



Fly Lines and By-Lines

Lee Wulff Chapter of Trout Unlimited - A local chapter of America's leading nonprofit organization committed to the conservation, protection, and restoration of North American coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.

See us at: <http://www.leewulfftu.org>

March 2015 President's Message

Hello to all Lee Wulff members!

It's March 7, 2015- opening day for fly fishermen in Wisconsin! Ahh! Finally the day has arrived! We all have been doing our best to beat the winter doldrums, and winter has been doing a good job beating us up. But things are looking up. Temperatures are expected to climb into a sweltering 50 degrees by next week! For us mid-western hardy souls this is a heat wave!! We all have been waiting with much anticipation for steelhead and early trout season.

I have actually been out in the snow and cold on some moving water myself over the past 3 weeks or so, correcting my stale casting habits and unraveling my tailing loops. I couldn't stand one more day indoors trying to row to nowhere on that rowing machine at the gym! Wading and casting outdoors beats any workout in a gym for me!

Just to let everyone know, there are a couple of neat events coming up this month. Saturday March 14 & 15 is one of the largest fly fishing shows in the Midwest. It's the 2015 Midwest Fly Fishing Expo, held in Warren Michigan. This will be my first year attending the show, and I'm told it's really terrific. If you want to check it out, the web site is <http://midwestflyfishingexpo.com>.

Also the weekend of March 28 is the first ever Driftless Area One Fly Contest in Viroqua! On Saturday 10 teams will be competing in this event. A couple of our own chapter members will be participating. Some of my buddies from the Women's Fly fishing clinic will also be there to compete! The rest of us who are making the trek up plan on having some great fun (hopefully sneaking in some fishing too), cheering our members and friends along, and enjoying the local entertainment and spirits. As far as I know, this contest will be held regardless of the weather. So ask Mother Nature to be kind to the folks in Viroqua that weekend!

The newsletter lists some other upcoming events, so please be sure to check it out. Jerry is still hosting fly tying classes at Cabelas on Tuesday evenings. He's a phenomenal tyer and superb instructor. There is no charge for the classes.

An important note: For those of you considering attending the May outing to Fennimore and wanting to stay at the Fenway House Hotel (restaurant: The Silent Woman): Please note the hotel is holding all the rooms in the hotel for our group until April 15. After April 15 we cannot guarantee you will be able to reserve a room, as the hotel will then be opening up reservations to the public. So please make those reservations soon!

I urge as many of you who can make the March meeting to attend! It will warm your hearts and inspire many of you to become more involved. If you only make one meeting this spring, please come in March. Bob Becker and Beth Harner, who are managing our Trout in the Classroom and summer Youth Program, will be presenting a power point program you don't want to miss! Our chapter is involved in many functions, but this program is one of the most rewarding and amazing things we do. Come learn more about what happens with these kids. Consider getting involved in working with these folks this year. The youth program lasts only a few short weeks in the summer, but it is one the best investments of time! You will see and hear many stories of lives changed by the experience-- for both the kids and the members who have participated!

SAVE THE DATE! We will be hosting a May family outing and picnic on Saturday, May 2, 2015. This will be our May chapter "meeting". We wanted to do something a bit different this year so that our spouses and families could also be included. Mark your calendars now. It will be held in the afternoon from approximately 2 p.m. until dusk. Location and further details to follow.

Happy fishing to everyone! See you at the meeting!

Meg

The finest gift you can give any fisherman is to put a good fish back, and who knows if the fish that you caught isn't someone else's gift to you.

-Lee Wulff

Our March Meeting Speakers - Bob Becker and Beth Harner

The presentation will be on our Lee Chapter Youth Programs including Trout in the Classroom, hosted by Bob Becker and Beth Harner

Where We Meet

**Village Pizza and Pub
145 N. Kennedy Drive
Carpentersville, IL**

Social Hour: 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. with 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 Scott Roane at royalwulff01@yahoo.com by Tuesday Mar. 17th so we know how many pizzas to preorder.

