

# On the Water



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George Wahl, with his "Eagle Tail" hat, in his Crestliner out on Whitefish Bay last September.

## Reminisces of George Wahl

by Juris Ozols

It struck me that November evening as I drove home from the visitation, the day before George's funeral: among all the hundreds of pictures of George on the posters, there was not one standard "fish picture."

There were many family pictures of George as a child, his youth, and his own family. There were many Whitefish Bay pictures, many Muskies Inc. pictures, the Expo, Vets Home Opener, all of the other activities which George led and participated in. There was at least one picture of George releasing a big muskie.

But not a single picture of him holding a muskie and looking at the camera.

And you know, that's typical of George. Here's a man who fished muskies for almost

**GEORGE WAHL** *continued page 4*

## February Twin Cities Sportsmen's Banquet To Feature James Lindner

James Lindner, Executive Director of Lindner Media Productions and co-host of TV's Lindner's Angling Edge will be the featured speaker at our chapter's winter fundraising banquet. The Twin Cities Sportsman's Banquet will be held Saturday, February 21 at the Minnesota Valley Country Club in Bloomington.

Growing up in the world of sports fishing, James Lindner has filmed and fished from the Arctic Circle tundra to South American jungles and from the Atlantic to the Pacific coasts and every state in between. As a multi-species fishermen, James has few equals and his prowess with muskies is legendary.

James is the son and nephew – respectively of Ron and Al Lindner. Al, Ron, James, Daniel and Bill

Lindner are the creative forces behind Lindner Media and their wide variety of award-winning productions, and have a long and storied history in the fishing business. In 2008, James was inducted into the Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame as a Legendary Communicator for his outstanding achievement in the realm of sportfishing.

This year's banquet will be bigger and better than ever with over \$10,000 in prizes including guided fishing trips, ice fishing gear from Clam and Vexilar, St. Croix Legend rods, loads of tackle, storage and other gear, as well as a Benelli shotgun. New this year will be more than five themed raffle tables worth more than \$1,000 each, cash raffles and numerous door prizes will also be given away.

Also new this year, Gold and Platinum pre-event early-bird dinner and raffle ticket packages. By purchasing a Gold or Platinum raffle ticket package that includes your dinner, you can save up to \$75.00. Attendees who purchase Gold early-bird packages will participate in an exclusive bonus drawing for a St. Croix Legend rod valued at \$330. Attendees who purchase



James Lindner will be the speaker at the Twin Cities Sportsmen's Banquet. He lives, eats, and sleeps fishing.

**BANQUET** *continued page 9*

## ***New Board Takes Office in January***

Newly-elected members on the chapter's Board of Directors are Eric Bakke, Jim Doyle, Mark Meritt, John Newman and Tony Sommerfeld. Board members who were re-elected are George Selcke, Joe Mellott, Troy Zuelzke, and Greg Kappes. Elections were held at the December meeting. Board members will serve two-year terms beginning in January.

Also on the board are Brad Coyne, Scott Crawford, Bob Culbertson, Dianne Dahl, Terry Hanson, Paul Hartman, Greg Ide, Jim Kroupa, Mike McGrath, Stu McIntosh, Joe Mellott, Matt Olson, Pete Randall, Eric Schultz and Vince Trotta who were elected last year to two year terms.

Chapter officers were elected from the board members. Shawn Kellett will again serve as President, Greg Kappes is the First Vice President and Second Vice President is Troy Zuelzke. George Selcke will serve as chapter Secretary and Dianne Dahl will again be the Treasurer. Eric Schultz is our Regional Vice President, representing our chapter at International meetings.

## ***Muskie Award Nominations***

The Muskie Award is given each year by the chapter to one individual nominated by other chapter members who has constantly and unselfishly devoted time and energy over the year(s) to promoting and improving the goals of Muskies Inc.

To nominate an individual for the Muskie Award, submit – in writing – a history of the person's involvement with the Twin Cities Chapter over the years. Send your nominations to Jim Kroupa at 6311 Steller Circle, Excelsior, MN 55331. Or, you can email them to [jkroupa@ties2.net](mailto:jkroupa@ties2.net). Call Jim at 952-474-5967 if you have questions. Nominations must be in by January 31. The winner will be selected by secret ballot at the February Board meeting.

