

Hatch

The Newsletter of the Michigan Fly Fishing Club

December 2023

Season Greetings



From Our Fly Fishing Friends in the Desert

Merry Christmas MFFC from the Desert Fly Casters, the gang in Phoenix, Arizona. This holiday card was drawn by DFC member Bob McKeon, one of the club's newsletter editors and graphic artist extraordinaire.

In 1993 and 2006 McKeon won TU's national Bollinger Award for Outstanding Newsletter while serving as editor for the Schrems West Michigan Trout Unlimited chapter. Among McKeon's many accomplishments were illustrating two books for Orvis Outdoor Outfitters: *The Caddisfly Handbook* and

Trout Stream Insects.

We really hope to feature more of McKeon's work in the future!

Also in this issue of *The Evening Hatch*, Jeff McGowan reminisces about the classic Rayburn Lodge on the Au Sable River that hosted early MFFC outings. You can read it on **page 5**.

On **page 7**, Jim DuFresne writes about when Kelly Galloup, then a Traverse City fly shop owner and part-time guide, invited him for a morning of brutally cold but exhilarating steelhead fishing on the Platte River.

Michigan Fly Fishing Club

Calendar

12/13/23 Board Meeting, Virtual**12/20/23** Fly Fishing Garage Sale**1/10/24** Speaker Meeting, Jim DuFresne, *Katmai National Park: Paddling in the Land of Bears***1/11-14/24** Ultimate Fishing Show, Suburban Collection Showplace, Novi**1/17/24** Board Meeting, Virtual**1/24/24** Activity Meeting, Spence Vanderhoof, Fly Tying**2/7/24** Speaker Meeting, TBA**2/14/24** Board Meeting, Virtual**2/18-23/24** White River Trip, Cotter, AR**2/21/24** Activity Meeting, Tom Sewruck**2/23-25/24** Outdoorama, Suburban Collection Showplace, Novi**3/6/24** Activities Meeting, Scott Freeburg**3/9-10/24** Midwest Fly Fishing Expo, Macomb Community College**3/13/24** Board Meeting, Virtual**3/20/24** Speaker Meeting, TBA**4/3/24** Speaker Meeting, TBA**4/10/24** Board Meeting, Virtual**4/17/24** Activity Meeting, Joe Sprys**5/1/24** Activity Meeting, Dan Walker**5/4/24** Youth School, Tollgate Farm**5/6-8/24** Old Member's Outing, Wawa Sum Lodge, Grayling**5/8-11/24** Dick Schot New Member's Outing, Wawa Sum Lodge, Grayling**5/8/24** Board Meeting, Virtual**5/15/24** MFFC Club Banquet, Italian American Banquet Center, Livonia

Meetings are held at Clarenceville Middle School, 20210 Middlebelt, Livonia.

MFFC Hoping to Host Fly-Fishing Film Event

The International Fly Fishing Film Festival, or IF4, is the world's leading fly-fishing film event, consisting of films produced by professional filmmakers from all corners of the globe.

The 2023-24 IF4 kicks off December 12 and continues through to July. Two close-to-home dates have already been finalized. On March 26, the Paul H Young TU Chapter will host the festival at Milford Independent Cinema in Milford, and on March 7, The Toledo Clinic Cancer Centers will host it at Bubba's 33 in Toledo.

Other Michigan clubs have shown interest in hosting the event. They are the Mershon-Neumann TU Chapter in Bay City, the Kalamazoo Valley TU Chapter in Portage, the Trout Unlimited Chapter in Ann Arbor, and the MFFC in Livonia. There are no dates or other details



for these presentations as they have yet to be finalized with IF4.

Tickets at most events are \$25 per person, but this season Fly Fusion, an online fly-fishing magazine and streaming service, is teaming up with IF4 to offer video access to the festival for \$10. Fusion tickets that would provide access to a week of viewing the festival are available only until Dec. 15 and the films must be viewed by the end of 2023.

For more information about upcoming IF4 events go to: www.flyfilmfest.com. For other Fusion streaming festival packages go to flyfusionstreaming.com/.

Time for Conservation Funding Requests

We are happy to report that the Club is once again accepting Conservation Funding Requests.

