cards and business cards done professionally. The added cost for the additional print quality over that of photocopies did not warrant the difference in quality. The newsletters alone would have been about four times more than we currently spend per issue. Members polled at a General Meeting were unanimous in their satisfaction with the print quality of the

photocopied newsletter.

The TRAA Hotline was discontinued as of the September 13th General Meeting. If this comes as a surprise to you, it's probably because you didn't use it anyway. At this same meeting, attendees approved a new TRAA logo and it will appear on all correspondence from this point onward. Members attending the November 8th General Meeting passed a motion not to set up a TRAA display booth at the London Boat, Cottage & Fishing Show in February 2001. The "Fishing" portion of the show has been dramatically reduced and the response from last year's effort was dismal. We will centre our activities on shows that focus on fishing and the environment such as General Marine's Boathouse Sale that takes place yearly in early February.



Kids love anything to do with fish and the places fish live. TRAA presentations and tours help nurture their natural caring.

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THE TRAA

GEAR PIG

Rick Ornato

O.K., so I've got a lot of fishing gear. It's not like that's a crime. My wife and I have this deal. I "ooh and ahh" whenever she buys a new pair of shoes and she tries to look impressed when I bring home a new "fly-thingsy" (her terminology, not mine).

Now don't get the impression that I run out every spring and buy whatever new doodad is featured in those shiny catalogues they keep sending us. I don't impulse shop. By the time I've got my wallet out, I know more about my prospective purchase than the salesman and enough to impress the manufacturer. I'll read anywhere from 10 to 50 reviews of a product before I consider buying it. I'll talk to friends, relatives, bag ladies (a very underrated source of information), people standing at bus stops, or anyone else who is too polite to walk away. I'll know wholesale prices, retail prices, and even the "end-of-stock-we-must-be-crazy" prices. I get as much information as I can on any given product before I buy.

Then I go to the local tackle shops with my wish list and say; "John can you get me this?", or "Ken will you order me that?" Why? Some may not believe this but "80% of all the gear bought in our local stores has cost me less in the long run". There, I said it.

I'd also like to say that everyone should put more emphasis on value than on price. For instance, I may be able to buy a Rapala cheaper at Wal-Mart than anywhere else (yes, I admit to using a spinning rod now and then) but I will not step into their "fishing tackle department". Again, why? If I buy it at a local tackle shop it may be 10% more in price but I'll walk away with the *right size, colour and style* of lure for my type of fishing.

Other invaluable tips such as how and where to fish my new lure are also readily imparted. I'm not sure where they get Wal-Mart staff, but you can be fairly sure that they're not as passionate about the "fishing tackle department" as the independent tackle shop owner is about our sport and his home waters. To me, that's worth at least 20% of the asking price! 'Nuff said about that. My most recent rod purchase was a custom built 8'6", 4-weight, 4-piece travel rod. Let's begin by saying that this is not an inexpensive rod. A "factory" version could set you back about \$440.00 CDN. My custom model included several hardware upgrades that pushed the price to over \$500.00. When casting, it feels like an extension of my arm, complete with nerve-endings.

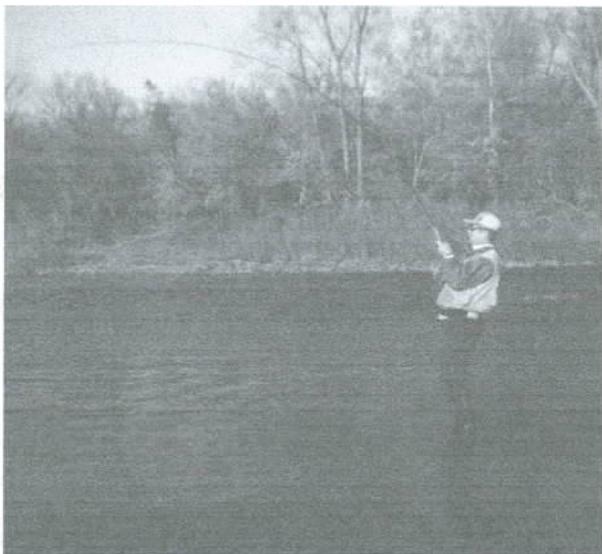
About a month after receiving this rod, I was "fishin' downtown" in the Thames River for 12 inch smallies. The retrieve of my fly through some slack water was rudely interrupted by a double-digit carp. After running downstream 150 yards and into my backing twice, the carp decided to sulk in some submerged logs. Holding the rod high, I eased him away from the logs to where I could almost reach my hand to the fly. Snap!

