

Tight Lines Newsletter

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

President's Note	1
Feb Speaker Preview	2
Feb Mtg Raffle Prizes	3
Steve's Fishing Report	3
Jan Meeting Review	4
Chain Outing Report	5
Donations and Dues	6
Outings/Shows Report	7/8
Big Fish of the Month	8
Meet New Members	9/10
Sponsors/Discounts	11/12
Membership Info	13

President's Note:

As the deadline for this issue came due. I thought "Man, I've done a lot of these". After doing the math I came to realize this is the 50th newsletter I've edited and mostly wrote (with contributions from Steve and Brian each month and the various trip coordinators throughout the year). That's a crazy milestone in my book!

While it's often stressful and time consuming to produce, and there are month's I might dread it a bit, I'm still enjoying the process. I like to write, I like to create, and it keeps me connected, not only with our 125+ members, but with the other 1000 non-member subscribers who get this newsletter each month.

I get a lot of positive feedback from readers, which is very satisfying. But mostly I do this because I like to see the club's activities come to life and be recorded. I greatly appreciate all of you that look at it each month!

This Month's Speaker

While it may still be cold and the water as hard as ice (ha!), dreams of open water are starting to creep in. Pre-spawn walleye might be first on some minds come Spring, but the feisty smallmouth bass is often considered the favorite of many to chase all year long.

www.arlingtonanglers.com



Our February meeting is often our largest. Past members come back to renew and many visitors we met at the Chicagoland Fishing Expo come to check us out. I hope you'll be among the attendees.

Arrive early to check in. There will be a crowd. We have a great speaker on tap, the raffle prizes are top notch, and the camaraderie can't be beat. It is a "must be at" event!

Chris Popp - President

Bill Schultz is a well known expert on "bronzbacks," catching thousands from both the big waters of Green Bay and the rivers all across Southern Wisconsin. He will be sharing many of the secrets of his success which will surely help you add to yours. Don't miss him!

Key Dates

Club Meetings
Feb 17
Mar 17

**Rolling Meadows
Flea Market**
Mar 7

Outings
Feb 18-20
Sturgeon Bay Ice
Mar 22-25
Wisc. River/Dells
Apr 23-25
Lk. Shelbyville

This Month's Speaker

Arlington Anglers Fishing Club



Visit our website at: www.arlingtonanglers.com

Tuesday, February 17, 2026

Bill Schultz

Chasing Smallies: Sharing My Secrets



Bill Schultz is one of the top smallmouth bass anglers in the country. Since his first smallie in 1994, he has caught and released over 35,000 SMB, with nearly 20,000 coming while wading and kayak fishing rivers across Southern WI. His talks and articles the past 25 years have turned thousands onto the fun and excitement of chasing SMB on rivers & lakes throughout WI. Please join me in welcoming Bill to the club!

Club Meetings are on the 3rd Tuesday of each month Jan.- Nov.

**Poplar Creek Banquets
2354 W. Higgins Rd.
Hoffman Estates, IL 60169**

**Guests Welcome
Fee \$3 members | \$8 non
6:30 PM Start**

February Raffle Grand Prize – St. Croix Avid



Our February raffle Grand Prize will be a St. Croix Avid Series 6'8", Medium power, Extra Fast action spinning rod valued at \$275!

This high end fishing tool is perfect for a wide range of finesse and power techniques. Ned rig, drop shot, vertical jigging, and tossing swim baits and paddle tails are all exceptionally effective with this rod.

Five awesome consolation prizes worth another \$300 will also be included in the raffle to give you more chances to win big.

Tickets are 1 for \$5 or 3 for \$10.

Be sure to attend the Tuesday February 17th meeting to get your tickets for a chance to win one of these outstanding prizes.!

Steve's Fishing Report By: Steve Jung

Ice is still good but air temps in the 50's this weekend may make some areas unsafe. Check conditions first and go with someone for safety.

AREA LAKES: Panfish on small jigs with waxies, spikes, or wigglers on cribs or weeds if you can find them in 4' - 10'. Crappies may be a little deeper.

FOX CHAIN: Ice is still good for the next few days, but warmer weather is on the way. Check conditions before heading out. Bluegills in 4' of water on jigs and waxies. Crappies a little deeper in 4'-12'. Small jigs with minnows or small plastics are working. Walleyes on tip up with shiners and some nice catfish being taken also.

CHICAGO LAKEFRONT: Perch - hit or miss from 87th street Usual baits working.

LAKE DELEVAN/GENEVA:

Panfish in 4' - 10' on small jigs tipped with waxies, wigglers, and spikes

NORTHERN WISCONSIN:

Ice is excellent with 4"-5" of snow on top. Northern Pike - Fair to very good. Big minnows over weeds in 8'-14' Perch - Very good 12'-17' over weeds with jigs/spoons tipped with spikes, wigglers, and waxies Walleye - fair to good with the evening bite being the best. 6' - 10' on tip ups with shiners/suckers. Bluegill/Crappie - good 10' - 14' with jigs tipped with spikes, wigglers, and small plastics. Crappies better in the deeper basin. Largemouth bass - fair to good with small shiners or jigging raps in 8' - 12'.



