



The Flyline

The Newsletter of the Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association

June 2022



Classic Adams tied by Mike Jacobs
From HFFA's Digital Fly Pattern Book
Photo by Don Lund and edited by Steve Veysey
Original printed version was edited by Nate Hopkins and Don Lund



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The President's Hatch

My term as president is finally winding down, as I will step down when HFFA has elections at the March, 2023 HFFA show. In some ways, it seems like I started this term just yesterday. In other ways, especially the hurdles that the Pandemic caused, it seems like its been a forever term. I found that I really hated the Zoom meetings. Turns out that at 75, my hearing has gotten much worse (never could hear from my left ear), so hearing someone out of a small speaker doesn't work well. I have also confirmed that I am a "people person," and I miss the personal interactions that come from an "in-person" meeting.

I have been saying that I am in "the fifth year of a one year term," but upon consulting my records, I find that I am in "the sixth year of a one year term." That said, most of those on the board have also served for six years. Only three on the board have served less than the six, one for three years, and two for four years. Our treasurer has served for 14 consecutive years, and our Coordinator of Fisheries and Environmental Protection has served for 17 years, four of those as secretary as well. Our Web Manager has been on the board for 13 years, two of those as President.

First: We all owe them a huge "Thank You."

Second: We really need to get some fresh members volunteering for positions on the board. The by-laws limit most positions to two years, so it doesn't have to be a lifetime commitment.



John Carl Miller

Finally: We need to get some younger people on the board so that we can have a window into the new world that is coming. (most of which I don't understand, or even want to understand)

As a note: I started volunteering when I was 29. I had two children, but still found time to serve on the Dubuque Audubon Society board and chaperone canoeing and camping trips for a high school club (called the Sierra Society named such because one of the leaders was involved with the Sierra Club and I was involved with the Audubon Society). Our girls went on many bird watches as well as all of the camping/canoeing trips. Our oldest girl still comments that the trips were the best part of growing up.

Plans for the 2023 HFFA show are moving along nicely. The venue is the most spacious that we have ever had.

The committee has been meeting and plans are moving ahead nicely. This is a CIFF show, with the help of the HFFA board. That said, if you would like to be involved with this show, you could sign up for one of the committees. Willa Campbell and Kirk Rosenow are chairing the show, so contact one of them to get involved (Willa's e-mail address is listed in this newsletter). There is always room for help with the silent auctions, bucket raffles, and registration desk. This could involve part of the planning or just helping set up and tear down at show time.

Breaking Good News:

The HFFA board has approved a \$4,000.00 grant for stream improvements on Casey Springs in the Sindelar Wildlife Area, just Northwest of Decorah. This is an \$87,400.00 project, and our contribution will be part of a matching grant. This is on public land.

John



**Help Support
Port-a-Potties at N&S Bear Creeks
Go Fund Me**

<https://www.gofundme.com/port-a-potty>

Contacts & Meetings

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dhorton@hardincountyia.gov
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Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing

Meets 1st & 3rd Tuesday of Month
7 to 9 pm

Paralyzed Veterans of America
Iowa Chapter

7025 Hickman Road Ste #1
Urbandale, IA

Contact: Dale Sanders
iaflyfisher@q.com

Quad Cities Chapter

Meets 3rd Thursday Every Month
6:00 pm to 8+

QCCA Expo Center
2621 4th Ave. Rock Island

Contact: John Channon
jc.channon@mchsi.com

Dubuque Fly Fishers

Meets 2nd & 4th Monday 7:00 pm
October to May

Swiss Valley Nature Center
13606 Swiss Valley Rd., Dubuque,
IA

Contact: Mike Stallsmith
president@dubuqueflyfishers.org

Central Iowa Fly Fishers

Meets 3rd Saturday 9:00 am Sep-
tember to May

Our Lady's Immaculate Heart
Church

510 East 1st St., Ankeny, IA
Contact: Kirk Rosenow
kcrosenow@gmail.com

Iowa City Chapter

Contact: Ryan Maas
maas_ryan@yahoo.com

Cedar Rapids Fly Fishers

Contact: Lance Zook
l.a.zook@mchsi.com

TROUT UNLIMITED

NORTH BEAR CHAPTER

Meetings held second Thursday
of month

September – May, Starting at
6:30 pm.

The Tavern Pizza & Pasta Grill
1755 50th St.

West Des Moines, IA

Website: tu-northbear.org

David Klemme - President

president@tu-northbear.org

TROUT UNLIMITED

DRIFTLESS CHAPTER

Meets the first Thursday of the
month October through May @

7:00 pm in the basement of
T-Bocks Sports Bar and Grill,

206 Water St. Decorah

www.iadriftless.org

Iowa Women Fly Fishers

Beginner or Skilled

Meet other Women Fly Fishers

Des Moines or North Liberty

katelodge25@gmail.com

willacamp@gmail.com

Trout Unlimited

Spring Creeks Chapter

Ray Thys – President

Check Their Facebook

www.facebook.com/springcreekstu

Iowa's Coldwater

Conservancy

Tom Murray

jandtmurray@gmail.com

Event Calendar

June 2022

June 15 - 17 & 17 - 19

Wisconsin Women's Fly Fishing Clinics

Intermediate and Basic Courses

West Fork Sports Club

Vernon County, WI

wisconsinwomenflyfishing@gmail.com

July 2022

July 31

Deadline for State Fair Tying Contest

State Fair Administration

P.O. Box 57130

Des Moines, Iowa 50317

August 2022

September 2022

September 10

8th Annual Brule River Spey Day

Lake Superior Steelhead Assn

Brule River @McNeil House, Brule, WI

www.steelheaders.org

September 23 - 25

HFFA Trout Outing

Upper Iowa Resort & Rental Campground

578 Lonnings Dr.

Dorchester, Iowa 52140

Dan Peterson

dpeterson578@gmail.com

September 30 - October 2

2022 Casting for Recovery IA

Camp Ewalu's Stone Retreat

Strawberry Point, IA 52076

Applications after January 2022

jknorris57@gmail.com

October 2022

October 1

6th Annual Driftless Flyathon

Yellow River State Forest

Limited Registration April 16th

flyathon@driftlessonthefly.com

October ?

