



## The Drift: Words from our President.

We've made a lot of progress! When you think about it, we've made a lot of progress environmentally in the past 40-50 years. When I was a kid, I was sick with asthma and had to stay at home a lot. I was inside all day. It drove me nuts. I had to do something, so I hammered together birdfeeders and set them up all over the yard. Then I could at least watch something wild outside from inside. In the summer, I hunted butterflies unceasingly, or at least until flower and ragweed pollen sent me home sneezing and short of breath. I joined the Audubon Society so I could get Audubon Magazine and read about far-off natural places, and also to get the mimeographed paper newsletter telling about the wild things going on locally in St. Paul. One January, our local Audubon Society leaders announced that on Christmas Day, they had seen a Bald Eagle—a Bald Eagle!—flying over the Mississippi River in St. Paul. Nobody believed them. Eagles simply didn't exist any more in the countryside surrounding the Twin Cities, or even up north for that matter. Sure, there were a few in the mountains out West and more in Alaska, but in the Twin Cities? The Audubon Society leaders should have known better than to start rumors like that. We all knew by that time that widespread usage of DDT in the U.S. to control mosquito populations after the Korean Conflict had killed off all the hawks and eagles and other raptors. We later learned that DDT, ingested into female raptors, caused them to lay soft eggs that were crushed during incubation. So, there weren't any more Bald Eagles in St. Paul, or anywhere else within reach of a 10-year-old kid on a bike. There was about as much chance of seeing a live eagle then, as there was of seeing a live Triceratops in the lobby of St. Paul's Science Museum.

Then there were the Canada Geese, the giant sub-species—or whatever they called them—that were also going extinct, presumably for the same reason. One cold winter morning, my parents stuffed the four then-existing Wagner children into their green Plymouth Country Squire station wagon and headed for Rochester, Minnesota. The destination was the warm water discharge of a power plant in Rochester where, supposedly, 25-30 of these big honkers were hanging out for the winter. We got there and sure enough, there they were there, 25-30 giant Canada Geese. We stood outside the car and stared at them until we got cold, then we all piled back in the station wagon and headed back home. My parents wanted us to see these giant honkers before they went extinct. They had read somewhere that even if the DDT situation got corrected, there wouldn't be enough of the geese left to sustain a viable population. So, the big geese were as good as extinct, even though there were still a few hanging around

*{continued on page 2}*

The **KIAP-TU-WISH CHAPTER's**  
almost monthly publication



**TROUT  
UNLIMITED**

Volume 13 | Issue 8  
April 2020

**CANCELED**  
Chapter meeting & board  
member election on Wednesday,  
April 1, 2020

Please watch your inbox, chapter  
website and the May issue of  
RipRap for updates.

**Cover photo:** A spring steelhead from the Brule River. This issue doesn't contain much about steelhead fishing; it contains nothing, actually. But a bright fish like this is just plain good for the soul. It's that time of year, the beginning of days spent outside on the water fishing for chrome, brookies, browns or rainbows. Enjoy it!

### DON'T FORGET:

- Visit the K-TU website & Facebook page for news, announcements & updates.
- The next RipRap deadline is **Friday, April 17.**
- Send info to: [manion.maria@gmail.com](mailto:manion.maria@gmail.com)

RIPRAP: Restoration, Improvement & Preservation through Research And Projects

{The Drift. . . from page 1}

power plants and such. And then there were other things that weren't extinct, but were gone from our area for good, as the old timers used to say. In all our wanderings, we NEVER even heard of anyone seeing a wild Turkey, a Sandhill Crane, or a Pelican, let alone seeing completely extirpated (locally extinct) species like Trumpeter Swans and Peregrine Falcons.

