

Hickory NC Trout Unlimited November 2019 Newsletter



Visit us on Facebook at Hickory NC Trout Unlimited Chapter 032

A LINE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello everyone,

The mountains are awash with color and the rivers are regaining some of their fishability so I hope that you have had the chance to get out there on the water. I don't know about you, but this has been the toughest October that I can remember. What's up with the weather? No rain has really taken a toll on the river and the fish newly in residence there. I have fished several locations this past month, Wilson Creek, the West Fork of the pigeon, the Cherokee Trophy Waters and others but the fishing was hard! It made me realize that I need to learn more about fishing in adverse conditions. I'm hosting a two-day Advanced Women's Clinic through the Fishing Museum of the Southern Appalachians that is supposed to address some of that. The workshop is being done by Mac Brown and Michael Bradley and friends in Bryson City mid-November I'm happy to say that several of the Hickory women have signed up for the class. We have one goal in mind--taking our game to the next level! There is one spot left if you know someone who is interested contact me at HkyNCTUpres@gmail.com.

Moving on... I was excited to see several old friends at our last TU meeting. Everyone liked the movie and the trivia was fun. It made me want to try a few new things. One thing is I've asked Brandon Harrison to do a Streamside class on Euro Nymphing up at Wilson Creek. We don't have a date yet, but he has agreed to doing the class. I will have a sign-up sheet at the November meeting for those interested. Take the time to read Brandon's article in this newsletter and see if this is something you want to explore or want to know more about... then sign up! I am excited to put my new euro nymphing recon to the test!

Talking about articles in this newsletter I also want to bring your attention to the one about the Brown Mountain Lights by Charlie Walker at the end of this newsletter. All I have to say is this, "it is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth!"

Now the last thing I want to talk about is our up and coming November meeting. Hickory TU is struggling. We have several board positions coming open and others that have not been filled. With people being so busy these days things are not looking good for our chapter, so I'm calling the November meeting "How to support your local chapter". This is going to be an open forum for the discussion about the direction for Hickory TU in 2020. The meeting will be

facilitated by Wes and Cathy Starnes. The long and the short of it is..... we need to hear from you! We need you there!

Just for attending you will be entered in a drawing for a \$25 gift card for Outback Steakhouse gifted by Wes and Cathy Starnes. We will also be adding Trout Trivia part 2 since you guys liked it so much. There will be a prize!

As usual we will be enjoying a taco Tuesday \$10 Buffet at Market on Main. If you plan to be there for dinner please email me so that I can prepare at HkyNCTUpres@gmail.com

Without you, some hard decisions will have to be made. With you, things look brighter! You make all the difference!

The tug is the drug...
Jackie Greene

NOVEMBER MEETING

WHEN: Tuesday, November 19

5:30 PM \$10 Buffet Optional

6:30 PM Program

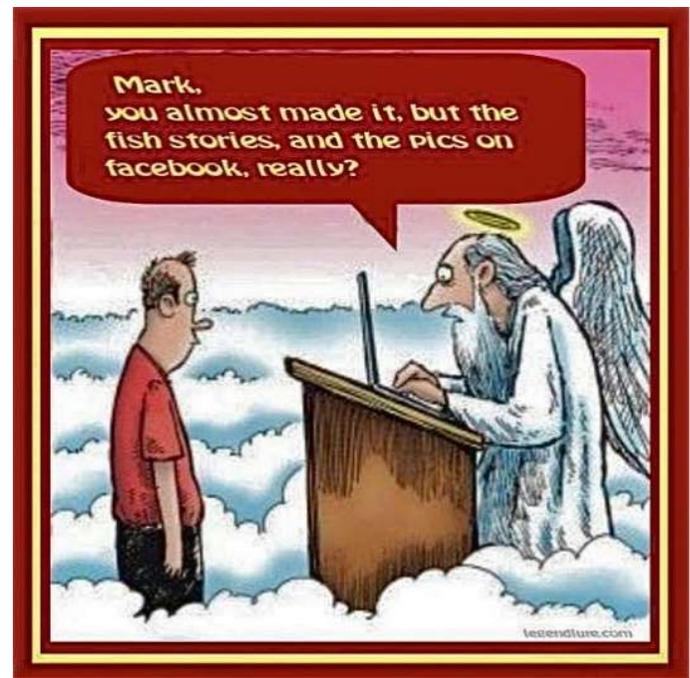
WHERE: Market on Main Cellar

PROGRAM: How To Support Your Local Chapter

SPEAKERS: Wes and Cathy Starnes

RSVP: HkYNCTUpres@gmail.com

QUOTE OF THE MONTH



You are receiving this newsletter either as a member or prospective member of the Hickory NC Chapter 032 of Trout Unlimited. If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, please respond by email to HkyNCTU@gmail.com and let us know.

