

# Newscasts

March 2009 Serving the Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited



## Meicher Madness Auction – March 10 Come and get it!!!

At the suggestion of many members and by a unanimous vote of the Executive Board, our annual March auction is now and hereafter known as the “Meicher Madness Auction” to honor Larry Meicher’s years of service to Trout Unlimited. While Larry did a ton of work behind the scenes, he was also front and center at many an auction, peddling off packs, reels, rods and even the hat off his head. (read the tribute to Larry on page 4).

It’s a very fun night and you might walk away with some amazing stuff, including:

- Proven patterns tied by local masters
- Beautiful fly rods
- Float tubes
- *More* proven patterns tied by local masters.
- Guided trips
- Fly tying materials
- Wonderful wooden creations

These are just a few of the amazing things people have donated... and won... at the auction. **You never know what you’ll find, or the great deals you can get!**

So be there – with items to donate and/or cash to snap up some very cool *stuff*. And in the tradition set forth by Larry, no \$10 bid will be accepted!

This is our second-biggest fundraiser, so mark it on your calendar and we’ll see you there! As always, we’ll start at 7 p.m. at the Coliseum Bar and Grill on Olin Ave. If you’d like to eat, be there closer to 6.

## **Somebody is going to win \$100!!!**

The *You-Must-Be-Present-To-Win* jackpot has reached its size limit. Contest rules stipulate that the jackpot never exceed \$100. So, someone will leave the March 10 meeting with a \$100 gift certificate to *Fontana Sports Specialties*. All members in attendance will receive, free of charge, the entry-half of a single raffle ticket. If the other half of your ticket is drawn from the hat, then you will the \$100 gift certificate. All you have to do is show up.

## Upcoming Chapter Elections in April

The annual spring elections offer an opportunity for Chapter members to serve on the Executive Board. This year our incumbent president, vice president, secretary and treasurer are running for reelection. These officers serve a one year term with a six year term limit.

Each year, three Directors are also elected and serve a two year term. Two board members are not running for reelection so there will be two openings without an incumbent running.

Lastly, the State Delegate to the Wisconsin Council of Trout Unlimited is a one year term up for election.

SWTU members further the Chapter mission in many ways and have made us one of the most active Chapters in the Midwest. A key to our continuing success is the regular change of leadership and the willingness of members to bring new ideas and enthusiasm to the Executive Board.

If are interested in serving in a position you need only contact any officer or board member on the Leadership Roster. (Officers are listed at the end of the newsletter).

Names are forwarded to the Nominating Committee, which assembles a slate of candidates for the April chapter meeting (April 14, this year). If there is no contest for a slot, the person is typically approved on a voice vote. If a slot is contested, the election is conducted via secret written ballot. In addition, nominations may be made from the floor.

The Leadership section of [www.swtu.org](http://www.swtu.org) has specific details on election procedures and the expectations for each position. If you have a nomination or further questions or your Internet connection is slow (or nonexistent), please call Mike Mihalas at (608) 345-1614.

## Drift!

We’ll have pictures and a lot more information in next month’s *Newscasts*. For now I’ll say that the movie was inspiring, the camaraderie was wonderful and we raised a good chunk of change to buy permanent stream access rights in Dane County!

## Over \$19,000 Raised So Far for Easements

### By Dan Wisniewski

Our chapter's efforts to raise funds to support Dane County's new program to buy permanent easements on trout streams has so far generated over \$19,200!

Eighty chapter members (see list) have contributed \$7705 in response to a fundraising letter sent last October. This is in addition to a \$2500 donation approved by the Chapter Board last fall. These contributions have leveraged \$9000 in additional donations from the following organizations:

- Wisconsin State TU Council \$5000
- Elliot Donnelly (IL) TU chapter \$1000
- Badger Fly Fishers \$1000
- Federation of Fly Fishers \$1000
- Dane County Conservation League \$1000

We will continue to work with our partner in this pilot program, the Natural Heritage Land Trust, to raise additional funds from other conservation groups and foundations. Any money raised from the Chapter's premier showing of the fly fishing movie "Drift" on Wednesday, March 4 is also dedicated to easement purchases (and will be included in next month's tally!).

