

Club Meeting: Fishing Our Home Waters, Upcoming Programs, Trout Pen Overview, and Travelogue

By Andy Mekelburg

Come join us as we celebrate the end of the year that we can't say out loud! For our first 2021 meeting, we are going to talk about our home waters, Catoctin Creek. Rick Loose will provide an overview of one of our most vital club activities — the trout pen. For those who have never jumped in the pen with us, or those who have, Rick will provide the secrets to raising monster fish. After that, we will have a “local” travelogue focusing on the Catoctin, welcoming any of our members who have caught those monster fish to tell us all about it.

In addition, we are going to discuss some of our new initiatives – Advanced Fly Tying Roundtable, Mentor program, and our revised Outings program.



In December, club members worked with Maryland DNR Fisheries to get (most) our trout out of the pen and into the stream.

This meeting is designed for any members who are planning to fish in 2021. We will supply the information for joining our Zoom call in a separate email. For those who have never used Zoom, or have had problems, let us know — perhaps we can help.

Join us on Zoom at 7 PM on January 12th — We'll email you the link. We hope you can join us for our next club meeting!

Beginner's Fly Tying: Egg-Sucking Leech

By Don Fine

Hope that everyone had a wonderful holiday and that these early winter days have given you an opportunity to relax with a favorite beverage, while you tie some flies for the coming colder months. For our January Beginner's (virtual) Fly Tying session, I have chosen another streamer pattern, which I and several of our club members use for catching stocked trout, as well as steelhead, during the winter months. The pattern is commonly called an *egg-sucking leech*.



Egg-Sucking Leech

Closely resembling a standard *woolly bugger*, the bright colored yarn or bead tied in at the front of the fly seems to enhance the fish's interest in the fly (see note below, regarding the use of flies with egg heads). Materials and instructions for tying my version of the egg-sucking leech will be provided to all who sign up for the January session.

From my internet search: *Egg Sucking Leech a Deeper Look at a Controversial Fly* – “Contrary to popular belief, flies with egg heads have been around for close to 200 years. This makes it difficult to validate arguments that we shouldn't fish egg-

suckers because they're not traditional. Flies like the Dallas, Topy, and Beauy Snow flies were finished with tufts (technically termed ruffs) of red, orange, yellow and green mohair — essentially turning beautiful classic flies into really expensive, time-consuming egg-suckers. Even leech flies have been tied as early as the 1700s, with The Horse Leech Fly from Brookes' *Art of Angling* mentioned in 1740. Classic fly tyer, Dave Carne adds that it's important to note that most of the bright-head flies were primarily used as spring patterns.”

How to Participate in our Jan. “Fly Tying at a Distance” Session

No later than **January 11**, head to the PVFF website to sign up for our *Fly Tying at a Distance* event. We will mail you the hooks and materials needed to tie this month's flies. All instructions for tying these patterns will be available online by **January 13**. Then consider sending us a photo of your fly and/or you at the vise to contact@potomacvalleyflyfishers.club.

