



November 2009

# *The Conservationist*

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter

This issue of *The Conservationist* is dedicated to our friend Dave Wittman.

## *The Fall Fundraiser - November 18!*

November is upon us and it is once again time for a special program. This is an important opportunity to support our Chapter and at the same time obtain items we have been interested in or an experience we will remember for a life time. The possible experience of a lifetime may be the trip to the West Branch of the Delaware River for a three night two day guided fishing trip. The West Branch is a truly incredible fishery. The trip, Winston 5 wt 8'9" pack rod and Abel reel, and a waterproof digital Pentax Optio W80 camera are the prizes that can be won by purchasing tickets at the meeting. These prizes will be awarded at our January 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting. However, tickets purchased at the fundraiser do not require you to be present to win in January. In addition, a Custom Made 8 wt rod and Abel reel will be available in a special raffle at the fundraiser. Furthermore, great silent auction and bucket raffle items will be available for interesting and sought after gear will gain much attention. Finally, a flea market will offer many items at bargain prices. Bring your items as well and donate 15% to the Chapter. And bring your check book and get some "needed" holiday items for your fishing closet or for someone else!

As a bonus, the Fundraiser offers an opportunity to ask questions to a panel of fishers whose expertise is legendary, at least to them. This gives many of us a chance to gain insight on a wide range of questions that arise on tactics, gear, and destinations which has led to new information for many of us. Come to hear this interesting Q & A segment of the meeting. You will definitely learn something, particularly if you bring a question.

- Nick Weber

**Special time for this event is 6:30 – 9:30**

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### **Monthly Chapter 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, then go past Holy Cross Hospital and across Sligo Creek Parkway. The Center is on the right.

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Past-President:	Bob Dietz	301-854-6893
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Publicity:	Paul Vicenzi	301-650-2087
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<i>Conservationist</i> Editor:	Joanne Kla	301-854-5053
Fundraising:	Bruce Eberle	301-854-3142
Raffles:	Bob Dietz	301-854-6893
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	Tim Pawlowitz	410-203-0369
Librarian:	Fred Przyborowski	202-251-8226
Outings	Dennis Covert	410-740-8337
Conservation Advocacy:	Jim Keil	301-588-8375
Webmaster:	Ken Bowyer	301-627-7154
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Trout in the Classroom:	Jim Greene	301-652-3848
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<b>Council Delegates:</b>	Bob Dietz	301-854-6893
	Larry Vawter	410-750-8264
Exec. Com. Member	Nick Weber	301-774-2806
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	Carl Smolka	301-929-1365
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	Robert Simpson	410-461-8180
	Cathy Nutter	301-384-2431
	Dennis Covert	410-740-8337
	Jim Greco	410-997-2787

## President's Column

When I heard of Dave Wittman's passing on that Friday, I was in shock and disbelief. I had just talked to him on Monday evening and he was full of spirit and energy. He said that he was looking forward to our September Chapter meeting and being an instructor at our first Project Healing Waters fly tying class at Ft Meade.

This winter he was going to assist in the Rod Building Class, the Fly Tying Class, as well as continue the weekly Ft Meade class with our Wounded Warriors. If that were not enough, he planned to assist our Trout in the Classroom Project for the school year beginning in January. The project now planned for over 20 schools this academic year. He was one of two field workers on the program, and serviced fully 75% of the schools. His other Chapter activities included checking the PPTU PO Box and distributing the mail. He also picked up *The Conservationist* from the printer, attached address labels, affixed stamps, and then sent them to you.

At his wake I talked to his family and friends. They all said that I was going to have a hard time replacing him. I could not agree more. A family member said when he came to our September Board Meeting he apparently was under "orders" not to go. However, he took his keys and sneaked out. At that meeting he handed out the mail as always. I was told by one of our members and Dave's friend, that he had urged Dave to slow down a bit and not take on so much. Dave's reply was "It's not work, if you love what you're doing."