=====

Tight Lines & Road Kill

Beer and Fishing

Fishermen drink. Fisherwomen do too. Now, there's a revelation! In Scotland, a place where many of the foundations of fly fishing were laid, "a wee dram of whisky" was as much a part of the sport as the rod itself. Of course, in Scotland, whisky is Scotch whisky; to a Scotsman there is no other kind! For those not familiar with the Apothecary System of weights and measures, a dram is 1/8 of an ounce or 3.697 ml, less than a teaspoon. Who among us thinks they stopped at a teaspoon?

I share at least one characteristic with Supreme Court Justice Bret Kavanaugh: I like beer! The craft beer explosion has been the best thing to happen since somebody discovered hops. I've had beer all over the world, and in my educated-by-copious-consumption opinion, US craft beer is the best beer one can find. You might have to carry a passport to find the best Champaign, but if you simply go to Olde Hickory Tap Room, you can get magnificent craft beer.

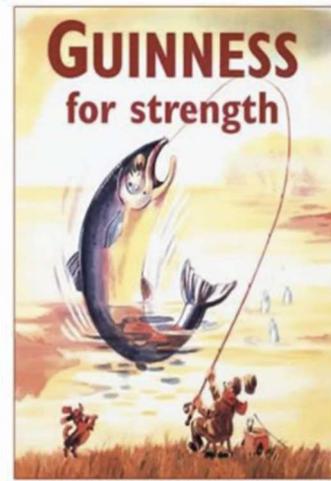
Beer is probably more a part of fishing in America than Scotch in Scotland. One of the first guides I ever fished with anchored a six pack to rocks in the stream, and we'd enjoy a cold one — or two — at the end of a long day of wading. That's where I had my very first Yuengling, the trendy craft beer way back when. I've used that same trick at least once or twice since then!

In a similar vein, I've been astounded by the number of beers that have fish names or use fish in their logos. A preponderance of those seem to be trout. Everybody is familiar with SweetWater's jumping trout logo. A few of the trout-named beers: Cutthroat, Lake Trout Stout, Brown Trout, Trout Hop, Golden Trout, Speckled Trout, and even Thirsty Trout. There's Trout Slayer, Sculpin, Blue Fin Stout, CoHoHo, Holy Mackerel, Wahoo, Snapperhead, Fisherman's Brew, and Red Herring to get a few other species and angling angles into the mix. There are several breweries with fish names: Flying Fish Brewing Co., Dogfish Head, Sturgeon Bay Brewery, Salmon River Brewery, and Fish Brewing Co., to name a few. Fiddlin' Fish Brewing Co. is right down the road in Winston-Salem ... they make good stuff, too!

So why is there such a strong tie between fishing, anglers, and brews? I certainly don't know. We might need to find a marketing psychologist for clues. I do know that a fish caught at 2 p.m. grows significantly after a couple good beers at dinner. A few brought to the net by the light of day become a lot after chugging a few at night. Maybe it's because we all drink like a fish. Ed Zern said, "Fishermen are born honest, but they get over it!" I have a feeling the two-carbon molecules in many beverages have something to do with curing that virtue. Who knows?

Pour yourself a wee dram of amber fluid or a New England IPA and ponder the question. You'll almost surely discern an answer then. Good beer and amber fluid enhance wisdom

and strength just as surely as they do fishing. Ask any angler how smart he is, how strong he is, or how good he fishes after he's tipped a few, and you'll understand.



By Joel Miller

=====

THE ART OF NYMPHING

By Brandon Harrison

Today's fly fishermen generally can be slotted into groups by the area they fish in. For this discussion I am going to dive into a method of fishing that some scowl at and others use simply because it's all they know. With winter time coming we all have to understand that the top water action that drives us crazy during the warm season is coming to a slow end, and will sadly become very unproductive by late November except during the late day warm spells that bring up Blue Wing Olives or late October Caddis, even a midge swarm bubbling up can cause a purist to get excited enough to change flies up and wait patiently watching a spot for one or two chances at a rising trout.

