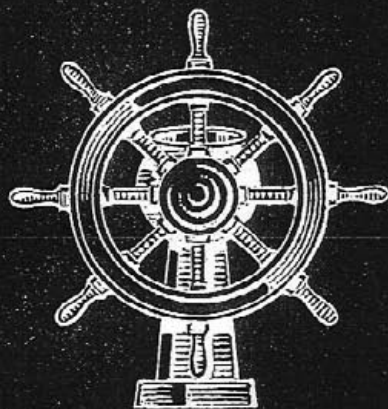


# from the helm



by Jack Holmes

## Clarke's a Winner!

**J**ennifer Clarke scared the crap out of me the first tournament she fished. She fishes alone in her home waters. I don't like people who fish alone. I truly believe that out on the salt anything can happen. Go to gaff a fish, hit a rogue wave, anything can happen and without that second person on board it's just plain dangerous! Not so to Ms. Clarke, she does it all the time and actually prefers to fish alone. I having spent part of the season watching her fishing prowess, her ability to adapt, and the fact she had the fortitude to venture out of her home waters to compete showed me the mark of a true winner. I no longer worry about her but still hate the fishing alone idea.

Jennifer fished four events in Massachusetts, then went to New Jersey, plus fished the final event in Virginia to complete a four fish stringer of 128.42 pounds, almost 20 pounds from her nearest competitor.

One thing that really amazes me about Jennifer is the fact that no matter what the conditions were she was ready, focused, and had the confidence to win. In a lot of tournaments we went to this year, we met fishermen who had every excuse in the book as to why they couldn't fish. Wimps! One look at Jennifer's record more than proves my point. Plus she has won not only the Mercury powered Pro Line boat, complete with Loadmaster Trailer for her "Top Angler of the Year" honor but the Mercury powered Wellcraft boat also for catching the biggest fish of the year. Not a bad payday!

David Nova and Max King from Virginia made a run for the title. Had the big fish showed up in Virginia, it might have been a different story. David is looking for sponsors now and I fully expect him and his "Marlin Maniac", a 25' Luhrs to be a major factor in the title race. They finished second with 109.28 but won Division five.

William Gavitt Jr. fished more events than anyone except Chuck Arnold. Lady Luck just didn't play a role in their fishing this year. Both caught fish, lots of fish, but never found that big one that would propel them close enough to Clarke to have a shot. Gavitt got to within 38 pounds but New Jersey waters let him down. No big fish! Both of these competitors will be back and don't be surprised if their names sit atop the leader board in any event they fish.

Three other names come to mind also. I'll call them late bloomers because they all have that ability to win. Jason Goldfarb from the Trayder, Tabb Bridges and his Layz-Dayz, and Robert Ransom from the Ugly Mug Fishing Team. I'm mentioning this now so that next year I can come back and tell you, "I told you so!"

Jennifer Clarke could come right back and win it again next year. She certainly has the ability but having been in this business for too many years, I've found it very difficult to repeat. Only one angler has ever done it, that was Dave Workman Jr. on the SKA trail. Notice that you've never seen back to back winners on the BASS trail? Can she do it, especially with other great talent that has surfaced? Like I said, she's a winner and has the confidence to repeat. One thing's for sure. When's the last time you've seen a column about a great female angler and a lot of men chasing her for a title? Times sure have changed and in my opinion, for the better.

Congratulations Jen! We're all proud of your accomplishment, you earned "Top Angler of the Year."

## ALL American Angler

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This magazine is dedicated to all our fishermen that through the year fish hard with so much dedication and devotion to the sport.

President  
Jack Holmes

Accounting  
Deona Holmes

Operations Director  
Bobby Flocken

Magazine Director  
Luis Viennich

### Contributor Editors

Gary Caputi

Jeff Merrill

John Minetola

### Our Address

15 Garnett Avenue  
St. Augustine, Florida 32084

ph. 904.819.0360  
fax. 904.819.0331

e-mail. [stripcrasa@aol.com](mailto:stripcrasa@aol.com)  
web. [www.fishasa.com](http://www.fishasa.com)

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**On the Cover:** Dave Nova, Max King and Edie Jett with a 39.97 lb. winning fish, caught at Rivercraft Marine tournament.