

# The Newsletter of The Connecticut Fly Fisherman's Association

WWW.CTFLYFISH.ORG

From the vest of the President



I hope all of you enjoyed your holiday season and I wish each of you happiness and good health throughout this coming year. Our December meeting went well and was supported with a good number of CFFA members. In the audience was Pete Aarrestad DEEP Director of Inland Fisheries who took the microphone and explained the facts concerning the recent roadside guard rail installation very close to the lower end of the Fly Fishing Only section on Salmon River. This installation blocked off a parking area that was used to access the river a short walk away. Needless to say this caused a huge outcry from anglers. Pete informed us that talks are under way to find a solution to the situation that appeases anglers concerns. He mentioned a possible seasonal gate that would be open from September until June to allow anglers access during the prime fishing months and closed during the heat of the summer. I will keep you informed on any settlement that is reached.

I am happy to tell you that our Beginner Freshwater Fly Tying classes directed by Pete Naples are filled to our maximum of 20 students. The details about these classes can be found on our website <https://www.ctflyfish.org/?view=article&id=152:2024-beginner-freshwater-fly-tying&catid=2> These beginner fly tiers can use your guidance as they begin their journey into a new hobby. Please consider volunteering for this important activity.

Preparations are currently in progress for our annual February Expo and Banquet. As you know this is our biggest and only fundraising event of the year. Supporting

your CFFA by attending one or both of these events is very much appreciated. A list of vendors and programs will be continually updated and posted on our CFFA website and our Facebook Page.

This January CFFA annual dues can be renewed in person at our January 16th meeting with cash or a check. You can also choose to mail in your payment or use our website to pay online using our PayPal set up. A link on our website provides the mail in form and the online payment under the Membership Tab.

For anybody that missed our November meeting that featured CFFA member Michael Day's bamboo rod building journey, I want you to know that he'll be televised on Fox61 CT at **5:45pm** and **10:45pm** on **Tuesday, January 9, 2024**. They will profile his bamboo fly rod building and his shop. After the broadcast, it will be available online.

Also upcoming on Saturday January 13 is the FVTU Angler Gear Tag Sale held in Unionville at the Farmington Community Center. Go to <https://www.fvtu.org> for info.

On a final note on December 21 I did call East Hartford Park & Recreation and I was told that Veterans Memorial Clubhouse is no longer available as a rental

Our meeting is on January 15th and we will have pizza and a DVD featuring Lefty Kreh on casting.



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For those going to the Jersey show this year if you might  
To check this place out, my friends and I go each year.



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# CFFA 2024 Banquet Dinner Reservation

## Saturday February 3, 2024

### Nomads Adventure Quest 100 Bidwell Ave, S.Windsor, CT

You are invited to attend this year's annual fundraiser and banquet celebration. Come out and enjoy a night of camaraderie, a great speaker's presentation and some "tall fish tales". Cocktails, cash bar and preview of prizes from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Dinner will be served at 6:30 pm. Seating is on a "first come first served basis" If you wish to reserve an entire table (8 seats) you must contact Phil Apruzzese @ 860-489-4319 or pjapruz@aol.com. This year the dinner is a **BUFFET style dinner for \$55.00 per guest. Just fill out the form below and mail with your check.**

**Mail this Reservation Form and your Check by 1/26/2024**  
**TO: Mr. Phil Apruzzese 1369 Mountain Rd. Torrington Ct. 06790**  
**Please Make Your Check out to CFFA**

**If you need a Gluten Free option or Vegetarian option please circle your preference below**

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
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Number of Reservations@ \$55.00 each \_\_\_\_\_

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## Finding Solitude in Fly Fishing

By Carl Ochnio

[carl.ochnio@gmail.com](mailto:carl.ochnio@gmail.com)



While on an extended fishing trip, I regularly call home to check in. My wife will often ask how my day went. Sometimes my reply will be

“disappointing” as I happened to bump into another angler. Yes, I do like my space and in today’s world it is getting harder to find.

While fishing in southern New England, I have accepted sharing the water with other anglers. A forty-five-minute drive to a popular river during the peak of the spring Hendrickson hatch might be followed by thirty minutes of driving around to search for an unoccupied pool or pull-out. If it’s an exceptional hatch and the surface of the water is boiling with rises, I’ll certainly deal with the crowd and of course, they with me.

On the other hand, there are times I will travel a few thousand miles to lay down fly line in water that is supposedly “off the grid.” A day in the Rockies might begin by traveling twenty-five miles on an unimproved road to reach a trailhead. Then hiking into a wilderness area to fish a pool I have been dreaming about all winter. When I finally arrive, it’s somewhat soul crushing to discover an angler already standing in that exact “go to” spot.

When heading out for the day, I am ideally looking forward to the following: being completely alone on a beautiful and secluded stretch of river, hooking up with a few fish and having the opportunity to learn something new. I take particular pleasure in seeking out-of-the way and off the beaten path locations. It’s mind-blowing just how much my mood improves as soon as the tires of my SUV touch a dirt road.

