

**Spring ~ 2001**

**Memberships  
\$15.00**

# *The Thames River Angler*

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

## **Inside this Issue**



### **Committee Cuts**

**The TRAA  
Gear Pig**

**The  
TRAAtoon**

**Carpin' Under  
Pressure**  
by Pete Diffy



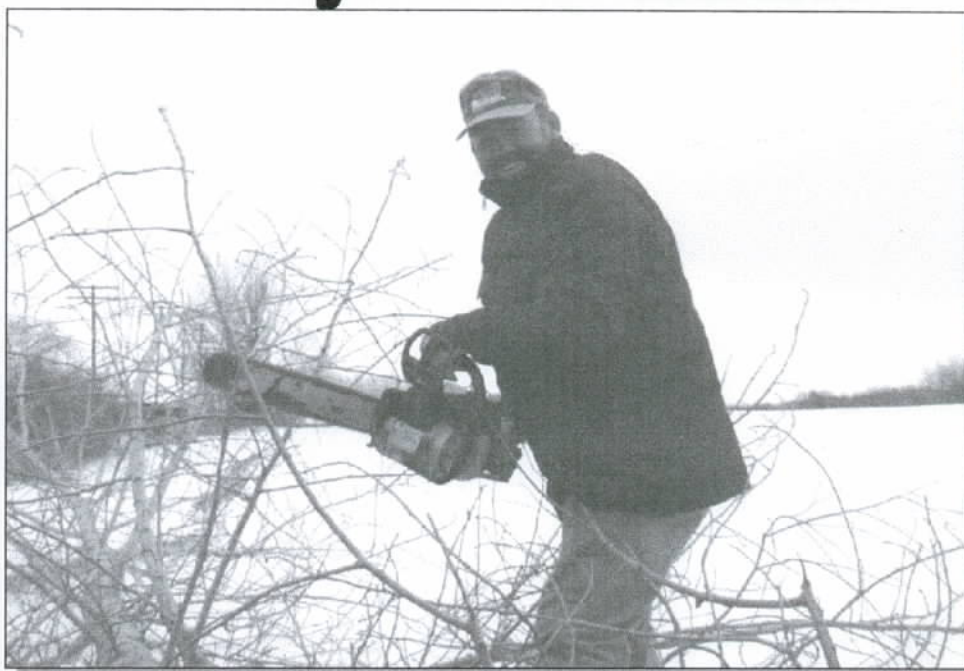
### **CONTACT US**

**Messages  
645-2845**

**E-mail  
traa@anglers.org**

**Web Site  
www.anglers.org**

## **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.*

# 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 hatch-

ery 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.*



# Carpin' Under Pressure

Pete Diffy

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!



# 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.

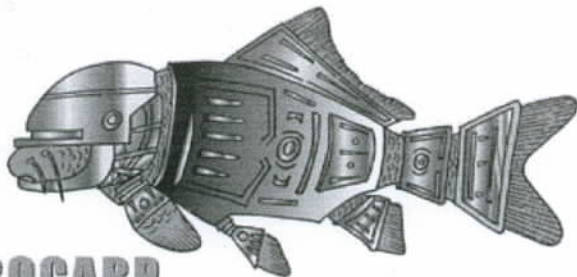
*Bad Thing:* Went to jump over a low cedar rail fence and the felt sole of my wading boot (it had come half off the boot a week before) caught on a root. The resulting force and location of the blow from my landing will save me money on birth control from now on.

*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.

# TRAA toon



## 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 nickle-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.*

**Please contact Paul Noble**

**3nobles@home.com**

**(519) 457-6069**

## 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*

## 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."