



# Hatch

The Newsletter of the Michigan Fly Fishing Club

AUGUST 2013

## Skipping Banquet Week

Written by Dan Finstad

Customer service professionals will tell you that one quick avenue to achieve customer satisfaction is to surprise the buyer, or service recipient, with more than they expected. The 2013 MFFC banquet and five days that followed might be a perfect example of customer satisfaction by those that experienced our MFFC Banquet this year and the fishing experiences that followed.

The agreement to bring Skip Morris back to our annual banquet was conceived the day after the 2012 Expo, at which Skip and Carol Morris attended as speakers. I brought together the dog-tired western based head-liners (Bob Jacklin, Aaron Adams and the Morris couple) for dinner that night. These remaining show stars would spend Sunday evening in Detroit and catch a west bound plane the next day. On the way to the dinner we somehow got talking about hobbies, and the other interests we all had, other than fishing. It was during this conversation that I came to find out that Skip was an accomplished jazz guitarist that spent more than a few nights a month playing in or with a jazz band. When I asked if Skip might preform some songs at a future function, such as our annual club banquet, arrangements progressed rapidly for Skip to appear at the 2013 Banquet. Skip and Carol really had an interest in fishing in Michigan and it was agreed that fishing too needed to be part of the arrangements. A contract was signed the following month. The next 14 months flew by in an instant.

Skip informed me he would need a bass accompaniment along with a list of audio and musical equipment that only a music person would understand. Peter Albertson, the budding MFFC guitarist,



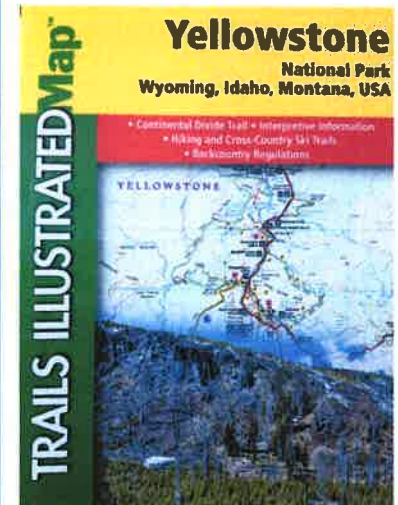
offered to help and it all came together with minimal hick-ups. My first choice bassist, a work associate at GM, bailed on me one month before the planned gig. I was told we would have to "settle for" his music instructor, Dan Pliskow who teaches music at Wayne State University. Mr. Pliskow had a resume that included performing with the big names of the jazz world. Sometimes luck rules over planning.

That is the background of how the MFFC banquet attendees entering the Italian American Club on May 22 came to be greeted by the sounds of jazz piping through the banquet hall. Not only were Skip's versions of Danny Boy and Amazing Grace played, but also at least one Skip original including the Song of the Skulpin. The 40 minute music set included requests from listeners including a George Benson classic and some other well-known tunes.

To say that the 130 attendees were entertained would be an understatement, but the day was more than half over when the first dinner attendee arrived. Skip's afternoon was spent signing many of his books and tying three of his classic fly patterns: the Skip Nymph, the Morris Emerger and Gabriel's Trumpet.

*continued on page 2*

## UPCOMING EVENTS



**September 7, 2013**

**MFFC Club Picnic**

Multi Lakes Conservation Assoc.  
Commerce Twp, Noon-5:00pm

**September 11, 2013**

**Speaker: Alex Lafkas**

**From: The Old Au Sable**

Clarenceville Middle School  
Livonia, 7:30 p.m.

**September 25, 2013**

**Activities Meeting**

Clarenceville Middle School  
Livonia, 7:30 p.m.

**October 2, 2013**

**Speaker: TBA**

**Topic: TBA**

Clarenceville Middle School  
Livonia, 7:30 p.m.

# Hatch

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Of course there is never enough time to tie all the patterns planned, but the 22 tying event attendees (seasoned tiers and rookies alike) took home some new skills and patterns from their time with Skip.

