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President's Message

Dear LWTU Chapter Members,

Please join us at our next monthly chapter meeting, with a special program about the Menominee River and the protection thereof, at [Village Pizza & Pub](#) (145 N John F. Kennedy Dr, Carpentersville, IL 60110 location) on Thursday, February 15th, 2024 with social hour starting at 6:00 PM (additional meeting details included below). Consider joining us even if you live further out, tollway access is relatively convenient. And guests are always welcome so be sure to invite your interested friends and family members.

The weather is warming up quickly, daylight hours are getting longer, and spring is well on its way! Check out our chapter's special [2024 Spring Into the Season Auction](#) and bid on items that will help you prepare for a great 2024 fishing season, including two

spectacular hosted fishing trips (including a [Colorado trip](#) and a [Wisconsin trip](#), courtesy of the Bob Becker Family and Duke Welter, respectively), a [24-pound featherweight canoe](#), and more. [Click here to see details and to bid!](#) Funds raised directly support the chapter's conservation and youth programs. Thank you to our generous prize donors and supporters.



[Colorado Trip](#)

The [Wisconsin inland trout fishing](#) catch-and-release early season re-opened on January 6th and the regular season opens on May 4th. A few of our members have been out more than once this year and reported success. And, spring [steelhead fishing](#) is on the horizon.

Dates for the chapter's 2024 fishing outings are:

- Early Spring: April 26-29 (Viroqua/Westby)
- Spring: May 16-19 (Fennimore)
- Fall: Late September, 2024 (Viroqua/Westby)

We've already had a tremendous amount of interest in our two spring outings. New anglers are always welcome, and we will be happy to pair you up with an experienced member who knows the outing area well. Please contact our Outings Coordinator at outings@leewulfftu.org if you are interested and have not already signed up. We need an accurate headcount for dinner reservations regardless of where you are staying.

The chapter's conservation committee plans to install two new stiles along [Bishop Branch Creek](#) this year during the first chapter outing, adding to our [extensive network of existing stiles](#) (where there are [stiles](#), generally there are fish).



Driftless Area Stream in Spring

We are seeking volunteers for the following upcoming events, please email volunteer@leewulfftu.org or leave a voicemail at (224) 414-2400 if you would like more information or are available and willing to assist:

- *Cabela's Spring Fishing Classic Conservation Weekend* - Hoffman Estates, IL - March 16th & 17th, 2024 from 11a-3p. Our chapter will be hosting a table at this event.
- [MCCD Tying Flies with Trout Unlimited](#) - Crystal Lake, IL - April 25th 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM
- *Chauncey H. Duker School Outdoor Program* - McHenry, IL - Help students with casting and fly tying on May 13th or 14th (date TBD), 8:30 AM to 2:00 PM or thereabouts (exact times TBD)
- *Fishin' So Fly* - Our longstanding partner school in West Dundee is again unable to participate this year. We are investigating alternative partnerships.

Our annual [Trout in the Classroom](#) (TIC) program is underway, with two classrooms participating this year. Our TIC classrooms are rearing brook trout after a year of shifting to rainbows (due to triploid brook trout egg sourcing issues in 2022). Chapter equipment was installed and setup last year and eggs were delivered to classrooms by chapter volunteers on January 10th. If you know any teachers who might be interested in the TIC program for future years please have them send an email to tic@leewulfftu.org.

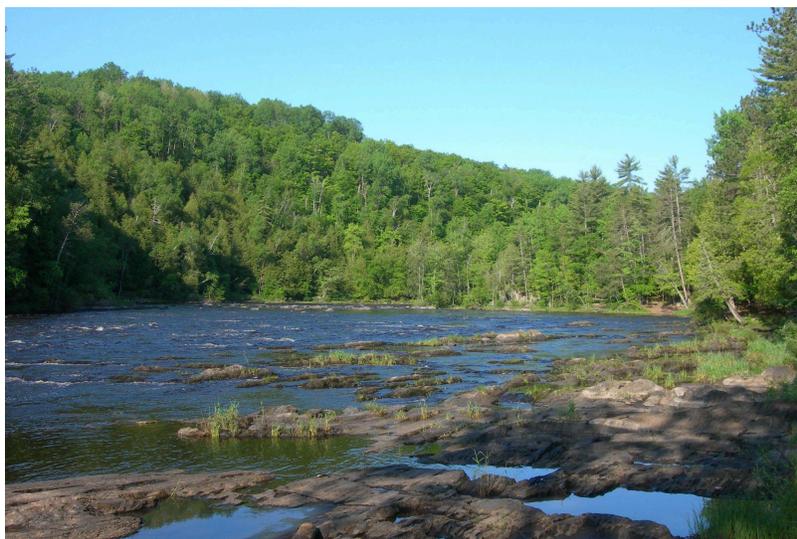
Weekly fly tying sessions resume(d) Tuesday, January 16th (originally planned for the 9th but pushed back due to a winter storm) at Village Pizza & Pub in Carpentersville. For more information or to sign up contact Jerry Sapp at sapp375@aol.com or 847-284-4824. (Recordings of select past sessions are [available on YouTube](#).)