## ***Muskie Expo Seminars Announced***

George's Minnesota Muskie Expo will take place April 3, 4, and 5 at Ganglehoff Center of Concordia University in St. Paul. This is the fifteenth year for the Expo, founded by George Wahl, inventor and manufacturer of the Eagle Tail. George's Minnesota Muskie Expo is strictly dedicated to muskies. The show features a long list of the world's top muskie anglers sharing secrets of success in seminars, retailers offering great sale prices, guides and resorts.

Concordia University's Ganglehoff Center is 2 blocks off Interstate 94, between Minneapolis and St. Paul downtowns, and convenient for out of town attendees and exhibitors as well. The new facility has space for additional vendors from past years.

The Expo is the place to connect with the factory reps from the industry giants with questions and suggestions. The unique aspect of the show is buying direct from the lure manufacturers, getting low prices, custom colors and the newest prototype baits. Lure companies comprise over 50% of Expo exhibitors. Their strong presence is because it's a cottage industry with 80% of the lures being made right here in the Midwest.

Daily admission to the Expo is \$10.00. A three-day pass is \$17.00. Children under 12 are admitted free. Seminars scheduled for George's Minnesota Muskie Expo are:

### **FRIDAY, APRIL 3:** expo hours 2:00 pm - 9:00 pm

3:00 pm	Bob Mehsikomer
5:00 pm	Rob Kimm
7:00 pm	Steve Worrall

### **SATURDAY, APRIL 4:** expo hours 10:00 am - 7:00 pm

11:00 am	Dan Craven
1:00 pm	Jim Saric
3:00 pm	Russ Smith
5:00 pm	Brad Hoppe

### **SUNDAY, APRIL 5:** expo hours 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

11:00 am	Larry Dahlberg
12:30 pm	Luke Ronnestrand
2:00 pm	Erik Jacobson

Expo information can be found online at [minnesotamuskieexpo.com](http://minnesotamuskieexpo.com).

## ***Family Night/Awards Program Scheduled for February Meeting***

Our February meeting will be a fun-filled evening geared toward the younger set. We encourage you to bring your entire family. There will be plenty of games and other events for kids and adults.

The meeting will begin at 6:00 pm instead of the usual meeting time. We're starting an hour early so the younger kids can get home and in bed at a reasonable time. Food will be available.

When the games are done, awards for our chapter's Members Only Contest and Kid's Fishing Contest will be presented. In addition to the fishing awards, the chapter's Muskie Award and Muskie Tale Award will be presented.

## Members Only Contest

from Pete Randall, Contest Chair

It looks like this is the final standings for the chapter's registered fish for the 2008 season.

Remember, the list published here is only a partial of all the fish turned by our members. Go to our web site [www.twincitiesmuskies inc.org](http://www.twincitiesmuskies inc.org) and click on "members only contest" to see the complete list.

Chapter Members Only Contest awards will be presented at February's general meeting. Also honored will be the entrants of the Kids Only Contest.

### JUNIORS DIVISION:

- 1ST:** Evan Nicolai - 87 points - 7 fish - 44" longest  
**2ND:** J.T. Doebler - 27 points - 2 fish - 43" longest  
**3RD:** Zachary Weyland - 15 points - 1 fish - 41"  
**4TH:** Thomas Batina - 8 points - 1 fish - 34"

**JUNIORS HYBRID DIVISION:** (points already tabulated with pure-strain releases)

- 1ST:** Zachary Weyland - 1 fish - 41"

### WOMENS DIVISION:

- 1ST:** Carole K Janik - 77 points - 6 fish - 41" longest  
**2ND:** Christine L Rein - 29 points - 2 fish - 51" longest  
**3RD:** Barbara Dull - 16 points - 2 fish - 51" longest

### WOMENS MASTERS:

- 1ST:** Cindy Hegdahl - 207 points - 15 fish - 47.5" longest  
**2ND:** Linda Knutson - 124 points - 10 fish - 47" longest

### MENS DIVISION:

- 1ST:** Phil Groth - 453 points - 31 fish - 47.5" longest  
**2ND:** Bob Culbertson - 243 points - 20 fish - 45" longest  
**3RD:** Jeremy M. Knutson - 225 points - 14 fish - 46.5" longest  
**4TH:** Bryan Walsh - 204 points - 11 fish - 51" longest  
**5TH:** Peter R Janik - 194 points - 12 fish - 52" longest

