



The Evening

Hatch

The Newsletter of the Michigan Fly Fishing Club

April 2024

Time To Catch a Trout



Winter is over, even if it's not official. We can tell because MFFC members are digging out the waders, getting in some mid-March floats for steelhead, and talking fishing even if they haven't strung up their rods yet.

Club members ventured down to the Proud Lake Recreation Area recently for the special catch-and-release season on the Huron River. Our Trout Tune-Up was a huge success if for no other reason than it didn't rain for the first time in years. Check out the photos and Sybil Hunter's column about the annual event on [pages 4-5](#).

MFFC members Ron LeTourneau and Jim Mullen landed some early-season trout on a float trip down the Manistee River on March 19. They hooked seven steelhead and landed five. You can see two that they netted on [page 2](#).

Tim Schulz's new book from Lyons Press, *A Cast Away in Montana*, won't be released until May but we managed to get a sneak preview of it. You can read a condensed version of the chapter *Coincidence* on [pages 6-8](#). Tim, an MFFC member, last wrote for *The Evening Hatch* in our November 2022 edition.

Finally, you know it's spring when Jim DuFresne buys another belly boat. We think it's his sixth or maybe seventh. Let's hope his wife doesn't see it half-hidden behind the garbage cans in the garage or it will be winter again for him.



Michigan Fly Fishing Club Calendar

4/6/24 Trout Tune-up, Huron River, Walled Lake Outdoor Education Center
4/10/24 Board Meeting, Virtual
4/13/24 Member's School, Wayne County Community College Ted Scott Campus

4/17/24 Activity Meeting, Joe Sprys
4/20/24 Scout School, Multi Lakes Conservation Association
4/27/24 Trout Opening Day & Remembrance, Gates Au Sable Lodge

5/1/24 Activity Meeting, Dan Walker
5/4/24 Youth School, Tollgate Farm
5/5-7/24 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, speaker Dirk Fischbach

5/16-19/24 Smallmouth Outing, Blue Spruce Motel, Port Austin

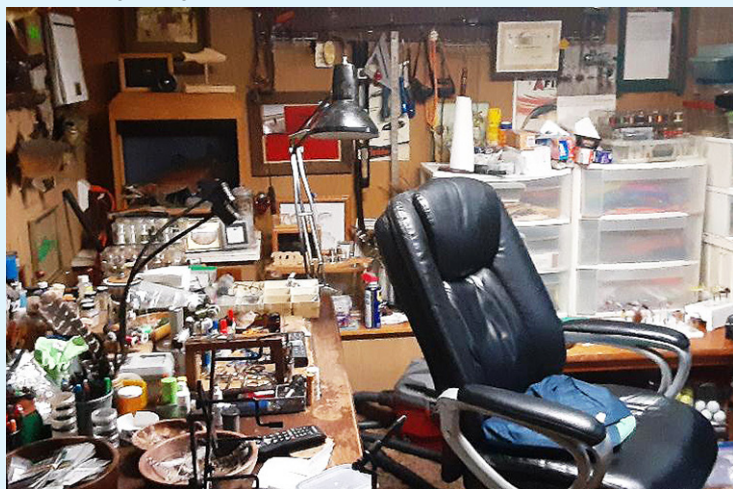
6/5/24 Speaker Meeting, Andrew, Motor City Anglers, Northville Community Center

7/10/24 Speaker Meeting Matt of Nu-Canoe, Northville Community Center
7/17-20/24 WaWaSum Family Outing
7/20/24 MFFC Club Picnic, Multi Lakes Conservation Club, Commerce
7/27/24 to 8/3/24 First week: Yellowstone-Montana Trip, Driftwaters Resort

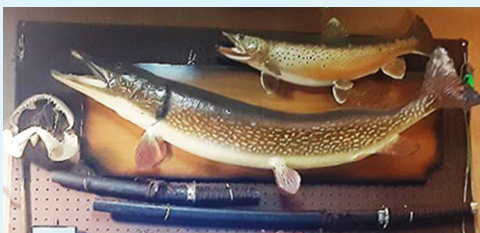
8/3-10/24 Second week: Yellowstone-Montana Trip, Driftwaters Resort
8/7/24 Speaker Meeting - TBD

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

Fly Tyer's Desk of the Month



This month, we're spotlighting Thomas Sewruk's tying bench. He sent five photos, and we counted at least six mounted fish in them along with a shark's jaw complete with teeth and what appeared to be a couple of samurai swords. We think he uses the swords to cut foam for hopper patterns.



