

Well members, spring is here, I sure am glad of that. We didn't have too bad of a winter but I am still glad that spring is here and we are starting to get the boats and equipment out and readied for the upcoming season, also glad because the extended trout season is open on April 1<sup>st</sup> and that means steelhead fishing on some of my favorite rivers/streams is open. The Big Mansitee was iced up for a time this winter and that kind of put a stop on the river fishing there for a lot of us.

How many of you made it out to one of the fishing or boat shows around the state, what kind of new equipment did you check out and walk away with, maybe a new boat. It always exciting to have a new boat and thinking about how you are going to rig it for fishing and family fun. I was able to attend a couple of the shows this year, not as many as I had hoped to but it was still nice to get out and see all the new products and meet new friends and catch up with old friends and dream of the new boats and equipment that I would like to have. Sure would like to get a small river boat with a jet drive and have it fully rigged to fish the rivers and use it for harbor patrol as well during the early spring and late fall.

In the last issue of GLSFN we talked a little bit about the proposed license package that has been presented by the N.R.C. I know a lot of discussion has taken place around the state at chapter meetings and shows. So far the license package is just a proposal, it hasn't had enough support to be actually presented as a bill by the legislature and as of the time of me writing this it doesn't look like anyone will be. It appears that it will probably be sent back to the N.R.C. for review and modification. The state board has decided that at the present time that we are not going to take a position on the proposal because it is just a proposal, if it does gain support and is presented as a bill then we will have to take a position to either support or not support it, we already know how much of our membership feels about it in its present form and it looks like most of you don't like it in its present form. If it is modified or altered then we will be coming back to the membership for more input before we do take a position. There are a couple of NEW bills related to our hunting and fishing license fees being introduced and they are currently in appropriations committee for review, when you get a chance take a look at them and stay tuned for more info. the bills. I'll have more info. here as well as our chapter reps. will have some info. and check the D.N.R. site and Mich. Govt. web site and ask questions about the the bills and how they may affect us..

Some other news that we have been following is the virus that has been moving into the Great Lakes area and may have a significant impact on our fishery, that virus is V.H.S. Dr. Ken Merckel had a good article about it in the last issue of GLSFN and he pretty well explained it and what effects it has on certain fish. No one knows for sure what, if any effect it will have on salmon or trout at this point but VHS in some other different stages has had an effect on salmon on the west coast and trout in Europe, lets keep our fingers crossed and hope it doesn't spread like some say it could. We can all do our part here as well; make sure not to transport any live bait to other areas around the state or to any of the inland lakes. Also please make sure you live wells and bilges are drained and clean before moving the boat to other areas, a concentration of bleach and water will clean and kill the virus in our bilges and live wells.

I would also like to encourage all of you to participate in your chapter events this year, outings, tournaments, picnics and so forth. Also would like to encourage everyone to take some one new fishing this year, maybe a neighbor, relative, some one at work. And

please don't forget about our youth, let's get them out and get a fishing rod in their hands as well and mentor them. For those of you that want to add a little competition to your fishing , try out one of the club tournaments' and then maybe try out one of the many larger tournaments around the state as well and see how it is. I would also like to ask everyone to try out a new port this year, a port you have never fished before and see how you like it; you may find your new favorite port. We try to fish a different port/tournament every year and I think it makes you a better angler and gives you a new prospective on our great lakes. Hope to see some of you around the state this year and remember to be safe out there on the water, the highways and in the woods.

Rick Balabon – President / MSSFA