



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

December 1st 2014

FISH ON

Issue 11

**Believe it or not, another year is about to come to an end!!!!
With that comes the time of the year, we spend time with
Families and, Friends, to celebrate this special time of the year.**

**Maybe you have been putting new line on the reels, or
sharpening the hooks on your favorite lures; we are all looking
forward to getting back on the water and begin the hunt for the
Great Illinois Muskie.**

**Here's hoping your stocking is filled with new lures, and the tall
gift behind the tree is that new rod you asked for.**

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

**We have a lot of information to pass on to you in this issue.
Please take the time to read through it and feel free to contact
any of the board members with any questions.**

**Our goal is to make the IMTT grow each year by listening to the
membership and adjusting as needed. We feel that the changes
described in this newsletter will help achieve that.**

Put Another Log On The Fire...

By Randy Hilger

As most of you know, I am into muskies. Muskie fishing, muskie lures, muskie tournaments, paintings of muskies, and muskie lore. While I love it all, I am especially fond of the lore and mystique of muskies. My collection of fishing nostalgia (“old crap” as Mrs. Hilger calls it) includes a collection of old fishing magazines with wonderful articles about muskies. Its cold outside, so put another log on the fire, and I’ll share a little of these with you...

“It’s a warm cloudy day in late May. I am at tiny Winchester, Wisconsin in northeast Vilas County, and drop into Art HaLa’s general store for a chat. My purpose is to steal him away from the store for a musky trip. He is a superb fisherman, and perhaps the most successful archer in Wisconsin deer woods. I win. Art gives up. He yells out the back door for his wife to take charge and we are off to Rice Creek flowage, not far away.

It turns out to be what we knew it was going to be. Tedious, dull. We hammer away, hour after hour. We run through the tackle box contents. We try every dodge of casting technique. We fasten on pound suckers and heave them. Nothing happens. This is foolishness - or is it? Morning and afternoon pass. Arms ache. The supper hour passes. We are not hungry, just crazy. We are now casting like automatons and we are so tired conversation has left us.

Around a point a wide spread of the flowage I catch a little Muskie He comes out of the bank and at the strike I know he is a baby. But Art is electrified. Art is a strong man. He grabs the oars and rows like mad. I know exactly where he is going – a half mile away where a big log jam lies so solidly over water you can get out and walk on top of it.

It is getting dark and raining a bit as Art drops the oars and picks up his rod. In a few minutes we each take babies like the first. They are put back without a second look. There is no need to talk. The time is now. The place is here. The Monsters are on the prowl.

Art strikes pay dirt. This is a strong fish. Art drops to his knees in the boat and leans his arms on the side to play it. We want this one badly. We never see the fish. He gets down under the jam and is gone and the plug fastened down under the jam somewhere is forgotten.

Time is of the essence. They won’t feed for long. The rain increases. The dark grows. Jets of water leap from the flowage. Art hooks and loses another one, not big. The hell with it. The rain and coming dark have something to do with it, but who really knows. A good one near the jam takes my yellow buck tail and I give him the hooks twice, to make sure. It’s best. Do it right then and either set the hooks for good, or lose him and be done with him.

This one makes a mistake. Instead of the jam, he chooses the open water and that’s good. He wallows to the surface and breaks. All I can see is turbulent water. Then he drives along the surface writhing

Put Another Log on the Fire, Continued...

and heads for the jam, but I am lucky again. I hold him and he makes a long sweep around the boat. Nothing to it now. There's nothing for him to wrap that line around. The rain hisses on the water and on the trees on the bank and I play him, and it is easy because he made his move wrong that first time when he struck. He should have gone for the jam.

Art has the wide mouthed net under him and he's mine, a clean, shining striped tiger, gills working, the uppermost eye fixed and round. Art taps him on the head with a wrench and we sit in the rain a little while and say nothing."

From "The Lure of Musky Fishing", by Gordon MacQuarrie, Sports Afield Magazine, July, 1956. (Note: in this edition, Evinrude introduced its most powerful outboard to date – the Evinrude "Whispering Power" 30hp outboard!)

"The musky's mean and brutal almost from the day of his birth. He never changes. Mark well that sinister trait of babyhood when he will eat only living things that he himself has killed. He never changes..."