Sewruk calls it his "fishing room" and we can see why. "My tying room is in the basement where I spend a great deal of time watching TV and tying flies," he added.

A man cave, no doubt about it.

Hooked Seven Steelhead, Landed Five; Not A Bad Day on the River

MFFC members Ron LeTourneau and Jim Mullen landed some early-season trout on a guided float trip down the Manistee River on March 19. They caught seven steelhead and landed five.

Left: LeTourneau with a beauty who added "I put back a 8.5-pound native hen before we snapped a photo...wanted her healthy and back in the river!"



TU Looking for Didymo Volunteers

Club member Glenn Easterbrook donated 100 Didymo collection kits and is challenging MFFC members to step up to assist Jordyn Stoll, TU Biologist and Didymo researcher, in tracking the invasive species.

Members are encouraged to send sample data using a scrubbing device (toothbrush, etc.) to sample the growth on rocks/substrates. Then, transfer the sample to a small watertight container filled with a preservative (rubbing alcohol, vodka, iodine) and seal the container in a Ziplock bag. Keep it out of the heat, using an ice pack if needed.

You also need to identify the river location by adding the provided label with a serial number specific to you (ex. 040324Boardman001_Hunter).

Use the QR to download the sample tracking app Survey123. Continue as a guest and download the MITU Didymo Monitoring survey. Allow the app to access your location (GPS coordinates) and camera (photograph the site).

Without data service, provide a locational pic and description and then send when service is restored.

Complete an app survey for each sample. Label each sample with a separate serial number.

Mail samples within 48 hours to 7851 Murray Ridge Rd, Elyria, OH 44035, Attn: Jordyn Stoll. Include a return address to match samples with app entries.

Contact Sybil Hunter (evening.hatch.mffc@gmail.com) for donated test kits and more information. For a detailed explanation on taking Didymo samples scan the QR code for the Michigan Trout Unlimited handout.



Right: Mullen with one of his own. "We used a rig with a 12mm bead and hook 2 inches apart and a six-inch dropper with another bead and hook. All of this under a bobber with split shots to take the rig down," said Mullen. "We let this float behind the boat for about 30 to 50 yards. We were very fortunate to have hooked fish and landed some. It was an outstanding adventure"



Michigan Fly Fishing Club

Business

Michigan Fly Fishing Club Board of Directors Meeting March 13, 2024

Roll Call

Meeting called to order 7:30 p.m.

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

Visitors: Glen Easterbrook; Tom Coleman

Approval of Agenda – Agenda from 3/13/24 approved

Approval of Minutes – Meeting minutes for 2/14/24 approved.

Officer's Report

President: S. Hunter

- A HUGE thanks to the Expo volunteers.
- Hatch is under construction.
- Steve Haywood from HFF Custom Rods is our April 3 speaker.
- Any interest in April 20, Wayne County Community College Education Booth to assist with tying, casting, etc. from 11:30 to 1 pm? A family Earth Day event: https://www.wcccd.edu/pdfs/2024/Earth_Day.pdf.
- Seeking help with May 17th the Clinton River Water Festival at Oakland University, sharing what we do and how to protect river resources. MFFC was represented in 2024.

Vice President: K. Lipp

Nothing to report.

Treasurer: B. Green

- Expo expenses are coming in.
- April 20 Expo Review meeting.
- Banquet Tickets income coming in.
- Trout Tune Up expense okay.
- Raffle is doing well.

Membership: J. Deputat

- Total members at fiscal year

ending July 31, 2023 is 407.

- 508 renewal letters mailed July 31, 2023.
- 407 current paid members; 47 former members 2022; 54 former members 2021.
- Members surveys mailed to 407 current members. 136 surveys returned (33%).
- As of 3/13/24 400 members have paid their dues, 81% by check.
- Jerry put together our thoughts for membership retention for discussion. We picked 3 items that we as a group thought most important and will go forward with implementing them with the membership.

