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Outdoors

His catches are inspiring.

Episcopalian priest discovers bliss in fishing

By Michael Bamberger
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

"What gives us the right to catch fish?" the student asked the holy man.

"I sometimes wonder if we have that right," said the holy man, a retired Episcopalian priest named Warren Davis, who lives in East Falls. "I once saw a short movie where the fisherman puts his pole in its stand, goes to his lunch box and takes out a sandwich. As he bites into the sandwich, he is pulled into the ocean."

"And yet you fish," the student said.

"I fish often," the holy man said.

"So how do you justify it?" the student asked.

"I keep only what I will eat, and I waste nothing. Most fish that I catch, I throw back."

"But is that justifiable? Then you are catching fish only for sport."

"Life is not always neat. I cannot justify it. What is nice for the fisherman is not nice for the fish. I bend down the barbs on the hooks. I use very light tackle, so that when the hook sets there will be less injury. The only way I can justify catch-and-release fishing is to say that I am an early-warning system. I hope, after the fish is caught by me, that he will learn, and that he will not be caught again. There is this biblical passage about God giving man dominion over the beasts, but, for me, that's not enough to justify it."

"Does fishing make you feel closer to God?" the student asked.

"Yes, it does," the holy man said. "Anything that makes us more aware of the fragility of life and death makes us feel closer to God. Once, I was fishing with two friends in the surf, off Nantucket. I caught an eight-pound bonito. We were releasing everything, but this one we wanted to eat. So later that night, when the three of us were sitting at the dinner table, we held hands and said a prayer of thanksgiving for the fish. It was a complete experience. This business of killing a fish is serious. The Indians taught us that, the idea of honoring your kill."

"Do you love fishing?"

"I do."

"How'd you fall in love with it?"

"In 1933, when I was 6, my family and I were vacationing on the Jersey Shore, and I was on my Uncle Gordon's boat, *Sinbad*. My grandmother was on board, and my mother and father were on board, and I caught a fish, the first fish I ever caught. I don't know what kind of fish it was, but I know that we ate it. That was a happy moment. Whenever I catch a fish, I am, in some manner, reliving that day."

"What kind of fishing do you enjoy most?" the student asked.

"I love fishing in the Schuylkill," the holy man said. "There are so many surprises in the Schuylkill, so many different types of fish and fishermen, and birds, so many different types of birds. And I love fishing in the surf; the surf is so alive. I love being in surf, in boat shoes and blue jeans, bringing in a bluefish.

"I must say, I do feel a little better about bringing in a bluefish than, say, a little flounder. The bluefish is a voracious killer himself, an eating machine. When I catch bluefish in late fall that I know I will put in the freezer and eat through the winter, I feel good about that. That feels right."

The holy man went over to a bookshelf to retrieve two of his favorite fishing books, both classics: *The Call of the Surf* by Van Campen Heilner and Frank Stick, and *Little Rivers* by Henry Van Dyke. He does not believe in collecting books — he believes in buying books, reading them, and giving them to people he thinks will appreciate them.

He doesn't believe in collecting material goods of any sort. Travel light, he says. While the holy man was searching for the two books, the student read some of his writings, which were strewn about on a coffee table. He read from the holy man's essays, poems, short stories, letters and instruction pieces, and on every page the student found kernels of wisdom.

On bodysurfing:

"Keep your body straight as an arrow, not arched up or down in any way, from the beginning to the end of the ride. Take a deep breath before sliding into the curl."

On dusk:

"This time says that the day and night are wed;
The two meet lovingly at twilight's edge.
And earth continues on her pirou ette."

On bird-watching:

"We humans live in mixed media. We are on and of the earth. But occasionally exalted experiences and inspired moments take us up to a new reality."

On a decrepit pier:

"Only the spirits of fishermen past haunt the pier now."

