This year would be a great time to get your valentine hooked on fly fishing. While the two of you are out there it’s time to get a great photo that will remind both of you just how much fun you had that day. This month we’ll provide you with some ideas on how to get that great photo. And that time on the river may create a great story. See a great story from the January liars contest.

PRESIDENT’S CORNER

The crocuses are out in our yard, daffodils shoots are out getting ready too. That means spring is just around the corner. So you better be tying flies and filling up your boxes in preparation for the fishing season. Make sure you have extra’s to offer the tree Gods in hopes that they release some flies back to you.

Our Board has been busy preparing events for the spring. We have a fundraiser in March, three Trout in the classroom release days in April and May, Balsam fishing trip in May and another one to Bryson city in October. We are working on conservation projects and stream cleans but have not settled on dates yet.

For all the new faces we keep seeing at our chapter meetings, please join us this spring and summer either as volunteers or on our trips. This is the best and quickest way to meet new members, to get involved.

Robby Abou-Rizk

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“If I’m not going to catch anything, then I’d rather not catch anything on flies.”

Bob Lawless

JANUARY MEETING

When: Tuesday, February 21st, 6 PM
Where: Sixty Six Grill and Tap House
3440 Frontis St, Winston Salem
Who: Wes Waugh
What: Keeping Wilson Creek Clean

Wes Waugh is the Executive Director of A Clean Wilson Creek (ACWC). ACWC is committed to protecting this National Wild and Scenic River in its natural state for future generations, as well as conducting conservation education opportunities for Wilson Creek visitors and recreational users. The program was run for many years by Bruce Gray, owner of Betsy’s Old Country Store, but with the large number of people visiting and using the river, the task became too large for an individual. ACWC was formed in 2018 and has been able to find donations and volunteers to greatly expand their efforts. To learn more about ACWC, make a donation, or volunteer, please visit ACWC.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Fly Tying Classes
At 9am on Wednesdays Project Healing Waters will host fly tying classes and at 6pm on Wednesday evenings Blue Ridge Trout Unlimited will host classes. The classes are free and all are welcome - from beginners to advanced. No need to sign up, just come join us. If you have specific questions about the evening classes, you can contact, Rusty Berrier at rustyberrier@outlook.com.

March 21 Chapter Meeting, Patrick Hayes, guide, euro nymphing presentation

April 18 Chapter Meeting, Jason Sparks – Tenkara presentation

Event: BRTU Fundraiser
Date: March 9, 2023
Time: 6:00 - 8:00pm
Location: Camel City BBQ
In order to support our ongoing cold water conservation work and the Trout in the Classroom program we are happy to announce the kick-off of our 2023 fundraiser. More information will be coming quickly.

We are looking for volunteers to help collect silent auction items that can be donated. Items or experiences (guide trips or weekend get aways) are gladly accepted. Joel Shepard (jeshep1967@att.net) and Fred Frank (ffrank@pathwaytech.com) are leading the effort to collect prizes and auction items. Please, contact them as they specifically needing help gathering items and reaching out to local retailers.

On March 9 we will have a BBQ dinner at South Fork Community Center for prizes and final silent auction bids. This will be an important event to support critical outreach from our Chapter. 

For more information, please read our information release regarding the fundraiser.

**Balsam Fishing Trip : May 4-7th** In the spring and fall of each year, we host a chapter fishing outing at Balsam Lake Lodge located in the Mountains of Western NC. Balsam Lodge is close to many streams & rivers with Delayed Harvest, Stocked and Wild trout as well as Balsam Lake itself. Unfortunately the trip sold out when we announced it at the chapter meeting in January. You can sign up for the waiting list on by contacting Fred Frank at ffrank234@gmail.com, 336-442-4676

**Bryson City fall trip:** This year we will switch from going to Balsam in the fall to Bryson city in early October. That area hosts all kinds of streams and opportunities. Details will follow in the next few months.

**Trout in the classroom Release days:** This year we will have three trout release days, April 20th, May 5th, and May 9th. We will be hosting about 10 schools and 250 students and teachers. We will need volunteers to assist with the day (8:30 am - 1 pm) at Stone Mountain state park. Please sign up at our website [SIGN UP]. Thank you.

