



The Evening

Hatch

The Newsletter of the Michigan Fly Fishing Club

December 2020



What Trout Like to Eat

By Sybil Hunter

Niall (pronounced Neal) McCarthy, owner of Motor City Anglers, joined us as a guest speaker at the MFFC December ninth meeting. "Most of the Trout's diet is aquatic bugs. Most of the time those are nymphs — aquatic bugs are bugs that live in the river," McCarthy said before outlining the four categories of aquatic bugs in Michigan.

Aquatic Bugs

1. Black Stonefly (January through April) "They are the first bug you'll see hatch at the beginning of the year."

2. Caddis (end of April through June) "This is a pretty prolific hatch on Michigan's rivers."

3. Midges (June through October) "These are tiny little critters."

4. Mayflies (Iso = June; Hex = mid-June to July; Trico = mid-July to September, Iso II=August through mid-September) "This is the biggest important one [hatch] in Michigan."

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Nuke'em With An Egg

Dan Walker opened for our December guest speaker, demonstrating how to tie his ever versatile Bubble and Nuke Egg patterns. As the name insinuates, the Nuke (nucleus) egg pattern has a bright center accent color simulating the nucleus inside the egg. The main thing about the Nuke Egg is that the smaller amount of the brighter accent color is tied to be behind (inside) the main color. The Brighter color is a nucleus inside the egg. The Famous Nuke Egg is NOT tied down at the back, whereas the Bubble Egg is tied down in the back but follows the same core concept as the Nuke Egg fly.

Remember to join Dan as our Guest Tier, December 23, 2020 at 7:30 p.m. Check mffc.org for pattern supplies and the Zoom link.



Michigan Fly Fishing Club

Calendar

12/9/20 Speaker

12/16/20 Board

12/23/20 Guest Tier: Dan Walker

1/13/21 Speaker: Jason Pokone, Tying Trout Flies for the Upper Manistee

1/20/21 Board

1/27/21 Tie Along: Corey Thelan

2/10/21 Speaker: John Ray of Mangled Fly

2/17/21 Board

2/24/21 Activity: Tie along

3/3/21 Activity TBD

3/10/21 Board

3/13-14/21 Expo @ Macomb Community College

3/17/21 Speaker: Capt. Chuck Hawkins, Simplifying Your Fly Box

4/7/20 Speaker & Elections

4/14/21 Board

4/17/21 MFFC Elections / Speaker: Roger Greil of Lake Superior State

4/21/21 Activity TBD

5/5/21 Activity TBD

5/12/21 Board

5/19/21 Banquet @ Italian American Center, 39200 5 Mile Rd, Livonia

6/9/21 Speaker @ VisTaTek, 18600 Haggerty Rd, Livonia

7/14/21 Speaker @ VisTaTek

8/25/21 Speaker @ VisTaTek

What Trout Like to Eat

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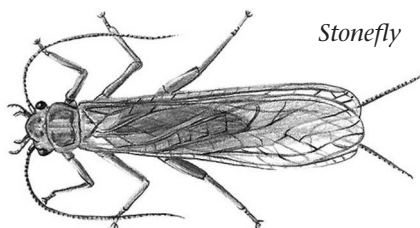
Nymphs

1. Swimmers - BWO, Beta Caddis.
2. Burrowers - they burrows in the bottom of the stream. "The biggest of these is the Hex."
3. Clingers - "Clingers attach themselves to rocks."
4. Crawlers - they crawl across the rocks and woody debris.

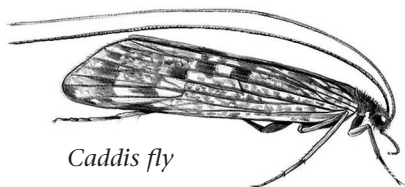
Lifecycle

McCarthy briefly went over the life cycle of mayflies: egg -> nymph (swimmers, burrowers, clingers, crawlers) -> duns -> spinners -> eggs.

A highly recommended fly by McCarthy mimics the Ephemerella subvaria (Hendrickson). It is called The Usual. "From my understanding this is a Mich-



Stonefly



Caddis fly

igan pattern," said McCarthy. "The tail, body, and wing is all snowshoe hair.

Next McCarthy discussed emergents and watching for rises.

During the hatch, "Hendrickson's feel like they are on the water for miles," said McCarthy. Fish duns in the morning, go home eat, take a nap, then, "You want to come back for the spinner fall in the evening. Warmer nights are better for spinners. The bugs will show up at the tops of the trees. As evening goes on they will mate," said McCarthy showing a slide of the Rusty Spinner - a dead male mayfly. "They mate and the males die," he said. The females hang on to the pink egg sack, they lay their eggs, and then they die. The spinner fall can be better than the emergents."

