

Skills Day 2014

The 2014 Skills Day Run was held on the Snake River below Brownlee Dam on June 7, 2014. The weather was near perfect and the fishing was great. For me the early morning started with spotting a very nice branch antlered buck on the OX Ranch property. Sorry the light was not good enough for a picture that would make the Rapids.

There were only three boat captains that attended however the goal was to build some confidences for all in moving current. I always emphasize the most important skill is the common sense to wear a life jacket when boating. The self-inflating jackets are my preference because in the summer time they are comfortable to wear. One caution with the self-inflating life jackets is to pay attention to the manufacture's recommendation to test and or replace the canisters.

We launched around 9:00 AM and spent several hours maneuvering boats in open water to transfer passengers and to tow a disabled boat in calm and moving water. Also we practiced 180 degree turns in moving water and other maneuvers in the moving water near the bridge.

All told it was a great weekend to be out on the water. Stay tuned for a slightly different format next year that will entail a little more whitewater, moving water, and great fishing. — Jed Myers



The Powerall

New Device for Jump Starting Vehicles

At the regular meeting Monday June 9th, 2014 the members in attendance saw a mobile battery pack that is used to jumpstart vehicles with dead batteries. The particular power-pack, "The Powerall Deluxe", is capable of starting up to 20 engines before needing a recharge and is the size of a checkbook wallet. For those that saw the device it is truly a compact item to keep in your boat, car, or pickup. The unit comes in a small carry case and fits easily in a glove box or console. Hopefully the vehicle needing a jump start will be a neighbor not you but this power-pack will be useful for whomever needs assistance.

If you would like to check out the power-pack more closely, go to <http://www.thepowerall.com/> for all the details on this replacement for jumper cables. The Amazon .com price is \$129.95 plus \$9.95 shipping and handling. Initially I was going to facilitate a purchase and delivery of these items for the members however, Amazon is hard to beat with their service and the units will deliver to your doorstep. I would encourage you to take a look and see if the unit would benefit you. Don't wait to be stranded to decide!! If Amazon doesn't work for you, let me know and I can utilize my source to get one for you. I believe the local NAPA stores also carry the units.
Jed Myers

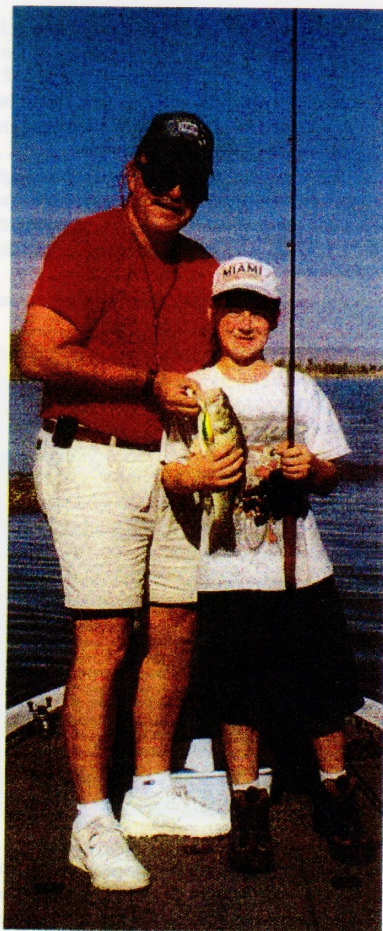
The Legacy of Tommy L.

by Judge John C. Vehlow

By way of introduction, the name on the side of my boat reads "Judge Bubba," and I love to bass fish and do it competitively whenever I can. To hear my Texas accent, you wouldn't know I have lived in Idaho almost half my life, and I have been presiding as magistrate judge at the Ada County (Idaho) Juvenile Court since 1990. I want to tell you about the time when my job responsibilities converged with my passion for fishing. I want to tell you about Tommy L.

It can easily be said that I have seen and heard just about everything during my tenure as a juvenile judge in Boise. In November 1999, an 11-year-old boy named Tommy L. came before my court for sentencing on arson, disrupting the educational process, and battery. Tommy had attempted to set a mattress on fire in somebody's garage, angrily tipped over all the desks in his classroom, and beat on his little brother.

Why, you may ask, such trouble for a boy so young? Well, his parents divorced when Tommy was 6 following much domestic violence within the home. His father was an alcoholic with a criminal record who fled arrest warrants to California; mother was a "recovering" drug user with a criminal record. There had been 23 referrals to Child Protection regarding neglect and abuse in the home. Tommy, who physically abused his pets, repeatedly hurt his siblings, and heard voices telling him to "do things," had been hospitalized three times in 1999 for depression and suicide attempts and was on medications. At the time of sentencing, Tommy L. had served 41 days in detention, and his mother did not visit him once during that time.



Judge John Vehlow and Tommy L.'s memorable 2001 fishing trip led to the September 2004 Scales of Justice Bass Tournament.

For some unknown reason during Tommy's sentencing hearing, and for the first time in my judicial career, I promised Tommy L. that if he successfully completed probation and stayed out of trouble, I would take him fishing. Perhaps I saw it as a safe bet because a kid that young, with so many strikes against him, would eventually get committed to state custody.

Instead, Health and Welfare removed him from his home and placed him in a stable foster care environment. With the aid of his caseworker, probation officer, foster parents, and counselors, Tommy L. successfully completed probation without further criminal activity. . . and I owed him a fishing trip.

I procrastinated in spite of the note stuck on the edge of my computer, plus a reminder by Tommy's probation officer that he had not forgotten. It was late August 2001 and almost time for Tommy to start school. So I set up a Saturday afternoon trip to Lake Lowell and cajoled my fishing buddy, Doug Stowers, to

go along as logistical support and witness. It was a beautiful day. Lake Lowell was very low, and I knew a bunch of catchable fish were stacked in the Equalizer.

