

# Hickory NC Trout Unlimited

## April 2018 Newsletter



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### A LINE FROM THE PRESIDENT



It has been a busy month for our chapter. Our Trout in the Classroom (TIC) programs at University Christian High School, River Bend Middle School and West Alexander Middle School all released their trout on different days at South Mountain State Park. By now many of you have likely seen the videos of the releases. Interesting to watch how some trout immediately shot for cover under a nearby rock while others began exploring by swimming upstream from one object in the water to another which was usually a piece of leaf or a twig. At times the small trout were hard to see as their body color blends well with the sandy bottom helping to hide them from birds and bigger trout looking for an easy meal. My travels allowed me to attend one of the releases and it was exciting to watch the kids release the trout they had raised over the school year. The educators were also pleased with the events of the day and the program as a whole. Our chapter would like to add another couple of schools to next year's list. This creates some challenges as we as a chapter will need to raise more money and we will need more volunteers to help the teachers through the school year. Our goal is to have several volunteers per school who will stop by from time to time to assist teachers with anything from tank conditions to possible teaching opportunities. If we do this correctly it could be a great opportunity to teach conservation of our cold-water resources and teach our future fisher persons of the future. So please consider donating some time, just an hour or two a month for the TIC program for the next school year.

I would like to say a special big thanks to Cathy Starnes for all her hard work coordinating the program with all three schools. Without her we would not have the program we have. **Thank you, Cathy!**

If you missed our March Program, you missed a good introduction to fly-tying equipment and techniques for tying some flies. Dave Hise from Casters did an excellent program. Thanks go out to Chick for setting up video so all in the

room could see Dave tie some flies up close and personal. I think we all left thinking about that \$4000 vise Dave guards with his life. And don't worry if you are wanting to learn how to tie. You can start off with a vise under \$50 to get started and a good rotary vise can be had for \$300 to \$400. Hopefully the chapter will be able to work out some details so that we can soon offer a monthly fly tying get together. Watch the newsletter for coming details.

Hope to see you at the next meeting on April 17<sup>th</sup>. Socialize and optional dinner at 5:30. The program starts at 6:30. This month we will have a program on the Health of Wilson Creek, our home water. Be sure to attend our next meeting and learn about Wilson Creek, meet some new fishing partners and get in on the raffle. See you there. In closing, if any member has any interest in being more involved or if you have a question or suggestion about Hickory TU, our events, procedures, whatever, please feel free to contact me at [HkyNCTUpres@gmail.com](mailto:HkyNCTUpres@gmail.com) or 478-284-1224. **See you Tuesday, April 17.**

### NEXT MEETING

**When:** Tuesday, April 17

**Where:** Peddler Steak House  
1350 U.S. 321

**Program:** 5:30-6:30 Dinner(Optional)/  
Socializing/Raffle Ticket Sales  
6:30-7:20 Guest speaker/ Program... Q&A  
7:20-7:30 "How To"  
7:30 Raffle/ Door Prizes... Conclusion

**Topic:** Determining the Health of Wilson Creek

**Speaker:** Dr. John Brzorad

John is a Co-director of the Reese Institute for the Conservation of Natural Resources and Associate Professor of Biology at Lenoir-Rhyne University. He will be speaking about the ecological health of Wilson Creek including a recent survey of the creek. John and several members participated in the eco survey on March 31 and photos of the event will be included with the presentation.

## FUTURE MEETINGS

Meetings are held the third Tuesday each month except July, August, and December. Locations may be changing so keep an eye on the newsletter or website. Spring meetings currently planned are:

May 15 Summer Fishing for Wild Trout

If you have a presentation you would like to share or an idea for something you would like to see, please contact Chick Woodward at [hkynctu@gmail.com](mailto:hkynctu@gmail.com).

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Lefty Kreh, one of the greatest fly fishermen of all time, passed away in March at the age of 93. This month we honor him with our monthly quote.

*“Most fishermen use the double haul to throw their casting mistakes further”*

...Lefty Kreh

## CHAPTER LIBRARY

We have created a Hickory Chapter library of fly fishing books. The listing is available on the Chapter website at <http://www.hkynctu.org/library/>. You will make your withdrawal request on the website and then pick up and return your books at the Chapter meetings. We will initially start with book donations from our members and if the activity warrants it we may purchase additional books. Susan Anderson has graciously agreed to serve as our Chapter Librarian. If you have any books that you would like to lend or donate to the library, please bring them to the chapter meeting. Please indicate in the book whether you are donating or loaning it to the library.

