

Hickory NC Trout Unlimited December 2019 Newsletter



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A LINE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello everyone, I hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving and would like to take the chance to say Merry Christmas to all of you.

Last month's meeting at Market on Main was very informative with our open forum questions and answers. We had a guest with us from TU National, Jeff Wright. He was very helpful in giving us direction as to where Hickory TU may go IF we have the support of our members. With that being said Jeff is sending out a survey as to give us direction going into the future. It's very important that you take the time to give us your input. Thank you in advance.

We will not be having a regular December meeting however we are working on putting together a Christmas party. This is something new for us. Normally we don't meet at all in December, but we miss you!!! So please look for an upcoming email with more information on that.

I am in the process of organizing a special program for our January meeting that looks rather exciting. We will have additional information about that in our January newsletter.

In retrospect and looking back over our year of 2019 Hickory TU has continued with our trout in the classroom projects, with Rivercourse, with our informational meetings, and we have supported many great causes. Actually we've

done a lot. Let's hope to continue this into 2020 and make it bigger and better with your support.

Happy Holidays, and I hope to see you soon.

The tug is the drug...
Jackie Greene

MONTHLY MEETING

There is no meeting in December, however, a newsletter will be coming out regarding the Christmas party as soon as it is available. Enjoy the time with your family and please join us for our next meeting on January 21st.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"The greatest gift you can give to another fisherman is to put a fish back."

...Lee Wulff

Tight Lines & Road Kill

Healthcare Plan – No, Not that One!

I won't dare wade into all the political morass that accompanies the national healthcare debate! I could, I'd be right, but I won't. Instead, let's talk about streamside healthcare when we wade into a trout stream.

Most of you know, in a former life I was a physician. Recently, in the midst of my monthly writers' block, Editor Chick sent me an article he'd found about what an angler should carry on the stream as a first aid kit. He thought it might lead to an informative piece for my column.

I read the author's recommendations with interest. Hawkeye had less equipment on M*A*S*H! The list includes several sizes of bandages and gauze wraps, ointments, various tapes, multiple sizes of band-aids, scissors, razor blade, cloth to make slings, a needle, tweezers, and a donor kidney just in case you need a quick transplant (I made that last one up!). He also recommends a whistle and mirror for signaling, matches and other stuff to start a fire, and a small pharmacy line of pain relievers, antihistamines, and antacids! Anybody have a pack mule?

I don't know about you, but I don't have any solo trips into the wilderness planned. I've done some, but the outfitter I went with had a well-stocked first-aid kit. Most outfitter licenses require them to. If I head out alone, on foot, into the Wind River Mountains of Wyoming with no contact with

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civilization, I might take all this stuff. For an afternoon of fishing on Wilson Creek, I'll pare down my kit a lot!

Now I'll tell you what I'd take. Most importantly, the stuff you need to remove a barbed hook from yourself or a friend. It doesn't take much: large tippet, a handle (the forceps we carry work well), and fortitude. I described how to remove hooks in detail in my October '18 column (<http://www.hkynctu.org/past-newsletters/> and click on Oct '18). Of course, if you crimp the barb when you tie or buy the fly, you don't even need this stuff. Crimped barbs allow you to release fish much less traumatically AND allow much easier release of an angler!

What else? Maybe a couple band-aid sizes, and, if you really want to get fancy, some antibiotic ointment like Neosporin. I keep a cell phone in my vehicle in case I really need help. No pack mule needed.

Why so little? Any significant injury I sustain means I'm done for the day. I'm headed back to the vehicle to treat a wound myself or head to an ED or urgent care if it's bad enough. So, what if I fall on a rock and get a deep wound? I wear a shirt! I'll use it to apply pressure to stop the bleeding and then to wrap the wound. Nothing in the more voluminous kit above allows you to properly care for something big. I can suture quite well, but not on the banks of Wilson! Stop the bleeding and go for help! Fracture a leg, send your buddy to call for EMS on the cell phone. Of course, most of where I fish has no cell signal.

A few more things are important: lip balm, sunscreen, and bug repellent. Those are really pre-aid to prevent bad things, not treat them.

One final recommendation. There are snakes in the woods! A flask of purely medicinal snakebite amber fluid makes fishing more productive and the angler wiser (see last month's *Tight Lines and Road Kill*, available on the same link above)! Taking some to share also assures you'll have a buddy to hike out and call EMS when you fracture your leg.

