



Troutlines

Special Points of Interest

Guide and Author Marla Blair

NH Chapters Map

Don't Forget to Send in Your Chapter Raffle Tickets!

Chapter Meetings and Events Calendar

No December Chapter Meeting

January Chapter Meeting
Thursday, January 16

February Chapter Meeting
Thursday February 20

Annual Conservation Banquet
Saturday, March 8, 2014
Grappone Center

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Guide Marla Blair on Fly Selection, Nymphing, and Insect Life Cycles

Story by Dan Stickney
Photos by Alex Hicks

Most of you missed a great presentation last month!

Our guest speaker was Marla Blair – California transplant, substitute teacher, Bette Midler look-alike, author of *Positive Fly Fishing*, and licensed Guide for Massachusetts and Western Connecticut.



Chapter President George Embley and Marla Blair

Marla shared some interesting perspectives on fly selection, the art of nymphing, and had lots to offer on the life cycle of the insects that trout feed on.

Her often repeated disclaimer: “This is my way, but yours may be different, and that's okay” struck a chord with many in the audience, especially when

Geography Matters NH Chapter Areas

When new members join TU and don't specify a chapter such as Basil W. Woods, they are assigned to a chapter based on their mailing zip code. The advantage of this is that you can join any chapter you wish (and change to another as well). For management of all the TU members nationwide, it is a simple matter to assign new members to a chapter based on their zip code. So far so good.

Where chapter maps start to fragment, sprawl, contract, or create islands in another chapter's area is when a TU member declares membership in a chapter that is not contiguous or in the “right” area. For example, two new TU members living in Pittsburg want to belong to the Basil W. Woods chapter (for obvious reasons!). If there are no other TU members in that zip code, then the TU computers assign the next new members to Basil Woods because of the two existing members. The TU chapters map will then show an island in the north country “belonging” to the Basil W. Woods chapter. Because of members free choice to belong to whatever chapter they want, the TU Chapters Map has become more of a jigsaw puzzle than a coherent map. Although the shapes are far from being as convoluted as gerrymandered Congressional districts, the TU Chapters Map appears distorted.

The NH TU State Council has the final say in changes to chapter areas but prior to any redrawing, the state's TU chapters must come to an agreement as to what to recommend. Our chapter is in the process of reviewing the current chapter areas and will be discussing

Presidential Commentary - George Embley



A good crowd gathered at the Forest Society HQ in November to hear Marla Blair talk about the body language of trout. Marla is an entertaining speaker and left her audience with a good grasp of how trout behave during various phases of the hatch and how that knowledge can help in fly selection. She was generous with her fishing tips and I would bet most picked up something. For example, I had never heard of Frog's Fanny dry fly powder floatant. I like patterns with CDC feathers and, while I know enough not to use paste floatant on them, I did not know that Frog's Fanny does work. I guess that will be on my Christmas list. It was great to see the new members who made it to the meeting, and my thanks go to the attendees who signed up to help with the banquet or the fly tying course, or were willing to be added to the general volunteer list.

As you may know, we support a number of local schools that participate in Trout in the Classroom (TIC). In early November, Jim Timmins, Steve Lowe and I participated in the two field trips that the Lebanon school district 4th graders take to the New Hampton Hatchery each year. Sometimes we help the kids strip eggs from the hatchery trout, but usually we spend the time explaining what is going on in the stream that runs through the hatchery. This time of year there are a lot of spawning trout in this stream. These wild fish are probably descendants of escaped hatchery trout. There are plenty of them and they are big enough to be easily seen (they are also off limits for fishing). It's a great experience for the kids and for us. Our chapter has been a strong supporter of TIC and provides chillers to seven schools so that the aquariums can be cooled to temperatures suitable for raising the trout from eggs to fry. And statewide, New Hampshire Trout Unlimited has placed 49 chillers in NH schools. At about \$700 apiece that is an investment of almost \$35,000. New Hampshire Trout Unlimited is involved in some way with more than 55 TIC and SIC (Salmon in the Classroom) programs. This is a major proportion of the 80 plus programs currently in place.

By the Friday after Thanksgiving ice had formed on a large part of our lake. A few ducks were still around right up to dusk, swimming and diving in the open water that remained. I'm not sure when they left, but they were gone by Saturday morning as there was definitely no more water to swim in – it was frozen from shore to shore. This was the earliest "ice-up" since we moved here seven years ago. It brings to mind the old saying – "If the ice will bear a goose before Christmas, it will not bear a duck after." I don't worry too much about how many ducks the ice will hold since I don't generally venture out onto the lake. When I do get the urge to go fishing in the winter I still head for a stream. So the idea that a harsh December leads to a milder winter is attractive (even if likely to be wrong). Some streams do stay open during the winter, and the fish are still there. So, if you find a nice day in January or February, look for a stream without too much ice and try it. I have been fortunate in being able to make an annual winter trip to central Pennsylvania. The spring creeks there provide good nymphing, and a midge or BWO hatch is always a possibility.

