



January 2006

The *Conservationist*

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter

www.pptu.org

Wednesday, January 18

The Vise Squad!

Yup, you show at our January meeting telling crazy stories about trafficking in controlled substances, you're gonna be in trouble. The Men In Blue will be on us in an instant. The real Vice Squad.

Actually not. You'll just be seeing our version of the authorities. The Vise Squad of PPTU. We won't be laying down the law, just some hackle. The only wild stories we'll be telling have to do with fish. Trafficking in controlled substances? Not unless you count a squirrel tail that was pinched off some road kill moments before Animal Control arrived.

It's time for the **annual fly tying meeting**, one of the Chapter's most popular occasions. Tiers will be manning their vises, spinning all types of cool and interesting patterns, and the crowd can circulate and ask questions, either to figure out a new pattern or maybe to spark an interest in learning to tie. We'll have **Bob Dietz** whipping up some traditional wet flies; **Jim Greco** putting the sparkle in some comparadun patterns; **Jeff Kane** with extended body flies; **Robert Simpson** doing his thing on tippet knots and droppers; and yours truly concocting some big and small Clousers. We'll have a few more tiers for sure and maybe a kids table too. So come down and face the Vise Squad! :

— Sebastian O'Kelly

**** Inclement Weather Notice ****

The next Chapter meeting is **Wednesday, January 18, 2006**. In cases of inclement weather there is a possibility that meetings will be cancelled. Please contact any member of the Board (see p.2) a few hours prior to the start of the meeting OR watch the PPCTU list serve.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Happy New Fly Fishing Year! As with the beginning of all new years, I think a little about resolutions. Rarely, if ever, do they get off the ground. However, on one or two occasions, I have gotten as far as February or March with a resolution or two. This year my first two resolutions involve fly fishing. The first is to faithfully keep a fishing log, and the second is to catch trout or at least to go fly fishing once every month. I know that I will get a good jump on the monthly fishing resolution because I plan to fish on New Year's Day.

I also look forward to a year in which our Chapter members will find increased value in their membership. New conservation goals, outreach and education efforts for our community are on the horizon. We intend to be a part of Mid-Atlantic Council efforts to improve the water quality of the North Branch of the Potomac. I also have a goal to sponsor a Learn to Fly Fish Day to share our sport with the public.

In other efforts for the Chapter, Ken Bowyer, who heads up our mentor program, tells me that he was underutilized last year, and looks forward to sharing some stream time with more of our members. I can attest to Ken's knowledge and willingness to share after he took me to the upper reaches of the Gunpowder River last summer and shared some of the secrets of the wild Gunpowder trout. I caught

(Next page) ?

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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| | Cathy Nutter | 301-384-2431 |
| | Joshua Forster | 301-604-0822 |
| Editor: | Matt Baun | 301-937-8015 |
| Program: | Sebastian O'Kelly | 301-593-7432 |
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| Patuxent: | Jay Sheppard | 301-725-5559 |

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 twelfth (12th) day of the month prior to the month of publication

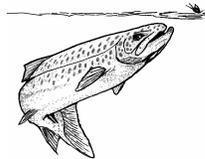
EDITOR: Matt Baun
Phone: 301-937-8015
mattbaun@yahoo.com

President's Column—Cont'd

four trout — and better yet — had the opportunity to share a day on that great stream with someone who knows it. See his comments (next article).

Finally, I hope that everyone will find our meetings and outings an increasingly good source of information and friendship, and a worthy investment of your time and energy. Come to the January Fly Tying Meeting and see some of that knowledge being shared. I also hope that you will find time during the year to help us with a half day stream clean up, and the other half day fly fishing it with a fellow member. You will both enjoy it. In the new year, may the rises be many. †

— Nick Weber



PPTU MENTOR PROGRAM BEGINNERS & BEYOND

Available to members of PPTU current with their dues, Ken Bowyer will conduct one on one stream side fly fishing instruction. Interested members must show commitment by having waders or hipers, a rod and reel outfit, and leader. Discussions will include equipment, knots, casting, flies, dry fly and nymphing techniques, entomology, reading water, conservation, etc. at nearby streams. Instruction will be tailored to individual needs.

Contact Ken at 301-627-7154 or e-mail:
kenbowyer@comcast.net

A note of thanks...

The Cloverly Safeway and Starbucks supported our Hawlings River tree planting conservation effort this past fall. Coffee and donut holes were provided to those in attendance and very much appreciated. Next time you head out to the Patuxent or Hawlings River, stop in and say thanks!.

Tackle and Tactic Tips

Fly fishers have an ancillary activity to keep the drift of their fly doing what they want it to do...dead drift or tight line or something in-between. This line manipulation after the cast is called "mending." Fly fishing is the only style of fishing that allows this. When one casts a monofilament or braided casting line, once the line is out there you have almost no control over where it lies or how it moves. Because fly lines have mass (weight) they can be repositioned to remove or increase the effects of drift caused by moving water.

