



*The Evening*

# Hatch

THE NEWSLETTER of the MICHIGAN FLY FISHING CLUB

September 2010

## ***MFFC in Rochester: Keifer, caddis and Paint Creek***

If you've ever been mystified by trout refusing your mayfly imitations or seen trout leaping clear of the water but have been unable to convince them to take your fly, you may have picked up some useful insights at the club's August 11 meeting at the Rochester Community House.

Dan Keifer, outreach coordinator for the Clinton River Watershed Council, an avid fly angler and someone who has come to appreciate what he calls the Rodney Dangerfield of trout insects, shared what he's learned about the caddis.

His curiosity about the caddis, he said, had its roots in his own frustrations of fishing to rising, feeding trout and getting only refusals. To sate that curiosity, he turned to a variety of published works, most notably "*Caddisflies*," by the late Gary LaFontaine. He discovered that the results of stomach pump surveys demonstrated that caddis – pupa, emergers and adults – constituted a larger portion of the fish's stomach contents than mayflies.



*Dan Keifer spoke to more than 50 club members at the August 11 meeting in Rochester.*

Why might this be so? Keifer attributed it to four factors:

- Caddis go through a complete metamorphosis in the stream, moving higher in the water column through the change period.
- They enjoy a longer lifespan. A caddisfly will live for a week or longer; a mayfly lives a day or two.
- Hatches last longer.
- They offer unique visual clues to feeding trout.

If that's the case, why are caddis not better understood and appreciated? He attributed this lack of appreciation and misunderstanding that renders the caddis the Rodney Dangerfield of trout insects to a number of factors:

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## **UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS**

**September 8  
Speaker Meeting  
Glenn Weisner  
& Wayne Sampson  
Glenn River Flies  
Topic: Terrestrials**

Clarenceville Middle School,  
Livonia, 7:30 p.m.

**September 11  
Au Sable River Clean-Up**

Sponsored by the Anglers  
of the Au Sable and the  
Au Sable Big Water Preservation  
Assn.

**September 15  
Board Meeting**

Clarenceville Middle School,  
Livonia, 7:30 p.m.

**September 22  
Activity Meeting  
Featured Tier: Ray Geitka**

Clarenceville Middle School,  
Livonia, 7:30 p.m.

**October 6  
Speaker Meeting  
Chris Reister, Mystic  
Outdoors**

**Topic: Fishing Alaska**  
Clarenceville Middle School,  
Livonia, 7:30 p.m.



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*Dan Keifer (left) and Past President Peter Albertson share a laugh before the meeting.*

## ***MFFC in Rochester:*** **Keifer, caddis and Paint Creek**

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- The complete metamorphosis of the caddis is hard to see and observe.
- Mayflies dominate the lingo and lore of trout fishing literature.
- Anglers aren't familiar with the pupal stage.
- The behavior of the insects is difficult to interpret.

So what are the "telltale" clues for recognizing caddis feeding activity?

- Trout leaping in the air. "When a caddis is fully developed, it's up, out of the water, in the air and gone like a shot."
- Rise forms are bulges and splashes, not heads and backs.
- There are no insects on the water.
- You're getting "refusal" strikes.

What to do in those circumstances? Fish an emerger, Keifer advised. His favorite pattern is the LaFontaine Emergent Sparkle Pupa," although patterns like the X-caddis and Craig Mathews' Iris Caddis are becoming increasingly popular.

When in doubt, he said, try an elk hair caddis dry fly with an emerger dropper.

## **Paint Creek to get new protections**

Paint Creek, a tributary to the Clinton River and one of Southeast Michigan's few coldwater streams, is special to Dan Keifer. He reported that a five-mile stretch of Paint Creek will likely be covered by new regulations effective April 1, 2011.



*Dan Keifer (left) offers additional info on caddis patterns.*

Anglers fishing the stretch from Tienken Road to Silverbell Road will be limited to flies and artificial lures. There will be a two fish take-limit with minimum sizes set at 14 inches for Brook Trout, and 10 inches for Rainbow and Brown Trout.

The new regulations must still be approved by the Fisheries Division of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment and the Michigan Natural Resources Commission. If approved, Michigan will have 160 miles of streams covered by special regulations.

## **Wanna tie one on? Do it at an upcoming Activity Meeting**

As the club's new program year kicks off, we are looking for "Featured Tiers" for our Activity meetings.

Openings are currently available for Activity Meetings in October, November, December, January, February, March, April, and May. Ray Geitka is stepping into September's spotlight.

