

# STREAMSIDE

VOLUME 25 ISSUE 4

DAME JULIANA LEAGUE

FALL/WINTER 2019-20

## Riffle & Runs

By John Burgos



Greetings from the tying bench. As we head into colder weather I hope you've all got a good stock of hooks. nBetter yet, I hope you've all got empty fly boxes from all those fishing trips. For Emerson, I think a healthy batch of "squirmies" is in the works. I've got my

itinerary for this winter's tying. Ask me if I stick with it.

This fall has started off with a bang. How about Ed Jaworowski for our opening speaker in September? Thanks to Bob Moser for setting that all up and making it happen. Personally, I wasn't able to attend. But, the feedback I received was nothing less than awesome.

- For all you curious anglers, we followed up September with a presentation on taming the snakehead. Wow! Thanks to Fred Dewees for his great talk. Take advantage of these educational presentations.
- If that's not enough, Jeff Kashuba and Adam Page will be our speakers in November to demystify the musky.

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- For the first time, DJL saw an opportunity to supplement PAF&B and did a fall stocking of our own on French Creek.
- Thanks to Bryan Fulop for researching the procurement and stocking processes. The hard work of our volunteers provided the monetary resources, and manual effort to acquire the fish

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and distribute them throughout the Fly Fishing Only section.

Take advantage of this new fall fishery. Remember though, these types of activities come about through the effort of our volunteers. We need volunteers to help run the meetings, teach and assist at our fly fishing school. We have many stream related tasks from stocking trout in the spring time to cleaning up the banks. Always look around at the stream while you are fishing. There is always something that needs our attention. Oh yeah, and most importantly, we need members to get involved in the direction and decision making for this club. Please consider joining the board.

To all of you who address questions from friends and family about learning to fish, consider a holiday gift enrollment in our fly fishing course this spring. I know for as much as I fly fish, passing that talent on to others is not a gift of mine. If you're like me, no problem! Our instructors are top notch. See Skip Krause at any of our meetings for more information.

As I write this, I am reminded it is Veteran's Day. We at DJL have a rare opportunity to help and share with veterans.

For those that don't know, Project Healing Waters (PHW) is an organization dedicated to helping disabled veterans through the cathartic effect of fly fishing. I'd like to recognize Ted Nawalinski for his efforts with PHW at the Coatesville VA hospital.

Remember this simple thought : You don't know how much you can help *until you do!*

Tight lines,



John Burgos is currently the DJL President. He has been chasing spotted fish on the fly for nearly 45years. If not prowling around the streams of Central Pa, he is likely lost on some dusty dirt road  
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outside of Bozeman, Mt.



## Thinking of Spring

By Chas Boinske

This may sound crazy, but It's already time to start thinking about spring fishing...if only for psychological reasons!

If you are anything like me, you always want to have your next fishing trip in the planning stage. It simply makes the end of a current trip, fishing season or project at work easier to take. While I fish during the winter months, I start thinking about fishing next spring and the first mayflies of next year. For that reason, my thoughts usually turn to the Little Blue Winged Olive (LBWO) and fishing on limestone streams in central PA.



While olives herald the start of a new year's mayfly fishing, they are present thought the year on many streams. Therefore, I never leave for a day of fishing without my box of Blue Winged Olives. It contains a mix of dry flies, wet flies, nymphs and emergers. The exact composition of the box varies depending on my destination but the most consistent components are Olive Sparkle Duns, the Waterhen Bloa,

assorted additional wetflies and pheasant tail nymphs in size #18. I have some cut-wing Olives tied by Tom Baltz that I save for the fussiest fish. Skip Galbraith of Spruce Creek has also tied me some hen hackle tipped duns that do the trick as well.

While olives are common and found on many streams, I prefer to fish the olive hatch on Spring Creek. Spring Creek basically runs from Boalsburg, past State College and Bellefonte and to the town of Milesburg where it merges with Bald Eagle Creek. In my experience, Spring Creek offers great LBWO fishing along its entire length. However, some of the most productive water is found between Bellefonte and Milesburg.

Early in the year, on days when it rains or snows lightly, look for fish eating LBWOs close to the bank or in the back eddies. Eventually, during a good hatch, fish will be seen rising in almost all types of water with the exception of the very fast, turbulent water. Choppy runs are my favorite place to find rising fish because that means that I will likely be able to deploy my favorite method of fishing the hatch. That is soft hackle/wet fly fishing.

Soft hackle fishing is probably the oldest form of fly fishing. I don't know why this method of fly fishing isn't employed widely today. It can't be because it doesn't work! It does! Especially during a mayfly or caddis hatch. Soft hackle fishing can be done upstream and across the stream as well as down and across as is commonly used.

One excellent PA fisherman I know ties a soft hackle as a dropper off of a heavy nymph and thus fishes two styles in one cast. The nymph is cast upstream as is typically done and when it reaches a point downstream of the angler he fishes the wetfly on the swing. It's a deadly combination... #18 Bead Head Pheasant tail and a #18 olive soft hackle.

Having a proper soft hackle rod does make the fishing more enjoyable. In my experience the rod should be at least 10ft long, a 4 wt and have a very soft tip to prevent the break-offs that can occur when a trout violently takes a soft hackle. My favorite is the Hardy Marksman although I believe that it may

no longer be in production. Suitable substitutes are readily available.

Leaders are simple. I use a standard 7ft leader that terminates in 2x tippet. There I tie in a tippet ring. From that ring, I drop a 6 inch dropper of 3x and tie on my first soft hackle. Usually the smallest. Then I tie on a second piece of 4x tippet 2 ft long. To that second piece of tippet, I tie my point fly. Usually this fly is the heaviest.

I've been chasing the LBWO on Spring Creek for 20 years. I checked my notes and found that most often, the flies are in full swing by the third week of March. Overcast days were best. Flies generally appeared around 11am and stopped hatching around 4pm.

So mark your calendar, pack up your foul weather gear and spend some time this winter tying LBWO soft hackles. Spring and the first mayflies of 202 are just around the corner!

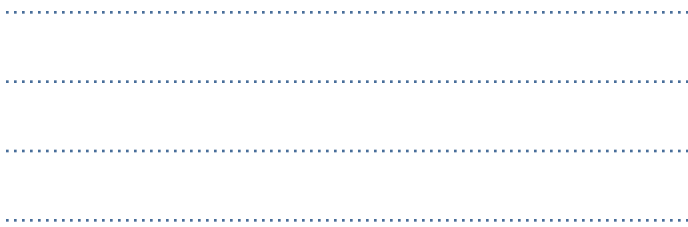
Where to go & what to throw is the starting point for every fishing trip we take. All the homework we do as anglers adds to the explanation of what we might expect out of a day's fishing and forming a strategy for going about doing it.