By Joel Miller

STOCKING STUFFERS FOR YOUR FLY FISHERMAN

Buying gifts for your fly fisherman can be an expensive proposition and most fly fishermen a pretty opinionated about what they want. You may think that \$500 rod would be wonderful, but your fisherman may be dreaming about that \$800 rod. You may buy a fanny pack when your fisherman is thinking about a chest pack. It's often better to let your fly fisherman purchase their own major items. But less expensive stocking stuffers may be just as fully appreciated in showing that you care. Listed here are some suggestions that your fly fisherman would be happy to get from you (Santa that is). These items are all under \$25. A source is listed as a reference only. You may be able to reach the source by putting your cursor on it and pressing ctrl-right click. If not

copy into the search bar of your browser. You might find something similar and less expensive by doing a little searching and stopping at your local fly shop to ask for suggestions is a great option.



Of course if you're going to buy stocking stuffers, the first thing you will need is a stocking to stuff them in. A little searching will find many options but here's a place to start looking: [https://www.personalizationmall.com/Christmas-](https://www.personalizationmall.com/Christmas-Stockings-c152.lp?fitmid=24598&did=307241&wordid=24598&utm_source=Bingfeed&utm_medium=cpc&msclkid=5e2783e6177b1f4dd2f3de5926220b4b)

[Stockings-c152.lp?fitmid=24598&did=307241&wordid=24598&utm_source=Bingfeed&utm_medium=cpc&msclkid=5e2783e6177b1f4dd2f3de5926220b4b](https://www.personalizationmall.com/Christmas-c152.lp?fitmid=24598&did=307241&wordid=24598&utm_source=Bingfeed&utm_medium=cpc&msclkid=5e2783e6177b1f4dd2f3de5926220b4b)

For cocktail hour you'll find coasters with beautiful fly fishing designs. Here is the source for this one:



https://www.amazon.com/The-Walton-Company-Coaster-Fishing/dp/B07KLY86PX/ref=asc_df_B07KLY86PX/?tag=bingshopping-

[20&linkCode=df0&hvadid={creative}&hvpos={adposition}&hvnetw=o&hvrnd={random}&hvpon={hvptwo}&hvqmt=e&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl={devicemodel}&hvlocint={hvlocphy}&hvtargid=pla-4583589103402771&psc=1](https://www.amazon.com/The-Walton-Company-Coaster-Fishing/dp/B07KLY86PX/ref=asc_df_B07KLY86PX/?tag=bingshopping-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid={creative}&hvpos={adposition}&hvnetw=o&hvrnd={random}&hvpon={hvptwo}&hvqmt=e&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl={devicemodel}&hvlocint={hvlocphy}&hvtargid=pla-4583589103402771&psc=1)

And maybe something as simple as a sticker to paste on the truck window might be the way to go.



<https://www.etsy.com/listing/552220350/brown-trout-waterproof-vinyl->

[decal?gpla=1&gao=1&utm_source=bing&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=shopping_us_d-electronics_and_accessories-decals_and_skins-other&utm_custom1=bcaa530a-bbb2-4e11-9cac-](https://www.etsy.com/listing/552220350/brown-trout-waterproof-vinyl-decal?gpla=1&gao=1&utm_source=bing&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=shopping_us_d-electronics_and_accessories-decals_and_skins-other&utm_custom1=bcaa530a-bbb2-4e11-9cac-)



If your fisherman has a den or a nice fly tying room, you might want to spruce it up with a decorative wall plate. This one can be found at:

[https://www.blackforestdecor.com/fly-fishing-single-switch-](https://www.blackforestdecor.com/fly-fishing-single-switch-plate.html?msclkid=ab1499585cd7141d3b6bc4e76f8ccdbb&utm_source=bing&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=(ROI)%20Shopping%20-%20Lighting&utm_term=4581802395024134&utm_content=Light%20Switch%20Covers)

[plate.html?msclkid=ab1499585cd7141d3b6bc4e76f8ccdbb&utm_source=bing&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=\(ROI\)%20Shopping%20-%20Lighting&utm_term=4581802395024134&utm_content=Light%20Switch%20Covers](https://www.blackforestdecor.com/fly-fishing-single-switch-plate.html?msclkid=ab1499585cd7141d3b6bc4e76f8ccdbb&utm_source=bing&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=(ROI)%20Shopping%20-%20Lighting&utm_term=4581802395024134&utm_content=Light%20Switch%20Covers)



