

— CLUB MEETING: JUNE 13TH at 4:00 PM —

Join Us: Annual Picnic and Fly Fishing Contests

By Dennis Allen

Join us on June 13th at the Catoctin Creek Nature Center (2929 Sumantown Road, Middletown). This is a family event. Bring kids, spouses, whatever – all are welcome!

4 PM: One-Fly Contest.

Check in at the pavilion before you go, and you have two hours to fish with one fly. We will be there early so you can be on the water at 4 PM, but you must be off the water by 6 PM. Whoever catches the most fish gets bragging rights and a trophy. It really is only ONE fly. You lose it in the trees or it breaks off due to that massive trout – you're done. Come on back, we'll have food and drinks waiting.

5 PM-8 PM: Food, Drinks, Fellowship.

There will be burgers, hot dogs, and drinks. Plates, plasticware, cups, and ice will be there. We ask that anyone coming bring a big bag of chips, cookies, desserts, salad, or whatever you'd like to share with the main course — but in a pinch we'd rather have you there empty handed than not there at all. Relax and enjoy food and friends at the park.

7:00 PM: Skill Contests.

You know how you really just want to get on the water but first you've got to rig up the rod and get a fly on it? Or your fly is doing no good so you want to change it? This year we're going to see just how well you've mastered these tasks.

First skill: you start with whatever rod and reel you want (we have club sets) but all the line is still on the reel. First person to get the line through the rod, tie on a fly (we'll furnish a hookless one), and cast it out wins.

Second skill: retrieve a fly, change it, and cast back out faster than anyone else.

Separate group starts for the two skills, pressure is on. Bragging rights and trophies are on the line. Novice and expert classes. You can participate in either contest or both.

Questions? Call Dennis Allen, 301-606-7998, or email redwombat34@gmail.com.



Scenes from the 2022 picnic

The PVFF 3-Fish Challenge

By Larry Forte

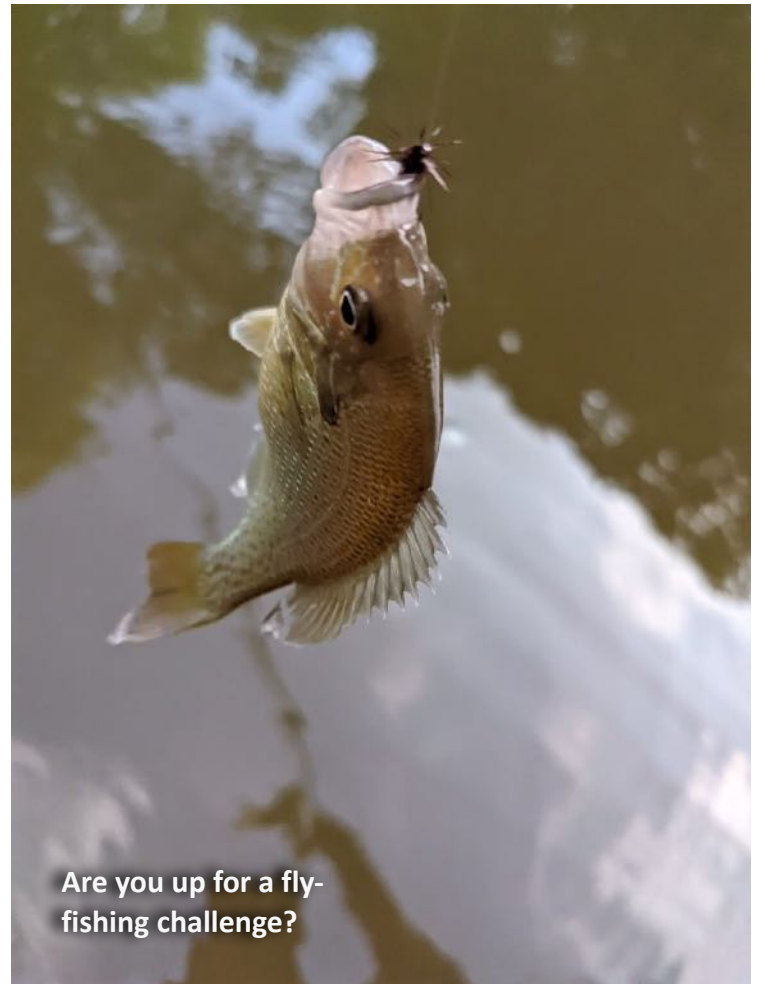
To steal the golf phrase – we have a Clubhouse Leader and that is Seth Denbo. While fishing recently on the Casselman, Seth caught and landed four different fish species: a brown trout, a rainbow trout, a brook trout, and a striped shiner. Right now, he is the leader of the PVFF 3-Fish Challenge!

