



February 2022 President's Message

Happy belated Groundhog Day and Valentine's Day everyone. This winter weather will soon be breaking and then it is back to fishing the Driftless. But in the meantime, tie some flies and check out the Driftless Symposium on February 23 and March 3. This year it will be online, and you can sign up for **free**. If you have never attended one in person now is the chance to do it from your home. The lineup of speakers is terrific this year. Having attended several of these in La Crosse in the past I know you will gain a tremendous amount of information in these two days. Jeff Hastings has set the programs up and will be hosting. Registration is free at:

Day 1 – Feb. 23 - <https://tu.myeventscenter.com/event/Restoring-The-Driftless-Day-1-59831>

Day 2 – March 3 – <https://tu.myeventscenter.com/event/Restoring-The-Driftless-Day-2-59832>

You must register for each day you would like to view the Symposium. These will be recorded and available on TUDARE's YouTube site.

We have suffered a loss of Brook trout in Belvidere High School they were thriving one day and the next morning the water was cloudy and all trout were dead. There was no mechanical problem found, the teacher is heartbroken and without an explanation. We have one tank left in Dundee Middle School that is doing fine with our most experienced teacher.

Our speaker this month is Zeke Hersh from the Trouts Fly fishing Shop in Frisco Colorado. He is the head guide and manager for the shop. Zeke will give us an introduction to fishing opportunities in and around Summit County Colorado. This includes the Blue River tailwater, the Colorado River, the Williams Fork, and the Arkansas River. I hope he can tempt you to join us on the exchange trip with the West Denver TU Chapter in July this year. I have fished these waters every summer and winter since my son moved to Summit County 30 years ago; I know you will enjoy the scenery and the fishing.

Do not forget to sign up for the May exchange trip to the Driftless, you do not have to volunteer as a guide to go. See Ralph Lessor's post in this newsletter for information.

Stay Well,
Jerry Sapp

Lee Wulff TU Meeting

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82298939724?pwd=SEVteWFwMHlmMlhIN2VEeTBPM0VGUT09>

[Meeting ID: 822 9893 9724](#)

[Passcode: 170737](#)

[Dial 1 312 626 6799](#)

[6:30 pm for meet and greet, 7pm the meeting starts](#)

[Join the audio by calling in or using the computer audio](#)

[Do not use both a phone and the computer audio. Doing that will create feedback distortion](#)

February- Spring Outings Update

Reserve your spot now for the Spring outings!

Reservations for the early spring outing to the Fennimore area and the May Exchange Outing to Viroqua/Westby are now available. For details see the Outings page on the LWTU website (<https://leewulfftu.org>) or contact Ralph Lessor, the Outings Coordinator (r_lessor@msn.com). Deposits for the Exchange Outing are due by March 5; see Outings page on the LWTU website for details on accommodations and events planned for this outing. We are still looking for volunteers to guide visiting anglers from Colorado on Driftless waters; if you are even moderately familiar with streams in the area, this is a chance to meet a new fishing buddy!

Serving as a guide will also get you preferred status for the July reciprocal outing to Colorado (plans still in development by the West Denver TU Chapter).

Bob Olach's Fly of the Month

T.E. Pritt's
#13 – March Brown

Since late last Summer / Early Fall, I began in earnest to try to duplicate some of T. E. Pritt's 62 dressings shown in his book "*Yorkshire Trout Flies*" later renamed as "*North Country Flies*."

Although quite a few of Pritt's dressings cannot be duplicated due to the unavailability of some of the specified materials (Brown Owl, Dotterel, Landrail, Sea Swallow, etc.) are now protected species, using non-protected game bird and hackles, I've been able to dress 19 of Pritt's 62 dressings.

In Pritt's book, he shows 5 different dressings for March Brown Spiders (#11 - #15) and so far, I've done Nos.. #11, #12 and #13, of which #13 is what I've done most recently.

The delay in doing the #13 March Brown dressing was in trying to find the thin, red fur taken from around a Red Fox's ear. Luckily for me, a kind fellow on the Flymph Forum sent me enough of the Red Fox's ear fur to tie a few of Pritt's #13 March Brown dressing.

In the past, I've tied quite a few of the North Country Spiders using Pearsall Gossamer silks (and still do) but recently bought quite a few of the YLI 100 silks in colors that closely match the now-discontinued Gossamer silks.



In the above flies, I used the YLI orange colored silk thread, the Red Fox's ear fur dubbing and English Woodcock hackles tied on size #12 and #14 Daiichi 1550 wet fly hooks.

Here's the actual dressing for the flies as shown in T.E. Pritt's book:

No. 13 March Brown

Hook 2

WINGS. Hackled with a reddish feather from the outside of a Woodcock's wing.

BODY. Orange silk, dubbed over with a little fur from a Fox's ear.



Grumpy's Page by Kurt Haberl

In the middle of May last year, prime time for flyfishing, I got a call from Ghost Mary Compson that surprised me.

"Wanna' go fishing tomorrow?" she said. "I'll drive."

"Sure," I answered. "I was going to go with Schnoz, but he canceled because Ray the Plumber is coming to his house for a project, and I asked him if he was putting in some kind of sprinkler system because of the last time he set his house on fire. I thought it was a joke when I asked, but he said it wasn't a sprinkler system, it was a leak in their shower. I don't like making a bad joke that Schnoz takes seriously, you know?"

"I know," she said, "but Huldy probably would like to install a sprinkler system. Anyway, I'll pick you up early, 6:30, because we have some driving to do to get to the place I have in mind."