**Waterhen Boa**





*Raised in Kimberton, Charles P. Boinske has been fishing in PA for more than 50 years. These days he spends as much time as possible fishing in Centre County, Charles also enjoys the history of the sport and particularly enjoys fishing with fly patterns like the Waterhen Bloa which were first tied hundreds of years ago.*



## Climate Change & Fishing Part 2

By Bob Mohlzan

In the last issue of STREAMSIDE I provided an overview of why and how “Climate Change” was occurring. I noted that higher global temperatures meant the atmosphere was able to hold more water vapor due to increased evaporation. Very simply, increased evaporation and slightly higher ocean temperatures translate to more severe storms and rainfall events in certain regions of the country, the intensity and duration of which can cause major flooding which sometimes can be catastrophic and life threatening. Its effect on our fisheries resources can also be massive.

### Change and Effects on Fisheries

Aside from direct mortality of finfishes after the flood water recedes and leaves them displaced or stranded, there can be a change in habitat which accompanies the movement of massive amounts of

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water downstream. I recall when hurricane Floyd came through southeastern Pennsylvania in the fall of 1999 and flooded our own French Creek. Before the storm, I stood on the roadbed of Sheeder Mill Bridge and looked down and saw mostly rocks on the stream bottom. After the storm passed and when the water receded I stood in the same spot, looked down and all I saw was sand, interspersed with the tips of rocks poking through the sand up and downstream. Whatever aquatic insects were under the rocks before Floyd were now either washed away or buried and smothered under massive amounts of sand. The major food source for French Creek’s finfishes was essentially gone. Over the course of a year or two most of the sand was washed away but the damage was done to some great Sulphur mayfly and caddis hatches for at least a couple of years. The trout in French are stocked and replenished each year but think of this happening in streams and rivers having naturally sustaining populations but subjected to these “100 year” or “1000 year” storm events every couple of years.

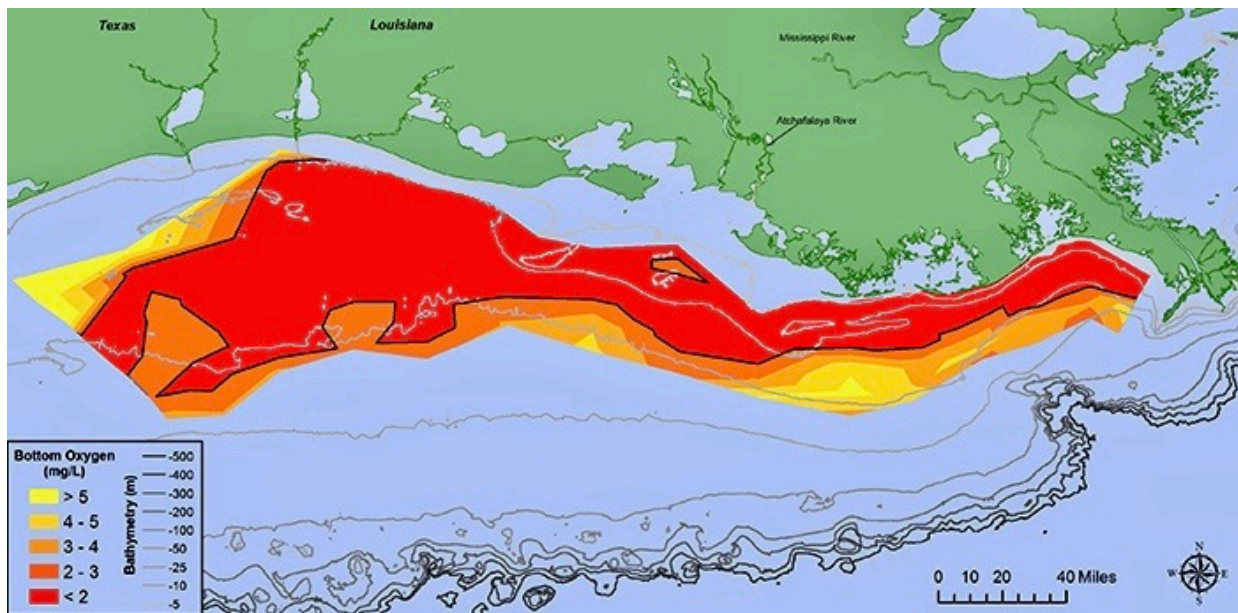
The other problem with flooding is that of pollutants. Major rainfall and flooding events wash fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, oils, chemicals and just “stuff” that is in the floodplain into the rivers. I think it was back in the 1990’s that the Little Juniata River in central Pennsylvania had a minor flood which somehow caused the unintended release of stored chemicals into the Little J. It was reported that most of the fish (and many trout) for several miles downstream sensed the chemical and moved to tributaries to take refuge, however, the aquatic insect population were decimated. It took four or five years for this food source to replenish itself to pre-spill levels. Obviously during the recovery period trout fishing suffered.

This past year the Arkansas River flooded due to unprecedented rain events and stayed that way for weeks. Eventually all this water moved downstream and entered the Mississippi River. Eastern Texas also had epic flooding. More pollutants, more fertilizers, and not surprisingly, a lot of fresh (non-saline) water ended up in the Gulf of Mexico. Such events have been common in the Mississippi River basin. This “toxic” brew deposited in the Gulf has had three major effects on the fisheries. First, there

is the Gulf’s “Dead Zone”, a 8,185 square mile area (NOAA estimate 2017) off the Louisiana-Mississippi-Alabama coast so depleted of oxygen that it cannot support marine life, including finfish. The size of the Dead Zone changes from year to year but shows that nutrient pollution, primarily from agriculture and developed land runoff in the Mississippi River watershed has significant adverse impacts on the nation’s coastal resources and habitats in the Gulf. These nutrients stimulate

freshwater lakes and ponds as well. The water may look fine but it can be deadly. Several pet owners found this out the hard way.

The third effect of all the water entering the gulf is the effect on salinity. Too much freshwater is not always a good thing especially if the organism has adapted itself to a specific salinity range. Non-mobile oysters are a good example. Suffice it to say the Gulf oyster fishery has been more or less wiped out by too low salinity levels. How this transfers to



massive algal growth that eventually decomposes, which uses up the oxygen needed to support life in the Gulf. This loss of oxygen can cause the loss of fish habitat or force them to move to other areas to survive, decreased reproductive capabilities in fish species and also reduction in the average size of shrimp, a target prey species.

other species up and down the food chain, especially those that prefer brackish water, is a big question. I would suspect that long term it could not be good.

The second major effect, also related to nutrients and slightly higher water temperatures, is toxic blue-green algae blooms. This past summer all the beaches and waters along the Mississippi coast were closed due to the blooms. Human contact with this algae can lead to a variety of severe medical ailments which could be life threatening. Commercial and recreational fishing was also closed down. Blue-green algae blooms seem to have become more prevalent the last few years and also more widespread, occurring in

As wet as the Midwest and east has been due to Climate Change, the west has been equally dry, at least during certain times of the year. The horrendous wildfires in the west denude the landscape of vegetation. During the rainy season mudslides and severe erosion are common. This past year in southwestern Colorado, wildfires followed by significant storms and massive erosion degraded the Animas River such that 80%+ of the Rainbow Trout population was lost. Stocking will restore the fishery temporarily until the vegetation has time to grow back. As wildfires become more prevalent in these fire prone regions you can expect more fishable streams in fire prone regions of the country to be so effected.