Driftless TU Work Day

9:00 AM to noon

1280 Quandahl Rd

1 mile East of Highlandville

Steve Perry

641-583-1604

November 2022

November 4 - 6

FFI Fly Fishing Virtual Expo

www.flyfishersinternational.org

December 2022

January 2023

February 2023

March 2023

March 10 - 12

HFFA Annual Meeting & Show

FFA Enrichment Center

1055 SW Prairie Trail Parkway

Ankeny, IA 50023

April 2023

The Flyline is the official publication of the Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association. It is published in April, June, September, and December. The HFFA is a chapter of the Fly Fishers International. Articles may be submitted as MS Word or as a text file. Typed, printed or clearly handwritten documents are also accepted. Photos can be submitted digitally. Send original jpeg. Deadline is one month before publication.

Send all materials to:

Don Otto, The Flyline Editor

hawkeyeflyfisher@gmail.com

641-230-1468

Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association Membership Application

New Renewal Change of Address Information

Check Membership Category:

- \$25 Member
 \$10 Youth Member (18 and under)
 \$15 Senior Member (65 or older)
 \$45 Family Membership
 \$300 Life Member

Conservation Contribution:

- \$10 (Glass)
 \$20 (Graphite)
 \$30 (Boron)
 \$..... (Cane, over \$50)

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

TELEPHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

Make checks payable to & mail to:

Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association

P.O. Box 8145

Cedar Rapids, IA 52408

PREMIER TROUT STREAM NEEDS YOUR HELP!

SAVE BLOODY RUN

- OUTSTANDING IOWA WATER IN THE DRIFTLESS AREA
- HOME TO REPRODUCING BROWN TROUT
- STOCKED WITH RAINBOW TROUT



- TOURIST AND ANGLER DESTINATION
- IN GLOBALLY SIGNIFICANT BIRD AREA
- DIVERSE AND SENSITIVE ENVIRONMENT



MEGA-FEEDLOT PLANNED FOR BLOODY RUN!

- 39 MILLION GALLON OPEN PIT LAGOON
- 11,600 HEAD OF CATTLE
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- LOCATED IN SINKHOLE AND KARST TOPOGRAPHY—EXTREME GROUNDWATER THREAT



YOU CAN JOIN THE BATTLE FOR BLOODY RUN

VISIT and LEARN

www.savebloodyrun.org/

- Why Bloody Run is special
- The politics behind Supreme Beef LLC
- Iowa DNR failure to protect public land
- DNR permitting ignores the law

DONATE

- Via credit or debit card or PayPal at www.savebloodyrun.org/donate/
- Via check "Save Bloody Run"
Clayton Co. CAN, PO Box 252 Elkader, IA 52043



2022 Iowa State Fair Fly Tying Competition

By Larry Murphy

The Iowa State Fair will be held August 11 through August 21, 2022. We will be holding the Fly-Tying competition once again this year. I am sure everyone has practiced tying their favorite flies and are willing to enter them in the state contest.

The Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association will again be sponsoring the Fly-Tying competition at this year's Iowa State Fair. The competition is supported by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the Iowa State Fair. The goal is to provide an opportunity for the public to view the art of fly tying and to promote fly fishing in Iowa.

The fly-tying display will be in the DNR Building on the Fairgrounds during the fair. The judging is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, August 10^h at 1:00 p.m. in the DNR Building.

Fly entries need to be received at the Fair Administration post box by July 31, 2022.

There are three divisions:

- Adult division is for anyone **17 years of age and older.**
- Junior division is for anyone **16 years and younger.**
- Expert division for tiers who have **sold flies.**

There are four categories for each division:

- Dry Fly
- Wet Fly/Soft Hackle/Nymph
- Streamers
- Open Class

You may enter in each of the categories, but **only one fly for each category. No flies smaller than size #18. No flies larger than size #2. To enter, please provide the fly tier's name, the division to be entered, the category to be entered and the name of the fly.**

You must be an Iowa resident to enter or a member of the Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association. If you have **ever tied flies commercially or sold the flies that you have tied, you must enter the Expert Division.** If you won a blue ribbon for one of the categories last year, you are not permitted to enter the same category this year.

The Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association will provide judges for the competition. Ribbons will be given for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners. Each fly will be judged in its category. In our contest, a panel of judges will choose the places in each category and division. The visitors to the state fair will see the flies displayed in the DNR Building

Flies must be sent to the Iowa State Fair Administration Office, P.O. Box 57130, Des Moines, IA 50317 and **received by July 31, 2022.** Each fly entered must have the **Fly Tier's name, address, telephone number, name of the fly, division to be entered and the category. Junior division entries must state the age of the fly tier.**

Keith Wunder, Paul Domoto, and Dave Rosset judging flies see below



Tenkara

by Dave Rosset

TENKARA

Definition: A simple form of fly fishing using only a rod, line and fly.

