



## Thames Valley Chapter Newsletter

# Stream Lines

*"The Voice for Eastern CT Trout and Salmon Anglers"*

January 2016

**Dear Member,**

Winter's cold temperatures have finally arrived and thoughts about going fishing are put on the back burner. Most of us now turn to fly tying, reading a good book or thumbing through the latest fishing catalog in the warmth of our "caves" and only to venture out when absolutely necessary. Well the next few chapter meetings are designed to help motivate you to leave those comfortable confines.

This month Jean Pillo will show us different ways to assess the water quality of our watersheds and describe a program you might want to volunteer for to assure that our watersheds remain healthy. In addition to Jean's presentation, we are having our second "Women's Meet & Greet" designed to welcome and attract more women to our chapter. Coffee & cupcakes (yes, guys you too!) and in addition to our regular door prize there are two special Ladies Only door prizes (Cabela's Traditional graphite 8 ½' 4 PC fly rod & case and a Cabela's Chest/waist pack). If you can't make the CFFA Expo FEB 6th we are offering our members to have "first dibs" on the fly tying material and books that the chapter will be selling at the Expo. We have over 200 great reads (many first editions and some signed) and lots of material for you to make it through the cold winter. And, if you sign up a new member that night you will receive a free gift!

February means Flies, Pies & More! Last year's we had a great turn out and it should be again. Fly tying demonstrations, rod building, mini clinics, art displays and more... like last year. This year the Fish Connection will be selling fly tying material & gear and we are adding a "Swap & Shop" tag sale where members can bring in gently-used, collectible, fishing equipment to swap or sell. We all have gear collecting dust that some else can use and enjoy. To reserve a table please contact me. Of course, there will be some hot pizza, popcorn & soda/water/coffee.... It should be fun night!

See you at The Moose!



John Preston, *President*  
Thames Valley TU, Chapter 282  
[jpreston44@yahoo.com](mailto:jpreston44@yahoo.com)



## Calendar of Events

**Tuesday, January 19th - 6:00pm**

**Chapter Membership Meeting, Moose Lodge, Bozrah, CT**

*Presentation: Jean Pillo - Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Program  
and Women's "Meet n' Greet"*

**Saturday, February 6th, 2016**  
**CFFA EXPO - TVTU will be there!**  
*Maneeley's, 65 Rye Street, South Windsor, CT*

**Tuesday, February 16th - 6:00pm**  
**Chapter Membership Meeting, Moose Lodge, Bozrah, CT**  
*Flies, Pies & More...*

**Tuesday, March 15th - 6:00pm**  
**Chapter Membership Meeting, Moose Lodge, Bozrah, CT**  
*Dean Keister - Stillwater Fishing & the LTC*



CONNECTICUT FLY FISHERMAN'S ASSOCIATION, INC. [ctflyfish.org](http://ctflyfish.org)  
presents  
**The 46th Annual Fly Fishing Expo & Banquet**  
Feb. 6<sup>th</sup> 2016  
Featuring **Ed Mitchell**  
Salt Fly-Fishing author, photographer, and lecturer  
Most recent publication: *Along the River Edge*  
**MANEELEY'S BANQUET FACILITY**  
65 Rye Street  
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**\$45 PER PERSON BANQUET**  
\* Cocktails 6pm \* Raffles  
\* Dinner 7pm \* Awards  
Guest Speaker: Ed Mitchell  
Reservations: Kurt Jagielow  
203-314-5811  
RSVP BY Jan 29, 2016

**Expo 9am-3pm**  
**\$3.00 Admission**  
Children Under 16 Free  
\* Kids Fly Tying Table \*  
\* Presentations \*  
\* Fly Tyers Row \*  
\* Local Fly Shops \*  
\* Free Parking \*

### January 19th Membership Meeting:

#### Women Members... "Meet & Greet" (from 6-7pm prior to the regular membership meeting)

Thames Valley TU would like to extend a special invite to our fellow Women TU members. Come out for coffee and cupcakes and meet other members of Thames Valley TU. Learn about our great chapter and what we do. Non-members, family, and friends are all welcome. Stay for the feature presentation and enjoy a fun night out!

