



## Mid-Missouri Trout Unlimited

<http://midmissouri.tu.org/>

# Cross Currents

December 2014

### **FUTURE MEETINGS**

**Tuesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 7:00 P.M. at Jack's Gourmet Restaurant.**

**Annual Photo Contest will be conducted. Photos must be taken in 2014 by a MMTU member or include a member and promote trout fishing or conservation.**

**Submit up to 3 digital photos by Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> to [gerlts@missouri.edu](mailto:gerlts@missouri.edu). Photos will be judged by those in attendance at the meeting. Submitted photos may be used in a slideshow at the annual banquet.**

**Tuesday, January 5<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 P.M. at Jack's Gourmet Restaurant. Aside from good fellowship and lively conversation, there is no program scheduled.**

### **President's Corner by Scott's Gerlt**

I hope the fall is finding everyone doing well. Two events are fast approaching. The first is the December photo contest. The rules are above.

The second is the Ozark Council outing at Sunburst Ranch on the North Fork of the White December 5-7th. All the Missouri councils should be present and plenty of fishing will occur. Please let John Wenzlick or me know if you plan to attend. Take care!

### **Jefferson City Angler Finishes What He Starts by Milt Barr**

I was greatly honored to be selected to start the siren at the beginning of the 2014 Trout Season on March 1<sup>st</sup> at Bennett Spring. It was a very enjoyable event especially because

Governor Nixon signed the back of my ticket, 0000001, which I received along with the prestigious honor.

As I returned to fish thirty plus times this season, I continued to relish the honor while enjoying all of my fishing and recreational experiences, as well as sharing stories, at what I believe is the best trout park in Missouri and maybe in the nation. During the season I often thought about the honor of having the first tag and began to monitor the number of tags sold in order to keep track of how many fishers had used the Park. On one visit a thought came to me: Wouldn't it be neat to have the very first AND the very last tag of the season!

I checked at the Park office and was told that as far as they knew no one had ever had the first and the last tag for the same season. So, having the persevering nature of a good fisherman, I hurried back from my granddaughter's birthday celebration in North Carolina to not only catch the last fish on the last day but to get the last tag of the season.

Amazingly, I got the last tag of the season, number 113,867. That is a lot of adult fishers at the Park, and does not count around 25,000 youth tags sold during the season. According to the agents at the Park, tag sales were up by approximately 6,000 in 2014.

I understand the 2014 season is probably a once in a lifetime experience that will be hard to beat, but I am ready to try. I look forward to sharing my fishing experiences with my new grandson whose name, coincidentally, is "Bennett."



Milt with first & last tag at Bennett Spring, 2014

Bennett Spring State Park and the Conservation Department's trout fishing program seems to get better each year. Not only for the citizens of Missouri but also for the thousands of tourist who travel to Missouri and use the Park. This is made possible by the hard working employees of the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Conservation as well as the continued support of the Parks and Conservation sales taxes. It also takes continued support from all of us passionate users of Bennett Spring.

One of my fishing buddies wondered if the 113,867 number might be equal to the number of tags I bought during my 50-plus year of fishing at Bennett Spring. I replied, "I don't think I bought that many tags but I would keep count for the next 50 years and let you know. "

### **Driftless Cranes by Dan Zekor**

I often tell people that while I may live in Missouri, my soul resides in Wisconsin. After 27 years in Missouri, the Badger State still calls to me; it's where I come from and is the reason my beer comes from Chippewa Falls, my brats come from Cumberland, my cheese from LaValle, and my football from Green Bay. Therefore, it should be no surprise that one of my favorite places to fish is near Viroqua. If you know Wisconsin Driftless Area fishing, you probably know Viroqua.

Now I'm no expert trout fisherman, by any stretch of the imagination. I didn't own a fly rod until about 12 year ago. I don't know my bugs well, I can only recognize and name a few flies (including a Kruse leech), and I'm still a little intimidated by some fly fisherman. I have,

however, read *The River Why?* and own a DVD copy of *A River Runs Through It* (I'll admit it even if you all won't). I also have a copy of *The Compleat Angler* by Izaak Walton which I swear I will read someday. I count five other books about fly-fishing on my book shelf including *Fly Fishing for Dummies*, and probably have 3-4 DVDs too. I joined TU and MMTU, and own lots of gear, but probably far less than most of you. I have not been infected by the desire to tie my own flies - I think this is a blessing or an immunity.

So what does all of this mean? Nothing really. It's just a description of some of the debris along the trail that I call fly-fishing. What really matters is that fly-fishing now holds a prominent place in my life, similar to that of another illness I contracted nearly 50 years ago - yes, I'm a duck hunter too; a confession for another time.