Events

- Outdoorama: approximately 200 kids tied flies.
- Expo Postcards: approximately 1,900 postcards were handed out between Ultimate Fishing Show and Outdoorama.
- Expo Feedback: people at the Expo commented that they enjoyed the speakers.
- Expo Volunteers: Kevin commented that the membership kicked into overdrive working multiple shifts.
- Member School: will be held at the Ted Scott Campus of WCCC (Haggerty and Ecorse Roads) 20 people signed up so far.
- Possible Event: Grindstone City/Port Hope Sportsmen Club event July 29, 2024.

New Business

- Election Committee: all slots filled except Corresponding Secretary.
- Job Descriptions: Kevin requesting job descriptions from each Board members. Use shared Board Drive.

Old Business

- Zoom Committee Volunteers

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
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Treasurer
Barry Green
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Membership
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Immediate Past President:
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At-Large Directors

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evening.hatch.mffc@gmail.com

Jim DuFresne Production
kidven@aol.com

Webmaster

Sybil Hunter Club Webmaster
sybilsvpemail@gmail.com

needed.

- The Evening Hatch: Sybil looking for an Editor.

Adjournment: 9:14 p.m.



Tuning Up for Trout *Some MFFC Members Actually Went Fishing*



Above Left: Club members Glenn Easterbrook, Bill Yaw, and Tim Law (from Ontario) enjoying the weather at the Trout Tune-Up. Above Right: MFFC members inside the yurt surviving on cream filled donuts, uber strong coffee, salad, and pizza.

Left: John Aukee inspects his waders with new member Tim Law after fishing in the Huron River. Right: Glen Easterbrook and Bill Yaw on their way to check the fishing conditions during Trout Tune-Up.



The President's Message...

Trout & Anglers; Who's Fooling Who?

Welcome to April! April signifies many things. spring, hyacinth, yard clean up. However, at the MFFC April means all things fishing: Member's School, Scout School, Opening Day...and it all starts with the Trout Tune Up.

The weather was just warm enough to stay outside when we all gathered in the yurt, where we were met with cream-filled donuts, coffee, Coke, pizza, fish stories, and each other. Many of us make the half-mile trek through the woods to the dam. Some people even fish. Me? I pontificated the wonders of how the



Sybil Hunter

MFFC was instrumental in stocking fish here and the wonders of how the fish, beat up, finless, and scabby as they looked, were smart enough to know human distance. There is no fishing within 100 feet of the dam. All the trout, full of life and color, stayed meticulously inside that 100-foot area.

While I understand fly fishing is about the hunt and convincing a fish to think — no, know — the gob of feathers and head cement at the end of the line is the fillet mignon of bugs, I am completely convinced this crew of fish was taunting us. We stared over the

bridge as they faced the conveyor belt of microscopic things flowing over the dam. They slurped, they schooled, they HAD to know we were there...and not a single one passed the 100-foot sign.

Okay, maybe ONE. Steve Isgrigg's stream report, when we passed him in the woods, included a fish on the ever-perfect White Wooly. Even without fish, everyone came back to the yurt happy. We even welcomed a few new members at the event, one hailing from Canada, and one from Georgia!

But isn't that what the MFFC is all about? Camaraderie around this wonderful sport that we call fly fishing.

They're Stocked But They're Trout; Catch 'Em If You Can



Michigan DNR workers release a portion of the 1,370 brown trout and 1,400 rainbow trout in the Huron River for the start of a special catch-and-release, flies only week at Proud Lake Recreation Area.



Broodstock trout school up after being released in the Huron River at Proud Lake Recreation Area. The rainbows and browns ranged from 13 to 19 inches.

By the Michigan DNR

Approximately 2,800 adult trout recently were stocked by the Michigan DNR in the Huron River at Proud Lake Recreation Area in Oakland County and Spring Mill Pond at Island Lake Recreation Area in Livingston County). These fish are retired broodstock from Michigan's state fish hatcheries.

The Huron River, downstream of the Proud Lake Dam, was stocked with approximately 1,370 brown trout and 1,400 rainbow trout, all ranging in size from 13 inches to 19 inches.

Spring Mill Pond was stocked with 450 brown trout and 200 rainbow trout, ranging from 13 to 19 inches.

In addition, 400 yearling rainbow trout were stocked in the Huron River and 100 in Spring Mill Pond. Anglers should be aware that some of these yearlings may at first be smaller than the minimum size limit of 8 inches.

