New Places
Story & Photos by Dave DeVita
A Message from the President

By Sheila Meyer

I frequently hear from people how members of NKFF have helped them through trying times. Those sentiments expressed the fact that while NKFF is at its roots a fishing club, it has evolved into a social system that serves many different purposes for its diverse membership.

Your vocal participation will help us achieve an appropriate balance between preserving our traditions and trying new ideas that will keep pace with our evolving membership.

We are fortunate to have a dedicated Board of Directors whose members represent an excellent balance between long term and new members. Below is an outline some of our priorities for the coming year.

**We should constantly search for more and better opportunities to fish.**

When you review the 2020 calendar of events you will see that we have added several new local fishing opportunities. The calendar of events is a fluid document and we welcome the opportunity to add your ideas to our schedule.

**We should provide excellent, innovative and enjoyable educational opportunities for our members.**

Our curriculum is constantly evolving and we need your ideas about changes you would like to see in our approach to education.

**We should continuously improve the quality of our monthly dinner meeting programs.**

We will continue the process of focusing on fly fishing programs covering topics that members request and those that will inspire and delight our audience.

**We should continue our commitment to contribute to our community.**

NKFF’s calendar of events clearly reflects the extension of our reach out into the community. Through programs offered directly to children and their families, participation in events sponsored by other organizations, by organizing and participating in efforts to conserve our natural resources, our voluntary efforts make tangible contributions to our community.

**We should cultivate settings that enhance opportunities for social interaction among our members. That is to say, we should have fun together.**

Part of our reason for being is the joy that comes from sharing with fellow members. I would like to hear ideas from you about how to enhance the social aspects of the club.

First and foremost, we must do the best we can to serve the interests of our membership. By striving to meet this objective we will strengthen the spirit of NKFF and all that it has come to mean to its members and our community.

I thank each and every one of you for your contributions to the success of NKFF.
NKFF Selected as Orvis 50/50 On The Water Film Tour Sponsor

By Kerry Premec

Northern Kentucky Fly Fishers has been selected as 1 of only 100 sites for the Orvis 50/50 on the Water Film Tour. The Orvis 50/50 on the Water campaign aims to inspire more women to get out on the water and discover the joys of fly-fishing. The 50/50 on the Water Film Tour is a family-friendly night of fly-fishing films.

You’ll leave the event inspired and energized by the storytelling, which highlights anglers and fisheries from around the world.

Tickets are on sale now.......HERE

What: Orvis/NKFF on the Water Film Tour
When: Wednesday, March 18th from 6:00 pm until 9:00 pm. Doors open at 6:00 pm, the show starts at 7:00 pm.
Where: Braxton Brewing Company
        “The Loft”
        27 West 7th St.
        Covington, KY 41011

Our sincere thanks to Braxton Brewing Company for their sponsorship of this event.
New Places - North Carolina Backroads

Cover photo: Glen Falls outside Highlands, NC

By Dave DeVita

A few months ago a fishing buddy told me Highlands, North Carolina was worth a visit. So, the morning after the NKFF Banquet, BeBe (my wife) and I headed to the Tar Heel State for a week of exploration.

Our first stop, Waynesville, is familiar to many in the Club, it being the HQ for many Club trips. Waynesville looks to have prospered even more since those days. It’s a much smaller version of Asheville, I always thought, with interesting shops and restaurants on Main Street, including the Mast General Store, one of my all-time favorites. Bogart’s still seems to be going strong. Oak Park Inn, too. Our friends, Tiffany and Chuck Logan, who recently moved to Waynesville and opened “Logan’s”, a neat little gift shop in downtown Waynesville.

Mostly, we spent our days hiking, including the Art Loeb trail off the Blue Ridge Parkway, and the Boogerman Trail (love that name) in the Cattalochee. Saw a few Elk running around up there, too. I fished Jonathan Creek for 3 hours Tuesday afternoon. Took me an hour to find some fish, but then caught 4 nice trout, all browns which sur-

(Continued on page 5)
prised me a little. I would have guessed they would have been rainbows. The area I fished was just off I-40, on the road which leads up to the Cattaloochee. Very easy access.

