



To conserve, protect and restore North America's coldwater fisheries and their watershed

MEETING: DECEMBER 7, 7:30 Holiday Party with Jack Smola At the Waveny Mansion Carriage Barn

Come and join the fun of good food and grog at the annual holiday party with renowned Jack Smola as our guest speaker. He is always not to be missed.

Letter from your President:

Fishing in the fall can be both good and bad. Good because water temps are dropping, the TMAs have been restocked and water levels are up from the summer. Bad because I seem to catch more leaves than fish, and also because the approaching winter freeze will shut down most local fishing. Happily, one morning before dawn on the Saugatuck TMA, I did manage to catch some browns and rainbows on just-tied olive emergers (using Bob Stoddard's pattern) Melvin and I also spent a weekend up in the Catskills fishing the East Branch of the Delaware in late October. At the first place we fished on Saturday morning, I hooked a good size brown in a broad riffle using a double nymph rig. Later that day, Melvin worked his magic on a number of rainbows as well as browns. Now, to help me get through the winter, I'm looking forward to our Chapter's Connetquot trip in March '05 (don't have the exact date but should be either 15th or 22nd).

I also managed to squeeze in a little saltwater fly fishing during a weekend in Montauk at Paul Fleming's place. I spent a very blustery Friday and Saturday working out the logistics of access and parking. In the wee hours Sunday morning, the gale force wind finally disappeared and I took off to fish the lighthouse point before sunrise. I got lucky wading in Turtle Cove, standing in the middle of a blitz, and beached a good size striper.

On the subject of saltwater fly fishing, I hope you all enjoyed Lou Tabory's presentation at the November chapter meeting as much as I did. Duane and I tried to use some of his insights the next weekend at Compo Beach, but we unfortunately got blown out by a nor'easter.

So we have plenty of time now to tie up some flies for next year. I think this would also be a good time for those of us who do to introduce other chapter members to fly tying. A very pleasant way to spent time indoors with the snow falling, swapping yarns about fish landed.

Shifting to the Chapter's environmental activities, I am encouraged by the initial progress of the Stamford Mianus River Park committees. The work project to fence off a section of the park by the Merriebrook Bridge was well attended by a broad based group of citizens, including several Mianus Chapter members. The hope is that the vegetation will naturally rejuvenate itself in the spring. Stay tuned for more projects in the park.

As we await the opportunity to start our fish bypass channel project at the Cannondale Dam, it was disconcerting to hear that recent water quality testing of the Norwalk River, conducted by Dick Harris of Earthplace, revealed elevated E. coliform bacteria counts. Along with efforts to leverage TU National's water quality initiatives, we are making sure the problem gets attention in the local media.

I attended the latest CT Council Meeting with Jeff, where we elected two new co-chairs, Al Chase (Farmington Valley) and Bill Blaufuss (Nutmeg Chapter), to take over for Jerry Bannock.. One of the CT Council's initiatives this year will be to update its strategic plan and I volunteered to head up the committee, with help from Rich Guarino (Thames Valley), Al Chase and Bill Field (Nutmeg).

Make sure you have December 7th on your calendars for the Chapter's 2004 Holiday Party. We have asked Jack Smola, known for his local knowledge and expertise, to regale us with stories of his recent trip to New Zealand. As usual, the Board will provide the wonderful hors d'oeuvres and liquid refreshments. See you there! *Tight lines, Jim Glowienka*

Mianus Chapter Officers

Jim Glowienka	President	(203) 857-4325
Mike Law	VP	(203) 966-3364
Dick O'Neill	Treasurer	(203) 438-5918
Jeff Yates	Secretary	(203) 834-2837

Board of Directors

Don Kiefer	(203) 637-9880
Walter Kirkman	(203) 637-3752
Tom Yates	(203) 834-2837
Don Walton	(203) 637-0213
John Awdziewicz	(203) 661-8023
Franklin Lang	(203) 637-1808

Directors for Life

Violet Jeans	(203) 637-1607
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Directors at Large

Jan Allardt	(203) 622-9097
Don Butler	(203) 855-1789
Mark Mitchell	(203) 254-8312
Rob Mould	(203) 866-6588
Ray Hamilton	(203) 322-0254
Jim Lucey	(203) 268-1063
Sharon Redman	(203) 257-1045
Melvin Rodriguez	(203) 406-8027

