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## ***Mark your Calendar***

- **March 27** – CVTU presents the **2024 International Fly Fishing Film Festival**, one night only at the Essex Cinema
- **April 13** – Winter fishing restrictions end on many Vermont waters – consult special regulations
- **May 3-5** – TU Northeast Regional Rendezvous, Arlington, VT
- **May 2-5** – Battenkill Fly Fishing Festival

## ***CVTU to Host IF4™ March 27***

The International Fly Fishing Film Festival, hosted by Champlain Valley Trout Unlimited, is coming **March 27** at the Essex Cinema, for a one-night screening of films featuring magnificent fishing adventures. The screening will be a major fundraising activity for CVTU, with all net proceeds going to support the local chapter's mission of conservation and education.

Don't miss this outstanding community-building and fundraising CVTU event. See the CVTU website – <http://vttu.org> - for details on this gala event, including trailers for the IF4™ films. Seating is limited, so get your tickets now. Tickets can be purchased online at <https://www.flyfilmfest.com/essexvt/>. CVTU's presentation of IF4 is generously supported in part by Lake Champlain Transportation Company and Precision Chiropractic.

## ***Chapter Highlights***

**New boundaries** - For the most part TU members aren't too territorial. Recent changes in the makeup of the Vermont Trout Unlimited Council, though, have led to some modifications to the map of TU chapter coverage areas. We welcome to the family the "David and Francis Smith Northeast Kingdom Chapter of Vermont Trout Unlimited." With the revival of this TU chapter, areas served by adjacent chapters have been reassigned. If you're a CVTU member residing in one of the few small areas affected, you probably won't notice the change: chapter affiliations won't be transferred. And regardless of where one's chapter headquarters might be, Vermont waters welcome folks from every corner of the state and beyond!

**With Gratitude** – The Champlain Valley Trout Unlimited chapter acknowledges with thanks a generous donation by **R.L. Vallee / Maplefields** in support of Trout in the Classroom, along with other chapter activities. Such support goes a long way to make the good work of CVTU possible. The chapter also extends thanks to **Larry Bruce** for his generous donation.

**New Meeting Site** – After a couple of meetings held at the South Burlington Public Library, CVTU has relocated our monthly meetings to more spacious facilities at the **Doubtletree** on Williston Road.

**New Web Site** – Early in December CVTU rolled out a new, completely redesigned web site. The URL address is the same: <http://vttu.org> – but the look, feel and contents have changed. Check us out! The site continues to evolve in accord with guidance from the Board and suggestions from chapter members, under "CVTU Webmaster" Rob Brown. Please reach out to Rob with your ideas.

**Jesse Smith joins BOD** – The CVTU Board of Directors welcomes **Jesse Smith** to chapter leadership. Thanks, Jesse, for stepping forward to help make it all happen!

**Newsletter Note** - Stream Lines is only as interesting and informative as you make it! If there's something you'd like to see in a future issue, whether it's a story in words or pictures, we'd love to hear from you. Get in touch with editor Rob Brown at [rab51@comcast.net](mailto:rab51@comcast.net).

## Winter Meetings

Like spawning runs and cycles of freeze and thaw, the Trout Unlimited chapter has a certain rhythm. Winter meetings provide one of the pulse beats that measure the life of CVTU. If you haven't been to one, CVTU meetings offer a time to see old friends and meet some new ones, a chance to venture a few bucks to win nifty "Bucket Raffle" prizes, and to learn and be entertained by a lineup of great guest speakers.

The **November** meeting marked a resumption of live, in-person gatherings, highlighted by an illuminating presentation **by Andrea Morgante**, founder of the **Lewis Creek Association**. In addition to an update on work done last spring with CVTU volunteers, Andrea provided an overview of the Creek from its headwaters in Starksboro to its mouth in North Ferrisburg. Riparian restoration efforts help to maintain some great steelhead runs, as well as other later-season fisheries. Andrea's talk highlighted ways to work alongside local officials and landowners to make stormwater decisions that will benefit our wild streams.



