



LEE WULFF CHAPTER OF TROUT UNLIMITED

February 2023 President's Message

Dear Fellow Members,

The early Wisconsin catch and release [early inland trout season](#) opened last month. Consider getting out and fishing the [Driftless Area](#) or [Great Lakes tributaries](#) during this present February warm up! It's never a bad idea to check out [the Driftless Angler's fishing report](#) before heading to the Driftless Area, especially during winter months, and don't overlook our chapter's [extensive network of fence crossing stiles](#) (where there are [stiles](#), there generally is high quality trout habitat nearby). Be sure to attend our next meeting's social hour starting at 6:00 PM on February 16th, 2023 at [Village Pizza & Pub in Carpentersville](#) to meet new friends, pick up fishing tips from fellow members, and enjoy the guest speaker program (detailed meeting details, including guest speaker information, can be found further below).

Watch for news about our chapter's annual spring conservation fundraiser coming soon. This year's conservation fundraiser will start a bit later and run a bit longer than those of years past to ensure we make the most out of several very special prizes to be announced in the near future.

Weekly fly tying sessions began on Monday, January 9th and will run for 12 weeks at [Village Pizza & Pub in Carpentersville](#). Participation via Zoom is also available. If you are interested in participating via Zoom please reach out to Jerry Sapp via email at

sapp375@aol.com to be added to the email invite list. Feel free to show up in-person without notice, bring equipment and materials if you have them as this year's material kits have already sold out. Thanks to chapter members Jerry Sapp and Meg Gallagher for their ongoing instruction efforts, and to chapter member Bob Olach for making a special guest instructor appearance at the February 6th tying session. (Recordings of select past sessions are [available on YouTube](#).)



LWTU Feb. 6th, 2023 Fly Tying Session

Upcoming non-chapter events:

- [Wisconsin Fishing Expo](#), February 24-26, 2023
- Driftless Area Stream Restoration Symposium, March 7-8, 2023. Links to register online: [Day 1](#) | [Day 2](#)

- Fly Fishing Film Tour (F3T) 2023 screening in [Milwaukee, April 20, 2023](#)
- International Fly Fishing Film Festival (IF4) with nearby screenings TBA by others, and scheduled screenings in Wisconsin. Visit the [IF4 website](#) for further details.
- [Annual Illinois Trout Unlimited Youth Conservation and Fly Fishing Camp](#), July 16-21, 2023

If you'd like to participate in our chapter's 2023 spring fishing outings, it's time to express your interest to our outings coordinator, Ralph Lessor. Please see the Chapter Outings section of this newsletter further below for additional details. Ralph did a fantastic job organizing last year's outings and I'm sure this year will be no different. Outings are loads of fun and a great way to get to know your fellow members better, share secrets, and of course fish. Outings are not just for the experienced, are open to members (and their guests) of all ages, and accommodate all genders. And if you are new to fly fishing, we can pair you up with a more experienced member through our buddy system. Additionally, some of our outings provide a special opportunity to get involved with our conservation committee's [stile](#) building and installation efforts. We have identified at least four locations for new stiles planned for 2023, adding to our [extensive network of existing stiles](#).

We are seeking volunteers for the following upcoming youth events / programs. Please send an email to youth@leewulfftu.org if you'd like further information or are willing to volunteer. Getting youth interested in our beloved sport is an important part of ensuring the future of fly fishing and related natural resources – and helping a child learn how to fish can be very rewarding.

- [McHenry County Conservation District's Gone Fishing with Trout Unlimited](#). Help students with casting and fly tying on April 16th, 2023, 1:00 - 3:00 PM. at [The Hollows Conservation Area, 3804 US-14, Cary, IL](#).
- *Chauncey H. Duker School Outdoor Program*. Help students with casting and fly tying on May 16th (our chapter plans to focus on volunteering on the 16th) and 17th (the Gary Borger chapter plans to focus on volunteering on the 17th), 2023, 8:30 AM to 2:00 PM at [Fort McHenry Park, 4301 Front Royal Dr, McHenry, IL](#).

