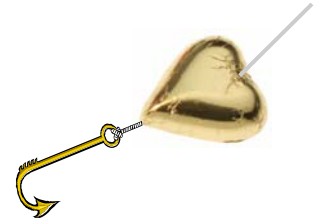




# Western Bass Club

Since 1938



## WBC NEWS February 2005

### President's Line



Chuck "the Rev"  
Bailey  
2005 Club President

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We can lay to rest another long lived and beloved fishing theory. I admit openly, I am not sorry to see it go! It will not be missed!

Every February, Larry Gonczy and I have scratched our heads and wondered what happened to the smallies in Lake Washington. Throughout each winter, we had been consistently catching fish in 40 to 60 feet. Then suddenly, February arrives and... nothing! **It was too early for them to move into the shallows, that wouldn't happen until March.** So where did they go?

Isn't it funny how you can be so sure about where the fish are **NOT!** But the problem is that we only had 4 weeks a year to come up with a solution as to where they **WERE!** And since we only fished once a week, how did we know if the weather was just shutting them down, or perhaps it was our presentations that needed to be changed? The mysterious missing fish have been driving us crazy over the last few years! The one piece of our winter time "fishing adventure" was still missing. **Until now.**

It's not that we hadn't considered a million possibilities – including the correct one: The fish were moving up **EARLIER** than we had imagined! But by the time we acted upon our theory – it was too late, February was gone.

This year I started by fishing in the normal 40-60 range and had limited success. But something gnawed at me to try **35** feet, and quickly 2 small fish came into the boat. Now the key word here is "**small.**"

See, all winter long we've only been catching their solid big brothers and sisters. The small fish are out deeper than 60 feet during the winter, leaving the key structure at that depth to the adults! Finally, I asked the right question, "If the small fish have moved into the 30's, is it possible the larger fish have already moved up into the 20's?"

Funny thing was, the question haunted me all day long, but **I didn't act upon it.** (Why? Because **EVERYBODY knows that smallies don't move up until March!**) It wasn't until Dennis Larson joined me for a couple of hours on the lake and suggested we give the theory a try, that I did. On our first pass, Dennis hooked up with a nice 3# 4oz fish in **27** feet. An hour later another 4# 1oz fish took my Rapala in... yep, **27** feet! A week later, Sarge writes on the website that he nailed 2 fish in **18** feet of water! Go figure!

So, as I write this, we are only in the first half of February, but the mystery has finally been cracked – our bronze back prey has been moving up **EARLIER** into the shallows than we ever imagined! **A full month earlier!** What you do with this information, I will leave to you. Personally, I'm mixing this new knowledge with a large portion of humble pie!

Why? Well, **EVERYONE knows the fish don't move into the shallows until March!**

I was so confident!

- **Stuart & Samantha Karpenko, WBC Editors:** [stu@westernbassclub.com](mailto:stu@westernbassclub.com)
- Views Expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of the entire membership.
- Western Bass Club News is published monthly for the membership of Western Bass Club. If you have any ideas for articles or are interested in advertising here, please contact the editors.

**WBC Members who do not renew their memberships by March 1 will not receive mailed newsletters until their 2005 dues are received.**

See Secretary's Report on Page 4 for Membership Renewal Options  
**Please Renew Memberships Before March 1, 2005**

# Events Calendar

## February 2005

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
13	14	15	16	17 7 pm General Meeting	18	19
20	21	22	23 Monroe Sportsmen's Show 12 pm - 8 pm	24 Monroe Sportsmen's Show 12 pm - 8 pm	25 Monroe Sportsmen's Show 12 pm - 8 pm	26 Monroe Sportsmen's Show 10 am - 8 pm
27 Monroe Sportsmen's Show 10 am - 5 pm	28					

**Upcoming Events**

- General Meeting - Thursday, February 17 - 7:00 pm
- Evergreen Sportsmen's Show - Monroe, WA February 23 - 27



## March 2005

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5 6:30 am Fish-In
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17 7 pm General Meeting	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

**Upcoming Events**

- Fish-In - Saturday, March 5 Silver Lake, WA 6:30 am at Public Launch
- General Meeting - Thursday, March 17 - 7:00 pm