From the article "Truth about Muskies" in the June, 1974 Fishing Facts magazine:

Question: (posed to an expert Muskie angler) *"How do you go about landing a trophy Muskie?"*

Response: *"Well, when I get him close to the boat, I look him over very carefully to make sure the hooks are buried good in his mouth. Then play him out to where he just lays alongside the boat. I have a two foot club, and right where the meat and head connect, you "tap" him once and he'll just flop right over. Then you can pick him up and put him in the boat and it's all over with."*

(THANK GOD WE HAVE COME A LONG WAY IN CONSERVATION AND CATCH AND RELEASE OVER THE LAST 40 YEARS...)

And then there was this...

"Someday somebody will come up with a new adjective to describe the musky. Meanwhile, anglers have just about exhausted their vocabularies calling him names. Vicious, ferocious, voracious, sulky, moody, unpredictable, sly, capricious - these are just a few of the terms fisherman have applied. All because muskies have produced reactions in the angler ranging from boredom to anger to ecstasy. "The more I fish muskies, the less I know about 'em" said Warren Bridge. That was after the now famous and still mysterious Leech Lake "musky rampage" of last July. There in five hot, muggy days 105 muskies up to 42 (and more) pounds were caught in one tiny area.

Bridge was the man who started it all. He was guiding a party of walleye fishermen when he saw a musky roll off Two Points Inlet of Sawmill Bay. Because he likes big game he got out his two-handed surf-casting rod and cast an 8 inch plug over to the fish. He got action-fast.

And that was the start of the most fantastic performance of muskellunge yet recorded.

Put Another Log on the Fire, Continued...

Warren was back in the afternoon with his brother Delbert and they picked up two more. The word spread like a forest fire after a prolonged drought. Shortly they were renting Musky plugs at Federal Dam for two dollars apiece. You couldn't buy, beg or borrow fishing space on any one of the 15 launches operating out of the place. People came with kayaks, duck boats and even airplanes.

The festival ended five days later as suddenly as it began. A tally showed Walter Kreutner of Shelsburg, Iowa boated the biggest fish - 42 pounds, 6 ounces. No one knew what caused the frenzied action among muskies. Everybody had a theory. The fish had sore mouths and struck in anger. The sustained period of hot, humid weather had done it. The lake was murky and the fish couldn't see to get food, so they had been hungry.

But at some point all theories broke down. Biologists say muskies are always shedding teeth and getting new ones. At Leech Lake they've been hitting in the cool waters of October as well as the hot waters of July. Some 35 of the muskies were brought in to taxidermist Paul Kreuger for mounting, and none had food in its stomach. Yet the lake was full of whitefish, the natural prey of muskies. All but one were females. Why, nobody really knows.

Even more perplexing was the fact that all of the 105 fish caught during the five day rampage were taken over a shallow bar not more than 100 yards square. Muskies are a "loner" fish and this concentration was unexplainable."

From "Fishing the Moody Monster" by Jack Connor, in a 1956 Sports Afield Muskie and Pike Special Edition. (I was 4 months old when the "Leech Lake musky rampage" occurred, but I remember it like yesterday... Randy ☺)

And in closing, some of my favorite quotes from these old Muskie articles:

"He is Jack the Ripper of inland fresh-water lakes and streams of some 16 states and Canada. He is the muskellunge of North America, and no other continent. The greatest of pikes, the royalty race of fish."

"This is the fish that has established a separate and unique school of specialist fishermen. Men who will go to any extremes of spending and travel and disappointment, to catch. No specialists in angling become more fanatic than musky hunters. They are hunters. It's a better word for them than anglers or fishers. They stalk the waters for a fish that is strictly a big-game animal. They spend scandalous sums. They exert themselves beyond physical limits. Once-peaceful anglers of the pastoral tradition of Izaak Walton turn into fireballs when musky fever burns in their veins."

Put another log on the fire, my fellow Muskie fanatics. Keep warm. Clean and lube your reels and sharpen your hooks. Spring and another Muskie season are coming. Merry Christmas to all my IMTT friends!

Randy

IMTT – “*Show Me The Money!*”

Have you ever wondered how IMTT manages its finances? The IMTT Board of Directors thinks it is important our members understand our finances and how your dues and entry fees are used. So here is a high-level explanation...