Hendrickson hatches occur sooner on the Au Sable and Manistee Rivers.

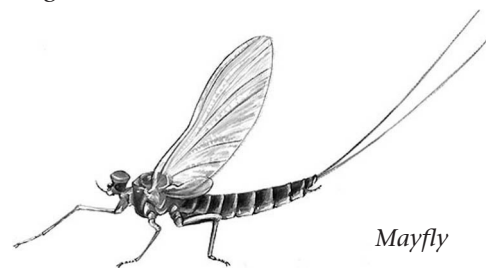
The South Branch has a later hatch due to the cooler water temperatures.

When asked if he guided, McCarthy said, "I guide my wife fishing sometimes, apparently I'm not very good at it. Chuckles ensued. "I have a guy for that," McCarthy said referring to Frank Woody, his Flint and Shiawassee River guide on staff.

McCarthy opened his retail location "just a few months before the pandemic hit." It is a full service shop offering flies, equipment, and guide service. Motor City Anglers is located in a strip mall on Haggerty Road north of Maple.

For more information on Motor City Anglers | The Fly Shop of the Great Lakes go to <https://mca.fish/>

Page One photo courtesy of Motor City Anglers.



Mayfly

Striped Bass on Tap for MFFC Members

The Michigan Fly Fishing Club has approved for club members the First Annual Striper Fly Fishing Trip to Long Island Sound at Mystic, Connecticut on Sept. 25-Oct. 2, 2021.

During the trip anglers will enjoy fly fishing for Striped Bass, Blue Fish and Albacore with Captains Ralph Noyes and Jack Balint. Three other days will feature surf, shore, kayak or jetty fishing. For many participants this will be their first experience with new fish species, techniques and fishing venues.

Total trip is less than \$1400 and includes outbound lodging, six days lodging at The Tober Inn of Mystic, two guided fishing boat trips, lodge breakfasts and catered dinners by Mystic Market East. Car travel, lunches, marine licenses (\$15) and tips will be each traveler's personal expense.

2021 Itinerary

Sept 25 Depart Detroit for Holiday Inn, Hazelton Pa



Striped Bass

Sept 26 Depart Hazelton for Tober Inn, Mystic, CT

Sept 27-Oct 1 Guided boat fishing & 3 days of surf, shore, kayak or jetty fishing.

Oct 2 Depart Connecticut for Detroit

Fourteen spots are available to MFFC members. Refundable guide deposits of \$200 for each angler are required to hold our dates so please remit your deposit by Nov 30 to reserve a spot in the boats and on the trip.

Payment balances are scheduled as follows:

- Nov 30, 2020 \$200

Trip reservation & guide deposit

- March 1, 2021 \$500

2ND payment for 50% down

- May 1, 2021 \$700

Final payment

Make your reservation with Bruce Strachan at 248-346-6391. Payments by check or cash, in person or by mail are accepted.

For a virtual experience of Strip-er fishing at its best, go the Captain Balint's Facebook page and see 2 magnificent striper blitz videos:

<https://www.facebook.com/thefish-connection/>

<https://www.facebook.com/jack.balint/videos/544979528849217>

<https://www.facebook.com/jack.balint/videos/966417596705406>

Please call Bruce Strachan at 248-346-6391 for additional trip information.



Michigan Fly Fishing Club

Business

Michigan Fly Fishing Club Board of Directors Meeting November 11, 2020

Roll Call

Meeting called to order 7:35 p.m.

Present: Strachan; Hunter; Oehring; Fischer; Niemi; Bada; Mayes; Sejalon; Green; Nowicki

Visitors: C. Hunter; L. Paisley

Approval of Agenda - Approved

Approval of Minutes - Approved of 10/14/20 minutes.

Officer's Report

President: Strachan

Appointment of Conservation Chairperson and Committee: TBD. Club member Joe Pawyl is interested in serving on the committee, but not as chairperson.

Appointment of Nominating Committee: going to be a problem run-in an election online; announcement to membership should be soon (earlier than normal); it appears per constitution it would be Barry Green and Fred Sejalon.

Vice President: Hunter

New email host (see New Business)

Website Status: Newsletter links & fly tying archives not working; Haley to address. Event times need to be cleaned up. Board of Directors pictures are missing a picture.

Treasurer: Oehring

Current treasurer's report approved.

Tax returns signed and sent.

Club Insurance Bond Policy - comparing what we have with FFI. C. Hunter comparing alternate FFI can current coverage. C. Hunter is presenting a summary of coverage. Oehring to call FFI for current coverages and pricing.

Corresponding Secretary: Fischer

Meeting reminder to be blast out next week.

Constant Contact database will be synchronized with Membership data; half a dozen email accounts were cleaned up.