Special regulations apply for anglers targeting these trout:

The Huron River at Proud Lake

Recreation Area is closed to fishing Oct. 1 through March 31. April 1-29, anglers are limited to flies only, catch-and-release fishing, with the exception that children under 12 may keep one trout sized between 8 inches and 12 inches.

Spring Mill Pond at Island Lake Recreation Area is closed to fishing March 15-31. April 1-29, anglers are limited to artificial lures only, catch-and-release fishing.

On both bodies of water, beginning April 30, all baits are allowed and anglers may keep up to five trout over 8 inches, but only three over 15 inches.

The Clinton River was also stocked with 640 adult brown trout ranging from 13 to 17 inches. These fish stocked at Riverside Park in Auburn Hills will provide additional angling opportunities beyond the yearling fish that are stocked annually. The Clinton River is open to trout fishing all year and anglers can keep up to five trout over 8 inches, but only three over 15.



Right: MFFC members strung their rods for the first time this year at Proud Lake Recreation Area and then (above) headed out for a special catch-and-release, flies-only season on the Huron River.



Coincidence *Finding Friendship & Camaraderie at Three-Dollar Bridge*

Editor's Note: This is a condensed version of *Coincidence*, a chapter from *A Cast Away in Montana*, Tim Schulz's new book from Lyons Press. An MFFC member, Tim is an engineering professor at Michigan Tech in the U.P. But in his secret life he's a writer, musician, part-time fishing guide, and sluggish skater on North America's slowest and oldest hockey team. The author of *The Habits of Trout—And Other Unsolved Mysteries*, Tim's work has also appeared in *Hatch Magazine*, *The Fly-Fish Journal*, and the November 2022 edition of *The Evening Hatch*.

What a delightful thing a coincidence is!

— Mark Twain

Samuel Clemens was born and then died under the glow of Halley's Comet. Some people call this a fantastic coincidence. But the comet is visible for about five months every 75 or 76 years, and dying at 75 wasn't unusual in Mr. Clemens's time if you made it through birth. I don't suggest this isn't a good story; I just don't think it's as impressive a coincidence as me parking next to two guys from Michigan yesterday at the Three Dollar Bridge.

In the strictest sense of the word, much of what happens in our lives is a coincidence. Automobile accidents are at one extreme, love at first sight at another. Fishing is laden with them. You can't catch a trout unless the time and place it decides to eat coincide with the time and place you cast your fly. Sure, your intuition might tell you where and when these coincidences are most likely to happen, but they are coincidences, nevertheless. There is a good reason that "You should have been here yesterday" is a worn-out cliché among anglers.

My mom would simply say, "Everybody's gotta be somewhere," and then move on. From her perspective, my new friends from Michigan and I happened to pick the same somewhere to be last night.

Scott and Jim are part of the Michigan Fly Fishing Club, and when they got back to their cabin, they told their friends they had met a writer from Michigan who gave them a copy of his book. Two of those friends, Joyce and Al Haxton, sent a text message shortly after Justin Edge and I confirmed our

trip:

Hi Tim. We are staying at Driftwaters Resort. Stop by at 6 for a drink if you'd like. We have an extra bed if you need it this week. Tonight is burger night.



Tim Schulz

I've eaten dinner alone and slept in my truck every night for over a week, so the opportunity to share dinner with like-minded people and sleep on a bed in a cabin sounded pretty darn good to me. At about noon during my trip with Justin today, I told Joyce I'd love to join them, but the sake of everyone else in the restaurant, I'd need

a shower before dinner. I'm as ripe as a three-day-old carp carcass on the Fourth of July, and even by Montana fishing lodge standards, that's bad.

I call home and talk to Roxanne on my way to the Driftwaters Resort. I do this every time I'm on a drive that lasts more than a half-hour, provided, of course, the American Telephone and Telegraph company has a tower in a convenient location.

"When was the last time you had a social conversation with people?" she asks.

"I just spent all day fishing with Justin Edge."

"Did you guys talk much, or did you mostly fish?"

"We mostly fished."

"Look, you haven't been talking with people for a week, so don't go crazy and talk their ears off."

