



January President's Message

Here's hoping that everyone had a very Merry Christmas and a fantastic New Year! For those of you who attended our Christmas fundraiser I hope you had a great time. We raised a lot of money to fund our projects throughout the year. If you have any thoughts on how to improve the event, please see me at the meeting or contact me via email.

Our Trout in the classroom program is in full swing now with hopes to release lots of baby Brookies into the ponds at Fox Bluff this Spring. There will be many opportunities to work conservation projects this year both here at home and in the Driftless area and I hope to see many of you out there. Fishin' So Fly will begin in earnest the last week in April so we'll need much help there too.

Also look for our many fishing outings planned for the coming months. These are times when we can share our fishing experiences and pass our knowledge on to others. Look for sign-up sheets at the meetings. If you haven't been to a meeting in a while please come back and join our group of dedicated men and women of conservation.

See you all on the 18th!

Bob Becker

Where We Meet
Village Pizza and Pub
145 N. Kennedy Drive
Carpentersville, IL

Social Hour: 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. with all you can eat pizza and pop served for \$15.00 per person

Main program: 7:30 p.m.

Other menu choices, cocktails and spirits are available for purchase.

Please RSVP to Yves Charron at yvescharron@aol.com (847-596-0231) by Tuesday January 16th so we know how many pizzas to preorder.

Our January Speaker - Dick Dragiewicz

Dick Dragiewicz is our speaker for this month. He will be speaking about the smallmouth fishery on the Menominee River and the impact a proposed mine could have on the fishery. Dick Dragiewicz has been fishing since early childhood. Over the past fifteen years he's become proficient at river smallmouth bass fishing, including the Milwaukee and Menominee Rivers. Dick has participated in stream improvement programs and electro shocking for warm water species. Now his focus is on protecting the Menominee River and its terrific smallmouth bass fishery from the damage a proposed metallic sulfide mine would cause to it and Lake Michigan.

He's a member of the Northern Illinois Fly Tyers (NIFT), Wisconsin Smallmouth Alliance, and Gary Borger Trout Unlimited. Friend of the DuPage Rivers Fly Tyers (DRIFT), Badger Fly Fishers, and Fly Fishers International (FFI).

The Menominee River offers the best smallmouth fishing in the Midwest and some say it's the best in the country. Some of you have probably fished it, others may be planning on fishing it, and everyone else should place it on the top of your bucket list of places to fish next season. It's that good. Equipment I use includes an eight weight and a six weight fly rod rigged with lines that can handle light weight foam poppers and big, bulky streamers and weighted crayfish patterns. Need rain gear and jacket to keep you dry and warm on chilly days.

Unfortunately, the lower half of the river is being threatened by a proposed polymetallic sulfide mine. The western edge of this open pit/underground mine would be within 150 feet of Michigan's shoreline of the river. Metallic sulfide mine drainage could flow into the river and contaminate it, thereby affecting river life and the surrounding area. Many of us are working to stop this mine from being developed. Those of us that are opposed to it see this mine as a perpetual environmental problem

Conservation Update – Jerry Sapp

Great news the TUDARE partners have been awarded a \$ 9.1 million grant to be used in 4 state area of the Driftless including Illinois. This will be divided up to include \$1.8 for the NRCS(Natural Resources Conservation Service) and \$7 million for stream restoration in the Driftless over the next five years. This may be the largest grant that TU was ever awarded. Lots of projects will have funding starting in 2019. You will be hearing more about this later.

There are several projects that will provide workday opportunities this summer. Our chapter has a good reputation from our work on stiles last year. There are more lined up for replacement and some new ones for us to put in this year. We can do several in one day if they are close together and fish that afternoon. Gary Borger Chapter has produced drawings based on our design and is going to print a pamphlet for distribution to other chapters.

Fox Bluff hunting season ends in January. We will be burning our brush piles and doing more brush cutting there afterward. Dates are not yet established yet but will be announced when they are set. Fish were sighted as late as mid October and we are hoping they do well over the winter. The temperature monitors indicated that the ponds are not exceeding the thermal tolerance of Brook trout through the heat of summer. We expect to release more Brookies this spring as our quest continues.

Cabin Fever? How About a Fishing Show?

