

# FLYER

OAK BROOK TROUT UNLIMITED MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



VOLUME 9, ISSUE 09, SEPTEMBER 2009

## PHIL'S RANT

By Phil Young

(NOTE: The opinions expressed in this article are not necessarily those of the management)

Okay, it's time for me to climb on the soapbox. Most of you know that I am involved in the Oak Brook Chapter's youth education program. I thought that this might be a good time to let all of you know how well the program is going. An earlier edition of the Flyer described the Trout in the Classroom program successfully put together by Marvin Strauch and Stan Zarnowiecki. You also read about the OBTU volunteers who mentored a group of young people learning fly-fishing at Highlandville, Iowa.

My part of the program is the Boy Scout Fly Fishing Merit Badge Class. This is the fifth year for these classes, which are a one-day event where Boy Scouts (boys age 11-17) are taught skills so that they can meet the requirements for the BSA Fly Fishing Merit Badge. We usually host 5 of the one-day classes each year (one Saturday in May, June, July, August and September) with a maximum of 15 boys per class and requiring the assistance of a minimum of 7 to 8 TU mentors. I say "usually" because this year was a little different.

On May 9, OBTU hosted a Girl Scout Fly Fishing Program. Five girls learned fly casting and fly tying skills from TU ladies Laura Andersen, Donna Smith, Ann Berg and Michelle Gleason and TU guys Jeff Kroger, Fred Hodge, Joseph Meyer, Marvin Strauch, Ted Bernhard, Frank Zbylski, Stan Zarnowiecki and me. We learned too late of a fish kill problem at the St.Charles Sportmans Club (our usual teaching site) and thanks to Michelle, we were able to move the fishing part of the program to the ponds at Fermi Lab in Batavia, IL. We are currently working on arranging and staffing a program for 70 girls at a Girl Scout camp on September 12. It is important that half of the young people in this world learn that fly-fishing is not a "men-only" sport, and just maybe we can interest them in also joining Trout Unlimited.

On August 1 we hosted our first Boy Scout Fly Fishing Merit Badge Class of the year. Fourteen boys from McHenry, Palos Park, Chicago, Bolingbrook, Wheaton and St.Charles were signed up to attend the class at the Oak Brook Central Park (where we hold our chapter meetings). As of the Thursday afternoon, before the Saturday class, the TU staff consisted of two volunteers and me, and I was ready to call boys on Friday afternoon and cancel the class. A few more last minute calls

*continued on page 3*



## Future Meetings and Events

Go to your 2009 calendar and mark down the following meeting and event dates:

### September 9, 2009

Directors' meeting

### September 12, 2009

Boy Scout Merit Badge Class  
Oak Brook Park District, 8:30-4:00

### September 16, 2009

Membership meeting at OBPD  
Recreation Center-7:00 PM  
speaker Henry Quilan of USFWS

### September 18-20, 2009

WI season closer fly fishing trip,  
Viroqua, WI

### September 19th, 2009

Work day with Southeast  
Wisconsin TU, on Van Slyke creek,  
see [sewtu.org](http://sewtu.org) calendar for details.

### October 9-12, 2009

Columbus Day weekend Scout  
fly-fishing trip, Coldwater River &  
Tyler Creek, MI.

### October 14, 2009

Directors' meeting

### October 21, 2009

Membership meeting at OBPD  
Recreation Center-7:00 PM  
speaker TBA

### November 2009

Fall Steelhead Trip-location &  
dates TBA

### November 11, 2009

Directors' meeting

### December 2, 2009

Holiday Dinner, location TBA

### December 9, 2009

Directors' meeting

### January 1, 2009

Happy New Year!!

Please see our website for a full listing of calendar events. [www.obtu.org](http://www.obtu.org).

**Letter from the President**

Dear Members,

Youth education remained our chapter's long suit this year. Oak Brook members were the backbone of planning and implementing the Illinois Council of Trout Unlimited's Youth Conservation and Fly Fishing School, which took place July 19 through 24. The school was an extraordinary success thanks to the concerted efforts of Wally Bock, Fred Hodge, Jeff Kroger, Arnie Leder, Ed Michael, Marvin Strauch, and Stan Zarnowiecki as well as the unsung support of many donors, individual, corporate, and institutional, of time, material and monies for which the School and Council are grateful.

