

The Thames River Angler

Newsletter of the Thames River Anglers Association

Summer 1999

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President's Message – Randy Bailey

We have now reached the halfway point in this calendar year. TRAA general meetings have included guest speakers, demonstrations and many other interesting items. It becomes particularly disheartening when we have a guest speaker and I have more fingers than the general membership in attendance. We have changed venues to try generating interest, but that did not seem to work. We incorporated angling into a meeting but again, there was limited attendance.

Remember that we are all volunteers with a common goal. If there is something else that interests you, tell us. If the meetings are too long, speak up. If the meetings are too boring, speak up. If the meetings are missing anything, speak up. If you have ideas, please feel free to call me.

The bottom line is that without participation by our general membership, the planning and execution of projects will never happen due to the lack of manpower. Members have never been more informed about TRAA events than they have been this year. The newsletter, Hotline and the Telephone Committee have all been active keeping you informed. Most TRAA general meetings are at the same time, the same place, on the same day every month.

See you in August.

Editor's Note – Paul Noble

Ahhh, it's summertime. All of southwestern Ontario is a sauna and everyone takes his or her holidays to once again escape the weather. What a strange bunch we are; going south to escape the cold in winter and heading north to cottage country to retreat from the heat. It's been said that Canadians talk about the weather more than any other nation on Earth. That's probably because we have more weather than any other country!

And it's this smorgasbord of weather that is quintessentially Canadian. Everything about our country is varied to the extreme. We have a massive expanse of diverse geological features filled with a relatively small population of people who represent a huge number of different cultures. We have the most modern metropolitan cities that are separated from each other by immense expanses of agricultural lands and wilderness areas.

Diversity also comes to mind when thinking of our sport fishery. The fact that we have the privilege to pursue virtually every "gamefish" on the planet within our own borders is proof of that diversity. New Canadians are amazed at the manner in which the common carp is maligned in this country. Many of these people come from places where carp are "the only game in town". I don't share the disdain that my fellow Canucks have for the carp...but it's nice to know that I have the option!

Trout Committee – Randy Bailey

The brown trout fry were released into Halls Creek, near Ingersoll, on Sunday, May 29th. Approximately 15,000 fry were divided between two predetermined locations. The creek temperature of 12 degrees Celsius shortened the acclimation period. The eggs were obtained from the MNR Normandale hatchery in on November 15th. This batch of brown trout was in our hatchery for a total 193 days. I would like to congratulate all the volunteers who made the trips out to the hatchery on a daily basis on a job well done.

The rainbow trout fry were released on Saturday June 5th. As with the browns, the fry were divided for release into two different locations. About 10,000 of them went into Dingmans Creek adjacent to the Delaware Sportsman's Association clubhouse. We had participation from their club with the release. The second batch of 10,000 was transported to the upper reaches of Stony Creek off of Sunningdale Road between Clarke Road and Highbury Avenue. Again, the stream water temperature was around 12 degrees Celsius. The rainbow trout were in our hatchery for a total of 107 days. Once more, congratulations to those volunteers who made the daily trip out to the hatchery.

On another note, we need to repair the water intake at the hatchery in the coming month of August. We also need to repair the stairs in certain spots also along with the railings. These work parties will be planned in advance so everyone will have sufficient notice to help out. Dates and details are in the "Upcoming Events" section of this newsletter or you can call the TRAA Hotline. Everybody will also be notified a few days in advance of each work day by the Telephone Committee.

Warm Water Committee – Lawson Jones

June 26th was opening day of bass season and about a dozen TRAA members found themselves angling for largemouth bass in a number of different ponds owned by Dr. John Wilson of Hyde Park. As usual, everyone was using baitless, barbless hooks because all of the bass were being placed in our transfer tank. The fishing seemed slow but when it was time to go, we had accumulated 84 largemouth bass. These fish were then transferred to Sharon Creek Reservoir and released with only one casualty.

Another bass transfer will be scheduled for some time in September. This time we'll be angling for smallmouth bass in the TRAA brood pond.