So, if you are interested in amazing, wowing, and tantalizing your fellow club members with a pattern of your own, a classic fly pattern, or just one out of a book or magazine, contact Todd Schotts at club meetings, or via email at [dragoneyeflyz05@yahoo.com](mailto:dragoneyeflyz05@yahoo.com) or [todd@grizzlyfliesbyschottsie.com](mailto:todd@grizzlyfliesbyschottsie.com).

So, let's get ready to tie one on.

# How we spent our summer vacation: The South Platte

by Dan Finstad

They say that timing is everything and during the last weekend in July that phrase took on new meaning for me. My son had signed up for a soccer camp in Golden, CO, and my wife and I planned to accompany him. A call to Ed Engle resulted in a confirmation that Ed would be available for a guide trip for a day in his home waters on the South Platte, while my son attended camp. Ed, who was one of the headliners at the 2010 Midwest Fly Fishing Expo, has cut down on the number of guide trips he provides each year to less than a dozen. Getting his last trip for 2010 was a stroke of luck or maybe just good timing.

I met Ed at 6:25 a.m. on a clear, crisp Friday about 40 minutes west of his home in Manitou Springs. I pulled the rental car alongside my guide's battle-tested Ford pickup truck with 178,000 miles on the odometer. If the truck could talk we surely would be able to hear a lot of colorful fishing stories that could only be confirmed or embellished by A.K. Best, John Gierach, and Ed's other fishing buddies. I was hopeful that the truck would add another "You aren't going to believe this tale" to its fishing resume. We jumped in for an eight-mile drive up a winding road into a colorful red rock canyon. The first morning light danced off the canyon walls and rock overcrops above us as the sun had just barely begun its ascent into the clear Colorado sky. The weatherman was predicting thunderstorms all day. Again this "timing is everything" theme was playing out, and the weather Gods were smiling down at us.

The plan, Ed explained, was to fish the end of the Trico hatch and hopefully we would be on the river when the spinner fall occurred. I was happy to leave the entomology logistics to the small fly guru. I kept pinching myself to make sure I wasn't dreaming. I was streamside on a gorgeous day with Ed Engle on his home stream, he with his front shirt pockets filled with boxes of his tiny magic insect imitations. Hopefully we would have more good timing with Mother Nature cooperating on hatch conditions.

The spot on the river that Ed initially wanted to fish already had a fisherman on the bank and he slowly backed up the truck for his second choice. Any spot that Ed was going to recommend was fine with me; I was anxious to get fishing. He parked the truck and I leisurely rigged up trying to settle down and not appear like an overly zealous yahoo. (A big task- I was geeked!) Ed looked at my gear and seemed satisfied that the five-weight rod and reel were up to the task at hand. Ed explained that he didn't like to tie anything on prior to actually surveying the stream. So I followed him down an overgrown path less than 30 yards to the stream with a fly-less leader on my line.

The stream flow was perfect for wading and we stood in ankle-deep water as we took in the 60-foot wide stream and the panoramic view in front of us. We were positioned in a long series of riffles, just above a significant drop into a deeper non-wadeable drop-off, above a big boulder. This is where my South Platte fly fishing lesson would begin. There were no noticeable fish or rises apparent as Ed assessed my leader and opened the fly box. He tied on a #20 Trico dun to 5X tippet and scanned the river for risers. Ed watched a few initial casts and told me that my casts weren't nearly as bad as I had

earlier warned him. He said I would be fine. I thanked him for lying. He told me to stop casting and watch for something to happen. This was not what I expected. Left to my own devices I could have likely mucked up this whole section of stream within 10 minutes of casting. The first lesson of the day was to be patient, wait, and let the stream and bugs tell us when the time was right. Again, there was that timing thing in play.

The next 10 minutes seemed like an hour. The sun climbed higher. The air became warmer. Trico duns began to appear on the water.

We spotted a rise across the stream and then spotted another. Ed got me in position to cast across and down and after a few casts I got my first take. I set the hook and proceeded to clamp down on the line in what my guide called a "MY Fish" response. The healthy fish had broke off in an instant. Ed explained that I had to let the fish run immediately, if that is what the fish wanted to do. I was on a steep learning curve and I was hoping my guide would not lose his patience with his client – a relative newbie to this type of fishing where bigger trout were possible. Until then I could count the number of 15"+ trout successfully landed on one hand.

Tricos began massing above us in huge swarms.

Ed had added a Trico spinner trailer to the lead dun fly on my line and we began to see additional fish taking insects in subtle rises. My eyes were adjusting to the ever changing light as the sun rose higher. As if by magic there were torpedo shaped shadows appearing in front of us just below the water surface.