Marvin Strauch and Stan Zarnowiecki, almost single-handedly, put OBTU into the Trout in the Classroom business at St. Pat's. The day the trout were released was a wonderful experience for all involved. We expect the program to increase this coming school year with two or more tanks being added in other schools, Dan Cekander working on filling a tank in River Forest. More release days will be scheduled for which more help will be needed. Let Marvin know if you can help with those added days or if you know of a school or district that might be interested in the TIC program.

Phil Young continues to lead our merit badge program, now in its fifth year. The merit badge classes were the fontanel of our youth programs, but like a baby's skull seem to be closing with age. Originally, OBTU conducted a merit badge class once a month, May through September, but were cut back to three classes so as not to conflict with camps and schools in June and July. It is hard to believe that a chapter of over 600 members cannot muster 7 or 8 members, without calling on the same 7 or 8 each month, during the summer to mentor the Scouts. We have one remaining merit badge class this year on Saturday, September 12; contact Phil and volunteer now for the 12th and for next year too. It is a great program, which takes little more than our time and know-how.

A long line of scouts need merit badge counselors, but we deny many scouts each year, even when we can muster for a full campaign. Let us make it again a 5 class calendar next year.

Notwithstanding some rather successful youth programs, they are only entry level to fly-fishing and stand only on the brink of real involvement of Trout Unlimited's mission. We do need to follow up and involve the kids we have touched in our own OBTU or other TU chapters near where they live. Kids need to come to our meetings and other activities. We all know the chapter demographic. TU should not be a good OLD, and I do mean OLD, boy's club.

On a lighter note, mark your calendar for the September 16th chapter meeting. Henry Quinlan, US Fish and Wildlife Service, will be talking about the status of coaster brook trout in Lake Superior and the efforts being made to bring 'em back stronger, including OBTU's own involvement in the network of PIT tag detection stations around Gitche Gume. Also, mark December 2nd for our Holiday Dinner. We will not be having a banquet this year, so the dinner will stand in its stead for our major fund raising effort. Anyone making last minute plans for the Viroqua season closer (September 18-20) needs to contact Stan Zarnowiecki or Joseph Meyer at One More Cast before September 14!



**Coasters, Lake Superior and OBTU . . .**

**O**ur September guest speaker will be Henry Quinlan. Henry has served as the Chief for Lake Superior fishery and aquatic resource activities for the USFWS Lake Superior Fishery Office since 1996. His primary responsibilities are to address Great Lakes Fishery Commission Lake Superior Fish Community Objectives, particularly those related to lake sturgeon and brook trout rehabilitation, aquatic nuisance species, and aquatic species diversity. His work takes him to

some of the most beautiful and remote locations on Lake Superior. Project locations include Isle Royale National Park, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore and several Indian Reservations.

Henry will provide us with an update on Lake Superior brook trout status with an emphasis on projects funded by our Chapter. Please be sure to join us at our monthly membership meeting to hear this informative presentation. 🐞

**Officers:** *President*, Greg Prosen – prez@obtu.org 630-986-1310 • *Vice President*, Stan Zarnowiecki – vp@obtu.org 708-606-4148 • *Treasurer*, Rich Ference – treasurer@obtu.org 630-983-7030 • *Secretary*, Clyde Alho – secretary@obtu.org 630-897-2401 • **Directors:** jpkroger@sbcglobal.net 630-369-4148 • Arnie Leder – aleder@cin.net 815-252-3303 • Jeremy Slade – jrsl3040@yahoo.com 630-853-2948 • Joe Vitti – vittifam@ameritech.net 630-969-2251 • Ken Voight – knvoight@earthlink.net 630-466-9743 • Phil Young – pyoung2653@aol.com 630-553-4307 • **Ex Officio Director:** Marvin Strauch – mjstrauch@comcast.net 708-599-5101 • **Emeritus Directors:** Jeff Berg – salmonsafari@sbcglobal.net 630-629-5681 • Wally Bock – wjbock1@comcast.net 708-598-6718 • Joe Hammon – jhammon@aol.com 708-453-8102 • Ed Michael – e1michael@cs.com 847-831-4159 • Doug Vanerka – dvanerka@comcast.net 630-655-0084.