Most fly fishermen enjoy searching out new places to fish. Here is a used book listed in good condition that can be used to help find new places here in North Carolina. The used book is available at this site, but if you prefer a new book you can probably find it.

https://www.amazon.com/Fly-Fishermans-Guide-Lea-Lawrence/dp/1888952822/ref=asc_df_1888952822/?tag=bingshopping-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid={creative}&hvpos={adposition}&hvnetw=o&hvrnd={random}&hvpon={hvptwo}&hvqmt=e&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl={devicemodel}&hvlocint={hvlocphy}&hvtargid=pla-4584345018249749&psc=1



What would Christmas be without getting clothes. 🧦 Here you can get your fisherman a pair of novelty socks with a rainbow trout sock design on them. I just discovered my son has a pair and I'm told they are an in-thing right now.

[https://www.amazon.com/Gold-Toe-Printed-Novelty-](https://www.amazon.com/Gold-Toe-Printed-Novelty-Graphic/dp/B07F72ZRPL/ref=sr_l_36?dchild=1&keywords=fly+fishing+christmas&qid=1572870874&sr=8-36)

[Graphic/dp/B07F72ZRPL/ref=sr_l_36?dchild=1&keywords=fly+fishing+christmas&qid=1572870874&sr=8-36](https://www.amazon.com/Gold-Toe-Printed-Novelty-Graphic/dp/B07F72ZRPL/ref=sr_l_36?dchild=1&keywords=fly+fishing+christmas&qid=1572870874&sr=8-36)



If your fisherman is really into the sport you might want to get this Tshirt honoring him as a master of fly fishing. There are a great many other fly fishing Tshirts out there on the internet.

https://www.amazon.com/fishing-fisher-fisherman-gift-men/dp/B0793FCWCD/ref=sr_l_54_sspa/hvaid=78340256204316&hvbm=bp&hvdev=c&hvqmt=p&keywords=fishing+christmas&qid=1572909212&sr=8-54-spons&psc=1&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUFSS09OOUROOkgLOFEmZW5jcnlwdGVkSWO9OT A3ND EwODhSWTNaSlpFRVdEJFomZW5jcnlwdGVkQWRJZDlBMdlyMDgLNDFKNEw5NlJXR0kSUjAmd2lkZ2V0TmFtZTlzcF9idG9mYWN0aW9uPWNsaWNrUmVkaXJlY3QmZG9Ob3RMb2dDbGijaz10cnVl



This is a handy gadget that I haven't seen before. When your tying a fly or landing a fish, many times you run out of hands. This gadget would make life a lot easier on the stream:

<https://wisewaterflyfishing.com/opros-3rd-hand-rod-holder/>



Over the years most of us gather more and more fly fishing equipment and have continually gone from fanny packs to vests that carry more things than we will ever use on the stream. Recently there has been a move to downsizing. The fly fishing lanyard is the epitome of that. If you do a

little research you can find all the tools you need and even a miniature fly box that fit on a lanyard.

https://www.amazon.com/SAMSEFX-Fishing-Lanyard-Braided-Paracord/dp/B077ZRWR8/ref=sr_l_42dchild=1&hvaid=77653061350992&hvbm=be&hvdev=c&hvqmt=e&keywords=fly+fishing+lanyard&qid=1573598660&sr=8-4



If your fly fisherman ties flies, a great idea that my son stuffed my stocking with for several years is the materials needed to tie a specific fly. Probably the best way to do this is visit your local fly shop and have them suggest a good local fly and

gather the materials for you. Another option is to look back through the newsletter at Dave Everhart's column *Advice from the Vice*. In each article he identifies what materials are needed for the fly.

Now for the fly fisher, when you're ready for that big gift that you want to give yourself, think about a trip to South Andros in the Bahamas this year. If you plan it for the first week in February, you might just run into my son and me.

GIVE YOURSELF A CHRISTMAS GIFT

South Andros, A Love Story

by [Louis Cahill](#)



Images of Andros all Photos by Louis Cahill



I love the Bahamas!

It hits me about this time every year. Just about the time I start pulling out the polar fleece and looking for my fishing gloves I start thinking about Andros. I love the cold weather, it's not that, it's just become a rhythm for me.

This is the time of year I start thinking about bonefish and gully wash (the coconut milk

rum and gin based fire water the locals drink). I start to crave conch salad and that sweet Bahamian bread.

