

# TROUT TALK

The Official Newsletter of Western New York Trout Unlimited

April 2007

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Shows-Len Bigaj (826-4178)

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## President's Report

Thanks to Greg Waile for teaching us how to make our own braided leaders at the last meeting. For those of you who weren't there he showed us how to make absolutely great soft, supple leaders from regular 2 lb. test line.

At the April 24th meeting, **Brad Brown**, Pesticide Control Specialist 1 of the NYDEC, will instruct us on "Responsible, Modern Mosquito Control." He is the expert in his field nationwide. Come learn how to best control these annoying pests (especially when they're buzzing in your ears when you have a good fish on). Also bring any questions you may have to ask him. I look forward to a real interesting presentation - don't miss this one!

Thanks to our Webmaster, **Ric Toczek**, our new site, [www.wnytroutunlimited.org](http://www.wnytroutunlimited.org), is taking shape. We hope to have it at full function soon.

Be sure to show up at your meetings- Stream projects are in the works for this coming Summer season, and your TIME is a valuable donation to our area streams. Come to hear the plans, and sign up for the work parties. It's also a great way to learn some new spots and methods.

We still need a Meeting Program Organizer for your monthly meetings. Suggestions as to what you'd like to see are always welcome. Please come early to tie, and donated flies are appreciated. This is our main money raiser at the shows.

**Dee Maciejewski, President**

## Whispering Pines Fish Farm

### POND STOCKING

Trout, Bass, Perch, Minnows

Grass Carp, Koi, Crayfish

496-7440

## Anglers Choice Taxidermy

World Class Fish Taxidermy

By Artist/Taxidermist **Peter T. Di Rado**

[www.anglerschoicetaxidermy.com](http://www.anglerschoicetaxidermy.com)

716-537-9753

**WNY TU Chapter Meeting:** Tuesday, April 24, 2007, 7:30 pm at the **Donovan American Legion Post**, 3210 Genesee Street, Cheektowaga, New York. **Brad Brown**, Pesticide Control Specialist of the NYSDEC, will instruct us on "Responsible, Modern Mosquito Control." He is the expert in his field nationwide. Come learn how to best control these annoying pests (especially when they're buzzing in your ears when you have a good fish on) **Fly Tying will start at 6PM** when we will be tying hare's ears. Please bring brown thread.

### New Website for Region 9

Region 9 Fisheries has their own web page on the DEC website now with a bunch of info for the Region's fishing opportunities, trout and otherwise. To get there either type in: [www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dfwmr/fish/reg9fish](http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dfwmr/fish/reg9fish) or at [www.dec.state.ny.us/](http://www.dec.state.ny.us/) website type in "Region 9 fisheries" in the search section and click on "Fishing in Western NY".

### Fishing Partner Connection

We are starting a new column for those looking for a fishing partner: **Fishing Buddy Wanted.** If you'd like to share your day on the water with someone, e-mail Editor **Vince Tobia @ vtobia@aol.com**. He will put your contact info in the newsletter. To get in touch with your partner, contact them directly. Include your name, telephone #, and e-mail address.

**Bill Swartz** 716-741-2563  
[flytyer72001@yahoo.com](mailto:flytyer72001@yahoo.com)

**Larry Jakubowski** 716-684-9755  
[jake14086@yahoo.com](mailto:jake14086@yahoo.com)

### Fly Tying

At the March meeting we had the following tyers: thanks to **Jim Logel** and **Greg Waild** for helping to tie 30 Bi-visibles. Tying at the April meeting is at 6pm. Bring brown thread for Gold Ribbed hares ears. Thanks

Len Bigaj.

### Shows

The W.N.Y. Sports and Travel Expo was held from March 8th to 11<sup>th</sup>, 2007. Thanks to the following members for manning the booth: **Bob Harris, John Miller, Jim Zak, Ed Luba, Gene Romanyshyn, and Gary Coons**. We earned \$492.50 of which \$424.50 was for flies. The next show will be at Erie County Fair in August 2008. I will keep you informed. Thanks to all.

Len Bigaj.

