

# Newscasts

April, 2004 Serving the Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited



## Fisheries Expert to Speak at April Meeting

Our April 13<sup>th</sup> chapter meeting will feature avid angler and world renowned fisheries expert, Ray White. Ray graduated from Madison West High School in 1953 and went on to earn B.A., M.S., and Ph.D. degrees in zoology, from the University of Wisconsin, Madison His career as an aquatic biologist for the Wisconsin Conservation Department (now the DNR) began in 1957. He worked for over 46 years to develop, apply, and evaluate methods for restoring stream habitat for fish in the Midwest, the Pacific Northwest, and in Europe. He has been a professor of fishery science at Michigan State University and Montana State University. Ray authored numerous distinguished publications including a seminal DNR technical bulletin on stream habitat management and a series of research papers on salmonid habitat behavior; articles on wild-vs.-hatchery-fish matters; and recent writings on the history of salmonid stream restoration.

He has been a Trout Unlimited member for over 34 years, and has served as a TU advisor at both state and national levels. He claims to have been bitten by the fishing bug in 1938 upon catching a small perch from a wooden pier on Lake Mendota's Picnic Point. He was bitten by the fly fishing bug on "about June 20, 1946", during a Hexagenia hatch on the Mecan River.

Please join us as we partake of this unique opportunity to learn about stream restoration from a passionate fisherman with a distinguished career and local roots. The meeting will commence at 7:02 PM on April 13<sup>th</sup>. As always, we will meet at the Maple Tree Restaurant located in the heart of McFarland on Highway 51. Please come early, and join us for dinner.

## Earthday Cleanup

Come out to Black Earth Creek for a belated Earth Day Celebration on April 24<sup>th</sup>. As in years past, SWTU will be picking trash from the stream corridor that passes between Cross Plains and Black Earth. We will meet in the Salmo Pond Parking lot at 8:00 AM to distribute garbage bags, and to divide ourselves into smaller groups. Each small group will comb a section of the stream for trash. A good turn out for this event means that the segments are all small and that the job is easy. The task should be completed by noon.

## March Madness a Huge Success

Our March Madness Auction was a lot of fun. Thanks to more donations than anyone could remember having ever seen, it was a long and fruitful night. In the end, we collected \$3,885.80 for the cause. This appears to have been our most profitable auction ever.

Success doesn't just happen. Hundreds of people contributed to this effort. There were at least 5 dozen sets of flies donated, and some of those sets were large. Dennis Franke donated a tremendous amount of camping equipment. Jim Hess and Peter Burke donated some nice pieces of wildlife art. Jim Bartelt and Scot Stewart donated guided fishing trips. The auctioneer's bag was once again provided at a very generous discount by Dennis Cuchna of Battle Lake Outdoors. The bounty filled over 40 square feet of table space. It all came in so fast that it is difficult to recall, and then thank, all of the donors. If you were one of them – Thank You! There were also a lot of generous bidders. Thank you too.



Scenes from the Auction: (Clockwise from top left), Dr. Sausage (Larry Meicher) prepares to foist a talking fish upon the crowd. Ole Svenson (Mark Maffitt) ponders some counterfeit pond specimens. SWTU President Sue Fey models a fishing pack. Col. Muskrat (Topf Wells) prepares to part with one of the evening's top bargains. (Photos by Jim Gentry.)

### **From the Project Chair**

"It's leaning against the porch railing just outside the back door," she told me when we spoke recently. "My hired-man put it there one day this winter. He said he found it pinned against one of the cattle-gates."

A day or two after one of our six work-days on Garfoot Creek last fall, I walked a stretch of the stream we'd worked on just east of Pam Allen's farm-buildings to gauge the short-term effects of our labors. I first saw the sled then. One of those injection-mold plastic, goes-like-hell, can't-be-steered, looks like a butter-dish deals. It was upside-down in the silt, maybe a foot of its three-and-one-half-foot length visible. Apparently it had been concealed beneath one of the many woody mats of debris we'd removed, and wasn't visible in the turbid water. Or else two days of unimpeded flow had already washed away enough silt to reveal it! Its removal would be high on the to-do list when work resumed in Spring.

It's gratifying to have re-affirmed the notion that, given the opportunity, a river can do much to heal itself.

