



The Evening

Hatch

The Newsletter of the Michigan Fly Fishing Club JANUARY 2013

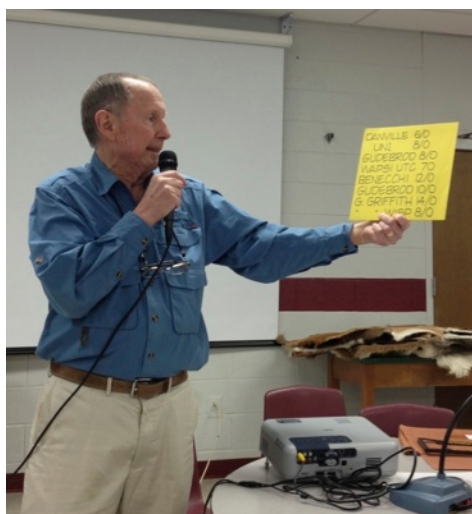
More Knowledge Yields Better Flies

After years of testing retail tying supplies and preparing his own, Chris Helm, has become the foremost expert in fly tying materials. He can read the hair of a hide, decode the thread industry's labeling system, and prepare deer hide as easily as your average person can walk. (Not to mention, he is world famous for his deer hair flies.)

Working with an engineer colleague, Helm spent years testing thread materials from the myriad of manufacturers, unraveling the labeling system. "It is really not a standard. It's arbitrarily assigned by a distributor or a retailer," Helm explained. "The correct standard for measuring thread is denier." Denier is the weight in grams for 9,000 m of thread, a measurement of fiber fineness originally designed to grade silk thread. Until 1947, silk was the only thread available. In 1937, nylon thread was created, but used primarily for the war effort. It was not until 1948, that it became available on the U.S. market, Helm said.

"The smallest is 20 denier. It teaches you the art of touch. Once you work with it....other threads are like cable. 130 denier is for bass bugs. It breaks between six to seven pounds. Small hair flies use 55 or 50 denier. Slippery, slides nice along the hair. It doesn't bind the hair. 70 and 140 is all you need for trout flies," Helm added.

"Nylon has 25% stretch. Polyester, 15% stretch. Gel Spun polyethylene has a mere 3% stretch," Helm explained as he held up a listing. "It's like golf. You can't play golf



Chris Helm holds up his denier guide during his January MFFC presentation.

with just one club. You can't tie flies with just one thread."

Gel Spun became available on the retail market in 1989. "Use it just for hair flies," and "Don't use it for the entire fly." "How many of you use it as backing?" Helm asked. A few hands raised. "Gel Spun backing uses less space," he advised, "but it must be exactly even because it blisters the rest of the spool if it's not."

Next, Helm pulled out his treasure trove of deer hides. "Winter hair is what we use for tying," said Helm. "The internal structure of summer hair is exactly the same as winter hair. The winter hair has an under coat." Then he addressed structure. "Deer hair is not hollow," Helm said. "There are hundreds and hundreds of tiny air cells (in each individual hair) called vacuous chambers."

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UPCOMING EVENTS



January 23, 2013

Activity meeting

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

February 6, 2013

Speaker: Josh Greenberg

Topic: Gates Lodge

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

February 13, 2012

Board meeting

Clarenceville Middle School
Room 106, Livonia, 7:30 p.m.

February 20, 2012

Activity meeting

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



The Evening

Hatch

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

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Chris Helm - Continued from page 1.

"Daylight causes the hair to change," said Helm. "Most people think it's the temperature." He then listed the three glands and three secreted chemicals that cause the change in a deer's hair based on light exposure.

According to Helm, the best available deer hair a tier can use is available at 40 degrees latitude or higher. The 40th parallel cuts through the top portion of California, runs down the Nebraska - Kansas border, chops off the northern portions of Indiana, Illinois and Ohio, and runs along the southern part of Pennsylvania. As all Michigianians are aware, we house the 45th parallel that runs north of Grayling and south of Gaylord.