In addition to our regular Door Prize & Raffle there will be a...

- Special Women's Door Prize drawings for:
- Cabela's Fly Rod (8 1/2' 4 pc 5wt)
- Cabela's Chest/Waist Pack

And for All Members....

- Book and Fly Tying Material Sale - 6 pm to end of meeting.
- Featured Presentation: Jean Pillo - Last Green Valley VWQM Program.
- Receive a gift for signing up a new member at the meeting.

#### January 19th Membership Meeting - Raffle Table

The raffle table will contain, among the customary 30 or so items, a Browning Waterton VII 8ft, 4wt, 2 piece fly rod with case. Other items include a new in the box 3/4 wt. fly reel. Please remember that your raffle committee values your donated items.

#### Somerset, NJ Fly Fishing Show Trip - January 30th 2016

Jack Balint is arranging a bus trip (room for 50 people) to the Somerset, NJ Fly Fishing Show on Saturday, 30 January 2016. The Somerset Fly Fishing Show is one of the biggest and best FF shows on the east coast. Cost is \$60 which includes show admission, transportation, and beverages. Tentative plans are to depart Norwich 7-7:30am, and leave NJ around 4:30-5pm. Contact Jack at the Fish Connection, 127 Route 12 Preston, CT. Phone 860-885-1739.

### [Free Upgrade to a Family Membership](#)

We are pleased to launch [a new Free Family Membership Upgrade offer](#) to any existing Trout Unlimited member -- for a limited time only! By signing up and adding the names and information for the family members living in your household at [www.tu.org/familymembership](http://www.tu.org/familymembership), you will enjoy the benefits of a TU family membership for the duration of your regular membership for free.



## Cane Rod Building - Craftsmanship at its Best by Two of Our Own

by Ed Walsh

There is no question that almost all fly fishermen are passionate about their sport. Most are just as excited to tell you about the 24" Rainbow they caught on the Farmington or the 6" Brookie taken in a small feeder stream of the Salmon River.

The ones who take this passion to the next level are those who tie their own flies and, or, built a graphite or fiberglass rod. Taking this passion even further are those very few who take the time, and acquire the tools, to build cane rods. It is two TVTU members whose efforts we introduce in this article.

Although Bob Walsh and Don Avery build exceptional cane rods each entered this endeavor from a slightly different direction.

Bob got the itch after reading an article on cane rod building in McLane's Fly Fishing Encyclopedia. But with a wife and three young children, plus attending graduate school, he just didn't have the time or money to pursue the thought. Even though the idea remained active it wasn't until Bob retired in 1999 that he pursued his dream. He originally met a guy fishing who had built more than 60 rods and offered to help get him started. Unfortunately the gentleman passed away before spending any time with Bob but another option opened when he found, and enrolled in, Master Rod Builder Lon Blaufelt's "Cane Rod Building Class" in Maine. The program was an intensive seven days of hands-on training and ended with the completion of what Bob calls "a serviceable 7'6" 4 wt. cane rod". Bob started to acquire the needed equipment and materials soon thereafter.



Bob flaming the bamboo to drive out moisture & enhance color.

Don took a quite different path. It was 1990 and he wanted to buy a 4 wt. bamboo rod but wasn't successful locating one at an affordable price so he bought Garrison and Carmichael's book "A Master's Guide To Building A Bamboo Fly Rod" thinking it would provide some direction. His interest only grew after reading the book and he started assembling the necessary equipment and materials. He completed his first rod and was comfortable with the finished product. Don was so confident with that first effort that he considered rod building as a career and actually visited the Orvis Company in Manchester, Vermont, to explore employment opportunities. He suggests the pay range and cost of living in Southern Vermont didn't match up well and that idea was abandoned.



Don using a depth gauge & planing form

While both had successful early experiences each suggested that the learning curve was not always fun-n-games. Bob dismantled a few early efforts while Don suggested his second and third rods were so bad they met dreadful ends destroyed with a hammer and saw.

