

STREAMSIDE

Volume 24 Issue 1

Periodical Newsletter of the Dame Juliana League

Winter 2018

Riffles & Runs *by John Burgos, President*



New Year greetings to all our members! As I write this article, we are currently in the coldest spell of the winter (so far). It has been tougher to find fishing opportunities. If you can't find open water, spend some quality time with your vise.

We are planning an exciting series of speakers this spring and hope to see you all out at our general meetings.

Thanks to **Emerson Cannon** for setting up a terrific lineup of speakers for the coming season.

As we head closer to the spring, the anticipation of our 25th Annual **Learn to Fly Fish Course** on April 28th will pick-up so expect **Bob Molzahn**, the course coordinator, to put the call out for volunteers. This course doesn't make it to the finish line without countless support hours from many of our members. If you know of a friend, relative or neighbor who might be interested registration materials are on our website. Proceeds from the course support our financial support of the **Chester County Conservation Camp** (<http://www.chescocamp.org/>) for youth and **Project Healing Waters** (<http://www.projecthealingwaters.org>). Please use the provided links to learn more about each organization.

Thanks goes out to the **Kimberton Fire Company** (KFC) for the generous support by allowing the use of their facilities for our board and monthly meetings. Be certain, there is a payback. We will be calling on members to volunteer a nice summer evening helping us collect parking donations at the KFC annual summer fair. **Troy Dunn** will be organizing a list of volunteers later this year. Please offer up a night of service.

All these activities require funding and outside speakers can be relatively costly. When you come to our meetings, search out **Joe King**. As our Sponsor Relations Coordinator, Joe has been heading up our "Raffles" program for years. Through his efforts making contact with local fly fishing shops and other businesses, Joe has been able to keep a fresh new selection of raffle prizes. Be generous. Buy a ticket or two. Walk away with some nice prizes.

The New Year marks a new membership year. **Mike Ferraro** will be available at all meetings to collect dues. Mike usually has pins and sew-on patches available for new members and membership cards. Information will be provided in emails. As always, members can mail dues to our mailbox or pay on-line using PAYPAL on the club website.

Back to the fishing, I hope you all had opportunities to fish and enjoy the outdoors this past year. I had the opportunity to fish in several states this past year and have begun to encounter more and more loss of resource access. I recognize that, as part of the American dream, we have the right to acquire property and use it as we desire. Would I ever try to get in the way of that dream? I used to think definitely not. But, our sport is quickly coming to a crossroad where loss of access combined with loss of habitat is putting a crunch on our sport and its enjoyment.

Now these experiences are not unique, but I've witnessed changes across the years that have negatively impacted my stream access. It is easy to say, and probably very justified, that fishermen have done this to themselves. We've all experienced boorish fishermen on the streams, at the parking areas. These same areas are some people's investment. Leaving trash, damaging property, none of that sits well with landowners and we can't blame them for feeling betrayed by those they allow use of their resource.

However, lost stream access is not always the fault of the anglers. The reasons for restricting access to land are also privacy, exclusivity, and profit. Any reason leads to diminished sporting

(Continued on page 5)

Winter-Spring 2018 Meeting & Event Calendar

Meetings are held at the Kimberton Fire Co. Fairgrounds Meeting Hall.
Doors open at 7:15 PM. Meeting begins at 7:30PM.

January 29 (Monday)

Featuring **Thomas Ames**

Fly Rods and Tackle and Their Development

February 26 (Monday)

Featuring **Dave Kinney** from Trout Unlimited

PFBC's Unassessed Waters Initiative

February 27 (Tuesday)

Spring Float Stocking of French Creek's Fly Fishing Only Area

Volunteers needed—12 Noon—Meet at Progressive Machine Lot

March 26 (Monday)

Featuring **Nick Raftas** from Sky Blue Outfitters

Resurgence of the Susquehanna River Smallmouth Fishery

April 30 (Monday)

Four Corners

Four different topics in four corners of the room presented by a DJL "Expert"