To quote country artist Rodney Atkins, I always “*wanna put a little gravel in my travel.*”

I admit that I enjoy wading unpressured water probably

as much as a skier enjoys fresh powder.

When I retired, I pictured miles of rivers deserted of anglers during the work week. There would be no more weekend fishing for me. I confess being somewhat delusional. What a surprise it was to consistently find those rivers filled with folks. Often compelling me to question whether anyone actually worked anymore?

I’d describe myself as J.A.F.F. (Just Another Fly Fisher) and certainly not a person with deep pockets. Like many



anglers, I fish public waters and have yet to toss flies on a private river or stream. I know the opportunity is always there for me to do so, but it comes down to that little matter of “exchanging money.” The added concern is if I did indulge, it would spoil me on ever returning to places I have always fished. It’s been said that once you fly first-class, it’s

hard going back to coach.

Does it seem like there are more people than ever on our public waters? Well, here is some raw data and one can extrapolate from there. In 1952, the population of the United States was reported to be approximately 152 million people. In 1969 it was around 200 million. In 2023, the number has risen to 339 million. You can see how these numbers lend some credence to those gray bearded and sage anglers who fondly speak and reminisce about the golden fishing days of yesteryear.

It stands to reason that as our general population continues to expand, it proportionally increases the number of anglers taking up the sport of fly fishing. This is great news for fishing gear companies as they have a larger market to reach. Not so much for those seeking space and solitude.

In 1956, in response to the growing population and to improve our national defense, President Dwight Eisenhower signed the Federal-Aid Highway Act. The bill re-

sulted in the creation of a 41,000-mile highway system that would alleviate traffic jams and any obstacles getting in the way of “speedy and safe transcontinental travel.” Sounded good, but as population continued to swell, it wasn’t long before the highways were jammed with additional cars and trucks. What was the solution to this problem? Simply expand the roadways.

It’s unfortunate this same remedy can’t be utilized on our rivers and streams; they cannot be widened to handle the ever-increasing angling pressure.

Expanding population is one of the reasons why it is harder to find solitude. Another culprit is the extraordinary advancements in technology. Hard to believe that just about thirty years ago, most anglers lacked easy access to the Internet, GPS, Google Earth or updated stocking reports.

As an example, in the 1970’s, if one wanted information on current river conditions, it required a trip down to the river to take a peek. Another option? Call someone who lived near the river, or a local fly shop to listen to what they might be willing to share.

Today, we can simply use a smart phone or computer to “uplink” to satellite orbiting the earth to check water flows, a fly shop’s river report or actually view river conditions on a “real time” webcam. Anglers can find out which waters were stocked in the past week or some cases, even the past twenty-four hours. There are days where this level of detailed information will dramatically influence the number of folks who choose to slide into their waders. Google Earth alone has helped to unleash a whole new breed of anglers who now refer to themselves as “blue-liners.”

No doubt, today’s anglers are also considerably more mobile. Years ago, should someone mention they were heading “up north” to fish, it generally meant a car trip to Vermont, New Hampshire or Maine. Today, it literally can mean getting as close to the Artic Circle as possible. Anglers seeking adventure are able to watch videos on YouTube highlighting great fishing destinations around the world. Then quite easily plan a trip to get there. While traveling during the summer, it is hard not to notice the folks hopping onto planes carrying rod tubes. It’s not just fish in your local river that are seeing an in-

creased number of flies constantly passing over their heads. Fishing pressure has risen most everywhere as our world seems to have quickly become much smaller.

To slow this upsurge in fishing pressure, a number of western states are having controversial discussions in regards to limiting the number of commercial guide boats on some of their rivers. On the Big Hole River in Montana, certain sections of the river are already closed to drift boats at designated days and times. On the famed Madison River, one section is now limited to wade fishing only. With this increase in angling activity, the thinking is if policies or procedures are not in place to regulate use, it will continue to grow to the point where it becomes a much more serious issue. These debates are heated and regulation is often a volatile topic. In history, you might recall The Barb Wire Wars that occurred primarily in the west during the late 1800’s. It’s an example of how differing viewpoints on the use and access of public lands can cause considerable tension.

Sure, it’s a longshot, but in order to protect their resources, can you imagine a day in the foreseeable future when a state limits fishing to odd/even days based on the last number of a fishing license?

With this increase in angling pressure, is it reasonable to continue to judge the “success” of a day of fishing based on the number of anglers one runs into? A response to the question certainly is personal and dependent on any number of factors.

My first choice is to continue to make every attempt to avoid the crowds of well-known honey holes and savor time spent on the quieter sections of a river. There are some legendary pools in my home state that I’ve yet to set foot in. I simply just don’t enjoy fishing these popular waters and will make every effort to by-pass them.

Pools on some of the popular rivers have legendary names associated with them. The Church Pool, Batis Run, Junction Pool, or the famed Texas Hole. Most of the time I spend my time in pools that do not have monikers. Over the years, I have had fun adding my own names to these spots. There is The Tub, Out of Sight Bend Pool, The Aquarium and Last Chance Pool.

