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President's Message

Happy new year!

Please join us at our next monthly chapter meeting at [Village Pizza & Pub](#) (145 N John F. Kennedy Dr, Carpentersville, IL 60110 location) on Thursday, January 16th, 2025 with happy hour starting at 6:00 PM. Our speaker will be fly fishing professional George Daniel presenting via Zoom. George has competed at a high level for Fly Fishing Team USA, earning individual back to back US National Fly Fishing Championship titles and ranked as high as 5th in the World. George has also served as captain for Fly Fishing Team USA and Coach for the US Youth Fly Fishing Team. He has competed and won other regional and national fly fishing competitions over the years. George has authored four best selling fly fishing books and dozens of articles for national fly fishing publications, including Fly Fisherman and Fly Fusion Magazine. If you have friends

and/or family members who might be interested, bring them along as your guest, and be sure to include them when you R.S.V.P. if they will be partaking in the pizza buffet. You can [R.S.V.P. here](#). There will also be prize-drawings! Tickets will be available to purchase at \$5.00 each. Flies and books will also be available for sale. Consider joining us even if you live further out, tollway access is convenient. If you cannot join us in-person please join us via Zoom (remote participation information can be found further below).



January Speaker, George Daniel

The chapter's recent annual holiday banquet and fundraiser at [Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation](#) was a lot of fun and a financial success. Thanks to all who contributed in making this a great event. If you missed the event in 2024 be sure to plan to join us in 2025.

The early catch-and-release trout season opened on January 6th on most Wisconsin inland streams ([click here for details](#)). The [Iowa trout fishing](#) season remains open all year.

And the great lake tributaries present an opportunity for big chinook, coho, steelhead, and brown trout. Rain drives fish into the tributaries so you might need to wait until the weather warms up...be mindful of [water flows](#) and do not wade if levels are unsafe. Do not hesitate to ask fellow chapter members for tips at our monthly meetings. Also, the following DNR resources offer helpful tributary fishing information: [Wisconsin](#), [Michigan](#), [Indiana](#).



Milwaukee River

If you fish in cold weather, be sure not to remove trout from water when air temperatures are below freezing as this can damage gills and kill the fish.

In 2025 the chapter will again host several fishing outings, and is exploring exchange trips with Colorado and Montana chapters. In spring 2025, during our early spring outing, the chapter plans to repair and upgrade additional stiles, as well as install one or more new stiles, enhancing our [extensive network of existing stiles](#) (where there are [stiles](#), generally there are fish). More information on outings will be made available as plans solidify.



Driftless Area Stile Installed by LWTU Members

Our Trout-in-the-Classroom (TIC) program is up and running in two schools for the 2024/2025 season including returning Crystal Lake's North Elementary, and newcomer Elgin Math and Science Academy. Eggs were recently placed in both classrooms. Our program is again rearing brook trout, unique to our chapter in Illinois (other Illinois TU TIC programs raise rainbow trout). Many thanks to our TIC volunteers and schools!



May 2024 LWTU TIC Release Day at Fox Bluff

And speaking of youth programs, we have some very exciting news to share: we expect the chapter's So Fly program to return in 2025 with long-standing partner teacher Beth Harner! This program typically involves 2-4 evenings of fly fishing with students at [Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation](#) in late spring. Stay tuned for details. A special thanks to member Bob Meschewski for cultivating these plans.

The rock dam at the outlet of the last of the series of three ponds in which we stock TIC trout at Fox Bluff is in need of minor repairs. We plan to tackle this when things warm up this spring. Please email volunteer@leewulfftu.org if you are interested in assisting.

The Sycamore Tree program designed to help mitigate [the effects of climate change on coldwater fisheries](#) is progressing. Plans to plant seedlings along streams in Wisconsin are still being formulated. The 2025 Driftless Symposium will include sessions regarding the topic of combating climate change with strategic tree plantings. See the non-chapter events section further below for details and registration information.

Watch your email for Evite invitations to meetings, events, etc. I hope to see all of you in-person at our next meeting. The January meeting will be available via Zoom. The main program typically starts at approximately 7:00 PM, preceded by a chapter business discussion.