Show Calendar for Winter 2018

Cabin Fever Day – 16th Annual - Fox Valley Trout Unlimited

Date: January 14, 2018

Location: The Grand Meridian, Appleton, WI

Sponsor: Fox **Ice Breaker** – 34th Annual

Date: January 13, 2018

Location: American Family Insurance Training Center, 6000 American Parkway, Madison, WI

Sponsor: Southern Wisconsin Trout Unlimited

Speakers/Program: Tucker and Jacquie Nelson from Nelson Spring Creek Ranch in Livingston. Tim Landwehr will talk about smallmouth bass fishing. Live aquatic insect identification by the Wisconsin DNR, lots of fly tying demos, and more.

<http://www.swtu.org>

West Michigan Fly Show *** New Show*******

Date: January 13 – 14, 2018

Location: East Kentwood High School, Grand Rapids, MI

Sponsor: Great Lakes Council of Fly Fishers International
Valley Trout Unlimited

Speakers/Program: Fly fishing seminars by Midwest experts Israel Dunn, Bill Schultz and Damian Wilmot plus fly tying demonstrations, casting clinics, vendors and more.

<http://www.foxvalleytu.org/cabin-fever-day-2017>

Chicagoland Fishing, Travel & Outdoor Expo

Date: January 25 – 28, 2018

Location: Schaumburg Convention Center, Schaumburg, IL

Sponsor: NMMA Sport Shows

Speakers/Program: Fishing show with extensive number of exhibitors/vendors/programs, limited fly fishing materials/programs. DRIFT will be giving fly tying demonstrations.

<http://sportshows.com/chicago/index.html>

Spring Opener – Badger Fly Fishers

Date: February 10, 2018

Location: American Family Insurance Training Center, 6000 American Parkway, Madison, WI

Sponsor: Badger Fly Fishers

Speakers/Program: Pat Ehlers will speak about largemouth bass and saltwater fishing. Show will have vendors, fly tying demonstrations, raffles, etc.

<http://badgerflyfishers.com>

Celebration of Fly Tying – 10th Annual Show

Date: February 24, 2018

Location: Knights of Columbus Hall, 5830 Clyde Park, Wyoming, MI

Sponsor: Grand River Fly Tyers

Speakers/Program: TBA

<http://www.grandriverflytyers.club/news.html>

TroutFest '18 Central Wisconsin Trout Unlimited

Date: February 24, 2018

Location: Fin 'N Feather, Winneconne, WI

Sponsor: Central Wisconsin Trout Unlimited

Speakers/Program: CWTU's TroutFest '18 includes mini-seminars, raffles, fly tying demos, artisans, youth fly tying instruction, guides, outfitters.

www.cwtu.org

Madison Fishing Expo

Date: February 23 – 25, 2018

Location: Alliant Energy Center, Madison, WI

Sponsor: Wisconsin Fishing Expo

Speakers/Program: See listing on website, 125,000 SF of fishing activity.

Outdoor/fishing show with limited fly fishing vendors/programs.

<http://wifishingexpo.com/>

Bronzeback Blowout – Illinois Smallmouth Alliance

Location: American Legion Hall, Elmhurst, IL (suburban Chicago)

Date: March 3, 2018

Sponsor: Illinois Smallmouth Alliance

Speakers/Program: Chad Hoover on kayak fishing for bass, vendors, raffles, etc.

<http://www.illinoismallmouthalliance.net>

Midwest Fly Fishing Expo (the granddaddy of fly fishing shows)

Date: March 10 – 11, 2018

Location: Macomb Community College Sports & Expo Center, Warren, MI

Sponsor: Michigan Fly Fishing Club

Speakers/Program: TBA

Show has demonstrations and programs on fly tying, fly casting, fly fishing seminars and more in 61,000 square feet of exhibition space.

Website has information on the 2017 show to help pique your interest in this show.

<http://mffc.org>

Three Rivers Fly Fishing & Fly Tying Show

Date: February 10, 2018

Location: Classic Café, 4832 Hillegas, Road, Fort Wayne, IN

Sponsor: Three Rivers Fly Fishers Club

Speakers/Program: Terry & Roxanne Wilson on bluegill fishing, Kyle Hammond on pike fishing, fly tying demos, vendors, etc.

<http://3rff.org/flyshow.html>

"Listen to the sound of the river and you will get a trout."

~Irish proverb

Lee Wulff Trout Unlimited 2018 Outing Dates

Early Spring Outing-Viroqua, WI April 27th-29th

Fennimore Outing-Fennimore, WI May 18th-20th

Wa Wa Sum-Grayling, MI, June 6th-10th

Early Summer Outing-Viroqua, WI June 22nd-24th

End of Season Outing-Viroqua, WI Oct 12th-14th.

Details for the above to follow.

