



September 2019 President's Message

Fellow Lee Wulff'ers,

Wow it's already time for our September meeting! Where the heck did summer go?! Seems like it just got here. I sincerely hope that everyone was able to get out to your favorite trout stream and catch that fish of the lifetime.

Our speaker this month is Emmy award winning producer Robert Thompson. He will talk about his last two productions "Spey Daze" released in 2017 and his latest release "Summer Haze". Both of these productions are set in the Midwest and parts have been included in the national Fly Fishing Film Tour. I talked to Robert today and he said he will bring copies of his DVD's to the meeting and offer them to Lee Wulff members at a substantial savings.

Our last outing of the year will be the weekend of October 11th to the 13th. See Gordon Rudd at the meeting if you have any questions. It looks like Jerry Sapp has a couple of stile installations planned for Friday morning, more details to follow.

Finally, if you haven't heard Lenore and I recently bought a house in Littleton, Colorado. This is a great opportunity for us to get closer to our family. We are not going to move until after the first of the year so I will remain as prez until then. Also, Yves has recently completed his fourth year as treasurer and according to TU rules must step down in the near future. Because of this we are in dire need for someone to step up and take over as treasurer and prez in training. If you ever thought you would like to be in a leadership role in the chapter now is the time to volunteer.

Tight lines,
Bob

This Month's Speaker - Robert Thompson



Robert Thompson is an Emmy awarding winning producer currently living and working in Chicago.

A former Michigander, Thompson grew up in the northeast part of the state as an avid fisherman and found his way to a fly rod in 2004. Fly fishing soon became an obsession and in 2009, he combined his background in film and television and his love for fly fishing to create fly fishing documentaries. His first film "Night of the Hex" was released in 2010, followed closely by "Musky County" in 2011, "Heart of the Driftless" in 2012, "The River" in 2014, "Spey Daze" in 2017 and latest release "Summer Haze." All of his films are set in the Midwest and parts of four have been featured in the national Fly Fishing Film Tour.

Here are the links to the last two trailers:

Summer Haze trailer <https://vimeo.com/318927317>

Watch Spey Daze Online | Vimeo On Demand

<https://vimeo.com/ondemand/speydaze/205995802>

Conservation News September 2019– Jerry Sapp

The conservation committee stile crew placed a stile on Trout Creek on May it was quite a different experience when we drilled the holes they filled with water as the ground was very wet and water table was high. We headed for the creek afterward to get the mud off things but now the stile is there and solid. We are trying to do a couple more stiles at the time of the fall outing on Friday October 11, The sites are not authorized with the landowners and I will be checking in with them after the meeting so if you can go on the 11th set me know and I will keep you informed as to where and when on the 11th.

The TUDARE Habitat Work Crew started the summer with two members but one later took another job with NRCS and left the crew with one man. The Survey crew for The Wisconsin DNR worked with him some days and sometimes he worked for them. The end result was not as much got done as was planned but the good news is the DNR is not using the money TU sent them this year and it will be applied to the salaries for next year.

Several nice restoration projects were completed this summer. I saw one on Billings Creek and hope to see several others later this month on Tainter and Warner. The work on Weister is finishing up this month and we should look at that with pride for the funds we contributed toward its success.

By the way I had the opportunity of watching two Otters feeding for 15 minutes before they saw me when I was fishing Bishop Branch just below the silver bridge access in the horse field. They may be around there now if you get a chance to stop and fish.

Chapter Meetings - 3rd Thursday of the Month

Village Pizza, 145 John F Kennedy Dr.

Carpentersville, IL (Route 25 north of Route 68)

Social Hour: 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Main program: 7:30 p.m.

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

October 17th - Chapter business meeting and fly tying

November 21st - Duke Welter from TUDARE

December 7th - Christmas Party

January 16th

Chapter Outings -2019

Salmon Outing – September 16th-19th

The fall salmon outing is full. Questions contact Matt Gregory at
MGreg53862@aol.com

End of Season Outing-Viroqua, WI

Oct 11th-13th

This is the last outing for trout fishing in Wisconsin as the season ends on October 13th at midnight. This will take place in the Viroqua/Westby area. A block of rooms has been reserved at the Vernon Inn in Viroqua (608) 637-3100. If you make a reservation, please mention that you're with the Lee Wulff Chapter of TU. There are other choices in the area if you'd like to stay somewhere else. Google motels in the Viroqua or Westby area.