Dreading the Winter doldrums, the snow, the cold, the long weekends with no fishing?? Here's a few upcoming fishing events.

Jerry Sapp from Lee Wulff will teach Fly tying classes starting on Tuesday Feb. 13th at Cabela's in Hoffman Estates. Class runs from 6 to 8 pm every Tuesday.

Classes will continue through March. This year we are using a different camera and hopefully things will be clearer.

Schedule:

Mar. 17 Hoppers with a twist

Mar. 24 Ants and Crickets

Mar. 31 Deer hair spinning demonstration

HERE IS WHAT YOU HAVE BEEN WAITING.. FOR A CHANCE TO HELP!

The Southern Wisconsin Chapter of TU has their first workday of the year on Saturday, March 14 on Pleasant Valley Branch along Dane County Rd H, about 1 1/2 miles south of County Rd. A. They will be finishing the stretch of the stream where we last left off. A map for this location can be found by clicking on this link: <http://binged.it/1C9hu26>

When: Saturday, March 14, 2015 from 9 a.m. to Noon

What: Willow and invasive brush removal to benefit trout stream habitat. Also friendly camaraderie, donuts, coffee, hot cocoa and a chance to give back to the resource!

Where: Pleasant Valley Branch Creek - Take Hwy 151 west out of Madison, on the west side of Mt. Horeb take Hwy 78 south 6.5 miles to Dane County Road H, turn left (south) on Cty Rd.H, Cty Rd. H will join Cty Rd A in 2 miles, turn left and in 1/2 mile H turns right. Our work site is about 1 1/2 miles south of Cyt Rd A on Cty Rd. H. You could also take Hwy 69 south out of Verona to Cty Rd A (8.5 miles), turn right (west) and follow Cty Rd A all the way to Cty Rd H (14.8 miles), and turn left (south) and go 1 1/2 miles. See the map link above.

Bring: Work gloves, loppers, and hand saws if you have them; otherwise the chapter has equipment you can use. Waders and rubber boots are suggested as we will be working on both sides of the stream. If you don't have any, you can work on the road side of the stream.

Parking: Park on the east side of the road.

If you have questions or think you can help, please contact Jim Hess (608-288-8662, jim.hess@tds.net) so we can get a volunteer count estimate.

Thank you. We look forward to seeing you there!

Future SWTU Work Days

Saturday, April 4

Saturday, April 25

Saturday, May 9

Another Opportunity To Get Out Of The House And Help Out!!

Lee Wulff Chapter work day on the upper West Fork of the Kickapoo with Blackhawk chapter . We will be clearing brush and removing beaver dams on Sat. April 11. A previous note on Face book indicated a week earlier but the date was changed. Blackhawk chapter will provide food. The only equipment necessary are boots and gloves. Hopefully a backhoe will be available to take out the dams but just in case a pole with a hook or grip at one end would be helpful to bring along.

I will have room for 3 in my van going up on Friday the 8th. Interested give me a call at 847 284 4824.

Jerry Sapp

Wa Wa Sum Survey Results

Listed below are the questions from the survey and the analysis by question. *In italics is my response/explanation of some of the comments.*

- Have you ever attended the Wa Wa Sum Outing? 57% yes-43% no.
- If no, please tell us why? Two respondents thought it was too expensive, too far and too much time away from home.
- Would you care to car pool? 13% yes-33% yes and they would drive-54% no.
- Do you like the way meals are done? 81% yes-19% no.

One negative response was that the quality of the food had declined.

- Are the times for the meals alright (8:00 breakfast/5:30 dinner)? 71% yes-29% no.

Some would like to have breakfast earlier and I think this could be done, especially doing our own meals. If you're going to go on a float trip with a guide and will miss dinner a plate can be placed in the refrigerator for you if you ask us to do so. Some would like to eat earlier and some later. Keep in mind with daylight savings time sunset is usually around 9:15 pm. Eating at 5:30 should be acceptable but here again if you plan on traveling a far distance a plate can be made for you.

