

Got Questions? We Got Answers.

December Club Meeting: Learning Stations

By Larry Forte

One thing about fly fishing is that there is always something new to learn, even if you have been fishing for many years. At our December meeting, our goal is to help all members learn something new about the sport we all enjoy.

Join us on Tuesday, December 14, at 6:30 PM for some hands-on learning. We will meet at Tuscarora High School. However, we will be in **room A201**. Club members will be there to help direct you to the meeting room. A reminder that a face covering is required while inside the school.



At our meeting, we will have several learning “stations” for our members.

Have a new reel and fly line? Bring it to the meeting and we will add it to your reel. Want to learn more about what our club has to offer? We will have a table for that. Want to learn more about brookie fishing in our local waters? We will have a table for that. Want to learn about Euro nymphing, vintage fly fishing gear, catching salmon/steelhead in New York, or Tenkara? We’ll have tables for all of these topics, too! There will be something for everyone — and we hope to see you there.

Annual Elections

We will also be electing our board for the coming year at our December meeting. The Board consists of three directors, the immediate past president, and the elected officers of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Below are the positions, as identified in the bylaws, that will be up for nomination and voting:

President: Main responsibility is to be the executive officer and preside over all meetings of the Organization and the Board.

Vice President: Perform such other duties and responsibilities as usually pertain to such office or may be assigned by the President and Board of Directors;

Secretary: Keep the Organization books and records, keep minutes of meetings and submit all communications received by the Organization to the proper member;

Treasurer: Receive all funds paid to the club and promptly deposit them in the official depositories, disburse funds on order of the Board of Directors, maintain the Organization financial accounts and records;

Director (one position is open): This is a three year term.

Combined Beginner's and Advanced Fly Tying: Dubbing Tips and Techniques

By Don Fine



From left to right: A.P. muskrat nymph, light cahill dry fly, muskrat wet fly

The holiday season is a busy time for all, so we decided to combine our monthly Beginner's and Advanced Fly Tying sessions into one evening of instruction. This combined session will be held on December 21 at 7:00 PM in room 207 at Trinity United Methodist Church. Being a combined session, we have decided to focus on a tying *technique* rather than tying a specific fly pattern. As such, the class will focus on the application of dubbing (i.e., material used for the bodies of artificial flies, especially fur or wool on unwaxed silk thread) which is used for creating the abdomen on many variations artificial flies.

While the steps for applying dubbing to tying threads are quite basic, the particular type of dubbing material and intricacy of applying the dubbing differs when tying nymphs, wet, and dry fly patterns.

Those participating in the December 21 session will also gain a more in-depth understanding of the terminology used in packaging dubbing materials (e.g. natural, synthetic, with or without antron, etc.).

Have you ever wondered why the abdomen of a standard dry fly is relatively thin and smooth, whereas a typical nymph or wet fly pattern has a 'spiky' and somewhat more rotund abdomen? If you haven't noticed, are interested in getting answers to this question, and generally enhancing your fly tying skills, you won't want to miss our December 21 combined fly tying session.

A reminder that a face covering is required while inside the church. If you can't join us in person, you can also join us virtually. Look for a Zoom invitation as we get closer to the date.

We Need You! Consider Volunteering to Support Your Club

PVFF is member driven, which means volunteers do everything. Volunteer positions include elected board positions — as well as other areas, such as mentoring, leading outings, website, social media, newsletter, conservation, feeding the trout at the trout pen, and other opportunities. Everyone has a unique talent, come share yours with your fellow club members! Contact Andy Mekelburg at andymekelburg@outlook.com.

2022 Outings: Let's Build a Schedule

By Mike Holland



One of the primary reasons people join fly fishing clubs is to have opportunities to fish with other people. Thus, one of our goals is to create and facilitate fishing outings for club members.

Our club has long had volunteers who have led many great outings. In some cases, club members know right now that they are planning to fish certain waters on specific dates next year. For example, Andy and I plan to fish Smith Creek on two Saturdays in 2022, April 23, and September 17. We also know that we would very much welcome the company of club members who would like to join us. Accordingly, you will see those dates posted on our website in the Outings tab.

We fully understand that busy schedules will preclude the setting of outing dates so far out in 2022. However, we know that to the degree we can get dates for outings on the books, it will create fishing, fellowship, and mentorship opportunities for club members.

