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President's Message

Dear LWTU Chapter Members,

Please join us at our next monthly chapter meeting at [Village Pizza & Pub](#) (145 N John F. Kennedy Dr, Carpentersville, IL 60110 location) on Thursday, March 21st, 2024 with social hour starting at 6:00 PM (additional meeting and program details are included further 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.

Spring is almost here, the recent warm weather and return of the sandhill cranes are sure proof! 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 or donate!](#) 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). Our TIC team is currently evaluating real-time water temperature and pH monitoring equipment with remote alarm features in the interest of improving outcomes. 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 resumed 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.

At last month's chapter meeting, speaker Dick Dragiewicz treated the chapter to an informative and engaging presentation about the Menominee River and the fight to stop the Back 40 mine planned along its bank. Books sold by Dick at the meeting financially support the Coalition to Save the Menominee River, Inc. [Click here](#) if you would like to learn more about or financially support said organization.



The annual Driftless Area Stream Restoration Symposium virtual event takes place this month. Don't have two days to spare to watch the symposium online? We've got your solution! At this month's chapter meeting we will replay the most interesting symposium highlights, with discussion afterwards if time allows.

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&omn=81187865810>

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

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.

As approved by the board, the chapter recently moved its two Chase accounts to a single Barrington Bank & Trust (BB&T) checking account and renewed one of its two laddered certificates of deposit held at BB&T (interest earned was transferred to the checking account). The chapter may transfer some of its checking account funds into a new savings account at BB&T earning approximately 4%, subject to board approval.

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

The Illinois Council of Trout Unlimited's annual youth conservation and fly fishing Camp is seeking mentors and students. [Click here for more information.](#)

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

Protect Illinois Wetlands

The U.S. Supreme Court recently gutted the Clean Water Act, eliminating the protection of many wetlands we rely on for flood control and habitat along major rivers. Now, Illinois wetlands are left vulnerable to developer bulldozers because our state lacks a comprehensive program to protect them. Wetlands act as nature's sponges, improving water quality, providing important flood control, and preserving endangered habitats. Illinois has already lost nearly 90% of our wetlands. In our warming climate and increasing extreme weather, we can't afford to lose any more. Consider asking your legislators to vote 'Yes' and cosponsor SB3669/HB5386, which will protect Illinois wetlands left vulnerable by the US Supreme Court by filling out [this form](#).

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 Water Recreation Rights

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: **Tup's Indispensable Dry Fly & Nymph**

Back in 2009, I sent a write-up to Kurt Haberl when he was the Lee Wulff Newsletter Editor AND author of the “Grumpy” stories. What some people might not know is that for many years, the basis for many of the Grumpy stories were based on true life adventures of “The Amigos” while camped at the Westfork Campgrounds in Avalanche!

As written almost 15 years ago, there’s an old English dry fly pattern called the “Tup's Indispensable,” first tied in the UK sometime during the late 1800s / early 1900s by a fellow named R. S. Austin and fished by G.E.M. Skues.

For many years, the recipe for the Tup’s dubbing was kept secret and many imitations were offered on the market as few people knew the exact recipe for the materials used in the Tup’s dubbing. Personally, for years I tied a Tup’s dry fly using a light, pinkish-colored dubbing based on pictures found in various magazines, books and web sites.

But sometime in 2008 or 2009 (possibly), a fellow in the UK provided me some samples of the Tup’s dubbings used by his father and / or grandfather, marked as “Circa 1910” and “Circa 1950” and, although I may not have been able to use the fur from an “unborn seal pup” and the “urine – stained wool from a Tup”, I think I was able to match the color and texture of the old dubbings (quite a bit darker than my old, pinkish dubbing) to tie a few dry and nymph flies, as follows:



Recipes:

Tup’s Indispensable Dry fly:

Hook: Daiichi #1190 Barbless Dry Fly Hook, size 14 - 18
Silk: Pearsall Gossamer Silk #3 – Primrose
Thorax Dubbing: “Tup’s Mixture”
Tail & Hackle: Keogh Ginger Cape

