



*The Evening*

# Hatch

**THE NEWSLETTER of the MICHIGAN FLY FISHING CLUB**

**September 2007**

## **Christmas in September? Join Peter Albertson for an Indian Ocean adventure**

To usher in the new program year, Corresponding Secretary Todd Schotts has lined up the one and only Peter Albertson. Fast becoming an angler of international experience, if not renown, Albertson has fly fished from Saskatchewan to Patagonia, from \$3 Bridge in Montana to the North Branch's Dam Four. With this meeting, he takes us to the Indian Ocean ... a place frequented by red crabs, coconut crabs, the red-footed booby, the brown booby and the common noddy.

Nope, they're not the nicknames of his angling partners. They're just some of the creatures and birds common to Christmas Island.

This island is a small non-self-governing territory of Australia, located northeast of Perth and south of Jakarta, Indonesia. The island is home to about 1,600 souls residing in a number of "settlement areas," one of which carries the intriguing moniker Fly Fish Cove.

"If you never have seen one of Peter's presentations, you will be amazed," Schotts said. "So with that make sure you get a great seat."

## **UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS**



*Globe-trotting Peter Albertson, pictured somewhere in Patagonia, takes September's stage.*

### **September 5**

**Speaker: Peter Albertson**

**Topic: Fly Fishing Christmas Island**

Clarenceville Middle School  
7:30 p.m.

### **September 12**

**Board Meeting**

Clarenceville Middle School  
7:30 p.m.

### **September 19**

**Activity Meeting**

Clarenceville Middle School  
7:30 p.m.

### **October 3**

**Speaker: Chris Helm**

**Topic: Caring for Your Fur and Feathers**

Clarenceville Middle School  
7:30 p.m.

## ***Pig prep ...***

*Kevin Lipp (front), past president; Todd Schotts (center) and Eric Center (rear) get on with the task of tending to one very large roast pig at the club's annual Family Day Picnic, Pig & Corn Roast last month. See inside for more.*





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

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

**2007 – 2008 Officers**

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

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

**Corresponding Secretary**  
Todd Schotts  
313-570-7966

**Recording Secretary**  
Cindy Center  
248-363-3861

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

**Membership** Eric Center  
membership@mffc.org  
248-363-3861

**Immediate Past President**  
Kevin Lipp  
734-837-1100

**Board of Directors**

Scott Freeburg 248-366-6783  
Paul DeJohn 734-420-0809  
Jeff Parker 248-529-6122

## Is there a tax accountant in the house?

MFFC Treasurer Bill Shannon requests qualified individuals with tax preparation experience to contact him if interested in preparing the club's 2007 fiscal year taxes. Please contact Bill at [wbshannon@sbcglobal.net](mailto:wbshannon@sbcglobal.net) or inquire at the next club meeting or event.



*Vintner Darryl Nowacki makes a point at the club's August meeting.*

## Northville gets touched by the Tuscan sun

*by Todd Schotts*

The MFFC's August meeting definitely was something out of the ordinary.

It was a night Tuscan wine came to Northville. Darryl and Kathy Nowacki, owners of Vintner Cellar Canton Winery, introduced us to appreciating the secrets of the grape, everything from how to properly hold one's wine glass to how to get the wine ready for consumption.

Not only connoisseurs of wine, they're also fly anglers, having taken classes from John Bueter and John Long. So they got a great start. But the wine was the reason they were there.

We had the opportunity to sample three wines. The first was "Rising Trout Chardonnay." "Rising Trout Merlot" was the second. The third wasn't a red or a white, but more of a blush. Darryl and Kathy wouldn't tell us which fruit this contained, but challenged us to identify the fruit. Someone hollered out "canberries," and they were absolutely correct.

It definitely was a first for the MFFC, and hopefully it won't be the last.

And don't forget, if you are interested in contacting them, call 734-354-9463 or email them at: [www.vintnerscanton.com](http://www.vintnerscanton.com).

## MFFC joins call for Congress to investigate plight of northwest salmon

The MFFC has joined more than two dozen regional and national conservation and fishing organizations, representing millions of members nationwide, in calling upon U.S. Representative John Dingell (D-MI) to have the House Energy & Commerce Committee, which he chairs, take a hard look at the Bonneville Power Administration's failure to protect endangered fish and wildlife as required by the Northwest Power Planning & Conservation Act.

That groundbreaking law, championed by Rep. Dingell when it was passed in 1980, ensures the protection, restoration and enhancement of fish and wildlife in the Columbia River Basin in the Pacific Northwest, and gives them equal status with all other users of the federal Columbia River hydro system, including electricity generation. But the promise of the act has not been met, said Chris Salp, Eastern Regional Representative of Save Our Wild Salmon, which spearheaded the group sign-on letter representing more than two dozen organizations.