Dave was the Ultimate PPTU Volunteer. He would not hesitate to be first, if someone needed help. If any of us could have just a tenth of the spirit and dedication that he carried, we all would be better people and our chapter would be better for it.

Dave was a father, teacher, friend fisherman, and our brother. You will be missed because we will never be able to replace you, but your spirit will always be with us.

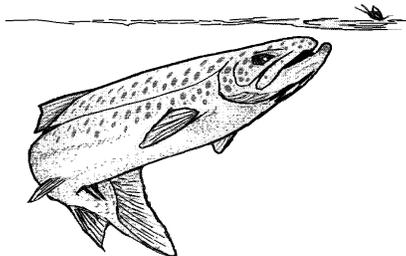
Larry Vawter

**PPTU MENTOR PROGRAM  
BEGINNERS & BEYOND**

Ken Bowyer and Tim Pawlowitz provide one-on-one streamside fly fishing instruction to PPTU members. Participants must show commitment by having waders or hipsters, 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. Members who have not made an Annual Supporting Contribution will be asked to contribute \$20.

Contact Ken at 301-627-7154  
or e-mail [kenbowyer@verizon.net](mailto:kenbowyer@verizon.net).

Contact Tim at 410-203-0369  
or e-mail [tpawlowi@msn.com](mailto:tpawlowi@msn.com).



Remember to return your videos and books on time. Many fellow members would like the opportunity to rent the books, tapes and DVDs that you rented. Late fees will be applied if they are not returned by the next chapter meeting.

*Have an idea for an article, or something you'd like to share with other chapter members? Material is welcome (and cheerfully accepted).*

*The deadline is the 12th of the month for the next month's issue. Please send articles, ideas, etc, preferably in MS Word or in the body of the e-mail to [earthmomjo@att.net](mailto:earthmomjo@att.net).*

*Thanks,  
Joanne Kla, Editor*

**FINAL NOTICE--Annual Supporting Contribution (ASC) due now!**

If a little red stamp appears on your mailing label, you need to send your \$20 check to our mail box in order to continue to receive the *Conservationist* and other benefits from supporting PPTU. Very simply, it costs a lot of money to operate the chapter for meeting room rentals, postage, printing, web site, and other costs. We want to use all the contributions we receive and raise through our fund raisers to support our work for the resource.

If your mailing label reads "PP-0909" then you need to renew your ASC; some members have previously paid their ASC for next year. You can pay the ASC at the next meeting or just mail it to our chapter mail box. Make checks payable to PPTU. You can choose to have the *Conservationist* delivered in hard copy or via the Internet; please advise which method you wish and include your email address. You do not have to be a TU member assigned to PPTU to subscribe to the *Conservationist* by paying the ASC.

**Help Wanted -- In urgent need of Volunteers**

To keep this chapter strong and vibrant, we need our membership to step up. PPTU needs strong and vibrant volunteers.

Now you ask: "What can I do?"

Well -- plenty. We have men and women donating their time in a variety of tasks, and we have done so for a number of years. So go up to any one of our chair persons and ask, "What can I do to help?" Please, give us a hand, and become a bigger part of the PPTU team. Pitch in! You will really enjoy it.

Larry Vawter

## Dave Wittman—a volunteer for all the right reasons!

Jay Sheppard

On September 18, 2009, PPTU lost its most ardent supporter and volunteer. If there were any tasks that needed to be done, Dave Wittman was at the front of the line volunteering to do them. Although he joined PPTU in early 2001, he had been an avid fisher since childhood. He was born and raised in New York State, fishing many of the streams of the Adirondacks all his life. He tied flies to make a little money for his college education in the 1950s. He worked for the National Security Agency until his retirement in the 1990s. Although he used computers during his professional life, he gave them up when he retired and no longer used email or the Internet.

