

Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing

contributed by Ted Nawalinski, Outreach Coordinator

Project Healing Waters (PHW) is a national, non-profit organization that brings together disabled vets and volunteer fishermen to open new alternatives to healing through fly tying and fly fishing. The local chapter is funded in part by **Valley Forge Trout Unlimited**.

From its mission statement, *PHW is dedicated to the physical and emotional rehabilitation of disabled active military service personnel and disabled veterans through fly fishing and associated activities including education and outings.*

This mission works locally through two venues - one at the Coatesville Veterans Affairs Medical Center every Wednesday evening for patients in residence and a second site at the West Bradford Fire Hall on first and third Mondays for outpatients and any local vet, able or disabled. Our vets in the Coatesville Veterans Affairs Medical Center are all being treated for the ravages of PTSD.

At both sites dedicated volunteer fisher folk help disabled veterans from Vietnam through Afghanistan learn to tie flies and build rods during the colder months, and assist in casting and catching on local ponds and streams during the spring and summer.

The activity draws a faithful group of volunteers from a loose pool of about two dozen members from our four local fishing

groups to assist as many as 18 servicemen and women. Home-made cookies and venison jerky and sausage and pizza work better than power bait on panfish to fill the seats on both sides of the tying bench. Stress and anxiety melt away as the vets focus their efforts to handling fragile and tiny materials to build their first fly and forge new friendships. Several vets built their fly rods from blanks we supplied. One of our veteran tyers won first prize in a national competition for his brace of three classic salmon flies.

Volunteers at the hospital are vetted and trained in privacy procedures through the Veterans Administration. New volunteers are always welcome and can tie and guide informally without registering with the VA. For the Coatesville Hospital activities (Wednesdays, 6-8 PM), please contact our local volunteer-in-charge **Matt Seymour** 484-678-1652 (mseymour1128@earthlink.net). The hospital coordinator of volunteer activities is **Earl Johnson** 610-384-7711 ext.4272 (Earl.johnson2@va.gov). Either of these men can help you get started.



The West Bradford site deserves special mention. This off-campus extension was started by tireless volunteers **Jay Brenneman** (j149b@yahoo.com) and **Dave Riggio** (djriggio@msn.com) for veterans not currently served by the VA Hospital. It is less formal than the hospital setting in that volunteers don't need to pass

through the government bureaucracy to help with the tying and the eating. Dave and Jay would love to have you join the outreach at the fire hall first and third Mondays 6-8 PM. DJL members active in the Coatesville and/or West Bradford groups include **Ken Leung, Pete Goodman, Gil Detweiler, Ted Nawalinski, Mike Ferraro, Ray Horowitz, and Ken VanGilder.**

As a fund-raiser for the West Bradford group, Jay wrote a book looking at eastern Pennsylvania fly hatches, enumerating the patterns of many species by *developmental stage*. This unique book is very nicely illustrated by Tom Ames and is now available for sale. West Bradford PHW is offering this book at \$20 to benefit their program. Jay is taking no profits from the sale. If you want one please contact Jay or Dave before they're all gone.

DJL members can help in two ways: officially-registered or casual volunteer tyers and fishing instructors are always needed and are welcome for whatever time they can offer. Donations of consumables such as *Healing Waters is continued on page 4*

Fall 2016 Meeting Schedule

Meetings are held on the 4th Monday of each month at the Kimberton Fire Co. Fairgrounds Meeting Hall. Doors open at 7:15 PM. Meeting begins at 7:30PM.

September 26 (Monday)

Featuring John Shein from the Kayak Fishing Store

"Innovations in Kayak Fly Fishing"

October 24 (Monday)

Featuring Nick Raftas of Blue Sky Outfitters

"A Day on the River: Fly Fishing and Rafting the Lehigh"

November 28 (Monday)

Featuring Katy Dunlap from Trout Unlimited

"PFBC's Un-Assessed Waters Initiative"

December 26 (Monday)

Featuring the League's Expert Fly Tyers

Fly Tying Roundup

Fly tying equipment, materials and instruction will be provided to all members who want to learn this craft—email djlffpa@gmail.com to sign-up. More information on our meetings can be found at www.djlflyfishers.org

"Meetings are open to the public so bring a friend"

Planning Your Fly Tying Session

by John Burgos

Many of my articles focus on making the most of your time while fishing. Here, I'd like to address some of those same concerns while preparing to fish, specifically while tying flies.