Speakers (Dec-Mar) spots filled.

Membership: Niemi

Current membership: 264 active members; 2 new members; several members from 2018-2019 are rejoining.

Members are donating to funds and providing contact info.

Membership directory distribution discussed. Board of Directors recommends locked pdf format for distribution.

Events & Outings

Striper Fishing Outing: Long Island Sound. Planned destination on

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2019 - 2020 Officers

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Michigan Fly Fishing Club Board of Directors Meeting November 11, 2020

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New London, CT; same format as other trips. Guides available; limited to 10 Club members; cabins near marina available. Shooting for Sept 2021; total cost \$1,910 per person. Request for Board of Directors to approve the event to be available to members as a self-funded, non-sanctioned trip.

New Business

Club Emails: Accounts are President, Treasurer, Correspondence; Membership and Info. New accounts from Google Non-Profit G Suite would cost \$4/month; includes 1 TB drive space for each account. C. Hunter states Google allows you to route (filter) via rules. Board of Directors approves for H. Briggs/S. Hunter to lead this effort and document a policy summary of roles.

Old Business

December Garage Sale: on hold, to be replaced with a Tie Along meeting.

Expo Update: Per Participation Survey - if venue is open, 80% of the membership will support volunteering. MCCC reviewing February, 2021 events. Headliners and speakers recent communications with D. Finstad that these speakers will not be likely to speak due to age/COVID issues. Vendors gave mixed feedback. Mayes states outlook is not good at this time.

Club Fund Raising Possibilities: Lisa Paisley discussed sponsoring other events for fundraising (adapting fish/Club birthday fundraiser via Facebook). Play some links and interactions; committee to form and be chaired by Paisley. There is a Club Facebook page; it is underutilized.

Adjournment: 9:36 p.m.



A belly boater's selection of dry flies, nymphs and streamers. On page 8 you can read what they caught in Upper Bushman Lake, the only catch-and-release lake in southeast Michigan.

The MFFC Annual Adventure to Yellowstone National Park

Once again The Michigan Fly Fishing Club will stage a trip to the Yellowstone National Park in 2021. Three weeks are reserved at Driftwaters Resort, located in the Madison Valley just downstream from Quake Lake.

Scheduled weeks in 2021:

Week 1: Saturday July 31 to Saturday Aug. 7

Week 2: Saturday Aug. 7 to Saturday Aug. 14

Week 3: Saturday Aug. 14 to Saturday Aug. 21.

Trips include prepared dinner each day except Wednesday evening. Breakfast and lunch items are also provided for each day.

On Wednesday evening the tradition is for the group to visit the Eastern side of the park and stay the night in Cooke City. This allows us to fish the Eastern side streams, the Lamar River, Soda Butte and Slough Creek.

For more information, or to make a reservation, please contact Al Haxton via email at Infoman984@sbcglobal.net or via phone at 989-889-1893.

In Special Recognition

From Sybil Hunter

A great big thank you goes out to the members of the MFFC.org Website Committee for spending an evening a month from January to August researching, and giving input via Zoom in creation and design of our new MFFC.org website! Committee members who volunteered their time and efforts are: Steve Isgrigg; Robert Misfud; and Dave Miller. They worked alongside Harry Briggs and myself (Sybil Hunter) to update the look and content of the MFFC's main website. Kudos to them!



Conservation Corner

Peter Albertson's

Conservation Corner



First, let me thank those who have chosen to participate in the Michigan Fly Fishing Club's Conservation Corner (CC) during meetings and via emails. Your time and interest in bringing forth conservation issues is very important to our Club, our fly fishing environment, and our State recreational opportunities. If you have a topic or Action Item for the CC to follow, please bring it to my attention **and be willing to be the topic lead contact** for the CC and be prepared to provide related Action Item follow up news to us.

Action Items

Pipe Line 5: Bridge Michigan article: Enbridge Sues Michigan Over Line 5 Shutdown Order, 11/24/2020
Pipe Line 5 Blog: Latest 12/5/2020; What Michigan's Moves To Shut Down Enbridge Line 5 Means, Bridge Michigan 11/16/2020.

Johnson Creek Land Fill Discharge Issue: Latest information, visit twp.northville.mi.us

Environmental Items Of Interest

EGLE U.P. Clean Energy Conference: Updates on MI Clean Water Plan, Climate, U.P. Energy Task Force, Mobility, U.P. Energy Task Force; 12/2, 2020.

Pebble Mine: Alaska's Controversial Pebble Mine Fails to Win Critical Permit, Likely Killing It, New York Times, 11/25/2020.

Michigan Bills 4567, 4568, and 4569 regarding regulations of commercial fishies: passed MI House, now in Senate. Source MUCC Newsletter dated 10/07/2020. Please review and take action as you see reasonable. The Three were sent to MI Senate February 11, 2020, per web site review.

