



The Evening

Hatch

The Newsletter of the Michigan Fly Fishing Club

December 2022

It's Fly-Tying Season!



A salmon in the Pere Marquette River at the end of the spawning run.

What Else Is There To Do During The Winter?

Right now, we're all busy with holiday festivities and getting ready for family gatherings.

Come Jan. 2 a lot of us will be thinking about the last Saturday in April. Opening Day can't come soon enough. Meanwhile, we'll plan trips, reserve a spot in a drift boat, lubricate our reels, clean out our fishing vests, and, most of all, tie a lot of flies.

To that end, Jim DuFresne caught up with Tim Flagler, the producer of some of the best fly-tying videos on YouTube and a headline speaker this spring at the Midwest Fly Fishing Expo, March 11-12. You can read why Flagler's videos are so good on [page 5](#).

Some MFFC members sneak in a little fishing in February by traveling

south to the White River in Arkansas. Jim Aitken visited the famed trout fishery last August and details his experience on [page 11](#).

Need a good book to get you through the winter? Jeff McGowan writes on [page 2](#) why *Trout Madness* and *Trout Magic* by John Voelker, better known by his pen name, Robert Traver, are still classics after all these years.

The second installment of DuFresne's midlife crisis series and subsequent journey to Argentina is on [page 9](#), while MFFC President Sybil Hunter's speech to the Natural Resources Commission on the Camp Grayling proposal is reprinted on [page 6](#).

Have a great holiday everybody, and then get tying!

Michigan Fly Fishing Club Calendar

12/21/22 Activity—Garage Sale

1/11/23 Speaker Meeting, Jerry Regan, Traditional Fly Tying

1/12-15/23 Ultimate Fishing Show, Suburban Collection Showplace, Novi

1/18/23 Board Meeting, Virtual

1/25/23 Activity Meeting, Spence Vanderhoof Tying

2/1/23 Speaker Meeting, International Fly Fishing Film Festival

2/8/23 Board Meeting, Virtual

2/15/23 Activity Meeting, estate sale

2/23-26/23 Outdoorama, Suburban Collection Showplace

3/1/23 Activity Meeting

3/8/23 Board Meeting, Virtual

3/11-12/23 Midwest Fly Fishing Expo, Macomb Community College Expo Center

3/22/23 Speaker Meeting, Anthony Ruela, "Getting into Small Water"

4/1/23 Trout Tune-up, Walled Lake Outdoor Education Center

4/5/23 Speaker Meeting, Ashley Agler, Small Water Fishing

4/12/23 Board Meeting, Virtual

4/19/23 Activity Meeting

4/22/23 Scout School

4/29/23 Opening Day & Remembrance, Gates Au Sable Lodge

5/3/23 Activity Meeting

5/6/23 Youth Fly Fishing School

5/10/23 Board Meeting, Virtual

5/17/23 MFFC Banquet

5/11-14/23 New Member Outing

Beginning Jan. 11, meetings will be held at Clarenceville Middle School, 20210 Middlebelt Rd, Livonia.

John Voelker *The Anatomy of a Writer*

By Jeff McGowan

The late Michigan Supreme Court Justice John Voelker is better known to anglers by his pen name, Robert Traver. The success of his novel, and subsequent film, *Anatomy of a Murder*, allowed him to retire from law and spend the rest of his life fishing.

Voelker's books *Trout Madness* and *Trout Magic* are required reading for Michigan trout bums. His "Testament of a Fisherman" is a way of life for many anglers.

Michigan Fly Fishing Club members were invited to attend a talk by Voelker's friend, attorney Frederick M.

Baker, Jr., at the University of Detroit-Mercy School of Law on October 28th. The talk was co-sponsored by Book Club of Detroit and the Michigan Supreme Court Historical Society. The MFFC was thanked in the event's program, however only one member of the Club was in attendance.

Baker

talked about Voelker's early years, his legal career, and his writing, especially *Anatomy of a Murder*. The movie adaptation, shot in and around Marquette, brought Hollywood to the Upper Peninsula. It also made Voelker a celebrity. But the old judge preferred to avoid the limelight and retreat to "Frenchman's Pond" to fish and play cribbage.