April 28 (Saturday)

25th Annual Learn to Fly Fish Course

Warwick County Park—See DJL website for details and registration information

May 5 (Saturday)

Casting Clinic

Featuring IFFF Certified Casting Instructor **Mike Costello**

Towpath Park, Pottstown—Registration details to be announced

Fly Fishing for Muskies

by Emerson Cannon

People call muskies, the fish of 10,000 casts and that is with gear! Now, think of casting a 12-inch fly 10,000 times with a 400 grain sink tip or 300 grain sink tip line using a 10-weight. That can be quite an experience! Sometimes you go two days and cast and cast and cast and maybe you'll have a fish follow your fly....maybe. Sometimes a musky will eat your fly but come off. Other times, you might be in a raft with the anchor on the bottom of the river trying to untangle your fishing partner's fly from a tree on the bank and a musky appears out of nowhere and eats your fly dangling over the side of the boat as you jump from being startled and Mrs. Musky swims around the anchor line, only to come off after it jumps 30 feet upstream! Just ask Joe King about that one!

Yes all that can happen on a two day trip and at least one of those will happen! Sometimes the odds are in your favor and you and your fishing partner get four muskies in during a two day excursion. That just happened in mid-December. Muskies, like other northern animals start putting on the feedbag when it gets cold and do not stop until mating season. Mating season for mus-

kies is March, putting on the feedbag time is November, December, January and February in Pennsylvania and Virginia. Catching a musky is exhilarating and makes you feel as if you have really earned it. Their fight is nothing special....getting them to eat is the big accomplishment. Hooking them and keeping them hooked IS a huge deal. You do not need a huge fancy reel with a special drag like for tarpon. These fish might run 30 feet. But they will do it maybe 6 times. Obviously a 30-35 lb fish is strong and will not come in easily. Flies are huge, hooks are strong and you are using a 40-lb test leader with a section of wire due to their teeth! These fish are at the top of the food chain in their body of water! They are in charge!

If you are interested in doing this on the James River in VA, contact Blane Chocklett at <http://www.blanechocklettfishing.com>. Blane is the musky expert. He will provide, rod, reel flies and expertise. He is a super patient instructor and will help you out. You need to be able to cast these heavy flies though.

Here are some pictures from the trip:



Here is a 42-inch musky...check out the size of the fly hanging out of his mouth! How about those choppers??



A remote section of Virginia



Here is a small one..only 32-inch but notice the colors...these fish are very pretty!



You fish out of a drift boat with one angler in either end and the guide rowing!



Blane holding a measured 48-inch fish estimated to be about 35-40 lbs. All of the larger fish are females. Of course, all fish were returned to their homes after a quick picture. The fish are scooped up in a litter that has a length measuring scale on the side. This way no fish are harmed. The person in the back has his right hand on this litter.



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. 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 it 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, I'd love to hear it.



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

Coming: Our 25th Annual Learn to Fly Fish Course

On Saturday, April 28, 2018, the League will be holding its 25th Annual Learn to Fly Fish Course at Warwick County Park near St. Peters Village. It does seem like a long ways away, but we had such a tremendous response the past few years we wanted to be sure everyone was aware of the date now in case you know of someone who is interested in learning how to fly fish. The class should fill up quickly so don't delay in letting interested friends know..

So if you know of anyone who is interested please have them visit our website www.djflyfishers.org for more information and to download a registration brochure. Those interested in attending can also call 610-574-3503 (leave a message) or email djlfpa@gmail.com. The cost of the all-day course is \$60 and pre-registration is required. Please send registration information to:

Dame Juliana League
P.O. Box 178
Kimberton, PA 19442

Coming: Spring 2018 Float Stocking-Volunteers Needed

On Tuesday, February 27, 2018, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission assisted by the Dame Juliana League will be stocking the Fly Fishing Only Catch & Release area on French Creek. This stretch receives about 1000 trout each year, a mixture of browns and rainbows. We will be using 2 or 3 float boxes to cover the entire 0.9-mile stretch. Each float needs about four (4) able bodied men and/or women to handle the boxes. Chest waders, a wading staff and warm clothing are a must. We will meet at 11AM at the Progressive Machine Tool parking lot on Pughtown Road, about three miles east of Route 100.