Some four hundred years ago in the mountains of Japan, commercial fishermen were looking for a simple and effective method to catch char and trout from mountain streams and then sell their catch in the local markets to their neighbors and to the local inns for their guests.

Rods were constructed from bamboo. Crafted so that it would cast a long line woven or furled out of horse hair and flies were nothing more than hooks fashioned out of needles with sewing thread for the body, soft or stiff hackle from local poultry for the wing and in some cases, peacock herl for a thorax. In casting the rod they noticed that the fly would land on the water first as if falling from heaven. Or in Japanese, tenkara.

A Passing Fancy

In 2008 Daniel Galhardo was preparing for a trip to Japan. Being a fly fisherman, Daniel was hoping to squeeze in some trout fishing. During his research he stumbled across a book called *Fishing in Japan*. Tucked away among the various methods of fishing, was a photograph of an angler fishing in a mountain stream with only a rod, line and fly. Intrigued by its intuitiveness, Daniel made it a point to visit a tackle shop. He purchased a tenkara rod, brought it back and taught himself to fish with it. Later that year he started creating Tenkara USA and launched his business in April of 2009. Lefty Kreh called it "a passing fancy". Over the past twelve years, tenkara has grown and continues to grow. And although in Japan tenkara falls behind bait, spin and western fly fishing, since being introduced outside of Japan, more anglers have shown a new interest in the tenkara method.

My Tenkara Journey

It was probably in 2011 or 2012 that I first became aware of tenkara. I had read about Daniel and Tenkara USA in one of the fly fishing magazines that I had a subscription with. I was intrigued, but not to the point of wanting to give it a try. I was a fly fisherman and had been since my mid 20s. And everyone knew that you fly fished for trout with a rod, reel, line leader, tippet and fly. Just like God intended. And then at one of our Central Iowa Fly Fishers meeting, my friend and fishing buddy, David Oliver, brought a tenkara rod and line that he had purchased from Tenkara USA. At some point I asked him to show me how it worked. And not long after I asked him if I could borrow it the next time we went fishing together.

Casting was easy. Not having to strip in line or having a reel took some getting used to. But not having to manage the fly line as you stripped it in, or having to constantly mend to get a *drag free drift* was a pleasant surprise! At some point Dave suggested that if I was going to continue to *borrow* his rod he was going to start charging me rent. Or, perhaps, I should look at buying my own rod and kit. So, after some online research and reading countless rod reviews from some of the tenkara blogs that were popping up (most notably Jason Klass' blog Tenkara Talk, Anthony Naples Casting Around, and Dr. Tom Davis' Teton Tenkara) I bought a Tenkara Times 1st Step, and some tenkara line. Each time I would go fishing I would take along my tenkara kit. Fishing with a fly rod in the morning and switching over to tenkara in the afternoon.

In 2014, I started experiencing severe pain in my shoulders to the point where casting a fly rod soon became a painful process. But surprisingly I had no pain when casting my tenkara rod! Diagnosed with arthritis on both clavicles and bursitis in both shoulders, four surgeries later I was pain free! I continued to fish tenkara in between surgeries and after and realized just how much I enjoyed it! Each time I went trout fishing I found myself using my tenkara rod more and my fly rod less. Today 95% of my trout fishing is using tenkara.

Equipment - Just a rod, line and fly!

Rods

The fly rod, in the words of Flip Palet, is *nothing more than an expensive pointer!* That's because in western fly fishing, you cast the line, along with a well balanced and tapered leader, and not the rod. In tenkara you are casting the rod and not the line.

In his book *tenkara*, Daniel Galhardo points out that: *tenkara rods are designed with four main things in mind.*

1. *They must cast a tenkara line well. A tenkara rod works as a whole to propel the tenkara line forward. The tip of the rod must not be too stiff nor too soft, and it must stop oscillating quickly.*
2. *They must be comfortable to cast. They must be designed with a comfortable grip and good balance to feel light.*
3. *They must set the hook well. More than a matter of softness/stiffness, the rod as a whole must not have too slow an action; otherwise the delayed hookset will result in missed fish.*
4. *They must play the fish well. A rod should not be too soft, otherwise it will be difficult to control a fish. On the other hand, a rod that is too stiff will not feel great when fighting a fish.*

Tenkara rods are either single length, or zoom (varying) lengths. Common single lengths are 11', 12' and 13'. Some manufacturers offer shorter and much longer length rods.

Zoom tenkara rods, come in either double or triple zoom. An example of a double zoom length rod would be the Ito, from Tenkara USA. It's shortest length at 13' may be extended to 14' 7". An example of a triple zoom would be DRAGONtail's Mizuchi that can be fished at 11.4', 9.5' and 7.8'. The concept of zoom type rods is the ability to extend or shorten its length depending on over-head canopy and size of the stream that you may be fishing.

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Most modern tenkara rods are made of graphite and are surprisingly light. Most 12' rods weigh less than 3 ounces. Tenkara rods are manufactured either in Japan, China, Vietnam or Korea. With Japan and China being the primary manufacturers. While there are American companies that design and sell tenkara rods, there are no tenkara rods that are made in the USA.

Japanese made rods tend to be made with a higher grade of graphite. They tend to be lighter in weight and have less tip oscillation than rods manufactured in China, or other countries. As a result they are more expensive and should you break the tip, or other sections, replacement parts for Japanese rods are more expensive. It should be noted that just because a tenkara rod is inexpensive, does not mean that it is a bad rod. The DRAGONtail Shadowfire 395 sells for \$84.99 and is considered by many in the tenkara community to be the best bang for the buck if you want to get started in tenkara. Truth be told, if you were to blind fold most tenkara anglers, hand them a rod, make a few casts to determine if the rod was made in Japan or China, most of them couldn't tell the difference. It also should be noted that all Shimano tenkara rods, which are very popular in Japan, are made in China.