- 6TH:** Corey DeZeeuw - 188 points - 12 fish - 47" longest  
**7TH:** Travis Hultgren - 172 points - 12 fish - 49.5" longest  
**8TH:** Jeff Peterson - 160 points - 9 fish - 49" longest  
**9TH:** John Huss - 157 points - 12 fish - 48.5" longest  
**10TH:** Jack Hilbert - 151 points - 9 fish - 50.5" longest

**MENS HYBRID DIVISION:** (points already tabulated with pure-strain releases)

- 1ST:** Corey DeZeeuw - 2 fish - 43" longest  
**2ND:** Greg Pirritano - 1 fish - 40"  
**3RD:** Matt Murtha - 1 fish - 34"

### MENS MASTERS:

- 1ST:** Kris Astorp - 1011 points - 60 fish - 52.5" longest  
**2ND:** Dean A Roll - 670 points - 37 fish - 52.5" longest  
**3RD:** Tony Sommerfeld - 214 points - 13 fish - 48" longest  
**4TH:** Mark Fredrick - 211 points - 15 fish - 45.5" longest  
**5TH:** David Gustafson - 184 points - 12 fish - 50" longest

**MENS MASTERS HYBRID DIVISION:** (points already tabulated with pure-strain releases)

- 1ST:** Kris Astorp - 4 fish - 38" longest

### LUNKER OF THE MONTH:

- JUNE:** official - Brandon Bunney - 51" - June 14 - Rush  
**JULY:** official - Kris Astorp - 52.5" - July 17 - Vermilion  
Dean A. Roll - 52.5" - July 27 - Vermilion  
**AUGUST:** official - Josh Borovsky - 56" - Aug. 1 - Vermilion  
**SEPTEMBER:** official - Dean A. Roll - 52" - Sept. 13 - Miltona  
**OCTOBER:** official - Peter J. Janik - 52" - Oct. 7 - Waconia  
Steve Hedensten - 52" - Oct. 24 - West Battle  
**NOVEMBER:** unofficial - Brian Hanson - 51" - Nov. 14 - Vermilion

And at this point, NO you will not see me ON THE WATER...



## Earn the Musky Tale Award

You too could have this illustrious "muskie tale" proudly displayed in your home. Surely you have a tale about something that happened this year while fishing. We're looking for hard luck or entertaining stories. You know, about the world record that got away. Or, about your boat sinking in the middle of Lake of the Woods. Or, the black flies and mosquitoes that nearly ate you when you got lost. We all – no matter what our fishing skills – have a story to tell.

The "Muskie Tale" Award will be presented to the club member who shares the best tale (story). Send your tales to last year's recipient of this award, Jim Kroupa at 6311 Steller Circle, Excelsior, MN 55331. If you want to email, please send to him at [jkroupa@ties2.net](mailto:jkroupa@ties2.net).

## Kid's Fishing Contest

Remember to send in your child's record of fish caught this season to the Kid's Fishing Contest. Every child under 12 who catches almost any species of any size will be recognized at the chapter awards in February. One entry for each child with all season's fish should be sent to Shawn Kellett, 414 Division St., Excelsior, MN 55331. Entries must be received before January 10.

## George Wahl Memorial Tournament Announced

The Twin Cities chapter will hold the first annual George Wahl Memorial Muskie Tournament on Saturday, October 3rd of this year. Muskie anglers who fish the one-day tournament will have their choice of 12 pure-strain metro area muskie lakes: Lake Minnetonka, Lake Independence, Lake Waconia, Eagle Lake in Hennepin County, White Bear Lake, Bald Eagle Lake, Forest Lake, Lake St. Croix, Lake Harriet, Lake Calhoun, Cedar Lake, Lake of the Isles.

The awards ceremony will be held on the same day at a centrally-located place yet to be named. Members of the rearing and stocking committee and tournament committee will be working out details of this exciting new event. Information will be published as it becomes available.

Funds raised by this tournament will be used strictly for the rearing and stocking fund. It is hoped that this will become a popular annual event for local-area fishermen.

## Accounting Help Requested

The board is looking for the help of a person who has some accounting experience. A few board members are meeting to work on a budget for the chapter. They are looking for someone who could lend their advice and guidance to help out with the budget process. If you are available or know someone who would be willing to help, please contact Joe Mellott at joemellott@hotmail.com or 952-226-4880.