Announcing Our New Mentor Program for 2021

By Kevin Haney

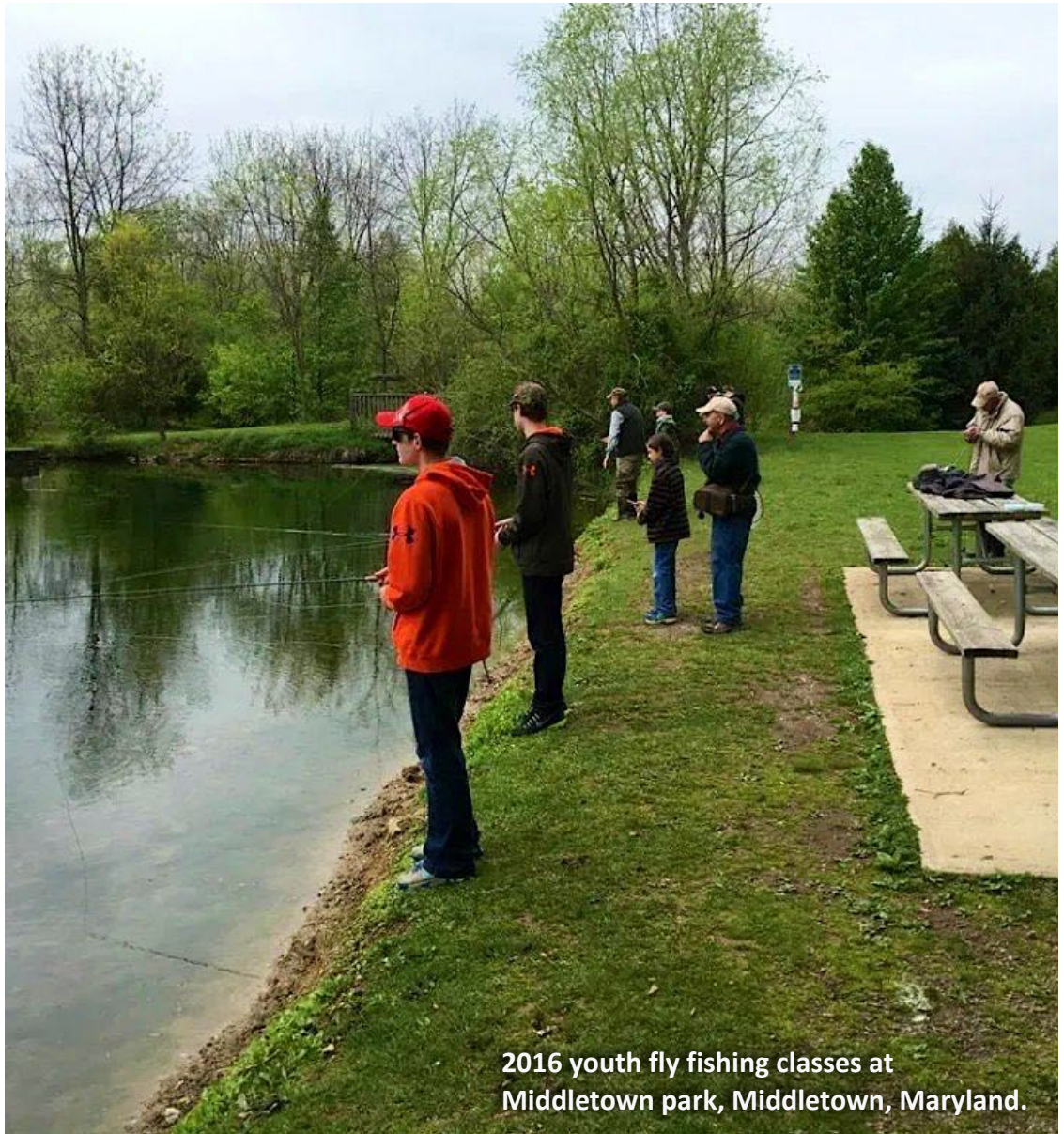
Passing down knowledge of fly fishing from one generation to another is part of the educational mission of the Potomac Valley Fly Fishers.

To that end, we will be instituting a new mentor program for the coming year. Soon, we will be sending out an email to all members with the details and asking for volunteers to be a mentor to a beginning fly fisherman.

The program will be geared toward helping folks that have little or no experience in fly fishing. Volunteer mentors will provide customized

instruction, both on and off the stream, in all areas of fly fishing and introduce them to club activities. The overall goal is to recruit more club members and produce capable, self-sufficient fly fisherman who will become long time club members and contribute to club activities.

Once the program is up and running, a person who needs a mentor will go to the PVFF website, read about the program, and submit a web form that asks



2016 youth fly fishing classes at Middletown park, Middletown, Maryland.

a few questions about experience level, where and for what species they want to fish, what equipment they have, and some other basic information. Then they will be paired with a mentor that matches their needs. So if you ever thought that you have a good base of fly fishing knowledge that could be of use to a beginning fisherman, please consider volunteering to be a mentor. And if you are just starting out on your fly fishing journey, we hope to soon have a roster of club members willing to help.

Project Healing Waters: Crittermite and Casting

By Andrew Frutiger



In our latest installment of online fly tying seminars, Colin Flournoy took the veterans through the more advanced Crittermite fly. Released by Fly Fishing Hall of Famer Bob Kraft in 2014, the Crittermite is a deadlier version of the hellgrammite.

As with the hellgrammite, the Crittermite is meant to be fished on the bottom of larger rivers like the Monocacy or Potomac with good water flow. The best way to fish this fly is to cast to the center and retrieve to the edges using short strips. Smallmouth bass love these flies, as well as large browns (16" plus) but be prepared to bring heavier rods (7wt to

8wt) with floating line to get the fly out where it needs to be.

Jim Lowell continued his casting clinic, focusing on the basics: *back cast*, *pause*, and *forward cast*. To get the tightest possible loops, you must balance mechanics vs. feel. You can have the best mechanics in the world, but if you are not patient on your backstroke (feel the bump) then your foreword stroke will waste both power and accuracy, not only coming up short but also spooking the fish and leading to lost opportunities.

If you have any questions or would like to participate in any of our upcoming fly tying sessions at Fort Detrick, please reach out to me at any time at andrewfrutiger@yahoo.com or go to our Facebook page at *Project Healing Waters — Frederick Chapter*.



The Crittermite

Membership Dues and Starve the Cat

By Dave Dowiak

The New Year approaching always reminds me how fast time "flies" by and how many more times I should have gone fishing. It also means it's time to renew your membership in our PVFF club.