The rod broke just below the first section. The carp was measured against the broken section. It was the largest I'd ever landed on a fly rod. With mixed feelings I relayed the story to the custom rod builder. He made a few calls and assured me that the broken section would be replaced and rebuilt at no charge. All I had to pay was the shipping. My new favourite fly rod and I have since been re-united to fish happily ever after.

Now, that's value at any price!

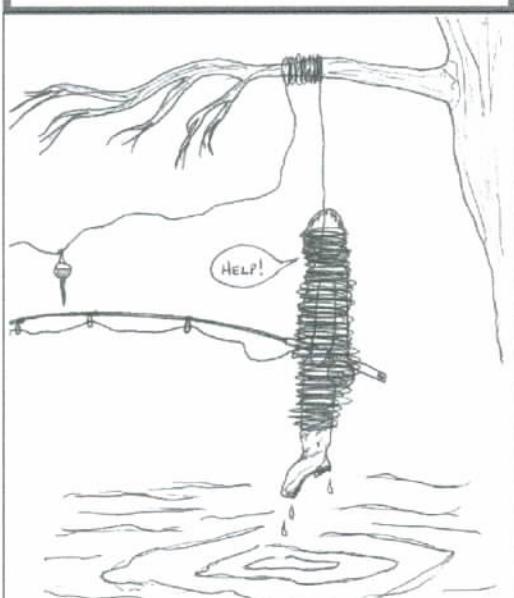
Randy's Trout Techniques...

Believe It or Not!



We caught up to Randy Bailey on the river for some exclusive photos and comments. Above left, Randy ties into just some of many fish with .025 lb. test microfilament ph-adjusted line and his 13 foot graphite/titanium linear-googleplex-laminate float rod. When questioned about the size of his catch (above right) he said, "Well, I'm using a hookless #64 fly with a nano-fibre dressing that can actually tangle in the teeth of several fry, err, fish. Reeling in up to six of 'em at once is not uncommon." Yes, Randy, you could say "parr" for the course!

TRAAToon



HIEMER DISCOVERS THAT
FLOAT RODS AND GALE FORCE
WINDS DON'T MIX!

The Quotable Angler

Paul threw in a long cast, the wind caught it and the Big Joe's Crayfish skipped several times across the surface. The wind caught it again, and on the last skip it was lofted into the lower branches, leaving it dangling a good 3 feet off the water. I stared at Paul, giving him a "Way to go there, sport" look. He tightened up his line and twitched the rod tip, trying to free the fly. There was an explosion: the smallmouth cleared the water and demolished the fly. The weight of the fish ripped the line free from the branches. In silence Paul played it out and then released the 3-pound fish back into the water. I was too stunned to say much, but finally blurted out, "Well, ain't ya gonna say something?" He looked up from resharpening his hook, saying, "I was kinda wondering how I was gonna get the fly back. It's the last one I've got."

Ian Colin James, 2000

"Opening Day", from his book:
Fumbling with a Fly Rod, Stories from the River



Sunday, December 2, 2000

TRAА Work Party

Members will be meeting at the TRAA trout hatchery at 8:00 AM and then will head out to finish de-brushing the second Ready Drain. Dress appropriately: layers are recommended to adapt to temperature and your own heat generation. The area may be muddy so choose footwear accordingly.

Sunday, December 9, 2000

TRAА Work Party

Will occur only if drain is not completed December 2nd. Members will be notified.

Members will be meeting at the TRAA trout hatchery at 8:00 AM and then will head out to finish de-brushing the second Ready Drain. Dress appropriately: layers are recommended to adapt to temperature and your own heat generation. The area may be muddy so choose footwear accordingly.