*Andrea Morgante, Lewis Creek Association*

The **December** "Fishmas" meeting featured a different kind of catch, as author, map-maker and raconteur **Peter Shea** entertained members with stories and pictures of fishing exploits in Ireland, the American west and here in Vermont. Listeners heard about big trout and scenic lakes in County Kerry, a not-so-isolated pond in the Northeast Kingdom, and the ins and outs of the "Code of the West" according to Peter Shea.



*Peter Shea*

**January** saw a move to a new meeting location at the Doubletree in South Burlington. Although a brief but intense snowstorm made travel to the meeting a real challenge, a couple of dozen hardy attendees braved the weather to hear from the headwaters. Fish and Wildlife **Commissioner Chris Herrick** and Fisheries Biologist **Lee Simard** spoke about management plans, and ways to improve the resiliency of fish habitat, especially in the wake of recent flooding. Asked what individual TU members can do to help, Commissioner Herrick said, "Teach someone to fish." More active recreational fishers means more resources – and more grassroots support – for the important work of the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department. That work extends well beyond the familiar "hook and bullet" areas of fishing and hunting to encompass wildlife management, land acquisition, and participation in host of related projects.



*Commissioner Herrick*

*Biologist Lee Simard*

**February's** Chapter meeting featured guide, author and Fly Rod Shop proprietor **Bob Shannon**. After inflicting a parade of photos of gargantuan trout and salmon on an envious audience ("You guys bring *all* your fish pictures to the fly shop. Payback...") Bob unspooled a riveting master-class discussion of the angler's craft.

Bob pointed out the most common mistake that leads to days of getting skunked on the water: failure to adapt to conditions. Discussion ranged from how to assess a fishing location, to leader setups, rod characteristics, fly selection, tactics and a sprinkling of Bob's "Secret Guide Stuff."

If temperatures hadn't plummeted that night, it's likely that most members of the CVTU audience would have been eager to hit the streams on Valentine's Day - the next morning.



*Bob Shannon*

## Trout in the Classroom

It's a rainy Saturday in December, and the senior TIC team of **Bob Wible** and **Ed Collins** are at Shelburne Community School, prepping the tank for another season. On hand to observe and learn are Catherine Todd and Eileen Worcester, two recent TIC recruits. Watching things with an experienced eye is teacher **Vasanthi Meyette**.

Vasanthi is the science teacher for two "teams" of 5th and 6th graders at Shelburne Community School. In all, 160 youngsters in the two mid-level grades will rotate through her classroom each week, interacting in various ways with the baby brook trout that will grow from eggs into fingerlings in the TIC tank.



*Vasanthi Meyette, Shelburne Community School*

A veteran teacher with more than 20 years' experience, Vasanthi weaves TIC into a host of activities. Raising a tank of brook trout takes months, so the setup serves as a touchstone for numerous facets of the curriculum. Units in life sciences, the environment, and even basic chemistry and math make use of the trout tank. Students signed up to serve on the "Tank Team" take responsibility for routine tasks, feeding the fish, monitoring temperature and water quality, and recording observations as the tiny creatures grow and mature.



*TIC Lead Bob Wible explains for volunteer Catherine Todd*

The tank holds about 100 fish, that rapidly take on a kind of personality - and noticeable cuteness. "Those two little eyes are adorable," Vasanthi says. Students are quick to identify with their little companions. "Every fish is named," she says, adding with a grin toward TIC lead Bob Wible, "every one of them is named 'Bob.'"

Trout in the Classroom reaches youngsters in a range of learning styles. Vasanthi beams as she tells how new American students are amazed at this living resource, an element often unheard of in their countries of origin. More than just a demonstration, the TIC installation provides inspiration and an important pathway to lifelong learning.



*TIC Volunteer Dave Barch introduces Otter Creek Academy students in teacher Brenna Kimball's class to their new friends*

Fast forward to January 10. Temperatures have risen, turning the previous night's snow into slush and wet. High winds the night before have brought down trees, caused power outages, and led a number of area schools to delay or cancel classes. CVTU Trout in the Classroom volunteers are out, though, gathering at the Park and Ride in Richmond.