Club dues are now \$15 single and \$20 family. Please fill out and mail in your membership form with payment, including your interest in club activities or any suggestions. You'll find the form at the end of this newsletter.

PVFF is all about education, conservation, and fellowship. Please participate to make our club more active and stronger to support these three goals. Read the informative monthly newsletter. Zoom the insightful monthly meetings. Enjoy the online fly

tying lessons. Hike with the conservation outings. Or call a club member or friend to go fishing.

But be aware that late membership payment means your first catch next year will be confiscated and fed to Andy Mekelburg's cat. I can hear Andy now saying, "When did we get a cat?" Pay him no mind — let's get the dues paid and starve the cat.

And to be politically correct in a satirical way, please note no animals were hurt in the writing of this article and Andy is willing to accept live trout into his neighborhood stream. He might start feeding them special cat food. How ironic...



Astronomy Minute

Great Conjunction Update: Some days you eat the bear ... and some days (weeks!) the bear eats you. The 10, or so, straight days of cloudy skies in the early evening was a bit much. Mother Nature can be so cruel!

Orion: Our old friend Orion is now making his way up over the eastern horizon. That means it is definitely winter. He'll be with us the entire season, moving a little farther westward every evening. The row of three stars in his belt make him easy to spot. Below the belt and to the right is the bright blue-white star Rigel, and above the belt and to the left is the red-orange star Betelgeuse. Obviously, Betelgeuse has not exploded in a supernova – yet. Apparently, it ejected a huge cloud of dust which caused it to dim considerably. Was that a precursor to supernova? Maybe, maybe not. Orion is a tremendous starting point for star hopping. Stay tuned ...

— Russ Hanson



Conservation News: Clifford Branch Clean Up

By Dave Keane

On Saturday, December 5th, eleven members from our club met to participate in a stream clean up. Clifford Branch is a small stream originating from a spring within the Frederick City Municipal Watershed. The stream meanders approximately five miles through dense hardwood forests before eventually flowing into Tuscarora creek.

Our focus was cleaning up the parking areas, roadway and stream. We were able to safely spread out over the various locations maintaining safe COVID protocols. The areas were equally littered with trash but the area with the greatest amount of debris was Hamburg Pond.

Thanks to the members who came out, braved the cold wet weather and cleaned up one of our local streams.



PVFF to Start an Advanced Fly Tying Group

By Larry Forte

This month, we will hold our first meeting for Advanced Fly Tying on Jan. 20th at 7 PM on Zoom. Here's how meetings of the Advanced Fly Tying Group will work. Each participant will be responsible for leading a tying session for at least one monthly meeting during the year. The leader for any given month will select the 'fly of the month' and show how it is tied during the meeting. Thus, if we have 12 tying members in the group, each member of the group would lead a session once per year.



Prior to the meeting which you are scheduled to lead, **you would supply only the recipe** (via email) for the fly to the other members. Then each member would be responsible for getting his/her necessary materials before the tying session — not the lead tier. The leader's sole responsibility is to show the group how to tie the fly. To be part of the group, we encourage participants to consider tying skills are that of an intermediate – advanced fly tier. Those who are new to fly tying would be expected to continue participating in the monthly Beginner's fly tying session, until they are proficient at the basic tying skills. Members of the Advanced Fly Tying Group are not excluded from their continued participation in the monthly Beginner's sessions. Also, as part of the group, your participation requires you to lead one tying session each year (assuming that there are at least 12 members).

Our kick-off meeting will be led by Don Fine. Details for the Zoom call will be sent out via email. If you are interested in participating, sign up on our website or email lbforte@verizon.net.

Last Cast

By Andy Mekelburg

Yay, we made it to the New Year! Wow, is all I can say. In this strange period, fly fishing and PVFF provided many of the positive experiences I had this year. Of course, being outside and communing with nature is always great, but it had a special significance this year, in which we felt trapped in our homes. Once we ventured those first steps outside, then slipped on our waders and boots and made our way onto the stream, our minds cleared and we focused on the water in front of us. Catch a fish or two and you've built a great memory.

It's interesting that when we are told to stay away from other people, there is still something inside us

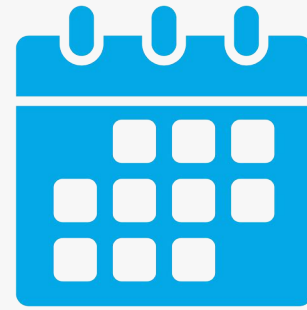
that makes us social beings and we have the need to interact with others. I feel fortunate and enjoyed the times that I was able to meet up with club members in a safe manner and share the passion of fishing. I don't think I'm the only one, given the large number of club members who joined us on the limited times we gathered in person at the casting clinic and the trout stocking. However, our non-physical get togethers speak to the heart of this club. Who would have thought that a group organized for fishing would have adapted modern communications technology to provide an online platform to share our interest?