If you have a favorite project or know of a worthy effort needing conservation funds, please contact Committee Chair Kevin Lipp at 734-837-1100 or kjlipp@gmail.com to get a copy of the Request form.

Completed Requests for Funding are due to Lipp by Feb. 7, 2024. If you have any questions please contact Kevin Lipp.

If It Snows In Clarenceville

A reminder to all MFFC members, it snows in the winter. And a snow day for Clarenceville means a snow day for the Club.

If the Clarenceville School District is closed the day of an MFFC business or activity meeting, our meeting that night is automatically cancelled. In short, a snow day for Clarenceville's kids means a snow day for fly anglers.

The President's Message...

Don't Hibernate This Winter! MFFC Won't Let You

Happy Holidays! Whether you celebrate Christmas or Hanukkah, the joy of family, twinkling lights, presents, and good food is upon us! That being said, the fishing around these parts is pretty lackluster in winter, not to mention very c-c-c-cold... and that's where the MFFC comes in!

We kick off the cold months with the annual garage sale, an opportunity to switch up things before the holidays.

In January and February, the coldest, most barren months, our Club has speakers (to help plan for when the snow finally melts) and the opportunity to keep your cast up to snuff indoors during

our activities meetings. There are also tons of fly-tying clinics and demos (beginning and more advanced) to tide everyone over. Or enjoy the camaraderie of promoting the Club casting, and tying at the two Showspan events; the Ultimate Fishing Show and Outdoorama.



Sybil Hunter

Then the fun begins in earnest when our Midwest Fly Fishing Expo rolls around in March. Buy equipment! Cast rods! Meet guides! Take notes about glorious fishing locales! Or consider volunteering. For a few hours of your time, you get a free all access pass to everything fly fishing!

In the winter, you can also sign up and plan for next summer's trips to keep that fly fishing excitement alive. Or take a trip south to Arkansas with fellow MFFC members if you can't wait until spring.

In early April, when you need it most, you can finally get back on the water to catch a fish or see if your waders leak at the MFFC Trout Tune Up, on the Huron River snow and all.

No matter the time of year, the MFFC is here for you with fly tying, trips, learning, knowledge, and camaraderie! I hope to see you all this winter taking advantage of all our Club has to offer.

Tight wraps and happy whip finishes,
Sybil

**Michigan Fly Fishing Club
Board of Directors Meeting
November 8, 2023**

Roll Call

Meeting called to order 7:34 p.m.

Present: S. Hunter; K. Lipp; J. Deputat; B. Green; J. Aukee J. Aitken; N. Tabaka; J. Bada.

Absent: B. Strachan, J. Eriksson.

Approval of Agenda – Agenda from 11/8/23 approved.

Approval of Minutes – Meeting-minutes from 10/11/23 approved with an amendment.

Visitor's Business

- Kathy Oehring reported on updates from the State of Michigan Raffle Seminar she attended. We are required to retain a set of documents for 4 years in the event of a State audit. We do not need to retain Club meeting tickets after meetings and we do not need to retain Expo tickets after the prizes are distributed.

Officer's Report

President: S. Hunter

Nothing to report

Vice President: K. Lipp

Nothing to report

Treasurer: B. Green

- Current month's treasurer's report presented and approved by board.
- We are still tracking to our forecasted budget.
- Wa-Wa sum invoice paid this year, Revenue booked last year.

Corresp. Secretary: J. Bada

- 4 eblasts; 368 contacts; 68% open rate.
- Upcoming speakers: December Todd Schotts; January Jim DuFresne; February Lance Evans or

Gates Lodge staff; March TBD; April TBD; May banquet speakers Dirk Fischbach; June TBD; July TBD; August TBD

Membership: J. Deputat

- 508 renewal letters mailed July 24, 2023. 407 current active members. 47 former members 2022.
- Member surveys mailed to 407 current members. 129 surveys returned to date.
- As of October 8, 2023, 362 members paid, (88%) paid by check.