## TAKE A BREAK FROM THE RIVER



It's the beginning of April and the bluegill will soon be headed for the beds. That can make for some great fly fishing. With Lake Hickory here in our back yard, Rhodhiss just upstream, and

Lookout Shoals Lake just downstream there are plenty of places to head out and catch a bucketful. Yes, I know we're all brought together as trout fishermen, but the trout streams are an hour away and there is some prep before you head up there, so when you have a little time after work or on a weekend between running the kids to games, this can make an easy diversion to give you time to relax. Of course

while the bluegill are on beds there may not be much relaxing time as you'll often get a fish on every cast and even a medium size bluegill will match the fight of a most of the bigger trout you catch at Wilson Creek.

If you're lucky enough to have a boat, even a small kayak or paddle board, you have an almost infinite area to fish, but if you don't have a boat there are many access areas for you. There are five boat launch



ramps along the north shore of Lake Hickory and the shoreline near them often holds spawning bluegill. There are also parks along the south shore of the lake that give you access and if you scout them you should find a place to throw a fly. So minutes away from home or work you have access to some great fishing.

The other great thing about fly fishing for bluegills at the right time they are top water feeders and there's nothing more fun than seeing a fish come up and slam your fly. My favorite fly for bluegill has always been a popper.

I've fished with other people using a variety of other baits and have almost always beat them with my popper. As to what color it's hard to say. I almost always use combinations of white and black: black body and black tail, black body and white tail, etc., but I seem to do best on Lake Hickory using a white body with a black tail. But don't be shy about using other flies. At times I have lost the white body on my fly, but kept fishing with the black tail and have caught fish. I have fished a squirmy dropper below a popper and have caught fish with it. There are a lot of other flies that work like foam spiders, crickets and grasshoppers, and many more. Bluegill are not choosy when they are on beds.

By the end of May, the bluegill move off the beds and



head for cooler water and it gets a little more difficult to catch them. Early morning and more so in later evening (just before the sun goes behind the

trees) they will come back into the shallows to feed. I've found that a shoreline with a quick dropoff is good because they can stay cool during the day in the deep water and it's a short trip to shallow water to feed. The best place will be right along the dropoff. Also, if you can find this type of water that is shaded by a woody shoreline it will be even better. Morning and evening you can still throw the dry flies discussed above, during the warmer parts of the day you need to go deep off the dropoff.



The best flies I've found for fishing there are small and black. A woolly bugger is a great fly, but keep it small, no bigger than a #12 nymph hook, bluegill have a small mouth. Just about anything small and black like the woolly bugger will work or just tie the hook with a black hackle. A few wraps of lead are good to help get the fly down to the fish.



And the best thing of all about bluegill fishing, is that there is no a tastier fish than a plateful of pan fried bluegill fillets and OK, I'll concede to those of you like my wife's family who believe they taste better with the bones in. Unlike trout on heavily fished streams, studies have shown that harvesting bluegill actually improves the gene pool. Growing up in Michigan, bluegill fishing was closed during April and May when they were on beds. Studies over time showed that bluegill are so prolific that it is rare to over fish them and if not kept under control they will over populate and grow stunted. Michigan opened it up to a year around fishery. So bring a bucket along while you're fishing and keep a few for dinner.



### **HICKORY NC TU LOGO GEAR**

The Hickory Chapter has an account at Lands' End for clothing and other items with our logo. There are frequent discounts available that you can sign up for by going to <https://business.landsend.com/>. To access the account go to: <https://business.landsend.com/store/hkynctu/>

We now have a second option for logo gear that Zan's wife Peggy has set us up with. Check out the following website: [www.companycasuals.com/hickorytrout/start.jsp](http://www.companycasuals.com/hickorytrout/start.jsp)

## **Tight Lines & Road Kill**

By Dr. Joel Miller

Those who don't know me well may not realize I just recently "re-retired." I stopped medical practice three years ago, but until recently I spent half of each week in Boone teaching PA students in the Wake Forest program. It was great fun and a big challenge, but the winter travel finally convinced me to bow out. Chick Woodward, Hickory TU's newsletter editor, asked if I'd write a column now that I'm blessed with more time. Chick, who, by the way, does a superb job (be sure to thank him next time you see him) must have thought the newsletter was getting too good, so I agreed to help bring it closer to mediocrity.

