

Allan C. Cole

By Dan Basore

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There is no end to our quest for fishing history. Wherever we go another chapter in the story of the evolution of fishing unfolds and we respect the living pre-1980 lure makers with Honorary Memberships so they will know their works are, and will be, appreciated far into the future.

Recently, fishing in the Sturgeon Bay Smallmouth Bass tournament, we met Tim Dawidiak of Howie's Tackle (www.howiestackle.com) who also owns a fine tackle/archery shop and motel there. When asked, as I do all that I encounter, "Do you have any old fishing items?" Tim produced an assortment of original handmade AC Plugs with handwritten notes by their inventor which he allowed me to acquire.

Quickly I contacted their maker, Allan Cole, who says he's been fishing all his life. Born January 6th, 1942 in Waukesha, Wisconsin, his family moved to California when he was in the 6th grade.

As a California resident he began to pursue giant brown trout all over the west coast in the 1960s taking 30 over ten pounds which is huge for out there. He moved to Bishop to be near the best brown trout fishing in the west. Next on his list in the mid-80s, he targeted the giant stripers in his state bagging 29 over 40 pounds. We don't think he told his wife that the main reason for their move to Lancaster was to be near the best striped bass fishing in Pyramid and Castais lakes. For these he used Rebel lures, and then modified them, painting them in the rainbow trout color which

Rebel and others soon adopted. Eventually he began to make his own lures, large swim baits.

In the early nineties he began to target the giant Florida strain largemouth bass in California with the big swimming lures he'd caught stripers on, taking 67 over 10 pounds. No doubt he has taken more lunkers in these three species than any other angler.



Allen Cole, inventor of the AC Plug, with one of many trophy bass he has taken on his lures

Many bass men couldn't believe his catches and accused him of using live trout which were illegal. Finally he began to take outdoor writers including Jim Matthews with him and the word got out.

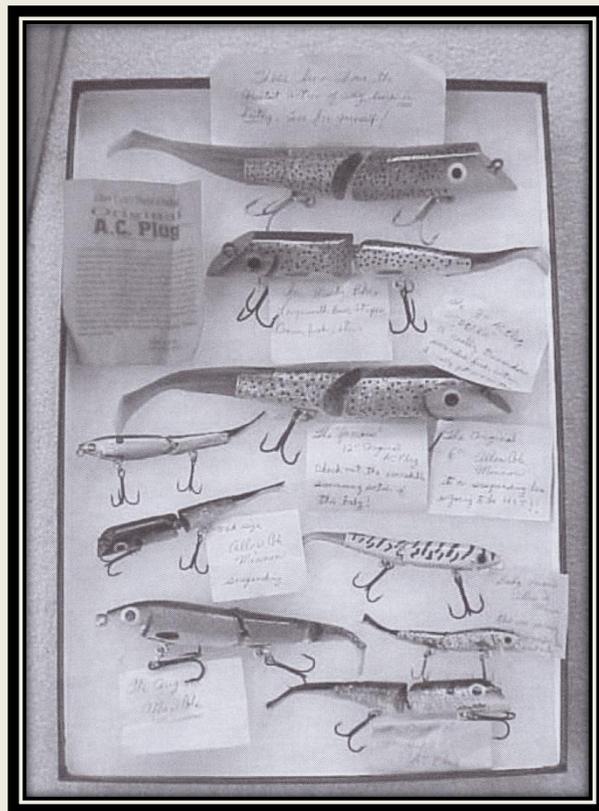
He sleeps in his truck and his is usually the first boat on the water and the last off as he hunts for that one big bite. His AC Plug is known as "The lure of big fish!" Many would rather have one trophy "than many keepers."

In 1992, due to great demand, Allan Cole began to produce his lures for the fishing market. He research included contact with Dick Streater, author of "The Lure Collectors Bible," to see if there had ever been lures similar to his. Dick assured him there wasn't.

As we reviewed these events I mentioned that Streater was flying in to travel with me to our National meet. Cole was surprised as he thought that

Streater was in his eighties when they communicated in the early nineties. "He must be around a hundred now," surmised Cole. Let's share a good laugh on that one as I assured Allan that Dick is hale, hearty and full of humor.

Cole's patent was applied for on March 10th, 1995 and granted on June 4th, 1996 and claims the following, "The attraction of fishing as a leisure time activity is well known. From the time of Isaac Walton and before, man has been attracted to the sport of fishing as a way of communing with nature. As is well known, fish are an elusive type of quarry and considerable skill is involved in being a successful fisherman. The challenge of fishing is not only to be successful in catching fish, no matter what the size, but also to attempt to catch fish of the largest possible size, so-called championship fishing. "



**Original AC Plugs with handwritten notes
by their maker Allan Cole**

His big lures consisted of a jointed wood body with a notched face and a flexible plastic tail piece. Full details may be observed by attaining a copy

of patent number [5,522,170](#) (Google Patents) or the excellent AC Plug website www.acplugs.com.

The early prototypes now in our Historical Fishing Display were originally given to western outdoor writer Jim Matthews to test and promote. They have Cole's handwritten notes that say, "These lures have the greatest action of any lures in history. See for yourself!" Another states, "The 9" AC Plug "Wobbler" a really tremendous wounded fish action. I really got BIT on this one."

For the original 4-3/4" Baby original Allan Cole Minnow he claims, "This one is really a great, suspending lure, small great action." For his 6" model, "It's a suspending lure ... is going to be HOT!!" The "famous" 12-inch Original AC Plug, "Check out the incredible swimming action of this baby!"

Cole found that the notched face so effective on his large plugs didn't retain the desired action on baits less than nine inches and ended up with a slanted face on them. His Minnows have a diving lip.

What a revolution in fishing was pioneered by Cole. Swim baits continue to increase in their use and effectiveness as we learn how, where and when to use them.

The AC Plug has been made by three different companies, Arbogast, Lure Jensen and Optima. But Cole wasn't happy with just royalties, peeling paint, cracking wood and other issues in the past. He has regained control of his lures and offers an unconditional guarantee and quick service as he pushes the envelope of swim bait performance. He will even hand-make custom lures and can be reached directly on his cell phone 702-339-5013.

It's great to meet someone who pioneered a new way of fishing and truly believes in his products, proves their effectiveness by catching trophy fish and stands behind them with an unconditional guarantee. Such a man is Allan S. Cole and we welcome him as an Honorary Member of the NFLCC.

Honorary Member - 2010