



## **In This January 2024 Issue**

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## **President's Message**

Dear LWTU Chapter Members,

Happy New Year! Please join us at our next monthly chapter meeting, with a special hands-on introduction to fly tying main program, at [Village Pizza & Pub](#) (145 N John F. Kennedy Dr, Carpentersville, IL 60110 location) on Thursday, January 18th, 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.

It may not feel like it or look like it outside, but the winter solstice is behind us, daylight hours are getting longer, and spring will be here before you know it! 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!](#)



[Colorado Trip](#)

Our annual holiday banquet in December 2023 at Max McGraw was a great success and raised over \$2,250. Thank you to all of our attendees, contributors, and volunteers. A special slideshow was shown at the event, [click here to watch the slideshow online](#).



[Slideshow](#)



Our November chapter meeting featured a Skills Fair, it was a big hit with a great turnout. Thank you to Meg for suggesting this program, which also inspired this month's planned hands-on introduction to fly-tying chapter meeting program.



Meg & Evelyn at the November Skills Fair, hosting their fantastic station featuring gear for women.

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 diehard members fished the Wisconsin opener and reported success. Plus, spring [steelhead fishing](#) is on the horizon.

The chapter's conservation committee plans to install two new stiles along [Bishop Branch Creek](#) this year during a chapter outing, adding to our [extensive network of existing stiles](#) (where there are [stiles](#), generally there are fish). Watch the [chapter website](#) for final details about 2024 chapter outings and the opportunity to help install stiles. Tentative dates for 2024 outings are:

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

We are seeking volunteers for the following upcoming events, please email [volunteer@leewulfftu.org](mailto: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.

The Illinois Council of Trout Unlimited is seeking a new youth camp director for their annual trip to Michigan. Please email me at [prez@leewulfftu.org](mailto:prez@leewulfftu.org) if you'd like further information.

Our annual [\*Trout in the Classroom\*](#) (TIC) program is underway, with two classrooms participating this year. Our TIC classrooms will again be 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](mailto: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](mailto: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.

Be sure to check out our book exchange program available at in-person chapter meetings. Purchase books for as little as \$5, and optionally return them after reading for a \$3 exchange credit.

This month's chapter meeting program will be a hands-on introduction to fly tying. Experienced members will show first-timers and beginners how to tie Woolly Bugger and Black Caddis patterns (the latter being an excellent spring Driftless fly). Equipment will be provided, but please bring your own if you have it. Be sure to take advantage of this special opportunity.



Fly Tying

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. **For the January meeting, the main program (hands-on introduction to fly tying) will not be available via Zoom due to its multi-station hands-on nature, but Zoom participation will be available for the chapter business discussion portion of the meeting starting at approximately 6:45 PM.**

#### In-Person Chapter Meeting Remote Participation Details

Participate via web browser or Zoom app:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2531998153?pwd=YlJHZDFiZEhYeGJRdzNVSytselZPZz09&omn=84802097046>

Meeting ID: 253 199 8153

Passcode: Leewulff

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

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

Meeting ID: 253 199 8153

Passcode: 41216694

Our treasurer plans to report at the upcoming chapter meeting, including interest earned through 2023 year end on our CD accounts. Fiscal reports are available to members upon request.

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](mailto: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

## Fox River Dams

Stay informed about potential Fox River dam removals and voice your opinions at [upcoming meetings](#).

## 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**

*“An Oldie but Goodie from 2012”*

- Bob



## Bead Head Burlap Flies

A couple weeks ago in mid-August, Bob Carrescia (aka – Italian Bob), Kurt Haberl (aka – Popeye) and I (The Bearded Bohemian) decided to camp at the West Fork Campgrounds and thrash some of the Driftless Area waters for a few days in between eating, sipping refreshments and taking naps.

Kurt and I decided (due to necessity) to let Italian Bob get there a day ahead of us so that he could practice his casting with his semi-new Orvis 5 wgt, which he now claims he can use to out-fish and out-cast the two of us!

Before leaving the Madison area, Kurt stopped at the “*On the Creek*” fly shop in Cross Plains and picked up a few extra flies, including several that he thought were named the “*Burlap Nymph*”.

For the first two days of fishing, both Bobs were using various nymphs, soft hackles and dries with some “moderate” success while Kurt was getting into fish after fish. Part way through the second afternoon, Kurt decided to have pity on the two Bobs and gave us each one of his recently purchased “*Burlap Nymphs*.”

So, the morning of the last day, we all started fishing Kurt’s “*Burlap Nymph*” and immediately started catching fish. Since we had a limited amount of these new flies, we had to be careful of snags and at one time when I caught a tree branch on a back cast, Kurt kindly set down his rod, climbed out of the water and pulled down the tree branch so my nymph could be saved.

