



# Hook, Line, and Sinker

*The Official Publication of The New Ulm Area Sport Fishermen*

March  
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Issue 3

## CLEAR LAKE UPDATE

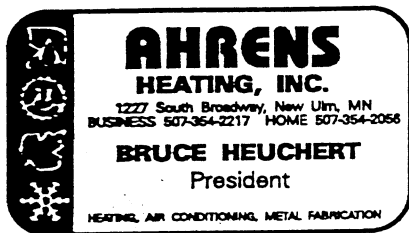
We made it! We got through the winter without having to start the aeration system. The first report I received this season showed the oxygen level at 11.8 ppm. This is a very good reading for winter, and the oxygen kept going up from that point. Before we received snow in early March, the oxygen was at 20+ ppm, it doesn't get any better than this. I haven't heard much about the fishing lately. Earlier people were catching some nice size sunfish. I expect the fishing will pick up once the weather warms. On Sunday, February 26th, we pulled the houses off the lakes and put them to bed until next winter. With no snow on the lakes, it made it very easy to get them off. The brown house needs some work done on it, we will try to get this done during the summer sometime. Thank you to the guys who helped get them off and up on blocks.



## MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

As most of you know, we are having a year long membership drive, with the person who signs up the most new members receiving a club jacket. So far the leaders have signed up three new members. There are two members tied in this year's quest for the jacket. All members are eligible to compete, all you have to do is get the new member's name, address, and the \$20 membership fee to me. I will see that they get their free hat, and you will get credit for signing that person. When you are recruiting prospective members, make sure you tell them about some of the projects we are involved with, such as, Clear Lake Aeration, Minne Con Wetlands Restoration, Minnesota River Cleanup, and Take A Kid Fishing. It may seem hard for you to try to get someone to join, but when you tell them about the club it is usually no problem to get them to sign up. You have until this coming December 1st, so get out there and find us some more members.

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# HELP!!!!

I could sure use some. It gets harder and harder to fill these pages. I am asking you to give me a little help. If you have a fish story from a trip you took, whether it was to the local pond or up north somewhere, let me know about it. A picture of a big fish, or a small one, we can also put that in. If you have an opinion you wish to express, we will print it, as long as you sign your name to it. If you come across an article that you think is of interest to our members, get it to me. We will also put classified ads in the newsletter if you have something you would like to sell. Please help this Newsletter be the best it can be.



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The Hook, Line, and Sinker is published monthly by Chris Vorwerk and John Vorwerk for the New Ulm Area Sport Fishermen. The opinions expressed in this newsletter are solely those of the respective writers and not be construed as the opinion of the NUASF or its Members. Send all correspondence and submissions to: Mike Deinken, Editor, 1022 Spring St., New Ulm, Minnesota 56073

### The NUASF Board

President-Scott Sparlin (359-2346); Vice President-Jerry Carlson (354-8869); Secretary/Treasurer-Mike Deinken (359-9650); Board Member-Randy Griebel (354-8461)

# IS IT REALLY OVER?

No it isn't. Now that the walleye, northern pike and bass season has closed, there's no reason to let all your fishing equipment sit idle until May. The walleye and northern pike season doesn't open on inland waters until May 13th, the bass season isn't open until May 27th. That sounds like a long time, and it is! You could go to one of the border waters like Lake of the Woods, the walleye season is open until April 14. Heck, it's only seven hours, one-way, from New Ulm. Or you could go over to the Mississippi River, there the walleye season is open continuously.

There's a lot more to Minnesota fishing than walleye, northern pike and bass. What about panfish? You know, bluegill, crappie, and pumpkinseed. If you enjoy catching these kinds of fish you're not alone. In fact, anglers catch about 20 panfish to every one walleye. Most of us probably got our introduction to fishing by catching a sunfish. Other than smallmouth bass and trout, sunfish and crappies are pound-for-pound the sportiest fish to catch. As far as I'm concerned they are also the best tasting.

Equipment is usually no problem for late winter panfish angling. You usually don't need much which is good because driving on the ice at this time of the year can be a real danger. It should be nice enough that a house isn't needed. You probably don't want to mess with a fish house anyway because you'll want to move around the lake. If you're lucky you won't even have to drill a hole. As the weather starts getting nicer and the days are longer there are few places I'd rather be than out on a lake fishing sunnies.