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**Phil's Rant** *continued from page 1*

generated additional volunteers and the class was held. The boys had a great time fly casting to and catching the bluegills that populate the park district ponds. I am always amazed at the smiles generated by kids catching those "three-inch wonders". I would like to thank Ted Bernhard, Jeff Kroger, Ed Michael, Greg and Sheila Prosen, Dave George, Doug Vanerka and Frank Zbyski for donating their time to staff that class.

Okay then, so far this year we have held a class on May 9 and one on August 1. What about the June and July classes? Well, last year we held the Fly Fishing Merit Badge Classes in June and July and we had problems getting enough volunteers due to conflicts with the Iowa Youth Fly Fishing Trip (HAFF Camp) and the Illinois Council Fly Fishing Camp. So due to a lack of volunteers the June and July classes (when these camps were scheduled) were not held this year. The next class is scheduled for September 12 (the same day as the Girl Scout Program). Listen folks, we have a product with an unlimited demand. I have to turn boys away because we do not have enough room in the class. I have scout leaders contacting me regarding next year's classes because they could not get their boys into the classes this year. If we had enough volunteers, we could offer 5 Boy Scout classes per year as well as Girl Scout classes.

Now for the rant. WHERE ARE YOU GUYS? Trout Unlimited is a "volunteer grass-roots organization". Note the word "volunteer"? We need a minimum of 8 volunteers per class for 5 classes. That is 40 volunteer-days. If I had 20 volunteers that would sign up for two classes per year that would equal 40 volunteer days. We have nearly 680 members in OBTU. There have to be 200 who live within 50 miles of Oak Brook. WHY CAN'T I GET 20 VOLUNTEERS FOR TWO SATURDAYS A YEAR? Teaching this class IS NOT ROCKET SCIENCE. Any TU member reading this article can cast better than a boy who has never held a fly rod.

I was a registered scout leader for many years while my own sons were in the Boy Scouts . . . 10 of those years as the Scoutmaster for Troop 34 in Bristol, IL. I know something about the home life of these boys. Some of these boys have never been fishing. Sometimes it is because they come from a "disrupted" family with no father, and sometimes it is because they have a father who is not interested in taking them fishing. Can you volunteer a Saturday to help teach a boy or a girl fly-fishing? Can you take one day from your own family to help a child from another family? WE NEED VOLUNTEERS TO MAKE THESE PROGRAMS WORK! When the clipboard is passed your way, sign up for one of the events.

If you don't help, the few TU mentors that are always volunteering to help will someday experience "volunteer burnout" and these programs will disappear. You will continue to wonder why kids don't fish like you did when you were a kid, and you will notice that all of the people at TU meetings have gray hair. And you will wonder why someone doesn't do something about that.

Okay, I am finished with my rant and I have climbed down from the soapbox. 🐾

**OBTU Mail Box**

I just got back from a week with some guys from TU on Michigan's famous Au Sable River. We spent most of the time learning about how to fly fish a river and how this river system is managed. We had a few guests like Todd White, a graduate student from Michigan State, who taught us about the bugs in the river (mayflies, Caddis flies, and other aquatic bugs and invertebrates). We also had a professor from the University of Michigan come and teach us about river hydrology and why it matters.

We also got quite a bit of fishing in, and for all of those who did not know how to fly fish, they taught casting basics and catch and release practices too. We left with a knowledge of how to read a river, how to identify what was hatching, and fly casting and tying basics. All kids that went to this camp came home with a new fly rod and reel, flies and the knowledge acquired from their mentors, which hopefully will lead to all involved in the camp's program and to enjoy fishing (specifically FLY fishing more). I think this camp is a great way to get your kids or anyone started on the great sport we all love, fly fishing.

I would like to thank all of the mentors, kids, people that donated their time or money to make this possible, and all involved for making this a great experience for me, and I hope everyone else feels the same.

I encourage all of you who want to make this great sport last, to please join Trout Unlimited."

—Alex Pernice

Congratulations to Trout Unlimited for running such an important program. I'd also encourage all of you to take a kid fishing this month... it's only a few weeks until back-to-school time. One evening or afternoon can turn a young person on to fly fishing forever. I think anyone who really loves the sport understands the importance of fostering an interest and commitment among future generations...