## Spring Banquet News

The board of Directors voted to scrub the September raffle in favor of the spring Banquet. I was asked to chair the banquet again. I believe that **Jason Czora** will be Co-Chair. It will be held on March 15th 2008 at Ripa's Restaurant, so please keep the date open. More info to come.

Len Bigaj

## Lower Great Lakes Fishery

We are set to participate in the 2007 Fish and Wildlife Festival, on June 2, 2007 at Hyde Park in Niagara Falls. Setup is from 8 to 10am, and the Festival is from 11am to 5pm. If you are interested in manning our booth let me know.

Len Bigaj

## Region 9 Angler Diary Program

The DEC Region 9 Fisheries Office will be running an angler diary program for Clear Creek (Arcade), Lime Lake Outlet, McKinstry Creek and Hosmer Brook during 2007 and is currently looking for anglers to keep diaries. If you fish any of the listed waters (even once) and would like to keep a diary for DEC please call the DEC Fisheries Office at (716) 372-0645 or e-mail at [fwfish9@gw.dec.state.ny.us](mailto:fwfish9@gw.dec.state.ny.us). The program will run March 1st through November 30th. This program duplicates one run in 2000 and will be used in conjunction with a late-summer electro-fishing survey to evaluate the fishery's overall quality. In 2000, 101 anglers signed up for the program.

## Trout in the Classroom (TIC) Website is Live

At long last, [www.troutintheclassroom.org](http://www.troutintheclassroom.org), is a live website with a lot of good information about our program. Please take a look and submit work or give me some feedback( Rochelle Gandour). The "contact us" link comes straight to me, so you can do that if you like. Also, please pass the site along to anyone you think would be interested in learning more about TIC. Many thanks to Con Edison for making the site possible.

### **NY TIC SPRING NEWSLETTER**

This spring's paper NY TIC newsletter for is due out in the month of May (earlier than last year). I would like to feature photos and stories from releases, as well as more creative classroom work. Please consider submitting work to share with the whole network! An archive of past newsletters is available at [www.troutintheclassroom.org](http://www.troutintheclassroom.org). Contact **Rochelle Gandour** at [rgandour@tu.org](mailto:rgandour@tu.org) or 917-803-0743 for more information or to reserve some space.

## Trout in The Classroom

March 27, 2007

Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum

TIC Teacher Meeting—Teacher Discussion Session

Tara Siudy and Skip Hoover (GW Krieger, Poughkeepsie) led us in a discussion about this year's **trout tapestry project**—an activity in which participating schools exchanged quilt squares and letters. Ann Owens, Darren Fogarty, Tara Siudy, Skip Hoover, Miriam Gomez, and Deb Valerio all had quilts to share. Some teachers made two quilts this year—one of other schools' squares and one of their own. Some teachers also used a map to locate the various schools participating in the program. Pictures of some completed quilts will soon be available on [www.troutintheclassroom.org](http://www.troutintheclassroom.org). We will do this project again in the 2007-2008 school year for any interested TIC teachers.

Ann Donzella Owens (PS 277, the Bronx) shared a **watershed-building activity**, in which students create topography

with crumpled newspaper, cover it with a thin layer of plastic, and then add elements (foil buildings, herb and spice agriculture, tissue paper roads, etc.) to simulate various types of land use. A full write-up of this lesson will be posted on our new website, [www.troutintheclassroom.org](http://www.troutintheclassroom.org) this summer.

Darren Fogarty (SS Seward Institute, Florida) shared an updated **data-collection trout journal** appropriate for middle-school-age students. The journal included charts to record the various tank data, as well as summary sheets to tabulate weekly results. A full write-up of this tool will be posted on our new website, [www.troutintheclassroom.org](http://www.troutintheclassroom.org) this summer.

Debbie Valerio (Windham-Ashland-Jewett Central School, Windham) shared the final products from a **trout life cycle written and oral report** completed by her students. Some students chose to make books to describe the trout life cycle, including one student whose book was made from transparency sheets that slowly revealed one picture after another, as the reader turns the page.

