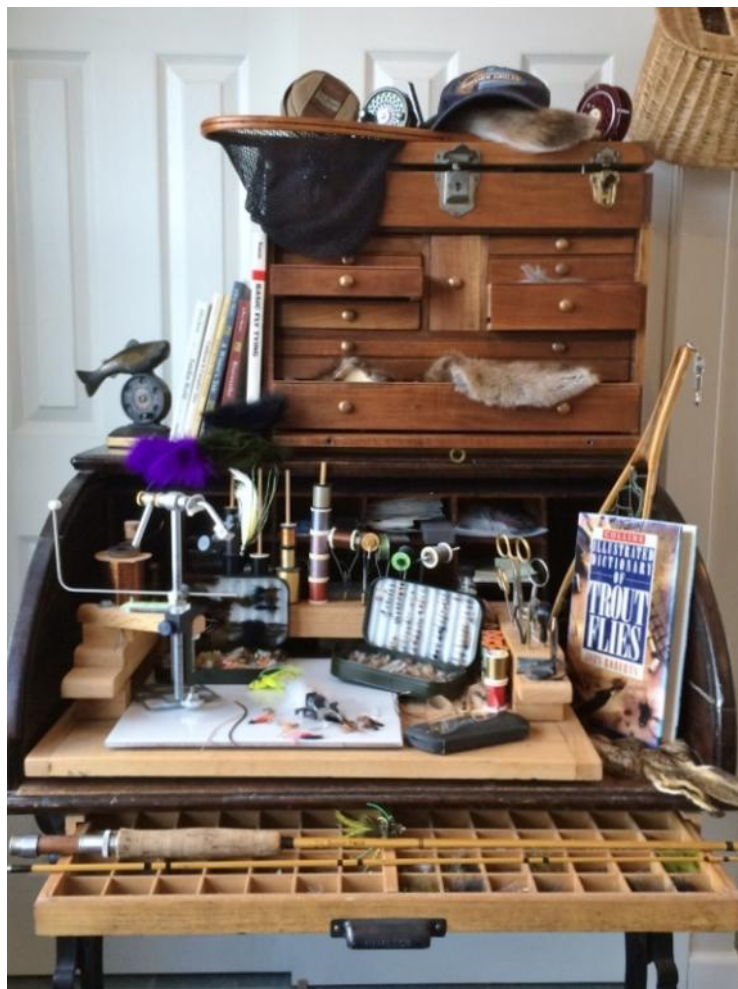




# *The Flyline*

*The Newsletter of the Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association*

*June, 2019*



**"Benson's Bench"**

**Second Place HFFA 2019 Show Photo Contest by Dale Tayloe**



President's Hatch - page 2  
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# The President's Hatch

HFFA had another great show this February. And that is thanks to Mike Jacobs and his super show committee. The speakers inspired me to look into Smallmouth fishing again. It's been at least 10 years since I did any Smallmouth fishing, and I now find that I miss it. Part of summer is too hot to fish for Trout, as it stresses them out and can pose a threat to the health of my generation of fishers. That's where Smallmouth fishing can fill a void, especially if done from a drift boat or personal pontoon boat. I even bought Tim Landwehr's book and read it for a half hour each day as I wait for my granddaughter to get out of school. I hope everyone who attended was inspired as well.

In Dubuque, we are "full steam ahead" on the 2020 HFFA Show. We are again, focusing on the Driftless Area, one of the most unique areas in the world. For 2020, we are making it a mix of Smallmouth and Trout. Some anglers don't know that some of the best Smallmouth fishing in the Midwest is found in the Driftless Area.

However, on the environmental end of things, I am very discouraged. We seem to be losing every battle with the Iowa legislature, and don't seem to be getting the job done on our own. We Iowans need to let our voices be heard and open up our pocketbooks to do our own stream restoration and get more permanent access to streams. Every year we lose access to



John Carl Miller

one or more streams (or parts of streams), and the DNR doesn't have the funding to do it alone.

I am encouraged by what other states are doing. The Harry and Laura Nohr TU Chapter in Wisconsin does work on one or more streams each year; the chapter raises funds, hires contractors, supervises work, etc. The Minnesota DNR has funding to do work on streams. The Black Hills Flyfishers raised \$32,850.00 at their recent auction, and their president's comment was "Now we need to put that money to work!" in their newsletter.

Consider stepping up to the plate when elections roll around this coming March (6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, & 8<sup>th</sup>) at the Annual HFFA Show and Meeting. We need to fill the President, Vice-president, a director from the CIFF and a director from CR/IC area. See quote from the Bylaws below: "The Local Clubs representing Central Iowa and Cedar Rapids-Iowa City may nominate one candidate each, to stand for election to the Board of Directors at the Annual Corporation Business Meetings held in even-numbered years."