There will be a group dinner at the Old Towne Inn, northwest, of Viroqua in Westby. Our reservation is at 7:15 and we will be seated as soon as our table is ready. Everyone is responsible for their own dinner and beverage. If you're planning on camping at the West Fork Sportsman's Club in Avalanche, WI please check their requirements and make sure they are open. There's additional camping at various Vernon County Parks and the Westby Rod and Gun Club at the ski jump.

There's a possibility of a short work project on Saturday morning. If this gets scheduled there will be a notice going out with the information.

If you're planning on dinner Saturday evening please RSVP to Gordon Rudd, mchenryflyfisher@gmail.com or 815-245-2425. If you have any questions, contact Gordon.

Bob Olach's Fly of the Month

Red Ass Soft Hackles

Decided to tie some other variations of this fly based on some pics I've seen on various sites. I used to tie the Red Ass quite a few years ago but have forgotten which dressing that I used.

The two flies with the peacock thorax and the green bead thorax were tied using red Pearsall Gossamer silk since I want the thread to darken when wet to highlight the red wire ribbing. (Silk threads tend to darken when wet).

The fly tied with a peacock body was tied with red Danville 6/0 Flymaster thread since I wanted the red butt to show when wet and not to darken.

You'll notice some red thread showing over the green bead. When I tie any bead thoraxed dressing, I do a thread build up behind the bead; do a whip finish behind the bead and then pull the thread over the bead to tie in the hackle (I'm too lazy to cut the thread after the "behind whip finish knot").



Here's the info on three Red Ass Soft Hackles flies, as I tie them:

Red Ass Soft Hackles

Hook – Daiichi #1550 wet fly hook (sizes 12 - 16)

Thread – Red Pearsall Gossamer Silk or Danville 6/0

Thorax – Peacock herl or a bead

Body – Green peacock with red wire ribbing or red Pearsall Gossamer silk with red wire ribbing.

Hackle – Grey Partridge



Grumpy's Page by Kurt Haberl

Things change when the end of the season nears. The fish seem to get crabby, and our favorite pink-collared attractors or great, shaggy bugs with rubber legs no longer seem to interest them. Foam grasshoppers will get rises but the trout often just nose them out of the water like porpoises playing with a ball, like they are insulted or tired of the game. Some of the trout probably know what's coming; they can feel it in their lateral lines. Dark days, little food, and colder water makes them hover hypnotically like they're made out of foam. Poor fish.

It's more complex for us. The fall brings cool nights, comfortable days, beautiful woods, the honking of geese and bleating of sand hill cranes staging up for flights south. The smell of a wood fire wafts through the campground, and the buzz of cicadas drones like bagpipes. It's not all good though. There are still ticks and mosquitoes around, but fewer of them. More bothersome are the weed beds filling our favorite runs, and tall grasses that turn meadows into fly catchers. Coupled with clear water and thin tippets, with flies snagged in a backcast, the grasses usually win. We lose a lot of flies in the early fall.

As the season nears the end, our group rotates partners. I'm tired of Schnoz by then anyway. He gets - well - grumpy. By then, I've pilfered all the flies I want from him, and his jokes are less witty than a dictionary or tax form.

On one of our last mornings, I went out with Calamity John. He's earned his nickname, and if you fish with him, you have to be a little watchful. It's not that he's a bad fisher or oblivious to danger; it's just that things happen when he's around. Unusual things. Unexpected things. Rocks that have lined a hill for centuries suddenly topple onto the steep bank and roll down on either side of you. A broken

branch that has been hanging low on a maple tree since a windstorm three years ago suddenly falls into the water and drifts into the two-fly rig you just tied on.

I volunteered to drive, and CalJo accepted.

“I think my battery is about to die anyway. It’s probably going to go soon.”

With CalJo, there is no probably. I figured it was already dead. After we would jump it, his alternator would go out, which would explain why his battery just died. Eventually, we’d get his car going, and one of us would follow him home.

“I was thinking about Brown’s meadow,” I said. “The grass is probably high, but you can get in the stream to cast, and there is a beautiful pool that holds fish all season, some of them pretty big, and below it there’s a long, rocky run that probably has a hatch on such a nice day like this. Are you game?”

“Lead on, Grumpy.”