Committees

Banquet:	Mike Law
CT Council:	Jan Allardt
Education:	Don Walton
Kids Programs:	Mark Mitchell & Rob Mould
Membership:	Mike Law
Web Master:	Dave Stoller
Speaker Programs:	Duane Mertz
Raffles:	Mark Mitchell & Rob Mould
Refreshments:	Violet Jeans
Stream Action- Norwalk River:	Jeff Yates
Stream Action- Mianus River:	Walt Kirkman & Don Walton
Trips:	Franklin Lang, Jeff Yates, Dick O'Neill

Meeting Location

Regularly Scheduled Meeting Location:
Waveney House, New Canaan CT

Time: 7:30 pm

Directions: Merritt Parkway, take Exit 37 and go North on Rt 124 (South Ave) for approximately 1/2 mile; take your 1st Left into Waveney Park Entrance. Follow Road up to the mansion. Parking is on the periphery.

MEETING SCHEDULE AND SPEAKERS 2005

January 11: Keith Fulcher, Fishing the Croton Watershed

February 8:
Tom Rosenbauer, Reading the Water

March 8:
Rob O'Neill, FF for Great Lakes steelhead

April 19:
Ken Balog, FF the Mill River

Mianus River Action Walt Kirkman

The first step towards revitalizing the Mianus River Park has been launched. Under the heading of "Mianus River Park Trail and Drainage Proposal," a number of important projects were started. These were all focussed on the river portion of the Park. They addressed access to the Mianus River immediately after crossing Merriebrook Bridge, the closure of two trails along the river – namely, the site called the "flats", plus the "cliff" site located somewhat further down the river, and lastly, the beginning of a drainage improvement project down the river trail to help redirect run off water into the river to minimize further erosion. This last item will require additional back fill in order to help stabilize the flow of run-off water.

Bright orange open-weave plastic fencing was used as the barrier to mark the sites. Excellent, hand crafted wooden signs were attached to the fencing or to a convenient tree (using plastic ties) to alert current park users as to the purpose and benefits to the river/trails of these initial actions.

A large number of volunteers contributed to completing the tasks noted above. The TU team included Harry Leigh, Henry Baker, Tony Parisi and Franklin Lang. Thanks to all.

A follow up to this first step was the initial phase of a complete landscaping program for the Park. This is to be undertaken by a group of about 22 senior students as a semester project, guided by their professor. The student group are all studying suburban renewal and landscaping at the University of Connecticut at Storrs.

On November 9, Erin McKenna of Stamford's Parks Department, John Monroe who is with the National Park Service, and Walt Kirkman on our Chapter's Board met with this large group of knowledgeable students for a detailed familiarization walk of the Mianus River and environs. The walk covered the area from Merriebrook Bridge to the Hemlock Pool, with numerous side trips into the Park along the way.

More on this vital subject will be reported as it occurs.

ANNUAL BANQUET March 19, 2005

Mark your calendars to join us at the Riverside Yacht Club on Saturday, March 19, 2005 for our annual banquet and fund raiser. It is one of the best events you will ever attend.

MY FIRST STEELIE Erf Porter, Nov'04

From the Porter Homestead in Roscoe to Pulaski, N.Y. is only 3 hours. Pulaski is synonymous with the Salmon river and thrilling prospects of hooking a big salmon or trout on their fall spawning run. I went twice last year. That big Chinook caught last year and pictured below was my first big Salmon River fish. It was the lure that brought me back to try and catch a steelhead this year.

Even on a nice fall day in November, expect a deep frost that will last well past sun up. Wearing cleats or "corkers" is a safety must to be sure you minimize the risk of a 40 deg. F dunking. When the Salmon River is at 300-500 cfs it fishes like the Beaverkill albeit with somewhat deeper pools and much more tricky and slippery wading. One false step in 1000 cfs and you'll be swept away.

On my single trip this November, well before sun up, I caught a nice 14 inch brown on the first cast using a gold ribbed hares ear nymph with a green luminescent set of wing stubs. I was skunked for the next 7 hours even with concerted efforts including nymphs of all sizes and shapes, egg patterns, streamers, and Beaverkill and Miramichi patterns fished out of frustration.

By 3:30 PM I'd seen 3 hook ups with none landed. This included a five minute effort trying to help a new friend in the upper end of the Church or Cemetery pool. He was without a net and was struggling to land a 8-10 lb. steelie. My new friend just didn't know how to handle this fish. After the fly pulled out of his fish, he humbly admitted that he still had never landed a big steelie.