Both suggested patience is a necessary attribute for anyone thinking about building a cane rod. While Don has guided a few cane rod builders and is always ready to answer anyone's questions he suggests it a lot easier to obtain information and guidance today on the internet. Bob has tutored thirteen fellow fly fishermen in their rod building efforts from physicians to sailors and a few high school and college students. One individual who is learning the craft under Bob's watchful eye is our own TVTU President, John Preston. John has built three rods and tells me a fourth will be started very soon.



Bob with his rod building Bible.

When discussing start-up costs two different responses were provided. Bob estimates equipment cost of between \$4,000 and 5,000. Don on the other hand used many resources (talented friends and associates) to acquire the necessary tools of which many were hand made. Don, by his own admission, is a true New England "Swamp Yankee". One who minimizes expenses whenever possible. He made that claim many times during our conversations for this article.



Bob splitting the cane.

Both suggest materials for each rod to be around \$250 and be prepared to spend 70 plus hours before a rod is completed. We did a little math at this point to understand what might be a reasonable cost to build a rod. Using \$20.00 / hour as a base pay and add \$250 for materials you arrive at a total of \$1650. But remember that 70 hours might be undercutting the total so a cost of \$2,000 is not unrealistic. Using this math it's not hard to see why a good cane rod maker charges \$2,500 and more for one of their products. Bob also added that good cane is getting more difficult to find which will increase costs going forward. Both agree by using the above calculations selling rods is not necessarily a profitable venture.

I asked both Bob and Don what type of rod they prefer fishing with and the responses were very interesting. Bob uses a fast action graphite rod most of the time while Don enjoys the slower action of one of his own productions. Bob also said he's reluctant to use one of his cane rod due to its worth.

I also asked if either sold any of their rods. Bob has not although he's received offers while Don has sold a few and donated one to a past TVTU Banquet. Bob has also donated a few of his finished products as raffle items to a few of the organizations he belongs to in the Connecticut and New York area.

One question that generated interesting responses was: what advice would you give anyone thinking about building a cane rod? Bob's first response was from the Nike commercials "Just Do It", but followed that up with "it's a very demanding undertaking which requires patience and tutoring but it will truly yield a family heirloom". He also suggests building a graphite rod first to get a feel for the time and effort required. Then think about increasing that time seven fold if deciding to build a cane rod. Don was a little more tongue-in-cheek with his "good luck" but included "do not think you'll get rich if you want to sell your products, just enjoy the ride".



Don loves the action of his cane rod while playing a Madison 16" Rainbow.

One thing that was quite obvious during our conversations was both men were willing to share every experience, good and not so good. And both, I am quite certain, would be just as willing to describe those experiences, and provide guidance, to anyone who may be interested in building a cane rod. Someone once said "what I have you have". It could have been Bob Walsh or Don Avery, probably both.

To my way of thinking these two gentlemen exemplify everything that is good about the great sport of Fly Fishing. I am honored to call them friends.

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# Jack Balint's Presentation - Saltwater Sport Fishing S.E. CT (Recap)

by John Preston

Jack Balint has been a full time guide since 1990 and owner of the Fish Connection shop in Preston, CT. Jack sport fishes with spinning and fly fishing gear primarily for Stripers (mostly), Blues, False Albacore and Bonita. He has held two world records and two state records (Bonita) and has guided customers for two Striped Bass state records. He is sponsored by Yamaha and Cobia Boats and one of the busiest captains in the area. During the prime season he practically guides every day... recording over 140 guiding trips for this year. Jack says this helps him know when and where to go for his customers to have a successful and enjoyable outing. With approximately 80 percent repeat customers as his customer base I would say he far exceeds their expectations. They come as far away as England.



Based in Stonington he normally fishes as far west as Montauk & Orient Point and East to Watch Hill. Jack likes to fish the front of the rips and doesn't chase the "birds" because they are not a reliable indicator to where the fish are. He says it is like fishing a river or stream for trout. He uses only about four fly patterns (anchovy, butter fish, squid, & bunnies) when fly fishing and when the squid are running (late May/June) a soft plastic with a single hook, 8-10" squid imitation (brown is his favorite color) can be a killer lure. He has fly and spinning gear for his customers and will take out three spinning or two fly customers at a time. He recommends a 10 weight fly rod or 7-7 1/2' spinning rod for most of the fishing.