The challenge is simple. Catch 3 of more fresh water species in ONE day with a fellow club member. Complete the challenge and you will be recognized at the Annual Banquet on October 21st.

There are only a couple of rules to follow. All fish must be caught on a fly with the name of the fly, the fly size which was used for each fish entered in the challenge and the location.

Join the PVFF 3-Fish Challenge. Visit our club website for challenge rules and to access the simple form.

Good luck and happy fishing in 2023!



Thanks to everyone that participated in the annual fly swap. Here's a picture of the amazing flies! Good luck fishing with them.



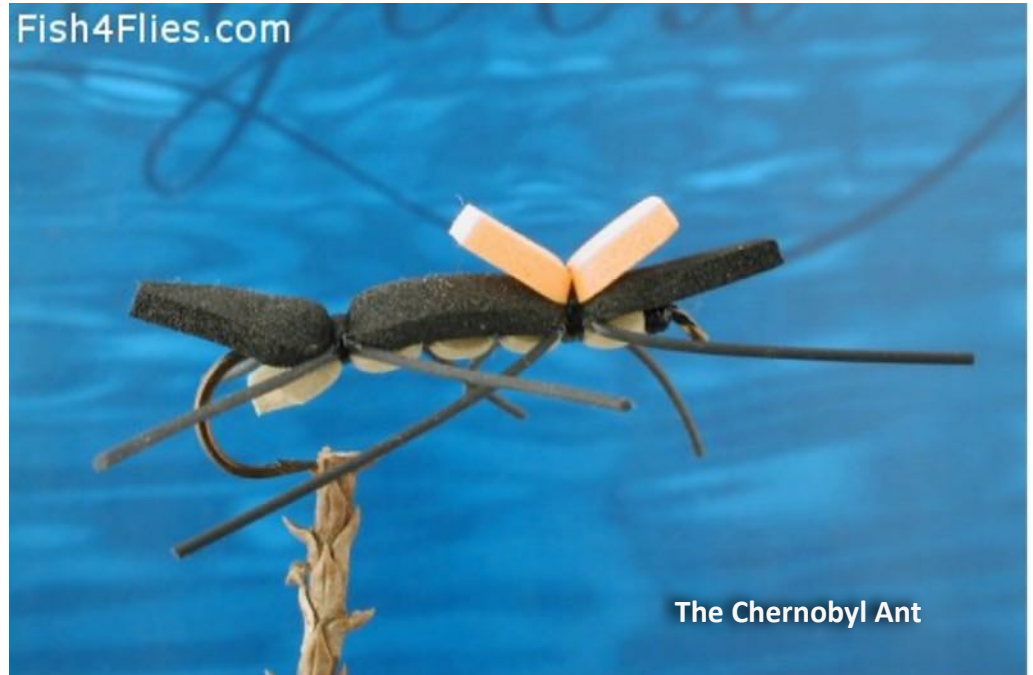
Beginner's Fly Tying: Chubby Chernobyl Ant

By Don Fine

Summertime, summertime! Now that days are longer and temperatures warmer, it's time to set aside some of the standard fly patterns which we would use for early season fly fishing. Instead, let's concentrate on summertime freshwater species: largemouth and smallmouth bass, large trout, and panfish — all of which are looking for large terrestrial foods packed with energy, such as ants, beetles, moths, hoppers, and crickets.

For this reason I chose the Chubby Chernobyl Ant for our next beginner's fly tying class. The origin of the Chernobyl Ant dates to 1990, when a group of guides on Utah's Green River were tying flies to resemble the river's large black crickets. Concoctions of deer hair and polypropylene cord were common at the time, but it was Rainy Riding's foam flies that started to substantially influence fly design; including the Chubby Chernobyl Ant.