Then along came Rachel Carlson who wrote *Silent Spring* which started a grass-roots movement that resulted in federal legislation banning the use of DDT. Other grass-roots movements of conservation-minded individuals sprang up, and existing organizations like the Audubon Society grew in membership and influence, and teachers started teaching about conservation. The states got involved with Aldo Leopold from UW-Madison writing *A Sand County Almanac* and Carrol Henderson from the MNDNR Non-Game Wildlife Fund heading up programs to help restore non-game wildlife, including Trumpeter Swans and Peregrine Falcons. Ordinary citizens got involved and teamed up with federal and state conservation workers, universities, teachers, and for-profit and not-for-profit sectors to bring back the environment and wildlife that we had lost through DDT, water pollution and air pollution. Now, you can't drive anywhere without seeing large flocks of Canada Geese. There are probably scores of grounds keepers at city parks and golf courses that would be a lot happier today if we had been a little less successful in our Canada Goose restoration efforts.

But it doesn't end there. I regularly see half a dozen Bald Eagles on my way to work in the morning. (Sometimes I even see them flying over the Mississippi River in St. Paul!) Spring, summer and fall, I see Trumpeter Swans, Sandhill Cranes, Wild Turkey and all manner of hawks and falcons, as I drive between customers' locations in the East Metro and Western Wisconsin. We REALLY HAVE made a lot of progress in the last 40-50 years.

But what happened to all the amphibians that used to be around? I remember so many frogs coming out on roads between swamps up north that the roads would actually get

greasy from dead frogs. Gross, I know. I thought it was gross then, too. The point is that there was an abundance of frogs then.

I also remember that there was a certain night or two each summer when all the female snapping turtles somehow knew that this was the night to crawl out of their ponds to lay their eggs. How did they all seem to know what night to come out on? I remember more painted turtles being around lakes and streams, and tiger salamanders being in just about every pond, roadside ditch or anywhere else that was wet for part of the summer. Where are they all now? Sure, there are still some of the above species around, but there are not anywhere near the numbers that were around when I was a kid. Where did they go? What happened to them? Last summer, I saw a lone tiger salamander marching across our driveway. Its skin was dry and dusty and it looked completely out of place. It looked like a member of the French Foreign Legion that tried to escape by walking across the desert and got so dried out and miserable that it decided to go back to camp again.

Something is happening to our amphibians, to the butterflies I used to hunt and to the songbirds I used to watch when I was a kid. Something is happening to them, but I'm not exactly sure what. There isn't as clear of a smoking gun today as there was back then. There aren't tons of DDT being sprayed over our swamps and low lying areas. There isn't nearly raw

**"The time is now. The who is you and me and every one of us. The question is when will each of us begin? "**

sewage, or lightly treated industrial wastes, being drained into our rivers and estuaries. Even the air seems cleaner now than it did then. I can remember seeing a brown haze hanging over the Twin Cities when we came back from up north, and that doesn't seem to be the case anymore. But if amphibians, butterflies and songbirds are all in decline, something still isn't right.

Something still isn't right and I believe it's up to our generation to focus our energy, our intelligence and our cooperative spirits on determining what the root causes of these

## 2020 EVENTS CALENDAR

Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, the Kiap-TU-Wish business meeting and board member election on April 1 is canceled; the board member election will be postponed until a future date.

Please watch the Kiap-TU-Wish website, Facebook page, email announcements and the May issue of *RipRap* for updates regarding other events, such as the May chapter meeting, Bugs in the Classroom, Trout in the Classroom, or the River Falls Fly Fishing Clinic.

Trout Unlimited seeks to prevent and mitigate the spread of novel coronavirus, and ensure that our members remain healthy. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Kiap-TU-Wish board members. Their email addresses are on page 7 of this newsletter.

declines are, as we did 50 years ago. Then, as grass-roots organizations, as educators and concerned citizens, as local, state and national governments, we need to address those causes and correct them, making the same incredible progress in the next 50 years that we've made in the past 50 years. We've done this before and we can do it again. The why is all around us as we see certain parts of our ecosystem slowly shriveling up and dying. The time is now. The who is you and me and every one of us. The question is when will each of us begin?

