

Single Haul



The Newsletter of the Izaak Walton Flyfishing Club

March. 2007

Editor's Eddy

The southern Ontario flyfishing community has suffered another loss: Sue Robins. A good number of IWFFC members have known the Robins for many years, and IWFFC extends heartfelt condolences to Ken, Sherri and Heather.

Further along on this page is a fine and eloquent tribute to Sue submitted for this issue by Dan Kennaley.

The Canadian Fly Fishing Forum is right around the corner. The planning has been carried out, and all that remain are the final details and the last-minute scrambling. One of the final pieces of the puzzle is finding people to introduce the speakers – a very simple but valuable job. If you'd like to help out, please contact Ken O'Brien at a club meeting, or send a meesage to this Editor; you help will be much appreciated.

To all members: Have a good Forum!

Bob Kuehnbaum, March 26, 2007

Quotable / Notable Quotes

Dad doesn't fish much now. I still call him whenever I catch a big one on the river, and he is as delighted over it as if he had caught it himself – no, more delighted. And this is the lesson he taught me, taught me slowly and subtly all those summers in the boat when I cast and pontificated, cast and fumed. Catching a fish is a joy, but what is even better is having someone you love catch one, when the delight is doubled. This is the true lesson to be taught a fishing son, more important than any theory regarding fish or fly, and I hope that one day I may pass it on to a son as patiently and unselfishly as my father passed it to me.

 W. D. Wetherell, Vermont River, 1984, Nick Lyons Press

I fish because of Beauty. Everything about our sport is beautiful ... And in times of partisan hubris, selfishness and outright mendacity, beauty itself may be the most endangered thing of all.

- Ernie Schwiebert, 2005

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Correspondence to the Editor may be sent via fax (905-276-2401), phone (905-276-6684) or e-mail at (r.kuehnbaum@sympatico.ca), or to the address on the last page.

A Tribute to Sue Robins

Dan Kennaley

On February 22, 2007, our fly fishing community lost Sue Robins in a car accident just outside of Stratford.

Sue was one of Ontario's top women fly anglers and enjoyed sharing her passion for fly fishing, especially with other women. Along with her twin daughters, Sherri and Heather, Sue had instructed fly fishing at OFAH's annual Women's Outdoor Weekend. She had also instructed fly casting as part of the Casting for Recovery program, which is aimed at women breast cancer survivors who can especially benefit, physically and psychologically, from fly casting. In addition, Sue had been a frequent seminar presenter at the Grand Opportunities Fly Fishing Forum and had taught casting and given seminars at the Spring Fishing Show. On top of that, either solo or with fly angling husband Ken, Sue had given presentations at the Canadian Fly Fishing Forum and to other Ontario fly clubs. She had been scheduled again to give another of her popular introductory fly fishing seminars for women at this year's Forum.

Although she admitted to not having tried fishing until she met husband Ken in the mid-60s, Sue was not one of those wives who simply humour their husbands by tagging along on the occasional fishing trip. When it came to fly fishing she was just as enthusiastic as Ken, and that meant very enthusiastic indeed.

The two of them had become intrigued with fly fishing in the early 70s when the popularity of fly

fishing was beginning to soar. They got books from the library and practiced casting with an old fly rod Ken's father had given him. Sue and Ken made a few trips with their fly rods to the Maitland in 1974, but they really got hooked in 1975 when they spent the summer traveling and fly fishing through Montana, Utah, the Yukon and British Columbia. By 1980, Sue was so bitten by the fly fishing bug that, when she was pregnant with the twins, her biggest concern was that her due date was going to be right in the middle of the Green Drake hatch. Not surprisingly, Sue and Ken's love of fly fishing rubbed off on their daughters who are now also avid fly anglers

Sue's ability to so effectively teach fly fishing is perhaps no surprise, since she was an elementary school music teacher in Stratford until retiring just this past January. Of course, her warm personality and infectious enthusiasm undoubtedly helped as well.

Near the end of the movie "A River Runs Through It", the narrator tells us of a conversation he had with his father about his deceased brother Paul. He tells his father that "maybe in the end all I really know about Paul is that he was fine fisherman". His father replies: "You know more than that. He was beautiful."

We know Sue was a fine fly angler, a fine teacher of both music and fly fishing, a fine wife and mother, and a gracious and good friend. And we also know she was beautiful – in every sense of the word.