This PFBC sponsored event is a lot of fun and a good experience so if you are interested in volunteering please contact (ASAP) our stocking coordinator, Dick Allebach, at 610-933-1846 or email him at rsallebach@verizon.net to sign-up or obtain additional information. Dick will acknowledge your response. Thanks for your participation!

A Steelhead Learning Experience

by Ted Nawalinski

My good friend Eric and I booked a trip to fish for steelhead in Pulaski, New York, from November 10 thru the 14th. Neither of us had any experience with the area nor with steelhead fishing so we booked a guided float trip for Day 1, thinking to pick an experienced \$400-plus-tip brain while catching big fish. And not knowing anything of the access points for the water in the area, Days 2 and 3 were booked on private water at Douglaston Salmon Run (the first 1.5 miles the fish see as they swim upstream from Lake Ontario) @ \$60 each/day, which sounded cheap to get first crack at dozens of big stupid fish. That left Days 4 and 5 for fishing all the free-access water which we had scouted during the hours when we weren't catching steelhead. Cheap hotel deposits @ \$100 brought our out-of-pocket-before-leaving-home cost to \$1200. Which, we figured, was probably going to be about \$10/fish - cheap, considering these are not found on French Creek.

Well, the week of November 5 brought four days of very heavy rain here, as well as to the Pulaski area and the Salmon River watershed. All that New York water piled behind the dams a couple of dozen miles upstream from Pulaski. It had to go somewhere so it was released into the last miles feeding Lake Ontario.

Challenge One: A comfortable and safe water flow for wading the Salmon River is 350 to 500 cubic feet/second; 750 can be handled by experienced fishers. Every day we were there, the release from the dams was around 2,000 cfs, dangerous enough to have closed Douglaston for our Day 2 adventure, and too fast to fish the wading sites with any real hope of landing steelhead.

Challenge Two: Our 5 AM embarkation on Day 1 found the ambient temperature at 13°F as we climbed into the boat - OK, since we were going to keep warm battling big fish. Not so: we sat in the boat in one spot for 2 hours until it was light enough to fish legally. The amazing thing was that dozens of anglers had been there on the banks long before we got there, staking out their spot for the rest of the day. This is static fishing: you're in water trying its best to sweep you into Lake Ontario or on the bank un-

moving, in teen temps, casting to the fish passing you rather than moving along a stream looking for where the fish are holding. Apparently this is fun because I chatted up several old timers who had been doing this with great regularity for three or four decades. The temperature never got above freezing the entire time we were there. And it snowed a couple of inches overnight Day 2 to Day 3.

Challenge Three: Real estate. Squatters' Rights. First-Come-First-Served. Having exhausted our easy options, Eric and I got up at dawn Days 3 and 4 and "went fishing." Ha! Anglers at the good runs were a rod length apart for many hundreds of yards and had probably been there since we had gone to sleep the night before. So, like the smallest fish in the pool, we settled for third-class positions and cast with great hope into water that we just knew held our dozen big fish. These were going to be the days! Alas, not so.

So, the learning experience...

- Go with someone who has been there before and knows the routine.
- Pick your time. Can't always pick good temps or flows, but you might guess what snowmelt will do.
- Be quick to cancel reservations if the 5-day looks challenging.
- To me, it's fishing for people who have nothing better to do. I like small trout streams.

It's a numbers game. Steelheaders talk in terms of X-for-Y; that is, number of fish landed for those hooked. Steelhead fight like mad and are frequently broken off. I talked with people who were "3 for 6" and a drift boat guide who was "7 for 13," a spectacular day! Eric and I were 0 for 0, although, in truth, I did have a bite, but lost it in two seconds, probably because I failed to set the hook well. But "Zero for Zero" is easier to say than "Zero for Point Five." If steelhead numbers were tallied as "Fish per Dollar" it would be far more difficult for steelheaders to justify a trip like this to the family. Fortunately for us, "Zero divided by \$1200" doesn't compute.