The answer for most of us is quite simple, we must go sub surface to where the fish spend 90 percent of their time eating anyway, but with presentations that are established by conditions not the fish. Nymphing is an art form much like dry fly fishing, but the requirements for success are set in different areas of technique. A dry fly fisherman (or Woman) sets their sights on the fish, and the bug, looking to catch a trout sipping a particular type of insect from the surface and then sneak up and trick that fish into eating a delicately tied imitation of that bug in its current stage of life. Nymphing is a much less technical hunt, but still very skillful if we chose to be fly fishing ninjas. One must first understand the water and how the flows twist around objects and structure. To be extremely good and nymphing up trout all winter long you're going to need to learn how to fish deep slow water, water that is hard to reach and even harder to see into. To do that we are going to use Bobbers.....call it an indicator if you like, but if it floats a weighted fly and you are looking at it for strike detection it is a bobber!

If you're still reading and I haven't been cursed into the next state lets discuss the different ways we can improve our "suspension nymphing". I'm going to try to broaden your

perspective and have you all open your eyes to what you can change rather than tell you what needs to change, because let's face it, articles aren't fishing and no one improves their fly fishing by reading.

Mend, Mend, Mend, Wait.....slow down, lets first watch the drift, and learn from it, the first thing you can do to get a better drift is to place a better cast, watching how the flies and indicator lay out onto the water and controlling the follow-through so that the first mend isn't necessary at all. If trying to keep the flies at a good depth is your goal then mending would be something you want to do very carefully and with as little disturbance to the indicator as possible. Trying to position yourself at the correct angle to the run is way more important than making a perfect cast and having the fly line laying across the current.

Fly line, is possibly the most important part of your rig, if you don't have a slick evenly matched line, your casts, and mends will be sloppy and your time spent on the water will be limited by how much you fight your setup. Most companies sell a couple nymphing lines and I will argue that a heavy high floating line is best since you are moving a very awkward rig around through the air and water. The trick to getting perfect mends starts with the rod and finishes with the fly line and how well it releases the surface tension of the water. Pick a slick line that will flip up stream effortlessly and lay back down just as softly as a size 18 parachute Adams over in the still corner of a plunge pool. Get used to your rod/line combo and learn what little movements will do to control the drift without stirring up the surface.

Weight is going to be necessary to reach the fish in December, I fought using split shot for years, only to realize in some situations well placed shot are better for keeping a good connection to the flies than none at all. The trick is to place these on the leader in an area that will sink the flies fast and create as little bend in the trailing leader as possible. Watching your setup sink in current is the only way to know what it's doing so just like with a streamer look and see what you're getting before you send it towards a fresh run.

Flies are the last of the equation, and this may be a touchy subject, but I will claim that no fish, wild or fresh out of a tank will pass up a meal if its hungry in the wintertime. I encourage you to control presentation before fly selection as long as we all agree presentation covers speed, depth, and path in moving water. Stocked trout will not pass up a small egg 95% of the time if its drift is perfect and they haven't seen it 15 times. The mop fly in natural colors sliding around on the bottom will absolutely get any fishes attention. A large dark hunk of leggy, meaty, nastiness will look just like a big juicy steak to a trout. I often ask people would they pass up a big steak if they were just eating fries, and rarely does anyone say yes. Now if the steak was moving funny or had dirt on it (ehh) maybe just look at it. So clean up that drift, maybe just drop to size 6x tippet or smaller.

I was once fishing beside Jacob Brewster near the Hatchery on the Davidson. Jacob was hammering a fish every few minutes and I was so far batting as close to (0) as I care

to admit. I had on 6.5x tippet and had watched Jacob catch wild and stocked fish on several different flies in a pool I had just fished. I offered to swap rods and Jacob asked what tippet size I was using..... we had a conversation and he switched mine up to 8x, we fished 10' apart and both of us caught fish. I went down and refished the water I had just fished that morning with the same flies and wacked 4 wild fish and a toad stocker rainbow. Note: I despise 7x tippet, but it will clean up a drift faster than anything else in your pack.

Midges..... These tiny little rascals will become a huge part of a trout's diet during the winter. Well if the fish are eating midges I throw streamers. I have standards and a size 26 isn't in them, if you want help fishing midges look elsewhere I just can't.

