



The Evening

Hatch

The Newsletter of the Michigan Fly Fishing Club

November 2018

Appreciating Quality Hackle

By Sybil Hunter

Bill Keough, owner of Keough Hackles and now Hareline Dubbin, LLC, joined us in November to take us on a journey From Egg To Fly. "I'm going to educate you," started Keough. He quickly addressed his recent acquisition of Hareline Dubbin, out in Oregon. "I've logged over 700,000 flight miles in the past six months and I've driven out there six times," Keough said. "Go on your cellphone and download the app Hareline Dubbin...there are 16,000 products. But, today we are going to focus mostly on the chickens."

There are 72 pens in his chicken houses, "a rooster gets to play around with about 15 to 20 hens," said Keough. "We gather up the eggs daily." The eggs are set in the 100 degree incubator heaters for 21 days. Eggs are turned 45 degrees every two hours during incubation. At the last 18 days, it's transfer time. In the next incubator, the temperature is lowered to 98.5 degrees. Eggs are put in a basket, from which they hatch in the last three days. Once hatched out, they get two shots in the neck and go into 100 degree pens for about a week.

At about 14 weeks, they are transferred to cages. Each one is raised in its own cage, which is 1 1/2' longer and



1' inch wider than state law requires. If the birds were not individually caged, they would peck and fight one another, which would not provide the quality hackle that tyers seek from the Keough name. Like Keough said, "If they are not separated, they just end up bald."

There are five rows of cages that span "just a little bit over a mile. We clean them out a couple three times a year," said Keough. When the buildings are full, they house around 100,000 birds. "They crow all day long."

The chicks are hand fed, all have water, and later some are auto fed. "It costs about 15 grand to feed the birds every week, all year around," said Keough.

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MFFC Calendar



Elmer Jantz. 15 lb Steelhead. Nov.5
Pere Marquette River with Tommy Lynch.

December 5, 2018

Speaker Meeting

Speaker: Brian Pitzer

Topic: TBD

Clarenceville Middle School

Livonia, 7:30 p.m.

December 19, 2018

Garage Sale Meeting

Clarenceville Middle School

Livonia, 7:30 p.m.

January 9, 2019

Speaker Meeting

Speaker: Brian Pitzer

Topic: TBA

Clarenceville Middle School

Livonia, 7:30 p.m.

January 30, 2019

Activities Meeting

Clarenceville Middle School

Livonia, 7:30 p.m.



Continued from page 1

“Once they are about 40 weeks old, they are mature,” said Keough. “Although they can take up to two months longer.” When they are ready to be harvested for their feathers, about 200 to 250 live birds are loaded into a cart. Carbon dioxide is pumped in to the top, the oxygen goes out the holes in the bottom. “It’s amazing how fast you’re dead when you don’t have oxygen,” noted Keough. A full cart weighs about 1,800 pounds. Keough moves these carts himself.

“We hang them after they are dead,” said Keough. “Take their heads off, hang it on a hook. All the blood runs out.” Then they take the saddles off. There are two main parts used for hackle: the saddle (tail section) and the cape (basically the top head section with the head skinned out). The saddles get washed in a washing machine, then dyed if necessary. “I do the dying,” said Keough.

Demands around the world differ. Keough said, On the east coast they want them dull and plain,” whereas in the the midwest they want brighter ones. “Also, I sell thousands and thousands of marabou patch,” said Keough (evidently to everyone but U.S. tyers). The chest section has the marabou feathers.

Carcasses are composted on the farm, topped with layers of tree trimmings and chicken manure. It makes rich, strong, black fertilizer. “It gets about 138 degrees” while composting. “In about a year, then that goes out in to the field.” That field grows vegetables for the farm.

“Feather birds are supposed to pay the bills,” said Keough. “The last 30 years they have been. Nothing goes on or off the farm alive. We even grind our own food these days.” This self encapsulated process protects the farm from disease, keeping costs down and quality high.

When asked if they eat any of the

carcasses, Keough said, “They’ve got no skins on them. They are tough. They’ll pull your teeth out.”

All the work is done by hand, and Keough does all of it. “The heads are cut off where they have to be skinned,” said Keough. They are scraped, defatted and delicately trimmed. “We sit and watch soap operas and skin.” Keough and his two staff skin 500-600 chickens a day. The capes too, go into a washing machine and dryer. “I had to buy my own,” said Keough. “My wife didn’t like it when I used hers.”

