



The Evening

Hatch

THE NEWSLETTER of the MICHIGAN FLY FISHING CLUB

December 2006

The Kenai is calling ... Getting the lowdown on fishing in Alaska

*"Where the river is winding
Big fish they're a finding
North to Alaska
They go north, the rush is on."*

Okay ... So we tweaked that passage from Johnny Horton's 1960 hit "North to Alaska," but it couldn't be more true.

Club member and Hank's Fly Fishing guru Mike Schultz took MFFCers on a tour of Alaska's Kenai Peninsula at the Nov. 8 meeting. Titled "Alaska on a Budget," Schultz gave members the benefits of knowledge gleaned during an 11-day Kenai excursion with fellow MFFC member Chris Hatcher. The lures, of course, are unbounded, rugged beauty and the prospects of fishing to the full complement of Pacific salmon species, rainbows, dolly varden, grayling and steelhead.

From touchdown in Anchorage, Schultz's travels took him first north via Highway 3, the primary gateway to Denali National Park, to explore Willow Creek in the Susitna River drainage – "it's just enormous!" -- and the Matsu Valley.



Club members gather around Mike Schultz to get a closer look at an Alaskan bead-fishing rig.

Willow Creek, he said, is a "sweet, sweet river," and is rated America's second best river for king salmon fishing. The wading, he said, ranged from very easy to difficult. More importantly, he described the fishing as "challenging, but a lot of fun." The only way to hook up with fish in the vicinity of mile marker (mm) 71.5 was by fishing hard beads. He brought a rod fully rigged for Alaskan-style hard bead fishing to give members the idea.

(Ironically, this type of fishing was subject of a column called "The Rant" in the November/December 2006 edition *American Angler*: "Pegging beads is a sure way to catch lots of trout. Somebody tell me how it's fly fishing.")

Continued on back page

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

December 2

**FFF-Great Lakes Council Fly Tying Expo
Mason, MI**

Doors open 9 a.m.

Note: Kelly Galloup, formerly of The Troutman in Traverse City and current proprietor of the Slide Inn outside West Yellowstone, MT, will be among the featured tiers at this event.

December 6

**"What's New in Tackle" Night
Clarenceville Middle School
Cafeteria, 7:30 p.m.**

December 13

**Board Meeting
Clarenceville Middle School,
Teachers' Lounge 6 p.m.
Activities Night
Clarenceville Middle School
Cafeteria, 7:30 p.m.**

Reminder:

**There is no meeting
on December 20**

January 10, 2007

**Speaker: Kevin Feenstra
Topic: Steelheading in Michigan
and Ohio**



Published monthly

Editor Mike Matuszewski
editor@mffc.org
248-646-4768

Michigan Fly Fishing Club
P.O. Box 530113
Livonia, MI 48153

2006 – 2007 Officers

President Joe Sprys
president@mffc.org
248-380-6170

Vice President
Pat Brazzil
vp@mffc.org
248-344-7470

Corresponding Secretary
Doyle Letson
248-348-7021

Recording Secretary
Cindy Center
248-363-3861

Treasurer Bill Shannon
treasurer@mffc.org
248-545-0141

Membership Paul DeJohn
membership@mffc.org
734-420-0809

Immediate Past President
Kevin Lipp
734-837-1100

Board of Directors
Scott Freeburg 248-366-6783
Eric Center 248-363-3861
Jeff Parker 248-682-4495

Prefer an e-Hatch to snail mail?

Get *The Evening Hatch* electronically and you help save the club money. That means dollars spent on printing and postage can get directed elsewhere – to speakers, education and other programs. Simply contact Membership Chair Paul DeJohn and ask to receive our newsletter via e-mail.

Tying in the spotlight: Center and Sprys

by Al “The Hackleman” Haxton

There is a certain chill in the air, and I sit here, on opening day of firearms deer season, thinking “Why am I not up north?” Well I am not up north, I am here in the metro area getting ready for another meeting of The Michigan Fly Fishing Club. Another activities meeting, with a guest fly tier that got no upfront notes of thanks or any bio about her prowess at the vise and on the stream. HER, prowess. That’s right, our guest tier for November was a ‘her’ and a mighty good one at that.

Thanks to Cindy Center for helping me out of a bind for the November activities meeting.