**GEORGE WAHL** *continued from page 1*

30 years, a man who caught 400 of them. But this is also a man who did things his own way. Being like everybody else – posing for “big fish” pictures as just one example – was not George.

I spent several days in September with a group that went up to Lake of the Woods, Whitefish Bay on what we all knew was George’s last trip. Tom Kenefick drove me around in his boat, as I tried to get pictures of George catching a muskie. It didn’t happen. George did catch a big Northern Pike, his last fish, and we have a photo of that. But no muskie.

However, I did sit down on the dock at Whitefish Bay Camp and film an interview with George and his two favorite fishing partners. I think it captures the tremendous spirit of the man, even as his health was failing. This article gives you excerpts from that interview, the reminisces of one of the exceptional Muskie Men of our times.

**JURIS OZOLS:** “Hey George, listen, I have to say this is really a pleasure being out here with you. I have never fished with you, never been out here, but you’ve got quite a life, quite a deal out here.”

**GEORGE WAHL:** “It’s... Maybe the best place in the world, other than being home. But it depends on what home is. But, yeah... It doesn’t get any better.”

**JO:** “How many years you been fishing Whitefish?”

**GW:** “Thirty eight, and this is my 153rd trip.”

**JO:** “Tell us about how many fish you’ve caught. Big ones and little ones and those kinds of things.”

**GW:** “In the area of 400 roughly.” *George pauses to consider.* “I think if you counted, like, say, 48 and better - 80ish? Something like that.”



*George being interviewed on the dock at Whitefish Bay Camp, Lake of the Woods in September 2008.*

**JO:** “How long does it take you to catch a muskie?”

**GW:** “One every six and a half days.” *George smiles.* “But a lot of those four hundred are not from Lake of the Woods. This (Whitefish Bay) is hard water.” *George looks out at the lake.* “The Muskies Inc. guys stay away from this, cause, it’s one every six and a half days. Well, the best I ever did was five in a morning, before 9 o’clock, from 45 to 52 inches. And then at 9:15 I missed one of the biggest fish I’ve ever hooked. So it would have been six.”

**JO:** “Do you come up here to catch muskies or do you come up here for other reasons?”

**GW:** “Just to be here. Yeah. Muskies are obviously part of it. In fact, they’re a big part of it. But it’s just being here. How do you beat this atmosphere?”

**JO:** “When you started coming here, why did you start coming to Whitefish? Instead of Sabaskong Bay, or something?”

**GW:** “Saw a brochure with a pretty sand beach. So I went to the sand beach. And came ever since. And it’s now sold and condoed out, and then switched to another resort, and now this one.” *George nods toward Whitefish Bay Camp.* “But it’ll always be Whitefish.”

**JO:** “When you started coming here, who did you come with, the other people, who were some of the other, I think you mentioned Hugh Becker at one time...”

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**GW:** “Hugh Becker is the Muskies Inc. pioneer for this place. He’d been coming here,” George chuckles, “forever, and he caught some awful, awful big fish. And he was a real decent guy. Stayed down at Vic and Dot’s and hung around this neighborhood right here.” *George looks out past the docks into the bay.* “But he has now died, and left Muskies, Inc. three million bucks.”

**JO:** “You went out on a boat with him, actually fished with him, together?”

**GW:** *George nods.* “Yeah.” And he laughs. “But I’m not leaving Muskies, Inc. three million bucks.” *George laughs again.*

**JO:** *Also laughs.* “Well, that’s alright. Hugh took care of that. Was Hugh a pretty good fisherman?”

*There is a loon call in the background, from out on the lake. George turns to look out there. He turns back to the camera.*

**GW:** “Nobody is a good fisherman. Nobody. It’s just how much time are you willing to put in. On the right water. And if you’re willing to do it, then you’ll catch fish. And you’ll end up with big fish.”

**JO:** “You said earlier, we were talking, and I asked you something about ‘Well, where are the muskies going to be today, and you know, what does it take to catch them,’ and you just kind of laughed at me. Go ahead and tell me what you said then.”

**GW:** *George has a smile on his face.* “All the geniuses... with ‘Sure Fire Tactics for Muskies’ – they ain’t got a clue! They really don’t. All they can do is type well.” *George types in the air with his right hand.* “Nobody knows where that fish is right now. If any of us here did,” *and George points at me and the other folks,* “we would be there in the next thirty seconds.” *George points out into the bay.* “But we don’t. So it’s a guess. You have to put your time in, and pay your dues, and then you’ll eventually catch a fish.”