- *Fishin' So Fly*, which we hope will get back into full swing in 2023 after a COVID-19 hiatus and scaled-back 2022 program.

Our chapter's three-classroom 2023 Trout in the Classroom (TIC) program recently suffered another setback at the Huntley location due to an equipment failure that was not reported by the classroom teacher in a timely manner. Our experienced TIC committee plans to reallocate the equipment presently in Huntley to a more suitable classroom next year. Our remaining two 2023 TIC classrooms are still well on the road to rearing healthy trout this year.

On February 9th, 2023, chapter leadership voted to invest a portion of the chapter's conservation fund in a ladder of short-term FDIC-insured certificates of deposit expected to earn roughly 4% interest annually. The prospect of investing in slightly higher yield U.S. Treasury I Bonds has been tabled for several reasons. In other fiscal related news, our chapter is forming a budgeting committee, if you are interested in joining this committee please contact our chapter treasurer via email at treasurer@leewulfftu.org.

The chapter is seeking volunteers to get involved in several other committees, and to take on select club duties. Please email me at [prez@leewulfftu.org](mailto: prez@leewulfftu.org) if you'd like further information or are willing to volunteer.

This month's meeting speaker will be P.J. Smith of [PJ's Guide Service](#), based in Westby, WI. P.J. is an Orvis-endorsed guide who has been fly fishing the clear, spring creeks in the Driftless Area for more than 20 years. He will be presenting his "*Becoming a Better Angler*" program via Zoom. (Recordings of select past meeting programs are [available on YouTube](#).)

Be sure to check out our new book exchange program available at in-person chapter meetings. Purchase books for as little as \$5, and optionally return them after reading for a \$3 exchange credit.

Watch your email for Evite invitations to meetings, events, etc. I hope to see all of you in-person at our next meeting. However if you cannot join us in-person, please join us via Zoom, the main program typically starts at approximately 7:15 PM.

In-Person Chapter Meeting Remote Participation Details

Participate via web browser or Zoom app:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2531998153?pwd=QXJUVHdBQVpUR3hQS1pCT0o2Rlhpdz09>

Passcode: LeeWulff

Participate by phone (one tap for mobile): +13126266799,,2531998153#,,,*61222057#

Participate by phone: +1 312-626-6799

Meeting ID: 253 199 8153

Passcode: 61222057

Best regards,

Brent Burval

Chapter Fishing Outings

Sign-up is now open for our spring outings:

- Early Spring Outing - April 27-30, 2023 - Westby/Viroqua, WI - Group accommodations at Logan Mill Lodge will require prepayment in full by April 10; amount will depend on number of attendees but is expected to be approximately \$240 for three nights double occupancy, including coffee and cold breakfast in the mornings. Contact Ralph Lessor, Outings Coordinator at r_lesser@msn.com or 908-295-9728, by March 1 if you plan to attend.
- Spring Outing - May 18-21, 2023 - Fennimore, WI - The Chapter will hold a block of rooms at Napps Motel in Fennimore; anglers will need to contact Napps Motel to reserve one of those rooms. We plan a bratwurst cookout for Thursday 5/18, cost TBD (approx.. \$8 based on last year's costs). Contact Ralph Lessor, Outings Coordinator at r_lesser@msn.com or 908-295-9728, by April 1, 2023 if you plan to attend.

Visit our [chapter's outings web page](#) for information about additional planned 2023 outings.

Bob Olach's Fly of the Month

The Driftless Hare Nymph

The “*Driftless Hare Nymph*” is a very rare nymph and only six (6) of them exist in this world ----- all in my fly box!

Years ago, when I first learned the materials in John Bethke’s “*Pink Squirrel*” dubbing, I substituted other furs instead of the dark Fox Squirrel fur and then dressed a bunch of pink-colored nymphs using mixtures of light / dark, green hares ear, black squirrel / beaver, etc. with pieces of amber antron and olive ice dubbing, to make several other sparkling dubbings.

Since then, I’ve used these sparkling dubbing mixtures for the bodies or thorax in other nymphs or soft hackles. Thus began the basis for the Driftless Hare Nymph.

