



September 2004

The Conservationist

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter

www.pptu.org

Wednesday, September 15

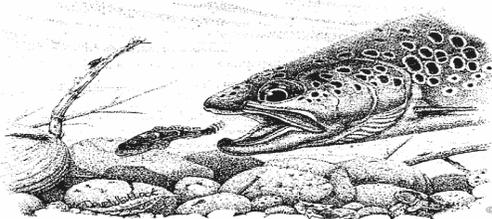
A FISH'S EYE VIEW

This month features the **Return of Ozzie**. No, we're not talking about a certain aging head-banger who's become a pop culture icon recently with his hit MTV series. After all, we're fly fishermen and therefore supposedly not interested in heavy metal (at least chucking it, that is).

Rather, we're referring to Ozzie Ozefovich, the man with the underwater fish cam. He's coming to present his third installment ("Trout Vision and Refraction") of his four part series filming the underwater world of the trout. In this piece and in Ozzie's own words, "we'll explore the impact that refraction has on the way we view trout and their world, and conversely, how trout view us. We'll see the imprint and sparkle a fly makes in the film before it floats into the window. Does it really matter what you wear when you're fishing? You'll be surprised at the little things that will put a trout down."

There's a saying about the key to better understanding the world is by learning to see it through the perspective of others. I think that certainly could be said about fishing. So come to Ozzie's presentation and learn how to see the world like a trout. ■

— Sebastian O'Kelly



Dave Whitlock © www.davewhitlock.com

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

It's hard to believe we're beginning another year of Chapter activities. PPTU Chapter is busy throughout the year with a variety of programs designed to support cold water fisheries, environmental issues, and member education and fishing activities. I'm sure the Board members were grateful for the two month respite from their management and leadership responsibilities- I know I was.

This next year we'll continue the ongoing support of all programs that we sponsor and address the recommendations of the ad hoc committee we established last year to review the Chapter's conservation activities. We'll report to the general membership on the status of the Board's deliberations on this matter at upcoming membership meetings. We would like to see a statewide expansion of our Trout in the Classroom (TIC) program. We'll look to our Mid Atlantic Council to facilitate the expansion among the other state chapters of TU. In our own area we want to expand TIC to new schools while sustaining the program in those current schools that have enjoyed its benefits. To support our program,

(Continued on Page 2)

Meetings

Time and Day: 7:00 PM, Third Wednesday except December, June, July, and August

Place: Margaret Schweinhaut Senior Center, 1000 Forest Glen Road, Silver Spring, Maryland

Directions: From Capitol Beltway: North on Georgia Avenue (Rte. 97). First right onto Forest Glen Road. Pass Holy Cross Hospital and go across Sligo Creek Parkway. The Center is on the right.

The Conservationist

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Contributions in the form of clip art, articles, conservation activities, trip reports, letters, fishing and conservation news, tying tips, book reviews, and essays about trout fishing should be sent to the Editor as plain text in the email body or Microsoft Word attachments. Authors should also include their phone number and a brief descriptions of the attachments. The deadline for submissions is the fifth(5th) day of the month prior to the month of publication

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

(Continued from Page 1)

we plan to have a special raffle at our November membership meeting. We have been able to acquire some attractive prizes at reduced or little cost and hope they will entice a large audience to participate in the raffle.

This is an election year; (*I thought I should mention it in case you have been able to avoid the interminable TV ads that are flooding the airways*). Seriously, this is an import responsibility we all have and the outcome will have consequences to environmental resources and cold water fisheries important to us throughout the country. I recommend a thorough reading of the summer 2004 issue of TROUT magazine for a short refresher on many of the issues that TU is involved with nationwide.

We share a common interest in our natural resources and environment and enjoy the rewards we derive from them. We must do our share to preserve those resources for our future generations. I recall the line I quoted in a previous newsletter column: "The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of natural scenic, historic, and esthetic values of the environment; ... (Our)...public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations to come."

Stewardship is a responsibility that our Chapter has shouldered over the years. It continues to grow in importance each year. ■

— Lou Boezi

TACKLE AND TACTIC TIPS

First and foremost, trout fishing is supposed to be enjoyable. Yes, catching trout at least once or twice a day is important. How we arrive at our fly selection, leader and line choices, etc., is mostly a matter of individual preferences. I would guess that there are more than a dozen national magazines devoted to fly fishing and an equal number to all fishing and the outdoors; more magazines serve regional readerships. Then there the thousands of local club newsletters like the *Conservationist*. So tons of ideas are floating around on how to catch trout and other fish. We need to find ways to catch our quarry that follow several basic guidelines. One of the first would be that the technique is not so complicated as to use lots of time on the water.