Tina Miner-James (Walton Central School, Walton) discussed her **AP-level environmental science course** that involves an in-depth study of the school's and students' local ecosystems. One of the year's projects includes building **three-dimensional topographic maps** of the area, derived from USGS maps. The students will also place and analyze **LeafPacks** in each of the area's West Branch Delaware tributaries.

Bill Parker (South Kortright Central School, South Kortright) showed two contraptions he's made to use with TIC. The first was an **improved hatching basket**—it was a small plastic tub with the bottom cut away and replaced with screen, holes drilled in its sides, and Styrofoam hot-glued to its sides. This basket is wide and flat, so the eggs don't bunch together, and it is also free-floating in the tank. Bill also showed us a **working model of a fish swim bladder**, built from a balloon, plastic cups, tubing, and a few weights. Patterns for and explanations of these tools will be posted on our new website, [www.troutintheclassroom.org](http://www.troutintheclassroom.org) this summer.

Jim Hubert (Queensbury Middle School, Queensbury) described his **easy water-change method**. It involves using a siphon to remove water into a nearby sink and then refilling the tank with aged water from a reserve tank (with pump) also near the sink. Photos of this setup are available at Jim's TIC website, <http://www.queensburyschool.org/Schools/MS/Teacher/Hubert/events.htm>, looking at the Photo Journal.

Melissa Johnson and Veronica Rowe (Phoenicia Elementary School, Phoenicia) shared some of their favorite artistic activities, including **watercolor pictures** of the trout at various life cycle stages (as observed in tank), decorating **trout cookies** as an anatomy lesson, life-size **paper-bag trout** (also painted), and **trout journals**. Detailed descriptions of these activities (and more from Phoenicia) will be posted on our new website, [www.troutintheclassroom.org](http://www.troutintheclassroom.org) this summer.

Sally Kemple and Shirley Currey (Kerhonkson Elementary School, Kerhonkson) shared their **yearlong project photo album**. They teach third grade and kindergarten (as separate, collaborating classes), so the kindergarteners took the pictures and the third graders wrote the captions. One third grader at Kerhonkson also has the special responsibility of **keeping a running tally of the entire TIC budget**.

Cheri Simmons (Rosendale Elementary, Rosendale) shared a few creative writing activities she does with her fourth grade students. One assignment was the creation of a **trout haiku** that was accompanied by a drawing or painting. In another assignment, the students **speculated about what the trout did on the weekends** and over vacations. The students' creativity led them to propose that the trout have had parties, tried shaving, wrecked the classroom, taken trips to NYC, and managed to somehow clean it all up before Monday morning.

Richard Hemmer (Livingston Manor Central School, Livingston Manor) shared a number of pieces of his students' **trout artwork**. His students also participate in Livingston Manor's annual **trout parade** and festivities, held each June.

Christi Browne-Sibrizzi (Scarsdale Middle School, Scarsdale) engages technology with TIC in many ways. Her students record **trout podcasts**, film **trout movies**, create **slideshow**s of the project, **blog** about the trout, and design **Comic Life** comics using photos of trout and each other. The Comic Life software is available for free on the internet and can be used on both PCs and Macs.

Rochelle Gandour (TIC Coordinator) shared a convenient and easy-to-use dissolved oxygen test kit, available from CHEMets (<http://www.chemetrics.com/chemets.html>). It has been used with students as young as fourth grade, though always with close supervision. The one-step test gives results in two minutes by comparing the sample ampoule to a

colorimetric key. Because this test involves breaking glass (safely, underwater) and an acidic solution of indigo carmine (<http://www.jtbaker.com/msds/englishhtml/i1440.htm>), safety goggles are a must. The used test materials can be disposed of in regular municipal solid waste. While not necessary for daily testing—we can be pretty sure that our tanks have enough oxygen in them—these are nice to use in an experiment or activity about oxygen.