**JO:** “I noticed when we were following you around trying to take pictures, that you would go from spot to spot, and you’ve got kind of a ‘route’ marked out, that you go to?”

**GW:** “Just a mental paper route. When you leave in the morning, you don’t know where you’re going. Or what you’re going to do. But your only decision is what color am I going to put on and what direction am I gonna go? Refining it beyond that? No.” *George shakes his head.* “Cause the fish

you’re looking for is anywhere. She might be right there in a foot of water.” *George points at the shoreline by the dock.*

**JO:** “When you say color, do you have any particular favorite colors, or do you change around?”

**GW:** “Red and yellow with a flame blade. Or purple. Or gray.”

**JO:** “Does it make a lot of difference do you think?”

**GW:** *George pauses.* “Sometimes yes.” *Another loon call in the background.* “Sometimes it’s red and yellow, period. But any color that you use, enough, you can be successful with.” *George nods several times.*

**JO:** “Hey, let’s talk Eagle tails! You were in the Eagle tail business for a long time. How did you get started on that?”



**George Wahl, John Olson, and Steve Tooker fishing Muskies on Whitefish Bay in September, 2008. This was George’s last Whitefish trip.**

**GW:** *Gets a distant look on his face.* “Worked for a Volkswagen dealership and a Volkswagen Rabbit rolled off a rack. A hoist.” *George lifts up in the air with his hand.* “And ran over me. And it broke my back.” *George has a smile on his face.* “And I had to change jobs. Or stay on workman’s comp for life. And I just chose to change jobs. And I got in the bucktail business.”

**JO:** “When was that, how long ago?”

**GW:** *George has to think.* “...eighty two... yeah...”

**JO:** “When you started out making Eagle tails, did they look then like the last ones, or did you change along the way?”

**GW:** “From the first one I made to the one I made last – there’s no difference.” *Emphatically:* “Identical.”

**JO:** “What are you trying to do with Eagle tail that makes it a very good lure? What is special about it?”

**GW:** *George doesn’t hesitate.* “Strong! It’ll never break. And a single hook will land a very big fish, consistently. So if you’re not going to break,” *and George shrugs,* “you’re in. You got the best lure going.”

**JO:** “Yeah... You don’t use treble hooks or anything then?”

**GW:** “Don’t need ‘em. In ocean fishing, there’s no such thing as a treble hook. It’s all singles. What have they learned that we don’t know? And that’s that a single hook lands a big fish.”

**JO:** “When you started, how did you sell your Eagle tails. You know, do you have some stories, you went to Thorne Brothers or whatever... How did you do that?”

**GW:** “I threw a whole bunch of them in the trunk of the car. And I went to Wisconsin.” *George makes a circle in the air with his arm.* “And I sold every one of ‘em. And never made another phone call. They called me.”

**JO:** “Yeah? Must have sold pretty well then...”

**GW:** “For years and years... Or not years and years. Three years. Everything sold in Minnesota was a Burgertail. And it was sold at Burger Brothers. Everything sold in Wisconsin or Chicago was an Eagle tail. And that was by design.” *George nods his head several times.* “Ted Burger knew that. And, finally one had to eat the other, and,” *a smile on George’s face,* “it was Eagle tails that won.” *Big smile.*

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**JO:** "Where did the name "Eagle tail" come from?"

**GW:** *George laughs and points to his head.* "My imagination. It turned out to be the exact, right name. Another guy, at the same time, come out with a very identical lure with a treble hook called a 'Fuzz-Wubbie,' and it was dead the day it came out. Because of the name."

**JO:** "How many lures do you think you've made in your career?"

**GW:** "Hmm... several thousand. Under a hundred thousand but over fifty. I've got



*George reeling in one of his Eagletails. Friend John Olson is also in the boat.*

Eagle tail number fifty thousand. I think. And I got it in a case."

**JO:** "Muskie, Inc. How long you belonged to Muskie, Inc.?"

**GW:** "Started in December of sixty-six, and I joined in the summer of seventy-two. And

John Olson over there," *George points behind the camera,* "He's right there with me. We're two of the older guys around."

