

A LOCAL CHAPTER OF
AMERICA'S LEADING NONPROFIT
COLDWATER FISHERIES
CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION

www.Mershon-TU.org

THE M E R S H O N
MUDDLER

◆ *Newsletter of the William B. Mershon Chapter of Trout Unlimited* ◆

1989, 1996 & 1997 RECIPIENT OF THE MICHIGAN COUNCIL TU CHAPTER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Meanders

A few thoughts from
the president
Don Albrecht



Don Albrecht, chapter president

At long last, our winter seems to be breaking up and spring is coming forth. As I write this, we are having our first week of above-freezing temperatures in a long time. Steelhead fishing is firmly taking ahold of all my spare time. It won't be long and there will be bugs on the water.

I hope you have had a chance to take part in some or all of the activities your chapter has sponsored this fall and winter. Starting last fall, we had the AuSable River Cleanup. Then, we had the Gun Club outing, with shooting and hamburgers & brats. In January, there was the Walleye Dinner, with a chance to see some really good fly tyers. To share the bad with the good, we have been struggling with a replacement supplier of fish. We learned that the fish **MUST** be prepared on-site. We have corrected this for the future. In February, we hosted a very successful Grin & Grub in Bay City, with free pizza and a great discussion with Mike Bachelder. March had us serving corned beef & cabbage, then a great presentation by Craig Porter and Dave Smith.

By the way, everyone should visit Craig Porter's website at www.ausabletrout.com because there is a wealth of information about things happening on the AuSable River. It's a great website.

Now, we are heavy into planning our April 17th banquet. It promises to be a great event. We'll finish out our year with a Rifle River restoration project on June 27th, at 2668 Rifle River Trail, West Branch; then a cleanup of the Rifle River on September 19th.

So bottom line, we have LOTS of opportunities to be involved. PLEASE take advantage of these events as a Trout Unlimited member. It's your chapter.

This year our chapter expanded our salmon-in-the-classroom program to two setups—Owosso Elementary and Vassar Middle School. For 2015–16, we are adding a third setup at Akron Fairgrove High School. These are great opportunities to demonstrate the importance of clean water and eco-systems to our kids.

We are also sponsoring three kids to Kids Trout Camp in July. Tuition and a rod/reel combo are provided to each child.

So, with all these activities as well as the major donations we made for river restoration, which we've reported on previously, we continue to be a very vibrant and active chapter.

Remember, all these projects are successful because you, the chapter members, stay involved and take an active interest in our projects. Continue to stay involved and let your leadership know what you think. I'm always looking for thoughts and ideas. Thank you.

Salmon in the Classroom project ready to release salmon smolt into local river

by Don Albrecht, chapter president

Middle school students at Vassar Middle School, under the direction of Mr. Andrew Tallman, are learning about salmon in their classroom. Mr. Tallman received eggs this fall from the DNR and began the process of raising salmon. Our Mershon chapter supplied all the equipment for the classroom. Eggs have hatched, and the salmon are growing. The physical hands-on experience is very exciting for the children. We look forward to this spring, when the salmon smolt will be released into the river. ♦



A Vassar Middle School student tests the water from the salmon-in-the-classroom tank to ensure that the chemical balance is correct.

Fall 2015 Rifle River cleanup date set

by Todd Zwetzig, chapter director

The Mershon Chapter of Trout Unlimited is proud to announce a new work opportunity on the Rifle River. We will be sponsoring a river clean-up on the Rifle River on Saturday, September 19th, 2015.

Mike Bachelder has been gracious enough to allow us to use his home on the bank of the river as our meeting and ending place. Mike is located in Selkirk just south of State Road on Gerald Miller Road. A BBQ at Mike's house will follow the clean-up. Food and drinks will be provided.

Look for more details on the Mershon website and in coming editions of the Muddler. ♦



Just a reminder that our annual spring banquet is just around the corner, on April 17, at Horizons Conference Center in Saginaw. The fun begins at 5 p.m., with delicious hors d'oeuvres, an opportunity to check out the fantastic items to be auctioned off this year, some time to chat with friends and swap stories, and a chance to view the displays that explain what our chapter accomplished last year. Horizons' delicious buffet will follow, along with entertainment by one of Saginaw's finest musical groups, Brush Street. If you haven't heard Mike Brush and Brush Street perform before, trust me, you won't want to miss it. If you're familiar with their music, then you have just one more reason to order your tickets right away. Brush Street is also a great reason to bring some friends along this year.

An interesting and enticing array of items for our raffles and auctions is pouring in, and there will be items you'll want to take home, no doubt about it. From fly rods to humidors, fishing trips to fine dining, you'll be pleased and enticed by both the quantity and quality of this year's offering. And remember, money raised

funds improvement projects on rivers we'll be fishing this summer.

So, come prepared for good food and great entertainment, and come ready for auction items you won't want to miss and fishing stories you can choose to believe at your own risk. If you have questions or need tickets, please call Andy Ludy at 989-326-2652.