“What about the hair fashion?” a club member asked. “That’s how I bought Hareline Dubbin,” said Keough.

“Once they are skinned, they gotta be laid out,” said Keough. “How you lay them out on cardboard is how they’re gonna be.” They are then washed. “The number of feather and feather tracts are the same (between chickens),” said Keough. It is all about the quality care and cosmetics. “I press these things between cardboard.” The cardboard sucks up the moisture and oils. (Not every company does this, nor does it correctly, as evidenced by oil transfer, greasy packaging and smell.)

Keough uses a six ton jack press. The hackles are layered on cardboard, then plywood is pressed from above. The old gland is cut off. “They (the chickens) are fatty and well fed. See the yellow fat? It’s the same ration from start to finish.”

“Hackles are graded after they are done,” said Keough. “We package them by hand. They are packed 500 to 1000 birds per box.”

Keough showed his drying racks. Each rack holds about 15,000 pieces. The drying process takes about four to five days.

Three people are involved in this process. “We can keep up with it,” said Keough without missing a beat. Every set of the process egg to fly, is completed by hand. Keough and the two highly skilled

others under his watch, make Keough Hackles what it is. “Look at the amount of time spent on it and you know what you’re paying for.”

Keough went on to talk briefly about the Hareline Dubbin business. It is a \$2.5 million warehouse of fly tying products covering 25,000 square feet. “We have all the product on hand to fill the orders,” said Keough. All that product was in unaccessible chaos when he purchased the company, and had to be bar coded, labeled and organized. “Three gals with a finger scanner pull the orders.”

“Everything we do is hand work,” said Keough. All products are dyed and prepared in-house, be it pheasant heads, Hungarians (birds), quails — it is all prepped on site. Even deer hide is hand cut.

“Turkey marabou is American. Marabou taken here is shipped to China, sorted, stretched and sized. Tariffs cost 25% going to China and 25% coming back. Metal is a 15% tariff. A \$2 pack is going to cost \$4 now,” said Keough. “The biggest product hit by tariffs is feathers.”

A slide showed Keough’s carding machine, dated 1905. This unassuming piece of machinery still does the best job processing product.

“It (the process) is time consuming,” said Keough. “Everybody’s fussy. The more consistency you have, the better.”

All this started in 1969 with a rooster and a hen purchased from a show in Ohio. “I have not put in genetic stock since 1989,” said Keough.

BOOTH CHAIR NEEDED:
Outdoorama
Feb 28 - Mar 3 2019
Contact Spencer Vanderhoof



MFFFC Business

Meeting Minutes
Michigan Fly Fishing Club
Board Meeting
October 17, 2018 at 7:30 pm

Rollcall

Present: Vanderhoof; Nowickis; Hunter; Selinger; Summers; Oehring; Niemi; Freeburg; Briggs
Absent: Strachan; Bada
Guests: Kevin Lipp; Peter Albertson

Approval of Minutes - Approved

Approval of Agenda - Approved after changes and additions

Officer Reports

President — Vanderhoof

No updates at this time.

Vice President — Strachan

Not present at this time.

Treasurer — Nowicki

Income down due to no Expo deposits rec'd yet. Audit report presented. Only minor issues.

Corresponding Secretary — Hunter

Kelly Neuman confirmed as January speaker.

Hatch — Hunter

Hatch on schedule.

Website — Briggs

Email policy & procedure information disseminated to board. Proposed 5 new Club emails for board members with the most dealings with the public. Board approved.

Membership — Bada

Currently 329 active members; 159 not renewed from 2018; 74 not renewed from 2017. Reminders being sent.

Events & Outings

Expo Drop Box is set up. Some issues with Outlook re: mass mailings. First letter with contract going out 10/16/18.

New Business

Ultimate Fishing Show, Tracy Partridge volunteered to chair.

Outdoorrama, still in need of chairperson. The Board feels we need to support this if at all possible.

Material supply for above events, Project Fish has helped in the past. This needs to be confirmed for this year.

Old Business

Activity calendar provided by Bob Niemi. Awaiting final confirmations.