Shore Line Protection Permits: Of interest to water front owners, EGLE- MI Environment Digest, 11/20/2020.

Five Themes To Watch as Michigan Reconsiders Its Use of Public Lands: Bridge Michigan article, 11/18/2020, regarding- Northern MI Land Ownership, Southern MI Land Access, Recreational Land Use Trends, Parks More Accessible, Public Lands Fighting Climate Change.

Please direct Comments to Peter Albertson at: palbertsontsp@icloud.com



Fly Fishing Reports *Members of the Fly*



Scott Freeburg with a trophy from "somewhere up north."



Past MFFC president **Spencer Vanderhoof** with a brown trout he somehow managed to land from the Manistee River last May.

Early December at Tippy Dam

Tippy Dam was not crowded Thursday morning, Dec. 10. I Started with the Nuke Minnow. In the process of losing my 3 prototypes, I caught two steelhead and hooked four Brown Trout. I also tried four other jigs and two yarn egg colors but all hits were on the Nuke Minnow.

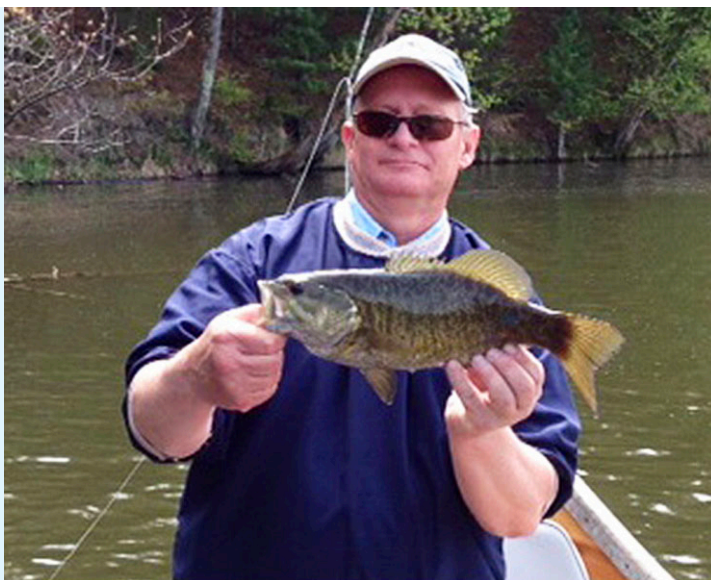
For the rest of the day, after the Nuke Minnows were gone, I struggled to get bites, I got four more browns on Small White Opal Minnow bucktail jigs and another nice steelhead on the Leggy Fox jig.

The water temperature was down to just under 38 F. All the steelhead hit on short or medium distance casts where a more natural drift is easier fishing bobbbers.

Dan Walker



Dan Walker's steelhead caught on a 1/32oz #6 Nuke Minnow at Tippy Dam.



Kris Cousino with a smallmouth bass, looking forward to fishing again soon in his retirement.

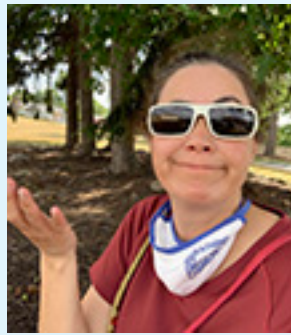
Operation Pin Drop

By Sybil Hunter

There is a proverb that says “Out of crisis comes opportunity.” I’ve heard it for years, I’ve found it nauseatingly cliché. Every cloud has a silver lining....blah blah blah, barf, barf, barf, eyeballs rolling to the back of my head and rattling around free range.

Well this year with the lockdown, the social distancing, and the like, I have learned to (trust me it feels more of a forced learning, but a learning nonetheless) slow down, appreciate the little things and frankly, appreciate people more (at a distance of course).

During the height of the lockdown, I was still Corresponding Secretary, so I sent out bi-weekly shout outs to make sure everyone



Sybil Hunter

was okay. The responses were heart warming! (...and many of them ended up in The Evening Hatch. Go fig.) I learned so much about my fellow Club members; I appreciated them more. For a time, I lived vicariously through members who were away from home when lockdown orders commenced. (Let me tell you, our peeps are widespread and connected!)

During the election, a box from China arrived with all of our Club pins. Given what I found out election night? I assure you that box stayed in quarantine untouched for a month, while I gave it the hairy eyeball. Eventually, I opened it, aired it out, eyeballed it some more, then slowly started sorting them as I took on Operation Pin Drop.