The hereunder named SWTU members enhanced that healing process on Saturday, March 27, the first in a series of 'Corps of Recovery' work-days scheduled for 2004. (APRIL 10 is the next!) While little was actually done in the water, . . . hold that thought. Allow me to digress here and focus the TU spotlight on Phil Anderson and Jim Hess:

Until some time late Saturday morning, and for who knows how long before then, a Cooper-sized stump had been parked to one side of Garfoot Creek, maybe seventy-five feet above its confluence with BEC, the many mega-roots holding it firmly in the ooze in two-plus feet of cold water. Over time, the diverse species of debris which periodically accumulated on its upstream haunch relentlessly steered the current-flow against the opposite bank, therealong excavating a sordid, mud beach whose coverlet was not content to stay in place. No more.

Phil and Jim cut the beast free with hand-powered pruning saws, then winched and wrestled it ashore. (During the process, it's probable various landlubbers and sidewalk-supers were involved.) To do so meant shipping water over the tops of their waders and wicking water up to their armpits, and maybe beyond. The thing is now parked behind the beach, which, it's hoped, will soon be re-colonized by native grasses. The piece has lots of character, and would likely be an eye-popping lawn ornament somewhere else. In its present location, however, its a monument to resolve. Three huzzahs, at least, for

Phil and Jim. Or Jim and Phil. Think of and thank these two for their efforts when you see it.

As I was starting to say, the bulk of Saturday's work was done on sort-of dry land. Two inches of rain fell in these parts Thursday night. A few more trees were limbed, and others were felled and cut to pieces. Some brush-piles, started last fall and already imposing, grew larger. Many smaller piles were concentrated to a few large ones. Altogether-new ones took shape. All this was done to facilitate a soon-to-be-ignited, DNR-sponsored burn.

Saturday, APRIL 10, the plan is to create more piles from other beams, boughs, limbs, branches and brush cut last fall, and which now lie strewn in various places along the creek. Certainly, more will be cut for stacking that day. Some of our members can't abide an idle chain saw. YOUR HELP is needed and IS APPRECIATED, not to mention ENCOURAGED. Join the Corps of Recovery, or re-enlist if a veteran of other times. We'll meet at the BRIDGE that spans GARFOOT CREEK where it passes beneath HIGHWAY KP about 1.5 miles west of Cross Plains.

We'll toil in one another's good company for three-plus hours, then re-locate for lunch and conversation, satisfied with our accomplishment to date and that to come: to wit, the restoration of a trout stream. All that we do is intended to permit that lucky ol' sun, which rolls around daily, to grow grasses along the stream to stabilize its banks, and to grow grasses in the stream to provide cover for bugs and the fish which eat 'em.

The roster of Veterans: Jim J. O'Brien and Garth (the Corps mascot), Roger Gilligan, Jim Hess, John Guzowski, Roger Clausen, Mike Grimes, Kars and Dan Geib, Ryan and John Pundt, Phil Anderson, Ray Venn, Lynn Blenker, and your not-so-humble scribe. This year's crop of new recruits includes: Ben Montgomery, Paul Zwicker, Joe Arena, Jim Beecher, Don Sprang, Jerry Conwell, Fritz Seybold, Mike Meier, Brian Fairbrother, and Darold Fairbrother from the Blackhawk Chapter. Notable among the newcomers, but who are veterans of a different sort: Bob 'Red' Wilson and Bob Grummer. Thank you all, and heartily.

### **You must be present to win**

There was no *You-Must-Be-Present-To-Win-Drawing* at our March meeting, so the jackpot held steady. All Southern Wisconsin Trout Unlimited members who attend the April 13<sup>th</sup> meeting will be eligible to win a \$60 gift certificate to Fontana Sports Specialties just for being there.

## Avoiding Birds' Nests

by Jeff Smith

Casting instructors usually try to teach students to cast a tight loop where the line closest to the leader, is close to the line closest to your rod tip. To accomplish this we teach students to have a fairly level casting stroke with a small but firm power snap of the wrist at the end of the back and forward casts. I think this is the best way to cast a single fly because (1) it is more aerodynamic under windy conditions, (2) it is the best way to cast long distances and (3) casting with broad loops often results in your fly, leader and line falling in a clump.

Whether this is the best way to cast is debatable. (Larry Meicher doesn't cast like this but he catches more fish than I do.) But it **is** the best way to get "bird's nests" (that tangled mess of leader you try to untangle for 15 minutes before you decide to tie on a new leader), "wind knots" and "tailing loops" (when the fly hooks on to the belly portion of your line).