Of course, once winter's arrival seems official, most of us tend to put our fly fishing gear aside for the year. If you are really ambitious you could inventory your gear (and put together your Christmas wish list) or perhaps start replacing the flies you lost over the season. These are things I plan to do every December and somehow I end up doing neither until sometime in February when I tie some flies for the banquet. And, speaking of fly tying, if you are looking for a last minute Christmas present for a fly fishing family member, give some thought to one of our two winter fly tying courses (beginner's class starts on January 7 and the intermediate class on February 18). You can find course information on our chapter website. I wouldn't wait too long though – the courses are filling up.

We won't have a December chapter meeting, but George Cummings has lined up some good programs for the beginning of the new year. In January, Matt Carpenter, a NH Fish & Game fisheries biologist, will be talking about the Merrimack River Anadromous Fish Restoration Program. He will discuss the status of the program for eels, shad, and river herring and also provide a summary of the Atlantic salmon program, which is being

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Presidential, continued from page 2

discontinued. This will be an important opportunity to learn about the future (if any) for Atlantic salmon in New Hampshire. In February, Tom Cormier of Eldridge Brother's Fly Shop will present a program on fishing the Bob Marshall Wilderness in Montana.

Best wishes for the holidays and tight lines to all for the coming year's fishing adventures. Hope to see you at our next meeting in January.

Editor's Soapbox

Gordon Riedesel

It's time for the first annual Troutlines quiz. Sharpen up your pencils and show your stuff. Circle the best answer.

1. What is tied onto a leader?
 - a. An Irish Bostonian politician "Tippet O'Neil"
 - b. The wife of a former VP "Tippet Gore"
 - c. Just a plain old tippet
 - d. An old political slogan "Tippet Canoe and Tyler Too"
2. What is the great equalizer for fly anglers?
 - a. Everyone puts their waders on one leg at a time
 - b. Trout don't give a fin if you've read every fly fishing book or own a \$900 fly rod
 - c. Although much smaller, a trout's brain often works much better than ours
 - d. All of the above
3. A true "Go-To" fly is:
 - a. Missing from my fly box
 - b. Usually one that the guy across the stream is using
 - c. The one that I tied in the middle of a blizzard last January when I knew it would be perfect in June
 - d. The one that caught the last fish (even though it was three weeks ago and on a stream in Montana)
4. Fly tyers all agree:
 - a. That there are different ways to tie a good fly
 - b. That there is only one way to tie a good fly
 - c. That all the good fly tyers knew Izaak Walton personally
 - d. That even though I have drawers and cabinets full of materials, I don't have what I need
5. Stoneflies are:
 - a. Hard to cast, especially when they are made of real stone
 - b. Kind of scary looking
 - c. Indicators of high water quality
 - d. Not to be thrown at people living in glass houses
6. Clingers are:
 - a. A type of mayfly nymph that lives in fast water
 - b. Well known to musical groups – also known as "groupies"
 - c. Discourteous anglers who follow you to your favorite hot spots leaving no room to cast
 - d. Flies that you forgot to de-barb and now are stuck in your skin
7. Fly selection:
 - a. Is best left to experts
 - b. Works best if done totally at random
 - c. Is a universal mystery
 - d. Is "catch as catch can"
8. Membership in Trout Unlimited is best determined by:
 - a. Perpetual optimism
 - b. Chronic pessimism
 - c. Love of receiving lots of "junk mail" from TU
 - d. Mostly A and C with a touch of B
9. The main difference between a strike indicator and a dry fly as indicator is:
 - a. Most strike indicators are fluorescent – rather un-fly like
 - b. Dry flies as indicators create a sense of optimism that a fish may take it rather than the nymph below
 - c. Fluorescent indicators seem to have more direct strikes than a dry fly indicator
 - d. Uncertainty on the angler's part – strike indicators are purposeful, dry fly indicators are hopeful
10. Two fly anglers are on opposite sides of the Upper Connecticut. What is the most probable outcome?
 - a. Each casts to the opposite bank since that's where the fish probably are
 - b. One fishes a dry, the other a nymph as part of an unspoken contest
 - c. They wait for Angus Boezeman to come by with a client to figure out what the hell to use
 - d. The smart aleck angler responds when asked what fly he or she is using by giving the Latin name for the insect in question. (If this happens to you the best response is: "Oh yeah? Well your mother's a Trichoptera!")