"Caddis and small trout flies are one part of the hide," Helm said. "The center is not good for spinning...because it tapers and is finer." Different portions of the hide are optimum for different uses. "Deer, of all animals, ranks in the top 5% of variations of hair." Their hair varies from herd to herd and location to location more than 95% of other animals. For example, Helm said, "Caribou are pretty consistent in texture and quality." (Helm suggests using caribou hair for small deer hair flies.) "The most buoyant hair is antelope. The problems is it's brittle. Don't use Gel Spun," said Helm adding, "Yearling elk is also excellent for spinning."

Variables that effect hair quality are: genetics, age, and food availability. "As deer age, their hair becomes melanistic (darker) and wirier. Fifty percent of the deer I look at aren't suitable for fly tying," says Helm. What he looks for is a deer about 110 pounds dressed, and then he checks the texture. "Two and a half to three and a half years old is best for tying."

"Mule deer is terrific for fly tying," Helm said displaying his next hide. Helm pulled out a reindeer hide as well. Club president, Chris Hunter, modeled it for the group. "Reindeer and caribou are from the same family," said Helm. Reindeer hide is much finer, but caribou much better for tying.

Helm then pulled out a collection of buck tails. Buck tails come from white

tail deer. Helm addressed quality and usefulness. "The mule deer does not have a useful tail." (This is ironic given Helm said the hide hair is so useful.) And wavy hair is good for pike flies and saltwater patterns. The bottom line, said Helm, "You gotta think about what kind of fly you want to tie."

Next topic - tanning. "Tanning takes off the oil from the sebaceous glands," said Helm. "Never put salt on the hide. If you get a hide, and don't have the time to clean it, then freeze it," Helm insisted. Otherwise you will never get the oils and smell out.

Helm suggested Dawn dish detergent as the key to a good tanning process. Helm's first step is to clean, debone, and wash a hide. Then it must be hung out to dry. If a hide is not completely dried before it is placed in storage, it will mold. Once dry, Helm grades the hides based on the tyability of the hair.

The same cleaning process works on old necks and saddles, says Helm. "Just wash them in Dawn dish liquid and that will revitalize them." He suggests putting them in 120 degree to 150 degree water. Stir, lather, rinse, then hang. This works for tails too. "When you buy a tail in a store, wash it with Dawn." Or later, "After a few years, the oil seeps back into the hair, so wash it. Just wash it in Dawn."

Fielding a question from a club member, Helm suggested dying tail hair at home. Heat the water to 115 degrees for the dye bath. Use clear vinegar, place the tail in the pan; when it is done take it out. Rinse, and hang. According to Helm, even basic Rit brand dye works wonderfully. The variety of colors from mixing, goes far beyond anything available on the retail market he said.

In closing, Helm offered to teach people to prep a deer skin. He welcomed all members and further questions at his shop where he can show a person first hand how to best take care of materials. He also suggested stopping by before a trip. Given a location and season, Helm enjoys sharing knowledge with his patrons about the most usable tying materials and flies available for their personal adventure. Visit him on the web at: www.whitetailflytyeing.com.

Chris Helm



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Forthcoming Calendar Items:

ART ~ TRADITIONS ~ LORE OF FLY TYING



Photo by
Mike Schrey

5TH Annual
Invitational

Celebration of Fly Tying

Hosted by The Grand River Fly Tyers

Special Presentations by:

Jeff "Bear" Andrews, Daryl Crowley, Jerry Drake, Chris Helm,
Julie Nielsen, Dennis Potter, Jim Reed, Christopher Soule & Ray Schmidt

Close-UP Video Tying Theater with 2 - 32 inch monitors

Instructors welcome adults and youths to learn how to tie flies.

Demonstrations throughout the day: how to make nets, bamboo rods, and graphite rods



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS HALL
5830 Clyde Park Ave SW, Wyoming, MI 49509
SATURDAY • FEBRUARY 23, 2013
9 A.M. - 4 P.M.



• Plenty of seating • Lunch and snacks will be available

\$10 FOR ADULTS \$5 12 YEARS TO 17 11 AND UNDER FREE

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Openings Available For NakNek

NakNek trip dates are as follows: week 1 - June 8th through the 15th; and week 2 - June 15th through the 22nd.

See Peter Albertson, organizer, at one of the regular meetings, or call him at 248.921.9103. He is also available by email at: palbertsontsp@me.com.