There are three ways to avoid these problems. First, put an arch in your cast. Fishing with two flies really increases the chances of getting tangled. However, one of the flies will usually be heavier than the other (i.e. hopper, dropper). In this case, don't cast a tight loop. Keep the power wrist snap at the end of your back and forward casts but cast in more of an arch. The weight and force of the larger fly will straighten out your leader. Opening your cast with an arch will keep everything in your cast further apart which will avoid tangles.

Second, when conditions allow, I almost always cast a "D cast". Here, the curved part of the **D** is your back cast and the straight part is the forward cast if you were to look down at the cast from directly overhead. This gets your line and leader away from you and avoids contact with your rod.

Finally, using that power wrist snap too soon causes tailing loops. The snap should be at the end of the back and forward casts just before you abruptly stop the cast.

These three practices should help reduce the number of tangled messes that are inherent in fly fishing. For more information, I encourage you to come to the Casting Clinic which will be held at Salmo Pond (1.5 mi west of Cross Plains) at 9:00 AM on Saturday Aprils 17<sup>th</sup>. For more information, on the clinic call me (Jeff Smith) at 836-5974.

## From the President

By Sue Fey

Yes, I went fishing on the opening day of our hard won early season! I met up with Bill Maund on South Valley Road at 10am, and as is our custom, we sat in my warm car and gabbed for the first half hour. (There were no other vehicles parked along the stream. Hard to say if this was due to the high, brown water, the spitting grey sky or the damp, intrusive wind...). There is little to tell about the fishing that ensued, the surprisingly fresh greenery dredged up off the stream bottom, the rare and illusive Pink Squirrel rescued from an overhanging willow or the slow and relentless loss of feeling in the fingertips... It was transporting though, as always, to be standing in moving water again and to feel the cold, (40 degree) embracing possibility that is a trout stream.

Your Board of Directors is focused on exploring strategies to establish a long range funding program. Whether we settle on creating an endowment or foundation, we are fully committed to offering our membership, (that's you) safe, secure and attractive, (read: great tax incentives!) options for sustaining our conservation mission and continuing to protect and improve our home waters. As a relative newcomer to the world of charitable giving, I am amazed by the diversity of attractive mechanisms that exist. I am also struck by how deeply personal these transactions are. Planned giving clearly evolves from a fundamental human desire to contribute to something one loves. To make a lasting difference in a way that is intimately connected to your values, your beliefs, your passions. It's heady stuff, and it's promises to be one of those proverbial win, win situations. As this effort evolves, I will be attempting to explain the details in plain English, and will also be asking for your ideas and involvement in how best to present and promote the wide range of planned giving and other options that will be available to us. Stay tuned!

## Conservation Congress Meetings

The Spring Wildlife & Fish Rules Hearings and Annual Conservation Congress Meeting are scheduled for April 12, 2004. Though there are no trout issues of statewide significance this year, your participation in the democratic process is encouraged. Hunters should always attend, and some of our sister organizations (e.g. Smallmouth Alliance) need us there. The rule changes under consideration may be previewed on the web at: <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/nrboard/congress/springhearings/2004/index.htm>

## **Back To the Basics**

By Tom Thrall

Last summer I found myself in Silverthorne, Colorado where my daughter's wedding was to take place. My son Tim was coming up from Ft. Collins to meet me early to do some fishing. Since I wanted to fish a part of the Colorado River that I have not fished before and because Tim and I don't get many chances to fish together, I bit the bullet and hired a local guide to help insure a successful trip. Also, I am trying to convert Tim to fly fishing and wanted him to have a good fly fishing experience. This turned out to be a great decision. We had a marvelous day and also caught a lot of fish. CJ, our guide, spent most of his time with Tim and soon had him fishing like a pro.

Later, as I savored the memory of the trip, I thought of how things may have gone differently if I had not hired CJ. I can say with some confidence that we would not have done as well. CJ simplified the process but made sure that we practiced the basics well. The following summarizes what I feel are the basics. Novices as well as seasoned anglers, need to remember the following basic skills.

Sample the Stream. The first thing that CJ did was to get out his net and sample the stream. He found baetis nymphs and stoneflies predominating and we selected our flies accordingly. In my fervor to get on the stream, I skip this step too often. Just lifting rocks is not enough (just gets the clingers). A kick sample gives a better picture. Sample nets can easily be made from materials at the hardware store.

Don't be too anxious to move if things are slow. Unless you've spooked them fish will lie where there is cover. As we first began fishing not much was happening. I'm sure none of you can identify with this, but many times under these conditions I move on to the next spot if I don't get a strike right away. CJ knew the fish where the fish should be and he would not let us move until we found the right flies to catch them.

