

Spring ~ 2001

Memberships

\$15.00

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

**Who are You and What are
You Doing with that Chainsaw?**



No, this imposing individual is not a homicidal maniac straight out of a 'B' movie. In fact, TRAA member Bob James is one of the nicest guys with whom anyone would ever want to do stream rehabilitation.

"Right, Mr. James, Sir?"

"Now take your finger off the trigger and step away from the saw..."

"But isn't cutting down trees a form of habitat destruction?" Indiscriminate clearing of trees, bush, and grasses are, without exception, a form of habitat destruction. However, periodic and selective maintenance of some streams is necessary to prevent more destructive practices needed to sustain acceptable flow characteristics. The TRAA removed in-stream obstructions - mostly overgrown willows and dogwoods - to alleviate the drain's flooding tendencies. Bankside vegetation was left intact to help stabilize against erosion and to preserve a cooling canopy. The unacceptable alternative to the above method would have been destructive dredging and channelization.

Editor's Note

Paul Noble



It's so incredible that I still can hardly believe it myself...

I missed fishing on the opening day of trout season. I know what you're thinking:

"He was barely clinging to life in a coma, or was kidnapped by a psychotic PETA member, or was abducted by extra-terrestrials on an 'outing' of their own."

All of those guesses are plausible coming from anyone who knows me but the real reasons are alarmingly simple. There are too many of what Ian James affectionately calls "Loogans" now roaming my favorite trout haunts. Most decent fish hunker down for the duration and I can sympathize. As I age I find myself looking for quieter moments instead of a wild party. Besides, I drank to much beer the night before after my opening day of golf.

Rehabilitation

Mark Biesinger

Stream Rehabilitation work on Komoka Creek has all but come to a halt and will remain as such until mid-June. Only then will we be certain that the rainbow trout fry have had an opportunity to begin moving freely in the nursery sections of the creek and are safe from our efforts.

While there was still snow on the ground, we returned to the Ready Drains at the request of Middlesex-Centre to remove all of the trees from the main channel of the drains. It was bitterly cold but the only complaints were from the equipment (the chains on the chainsaws kept derailing!).

We have yet to take a streamwalk to inspect the mouth of Komoka Creek for debris, deadfalls and other materials that were blocking it last fall. However, if the numbers of returning steelhead are any indication, most of it must have blown out into the Thames River during high water events in late winter.

Streamwalks will be organized for both May and June to determine what stream habitat improvements are needed in the short term.

Don't worry, we'll be contacting you for the next stream rehabilitation work party!



The crew poses after the last Ready Drain work party.

Tired, cold, hungry and still having a good time!

Left to Right: Randy Bailey, Paul Noble, Wes Adam, Archie Graham,

John Jackson, Bob James & Kevin Lemesurier (kneeling).

The best lookin' guy, Rick Ornato, was behind the camera.

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Trout

Randy Bailey

The Trout Committee has experienced some disappointing hardships over the past year in regard to the TRAA trout hatchery but like any championship team, we are viewing these difficulties as opportunities to improve our expertise in the area of raising trout.

The angle and depth of the spring source pipe has been altered to minimize the amount of debris from entering the straining basket. The entire weir area has been vacuumed to remove the dead leaves and other matter that were composting on the bottom. The free-flowing section above the weir also had to be excavated of the same type of rotting muck.

Although this work to the existing weir has been effective, the current system must be updated. The structure of the weir has served its purpose and requires replacement. The present setup does not allow easy or effective cleanout of debris and silt from both levels of the weir system. Cleanout is not feasible when the hatchery is in operation because flow to the source pipe cannot be diverted or shut off at the weir. As a result, ambitious plans are being discussed to completely redesign the way in which we draw our source water. The Trout Committee is accepting all suggestions for these improvements.

The water that is regulated at the trays is now being gravity-forced through aquarium grade filter media. This media is cleaned on a daily basis by members of the trout hatchery rotation when there are eggs in the trays.



All four trays are being used for the current batch of rainbow trout eggs. This should allow greater flow around individual eggs and should also simplify the daily maintenance of the eggs..

The perforated metal of the egg trays has been replaced by a plastic mesh. The larger openings in the plastic screening allow a freer upwelling of water. It is also easier to detect and remove both debris and trapped air.

There are currently 32,000 rainbow trout eggs in the hatchery and all indications point to a

successful hatch. A release site still must be discussed and suggestions are welcome.

Members participating in streamwalks over the past three months have noted possibly the best return of spawning steelhead to Komoka Creek to date. Over 40 redds were distributed over a very short section of the creek from the hatchery to the old rehabilitated section above County Road 14.

There's nothing more satisfying than witnessing the return of those fully matured rainbow trout that began life just like those in the trays of the TRAA trout hatchery now.

Kinda' makes your eyes water.

Warmwater

Kevin Lemesurier

The retrofitting of the TRAA walleye hatchery has been successfully completed thanks to a few dedicated members. Most of the plumbing has been replaced with a more efficient system utilizing non-corrosive fittings. The self-contained "loop" allows the re-circulation of water while the pump is positioned so that it no longer endangers the newly hatched walleye fry.

On March 24th, in the middle of a freak blizzard, TRAA members moved the hatchery to its new location behind the drive shed near the Fanshawe Conservation Area campgrounds. The plumbing and electrical connections were made after the circular and the black plastic tanks were put into position. The final checks and trial runs on the hatchery systems were completed just days before Rob Culp of the Dunnville Hunters & Anglers Club called Randy Bailey with the news that our walleye eggs were ready. On April 14th Kevin Lemesurier and Archie Graham made the trip down to Dunnville. They arrived back at the TRAA walleye hatchery with over 300,000 eggs. For the first time in over 2 years the TRAA walleye hatchery was back in operation.

Shortly after the eggs were in place, members began working on the fence that will enclose

the area occupied by the walleye hatchery. The posts were put in place on April 25th and then the chain link sections were erected the following Sunday, April 29th. Once the large gate and the barb wire are added, we will have a compound that will maintain the security and the safety of the walleye hatchery operations. The TRAA utility trailer and the fish transfer tank will also be located in this compound so that access to this equipment is more convenient. All that remains is to paint the exterior of the walleye hatchery a uniform colour.

The walleye eggs began hatching barely a week after they were put in the hatchery's bell jars. The new system seems to be

working well because the little fry are rising into the overflow area and are ending up safely in the circular growth tank. The release date has yet to be set but we should be able to keep them a couple of weeks longer than we have with previous batches. The soy mix in the "slop" tank is supporting

a healthy crop of plankton and insect larvae that we'll be feeding to the fry.

A venue will be set for a bass transfer on Opening Day in June (come out to the May 9th General Meeting for more information).



Kevin Lemesurier and Lawson Jones bear down on a post-hole auger for the new fence around the TRAA walleye hatchery compound.

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Carpin' Under Pressure

Pete Difffy

For many years now I have been collecting data that seems to link carp feeding activity to the changing weather systems that cross over the US on a daily basis. My main area of interest is the effect that the barometric pressure has on the daily routine of carp, particularly how it seems to control their feeding habits. This interest first surfaced about 10 years ago, when for some inexplicable reason the carp suddenly stopped feeding after what had been a very hectic 2-3 hours. On my deck I have a little weather station which includes rainfall measurement, high and low temperature recording and a barometer. I glanced at the barometer and noticed that in those couple of hours the pressure had dropped significantly and was now below 30 inches, whereas when I started it was above. The pressure continued to drop, and some hours later a thunderstorm rolled through.

This got me thinking about a book I had read many years before called *Fishing for Big Pike*, by Barrie Rickards and Ray Webb. In one chapter Ray Webb discussed the impact barometric pressure had on the feeding habits of pike in his local water, and concluded that a sustained low pressure was a good time to try dead bait, but a high pressure would result in more pike to live baits. From my simplistic way of thinking I came to the conclusion that maybe the carp were effected in a similar way. Low pressure in the carp's case signaling a reluctance to move around and feed as much as when a high pressure is in control of the weather.