We are very blessed to have so many good waters to fish in this area. At the risk of forgetting someone's favorite, locally they include Beaver Creek, Big

Hunting Creek, Catoclin Creek, the Conococheague, the Chesapeake Bay, the Gunpowder River, the Monocacy River, Morgan Run, Owens Creek, the Potomac River and its North Branch, the Rapidan River, the Savage River, the Susquehanna River, Yellow Breeches Creek, the Youghiogheny, and of course Rockdale Run.

If you know now that you want to fish one of these local waters — or a more distant water like the Salmon River in Pulaski, New York — please consider volunteering to lead an outing and getting it on the books as soon as possible so that others can plan to join you. Keep in mind that an outing does not need to be complicated, it does not have to have a lot of participants, and it does not have to be on any specific day of the week.

Personally, I would love to see us have at least one outing scheduled for each month of 2022 so that members can plan accordingly.

As I close, I will encourage you to visit our website regularly to check on scheduled outings. Our website will be the primary mechanism for providing notice for outings. Please let me know if you have any questions or need any assistance from me.

Fly Fishing Along the North Carolina Coast

By Dan Neuland



I had the pleasure of fishing with Bill Kulp in North Carolina for a few days in November. Bill moved to North Carolina three years ago and he knows how and where to find fish with his 21 foot boat. We fished along the coast near Cape Lookout National Seashore.

We were on a quest for false albacore but they were uncharacteristically absent for most of our time on the water. Fortunately, the red drum and sea trout were plentiful. We fished mostly chartreuse half & half clouser/deceivers that I tied on size 2 hooks. We used 10-wt rods with full sinking lines. Bill switched once in awhile to a spin rod but he landed all his best

fish on flies. We could not count how many sea trout we landed, mostly gray (weakfish) and some spotted trout, all good sized over the Cape Lookout shoals.

The drum were the biggest fish we landed. In addition, we landed a variety of sea dwellers including flounder, lizard fish, pompano, cow nose ray, skate, mullet, and lots of small blues. We lost a few nice fish due to a broken hook point that happened to me twice and Bill once...not sure how that was happening?

The second day we sought out a different area looking for albies. We were fishing in 50-60' of



water over a shipwreck or some sort of structure. Letting my line sink into the depths, I hooked and landed a really nice gray trout, the biggest of the trip. I also caught a pompano with a shark bite. Bill hooked into a big fish that actually took his line to the bottom and wrapped up on the structure, breaking his fly line! Not sure what fish that was? We did not luck into any albies.

Later that morning we were drifting along Shackleford Banks. Bill landed a nice drum and I kept catching bluefish. Then Bill spotted albacore that were surfacing near the shore! He positioned the boat to drift through the area. The albies were bursting here and there and at one brief time we appeared to be surrounded by them. Unfortunately, at the moment I needed to be casting to the albies, I was trying to unhook a feisty blue — and in my

haste to flip my fly into the frenzy of albies beside the boat, my line wrapped into a tangle around the tip of my rod. I actually had to pull my fly away from the attacking fish to save my rod from being broken! That was my only shot at the breaking fish as the albies seemed to disappear as quickly as they appeared. Bill did hook an albie that streaked the line from his reel. He had the brute on the line for a minute or so before the hook pulled loose!

Luck was not with us that morning. We caught more blues and some small trout on our way back to the take-out. We only fished the morning as I had to drive back to Maryland that day. It was an outstanding time with some really nice fish landed. Saltwater fly fishing really is exciting, you never know what will smack your fly next!

Catoctin Creek Outing: Let's Catch Those Stocked Fish

By Andy Mekelburg

Outing chairman Mike Holland arranged a great kick-off to the 2021-2022 season on November 22 at the Catoctin Creek Nature Center. Timing was good, coming a couple of weeks after the trout stocking. Thanks to Rick Loose, the trout feeding team, and all the volunteers who participated in the trout stocking.

We had a good group that came out in slightly chilly temperature to kick off Thanksgiving week. Without disclosing the secret locations, I can confidently say that there are no small fish in there.

Dirk Vandervaat, known from now on as "Eagle Eye," hauled in plenty of fish after letting the first couple of fish get off for humanitarian reasons.

Kevin Lynn reported a number of catches and even I caught a couple, thanks to Dirk's laser-like vision. Yes, the MekelMop worked for the first fish, then I switched to the prince nymph after watching Dirk's continued success. After a bit of warm-up (okay it was a couple of hours) Seth Dembro started pulling them in, allowing us to claim a successful day for the group.

We are appreciative of our intrepid leader, Mike, as he fished the riffles in order to send the fish our way. We are looking forward to the next outing.



From left to right: Seth Dembro, Mike Holland, Kevin Lynn, Dick Vandervaat, Frank Bender.

