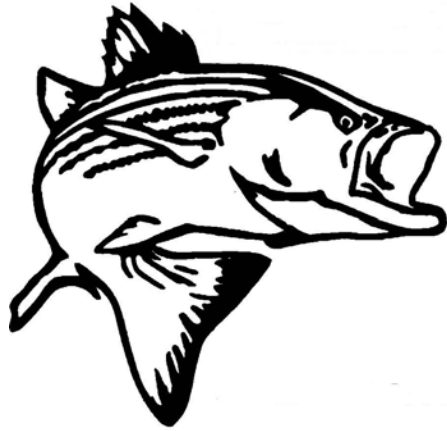


**Catch
the
Striper
Fever!**

T.S.B.A.



***Tennessee
Striped Bass
Association,
Inc.
Newsletter***

**February
2011**



Ezell Cox has been busy this past month trolling with umbrella rigs. See page 8 for his tips and advice on using this highly effective lure.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Hello everyone!

In 2010 Eric Rauch introduced the idea of TSBA partnering with the mentoring organization Big Brothers Big Sisters. TSBA members are in an ideal position to use fishing and time spent out on the water as a way to build positive relationships in the lives of young people facing adversity. Last year Ezell Cox assisted Big Brother John Kosmak, who is mentoring Austin Ball. Their adventures with Ezell were featured in several TSBA newsletter articles.

I recently received a letter from John, where he shared how powerful and influential the time spent with Ezell was in making incredible changes in Austin's life perspective. I'd like to share a portion of John's letter with you:

I am the Big Brother to Austin Ball who was featured in your newsletter courtesy of Ezell Cox. Ezell is a wonderful and remarkable person. Your organization, with its willingness to adopt a Little Brother, is awesome. We have now fished three times with Ezell from delightful warm weather to grueling cold (but wonderful still). This last trip (despite 20 degree temperature and a single digit wind chill) marked, per Austin, his most favorite activity in the year that I have worked with him.



Austin on one of favorite days in 2010.

It is difficult to convey how the “small gesture” of taking some strangers fishing can have an enormous and immeasurable effect on a life. Many of the kids enrolled in the Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) program are from very impoverished homes and do not have a clue what a normal life is like. Most come from a single-parent family and have no idea what a dad or male mentor is like.

Ezell has been an unbelievable role model. So much, in fact, that Austin says Ezell would be the only other adult he trusts. Many of these kids have never fished. It is these activities which change how these kids think, how they view the world, how they view adults, and see that there are wholesome activities available to them. BBBS has an incredible track record, with almost all participants improving in school grades and demonstrating less

delinquency and drug abuse along with other positive changes in their lives. I want you to know that your organization has helped tremendously. We see Ezell as a life long friend and brother. Your organization caused this. Imagine the possibilities that you have created and can continue to create each year by partnering with BBBS. Austin even got to tour the police department and took a cruise with an officer on one trip.

On another trip, Ezell arranged for the K-9 officer to do a drug search with his dog, etc. Ezell is a great guy. These things have encouraged Austin to consider a police career, far from the initial gang wanna-be when we met. Thanks for what you do. God bless all of you for blessing the BBBS program.

Professor John Kosmak, Tusculum College, Professional Studies Program

Last year we asked our members to volunteer to take these kids fishing. Unfortunately the participation was minimal. I for one was not able to help out and I'm sure the reasons were similar to everyone else (yard work, work, tired, too busy etc.). After reading this letter, and understanding how just one day can provide a great experience for the kids and make an impact on their lives, I will be sure to commit to helping this year. I hope you will do the same. I will provide more specifics in the future regarding opportunities you will have to contribute to this worthwhile organization.

— Erik Engebretsen

ATTENTION: February Meeting

TSBA's monthly meeting will be held on February 21, 2011 at the Flatwater Grill restaurant in Oak Ridge. Our speaker for the February meeting will be Jim Farmer of Cast Away Bait and Tackle Company.

