

## The Where and How of Yahara Lakes Panfishing

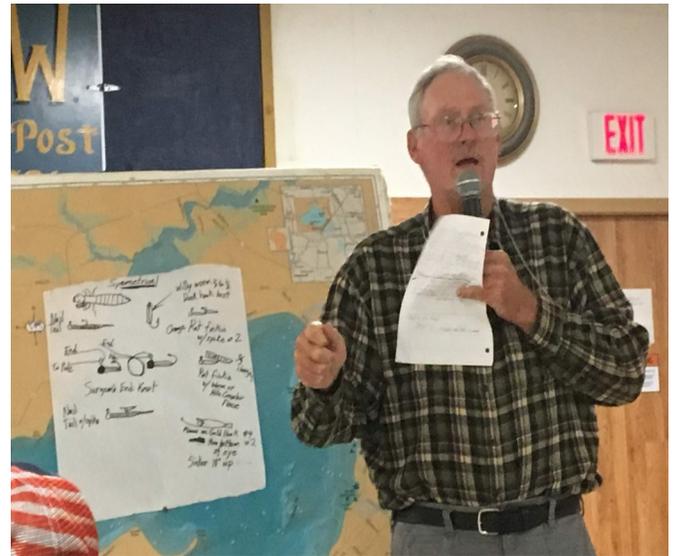
*Notes by Stan Nichols*

If I wanted to know where the fish are biting I would go around to the boat landings and look for a beat-up pickup truck with a boat rack on the top. Then I would look out in the lake to see if there was someone fishing in a rowboat (no motor). If so, I probably found Paul Zoch so that is the place to be fishing. When I left the October YFC meeting I saw the boat on the top of a newer pickup. It was dark so I didn't get a good look at the model or license plate. Did Paul get a new pickup? I am going to have to get a closer look next spring.

I am sure Paul is one of the most productive anglers in the Yahara Fishing Club and he discussed a lot of tips and tricks at the October meeting for catching panfish in the Yahara Lakes. First was lures he uses: His three go-to lures are a red naitail on a small chartreuse jig baited with one spike, a small chunk of night crawler, or one-half a red worm. The second was a rat-finke (size 8, 10, or 12) baited with two spikes and the third was a red Willy Worm (orange if you are fishing Beaver Dam Lake). He also had some small white bucktail jigs for catching white bass.

Other good live baits are a minnows hooked crosswise through the head, just below the eyes and hellgrammites (dragonfly nymphs). You can buy hellgrammites or seine them. The best place to look for them is in shallow, weedy ponds without fish. Although hellgrammites are expensive or hard work to get you can cut them into two or three pieces for bait. Put the piece on a nail tail and make sure it is straight in line with the tail. For minnows he likes using a gold hook, for other live bait a dark hook. Minnows work especially well in the fall. When using spikes hooks them through the head and gives them a squeeze to bring out some "juice". When using jigs he ties them on with a surgeons end knot (I think a surgeons end knot is just an overhand knot only go around the loop a couple of times).

The where to fish is simple or it can get complicated. It takes a long time to get the intimate knowledge of the where and when to fish different areas of the lakes that Paul has and it changes from day to day, season to season and year to year. For beginners, look for weeds, especially coontail. Fish the outside of the weed beds, generally in 8-to-9 feet of water or holes and thin spots inside the weeds. Also look in deeper water outside the main weed bed for clumps of scattered weeds. Panfish like the weeds because they are the home of "bugs" that the fish eat. If



Paul Zoch



The two jigs on the right are nail-tails, the two on the left are ratfinkes, and there is a white, white bass jig on the far left.