So from that point on, I have kept an eye on the pressure at the start and end of my fishing sessions. For the last couple of years I have been viewing the Intellicast web page, which has an excellent previous 48 hours observation page. Here it gives the pressure readings hourly. I can check the trend, which in some cases is more

important than the actual numbers. Referring back to Ray Webb's conclusions, the best time he found was after a sustained low pressure when the pressure started to rise rapidly. I have found the same to be true for carp. I can't wait to get out fishing when I check the 48 hours page and see the pressure is rising by the hour. I have never failed to catch carp in this scenario.

So why do carp, or any other fish, notice any change in atmospheric pressure? After all, we all know that water is incompressible; so why and how does it effect a carp? All their lives are spent traversing the depths and shallows of a lake where their bodies must experience quite dramatic changes in water pressure. It seems strange that a small change in atmospheric pressure would have such a big impact on them, but without doubt it does, and although I have yet to draw any conclusions for this, I know for a fact that I have a tremendous amount of success when a high pressure system is in control of the weather.

My 'magic' number is 30 inches. Take my last 31 trips for instance. I have taken 218 carp, of which 187 were taken during the period of a high pressure system. The pressure during these 31 trips was: 18 high and 13 low pressure. In the 13 low pressure sessions I had 8 blanks and 37 fish. Float fishing took 21 of these just off my boat launch on a tranquil August morning with a pressure reading of 29.97 to 29.95 in 2 hours. None were over 3lbs. A really odd day, and one I have never experienced before or after. The rest of the fish were all taken during high pressure systems and I had one blank in the 18 sessions. All of my 20lb+ fish came during high pressure too. I don't need much convincing that pressure does have an effect on the carp's feeding habits (in my lake) with numbers like that.

I hope this may be of interest to you the reader. It certainly helps me decide when I need to take a 4 or 12 pack with me to the bankside!

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THE TRAA

GEAR PIG

Luke Outbeloh

I'm blind in one eye, two fingers from my left hand are missing (so's my right foot), my right hip's plastic, there's a steel plate in my skull, some of the moles on my neck are looking a bit scary, I can tell the weather's changing when the lead pellets in my buttocks begin to ache and I couldn't sire children even if I wanted them. My name's Luke but all my friends call me Lucky.

I'd like to talk to you about stuff you need for being safe when you go fishing. I'm an authority since I can tell you what I shoulda' had when these bad things happened to me. *Bad Thing:* Yanked on a jig hard enough that it sling-shotted right back into my eye. Lost the eye but got the \$0.20 jig back.

Shoulda' Had: Shatterproof sun, safety or prescription eyewear. Spin fishermen are taking a chance without them, fly fishermen are just plain stupid without them.

Bad Thing: Figured steelhead were called that because my knife just slid off the gill plate and lopped off my pointer and my other favorite finger.

Shoulda' Had: A sharp fillet knife. A dull knife is harder to control and is therefore far more dangerous. It also makes a mess of the job and makes you look like a tenderfoot.

Bad Thing: Sliced an artery after falling off a cliff. A tourniquet stopped the bleeding but I lost the foot to gangrene.

Shoulda' Had: A whistle. People were canoeing by but they couldn't hear me yell over the rapids. A whistle would've brought them over and I would've been at the hospital soon enough to save the foot.

Bad Thing: Didn't see the drop-off above the gorge and stepped into the wildest ride of my life. It stopped being fun when I smashed my

hip on a granite boulder.

Shoulda' Had: A wading staff. It's great for prospecting that next step, climbing up steep banks and for hiking to the next good pool. But, if you need it to help you combat the current, you shouldn't be in there anyway.

Bad Thing: I always admired the tanned, leathery look of the experienced fishing guides. Unfortunately my weather-worn look has turned into melanoma.

Shoulda' Had: Regular applications of sunscreen. Tans look great in the short term, but cancer's not a fashion statement.

Bad Thing: Got lost in the woods and came out onto the skeet range for the Nudist Neo-Nazi Gun and Camping Club. It's amazing how fast you can still run with a butt full of buckshot.

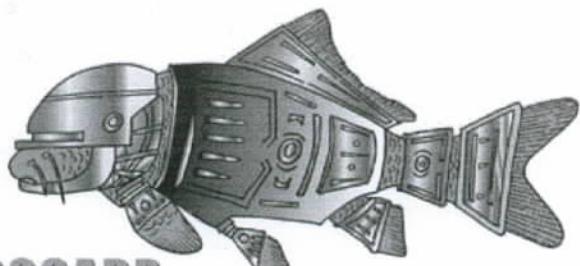
Shoulda' Had: A compass. They are especially handy when you're in unfamiliar territory. Heck, I couldn't even give the cops directions back to the NNNGCC.

Bad Thing: Went to jump over a low cedar rail fence and the felt sole of my wading boot (it had come half off the boot a week before) caught on a root. The resulting force and location of the blow from my landing will save me money on birth control from now on. *Shoulda' Had:* Equipment in good repair. If it's broken or worn, fix it or replace it.

Bad Thing: People saw or heard about *Bad Things* and still did nothing to prevent these same *Bad Things* from happening to them.

Shoulda' Had: Common sense? Brains? Body guards? I dunno. It seems that some things, like intelligence and reasoning, are attributes that many folk aren't born with. Hopefully their bodies wash out of the gene pool before they ruin it for everybody.

TRAAtoon



ROBOCARP

The Quotable Angler

"I don't think there's any such thing as one rod, any more than there's such a thing as one peanut. Either you're eating peanuts or you aren't."

-Arnold Gingrich
from *Fishing in Print*

COWPOKE WISDOM

"NEVER DRINK DOWNSTREAM
FROM THE HERD"

Two Sage Fly Rods for Sale

LL490-3

9-foot, 3-piece, 4-weight dry fly rod with Struble nickel-silver reel seat w/bird's eye maple insert and "superfine" shaped corks.

RPL+790-4

9-foot, 4-piece, 7-weight steelhead rod with machined aluminium reel seat anodized black and "full wells" shaped corks.

Both rods are hand built with SIC stripper and single foot snake guides. Purchaser will have their choice of thread colour for the whippings and an inscription, if desired.

These rods are both offered at \$350.00 each which is less than 50% of their retail value.

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Where You Are is Where You're At...

A man in a hot air balloon realized he was lost. He reduced altitude and spotted a woman below. He descended a bit more and shouted, "Excuse me, can you help me? I promised a friend I would meet him an hour ago, but I don't know where I am."

The woman below replied: "you are in a hot air balloon hovering approximately 30 feet above a Lake Superior fen habitat, 2.7 miles west of the Steel River near one of the remnant populations and spawning grounds of the coaster brook trout."

"You must be a biologist," said the balloonist. "I am," she replied. "How did you know?"

"Well, answered the balloonist, "everything you've told me may be technically correct, but I have no idea what to make of your information, and the fact is, I'm still lost. Frankly, you've not been much help so far."

The woman responded: "You must be a bureaucrat". "I am," replied the balloonist, "but how did you know?"

"Well," said the woman, "you don't know where you are or where you're going. You have risen to where you are due to a large quantity of hot air. You made a promise to someone that you have no idea how to keep, and you expect me to solve your problem. The fact is, you are in exactly the same position you were before we met, but somehow it's now my fault."

SUMMER ~ 2001

MEMBERSHIPS
\$15.00

THE THAMES RIVER ANGLER

"NEWSLETTER OF THE THAMES RIVER ANGLERS ASSOCIATION"

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WHY IS THIS MAN EATING HIS FISHING ROD?



TRAA member Rick Ornato was heard saying, "If I catch a carp on a fly, I'll eat my rod." When asked why he wouldn't just eat his hat like everyone else Rick replied, "Well, it was a tough choice. The rod's pricey and so's the hat. However, my wife bought the hat!"

Many North American anglers like Rick are starting to "warm up" to carp and other so-called coarse fish that inhabit our watersheds. Opportunistic fishermen are starting to take advantage of fantastic opportunities right in our own backyards for matching

wits with abundant, tackle-breaking, intelligent (carp have twice the I.Q. of trout) adversaries. The thinking angler acknowledges the fact that in these days of catch and release, maybe there should not be any distinction between "game" and "coarse" fish.

Editor's Note

Paul Noble

The air conditioner in our house has been idle for three years now. We've adapted to it. One unforeseen aspect of having the house windows open is that it puts us back in touch with the world outside. More and more these days, people are isolating themselves from all that is going on around them.