The IMTT is an Illinois Not-For-Profit Corporation. None of the officers or board members receives a salary, a discount on dues or entry fees, or even reimbursement for travel costs incurred to represent the IMTT at programs, shows or meetings. We contribute to the IMTT mission just like every other member. The first source of revenue – our annual dues, are used to help offset costs like insurance, maintenance of the website, printing, postage and other organizational expenses. This year we added a subscription to MidWest Outdoors Magazine to member benefits, which is also funded from dues.

The second source of revenue is tournament entry fees. **50%** of your tournament entry fee is used to payout first, second, third and fourth place winners at each tournament. A portion of the remainder from each entry fee is used to fund cash prizes for the State Championship, Angler of the Year and Angler of the Year Runner Up. Another portion is used to cover tournament expenses like facility charges, banquet catering, trophies, jackets and pins. Remaining amounts are used to fund fishery improvement projects and the Youth Honor Program.

Donations and raffle income are the last revenue source. Raffle income for the scholarship program, and any donations received for the scholarship program are restricted to that use. The Board uses unrestricted raffle income to fund special projects and fishery improvement.

So how did 2014 turn out? We collected **\$15,850** in entry fees, and paid out **\$11,441** in cash prizes, a **72.2 %** payout percentage. We contributed **\$1,400** towards the IDNR tank trailer and other fishery support projects, spent **\$740** for the Youth Honor program, and (thanks to a generous member donation), we were able to award **two \$1,000** scholarships for fisheries biology students.

And what is on tap for 2015? First, the Board approved a small increase in dues (**from \$28 to \$30**) to help offset the MidWest Outdoors Magazine subscription cost and increased printing and postage costs. Second, with input from many members, the Board decided to increase tournament entry fees by **\$25 per day, with 100% of the increase going to immediate tournament payouts**. Our goal is to increase tournament payouts and incent more muskie anglers to enter IMTT tournaments so we can achieve “full fields” at all events. Additional information regarding the 2015 Schedule, Rule Changes and Entry Fee/Payout Schedule changes is in the accompanying newsletter article and in a PowerPoint presentation available on the IMTT website.

We welcome members’ questions and suggestions on our finances and programs. The IMTT is your organization, here for your enjoyment and to improve the Illinois Muskie fishery for current and future generations.

Thank you for being a member of the Illinois Muskie Tournament Trail!

2015 Trail Schedule and Rule Changes

The IMTT board of Directors is excited to announce the 2015 Trail Schedule and several important rule changes. The 2015 schedule and these rule changes are based on input from IMTT members.

The Board's decisions on the 2015 schedule and rule changes are designed to;

Increase IMTT membership.

Maximize member's participation on the Trail.

Make the trail accessible to Muskie anglers in all parts of the state.

Make the IMTT the most fun competitive Muskie Trail possible.

Raise funds to support the continued development of the Illinois Muskie Fishery.

The 2015 Trail Schedule has 10 tournaments, four in the northern part of the state, three in the southern part of the state, and three in the middle part of the state. This will provide Trail participation opportunities for members from all parts of the state.

Six of the tournaments will be conducted by the IMTT, and the other four will be "club tournaments" conducted by the Shawnee Muskie Hunters, Fox River Valley Muskie Club, and Quad County Hawg Hunters, all chapters of Muskies, Inc.

March 14th & 15th	IMTT "Spring Classic" Tournament on Kinkaid Lake
April 11th & 12th	IMTT "Jake Wolf Memorial" on Spring Lake North
May 2 nd & 3 rd	Shawnee's "Spring Fling" Tournament on Kinkaid Lake
May 16 th	Fox River Valley's "Challenge on the Chain" on Fox Chain of Lakes
May 30th	IMTT "Russ Schaller Memorial" Tournament on Fox Chain of Lakes
Sept. 12th	IMTT "Greg Tichacek Memorial" on Lake McMaster
Sept. 26 th	Quad County Hawg Hunters' Muskie Tournament on Lake Evergreen
October 3rd & 4th	IMTT "Fall Classic" Tournament on Prairie Lake
Oct. 10 th & 11 th	Shawnee's "Fall Brawl" Tournament on Kinkaid Lake
Oct 24th & 25th	IMTT "State Championship Tournament" on Fox Chain of Lakes

2015 IMTT Rule Changes

Trail Points: Trail points will be awarded for every Trail event fished, (*previously participation points were limited to six events per year*). 15 points for IMTT events, and 10 points for club events.