If you are fortunate to fish a lot you've probably also experienced the misfortune of losing lots of flies. Losing flies means replacing flies. Replacing flies mean buying them or tying them your self. For me, I choose to tie. Unfortunately, for me, my time at the tying bench is often limited.

When I have time on my side, I try to take an intelligent approach

to replenishing my supply of flies. I consider where the next trip will be and what flies I will likely need. Since I'm often time constrained, I rarely tie for more than one hour at a time. Thus, I always plan to tie just one pattern at any one session.

Though I generally tie very simple flies, I am not against tying those beautiful Catskill style dries or elaborate articulated streamers. These effective creation of these patterns will definitely benefit from the following suggestions.

Focusing on one pattern allows for up front preparation that can drastically cut down on time. First of all, clear your tying area of clutter. Collect the tools you will use. Take the time to gather and prepare materials ahead of time.



Upper photo: My tying desk with just enough materials for the current tying session. Lower photo: A handful of fresh nymphs from my tying session.



If you fish barbless hooks (and I hope you do), crush the barbs down all at once. If you're tying bead head nymphs, place beads on the hooks ahead of time and set them aside. Basically, try to handle tools, hooks and just about anything else as few times as possible.

Pre-select feathers, quills, whatever you may be using and set them out in a way that is convenient and efficient for you to access. If you mix your own dubbing, mix enough for all the flies you plan to tie. If I know that a particular tying session requires extensive setup, I often do those tasks the night before.

Get familiar with your tools. This one may sound elementary, but isn't. Many of us have purchased fancier "rotating" fly tying vises, but rarely make use of the advantages (including myself). If you do not think you are taking full advantage of your rotary vise, there are plenty of resources online that will demonstrate techniques that you can incorporate into your tying.

Perhaps the single most effective time saving

technique is to learn to tie with your scissors in your hands. Think of all the time spent reaching for those scissors. Snip, that material is gone. Give it a try.

While it is not all about churning out flies, I am always looking for ways I

can improve the time spent at the vice. If you have a favorite technique, we'd love to hear it.



Notes from the Tying Bench by Bob Molzahn, Newsletter Editor

For those of you who made our April meeting this past spring you are aware that the League does not have an President at this time. **Emerson Cannon** was unable to continue after his two-year term due to some on-again, off-again health issues. Fortunately, we have a very engaged Board of Directors and were able to pick up any slack that may have been created. Fortunately also, Emerson is doing much better and is continuing on the Board to provide great leadership and support. The Board will continue to assess the situation as the meeting season moves forward and will keep our members advised. By the way, if you are interested in becoming more involved with the Board and our club's activities please feel free to contact any Board member. Our next Board meeting is scheduled for January 3.

Our 2016-2017 meeting season has arrived and we have a

great speaker coming on September 26. **Jon Shein**, one of the true leaders in east coast kayak fly fishing, will be dragging in a few of his kayaks to the meeting and talking about the latest in equipment. Jon is an animated speaker so you will not want to miss this hands-on presentation.

Tim King, our webmaster, reports that he is just shy of 100 likes on our club's Facebook page. If you are a **Facebook** user and have an inclination to "LIKE" what we are doing go into the page and express your appreciation. It would make Tim very happy! 😊

Lastly, I am always looking for articles and pics for our newsletter so send them on. My email address is rjm1949@comcast.net.



Reel Tails: September Albacore Fishing

by Emerson Cannon



Come September, albacore begin to invade waters near Harkers Island, NC. Step one is to tie a few flies! We match the hatch...the size of the baits that fish typically eat this time of year.

So how about getting interested anglers/tyers together to get some of these flies made. The baits are very skinny so less is best in trying to imitate. There is no ONE fly that works and some that do work might not work all of the time!

Also, larger baits might come in so we must have a few of those larger 3.5" baits as well.



To get in the mood, we might look at paintings of albacore....or even look at pictures of large albacore caught later in the season!