Most folks drive home with the windows up in the car, park it in a garage behind an auto-closing door. They then spend the rest of the day cloistered in houses or shrouded by privacy fences. I saw a teenager fishing with headphones on. I was about to shrug it off when his dad came out of the woods also wearing headphones. There they sat, blissfully insulated from each other and the natural, outdoors experience that they were nearly sharing.



TECHNIQUES

TIPS & TRICKS OF THE FAMOUS AND NOT-SO-FAMOUS

Paul Noble

This new column is yet another opportunity for everyone to share some of their angling experience. Last year we launched the "Gear Pig" column, which has been very popular with the readership but is falling short of the mark with wanna-be authors. I'd like to start this one off with a technique for catching those frustrating "bonefish of the north" - the venerable redhorse. Most of you are saying, "What's a redhorse?" Let's just say they're a sucker on steroids and the piscatorial equivalent of Albert Einstein. In comparison, trout seem as easy as chub and smallmouths give up like rock bass.

I've watched as others fish for redhorse. These fish inhale a bait, jig, fly or other lure and spit it back out in less than a second. Seasoned anglers (even professional guides) are amazed when I tell them that their offering has been sampled and rejected because they neither felt nor saw any indication of a "pick up." So how do you catch them? The one weakness that redhorse have is their fearlessness toward relatively stationary, wading fishermen. This sets them up for a sight-fishing version of an old fishing technique called "dapping". Originally, dapping was done using a

fly rod and that's what I use. However, the method can easily be adapted to a spinning rod and its shorter length may be an advantage at times.

Add a half metre section of 2-kilogram fluorocarbon leader to your line. To this, tie a size 8-10, unweighted, white nymph (Ian James' *Puke Fly*, without the eyes, is the best I've tried). Any colour of nymph would probably work but you have to clearly see it

drifting to the fish. Pinch on one BB shot about 30 cm above the fly and you're ready.

Find a "flats" area where the carp and the redhorse roam. Wade right out there. You may

spook them but just be patient, they'll be back. As you see them approach, "dap" your fly with only enough line out to drift the fly naturally to the fish of your choice. If the fish's white lips extend toward your fly, STRIKE! Don't strike after the fly disappears past the lips. By the time your hookset transmits down the line to the fly, it's too late. Be patient, it takes practice.

When you finally do connect, buckle up sport, you're going for a ride on a bucking, jumping redhorse!

"Yee-hah!"

And please, gently release them, some breeds of redhorse are threatened or endangered.



The toughest hombre in the Thames; both to hook and to land. A beauty loaded with both brains and brawn.

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REHABILITATION

Mark Biesinger

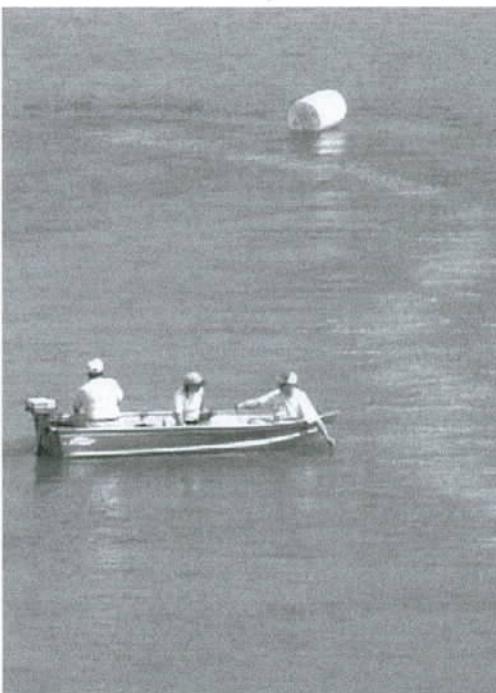
Work parties for the Rehabilitation Committee have had to take a back seat this year to other ongoing TRAA projects involving both the Warmwater and the Trout Committees. With a finite core of roughly a dozen active volunteers out of a TRAA membership of about forty, it doesn't take long to spread ourselves a bit thin. However, there was a streamwalk planned to check out the mouth of Komoka Creek on May 26th. If you've read this column in past issues, you'll know that this area was blocked with debris and corn stalks deposited there by last year's high water events. We were curious about the status of the blockage because steelhead (rainbow trout) had made it up the creek to spawn in record numbers this past fall.

A small party of six members made the long walk down to the mouth and found that the area was still substantially blocked. They worked hard clearing as much as they possibly could without the aid of chainsaws and debrushers. About half of the mess was cleared with the rest being too much to do by hand. Another work party, this time with saws and debrushers, will take place on Saturday, August 18th.

As usual we'll meet at the trout hatchery at 8:00 am. Those wishing to attend are advised to wear waders and long sleeved shirts. Kevin Lemesurier and Paul Noble borrowed a boat to help with a test run of the Bubbler on Fanshawe Lake. Our job was to take Jen, a UTRCA summer employee around to four different stations where we took readings of oxygen levels and temperatures at different

depths. These tests will help determine the effect that the Bubbler has while it's in operation. The motor on the borrowed boat was Kevin's 3.5hp Eska direct drive. No neutral, no reverse; you start it and your moving! We aren't sure who's older, Kevin or his motor. Both little powerplants ran like a top all morning. We managed to get the job done and had Jen entertained the whole way. Don't mention the duelling anchors, OK Kevin?

There was discussion at the July General Meeting about organizing some cleanups like the Mud Creek project a few years ago. Members were interested in doing something on the main river itself. This discussion will continue at the August General Meeting.



*The TRAA's Kevin Lemesurier (driving),
Paul Noble (probe deployer) and the
UTRCA's Jen (in charge of the crew).*

TROUT

Randy Bailey

The Trout Committee is both proud and relieved to announce that the Spring 2001 batch of 30,000 rainbow trout responded well to all the changes that were made to the TRAA trout hatchery. These changes were outlined in detail in the last issue of this newsletter.

Randy Bailey believes that the removal of composting vegetation and silt from the weir system, and the regular maintenance of the aquarium filter media at the head of the trough that contained the trays were both of significant benefit. "We had far less silt accumulation in the trough and on the eggs themselves. The fungus growth evident in past years was virtually eliminated, or at least kept to a manageable level," said Randy, commenting on the positive effect of the cleaner source water. He went on to say, "This latest batch of eggs was still late in developing. We feel that this is because of the low temperature (9 degrees C) of the spring source water. Unfortunately this is a variable over which we have little control."

The release date for the rainbow trout fry was scheduled for June 24th even though there was concern over whether or not they would be large enough to ensure a decent survival rate. It was decided that the release should go ahead regardless of their size to minimize any

repeats of past catastrophic attempts to keep the fry beyond a few weeks. Oxbow Creek was selected as the donor stream provided that its water temperature was suitable for acclimation purposes. Komoka Creek was chosen as a "backup" if conditions in Oxbow Creek were not appropriate.

Members were impressed that the trout fry had reached an average of 3 centimetres by

the time the release date was upon us. After preliminary temperatures of both Oxbow and Komoka Creeks were determined, it was felt that Komoka Creek would offer the best scenario for acclimation. Four release stations were chosen along Komoka Creek: three upstream and one downstream of the trout hatchery.

Continued hatchery improvements will



Carley Noble patiently awaits the acclimation of the thousands of trout fry in her care before releasing them into Komoka Creek.

take place over the summer months as time away from other projects permits. Another complete cleanout of the weir system must occur before the fall so that we are ready to receive a compliment of brown trout eggs to occupy us over the winter months!

If you would like to be a part of the trout hatchery rotation, please contact Randy Bailey as early as possible.

WARMWATER

Kevin Lemesurier

Everything was going very well at the refitted TRAA walleye hatchery this past spring. The Dunnville Hunters & Anglers Club graciously supplied us with 300,000 walleye eggs on April 14th. Within about a week they had already started hatching. Kevin Lemesurier and all those who got the walleye hatchery up and running again were extremely pleased with the success of the operation.

Then, on May 5th, the unthinkable happened. Approximately 97% of the walleye fry were stolen from the circular growth tank. A devastated Kevin

Lemesurier, the driving force behind the revitalisation of the walleye hatchery, said, "I could take it if they'd have cut off my right arm but this... This hurts." It's almost certain that the walleye fry did not survive a transfer to a private pond or other similar destination. "This is a

demonstration of how the selfishness and the stupidity of a few petty criminals can negatively affect the long term goals and benefits of a program like the TRAA walleye hatchery," commented an understandably bitter Randy Bailey at the May General Meeting.