The next board meeting is scheduled for August (probably the 3<sup>rd</sup> week-end), so if you have any thoughts on how the club can move forward, attend the board meeting or let your representative know your thoughts.

*John*



**Help Support  
Port-a-Potties at N&S Bear Creeks  
Go Fund Me**  
<https://www.gofundme.com/port-a-potty>

# Contacts & Meetings

## 2019 Board of Directors

### **John Miller, President**

1890 Wood St.  
Dubuque, IA 52001  
dbqflyfisher@mchsi.com

### **Kyle Anderson, Vice President**

120 Booth St.  
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Muscatine, IA 52761  
dave.jones@kentww.com

### **Brad Mullin, Treasurer**

P.O. Box 8145  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52408  
mullinb1427@yahoo.com

### **Kate Lodge, Past President**

209 S. Vail  
Genesco, IL 61254  
katelodge25@gmail.com

### **Willa Campbell, Director**

7701 Goodman Dr.  
Urbandale, IA 53022  
willacamp@gmail.com

### **John Channon, Director**

582 Belmont Rd.  
Riverdale, IA 52722  
jc.channon@mchsi.com

### **Mike Stallsmith, Director**

6520 Kingsley Ct.  
Dubuque, IA 52001  
decoydux@gmail.com

### **David Oliver, Director**

1040 Ridgewood Ave.  
Ames, IA 50010  
doliver@iastate.edu

### **Ron Stahlberg, Director**

1412 Pine Ridge Lane NE  
Swisher, IA 52338  
flyfish@southslope.net

### **HFFA Webpage**

<http://www.hawkeyeflyfishing.com>

### **Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing**

Meets 1st & 3rd Tuesday of Month  
5:30 pm

VA Central Iowa Health System  
CLC - 12, Room B105  
Des Moines, IA

Contact: Dale Sanders  
iaflyfisher@q.com

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### **Quad Cities Chapter**

Meets 1st & 3rd Sunday 6:00 pm

October to May

Meets 1st Sunday 6:00 pm June to  
September

Riverdale Fire Station, 110 Manor  
Drive, Riverdale, IA

Contact: John Channon  
jc.channon@mchsi.com

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### **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

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### **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: Martin Acerbo  
macerbo@iastate.edu

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### **Iowa City Chapter**

Contact: Ryan Maas  
maas\_ryan@yahoo.com

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### **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](http://tu-northbear.org)

Jim Kelehan-President  
president@tu-northbear.org

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### **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](http://www.iadriftless.org)

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### **Iowa Women Fly Fishers**

Beginner or Skilled

Meet other Women Fly Fishers

Des Moines or North Liberty

[katelodge25@gmail.com](mailto:katelodge25@gmail.com)

[willacamp@gmail.com](mailto:willacamp@gmail.com)

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### **Trout Unlimited**

#### **Spring Creeks Chapter**

Ryan Maas – President

Check Their Web Site

[www.tu-springcreeks.org](http://www.tu-springcreeks.org)

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### **Iowa's Coldwater**

#### **Conservancy**

Tom Murray

[jandtmurray@gmail.com](mailto:jandtmurray@gmail.com)

# Event Calendar

## June 2019

### **Wisconsin Women's Fly Fishing Clinics**

June 12-14

#### **On The Water Skills Clinic 2019**

West Fork Sportsman's Club  
Avalanche, WI  
wisconsinwomenflyfishing@gmail.com

June 14-16

#### **Women's Fly Fishing Clinic For Beginners**

West Fork Sportsman's Club  
Avalanche, WI  
wisconsinwomenflyfishing@gmail.com

## July 2019

July 7 -12

#### **Project Aware - River Cleanup Boone River**

Goldfield to Boone Forks Wildlife Area  
www.iowadnr.gov/aware

July 21-23

#### **Upper Midwest FFI Fly Fishing School**

Rochester Community & Technical College  
851 30th Ave.  
Rochester, MN 55904  
Todd Heggestad  
theggestad57@gmail.com

July 21-23

#### **Upper Midwest FFI Master Casting Preparation Course See Contact Info Above**

July 22-27

#### **FFI Fly Fishing Fair**

Montana State University  
Bozeman, MT  
www.flyfishersinternational.org

July 31

#### **Deadline for State Fair Tying Contest**

State Fair Administration  
P.O. Box 57130  
Des Moines, Iowa 50317

## August 2019

## September 2019

September 7

#### **5th Annual Brule River Spey Day**

Lake Superior Steelhead Assn.  
Brule River @ McNeil's House  
Brule, WI  
www.steelheaders.org