Baker and his friend Rich Vander Veen first met Voelker in a UP bar. The retired judge was playing a game of cribbage against another bar patron. He won the game and was so happy that he promptly invited Baker and Vander Veen

to fish with him at the pond that very day.

For a more complete idea of the scope of the talk, see the profile of Voelker written by Vander Veen and Baker in *Traver on Fishing*, published by The Lyons Press.

Baker is the Secretary/Treasurer for the John D. Voelker Foundation, which raises money for trout habitat, and for its Native American Law School Scholarship. For more information scan the QR code with a smartphone or a mobile device to visit the Voelker Foundation website.



John Voelker and Jimmy Stewart lightup cigars on the set of *Anatomy of a Murder* in 1959 (Courtesy Archives of Michigan)



Denise Langford Morris (left), secretary of the Michigan Supreme Court Historical Society, with Marcia McBrien and Fred Baker.

The President's Message...

We're Headed (Back!) to Clarenceville Middle School

As we head into the holidays we become introspective, tying flies to soothe the spirit of fly fishing past, and checking out the sales to feed the spirit of fly fishing future. As humans we go back to our roots, family dinners, festive cookies, warm pies, presents, fights over the dinner table....ah the nostalgia!

MFFC went back to its roots this past April, running in to old friends, honoring founding fathers, then continuing the long history of crazy fishing trips throughout the warmer months.

In this way it seems fitting that we will return to our roots once again at the start of 2023. Two days before Thanksgiv-



Sybil Hunter

ing I signed a contract with Clarenceville Middle School for 2023 with meetings scheduled for: Jan 11 and 25, Feb. 2 and 15, March 1 and 22, April 5 and 19 and May 3. Casting in the gym is back! We will kick off the new year with Jerry Regan!

I am very excited to return to Clarenceville as it is a more central location for our club. Now members in northern Oakland County and in Macomb County will have easier access to our meetings. A big thank you goes out to all who have been willing to scout, hunt, interview, locate, and generally assist with finding interim meeting locations!

And a thank you to those of you who traveled with us along the way! Don't forget to join us for coffee, cookies and garage sale on Dec. 21, to usher out 2022.

Tight wraps and happy whip finishes,
Sybil

Michigan Fly Fishing Club Business

Michigan Fly Fishing Club Board of Directors Meeting November 16, 2022

Roll Call

Meeting called to order 7:34 p.m.

Present: S. Hunter; K. Lipp; J. Deputat; B. Green; J. Aitken; K Oehring

Absent: J. Fischer; J. Erikson; J. Bada; B. Strachan

Visitors: Wayne Glessner; Chris Hunter; Bill MaGee; Mike Matuszewski; Kathy Oehring; Craig Summers.

Approval of Agenda – Agenda from 11/16/22 approved

Approval of Minutes – Meeting minutes for 10/12/22 approved.

Officer's Report

President: S. Hunter

Nothing to report.

Vice President: K. Lipp

Nothing to report.

Treasurer: B. Green

- Accounts look good.
- Approved Treasurer's report as presented.

Corresponding Secretary: J. Fischer

Nothing to report.

Membership: J. Deputat

- Current: 319 paid members
- Email sent on 11/5/22 to members who have not paid their dues, 15 responses already

Events and Outings

- Ultimate Fishing Show (J. Aitken) Signup sheet posted, 17 out of 62 slots filled
- Outdoorama: (J. Aitken) Info needs to be included in next Hatch calendar
- Midwest Fly Fishing Expo: (K. Lipp) Reviewed status of speak-

ers – we have Landon Mayer, George Daniel and Tim Flagler. Looking to add 1 or 2 additional speakers. Vendor contracts have been sent.

New Business

- New Member Process: (J. Deputat) Ideas for greeting visitors and new members at meetings and via phone calls was discussed. Concern that visitors and new members don't know enough about the Club and may not feel comfortable initiating conversations. Jerry will bring ideas to December Board meeting.
- Membership Form Review: (J. Deputat) Jerry reviewed revised membership form. Discussion regarding how and if we use all of the fields on the form and what additional fields should be added. Jerry will present a revised membership form at the January meeting.
- Tabled until December Board Meeting: (J. Aitken) Cleanup up 8 Mile Storage Unit. Annual inventory of equipment and fly tying materials.