"On a regular basis, the Bonneville Power Administration makes energy decisions that fail to treat fish and wildlife concerns on par with power considerations, violating the spirit and intent of this law so carefully crafted by Congressman Dingell two decades ago," Salp said. "The agency continually sidesteps or ignores salmon protection laws. Its shortsighted dam operations have been the largest cause of recent declines for many of the Columbia and Snake River salmon and steelhead populations."

Among the groups joining the appeal are the Federation of Fly Fishers; Fly Girls; the Michigan Council of Trout Unlimited; the Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) and the Michigan River Guides Association.

# MFFC Family Day 2007



The 2007 Family Day Picnic, Pig & Corn Roast has come and gone. Uncooperative weather held attendance to about 120, but everyone seemed to have a great time in spite of the clouds and raindrops. We had plenty of food (enough to feed an army of hungry anglers), fun and games for everyone. There was a penny scramble, sack race and a balloon lady for the kids.

New this year was the inaugural 3-D Target flycasting competition, complete with a trophy worthy of placement on the mantle. There was roast pork, grilled chicken, brats, corn on the cob, baked beans, all kinds of wonderful salads, and an array of desserts to die for. Some attendees went fishing; some took aim on the sporting clays course.

But, most importantly, there was an abundance of smiles and laughter from everyone that attended.

Event chair Jeff Parker offers lots of special "thank you" comments:

-- To the Early Risers: Ken Harfoot, Jim Weakland, Dale Ross, Eric Center, Kevin Lipp. They showed up extra early (reportedly at around 3 a.m.!) to commence the roasting of the pig and stayed all day.

-- To the Grill Masters: Mike Duchin and Randy Park, who spent hours over a hot grill, roasting corn and grilling chicken.

-- To our Youth Entertainment Organizers: Fran Hocking and Colleen Jenkins. Without them we wouldn't have had nearly as many laughs.

-- To the organizers of our first annual 3-D Target Flycasting Competition: Scott Freeburg and Todd Schotts. See the back page for photos of the dramatic cast-off.

Hats off to all these folks and the other volunteers who made the event possible.

If you missed out on this year's food, fun and games, have no fear Parker says plans are already in the works for next year, so circle the first Sunday of August 2008 in your calendar. We hope to see everyone there.

# MFFC member recalls his first trip to Belize & the Salt

by Stephen Isgrigg

About a year ago Ray Schmidt ([www.schmidtoutfitters.com](http://www.schmidtoutfitters.com)) came to speak at a club meeting about saltwater fishing in Belize. I thought it was a good idea since we had had a tough winter and the idea of getting away for a week sounded pretty good. I contacted Ray and set up to go in February 2007.

After tying flies for a month ... for bonefish ... tarpon ... and permit ... I bought a tropical fly line for my 8 weight and a lot of sun block and a really goofy looking hat ... I was ready.

We landed in Belize City and quickly went through Immigration and Customs. Ray Schmidt arranged for the hopper flight to San Pablo on Ambergris Cay. After a 10-15 minute plane ride at only about 1,000 feet up, we got in the water taxi for a 10-15 minute ride north, about 2.5 miles, to El Pescador Lodge ([www.elpescador.com](http://www.elpescador.com)).

We were met on the lodge dock by the owner of El Pescador, Steve, and walked up to the lodge to sign in. We sat and talked and most people drink a lot ... I had a rum punch ... it was very good. I then took a few minutes to unpack.

Interesting thing is the room had a safe for your things ... money, passport, etc.... I liked the idea very much and set my mind to ease about such things. Dinner was always at about 6:45 p.m. and always was very good. Bed time was about 9:30 p.m.. As for El Pescador, the staff and guides were very nice. It seemed that the guests – doctors, a marketing exec, an orthodontist -- have been here several times. Many guys brought their wives.

El Pescador is a very nice resort, not just a fishing camp.

I met Ray and we talked a little before breakfast at 6:15 a.m. After breakfast, Howard, my fishing partner for the day, and I geared up and met Tomas, our guide, out by his boat about 7 a.m.

We went north for about an hour to the “park” near the Belize-Mexico border. When we got there, Howard was up first and quickly caught a small bonefish. I was up next and in a few minutes, I had hooked, played and caught my first bonefish on a gold Gotcha that I had tied ... not a big bonefish, but my first. The goofy hat was a real lifesaver; the sun in Belize is brutal.

The weather was hot (85-90 F), humid and sunny. We'd had a great day. We got back to the lodge about 3:30 p.m. Dinner was at 6:45 p.m. and most people headed for bed by 9 p.m.

The next day I met Tomas, my guide, at the boat and Steve, a doctor from Lafayette, IN, my fishing partner for the day, about 7 a.m. We decided to go to the park and try for bones again.