September 7

#### **HFFA - Iowa DNR Work Day**

Manchester Trout Hatchery  
22693 205th Ave., Manchester, IA  
Kate Lodge  
katelodge25@gmail.com

September 20-22

#### **2019 Driftless Flyathon**

Decorah, Iowa  
flyathon@driftlessonthefly.com

## October 2019

October 4 - 5

#### **2019 FFI Fly Fishing Tournament Southern Council**

Mountain Home, Arkansas  
Ron Knight, President FFI SOC  
ron79580@gmail.com

October 4-6

#### **2019 Casting For Recovery IA**

Camp Ewalu's Stone Retreat Center  
Strawberry Point, Iowa 52076  
norrisk@ihaonline.org  
**Apply by July 26, 2019**

## November 2019

## December 2019

## January 2020

## February 2020

## March 2020

March 6-8

#### **HFFA Annual Fly Fishing Show**

Best Western Plus  
3100 Dodge St.  
Dubuque, Iowa 52003  
John Carl Miller  
dbqflyfisher@mchsi.com

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



# *HFFA Sharing the Sport*



The Annual Dubuque Fly Fishers Picnic was well attended. Photos by Kate Lodge show the group gathering upper left and casting instruction by Brian Ramsey upper right. Jane Kiebel is learning the craft from an expert.

The 2019 HFFA Bluegill Outing was also well attended. Attendees were; Jason, Marybeth & Liam Hayes, Jack & Terri Werling, John Dautremont, Lisa Davis, John & Cheryl Channon, Lance & Laurie Zook, Dan & Kathy Hoeper, Bailey Hesseltine, Meg Rose, Steve Anderson, Dan & Alex Peterson, Jim & Barb Cato, Kate Lodge, Hank Moeller and the Dan Jacobs Family.

Photo below by Lisa Davis shows the group.



Photos above left by Lisa Davis and above right by Kate Lodge show some of the real contributors to HFFA. The Hayes family and Hank Moeller worked tirelessly on the Little Amana show. The Channons, Zooks, and Catos are always helping out somewhere. Jim Cato is there behind John's hat. Question for Hank "Where is the chicken??" LOL

# *Run, Bloody Run*

*by R. M. O'Bryon*

"I can't think of any good reason why they shouldn't," I answered. "They take winter-run steelhead on them, don't they? And remember late November when it was below freezing."

It was Friday the 19th and we were enjoying a hot cup of coffee during the morning recess. The bright January sun was warming things up. It was 30 degrees outside and rising. The weekend forecast was for continued clear skies with highs in the 40's. You could hardly call it a January thaw because there wasn't a trace of snow left on the ground, but it was thawing us!

The subject was northeast Iowa trout fishing. Gary's question was: "Do you really think they will take a fly in the middle of winter?"

Gary Fiscus, my bailiff, is a life-long fisherman and sportsman. He and his wife, Arlene, have sojourned in Canada at their Lake-of-the-Woods cabin for more than 25 years. They have explored their share of other waters and it would be hard to name a local river, creek, lake or pond either of them could not describe in detail. The one flaw in his character was corrected when he was introduced to fly fishing for trout a few years ago. He hasn't been the same since, and, although not a purist, now ties his own flies, uses them with considerable and ever-increasing skill, and seldom misses a chance to practice this elusive, delicate and rewarding art.

As we finished our coffee, we recounted streamside conversations with local fishermen, especially the winter lunkers they told of taking on spoons, spinners and bait, usually minnows. We debated the credibility of one who told of incursions up silent valleys on snowshoes and of successfully stalking the wildest of the monster trout in some ice-rimmed pool.

There is no closed season on trout in Iowa. The forty-odd, small, spring-fed streams in the northeast corner of the state are stocked weekly from April through October and into November with catchin'-size trout -- Rainbows, Browns and a few Brookies. You rarely catch a trout under 9 inches, even in April when regular stocking begins. In the fall they generally run upwards from 12 inches. Large fish, including broods, furnish a late fall and winter bonus and are widely dispersed. Winter survival is good in the major streams with pre-season counts by stocking crews often raising several hundred fish per mile.