Anyone who has information regarding this crime are urged to contact anyone within the TRAA. We would especially be interested in

speaking with three men who were witnessed exiting quickly from the walleye hatchery area mere hours before the fry were stolen. Their vehicle is described as a late model, burgundy GMC stepside pickup truck.

Since the walleye hatchery has been empty, work has resumed on the facility. The fence has been completed with a large gate. The gravel piles have been used to level the area around the hatchery. The hatchery has a spiffy new paint job. The underground tank

has been given a custom "trap door" to allow easier access and has a new frame to prevent debris and animals from entering.

Speaking of animals, a TRAA work party was confronted by an unwelcome squatter in the pile of material left over from construction

of the shelter for the circular tank. Paul Noble lifted a corner of a large piece of roofing and was confronted by a rather odourous skunk. Fortunately the skunk was just as afraid and ran in the opposite direction that Paul did.

Needless to say, the whole smelly pile of material was quickly removed to a proper dump site.



Archie Graham, left, Tim Jokela Jr. and Tim's mom brush a lovely coat of green on the TRAA walleye hatchery. Note the new fence in the background and the circular growth tank from which the walleye fry went missing in May.

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PUBLIC RELATIONS

Paul Noble & Rick Ornato

Many of the regular readers of the *Thames River Angler* may have noticed some subtle changes to this issue. We've cleaned up the look to hopefully unclutter the appearance. We are also hoping that the pictures and other graphics are a little cleaner and clearer. These changes are all a precursor to what will arrive in your mailbox in the Fall. We now have at our disposal, a new publishing program that will enable us to give the TRAA newsletters, pamphlets, business cards and every other related publication a more professional look. The PR. Committee is putting a self-imposed deadline of October 31, 2001 to have the new, improved and updateable TRAA web site up and running. The updated site will have most of what is currently up plus a large number of new features. It will be a lot easier to get around and will be easy for us to keep current and informative.

A small number of members have been slowly rebuilding the TRAA's photographic archives. A large number of them have been stored digitally for use in publications such as the one you're reading. They were taken with digital cameras or were digitized using a scanner.



New display boards will also be designed and produced using many of the new photographs in the TRAA archives.

SOCIAL

John Jackson

What is with TRAA members and a lack of walleye? At every a TRAA Walleye Derby, the walleye either don't get invited or they just choose to avoid us. Such was the case on April 21st when one walleye was caught and Lawson Jones was declared the winner by acclamation. Despite the lack of walleye, everyone had a great time and, as usual, breakfast on the riverbank was delicious.

The TRAA Bass Derby took place on June 30th and was attended by only four members. This was unfortunate because the smallmouth fishing was awesome in the North Thames River that day. Besides the numerous bass caught and released that day, Paul Noble and Rick Ornato had a ball bothering carp (see this newsletter's cover). The London Area Carp Group would like a rematch of last year's challenge. Last year they kicked our butts. The match style fishing is an easy, fun format. Tentative dates are August 19th or the following Sunday, August 26th. We'll Call you!

A Salmon Derby has been tentatively set for September 30th on the Bayfield River. Details will come to members as they're available.



The one good thing about bass fishing anywhere in the Thames River is that there's always bass there to catch!

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THE TRAA GEAR PIG

Paul Noble

Do you have a favourite piece of equipment? What is the one piece of gear that, above all, makes you a better fisherman, makes you think you're a better fisherman or simply makes the whole thing more rewarding and worthwhile? Well this is what a few local angling luminaries had to say when asked "What is your single, most favourite piece of gear?" and "Why?".

Rick Ornato has the deserved (or undeserved, if you ask him) honour of having this column named after him. Yes folks, Rick's the original Gear Pig. "After careful consideration, I have to say that my chest pack is my favourite piece of fishing equipment. Almost everything I used to put into a vest fits in the pack. Now I just switch around fly boxes depending on the target species of fish because the chest pack houses all the other necessary gear at all times." Now that's a weight loss program that we can all handle.

Tim Jokela Jr. is an ardent small stream, small fly specialist. Problem is, Tim, small fish also tend to specialise in those arenas. "My Sage XP 9-foot, 3-weight fly rod has to be my number one piece of gear. It pretty well casts itself. It can make a beginner look like a pro." You've got to love any piece of effective equipment that also makes you look good.

Mike "Donny" Cavanagh is the host of the Outdoor Don Carpathon, a prestigious event that has been around, annually, for over 20 years. "My most prized piece of fishing equipment is my minnow bucket. There is

nothing really special about it except that it is in my possession and not at the bottom of a lake or mangled on the side of a highway. Hiemer Roulston will never see this one because bad things always happen to minnow buckets when he's nearby. Yep, it'll never see daylight. It's staying safe in the basement." Maybe you could lend out a cheap decoy and still use the real one.

Scott "Hiemer" Roulston is an evil, black hole for equipment. Things go missing, get broken or are wrecked when surgically removed from his head. "I don't own my favourite piece of gear. When I need a minnow bucket, I just borrow one. It doesn't seem to matter what kind of shape it's in when I return it, or if I even return it at all. The next time I go to borrow it, the bucket always looks brand new again." 'Nuff said.

Randy Bailey is famous for having stuff that other people used to have in their tackle box until they let him look through it. "The favorite piece of gear in my tackle box is a lure with a hard plastic body, a soft plastic tail, a treble hook and a recoil mechanism that you activate after casting by ripping it through the water. The mechanism then causes the tail to whirl and wiggle through the water for about 15 seconds. I get lots of laughs and teasing until I start hauling in the bucket-mouths." Randy needed another system when the use of explosives was banned as an angling method.

There you have it. An eclectic mix of people reveals, well, eclectic choices.

The Quotable Angler

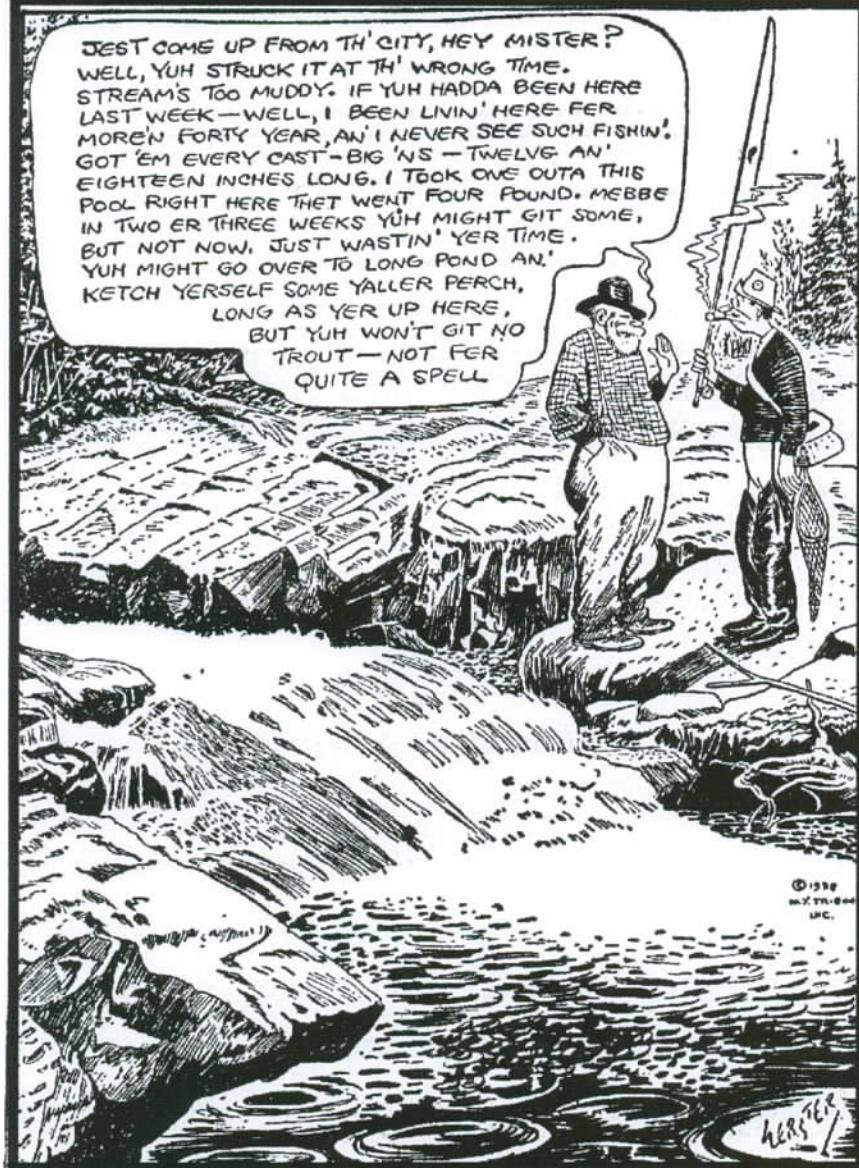
"I spent my honeymoon fishing for small-mouth bass.
I had to.
The trout season had ended."