Or you can contact Jim Johnson directly at naknekrivercamp@gmail.com to address any questions.

Come Attend The Members' School!

As a member of MFFC, sign up for the Member's School to join fellow club members in pre-season preparation, practice, and camaraderie at Northville High School on February 16, 2013 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Gain knowledge at all levels in subjects such as tying, casting, entomology and knots.

Morning snacks and a lunch spread are included. A guest casting instructor will work along side seasoned club casters and fly tiers.

Come on one, come all (or until the space is filled) to this exclusive members only event coming soon in February!

Attend The New Member Outing!

The 2013 Dick Schott New Member Outing will be held Wednesday May 8th thru Saturday morning, May 11th (during the week leading up to Mother's Day) at MSU's Camp Wa Wa Sum, located 6 miles East of Grayling.

New members wishing to attend are required to attend the club's Member Fly Fishing School in February, and be able to show a safe level of fishing / wading proficiency before being included in the outing.

Sign-up will begin at the club's March 6th Speaker Meeting and will continue until the outing is full.

Watch The Hatch and the website, www.mffc.org, for future updates.

Contact Paul DeJohn by Phone or Text at 734-612-9900 for further information.

Corrections: Watch out people! Either Joe Sattler has an evil twin or there was a mistake in The Hatch. (Apologies go out to Joe Sattler for misspelling his last name in the Dec/Jan edition of the newsletter.)



Sign Up Now To Assist At The Expo!

The MFFC Midwest Fly Expo is coming sooner than you think! The Expo will be held Saturday, March 9th and Sunday, March 10th at Macomb Community College Sports & Expo Center at 14500 East Twelve Mile Road, Warren, MI. Saturday hours are 9am to 6pm and Sunday hours are 10am to 4pm.

Volunteers are needed to work in two hour increments to help with the club booth, the ticket booth, security, set-up, tear down, assist with the children's activities area, assist with the beginner fly tying instructional table, help in the club room, and many other important activities. Please sign up at the next club meeting to help us make this year's Expo the best one yet!

For questions regarding the Expo see Joe Sprys at the next club meeting or email him at: flyfishmichigan@gmail.com. Visit the official website at: <http://www.midwestflyfishingexpo.com/>.

BOARD MEETING

MICHIGAN FLY FISHING CLUB December 12, 2012

Call to Order: Dan Finstad - 7:30pm

Roll Call: 1) Hunter, 2) Finstad, 3) Doyle, 4) Kramer ---A, 5) Freeburg, 6) Nowicki, 7) Center, 8) Schotts, 9) Vanderhoof

Review of Minutes: Motion to accept Nowicki - Seconded Schotts.

Approval of Agenda: Motion to accept Hunter - Seconded Nowicki.

Officers Reports: President Hunter

Casting program, MFFC Fly Fishing Cert program discussed. Goals of program to establish a club run certification program with a set of skills consisting of 1) Casting 2) On stream ability & 3) Education...Scheduling is being developed for the initial phase of this program. The committee is Chris Hunter, John Long, & Peter Albertson. The three will attend classes with Master Casting instructors for research and educational purposes. Motion was made by Chris Hunter for a budget of \$1,000.00, which is covered under the current budget. The motion was seconded by Eric Center. Motion put to a vote by Finstad and unanimously passed by board.

Officer Reports cont: Vice President Finstad

Expo post cards are done, ahead of schedule, and will be ready for distribution to fly shops etc.

Officers Reports cont: Treasurer Freeburg

- a) Freeburg passed out a copy to everyone of current budget and explained that he has had a meeting with the clubs tax consultant John Kuderik and everything concerning the budget and next upcoming tax year is in order. The \$1,000 cost for the program would come from the 2013 budget. Freeburg wanted it read in to the minutes his appreciation of all the work the club's past treasurer has done to make the tax issues of the club easy for him.

Motion to approve the Treasurer's report was made by Nowicki and seconded by Doyle followed by a unanimous vote by the board of approval of the report.

- b) Also Freeburg mentioned that the club now has in its possession the 22 Shelbyville rods the club has purchased. They are being sorted and the final decision as to which events will obtain some of these rods is being worked out.