A note for collectors: Auction items will include 3 "Wanigas Supreme-Custom Quality Hand Tied" leaders from Art Neumann's Wanigas Rod Company.

A note for serious collectors: Our live auction will include the very last fly rod in inventory at Art Neumann's Wanigas Rod Company. A fiberglass treasure you will want to add to your collection. ♦

Spring fundraising banquet offers a promising lineup

*by Jim Lewis,
banquet chairman*

We hope you plan to join us for our June 27th river work project. Our work this year will be done at 2668 Rifle River Trail, West Branch MI 48661. Like in the past, we will officially begin the event at 10 a.m. and wrap up around 2 p.m.. Lunch and equipment will be provided, but we recommend that volunteers bring their own waders, water bottle, and work gloves.

We've gotten all the permissions we need from the landowners and the MDEQ, and MDNR Natural Rivers permit applications have been submitted.

We'll be installing 350 of double-row tree revetment at the toe of the eroding slope and also planting native shrubs above the bank, between the cabin and the edge of the streambank, so there will be a range of activity levels.

For further information and to register for the event, please contact josh@huronpines.org. ♦

Summer work project update

by Josh Leisen, Huron Pines

Brand-new Zodiac Signs, and a Permanent Horoscope for Flyfishers

by Bob Kren,
Mr. Flyfisherpersonguy and
Astrolonomer*

Hey!, all you superstition addicts, the Zodiac has changed since it was dreamed up over thirty centuries ago. Mr. Sun and Ms. Earth have conspired, through mean old Mr. Gravity and a process called “precession,” plus Internet dating, to change the apparent position of the Sun against its background of stars (which you can’t see in the glare of daylight, but it’s there) to produce a new!, improved! set of signs and dates for the Zodiac. You can be the first on your block to impress your friends, and especially your enemies, with your newfound knowledge of the nonsense of Astrology. Hang onto your shorts, it’s gonna be a bumpy ride.

First, you’ll notice that ALL THE DATES HAVE CHANGED: for instance, I used to be a Scorpio, but now I’m Virgo. Which is oddly dissatisfying, but that’s the feeling all us newly-minted Virgos have. Also, SOME DATES OVERLAP**. So, if you were born on March 11, you have a choice, I guess, of living under either one or another sign (or both, and in this case that would make you what, an “Aquariscus,” or a “Piscarius”?). Real live astrologers get around this by insisting that you buy a new horoscope every year. Save your money, and spend it on gear.

Capricorn: *January 20–February 16 (formerly Dec 22–Jan 19).*

Your thinking and actions are guided by the cold weather, Goats. You dress warmly even in Summer. Get somebody to buy you a set of Patagonia pj’s, to go with your other snuggies, for your b’day.

Aquarius: *February 16–March 11 (formerly Jan 20–Feb 18).*

The worst part of winter. Tie!, tie!, tie! And tie some more. Special indications for tying lots of flies to give away, especially to a certain Virgo, who will go nameless (see above, hint hint).

Pisces: *March 11–April 18 (formerly Feb 19–Mar 20).*

You’d think that being born a Fish would give you an advantage. You know better. You may occasionally smell like a fish, but that’s where it ends. Cure the hurt by letting a loved one buy you something outlandishly expensive but marginally useful, like a bamboo flyrod.

Aries: *April 18–May 13 (formerly Mar 21–Apr 19).*

You Rams are now noted for stability, persistence, and logic, and staying true to traditions, while you express yourself in a sometimes clumsy way. Buy yourself a wading staff. Better make that two.

Taurus: *May 13–21 (formerly Apr 20–May 20).*

Enough with the “Bull” jokes! Tauri are no worse in a china shop than, say, a t. Rex or a 747. Buy yourself a nice leather hat, and hope it’s not a relative, or at least not a close one.

Gemini: *June 21–July 20 (formerly May 21–Jun 21).*

Ah, that split personality, that allows half of you to be sensitive, impulsive and sometimes unrestrained, while the other half can defend the weak with courtesy, all the while being impressionable and vulnerable. A straitjacket fishing vest with lots of pocketsful of neat but unreachable stuff sounds reasonable as a birthday present.

Cancer: *July 20–10 (formerly Jun 22–Jul 22).*

Well, Crab, you believe your strong armor will protect you from the cruelty and hypocrisy of the world. Good luck on that. Just keep running sideways, and try not to bash into things. Wearing radial-ply tires as onstream bumpers may help.

Leo: *August 10–September 16 (formerly Jul 23–Aug 22).*

Along with high social position, you are a font of good reputation, decency and outspokenness, and you shine and make a strong presence wherever

you go. You probably give unwanted and unnecessary advice during a good hatch. Take some casting lessons from John van Dalen—that'll make you humble.

Virgo: *September 16–October 30 (formerly Aug 23–Sept 22).*

You're just like I, you poor soul. We know more than the other zodiac signs what to avoid and what is to be achieved in order to fulfill our aspirations. We are first to perceive any imbalance, and with skill and courage, when possible, we move to restore balance. Have somebody buy you a good pair of studded wading boots.

