



*The Evening*

# Hatch

THE NEWSLETTER of the MICHIGAN FLY FISHING CLUB

March 2010

## Scribner's offering: A master class in knots and knot testing

Security. Stability. Strength.

They're words you'd normally expect to hear in a TV commercial about a bank. Instead, they were the focus of Capt. Chuck Scribner's presentation to MFFC members at the club's Feb. 3 meeting. His presentation was entitled "Testing Your Knots! How it can make a difference in landing a fish of a lifetime."

"Good fishermen land more fish on good knots. Good fishermen get

better when they test their knots," Scribner said.

It was enthralling to anyone who's felt the tell-tale "ping" when a good-sized fish has freed itself from the end of the line and shook one's head while examining the pig-tailed tippet where the knot once was ... which meant virtually everyone in the room.

Scribner began his presentation defining the three terms. "Security is how the knot will hold up under normal circumstances. Stability is how it will hold up under abnormal circumstances. Strength is how much

*Continued on next page*

## UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

**March 10** (*Note: 2<sup>nd</sup> Wed.*)

**Speaker: Brad Petzke**  
**Topic: Fly Fishing the U.P.**  
Clarenceville Middle School  
7:30 p.m.

**March 17**

**MFFC Board Meeting**  
Clarenceville Middle School  
7:30 p.m.

**March 13-14**

**Midwest Fly Fishing Expo**  
Macomb Community College  
Sports & Expo Center  
14500 E. 12 Mile Rd., Warren

**March 24** (*Note: 4<sup>th</sup> Wed.*)

**Activity Meeting**  
**Featured Tier: Ray Geitka**  
Clarenceville Middle School  
7:30 p.m.

**April 3**

**Trout Tune-Up**  
Walled Lake Outdoor Ed. Ctr.  
The Yurt, 3577 Sleeth Ct.  
Commerce Township  
8 a.m.-5 p.m.

**April 7**

**Club Elections**  
**Speaker: Eric Stroup**  
**Topic: To be announced**  
Clarenceville Middle School  
7:30 p.m.

## *For the well-dressed Midwest Fly Fishing Expo volunteer ...*

*Jim Kennedy (right) and Ken Gribble (in line behind Jim) pick up their 2010 Midwest Fly Fishing Expo shirts from Cindy Center and Tom Gualdoni. It means that the annual Expo is almost here.*





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## Need a nametag? Here's how to get one

A "Nametag Sign-up Sheet" is available on the front table at most club meetings. Simply print your name as you want it to appear and put \$5 in the attached envelope. Nametag guru Paul DeJohn will see that your nametag is put on that same front table within 30 days.



*Capt. Chuck Scribner (left) and Eric Center demonstrate knot and line strength at the Feb. 3 meeting.*

## Scribner's offering: A master class in knots and knot testing

*Continued from previous page*

the knot weakens the material – the mono or fluorocarbon – when it's tied." Knowing these characteristics for the knots you tie and the material you use, can increase your sense of confidence when you have to fight a big fish.

It helps to know why knots fail, too.

According to Scribner, they fail if "you tie them poorly, use a poor choice of line, use the wrong knot for jobs or use old, weakened material." A bad knot is one that's "tied carelessly and is sloppily trimmed – one where you trimmed the tag end too close to the knot, for example. A bad knot is one that slips and one that's tied from material weakened by exposure to bug spray or too much sun."

He offered a few simple steps to improve one's knot confidence. "Buy new mono every year and date your spools. Practice tying your knots at home. Always moisten your knots.

Never jerk your knots tight; tighten them with slow steady pressure. Re-tie your knots and leaders often." Adopting these practices is "your insurance policy for when you have a big fish on."

Of all the knots employed by fly fishers, Scribner does have a favorite, the five-turn double clinch knot. "In 35 years, I've never had that knot fail," he said.

While the presentation was liberally sprinkled with that kind of usable advice, Scribner devoted much time to describing and demonstrating his methodology for testing various materials and knots. It is scientific, intense and takes a bit of time, but its effects on the fisher can be profound, he said. "You gain confidence. You understand what your line and knots can withstand. You know what kind of pressure you can apply to the fish. You improve your landing ratio.