Skip's last performance of the day was a heartfelt presentation entitled "Creeks" which Skip delivered with a lot of enthusiasm. The crowd definitely left the presentation knowing that this type of small water fly fishing is near and dear to Skip. This final event was the banquet nightcap to a trifecta (tying, Jazz gig, and presentation) that few others, than maybe Oscar Feliu could have pulled off. Nobody would argue that we all got a little more than we, as banquet attendees, expected. Many kudos to Skip Morris, Jim Telinda, and the entire banquet committee for a special night.

Now on to the fishing promise in Skip's contract and how could we make his, and Carol's, fishing experience in Michigan a memorable one. How about four rivers in the next 4 days?

The Morris Michigan fishing adventure began less than an hour from Skip and Carol's hotel in Livonia. Who better to introduce the experienced bass fishing couple to our local metro area bass venues than Jim Distefanis and his fishing partner, Gary Clark. These two unassuming bass pros fish for bass weekly from May to October and they know where the bronze backs hang out. On most days they also know what will entice the fish to bite, with their own patterns. I called Jim late afternoon to see how the Thursday fishing trip was going. Skip landed four fish during my ten minute phone call with Jim. Carol proved to be an excellent bass fly fisher too. She recorded many fish with her camera - when she wasn't landing the top water fly attacking smallmouths and rock bass. All this occurred on a drab, cold day with more than a few raindrops

being dodged. The next morning the clothes dryer at the Finstad home got a workout as the Morris couple dried out their gear and reloaded for the next adventure. We left mid-day Friday, heading north for the Au Sable system and a chance at a native Michigan brook trout - a bucket list item for Skip.

Our host and guide for Friday afternoon was the ever capable Joe Sprys, who did his best Jerry Regan impersonation giving our Michigan fly fishing newbies the South Branch history. No hatches and no fish but a lot of quality conversation was had. A feast at the Spry river house was followed by a deer sighting on the early evening trip to the Finstad lake house on Big Bear Lake, north of Lewiston. The night came early for some very tired fisherman.

Saturday morning Al Haxton, Joyce Kelly, Joe Sprys, and I headed to a river that will remain unnamed. We recruited a local guide, Mike Mareau, who was eager to put us on fish. Though we fished hard at several locations, there was only one fish landed during our afternoon adventure - that being a seven inch brookie. There were few fish rising and it was not Skip's day yet. We were able to get Skip onto a little creek late in the afternoon and he grinned like a five year old boy discovering pollywogs and frogs for the first time, all the while he fished the four foot wide water system. We all enjoyed the day, but catching trout would have to wait for another time.

Sunday we headed south to fish the Big Water below the dam at Mio. Scott Freeburg and Dean Williams met us at 11 AM at the Mio launch site. Both of our boat captains were grinning and joking as we jockeyed for position with the kayak and canoeists that also had planned to use this waterway on this Memorial Day weekend afternoon. We were lucky it was a cool day. That kept the river traffic manageable. About 30 minutes from the launch site, we had adequate space to fish without the fear of a pending bumper boat derby. Deane and Scott were excellent guides and we actually began casting to rising fish just a short time into the trip. Skip and Carol both proceeded to catch browns and rainbows and it was soon apparent that there was a little competition about the size and species being caught between husband and wife. No winner was declared, but all had a good time and we pulled out of the river well after 8:30 PM with a lot of good memories. The last fish of the day was a brook trout

*continued on page 3*

*continued from page 2*  
landed by Skip. Yes, this fish allowed him to put the checkmark next to one his top bucket list items. The late night ride back to the Detroit metro area was only made possible with a chatty Skip (who drank some high octane Mountain Dew) keeping me awake with stories covering all topics – fishing and non-fishing.

Monday we again rendezvoused with Al, Joyce, and Todd Schotts for the annual outing at Al's secret lake. The rain moved in for Memorial Day and I think Skip secretly prayed for it.

The five previous days had just about worn out Skip and Carol. After a brief cool weather picnic, Al delivered the Morris couple to their airport hotel room, to get some much needed rest prior to their trip home. Carol took an unbelievable number of pictures throughout the week. I would bet that she is still sorting through them.

