



April Meeting:

Fishing the Hex Hatch By Dick Dragiewicz

Last summer I gave you a preview of the Randy “Buzz” Butters presentation on “**Fishing the Hex Hatch**”. This is a revised and expanded version of that earlier note.

Buzz Butters came to the MLSFF club meeting on April 10 and talked to us about fishing the hex hatch. He showed us more than 100 hex fly patterns out of 300+ patterns collected over 20 years. He told us what rivers to fish, gave us the range of dates for the hex hatch, explained how to prepare for this night time fly fishing challenge, suggested fly patterns to use, equipment to use, and gave us lots of other information that can improve your chances of success when you fish the hex hatch.

Trout, bass, bluegills, white bass, walleye and probably many other fish feed on these big mayflies. And, rumor has it that your chance of catching a trophy fish at night improves significantly during this hatch.

The “Hex Hatch” refers to the hatch and spinner fall of the gigantic *Hexagenia Limbata* mayfly. This mayfly’s body ranges in size from 1 ¼” to 1 ½”, plus the tail. The hatch generally takes place after sunset starting in mid June and running through mid-July. Actual starting and ending times of the hatch varies by location and weather patterns. In some places this hatch continues on a sporadic basis into August. And, for a more comfortable variation on fishing this hatch, try it at sunrise; the fish are still feeding on these big bugs.

Hexes live in rivers and lakes that have silty bottoms. They need this soft mushy bottom so they can create “U” shaped burrows where they live during their nymphal stage. Rivers and creeks that have silty bottoms and are home to the *Hexagenia Limbata* include Black Earth, Mecan, White, Tomorrow, Milwaukee, Bad Axe, Pine, Wolf, Prairie, the Bibbons Swamp on the Brule River, lakes and beaver ponds, the lower reaches of spring creeks and, of course, the Mississippi River. With some research I’m sure you’ll find lots of places that are home to this mayfly.

Some of us are already familiar with this insect. Ice fishermen use “wrigglers” as bait. These wrigglers are hex nymphs.

Flies used during this hatch are tied on big hooks in sizes ranging from 6’s to 10’s. Hex emergers and nymphs also work during this hatch.

Emerger fly patterns should use soft flexible materials that produce lots of



Hex Nymph

movement, for example, marabou and rabbit strips.

If you don't remember what Buzz Butters told us about his preparations for fishing the Hex Hatch here are some of his tips. These are things he does to get ready for this fishing adventure. Start by getting at least three working flashlights (he figures you'll lose one, the second one probably won't work, now you have a backup with the third light to get you back to the car/truck), bring lots of insect repellent to keep those hungry mosquitoes away (head nets also help), after he applies insect repellent he puts on latex gloves (same type your doctor uses) to keep the DEET off of fly lines, etc., have an assortment of mayfly patterns (dries, emergers, and nymphs in sizes #6 to #10), during the day scout out the area you plan to fish so you know where the fish might be located, mark your path to the river so you can find your way out after fishing. You can mark the path by placing glow in the dark thumb tacks on trees as you enter the woods on the way to the river. Hanging paper napkins or toilet paper also works. Be sure to pick up the tacks and paper products on the way out. Sometimes he'll use a compass or a GPS device.



Hex Spinner

Be sure to check out the river/lake during the day to make sure you know what's in the water...you don't want to accidentally find logs, rocks, or deep holes while fishing at night.

Sometimes he fishes nymphs at night with a strike indicator. To do this he places glow in the dark tape on the indicator, shines a light on it, then goes fishing. Says the indicator looks like a lightning bug on the water. When using your flashlight be careful not to spook the fish. Placing reflective tape on your fly boxes, net, or other items that could get lost is also a good idea.

Rod/line/reel systems in 5 to 7 weight work well. Leaders are generally going to be 7 1/2 to 9 foot long with OX to 2X tippet material. Don't worry about this size tippet, its dark and the fish can't see the leader/tippet anyway. This size tippet makes the system strong enough to handle any size fish.

On dark cloudy nights try using fly patterns tied with all black materials. He thinks that the fish can see this dark profile better than light colored patterns.

If you go Hex Hatch fishing this season be sure to tell the club about your adventure and fishing success.

April Outing:

In Search of Trout at Black Earth Creek by Greg Schick

Mother Nature treated us kindly for our April outing by providing us with a nice sunny weekend. Dave Gonzales decided to head out to Black Earth Creek on Friday afternoon before the outing so he could get in a little fishing as he was scheduled to work on Saturday. I know about this because I beat him to the stream! I took the day off and wandered out to Black Earth Creek around 1:00 pm. (My wife was going to entertain her grandkids for the weekend and it was her idea for me to spend the time fishing. Is that a great lady or what?!)

Dave and I both caught fish that afternoon; his on beadheads, and most of mine on midge pupa and larva patterns. John Bethke, creator of the Pink Squirrel, has said that's the only fly he uses only Black Earth Creek. I wish I had his confidence for, while I can catch fish on that fly on the stream, 80% of the fish I caught on Friday afternoon were on midge patterns.