Old Business

- Membership Survey: (J. Deputat) Jerry reviewed the draft form and his draft notes. Motion to include a Membership Survey with the Membership Dues mailing. Form's questions will be submitted by Jerry for the May board meeting and reviewed by the Board at that meeting. The form will use a numeric range for responses. Motion approved.

Adjournment: 9:18 p.m.



2022 - 2023 Officers

President:
Sybil Hunter
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Vice President:
Kevin Lipp
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Coresponding Secretary:
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The "Original" Michigan Fly Fishing Club - MFFC
@theoriginalmichiganflyfishingclub · Nonprofit organization

Contact us

mffcc.org

We Have a Facebook Page!

Did you know we have a MFFC Facebook page? Directly reach the page by scanning the adjacent QR code. Enjoy it and then "like it" for us! It has meeting announcements, fly tying recipes, fishing articles and other fly fishing related topics. If you have a photo with a story, send them to Joyce Haxton at rainbow10trout@gmail.com and your story and/or photo will be posted!



Sign-up Is Open for MFFC Montana/Yellowstone National Park Trip

Interested in fishing Yellowstone National Park and Montana? Here's the scoop

Cost: The trip is \$825 per person per week. This includes breakfast and lunch items plus dinners for six days at Driftwaters Lodge. Wednesday night is the Cooke City trip and is additional. But folks don't have to go there. No formal dinner is provided Wednesday night due to the side trip.

MFFC Needs Show Volunteer Tiers

The Ultimate Fishing Show is just around the corner, Jan. 12-15, and we need volunteers for Friday afternoon and evening, Saturday all day, and various open spots on Sunday.

If you can volunteer an hour or two or even part of your day, it would be greatly appreciated. Showspan is gracious enough to donate booth space to us to provide interactive activities for the younger attendees. Each boy or girl who stops at our booth takes home a wooly bugger stuck to an Expo postcard.

The Ultimate Fishing Show and Outdoorama are huge advertising events for our Midwest Fly Fishing Expo. Plus, this year, we received a Fly Fishers International Youth Fly Tying grant!

Ultimate Fishing Show times are: Noon – 8 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 12; Noon – 8 p.m. Friday, Jan. 13; 10 a.m. – 8 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 14; 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 15.

When you register online to volunteer at www.volunteer-signup.org/H4ERD, your \$12 entrance fee is waived. Parking is \$5 and you enter at the back entrance of the venue at the volunteer check-in booth.

Sign-up Is Open for MFFC Montana/Yellowstone National Park Trip

Dates: Week 1: July 29 to Aug. 5; Week 2: Aug. 5-12; Week 3: Aug. 12-19

Cabins: We now have access to all six cabins, so there is room for a few more people.

Signup Time: Dec. 7

If you are interested, contact Al Haxton at: infoman984@sbcglobal.net or 989-889-1893.

The Beauty of a Spilt Cane Fly Rod

Why is fly fishing so calming? The first sound we hear as human beings is the heartbeat of our mother. After birth we know the calm of her rocking us. Fly rod action and sound mimics just that.

Ron Barch, November's speaker and premiere cane rod builder from Hastings, began his program by thanking MFFC members for their dedication and passion for the sport, the Midwest Fly Fishing Expo they stage and their years of conservation efforts...and most of all for getting him out of the shop to fish.

"Bamboo is easier on our shoulders and elbows," said Barch, who learned to cast from fly fishing great Lefty Kreh. "I can fish split bamboo all day long."

"A good designer can build one specifically for you. Graphite is too stiff for guys our age. The nice thing about a split bamboo fly rod is you can fix it. If you break a graphite rod, you're out of luck."

Barch walked attendees through the process of

split bamboo rod building, including the equipment needed, temperatures for curing, and the best supplies.

"For \$1,000 you can make and get all the tools you need to make a split bamboo rod," said Barch. "Making it pretty is the hard and expensive part."

Among his many tips that evening, the best cork comes from Portugal. "To clean cork, don't sand it. Use powdered bleaching cleaner, make it into a paste, use it to rub the dirt off the cork."

And finally "About rod building ... Don't believe anything you see online."

For more information on Ron Barch or custom crafted split cane rods from Alder Creek Angling scan the QR code to visit his website.