Events and Update

- **Banquet:** Joyce Haxton reports that Dirk Fishbach, our 2024 speaker, will have a tying session at the Italian-American Club during the day of the banquet. The session cost, which will include lunch and tying materials, will be \$25. Seating will be limited to 20 people.
- Expo: Kevin Lipp reports that headliners and featured tiers are set. Vendor interest is high. Kevin is looking for someone to head up security.

New Business

- Chris Hunter reports that we are getting 6-14 Zoom attendees per meeting. There was general agreement that we should continue to offer Zoom. Chris recommends that we need a 3rd person who can run Zoom at the meetings because Zoom requires two people to be effective.

Old Business

Nothing to report.

Adjournment: 8:34 p.m.

2023-2024 Officers

President:

Sybil Hunter
president@mffc.org

Vice President:

Kevin Lipp
kjlipp@gmail.com

Corresponding Secretary:

Jon Bada
correspondence@mffc.org

Recording Secretary:

John Eriksson
recordingsecretary@mffc.org

Treasurer

Barry Green
treasurer@mffc.org

Membership

Jerry Deputat
membership@mffc.org

Immediate Past President:

Bruce Strachan
bruced0402@gmail.com

At-Large Directors

Jim Aitken

dznvvm@gmail.com

John Aukee

j.aukee@yahoo.com

Norm Tabaka

ntabaka@gmail.com

Hatch Editors

Sybil Hunter Submissions

evening.hatch.mffc@gmail.com

Jim DuFresne Production

kidven@aol.com

Webmaster

Sybil Hunter Club Webmaster

sybilsvpemail@gmail.com

Speakers Supreme

Dirk Fischbach Returns to the MFFC as 2024 Banquet Speaker

Dirk Fischbach is the featured speaker for the MFFC banquet on May 15, 2024 at the Italian American Banquet Center, 39200 W. Five Mile Rd., Livonia.

The evening program begins at 5:30 p.m. with a cash bar and continues with raffles, 50/50 drawing and door prizes.

Tickets are \$45 per person and will be available after the first of the year at club meetings and at the Midwest Fly Fishing Expo March 9-10.

Fischbach will also have an afternoon tying session from noon to 3 p.m. on May 15 at the Italian American Banquet Center. The tying session is \$25 per person and includes lunch and tying material for several flies.

A frequent speaker at our meetings, Dirk Fischbach began his guiding career at Montana's Lone Mountain Ranch in 1986 and founded the first full-service guiding operation on Michigan's Huron River in 1988. His home river is the Huron near Dexter, Michigan, but he still travels west regularly. His guiding specialty is smallmouth bass, along with taking trout, salmon, and carp with the long rod.

He has owned and operated several fly shops, and now is the Midwestern representative for Hardy, Greys, Waterworks-Lamson, Royal Wulff Fly Lines, and Reisa Flies.

A resident of South Lyon, MI, Fischbach is an honors graduate from the University of Michigan's College of Literature, Science & the Arts, and former managing editor at Heritage Media's Western Region Newspapers.

He is co-owner of Bailiwicks Outdoors in Dexter, Michigan, and is president of the Huron River Fly Fishing Club. He



Dirk Fischbach, an expert on smallmouth bass fishing on the Huron River, will be the featured speaker at the MFFC Banquet in May.

is an active member of Trout Unlimited, the Federation of Fly Fishers, and the Michigan Fly Fishing Club.

Dirk Fischbach is the author of three books on fly fishing and fly tying, including *The Fly Fisher's Huron: A Practical Guide to Michigan's Blue-Ribbon Smallmouth River*.

For more information or to purchase tickets, email Joyce Haxton at rainbow10trout@gmail.com.

Jim DuFresne Explores Katmai National Park at January Meeting

Author and MFFC member Jim DuFresne will give his presentation, ***Katmai National Park: Paddling in the Land of the Bears***, at the Club's Speaker's Meeting on Wednesday, Jan. 10.

DuFresne is the author of Lonely Planet's ***Alaska*** travel guidebook, and its ***Hiking In Alaska*** guide. His presentation is based on his trip to Katmai National Park in the mid-1990s when he joined five other kayakers to paddle the Savonoski River Loop, a seven-day adventure in the heart of this 3.9 million-acre wilderness.