I have only scratched the surface in this article of the changes that are here or coming with the onset of more rapid climate change. I think it is important that as sportsmen we take this threat seriously, understand the science behind it and become better informed. Likewise, we need to support our

*Bob Molzahn, a longtime member of the Dame Juliana League, has over 43 years of professional experience in environmental resource management and regulatory issues. During his working career he served as the General Manager of Environmental Affairs for Delmarva Power & Light Co. and as President of the Water Resources Association*

*of the Delaware River Basin. He holds a degree in Fisheries Science from Cornell University and was President of the Dame Juliana League from 1996-2008.*



## All A Big Mixup, Officer (A Series)

By Bob Bonney

DWCO Ed Guthrie and I were sitting in the “**Marked State Patrol**” vehicle in the middle parking lot of the E. Brandywine DHAL when Ripper, a man in his 50’s, rode his bicycle not 10 feet in front of us. He parked his bike and walked down to the DHAL pool. Ripper did this without noticing us. This DHAL pool was stocked two hours prior with 60-70 trout. We walked upstream checking licenses then returned an hour later to find Rip using a 6’ square throw net to catch what he thought would be dinner. We observed Rip take 4 trout from the pool using the net. Shortly after netting the 4th trout Rip began packing up his equipment.

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government leaders who embrace the real threat of climate change and are taking actions to at least slow it down.

I approached Ripper and asked how the fishing was. He stated: “Ok.” I asked him “how many you got?”. “About four,” he stated. I asked “what did you get them on?” “I got them on a spinner.” As I’m asking him these questions, I’m looking at his rod and reel, lying on the ground at my feet. I can see a rubber worm with a large ball of Power Bait on the hook. I asked him if he had any bait, “No.” I asked him why he was using a net to catch fish and not his rod and reel. He stated that he was using the net to catch minnows (Illegal in Approved Trout Waters). I inspected the backpack he brought to the stream with him. Inside I found two opened/used jars of green and yellow Power Bait and six trout!

I asked to see his fishing license and ID, which he produced. I asked him how long he had fished this particular area of the creek; he stated “I’ve fished it for long time.” How long, I asked again. “For years,” Ripper stated. I asked him if he saw the DHAL posters all along the trail, “No.”

Ripper took a hearing and brought an attorney, but to no avail.

I filed six charges against Rip. (1). Bait in the DHAL, (2) Possession of a net over 4’ square/diameter within 25’ of the stream, (3) Taking Fish Out of season, (4) Using a net to take trout, (5), No Trout Stamp, (6) Serious Unlawful Take (3x Daily Limit a Misdemeanor), Taking/ Possession by unlawful methods (3x more than daily limit, Misdemeanor). Ripper took a hearing... The judge found him guilty on all charges. Aw gee.



*Bob Bonney is Chester County’s Waterways Conservation Office and valued member of The Dame Juliana League, Valley Forge Trout Unlimited and Project Healing Waters. He may be a poacher’s worst nightmare.*

# Letort Spring Run Introductions

By Daniel Miller



Not that long ago, I was scrolling through my internet feed and I noticed multiple feeds describing a fish kill on the Letort Spring Run. I read through the articles and stewed over the situation for the next few days.

The article was a rapid response to 250 dead brown trout found in the Letort Spring Run, with a strong chemical odor present in the stream. The Letort is laden with legendary stories. A good deal of that lore is currently sitting on my bedside waiting to be read. Whatever caused the pollution is a calamity to the conservationists and stewards that have poured their love into this stream. But it's not the first assault, and I fear it won't be the last.

For about 4 years I have participated in Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing. Prior to that my "recreation" was backpacking and hunting. What I like to think of as my Penn's Creek baptism turned my attention to fly fishing. Now it's my primary way to commune with nature, truly unburden and discover myself. My journey with Project Healing Waters has been extraordinary. I have fished in places I never in my wildest dreams expected to. I've had experiences in Yellowstone, visited Bozeman twice, fished in Belize, and recently discovered the magnificent Upper Delaware River. Yet even with all those big travel trips, I return most to the memories on our local Pennsylvania streams.

In October 2018 I had reached out to a friend I met through our Project Healing Waters Program in Harrisburg. Bill Knouse has a reputation as an outstanding fly fisherman and match the hatch expert. I reached out to Bill because I had never fished the Letort Spring Run. I've lived in Central Pa my entire life, but only read and wondered about the Letort. Motivated to try and learn new water, and interested in Spring Creeks, I contacted Bill and asked if he would show me somewhere new to fish. Bill was quick to respond; we had recently been fishing Penn's creek together and had a good time. Bill sent me the coordinates.

I rolled up to the parking area and looked skeptically at the water flowing through a grove of willows. Bill followed in his Jeep. He met me excited to share the wonders of the legendary Letort. Bill is emotionally attached to the Letort Spring Run, having grown up nearby.

As we approached the stream Bill explained the fishery to me in depth. As I pulled out my leader and attached a Sculpin, he looked at me skeptically. Bill checked out my 5x leader and me to shorten it. I complied, and asked if it had to do with turning over the Flyman Sculpin Helmet fly, I had tied. He replied, I don't want you to lose a big fish if you hook it. This was my introduction to the Letort Spring Run, and now *I looked at Bill skeptically.*

Not being used to the conditions of a spring run I noticed, under the overcast morning sky that the stream, was choked with vegetation. I found out this was watercress. It created a unique fishing experience than I was accustomed to. I tried to capitalize on the areas of the stream that I could cast on the edges of the cress, and Bill pointed out areas in the stream with back eddies caught in the edges of bends. I wondered if the Letort was too much for me. If prayed that this legendary "sacred" fly-fishing water would yield to my crude attempts to present a fly.

I turned my attention to talking about Penn's Creek and we began sharing fishing stories. I had lost my stream focus and simply enjoyed the time to be in the company of another fly angler. I think that one of the unique things in fly-fishing is the company we

keep in pursuit of fish. We fly fishers are a widely diverse bunch of people. Yet when we peel back the layers of differences, we find a common passion for wild fish and self-constructed flies. As I talked, I was startled mid-sentence as Bill muttered - then yelled, "Take it...! Take it...!"

I noticed two shadowy forms pop up, just as I was stripping my sculpin along the undercut bank. There were two fish enticed by my swimming zonker strip. When I noticed them, I let my fly drift in the current and stall directly in front of both fish. One fish was clearly bigger than the other. I felt a small hesitation and a gut-wrenching twinge of disappointment as they hesitated and appeared as though they would not commit to the fly. I gave the line a small strip to give the action that the fly was fleeing. Immediately the bigger of the two fish engulfed the fly without hesitating. I strip-set and looked in bewilderment at the fish splashing at the end of my line. With a howl Bill jumped through the brush and into the stream. He netted the fish and we high-fived. I had a wild, healthy, toothy rainbow trout!