Ron Barch's handcrafted cane rods



Rod Builder Ron Barch





Tim Flagler *A Calm Voice When Your Fingers Are Covered with Zap-A-Gap*

By Jim DuFresne

I'm an intermediate fly tier. I know I am. For 10 years, I took a beginner's class at TU chapters and fly shops, and I passed every one of them.

But over time, I suspected I wasn't using a whip finish tool correctly, so I turned to Google for help and clicked on *Orvis One Minute Fly Tying Tips*. I immediately recognized the calm, reassuring voice on the video and the fingers spinning thread around a bare hook.

It was Tim Flagler, the most trusted fly-tying instructor I've ever had, and it took him only a minute and 27 seconds to straighten out my problems.

Who knows what he looks like? Most fly tiers wouldn't recognize him if he was standing next to them at Cabela's. Who cares? Through the magic of the Internet, Flagler has helped beginners and intermediate tiers everywhere to produce some of the best flies they've ever pulled out of their vice.

A lifelong New Jerseyan, Flagler uploads a new fly recipe or instructional video almost weekly via his New Jersey-based Tightline Productions. He estimates he has created "well over 600 videos" dedicated to fly fishing, the reason his YouTube channel, *practicalpatterns.com*, has more than 106,000 subscribers and 33 million views.

You can also hear that soothing voice on Midcurrent (*midcurrent.com*) and Trout Unlimited's national website, as well as on the Orvis Learning Center (*howtoflyfish.orvis.com*). In addition, he



Tim Flagler giving a fly tying demonstration at the 2021 Midwest Fly Fishing Expo.

has a regular column, "Beginner's Masterclass," in *Fly Tye* magazine.

Even better, Flagler will headline the Midwest Fly Fishing Expo next spring with demonstrations at the Macomb Community College Sports and Expo Center. On March 11-12, you'll get to see and *hear* the most recognizable fly-tying voice on YouTube.

"It's funny I worked for 14 years for a production company before starting Tightlines, and I never narrated anything," said Flagler. "I hated my voice."

"I've been told it sounds like confidence. I still have to be careful, it gets a little Jersey if I read in the afternoon, and I don't want that."

Flagler has taken fly-tying videos to

a higher level because he incorporates professional video production standards at his in-home studio.

He shoots the entire tying process non-stop, followed by additional footage, such as close-ups of the fly or picking up a tool. In the production stage, he often performs 200 edits and cutaway splices in a six-minute video. Then he adds the narration with the

help of his wife, Joan, in a sound booth and finishes by laying down the audio with the video.

"When I'm producing the narration, I'm nowhere near a vice; I'm watching a rough cut of the video," said Flagler. "It takes a really long time to clean everything up."

His latest effort focuses on Dave Whitlock, who recently passed away, and his most famous fly, the Red Fox Squirrel Nymph. He needed nine hours spread over two days to produce the six-minute-and-35-second-long video.

"I like to be really concise with a video," said Flagler. "Five to six minutes to me is ideal; that's loaded; there is no air time in it."

Still an intermediate tier? I am, and here are some tips from Flagler on moving up to the next level:

Hooks: When following a recipe, the demonstrator always promotes the brand he is using, maybe Daiichi or TMC, and all I have is Mustad. It's not the brand you need to be concerned with, it's the style of the hook, and even with that, you can be a little flexible.

"As far as I'm concerned, brand does not matter," said Flagler. "But if (the recipe) calls for a scud emerger hook, then you'll want to use a scud emerger hook."

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The Red Fox Squirrel Nymph



Scan the QR code for Tim Flagler's latest video on the Red Fox Squirrel Nymph, Dave Whitlock's best known fly.

MFFC to the NRC: Don't Give Away Our Land & Water

Editor's Note: The following is the three-minute appeal that MFFC President Sybil Hunter gave to the Natural Resources Commission in regard to the proposed Camp Grayling Expansion.

By Sybil Hunter

In junior high, I camped at Hartwick Pines on a Camp Grayling active training weekend. We saw military personnel in town and heard gunshots throughout the night, yet we felt safe knowing the men and women were training to protect our country.

I grew up respecting the military. My grandfather, an Army Colonel, has the honor of being buried in Arlington Cemetery with my grandmother.

My request is pro-recreation, not anti-military. I am the President of the Michigan Fly Fishing Club, a group of 300+ members, spread across Michigan, many of whom are service veterans. Based on the extremely concerning first-hand accounts of our Club members, the MFFC Board of Directors has issued a statement opposing the proposed Camp Grayling expansion, which I have been asked to speak to today.