Last Month's Speakers Tips: By: Brian O'Connor



Chris Taurisano spoke about 'Optimizing your Time in the Winter Months, sharing "4 Factors that Initiate the Bite". They were: cold water temperatures, spawning movements, baitfish movements and current. He said that these factors more than anything will dictate where to fish and how to fish.

For ice fishing, T-Bone prefers the Fox Chain for panfish, Lake Michigan harbors for brown trout, Eagle Lake for pike, and the Mississippi River for perch. He also reminded club members of the local gems around us for great ice fishing. He mentioned success he's had on Pike with dead bait.

After recently selling T-Bone Guide Service Chris rediscovered his love for fishing after the tedium of 300 guide trips a year. In his spare time he now focuses on trophy waters within a 2-hr drive. For open water, Chris favors Lake Geneva walleye, Lake Michigan (Milwaukee) brown trout, Lake Michigan (Illinois/Indiana) perch, and the St. Joseph River (Michigan) for walleye and steelhead.

Chris harped on preparation. The #1 issue with his clients was they weren't dressed properly. Warm layered clothes, waterproof boots, hats, gloves, and spares are critical. He also shared some tips for when the ice bite isn't so good.

Regarding prep for open water he suggested oiling reels, changing out old line, and sharpening hooks.



January Raffle Winners

Our January raffle grand prize was a Grandt All American Series spinning rod valued at \$240! It was 6'6" in length with medium light power. The excited winner was Pat Trunda pictured at left, on the right, with Grandt pro staffer and past AAFC President Bert Saxon.

Flashlight Combo), Larry Liebert (Okuma Inspira Spinning Reel), and Rich Sutton (Googan Squad 3 Piece Shallow Bass Assortment).

There were also 20 door prizes winners among the 68 attendees!



5 additional consolation prizes worth over \$200 were also given out. Winners pictured at right in order were: Dave Rohlwing (Husky Tool Kit), Don Taylor (BPS Tackle Bag), Phil Fors (Pocket Knife and



Fox Chain Ice Outing Report By: Dave Rohlwing



The warm days we experienced in early January were enjoyed by many, but it trashed the ice that had developed earlier. So, we had to reschedule our Chain of Lakes Ice fishing adventure to January 31st.

We met in the parking lot of the Time to Bite Bar and Grille at 6AM where our guide picked us up and transported us to our ice fishing location on the north end of Channel Lake. The ice that day was very good and measured around 11 inches.



Fourteen of us fished the hard water through 8-inch holes. The electronics showed fish below, but the bite was slow. Our guides fired up their grille and served us hot cheddar brat sandwiches with chips and water mid-morning.



Getting off the ice late morning we reassembled at Bootlegger's Bar and Grille for lunch and socializing.

Members joined our adventure for various reasons. For some it was a first-time experience, and some wanted to just get out and fish. One member said "I thought the trip was great! Met a bunch of good fishermen who had a lot of experience and good stories of other adventures fishing." Another member hadn't ice fished in 50 years and just wanted to give it another try.



Tackle Donations Final Collection Date

The deadline for tackle donations for our table at the Rolling Meadows Fishing Flea market, which is the largest such events held in the Chicago area, will be the February 17th meeting. This year the flea market sale will be held on March 7 at Rolling Meadow H.S.

New for this year, all sales will be directed to our philanthropic budget, an initiative we began at the end of 2025.

We rely on tackle donations from existing or previous club members. Therefore, your assistance is needed for this year's event to be a success.

Everyone has old tackle that will never again see the light of day. Please set aside 2 or 3 items for donation to our cause.

Items most needed are lures, jigs and terminal tackle. Tackle bags, working reels, decent rods, and various outdoor gear is also good. Please be generous giving up the things you'll no longer use. It's a big help!

We will have a collection box for misc. items and a table for larger items at the back of the room at the Feb meeting. Contribute what you can. Call Chris Popp if you can't make the meeting and have something to donate.



2026 Dues Renewal Deadline Is Feb 17

The official deadline for dues renewal to maintain continuous membership is February 17. Shortly after that date past members will be removed from the member roster and communications list until they renew. That means they won't get the email updates on outings, events and other activities, and won't be eligible for the Midwest Outdoors subscription raffle.

Of course, we hope that all past members want to come back. We are happy to announce that, in spite of inflation, we are holding the family membership to \$40.

This year looks to be another great one. With outstanding speakers, more outings, great raffle prizes, and networking opportunities, you won't want to miss out. Even if you weren't very active in 2025, it's still a bargain to stay involved.