—Kirk Deeter, writer/editor Field and Stream

Dear Greg,

I thought that the trout unlimited school was very fun. I felt like I learned so much from it. The next time I went out fly fishing I felt like it all came together a lot smoother than it had been in the past. I also thought that having been taught how to match all of the hatches helps you catch more fish. Also being able to read the water makes it easier to find the trout. I thought that all of the instructors were very nice and fun to be with. I now have a new respect for trout and their environment.

Thanks again for a great week.

—Joey Crosson

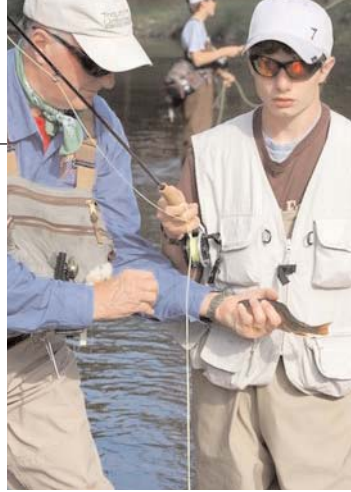
## Celebration on the River of Sand

Greg Prosen

Strings of rose tinged steel blue-gray clouds radiating from a faint yellow glimmer of a sun speeding to its nautical twilight provided only a dim reflective glare over blackened waters of the North Branch as two young lads and their much older mentor made their way precariously back over submerged gnarled roots and stumps to Twin Bridges after a rather tough evening of fishing, which had produced for them only two small brookies and a couple of creek chubs. Andrew, bringing up the rear, broke the silence of the growing nightfall, shouting, "Look at all these little mayflies coming off... the trout are going crazy." Nate and the old guy splashed back upstream through the darkness to find Andy impossibly trying to skim one of the minuscule ephemera off the surface with his hand. The old guy simply pinched one off the surface by its wings. The mayfly, tiny as a Trico, but with two tails, indicated an equally diminutive Baetis, likely of the former genus Pseudocloeon: "the tiny green curse." After a monumental struggle in the dark attaching 7x tippets and tying on a pair of size 24 tiny blue winged olives, the boys set to work casting over the riffle of boiling and splashing trout. After what seemed like a thousand casts, with several fish barbed and a couple of trout hooked for a fleeting moment or two, first one bright brookie and then another was landed by each of the boys. Remarkably, these two young anglers managed to accomplish what many more experienced fly fishers spend half a lifetime attempting... remarkable because this was only the fifth day in their lives that Andrew and Nate ever held a fly rod in their hands. On the way finally out of the now black waters, Nate remarked, "this was the best vacation, ever..."

The Illinois Council of Trout Unlimited, seeking to celebrate the founding of Trout Unlimited just 50 years ago on the banks of Michigan's fabled Au Sable River, hosted a youth conservation and fly fishing school, at which nine boys, including Nate and Andrew, learned first hand a little about hydrology, hydraulics, fluvial geomorphology, aquatic entomology, fisheries biology, ecology, and forestry, all in an outdoor classroom, and, oh yes, a little bit about fly fishing. The school was envisioned not to stir memories and stories of Joe and Me: fishing, although it certainly did spark friendships and fish stories, but rather to build early-on an appreciation of those delicate little complexities which make truly remarkable the places in which cold-water fisheries abound. The trout of the Au Sable and the world-class river itself proved to be the nexus.

After welcoming remarks and introductions, the bus ride from Oak Brook to the Ralph A. MacMullen Conference Center at Roscommon, MI, was spent viewing *The Way of a Trout*, being fitted with waders, learning some basic knots and viewing the *Dynamics of Fly Casting* by Joan Wulff. Check in at RAM was brief, the students finding themselves soon knee deep in Higgins Lake for a fly



casting lesson, most for the first time in their lives. Evening found the students in a classroom setting, learning about the origins, classification, taxonomy, and anatomy of trout as well as how to practice effective catch and release. The life histories and habitat

of Au Sable trout were presented together with an overview of the watershed. Todd White, from Michigan State University, introduced the students to aquatic macroinvertebrates with its lexicon of Latin. A fly-tying session, trying to replicate some of the insects viewed in *Bugs of the Underworld*, capped off the rest of the first evening.