No worry about matching the hatch, try a large terrestrial-insect imitation, like the Chubby



Chernobyl Ant alone or with a small dropper fly. This approach has saved the day for many fly fishers (including me). Search on “American Angler Chernobyl Ant” for more about the origin of this fly.

Join us at 7:00 PM on June 20th at Trinity United Methodist Church. For newcomers who plan to attend this session, please contact me in advance (dfine1443@gmail.com) to ensure I have tying equipment available for you.

Advanced Fly Tying: Crayfish Pattern

By Larry Forte

At our Advanced Fly Tying gathering, on June 21st at 7:00 PM, Ray Ouellette will show us how to tie a crayfish pattern. This is ideal for fishing the Potomac and Monocacy rivers during the summer.

We will meet in Room 108 at Trinity Church at 7:00 PM. For those that prefer to join us via ZOOM, no

problem. We will have a Zoom hook-up at the church for folks.

Interested? We would love for you to join us. Just let me or Don Fine know. You can sign up on our website or you can email me at lbforte@verizon.net.



May 2023
Casting Clinic

Images by Nina Cleven



Meet a Member: Kraig Laskowski

Coordinated by Mike Holland

How long have you been fly fishing and when did you join the club?

I joined the club in February 2022. I learned to fly fish through Project Healing Waters four years ago.

What type of fly fishing do you like the most?

I enjoy any type of fishing, but my favorite is fishing for trout.

What is your favorite water to fish?

So far, my favorite water to fish has to be Mossy Creek, Virginia.

What is your best fly-fishing memory?

My best memory has to be going to Harman's Cabins with Project Healing Waters. The trout fishing and the PHW volunteers made the trip unforgettable.

What is your favorite fly?

My favorite fly is the Woolly Bugger. It was the first fly I learned to tie and caught my first fish on while fly fishing.

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

Woolly Bugger, Zebra Midge, Elk Hair Caddis, Clouser Minnow, and a Prince Nymph.

What advice do you have for others?

Don't let a lack of knowledge intimidate you. The most important thing is to get out and fish.



Kraig Laskowski

What is your bucket list fly-fishing trip?

My bucket list trip would be fishing for salmon in Alaska.

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

I joined the Frederick Watershed event and had a great time, but the brook trout won that day.



A tiny but beautiful redbreasted dace took a nymph and in turn could be food for the abundant trout

Outing Report: Yellow Bugs on the Yellow Breeches

By Seth Denbo

On a beautiful Friday in mid-May PVFF members ventured out of the Potomac valley and headed north to our neighboring commonwealth to wet our lines on one of the iconic central Pennsylvania streams that flow into the mighty Susquehanna River. Known for its many miles of fishable water, prolific hatches, and abundant trout, “The Breeches” has a storied place in the history of our sport.

We met at the Barnitz United Methodist Church, whose grounds include a beautiful stretch of the stream, and where the congregation generously allows anglers to park. A few miles upstream from where Yellow Breeches runs through Mt. Holly Springs, this section does not get as much pressure as the catch and release stretch further down. The river holds stocked fish and a healthy population of wild brown trout, as well as the usual varieties of Cyprinidae.

On his way to the stream, club president Andy Mekelburg stopped and caught breakfast for everyone at his local river, also known as Home Run Donuts in Hagerstown (look them up). Club members Denny Grizzle and Dirk Vandervaart and I were all impressed with the size and tastiness of the donuts that grow along the asphalt river of US Route 40 in Washington County.

After a generous and delicious donut breakfast the four of us headed upstream to start fishing. We got lucky with perfect weather; in fact it was maybe a little too good for ideal fishing. But the water temperatures in the 50s made for excellent opportunities to entice the trout to eat what we were offering. Early on in the day there was very little surface action, but a variety of nymphs were working. Everyone caught fish in the various spots where we’d settled, despite competing with some friendly but much more successful local anglers who

were using PowerBait.

For lunch we returned to the church, which has a nice pavilion with picnic tables. Over lunch we discussed the virtues of stocked and wild fish, and what, in each of our opinions, was more fun to fish for. I posed a hypothetical choice between catching a four-inch wild fish and fourteen inch stocked fish. The preferences were evenly split, with two of us preferring wild fish and two preferring big fish. In the end though, we all agreed that catching fish is more fun than not catching fish whatever their size and birthplace.