Wednesday we headed toward Franklin and Highlands, which are about 12 miles apart. Franklin is about an hour east of the Nantahala and at the western end of the Cullasaja Gorge. One of the nicest things about that Gorge is that a river runs through it. A second nice thing is that the River reportedly holds native and stocked trout. A third nice thing is that I only saw one or two people fishing it in the 4 trips we made through it. A fourth nice thing is that it is really pretty, particularly with the fall colors.

Despite several trips to western North Carolina over the years, I had never heard of the Cullasaja Gorge or River. The River starts nears Highlands, flows west and enters the Little Tennessee River near Franklin. The road through the Gorge, route 64, parallels the river, and is extraordinarily scenic with some of the largest and prettiest waterfalls in the southeast. There’s a nice pull off at Dry Falls, and walkway behind the Falls. Bridal Veil falls is closer to Highlands. Glen Falls is just outside Highlands and about a 30-minute hike down and a bit longer back up.

Highlands is certainly worth a visit. It attracts mostly a summer crowd due to its elevation, 4,000+ feet above sea level. A handsome and manageable mountain town, it reminded me of a western mountain resort, absent the skiing, but with the prices. It attracts the affluent, with large old Inns, nice restaurants and plenty of shops. Even with the mountain vibe, it wasn’t all that outdoorsy, which sort of supports my guess that the Cullasaja is not heavily fished. I saw no sporting goods
stores or fly-fishing shops, though the large Ace hardware on the edge of town might have carried sporting goods.

Franklin seems like a nice little town and probably the best place to stay if you want to see the local sights and try for the Cullasaja trout. I fished for about an hour and a half right at the campground where we were staying, with a couple of strikes. I am keen to give it a try.

Wayah Road. Wayah Road is the road which runs alongside the Nantahala. While at Glen Falls outside Highlands, we saw a guy operating a drone with a camera. Turned out he was with the North Carolina bureau of tourism or some such agency. He told us we should take Wayeh Road from just outside Franklin toward the Nantahala and to make sure to drive up to Wayeh Bald, a former forest ranger lookout station. He was right. On clear day, you can see the

(Continued on page 7)
Smokies from the Bald. We had a clear day and saw the Smokies. Near the Bald the Appalachian and Bertram trails run together, so we can say we hiked part of the Appalachian Trail - about 100 yards of it anyway. We also learned that the road that runs alongside the Nantahala river is actually Wayah Road.

The Nantahala. I did get to fish the Nantahala that Friday afternoon. I never thought I could fish there and not catch anything, but I fished there and didn’t. Catch. Trout. But, we did catch a bear, sort of.
Pick-up trucks buzzing, hounds howling = bear hunt. One last bonus on the trip was finding ourselves in the middle of a bear hunt. We could hear the hounds howling on the mountain on the opposite side of the Nantahala. Pickup trucks with kennels in the back pulled over in groups of 4 or 5. Interestingly, when they got out of their trucks, they would look up at the mountain and down at their screens, apparently tracking the dogs that way. The younger hunters were on the mountain. More senior hunters down by the river. They were all friendly and happy to describe what was happening. We saw them pulling the late bear across the Nantahala. When we got back to the campground, I did some quick research. The most recent information I could find was from 2017. That was the third year in a row the annual bear harvest in North Carolina exceeded 3,000! I would have guessed more like 300.

The Nantahala was as pretty as ever, we “discovered” the Cullasaja, toured Highlands, caught a bear, and visited friends in Waynesville. And did catch a few trout. A memorable trip and not that far away.

The bear hunt in the Nantahala Gorge
Photo by Dave DeVita
February Calendar Highlights

February

1 Sat   NKFF booth at BUFF Greater Cincinnati Fly Fishing Show - Oasis Conference Center in Loveland, OH – 9am-4:30pm – seminars, lots of Fly fishing, kayaking and Fly fishing guides, vendors, Tying & NKFF promotion at our booth

6 Thu  NKFF Meeting @ Florence Lions Clubhouse in Florence, KY - 5:30-9:30

8 Sat   NKFF Trout Day Trip to Brookville Tailwaters – 8:00am - ?:00pm – (J Lillard)

9, 16, 23 Sun   NKFF Beginner's Fly-Tying Classes – Boone Cty Main Library in Burlington - 2:30-4:45pm (A McDaniel)

