



September 2021 President's Message

Welcome back to more Zoom only meeting; you can thank the Delta variant for that. The plan was to start in-person meetings this month, but TU National and common sense nixed that idea. The chapter will continue to do Zoom meetings till further notice. Please wear a mask and get vaccinated so we can get through this mess.

Now, on to the good stuff. Our chapter's crack stile building team has or will have completed by the time this letter gets to you 9 stiles this year. Four on Dutch Creek one on Norwegian Hollow one on Pine Creek and most recently 3 on Bohemian Creek. The one on Pine got a little bit of damage after the 11-inch rain that turned the Pine into the Mississippi but that has been repaired by the conservation crew. You can look for a Royal Wulff on the stiles we have done thanks to the Reinhart family. Mike Reinhart's, Mark's brother, company created a beautiful metal stencil and donated it to our chapter Mark Reinhart will get them all marked as they are revisited.

The chapter can be proud of the news that a 12 inch + Brook trout was caught and released at Fox Bluff. Gabe Powers sent me the following photo. The angler is unknown, but the fish is a beauty. Despite the Covid delays and disruptions in our Trout in the Classroom program this is what the program can produce. Thanks to all who have been working on the project especially our teachers. Our Trout in the Classroom program will continue this year despite Covid. We hope for a banner year of fingerling production after two years of Covid related problems.



The chapter secretary has resigned, and we are looking for a replacement if you can help please email me.

Our speaker this month will be Dr. Kelvin Rodolpho a retired University of Chicago geology professor. Dr. Rodolpho will lecture us on Karst Geology in the Driftless. Having heard him speak before I think you will learn why our streams are unique and need protecting. He will discuss the problems that Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) cause and much more. Dr. Rodolpho is an informative speaker and very entertaining, I hope you can join us. Log into zoom Thursday September 16 at 6:30 for the virtual cocktail half hour. The meeting starts at 7:00.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2531998153?pwd=QXJUVHdBQVpUR3hQS1pCT0o2Rlhpdz09>

Meeting ID: 253 199 8153

Passcode: LeeWulff

One tap mobile

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From Gordon Rudd - New Outings Coordinator

After organizing outings for the Lee Wulff Chapter of Trout Unlimited for over 30 years I've decided to step aside. Our new Outing Coordinator is Ralph Lessor. Ralph is an experienced fly fisherman and is familiar with the Driftless area.

Some of the outings in the future will remain similar as in the past but if you have any ideas or suggestions, please forward them to Ralph. His email is R_Lessor@msn.com.

In closing I'd like to thank all of you that helped with and attended many of the outings over the years. Gordon Rudd

Ralph Lessor – Intro

It's truly an honor to be asked to follow in Gordon's footsteps as Outing Coordinator for LWTU. I know only a few of you by name and face, since I only became really active in the Chapter a year or so before COVID hit, when I entered retirement and had more time for the truly important things in life. I'm an avid, if not particularly skilled, fly fisherman and fly tyer (some of you may recall me as the guy whose wife kept sending cookies and brownies to the Tuesday evening fly tying sessions). I'm a TU Life Member, and enjoy fishing of all types, but particularly dry fly fishing for rising brown trout, an addiction I picked up fishing the upper Delaware River system in the Catskills when I lived in New Jersey.

I hope to continue the traditions established by Gordon, with spring outings to the Driftless area (which I've been fishing for several years now, but am still learning about) near Fennimore and Viroqua/Westby, and a fall outing to close out the season. Unfortunately I can't make this year's edition of that as I have a trip to Alaska that was rescheduled from last year. If anyone has suggestions for alternative or additional outings, please pass them along and I'll see if we can drum up enough interest to organize something. Gordon's already given me proposed dates for next year, which will be communicated shortly so you can mark your calendars.

I hope to get to know more of you better through future chapter meetings, outings and events such as the picnic and work days. Please join me in thanking Gordon again for the years of leadership in various roles in LWTU; he's left big wading boots for me to try to fill!

End of Season Outing Viroqua, WI Sept 10-12

Dinner Friday night at the Old Towne Inn (100E Old Town Rd, #8201, Westby, WI)
at 7:30

Bob Olach's Fly of the Month

“Plover & Purple” North Country Spider

Ever decide to tie a few flies and then pick out the wrong materials?

Had intended to tie a few “Starling & Purple” Spiders for a late September trip “Up North” but grabbed a bag of “pre-plucked” Golden Plover hackles instead of Starling.

Although Golden Plover and Starling feathers look A LOT different, I didn’t realize that I picked the wrong hackles until I dumped them on my fly tying desk.