Saturday morning brought the rest of the group to the stream; Peter Alba, Melvin Anderson, Dick Dragowicz, Peter Puccio, Frank Stetzer, Al Welch, Barry Wichmann, and Ken Zielinski.

I think most everybody caught fish during the day.



Friday's fish weren't large, but they were hungry.



Dave Gonzales with another Friday fish — small but feisty

Barry Wichmann said he hadn't done one of the outings before and wasn't sure what flies he'd need. After catching six trout on Saturday, he certainly could be sure he brought the right ones!



Ken Zielinski and Frank Stetzer gearing up



Peter Puccio on a deep pool



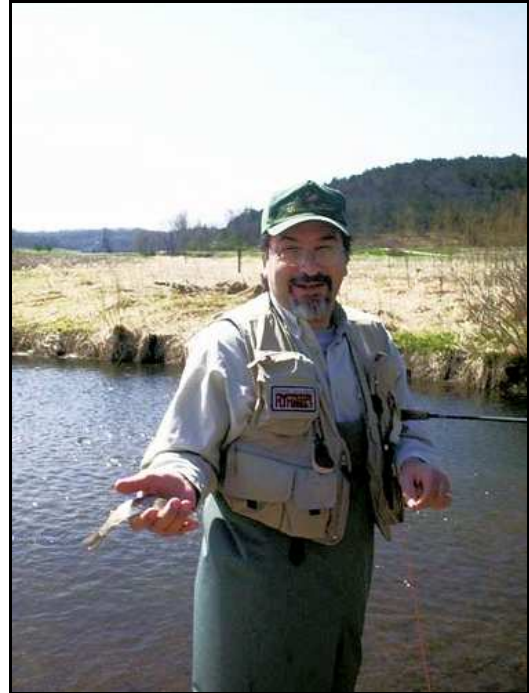
Melvin Anderson working the big pool on the upstream side of South Valley Road



Barry Wichmann working a nice riffle.



Al Welch with a "trout self-portrait"



Peter Alba caught on camera



I love using those #20 Midge Larva — aka, the "Blood Worm"

May Meeting:

Annual Casting Clinic!

Bring fly rod and reel to the Casting Clinic on Tuesday May 8th "meeting"!

Erik Helm from Laacke & Joys fly fishing shop will be giving us a fly casting class. He'll be demonstrating casting styles and techniques that we need to be successful fly fishers.

Chef Zielinski says he'll have brats and soft drinks available for a small donation again!

The clinic will be at Greenfield Park Area # 5 from 5:00 pm to 9:00 pm

May Outing:

Panfish in the Madison Area!

On Saturday, May 19th, we will be meeting at the Pettit Center at 7:00 am and leaving at 7:15. We'll be carpooling as usual, but we aren't going trout fishing. We will be trying for crappies and bluegills in Madison at Lake Waubesa. You don't need a boat to catch these fish, although you can use one if you want. I will be wading.

If you want to meet us there we are going to Lake Farm Park on the west side of Lake Waubesa. Here are the directions to get there or you can print out the map on our website.

Take the Hwy 12 & 18 expressway going around the south side of Madison. Turn off at South Towne Dr. and go south less than a mile. Look for a brown sign that says campground, boat launch and a couple other things. Turn left and follow the road to the boat launch sign. If the launch is full there is another road just before the road to the launch. Go back and take that road. It goes to the rest of the park. It has a couple of parking lots and buildings where it shouldn't be crowded. These parking lots are just a couple hundred feet from the lake so we don't have to go far to fish.

You will need to pay \$7.00 for parking unless you have a state park sticker. That park is also a state park so the state sticker is good.

Bring a lunch and your waders. I think I can guarantee some fish, but I can't guarantee the weather. If you have any questions just call me.

Ken Zielinski (414-425-9077)

The Two-Thousand Dollar Adams

By Gil Padovani – Long Island Flyrodders

When I decided to try my hand at fly tying, several years ago, I had no idea whatsoever of what I was getting into. I started with a simple instruction book, a Thompson' A' vise, some basic tools and enough feathers, hooks and fur to tie some twenty-five #10 Light Cahills.

It soon became apparent to me, that if I were to be successful in my endeavor, I would have to add a few new items to my meager collection. Naturally, this led me to buy some new books, a few extra tools, a couple of grade B necks, three dozen different size dry fly hooks and two small bags of gray and ginger dubbing fur.

As any sympathetic fly tier would compassionately understand, I soon found out that these were not enough. After all, how could I tie a Royal Coachman without peacock herl or a weighted nymph without fuse wire?

The answer obviously lay in: First making a list of all the paraphernalia needed to tie every dry, wet, nymph and streamer fly known to man (from size 2 to 22, of course) and second, transferring the savings I had set aside for my sons' college education, to the accounts of most of the country's leading suppliers of fly tying material.