Bob Olach's Fly of the Month

Pheasant Tail & Golden Plover Soft Hackles

There are several materials that I like to use in many of the North Country Spiders and Soft Hackled dressings that I tie and fish including partridge, peacock herl, starling, hare's ear, etc. and I use rooster Pheasant Tails in "many" soft hackle and nymph dressings.

But I think one of the prettiest hackles that I have are taken from European Golden Plover wings and a Golden Plover skin that a fellow in Europe sent to me years ago (by mistake but he told me to keep it anyway).

The Golden Plover hackles have a gray (dun) / brown color alongside the feather's stem with "golden" / yellow tips that are really soft and easy to use when dressing a fly.

Here's a pic that I found on the Internet of a pair of Golden Plover wings from "Cookshill" in England. Cookshill is the UK company that I use in getting many of the hackles for tying North Country Spiders and other Soft Hackled dressings.

It should be noted that Golden Plover wings and whole skins are very difficult or impossible to obtain from various US suppliers and there's a waiting list at Cookshill. So, if you're interested, you better get on Cookshill's waiting list ASAP.

There are other suppliers in the UK that also sell many of the European game bird hackles (Snipe, Starling, Red Grouse, etc.) and I've purchased from several of these companies in the past but for the past few years have only purchased from Cookshill as I think they have the best materials and ship quickly if the desired materials are in stock.



Here's the dressing for the flies pictured:

Hook – Daiichi 1550 or Mustad 3906 wet fly hook (sizes 12 – 16)

Thread – Pearsall Gold Gossamer silk (#6a)

Body – 3 to 5 pheasant tail fibers (depending on hook size)

Thorax – Hare's Ear

Ribbing – Uni – Small or Extra Small gold colored wire

Hackle – 3 to 4 turns of Golden Plover

"Unless one can enjoy himself fishing with the fly, even when his efforts are unrewarded, he loses much real pleasure. More than half the intense enjoyment of fly-fishing is derived from the beautiful surroundings, the satisfaction felt from being in the open air, the new lease of life secured thereby, and the many, many pleasant recollections of all one has seen, heard and done."

~by Charles F. Orvis, 1886~



Grumpy's Page by Kurt Haberl

My nickname isn't Grumpy for nothing. When Annie and her friends get together for a book club meeting and luncheon, it's time for me to leave the house. I thought I might stay upstairs for the December book club, but all the excited banter about some young, hunky hero named "Stallion," who never seemed to be able to afford a shirt even after he uncovered a diamond mine and fell in love with a plucky young woman whom nobody appreciated except him because she was a diamond in the rough, but their love was forbidden by some evil uncle, and - you get the idea. After half an hour I knew I'd have to leave the house and go down to the hardware store to look at nails and drill bits but then I got lucky because Schnoz called and said, "Huldy is over at your house for book club about some woman who falls in love with a horse and you don't want to be there for that."

"Stallion," I said.

"What?"

"The hero in the book. His name was 'Stallion.' He's a guy who never wears shirts."

"Horse. Stallion. Whatever," Schnoz said. "Since the season is closed, it's the perfect time to go through your fishing vest and re-sort everything, so bring yours over and we'll compare notes."

By the time I got there, Schnoz had emptied everything out of his sweat-stained vest and laid it out on a card table in piles that vaguely resembled organization.

"Here's what I'm thinking," Schnoz said. "First I empty everything out of my vest and then only put back in what I really used this year and only the flies that caught fish. Everything else goes into this tackle sack I bought and can keep in the car but not carry around everywhere."

"That sounds good," I said. "Are you going to run your vest through the washer to get rid of the sweat, all the bug spray, vanilla for gnats, coffee spills, and the time that swallow shat on you when you were under the camp pavilion?"

"Huh? My vest has character. It's not so bad."

"I smelled it from the front door. Animals probably can too."

"Well, I can soak it in this empty bin I guess. Huldy has soap somewhere."

While he was gone, I looked at his stuff. At first I thought it was kind of a violation, like not being able to help noticing whether a guy wore boxers or briefs. Schnoz's piles were rather interesting, though.

When he came back, I said, "What's this?" I held up a little plastic gadget attached to a broken zinger. It was black, slotted, and part metal, and looked like it once belonged to a lawn mower carburetor.

"That? Hm. Maybe it was a leader straightener."

"But there's no place to thread the leader."

"I don't remember. Leave it out. See how easy this is?"

"What about this?" I held up something that looked like a miniature megaphone with a trigger and tiny canister attached.