Soapbox Quiz, continued on page 6

Marla Blair continued from page 1

she offered the idea that when nymphing, specific patterns are less important than proper presentation. An example in which a biologist friend showed her a bucket of mud from a local river that was teeming with life backed up her position: there were mayfly, caddis, and stonefly larvae in abundance, and all were active in their own way at the same time.

She agreed that during a specific hatch cycle fish may well key on the active insects more, but at other times she feels that fish feed opportunistically on whatever bugs pass by. Often as we fish we'll encounter others using different flies than we are who are also having success, which seems to support her idea.

Again, this is her experience – yours may differ, and that's okay. There was much to learn and consider when looking at things from a different viewpoint, and anything that gets us thinking about our sport is good, in this author's opinion.



Carolyn and Alan McCausland enjoy a laugh with Marla Blair following her presentation.

Marla posited that our flies should aim to *imitate* life, rather than *copy* it; she uses just a few patterns in a variety of colors and sizes with great success, often using the same fly to mimic different species and life stages. An emerger pattern can work well for fish eating mayflies and also work well when caddis are coming off if the color and size are correct – Marla emphasizes profile, size, and color rather than anatomical accuracy above all.

Reading the riseform of the fish will help determine where in the water column they are feeding –no surface activity means that the fish are feeding on the bottom or are simply dormant. A porpoising rise – shoulders and tail, so to speak –indicates that fish are taking emergers before they break the surface, and a splashy rise indicates that fish are taking an insect that hatches and immediately takes flight upon leaving the water. Finally, a delicate rise when the fish shows sipping lips and a small ring in the water indicates surface feeding on either duns or spinners, with duns being newly-emerged insects and spinners being adults returning to the water to complete their life cycle.

A few patterns that Ms. Blair wouldn't be without are Rusty Spinners in sizes 28 through 10 and a variety of colors, and parachute and CDC versions of the Blue Winged Olive, also in different colors. The traditionally tied Adams is also a favorite, as it has a shape and color that mimics many different insects.

Finally, regarding nymphing, her favorite way to fish is with an unweighted fly and two split shot; all three are separated by a distance of four fingers' width. A dead drift is critical, as is being almost on the bottom of the water column when drifting nymphs, as this is where natural insects will tend to be if dislodged by current or when they're swimming.

Marla was a lively, funny speaker with some interesting ideas – we were lucky to spend an evening with her. She'll be at the Marlborough Fly Show this January – stop and say hi, and tell her Basil Woods TU sent you.

Chapter Maps, continued from page 1



with other chapters what areas to let go and what to add. This process may take a few months but the outcome will strengthen chapter areas and be a rational and coherent map.

If you or a TU friend is in the “wrong” chapter, you can request a change from TU by calling 1-800-834-2419. Ask to become a member of the Basil W. Woods, Jr. Chapter, #200.

We need your help !

You may be aware of the chapter's beginners and intermediate fly tying classes will be commencing on January 7 at the Passaconaway Club on Garvin's Falls Road in Concord. We are renewing and revising our fly tying courses. We are looking for both new instructors and assistants and would like you to consider volunteering.

With classes of up to 15 students with no, or minimal tying experience, 3 or 4 assistants are needed to help a small group of students as they learn the pattern and how to master materials and tying tools. Not all students proceed at the same speed, and this makes fly tying assistants extremely important. Each class begins with the lead instructor tying the "fly of the night". Next, the students learn to tie step-by-step with the assistants providing guidance.

Instructors and assistants need not be experts at the vise, but should possess basic and intermediate tying skills with a desire to pass on those skills. Remember, most new students won't even know how to properly seat a hook in a vise, or start the thread on the shank. And no one should feel that they have to be there every night. The beginner's class runs for 6 weeks tying one fly per night that covers the basic patterns. The intermediate class, which most often consists of students from the beginner's class, runs for 5 nights, and ties 2 flies per night. All classes run from 7 - 9 PM: see the form below for the specific dates.

We are trying a pilot program this year by supplying the required materials plus vises and tools as needed. This should be a great advantage to a beginning student as choosing quality materials is a large part of the fly tyer's knowledge. Please consider volunteering. Contact Bob Ives to sign up for an adventure: ivesr@comcast.net.