From whence the column's name? All anglers wish for tight lines, but sometimes literary tight lines may be a good thing too. Anyone who has a tying bench knows road kill all

too well, but you may find the stuff you read here quite similar, stuff that deserves a cast-off spot in a ditch!

So, what might you find here? A somewhat loose, rambling collage of stuff that will take shape depending on what pops into my head (or pops out of another anatomic site). Might be about a certain fly, a stream, a fishing technique, a conservation topic, a bit of humor, or GOK what else ... kinda like a Rorschach test in fly fishing. I'd be pleased to field questions from readers — about anything; if I can't get an answer with a bit of research, I'll just make stuff up! Sort of like one of the attending physicians told me in my residency, "If you can't dazzle them with your knowledge, you baffle them with your BS!" So, here goes.

In March our three Trout in the Classroom project classes released their fry into the wild at South Mountains State Park. TIC is one of the most impressive things TU does, giving students the equipment and knowledge needed to raise trout from eggs to fry and releasing them into streams. Yes, baby fish are called fry! Actually, when first hatched and still sustained by their yolk sac, they are larvae, become fry when large enough to feed themselves, and then fingerlings when they grow scales and functional fins — all baby fish. Rare species of fish are born alive after internal fertilization and gestation. Internal fertilization? I've caught a lot of fish, but I've yet to see one that looked equipped for internal fertilization. We just won't go there! Just be careful what you mean when you say fish fry!

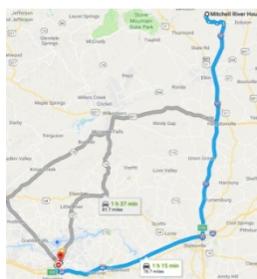
Isn't this a strange language we speak, especially when it comes to baby animals? Dogs have pups but so do dolphins. A baby tiger is a cub, but a baby cat is a kitten. Know what a kit is? A baby fox or ferret. A baby rabbit is called a kitten too! So how can a hare baby be a leveret, not a kitten? And wouldn't it make a lot more sense if a little one was a rabbit and a big one just a rab?

I'll leave you with one final thought to ponder: if infants are in a state of infancy, are adults in a state of adultery?

Let me know what other falderal you'd like to read about here. Contact me through the column's email address: [hkyNCTUtlrk@gmail.com](mailto:hkyNCTUtlrk@gmail.com). Not many columns get one.

Joel Miller

### **MITCHELL RIVER DELAYED HARVEST**



My son went up to the Mitchell River in January and called me with a good report. The last time I had fished there was probably ten years ago and I hadn't been back since I was not real impressed. I remembered

the stream as more of a long ditch than a beautiful trout stream. In our conversation my son mentioned some new wing dams had been built. His good day on the river and the



mention of some positive modifications to the stream piqued my interest so I called a couple friends and we headed up there to check it out. It's not a bad drive to get there. The

quickest way is I40 to Statesville and north on I77 to exit 93 and then only a few minutes to the stream, about an hour and fifteen minutes if you don't stop for breakfast in Statesville. We drove to the head of the road where it is gated. This was the only day above 50 in a two week stretch of cold weather so we were a little concerned with crowds, but we only passed a half dozen other cars parked along the way and there was only one other car in our parking area. We geared up and hit the river. My two partners hit the bridge by the gate where my son had claimed to have "killed them" a couple weeks before. I walked a little to check out the report on stream improvements.



Just downstream from the bridge was a beautiful pair of wing dams along the sides of the river with a good chute below them. There was another fisherman just below it so I put in upstream of

there. I had the normal early morning tangles and snags that always seem a way of starting the day. After riggering I noticed the other fisherman had moved downstream so I headed to the wing dam. The water is quite shallow above the wing dam and very fast passing through, but there is a nice long chute below. I tried my Y2K and a squirmy which have been producing well this year, but nothing. I then tied on a copper john and the fly no sooner hit the water than my line went screaming upstream and after a few minutes fight I pulled in a beautiful 16" rainbow. Next cast I snagged a tree and lost the fly, the only copper john in my fly box. I tried a few others and not so much as a nibble.