Libra: *October 30–November 23 (formerly Sept 23–Oct 23).* Librans are selective and leery, clarifying what they take and what they leave in life. "Catch and release" is their mantra, except with perch and walleye. Treat yourself to a good fish supper, tilapia maybe.

Scorpio: *November 23–November 29 (formerly Oct 24–Nov 21).*

Only seven days! Short, short, short, poor Scorpios, ebullient and extroverted. You are free spirits and will give your opinion even if hurts your fellows. You are velvet Rebels who show insensitivity to what happens next to you. I'm glad I'm

not one of you !@@holes anymore. Go away! You don't deserve a gift!

Ophiuchus: *November 29–Dec 17* (Yep, this one is new, and it's a hefty baby. Means "serpent bearer.") Ever fish a serpent fly? Easy to tie, effective after dark, slithered over water, like a swimming baby snake: diamond-shaped foam head over hackle beard, thin 6-inch leather tail.***. Ophiuchians have an inclination towards complication rather than simplification of situations. You fit the role of the therapist and the analyzer of difficult psychological circumstances. So, go over to Bo's and buy yourself something extravagant, because there's no rule that says that your own "difficult psychological circumstances" won't respond well to shopping.

Sagittarius: *December 17–Jan 20 (formerly Nov 22–Dec 21).* You are not afraid of the consequences of large doses of your own ambition, and dollops of impulsivity. Both conformism and formalism spoil the image of the pioneer person you wish to be. Go fishing in South America? – do it! It's the right time of year, and impulsiveness rules!

And there you have the latest mumbo-jumbo hiding behind a bunch of numbers, trying to look legitimate. My advice, not from the stars but from common sense, is "Stay healthy and have fun," every one of you. Except maybe the new Scorpios. ♦

** I taught a course "Beyond the Solar System" at UM-Flint for six years. Honest, I did.*

*** There ain't no arguing with the Stars and Planets. Go figure. Stars don't lie. People do.*

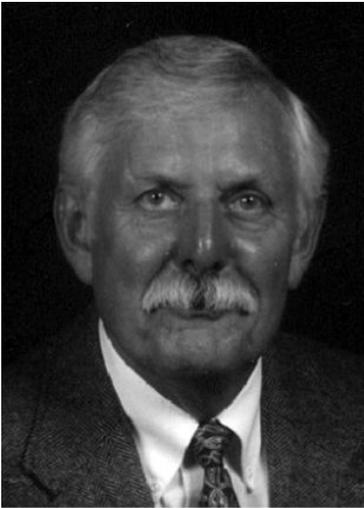
**** Caught a fairly large 'bow after dark on one of these. Not a lie.*



Mershon chapter loses beloved trailblazer, Nellie Wing

by Jac Ford, past-president

Trout Unlimited lost a great friend and supporter earlier this year. What follows are some of the fond memories of this gentle man, who paved the way for our chapter and Trout Unlimited's efforts to preserve and protect our cold-water fisheries.



Our chapter began its long journey to be the outstanding leader in Trout Unlimited it is today because of people like Nellie Wing. Nellie was involved in our chapter during its first decade. This time period was critical to our development. Nellie became president near the end of the first decade, and like many others from that era, he was the true ground breaker for the Wm. B. Mershon Chapter.

If you can imagine, the chapter had no bylaws, no mailing lists, no membership, and the banquets were a dream for the future. This was a difficult time for our chapter. It took much thought, dedication and perseverance. We still have many of these great leaders around, and we are grateful for that. Nellie Wing, along with others, such as Art Neumann, Bill Priest, Bob Nelson, Bill Kessel, and Win Case, were true ground breakers for our organization.

Nellie was a very upbeat person. Pleasant and considerate to be around, he welcomed new friendships and prompted them to join Trout Unlimited. Nellie was very much a people person and an adroit fly fisherman.

Nellie would be on the river weekly. He had a routine with his buddy, Bill Kessel.

They were a team that was easily recognized by their larger-than-life smile. In the olden days, it was customary to have a beer or two while enjoying your shore lunch. That was the way it was back then—rivers could almost be described by “one-beer bend,” then, “two-beer bend,” and so on down the river. Fishing was and is a very social event, and Nellie fit right in in that environment. It was fly fishing at its best. Seeing Nellie on the river was an awesome event because we recognized the true love for the sport that he possessed.

But, Nellie carried his love for fishing a giant step further—his love for Trout Unlimited was truly admired, as well. He was a trooper working to help our chapter on its long journey and became president to show his dedication and love for our great chapter.

Nellie served fly fishing and our chapter very well. Thank You, Nellie.