Last year, I dressed a few of the late Dave Hughes’ “*Red Fox Squirrel Nymphs*” and I liked the profile so much that I put together some other nymphs that used different materials but still had the general appearance of Dave Hughes’ nymph.



(Whoops – tied one of the nymphs with a gray Partridge hackle)

Dressing:

Hook: - Daiichi #1550 or #1530 wet fly hook (sizes 10 – 12)

Thread: - Red or burgandy Danville 6/0 thread

Underbody: – 6 to 8 wraps of lead wire sub

Body: – Light / Natural hare's ear mixture dubbing

Thorax: – Dark hare's ear mixture dubbing

Ribbing: – Small Gold Ultra wire

Tail:– from a Ginger colored hares mask

Hackle: - Light olive dyed Partridge



Grumpy's Page by Kurt Haberl

It had been a long time since I'd felt this much excitement about going to a TU chapter meeting. Usually our meetings followed an unchanging pattern of the Ne'er-do-wells shuffling in, stopping at the bar, smiling at the immediate insults that passed for "hello," told one or two lies, ate tasty food that would not please our doctors, made plans for the next outing, and then listened to a DNR guy either praise a stream we could never find on a map or warn us about wild parsnip, threatened brookie habitat, or new access points to an improved stream that would actually hold trout in two or three years. The pattern was as dependable as Wet Curtis falling in water, as dependable as Schnoz doubling the size of some trout he snagged, or as dependable as Ghost Mary out-fishing all of us using the same flies we used in the same runs.

This meeting was different. Someone in the chapter had managed to have Doc Holiday set up a demonstration and project his magic fingers tying flies that would fool an entomologist. I don't remember much else, not how Schnoz insulted my casting when he said hello, not what I ordered at the bar, not what I ate, nor when our first outing of the year would be. Not with Doc setting up his \$600 master vise on a table covered with white satin, opening a specially built lacquered tying box with trays that rose when he opened it, rotated out, and kept every feather, hook, and bead perfectly safe under a glass, spring-loaded lid. He adjusted the camera on a small tripod so that his vise and precise hands appeared on a white screen behind him.

No one dared to ask what kind of doctor he was. Some said he was a brain surgeon or a heart surgeon or an eye doctor who specialized in detached retinas. It was sure to be something none of us could do. Doc's thick, graying hair looked like he had just been to the barber that day; his tweed jacket, tasteful tie, and gray waistcoat made him look like an earl or some lordly Brit. He smiled at us with perfect, gleaming teeth that made me wonder if he had ever eaten a piece of chocolate or sipped root beer in his life. The room was suddenly quiet.

"Well, let's start with something simple," he said in a baritone as rich and kindly as Bing Crosby singing "Goin My Way." A black, barbless hook magically appeared in his vise, and in three seconds, it had covered itself in perfect, abutting thread wraps from the eye to the bend. "I won't have to tell you what this is, because you'll all recognize it before I've done the whip finish."

Then, in quick succession, a small, yellowish ball appeared at the bend as he said, "Egg sac," and above it a tiny hollow tube curved back from the bend, which suddenly was wrapped in mahogany fur with three perfectly tapered tails jutting out from this tapered abdomen and some proportioned wraps to form a segmented body. I couldn't tell you how he did it; everything just suddenly appeared. The segmented body continued two-thirds up the shank of the hook, and then he tied in two graceful wings, not hair; these were translucent, mosaic film like the real thing wrapped in three deft crosses so they stood perfectly up and back. A thorax of thin, closed-cell cork with fuzz appeared before the wings, and then, to our astonishment, six plastic legs splayed out from the thorax,

each leg with a slight knee bend at just the right place. Finally, two hollow, green barbell eyes were tied in front of the legs, and with a fine-tipped magic marker, he put pupils in the eyes.

"Everything on this fly floats," he said matter-of-factly. "You can't sink it."

We started to applaud, but he held up his hand in humility to quiet us.