News From

The Library

Members are reminded that “The Rod Book” now resides in the “Joe Sattler Memorial Library” and is available at every meeting for members to peruse. More than just rods, it is intended to provide members with a means to sell and purchase new and used fly fishing related paraphernalia at prices far below retail. We currently have an assortment of items ranging from rods, float tubes, tying vises, landing nets, to even a pontoon boat! All items are owned by MFFC members and made available only to MFFC members. Check it out at your next visit to the library.....just another perk available with your MFFC membership! To post an item for sale, simply complete a form which is available through Allen or Jerry at the Library.



Club Constitution electronic copy and by-laws found. Freeburg will ensure it is up to date and added to the Club cloud document file.

Kevin Lipp expounded on the Drop Box component of cloud storage for the Expo. Board approved 6 month trial then reassessment.

Visitor Comments: See above

Adjournment: 9:16 pm



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November Fly Of The Month

Carrie Stevens Tied Like A Boss

General MacArthur

By Todd A. Schotts

To honor our veterans with November Fly of the Month, I have gone back into history, searching the archives for a fly worthy enough to honor my fellow veterans. After the lengthy search, I found a fly worth the honor — the “General MacArthur” by Carrie Stevens.

If you are unfamiliar with Carrie Stevens, she was a fly tier and designer from Madison and Upper Dam, Maine. She is the creator of Rangeley Favorite Trout and Salmon Flies. She was a self taught fly tyer and the wife of a Maine guide. History claims, *“She took a break from her camp chores and tied a streamer which would resemble a small baitfish. She took her creation to the Upper Dam pool, where she promptly hooked a 6lb 13 oz brook trout. She entered the fish into a contest which was being held by Field and Stream winning second place and received a flood of orders for her new pattern.”*

Her fly tying was unique, she tied flies without the aid of a vise. She held the hooks and tied the materials in her hands. Also unique, with her earlier flies, numbers rather than names identified her fly patterns. By the 1930’s her list now included names along with numbers for her flies. One of her earlier flies was the Gray Ghost, one of the most well-known and most effective New England Streamer patterns that is popular choice for either casting or trolling yet today. Some of her

other patterns include: F.R.S. Fancy; Pattern No. 9; The Judge; Indian Rock; and Morning Glory, just to name a few flies.

According to my research, she designed/created over 100 very successful fly fishing patterns. Being a fly designer myself, I find this totally amazing. The methods she used to tie her streamers were much different than what today’s tyers practice. She crafted the wing sections separately off the hook shank. Carrie’s techniques would seem so tedious to the modern-day tiers, but her flies were known for beauty and strength. The heads of the flies were all finished with her famous signature of three bands — black, reddish-orange, then black, with the exception of her very first flies and the “Patriotic Patterns.” During the 1930’s, 49% of all record fish taken from the Upper Dam were caught with her flies. During the 1940’s and 1950’s, most American tiers were making streamers that attempted to imitate proportions invented by Carrie Stevens. She passed away August 3rd, 1970. After her death, Maine Governor Kenneth M. Curtis declared August 15th, 1970 to be “Carrie Gertrude Stevens Day.” She is the only fly tier to be recognized by the state of Maine. Even after her death, her legacy continues to this day. She was a true pioneer in the fly tying.

The “General MacArthur” streamer is one of the four streamers Stevens created to show support for World War II, known collectively as her “Patriotic Patterns.” Since General Douglas MacArthur was a prominent figure in the media in the day, he was an obvious symbol of patriotism; this probably is why the General MacArthur streamer was the most popular of her four patriotic patterns. They are: #186a America, #186b Casablanca, #186c



General MacArthur

HOOK: #2-6 Partridge CS15

THREAD: White flat waxed nylon

TAIL: Red, White, Blue hackle bars

WING: 2 White Saddle or Neck Hackles flanked by blue hackles, flanked by grizzly hackles

BODY: Medium Flat Silver Tinsel

THROAT: Red, White, and Blue hackle bars

CHEEKS: Jungle Cock Eyes

General MacArthur, and #186d Victory. All four patterns share the distinctive red, white, and blue heads, which can be quite a challenge. It is noted that flat thread works best, as it helps to prevent the bumps between the color transitions. The General MacArthur also proved to be an effective fishing fly. In 1942, H.G. Tapply, editor of *Hunting and Fishing* magazine, and his wife went on a fishing trip, his wife caught 10 landlocked salmon on the pattern in just two hours, while he managed only one fish on his favorite Dark Tiger.

This fly of the month is to honor all my fellow veterans (November 11th) and to all my brothers and sisters in the Marine Corps, Happy Birthday (November 10th). If you do decide to tie this pattern, it is truly an enjoyable pattern to tie and to fish.