I smiled. By this time of the season, Schnoz would have argued with me and suggested Sterrit’s Run because he’d heard from a flyfisher who heard from another flyfisher who heard from a farmer who heard from a teen-age skateboarder that there were lunkers hiding under some willows. You get the idea.

The drive to Brown’s was uneventful and peaceful, broken only by the velvety, confident voice of Allison on my GPS saying sexy things like “Turn left at county road PS.” I’d like to meet Allison some day. Sometimes CalJo would say something encouraging like, “The stream was clear under that last bridge. That’s a good sign. Look, over there. Pumpkins. I love pumpkins. They’re so orange. And round. Wow. There’s a maple already starting to change. Maples sure like to dress up.” You have to smile when you’re around Calamity John.

The cows in Brown’s meadow had moved to the far side of the field and were gradually eating their way back to the barn well past us. They kept the grass down pretty well near the stile and fence, but as we got to the stream where there were some gullies and softer soil that the cows didn’t like, things changed. It had apparently been a perfect year for grass, and we soon found ourselves bushwhacking through dense, clingy stalks as tall as we were. After fifty yards or so, I turned around, expecting CalJo, but seeing only swaying grass.

“Marco!” I called out.

“Polo,” I heard from about thirty yards back.

“Marco!” CalJo pushed his way through the jungle and panted, “Polo. Um, I stopped to look at this gorgeous wild rose. Have you ever stumbled on a wild rose so beautiful and healthy it looked like some fairy godmother put it there?”

“Not really,” I said. “I’ve stumbled on wild rose bushes with thorns that ripped my waders as if Schnoz put them there to aggravate me.”

“Oh, yeah,” CalJo said, and looked down at his waders. We both saw scratches but we wouldn’t know which kind of rose he had stumbled into until he got into the water. We reached the stream after

another thirty yards of elephant grass doing its best to bar any intrusion. I had guessed the location pretty well. Above us was the large, gently rippling pool with a few relatively harmless trees scattered around it, and below us flowed the glistening run eddying around rocks and a wing dam or two before slipping into a silky glide for another fifty yards.

“How about if you take the pool,” I said, “if you have something with a bead head or enough weight to get down about four feet, it could be really good. I know there are some big fish in there. I’ll throw some grasshoppers over this riffle.”

“I’d love it,” CalJo said. Schnoz would have said, “How come you want the riffle?” Then I’d answer, “Because if you fish the deep pool, you might actually drown, and then I could have your rod.” Then he’d say, “Yeah, well if you break an ankle on that rocky bottom, I’d still call for an ambulance, but probably not until tomorrow morning, so there.” Did I mention he gets really grumpy at the end of the season?

I watched CalJo head up to the pool. It’s good to keep an eye on him. It didn’t look like there would be any lightning strikes out of the partly cloudy sky, nor any rock formations that might avalanche, and the few trees were relatively healthy and young. I thought he’d be okay.

I started throwing a grasshopper where the riffle became a glide, and in fifteen minutes, I caught three nice browns and a brookie. Then I heard a whoop from up above. CalJo seemed to be climbing out of the water, so I reeled in and headed up toward the pool in a quick walk.

I’m not sure I can explain what I saw. He had obviously hooked a good fish, but somehow his line and gone over a low branch of one of the few trees, and he had tried to push his rod up over the branch to free it, but then the branch caught his reel right when the fish made a run. Something had to give, and his rod, wedged in the tree, is what gave. The top third broke off over a branch and slid down the taut line into the water. Now free, the butt and his reel slid down and hit CalJo. Probably from habit, he had put his arms up over his head to protect himself, so it didn’t knock him out to drown him, but it banged him pretty good. Then I saw he was stuck in mud, and in grappling for his two-thirds of a rod, he fell to one side. His waders filled with water.

“Aw, man!” I called out.

“It’s okay. My waders were leaking below the knees, so most of the water will just run out.” He managed to grab his rod, tighten the line and pull his feet out of the muck. He struggled onto a little gravel bar and I saw that the sole of one of his boots had given way in the mud and was flopping like clown shoes.

Then I saw the fish.

“Good Gawd!” I said. “John, did you see him?”

“Not yet. I’ve been pretty busy,” he called back.

The fish, a grand brown with a kipe, had worked its way down to me, followed by two members of its harem. It saw me, gave me the evil eye, and just then the top third of CalJo’s rod slid down the tippet

and hit the fish in the snout. It snapped its mouth open and shut as if to say, "What the hell is this?" Then it slowly finned its way down into the depths, where it settled like a log.