- In an attempt to keep expenses down do you think it would be a good idea to look into doing some of our own meals? 28% yes-33% yes and I can help-39% no.

The negative response was based on not saving much, but the estimated savings of 1/3 is sizable.

- Do you think it's a good idea to have a program/presentation on Sunday morning during breakfast? 59% yes-41% no.

We don't have a program every year but if there is an opportunity to have someone of interest join us it's usually informative.

- Have you ever done any other activities while on this outing that you thought were interesting? 38% yes-62% no.

With the majority of responses negative I think it's because folks don't know what's available. Some of the things others have done is to visit, Hartwick Pines State Park which offers a stand of virgin white pines, a logging museum, hiking trails, bike trails and a visitor center, visit the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) museum in Roscommon and the Kirkland warbler spotting site, Michigan's rarest bird and the Main Branch Gallery in downtown Grayling. Also, if you want to take a day trip, Mackinaw City is approximately 85 miles north and once there you can take a ferry to Mackinaw Island.

- Do you have any other comments or suggestions concerning this outing? 47% yes-53% no. *Negative responses were primarily in relation to the quality of fishing.*

You do have to work a little harder and smarter. Fishing in the evening is the prime time, especially if there is a hatch. We may try a buddy system the first or second day (half a day) but keep in mind that the goals our of outings are to provide the opportunity to enjoy a safe and pleasant experience

Gordon Rudd 815/245-2425 mchenryflyfisher@sbcglobal.net

Upcoming Outings

Early Spring Outing/April 24th-26th 2015/Viroqua, WI

This the first outing of the year. It takes place in one of the finest trout fishing areas of the Country, known as the Driftless Area. A block of rooms have been reserved at the Vernon Inn in Viroqua (Toll free: 800-501-0664). Let them know you're with the Lee Wulff group when you make your reservation.

Some will be camping at the West Fork Sportsmans Club in Avalanche, WI. You must be a member to camp and the cost for membership is currently \$10 per year. The campground does not take reservations unless you are going to rent one of the two cabins they have.

This area includes the famed West Fork of the Kickapoo, Timber Coulee and Camp Creek to only mention a few. The early WI season is open only to catch and release fishing. We offer, to current Lee Wulff members, an opportunity to spend some time with an experienced member. So, if you're new to the area, new to fly fishing or would like to hook up with, and spend some time with, an experienced member this is the trip for you. You must RSVP to Gordon Rudd at 815/245-2425 or mchenryflyfisher@sbcglobal.net no later than April 16th for the Buddy System. If there is a work project scheduled the Buddy System will be rescheduled. The Buddy System takes place Saturday morning until noon.

A group dinner is scheduled at the Old Towne Inn, located northwest of Viroqua on Route 14 in Westby, WI. Dinner reservations are at 7:30 PM for Friday and Saturday and individuals are responsible for their own meals and libations.

There is a great fly shop in Viroqua called the [Driftless Angler](#) owned by Mat Wagner and Geri Meyer. Guide service is available by calling 608/637-8779

Other local contacts are: □

Bob Blumreich-Silver Doctor Fly Fishing - at silverdoctor.net or by calling 608/637-3417

Rich Osthoff -***Signature Flies***- at richosthoff.com or by calling 608/847-5192 □

Viroqua is located approximately 2 hours northwest of Madison, WI on Route 14.