After lunch we headed back out for more fishing. With much of the river bathed in warm May sunshine fishing slowed in the afternoon. Later in the day sporadic rises of trout were seen, cast to, and fish caught on dries. The stream is known for its hatch of Sulphurs (*Ephemerella Invaria*), which generally happens late in the afternoon and early evening. Around 3:00PM I did see a couple in the air, and managed to entice a wild brown to take the parachute Sulphur that I'd tied in the hopes of making something of the hatch.

We all enjoyed the variety of fish that were attracted to our flies. Between us, over the course of the day, we managed to net an impressive range of species before releasing them back to their watery home.



Top: Competition for anglers on the Yellow Breeches

Bottom: Denny Grizzle, Seth Denbo, and Dirk Vandervart



Our haul included stocked rainbows and browns, wild brown trout from three inches to over a foot, fall fish, creek chubs, and dace. Overall it was an enjoyable outing. I look forward to many more trips to the Yellow Breeches, and recommend club members explore this beautiful and rewarding fishery.

Outing Report: East Branch of the Antietam Creek

By Mike Holland

Many thanks to Phil Clevener for organizing and leading an outing to the East Branch of the Antietam Creek on May 4, 2023. Phil reports that:

Andy Mekelburg, Paul Bemder, and Paul Dobson joined Phil to spend a cool, cloudy day fishing the East Branch of the Antietam Creek near Waynesboro, Pennsylvania. Due to heavy rains, the creek had been running high all week but had cleared some by the day of the outing.

Antietam Creek is a freestone stream that originates high on South Mountain a half dozen miles before entering the mile-long, Fly Fishing Only section in Renfrew Park. This section had been stocked only several days before the outing, but the cool conditions seemed to have affected the trout and their desire to eat.

Paul was the top angler with a catch of seven browns and rainbows. He admitted that he hit a “honey hole” not long before he quit for the day, and that hole accounted for five of his seven trout, all on a pheasant tail nymph.

Phil was able to account for four browns, one of which was a wild trout. He was using a Mekelmop style fly targeting the newly introduced stocked browns and rainbows. Frank spent a good part of the day trying to attract two golden trout that were lying together in a pool. While Frank and Andy didn’t land any fish,



Paul Dobson



Frank Bender

everyone seemed to have a good time. All three anglers indicated that they were impressed by the stream and would go back to fish it in the future.

Continuing Brook Trout Education

By Mike Holland

On May 1, 2023, I attended the Murray Fly Shop's Advanced Brook Trout School in the George Washington National Forest. I was joined by PVFF President Andy Mekelburg and member Vince Leon-Guerrero.

We spent the morning learning about hatches, tippets, knots, leaders, and flies and then went fishing. Harry Murray and his son Jeff are leading authorities on fishing for trout in the Shenandoah National Park; Harry authored the seminal work on the subject, "Trout Fishing in the Shenandoah National Park," which I highly recommend.

While I have read Harry's book, I learn best visually and audibly so the session was quite impactful. One key learning was the Double Surgeon's knot and how to use it to facilitate loop to loop connections with your leader and fly line as well as your leader to tippet. Another takeaway for me was their instruction not to make tippet to tippet connections and to avoid simply tying new tippet to the end of your leader.

It is important to know that a new leader typically has about eighteen inches of tippet; Jeff Murray recommends marking that point with a marker. As you change flies, you lose and

eventually run out of the tippet that was provided as part of your leader. At that point, you will want to connect new tippet to the leader. Jeff suggests that the best way to do so is with a loop-to-loop connection.

Jeff also suggested tying your hopper/dry-dropper and double-nymph rigs ahead of time to save time while you are on the water. While I had heard that advice before, it resonated and is something I will try to do going forward. Aside from saving time, another benefit is the intentionality and the decision-making you will have to do. You will have to decide what size and type of dry fly to use as well as what nymph



Vince Leon-Guerrero, Andy Mekelburg, and Mike Holland in the George Washington National Forest

and its size. You also will likely want to try several rigs with different combinations of files and sizes. Jeff also recommended using fluorocarbon tippet to connect your dropper to the first fly or nymph because fluorocarbon is heavier than monofilament tippet and will help you get your nymph down. Conversely, you will want to avoid using fluorocarbon tippet to connect dry flies to your fly line because the fluorocarbon will drag them down.