**SOUTHEAST REGIONAL RENDEZVOUS**

March 10th-12th in Asheville, NC

Join fellow TU members, supporters and volunteers from a cross the Southest on March 10-12th, 2023 at the Crowne Plaza in Asheville, NC for some great fishing, informative presentations, inspiring dialogue and engaging camaraderie with those who share your dedication to TU and our mission.

Located in the heart of the Smokies, where the French Broad and Swannanoa Rivers meet. A mecca of Appalachian fly fishing, this is the perfect location to join us for the weekend – and stay longer or make a family trip or fishing buddies escape around this great event!

Asheville is within striking distance of some amazing trout fishing opportunities, and we hope to score some great Spring weather to make that a reality!

TU regional rendezvous are occasions to be inspired – by the work of TU staff, lessons from volunteer leaders, and conversations with newfound friends. They are also an excellent opportunity to discuss the unique issues facing the region as well as a chance to network and build relationships with fellow TU volunteer leaders.

For more information or to register go to: [Rendezvous](#)

**RIVERCOURSE 2023-JUNE 11-16**

Rivercourse is North Carolina Trout Unlimited’s Youth Trout Camp...

Established in 2002, the Rivercourse Coldwater Conservation & Fly Fishing Youth Camp is sponsored by the North Carolina State Council of Trout Unlimited and emphasizes Trout Unlimited’s Mission – the conservation, restoration and preservation of coldwater fisheries and their watersheds – while teaching campers the basics of fly fishing, a sport for a lifetime.

Rivercourse is a high quality experience for boys and girls between the ages of 13 and 15 and takes place in the heart of the Appalachian mountains at the Lake Logan Event Center near Canton, N.C. This pristine setting includes a section of the West Fork of the Pigeon River, which is privately owned and stocked with trout for the use of the camp.

While flyfishing is the camp’s primary activity focus, campers get to enjoy some other unique, often once-in-a-lifetime experience, such as releasing a raptor (like a hawk) and catching it when it returns, outside games, visits with conservation officials, fish sampling and many others.

During the Summer Camp, sessions on a variety of topics are mixed into the day. Geology, fish and insect sampling, scientific and natural encounters; all things related to the things in the natural world around us and cultivating a better understanding of them and how precious they are.

And throughout the camp there are plenty of sessions where we just have fun fishing together and getting to know each other and building enduring friendships,
gaining a deeper appreciation of the majesty of nature while learning to love a sport that can be enjoyed for a lifetime.

To apply to attend camp this summer: Register

**Volunteers needed.** Rivercourse also needs adult volunteers to attend and help with the program. To apply as a volunteer: Volunteer

### NC LICENSE PLATE

When it comes time to renew your license plate, consider pledging your vehicle to Trout Unlimited. With each purchase $10 is donated to the North Carolina TU.

### FISH PHOTOGRAPHY

Several years ago my father-in-law took a photo of his wife holding a pair of apparently gigantic yellow perch. Obviously yellow perch don’t grow this large and these were most likely less than ten inches long. So how did he do this? If you look very closely at this photo you’ll see a string above these fish. She isn’t actually holding the fish, but is standing several feet behind them. Cameras have a difficulty showing depth on a flat surface (depth of field) and objects in the foreground often appear large next to those in the background. A great technique, but not recommended for trout unless they are from hatchery supported waters and on their way home for dinner.

### DON’T JUST SNAP PICTURES, FRAME THEM

Once you are ready have the subject pull the fish out of the water and pose. A few seconds out of the water will not harm the fish, so look at your pose in your viewfinder and assure what you have is what you would want hanging on your wall. Then snap the photo.

### TAKE MULTIPLE PICTURES

Once you have snapped that first photo, keep on snapping until the fish disappears back into the water. Zoom in and snap the photo as the fish as its being released in the water, put the fish back in the net and get a close up. Often, one of these other photos may prove to be even better than the one that was planned.