Ed Zern,
from his collaboration with cartoonist H.T. Webster:
"To Hell with Fishing" (1945)
(the cartoon below is from the same book)

FROM THE WHAT THE HECK IS THAT? DEPARTMENT



TRAATOON



According to the creator, Rick Ornato, this fly has been named the *Labattis Caddis*. Apparently, Rick noticed a number of the naturals in a section of water he fishes regularly. He has also noticed that they tend to reproduce and increase in number as the summer season wears on.

Rick says that to fish the *Labattis Caddis* effectively, "Cast it close to public and private docks, boat launches, beach areas or any other place where loud, obnoxious people congregate on weekends and holidays. Then just let it sit there on the bottom with all the other naturals." When asked if the *Labattis Caddis* produces a lot of fish, Rick says, "Not really, but I'm hoping it catches on because I can produce two dozen of these babies in one weekend alone."

If You'd Like to Attend a TRA General Meeting...

We meet at 8:00 pm on every second Wednesday of every month at:

**Grosvenor Lodge
1017 Western Road
London, Ontario**

FALL/WINTER
2001/2002
MEMBERSHIPS
\$20.00

THE THAMES RIVER ANGLER

"NEWSLETTER OF THE THAMES RIVER ANGLERS ASSOCIATION"

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

A DOUBLE-UP
ISSUE FOR:

TECHNIQUES
SNAGS &
PICKEREL

GEAR PIG
FAVE' GEAR &
QUICK-CHANGE
FLY REELS

A CHAT WITH
THE PRES'

COMMITTEE
NEWS

COVER STORY:
2 WEEKENDS
AT BUD'S

CONTACT US

MESSAGES
645-2845

E-MAIL
TRA@ANGLERS.ORG

WEB SITE
WWW.ANGLERS.ORG

WHY IS BUD ATTACKING BOB WITH A CANADIAN WIGGLER?



Actually, TRAA member Bud Bryant has come to the aid of fellow TRAA member Bob James. Although body piercing is all the rage these days, we believe that these things should be left to trained estheticians under controlled circumstances. Full marks to Bob for originality; jewellery is normally impaled on the ear, nose, lip, tongue, etc., but Bob decided to go straight for the jugular!

How many times have you been yanking on a snagged lure only to have it suddenly release and catapult past your ear at an alarming rate? If you're like the rest of us, the incident is quickly shrugged off with a joke and a nervous laugh. Ask Bob how

much fun he's having with Bud trying to dig treble hooks out of his neck. This ultimately resulted in a trip to the hospital for a surgical removal. There are ways to safely and effectively "unsnag" and you can read about it in one of this issue's "Techniques" column.

Editor's Note

Paul Noble



Many anglers dread the coming of winter and the supposed drought in fishing opportunities. Most of these so-called hardy outdoorsmen put there rods away and stay at home in a torpid state not unlike hibernation. For me (and a couple of close friends), winter can be the most rewarding times of the year to fish for steelhead, walleye, crappie, perch and pike. Our first choice is a river free from slush and ice. Even when a river looks un-fishable, there's sometimes just enough open water to cast into and that's all you need.

Just this morning we were out catching walleye on a local river and only saw two other anglers (and they caught 'em too!). We were warm and cozy in our layered clothes. The snow was falling softly in big fluffy flakes that muffled our section of the river into peaceful silence.

If everything freezes up it's time get the "hard" water gear out and fish through a hole.

And, it doesn't matter what the weather's like, you can still attend a TRAA General Meeting at Grosvenor Lodge, 1017 Western Road and just talk about fishing!

A CHAT WITH THE PRESIDENT

Randy Bailey is winding up his third consecutive term as President of the TRAA. He is one of the original members and as such has seen many changes within the TRAA. The Thames River Angler caught up with Randy in his crowded garden shed.

TRA: Membership fees have increased for the first time in the TRAA's history, and by nearly 34%! How can this be justified in a time of dwindling membership numbers?

RB: As you mentioned in your question, the fees have remained the same for almost 15 years. All things being equal, the increase is modest and compared to other organizations, the total dues are still at least half of the going rate. I honestly believe we could have gone to \$30 without seriously affecting the membership roster. By the way, they are due now. Have you paid your \$20?

TRA: I'll cough it up at the January 9th General Meeting. So how do you account for the dwindling membership and the lack of interest in the ongoing activities of the TRAA?

RB: We've talked about these issues time and time again. The only thing we can be sure of is that membership numbers and the number of active members seem to fluctuate independently of each other. The number of folks we get out to work parties, for example, seems to remain stable despite the overall membership roster. The number of members who initiate and drive projects within the

TRAA has dwindled and this, more than anything, concerns us.

TRA: How are you addressing this concern?

RB: We've discussed the possibility of a "mentoring" program where some of our more experienced people take some of the keen but apprehensive members under their wings. We've tried this informally in the past with limited success. We forgot to "back off" and let the "newbies" make the same mistakes we did but under a more controlled scenario. Many of us, and I may be the worst, tend to move in and get the job done without letting the new guy get his feet wet.

TRA: Talk regarding a permanent home for the TRAA is heating up once again.

RB: For me, it has never cooled off! Many of the more successful clubs have their own clubhouse and seem to enjoy a stable membership roster year after year. We are not a cash-rich club so we'll need some assistance in procuring land or for costs in the actual construction and maintenance of the building. As long as I am a principle in the TRAA, I will remain focussed on getting a place of our own.

TRA: Randy, thank you for taking the time to chat with us. Is there anything you'd like to add?

RB: Only to wish everyone all the best for this new year. Oh, and mark all the TRAA General Meetings on your new calendars now: they're every second Wednesday of each month!

2 Weekends at Bud's

the Cover Story Continues...

Bud Bryant

On Thanksgiving weekend two members of the TRAA - namely Archie Graham and Fred Smithers - drove 428 km on their way here and didn't get lost until they were within a stone's throw of our place. We were surprised they showed up on the same day they said they would. The last time Fred and his wife Nancy came up they were expected at about 8:00 am. At about 1 pm Fred calls and I figured they were lost near here but Fred says, "We're ready to leave London now. I slept in!"

Anyhow, Archie and Fred made it up just fine this year.

When Archie got up on the Saturday morning we asked how he slept. "Sleep," he says, "that mantle clock chimes every 15 minutes!" Clock moved to porch. Saturday was cold and wet. Three times we waited for the rain to quit and three times we came back wet. We even had sleet and a beautiful rainbow - lots of weather but not one strike from the fish.

Sunday was a better day weather-wise. Archie finally broke the well-known TRAA jinx by catching a small "hammer-handle" pike.

And now, the rest of the story. The very next weekend, Bob "Bunky" James and his wife Gail came up to our place. Bunky and I went out on the Saturday morning and fished all over the lake to no avail. We decided to go up to the top of the lake and try the river. We were fishing heavy weeds. Bunky had a big Canadian Wiggler lure tied on and, big surprise, got snagged in the weeds. Well, he starts pulling and yanking and pulling and all of a sudden ... WHAM!

Out of the weeds - whizzing past me - and into my fishing

partner is a Canadian Wiggler at lighting speed. The result? One 230-pound Bunky hooked in the neck. It's not a legal catch 'cause he's snagged, and not in the mouth - will have to release.