Cindy has been a member of our club for quite a few years now. I know she took some fly tying lessons at Beuter’s shop in Northville, and she has sure impressed all of the guys in Montana with her great flies and fish-catching abilities. She continues to bring in photos of huge fish she catches right here in Michigan, and I always look at them in awe and with a bit of envy.

I have never caught a fish as big as some she catches, and I must admit I feel a bit embarrassed of that fact. I know she showed some great techniques during her “spotlight” moment, and I also know that all those who watched her were not only impressed with her abilities but also with her knowledge of the fly and how to tie and use it. Thank you, Cindy, for stepping up and being the “Guest Tier” for our November activities meeting.

For December I actually planned ahead and asked our present president (that is sort of hard to say, try it 5 times fast) to share some fly tying fun with the club. Joe Sprys has been a member of our group since 1999. He tells me that he has been fly fishing for a few years now, having learned the sport during his childhood, on the South Branch of the Au Sable around the Chase Bridge area. Joe admits to taking some fly tying lessons at MacGregor’s Outdoors



November’s featured tier, Cindy Center, demonstrates tying Randall Kaufmann’s Filoplume Mayfly Nymph.

in Ann Arbor, and he has expanded his experience for more than 25 years.

Joe enjoys tying and fishing many original Michigan patterns and for the December activities meeting he will share a couple of his all-time favorites. So get there early and save a seat for some great Michigan patterns, tied by Joe Sprys.

Jack’s Doodle Bug

(a pattern from Jack Schweigert, and one of his favorites too. Jack, and his wife Ann, owned Jack’s Fly Shop in Roscommon.)

Hook: #4x1 size 4 – 10

Thread: dark brown or black 6/0

Tail: red wool tag cut short

Body: brown floss ribbed with fine gold tinsel

Wing: gray squirrel tail, length to the end of tail

Throat: yellow deer hair

Eyes: white/natural deer hair, tied figure eight behind hook eye and trimmed short to represent eyes

Cabin Coachman

(Reputed to have first been tied at George Mason’s cabin on the South Branch, on what is now the Mason Tract, in 1934. John Stephan, a local guide, supposedly adapted some of the Coachman flies that Mason enjoyed, and because they were tied in his cabin they were known as “Cabin Coachman.”)

Hook: #12 dry fly hook

Thread: 6/0 black

Tail: red hackle fibers

Body: peacock herl fibers

Wing: blue hackle tips

Hackle: brown and grizzly mixed

Fishing report: **Tiny BWOs bring out the big browns on Utah's lower Provo**

by Rick Gokenbach

It was Friday September the 15, I was on my way to a conference in Park City, UT, with hopes of fishing two days before the conference. I had a flight into Salt Lake City with a stop in Phoenix. The landing in Phoenix was rough and things got worse from there. Before we departed Phoenix the Captain informed us that it was going to be a rough ride to Salt Lake and no one will be leaving their seats not even the flight attendants. It was great, just like the Cyclone at Kings Island, except we didn't actually go inverted and no one threw up ... that I know of.

It rained hard from the time I arrived till early morning. The water poured down on my balcony all night. Up at 5:30 a.m. to get ready, I noticed the rain had stopped. But when I opened the curtains, I found that the rain had not stopped; it had just turned to snow. Two inches were already down and it was still snowing hard. Undeterred, I was meeting a friend, Chris, who had moved to Park City just two weeks earlier. We were to meet at 8 a.m. and the snow was continuing unabated.



A perfect day for steelheading in Michigan or trout fishing near Park City, Utah.

It was still snowing when we arrived at the local fly shop, Trout Bum 2, 30 minutes later. Snow continued to fall

as we waited for our guide, Walter Foster, to show up. When he arrived, he was reluctant to take us because of the weather. I explained to him this is a beautiful Steelhead day in Michigan, overcast, snow and the temperature was 38 degrees and rising. We're going fishing!

We fished the lower Provo River, about an hour from the Salt Lake City airport and only 30 minutes southeast of Park City along highway I-89. The river runs parallel to highway I-89 in Provo Canyon and access is just a matter of pulling off of the road and



Rick Gokenbach displays a healthy Provo River brown.

walking down to the river. The lower Provo is a canyon tail water and offers an estimated **7,500** trout per mile -- a healthy population of wild brown trout, with populations of rainbow and cutthroat, as well. The tail water is created as the river flows from the depths of Deer Creek Reservoir creating ideal trout habitat. This section is a long established tail water with large populations of sow bugs, scuds and midges. Hatches of Blue Winged Olives and midges are prolific in the early season. Pale Morning Duns, Caddis and Little Yellow Stoneflies round out the menu during summer months.