Jim, an avid fisherman his entire life, has been making his own custom tackle for the past 10 years. Jim will discuss some of his favorite u-rig and jigging techniques as well as casting. He will also show a video concerning the presentation of u-rigs and jigs for wintertime stripers. You can visit his website at <http://www.castawaybaits.com/servlet/StoreFront>.

Our meeting will be held in a private room, which is best entered through the side door near the railroad bridge. Dinner will start at 6:30 p.m., with the meeting to follow at 7:15 p.m. The dinner is a special buffet that owner Dean Russell is organizing for us. The cost is \$15, which includes a drink and gratuity. (Note that payment is cash or check only).

Minutes of the January 2011 meeting

What a great start to the new year: the January TSBA meeting had around 35 members in attendance. We also welcomed one new member, Mr. Arnold Bishop.

At 7:15 TSBA Vice-President, Jim Blazier opened the meeting. He led a short discussion about upcoming events. It was confirmed we would use the Grainger County Park Pavilion for the Fish Fry and Kids Day events. Doug Steffe will take care of the arrangements. Kids Day has been scheduled for May 21 from 2:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Next on the agenda was an open discussion about winter fishing techniques. Tennessee River systems can get very cold in the winter, slowing the metabolism of striped bass. As the water temperature drops below 50 degrees, striped bass feeding rate slows tremendously. Some of the wintertime techniques members discussed included trolling umbrella rigs and lures, jigging spoons, bottom fishing with live and cut baits and bottom bouncing. These techniques can improve catch rates during the more challenging fishing conditions created by cold water temperatures.

Winter is a good time for boat and equipment maintenance. Some members use slow times to play with new equipment and make improvements to their boats.

Steam plants are always a topic for wintertime discussions. Ezell Cox mentioned that flowing systems are unpredictable. Best conditions occur when warm water discharges are allowed to pool up. Slower river currents will present better opportunities for hookups. Strong flowing systems tend to push the warm water discharge downstream quite rapidly.

Alan Franklin urged everyone to take extra caution during winter. Boat ramps may be icy and dangerous. Also, your trailer bunks may be icy, so never unhook your boat until it is in the water. Everyone should winterize the fuel system on their boat. Ethanol can have harmful effects on your equipment. Use a good fuel stabilizer and a Racor brand fuel water separator filter. This can help your boats performance year round.

Doug Steffe urged members to consider receiving the monthly newsletter by e-mail and to renew their memberships.

— **Bud White, Secretary**

Outlook for current fishing spots

CHEROKEE LAKE

The downstream end of the lake will have good fishing from Point 19 to the dam. Look for surface breaks and feeding gulls. Large schools can be found at times in very shallow water. Live bait should be easy to catch in most of the warm coves. Casting and trolling with artificial lures may still be the most effective method. The John Sevier steam plant may be off-line. If this happens, the early season bite may not develop there if the plant is not discharging warm water into the lake.

NORRIS LAKE

The best fishing should be found mid-lake from Hickory Star on the Clinch River and Springs Dock on the Powell River and upstream. Look for the gulls and the warmest water that is attracting bait fish. Artificial lures are still very effective but with some warmer water to be found on sunny days, live bait could also be pulled along the shallow, sun-warmed banks with planner boards.

WATTS BAR & MELTON HILL

The steam plants at Kingston and Bull Run Creek will have the most predictable catches. This will depend largely on the contrast in water temperature in the Clinch River around the steam plants.

FISHING REGULATIONS

New fishing licenses are required to fish starting each March 1, 2011. It is each fisherman's responsibility to know the rules and stay legal. Changes are normal in the management of our fisheries each year, and those changes become effective on March 1. Each body of water may have exceptions you need to be aware of before exposing yourself to a fine. There are some seasonal striped bass CREEL AND SIZE limit changes that take place on April 1, 2011. Go on line to Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency at www.tnwildlife.org or pick up a 2011 Fishing Regulations book at sporting stores or TWRA offices to read about these changes.