From there I went back up to the bridge where my friends had left without much luck. I tried an egg bead which my son claimed had caught most of his fish and my indicator jerked a few times, but it could as easily been a bottom snag as a fish. It was past noon so we met at the car for a quick

lunch. The two of them had managed only a combined total of four fish, but at least none of us were skunked.

After lunch I headed upstream. A couple hundred feet above the bridge I saw another wing dam on the far side of the river and another couple hundred feet above that some very large boulders that looked to have been placed in the river. That's as far as I got, because just below the boulders I spotted huge school of fish. I thought it was rather curious because they were all sitting on a gravel bar and it looked like they were bedding. The fish here are delayed harvest and I'd never heard of them bedding, but no matter. With that many fish I worked my way down to the stream and started fishing. I threw several nymphs at them, but couldn't get a take on any of them. I had noticed a few rises, so tied a #16 Adams with no luck. Next I went to a #14 elk hair caddis and managed a feeble rise, but the fish didn't take it and nothing went after the fly again. I was frustrated, but with that many fish sitting there tried some more.

While I was working an egg bead, my friend walked by and suggested a woolly bugger. He said he had a couple follows. I tied on a black woolly bugger and made a few passes through the school of fish. Not only did I not get a follow, but as the fly moved through them they didn't even move out of the way as it went by. It was then that my brain clicked with a memory of other times like this. I took a closer look and noticed the fish were in perfect lines. The last time I had seen this was up on Elk Creek and it was a school of suckers. I cannot swear to it, but I am certain I had wasted a whole afternoon trying to catch suckers! There may have been a few trout around them that I saw rising or perhaps those were only creek chubs. I'll never know. With that new knowledge I packed up and headed for the car.

I only covered about a 1/4 mile of stream, but the river through there was developed very nicely and my son told me there were more new wing dams downstream near the bridge to the Mitchell River House. The Mitchell River House, by



the way is available for rent and would be a good place for a fishing getaway. It sleeps 8-10 people. You can get more information at <https://mitchellriverhouse.com/about/>.

It wasn't a great day on the river, but in February it has been three months since any fish were stocked giving plenty of time for losses from catches, poaching, and the blue heron we saw to reduce the population. But any day you catch a nice 16" rainbow you have to consider it a success. With all the improvements it is now a beautiful river and we will be heading back.

**APRIL/MAY FLY PATTERNS**

Reprinted from Carolina Sportsman magazine

This is the time when the widest arrays of hatches come off, and trout are gorging to make up for the lean winter months.



Primary hatch patterns include No. 14 Red Quill, No. 18 Blue Quill, No. 14 Hendrickson, No. 16-14 Light Caddis, No. 16-12 Light Cahill, No. 16-14 Sulphur Dun, No. 12-10 Yellow Mayfly, No. 16-14 female Adams and No. 14 green or yellow Elk Hair Caddis. Good nymph patterns are No. 10-8 Yellow Stone, No. 10 Tellico, No. 10 Stick Bait, and No. 10-8 Yellowhammer.



In late May, watch for Green Drake hatches. Best time to fish Green Drakes is at dusk. These are large insects, so you'll need a No. 8 or 10.

*Though the above are good flies for a normal spring, the weather this year has been much colder than normal and I would suggest you take a look back at the last newsletter and use the March flies for at least the first couple weeks of April.*

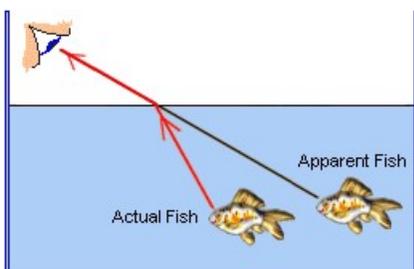
**NOTICE OF CHANGE AT WILSON CREEK**

Someone made the decision that purple represents no trespassing. If you see a purple sheet or purple paint it means keep out. There are several of these just south of the visitor center, but may be popping up elsewhere.

**TIP OF THE MONTH-REFRACTION**

Refraction is a physical phenomenon that distorts a view of an object when it passes through two mediums. Put simply, when you look at an object that is under water, it is not where it appears to be.