Tup’s Nymph:

Hook: Daiichi #D1560 Traditional Nymph Hook, size 14 – 18
Silk: Pearsall Gossamer Silk #3 – Primrose
Thorax Dubbing: “Tup’s Mixture”
Ribbing: X-Small Gold Ultra Wire
Tail: Keogh Ginger Cape



Grumpy's Page by Kurt Haberl

Believe it or not, this time it wasn't Schnoz who started the argument. It began with a simple question from our newest chapter member, Allie Vargas, who transferred in from Colorado, and was quickly becoming one of the usual suspects. The trouble came during the first outing after a chapter meeting with some professional suggestions on ways to organize fly boxes. At first I thought her question was truly innocent, but once things got going, I saw her sit back and take mental notes, and then it occurred to me that she was wise enough to figure out that if you wanted to know all about individual fly fishers, just ask how they organize their fly boxes.

"How do y'all organize your fly boxes?" Allie asked. She asked with no hint of irony, sarcasm, or double entendre, but suddenly her alert eyes and head-turning attention told me something else was going on.

"Organize?" Dewey said. "You guys organize your fly boxes? Don't you just remember that your favorite pheasant tail is in your green box right next to a Royal Wulff you found in a bush?"

"You put those two next to each other in the same box?" Schnoz asked.

"Sure. I caught a fish on a pheasant tail once, and right after that, I found the Royal Wulff in a bush. I guess my box is organized according to history. Which fly did I get first and which did I get second. It makes me think about the fish I caught and when I caught them. You know, history."

"That's an interesting philosophical approach," Roy the Plumber said. "You're not organizing by genus or size or color, you're organizing according to a time stamp you keep in your head, and to find a certain fly, you simply follow a story line. How far back can you go?"

"To the beginning," Dewey said.

"What was your first fly?" I asked.

Dewey looked up at the evening sky, and his finger counted months and years in the air. "Uh, my history goes back to a piece of red yarn I tied to look like a worm so it would wiggle in the water."

"Do you still use it? Schnoz said.

"Naw. The hook is all rusty and the red yarn has turned kind of yellow. I use it as a place marker that starts the beginning. It's historical and personal and sentimental. If I lost it, I'd feel bad."

“Did it catch anything?” I asked.

“Yes,” Dewey said proudly. “I caught a six inch creek chub with it on Bower creek before the creek filled up with silt and old tires. At the time, I thought the chub was a brown trout. That’s the beginning of the story, probably 50 years ago. We all have to start somewhere.”

“My turn,” Schnoz said impatiently. “I organize my boxes using the OMG method. It works perfectly.”

“I’ve never heard of that,” Ghost Mary said. “What’s the OMG method?”

“It’s simple, but it works. I have two boxes of all the valuable flies I bought for real money at Orvis. That’s the ‘O’ box. I have two boxes of all the flies I tied myself, most of which are experimental and don’t have names, except for one I call the Stinger because all it ever caught was my ear. It’s in the back of the second ‘M’ box. My last box contains all the flies I pilfered from Grumpy when he wasn’t looking. OMG.”

“Hey,” I said. “You’ve been stealing from me?”

Everyone laughed. Pretty much everyone in our chapter begs and pilfers from everyone else.

“But, Schnoz,” Wet Curtis asked, “how do you organize the flies in each box?”

“I don’t. That would take all the fun out of it. Think of it this way. When you go to a casino to play a slot machine, it’s only fun because you don’t know what’s going to come up when you spin the wheels. When you pick a fly at random, you feel really good when one comes up a winner. It’s like ‘jackpot!’”

I saw Ghost Mary put her face in her hands. She wasn’t buying it. Allie made the mistake of taking a drink when Schnoz explained the OMG method, and it made her choke and cough.

“What about you, Roy? I asked.