When dead drifting a fly, we do not want the effects of the currents to remove any slack between the rod tip and the fly or we will have drag—the curse of fly fishers everywhere. In other cases, we may actually want to increase drag on a moving streamer or similar fly. Mending is simply the action of **picking up** the nearer portions of the fly line and **laying it down** somewhere else. This action will either delay the onset of drag (upstream mend) or increase the drag (downstream mend). At the same time, one benefit is that the point of contact between the rod tip and the water with the fly line is also repositioned. If one casts directly across a moving stream, the entire line immediately starts to drift downstream. If this is allowed to continue, then any slack between the rod tip and the leader is going to vanish as the line continues to try to drift down the stream. If the line is immediately mended to move the nearer portion of the line upstream of its present position, then some delay is added to the drift before drag will start. The reverse is true: mending downstream will initiate the start and increase the speed of the drag in most cases.

Usually we do not want to disturb the tip of the fly line when we mend the line. A typical mend is a very **gentle** but rapid movement of the rod tip to **first lift** the near section of the line off the water and **roll it over** to the new position. This is **not** casting the line to its new position. Casting is moving the entire line with considerable energy compared to most mends. If that much energy is used to mend the line, then the fly or at least the leader will almost certainly be moved as well, and drag is immediately injected into the drift. ?

Watch the tip of the line: if it moves when you mend, you are using too much energy. You must practice this technique on water, as the resistance of the line to the water surface is critical for the rapid but subtle move of lifting and moving the line to its new position. I would also suggest that you use a large visible dry fly to practice your mending technique so that you can see the effect on the tip of the line and on the fly. Eventually, learn how to move the rod tip towards the tip of the fly line to actually toss little loops or curves of line into the middle of the line to increase drift time. Once drag has commenced, you are finished mending. Mending anticipates what the line will be doing in the next few seconds. Waiting and watching until it is too late will greatly reduce the dead drift time on a fly. Mending is rarely needed when the fly is cast directly upstream from the wading fisher. It is most needed when casting across a moving stream. None of these last two statements may apply when you are drifting in a boat, if you, the line, and the fly are all drifting at the same speed and direction. I generally find that I can mend the line a maximum of three times on a given drift with each successive mend being about half the amount of line moved as the previous one.

Mending is going to greatly increase your fishing pleasure. Practice it as much as possible if you are just getting into the sport. If you are an old timer, make sure you are mending correctly: the fly line tip is not being moved during a mend to increase the dead drift time of a fly. †

— Jay Sheppard



Wintertime Blues?

The bad news is that winter is here. The good news is that some of us may have some extra time on our hands. Next time you're at your tying desk, tie up a couple extra flies and set them aside. Nothing special, just whatever you're tying. When you have a half dozen or so tied, bring them to the next chapter meeting so we can offer them at future raffles. If you attach your name, we'll be sure to thank you when they are raffled off. Just one more way to help protect the trout and to cure those wintertime blues. Thanks!

Patuxent Report

Hunting season will continue through most of February in some sections of the Park, so be careful. It is unclear if the current state budget problem will allow the state to obtain some brown trout for stocking our local streams next year.

If you have not helped in the past and want to help stock trout this year, call or email me (301-725-5559 or jmsheppar@aol.com) BEFORE the February meeting or sign up at the January or February monthly meetings. If you have not helped on this activity, you must have chest waders and be able to help on a weekday.

Although this is strenuous work, it is very rewarding, as you may get to see 1.5–2.5 miles of stream and some of the trails. Those already on my E-mail list need not contact me, unless they have a new E-mail address. †

— Jay Sheppard

2006 PPTU Fly Tying Class

If you have decided this is the year you will finally take the plunge and learn how to tie flies, this is the perfect opportunity. This year we are offering two classes. **Jim Greco** and his able colleagues, **Dave Wittman**, **Robert Simpson**, **Bob Serrano**, and **Larry Vawter** have volunteered to teach the classes. These tiers bring a wealth of experience to the classroom.

The first class runs for 6 weeks and will be primarily aimed at novice and intermediate tiers. The emphasis will be on teaching a solid foundation in the basics of tying nymphs, dries, emergers, streamers and terrestrials. Classes will be held on Tuesday nights 7 to 9 pm at the Schweinhaut Senior center (Jan.31, Feb. 7, 14, 21, Feb. 28, March 7). †

The second class will run for only 4 weeks and be designed for more advanced tiers. It will require a mastery of basic skills as a requisite for joining the class. Flies patterns we will address are advanced emergers, spinners, com-paraduns, and cripples. Classes will be held on Tuesday nights at the Margaret Schweinhaut Senior Center (March 14, 21, 28 and April 4.)

Students should have their own basic tools (contact Jim for a list) and vise with them on the first night of class. For PPTU chapter members the \$95.00 tuition fee covers the room rental, class handouts, and tying materials for flies to be tied in the class with the balance of revenue going to the PPTU Chapter for use in its education and conservation efforts. Non chapter members are welcome to join, too, and their tuition will be \$110.00 which will also include a subscription to our newsletter, *The Conservationist*. The advanced, 4 week, class will cost \$65 for PPTU members or \$80 for non-PPTU members.