Light travels at a different speed through water than it



does through air. When it passes from the water to the air, or vice versa, it bends. Some pretty difficult physics to comprehend, but all you need to know is that when you look at a fish under water, it is closer than it appears and the deeper the fish is, the more difference between the actual and apparent position. If a fish is very shallow it makes little difference, but if the fish is at the bottom of the pool it becomes very significant. What this means is that when you cast to a fish, always aim a little closer that it appears. If you cast too short, it will not usually make a lot of difference and you can make your next cast a little farther, but if you cast too far over the fish, the line landing over it may spook it.

**TROUT IN THE CLASSROOM**



If you didn't attend any of our three Trout in the Classroom releases in March you missed some really fun events. University Christian High School, River Bend Middle School, and West Alexander Middle School

each released the trout that they have been raising from eggs since Last September. In spite of all the rain this month, we were blessed to have sunny weather for all three releases,

though it was a bit chilly. University Christian won the competition with 59 fish released, followed by River Bend with 50, and West Alexander with 19. West Alexander did have a handicap, however, as they lost power for a few days in the tornadoes last fall and as a result several fish. West Alexander did win the attendance prize with 200 students and their home room teachers showing up.



Photos and videos of the releases are available on our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/nwctu/> and on

our website at <http://www.hkynctu.org/chapter-activities/trout-in-the-classroom/>.

Hickory TU would like to thank the following people for their time and dedication to the program:

University Christian HS: Principal Bill Unverfehrt and  
Teacher Derek Chase

River Bend Middle School: Principal Chip Cathey and  
Teacher Stoney Turner

West Alexander Middle School: Principal Chad Maynor  
and Teacher Ryan Rowe

And special thanks to all of the students who spent their time during the year feeding the fish, cleaning the tanks, and checking the water to keep the algae and pH at the right level for the trout to survive.

Our TIC Director that watched over the program and brought it to a successful end for the March releases is Cathy Starnes. If your school would like to become involved with the Trout in the Classroom program you can contact her at [hkynctu@gmail.com](mailto:hkynctu@gmail.com). For more information about the TIC program visit <https://www.tu.org/TIC>.

## 2018 STOCKING SCHEDULE

Wilson Creek stocking for the remainder of the spring Delayed Harvest are April 3 and May 2. If you would like to help with stocking, be at the handicap parking lot between 9:30 and 10:00 AM.

## TU WOMEN'S INITIATIVE

### FLY FISHING ESSENTIALS FOR WOMEN CLASS

Hickory NC TU is presenting a class designed for women who are interested in learning to fly fish or are new to the sport. We'll spend 4 hours learning about the basic concepts of fly fishing, equipment needed, the trout stream, practice casting, and what to wear on a trout stream. You'll leave with enough knowledge and resources to prepare you for your journey learning this fulfilling and engaging sport.

When: April 21, 2018

Time: 10 am to 2 pm

Where: Wilson Creek Visitor Center

Cost \$5.00 for box lunch

Preregistration required: 12 participant limit per class  
Register via email to [jean.mcmullin1@gmail.com](mailto:jean.mcmullin1@gmail.com)

## EAGLE ROCK CAMP

The spring veteran event is the week of April 8 at the YMCA camp east of Lenoir. Our role in the program is on

Thursday, April 12. We will be teaching fly casting and then taking the class to the lake to see if they can catch some fish. If you would like to help out, be at the Charlotte YMCA Camp Harrison at 10AM and bring along a few bluegill & bass flies with the barbs bent down. The camp is a few miles east of Lenoir on Highway 18. The GPS address is 7901 NC-18, Boomer, NC 28606. If you plan to come let us know at [hkynctu@gmail.com](mailto:hkynctu@gmail.com).

Eagle Rock Camp is dedicated to support veteran families. If you would like to learn more about Eagle Rock Camp or make a donation, you can visit their website at <http://www.eaglerockcamp.org/>

## PISGAH TU FLY FISHING SCHOOL

The annual event will be held Saturday, April 28, 2018 from 8:30 am to 4:45pm Harmon Field in Tryon, NC. The program includes a morning of fly fishing basics and an afternoon on the river with a mentor. For details visit <https://pisgahtu.org/ffschool/>.