I think about warm breezes and cool sand when I should be thinking about migrating brown trout. I start checking over my bonefish gear when I should be prepping my Spey set up. I find myself looking at the weather for Andros when I should be planning my steelhead trips.



I think about my friends there at [Andros South](#) and the friends I've made fishing there who live all over. Some of them even get a phone call. "Hey, what's up? Done any good fishing lately? Going to the Bahamas this year?". The other day I even bought a bunch of saltwater tying material. You never know, right? I got some leader material too. Better safe than sorry.



It's almost November and I'm making rum drinks while all my friends are settling into dark winter beers. I imagine they talk about me behind my back like I was a fool hopelessly in love with a girl who doesn't know he exists. "Wake up dreamer, it's not gonna happen".

Well, the world needs dreamers. I'm booking my ticket tonight. Try not to hate me.

Louis Cahill

Gink & Gasoline

www.ginkandgasoline.com

ADVICE FROM THE VISE

Welcome to December's edition of Advice for the Vise. Winter is a great time to fish, and while trout may not be overly assertive to feed, they still gotta eat. Getting down where they are is critical for success this time of year, so thought I would put up, a really quick and easy pattern that hits the bottom for a bounce along. The October Caddis is a producer not limited to the fall, I think the color fits well with our streams. You can fish this tight lined, under an indicator, or I like it under a high floating dry like an elk hair caddis.



Tying this on a #16 Barbless competition jig hook. The bead is a slotted tungsten 2.8mm black nickel. Using white thread, the tail is 6-8 Coc de Leon fibers in dark pardo and a small size gold wire rib.



The body is amber sexi-floss, which is a silicon spandex material that is very stretchy but holds its color. Collar is golden brown ice dub and a fluorescent orange hot spot.



Start the thread and tie in the tail fibers leaving a hook shanks length off the bend. Tie in the rib to the bend of the hook and smooth the body down. Counter clockwise spin of your thread will let it lie the flattest for a smooth underbody.



Tie in the floss at the head with a couple wraps, then put tension on the floss keeping it tight as you wrap towards the bend of the hook, stop just north of the wire. I like to invert the fly and wrap away from me, again put some tension on this material. It has a great natural segmented look. Wrap to the head, then come back a

third and wrap forward again to the head. You want a tapered body, the trick to this is a game of tension on the floss. Tighter = flatter and less tension = fatter.



Normally I would counter wrap the rib to the wrapping direction of the body material, but with this one, I rib it the same way, again some tension applied to the wire will sink the wire in the stretchy floss giving it a nice effect. Helicopter the wire off after tying it in.



With a swipe of wax and a very little bit of dubbing, create a small noodle, just enough to give it a sparkle without affecting the ability of the fly to drift on the bottom. Wrap the dubbing noodle and whip finish. With some fine thread, this is 14/0 secure a couple wraps and whip finish a hot spot to finish the fly.



I'd love to hear your feedback and I'm always happy to answer any and all questions, give a lesson, or just talk fly fishing. Don't hesitate to contact me at jacobsforkflytying@gmail.com or check out some of my current ties on Facebook and InstaGram at Jacobs Fork Fly Tying.

Dave Everhart

TIP OF THE MONTH

TIPS FOR KEEPING ICE OFF OF FLY ROD GUIDES

Hatch Magazine
by Colin K. Breck - Wednesday, Feb 19th, 2014



With much of the country still well in the midst of what is beginning to seem like an interminable winter, cabin fever has sent many of us out to the stream on days which would typically keep us indoors in the warmth and comfort of home. Fishing on those frigid days can be frustrating at times. You're cold. The fish are lethargic. Conditions are tough. And your rod guides and tip keep icing up, causing you to have to break from fishing to clear the ice. Patience can wear thin.

Although there's nothing you can do to improve the cold temperatures, sluggish fish and lousy conditions, you can put a dent in the frustrations that come from iced up tips and guides by experimenting with one or more of the remedies below.



STANLEY'S ICE OFF PASTE

This is the only remedy of the few listed here that is actually made for the topic at hand. A Loon Outdoors product, Stanley's Ice Off Paste is designed for the sole purpose of keeping ice off fly rod guides. According to Loon, it is the only product designed with this goal in mind. As such, it is a specialty product, and thus comes at a premium price. You'll pay \$7.50 for a small container of paste which you smear on to your guides before hitting the water and as needed while the day goes on. Although the price isn't exactly wallet bursting, it is significantly pricier than the other available remedies. For that price jump, however, you'll get a product that is designed for, tested on and declared safe for your rod and fly lines by a company that makes nothing but fly fishing products.