Let's all pause for a moment of silence for a man who was significant to our chapter's existence, and to his family and friends whom he loved so much. ♦

Remembering Nellie: thanks for the memories

by Robert E. Nelson, D.D.S., P.C., chapter president from 1968-1969

Because of Trout unlimited, Nellie was one of the first people I met when I came to Saginaw in 1963 (52 yrs ago). We had a large fishing fraternity of dedicated trout fishermen in Saginaw with a wonderful camaraderie that had no social or economic

boundaries. There was a special energy that rose from a deep love of the sport, energized by the common goal of Trout Unlimited and fueled by the vision and enthusiastic activities of Art Neumann and his little shop on Sheridan. Saginaw had many of the best qualities of a new frontier in those days, which in a sense it was. We were on the frontlines, fighting for survival—of the sport that touched the soul of us all. As Art put it, “What is good for trout is good for the trout fisherman.” It was in this atmosphere that I rapidly made so many good friends, including Nellie. Our families have

been close ever since. So many of us did as much as we could for TU and kept swinging, even though the battle seemed almost insurmountable. I still remember Vince Marinaro holding court at Bill Priest's cabin on the mainstream, telling us that we weren't going to win. He had fought the good fight in Pennsylvania and lost—the power of eminent domain etc.. As much respect as we had for Vince, we didn't buy his appraisal and continued to do our best, with the optimistic confidence of pre-ordained winners. It was the kind of fight that

(see *Nellie*, page 9)

My best fishing buddy, Nellie Wing, in the 1960's

by Bill Kessel, a fellow angler

We were both young, in our late-20's when we began a fishing friendship. The times were less restrictive then, and you could catch and keep fish caught anywhere on the Au Sable Rivers. The fishing limit was five trout over ten inches. Beginning in the spring of 1958, we would drive to Keystone or Whirlpool Road, suit up in waders and fishing vest, assemble our Neumann bamboo rods, and slip into the river. One would fish from Whirlpool downstream, and the other got in above River at the High Bank and got out at the Whirlpool. Two to three hours of fish activity, warm sun on the water, and scenery only found on the Mainstream filled the afternoon hours. Dry-fly fishing totally encompassed our lives. Any opportunity to get out of Saginaw, we made the two-hour drive to the Mainstream. Even after work, to fish a couple of hours into the dark, was well worth the long trip to the river and the drive back to Saginaw.

We planned a week's outing with our wives in June 1961 to camp above the Whirlpool for a week. Then, you could drive down Keystone Road and take the long "dirt road," winding its way along the bank, ending above the Whirlpool. We pitched two tents, some air mattresses, and sleeping bags to make a comfortable stay. We cooked breakfast in the a.m., frying bacon and eggs over the fire and toasting the bread over the fire. A pot of steaming coffee, made from cold stream water, brought great conversation, as we were sitting on the bank overlooking the Whirlpool and the sun ascended on us. Life

didn't get any better than that. Mid-day, we spread a blanket on the lower bank, a few feet above the swirling waters of the Au Sable, as the river made a bend towards the Whirlpool itself, and played cards to fill the afternoon activity. Late afternoon, we built a campfire to cook our supper, sipping a glass of wine or two, as we watched the cook prepare supper. Near dark, as the drake flies began to emerge, we "suited up" and began the evening fish. About 9:30 p.m., we returned with a couple of nice trout each, to put in the cooler for the next night's dinner. We repeated this process for a week, with an occasional trip into Grayling to Glen's Market to restock our food needs. The dirt road from Keystone was closed a year later, so the access to the great location we had was "no more."

Nellie and I purchased a John Hinkle-built, 24-foot Au Sable Long Boat, with swivel seats and a live well under the front seat. With both of us working for Wiechmann's Department Store, we coordinated our day off as Thursday each week. Retail was a lot of hours, with one night and Saturdays in the schedule; the Thursday off was really appreciated. Either I or Nellie would pick one another up about 8 a.m. at our homes. A cup of hot, steaming Bull Shot (consume and vodka) would get the conversation going, as we began the two-hour trek North. The boat was kept on a rack at Dave Wyss's (Jim Wakeley's place) by Wakeley Bridge. A "Gerry built" trailer, with one wheel bigger than the other, would hold our boat as we drove along M 72 to Louis Landing to launch the boat. The air was still crisp about 10:30 a.m., but I was prepared for this, as I poured a Bloody Mary (Mr. T and vodka) into a cup each for Nellie and me. As the sun warmed the river, an occasional fish would make a ring on the water ahead of us. We had floated so many times, we knew the best "holes," as

we passed Dan Babbit's (a legend name on the River) or Wa Wa Sum, high on the bank where the Bay City Hottentots gathered the first weekend in May each year. As you steered to the left side of the island above Stephan Bridge, you could see the trout darting out from the log jam.

Below the Stephan Bridge, we would pull the boat over to the bank and dock by Bill Meagher's. Bill had a continuous pipe of cold well water flowing on his property. It tasted great, and we filled the coffee pot to put on the fire for an after lunch drink. A couple of cold beers were opened, as we prepared lunch—brats or two large ground beef patties on the small grill we carried in the boat, as well as some heated-up baked beans. We toasted some garlic bread on the grill, too. A few chocolate brownies to go with the coffee finished the outing. Another few hours of casting from the slowly moving boat filled the afternoon. Twin Pines, Don Woomer's, Trafeh Lodge, Geo. Griffiths, were land marks enroute to the finish of our trip to Wakeley Bridge. We took the Boat out of the river and loaded our cooler and gear in the car, as we "wound up" another great day on the Au Sable River. On the two-hour trip to Saginaw, we recanted the highlights of our trip and looked forward to the next Thursday.