For a few years now, I believed mastering my inconsistent roll-cast or the presentation of my fly were among the milestones to be achieved in my quest to be a real fly-fisherman. Technique is important, to be sure; however, there is a lot more to be found in fly-fishing if you're paying attention.

I made three trips to Viroqua in 2014. During the last trip, the final days of the trout season, I fished only two streams with reasonable success. I also discovered future water to be fished, took side trips into different hollows, discussed the day's strategy with other like-minded fisherman, and enjoyed the history and beauty of a country-side just entering autumn. However, there was a moment that transcended everything else on the final day.

On a small stretch of stream late in the day I pitched a hopper near the bank where a couple of fish were rising. These guys were a delightful delay keeping me from a riffle and bend in the river where I knew fish would be found. Five or six casts, three-steps would be my pattern. Eventually I would land a feisty 14 inch brown trout. Pushing ahead, I reached the riffle with a deep hole, nearby undercut bank, and wet snag. I changed flies, to a Royal Wulff and immediately caught two browns about 14

inches. Above the riffle the river took a sharp turn to the right and I could see fish rising. I cast up stream to nearby risers and would let the fly shoot through the riffle and over the pool. On about the third or fourth pass a big fish took the fly. I can't say for certain, after three minutes or so it shook off my hook, but a hefty, colorful brown trout of 20 inches would be in the ballpark. I lost that fish, but I was excited!

As I slowly rounded the bend I could see a feeding frenzy taking place. A large hatch was happening, probably tricos, and fish were rising everywhere. At about the same moment, a kingfisher rattled within feet behind my head and I nearly launched out of my waders. I regained composure and I frantically tried to find a fly that matched the hatch better than the Wulff. My head was whirling with anticipation of catching more fish, and I had another 75 yards of stream I wanted to cover before dark. As I began pitching my fly to the rising fish, two nearby sandhill cranes let loose with a call that is best described as prehistoric. Three types of birds calling can make me stop in my tracks - geese, loons, and sandhills. At that moment, I let my line drop and watched the cranes slowly pass through the valley sky. Hundreds of mayflies were rising from the river, trout were seemingly everywhere, and the memory of a large, lost brown trout was still vivid.

There are moments in life that are probably bigger and more important, Gus Orviston figured that out. But things that touch the soul are rare, coulees, spring-fed streams, trout, mayflies, a kingfisher, and two sandhill cranes, and not worrying about my roll-cast or presentation was all that it took for me on a late September day in 2014.

### **Catch and Release Season Open**

Nov. 14, 2014 – Feb. 9, 2015

Maramec Spring Park open daily 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

State parks open Fri. – Mon. 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Fishing permit and trout permit required.

### **Flies Only**

### **Secchi Disc by Curt Morgret**

*"I fish in incantations, genuflections, my body a living marker for the crest gauge, tidal fluctuation, flood tides and freshwater seiches. When my eye falls on rivers I praise their transparency, their nature of shaping their way as they move.*

*"Water is my heart churning in a white hydraulic, my tongue longing for a quiet pool, the skin of night settling in, mayflies on the edge of moonlight sifting out of the trees. I praise the lust for emergencies, the urge to quit the job, convert the pension funds to river frontage, the sudden impulse to carry the fly rod into a meeting, the fly ripping the lips of your superiors. I embrace the chant of waterfalls, the litany of holy rivers. From the Mad Anglers Manifesto, by Michael Delp*

He understood, with a great deal of clarity, the specific point of the beginning of the end. A warm, sunny Friday morning in late September, coffee at the desk, small chit chat about the football game on Saturday, irritation about incomplete information for reports with deadlines at month-end and a certain amount of, let's say, casual indifference as he stared out the window. The trees on the early schedule were dressed in yellow, with a background of green from those that had not recognized the change of season yet. The warm breeze blew them all around and the grass had a dull, dry look that could become bejeweled in emerald with an overnight rain and drop in temperature.

The change in season matched his mood, his maturity and a sense of impatience about where all this led. The knock on his door stopped his traitorous thoughts and brought him back into the capitalist world.

"I brought you a fly rod from a yard sale. I threw in a box of flies and a couple of other things to get you started. Good luck."

And there it was, or, as people in the office say, "Yeah, that guy was alright. Whatever happened to him?"

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*Mid-Missouri Trout Unlimited meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month, except for July and August. The regular meeting place is in the Wine Room at Jack's Gourmet Restaurant, located on East Business Loop 170, across from the east tide Westlakes Hardware in Columbia, MO. June meeting is at Stephens Park. Meeting time is at 7p.m., but come early to chat and eat. Short business meeting before hand.*

One of our significant costs is printing and mailing this newsletter. If you are willing to accept it by email, more of MMTU monies can be spent on conservation. Just send your email to [rileym@missouri.edu](mailto:rileym@missouri.edu) to make the switch.