In the meantime, we've also made an incredible amount of progress in the past 40-50 years in restoring coldwater habitat for coldwater species like TROUT! We are coming upon the best and most productive part of our trout fishing season. So, while you are all contemplating what the little and big things you can do to address the environmental concerns that are before us now, GET OUT THERE AND FISH!

Happy Fishing! — Scott Wagner



## News From The K-Tu Tie-A-Thon

On February 22nd we held our first tying session of this season and it went swimmingly. We had ten tiers who sat together for three or four hours tying up dozens of nymphs, wet flies and emergers to help restock the chapter fly coffers. And it was a raucous group of folks telling stories, jokes and showing remarkable wit, and with most of the derision directed toward this writer.

The tiers were Ken Hanson, Ed Constantini, Bob Trevis, Scott Hanson, Jonathan Jacobs, Ryan Myers, Jeff Rivard, Paul Johnson and Chad Borenz. Our next meeting is March 28, when we will focus on dry flies and dry emergers. Please consider joining us next year. — Mike Alwin

## River Falls Fly Fishing For Trout Clinic

This year's clinic, an all-day affair that K-TU has been running for a couple of decades, is scheduled for June 6th. Sponsored by River Falls Parks and Recreation and Kiap-TU-Wish, the clinic invites citizens in the immediate area to learn to fly fish for trout on the Kinnickinnic River. The River Falls parks and rec department does all of the marketing for this event, and all we have to do is show up and teach it! We teach the students casting, some entomology, a little knot tying, stream strategies and wading safety. Plus, we feed 'em supper and take them fishing in the evening. It doesn't get any better.

We usually have about a dozen volunteer guides/mentors from the Chapter but the cast is always changing so there's always an opportunity for you to get involved. Contact Brian Smolinski at: [brian@lundsflyshop.com](mailto:brian@lundsflyshop.com) or Mike Alwin at: [mikealwin@gmail.com](mailto:mikealwin@gmail.com). Mark your calendar for June 6, and I promise you'll have a good time. — Mike Alwin

## Editor's Note

Today I made a pot of lentil soup instead of working on RipRap. I was procrastinating because the Covid-19 crisis was bumming me out—canceled chapter meetings, uncertainty about upcoming events, working from home and the collective ennui of an unsettled time. I also attempted to cheer myself by spey casting along the Mississippi. The sun was out, which was glorious, and I got to cast a Norling 10' cane switch rod, which was glorious too.

As we'll be keeping our social distance for a while, it seems to me that this issue of RipRap—with its unplanned focus on fly tying—may help fill some of that new-found time at home. Jonathan Jacobs includes a lot of tips about where to look for tying help, much of it virtual. I'd bet that your local fly shop would be more than happy to do some personal shopping for you—hooks, hackle and the like—and either send it via post or have it ready for curbside pickup.

And speaking about virtual, spoiler alert: The chapter website is currently being updated and expanded. We were going to include an announcement in future RipRaps, but it seems appropriate to give you a heads up now; while our in-person community is hampered, our virtual one will be stronger. Kiap-TU-Wish member Chad Borenz and his team are working hard behind the scenes to build upon on the already strong site that Greg Meyer (former RipRap editor and website designer) created years ago. Stay tuned for more.

As for my contribution this month, I offer a list of books (below) that you may find interesting for your increased time at home. They are nature related, not fishing related, and what I have on my bookshelves right now. If you're not out fishing, you might enjoy one of these for change of pace. Send me an email if you like them—or not!

Finally, it's Spring Appeal time. Please consider a donation. The places we seek to preserve via our Spring Appeal funds are, as Hap said, the places that bring us joy and comfort. — Maria Manion

## Hap Lutter Memorial Spring Appeal

Hap Lutter was a Kiap-TU-Wish member (and chapter treasurer) who passed away in 2009. The Kiap-TU-Wish Spring Appeal is part of his legacy.

