

# The Flyline



***A publication of Mountain Laurel Trout Unlimited***

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## **President's Message**

*by Randy Buchanan*

The pandemic has changed everything! These past three months, the Chapter has been meeting via Zoom and, thanks to Missy, they have gone rather well. This has enabled the Chapter to stay in touch and still try to keep the Chapter moving forward and keep our members safe. To keep everyone safe means that, again, our banquet in March had to be cancelled. We will follow the guidance of the Pennsylvania Department of Health and National Trout Unlimited and, if allowed, the Chapter may hold an outdoors fundraiser this summer on July 10 at Saints Peter & Paul Orthodox Church in Windber. The banquet committee is in the planning stages and will make a decision in the near future.

Because of our banquet being cancelled, the Chapter has not been able to plan new projects, but that doesn't mean that we have nothing to do! The Chapter has scheduled four trash clean ups and may do a tree planting at Greenhouse Park along Soap Hollow Run. The Chapter's fly tying classes were cancelled earlier this year, but, with the aid of Zoom, we will start fly tying live in April. The first pattern will be a marabou nymph.

As you can see, there are still things in which we, as TU members, can be involved. Come out and join us and stay six feet apart and be safe.

Catch one!

*Randy*

Penn State Extension is holding a presentation, via Zoom, to introduce the newest version of their mobile app and online reporting tools called First Investigation of Stream Health (FISH). On April 1, from 2–3 PM, they will show you how to access the newly updated reporting tools on your phone or computer and walk you through your first FISH visit to a stream. The FISH tool is a fun and easy way for individuals, families, volunteer groups, and TU members to explore a stream and share your findings with the scientific community. Registration is required to receive the Zoom link. Go to this link to RSVP:

<https://extension.psu.edu/new-citizen-science-tool-first-investigation-of-stream-health-fish>.

English teachers (apparently even those in retirement) are at their happiest when issuing a writing assignment.

So, Mr. Cooper, if I only had one fly...  
hmm, here goes!

There was a time in my fly fishing adolescence that I looked like an Orvis foot soldier when I took to the stream. Now, with one hip recently replaced and all other joints under warranty review, I have pared down my "necessary" equipment. My bag of tricks still doesn't include one fly pattern that works every single outing, but my current bag always includes several ties of one particular nymph pattern that is at hand every time I take to toting a fly rod.

In some circles I have been dubbed a nymph fishing devotee. Any affinity I have for fishing nymphs is simply supported; and, the humble Gold-Ribbed Hare's Ear is to blame – for several unimpeachable reasons.

In 2020's last issue of *The Flyline*, Mr. Cooper aptly described the Gold-Ribbed Hare's Ear as "ubiquitous." The ever present fly was well described to be sure and so-described with good reason. Widely popular in its use, the Hare's Ear defines the term versatile.

Although not complete, the following list of reasons bespeaks the versatility and universality of this popular fly pattern:

- ◆ Possibilities involving sizes and colors are numerous.
- ◆ Offerings may be tied in weighted or unweighted versions.
- ◆ No exotic materials are needed for tying.
- ◆ Arguably, it is one of the greatest imitators of a wide variety of trout preferred table fare.

- ◆ Quite simply put; when assiduously used, it works - and, therefore builds confidence.
- ◆ It need not be a masterpiece of fly tying prowess.
- ◆ Few patterns choices rival it as a means of learning (and teaching) a multitude of fly tying skills and techniques.

It should be noted that the Hare's Ear is a very forgiving pattern to tie. In fact, some of the most crudely created offerings can prove to be the most productive choices when put to use, even if it takes some courage to try them; and even if there are no witnesses. Novice fly tyers should reread the last sentence, take it to heart, and remember it the next time you are intimidated by the spectacular presentation of a Buchanan Stone Fly Nymph that could pass for a \$300 tie tack in a jewelry case at Neiman Marcus!

Let me say finally, that confidence is the key to successful fly fishing. Using the Gold-Ribbed Hare's Ear builds confidence. Just as in tying the fly, presentation of the fly on stream can be less than perfect as well - and still be successful. Of course, the speed of drift is always of paramount consideration. And yet, the lowly Hare's Ear, ironically and forgivingly, can allow the fly caster to be both meticulous and sloppy at the same time - and still catch fish.