10 Mon   NKFF Monthly Fly Tying at various locations TBD – 6:30pm – 8:30pm (R Arrowood)

19 Wed   NKFF BOD Meeting - 6:30pm - Emerge ITS at 1895 Airport Exchange Blvd #170 in Erlanger, KY

25 Tue   5th District Federation Meeting – at a location to be announced soon - 6pm

Zebra Midge  Prince Nymph  Rainbow Warrior  Copper John  Splatte Roller
March Calendar

Highlights

March

1, 8, 15 Sun  NKFF Beginner's Fly-Tying Class - Boone Cty Main Library in Burlington - 2:30-4:45pm (A McDaniel)

3 Tue  NKFF Camp Ernst Boat/Canoe/Kayak Lake Float and/or Bank-Walk & Fish – 4:00pm – dark (J Lillard)

5 Thu  NKFF Meeting @ Florence Lions Clubhouse in Florence, KY - 5:30-9:30 – Chad Miller of Sugar Creek Anglers - Warm Water Fly-Fishing Tactics

6 Fri  Deadline for RBSF Nominations

7 Sat  Wildlife Women Fly-Fishing Class @ New Day Ranch Conference Center in Verona, KY – 10:00am – 4:00pm - (NKFF Educators)

10 Tue  NKFF Monthly Fly Tying at various locations TBD – 6:30pm – 8:30pm (R Arrowood)

11-15 Wed-Sun  NKFF Western NC (Hot Springs area) Trout Trip – (J Lillard) – leaving Wednesday (12th) after work – staying in a great house right on the stream and several cabins just up the road

18 Wed  NKFF Orvis 50/50 Fly Fishing Film Tour at the Loft in Braxton Brewery 6:00pm – 9:00pm. Tickets are available HERE.

19 Thu  NKFF Pack 727 Cub Scout Fly-Casting Instruction – 7pm – IHM Britt Hall (D Bottoni)

21 Sat  NKFF Float (only) & Fish Trip – 8am – 3pm –Stanfield Lake near Seymour, IN - launch your Watercraft (boats, canoes, kayaks, pontoons and fish the lake) (R Francis)

24 Tue  5th District Federation Meeting – United Trappers / Lloyd WMA Clubhouse in Crittenden - 6pm

26-29 Thu-Sun  NKFF Spring Steelhead Trip to Steelhead Alley in northeast OH drive up on Thursday, fish Fri-Sun – guide-day on Friday (cost is about $160.00 per person) – (J Randall)

28 Sat  NKFF Local Fly-Fishing Introduction Day Trip to a farm pond in KY – KY Fishing License required – come out and learn to catch bluegill and bass.
Free Fly Tying Classes Begin February 9

NKFF’s world famous fly tying classes begin Sunday, February 9th, 2020 and continue for 6 consecutive Sundays.

Why are these classes “World Famous”? Because we’ve been doing them since the beginning of time and because they are taught by Aaron McDaniel and a whole host of extraordinarily talented instructors. When you complete these classes, you will be tying flies that will truly catch fish!

Recommendations will be made for equipment and tools in the first class, so there is no need to bring anything. If you already have tools, bring them.

When: February 9, 16, 23 and March 1, 8, 15
from 2:30 pm - 4:45 pm

Where: Boone County Library - Main Library
1786 Burlington Pike, Burlington, KY 41005

You do not have to be a member of NKFF to register for the class, but you must register to attend.

You can register by calling Boone County Parks & Recreation at 859-334-2117

Or Register Online HERE
March 5th: Chad Miller has been guiding on the waters of his youth in Indiana since 1996 and specializes in warm water tactics for smallmouth bass. He was the first Smallmouth fly fishing guide in Indiana. Currently Chad is the only full time fly fishing smallmouth guide in Indiana. Chad has lived his entire life in West Central Indiana and has fished Sugar Creek his entire life and the Tippecanoe River since he was 15 years old. The Tradition of fishing Sugar Creek has been passed down for 5 generations in the Miller family.

Chad wrote the cover story on “Warmwater Tactics” for the Fall/Winter 2019 issue of Flyfisher Magazine, the publication of Fly Fishers International.

April 2: Jeff Crosby is the Central District Fisheries Biologist for the Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources. The Central District includes all of Northern Kentucky and all counties west of I75 to the Ohio River with the lower most counties include Garrard, Boyle, Washington, Nelson and Bullitt. Jefferson County (Louisville) is in the Central District.

