

Newsletter December 2018

### ***President's Message***

Ed has lots to mention this month and his fingers have been hyper-speed typing on his keyboard:

SO PLEASE SEE PAGE 2 FOR ED'S MESSAGE

#### **NEXT MEETING:**

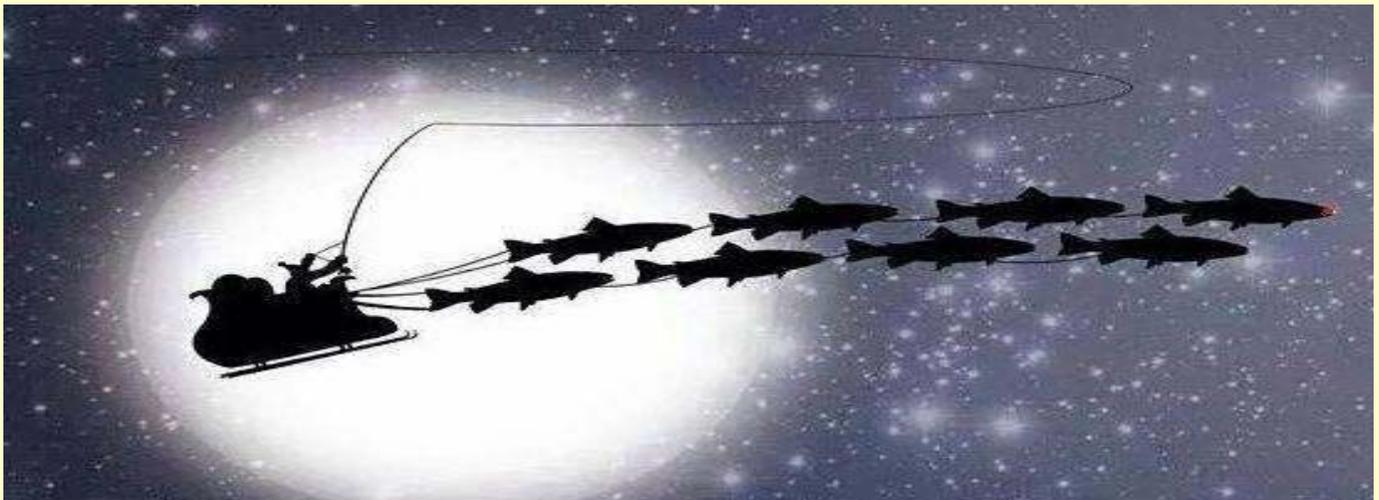
Tuesday December 18, 2018  
South Foxboro Community Center  
382 South St. Foxboro, MA 02035  
Time: 630pm to 9pm

#### **MEETING SPEAKER**

**KEN ELMER**

Ken's been fly fishing for 45 years and guiding for 15.

See Ed's Message for bio details



Happy Holidays to all of you and your families!

## **President's Message**

It's cold and I don't like it the way I used to. I remember enjoying putting on extra layers, skiing and doing fun things in the winter, but now that I am older it's not fun anymore. At the last meeting, the consensus was that just about everyone enjoyed Cynthia Harkness's presentation. It was very interesting hearing about her trials and tribulations in the world of fly fishing.

I am looking forward to our next speaker, Ken Elmer, on Dec. 18<sup>th</sup>. Ken has been fly fishing for 45 years and guiding for 15 years. He guides on the Millers, Ware, Swift, and the West, Middle, and East Branches of the Westfield River. Ken is the author of The Millers, Swift, Ware and EB Fly Fishing Forum as well as The Fly Fishers Guide to the Millers River. Ken's blog: [Millers River Fly Fishing Forum](#).

Peter Jenkins from The Saltwater Edge, will be presenting Tactics on Fishing the Flats, Bonefish or Stripers, on January 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Stay tuned for other interesting and stimulating presentations coming in March and April.

I was talking with Jimmy Clinton who is working with Project Healing Waters. Given the time of the year, I was wondering what our club might be able to help out with, e.g. gear, supplies, donations ... He said, two things that are the highest on the list:

1.) Hooks for fly tying – they go through a lot during their monthly tying sessions.

2.) Volunteers with some tying expertise to help out during the tying sessions.

The sessions are held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wed of the month at 530pm year-round at the VA Boston Healthcare System, 940 Belmont Street, Brockton, MA 02301, building 23.

**Reminder: Don't forget Feb. 26<sup>th</sup>!**

A very important reminder: this year is the Club's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. We are planning a special meeting on Feb. 26<sup>th</sup> to celebrate this milestone. Mark this date down. If you know old or new members who haven't been involved in a while---let them know!