**JO:** "You've done a lot. The Vet's Home Opener, I believe, came out of your imagination?"

**GW:** "Uhh... Let's stab at February eighty-eight. Or eighty-nine. We had a snow storm. Don Pursch canceled as the speaker. And I was president. So I had to come up with a

program. So I started talking about why don't we do something for a nursing home? And Mike Tesch out in the audience raised his hand and 'Naahh. Vet's Home.' That was it. But that clicked with everybody."

**JO:** "Oh, man. I've been to, I don't know, maybe not ten but over half dozen here recently, taking pictures and stuff, and that to me is one of 'the' highlights of the year. That's a wonderful thing to do."

**GW:** "Yeah, I guess it was my idea but Mike Tesch put Vet's Home on it. Cause I was just going to do it at a nursing home. And it turned out to be a good program for the meeting. It's been twenty years now. Close."

**JO:** "Okay, another thing of course is the Muskie Expo, the Blaine show there. Tell us about that."

**GW:** "A guy in Milwaukee put one on. And I went to it as an exhibitor. And he did well. So I came back to the board... May of ninety-four and said, 'I know everybody in the tackle business, I can pull this off. But I think it's expensive and I need some money. How'd you like to loan me the front money?' No. Not a chance. The conservative board members shot it down instantly. And thirty days later I talked them into it. And it turned out to be only nine hundred bucks. Which was very aggravating to me, afterwards. But they loaned me the nine hundred, and I paid them the nine hundred back by October 1st. And I've given them another seventy thousand, beyond that nine hundred."

**JO:** "Right, that's been a very successful thing, then."

**GW:** "And it was just a handshake deal. I promised them I'd do it. And, most of 'em didn't believe me. But I did it."

**JO:** "Those are two, the Vet's Home and the Expo. How about any other things that you've been involved in, in Muskie, Inc.?"

**GW:** *George replies very quickly.* "The Twin Cities Chapter Winter Picnic was me. It used to be hotels, and way back then it was twenty-five bucks, thirty bucks a ticket, and everybody complained, cause it was too much money. So we started, you know, the picnic idea with hotdogs and the gambling and whatever, and it took off, went for a while."

**JO:** "Yeah, that's, that's a fun event too. You've never really been involved at the

'International Level.' Though. You've kind of stayed more at the Chapter level."

**GW:** "International never excited me. Bunch of nice people, and whatever, but..." *George hesitates.*

**JO:** "Well, you ended up in the Hall of Fame, you know, so most folks must like you."

**GW:** "Yeah, I never had any arguments with anybody. Got along with everybody all the time. Plus when you're in the tackle business, it helps cause everybody knows who you are."

**JO:** "What do you think of Muskie, Inc. now? The direction it's going, should things change, how about some thoughts on that?"

**GW:** *George pauses, but it's clear he has a definite opinion.* "Just keep doing what you're doing. It's never going to be the Junior Chamber of Commerce where there's oodles and oodles of members. Cause it's a select crazy few to start with. And a lot of guys will join, and, two years later they're out. It wasn't what they thought it was. It's been hovering around 6000 members forever. That's fine. Leave it there. Cause you got the hard core people that love it, enjoy it, and will put an effort into it. And if you get all the fly-by-night-Harrys in there, and you get, say, 12,000 members, it becomes very hard to administer, and, they're not the right people."

**JO:** "I hesitate to ask this question but I'm going to do it anyway – what do you think of the magazine and especially the covers of the magazine?"

**GW:** *A quick response.* "I love it. You take the magazine away and you don't have Muskie, Inc. anymore."

**JO:** *Laughing,* "A great answer, great answer!"

**GW:** "It's the glue. And, beyond the magazine, the Members Only contest is the glue. You got to have 'em both. But," *and here George frowns a bit,* "the Members Only contest promotes that you measure every fish that you catch. That's wrong." *A nod of the head.* "I guarantee you if you come home and tell your wife that you caught a 48, a 46, and a 44 and a half: 'Oh, that's nice honey. Go cut the grass.' She doesn't care. Your buddies don't care. Nobody cares. To that half inch, or whatever. So just estimate. And if you're wrong, you're

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wrong. Cause, nobody cares, how big your fish is. They're more interested in telling you how big 'theirs' was."

"Everybody'll come up and say, 'Hey, how did you do on your last trip?' And, before you give them the answer, they're telling you how 'they' did on their last trip."