— **Ezell Cox**

The 50/50/50 rule and how it applies to you

It is well documented that wearing a lifejacket greatly reduces your chances of dying in a boating accident. According to the U.S. Coast Guard's Recreational Boating Statistics Report (2008), of the fatalities associated with boating accidents, 90% of the victims were not wearing a lifejacket.

While wearing a lifejacket year-round is a good idea, consider the additional importance of wearing a lifejacket in cold weather. A boating accident could needlessly become lethal due to your exposure to cold water. Before you conjure up images of the latest episode of Discovery Channel's *Deadliest Catch*, where fishermen are battling the Bering Sea under extreme cold weather conditions, did you know that cold-water injury researchers actually define cold water as being less than 65° F? That certainly applies to striped bass habitat in Tennessee during the winter months!

Understanding the physiological stages your body goes through after immersion in cold water might just convince you to wear a lifejacket, which can make a huge difference in your survival after being immersed in cold water.

Phase 1: Cold Shock Response

The natural response to entering cold water is to gasp. Those not prepared for a fall into cold water will gasp and can inhale water. Many people die during this initial contact with cold water. Wearing a lifejacket will greatly reduce the chances of aspirating water.

Phase 2: Cold Incapacitation

The longer a person stays in cold water, the less physical movement they will be capable of performing. This incapacitation makes it harder to swim or re-board a vessel after falling. The chance for self-rescue decreases with continued exposure to cold water. For those of you that fish alone, this is something especially important to consider.

Phase 3: Hypothermia

Hypothermia is defined as a drop in core body temperature below what is required for normal body function. While signs of hypothermia vary depending on the degree of cold water exposure, characteristic symptoms

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include violent shivering and mental confusion. Difficulty in speaking, sluggish thinking, and inability to use your hands progresses to organ failure.

If a person is smart and has worn a lifejacket, they may survive the initial immersion to reach this point. Research shows that people can survive for long periods in cold water, but only if they are wearing a lifejacket.

The United States Coast Guard promotes using a life vests as a method of protection against hypothermia through the 50/50/50 rule: If someone is in 50°F water for 50 minutes, he has a 50 percent better chance of survival if wearing a life jacket.

—— *Jim Blazier*

**Please support TSBA and
renew your 2011 membership today!
See page 19 for details on the simplified renewal process.**

MARCH EXPECTATIONS

March is a transition month for the pre-spawn stripers. This is the time of year when striped bass start to put on their pre-spawn weight by gorging. They will be found early in the month roaming the deep, open water in large schools as they feed on small threadfin shad that are struggling to survive. With the longer days of sunshine, water temperatures are expected to climb from 45°F to the high 50's in some areas by the end of the month.

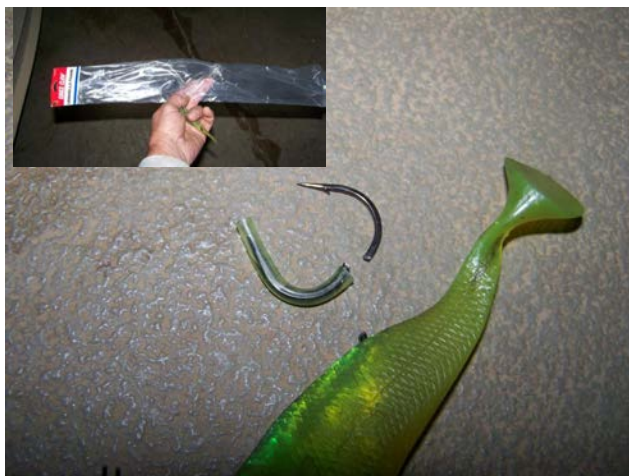
Striped bass will then be migrating into the shallow, relatively warmer, incoming rivers and feeder creeks. The surface action can be great and the gulls are still very much worth following. Most fish will be caught near the surface to 20 feet deep. The area around the steam plants will continue to attract bait fish and striped bass.