"That? That's my pocket air horn. It does triple duty. You can use it to signal for help if you're stuck in the mud. Its blast carries for five miles. Guaranteed. You can use Morse code, dot dot dot, dash dash dash, dot dot dot for SOS and people will come running."

"But we use walky-talkies and no one knows Morse code anymore. I don't think the Boy Scouts even teach it these days."

"Well, it's also so loud it can scare wild animals away, you know, farmer's dogs and pesky cows, and I heard the wolves are back in the western part of the state."

"You ever seen a wolf?"

"No, but you know - be prepared."

"Schnoz, this thing has a time stamp. You bought it in 1994. Are you kidding me?"

I couldn't resist the temptation and pressed the trigger. The sound that came out of his air horn designed to protect him from wolves and such, a blast guaranteed for five miles, sounded like a bad fart, kind of a "Pffffff," and it didn't even smell.

"Maybe I can get it recharged."

"Well, it might protect you if you threw it at a wolf or stuffed it down its throat while it was lurching on your leg, but other than that..."

"Put it in the 'maybe' pile here," he said pointing to a little pile of things that looked like he had found them in gutters. "And maybe it's not best to begin with gadgets. Why don't we talk about flies and what I should keep? So, what flies did you catch fish on last season?"

"Uh, let's see, bead head pheasant tails, pink squirrels, cracklebacks, and olive wooly buggers."

"That's it?"

"Pretty much. I might have caught one on a beetle or a soft hackle, but that could have been from the year before."

"How can a self-respecting fly fisher begin the season with only four patterns? I'm ashamed of you."

"I keep other flies for show, but you asked me what I actually caught trout on."

"Four flies."

"Look, anybody can catch a fish on a caddis if there's a caddis hatch on, but think of the skill it takes to catch fish on only four flies. It's not the fly; it's the presentation and drift."

"I've seen you fish. I think it's pity. The fish pity you."

"Well, what's in your arsenal, Napoleon?"

"Hah. Early season I caught fish on little black caddis and blue winged olives. Remember that day out on Springer's Run before the wind came up and we couldn't even cast?"

"One fish. You caught one fish that day."

"Well, it was either on a little black caddis or a blue winged olive. Then there was the time on the Mill Race when I caught a fish on golden stonefly."

"You snagged that fish. We don't even have golden stoneflies in this state."

"I just know it worked."

And so it went, through every pattern Schnoz had, Adams dries, Wulffs of every kind and size, royal or not, ants, grasshoppers, midges, tricos, scuds, renegades, bisvisibles, trivisibles, quadrivisibles, and some flies whose names he couldn't even remember. At one

point he took a break to retrieve what was left of his vest after the sweat, bug spray and mud had been removed and ran it through the dryer. It came out different from what I expected.

“Tan,” I said. “I didn’t know you had a tan fishing vest. I thought it was camo.”

“Very funny.”

For another hour he reminisced, vaguely recalled or completely made up catching fish on streams whose names were soon confused with streets in town, Pine and Robin and Jersey. It seemed after a while that the limited vision afforded him by his ample proboscis had fine-tuned his imagination, both in the numbers and size of fish caught last season. Even more remarkable was his memory of what those imaginary fish had actually taken, everything from tiny zebra midges to giant Hornburg streamers. No wonder he continued to fly fish. He caught fish everywhere, all the time, and each was a trophy.

“You don’t need a book club,” I said eventually. “You’ve got epic novels stored up there in your cerebellum. Homer would be impressed.”

“Thank you,” he said. “I’m glad you finally appreciate my fishing expertise.”

“Well,” I said vaguely.

In the end, everything he had went back into his tan vest, except for the gadget neither of us could identify on its broken zinger and the mini farting air horn, which he thought he could re-charge. He leaned back in his chair with great satisfaction, sighed, and said, “Well, should we start on your vest?”

I thought about it for a moment and said, “You know, I think I’m good to go. I have four flies I catch fish on and a dozen or so other patterns to show other fishermen and maybe trade for something else I’ll never use. I’ve always liked old, reliable things. Maybe that’s how we stay friends.” I thought it had been a fine afternoon

Schnoz just shook his head. “You catch fish out of pity. They feel sorry for you.”

That’s when Huldry came in, her face flushed from excited talk about Stallion, diamonds, risking all for love, almost losing everything, and some version of happily every after. It must have been just like an alternative kind of trout fishing, except for the diamond mine. Even Schnoz doesn’t have a diamond mine hidden in his vest. He has an air horn that farts instead.

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PS: Any grammatical errors spotted in this newsletter were purposefully put there to keep you on your toes.

PPS: You Are Welcome.