**DIRECTOR INFO.**

<b>PRESIDENT</b>	
<b>CHUCK BAILEY</b>	<b>(253) 941-8413</b>
<b>VICE PRESIDENT</b>	
<b>LARRY SULLIVAN</b>	<b>(253) 630-3988</b>
<b>SECRETARY</b>	
<b>STUART KARPENKO</b>	<b>(253) 841-2183</b>
<b>TREASURER</b>	
<b>DOUG BOOTH</b>	<b>(253) 630-6033</b>
<b>AMBASSADOR</b>	
<b>ROB MAGLIO</b>	<b>(253) 631-0604</b>
<b>ENTERTAINMENT</b>	
<b>BOB PAYSENO</b>	<b>(425) 277-3461</b>
<b>GREETER/GREEN SLIPS</b>	
<b>RICHARD LOTH</b>	<b>(253) 761-2324</b>
<b>SPECIAL EVENTS</b>	
<b>PHIL AND SUE HUDGENS</b>	<b>(253) 639-9428</b>

**GENERAL MEETING INFO.**

Date:	Third Thursday of each month
Time:	7:00 pm
Location:	Kennydale Community Center
	2424 NE 27th St.
	Renton, WA

Please feel free to visit the club website or contact a board member if you need directions or have any questions.

**Club Homepage:**  
[www.westernbassclub.com](http://www.westernbassclub.com)

**Membership dues are \$35 before March 1st and \$40 after March 1st for renewing members.**

**Dues for new members only \$35 (year round).**



*Tom Lester II is a family man who lives in Corsicana, Texas with his wife, Kelly, and his daughters, Megan and Tatum. He has fished the Bass Anglers Sportsman Society Central Invitational tournament trail (58th for the 1999-2000 season), the FLW Everstart Series and several other professional-level bass fishing tournaments. Sought-after for endorsements by numerous leading outdoor product companies, Tom's name appears alongside some of the industry's most well reputed brands. Quarrow, Pro Locker, Bill Lewis Lures, and EZ Retriever number among more than a dozen Tom Lester sponsors. He also serves as pro staff for Quarrow and P-Line and as a field staff member for Bulldog lures, Lure Eyes sunglasses, H&H Plastic Rattles and more.*

**Trapping a Bass - by Tom Lester II**

In our ongoing quest to find new and improved ways to catch more bass, sometimes the answer is right before our very eyes. So often the most effective means of boating more fish is so simple, we simply overlook it. Chances are it is right in front of you, but you don't see it. It's like not being able to see the forest, for the trees, so to speak. What is it? The ole' reliable Rat-L-Trap. That's right, the simply looking, easy to use, noisy, baitfish imitating lure we all have in our tackle boxes that we've been using for years, a Rat-L-Trap.

Rat-L-Traps are the number one selling bait in America. There is a good reason for that... they catch fish. Anglers everywhere have used a Rat-L-Trap at one time or another in their fishing. Chances are they caught fish on em'. The Rat-L-Trap is a "go to" for everyone from the

beginning anglers to long time touring professional anglers,

The Rat-L-Trap is a bait that can be used in a variety of ways. The most common way to use the bait is what I call the basic "chunk and reel" method. Chunk it out there and reel it back in relatively fast hoping to trigger a strike from a feeding fish or generate a reactionary strike from a passive fish. If that doesn't work, you can try slowing it down a bit allowing the bait to work a little deeper. Often this subtle little difference will result in more strikes.

One of my favorite ways to use the bait is probably the

*(Continued on page 10)*

# Tournament Report

Insurance Forms are needed before April Draw tourney and are a good thing year round, so get me your copies soon!



Larry Sullivan  
2005 Tournament  
Director

## Some things to get before "T" Season!

Here is a list of required and helpful items for the tournament season...

### Required items:

- Life vest... Coast Guard approved and must FIT WEARER!
- Alert device... air horn and or whistle.
- Fire extinguisher.
- Throw cushion.
- Signal flares... at least one with good expiration.
- Kill switch for motor.
- Working livewell with aerator.
- Running lights, fore and aft, or you will be last out and restricted to running at idle in darkness, but with our weather and fog... get the lights and make sure they work.
- Insurance!
- Some sort of Porta-Potty...i.e. urinal, special insert for compartment, bed pan, etc... New Rule this year and items can be found at Boaters World and Campers World. Item must be able to be covered to prevent leakage. Even a two gallon bucket with a lid should be adequate and would fit in a compartment.