Umbrella rigs and the quest for trophy stripers

Umbrella rigs (u-rigs) are defined as an array of more than 3 artificial lures or baits (with or without hooks) used by a single rod and reel combination. The rigging is designed to imitate a school of small baitfish swimming by with one struggling fish trailing behind. This triggers an instinctive predatory response in stripers and is widely known to be a very effective lure for catching fish. There are those that would argue that fish are frightened or shy away from the line size and maybe even the u-rig frame itself, but that does not seem to hold any merit with this reaction type bite. It is so effective, in fact, that



The u-rig capitalizes on basic striper biology: the instinct to strike at the weakest fish in the school.



TWRA has mandated special regulations when using an umbrella rig: the u-rig may only have a *single hook* (a hook with only one point).

There has been a lot of interest expressed by TSBA members to learn more about this type of gear. Follow-

Ezell starts with an Eagle Claw frame (see photo inset) and then makes his own teasers. He cuts the hook off each 4-inch Storm paddletail lure to make his teaser that is legal to use in Tennessee

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ing is a summary of a "typical" set-up for trolling with u-rigs. There are about as many variations to this set-up as there are fishermen that use them.

Start out with an umbrella frame that has multiple places to attach lures and teasers. A common 4-arm frame made by Eagle Claw has 9 places to attach lures and teasers. Attach two teasers on each arm of the frame and secure the lure, with the single-point hook, in the center of the frame so that it is trailing at least 12 to 18 inches behind the teasers. The lures and teasers are the normal color, or, size, shape, and action that catch fish when casting and trolling. Jigs with curly tails, blades, swim baits and spoons all seem to work in the right location. You can just cut the hook off for the teasers. Attach the teasers on the ends of the umbrella frame as close to the arm as possible and still get the desired action from the teaser. The teasers half way in on the arm should trail behind the outside teasers by at least 4 inches. I use 40 to 50-pound mono line on the lure so I can just grab the frame and lift quite a large fish right into the boat with it. The completed u-rig cost should range between twenty and forty dollars.

When presenting the u-rig, depth of trolling from the surface to a 30-foot depth is accomplished by weighting the umbrella rig (one to fifteen ounces), boat speed and length of line let out. The common



Doug Steffe, using the big green u-rig that was passed around at the January meeting, caught this fish on Norris by the Anderson County park.

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Dr. Ezell prescribes a cure for spring fever: fish the upcoming spawning runs

Cherokee Lake

I have heard some rumors that the coal-fired steam plant at Rogersville will no longer be in operation. (Editors Note: TVA released a statement in August of 2010 stating that the John Sevier Fossil Fuel Plant will close two of the four coal-burning units in an effort to reduce reliance on coal. This will likely happen in the next four to five years). The warm water discharge from this plant has historically created an early start to the spawning season on the upper part of Cherokee Lake. Upper reaches of Cherokee Lake, especially above the Quarryville Access area, have some treacherous sections to navigate in the spring until lake levels start to rise in March. Be aware that your GPS data may not be accurate enough to use as your only reference to navigate the old river channel. It is easy for boaters to run up on a mud flat in this area, so you will need to proceed cautiously.

Although there are lots of fish that do not make the spawn run to the headwaters, Quarryville and above is always a great place to locate early-spring spawn run fishing. There is another good access at Caney Creek and Malinda Ferry Bridge. Paddle fish season is March 1-15, so there are often many fishermen in boats as well as on the bank above Malinda Ferry Bridge trying to snag these big fish. The shoals above Crockett Creek at the power lines and log home sometimes are as far upstream as wise boaters will go until the lake elevation comes up later in March. The upper most launch access is above the Hugh B. Day Bridge, which also has some bank fishing access when the lake comes on up in April.

Remember: WATER TEMPERATURE is the key to finding bait and fish. Look for the warmest water you can find. Find the fish-eating birds sitting along the sun warmed banks. That is where you will find me fishing.