As most of you know, the Board of Directors under Dave Nowicki’s solid leadership, commissioned a 50th year anniversary cloisonné pin, designed by MFFC’s own professional designer Corey Thelan, that sports not only the official MFFC Yellow Dot, but a full technicolor Rainbow Trout in all it’s beauty. The Board commissioned a banner with the design as well, thinking we would roll out the celebration, you got it, at The Expo. But, we all know how tHaT went!

So Sybil freaks out. Incensed there was suddenly no direction for these fabulous pins, I proudly championed the project. The next day, I looked at the 400 pins. I looked at the roster, and reality hit. The weight of the pins was heavy. A few days passed. I don’t know how Bill Shannon contacted me, but he did. Next thing I know, we had a game plan. Bill split the state in half. He took the east side, I took the west. Operation Pin drop was A Go!

Like magic, Club members stepped up and volunteered to help with the rollout! My heart warmed. I got to speak to volunteer Club members,



The MFFC 50th year anniversary sticker seen on a parked vehicle.

some I knew well, others I had not met. All were wonderful! Each with their own story. Every volunteer was hooked up with pins and certificates in a baggie and off we all rolled!

So Sybil takes to the road. Not to be outdone by the awesome volunteers, I traveled far and wide (from Fowlerville, to Ortonville, to Dundee, to Royal Oak to see Bill). I learned much about our Club members. Some were retiring. Some were healing. Some were working. I was amazed who knew who. On the whole, I was met with smiles and enthusiasm. Our Club members live in big houses and small, fancy and unassuming, rural and city. Up North, westside, in the D, Downriver, NE, NW, so far east it’s practically Canada, actually IN Canada itself....we are ALL over the state. During this goodwill tour, I even met a migratory moose to boot. You can’t beat that!

Through the process, I inadvertently helped Bob Niemi update the membership roster (whether he wanted me to or not). A large number of Club members moved. Who moves

during a global pandemic?! (I was told the housing prices were very good.) People were fired. People retired. One member was being forbidden to retire. People had squatters. Steve was going stir crazy. (Maybe that’s



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Upper Bushman Lake *A Paradise on my Doorstep*

By Jim DuFresne

A half mile from my home, I told Steve to turn down Oakhill Road and my friend pulled over where the dirt road borders a small marshy lake. A wire fence had been erected across the north end of the lake, only 10 feet from the road, while 20 feet above it was a powerline. On the edge of Oakhill itself were four men sitting in lawn chairs.

"Watch how they catch a fish," I said.

They all had rods rigged with bobbers and crawlers. Because the fence prohibited directly retrieving a hooked fish, they bypassed it by casting over the powerline, placing their bait and bobber in the open water beyond it.

It didn't take long for a bobber to disappear beneath the surface. The angler set the hook and then stood up to begin his retrieve, literally pulling a large bluegill up to the powerline. When his prize catch was wiggling madly two inches beneath the line, he expertly snapped his wrist and flicked the fish cleanly over the wire where it fell into the small sliver of the lake on his side of the fence. He grabbed the bluegill and tossed it in a bucket filled with others.

"He's good," I said, and Steve nodded. Tangled and dangling all along the powerline were the remnants of not-so-skilled anglers; balls of line, red-and-white bobbers, lures and a half dozen dried-out panfish, some of impressive size.

"They from around here?"

"Nobody in my neighborhood fishes like that."

This is how I learned Upper Bushman Lake was an extortionary fishery. Trophies were hanging on a powerline.

Technically Upper Bushman Lake is a 32-acre, spring-fed



Jim DuFresne

lake that forms the headwaters of the Clinton River north of Clarkston. In reality, Upper Bushman is a chain of three lakes connected by narrow waterways and surrounded by wetlands and a hardwood conifer forest. A single family owned the entire lake for almost 50 years and cherished its natural beauty so much they never sold any of it off to developers.

Their property also bordered Independence Oaks, Oakland County's largest park, so when the family decided to give it up, Oakland County Parks and Recreation, with help from a local conservancy and a generous grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, paid \$2.8 million for 186 acres in 2010.

In 2011, DNR fisheries biologists surveyed Upper Bushman for the first time and were stunned at what was in their nets. Most largemouth bass were six years or older; the bluegill *averaged* 8 inches; 55% of the northern pike exceeded the minimum size limit of 24 inches. In short, Upper Bushman exhibited all the characteristics of an unexploited population with outstanding catch rates and large fish.

That fall, the DNR and county officials went to Lansing and lobbied for a bill designating the lake as a catch-and-release fishery. It passed, and the following spring Upper Bushman became the only lake in Southeast Michigan where you had to release what you caught, regardless of size.

But I didn't wait for the legislation to become the law of the land. I wasn't sure if the park was officially open yet, but I didn't ask either. Shouldering a float tube and waders, carrying a 5-weight fly rod and flippers, I would run across Sashabaw Road from my neighborhood to a rough gravel parking area and from there stroll through a grassy meadow to a lake that was all mine.