**Note: Upcoming Events**

Jan 18-20, 2019 The Fly Fishing Show, Marlborough MA

Feb. 16, 2019, Bear's Den Expo, Taunton MA. For club advertisement giveaways, we need some volunteers to tie around 50 flies. Please let one of the board members know if you can help out.

We are always looking for ideas and new members. Invite someone you know or don't know, who might be interested in fly fishing, to a meeting. At the meetings voice your opinions, we need your input, this is your club. Even if you cannot make the meetings, we are very interested in hearing your thoughts and ideas as well.

Lastly, I would like to bring to your attention, for those who are unaware, that our long-time member and Good Friend, Tom Magee, passed away on December 8. Please see the last page of our Newsletter for a tribute from Armand and pics from our archive.

Tight Lines & looking forward to seeing you and meeting new members!

Ed

## Winter Fly Fishing

By Ed Rosenbloom

*Ok, now that you have read the formal message, here is something that I did research on I am looking for your feedback (botangles on the Member Message Board) I need to know, does this make sense and/or what did I miss.*



It is not officially winter, but It's bone chilling cold outside. The rivers are running high and fast, the ponds are high too, all due to the rains and some snow. Question: Tell me the truth. Is it really worth fly fishing in the winter? I've read articles in magazines, on the internet, watched videos, and talked to people, but I am still not sure that someone like me is going to catch fish.

If I had the money I would head south to the warmth, based on what I've heard, some great stories, trying for bonefish, permit, tarpon, etc. and of course be warm. But I can only dream, watch more videos and play the lottery. Since the stripers have migrated away, I'm not sure about looking for holdover stripers, so if anything, the focus is on freshwater. I did some research. Here are somethings that I picked up. Let me know if you agree or disagree and if I missed anything.

## Fly Fishing in the winter

### Gear

Most likely, when it's 30 degrees or less out you need to layer up, right? Layer up with a base, mid and top layers, there are some things you need to spend a little money on. The right layers are a good long-term investment. Base layers should be thinner layers that wick away your sweat so it can evaporate. A Merino wool base layer is soft, moisture-wicking and odor repellent (pretty much). Insulating layers are next. A simple fleece top can be layered on or stow away for later. Put it in a large pocket in your jacket or vest or a pack that you might be carrying. One idea was to roll up a fleece shirt lengthwise and store them inside your waders above the belt, at the small of your back. Always choose something that zips up tightly onto your neck. It's the same with an extra pair of gloves and a spare hat. One little leak can be more than an inconvenience when it's really cold out.

Not only do our hands need to be warm, but you still need the use of your fingers to fish properly. This is where a quality and comfortable pair of fingerless gloves comes into play. You don't want to experience being on the river and feeling like your hand is going to fall off, because that hand got wet releasing a freezing cold trout, is no fun at all.

Reference: Excellent Article:

<https://troutbitten.com/2018/11/11/fly-fishing-in-the-winter-your-hands/>

Warm feet are a must as well. Start with some thin, breathable liner socks. Next, layer over those liners with a quality insulated sock, e.g. ones made by Simms. But make sure you don't overdo it. Also try some "artificial" heat like HOTHANDS Toe Warmers. Quick tip on these toe warmers: They are designed to heat in low oxygen environments. But they do need SOME oxygen. Get them warm before you apply them. And hours later, if they seem cold, take

your boot off and let some air down into the foot of the waders for a second. The warmers will heat up again.

It's important to realize that heat retention is about air space. That's what insulation does – it traps warm air for us. So, if you cram your big foot, with three socks and a neoprene bootie, into a wading boot without enough space, your feet will be cold anyway. The only way to keep your toes warm is to give them enough space and enough insulation. And then move once in a while.

If you wear a ball cap style, carry a thin fleece hat to put under the hat. The trick to all of this is to allow your body to cool off when it needs to, but to preserve that built-up heat when you aren't producing it. Some suggest using a buff to protect your face. If really cold, move up to a balaclava. We lose most of our body heat from the head and from the neck too. So, keep it all covered.

## Fishing

Winter is among the toughest times of year to catch trout in streams. Water temperatures are cold and a trout's metabolism is slow. Even though a fish doesn't need to feed as much in cold weather, they will eat if given a chance, especially if water temperatures climb above 40 degrees.