(Continued on Page 5)

TRIP REPORT — Deposit, NY. West Branch of the Delaware River

Memorial Day '04: Two Aprils ago, I won a chapter raffle prize: three nights and two days for two at the West Branch Anglers Resort, all meals, lodging, flies, and guide services included. I had the choice of two days in a drift boat or a day of instruction followed by a day of drifting and wading. After my wife beat back all applicants to join me (it's amazing how many friends I have), we decided to go with Package #2. My wife had flyfished but once before, so the day of instruction would be, we thought, a good idea.

We drove up Friday morning, and it took us about 5.5 leisurely hours. From the moment we arrived we were warmly welcomed. Larry, the guy who runs the flyshop, helped us pick out flies we could use for that evening's hatch. The staff explained that they had Cabin 18 prepared for us; handed us our dinner and breakfast tickets; and told us to meet up with our guide at the flyshop at 8AM.

The deluxe log cabin had two bedrooms with a double and single in each, a full bath with a Jacuzzi, a modern kitchen/dining room with everything one would need for an extended stay sans Meal Plan; and a living room with a fire place and cable TV. The cabin was air conditioned, but the days reached only the high 70s and the nights were as cool as 36. All the cabins fronted the river, and there was a picnic table and barbecue stand right off the porch. It's a difficult life, but someone has to live it. We had an early dinner that evening at the spacious lodge restaurant and had the choice of the menu, which ran from prime rib and peppercorn NY strip to crab-cakes and rockfish. Bellies full, we went to bed early. At eight the next morning, after spotting a bald eagle soaring above the resort, we met our Orvis guide, Joe Demaldaris and set out for the casting pond. Joe's an excellent instructor, someone who would make a good school teacher. He worked really well with my wife, who by the end of the afternoon had gone from the "windshield wiper" to putting out regularly thirty feet of line in a nice loop. The wind was steady all day, so it took some skill to do this. I can't say enough about how much my presentation improved that day. I catch more fish and enjoy casting more. The next day was a fishing day. Joe met us with drift boat in tow, we picked out some flies (also included in the package), and we set out for the lower West Branch. Even at midday, there were sulfers all over the water. Then the Green Drakes came in on top of the sulfers, covering the

water with bugs, but the fish generally were uninterested; so instead of sulking we went deep, drifting a drake nymph above a beadhead golden stonefly nymph. It wasn't long til I was into my first fish, a very nice brown that made a couple runs before my newly learned improved clinch knot gave way, drawing a groan from Joe.

I insisted I tie the knot again, and it wasn't long before I was into a very determined 22 inch brown that made run after run after run, its head down and digging for the bottom the whole time. I kid you not, it took 15-20 minutes to get this fish to hand; we both were exhausted. I had never fought a trout for 15 minutes, not even one of the Missouri River rainbows. During the fight, I could hear Joe praying that he would tie the rest of the knots if only this fish came to hand. It did, and my wife snapped a picture of it. After boating a measly eighteen incher, again by nymphing, we then reconsidered the topwater action. Joe wondered if the risers weren't taking sulfers or drakes but a fly that was scarce and just about at the end of its hatching season. So he tied on a March Brown emerger, I lobbed it out there about 50 feet, and bang! I was into another nice brown. I broke him off (we were fishing 6x on account of the high blue sky and clear water), but not until a couple of good runs. I picked up or lost a fish here and there during the heat of the day on this emerger.

