
STREAMSIDE

Volume 19 Issue 2

Periodical Newsletter of the *Dame Juliana League*

Spring 2013

View from Kennedy Bridge *by Troy Dunn, President*



Let's face it, no matter how good the weather is, water levels, bug activity, etc., sometimes the fish don't rise. Such has cer-

tainly been the case for me this spring. I guess that's why they call it "fishing," not catching. Don't get me wrong, I've caught more than my fair share of fish this year. But, after a long stretch of tight line nymph fishing and swinging streamers, the anticipation of a great April and May, making long cast with big ol' dry flies to hungry trout (big = size 14 or larger) was mounting by late March. The stage was set with near perfect water levels, fairly decent spring weather, plenty of bugs on the water...but the rise just hasn't materialized on the creeks I fished. Maybe they are waiting for the cicadas? Yep, in case you have not heard this is the year for the 17-year cicada "hatch," I know what you are thinking...didn't we just have cicadas a few years ago? It hasn't really been 17 years, has it? In short; no it has not. Like fish and, I suppose, other species (the Japanese beetle comes to mind) the cicada has year classes that entomologists call "broods," go figure. This year "brood 2" happens to be one of the stronger classes for the east

coast and so we notice them more. There are other broods, and which year is strongest in what geographic region varies as well. You can Google all of this, of course, and find out more than you really want to know. All I really want to know is when do they start hitting the water and where...if you happen across that information pass it along please.

DJL is now on Facebook! If you have a Facebook account, be sure to like our club page. The page is not just set up in broadcast mode. This is your page, too! You can post material to the Facebook page and also use it as a social meeting spot for all sorts of impromptu gatherings and information sharing. For instance, when you find out where the cicadas are hatching you can post to the Facebook page and let us know. Making a special trip to central PA but want to defray the cost of filling your gas tank? ...post up to the page and share the expenses.

We had a great casting clinic in May. This member-only event was organized by John Burgos. Mike Costello did an excellent job of fielding questions that really spanned the gamut of casting issues as well as issues with instruction, which was an interesting topic to learn about from someone who has significant experience in the teaching aspect of our sport.

Thanks, John and Mike. Your efforts were truly appreciated by the club.

Speaking of instruction, we had a really great day this year for the Learn to Fly Fish Course. Bob Molzahn organized another successful class. Thanks to Bob and all the volunteers; we really would not be able to offer this course without a team effort.

Thanks Emerson Cannon and Dick Allebach for their assistance with the organizing the stocking activity.

Our next big event this year for which we will require volunteers is collecting parking donations at the Kimberton Fair. It is the last full week in July. We will be collecting donations from about 5:30PM until about 9:30PM on Monday, July 22nd through Wednesday, July 24th. We need a minimum of 5 people each night, and we always seem to be a few heads short. If you can volunteer, please send a note to the club e-mail address dj1ff@comcast.net and let us know. By helping the Kimberton Fire Company with the fair, we get free use of their facilities for our meetings. It is one of the many things we do that help keep our dues so low while still being able to provide quality speakers, casting clinics, video libraries, fly rod and reel lending, etc.

If you can't support the Kimberton Fair event, there are other ways you can engage. We recently had a vacancy in the post for secretary. John Burgos has stepped up in an acting role to perform this critical function for our club while we prepare the slate of officers for the September meeting. **The Steam Improvement Coordinator position is currently vacant.** All officer roles are up for reelection in September. If you would like to become an officer of the club please give myself or one of the other board members a call so we can discuss the various duties performed throughout the organization and find a suitable match. Tight lines! -Troy



Fish Pic of the Year

Over the years, we have had numerous pictures of fish our members have caught on the fly published in this newsletter or on the website. This picture, however, is the first one of a Louisiana redbfish. It was caught at Myrtle Grove, Louisiana, 45 miles South of New Orleans, on April 20, 2013. The fisherman is club member Gill Detweiler. The guide was Mark Brockhoeft.

If you have a fish picture and would like to show off your catch, please feel free to send it to me at the club email address. All pics will be published. Thanks!