So far, the county has purchased 12 permanent easements on over six miles of trout streams. These easements allow public access and facilitate stream restoration work. County funds (and our TU dollars) often generate matching DNR funds that expand the number of stream frontage that will be forever protected. There is no collaborative county-state-TU-land trust program like this in the country!

Every dollar contributed is fully tax deductible and goes entirely for the purchase of easements. Please make your checks payable to Southern Wisconsin TU and send your contributions to: Trout Unlimited, 222 S. Hamilton St., Suite 12, Madison, WI 53703.

# Thank you!!

### Easement Program Contributors to-date:

Edwin Barnes	James Burns
Roger Clausen	William Flader, M.D.
Steve Gordon	John Gribb
Stephen Hawk	Roger Howard
Dave Kindig	Joseph Kubale
Daniel Laudon	Mark Rhinerson
Brent Nicaastro	Thomas Patterson
Charlie Sanders	Robert Selk
Frederick Seybold	Jeff Smith
John Tweddale	Hugh Wabers
Leslie Wadsworth	Douglas Wadsworth
Tom Bewick	Greg and Jane Hyer
John Lyons	Raymond Venn
Kate Wipperman	Lynn Blenker
Stephen Born	James Gentry
Lee Groth	Patrick Handrick
Jack Heiden	Gilbert Herman
Martin Jenich	Richard Lindroth
John Serunian	Scott Seymour
James Sugar	John Heinrichs
James Kanvik	Drew Kasel
Jordan Konisky	Greg Paradise
Matthew Mitro	Robert Krewson
Stephen Wald	Dennis Presser
Thomas Thrall	Ken Genskow
Tom Crabb	Gregory Vodak
Colleen Moore	Len Maurer
Dennis Franke	Chuck Valliere
Nancy & Joe Moskal	Ann Jakel
Stephen Berg	Jim Beecher
Peggy Stormoen	Steven Robertson
Keith Nelson	Ken Pfile
Thomas Pellett	Tina Murray
Gerald Campbell	Robert Chybowski
Charles Hodulik	Dan Wisniewski
Bill Pielsticker	Frank Kosmach
Tim and Joan Sullivan	
Gene Mueller and Family	
Thomas M. & Margie E. Krauskopf	
Michael and Shelley Dubis	

### Organizations:

Elliot Donnelly TU Chapter of Illinois  
The Dane County Conservation League  
Wisconsin Trout Unlimited State Council  
Badger Fly Fishers  
Federation of Fly Fishers

## Bettering Black Earth Creek

By Mike Grimes, Project Chair

On **March 14** and **March 28** we will meet at Salmo Pond at 8 a.m. for limbing and installation of sweepers. Most of the work will be on the south side of the stream so waders are needed to cross over. We'll work up a hunger and have lunch (provided) at noon.

The DNR and others commented on the great effectiveness of the sweepers we installed last year!

Note that we cannot work if the water is too high. Contact Mike Grimes, Project Chair, at [mgrimes17@charter.net](mailto:mgrimes17@charter.net) or (608) 655-1086.

## Free Casting Clinic on April 18

We are once again sponsoring our annual Fly Casting Clinic. The clinic is free, and available to anyone interested in learning how to cast a fly. Beginners are especially encouraged to attend. Loaner rods will be available for those who do not own their own equipment. The clinic will begin at 9 a.m. on Saturday April 18 at Salmo Pond (2 miles west of Cross Plains on Highway 14).

You can learn about casting, aquatic entomology and reading the water. This is a fantastic opportunity for



Jeff Smith helps teach casting.

anyone 6 years of age and older to get involved in our sport. These 2-3 hours would cost a bundle from a private guide! Let any friend, relative or neighbor know about this valuable once a year event. For more information, please contact Jeff at [riversmith@charter.net](mailto:riversmith@charter.net).