"I almost forgot," he said, stripping small feathers, and though no one saw how he did it, two perfectly curved antennae jutted out over the eye of the hook. He smiled, rotated his vise, and nodded with satisfaction at a fly sure to be swatted if it ever appeared anywhere other than in the jaws of a vise.

There was a moment of stunned silence followed by all the women saying "Ooooh," and all the men saying "Aaaah." I looked over at Schnoz. His mouth was agape as if he had seen Merlin, King Arthur, and Lady Godiva appear on the screen.

Ghost Mary smiled at me, pointed to her wrist, and said, "Thirty-two minutes."

"What?" I replied stupidly. She just shrugged. She was right. Thirty-two minutes had passed, but it seemed like five. Magic is like that.

For his next feat, Doc tied a golden stonefly, a flat-bodied specimen with a crustacean's back, a soft underbelly shaded with markers to show segments, legs with knees, feet, and tails and antennae which were somehow segmented in very fine wraps. Doc's only comment in the process was, "Everything on this fly sinks, and the legs move only horizontally like the real thing."

The room erupted in applause. It was impressive. The fly he tied, a stonefly an inch and a half long, appeared on the screen nearly two feet long, and every detail, every proportion, every color down to the dark eyes - was perfect. The applause eventually faded, and as he packed up his vise, tools, and supplies, he said over the lapel microphone, "You know, ladies and gents, I want to leave with a challenge. One thing has bothered me for years. No matter how carefully I research actual bugs, look for new materials to match the originals, or test what sinks and what floats, I can't get beyond the one ugly thing on every fly - the hook. I challenge you all to figure out some form of epoxy or strong, fire-hardened fluorocarbon with the clarity and density of water so I can get rid of that gawd-awful hook. If someone could just invent a strong, clear hook, I could retire the happiest of men."

I could see Schnoz's brain gears beginning to engage and spin. I hoped he wouldn't call next week to tell me he had burned his house down trying to kiln-fire an epoxy hook. A moment later his shoulders slumped and he looked like someone had just told him the fishing season would be cancelled this year because all the fish were gone.

"What's wrong with you?" Wet Curtis said to him sympathetically.

"I've been tying flies for almost 50 years, and I've sure spent as much time and money on it as the next guy, but I'll never be able to tie a fly that approaches the perfect ones he ties. I feel like such a duffer. It takes me three tries for my fumbling fingers to tie an ant with two black beads and a wrap of hackle for legs. It's discouraging."

Ghost Mary sat down next to him with a look on her face that said, "Look at me and listen up because I'm only going to say this once and it's important."

"Schnoz," she said calmly. "I'm not denying his artistic skill, but each fly he tied took over thirty minutes to complete. The fish don't care. If you want a couple of Doc's flies to put in a shadow box on your wall to admire, you could probably buy some. I want to let you in on a little secret, though."

Schnoz straightened up and gave her all his meager attention.

"I went to a show in Chicago last year to watch Doc, and afterwards I talked to him for a good while. The flies he ties go in display cases or are bought by collectors. Doc doesn't use them. He doesn't fish."

"What?"

"He hasn't gone fishing for years. He just likes to tie flies. Here's another part to the secret. I did a pretty good imitation of a pale morning dun after he showed some tricks, and I was so proud of it, I gave it to my brother out in Colorado when he had a day off from guiding. He took my fly, looked at it from every angle, and then undid the cuffs on his rain jacket. He roughed up the fly on the Velcro strip so it looked more like a fur ball with wings. He gave it back to me and said, 'Now, it's good enough and will catch fish. If you're going to use the photographic imitation you tied, you might as well use bait. The whole point of the game is to fool them with an imitation you fish with some skill. That's why some fish fight so well. They're pissed because you fooled them. Don't ruin the game.'"

"Don't ruin the game," Schnoz repeated.

"I get it," Wet Curtis said. "The fun is in being good enough. Anybody can be good enough."

"That's us," Mary said. "Good enough."

It was probably the best chapter meeting we had in years. Well, maybe it wasn't the absolute best, but it was good enough.

Chapter Officers

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