***It is no exaggeration to state that on that third day of fishing, I caught 2 to 3 times more fish in 5 hours of fishing than in the previous two days!***

So, when the three of us got back to our respective homes, the search for the proper materials to replicate the “*Burlap Nymph*” began.

Hobby, fabric and grocery stores were visited in search of the correct burlap to use (raw, untreated tan / brown burlap). I called Todd Opsal at “*On the Creek*” and he advised me that they were using burlap from an old potato sack. So back, I went looking for potato sacks. But, at least in my home area, the grocery stores get all their veggies in paper or synthetic thread-woven bags.

Finally, a friend suggested that I stop at a local coffee shop that brought in coffee beans from South America and Africa for the shops’ roasting / grinding. Lo and behold, I was able to get an empty burlap sack from which I could get burlap threads to tie the “*Burlap Nymph*.” I think that I now have enough burlap thread available to tie flies for everyone who belongs to Trout Unlimited – NATIONWIDE!

In my phone call to Todd Opsal, I mentioned the appearance of the nymph that Kurt had and was advised by Todd that what we were fishing wasn’t the “*Burlap Nymphs*” being tied and sold at “*On the Creek*” fly shop!

After a phone call to Kurt, and a subsequent visit by Kurt to the “*On the Creek*” fly shop, turns out that what we were fishing wasn’t a “*Burlap Nymph*” but a tan / cream-colored scud.

Not to be deterred in that I now had enough burlap to tie gazillions of burlap-bodied nymphs and scuds, I started tying both to use later this month on our Fall Outing at the West Fork campgrounds.

The enclosed pic shows the tan / cream colored scud (the top fly) that was so successful for us while the two flies on the left are the “*Burlap Scuds*” and the two on the right are the “*Burlap Nymphs*” tied per the instructions and information given to me by Todd Opsal.

So, prior to anyone heading up to the Driftless Area later this month, it's suggested that you tie a few of these bead heads or go to the “*On the Creek*” fly shop! Tell Todd and Nick that Italian Bob, Popeye and the Bearded Bohemian suggested that you get stop by!



Here's the materials I used to tie the above two dressings:

#### ***BH Burlap Nymph***

Hook:	Daiichi #1550 Wet Fly hook (Size 14)
Bead:	Cyclops Gold Mini 3/32"
Thread:	Uni-Thread 6/0 - Tan
Body:	Brown Burlap
Ribbing	Gold Ultra Wire

#### ***BH Burlap Scud***

Hook:	Daiichi #1130 Curved Emerger hook (Size 14)
Bead:	Cyclops Gold Mini 3/32"
Thread:	Uni-Thread 6/0 - Tan
Body:	Brown Burlap
Spine:	Several strips of shinny Pearlescent Krystal Flash
Ribbing	Gold Ultra Wire
Tails and Antennae:	Tan colored hen hackle barbs

Notes: Before tying in the antennae, I slid the bead back towards the hook bend, tied in the antennae and then put a drop of head cement over the thread wraps / antennae butt ends before pushing the bead over the thread / antennae. I then pulled the thread over the bead, did a couple thread wraps before tying in the gold wire ribbing.

On both the nymph and the scud, after tying in the burlap at the back of the hook shank, I wrapped the thread up to the bead and, to make the burlap a little “shaggy”/ fuzzy”, I scrapped a razor blade over the burlap thread.

After doing the wire ribbing wraps on the nymph and whip finishing, a dark brown permanent marking pen was rubbed over the top of the nymph to make a dark spine / elongated wing case.



## Grumpy's Page by Kurt Haberl

I heard the wind huff outside and saw against the glow of the streetlight on the corner the swirl of wild flurries driven as if they were searching for some place to hide. The thought of going out made me shiver.

"Thanks for inviting me over," Schnoz said. "With Huldý visiting her sister this week, I don't have anyone to, uh, talk to, and then my mind starts to think things, and then, uh, one thing leads to another until a neighbor calls the police or fire department."

"Inviting you over was Annie's idea. She promised Huldý. I'm glad you're here. It makes me think of the days I read about back in England when friends sat together in a club, sipping Scotch, waxing bamboo rods or cleaning silk lines and talking about favorite fish or pools that had names."

Schnoz raised his glass to me. "Egg nog is as good as anything this time of year."

"Agreed. Did the police department send you a card? You probably pay more fines into their community fund than anyone else."

"This year I got a card and a ham from them. They were very appreciative."