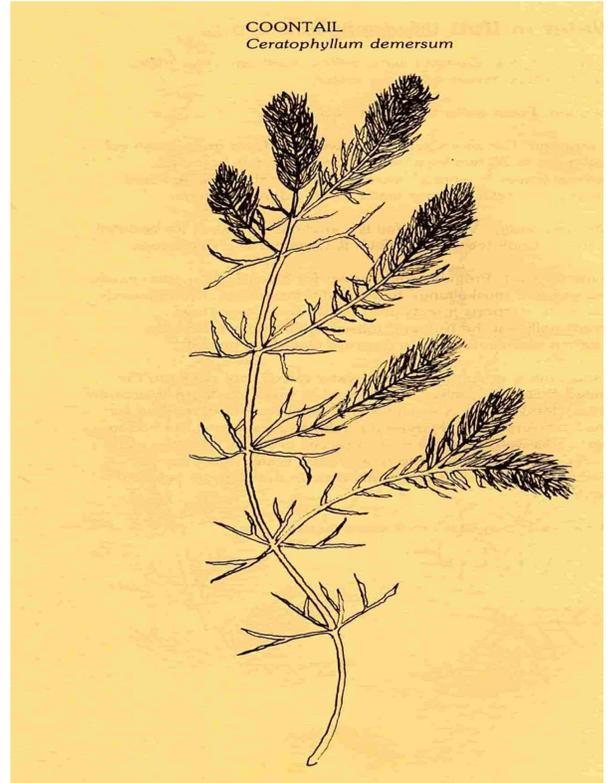
*Continued next page*

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Picture of a wet Coontail example supplied by Paul



Drawing of a wet Coontail example supplied by Stan

you don't find fish in 10-15 minutes move and look for another area. If you are catching fish in one area and the bite stops you can move but come back an fish that area later.

In general Paul looks (or knows) of bars and humps with weeds on the top. Places like Dunn's Bar, Brearly Street Bar, Commodore Bar, Marshall Park, and Second Point on Lake Mendota. Christy's Bar, Green Lantern Bar, Larson Beach, Rockford Heights, and Hog Island area on Lake Waubesa, and Colladay Bar, off the Kegonsa State Park, and the northwest corner of Lake Kegonsa. For fall fishing he likes Lake Kegonsa.

Paul uses softer fiberglass rods for most applications. He might use anywhere from 4-to-10 pound line depending on how thick the weeds are and how clear the water is. He is usually fishing with two or three rods. He might have one or two rods "dead sticking" and uses a third rod to cast around the boat.

For weather, Paul likes fishing on high-pressure days. He feels the bugs in the weed beds are most active then. On cloudy, low-pressure days the bugs move less. For perch get fishing at the crack of dawn.

Like I said in the beginning look for the pickup truck with the roof rack and a guy fishing from a rowboat.

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## Smallmouth Fishing Door County with the Rock Valley Anglers

When Ken Terrill first suggested we join Dave McCoy and the Rock Valley Anglers up on Door County in early October I could see us plowing through cold waves in full raingear like on the TV program **Deadliest Catch**. It turned out to be a lot more comfortable. The water was about 62 degrees, almost 10 degrees higher than normal for this time of year, and we were able to keep out of the worst of the wind. Dave estimated he has done this five-hour trip from his home in Rockford **a hundred times** over the last 20 years. If you have been up in Door County over the tourist season you see a lot of fishing charter boats advertising for salmon and trout, but no one except Dave seems to target the Smallmouth Bass. It turned out that there were a lot of them up there

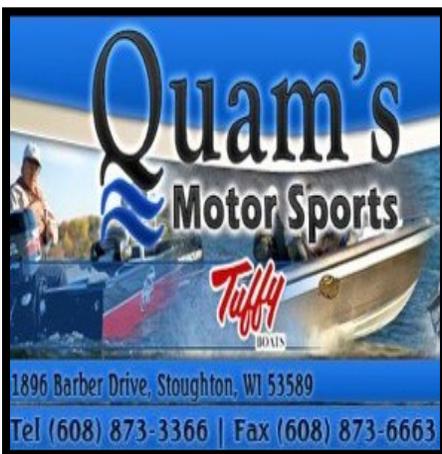
I was also a leery of how Dave recommended we fish. He strongly encouraged yellow nine-foot Eagle Claw medium-light fiberglass poles. These "noodle rods" remind me of rods from 50 years ago. Fortunately they were only \$25.00. Then he wanted us to use 10 lb mono, once more rewinding the clock. No super-braids with flouro leaders. Just mono through about a 1/8 to 1/2 oz. egg sinker held 3-4 feet from the hook by a split shot, tied to a size 2-4 hook. You don't need an extensive tackle box—just a single plastic container with a lot of hooks, split shot and egg sinkers. So far this is cheap. Then I hear that he wants Ken and I to get 25 **dozen** large sucker minnows for 2-3 days fishing. (Yes, 300 large minnows for the two of us.) A total of 160 dozen for 15 people 5 boats. He had Ken pick these up from a bait shop near Green Bay. That is so many minnows that the shop had to arrange a specially timed delivery. It worked out just fine. Dave kept them in 3 or 4 100-quart coolers just outside the motel with aerators going all the time. We used a motel hose to change the water. I contributed an old aerator from a tropical fish tank and we used a portable 2-D battery Walmart special that ran to aerate the minnows on the boat, and lost very few.