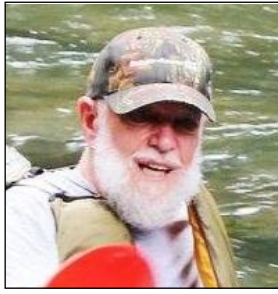
O.K. I'm done!

Mr. Cooper was correct. This was fun.

*Gold-Ribbed Hare's Ear*  
Photo by Tom Hindman



**Gary Wetterberg** was not a native of Somerset County. He and his wife relocated to the area after Gary retired from a federal position that took him to various parts of the country.



When they decided to make Somerset County their retirement home, Gary quickly went back to work in local conservation efforts. Gary became active in and strongly supported the efforts of the Casselman River Watershed Association and also contributed significant time to the conservation of the Laurel Hill Creek watershed where he resided. Gary also became an active Associate Board Director for the Somerset Conservation District. Gary and his wife chose Somerset County to live in primarily because of its outstanding natural resources they enjoyed and they wanted to make sure they did all they could so that others could do so as well.

**Thurman Korns** passed away in October at the age of 90. He grew up in the Wells Creek watershed that had long suffered from abandoned mine drainage (AMD) pollution. Thurman was a truck driver who simply wanted to do something to give back to his home area and actually did something about it by volunteering in the growing conservation efforts in the Cambria-Somerset region. Through that involvement he gained knowledge about



water quality improvement efforts and in 1999 he established the Wells Creek Watershed Association and served as its President until 2014. Under his leadership the WCWA secured grant funding and worked with other partners to design and construct AMD treatment systems that have restored aquatic life and a trout fishery to the watershed.

He also became involved in regional efforts through serving as Chairman of the Water Resources Committee of the Southern Alleghenies Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council and served as a long time board member for the Somerset County Conservancy. Thurman also joined the board of directors of the Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project (SCRIP) and served as its Treasurer and was in charge of the SCRIP River Keepers who monitored the Stonycreek River and its tributaries. It was Thurman, who through his monitoring efforts, made the historic and scientific discovery that the Stonycreek River had changed from a net acidic to a net alkaline waterway which served to further foster the momentum and efforts to continue the now proven successful AMD abatement projects.

**Ron Donlan** passed away in late December at age 71, shocking those who knew him since Ron always lived life to the fullest. Ron was a professional conservationist who served as the



Natural Resource Conservation Service's federal Coordinator for

*Continued at "Loss" on page 4*

the Southern Alleghenies RC&D Council.

The RC&D, in the 1990's and throughout the early 2000's, was a multi-county federally designated and empowered unit that was the genesis for the most significant conservation and economic initiatives ever undertaken in the region. The origin of the Oven Run AMD abatement projects on the Stonycreek River, the public acquisition of the Manufacturers Water Company properties that included the Quemahoning Reservoir, the initial efforts to create the Allegheny Highlands Trail that would later become the Great Allegheny Passage Trail are just a few of the cutting edge natural resource conservation projects that the RC&D and its implementation arm the Southern Alleghenies Conservancy generated and supported.

Ron served as that support mechanism, often taking the risks that no one else wanted to, that put him in the forefront of the projects yet still behind the scenes so that elected officials, conservation districts, watershed groups and non-profits could achieve their project goals that would not have been possible without Ron's assistance, advice and often hard charging mentality.

I was personally fortunate to work side by side with all three of these dedicated conservationists for many years. Because of that I can assure you that everyone in the region is even more fortunate because all of you benefit everyday from the successful, economically sustainable and still ongoing quality of life improving natural resource enhancement projects they helped to create.

## Community Science Opportunity

The Somerset Conservation District and MLTU are working to assess the Bens Creek and need your help. They are seeking volunteers to walk stream sections and document good stream habitat and cover, as well as pollution and problem areas.

Adam Cotchen, Watershed Scientist with the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, and Greg Shustrick, Watershed Specialist with the Somerset Conservation District will lead a virtual program about this project on April 7 at 7 PM via Zoom.

Volunteers will use the Rivers Inventory by Volunteers for Efficient Restoration Strategies (RIVERS) tool to document disturbances and complete a watershed inventory.

RIVERS is not a mobile application itself, but rather is a 'Survey' within the mobile app called **Survey123 for ArcGIS**, which you can download through your phone's App Store.

During the presentation, Adam and Greg will cover some basics on stream assessment and further describe what data they wish to acquire.