The first time I went I was stunned at how good the fishing was. The first dozen bluegills were running a solid 8 to 9 inches, and a couple of times I landed trophies close to 11 inches. All within 45 minutes. I finished the evening off catching an 18-inch largemouth bass on



The first lake in the chain of three known as Upper Bushman Lake.

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Upper Bushman Lake

Continued from page 8

a size 10 sponge spider. The fish jumped out of the lake repeatedly before I was able to land and release it. My heart was pounding so hard, I thought I'd died and gone to the heaven I always imagined was up there.

The fifth or sixth time I visited Upper Bushman, an Oakland County sheriff passed me as I was running across Sashabaw. He drove another 50 yards and then turned on his flashers and made a squealing U-turn, spitting gravel in every direction. When he pulled into the parking lot, I thought for sure he was going to jump out of his car with his weapon drawn and tell me, "Drop the belly boat and the fly rod and raise your hands slowly over your head!"

Instead, he calmly said, "I don't think the lake is open for fishing yet."

"Really?" I said in a voice dripping with innocence and a shocked look on my face. Stupidity has gotten me out of a lot of predicaments in my life so I'm pretty convincing at it. He said if I wanted to fish, I could go to Crooked Lake in the adjacent county park. I wanted to say "yea, well, you don't catch 11-inch bluegills in Crooked Lake," but instead, thanked him for not giving me a "Recreational Trespass" ticket and walked home.

The next time I fished Upper Bushman, it was officially open. By then, the county had built a massive 312-foot boardwalk to a 180-foot-long fishing pier along the shore where the lawn chair anglers use to cast from. Today it's probably one of the most productive spots for shore anglers in Oakland County

They do allow live bait and that has always bothered me. It's tough to retrieve your hook from a pumpkinseed without killing it when the worm is halfway down its gullet. On the other hand, officials designated the lakes non-motorized, and you have to carry your fishing kayak or canoe a quarter mile to even get it to the water. That alone keeps the angling pressure light in the main portions of Upper Bushman.



A Master Angler pumpkinseed caught and released this spring from Upper Bushman Lake.

There was a time, I thought I'd never fish another lake at home again. But that hasn't been the case. For one thing, the channels between the three lakes get incredibly weedy after mid-June, and it's a struggle to kick a belly boat through them. Then there is the fact that Oakland County has more lakes than any county in Michigan except for Iron in the Upper Peninsula. And most of them are in the northern half where I live. I've learned I like diversity as a fly fisherman.

Still, every time I cast into Upper Bushman in early summer, whether I catch a fish or not, I reflect on how lucky I am. Fate – or the fishing gods I often pray to when I'm on the AuSable – intervened and placed on the doorstep of my home the only trophy, catch-and-release lake in southeast Michigan, an over-urbanized region with almost half the state's population.

So, I'm still beholden to the words I said to my wife after I walked home that first magical night on Upper Bushman Lake. "Honey," I said, "we're never moving from this house." And we haven't.

The MFFC Library is Open

We are all looking forward to resuming our face-to-face meetings, but until this COVID thing subsides, we'll just have to cope.

The purpose of this note is to remind you that we still have a library with a combined total of over 500 books and DVDs. With the winter months ahead, you may wish to catch up on your reading, fine tune your fly tying skills, or read up on a Spring trip you may have planned.

With the help of Harry Briggs, the MFFC Webmaster, we now have all of our library offerings posted on the MFFC website (MFFC.org). Simply select the "education" header, then select "library" from the drop down menu. Then click on one of the four selections for a listing of books and DVDs. If interested in taking out any books or DVDs, please adhere to the following procedure:

Make you selection(s), specifying title and book/dvd number. Please limit your selections to no more than two (2) books and (2) DVDs.

Email your selection to Jerry Deputat, MFFC Librarian, at

flytyer@wowway.com no later than December 22.

NOTE: *Due to the limited access to the school, this is a one-time opportunity.*

Jerry will take care of getting your selections from Clarenceville (where the library currently resides).

Jerry will then email you after pulling your selections and coordinate with you to choose a date and time to meet you in the parking lot at Clarenceville.

In your email to Jerry, please specify your preferred time of day to visit the school (morning, afternoon, evening)

If you have any books/DVDs that need to be returned, please let Jerry know and a date will be coordinated with you as well

Also, if interested in purchasing license plate holders, pins, patches, or decals... We can similarly coordinate a time... just advise of item and quantity.

We have plenty of fly fishing knowledge at our fingertips. Take advantage of this Club perk.