Until next month Tight Lines and Snazzy Flies.



November Tyer Of The Month

Featured Member Tyer

Shakey Bealy

Spencer Vanderhoof

The fly I'll tie as the Featured Tyer on our club's activity night on November 21st, will be the Shakey Bealy.

It is a soft-hackled style pattern created by Nick Nicklas of Blue Ribbon Flies in West Yellowstone. It is a twist on the old March Brown soft-hackled fly that has gained fame on the Madison River stretch in Yellowstone Park during the fall Brown Trout runs up that river.

The fly is named after a Yellowstone Park ranger by the name of Frank Beals. He would take the summers off during the '60's from his job in San Diego to work as a park ranger so he could fish during his free time. It is claimed that he would get so excited about fishing that he would shake, thus was given the nickname Shakey Bealy.

The Park stretch of the Madison during these fall run-ups is famous. Going back to the times when Joe Brooks fished that area with his well-known Brooks' Stone. A very heavily weighted stonefly nymph that is tied in such a way so as to present the same view of the fly to the trout from every side of the fly. The method of fishing the Madison back then was with Brooks' Stone or very large streamers on 9 weight streamer rods.

As some of you may know, the soft-hackled fly was re-introduced by anglers like Sylvester Nemes; eventually some anglers tired of the big rods and weighted flies and began to fish soft-hackled flies for these fall spawners. This fly is just one of

those flies. It is a great fly in the fall, both out west, and here in the mid-west.

I'm writing this on the day after Halloween. Nick Nicklas claimed that he was inspired by the spirit of Frank Beals when he came up with this pattern. Who knows? All I know is it's a great autumn fly and should be in your fly box when the leaves are turning here in Michigan.

Materials for the Shakey Bealy:

Hook: TMC 2302 size 10 (You can experiment here with standard wet fly hooks, but this hook helps get this fly below the surface).

Thread: Brown Uni 6/0, Danville's 6/0, or UTC 70 denier.

Under Tail: Krystal Flash (pearl or orange).

Over Tail: Mallard dyed Wood Duck or Wood Duck flank feathers.

Rib: Brown cotton sewing thread, or brown D-Rib.

Body: Amber colored dubbing.

Thorax: Orange ostrich herl.

Collar: Partridge back feather tied in at the butt.

I will supply all the materials including the hooks. Tyers bring vise, tools, and thread of choice.

If I could, I'd like to dedicate this session to an old friend, Mark Libertone of Wellsville New York who passed away September 16, 2013. Mark was nicknamed "Softhackle" by all of us that knew him. Though I consider myself a dry-fly angler, I always carry a fly box filled with soft-hackled flies in my vest called the "Libertone Box," and occasionally these find their way onto the terminal end of my leader.

The picture —> is Mark at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum in Livingston Manor, NY the year before he passed away. Some of you that head

Shakey Bealy



out west with our club are aware of the Campfire Lodge and Jim's Fly Shop there. Jim Slattery was an old friend of Mark's, who is himself a soft-hackled fly addict.

To see Mark's old collection of soft-hackled flies go to www.troutnut.com/libstudio/FS&S

Jason Neuswanger (TroutNut) was kind enough, when Mark was ill and unable to maintain his site, to forever include it as part of the TroutNut website!



Fish Tails

John Pinto

Sand In My Shoe

There I was..... From 1985 to 1999 I was checking out every island in the Bahamas. I learned my lessons well from my mentor Bonefish Joe Cleare of Harbour Island and now I was on my own. Each island brought new experiences figuring out the Bahamian bonefish scene, which was harder than one might think.

First of all, every fly fisher who has challenged the Bahamian bonefish no doubt caught their first fish while being poled around in a skiff by a local guide. I did! That first fish and the guide are always remembered and no doubt a photo adorns the angler's office wall. Yes, there is a photo on my office wall of bonefish #1.

The second memorable fish is the one where the guide stops the boat and you begin wading around and you are more eye-to-eye with the fish in very shallow water.

And while the first two fish are memorable, the truth be known the guide did all the work. You basically stood on the front of his boat, he spotted the fish and told you where to cast. You might have had a "three for six" day (six fish hooked, three landed) but all you did was cast when, and to where,

the guide hollered. You had no idea why the guide took you to this area of the island and probably had no idea of "time of tide."