### BE UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

A photo of a fisherman posing with a fish from across the river will not impress anyone, even if it is a lunker. As a rule of thumb, your subject should fill at least one third of the frame. Remember it is usually the subject you are shooting, not the background. If you want to include the background, take your close up photo and then zoom out or back up for a second photo. The camera I use has a 40x zoom on it and takes a photo with up to 18 megapixels. This allows me to zoom in and take that photo of my fishing partner from 50’ away and still have a close up. The high resolution photo then allows me to frame and crop the photo on my computer to produce a picture as good as if I had been standing a few feet away. Some of the smart phones today shoot even more pixels than my camera, so you can do a lot of adjustments when you get home to your computer.
POSE YOUR FISH
We all want our fish to look big in the photos and there are a few tricks to doing that. The first and most important is to be sure you fish is near perpendicular to your camera. A photo of the fish’s belly doesn’t do it justice. The second thing to remember is to point the fishes head slightly toward the camera. That gives it a bit of depth to the photo that doesn’t make the fish bigger, but makes a better presentation. The last thing to do if you want to make your fish look big is the technique that created the giant perch at the beginning of this article. Extend your arms away from your body toward the camera, but there are some tricks to getting this right. First, the fish should hide your arms as much as possible so your straight elbows don’t give you away. Keep your body erect, not bent over, and put the fish on a line with your elbows and the camera. The second thing is to hide your fingers. Clever photography can make a six inch trout look eighteen inches long, but if your little pinky is in front of the fish in the photo and is a tenth the length of the fish, it’s a dead giveaway.

USE FILL FLASH
We all have photos of ourselves with fish where the top half of the face is covered by the shadow of the hat brim. These may show a great picture of the fish, but they do little justice to the person who caught it. There are two solutions to this problem: a) turn on your flash to lighten the subjects in the photo or b) take off your hat. Fill flash can do a lot for photos. On a sunny day there will almost always be dark shadows in the photo and the flash will give you a much more even lighting and a much better photo. On cloudy days the flash will bring out more color in your photos. In addition the brighter image will adjust the camera to a faster shutter speed which will increase the depth of field, bringing more of the photo into focus.

LEARN TO ADJUST THE SHUTTER SPEED
As was just mentioned in the previous topic, changing the shutter speed will normally bring more of your photo into focus. The converse of this, however, is that a faster shutter speed will reduce your aperture size (f-stop) and let less light into the photo. This whole thing is a study in college level physics (which I took and still don’t understand). Just remember a faster shutter speed puts more picture in focus. Shutter speed also affects the focus of items in motion. If you want a picture of the fly line being cast without a blur, increase your shutter speed to 1/1000 of a second or faster. If you want to show the water running over the rocks slow your shutter speed to 1/60 of a second. You can go slower than that, but you’ll need a tripod.

USE YOUR MACRO
Most automatic cameras will not focus from less than 2-3 feet away. If you want a really good close up of your fish, switch to your macro setting. This is usually designated by a tulip on your settings buttons. With the macro setting you can usually get within a foot of your subject. The depth of field focus in this setting will be much smaller and if you get too close, only the head of the fish may be in focus.

FISH FIRST, PHOTOS SECOND
When photographing your fish, remember that the life of the fish is more important than that perfect photo. There is an excellent article following on how to protect your fish during photography.

HOW TO HOLD THE FISH
Remember that it is the fish that is the focus of your photograph. How you hold that fish is an important element of the photograph. Most people wrap their hands under the fish with their fingers on the side toward the camera. This very often presents a better picture of the fingers than the fish and may be very distracting. Try putting one hand around the narrow part of the fish in front of the tail with the fingers toward you and the other just behind the head. Good proportion of subject to background.

REVIEW YOUR PHOTOS BEFORE RELEASE
After you have finished your photographs, put the fish back in the net to revive and look at the photographs you have just taken to be sure they are in focus and give you what you are
looking for. You don’t want to discover the lens cap was on after you have released the fish.

EXPERIMENT
As you get better with your photography, take some time to try out different angles and methods of photographing the fish. Take some pictures in the net, in the water, on release, and anything else that you happen to think of at the time. Digital photography has opened up the ability to do a lot more experimenting than the days when we had to pay to develop a print to see the outcome. Today you see the results right there on your camera as soon as the photograph has been snapped.

Get out there on the river with that camera (or your phone) and start snapping photos!

8 TIPS FOR TAKING GREAT PHOTOS WHILE PRACTICING GOOD CATCH-AND-RELEASE
This excellent article was posted on the Facebook page of Gink & Gasoline. This is an excellent site for trout fishermen and well worth seeking out. You can also visit them at http://www.ginkandgasoline.com/.

Carry enough net
Carry a net with a large rubber net bag. Rubber nets are super gentle on fish and allow you to rest the fish in the net. You can spend money on a nice one but you can also get one for $20 at Wal-Mart.