May 15-17 2015 - Fennimore, WI



The second outing takes place in the Southwest part of Wisconsin, again in the Driftless Area. A block of rooms have been reserved at The Fenway House Hotel (608-822-3782). Room rates: \$74-\$84/night. If we can guarantee 10 rooms we all will receive the group discount of 10% . Cancellation policy: 24 hours

Rooms vary in size and # of beds. There are 6 double bed rooms. A couple of the other rooms have jacuzzi's available (\$84/night). There is one room available with 2 rooms, including a living space and kitchen for \$99.00/night. **To guarantee your room, the hotel recommends booking by April 15. After April 15 the hotel will be opened to the public for any remaining rooms.**

Call 1-608-822-3782 or email reservations@thesilentwoman.com

Members are responsible for finding their own roommate, if they want one, and making their own reservations. Make sure to let them know that you are with the Lee Wulff Chapter of TU.

Camping is not readily available however there is a campground, Klondyke Secluded Acres located at 6656 Pine Know Rd., Lancaster, WI (608-723-2844). This is approximately 10 miles southwest of Fennimore. They have improved sites as well as tent sites with pay showers.

There are many great trout streams, with easy access, in this part of the state. Some to mention include The Big Green, Castle Rock, Doc Smith, Crooked Creek the Blue and Big Spring. These streams have sizeable trout populations and sizeable fish.

Fennimore is located approximately 1 1/2 hours west of Madison.

A group dinner is scheduled at The Silent Woman restaurant, located in the hotel. Dinner reservations are for 7:30 PM and individuals are responsible for their own meals and libations. No group dinner is planned for Friday evening.

Wa Wa Sum Outing

June 3-7 2015 - Grayling, MI



This is an excellent outing to the historic rustic lodge owned by Michigan State University and situated on the banks of the “Holy Waters” of the famed Au Sable River. This location is a short walk upstream from the very spot upon which Trout Unlimited was founded. The outing includes four nights lodging and fabulous fishing *opportunities* on the Au Sable and Manistee Rivers. Wa Wa Sum lodge is located just east of Grayling and it takes approximately 7 hours to drive there from the Chicago area. ***New this year-We will be doing our own meals this year in an attempt to reduce the costs. Everyone is being asked to sign up for kitchen help; cooking or cleaning.***

The cost for this outing is estimated at \$225. A non-refundable deposit is of \$50 is required to reserve you spot and the balance is due by May 15th. As stated, this is a rustic lodge, and you need to bring your own bed linens (sleeping bag & pillow) along with towel and washcloth.

Guided float trips are very popular, but hard to get this time of year. So, if you think this is something you’d like to do make your reservations early. Some fly shops to consider;

Gates Au Sable Lodge, www.gateslodge.com 989/348-8462

Old Au Sable Fly Shop, www.oldausable.com 989/343-3330

Fuller’s North Branch Outing Club www.fullersnboc.com 989/348-7951

To RSVP or for more information on any of these outings, contact Gordon Rudd at 815/245-2425 or mchenryflyfisher@sbcglobal.net

Late Spring Outing

June 26-28 2015 - Viroqua, WI



This is the fourth outing of the year. It takes place in one of the finest trout fishing areas of the Country known as the Driftless Area. A block of rooms have been reserved at the Vernon Inn in Viroqua (**Toll free:** 800-501-0664). Let them know you're with the Lee Wulff group when you make your reservation.

Some will be camping at the West Fork Sportsmans Club in Avalanche, WI. You must be a member to camp and the cost for membership is currently \$10 per year. The campground does not take reservations unless you are going to rent one of the two cabins they have.

This area includes the famed West Fork of the Kickapoo, Timber Coulee and Camp Creek to only mention a few. The early WI season is open only to catch and release fishing. A group dinner is scheduled at the Old Towne Inn, located northwest of Viroqua on Route 14 in Westby, WI. Dinner reservations are at 7:30 PM for Friday and Saturday and individuals are responsible for their own meals and libations. There is a great fly shop in Viroqua called the [Driftless Angler](#) owned by Mat Wagner and Geri Meyer. Guide service is available by calling 608/637-8779

Other local contacts are:

Bob Blumreich-Silver Doctor Fly Fishing - at silverdoctor.net or by calling 608/637-3417

Rich Osthoff -***Signature Flies***- at richosthoff.com or by calling 608/847-5192

Viroqua is located approximately 2 hours northwest of Madison, WI on Route 14.

