

Spring ~ 2000

**Memberships
\$15.00**

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

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Committee Cuts



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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 , the author formerly known as Ian Colin James.


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

. I am speechless.

P. So you are stunned then?

. Absolutely.

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


. 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*?


. 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?

. 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.


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

. I like that!

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

. 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. , thank you for this.

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

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 sheduled 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!



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!



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 P.R. activities? Let us know. We're good, but we can't read minds!

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 is still on for a walleye growth tank. It is too difficult to maintain a steady temperature in the existing above-ground tank. The new tank or pond will have to be an in-ground setup so temperatures remain stabilised.



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 Jarman 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!

U P C O M I N G E V E N T S



Saturday, June 24, 2000

TRAA 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

TRAA 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.

M E M B E R S H I P S

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