



March 2020 President's Message

Greetings fellow members! Welcome to Spring (almost). Looks like the worst of Winter is behind us and we can start getting back on the stream. Soon the bugs will be hatching and fish will be looking for that big meal after the long Winter.

As most of you know, COVID-19 (coronavirus) has captured most of the news the last few weeks. Although the US hasn't seen the impact that they have seen in Europe or Asia, the CDC predicts that the US will see an increase of cases in the near future. With that in mind, we have decided to cancel the March chapter meeting based on recommendations from TU national to keep our members safe. We hope that this will settle down so we can come back for our meeting in April featuring Jason Randall.

Our Trout in the Classroom fish are doing well and looking forward to getting to their new home in Fox Bluff and Kinnickinnick Conservation Area. We are getting closer to the kickoff of Fishin' So Fly so if you can volunteer please let Bob Meschewski know. Jerry will let us know if we have the opportunity to do any work out at Fox Bluff but as of now everything is on hold. Jerry also says that we are still going to try and get together on March 22nd and 28th out at White Pines State Park for those that are interested to fish for the rainbows that will be planted there. Yeah they are stocked but they're still fun to catch! Gordon told me that the outing the weekend of April 24th, 25th and 26th is still on but we will monitor the progress of COVID-19 later in April.

Stay safe everyone and follow the CDC guidelines to prevent COVID-19. See you all at the April meeting!

Tight lines,
Bob

Conservation News - Jerry Sapp

Spring Trout catch and release season at White Pine and Apple River Canyon opens March 21. We will have Lee Wulff members out at White Pines on March 22 (Sunday) and March 28 (Saturday) to help you. Email sapp375@aol.com to check on water and weather conditions. If you are inexperienced or would like to catch a lot of fish to start the season, here is your chance. The workday on March 26 has been cancelled by Mc Henry County Conservation District due to Corona concerns. This is the latest casualty of the outbreak, stay healthy my friends.

Upcoming Spring Lee Wulff Fishing Trips

Note from Gordon Rudd: Due to the cancellation of our March meeting if anyone wants to sign up for any of the outings send me an email; mchenryflyfisher@gmail.com.

2020 Early Spring Outing April 24th-26th - Viroqua, WI

This is our annual outing to Southwest WI in the Driftless area. Our Chapter will gather at the Vernon Inn in Viroqua, WI. For reservations call 800/501-0664. Let them know you are with the Lee Wulff Chapter of Trout Unlimited as a block of rooms has been reserved. Members are responsible for finding their own roommate, if they want one, and making their own reservations. Also, there's the Old Towne Motel in Westby, no association with the restaurant, Logan Mill Lodge and Central Express in Westby. Only the Vernon Inn has blocked rooms.

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 \$30 per year. The campground does not take reservations unless you are going to rent the cabin they have. www.westforksportsmansclub.org for more information. **Because of the severe flooding last fall check to make sure they are open before arriving.**

This area includes the famed West Fork of the Kickapoo, Timber Coulee, Bishops Branch, Tainter Creek and Elk Creek to mention only a few. The early WI season is open only to catch and release. 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.

Dinner is scheduled at the Old Towne Inn, located northwest of Viroqua on Route 14 in Westby, WI. Dinner reservations are at **7:15** PM Friday and Saturday and individuals are responsible for their own

meals and libations. We will be seated as soon as our table is ready.

There is a great fly shop in Viroqua called the Driftless Angler owned by Mat Wagner and Geri Meyer, www.driftlessangler.com 608/637-8779. Guide service is available from them as well as from the following guides.

-) Dave Barron, Jacquish Hollow Angler, 608-604-6690 dbarron@wicw.net
-) Jim Bartel, Spring Creek Specialties, 608-206-5651 jimbartelt@yahoo.com
-) Rich Osthoff - 608/847-5192
-) Some books of interest for this outings include; No Hatch to Match by Rich Osthoff
-) Fly Fishing Midwestern Spring Creeks by Ross Mueller
-) Exploring Wisconsin Trout Streams-The Angler's Guide by Steve Born
-) Flyfisher's Guide to Wisconsin & Iowa by John Motoviloff
-) Wisconsin Atlas & Gazetteer by DeLorme.

Viroqua is located approximately 4 ½ hours from the Chicago area and 2 hours northwest of Madison, WI on Route 14.