Club News & Events

Vacant Club Positions

Conservation Chair: We have not yet located a replacement for Pat Kelly, our current Chair. As a member of the Conservation Committee, Pat will retain responsibility for the workdays and community event days, which will make the task considerably lighter for the new Chair.

Single Haul (Co-)Editor: We are looking for someone on an interim or long-term basis to assume some or all of the responsibilities of editorship.

If you think that you have the skills and /or would like to discuss either position, or the position of Conservation Committee member, please call Bob Kuehnbaum at 905-276-6684.

Meeting Schedule

The remaining few meetings before our "Summer Break" are below. Consult the IWFFC website for any possible changes or updates.

April 3 – Tying Meeting: Sheldon Seale will demonstrate woven nymphs. Elliott Deighton will lead the beginners table.

April 17 – General Meeting: Beginners Program (suggestions welcomed).

May 1 – Tying Meeting: Silvia D'Amelio will be tying flies from her February 20 presentation on Lake Superior "coaster" brook trout.

Kettle Knott Award

Following the request for a dedication placed in the December issue of the *Single Haul*, **Bruce Roney** submitted the following words:

"In recognition of your tireless efforts to share with others your skills and knowledge of the many aspects of fly-fishing. Your dedication and mentorship are in keeping with the spirit of those for whom this award is named."

A Fly-fishing Mentor

In our fly-fishing sport there are those whom we turn to, Their skills and their knowledge we need, For they are the mentors, the ones who share freely, Their advice and their counsel we heed.

"Keep your rod tip a straight line when making a cast", Or, "With practice, your flies will be skilled", With a host of other encouraging thoughts, The learner's enriched and the teacher's fulfilled.

Well said, Bruce!

Fly Tying DVDs

Pat Kelly has been busy recording tying meetings – e.g. Henri Lemieux, Ken Collins, Sheldon Seale – and he has created a DVD for each of them. He has also gone through some of our old VHS (and other tape) recordings and created DVDs of Dave Whitlock at the Forum in 1981 and 1986, Chico Hernandez (saltwater flies) at the 1982 Forum, and others.

The DVDs are available at club meetings for \$10 apiece.

Tips and Trips

Evenings on the Crowsnest

Eugene Knapik

This past August, I had the pleasure of fishing for a week in southwest Alberta with my friends Mike Retallick, who many readers know from the IWFFC, and Ken Retallic, a writer and avid fly fisherman from Ketchum Idaho. The plan was to fish the Crowsnest River, along with cutthroat streams such as the Castle, the upper Oldman and the Livingstone Rivers.

The three of us met up at Lundbreck Falls on the Crowsnest, but didn't stick around. There were a lot of people in the campground and many rods on the river. It had been three years since I fished the Crowsnest, and I feared we would find much of the river had succumbed to this high level of pressure. I needn't have worried, though, as we had no difficulty finding plenty of water to ourselves throughout the week.

During the day, we primarily fished the cutthroat streams, prospecting with attractors; in the evenings, we concentrated on the Crowsnest. These evenings proved to be the highlight of the trip. Hatches began after 6 pm, and trout rose steadily to size 18 and 20 Baetis, and to spinners closer to dark. Many of the best trout were bank feeders which would stay tight to the bushes and rise less than a foot from the bank. Little comparaduns and CDC flies took scrappy rainbows when we were able to present the flies well enough - and close enough to the bushes to get a look from these picky feeders. The gusty wind had other ideas, and I confess there were times when placing the fly in front of the trout gave me a lot of trouble. The fish were 14 to 18 inch rainbows, with an occasional larger trout in the mix.

One evening, Ken and Mike walked downstream from the bridge over the Trout Unlimited water near Burmis Lake, while I headed upriver, watching the bank for risers. I was casting after a pair of good trout sitting behind a protruding log, when I heard a rustling sound across the river. It must be a dog, I thought, for we had seen dogs around the river on previous trips. This time, however, it was no dog, but a mid-sized black bear. I said, "It's OK, I'm just leaving", and started to slowly walk downstream. When within sight of the bridge, I started to relax, but then heard the telltale rustle once again: the bear had followed me downstream, poking his head out of the bushes for

a better look. Below, a deep pool meant crossing the stream, so I pushed through the brush behind me, and climbed the high ridge overlooking the stream. Fortunately, the bear, which was taking advantage of the many berries in the valley, stayed put on the far side of the river.