Bill looked stunned and both of us chattered as we examined at the fish and released it. Bill said it is extremely rare to catch a rainbow in these waters. The Letort is widely known for its wild migratory browns. What I found interesting was the fish that was *with* the rainbow was clearly a brown trout, the smaller of the two. Bill also pointed out how resilient trout are as a specie despite the stream's path through Carlisle. There were always be the constant threat of pollution and land development.

As we walked back to our cars we talked excitedly about the fish. Bill pointed out that seeing wild fish means this fishery is healthy, despite folks saying it isn't the robust fishery they remember. To be sure, the statistics of the fish commission tell a story of a steady reduction in numbers of fish. More recently with the 250 fish kill we have a humbling reminder of the difficult balance our urbanization has with the fishery. It is troubling to think that something as trivial as a gas leak can pollute a stream within a matter of hours suffocating 250 fish. I makes me shudder to know something that innocuous could disrupt an ecosystem so dramatically.



Fishing awakens me; in it I find the opportunity to breath, smile and experience a range of emotions that I find difficult to express. I think while on a stream "why aren't more people out here?". Don't get me wrong, I am relieved to fish without having to navigate other anglers.

This time of year I look forward to the feeling of the stinging frost. The cold nip of a fall morning. The crunch of frozen leaves beneath my feet. This will be the time I return to the haunts of the Letort. With the constant pressure of human development near the stream and the wild fish that live in it, I think it's important to explore, study and try to understand this amazing resource. There is a risk that this stream despite the conservation efforts of CVTU and PFBC will not always be there to be enjoyed. I try to have faith that it will. Like other fish kills, I hope nature will eventually renew the population of wild trout that feed, spawn, and travel through it. To me, the common angler, the Letort lives up to its celebrated fame. I am a fan.

The Letort is moody and difficult. The fish are there, but it takes commitment and persistence. You cannot have a one-night stand with this fishery. You have to put your hours in, study the flows, understand where fish lie. But its beautiful.. the



hanging willows and deep green cress-shrouded waters will keep me coming back. I have been given the opportunity to fish many streams and this one will continue to be a favorite. Whether I'm skunked or not, I always see fish in the stream and unceasingly dream about them.

*Daniel Miller is married with two kids. He was introduced to Fly Fishing while recovering from PTSD and Major Depressive Disorder through*



*Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing. He is known to his friends and family as an avid and sometimes obsessive outdoorsman. Daniel is now a volunteer with the Harrisburg Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing Program.*

*Although he took to fly fishing and tying quickly, he still acknowledges that it is his many mentors and*

*friends that have taught him what he knows, and he feels blessed to have been afforded the opportunity to learn.*



## Dusting Off Your Fly Tying Vise

By Jerry Coviello

This has happened to all of us at least once in our lifetimes. After we start a hobby we have to put it away because we get married, have kids or job demands. Life just gets in the way! Don't get discouraged because we all come back to fly tying again.

Many fly tiers believe that winter is the best time to sort your materials and restock your fly boxes, some of my fly tying friends call this the Fly Tying Season. Sorting your materials helps you see what

you're missing to restock, and get a list so you can order what you "need".

For some this is like riding a bicycle. Just put the hook in the vise and crank out a few dozen as if you never stopped tying flies. For others this could be relearning how to tie flies all over again. Don't be afraid with today's help on YouTube, Facebook and the web, there are plenty of experts willing to give you information overload.

One way to restart, is to visit the Fly Fishers International Learning Center. This is located on the Fly Fishers International Website, <https://flyfishersinternational.org/Education/Learning-Center/Fly-Tying>.

The FFI is becoming the leader in Fly Fishing educational workshops and programs, and is committed to creating and bringing new programs to our members. Under the Fly Tying tab are two resources, one is an "Introduction to Fly Tying" This is a large PDF with videos embedded into the document. The Presentation would need to be downloaded onto your computer. Once you open the document, you will get familiar with the tools, flies and what they imitate. Plus a step by step on how to tie the Woolly Bugger and Elk Hair Caddis. I also created a 35 minute video of the program that is on YouTube <https://youtu.be/UuvzZSU5o6M>

Once you have knocked off the dust and are ready to get going, there is a Fly Tying Group Video Library, this has over 500 links to videos all over the internet. Here you will be able to find any fly that you may like to learn how to tie. These videos have been prescreened and have passed the Fly Tying Group for quality.



The Fly Tying Group also has a Fly Tying Skill Award Program. You may have seen a few articles on Fly Tying Magazine from Al Ritt on how you can participate in the

Fly Tying Skill Award Program. There are 3 levels, a Bronze, Silver and Gold. A great way to get started and perfect your tying skills is to participate in the

Skill Award Program. Just start with the Bronze Fly Tying Skill Award, these are basic flies designed to help you. There are videos on the website on how to tie each fly. The Bronze Award is located at <https://flyfishersinternational.org/Tying/Fly-Tying-Skills-Award-Program/Bronze-Award>.

The flies shown below are for the Bronze Fly Tying Skill Award:

*Orange and Partridge Soft Hackle*



The Grey Goose Emerger



*The Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear*



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*Pheasant Tail Variant Dry Fly*



*Olive Woolly Bugger*



If you are looking for more patterns to tie, go to the Fly Fishers International Fly Tying Group Fly of the Month. Located at <https://flyfishersinternational.org/Tying/Educational-Resources/Fly-of-the-Month>

Don't get discouraged! I remember what Eric Leiser told me when I first started tying flies, "They say the times spent fishing or tying is not deducted from man's allotted time on Earth—so spend many, many, many hours on stream and at your vise".





*Jerry Coviello is the Fly Fishers International Fly Tying Group Chairperson, and writes a column for Fly Tyer Magazine on Intermediate Skills and is the Fly Tying Field Editor for FFI Fly Fisher magazine. He has designed Beginner and Intermediate Fly*

*Tying Classes for the FFI Learning Center. You can find him at a few of the fly fishing shows as a fly tying demonstrator. Jerry will be tying at the Fly Fishing Show in Edison NJ January 24, 25 and 26 2020*



## A Friendship Runs Through It (A New Series)

By John Dettrey

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My friend Karl Heine and I have fished together for the last 40 years. Many readers will recognize Karl as the exceptional fly fisherman who haunts Valley Creek, to the chagrin of its wild trout. In addition to scads of native talent, some consider his considerable prowess to be the result of tying and fishing topwater patterns that cannot be seen with the naked human eye; at least not mine.



Karl migrated to the East Coast from California in the early 70's while I was a student at West Chester University. I met him through mutual friends; within a short time, we began fishing together.