**JO:** "Well, that's human nature though, isn't it, about a lot of things, not just Muskie fishing, you know how..."

**GW:** "But, it's one of the ills of the Members Only Contest. But I don't think it's an ill that you can get rid of."

**JO:** "Let me go back to Whitefish Bay. What's the biggest fish you've caught here on Whitefish?"

**GW:** "Fifty-six, right around the corner." *George points over to his right.* "And right around the corner, I also saw the biggest fish I've ever seen. Big enough that I think I could have stepped out of the boat and stood on her back. I almost had a hook in that one, but not quite." *George smiles. Memories are obviously going through his head.*

**JO:** "Hey, I see your buddy, John Olson, over there, Come on, John!"

**GW:** *Motions to John.* "Come on, John." *George taps the dock next to him.* "Sit down right here."

**JO:** "Well, How long you guys been running around together?"

**JOHN OLSON:** "We've been here eighteen years, nineteen years. He's probably one of my two best friends."

**GW:** *George looks over.* "I'm too opinionated."

**JNO:** "But he's still one of my two best friends. And the other one's over there." *John points behind the camera at Steve Tooker.*

**JO:** *Laughing.* "We'll bring Steve in here too. You guys, when you're in a boat together, and you spend how many hours in a boat together?"

**GW:** "When we leave in the morning we have no idea where we're going. None."

**JNO:** "You go around the corner and then



**Steve Tooker and George Wahl holding a 42-inch Northern Pike, the last fish that George caught.**

you figure it out."

**JO:** "What's the biggest fish you've seen John pull in?"

**GW:** *Ponders briefly.* "Fifty..."

**JNO:** "Two."

**GW:** *Nods his head,* "Two."

**GW:** "Yeah. Nice big fish, Again," *and George points back with his thumb and nods,* "right around the corner up here. It's a nice corner."

**JO:** "When was the last time you guys kept a Muskie? Either one of you?"

**GW:** *A pause as both John and George think.* "Gosh..."

**JO:** "You can't remember, can you?"

**JNO:** "Early eighties I had one die. That was it."

**GW:** "Yeah, and I found a dead one, in the nineties, that was still kind of half alive. And we ate it. Thirty-nine incher, and it was really good." *George and John laugh.*

**JO:** "Well you know, we got Steve over there. You say he's the other one you can stand to have in the boat?"

**GW:** *Nods.* "Yeah..."

**JO:** "George, does that mean I can't ever fish with you?"

*Big laughs by both George and John.*

**JO:** "Is that what you're trying to tell me, George?"

**GW:** *Still laughing,* "No, no... It's just that I fish with very few people. But very few people will put up with me, in a boat. Cause, like, I'm opinionated, and I'm right, they're wrong. Period."

**JO:** "Is he getting more mellow in his old age, John, or is he as bad as he ever was?"

**JNO:** "About the same." *John smiles and nods his head.* "About the same." *George laughs.*

**JO:** "Go on, Steve, why don't you sit down. Tell us a little bit about yourself."

**STEVE TOOKER:** "I met George after I bought a resort at Leech Lake. And I met him, through John, and John says, 'You gotta meet George.' So we went over to his basement. And George was sitting there making lures. And that was one of my first introductions to Eagle tails."

**JO:** "So how long you been fishing with George?"

**ST:** "Since in the mid-eighties."

**JO:** "You really think he is opinionated?"

**ST:** "George? Oh definitely!" *Lots of laughter by all three.*

**JO:** "But does he have any opinions that are wrong?"

**ST:** "You know, I think we all have opinions that are wrong."

**JO:** "I got pictures of you guys, all three of you in the boat today."

**JNO:** *Nodding.* "George will put you on a fish and sit down and have you cast at it."

**GW:** "Yeah. That I don't mind. If I know there's a thirty-pounder out there, I'll tell a guy with me. 'You take it.'"

**ST:** "And George took me out for years. Trying to get over a fifty-inch fish. And we'd go out in the evening, just for a short while, and he'd say, 'I got one spotted.' Well, we never have connected yet, but we keep trying."

**JO:** "So it's amazing. You, guys all get along very well together, and nobody wants to

*continued next page*



George Wahl casting an Eagletail on Whitefish Bay.

**GEORGE WAHL** *continued*

throw anybody out of the boat, or maybe you do, or not...?"