Hap recognized the need for a funding source beyond our annual conservation banquet to supply the dollars needed to reach beyond sometimes limited grant funds. Hap launched the initial Spring Appeal because annual dues go to TU National, but little of that money ever comes back to the Chapter to benefit the waters we love to fish.

If you fish the trout streams of western Wisconsin or have another interest in keeping these waters healthy and productive for generations to come, we hope that you will consider making a generous donation to this year's Spring Appeal. Money raised will go directly toward funding current and future habitat work, as well as restorations still in the planning stages. Monies will also help support Kiap's stream monitoring efforts, education efforts and operating costs.

Watch for the Spring Appeal envelope in your mailbox. Please support your passion,

and Hap's legacy, with a contribution. Whether a check, an employee match, or a stock gift, your support will be greatly appreciated. And don't forget, your contribution is tax deductible!

Thank you for sharing Hap's vision of nourishing and preserving the water and natural resources we all use and love.

*First-time donors will receive a half-dozen nymphs, tested and proven to work on the Rush and Kinni. If you contribute \$125 or more, a half dozen specially tied dry flies or streamers will come your way.*



*"Flyfishing and just being on the Kinni brings joy and comfort." — Hap*

*Canoeing With The Cree* by Eric Severeid  
*Sightlines* by Kathleen Jamie  
*Underland* by Robert Macfarlane

*Landmarks* by Robert Macfarlane  
*A Place In The Woods* by Helen Hoover  
*Pilgrim At Tinker Creek* by Annie Dillard

*The Peregrine* by J.A. Baker  
*Waterlog* by Roger Deacon  
*Things That Are* by Amy Leach

Maria's  
Suggested  
Reading

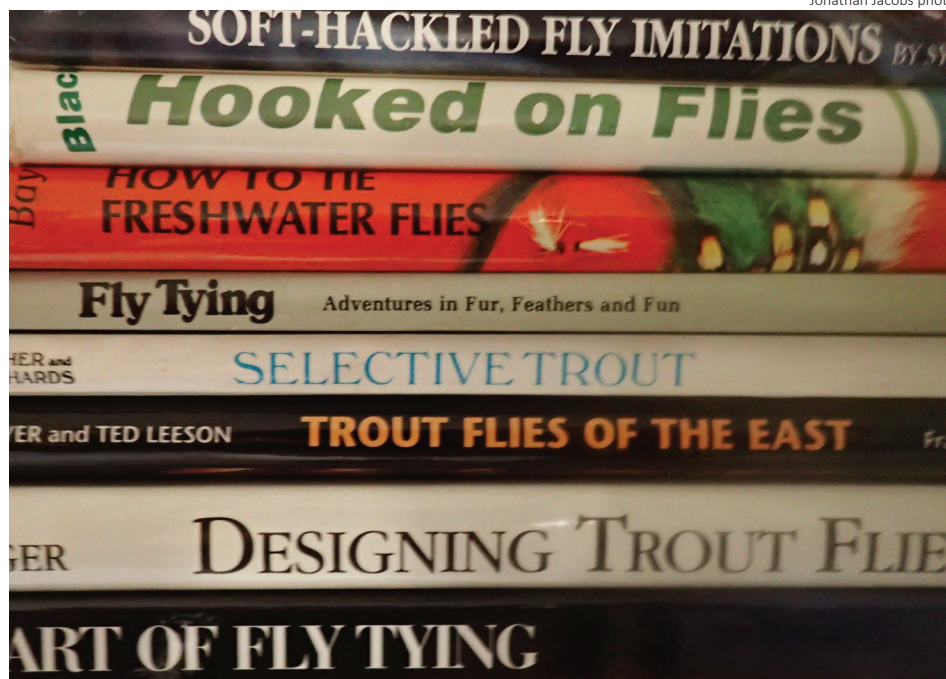
# Tying

By Jonathan Jacobs

Even though we had to blow up the natural order of things and hold our annual Dry Fly Dick Memorial Fly Tying Meeting in March this year, I'd like to tell you a little about Dick and, if you're a beginner, how to go about learning to tie flies, and if you're an experienced tier, how to learn about new techniques and materials.