TIC Coordinator Bob Wible is handing out assignments and containers of trout eggs, obtained at the state fish hatchery. With their routes and precious cargo in hand, volunteer drivers set out to bring the eggs to prepared TIC tanks in participating schools.

**Dave Barch** pulls up to Otter Creek Academy, where teacher **Brenna Kimball** and her eager pupils are waiting. Dave introduces the tiny trout to the students, who watch as the fish are introduced to their new temporary home. After some encouraging words, Dave goes on to his next stop, where the process is repeated. Dave's route is mirrored by a number of other drivers, who deliver eggs to a total of 35 active TIC tanks. CVTU's Trout in the Classroom program currently reaches 32 schools in Chittenden, Addison and Franklin Counties.

- RB

# International Fly Fishing Film Festival – Preview



The International Fly Fishing Film Festival - IF4™ - is the world's leading fly-fishing film event, consisting of coveted fly-fishing films produced by filmmakers from all corners of the globe and showcases the passion, lifestyle, and culture of fly fishing. The exclusive screening of nine short films is coming to the Champlain Valley March 27 at the Essex Cinema. This one-night special event is a major fundraising activity for CVTU, with all net proceeds going to support the local chapter's mission of conservation and education.

## The Films

Visit the CVTU website (<http://www.vttu.org>) for more information and official trailers for Film Festival selections.

Among the official selections in the festival are

- **Pinawaca**, a jungle adventure, led by popular angler and guide, Jako Lucas, in search of legendary and oversized peacock bass;
- **South Caicos**, an unpressured and undisturbed adventure in the heart of bonefish territory;
- **Vivid Dreams**, a breathtaking film about a group of friends in search of oversized sea-run brown trout in rugged landscapes;
- **Tunulik**, a northern adventure to Nunavik in search of trophy brook trout, arctic char and Atlantic salmon;

- **The Runaround**, a high-energy film following a group of friends on an adventure from Walker's Cay to the famed Everglades;
- **Tension**, a cinematic tale celebrating legacy, conservation and the American West;
- **A Ride with Clyde**, an unforgettable, unconventional and memorable trip with salty friends into the Tennessee hills;
- **Kendjam**, a tale of Bolivian adventures; and
- **The Golden Ride**, an unforgettable fly-fishing trip centered around a community of friends as they travel south to Argentina in pursuit of aggressive Golden Dorado.

The screening of all nine IF4 films will be at the Essex Cinema, March 27 at 7:00 pm. Doors will open at 6:30.

Tickets can be purchased through the GET TICKETS link on the CVTU website, or at the door on a space-available basis.

CVTU's presentation of IF4 is generously supported in part by Lake Champlain Transportation Company and Precision Chiropractic.



## Northeast Regional Rendezvous

Join fellow TU members, supporters and volunteers from across the Northeast on May 3-5 in Arlington, Vermont for some great fishing, enlightening presentations, inspiring dialogue and engaging camaraderie. In partnership with the [Battenkill Fly Fishing Festival](#), this marriage of fishing-centric celebration of one of TU's top Priority Waters in the East with the kinds of in-depth and hands-on conservation and community engagement conversations makes the Northeast Rendezvous a fun and impactful weekend.

***If you purchase a ticket through TU, you DO NOT have to buy a ticket on the Battenkill Fly Fishing Festival site! Your TU ticket covers both programs!***

## President's Message

- Ed Collins, CVTU President



It's winter in Vermont. Not much open water for trout fishing at this time of year, but you can still keep busy. It's time to prepare your gear for the upcoming season: check your rods, lube your reels, replace your leaders and start tying your favorite flies.

It's also time to attend the winter meetings of the Champlain Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited. Meeting and program information is available on our website at [vttu.org](http://vttu.org) - check it out.