### Helpful items to have:

- Extra fuses for electrical breakers.
- An oar and or push-dock pole.
- First aid kit! ... with side cutting clippers to remove hooks from body parts.
- Spare Prop for big motor and trolling motor.
- Prop Wrench for big motor and trolling motor.
- Tool box with various tools including allen wrenches, spare wiring and wiring connectors.
- Spare container with 2-3 qts. of marine oil if not for you, for another who forgets theirs or runs out.
- Spare set of boat keys AND Truck keys...seen too many folks throw keys to someone on the dock only to find they cannot throw!
- Battery Jumper Cables.....they make small sets to fit easily in a box.
- Extra sunglasses and sunscreen!
- A cell phone.

### 2005 WBC Tournament Schedule

April 23rd-24th	Silver Lake	Draw Tourney
May 21st-22nd	Potholes Reservoir	Points #1
May 28th-30th	Banks Lake	Jamboree
June 25th-26th	Riffe Lake	Points #2
July 30th -31st	Lake Roosevelt	Jack-n-Jill
Aug. 27th-28th	Lake Chelan	Points #3
Sept. 24th-25th	Tri Cities-Wallula	Points #4
Oct. 1st-2nd	Lake Sammamish	Team Tourney

So now with plenty of time... get out there and find these things and maybe even trade for stuff at the tackle swap or ask a member or two where to get these things to save time.

See ya on the water!

## Secretary

Stu Karpenko  
2005 Secretary



### WBC Newsletters - Mail vs. On-line Version

Due to increasing costs associated with the printing and mailing of this newsletter, we are trying to reduce the number of paper-copy newsletters that are mailed out each month.

Members will be asked upon renewal of their club memberships, or in another manner, if they are willing to access the newsletter via the WBC web site instead of receiving a mailed hard copy.

Several members have already indicated that they read the newsletter on-line and that the mailed copy just gets set aside.

Members who wish to receive the newsletter by mail will continue to receive it, as usual.

### Membership Renewal Options

You can now renew your WBC membership by:

- Printing and mailing the renewal form available on the web site (from main page, go to MEMBERSHIP/ SIGN-UP RENEWAL!)
  - Mailing the renewal form on Page 11 of this newsletter.
  - In person at the General Membership Meetings. Stu Karpenko will have the renewal forms at the February 17 General Meeting.
- Memberships renewed prior to March 1 are \$35. March 1 and after, dues are \$40. Save \$5 by renewing early.

This month we are going to be treated to something really special. We will be hearing from WBC's own Larry Gonczy! Larry will be giving us a narrated underwater tutorial of Lake Washington. Larry will be showing us some never before seen footage with his Aqua-Vu camera that will blow you away.

He is going to give us some really great tips and tactics on how to catch more of those wily smallmouth bass. He's going to be helping us interpret all of those funny looking shapes that seem to show up on our sonar graphs. If you are one of those fishermen who want to be able to find fish easier and understand all that structure below your boat, then you don't want to miss Larry's presentation this month.

Here is just a sampling of some of the comments I've heard from various people who have heard some of Larry's previous presentations over the years-

- "That was the most unbelievable presentation I have ever heard"
- "Each time I hear Larry speak, I make sure I bring a notepad, because I know I'm going to pick up some really valuable information to help me become a better bass fisherman"
- "WOW!"

Bob "Pays2no"  
Payseno  
2005 Entertainment  
Director



Larry also has his own website that you can check-out sometime to learn more about what to expect at this month's meeting... here it is: <http://www.northwestfishingtutorials.com>.

Come and enjoy a real fun, exciting & educational night with Larry... you won't regret it!

I would also like to recognize Larry's sponsors that have helped him become so successful as a professional speaker over the years:

G-Loomis

Aqua-Vu

Rapala

Lund Boats

Auburn Sports & Marine

Gamakatsu

Kalin Baits

Shimano

## Special Events

Hi Everyone,

If you got a chance to see the Sportsman Show, you know it was a lot of fun and you had lots of great things to spend your money on. O'Laughlin's did it again by putting together another super show. Terry, thanks again for always taking care of us with a booth!

Thank you to everyone who worked the booth and thanks to the many members who stepped up last minute to fill in. We would have had to close down without everyone's help.