What's a guy to do? I got out my pliers and my knife and went to work. I was a bit scared standing in the boat doing backwoods surgery, especially when the water was getting a bit rough, but Bunky said, "Take it out." I managed to get one treble hook out but the other was buried. I pulled and twisted with the pliers but decided not to use the knife on him. On the way back to the cottage I was laughing and taking pictures (it's hard not to laugh when you're sitting across from someone with a Canadian Wiggler dangling from their neck).

When we got back to dry land I got some tools from my dirty tool box and my wife came out of the cottage a bottle of peroxide. I was laughing so hard I was rolling on the ground. We decided to take him to Emergency and let

the professionals take it out.

After the lure's removal, they asked to keep it for a board in their Emergency Room. It had about 25 lures mounted on it! Once a year they sell tickets for all the lures they collect and the money raised goes to buy stuff for the Emergency Department. Believe it or not, Bunky wanted to keep the darn thing and he made a donation instead! With his neck all stitched up we headed back to my place. Thank God winter's coming!

Even though Bud's retired and living the good life in the Parry Sound District, he still maintains his membership in the TRAA. He also maintains his lake's teeming with fish!



**Don't worry son, Daddy's just training
for a weekend at Bud's!**

TECHNIQUES

Dunk Lunkerson

Snags. If you're putting your bait, lure, or fly where the fish are, you're going to get "hung up" on a regular basis. With this in mind, it's amazing how many anglers don't know what to do when their terminal tackle gets stuck on something. Maybe it's that many of us are too frustrated or lazy to approach the problem in a sensible manner.

Most of today's fishing rods are designed to cast and fight fish efficiently, not as levers against immovable objects. Yet that's the first thing we do when a snag occurs. The challenge begins with a series of jerking motions that send the rod from a relaxed state to a dramatic "C" shape.

Nice TV-show hookset, Einstein. You've just set the hook deeper into that submerged stump. Or jammed it further into that tiny crevice between those boulders. Or snapped your rod in half. Or, as in Bob James' case, the weed waits for the optimum moment to catapult the lure directly back at you (see cover story - ed.).

You don't have to risk losing a rod, an eye or a tooth to work out a snag. Firstly, you've got to think about your situation. Are you in a river, a lake, a ditch, a pond...? Should you continue pulling in the direction that got you in trouble? Does it feel like weeds, wood or rock? In moving water, you can use the current to "belly" slack line in behind the snag. You can now do your TV-show hookset because the "belly" against the water resistance dampens the shock. The "belly" also redirects your pull in a direction different than the one that got you in trouble. In any type of water, repositioning yourself to pressure the snag from a different direction can work. Most experienced fishermen have tried this technique but some screw it up. Three things to remember: continuing to maintain pressure while you move may only re-direct the snag itself and changes little; wading climbing or tiptoeing into danger only complicates things; wading into the pool or

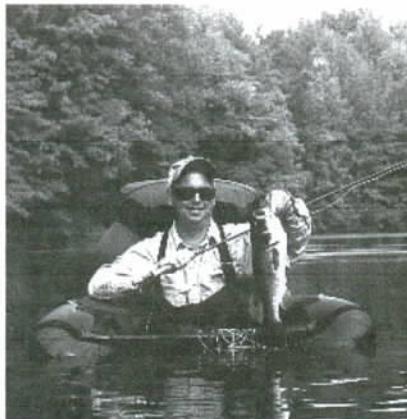
"run" only ruins the fishing for you and everyone else. Wading or otherwise moving into danger to save a lure or bait is just plain idiocy. Changing positions with a boat or float tube simplifies things but you still have to be aware of spooking a "prime lie".

Another technique is the "slingshot" and is usually only effective when you're hooked on a rock or concrete structure. This involves angling the rod

slightly to one side and pulling the line tightly just above the reel perpendicular to the rod. The line is then released with a "snap" as the rod-hand brings the rod sharply in line with the snag.

There are a number of snag removal tools on the market and they have enjoyed a limited popularity despite their general effectiveness. Most are too cumbersome, too heavy and employ a length of rope - a setup most fishermen would rather not carry in their vests. I personally believe that they make a lot of noise during their use and, despite manufacturer's claims, are abrasive on

most of the lighter monofilament lines that we use locally. The best way to deal with snags is to lessen their likelihood or make it easier on you and your equipment when they happen. Your terminal tackle can be rigged to lesson the occurrence or the damage caused by snags. When fishing with baits, it's usually the sinkers that get hung up. Try a "dropper" rig that sacrifices only the sinker portion of the setup (see Glyn's "link ledger" next page - ed.). Randy Bailey uses lighter line below his floats so that he always gets his float back after "snapping off". Anglers experienced in fishing weedbeds know that weedless lures - spinner-baits, plastic worm rigs, etc. - or floating lures that suspend over the danger are most effective. You are, without a doubt, going to get snagged. How you minimize the occurrence, the damages and losses, as well as the dangers, is up to you and your common sense.



Float tubes give great access to fish like these. You can also get into more snags and a new set of challenges and dangers.

TECHNIQUES

Glyn Williams

I have been a member of the TRAA for many years now and I know that they have many fine anglers, but seem to fall down when fishing in carp derbies and pickerel fishing. I would like to give you my thoughts and a different approach today on pickerel fishing.

When I first came to Canada in 1977 and was out fishing I had endless number of people comment on the length of my rod: 13-feet. They did not realize that in using a long rod I could use with confidence a 3-lb. line, could cast a small weight a long distance and generally have better control over my lure or float. Anglers in England now use poles up to 50-feet long, no reel and a piece of special elastic about 3-feet long attached to the rod end and then to the terminal tackle. They are then able to lower the bait in the water with minimum disturbance and fish over the chummed area more

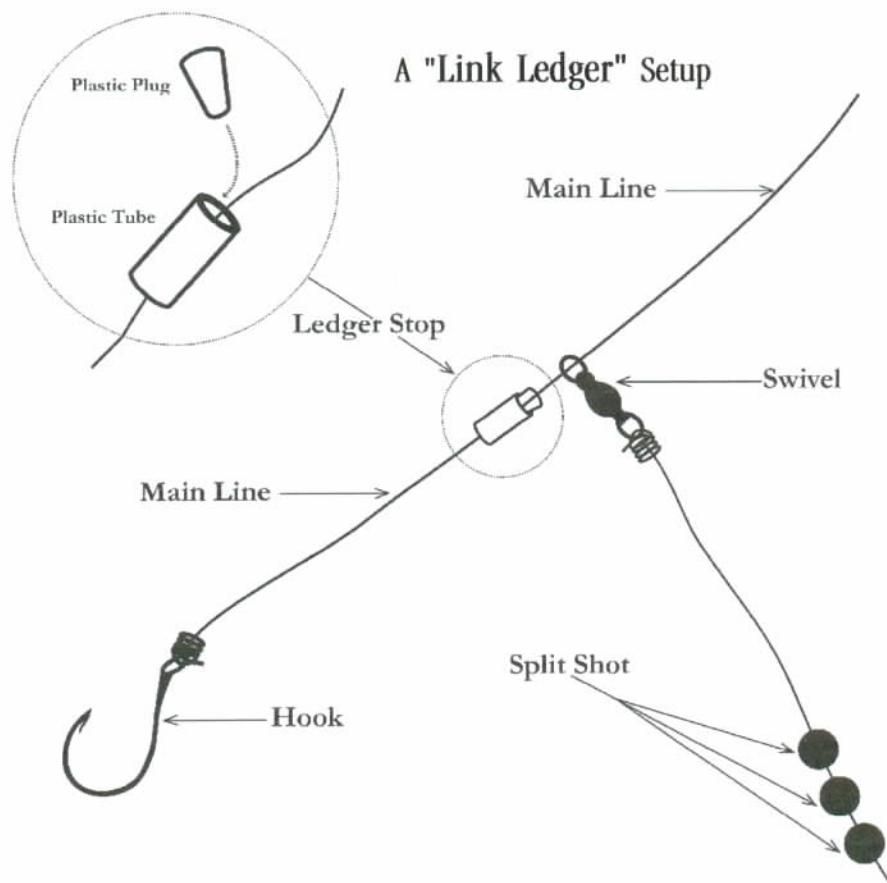
accurately. Salmon fisherman have for many years used 14- and 16-foot rods.