We're shooting for at least one a month in the coming year, starting now (I always like the challenge of winter fishing).

Meet a Member: Larry Forte

Column coordinated by Mike Holland



Larry Forte with Lefty Kreh in 2014

How long have you been fly fishing?

I started fly-fishing about 20 years ago.

What type of fly fishing do you like the most?

Dry fly fishing for wild trout.

What is your favorite water to fish?

Penns Creek in central Pennsylvania.

What is your best fly fishing memory?

I have 20 years of memories. When I started fly fishing, it was with a group of four other guys. Three of us were new to the sport. Since that first trip, we have been doing an annual fishing trip. These trips have kept us connected as great friends and have also created many amazing memories.

What is your favorite fly?

I love fishing with Sulphurs in the spring at dusk.

If you could only fish with five flies, what would they be?

Olive Wooly Bugger, Adams/Purple Haze, Elk Hair Caddis, Copper John, Yellow Sulphur

What advice do you have for others?

While fly fishing is an amazing sport, it is not just about catching fish. Try to give back to the sport we love. That could be teaching kids how to fly fish, mentoring someone new to the sport, or helping a Vet learn how to tie flies. There are plenty of ways to get involved and help.

What is your bucket list fly-fishing trip?

Patagonia, Alaska, and someplace where I can catch bonefish!

When did you join the club?

I joined about 17 years ago. When I started fly-fishing, my fishing buddy lived three hours away and I knew I had a lot to learn. Joining the Potomac Valley Fly Fishers (PVFF) was the answer. Over the years that I have been a member, PVFF has taught me many things including: fly-casting, fly-tying, rod-building, how to catch fish, and how to give back.

Do you have any memories of past club events or members you would like to share?

PVFF has provided many memories and I have made some great friends because of the club. If I had to pick one memory, it would be the time in 2014 when Lefty Kreh spent the day with our club. After the event, I was lucky to have dinner with Lefty and a few other club members. It was an incredible evening. Listening to Lefty talk about his life and tell fishing stories was pretty cool.



Project Healing Waters: Fall Trout in Central PA

By Andrew Frutiger

Recently Larry Forte, Don Dunkers, and Donald Lee were able to take veterans Billy Noland and Pete Rooney to a small private stream in central Pennsylvania.

It was a fantastic day with unbelievable conditions. Both Billy and Pete crushed it throughout the day catching several trout over 20 inches.

It was a special day and a thanks to Don

Dunkers (a PVFF member) for making it possible. Hopefully, we will go back again next spring.

If you have any questions or would like to participate in any of our upcoming fly tying sessions at Fort Detrick, please reach out to me at any time at andrewfrutiger@yahoo.com or go to our Facebook page at *Project Healing Waters — Frederick Chapter*.



From left to right: Donald Lee, Pete Rooney, Don Dunkers, and Billy Noland

Of Wood, Bamboo, Brass and Silk

By Kevin Haney



Physical objects have the power to connect us with the past. Something of the history of an object and those who used it can, with repeated and long-term use, become infused into the object itself. If you are sensitive to such things, that history can be felt. One does not have to be a mystic or a metaphysician to appreciate this fact, you only have to be open to it. I'm among the small contingent of anglers that prefer to fish with antique fly fishing tackle. While admittedly not always the most efficient tool for the job, if someone were to

ask me why I prefer to fish this way, the best answer I could give was that it puts me in touch, on both a conscious and subconscious level, with the fishermen, fish, and experiences that are infused into the history and lifetime of the tackle. Modern tackle, lacking this rich history and connection to other people and other places, are to me just cold and impersonal products of the industrial laboratory.

The rod is the central component of any fly fishing outfit, whether antique or modern. If it does not

function well, it doesn't matter what reel, line, or fly you use. For the purposes of this discussion, I'll talk about "antique rods", which will include both bamboo rods and the solid wood rods that predate bamboo, usually made from greenheart or lancewood. Bamboo rods really started to come into their own at the beginning of the 20th century and with that, wood rods became less and less common, although they were still made up until the 1930s. And please keep in mind that what I say is just my own personal opinion, not meant to offend. Many, many more people use graphite rods than use antique ones, so I realize that my views represent a distinct minority.