She makes a good point. I crane my head toward the rear-view mirror and realize I've barely

seen my own face during this trip, let alone other peoples.' I haven't been silent like Mahatma Gandhi on a Monday, but I haven't said many words either. Roxanne knows I can talk a lot when I get going, so I promise to keep my chatter somewhere between Gandhi and a livestock auctioneer.

The Driftwaters Resort is a small bar and restaurant with two dozen campsites and a half-dozen cabins. When I pull into the parking area, Joyce and Al are standing on the porch in front of one of the rooms. I worry my visit is an imposition, but they wash all that away with the sort of handshakes and hugs we usually reserve for lifelong friends. Fishing in general — but fly fishing in particular — has a way of forging these connections. To paraphrase John Voelker, it isn't that you see fly fishing as being so important; instead, you see many of our other concerns as equally unimportant and not nearly so much fun.

It's not that you won't find scoun-

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"The book is filled with joy, surprise, and unforgettable anecdotes. I loved it." —Nick Lyons

A Cast Away in Montana

Tim Schulz

Illustrations by Bob White | Foreword by Jerry Dennis

Tim Schulz

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drels in fly fishing the way you find them in politics or other dens of iniquity. They're out there. But often, with enough time, the fishing changes them. In the preface to his book, *Trout Madness*, the same John Voelker suggests we drive the trout fishers into diplomacy or drive the diplomats to trout fishing. "Either way," he says, "we'd be more apt to have more peace: the fishermen-turned-diplomats would hurriedly resolve their differences on the trout stream so that they might return to their fishing, while the diplomats-turned-fishermen would become so absorbed in their new passion they'd never again find time for war."

After I shower, I walk to the lodge's restaurant for dinner. It's a rectangular building fronted by a large rustic porch spacious enough for outdoor dining. Inside the bar, several Moscow Mule-style copper mugs hang from the wall, and the tap line has a bevy of craft beers from local breweries. I order the Gallatin Pale Ale. When the owner, Rachel, comes into the dining area, Joyce gives her a giant hug and brings her to the table to meet me. Rachel wants to make sure I feel at home. In this setting, there isn't any other way to feel.

My mom owned a place like this when I was a kid. Her bar wasn't alongside a world-famous trout river. Instead, it was across the highway from one of the largest railroad-switching yards in the country. Missouri Pacific engineers and brakemen — not Madison River trout anglers — populated her stools. Rugged men in Dickie coveralls, washing down Slim Jims, pork rinds, and pickled eggs with Falstaff beer while teaching me card tricks and bank shots. If I had grown up here, I might have learned roll casts and clinch knots. But either way, I always feel at home in a place like this.

The burger is a great break from the dinners I've been assembling in the Suburban, and the conversation is much livelier than the ones I've been having with myself. I do my best to ration my words, but I'm the new guy, and everyone at the table wants to know my story. Roxanne said I should take a big swig of beer whenever I feel the words, "That reminds me of a story," staging in my chest. I'm on my second pint and thinking about ordering my third.

When we finish dinner, some people gather up their gear and head to the river. I fished all day with Justin, and I've never enjoyed fishing after more than one beer. So when Joyce and Al say they're not planning to fish this evening, I ask Rachel if I can buy a couple of bottles of wine. After dinner, a small group of us go to one of the cabins and do the second-best thing besides fishing. We talk about fishing.

A shared love of fly fishing makes people instant friends. But a shared love of bamboo fly rods makes them extended family. When our conversation turns to cane rods, I retrieve



A brown trout caught at the Three Dollar Bridge.



The Three Dollar Bridge on the Madison River in Montana.

mine from the truck. For the group, the most notable is the eight-foot, six-inch rod built by Ron Barch. One of the tips makes it a five weight — the other makes it a six. Ron designed the rod to replicate a wand that made John Voelker feel like the famous ballet dancer Nijinsky, and "Voelker's Nijinsky" is the inscription on the butt of the rod. I have a Winston built by Jerry Kustich and several Sweetgrass rods designed by Glenn Brackett. Al and Joyce admire them the way godparents admire godchildren.