It takes many members for these events to be successful, so pat yourself on the back for a job well done.



PHIL and SUE  
HUDGENS

2005 SPECIAL EVENTS

The next special event for us is Fishing Kids on June 4th. So keep this date in mind and we will have more information later.

There are still lots of raffle tickets to sell! Remember, this is our only fundraiser and it is how we help fund the costs our club incurs. So, do your part and help sell - or you can buy a book and maybe you'll be the lucky winner of a G-Loomis Rod and Shimano Reel. If you need tickets, just give us a call, or we will have them at the meeting.

See you at the meeting.

Phil and Sue Hudgens

[Philandsue@aol.com](mailto:Philandsue@aol.com) 253-639-9428

The following is an excerpt from an e-mail that was received from OrDella Rods in response to WBC's thank you for the two OrDella "WBC" rods that were given for the WBC Banquet raffle:

*"OrDella custom built and donated only one of the rods. Jim (Rumann) purchased the other at a special price out of his own pocket. Thanks for recognizing our contribution. I enjoyed doing it. Please make sure everyone knows Jim's good deed as well."*

*OrDella Rods*



## AmBASSador News



Rob Maglio  
2005 AmBASSador  
Director

Well, I have to say I was surprised at the turnout for the time of year. That's awesome! I lost count of exact people, but I am pretty sure we had exactly 20 people show with 8 boats. We had to go three deep in a few, but that's alright. The surface temp was 49 degrees and the weather wasn't too bad. The sun was in and out, so that helped. I know there were several fish caught, two being over 4 lbs. New member, Jerrie, caught a smallie at 4-4 I believe and I was able to bag a 4-11 smallie. My fish came in about 20 feet of water on a dropshot rig and Jerrie's was in 50 ft on a spider jig. There were plenty of perch caught, also. I hope everyone enjoyed lunch. I didn't hear any complaints. Chili dogs were the choice entrée. It took awhile to get the chili hot and I'll work on that. All in all it was a very good day. We even had Virgil Wilbur and Jim Rumann stop by at lunch. We had great donations to the pot, and that's always appreciated.

Next fish-in is March 5th at Silver Lake in Cowlitz County. Since it is a further drive than usual, I am not planning on having a breakfast. This could change, though. It should be getting lighter a little earlier so I am saying arrival time will be 6:30 am at the launch. The boat launch is the one across from the old Silver Shores Resort that closed. We launched there for last year's draw tourney. It is several miles past the well known Silver Lake Resort. I don't remember there being launch fees, but bring a little cash in case. Fishing will be interesting, as weather can play a big part in this shallow lake. See you all there!

**When: Saturday,  
March 5th  
6:30 AM**  
**Where: Silver Lake,  
Cowlitz County**

## Fish-In - March 5 at Silver Lake



**When: Saturday, March 5th**

**Where: Silver Lake, Cowlitz County - Public Launch**

**Directions:** Take I-5 south; Take Exit 49 (Spirit Lake HWY 504) ; Take left off exit and go back over I-5 (Should pass a Burger King); Stay straight for Approximately 8-9 miles (Past the Silver Lake Motel & Resort); Public launch is on the right hand side.

### Dealing with the Off-Season Doldrums - by Jeremiah T. Bagwell (cont.)

*(Continued from page 9)*

other anglers. Not only will you learn more about the sport you love, but there is the potential for meeting new friends and fishing partners that love the sport as much as you. The fact that these sites are available twenty-four hours a day is perfect for everyone, regardless of their work schedule.

Another valuable tool for increasing your winter season education, is fishing related videos. From the comfort of your own couch, you can learn tips and tactics from the country's best professional bass anglers. Plastic Tactics and Understanding Sonar by Mike Del Visco are two great learning aids for anglers of all skill levels. Kevin VanDam's Pitching to Heavy Hitters really does a wonderful job of explaining when and where to flip and pitch your baits, to become more successful. Woo Daves' Structure School

gives a detailed look at various aspects of fishing for deep bass.

There are numerous other videos on the market that can and will help you increase your knowledge level. Take advantage of these resources and then practice the techniques that you have learned once spring arrives. You will be amazed with the results.

Rather than moping around and letting your skills diminish, take advantage of your off-season. Not only will you emerge as a more educated and highly skilled angler, it will also make the time pass more quickly.