Brandon Harrison

If interested in a wade or float trip, send me a message. I love to share the fun. bharrisonflyfishing@gmail.com

=====

ADVICE FROM THE VISE

November is suddenly upon us and while the dry bite is still possible, I find tight lining nymphs to be really productive when the temps begin to fall, and this year with everything delayed it should be a productive month as the water levels normalize. This months pattern is a play on one I love in the spring, Lance Eagan's Tungsten Surveyor. To give it a little extra action, I add a partridge or quail soft hackle as an attention getter.

For this fly, you can tie it relatively big as compared to my preferred 14/16 spring pattern on a standard jig hook. This fly presents well in a #10 or #12 with a 3.5 or 3.3 mm nickel silver tungsten bead. The tail is CDL fibers in red, and the rib is small silver ultra wire. For dubbing, rainbow scud light blended with a pinch of UV ice to give it some sparkle down deep. Soft hackle from partridge for a lighter color or quail for a bit darker look. I've grown fond of the quail, especially for smaller soft hackles, it has a good look and I have an excellent local supply. Finish off with a red thread hotspot collar and it's a good looking bug.



Start off with a slotted silver tungsten bead and dress your hook to the point with white thread. I'm using Danville 6/0 on this pattern.

Stroke about an inch of fibers forward on your CDL feather to align tips and pinching the tips, remove the fibers and tie in the tail, about a hook shanks length.



Tie in the silver wire rib and dub a thin noodle building up a carrot shaped body to the head.



Counter wrap the wire in evenly spaced wraps and capture that at the head and helicopter the tag off.

Prepare the soft hackle feather by removing the fluffy bits at the bottom, then, using your hackle pliers, grip the center of the feather and stroke the fibers downward towards the shaft. You will be left with a triangular tip that you can trim off into a "spade" to tie in.



A swipe of 721 wax on your thread here is helpful to give some tack to hold the feather in without too many wraps. Take a wrap or two with the waxed thread to build a base. Align the feather with the top facing up and the tip just behind the bead and take a couple taut wraps to secure that in.

Using your hackle pliers, pull the feather taut, stroke back the fibers and wrap the feather two or three times depending on your feather size. Capture that stem and clip off as close as possible.



Whip finish the white thread. Tie in 2 wraps of red thread, I like the Ultra 6/0 for this size. Pull the tag forward of the bead and secure it in with two wraps and snip off the tag. Take one wrap to pull the tag into the hot spot and lightly coat about an inch of thread with head cement. Take 2 more wraps to spread the head cement and whip finish the red and snip off the tag.

As always 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

=====

CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT CHALLENGE



Last year I tied up several fly fishing Christmas ornaments. I took them to the November meeting and made them part

of the monthly raffle and they were a great hit. For those of you who love fly tying, I challenge you to tie some up some ornaments for this year.

You should be able to find clear glass globes in any craft store. They came in two sizes, but I found the larger (2.5") to be best for the task. From that point onward, it's up to you where you want to go with the ornament.



I purchased a jar of coarse sand to put into the bottom of the ornament to represent the river bottom, but you can find many different materials in many colors at a tropical fish store. If you go this route, you will need to secure it. Most glues have some opacity to them and don't look natural or are too thick to spread evenly through the material. I searched and found Beacon 3-in-1 that is crystal clear and thin enough to spread throughout the material for a great bond.

While the glue is setting you can tie up any fly you would like, a Christmas tree, or anything else you want to use in the ornament. I even saw one ornament with nothing but pieces of marabou feathers. That one was done without the sand.

If you are tying a fly for suspension in the globe, the tricky part will be getting the thread around the fly in the right position that it hangs horizontally. The best way to do this is to just loop your thread under the fly and then adjust it until you have it right. Then tie it in that position.

The fly will be suspended from globe cap. Remove the wire hoop from the cap and run the thread up one of the holes. Set the cap onto the globe and adjust the thread up or down until you have it in the right position and then put the thread back down through the other hole. Apply a drop of glue to the thread on the top of the cap being careful not to fill the holes. A hot glue gun is your best bet as it will harden quickly. When the glue has hardened, put the wire hoop back in and secure the thread on the underside. I do this by doing a couple wraps around the wire hoop, a quick cinch knot, and then a dab of glue. Then slide the cap back onto the globe.

At that point you have a completed ornament if you wish, but I like to decorate the cap. I make a wrap of ribbon of the same width as the cap height and then decorate it with a very small bow that can be found at the craft store. My wife is a lot more "crafty" than I am, so I let her do this fine work for me.