Right after that episode, I went back to the bottom of pool where I'd been, complete with a new rig. I returned to basics: floating line, 4 ft. graphite sink tip, new 9 ft. fluorocarbon leader with a 6 lb. tippet, and a funny looking loose hackle grey spey fly tied on a red hook. Ken Tutalo, owner of Roscoe's Baxter House tied it for me the night before, promising it was the right fly for such occasions. I was especially careful tying the fly on with a half blood knot with an extra wrap and cinch and then testing it carefully to be sure it was secure. With my new rig, my casts presentations were softer and more "classic" for a streamer or wet fly. I felt more comfortable and I was quickly into a good rhythm. I was near the lower end of the Church (Cemetery) pool in the lower fly fishing area.

I cast directly across the stream, adjusted to the current flow, and let the spey fly swing naturally and deep. On about the sixth cast, I felt the hit, set the hook softly, and for the next 15 minutes a big fish took me for several long walks/trots. On each, I was always conscious of

trying to be downstream of the fish and applying steady low-tipped, side-stream pressure – just like my dad had coached me in how to handle a big fish.

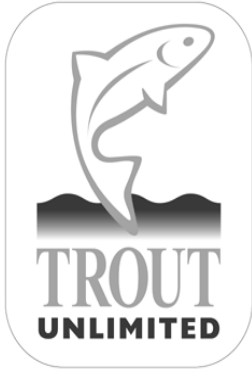
On reflection, I guess this big stud steelie was pooped from taking care of his harem. I didn't experience the long, fast runs and jumps as advertised for steelies. Instead, he fought with more dogged jigs and jags and occasional rages and head shakes like a tarpon or big Atlantic Salmon.

That new friend I had tried to help had stayed upstream in the pool. When I yelled upstream "now its your turn." He yelled back, "can I use your net," and I yelled "yes." I simply would not risk beaching this fish with a 6 lb. tippet. I was also struggling to keep the fish from turning down steam, taking off down the rift below the pool, and splashing good bye as he left me helpless. After 15 minutes I was not winning the battle – it was, at best ,a draw. At times I had seen flashes of a big crimson side making me believe it was probably a steelhead, though I had never seen one up close and personal.

So, I entrusted my fish fate to my new friend. I gave him my net and politely suggested he get downstream between the rift and the fish. He gracefully obliged. When he was in place, I eased the fish down stream while lifting the tip to try and keep the head up. The strategy worked and I gently guided the fish toward the net. One scooping swoop and up came what seemed like a net full of crimson. For the first time in the entire fight, I got to see this beautiful crimson striped animal.

On the bank, my new friend snapped a couple of pictures while I tried to act cool. I mumbled words of thanks and babbled a sentence about a grey spey fly. I guess this was normal behavior, even for an old dude with a racing heart.

It was a great fight and, respectfully, I was very conscious of getting my first steelie safely back into the water. I tailed it into a pocket where I helped revive him. I was on my knees and up to my elbows in the water. As I gently moved him back and forth, It struck me, how cold the water was. After regaining his strength and composure he pulled away – not far though. He eased down steam and stayed still for a short moment. He seemed to look at me while, what was now a small crowd, applauded. I applauded too - the big steelie for his style, beauty, courage, and nobility. Then I said thanks and applauded my new friend. He reminded me that was the first steelie he had ever landed. We shook hands again. We laughed. It was nice.



Trout Unlimited
P.O. Box 357
Riverside, CT 06878

Visit our website www.mianustu.org

TU National: <http://www.tu.org>

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That little symbol is particularly poignant for two events that all members of this chapter should attend. The first is next week's holiday party which is a lovely evening at the charming Carriage Barn at Waveny Mansion and the second is the Annual Banquet on March 19 at the Riverside Yacht Club. Each is centered on our love of fly fishing, as are our regular monthly meetings, but with the addition of celebration and togetherness that is quite special. Our significant others join us for these evenings and lend a festive air that is very enjoyable. Where next week's holiday party features usually one "gotta win" raffle, the March 19 banquet is chock full of raffles, auctions and "gotta haves" that the most staid of attendees find mouth watering; of course the dining and atmosphere are equally delectable. Hopefully this has wet your appetite for two great evenings. Do join us!