



America's Oldest Saltwater Fly Fishing Club

THE CURRENT

"The lifeline of the estuary and knowledge"



Fish Lost and Lessons Learned











My fanwing Royal Coachman disappeared in a speckled orange swirl, the flanks of the tiny brook trout far brighter than the upstate New York fall foliage...

continued on page 5.

"Pass on to all, who ask, what you learn here"

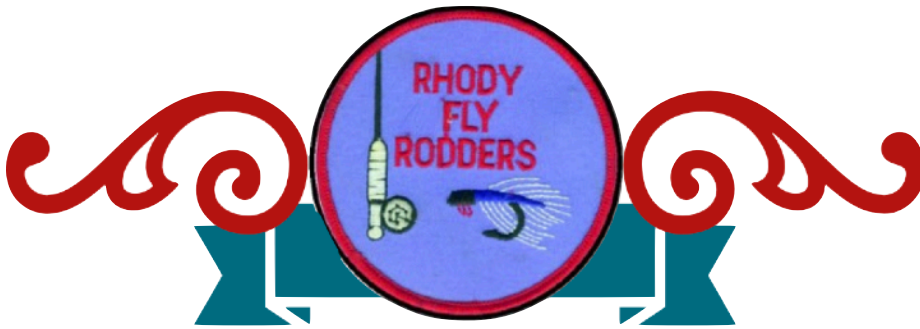


In This Issue:

-  **President's Message**
An Update From Capt. Ray Stachelek Page 3
-  **Main Editorial**
Fish Lost and Lessons Learned Page 5
-  **Member of the Month**
Bob Signorello Page 7
-  **Fly of the Month**
Jeff's Albie Hooker Page 8
-  **Fishing and Fly Pictures**
October Member Submissions Page 9
-  **Fly Rod Sale**
Silent Auction for 3 rods Page 10
-  **What's New? What's Worthless? What's Working?**
Chocklett Factory 3D Bug Wings, New Fly Lines, Airtags Page 11
-  **Ugly, But Deadly**
Cap't Ken Cooper's Secret Fly Page 12
-  **Newsletter Update**
The Straw that Stirs the Drink Page 14
-  **And More!**

Follow Us On Instagram!

@Rhody_Fly_Rodders



Welcome back for our 62nd year! There are still a few good fishing days left before we stow our rods and boots away.

Moving On

Our newsletter editor and board member Patrick Williamson, is moving away from Rhode Island. Rhode Island fishing is dear to his heart, and he will miss the many new friendships he has established. Patrick has had such an impact on this club in just a few years. We were so lucky to have him as a voice and steward for marine fisheries. Patrick will still visit the state from time to time during fishing season. We will miss him at our meetings and club events. We wish you the best in your new venture. Thank you for your contributions.

Officer Elections!

It's also that time of year to start thinking about club elections, running for a club officer position, and if you would like to be a board member. **This is notice of our November Election Night. Elections are scheduled for November.** If you want to get more out of the club consider running for an officer position. The pay is nothing, but there is plenty of personal satisfaction. In return you get a pat on the back for a job well done. There is plenty of room for advancement. All you have to be is a paid member in good standing and be respectful.

Sunshine Committee!

Not feeling well, under the weather? Maybe we can help getting you back on track, at least put a smile on your face. Please contact our Sunshine Chair Person. Let Susan Estabrook know and we can rally around and offer some friendly support. Contact email address: susan@ysring.com

Capt. Ray Stachelek

Capt. Ray Stachelek



President
Rhody Fly Rodders

“This may be one of the most important club events we have”

April Meeting Preview



Tuesday, October 21, 6:00pm
 Riverside Sportsman Association
 19 Mohawk Dr., East Providence, RI 02915



Pizza Night!

Our first meeting of the season is always Pizza Night! It's nice to see everyone come back again, and it is the aroma of melted cheese and pepperoni that brings them back. Caserta Pizzeria has been a staple in Rhode Island for almost 75 years. Some say it's the best pizza around. Federal Hill is our own little slice of Italy. "If you are not eating Caserta's, you are not eating pizza." That's Caserta's slogan. Mangia.... Mangia!

We will recap the fishing season with a group discussion to wrap up this past season. There are plenty of fish tales to tell. So if you have any interesting stories or antidotes we'd like to hear them. Don't hold back. We can always use a smile.

Rod Auction

Bob Signorello has donated three fly rods that we will be auctioning off at the next meeting. More information on the auction is on [page 13](#).

Cinch that knot tight! See you at our first meeting of the season. Pizza! Pizza!

