



The Evening

Hatch

The Newsletter of the Michigan Fly Fishing Club

March 2018

The Arkansas White Water Wrap Up MFFC Calendar

By Scott Freeburg

To start the year 2018 off, eleven members of the Michigan Fly Fishing Club braved snow, and ice cold travel conditions, to venture 800 miles south to fly fish the White River near Cotter, Arkansas.

Harry Briggs, Jim Fischer, Tom Hector, Jim Holly (aka Skeeter), Bill Wischman, Katherine Hammons, Dan Finstad, Scott Freeburg, Adam Freeburg, Frank Gosiewski and Ken Harfoot would make the “bucket list” trip at the MFFC White River Outing. The goal was to see if the White was the Trout Mecca it’s reputation described it as, and, hopefully land a trout or two.

Michigan guide Kelly Neuman, of Streamside Rod & Guide, and myself began organizing the trip back in April of 2017. Our group would stay at The White River Trout Lodge on the banks of the river and have three days of “intense” guided fishing from river drift boats including all equipment and meals.

The White is a tail water fishery beginning at the dam below Bull Shoals Lake in the Ozark Mountains of northern Arkansas. The dam can run up to 7 generators releasing additional water into the White and dramatically change river flows any day of the week.

Our group left Tuesday morning,



January 30th, in a rented Ford Transit van and traveled the first 500 miles to Highland, Illinois. A memorable stop along the way was lunch at Bird’s Smokehouse, east of Fort Wayne Indiana. The ribs there were outstanding as was every thing else. In Highland, we had a wonderful dinner at a brewery called Rail Shake and for desert, foot high pies Katherine picked up along the way. After spending the night, we drove the rest of the 300 miles through some memorable mountain back roads

We arrived at the lodge Wednesday afternoon to sunny skies and 65 degree temperatures. Then a quick trip (not !!!) to Dally’s Fly shop for fishing licenses and back to the lodge for dinner and to

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April 11, 2018

Speaker Meeting

Speaker: Ethan Winchester

Topic: TBD

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

April 25, 2018

Activities Meeting

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

May 2, 2018

Activities Meeting

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

May 16, 2018

MFFC Annual Banquet

Speaker: Jason Randall

Topic: Where Trout Are

Italian American Center, 5:00 p.m.



More fish tales that way ->

Continued from page 1
plan for the next day's fishing.

Overnight, temperatures would drop, leaving us with colder 30 to 40 degree temps for the rest of the week. Luckily we avoided any precipitation but did have to deal with some windy days.

On the first morning of fishing everyone paired up into six groups, each of the six guides had two anglers per boat. Skeeter volunteered to go it alone with guide Clint and be the odd man out. The guides spread us out throughout the river system giving everyone good water to fish.

Not more than five minutes on the water, our guide Kelly received a text and picture on his cell. Skeeter's landed the first fish, a 21 1/2" Brown trout!

For me and my son Adam, the first day of fishing was slow. Our 8 wt. fly rods threw 6 to 8 inch articulated streamers all day long. I was only able to bring in two small Rainbows, and one small Brown, a little bigger than my fly.

When we returned to the lodge everyone was all smiles. Many shared their fly fish stories but it was Skeeter that had the best day. He caught over 20 Rainbows and Browns and was enjoying a well earned Manhattan cocktail before dinner. I was relieved everyone caught fish and was having a good time.

For the second day, the guides warned us the river would be at max flow with all gates at the dam open, running seven generators. It was an amazing spectacle to see a river rise six feet but the fish are used to it and take opportunity to feed in new bank areas and food sources. Evidently, when the gates open, the Shad get sucked through and kind of chopped into pieces. The fish and the birds key in on this and

have a major feast downstream.

When we returned to the lodge for dinner, again everyone was all smiles and fish stories. Again Skeeter boated over 20 fish and enjoyed his well earned Manhattan. But the highlight of the day was Dan's a 23" Brown trout. A big male that made for a spectacular picture.

For Adam and myself, it was another slow day, with no fish caught or released. That night Adam and guide Eric tried "mouse fishing" and the kid finally got the skunk off with a nice brown around 11 pm. Night fishing on Friday in the dark... How cool is that?