The PPTU Board has been trying to compile a list of the many tasks that Dave performed for the chapter in recent years. Many might appear small and mundane, such as checking the chapter PO Box twice a month for mail. However, they all contributed to an efficient chapter operation. Probably his most intensive efforts were directed toward Trout in the Classroom. He would sometimes drive up to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, several times in a week to obtain another replacement part for one of the TIC classrooms. He also helped at Membership tables at such venues as Bass Pro and other local events. I am sure he is a major reason many joined TU at such events, as he was an incredibly likable chap and effused enthusiasm for saving our resources for the generations to come. He mailed the *Conservationist* out to our members and the stores, having picked up the copies from the printer and the mailing labels from me. Stamping and labeling several hundred copies eight times a year was done with his usual efficiency, as he did everything else for PPTU. He was a major coach for both the rod building and fly tying classes the chapter provided each year. Again, many students learned more than just tying flies and building a rod with Dave in the classroom.

Dave Wittman left a very large hole in our community. His waders will be impossible to fill, even if we found a dozen volunteers to take over his many tasks on behalf of the chapter and Trout Unlimited. Dave was a cherished friend, and we will all miss him greatly.

*A sampling of testimonials from PPTU members and others is given below. Regretfully, due to space limitations some had to be edited and not all that were expressed on the chapter list serve (ppctu@yahoo.com) or in other emails are included here.*

Dave was such a nice, easy-going guy, and I will remember him fondly. Back in 2006, when I was *Conservationist* editor I made the mistake of using the wrong meeting date. The mistake was discovered after the several hundred newsletters had already been printed. So by the time I got around to calling Dave to see how I could make amends, he said he already took care of the problem, having hand-corrected the date in each copy. I felt terrible he had to cover for my mistake but he said he was happy to help! One of many small things he did for the club!  
—Matt Baun, Yreka, Calif.

He was always so upbeat. He was also a tad eccentric in his own way. A guy who'd made his livelihood with computers but refused to own one after his retirement. I remember him regaling me with stories about his adventures of fly fishing for huge brook trout in Canada, and a pay-for-fishing place he and Jim Greco frequented in Pennsylvania. The group photo (posted on the chapter list serve pptu.org) is from one of the autumn outings to Central PA in October 2003, where we stayed at Jim Keil's cabin. He was always very supportive of the outings program and even arranged for us to stay in his daughter's vacation home outside of Deep Creek during one of our Western Maryland Memorial Day spring weekend outings. You count yourself fortunate in life when you meet folks like Dave, and I will miss him.  
—Joshua Forster

Just out of curiosity, I did a search of the chapter list server using Dave Wittman as the criteria. Considering that after Dave retired from NSA as a computer specialist, he abolished computers from his home and didn't own one, it is amazing how many hundreds of references there are to him on our computer driven list server... Dave worked as a coach in our fly tying class, rod building class, and in Project Healing Waters (PHW). PHW is now ongoing every Thursday evening at Ft. Meade.

Dave was a great friend. When I spoke to him on Wednesday [Sept. 16], we talked of his role in TIC. I told him he shouldn't work so hard, and he ought to slow down for a while. Dave just laughed and said "When you're doing something you love, it's not work." He truly was a selfless soul who always gave more than he received. I cannot express how much Pam and I will miss him. All of us will; for in many ways he has always helped each of us.

—Jim Greco

When you met Dave you just knew right away that this was a decent man. Solid in absolutely every respect. Some sort of honor to carry forth his memory and all he did for this chapter would be very appropriate. My guess is that others are already thinking of this.

—Sebastian O'Kelly

It is with sadness that I read of Dave's passing. I did not know Dave as well as other members of the TU chapter. I was fortunate to meet him at the weekly rod building class last year. He was so inspirational with all his comments and help during the classes

—Michael Abramowitz

Dave was obviously well loved by so many of you and, in the short time I have known him, I can see why. I did not know Dave as well as many of you did, nor did I know Dave for as long as many of you did. But, shortly after I joined PPTU, I quickly learned what a kind soul and a good man Dave was. It was obvious how much he enjoyed sharing his time, passion, and expertise with others, especially the kids in the "Trout in the Classroom" program. Dave's passing made me think of the words inscribed on the "Creed" at the Joe Brooks Memorial at Big Hunting Creek (the photo is posted on our PPTU.org web site). The words carved in the stone could have just as easily been describing how our friend lived his life. His fellowship and his stewardship will be deeply missed.

