

Illinois Spoonpluggers Newsletter

**Dedicated to the teachings of E.L. "Buck" Perry
The Father of Structure Fishing**

April, 2009

The next meeting of the Illinois Spoonpluggers will be on Thursday, April 9, 7:15 PM at the Elk Grove Village Public Library. Club meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month.

***Sad News:** We regret to report that club member **Dave Johnson**, Rockford, IL passed away on March 24, 2009 at age 65. Dave was an active lifetime fisherman who became involved in Spoonplugging the during the past couple of years. Although serious health issues limited his time on the water, Dave and fellow club member Rich Lynch were able to attend a number of meetings and fished together whenever possible. They had attended the Winter Seminar in the past and had hoped that Dave would be able to attend this year's event, but that was not to be. Dave's lifetime of public service, including nearly 25 years as a city and county elected official, made its mark on the people of Rockford, IL. He will surely be missed. We send our condolences to his family and friends.*

1. MEETING SUMMARY - The March business meeting was held at the Elk Grove Village Public Library and was attended by 14 members. Marty McAvoy surprised everyone by arriving a couple days early for the seminar just so he could attend the club meeting. This is the same guy who attended every single National event in 2008. Talk about dedication! Great to have you, Marty, and all the best to the NEWEST Indiana Spoonpluggers club!

The seminar folders were stuffed in short order before Jim Duplex and Phil Szafranski led everyone through a dry run of the material (slides and discussion points) for input and final adjustments. Some minor tweaks to the agenda were made to achieve the best flow. The "questions" segment was scaled back from previous seminars to allow more time for presentations and the group activity in the afternoon. Everyone reported that the various arrangements had been made and we were all set to go. Scott Duff said members could arrive for the Friday evening get-together and dinner at Russell's starting around 7:00 PM. Thanks again to all who chipped in to make the Winter Seminar a success!!!

2. PROGRAM: This month's feature was a Year-In-Review Report by Phil Szafranski. Phil is very disciplined in fishing his favorite local lakes, but he especially enjoys exploring new waters and 2008 was no exception. Depth finder glitches twice led to excellent catches of walleye using his lures as mapping tools, then markers and line sights to pinpoint the schools of fish on the cast. Buck would be proud! The season also saw Phil extending his depth control on new features in Michigan's Paw Paw Lake for some fine catches of northern pike and bass. With the high price of gas, Phil decided to check out a new local "bass" lake on several occasions and was into the fish in short order. He also made trips with other club members to Central Illinois and Southern Wisconsin resulting in schools of LM bass and multiple big muskies. Phil goes 100% by the book, but equally important, is his ability to put it into practice and adjust quickly to what he encounters on the water (the conditions at that particular time). That's the key we all need to remember to ultimately be successful as fishermen! To close, Phil took members new and old alike through a quick quiz covering Weather and Water basics from Mr. Perry's material. Phil keeps a low profile on the water but don't be fooled; he is one of the best and most dedicated Spoonpluggers in

the Illinois Club. Thanks, Phil, for all you do for the club, and for Spoonplugging.

3. ILLINOIS SPOONPLUGGING SEMINAR 2009 REPORT:

We had another great turnout for our Winter Seminar. In all, there were 69 participants, which made this the largest attendance to date. Thanks to all for coming, especially those individuals who came from out of town.

Thanks also go out to John Bales; his presentation on Deep Water gave us all some food for thought. And thank you Fran Myers for assembling the PowerPoint presentation and handout for John's talk. The Mapping & Interpretation segment that followed, had participants applying John's comments almost immediately, which hopefully led to some permanent knowledge.

Thanks to our sponsors for the day: **Cabela's in Hoffman Estates, Lure Craft Industries, Bite Me Tackle, Custom Bass Jigs, Buck's Baits & Jeri Perry, and Jerry Borst Lure Retrievers.** They donated an assortment of fishing tackle that was distributed to participants.

None of this could have been done without the concerted effort of club members Phil Szafranski, Jerry Hein, Craig Hubbard, Jim Taylor, Scott Duff, Wayne Dylo, Rick Matus, Joe Renholds, Jim Duplex and the rest of the Illinois Spoonpluggers. Great job, guys! And lest I forget: it wouldn't be a seminar without Jenny Hubbard and her cookies. She made 22 dozen that were appreciatively consumed by those in attendance. Thank you, Jenny, for the cookies and the film work!

If you couldn't attend this year, we hope to see you in 2010. Have a great season and don't forget about the upcoming National Outings scheduled for the spring, summer, and fall. "The more (we) learn, the more there is to learn", Buck Perry. ---Jim Duplex, Seminar Coordinator

4. FISHING REPORTS - Scott Duff reports action from the walleye (pre-spawn), white bass and northern pike on the Fox Chain with water temperatures in the low to mid 40's and good (fairly dingy) water color for the season. The ice has been out since about March 20 on the northern lakes, a week earlier on the south end. The cooling lakes at LaSalle and Braidwood are now open, too. Heidecke Lake opens on April 1. LaSalle is open Wed-Sun but remains closed on Mon/Tue through April. Spoonplugger Mike Lynch reports getting into some good SM and LM at both Braidwood and LaSalle. The size on Braidwood is improving, too, as that fishery tries to make a come-back. Water temps in early spring at LaSalle typically range from the 50's on the cool side to the low 80's at the discharge.

As usual, we can expect our typically stormy spring weather to be all over the map. Its blizzards, tornadoes, and everything in between but get out when you can. Even though fish activity will be inconsistent, this is the time of year to get a handle on the new fishing season. The fish are quite active at times and can be shallower than you might expect. Its also the best time to take a look at new and/or old waters without any weeds being present. Shallow structures normally under the weeds, which the fish use during the early season, become apparent using the smaller spoonplugs on the troll (500-400-250). This can yield surprising results. This is the perfect time to map and fish new areas since the boat traffic will be less than during the warm season. Location will be related, for the most part, to the spawning areas. Expect to do plenty of casting in these areas, too. Again, the fish will often be found quite shallow, but if not go deeper (especially on the cast) along the migration route between the spawning area and the deep hole, channel, or slot. Activity periods can be short and unpredictable so stay in position fishing for as long as you can, if necessary. The seasonal perspective you gain from your efforts during the early season will help you do a better job, and will add to your satisfaction, throughout the entire season.

Upcoming National Fishing Outings:

Bama & Ohio Spoonpluggers Outing (AL), April 15-19, 2009

Leoni Outing, Jackson, MI, June 2-7, 2009

Lunker Hunters Muskegon (MI) Outing, July 8-12, 2009

Northern Indiana "Buck Sez" Outing, August 13-15, 2009

Buck Perry Memorial Outing (NC), September 4-6, 2009

Chickamauga Reservoir Outing (TN), October 1-3, 2009

Spoonplugger Web Sites:

Spoonpluggers of America: nsoa.info

Buck's Baits: buckperry.com

Discussion Board, links, and more: spoonplugger.net

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