Nellie passed away a couple of weeks ago. I am age 82 as I write this letter. Time goes on, everything changes, but the MEMORIES OF BILL AND NELLIE FISHING TOGETHER, can NEVER BE TAKEN AWAY. ♦



Pay It Forward

WILLIAM B. MERSHON CHAPTER OF TROUT UNLIMITED

52nd Annual Spring Fundraising Banquet

Friday, April 17, 2015

HORIZONS CONFERENCE CENTER

6200 State Street, Saginaw

5:00 p.m. \$ Hors d'oeuvres, as well as prize-gazing and generous bidding.

7:00 p.m. \$ Buffet dinner, beer and wine included

Entertainment by:

Brush Street

Live auction, silent auction, bucket and card raffles, 50/50!

All proceeds designated for the protection and preservation of the cold-water fisheries of the Au Sable and Rifle Rivers.

Make your reservations now—seating is limited!

What does TU mean to me?

by Capt. Todd Zwetzig,
Mershon chapter director

Fly fishing has been a part of my life, since I was a kid. For the past 15 years it has also been part of my livelihood. I have guided on the Pere Marquette, Manistee, AuSable, and Tittabawassee rivers as well as Saginaw Bay and Lake Huron. I currently focus primarily on the Ausable from the “Holy Waters” to Lake Huron and everything in between. For me, fly fishing has evolved from a “hobby” into a way of life.

It wasn't until my daughter came into my life that I realized what fly fishing, our rivers, and TU have meant to me. I realized it had nothing to do at all with the catching of fish, but the experiences, closeness to nature, and friendships it fosters. Thoreau said it best when he stated "Many men go fishing all of their lives without knowing that it is not fish they are after." I realized this is something that one needs to experience on their own, to appreciate, and began to see the importance of why I need to preserve this for my daughter.

After I had my second child, I felt it was time to become actively involved in the preservation of our resource, not only for them, but for every

generation to come. Being a guide and now a director for the Mershon chapter gives me a unique opportunity to share the importance of TU with a variety of people and encourage them to get involved.

As far as sharing the fly fishing experience with my daughter and son, I am happy to say that at age 7 and 5 they have already started to create their own memories, chasing trout with a fly rod. Hopefully, one day they will be able to share this experience and importance of TU with their children as long as we continue to protect this valuable resource. ♦

Nellie, *continued from page 6*

engendered a classic beauty because of the all-inclusive, unselfish and cooperative nature of the battle of David against Goliath. If we lost, it wouldn't be for lack of trying. As you all know, we won!

In the process, Nellie became an early president of the Mershon chapter, as evidence of his personal concerns. The TU Spring banquet was the bona fide kick-off for the opening of trout season and was held within days of the opener to accommodate fishermen from out of the area and state, so they could meet and rub shoulders with the celebrities (trout fishing authors and speakers, DNR hierarchy, politicians, and fishing friends). The Spring banquet was a vibrant part of our fight for clean water, and the president was central to the event.

In those years Nellie was one of the fortunate, relatively few who had an AuSable river boat that he kept at Jim Wakely's, he and knew what to do

with it. On occasion, we fished together, leaving Saginaw after work, fishing the Hendrickson spinner fall or Hex hatch until the late hours of night, and driving back to Saginaw for work the next morning. As serious trout fishermen, we did a lot of that in those days. Looking back, I can see that many of us were warriors, not only in pursuit of trout, but also in defense of their survival.

Nellie, like so many other trout fishermen I came to know, was a gentleman. He was also a gentle man, with a quick smile, who was a pleasure to be with. I can't ever remember him saying a negative thing.

It would take an inveterate trout fisherman to appreciate the wide variety of adventurous memories we accumulated, such as the time Nellie and I and Bill Priest drove to the PM for steelhead and had to cut our way out of the Baldwin campground the next morning. We had slept through heavy winds and a tornado that wrecked Baldwin. We finally cut our way through to the High Banks for

heavy water and more hooked fish than a man has a right to enjoy. I finally landed one because I was willing to swim for it.

And another time, one night about 1:30 a.m., after some good Hex fishing, we stopped in West Branch at the bowling alley for a hamburger and cup of coffee. As we got in the car, it started to pour—buckets. Not far down the new expressway through the driving rain, the headlights picked up a weird apparition. Nelly exclaimed “Did you see what I saw?!!!” I did, and we had a lively conversation. I probably won't speak of the strange experience again because Nellie was the only other witness, and I would like to maintain some credibility.

When I heard Nellie was no longer with us, my mind went into a sort of lockdown because it was hard to imagine a world without Nellie. Some people are like that.