DuFresne made this trip in early August when the park's famous salmon runs were at their peak and brown bears, some tipping the scales at more than 1000 pounds, were everywhere gorging on the spawning fish.

DuFresne has been the production editor of *The Evening Hatch* since 2020 and a frequent contributor to its pages including this issue with a feature about winter steelheading on page 7.

The meeting starts at 7:30 pm, and the 45-minute presentation will begin around 8:00 pm. DuFresne's show will be followed by a short question-and-answer



*Jim DuFresne will be the speaker at the MFFC meeting on Jan. 10. The author of several books on Alaska, DuFresne will give his presentation *Katmai National Park: Paddling in the Land of the Bears*.*

period if time allows. MFFC meetings are at Clarenceville Middle School at Middlebelt Road, between 7 and 8 Mile Roads, in Livonia.

Rayburn Lodge

Filled With History & MFFC Memories

Y By Jeff McGowan

Years ago, the Michigan Fly Fishing Club had a couple of outings at Matabanic Lodge. When the property was sold, the MFFC had to find a new venue. Fortunately, Phil and Debbie Heck had just purchased the Rayburn Lodge immediately downstream.

Named after Don Rayburn, a Bay City oilman who once owned it, the original Rayburn Tract was 1,1765 acres and established in 1924 by the family whose company at the time, Murray Body, was a manufacturer in the booming auto industry. The state eventually purchased the place for its extensive acreage on the main branch of the Au Sable and, in the mid-1990s, sold the lodge, which was moved to its current location.

When the Hecks bought it, the lodge had great potential but still needed much work. Phil and Debbie re-chinked all the logs, among other tasks. The impressive main lodge is a two-story log structure with maple flooring and teak wall paneling. Inside, a balcony overlooks a great room with a large fieldstone fireplace and is surrounded by five bedrooms.

The outing known as "The Little Matabanic" relocated to Camp Wa Wa Sum and is now known as the Dick



The Rayburn Lodge which has been significantly upgraded over the years. Located on the Au Sable River, the lodge can be rented year-round (www.rayburnlodge.com).

Schott New Member Outing. The "Big Matabanic" outing moved next door and became the "Rayburn Outing."

Al Bullock ran those early Rayburn Outings. Although Phil and Debbie ran the Lodge as a bed and breakfast, Al was determined to stack MFFC members in there like cordwood. Cots were set up wherever there was space, and Debbie had to watch while her kitchen was taken over.

The first year I stayed there, I slept on a cot in the room known as the library. It had about a half-dozen books, plus a desk with a fly-tying vice, a spool of thread, and a couple of moth-eaten skins.

I dreamed of being one of the "cool kids" who got to sleep in a real bed. The following year, I upgraded to the Guide's Cabin. It had two beds and a sofa bed; Al managed to stick a cot in there anyway. My roommates were Al Bullock, Kevin Lipp, Dave Begley,

Barry Green, Bill Johnson, and Rick Gokenbach.

I did not realize until it was too late that I was sharing a cabin with world-champion snorers. The cabin vibrated all night, I never got any sleep and was, therefore, always late for the catered breakfast.

On one of my earliest visits, Al acted as admiral of our rag-tag armada that floated below Mio. He had his drift boat, I had my first (very wobbly) Au Sable boat, Kevin Lipp had his one-man pontoon, and another member had a homemade plywood kayak.

It took the better part of the day to spot the cars and launch the boats. The float should have been only about four hours but took almost twice as long. And I do not remember catching any fish.

Somehow, we all made it back to the Lodge and with extra funds from the outing budget, Al bought a bottle of Glenmorangie Sherry Cask Scotch. It burned my sunburned lips as I took a sip, but it was a very delicious way to end the day. As we laughed and tied flies, I did not realize that the day could never be repeated.

Phil and Debbie sold the Rayburn in 2013 and years later, I helped scatter Al Bullock and Dave Begley's ashes in the Holy Waters downstream from the lodge.

As Heraclitus said, "You can never step in the same river twice."



Jeff McGowan



The MFFC Gang at the Rayburn Outing in 2010.

