



November 2020 President's Message

Well those political ads are over and now we can get back to watching Dancing with the Stars without the agitation of politics. Hopefully the Clean Water Rule will be reinstated and our trout streams protected from pollution. Maybe! There is trouble in Vernon County again where a fish kill has occurred on a small tributary of the Knapp Creek. The number of fish killed 118, by 3,000 gallons of manure pouring into a small unnamed creek, trout up to 16" gone and some of those were probably spawners. The effect on Knapp Creek unspecified but you can bet it is not good. TUDARE Voluntary Steering Committee had a long discussion about it this past Wednesday and decided to recommend that the Wisconsin State Council have a DNR official come to the State Council meeting to answer questions about what is being done. Wild Rose Dairy, responsible for two fish kills in the past, still has not been brought to litigation or fined for their spills. My suggestion is that for every trout killed the maximum herd size permitted be reduced by an equal number. Then they might feel our pain

The Lee Wulff board met earlier this month and voted to buy 44 stile posts at a discount secured by Denny Sullivan. The cost and posts will be shared by Gary Borger chapter. Over the past 4 years we have completed 22 stiles. This should secure us for a few more years.

Our speaker this month is Jeff Hastings the TUDARE Project Manager who will give us a rundown of projects recently completed and upcoming work in the Driftless Area. Jeff is currently seeking a large new grant that he will inform us about. There will also be some drone footage of the Warner and Citron Creek projects if Zoom technology works out correctly.

Jerry

Topic: Lee Wulff T U Meeting

Time: Nov 19, 2020 06:30 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89196342361?pwd=M1JLOUQ0bXhpUm1BNIITRWV0U0dpZz09>

Meeting ID: 891 9634 2361

Passcode: 250621

Dial by your location 1 312 626 6799

Outings Organizer

We are in need of a new individual to organize our chapter outings. After 30+ years of running outings Gordon Rudd has announced that next year will be his last. If you're interested you could work with him next year and see exactly what's involved. It's well organized and he has all of the contact information available. You can contact him at 815-245-2425 or mchenryflyfisher@gmail.com.

Bob Olach's Fly of the Month Revised Bead Thorax Pheasant Tail Soft Hackled Nymphs

Back in 2009, I did a small write up on a "Trio" of flies that I tended to fish that included my Crackleback variation, the Pink Squirrel nymph and a Pheasant Tail soft hackled nymph that used a gold bead as a thorax, directly between the pheasant tail body and the partridge hackle.

For quite a few years, this soft hackled nymph was my go-to fly (and also for some of the Amigos who fished with me).

But, when I started tying more of the North Country Spiders and other soft hackled flies, I tended not to tie, or fish, this fly as often as before. In fact, it's probably been close to 10 years since I've tied very many of this dressing ----- until now!

I've modified my original dressing slightly that I think might make the fly more effective and durable. Tails have been added (the original was tail-less); an extra turn or two of the PT barbules are done right behind the bead (to keep the bead from sliding then pass the thread over the bead before tying in the partridge hackle; finishing off with another 5 turn whip finish and a drop of Fly-Tite head backwards down the hook shank after catching several fish); and to make the bead be a little more secure, I now do a 5 turn whip finish after doing the wire ribbing, cement.

Hopefully, once this Covid thing is resolved, I'll be able to fish this fly again in the sloughs, ditches and run-offs in Cheese Country.



BH Pheasant Tail Soft-Hackled Nymph

- Hook:** Daiichi #1550 /1560 or Mustad 3906 / 3906B sizes 12 - 16
Silk: Orange silk or Danville threads
Body & Tails: 4 – 6 pieces of Rooster PT Barbules (depending on hook size)
Ribbing: Gold or Copper Ultra wire
Thorax / Weight: Gold or Copper Cyclops bead head
Hackle: Natural Partridge (Brown or gray hackles seem to be equally effective)



Grumpy's Page by Kurt Haberl

"Do you remember last year's Christmas party for our chapter?" Schnoz asked.