CHAP STICK

Chap-stick lip balm and other similar products are a favorite homemade remedy of many fishermen for preventing, or at least delaying, icy buildup on rod guides. Similar in consistency to Stanley's Ice Off Paste, Chap-stick will significantly cut down on the amount of ice that builds up on your guides. While there's no evidence regarding how the ingredients in lip balms will affect the resins on your rod and the coatings on your fly line over time, the reality is that gear won't likely see enough exposure to those ingredients -- unless you're very frequently out fishing in icy conditions -- to make a difference. Some anglers have voiced concerns about the potential fish-chasing effects of lip balm scents/odors disseminated into the water, but we're betting these worries are likely overblown as well.



PAM COOKING SPRAY

A noted favorite of steelheaders, many of which claim it to be the ultimate rod de-icer, PAM cooking spray has been shown to help slow the build up of ice. And, as you likely guessed, there's no reason to go name brand here. Grab the cheap store brand stuff. Spray it on before hitting the water, and if you're so inclined, carry it along for reapplications throughout the day. When re-applying on the stream, you'll want to be sure that your guides are clear of ice as dry as you can conveniently make them, to help the spray adhere.

ONE OTHER THING

If you're clearing icy buildup from your rod guides or rod tip by snapping or plucking it off with your fingers, please stop. This is no more than a recipe for a broken guide, not to mention a tedious waste of time. Instead, simply dip the rod into the water, which is warmer than the air and allow it to melt the ice away.



FROZEN FERRULES

(Editor's Note) I'd like to add one more warning. Both my son and I have had rods break when

water got into a ferrule and froze. When moisture gets into the ferrule and freezes, it expands. The expansion can crack the tube portion of the ferrule which destroys the connection and you need to replace it. It would be wise to put a little ice off paste on the connection before you slide the rod pieces together.

WILSON CREEK PROJECT

Jeff Wright, TU Southeast Volunteer Coordinator, has reached out to us with a request for help at Wilson Creek. As you all remember, major storms caused a number of landslides in the watershed. Two in particular occurred off of Rockhouse Creek Rd and the sediment is threatening to enter the water. In the long-term, Andy Brown is looking for funding to do some remediation in the area to decrease the chances of this happening.

In the short term, we are hoping to address the threat by erecting silt fencing to keep the debris out and the creek healthy. This will take about one day and we need 6 – 10 people to help out. The Forest Service and Andy Brown have suggested this happen in early December so we will target Saturday, December 14th for the work. People would need to be prepared for a strenuous but short hike to the slide location, digging, and pounding in silt fence posts.

If you are able to assist with this project, please contact Jeff at jeff.wright@tu.org.

CASTING CAROLINAS

Casting Carolinas is a free program for women cancer survivors. The fall retreat was held October 11-13 at Lake Logan in Canton, NC. To apply for a future retreat or to volunteer to help out, sign up at www.castingcarolinas.com.

COME VISIT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE

I follow a dozen different fly fishing blogs and post many of them on our Facebook page. Many of these articles are too long to include in the newsletter so never make it here. Recently I posted a blog on fly fishing for big bluegill. It turned out to be one of the most followed posts we've ever had. There are also posts on targeting fish in small streams, how to tie a Tenkara fly, and even a bit of humor thrown in. Please visit our page at: <https://www.facebook.com/nwctu/> and be sure to like and follow the page so you will be kept up to date on the latest posts.

CHAPTER WEBSITE

As we have special projects our website is often enhanced to provide information for them. One of our best was for our Boy Scout fly fishing merit badge program we put on last year. If you know of a troop who wants to do the merit badge or if your TU chapter is putting one on, check it out at <http://www.hkynctu.org/helpful-links/fly-fishing-merit-badge/>. You'll find almost all the reference material you need for the program.

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS INVITED



Bill Long hit the jackpot on Wilson Creek this fall with a 28" rainbow trout. Quite something on WC as most people never manage anything that big in Alaska.

If you have a great day on the river, please send us a photo to share at HkyNCTU@gmail.com

If you have success on your trip, please share it with us.