“Well, our philosophies differ, I suppose. I believe in simplicity and minimalism. Allow me to demonstrate.” He took an old, dented aluminum box from his shirt pocket and said, “This, my friends, is my fly box.” With a little ceremony, he passed it around the campfire. When it got to me, I saw there were three flies in it. One was a pheasant tail; one used to be a black wooly bugger, and one was some unidentifiable wrapping of fuzz with a peacock herl tail.

“Sometimes I organize these flies alphabetically; sometimes by size, sometimes by color, sometimes by season, and sometimes by wetness.”

“Roy, there’s only three flies in your box,” Schnoz said. “Why organize them at all?”

“Well, you see, Schnoz, my good friend, organization is a matter of choice, experience, accessibility, and sometimes whim. When I had five or six flies, it used to be more difficult. Take for instance, that Royal Wulff fly that Dewey salvaged from a bush. At one time, that fly was probably mine. I remember every bush, tree, and snag where I have deposited flies for safekeeping or sharing. It’s kind of like those Little Free Libraries you see around town. You know their motto: Take a book; leave a book. Sometimes before I fish a favorite run, I’ll use one of my older flies I left in a bush for future use. Why carry the useless weight of gear when I can usually retrieve what I need from such a handy dispenser right on my favorite streams?”

That’s when I saw Ghost Mary look up, and Allie put her face in her hands.

“Organizing helps me to be logical and practical,” Wet Curtis said. “I bring every fly I have in all my foam boxes on every trip. The boxes go from heavy to light in terms of flotation. They do double duty, because normally hooks and flies are just ballast, but if I pack my vest with foam boxes, I don’t worry as much when I fall in the stream because I have eight or ten mini flotation devices in my vest.”

“Does that work?” Ghost Mary asked.

“No,” Curtis said, “not for actual flotation, but they work psychologically. If you carry lots of things that float, they will help you float, theoretically. I’m careful to wade in only one or two feet of water, so I don’t expect them to help me bob in the stream. Psychology is a powerful thing, nevertheless. Because of my foam boxes, I have no fear of falling in a stream.”

“What about you, Mary?” Schnoz asked. “You catch fish. How do you do it?”

“I use boxes organized by seasons,” Mary said. “My spring box has Hendricksons, Sulphurs, little Black Caddis, tiny Black Stoneflies, dark Midges and Perdignons. My summer box has Cahills, Hexes, Tricos, Grasshoppers, light Midges and Perdignons. My fall box has more Tricos, Grasshoppers, and Tan Caddis. I have a box for all seasons with Cracklebacks, Zebra Midges, Blue Winged Olives, Tan Caddis, Ants, Beetles, Crickets, Sowbugs, and Wooly Buggers. Fish eat those in every season. I have an attractor box for off color water or stubborn fish with Pink Squirrels, Prince Nymphs, Girdle Bugs, Royal Coachmen, and lots of flashy soft hackles.”

“Is that why you catch fish?” asked Roy. “Your encyclopedia of flies? I mean, if some professionals compete in a ‘one fly contest,’ I thought I was overdoing it by having three flies.”

Ghost Mary smiled. “I think the fly matters less than the presentation, being sneaky, and hiking to unfished water. We’ve all had fish take something weird like a big dry fly on a

hot, sunny day, or a big wooly bugger in a riffle. Some trout are just bored or cantankerous.”

“I’m sticking with OMG,” Schnoz said. “I don’t want to be accused of being crazy about Cahill’s, Sowbugs, and Pink Squirrels.”

We all looked at each other. Crazy? Schnoz being crazy was already a given.

Then they turned to look at me. Where is that sudden boom of thunder or downpour when you need it? The worst part was that Ghost Mary winked at Allie, who looked at me with wide eyes that said, “This is going to be good.”

“Well,” I said. “For a long time I followed the ASS method, the Anti Schnoz Selection. When we got to a stream, if I saw Schnoz put on a dry, I figured his dries usually look like Frankenstein and would scare the fish to the bottom, so I would put on a bead head nymph. If he put on a nymph, I figured his ugly nymphs would scare fish to the surface, so I would put on a dry.”