"Remember," he said, "your connection to the fish is the line you use and the line is only as good as the knot you've tied and tested."

## MFFC members embrace Project Healing Waters

by Mike Matuszewski

When more than a dozen Michigan Fly Fishing Club volunteers gathered at the John Dingell Veterans Administration Hospital in Detroit on Jan. 6 for the club's inaugural Project Healing Waters session, they had no idea what to expect.

The lack of activity outside the facility was misleading. "I was surprised at how little activity was going on outside the building and how inside it was a beehive of activity," said volunteer Jim Aitken, "not unlike inside the terminal at a busy airport."

Project Healing Waters is dedicated to the physical and emotional rehabilitation of disabled active military service personnel and veterans through fly fishing and fly tying education and outings. Project Healing Waters was founded in 2005 at Walter Reed Army Medical Center with the help of local Trout Unlimited and Federation of Fly Fishers volunteers. Since then, it has grown to 70 locations across the United States and Canada.

"It's been proven that fly tying and fly casting help the veterans to increase their motor and fine motor skills. The activities also have a positive effect on healing the mind and spirit," said MFFC member Mike Duchin, who is heading up the club's Project Healing Waters involvement. MFFC member and Project Healing Waters volunteer Charlie Gray, himself an Air Force veteran, said, "Some of us got involved because we served our tour of duty and we were fortunate to come back intact physically and mentally and others were not. We want to show support and appreciation in some small way to these guys."

Jim Holly agreed. "I really don't think of myself as a veteran, but I am," he said. "My tour of duty was not one that put me in any combat, but I still feel a kinship and I thought this was an



*There were smiles all around at the end of the first Project Healing Waters session in January.*

opportunity to do something for the guys I consider to be the 'real' veterans."

Among those joining Duchin, Aitken, Gray and Holly at the inaugural MFFC-Project Healing Waters session were Terry Herron, Joe Sattler, Bruce Strachan, A.L. Bulszewicz, John Long, Howard Geller, Thomas Kelly, Dean Williams and Mike Scott.

The assessment from the morning? An unqualified success.

"I was able to help a vet tie a couple of flies," Aitken said. "He struggled with each step but kept at it. As we parted, he handed me his newspaper for me to read. I think we both went back feeling pretty good about the morning."

Holly recounted his morning, "My tier was not sure he'd be able to complete a fly because it required (him to do) a few things that he did not do well. Sure enough, his first fly was a little crude, but then his buddy stopped by to show him a fly that he had done. It was pretty darn good. So I let my tier go mostly on his own for the second fly and it turned out to be a real beauty. He was truly delighted he had come along so quickly."

The MFFC members report leaving the first session having gotten as much enjoyment out of the experience as the vets.



*Charlie Gray, also known as "Sarge," works with a veteran.*

"You get more out of this than the veterans," said Gray, who served three years in the Air Force stationed in Germany. "You feel good walking out the door."

John Long, who served three years in the Navy as a radarman, agreed. "It was great to see so many MFFC members show up. You can't help but get a good feeling from volunteering for this program."



*A.L. Bulszewicz offers advice during the inaugural session.*

Go yurt ...

## Trout Tune-Up on tap for April 3

The Trout Tune-Up, one of the MFFC's oldest events, is scheduled for 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday, April 3, at the Walled Lake Outdoor Education Center, 3577 Sleeth Court, in Commerce Township.

Home base is a structure called the Yurt. The club provides food and beverages and a place to get warm. This outing makes for a great time to flex those casting muscles, work on some of the techniques learned at the Members' School or test any new equipment you may have acquired at the Midwest Fly Fishing Expo.

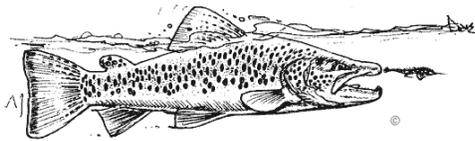
Down a trail from the Yurt is the Huron River.

"The Huron River will have been recently stocked by the DNR with trout from a nearby hatchery," said Scott Freeburg, who has organized the event for the past several years. "The DNR usually puts in 2,000 to 3,000 brown and rainbow trout between the Moss Lake dam and Wixom Road bridge." Special trout regulations (flies only) are in effect for that stretch from the 1st through the end of the month of April.