"I remember the early part of it, but as the party went on, I remember less and less."

"Do you remember what I won?"

"No. A dishwasher? Uh, the wading boot Dewey found in the stream behind camp?"

Schnoz just shook his head. It was a great party, and I shouldn't be expected to remember every single detail, especially when there were dozens of great raffle prizes, and I didn't win any.

"I won a guided trip on the Menominee River up in the U.P. for smallmouth, and now that trout season is over here, it's the perfect time to go."

"Good for you. Have fun."

"It's a guided fishing day for two. Huldy doesn't fish, and you're the only friend I have who wouldn't just ask for the money and favors I owe them instead of fishing."

"You have other friends?"

"Well, there is a slight difference between 'have' and 'had.'"

It was my turn to shake my head.

"We're going tomorrow. It's over a five hour drive, so we need to leave at 5:00 AM. I'll pick you up. All gear, a shore lunch, and a boat are included. We just need to get licenses at the fly shop and bring some cash to give the guide for a tip."

"Well, okay."

For once, Schnoz told the truth. He picked me up at 5:00; the drive was just over five hours, and Schnoz apparently really won a guided smallmouth trip. By 11:00 we had been licensed, checked out for left hand or right hand retrieve fly reels, fitted for life jackets, and were on the river. It was chilly, and we all wore neck gaiters pulled up for protection, although the one Tim gave Schnoz barely covered his proboscis. Our

guide, a young man named Tim, who seemed experienced far beyond his years, motored his boat quickly up the river with the same familiarity as if Schnoz and I were on our way to our home donut shop. He fitted our tippets with streamers, watched us cast to see how quickly he would have to duck, weave, and cover his head with two aging spring creek fishermen in his boat. Our nicknames alone made sure he tightened the croakie on his sunglasses to protect his eyes.

"Aren't you worried, at least a little about two of us in your boat? You know, casting?" I said.

"Barbless hooks," Tim said. "Tetanus shots. I get one every spring. We're good."

"Football helmet?" Schnoz said.

"Doesn't work," Tim said. "Too many tangles around the faceguard, and it cuts peripheral vision."

Tim's first spot was a small bay, kind of a backwater on the river, and as he glided the boat to a stop, he pointed to places to cast on either side of us that seemed senseless. There was no structure, no deep run, just ordinary tannic water flowing slightly slower than the main river. Both spots gave us hookups and my first surprise was how fiercely a smallmouth bass would fight against the rod, the current, and our drags. They took the streamer with the aggression of a brook trout, then ran with the speed and strength of a rainbow, and then settled into the dogged stubbornness of a brown trout.

"Wow," Schnoz and I said at the same time. Tim just smiled. When netted, we saw how beautiful these fish were, bronze and strong, big-eyed and broad-shouldered. Tim snapped pictures and we released the fish with tail splashes that sprayed both of us. We each caught three more before Tim motored us upstream to a spot with more current, though we could see rocks breaking it up. We each caught three more. At his next spot, we each caught two, and they were both smaller.

"Hm," I heard Tim grumble to himself, and then he took us to a fourth spot, where we fished for twenty minutes without a take. He checked his position carefully by looking around at trees, a crag on the bank that looked like a T Rex, and a stump on the opposite bank that looked like it had been there since the glaciers receded.

"The biggest lunkers should be right here," he muttered.

He started his outboard again and slowly worked his way upstream checking the bank and looking into the clear, tea-colored water until I saw his head jerk back as if someone had slapped him. On the near bank, between a small sandbar and a gravel-filled gully, we saw a thin stream of orange liquid running into the river. He beached the boat on the sandbar, and we scrambled up the bank through a hedge row and some

scrub to emerge into bright sunlight, and a vision of hell. A gravel road ran along our right, and near us was a four by eight foot sign unashamedly proclaiming the site of a future open pit mine, The Back Forty. It looked like the site was being explored by some foreign Acquire Corporation to extract gold, silver, and other valuable elements "for American industry, American jobs, Progress and Preservation." Across the road, a crew in vests and hard hats were shooting lines with optical levels, transits, and sight poles. Dozens of small orange flags had been planted among several large augers where they explored mineral rich ore.