Thanks to the generosity of **Mr. Randall Kaufmann**, author and owner of Kaufmann's Streamborn Inc. fly fishing shops and catalog company (<http://www.kman.com>) this year we will have a reference text available for class members. *Fly Tying Made Easy for Beginners*, by Randall Kaufmann, is a wonderful, full color tying manual which normally retails for \$21.95 and will be available to students for the reduced cost of \$11.00.

Anyone interested may contact Jim Greco by phone at 410-997-2787 or email at Jimg6128@comcast.net.

Registration will be on a first paid first served basis with a limit of 20 students per class. As long as there are openings available, students can also sign up at our PPTU booth at the College Park Fly Show, or at our January chapter meeting. These classes will most likely fill early, so register early if you want to take a class. †

— Jim Greco

Important Announcement for all Members

Occasionally, the need arises for the chapter to contact its members quickly with important information. A recent example was last year's snowstorm that closed the senior center on the night of our fly-tying demonstration meeting. It looks like the easiest way to accomplish this is to encourage every member to subscribe to the chapter listserver.

Some people have found that the amount of email associated with the listserver can sometimes become overwhelming and have chosen to avoid the listserver. There appears to be a way we can accommodate everyone and rely on the listserver when we need to get an important message out. But for this to work, everyone needs to heed the following instructions.

People who currently are on the listserver and receive each message in a separate email need to do nothing. People who have chosen the "Daily Digest" status and receive just one email a day containing a compilation of the day's messages need do nothing, but should be aware that there could be a delay of up to 24 hours before they receive any emergency announcements. They can still visit the listserver website to check for recent messages if you suspect there might be one, like when it snows on a meeting day.

People who have chosen the "No Email" option and use the listserver website to look at messages posted to the group will need to change their status to "Special Notices." This will still block all email except for special notices that can only be sent out by a few people from among the chapter leadership. You can still use the website to view messages, and normal message traffic will not be sent to you, only special notices. If you keep the "No Email" status, you WILL NOT receive special notice messages. Please check the chapter website at www.pptu.org for more details about how to change the status of your membership in the listserver, as well as how to get on board if you don't already participate in the listserver. †

— *Robert Simpson*
PPCTU Listserver Moderator

FLY FISHING SHOW JANUARY 14–15

You should have received flyers for the Fly Fishing Show to be held at the Reckord Armory, located on Route 1, at the University of Maryland in College Park on Saturday and Sunday, January 14 and 15.

PPTU will have a table there. Please stop by and say 'hello' and maybe sign up a friend with TROUT UNLIMITED. Admission is \$14 for one day or \$24 for both days for an adult; under 12 is \$2.

Although most of the special classes are undoubtedly full, there are plenty of free seminars, talks, and other demonstrations going on all the time. Those interested in new fly tying techniques or wondering about building rods will see plenty of demonstrations on these arts. The show will have many dozens of tackle and book dealers and fishing lodges and guides from around the country. It is just the ticket for a midwinter day when fishing is on the mind but not yet comfortable to do. The hours are 9 am to 5:30 pm on Saturday and from 9 am to 4:30 pm on Sunday.

Finally, with this and other shows and midwinter activities over the next couple of months, do not forget to check over all your tackle for possible replacement. You should fill your waders, one leg at a time, to find any leaks. Look over your lines for fraying, cracks, etc.

Take a careful look at all your flies in your boxes: are they starting to fall apart, need a little more head cement, still have a point, etc.? How old are your tippet spools and leaders? Mono can become very brittle with age; most mono is rarely usable after 3 years under the best of conditions. Are your nippers and gadget retrievers still in good shape? Do not wait until the first warm spell in late February or early March to find that your waders leak or a new line or fly would help catch fish. The Fly Fishing Show at College Park may be a good opportunity to get some new tackle items. †

ADDRESS CHANGED? Missing an Issue?

If you have moved or see any error in your mailing labels (*Trout* or *Conservationist*), please notify **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.

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-0905 or NTU-0905.



Return Address:

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter TU
P.O. Box 2865
Wheaton, MD 20915

2006 Outings Preview

Even though old man winter has our local rivers and streams in his icy grip, it's not too early to begin making plans for the coming fishing year. As the Outings Chair, I would like to give you a brief preview of the upcoming schedule.

For those hardy members seeking a mid-winter fishing fix we will meet at **Big Hunting Creek** on February 25. Dark water, slow drifts and cold mountain air should take some of the edge off. In March, we're going to try something a little different — a one fly contest on the **Gunpowder** for bragging rights. This will take place on the 25 of the month. The ground rules are still in deliberation so stay tuned. In April, we will seek some of the best brookie fishing in **Shenandoah National park**. We're planning on an overnight camping trip on either April 22 or 29. Look for a firm date to be announced. Finally, from May 27-29, we will round out our spring schedule with our annual Memorial Day weekend to **Western Maryland**.

I would also like to thank the members and guests who participated in last year's outings for making the program a success. Hope to see everyone back this year along with some new faces.

FIRST CLASS MAIL