Jeff will be talking to us about fishing opportunities within the District or within a 2 hour drive of Northern Kentucky. Many of these waters are an hour or less drive. He will be telling us about wading opportunities as well as waters that can be fished with a kayak or canoe. Many members have wanted to learn more about waters that are closer to home and Jeff really knows his stuff. This is a program you will want to see first hand.

Register for meetings at nkff.org or by email at reservations@nkff.org
Monthly Fly Tying Opportunities

Last year, NKFF member and webmaster Randy Arrowood had a very clever idea. Let’s offer fly tying get-togethers at various locations throughout Northern Kentucky on a frequent basis. This way, convenience for members is increased.

Well the idea was so popular that this year these fly tying sessions are scheduled 10 months of 2020.

The events are typically held in one of our county libraries. One fly is tied and a high resolution camera is used to project the lead tier’s instructions on a flat screen TV. All the supplies are provided but bring your own tools. And there is a great mix of experienced and new fly tiers, so that instruction is of very high quality.

The next session will be held on **February 10th**, from 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm at the Ft. Thomas Branch of the Campbell County Library (1000 Highland Ave., Ft. Thomas, KY 41075). Register [HERE](#).

Join us...We will be tying the 2 variants of the Trout Magnet.
GRAY’S BEST 2020

Our top choices for angling & hunting gear

Gray’s Best awards are anticipated by longtime readers of Gray’s Sporting Journal and coveted by hunting and angling manufacturers. The reason? Gray’s Best carries the weight of authentic sincerity. Many sporting magazines print an end-of-the-year roundup of new products. Gray’s publishes a distinguished selection.

Our editors cover areas of expertise and experience—Angling, Shooting, Apparel, and Accessories—and choose gear that not only makes good first impressions, but also satisfies during repeated use. We make choices of our own volition, absent encouragement and incentive from the manufacturers. Further, Gray’s Best winners deliver on the claims of their makers but also have an extra attribute, an extra something that evokes a feeling, remembrance, or aesthetic and can be defined only as . . . satisfying. Much like Gray’s itself.

Check out the full list HERE.
Illustrator Robert McKeon

By Tim Guilfoile

In September of 2019, I got an email from Bob McKeon. He had spotted the September 2019 issue of The Creel on the Fly Fishers International website and wrote a very complimentary note to me regarding the photo story “Teach a Kid to Fish”. Needless to say, I was very flattered that someone that I didn’t know from Adam would take the time to drop me a line.

Bob is the editor of Forward Casts, the Official Desert Fly Casters Newsletter out of Chandler, Arizona (a city about 30 minutes southeast of Phoenix). He describes himself as a Certified Lawn Toss of any old Fly Rods, Graphic Guru and Head Wrangler of Stuff and I must say he puts together a mighty fine newsletter.

Since last September he and I have exchanged our monthly newsletters and “talked” back and forth via email. Little by little we are getting to know one another.

I recently learned that Bob spent the first half of his life as a full time graphic artist eventually owning his own design studio in 1971. Bob won 11 ADDY Awards regionally and nationally for various clients in outstanding graphic design projects. The American Advertising Awards, also known as the ADDY® Awards, honor excellence in advertising and cultivate the highest creative standards in the industry.

(Continued on page 16)
Illustrator Robert McKeon

(Continued from page 15)

Among Bob’s many other accomplishments was co-authoring, illustrating and producing 2 books on bamboo fly rods: Best of The Planing Form, volumes 1 & 2 (by R.J. Barch and Robert McKeon).


Bob won the 1993 and 2006 Bollinger Award (Outstanding newsletter nationally through Trout Unlimited) while serving as editor for the Schrems West Michigan Trout Unlimited chapter. Now Bob continues to express his passion for fly fishing as editor the Desert City Fly Casters newsletter.

(Continued on page 17)
Bob and his wife, Margo, are active musicians on the Jazz scene in Phoenix. It was through music that Bob connected with Ed and Ellen Zacko.

The Zacko’s have sailed their Nor Sea 27 sloop “Entr’acte” (which they built in their backyard) about the world, crossing the Atlantic four times, the Pacific once and traversing the French Canals from North to South and East to West. Accompanying them on their adventures were there imaginary friends Mike The Moose, Charlie The Bear, Baby G The Gorilla and Bori the Chef.