"Sometimes, if we're lucky, the DNR will have released some of their 'breeder stock.' These fish are usually very large and very strong. Catching one of these guys can sometimes be one of the largest fish you catch all year," Freeburg said.

The yurt is a semi-permanent structure which was used by the Mongolian Nomads. It is the Asian version of a tepee. The Education Center's Yurt is 30 feet in diameter, built on a 36x50-foot deck, and can accommodate up to 50 people.

Don't forget your 2010 fishing license; your 2009 license expires March 31.



## Spend the April 23-25 Opening Weekend at the Rayburn Lodge

by Scott Freeburg

Here in our great state of Michigan, the last Saturday in April is the traditional opening day of trout season and the "Trout Opener 2010" -- believe it or not -- is fast approaching.

In conjunction with the Michigan Fly Fishing Club's "Trout Opener" celebrations and activities (*see related story*), weekend accommodations will be available to MFFC club members at the Rayburn Lodge, located on the banks of the Au Sable River, downstream (east) of the city of Grayling, at 1491 Richardson Road.

The historic lodge is a handsome log mansion with a long history in the Grayling/Au Sable area. For newcomers to our sport, the Au Sable River is one of Michigan's premier trout streams and the lodge is located right in the middle of the world-famous "Holy Water" section. This stretch of river has been known to challenge adept anglers with some of the best trout fishing in the country.

Space for this outing is limited and I will start a sign-up list and be taking deposits immediately. Total cost will be \$120 with final payments due by the April 1st meeting. Included are Friday and Saturday night accommodations, hearty breakfasts each morning and snacks and beverages throughout the day. Check-in is after 2 p.m. on Friday, April 23. Check-out is 11 a.m. on Sunday.

To reserve your spot please contact me via telephone (248-366-6783), email ([sfree357@aol.com](mailto:sfree357@aol.com)) or see me at upcoming club meetings.

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## Make way for da U.P.: March 10 speaker will show you the way

Pioneering different fly fishing techniques in Michigan's Upper Peninsula for more than 10 years, Capt. Brad Petzke of Rivers North Guide Service offers remote outings in Michigan's most pristine wilderness.

He brings that knowledge to our

March 10 meeting, offering his perspectives on experiences that are much different than what many Midwestern fly fishers consider the norm.

Petzke calls the Escanaba River, the St. Marys and the Two Hearted his home water. From Atlantic salmon, native brook trout, brown trout, steelhead and Pacific salmon, the U.P. has something to offer all skill levels of fly angler.



**Oh, dem bones!**  
A.L. Bulszewicz, that's her arm, shows off a bonefish caught on a recent trip to the Turks & Caicos Islands. She caught the fish on one of Mike Duchin's increasingly famous Pook patterns, which she has labeled the "Duchinator" series.

# MFFC Board Meeting Minutes December 9, 2009

**Call to Order:** C. Hunter called meeting to order at 7:30.

**Present:** P. Brazzil, C. Hunter, R. Gokenbach, S. Freeburg, B. Kramer, J. Telinda, T. Schotts, J. Long

**Visitors:** Fred Field, Charlie Gregory

**Review November 11, 2009 Minutes:** Motion to accept, S. Freeburg. Seconded by B. Kramer. **Motion Passed.**

**Approval of Agenda:** Motion to accept the agenda as amended, P. Brazzil. Seconded by S. Freeburg. **Motion Passed.**

## **Officer Reports:**

**President – Brazzil,** Pat indicated that he and Joe Sprys are working on the Expo and the postcards are done and he will bring them to the next meeting. After each Expo we have thousands of tickets with customer information that needs to be entered into a database. We have added a new position in admissions, data entry. This position would enter the data as we retrieve the tickets from the club box. We have also changed the hotel to the Best Western (Georgian Inn) at Gratiot and 13 Mile Road. Pat wanted to commend Mike Duchin on his work with Project Healing Waters and his ability to leap Government hurdles in a single bound to get this off the ground. Mike has an upcoming fly tying session at the VA Hospital with later casting sessions and eventually taking our fine Heroes fly fishing. Pat also wanted to commend our treasurer Scott Freeburg on his outstanding work on the books making the audit go smoothly. The balance of the board also expressed their thanks and commended all. Pat also added the appointment of John Pinto as the Travel Committee chair and noted he is looking for a co-chair.