True tenkara rods are designed for casting and fishing with unweighted flies and may not be suitable for fishing with weighted nymphs and flies. However, some tenkara rods are designed to fish both. If you intend or want to have the ability to cast and fish both, contact the American company whose rod that you are considering and they will be more than happy to help. Social media is another good option, but remember everyone has an opinion. It's also worth noting that some tenkara rods may have limitations on the size of fish that can be landed. Most companies will provide that information in the rods description. If not, a quick phone call to the company will get you that information. In fact, when you decide to purchase a rod, I would highly recommend that you call the company. Most likely the person that picks up the phone will be the owner, or someone who fishes tenkara and knows what that rod can and can't do.

All tenkara rods are telescopic. **But!** Not all telescopic rods are tenkara rods. I mention this as a caution should you look at purchasing a **cheap** tenkara rod from Ebay, Amazon, Alibaba or other online outlets. Oftentimes, the rod may be described as a **tenkara rod**, but is really a telescoping rod for fishing with bait. Of course major companies such as Tenkara USA and DRAGONtail tenkara do have a presence on Amazon. Tenkara Addict, Tristan Higge, has purchased a number of cheap telescopic rods and has reviewed them on his YouTube Channel Tenkara Addict.

Lines

In the beginning tenkara lines were made out of woven or furled horsehair. While you can still find horsehair tenkara lines, or at least a kit to make your own, modern tenkara lines are either furled thread, level fluorocarbon, or pvc. You can also purchase lines made from furled kevlar, tapered nylon and level nylon. Fluorocarbon and furled thread are the two most popular lines.

Furled - Furled lines, also known as "traditional" tenkara lines are sold in fixed lengths from 9'-20'. They are very easy to cast, especially in the wind and are a good choice for a beginner. They are attached to the rod using a girth hitch and normally come with a tippet ring. If they have one drawback, because of their density, furled lines are not as easy to keep off the water as level Fluorocarbon lines. Furled lines get a bad rap for becoming a *bird's nest* when trying to undo your fly from a snag. However, when that happens, I have found pulling the line through your fingers a few times and then making a few false casts, without the fly attached, or allowing the line to play out in a downstream current you are then good to go!

Level Line Fluorocarbon - Level lines are probably the most common line used by tenkara anglers both here in the USA and abroad. Unlike furled lines, which are purchased in fixed lengths, level lines are sold on 30 meter or 50 meter spools. Thus allowing you to cut the line's length based on the conditions that you are fishing. Level lines are colored which helps in detecting strikes below the surface. Offered in orange, pink, yellow and green with orange being the most popular. Level lines are sold based on a number system from 2.5 to 4.5. The lower the number, the easier it is to keep off the water, but the more difficult it is to cast in breezy conditions. The higher the number the easier it is to cast, especially in breezy conditions but keeping the line off the water might be a challenge. A 3.0, or 3.5 is a good compromise that allows the line to be kept off the water and still having good casting in a breeze.

Other Tenkara Lines - Tapered nylon, furled Kevlar and PVC are other line options.

Tapered nylon comes in fixed lengths in orange, white or yellow. They are very easy to cast, are very easy to see, but may not perform as well in breezy conditions. They are a bit harder to straighten out than level lines and may require some extra pulls through the fingers. Tapered nylon, along with a furled line are often recommended as great lines for beginners.

Furled Kevlar lines are sold in fixed lengths and do not experience the *bird nest* when retrieving your fly from a snag. I have not used any of these lines.

PVC lines normally come in fixed lengths. They are very easy to cast but because of their density are almost impossible to keep the line off the water. They are popular with some tenkara anglers when fishing for trout with dry flies and with those who fish for warm water species such as Bluegill in local urban ponds. Which is what I primarily use them for.

Tippet

As we know, in western fly fishing, the size tippet used is in direct correlation to the size of the fly being used. And there are formulas that can be used to help figure that all out. Not so with tenkara. Because it's the rod that does the casting and not the line, the tippet is used as a drop down segment to connect the fly to the line. What is important is that for most tenkara rods and in most situations, all you will need is 5x. Why 5x? Well for one, to *keep it simple*. But also, should your fly become snagged it's easier to break it off. Better to lose your fly than break the tip of your rod. As far as length is concerned, 4' is a good place to start.

Flies

Japanese tenkara flies are called Kebari, which literally translated means **feathered/haired hook**. The most recognized kebari is sakasa, or reversed hackle. They are normally tied with the hackle tied out in front of the hook eye, using either Hungarian Partridge or Hen Pheasant. They can be fished either in the surface film or subsurface. As the fly moves through the water column the hackle pulses which will attract a hungry trout into striking. They are a great fly for slower moving runs.

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Futsu, or hackle are tied using rooster feathers wound around the hook as you would when tying a dry fly. They can be fished on top like a dry fly, in the surface film or subsurface. Because they are tied with a stiff hackle they are a great subsurface flies in faster runs.

Jun tenkara flies are tied more like western soft hackles using again Hungarian Partridge or Hen Pheasant. You would fish them like you would any western soft hackle fly.

Japanese tenkara flies are traditionally tied without any weight, relying on manipulating the fly to get it to sink. However, they may also be tied with a small bead to help it sink deeper.. It should be noted that some tenkara rods may not be designed to fish weighted flies and you may experience less than desirable casting. If the rod was designed for only fishing with unweighted flies it usually will be mentioned in the rods description. If unsure, a quick phone call to the company can clarify.