Officers Reports cont: Corresponding Secretary Doyle

- a) Mike explained that the clubs speaker schedule is complete for this year. Looking in to getting Ann Miller for next season.
- b) Mike also wanted read in to the minutes the clubs appreciation for the work done by Harry Briggs on the clubs web-site.

Officers Reports cont: Membership Chair Nowicki

Dave reports that our club membership has leveled off around the 340 member range.

New Business:

- a) Todd Shotts brought up the inclusion of adding web-site links to the MFFC's web page. Maybe listed under fly tying links, knots, rod building, casting, etc and he offered some examples. A motion was made by Shotts and seconded by Center to open for discussion. After some discussion a motion was made by Finstad to table this topic until any issues that may arise from it are discussed with Harry Briggs. Motion carried by unanimous vote of the board and tabled.
- b) It was decided by the board to make board member pictures, on the web, uniform and a tad more professional looking. No "big fish" pictures etc. At next board meeting, members will attend with their club shirts on and photos will be taken and then posted on the web. Motion was made by Nowicki and the vote was unanimous save for some grumbling from Vanderhoof and Doyle that they wanted the membership to see their smiling faces holding Browns somewhere north of 20".

Old Business:

A motion was made by Center to un-table the topic of allowing ads to be placed in the Hatch. Hunter seconded the motion and it was discussed. After some discussion, Center made another motion to put it to a vote. This was seconded by Nowicki and the board voted unanimously not to allow ads in the Hatch.

Visitor Comment: None

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn 9:04pm. Motion seconded by Freeburg.

BOARD MEETING

MICHIGAN FLY FISHING CLUB

November 14, 2012

- Call To Order** Call To Order Chris Hunter - 7:30pm
- Roll Call**
- | | | |
|-------------|----------|----------------|
| Hunter | Scott | Center - Phone |
| Finstad - A | Freeburg | Open |
| Doyle | Nowicki | Schotts - A |
| Kramer - A | | |
- Review Of Minutes** Motion to Accept Scott - Seconded Doyle
- Approval Of Agenda** Motion to Accept Freeburg - Seconded Scott
- Officers Reports**
- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| President Hunter | Casting program discussed and will be called MFFC Fly Fishing Certification Program. It will be a three part program which meets monthly. |
| Vice President | No Report |
| Treasurer | Received report from Financial Review Committee. Report accepted with recommendations. Copy of report in file. Motion to approve Scott - Second Doyle. |
| Corresponding Sec. | Speaker set for year and summer meetings will be on the second Wednesday of the month. The Hatch will contain copy of Minutes and copy of Financial Report. Motion to accept Freeburg -Second Nowicki |
| Membership | 343 current paid members. MUCC Roster set with only paid members included. |
| New Business | Election of At Large Board Member Spencer Vanderhoof |
| Old Business | No old business |
| Meeting Adjourned | Motion to adjourn 9:27pm Second Scott |



Step 1: Lay your thread base to the bend in the hook. Tie in the amber dubbing at the hook end, trim it at an angle to represent the shuck. Tie in the goose biot at the back.

Step 2: Cement the body. Wrap the biot over the rear two thirds of the length of the body, wrapping towards the eye. Tie off the biot and trim any excess material. In the immortal words of Al Fly Tying Haxton, "Don't crowd the eye."

Step 3: Tie in a two inch piece of foam in front of the biot, foam towards the back.

Step 3: Dub behind the head with olive or gray dubbing. When finished, this will be under the wing casing to give it structure.

Step 4: Tie in a medium dun CDC puff at head. Use two loose thread wraps just behind the eye. Again, "Don't crowd the eye."

Step 5: Slowly pull the shank of the feather under the (loose) thread wraps until the feather is the right length to simulate insect legs. Divide the feathers into equal parts.

Step 6: Pull the foam from the back, over the thorax and CDC legs, and secure it with thread behind the eye of the hook. Trim off any extra materials. Whip finish. Bask. Dream of fish.

EPF Emerger

Hook: Size 18-20

Thread: 70-denier, brown-olive

Materials: Amber dubbing; olive/gray goose biot; olive/gray dry-fly dubbing; electronics packing foam 1/16 inch wide; medium dun CDC puff