**Treasurer – Freeburg,** The budget is on target and income from the Expo is going well with membership and raffle income ahead of last year. Scott said

the FFF dues are due January 1, 2010, and Motion to send the FFF dues by S. Freeburg, and seconded by J. Telinda. **Motion Passed.** Scott lastly indicated all of the club's accounts will remain unchanged in their current locations for the next year.

Federal tax return was reviewed by the board and Motion to accept the 2009 Federal taxes by J. Long, seconded by T. Schotts. **Motion Passed.**

Motion to accept the treasurer's report by B. Kramer, seconded by J. Long. **Motion Passed.**

**Corresponding Secretary – Kramer**  
Hatch – In good shape but some club members are having trouble with the hyperlink.

**Speakers –** Going well.

**Website –** Eric still needs pictures from past Expos.

**Membership – J. Telinda,** Membership is at 298 paid as of 12/8/09. Jim asked Bruce if the Constant Contact list goes only to club members, Bruce said it goes to more than club members like past and future speakers. Chris also asked about the security of Constant Contacts, could the email be reverse engineered and it cannot.

## **Events and Outings**

**Eastside Special meeting,** Rick Gokenbach, We have lost our speaker. I need help and suggestions.

**Family Outing – Pat Brazzil,** Pat is now the Outing chairman for the family outing on July 16, 17 and 18.

## **New Business:**

**Insurance Issues – Fred Field,** Fred presented 2 issues that came up during our club's policy review that would require a constitution change. Motion to table till next board meeting by B. Kramer, seconded by T. Schotts.

## **Motion Passed.**

## **Old Business:**

**Clarkston Schools Fly Fishing Club – Rick Gokenbach,** Rick has made several attempts to contact them with no response.

**Adjournment:** The motion to adjourn by Pat Brazzil, seconded by J. Telinda. Carried at 9:52 p.m.

## **March's featured tier: Geitka says Irish flies will be smiling**

*Todd A. Schotts*

We've got none other than Ray Geitka step-dancing into the green-tinted spotlight as our featured tier with his version of a St.Patty's Day fly. It's a version of a Zonker he developed after experimenting with several existing patterns. Initially, he was going to tie a Hendrickson pattern, an early season pattern, but opted for a seasonal streamer theme.

This streamer CAN be an early season fly, as attested to by Chuck Hawkins and Joe Humphreys. It's designed for big, hungry fish. When Ray initially tied some up for the fabled Spruce Creek in Pennsylvania, he ended up with many hard strikes, but few hook-ups.

To solve that problem, he shortened the rabbit strip, used a longer-shanked hook, and a tungsten cone head while dressing it with more pizzazz (*shiny/flashy materials*).

Even still this fly is still subject to tweaking. The name of this fly? At the time of writing this article, the fly had no name. But Ray did throw out a name that I think fits this fly as well as corned beef goes with cabbage or green goes with beer. Let's call it "Ray's Smashing Zonker." It sounds like a fly everyone should have in their fly box.

When March's Activity Meeting rolls around, Irish Flies will be smiling. So bring your vise and note-taking material. Plan on joining Ray as he demonstrates a pattern virtually guaranteed to produce heart-stopping strikes.

## Forget Simon & Garfunkel, try fishing in troubled water

by Todd A. Schotts

Remember the Simon and Garfunkel classic "Bridge Over Troubled Water"? Well, forget the bridge. This is a tale of fishing armpit-deep in it.

The 2009 fishing season blessed us with an abundance of rain, especially in May, June, and most of July. It meant having to deal with very high water and some downright dangerous wading conditions. But some of us fly anglers were not to be denied. We just couldn't help ourselves. Either cabin fever had gotten the best of us or maybe we just inhaled too many fumes from the head cement at our tying desks.

