



*The Evening*

# Hatch

The Newsletter of the Michigan Fly Fishing Club

June 2018

## Outfitting Montana

*By Sybil Hunter*

*Shelly Ehmer is Montana's latest female outfitter. Chris Hunter came across her at the New Jersey fly fishing show, and passed on her contact information as a woman in the field - er, stream. Thursday, I made a phone call to see what getting into outfitting was all about...*

"Hi Shelly, this is Sybil Hunter from Michigan Fly Fishing Club, back in Michigan....What is your outfitter number?" I started out the inquiry.

"33337," said Ehmer.

"Is there a significance to this number?" I asked.

"It's the number of people in Montana with outfitter numbers," she said. (My brains exploded. That is a ton of competition.)

"What area of Montana do you focus on?" I asked.

"The whole state," came my answer. (This time I think she heard my brains explode.) After a pause, she continued with, "I work on the Missouri, the Madison, the Black Foot, the Bitterroot, and of course the Bighorn."

"I've been a guide for several years," said Ehmer, who is originally from



Oregon. "We grew up fishing," she said. Now she wants to be an outfitter.

"What did you have to go through to certify?" I asked.

Aside from the \$1800 non-refundable application fee, and certification exam, "You need 130 documented guide days on the river," she said. Although when she applied, 35 of her "documented hours" were denied by the state based on documentation inaccuracies. Unruffled, she hit the river to re-earn them.

As for the state exam? "It was tough," said Ehmer. "That was the hardest test I've ever taken. They give you two right answers and you have to pick the 'rightest.'" Well, her right was right. She passed with a 95% on the first half, and a 92% on the second.

*Continued on page 2*

## MFFC Calendar



**July 18, 2018**

**Speaker Meeting**

**Speaker:** John Gouker

**Topic:** Small Streams of west MI  
Cotic Center  
Farmington Hills, 7:30 p.m.

**August 22, 2018**

**Speaker Meeting**

**Speaker:** TBD

**Topic:** TBD

Cotic Activities Center  
Farmington Hills, 7:30 p.m.

**September, 2018**

**Speaker Meeting**

**Speaker:** Tommy Lynch

**Topic:** Small Streams of West MI  
Cotic Activities Center  
Farmington Hills, 7:30 p.m.



*Continued from page 1*

Welcome Outfitter Number 33337! She received her outfitter number last week.

Bemoaning the fact she has not been on the water for a week or so because she has been setting up her new residence in Montana, she noted that she is taking her mother (who came down to help move) fishing. "I'm going to be on the water tomorrow!" said Ehmer enthusiastically.

"What challenges did you face as a female guide?" I asked.

"They'd run over my water!" said Ehmer. "Certain guides would see the fish rising, and they would run over the water to put your fish down and disappoint your client." Ehmer said another guide pulled her aside telling he she needed to call them out on their bad behavior. "Keep running over my water, I'll hold you under the water until the bubbles stop!" was one of the suggested responses Ehmer said. "I had to earn my stripes. They had to know I'm legit," she said. "I have to be professional now," she said as a new outfitter. "I've had to work hard to get here....but there's more than one way to skin a cat!"

My bet is on Ehmer.

She went on to tell me that she is not allowed to get so much as a ticket for having a head lamp out on her vehicle or her outfitter's licensure is at stake. Applicants are even required to disclose all prior tickets, with full explanation. "I don't like seatbelts," said Ehmer.

"What challenges have you faced as a new outfitter?" I asked Ehmer.

"You have to start from scratch," she said. "All of your prior clients belong to your prior guide shops." If a guide books a client at one shop, they are required to leave that client at that shop.

"What's next?" I asked.

Booking shows. "I went to the New



Jersey show this year," she said. "The only good thing out of New Jersey was a booking from one of you (an MFFC member)." Next she said she is planning to participate in fly shows in Texas, Michigan (ours!), Los Angeles, Pleasanton, California, and possibly Denver.

"What do you do in the winter?"

"I booked four boats. I lived in southern California working on sport boats in San Diego taking trips off-shore. I was a bartender....," she continued, "You do winter work to keep up the summer job."

"What is your go to winter job?"

"It just changes," said Ehmer. "I worked at a motel one winter. I would work at night so I could fish all day," she said with a laugh. "Accounting and bookkeeping is my back up job. One year I worked for PNC Bank."

She sent me a video of her bringing her boat down a formidably high, steep, bank in the dead of winter to the cold river below. She is still smiling. You can hear her excitement as she whoops in the background.

"So why did you choose to specifically be a Montana outfitter?" I asked.