Realize that seeking solitude has its shortcomings. In many cases, one might be casting in less productive water where the fish count is lower. The trade-off is it can be quiet and peaceful. Solitude might provide an opportunity to witness an eagle or an osprey effortlessly glide down and nab a fish with its talons. Should you get far enough away from the crowds, it can provide the opportunity to listen in on the soundtrack of nature.

Are there other downsides to consider when tossing flies in less productive sections of rivers and streams? It can be problematic if one needs frequent bites to maintain a positive mental attitude. It's hard to explain but there are days when if I don't hook up with a fish within the first hour, it can begin to feel like I lost my mojo and will never catch a fish the rest of my life. It's funny how after all these years and so many fish brought to the net, this feeling of doubt can still creep into one's head.

Of course, there are those mornings where I might wade a few miles and not scare up a rise. To avoid a complete skunk and to boost my ego and spirits, the last refuge of this scoundrel is to stop and fish under the bridge on the state highway when heading back to my SUV. I'll plant myself under the bridge, tie on my confidence fly and listen to the whine of car tires and rumble of semi-tractor trailers as they pass directly over me.

Even if you relish solitude, it's always a good idea to have an ace in the hole just like the good old Bridge Pool. Simply having a last-ditch option can be the anti-perspirant that will ward off the smell of an otherwise malodorous day. So, I'll catch a couple of fish, feel a little bit better myself and head home smiling. It is a high price to pay, but there are some days when one just needs to net a fish. A spot such as this can often be a gem hidden right there in plain sight to everyone, yet so many will just walk right by it.

One of the upsides to trolling secondary waters is one can generally move around from pool to pool without hesitation. There are popular rivers where an angler is somewhat resigned to fish a very small section or feel stuck in a particular spot. I refer to it as "cement fishing" as one feels their boots are literally glued to the river bottom. It's the equivalent of finding a good parking

spot in New York City as one cannot bear the thought of ever giving it up.

Another way to enjoy solitude is to consider fishing when the weather turns lousy or during the shoulder seasons such as early spring or late fall. Choosing to fish during the milder days of winter is also an option. With the high tech and tactical clothing available today, an angler can nearly dress for just about any type of weather condition.

### **So, What's Next?**

Where one decides to fish is a personal matter and dependent on any number of factors. An angler who prefers to fish "gold medal" or "trophy" waters known to have a high fish per mile count can easily track down those locations. Someone seeking a challenge or is a glutton for punishment might choose to toss their flies in pools holding highly pressured and educated fish. The other option is deciding to take a chance on some secondary spots and the outcomes associated with it. Seeking the middle ground might be a nice alternative. A mix and match providing an opportunity to experience a bit of both environments dependent on the conditions or your mood.

On most days, I believe you'll know where to find me.

*"Sometimes when standing alone in a river...*

*I feel it's exactly where I'm supposed to be" – Unknown Quote*

*\*From the author. Thanks for taking the time to read part one of Finding Solitude. Hope you enjoyed it. Look for part two in next month's CFFA newsletter.*





## CFFA Election of Officers

The Board of Directors is presenting the following slate for 2024. As you can see our Legal Secretary and Vice President of Promotion positions are open. If anyone reading this has the desire to fill this position please let us know.

**President - Gary Steinmiller (current)**  
**VP Activities - Bob Winot (current)**  
**VP Promotions - Open**  
**VP Environment - Phil Apruzzese (current)**  
**Recording Secretary - Phil McCormick (current)**  
**Legal Secretary - Open**  
**Treasurer - Chuck Koteen (current)**

We will be accepting any other nominations from the floor at our January membership meeting.



### Paul's FLY OF THE MONTH

#### River Blob Egg

**Hook:** Fulling Mill 5125 Jig hook or Hannek H450 Size #12 (or jig hook of choice.)

**Thread:** Fluorescent Orange 6/0.

**Bead:** Slotted Tungsten Bead Fluorescent Orange -- 3.5 to 4.6mm depending on the sink rate you want.

**Body:** Medium Flexi Squishenille UV – Fluorescent Orange #137.

Tying instructions and a video on how to tie this fly can also be found at <http://tightlinesflyfishing.blogspot.com/>. If you have any questions about this fly or would like to submit a Fly of The Month I can be reached at [pdinice@frontier.com](mailto:pdinice@frontier.com).

The River Blob  
 tied by Paul Dinice  
[tightlinesflyfishing.blogspot.com](http://tightlinesflyfishing.blogspot.com)





# 60th Anniversary Celebration Banquet

The Nation's oldest chartered saltwater fly fishing club has reached a noteworthy milestone. Come and help celebrate our 60th Birthday with a gala dinner event serving all you can eat family style chicken.

**Wright's Farm, 84 Inman Road, Burrillville, RI 02830,  
Saturday, January 20, 2024 at 1:00pm.**

Come one come all, everyone is welcome to attend our festive event. What a great way to share our history and renew old friendships with the sport we so passionately and actively participate.

We've tried to tailor the cost of dinner at a reasonable price to fit most family budgets.

**Please complete the form and make checks payable to Rhody Fly Rodders.**

Active paid member cost.....\$23.00 includes tip, state taxes.  
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