I was on my own for one final day before driving back to Calgary and flying home. It was overcast after a week of sunny days and I decided to fish the Crowsnest all day. I took a number of small rainbows on attractors in the morning in a long deep run below a monsterous pool, and a couple of 12 inchers by nymphing through the early afternoon in a run where I noted what looked like the tracks of a large cat in the sand. That evening, the Baetis didn't materialize at all and fishing was decidedly slow until a half hour before dark, when good trout began coming up after spinners which were all around me. I don't know just what insect it was, but I was able to imitate it well enough with a hastily tied on size 14 rusty spinner, and took four good rainbows in short order. Two of them came up from the depths of a big rocky pool, and two were rising in a long, gentle run, about three feet out from a bushy bank and on the edge of slower deeper water.

There is plenty of access on the Crowsnest, and a great deal of variety, from long bank runs, to surprisingly deep pools, and fast riffles. For those of us used to fishing the Credit and the Grand, it is a perfect size. There are plenty of services through the string of villages that define the Crowsnest Municipality, including at least two friendly fly shops, motels, bed & breakfast places, campgrounds, and several restaurants. For additional variety, some lovely scenery and plenty of cutthroats can be found on the Castle, not far to the south. The Forestry Trunk road will take you north to the Oldman and Livingstone Rivers, and it is well worth the drive to fish these gorgeous streams. West through the Crowsnest Pass, you will find the well-known Elk River and many other fine streams in British Columbia. If you decide to try B.C. rivers, though, check your regulations: there are now daily user fees applicable on many of the best streams.

Fly Tying

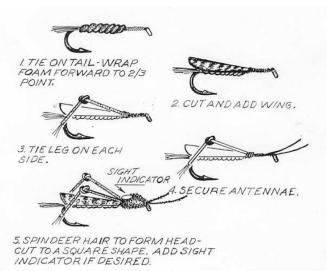
Unsinkable Grasshopper

Eric Schubert

Illustrations by Adrian Jund North Idaho Fly Casters Club

If you are adept at the rudimentary steps of tying flies, this month's pattern, the "Unsinkable Grasshopper" should be a fairly easy pattern to tie. Use a Mustad 9672 #10 hook or any equivalent 3X-long shank hook. The tail of this fly consists of a small bunch of red hackle fibers, complemented by a body of yellow, olive, or tan foam. The body colors can be altered to match the particular color of grasshoppers on your local stream. I find that a yellow body seems to work more consistently than other colors. Use strips of closed-cell foam for constructing the body; this will aid in giving the fly its permanent floatability.

The wing for the Unsinkable Grasshopper is cut from a lacquered piece of turkey flat and the legs are the type that are pre-knotted segments from pheasant tail fibers. Antennas are constructed from hackle stems. Complete this fly by spinning deer hair for the head-portion and cutting it into a square shape. You can also opt to add a small piece of orange yarn as a sight indicator to the area directly behind the deer-hair head.



Presenting this fly is simple and does not require much finesse. Cast it near undercut banks that traditionally are some of a trout's favorite holding spots. Casting the fly onto the opposite shore and then stripping your fly into the water is also a winning fly fishing strategy. Don't worry about

making the perfect cast and presentation; remember that grasshoppers fall into rivers with a definite "splash".

Try tying the Unsinkable Hopper in various sizes and colors; you will quickly learn to appreciate thisunsinkable offering.

Hook: Mustad 9672 #10 or equivalent

Thread: Tan 6/0 Tail: Red hackle fibres

Body: 1/8-inch wide yellow foam strip

Wing: Lacquered turkey flat Head: Spun natural deer hair Antennae: Brown hackle stems

Legs: Preformed (knotted) pheasant tail fibres or

synthetic legs

Courtesy FFF ClubWire Newswire Service

Tying Small Flies

Klaas Oswald, Sault Fly Anglers

The following is taken, with the author's permission, from an issue of The Fly Paper, the newsletter of the local fly fishing organization in the Soo, Ontario. The original was entitled "Tying Tiny Flies", but Klaas correctly noted that the definitions of "tiny" in northern Ontario and in our area differ appreciably. In the north, anglers are in the habit of using # 8 fancy wet flies for brook trout fishing in streams, #6 Woolly Buggers in lakes, and #2 "down east" type streamers while trolling behind a canoe for lake trout. This is attributed to the nutrient-poor waters and short growing seasons. Fish need to take everything that drifts by, so a large fly, like a #10 Royal Coachman or other attractor, visible from a distance, often outfishes a smaller and more imitative fly. But there are times when small flies are more productive, even though the northern anglers consider flies in #12 – #16 range as "small" or even "tiny".