Rest easy, old friend,
Bob

Opening Day

by Snarly Windknot

By way of introduction to Snarly Windknot, you need to know he is a little rough around the edges and writes poetry with a rather dull pencil, but he fishes from the heart and loves time on the river as much as anyone. Here is his take on opening day, which usually finds him at Comins Flats.

I stumble out of bed and trip over the dog.
It's only 4 a.m.; I was sleepin' like a log.
But this, my friend, is the price you pay
to be first in the river on opening day.

I stuff my lunch into a paper sack,
put some cookies in my pocket for a mid-day snack.
I fill my thermos with coffee, take a cup to go,
then I sneak some more cookies—my wife won't know.

I jump in the truck with all of my gear.
It's 4:45, I've got to get out of here.
I'm still half asleep, and I drive in a daze,
then I miss my turn and have to backtrack a ways.

When I get to the river, it's still plenty dark,
but there's so many guys waitin' there's no place to park.
I finish off the cookies, my coffee's all gone.
I decide to eat lunch to save time later on.

Then, I get out of my truck and get my waders on,
so I'll be ready to go at the first crack of dawn.
I walk down to the bank to check out the flow.
I'm bein' real careful, movin' real slow.

But I slip on a rock and trip and fall in
right at that deep hole—I'm up to my chin.
My waders fill quickly with water and muck.
I remember my wader belt's back in the truck.

I try usin' my rod in place of my staff
but it's not so sturdy, and I break it in half.
As I flail and I flounder, my hat floats away.
I throw my rod after it, it's broke anyway.

So, I get to the bank and pull myself out,
and while I'm drainin' my waders, out swims a trout.
The guys are all laughin', and I hear someone say:
"Geez Snarly, you got the first trout of the day!"

I'm shiverin' and cold, and my coffee's all gone,
so I throw the trout in my creel and head'er for home.
The lesson is sometimes it simply don't pay
to be the first in the river on opening day.

Trout fishing started much different for me than most people. Up until five years ago, I had never seen a trout, fly rod, or fly in my life. One day, a good friend from college, Chris Myers, asked if I wanted to go to a fly-tying class with him. I figured it would be a great way to spend some time together and also learn something new. But I didn't know what I was getting into.

It was very interesting going through the class and learning something that I never dreamed of learning, but it was also very confusing. I had no idea what I was tying, how it was used, or what most of the people were talking about, but Jac Ford's stories made me want to try it even more. After the class, I had a pile of flies and nothing to use them on. Luckily, my wife bought me my first fly rod for salmon fishing in the fall. Now, she is probably regretting this decision, since I now have a closet full of fly-fishing equipment and am always looking for more. That year, I hooked and landed my first salmon on a fly rod and have been hooked ever since.

To me, TU is about gathering with friends to share our passion for fly fishing and learning something new. I believe Trout Unlimited is more about gathering people with the same passion of fly fishing than it is about the trout. I don't want to downplay that great activities TU does, like trout stream restoration and protection, but fly fishing has evolved greatly over the years from just fishing for trout to fishing for every species of fish. No matter what you fish for at TU, you find others who share your passion or can teach others who are looking for something else to fish for. The passion of others is what drew me and continues to draw me to fly fishing and to actively participate in TU. After five years, I couldn't think of my life without it. ♦

What does TU mean to me?

*by Andy Ludy,
chapter director*

Saginaw Township Community Education offers new class for youth, taught by Merhson chapter members

Fly Fishing Basics for Youth, Ages 12 & Up NEW!

Do you love to fish and want to learn more about fly fishing our great Michigan streams and rivers? Then join us for an introduction into fly fishing and fly tying and so much more. Experienced fishermen Jac Ford, Don Meyer and Lou Albosta will demonstrate fly casting and fly tying. Also explained will be how to get involved in our local Trout Unlimited chapter and how to use social media to find local events and resources. The William B. Mershon Chapter is providing this clinic. All registrants will receive a free youth membership to Trout Unlimited if they desire to join.

Instructor: Jac Ford

Register by May 8.

Location:	Heritage High School	Day(s):	Wednesday
Class Fee:	\$10	Date(s):	May 20
Min/Max:	10/25	Time:	5 - 7 PM

www.celighthouse.org * 989-797-1847 * Spring 2015 Children's Classes

How to tie the “Grumpy Muppet” streamer

by Jac Ford, chapter past-president

Mike Schmidt invented a new streamer recently, and passed it on through video on Facebook. Interesting how streamers and other flies evolve.

I have been guiding Lee Adams and Mark Babiy for twenty-three years. Back in the early nineties, Mark was tying for the Pere Marquette Lodge, then Johnson’s Lodge, while working his way through college. Lee Adams invited me to fish with him on the Muskegon in the mid-nineties and had hired John Klousing as guide. That day, the “Snow Puppy” streamer, unnamed at the time, boated six browns for me over twenty inches. So over the years, there’s been a fly-tying streamer connection.

Babiy has grown to be an adroit fly tier and streamer geek. So, when the three of us got together for our annual Steelhead fishing recently, the hair, feathers, and tails were flying, to say the least. Mark started tying a “Grumpy Muppet,” which looked awesome and was very predatory looking. Although Mark seldom talks, he shared how this streamer evolved.