Unfortunately, this idea did not go over too well with my wife, who, as anyone will readily realize, is not

sympathetic to fly tying as you or I may be. The obvious alternative therefore, was for me to sneakily charge these just needs to my VISA and Mastercard cards and have the suppliers ship them directly to my secretary's home address.

Having pulled this coup successfully, I found myself confronted by a new dilemma: Lack of space. I surveyed the situation very carefully and soon deduced that it would psychologically be in my two sons' best interest, if they shared one bedroom instead of their having separate ones.

That evening, at the dinner table, I casually mentioned reading an American Medical Association report exulting the benefits of siblings being able to communicate freely from one bed to another. "We could also buy another color TV set and put it in their room..." I quickly added, when I saw the frown in everyone's face.

That did it. My wife saw herself, undisturbed, watching soap operas in the family room. The boys saw themselves undisturbed, watching the ball games in their bedroom, and I, of course, saw myself undisturbed, tying millions of flies in my brand new hobby room!

Three days and a brand new 35" Sony color set later, the move was completed; I finally had my own fly tying room.

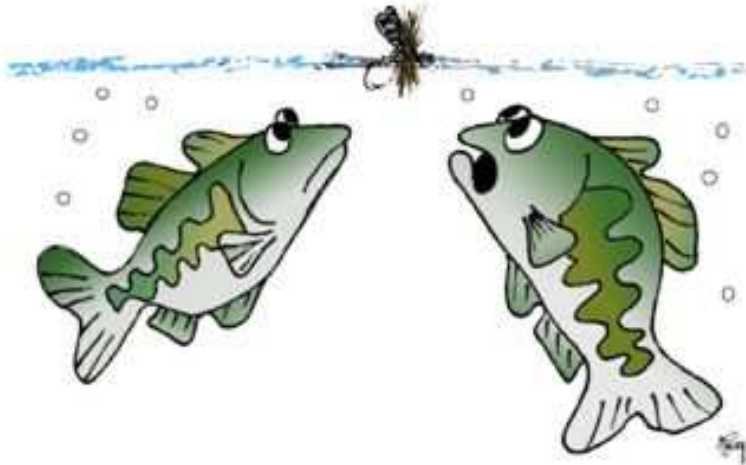
It was then that I realized I had overlooked something minor... like a chair to sit on, a bench for my vise, shelving for the books and other incidental needs. Obviously, something had to be done quickly to remedy this awkward situation. The following day, I stopped at the local unpainted furniture store and bought a desk, chair, three bookcases and a large storage cabinet. Next, I went to the local department store and purchased three cork bulletin boards, a high intensity lamp, some magnets, a wastebasket and a few other desperately needed items.

Within two weeks, my fly tying room was completed. The furniture, now stained a light maple, was in its proper place. The books, in the bookcases, were filed in categorical order. Materials and tools were stored systematically in the desk drawers on the file cabinet. Everything was just perfect!!

That evening, to my utmost satisfaction, I tied a gorgeous, size 14 Adams which was reminiscent of the first dry fly I had bought for seventy five cents. I closed my eyes and, in my head, I added all the money I had spent so far just for this beautiful fly. I nearly had a heart attack when I figured that, this Adams had cost me almost two thousand dollars!

The following day, I went to a favorite trout stream, tied my brand new Adams to 6X tippet and cast it as gently as I could, to rising trout on the opposite bank. Needless to say, the fly got snagged on an overhead branch that was totally out of reach. I pulled on the line, snapped the leader and watched the equivalent of two thousand dollars just hang there.

As my mother used to say, "Easy come... easy go..."



"The trout say it tastes
just like chicken."

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MILWAUKEE LAKE & STREAM FLY FISHERS

2007 CALENDAR

	May	June	July
Meeting	8th Greenfield Park Area 5	12th On the Water	10th On the Water
Outing	19th	23rd	21st
Fly Tying	9th and 23rd	None! It's time to fish!	None! It's time to fish!
Notes:	See club website for the outing map!		

	August	September	October
Meeting	14th On the Water	11th	9th
Outing	25th	22nd	20th
Fly Tying	None! It's time to fish!	12th and 26th	10th and 24th

Meeting:	7 pm Yesteryears Pub & Grill 9427 W. Greenfield
Outing:	Meet at 6:30 am at Park & Rides lots. See Hatch for details.
Fly Tying:	Sportsmen's Warehouse (I-43 & Mooreland Rd.) from 6:00 - 8:30 pm.
Event:	*

The Hatch is the monthly newsletter of the Milwaukee Lake & Stream Fly Fishers, an incorporated nonprofit organization affiliated with the Federation of Fly Fishers.

Milwaukee Lake & Stream Fly Fishers meets the **2nd Tuesday** of each month at **7 p.m.** at **YesterYears Pub & Grill, 9427 W. Greenfield Ave., West Allis, WI**

Meetings **May through August** are on the water. Read **The Hatch** for locations or go to our website

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Submit contributions for **The Hatch** by the 20th of the month to:
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