The photograph of Dick that circulates regularly, the one that shows him decked out in a pith helmet, smoking a cigarette and scooping up a big cutthroat, is a terrific one that intimates that he may have been a character. If you never had the pleasure of the man, you have no idea how accurately that photo conveys that notion. Dick was far more than a character, however. He was a serious conservationist that gave of his time and talent to several organizations, including Kiap-TU-Wish. Dick came up with the idea of rounding up fly tiers on an annual basis and recruited them for that purpose for many years. He was not a tier, but he recognized talent for the craft when he saw it. Many talented local tiers tied professionally for Dick, who operated what was quite likely the only combination fly shop/plumbing contracting shop in the nation. May Dick's legacy live on!

Now, on the topic of fly tying itself. First, if you think that tying your own flies will be a money-saving proposition, you will likely be disappointed. Technically, your cost per fly will be less than market price, but the costs of tools and the constant acquisition of materials will quickly pile up to a dollar amount that might likely buy you a lifetime supply of commercial patterns. Tying your own flies does have many other advantages, however. First, it's a terrific hobby, a way to while away long winter hours. Second, it broadens one's angling horizons and gives you a greater appreciation for the sport. Third, your carefully and correctly tied fly will likely outlast a commercial pattern. Fourth, you can adjust standard patterns to perform better in your particular way of fishing or to better suit local conditions (Think of the anomalous green-bodied Kinni



Jonathan Jacobs photo

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Sulphur or the dark-bodied mystery mayfly that local anglers have dubbed the "Darth Vader," which, as nearly as I know, has no commercial artificial analog).

If you're still interested after that warning, the next logical question is, "How do I learn?" Here's a cautionary tale for the autodidacts in the readership: The late Gary LaFontaine wrote that he was a self-taught tier and therefore "had an idiot for both a student and a teacher." In other words, find some instruction. Perhaps you have a willing friend, as I did when Andy Lamberson stepped up to show me the basics. Fly shops often offer instruction in a group setting. Community Education programs sometimes offer fly tying classes (I have it on good authority that Scott Hanson, the one-time editor of this publication, is active in this area. If he can teach like he can tie, we'd all likely benefit from enrollment.) And we mustn't fail to mention the St. Paul Fly Tiers club, where you can find not only instruction, but bonhomie and camaraderie as well.

Books offer an excellent adjunct to in-person instruction. The learning program is right there in front of you and you can

quickly refer to previous pages if something isn't quite clear or has escaped you. You needn't fret about having the most recently published volume, either. While materials come and go, the basic techniques in tying have remained relatively constant for a long time. *Fly Tying Made Clear and Simple* by Skip Morris and Richard Bunse, along with *The Art of Fly Tying* from the Hunting & Fishing Library have good, clear photos, sensible prose and the advantage of ring binding, which allows them to lie flat and open for ready reference. If you're curious about how the professionals do it, Charlie Craven, a wizard at the vise, has published *Basic Fly Tying*. A much older, but still useful book, is *Production Fly Tying* by A.K. Best. Another useful book from back in the day is *How to Tie Freshwater Flies* by Kenneth Bay. This book approaches fly tying instruction in a modular way with each lesson building on the previous one. Lastly, one of my favorites is *Adventures in Fur, Feathers and Fun* by John F. McKim. McKim, a talented illustrator, does not use photographs, but instead relies on pen and ink drawings. The background clutter one finds in photographs is thus completely absent while critical points are



stressed by magnification or appear as insets. Some of these books may be out of print but are commonly available at reasonable prices in the used market.