The first full day of the school was devoted to fostering an appreciation of the unique geomorphology and hydrology that make the Au Sable watershed a world-class cold-water fishery. Professor Mike Wiley, of the University of Michigan, posed the question: what is a river and how does it get its water? The students, in touring the watershed, soon learned that a thousand feet of sandy substrata, overlain with cobbles and boulders, deposited by ancient mile high glaciers, now absorb the rainfall, which through seeps and groundwater makes the river channel run always clear and full. Neither feeder streams nor runoff were seen, just the quiet steady flow of cold water in the main river channels. At several stops on the South Branch and Mainstem of the Au Sable, beginning with a trickle from a white cedar swamp, teams of students transected the channel, measured widths, depths and stream velocities in order to calculate the discharge in CFS. The students were able to grasp how the channel varied as the discharge increased proportionally to the area drained. At each stop other teams also surveyed aquatic insects and as the teams progressed down the watershed they were able to measure and appreciate the changes in taxa richness and habitat stability, the presence of pollution intolerant macroinvertebrates, and whether the energy which drives biological processes in the stream derives from autotrophic (photosynthesis/in-stream) or heterotrophic (respiration/out of stream) sources. In this case, the Au Sable was shown to be dependent upon woody debris for its biological energy. The concerted effort to restore the old sweepers for which the Au Sable was so famous was evidenced by the considerable number of newly planted cedars. It was a full day with some sophisticated concepts leavened upon such young minds. The evening was spent fishing the Mainstem of the Au Sable. George caught the first trout in his life.

The second morning of the school took the students to the Main Branch Au Sable for some fly-fishing, all students by now, save one, having caught a trout on a fly. Steve Sendak, senior fisheries biologist from the MDNR Grayling office, joined the group at Keystone Landing, where a fish shock sampling was performed. Prodigious brown trout probed from the abundant woody debris amazed everyone. The number of very large browns in every debris pile seemed to belie the notion of trout territoriality, but the tangled roots and branches proved to screen one trout from the sight of another, while greatly widening the sight of a lot of young anglers.



The trout caught thus far by our students were mostly yearling brookies. Lunch was served on the Mainstem just above Mio dam, where the river ran swift and deep. In the afternoon, students and mentors crossed the river to two worksites where timber was harvested from the forest and dragged to the bank. Under the supervision of Eric Nelson and his work crew from the Huron Pines Americorps Conservation and Restoration Program, the timber was emplaced, providing energy and habitat for the River. The work was hot and sweaty, but the lesson was not lost on our students. One of the students, Wray, commented that the day was “well thought out,” fishing blindly in the morning, then seeing where the big browns held, and in the afternoon creating the very habitat that held the big fish. Several students said the river restoration was not something that they could do every day, but fully enjoyed this tough opportunity to participate in a habitat restoration.

Evening brought the students to Comins Flat below Mio, where all enjoyed a cook out of burgers and dogs, and were given the opportunity to fish the trophy waters. Bob Linsenman spoke briefly about the big river’s history, the effort afoot to improve the fishery, “as well as giving some sound advice on what patterns were effective. Everyone spread out on the flats and with varied techniques under the tutelage of the several mentors, all the students, including Carl, who was fishless to this point, but not for lack of effort, caught rainbows. A new lesson, however, had to be learned. Some fished the slow water under the timber on the banks, but were quick to learn that the rainbows hid under the heavy water in midstream and that species indeed find different niches.

The next morning found everyone knotting on 7X tippets and size 24s duns to fish the trico hatch in the Holy Waters. The hatch came as scheduled and almost everyone managed to land a brookie or small brownie on either a trico dun or spinner. The hatch ended as if someone abruptly pulled a light switch. It was then on to Hartwick Pines, where Tayler Skelton, a young intern, gave a fine talk on the disastrous role the logging industry played on the ecology and geomorphology of the Au Sable system and how it led to the extirpation of the only game fish native to the watershed: the grayling. The kids even managed to brand and saw some logs before lunch.