Project Healing Waters Update 2017

Thanks to the generous support of individuals and organizations like the **Dame Juliana League**, the Coatesville VA Medical Center program of **Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing** hosted 163 disabled Veterans a total of 474 times. We had 33 consistent veterans who visited us at least five times, some as many as 12, before being discharged from the VAMC and moving on to PHW programs near their home towns. Our 41 intermittent volunteers contributed 2261 hours. The top dozen of these men and women contributed 1,180 hours – 70% of the total!

About one third of our expenses went for food – over \$2000. The weekly fare is usually quite modest – usually soft pretzels and the occasional pizza with donated cookies and venison jerky. A July 4th party and one at Christmas are special treats with more elaborate wraps and hoagies and pulled pork sandwiches and donated desserts. We use the weekly food to entice the curious to check us out; the 86 Veterans who came only once and the almost 100 who returned shows that not all bait works all the time but enough to keep us coming back. It's hard to believe that such simplicity in our weekly enticements can cost so much but our success rate is quite spectacular compared to other programs around the commonwealth.

PHW/VAMC greatly appreciates your financial and emotional support. Please continue to think of us when upgrading your gear; items in good condition can always find a second life with a disabled Vet. (Contributed by Ted Nawalinski)



Riffles & Runs *continued from page 1*

opportunities. At the federal level, recent decisions by the current Trump Administration to reduce amounts of public land will most certainly have adverse effects on anyone who values outdoor sports.

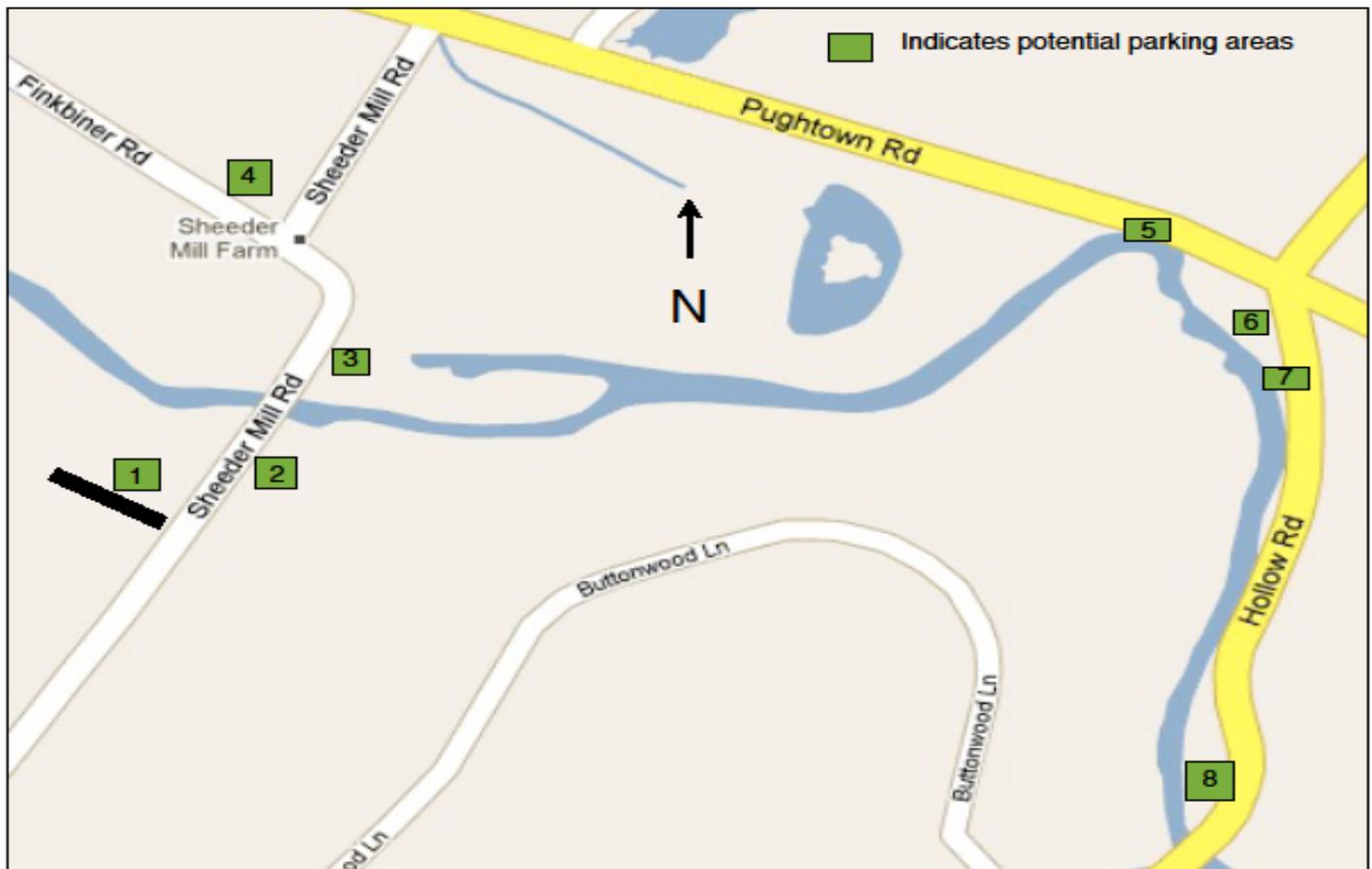
I suggest that everyone pay close attention to current and future proposals that may restrict your access to public land. Make