For our March meeting, CVTU is sponsoring a "Movie Night," the International Fly Fishing Film Festival, (IF4), on March 27, 2024 at the Essex Cinema. Tickets are available at our website. We hope to see you there.

Lastly, it's not too early to start thinking about the spring and summer CVTU activities: conservation projects, clean ups and fishing meet ups are all in the works. planned. Once again, see our website, [vttu.org](http://vttu.org), For details. We look forward to seeing you!

## Vermont Trout Camp for Teens

Applications are currently being accepted for the 12th annual **Vermont Trout Camp for Teens**, set for June 23-27, at Quimby Country in Averill, VT. Details for this program for teens between the ages of 13-16 and applications are available at the Camp website- [www.vermonttroutcamp.com](http://www.vermonttroutcamp.com). This is a marvelous opportunity for young people to learn to experience the out-of-doors to the fullest. The program offers instruction in fly-casting, entomology, on-stream fly fishing tactics, fly tying, coldwater fisheries management and biology. The deadline for applications is April 15th. Vermont Trout Camp for Teens is sponsored by Trout Unlimited, and industry leaders like Orvis, Cortland Line, LL Bean, & Patagonia.

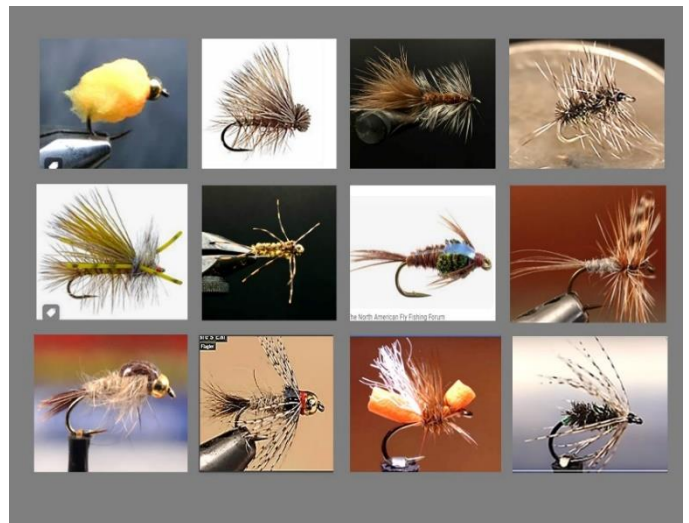
## CVTU/Vt Fly Gals Fly Tying

A collaborative group of fly tiers from CVTU and the VT Fly Gals has been meeting in Underhill since the middle of January. This year we are having separate sessions, one for the real "newbies" and another for the more veteran tiers. Attendance in both groups has been steady and both have had great results and are gaining skills weekly. A big shout out and thanks to Jean and Steve for helping the new kids on the block.

The roster of patterns has included old standards for the beginners: of course, the venerable Woolly Bugger, Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear, Elk Hair Caddis, Griffiths Gnat are on the list. The "next level" group has been working on tried and true patterns such as the Pheasant Tail Nymph and Blue Winged Olive Soft Hackle, but are also trying some more modern patterns such as Pat's Rubber Legs, Guide's Choice Hare's Ear and the Rubber Legs Stimulator. This year the focus our been on improving proportions and working on smaller flies.

The bulk of the proceeds from the attendance fees are going to the United Church of Underhill for providing us with a space to meet and the balance used to purchase new materials.

Feel free to reach out to Jamie Eisenberg if you would like to know more and perhaps even suggest some patterns to work on next year. [Eisenberg.jamie@gmail.com](mailto:Eisenberg.jamie@gmail.com)



- JE

(Editor's note: Some call people who tie flies "tiers," while others prefer "tyers." Spell check, Webster's and Oxford dictionaries accept either. What's your preference? Write [rob.brown51@gmail.com](mailto:rob.brown51@gmail.com) - contribute to a future SL article!)

## Occasions of Hope

The Scottish novelist John Buchan famously described fishing as “the pursuit of what is elusive but attainable, a perpetual series of occasions of hope.”