Jack provided us with many examples and stories of his customers successfully catching Stripers, Blues, Bonita and False Albacore. The one story that stuck in my mine wasn't about fishing but when he saw a few deer swimming off shore of Watch Hill heading south out to sea or Fishers Island. He turned his boat around and guided them to shore.

Jack is also a fine fly tier. At our fly tying classes held at his shop last winter he demonstrated his skills by showing us how to tie a couple of versions of a Deceiver. So stop by his shop in Preston and I'm sure he will help you out with anything (latest info, guiding, tackle, bait, fly tying material, etc.) you might need.

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# Conservation Fund Raising Raffle

by the Conservation Committee

## Win an Orvis Helios Outfit!

The Conservation Committee has been busy planning & working on increasing our conservation efforts and applying for grants. This takes a lot of resources... man-hours and money. Please help us raise \$2000 for future projects dedicated to conserving, protecting and restoring our cold-water fisheries in the Eastern CT. All funds from this raffle will be ear marked for conservation only.

Show your support for Eastern CT cold-water fisheries and **Win** a very "gently used" Orvis Helios 9 ½ Foot, 6 WT, 4 Piece, Fly Rod & case (original MSRP \$795); a "new" Gold Orvis Mirage III LA Fly Reel (MSRP \$475), and a "new" Sage WF6-F Fly Line (MSRP \$79). A perfect outfit for broodstock Atlantic Salmon or big water angling!



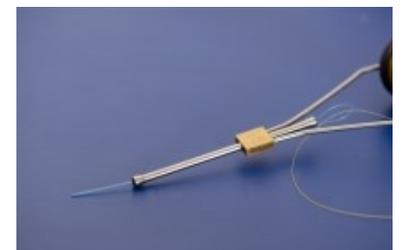
Raffle tickets are only **\$20** each. The drawing will be held once we meet our goal of \$2000 (100 tickets). You do not have to be present to win. Tickets are available at our monthly meetings and through the Chapter's Board of Directors members. Or, send a check payable (with name, address & phone#) to: **Thames Valley TU Chapter 282, P.O. Box 211, Hanover, CT 06350**. A ticket will be mailed back to you and recorded.

**Thank You for your Support.**

## Fly Tying "Tips"

### (Dental) Bobbin Threader

Instead of using a metal wire bobbin threader try using a dental floss threader. It won't cause any sharp burrs in the metal tube of your bobbin thereby, preventing breaking off the thread while tying.



If you have any fly tying tips, please submit them to [John Preston](mailto:John.Preston@tu.edu).



# Fly of the Month

## "Sulphur Soft Hackle"

Video and tying by Tightlines Productions

Lately I have become obsessed with soft hackle flies. Here is a pattern that might be the answer to your prayers when the sulfurs are hatching but your dry fly keeps getting refused or getting an occasional small trout. Fish it like a dry fly or just below the surface film were the big ones are feeding! [Link to tying video](#)

### Fly Tying Recipe: Sulphur Soft Hackle

Hook: 1X-long nymph hook, here a Dai-Riki 60, sizes 12-18.  
Thread: Brown UTC, 70 denier.  
Tail and thorax: Pheasant-tail fibers.  
Abdomen: Fluorescent orange UTC Ultra Wire, size brassie.  
Adhesive: Zap-A-Gap.  
Hackle: Hungarian partridge (or hen hackle).  
Head: Thread and head cement.