In-Person Chapter Meeting Remote Participation Details

Participate via web browser or Zoom app:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2531998153?pwd=qgJen8i6c6VLarKOLGoGOOUAvoCJtf.1&omn=88593294635>

Meeting ID: 253 199 8153

Passcode: leewulf

Participate by phone (one tap mobile): +13126266799,,2531998153#,,,,*6660531#

Participate by phone (manual dial): +1 312-626-6799

Meeting ID: 253 199 8153

Passcode: 6660531

Be sure to check out our 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.

Feel free to email any speaker suggestions to speakers@leewulfftu.org.

Please track your volunteer hours and report volunteer hours to the chapter treasurer by 4/10/2025 at treasurer@leewulfftu.org.

The chapter is seeking volunteers to get involved in several committees, and to take on select club duties. Please email me at prez@leewulfftu.org if you'd like further

information or are willing to volunteer. Thank you to those of you who are already volunteering.

Be sure to check out Bob Olach's Fly of the Month and Kurt Haberl's Grumpy's Page contributions this month further below.

Tight lines,

Brent Burval



When moving between bodies of water while fishing please be extra diligent in cleaning and drying your gear. Read [this recent press release about *Previously Undetected Parasite Discovered In Wild Wisconsin Trout*](#) to learn more about why this is so important.



Soil and Water Conservation District Funding Slashed

The 103rd General Assembly of Illinois has finalized the FY25 budget. Sadly, this budget was signed into law with a roughly 48% decrease in Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) operational funding. Illinois' 97 SWCDs experienced a substantial funding shortfall in the FY 2025 state budget. SWCD operations funding was reduced by \$4 million from \$8.5 million in FY 24 to \$4.5 million in FY 25. The shortfall will lead to the loss of trained and qualified Soil and Water Conservation District employees which will take years of training to replace. Without sufficient funding, employees, much like unprotected soil, will erode away. Help petition to restore state funding [here](#).

Help Pass Good Samaritan Legislation

Done and done! [Signed into law](#) in-part thanks to support from TU members!

Protect Illinois Wetlands

The U.S. Supreme Court recently gutted the Clean Water Act, eliminating the protection of many wetlands we rely on for flood control and habitat along major rivers. Now, Illinois wetlands are left vulnerable to developer bulldozers because our state lacks a comprehensive program to protect them. Wetlands act as nature's sponges, improving water quality, providing important flood control, and preserving endangered habitats. Illinois has already lost nearly 90% of our wetlands. In our warming climate and increasing extreme weather, we can't afford to lose any more. Consider asking your legislators to vote 'Yes' and cosponsor SB0771/[HB5386](#), which will protect Illinois wetlands left vulnerable by the US Supreme Court by filling out [this form](#).

Illinois House Bill 1568 Water Recreation Rights

As an angler, you know that the many beautiful streams in Illinois could be much greater recreational assets than they now are. Those streams could provide some of those same memorable, on the water experiences that are available to our neighbors in Wisconsin and Michigan just outside their back-doors. An Illinois Supreme Court decision recently called on the state legislature to reassert the public right to use state waters. The idea is to pass a new law clarifying and modernizing existing rights for river access. [HB4708](#) is the legislation that can get this done. Your help is needed to tell your legislators to support this much needed legislation. Please do it now. [Click here to easily take action in under a minute of your time.](#)

Save the Kish

Despite much opposition, the Woodstock City Council recently approved all of the preliminary measures that will allow the Lennar Riverwoods proposed high-density development along the banks of the Kishwaukee River in Woodstock to go forward. Follow this situation [here](#). But it's not over until it's over. Voice any opposition you may have by emailing the Woodstock City Council at citycouncil@woodstockil.gov and [signing this petition](#).

Additional Action Links

Trout Unlimited is not just about trout angling. [The national founders committed to conservation and preservation when they incorporated in 1959](#). In this spirit, please consider taking a few minutes to explore additional ways to take action:

<https://standup.tu.org/> & <https://www.tu.org/conservation/action-center/>

Bob Olach's Fly of the Month

Golden Pheasant & Peacock Caddis



Awhile back, I saw a picture of this fly but have forgotten the name of it. So, when in doubt, name it after the materials used in the dressing, right?