—Carter Wildermuth

Dave had such a good heart. I remember his making—in his words—"just a short run" up to York, PA to get some part or other for the trout tank when we were raising trout over at Highland View school. Dave spent frequent times tying wooly buggers with my kids in the 4th and 5th grade. He was so patient with the kids and loved being around them. He always spoke so highly of fishing and camping with his grandkids in upstate New York. He told me stories of fishing at the Black River in the Adirondacks, as well as heading up in high school to fish at West Canada Creek just north of Utica. He even spoke of tying flies to make money for his education. He loved to share his fishing adventures, and especially enjoyed showing me pictures of his trips to catch big brook trout in Labrador. He was truly selfless in his dedication to the kids and the Trout in the Classroom program. He really gave and received great joy from the excitement that it brought to the kids. It would be wonderful to dedicate a plaque in his honor at one of the schools where TIC is going strong, or on one of the sites where Dave liked to fish. I will miss Dave. He was truly a wonderful man.

—Jed Feffer (PPTU member & teacher)

While, I, too, did not know Dave very well, he always took time to talk with me, share his experiences and made me feel welcome. His devoted efforts on behalf of PPTU will be missed immensely. I will keep him in my prayers.

—George Vincent

This is a great loss to his family, friends, and his PPTU family. His untiring effort on our behalf and especially the youngsters taking part in Trout in the Classroom will undoubtedly not be matched anytime soon. God's speed Dave.  
—Nick Weber

Dave was wonderful. He loved Trout in the Classroom (TIC) so much that whenever we were to visit a school together, he would turn up at my door at least 15 minutes and more often more than a half hour before we were due to leave. Early in our friendship I learned to have a pot of coffee ready for his arrival, with a little milk and sugar. I got to treasure some of those times because of the chance it gave us to talk together, sometimes about his childhood and family life which came alive as he described fishing West Canada Creek as a boy, summer weeks with the family at Eighth Lake in the Adirondacks and his special joy—his grandchildren. I miss those chats and his enthusiasm for everything from NASCAR racing to baking pumpkin fruit cakes, which were dense, delicious and so heavy that it burned calories just to move one from his pickup to the kitchen. Dave and I had planned to go this year to another of his loves—the national Punkin Chunkin contest in Delaware, which is where he got the fruit cake recipe. And I really enjoyed his steadfast refusal to get a computer. "I've worked with them and know what they can do," he once told me, "and I don't want to have anything to do with them anymore."  
—Jim Greene

*Below are some additional tributes to Dave from TIC teachers, Sue Muller of Howard County Parks, Diane Lill of the Audubon Naturalist Society, and Rochelle Gandour, a national TIC facilitator working for TU.*

I will remember always Dave's amazing contributions to the lives of students, particularly ours at Swansfield, and to my life. Dave has had such a difficult year, and I am heartened that he got to see his daughter come out on the other side of her terrible accident. Dave's soul is just the kind that keeps our world strong and beautiful. My students will be greatly saddened, but I will remind them how lucky they are to have shared such wonderful experiences with such a careful, kind, and thoughtful soul.  
—Megan Icenogle

...my heartfelt condolences for your loss, our loss, the children's and teachers' loss. Dave's enthusiasm and dedication were such an inspiration to many. To me, I remember the first time I met Dave—it was in a TIC planning meeting. I was immediately struck by his absolute, tireless generosity with his time, his energy and his heart.  
—Rochelle Gandour