The Bahamas are extremely tide-sensitive and are a low tide fishery. Your best fishing is two hours before to two hours after the low tide, a four-hour window. First-time novice anglers to the Bahamas will fall for the guide's claim that "you gotta fish all day, Mon!" That means you are fishing for eight hours, four of which are the high-tide window and the fish are all up in the mangroves and impossible to catch. So you have a nice boat ride for half the day. And the guide makes more money.

If you chase Bahamian bonefish long enough you begin to figure out the game. Yes, you caught fish but it was from a boat and all you did was cast. The time will come when you say, "Enough, I want to do this myself," and you step out of the boat. For some of us, we have stepped out of the boat long ago, never to return, and have become "stalkers." We do it entirely by ourselves.

That third fish, to me is the most memorable. You looked at the tide chart



the night before and all your learning over the years comes into play. You determine the area you selected at 9:17am will have a low incoming tide, the sun will be at your back, hopefully the wind as well and schools of fish should be coming out of the the bay and across the shallow flats as they head up the creek season to feed. You are in position well ahead of time and as predicted the fish are on the move. Schools gliding by and even some tailing fish. You are in a little more than ankle-deep water and in casting range. You land your first fish as a stalker.



I fish Mayaguana exclusively because of the way Curtis Creek is situated. The tide fills from the west and the prevailing wind is from the northeast. These two forces of nature fight each other, the wind holds the tide back and at dead high tide we have low tide conditions. We have tailing fish at high tide in Curtis Creek which is unheard of in the Bahamas. Consequently, between Curtis Creek and the other three areas, we are able to fish Mayaguana from sunrise to sunset.

Eso es lo suficientemente bueno para mí! That is plenty good enough for me!



Michigan Fly Fishing Club

Club Events

Available Through December

Expo Shirts

From the November meetings until the December activities meeting, you can place your order for the official issue 2019 Expo shirts!

This Columbia Bahama long sleeved shirt is available in a *wide* range of men's and women's sizes!



ALL sizes will be available at Club meetings to try on - sizing of the shirts is VERY generous.

The cost is \$50 per shirt. Make checks payable to MFFC.

For Club members that cannot make the meetings, orders can be made by simply contacting Eric or Cindy Center at their email ecenter4753@yahoo.com or at their cell numbers (248) 787-6414 and (248) 787-6414 respectively.

Ultimate Fishing Show

Volunteers Needed

It is time for Ultimate Fishing Show volunteer sign up! We need folks to volunteer for instructing fly tying and manning the casting lane for two hour shifts on Thursday-Sunday, January 10-13. Folks who volunteer for 2 shifts on one day will get parking paid by the club. (3-4 tiers per shift, 1-2 casting lane leads per shift) Please **contact Tracey Partridge**, MFFC show chair, at 734-707-5333 or by email tleepartridge@gmail.com, with dates and times you are available, and encourage other members to join in the fun as volunteers!

Dates and times

SHOW DATES

MOVE IN

- Thursday January 10 1:00 pm-9:00 pm
- Wednesday January 9 >3 pm
- Friday January 11 11:00 am-9:00 pm
- Thursday January 10 Set by noon
- Saturday January 12 10:00 am-8:00 pm

MOVE OUT

- Sunday January 13 10:00 am-5:00 pm
- Sunday January 13 5:00 pm-10:00 pm

Full show information on the show can be viewed at [Ultimate Fishing Show-Nov](#).



For River Conservation

Fund Raiser

The Mason Griffith Founders Chapter of Trout Unlimited recently received the donation of a hand made wooden drift boat. The proceeds of selling the boat are to be used to make improvements to the Au Sable and Manistee Rivers. The boat is a fantastic handmade classic "Columbia 16" mahogany and ash drift boat. This vessel was crafted in 1999 in Grand Rapids, MI and was completely reconditioned in 2015. The renovation included a new exterior bottom varnishing and a new contour covering supports by removable fiberglass struts. The master craftsmen that built this vessel always used historically accurate drawings for the construction as well as the renovation. The boat includes trailer, drift boat cover, oars and dual anchoring systems. The asking price is \$7500.00. Further information and pictures are available at ausableriver2@yahoo.com or 989-826-6750.

December Guest Speaker

Brian Pitzer

Brian Pitzer is the owner of The Northern Angler Fly Fishing Outfitters in Traverse City, Michigan. Watch email for details.



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