Modern graphite and fiberglass rods are born of the chemical laboratory, with any one being pretty much identical to the next one. Bamboo and wood are natural materials. And because they are natural, each rod is unique and has something of a "personality." To put it in more ineffable terms, a properly made bamboo rod--as Per Brandin has said recently--has a soul. Every one of them carries a life with it. That bamboo plant grew on a hill in China and waved this way and that in the wind, no two stems exactly the same. It was cut and carried to a warehouse and dried, again no two the same. Then it was handed to a builder and he or she split and milled or planed it to shape, with every one being unique. That gives each rod an individual character. Antique rods are original art, like an oil painting. Modern rods are more akin to posters or prints.

On a more practical level, antique rods are much more pleasant to cast at short to medium distances, and they are more sensitive in transmitting the feel of the strike and the fish than is graphite. I like the extra weight of bamboo and wood (and we're talking mere ounces here) versus graphite. It feels more substantial in hand while casting and fighting fish and provides better tactile feedback on what the rod and line are doing, especially if it has a solid wood handle instead of cork. Antique rods feel like an extension of my arm, a reflexive, extra muscle.

Graphite (and fiberglass to a somewhat lesser extent) feels like a piece of equipment or a tool.

Antique rods look like the shiny mahogany boats from yesterday, while graphite looks like the new fiberglass speedboat. Antique rods are like a fine handmade wood bow, ready to take the buck as it approaches the stand, while graphite is like a 30.06 from 200 yards, dropping the buck with cold efficiency. Antique rods are a handmade violin, graphite, an electric guitar. Antique rods are the seasoned old fisherman, comfortable with his capabilities and satisfied with the simple things, while graphite is the youngster, eager to catch the most fish, as fast as possible. Antique rods are at home on the cabin wall, holding memories of past days on the water, while graphite sits uncomfortably in the closet, waiting only to be fished. Like food, for some, it's a rich experience of many senses to be savored — for others, it's about getting full fast.

The brass and steel period-correct reels that you would use on an antique rod, while heavier, balance out the heavier rod and just feel and look right. Modern aluminum reels do not do that. And balance is the key to a good casting and fishing outfit. If the balance is there, any extra weight from antique gear will hardly be noticed. And, to me, there's just something aesthetically wrong and cognitively dissonant about putting a modern reel on an antique rod, or vice versa.

All antique rods were designed and made to be used with silk lines — plastic lines didn't come into widespread use until the 1950s. The silk line is an extension of the antique rod, much more pliable than plastic and smaller in diameter for the same line weight. And while they do require some extra care, drying them out and cleaning them off after each use and dressing them with line dressing before the next use, that extra effort pays off with a smaller line that cuts the wind better, is more accurate and stealthier than plastic, and is just more of a joy to cast. On the practical side, a good silk line, properly cared for,

should last at least 20 years while you might be lucky to get 5 years regular use from a plastic line.

In the end, it all comes down to personal choice and the enjoyment you get from using the tackle you prefer. For me, when I catch a fish on an antique rod, I'm connected to a wild, living creature by a rod and a line made from something that was wild and living too. I'm participating in the continuation of a long tradition, by holding and fishing a thing of beauty and grace that people have been using for perhaps the past hundred years. And, though it might sound a little "out there," I feel that the rod, reel, and line I'm using are infused with the memories of all of the fish they caught in the past, and all of the many fishermen that used the tackle. It connects me to the greater whole of a long and storied angling history, making me feel part of something that started long before I was born and that will continue long after I'm gone. And that, I think, is quite a lot to get from the simple act of standing in a stream and trying to hook a fish on a fly.

I would like to start a special interest group of folks who are interested in collecting and fishing antique fly fishing tackle. Some of the things we could do are learning to better cast antique rods, refinish silk lines, basic rod and reel repair, making furred leaders, and outings using antique tackle. If you are interested, contact me at

kevinhaney1@outlook.com.

We Want to Meet You

We are seeking people for the "Meet a Member" column. It's easy to do: we'll send you a Q/A form to fill out. You tell us about yourself (it's fly fishing focused, of course!). Interested? Email

michaeldhollandjr@hotmail.com.

Calendar of Events

- Dec. 14** Club Meeting & Annual Board Elections
6:30 PM
Tuscarora High School
Room A201
Frederick, Maryland
- Dec. 20** Board of Directors' Meeting
Location TBD
Frederick, Maryland
7:00 PM
- Dec. 21** Combined Beginner's and Advanced Fly Tying
7:00 PM
Trinity United Methodist Church
Frederick, Maryland
Room 207
(In-person tying session with online print/video instructions; Zoom link will be provided for those who cannot attend in-person)

2021 PVFF Offices & Directors

President.....Andy Mekelburg
Vice President.....Dave Keane
Secretary.....Vacant
Treasurer.....Dennis Allen
3 year Director.....Dave Dowiak
2 year Director.....Troy Kitch
1 year Director.....Russ Hanson
Past President.....Larry Forte

