

The

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Mack Attack

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Tip of the Month



THE MACK'S BOX

by Paul K. Wright

Off-season, pre-season, snow storms, can anyone say CABIN FEVER?

OK, it's been a long winter. I believe I have had my hands on every piece of tackle I own... at least twice! I have sharpened all the hooks, re-arranged and inventoried all my jigs, crank-baits and my "Mack's Lure Box". This is a Plano box that is two inches deep that Wally Pops, Double Whammies, Cha-Cha's, Bead boxes, extra Smile Blades, and other Mack's Lure products that will fit nicely into.

By turning the box over, I can get just the right color because I store

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Soggy sandwiches and Smiles or From Trials to Tournaments

By Bernadine Ayres

Part one of two

Most of my adult life I spent working and watching other people having fun. However, that has all changed now. It all began with an automobile accident, which ended my nursing career... well, working in the hospital that is. I did not know it would give me a new job of nursing at home, and with my new husband, followed by a completely new way of life for me.

Let me back up just a bit. Recently my boyfriend from high school and I reunited after thirty years, and were married. After my accident we were sure things would still work for us so we went ahead with our wedding plans, and began what we believed to be the best marriage on the planet.

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Into our second year of marriage, we knew something was wrong because my dear husband began having severe headaches and other health problems. The diagnosis was Lyme disease. That is where my private duty nursing came into our life. For several months as the disease attacked his body I cared for him, just like he cared for me after my auto accident. We were glad we had each other and so thankful that he was able to help me get back on my feet before he got sick and the job duties changed.

You hear so much about prenuptial agreements; well we had one too. It was this; we would care for each other whatever happened. Because we were older going into our marriage, we did not have to decide how many children we would have; we already had all we were going to. We did not decide whose parents we would go to for holidays, all we had was our mothers and they were living in Florida near each other, so if we went to see one, we would

see them both. No, there were not that many things we had to decide on as the younger couples have. Therefore, we made a promise that we would take care of each other as long as we could do it.

After my husband regained his health, we started fishing together. I had never fished before, this was something new, and I really enjoyed it. I always thought drag was something you would do to a field in

the spring, and tackle was what football players did. A reel you wound the garden hose up on and hooks were something your coffee cup hung on. Casting is what they do for a school play, and a jig was what they did at wedding receptions. I had a lot to learn!

We started camping and fishing, first with a tent, then pickup camper, then motor home, and finally a fifth wheel. We found the fifth wheel worked out best with pulling and launching our boat. We also changed boats, from a 12-footer, to a 14, then a 16-foot boat. We camped and fished with some other couples and truly enjoyed ourselves. It was the beginning of a completely new life for both of us. No more time clocks, and the only time the alarm clock would go off was to get up early to go fishing!

One time we happened to be at a place where they were having a wall-eye tournament. We watched the boats in the morning as they launched, then bobbed around in the water waiting for the take off. While watching, we saw the sun began to peek over the water, smell the fresh breeze as it blew across the river and the wind hitting our face on this fresh early morning and we just stood speechless holding hands. Wow! Then we saw the first flight take off one at a time. We did not know what first flight meant, but soon realized there were so many boats they divided it

TIP

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each rig on it's side and you can see the color before you grab it.

This box is ALWAYS in my boat and full of the rigs that I use the most. When I use something out of this box, I replace it as soon as I get off the water. When you have your tackle organized by type, size, and color, you save a lot of time when you need something "right now".

I hope your pre-season work is going a little faster than mine, but I always look forward to getting all my tackle in order. Good luck to all in the upcoming season.

up into two flights. One went out at 7:00 and the next one went out at 7:30. It seemed the first flight had just gone from sight and the large waves decreased when it was time for the second flight to line up.

Watching the take off was so exhilarating we decided to pretend we were in the tournament also. We launched our boat at a nearby boat launch so we would not be in their way, and we began to have our "pretend tournament." We really put our heart into that day fishing, trying many different methods of presentation. Different lures, different water depths, and found we were doing really well.