Don't be afraid to change flies. We didn't catch any fish with the with stonefly nymph patterns that we started off with, but when we switched to pheasant tails we immediately started picking up fish.

When fishing nymphs, get them on the bottom. If we stopped picking up fish, CJ would ask if we felt the bottom bounce. If not we put on more split shot and would start to pick up fish again. I tend to get lazy in this regard and don't take the time to get the bottom drift right. Also, I hate picking up debris and getting snagged, but if this is not happening you're not down where you should be.

Avoid Drag, the great enemy of the fly fisher. A dead drift is just as important with a nymph as it is with a dry fly. CJ worked with Tim and quickly taught him to cast and mend his line well. Instead of flailing the water until you accidentally get a dead drift, plan each cast carefully. Drag will not only discourage a fish from striking, it will also put fish down.

Use a strike indicator effectively. Set the hook very time that indicator does something funny. Watch it to see if the fly is dragging. If the indicator looks like a motorboat with a wake you've got problems. Adjust the level of the indicator after you move to water of a substantially different depth.

Have the right flies. When fishing areas you are unfamiliar with, get local information. Most fly shops and anglers, are generous with information. When fishing unfamiliar waters, I always visit local fly shops and ask for recent hatch information. I also make it a habit of purchasing something from them (leaders, a few flies I can use as patterns, etc). The investment always pays off in good information.

Finally and most importantly, don't spook the fish. My belief is that spooking fish is the biggest reason people don't catch fish. The big western streams are much more forgiving than our small Wisconsin spring creeks. You can have the perfect fly, make perfect casts, and be fishing where the fish used to be before you inadvertently scared them off. The number of ways that fish can be spooked is nearly limitless. Here is a list of ways to avoid spooking fish. 1) Don't be seen by the fish. Keep on the low side of the bank. Approach low and cautiously (on your knees if necessary). Watch your shadow, the fish will see it. 2) Don't be felt by the fish. Walking heavily on the banks will send them scurrying for cover. Walk softly in the water when wading and only wade if you have to. Fish can feel wave action. Waves created by wading will put fish down. Fish can feel scraping feet on gravel too. 3) Other more subtle spookers include casting your line over rising fish. Water droplets falling from your line when false-casting will spook them on flat water. Plunking a sinker over them, even a strike indicator can spook. A dragging fly under or on top of the water will do the trick too. By making some simple adjustments and following the above basic principles we were able to stay in one area of the river and caught fish all day long. Had we not had our guide to keep us on track, I very likely would have given in to some of the bad habits I have developed and would have covered a lot more water and caught fewer fish in the process. It was a great reminder to me to get back to basics whether it's on a big western river or a small Wisconsin spring creek.



# Please Join Us for the

Token Creek Watershed Association's  
Spring Forum and Annual Meeting

Monday, April 19<sup>th</sup>

At the Bristol Town Hall

7747 County Rd. N

Doors open for browsing at 6:00 pm

Program to begin at 7:00pm

- Listen to Mark Martin of the Audubon Society speak on prairie restoration
- Get up-to-date on the Stream Restoration Project with Scott Stewart, WDNR
- Visit with other local groups with an interest in the watershed
- Bid on great prizes in our silent auction

Come see what the Token Creek Watershed Association has been up to!  
With newly formed committees, a detailed action plan for the upcoming year and a  
change of leadership in the Token Creek Restoration Project,

**Now is the time to join!**

**Annual Membership Levels:**

**Rates:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$10.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Spring Sentinel	\$25.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Brook Champion	\$35.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Streamkeeper	\$45.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Creek Guardian	\$100.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Watershed Watchdog	\$250.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Sponsor	\$500.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	\$_____

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I would like to receive updates on TCWA activities via email

\_\_\_\_\_  
Comments/Volunteer interests

Please return to: **TCWA PO Box 366 Windsor, WI 53532**

\*For more information please contact TCWA Coordinator Jennie Nuese at 608-334-8941

**Important dates to remember:**

April 10<sup>th</sup> Garfoot Creek Workday – Meet at Highway KP 1.5 miles west of Cross Plains  
April 12<sup>th</sup> Spring Wildlife & Fish Rules Hearings and Annual Conservation Congress Meeting  
April 13<sup>th</sup> Chapter Meeting Featuring Ray White  
April 17<sup>th</sup> Casting Clinic at Salmo Pond  
April 24<sup>th</sup> Black Earth Creek Clean Up Day  
June 12<sup>th</sup> Special Needs Fishing Day

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