So I got up there early evening to learn I was supposed to bring a cot and sleeping bag, as there will be around 8 people packed into a 1-2 bedroom motel cottage. Because I didn't, Ken checked out a motel a couple hundred yards down the road where he slept the night before and we got a good two-double bed place for \$75.00 a night. This is Door County during the fall-color tourist surge, so I think we lucked out. If you go on this trip with Dave in the future talk to Ken or myself about the accommodation options, unless you don't mind sleeping on the floor with a lot of other people.

We weren't done with changes. Dave had suggested that we bring up drift or wind socks. I have a pretty good one that I've only used a few times, and Ken borrowed one from Gary Schutte and purchased a couple more. We drifted almost all the time, about 15 to 35' deep, and we usually needed the drift socks to slow down. (I said we were able to keep out of the **worst** of the wind.) At one point I think we had four of them going at once.

After all this, though, we were set. While we did not boat the 50-100 fish per day that Dave expects, we probably averaged at least a dozen each per outing, and they were mostly in the 16-19" range. Ken even had a skinny 23" bass and a 34" Northern. You do break off somewhat regularly, and drifting over the zebra muscles will tear up your line. As you can expect, Dave's boat did a bit better. Much of the time he had 5-6 people fishing from his large boat, which must require a lot of coordination. We fished from Ellison Bay north to the Washington Island ferry, one afternoon slipping into and out of the harbor entrance between ferries. Everything was catch and release. It was a lot of fun. See picture page 4.

Tom Raschke and Ken Terrill



## Notes from the President—The Barge

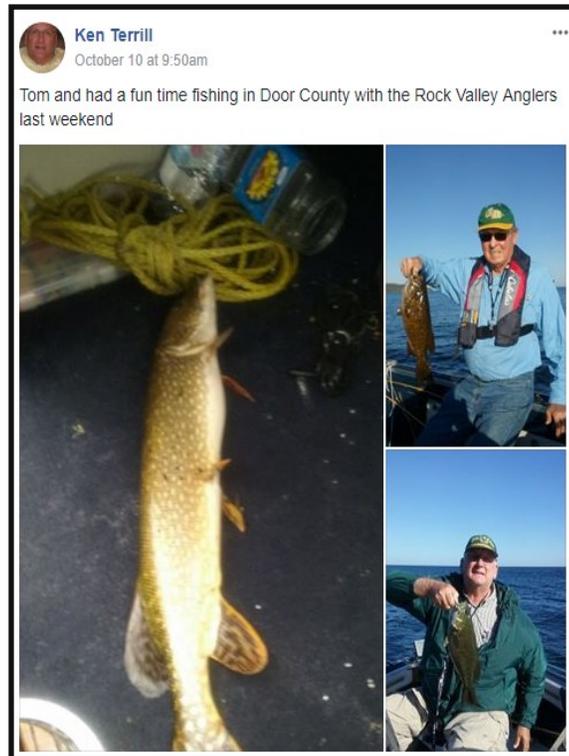
It's a bit of a curiosity. I'm referring to Clements Fishing Barge, at Genoa, Wisconsin, a bit south of LaCrosse on the Mississippi River. I'd been there once before, and was anxious to go back. When a Club outing to the Barge took shape this past month, I signed up promptly and found myself to be one of the four Club members heading up to Genoa on a chilly, late October day. The worst of the deal was having to meet the other three Club members at the Park and Ride in Springfield Corners at 3:45 a.m. I thoroughly dislike getting up so early, but that's the way it had to be in order to get a full day at the Barge. The ride up was punctuated by numerous sighting of deer. Fortunately our driver, Gerry King, and our navigator, Jim Krause, were more alert than I, as I dozed on and off in the back seat during the two hour drive. When we arrived in Genoa, a sleepy little Wisconsin river town, we stopped at the bait shop where we acquired walleye minnows and some of the BIG river jigs that were advertised by the bait shop staff as the "go to" lures. We then headed for the landing where we met the boat that ferried us out to the Barge, just off the Minnesota side of the river.