Salmon Outing - September 15th to 18th. 2015 - Walhalla, MI

Details to be announced

Bob is taking a spring break so please enjoy this article from the past

“The Trio” by Bob Olach

For those Lee Wulffers who have fished with me, you know that I **ALWAYS** start fishing by tying my version of a Crackleback onto my leader and then tying (onto the hook bend of the Crackleback) either a Pink Squirrel nymph (thank you, John Bethke) or a BHPTSH (bead head pheasant tail) nymph approx. 24” behind of the Crackleback. The Crackleback serves as both a dry fly and also as a strike indicator should a fish take the sunken nymph, thus doubling my chance of success with each cast (as compared when using only one fly alone).

Since the Wisconsin early trout season starts this month, I’ll probably start off the same way each day before switching off to one of the “many” soft hackled dressings that I’ve been tying since the season ended last September. For those who want to try the same three flies this year, the following information tells what I’ve been using in tying these three flies.



Crackleback

Hook: Daiichi #1190 – Dry Fly Barbless sizes 12 - 14

Silk: Pearsall Gossamer Silk – Black

Body: Light Olive – (Hareline – Pale Evening Dun)
Light Yellow – (Hareline – Pale Watery Dun)

Back Spine: Two Strands of green peacock herl

Hackle: 5 1/2 - 6 turns of brown dry fly hackle

Treatment: A drop of “Watershed” and then dried overnight

***Pink Squirrel Nymph**

Hook: Mustad #3906 wet fly hook – sizes 12 - 14.

Thread: Black poly or Pearsall Gossamer silk.

Body: “Touch dubbed” Fox Squirrel body fur mixed with Amber Antron and Olive Ice dubbing.

Ribbing: Red copper wire

Tail: Rainbow / Pearl Krystal Flash

Thorax: Fluorescent Pink Chenille

** Note: As stated in last month’s write-up, you can read the article written by John Bethke on how-to-tie the **REAL** Pink Squirrel nymph. The website for JB’s article is: <http://www.couleeregiontu.org/Tips.html>*

BH Pheasant Tail Soft-Hackled Nymph

Hook: Daiichi #1550 or 1560 sizes 12 - 16

Silk: Pearsall Gossamer Silk -Orange or Brown

Body: Pheasant Tail herl

Ribbing: Gold Ultra wire

Thorax / Weight: Gold Cyclops bead head or 10 wraps of gold ultra wire

Hackle: Natural Partridge (Brown or gray hackles seem to be equally effective)

***On Fly Fishing** – “Here’s a guy standing in cold water up to his liver throwing the world’s most expensive clothesline at trees.”*

- P.J. O’Rourke, 1988

Do they work? Take a look at **Bob Olach** from early last spring and the beautiful rainbow he caught. He won't say where; he won't say on what, but those of us who have fished with him know he pretty much confines himself to soft hackles, Bethke's Pink Squirrels, and Cracklebacks. Since Bob releases all his catches, this beauty is still out there somewhere





Grumpy's Page by Kurt Haberl

Opening Day - 2015

"There's been a change in plans," Schnoz said, as he opened the trunk of his beat-up troutmobile for my waders, favorite rod and gear.

"Afraid of the cold?" I said, ready to point out that his nasal ventilation system would be a problem in temperatures just above freezing, and walking on the lingering snow with a strong sun reflecting on it could actually sunburn the *inside* of his nose.

"No, I got a phone call. Do you remember Old Ben Waverly?"

"Yes, he was one of the best in the chapter. Isn't he in a home somewhere?"

"Yes, and we're going to do something nice for a change."

"Is Huldy making you?"

"No. She doesn't know. This is just us being decent."

"I'm all for it. We certainly can use the practice, and it might be a good way to start off the season."

