

The Flyline



A publication of Mountain Laurel Trout Unlimited

January 2024

Volume 62, Issue 68

President's Message

by Dave Maher

Happy holidays and Merry Christmas to everyone. The new year is here, and I hope everyone is looking forward to some exciting events. The Chapter is planning a lot for the new year.

We are organizing our fly tying classes that start in January, and you can find more information about them in this newsletter. Check out the dates and come out and have some fun by taking the classes or helping teach them.

Gary Cooper and the banquet committee are busy planning the upcoming banquet. The 2024 Banquet will be held on March 23, 2024 at The WILLOW on Airport Road. Remember, the banquet is our major fundraising event of the year.

In the first few months of the new year, we will be setting dates for workdays including our four stream/roadside cleanup projects, starting March 30. We can always use the extra help.

The Chapter will be represented at a new event - "Growing Our Future" - before the Johnstown Symphony Orchestra's February 10th concert. More details may be found on page 4.

We will also be present at "NatureWorks" on March 9. Bring your family or give us a hand.

Tight lines,

Dave

Keystone Coldwater Conference

The Keystone Coldwater Conference will be held on February 23 and 24, 2024 at the Ramada Conference Center in State College. The theme is "Shared Priorities Ensuring Cold Clean

Water for all through Community and Collaboration." A wide variety of presentations are expected on topics such as forever chemicals, effects of climate change, policy changes, invasive species, water quality impaired by development, and more; all aimed at the impacts on the cold water resource and native and wild trout. Registration for the conference will be available on the PATU website: patrout.org.



At the annual meeting in Mill Hall, the Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited presented a special lifetime conservation award to the late **Randy Buchanan** for his service as the long-time President of the Mountain Laurel Chapter of Trout Unlimited (MLTU) and for his active involvement in countless coldwater conservation projects in the Cambria, Somerset and Bedford County region. Accepting the award are left to right, MLTU member Jill Roberts, MLTU Vice President Shane Rudnik, MLTU President Dave Maher, Randy's wife and MLTU Treasurer Pat Buchanan, MLTU member and Randy's niece Becky Buchanan, and Randy's niece Kim Lardieri.

Photo by Len Lichvar.

Fly Tying Season Begins in January

by Gary Cooper

Those of you who would like to learn to tie flies, as well as those who would like to take our beginner's course again to sharpen their skills, please take notice of this article. MLTU will offer beginning fly tying on Monday evenings or on Saturday mornings in January and February.

These classes are free to the public. Tools and materials will be provided to students. We ordered nearly \$1,000 of new supplies for these and future classes.

Monday night classes will begin on January 15 and will continue January 22 and 29 and then February 5 and 12.

See "Tying" on page 3.

Dr. William Kimmel, professor emeritus of Biological and Environmental Sciences at California University of Pennsylvania (now known as PennWest California) was named the 2023 Outstanding Professional Coldwater Conservationist by the Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited.

“Doc” Kimmel has dedicated his life and career to education and research that evaluates and protects coldwater habitats and the life within them. He has dozens of publications with a special focus on mine drainage and acid rain impacts on macroinvertebrate and fish communities in southwestern Pennsylvania. His decades of genetics work highlight the population fragmentation and inbreeding of brook trout in the Laurel Highlands, as well as the impact of climate change on these vulnerable communities.

During his decades of teaching, Doc has mentored hundreds of students, many of whom pursued careers in wildlife and fisheries management. His charges remember him fondly and comment on the wealth of knowledge they gained from him. Even those of us who did not have him as an instructor recognize his extensive knowledge and passion for protecting coldwater streams and appreciate his willingness to investigate and problem solve.

Doc is well known and respected among non-profit conservation organizations in the area, as he and his students have often assisted with biological surveys, pre and post projects, at a huge cost savings to these groups.

Doc hasn’t slowed down in retirement! He still regularly participates in fish and macroinvertebrate surveys, and he is always open to chatting about the latest projects and science.

Congratulations, Dr. Kimmel!



Melissa Reckner presents Bill Kimmel his award.

“Tying” - continued from page 2

Saturday morning classes will begin on January 13 and continue on January 20 and 27, and then February 3 and 10.

February 17 is an event called “Pies and Flies.” On that day, instructors from the class tie for the students. Students may also bring their materials and vises and tie themselves. There will be pizza, too!

If you are interested in one of these classes, call me at 814-266-4763. If I do not answer, leave a message with your name, phone number, and e-mail address.

These are great, enjoyable classes. Imagine catching a fish on a fly that you tied! Sign up now!