Michigan Businesses Stand Up to Oppose Line 5 Oil Tunnel

By National Wildlife Federation

This month, the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) approved Enbridge's Line 5 tunnel siting permit, and the Great Lakes Business Network has immediately expressed resounding disappointment at this decision.

The Great Lakes Business Network (GLBN) is a coalition of businesses from around the state, many of them based in Northern Michigan, dedicated to preserving the integrity and vitality of the Great Lakes, fostering sustainable business practices and opposing an oil tunnel or pipeline through the Straits of Mackinac.

The new oil tunnel and continued operation of Line 5, GLBN points out, poses risks to the climate, the health of the Great Lakes, and the businesses that rely on them. These risks are disproportionately borne by Michiganders and Michigan businesses, while the benefits will be realized by a Canadian corporation with a history of pipeline failures and oil spills in Michigan.

Experts have projected that emissions from the Line 5 tunnel would top 27 million metric tons of carbon, as opposed to a scenario in which the pipeline is shuttered. The PSC decision supports a significant, long-term source of greenhouse gas emissions at a moment which calls for investments that will instead improve air quality, community health, and a more stable climate.

"Bell's Brewery recognizes the importance of abating greenhouse emissions immediately while protecting the ecosystem services and inherent value of natural systems – especially the world's largest body of fresh water," said Carrie Yunker, Executive Vice President of Bell's Brewery. "We are disappointed that today's decision fails to recognize these imperatives to creating a more robust and resilient Michigan economy."

"Today's ruling by the Public Service Commission is a major step backward for our region and our planet," said Juliette King-McAvoy, of King Orchards. "Enbridge's oil tunnel risks our livelihoods, our public health, and over twenty percent of the world's freshwater. This is a bad project made worse by Enbridge's track record of repeated safety failures. Businesses from around the region will continue to unite against this scheme."

"The fight against this oil tunnel is far from over despite this short-sighted decision from the PSC today," said Bob Sutherland, President of Cherry Republic in response to the news. "The decision ignores current economic realities, tribal sovereignty, and sound science. We will continue to explore all avenues to ensure that this pipeline threat to the Great Lakes is eliminated."

"Approval of Enbridge's untested oil tunnel is baffling," said Rich Bergmann, Managing Partner of Round Lake Group LLC. "Studies have shown time and again that there exists a



Enbridge's Line 5 oil pipeline under the Mackinac Strait (photo courtesy of National Wildlife Federation)

range of Line 5 replacement options that are both commercially viable and operationally feasible that do not include the construction of an underground tunnel, unlike anything we have seen before in the world."

"Imperiling the Great Lakes for the sake of new fossil fuel infrastructure during this time of climate crisis makes no common sense and certainly no business sense," said Peter Laing, Owner of MAWBY Sparkling Wines, "Today's decision by the MPSC defies all sound logic and poses a real threat to our fresh-water economy."

"The Michigan PSC has acted prematurely with this decision, approving the permit for a tunnel that both Enbridge's own board, and the US Army Corps of Engineers have not signed off on," said Ian Bund, Co-Owner of Angell Farm LLC. "It is unfathomable that the PSC would approve this permit without an updated feasibility of the tunnel or the true costs of constructing it."

"While the Commission argued for the need of a tunnel to safeguard the Great Lakes from an oil spill, they completely failed to take into consideration that throughout the many years of construction of Enbridge's tunnel project, 22.7 million gallons of oil and natural gas liquids will continue to be pumped through the heart of the Great Lakes every single day" said Ella Skrocki, Owner of Sleeping Bear Surf and Kayak. "What a remarkable disrespect to the people and businesses of the Great Lakes Region whose health & livelihoods



rely on the protections of our invaluable fresh-water ecosystem."

For more on the Great Lakes Business Network go to: glbusinessnetwork.com.



Scan the QR code for the Bridge Magazine article on the controversial Line 5 issue.



Steelie Fever *Finding a Cure on the Platte River with Kelly Galloup*

Editor's Note: In 1987, Kelly Galloup was a proprietor of a Traverse City fly shop and a fishing guide in his spare time when he invited Jim DuFresne, the new outdoors writer for the Saginaw News, for a December steelhead outing. The following article first appeared in the Saginaw News.