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The Old Man and Leroy Brown

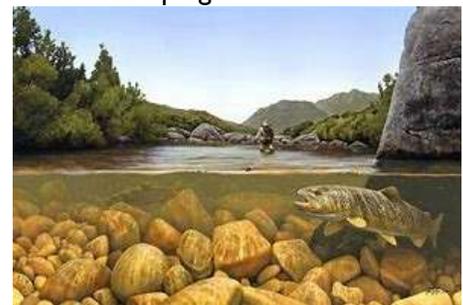
The old man sat up on the side of the bed, stretched his arms out to the side and glanced over at the clock, “Hmm, 5:15, I guess I better get it in gear, that old brown trout has got to be hungry today”. He wiped the sleep from his eyes, reached for his glasses and slowly rose from the side of the bed. He slipped into his pants, stepped into his slippers and headed to the kitchen. “Need to get the coffee started, make my sandwich and get my butt to the creek.” He started the coffee and made two sandwiches, one for breakfast and one for lunch. Then the old man shuffled around the house, gathering his fly rod, his creel (which he never used, except for an occasional one for dinner and Leroy if he ever caught him), his vest, waders, and boots and then set them by the door outside. The old man poured a cup of coffee and headed to the porch to sit in his favorite rocker and drink it. He liked having his coffee outside unless it was too cold. He liked looking out over the fields and watching the deer or turkey as they made their way across to the creek. Often times they would stop in the yard and eat as if he wasn’t even there. After he had his cup of coffee, he went back inside, poured the rest into an old metal Coleman thermos. He slid on his waders, put on his wading boots, grabbed, his lunch, thermos, his old cowboy hat that was tattered and torn from the years of wear, his rods, net, and gear and then headed to the truck, “Daylights burning”.



The weather was beautiful he thought as made his way down the old dirt road that ran along the creek until he came to his pull out spot. Grabbed up his rods, vest, net, and creel and made his way down the side of the road to the creek. He walked along the shoreline slowly until he came to the spot where he knew old Leroy lay. He eased out into the water and watched for a spell to see what the fish were doing. There were flies riding the water like little sail boats on the ocean. He studied a bit more and saw a trout rise, and then another and another. “Well he said softly to himself. He reached into his vest flies and pulled out the old trusty Adams and tied it on. He was a little slower now as his age made the eyesight a little less sharp and the fingers less nimble. Time was on his side, so he did not worry about rushing at all.



“Those trout will be there and waiting to gobble it up” he said softly. He looked back up at the water and studied it a little more. He saw the trout rising over various parts of the creek and picked his spot. He raised his rod, stripped off some line and began his cast. A couple of false casts then he laid his line out as softy as a feather touching down, tossed a small mend into the line and followed it down stream with his rod. It did not take long before he had a trout rise to his fly and take it. He set the hook, stripped his line back and brought it up to him so that he could reach out with his net and catch him. He looked down into the net a beautiful little rainbow. It was small but a wiry little fellow he thought, “you are a good catch, but you are not Leroy”. Keeping his net in the water, he wet his hand and reached in carefully, took hold of the fish gently and removed the barbless hook from his mouth. “Now little fella, you go back tell Leroy that the old man is here and he wants to talk to him for just a bit”. With that he lowered his net and let the rainbow swim gracefully from his net. He checked his fly to make sure it was still tied on good (a practice that he tries to do every time) and began another cast. This time in yielded nothing. A few more casts, step or two here and there and he hooked up again. This time a little larger bow hit the net. He looked down inside at the beautiful fish but it was not Leroy. He sighed a little bit and as before took great care in handling the fish, trying to handle it the least amount he could and get it back into the water as quick as he could so as not to damage the fish. Once again he checked his fly and cast again, several times, catching a few fish here and there, each time he smiled, talked to the fish some and sent it on its way unharmed.



Leroy sat and watched everything from below the ledge of a big old rock. This was one of his hiding places where he would ambush his food when it came by. He looked out and saw the old man come up and fish, catching the younger ones left and right. "I told them to watch out for that old guy, but you know these young ones these days, they just won't listen to us old codgers. At least he is gentle with them and lets everyone go to live another day. Unlike some of those guys that come out and yank them out of water, stand and pose for hours, digging hooks out of the brothers and then tossing them back into the waters only to die. I lose a lot of relatives that way and worse yet, some stuff them in the basket thing on their side and take large numbers of them with them when they leave. I don't know what they do with them, but they never come back." Leroy watched the old man some more and thought "I have never seen the old man use his basket. He always takes the brothers off and puts them back. I wonder why he never takes any? None the less, I will stay in my hiding place until he is gone, I don't want to chance it for sure.

