

# editorial

6 - Southpoint Sun

Wednesday, March 4, 2020

*Memories of...  
Kingsville, Leamington  
and Wheatley*



## I'm not an ice fisherman

The mild winter has countless ice fishing enthusiasts lamenting their lack of recreation this past couple of months.

I have noticed a few hardy souls on Facebook out fishing on harbour ice near Lake St. Clair, but it's something that I wouldn't do.

My experience with ice fishing goes back to when I was a kid and I think I can count on one hand the amount of ice fishing expeditions I've been involved in my life.

My earliest memory of ice fishing goes back to when I was about 8 or 9 years old. My dad took me out on frozen Lake Erie.

We made our way through the bush across from our house at Point Pelee, pulling a toboggan with all of our supplies.

After navigating the makeshift trail through the deep snow, we made it over the shoreline ice hills and headed out onto the lake.

I remember being mesmerized by the cracking of the ice as it made those ominous sounds. After a few minutes we parked our sled and Dad got a line ready for me. He then used an auger and a spud to create a hole for me to fish in. I don't remember if I caught anything that day, but do remember it was very cold and I accidentally stepped in the fishing hole and got a soaker up to my knee.

Dad hurried me home and got me dry and then the next day I came down with the mumps. I managed to miss a few days of school and always associated that soaker with getting the mumps. Of course I know better now.

I may have gone out ice fishing once or twice as a teenager but don't really remember anything unique or special about those trips.

My only other venture out on frozen Lake Erie came when I was in my early twenties.

I believe there were five of us that went out on that fateful day. Brian and Greg Sellon, Troy and Tracy Wiper, and myself.

We had a fancy homemade hut, all the tools necessary, a bucket of minnows and something to sip on to warm our souls, that wasn't coffee.

Funny, four of the five of us were together last Saturday night and we laughed about that day.

As we stepped down onto the ice off the end of the dock, I remember we tipped over the minnow bucket and lost most of them.

As we scrambled to pick up errant minnows, I remember the ice below us kind of heaving like it was about to give way. I had a bad feeling.

A few more steps and we parked our sled and went to make our hole with the ice spud. Expecting to take a few whacks to get through, it broke through right away, revealing just how thin the ice was after all. It wasn't much more than a couple inches thick.

Seeing this, I started to go into a little panic and immediately went to all fours, employing a stop-drop-and-crawl defense. The rest of them thought this was funny.

They all laughed (and continue laughing to this day), but we all scampered safely back to the dock and cancelled our fishing plans for the day.

I grew up on that lake but I don't remember ever being as scared on Lake Erie as I was that day.

Well, other than a summer storm trip we took to Pelee Island on Sam Ouellette's little 16-foot fiberglass boat about 1983. Somehow, we thought we could outrun the Pelee Islander and get to the island way ahead of our wives and girlfriends and the rest of our ball team. We didn't.

I thought we were dying that day, but I'll save that for another column.

### RIB'S RAMBLINGS

Mark Ribble



Photo courtesy of the Kingsville Archives



The Kingsville Fish Hatchery (aka Dominion Fish Hatchery) was erected around 1916 at a cost of \$11,560. The two-storey frame structure, 87 feet long by 36 feet wide, was built on the west side of Division Street South, at the lakefront, where luxury townhomes now stand. Local fishermen had lobbied the Dominion Government to increase the number of hatcheries in the western Lake Erie basin in order to stimulate the fishing economy. Kingsville was selected over Amherstburg for the location of the new facility. An adjacent residence was also built for the use of the Fish Hatchery Superintendent and his family. After closing the facility in 1960, the building was used by the Kingsville Board of Works and then eventually demolished in 1998. The land was sold to a developer around 1999. (First in a series of four).

A Look at Leamington's Past courtesy of C. Scott Holland



March 1986. Brad Brown (left), captain of the Shoreline Novice team, accepted the championship trophy from Grampa Bob Kirk at the annual Grampa Kirk Tournament.

Clippings from the Wheatley Journal, March 2000



Winter Camp Challenge - Scouts from Wheatley were among the troops at the recent Owen Sound winter camp. Using the insulating effect of snow can help make for comfortable conditions in harsh weather. Above left: Kellie Dawn Rivait is shown relaxing in the snow shelter built by the Scouts. Above right: Preparing for an outing using the sled the Scouts built last year are left to right, Joel Rivait, Mandy Hodovick (in sled), Chris Rougoor, Kyle Cobby, Adam Thomas and Kipp Cobby.

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