We frequently fished West Valley Creek in the stretch from the meadows along Route 322 to its confluence with the Brandywine River. This is my earliest recollection of successfully using a fly rod; in this case, to lure stockers from undercut banks by drifting unweighted nightcrawlers where flies and spinners could not go.

When Marsh Creek impoundment was created, we fished at night for tiger muskies using ocean sized bobbers and large live baits. In those days, the Lyndell Store on Rt. 282 kept a small supply of fishing tackle and a large aquarium containing live

minnows for bass fishing. Larger creek chubs were sold for musky fishing and we typically chose the largest baits available.

Our gear was simple but adequate; Zebco 33 spincast reels mounted to bass casting rods. Fishing by Coleman lantern light, you would wait for the bobber to disappear, then reappear and begin moving away before setting the hook. This was the period when I learned through first-hand experience that members of the pike family, with the exceptions of perch and walleye, are generally inedible.

Concurrent with the explosion of professional bass fishing, we discovered Muddy Run reservoir in Lancaster County. The reservoir is part of the Conowingo power generation system and a reliable fishery for big largemouth bass, northern pike and panfish. Additional draws were an early season trout stocking and small electric-powered rowboats that could be cheaply rented. For a decade we opened trout season in one of the rented boats, fishing live minnows and spinner baits for stocked fish.

When bass season opened, we worked the shoreline with Texas-rigged, spade-tailed plastic worms. The typical approach was drifting close to shoreline trees and brush, casting the worm and slowly retrieving the first 5-10 feet along the bottom. As I remember, worm colors were restricted to black and purple and both had their days. These were the old-style worms that melted your tackle box trays but they were effective on bass. I'm embarrassed to remember that somewhere there is a picture of us after a Muddy Run trip with a six fish stringer that weighed 24 pounds.

Pre-eminent among Karl's buddy qualifications is that he knows me well enough to accept me as the imperfect soul I am. We have fished through all kinds of personal setbacks and, for the most part, come out smiling.

Like most long-time fishing partners, we have comfortable rituals such as early morning coffee and donuts when we open the season at French Creek; staying in touch by phone on the water but not too frequently; and, refusing to bore each other with tips

on what flies are working when one of us is pounding fish and the other is hoping to get on the scoreboard.

Karl has always been an advocate of not detracting from the fishing experience by providing too much information about how to be successful. This has helped me to pay more attention to hatches and fish behavior, and learn to have fun solving problems.

I like a sense of humor in a fishing partner and Karl never disappoints. He discovered early in our association that I have a strong aversion to yellow jackets and hornets due to unfortunate childhood encounters with these tribes. On more than one occasion, he used this knowledge to liven up a slow day.

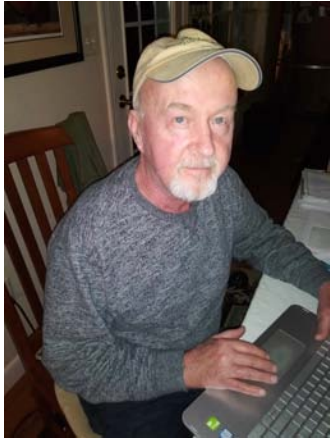
One hot and glassy morning on Muddy Run, we fished along a bank that had been productive in past trips. As we worked up the shoreline, I noticed that the normal hum of the nearby transmission lines seemed abnormally loud. Scanning the bank, I saw a huge hornet nest hanging from a dead tree.

"Karl, there's a hornet nest. Let's get out of here!", I croaked. "Don't worry, they won't bother us." he casually replied as he continued casting to shore.

As if on cue, two hornets flew directly at me and circled my head. I flailed away with my hat and was seconds from leaping into the water when the scouts departed and we moved up the shoreline. By the time Karl stopped laughing, the blood had returned to my face and my heart rate had dropped below 200 bpm. It took a little longer for my sense of humor to return.

These days, Karl concentrates on trout fishing, near and far. Revisiting my childhood (some say I never left it), I flyrod for panfish on nearby lakes and ponds. Occasionally we get together for a Valley Creek trip which is usually humbling. And that's ok.

There may even lurk the possibility of a return trip to Muddy Run with Karl to fish for bass - as long as I control the motor.



*John Dettrey spent his early childhood years in Chester Springs, attending the schoolhouse near the current Post Office before moving to Trappe and eventually to Philadelphia. Favorite memories from that period include fishing local pasture creeks*

*that could be reached on foot or via bicycle. A long-time volunteer for Valley Forge Trout Unlimited, he coordinates their annual Fly Fishing School.*



## Grace, Gratitude and The Great Outdoors

By Sharon Shelton

Tim and Joanne Linehan need little introduction to the fly fishing community. Me, on the other hand, well, I've never even held a fly rod! I am a native-born Maine-iac who, 20 years ago, wandered far



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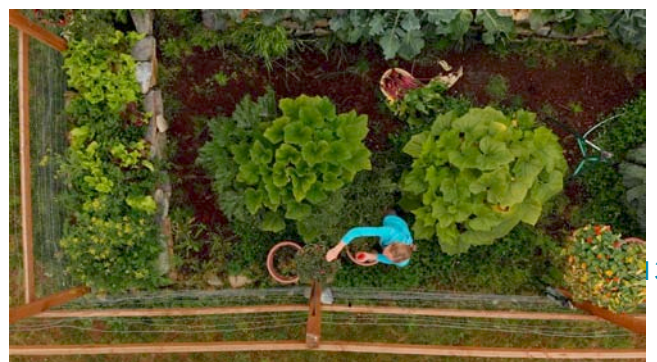
and wide from New England to advise dentists and their teams how to build a profitable patient-centered practice. Throughout my adventures, I learned that dentistry is simply “not that much fun” and my husband and I left the noise and somehow ended up in the “Maine of the Northwest” t a little valley with big heart known simply as “The Yaak”. That was three years ago.

My name is Sharon. I'm not your typical fly shop employee. In fact, Linehan Outfitting is not your typical fly shop. It's not a fly shop at all, actually. It is a mom-and-pop outfitting business owned and managed by one of fly fishing's greatest guides and a professional chef that would give Gordon Ramsey a run for his money. *(That's an invitation, Gordon.)*

Here's a look into a typical day at the office while Tim is guiding out in the field, making guests feel like they've known him forever, because, well, that's what he does best. Back at headquarters, I am here to answer the phones so that Joanne can do what she does best: prepare for the arrival of the next Kootenai River Lodge party.

The Linehan girls (a golden retriever, Gracie and three English setters, Maisy, Maggie and Lucy) are fed, happy and lounging in the office when I arrive to work in the morning. The sound of The Grateful Dead is ringing out over the speakers, the wind chimes faintly tolling in the background as though written as an accompaniment for the song. As summer yields to autumn, a cool breeze (the breeze is always cool in the Yaak) drifts through the house, carrying with it the smell of warm chocolate, spices and something smoky.