The Sycamore Tree program designed to help mitigate [the effects of climate change on coldwater fisheries](#) is progressing, with seeds collected and sold to Wisconsin DNR's Wilson State Forest Nursery in Boscobel in 2022 germinating at better than anticipated rates. Plans to plant seedlings along streams in Wisconsin are coming to fruition. These fast-growing high-canopy bank-stabilizing trees will provide trout streams with much needed shade as climate change continues to impact stream temperatures. This program is getting a lot of attention and may expand to additional conservation groups.

This month's speaker will be Dick Dragiewicz. Dick will be speaking about the Menominee River (which forms the border of Wisconsin and Michigan's Upper Peninsula) and its renowned smallmouth fishing opportunities. Dick has become a champion of the river and the fight to stop the Back Forty Mine that is proposed along its banks. Dick will give us an update on stopping the mine and why that matters. The Menominee is an excellent smallmouth stream that could be ruined by the proposed mine. He is also quite knowledgeable about fishing the river and will share with us information he has gained over the years. He will also be bringing along some books that will be available for sale, curated from a collection that was gifted by the late Harry Blessing. The books will be priced from \$1 to \$10, with proceeds benefiting the Coalition to Save the Menominee River, Inc.

Mines are a major conservation concern. Chris Wood, TU President, recently presented testimony, with a focus on the importance of abandoned mine cleanup, at a Public Lands, Forests, and Mining Subcommittee hearing, see the *Take Action* section of the newsletter further below to watch his testimony.

If you missed it, be sure to check out [Kurt Haberl's November 2020 Grumpy's Page about Schnoz' trip to the Menominee River](#).



Menominee River

Watch your email for Evite invitations to meetings, events, etc. I hope to see all of you in-person at our next meeting. However if you cannot join us in-person, please join us via Zoom, the main program typically starts at approximately 7:00 PM, preceded by a chapter business discussion.

In-Person Chapter Meeting Remote Participation Details

Participate via web browser or Zoom app:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2531998153?pwd=YlJHZDFiZEhYeGJRdzNVSytselZPZz09>

Meeting ID: 253 199 8153

Passcode: Leewulff

Participate by phone (one tap for mobile): +13126266799,,2531998153#,,,,*41216694#

Participate by phone (manual dial): +1 312-626-6799

Meeting ID: 253 199 8153

Passcode: 41216694

Yielding to the guest speaker's fundraising efforts, the chapter's book exchange program, typically available at in-person chapter meetings, will be on hold this month.

The chapter holds two certificates of deposit purchased in 2023, both earning handsome interest. One matures this month, the other in 2025. The board recently approved the renewal of the former for another cycle of approximately one year, maintaining the laddering plan established when the two certificates were first purchased. Also approved was the transfer of the maturing certificate's earned interest to the chapter's bank account, and the consolidation of the chapter's two bank accounts (one general fund checking account, and one conservation fund savings account earning negligible interest) into a single checking account at Barrington Bank & Trust, a Wintrust Bank (the chapter's accounting ledger will continue to appropriately track the two discrete funds separately).

The chapter is seeking volunteers to get involved in several committees, and to take on select club duties. Please email me at prez@leewulfftu.org if you'd like further information or are willing to volunteer. Thank you to those of you who are already volunteering.

Be sure to check out Bob Olach's Fly of the Month and Kurt Haberl's Grumpy's Page contributions this month further below.

Tight lines,

Brent Burval

Take Action

Farm Bill for Fish Conservation

The Farm Bill is the largest source of private land conservation funding in the nation, but not everyone realizes the impact that it has on coldwater fisheries for trout and salmon.