MFFC Club members have expressed

their concerns to the Board of Directors witnessing things like military vehicles obstructing their residential street, Zodiac boats full of personnel armed with ARs in their back yard in the middle of the day, pets injured from piles of razor wire, and bullet shells in front of their property. These are not the low-profile activities promised by Colonel Myers, but an unsettling foreshadowing of things to come if the expansion is approved.

Recent events prove Camp Grayling Administrators cannot be good stewards of the land. Look at the PFAS content in the local groundwater and wells. Look at Lake Margarethe.

With the newly proposed lowering of the flight ceiling to 500 feet to allow for practice bombing exercises and strafing, I do not see how this will not further the environmental toxins to residents and wildlife alike. This is a public recreational area and we are harming the public by failing to provide State

oversight to protect our residents.

The expansion threatens the quality of access to World Class trout streams, and land for hiking and hunting, but also impacts specific ecosystems of endangered wildlife.

To give an idea of the extent of this expansion,

the proposed expansion would cover more square miles than the city of Chicago. One cannot fathom turning Chicago into a military training ground, but this is being openly considered and advocated within our State.

This commission needs to understand this is public recreational land and that the public interest needs to be considered. Diverting usage of such a large amount of recreational State land in favor of private military contracting does not benefit the residents of Michigan. I cannot imagine any taxpayer taking their family for a hike and a picnic wants to be told the land is now closed for military exercises.

I am imploring this commission to think about the land being used for this expansion and what it is taking away from the taxpayers of this State. It does not make sense to use taxpayer resources to fund private military activities. This is more egregious when one considers some of the proposals would allow other countries to send their militias to use Michigan as a testing ground for untested military weapons.

Please stop this expansion and save our recreational land.



Camp Grayling Resources

Governor Gretchen Whitmer
gretchen.whitmer@michigan.gov

Shannon Lotts, DNR Director
lotts1@michigan.gov

DNR-Camp-Grayling@michigan.gov

Senator Debbie Stabenow
senator@stabenow.senate.gov

Senator Gary Peters
senator@peters.senate.gov



MLive article on the airspace expansion proposal



Bridge article on Camp Grayling expanded airspace request

Peter Albertson's

Conservation Corner



Now The National Guard Wants Our Airspace

First, thanks to the MFFC Board for taking a stand opposing Camp Grayling's proposed expansion as noted in the most recent edition of the *Evening Hatch*. If you have not yet looked at the November issue, please take a moment and digest the article on page 5: *Opposition Building Against Grayling Expansion*.

Recently I read a significant article from the Anglers of the Au Sable: *The Secret Expansion - The Camp Grayling Expansion Plan Just Got Worse*

Thanks to the Anglers for all their dedicated focus on this issue. Please scan the adjacent QR code, read how the National Guard also wants our air

space and let your elected officials know how you feel about the expansion.

Reach out to township boards, property owners associations, U.S. Senators (senate.gov), U.S. Representatives (house.gov) and Michigan State Senators and House of Representatives.

Please understand they listen to those they hear from, if not you, then someone else. Call, email, write a letter if you want but do something. They need to hear from you.

If you have comments or feedback please send them to me with an email at: palbertsontsp@icloud.com.





A Snowy Spey Rod *Winter's Reflective Time to Cast*



By Matt Hartman

It's that time of year again... We've gotten our first snowfall and my drive home is in the darkness. Many have taken to the woods but I prefer the water. I love the crunch of snow under my feet walking the trail in a muted world.

It's a reflective time for me stepping into the cold water pulling line off the reel. Set the anchor, sweep, and deliver; the rhythm is intoxicating. Working a run two steps at a time can be a slow process. Often I close my eyes and listen to the current working its way around my legs.

The cast, when performed correctly, can be triumphant. Even alone, you can't help but smile when the timing is just right. You must force yourself to slow things down; too fast and you'll end up with a mess.

Spey rewards finesse, technique, and a measured application of energy. The fish reward whomever wanders down a snow-covered trail searching for solitude in a chaotic world. Many days can be spent without fish but that's not why I'll be there standing in the river.