Let the fish recover
Once you’ve landed your fish, give him a minute or two to revive from the fight. Let him rest in the net, fully submerged, near the edge of the current where the water is full of oxygen. Keep his head upstream and let him relax. This goes a long way.

Get your act together
Take advantage of the rest period to do your job as a photographer. Find your angle, figure out your exposure, get your angler looking good, and take a few test shots without the fish. A little time spent now while there’s no pressure will make your photos a lot better in the end.

Hold the fish right
No need to panic
This is where both C&R and good photography usually go out the window. I am continually blown away by how many anglers don’t know how to hold a fish for a photo.

First and most importantly, never squeeze a fish. This doesn’t help anybody. Most guys hold fish way too tightly. If you’re not sure, you are, I promise. When you squeeze a fish, it panics and struggles. If you respond by squeezing tighter, he struggles more. This is how photos get ruined and fish get killed. No grip is needed, I promise. If you let the fish balance in your hand he will relax and you will not have to fight him.

Use two hands. Let the front of the fish rest on one of your hands. Keep your index and ring finger under the bone of his skull to support the weight. This keeps his organs safe from harm. Put your other hand just in front of his tail. This part of the fish is all muscle so you can grip him firmly here. If possible, put this hand on the back side of the fish, away from the camera. It makes a much better photo.
Try this and you’ll be surprised how much easier it is. Trust me, this is my job.

**Keep the fish in the water**

It’s not just good for the fish, it’s good for the photo. Fish start to lose their color as soon as you take them out of the water. Keep them fully submerged until you are ready to snap the shutter, then lift them for no more than 10 seconds at a time. Fish don’t have lungs, so they can’t hold their breath.

**Leave the fly in the fish**

If you’re worried about dropping the fish and missing the shot, there’s a simple solution. Leave the fly in his mouth. He won’t go far.

**Take a knee**

There’s no need in blowing your back out. Take a knee in the river or on the flat with your fish. This makes a much more flattering photo and makes it easier to keep the fish in the water.

**Relax**

Most of the things I see go wrong when taking fish photos are due to tense anglers. And of course you’re tense! You’ve been told you’re killing every fish you touch. Take a deep breath and chill. Everything will go smoother. I know you might think you’re never going to catch another fish like this one, but you will, plenty of them. Just enjoy the moment.

**ADVICE FROM THE VISE**

After the recent deep freeze in December, thought I would foster some warm thoughts and shifted into tying some foam terrestrials. Never too soon to get that summer box ramped up and be ready for some warmer weather, or at least the thought of it.

This is a simple beetle pattern and is one I have used for years on trout as well as panfish and bass. It floats high, is nearly unsinkable and the rubber legs get fish really stirred up.

I’m tying this one in black but the good thing about foam is it comes in every color combo you can imagine. Break out the markers and you can add eyes, spots or whatever you can dream. It’s a simple tie with just a dubbing loop, a hot tag, and the foam back. I’m using a 2X long streamer hook in size 8 for this one, but any size will work just fine. For the hot tag, I’m using Glo-Brite floss, I like the way it frizzes out when you pull it tight and snip, but Antron yarn would work just as well.

The dubbing is really the key to this one. The dubbing is a quarter fiber and the rest is micro rubber legs. This dubbing is available as “Beetle Dubbing” from Fly Tyers Dungeon or Hareline as “Wiggle Dub”. This dubbing needs to be in a loop and spun into the noodle.

I cut the foam in a beaver tail shape using a cutter, but you can easily cut the same shape with scissors to fit the hook size you are tying to. This particular shape is great for a number of patterns, so if you want to play with foam patterns, this one is a multi tasker for hopper, stompers, and beetles.
Start out by dressing the hook from the eye to the bend, and tying in the foam by the tail end with some snug wraps.

Next, form a dubbing loop about 4 inches long and evenly spread out the dubbing up the length of the loop. Don’t pack it in there too tightly or the legs will get trapped in there, less is always more with dubbing. Better to be somewhat sparse with it and have more wraps.

Spin it just enough to lock in the fibers and legs, brushing it out as you spin- not too tight. Once you spin, brush it out gently to get as much of the legs exposed.

Now we wrap from the bend to the eye, again brushing out with each wrap to expose the legs.