Setting a hook at fifty is a challenge I usually don't have to face. About 9PM, we anchored near a cliff that came down into a deep run, with the water running against the cliff wall. We were no more than 12 feet from fifteen different risers. I would just pick out a nice one and go drag free over it with a humongous coffin fly. Meanwhile, my wife was struggling with the many opportunities in front of her, so Joe wisely pointed out a solo riser on the other side of the boat, 30 feet out. Doesn't my wife take a second to focus, inhale some calm words from Joe, and toss a perfect loop, properly reach-mended, right upstream from this big brown? When the brown feels the needle it starts to separate from the boat. Joe and I look at each other, silently signaling "nice fish," when suddenly it turns and runs right at the boat! Joe and I both are yelling "strip! strip! strip!" when my wife turns to me with this look of concern and frustration and says, "what the [un-ladylike language deleted] does that mean?!" Of course, the fish throws the hook, but not after a heart-pounding ten seconds. Joe was looking kind of dejected about his rookie losing such a nice fish, indeed her only fish, when my wife explains, "you guys taught me how to cast, how to mend, how to choose a fly, how to tie it on-but you

(Continued on Page 4)

PATUXENT REPORT

The new parking lot on Jennings Chapel

(about 1.5 miles west of Rt. 97) received a fair number of visits from fishers in May and into the summer. The lot gives access to the middle section of the river between Howard Chapel and Hipsley Mill; be sure to always check the clarity of the stream at the Howard Chapel bridge before walking down from this new parking lot. The new bridge replacement project where Hipsley Mill crosses the Cabin Branch is going well, but it will be at least the middle of September before it is reopened to traffic. We hope to get the roads department to leave a bit more parking in the vicinity of the bridge for both cars and the stocking truck in the spring.

My expectations are that 25% of the brown trout survived this summer's flows and heat; in a normal year, we might see 20% of the stocked fish survive. The better flows and cooler temperatures should leave a fair number of trout scattered up and down the river for the rest of the year. A small number of rainbows also might be found to hold over this year in a few sections. If you are interested helping in the annual electro-fishing surveys of this stream, please contact me by the September meeting. This is always a good opportunity to help and also to see where the trout are (or are not). This is a week day pursuit with waders required. Dates and times have not been determined. Similarly, if you have any interest in the Gunpowder surveys, let me know by Sept. 15. ■

— Jay Sheppard

TRIP REPORT

(Continued from Page 3)

didn't teach me what to do when I got a fish on the line!" We burst out laughing at that one. It was true: how do you instruct someone how to play a big, wary trout without having a trout on a line? At the end of the day, I'd landed four or five fish in the 16-22 inch range, broke off or LDR'd about the same number, and just plain missed a half dozen takes. A good day on the Delaware for me. I was there last year and managed only one fish in two days. Both my wife and I are looking forward to a return trip. Joe promised that the next time we came he'd teach my wife how to play one of these fish. We had a very relaxing time on this trip and we enjoyed some splendid instruction, hatches, and fishing. The accommodations were first-rate. ►

How good was the service at this resort? At the take-out, I told Joe we wished we'd picked up some firewood. So Joe calls the owner, it's now 10:45, and he delivers a couple bundles to the cabin. If you ever get a chance to get away to the Delaware watershed, I can't recommend these guys enough. ■

— Jim Keil

FALL PPTU FUNDRAISER

At the PPTU meeting to be held on Nov. 17, there will be a raffle for the benefit of some of our major conservation efforts such as our very successful Trout in the Classroom program. As with any of our raffles, consider this as your chance to help us promote the goals and mission of our Chapter. The great prizes donated by supporters of the PPTU offer a tempting incentive to get you to contribute to our cause which will enable us to continue expansion of our Trout in the Classroom Program and others. We ask you to dig deep and support our efforts where it can really help. Two years ago, Jim Keil won the grand prize (*See Story, Page 3*). Considering the small number of tickets we manage to sell (last year the number was around 60 or 70 tickets) for this event, you have a good chance at winning. Let's see how much we can raise for this worthy cause.

1st prize - An all expense paid stay for two anglers at the West Branch Angler & Sportsman's Resort located on the West Branch of the Delaware River. This package includes three nights at the resort in a cabin on the river, all meals, two days of drift boat fishing for two anglers with a guide and tips for the guides, or one day of fly fishing school for two and one day of drift boat fishing for two. This prize alone has a retail value of approximately \$1900.00.

2nd prize - Will be a one day guided wade fishing trip for trout or smallmouth bass to local waters with local guide Stacey Crossland-Smith.