There are two keys to winter fishing: picking the right days and slowing everything down. In general, unless you're fishing a tailwater or a spring creek, you don't want to be on the water when it's bitter cold out

Time your fly-fishing outing with the insect activity on the river you plan to fish. As a general rule, insects are most active when the water is the warmest. Too early in the day and the river is covered by shadows and cold. Likewise, in late afternoon when shadows begin to cover the water, consider heading for a nice warm fireplace instead. The best time to fish is when you will be the most comfortable, usually from mid-morning to late afternoon.

According to Tom Rosenbauer, trout won't be found everywhere, though, in fact they will probably be concentrated in just a few pools. So, look for them where you find:

- In-water cover, especially logjams. - Trout will use rocks for winter cover but because there is usually more turbulence around rocks, logjams offer better habitat.
- Water depth over three feet
- Slow but not stagnant currents. Water that is nearly still does not bring food to the fish.
- Springs along the streambank.
- Groundwater is warmer than surface water during the winter.
- Usually, springs betray their presence by patches of green plants growing in the warmer water. You can also find springs by looking for tiny patches of fog along the bank on very cold mornings.

Small flies work well in the winter. Tiny midge and mayfly nymph patterns catch the majority of winter trout. For example: go with generalist nymphs, such as a Hare's Ear, Copper John, Scud, or Pheasant Tail. And because fish aren't willing to move very far to eat your offering, fish a two-fly tandem rig. Two patterns in the water means a better chance of bumping a fish in the nose with one of them. Also, take a few winter dry flies, e.g. Griffith's Gnats, Parachute Adams, Any other suggestions?

Strike at the slightest indication of a bite. During the cold season, a trout's metabolism slows to a point where takes can be very subtle. To determine whether you had a strike or if your nymph is hitting the bottom of the river, you must set the hook whenever your strike indicator hesitates, if you're using one.

Winter fishing is often about reduced expectations, you're usually not going to run into pods of fish feeding on the surface the way you might in June, and no trout are going to charge down your streamer in the way a spawn-enraged brown will in October. Head out into the cold with the goal of catching a single trout; anything else is gravy.

Tom Rosenbauer's points for winter fly-fishing:

1. **Slow and deep is best.** Use a strike indicator and weighted fly, or weight on the leader and the high-stick method, which keeps most of your fly line off the water. Dead drift is critical in winter because trout won't chase a fly in cold water.

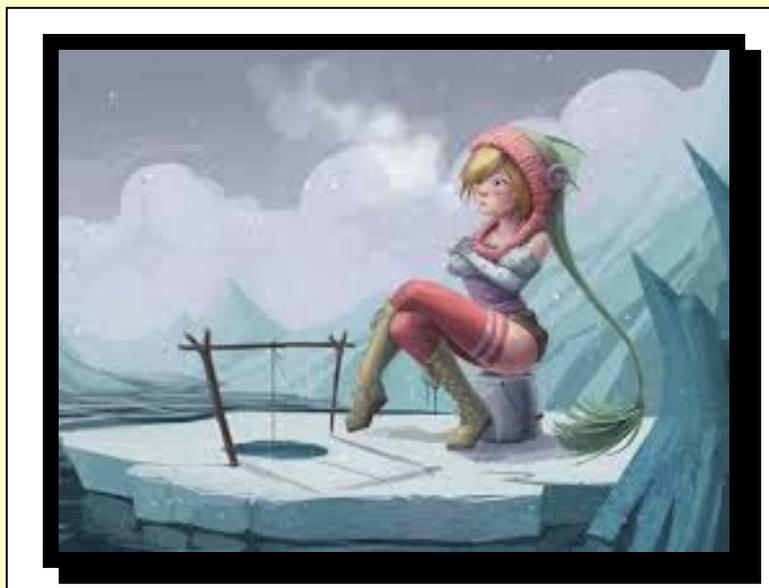
2. **Swing with a sinking-tip line.** Although dead-drift nymphing is best, if you prefer to swing a fly for trout or steelhead, use a sinking tip line with a very strong mend at the beginning of the cast so your fly swings slow and deep.

3. **Look for rises.** Occasionally trout will rise during the winter, almost always to small midges or olive mayflies. A small midge emerger or a tiny olive mayfly emerger will be the only dries you'll need to carry.

4. **Stay in bed in the morning.** You'll see the most surface activity mid-afternoon on sunny days, or, surprisingly, all day long on gray snowy days without wind.

5. **Light tippetts are usually more productive in winter.** The flies are small and water is clear. I use 6X Mirage for trout fishing and 4X Mirage for steelhead under most conditions.