-Bob Molzahn, Editor



Filling the Fly Box

by John Burgos

I fish a lot. At least that what my wife tells me. But I don't fish every day so I'm not sure what she means. Whatever the case is, I do know I lose my share of flies. So when I'm not fishing, I need to be refilling my fly box. I love to tie flies. And I love to tie really fancy flies. But years ago I came across a quote (no citation) that drives much of my philosophy: "Don't spend more time tying a fly than it takes to lose it."

So I try to apply that to much of my fishing. This is not to say that those beautiful flies shouldn't be tied. Of course they should ... when time is available.

You may have read Charlie Meck's "One Minute Flies" article he wrote for the Mid-Atlantic Fly Fishing Guide several years back. I must confess, this is a take off of Meck's article. I've come across a list of flies that I generally use most of the time to catch trout in just about all waters across the country. The list grows from time to time. It shrinks, too. I select these flies first because they catch fish, second because they are very simple, and third, because they emphasize some of the core fly tying skills.

I'm not including links, but you can find YouTube or other video tutorials for each fly. I am providing a short description and pattern for each fly on my list, which is presented in no particular order, as they can be effective at any time.



Walt's Worm

This simply fly is nothing more than a "cigar" shape of any blend of dubbing. Up in the Central PA limestone streams where it was created, I find that a light tan works best. Though I encourage the use of other colors like Hare's Ear and olive. I tie this fly on standard wet fly hooks in sizes 14-18.

Serendipity

Though I've known of this pattern for years, my use of the Serendipity is relatively new. Joe King strongly suggested I put it to use while fishing Penns Creek this April. The Serendipity is a simple wrapped body with a small bunch of elk or deer hair tied in at the head. The wrapped body can be anything from thread, floss or wire. Joe's favorite is red floss with a gold wire rib.



Thread Flies

I'm not sure I've seen this particular name used, but these flies are nothing more than a thread body with a tail, ribbing, thorax, and wing pad. I use standard wet fly hooks and generally do not tie these flies larger than size 16, so any of the above parts are optional. Different beads can be used too.

Sucker Spawn

I recently wrote an article specifically on the sucker spawn. This fly is a great searching pattern whenever any fish are spawning, not just suckers. This fly has the simplest material list: yellow yarn. You can spice it up with different colors. When trout spawn I use a more tangerine color. But if I only had one color, I would use yellow. Here, too, some tyers spice up their offering with a beadhead. I generally tie this fly on standard wet fly hooks in sizes 12-16.

Green Weenie

What could be simpler than the Green Weenie? This fly is nothing more than a hook wrapped with fluorescent green chenille, leaving an extra loop off the bend of the hook. This fly works well in both standard and 2XL wet fly hooks in sizes 10-16.



Though standard wet fly hooks are fine, I like using scud hooks in sizes 18-20.

Woolly Bugger

Few of us go to a stream without woolly buggers. This simply fly may have caught more trout for more anglers than any other. This fly is nothing more than a marabou tail, a chenille body and a hackle ribbing (tied palmer style). My favorite colors are olive and black, though white, and yellow work well too. Many combinations and additions can be made to this pattern, like adding flash materials, rubber legs, cone heads, etc. This is a great pattern to have in your box. Tie these on standard streamer hooks in a wide range of sizes (2-14) depending on your quarry.



Fly Box is continued on page 3

Flats Fishing Techniques Eventually Sink In

by Bob Ballantyne

The airport in Miami was showing its usual winter bustle this past January as I sat with a son awaiting our connection to Philadelphia. Less than an hour earlier we had left Key West from what has quickly become an annual family tradition. A yearly winter trip to the waters of the lower keys includes another son and a friend of his, making our angling group a quartet.

A short flyrod case holding my six-piece, ten-weight rod attracted the attention of a young fellow from Allentown. A brief conversation indicated he was rather new to fly fishing, and he spoke of his experiences on Lehigh Valley area streams. When he asked what we had been catching, I answered, "Some groupers, various snappers, black-tipped sharks, and crevalle jacks, among others."

His response was, "Do you use dry flies?" My reply to that inquiry was, "No, mostly streamers."