Lastly, we have the demon Internet. Candidly, I am completely sold on the idea of online learning — within a certain range. It cannot substitute for in-person instruction. Internet videos are best at teaching us new patterns, specialized techniques and how to deal with the new materials that appear on the market at a dizzying rate. (Think about the synthetic hair and fur substitutes, the flash materials, the UV curable adhesives and finishes, etc.) I'll list some online resources but will omit the URLs for them. Simple Google or YouTube searches are all you need to find them. First and foremost, there's *Charlie's Fly Box*, Charlie Craven's resource center for patterns and videos. Mr. Craven is the real deal. *Blue Ribbon Flies*, the venerable West Yellowstone establishment, often has links to how-to videos attached to illustrations of the flies in their online catalog. One of the great strengths of this shop's patterns is that they are "guide flies" — quick to tie, durable and meant to catch fish. *Fly Fish Food*, a shop out of Utah, offers videos that range from how to tie various "guide flies" to instructions for tying complex, nasty-looking articulated streamers. If you are, as you should be, a subscriber to *Midcurrent.com*, a web aggregator, you are undoubtedly familiar with the videos of Tim Flagler, who operates as *Tightlines Video*. Flagler offers some of the highest quality video and voiceover available. If you're curious about flies outside the coldwater world, Gunnar Brammer of the United States, Nicklaus Bauer of Sweden and Paul Monaghan of Great Britain will give you a cosmopolitan look at how to create flies that are larger than some of the fish you catch.

Get out there and get after it. I think you'll find that catching a fish on a fly you tied yourself will add an extra degree of satisfaction to your angling. 🐟

*In last month's issue I wrote that the movie Rancho Deluxe was fifteen years old in 2000. The movie was released in 1975 and was thus 25 years old in 2000. Also, by way of clarification, the Mike who moved to Kentucky is most definitely not Michael Alwin, who I think will barely acknowledge Kentucky, much less move there.*



*At last month's chapter meeting—the Dry Fly Dick Memorial Fly Tying Meeting—Loren Haas was awarded Dry Fly Dick's pith helmet in honor of his Foam Wing-No Hackle Mayfly. See Loren's award-winning fly recipe below.*

## Foam-wing No-hackle Mayfly

This is a specialty fly. I wish I could tell you it works most the time. It just doesn't; however, when the mayflies are hatching and the fish are tail slapping the surface, and you know they are taking emergers, don't give up on your dry fly fishing just yet. This pattern will entice many of them to make the extra effort to grab it in the surface film. Tied in many

colors and sizes, I have chosen an early season, dark, Blue-winged Olive pattern in size 16 on a sproat hook. Matching the size of the fly is more important than dialing in the perfect color. If you tie this pattern and use it, let me know how it works for you this spring. — Loren Haas

### Materials:

I use heavy or standard hooks, size 16 to 20 with olive thread. The under-body on larger flies can be thin sticky-back foam covered with dubbing; on small flies use olive dubbing. The tail is hackle fibers or turkey short fibers from tail or wing. The magic wing is foam sheets that line the inside of mail envelopes. I have re-purposed foam envelope sheets in grey, brown, light yellow and clear white. Thicker foam works better in the ruffles.

### Instructions:

Tie a dubbing bump at the bend of the hook. Splay tail fibers over the bump and cover with dubbing. Add sticky-back olive foam or olive dubbing to body. Figure-8 tie an oversized foam wing strip with light dubbing to finish. Secure the open wing shape with one post turn. Dub the head, superglue the thread one inch and whip finish. Trust me, you are going to need the superglue. Cut the wings to shape.

Loren Haas photos





# TALES FROM AN EXPERT NOVICE: by Jennifer Medley

## Fishing Together, Alone

Back when I was single and living in Ely, Minnesota, I wrote out a list describing “the one” I was hoping to meet someday. I had pretty high criteria for a future husband and it didn’t take long to realize I likely wasn’t going to meet him in tiny Ely. Plans for being a spinster and living off the grid in a house I made from scraps from the dump, began to form. I drew up a house design and updated my tetanus booster which was required if you wanted to search through the piles of salvaged construction materials at the landfill.