Ellen and Ed Zacko have turned the adventures of their characters into a children’s book illustrated by, guess who, Robert McKeon.

One day I hope to meet Bob McKeon face-to-face, but for now I enjoy getting to know him long distance and I am most appreciative of him having reached out to me.

Over the years I have met and become friends with many people in the fly fishing community that I have actually never met, that is, face-to-face. But it is surprising how many, over time, that I do eventually meet and when we do it is if we have known one another for a long time....because we have.

Try it sometime. Take a chance and if you stumble across someone that you might like to meet some day, go ahead and reach out. Don’t wait. Go ahead and meet them now.
Balancing a Fly Rod

By Rob Fightmaster

Every year, it seems every fly rod company comes out with a new rod that is not only supposed to cast itself, but is substantially lighter than its predecessor. As a matter of fact, the average graphite rod today is probably about 1/3 the weight of the average graphite rod of 30 years ago. And that difference is far more substantial when you start comparing the weight of today’s graphite rods to the bamboo and fiberglass rods that your father or grandfather may have used. But none of this matters if your rod is not properly balanced by your reel.

It’s a phenomenon called “levered weight.” If you carry two 20lb. buckets of water, one in each hand, it will feel more comfortable than carrying just one 20lb. bucket of water in one hand. One side balances out the other. The same concept applies if you have the lightest fly rod on the market but have a reel on it that is too heavy. It will feel heavier in your hand than a heavier rod that is properly balanced by its reel.

When it comes to trout fishing and really, most freshwater in general, your reel does not play a very significant role. Unless, you just have to have “the best,” it is not necessary to sink a lot of money into a reel. However, just because it may not be the most important piece of equipment, doesn’t mean you shouldn’t put some consideration into things like its size. It needs to be big enough to comfortably hold the fly line and appropriate amount of backing, and it needs to balance the rod. In most cases, a rod and reel are balanced if it will self-balance when you set it on one finger positioned near the tip of the cork grip.

In the picture above, the reel is just a little too heavy for the rod. I prefer the balance point to be just a little closer to the tip of the cork. But it’s close enough to not feel uncomfortable.

(Continued on page 19)
Balancing a Fly Rod

(Continued from page 18)

Most companies will designate specific reel sizes for specific line and rod sizes. If a reel is for 4 – 6 weight lines, it not only means it has the capacity to store those line sizes, but it should balance most 4 – 6 weight rods. Of course, things like the material from which the rod is made and the length of the rod can determine if it actually falls in the “balance range” of that particular reel. If your rod is a short, super light 4-weight, you may want to bump down to the next smaller size. On the other hand, if your rod is a 6-weight bamboo, you may want to bump up to the next larger reel size.

The design of the reel seat on the rod will also be a factor. Almost all modern graphite rods have an uplocking reel seat, which positions the reel just behind the cork grip. Some bamboo rods may have a downlocking reel seat, which puts the reel almost right at the butt of the rod. The latter can help when trying to balance a heavier rod.

As reels become lighter and lighter, it has become far more difficult to find appropriate size reels to balance bamboo rods. However, one reel manufacturer, Ursus, has designed a reel that has removable brass plates on the interior. The weight of the brass plates help to balance heavier bamboo rods. When using the reel on a lighter graphite rod, the plates can be removed. Pretty cool.

In any case, no matter what rod you fish with, keep this in mind when selecting your reel. It will greatly reduce casting fatigue and result in much more enjoyable days on the water!
Simms Spring 2020 Gear

Simms Fishing Products, the preeminent manufacturer of waders, outerwear, footwear, and technical apparel in fishing, announced the launch of the Spring 2020 product line on Jan. 8, 2020. Simms unveiled the full line at ICAST (July, 2019) and IFTD (October, 2019). Between the two shows, Simms garnered nine Best of Show awards from the Spring 2020 line alone. Designed for anglers fishing rivers, lakes, and oceans, the complete Spring 2020 line is available now in select retail stores and online at www.simmsfishing.com.

“I couldn’t be more excited for the release of the spring line. Once again, our product team has done an outstanding job of making the best even better and also bringing new product innovations to the table,” said Casey Sheahan, CEO of Simms. “In my mind, not only is this a pivotal collection of technical fishing gear, it’s a collection that makes a statement because it truly represents what Simms is all about.”

