



## Yahara Fishing Club April 2026 Newsletter

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### Spring Fishing the Upper Mississippi River *by Stan Nichols*

After more than 50 years of guiding on the Upper Mississippi River Ted Peck has some wise advice for catching fish. Ted's talk at the March YFC meeting concentrated mainly on spring fishing, but some techniques apply year-round.

Ted first emphasized safety, especially in the spring. Ice flows are common, ramps are iced up, water fluctuates, and clarity varies, so you might not see hazards. As Ted says you are your own 911. I won't go into all the items Ted mentioned to have in your boat but follow the Boy Scout motto- "Be Prepared."

Drastically changing water conditions not only affect safety, but they also affect fishing. As water conditions change fish movements change so what was a "hot spots" yesterday is a void today. Ted is a strong proponent of "run and gun." If you don't find fish in 15 minutes, move to a different location.

Walleyes stair-step to shallower water as the water warms in the spring. If the water warms 10 degrees, walleyes are likely to be 10 feet shallower. If the water temperature drops, walleyes drop back to deeper water. As said previously, there is no magic depth. You must look each day.



Mr. Peck

Walleyes spawn at water temperatures about 46-48 degrees. About the middle of April, position your boat in about 10 feet of water. Fish inside seams and current breaks. Drag a Jig with plastic or use a number 7-to-9 shad rap. Use a steady retrieve and tick the bottom. Ted never uses a jig heavier than 3/8-ounce. Saugers will be found in deeper water. Walleyes like purple jigs; saugers Kelly green. Most big walleyes are caught before the spring runoff.

*Story continued on page 2*

#### **FROM THE MIGHTY MISSISSIPPI TO LAKE WINNEBAGO**

April 8<sup>th</sup> Club Meeting Presentation: Matthew Crawford: From the Mississippi River to the Lake Winnebago system, he shares advanced tips and secrets to help you catch more fish on many of Wisconsin's waterways.

Join us at 7 p.m. on April 8th at Bowl-A-Vard Lanes in Madison.

Post-spawn walleyes slide back downstream higher in the water column, not on the bottom. Pulling crankbaits can be very effective. A technique Ted just briefly mentioned is a three-way rig. This has a bell sinker, a foot or two below a three-way swivel. To another arm of the swivel attach a leader. To the end of the leader attach a floating Rapala or a floating jig head with bait. This is a standard rig for fishing post-spawn walleyes in the Wolf River as they drift, suspended back downstream. A variation to this technique is to use two Rapalas, break the bill off the first one and take the bottom hook off, then add a leader to the first and attach a second one a couple of feet back.

Ted is a strong proponent of using willow cats for bait-either the live minnows or the various available flavors. Walleyes and saugers eat willow cats every chance they get. Just be aware of regulation for using live bait, or bait processed from live fish. Regulations differ between Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

What happens as spring progresses or other species?

For saugers target side channels and running sloughs with sand bottom. Drift and lift hair jigs. Cadence is the key. Snap for walleyes, lift and drop for saugers. Look in 11-13 feet of water. For trolling pull and pulse at 1.8-2.2 M.P.H.

For ice out perch look for cuts off the main channel that load from downstream. Perch spawn earlier than walleyes and can be found at the edge of receding ice. Fish with a long pole dangling a perch-colored buckshot rattle spoon at the ice edge (I've used a similar technique for bluegills in the winter on Lake Onalaska. There is open water where springs come in. Standing on the ice, use a long cane pole to dangle a lure in open water)

Look for crappies near wood and bluegills on mud flats. Smallmouth bass love Ned rigs. Northern pike also spawn early and can be found at the ice edge. Use standard lures like tandem leaf spinnerbaits in orange/chartreuse with a white fliptail, a number five Mepps Aglia with a flashabo tail, a Whopper Plopper, a 6-inch Grandma, or a one-ounce Rat-I-Trap.

Ted talks fast and covers a lot of ground. For more details, contact Ted at [www.tedpeckfishing.com](http://www.tedpeckfishing.com) or 563-544-4611. Thanks to Tom Raschke for some screenshots of Ted's presentation, that add to this article.

**Mike Michaels, former Yahara Fishing Club President, passed away at age 72 in Alabama on March 9, 2026.**

He was a director of the Madison Fishing Expo and later was part of two Madison ice fishing shows at MATC on Wright Street. He loved fishing in Madison.