A second look at the frightened ranks of flakes outside made me consider putting another log on the fire, but then I remembered we had installed a gas system which smoked less, was just as warm, and lapped ceramic logs with the same golden glow as a wood fire. Progress wasn't always bad. A knock at the door roused me from my warm reading chair.

"Do the police know you're here?" I said.

"Probably, but they know I do fewer dangerous things when I'm in your house."

Then I saw the familiar face of Wet Curtis through the window and hurried to open the door. Curtis came in with a large, unwrapped box and stomped his feet on the rug.

"Annie called and said Schnoz was here and you probably needed backup. I was going through my gear and have some stuff for you to look at and decide if you want any of it."

"We're having egg nog, but I can make hot chocolate or another drink if you want something stronger."

"Egg nog sounds great," Curtis said. "I'm still trying to acquire winter weight. I brought a bag of some Christmas cookies. They're half butter and half sugar." He put his large box of gear in front of Schnoz, who immediately noticed a rod tip sticking out and pulled out

what looked at first like a short ice fishing rod, but then I saw several yards of fluorescent yarn attached to the tip.

"An indoor practice rod," Schnoz said. "I haven't seen one of these in years."

"You can use it," Wet Curtis said.

"Thank you," Schnoz said, and immediately began buggy-whipping the yarn back and forth.

"I meant to say you OUGHT to use it," Curtis corrected himself.

"Don't cast toward the fire," Curtis and I said at the same time. Then we saw that our warning was unnecessary because Schnoz had somehow knotted the yarn to a third of its original length.

"There must be a terrible crosswind in here," Curtis said. I heard another knock at the door, but Annie answered it this time on her way to putting a tray of various cheeses, crackers, and salami on the coffee table. Ghost Mary entered with a tall woman who had a very friendly face and kind smile.

"Hello, everyone," Mary said. "Annie said Schnoz was here and you needed backup. This is my new friend Allie. She transferred into my husband's company from Colorado, and she'll be fishing with us next spring. I brought some cheesecake."

"Ooh, what's that wonderful smell?" Allie said.

"Me," Schnoz said. "I took a shower today with Huld's soaps."

"It's mulled cider in the kitchen," Annie said. "I'll bring out a pitcher."

I didn't hear any more knocks, but somehow Dewey and Roy the plumber appeared with beer and cartons of ice cream. Then the noise became a din, and I expected the police to knock next, but they never showed up. Schnoz started handing out gear from Wet Curtis's box of surprises.

"Ooh," Allie said, holding up a packet Schnoz had given her, "furl leaders. Can I have these?"

I only heard bits and pieces of things after that, but it was enough.

"Dry and a dropper," Roy the plumber said. "If I'm going to tangle everything anyway, I might as well make it worthwhile."

"I think I'll put on a new leader this year," Dewey said.



"No one can make the casts I can make," Schnoz told Allie, and then Wet Curtis took the hopelessly tangled practice rod from Schnoz and held it up for all to admire.

"He's telling the truth," Curtis said.

"When is the first outing?" Annie asked hopefully.

"The police gave Schnoz a ham this year," I announced and everyone who could hear me congratulated Schnoz.

"I got new waders for Christmas," Wet Curtis said, "so this year I'll have three backups."

"I found a new stream the DNR doesn't know about," Ghost Mary said. "It's on public land with an easement for hikers. Matt at the fly shop hasn't even heard of it."

Allie looked around the noisy room and said, "Mary, you were right about your fishing buddies. I didn't believe you at first."

"Maybe if I fish three or four North Country spiders as droppers," Roy the plumber said, "one of the flies would stay untangled long enough to catch a fish."

Schnoz said, "I think this year I'm going to leave everything superfluous at home."

"Like a net?" I said.

"Like you," Schnoz said.

I smiled and looked into the golden fire again. Those tweed-clad, necktie-wearing gentlemen in their fishing club had nothing on us. It's true that fly fishing is often about peaceful solitude, a burbling stream, reflection, and Zen. Sometimes, especially when the wind and snow outside compete for a place to hide, a golden fire, noise, food, cider, nog, and the camaraderie of trout fishers in January foretell a very good new year. If you can't fish, talk about fishing.

## Upcoming Non-Chapter Events

- [\*Chicagoland Fishing Expo\*](#) - Schaumburg, IL - January 25-28 - Be sure to drop by the Illinois Council of Trout Unlimited booth to see some friendly faces. \$3 off adult tickets with code SEM24 available until midnight 1/18/2024 [here](#)
- [\*Women's Intro to Fly Fishing Clinic\*](#) - Oshkosh, WI - February 3rd
- 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@leewulfftul.org](mailto:volunteer@leewulfftul.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)

# Chapter Officers

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