Rehabilitation Committee – Rick Ornato

It's work "party time" again and we have a number of jobs to do. The cornfield bend in Komoka Creek that was reconstructed two years ago needs to be back-filled and replanted. There are barriers in the creek preventing the migration of spawning fish to the nursery areas that must be removed. Plantings of stream-bank vegetation are required above County Road 14 to prevent erosion and provide shade. When a lot of people show up to these work parties, the sessions are fun and easy. You also get a hands-on learning experience! Check out the dates under the "Upcoming Events" section of this newsletter or call the TRAA Hotline. All members will also get reminder calls from the Telephone Committee.

Public Relations Committee – Randy Bailey

On July 11th we participated in an open house hosted by the Friends of Sharon Creek. This event was held at Sharon Creek Conservation Area and featured a number of fun activities. Fred Smithers, Lawson Jones and Michael Mathews took the time to attend and helped educate kids on how to bait a hook, remove a fish, tie a hook and cast a fishing pole (without letting go of it).

Another informal demonstration of simple angling techniques took place on July 10th at Fanshawe Conservation Area. Fred Smithers and Randy Bailey shared some tips with about a dozen kids. Both venues attracted a lot of exposure and attention. We hope to participate in another one at Fanshawe Conservation Area again.

Local guide and artist Ian James has acknowledged the TRAA in his upcoming book *Fumbling with a Fly Rod-Stories of the River*. Published by HarperCollins, this collection of humorous short stories will be on bookshelves everywhere in the early spring of 2000.

R U Wired?

Do you have an e-mail address that you would share with the TRAA to improve efficiency and reduce costs? If so, please drop us a note at traa@anglers.org and let us know the following:

Would you like your e-mail address included on the TRAA membership lists?

Would you like the Thames River Angler e-mailed to you?

Would you like the Phone Committee to contact you by e-mail rather than telephone?

Would you like a copy of each Hotline message e-mailed to you?

Do you have any other ideas?

All of these options have the potential to increase communication and efficiency while decreasing expenses for your TRAA.

Drop us a note at traa@anglers.org. Please put this newsletter down and do it NOW!

It's Bud's Problem, Now *by Bud Bryant*

I am confident that this will be the final chapter in the case of the "Missing Dock". After four years in dry-dock this trouble-making dock is finally floating again (in its final resting spot, I hope). For the newer TRAA members I'll review the dock's history as I remember it.

TRAA members built the dock in 1993 to replace a dock that had been burned by vandals in Sharon Creek Conservation Area. The dock was constructed of cedar in two sections of 6 by 10 feet each. The dock was then put into Sharon Creek Reservoir and secured by chaining it to an existing concrete structure. Within a week the chains had been cut and the dock was in the middle of the reservoir being used as a diving platform. We brought it back in. The next time we checked it had a burn mark on it.

But this was nothing compared to what laid ahead. One of our members made the trip out to Sharon Creek C.A. to check on the dock. Dock? What dock? The reservoir was scoured but there was no sign of the dock. We called the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority (Sharon Creek C.A. is in their jurisdiction) and they said that they didn't remove it. Randy Bailey kept hinting that we should check the Parry Sound district, particularly in the vicinity of my cottage. A good theory, but it wouldn't fit in the back of my Mazda pick-up. End of story? Nope.

Jim Romph reported the dock as stolen to the Ontario Provincial Police. A few weeks later a TRAA member went fishing at Sharon Creek Reservoir and...lo and behold our dock's back! Jim and I went out, towed it back across the reservoir to its original location and again, chained it to some posts. To our amazement, the dock stayed in that spot for the rest of the summer. But wait, there's more.

In the late fall, Jim and I towed the dock into a sheltered bay and tied the dock to t-bars that we had driven into the middle of the bay. The following spring we went to move the dock back to its original spot and... oh no, it's gone again! The t-bars are there but the ropes had been cut. Again we searched the entire reservoir. As we were passing one of the three homes that back onto the reservoir, we noticed a dock. It can't be ours because it's been back-filled along one side to make it look permanent. Upon closer inspection we realise that it is ours. Now what? We could call the O.P.P. or approach the homeowner. Well, there's two of us: me, a little sh!t (cuss box is up a buck) and Jim the burly truck driver. We decided to knock on the door and felt lucky when no one was home. We were pondering our next move while driving out when a car passed on its way in. We went back in and told the guy he had our dock. He said, "I found it floating in the middle of the lake and didn't figure it belonged to anyone." Needless to say, we got it back again. By this time, pretty well everyone in the TRAA had seen (or not seen) enough of this dock and we decided to sell it.