Once we have gotten the flies tied, we travel to Harkers Island....hope for nice clear weather and then try and catch these guys. This time of year is great as temperatures are nice...all light-weight clothes and hope for calm days. The fish are not as large as the end of October or during November but on a 6 or 8 weight... they give you a huge blast.



You need to find a great guide or take your own boat. Here we are with Brian Horsley in the middle, the best guide around!

And on the way home you can always pick up a tattoo of an albacore to surprise your spouse as well! ha ha ha ha



Healing Waters *continued from page 1*

tippet, floatant, nippers, strike indicators, etc. will help the chapter manage its unds most effectively so pick up one or two extras when you next replenish your stocks and drop the items off at the video library table with Ted Nawalinski at the monthly meetings.

Lastly, a fundraiser will be held on **November 10th at the Phoenixville PA Country Club**. The proceeds will be used to fund expanded Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing (<https://www.projecthealingwaters.org>) programming at the Coatesville Veterans Affairs Medical Center in 2017. You're invited! You're needed!

We invite you to join us for this celebration of Thanksgiving for our vets, by making your ticket donations soon!

Our featured speakers will include two veterans who have participated in our Coatesville program and Bob Fitch, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Project Healing Waters, Inc. An interesting & unique list of prizes will offered in a silent auction as well!

Tickets are \$75/plate. If you would like to contribute but can't attend in person your gift may be used to invite one of the many veterans at Coatesville who are enjoying our programs. Your contributions will provide us with the equipment, transportation, food and printing materials we need to reach more hospitalized vets.

We look forward to seeing you there!



Left: Pete Goodman spots a fish. Below: Vet takes a nice Crappie. Lower left: Ken Leung instructs on where to place the fly



Below right: Gil Detweiler helps with casting. Below middle: IFFF Certified Casting Instructor Dave Zamos instructs with casting.

Lower left: Success! Sunfish on a fly



Flies For Freedom

Give back a little freedom to the Vets who protected ours



Auction Items: Among an exciting assortment of unique items, the auction will feature a shadow box of five original Rangeley flies specially tied by Mainline Fly Tyers for this event. Each fly represents the ribbon of five major U.S. military campaigns.

\$75/plate

An evening of thanksgiving to benefit our disabled veterans being treated for PTSD at the Coatesville Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Featuring Coatesville PHWFF program participants and an assortment of silent auction items for both ladies & gentlemen.

Thursday, November 10th, 6:30-9pm at Phoenixville Country Club

For tickets or information call:

610-291-6266

Chuck Cutshall,
Gala Chairman

484-678-1652

Matt Seymour,
Gala Co-Chair, Project Healing Waters

Or make a direct purchase @ <http://conta.cc/2bzc0m8>



Supporting PTSD Vets On Their Path to Recovery

Their Heart Is In Your Hands *by Domenick Swentosky, Troutbitten.com*

Fish pictures are the grand compromise of catch and release. An Instagram feed with a full gallery of trout is replacing the stringer of dead fish for bragging rights. And that's a good thing. They look better alive anyway.

Would a trout be better off if we didn't take its picture? Sure it would. Moreover, wouldn't a trout be better off if we didn't set a hook in its mouth and drag it through the water? Sure it would. So I think we have to be a little careful how self-righteous we get. Point is, we all draw the line somewhere, and I firmly believe that a quick picture, taken responsibly (I'll get to that), won't hurt a trout.

Most of the fishermen I know who've spent a great deal of time with their boots in the water have caught on to catch and release. The bare facts stare you in the face pretty quickly if you start keeping your limit on every trip. You soon realize that a good fisherman can thin out a stretch of water in short order, and a group of good fishermen can probably take down an entire watershed.

So we take pictures instead. I've learned to play fish fast and hard, and even the Whiskeys are brought to hand in just a couple minutes. I rarely use anything less than 5X; I prefer a rod with a good backbone, and the average fight lasts less than, I'd guess, thirty seconds.

After playing a fish quickly, I scoop it in a rubber mesh net. I find an area next to the bank with cold, moving water about a foot deep and let the wooden frame of my net suspend the fish in the bag while I set up the camera and tripod. I have a routine for this, and it takes less than a minute. It's important to keep the trout positioned in the net with its nose in the current, where the gills are free to breathe. Done that way, a trout could survive in this small live-well for a long time. But we don't ask it to.

