



The Evening

Hatch

The Newsletter of the Michigan Fly Fishing Club

April 2015

Fishing The Muskegon River

By Sybil Hunter

"I fished a lot in college," said Kevin Feenstra at the MFFC speaker meeting. "I was going to go to law school when an owner of an outfitter approached me. Next thing you know, I spent a year on the Muskegon River, guiding about 200 days out of the year."

The rivers are ever changing. "One of the biggest changes is the wildlife. One of the more drastic changes is how the river adjusts to these drastic changes. When you fish in the middle of the river now, these fish get much more sophisticated than they did the same time last year."

"During the winter months, the water holds the most oxygen. Trout stay in the slowest parts of the river. If you are fishing for steelhead in the winter, spend your time fishing downriver near wood and brush. Where these are, there is food," advised Feenstra.

"The best fishing to be had, morning or evening, is on a winter day," said Feenstra. "You can still fish the main run of the Muskegon, even with slush. The river is very much alive in the winter. Midges have an antifreeze like substance in their veins that allows them to hatch in winter," said Feenstra. "The midge pupa is really an effective bait for trout."

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In January and February, Feenstra suggests early winter stone flies. He also suggests checking for nymphs of flies used in summer, to see if they are still there. Rainbow trout get their spawning colors in February, so he suggests fishing for them with crustaceans, a sal bug, or bright orange scud patterns. "It's just like shrimp dinner!" Although for steelhead
Continued on page 2

MFFC Calendar

May 6, 2015

Activity Meeting

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

May 20, 2015

MFFC Banquet

Speaker: Craig Matthews

Topic: YNP's Overlooked Waters
Italian American Banquet Center
39200 West Five Mile Road
Livonia, 5:30 p.m.

June 10, 2015

Speaker Meeting

Speaker: Steve Sendek

Topic: Alaskan Hunting & Fishing
William M. Costic Center
Farmington Hills, 7:30 p.m.

July 8, 2015

Speaker Meeting

Speaker: Steve Bocks

Topic: Bighorn River, MT
William M. Costic Center
Farmington Hills, 7:30 p.m.



"The river comes alive!"

Fly Fishing By Season

Continued from page 1

the game changes, as their color preferences adjust with the seasons. In fall, they prefer copper or green, but in winter, blue colors are most effective.

Use midges or a muddler minnow to catch sculpin, said Feenstra. "They are like alligators. There's a fast blast, then they are slow and smooth."

In March, "This is when the river really starts coming to life. You start to see a lot of things you don't see in the winter. Mink." Feenstra suggested. Also early stone fly hatches start around March. "During March and April...is the best dry fly fishing."

"Whenever we have a tidewater event, we get a migration. Wait it out a day and there will be really good fishing," said Feenstra. Watch, too, for thermal pollution from dams, where the hot water comes into the river. "Springs are where fish go to survive. These springs can keep them alive. These are kinda the backbone of survival." This is

especially important because fish spend a year in the river before they can spawn. "Springs also keep fish warm in the winter."

In April the birds cue the fishing. "Salmon...steelhead...the Muskegon river is a fly fishing machine! There are so many types of fish, that attracts fish predators."

In May, it is time for brown trout and brook trout. "During May is the biggest brown trout catch. Use a king salmon imitation." (In the water, they look like sculpin.) "Fish along the wood."

"From May 17 through 18 is the May fly hatch - gray drake. The gray drake are kinda unique," said Feenstra. They hatch in the woods rather than the stream. Then the spinner comes back from the woods where it spins and dies in the river. "There is a big splashy rise when these bugs fall from the trees."

Isonychia are great to fish this time of year as well. "The most beautiful nymph turns into the clumsiest may fly," Feenstra commented. "Fish expect a big clumsy mayfly when you fish it."

Of note, Feenstra reminds fishers, "Spawning fish are slower and less picky. In April, May and June, they become very territorial. Fishing for spawning fish is a great way to be successful."

In July, fish with big crayfish patterns said Feenstra. "Yellow and chartreuse being among the best colors to use."