In the kitchen, Joanne is working her magic again... another hosted party is arriving at the Kootenai River Lodge and tonight's four course menu will welcome them for their week long fly fishing adventure. As one happy guest recently remarked,



“Y-ou come for Joanne’s cooking, and stay for the fishing.”

As a part time office assistant, I get the pleasure of witnessing this dance between chef and ingredients as Joanne gently folds whipped cream into melted chocolate for her extraordinary chocolate mousse cake, tonight’s dessert for the River House guests. Few people get this rare opportunity to glimpse a



day in the life of an outfitter’s chef, especially one as graceful as Joanne Linehan of Linehan Outfitting in the remote Northern Rockies of Montana.

Joanne uses her culinary expertise to create a varied and delicious menu for this week’s guests, taking into

consideration those with food allergies and personal preferences. Whether it’s a meat and potatoes lover, a vegetarian or a gluten-free guest, creating meals that satisfy every taste bud in a diverse group can be a challenge for most, but Joanne makes it look easy. Really, it must be magic, as once a guest tastes her fabulous cooking, it is as though a spell is cast upon them to want to return to this remote and wild country, and oftentimes, they are reserving next year’s adventure even before they depart.

Now, I’m not sure what goes into the rub Joanne uses on her short ribs, or how she gets them so tender and juicy, but I know the smoky aroma wafting throughout the office will linger for hours, making it really difficult to concentrate on reservation lists when all I want to do is taste whatever is happening out there in the smoker. Sometimes, I sneak out of the office to catch a glimpse of what is happening in the kitchen. Today, as Joanne whisks the dressing for tonight’s salad course (oh, she grows her own garden and forages the surrounding mountains for morels and huckleberries, too, so

guests get to dine on the freshest ingredients to be found in Montana) I spy a perfect work of art that



just came out of the oven...Joanne humbly calls it a sourdough loaf, but I know what it takes to keep a sourdough starter alive and well for daily bread baking. Believe me when I say it is a work of art!

I’ve seen the hours it takes her to learn the guests’ preferences, to thoughtfully create a menu to accommodate different needs, to drive 3 hours to the city to pick out the finest ingredients, to weed, water and harvest her garden, to gracefully prepare a four course meal to transport 50 miles to our Kootenai River Lodge to entertain, to serve and clean up afterwards to only to return to the Yaak late at night just to wake up a few hours later to do it all over again...and all while caring for four hunting dogs, answering my questions, returning phone calls, scheduling guides and packing her legendary brownies for the anglers’ lunches. And she does it all with gratitude...for our guests and for the enchantment of living in the Yaak Valley.

Tim and Joanne Linehan, owners of Linehan Outfitting Company, have built their business on the foundational principle that guests are treated like family when they visit Libby or Yaak, Montana. After 30 years of blood, sweat, tears, and mostly laughter, Tim still guides and Joanne still cooks. Their skills are remarkable, but their hospitality is unprecedented in the industry. To fish, hunt or stay with Linehan Outfitting is to experience a memorable adventure that is less about the trophy and more about discovering a part of yourself you never knew existed.



And Joanne's cooking will keep you coming back, as many of our guests do, year after year after year.

Sharon Shelton,

former urbanite turned mountain woman, mighty huntress, aspiring author, cabin wife, mother to @MaaknCheez, artist, daughter, sister, aunt and part time assistant to the world's best outfitter- that's right ... Linehan Outfitting Company in Yaak Montana!



## A Steelheader's Day (Cold, Windy, Spey Fishing for Steel in the North Country)

by Dave Riggio

I remember it vividly. It was late November, a bit after Thanksgiving, in 2004, and a typical cold day on NY's Salmon River. Fishing was good. Water temp was about 39 and I was with three good friends. I had my trusty 10' 8 wt.

Fishing with one of the three, we were close to waist deep. It was a long run and a pretty decent flow at 825 CFS. The other two friends were fishing two-handed long rods. One was an accomplished caster and the other pretty early on the learning curve. They were the smart ones, needing only to wade calf deep to reach their targets. I don't need to say more than "Damn that water was cold!" I made up my mind then and there that to continue to fish for

steelhead this time of year, I needed to bite the bullet and learn how to Spey.

I went through the normal progression for those of us who are self taught. I acquired equipment – some trial and error based on other folks'



recommendations. I watched a DVD or two trying to understand *anchors, bloody L's, river left, river right, grain weights, head lengths* and a few seemingly crazy casts.

So I was learning "spey." It was a bumpy journey, because I needed to *unlearn* what I had been doing as a fly fisherman for the past 40 or so years. What I didn't realize at the time, it's not about numbers of fish. It's about connecting with nature, with the river and with the quarry itself. And it is definitely about the camaraderie among two handed rod folks.



Through the course of the next 10 or so years, I began to understand that “spey” is a style of fishing that is not limited to a two handed long rod. In fact, learning the concepts and casts actually put you in a great place with your regular trout rod on tight streams. More on that later.

Now 15 years later I can hardly contain my enthusiasm for the Spey Style. Like everything else, the light bulb finally goes on and everything falls into place.

What follows is my attempt to explain equipment and lines and to try and clear up confusing lingo and acronyms, etc. and pique your interest in “spey” for salmon and steelhead and also on your favorite trout stream.

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I will deal primarily with my favorite setup for the NY Salmon River and will approach this in several sections:

#### **Rods:**

- You do have a choice in rods either a switch rod or the spey rod.
- *The switch rod fills the gap between a single-handed trout rod and a full spey rod.*
- *[A tip on s,witch rods, you can line them with a trout line, a switch line or a spey line.]*
- Generally for this river they are in the 6 – 8 wt range and about 11’ long. They allow you to fish nymphs and also to swing flies.



- The spey rod allows you to cover much more water by swinging wet flies or streamers and also by wading dry flies.
- Generally they are in the 7 – 9 wt range and 13-14' long. If you go all in for a spey rod, you might go with something in the 7-8 or 8-9 range. I fish a TFO Deer Creek 7-8 spey.

### Reels:

The choices are endless but strongly consider a reel with a sealed disc drag and the ability to hold 250-300 yards of 30lb. backing. Make sure it balances with the rod.

### Lines: Running line, the Head and the Tip

- As you know a trout line has all these components integrated into a single line. What is confusing are the designated line weights vs. the “grain windows” on your switch or spey rod.
- Switch and spey setups give you a choice between an integrated line (running line and head as a continuous line from the manufacturer) or separate components of running line, heads and tips. More below.

### First some definitions:

- The **Running line** is that small diameter light line that connects from the backing to the head.
- The **Head** is the power portion of the set up. Generally Skagit, Scandi and short, medium and long belly lines.
- The **Tip** tapers the head portion down to the diameter that you would attach to your leader or in some cases, to your tippet.

If your choice is a switch rod, I recommend that you carry a spare reel spool with a trout line set up for nymphing and a spey set up on your rod.