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Norris Lake

The Clinch and Powell are natural rivers that have no upstream dams. Information about these two rivers can often be applied to other natural rivers in the area that have these same species available. Walleye and sauger are the first game fish to make the spring run. These species typically stage in some of the deeper pockets of water a few miles downstream from the rivers in the uppermost shallow coves. This can start as early as mid-February but is ultimately controlled by environmental triggers including water temperature and length of daylight. When the sun's angle and length of day have warmed the rivers to around 60 degrees, the walleye and sauger move into the rivers to spawn. Spawning starts in March and continues through April. The white bass (stripe) are the next to spawn and move up into the rivers in late March. The striped bass (striper or rockfish) begin to show up around the first of April through the first half of May. Keep in mind that the "typical" spawning season can vary slightly from year to year. Not all of these fish will make the spawning run every year and there are also other game and non-game species making spawning runs up the rivers during this period. Some of the hatchery raised fish have become confused and disconnected from normal spawning behavior and may just move into any incoming major creek.

Lake elevations on Norris Lake are in transition during most of this time period. The winter pool level is 1000 feet. Beginning in March the elevation is raised 10 feet, with another 10-foot increase in April to bring the level up to a maximum summer pool elevation of 1020 feet. Access to the Clinch River is good from Highway 25E. Lone Mountain Dock, Sycamore, 25E River Road, and Beach Grove have access for boat launch. There is good bank fishing access where the Clinch River crosses 25E River Road and also on Indian Creek at Bullen Valley Road. The Powell River is a lot more remote, but has a lot of local fishing traffic this time of year. There is a gravel launch ramp at Lonesome Valley Road out of New Tazewell and a

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small boat can sometimes be launched at Gap Creek Road off of Highway 63. Earl Hollow Road has a launch ramp also off of Highway 63. These ramps and roads are not suitable for larger boats. Limited bank fishing access can be had from Gap Creek and Lonesome Roads.

My experience and knowledge is best about the striped bass and how to catch them. My favorite way to fish is to use the large gizzard shad, that are also in the river to spawn, as bait. I am limited to a water depth that allows me to use my aluminum boat with a prop without damaging it. I use monofilament line 20 pound test and smaller with no weight tied straight to a 4/0 octopus hook. I hook the large gizzard shad thru the upper lip only, then let out about 15 feet of line before attaching a redi-rig float or side planer board. I use my electric trolling motor to pull the side planer close to the bank and let out 75+ feet on the redi-rig float behind the boat. My electric trolling motor speed is normally less than 1 mph.

Artificial baits are also very successful this time of year also. Large hair jigs with curly tail, top water plugs, and wake baits are some of the most common used for striped bass.

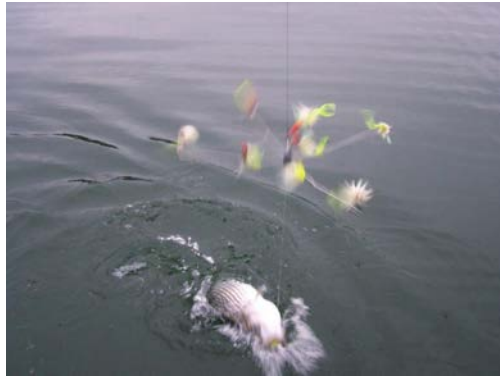
This abbreviated version of, what, when, and where on the spring spawn run may get you started on a cure for spring fever.

— *Ezell Cox*

How to Contribute to the Newsletter:

Please send in any pictures or news that you think would interest club members – we are always glad to hear from you. You can e-mail photos and reports to: engebretsenerik@yahoo.com
We usually put the newsletter together around the end of the month, but send your information any time and we will work it in.