Wednesday, December 13, 2000

TRAА General Meeting

New Location!!! Grosvenor Lodge, 1017 Western Road, London

The meeting begins at 8:00 PM so try to show up a bit earlier.

Coffee and soft drinks are available for modest renumeration.

You Can Join or Renew Anytime

...and it's still only \$15.00!

Yes! I want to be a member of the TRAA!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

*Tax receipts are issued for donations over \$25.00
(in addition to the \$15.00 membership fee!)

Mail To:
1017 Western Road, London, Ontario N6G 1G5
Or just bring it to the next General Meeting!

Winter ~ 2000

Memberships

\$15.00

Inside this Issue

**News from this
Year's Annual
General Meeting**

Committee Cuts

**An Introduction
to Float Tubes**

**The Fanshawe
Bubble Project**

**Plus All of the
Usual Stuff!**

CONTACT US

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457-4122**

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traa@anglers.org**

**Web Site
www.anglers.org**

The Thames River Angler

"Newsletter of the Thames River Anglers Association"

President's Report

BIG Changes for 2000!

Randy Bailey

The TRAA Annual General Meeting for the year 2000 took place on March 8, 2000. The executive and all of the Committee Chairs were filled by majority vote and acclamation. This was made easier by the fact that eleven former positions were either eliminated or amalgamated to "trim the fat" from the TRAA's operations. This streamlining will allow us to maintain the focus and direction that has historically been a hallmark of the TRAA.

Change was Necessary

When we had 75 to 100 members, we needed more executive positions and committees. The large membership allowed this diversification. We now have less than 40 members and can no longer afford to spread those who are actively involved too thinly. That is why the manner in which we operate the TRAA had to evolve.

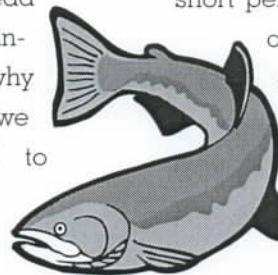
There has been talk that we should make it compulsory for TRAA members to maintain a mandatory level of involvement. This could take the form of a minimum number of hours of

participation in TRAA events or projects over the course of the year. Another could be a two tier membership structure: \$15.00 for active members and \$25.00 for inactive members. However, most of those who have discussed this issue agree that no one should be penalised in any way for being a TRAA member, active or inactive. All members are important when our organisation represents TRAA concerns to the community at large.

What's Up for 2000?

In recent history, long term projects have resulted in a waning of interest from TRAA members. This year we hope to focus on a number of projects that can be completed in a short period of time. This may foster a sense of accomplishment and maintain a momentum that will take us on to tackling new goals. The final ingredient in the formula will be to sprinkle the agenda with some social events for everyone.

What's the bottom line? The TRAA is getting back to basics... And we're going to have fun doing it!



Editor's Note

Paul Noble

If you've been a member of the TRAA for about a year, I'm sure that you have noticed the "new look" to your TRAA newsletter. We're proud of our past efforts but we felt that this publication should be more dynamic and exciting to reflect what's happening in the TRAA.

You'll still find many of the popular sections of past editions sprinkled throughout the newsletter. As long as I keep getting submissions from all of you, the quality of the content should continue to be outstanding.

However, there are those who seem to have a lot to say, but also seem reluctant to put it into writing. This is a warning: I know who you are and I'm coming after you!

Come on, let's contribute, but most of all, let's have fun doing it!



Annual General Meeting 2000

Change...you're going to hear that word a great deal over the course of the coming year, especially when the conversation concerns the TRAA. The recent AGM on March 8th had a common thread of change running throughout the meeting.

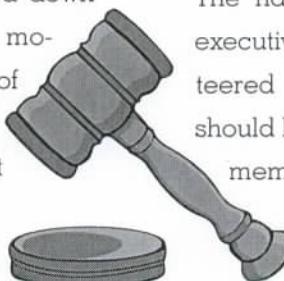
Oceans of Motions

Without becoming bogged down with the details of every motion, here's a summary of the more interesting changes (there's that word again!).