We live in Marshalltown in central Iowa and it wasn't the first time we had ever talked about trying winter fly-fishing for trout. But you don't drive 150 or more miles in the dead of winter just to wallow around in snowdrifts, slip on ice-covered banks, get frostbitten, and catch pneumonia when it is doubtful you will be able to find, let alone get to, any open, fishable water. But -- with no snow here, and little, if any, there? We agreed we'd never get a better chance to try and that it would be fun, even if we never saw a trout. Nothing was decided -- but a seed was planted!

The seed grew.

After supper, the phone rang and a familiar voice said: "We'll pick you and the Missus up at seven. All you'll need is your personal gear."

"The wife can't go, but I'll be ready," I replied, and hung up, knowing that Arlene would accompany us and that we'd have plenty of fried chicken, coffee, snacks and other goodies to comfort and sustain us.

Arlene is a patient and determined bait fisher. She uses a spin-cast outfit, never complains, and is usually the last to leave the stream when day is done, even when fishing is poor. She usually catches her share of fish, but, like all good fishermen, it's the fishing, not the fish, that matters most. That is why it's nice to have her along.

We were delayed an hour or so taking care of court business and it was a little past noon when Gary turned the wagon into the park at North Bear Creek in Winneshiek County near Highlandville. As we drove upstream, we noticed several local cars parked along the lower reaches and knew we did not have it all to ourselves, even in January.

We parked near a favorite stretch above the second ford. The high, limestone bluff reflected the bright sun's rays, and, as we assembled our rods, donned our boots, and ate our lunch, it seemed even warmer than the announced 40 degrees. Patches of ice and snow in protected areas belied the apparent season.

We approached the stream and a trout darted and vanished into the ledgey rocks on the far side of the long, slow pool. We halted and studied the water. Upstream, staggered a few feet apart in the deeper water, two nice sized trout held against the current, sunning themselves -- motionless except for the slow and rhythmic fanning of fins. "This is it! We can't miss," we chorused.

Arlene crouched and slowly eased herself down the bank. She flipped a worm across and above the trout. Backing away, Gary started downstream and I up.

About 100 feet above, I cut back towards the stream and saw Arlene "rear back," a mid-stream boil, and then her line go slack.

"I got a little eager, I guess," she sputtered, and lobbed her hook, worm still intact, back across the current and watched it drift back into the "lie."

Upstream, this beautiful, rock-bottomed creek is a series of riffles, runs and moving pools. The current has undercut the rock bluff, forming cave-like pockets in several places. Large hunks of fallen limestone and an occasional boulder add to its character. My spirits soared when I found this excellent stretch of fly-water unoccupied and ice-free all the way up to the flat water upstream from the long, cascading riffles above the next ford.

I suppose every fly fisherman has a favorite fly for familiar waters and that it's the confidence he has in his "pet" that accounts for a large part of its success. One does a better job of fishing a fly he believes in than one he doesn't. This is human nature. If pinned down, I would have to admit that the Robyn has of late been my favorite for these waters. It produced well all year and took more fish for me in the late fall than any other single pattern. This nymph-like fly has a yellow-orange floss body with a black or gray back and is hackled with the short, hard hair taken from the foreleg of a deer. Because of the deer hair hackle, it is somewhat buoyant and may be fished as a fly or a nymph (a "flymph"). I tie them mostly on 1x or 2x stout hooks, and 1x long hooks, to give them sinking qualities and fish them as a flymph. This versatility is a boon when changing flies with cold-numbed fingers is difficult and uncomfortable. It ties well up to size 14.

Hair-winged wet flies and bucktails also produced well for me in the late fall. Si Saito, an architect from Waterloo and a dedicated small-mouth bass fly fisherman, is a frequent visitor to North Bear and we have enjoyed exchanging food, yarns, techniques and flies around campfires. When I met him last summer, he used the Muddler almost exclusively. While he always enticed many strikes, he hooked only a small percentage. I suggested that he go to normal, small flies on trout. As a good listener and learner, Si switched to lighter flies like the Robyn and improved his percentage. He became increasingly expert at tying all kinds of flies, and discarded his home-made bamboo rod as he upgraded his equipment. He soon became a purist wet and dry fly tier and fisherman.

The water was low and crystal clear. I tied on a #14 Robyn and cast across a riffle and watched it wash into the pool below. My "pet" failed and I ran the gamut of wet flies, nymphs and bucktails. Up and down, I tried every trick that had ever worked and some that hadn't, but nary a follow. I never saw another trout until, as I returned to the wagon, Arlene staged a repeat performance. This time she had forgotten to engage the line-pickup before she struck.

"It's just not my day. Four bites and no fish," she protested. "How about you?"

"No hits, no trout, no errors," I answered.

"Ditto," Gary added, shaking his head as he approached the wagon.