The Barge is more like a gigantic fishing pier than a barge, but it's out there floating on the river, just below a major lock and dam. There's a snack bar/restaurant/tackle shop which sits on the middle of the Barge, and fortunately there was a cheap cup of coffee to be had to warm me up on a rather chilly morning. There were a lot of crusty (some anyway) old (and young) fishermen populating the Barge as the morning wore on, all jigging in the heavy current created by the flow of the river and the water being released through and over the huge dam. I learned quickly enough that you needed heavy, and I mean heavy, sinkers and jigs to keep the bait out and away from the Barge, near the bottom, and down below the considerable volume of decaying weeds carried along by the current. Unfortunately, I just didn't have the best selection of heavyweight tackle for the task at hand, and I spent a whole lot of time clearing weeds off my jigs and weights, and casting my bait back out into the current, away from the edge of the Barge. Like my fellow Club members, I did, however, manage to catch some saugers, a very close cousin (though smaller) to the familiar walleyed pike. I saw other fishermen reeling in a variety of species, including walleyes and northern pike (some rather sizable, I might add), as well as crappies, perch, white bass, and blue gills, not to mention a redhorse (whatever that is) or two. I'm told that bass are caught out on the Barge at times also. Apparently what's there to be taken depends on time of year, temperature, and other factors.

It is well worth a trip up to Genoa, at least occasionally, to visit the Barge and catch fish in the mighty Mississippi (and all without a boat), especially if you can have company from the Club to share the experience. And the price of admission is only \$18, plus a couple of "scoops" of minnows at the bait shop, which is altogether pretty reasonable for being able to enjoy an all-day fishing adventure in Wisconsin. But go soon if you want to experience the Barge this year, as it will be closing in mid-November for the season, until sometime in the spring of 2018.

Gard Strother

## From Facebook—Door County



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Once more Mary has donated \$500.00 towards the Kids Fishing Days from the Rod Regel Memorial Fund.

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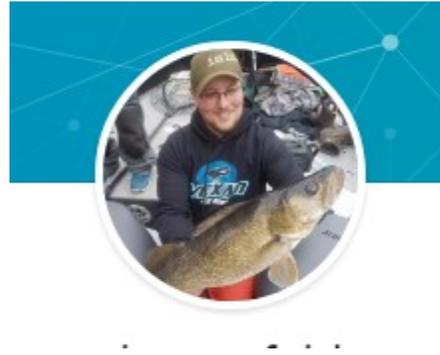
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## November Speaker Noah Humfeld

He has been guiding the Madison area for two years, and will be speaking about Walleye fishing with an emphasis on fall shore fishing on the Madison Lakes.



## YFC Kid's fishing day raffle 2018

We've already started getting some great prizes for our raffle at the WI Fishing Expo 2/25/18. We need YOUR HELP selling raffle tickets and getting prizes too! If you would like to donate a prize or know of a business that may donate something to our club please let me know. We will be handing out tickets to sell at our October 11th club meeting and will do so every month until the expo. You can also get tickets by making special arrangements with me at any time.

Top prize \$1000, second prize \$500 plus many other great prizes. Let's make this our best raffle ever!