To select a trout line for a switch rod remember the number 3. This is important to get the grain weight necessary to allow you to cast. For example if you choose a 6 wt switch rod, know that to line it with a trout line, add 3 to the rod

weight. So in this case go for a 9wt trout line on that spare spool (6+3). Know also that a 6wt switch rod can reasonably handle a fish up to 12 lbs. (6 wt x 2 = 12 lb. fish).

- For switch or spey lines, think of what you will be fishing, the size of the river and the space behind you for the cast.
- Generally speaking, heavy flies on a small to medium river with limited room behind you call for a **skagit** line or head. This set-up works well on the Salmon.
- Today more folks are moving to a **scandi** set-up where the head is 25-35 ft. in length. This allows for more subtle presentation but requires a tad more room to cast.
- Short, medium or long belly (head) lines (40-80ft heads) are not necessary or appropriate for the Salmon River.

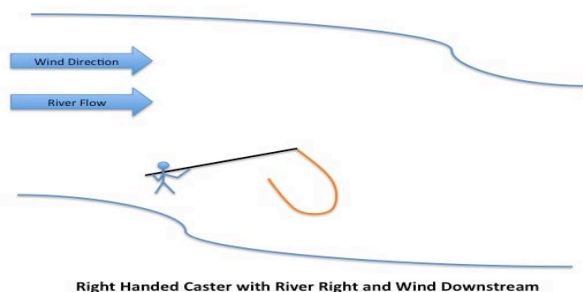
Most folks today are moving to the component arrangement with a separate running line attached loop to loop to an appropriate head (skagit or scandi) attached again loop to loop to a tip. The tips may vary from 10 to 15ft. in floating, intermediate and various sink rates from 4-8+ inches per second.

### The Wind, the River and the Casts:

Is the wind in your face or on your back? Who cares? I can tell you from experience, this is something you need to pay attention to and embrace quickly when you spey. Real simple, when you spey, there is considerably more fly line in action. As a result, the potential for injury presents itself if you don't pay attention to wind direction. You must always make your cast with your D loop (remember the roll cast) off your downwind shoulder. Think about it you will have between 40 – 60 feet of fly line, tip and tippet in action during a cast. If the wind is in your face, you must set your cast up off your downwind shoulder.

Is it river left (RL) or river right (RR)? This is another small tidbit that will become second

nature when you spey. For definition, as you stand in the river facing across the current, if the water flow is from your left shoulder to your right, then that is river right. Obviously, the opposite is true for river left. Why is this important? If you cast the rod in your left hand (your left hand is above the reel and your right hand is on the rod butt), a river right will determine the casts you would normally use (e.g., the “switch cast” or the “snap T”). Conversely, if you cast with the rod in your right hand (your right hand is above the reel and your left hand is on the rod butt), a river right will determine the casts you would normally use (i.e., double spey). Remember though, that the wind direction dictates which side of you that you must place your D loops regardless of RL or RR. So in the illustration below, if you are casting right handed, with river right and with the wind downstream, you must make your D loop on your downstream side, therefore a double spey.



Let's start with the basic casts – switch cast, snap T and the double spey.

All of these casts take much from the basic roll cast but make it more dynamic. Like the roll cast, you will setup as D loop to load the rod and then cast to your target. Unlike the roll cast, spey allows you to quickly and easily change direction by manipulating the **Anchor** (the spot where your fly is before the forward cast) to allow a change of direction.

I won't attempt to explain these in words, as it is better to view them on an instructional video just copy and paste into your browser.

**How To Cast Double Handed Rods (ft. Antti Guttorm)** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gp5ekOqL2HM>

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**Spey Casting - Choosing the Best Cast for the Conditions** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Pqxn3Zb7XE>

### A few Brief words about Spey for your local trout streams:

Understand that “spey” as a casting style is separate from equipment. People generally think of “Tpey” as a long rod with long casts to ‘swing’ a fly to an aggressive fish. While that's true, the style has many applications for small stream, large and small rivers and even salt.

### Switch (Trout Spey) Rods:

If you want to jump into Spey for trout there are two numbers to keep in mind when you research switch rods, the numbers 2 and 3. Generally switch rods for trout are in the 2wt to 5wt range using the familiar fly rod designations.

Multiplying by 2 to the rod weight designation will provide you with a guide for the targeted fish weight that the rod can easily handle (a 3 wt switch can handle 6 pound fish and so on).

Adding 3 to the rod weight designation will allow you to understand what standard trout line to use (a 4wt switch rod will use a 4 wt switch or spey line or if you choose to use a standard trout line add the 3 to the rod weight and you would use a 7 wt trout line). You can however, utilize spey casts with your trusty single-handed rod. Believe me that this style comes in handy when there is no room for a back cast.

I've included a few links to a series of RIO Products How To Video library, as seeing things in their tutorials are much better than any words I choose - just copy and paste into your browser:

<https://www.rioproducts.com/learn/videos>

<https://www.rioproducts.com/learn/how-to-make-a-single-handed-spey-cast>

<https://www.rioproducts.com/learn/how-to-set-up-a-trout-spey-rod>

*Dave was born in Newark, NJ, in 1952 and grew up in Summit. His dad introduced him to fly fishing at an early age and the two of them frequented “Ken Lockwood Gorge” on*



*the South Branch of the Raritan River. He retired from Quest Diagnostics in 2013 after 39 years and fills his time as a volunteer with PHWFF.*

*He is currently the Pennsylvania Regional Coordinator for PHWFF.*

*Dave enjoys any day on the water with either a single handed rod or a two hander. For the past 12 years he has most often reached for a Spey Rod even on relatively smaller water. With rods 13+ feet from 4wt to 9wt, he finds it a more exhilarating yet contemplative method of fishing.*

*His tying experience has also expanded from traditional nymphs, wets and streamers to include Irish North Country wets, traditional and modern spey flies as well as mixed wing "Wm. Blacker" style salmon flies.*

*When he is not fishing or supporting PHWFF, he either spends time with his sons Matt and Michael, daughter-in-law Mary and grandkids Ben, Clara and Owen or traveling internationally with his wife Pat.*



## Watch Your Back (Cast)!

By Dave Zamos

In single-handed fly casting, the basic forward cast and the back cast are mechanically the same. Further, a good back cast is essential to an effective forward cast. Conversely, back cast faults impact the forward cast. Since our eyes usually face the direction of our forward cast, it's easy to lose sight of our back cast. Put a rising fish in front of us and it's really easy to lose sight of our back cast!

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So be mindful of your back cast. It never hurts to check out what's going on back there. A slight turn of your head and a quick glance are all it takes. Ensure that you are maintaining good form and timing. Look back to see if you have obstacles

to avoid. On longer casts with a lot of line in the air, look back and pick a target for your back cast to ensure that you're in line with the forward cast. Heck, there are times we want to deliver the fly on our back cast, so you have to look!

The result of an inefficient back cast is often loss of line tension with the rod that results in an underperforming forward cast. As you watch the loop of your back cast, notice its shape. If it's a tight loop, congratulations! But if it's falling short of expectation, there are casting principles to which you're likely not adhering. After teaching over 1000 fly casting students, including some very experienced casters, here are some of the more common casting faults I routinely see.