It reminded me of the difficulty I had when I first started to visit the Keys in winter for a little repose from "cabin fever." Trout techniques just don't cut it in the flats style of fly-fishing. Casting a *flav* onto the waters of Soda Butte Creek in Yellowstone to trick a cutthroat does not translate to the methods used for attracting the large predatory fish in the waters around Key West. (Our January trips do not correspond to the season when the very popular bonefish, tarpon, and permit are present.)

Tutored by a great guide (Justin Rea of StingRea Char-

ters), and while fishing from his skiff, I managed to get the technique down over the period of the first couple of annual trips.

But, perhaps because of my ingrained trout fishing experience of many years, it took me a while to transfer the flats fishing concepts to times when wading on my own.

Long casts are required. The rod tip is brought down to almost the surface of the water and kept there during stripping. The line is gripped against the rod by two fingers of one hand (in my case the right) to keep it taut, and long, aggressive, and rapid strips are made with the other hand, starting right at the rod and ending as far back as one can reach. One has to imitate darting, live prey in order to attract predators like the crevalle jack, which is just about the toughest fighting fish, pound-for-pound, in salt water.

On a strike, the line is kept taut, but fed to the fish until it is "on the reel." It is then "raise the rod tip and then reel down quickly," repeating that up-down action and keeping a tight line until the fish is landed. Also, the rod should not be raised more than 45 degrees to prevent breaking the tip, and, of course, never choke up on the rod as it could break. This type of fly fishing is a "real hoot," but also a tiring one!

It is a fatigue I love!



Fly Box *continued from page 2*

Soft hackles

This is generalized grouping for a classic wet fly pattern. Classic patterns like "partridge and orange" are tied with floss bodies. I like tying these with dubbed blended fur bodies with "typical" nymph colors of hare's ear and olive. Your favorite ribbing will accent this fly. I tie my soft hackles on standard wet fly hooks in sizes 10-18.

Pheasant Tail

The

pattern presented here is much like the soft hackle, but I use pheasant tail and gold or copper ribbing. This is perhaps one of my favorite patterns. Tied without weight gives a very sleek and slender body, very representative of the nymphs you are trying to imitate. Tie these in same sizes as other soft hackles.

Zebra Midge / Black Beauty

This pattern is a great winter pattern or anytime you encounter

fish rising to virtually invisible flies. It works well underneath or fished in the film. Tie this fly with black floss or thread and fine gold or copper wire. A small tuft of black dubbing for the thorax completes the fly.

All these flies can be complemented with bead heads (glass or metal) or tied weighted. Each step adds just a bit more complexity. But in general, this selection represents a dependable set of flies that have been well tested on streams everywhere.

Keep it simple. Give these a try.

Have a great fishing year!



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Bonefish on a Budget ...Revisited *by Troy Dunn*

About 10 years ago DJL Member Scott Zeigenfuss put together a presentation entitled Bonefish on a Budget. At that time I was still trolling around French Creek with a 1970s vintage fiberglass fly rod and Pflueger Medalist reel that my father-in-law gave me from his stash of used gear in his basement of wonders. I recall my initial sticker shock needing to purchase a license, trout stamp, fly line, fly box, flies, and rubber wading boots and thinking wow...this could get expensive, good thing I'm only "trying it out." I tell you all of this simply to highlight...I got the market on cheap cornered. I drive my cars into the ground, my Honda push mower is going on 15 years old, and I'm pretty sure I don't have a single friend who gets their TV signal the way I do...from that thing on top of my chimney.

When it comes to ways to do things without spending too much money...I'm a self-proclaimed expert. Imagine my shock and horror at the outrageous price tag that Scott put on this so-called budget-conscious trip. "No way," I thought, count me out. I'm not spending that much money on a fish, I'm perfectly happy with my fiberglass rod and I catch plenty of trout right outside my door.

Ten years and 5000 trout later, I've probably spent more on rods than even I like to admit. I have several trout reels that could handle fish that I will never catch, and I'm quite sure that I have enough fly tying material to tie flies for a lifetime and yet I find myself in French Creek Outfitters buying more materials on a regular basis. I made the plunge into salt-water gear about five years ago, and in the past few years I've gotten the hang of this bonefishing thing as well as what I think a reasonably priced bonefishing trip should cost. This all assumes, of course, that you can actually cast in bonefishing conditions.

