

SUMMER ~ 2001

MEMBERSHIPS

**\$15.00**

# THE THAMES RIVER ANGLER

"NEWSLETTER OF THE THAMES RIVER ANGLERS ASSOCIATION"

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PLUS ALL  
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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



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

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.

# REHABILITATION

Mark Biesinger

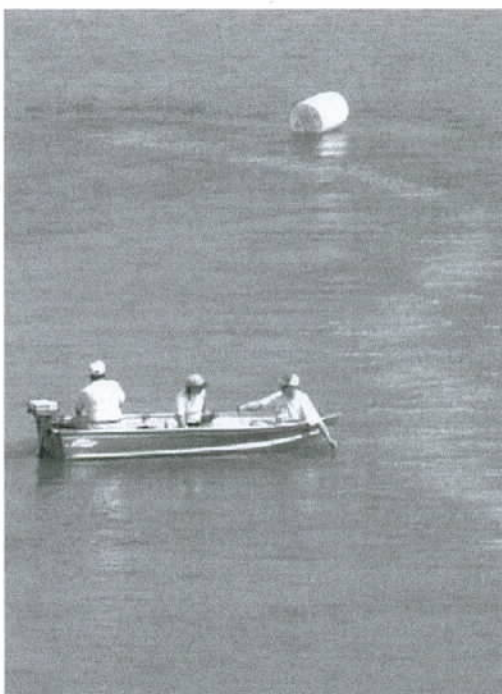
Work parties for the Rehabilitation Committee have had to take a back seat this year to other ongoing TRAA projects involving both the Warmwater and the Trout Committees. With a finite core of roughly a dozen active volunteers out of a TRAA membership of about forty, it doesn't take long to spread ourselves 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 steel-head (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?



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

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.



# 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

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.



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

# 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, burgandy 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 construc-



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.

tion of the shelter for the circular tank. Paul Noble lifted a corner of a large piece of roofing and was confronted by a rather odourifous 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.



## 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!*

# 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.

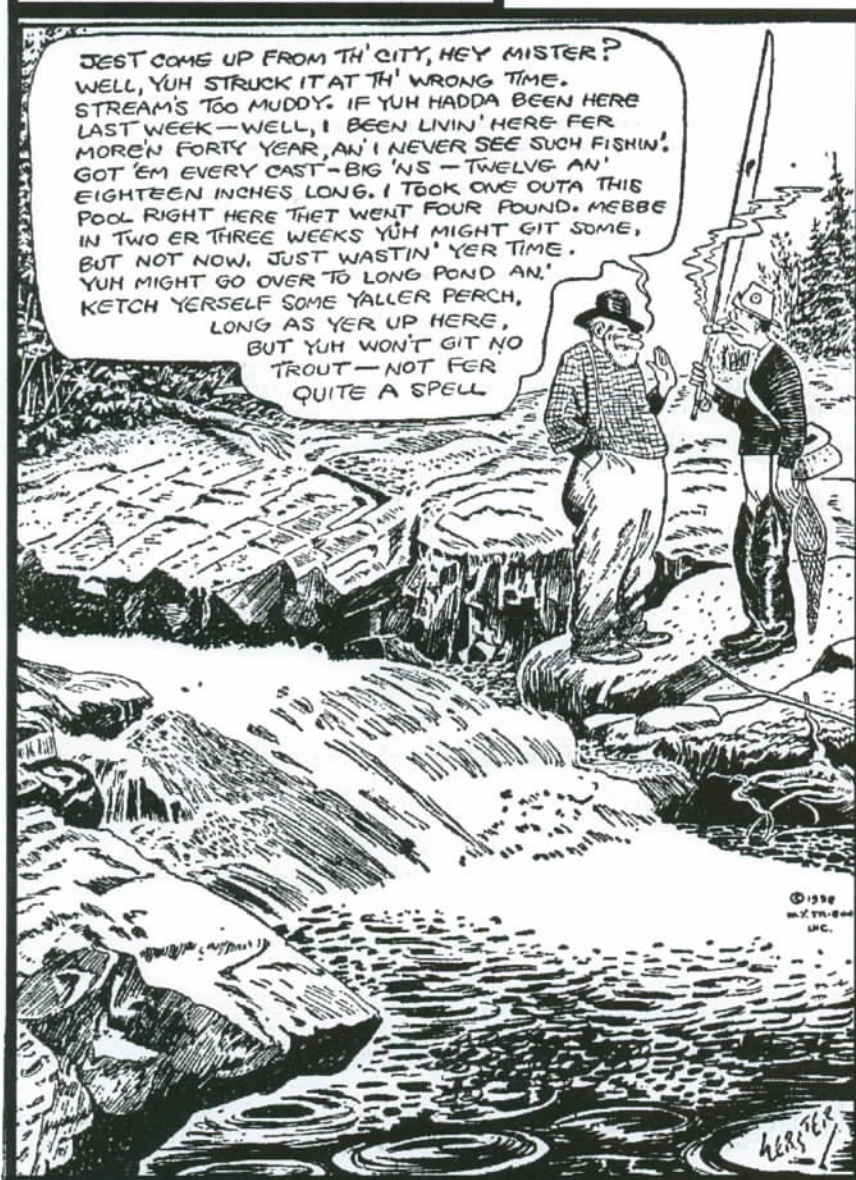


# The Quotable Angler

"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)

## TRAA TOON



FROM THE

## WHAT THE HECK IS THAT?

DEPARTMENT



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 TRAA General Meeting...

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

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