"Montana is just beautiful," she said. "It's wild. I love the Native American culture around the area. I lived on the Crow reservation for awhile. I was working on the Big Horn. Some of the things you see there are extraordinary." She paused. "It's definitely amazing."

"I ran into a very big grizzly bear out here once...It's humbling." (I should have asked if Spencer was there.)

"In Colorado it (getting a license) is easier," she said. "But here it's a huge industry." That is why the state keeps outfitters so highly regulated. "They want to be certain to filter out the dirt bags," said Ehmer.

"What inspired you to guide in the first place?" I asked.

"The reason I wanted to guide is because alot of females said, 'Oh you should guide,' and 'You are good at this.'"

"What is the best part of your job?"

"Meeting the people," said Ehmer.

"Having a great day on the water with them. Fishing could be tough, but I keep them safe and make sure they're happy."

"Why be an outfitter?" I asked closing the interview.

"I have my freedom. They don't own you. I book my own trips. I control my own pricing," said Ehmer. "I like my freedom."

And the name of that freedom is Shelly Ehmer Fly Fishing ([www.ShellyEhmerFlyFishing.com](http://www.ShellyEhmerFlyFishing.com)).





# MFFC Business

Youth School

## Another Success!



*Savannah Cesaro, Pete's granddaughter.*

Up-Coming

## Club Events

Club Picnic July 21 (good eats), at Multilakes Conservation Club, contact John Erikson.

Au Sable River Clean-up at Gates Lodge September 8, contact Al Haxton.

Manistee River Clean-up September 22, contact Al Haxton.

Muskegon River Outing September 20-23, contact Todd Schotts.



Come For Fun!

## Club Picnic

75 YEARS  
1942-2017



Multi-Lakes  
Conservation  
Association

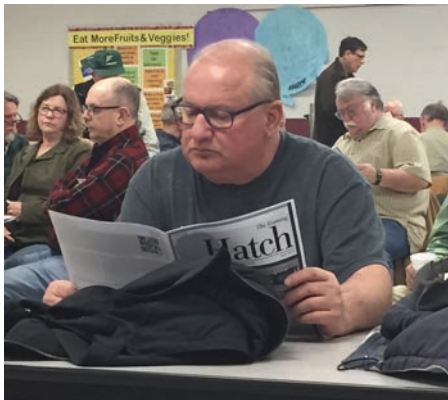
### Michigan Fly Fishing Club Picnic July 21, 2018, Saturday

Come early! Food served at 2:00 p.m.  
Prizes, games and fun for the family!

See John Ericsson for details  
[johneriksson5@aol.com](mailto:johneriksson5@aol.com)

Caught!

## Reading The Hatch



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# Michigan Fly Fishing Club

Michigan Fly Fishing Club

## Banquet Shinanigans

Cheers!



Jason Randall, the star tyer and speaker at the 2018 Banquet

Past Presidents: Chris Hunter, Kevin Lipp, Scott Freeburg, Dan Finstad, Al Haxton, Peter Albertson, Mike Metuszewski



# Michigan Fly Fishing Club



John Pinto

## Sand In My Shoe

There I was...it was March of 2001 and Scott Heywood from Angling Destinations called me. He asked when I had my next group going to Mayaguana and I replied the third week of May. He asked if I could take two of his clients and I replied that two more would fill out the group to max capacity. He said they were "an elderly married couple" from Powell, Wyoming and had gone of several trip through Angling Destinations. Their names were Berle and.....I'm not kidding here! .....Winston Churchill. Scott phoned them back and said there was room in the May group and concluded his deal with the Churchill's.

We all met in Nassau at the El Greco Hotel, spent some time around the pool getting acquainted, then walked over to Arawak Cay (Fish Fry) for everyone's first taste of Bahamian cooking that week.

Winston was quiet and Berle was just the opposite. They said they had only fished for bonefish once, that was in Belize and the fish were "rather smallish." They had heard about the large bonefish on Mayaguana and even took a two day canoeing class back in Wyoming so that they would not be the ones holding up the rest of the group. Their enthusiasm was contagious.

We landed at Mayaguana the next morning and Shorty Brown had our truck waiting for us. Berle excused herself to use

the lady's facilities in the airport while we waited for our luggage to be brought over in the trailer pulled by Cleveland's pick-up truck. We loaded our truck with our luggage and waited for Berle....and waited....and waited some more. Finally Winston and I walked over to the lady's restroom and there was Berle engaged in a conversation with a good-sized group of Mayaguana's women. Winston motioned for Berle to go to the truck and as we walked away Winifred Moss, whom I have known for many years, hollered out, "John, you brought a nice lady to Maygwana. Make sure she catches plenty of dem bonefishes!"