3rd prize -- Will be a sweet, 7'- 5wt. fly fishing outfit from L. L. Bean. -- including rod, reel and line. Ticket prices will be \$15.00 apiece or three tickets for \$35. We will be selling tickets at all meetings until the raffle takes place, on November 17, 2004, and you do not have to be present to win. Also, most Board members will have tickets to sell anytime. Time to ante up folks; we need your help! Support our chapter of TU. ■

TACKLE AND TACTIC TIPS

(continued from page 2)

There are so many minutes of fishing we are allotted in our lives, let alone hours of daylight. Why use a knot that takes 2 minutes to tie that does the same job as one taking less than half of that? Secondly, we need various techniques that do not thwart our goal of catching fish. If a particular knot is constantly breaking under normal fishing conditions or a fly pattern is not catching fish, then we need to find something else.

I am only suggesting that when you read about new ways to tie knots, make leaders, or tie a new fly, give them all a good try to see if they do make your fishing fun. If they are just as simple to use as your earlier methods or patterns, then decide which performs better under the same conditions. My admonition is that you still catch and land as many fish as before with the new technique, knot, etc. Any knot or leader system can be constructed in a variety of ways. Pick one that you can do in your sleep and that also brings fish to the net on a regular basis. Over the summer there was some Internet discussion regarding ways to attach leaders to fly lines.

The discussion was as always very positive and educational to all. One of the problems some were encountering was the issue of bringing the tip of the fly line and the knots attaching the leader inside the tip top of the fly rod. The concern is that if the fish suddenly makes a last run to escape then the added friction of those connection knots passing through the guides might cause a light tippet to break. With exceptionally long leaders (more than a couple feet more than the length of the rod), one has this problem in landing a fish.

I prefer the loop-to-loop connections so I can easily change leaders. The smoothest connectors are the braided mono loops. As long as they have over 2.5" in contact with the fly line they should do fine for all trout fishing. The butts of the braided loops are to be covered by a shrink wrap tubing sleeve.

The only minor issue I have noted is that they do suck up a bit of water that is later flicked out on the back and forward casts. This tiny spray may alert some of those wary trout we find on the smooth flats of our heavily fished waters. Do not apply super glue, etc., to the full length of the braided loop. It is supposed to stretch to clamp onto the line. Before you attach the loop, do add a tiny ►

drop to the actual tip of the line to seal it from taking on water. Also make sure that if you attach the loop yourself that the line extends as far up inside as possible; this ensures better transfer of the energy from the fly line to the butt of the leader. Only when we are going after large game fish do the braided loops sometimes fail. If you are chasing fish with tippets over 10 pounds, then I suggest you use a monofilament loop or, for really big game fish, strip off the finish and whip finish a small loop that will pass through the guides with no problem. If you use a whipped loop or a mono loop on the end of the line, you can coat the knots to make them more likely to slide through the guides. Epoxy makes the smoothest connection, but it will cause the coating of the line to crack right behind it; in turn, this will cause the line tip to suck up water and sink. I prefer some smooth flexible cement to cover the knots. Again, use what you find to work for you. ■

— Jay Sheppard



ADDRESS CHANGED? MISSING AN ISSUE?

If you have moved or see any error in your label on this newsletter, please advise both the National TU office and this chapter with separate notices. Our mailing list is maintained apart from the National list; we do eventually get the notice of address change from National TU, but it is often a few months before it affects your newsletter and other mailings. Please help us help you. Thank you.

Last year we had several reports of members not receiving their newsletters. First, make sure we have your correct address, including 9-digit ZIP, and that your dues are paid up (label reads PP-0904 until this November, 0905 after that). If you are missing a back issue, please contact us for a copy. For future reference, we try to mail the newsletters to our active members about 2 weeks before the next meeting. Remember, we have no newsletters or meetings in December or during the summer months of June, July and August.

GADGETS & GEAR I REALLY LIKE

Over the years all of us accumulate gadgets and gear that we probably could have lived without. Most of my stuff that falls into that category usually ends up in a cardboard box under my tying bench labeled fly fishing gear. However, if a piece of gear or a gadget ends up in that box instead of in my vest, rest assured it will most likely never see the light of day again.

With this in mind, I thought I would share with you some of the gadgets and gear that have made themselves so useful to me that I can't imagine being without them.

I have used a number of environmentally safe, Loon Outdoors products for long enough to give a hearty recommendation to just about everything with the company name on it. A long time ago... I started with Loon Aquel, the only fly floatant I use. From there I used some of their other products, such as U.V. Knot Sense, U.V. Wader Repair, the U.V. Mini light, and the U.V. Power Light. Recently, I called their customer service department and spoke with Tami Parr, who was polite, knowledgeable, and solved my problem with a defective Ultra Violet (U.V.) Mini Light by instantly sending me a new one at no cost, no questions asked. Later, I called back to speak to her about some background for this article, and the phone was answered by Dan Paradis, owner, inventor, and all around nice guy.