The primary goal is to have volunteers and members use the RIVERS 'app' as a planning tool to map out potential project sites for MLTU to address in the coming years. These data will be added to the existing GIS map Adam has started for the Chapter.

The Chapter may use this tool on other streams in the future too.

To learn more about the RIVER's app, visit <https://www.tu.org/science/science-engagement/community-science/rivers/>.

To participate in April's presentation, contact Adam at [acotchen@paconserve.org](mailto:acotchen@paconserve.org) and he will share the Zoom login details with you. You are encouraged to have the app downloaded to your phone prior to the presentation. Thank you.



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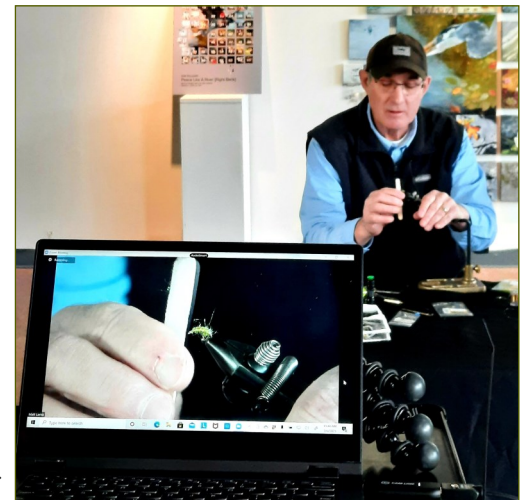
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Penguin Court, a Preserve of the Brandywine Conservancy, and the Bottle Works Ethnic Arts Center held the 5th annual NatureWorks event virtually this year, because of the pandemic. While live streaming was unsuccessful, all presentations were recorded and are available on the [Bottle Works' YouTube](#) page. Randy Buchanan, Shane Rudnik, and Dave Maher represented MLTU and shared information about the organization, the importance of coldwater resources, macroinvertebrates, and fly tying. Check out MLTU's 30-minute video, as well as those of our partners!

*Dave Maher ties a scud. Photo by Melissa Reckner.*



## Fly Tying Opportunities

MLTU will be hosting a series of fly tying demonstrations via Zoom, beginning in April. You are encouraged to follow along, as step by step guidance is given. There is no fee to participate; however, you are responsible for providing your own material. The marabou nymph will be the first fly tied, and the following is the list of materials to have on hand.

- Hook – size 16,14,12 any style
- Thread – match the marabou
- Rib – fine gold wire
- Body – any color marabou
- Wing Case – small turkey tail
- Thorax – marabou



Interest and participation will determine future dates and flies.

The first session will be Monday, April 12 with the Zoom room opening at 7 PM and tying to start at 7:15. Please register to receive the Zoom link by contacting MLTU Board Member, Eric Fabrizio at [eric\\_fabrizio2@yahoo.com](mailto:eric_fabrizio2@yahoo.com) by April 9.

**Mountain Laurel  
Trout Unlimited**

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## Save the Dates!

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- ◆ April 1 - FISH app presentation via Zoom, 2 PM (details on page 1)
- ◆ April 1 - MLTU Meeting via Zoom, 7 PM
- ◆ April 7 - RIVERS app / Bens Creek project presentation via Zoom, 7 PM (details on page 4)
- ◆ April 10 - Little Paint Creek litter cleanup, 8:30 AM, meet along Berwick Road
- ◆ April 12 - Fly tying session via Zoom, 7 PM
- ◆ April 18 - Bens Creek litter cleanup, 9 AM, meet at Jim & Jimmies
- ◆ April 24 - Yellow Creek litter cleanup, 9 AM, meet at Frontier Restaurant
- ◆ May 5 - Banquet committee meeting, 7 PM, meet at Dave Maher's house
- ◆ May 6 - MLTU Meeting via Zoom, 7 PM
- ◆ May 8 - Clear Shade litter cleanup, 9 AM, meet at the old Iron Bridge
- ◆ June 3 - MLTU Meeting via Zoom, 7 PM
- ◆ June 8 - MLTU newsletter submission deadline, 4 PM (submit materials to Missy)
- ◆ July 10 - Tentatively MLTU Banquet at Saints Peter & Paul Orthodox Church pavilion in Windber. If this occurs, watch your mail for a letter with details and ticket info.