Directions

From Providence take Rt.195 to Exit 2B. Bear right on the ramp and follow Rt. 114 S for 2 miles. Look for WPRO Studios on the left, then take first U-turn back to Rt.114 north. Continue north and look for the Riverside Sportsman Club (blue) sign on the right.



Hats are on sale!

Fish Lost and Lessons Learned

My fanwing Royal Coachman disappeared in a speckled orange swirl, the flanks of the tiny brook trout far brighter than the upstate New York fall foliage. The stream was so small I could hop across its widest pool, and no more than knee deep anywhere. I was fourteen, and all I knew about fly fishing came from reading *Field & Stream* and the copy of Ray Bergman's *Trout* from the public library, but I was obsessed with catching a brook trout. I had caught a few panfish on a fly, but I'd never even seen a trout in the wild, much less caught one. I was so startled I missed the hookset. That flash of orange haunted me as the next fifty-odd years flashed by, consumed with school, sports, a girlfriend/fiancée/wife, a career, children, and eventually grandchildren. When retirement loomed in 2023, I remembered that flash of orange. I told the attendees at my retirement dinner that my goal was to catch at least one fish on a fly before year end. Realizing I'd probably fish saltwater more often than fresh, I bought a 9-weight rod, took a casting class, and even learned to tie a few crude Clousers.

In April, I fished in northern Maryland with my daughter's friend Jeff, who guides out of the Great Feathers shop in Sparks. Early that morning, I achieved that goal when a tiny bluegill latched onto my nymph. Not the fish of my dreams! Over the course of the morning, I added a couple of small rainbows and browns, two scrappy smallmouths, and some trash fish, but I persisted with upstream hooksets that led to more missed fish than catches. As the end of the day approached, there was a silver flash and my line went tight – the biggest fish of the day set the hook itself. Three times I brought the rainbow close to Jeff's net, and three times it surged away. It looked like a monster compared to my previous catches that day – probably north of fifteen inches. With Jeff on my right and the leader knot tight against my rod tip, the fish made a sudden dash to my left and began to flounder in the shallows next to my foot. As I reached down to grab the leader, Jeff shouted "No!" Of course, when I grabbed the 5X leader, it snapped. "The one that got away" sticks in my memory more vividly than any of the ones I saw in the bottom of the net. Lessons learned: listen to your guide, and don't expect a 5X leader to hold a fish out of the water.

In May, fishing my "home waters" on Cape Cod for the first time, I flailed away, creating wind knots and yanking my self-tied 2/0 Clouser out of the collar of my wading jacket. Just as I was about to give up in discouragement, a snapper blue latched on and I was able to snap a quick shot with my cell phone before releasing it – proof that there were fish a few hundred yards from my front door, and that they would bite a fly. In quick succession, the subsequent days saw me landing my first schoolie striper and my first slot-sized fish. Then there was the day I hooked what felt like a small schoolie. Midway through its first run, my rod was almost yanked out of my hand and went double with the weight of something large. Seconds later, it was gone, along with the bottom six inches of my leader. Monster striper? Seal? Whatever it was, I never saw it. Lessons learned: as the old saying goes, "the fish are at your feet", and big things can swim by unnoticed.

Continued on next page...

By Paul Burmeister

Fish Lost and Lessons Learned

My wife's beloved grandmother grew up on Prince Edward Island, and we made a visit that fall to see her ancestral home. While there, I arranged a day fishing the Trout River with guide Collin of PEI Trout Fishing. I finally caught a brook trout: two, to be precise, and I realize how spoiled I am that my first-ever brook trout was a nineteen-incher, brilliant in its fall spawning coloration. I arranged a follow-up visit for the following June and set the timing of two days of fishing to follow the first full moon, when the sea-run brookies would be returning to their spawning creeks to rest up and fatten up for the fall. For the preceding week, Collin's Facebook page was plastered with photos of the trophy-sized fish his clients had landed. The day before we were scheduled to fish, the heavens opened up, and by the end of the day the streams were over their banks and the color and consistency of chocolate milk. For safety's sake, our first day of fishing was cancelled. The second day, conditions had improved marginally, but the flow was still fast and high and the water far from clear. We fished all morning without a strike, and then the rains came back. As the water rose and, drenched and cold, we retreated to our vehicles, we tried one last pool. My streamer drifted into an eddy and just as I twitched it the line went tight and the rod doubled over. I had my finger on the line for control and didn't release it to let the reel's drag do its job, and the brand-new 2X leader snapped. Once again, I never saw the fish, but to snap a leader that size, it must have been a good one – it felt bigger than the 19-incher I'd landed the autumn before on the same rod. Lessons learned: you can't control the weather, and you need to use the tools you have the way they're intended to be used.