In late summer, switch to "very small crayfish. Cast them upstream. Twitch. Wait. The crayfish saves the day. Crayfish become soft and vulnerable before they shed. The flies should look soft. Use olive and tan maribou. (That is their molting color.) Fish it very, very, very slow."

As summer goes on, Feenstra suggests casting farther upstream.

In September, "Osprey migrate through and catch fish in the lakes."

In October, "There is a nice run of salmon. King salmon...alot naturally reproduce!" Fish the egg sucking leech. Use sparkle."



"A partly cloudy day is a really good thing in the fall. There is really good fishing just before a storm comes in. Post storm, there is high pressure, and bad fishing."

Then in November - spey fish! "It's actually easier to cast a two handed rod wading," said Feenstra. Spey rods are good for steelhead. "Steelhead are aggressive. Copper or orange flies work best." Spey rods also work well for pike.

In December, "The water gets colder and colder. Start fishing natural patterns. Go to a goby pattern. Use big eyes. The fish really pay attention to the eyes. Tie them two to five inches in length. This is the best time to catch steelhead!"

"I hope you take advantage of the great resources we have in Michigan."



Terry Drinkwine

Featured Columnist

Two Cents Worth The Expo

Another year has passed and with it went another gathering of the “faithful” on the second weekend of March at the Midwest Fly Fishing Expo. The “Rod Show,” as some call it, has been the signature of the Michigan Fly Fishing Club for 37 years; members collectively put forth the Herculean effort it takes to make the Expo the success it has become.

Lead by Joe Sprys - who will next week begin planning next year’s Expo - and the dedication of the “usual suspects” like Bill Shannon, Jim McLellan and crew ... who spend two days prior to the opening of the Expo seeing to the task of getting the arena ready for vendors and attendees, only to tear everything down two days later and truck the infrastructure back to storage until next year. Over a hundred volunteers manned the different stations necessary to make the Expo the success it was.

Of course there were glitches. But John Pattee, our security chief, and staff, met the challenge when some horse’s-ass stalked and poached the vendors. Good job John.

As always, the Kids Korner was a busy place with T-shirt painting and fly tying. Several hundred kids painted T-shirts and tied their first flies with the help of MFFC members who get as big a kick out of helping as the kids do showing off the finished project.

The Expo wouldn’t be the venue it has become without the seminars. Dan Finstad again procured the talent that brought people from all over the state and beyond. Of course the headliners needed to be managed, and that took volunteers too.

Fly tiers from every corner of the state and beyond, were on hand to share their craft and talents thanks to Todd Schotts. (You wouldn’t think a guy that could double for a tree would be that nimble with his hands.)

Kevin Lipp ran the club room with volunteers and made sure assignments were handed out and people knew where they were going. It was also the place for a break and a cup of coffee and lunch. (Next year, Kevin, think more diet pop!)

It takes a good team to keep the finances of the Expo in order and Jim Telinda and crew made sure the monies were appropriately counted and attributed to the necessary accounts ... the last time I saw such a check and balance, I was at Fort Knox.

I think what was the most telling about the reputation the Expo, that has developed over the past years, was the line of people waiting to get in that stretched from the ticket windows down every hall in the building and ended up at the entrance doors. But, you guessed it, it was handled with efficiency thanks to Joe Statler and his team.

Perhaps what everyone takes for granted – the gathering of data for next year’s mailers – was done by Linda Smith and Steve Bocks. Before the end of the Expo, most of the ticket information had been collected and stored. A thankless job, but a necessary one.

From security - that included manning the doors, hallways and watching booths when the vendors needed to leave - to the volunteers at the Club Booth and especially Dave Nowicki who stood behind the counter both days promoting the club ... resulting in 29 new memberships.

Of course there were many more members without whom the Expo wouldn’t have been a success. Thank you one and all. The reputation MFFC enjoys, is due to your efforts.



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April Fly Of The Month

Featured Fly

Great For MI Rivers

Au Sable Wulff

By Todd A. Schotts

With Trout season just around the corner, insects will be hatching in the waterways, the rivers will be coming alive, and what else should we tie but a fly that is considered one of the “Top 10 of Trout Flies” by *Field and Stream* - the “Ausable Wulff” from the master and world class tyer, the late Fran Better.