This time it did end up in Parry Sound. I have enclosed a snapshot of the finished dock that can be passed around at the general meetings. I hope everyone has a good summer and if you're near Parry Sound, look me up!

Smoked on the Water *by Paul Noble*

Every Sunday morning at 7:30 am, there is a gathering of anglers at various sites throughout the city of London. They pay \$6.00 for the privilege to be told that they can fish from one spot only. After this location is arbitrarily chosen for each angler, they dutifully toddle off to the riverbank with mounds of equipment mounted on various types of wheeled conveyances. All of this may sound odd to most Canadians, but in Europe this type of "match" fishing is enormous, much like bass tournament fishing is in the U.S. But this is Canada, eh? That's why, when the "regulars" of these English Style Derbies challenged TRAA members to a friendly match on July 11th, we accepted without hesitation.

Granted, they have rods that are twice as long as ours, but we've all been lead to believe that size isn't everything. Sure, they may target the heaviest fish swimming in the Thames River: the common carp (something we usually catch while fishing for something else). Yeah, they happen to have long-handled nets to deal with the four foot difference between the bank and the water surface, special slingshots to chum the area in front of their location, unique "bait-runner" spinning reels and numerous other doo-dads. But hey, we have our own tried and true techniques and equipment, right?

The early morning of July 11th was already warm and muggy. All anglers knew the fishing would become difficult when the sun hit the water. As the group assembled it was apparent that the TRAA team was greatly outnumbered. Being members of both sides in the challenge, Glynn Williams and George Allen were added to the TRAA camp. The TRAA's cause was also bolstered by the enlistment of professional angler and television personality Lonnie King.

It was difficult to stifle our snickers as we watched our fishing foes struggle down the bank with their heavy cargo after we had easily scampered down with our minimalist gear. We could hardly suppress our amusement as we witnessed perfectly good baits being flung out to the depths with no lines and no hooks. As if chumming would work in a freshwater river. After carefully measuring and weighting their fishing "systems", they cast these bizarre rigs after the chum.

As TRAA members watched their motionless rod-tips, one of the "regulars" just happened to hook a fair sized carp. Then another...then another. Then another one of the "regulars" hooked his first carp. Then another. For TRAA members, this was quickly becoming a spectator sport. When it came time to tally the weights, Team TRAA was nearly tripled by the "regulars" of the English Style Derbies. If you remove guest Lonnie King and double agent George Allen, Team TRAA was blanked. Yes-sir-ee, a grand total of zero. Dave Jeffries actually had a measurable catch but decided to kill it for lunch (only fish suitable to be released alive are eligible).

TRAA President, Randy Bailey, has negotiated another chance for Team TRAA to redeem itself sometime in September of this year. Regardless of the trouncing we all had a great time. We also learned that "visiting techniques" can quickly find a place in the arsenal of those willing to accept them.

For instance, there's a certain reversed float method that should be deadly on steelhead...

Upcoming Events

Sundays, July 25; August 1, 8 & 15, 1999

English Style "Match" Derbies

Meet at these venues at 7:30 am: July 25th, Springbank Dam; August 1st, Harris Park; August 8th is the "Thames Championship", Greenway Park; August 15th, Fork of the Thames. After the draws you fish from 8:00 am until noon. The \$6.00 entry fee (\$10.00 for the Thames Championship) is used to provide prize money. These events foster good fun, good sport, and good fellowship.

Saturday, August 7, 1999

Trout Committee Work Party

Repairs to the source water intake pipe for the trout hatchery and maintenance to the stairs leading down to the hatchery enclosure will commence. Please meet at the trout hatchery at 8:00 am and wear rubber boots. Don't forget the bug dope and sunscreen! Refreshments will be provided.

Wednesday, August 11, 1999

General Meeting of the Thames River Anglers Association

Come out to the Canadian Corps Association building on Dundas Street, right beside the Kellogg's plant at 8:00 pm. After the business portion there will be a cooking demo' showing just how easy the recipe in this newsletter is for anyone to pull off.