I have noticed that many TRAA anglers are using long rods with fine lines so the principal must work. The first thing that I do to my rod is to take the shine off it with the green pan-cleaning material called Scotchbrite. This eliminates all flash when casting and does not scare the fish so much.

A general method employed when

pickerel fishing is to cast the lure or bait about 30 times then move up a few paces and start again until the full length of the river has been covered. My theory is that when the angler moves the fish move as well so one is always fishing where the fish were a few moments ago. Why does everyone do this? In Canada we have a wonderful spring "run" of walleye. If one stayed in the same place all day, every fish that was moving upstream would go past you. Think about it. Get a comfortable chair get settled in and let the fish do all of the work. Chum the river in front of you with 50 chopped-up night crawlers and a dozen or so smelt cut into chunks. Fish with a link ledger about 3-inches long with just enough weight to hold in the river and bait with an air injected worm or piece of smelt. If you get bored have a few casts with your favorite jig or lure. Try it out before the annual derby and see how it goes. Your highlight of the day may be more fish instead of the fantastic breakfast dealt out.

It is a fact in England where they don't have a spring run, that 95% of all pickerel are caught on live or dead bait - mainly herrings. Many big fish are caught and one of 14lbs hardly gets a mention. Two rods are permitted between 1st October and 15th March, which allows the angler to employ more methods.



REHABILITATION

Mark Biesinger

Work parties for the Rehabilitation Committee are now back in gear with the cessation of the spawning activities in Komoka Creek.

One major project is the restoration of some work that was done by the TRAA a few years ago. The cornfield bend on Komoka Creek, just downstream from the trout hatchery has been an ongoing enterprise since it was identified as a severely eroded section that was in danger of getting out of hand. The TRAA brought in heavy equipment and actually moved the stream channel back to its original position and created a new bank using root wads, soil and vegetation. This has held for a few years but is once again in danger of being compromised by the relentless forces

of high water events. Although the root wads have, for the most part, remained in place, the soil and vegetation portion of the bank has been eroded to the point that the stability of the entire outside bank is in jeopardy.

In order to help stabilize what is left of the

remaining bank and to avoid having to bring heavy equipment back in, the Rehabilitation Committee decided that a more "robust" back-fill was required.

On December 15th, TRAA members formed

a work party to move four pick-up truck loads of rock and broken concrete to the cornfield bend site. As each truck arrived, each piece was painstakingly placed by hand behind the existing root wads. It was miraculous that neither truck got permanently stuck at the streamside.

The next step is to lay down the filter cloth and cover it with a layer of gravel.

This in turn will be covered with a layer of topsoil that will be planted with various grasses, willows and dogwood to help maintain the stability of our hard work.

Thanks go to Randy Bailey and Mark Biesinger for the use of their trucks.



The "cornfield bend" is back-filled - ready for filter cloth, gravel, soil and finally, the planting of vegetation for bank stabilization.

TROUT

Randy Bailey

The Trout Committee had reason to believe that their troubles were over after the success enjoyed this past spring with the release of rainbow trout fry hatched in the TRAA trout hatchery. After the rainbows were gone, the entire weir section of the spring source was aggressively cleaned of sludge and other organic matter. The entire system was flushed and it was felt that, barring any natural disasters, we were ready for the brown trout eggs in the fall.

In order to try to eliminate some of the "natural" disasters, a work party was called in October to cut down a couple of dead trees that were threatening the source water pipe and the hatchery itself. Kevin "Black Jack" Lemesurier operated the chainsaw and instructed those of us directing the fall of the tree by pulling on a rope. After much discus-

sion and planning, Kevin cut the tree with the rest of us pulling mightily on the rope. The tree fell directly across the source water pipe, snapping it in several pieces in a shower of water! There was a silent pause and then one after the other, each of us fell into hysterical laughter. The pipe was quickly repaired that same day.

On November 2nd a batch of 30,000 brown

trout eggs was picked up by Archie Graham and Kevin Lemesurier from the MNR Fish Culture Station in Normandale. The daily rotation was set up to monitor the hatchery. All things were progressing well until days 49, 50, & 51. Notes regarding the number of white eggs and fungus had increased in the log book. On Saturday, December 29th, (day

52) I ventured out to the hatchery hoping that things were turning around. Much to my dismay, we were having the same problems as we experienced last fall. The decision was made to flush the remaining 60% to 70% of eggs that were in the process of eyeing up. This was done rather losing them all. I took samples of the eggs in various stages of development as well as samples of water and filter cloth.

I will be sending the egg samples to Paul Malcolmson at Normandale and the water samples to the M.O.E.E. attention Bruce Hawkins or Scott Abernathy for evaluation. The general membership will be informed of the results once they are made available. Thanks to all those members on the hatchery rotation who volunteered their time to check the hatchery each day.



Randy Bailey carefully removes "dead" eggs from a tray in the TRAA trout hatchery. High rates of fungus and non-developing eggs have raised questions about the over-all quality of the hatchery's spring source water.

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PUBLIC RELATIONS

Paul Noble & Rick Ornato

Most of you may have noticed that the Fall and the Winter issues of the *Thames River Angler* have been combined. The reasons are numerous but there are three main ones. Firstly, those responsible for putting this publication together have been running short of the time that can be needed for editing and writing. Secondly, the activity level within the TRAA seems to have dropped off - fewer stories to report. Thirdly, there is hardly anything coming from the general membership (everyone is probably as sick of hearing this as we are of pointing it out, but there it persists).

Despite all of the roadblocks and the resulting wait, we believe that this issue is still one of our best. Bud Bryant, Glyn Williams, Mark Biesinger, Rick Ornato, George Allen and Randy Bailey should be commended for their submissions.

The PR. Committee is also working on slide presentations to a Scout troop and to a high school fishing club. Unfortunately, the trout hatchery tours that had been arranged this winter were cancelled because of the problems with this year's brown trout eggs.



Paul Noble installs a rainbow trout replica in the TRAA trout hatchery for viewing by tour groups.

WARMWATER

Kevin Lemesurier

The Warmwater Committee activities are a bit dormant in the colder weather but that hasn't stopped us from making plans for this coming spring.

The hydro-electric service for the walleye hatchery has to be properly and permanently installed. We have also been reviewing designs for a water filtration system that may incorporate a sand filter and/or a bio' filter. Anyone familiar with swimming pool systems will know about sand filters and those who enjoy aquariums will be familiar with bio' filters.

Also of interest to the Warmwater Committee is the possibility of obtaining and installing a chiller unit in the walleye hatchery to keep the water temperature constant during the growth period in the circular tank.

Randy Bailey is having a new screen fabricated for installation the circular tank to stop any fry from entering the holding tank that houses the submersible pump.

These projects need to be completed before April, 2002 as that is the time when we will be obtaining walleye eggs.

Anyone interested in getting involved should call Kevin Lemesurier.



Kevin Lemesurier puts some final touches on the bell jars in the TRAA walleye hatchery.

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THE TRAA GEAR PIG

Paul Noble

Last issue's "Gear Pig" column was so popular with readers, we decided to do it again. A few more local angling luminaries were asked, "What is your single, most favourite piece of gear? What is that one piece of gear that, above all, makes you a better fisherman, makes you think you're a better fisherman or simply makes the whole thing more rewarding and worthwhile?"

George Allen, who fishes matches, chose the whistle that starts and ends the Derbies. "Waiting for the "off" produces all sorts of feelings: anticipation and eagerness, and hoping you at least make your entrance fee back. Like greyhounds straining at the leash - there is no feeling like it. Then, there's the "all-out" whistle. If you are catching well, you hope there are hours to go. Conversely, if you are catching well, you might also want it to blow a.s.a.p. and hope no-one else catches a monster in the interim. If you have tried everything but have had a lousy morning, the whistle can't come soon enough. Here's to "the whistle" (especially as I get them for nothing from my buddy Duncan)." Hey George, everyone likes free gear!