Quite a few years back, I got the honor to meet Fran Better at his shop, Adirondack Sports Shop in Wilmington. I was so intrigued by his insight on flies, fishing, and how as a tyer to look at the world of insects. His shop was unique. The day I stopped in, he was behind the vise tying none other than the “Ausable Wulff.” I walked over and started talking to him, the next thing you know, three hours went by. I was so intrigued by his tying. It was a game of 20 questions for me as I was still a rookie to the world of fly tying. After that meeting, I was a true fan of his tying.

He is a world class tyer that could tie the toughest Classic Atlantic Salmon flies to the most unique Trout Flies. His series of flies, like the “Haystack” or the “Wulff” series are simple flies, but are some of the most

effective patterns out there. That is one thing I picked up from him, very simple flies can be very effective.

He started fly fishing started with his dad at an early age, and he learned tying from his dad’s, friends like Ray Bergman. With world class knowledge being taught at an early age, it’s no wonder in high school he actually designed and came out with the famed “Haystack” series!

In 1961, he designed the AuSable Wulff series of flies (not to be confused with Lee Wulff’s series of Gray Wulff flies). This fly had very basic materials, and the tying itself was so simple, yet durable. Like all Wulff Patterns out there, this fly is a high floating, but durable and easy to see fly for the angler and the fish. It is considered an attractor pattern, but can easily imitate Drakes or even an Isonychia.

Fran developed a reputation in the 1960’s as a spokesman for the West Branch of the AuSable River. He actually carried that torch until his health started failing him.

When fishing the AuSable Wulff fly, or its relatives, you can use it in high water, it’s great for pocket water, or even slack water. The way I was instructed by Mr. Better was, “You have to use a heavier tippet and cast two or three times, no more than that! And cast to where the fish are or will be. If you cast to where the fish won’t be, the fly won’t work.”

So when you tie this fly and fish it, remember to look up in the sky and thank Fran Better for the great tribute and legacy he has left to the world of fly tying and fly fishing.

Tight lines and schnazzy flies!



MATERIALS NEEDED:

HOOK: Dry Fly Hook, sizes 10-16

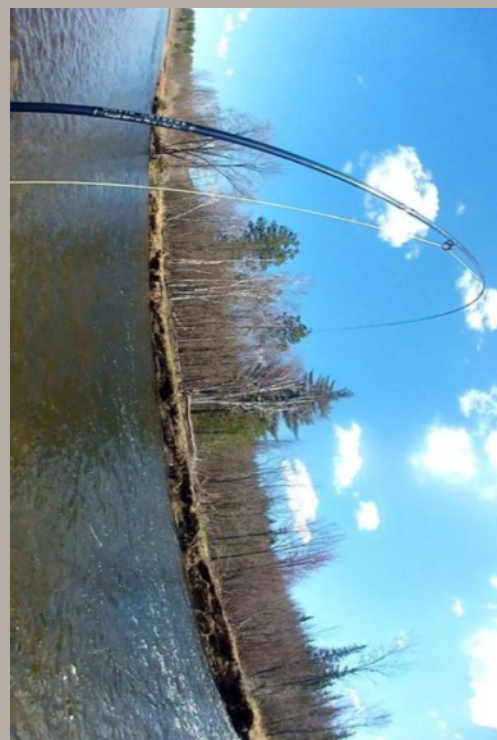
THREAD: Florescent Orange 6/0 or 140

TAIL: Woodchuck Guide Hair

BODY: Rusty Orange Austrailian Opossum Fur

HACKLE: Cree, Grizzly or Brown hackle

WING: Kip Tail or Calf Body Hair





April Members Corner

Featured Members

Featured Member Tyer

Scott Freeburg

By Todd A. Schotts

With the famed Michigan Trout Opener just around the corner, everyone is behind their tying desk hopefully getting that secret fly that will entice the majestic Michigan Trout. This month's featured tyer fits in *perfectly* for this special occasion, and the pattern is even more of a *perfect* fit.