We quit in time to watch the weigh-in, and after checking our catch of the day just looked at each other and smiled. In that smile, I think our eyes did a 'high five' and both of us quietly in our minds said to ourselves "we can do this!" Therefore, the rest of the fishing season we became more knowledgeable about our equipment, various bodies of water, and made our plans for the following year. *Continued next month*

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Public Panfish #1

*By Hall of Fame Angler Stan Fagerstrom
Part 1*

I'm wondering if you're having some of the same kind of fishin' itch I've got. It's one I usually come down with when the calendar indicates spring isn't all that far off.

I realize there's still ice on the lakes in many parts of the country.

Be that as it may, I find the points of my own piscatorial compass pointing to springtime crappie fishing. I've heard from enough fishermen around the country over the past half century of fishing and writing about it to know I've got lots of company.

If you aren't among the building number of fishermen who know how much fun it is to catch crappie, you're missing a bet. And that doesn't even take into consideration the delights these fish provide when you've got them in the frying pan.

The crappie is among the most popular of American panfish. Once you've managed to catch a few it won't be difficult to understand why. There are three great keys to successful crappie fishing. They are as follows: You've got to find the fish. Once you do you must fish at exactly the right depth. And even at the right depth you won't do much unless you are fishing your lure at exactly the right speed.

Those three things--location, depth and lure speed--are the keys to putting more of these great-eating panfish into your boat.

You've got to find crappies before you can hope to catch them. So let's talk first about where crappies are most likely to be. I'm going to devote this and my next two columns to crappie fishing. I'll be talking primarily about crappie fishing in the Pacific Northwest because that's where I've done most of my crappie catching. Even so, the techniques I'll detail apply wherever you are.

I don't need somebody calling to tell me this isn't the way they do it in Kansas or Nebraska. Mainly I'll be talking about catching crappie in the lakes, ponds and big river waters of western Oregon, Washington and northern California. I've caught sufficient numbers of crappie in all three regions to know what I'm talking about.

Much of what I know about crappie fishing I learned as a kid fishing at every opportunity in the Columbia River backwaters of Southwest Washington State. Later I refined my tactics while I lived right on the shore

of popular Silver Lake in the southwest part of the Evergreen State. Having a boat in the water all the time about 60-feet from my front door for more than three decades provided a wonderful opportunity to look for and catch crappie--especially when the cook wanted fish for dinner.

Springtime offers the best shot at crappies. Fall can also be excellent, but it's that period from March through early July that most consistently sees the peak action of the year. Crappies school in the spring. Where you find one, you'll eventually find others.

But where are you most likely to find that first one? In sloughs, ponds,

or most lakes, look for crappie around wood. This wood may be in the form of downed trees, submerged logs, pilings or abandoned docks. Crappies also like rocks. Some of the best fishing at Silver Lake for example, often came around the lake's sunken rock piles.

I haven't fished any of the Columbia River sloughs in several years but I can tell you how I'd approach such a trip if I were to make one tomorrow. First I'd look for cover like that I've described. Once I found downed logs, dead trees or any other possible crappie holding spots, I'd fish them ever so carefully.

I wouldn't expect to catch a boat

full of fish right off. As soon as I caught even one crappie I'd mark the exact spot so I could come back to it. In crappie fishing on new water I often carry a pocket full of short yellow ribbons. Whenever I catch one fish, I pinpoint the spot by attaching a ribbon to the cover. That ribbon might not be where you can see it easily, but I'll know where it is.

As soon as I get a half dozen spots marked in this fashion, I simply move from one to the other and forget about trying to find fish anyplace else. Why? Again because I know in the spring where there's one crappie in a certain spot, sooner or later there will be others. I've made this procedure pay off time after time.

In my next column I'll get into some of the other aspects of successful crappie angling. Watch for part 2 in the next edition of the Mack Attack!

Photo of the Month

We want your photos! Send your photos to bernie@mackslure.com.

Bryon Bradley of Richland, WA caught this 21-pound 36-inch buck steelhead on the Snake River above Ice Harbor Dam on 12/26/06 floating a black 1/4 oz. Rock Dancer jig tipped with bait shrimp. He has also caught several others using the Rock Dancer, but this is his biggest for this season.



The Mack Attack is a free service provided to anyone who is interested by Mack's Lures Inc. We need your input! If you know of anyone who would like to be on the mailing list to receive the Mack Attack, please forward their e-mail address to al@mackslure.com. Photos, stories and comments are welcomed and encouraged. Please forward all content materials to bernie@mackslure.com. THANK YOU!