On our third and last day, Saturday, river conditions changed again. Cool temps, light overcast skies and minimum flows from the dam prevailed. The water level was the lowest I had witnessed all trip. Today would be a challenge.

After a discussion with other guides, Kelly thought it would be best to spend the day downstream by the confluence where the Norfolk River flows into the White.

When we got to the boat ramp, Skeeter and his guide Clint were getting their boat ready to launch. Kelly and Clint talked a bit, then into the water went the boats.

We motored up the White a distance, then up the Norfolk as far as we could go, into a shallow gravel area of the stream. That day we used lighter rods and smaller flies. Kelly rigged us up 5 weights with a small olive streamer on mine and a strike indicator with two nymphs on Adam's. In the back of the boat I cast into the water first, while Kelly finished rigging Adam. On my second cast a strike, and fish on! A small brown, but, it was a good start. On Adam's first cast, down went the indicator, and he brought up a nice Rainbow. Funny thing was, it spit two minnows out when netted and still had two in it's mouth when Kelly took the fly out.

We continued to catch fish all day with the small streamers being the most preferred flies.

After lunch we kept fishing the lower sections of the Norfolk. We continued to catch more Rainbows and Browns from 8-18 inches. A few times Adam and I would double up on catches, and even once we tripled. For his 18th fish, Adam caught a really nice Rainbow. It was 18+ and also made for some great pictures.

Later in the afternoon fishing started to slow down and it was almost time to head back to the ramp. Kelly suggested we fish the White before taking the boat out. We were in, even though I had already caught 20, I still could fish some more.

My next fish would be my last. Halfway thru our drift my fly line went tight and I could feel more weight and power than any other fish caught that day, or the whole trip for that matter. Adam also hooked up and another double was on. After a few short runs and some tense moments, Kelly netted our fish. Mine was a fat Brown that was 21 inches; it was my 21st fish.

That Saturday our boat caught and released 42 trout. A pretty great day!

Again, Skeeter had a banner day. He ended the trip with a total of 74 trout caught and released.

Overall, our group caught and released more than 250 trout over the three days we were there!

Top Rod honors were shared between Dan and Skeeter for "Biggest" and "Most" fish caught. For me this was a "bucket list" trip. Everything from the travel, to the lodging, to the guides, to the fishing was top notch and first class. I would readily do it again because there was so much we didn't get to see or do.

I'm just going to need a bigger bucket.



MFFC Business

...of fish tales, I mean tails!



John Pinto's

Sand In My Shoe

There I was...It was 1982 and another Michigan trout opener. By now my opening day agenda was pretty routine staying with Bill & Fran Merrill on the Manistee and checking in at Gate's to see who was fishing on the Au Sable. Opening day always meant hooking up with Roger Hodap and Kim Goldenstein who were regular opening day anglers each year at Gates. Roger was from Cincinnati and Kim from Indianapolis, fishing with them was a real treat. They knew the Au Sable pretty well, were both good fly fishermen and threatened each year to visit "my water" on the Manistee where they had never fished. Moving them off the Au Sable was a monumental task, I persisted and finally arranged to meet them at Paul Gorten's Thunderwing.

We hooked up right on schedule and began walking across Paul's sixteen acres towards the river. Somehow the conversation was not about trout but rather...bonefish. It was the early 1980's when fly fishing for bonefish had become the rage. *Fly Fisherman Magazine* had just run a large expose all about the Bahamas, I was salivating just thinking about it. The next words out of Roger's mouth would change me for me the rest of my life!

"If you really want to catch a bonefish, go to Harbour Island in the Bahamas and hire Bonefish Joe Cleare!"

He went on to say that his brother goes there each year, stays at the Pink Sands resort and has fished with Joe almost twenty times. Roger's advice was burned into my memory.

Fast forward to 1985 when Ronnie and I were planning our wedding. Of course planning the honeymoon was one of the details. She was leaning towards St. Thomas and had collected a bunch of brochures full of beautiful tropical pictures, with dozens of places to shop. Somehow I

Speaker Meeting: Ethan Winchester - Apr 11, 2018

could not get excited about St. Thomas and did not hide it very well. She picked up on it and out of nowhere asked, "What about the Bahamas?"

RELEASE THE PIGEONS!!!!