"I'll be ready." When Mary says she has a place in mind, it usually means there will be something remarkable about the stream, maybe one lined with wild roses, or a little brook winding through an old stand of stately pines, or secret waterfalls. There are always fish, although fishing for Mary is not always about the fish.

I've waited over six months to write about this because even now, I'm not sure what happened. There's a reason why Mary has acquired her nickname.

True to her word, she picked me up at 6:30, and for the first few miles, she was unusually quiet, so I just asked her, “Mary, why do you go fishing with the quirky guys in our group.”

She laughed. “Well, Grumpy, ‘quirky’ is the right word, and I like it for two reasons. One is that fishing with you all, especially Schnoz, Dewey, and Calamity John makes me appreciate my husband more, and secondly, when I get home, I always have stories to tell George, and he’s a man who doesn’t care for fishing, but he loves stories and laughing.”

For almost two hours, we headed due north, and then Mary began a series of turns only she could keep in memory, including one backtrack because an old, weatherbeaten barn she remembered had collapsed and there was no other sign for a turnoff. Finally, she pulled onto an apron where the road crew had simply dumped what was left of their last load of asphalt, smoothed it a little, and forgot about it. There may have been a path to a small concrete bridge nearby, but it was long gone.

“Is there a name for this stream?” I said.

“Probably, but I don’t know what it is. My dad sometimes took me here when I was young. We used to rent a cabin a mile or so up the road. Most of the time when he took my brother and me fishing, we would go out in a rowboat with spinning gear, worms and minnows to fish for bluebill and bass, but as he got older, he bought a fly rod and reel to go after brookies. That’s what I’ll be using today. I drive up here every year on his birthday or close to it, depending on the weather.”

“In honor of your dad?”

“I don’t know if ‘honor’ is the right word. He could be an SOB sometimes if you used a tool and didn’t put it back, or he got behind a farm vehicle, or if the local hardware store was out of number 8 hex head machine screws. It was hard to predict. When he went fishing, though, he was a different man. That is the one I want to remember.”

“He was good to you then?”

“Yes, but if the fishing was not good and we got skunked, he would react. Mom finally convinced him that his son and daughter were too old to see him drop his pants and ‘moon’ uncooperative fish before we packed up to go back to the cabin. After that, a day without fish meant he would spout a chorus of sailors’ navigational and other terms, and then chuck a big rock into the lake ‘to piss off the stupid fish.’”

We put on waders and I watched Mary string up a fiberglass rod that probably used to be white and was thicker than my thumb above the pitted cork grip. On it, she mounted a very old and scratched Plueger Medalist reel, with its white plastic knob and a small screw for a drag, a model I had not seen in years.

“I’m not sure,” Mary said, “but this outfit probably came from Sears or Western Auto. He bought almost everything he owned from those two stores, including clothes, tools, presents for mom, plumbing supplies, radios, and furniture. About the only thing he didn’t get there was dental work.”

I smiled. Those were different times.

“This is his fly box. No vest, just this Sucrets tin, and I only saw him use one fly, a size 12 Royal Coachman. He used to call it the most beautiful design he ever saw, and if fish wouldn’t take it on the surface, he’d put a couple of split shot on his leader to sink it. If they still didn’t take it, he’d start chucking rocks into a pool for revenge.”

“So he didn’t cater much to a fish’s taste?”

“He didn’t cater much to *anyone’s* taste. Mom could get him to do what she needed mostly, but it was often after a morning of negotiations and chess moves that would make Versailles look like kindergarten nap time.”

I could picture that, and it made me smile again.

We plodded through waist-high grass to a beautiful drop-pool about fifty yards below the bridge. It was bordered on either side by a small berm of rocks left after the latest flood, and behind them a willow or two whose branches caressed the pool near the shore.

“You first,” Mary said, “while I tie on a Royal Coachman.”

It didn’t seem right for me to wear out her father’s pool by being the guest, so after half a dozen casts in which I stripped a nymph through the pool nearest the bank or yanked too hard on any pretense, I did the right thing when she looked down to finish her knot by casting my fly directly into the willow.

“Damn,” I said for emphasis and disguise, “I hate sudden breezes.” Then I straightened my line and pulled until the tippet gave way and sent the leader back at me in a whip-snap of coils, kinks, and knots.

“Your turn,” I said. “Watch the wind from starboard.” Hell, I can’t remember which side is starboard, but it sounded good.

Mary stepped into the pool and sent out three of the prettiest, small-looped casts you’d ever see. The Coachman landed on the water with the gentleness of a snowflake. Each time, her fly drifted the length of the pool without a take. She gathered her leader in, opened the Sucrets box and pinched two BB shot on the leader just above the tippet. Her next cast plopped at the head of the pool, drifted smoothly into the middle,

and then her line straightened with a fish. After a minute, a beautiful eight-inch brookie came to her hand.

“Picture?” I said, pulling my phone in its waterproof case on a lanyard from inside my vest. When she held the fish up and smiled while I framed and clicked several shots, it happened.

From the middle of the pool came a *ka-bloosh* as if someone had thrown a brick in. I looked upstream and at the willow and then the sky. There were no kids messing around, no squirrels fighting over a walnut in the willow, and no birds overhead.

“What the-“ I know I said. Mary smiled at me and then shrugged, not surprised at all. She let the brookie go, and said, “That was a Lego fish. On the days when we didn’t catch a mess of fish for dinner, but maybe only one, dad would call it a Lego fish, and let it go. That was our signal to pack up and head back to the cabin.”

She waved slowly at the pool, and soon we headed south on the long drive for Mary to drop me off at my house. Six months is a long time to think about something.

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