Sunday, August 15, 1999

Trout Committee Work Party

Repairs to the intake pipe and the stairs at the trout hatchery will continue. Please meet at the trout hatchery at 8:00 am and wear rubber boots. Don't forget the bug dope and sunscreen! Refreshments will be provided.

Sunday, August 28, 1999

Rehabilitation Committee Work Party

Please meet at the trout hatchery at 8:00 am. Waders or rubber boots and work gloves are advised. Insect repellent and sunscreen are recommended. Refreshments will be provided.

Wednesday, September 8, 1999

General Meeting of the Thames River Anglers Association

It's steelhead/salmon time again! At the August meeting you learned how to cook 'em...wanna know the latest on how to catch 'em? Come on out to learn how to look like a genius on the water!

Sunday, September 12, 1999

Rehabilitation Committee Work Party

Please meet at the trout hatchery at 8:00 am. Waders or rubber boots and work gloves are advised. Insect repellent and sunscreen are recommended. Refreshments will be provided.

Contact Information

Here are some sources of information for the Thames River Anglers Association:

TRAA 24-Hour Hotline (519) 457-4122

TRAA Internet Site www.anglers.org

TRAA E-mail Address traa@anglers.org

TRAA Snail Mail P.O. Box 1415, Station A, London, Ontario N6A 5M2

TRAA Newsletter Published Quarterly

The best way to stay informed is to attend the TRAA General Meetings. These occur on every second Wednesday of every month at 8:00 PM. The location is the Canadian Corps Association, 1051 Dundas Street, London, Ontario.

Fishy Recipe – *Australian Grilled Fish*

Ingredients

2 fish fillets*

¼ cup lime juice

1 tablespoon olive oil**

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

2 teaspoons fresh ginger root, grated

¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper

to taste black pepper

*The fillets should be about 8 ounces and 1 inch thick each. Use fillets or steaks of salmon, steelhead, swordfish, halibut or tuna.

**Do not use "extra virgin" olive oil. It will break down at high temperatures and may impart an undesirable flavour.

Directions

In a glass or ceramic bowl, combine all the ingredients except the fish to create a marinade.

Marinate the fish, covered and refrigerated, for 45-60 minutes. Turn the fillets 2-3 times.

Preheat the grill over white-hot coals (or on "High" for gas grills). Brush the grill liberally with olive oil.

Grill the fish, brushing it with the remaining marinade. Continue grilling until cooked through and opaque in the centre. Turn fish after 4-5 minutes. Grilling times vary depending on your grill and the heat source.

Some guests may appreciate squeezing fresh lemon on their entrée.

Serve with a crunchy green salad, a crusty fresh roll and a crisp white wine.

(I tried it with salmon fillets...awesome! Ed.)

The Entertainment Section

A Poor Man's GPS

One summer day in July, two unnamed TRAA members (not Les Howey and Jeff Adam) found themselves fishing a bass tournament in a rented boat. They were thrilled to find a location unknown to the rest of the field that produced fish after heavy fish. When it was almost time for the weigh-in, both men agreed it was a good spot to re-visit the next day. "How do you think we should mark the location for our return tomorrow?" asked one TRAA member (not Jeff). The other TRAA member (not Les) rummaged through his tackle box, produced a marking pen and drew a large "X" on the bottom of the boat. The TRAA member without the pen (not Jeff) frowned. "That won't work!" he exclaimed, "What if we get a different boat tomorrow?"

A Fish by Any Other Name...

Most of us have always thought that the collective noun "school" applied to all fish, but apparently we were wrong: the Old Farmer's Almanac refers to a "hover" of trout, a "smuck" of jellyfish and a "troubling" of goldfish.

When you think about it, trout do appear to "hover" when holding a position in a stream and jellyfish would make a "smuck" sound if dropped or dashed upon rocks. However, it is difficult to perceive goldfish as "troubling".

Then again, there were those fraternity initiations...

He Should've Paid Off the Fish

After an entire day of flogging a river famous for angling adventure, the unsuccessful fisherman complained to his gillie, "You must be the worst fishing guide on earth!"

The guide sighed and replied, "Sir, that'd be too much of a coincidence."

"My Kid can Out-fish Your Honour Student!"

- A bumper sticker seen on a 1979 pick-up truck.