

Bar closes; fishing still open

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Last Friday night was a night to remember. The End of an Era. The Closing of an Age. The Passing of an Institution.

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They closed the 400 Bar. "Nobody cares," I told Big Jim Sanders. "It is, as Cy Butt used to say, 'an historical occasion' and who gives a damn?"

"That's right," Big Jim said, "But let them close a school and people show up in droves."

We talked about all the folks — fishermen, reporters, bon vivants — who had passed through these portals and we drank a beer to their troubled spirits.

"It was always like Spoon River with barstools," Frank Custer observed.

The ace ex-Capital Times man fell — leaned, actually — strangely silent. To be on strike during the longest winter on record.

The coldest Spring. The highest water. And now this ... it was too much for a body to bear.

"I'm going to take up fishing," he said.

"You picked a good time," Big Jim said. "The Big Green Hellgrammites are in at Blair Street."

"Big Green tomorrow," Frank smiled wanly. "A Little Blue tonight."

We left him there, at the bar, arms akimbo, making his last stand.

"You keep closing the saloons," James Roy Miller used to warn us, "and you'll kill the free press in America."

Ponder that, come hell or highwater, along with your Friday Fishin' Report.

LAKE MENDOTA: Starting to pick up some perch off Picnic Point and Second Point. A lot off Governor's Island too but they're small. Big, fat bluegills off Tenney Park on nightcrawlers.

Smallmouth bass and walleyes fair off Conklin Park. Smallmouth active off Maple Bluff. Also a few behind the CMI Building. On crawlers.

Muskies and northern pike are active. Steady Eddy reports a keeper muskie off The Edgewater. Scott Rasmussen says a few Northern were taken off Governor's Island, but "nothing spectaclar," mostly in the 6 to 7 pound range.

Catfishing continues good in North Bay-Westport area. Check with Dick Stenlund. He has a trunkful.

LAKE MONONA: A few bluegills in The Triangle area on leaf worms. Good catches here over the 4th.

A lot of sheepshead are being caught off Law Park — "big, slobby things" — according to Steady Eddy. There's ways of fixing them, he insists, but the secret is locked up in

the 400 Bar. In truth, DNR and Sea Grant know too, but it ain't half the fun finding out from them.

The Rock Pile is good for bluegills, many running right around one-pound each.

Little peewee walleyes are all over the lake. In a couple of years, should be a real fishery. Dunning Street bar is producing keepers, mostly at night, but then as Steady says, doesn't everybody?

They're getting bluegills in Squaw Bay, but the fish are small and Scott says you really would do better off The Rock Pile. Also some crappie action in Squaw Bay.

On the Yahara between Mendota and Monona, they're catching nice "eatin" walleyes in the 2-pound class and they're catching them on leaf worms.

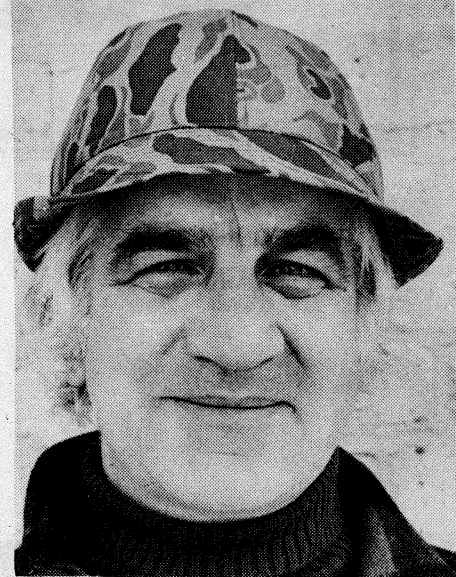
UPPER MUD LAKE: This is some of the best panfishing around, unless you count Captain Jack's bait well, or Bonnie Connie's basement.

Crappies are fat and sassy and running up to a pound apiece. Use a jig dressed with a minnow.

The bluegills, while not the real biggies, are averaging a half-pound to three-quarters of a pound. Most successful rig seems to be a small ice jig with either red or wax worms.

LAKE WAUBESA: They're taking out some nice Northern pike. Best spot is The Springs at the South End. Best bait — the Old Reliable sucker, but some fish are being taken on spoonplugs. Northerns this week were running from 8 to 15 pounds.

The panfishing is good at Hog Island, nice bluegills here. Panfishing only fair at Brickston Park, bluegills few and far between. Also, largemouth bass off Hog Island on leeches and crawlers. The Bible Camp area is producing acceptable walleyes at night.



**Papa Hambone's
Fishing Report**

LAKE KEGONSA: About the same as last week, which was: Perch and bluegills at the Country Club and Holiday Point areas. Walleyes around Holiday Point. Not a lot of people fishing here. At the river mouth, largemouth bass being taken, nothing big, but they're keepers up to 2-pounds.

Overall, the consensus is that the fishermen have adjusted pretty well to the high water and it really hasn't hurt us and our crazy sport.

That's good to hear, says Steady Eddy, because The North Pole is predicting on Channel 3 that this weekend we got more high water coming, the piers are all down at the thermocline and the 400 Bar is closed forever.

Custer always said it was God's will.

And She must really be ticked off.