Since purple bodied soft hackles / spiders (Snipe & Purple, Starling & Purple) have done well for me I figured, what the heck and tied a dozen spiders with the Golden Plover hackles.

Will find out how / if these work when I’m fishing later this month.

Here’s the dressing for the pictured flies:

Plover & Purple North Country Spider

Hook – Partridge Capt. Hamilton Y2A sizes 14 & 16

Thread – Pearall Gossamer or YLI 100 purple silk

Body – Pearall Gossamer or YLI 100 purple silk

Thorax – peack cock herl (optional)

Hackle – Golden Plover (3 turns)





Grumpy's Page by Kurt Haberl

The little town of Conroy isn't really a town. It sits at the top of a hill at the intersection of blue roads County Y and Z with one house on each corner and a tavern on County Z. The tavern is in better repair than the houses. At the bottom of the hill, winding around three sides of it, runs Little Goldie Creek, a brook barely six feet wide that begins a mile up County Z at a spring guarded by a canopy of downed willows, brambles that Br'er Rabbit would treasure, and clear, sweet water, the kind brook trout crave. In late summer, if most streams have recently flooded or heat has forced trout up into headwaters, Little Goldie is a fine place for a morning with grasshoppers, blue winged olives or midges.

It was my turn to fish with Roy the Plumber, which is always entertaining because he is the only retired plumber I know with a degree in philosophy from the University of Chicago, a degree he insists perfectly prepared him for a career in plumbing.

"The reality of water running downhill, no matter what you try to do to stop it, is an existential question that one must daily consider," he has said. "It affects topography, blood circulation, architecture, war, national and state boundaries, agriculture, the production of liquor, and who gets to shower first in a family of six kids. Who better to deal with the vagaries of water than a philosopher?"

I never argue with Roy the Plumber. When he suggested Little Goldie, I saw immediately the overwhelming rationality of his decision at the end of summer, even though neither of us had fished it for several years. However, when he said, "I'll drive," it made me pause. Roy is a wonderful narrator with physically animated stories about barns, bridges, types of concrete, and topographical features, which means his driving on country roads assumes the actual pavement is a mere suggestion for proceeding. To compensate, he drives the Panzer model of the Suburban, which I suspect was once white but now is several shades of camo rust. After he parks, he usually leaves his keys on top of the right rear tire "so I know where they are and so do you in an emergency" with the additional confidence that anyone who might take his keys and steal his Suburban would either die in the process or at least "be in real trouble."

We somehow survived the overland trek. Roy got out of his Panzer, stretched, and looked out over the field across the road which seemed to be a hypothetical entity to him, and said, "That's all wrong."

"What is?" I said.

"That tree. It's in the wrong place."

I looked out over the field to see a tree standing proudly in the middle of the field.

"How can a tree be in the wrong place?"

"It's a willow. It shouldn't have sprouted on a little mound like that. Willows drink a lot of water. It should have sprouted at the bottom or in a ditch. Maybe it sprouted during a flood when the field was a swamp. Even so, it was a mistake. The poor willow looks stunted."

"Poor willow?" I said.

"Willows usually have more sense than that. Besides this one is alone. Willows like company. It's a loner just inviting lightning out there in the middle of a field like that. Poor guy."

Roy shook his head and put his keys on top of the rear tire of his Chevy Sherman. We geared up and started up the little brook, which seemed just as I remembered - a few short runs below a wide pool that towheaded kids would occasionally swim in to cool off quickly, with more short runs and a drop pool upstream where brookies often gathered to court, fight, and dig in gravel until they jumped the foot-high rock ledge before heading upstream to spawning beds. At the swimming pool, I made one of my worst casts ever, which turned my leader into a nest of knots, loops, and bimini twists as if someone had been practicing knot tying in the dark. It became Roy's pool, and his first cast took an energetic eight-inch brook trout. As he let it go, the bushes on the left rustled and a girl of about ten stepped out. She wore genuine Osh Kosh overalls, a teal T-shirt and a bent straw hat that looked like it had been her grandmother's.

"What 'cha doin'?" she said. She sat down on the remains of a willow that ran the length of the pool.

"Fishing," Roy said. "Were you going to swim here?"

"No. It's not hot enough today. Are you really fishing? You don't have any worms."

"We're flyfishing," Roy said. "We tie feathers and yarn around a hook to try to fool fish. It's more of a challenge to fish with a hand-made fly."

"Do your flies catch fish?"

"Once in a while. They usually catch rocks, bushes and trees, in that order. Do you fish?"