2020 Fennimore Outing Fennimore, WI May 15th-17th

This area includes the Little Green River, Big Green River, Castle Rock Creek, Blue River, Borah Creek and Platte River. Fennimore is located approximately 1 ½ hours west of Madison, WI on Route 18.

Friday night we are planning on having a group dinner at the Hickory Grove Golf Course.

Saturday, we are planning a group dinner, details to follow.

There are no fly shops in the area so make sure you have what you need prior to arriving. Some guides and books to consider:

-) Jim Romberg, Fly Fisherman's Lair, 608/822-3005-local guide
-) Dave Barron, Jacquish Hollow Angler, 608-604-6690 dbarron@wicw.net
-) Jim Bartelt, Spring Creek Specialties, 608-206-5651 jimbartelt@yahoo.com
-) Rich Osthoff - 608/847-5192
-) No Hatch to Match by Rich Osthoff Fly Fishing Midwestern Spring Creeks by Ross Mueller
-) Exploring Wisconsin Trout Streams-The Angler's Guide by Steve Born Flyfisher's Guide to Wisconsin & Iowa by John Motoviloff
-) Wisconsin Atlas & Gazetteer by DeLorme.

A block of rooms has been reserved at Napps Motel, 645 12th Street, Highway 18 East. This is on the east side of town on the south side of the street, 608-822-3226. **Make your reservation by April 30th.**

Another block of rooms has been reserved at Fennimore Hills Motel, 5821 US 18, Fennimore and is located on the west side of Fennimore, 608-822-3281. **Make your reservation by March 30th for a 1st floor room or April 30th for a 2nd floor room.**

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 when you make your reservation.** Rooms are difficult to get this time of year as it's prime trout fishing time and Spring turkey hunting season. Don't hesitate as you can always cancel your reservation if your plan should change.

Any questions contact Gordon Rudd, mchenryflyfisher@gmail.com or 815-245-2425.

WA WA SUM June 3rd-7th, 2019 Grayling, Michigan

This is our annual trip to the fly fishing only, catch-and-release section known as the "Holy Water" of the famed AuSable River in Grayling, MI. Wa Wa Sum is located just downstream from the birth place of Trout Unlimited. TU was formed at George Griffith's home, The Barbless Hook, in July of 1959.

Wa Wa Sum is a historic lodge dating back to 1880 and was originally owned by the Stranahan family from Toledo, OH. Michigan State University acquired it in 1982 and uses it primarily as a research center. They rent the lodge to various organizations throughout most of the year and our chapter was grandfathered in in 1983.

ACCOMMODATIONS: The Wa Sum Lodge is a historic log building with a great porch overlooking the Au Sable River. Arrangements are dorm style, so bring your own bedding or sleeping bag, towels, washcloth and soap.

Guide trips are very popular this time of year and if you think this is something you'd like to do, please make your reservation as soon as possible so you're not disappointed.

Your reservation days and full nonrefundable payment is due by May 11th. Make checks payable to Lee Wulff Trout Unlimited c/o Al Faleskin, 301 Harwich Place, Rockton, IL 61072

Wednesday-With people arriving at different times, or not at all, everyone is on their own for food. There are several restaurants in Grayling and Gates Au Sable Lodge has a dining room.

Thursday *Breakfast*-Continental style; coffee, tea, some assorted fruit, toast, cold cereal.

Lunch-Make your own sandwich, water, chips and a snack.

Dinner-Brat cookout, chips, potato salad, condiments and snack

Friday- *Breakfast*-Continental style; coffee, tea, some assorted fruit, toast, cold cereal.

Lunch-Make your own sandwich, water, chips and a snack.

Dinner-Cook your own burger, chips, condiments, water and a snack.

Saturday- *Breakfast*-Continental style; coffee, tea, some assorted fruit, toast, cold cereal.

Lunch-Make your own sandwich, water, chips and a snack.

Dinner-Ray's BBQ, Brews & Blues, 204 Ingham St., Grayling, MI Everyone responsible for their own food and beverage.

Sunday- *Breakfast*-Continental style; coffee, tea, some assorted fruit, toast

Lunch-Make your own sandwich, water, chips and a snack

If you have any special food requirements, you're responsible for your personal needs.

The cost for this outing is based on the nights you're there and are as follows;

Wednesday-\$50 per person

Thursday-\$70 per person

Friday-\$70 per person

Saturday-\$60 per person

This is a remote location and Grayling is about 8 miles from Wa Wa Sum. There is a community refrigerator with limited space for some ice and items that need to be kept cold.