## **A Review of “The Mind of the Trout” and “Understanding Trout Behavior”**

### **Part One**

By Russell Shefrin

As a psychologist and a fly fisher, titles that associate the word “trout” with the words “mind” or “behavior” grab my attention. I have recently come upon two such books, and I thought I would share my impressions with you. Initially, I intended to review both books in one article, but I now find the story is too long. Instead, I have decided to discuss one book here and the other in the next issue, assuming that will be acceptable to our editor.

I read “The Mind of the Trout” by Thomas C. Grubb, Jr. (The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003) first, so I’ll start with that one. (It is also the longer and the more wide-ranging of the two books.) An on-line review maintained that this book is in the same vein as those typical scientific works which contain lots of jargon but wind up telling you what anglers already know. Perhaps I take a bit of offense to this kind of observation, because the same claim is often made of psychological research, except that the word “grandmothers” is used instead of “anglers”. But my objection goes a bit deeper. I am one of those people who, while appreciating “lore” as much as the next guy, are skeptical of its wisdom unless it has been subjected to research using the scientific method. That is one reason I found “The Mind of the Trout” a worthwhile read.

Now, let’s be clear about the title. By “Mind”, Professor Grubb does not mean what we ordinarily think of as “mind”, namely the self-aware consciousness that characterizes human thinking. “Thinking” here refers to the gathering and processing of information and then to using that information to “make decisions”, e.g., “choosing” (though, again, not in the conscious, self-aware human way) whether to go after the minnow or the midge. A thesis of the book seems to be that this type of behavior represents something more advanced than simple reflexes or innate, genetically programmed responses to certain stimuli. The subject of the text is “cognitive ecology”, which, Professor Grubb explains is “the science of why animals think as they do”.

The book begins with anecdotes in support of the notion that trout sometimes act in ways which would not be expected if their behavior were entirely under the control of simple reflex or genetically pre-programmed mechanisms, i.e., trout seem to “think”. Subsequent chapters then explore such matters as the trout’s sensory abilities, both to their external and internal environments, the fish’s perception, attention, learning, memory, etc., and the role of evolution.

To me, this is very much a “textbook”; most chapters are filled with details of theories, reports of experiments which support or refute various hypotheses, and the occasional seemingly nitpicking comments on the experiments so typical of academic critical thinking. Not the kind of book I can read while I’ve got one eye on the hockey game on TV. However, when I took a “study” approach to the book (as opposed to reading it casually), I found it meaningful on many levels. It led me to appreciate, more deeply, phenomena I’d observed while fishing but either didn’t think about or recognize as being part of a larger whole. The book increased my admiration for such an apparently simple creature as a fish, now that I have a better sense of its “cognitive behavior”. Thanks to the review of experiments, I have become more aware of other studies on the matter. I noticed, for example, a recent report on the internet on the ability of hatchery-reared salmon to learn new kinds of feeding behavior and to target new kinds of prey simply by observing other fish. A study cited in the April, 2007, issue of “Natural History” describes evidence of “logic” in cichlid fish. After reading “The Mind of the Trout”, it is easier for me to see how these findings fit into the bigger picture of cognitive ecology of fish.

Finally, is there anything “practical” in the book for everyday fly-fishing? Well, at least as far as I can see, this book won’t tell you whether to use mayflies or caddis imitations on the Hosmer in June. Moreover, what one angler finds practical, another may not. I made a list of some points made in the book that I will keep in mind when I finally hit the streams. Here are a few. From the chapter formidably entitled “State-Dependent Cognition”, I learned to be

careful to release trout very near or at the site they were initially hooked so as not to disrupt established dominance hierarchies. The same chapter explained that when salmonids are drift feeding, the dominant individuals are usually found at the head of pools. Some observations in the chapter on “Attention” suggest that “matching the hatch” may be more effective if the hatch one matches is the most recent one, not the one that just started. This section (on search images) hints that, when fish are feeding avidly on a heavy hatch, ones imitation may have to be much more accurate and presented more carefully than would otherwise be the case.

Overall, I liked this book. It’s not an easy read. If you are looking for some casual summer reading and do not like to wade through technical details and the pros and cons of this or that theory or experiment, this book is probably not for you. But if you are interested in “what makes trout tick” and take your time with this book, I think you will find it worth the effort.