The learning continued for me once we got on the water. After some recent rain, Little Stony Creek was higher and cold so the brookies were just not that interested in dry flies. They did take some nymphs though. I focused on dry flies and casting, or more accurately, dropping it in various places to cover the water in a fashion that was least likely to disturb fish in other lies. Jeff stressed to me the need to have a straight up and down casting action, like a spring. I also took the plunge, so to speak, and worked on getting as low as possible when approaching pools. In more than one instance, I literally found myself kneeling to stealthily approach a pool, and that is a technique I plan to employ more frequently going forward.

Similarly, Jeff showed me how to tie a clinch knot using the tip of my forceps; you (1) thread the fly, (2) create a loop to hold with a tag pointing out to the right, (3) put your forceps in the loop, (4) twist five times, (5) grab the tag with your forceps, and (6) pull the tag and your forceps down out of the loop.

It was hard fishing. I was able to hook into three and land one while managing to lose a fly box (which is why I always carry more than one). I sure did enjoy my Redington Butterstick, and I had fun.

Most importantly, I was able to enjoy the company of a couple of PVFF members and several other anglers as well as the incredibly beautiful scenery. It seems to me that the more I learn about fishing, for brookies and otherwise, the more I need to learn and the more I want to fish.

If you want to learn more about fishing for mountain brook trout or fishing in the Shenandoah and/or George Washington National Forests, I recommend Murray's basic and advanced fly-fishing schools which they conduct every spring. You can sign up at murraysflyshop.com.

Project Healing Waters: Help Wanted

Our Project Healing Waters team is looking for help with our outings and monthly meetings. If you are interested in being a volunteer or would like to learn more about helping, just send me an email at lbforte@verizon.net — or give me a call at 301-943-7533. — Larry Forte

Seeking Newsletter Editor

We are seeking a volunteer to prepare the monthly club newsletter beginning in the summer of 2023. Training will be provided. Contact me at contact@troykitch.com if you're interested. — Troy Kitch

Last Cast

By Andy Mekelburg

One of the cornerstones of the Potomac Valley Fly Fishers is that of “Fellowship.” Seems obvious: you join a club because you have an interest and want to be with others who feel the same way. I got a good dose of fellowship in May, while fishing, tying, and “Board of directoring.”

May was a great month for me for fishing. Not that I caught a plethora (always wanted to use that word) of fish, but I did a lot of fishing with a bunch of PVFF Members at a lot of new places. This included: brook trout fishing at the George Washington National Forest with Mike Holland and Vince Leon-Guerrero, PVFF outing at Antietam Creek led by Phil Cleven, PVFF Outing to Yellow Breeches led by Seth Denbo, fishing for bass with Denny Grizzle, and exploring a new Pennsylvania stream (undisclosed for now) with Paul Dobson.

By my count, I fished with more people than I caught fish, but that’s the fun part of it. I did reach the 3-fish challenge (!) for some fishing vindication. Also, I witnessed two others meet that challenge, which was just as exciting to me. If you practice catch and release, you always walk away with empty hands. The key is walking away with memories of a good day with fellow fishers. That I did! Lesson learned – go on club outings.

I don’t usually mention my fly-tying efforts, for obvious reasons, but it’s an important part of the club and I look forward to the two nights a month I spend with the group. Fly tying is one of the few artistic endeavors that I can at least marginally do, with satisfying results, however the best part is being with others and learning the nuances of our sport. Many fishers look to catch a fish with a fly they personally tied and with a rod they made — very satisfying.

Our beginner’s class is led by Don Fine, a legendary tyer (watch his YouTube videos). The class is always

well attended, with many first timers. I tend to relive my first efforts to tie and laugh, as Don leads them to complete the fly. We’re trying to come up with ideas to help that first timer continue their efforts. Any thoughts, let Martyn Holland know.

This month we tied the Damsselfly, which is somewhat like a Woolley Bugger, but with a twist. The next day, I tried it out on Rockdale Run and caught a nice Rainbow within the first half dozen casts! Of course, I immediately sent a picture to Don. Very satisfying – thanks Don!