He made a pit stop at the local donut shop and bought three coffees and a dozen donuts, then made a series of twists and turns until he pulled into the carport of Wisteria Lodge. Ben stood at the curb, wrapped from head to toe in wool, earflaps, goose down, and a gardener's knee boots. A young attendant shivered next to him, her dark hair blowing in the spring chill. She had apparently been reciting rules to him, because all he said was a series of, "Yes, Sweetie, of course, Honey, I'll remember, Dolly, no, we won't get arrested, and we'll be back before dark."

"Heck," Schnoz muttered. "Poor Ben. This is worse than being married."

I noticed that Ben didn't have any gear and I got mentally prepared to lend him mine, but I noticed by the disjointed, creaking way he got into the back seat that he might not be up to wading and fishing.

"Ah, yes," Ben said, "she loves me, Miss Angela. They all do. Still, it's pretty good to get away from Hysteria Ledge once in a while. Schnoz, did you make Grumpy swear?"

"No," Schnoz said. "He doesn't know."

"Okay," Ben said. "Grumpy raise your right hand, put your left hand in your lap and repeat after me. Upon the pain of losing important anatomical appendages..." He waited for me to repeat the words. "I solemnly swear that the information... along with its customs will be held in secret as an inheritance ... until such time that I am too shaky to tie on a size 18 midge or too unsteady to wade ... when I will pass along this secret to a carefully chosen, worthy heir ... and make him or her swear under penalty of bodily disfigurement ... to pass along this sacred tradition to, let's see, you guys are the fourth generation. Hm, yes, it started with Old Johnny Lepp, then my grandfather, then me, and now you. Do you swear?"

"I swear," I said.

"Aren't you going to fish, Ben?" I asked.

"No. Knees too wobbly for the water, and I got arthur-itis in both shoulders."

Ben unbuttoned three layers of down, fleece, and wool and took out two Christmas cards, giving one to each of us. Inside he had written rather complicated directions such as, *Take highway P for three miles, turn left on Owl Trail or at what's left of the red barn, then cross two bridges and turn onto the tractor path by the rock outcropping that looks like a sitting*

buddha, and so on. The rest is secret. We ended up in the middle of nowhere, and I'd never be able to find it again without Ben's Christmas card. I'm not sure how far we drove because Old Ben has always been so interesting, so the only way to measure the drive is to say it lasted for a large coffee and three donuts.

"Stop," Ben suddenly called out. We were at the corner of an overgrown field, and I couldn't see water anywhere. He rolled down his window and looked wistfully toward the field and a single tree standing like a sentinel near the remains of a stone smoke house. "There she is," he said. "It's a black walnut. My father planted it over 70 years ago, when I was just a stripling. It's the end of the road."

Schnoz peered ahead at what looked like a bog. It was the end of the road.

"Well," I said.

"Well, now we walk," Ben said. "Schnoz, put on your waders, just in case you have to step into the water. You probably won't get that far, but we'll see. Bring your rod. Next year on opening day, it will be Grumpy's turn. If I can, I'll go along to make sure you do things right. Doing it right ... matters."

We followed a scrubby tree line for a few hundred yards. Ben smiled at me when I gave him my wading staff as he shuffled over uneven ground. We entered a small copse of pine, maple, and bent oak. We walked at Ben's pace for another twenty minutes.

"My father sold the farm almost 50 years ago, but I don't think the owner made a go of it. I inherited this wood. Nobody would want to buy it and it's probably not even on the tax rolls, at least I never got a bill. I own this stretch about 50 yards wide and half a mile long."

We left the woods and crossed a dry gully toward a large, broken willow. Below it was bathroom-sized pool tangled with fallen branches that made it completely unfishable.

"Grandpa's spring," Ben said. We followed a foot-wide rivulet down a hill and along a sandstone cliff about twenty feet high. When we came to another outcropping, Ben paused and took a deep breath. He walked slowly then, expectantly, silently, like he was entering a church. We came to a cobblestone beach and beyond it, a beautiful pool about twenty feet wide and forty feet long up against the cliff. Beyond the pool, the stream narrowed into a chute that babbled and disappeared under many years of falling timber. I shivered - partly from the opening-day cold, and partly from - I don't know what.