The positions of all five Directors have been eliminated. The task of Membership Co-ordinator will become a duty of the elected Treasurer. The task of managing the cuss box will become a duty of the elected Chairperson. The Telephone, Hotline, Newsletter, Library and Webmaster will all become a part of the Public Relations Committee.

The Fundraising Committee has been eliminated as stand alone entity. Its function will be undertaken by the TRAA as a whole as the need for extra funding arises.

All of these modifications to the TRAA's infrastructure had been discussed over the three months previous to the AGM with numerous requests for input from the general



membership. If you have concerns or would care to make recommendations regarding the organisational structure of your TRAA please notify us at a meeting or through our e-mail account. For other AGM motions, ask Paul Noble for a copy of the minutes.

The Few, the Brave

The names of those who stood for executive positions or who volunteered for the Committee Chairs should be recognisable to most TRAA members.

Here's a rundown of those who stood and were elected or volunteered to guide us through the year 2000:

President	Randy Bailey
Vice President	Dave Jeffries
Chairperson	John Jackson
Treasurer	Archie Graham
Secretary	Paul Noble

Rehabilitation	Rick Ornato and Dave Jeffries
Trout	Randy Bailey and John Jackson
Warmwater	Lawson Jones
Social	Dave Jeffries
Public Relations	Paul Noble, Randy Bailey and Rick Ornato
L.S.F. Rep'	George Hoy

Keep in mind that these guys can't do it alone. You know what interests you, so make yourself available to the appropriate contact.

Rehabilitation

Rick Ornato & Dave Jeffries

We are looking forward to a busy year 2000, chock full of all kinds of interesting projects. On December 18th a TRAA work party was formed to attempt some trial plantings of willow stakes along Komoka Creek between the cornfield bend and County Road 14. These dormant stakes (stalks?) should take root in the spring and provide a cooling canopy along this open section of the creek.

After meeting at truck stop on the 401, we carpooled to a section of Hall's Creek that was reputed to have the purist strain of willows for the job. Randy "Whatsa Willow" was in charge of selecting the appropriate flora and Paul "Clear-cut" Noble was assigned with the duty of harvesting. The rest of us wisely stood clear and relatively unmarked.

After returning to Komoka Creek with our bounty, we carefully followed the planting instructions of George Hoy. Surprisingly, several members of the work crew had to be constantly reminded that the fat end goes in the ground and the skinny end points to the sky. Despite this, an excellent turnout made light work of it all.

Another work party was formed on January 23rd to start the cleanup and de-brushing of O'Neil Drain #1 near the hamlet of Denfield. Members fought snow drifts that were, at times, waist deep. It was difficult to determine where the steep banks of the creek began because the snow overhung its entire length. Those who were wearing waders slid down into the water in a "mini-avalanche" while

those wearing only boots clung to the dormant dogwoods for support. Despite these impediments we managed to clear the first 750 metres of deadfalls, obstructive overgrowth and other debris that restricted normal water flow.

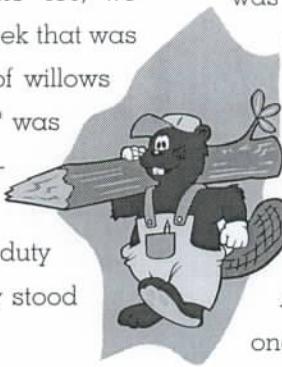
The air was so cold that the water of this coldwater stream felt relatively warm on our hands. We say relatively because the water was cold enough to preserve the corpse of a cottontail rabbit that must have slid down in its own "mini-avalanche". The great camaraderie, the high-jinks and the promise of a free breakfast made the task enjoyable.

After working up an appetite, everyone piled into a little restaurant in Ilderton to refuel. This relaxing repast was

marred only by the spectacle of John Jackson laying waste to the buffet. It was like a bad traffic accident: you know you shouldn't stare, but you just can't help it!

The rest of the O'Neil Drain #1 will be dealt with on Sunday, March 19th. As an aside, the landowners in the area asked the township if there was a viable alternative to dredging the creek because they were concerned about the environmental impact of such a practice. That's when the TRAA became involved. Kudos to those people.