Secure the loop just behind the eye, don’t crowd that and leave about an eye length for your thread to rest in preparation for the securing the foam.

Brush the legs down and pull the foam gently over the top of the dubbing and take a couple of snug wraps to secure it.

Trim the head and shape the edges.

Now we wrap from the bend to the eye, again brushing out with each wrap to expose the legs.

Tie in a few strands of floss, pull those snug and trim them and they will fuzz out and give you a sighter for the dark fly. That color is up to yourself. Whip finish behind the eye and trim the legs off, I like to taper them longer in the front and shorter in the back. That fly is ready to fish. Shoot me a line if you want some cut foam bodies, happy to send you some to try out.

As always, I’m honored to answer questions, give a lesson, or just talk fly tying and fishing. Don’t hesitate to contact me at Jacobsforkflytying@gmail.com or check out some of my current ties on Facebook and Instagram at Jacobs Fork Fly Tying.

Dave Everhart

LIARS CONTEST/STORY TELLING JAN 2023

Wow what a chapter meeting night. Another packed night, and lots of wild stories. Joel Shephard warmed up the floor with a story of a water moccasin jumping into the boat while trying to get the lure unhooked from a submerged brush to stories of a groomed poodle named Princess tracking a deer scent through the woods in the middle of the night during archery season, only to be surprised by the game
warden. We heard of fishermen being chased by bear, moose, bison to sinking in quick sand and a shark taking a bite out of a stringer of fish, hanging from Joel’s waste while he was waist deep in the water. We heard about a dog chasing a deer into the river, jumping on top of it while it swam across the deep pool riding on top of him. We heard about loosing a steel fishing rod in the water only to hook into it on another fishing trip. The stories were all so good we just good not pick a top one. However here is the account of one wild one while bone fishing.

Landing a hot bonefish when wade fishing is never easy, but this one got complicated. We were fishing the flats of southern Mexico on the Yucatan Peninsula about 250 miles south of Cancun in Espiritu Santo Bay. We had a group of 6 anglers on a once in a lifetime, bucket list trip targeting bonefish and permit. Espiritu Santo Bay in one of the most remote locations in the Caribbean and is truly wilderness flyfishing.

This story begins on a day where we were wade fishing under bright sun in gin clear water on a white sand flat that held lots of medium size bonefish. On the falling tide the bonefish were concentrated in the creek mouths and edges of the flat where the receding water concentrated the bait. The fishing conditions were near perfect which seems so rarely to occur. This was truly a memorable day for many reasons. Tim, my fishing partner, was wade fishing about 50 yards in front of me and was landing some nice fish. I noticed from a distance he had hooked another bonefish and his rod was fully bent and he had yet another big, tight line smile on his face. A minute or two later he had the bonefish at his feet and was trying to land it with one hand on the rod and the other under the fish. All bonefish are super slick and hard to land but this fish was still a little hot and was splashing all over the place and had managed to wrap the line around Tim’s leg.

Suddenly, I hear Tim scream like a 10-year-old schoolgirl, and he started scrambling desperately to try and find some dry ground. I was not sure what had happened but all that bonefish splashing undoubtedly had attracted the interest of a higher up the food chain predator. Amazingly a crocodile or maybe a caiman had somehow emerged from the clear water and clamped down on Tim’s bonefish and done it directly between his legs. Complicating the situation was Tim’s line was still attached to the bonefish and the line was a bit tangled around his leg. From 50 yards away I started to make my way up the beach to see what the commotion was about. Next thing I see is Tim throw his fly rod on the beach and start running my way. Tim had freed himself and was running for cover. I was also trying to locate my camera to capture the scene. The crock followed Tim to the water’s edge but kept his distance after that.

Fly fishing for me is about time well spent in nature and the challenge of catch and release fishing. Experiencing new rivers or flats never gets old. I am fortunate to have taken many fishing adventures, but the most memorable element is always the people you encounter and share the experiences with. Thanks to Blue Ridge TU for hosting story night which was a lot of fun. As a new TU member I look forward to meeting likeminded anglers that share a passion for the outdoors and hopefully finding some time on the water together to create new stories for next year’s story night.

Tight lines,

Tom Westbrook

Editor’s note: Thanks Tom for the great fish story. I’m sure a lot of you have a great story to tell. Please share it with all of us by sending it to me at BRNCNewsletter@gmail.com for a future issue of the newsletter.

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