

Summer ~ 2000

**Memberships
\$15.00**

The Thames River Angler

"Newsletter of the Thames River Anglers Association"

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A New Place To Meet!



The TRAA Gear Pig



The TRAAtoon is Back!



A Photo of George's "Big One"



Plus All of the Usual Stuff

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President's Report The Changes Continue

Randy Bailey

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

Making It "Do-able"

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

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

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

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

Short Term Thinking...

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

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

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

Editor's Note

Paul Noble



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

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

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

A Sound Thrashing

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

Paul Noble

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rehabilitation

Rick Ornato & Dave Jeffries

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

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

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

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

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

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

If there is ample time, we may organise some quick and fun work parties to re-plant some of the ditch bank grass seed that was washed off the banks of Komoka Creek this past spring. The small spruce saplings and the willow cuttings near the cornfield bend

still need relief from being overgrown by weeds. Stream walks to assess other areas in need of cleanup or rehab' will also take place this fall.

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



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

Trout

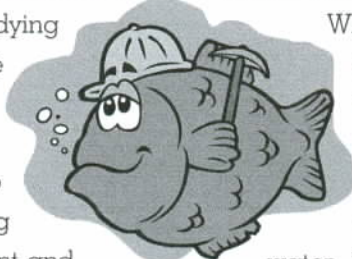
Randy Bailey & John Jackson

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

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

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

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



While Fred and Paul worked at saving as many of the floor-bound trout as possible, Randy checked the stream temperature. It was found to be within 1 or 2 degrees of the hatchery water. There was no alternative but to release the remaining fry into Komoka Creek. Surprisingly, only about one thousand of the remaining twenty-five thousand fry were lost as a result of the accident.

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

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

Public Relations

Paul Noble, Rick Ornato & Randy Bailey

Although this is generally a slow time for this Committee, we had enough on our plates to keep us hopping throughout the summer.

Archie Graham took a group of Rangers on a tour of the trout hatchery literally days after the new stairs were built.

Randy Bailey and Paul Noble attended a "council meeting" of the Township of Middlesex Centre to listen to presentations from both the opponents and the supporters of increasing the concentration of hog farm operations in the area. Although the TRAA was not called upon to comment on the situation it was interesting to listen to many of the differing views on the subject.

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

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

benefits certainly made it worthwhile.

The TRAA, being an associate member of Grosvenor Lodge, will be able to use their

telephone messaging service (a

Hotline replacement?), will have our mail directed to the Lodge address

to be held for us to pick up (a replacement for the postal box?)

and are eligible for a storage area for files, display goods, etc. All of this is in

addition to the meeting room. You'll be able to check it out because the

September 13th General Meeting will

take place at Grosvenor Lodge.

TRAA members who helped out at the Sharon Creek Family Fishing day were welcomed by some fairly scary conditions.

The morning was interrupted by a summer storm that dumped a lot of rain on participants in a short period of time. Just as things resumed, a more fierce storm arrived with wild wind and lightning that drove everyone to their cars. Although short, the time that they did have was worth the trip out to Sharon Creek Reservoir and all look forward to next year's Fishing Day.

The kids will be heading back to school soon and that means that some may be looking for organisations such as the TRAA to do some in-class presentations. We are still getting mail from students who we visited last year. If you hear of an opportunity to talk to a school or special interest group, contact any of the Executive or Committee Chairpersons. We are also looking for members to help out in these presentations. Kids love this stuff and the impressions that are made can last a lifetime!



THE TRAA

GEAR PIG

Paul Noble

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

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

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

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

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

look after it all that well. I know a guy who probably has between five and ten thousand dollars tied up in equipment. He's also got an old Ford Escort that cost him about \$800.00. He's had the car for over a year and has already washed it once. That's more than he's cleaned *all* of his fishing rods combined! Come on fella, where's your priorities?

You might be getting the gist of where I'm going with this pitch. I want this to be a regular column for people who collect fishing related Gear. All of you Gear Pigs must have stories, tips, recommendations and criticisms. We want to know how you come by your Gear. Do you buy it, trade it, make it, inherit it, take it (Bailey)? We want to know how you use it, abuse it, fix it, store it and service it. If I don't get stories, I'll just trash this column like a leaky old pair of waders. But, we all know that when a bunch of TRAA members get together we all gush or fret about our Gear like moms at a soccer game talking about their kids. Put pen, pencil or crayon to hand and tell us about that latest piece of sexy Gear that turned your eye or that expensive trinket that betrayed you. Relate to us the care you lavish on your Gear and the techniques you use to extend its life and functionality.

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

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

George Catches Fish of a Lifetime!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

TRAA toon



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

The Quotable Angler

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

"Fish," I said.

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

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

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

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

Roland Pertwee
"The River God" (1928)



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

Monday, September 11, 2000

TRAA Executive & Committee Chairperson Meeting

Grosvenor Lodge, 1017 Western Road, London

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

Wednesday, September 13, 2000

TRAA General Meeting

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

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

Coffee and soft drinks are available for modest remuneration.

Saturday, September 17, 2000

TRAA Work Party

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

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

Saturday, September 24, 2000

TRAA Bass or Rainbow Trout Derby

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

M E M B E R S H I P S

You Can Join or Renew Anytime

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

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

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

Mail To:

1017 Western Road, London, Ontario N6G 1G5

Or just bring it to the next General Meeting!