Until next week...Fish Hard, Fish Often and Don't Hate the Player, Hate the Game.



Richard Loth  
2005 Greeter /Green-slips

## Green Slip Report for December

### SHIVERING GREENSLIPS

O.K., first the long johns. Then sweat pants and polypro undershirt. Now a nice wool shirt (long sleeve, of course). Then the wool army pants. Now, put on the bib overalls, wool socks (2 pair), and the high top hiking boots. Then the sweat shirt and down vest. And last but not least the snow mobile suit. Alright, now to go FISHING. (Darn it, I should have gone to the bathroom first.)

Oh well, a few people overcame these obstacles to go out in the DEAD of winter and RIPPED some lips. Actually more of us went out but didn't rip any lips. BUT WE WERE THERE.

**ALSO, don't forget to get your scales verified. I will have the equipment at each meeting so bring in your scale and get weighed. This must be done by March to have your greenslips accepted.**

Name	Weight	Bait	Lake
Chris Sergeant	4# 11oz. SM	Dropshot	Wash.
Pat Sotherlund	4# 8oz. SM	3-way Rev.	Wash.
Larry Sullivan	4# 0oz. SM	Dropshot – ROBO	Wash.
Mark Maderos	2# 14oz. SM	3-way Rev.	Wash.
Rob Maglio	2# 8oz. SM	3-way Rev.	Wash
Brian Walker	1# 10oz. SM	Tube Jig	Wash.

ONE DAY WHILE DRIVING HOME FROM HIS FISHING TRIP IN THE POURING RAIN, A MAN GOT A FLAT TIRE OUTSIDE A MONASTERY. A MONK CAME OUT AND INVITED HIM INSIDE TO HAVE DINNER AND SPEND THE NIGHT. THE MOTORIST ACCEPTED. THAT NIGHT HE HAD A WONDERFUL DINNER OF FISH AND CHIPS. HE DECIDED TO COMPLIMENT THE CHEF. ENTERING THE KITCHEN, HE ASKED THE COOK, "ARE YOU THE FISH FRIAR?"

"NO," THE MAN REPLIED, "I'M THE CHIP MONK".

Chris took the \$5 club prize for big fish of the month. Each month the club gives \$5 to the member for the biggest bass turned in on a greenslip. Also, remember that the Big Fish Kitty starts in March. You must be entered the prior month to be eligible for the money. It continues for 8 months and costs \$1 per month, payable to Rich Loth. You must pay for the remaining number of months after you enter. The amount of the prize depends on the number of people signed up. This is in addition to the Big Fish of the Month prize. So get signed up now.

Keep your rods up and Rip some Lips!  
Rich

## Treasurer

Doug Booth  
2005 Treasurer

Hello Fellow Clubbers,

I just wanted to let you all know that Western Bass Club is financially well. I have heard recently that some members were concerned about our lack of funds. We have made a number of large disbursements that did run our savings balance out. We have started to recoup our cushion and are approximately at the same fiscal level that we would be at any other year. Unfortunately, banking policies have changed since we originally started our accounts and we will no longer have a dedicated savings account. I believe that having access to all our resources will continue to benefit the club far beyond the \$3.00 a year we would have made in interest. But, it is still important to pay your membership fee, as well as doing your part in the fundraising rod raffle. If each member sold a book of \$20 worth of tickets, this would be the best raffle in a long time. Please remember that everything costs more these days so each of us needs to do our part in helping keep our club financially on the black side of the scale.

Doug

## Lost Confidence – By Bob Figueria

This article was posted on [www.westernbass.com](http://www.westernbass.com)

*Bob Figueria is Rob Maglio's biological father. Mr. Figueria wrote this article when he was tournament fishing the Delta Region in California. He had 12 years of tournament angling experience.*

The deafening roar of the speeding 18 wheeler was almost too much to bare as it sped past my tow rig in the middle lane of highway 580. Wow, 75 MPH, where's a cop when you need one!

There I was, back on the interstate with my shiny new Ranger 488 in tow, headed for home after another poor tournament finish and I wasn't in a good mood! I just gazed out the window, watching the cars and road signs go zipping by. I was totally dejected . 12 pounds??? Man, that is 'weak sauce'!!!