There are a large number of new and "doable" projects that involve everything from obstruction removal to fish habitat structure. We'll be calling you to help out!



Trout

Randy Bailey & John Jackson

Most active members or those who are able to make it out to the general meetings should be aware that we lost this year's batch of brown trout due to a lack of short term memory. Paul Noble shut off the source water to the hatchery trays to pick the dead sac-fry and egg casings without the hindrance of water flow. This is a common practice in the day to day operation when the trays are in place. It is not, however, common practice to leave the source water off after the task is completed.

The sac-fry that survived the episode were released into Komoka Creek. Paul still retains no memory of the incident but his wife Kim was quick to point the details as she was present at the time of the crime. Despite the loss of the trout fry, members of the trout hatchery rotation crew are more concerned about the welfare of Mrs. Noble.

The break in "trout-sitting" has given the Trout Committee time to pursue other enterprises. The trout hatchery was given a serious cleanup and mothballs were strategically placed to ward off pests. This was done because the hatchery enclosure had become a haven for mice, raccoons and other undesirables.

An offer was extended by a member of the Delaware Sportsmen's Club to remove the stainless steel tank from the trout hatchery locale. This was to be accomplished by dragging the tank up the hill with a winch.

Unfortunately, we have yet to decide what should be done with the tank once it's removed. Suggestions are welcome. Members of a work party on February 13th set up a barrier in Komoka Creek upstream of the trout hatchery. Another structure was placed a further distance down stream of the hatchery. The downstream structure had a small opening that would allow returning steelhead access to the area upstream to the barrier.

The plan was to trap these rainbow trout as they continued upstream to spawn so that we could strip them of their eggs and milt for the trout hatchery. High water levels allowed the trout to bypass

the barrier, avoid capture and carry on with their prime directive. We will be applying to receive a small number of eggs from the MNR's Normandale Hatchery so that we are able to maintain our educational tours of the hatchery.

We have received the plans and a bill of materials from Rob Secco of SDI Builders to rebuild the bottom section of the stairs at the trout hatchery site. Rob has supplied his services free of charge. If we can't get \$15.00 out of him, maybe we should consider giving him an honorary membership.

The remainder of our 1999 CFIP grant has gone toward the materials for this project. Construction will be underway as soon as the ground thaws enough to cement in the supports.

Public Relations

Paul Noble, Rick Ornato & Randy Bailey

Every TRAA member will be affected in some way by the activities of this committee. You have been touched by the work of the PR. guys just by reading this newsletter!

We occupied a table on February 5th at the General Marine Annual Boathouse Sale. The TRAA display was set up with memberships, hats, pamphlets and cards for sale or for the taking. Thanks again to the folks at General Marine for hosting this event and having us as guests.

The TRAA display was once more put into action from February 24th through to the 27th; this time at the London International Boat, Cottage and Fishing Show at the Western Fair Grounds. Those of us who worked this show reported a great amount of traffic through our booth. All of the pamphlets were handed out and hundreds of people talked to us about the TRAA's activities.

Before we go ahead and print new TRAA pamphlets, the content will have to be updated and the format may also be changed. Suggestions and submissions for the pamphlets are now being considered so that they can be published before the upcoming summer activities create another requirement for these handouts.

Our presence at shows and other events has resulted in an increasing number of organisations and special interest groups that are attracted to the TRAA and its activities. Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, school groups and others are asking how they can become involved in

our work parties. Teachers are asking us to speak to classes and school clubs. All of these groups are willing to organise into smaller parties for field trips to the trout hatchery, the walleye hatchery and to rehabilitation sites.

When was the last time you called the TRAA Hotline? Are you getting what you need when you call it? If it needs changes please let us know. The Hotline is too expensive to be ignored.

We are once again attempting to pull together all of the TRAA's archives and library resources so that they occupy one location. This will help us organise and control their whereabouts. If anyone has any TRAA property in their possession, please contact us so that it can be made available to all TRAA members in a controlled manner. We continue to receive e-mail from surfers who visit our web site requesting more information about the TRAA and how to join as a member. Look for some cool changes at www.anglers.org this year.