**See:**

<https://sprywilliams.com/obituary/2026-3-11-michaels-ii-raymond-mike/>

**Upcoming Speakers and a Mini Session**

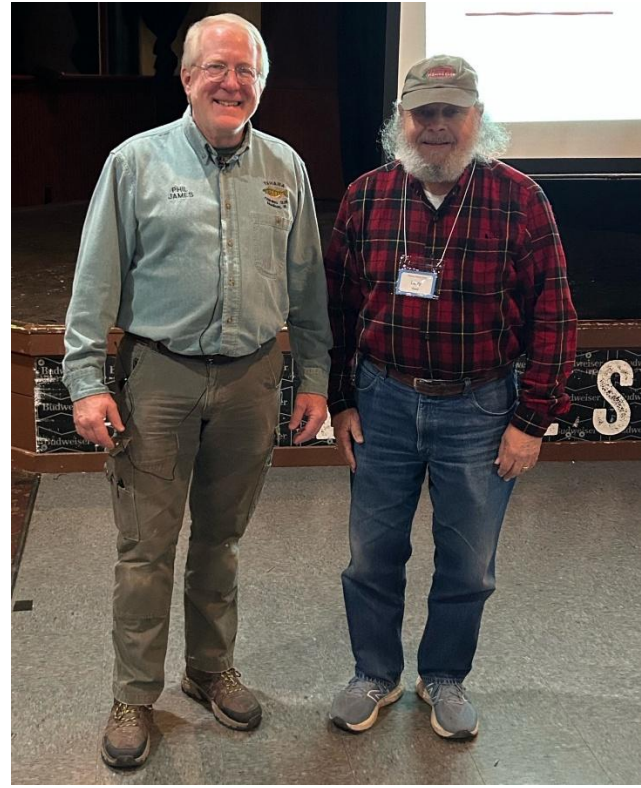
On April 8th, starting at 6 p.m., Phil James will offer a mini session prior to our regular club meeting, titled "Fluorocarbon: Is It All It's Cracked Up To Be?" Come to see what testing shows compared to manufacturers' claims.

May 13th: Patrick Durkin – Patrick Durkin of Eau Claire, Wisconsin, is an award-winning outdoor writer, freelance newspaper columnist, and general outdoors reporter.

## \$1000.00 Winner



## \$500.00 Winner



Keith King, the \$1,000 winner with Phil,  
(And a new club member!)

Phil with Larry Reed, the \$500 winner

## Updating Our Photos

Hi YFC members,

At our last board meeting we talked about how dated many of the photos are that we use in our displays at various events, including the fishing Expo. We are interested in updating the photos and have compiled what we can from our Facebook page, but we could use more variety. If you have pics from the last couple of years of fishing outings with members, or other club activities like kids days, club picnics, or on-the-water meetings, please consider sending a handful to Paul Meyer at [pmeyer8789@gmail.com](mailto:pmeyer8789@gmail.com).

## Tired of people asking what happened to the Perch on Mendota?

Below is a link to a recent video from Noah Humfeld that debunks the rumors and gives his opinion. Spoiler alert: The Spiny Water Flea.

[https://youtu.be/fmNKCnGFkmQ?si=9\\_ixooizTgseXs0E](https://youtu.be/fmNKCnGFkmQ?si=9_ixooizTgseXs0E)

## Notes from the President(s)

Well, we took a couple of months to work on a smooth transition, but this really is my last edition of Notes. Tom Harrington is taking over as President as of the April meeting, and I know he will do a great job. I have really enjoyed (most) of my time serving the club. While I still intend to remain an active contributor, my wife and I have some ambitious travel plans, so I will be absent for most of the coming year. This raises the housekeeping issue of finding volunteers for the small jobs that I have been doing on the side. Please take a look at the list in this newsletter, and sign up to take one over. And please give Tom a warm welcome in April!

Notes from Phil James, The “(Old”) President

Hi Everyone,

As you all know by the announcement at our last meeting, starting April 1, I will be the new acting president of the club. I want to thank everyone for your support, and I hope to continue on with Phil's inspirations for the club. Phil has been a real motivator for the Yahara Fishing Club. I, along with the club, would like to thank Phil for all the years of volunteering, being on the board, and for his great guidance and dedication as president for so many years. Although he is not leaving the club, he is taking a well-deserved break. Our Kids Fishing Days and conservation efforts continue to be important, and we will prioritize these events. I look forward to new ideas to expand the membership of the club and the possibility of some new club events for all of us to enjoy. Such as the rod-building class we enjoyed last Saturday. It was a lot of fun and informational, and we have a great custom rod to use! I look forward to this new chapter and appreciate all of your support. See you at the next meeting!

Notes From Tom Harrington  
The “(New”) President

## These Jobs Need to Be Filled Now

As I announced earlier, I will be stepping down as club president and Tom Harrington will be taking over. My wife and I have been making travel plans and now plan to be gone for most of the next year starting sometime in May. Below is a list of the "side jobs" I have been doing for the club. We need volunteers to take over each one. None are terribly difficult, but they should be transferred now while I am still around to pass on materials. Please reply to the recent email with the task you can help with. I can train for most of them at the April meeting.