On the days when I didn't finish well in a tournament, I use to beat myself up pretty hard. These negative feelings seemed to occur more often these days, ever since I raised the level of competition by entering more Pro type tournaments. During the trips home after a poor finish, I'd hear myself saying things like, "I can't hang, maybe I should quit" or "I just plain suck"! I finally had to ask myself, "what's happening to me? Why am I so hard on myself?" The answer was 'Lost Confidence'.

What is Lost Confidence? It's a condition that we cause for ourselves and it starts by not defining a road map for our direction as tournament anglers. By not setting short term goals, I found myself going into tournaments with unreasonable expectations. In talking with others, I found that this is a common thing amongst tournament anglers. It can also occur by setting non-achievable goals which are too aggressive and are beyond our level of experience.

Take this past 1999 season for example. I put everything else aside and I set one goal for the year and it was to qualify for the Anglers Choice TOC. It would have been real easy to put unnecessary pressure on myself by setting the end goal of winning a boat at the TOC but that would have been unrealistic and would have caused additional stress.

The Anglers Choice Delta team circuit has 7 tournaments during the season, with all 7 tournament finishes counting in the year end points race, with no throw outs. My partner and myself took one tournament at a time and set a short term goal at each event. It was simple. Do your homework, pre-fish with conviction and then go out and fish the tournament with confidence. We maintained that philosophy throughout the entire season and into the TOC which was held at Clearlake this past Oct.22nd and 23rd . Even though we were a little intimidated at the level of competition (which was discovered at the TOC dinner when we saw all the tournament heavy weights) we still adhered to the philosophy. We knew that we had as good a game plan as anyone going into day one of the event.

We fished day one with lots of confidence and did the best we could however, despite losing a few big fish which put us 8 pounds behind the leader after the weigh-in, we still maintained our confidence. In fact, we went into day two with more confidence than either of us had ever displayed before. After 2 hours of fishing, we were back in the hunt with a quick limit for 17+ pounds including a 8.41 lb giant which was good for second big fish for the event. We knew 17 lbs wasn't enough weight and had to make a move. Our confidence was very high because we still had water that hadn't been used yet. We went in there and culled a 1° pound fish with a three pounder and with a hour to go in the tournament, we still had a 1° lb. fish in the live well that we needed to cull and time was getting short. I had confidence in one tule burm in the north end of the lake so we went over to it. I kept pitching and flipping that jig despite constant urging from my partner to move. I said, "patience dude, this wall has some good fish on it". No sooner did I say that when I set on a 4 pounder. That fish was a story in itself!!!

We ended up fishing 5th and were only 2 pounds from winning the whole thing but it was still good enough to win the last prize boat and the dream had come true. As we sat in the hotel room, we looked at each other and started to laugh! The feeling of meeting our goals and walking away with a boat was a feeling that I'll never forget and it all started by setting a series of achievable goals and not losing our confidence.

### Conclusion:

Measuring the growth of your fishing knowledge is very difficult because it occurs so gradually that its very hard to realize on a short term basis. The key is not to worry about the near term stuff too much, but to focus on the big picture, that's what really matters.

Here are some Tips that should make achieving your own personal growth more successful:

- Set goals for yourself or for your team.
- Measure yourself after the end of a season, not after each tournament.
- Enter tournaments that offer competition equal to or slightly higher than your own experience.
- Don't set too high of expectations for yourself
- Fish with confidence and conviction.



## Dealing with the Off-Season Doldrums

by Jeremiah T. Bagwell

Compliments of BassResource.com with permission of JT Bagwell.

*A well rounded individual making a mark in the fishing industry, Jeremiah has a number of irons in the fire. "I have the opportunity to be on a number of Pro Staff's for some of the best companies in the business," Bagwell stated. "Things are all starting to fall into place. I am writing for a number of websites and I even have other writers doing articles about me on a fairly regular basis. Bagwell is also a Tournament District Director for the American Bass Anglers Tournament Trail in North Western Illinois. Jeremiah has won multiple tournaments, had several top 10 finishes and has a few big bass awards under his belt. You could say the rest is history, because now Jeremiah is developing a great network of friends and contacts in the fishing industry. Not to mention having a lot of fun and success competing in bass tournaments.*



Here in the Northern part of the country we are barely into our cold weather season. Already my anxiety level is going through the roof. I have cleaned the basement and got all of my tackle sorted. Next year's gear has already been ordered. Now all I can do is sit around waiting for spring and dreaming about bass fishing. That is if I want all of my hard work and practice to go down the drain.