All of the committees now amalgamated under the PR. banner racked up more bills than all of the other committees combined last year. The numbers will not be as lopsided this year, but some fundraising avenues are going to have to be seriously considered. We have the charitable status, so let's utilise it.

We're up for any and all ideas!



Warmwater

Lawson Jones

It has been decided that if the walleye hatchery is to continue, a permanent rearing or growth pond must be incorporated into the operation. This is because the temperature in the current aboveground tank is too difficult to maintain. As a result, the walleye fry have to be released before they are able to grow to a viable size for survival.

There have been meetings with the UTRCA to discuss what shape or type will be required. The option of a single, pond may be ruled out because it would have to be fenced and would pose some liability problems. Another idea is to build a number of smaller ponds that would pose no safety hazard to children, animals or Dave Jeffries. The UTRCA is still committed to the project and has offered appropriate machinery to construct these ponds.

We have sponsored a park bench bearing the TRAA's name to be permanently installed beside the new walkway at Sharon Creek Conservation Area. Hopefully it's within casting distance of the reservoir! Another bass transfer is likely on opening day this coming June. This is where we fish with baitless, barbless hooks and all fish caught are then transferred to a pre-approved location for release.

Other projects are also being cooked up as you read this. We'll keep you posted!



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Social

Dave Jeffries

It has been suggested that regular recreational fishing trips be set up on a weekly basis once the weather turns more favourable. The emphasis will be on having fun, sampling the angling opportunities at a number of different area locations and maybe even learning a few tips from some of the more experienced fellows in the TRAA.

You don't have to know much to catch fish around this area, just ask Randy Bailey, he is living proof!



The Annual Derby is taking place Saturday, March 25th on the Thames River near Kilworth. Those interested are asked to bring \$5.00 to the Little Beaver Restaurant in Komoka by 6:00 am sharp. The entry fee covers a shore-cooked breakfast. Heck, it's worth it just to see Bob James wear his NASA inspired apron! Remember that only paid-up members are allowed access to this prestigious event so if you still owe us for Y2K, bring an extra \$15.00 dollars along with you. We will be making a concerted effort to have some sort of guest speaker, entertainment or other diversion after the business portion of the general meetings. Maybe we can get Scott "Heimer" Roulston and Mike "Outdoor Don" Cavanagh to do their dramatic mime routine of the classic conflict between fish and fisherman. Maybe not.

Call the Hotline for all upcoming events!

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FLOAT TUBE FISHING

Rick Ornato

The float tube or "belly boat", in my mind, ranks as one of the greatest advances in fishing to date. Forget graphite rods and ultralight waders, or Gortex and polar fleece. Float tubes are the fisherman's equivalent to the Lay-Z-Boy reclining chair. In addition to comfort, it has another advantage over any other kind of watercraft: Stealth. Float tubes are virtually noiseless in the water. Add to that the ability to change your position by inches or by feet, without using your hands, and you have the ultimate fishing machine! Mobility, stealth and comfort...

Most of the newer models also come with different sized storage pockets for all of your gear. This eliminates the need for a bulky vest or bag. While many of those who know me would consider me a "gear-pig", I have a tendency toward minimalism on the water. However, one thing that I am not minimalist about is heeding common sense when it kicks me with its sensible shoes.

Float tubes fall under the category of "inflatable craft". A fisherman fairly bristles with pointy and abrasive tools that are ideal for deflating inflatable craft. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to see where I'm going with this but it seems common sense is so rare that it's often mistaken for genius, so we shall proceed all the same.

NOT SUITABLE AS A PFD - LIFEJACKETS ARE STRONGLY RECOMMENDED

If you were to purchase a new float tube, you would find the above message plastered all over the instruction booklet and packaging like graffiti on a New York subway car. Granted, some of you brawny, macho types who happen to be strong swimmers might make it to the shore of a small pond with your life if you weren't wearing waders. Personally, I'd wear a PFD. Not only do I make it to shore, but I make it with my deflated float tube and all the rest of my expensive gear.