(photo by Jesse Smith)

A growing number of non-profit retreats and support programs embody the idea, bringing hope and healing to people in need. From survivors of cancer to traumatized veterans and at-risk youth, the beneficiaries of these projects learn what many of us already believe – that fishing is good for you.

When people are subjected to severe stresses, the body responds with surges of adrenaline and cortisol. Blood pressure and heart rate go up, while immune responses, memory and the ability to handle the tasks of everyday living decline.

Fly fishing reduces stress. In addition to the peaceful surroundings of fresh air and beautiful water, fishing provides a low-impact workout for the whole body. Unplugged and focused on solving the riddle of water, fish and line, the fisher enters a state in which mind and body are refreshed and healed.

While this likely explains why we like to fish, this premise also underlies an increasing number of recovery and support programs that promote healing and hope to people faced with special challenges.

**Project Healing Waters** (<http://projecthealingwaters.org>) is devoted to helping veterans, whose injuries may have been sustained on the battlefield or suffered inwardly through PTSD. Through Project Healing Waters, veterans

find comradeship and connectedness in fly fishing, casting, fly tying and even rod building. Vets can reach Project Healing Waters through the Veterans Administration in White River Junction, through Green Mountain Veterans in Burlington, or through the Fly Rod Shop in Stowe.

**Reeling in Serenity** (<http://reelinginserenity.org>) sponsors fly fishing retreats for people choosing to celebrate life without drugs and alcohol, providing a “safe space and resource for the sober fly angler who is doing the work one day at a time.” Reeling in Serenity taps into the spiritual connections with nature and the contemplative aspects of fly fishing. Scheduled retreats include sites in Georgia, Pennsylvania, Montana and North Carolina.

Another exciting program, **The Mayfly Project** (<http://themayflyproject.com>) uses fly fishing as a focus in mentoring children in foster care. With “projects” – think in terms of “chapters” – scattered across the country, the program offers a comprehensive series of lessons and encounters with fishing under the guidance of volunteer mentors. Mayfly Project centers nearest our area are in the Hudson Valley of NY and around Hartford, CT.



(photo by Sharon Brown)

Perhaps the best known program in our area, **Casting for Recovery** (<http://castingforrecovery.org>) focuses on women in various stages of their battle with breast cancer. The nationwide program offers retreats for Vermont and New Hampshire residents, currently sited in New Hampshire.

A similar and more local program for women cancer survivors, **Hope on the Rise** (<http://hopeontherise.org>) is based in Washinton, VT. A check on their website shows that they stopped running retreats during the pandemic. Attempts to check in with Hope on the Rise were still unsuccessful when this article went to press.

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*(Occasions of Hope, continued...)*

Meanwhile, **Reel Recovery** (<http://reelrecovery.org>), a nationwide program based in Needham, MA, offers retreats for men dealing with all forms of cancer in various stages.

Although they're primarily located in the west, **Rising to the Fly** (<http://risingtothefly.com>) has served individuals in 19 states and Canada. Their mission is to "break down barriers to make fly fishing accessible and inclusive to all women," a goal that Rising to the Fly attains by providing "gear and garb" along with education, much of which is offered online.

As American naturalist and philosopher Henry David Thoreau observed, many people "go fishing all of their lives without knowing that it is not fish they are after." Programs like these remind us that the pastime we enjoy for recreation and pleasure can be a powerful, healing resource. They deserve our recognition and support.

- RB



HD Thoreau  
(Wikimedia Archive)

## CVTU Online

Since going live in December, CVTU's website has drawn a small but steady stream of visitors. Situated at its long-standing address, <http://vttu.org>, the site underwent a complete redesign. Parts of the site remain "under construction," with additions and improvements being made frequently. A "comments" block on the home page asks visitors for suggestions. Thanks to **Jesse Smith**, **Bob Wible** and **Dave Barch** for recent photo contributions! All CVTU members are invited to contribute ideas and images to the site. Contact [cvtuwebmaster@yahoo.com](mailto:cvtuwebmaster@yahoo.com) (AKA Rob Brown).