Next stop was a travel agency - they still existed in 1985 - and we told the woman we wanted tickets to Harbour Island and a room at the Pink Sands Resort. She called back the next day and told us the Pink Sands was not fully opened in July - which is the "off season" - the kitchen only serves breakfast and lunch and I am expected to wear a dinner jacket at all meals. Turns out the Pink Sand is an old British hang-out where Dr. Smedly Thompson III, his sickly old wife and her nurse will spend a month "during the season." This was not exactly what we had in mind, but perseverance paid off and we were booked into the Coral Sands, fully operational, right next door.

Upon arriving, checking into the room, and changing into beach wear, we walked onto the famed pink sand beach of Harbour Island. We were immediately greeted by a well-tanned man wearing a lot of gold necklaces who asked two questions.

"Where are you from?" and, "How did you find out about this place?"

We cleaned up, changed clothes and went to the hotel bar to await dinner. We were thrown together with a group of Texans who were staying there for the eleventh consecutive year. After being introduced to a few of them, the two questions again came to us. "Where ya'll from?" and, "How'd y'all find out about this place?" It became apparent we had stumbled upon everybody's favorite little hideaway. We later learned that Harbour Island, affectionately referred to as "Briland" by the Bahamians is a favorite vacation getaway for those crammed in Nassau, a mere 52 miles away. We went back the same date each year for nine years.

The next morning I was waiting at the PLP dock with my fly rod already strung up. I was told to meet Bonefish Joe there. Soon a white Toyota pick-up truck pulled up and out stepped a man with shoulders that rivaled an NFL linebacker. He walked up to me and asked, "Mistah John Pinto?"

I answered that I was and fired back, "The famous Bonefish Joe?"

He replied, "Atch yo service!"

We looked at each other, shook hands, both smiled and a deep friendship that would last for many years had just begun.



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March Fly Of The Month

A Prize Pattern From England

Blagdon Buzzer

By Todd A. Schotts

For this month's fly pattern, we are going back in time, back across the pond to England for a unique fly that has spun off a family tree with many diverse styles of relatives. The originator of "March's Fly of The Month," is Dr. Howard Bell and the fly is called the Blagdon Buzzer.

This fly was created back in 1920's in the Blagdon Lake Reservoir in Northern edge of Mendip Hills about 10 miles south of Bristol, England. I couldn't find much written on Dr Howard Bell, but do know he is considered the "father of imitative Stillwater fishing" over in England, which he fished from 1922 to 1969. The writings claim he studied the lake's aquatic invertebrates to produce a range of dressings to represent them. I know this pattern with its huge family of relatives are some of the most effective flies out there for stillwater fishing.

The Blagdon Buzzer is the very first buzzer/chironomidae created to represent the midge pupa. A buzzer is basically an imitation of pupa midge, the non-biting mosquito that in its larva stage, part of the Midge Family. When people tie patterns representing these flies, it is often in the midge pupa stage or adult dry fly stage.

Things to remember when tying this pattern, is that they are very abundant in most stillwaters with hundreds of different

species in the U.S. and across the big pond in Europe. They hatch almost year-round, and they are high on the menu for the species in the stillwaters. When tying buzzer patterns the rule of thumb is to use the sparsest of materials...so, when tying these patterns make sure they are sparse enough for the fly to move and sink freely in the water. A lack of body volume is a way to achieve this. With the newer relatives of this pattern, they use epoxy and other resins, but the original pattern we are talking about does not. Also when tying these patterns, remember the average actual length of buzzers are 1/4" to 1/2" so tie them on size 12 to size 14 hooks. However, some patterns call for size 10 to 8 for larger Buzzer Flies.

The buzzer fly pattern can be fished solo or in tandem with 2 or 3 other flies including dries, other nymphs, or other buzzers. The recommended writings in England mention the "Top Fly" or a dropper be a light buzzer, typically a fluffy one tied on a light hook. The "Dropper" is a buzzer, and then the "Point Fly" a typical heavy buzzer, epoxied to sink fast and tied to a heavy hook.

When picking a line, floating line is recommended, but depending on water conditions, you can also use an intermediate line. You can retrieve your fly with long slow pulls, use a figure 8 retrieve, or short intermittent pulls. One thing mentioned in the he information is that can speed up the drift by either taking one or two steps back or slow it down, or by stepping forward along the bank.