**The first is slack, which is the enemy of a good cast.** Our goal as casters is to make the rod bend; allowing slack into a casting stroke diminishes the bend. You want the line under some tension as you begin your back cast; the line, leader, and fly should all be moving. When starting out with a pile of line outside of your tip and at your feet, roll it forward to straighten it out before making the back cast.

While beginning a cast, begin with the tip low and slowly lift the line off the water to maintain quiet tension.

**Another common fault is canting the rod too far rearward on the back cast.** There can be a few

causes of this, but typically it's either because you've taken too long of a stroke on the back cast (which tilts the rod too far back) or become "too wristy." Cocking your wrist backward at the end of the stroke results in the rod tip pointing straight backwards. We want the tip of the rod (which flexes under the load of the line) to travel relatively straight during the casting stroke. This is known as the straight line path (SLP) of the tip. When the rod tip doesn't stop at the end of its straight line path, the tip begins to carve a convex path. When the rod tip begins to carve a convex path, the loop gets larger. When the rod tip stops at the end of a convex path, the top leg (i.e., fly leg) of the loop is at one level and the lower leg of the loop (i.e. rod leg) is dragged down too low. This forms a large loop that is prone to wind effects and possesses less energy than a tight loop. The large-loop back cast will likely not straighten the line behind you. This loss of energy and associated line tension with the rod tip reduces the re-establishment of load on the forward cast. I often tell students to "throw your line high to the sky" on the back cast to help ensure that the back cast is deliberate and the rod tip stops at the end of its SLP. Stopping the rod at the end of SLP allows the following line to form a tight loop as it rolls out beyond the stopped rod tip.

Now that we've maintained SLP on the back cast and thrown a tight loop, where else might we falter?

**Well, the anemic back cast is another enemy.**

Applying accelerating force through the casting stroke is necessary to propel the line, and when we instead move the rod back and forth like a

The rod has stopped abruptly at the end of the back cast stroke at an angle appropriate for the amount of line in the air. A tight loop is seen forming immediately.



windshield wiper, we throw lazy loops that, again, don't straighten. It's akin to piling up slack in the air behind us, and we already discussed that slack is the enemy. Take a look back and make sure that you are smoothly propelling the line with an accelerating power stroke on the back cast over a sufficient stroke length with an abrupt stop at the end of the stroke such that the line

During the pause, the hand holds its position to avoid creep. The line is nearly straight and the forward cast now begins with the line under tension.



straightens out behind you. So now we've moved the rod tip through its SLP to an abrupt stop with a smooth, accelerating power stroke. It's time for the "pause"—the short wait before we begin the forward cast during which the line straightens behind us.

**Often, the timing of our pause is poor.** Wait too long and the line drops; tension is lost and the line's trajectory on the forward cast will be more on a convex path as we have to pull it back up, resulting in a wider front loop. Conversely, if you don't wait long enough, you lose the effect of the full mass of a

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rearward moving fly line to help reload the rod on the forward cast. Also, the line may make a “snap” noise; don’t be surprised if your fly breaks off as it tries to abruptly change directions. When the line is just about straight behind you, begin your forward cast. Remember, the longer the line in the air, the longer the stroke and pause. You’ll develop a feel for this with practice.

OK, so now we’ve eliminated slack, moved the rod tip through its SLP and stopped the rod, paused just long enough for the line to straighten, and

maintained line tension as we ready for our forward cast. When we stop the rod at the end of the stroke (i.e., at the end of its SLP), we need to freeze our hand at that stopping point.

**Often, casters will let their hand rebound and move forward a bit during the pause; this is known as “creep.”** Creep shortens the distance available to now make the forward casting stroke. Over this shortened distance, the caster then tries to cram too much force into the forward stroke of the cast. In other words, the caster feels the need to immediately “punch” the forward cast and applies too much power at the beginning of the stroke. This usually results in a tailing loop in which the fly leg of the loop drops below the rod leg and then upwardly crosses it again. Unwittingly, the caster has impacted the paths of the two legs of the loop and the result is a visible “tripping” of the fly line over itself that results in a wind knot, usually somewhere in your leader. [Note: The opposite of creep is “drift,” where the casting hand moves rearward subsequent to the stroke stopping point. Drift is not deleterious and provides, on longer casts, more distance over which to make a smooth, progressive forward stroke.]

The common back cast flaws described above—slack, canting the rod too far rearward, an anemic power stroke, poor pause timing, and creeping the hand forward-- all impact the forward cast. Set yourself up for success with your forward cast by paying attention to your back cast. Practice with an amount of line in the air that you can comfortably control. Take a look back during casting practice, or have a partner take a video. Make sure that you have a smooth, progressive power stroke on your back cast to propel the line so that it straightens, make a stroke of appropriate length for the length of line in the air and stop the rod tip at the end of its SLP to maintain a tight loop, pause just long enough to let the line straighten but not fall, and maintain your hand position at the end of the back cast to preclude creep. When done, the forward cast will

begin with the line under tension and allow the rod to reload immediately.

Remember, the principles above apply to the forward cast, as well. Take the timing and finesse that you've now developed with your back cast and bring them into your forward cast. Nothing extra--no extra power; maintain SLP and don't blow through the forward cast stopping point. Your presentation cast is nothing more than a false cast that you decide to let drop to the water. Be mindful and enjoy the artistry of your cast!



*Dave Zamos is a resident of Bucks County, PA. He's an FFI Certified Casting Instructor, a TU lifetime member, and provides casting instruction for ORVIS 101 courses at the Orvis, Plymouth Meeting, PA store as well as private lessons. Having fly fished his entire life, he's fished*

*for multiple species in fresh and salt water in the U.S. and multiple international locations.*



[dzamos@comcast.net](mailto:dzamos@comcast.net)

## Last Cast

By John Burgos

*Yes, the days are shorter. The nights are colder. But does that mean the fly rod gets stashed away? I hope not. As cabin fever overcomes you, consider some of the resources that are available in our great state. We have an abundance of winter opportunities. From the tailwater Tulpehocken to the limestone Valley Creek, there is always something to fish. French Creek should fish well this winter. Just take everything a bit slower!*

*Plan to increase your tying skills. Our December meeting always after Christmas is our "Fly Tying Fall Winter 2019-20*

*Roundup." I can't even guess how many "years of experience" will be in that room that night. If you are looking to learn a skill, that meeting will be your chance. You do not need fly tying equipment to participate.*

*John B*



### Editor's Note:

We're creating a newsletter that becomes a valued benefit of belonging to Dame Juliana League.

Over the last 3 issues we've had a remarkable list of contributors.

We invite you to become part of our roster of talented writers. If you have an idea for publication, let me know. Those that are ready for will be gratefully considered.

Until then, enjoy this extended holiday addition of STREAMSIDE!

Matt Seymour  
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