Caddis flies are pretty much common wherever there are trout, so let's do a really simple Caddis dressing by:

'Wrap the black thread down the hook shank; tie in a small gold wire; tie in strands of peacock herl; wrap the thread back towards the hook eye; wrap the peacock herl forward and secure with the black thread; counter wrap the gold wire over the peacock herl and secure it with the black thread and then fret the wire until it breaks; tie in a clump of Golden Pheasant tippets for the wing; then whip finish and add a drop of head cement.'

If you don't have any Golden Pheasant tippets handy, use a small black hen hackle; a clump of pheasant tail fibers; a starling back feather; a peacock sword, etc. for the wing. If you want to be a little fancy and want a dry fly, use a dry fly hook and tie in a small dry fly hackle in front of the wing!

Here's the materials I used on the pictured flies:

DRESSING

Hook: Daiichi #1550 wet fly hook (sizes 12 - 16)
Thread: Black UNI or silk thread
Body; Green Peacock Herl
Ribbing: Small or Extra Small Gold Wire
Wing: A clump of Golden Pheasant tippets



Grumpy's Page by Kurt Haberl

The invitation that came from Schnoz was rather formal, at least for him. At first I thought he had just hand-written it on index cards, but then I saw that the cards he chose came from his collection of citations from the fire department, and I suspected his other friends may have received an invitation that was originally a police citation. It was not unusual for Schnoz to host an after-season, pre-Christmas gathering, but an actual written invitation seemed ceremonial.

End of season Celebration

Where: Schnoz's patio, come through house to say hello to Huldy and get a drink

When: Sunday, December 1 at 6:00 PM

Why: To celebrate friendship, the end of another fishing season, and the completion of a ritual exorcism of all frustrations from the last year. A donation of tangled leaders, scuffed fly lines, experimental flies, flies that have been ruined by fish, thorns or mis-use, and torn nets would be appreciated. Let us begin a new year with a clean slate free of hard feelings and bad memories. Partners are welcome.

Huldy met Annie and me at the door with our favorites, tea for Annie and an oversized mug of hot cocoa for me with something spicy in it.

"What's this all about?" I asked.

"I don't really know," Huldy said. "He put up something that vaguely looks like a Christmas tree back on the patio, but next to it is just a box of junk instead of presents. Annie, would you carry this tray of cookies and brownies out? I'm going to video this on my phone from the back door. I want to be ready if Jake comes to the front door."

Jake was the local police chief. Huldy had his number, along with fire chief Otto's number on speed dial. I thought Huldy was overreacting, I mean, this was going to be a celebration. When we got back to the patio, I saw that we were last. Besides Schnoz, Wet Curtis and Nancy were there, along with Dewey, Roy the Plumber, Gordon Redd, the author and speaker who had just moved into our chapter, Hook, Line and Sinker Hinkeler, Calamity John, Billy Bob, who bought every new rod or gadget that came out because he could, Ghost Mary and her husband Tom, and Allie Vargas, the newbie from Colorado. They were gathered around the ugliest Christmas tree I have ever seen. It was some kind of cedar, more like a misshapen sticker bush that leaned precariously in its stand and had one side that was completely made up of dead and broken branches.

“Good,” Schnoz said as we stepped out and Annie went around the circle with the tray of cookies and brownies. “Everyone’s here. Friends, I’ve arranged this gathering to celebrate our success and acknowledge our losses. The idea came to me when I was reading a book about Druids and their rituals for the good of the community.”

“Pagans?” Wet Curtis said. “You’re now a pagan?”

“He’s always been a pagan,” I said. “The kindest one I’ve ever known.”

“I’m more of an animist,” Schnoz said. “Look it up. Anyway, I’d like to get rid of all the bad vibes of the year, so I asked you to bring anything broken or useless to hang on the tree.”

I saw that the tree was already partially decorated with several birds’ nests of leaders hanging from the dead branches, along with drooping tippets with flies still attached.