"Put a midge on," Ben said, "size 18 or smaller. Do you have a zebra?"

"Yes." Schnoz strung his rod, managed to thread the midge and tied his improved clinch knot.

"Okay," Ben said. "Now we're going to say hello to Old Ben. I named him after myself. Before him was Pappy 2, and before him was Pappy 1, then Johnny 3 and Johnny 2, and so on. I'm not sure how far back. Someday there'll be a Schnoz and then a Grumpy. Do you see that patch of moss halfway down on the cliff?"

"Yes."

"Just below it is a ledge, and the water goes pretty deep. Forget the weedy side and just cast to the moss. Let it sink."

Schnoz stripped out some line, checked behind him, and made a decent early-season cast just short of the moss.

"Again," Ben said.

Schnoz stripped out a little more line and rolled the midge to the moss hanging from the ledge.

"Ready?" Ben said.

Within seconds, a large swirl showed a take. The rod bent like it was snagged, then the line tore downstream, veered back toward the ledge, and then the water exploded as a large brown jumped and eyed the intruders. It was at least six pounds and splashed the pool like a cannonball had fallen in.

"Hello, old friend," Ben said. "Glad you're still here."

The fish raced toward us and Schnoz quit the reel and stripped in line as fast as he could.

"Do you have a barb on the hook?" Ben said.

"I think I pinched it down."

"Probably doesn't matter," Ben said. The fish began to bulldoze and burrow toward the ledge and its lie. Schnoz pulled his rod down to the right, holding on as much as he could. The fish left the ledge, headed straight toward us and jumped again. He seemed even bigger this time, and the spray landed at our feet.

"Should I wade in?" Schnoz said. I noticed a quiver in his voice.

"If you want," Ben said. "Won't matter."

Schnoz took a step into the water and pulled his net from his back. He leaned into the fish and managed to direct it toward the cobblestones. The great fish saw either Schnoz or the net, did not like what he saw, and tore down in a great bulge of water to the bottom of the pool and a snag. There was nothing Schnoz could do. For a moment the line remained taut, then went limp and Schnoz reeled it in, the leader broken off at the tippet.

I thought Schnoz was going to cry. Ben smiled and then broke out in great guffaws of laughter. He bent over, slapped his knee, and then pounded the wading staff into the water like a little kid splashing a puddle. He looked ten years younger.

"Well done," Ben said. "You and Old Ben both did real good."

"Now what?" I asked. "Are there more more fish in there?"

"Dunno'," Ben said. "After we say hello to Old Ben, we wave and go home until next year's opening day. Them's the rules."

He looked us both right in the eye.

"You swore," he reminded us. "You will not dishonor yourselves or me or my pappy. You hear?"

He poked Schnoz's knee with the wading staff.

"I understand," Schnoz said.

"I understand," I repeated.

Ben saluted Old Ben and let out a big sigh.

"Okay," he said. "That was as good as it's ever been. I think that will get me through another year. How about you?"

Schnoz nodded but didn't say anything. I could see his hands were still shaking.

"Oh, I almost forgot," Ben said. "You got a dollar?"

Schnoz patted his waders stupidly and shook his head. I took out my wallet and gave one to Ben. He opened several layers of his bundling, took out an envelope, and gave it to me. "Here's the deed to this property. It's got both your names on it. Take care of it." I took the envelope, but he did not let go. "Take care of it," he said again, and I nodded. He took a long look at the snags at the bottom of the pool, let out another great laugh, slapped the wading staff into the water, then turned and began to amble back to the car. Twice more on the way back, he stopped and broke out into great snorts of laughter. It was nice to know Ben would make it through another year.

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

PPS: You Are Welcome.