I suppose there's an argument that bamboo rods should go the way of the hourglass, sundial, icebox, phonograph, telegraph, carbon paper, carburetor, spear, and sword. Graphite rods can do things bamboo can't, and a creative builder can come close to making them do anything bamboo can. Graphite comes from carbon, which is the crucial element in organic matter. Because most of Earth's carbon has biological origins, graphite — like bamboo — was once alive, but it doesn't look and feel that way. Two graphite rods with the same model from the same manufacturer are nearly indistinguishable, like a pair of new pennies stamped at the mint. Bamboo rods of the same model are more like identical twins. Looking closely, you'll notice a freckle or mole in a different place. A group of anglers won't often ask to see all your graphite rods, but they might if your rods are bamboo.

When Scott and Jim return from the river, Joyce and Al retire to their room. Those guys fished past dark, and judging by the stories, the rewards were well worth their efforts. When I bring my sleeping bag in from the truck, they uncork a bottle to celebrate their fishing and help them sleep. I listen to them summarize this day and make plans for the next with all the enthusiasm of third-graders on the first day of summer break.

What about fishing makes grown men and women feel and act like kids again? The answer is common in nearly all unfading writing about fly fishing. All our lives, someone tells us growing old means growing up. As John Hartford sang, they sell us a suit, cut off our hair, and send us to work in tall buildings. But then we find a book where a wordsmith embeds poetry into their prose and permits us to say hello to the sunshine, the dew, and the flowers.

I lay my sleeping bag on the cabin's loft bed and then crawl inside. It's my ninth night on the road and my eighth in Montana. I'm here for two more weeks, but that wonderful feeling that my time in this state is as endless as the sky above has slipped away. My first casts on the Big Hole, the

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Tim Schulz

Continued from page 7

Beaverhead, Poindexter Slough, the Missouri, Rock Creek, and the Madison are all in the mirror now. I know I can go back to any of those rivers. But I also know I can't see them for the first time again.

This bed is more comfortable than the air mattress in the back of the Suburban, and although I've had a long and full day, sleep does not come immediately. Unlike Hemingway's Nick Adams, I've never been blown up at night, at least not literally — but like him, I have a lot of practice at being awake. I don't think about trout streams to occupy myself when this happens. Instead, I think about tying flies. I start with a bare hook, then wrap the thread back to where it hangs over the place where the barb should be. Then I tie in an Antron husk and wind dubbing up to the thorax. Sometimes, I get distracted and have to start over again. On rough nights, I can finish dozens of flies. I don't complete even one on good nights like this one.

The morning at the resort is chaotic but controlled. The cabin I slept in is the breakfast center—the kitchen is stocked with Raisin Bran, Quaker Oats, blueberry muffins, and whatever else people have requested or brought. Some anglers bag lunch for the day, and there's plenty of conversation around the table, but not as casual as last night. Today is a road trip for most, so they pack their cars and double-check their plans. A friendly couple named Boyd and Shirley ask me to donate some books and photos for their Trout Unlimited banquet. I agree, and — with that — pick up another place to stay the next time I'm a trout bum in lower Michigan.

Tim Schulz's new book, *A Cast Away in Montana*, will be released in May by Lyons Press. The 232-page, hardcover title includes 25 illustrations by Bob White and a forward by Jerry Dennis. It will retail for \$29.95.

For those who want to preorder a copy, scan the adjacent QR code to enter Tim's website, where he has links to the various ways it will be available including Amazon and Barnes & Noble.



As the cars and trucks pull from the parking lot, I realize I'm in the middle of a massive goodbye pageant. Joyce gives me two containers of bear spray and makes me promise to wear them when I'm in bear country. She and Al give me a couple of big hugs and then leave me alone in the lot. Bear spray is supposed to make a bear cry, and even though I'm not a bear and haven't discharged a canister, it seems to be working on me. I'm not supposed to meet Bob and Kate until around noon, so I walk to the restaurant to see if I can get breakfast. A Mexican couple sitting on the porch welcomes me in, and when I sit at a table, one of them walks into the kitchen, and the other asks what I'd like to eat. I order a burrito with diced onions, red peppers, scrambled eggs, chorizo, and black beans. I top it with both rojo and verde sauce from two large plastic squeeze bottles. Without a doubt, it's the best meal I've had so far on this trip. "What are the chances," I think, "that a couple from Mexico are sitting here waiting to cook someone a delicious breakfast at the exact time I walk onto this porch?"

What a delightful coincidence.



Michigan Fly Fishing Club
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