If you are one of the millions of bass anglers that reside in the northern half of the United States, the winter months can seem to last an eternity. The lakes and rivers become over sized ice hockey rinks. No matter how hard I try, I just can't figure out how to get my Minn Kota to cut through the hard water and my Senkos just lay motionless on the ice. I guess that rules out ice fishing.

The majority of bass anglers can't afford the luxury of heading south for the winter or taking trips to exotic warm climate locations. Instead, we must stay in our snow covered prisons, anxiously awaiting our spring time release date. Rather than spending four months dreaming of the bass that you could be catching, take advantage of the off-season. This is the time of year to hone some of your skills and increase your knowledge for next season.

I have a miniature obstacle course set up in my basement. There is a variety of targets obstructed by different objects. This is how I attempt to keep in stroke for pitching and flipping different baits. Each one of the obstructed targets serves its own unique purpose. One obstacle that has been very beneficial too me, is a small tunnel that I made out of cardboard boxes. At the end of the tunnel is a small lid from a laundry detergent bottle, this represents my strike zone. I use this portion of the course to practice pitching to low, congested targets. I designed this obstacle two years ago and it has paid amazing dividends when it came to getting a jig under a boat dock or pitching underneath low hanging trees.

This also keeps me tuned in with my equipment. When I pull out my All Star rods and Pflueger reels in the spring, they will not feel awkward to me. That is because they will have been a vital part of my off-season workout routine. To the untrained eye, it might appear that this is just a stupid little game that I play all alone, but do you think major league pitchers just sit around all winter? Of course not, they are in a gym somewhere working on their sliders and fastballs. The time you invest refining your skills during the winter will offer huge benefits come tournament time in the spring.

Take this time too learn how your lures actually work. Several colleges, high schools, and local YMCA's have indoor swimming pools. For a minimal fee, anglers can rent these pools by the hour. The crystal clear water is a perfect testing ground for seeing exactly how different baits look in action.

Take several different baits and study how different retrieves and rod movements affect their action in the water. For one reason or another, each of us has developed an idea of what we think our baits do when we retrieve them a certain way. By seeing these baits with an unobstructed, perfectly clear view, we can now witness whether or not our assumptions were correct.

Boat show season can also be a huge off-season advantage to anglers. Typically, these shows offer seminars that are taught by seasoned pros. Visit as many seminars or instructional demonstrations as you possibly can. Most of the time, these seminars require little or no fee in order to attend. B.A.S.S. holds several Bassmaster University educational programs throughout the country every January and February. These hugely popular, two-day training programs are taught by the top anglers in the business. To the best of my knowledge, nobody else offers instructional seminars that feature the likes of Davy Hite, Hank Parker, Jay Yelas, Woo Daves, Larry Nixon, Kevin VanDam, and numerous other top tournament-winning pros. Although a little higher priced, attending one of these programs may just help push you too the next level of competitive bass fishing.

When you can't get out to these seminars or other educational programs, use your time at home to learn as much as you can. Reading several magazines and visiting fishing websites can be like getting a fast track bachelors degree in bass fishing. Websites such as Probass.com, BassResource.com, AmericanBassAnglers.com, LandBig-Fish.com and BigfishTackle.com offer anglers a huge assortment of informative articles, as well as fishing chat rooms and message boards. After you read an article, you can then go to the forum or the chat room and discuss the various topics with

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Trapping a Bass - by Tom Lester II (cont.)

*(Continued from page 3)*

most underused presentation of all, a yo yo retrieve. I use this approach when fishing the bait off of main lake and secondary points and around the edges of creek channels when the fish are not real active.

Cast the bait out and let it fall to the bottom. Once on the bottom, quickly pull it up a foot or two and stop allowing the bait the flutter back down imitating a wounded or dying baitfish. The presentation of an easy meal may very well cause a non-feeding fish to go ahead and eat your bait simply because it's there and it's easy. The result, you catch a fish.