I still have a copy of that list which I pull out every once in a while to remind myself of what I asked for. It covers many critical aspects—faith, romance, finances, family life, social skills, mental health, attractiveness and musical tastes. But interestingly, the only thing I typed in all caps was “FISHING for sure!”

Thankfully, I am now married to a man

who likes to fish. We went fishing on our first date—which is another story involving pocket knives, a compass, swamps and skunk-sprayed hunting dogs. We married not long after we met, then began having children and hardly ever picked up a rod in those early years. It’s only recently that we’ve been able to start fishing together more regularly, out on the water either in a boat or in waders.

I’ve realized that in every stage of my life, I really never went fishing alone. When I was young, I only went out fishing with my dad. As a single adult, I sought out others who fished and joined them. And now, married, with a family, I usually only go out on special occasions, such as celebrating Father’s Day or someone’s birthday. I always look forward to these days because it means I have to set aside my regular life to go fish.

As much as I enjoy fishing and as close

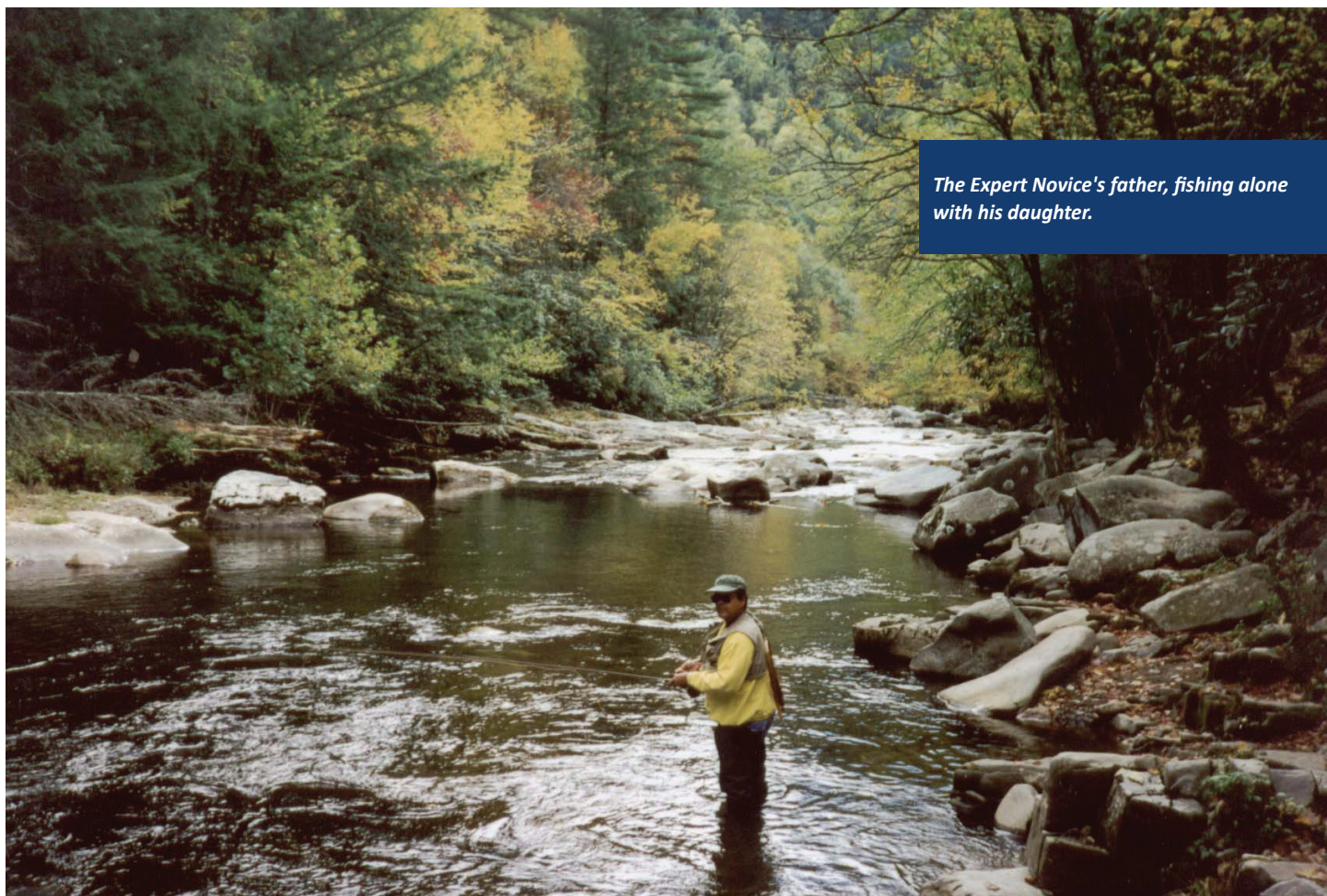
as we live to beautiful trout water, I find that I never go out on my own. The most rewarding fly fishing experiences I have are when I meet up with my dad, talk a bit, walk out to the stream together, and fish together—but apart. Although on the stream I am standing alone, I am not really fishing alone. There is just something about sharing that time together, that particular space on the water, that simply is not the same as going out there by myself. Looking back, I reflect on what I was really looking for many years ago when I made that all-important list.