Do you have to use Japanese style tenkara flies when fishing with a tenkara rod? No, you may fish with any fly you choose. In fact, not all tenkara anglers in Japan fish with traditional tenkara flies. Many fish with western dry flies and nymphs. Most tenkara anglers would agree that if you are fishing for trout with unweighted, or modestly weighted tenkara flies in moving water, then you are keeping with the tradition of tenkara. Depending on the rods design, you can also use a tenkara rod for tight line nymphing. But be warned, once you do, except when fishing in very windy conditions, where using a tenkara rod would not be practical, you will never go back to fish nymphs under an indicator with a western fly rod.

If you come from a fly fishing background the thought of spending a day on a trout stream with a few patterns of Japanese tenkara flies as opposed to fly boxes of patterns to *match the hatch* sounds crazy! I know I did. I'd been matching the hatch since my mid 20s. But once I made the commitment to fish tenkara using traditional tenkara flies, I found myself less concerned about what fly I had tied on, and more focused on fishing. And I caught fish! Was it an easy transition? I'll be the first to admit it wasn't. The epiphany for me happened on a day of fishing at Waterloo Creek on Spring day with my good friend Larry Murphy. I had made the decision before leaving that I would only use traditional Japanese style flies and left all my boxes with western flies at home. As I arrived at the spot that I intended to start fishing, I noticed trout rising to a hatch that was coming off. Careful examination confirmed it was a size 16 Gray Caddis. I opened my fly box and picked out a Road Cone Kebari that Mike Agneta had sent me. Tied it on, made a cast to a spot that I thought a fish would be and caught a 14" Brownie. I continued fishing and a few others spent the day fishing, catching and releasing fish. That Gray Caddis hatch became immaterial.

The 10 Colors of Tenkara

Ask 10 tenkara anglers to show you the fly they use and they will show you ten different flies. So in a play of words, it is often joked that "tenkara has ten colors". Tenkara master Dr. Hisao Ishigaki explains fly choice like this. "No fly can catch trout. Any fly will catch trout." In other words in tenkara the fly that you use really doesn't matter, but how you use that fly does. With tenkara the emphasis is more on fly presentation and manipulation than "matching the hatch."

Yes, in Japan and other countries there are tenkara anglers who use western style dry flie, wet flies, soft hackles and nymphs. Dr Ishigaki is also fond of saying that "if the fish won't come up, you must go down". Nymphs aside the freedom an angler gets by not being focused on hatch matching, means less time looking in the box for the right fly and more time fishing and catching fish!

Getting Started

So, now that you're all excited about wanting to give tenkara a try, where to begin? Well I'm going to borrow a page from the play book of long time tenkara angler Jason Sparks. Jason is the administrator of the Appalachian Tenkara Anglers FaceBook page and along with Michael Agneta and Matt Sment, editor of Tenkara Angler Magazine (tenkaraangler.com). Jason wrote an article in June of 2020 entitled: Rule of 12:s: Tenkara Rod Line, & Fly. In it Jason suggests that because of the amount of information available someone new or wanting to give tenkara a try might become overwhelmed. Jason suggests that to get started in tenkara and to **keep it simple**, to just remember this. **Rod length: 12', Line length: 12', Fly size:12'** will get you started. So, why a 12' rod? Think of it this way. With western fly fishing oftentimes a 9' 5wt is regarded as the *all around model*. So it is with a 12' tenkara rod. Long enough to fish large rivers and ponds and short enough to fish our Iowa Spring Creeks. Also, it is often recommended that with tenkara the line should be the same length as the rod; Add to that a 4' piece of 5x tippet and a size 12 fly and you are all set?

But what rod should you buy? Mike Agneta wrote a great article for the Tenkara Angler Magazine entitled: **I Want to Try Tenkara, What Rod Should I get?** It's worth checking out. A few of the rods that Mike suggests are the DRAGONtail Shadowfire 365, Tenkara USA Iwana and Tenkara Adventure Outfitters Classic.

As far as line is concerned I would recommend the Shogun from DRAGONtail and a tapered nylon tenkara line (11 ½') from Tenkara USA. Also, you will find in the Learning Center on Tenkara USA's website, instructional videos that will help you to learn the proper ways to extend and collapse the rod, attaching the line to the rod, along with other essentials to help get you started.

Agatha Christie's Belgian detective Hercule Poirot would rely on the little gray cells in his brain to help him sort out the clues in a murder investigation. Hopefully, the information that I've presented hasn't overloaded the gray cells in yours.

Flies below left to right Sakasa, Futsu, and Jun

Tight lines!

Dave



FFI Women Connect 2021

By Willa Campbell & Kate Lodge

Willa's Tale:

Women Connect, the women's branch of FFI, is beginning to sponsor fly fishing outings for women. Kate Lodge and Willa Campbell both participated in these outings. They are founding members of Iowa Women Fly Fishers and have supported Women Connect since its inception.

The Central Oregon women's rendezvous was held in Sisters, OR, on September 13-19. Fifteen women participated from all over the country – Iowa, Ohio, Georgia, Texas, California, Idaho, and Oregon. This is Willa's 4th year at the Sisters rendezvous. The participants stay at Black Butte Ranch and have the option of fishing with guides or fishing on their own. Central Oregon offers many rivers and lakes within a day's drive: the Metolius River, the McKinsey River, the Deschutes River, the Crooked River, the Fall River, and many alpine lakes – Hosmer, East, Three Rivers and more. On this trip, Willa caught a number of trout on the McKinsey River. She and a friend floated the river in a drift boat with a guide from the Fly Fisher's Place in Sisters. They fished with the same guide on Hosmer Lake near Mt. Bachelor and were rewarded with several nice-sized lake trout. Later in the week, they floated the Lower Deschutes with Mary Ann Dozer. Regulation on the Deschutes require that you get out of the boat and fish from the shore. This provided a great opportunity for a Euro nymphing adventure.