## Welcome!

Southern Wisconsin Trout Unlimited is pleased to announce the addition of these fine folk to our ranks.

Chris Dorn	Sarah Bennington
Henry Walski	Kenneth Hesselbach
Robert Kelso	Jim Vandenberg
Anthony Lawler	Matt Howards
Dean Becker	Anthony Messinger
Kevin Jennings	Richard Anderson
John Mueller	William Schlafer

We are honored to have you among us. Please join us for a Chapter meeting, and we will give you free raffle tickets, flies and "an offer you can't refuse" from some of our most experienced fisher-folk!

## Check the Chapter Calendar!

Stay in tune with all things trout with the SWTU Chapter Calendar, easily found in the left menu bar of [www.swtu.org](http://www.swtu.org). If you have an item for the calendar, please contact Jordan at [jordan.konisky@gmail.com](mailto:jordan.konisky@gmail.com).

## Go to Camp – Stream Restoration Camp!

The Chapter will pay the way for 5 dedicated SWTU members to attend Stream Restoration Camp. This year it's being held March 27 – 28 at Living Waters Bible Camp in Westby, WI. (There will be time on Saturday for some fishing!)

This training is **vital** to the expansion and continued success of our Chapter's habitat restoration work. If you're interested in attending, please contact Dave Sanders at 843-7125 or [daveandcheri@charter.net](mailto:daveandcheri@charter.net).

## Special Annual Fishing Day

Please mark your calendars for our TU chapter's Special Annual Fishing Day on Saturday June 13, 2009 at Jim Kalscheur's Ponds. You have the opportunity to provide a great day of fishing for some very special people who are not ordinarily able to share in the pastime we all love. Setup will commence at 7:30 a.m. and the fishing will begin at 9 a.m. The directions to Jim Kalscheur's ponds are: Take Mineral Point Road towards Pine Bluff. Turn left, after approximately 5 miles, onto Old Military Road, then left on Valley Spring Road. The Kalscheur property will be on your left. TU signs will be strategically placed at intersections to help provide direction. TU members are encouraged to bring their family members to share in this wonderfully rewarding volunteer opportunity. We need groundskeepers, fishing guides, greeters, servers and fish cleaners. Breakfast pastries, lunch and beverages will be provided. All volunteers are welcome to fish the ponds after our guests leave, around 2 p.m.

I need about six volunteers on Friday night, 06/12/09, to help set up fishing tackle for our guests. Please meet at Kalscheur's Ponds at 5:30 p.m., the project should be finished before 8 p.m.

Contact John Schweiger at 238-8062 for more information or to volunteer Friday night.

## Talking TU Our booth at the Midwest Fishing Expo



## Remembering Larry Meicher

It is with a saddened heart that we report the passing of Larry Meicher. Larry passed away Monday March 2<sup>nd</sup> at his farm after a prolonged battle with cancer. Please take a moment to reflect on Larry's commitment to SWTU and TUs' mission. Keep his wife Dorothy and Larry's family in your thoughts and prayers.

At Larry's requested, he will be cremated and a streamside memorial service is to be held on one of his favorite streams with the date, time and place to be announced in the future.

Larry Meicher was involved at every level of TU in Wisconsin for decades, and whatever needed to be done, he did. His contributions were consistently outstanding – both in leadership and service to chapter and council and he was involved for more than three decades!