It was nearly three o'clock and we poured some coffee and talked the situation over. Deciding to move, we settled on Lower French Creek, some 25 miles to the east in Allamakee County.

Lower French snakes through a large, flat, open pasture and has many deep holes and pools on the outside of every curve. There are a few rocky riffles and graveled runs. It is an easy stream to fish and can be fair, even if not classic, fly-water. It can be fished from the road below the pasture for about a mile until it enters the Upper Iowa River.

We fished French until dark. Arlene caught a 13-inch brown and a 14 inch rainbow. Gary and I were skunked. Arlene proved the trout were there. We had proved nothing.

Two weeks later on the 3rd day of February, Gary and I continued our experiment. Noon found us working Spring Branch, a small, sandy stream by the National Rainbow Hatchery near Manchester. It was a quiet, sunny day and the temperature was in the 30's. After a fruitless hour, we headed back to the wagon. Near the hatchery, I noticed a small rainbow feeding off the end of a weir. He took my #16 Adams dry fly on the first cast. I released him, commenting that at least I was not skunked again. It was the only fish we saw.

We drank some coffee and decided to try Bloody Run Creek, about 60 miles to the northeast near Marquette in Clayton county.

Arriving around three o'clock, I settled on a long, rocky pool above the campground. Gary took off upstream. Bloody Run is similar to North Bear and has some good stretches of fly-water. In recent years, moss and weeds have appeared and silting has increased in the slower areas, all probably the result of farming and increased use of fertilizers upstream. It is still a fine stream and is not as heavily fished as North Bear.

Experimenting first with small and then heftier flies, I soon lost enthusiasm and went to a #12 Robyn. I moved it slowly up and down the pool, methodically quartering up and across, letting it drift naturally.

I had fished it thus, nymph-style, for nearly an hour when, just as my fly rose to the surface at the end of the drift, a 15-inch brown exploded from the deep, gulping my fly and hooking itself.

Thinking this might be the only tangible proof of my theory, I carefully played him out and I was grinning like a kid when I slid him onto the gravel bar below.

Twenty or so minutes later, I changed tactics and tied on a #8 black Woolly Worm with grizzly hackle, spiraled Mylar ribbing and tag. On my second cast to the rocks on the far edge, a 14-inch rainbow took it just as it started to sink and before it had moved 6 inches. He put up a good fight, running up and down the pool, jumping several times. He soon tired and I beached him on the same bar.

With the Robyn and Woolly Worm, an incredible forty-five minutes followed. I had seven strikes and landed four more Browns, the smallest 13 inches and the largest a hair under 15 inches. Each took the Woolly Worm with a vengeance as it started to settle and no more than an inch or so under the surface. Because of the shadows, I could not see them before they struck but they seemed to be coming from the rocks along the edge or from the deeper water just beyond, rolling and spanking the water with their tails as they inhaled the fly -- like a trout takes a fallen grasshopper near the shore in the good old summertime.

With my limit of six in the bag, I hollered for Gary, hoping he could get in on the action. To my surprise, he was quietly fishing the riffle at the head of the pool and had seen me take my last two fish. He showed me his one and only fish, a solid 16-inch Rainbow, which he said he had taken on a bucktail when he first started in the big hole above. He had worked on up a half-mile or so further and then back. It was the only strike he had.

It was getting dark and cold in the valley. Gary made a few unsuccessful casts while I cleaned and washed my last two fish. Then we broke out our flashlights and cut across the timbered pasture towards the wagon and a hot cup of coffee. "They will take flies in the winter," I iterated. "Trout for Sunday dinner," Gary added.

Three weeks later, the 24th of February with the temperature again in the 30's and the skies clear, I returned alone to Bloody Run. I fished all afternoon, fighting ice in the guides the last two hours as I had on the previous trip. Most of my time was spent casting the same Woolly Worm in the same pool. The water was low and clear again. I never had a hit nor saw a fish.

On Saturday, the 9th of March, I again pulled off the gravel at the campground at Bloody Run. I immediately found my car stuck in the clayish mud. Being alone and with no help around and none likely to show, I knew the first thing for me to do was to extricate the car. I placed all the nearby sticks and stones under the rear wheels. It still wouldn't move. I walked to the stream to gather more rocks. My spirits sank even further when I found the stream up nearly a foot and dirty-red, and I knew how Bloody Run came by its name. A few armloads of rock later, I pulled back onto the gravel and parked. I was puzzled as to why the stream was up and dirty, for there had been no reports of heavy rains. I had no bait but decided to give it a try. Conditions might be better upstream and it might clear some in an hour or so, I hoped.