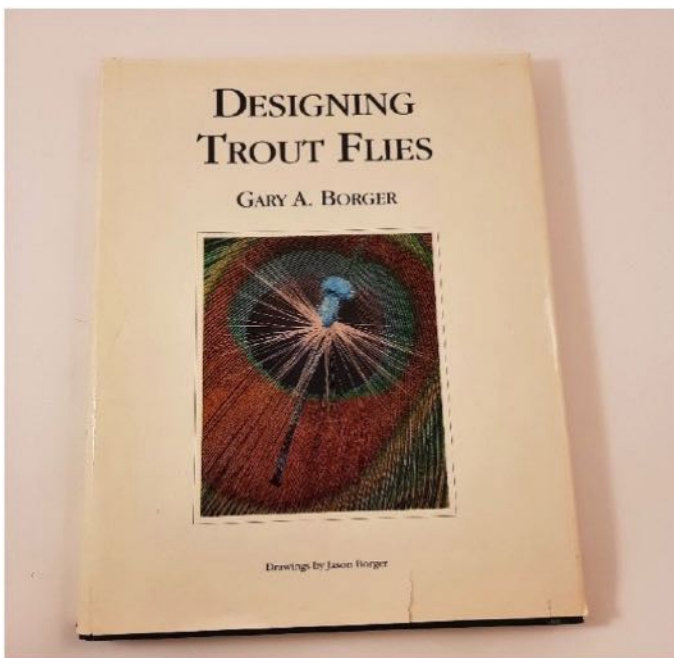
The following night Mark Richardson led us in tying, but I haven’t gotten the opportunity to give it the Rockdale Run test. The value of these classes is that you not only learn to tie a particular fly, but you learn how to fish it, something you don’t from watching online (unless it’s Don’s videos).

Our board met this month and things seem to be going along well (I hope this doesn’t jinx it). We have our annual picnic in June and no general meetings in July and August. Planning for our banquet is in full swing. Now is the time to collect items that you may not need or want and to bring them to the picnic to donate for our auctions.

Separately, the Friends of Lefty Kreh continue to meet every 2nd Wednesday evening. We are working on big plans for installation of the sculpture (hopefully in October), but just as important are the plans to follow up to continue Lefty’s legacy. We have some great projects we are working on — an exhibition at the downtown Frederick branch of the library, an annual “Lefty Kreh Day” by Culler Lake, scholarships for students and youth interested in the outdoors, a possible booklet, and we’re working in partnership with Thorpewood to use their pond and facilities to help our efforts in research, education, and teaching fishing. One of the areas is exploring

the link between fishing and making a clinical difference with veterans, youth, and others who would benefit by going out into the outdoors. Very exciting things are going on. If you are interested in helping on any of these activities, just let me know. The more the merrier. Enjoy the summer and keep on fishing!

Gary Borger to be Inducted into PA Fly Fishing Museum



The Pennsylvania Fly Fishing Museum Association is excited to announce that former PA resident Gary Borger, award-winning fly-fishing author and FFI Master casting instructor, will be inducted into the museum there on November 4, 2023, at their fundraising banquet. The banquet will be at the Masonic Lodge in Carlisle PA. Hours are from 5PM to 9PM. Casual dress.

Seating is limited, so reserve your seat ASAP. The link to reserve your spot is on our website.

Calendar of Events

- June 13** Annual Picnic @ 4PM
Catoctin Creek Park & Nature Center
2929 Sumantown Road
Middletown, MD
- June 20** Beginner's Fly Tying
7:00 PM
Trinity United Methodist Church
Frederick, Maryland
Room 207
- June 21** Advanced Fly Tying
7:00 PM
Trinity United Methodist Church
Frederick, Maryland
Room 108
- June 29** Board of Directors' Meeting
7:00 PM
Trinity United Methodist Church
Frederick, Maryland
Room 109
- July 29** Catoctin Watershed Outing
- Sept 16** Smith Creek Outing

2023 PVFF Officers & Directors

President.....Andy Mekelburg
 Vice President.....Martyn Holland
 Secretary.....Owen Davis
 Treasurer.....Dennis Allen
 3 year Director.....Dave Dowiak
 2 year Director.....Russ Hanson
 1 year Director.....Dirk Vandervaart
 Past President.....Larry Forte

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 _____