Before you go bonefishing here are the pre-requisite casting skills. You must generate enough line speed and accuracy to cast to a fish that is approximately 50 or 60 feet away without spooking it. Technique is important, obviously, but I've seen so many folks get it done in so many different ways I'm not going to tell you how to cast...talk to Mike Costello about that. Sounds easy right? Ok...I forget to mention a few small details. First, you must somehow simulate a rush of adrenaline similar to being chased down by Bigfoot or some other malevolent mythical creature. Next, you need about a constant 15 mile per hour

wind (gusts to 25 MPH) preferable right to left if you cast right handed. Finally, you need someone to yell at you that you just cast 60 feet not 50 and you lined the fish. Preferably there will be some disagreement on the numbers as well...for instance what you think is 60 is 70 and 2 o'clock is perhaps 2:15 in reality. Eventually you will learn or your guide will learn to calibrate this out, but probably not on day one...so in addition to all of this...you'll probably develop a bit of a 'tude. Great...conditions simulated now show us how good your cast is...my advice...learn to cast 70 feet of line accurately in perfect conditions and you'll have a sporting chance.

So where were we? Ah yes, bonefishing on a budget. You will note that the title was not "Bonefish on the Cheap" or "Bonefishing for Under U.S. \$500." If that is your idea of a bonefishing budget...you are probably not going to get there.

For argument's sake, let's assume that you already have all the required gear. Maybe you fish for stripers and a buddy gave you a tropical fly line. Now you are ready to plan your first week-long bonefishing trip. Your first real expense will be getting to the flats. But where do you go?

Option 1: You've heard there are bonefish in Florida, and you know there are great travel deals to Orlando, so \$200 airfare via Frontier Airlines out of Wilmington, Delaware seems like a possible choice. It's actually not a bad choice if you want to see fish besides bonefish (tarpon, permit), and don't mind paying the going rate in Florida for guides every

day. This is where the whole art of balancing your budget will come into play. Florida is absolutely the cheapest destination from a travel perspective, but it has 2 drawbacks to consider. The first is the aforementioned going rate for guides. Good guides in Florida are about \$600 per day (plus tips); splitting that 2 ways (assuming you have a buddy) will still be \$300 per day. The second is that the bonefishing in Florida can be quite difficult, and "do-it-yourself" is extremely difficult. A beginner will most likely require a guide every day. So a proper budget for Florida bonefishing is probably close to \$3000 unless you have family in the Keys.

Option 2: The Bahamas, originally Baja Mer, meaning shallow sea in Spanish. This translates into endless miles of perfect flats for bonefishing. There are several islands in the



Eleuthera on your own (top left); On the flats, Turks and Caicos (top right);
Big Exuma Bonefish (lower right); Bones schooling (lower left)

Budget Bonefish *continued from page 5*

Bahamas that you can get to cheaply (under \$500) and provide excellent opportunities to catch bonefish even for the “do-it-yourself” fisherman. Prices for guides vary widely, but if you do your homework and pay attention to the forums you should be able to find a decent guide for about \$400 per day. Eleuthera and Exuma are both reasonable targets. If you are a beginner, you will still need a guide for the first couple of days. Attempting to “do-it-yourself” after already committing to roughly \$1300 in travel expenses (airfare, passport, accommodations, food, “car”) is sheer madness. You can “do-it-yourself,” however for many of your days depending on the island you chose, just not all of them. You need an experienced guide to help you see the fish, understand proper presentation, etc.

All totaled, the Bahamas option will run you roughly \$2000 if you do your homework and try to eat at local establish-

ments assuming you are splitting costs with a buddy. (car, guides, bunk, etc.) If you are traveling as a couple, you should probably double the number; you might be able to save a little in this case by finding someone to split guide costs if your travel companion is not interested in fly fishing once you reach your destination, but you may not find this enjoyable. If planning this as a couple’s vacation with bonefishing on the side... add about \$1000 to the trip to cover nicer meals and other non-fishing-related excursions (e.g., snorkeling, site seeing).