The PVFF Rod Loaner Program is Here for You

By Dave Keane

Our club has an inventory of fly rods and reels available to members to borrow. The rod loaner program is designed to allow members the opportunity to try different weight fly rods prior to purchasing or check one out for a special outing. Additionally, new members who don't yet own a rod can check one out to learn how to cast and fish. Below is a list of rods that are available to use:

- ★ #1 LL Bean Quest II 9' 8 wt 4 piece
- ★ #2 LL Bean Angler 7' 5 wt 2 piece
- ★ #3 LL Bean Angler 7' 5 wt 2 piece

- ★ #4 LL Bean Angler 7' 5 wt 2 piece
- ★ #5 Cortland Pro-Crest 5-6 wt 2 piece, fiberglass "Walker Zimmerman Jr"
- ★ #6 Okuma Tempest 9' 8 wt 3 piece
- ★ #7 Orvis Hydros 9' 9 wt 4 piece

All rods come with a reel and line and some will come with a hip pack and flies. Contact me at 240-367-4905 or at plantprotection@comcast.net to check out a rod.

Last Cast: Holiday Wishes and Let's Go Fish

By Andy Mekelburg

I write this article as we are in the middle of the holiday season. We change our focus from everyday things to family, food, and relaxation (unless you're traveling). However, fly fishing fits into that equation.

As reported, we had a great outing on November 22 to Catoctin Creek, where the group was able to share fellowship and fishing to kick off the season. I know some of you are off to fishing and family destinations, so safe travels. I'll try to get out beyond Rockdale Run; give me a shout if you are going out and need some company, I've got gloves.

As we're in the midst of the holiday buying season, it's a good time to drop hints or conveniently have fly fishing

magazines laying around opened up with circles drawn around items you "need."



This is also a great time to purchase that first fly rod or vise for your kids to ignite the spark of a lifelong passion.

At this month's general meeting, following our annual club elections, we'll have members posted at stations to discuss destinations, trips, equipment, new techniques, and more. It's a good chance to learn and get some ideas on your own.

For those that I won't see on December 14, I wish you all a great holiday season and hope you have a great 2022.

POTOMAC VALLEY FLY FISHERS

P. O. BOX 3001

FREDERICK, MD 21705

www.potomacvalleyflyfishers.club



FLY FISHERS
INTERNATIONAL



POTOMAC VALLEY FLY FISHERS
MEMBERSHIP and RENEWAL APPLICATION and LIABILITY RELEASE

Year _____

The purpose of the Potomac Valley Fly Fishers (PVFF) is (1) to promote fly fishing as the most sportsman-like and enjoyable way of fishing and the most consistent with the preservation and wise use of our resources; (2) to provide advice, suggestions and assistance to club members; (3) to publicize the best practices and techniques of fly fishing, fly tying, fly casting and other related subjects; and (4) to maintain liaison with other organizations of sportsmen and conservationists. By my joining PVFF voluntarily, I understand there are risks involved and will not hold the PVFF club, board of directors, and officers responsible for any injuries, accidents or death as a result of participation in the activities of the Club. I also grant PVFF permission to photograph me and/or my family at any activities and also to publish them in our monthly newsletter, at the meetings and any PVFF fly fishing functions.

Website: www.potomacvalleyflyfishers.club

The undersigned being in agreement with the above does hereby apply for membership/renewal in the Potomac Valley Fly Fishers.

Applicant's Name: _____ Date: _____
(Last) (First)

If family membership, other names: _____

Home Address: _____
Street City State Zip

Phone Number: _____ E-mail address for e-mailing newsletter _____

Applicant's signature: _____

Are you a Fly Fishers Int'l (FFI) member? Circle **Yes or No** **Yearly Dues:** ___ \$15 single ___ \$20 family \$ ___ Donation

How did you hear about PVFF? ___ Friend ___ Facebook ___ Newsletter ___ Fly Shop _____ Other

Interested in a volunteer position? ___ Officer /Board of Directors ___ Committee/Chair ___ Banquet ___ Trip Organizer ___ Teaching Fly Tying ___ Other Activities

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO POTOMAC VALLEY FLY FISHERS. Mail your check with this completed form to:

David Dowiak, PVFF Membership
8920 Bloomfield Road
Frederick, Maryland 21702

Dues for calendar year Jan 1-Dec 31

Cash _____ Check # _____ Amount _____ Date _____
New _____ Renewal _____ Life _____