these issues your top priority. Be sure that you understand and take the time to gain an informed opinion. There are many organizations that are well positioned to challenge perceived threats (eg. Trout Unlimited). If you feel compelled, please get involved with these organizations. Most importantly, contact your state and federal legislators and make your concerns known.



Designated Parking Areas Near French Creek CR-FFO

Parking rights are provided by the landowner. Please respect their privacy and need for silence. All trash needs to be carried out or parking rights may be terminated.



- 1.....Parallel park on right side of trail. Do not block horse trail. (1 space). Park on the road (1 space on either side of the trail entrance (2 spaces). This gives (3 spaces) in total at this location.
- 2.....Parallel park on road by upper barn, but do not block entrance to field by the barn (2 spaces)
- 3.....Parallel park as close to fence as possible but do not park in front of gate (2 spaces)
- 4.....Parallel park on north side of road but do not park in front of, or past mailboxes (3 spaces)
- 5.....Park off Pughtown Road on the shoulder by guardrail (2 spaces)
- 6.....Parallel park on shoulder off Hollow Rd (2 spaces)
- 7.....Park in designated area (3 spaces)
- 8.....Parallel park on shoulder of Hollow Rd (2 spaces)

**Dame Juliana League
Fly Fishers**

P.O. Box 178 Kimberton, PA 19442

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 Member dues per calendar year are
 \$20-Individual, \$25-Family.
 For new members please add \$5.

Newsletter Editor- *Bob Molzahn*
 Articles, news, and fly tying tips are gratefully accepted.

Please send them to rjm1949@comcast.net

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www.djflyfishers.org

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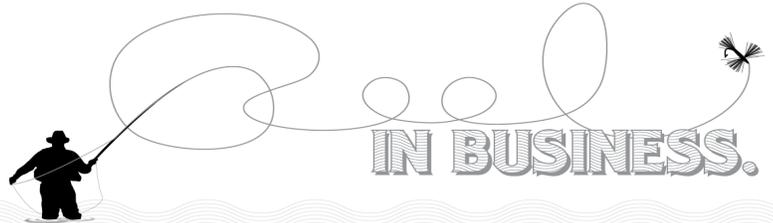
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