Mark Biesinger took "reflex buying" to a new level. "My new favourite (it changes constantly) piece of gear is my 7-foot, one-piece, St. Croix, Legend Elite baitcaster. I've caught a few fish with it and its a heck of a great rod but I like it for different reasons. My buddy and I were at the Spring Fishing Show with plans to buy baitcasting rods. We were both looking at the St. Croix Avid series (mid-range). Both of us were ready to buy when a strange feeling came over me. I

couldn't just have the same rod as my buddy. Must have better ... must spend more money. Hence the purchase of a high-end piece of gear. And it was just for the shear one-upmanship of it. Plus, I can constantly tell him my rod is 1.05 ounces lighter than his: 'Yep, I could cast all day with this puppy!' So, Mark, does the wife let you out anymore with the wallet?

Ian Colin James is a professional fly fishing guide and has seen a lot of trendy gear. "My favorite piece of gear is split-shot. I tell my clients to add more when they think they've got the just the right amount. I'll ask the locals how much they're using and then add two or three times more. When you've got enough shot above your fly to bring down a polar bear, you're ready to fish. It must sound like a rock slide rolling down the river at them but the fish don't seem to mind." And you thought fly fishing was an artful and delicate pursuit.

Rick "Ramble-on" Yeadon could probably talk fish into giving up but uses a rod anyway. "I've got a flashlight that clips right to my hat so everywhere I look I've got light to see. I look in the river and see the fish get spooked by the high-intensity beam. I look at my buddies and watch them stumble around with temporary blindness. It's really neat. It doesn't matter how fast I turn my head. Everything I look at I see. Why just the other night ..." Um, Rick, we see the light. There you have it. Another eclectic mix of people reveals, well, more eclectic choices.

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THE TRAA GEAR PIG

Rick Ornato

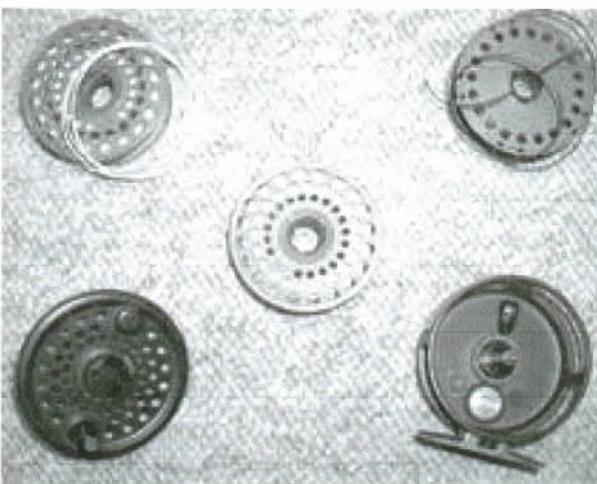
When fishing new water (which I frequently do) one of the problems we fishermen face is what gear to bring on the stream and what to leave at home or in the car. As most of the best fishing is off the beaten trail, I want to make sure I have everything I need for a day on the water. While most people figure I need a 90-litre, expedition-grade backpack to go fishing, quite the opposite is true. I am always re-examining the gear I carry streamside and removing that which isn't essential. If there is one tool that can take the place of two or maybe three others, I'll give it a try.

It was that kind of thinking that made me take a closer look at cassette reels. I had been using the regular assortment of cheap but respectable reels such as the Crown II and Orvis Clearwater. This worked alright with a vest but I had switched to a chest-pack a couple of years ago. This meant sacrificing a fly box to have an intermediate line available for a quick change. Leave a fly box behind? Not a chance. Not on new water anyway.

So off I went to the Internet for a virtual shopping trip and started looking for reels. And reels there were. Big ones, small ones, shiny ones, dull ones, expensive ones, and well... more expensive ones (\$300 USD to save a little bulk? The name's Ornato, not

Gates).

I then came across a company called British Fly Reels (BFR). They had a 3/4/5-weight and a 6/7/8-weight in both click & pawl and disc-drag models. The prices seemed reasonable so the next step was to get my hands on one. One of the local fly shops had one in stock so I went to have a look. It seemed like a very solid cast-aluminum reel. The click was a little loud but that was a minor consideration. What really impressed me was the drag (because, unlike many fly reels, it worked). It even had a nice range of tensions. All for around \$100.00



CDN including two extra spools. Another nice feature is the line details stamped on the cassette (e.g. 3/4/5/, WF/DT/ST, F/I/S) All you have to do is colour in the appropriate characters with a permanent marker and the on-stream guesswork is gone.

I ended up buying that reel and have bought another one since. I have two spools for my 8-weight lines, three spools for my 6-weight lines, and three for my 4-weight lines. The cassettes change very quickly, weigh much less and are flatter than conventional spools. These features all add up to ease of transport in a chest pack and ease of use streamside.

My original reel is now almost eight years old and still works great.

Anybody want to buy a Crown II?

The Quotable Angler

"There is no substitute for fishing sense, and if a man doesn't have it, verily, he may cast like an angel and still use his creel largely to transport sandwiches and beer."

Robert Traver,
"Trout Madness" (1960)

The Fisherman and the Frog

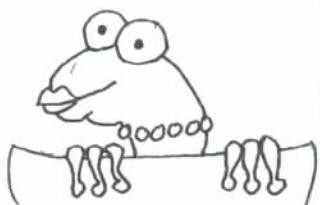
TRA member Tim Jokela was fishing the Thames River when a frog called out to him from the reeds, "If you kiss me I'll turn into a beautiful princess." He grabbed the frog and put it in his vest and resumed fishing.

"Hey," said the frog poking its head from Tim's vest pocket, "If you kiss me, I'll turn into a beautiful princess and stay with you for a week." Tim smiled and pushed the frog's head back in his vest pocket.

"OK, OK," said the frog, struggling from the vest pocket, "I'll turn into a beautiful princess, stay with you for one week and I'll do anything you want!" Again, Tim merely smiled and pushed the frog back into his vest.

The frog once again struggled to daylight, clearly frustrated. "What's with you? I've told you that I'm a beautiful princess, that I'll stay with you for a week and that I'll do anything you want. Why won't you kiss me?"

Tim stopped casting and smiled at the frog. "Look, I'm an avid fisherman and when I'm not fishing, I'm tying flies, so I don't have time for a girlfriend, but a talking frog is really cool!"



Obituary by a Wife Who was a
Fishing Widow before her Husband
Actually Passed Away:

Matt is Dead, Boat for Sale.

HOW TO MAKE ANY FISH LOOK LIKE A TROPHY!



All anglers like pictures of trophy fish, especially when they're the ones with the happy smiles and the slimy hands. However, if you're like the rest of us, the only time you land that once in a lifetime specimen is after you used the last roll of film to record your buddy passed out with the mini-marshmallows up his nose.

You always have a camera with lots of film when you catch that little skipper, right? Well take a tip from Mike "Donny" Canavanagh and Scott "Hiemer" Roulston. Hold the hapless creature as far out in front of you as possible so that, from the camera's perspective, the fish looks huge. If you have a buddy like Hiemer who is the same size or shorter than you, pull him into the shot to reinforce the size difference. If you want rods in the shot keep them back beside you or pressed to your body. This will further the ruse by distorting the scale size of the fish in relationship to a measurable prop.

Have the photographer coach you on how to tilt the fish to attain as much glare as possible. This distorts the image and helps with the overall effect.

Congratulations to Donny, Hiem and the photographer for giving Donny that trophy steelhead we all know he richly deserves.

Nice fish Donny!

YOUR THAMES RIVER ANGLERS ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP IS NOW DUE!!!

Yes, as of January 1, 2002, your 2001 TRAA membership has expired.

All of the payment plans we've had in the past are still in place: cheques, money-orders or cash for payment in full! Wow, with terms like that how can you resist!

Please take note, especially if you're renewing:

Membership fees have been increased from \$15.00 to \$20.00 per year.

Even with this modest increase, membership dues do not begin to cover the costs of the TRAA.

Please consider a donation over and above your membership fee.

A charitable tax receipt will be issued for charitable donations over \$20.00.

Yes! I want to help the Thames River Anglers Association help the Thames River

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province/State: _____ Postal/Zip Code: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

TRAA Membership: \$20.00

Charitable Donation: _____

TOTAL: _____

Please bring this to any TRAA General Meeting with a cheque, money-order or cash.
If you would like to mail in your TRAA membership dues and any donation (no cash in mail) our address is:
1017 Western Road
London, Ontario N6G 1G5