From a short story about a priest named Father Jonas:

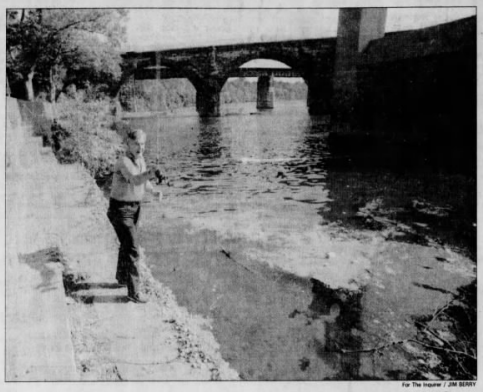
"Father Jonas had not come to the ordained ministry directly. In the typically circuitous route of most of the men who are priests, he began in what seemed an unrelated field. He was in college, a superb student, majoring in zoology, but developing a special interest in ichthyology."

From an essay on the pleasures of fishing:

"In the contemplative practice of fishing, we realize the unity of all things. We restore a sense of proportion to our lives. 'Yes, as every one knows, meditation and water are wedded for ever,' Herman Melville writes in *Moby Dick*. We remember that we emerged from the water, we are made up of water. . . . To be beside the water is to be beside ourselves."

The holy man returned to his student and presented him with the two books. The tutorial was drawing to a close. The Rev. Davis is a man of varied interests. That evening, he was attending a Phillies game. The next evening, he was playing piano at a jazz club. In between, he was filling in for a vacationing priest at a church in the Northeast.

In the book *The Call of the Surf* there was a pale color photograph, nine inches long and two inches wide, serving as a bookmark. The photograph, unpeopled, captured a gorgeous autumnal Jersey Shore wave, fully broken on the far left side of the picture, just starting to curl on the far right. So inviting. It was easy to imagine the holy man wading into that surf — dungarees around his legs, surf-casting rod in his hand — hoping to pull out a late-fall bluefish, a bluefish to sustain him through the winter, feeling all the while both joyful and serious.



For The Inquirer / JIM BERRY

"I hope, after the fish is caught by me, that he will learn, and that he will not be caught again," says Warren Davis.

Golf

Streaking Brooks takes lead

ASSOCIATED PRESS

FRANKLIN, Wis. — Mark Brooks, the defending champion, finished with a streak of 52 bogey-free holes yesterday and took a 1-stroke lead into the final round of the $1 million Greater Milwaukee Open at the Tuckaway Country Club.

"It's not like I've played perfect golf," said Brooks, bogey-free since his only blemish of the week, at the second hole of the first round. "I've only made 16 birdies, but your confidence builds the more holes you play without a bogey."

The 31-year-old Texan, who reeled off seven birdies for a 7-under-par 65 to get in front, could not distance himself from the pack on a day of low scoring as the field averaged 70.5 strokes in friendly conditions.

At 15-under 201, Brooks headed into the final round a stroke ahead of Canada's Richard Zokol.