This article is therefore appropriate to those newer to fly-tying who are still struggling with materials and smaller hooks. For more advanced tyers, just think of your #18 – #26 flies. – Ed.

"Advanced fly tying techniques aren't about knowing the obscure; they're about understanding the simple." – Neil Patterson

First, make sure the light is good. At home I tie where there is good <u>outdoor</u> light coming down from my left side and, in addition, I have a flexible-arm

lamp that I can position very close to the fly tying vice. Every day isn't perfect, and outdoor light can be obscured, so I often need the extra light from the lamp. Why do I like as much outdoor light as possible when tying? I find that any kind of artificial light tires my eyes more quickly than the real thing. Besides, outdoor light reveals the true colour of fly tying material; most kinds of artificial light do not.

Secondly, I restrict all my smaller or more complex tying to the morning hours, when my eyes are not yet tired from the day's activities. Looking at flickering lights (computer or TV screens), or really giving the eyes a work-out in reading for much of the day seems to really tire out the eyes. I have found that I can concentrate better in the mornings, which is important in working on the smaller flies. Morning tying also means good light.

If tying with fresh eyes in better light doesn't quite do the trick, you may have to invest in a flexible-arm magnifier with a light ring built into it.

Third, take your time and think ahead when learning to tie small flies. Plan out the tying steps in advance. So what if this slows you down and you tie only a fly or two. At the end of the session, success in tying them well will be a real confidence booster and will make the next session easier and faster.

Fourth, use materials that are sized to the task. You *can* afford a spool of 8/0 thread that you use only for these flies. Learn to apply just the tiniest amount of dubbing onto the thread for fly bodies, and take the time to pull out coarse guard hairs from the dubbing first.

Finally, learn the techniques of smaller tying. One trick I often use, after I have decided on the pattern, materials, and sizes of flies I want to tie, is to deliberately start tying them first oversize, and working down to the size I want. For instance, if I am tying #16 and #18 Sulphurs, I may start with one in size 12, then tie two in size 14, then go down to #16 and tie a bunch, and then down to #18. Starting first in the larger sizes lets me perfect the exact thread and material manoeuvres that are required for the pattern. Going down to a single fly in size 20 and then backing up to 18s makes the latter seem like monsters! I sometimes think that tying tiny is as much the overcoming of a mental state as overcoming physical limitations.

Try to follow the KISS ("keep it simple, stupid!") principle. Avoid over-extending yourself by trying to tie Royal Wulffs, for instance, in #20. It can be done, but why? Leave the tying of small but complex flies until you have mastered the easy ones. Do things like using only one hackle instead of two: because the hooks are so light, and the ratio of fly surface

(from hackle, dubbed body fibres, and even the hook bend itself) to hook weight is so great, smaller flies will float well without the extra hackle. (Actually, with a fuzzy body and bit of paste floatant, and a false cast or two between floats, they will float quite nicely without any hackle at all.) Avoid any extra turns of thread: on small flies they really add up in a hurry, both in bulk and in weight. Use only two turns instead of the five or six you can get away with in tying larger flies.

Stick to simple patterns, or, simplify the pattern you are tying. Small wet flies, consisting only of a thinly dubbed fur body together with a single turn (two at the most) of a very small soft hackle, are killers. I reduce my small dry flies to the simplest patterns, and avoid tying Catskill type dry flies with upright divided wings of duck flank together with two colours of hackle on the same fly. My Sulphurs are simple and consist of tail, body, and rotary hackle (I usually leave out the wings), or simple parachutes with a wing post usually consisting of two inches of polypro yarn that can be cut to size after it's tied in. I tie small Sulphur mayfly spinner spent wings with a simple tail, thin body, and a dubbed thorax figure-eighted over a small polypro pair of wings.