I could go on about safety tips for pages but I won't bore you. There are a number of warnings and cautions listed in the literature provided when you open the box with your new float tube inside. You know, stuff like "Stay Out of Shipping Lanes" and "Not Recommended for Shooting Class IV Rapids". To remind myself, I repeat the mantra, "Drowning Sucks, Fish Safe", as I embark on any angling adventures. Fishing from a float tube is, without question, my favourite way to fish. For those of you who have not fished from a float tube, I suggest that you give it a try. I just happen to have two "belly boats". You pick the pond and I'll bring the tubes.

The Quotable Angler

"Creeps and idiots cannot conceal themselves for long on a fishing trip."
John Gierach, from his book: *The View from Rat Lake*, Simon & Schuster 1988

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The Fanshawe Bubble Project

Paul Noble

Members of the TRAA were invited to attend a meeting at the UTRCA administration building on February 2nd to listen to a proposal by John Small, Industry Liaison, University of Western Ontario and Rupp Corriveau, Research Associate, Advanced Fluid Mechanics Research Group, UWO. Karen Maaskant was the UTRCA contact at the meeting. The TRAA was represented by members Archie Graham, Randy Bailey, Fred Smithers, Lawson Jones and Paul Noble.

The UWO, the UTRCA and Compressor Engineering Group have been working on an experimental bubble system at Fanshawe Reservoir. The TRAA has been asked to enter into this partnership as being a possible lead applicant for a \$50,000.00 grant from the Trillium Foundation.

This system has been developed as an attempt to address two main concerns at Fanshawe Reservoir: blue-green algae blooms and wave conditions which impair usage by competitive rowers.

Fanshawe Reservoir is the site of dozens of major rowing events and is also used as a practice facility for competitive rowers. Wave conditions on the lake have often disrupted their activities. The bubble system has shown, during an experiment last September, that wave action was diffused. A fully functioning model of the bubble system should result in calmer water throughout the race course.

All users of Fanshawe Reservoir are aware of the excessive blue-green algae blooms of recent years. This can be toxic to humans

and causes an imbalance in the aquatic ecosystem by reducing the amount of oxygen to other organisms.

The bubbler system will theoretically improve oxygen levels in the bottom section of the water column which should reduce the amount of nutrients that are released from the sediments. A reduction of nutrients should reduce the growth of the algae. The disturbance created by the bubbles may also mechanically inhibit algae growth.

All those present at the meeting were excited about the possible "spin-off" benefits from such a project. Yes, the main thrust of the bubbler system was originally to benefit the rowers. But it has become apparent that all user groups could benefit from the impact of improved water quality. The introduction of oxygen into small lakes and reservoirs has shown in some cases to improve the viability of the sport fisheries. Any reduction in the algae bloom would be welcome by boaters, anglers, campers, hikers and day-users, to name only a few. The UTRCA's revenues would also increase.

The grant is needed to fund a full prototype and its testing this year. The TRAA was approached because it was felt that an environmental group should be lead organisation on the application. The money will not enter the TRAA accounts and the accountancy will be administered by the UWO.

This is a great opportunity for the TRAA to show that we are a valuable partner in the improvement of Fanshawe Reservoir for all user groups.

The free publicity can't hurt either!

The Entertainment Section

We Have a Winner! The TRAA Membership Draw

We didn't know where else to put this announcement. Judging by those involved, it could only be entertaining. The winner of the "membership draw" for a full day of guiding with Ian James was Rick "Ramble-On" Yeadon. Those who know both Ian and Rick know them as somewhat talkative.

Nobody knows what to expect from this pairing but it's possible that some fishing might occur during a break in the anecdotes, fables and yarns.

Congratulations Rick; sorry Ian.

1999 Darwin Awards Nominee "Gone Fishin"

Confirmed True by Darwin

Ukraine (25-May-99) - A fisherman in Kiev electrocuted himself while "fishing" in the river Tereblya. The 43 year old man connected cables to the main power supply of his home and trailed the ends into the river. The electric shock killed the fish, which floated belly-up to the surface of the water.