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Make sure you line and connections are heavy-duty enough to support the weight of lifting a fish out of the water.

practice is to pull a u-rig from each side of the rear of the boat. Down riggers can also be used for depth control of the umbrella rig. A good fish finder along with skill and knowledge of boat control can provide some additional techniques for improving your results when using a u-rig. These techniques include doing zigzag moves, kicking the motor out of gear in order to get to deeper fish, and going in circles, which causes the slower moving inside

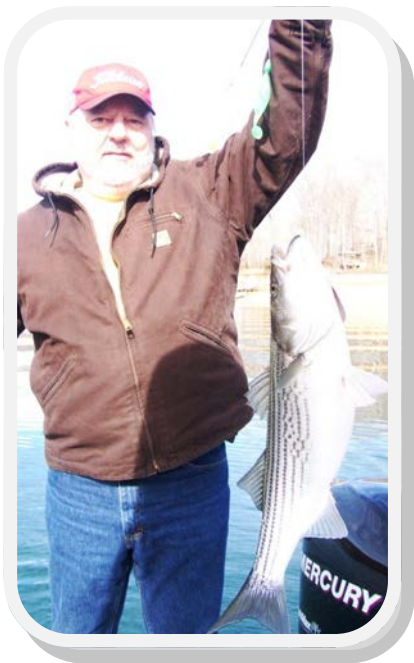
u-rig to sink while the u-rig on the outside will rise as it speeds up.

There are tools sold to retrieve hung up u-rigs that are effective, but here is another option: heavy braid lines can be used to pull the u-rig. If the rig gets hung up, just tie the heavy braid line to a cleat on the boat and use the motor to recover it for repair. Be mindful of the connection strength when planning to use the braid as a rope to retrieve the u-rig. Some of the swivels, snap latches and split rings that come with the u-rigs are just not designed that type of heavy duty use. I use a very inexpensive 9-foot stiff rod and reel with a line counter combination for around sixty dollars spooled with 100 pound braid.

— ***Ezell Cox***

The TSBA web site has been rebuilt by Keith Shannon.
Access it at **www.TNStripedBass.com**, logging in with your
real name to register and your own unique password.

Trophy Shots: TSBA members



share their catch of the day



All of January's trophy shots share one thing in common: each fish was caught on a u-rig lure on Norris Lake. Jay Giradot hosted a day out for Wayner Beeler, Ezell Cox and Doug Steffe aboard his enclosed Sea Pro boat (pictures opposite and above.)

Jay (below), in search of just one last striper before heading off for shoulder surgery, was in luck the very next day and landed this impressive fish. Congratulations, Jay! Take care of that shoulder so you can get back to the business of landing monster stripers like this one.



YOUR 2011 TSBA OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, AND STAFF

President:

Erik Engebretsen 404-683-0181
engebretsenerik@yahoo.com

Vice President:

Jim Blazier 865-694-8014
jblazier@comcast.net

Treasurer:

Doug Steffe
865-278-2363
865-335-3815

Secretary:

Bud White
423-234-0704

Asst. Treasurer:

Allan Franklin
865-805-3120

TSBA DIRECTORS

Todd Asher, Bill Ballou, Erik Engebretsen, Billy Davis, Cory Malabey, Keith Shannon, Bud White

TSBA STAFF

Newsletter Printing

& Distribution: Jim Blazier & Bill Ballou

Newsletter Editor;

Sherry Wehner
swehner9@gmail.com

Membership:

Doug Steffe
865-278-2363, 865-335-3815
dougsteffe@centurytel.net

Web Site

Keith Shannon
keith.shannon@gmail.com

Public Relations

Allan Franklin	865-694-8888
Ezell Cox	423-626-9547

Kids' Fishing Day:

Allan Franklin	865-805-3120
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Tournament Coordinator:

Allan Franklin	865-694-8888
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Door Prizes:

[vacant]

Advisor:

Ezell Cox	423-626-9547
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2011 TSBA Calendar

Please join us at TSBA meetings and events. Monthly meetings are held at the Flatwater Grill at 100 Melton Lake Peninsula in Oak Ridge, Tennessee (<http://theflatwatergrill.com>).