And we can't overlook the social part of these outings. The Fly Fishers' Place in Sisters provided drinks and snacks on the first day, a good opportunity to welcome the new people. Most of our evening meals were shared in the houses we were staying in. Three boats were on the McKinsey one day so we met up for lunch and a good sharing of our fish stories. The last night was celebrated with food, drink, prizes, games and lots of laughs. I can't say enough about the benefits of these outings and I encourage all of you to fish with a group when you can.

Kate's Tale:

While the Oregon Rendezvous was winding down, women in Southern California were still hoping to pack warm enough for Minnesota's fickle fall weather for the week of September 27 to October 3, 2021. They live in Southern Cali for a reason. It's warm all the time. Now they were being told that it could be 75 degrees – or it could be in the 20's with sleet and snow. And maybe, both in 24 hours. The only thing those of us in the Driftless could do beyond giving advice to bring clothes to layer, was for us to bring extra fall and winter clothes just in case we might need to share.

And so the 2021 Fly Fishers International Women Connect Rendezvous at the Cedar Valley Resort Lodge in Whalen, Minnesota began as women started arriving from California, Wyoming, Florida, Montana, Pennsylvania, Arkansas, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and even a few from Iowa. All of us were excited to get fishing. The first night, we had a social in nearby Lanesboro with Root River Rod Co. owner Steve Sobieniek and his guides who shared information about the Driftless fish and waters. I think all of us had hired guides for wade and/or float fishing so it was fun to meet up with them ahead of time.

Tuesday through Friday was a fly angler's dream. Two fully stocked refrigerators so we could eat breakfast, pack a lunch, and head out. While during the week we all had at least a half day of guided time, we all had full eight to 12-hour days of exploring and stream time. At dark it was head back to the lodge, share a meal and tales, and do it again the next day. I added a few favorite streams to my list.

We did mix it up a little. Marlene Huston (Iowa Women Fly Fishers) and her husband Tom, hosted us for a lunch meet-up at their cabin on Trout Run. Another dark morning found us caravanning to Viroqua, Wisconsin and Geri Meyers and Mat Wagner's Driftless Angler Fly shop where they provided us with special treats – both food and shop sale. Geri wasn't done with the treats! Private waters to fish and a lunch at Esofea Gardens surrounded by colorful flowers and hummingbirds and a view of trout rising in the stream.

Saturday! Our last full day. FFI has a variety of challenges to help to work to improve skills. One set of challenges is the Casting Challenge with three levels: Bronze, Silver, and Gold. With a lot of fun, and yes, concentration, almost all of us passed our Bronze level and a few passed the Silver level. With us we were fortunate to have several qualified women with us to coach and to sign off as we passed on each skill. Sandy Carpenter (Florida and Montana) has done a lot of coaching with her husband, Mike who is an FFI CI (certified instructor). Marlene Huston, with Root River Rod Co. is an FFI CI. Kathy Crofts, another almost FFI CI, is a manager and guide with North Fork Anglers in Cody, Wyoming.

To really experience our week, check out The 2021 DRIFTLESS Rendezvous on YouTube, <https://youtu.be/YsSb3nHe3U>. John Van Vliet and his wife Catherine Smith took many hours of video from all types of cameras and drones to capture this amazing week. I can't believe the many hours of editing involved in putting this project together. While this video is my favorite, of course, their other YouTube videos (For Travel's Sake) are enjoyable to watch, too.

Will we do this again? Yes! We have dates and location reserved for fall 2022. Costs for food, etc. are still being worked out. By the time this issue of the Flyline is sent, we should have details and sign-up on the Fly Fishers International website. We had some very experienced people at the 2021 Rendezvous, but we also had beginners. All skill levels are welcome so don't feel intimidated. Keep checking in if you are interested. You do need to be a member of Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association's parent club, Fly Fishers International. Annual dues are \$35 and provide a variety of benefits and opportunities.

p.s. A very special thank you to Patty Leuken, Arkansas, Sandy Carpenter, Florida/Montana, and Marlene Huston, Minnesota for making FFI Women Connect and this 2021 Rendezvous possible. Also, Jody Millar, Le Claire, Iowa for joining in the fun!

Willa & Kate

An Obsession with Water

by John Carl Miller

CHAPTER 1: YOUTH

It all began a long, long time ago, probably over 65 years ago. I remember the one and only time my parents left the four of us, my brothers and I, alone to be watched by my grandmother who lived next door to us. Being the young craftsmen that we were (ages around 4 to 9), we went into the garage and constructed a sailboat out of a 2x4 scrap piece (very simple, just make a V in the front). Now, what should we do with it? Sail it of course. SO...we walked across the street down a cow pasture, and to the Turkey River. All of this without my grandmother noticing. We launched the newly constructed craft and watched it drift down river. As we were about to walk to the Keystone Bridge to watch it plummet over the big dam, we heard grandmother screaming for us. Maybe that's why she never watched us again. But more importantly this event began a lifelong love of rivers and lakes.