If you have any questions please contact Gordon Rudd at mchenryflyfisher@sbcglobal.net or 815/245-2425.

Bob Olach's Fly of the Month

The “Crackleback”

As many of the fellow LWers know, quite a few years ago, I started tying a variation of Ed Story’s “Crackleback” fly. For many of the past years, I try to have close to 100 CBs tied and ready for each trout season’s fishing.

For me, the Crackleback serves as both a dry fly and also as a strike indicator, should a fish take the sunken nymph or soft hackle that I have tied “New Zealand-style” to the bend of my Crackleback’s hook, approx. 18” - 24” in front of the Crackleback. Hopefully, with the right nymph or soft hackle as the point fly, my chances of successfully hooking a fish increases as my casts thrash the waters where I’m fishing.

Since, my usual three “Amigos” and one “Amiga” seem to have my flies show up in their fly boxes, I try to have enough Cracklebacks available to last most of the season and usually end up with about a dozen or two remaining at the end of the season, if all goes well.

Recently, at one of our “Soft Hackle Sessions”, we deviated from tying soft hackles to tying Cracklebacks and the following describes what we used.



Crackleback

- Hook:** Daiichi #1190 – Dry Fly Barbless sizes 12 - 16
- Thread:** Pearsall Gossamer Silk – Black or Danville 6/0 Black Thread
- Body:** Light Olive – (Hareline – Pale Evening Dun)
Light Yellow – (Hareline – Pale Watery Dun)
- Back Spine:** Two Strands of green peacock herl
- Hackle:** 3 turns at end of hook shank and 6 ½ turns of brown dry fly hackle palmered over the dubbed body.
- Treatment:** A drop of “Watershed” and then dried overnight

Note:

I believe the original Crackleback used various colors of turkey rounds for the body and used 5 or 6 turns of a brown rooster cape hackle, thus allowing the fly to be used as both a dry fly and, when pulled under, as a sunken wet fly. My variation uses dry fly dubbing for the body and quite few more turns of dry fly saddle hackle, to make the fly float better.



Grumpy's Page by Kurt Haberl

“I miss Old Ben Waverly,” Schnoz said, as he put the car in gear and we headed out for our first time on the water in spring. We were fortified with strong black coffee and three donuts each. We had both been following some kind of beach diet without flour, sugar, dairy fat, or carbs devised by our wives, who could nag mercilessly when something was important. As near as I could tell, the only things we would be able to eat every week were broccoli and quinoa. I don’t like broccoli unless you can drown it in butter, and I don’t even know what quinoa is. For those of you who have never been force-fed it, it’s kind of like grits without any butter. Marriage isn’t so bad when a woman decides something, but when two wives get together, the only thing a guy can do is go fishing. We had been following that miserable diet for two whole days, and it was time for real food like donuts and black coffee.

"I miss him too," I said, holding the Christmas card he gave us with the directions to his secret spot, and the rules for fishing it. We followed the directions on highway P for three miles, then turned left on Owl Trail at the red barn, although it looked like the barn was no longer red and after one more winter, it would no longer be a barn. Then we went over two bridges and followed the tractor path by the stone outcropping that looked like a sitting Buddha. The rest is still secret.

"Okay," Schnoz said. "Read what we have to swear to."

"Raise your right hand. Upon pain of losing important anatomical appendages, I solemnly swear that this 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... the fifth generation. First was Johnny Lepp, then Old Ben's grandpappy, then Old Ben, then us. According to Ben's rules, we put on a size 18 zebra midge, hope we hook Old Ben, descendant of Big Johnny 1, Johnny 2, Johnny 3, Pappy 1, Pappy 2, and then Old Ben. Then after he breaks off, we salute him and head out until next year. If someone is lucky enough to beach him, we salute him and put him back and head out until next year."

After we swore the oath at each other, Schnoz brought his car to a creeping halt not too far from the black walnut Ben's grandfather had planted near a copse of some oaks and maples, hiked toward the tangle of willows that marked the spring that fed the stream, and then to the stone outcropping and Old Ben's pool.

"It's your turn," Schnoz said, "and although I appreciated your efforts the one time we beached him because you yelled, 'Snake, snake,' and I ran headlong into the mud bank, I will not yell 'snake' this year or wade in to try to herd him toward you. You're on your own."