“Oh, I think it’s a Mike Schmidt streamer” Mike was a recent guest of the 20-Plus Streamer club and owns the Anglers Choice fly tying business. Just another interesting turn of events that occurs with this trio the past two decades.

Check this streamer out, then attach it to your leader. It will fish. Oh, and if you’re not a tier, get some from The AuSable Angler, in Mio, or from Orvis. Then get out on the river to catch your next Brown over twenty inches. ♦



Step 1: wrap the hook and tie in the streamer hair, extending it out the back of the hook.



Step 2: tie in UV Polar Chennile on the back of the hook, then wrap forward and tie in place.



Step 3: tie in two rubber legs, so they have ends on both sides.



Step 4: tie in a few strands of Flashabou.



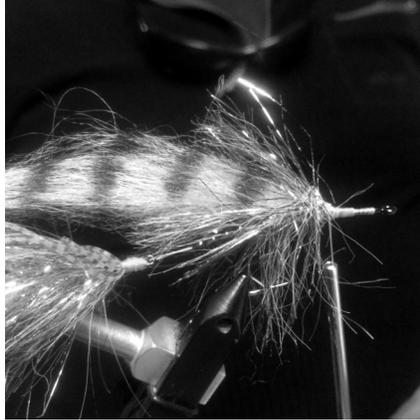
Step 5: whip finish and cover the head with Hard As Nails.



The finished tail section.



Step 6: using 19-strand Beadalon, install wire through the head, then string on four beads and attach the wire with the thread to the back of a second hook above its barb.



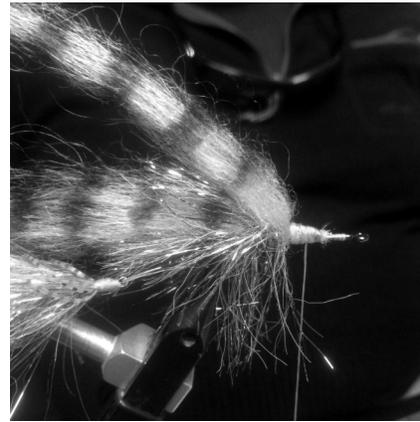
Step 9: tie in Polar Chenille, wind 1/4 inch, and tie off.



Step 12: tie in a Mallard wing feather on each side.



Step 7: tie in more Palmer Chenille above the barb of the hook, then wind forward six turns or 1/4 inch. Cut the chenille off after tying in place.



Step 10: tie in another wing with streamer hair.



Step 13: tie in Senyo's Lazer Dub on the top and bottom. Then, pull back and wind a bunch of thread in front of the dubbing to ensure that they hold.



Step 8: tie streamer hair the proper length to the end of the back of the hook and make a Barr effect with a permanent marker.



Step 11: tie in two legs on each side.



The finished streamer, "Fuzzy Muppet," by Mike Schmidt of Anglers Choice, tied by Mark Babiy.

Ode to old guys

by David Oeming, chapter director

Sometimes, while driving up north, I think about the Old Guys. Uncles, lineal relatives, men who took me fishing, and whom I took fishing when they no longer could go out alone. I learned from these men: how to handle equipment, tie on a fly, clean my catch, read a stream, and many other details about the enterprise of finding and catching a fish. More importantly, though, I learned how to be an Old Guy.

Young men and women crave many things (usually forbidden, and therefore, craved the more). Rookies would not admit it, but positive attention from a respected older person is high on that list. Sharing time and experience with an expert fisherman means inclusion in the order, and opportunities for learning and practice that cannot be garnered on one's own. We know this, and try to produce this experience with formal activities such as fish camp, take-a-kid-fishing trips, and buying fishing gear for children and grandchildren. These things are necessary because the attention span of a youngster approximates that of a kitten. The real benefit of these activities, though, is to match rookies with Old Guys, to pass on the lore.

Uncle Joe carried his battered four-piece glass rod, Heddon reel, patches with waders attached, and fly vest of indeterminate age in the trunk of his Buick, ready for deployment at any stream he might cross. A fishing trip with Uncle Joe required faith that his Electra convertible would fit down the two-tracks he had decided would lead to unfished waters in the U.P. and obscure tributaries of the Au Sable system. I don't recall if we caught many fish, but I do remember conversations about business, engineering, people, sports, and other worldly matters. The fishing was

important, of course, but more important was my opportunity to hear Uncle Joe's memories and stories.

Joe has been gone these many years. I remember our last trip when he was feeble, with barely enough strength to totter down to the upper North Branch in those same threadbare waders. I probably shouldn't have done it, but I helped him down the path to the river and led (even dragged) him to a spot where he could throw a fly. Joe complained he wasn't able to do it, but we persisted until he caught a small brook trout. We left the river after that, satisfied: Uncle Joe because he was still able to catch a trout on a fly, and me because I was able to spend time with and learn from an Old Guy.