So there you have it: recommended minimum budget \$2000. You can do it for less, but your probability of catching a fish will plummet. Getting skunked after dropping \$1500 would be an example of bad budgeting/planning.



Q & A: Bonefish on a Budget

After discussing this article with friends and club members, it occurred to me that there may be a variety of questions folks may have with respect to my thought process on budget, and what the essentials to a successful first bonefishing outing are. I’ve addressed those here as a sidebar.

Q: It seems like you could do a lot more homework, and probably get your budget down even further for both the Bahamas trip and the Florida trip. How did you settle in at the number you did?

A: This was a qualitative attempt to strike a balance between maximizing the likelihood of actually catching some bones while minimizing dollars spent. The odds are truly stacked against you in bonefishing. I chose a point where I felt like the amount of money you could save no longer justified the increased likelihood of getting skunked and then added in a cushion of about \$200.

Q: I’ve already planned a trip to [insert tropical destination] where I hear the bonefishing is off the charts. I can not afford a guide, but will have some mornings free. Should I take my equipment and try anyhow.

A: Of course, the point of the article was not to say you couldn’t catch fish without a guide. It’s just highly unlikely, and would not be worth spending the money on airfare, etc. solely for bonefishing, and then to skimp on a guide. If you have a

couple of mornings to fish, consider seeing if you can hook up with someone when you are there who will split a half day with a reputable guide. That might add \$150-\$200 to your trip, but would be worth it. It will multiply your chances of catching fish on subsequent days by at least ten.

Q: I keep hearing a lot of talk about tides. What can you tell me about them?

A: Ugh! Tides! An important topic which is another article unto itself. Just another reason you really need a guide, at least for the first day or two. If you are reasonably schooled in tide mechanics, and print out a tide table before you leave, I suppose you could figure this out as well, but you would still need to discuss the variations across the islands with locals, and even then, things like wind direction can significant delay or speed up the tides. Remember, the low tide will occur about 50 minutes later each day. Where to fish and at which specific tide is 1/3 science, 1/3 art, and 1/3 luck.

Q: I have a buddy and we can afford to get a guide for our entire stay, but based on your article we are considering reducing our budget and only getting a guide for the first couple of days. Is this a good idea?

A: Goodness no! This is a terrible idea. Guide + Boat = MORE FISH, period. I don’t care if you are the best fisherman in the world. Having these two pieces of

fishing equipment will increase your chances of catching fish significantly. Spend as much as you are comfortable spending on these items. Just keep in mind this can get expensive quickly. Please don’t forget to tip your guides, they work really hard...it’s not their fault you can’t cast.

Q: What about destination lodges for bonefishing, or guided trips, I know they can be expensive, but they seem like a great value.

A: Difficult to say. Most first timers aren’t going to be willing to shell out the kind of money that these trips require. That willingness seems to come about 30 seconds after they hook their first bone. There are some great lodges and guides out there who really do offer some great package deals, especially if you are traveling alone, and really hate the hassle of figuring anything out on your own. You will almost certainly catch fish!



ARTICLES WANTED!!

The next edition of **STREAMSIDE** is due out in September, 2013. If you would like to write an article, story, share a fly pattern or picture or write a poem please do so and send it by August 31, 2013, in MS Word format to rjm1949@comcast.net. All articles received will be published.

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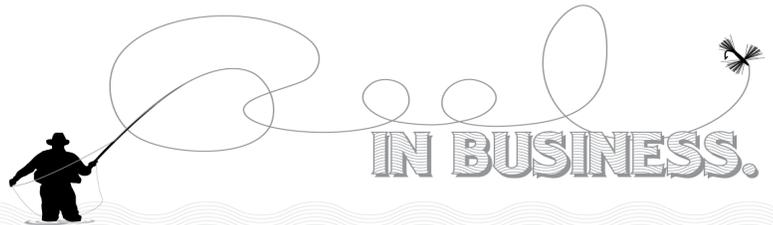
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