The tied fly in the clear globe is the traditional ornament, but if you explore on-line you'll find a lot of options. I mentioned the marabou feathers which is very simple. Another I've seen is a Christmas tree tied out of elk hair. Beyond those, it's just a matter of how fancy and elaborate you want to make it. I hope you'll join me this year to make our November raffle a big winner for the chapter.

TIP OF THE MONTH

Choosing The Right Color Lens For Your Fishing

by [Kent Klewein](#)



Two lens colors anglers should utilize in their polarized sunglasses. Photo By: Louis Cahill

Polarized sunglasses are one of the most critical pieces of gear an angler can equip themselves with on the water.

They significantly cut down the glare on the water so you can spot fish and read water more effectively. Without them an angler can feel naked and ill-equipped. Polarized sunglasses play so many important roles in everyday fly fishing and making a point to choose the right lens color before you hit the river can end up adding or subtracting to your overall success on the water. I carry two different pair of sunglasses with me at all times. Depending on the fishing location, time of day, and available light, I'll choose one over the other.

Yellow Lens (Low Light Conditions)

Early morning and late evening hours when the sun is low in the horizon and off the water I prefer to wear polarized sunglasses with yellow lens. They increase the contrast and brighten everything a couple notches. I also prefer yellow lens when I'm fishing heavily canopied streams. Sometimes even in the middle of the day, there are many places where the sun doesn't penetrate the canopy, and you'll find yellow lens are the only way to go for these shady low light conditions. Nasty weather days when its cloudy and rainy, yellow lens perform well. The winter brings with it limited sunshine on the water, since the sun doesn't move across the horizon as high, and wearing yellow lens solves this problem. You don't want to go 100% with a yellow lens for every day fishing though. During high light levels you won't get the contrast you'll need, but they do perform extraordinarily well in niche low light situations.

Amber Lens (Moderate to High Light Conditions)

If you only had the luxury to choose one color lens for fishing, there's no better color choice than amber. Day in and day out it's the best all around color lens for performing well

in conditions across the board. Amber performs well from moderate to high level light conditions, and it copes relatively well in lower light conditions as well. Extreme low light conditions aren't ideal for amber lens, but it's not everyday you're going to encounter those conditions. Whether your fishing saltwater or freshwater, amber is the color lens most anglers decide to wear and fish with because of its ability to perform in a wide range conditions.

Kent Klewein

Gink & Gasoline

www.ginkandgasoline.com

hookups@ginkandgasoline.com

FLY TYING WITH CATS

When I got up the other morning my wife called me over to ask what the little pile of strings on the floor was. I took a good look and when I noticed the color and a little sparkle I knew right away it was the remains of some rubber legs I use for fly tying. On the left you'll see a strip of the legs as they looked before our cats discovered them. Of course we found several piles scattered around the house as the morning went on and even a couple days later.



Anyone who knows cats and fly tying knows that it is a disaster in the making with bird feathers, rabbit masks, squirrel tails, and a lot more that can make wonderful toys for the cats. I have in fact replaced some of the damaged cat toys with feathers from my tying supplies. So when I decided a couple years ago to get a fly tying desk, I got a roll top. I have been surprised that the cats haven't found ways into it. The worst that has happened is for them to discover an occasional bead I've dropped which got batted all over the house.

On occasion in the past I have forgotten to close up the desk for the night and have been happy that the cats haven't gotten into things, especially with loose hooks lying on the bench. When they finally did decide to invade my left open desk, it's amazing that they decided the best toy was the rubber legs. I will be a bit more careful in the future.

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.

WILSON CREEK CLEAN UP

Foothills Conservancy is working with local organizations to make a big dent in litter and graffiti along Wilson Creek. Join us as we hike and clean access points to the water with our friends from Wild South, A Clean Wilson Creek, & River Network.

Date: Saturday, November 9, 2019

Time: 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Place: TBD on Brown Mtn Beach Rd

RSVP: Call 828-437-9930 or email

bwatkins@foothillsconservancy.org

SIMONS WELTER HONORED

By Jackie Greene



I believe it was sometime last year that we had Simons as a guest speaker at one of our trout unlimited meetings. She's an awesome friend who has done lots to help women survivors with Casting Carolinas. Simons has been honored with being included in the Garden and Guns Magazine book of Southern Women which came out October 29, 2019.