6. **Know where the fish hold.** Fish tend to "pod up" in winter in deeper, slower water. Once you catch one try not to disturb the water and continue to fish in the same place. Fish the slow water thoroughly, but move often if you aren't connecting.



## Crossroads Speaker Series

**December 18<sup>th</sup>**

Ken Elmer, Western MA Fly Tier and Guide, will be presenting on Central/Western Ma rivers and will do a fly-tying demo beforehand.

**January 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Peter Jenkins, The Saltwater Edge, will be presenting on Tactics on Fishing the Flats, Bonefish or Stripers.

**February 26<sup>th</sup>**

Crossroads 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration—No Speaker

**March 26<sup>th</sup>**

TBD---→Any member suggestions would be much appreciated!

**April 23<sup>rd</sup>**

TBD---→ Same applies for this date!!

### Other Events:

**January 18-20, 2019**

**The Fly Fishing Show, Marlborough MA**

**February 16, 2019**

**Bear's Den Expo, Taunton MA**

Courtesy of  
**ARMAND'S  
ARCHIVES**



### **Fly Rod for Christmas By Armand J. Courchaine**

It was Christmas 1954; I looked at the long decorated package under the tree. That was the first thing I opened. A beautiful 8 ½ ft Eagle Claw Wright McGill “Sweetheart” fly rod. The next present was an Ashaway “Golden” B level fly line. My dad wasn’t a fly fisherman. The inscription on the rod said HDG line. Even though I was tying flies and selling them for a year I had no rod.

In March I bought my first fly reel (still have and use to this day). A Pflueger Medalist 1495 model. I have taken everything from trout, shad, fresh and saltwater bass, blues etc, with this reel.

The opening season of 1955 was great. Instead of doing my homework I was sneaking off to the Fall River Public Library learning about fly fishing. My hero was the late Joe Brooks. I read his books and magazine article. Brooks talked about long leaders with floating lines. I tied fourteen-foot leaders down to four-pound test. I fished small; streams and ponds with #10 Coachman wet, 9-3 streamers #8, and Marabou Black Ghost #8. Life was great fishing the leaders with a little line. Everything was great until the summer and fall. I almost quit fly fishing because I had a lot of trouble with my leaders too long and light while using deer hair bugs and salt water fly. I almost got killed trying to cast Slades Ferry Striper Fly. This was more deadly then using clousers.

One night while trying to cast for stripers, I got hung up on the brush behind me (maybe a tree). I pulled the leader it broke. I had four feet not fourteen ft. I tied a new fly on and it was heaven. I stopped fishing from the bridge. I fished along the bank. I had hip boots so my fishing would be limited I thought. I couldn’t false cast had to roll cast. In my mind I thought, “Fat chance catching stripers – roll casting”. My best attempt with B level line was a cast maybe 30 ft. The fly landed and I was busy stripping line from the reel. I didn’t know it I was on to a fish. That was the beginning. I was getting more fish along the shoreline. They weren’t as big like the commercial guys were getting. On the Sweetheart it was fun. Besides short leader I was also using a smaller hook size 1 Eagle Claw bait holding hook that was not treated, so I found out real fast I had to rinse them off and dry them. I still had rust problems. I fished them this way.

I thought I hit a gold mine fishing from shore that I didn’t share my secret with the commercial guys. I would bump into the fishermen and they would ask where are you fishing we don’t see you on the bridge. I told them I was restricted to shore fishing.

About the “Sweetheart” fly rod. I was reading about varnish for bamboo fly rods. I thought I would preserve my rod. The varnish made a wrinkle finish of the rod.

## IN MEMORIAM

*Thoughts on Our Good Friend*

### Tom Magee

I have known Tom--100 years. No I don't know how long I have known Tom. Tom was a member of United Fly Tyers from the early sixties. From the beginning, he was one of the founding charter members of Southeast Mass Chapter of Trout Unlimited, came on board the early days of Crossroads Anglers.

How I would describe Tom is that he didn't like fly fishing, he loved it. Trout, Stripers, False Albacore he dove into it. I think he put fly tying above the fishing part and sharing. He wrote tying instructions for the public and taught tying close to his home. He had a special love of teaching veterans Project Healing Waters at Brockton VA hospital.

Tom (81 years old) was sick for a long time. All his friends prayed for his recovery. He passed away December 8, 2018 His funeral was on December 15. He will be sadly missed by family and friends. It's not good bye – until we meet again.

The sun is setting, gone another day but the sun will rise, we will see the bait and busting bass, we'll all be fishing again.

Old friend  
Armand