By Jim DuFresne

The only things the headlights revealed at 6:30 a.m. was a small portion of the road Kelly Galloup and I were trying to follow – and snow.

Huge flakes, thousands of them, rushed from out of the dark and hurled themselves against the windshield. A pattern of white that was swept up quickly by the wipers only to instantly reappear on the windows again and again ... and again.

"It almost hypnotizes you," said Galloup.

"Yeah," I said, and I buried my hands deeper in my coat.

The snow was hypnotizing us, and the activity we were about to pursue was sending chills of excitement through us that the car heater could never possibly reach.

We were winter steelheading. For most anglers, the very name "steelhead" produces images of this leaping fish, fighting hard and doubling the rod over until that final sweep of the landing net.

When we arrived at Galloup's favorite spot on the Platte River, the Traverse City guide looked into the water and saw 10 or 12 fish holding deep along the bottom and had another name for those chills running through us.

"I've got steelie fever," he said.

It took only a few minutes for Galloup to find the cure. He had just chosen a fly and was explaining the fly fishing technique he called chuck-and-duck when he made his second cast into the hole.

Or was it his first? It's hard to remember because it all happened so quickly. I was still getting my equipment ready and listening to Galloup when his 10-foot suddenly bent towards the water.

"Holy . . ." said Galloup. His remark was quickly followed by an explosion in the river, and that beautiful fish, that steelhead all silver and pink, was arching its body out of the river to a backdrop of snow – a layer of the white stuff on the banks, snow covering every branch of every tree, snow falling in huge clumps.

It was winter steelheading, picture perfect.

With a five-pound tippet between his fly line and what we were pretty sure was at least an 8-pound steelhead, Gal-



Jim DuFresne



Kelly Galloup with his 8-pound steelhead caught during a winter outing with Jim DuFresne in Platte River in 1987.

loup was cautiously battling the fish, letting it run down the middle of the river but keeping it away from the log jams along the banks.

At one point, I paused to pull out my camera, and the next minute, Galloup was gone, some 50 yards down the river, still dashing through the water with his battling steelhead.

The next time I saw him, he was slowly making his way back upstream with the fish in tow.

We eagerly went back to the hole, sure there was more steelhead that could be enticed into striking flies. Soon, the excitement of the day's first fish wore off, and the winter of winter steelheading set in.

We were getting cold. We were bundled up in wool, but the tips of our toes were numb, our ears began to sting a little, and our fingers, well, our fingers, were the big problem. They were exposed to the snow and icy water to work the

Continued on page 8

DuFresne: Battling Snow & Cold to Catch a Winter Steelhead

Continued from page 7

line in. But they became so cold and stiff that it was hard to handle the rod or grab the reel.

Steelheading quickly became a process of casting for a while, then stopping to bury your hands inside your coat. Fishing a little more, warming your hands a little more.

I was thinking about my fingers at one point, thinking it was time to stick them inside the pockets of my coat when the hit came. Galloup says sometimes the steelhead takes the fly so lightly in the winter, you can hardly feel the strike.

But there was no doubt about this one and I quickly set the hook. The battle was on; a determined fish versus an angler whose fingers could barely turn the reel.

The steelhead would sit on the bottom and then suddenly run. I would keep the rod up and then reel whenever the fish gave up some line. This lasted 15 minutes, with the steelhead running at will and pulling me down the Platte.

Gradually, it tired, and reeling in the line became easier. Maybe too easy. Did I become overconfident? Or was I simply careless?

At the last minute, the steelhead dashed into a log jam. Galloup groaned and lunged across the river towards the en-



Kelly Galloup wades upstream in the Platte River after chasing a steelhead on a snowy December day in 1987 (photos by Jim DuFresne).

tangled line, but it was too late.

On five-pound tippet, it didn't take much for this steelhead to break it.

Trudging back up the river, Galloup asked me, "What do you want to do? Getting cold, want to quit?"

"Are you kidding? I want to go back to that hole and try again!"

There was this chuckle behind me and Galloup said what I already knew.

"Steelie fever."



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