The fish were everywhere, taking Trico spinners while barely breaking the surface.

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*Ed Engle, master of the small fly, gets ready for an adventure with Dan Finstad.*

## **How we spent our summer vacation: The South Platte**

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Only the top side of the dorsal fin and the tip of the mouth of the feeding fish were breaking the water. I couldn't believe my eyes, all the fish were healthy size in the 13-plus-inch class. Ed would later say that he wished he had a tape recording of my voice which continued to raise a couple of octaves when the fish began to appear. "Highly animated" and "excited" do not begin to describe my awestruck reaction to the scene before us.

I hooked and fought three or four additional fish within the next 30 minutes, each time surviving several runs downstream and bringing them back to my guide's net only to have them get off the hook just before we could net them. Ed had the patience of a saint and reminded me that we were fishing with very small flies and it wasn't necessarily my error. My ego was getting bruised and I was wondering if I would ever land one of these beautiful fish. I finally began to finely calibrate the limitations of how much pressure was possible and we landed a highly colorful 13" rainbow. A couple of more catches and releases followed with fish in the 14- to 15-

inch range. One of the last fish of the morning was one that will be long remembered.

An acrobatic rainbow took the trailing spinner just above the drop off in the stream and immediately jumped two feet in the air the minute I set the hook. The fish immediately headed for the deep water and held its ground for some time downstream until I was able to coax it out into the upstream riffles. This back-and-forth tussle went on for some time. It made several short runs and another airborne leap across stream. I played the fish back toward me and it swirled several yards in front of Ed as he readied the long handled net. As Ed again got into position downstream from me, I told him that I thought the fish was far from exhaustion; it seemed possessed.

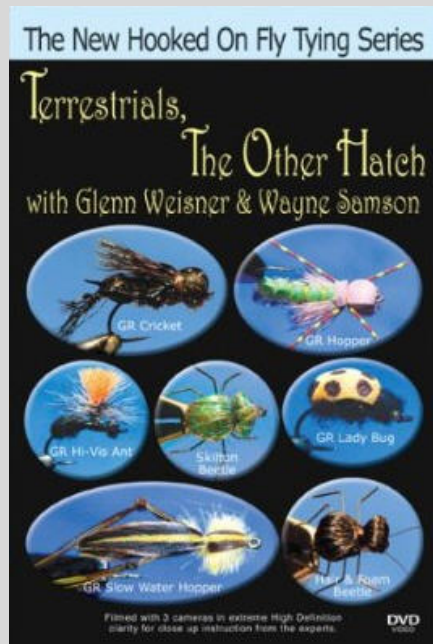
The next several minutes of the fight were amazing. I am not sure if the fish saw the net, or saw Ed, but the next run was something I had never experienced in trout fishing. The fish streaked directly upstream, its afterburners kicking in. All I could do was let it run. In less than 20 seconds I saw the entire 90 feet of olive colored fly line fly off the reel. I watched as the fish and line streaked up around a bend upstream and out of sight. My voice shrieked to Ed that I was into my backing. The florescent green color of the backing rolled off for about 10 additional feet and I was hoping for some miracle or guidance from Ed, who seemed as surprised as I. I fully expected the fish to continue upstream and prepared myself for the snap of tippet and disappointment as I kept letting it run. Finally the fish slowed and I was actually able to gain back some line. Then the spastic rainbow started running back toward me. At first I was keeping up but the fish was coming back fast with the current.

Ed saw the situation and realizing what was happening, he hollered for me to start stripping line. Ed doesn't raise his voice very often. My stripping was awkward, far from pretty, and not nearly as fast as my guide expected. I had fly line everywhere in front of me and briefly had loose line that generally results in the loss of the fish. Ed was beside me, saw my struggles with the slacked line, and asked if the fish was gone. Miraculously the fish was still on as I continued to strip line with Ed, as my instructor, giving directions beside me. I had caught up to the crazed fish and it was finally showing signs of tiring. Ed again got ready with the net and we finally slipped the chunky 15.5-inch trout into the net.

Both the fisherman and fish were completely spent.

My guide gently retrieved the deep set fly and pointed the trout upstream allowing it to recover gradually. It took several minutes for the fish to revive and we watched it in the shallow water for several minutes as it regrouped before kicking its rear fin and propelling itself back into the faster water. We reviewed the line management lessons and had a few laughs in the process.