The leaders after three rounds

Mark Brooks	70-66-65—201
Richard Zokol	67-71-64—202
Jay Haas	69-71-64—204
Nick Price	69-71-65—205
David Frost	66-70-69—205
Fred Couples	68-69-68—205
Larry Mize	70-67-68—205
Payne Stewart	68-72-67—207
Russ Cochran	69-71-67—207
John Adams	71-67-69—207
Howard Twitty	69-68-70—207
Dick Mast	67-69-71—207
Thomas Lehman	68-67-72—207
Nolan Henke	70-69-69—208
Lance Ten Broeck	74-68-66—208
Duffy Waldorf	69-70-70—208
Tom Purtzer	72-68-69—209
Joel Edwards	70-69-70—209
Mike Donald	70-69-70—209
Mark Calcavecchia	70-69-70—209
Lee Janzen	68-73-70—209
Jay Delsing	70-69-70—209
Dave Rummells	74-68-67—209
Greg Glaser	72-66-71—209
Joey Sindelar	71-67-71—209
Tom Sieckmann	69-67-73—209
Brander Chamblee	71-71-67—209
Craig Parry	71-69-70—210
Andy North	73-68-69—210
Gil Morgan	70-68-72—210
Steve Pate	69-70-71—210
Loren Roberts	69-67-74—210
Phil Blackmar	68-70-72—210
Brian Tennyson	73-69-68—210
Billy Mayfair	71-67-72—210
Dan Halldorson	71-66-73—210
Patrick Burke	69-70-72—211
Gary Hallberg	74-67-70—211
Wayne Riley	69-72-70—211
Bob Wolcott	72-69-70—211
Dave Barr	69-70-72—211
Mark Wiebe	71-67-73—211
Mike Donald	75-67-69—211
Jim Kniest	74-68-69—211
Ronnie Black	71-68-72—211
Ray Stewart	70-71-71—212
Jerry Anderson	70-71-71—212
Jerry Haas	72-69-71—212
Bob Eastwood	72-67-73—212
Ken Green	68-73-71—212
Mark McCumber	72-70-70—212
Ted Schulz	71-71-70—212
Blaine McCallister	71-71-70—212
Steve Hart	72-69-71—212
Mike Springer	72-65-75—212
Kenny Knox	70-70-72—212
Aaron Pierson	72-70-70—212
Chris Perry	70-70-73—213
Steve Stricker	70-71-72—213
Marco Dawson	70-69-74—213
Robin Freeman	71-71-71—213
Curtis Strange	70-72-71—213
Jim Gallagher	70-72-71—213
Greg Norman	70-71-73—214
David Peoples	70-69-75—214
John Ross	73-69-72—214
Bob Estes	71-71-72—214
J.P. Hayes	71-71-73—215
Denis Watson	71-71-73—215
Jim Hallet	74-68-73—215
Larry Laoretti	74-66—140
Terry Dill	70-70—140
J.C. Goose	67-73—140
Ricky Thompson	72-69—141
Mike Joyce	72-69—141
John Brodie	71-70—141
Bob Rawlins	70-71—141
J.C.Snead	70-71—141
John Paul Cain	70-71—141
Agen Bartha	69-72—141
Howie Johnson	72-70—142
Charlie Sifford	72-70—142
Rolf Deming	71-71—142
Chip Beck	71-71—142
Orville Moody	70-72—142
Bob Wynn	68-74—142
Miller Barber	69-76—142
Labron Harris	75-68—143
Charlie Owens	73-70—143
Robert Gaona	73-70—143
Tommy Aycock	73-70—143
Harry Toscano	72-71—143
Bobby Nichols	71-72—143
Dewitt Weaver	71-72—143
Snell Lancaster	74-70—144
Larry Ziegler	73-71—144
Bob Lunn	72-72—144
Babe Hiskey	70-74—144
R.H. Sikes	70-74—144
Tom Schafer	73-72—145
Dow Finsterwald	70-75—145
Gary Cowan	73-72—145
Mike Fetchick	74-72—146
Bill McDonough	73-73—146
Walter Zembriski	72-74—146
Bob Goalby	75-72—147
Bob Menne	75-72—147
Don Massengale	74-73—147
Jack Kiefer	74-73—147
George Johnson	75-72—147
Robert Zimmerman	73-73—146
Art Proctor	77-71—148
Quinton Gray	76-72—148
Jim Ferree	73-75—148
Randy Glover	73-75—148
Steve Reid	76-74—149
Bob Panasik	78-72—150
Jerry Barber	75-75—150
Jim O'Hern	73-77—150
Doug Dalziel	71-79—150
Tony Holguin	78-74—152
Dan Sikes	77-77—154
Alex Redmond	80-75—155
Rex Baxter	80-76—156
Marshall Strauss	79-79—158

Seniors

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Bruce Crampton made birdies on 11 of the last 14 holes for an 8-under 63 and held a 1-stroke lead after 36 holes of the Senior PGA tour's First of America Classic.

"I play one shot at a time and let the score evolve," Crampton said of his remarkable round, which tied the course record, set by Miller Barber in the final round of the 1987 Classic.

Crampton has a two-round total of 132, which puts him 10 under par. With 18 holes left, he's a stroke in front of Tommy Aaron, who shot a 67, and the first-round leader, Homero Blancas, who followed Friday's 65 with a 68.

Crampton, Aaron and Blancas will be the last group in today's final round as they try for the $60,000 winner's share of the $400,000 purse.