Rat-L-Traps come in a variety of sizes, colors and styles. Some sparkle, some have spinners on them, some have a plastic bill on them for diving deeper, some float and others will suspend. There is so many, it's sometimes hard to figure out which one to use. If you find yourself in this situation, like I so often do, go back to the basics. The ½ ounce chrome with a blue back, chrome with a black back or a gold with a black back are my standard baits. On cloudy days, early morning or late evening, I use the gold color. When the sun is bright, you can't go wrong with the chrome.

Last month I fished a BASS tournament at Sam Rayburn. The tournament was won on a Rat-L-Trap being fished over scattered grass (hydrilla). Several other anglers, including myself, caught fish on Rat-L-Traps in the grass.

When fishing these baits around grass, you need to be using a high speed reel with a gear ratio of 6:1 or better on a medium action rod. This will allow you to literally rip the bait through the grass triggering strikes. If the fish are aggressive, they will usually hit the bait just as you pull it loose from a snag in the grass. If the fish are not real aggressive, you may need to scale down to a ¼ ounce Rat-L-Trap in order to slow the bait down enough to get bit;

yet keep it from staying hung up in the grass due to the slower retrieve needed to generate strikes. This is where having a variety of colors and sizes of baits come in handy.

I really love fishing Rat-L-Traps over grass. The bait looks like the forage the bass are feeding on, a shad and the noise from the rattles inside seems to attract the fish even when they are buried up in the thick grass. When a grass bass hits the bait, it usually inhales the thing.

Another bait to use over grass is the Red Zone Rat-L-Trap, it suspends. After cranking it down during the retrieve, you can stop the bait and it will suspend allowing the fish more time to see and strike the bait. You can also use it like a jerk bait while it is suspending, then continue the normal retrieve. This lure is also real effective on pre-spawn fish in creeks that are suspending between the creek channel and their spawning areas in shallower water.

As a tournament angler, keeping a fish on after hooking it can mean the difference between making a paycheck and not making one. That's why I always replace the hooks on my Rat-L-Traps when fishing a tournament. The hooks that come on the bait are ok for pleasure fishing or pre-fishing a tournament, but when it really counts, I want a good sharp hook that increases my chances of landing the fish.

The next time you're at the lake or your favorite body of water and you can't figure out what lure to use to catch ole' bucketmouth, remember the answer may have been sitting there all along. There's a good reason everyone you talk to has a few in their box, the Rat-L-Trap simply catches fish.

Until next time, enjoy the Texas Outdoors.



### WBC CLASSIFIEDS

Hot Tub for sale. Considered a 6 person hot tub but it is the size of an 8 person (Has a lounge along with seats). Comes with 2 pumps (not 1) and heater. Has been removed from my deck for 2+ years. Tub needs plumbing redone. Heater probably needs a new element since it has not been run in 2 years. Both pumps worked great when tub was disassembled. \$500. Contact Rick Gagliardi at [coachbass-dog@earthlink.net](mailto:coachbass-dog@earthlink.net) or at 253-952-8210.



If you have anything you would like to sell or want to buy, write up your ad and email it to [Stu@westernbassclub.com](mailto:Stu@westernbassclub.com). Don't forget to include your contact information.

# Western Bass Club Membership Form

*Spouse, children under 18, and grandchildren are also members with your paid annual dues*

NEW MEMBER AND MEMBER RENEWAL FORM

NAME (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthday \_\_\_\_\_

List Children \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdays): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Birthday \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Birthday \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE NOTE: ***For renewing members, all dues paid before March 1st shall receive a five-dollar early registration discount.***

***New members and before March 1st dues are \$35***

***March 1st and after dues are \$40***

*Your signature on this application releases Western Bass Club from all claims for any injury and/or damage, personal or property, that you, members of your family, or guests may cause or sustain.*

**Make checks payable to: Western Bass Club**

Member Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Check Number \_\_\_\_\_ Newsletter - circle one ( E-mail/On-Line / U.S. Mail )

Mail to: Western Bass Club  
Attn.: Secretary  
PO Box 58151  
Renton WA, 98058



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Renton, WA 98058



## February Birthdays

Dan Mowry	2
Semrin Gokeri	5
Valerie Knott	6
Judy Gross	8
Curtis Ramsden	9
Justin Kopf	11
Michael Singson	14
Liz Holmes	19
Zackery Johnson	21
Philip Neilson, Jr	26
Carla Watts	26
Katie Gross	29
Darrin Sanger	29



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