The name of the game that day was nymphing. We fished midge-type nymphs of our guide's design in sizes 20 and 22 with floating line and a few small split shot 18 to 24 inches up on the tippet. There was a small hatch in the afternoon, but by the time I changed rigs and managed to catch one fish the hatch was over. All in all,



A proud double on the lower Provo.

though, we had a spectacular day, netting more than 50 fish that day, none smaller than 12 inches. Five measured at 20 plus.

Well satisfied, we retreated to Chris's house for dinner and a few glasses of wine. Later, Chris gave me the keys to his truck because he said he wasn't going to fish on Sunday. I WAS!

At 7:30 a.m. my phone rang, it was Chris. He said all he thought about all night was the trout we had caught. I picked him up, made a stop at Trout Bum 2 for an ample supply of small nymphs and made for Provo Canyon. We headed back to the same spot.

In four hours we netted a dozen fish, but at 1:30 p.m. the hatch began.

I have never seen a hatch like this, thousands of BWOs, sizes 20 to 22, and more amazing than that was hundreds of large trout cleaning them off the water like this was the last supper. They looked like piranha eating a cow unlucky enough to stumble in the water.

As luck would have it I had plenty of BWOs in size 18s and 20s with backup Griffith's gnats in sizes 20, 22 and 24. We were hammering them! The nymphers across the water at one time asked what I was fishing with. I promptly held up my 6X tippet with a size 20 BWO.

Needless to say this was a great trip. What's on tap for next year? The target is the Green River, another outstanding Utah tail water fishery.

The Kenai is calling ... Getting the lowdown on fishing in Alaska

Continued from front page

Schultz reported more success with “read” fly fishing in the Canyon Section of Willow Creek, an area of little, “almost non-existent,” fishing pressure where the fish were more receptive of glo-bug and nuke egg patterns.

Other areas on the Gateway to Denali route were Montana Creek (mm 93.5), which offered easy access and lots of fishing pressure, and Sheep Creek at mm 88.6 that offered easy access, fast water and moderately difficult wading. Sheep Creek, Schultz reported, was a place perfect for exercising that age-old chuck ‘n duck technique.

Unexplored-but-intriguing rivers included Goose Creek, Caswell Creek,

Troublesome Creek, Deception Creek and Clear Creek.

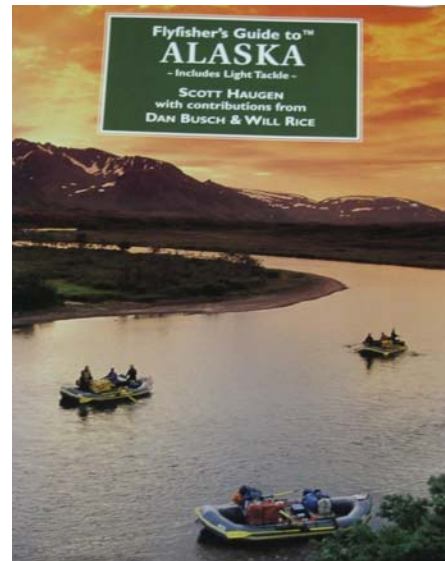
Turning from the route north to Denali, it was time to head toward the Kenai Peninsula and waters like Quartz Creek, the Kenai River and the Russian River with its flies-only water. Unexplored fisheries included Bird Creek, Kasilof Creek, Granite Creek, Ingram Creek and the Ninilchik River.

Now about that “budget” part of the presentation. According to Schultz, “You can do the trip for \$1,750 to \$2,000” per person and that includes the cost to get to Anchorage, vehicle rental, lodging and food.”

Some things that he’d do differently? He said he’d go in the fall – “fewer people and the fish are eating more eggs and flesh that’s in the water.”

He’d also do “more back country, take less gear and flies, fish more streamers and mice and spend less money.”

One more word of advice, when tracking trails along the river, remember they’re not like trials on PM (Pere Marquette). “The trails here are made by bears, not people,” he said.



Schultz called this book a necessity if you're heading north to Alaska.

**Michigan Fly Fishing Club
P.O. Box 530113
Livonia, MI 48153**