Our featured spotlight tyer for April was Scott Freeburg, our current Vice President and chair for many outings. Scott has been with the Michigan Fly Fishing Club since 1996, he is our current Vice President, has served on our Board of Directors in the realm of Treasurer (twice), and Director at Large many times. Besides being on the board, he also chairs the Trout Tune Up and Trout Opener Weekend. Like myself, Scott is from the west side of the state, growing up around the Pere Marquette, Grand, and Muskegon Rivers.

His fly pattern is *perfectly* created fly for the opener. It has remained a top secret fly for many years amongst a select few fellow tyers. For the rest of us, we have all tried to copy and tie this certain fly, but without any luck. It is none other than the "Opening Day

MATERIALS NEEDED

- HOOK:** Mustad 94840 size #14
- THREAD:** 8/0 or 70 Denier Camel Brown
- TAIL:** Lemon Wood Duck
- BODY:** Beaver-Fox Blend dyed Pinkish Brown
- WING:** Gray Hi-Viz color #16
- HACKLE:** Badger



Special – Mr. Perfect.” All I know is that this fly was created in circa 2005 in the tying dungeon of Mr. Perfect himself. With the evaluation of this fly over the years, it has increased with positive results on the river. The hardest part of tying this fly is to get the correct blend of color in the mixture of the dubbing (as of writing this article I still didn't have security clearance to get the exact mixture recipe). I can contest, I have a lot of "what ifs" in containers that didn't make the correct dubbed color. This fly impersonates the famed Hendrickson hatch in Michigan.

Fish this pattern like any other dry you would fish this time of season. I have tried this pattern about a month after opener and had some luck, but nothing like on opening day, most likely why it got its name. So bring your tools, vise, and note taking material to learn one of the most top secret and notorious flies for Michigan's Trout Opener.

Welcome to all our new

Club Members

- Charlie Hatmaker of Waterford
- Bill Winnick of Ypsilanti
- Michael Geczi of Shelby Twp.
- Andrew Tata of Monroe
- Mike Bamford of Grosse Pointe Park
- Scott Bowerman of Whitehall
- Tammy Bowerman of Whitehall
- Steve Byrd of Flushing
- Tammy Byrd of Flushing
- Mike Dilworth of South Lyon
- Kathleen Maciag of Clinton Twp.
- David Mayes of Novi
- Raymond Miller of Marshall
- John Rzepecki of Clinton Twp.
- Bill Blair of Hartland
- Roger Blair of Beverly Hills
- Dreama Blaszyk of Rochester
- Jamies Bretz of Plymouth
- Kevin Green of Blissfield
- John Hunter of Ann Arbor
- Leslie Koltuedt of Canton
- Ron Le Tourneau of Canton
- Benedict Letizio of Allen Park
- Robert Loyselle of Royal Oak
- Vern Lund of Howell
- William Mangan of Columbus
- Dwight Martindale of Washington
- Bill McCarty of Washington
- Brian McLennan of Wolverine Lake
- Aaron Munoz, Sr. of Dearborn
- Randy Tambourine of Warren
- David Worley of Goodrich
- Rob Nowicki of Lake Orion
- Kathy Swierlik of Dearborn



Michigan Fly Fishing Club

Club Events

A Great Success Once Again!

MFFC Midwest Expo Brings in new members

By Dave Nowicki

As we near the end of the Club's year, we reach the annual high-point in the number of Club members. As of March 31, 432 people were paid-up members of the Club. That total includes 85 new members who joined after the 2014 Expo, including 30 people who joined at the 2015 Expo (a good year for new member sign-up at the Expo). About 40% of the Expo sign-ups were people who are new to fly fishing and looking for a place to learn the sport. Unfortunately, the increase in membership was offset by the loss of 73 people who were members in 2014 but elected not to renew their membership.

In May of last year, I studied the Club's membership database looking at the people who were members at one time, but did not renew their membership. Of the 433 people who are no longer Club members, 146 (33%) did not renew their membership after their initial year. Data available on the internet says that first-year losses for clubs are generally in the 12-15% range.