Remember that Pupae make up 90% of a trout's diet and are found in different colors and sizes. These colored "Buzzers" will help 365 days out of the year.

So, start slinging those bobbins, and it is time to get your "Buzzer On!" Until next month, Tight Lines and Snazzy Flies.

Blagdon Buzzer



HOOK: Curved Nymph Size 10-14 vary the wire thickness to vary the fly weight.

THREAD: Black 70 Denier or 8/0

BODY: Tying Floss or Wool Black

RIB: Flat Gold Tinsel.

BREATHERS: White Ply yarn or similar material



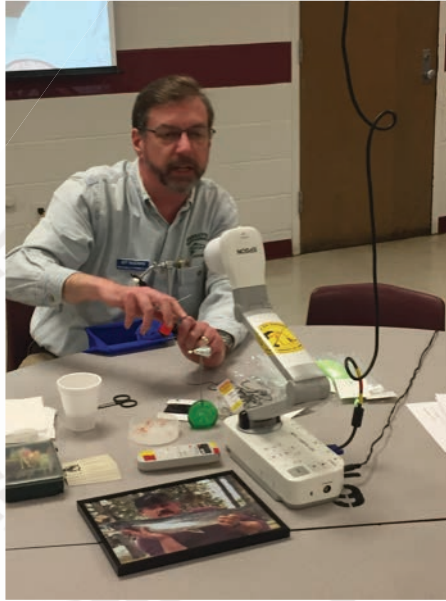


March Tyer Of The Month

Featured Member Tyer

Bring On The Fish!

Jeff McGowan



Jeff honoring Al Bullock, tying Al's signature fly. Al's picture in the foreground.

Jeff McGowan was our March Featured Tyer. He has been an MFFC member for 20 years and has served as a board member, Boy Scout School co-chair and Hatch editor. Jeff fishes the AuSable and Manistee from his AuSable riverboat and has worked as a commercial guide and fly tyer. He is best known for tying traditional Michigan patterns using natural materials. This month, Jeff departed from tradition by tying the Krystal Bullet, a fly his late friend Al Bullock used to tie for Beuter's Outdoors.

Krystal Bullet



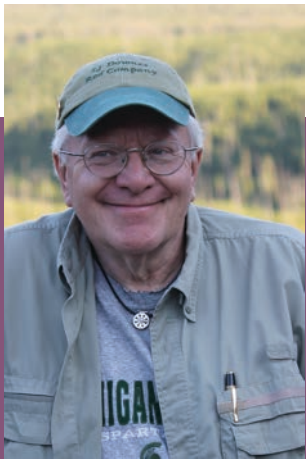
- HOOK:** Salmon hook, size 4
- THREAD:** Red or pink, 6/0
- TAIL & WING:** Krystal Flash
- BODY:** Sparkle Braid



February's Tyer Of The Month, past president, Chris Hunter tying the Purple Haze.



Expo Kid's Korner



Meanderings of a Fly Fishing Fan

Al The Hackleman

After The Expo

Well I must say I am sort of bummed out right now. After the weekend of the Midwest Fly Fishing Expo its always a bummer for me. Another great show behind us, and another year until we get that challenge and fun adventure again. So I am a bit bummed that I have to wait another year. It was such a great weekend that I think I can make it through the next year, but I already anticipate the fun of our 42nd yearly show. I must also say that it won't be long until we celebrate our 50th yearly show. I think its time to start saving money for gold pins for that show. And after all, our next show is only about 51 weeks away.

This year it was my very real pleasure to introduce one of the guest speakers, Mr Phil Rowley. Phil is from Canada and I found him both experienced and very willing to share that experience with others. I was fortunate to have his two books and got them both autographed. In the times between his presentations we had some wonderful conversations. I have always enjoyed fishing still waters, lakes and ponds, from a float tube. Phil offered some real updated ideas about many of the pieces and parts of still water fly fishing. From very interesting and well thought out suggestions about leaders to some totally fabulous fly patterns, he truly educated me in some real eye opening ways. I have about eight pages of notes that I made while he presented and while we spoke together. I

felt truly lucky to spend time with Phil and I feel very confident that his background in still water fly fishing will improve my fishing in the years to come. One very up to date item about Phil, he the he produced the App, Still Water Fly Fishing, that shows not only lots of information about that style of fly fishing but also specific items about many lakes and ponds around the United States and Canada. I have already downloaded it and am sure it will help it the pursuit of still water fish. Check it out.