A few years ago, I bought a center console from my son's father-in-law, who became a saltwater guide when he retired. He was ill and hoped the boat could stay in the family, so that the granddaughters we shared could catch fish from it. I know even less about conventional fishing than I do about fly fishing, so one day this summer my daughter arranged for her family and me to spend a day with Ben from Jax Charters. We fished the Monomoy Rips, and after everyone else had caught fish on spinning gear (while I kept careful notes on rod set-up and technique), I asked Ben if I could try a few casts with his fly rod. I landed three over-slot stripers over the next hour – the first fish I've ever caught from a boat on flies. The next morning, I took one of the granddaughters I share with my boat's original owner, along with my son and son-in-law and a grandson, back out to the rips. The smile on my granddaughter's face when she landed her first fish, an over-slot striper on a spinning rod, is an image I'll cherish forever, and I truly felt my son's father-in-law was in the boat with us in spirit. I tried a few casts with my fly rod, and the water boiled as a good-sized striper attacked my orange squid pattern. No excuses: I simply missed the hook set – I still haven't landed a fish on a fly from my own boat. Lessons learned: sometimes you just miss hook sets, and the smile on a grandchild's face is a more precious memory than any fish I've ever landed.

And the biggest lessons I've learned in the two years since retiring? I bet I now know one-tenth of one percent of what there is to know about fly fishing, and much of that has been from the fish I've missed. As long as I'm missing fish, I'm at least out there fishing. Winters are long and life is short.

By Paul Burmeister

Bob Signorello

Hellertown, Pennsylvania

How long have you been a member?

2 years

Favorite flies?

Peasant Tail Wet Fly

Favorite places to fish?

Estuaries, bay, breachways, ocean, and surf

Boat or shore fishing?

Both

Any notable catches?

30 inch rainbow trout, Alaska

Favorite species to catch?

Steelhead, snook, and stripers

Favorite fishing partner?

Capt. Ray, Tony, and my son Rob

How long have you been fly fishing and tying flies?

65 years

Any notable stories?

Catching my first false albacore at Montauk, New York. I was so excited, so nervous, keeping my fingers crossed. Remember every blistering run, every thought going through my head just like as if time had stopped.



Jeff's Albie Hooker



Albies, stripers, and bonito on micro bait are notoriously difficult to catch. Jeff Perry ties his Albie Hooker for these tough situations. This fly has a great profile in the water while also delivering movement and flash.

- 1) Attach your thread near the bend and tie in a pinch of ice dub shimmer fringe.
- 2) Attach the Krystal Hackle and advance your thread to the head.
- 3) Wrap the Krystal Hackle around the shank until you reach the head and tie it off.
- 4) Tie in a strand of saltwater Flashabou on each side.
- 5) Use UV epoxy to finish the head then pick out the Krystal Hackle with velcro.

Materials



#1 hook



Mono or White Thread



Ice Dub Shimmer Fringe



Large Krystal Hackle



Saltwater Flashabou



UV Epoxy



September

OCTOBER, 2025



Fly Rod Sale

Bob Signorello, from Pennsylvania, our Member of the Month was nice enough to bestow a gift of three graphite fly rods to the club. Bob's only request is that all proceeds from the sale benefit the club's treasury. This is a very thoughtful, kind and generous gesture. We thank Bob for keeping us in his thoughts.

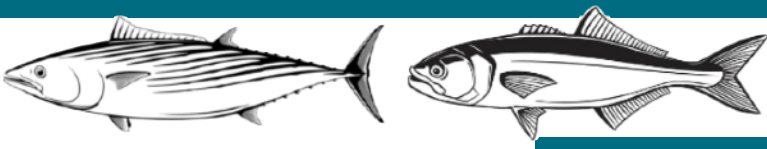
This was so unexpected since Bob lives so far away in PA. It just goes to show how much Bob enjoys reading our newsletter. We can't thank you enough, Bob! We will have a minimum bid posted on each rod. Please take the time to examine these rods at the meeting. You will find all three are in very good condition. Here's a chance to get some quality equipment at below market price. Most used Temple Forks list and start around \$150.00 on the used rod market.

Temple Fork Ti Cr X, 8 wt. 9 feet, 4 piece: Minimum offer \$70.00

Temple Fork Ti Cr X, 7 wt. 9 feet, 4 piece: Minimum offer \$70.00

Pflueger Medalist, 6 wt. 9 feet, 2 piece: Minimum offer \$35.00





What's New?