Matt Hartman, who wrote and photographed this reflection of spey fishing, is a member of the Northern Angler Fly Shop staff in Traverse City. Scan the QR code for more about the shop's fly-tying classes, videos, or an up to date river report for the northwest corner of the Lower Peninsula.



Back In Class *MFFC's Youth School Returns in 2023*



MFFC members teach students at the Youth Fishing School the proper way to cast a fly rod.

By Len Dixon

After a three-year absence due to various pandemic-related restrictions, MFFC's Youth School is scheduled for Saturday, May 6, 2023.

Our School will return to MSU's Tollgate Education

Center in Novi, which offers both a conference center classroom and a rarely fished pond with bank-side access to hands-on fishing for the youth.

Each "registered" club member may sponsor a youth to enroll in the School. This member benefit is free because club members provide the team of instructors and mentors for all subjects taught. At a minimum, the curriculum includes what fish eat, how to tie a fly to imitate what fish eat, what knowledge and equipment you might need, and how to use the equipment to fish safely, effectively, and responsibly.

If you would like to be part of MFFC's commitment to education, especially for our youth (ages 7-16), possibly assisting in a youth catching their first "fly-caught" fish, this is your opportunity. The most important attribute needed is an encouraging and positive attitude.

If you would like to tie some of your favorite flies to donate for a fly box for each youth, please start tying. Each youth will be provided an MFFC-logoed fly box with whatever flies are provided - including what they tie in the School.

If you would like to instruct/mentor, please contact Len Dixon at 248-921-1494 or lendixon@comcast.net.



Above: MFFC member Spence Vanderhoof explains the fly box selection each student at the Youth Fishing School will receive. Right: Students spend time tying their first fly at the school. The MFFC Youth Fishing School returns May 6, 2023.





Que Pasa? Do You Know the Way to Patagonia?

Editor's Note: This is the second in a three-part series about Jim DuFresne's mid-life crisis that led him to Argentina in search of Patagonia's renowned fly fishing. The first installment appeared in the November edition of the Evening Hatch.

By Jim DuFresne

I was on a roll on my journey half-way around the world to catch a trout.

I arrived at O'Hara Airport in Chicago in snow and freezing rain, but my plane still departed, on time no less, for New York. We landed at JFK Airport ahead of schedule under blue skies and dry conditions.



Jim DuFresne

In Buenos Aires, my duffle bag was the first luggage to appear on the carousel, and at customs, they just waved me through.

Thirty two hours after leaving Chicago, I was sitting down with my daughter at a small outdoor cafe in the northwest neighborhoods of Buenos Aires. We were waiting for our dinner of *milanesa*, a piece of beef pounded thin and then cooked with cheese, mushrooms, bacon, and other toppings. It's the ultimate meat lover's pizza in a land



A rainbow trout from the confluence of the Chimehun and Collón Cura Rivers near Junin de los Andes in Argentina (photo courtesy Trident Fly Fishing)

known for its fine beef.

At the sidewalk café, in the cool of the evening, we were mapping the next leg of my journey to Junin de los Andes, a small town in the heart of Patagonia's Lakes District, in the foothills of the Andes Mountains and only 30 miles from the Chile border. It is the self-proclaimed "fly fishing capital" of Argentina, a place where all the street signs are adorned with leaping trout. It is almost 1,000 miles southwest of Buenos Aires and I was going to reach it by a combination of planes, taxis and an all-night bus ride.

My daughter lives and works in Buenos Aires and is fluent in Spanish. But she wasn't going to be at my side like she was at the restaurant

ordering *milanesa*. So, in my notebook I asked her to write "Where is the bus station?"

Donde esta el terminal de omnibus?

"You realize they are going to give you the answer in Spanish," she said after translating the phrase.

"And I won't be able to understand a word of it."

So Jessica wrote *Necesito ir al terminal de omnibus?*

It translates into "I need to go to the bus station" and I practiced it with a slight accent of desperation.

I really wished I had paid more attention to Mrs. Gonzales, my high school Spanish teacher, because it's always better to know the language for the place you're trying to reach. But still it's amazing how far you can travel armed with only the Lonely Planet *Latin America Spanish Phrase Book* and a determination to get there.

Like flagging a taxi and then getting him to take me to Buenos Aires' domestic airport, not the international one. Following the other passengers when

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The Rio Dorado Lodge in Junin de los Andes.