While past members can obviously renew at any time, everyone paid by the February meeting will be entered to win one of 25 subscriptions to the Midwest Outdoors Magazine we will raffle off in early March.

Renewal options are on pg 13.



March is Fishing Swap Meet Month



Who doesn't want to find a bargain on fishing tackle and equipment? Duh, nobody! While we all probably have more gear than we'll ever use we can't seem to resist getting just a little bit more. Especially when we want to try a new technique or refill a dwindling supply of key baits.

While there is no guarantee what will be offered at a fishing swap meet (or flea market) there is always something to be found for pennies on the dollar. And it's a great way to spend a weekend

morning scrounging through tables and hanging with other anglers on a brisk winter weekend morning. Although a couple have come and gone the majority of events are held in March. This year the roster isn't optimal as several events were scheduled on top of each other. But at least one will be in your local area regardless where you are in northern Illinois.

Here are the dates for the March events. Search online for times and other details. Check one out!

Mar 7	R. M. Fishing Flea Market	Rolling Meadows HS
Mar 14	Salmon Unlimited Swap Meet	Schlader Rec Ctr Winthrop Harbor
Mar 15	QCHH Flea market	Yorkville American Legion
Mar 15	Fishing Garage Sale	Rockford – Hoffman House
Mar 21	Chain O Lakes Fishing Flea Mkt	Fox Lake American Legion
Mar 21	Fish & Hook Show	Lockport VFW
Mar 21	Riverside FC Swap Meet	Berwyn Moose Lodge

AAFC at Rolling Meadows Fishing Flea Market

The Arlington Anglers Fishing Club will have a booth at the upcoming Rolling Meadows Fishing Flea Market on March 7 from 8-1 at the Rolling Meadows HS in Rolling Meadows, IL.

We will have a wide variety of used tackle and equipment for sale, at bargain prices. All sales proceeds will be going to our philanthropy budget.

We will also have a small stand highlighting the benefits of membership in our club and will be collecting email addresses for our monthly newsletter.

Please stop by our booth to learn more about the Arlington Anglers and maybe pick up a tackle item or two to help our community outreach initiatives. And bring a friend!



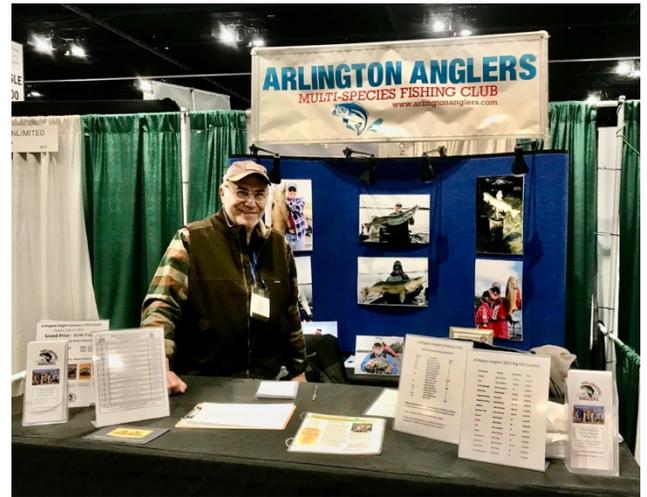
Chicagoland Fishing Expo Report

The Arlington Anglers had a booth at the recent Chicagoland Fishing Expo held at the Schaumburg Convention Center from January 22 to 25. I'm not sure how many years we have exhibited, at this show but it has to be over 20 years.

While this is the premier fishing and outdoor show of the season it doesn't compare to the heyday of the late last century where the International Amphitheater and then the Rosemont Convention Center had hundreds of booths featuring all the boat and tackle manufacturers, and resorts, of the time. But it's still a good show to see and purchase some of the latest gear and hear good national and local expert speakers share their knowledge. It had record attendance for the few years it's been in Schaumburg, in spite of nasty weather.

Our primary goal at this show is to present the benefits of club membership, invite visitors to attend one of our meetings, and to sign up subscribers to this newsletter hoping they'll see all the things we do and want to be part of it in the future. We consider the show a success with 105 new subscribers, with several already joining.

This is also an event where we strengthen our industry relationships. It's great to see so many friends and supporters of the club each year.



Big Fish of the Month



Big Fish of the Month goes to frequent contributor to this column, Dan Blaszcinski, for this fat 31-1/2" pike he recently caught while ice fishing on Winthrop Harbor, Lake Michigan. He also got several nice perch.

Normally we would have a whole page of Big Fish with 1st and 2nd Honorable Mentions and a Kid Fish of the Month. Unfortunately, Dan was the only member that submitted an entry. I can only imagine it's because most members aren't out yet and are waiting for open water season.