Our EXPO does a lot of wonderful things each year. This year the Kids Korner had more than 230 youngsters come through to make a one of a kind Tee shirt, maybe tie a fly to catch a fish and maybe learn how to cast a fly rod. Some children won some wonderful prizes and we want to thank David Humphries at River Traditions for his great engraved fly boxes that were won by so many of the participants. We also want to thank Josh Greenburg of Gates AuSable Lodge for his kind donation of all the shop fly boxes so the young fly tyers had something to protect the hooks on their flies. A job well done by all involved.

As always there are so very many folks that step up and volunteer their time to make our EXPO successful. From the folks that set up the show all day on Friday to the great crew that helps with the tear down on Sunday afternoon, we as a club are in your debt. So many members help out in so many ways its tough to thank them all. So all you folks that sold the tickets, spoke to potential new members at the booth, folks that did all that data entry in the back room, folks that helped with speaker venues, members that stood at the doors and provided security,

THANK YOU ALL. I am sure I missed some and please forgive my forgetful memory. A very special THANK YOU to all the chairs of each part of the EXPO. Once again, Jim Telinda did a fabulous job of making sure things ran perfectly. Many of us joke that the show runs itself. We all know that is the biggest lie told by any fly fisher anywhere. Another great THANK YOU to Al Bulszewicz for being the chair of our wonderful hospitality evenings both Friday and Saturday night. The food was superb and the hospitality was unmatched.

While talking about the hospitality suite I want to share a very nice thing that happened to Joyce and I during our stay at the hotel. Sunday morning while walking down to check out we happened to be walking in the hallway with an employee of the hotel. Without any prompting or asking, she commented that they always look forward to the weekend when they hear the "fly fisher club" is coming back. She told us that "we" are one of their nicest groups and that "everyone" enjoys our group and that they all consider us "first rate people." So another fine compliment to our club. Let's all work to keep that good reputation.

I must admit that I did not spend as much as I had budgeted. But Joyce and I both came away with some good stuff and we are both looking forward to using out new items and enjoying them during our fishing this season. And let's all remember, the new season is only 38 days from our next meeting.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our Opening Day celebrations.





Michigan Fly Fishing Club

Club Events

Michigan Fly Fishing Club's

Midwest Expo



Michael Mauri - presenter & casting legend

What's your stock response?

“It depends.”

Who is your favorite musician?

“Anything reggae”

What question are you sick of being asked?

“There isn't one because people don't ask me.”



Mike Schmidt - fly tyer, presenter & guide

What's your stock phrase?

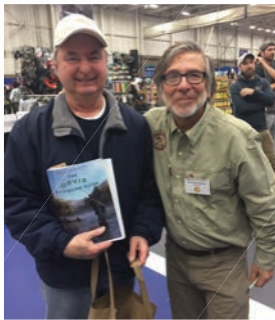
“I'm more of a confidence guy than a color guy.”

Who is your favorite musician?

“Skrillex and Jethro Tall.”

What question are you sick of being asked?

“You quit your corporate job for this???”



Tom Rosenbauer - Marketing Director,

Orvis Rod & Tackle

What's your stock phrase?

“Don't over think fishing.”

Who is your favorite musician?

“Dawes and Shostakovich.”

What question are you sick of being asked?

“What's your favorite fly?”



David Humphries - vendor, engraved wooden fly boxes

What's your stock phrase?

“Both men and fish get in trouble when they open their mouths.”

Who is your favorite musician?

“Dave Matthews.”

What question are you sick of being asked?

“Did ya eat it?” (referring to the fish)



Jerry Regan - infamous fly tyer

What's your stock phrase?

“I don't know, I have this bad habit of talking before I think...” Discussion with Mark Reis. “If you ever win the lottery, give me a call.”

Who is your favorite musician?

“Eva Cassidy. She sang Fields of Gold.”

What question are you sick of being asked?

“Would you take out the garbage?”



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