Carl Clark joined me on one such escapade. We decided to attempt to fish the Huron River. We knew the stretch of river from Hudson Mills to Delhi metroparks (*also known as the "Book Section" of the river, a tribute to Dirk Fischbach's book, "The Fly Fisher's Huron"*) was way up into the picnic areas and very, very fast. This area would be way too dangerous and likely not very productive. Instead, we went up to Island Lake State Park to fish below the dam. I had been there a couple of days earlier and had good luck even though the currents were fast and the water was up 36 inches.

When we arrived we could hear the roar of water rushing from the dam. I suspected Carl was having second thoughts when he mentioned he'd forgotten a net. That's okay, I replied, because I didn't bring my camera. We both started to laugh. Carl said this would be the day we'd need both.

We had to wade downriver a ways before the current actually slowed down enough to keep our nymphs and streamers down below the surface. The first problem encountered is common for most people who fish with me. I'm a big guy and can get into deeper water than most people can. I think Carl was doing the tiptoe-wader-dance a few times and I think I

heard some adult language coming from behind me.

After we got past the first two weirs, I was rewarded and hooked into a nice rock bass that put up a pretty good fight. I had on my flashback nymph and was having a blast catching an abundance of rock bass that looked like they were on steroids.

Carl, on the other hand, was catching one smallie after another. I was sort of jealous. I wanted some of that action, so I headed into the fast, deep current to fish the opposite bank. I saw what used to be a nice-sized shade tree that had become new structure in the river. I saw something move over to the right of a tangled mess of branches, foam, and one lonely flip-flop.

I cast my size 14 flashback nymph and BAMMM!!! Something hit my fly, and it wasn't going anywhere. With the murkiness of the water, it was hard to see exactly what I had on. The fight was on and I had three predicaments to overcome: the tangled mess of branches, the current (I was standing right in the fastest part) and the level of the water that was already at the very top of my waders.

Eventually I got him close enough to where I thought I could lip him. To my surprise he wasn't ready. My only success in this maneuver was to allow an abundance of cold water to slop over the top of my waders. My trusty five-weight St. Croix was being put through a major test. This whole time, Carl was offering moral support by shouting instructions. Fighting this fish in the fast current, was taking its toll on me and the fish, but I wasn't going to give in.

Finally, I was able to lip this Huron beauty and was in total awe. We estimated the size of this smallmouth at 19 or 20 inches. Carl got out his trusty tape measure. He tipped the tape at only a mere 18 ¾ inches. As we released this beauty, Carl said, "See, no camera or net."

I think we both started to laugh.

We kept fishing up until about dark and we did hook more smallies, rock

bass, crappies and bluegills. I don't really recommend fishing in this kind of high, fast water, but if you are able to stay safe, I'll bet you'll have a blast. Tight lines and snazzy fish.

## 2010 Trout Opener Memorial Breakfast

by Al Haxton

While opening day of the Michigan Trout Season is about as early on the calendar as possible, the day is rapidly approaching. I could share the true count of days until the rods will be uncased, fly lines straightened and new winter tied flies appear on the ends of tippets, but I think I will make you count the days for yourself. Trust me, it is time to begin making plans.

I hope this year you will plan on joining other MFFC members and guests at our annual Opening Day Memorial Breakfast. Each year many of us gather at the Gates Au Sable Lodge Boardroom to share fishing stories, some coffee, bagels, donuts and perhaps a famous Bloody Mary, that starts the day so well. We gather there to share good times and also to remember past members who are no longer fishing with us. For a few moments each year we recall the likes of Bud Crudder, Past President Tony Yuhas and far too many others. We fondly remember past experiences shared with these and other members, and share new experiences with friends and fishing buddies. This year will be especially tough with the loss of Rusty Gates and Joe Kutkhun, two superb friends of the resource.

As in past years the Boardroom will be open to us from about 9 a.m. until about 11 a.m. Only one rule must be observed, as in the past, it is requested that we park in the Stephan Bridge Road public access parking lot. With just a short walk you will be welcomed to our 2010 Trout Opener Memorial Breakfast.

I hope to see many smiling faces again this year. Please plan on joining us for this fun and thoughtful opening day celebration.