Dan explained some of the differences between U.V. Knot Sense, U.V. Wader Repair, and U.V. Boat Patch. Knot Sense sets in a coat thick enough to provide a smooth cover for nail knots so they can easily pass through your guides, and it provides maximum strength to critical knots used in rigging. Wader Patch sets in a thinner layer than does Knot Sense. Boat Patch is formulated for maximum bond strength with neoprene and vinyl. All of these U.V. products are tough and set quickly – usually, in less than a minute when exposed to strong sun light.

When using the Mini Light they set in about forty seconds, or ten to twenty seconds when using the bigger, Power Light. Bulb life for the lights is about one hundred thousand hours, and one set of batteries will last for approximately 20 hours in either light. The Mini Light is most often used by fishermen, and the Power Light by professionals who rig a lot of lines. Both lights have a lifetime ►

guarantee. I use these products to make hard body, wet ant patterns, "poxy" back wing cases on nymphs, and to coat the nail knots, whipped backing attachment loops, and perfection loops on my fly line rigging. Punctures in waders can be fixed on the spot, and any fluorescent paint used on flies can be activated for night time fishing with either light. Check out their entire line at www.loonoutdoors.com.

Another gadget I use all the time is the "Cinch Tie" knot tying tool Robert Simpson demonstrated at the fly tying demonstration meeting we held last year. I have used this tool for years and figure it has probably saved me a hundred hours of knot tying time on the stream since I started using it. That is a lot of time I'm very glad to have used for fishing rather than tying knots. Use it to tie clinch knots, surgeon's knots, surgeon's loops, nail knots, and many others. Get one, and put it on a zinger. Once you learn to use it and pin it to your vest it will quickly become your favorite gadget. There are many more gadgets and gear to critique, but they will have to wait until next time. If you have a favorite gadget or piece of gear, drop me a note at jimg6128@aol.com, and let me know what it is. Maybe it will show up in a future article. ■

— Jim Greco

****MEMBER'S ASSESSMENT **** **NOW PAYABLE**

The annual assessment (see back) is now payable. Check your label-if the "PP-" date is "0904" (or there is NO "PP-" and date), you can send your \$15 now, and you will not have to worry about paying at the September meeting. Some members paid twice this year, so they already show "PP-0905." Make checks payable to "POTOMAC-PATUXENT CHAPTER - TU" and mail to our chapter mail box. The assessment covers only the newsletter and related administrative expenses; all donations above expenses at raffles, etc., go to the resource and not to support our members with free newsletters, maps, etc. **Final mailing** for those having "PP-0904" on their label will be the November issue. **There will be NO separate mailings to remind members of this obligation. Please take note and action today! You will not want to miss our January issue and later issues with all their announcements. Thank you.**

LIES, DAMN LIES AND RELEASES



Matt and Holly Baun, Brad Bickford, Mike Goeser, Chris Gunzel and Jordan Snyder joined me last April 24th for the outing to the Rapidan River. Due to the recent rains, the flows on this charming little freestoner, which is nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia where indigenous brook trout thrive, were up but still well within tolerable levels. We fished the middle sections of the river, amongst flowering dogwoods, redbuds and rhododendrons, downstream of Camp Hoover in Shenandoah National Park and the Rapidan Wildlife Management Area.

The day's weather was sunny with a high air temperature of 74 degrees and a water temperature of 58 degrees at three in the afternoon. Not surprisingly, the weather conditions were not that conducive to generating any noticeable hatch activity, other than an odd midge or two, and most of the trout were caught on attractors and caddis patterns.