I rigged up and cut across the timber to the pool. It looked hopeless. I walked on up to the big hole on the end where the stream runs into the rock bluff and noticed there were large slabs of ice, a foot or more thick, piled on the shore on the outside of the bend. It was then I surmised that ice-jams in the flat areas above had broken and caused the flash flooding.

I continued on up another quarter mile, snipped off my two-pound tippet, tied on a #8 Hair-Winged Coachman, and began to fish it slowly along the bottom of a small pool. I changed to a Thor and then tried several other large flies, mostly bucktails, as I worked my way back down. The scenery and the clean, fresh air were my only rewards.

I was ready to throw in the towel when I returned to the long pool. Then I noticed that the water had dropped several inches and was now clear on the far side below the riffle where several springs feed into the stream. This clear water fanned out until it reached mid-stream, about fifty feet below where it blended with the dirty water. The water was clearing slowly and it soon became reasonably fishable for another fifty feet on down.

Like the proverbial elephant, I tied on the same Woolly Worm, made the same cast in the same pool, and leaned forward, expecting a strike on the first cast. It didn't happen. I continued working the clear, far edge and letting the Woolly Worm settle and drift in naturally with the current.

It was three-fifteen when I took my first fish, a scrappy, 12-inch Brown that picked up my offering near the bottom in the deeper water.

A bit later, I dropped the Woolly Worm by a large rock on the far edge. When it had settled a few inches, there was a churning boil and I saw a monster trout, probably five pounds, swoosh his tail as he rolled and dived. I felt, but missed him when I struck. Maybe he missed and merely rolled against my leader -- I hoped. Mentally noting the exact spot so I could try for him later, I moved down a way.

During the next hour, I picked up two more Browns, each a little larger than the first. Then I switched to a #10 Robyn and nailed my fourth. After a while, I tied on a white-bodied, black-hackled Woolly Worm and a 15-inch Rainbow smashed it near the tail of the pool as I began a retrieve.

He must have thought he was a thrice-his-size Steelhead or Atlantic Salmon, fresh from the sea. I lowered my rod after he made an explosive leap two or three feet into the air and then raced upstream. I took up the slack in my bowing line and held my rod high. The steady pressure of the rod and drag slowed him near the riffle at the head and he erupted again and aimed for the tail. After five frenzied dashes, three up and two down, and six soaring leaps, I was able to contain him in the middle of the pool. He continued the fight. I kept my rod tip low but he still gave four more valiant, surface-skittering attempts before he turned and came in belly-up, completely exhausted. It was 1968 -- a leap year -- and he was truly a leaper.

The stream was slowly clearing. At six o'clock, I caught another trout, my sixth, which I released, still hoping the monster might hit again. I fished for another half-hour and then made one, final cast to the big one's spot. He didn't show.

I waded down the brush-edged, shallow side of the wide, weedy flat water below the long pool, carefully feeling my way and aimlessly roll casting a Robyn ahead in the near darkness. To my surprise, a 9-inch brown latched onto my fly. I had released a much nicer fish, but I again had eatin' proof of another limit catch! I was talking to myself all the way back to the car.

So ended a memorable winter day -- a memorable winter! The big one got away (don't they always?). And that 15-inch rainbow was the gamest, jumpin'est Iowa trout that I've ever tied into. For his size, he was the equal of any wild trout, including Steelhead, that I've hooked or seen hooked anywhere. I wonder if the battle might have ended differently had he been hooked in bigger, faster water with wild rapids to run to. I didn't catch any lunkers like the bait-and-hardware boys do, but I had accomplished my goal and had a ball doing it. And I'll be going again.

#### Editor's Note "Robyn or Robin"

This was truly a team effort. Dean Elder sent me Judge Robert O'Bryon's essay on fishing NE Iowa. I scanned it to pdf. Sue Schulteis converted it to text. Dale Sanders provided the tying information, which was originally provided by Dean Elder in the HFFA Tying Manual. This essay may have been printed before but I thought it was worth visiting again. Judge O'Bryon and Dean were both charter members of HFFA. I have seen Dean tie this fly and always thought it was the Robin. A letter Dean sent along with the essay from the Judge says that it is Robyn an acronym of his name. Learn something new every day. Thanks to all! Don

#### Robyn or Robin

Hook: Mustad 3906

Size: 10 - 14

Thread: Black 6/0

Body: Yellow and Black Floss

Hackle: Leg Hair From Whitetail Deer



#### Notes on Tying

1. Stack deer hair (it should be short and slightly stiff) and tie it in with fine points forward (1/4 shank of length). Trim off the butt ends and wrap down the cut ends.
2. Attach 4 strands of black floss and 4 strands of yellow floss at bend of hook (each about 6 inches long).
3. Wrap yellow floss up to eye and back down to bend in the hook.
4. Wrap the black floss around the yellow floss 3 turns each time you wrap the yellow floss over the back of the hook. Weave the floss up the body of the fly to the deer hair. This will give you black on the back and yellow on the bottom.
5. Push deer hair back over body.
6. Tie off with neat head.