Fly of the Month

By Todd A. Schotts

December's Fly of the Month

Norman Means' Bunyan Bug

With this crazy and unbelievable year, I decided to take us back, far back into the history of yesteryear for this month's fly (far away from Covid concerns). This fly is just as deadly today as when it was created and became famous once again in the movie *A River Runs Through It*. This month's fly is the "Bunyan Bug," by Norman Means.

The river report on Norm Means is very interesting, to say the least. He was born in West Virginia but moved to Montana in 1912. After moving to Montana, he studied forestry at Montana State University. He later owned and operated in Missoula a fish and tackle shop called "Paul Bunyan Fishing and Tackle." His store was named after his popular nickname "Paul Bunyan." He was an innovative fly tier and custom bamboo rod builder...plus many other things.

His biggest creation and our fly of the month were created (or born) around 1923 and eventually became a series of cork bodied flies representing the large adult bugs known as "Bunyan Bugs." The first one was designed to imitate the Salmon Fly. Back when this fly was designed, floating a fly was challenging due to the lack of materials that aided in floating flies like we have today; that is why cork was used. These flies became abundant, for Salmon Fly, Green Drake, Brown Drake, Orange Stonefly, Yellow Stonefly, White Moth, etc. When these flies were first created, you could say it was more of a craft that probably needed a knowledge in woodworking. The best way to tie, or put these flies together, is in segments. If you tied one fly, it would probably take you at least one to two hours. Norman later created a special tissue and



decal that was applied to the cork body to make all the flies more uniform and speed up production. An important consideration as these flies were in high demand at the time.

When tying this pattern, you have to remember to be careful cutting the bodies down since cork can be very brittle. For this pattern, a size 4 hook is what is recommended, but size can change depending on which Bunyan Bug you are tying.

The body is about the length of the hook shank. It is generally a round top with flattened sides and bottom. When you cut the groove for the hook, just make it deep enough to have the hook flush with the bottom. Before you set the hook, get a good base of thread from the bend of the hook to the front. With today's adhesives, it is best to use 5 Minute Epoxy.

Once the body is secured and dried to the hook, make the slit for the wings. With all the time that has been invested up to this point, the best slit to make is a small cut line with your knife. Then take sandpaper (folded over) to make the groove for the wings. If you use a knife for the whole procedure, you have a good chance of chipping or breaking the body apart.

Next, color your cork body. With

the solid coloring on the body, you may have to do more than one coat to get a nice bright, vibrant color. After coloring the body, take a black or dark brown marker to color in segments on top and bottom.

Once that is done, put the elk mane in for wings. Don't forget to get the fluff out. When the wings are set, evened, and splayed, tie on your thread. Wrap the thread back at the bend of the hook, then make spiral wraps up the

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Bunyan Bug Recipe

HOOK: Heavy wire 3xl streamer size 6 or 4

WINGS: ELK mane

COLORING: Markers

THREAD: 210 Denier Rust or Dark Orange

ADHESIVE: 5 Minute Epoxy

COATING: Hard as Hull or Sally Hanson's Hard as Nails

OTHER ITEMS: Sandpaper, razor, and knife

A Tie Along *It's Opal Time!*

Activity Zoom Meeting, December 23

Dan Walker's Opal Minnow

By Todd A. Schotts

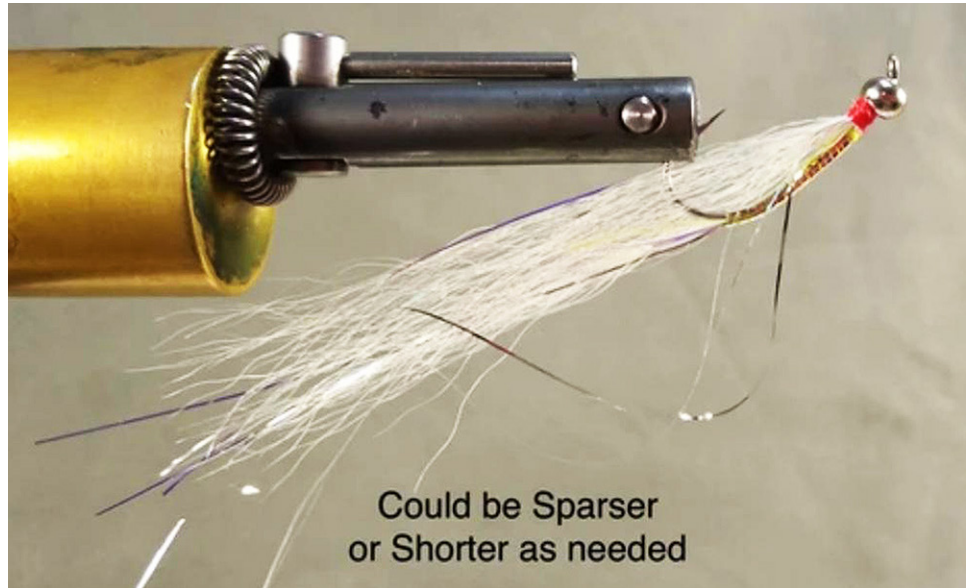
Hello fellow Club members! The Holiday Season is upon us already. It is unbelievable that this year is almost over, but probably most of us are happy it is. So, for some holiday fun and cheer, we are bringing Dan Walker to the vise to tie a great pattern series of the "Opal Minnow."