"Should I climb the tree?" CalJo called. "Try to get some leverage?"

"Lordy, no!" I called back. "If he sees you up in the tree, he'll go nuts. You don't have much flex in what's left of your rod, so maybe loosen the drag a little if he lunges."

Then I saw CalJo sit down on the gravel bar and cross his legs as if he were about to meditate.

"What are you doing?" I called.

"Getting low, so maybe he won't see me. Your suggestion was a great one."

Suggestion, I thought? That's when it occurred to me that no one would believe this, so I got my waterproof camera out and started snapping pictures. For a while, it was a tug of war, with CalJo gaining a foot or two by pumping the broomstick that once was a rod, but then the trout would get angry and just dive back to the depths.

"I have an idea," CalJo called. "Why don't you start throwing some big rocks at him, and maybe he'll get scared and run up here near me, and I can net him."

"Nothing is going to scare this fish," I said. "I'd have a better chance damming the river upstream, and after all the water flowed away, you could walk over and grab him."

"Good idea," he said. "There's kind of a rocky bank upstream. Maybe you could cause an avalanche."

"Cal Jo, there is no way I can dam the stream. What are you thinking?"

"Well, maybe you could tie a seine to that tree over there and then walk around the pool and we could net him that way."

"Where the hell would I get a seine?"

"I think I have one in my car back at camp."

"That's 40 minutes each way!"

"Well, I'm not going anywhere, and neither is he, apparently."

"You can't use a seine. It's not sporting."

"Okay, but I didn't think claiming a catch was dependent on the size of the net."

The tug of war continued for another fifteen minutes, and I actually began to admire CalJo's relative skill in not breaking the fish off. Then another thought occurred to me.

"CalJo, what size tippet are you using?"

"Maybe three feet."

“No, I mean how thin is it? 5X? 6X?”

“I don’t know. Probably twenty pound test. I took it off my bait casting reel because I was tired of breaking off flies in the grass. You know how I cast.”

“Twenty pound test? Geez, CalJo, why don’t you just reel him in?”

“I didn’t think that was sporting.”

“Sporting? You wanted me to use a seine on him.”

“I didn’t think that was so bad. It was still using a net. I was going to suggest you stun him by lighting a cherry bomb and throwing it in. I think there are a couple back in my car.”

“Why didn’t you just suggest I call up the DNR and get someone out here with their electrodes and shock him so he floats to the surface?”

“Good idea,” he said.

“No,” I said. “You have to reel him in.”

“Okay.” Cal Jo struggled to his knees, then stood and braced the butt of his rod against his stomach. He reeled slowly and steadily as if he had hooked a discarded tire. The great fish was not happy. I could tell by the jerking on the line and the zig zags in the water, but twenty pound test is still twenty pound test. I just clicked more pictures. Soon enough, CalJo bent over and slid his net below the tired fish. When he lifted it out of the water, I clicked more pictures, but then his net, probably a rotting cotton weave, gave way, and the fish slid through the net and back into the water. CalJo did the only thing he could do. He let go of the net and grabbed his rod with both hands. I watched as the net slid down the line and tangled in the top one-third of his rod, the handle banging the great fish in the snout again. CalJo tired of winching the fish and simply backed up the gravel bar, eventually beaching the great fish. We both ran to it, CalJo cranking like crazy and me snapping pictures. Then I took pictures of my friend holding the fish up by the tail, his hand barely able to circle it. One strap of his waders had broken, but even then, they were bloated full of water and I saw two places where water spurted out of holes. He smiled, but his sunglasses were gone; his hat had blown into the water, and I turned to see it sink into the pool. The fish gave me the evil eye again as I snapped more pictures of it, the top third of CalJo’s rod, the net tangled in the rod, and CalJo smiling like a twelve-year-old after his first kiss.

We unhooked the wooly bugger and cradled the fish in the water until it swam away on its own, a final, angry tail flip splashing both of us. CalJo stood up straight and heaved a great sigh.

“This was the best day ever.”

It was. No one had ever cradled a camera as carefully as I did that day as we bushwhacked our way back to the car and on to Mat’s Fly Shop so Calamity John could get some new gear to replace his flap-soled boots, leaky waders, broken rod, lost hat and glasses, line, tippet, and net. I had never seen a man so happy.

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