**1) Parks reservations** for Kids Fishing Days. 15 minutes in October, 1 hour in November, and April. The April filing is due now, so it would be a perfect time to get trained.

**2) Mail newsletters** to members without computers. 30 minutes each month; requires a color printer

### **3) Bass Pro Shops donation**

Contact the store in March and connect with the appropriate manager to express our interest in receiving the used rods and reels they take in during their annual trade-in sale

### **4) Print nametags** for new members

Requires a color printer, I have paper and a template

### **5) Accept donations** to the club

Be the contact person for equipment donations, arrange to pick up donations and put them in the storage unit

### **6) Printing services** - Flyers for Kids Days,

Membership cards, signage. We have an account at Staples and existing templates. Submit and pick up orders

**7) Fishing Contest** - Periodic check of submissions, reminders to enter fish, December 1st, close the year, open the new year, and determine winners. Requires use of Excel.

*Phil James*

## **Spring Trout Season Opens April 4th**

The DNR has changed the annual opener for spring stream trout fishing, moving it a month earlier. The season now opens April 4th. This is only for inland streams, not lakes, ponds, or great lakes tributaries. Get out for some early trout action!

## **Spring Conservation Congress Club Outing**

The annual Wisconsin Conservation Congress will be held in person with meetings in each county on Monday, April 13th. The Dane County meeting will be held from 6-9 pm at Stoughton High School. This is your opportunity to speak up and give your opinion on all fishing, hunting, and wildlife issues and law changes the DNR is considering. If you don't want to attend and vote in person, you can do so online from 6 pm April 13 through 6 pm April 15 using the questionnaire at this link:  
<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/about/wcc/springhearing>

We are the only state that gives its people this opportunity, so please take advantage and make your voice heard.

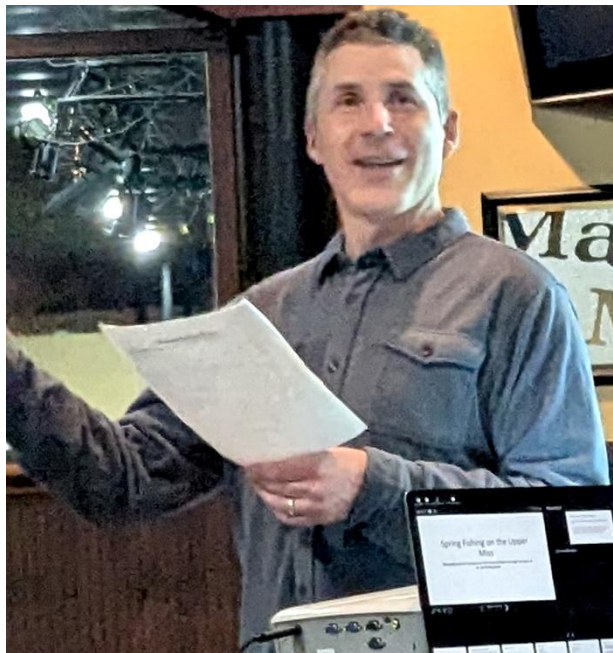
## **Boat for Sale**

Some of you may remember Rich Vogt, who was a member of the club until a couple years ago. He died recently after a long battle with cancer. His wife has asked for help in selling his boat, so here are the details if anyone is interested. 2005 Alumacraft Lunger 165 This is the console model (ie, not tiller, has a steering wheel) and comes with a 40 hp Mercury 4 stroke engine (also 2005), Humminbird Helix 7, Minnkota 55 pound thrust Power Drive trolling motor with 48" shaft, all in good condition. Also includes a cover and the trailer, and has a 21 gallon livewell and 7' rod locker. \$9000, Contact Joanne Vogt at [vogt4jo@gmail.com](mailto:vogt4jo@gmail.com).

*Phil James*

## **Outings**

*By Jim Pankratz*



## **Mississippi River Backwaters:**

Nothing beats jumbo perch and lots of bluegills on the backwaters of the Mississippi River. We will fish in the La Crosse area which is 2 hours from Madison. There is some interest in doing a 2 day trip on this but you can fish one or two days. The cooler weather and water has slowed the bite but as the water warms the fishing should heat up in early to mid April when we will go after some of the biggest perch of the year!

*Outings continued on the next page.*

## Clements Fishing Barge

Again the cooler weather has slowed the start of this bite which should be great in April. You can catch anything on the river but early time is great for perch, walleyes, northerns and more. Cost is \$25 for age 16 and up and just \$5 for kids 6-15.

## 2026 Walleye Run

As the water warms, the walleyes will start to make their run. Depere, Nekoosa and the Mississippi all will have opportunities. This will likely happen in early to mid-April.