Matt and Holly caught several respectable sized brook trout on a size 12 Mr. Rapidan pattern downstream of the Junction Pool (formerly Creel Pool # 1). Brad caught three on a size 14 Adams Parachute pattern at the Junction Pool. And Mike caught several brookies downstream of the Junction Pool and upstream of the second gate at the upper boundary of the WMA and National Park using various caddis and attractor patterns. Jordan caught fifteen smaller brookies nearer the headwaters at the confluence of Mill and Laurel Prongs on Elk Hair Caddis patterns, and Chris caught as many if not more, including one of twelve inches, in the same area on Elk Hair Caddis patterns. As for myself, I caught and released three, including two that were ten inches each, on a size 14 Adams Irresistible and a size 16 tan Elk Hair Caddis pattern in a large pool just upstream of the Junction Pool. ■

The September outing will be to the Big Gunpowder Falls River in Maryland. Please see me at the September 15th Chapter meeting if you plan on attending this outing. ■

— Joshua Forster

CONSERVATION UPDATE



Over the winter, the Board created an ad hoc committee to review existing and potential new conservation activities in which the chapter might engage. Currently, many of us are involved in such efforts as protecting the Paint Branch; helping out with the highly successful Trout-in-the-Classroom Project; attending public meetings; writing letters to government officials and the media; staffing fishing rodeos and kids' fishing days; demonstrating flytying at Bass Pro Shops; staffing the tables at the flyfishing show in College Park; or stocking streams. Nonetheless, some members of the chapter leadership past and present believe that the full membership could more regularly be engaged in conservation activities than is now the case. I was asked to pull the committee together. John Parchen, Paul Prevost, and Sue Rose answered my call for help. As you will recall, one of our first activities was to petition the membership for ideas. From those petitions that were returned and our own sense of what was needed, we created a list of activities in which the chapter might engage in addition to those in which we were already functioning. At the March 2004 Board meeting we presented our ideas. One of these suggestions was that we should hold regularly scheduled conservation activities, one in the fall and one in the early spring. Some of those activities could include contributions to the efforts of the Beaver Creek Watershed Association to restore that watershed and fishery; participation in the Izaak Walton League clean-up of the Upper Patuxent; maintenance of a wild brook trout fishery in the Upper Savage River system; and temporarily assisting Patapsco Valley TU in the maintenance and protection of Morgan Run. Of course, we're already involved in some of these activities, but we would try to organize twice-yearly "events" around them. These events would have regularized dates, like every year the second Saturday of March or some such thing, so that everyone would be able to plan for the events upto a year in advance.

This is where we are. If you have any suggestions or ideas you can contact John Parchen (twotrouts@aol.com). We should be updating you with more specifics before the calendar year is out. ■

— Jim Keil

NOVEMBER OUTING

Connetquot River, Long Island, NY.

We still have nine spaces open for this trip on Monday, Nov. 1. We need a total of sixteen people to go on this trip to keep the cost at \$80.00 per person for a whole day of fishing on the Connetquot. The targeted species will be Kamloops Rainbows, German Browns and large sea-run Brook Trout. The Chapter will have the river to ourselves. For info about the trip please contact *Joshua Forster* at 301-604-0822. ■

Membership

THE POTOMAC-PATUXENT CHAPTER of Trout Unlimited has two membership categories: **Regular or Family** (\$15/year assessment) or **Student** (free). The Chapter operates on a September-to-September basis. The assessment is totally separate from Trout Unlimited dues. Send correspondence, change of address, or assessment payable to POTOMAC-PATUXENT TROUT UNLIMITED, PO Box 2865, Wheaton, MD 20915.

Chapter and national TU expiration dates are indicated in the mailing label as PP-0903 or NTU-0903.

First time visitors receive two free issues of this publication.

A THOUGHT FOR SEPTEMBER

September "restarts" the trout fishing, as far as I am concerned in this region. The cooler temperatures and shortening days seem to make all the trout that survived the summer anxious to inhale almost anything that comes within their sight. As far as fishing the Gunpowder, Savage, etc., you can certainly use the more typical late summer flies, lures and techniques. This means beetles, ants, inch worms, crickets, caddis, hoppers, standard nymphs and similar fare. For beetles, I really like the combination of deer hair and foam: a thin, but wide, shell back of black foam over an underbody of spun black deer hair, trimmed directly underneath to leave only a few straggly "legs" dangling along the sides (tie in a tuft of colored yarn or add a drop of airplane dope to the top, if you want better visibility). I have also liked using peacock for the underbody, as it gives a really nice color. The Crowe beetles made of all deer hair really worked well, but they last only for a few trout; you can extend them a little more with several coats of Hard as Nails nylon nail polish. The foam version lasts and lasts. ■

— *Jay Sheppard*



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FIRST CLASS MAIL