Green Cards: An IDNR Creel Card **MUST** be completed and submitted to the IMTT for each fish to be counted in an IMTT event. The IMTT will send the cards to the IDNR.

Witness Points: Each IMTT member on a team that witnesses another team's fish at an IMTT event will be awarded 2 Trail points per fish witnessed. If clubs adopt the same rule (*or record witness information and submit it to the IMTT*), 2 Trail points will similarly be awarded to each witnessing team member.

Entry Fee and Winner Payout Changes

The entry fee for IMTT events will be **\$75.00** per person per day. (**\$75.00** for a one-day tournament, and **\$150.00** for a two-day tournament).

100% of the entry fee increase will be paid out in immediate tournament prizes.

For 2015 only, due to the unique sponsorship and co-host structure of the championship, no portion of IMTT event entry fees will be credited to the championship prize pool. Instead, the portion of the entry fee that would normally be credited to the championship will be credited to the **Angler of the Year** and **Angler of the Year Runner Up** prize pools.

So what will this do to the IMTT tournament prize pools?

If we average 30 teams per IMTT event in 2015, the prize pool for a one-day tournament will be \$3,000.00, and \$6,000.00 for a two-day tournament. Here are the expected pay-outs for a 2015 two-day tournament:

First Place Team	\$3,000.00
Second Place Team	\$1,500.00
Third Place Team	\$900.00
Fourth Place Team	\$600.00

(These are based on 60 entries (30 teams) registered at a two-day tournament.)

Enclosed with this newsletter are several forms for your review:

2015 Membership Application / Liability Release Form (two sided form)

2015 IMTT/ Glenwood Lodge Scholarship Raffle Form

Free Raffle Entry Form for early membership payment

Note - all members that pay their 2015 dues before the conclusion of the Chicago Muskie Expo on January 11 will be entered into a FREE raffle to win an IMTT logo Team Cordwood "Blade Box" spinnerbait tackle box filled with ten premium muskie spinnerbaits. If you are not attending the Chicago Muskie Expo, you can mail your 2015 Membership form, dues payment and the completed raffle form to Randy Hilger so we receive payment before January 9 and be entered into this FREE raffle drawing.

2014 IMTT Tournament Results

SPRING CLASSIC ON KINKAID LAKE – March 28 & 29, 2014

11 fish caught 58 entrants

Big Fish 41.75 inch

41.75, 40.75, 36.5, 37.5, 37.5, 30.75, 33.5, 41.25, 32.5, 35.5, 37

IMTT JAKE WOLF MEMORIAL ON SPRING LAKE NORTH – April 19, 2014

29 fish caught 58 entrants

Big Fish 40.75 inch

35.25, 35.5, 40.75, 37.5, 37, 37, 39.25, 39.25, 32.5, 38.75, 32.75, 35.5, 32.25, 32.25, 33.75, 31.5, 32.25, 33, 31, 36.5, 31, 33.25, 36.25, 36, 32, 38.25, 33.75, 38

IMTT FALL CLASSIC ON LAKE SHELBYVILLE – September 13&14, 2014

1 fish caught 21 entrants

Big fish 31 inch

IMTT GREG TICHACEK MEMORIAL ON LAKE MCMASTER – October 4, 2014

7 fish caught 24 entrants

Big fish 40.5

36.5, 34.5, 35.25, 37.25, 32, 31.5, 40.5

IMTT CHAMPIONSHIP ON PRAIRIE LAKE - October 25 & 26, 2014

29 fish caught 38 entrants

Big fish 44.5 inch

35.5, 34, 37.5, 32.5, 44.5, 42.75, 44.5, 38, 38, 41.75, 37.5, 40, 35, 39.5, 42.5, 37, 35.75, 42.5, 40.5, 37.5, 34.5, 33, 41.25, 36.75, 40.5, 40.5, 39.5, 34.5, 36.5