Every watershed that passes through private land is impacted by the land use surrounding it. The Farm Bill provides the tools and funding for willing farmers, ranchers, forest managers and landowners to be the lead stewards and conserve their land and improve its interaction with the waters that flow through it. [Please support reauthorization of the Farm Bill in 2024 with a strong conservation title here.](#)

Illinois House Bill 1568

As an angler, you know that the many beautiful streams in Illinois could be much greater recreational assets than they now are. Those streams could provide some of those same memorable, on the water experiences that are available to our neighbors in Wisconsin and Michigan just outside their back-doors. An Illinois Supreme Court decision recently called on the state legislature to reassert the public right to use state waters. The idea is to pass a new law clarifying and modernizing existing rights for river access. [House Bill 1568](#) is the legislation that can get this done. Your help is needed to tell your legislators to support this much needed legislation. Please do it now. [Please click here to easily take action in under a minute of your time.](#)

Additional Action Links

Trout Unlimited is not just about trout angling. [The national founders committed to conservation and preservation when they incorporated in 1959.](#) In this spirit, please consider taking a few minutes to explore additional ways to take action:

<https://standup.tu.org/> & <https://www.tu.org/conservation/action-center/>

Watch TU Taking Action in Washington, D.C.

Watch Chris Wood, TU President, present testimony, with a focus on the importance of abandoned mine cleanup, at a Public Lands, Forests, and Mining Subcommittee Hearing relating to 118th Congress Bill [S.1281](#) (Mining Regulatory Clarity Act of 2023) at

00:53:39 [here.](#)

Bob Olach's Fly of the Month

Yellow Soft Hackle Spiders (Oliver Edwards' Yellow Spiders)



In the past few years, it's been satisfying to see quite a few Chapter members start to tie and fish soft hackles

About 10 years ago, we had this dressing in a Chapter newsletter and it's such an easy and pretty fly, that it's worthwhile to rewire / repost the information.

There's an old Oliver Edwards' video called "*Wet Fly Fishing on Rivers*" where he tied and fished several soft hackled flies including Edmonds & Lee's March Brown (my favorite fly dressing!), Snipe Bloa, Dark Needle, Greenwell's Glory, Stewart's Black Spider, and his own, ***Oliver Edwards' Yellow Spider***.

His dressing for his spider called for the use of a Partridge L3A hook, a white hen hackle dyed a light yellow, Pearsall's Primrose yellow silk, and a Pale Watery Yellow dubbing.

Although I have several Pale Watery Yellow dry fly dubbings, I also have several cubes of the Oliver Edwards / Davy Wotton SLF Masterclass dubbings and thus decided to use some of the Oliver Edwards' #7 (HEPTAGENID Sulphura Dun & Emerger – Yellow May) dubbing for this fly.

For the above yellow spider the dressing was:

Hook: Size 12/14 Daiichi 1640 (also use Daiichi 1550 wet fly hooks with a longer shank)
Thread: Pearsall's Primrose silk
Hackle: White or creme hen hackle dyed in turmeric spice
Dubbing: SLF Masterclass #7



Grumpy's Page by Kurt Haberl

Allison was the newest member of our chapter, and I agreed to fish the runs and pools behind an old red barn with her after Ghost Mary told us she had to take her car into town because one of her tires had developed a slow leak. Schnoz had already planned to bushwhack some new run with Dewey, which usually resulted in torn waders, scratched faces, and lost gear. I felt lucky to avoid that kind of expedition.

"It's not a penalty," Ghost Mary said. "Allie's good."

"Okay, Allison," I said. "I'll drive and I promise you will see fish."

"It's Allie," she said.

"Allie," I repeated.

"In my chapter back in Colorado, the president was a guy named Joe, who couldn't remember my name and always called me 'Sally,' so I started calling him 'Moe,' instead of 'Joe,' until the nickname stuck. I'm not sure he liked it, but the other members said it reminded them of the Three Stooges, so they used it every time they could."

"I'll remember 'Allie'," I said.

"I don't feel right calling you Grumpy," Allie said. "What's your real name?"

"I don't have a real name."

"What's on your legal documents?"

"Usually 'Defendant'."

There was a long pause, and then she said, "I can't imagine that your given name is that embarrassing, but if you prefer 'Grumpy,' then 'Grumpy' it will be."

"Thank you, Sally," I said, and she laughed. That was a good start if you're going to fish for a day with someone much taller than you and less than half your age.

On the way to the riffles, Allie listed the promising signs she noticed. We had low cloud cover, but no rain, at least not yet. We crossed a few creeks where she saw swallows swooping low over the water, and the wind, even with a licked finger held up into the air, was barely noticeable. She said when she checked the river behind the campground, the temperature was a prime 58 degrees, good enough for brook trout.

"I think we will do more than see trout," she said.

When we got to the stream, I saw a lot of bugs hatching. To Schnoz and me, there were only five kinds of bugs. There were caddis, little black caddis, little brown thingies, little green thingies, and midges. Neither of us could see very well, so a lot of hatches fell into the miscellaneous midge category. We hated midges.

“What do you think?” I said.