We kept our end of the fishing agreement showing the Washington State couple some varied Michigan fishing venues, again, maybe giving our west coast friends more than what was ever expected. A big thank-you

goes out to all those that made the banquet a blockbuster (best yet) event. Also a big thank-you is extended to all who contributed to the Morris fishing excursions. The MFFC is a great fishing club because we have people that are always striving to make everything we do memorable and special. We as a club have a history of constantly exceeding expectations. I couldn't be prouder to be part of this group.

## A Word Of Thanks

Throughout the year the MFFC supports awareness and restoration projects to improve the ecological development and restoration of the precious wildlife resources of our Great Lakes state. Here are a few letters of feedback regarding the club's monetary involvement.



### MUCC Michigan United Conservation Clubs

Uniting citizens to form ONE VOICE for Michigan's great outdoors.

2101 Wood Street Phone: 517-371-1041  
P.O. Box 30235 Fax: 517-371-1505  
Lansing, MI 48909 Web site: www.mucc.org, www.michiganoutdoors.com

March 27, 2013

Chris Hunter  
Michigan Fly Fishing Club  
P.O. Box 530861  
Livonia, MI 48153

Dear Chris,

Thank you for your support of Michigan United Conservation Clubs' recent fundraiser held on March 14, 2013. Your generosity will help MUCC protect our outdoor way of life, advocate for conservation in Michigan, and convey our passion for hunting, fishing, trapping and outdoor recreation to the next generation.

Michigan United Conservation Clubs is a 501(c)(3) organization as determined by the Internal Revenue Service. In accordance with I.R.S. guidelines, no goods or services were given in exchange for this gift. This letter serves as a receipt to substantiate your charitable deduction.

We thank you for your very generous donation of \$1000.00 to Michigan United Conservation Clubs.

Sincerely,

  
Joe Sattler - Chairman  
MUCC District 1 Fundraiser



April 1, 2013

Terry Drinkwine, Treasurer  
Michigan Fly Fishing Club  
2856 Pinto Drive  
Commerce, MI 48382

RE: MFFC Conservation Grant

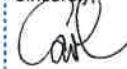
Dear Terry and friends at MFFC,

It is with delight that I thank you for your continuing support of the efforts of the Upper Black River Council. Your recent affirmation in the form of a \$1,250 grant from the MFFC's Conservation Grant program will be well used this year. We're finishing the assembly of our river crew for 2013 and have an excellent collection of young students who'll be continuing with in-stream habitat enhancement on the Main Branch of the Black this season under our newest permit. Once this permit reach between Town Corner Lake and the former Blue Lakes holding is completed, 8,900+ river feet will have been enhanced for our naturally-reproducing brook trout fishery.

As one of our first and longest supporters, the UBRC is most grateful to the MFFC for your continued support and confidence in the work we're doing here in northern Michigan to preserve and protect one of the most outstanding brook trout fisheries in the country.

We'll keep you posted as our project unfolds. Many, many thanks.

Sincerely,

  
Carol Moncrieff Rose, Chair  
Upper Black River Council  
c/o 18555 Glacier Trail  
Hillman, MI 49746  
(989) 742-4225  
[crose@upperblack.org](mailto:crose@upperblack.org)

*Great Fly Expo again this year!*

## Schotts Talks Bass: Small Mouth Outing

"Smallies fight hard. That's what is so great about them. They are great fish! Mine was 19 inches. I think there was a 21 incher caught too." Todd Schotts regaled summer meeting attendees on the joys of MFFC's Small Mouth Outing. "The construction was crazy, but we filled up the cabins, hotels, and the Lucky Horse Shoe cabins on the other side!"

Water levels were way down this year in Eagle Bay. The group also fished Grindstone Bay, where the Coast Guard Station resides, along with their two boarding houses. Twelve grindstones were operated at what is now the access site along the cobblestone road. Todd reminded future attendees to bring practical shoes to navigate the cobblestone road, so as to avoid turning ankles. Another feature of Grindstone Bay is the Lelander schooner that went down just outside of the bay in 1853. The wreckage makes for good fishing, as long as it is fished wisely (lest line is lost).