## Port Washington Salmon Charter

It's never too early to lock in our dates for chasing coho, browns, steelhead, lakera and king salmon. We will likely have 2-3 charters going the first 2 weeks of June for cohos and a chance to go the last 2 weeks of August for kings. Sign up now with interest and dates will be set by our March club meeting. The rate is \$550 for 6 people and Captain John Iverson will give a bonus 2 hours for a 7 hour charter. A \$50 deposit will be required per person. These spots are filling up so get your spot soon!

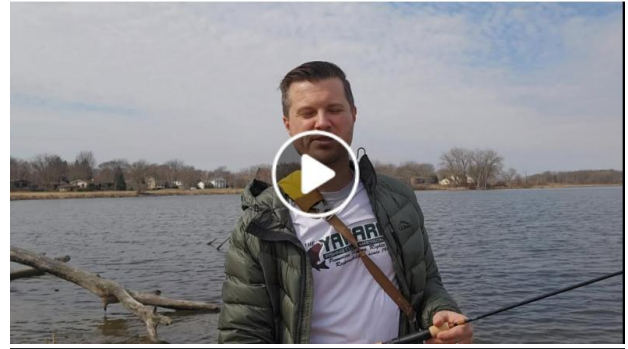
## Big Bay de Noc

Come experience what the UP has to offer! This is our famous smallmouth trip but you can catch northerns too. With a close side trip to Little Bay de Noc for walleyes, your fishing cup will be filled full. Finish your night with a great dinner and a Widomaker beer at the Nahma Inn for a club outing that will become your favorite one of the year! Currently we're looking at the second and third week of May but if the cold weather continues even the traditional Memorial Day Weekend will work.

## From Facebook

### See Neil Ferris's great promo

Building custom rods with Al Hutchison



<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/17Da2qJwgB/?mibextid=wwXifr>

### Lots of good photos of rod building on our Facebook pages

**Brian Wagner**  
Yesterday at 7:18 AM · 🌐

A good time was had by All at the Club sponsored rod building class.

Special thanks to Eric for coordinating the event, Al and his fellow instructors and Madison Auto Trim for a great venue (and food) for the event.

Can't wait to pick up my personalized rod this morning!

## Club Sponsors

A variety of businesses in the Madison area help sponsor activities of the Yahara Fishing Club, including printing of the newsletter. They also supply goods and services to the angling public. If you are in the Madison area and need something for your fishing trip, please give our sponsors a try.



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## ***The April 8th meeting is at Bowl-A-Vard Lanes***

*Matthew Crawford shares advanced tips and secrets to help you catch more fish from the Mississippi River to the Lake Winnebago system.*

**7 p.m. on April 8th at Bowl-A-Vard Lanes (2121 E. Springs Drive, Madison).**

### **Calendar of Upcoming Events**

**Wednesday, April 8th, 7 p.m.:** Monthly meeting at Bowl-A-Vard Lanes. Mini session starts at 6 p.m.

**Wednesday, April 8th, 7 p.m.:** Rock Valley Anglers Musky Night – Jeff Van Remortel, holder of the Wisconsin Live Release Musky record (56 inches) will present tips and stories. Free event at the Hoffman House, 7750 State Street, Rockford, IL

**Wednesday, May 13th, 7 p.m.:** Monthly meeting at Bowl-A-Vard Lanes. Mini session starts at 6 p.m.

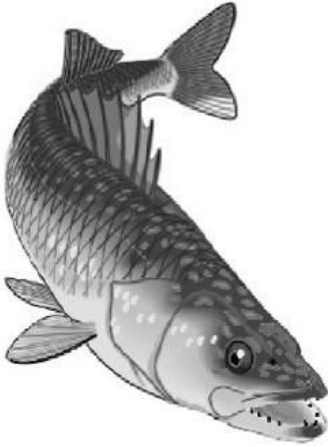
#### **Board of Directors**

**Phil James, President**  
**Jim Kusuda, Vice President**  
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**Paul Meyer, Membership**  
**Ken Terrill, Mini Sessions**  
**Kim Galloway**  
**Tom Harrington**  
**Gerald King**  
**John Porto**  
**Brian Wagner**

#### **Coordinators**

**Jim Pankratz, Outings**  
**Tom Raschke and John Pribek, Newsletters**

Yahara Fishing Club  
P.O. Box 259803  
Madison, Wi 53725



Check out our web page at: [www.yaharafishingclub.org](http://www.yaharafishingclub.org)

**Yahara Fishing Club Membership Form**  
**P.O. Box 259803**  
**Madison, WI 53725**

Annual Dues are from January 1 to December 31. Please print. \*\*\* ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Name \*\*\*

\_\_\_\_\_

If Family or Youth, Additional Names

\_\_\_\_\_

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