

My Lure Designs Have Really Come to the Forefront Locally

By Steve Welch

About two years ago I came up with the idea of getting some specialty lures to sell in my booth to give my wife something to do while at the winter shows. So I knew what I wanted just had to perfect it and make it the way I wanted it and knew it would work. I wanted a crappie jig that would probe deep brush and not get hung up all the time and I wanted it to have a flare all its own. I also wanted hair jigs on a larger scale to fish these same depths and to also be able to entice other species like walleye and small mouth. Hence I came up with the Deep Ledge Jig, the Brush Bug and the Mississippi Killer.

With today's technology and the greater depths Lake Shelbyville and Kentucky Lake have to offer. Crappie fishermen needed a jig that would handle getting into these dense brush piles. They can now find them and return to them due to GPS just the normal weighted crappie jigs would need a split shot or even a second jig to get to the spots. The Deep Ledge Jigs have a small number four hook on them that would straighten when hung up. Then we went further and my partner Alan Corzine is a Mechanical Engineer so we balanced this lure and cut eyes into it to hold the eyes without popping off and gave it a slim profile and we cut molds to also hold a spinner to entice fish hitting it on the fall and walleye as well to pull crawlers with and cut it to handle a larger number two hook for the bigger predators. This took time to get it right and C&C time on a lathe. We were determined to have our own design. Then the Deep Ledge Jig and its spin off the Brush Bug and Mississippi Killer were born.

I teach anglers my whole deep fishing system, which not only includes my jigs, but also special made rods shorter in length and stiffer than your normal crappie rod. I want them shorter to enable you to see your jig on your front depth finder. You don't want a pole extending to far past the front of the boat or you won't be in the cone of your transducer. Seeing your bait is critical in taking those big fish that tend to hover right over those deep brush piles. Then the second part of this system is to use braided line. No stretch line that will enable you to pop your jig off the deep stuff and not break your line losing critical fishing time re tying. I use Fireline Crystal 8/3. I like that I can see it and supposedly fish can't but who knows. I know I can see it. The 8/3 is as strong as twenty pound mono and I readily swing two pound fish right over the side of the boat with the braided line and my stiffer rod which I have made by Norms Custom Rods in Decatur Il. 217-877-4529. Just tell him you want a Welch rod he will know.

Then I also wanted a white bass lure to fish different depths and situations that would also catch other species such as walleye. It is a tail spinner lure similar to other lures out there but I experimented with paints until I got something that would hold up and several blades and hooks until I got a lure that you can burn it or reel it as slow as you want. You can vertical jig it or cast it out and pop it and retrieve and then repeat. You really can't fish it wrong. We call it the Candystriper and the two retail stores I have them thus far can't keep them on the shelves. I sell about 300 to 400 a week and would welcome any other retail store that might want to see this and all my specialty lures.

I made this lure for white bass to handle busting fish all the way to ledge fish in twenty feet of water. The busting fish you need a lightweight lure that you can burn through the school and stay on top so the 3/8oz. smaller version came to life. Then I need a lure to just retrieve it through the schools that were mid depth so I use the 1/2oz. Then a lure to pop it off bottom and let it freefall back and fish it as deep as twenty-five feet or deeper if need be right down a river channel ledge. The 5/8oz. version came to life.

I never envisioned this lure working so well on other species but this summer I have been using it around bridge piles for crappie. I have been reeling it through submerged weeds for walleye and just tearing them up. Clients are amazed at how it just catches everything including huge buffalo and channel catfish.

Everyone locally around Lake Shelbyville has taken this lure to heart and it is the top shelf of all his or her tackle boxes. I routinely get fishermen pulling me over at gas stations or boat ramps or anywhere and say. Hey got any of those lures with you. I sell them right out of the backseat of my truck like some secret drug deal. With today's Internet anglers have also found my website and my fishing report gets about 3000 hits on a Friday alone. www.LakeShelbyvilleGuide.Com. I also e-mail a weekly report to the Chicago Tribune, The Bloomington Pantagraph and Larry and Linda's Fishing Hole just to keep anglers updated to conditions. Then several local resorts use it to post fishing conditions as we have exchanged links.

We have been enjoying a fruitful summer with the white bass fishing through the roof and hundred fish days the norm and still getting walleye roaming with the whites, but the crappie fishing has been a real surprise since the lake is very high at this writing they are shallow for this time of the year in newly flooded timber.

Many anglers are already calling to get their trips set up for the fall but don't wait as we have been doing well all summer. For those interested in my lures they are available only so far on my website at www.LakeShelbyvilleGuide.com and at D&M located in Sullivan Il. and Marve & Kathy's Bait Shop located on Lake Shelbyville at the Bo-Woods boat ramp or four miles south of Sullivan. Any bait shop or other retail establishment wanting info on how to handle these lures just shoot me and e-mail from my website or give me a call at 217-762-7257 home or 217-840-1221 cell. These lures really work (Guide Tested) as my buddies tease me.