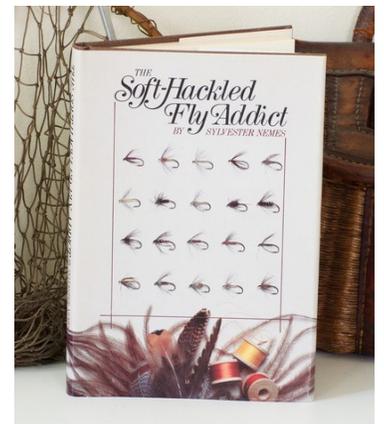
## "Book Review"

by John Preston

### "The Soft-Hackled Fly Addict" by Sylvester Nemes

When it comes to reading I am a fact-based, Jack Webb sort of reader (if you under 50 you are probably wondering who is Jack Webb?). No non-fiction, flowery worded stuff for me... just the facts! But when it comes to history, DIY, politics, sport cars, and fly fishing I can get quite absorbed into them. This brings me to a book I have recently read, "The Soft-Hackled Fly Addict" written in 1981 by Sylvester Nemes. His first book "The Soft-Hackled Fly" (1975) was responsible for the resurgence of a type of fly that has been fished for centuries. Being a dry fly "semi-purist", of course, I never read any of his books... what a pity. It took his book "Spinners" (1995) to open my eyes to another dimension of fly fishing and tying. I picked it up on EBay this year because I wanted to know more about spinners and their imitations because of the Green Drake (and others) spinner falls I encounter out West. I enjoyed that book so much I had to read another of his books which brings me to the "Addict" book.

Using T.E. Pritt's "North-Country Flies" and Edmonds & Lee's "Brook and River Troutling" books from the late 19th and early 20th century Nemes walks us through a short history of soft hackled flies, the many patterns and methods of the time. There are many pattern recipes and color plates to examine and, I might add, adapt for today. I am sure many of the feathers are not available now but one can always find a substitute. In the "Troutling" book the authors rehash much of Pritt's patterns but add a few of their own. Their most important contribution is matching the patterns to an insect order (i.e. mayflies, caddis, stoneflies & true flies).





Waterhen Bloa

My "Addict" copy was signed and came with a Waterhen Bloa soft hackle fly with that I believe was tied by Nemes. What's interesting is the fly looks like a gray soft hackled Lady Beaverkill or a Muskrat soft-hackle that George "Midge-master" DeGray always highly touts. The Bloa pattern calls for a feather from a Water Hen's wing (gray) and a body of yellow silk & fur from a Water-rat (muskrat or mole).

Nemes then describes the "modern" soft-hackled fishing methods he uses that were missing from his first book. Of note (to me) was the "droppers and bob" method. Bob here means the first fly and not bobber (aka indicator). It reminded me of Steve Culton's very good presentation on fishing multiple wet flies. It is a method that is not used much anymore... must try it out this year. Next Nemes describes and illustrates how to tie soft hackled flies. They are very easy to tie... basically a slender body and soft hackle. You can add a small ball of fur (thorax) just behind the hackle to make the hackle more "lively" and buggy looking. I love quick, simple and easy to tie flies. He also offers up 20 of his patterns (14 old patterns from his first book and 6 new ones). The final chapter is a short story by Nemes entitled "Upper Big Blue" which is interesting but it is fiction and, of course, I can't remember much of it...

"Addict" is highly recommend (there is much to learn from it) but I warn you, one can get "hooked" on his books and soft-hackled flies. I know I have. I will be tying dozens of them for the coming season. I have added his first book to the collection and working on getting my hands on at least one more...

Note: If anyone has a copy of Sylvester Nemes "Soft-Hackle Fly Imitations" (1991) drop me an email. I would like to borrow it to read or buy. Thanks.

If you have any reviews or recommendations, please submit to [John Preston](#).



## "2015 Class Reunion"

by John Springer



Funny how things work out sometimes for you. My wife's class reunion is this year and you know how it goes, people in charge send out messages looking for class mates to let them know about this and questions are asked. Like what are you doing now and where do you live. Well it turns out one of Sandy's class mates is now a fly fishing guide on several of the rivers I fish in and around Cherokee North Carolina. Sandy contacted Eddie and said we were going to be there and how much I loved to fly fish that area and so I got to meet Eddie Hudon and his son Ray and spend a day on the Raven Fork fishing, telling stories and chiding each other all day. Eddie left

me alone but we could see each other and when fishing slowed down for me, he invited me to fish his spot. Since he has been fishing these waters for 10 years he knows them very well, all his flies are tied by an old timer who fished them all his life. His flies work very well I could not help but realize Eddie's a smart guy for doing this. A bit more about this later.