The girl shrugged. "I don't have a rod like that. It looks like fun."

"You should try. Here." He walked over to her along the willow and said, "Let's go up to the top of the pool where you won't even have to cast and tangle things up like my friend Grumpy here. You can just let line out, and there's a fly called a soft hackle on the end and you can just let it swing in the current and brook trout seem to like that."

"Okay, thank you."

He gave his rod to her and at first she held it with the reel on top until Roy turned it over and showed her how to play out line. The fly drifted into the middle of the pool, and immediately a brook trout flashed, took the fly, and headed downstream. The girl shrieked and began to jump up and down, holding the rod with both hands and then called, "What to I do? What do I do?"

"Just let him go for a little bit, and when he slows down, reel him in. If he makes another run, let him go until he stops and then reel him in again."

She did as he said, and within a minute, a six-inch brookie dangled from the end of the fly rod a few feet from the tip.

"Can I take him off?" The girl asked. "I like pretty fish."

"Of course," Roy said, impressed that someone that young would handle fish. She handed him the rod, then tried to grasp the trout, several times twitching her hands back when the fish wriggled. Finally she managed to grasp it and then petted its head.

"You're beautiful," she said, carefully removing the hook and then stepping into the water in her sneakers to hold the fish until he revived. She stroked its head, its belly, and played with its tail fin, until it had decided enough was enough and wriggled out of her hand.

"That was fun," the girl said. "Will you come back here sometime?"

"Probably not until next year," Roy said. "You won't have to wait." He handed the girl his rod. Like everything Roy owned, it was old but serviceable. "This is now yours," he said. "I have a new one in my truck I haven't used and now is the time to start."

The girl looked at him in wide-eyed wonder, then jumped up and down in the water, shrieking like it was Christmas morning and a pink pony was standing in her living room with a bow around the single horn on its head. Roy looked at me and said, "Your turn." I rummaged in my vest and found a flybox I hadn't used this year because it was full of store-bought flies recommended by guides, and I don't take advice very well. I gave it to the girl, and said, "Here's an assortment of flies. Most of them work."

The girl shrieked some more, so much that even the freckles across her nose and cheeks seemed to turn red. She jumped the willow log and ran to the bushes, then turned and said, "Thank you, thank you, thank you. I have to show my brother. He won't believe it."

Then she disappeared into the bushes. We could hear her shrieking all the way up the hill to Conroy. Roy the Plumber and I shared my rod to fish the rest of the morning all the way up to the drop pool, and a fine morning of fishing it was. The proof of a fine morning of fishing is that you quit counting fish. Counting automatically seems to happen when you catch three or four, but after a dozen, you lose track because numbers don't matter.

We went back to camp happy as larks in a sunflower patch and enjoyed the day again when we told the story of the young girl and her shrieks of joy.

The next morning, Ghost Mary came up to me at the stove and coffee pot, and said, "Grumpy, are you willing to fish with me today? I want to show you something special."

"Of course," I said. Mary was tops among us and a day of fishing with her always seemed to turn out great.

"I'll drive," she said. "After putting your life in Roy's hands yesterday, you should be able to just sit back and relax."

I did, and I admit a few times I lay back and closed my eyes, reliving the fun of the day before. Eventually she pulled off and parked in gravel near a DNR access sign.

"Put your waders on, but leave your rod," she said. "I want to scout first."

We followed a deer path down a slight hill to a clump of bushes and the sound of running water on the other side. I saw the flash of a rod above the bushes, then another and Mary made a "shhhh,"

sound at me, her forefinger up to her lips. We stepped through the bushes, and there in front of us, knee deep in water of the honey hole drop pool, stood the freckled girl from yesterday and a boy perhaps two years older. While I watched, the girl made a perfect roll cast pickup and then sent a tiny dry fly over the pool where the fly and line drifted to the water with the gentle fall of a snowflake. She stripped in the slack and raised her rod expertly when a good brook trout took her fly off the surface. She got the fish on the reel, turned her rod the opposite direction of the fish's run, switched when it darted the other way, and soon had a ten-incher in her hand, stripping line to hold Roy's rod behind her in her armpit while she bent to free the trout.

That's when Mary called out, "Hey, Molly, hey, Jeremy." The kids turned in surprise, and Jeremy said, "Hey, Miz Compson. It's so good to see you again. I think of you every time I string up the rod."

Molly looked at me with a sheepish grin. All I could do was smile.

"Should I tell Roy?" I asked Mary.

"Of course not. These are really great kids, and now they're fly fishers. I told you I'd show you something special. What could be better?"

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