Chocklett Factory 3D Bug Wings have been on the market for several months. These wings are a light weight silicone like material and are marketed as providing a life like wind for your fly. They cost about \$8.50 for a pack of 6 pairs of wings. While the product is pretty cool and would make an awesome damsel fly imitation, the additional cost is probably not worth it for me. I personally don't find largemouth, smallmouth, or panfish to be that picky.



What's Worthless?

Fly Lines over \$150 are absolutely bonkers. If you cannot cast a \$90 line, the extra \$60+ you spend on a fly line is not going to help you out. **Your better off buying a casting lesson.** Chances are if you wait a year, that expensive fly line will be on sale for \$75 or less by the holiday season. Thirty years ago fly lines were not nearly as good as they are today and people still caught fish. Skip the expensive fly line and let it sit on the shelf of the fly shop. Instead, wait till the offseason and buy the model line from one or two years prior that is being sold as a closeout special. It will be on sale and just as good.

What's Worth It?

“Someone I know” recently put down their fishing bag at night while fishing and did not put it in their car before driving away. Luckily someone returned their bag to the lost and found at the state park where they were fishing. After this, they were surprised to find out how cheap apple **AirTags** are. For about \$25 you can always know where your fishing bag, kayak, boat, luggage, or other valuable gear is. You could probably even slide an AirTag into a rod tube. AirTags and other tracking devices are well worth it for keeping track of valuable assets.

Ugly, But Deadly

I'm going to give away one of my long-held secrets--one of my own-design flies that has proved to be very effective, especially for picky striped bass.

First, let me tell you where I stand on the perennial debate about what constitutes a "fly." On one side of the debate are the ultra purists. They contend that a fly must be constructed with purely natural materials (excluding the thread and hook, of course), meaning just fur and feathers. At the other extreme (where I fit in) are those who say it's a fly so long as you can cast it with a fly rod. In between are those who abide adding one or more of a seemingly endless selection of man-made materials, even including lead dumbbell "eyes" and mini spinner blades. The secret I am about to reveal takes it one step further.

I devised this fly about thirty years ago while fishing with a true striper bum, a fellow who practically abandoned his wife and family, his day job and his usual circle of friends to focus on fishing for striped bass, whenever and wherever, barely managing to "get by" financially. I was introduced to this fellow by my late friend Newell Steele, who owned and operated the very successful Angler's Lie fly shop in Arlington, Virginia. I won't reveal the fellow's real name, but Newell had nicknamed him "Mud Shad."

In the spring, I had fished an all-nighter at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge with Mud Shad from the small center console boat he had borrowed (?) from his sister, and we had done well on stripers (aka Rockfish, locally) and gotten along satisfactorily. And so, months later when he called to invite me to fish the outflow of a power plant from that same boat, I said yes.

The month was January and the power plant was at Morgantown, about 60 miles down the Potomac River from Washington, DC. I don't recall from where we launched, but I do remember that we anchored in a current seam in the midst of the warm water outflow from the power plant. I had spin and fly gear aboard. Mud Shad stuck with heavier conventional tackle. There were holdover stripers stacked up in the outflow, and we each hooked up multiple times using five inch paddle tail soft plastics on one-ounce leadhead jigs. Mud Shad caught more bass than me, but I landed one that weighed just under 25 pounds on my Boga Grip scale. I wanted to nail one like that on fly, and so I started using my 10 weight outfit with a 450 grain Teeny line. I went through a variety of five to seven inch flies without so much as a nibble. Then Mud Shad clued me in: It's the vibration from the paddle tail that triggers the bite.

[Continued on the next page....](#)

Ugly, But Deadly Cont.

A light bulb went off in my brain. I took one of my flies that was tied “Clouser-style” with heavy lead dumbbell eyes, spread the bucktail hairs aside, and pushed a five inch paddle tail onto the hook shank. As soon as I bounced that fly off the bottom, a decent striper whacked it—and then several more before we quit fishing. I did not hook a bass over twelve pounds on that fly, but ugly as it was, the stripers were nevertheless attracted to it.

Months later, at the end of June, I was fishing at Lobsterville Beach on Martha's Vineyard on a windless, flat calm night. The sea in front of me was alive with schoolie stripers chomping on small sandeels. “Slurping” the sandeels would be a more accurate description of the feeding. I “matched the hatch” casting slender sandeel flies on a floating line, but had minimal success. This had happened on a prior late June trip to the Vineyard, and this time I was better prepared. Based on my experience at the power plant months before, I had constructed a few paddle tail flies in different sizes and colors. That night at

Lobsterville, I swapped out the skinny sandeel imitation for a three inch long black paddle tail glued to the hook behind a brass cone. I'm not saying this “fly” was easy to cast; it was not! But the stripers loved it, and so did I.