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Feb. 21 | Monthly Meeting: dinner 6:30 p.m., meeting 7:15 p.m.
The Flatwater Grill in Oak Ridge.
Topic: Artificial Baits and Fishing Tackle, speaker Jim Farmer |
| Mar. 21 | Monthly Meeting: dinner 6:30 p.m., meeting 7:15 p.m.
The Flatwater Grill in Oak Ridge.
Topic: Catching and Keeping Live Bait,
Speakers: Alan Franklin and Ezell Cox |
| Apr. 18 | Monthly Meeting: dinner 6:30 p.m., meeting 7:15 p.m.
The Flatwater Grill in Oak Ridge.
Topics: Umbrella Rigs, Speaker Mack Farr
Graph Reading, Speaker Bill Carson |
| Apr. 23 | Tournament: below Loudon Dam. Details TBA |
| May 7 | Tournament: Striper Bowl at Grainger Co. Park. Details TBA |
| May 16 | Monthly Meeting: dinner 6:30 p.m., meeting 7:15 p.m.
The Flatwater Grill in Oak Ridge.
Topic: TWRA Stocking |
| May 21 | Kid's Day: 2:00 - 8:00 p.m.,
Grainger County Park |
| Jun 20 | Monthly Meeting: dinner 6:30 p.m., meeting 7:15 p.m.
The Flatwater Grill in Oak Ridge.
Topic: Artificial Baits and Fishing Tackle, speaker TBA |
| Jul 9 | Tournament: Details TBA |
| Jul 18 | Monthly Meeting; details TBA |
| Aug 15 | Monthly Meeting: dinner 6:30 p.m., meeting 7:15 p.m.
The Flatwater Grill in Oak Ridge.
Topic: Artificial Baits and Fishing Tackle, speaker TBA |
| Sep 24 | Annual Fish Fry, Grainger County Park |

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T.S.B.A. 2011 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

As a member:

- *You'll receive a monthly newsletter.
- * You'll help support Striped Bass Fisheries & Wildlife Agencies.
- * You'll be informed of new regulations & information that affect striper fishing.
- * You'll develop a network of "striper friends."
- * You'll learn new methods to improve your striped bass fishing effectiveness.
- * You'll be able to call officers for fishing reports.
- * You'll be able to attend monthly meetings with informative programs.
- * You'll have access to all areas of the TSBA web page.

Is this a renewal ____ or a New Membership ____

Your Name_____

Spouse's Name_____

Address_____

City_____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone(_____)_____ # of minor children in family _____

E-Mail address _____

Referred By: _____

I have read and agree to abide by and be bound by the Tennessee Striped Bass Association, Inc. (TSBA) Bylaws. A copy of the Bylaws can be found on the TSBA website at www.TNStripedBass.com or at the offices of the corporation.

(Signature)

(Date)

Enclose a check for \$20.00

***Mail to: Tennessee Striped Bass Association, Inc
P.O. Box 163
Sharps Chapel, TN. 37866***

Simplified Renewal Note: Membership renewals with no address or info revisions may send **just a \$20 check** with member's name, to the address above. Filling out the application is not required. Yearly dues are due in January each year. New members that sign up in Oct., Nov., or Dec. will get credit for the remainder of that year and the following year.



The TSBA is a non-profit corporation that supports TWRA & its Striped Bass & Cherokee Bass programs. We come together to provide a unified voice for the Striped Bass & the Cherokee Bass programs in the State of Tennessee. We educate the public & share our knowledge with fellow Striped Bass anglers.

**Tennessee Striped Bass Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 163
Sharps Chapel, TN 37866**



**February 21, 2011: Monthly Meeting
Flatwater Grill
100 Melton Lake Drive, Oak Ridge
Dinner at 6:30 p.m.; meeting at 7:15 p.m.
This is your last issue if you have not renewed
your membership for 2011**