## CHAPTER WEBSITE

If you haven't yet visited our chapter website, you need to check it out. There is a lot of reference information there on the "Helpful Links" page that will improve your fishing experience. For instance there is a link to an interactive trout stream map where you can locate all of the various types of trout waters from delayed harvest to wild trout. There are links to fly tying instructions for beginner, intermediate and advanced flies. And there is a link there to the Fly Fishing Trail in western NC. When you get a little time, check it out at [www.hkynctu.org](http://www.hkynctu.org).

## NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS INVITED

Got a great photo or story from a recent fly fishing trip, a new product you think others would love, or any stories to share with other members? We'd love to hear from you and publish you in the next newsletter. Send it to us at [HkyNCTU@gmail.com](mailto:HkyNCTU@gmail.com) for consideration of publication.

## PHOTOS OF THE MONTH

I've been pleading for newsletter photos for some time now and this month you really came through. We have several pictures here of some beautiful fish. We'll start with a photo sent in by Randy Munday.

It was the end of the season in 2017 during our *almost* annual



Yellowstone Park trip. The weather was getting cold, but you just can't terminate a trip like this for no small reason. After a ride from the outfitter into the Slough Creek far second meadow, my wife Renee, demonstrated her love of flyfishing with this beautiful trout she caught on a tough day.

Jackie Greene fished Wilson Creek a couple days after the March stocking and had a great 40 fish day. This beautiful brown trout

was the prize of the day. When asked what flies she caught them on, her reply was "A little bit of everything. I would catch 2 or 3 and change flies. They would only bite something new."



Congratulations Jackie, you have now become a true seasoned fly fisherman able to dance around giving away your secrets. I notice the hole you fished was also not named, but those of us who know Wilson Creek can guess that one.

William Long landed this beautiful rainbow on Wilson Creek the first full week of March. I heard a report that 4% of the fish they stocked were considered trophy and we saw a lot of them there. He said that he caught the rainbow on a



"Heter-O-Genius" nymph created by Dave Hise.



And last, but certainly not least, we cannot publish another newsletter without a picture of Trey Harkey with one of his beautiful fish. This one is an absolutely beautiful 28" rainbow caught in private waters near Boone.

Everyone loves to see great trout pictures, big or small and their beautiful colors. If you have a photo to share, send it to



[hkynctu@gmail.com](mailto:hkynctu@gmail.com).

### **SWIMMING UPSTREAM - a hand crafted sculpture by Mr. Eddie Hamrick, woodright**

Artist and craftsman Eddie Hamrick has been plying his trade for over a half century. He is a master carver and furniture

designer, business owner and nationally recognized craftsman. His work with wood started at the age of six when he built a train set. Later, Eddie spent five years in training at Colonial Williamsburg and later taught at the John C. Campbell Folk School. His wooden sculptures are in the libraries of at least two US Presidents (seven Presidents have Hamrick creations) along with four NC Governors and a host of other collectors. He



has been recognized for his expertise with the Official Craftsman of NC presented by the NC Department of Travel and Tourism and the Brown-Hudson Folklore Award. His design and woodworking skills have also enhanced a number of area churches.

This sculpture will be in Catawba Science Center's Italian Dinner Live Auction.

The Italian Dinner will be held on Saturday April 21, 2018.

**However**, folks can go to the Catawba Science Center website on April 1 to



go ahead and pre-bid. They can also continue to bid during the live auction without being present. Our website explains the procedure for designating a proxy. The starting bid price is \$5,000

## **HICKORY NC TU OFFICERS**

Zan Thompson... Pres

[HkyNCTUpres@gmail.com](mailto:HkyNCTUpres@gmail.com)

Jackie Greene... VP

[HkyNCTUveep@gmail.com](mailto:HkyNCTUveep@gmail.com)

Holly Cole...Secr

[HkyNCTUsec@gmail.com](mailto:HkyNCTUsec@gmail.com)

Gerry Johnson... Trea

[HkyNCTUtreas@gmail.com](mailto:HkyNCTUtreas@gmail.com)

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[HkyNCTU@gmail.com](mailto:HkyNCTU@gmail.com)



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Trout in the Classroom

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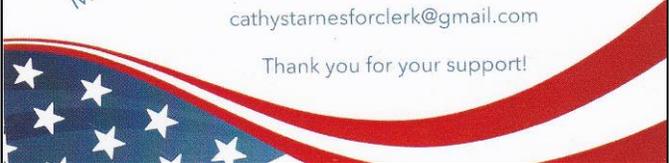
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Thank you for your support!



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