DuFresne: *Hola, You Wouldn't Happen to Speak English?*

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they changed our gate and then again when they changed our planes, not knowing why I was boarding a bus and being driven across two runways. Asking somebody where is the *banos*?

In the next 15 hours, all my conversations began with *hola* and ended with *mucho gracias*. In between, there was a lot of sign language, pointing and an occasional word of English or Spanish. Argentina is not like Mexico where, due to its relationship and proximity to the U.S., everybody in the travel industry seem knows a few key words of English.

Here I was on my own.

After arriving in Neuquen, I had to find my way to the bus station in the middle of this mid-size city. I walked out to the line of taxis and to the first one said "bus station." He looked confused. So I opened my notebook and butchered the phrase Jessica wrote down. Now he was even more confused.

So I showed him the notebook, hoping that all those nights I spent harping on my daughter when she was in third grade about the importance of good penmanship would pay off 20 years later. It did.

"Ah! Si, al terminal de omnibus!"

Off we went. When he kept asking me the same question during the ride and it included *donde*, I gave him the only thing I could think of, Junin de los Andes. It was obviously the right answer and later I realized he just wanted to know which platform at the bus station to drop me off at.

But at the time, I thought we were actually having a conversation, so I said, "Going fishing." He didn't understand the English but he clearly understood the wave of my arm as if I was casting a fly rod.

"Ah, ir de pesca."

"Going to catch peces."

"Si, si," he said with a big smile.

I was on a roll, so I topped off the conversation with *Peces Grandes!*, saying it as if I was super-sizing my burrito at Taco Bell.

He laughed and was still smiling when he pulled into the bus station. He dropped me off where the buses for Junin de los Andes departed and, when handing me my duffle bag, said something I think meant good luck catching



Junin de los Andes is only 30 miles from the Chile/Argentina border. A self-proclaimed fly fishing capital of Patagonia, every street sign in the town has a trout on it.

that big fish. With the help of an extremely nice ticket agent who knew a few words of English in my time of need, I boarded the right bus at 10 p.m. for a seven-hour, throughout-the-night ride. The bus was nice but I never slept a wink.

Every 40 minutes or so, we'd pull into a small town with some people getting off, others getting on, and the bus driver saying something I did not understand. Everybody seemed to know where they were or where they were going. Except me, I was clueless. I asked the driver a couple of times if this was Junin de los Andes. He just shrugged his shoulders as if he didn't understand me.

At 5 a.m., our arrival time, the bus didn't stop. I was on the verge of panicking when I remembered Jessica's final bit of advice; *Argentina is always an hour late. It's their culture.*

At 6:10 a.m., the bus pulled into a town, and I decided to take a huge risk.

I got off.

I showed the name of the lodge to a sleepy cab driver as the bus was disappearing down the road and held my breath.

To my utter amazement he said "*si*."

Within 15 minutes he dropped me off at a beautiful log lodge on the outskirts of Junin de los Andes with mountains on the horizon turning pink from the glow of the sunrise. Above the door was a large carving of a rainbow trout.

When an older gentleman answered the doorbell – somebody I was pretty sure I had just gotten out of bed – and in very broken English said "Welcome to Rio Dorado Lodge," I hugged him.

It was another lesson from my mid-life crisis; the destination is never the adventure, it's always the journey.

White Delight *The Arkansas River is a Bountiful Trip*

By Jim Aitken

A number of MFFC members fish the White River in Arkansas in February on an annual trip. Using their experience and advice, three friends and I fished the area this past August.

From the Grand Rapids area, the trip took about 12 hours. We stayed at the White River Trout Lodge, where the February crew stays, and contracted Jeremy and Clint for guide services.

The White gets its name from the daily morning fog over the river as 50-degree water mixes with the daily heat of Arkansas.

We fished four days total, three on the White and one on the nearby Norfolk. Both are tailwater rivers from power-generating dams. Each day, local authorities issue their generating plan.

While there, the typical day started with very low flows, exposing rocks and islands not there the prior evening. As the day progressed, generators turned on in response to electrical demand.

The White River Shoals Dam has eight generators. By 2 p.m. each day, six to seven were operating which meant the river rose about 6 feet.