We picked up Tommy L., now almost 13 years old, with his trout pole and spinning reel and went to the lake. At the launch, I put Tommy in a life jacket, sat him in my lap and headed out, letting him steer my bass boat. Tommy had never been in such a boat, and he was so excited. When we started fishing, I hooked the first bass and let Tommy reel it in. Doug let Tommy do the same, and by the end of the day, Tommy had caught a few on his own pole too. We fished until almost dark, took some photos, and stopped for burgers on the way home. While ordering, Tommy looked up at me and said, "Judge Vehlow, I want you to know this has been the greatest day of my life!"

Whoa, knock me over! I barely contained my tears in front of the kid, and I still can't tell that story without becoming emotional. I kept my promise, but Tommy L. was the one who taught me that day at Lake Lowell... that, as adults, regardless of who we think we are or how hectic our daily lives are, we should still take time to give a kid a hand up.

Sadly, there are many more Tommy L.'s out there, more than you can possibly imagine. My experience introducing Tommy to bass fishing made me think that other troubled kids could be helped by tournament bass fishermen—good sportsmen who possess strong moral and ethical values, a desire for stewardship and conservation of natural resources, and youthful enthusiasm about catching bass.

Luckily, the legacy of Tommy L. didn't end with one successful day of fishing. Through the involvement and commitment of Idaho sportsmen, court and agency staff, and many other people who care about kids, the legacy continued last September with the Scales of Justice Bass Tournament.

A Legacy Continues... The Scales of Justice Bass Tournament

After my memorable fishing trip with Tommy L., I envisioned holding a bass fishing tournament for kids who had committed crimes and were on probation with my court. Last winter, with a green light from both the Idaho Supreme Court and the Ada County Board of County Commissioners, I started looking for a source of fishermen and their boats. I contacted Mr. J.C. Worthen, president of the Idaho Bass Federation (IBF), the governing organization of all bass fishing clubs



Rob Bristol (above left) and Scott Warnock help Sean R. weigh his catch.

Right: Tony Enrico helps Tricia W. reel one in.



in Idaho, about my idea. Mr. Worthen, a retired educator and competitive bass fisherman, instinctively recognized that tournament fishermen acting as mentors to kids in trouble would be a win-win situation. From the outset, I had Mr. Worthen's and the IBF Board's full support.

Together we named the tournament, set the date for Sept. 19, 2004, and set up a committee to organize the event, to be held at nearby Strike Reservoir. We also gained the invaluable support of Larry Raginit of Premiere Bass, who runs an annual fishing tournament here for kids with disabilities, to

Below: Expert fishermen, local volunteers, and approximately 30 youths participated in the September event.



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"I don't think I've ever been more impressed with an event than the Scales of Justice Bass Tournament. The sight of all of those beautiful bass fishing boats lined up, each with a wide-eyed, excited juvenile court youth on board, was awesome! . . . It was the perfect day; kids with struggles, and over 100 people volunteering their time to give these young people a positive experience. It doesn't get any better than that!"

— Dr. Kay Carter, ACJCS Director

assist in getting sponsorships and donations. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game provided the necessary permits for each of the juveniles, and the Idaho Power Company reserved an adjacent park for use as tournament headquarters. Local businesses and supporters donated fishing tackle, rods and reels for the kids, plaques, hats, t-shirts, and food for our picnic.

Throughout the spring and summer, tournament fisherman came forward to volunteer, as did many non-boaters who wanted to help. The kids were nominated and their parents completed liability and confidentiality waivers. Each boater had to provide a

certificate of liability insurance. Teams were established, with a court officer assigned as a witness in each boat, along with the fisherman and the juvenile.

The weather was fine on tournament day. About 30 juveniles were transported by Ada County Juvenile Court Services (ACJCS) to the lake, and even Tommy L., the young man who inspired it all, was able to participate. One girl fell ill and a couple of kids no-showed, but for the rest of us, kids and adults alike, the day was magical.

The Scales of Justice Bass Tournament was deemed a resounding success by all involved. All the juveniles caught fish with the assistance of their boating mentors; no kids had to be returned to shore for misconduct; each youth got to keep their donated rod and reel, and each received a plaque. More importantly, some of the kids have continued relationships with the fishermen. As a fitting ending, Tommy L. won the tournament with the assistance of his fishing mentor, Neil Russell.

Now more than ever, I am convinced that the Scales of Justice Bass Tournament should be replicated by juvenile judges in jurisdictions across the country wherever there are fish to be caught. It was an incredible experience and truly the greatest day of my professional life.

For more information, don't hesitate to contact me: Judge John Vehlow, Ada County Juvenile Court, 6300 W. Denton Street, Boise, ID 83704; phone (208) 577-4836 or e-mail: jvehloj@adaweb.net.

"Rarely have I seen such a creative approach to turning the light on in these at-risk children. I've never seen so much outpouring of good faith by an independent group of people assisting the Courts as was done by the bass fishermen of southern Idaho, the volunteers and donors. They truly have shown these youth there is a better path in life than committing crimes."

— Justice Roger Burdick of the Idaho Supreme Court, who participated as a boating witness



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Scales of Justice bass Tournament is coming up on September 21st at Strike reservoir. They were short a few boats last year and welcome the support of our membership. It is a good way to share a sport that many of are involved in with kids that may have never had a chance to go fishing. Please see page 2-3 for the reprint of the story behind this event. You can contact Toni Ruby at toniruby1@gmail.com for sign up forms.

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May 2014



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Western Whitewater Association

Calendar of Events

September 13th-14th Confluence Run

October 25th– Hammer Creek Fishing days

General Meetings

are the second Monday of the Month at Canyon Creek Restaurant Nampa, ID