

# The Tale of the Smelley Jelly

It was a matter of life & death!



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I have spent most of my life fishing for stripers and bluefish wading the waters of Southeastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island. I was a life long member of Rhody Fly Rodders. Fishing was fun. Life was easy. We started to loose access to our favorite waters, no parking signs appeared. It started to be a struggle to fish (I never thought this would happen).

I am very fortunate to have friends with boats. Once in a while I will get a phone call "Want to go fishing ?" My gear is always ready. You don't have to ask me twice. I heard you the first time – I'm ready.

A few years ago my friend Mike Cree, Mansfield, MA gave me an invitation. We were fishing the waters near Mass Maritime Academy and Buttermilk Bay. It was one of those days with birds diving and fish busting the surface. Everything was fine, catching fish until the patrol boat chased us away. We were in the Cape Cod Canal. Why is it that the best fishing is off limits! I understand commercial tankers have the right of way. Oh well we went back into Buttermilk Bay. Something strange was happening. I was getting out-fished. . Fishing is serious with me. What is Mike doing different? I noticed he was near the outboard engine. At first I thought he was relieving himself. He was extremely busy. Finally "what in the world are you doing?" I surprised him! He turned around. I could see he had something in his hand. O.K. What is that? He replied "Smelly Jelly". It was Menhaden blend. Imagine lacing his fly with smelly jelly. "What is this world coming to?"

At Christmas Time that year. Mike presented me with my own bottle of Smelly Jelly. I laughed and put it in with my fly gear bag.

Years passed and I never used the stuff. A few years ago I got an invitation from my friend Ron Mentecalvo of North Providence, R.I. In the upper Narragansett Bay it was loaded with peanut bunker. Whether fish fresh or salt I have a special love for surface strikes. I was using a fly I originated in the early seventies Armand's Mud/Deceiver. I was in the process of tying a smaller version of the fly when a bottle rolled out of my bag. Smelly Jelly, I was wondering if this was a message from heaven. Oh well I soaked the fly in smelly jelly. Ron, said Armand I'm going to move the boat along the shoreline. With coils of fly line on the deck, I have a bad habit of putting the fly in my mouth. AHHHHHHHHHHHHH-H! I thought I was poisoned. I was spitting over the side, I thought I would be throwing up at any moment. The most horrible stuff I ever put in my mouth. This stuff should be outlawed even for fish. Fast forward – I didn't die. The stuff does work on fish. I can't fish with the stuff because of my bad habit of putting the fly in my mouth.

It was one of the happiest days of my life fishing but it was the worst day also. I thought I was going to meet my maker.