I never named the fly. I suppose Captain Ken's Paddle Tail Clouser would be appropriate, if a little long. Anyway, if you are on my end of the What-Constitutes-a-Fly spectrum, then construct a few and give them a try.



Changes

The newsletter looks a bit different this month, but don't worry. The good changes are here to stay, and some of the old article series will come back in subsequent newsletters. For example, you may have noticed that two articles in this edition were longer than a page. This is here to stay. [Shorter is still better than longer](#), but a two page max is the new length limit for submissions. Additionally, you may have noticed no book review, spotlight, destination, or memorable story article. Those will come back, but might not be included every month.

Future Goals

Besides the changes you saw here, the goal remains to deliver the newsletter in a better format than an attachment. This year we hope to achieve that goal.

The Straw that Stirs the Drink

We are striving to create a collaborative, entertaining, and informative newsletter. The straw that stirs the drink is member submissions. In addition to the efforts of our awesome more regular contributors like Ken Cooper and Paul Pezza, we also need other members to contribute. When I started producing the newsletter, I wanted to provide a space for everyone to contribute and have a chance to add to the RFR community. Please help make this a reality, please save us from reading 16 pages of my thoughts, and please continue to contribute pictures and articles for our newsletter.



We Need Your Help!

Did you read a good fishing book or go on a trip somewhere? Do you want to share your knowledge of a **well known** spot with members new to the area or new to fly fishing? How about just some pictures of the fish you catch? ***U dun't hav 2 worry about gramma or speling***, we can fix it! Let us know and we will include it in the next issue.

Contact the newsletter team:
Rhodyflyrodder.newsletter@gmail.com

Officers and Board

President:

Capt. Ray Stachelek
401-884-3794
castaflycharters@cox.net

Secretary/Treasurer:

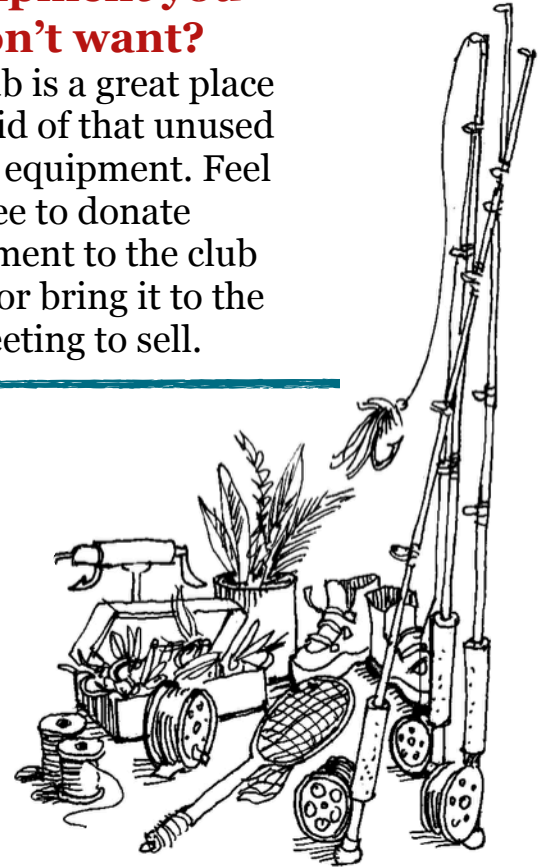
John Pope
jpope@johnspopecpa.com

Directors:

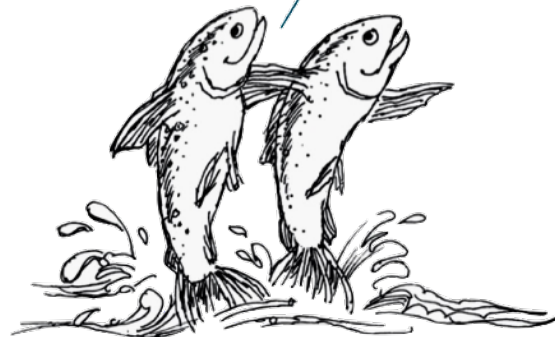
Susan Estabrook
Bob Teeden
Gary Menard
Patrick Williamson

Do you have unused fishing equipment you don't want?

Our club is a great place to get rid of that unused fishing equipment. Feel free to donate equipment to the club raffle, or bring it to the meeting to sell.



Good Times!



Artwork by: **Peter Nilsen**