The leaders after two rounds

Bruce Crampton	69-63—132
Tommy Aaron	66-67—133
Homero Blancas	65-68—133
Gibby Gilbert	69-65—134
Dave Stockton	68-67—135
Dick Hendrickson	67-68—135
Jimmy Powell	67-68—135
Bob Stone	66-69—135
Mike Hill	69-67—136
Harold Henning	69-67—136
Simon Hobday	69-68—137
Ken Still	67-70—137
Isao Aoki	66-71—137
Bob Brue	67-70—137
Rives McBee	71-67—138
Jim Albus	70-68—138
Walter Morgan	70-68—138
Bert Yancey	69-69—138
Ben Smith	69-69—138
Bill Kennedy	70-69—139
Ben Smith	69-70—139
Gay Brewer	68-71—139

Associated Press / CHARLES BENNETT

Mark Brooks, the defending champion, blasts out of a sand trap at the Greater Milwaukee Open.

LPGA

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — Angie Ridgeway used a little luck to grab a share of the first-round lead with Rosie Jones at the LPGA Rail Charity Classic.

Ridgeway needed to make an eight-foot putt for par on her final hole, No. 9, to equal Jones' 7-under 65 on the 6,404-yard course at the Rail Golf Club. Ridgeway knocked the ball to the edge of the cup, where it hung on the lip for several seconds before falling in.

Both Ridgeway and Jones made seven birdies and no bogeys, and were a stroke in front of Michelle McGann, Kris Tschetter, Kristi Albers and Danielle Ammaccapane.

The leaders after one round

Rosie Jones	33-32—65
Angie Ridgeway	34-31—65
Kris Tschetter	33-33—66
Michelle McGann	32-34—66
Danielle Ammaccapane	32-34—66
Kristi Albers	34-32—66
Dottie Mochrie	32-35—67
Nancy Lopez	34-33—67
Betsy King	33-34—67
Pat Bradley	33-34—67
Jenny Andrews	35-32—67
Florence Descampe	33-35—68
Judy Dickinson	34-34—68
Laura Davies	34-34—68
Nanci Bowen	34-34—68
Kim Saiki	37-31—68
e-Nicole Jeray	35-34—69
Kim Williams	35-34—69
Nancy White	33-36—69
Debbie Massey	35-34—69
Ellie Gibson	33-36—69
Jill Briles-Heinen	36-33—69
Lauren Howe	36-33—69
Sherri Steinhauer	34-36—70
Muffin Spencer-Devlin	34-36—70
Alice Ritzman	35-35—70
Susie Redman	35-35—70
Sarah McGorin	34-36—70
Alison Finley	35-35—70
Martha Faulconer	35-36—71
Mitzi Edge	36-34—70
Noelle Daghe	34-36—70
Jane Crafter	33-37—70
Barb Bunkowsky	36-34—70
Marci Bowman	35-35—70
Maggie Bartenfeld	35-35—70
Loretta Abbrecht	35-35—70
Jennifer Graft	36-34—70
Kelly Crawford	35-35—70
a-denotes amateur	

Dobbs wins 4-way playoff to take Phila. Open title

By Mayer Brandschain
INQUIRER CORRESPONDENT

Frank Dobbs, assistant professional at Spring-Ford Country Club in Royersford, won the Philadelphia Open Golf Championship with a par 35-35—70 in a four-way playoff yesterday on Philmont Country Club's North Course.

Dobbs, the Philadelphia PGA's player of the year last year and one of the dominant players on this season's local pro circuit, birdied the 18th hole with a 15-foot putt to earn the title and $2,600 from the purse of $13,900.

The defeated players in the playoff, each parring the last hole and scoring a 71, were Jay Sigel, Aronimink amateur and former British and U.S. amateur champion; Harold Perry, Kennett Square Golf and Country Club pro, and Chris Lange, Overbrook Golf Club amateur and former Philadelphia champion.

The playoff finished a tournament that was twice interrupted by rain on July 15 on the North Course. Only nine of the 45 pros and 15 amateurs had completed the scheduled 36 holes when lightning and rain stopped play for the second time.

It was ruled that the tournament should revert to 18 holes and that the four leaders at 68 — Sigel, Dobbs, Perry and Lange — should meet in an 18-hole playoff.

Auto Racing

Waltrip passes Jarrett to win race at Darlington

ASSOCIATED PRESS

DARLINGTON, S.C. — Michael Waltrip passed Dale Jarrett five laps from the end yesterday and went on to win the Gatorade 200 Busch Grand National stock car race at Darlington Raceway.