**JNO:** "Not yet."

**GW:** "We have never had an argument in the boat, not even close." Steve and John are both nodding their heads. "Not even a cross word. But that's because I'm right all of the time, and they know it." *Laughter all*

*the way around.*

**ST:** "I think the most fun I've ever had is the times on Whitefish Bay with George and John. I've always had a marvelous time up here, and it's just one of the highlights of my life. The week is too short. The week is always too short."

**JO:** "Well, I understand you're going to come back again for the opener. George, are you planning already here?"

**GW:** "Well, I got some physical problems and I hope I'll be back for the opener. I didn't think I'd ever be here again now."

**JO:** "How, how about if I promise to come and take pictures of you, you know, so you finally catch a fish so I can get that."

**GW:** "Opener... Uhhh..." *George pauses.* "Well as far as guaranteeing a muskie..."

**JNO:** *John is nodding.* "That's as close as it will get."

————— **this 'n that** —————

**THANK YOU**

Thanks to Matt Thompson who stepped in at the last minute to speak at our December meeting when scheduled speaker, Rob Manthie, had to cancel. Rob will be rescheduled soon.

**YOUTH CHAIR NEEDED**

The chapter is seeking an individual to chair our youth activities. The youth chair will work with a partner non-profit for kid's fishing days, seminars, and/or tournaments. The group has the organization, mechanics and personnel to pull off these events. All our youth chair has to do is organize a few volunteers with boats on the event day and coordinate with the non-profit. The Youth Chair also heads up our chapter's Kid's Fishing Contest. The Youth Chair doesn't have to be a member of the Board, just willing to spend a few hours working for the youth of our chapter and underserved kids in the metro area. Contact Shawn

Kellett at 952-380-1218 if you're interested in helping promote youth activities for our chapter.

**NORTH METRO BANQUET**

North Metro chapter's Winter Banquet will be held Saturday, January 31. Featured speaker is Gregg Thomas, from *Battle of the Beast Guide Service*.

The evening includes an all-you-can-eat fish dinner as well as thousands of dollars in raffles and prizes including a one-week stay for four at Red Wing Lodge, guide trips, custom muskie rods, ice fishing gear, lure packages, a special ladies raffle.

The banquet will be held at the North Air Banquet Hall (KC Hall) at 6831 NE Highway 65 in Fridley. It starts with a social hour at 4:30 pm with dinner served at 6:00 pm. Cost is \$25 – children under 12 are free. Contact Bob Anderson at 763-441-3108 or pikebob@charter.net to make your reservations.

**GW:** "Yeah... And big fish too. Some guys say fall is the best or other guys will say August full moon. But a fish eats every day of the year. Or close to it. So that puts opener right in the money."

**JO:** *Sighs.* "Well, okay. What else do you want to say, George, here? Here's a chance. This tape will be around forever, you realize."

**GW:** "As far as Muskies Inc., just keep doing what you're doing. And don't get any grandiose ideas of becoming a real big organization. It's just not in the cards. Stay healthy, stay small, and stay important."

*George Wahl passed away November 19, 2008 and is buried at Ft. Snelling National Cemetery. The Expo has been renamed "George's Minnesota Muskie Expo" and will continue to be held annually.*

*The video of the full interview is available on DVD. Please contact me at [assistanteditor@muskiesinc.org](mailto:assistanteditor@muskiesinc.org).*

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**BANQUET** continued from page 1

Platinum early-bird packages will participate in an exclusive bonus drawing for a Shimano Calcutta 400TE reel valued at \$369 as well as the St. Croix Legend rod drawing. Act fast because the deadline for early-bird packages and the bonus raffles is January 30.

Seating at the banquet is limited to the first 200 who purchase tickets and they will go fast, so get your orders in early. You may purchase your tickets several ways. Use the order form below and mail in your reservations. You may purchase on-line using your credit card at our chapter website [www.twincities-muskiesinc.org](http://www.twincities-muskiesinc.org). Order forms are also available to print out at the web site.

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*Dennis is one of the Midwest's most accomplished professional anglers. In addition to his guide service, Dennis has been featured on numerous television shows and is a frequent featured writer in Musky Hunter Magazine. During his 4 years with the Professional Muskie Tournament Trail, he became the only angler in its history to make 3 consecutive championship appearances and finish in the Top 10 three years in a row.*

*Muskies Inc. Twin Cities Chapter General Meetings are held at 7:00 pm the second Tuesday of every month at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 1114 American Boulevard West, Bloomington, MN (just off I-494 & Lyndale Ave.).*



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