The wind and clouds made the bonefish very hard to see. I caught two bonefish and hooked another two. We fished off and on through the afternoon. I got a couple shots at three good-sized permit. They turned, followed the fly, but did not bite. I did lose three flies to barracudas. Two bit the line off cleanly and the third I got to hand, but we couldn't get the fly out so we cut the line and let him go. We fished until about 2 p.m.

We saw a lot of wildlife -- roseate spoonbills, pileated woodpeckers, frigate birds, an Everglades kite, a yellow-horned night heron, black vultures, a mangrove swallow, a jabiru stork (it stood 5 feet tall and had a 10-foot wingspan). We saw bats that attached themselves to the underside of a tree limb and were so well camouflaged that it took quite a while to make them out at less than 3 feet.



*A proud moment: the author displays his first bonefish.*

Speaking of wildlife, that night we watched the Super Bowl on TV outdoors by the bar. The staff had set up tables so we could eat dinner there at half time, too. I watched most of the Super Bowl, but took a few minutes to walk out to the end of the dock and see the near-waning moon and stars. Just another day in paradise.

The next day was devoted to tarpon. After breakfast, I borrowed a tarpon rod from the lodge and went down to the boat dock to meet my guide, Nesto.

We drove west for an hour, to the mainland coast. I had the chance to cast to a couple of tarpon in shallow water, but could not get one to bite. They are very hard to see, appearing as a light gray line in the water.

We also pursued them in deeper water – 10-15 feet -- and I could not see them at all. Nesto would say 9 o'clock and 30 feet out and I would cast there. I couldn't see them and I never managed to hook one.

Later, I and Jeff Kroger, a fellow angler from Traverse City, decided to try fishing the lagoon behind the lodge. It meant a mile-long paddle in a two-person kayak through the mangroves. We ended up on the west side of the lagoon only to see some very big bones tailing very close to the shore in *continued on next page*

## Bitten by the salt, permit and tarpon are the new quarry

*Continued from previous page*

less than 6 inches of water. I cast to a couple, but they would always spook. Bones spook very, very easily. A couple spooked while the flies were still 3 to 6 feet in the air above them and 3 to 6 feet away. I did manage to hook one good-sized fish, but he got off quickly. Nevertheless, this was a highlight of the trip.

The next day provided much travel and a break from casting, with the interlude provided by a trip to the Mayan ruins of Lamanai. The view from the top was terrific. Along the tour we saw howler monkeys and the guide would call to them and make them howl back. They are very territorial. I got to see the national flower of Belize, the Black Orchid. It is the smallest of all the orchids and was about the size of your thumbnail.

The next day would bring the hunt for something considerably larger ... tarpon.

Ray let me fish first and longer than normal ... it was a nice gesture. We looked all over the mainland coast, but not one tarpon. Before lunch I caught four mackerel around a coral head looking for tarpon and Ray caught a couple little jacks.

As we moved the boat to some other spots, we did see three porpoises. Near the end of the day the rain hit all around us but we only got a little sprinkle. We looked for some permit, but again found none.

The next day we decided we would go for bonefish. My fishing partner was rewarded with two bones and three barracudas. I caught seven bonefish and got bitten off by three 'cudas. I caught my biggest bone that afternoon. It was about 2.5 pounds and it took me into my backing. I have caught steelhead, king salmon and Atlantic



*Palm trees and placid waters set the stage for setting off on another day of fishing at El Pescador.*

salmon on my lucky rod (I won it at the club), but the backing had never seen daylight. Later, I broke off on a really good bone by stripping when he started to run. My mistake!

I did get a couple shots at a school of 20-30 permits, but no bites. The next day would bring a return to Detroit. Back to Michigan. Back to the cold.

Next year I will get my tarpon.

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## Conservation Resource Alliance completes another Bear Creek project

Keeping momentum moving along in the Bear Creek Watershed, the Conservation Resource Alliance (CRA) and its partners have helped stabilize another extremely large eroding streambank. Bear Creek is the largest tributary of the Manistee River below Tippy Dam and is known for excellent trout fishing and its large runs of chinook salmon and steelhead. The site encompasses approximately 250 lineal feet by 60 feet in height with the potential to deliver an estimated 385 tons of sediments per year.

This project was successfully completed with financial support from the Great Lakes Commission and the USDA and help from many other project partners and volunteers, including the **Michigan Fly Fishing Club**, the Grand Traverse Band of



*This Bear Creek bend is being stabilized with the help of MFFC-contributed conservation funds.*

Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, and Bear Creek Watershed Council.