Simons loves the sport of fly-fishing, however, she is a female in a roll that is predominantly done by males. She is a fly fishing guide in the town of Cashiers in Western North Carolina but grew up in Statesville. Here she is featured in this book with other amazing women like Dolly Parton, Oprah Winfrey and Rosalynn Carter and many others. I'm so proud of Simons and I felt you would want to share in her amazing news since many of you know her too.

ADVANCED WOMEN'S CASTING / FISHING WORKSHOP with Mac Brown and Friends

Saturday & Sunday, November 16-17

Bryson City, NC

This is a 2-day clinic/workshop both on and off the water. It is designed for women who want to step up their game and take fly fishing to the next level. All women who enroll must actively fly fish either alone or with a guide on a regular basis and seriously desire to improve their casting and fishing skills. Participants should arrive on Friday evening if possible. Class will start on Saturday morning and will last all day Saturday & Sunday.

Cost is \$450, which includes lodging (double occupancy) for 2 nights. Some meals may be included but not guaranteed. Full payment is required at the time of enrollment. Refunds will not be given unless your spot is

refilled before the class begins. **The workshop is limited to 10 women.**

To sign up for the event contact Jackie Greene at HkyNCTUpres@gmail.com

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

We maintain a calendar of upcoming events on our website at <http://www.hkynctu.org/calendar/> to help you plan your time. If your organization has an upcoming event, you can let us know at HkyNCTU@gmail.com and if appropriate we will add it to our calendar.

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS INVITED

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



Jackie Greene recently made a trip to an unnamed pond down in Georgia. I'd like to report that as president of our Trout Unlimited Chapter that she caught these fantastic fish on her fly rod, but she admitted to going rogue and caught them on a bait casting rod.



HICKORY NC TU OFFICERS

Jackie Greene... Pres	HkyNCTUpres@gmail.com
Susan Anderson...Sec	HkyNCTUsec@gmail.com
Gerry Johnson... Trea	HkyNCTUtreas@gmail.com
Chick Woodward...Editor	HkyNCTU@gmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Steve Anderson	Accounting Review Exec
Gail Garrison	Programs
Gary Hogue	Past President
Lynn Marilla	Veteran's Services/Programs
Joel Miller	
Gary Schnick	
Cathy Starnes	Trout in the Classroom
Preston Herman	Five Rivers Club

THE MYSTERIES OF WILSON CREEK

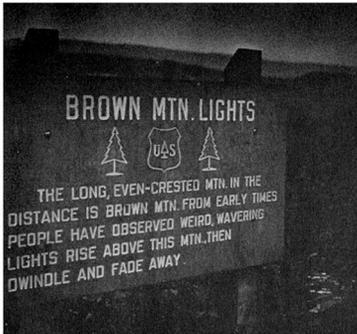
The Blue Wilson Creek well spectacular scenery, water, deep pools and enjoyed by fisherman course the gorge with IV rapids for the kayakers. But there is history of the area hardwood forest of the waters that we are many mysteries surround this beautiful may not know about. I of some of the legends yet I spend almost around up there creek and hiking the



BROWN MOUNTAIN

Ridge Mountains and known for its hiking trails, clear long runs that are and swimmers and of it's exciting class III and adrenalin seeking so much more to the that is set within the the Pisgah forest and enjoy so much. There and legends that area that some may or for one, had not heard of the mountain and every weekend year chasing trout in the trails. The legends

range from sightings of something that resembles a man, but taller and more beast like, to ghosts of Catawba and Cherokee Indians, as well as others that have lost their lives or disappeared that have been seen throughout the area. But there is one such legend stands out more than any other and has been reportedly seen by more people and perhaps the biggest mystery of the Blue Ridge Mountain, is the Brown Mountain Lights.



An early account of the Brown Mountain lights dated back to September 24, 1913 when a fisherman claimed to have seen "mysterious lights seen just above the horizon every night," red in color, with a pronounced circular shape. After the account, an employee "D.B. Stewart" of the United States Geological Survey, studied the area in question and determined the fisherman had mistaken train lights for something a little bit more mysterious. More reports flowed in and a more inquiry began in 1922. They again determined what the witnesses had probably seen were automobile or train lights, perhaps fires or even stationary lights. According to the marker on the Blue Ridge Parkway, a massive flood struck this area soon after the USGS survey. All electrical power was lost and trains were inoperative for a period of time and several automotive bridges were also

washed out. Sightings of the lights continued during this time. In a U.S. Weather Bureau reported 1919 explained the phenomenon as an electrical discharge, similar to the "Andes Light of South America".