There are a variety of techniques suitable for tiny flies. Tie in the rotary hackle first so the stem can be tied down under the body. Apply dubbing to the thread before tying in the tail: as you wind the bare portion of thread towards the tail position, tying in the tails as you go, the dubbing will be in the proper place just as you finish the tail windings. Learn to hold the materials at a 45° position, up and toward you from the hook shank, so that as you make the first unseen (yes, your fingers will be in the way of seeing what you are doing on very small flies) turn or two of thread, those turns will pull the material onto the top of the hook shank. Don't crowd the eye of the fly. There is a tendency in small flies to put too much stuff on the hook. For parachutes, tie in the wing post near the middle of the hook, not near the front.

Above all, there is no substitute for practice. Take a quiet Saturday morning, pick out a pattern, lay out your materials, and tie a bunch of flies. Your first effort at the smaller sizes may be atrocious, but each succeeding fly will be better and better as you apply some of the techniques above. If you get too frustrated in your first attempts at tiny flies, quit and wait for a better day, then try again.

Why bother with small flies? The fact is that most of the stream insects (mayflies, caddis, stoneflies, terrestrials) are equivalent to #14 or smaller, so these are the sizes that the fish recognize as food. In my experience, there are

many times when the trout have definitely voted for the small patterns.

Here are two simple dry fly patterns, both of them from Fishing the Midge by Ed Koch (1972). Try both in sizes 16 to 20. Once you have mastered these, you can go on to bigger and better things. Well, make that smaller and better things.

Dangler (a version of the Grey Hackle Yellow)

Thread: yellow 8/0
Tail: grizzly hackle fibres
Body: thinly dubbed light yellow

Hackle: grizzly

No Name Thread: grey 8/0 Tail: none

Body: grey muskrat underfur

Hackle: Grizzly

Tying sequence:

- Attach thread about the middle of the hook and advance it to a spot about 1/5 of the way back from the eye. This distance will vary somewhat with hook size and shape.
- Pluck a very small grizzly hackle from the top of the neck - the ones you thought you would never use. Stroke the barbules backward, cut off the lower ½ to 1/3, wherever it starts to get webby. Give the lowest remaining barbs, for about 1/16 of an inch, a slight "brush cut" by cutting off the barbules close to the stem. Face the hackle the right way, concave side forward, lay the prepared butt of the stem on top of the hook at about right angles, and wind a single figure-X over the butt, thus attaching it to the hook and leaving it standing straight out on the far side of the hook. Wind a second figure X over the first. This technique attaches the hackle before other materials are in the way, it leaves the hackle out of the way of succeeding operations, and it is already sitting at the correct angle for winding onto the hook.
- Now dub a very thin noodle onto the thread, in the fine fur or man-made material of your choice. You will notice that because of the size of your fingers, you can only dub to within about a halfinch or so of the hook shank. This is perfect. This leaves enough bare thread to wind towards the bend before the dubbing touches the hook shank.
- If the pattern has a tail, now is the time to prepare it. Cut a few fibres of hackle from a larger feather, hold the tips in your big lumpy left-

hand fingers at a cross-angle over the shank, and put a turn or two of thread over. Still holding the fibres, tighten the thread. This should pull the tailing onto the top of the shank. (You may have to practice this a bit before you get it right. Use the fibres from some throw-away hackle, and a bare hook shank.) As you wind thread to the bend, the dubbed portion should touch the shank just when you need it.

- Wind the dubbing, keeping the body slender, to the base of the hackle. Strip any remaining dubbing off the thread, and wind the thread to near the eye, leaving room to finish the fly.
- Using your smallest hackle pliers, wind a few turns of hackle, and tie off in the usual way.
- Because of the small size, I do not recommend trying to put a whip finish on these flies. Instead, use a simple multiple half-hitch tool, and slip a few half hitches over the eye.

There. You're done! And it wasn't so hard after all. Now put another hook into the vice and do another. You'll find that each successive fly will be easier, and will look better, than the one before. Once you've done a half dozen, you'll remember the techniques forever. These tying techniques work just as well on larger and more complex patterns, to reduce the tying steps and reducing thread wraps for a lighter fly.

People generally take up angling for contemplation, fun, and genial companionship. Then there are midge fishermen. Their terminal tackle is 'something invisible attached to nothing'. They take up angling for the same reason blind swordsmen take up the blade in samurai films. — The Armchair Angler

The Vise Quad

Where members share favourite fly patterns

Lake Erie Perch Fry

Sheldon Seale

One of the most popular food fishes in eastern North America has to be the Yellow Perch. Certainly anywhere around the Great Lakes (with the possible exception of Lake Superior), Perch thrive and are harvested in uncounted millions. Fortunately, Perch are extremely prolific and, if given any reasonable chance, they can maintain their numbers successfully all by themselves. Not surprising then is that Perch are a favourite food of many gamefish that occupy the same locales.