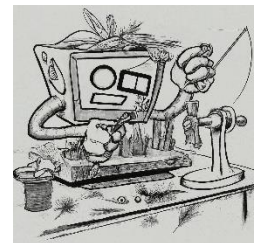
## Featured Fly: the AI challenge

There's been a lot of buzz and controversy in the non-fishing world about "AI," computer-generated imitation "intelligence" that can write kids' homework, routine reports, promotional copy, probably newsletter articles. For this issue we thought we'd take a baby step into the AI stream and try a computer-designed fly.

We started out by asking Bard (Google's "generative artificial intelligence chatbot") to come up with a design. We said:

*"Write a recipe for an original trout fly pattern, specifically designed to attract steelhead in the early spring in Vermont. Include a cool name for the fly, a list of materials needed, and detailed instructions for tying the fly."*

After "thinking" about it for about three seconds, Bard replied to our prompt. It's important to remember that the computer doesn't really know about flies. Instead, it combs through gazillions of words of recorded language to assemble something that looks sort of sensible. Purists will notice that Bard seems to have an imperfect understanding of technique and sequence, while experts (*thanks, Sheila!*) may spot that the "cool name" already belongs to a classic salmon fly. So much for computer-generated originality.



*Fly Name: The Green Machine*

*This early spring Steelhead slayer combines the flash of emerging life with the warmth of the returning sun to tempt even the most sluggish winter trout. Its vibrant green body shimmers, mimicking algae growth, while the fiery orange hackle pulsates like the first flush of aquatic insects. It's time to awaken those spring appetites!*

*Materials:*

*Hook: TMC 300 #6 or #8*

*Thread: 6/0 Olive*

*Bead head: Silver conehead (medium size)*

*Body: Chartreuse dubbing with a pinch of olive blended in*

*Rib: Fine gold wire*

*Flash: Pearl Mylar tinsel*

*Hackle: Fiery orange saddle hackle*

*Thorax: Fine peacock herl*

*Head: Black thread*

*(continued next page)*

*(Featured Fly, continued...)*

**Instructions:**

*Secure the thread behind the eye of the hook and tie in the silver conehead, facing forward. Whip finish and trim excess thread.*

*Dab a small amount of dubbing onto the thread and wind it back and forth on the conehead, gradually increasing wraps to form a smooth, tapered chartreuse body, leaving space for the hackle at the bend.*

*Tie in the gold wire rib just behind the conehead and spiral it down the body in tight, even wraps. Secure and trim excess wire.*

*Tie in a pinch of Pearl Mylar tinsel at the front of the body and wind it forward towards the head in sparse wraps, creating a subtle flash. Secure and trim excess tinsel.*

*Select a few strands of fiery orange saddle hackle and tie them in at the hook bend. Wind the hackle forward in tight, even wraps, forming a dense collar that stands proud of the body. Secure and trim excess hackle.*

*Wind a few turns of fine peacock herl just behind the hackle to create a subtle orange-green flash and thorax transition.*

*Whip finish the head to secure all materials and form a durable knot. Apply a drop of head cement for added strength.*

*So tie up a few Green Machines and head out to those Vermont streams this spring. Let the vibrant colors and lifelike movements do the talking for you, and watch as sleepy steelhead awaken to the allure of the Green Machine!*

OK – with that kind of encouragement from the computer, a few of us just had to try it! See the results that follow. Does this herald a new computer-driven era fishing? Probably not. But writers (and newsletter editors) might just be looking over their shoulders.



*fly by Larry Bruce*



*fly by Rob Brown  
(missing cone head, tail added, from a cat toy)*



*fly by Paul Kempner*

*Finally, we fed the instructions to ANOTHER A.I. application, asking it to draw a picture of the fly as it “understood” it to be. The result was interesting, but suggests that leaving two computers alone to talk to each other doesn’t necessarily double the “intelligence” part of “A.I.” The “Gemini” rendering of the Green Machine:*

