



Illinois Spoonpluggers

Newsletter

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

August Meeting Notes: 12 members attended the meeting. Club members discussed the importance of mapping. Regardless of the tools used to map, one must learn to map and interpret what they are mapping to consistently arrive at the fish.

September Meeting:

The next meeting of the Illinois Spoonpluggers will be on Thursday, September 9th, 2010 at 7:15 PM at the Elk Grove Village Public Library. Club meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month. The August meeting will be held in the Group study room.

Club Notes: The club had some past spoonplugging articles placed on DVD's for club members, if any members did not receive a copy you can contact Jim Taylor about getting a copy.

Fishing Reports: Jim Duplex, Scott Duff and Jim Taylor reported on their trips to the 2010 Indiana outing. Faced with cold front conditions for most of the outing fishing was a bit slow but lakes with good watercolor still produced some nice fish including a nice 43" Muskie for Scott. **Bob Roels, Brett Christenson, Jim Perillo, and Jim shell** all have reported some nice catches of Bass, Pike and Walleye from southern Wisconsin. **Rick Mantus** Reported on a trip to Eagle lake Ontario with his neighbor where they battled high winds and rain but still managed to boat some nice fish. The biggest walleye and Muskie of the trip were caught on 800's and NoBo. **Frank Yavaraski** made a quick dinner stop at the Indian outing on his way to

Michigan where he caught some nice pike under hot and humid conditions.

On the water with John Bales

By: Jim Taylor

I took a day of instruction with John Bales yesterday. Think it was a day of fishing with John and observing what he does? Forget it! By Neddie Dingo it was a day of **work**! Within about 10 minutes John looked at me, smiled, and said, "You're lost ain't ya". It didn't take long to spot the weakness. John said at the outset we might not put a line in the water, and although we were on the water continuously from about 8:15 am until 4:45 pm, we might have fished for 30 to 45 minutes. The rest of the day was spent working on interpretation. John would go to a section of the lake(Lake Webster) point out a structure on the map and say, for example, "Find the end of bar and put a marker on the contact point. You have 3 minutes." When I went astray, he'd say, "You missed all of that.", explain why, what to do to correct it, then say "Now go back and start again."

All in all, I came away with a new sense of confidence and a fresh outlook on Spoonplugging. John is an excellent teacher. He watches everything you do, he's patient, explains things clearly, will show you how to do something. and then say, "Now you do it." I don't know how many times he said, "We're not leaving here today until you're confident with this stuff." He is genuinely interested in getting you to learn and improve.

Now, of course, the real work begins: going on the water and practicing what I learned.

One suggestion for anyone who decides to take a lesson from John. If you can, use your own boat. I teamed up with Scott and his boat for IN outing, so we used John's boat and it handles quite differently from mine, i.e. larger heavier boat, different engine with shallower pitch prop, etc. That's not an excuse for my screw ups, but I do think it makes a difference..

Legend Of Illinois Fishing To Take His Legacy South

When Terry O'Malley was a hotheaded young man, he was bound for serious trouble. Fortunately, a stint in the Marines tamed some of his more destructive energies and then he ran into Buck Perry on the Chain O'Lakes and his fire erupted in a new direction.

This was the golden era of fishing in northern Illinois, when Carl Lowrance was demonstrating his "green box" fishing depth finder to hungry kids with incredible imaginations like Ron and Al Lindner, Spence Petros, Tony Portincaso and others who went on to reap glory from the sport.

Bill Binkelman still was a buyer for the Boston Store and his Fishing Facts magazine was but a newsletter. But the early articles he wrote--as well as those of the Tribune's Tom McNally--captured the miracles that were under way.

One of the most profound was Perry's epochal definition of structure fishing, which created methods of exploring untouched colonies within so-called burned-out lakes. His revolutionary system of trolling and casting lures called "spoonplugs" allowed anglers to patrol waters at specific depths and various speeds, creating a new way to contact hard-to-find fish.

One of Perry's early acolytes was O'Malley, who actually took to the road for three years to help Perry demonstrate the system and drill its effectiveness into the minds of anglers.

But while that may be a great way to learn lakes--O'Malley's early maps of more than 100 lakes still are generally valid--it's not the best means of putting bread on the table. O'Malley returned to his home in Antioch and a steady job with an elevator company.

But he had been bitten hard by the vision. He knew the results.