This plays havoc with fishing, so we would fish close to the dam till 10 or 11 each morning and then move quickly downstream, fishing ahead of the rising water.



A nice rainbow from the White River in Arkansas. A few of the rainbows that were caught were quite dark like this one.

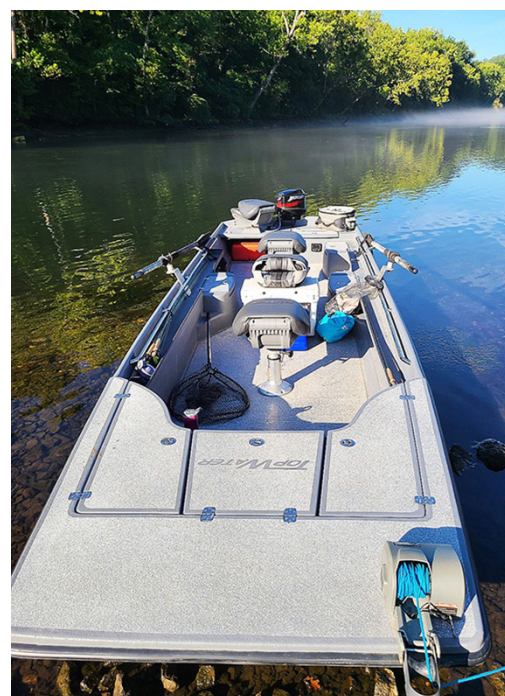
We had great success! Most of the fish were caught with a hopper/dropper rig. We caught a few brook trout up to 13 inches. With one exception, the rest of the catch was rainbows, none less than 12 inches and the largest was 20.5 inches. A typical day was 20 or more fish a day per fisherman. Amongst the group, only one Brown was caught. Even when specifically targeted, the

Browns weren't interested. But, the water was clear, offering the fun of seeing a fish come up, inspect, maybe refuse, but often take the bait. Overall, we were quite happy with the size and frequency of the fishing action.

We are already planning the next trip. The Rivers have two bug hatches, Caddis and Sulfurs, running from around May through mid-July. Next year we plan to spend our time dry fly fishing those hatches.



Above: The morning mist on the White River. There were lots of anglers wading during the morning low water. Right: Jim Aitken floated in both flat bottom boats like this one and in a drift boat similar to those seen on the Pere Marquette River.



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Flagler's choice for a moderately priced hook is Wapsi Lightning Strike Hooks, \$7 for a pack of 25. For a high-end black nickel, barbless hook, he turns to Fulling Mill, a British company whose hooks are available in the U.S.

Capes: Flagler has never pulled the last feather from a cape. But he has many with bare holes in the middle.

"That's because I've used all the size 18 to 12 feathers from it," Flagler said. "I would still say buying capes is essential (as opposed to packets of individual feathers) and more affordable.

"I remember paying \$20 or \$30 for a cape years ago. Today I'm paying the same for better capes. I don't know how those guys can produce capes of better quality and still charge the same price."

Substituting Materials: Having everything a recipe calls for is ideal. But intermediate tiers need to learn when and with what they can swap out materials for something similar. It not only saves you a trip to the fly shop, says Flagler, it often leads to new and more innovative patterns.

A better fly by accident.

"That's what separates intermediate tiers from the experts, swapping out materials and still producing a good



Tim and Joan Flagler chatting with MFFC members at the 2021 Midwest Expo. fly," said Flagler.

Learning Basic Techniques:

When you look at a recipe – a list of the materials without step-by-step instructions – and can still tie that pattern, you're an expert at the vice.

To reach that level, you need to master basic techniques, from working with dubbing material to building a parachute post or setting wings on a size 18 hook, to instinctively know what has to be done without being shown.

That is why online videos are such an improvement for beginners and intermediate tiers. You can watch Flagler tie a fly repeatedly, stop it, rewind it,

whatever, until you have it right.

"Fly tying is a very dynamic thing; there is so much that can happen between figure three and figure four that you miss," said Flagler. "Watching it being tied makes it so much easier to learn how."

Insomnia: Okay, Flagler never recommended this tip, but I will. One night I was lying in bed watching a Flagler video on my iPad, and the next thing I knew, it was morning.

Having trouble sleeping at night? That voice is so smooth and calming; you'll never make it to the whip finish at the end.



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