"Fair enough," I said. The pool didn't look like it had changed at all. There was still a beach and mud bank at one end, a stone outcropping that loomed over a deep, dark pool, and several willows on the opposite bank to snag any errant flies one might cast. I admit my hands were shaking as I strung my rod and aimed the largest tippet I could possibly get through the eye of a midge. It took a while, but I got a midge tied on. Then I took a deep breath.

"Well?" Schnoz said.

"Let's take a moment to savor what Old Ben and God gave us." It was a beautiful scene. The stream flowed slow and clear before us. The stone ledge glistened in the morning light with moss and lichens. Opposite the ledge, a border of budding wild rose and thistles lined the bank. Behind us, spring redwing blackbirds sang to each other in excitement. Overhead I heard a wing of sand hill cranes heading back north to nesting grounds.

"Okay," I said, and Schnoz moved to avoid any early season backcast mistakes.

The midge landed a foot from the ledge and the darkest depths of the pool. I began to count, but after only "three" the leader shuddered and I raised my rod, feeling a quick throb on the end. It was small, and after less than a minute, a beautiful seven-inch brookie came to my hand.

"I didn't know there were brookies in Old Ben's pool," Schnoz said.

"We've never seen one. The big brown usually ate them, I thought, or chased them downstream."

"I hope that's not a bad sign. As much as I like brookies, it would make me sad if Old Ben is gone."

I cast again. At another count of three, I hooked another brookie, slightly smaller than the first. Another cast, another brookie. In ten minutes, we had released ten.

“You know, according to the rules, we were supposed to hook only one fish, assuming it would be Old Ben or his offspring, and then head home until next year.”

“But Old Ben never said anything about little brookies. If we caught ten, do you think that means the big brown is gone?”

Schnoz sighed. “I’m afraid so.”

“One more cast.”

I sent the fly several yards away from the ledge. It sank a little deeper, then I felt a slight tug. It was another brookie, a good one, though, probably ten inches. After that, I’m not sure what happened. The redwing blackbirds apparently thought we were too close to a nest and began to dive at us. One knocked Schnoz’s cap off. They squawked and flapped and dove and recovered and dove. Then from nowhere, a red-tailed hawk dove at them, narrowly missed, but before he could dive again, more redwing blackbirds joined the melee going after the hawk and us. Schnoz headed for cover, but slipped on the mud bank and landed face first. When he rolled over, he looked like he had applied camouflage to his vest, hands and face. The blackbirds were not fooled and kept after him.

“Snake, snake!” He yelled, but I just laughed at him. After last year, that trick wouldn’t work on me. I brought in the brookie slowly because I had to use the rod also to defend myself from the squawking birds. Then I saw it. There at my feet, actually slithering over my left boot was a brown and black mottled snake. Without thinking, I kicked and the snake flew out into the pool. Luckily I saw it had a small head and no rattles. Then my other boot slipped and I went down on the sand and mud, losing my rod. The birds saw their advantage and swarmed over me. I flailed arms and legs, lost my hat, and saw my rod sliding into the pool. On the third grab, I caught the butt and a handful of mud. Schnoz had found a stick and swatted at the blackbirds, which only made them more furious.

Aided by slack line, the brookie got off the hook, and after a few more squawks and dives, the blackbirds apparently agreed they had defended their nests honorably enough and retreated. Both of our hats floated gently into the middle of the pool and sank. I reeled in my line, wincing at each turn and the gritty scrape I heard from the spool. I cut off the fly and turned to Schnoz. He stood a few feet to my side, dirty, stunned, and breathing heavily. Then he raised a single arm and pointed into the pool. I expected to see the snake coming after me, but instead there was a log about five feet from the sandbar, only it wasn’t a log, it was Old Ben, who had come up to observe the fracas. He finned slowly, majestically, a full yard long and wide-shouldered like a loaf of rye. Then he opened his mouth once, probably laughing at us, turned, and with a powerful tail flip, sent a spray over us. It was a final, effective insult. Gliding like a submarine, he slid back into the depths of the pool.

“You win,” Schnoz said to Old Ben. We lost, but it felt good. Yes, we were a mess and my rod and reel would require some attention and cleaning, and we couldn’t just walk back into our houses caked with mud, but we had seen the great fish again. He was still there for another season. That was good. No matter what else bad happened this season, knowing that Old Ben was still there was a happy thought. Fishing is like that.

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