The old man stopped to take a break, opened his thermos and poured a cup of coffee, took a drink and watched the water. He pulled out his sandwich slowly ate it and enjoyed the world around him. He was in his happy place now, enjoying life as he thought it was intended to be, him, the creek, nature and the fish. What could be better he thought, other than catching Leroy. But he had not seen Leroy today as he usually had and was disappointed some. He finished his lunch, sat there a bit, changed his fly to a stone fly pattern and waded back out into the water.

Leroy had forgotten about the old man and went on about his business, lazing under the rock sucking in the food as it came by and enjoying life. Suddenly he felt a pinch as he gobbled down a larger meal, then a slight jerk to the jaw, "I have



been hooked he thought." Leroy gave a mighty run, shaking his head, he headed down stream. "I can't believe this happened, I have to get away from this and set myself free". But to no avail, he was making no ground, no matter how hard he fought and ran, he was being hauled back up stream. He turned and looked and there was the old man, pulling him in with a look in his eyes that ole Leroy had never seen before on the old man's face. He saw the net and made another run, several times, but it was no use, the net slipped under

his massive body and he was hauled out of the water. Fear reached Leroy's brain and the old man stared down at the big brown trout. "Well, well, look what we have here" said the old man. "After all the years, I finally got you. You are bigger than I thought and a good looking fish too. You sure would look good hanging over the fireplace in the old cabin." But as the old man looked down at Leroy, he thought of the many years of fishing, the pursuit of this massive fish and the years of fishing for him. He thought of himself getting older and all that he went through and all that ole Leroy must have gone through to dodge every hook or break himself free. The old man smiled, reached in and removed the hook from Leroy's jaw, he wet his hands and lifted the mighty fish up gently out of the net. He stared Leroy in the eyes for a moment, "You fought my friend. You are a mighty fish and a very wise fish too. It would be a shame to take you from your home, and besides, who would I have to chase after all the time." With that he lowered Leroy back into the water, handled him lightly and let Leroy swim gracefully off. "Goodbye my friend and thank you for all these years. We will meet again and I hope you will remember me and come say hi now and again."

Leroy swam away for a few feet and turned to look back at the old man. "I can't believe he tricked me and caught me. That old man is a smart one, but more than that, he is a gentle one. He took great care to make sure I was not harmed and let me go. The look in the old man's eyes when he held me up to look at me was as if we were old friends. I thought for sure he would put me into the basket, but he did not. With a slight tear in his eyes, he let me go with such care as if he wanted me around for a little longer." Leroy swam back to his rocky ledge and watched as the old man climbed out of the water, "goodbye old timer". The old man walked back up to his truck, loaded his gear and headed home to his rocker. "It was a great day today and best of all, I finally got Old Bad Bad Leroy Brown." I just could not fathom taking him from his home just to sit on my wall. He will be there another day for me to chase." With a smile on his face that will not go away for a while and a story to tell for years to come, the old man slowly drove home.

The moral to this story is one of care.

Handling the fish properly when caught can lengthen their time here for many to enjoy. Take your time when handling the fish when you are out on the water, follow these steps so as not to damage the fish and release them to live another day.

I. Use barbless hooks so that the least amount of damage can be done.

2. If a fish swallows the fly deeper into its mouth and can be hurt with removal, cut the line. (This will not harm the fish and will rust away over time)
3. Net the fish as quickly as possible
4. Keep it in the water as long as possible
5. Wet your hands before handling the fish so that you will not remove the protective coating on the fish
6. It is ok to take a few pictures but do it as quickly as possible so that the fish can be returned to the water quickly unharmed.
7. It is in the heat of the year, get the fish in as quickly as possible and keep in the water as much as you can, to prevent the fish from dying.
8. In the winter try to keep the in the water as much as you can, extended time out of the water can freeze the fish's gills.
9. If you are measuring them, do it as quickly as you can, take your photo and return to the water as quick as you can. If at all possible due this in the net while it is in the water to prevent damage to the fish.
10. The use of rubber nets is safer to use causing less stress on the fish and entanglement.
11. Be careful not to squeeze the fish behind the gills as it can cause damage. Even though they swim off, they may not survive long after.
12. Always wash your gear to prevent spreading disease.

Take great care in handling the fish and educate people in the practice of safe handling.

"On the Line with Charlie Walker"