# *The Rubber Ducky*

*by Larry Niday*

*Second Place HFFA 2019 Essay Contest*

My new ship was laying on the pond bank in front of me, aired up and ready to go. Some would call it a float tube, or a belly boat, maybe even a kick boat because of its method of propulsion, but in a momentary lapse of sanity, I had decided to christen it the "Rubber Ducky". After all, to me it seemed to be the most fitting description. It was a rather unique watercraft, the nearest thing to a real boat I could afford at the time; basically, a pickup inner tube covered with a bright blue and yellow nylon shell. Another folded tube curved across the back to lean against, covered with the same material and in the donut hole was sort of a seat, like a baby's swing, without the hanging fuzzy animals or bells. What else could you call it?

I was having second thoughts about this christening though. My understanding of christening a ship involved a bottle of champagne, or at least, in this case, a bottle of beer, broken across the bow of a boat. But standing there, with the bottle in my hand, I was fully aware of the folly of breaking a bottle against a rubber tube. First, it would be impossible to do and if I swung the bottle with any force, hitting what amounted to a tightly inflated balloon, it would just as well end up in the middle of my forehead. Not wanting to end a fishing trip like that, I opened the bottle, downed the contents, held up the empty bottle and in a quieter voice than planned, said "I christen thee!" That seemed much safer, and although I had intended to announce it loudly, outside of a few squirrels and maybe a raccoon, I was the only living thing within hearing distance and the whole thing had suddenly seemed a little ludicrous.

The first problem was getting me and this rubber contraption both in the water at the same time. It seemed to be a little more difficult than I had thought and just looking at it gave me no hint of any easy way to do it. I pulled on the boot foot chest waders, shrugged into my fishing vest and set the fly rod on the bank where it would be in easy reach. I carefully eased my feet into the leg openings in the seat and reached out with the fins, intending to put them on the boots, but sitting on the ground with an inner tube against my stomach made my arms about three feet short. That didn't work. It was obvious the fins had to go on first, so, I had to wiggle out of the tube and walk back to the truck tailgate to put them on the boots. I was ready. In my mind, the sight of a man flapping across the grass in full length Gortex, a bulging vest filled with fly boxes, spools of tippet, first aid kits and every tool in the latest fly fishing catalogue was noticeable, but the black flippers waving out in front with each clumsy step had to be memorable. My sincere hope was that no one wrecked on the road driving by this show.

The flippers barely fit through the leg holes in the seat. I reached for my rod and stood up, pulling the tube up to my waist and like a toddler with a bright yellow giraffe swim tube, happily stumbled into the pond. Two steps in and it became obvious that I was heading for trouble. My feet, even with the flippers that should have worked like snowshoes, started sinking in the muck on the bottom. With some difficulty, I managed to turn around and slowly back into the deepening water until the bottom dropped out from under me and I found myself floating. I was free! It didn't take long to get my bearings and learn how to kick my feet to move it in the right direction. I was sitting in the seat astraddle the center strap with my legs hanging out in the water. Kicking the fins propelled the whole works backward, so I had to watch over my shoulders to see where I was going. I was feeling happy about my new adventure and started cruising over the water, although slowly, heading for my objective, the gathering place for the biggest fish in the pond.

The west bank of the pond ran along the side of a hill. The tree covered slope made a steep decline to the water with little room left at the bottom to stand. Trees that had given up their fight to stand along the bank were laying out in the water with the exposed branches forming a tangle over the surface. It could be fished somewhat successfully with spinning gear or a bait casting rig, but was impossible with a fly rod, which was my weapon of choice.

Like an iceberg, the largest unseen portions of the felled trees were under water and reached far beyond the dry snarled branches that could be seen from my vantage point. I felt the tug of a snag catching my waders as I ventured too close and adjusted my course to swing out away from the danger. Brushing that off as a near miss, I resumed my search for that spot I just knew would speak to me when I saw it.