## Call for candidates: 2010-11 elections to be held April 7

You may be aware that this year all of the State's "constitutional offices" – Governor, Lt. Governor, Attorney General and Secretary of State – are up for election as are the entire Michigan House of Representatives, the entire State Senate and all of Michigan's representatives to the U.S. House. Add to the mix our own MFFC elections – to be conducted at the April 7 meeting – and you've got one heck of an election year.

As with the State ballot, just about every office is up for election – President, Vice President, Treasurer, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Membership Chair, and **two** at-large Director positions.

Outgoing President Pat Brazzil appointed a committee consisting of Past Presidents Joe Sprys and Peter Albertson and returning Director Todd Schotts to conduct the election. Members interested in standing for election should contact the president or any of the members of the Election Committee.

"The strength of our club is the willingness of our members to get involved and make things happen – not only as volunteers but as leaders," Brazzil said. "If you care about our organization and hope to see it continue as an active, energetic, fun organization, I encourage you to run for a leadership position."

Here is a brief description of each position:

- **President:** Presides at all club meetings and functions as the chief executive officer.
- **Vice President:** Presides at meetings of the Board of Directors.
- **Recording Secretary:** Keeps the minutes of all Board meetings and other special business meetings as necessary and maintains the inventory of the club's equipment.
- **Corresponding Secretary:** Is responsible for arranging speakers for club meetings and special events.
- **Treasurer:** Manages the club's finances, pays the club's bills, and ensures that all finance-related reports are filed with the appropriate government agencies.
- **Membership:** Is a first point of contact and a resource for individuals interested in joining the club. Maintains the club's roster.
- **Directors:** Provide insight, perspective and advice as members of the Board and guide special Board endeavors as directed by the President. Directors serve two-year terms.

The Board meets once each month, typically on the second Wednesday of the months September through May. Special meetings may be convened during the summer or at other times as necessary.

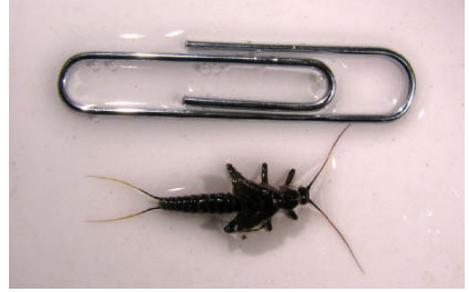
## Needed Constitutional amendment to be considered April 7

The April election will also include a referendum on a proposed addition to our Club's Constitution and Bylaws.

President Pat Brazzil explained: "Our Directors and Officers (D&O) insurance company underwriter is mandating that our organization have a dissolution clause in its Constitution and Bylaws. Our Constitution and Bylaws are consistent with all other typical non-profits with the exception that we do not have a dissolution clause. This clause would provide structure and precedence for the Board to follow in the event of an organizational dissolution and therefore avoids potential litigation /D&O insurance claims against our future leadership."

Members attending the April 7 meeting will vote on the following dissolution clause proposal:

"Upon the dissolution of the Club, should any assets remain after the payment, or provision for payment, of any and all debts and liabilities, all remaining assets shall be distributed to the Federation of Fly Fishers, in compliance with Section 501(c)(3) of the internal revenue code. In the event the Federation of Fly Fishers is no longer a qualified 501(c)(3) organization, the funds shall be distributed to the State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Natural Resources Commission, to be used for the conservation of trout streams within the State of Michigan. Such distribution shall be made in accordance with all applicable provisions of federal and state laws."



### ***Stonefly searching in southeast Michigan***

*January 30 marked the date of the annual Huron River Watershed Council Winter Stonefly Search. MFFC member Bruce Strachan (right in the photo above) joined a team that sampled stretches of Davis and Walker creeks northeast of Ann Arbor. Davis Creek was especially productive. Pictured in the upper right is a Winter Stonefly Larva (Family Taeniopterygidae, Genus Taeniopteryx), which features the six legs, two tails, and two prominent antennae, characteristic of all stoneflies. Below it is a Giant Stonefly Larva (Family Pteronarcidae, Genus Pteronarcys). Note the two claws on each leg.*

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