“Wait a second,” Ghost Mary said. “This tree looks awfully familiar. Is this the cedar that guards the only casting spot below Farmer Farmer’s house at the Oxbow Curve?”

“*Exactomundo*,” Schnoz said. “This is the tree that has captured dozens of our flies and worn tippets like medals. It has been the bane of my days at Farmer Farmer’s.”

“You cut down Farmer Farmer’s tree?” I said. “Does he know about this?”

“Not yet,” Schnoz said. “I don’t think he really liked this stickery thing anyway. One time he told me it was ugly.”

“It is ugly,” Roy the Plumber said, “but Farmer Farmer is really generous about us fishing on his land, and I wouldn’t want to offend him.”

“I sent him a big box of chocolates,” Schnoz said. “It should get there tomorrow, along with some kind of fancy bourbon. It’ll be fine. Anyway, it’s time for all of you to decorate the tree with any bad memories, ruined fly lines, or useless flies you brought.”

Schnoz bent over and took several knotted tangles of monofilament from his box and strung them on the tree, then added one of his hats that had been trampled on by cows at Farmer Farmers, and finally, an old landing net he had splintered on rocks when he lost a fish. I added some experimental flies that chased fish away, and saw Curtis loop a broken wading staff on a dead branch. Several others added leaders, flies, and other broken or useless gear while Schnoz unfolded two fireproof blankets and spread them out around the base of the tree.

“Wait a second,” Dewey said, taking two of the tangled leaders with old flies still attached, “do you mind if I take these. I think they’re still good.”

“Sure,” Schnoz said. “Okay, I think we’re ready.” He gave Gordon a fire extinguisher just in case, and then said, “I almost forgot something.” He pulled his phone out and punched a speed dial number, then said, “Hey, Otto, it’s Schnoz. Could you do me a big favor? Are you in the office at the fire station? Great. Go to the second drawer to the left by the computer and bring one of those 278 forms over to my house. Yes, the citation for an unauthorized fire. Is it still a fifty dollar fine? Okay, whatever. Thanks.”

“Honey,” I heard Huldy say from the back door. It sounded like she was afraid. She raised her phone and began recording.

“Here we go,” Schnoz said, taking a lighter from the empty box. He clicked the trigger and held the flame to the lowest branch while we all stood there, speechless and dumb-founded.

The tree quickly went up in crackling flames. Schnoz started laughing. I looked at Gordon, who held his fire extinguisher at the ready and shrugged at me. The leader tangles and tippets melted first. Then the plastic fly lines smoked and melted. Next, Schnoz’s broken landing net caught fire and burned with many colors caused by its varnish. Finally, Wet Curtis’s carbon fiber wading staff began to bubble, melt, and turn into something like a molting snake, wrapping itself around several branches, alternately glowing and smoking.

“We should sing something,” Allie said.

“I think the only Druid among us should use some incantation to get rid of all the bad vibes,” Roy the Plumber said, looking at Schnoz.

Playing along like the fifth grader he was just under the surface, Schnoz wiggled his fingers at the burning trunk and began to recite, “Hocus pocus, big bad smokus, never bother fishers again, for if you do...”

“We’ll burn you too,” Allie said.

“And that will be the end of you,” Schnoz said, “again.”

Wet Curtis and Ghost Mary put their heads in their hands. Mary’s shoulders began to shake with uncontrollable laughter. In a few minutes, the trunk was reduced to a mere foot high smoldering stump. Schnoz took it out of the Christmas tree stand, carried it over to a puddle at the back of his yard, and tossed it in to watch it sizzle.

That’s when Otto the fire chief appeared behind Huldy and called out, “Schnoz, I brought your unauthorized fire form.”

Schnoz hurried back to the patio, took the form, and began filling it out.

“All you’ll have to do is sign it,” Schnoz said to Otto, “and I can give it to the police chief and pay the fine.”

“Wait,” Gordon said. “You’re filling out your own illegal fire citation?”

“Just saving time,” Schnoz said. “I’ve seen this form often.”

“Why don’t you just arrest yourself,” I said, “and save even more time.”