We watched the Turkey River flow by every day from our kitchen/dining room window. It always drew us like a magnet. At a very young age, we would wake up early in the morning to fish its welcoming banks. As we got older, we would ride our bicycles down to the little dam and fish for smallmouth bass, although I don't remember catching many, if any. By the time I started high school and my next two brothers were in junior high, we had purchased two canoes with our lawn mowing money. Now the adventures could really begin.

On most weekends, we canoed from Elkader to Motor Mill. Other trips were: from the trout hatchery to Elkader, from the bridge up-river from the hatchery to the hatchery, and some longer trips from Elkader to Garber. This was the beginning of our life on the water. We had many adventures canoeing the Turkey. I remember one Sunday trip that we had the company of a river full of ice flows. I don't know if we even thought about what would happen if we were pinched between two of these chunks of ice that were larger than our canoe, but it probably wouldn't have gone well. On one overnight trip we were forced to sleep under the bridge near Osterdock because of the rain. I woke up several times at the bottom of the hill, right next to the water. I had started on the relative flat part at the top of the slope and rolled down as I moved in my sleep.

At the end of our trips to Motor Mill, we would explore the old mill. It wasn't boarded up yet, and we could go into it through the opening where the waterwheel had originally been. The limestone walls were huge at that point, to us at least 8 feet wide. We did one very dangerous thing if we got there early, before dad was there to pick us up. We would race over the bridge. Not like normal young boys, but up the steel framework, across the flat part, slide down the next downward part and do the same thing over the second span. I remember it looking a long way down to the riffles of the Turkey River below.

On long weekends, we would canoe the Upper Iowa River, the Wapsipicon River, or the Turkey from Elgin to Elkader. Dad would drop us off and then pick us up three days later. Can't imagine how we survived without cell phones. Dad would give us the tarp from his Coop truck so that we wouldn't have to sleep on the sandy ground, but most times we had to use it as a tent, draped over canoes, to keep us out of the rain. In those days, the threat of rain never changed our plans. People were tougher then and so were we.

One of the long weekends on the Upper Iowa River was on a Fourth of July weekend. There were eight of us, four brothers and four friends, on this particular canoe trip. Part of the fun (remember we were young and dumb) was to shoot pop-bottle rockets at the other canoes as we drifted or paddled down the river. The fun continued onto shore where we were going to set up camp. As we hid behind our turned over canoes, we shot the rockets at the opposite group. One of the rockets went under the edge of a canoe and ignited the entire store of pop-bottle rockets, M-80s, Cherry Bombs, and whatever else was in there. Besides the noise, smoke, and live rockets; four young men came scrambling from behind the canoe. We, who were shooting at the canoe, laughed ourselves silly.

CHAPTER 2: EARLY ADULTHOOD

Like many kids, college ended my canoeing adventures for several years. Then teaching and kids reduced my adventures to hiking and birding adventures. When I finally thought I could afford it, I bought a new Grumman canoe.

I remember the first trip down the Turkey River with my wife, Leta. We chose the Turkey because Mom and Dad could babysit for us in Elkader. We started at the fish hatchery and headed for Elkader. Within a half hour of our start, we rounded a corner and hit a snag with the side of the canoe. Being Leta's first time in a canoe, she leaned the wrong direction and over we went. She was in the water flailing her arms trying to stay afloat when I said "just stand up." She didn't swim (and still doesn't, but now we wear PFDs whenever we are on the water), so it must have been a frightening experience for her. But she still canoed with me all over the Midwest, and even into the Boundary Waters several times.

In 1976, we were asked to chaperone a weeklong canoe trip with another couple. We would canoe the Wisconsin River from just below Sac City to Boscobel. Turned out that the other couple got sick the night before the trip and we were left to lead our first canoe trip with absolutely no experience at leading a group. Turned out to be a fantastic trip. Leta didn't take her PFD off all week (or so it seemed), we bonded with the kids and they all called Leta "Mom".

That began the start of many trips with the Hempstead Sierra Society. We canoed on weekends when we could. We always had at least one weeklong trip in the summer, to places like the Boundary Waters, Wisconsin River, the Upper Iowa River, and almost every year to the Current River in Missouri. In the early days, we would take off from Hempstead at noon on the last day of school for Easter Break (that's what they called it then), drive in the green Sierra Society remodeled school bus until the wee hours of the night (and once until 5:00 am), set up camp, then canoe three days, coming home on Saturday so that the kids could be with family for Easter. When our girls were 5 and 9, we had an Easter egg hunt on the banks of the Current River. When Easter Break was shortened and became Spring Break, we took a weeklong canoe trip to the Current River with the Sierra Society on the first week of summer.

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I remember my first backpack trip with the Sierra Society. It was the summer of 1977, and we went to the Sawtooth Mountains of Idaho. At our first campsite, we set up camp and then had some time to ourselves. I spent the hour or two sitting on a rock next to the mountain stream that was cascading down the mountain. We were to learn the next day that the water cascading down the mountain had been snow just a day or two before. I remember the peaceful, relaxing feeling of sitting beside the stream, seeing the water cascade over the rocks, and just listening to the sound of the water. I can still find my peaceful, happy place next to water.

Of course, there were many weekend canoe trips with Brian Larson, including at least one full week to the Boundary Waters every summer. My favorite "close to home" was from Volney to Effigy Mounds on the Yellow River. The BWCA trips were always in a tandem canoe, but after 1987 most river trips were in our solo canoes. Mine, a sleek Wenonah canoe called the "Advantage," and Brian's canoe was a cedar strip canoe that he built himself in his garage/workshop.