Perch patterns abound and, while successful, I have never been overly satisfied with the way they look in the water. Answer: develop your own pattern. This I have done and I am pleased with its success, especially on that big, hard fighting, Lake Erie smallmouth bass!

As with many of my patterns, I have borrowed from other flies to develop the Lake Erie Perch Fry. It can be a little complicated to get right but even less than perfect examples of the pattern seem to work well.

Hook: Mustad 9671 or 9672 or equivalent, # 8 to 4

Thread: White and Olive, 6/0 Tail: Orange wool, from the skin

Body: Silver mylar piping, length of the hook shank,

weighted

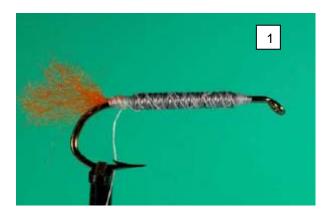
Throat: Orange wool, from the skin

Wing: Equal amounts of Pearlescent under Peacock

Green Krystalflash, extending just past the hook bend

Tying Notes:

Weight the middle of the hook shank with lead wire of about the same diameter as the hook. Be generous but leave room at the back and eye where more materials will be added. Start white thread (if you don't have white, use olive throughout) and secure the wire front and back with little ramps of thread. Attach a small tuft of orange dyed ram's wool cut from a skin patch at the bend. If you must use orange wool, comb it out a little. Leave the thread near the hook bend.



Measure a section of mylar piping equal to the overall length of the hook and slip it over the hook shank. Tie in the piping at the bend with 4-5 tight wraps of thread and tie off the thread with a whip finish knot at the back.



Restart olive thread just back of the hook eye. Tie down the front of the piping making certain the body is smooth. You may have to trim a little excess mylar at this point. Add a throat of orange wool equal in length to the hook gap.



Tie in your wing of equal amounts of Krystalflash or similar material. Pearlescent first, then Peacock green. Trim the material at a point just beyond the tail. Don't overdo it, you want a relatively slender effect overall. Form a noticeable, neat head of olive thread, whip finish, and trim the thread and coat with your favourite lacquer or head cement. You could add eyes with material paint or enamel (or the little stick on eyes but coat the head with epoxy or Softex). Try yellow with a black or red pupil.

I know what you're thinking. Where's the yellow in Yellow Perch and where are the olive vertical bars on the side of the Perch? If you must have yellow, substitute gold Krystalflash for the pearlescent. I have tried various approaches for the vertical bars and have given up. The fish don't seem to mind.

Fishing Notes:

This is a classic streamer or wet fly. For those who don't mind, it can be trolled out behind your float tube or pontoon boat. I often double it up

with something much bigger (like a red and white Bunny fly). In any case, treat as any streamer or large wet fly in either moving or still water. When the fish have taken this fly, they have usually done so with some authority so don't go too light on the tippet!



Miscellany

I Worship at the Altar

A tranquil stream at break of day Reflects the morning dawn The dancing waters shimmer bright Shine forth a restful calm

A morning meditation
The spirit, senses wake
A solemn prayer from nature shared
Gives back more than it takes

Something, surging ripples flow
A symphony of sound
And thoughts meander with their song
At peace with all around

And to the flowing waters cast Your troubles float away This peace of heaven round you waits With open arms this day

A gentle pool in shadow hides A treasure trove in wait What bounty there a hidden lair The mind anticipates

Ant to your quarry you present
The careful casted flies
In hopes to lure what lurks below
And to the surface rise

Much more is there than greets your stare In commune as you stand And worship at the water's edge Give thanks the catch you land

The river bank an altar
The streams we wade baptize
In souls and spirit we're transformed
God's gift is nature's prize

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For Sale: Club member Jim Cripps has a 2-hp 1970s-vintage, low-hours Evinrude outboard motor for sale. Good for a canoe. Interested? Contact Jim at 905-451-2571.



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Contacting IWFFC

Website: http://www.iwffc.ca

IWFFC information line: (905) 276-6345

Mail: Unit 6, Suite 283

2400 Dundas Street West Mississauga, Ontario L5K 2R8 Canada