“They’re small and black. I read about early little black caddis, but I don’t think I have any. Back in Colorado, there’s usually too much snow melt to fish early small black bugs.”

“I have little black caddis,” I said, opening my caddis box and giving her a few..

“I have an emerger that covers almost everything small. I can put on a dropper with the emerger behind your caddis. That seems like a good bet.”

“You’re new, so you get first shot,” I said, since I was still fumbling with flies, knots, and a dropper while she was ready to go. Rather than rings from rising fish, we saw a few splashes, which told us they were probably taking emergers. In three casts, she caught three fish, one on the dry and two on her emerger. After that, the run slipped into a deep sleep and the flow of water over rocks sounded like snoring.

Allie looked at me and grumbled, “Was it something I said? I thought these fish liked me.”

“They do, Sally, but last night was a full moon so they gorged themselves on hexalopes.”

“Hm, Stumpy, you mean like jackalopes, only bugs?”

“Yep. They have horns kind of like pointy ears and big flat feet and lots of legs. I’ve never seen one. I’ve only heard about them. I think you should move up to the next run. I’m going to drift a bead-head deep through this run and see if I can aggravate one enough to strike.”

She took a wide walk around the run and slipped back into the water thirty yards above me. I fished a bead-head pheasant tail and had one take but no hookup.

A minute later I heard Allie’s frantic call. “Chumpy! Chumpy! Help me!”

I rushed out of the water and jogged up past a willow to the bottom of the next run. Allie stood there calmly with her rod under her arm and an open fly box in her hands.

“Geez, Hallie, what?”

"I found a pod. Probably fifty trout. They're in a feeding frenzy. They're like little sharks. I broke off a good one. We have to keep them worked up so they don't fall asleep. I don't think it matters what's on your tippet. Just throw it in, um, Dumpy."

I did and sure enough, a brown at least a foot long ate my nymph and ran right at me. He seemed angry, so I netted him quickly and let him go, after he gave me a face splash.

Allie and I fished for another hour, taking turns, and calling each other "Lumpy," and "Callie," and "Bumpy" and "Dally" and "Clumpy," until we finally ran out of letters and the fish sneered at everything we cast. We didn't catch all fifty but I'll bet we caught at least half of them. For a while, each fish seemed angrier than the one before it.

"They're angry because of the hexalopes," I said. "I've never eaten one but I hear they're really salty, and the fish sometimes have to keep eating whether they want to or not. Then they get mad when they find out they didn't get a hexalope."

"Like potato chips," Allie said.

"Egg-zactly."

We waded upstream and caught a few more, but it was not like the frenzy of the shark pool. On the way back to camp, Allie said, "Mary told me it would be fun if I fished with you or Wet Curtis, but I should wait a while before I fish with Schnoz because he's ... a challenge."

"Mary's smart."

"Anyway, I got divorced a month ago and Mary's husband found a place for me out here. My ex only cared about work and trading and money and bonuses. You guys remind me of my dad, who taught me how to flyfish, so I went back to it to preserve my sanity, and it worked. The nicest people often carry fly rods. It's the nature of the sport and Nature itself. Golfers seem to be more like my ex, more competitive."

Back at camp, we laughed when Wet Curtis announced he was cooking burgers and opening chips and dip for everyone.

Schnoz pulled me aside and said, "Grump, I'm sorry I abandoned you so you had to go with a beginner. It was just that Dewey found this stream that required some bushwhacking."

"That's okay. How was it?"

Schnoz shrugged. "We caught one each. How did you do?"

"We caught a few. Allie knows what she's doing."

After burgers and chips, Ghost Mary pulled me aside and asked how I thought the day went.

“Compared to bushwhacking?” I said.

I found that Ghost Mary saved a piece of pie for me from her trip into town. I thought about telling her the day had been an ordeal to justify the pie, but I didn't. You can't fool women. Don't even try.

Upcoming Non-Chapter Events

- *Cabela's Spring Fishing Classic Conservation Weekend* - Hoffman Estates, IL - March 16th & 17th, 2024 from 11a-3p - Our chapter will be hosting a table at this event. Please email volunteer@leewulfftu.org or leave a voicemail at (224) 414-2400 if you would like more information or are available and willing to assist.
- *Fly Fishing Film Tour* (F3T) 2024 screenings in the area:
 - [Madison, WI - March 7th](#)
 - [Downers Grove, IL - March 19th](#)
 - [Lake Forest, IL - April 7th](#)
- *IF4* 2024 screenings TBA
- *Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing* (PHWFF) - Ongoing (click [here](#) to get involved, and check out [these related photos](#) posted by a chapter member)
- *Fly tying with NIFTY*

Chapter Officers

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