At the chapter level, he served early on as Chapter President. Perhaps most importantly, he has played a principal role in recruiting many successor chapter officers – in fact, from the time that Larry first introduced himself to a new member he was already sizing them up for leadership potential and future roles in TU. He was a highly-effective lead instructor in SWTU's beginner fly-tying classes for more than twenty years. Several past presidents of SWTU and Council and national leaders, and scores of TU members generally, were recruited from that class. For chapter and council fund-raising events, he was omnipresent. SWTU and Wild Rivers chapters couldn't imagine an auction without the infamous auctioneer Dr. Sausage, known for extracting ridiculously high bids for seemingly useless trout fishing miscellanea – all to support coldwater conservation. Whether it was an educational event, stream project, oversight of award nominations, master of ceremonies, interim officer – he did it all with grace and enthusiasm at both Council and chapter levels. He played a key role in organizing new chapters in Wisconsin. In addition, when Larry was MC of a TU ceremonial event and presented a TU award in his rich baritone voice, there was no doubt in the mind of the recipient that it was heartfelt and represented genuine appreciation on the part of our organization.

Larry was always a generous contributor to chapter and council fund-raising events. Of particular note, his famous series of Pass Lake flies (anything black and white that he tied on a hook!), for which he gained the nickname "The Pass Lake Kid," were always sought after and seem to show up at every kind of TU event. He was a "performer" on TUTV in a wonderful episode that showcased local conservation efforts on Black Earth Creek. His warm friendly style of communicating, coupled with his many years of work as a professional educator, made him a top-notch spokesman for local conservation efforts viewed nationwide.

All his accomplishments in support of TU's mission – notable for both their quality and their longevity – made Larry Meicher a splendid recipient for the Wisconsin State Council's Lifetime Achievement Award. He has spent a TU lifetime recognizing the work of others; it was with pride that the Wisconsin Council recognized Larry for his superior long-time leadership, service and commitment to Trout Unlimited at the February State Council Banquet with a Trout Unlimited Lifetime Service Award.

Larry's commitment and contributions to Trout Unlimited and our cold-water resource far exceeded the high lights outlined above; his accomplishments were a lifetime to be proud of and we are honored to have known him.

Larry will be missed and his waders may never be filled, but his contributions will never be forgotten.



*Larry receiving the Trout Unlimited Lifetime Service Award*

## Fountains of Youth

*A look at classic flies that have withstood the test of time ... flies that remain "forever young"*

by Rusty Dunn

*"Of all feather required for fly dressing, the hackle is the most important and, unfortunately, the most difficult to procure." --F.M. Halford, 1886 in *Floating Flies and How to Dress Them**

How times have changed. If Halford could visit a well-stocked fly shop today, he would be astonished. The quality and variety of modern dry fly hackle is extraordinary. Colors that used to be as rare as the crown jewels are now as common as a knockoff Rolex. How did it happen? A handful of meticulous and observant fly tyers raised chickens for decades, choosing at each generation only birds with the best hackle for further breeding. Their selective breeding yielded roosters having long uniform feathers with thin flexible stems and short, stiff, glassy barbs.

Chickens were domesticated over 4,000 years ago from crosses among at least two different species of wild Asian jungle fowl. Two separate and independent poultry breeding programs in America produced today's fly tying elite from more ordinary domestic stock. One lineage began with Harry Darbee in the 1930s, and the other with Henry Hoffman in the 1960s. Their pioneering work on poultry breeding for fly tyers lives on today... literally.

Harry Darbee (1906-1983) was a commercial fly tyer in the Catskill town of Livingston Manor, NY. Darbee bred chickens expressly for fly tying from the 1930s through 1970s. He began with stock obtained from the famous fly tyer Reuben Cross, but Darbee had the wisdom to diversify his flock by crossing it with old European varieties, most notably Blue Andalusian and English Gamecock. Darbee bred mainly for feather color, especially the many shades of dun. He spent decades seeking an elusive "self-blue" variety, which might yield only natural blue dun offspring. He never succeeded, but Darbee's many flavors of dun were treasures of the fly tying world.

Darbee was as generous as he was clever. He gave eggs in 1954 to Minnesota's Andy Miner, who expanded the color range and greatly improved feather quality. Darbee described Miner's hackle as "the finest in the world." Miner never sold a single feather or egg, but, like Darbee, he gave many away. He gave eggs to Michigan's Ted Hebert in 1973 and to Pennsylvania's Buck Metz in 1972, who established the first large hackle business. Metz subdivided the Darbee flock, yielding a series of lines whose offspring had more predictable colors. This was an important advance, as it improved on prevailing "shot-gun breeding" strategies.