All Michigan trout are not in streams and rivers, pursued by fishermen with fly gear. Many small lakes in Michigan are stocked with splake, browns, rainbows, and lake trout. Flies are irrelevant to this put-and-take harvest; the fish stay in deep water, and respond only to speed, color, flash, and food. The late pharmacist, Old Guy, and piscator *extraordinaire*, Art Dengler, developed a method to troll with sewn shiners for these trout. As a young man, I was fortunate enough to be admitted as one of his few acolytes. Art taught us an entirely different way to think about fishing for trout, about gear that did not involve light fly rods and matching lines, and even about enjoying a grilled splake dinner preceded by the English gin martinis much favored by our mentor. Without Art Dengler's tutelage, I would have no knowledge or appreciation of his iconic way to catch trout in a lake.

Other Old Guys have informed my trout fishing history and experience. I spent fine evenings with my dad on many rivers. My Uncle Jack and I went on after-work trips for years, punctuated with arguments about the

Bill of Rights, the worth of expert witness testimony, the place of judges in our society (Jack's position was that, unless they agreed with him, their authority should be ignored), and, occasionally, where the fishing might be good that evening. Uncle Arnold, butcher by trade, showed me how to cut meat, and how to fish a small stream like Big Creek. Others informed my experience about building and maintaining a cabin on the river, putting in river structure, and measuring who might be a good fishing companion (and who clearly shouldn't be). All of these Old Guys are venerated, and remembered fondly.

Late last spring, I returned from a successful evening on the Rifle to find a young man packing gear into his car, parked next to mine. A conversation ensued, and he advised that he and his young family were camped at a lake near the upper river. He had recently started fly-fishing on his own, and was interested in my gear, and methods for fishing on rivers. I explained leaders, tippets, and knots for joining the system together. He was very serious, and under the glow of his lantern, I gave him a few of my flies, tapered leaders, and tippet spools. I also gave him the two fish I had kept, to prove to his wife and small son that trout fishing, in fact, could produce dinner. He asked if I would be fishing there again, and upon my affirmative response said he would look forward to seeing me on the river. We parted amicably, he to his family camp, and I back to home and work.

I guess I've become an Old Guy. If so, I believe I certainly am in good company. ♦

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Officers

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Don Albrecht
989-245-5819
Albrecht.don@sbcglobal.net

Vice-President

Donald Meyer
642-9093
donalddmeyer@aol.com

Treasurer

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642-5286
dsbec53@chartermi.net

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989-793-6712
fishingkris@yahoo.com

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781-0997 (H/FAX)
canglers@aol.com

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ajludy@gmail.com
wbmershontu@gmail.com

Directors

Joe Albosta
albostaj@gmail.com

Lisa Kelly
989-450-9721
lisa.undergroundgirl@gmail.com

Jim Lewis
790-3151 (H), 989-751-0344 (C)
jim_lewis@chartermi.net

Chris Myers
989-332-0625
crcasemyers@gmail.com

David Oeming
989-692-0322
djoeming@sbcglobal.net

Ralph Omness
989-280-0316 (C)
k8nk1@aol.com

Nick Thomas
989-450-6869
nickthomas8@hotmail.com

Todd Zwetzig
989-225-2478
toddzwetzig@gmail.com

Advisors

Bill Adams
989-860-2090

Bo Brines
989-832-4100 (W)
989-832-9528 (H)
bo@littletforks.com

Joe Bula
781-2047 (H)
joenette@mybluelight.com

David Cozad
benthos1@aol.com
989-684-7947

David Fisher
781-4932 (H), 792-9641 (W)
djfisher@smithbovill.com

Carl Hubinger
642-5487 (H)
ccarlhubinger@msn.com

Howard N. Johnson
753-6373
hnjohnson@aol.com

Risty Kalivas
790-8614 (H)
ristydo@aol.com

Rich Kemerer

Bob Kren
810 659-8470
rmkren@umflint.edu

Paul Morand
989-893-7132
pmorand@hotmail.com

Art C. Neumann
777-0484 (H)

Christopher J. Radke
249-6420 (H)
cradke@shinnerscook.com

Jake Shiners
781-3003 (H), 752-7700 (W)
shiners@mistequaygroup.com

Robb Smith
989-893-3792 (h)
989-233-1922 (cell)
rssmithsr@chartermi.net

Bob Spence
799-6617 (H)
rsspe2@chartermi.net

Greg Stansbury
751-3925 (H/FAX)
papertube@aol.com

Newsletter Layout

Teri Skidmore
781-0040
TeriSkidz@gmail.com

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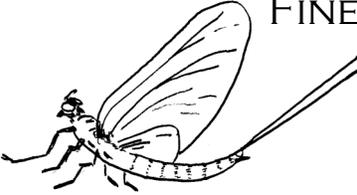
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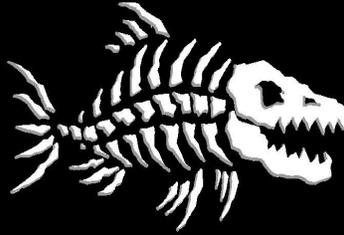
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