Jim Pankratz 608-709-6442 or [jimannepan@aol.com](mailto:jimannepan@aol.com)

## More From Facebook



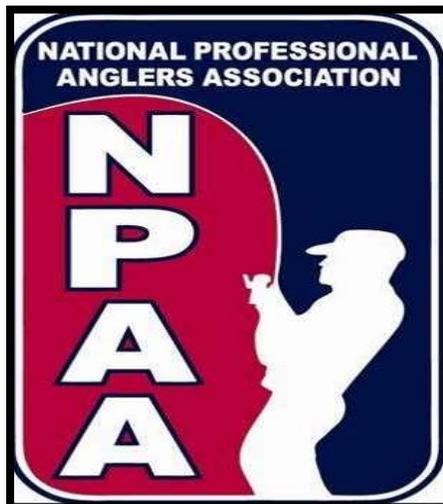
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## Outings

Clements Fishing Barge in Genoa on Mississippi anytime from now till November 12

Shore fishing for walleyes Tenney Park November 11 or 18th

First ice panfish outing December or January

Sturgeon Bay Whitefish outing likely February 9-11, 2018

**Want to go on an outing? Want to get to know other club members? Want to fish locally or new lakes out of town chasing the hottest bite? Have a place you want to go to? Then you simply need to sign up to say you're interested in going on any or all of these outings. An outing can happen with enough interest but if no one signs up then the outing can't happen. Outings without exact dates are either weather dependent, river levels and based on the timing of the bite. Once you're signed up you will get more specific details of the trip.**

**Outings anywhere anytime:** I'm looking for recommendations on trips that you would like to do. Let me know and I can try to set something up!

**Louisiana:** We have club members wanting an outing chasing redfish and tuna. Contact me if interested so we can set this up!

**Lake Erie:** Want to go on a walleye, smallmouth or perch outing on Lake Erie this summer or next summer? Contact me.

**Canada-** If you want to go to Canada this winter or next summer NOW is the time to prepare! We have several resorts to choose from. Eagle Lake? How about Rainy Lake? Lake of the Woods? Lac Seul? Get excited and let's start planning a trip of a lifetime!

**USA-** Canada too far or other reasons? How about traveling within the US to the Minnesota sides of Lake of the Woods or Rainy Lake? Devil's Lake? Lake Oahe, SD? Lake Gogebic, MI? How about our Big Bay de Noc outing? Green Bay?

**Guided trips on local lakes, Green Bay/Sturgeon Bay or others:** If anyone would like to learn a lake better or techniques with a guide, join other club members to get a better rate. Contact me if interested.

All outings above are open to club members, our Rock Valley Angler friends, your family and friends! We need members with boats but you can participate even if you don't have one. Sign-ups will be at club meetings but also on Facebook or through club emails. As always you can contact me at any time to sign-up or if you have questions or just want advice.

If you have any outing ideas please let me or anyone on the board know!

Jim Pankratz      608-709-6442 or [jimannepan@aol.com](mailto:jimannepan@aol.com)



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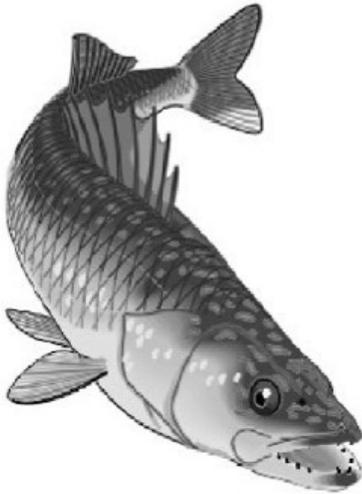
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### Yahara Fishing Club Membership Form

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

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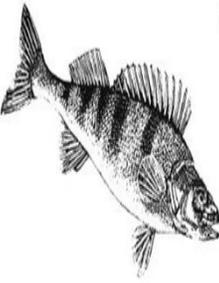
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The next YFC meeting is Wednesday, November 8th  
7:00 pm at the VFW Hall 301 Cottage Grove Road  
Speaker Noah Humfeld

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

### November Events

November 8th, 2017, Regular club meeting at the VFW hall at 301 Cottage Grove Road. See description top of page 5.

### December Events

December 13th, 2017, Christmas Party at the VFW hall at 301 Cottage Grove Road

### Board of Directors and Officers

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