On a trip that I took alone in my solo Advantage, I learned the real reason to wear a PFD at all times. I rounded a corner and tried to shortcut it. Water came over the sides of the canoe and promptly dumped me into the river. Everything was appropriately strapped in, except the PFD. There I was holding the canoe in one hand and the paddle in the other, watching the PFD swirl around in the eddy. If I had hit my head, it may have been the end of my obsession.

In around 1990, that obsession took a turn with my involvement in fly-fishing. From that time on, every spare moment was spent either walking a stream, or fishing on a lake in a float tube at first, and soon in an inflatable pontoon boat made specifically for fly-fishing. The pontoon proved to be a real asset for fishing for Smallmouth Bass. During the late 1990's, I went on several trips with a group of Dubuque Fly Fishers to the Sylvania Wilderness Area to fish for Smallmouth Bass. On many occasions, we spent all day on the pontoons fishing or just getting to the fishing spots. My favorite memory is waiting for a large Smallmouth to ascend the twenty feet from the bottom to take a Dragonfly imitation. That was on Deer Island Lake, and it required traversing several lakes and then portaging into the next. I took the pontoon to the Black Hills and used it on several lakes in the early 2000's. The pontoon had a blowout and fixing it proved difficult. And it was too slow for Minnesota fishing, so I scrapped it.

CHAPTER 3: MATURE ADULTHOOD

Fast-forward to the 2020 HFFA Fly Fishing Show held in Dubuque. I had 4 canoes, but was old enough that I didn't feel agile enough to enter and exit a canoe. Also, sitting for a long period of time without a backrest was a thing of the past. At the show, I met Mel Hayner, of "The Driftless Fly Fishing Company." He was a presenter and had a booth at the show. He had a Jackson Kayak on display. I had seen the Mayfly by Jackson Kayak at Canoecopia in Madison a year or two earlier and fell in love with it. It is specifically designed for fly-fishing with built-in tubes for storing the fly rods while traveling from location to location on a lake or river. It also had a raised seat with a backrest and an inflatable lumbar support. It was just what I needed. By the time the show was over I had set the groundwork for getting my first kayak. A few weeks later, Lyllly (granddaughter) and I drove up to Preston, Minnesota, to pick up the kayak. Like many things, this plan went sideways. UPS had sublet the delivery of the kayak to a private company, and the schedule was different from what UPS had given Mel. Of course, that wouldn't have been a problem if I weren't in such a hurry to get it. After all, not many lakes or rivers are calling me to paddle on them in the middle of March.

As it turned out, it arrived the next day. Mel's young employee and I agreed to meet at about half way between Dubuque and Preston. We met at a church parking lot in Postville, Iowa. Lyllly was with me to pick up the kayak, and was presented with a very nice Orvis sling pack that she had been looking at in the Preston store. It was a very nice reward for having to make two trips to get the kayak.

We transported it home on a small (4 foot by 6 foot) utility trailer. I had Thule bars mounted on the trailer to carry our bicycles, so off came the bike mounts. We used foam canoe pads to transport the kayak home from Postville, but I would need a better way to transport it to northern Minnesota the following summer. Note: Because of the pandemic, it was almost two years before I got to Minnesota to visit my brothers, and thus the kayak hasn't gotten to Minnesota yet either. We finally made a few quick trips to Minnesota during the summer of 2021, but without the kayak.

Now, the task was the modification of the trailer. First I had to lengthen the tongue of the trailer to accommodate the length of the Kayak on one side and a cargo box on the other. Then I bought appropriate kayak pads to handle the weight of the kayak (heavier than most).

Next project was to get a kayak for Lyllly. We managed to trade my two solo canoes for one kayak for Lyllly. We got the Staxx by Jackson Kayak. Now we can take both kayaks on the trailer. Next, I have to build an elevated bar to accommodate the cargo box too. That will be a project for my brother, Gary, and I next time I go to Minnesota with the trailer (he has a welding/metal shop area in his huge shop).

I have fished from the kayak at Central Lake twice. The first time it was a "shake-down trip" to fish and see what I needed to take with me. The most important thing that I learned was that I needed an anchor to counter the wind that seems constant here in Iowa. I also decided that the pontoon boats are a better deal for small lakes, but for larger lakes and rivers, the kayak is the best deal.

I can't wait to get up to Minnesota and fish some of the lakes that I loved to fish years ago (had a boat and motor up there, but a building fell on them, but that's another story). Hart Lake is my favorite lake to fish. I remember getting up very early one morning and going out alone. The mist was rising from the water, and I would catch a largemouth bass on about every cast with a top water lure cast into the lily pads. Can't wait to try that with a fly rod. My next favorite is Long Lake (there's one in every county in the north country). Its about 60 feet deep in one spot, and goes through a narrows to the end of the lake where the northern wait. Again, a blast on a fly rod. For a quick and easy, close to home (the cabin), there's Twin Lake(s). When our first daughter, Tina, was three, Leta and I canoed through the narrow openings to the larger lake with her sitting in the middle of the canoe. I cast into a small cut of somewhat shallow water when a northern hit the lure. I set the hook, and it came right out of the water doing a tail walk. Tina said, "Dad, that's just like on TV."

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This summer, I hope to take Lyllly on a kayak trip (rods included) on the Upper Iowa River from Kendellville to Bluffton. I was about Lyllly's age when I first canoed that stretch with my brothers, and have since canoed it with the Sierra Society kids and with Leta. It may be the prettiest stretch of river in Iowa. Of course, the dream is to either walk a stream and fly fish, or fly fish out of the kayak as often as I can this summer. Wish me luck.

Photos below Lyllly's kayak on left mine is on the right

John



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