*Many men go fishing all of their lives without knowing that it is not fish they are after.*

— Henry David Thoreau

*Doubt not but angling will prove to be so pleasant that it will prove to be, like virtue, a reward to itself.*

— Izaak Walton



*The Expert Novice's father, fishing alone with his daughter.*

Jennifer Medley photo



# FLY TIER'S CORNER

## Two Approaches to the Hex: *by Mike Alwin*

Hexagenia are, simply, legendary. Where they occur they are typically prolific and frequently induce crazed feeding among the trout. Of course, you can read dozens of entries about the Hex on the AuSable and other rivers in Michigan, but this genus is found as far north as Canada and as far west as the Rockies. In our little corner of the world you can find them in watery environments all over northern Minnesota and Wisconsin. You can fill up your car with them on the Namekagon and might have to shovel them off the Mississippi bridge down at Winona. The Bibon Marsh on the White River still produces fishable Hex emergences, but closer to home the Kinni, once renowned for its Hex, is completely devoid of them today; the last time I saw a fishable hex on the Kinni was in the mid 1980's.

Mike Alwin photo



When we first start tying flies we are given the parameters of size, shape and color. If you're trying to imitate a caddis don't tie a vertical wing. If you're trying to imitate a Blue Wing Olive, tie it on an #18 instead of a #12. If you're trying to tie Sulphurs stick to light colors as opposed to dark colors. Duh. Trying to mimic the naturals through the use of size, shape and color is

good solid advice. This first fly is Bob Mitchell's attempt at imitating the Hex dun. He took a very large White Wulff and colored the body to better resemble the natural, and he chose that pattern because of its inherent visibility.

Mike Alwin photo



Size, shape and color are good places to start, but to those parameters we should add behavior. In the case of Hexagenia that would mean lots of movement upon emergence. The Hex produces a commotion on the surface and it's that commotion that induces the aggressive feeding this emergence is known for. A

big Bi-Visible would work, except that it's so light that it wouldn't make enough of a disturbance on the water. Better to start with a tail of marabou or rabbit strip, a body that can absorb a little water, and then a lot of hackle and/or a big deer hair head to keep the front end on the surface. Fish it across, and across and down, jiggling the rod tip ever so slightly to simulate the movement of the emerging meal.

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You can support Kiap-TU-Wish when you shop online. Go to [smile.amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com), choose Kiap-TU-Wish Trout Unlimited and for every online purchase, Amazon will donate 0.5% of the eligible purchase price to the Chapter. Every penny helps.





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