Waltrip earned the fifth Grand National win of his career and his first since taking the checkered flag in February of 1990 at Dover, Del. He drove the race that lasted 1 hour, 27 minutes, 13 seconds. He won $17,935.

The results

With driver, starting position in parentheses, residence, type of car, laps completed, reason out if not finished, money won and winner's average speed in m.p.h.

1. (15) Michael Waltrip, Davidson, N.C., Pontiac, 147, $17,935, 128.140.
2. (13) Dale Jarrett, Conover, N.C., Chevrolet, 147, $8,610.
3. (2) Jeff Gordon, Pittsboro, Ind., Ford, 147, $10,260.
4. (6) Dale Earnhardt, Dooie, N.C., Chevrolet, 147, $3,635.
5. (21) Ed Berrier, Winston-Salem, N.C., Oldsmobile, 147, $3,235.
6. (1) Mark Martin, Jamestown, N.C., Ford, 147, $2,835.
7. (15) Morgan Shepherd, Conover, N.C., Ford, 147, $2,535.
8. (30) Tracy Leslie, Mount Clemens, Mich., Oldsmobile, 146, $4,085.
9. (7) Phil Parsons, Denver, N.C., Oldsmobile, 146, $1,985.
10. (2) Todd Bodine, Chemung, N.Y., Chevrolet, 146, $3,085.
11. (18) Ward Burton, South Boston, Va., Buick, 146, $5,060.
12. (17) Jimmy Spencer, Berwick, Pa., Oldsmobile, 146, $1,560.
13. (14) Rick Sinskin, Calera, Ala., Chevrolet, 146, $1,535.
14. (19) Rick Mast, Rockbridge Baths, Va., Oldsmobile, 145, $1,510.
15. (29) Tom Peck, McConnellsburg, Pa., Oldsmobile, 145, $3,260.
16. (12) Bobby Labonte, Thomasville, N.C., Chevrolet, 144, $5,235.
17. (4) Joe Nemechek, South Boston, Va., Oldsmobile, 144, $4,585.
18. (11) Kenny Wallace, Harrisburg, N.C., Chevrolet, 144, $2,710.
19. (24) Steve Grissom, Gadsden, Ala., Oldsmobile, 143, $4,385.
20. (20) Jim Bown, Portland, Ore., Chevrolet, 143, $1,335.
21. (14) Jeff Purvis, Clarksville, Tenn., Ford, 143, $1,310.
22. (8) Robert Pressley, Asheville, N.C., Oldsmobile, 143, $4,235.
23. (31) Hut Stricklin, Lawton, Mich., Oldsmobile, 142, $2,410.
24. (22) Tommy Houston, Hickory, N.C., Buick, 142, $2,285.
25. (25) Ricky Craven, Newburgh, Maine, Chevrolet, 141, $4,040.
26. (28) Joe Nemechek, Lakeland, Fla., Chevrolet, 140, $2,260.
27. (32) Shawna Robinson, Des Moines, Iowa, Oldsmobile, 138, $1,185.
28. (23) Chuck Bown, Portland, Ore., Pontiac, 137, $3,925.
29. (33) Andy Belmont, Langhorne, Pa., Oldsmobile, 136, $1,160.
30. (34) Troy Beebe, Modesto, Calif., Ford, 131, $1,150.
31. (9) Harry Gant, Taylorsville, N.C., Buick, 126, crash, $1,135.
32. (26) Richard Lasater, Little Rock, Pontiac, 109, $1,735.
33. (5) Bobby Dotter, Chicago, Oldsmobile, 93, engine failure, $1,725.
34. (16) Bill Elliott, Dawsonville, Ga., Ford, 34, engine failure, $1,115.

Southern 500

A steady rain washed away the scheduled second round of qualifying for the Southern 500.

The top 20 drivers were set in time trials Friday, and NASCAR officials completed the 36-car lineup using their first-round qualifying laps and adding three drivers who did not make qualifying runs but have run in practice.

Among the drivers added to the lineup yesterday were Rusty Wallace, who was 21st in Friday's session, and Richard Petty, starting 31st in the last of a record 46 starts at Darlington Speedway, including 33 Southern 500s on NASCAR's oldest superspeedway.

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