When it's time to take the picture, I slide one hand under and behind the pectoral fins so my palm and three fingers support most of the weight, and I like to support the head of larger fish with my extended index finger. I use my other hand to raise the tail. The key point here is to *lift* — *don't grip*.

Gripping a trout never calms it down. And squeezing its heart might kill it.

A recent post from Tony Bishop of the New Zealand blog, *Bish & Fish*, pointedly addresses this foul. Bishop writes, "*Gripping a fish in the pectoral area using inward force and squeezing pressure will compress the heart and maybe the liver and gills. The outcome for the fish is not going to be good, even if it does manage to swim away on release.*"

Surprisingly, Bishop has taken some criticism from anglers asserting that squeezing the heart and the vital organs of a

trout *might not kill it*. What? People are strange. It can't be good for a trout, and pictures look better when the fish is lifted instead of squeezed anyway. So why take the discussion any further? It's an easy adjustment to make. There's no reason to squeeze — just lift and balance the fish. Again, a trout cannot be calmed by squeezing it.

Later in the article, however, Bishop makes a point that I respectfully disagree with. He argues that you can't hold the tail underhand (what he calls the UK Grip) without squeezing with the forward hand: "*The UK grip means that the tail of the fish is not firmly held, so the holder must squeeze the fish in the heart area as shown above. If the fish thrashes about, the grip around the heart area has to increase because the grip ahead of the tail is very weak. All bad news for the heart and other organs.*"

I always grasp the tail underhand, and I get a firm hold around the bony part of the tail (the wrist). But if the fish does any thrashing around, I just put it back in the net. I never squeeze if it starts to move.

My friend, Pat Burke, wrote a great piece a while back on *Taking the Solo Shot*. I learned a lot of what I know about the trout selfie from Burke. He does it so well, who can argue? My method is mostly the same.

My favorite fish pictures are a simple lift and shoot. I'm usually kneeling; that puts me close to the net and keeps the trout near the water. And I only lift the fish from the water for a few moments. (More than five seconds is a long time to me.) If the fish is not dripping water, it's probably too long. If I've gotten the shot, then I release the fish into the river. If I want a second shot, I put the fish back in the net and admire it for a minute or so, then I lift it again. If I don't get the shot I want after two tries, I usually release the fish anyway because it just seems like the right thing to do.

And, candidly ... I've learned a lot more about what's right and wrong through the years. I've made mistakes. We all do. The more you fish, the more

those moments speak to you. The trout and the river will show you the way forward.

Enjoy the day!

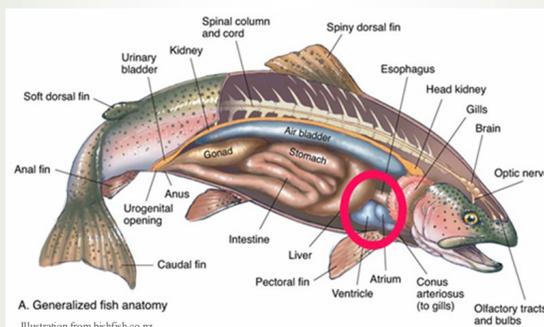
Domenick Swentosky is a writer, musician, father and fisherman living in central Pennsylvania. Find more of his work at www.troutbitten.com. "T R O U T B I T T E N" [@troutbitten.com](https://twitter.com/troutbitten). Reprinted with permission from the author.



Pat Burke holds a large brown trout the correct way (Pat Burke photo)



Don't do this! The trout's heart is right behind those gripping fingers. Not good.



**Dame Juliana League
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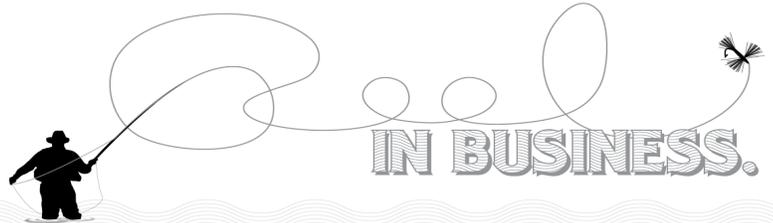
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