If you're not too familiar with Dan, he is a longtime member of the Michigan Fly Fishing Club. You will certainly recognize him as one of the members who usually has a fishing report at meetings. When we used to have regular meetings, Dan was seen at the meetings tying egg flies, or some other kind of pattern. He has graciously appeared as the "Featured Tyer" on many occasions and is always a patient teacher. He is a master at the vise for sure, and definitely a fish magnet when he's on the stream.

Here is what Dan says about this fly: *I have been using the Opal Minnow in jig for steelhead, [and] in balanced jig form for three years now. It has become my favorite of several pearl, white & silver minnow patterns. A great confidence fly when fishing is tough in the winter, as well as a hot pat-*

tern when fishing is easy. I have caught my biggest of each and many Steelhead, Brown Trout, a big Walleye and Coho. It should be a great pattern for the Smallmouth outing, as well as being adaptable to anything from Crappies to cold water Musky when tied on the right hook.

I'm excited to see Dan tie this fly, so get your vises set, bobbins ready, and holiday cheer going for what sounds like an amazing fly tying session! I know I cannot wait to tie some up and have them ready for some tight lines myself. Thanks Dan, for bringing this to us. The pattern and materials are listed below. Until next month, stay safe, tight lines, snazzy flies, and Merry Christmas.



Opal Minnow

HOOK: #8 to #4. Down eye standard shank fly hook or a jig hook

BEAD HEAD: Silver 4.0mm to 5.5mm sized for the hook

BODY THREAD: Chartreuse is best, or white

TAIL: Two strands of Opal Mirage Flashabout

BODY: Opal Mirage wrapped over chartreuse thread base

HEAD THREAD: Fire Orange 140D or Uni 6/0

WING: Sparse white bucktail tied in the gap, with small fire orange collar against the bead head

WING FLASH: One strand of Opal Mirage folded to each side of the wing.

Notes: The Opal Minnow can be tied on a down eye regular shank fly hook, or a jig hook. For larger ties, size 4 to 4/0, a sparse bucktail tail, more flash strands, a topping and a throat of your choice might be nice. I would use Sparse Angel Hair flash, long chartreuse for topping, short red or pink for a throat.

Opal Bucktail Minnows

Steelhead Balanced Jigs



Fly of the Mouth

Continued from page 10

cork body. Make sure you take two wraps on each spiral going up. When you get to the wings, tie around the head and the elk mane to secure it.

I am not exactly sure what they used back in the day to coat the body (probably varnish), but you can use Hard as Hull or Sally Hanson's Hard as Nails (either one works great). Coat the whole body, from back to front, and then let it dry.

If you want to actually attempt to tie this classic fly, or if you are just interested in seeing the procedure, go to YouTube and search for The Portland Fly Shop, then look for the video "Tying the Bunyan Bug."

So if you want to tie an original version of a fly from history or use modern-day materials from foam, I can see many tight lines with the Bunyan Bug. I want to wish all of you a wonderful and hopefully safe Christmas and New Year's. Until next month, stay safe, tight lines, and snazzy flies.

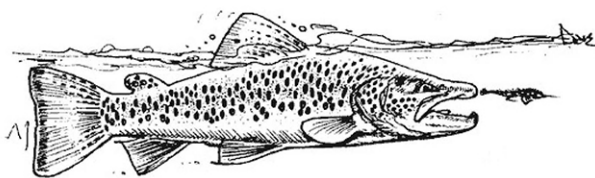
Operation Pin Drop

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why he got all the ghost member deliveries?) Spencer was birding. (Some things never change.) And of course, people were still fishing. <*)))><

Don't get me wrong, not everyone is perfect. I got thoroughly harassed and hassled by a relative, I got scowled at through a window, I was brusky confronted at least once, because some crazy person was skulking around carrying *gasp* a PIN, even though I had called ahead of time.

I can't think of any more of a crisis-y crisis than a Global Pandemic, and yet because of it's fallout, I cannot express how greatly appreciative I am for this unexpected opportunity to catch & release a myriad Club members. We are from such diverse backgrounds, and yet we have a common line, that hooks us all together. Fish On MFFC. Fish on.



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