“Ha,” Schnoz said. “I knew you were doing that, so I’d put on the opposite of what I wanted to fish, and then switch as soon as you weren’t looking.”

“Yeah, but I knew you knew, so if you were looking, I’d put on the opposite of the opposite, knowing that you were going to change as soon as I turned my back.”

“Okay,” Wet Curtis said, “we all know you two fighting with each other is half the fun, but how do you organize your fly boxes?” He shook his head, but I saw that Ghost Mary and Allie were enjoying this immensely, so I kept going.

“After a while I followed Roy and kept a little box with just four or five of my favorite flies, because I figured those damn trout shouldn’t be so picky about what they eat, and by God, I was going to fish for them with what *I wanted*, but the fish won out, so next I would plan ahead and pull out ten flies or so that seemed best for the season, time of day, and the hatch chart I got from Matt’s fly shop, but that got to be a lot of thinking, and you know how I am about thinking, and if I planned the day and got to the water and saw it was off color, everything got messed up.”

I had to take a breath, but I thought, *what the hell*, and just went ahead.

“Next I organized my boxes by size. If the water was off-color, I’d fish something big, and if it was really clear and shallow, I’d fish something small. When I couldn’t figure out if I should fish a dry or a wet fly, I’d compromise and put on a soft hackle for in between, and I guess I caught a few more fish that way. Something bothered me, though, so I quit.”

“What?” Roy asked. “If that plan seemed to work...”

“But lots of time it didn’t work, and it wasn’t as much fun. You know, I like the surprise of it all, and sometimes I laugh out loud when trout do the unexpected. Then one day I got this flash. There’s a word for it. It wasn’t thinking a lot or working it out, it just *came*.

Epiphany. That’s the word. It was a flash. When I go to a restaurant, I like salad bars and sampler platters and a smorgasbord, and in the best restaurants, I like the way they make things look. So now I do two things. I organize my boxes by color, so all my green flies are in one box, black in another, brown in another, beige or white in another, and I have a clown box with pinks and reds and oranges and yellows. When I open a box, it looks real pretty, and it makes me smile. When I fish, I follow the Rule of 4. I pick a fly that intuition tells me, ‘ooh, pick this one,’ although it doesn’t matter which one I pick. Then I make four casts, and if a fish doesn’t take it when I’m pretty sure fish are there, I switch to a fly that’s the opposite. If they don’t want a black Perdigon, I give them a Crackleback, and if they don’t like that, I give them a Grizzly soft hackle, and then a flashback bead head. They get to see a fly four times, and if I find something they like, after four fish, I switch to another fly. Trout like a smorgasbord. They surprise me. They make me smile. Basically I throw everything at them, and I think they like it. We have fun. I know it’s crazy, but sometimes crazy is good.”

“Wait a second,” Roy said. “You’re doing the same thing Schnoz does. He picks flies at random like spinning the wheels on a slot machine. The fun is in the random surprise.”

“It’s not fair to accuse me of being just like Grumpy,” Schnoz said.

“Yeah,” I said. “Schnoz and me are opposites.”

That’s when the peal of thunder finally came, followed by a driving rain. We all got up, grabbed our camp chairs and raced to our tents.

“Hey,” I heard in a call from Roy, barely above the splatter of the rain, “Who’s got my fly box? I’ve only got three flies, and I need them.”

“I do,” Allie called back. “I’ll give it to you in the morning.”

After another crash of thunder, Schnoz called out, “I’m not like Grumpy!”

Three or four peals of laughter called back to him.

(Special thanks to Dick Dragiewicz, whose notes and suggestion from a recent chapter talk made the above nonsense possible.)

Upcoming Non-Chapter Events

- *TUDARE 2024 Driftless Area Stream Restoration Symposium* - Online - [March 11th](#) & [March 12th](#)
- *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](#)
 - [Lake Forest, IL - April 7th](#)
- [IF4](#) 2024 screenings in the area:
 - [Richland Center, WI - June 6th](#)
- *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](#)

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