Several more fish were caught and released that morning and a few in the afternoon. The morning session will be remembered for the nearly three hours of entertainment that the South Platte spinner fall gave us. I now think timing is almost everything. Add timing to a patient, seasoned guide with magic small flies on his home river and you have lasting fishing memories.



*Terrestrials will be the focus of the September 8 meeting. With a little luck and some help from the weather gods, some of the patterns will continue to produce through the remainder of the month.*

## Glenn River Flies' Weisner and Samson open MFFC's new program year

School, quite literally, is back in session on September 8 when the Michigan Fly Fishing Club's program year begins at Clarenceville Middle School in Livonia.

The first speaker meeting of the year features the dynamic duo of Glenn Weisner and Wayne Samson of Glenn River Flies.

The Glenn River team has been tying flies and fishing for decades. Career schedules, family commitments and plain old bad luck generally means that when they show up on a trout stream the main insect "hatch" has already come and gone. It was for this very reason that Glenn and Wayne started to research and tie terrestrial patterns.

Their DVD "The Other Hatch" is a compilation of their most productive terrestrial patterns that are durable enough to withstand a 50-bluegill afternoon in your favorite farm pond and creative enough to be presented on virtually any trout water setting.

On September 8, Weisner and Samson will bring club members the highlights of that DVD live, in person and up-close. The DVD features such patterns as GR Hopper, GR Slow Water Hopper, Hair & Foam Beetle, Skilton Beetle, GR Hi-vis Ant, GR Cricket, and the GR Lady Bug

With a combined 40 years of both fly tying and on-stream fly fishing experience, Weisner and Samson conduct private fly tying sessions and on-stream educational workshops.

## Sept. Featured Tier: Geitka opens the year with a surprise pattern

Ray Geitka kicks off the run of featured tiers at MFFC Activity Nights on September 22. While Ray hasn't shared what patterns he will focus on that night, this isn't the first time he's been in the Activity Night spotlight. Previous ties included the U.P. Hillbilly (a.k.a. Pinto's Folly), Washington Nymph, a variety of Clouser-style Minnows and Ray's Smashing Zonker. So it will be interesting to see exactly which patterns Ray selects for the first Featured Tier segment of the program year.

It's hard to imagine that anyone would be unfamiliar with Ray, but just in case you are: He is a long term member of the Michigan Fly Fishing Club; he joined in 1980 right after attending the 2nd Annual Bamboo Revival, now known as Midwest Fly Fishing Expo. Ray is a past president of the Paul H. Young Chapter of Trout Unlimited, a past director of the MFFC and has served on the MFFC Conservation Committee. Ray also happens to be one of the few persons – if not the only person – who has a complete collection of Midwest Fly Fishing Expo show and worker pins.

Ray is an accomplished tier. He studied tying under Hollis Haliday and has taught tying classes for both Royal Oak and Birmingham Adult Education. He has also instructed at local fly shops.

So bring your vise, tying tools, note-pad, and get ready to be amazed and educated.

## How we spent our summer vacation: Telinda and Wischman take on the San Juan



New Mexico's San Juan River, which is best known for catching BIG fish on really SMALL flies, finds its way onto many a fly fisher's "gotta go" lists. Treasurer Jim Telinda and Bill Wischman got up and went.

Telinda, who's a veteran of several trips to the San Juan, reported, "Once we got there, it was classic San Juan. Temps were in the 90s and the river was running at 550 cfs (cubic feet per second). A little low in my book. The water temp is 50 degrees all year long and creates evaporative cooling when the weather is hot. It's incredibly comfortable on the river. The river was absolutely clear with essentially no algae. I assume that was because we were early in the year. When going in the fall, the river has always been full of algae."



One highlight from the trip was a day spent with guide Andy Kim.

"Once we got the technique down for the small flies, fishing was great," Telinda said. "Bill picked right up on tying on those 24s, 26s and 28s. One of the best patterns was the Yong Special, which is a cream midge. Departing from small flies, I had outstanding luck with a fly Kim calls AK-47. It's a variation of the Chernobyl ant. It's incredible to watch a large trout just mosey up and take the big dry. You can see them all the way and obviously, they can see you also."

"It's an outstanding place to go since there is no question about fish being there," he said. Sometimes, they are difficult to catch, but once you get on a roll, there is no better place to fish for trout.

Telinda says there's not just photographic evidence, but video. "If you would like to see Andy's video, go to [www.yspecial.com](http://www.yspecial.com) and go to the YouTube link and scroll down to "Fishing with Jim and Bill."

*Jim Telinda, top, and Bill Wischman display a couple of San Juan River rainbows.*

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