I only knew Mr. Wittman for about ten months, but you were so right when you called him selfless. He did everything in his power to set up and run a wonderful program at Atholton, stopping in regularly to be sure that all was well. The kids loved it when Mr. Wittman came around, and I felt like I formed a great friendship with him. My heart is broken that I did not get to say goodbye. Mr. Wittman connected with the kids so naturally, and he knew how to get those kids involved in something bigger than sitting at a desk in class. I will miss him immensely.  
—Lisa Young

He was a wonderful friend to Westbrook and a dear member of our Aqua Eagle family. I will especially miss him.  
—Sandi Geddes

Mr. Wittman made a huge impact on our students, staff, and community. His time, efforts, and dedication were wide spread. His love for our school and commitment to teaching our students went above and beyond.  
—Heidi Balter (Principal, Atholton Elementary School)

I think it is comforting to know that his legacy will live on through Trout in the Classroom.

—Sue Muller

I will truly miss Dave. He was a wonderful, sweet man and it really meant a lot to share in his love of kids and trout.

—Diane Lill

Last year was our first with TIC, but I feel like I've known Dave for a long time. He was a very warm and friendly man. The kids who participated last year all had such a blast and learned so much, not just about the trout and nature, but about teamwork and responsibility. As a teacher, my greatest reward is seeing kids excited and learning. The joy of learning that shown on my students faces last year is ample evidence that Dave Wittman was a gifted teacher. We'll miss him.

—Dave Airozo (Forest Knolls E.S.)

Dave meant so much to the TIC program and made such a difference in the TIC program at Burleigh Manor Middle School. It was because of him that the program did so well last year. He was always there whenever a problem or question arose. Every time he came in, the kids would call out, "Hi, Mr. Wittman!" They knew what he did for them! All of us knew.

—Kathleen Tunney

Dave's passing is a loss to all who knew him, and the new members of our TIC family will miss out on knowing a wonderful, dedicated man. Gerstell Academy will participate again this year. We had such wonderful success last year, and finally solved the mystery of previous years, that I am really excited about this year.

—Elaine Shea

### Future Honors for Dave

The PPTU Board is working on a few ideas as to how to remember Dave's major impact on our chapter over the past 9 years. The Mid-Atlantic Council of TU is also considering an award in Dave's name to honor his contribution to the youth and others regarding fishing and conservation education. We will keep everyone posted as these memorials take shape. We are also building a corner on the chapter's web site to post more tributes and pictures of Dave.



## PPCTU – 2010 TYING FLIES FOR TROUT

FOR NOVICE OR INTERMEDIATE FLY TYER –This class is designed for those wishing to learn new tying skills or improve techniques they already have. The class will cover the basic skills and materials for tying nymphs, emergers, duns, and spinners, as well as basic wet fly and streamer construction. The class will focus on proven local patterns.

Jim Greco, Robert Simpson, Carl Smolka, Larry Vawter, and Dennis Covert will conduct the class. The class will be at the Schweinhaut Senior Center, 1000 Forest Glen Road, Silver Spring, MD, from 7 to 9 PM on Tuesday nights: January 5, 12, 19, 26, February 2, 9, 2010.

Tuition for the class is \$135.00. TU members who have made a \$20.00 Annual Supporting Contribution (ASC) will receive a discount, making the tuition only \$115.00. The tuition fee covers the room rental, class handouts, and materials for flies to be tied in the class. Limited enrollment -- sign up now. Students must supply their own tools. Optional tying manual available for \$11.00 – “Fly Tying Made Easy for Beginners,” Randall Kaufmann (\$21.95 value)

To register, contact Jim Greco at a chapter meeting, or at [Jimg6128@verizon.net](mailto:Jimg6128@verizon.net), or 410-997-2787.

By the way -- I should point out each student will receive enough material to tie at least 4 flies of each pattern we teach. That means you will finish the class with approximately 48 flies in your box you didn't have before taking the class. Have you bought any good flies lately??? -- Just the value of those flies makes the class tuition almost free, and you will have a new skill to practice for the rest of your trout fishing future...



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

FIRST CLASS MAIL