If you're a member and catch a nice fish, send a picture to Chris Popp for Big Fish of the Month consideration.

Getting to Know Some New 2026 Members



Mike Stehlik lives in Deer Park with his Significant Other of 12 years, Erin Marcus. They have a dog, Logan, and a mean old man of a Macaw named Grover.

Mike works for Thrivent Financial training their new financial advisors.

In spite of this picture of him driving one, Mike does not have a boat.

Mike says he likes fishing for everything but leans more towards smallmouth than largemouth bass. He likes both open water and ice fishing.

Mike joined the club to meet new friends and to learn more about local fishing opportunities.



Jim Feltman lives in St. Charles with his wife of 29 years, Susanne. They have 3 adult children, two of which are avid fisherman.

Jim is an engineer but switched to sales and management. He launched the US subsidiary of a Japanese pump company 12 years ago and works at building their presence in the States.

Jim has 2 boats and 2 kayaks. His boats are a 2008 Craigcat with a 25 HP Merc and a SeaDoo Speedster.

Jim says he fishes for what's biting, but wants to get better at targeting species like crappie, walleye, and muskie.

Jim joined the club in anticipation of winding down his career, looking to spend more time on his hobbies, with fishing being at the top.

Jim said he was impressed with the club after attending a meeting as a guest and was excited to sign up. He even corralled a friend to join!



Bill Dohr and his wife Teresa hail from Paw Paw, Michigan, but are originally from Park Ridge. They have 3 adult kids.

Bill is retired from a successful career in banking and finance.

Bill does have a pontoon boat, but moors it on his community lake, so not suitable for travel.

Bill says he's open to chasing all species and have caught most throughout his life. Generally, though, his preference is targeting whatever fish are biting that day.

Bill joined the club to participate in outings, attend meetings when he can make it back into town, and getting to know other like-minded fishing enthusiasts.

More New 2026 Member Profiles



Frank Rowinski lives in the Sun City Dell Webb community in Huntley with his wife, Elaine. They have 2 married children.

Frank is presently the President of the Sun City Anglers. He is also a member of McGraw Wildlife Foundation in Dundee.

Frank is retired from United Health Care where he handled pharmacy licensing & legal maintenance.

Frank doesn't have a boat. He fishes mostly at McGraw where they are provided.

In freshwater he likes bass, walleye, pike and muskie. When fishing in-shore he likes redfish, speckled trout and flounder.

Frank was recommended to our club by other Sun City members of both. He joined ours to meet even more anglers and to get some ideas for the club he runs.



Dave Mikal resides in Grayslake with his wife, Bea.

Dave is retired from a career in construction.

Dave has a 16' Smoker Craft Big Fisherman with a 25 HP motor.

Dave says he isn't an avid fisherman (yet) but enjoys and looks forward to the adventures and fellowship with other people in the club.

Dave Joined after being invited to a meeting by an existing member and liked what he saw.



Jim Svestka resides in Berwyn. He's been a lifelong bachelor, but has a steady girlfriend, Levier.

Jim is semi-retired, helping out with family. Previously he was Manager of Finance & Operations at Motorola Distributorship.

Jim has 3 water craft: a Bass Tracker for inland lakes, an 18" Lund for Lake Michigan and Green Bay, and a Hobie kayak.

Jim likes fishing for walleye, perch catfish, crappie, BGs, smallmouth, salmon, trout, and pike.

He also likes eating fish, so he often targets good eating varieties for the table.

Jim joined the club to learn more fishing techniques, participate in boat outings in Wisconsin, and to get in on the kayak outings where ever they take place.

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trollingmotorrepairservice.com



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Member Discounts

Being a member of the Arlington Anglers comes with many benefits. Following is a list of partners that offer discounts to our members with their membership card or online code. Be aware, some manufacturers do not allow discounts by their dealers. Also, discount percentages could change at any time, at our partner's discretion. See our website Members Only section for the discounts that apply.



Renew Your Membership or Join The Club

Yearly dues are the financial life-blood of our club. They pay our speakers, insurance, shows, pizza party, and other operating expenses. Presently, our annual family membership is \$40.00. Please renew or join today!

We've now added Zelle quick pay to our options: (arlangfc19@gmail.com). So, 3 ways to pay: (1)Zelle, (2)at a meeting, or (3)check by mail. New members - use the form below or visit our "Join Our Club" web page.

Bring checks made out to "Arlington Anglers" to a meeting or mail to:

Arlington Anglers
C/O Rich Sutton
719 W. Catino St.
Arlington Hts., IL 60005



We're on the Web!
www.arlingtonanglers.com
or
QR Code (to the right)
or
FACEBOOK at: Arlington Anglers



Renewing members need only provide Date and Name.

Fill out completely and mail with your check.

Today's Date: ___/___/___

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: __ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell: _____

Date of Birth: ___/___/___

Email Address: _____