I had sort of figured out the navigation and how to control my new watercraft and felt like I had conquered all the intricacies of this new mobility when a problem caught my attention. On my left leg, I felt a sudden cold touch that started growing and rapidly became a steady stream of water. The tree branch had torn my waders and the hole was growing. The water started running down my leg, into the boot and as the flow increased, moved slowly up my leg, reaching my crotch and spilling over into the right leg. It didn't stop until the water rose to the outside level which corresponded with the waist of my jeans. I thought briefly about returning to the shore, but my wallet and keys were in zip lock bags and I since was already soaked, I wanted to finish what I had started. I was actually beginning to feel sort of comfortable as I acclimated to the temperature of the water in the waders.

By this time, I had reached my destination. The trees along the shore overhung the water, making it a little difficult to cast close to the submerged trunks of the trees. A sidearm cast got me in there and I began casting toward the shore and stripping the streamer back along the exposed branches. I have never been a student of physics, someone warned me early on that it had something to do with math, but I do understand the principle of every action having an equal and opposite reaction. Flyrodding from a float tube demonstrates the truth in that theory. Each back cast propels the tube forward and the forward cast pushes you back. I would spin, rock or tilt and my fly would land anywhere it wanted, which was not necessarily where I wanted, which completely wiped out any hope for accuracy. In my case, where accuracy is often determined by how close my fly lands to the side of a stream I was hoping for, it multiplies...mathematically. It was no surprise then, when a cast went into a tree and stayed.

I tried wiggling and shaking the rod, but the tree wouldn't let go. I had a strong bass tippet on the leader and it wouldn't be easy to break loose, so with nothing to brace against and no foothold, each time I tried to break the tippet, just pulled me deeper into the chaos of the branches. I glanced over my shoulder to see where to move for a better angle.

The snake was on my left.

First, I recognized the rhythmic disturbance on the surface at a distance. As it approached, the egg shaped head appeared, moving back and forth as it serpentine through the water. What had appeared to be waves, proved to be the back of the snake as its long body rippled from the head to the tail, propelling it straight toward me. I was looking at an Anaconda of biblical proportions. One that could swallow me whole, spit out the float tube and pick its teeth with my fly rod. Anyone else would probably have seen a four foot common water snake, but this is my story and I'm just telling you what I saw. Cold terror gripped the back of my neck, sending chills down my back into the water-filled waders. When you are in a float tube, low in the water, an animal like this doesn't see a human, but a nice log to crawl up on to sun themselves. I resented being mistaken for a log and there was no room for any company, especially something that looked as evil as this intruder. I had to act fast, so I grabbed the rod with both hands and swung as hard as I could to my left, breaking the leader, and in a single movement swung it around and with a loud splash, brought all nine feet of it hard down on the water in the direction of the snake. It worked. The snake turned to my right and moved away from me towards the shore. I held the rod out in front of me like a sword, following it to make sure it didn't turn back towards me. I was prepared, if it turned, to slash the rod back and forth in front of me and yell to the top of my lungs the way Blackbeard taught his pirates. It caused many ships to surrender without a fight; maybe it would work on a snake. It kept its bearings though, towards the west bank of the pond, where it reached the shore and turned along the bank until it disappeared into the root ball of a downed tree.

I watched for a little while until I was sure it wouldn't appear again, and then looked around to see if there were any more uninvited guests. Seeing none, my mind turned to the quickest way back to the truck. So many things had gone wrong that I just wanted to get back before the Fates thought of something else to torment me with. I began kicking the flippers, moving the float tube as fast as I could back towards the truck.

Leaning against the backrest and pushing the tube through the water, gave me plenty of time to reflect on the happenings of the past hour or so. I ran the list of my acquaintances through my mind, trying to decide which one I disliked enough to make a gift of a bright blue and yellow belly boat and with a name like the "Rubber Ducky", who could refuse such a gift?

*Larry*



# *Fly Tying Competition at 2019 Iowa State Fair*

## *by Larry Murphy*

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.

This year's fair will be held from August 8th through the 18th. The fly tying display will be in the DNR Building on the Fairgrounds during the fair. The judging is tentatively scheduled for Friday, August 9<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. in the DNR Building.

Fly entries need to be received at the Fair Administration post box by July 31, 2019.

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. The categories are the following:

- 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**.

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.

**No flies smaller than size #18.**

Flies must be sent to the Iowa State Fair Administration Office, P.O. Box 57130, Des Moines, IA 50317 and **received by July 31, 2019**. Each fly entered must have the **Fly Tiers 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.**

Photos below by Larry Murphy show Dave Rossett on the left and Larry Young on the right judging the winners and the fairgoers enjoying the display.



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(Editors Note - All of Dean's stuff is in excellent condition and well cared for.)

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