Henry Hoffman was a commercial fly tyer in Warrenton, OR. Disappointed with the quality of available hackle and having been raised on a chicken farm, Hoffman decided to take matters into his own hands. He bought a pair of bantam Plymouth Rock (grizzly) chickens at a livestock show in 1965 for five bucks. The birds had exceptional feathers and founded Hoffman's selective breeding program. He later added browns and natural duns to the flock. Within 10-15 years, Hoffman produced the finest hackle ever known, especially his grizzly. Improvements in feather quality were remarkable. Before Hoffman, rooster saddles were not suitable for dry flies, but by 1980 Hoffman "Super Saddles" were legendary. Demand was high, supply was low, and Hoffman hackle was as scarce as it was famous. Genetics of both the Darbee/Miner/Hebert and the Hoffman lines of chickens is now entrusted to Tom Whiting and other commercial growers, who continue to make improvements that many thought were impossible.

When you next hackle a dozen #24 midges or wrap a feather of uncommon color and beauty, think of the observant poultry breeders who made it possible. Harry Darbee's and Henry Hoffman's hands will be all over your finished flies. Their amazing chickens are 75+ years old and going strong. Indeed, they get better and better every year. We should all age so gracefully...

## ----- Adams Midge -----

Adams Midges might just satisfy all your midge needs, but other useful colors are Olive, Cream, Grizzly, and Black Midges. Vary the colors of the thread, tail fibers, dubbing and hackle as needed.

Hook:	Dry fly, #20-26
Thread:	Gray, the smallest available
Tail:	Grizzly & brown mixed hackle fibers
Body:	Gray muskrat, beaver, or silk dubbing
Hackle:	Grizzly & brown mixed



## Amazing Times

By Dave Sanders, SWTU President

The outlook for opening weekend is mild in the high 40's with possible showers. Might just be a great day for a Blue Wing Olive hatch.

Opening day is always a tell tail sign that a new beginning is just around the corner. No one knows for sure what opportunities will abound, in the stream or in the Chapter. The sure signs of spring include the start of stream restoration projects, fly tying classes nearing completion with another graduating class of accomplished tiers and future SWTU leaders, Project Green Teen environmental program off and running with the up coming week long excursion at Avalanche,

the annual SWTU Casting Clinic at Salmo Pond, on on on we go.

On opening day we could all drift a pass lake on our secret stretch of stream in honor of Larry Meicher; I know he would be proud and smiling down on us.

In that spirit of dedication, remember that the resource is not free. It demands our continued vigilance and commitment and SWTU works hard to make sure there are opportunities for everyone to participate in sustaining our cold-water fisheries, ensuring ongoing life of our precious trout streams.

Remember to watch our on line calendar for opportunities and events of interest.

### Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited Leadership:

President	Dave Sanders	(608) 843-7125	<a href="mailto:daveandcheri@charter.net">daveandcheri@charter.net</a>
Vice President	Mike Mihalas	(608) 345-1614	<a href="mailto:mike@mihalas.com">mike@mihalas.com</a>
Secretary/Newscasts Editor	Drew Kasel	(608) 242-9872	<a href="mailto:madkasel@gmail.com">madkasel@gmail.com</a>
Treasurer	Tom Thrall	(608) 273-4248	<a href="mailto:tthrall2@yahoo.com">tthrall2@yahoo.com</a>
Past President	Jack Way	(608) 222-2461	<a href="mailto:jackway@charter.net">jackway@charter.net</a>
State Council Rep.	Greg Vodak	(608) 873-5107	<a href="mailto:gregvodak@charter.net">gregvodak@charter.net</a>
Project Chair	Mike Grimes	(608) 656-1086	<a href="mailto:mgrimes17@charter.net">mgrimes17@charter.net</a>

### Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited

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