The Simms spring 2020 line features the expansion of the G4, Dry Creek®, Solar-Flex® and BugStopper® collections, along with a wider selection of outerwear for women.
RIO Introduces New Fathom Sinking Lines

By Spencer Durrant

RIO is delighted to announce the launch of a new series of sinking lines designed for anglers that fish in lakes. The new line family, called Fathom Sinking lines, is ideal for anglers fishing out of boats, pontoons and float tubes, or standing on the shore of a lake fishing into deeper water.

Each line in the Fathom series has a short, quick-loading head for minimizing the number of false casts, and for quick distance. The running line and head are made in different colors to easily show the line’s loading point, and to instantly identify which sink rate the line is.

In addition, all Fathom lines are built with Density Compensation for complete depth control, and have a built in hang marker 20ft from the front end that shows anglers when to stop stripping, and when to fish the “hang” – a deadly technique for anglers anchored in a boat, or fishing “loch style”. Finally, welded loops on both ends make for quick rigging and leader changes.

Available in 5 through 8-weight sizes, these lines come in four different sink rates; Slow Type 3 – 3 ips (inches per second), Medium Type 5 – 5ips, Fast Type 6 – 6ips, and Extra Fast Type 7 – 7 ips (not available in a WF5). Find them at your nearest RIO dealer for $79.99. Watch here for more information.

RIO Fathom Sinking Lines
NKFF Hosts Wildlife Women for Fly Fishing Instruction

When: Saturday, March 7 from 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Where: New Day Ranch Conference Center, 14838 Rosenstiel Rd, Verona, KY 41092

This class is also open to women members of NKFF. Please register [HERE].

At Wildlife Women we want to inspire women to embrace the beauty of the outdoors, gain support from new found friendships, and create a legacy to be passed down to future generations. We host a variety of events for women only, mother/daughter events, and events that are designed to include the whole family.

Wildlife Women founder Bridgette Holbrook did not grow up hunting and grew up with a natural fear of guns. As a young mom Bridgette found that her daughter had severe food allergies and no idea where to turn.

After doing some research, trial and error, and a little luck, she realized that her daughter could eat wild game without any negative consequences.

When she became a single mom and found herself having to hunt, she overcame her fear of guns, began hunting on her own for food and her passion for the outdoors reached new levels.

Today Bridgette and the entire staff at Wildlife Women are dedicated to educating others about the benefits of life afield and choosing the right equipment.
Do you want to talk to one of Kentucky’s Fisheries Biologists? Well here is the key to which biologists cover each fisheries District in Kentucky and what counties comprise each District. Got a question? Call them, that is part of their job...to answer your questions.
The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources created the Fishing in Neighborhoods (FINs) program to provide anglers with quality fishing opportunities close to home. The program currently includes 43 lakes statewide. The aim of the program is to create quality fishing opportunities near urban areas of all sizes throughout the state. More information may be found HERE.

**Below is the schedule for the first 2020 trout stocking for FINs Lakes in Northern Kentucky**

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<td>Campbell</td>
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<td>Grant</td>
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DUN Magazine is no ordinary fly fishing publication. This quarterly publication is a work of art destined for your coffee table or favorite display shelf. Each edition is over-sized to showcase the photography inside. Standing at 11.75 inches tall and 9.25 inches wide, this is one impressive magazine.

The magazine is eco-friendly, made of recycled papers and vegetable ink. The cover is 80# matte cover stock with a soft touch and an foil stamped DUN logo. The text pages are 80# matte finish, printed with highest quality inks available.

We spare no expense in printing this publication. It is more like a book than a magazine. You’ve never seen anything like it.
The Truth Uncovered

Rooting through the archives can often be a revealing experience. Those of you who know Ron Kilmer today only see the façade of a classic conservative. But deep down, Ron has always been a stalwart liberal.

The photo above was leaked while Ron was on the campaign staff of Al Gore.

Ron actually wrote the script of “An Inconvenient Truth”, the critically acclaimed documentary about the dangers of global warming.

The film won 2 Academy Awards but Kilmer snubbed the Oscars saying, “The art is in the doing. I don’t need a silly trophy to know I’m the best.”

We know you’re the best Ron and we love you for it.