NatureWorks

NatureWorks will be held Saturday, **March 9** at the BottleWorks Ethnic Arts Center in the Cambria City section of Johnstown from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. This free, family-oriented event is meant as a cure for “Cabin Fever” and will showcase over 20 local conservation organizations and state agencies that are working to restore and promote our region’s local natural resources. Learn how to correctly install a bluebird box with the Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania, view live macroinvertebrates and see how anglers tie artificial flies to mimic them with MLTU, create chalk colored with iron oxide recovered from abandoned mines, make an animal track booklet with Penguin Court to take home so you can identify tracks in the snow and mud, learn about local whitewater recreation opportunities with Benscreek Canoe Club, and more! Stop by and say, “Hello!”



Pennsylvania Master Naturalist, Jill O'Neill, reviews woodland finds with children at NatureWorks. Photo by Melissa Reckner.

Johnstown Symphony Orchestra

The appeal of NatureWorks drifted to the Johnstown Symphony Orchestra (JSO), whose staff is working with NatureWorks organizers Sue Konvolinka and Melissa Reckner to host, “Growing Our Future,” an event before the JSO’s **February 10th** concert: “Classics with Curtis Stewart” at 7:30 p.m. at the Pasquerilla Performing Arts Center at UPJ. Doors will open at 6:00 p.m. Nine organizations, including MLTU, will be present before and during intermission of the concert to share news of their work, drum up membership, and trumpet local natural resources. Activities will be geared towards adults. Get your tickets at www.johnstownsymphony.org.

MLTU Board Members

President: Dave Maher
Vice President: Shane Rudnik
Treasurer: Pat Buchanan
Secretary: Eric Fabrizio

Jeff Baird
Gary Cooper
Adam Cotchen
Butch Kerchenske
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The annual fundraising banquet for the chapter will be held on **March 23, 2024** at The Willow.

The Willow is a new facility opening in late fall or winter. We have toured the facility, and we think you will enjoy its many amenities. Please mark the date of the banquet on your calendar so you don't forget. The Willow is located at 650 Airport Road in Johnstown.



Each ticket costs \$40. Dinner will be a buffet, though the choices have not been made yet. When we have decided, we will let you know.

As usual, we will have special prizes, a silent auction, baskets, and other ladies' prizes. We will have three full levels of prizes to be chanced off. A brief awards ceremony will be held following dinner.

Doors will open around 5 p.m. and dinner should take place around 6:30, with raffles to follow.

All our activities are funded by money raised at this banquet. We accept cash and credit cards, so spend a little cash. We had a good banquet last year. Let's make this one a great success!

Trout in the Classroom 2024

MLTU is working with seven schools as they prepare to receive rainbow trout eggs from the PA Fish and Boat Commission. Students will raise these fish throughout the winter and spring in a classroom aquarium, while observing their anatomy, understanding their habitat requirements, and realizing how important cold, clean water is to their survival. Before the end of the school year, students will release their trout into a state-approved body of water. If you would like to help with the release days listed below, please contact Missy Reckner or Adam Cotchen.

- ◆ Blacklick Valley Jr.-Sr. High School – Friday, May 17
- ◆ Divine Mercy Catholic Academy East & West – TBD
 - ◆ Forest Hills Jr.-Sr. High School – TBD
 - ◆ Richland Elementary School – TBD
- ◆ Shade-Central City High School – Thursday, May 9
- ◆ Shanksville Stonycreek Elementary School – Friday, May 3

**Mountain Laurel
Trout Unlimited**

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Save the Dates!



- ◆ Jan. 4 — MLTU Meeting @ Richland Municipal Bldg., Board 6:30 PM; Membership 7 PM
- ◆ Jan. 17 — Banquet Committee Meeting @ Dave Maher's House, 6:30 PM
- ◆ Feb. 1 — MLTU Meeting @ Richland Municipal Bldg., Board 6:30 PM; Membership 7 PM
- ◆ Feb. 10 — "Classics with Curtis Stewart" Concert @ PPAC—UPJ, Doors open 6:00 PM
- ◆ Feb. 17 — Pies & Flies @ Richland Municipal Bldg., 9 AM
- ◆ Feb. 21 — Banquet Committee Meeting @ Dave Maher's House, 6:30 PM
- ◆ Feb. 23-24 — Keystone Coldwater Conference @ Ramada Conference Center, State College
- ◆ Mar. 7 — MLTU Meeting @ Richland Municipal Bldg., Board 6:30 PM; Membership 7 PM
- ◆ Mar. 9 — NatureWorks @ Bottle Works Ethnic Arts Center, 10 AM - 2 PM
- ◆ Mar. 12 — MLTU newsletter submission deadline, 4 PM. Submit materials to Missy.
Newsletter covers April 1 - June 30, 2024.
- ◆ Mar. 20 — Banquet Committee Meeting @ Dave Maher's House, 6:30 PM
- ◆ Mar. 23 — MLTU Annual Fundraising Banquet @ The Willow. Doors open 5 PM.
- ◆ Mar. 30 — Stream/roadside cleanup. Location and time, TBD.

See pages 2 & 3 for Fly Tying Class dates.