After lunch, Dale Marie, an interpretive forester, led a tour of Hartwick’s old growth forest, emphasizing the role such forest plays in the hydrologic cycle as well as the role it plays with the various fauna in its environs. Brian Bury, the Natural Rivers Zoning Administrator for the Au Sable River, guided the group to the banks of the East Branch, where he spoke of the relationship of the river to its riparian forest corridor. The evening called for more fishing in the Holy waters, but severe lightening and torrential downpours forced everyone indoors for a marathon fly-tying session.

Dawn came with scudding low grey clouds and light drizzle as the bus was boarded, bound for Carl Hueter’s old river house on the North Branch above Lovells. Carl, former chair of the Michigan Council of Trout Unlimited, who was eminently acquainted with every riffle, run and hole on the North Branch, assigned the students and their respective mentors for the day a beat that was known to produce tricos and the attendant bulging rise forms characteristic

of a trico spinner fall. The river was unaffected by the night’s heavy rainfall, running clear and at normal level. The cold damp morning did not produce the hatch at its early-appointed hour. It became almost impossible to restrain the kids sitting on the bank for the expectant tricos to come. After several rises from a single fish, Joey could not stand the suspense any more and sallied forth to hook and land a nice brown on an attractor pattern. Showing great restraint, he again took his place on the bank to watch the water pass in review. At mid morning, all were ready to give up and started to move downstream to the road, when there was a blurp and then another and another. The duns were coming off in earnest and Joey and his fishing partner Curt, hunkered down on their knees astride the riffle and began to barb trout after trout. Not many were landed but the fishing was fast and furious. Suddenly duns were ignored as untold numbers of spinners drifted down stream as if on a giant conveyer belt. A change to a spinner pattern and it was business as usual, the trick being to keep the fly in that mix of millions on the conveyor belt. Curt, who last year had fished in Alaska, said that morning was “awesome, better than Alaska, because it was more of a challenge.” Down stream, Javon was into fish and his partner, Alex, landed a 12” brook trout, only to have it cartwheel away from a photo attempt.

Back at the River House, lunch was served, after which, Professor Barry Coddens, from Northwestern University, together with Arnie Leder, just retired from the EPA, and Jeff Kroger, a retired schoolteacher, set to work with teams of students to test pH levels, biochemical oxygen demand, as well as sampling nitrate, phosphorus and dissolved oxygen levels of the North Branch. There was more fishing that afternoon, followed a cold fried chicken dinner, then fishing the evening rise. Dinner on the Au Sable that evening set the stage for Ed Michael’s talk about the origins of Trout Unlimited, almost 50 years to the date.

The last day found the bus for Oak Brook packed before breakfast because the guys wanted one last chance to fish the tricos in the Holy Water. Alas, the tricos only materialized at one of two locations fished that morning. Where the trikes appeared, the trout were nailed. There is no fairness in nature, but during the course of the week, not only did each student catch a trout on a fly, but each caught one on a trico, something many other anglers have never experienced. The students did board the bus with a good understanding of the delicate relationship between the Au Sable’s hydrology, geomorphology, ecology, and water quality and how it all relates to produce an excellent cold-water trout fishery. They also boarded with a somewhat now used fly rod outfit, courtesy of the Sierra Club. Wray, when later asked what he liked best about the school, answered simply “the river”. For that, he should receive high marks as should all of those young men who are now graduated to a new lifetime avocation! 🐟





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## Annual Custom rod Raffle

**B**y this time all members should have received your winning tickets for our chapter annual custom rod raffle. We are asking all members to purchase or sell a few books of tickets. This is one of the few ways that we have to raise revenues for our general operating fund. You are welcome to come to any of our few

remaining monthly membership meetings, Wednesday September 16th, or Wednesday October 21st, and drop off your ticket stubs and money. See Stan Z. for more tickets if you need them. Please be generous and purchase tickets for this great prize, a custom rod of your choice built by Clyde Alho of The Rod Shop. 🎣

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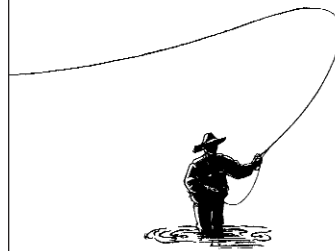
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