We arrived to the Baycaner Beach Resort and began moving into our rooms. There was a group of seven government people also staying at the Baycaner and it wasn't long before Berle started a conversation with them. Within twenty minutes she knew all their names and what government positions they held. They all knew she was chasing Mayaguana bonefish.

All around the island Berle engaged people, told them she and Winston were from Wyoming, owned a farm and grew barley that they sold to Budweiser. At dinner one night, Berle told us how she, Winston, their two sons, one daughter and their children would snowmobile into Yellowstone Park on the afternoon of Christmas Eve each year. They would find a tree suitable for decorating and proceed to cook their dinner and exchange gifts under the Christmas sky. How cool!

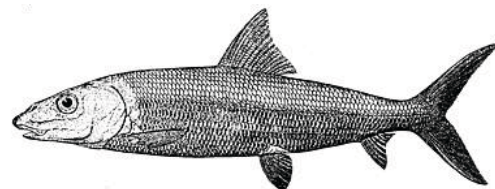
During the course of the week Berle proceeded to meet everyone on Mayaguana and became everybody's adopted Grandmother. Everywhere we went, folks would ask how many bonefish Berle caught that day and the

only thing missing were the "GO BERLE" banners in the coconut trees.

Winston said very little except for explaining about his and Berle's wedding day which happened to be December 7, 1941 – Pearl Harbor Day. According to Winston, "One good tragedy deserved another!" Berle just smiled.

On our last day of fishing I took the group out to Curtis Creek for "first light" fishing, that magical forty-five minutes before the sun comes up and the flat is like an oil slick. Not a ripple and several tailing bonefish can be spotted from two-hundred yards. I was walking with Berle when a big bonefish tail came up and I sent her into battle. Just then another angler called me and I had to leave Berle to tend to his problem. When I returned Berle was walking towards me and I asked what happened. She said the fish just swam off. Always worried about introducing new sounds into the bonefish's environment I asked if the fish was "spooked." Berle thought for a moment then said, "No! He wasn't spooked. But he was *GREATLY CONCERNED!*"

Thank you Berle. We now use "Greatly Concerned" as a degree of spookiness regarding bonefish.



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By Brian Gratwicke - originally posted to Flickr as bonefish *Albula vulpes*, CC BY 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=11496082>



# Michigan Fly Fishing Club

Trout Team Six

## On The Fly



## Trout

Stalking,  
Keep your shadow off the  
water.  
Check the seams.  
Watch the riffles.  
Cast to the bend and the bank.  
Hunting,  
Know where they feed.  
Cast,  
Mend,  
Strip.  
Mimic the food.  
Waiting,  
Represent.  
Silent patience.  
Feel the tug  
and the fight is on!

*By Sybil Hunter*



Members

## On The Fly





# Michigan Fly Fishing Club

## Club Events

### Dick Schott Memorial Outing

## New Members

This year's New Member Outing was held on May 9<sup>th</sup> thru 12<sup>th</sup> at the Wa Wa Sum lodge just outside of Grayling, Michigan. 19 new members and staff attend the event for three days of instruction, fishing and comradery. Note I said fishing, not catching, since the high water and cool temperatures (24 degrees on Friday morning) had most of the fish still on vacation in Florida. I knew things were going to be slow, when the fishing reports from Gates and the Old Ausable fly shops said things were poor. However, even with the poor fishing, everyone seemed to enjoy the event — no complaints were received.

For those who have not attended this event before, it is held at a beautiful 100-year-old lodge, Wa Wa Sum, on the north bank of the AuSable river. Mornings are spent with our two main guides Terry Herron and Artie Mikkola visiting various points along the Main branch and North branch, stopping at the main fly shops in the area, and sometimes visiting local bars for lunch. The afternoons are for trying out some of the visited spots and learning improved techniques from our guides. After dinner prepared by our fine cooks, Frank Kunick, Pat Cronin, and Dale Luff, we learned about the lodge's history from Kevin Gardiner, and local fishing from Josh Greenburg of Gate's Lodge.

I would like to thank all who attended and especially our support staff who have supported this event for the last several years. To club members who have not attend this outing, put it on your agenda for some time in the future. It is a great opportunity to learn about fishing the AuSable river, and to meeting other members of our club, plus maybe even catch some fish.



### Women's Outing 2018

## Grayling



*Linda Bocks next to a 350 year old cedar at the 2018 MFFC Women's Outing*



*Kathleen Hodges, Linda Bocks, Judy Skeen, Paula Dobos, Katie Raeon, Carolyn Bennett*



*Katie Raeon getting her fish on.*



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