Winter Fly Tying Class Registration
Basil W. Woods, Jr. Chapter Trout Unlimited
Tuesday Evenings: 7 - 9 PM, January 7 - March 18
Passaconaway Club - Garvins Falls Road, Concord NH

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____

Check the Class or Classes you are signing up for.

Beginner's Class January 7 - February 11 \$ 50 \$ _____

Intermediate Class February 18 - March 18 \$ 75 \$ _____

Please make check payable to: Basil W. Woods Chapter TU **Total\$** _____

I am not a TU member I am a TU member

Send registration and payment to: Basil W. Woods Chapter TU
PO Box 3302
Concord NH 03302



Please photocopy this form if you need extras.
Questions? e-mail us at: concordtu@yahoo.com or Bob Ives : ivesr@comcast.net

Soapbox Quiz continued from page 3

11. A newbie to fly fishing hires a guide hoping to learn some basics. The guide happens to be an enthusiastic talker and overloads the newbie's brain with too much information. At the end of the outing, the newbie tries to recall all that was thrown his/her way. For some reason, the term "Feeding Lane" remained unclear. What definitions did the newbie come up with?
- A feeding lane is what trout do when they visit a busy McDonald's
 - The feeding lane is the side of the road where Crows and Turkey Vultures line up to enjoy the carnage of squirrels, other birds, raccoons, and an occasional deer along a busy highway
 - A feeding lane is kind of like bowling but with food in each of the gutters
 - A feeding lane is where your group takes a break from fly fishing and enjoy a snack
12. The Adams is:
- A very strange family
 - Resembles everything, looks like nothing
 - The family fly of the 2nd and 6th US Presidents
 - Is pretty good looking considering that 50% of its hackle is grizzly.
13. A soft hackle fly is to a full dress Atlantic Salmon fly as:
- Bill Belichick's fashion sense is to Pierre Cardin's
 - Most of our fly boxes at the end of the fishing season are to fly catalog photos
 - Our casting with multiple flies and split shot are to passes by Tom Brady
 - Our very first fly rod is to a Winston/Sage/Scott/or handmade Bamboo rod
14. Once you have all the rods and reels to meet each of your fishing needs, what is the next step?
- Tell your spouse you don't need any more gear
 - Tell your spouse you probably will need more gear because what you have is becoming obsolete
 - It is time to seriously shop for more gear because you most likely don't have all the rods and reels you may need.
 - Realize that you are delusional and seek professional help.
15. Fishing season has ended as winter approaches. You know your job is important and that getting away from work to fish is a high priority. In order to maximize your fishing opportunities next season, you need to spend the winter:
- Developing not just a single excuse to get out of work to go fish, but an entire series that will seem believable come Spring
 - Figuring out how to both be at work and on the stream at the same time
 - Learning Hollywood make-up skills so that you can create a look-alike to take your place at work (this may require extra work in other areas too)
 - Living in a fantasy world where you actually do get to fish more

Answers:

- | | |
|--|---|
| | 10. a,b,c and d |
| 1. c | 11. c (but it could be any of the others) |
| 2. d | 12. b |
| 3. a (b,c, and d also good) | 13. a |
| 4. d | 14. d |
| 5. c | 15. b |
| 6. a | |
| 7. c | |
| 8. d | |
| 9. d (a,b, and c are equally good choices) | |

Thanks and apologies to Mental Floss Magazine for the Quiz Format and Scoring System.

Scoring

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 0 - 5 Correct | Not Too Bad! |
| 6 - 10 Correct | You Are Getting It |
| 11 - 15 Correct | Pretty Good, but Better Check Your Answers |

Calendar

- January 16, 2014 Chapter Meeting, 7:00 PM. Matt Carpenter, NH F&G fisheries biologist
 February 20, 2014 Chapter Meeting, 7:00 PM. Tom Cormier, Eldridge Brothers Fly Shop
 March 8, 2014 Annual Conservation Banquet, Grappone Center, Concord

All chapter meetings at 7:00 PM, Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, 54 Portsmouth Street, Concord unless posted otherwise.

Newsletter Information

Troutlines is published September through May. Chapter members who have given TU national their e-mail address will receive an e-mail notice from us through the TU national server that the latest newsletter is online at our chapter website. Paper copies are sent to members who don't have an e-mail address listed with TU national.

If you would prefer to receive paper copies of **Troutlines** rather than electronic copies, drop us a line to either our e-mail or mailing address. If you now receive a paper copy and would prefer to read it online, drop us a note and update your membership information with TU national.

Basil Woods Jr. Chapter TU
PO Box 3302
Concord NH 03302-3302

www.concordtu.org

e-mail: concordtu@yahoo.com