He knew how to spoonplug his way around Illinois and southern Wisconsin and make believers out of hardheads who mainly camp upon the last weedbed or rockpile where they encountered a lost or suicidal fish.

For years, O'Malley's life involved commuting downtown to Chicago to fix elevators, hurrying home for supper and a shower and blasting out to give a seminar at a fishing club. There was a time when he sort of dropped out of fishing, chilled by the plethora of patch-clad wannabes who made instant names in fishing tourneys. They thought this allowed them to elbow onto a stage with people like O'Malley and play the role of expert. The process was so repulsive it turned O'Malley away.

But even though a lot of these one-shot Charlies still are out there, O'Malley couldn't fight the bug. Especially not the way the Chain O'Lakes enjoyed its muskie recovery the last few years.

O'Malley needed no special familiarization with his spoonplugs. He just went to some of the good spots he used to know and started hammering fish. When a fiend invited himself along, they ambled out to catch and release seven muskies. O'Malley made it look easy.

Pretty soon the word got out and O'Malley was ushering anglers here and there. To keep his best holes from excessive pressure, he evolved a muskie triangle between the Chain and various southern Wisconsin lakes between Milwaukee and Madison. His boat averaged up to 300 muskies a year, more than 100 on the Chain. He had become the muskie king of northern Illinois, with people flocking to his seminars and signing up for his schools.

And then he met another crossroad, another challenge that this time is going to let us see just how high he can fly. Even though Buck Perry still is vigorous in his 80s, fishing all over the country, he had been pressuring O'Malley to come back to work with him. O'Malley knew what this meant. With his friend and mentor's hourglass running short, he was being handed the keys

to the religion.

"I just can't allow spoonplugging to fade away after Buck passes on," O'Malley said as he packed his car for the big move this weekend to Perry's lair in Hickory, N.C. Finally retired after 30 years with the elevator company, O'Malley will take over some of the southern routes that Perry relentlessly travels, spreading the word on how to troll to find fish, how to position for proper casting, how to differentiate what "structure" is from what it is not.

A bane of Perry's--and consequently, O'Malley's--existence has been a misinterpretation of the concept. "Structure" is material that fish use to guide their movement from deep water to shallow, and vice versa. It's their underwater highway system. It could include the relationship of a weedbed to a gravel point and some submerged, rotten tree trunks. Or it could be none of them. It is only material that attracts fish, like certain kinds of dropoffs, current patterns, ambush zones. It is not simply a dock or tree in the middle of nowhere.

"This is such a great system, such an important message, that it needs to be kept out there," O'Malley said.

And so that will be his mission as he chugs south at 58, a second family in tow, a new and demanding life on the horizon.

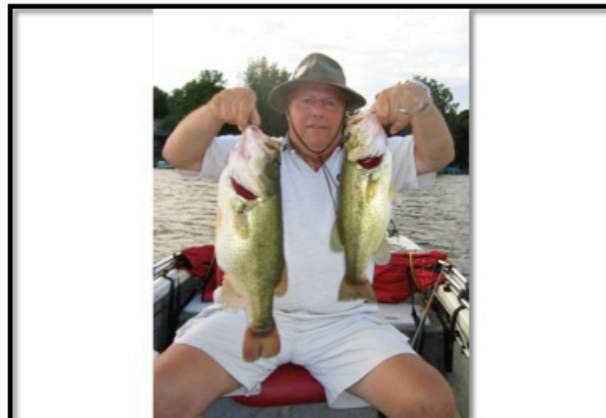
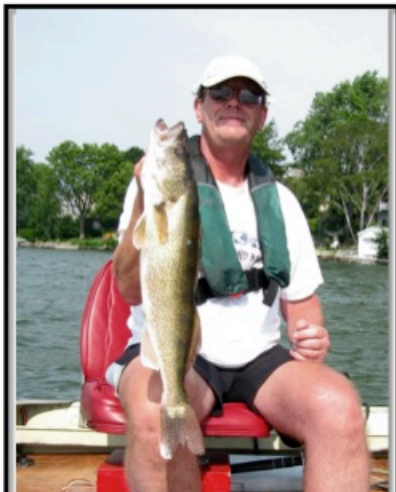
O'Malley knows what touring with Perry entails.

"You never get to fish any really good lakes," he sighed.

"Anybody can fish those. Buck fishes the ones that everyone thinks are tough, if not impossible."

And, of course, the task is to hammer them.

As they often say in the fishing business, it's a dirty job, but someone thankfully has to do it.





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