# WHAT'S A GOOD YEAR CLASS?

You hear so much talk about this years class being a good one or a bad one, but what are they really talking about and what makes a good year class. For a good year class to exist, a number of things must happen. At the time of the spawn,



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conditions must be optimum. Where natural reproduction occurs, suitable spawning habitat must be present. For walleyes this means gravel or gravel mixed with rock in relatively shallow water (2 to 8 feet). When water temperatures reach about 48 degrees F, spawning usually peaks. Sudden and severe cold fronts at this critical time can push fish off spawning areas. Continued bad weather may influence how many fish spawn and how successfully.

But ample habitat under prime conditions doesn't guarantee a good spawn. In rivers and reservoirs, rain or heavy snow melt can transport extraordinary loads of silt into the system, burying the unhatched eggs, which need oxygen to survive, thereby killing substantial numbers. In some areas, a super-successful spawn can only occur when winter or spring precipitation is lower than normal. Aside from being buried, walleye eggs can survive most things other than being eaten. In years when prolonged cold spells delay hatching (normally a 10 to 18 day process), eggs are vulnerable for a prolonged period of time to predation by baitfish, suckers, crayfish, bullheads, and other nest robbers.

Once hatched, the young alevins could suffer high mortality rates if water temperatures dip back into winter temperature ranges. Floods can sweep them out of sheltering areas. Young fry are susceptible to predation by such unlikely enemies as smelt and insects, along with the usual host of bass, perch, and birds. Finally, young walleyes can starve for lack of adequate prey in rearing areas, as determined by weather, water, and other conditions. An early spawn and subsequent cold fronts can be brutal on such fragile little fish. If the serendipitous occurs-if conditions conspire to bring the most walleyes to spawning areas at the right time under prime conditions, the hatch is successfully carried off, predator counts are low, shelter is good, and forage is high-lots of young walleyes hatch. But another critical hurdle must be jumped. Young-of-the-year walleyes that don't find adequate prey in summer may be too small and weak to escape predators and survive the winter.

If significant numbers survive their first winter, odds are they'll become a super year class in several years, barring other potential disasters-environmental problems like freeze-out and pollution, or biological disasters like disease and lack of forage. Then, when the year class edges into the catchable size range, great year classes begin showing up in creel surveys and test nets. Only then can you be certain that a great year class exists, the kind of year class that increases odds for fishermen. But knowing and catching are flip sides of a coin. Fishing should be good for another six years or more, unless a major bloom of perch, shad, smelt, or ciscos keeps walleyes so fat and happy they're impossible

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to catch; or unless anglers crop the year class too quickly; or unless weather conspires against you every time you visit the fishery; or unless.....

# FROM THE PRESIDENT

There is no doubt the Fishing Opener will be on us before we can say "fathead minnow". Being that as it is, take time to read through your fishing regulations, understand why they are there and jot down what you feel could make for some improvements. Most of us are law abiding, resource caring anglers, but still, laws that affect angling opportunities for all of us are abused by a group of anglers or fish hogs disguising themselves as fishermen. It is often said that fish management or any resource management for that matter, is one of "carrot and stick". I think groups like ours do one heck of a lot of carrot, but often we don't get involved with the stick. What are the regulations that will do more to improve fishing and fishing opportunities? Are they laws that even pertain to the taking of fish? Maybe they are those laws that affect where fish live and propagate. Whatever the case may be, it's our resources, it's up to us to find improvements and bring them forward for discussion and examination.

At the present time we have allocated \$1,000.00 plus of our general revenues raised through group activities to support payments for the sand blanket at Clear Lake. Other funds have been approved to install the walkway to the fishing pier/dock at the park. You will see a noted increase in usage of the park and lake from the shoreline because of this. It's money well spent.

See you at the next meeting, bring an angling friend.



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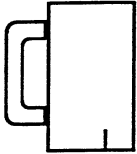
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# Club Calendar

- March 30th, Meeting, Offices above Southside Pub-7:30 P.M.
- April 27th, Meeting, Evan Inn-7:30 P.M.



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