"You wanna hit the rocks and the ship wreck," said Schotts. "You'll see black spots and that's where the fish are hiding." The slideshow picture changed, "then there's Scott chasing a Gar Pike outta there..." Everyone chuckled.

"I'm walking. I'm stalking. We were hitting the beds," said Schotts

moving to the next photo. "You gotta walk and stalk the fish," he said adding, "But remember you are walking on shale!"

The Small Mouth Outing is an all weather event. Even in dense fog, and 63 degree weather, the MFFC group fishes on...and Schotts had the pictures to prove it. "There are plenty of maps," reminds Schotts, "They show the parking and terrain so you can find the best approaches and holes. The bottom line is, "Always be prepared." He warned, "Storms come in really fast."

The bass spawn is based on the weather and the water temperature, which in turn affects the choice of fly.

An early spawn will occur after three plus days of 45 to 55 degree weather, at which point fish hang near the bottom and are slow moving. A late pre-spawn occurs after a few days of 55 to 60 degree weather, at which point males ready the beds. Females remain deep in the water. Ideal spawn temperature is water in the mid-60's. Males are then very aggressive, protecting the beds. Females will move to shallower water. The entire spawn process can last from four to thirteen weeks.

"You can use a six to nine weight. In calm water, a five to eight weight," advised Schotts. "I use a six weight, along with a weight forward floating bass bug taper and intermediate line." He added, "Use a sink tip. Quick change sink tips are not recommended." The leader can range

from 6 lb. to 15 lb. test, nine to twelve feet long. Bonefish leaders are good because they cut through rock, etc.

A brown drake is a good, standard fly to bring on this trip. Depending on the arrival time within the spawning process, good flies to have on hand include: streamers, size 10-30; nymphs, size 8-14; dries; crayfish; and top water flies, sizes 12-13. "If you bring a minnow pattern, you want the minnow patters to be really thin," says Schotts.

Then comes the fun - the Friday night soup and chili cook-off! The group went through eight bundles of firewood in four hours! Norm Tabaka swept the soup and chili categories. John Wisniewski won the rod from Schultz Outfitters. After fishing and food, the crew crashed - Schotts showed the blackmail photos to prove it. Not to mention how Scotty's "sexy pants" stole the day.

Despite his excellent fish stalking, and planning skills, Schotts did not get home without incident. "I rolled the kayak in four inches of water," he said as his audience laughed. "The worst part was getting myself out of the kayak...after the water created a nice tight seal."



### MFFC 2013 - 2014 Calendar

	Speaker	Board	Activities
2013 September	11	18	25
October	2	9	16
November	6	13	20
December	4	11	18
2014 January	8	15	22
February	5	12	26
March*	5	12	19
April	2	16	23
May	7	14	

\* March 5 Meeting Activity, March 19 Speaker

## The DNR Addresses Fish In Michigan

"I knew what I wanted to do at an early age. I like small creeks, and fly fishing is my love," said Jim Dixon in his "State Of The Fisheries" address at the July MFFC summer meeting at the Costic Center in Farmington Hills, Michigan. Dixon has been with the DNR since 1987, and still loves his job. "Michigan is ranked #1 for fly fishing in the states," said Dixon. "We have a wide range of waters, there is diversity of fish species - the largest variety, and many difference access sites to the fish."

Dixon spent much of his time addressing the concerns of club members. Invasive species was the first topic brought to the forefront. "Chicago is doing a tremendous amount of work maintaining and monitoring the electronic netting," said Dixon. He also addressed the zebra mussel influx from the 1980's, the algae blooms causing a loss of plankton, and the 50 years of rehabilitation the DNR has already effectively perpetuated.

### The Great Lakes Report:

**Lake Huron:** This lake is being stocked with steelhead. The number of Gobies are going down. Perch fishing is coming back, however, there are mostly large perch (12 inches) and small perch (4 inches), but very little inbetween. "I think this is going to change," reported Dixon.

**Lake Superior:** Superior houses lake trout. Very little stocking is needed for this body of water, as the lake was considered rehabilitated about 15 years ago. Dixon suggested fishing the U.P., "There's never anybody there, but it's awesome fishing!"