They had last stocked this part of the river last fall so the fish now in the water for 5 months were much more difficult to catch and were not eating the fly called the "Brain", no this was like fishing for wild fish out west only

closer to home and much cheaper. My cost for 3 days of fishing the C&R water at Cherokee was \$52, well worth the price. Ray kicked back and watched us and added comments but was tired from driving 14 hours; he played the gille for us each time we got a big fish. As always happens for some reason our conversation got around to food, I said how I had not had much good Italian food since I left Connecticut, Eddie the perfect host said "I know a place, it's called Frankie's" and so we went later with our wives. Wonderful way to end the day.

It rained hard that night and so the water came up and turned to chocolate, Eddie is hard core like myself and so we went. My expectations were not high looking over the bridge at the water; the only bright side was not many people were fishing. What I have found fishing these conditions was to use San Juan worms, at the fly fishing show in New Jersey I was introduced to some new material to make a rubber worm. So I said I was going to try it, Eddie said good choice. They work! A local fly from down that area is the "Mop" I had used it last fall but caught nothing with it, Eddie said to try it out now it was a great fly, he had them himself. They worked. They are still experimenting with this material down there but it holds promise, and it's from a mop! Like many rivers, golden stone flies work and with the dirty high water Eddie gave me one of his to use, it took my best fish. He also told me exactly where to fish, nothing like local knowledge.



During the week I was there we also fished the Nantahala River and the Tuckasegee rivers, again Eddie showed me the best places to fish and since the both rivers had been stocked hard as it was the opening of the season we got many fish. But if you hunted you found the hold overs from last October's stocking. They are way ahead of us in the south as they have what is called "Delayed Harvest Waters" they fill the river with fish in late fall and it is no kill till June the following year when the water gets warm. Since there are so many out of state cars parked along the river it must work for the state coffers. They are even building a new hatchery in North Carolina to keep the fishermen happy where as Connecticut wants to close one and our fish are getting smaller. If some really great fishing that starts very early

compared to the Northeast and also remember it gets cool down there later interests you check out these rivers and I would strongly recommend Eddie as a guide for a day he could show you more in a day than would take you many trips to learn on your own, that really goes for any new place you go to it took me awhile to figure that out. Here is Ed Hudon's website [bluechipflyfishing](http://bluechipflyfishing)

If you go check out the mom and pop hotels in Whiter N.C. they are cheaper than in Cherokee. Lots of cheap places to eat. The local fly shop is called River's edge. They also have in Bryson City very close by another fly shop and starting this fall will stock the Tuckasegee River in that town to see how it works out so fishermen have even more waters to visit. There is much more to do in Bryson city also if you want or need more. I'm very lucky to have met my wife and the 3 days I fished with her old school mate, well it was another bonus in my life.



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**Jacqueline P. Preston**  
Owner



## Place an Advertisement in "Stream Lines"

Looking to reach a new and diverse audience? Presently we have over 470 members in Eastern CT and the newsletter is published September through May (9 issues). If you have a service or product and would like to reach out to our outdoor and conservation minded readership, consider placing an advertisement in the chapter's newsletter "Stream Lines" and website. The cost is only \$50 for the entire year (9 Issues). For more information and to purchase an ad contact [Jackie Preston](#).

**Thanks for your support!**

## Help Raise Funds for Thames Valley TU



by Jim Clark

### Dear Chapter Members...

Here is a way you can help us raise funds to support our various projects. Donate your no longer used Fishing equipment and books. We will raffle them off and use the money raised to support the chapter's various projects. As a non-profit chapter we can give you a letter for the value of your items which you can use for tax filing purposes.

For more information and to make a donation call Jim Clark at 860-546-6924.

**Thanks for your support!**

To join Thames Valley TU or for information please visit our website [www.thamesvalleytu.org](http://www.thamesvalleytu.org)  
Questions or comments on the Newsletter contact [John Preston](#)

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