In the last year, we've looked for ways to retain new members by getting them acclimated and participating in the Club. The first thing we decided to work on was something that we could hand the

new members giving them just about everything they needed to know about the Club. A small team (Bill Wischman, Brian Rippon, Jim Kadlubowski, and myself) met to compile a New Member Guide. The Guide was completed and distributed for the first time to the new members who joined at the Expo. The Guide contains the basic information about the Club including its history (including the story of the Club patch), education and conservation efforts, library, what to expect at Club meetings, The Evening Hatch, and the Expo. For those new to fly fishing, it lists some of the books and DVDs available in the Club library that would be useful to a new fly fisher. It also includes information about fly fishing in Michigan, and SE Michigan, with additional information on Club events and outings.

This summer, I'm hoping to create a schedule of summer fishing "meetings." The idea would be to have 5 or 6 places, each with a Club member "leader," throughout the Detroit Metro area where Club members could meet to do some fishing. This would provide the opportunity for some actual fishing with other members, and could be especially helpful for new members, particularly those new to fly fishing, to get involved in the Club without

having to travel and/or pay to attend a Club outing. If you would like to be the leader of one of the locations, or would like more information about leading a "meeting," please contact me. I plan to be at Bishop Lake in Brighton on Wednesday evenings during June, July, and August (except for Club meeting nights) beginning around 6:00 PM. If you have a float tube, pontoon, or boat, come and join me. Bishop Lake is a no-wake lake.

Also this summer, I will be working on a beginner's guide to fly fishing. While there are many of these available already, most are published by a commercial entity or another fly fishing organization. I would be nice to hand one to a new member that has our name and logo on it.

Membership renewals will be mailed in mid-July. I would appreciate it if you would return them promptly, otherwise I have the added work, and cost, of sending out reminders.

If you would like to be the involved in one of your favorite fishing locations, or would like more info about leading a fishing location meeting, please contact Dave Nowicki.

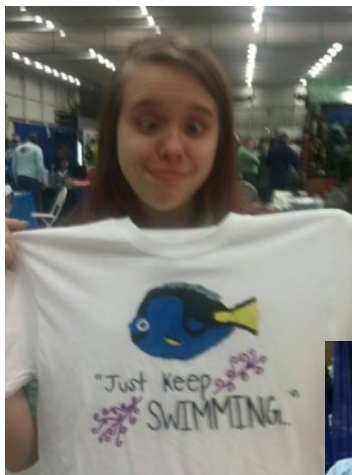
Michigan Fly Fishing Club



Featured Photos

Enjoying

The EXPO



What Can You Do With MFFC? Upcoming Events

April 25, 2015

Opening Day Of Trout Season

Gates AuSable Lodge, Grayling
Mastor of Ceremonies: Al Haxton

April 23-26, 2015

Opening Weekend

Riverview Lodge, Grayling
Contact Scott Freeburg
sfree357@aol.com

May 6-8, 2015

New Member Outting

MSU's Wawasum Lodge, Grayling
Contact Mike Doyle
miketheflyguy@gmail.com

May 20, 2015

MFFC Club Banquet

Speaker: Craig Matthews
Topic: YNP's Overlooked Waters
Italian American Banquet Center
Contact Joyce Haxton

August 29, 2015

Club Picnic

Multi-Lakes Conservation Assoc.
Commerce Twp, 12:00-5:00
Contact John Eriksson
johneriksson5@aol.com

20 May 2015

**The Annual Michigan Fly Fishing Club Banquet will be held on
Wednesday May 20, 2015**

at the Italian American Hall, Livonia

Banquet speaker is Craig Matthews

Door prizes & Special Member Only prizes will be awarded

The cost is \$40 per person

cash bar available

Meal selections are: 8 oz. New York Strip; Chicken Marsala; Salmon Siciliano

Banquet Agenda

5:30 to 6:30 Arrival and Social Hour

6:15 to 7:15 General Door Prize Drawing

50/50 Ultimate Drawing Entries

7:15 Dinner begins

Continue 50/50 Drawing Entries

Continue General Door Prize Drawing

8:00 Introductions and Remarks

50/50 Drawing Award

8:10 Guest Speaker: Craig Matthews

8:45 Special Members Only Door Prize Drawing

Fly tying with Craig Matthews earlier in the day - there is one space left. Contact Joyce Haxton.

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