Many reasons have been tossed back to disprove the lights from trains, automobiles, swamp gasses, hikers, a phenomenon called "fox-fire" that is bioluminescence created by some species of fungi that is present in decaying wood, but none are proven.

Being the inquisitive person that I am with these lights, this writer and fisherman leans to the legends and the mountain lore that surrounds this amazing phenomenon. The stories told range from the Cherokee maidens that search the forests with their lanterns, looking for their lovers and husbands that lost lives in horrific battle between the Catawba and Cherokee Indians. Another legend has it that the spirit of a faithful servant that carries a lantern, roams the mountains in search of his master that went off hunting, never to return again and left him to tend camp while he was gone. Another mountain lore has it that the spirits of a lady named Belinda and her child were murdered by her husband Jim who was having an affair with another woman named "Susie". Legend has it that lights began to appear that led them to a pile of rocks where the bones of a woman and her child were found.

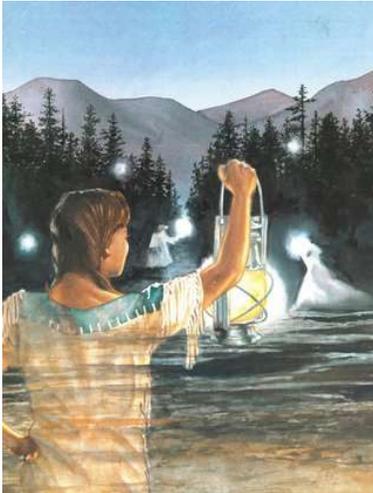
Having heard the tales, I talked to several locals and residents that have places along the Wilson Creek about the stories of the lights. One of the accounts of the lights came from a very accountable woman that spends a lot of time on the creek fishing and has a place on the creek. Jackie Greene shared her experience with me in an interview about her encounter with the Brown Mountain Lights.



Photo courtesy of <http://www.brownmountainlights.com/>

"I have had a camper on the Wilson's Creek now for about nine years and during that time I have spent a lot of weeks and weekends there all year long. My camper is creek side and sits in a spot closer up towards the

road but yes is still close to the creek. It lies between the mountain across the creek and one on the other side of the road that are both very vertical. I was at my camper about 6 years ago before I had my cancer and enjoying the creek and fishing. I was up during the middle of the week as I am a lot during this time of year. I had a great day on the creek, I had not been drinking, nor had I watched any kind of scary movies that would have altered my mind. It was in fall time of the year, there are no lights out there by the creek and with the exception of the stars, it is pitch black at night, both outside the camper and inside. At this particular time of year, I was the only person at the campground besides the person that ran the campground and his camper was a little way away from mine. It is not your normal campsites where campers are right next to each other. Each site has a lot of area between them.



It was in the middle of the night and I was sound asleep until I was awaked by something that to this day, I am not sure what it was, other than a very eerie feeling. As I was startled awake and with my eyes wide open now, I saw these white balls of light hovering above me in the bed. They ranged in size from roughly 6 to 12 inches in size and maybe a dozen or two of them that were moving slowly around the room in no particular pattern. As I stared at them, I could see through them and it appeared as if they had energy, or electrical impulses flowing around in different directions inside of them like small lightning displays. My first reaction was a deep gasp for air as I looked at them but as I watched them for a moment, a calming feeling came over me instead of fear. My first impulse after the calming came across me was to reach up and touch them because they were so close to me. I quickly decided not to do so since I did not know exactly what they were. Within a few minutes (that seemed so much longer), some started to dissipate into thin air while others seemed to float through the walls of the camper towards the outside.

I eventually went back to sleep and when I awoke, I made me some coffee and headed down to the other gentleman's camper that managed the campground. I shared with him the story and at that time he told me that another person in the campground had had the same experience. It was quite the experience that I will never forget."

Having heard this story, I heard from others in the area that told of incidents where people had seen the lights coming down the sides of the vertical mountains as if they were walking down it with lanterns. Having spent as much time as I have in the area now, I can attest that no one could be walking down the sides of those mountains at all, much less at night with a lantern.

The folk lore and legends of the area are still a mystery to this day and if you talk to some of the locals, you will find that the creek that we all love to fish and adore, holds many more secrets than just the excellent trout fishing that is has to offer.

"On the line with Charlie Walker"