**Lake Michigan:** "We have a great fishery," Dixon pointed out. In 2012,

it had the highest numbers for stocking chinook. Genetic analysis done between farmed and wild fish "show very little difference." DNR sampling is done in the middle of summer. Sixty percent of the chinook sampled were wild, and thirty percent of the steelhead caught were wild. 2014 will be the fiftieth anniversary of stocking fish for Lake Michigan! Lake Michigan streams are best for ground water, geology and gravel, things that are not there for the Lake Huron streams," said Dixon. "And the steelhead fishing is really great!"

"There are low levels in the lakes," agreed Dixon responding to a member's concern. "It's all natural. The high water mark comes late in summer." He continued to explain the correlation with the decrease in snow run-off and a quicker rate of evaporation in recent years. Water levels are directly related to snow pack. "Even with all the water now, it still takes time to trickle on back to the lake."

Dixon talked about the new bag limits. The number of fishing licenses, has decreased from 1.6 million in 1987 to 1.15 million in 2012. He then answered questions regarding the coastal brook trout population. "We still are trying to figure out why we are losing the population of the salmon trout." He reminded the group, "Part of our job (as fishermen) is to manage the resources."

The next topic was a club member's concern about fracking regulations. "The DNR has no regulatory authority," reminded Dixon addressing fracking. The DNR can be present at meetings, but can comment only. Dixon explained the standard response from fracking proponents is, "We've been fracking in Michigan for fifty years without incident." Dixon went on, "I caution

everybody that almost everything we do takes time. It takes ten years." The benefits being presently reaped, are based on regulations put in place 20 years ago."

### The Fish Report:

**Hatcheries:** "We are entering an agreement with the Little Traverse Bay Odawa Indians. They have a sturgeon hatchery that is *really* nice." Dixon added, "The Little River Band of Ottawa Indians have a proposal to release grayling into the wild, but nothing is concrete as of yet. We've been working well with the tribes."

**Sturgeon:** There are an estimated 35,000 or so in the Detroit River, Lake Saint Claire, and the Saint Claire River. There are sturgeon guards on the Black River, being managed by the Sturgeon For Tomorrow group.

**Atlantic Salmon:** These fish are raised at half the hatchery density of other breeds.

**Steelhead:** "Steelhead is a Rainbow Trout," said Dixon discussing genetics. "They go through a smolting (endocrine changing) phase."

**Smelt:** "We see them really little, and then they disappear. The mussels changed the plankton and there's no food. Smelt are not native to the Great Lakes either," said Dixon.

Next, a club member brought up the Kalamazoo River clean-up of PCB's and paper mill chemicals. The DNR "rescued turtles and geese," answered Dixon. "The insects came back really quick. The fish (currently) seem okay."

The last question of the night was about Pigeon Dam. "It's still there. There have been three accidents that devastated the river," said Dixon, "I want to see it out." Club members overwhelmingly agreed.



## Give Me Your Submissions

Wanna see it in The Evening Hatch? Fantastic! Me too! Please feel free to submit articles, blog entries, ideas, emails, pictures, fly patterns, and other input to The Evening Hatch editor, Sybil Hunter. You can always find me at: [evening.hatch.mffc@gmail.com](mailto:evening.hatch.mffc@gmail.com).



Special thanks to Dan Finstad, this month's featured writer!

## NYMPH PATTERN

**NAME:** Ultimate Skip Nymph

**CREATOR:** Skip Morris

**HOOK:** Heavy wire, standard length or 1X long, sizes 18 to 10.

**BEAD:** Black or copper metal.

**THREAD:** Tan 8/0.

**RIB:** Small copper wire.

**ABDOMEN and THORAX:** Natural hare's mask or hare's mask-colored squirrel.

**TAIL, BACK, and WING CASE:** Natural pheasant tail.

**COMMENTS:** An all-around mayfly- small-stonefly nymph. It can be tied in all the sizes, and colors – light, dark, olive and whatever. It sinks fast, trout love it.