“I tried that last year, but Jake, being Chief of Police, got really mad because he got chewed out for a self arrest made by an amateur who didn’t even read himself his rights. My judge is George Lane and he’s a real stickler for details and he told Jake the citizens were paying good money for arrests made by a professional, not some amateur. Every time I go before Judge George he brings up something I never thought of, and sometimes he tells me to get out of his court and sometimes he fines me double. Maybe I should ask for a change of venue or at least a different judge. The last time I went before him, he was so mad he ignored me completely. He looked at Huldy and said, ‘Huldy, what happened?’ Anyway, I’ve filled out the form, Otto, so all you have to do is sign it.”

“I’m not signing that,” Otto said.

“Why not?”

“It says you burned an unauthorized fire. Where’s the fire?”

“We burned it,” Schnoz said. He pointed to the middle of his patio where there were two fire blankets around an empty Christmas tree stand.

“I don’t see any fire,” Otto said.

“But I’ve got witnesses,” Schnoz said.

“Not me,” I said. “I didn’t see nuthin’.”

“Me neither,” said everyone else in turn, except Mary, who was laughing so hard, it sounded like most of her drink was about to come out her nose. Then I noticed Huldy stopped recording and hid her phone in the pocket of her apron. Gordon put the fire extinguisher behind his back.

Fire Chief Otto turned around and walked back through Schnoz and Huldy’s house.

“I don’t know what to say,” Schnoz mumbled.

“Just thank your guests for coming,” Huldy said.

“Wouldn’t miss it,” Ghost Mary said. “This next season is going to be the best one ever. I’m sure of it.”

“I call dibs on the Oxbow Curve at Farmer Farmer’s stream,” Wet Curtis said. “First outing.”

“Second,” said Schnoz. “Just so I get to fish it before Grumpy.” That started an argument about who would fish it next and what flies should be used and if there should be a pool or a trophy for the fisher who landed the largest fish out of the Oxbow Curve. Mary was right. It was going to be the best season ever.

Upcoming Non-Chapter Events

- [Chicagoland Fishing Expo](#) - Schaumburg, IL - January 23-26, 2025 (be sure to visit the ILTU booth!)
- [2025 TU Driftless Area Symposium](#) - La Crosse, WI, - Feb 25-27, 2025 ([agenda](#))
- [2025 TU Annual Members Meeting and CX3 Event](#) - St. Paul, MN - September 24-28, 2025
- [IF4](#) 2024 screenings in the region:
 - [UW Center for Civic Engagement, Stewart Avenue, Wausau, WI](#) - February 5, 2025
 - [Laack's Tavern & Ballroom, County Road JM, Sheboygan Falls, WI](#) - March 9, 2025
 - The Park Center, U.S. 63, Hayward, WI - April 5, 2025
 - [Hotel Winneshiek, East Water Street, Decorah, IA](#) - April 26, 2025
 - [Starlite 14 Drive In, Richland Center, WI](#) - June 6, 2025
- [Fly Fishing Film Tour](#) (F3T) 2024/2025 screenings in the region:
 - [Varsity Cinema, Des Moines, IA](#) - March 8, 2025
 - [Barrymore Theatre, Madison, WI](#) - March 21, 2025
 - [Davis Theater, Chicago, IL](#) - April 1, 2025
 - [Gorton Center, Lake Forest, IL](#) - April 6, 2025

- Cedar Rapids, IA - TBD
- *Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing* (PHWFF) - Ongoing (click [here](#) to get involved)
- *Fly tying with NIFTY*

Chapter Officers

President:	Brent Burval prez@leewulfftu.org
Vice-President:	Jerry Sapp sapp375@aol.com
Secretary:	Scott Lammers secretary@leewulfftu.org
Treasurer:	Jerry Ward treasurer@leewulfftu.org

Join Trout Unlimited



When joining Trout Unlimited (TU) at the national level, TU automatically assigns you to a local chapter based on your Zip Code and [this chapter boundaries map](#).

If not already a TU member, [click here to join TU for as little as \\$17.50 for your first year](#).

Already a TU member but not assigned to the Lee Wulff chapter? Call TU customer service at 1-800-834-2419 and make the switch to the Lee Wulff chapter (#448) today!