The man then waded in to collect his catch, neglecting to remove the live wires, and suffered the same fate as the fish.

In an ironic twist, the man was fishing for a mourning meal to commemorate the anniversary of his mother-in-law's death.

"Wanted: Wading Staff... apply within."

A bumper sticker seen on a 2000 Navigator.

Fishy Recipe Two Easy Ones

In the past I have been condemned for selecting recipes that require skills that are beyond most fishermen. Personally, I don't believe that but there are times when speed is of the essence. So here's two that fit the bill, whether you're in a hurry or culinarily challenged.

Quick & Simple Tuna Salad

1	can	albacore tuna
2	tablespoons	finely chopped onion
1	tablespoon	hamburger relish
3	tablespoons	mayo' or substitute

Directions: Mix everything together well and spread on a piece of bread with a slice of tomato and a piece of lettuce. Cover with another piece of bread and enjoy!



Tomato Surprise

4	fillets	walleye
1	tablespoon	oil or butter
1/2	can	condensed tomato soup

Directions: Spread oil or butter around a heavy skillet and add fillets. Pour condensed soup (no water) over fish and cook until flaky.

"No Headache, but..."

According to Men's Health Magazine you can burn 1500 calories by engaging in 12 hours of vigorous sex. However, you would burn the same number of calories by participating in 3 hours of fly-fishing.



Life is full of difficult choices.



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Saturday, March 25, 2000

TRAAC Annual Walleye Derby We'll be carpooling from the Little Beaver Restaurant, County Road 14, Komoka at 6:00 am to fish the Thames River near Kilworth. If you're not a paid-up member for 2000, cough up \$20.00 and we'll let you fish with us (and we'll give you a membership card!). If you're already a member, you can fish with us for \$5.00. We'll even feed you breakfast!

Sunday, April 2, 2000

Rehab' Work Party Meet behind Hakim Optical, Richmond Street & Fanshawe Park Road at 7:30 am. From there we'll go to O'Neil Drain #1 to complete the cleanup and de-brushing of the lower section. There is also a beaver dam that requires removal.

Wednesday, April 12, 2000

TRAAC General Meeting As usual, we'll be meeting at the Canadian Corps Association Building, 1051 Dundas Street East, beside the Kellogg's plant at 8:00 pm. This the best place to catch up on all TRAAC activities and this year there will be a presentation of interest after every general meeting.

Wednesday, May 10, 2000

TRAAC General Meeting Let us know how you did on the Opening Day of trout season!

Wednesday, June 14, 2000

TRAAC General Meeting Details regarding the TRAAC Bass Transfer will be available at this meeting.

Wednesday, June 24, 2000

TRAAC Bass Transfer Members will fish for bass with barbless, baitless hooks and the captured fish will then be transferred to an appropriate location for release. Always lots of fish and lots of fun!

Note: Any of the above can change so call the Hotline or attend the General Meetings.

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We have a Winner!

The TRAAC Membership Draw

All of those who had coughed up their \$15.00 for this year's TRAAC membership dues before the AGM were eligible for a free draw of a day's guided fishing with Ian James. Ian's first book, *Fumbling with a Fly Rod: Stories from the River*, is a laugh-out-loud collection of true anecdotes. We can't help but think that the winner of the draw, Rick "Ramble-On" Yeadon could have provided fodder for another chapter. Those who know both Ian and Rick are probably wondering how they'll fit any fishing in between all the yacking! If they make it back alive, we're sure they'll have more to talk about!

Visit www.ianjames.on.ca after March 30th!



You Can Still Join or Renew

...and it's still only \$15.00!

Because you let it go so long, you missed the free draw but you can still reap the benefits of being a TRAAC member. Your immediate family is also included in the membership package. Come out to a general meeting to join or you can fill out the little form below and mail it with a \$15.00 check or money order to: TRAAC, P.O. Box 1415, Stn. A, London, Ontario N6A 5M2

Yes! I want to be a member of the TRAAC!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

*Tax receipts are issued for donations over \$25.00

(in addition to the \$15.00 membership fee!)