Fly Tying at a Distance has actually had more participants than when we met in person. Our general meetings on Zoom have been well attended and has actually provided more of a platform for our club members to interact with each other, compared to our physical meetings. It's given me a chance to get to know our club members much better. And no better example was our virtual banquet and raffle. Everyone came through and we not only replenished our treasury, but we had a good time as well.

What does next year have in store? Who knows! From the Club's standpoint, I'm very positive about this coming year. Not only can we build on the successful programs we launched last year, but we have some new ideas that I'm looking forward to. Larry Forte and Don Fine have organized a new advanced fly-tying group. We'll be gathering once a month, starting virtually, of course, and each person gets to teach their favorite fly. Kevin Haney is organizing a new mentor program. We encourage those who want to learn to be matched with those willing to teach. Mike Holland is working to launch a systemic (fancy word for organizing) approach to outings. Any member is encouraged to lead an outing and Mike will work with that person. In my mind, a successful outing only needs two fishers. We may organize some specific outings, e.g., Euro-nymphers, bamboo rod aficionados, Tenkara, etc. Members who are interested in this should contact Mike.

I very much appreciate the good times I've had this year with the club and the members. I would list everyone, but we have over 130 members now! I want to acknowledge and thank Lynn Ashe, who is stepping down as a director. Lynn brought many excellent ideas to the club. Ruby Fine is stepping down as Membership Coordinator. I can't say enough about the impact Ruby has had on our club, but she promised to continue in her participation.

Looking forward to a great new year and catching (and releasing) a lot of big fish!



Calendar of Events

- Jan. 7** Board of Directors' Meeting
Conference Call, 7:00 PM
- Jan. 11** Beginner's Fly Tying Online
Sign-Up Deadline
- Jan. 12** Virtual Club Meeting — Join
us on Zoom at 7:00 PM (the link
will be sent out via email)
- Jan. 13** Fly Tying Instruction Available
on PVFF Website
- Jan. 20** Advanced Fly Tying Group —
Join us on Zoom at 7:00 PM
(the link will be sent out via
email)

2020 PVFF Offices & Directors

President.....Andy Mekelburg
 Vice President.....Dave Keane
 Secretary.....Karen Baker
 Treasurer.....Dennis Allen
 3 year Director.....Dave Dowiak
 2 year Director.....Troy Kitch
 1 year Director.....Russ Hanson
 Past President.....Larry Forte

POTOMAC VALLEY FLY FISHERS

P. O. BOX 3001

FREDERICK, MD 21705

www.potomacvalleyflyfishers.club



FLY FISHERS
INTERNATIONAL



POTOMAC VALLEY FLY FISHERS
MEMBERSHIP and RENEWAL APPLICATION and LIABILITY RELEASE

Year _____

The purpose of the Potomac Valley Fly Fishers (PVFF) is (1) to promote fly fishing as the most sportsman-like and enjoyable way of fishing and the most consistent with the preservation and wise use of our resources; (2) to provide advice, suggestions and assistance to club members; (3) to publicize the best practices and techniques of fly fishing, fly tying, fly casting and other related subjects; and (4) to maintain liaison with other organizations of sportsmen and conservationists. By my joining PVFF voluntarily, I understand there are risks involved and will not hold the PVFF club, board of directors, and officers responsible for any injuries, accidents or death as a result of participation in the activities of the Club. I also grant PVFF permission to photograph me and/or my family at any activities and also to publish them in our monthly newsletter, at the meetings and any PVFF fly fishing functions.

Website: www.potomacvalleyflyfishers.club

The undersigned being in agreement with the above does hereby apply for membership/renewal in the Potomac Valley Fly Fishers.

Applicant's Name: _____ Date: _____
(Last) (First)

If family membership, other names: _____

Home Address: _____
Street City State Zip

Phone Number: _____ E-mail address for e-mailing newsletter _____

Applicant's signature: _____

Are you a Fly Fishers Int'l (FFI) member? Circle **Yes or No** **Yearly Dues:** ___ \$15 single ___ \$20 family \$ ___ Donation

How did you hear about PVFF? ___ Friend ___ Facebook ___ Newsletter ___ Fly Shop _____ Other

Interested in a volunteer position? ___ Officer /Board of Directors ___ Committee/Chair ___ Banquet ___ Trip Organizer ___ Teaching Fly Tying ___ Other Activities

Please make check payable to Potomac Valley Fly Fishers or PVFF and mail with completed form to:

David Dowiak, PVFF Membership
8920 Bloomfield Road
Frederick, Maryland 21702

Dues for calendar year Jan 1-Dec 31

Cash _____ **Check #** _____ **Amount** _____ **Date** _____
New _____ **Renewal** _____ **Life** _____