Stabilization efforts included fieldstone rip-rap with large woody debris incorporated along the toe of the streambank and four rows of log terracing up the slope of the bank. To help efforts along, Advanced Placement biology students from Troy's Athens High School will help project partners with planting the slopes with native shrubs and trees.

## Lady Luck continues to shine for MFFC member in Montana

by Mike Duchin

It began April 19, when Mike Duchin won the grand prize at Ann Arbor TU's first banquet. And what a prize it was: an all inclusive trip for two to Missoula, MT; and fishing forays guided by Dan Sheppard of one of Missoula's very best fly shops, The Grizzly Hackle.

My son John and I arrived in Missoula about 2 ½ hours late as a disabled aircraft snarled air traffic at the Missoula airport. Hey, we got an air tour of the Five Valleys area and got diverted 100 miles to Kalispell, MT, to take on more fuel because we were running low. This trip was sure to be an adventure. Oh yeah, while we made our way west to Montana, our luggage took a sidetrip to Chicago. For safety reasons, we guess.

At least we had the foresight to carry on "emergency travel necessities," making it possible to begin fishing the next day while our luggage caught up.

Our first stop, of course, was The Grizzly Hackle, where we met Dan, his wife Diana and his staff of guides and coworkers. The shop is a true "candy store for the fly fisher!" If you can't find what you need in this store, you don't need it!!! The Hackle's truly knowledgeable staff makes selecting flies a breeze for visiting anglers. And, here's a nice added touch. There's a coffee bar – one good enough to satisfy the most discriminating taste buds – in the store.

Dan arranged for our stay in the Holiday Inn, less than two blocks from the shop. This allowed us to walk Missoula's downtown historic area and to dine in its great restaurants. I highly recommend "The Pearl," by the way.

Our first destination was the Blackfoot River. Overcast conditions made for a



*It's all in a day's work in Montana for Mike Duchin.*

promising outing, even though the heat (101 by day's end) tempered our optimism. The Blackfoot is a high-gradient river with great riffles, deep cut banks and ledges that hold monster fish. Not to worry, we were able to say we had caught A LOT OF FISH in spite of the heat. Two fish greater than 20 inches were caught, one apiece for the Duchin men. We represented our club well, as the talk among those who had gone out with other guides revealed we did exceptionally well.

Dan is a true gentleman, a gracious host and a super guide. He was tying and changing more flies on our lines than "Carter's got liver pills," making sure we prepared for the next stretch of river that we'd be fishing. I could not have asked for more fun in one day!

Our second day took us to the Bitterroot, a slower, non-whitewater river. The weather was CLEAR, SUNNY AND HOT (102). We started with streamers and mice and changed to dries and nymphs as the day progressed. This river produced cutthroats, 'bows, squawfish and a mountain whitefish or two.

As with many Montana rivers, the extended extreme heat meant that fishing would close at 2 p.m., to avoid stressing the fish. With this in mind, Dan took us to a "secret spot" where we hiked about a quarter mile up a small tributary stream off the Bitterroot. It looked like an aquarium, with 'bows in the 24-plus range sitting pretty and not biting a thing. A stealthy approach allowed us to view these monsters. We had a few chances to



*What could be finer than a day on the Bitterroot?*

entice them, all to no avail. It was just too clear and too hot. One of those big boys did follow a fly tied by fellow club member Jim Weakland. My son's heart was pounding, but, the fish turned away at the last minute. I was able to use the same type fly -- different color, though -- and caught a large squawfish.

John moved downstream from the "locked-jawed 'bows" and landed a nice 16-incher. Two o'clock came too soon; we shut down the fishing, broke out the shore lunch. We were two very happy camper's!!!

Prior to heading to Missoula, I had asked Dan if I could bring him anything from Michigan (other than a steelhead or salmon). He asked for something representative of the Au Sable River. Todd Schotts helped me assemble a collection of Au Sable flies. Using the "Trout Flies for the Michigan Emergence Schedule" and Rusty Gates' "Seasons on the AuSable" as references, we came up with a baker's dozen. I put them in a shadow box and included our club patch and pin, an index to all the flies and credit to Todd for his tying ability. I presented this to Dan on our final trip back at his shop. Dan was surprised and much pleased with the gift and stated he would proudly display it in the shop for all to enjoy. So if you make your way to Missoula, there'll be a bit of the MFFC waiting.

I returned tired, fully satisfied and truly lucky to have made this trip of a lifetime, full of memories...shared with my son John...priceless.



### ***Trophy time for our "Top Rod" ...***

*The battle for the trophy and bragging rights as the club's "Top Rod" at the 2007 Picnic, Pig & Corn Roast came down to a cas- off between Adam Freeburg and Art Mikkola. Adam walked off with the trophy with a score of 18 points out of a possible 50 on what everyone agreed was a very, very tough course.*

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