While we looked at each other, a man with a yellow hard hat strode over and called out, "You know you boys are trespassing. This here is land we can legally explore, and pretty soon we'll apply for all the licenses we need to start a mine."

"We're not boys," Schnoz said.

"There's no sign that this land is posted, so there's no proof you own it yet," I said.

"You're killing the river," Tim called.

"Ah, fish-kissers," the man said. "I get it. Nevertheless, we are legally exploring. You have to leave."

Tim walked across the road, and I thought at first he was going to fight with the hard hat, but instead, he stepped across a shallow ditch. On the other side, he put his foot on the base of a fifty gallon barrel laying on its side and spewing orange liquid out of its bung hole, and with a great pull, righted it to stop the spill.

"We follow all safety precautions, and when we leave, we clean up and you won't even know we were here."

"Too late," Tim called back. "You're killing the river. People downstream drink this water. It runs into Lake Michigan and millions drink from it."

The hard hat pulled a radio from his vest and mumbled into it, pointed to us, and then jerked his thumb up as if he were an umpire calling us out at the plate.

Tim sighed, mumbled a mild expletive or two, and led us back to the boat. The sight of such an operation merely two fly casts from the river had shocked us. How could such a thing be starting? Nobody felt like fishing. It was a silent ride back to Tim's pickup and boat trailer, a silent ride back to the fly shop.

"I'm sorry, men," Tim said as we helped carry gear into the shop. We each gave him a \$50.00 dollar tip for expert guiding, which he didn't want to take, but when we insisted,

he got a large tin from behind the counter, wrote "Back Forty Rescue Fund" on the side in permanent marker and put our hundred dollars in it.

It was a five hour drive home that seemed to take a whole day. The sun set; lights came on in houses through small towns that didn't yet know what was going to happen to their water, and as we got closer to home and the night deepened, lights began to flicker out in house after house. There is a difference between night and absolute darkness, and we saw both that day.

Full disclosure: Grumpy's page is a work of fiction, usually fun, but not always, including this entry. The Back Forty is a proposed mine not yet licensed to extract gold, silver, and other minerals. One of the problems is that the mining releases sulfide, which causes a lot of the contamination. When sulfide is mixed with water and air it creates "sulfuric acid"....then this mixture becomes known as Acid Mine Drainage. The time to act is now before licenses beyond exploration are granted. The Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin continues to fight this proposal to protect their ancestral land and the environment. Although nothing has yet been approved beyond exploration, the plan includes a partial retaining wall at the edge of the mine pit mere yards from the Menominee River, several "buffers" surrounding identified cultural resource sites, Native Burial Sites or gardens within the boundaries of the proposed mine property. The dangers to the Menominee River and Lake Michigan, especially with recent storms of greater strength and frequency in the Midwest, make contamination probable. Such contamination would affect communities well downstream, including large areas of northeast Wisconsin and the river's drainage into Lake Michigan. The company has promised jobs, an improved local economy, and complete cleanup after they finish the extraction and leave (taking the temporary jobs away as well). Such guarantees are doubtful. For more information, contact:

The Coalition to Save the Menominee River, Inc.
P.O. Box 475
Marinette, WI 54143
www.jointherivercoalition.org

Also, I'd like to thank Dick Dragiewicz, who has taken a lot of time to forward me information, follow this situation carefully, and help with editing this version of Grumpy. Conservation work is often thankless, slogging drudgery, much like a long trek through mud. When any of you see Dick, be sure to give him a pat on the back and a fresh drink.

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