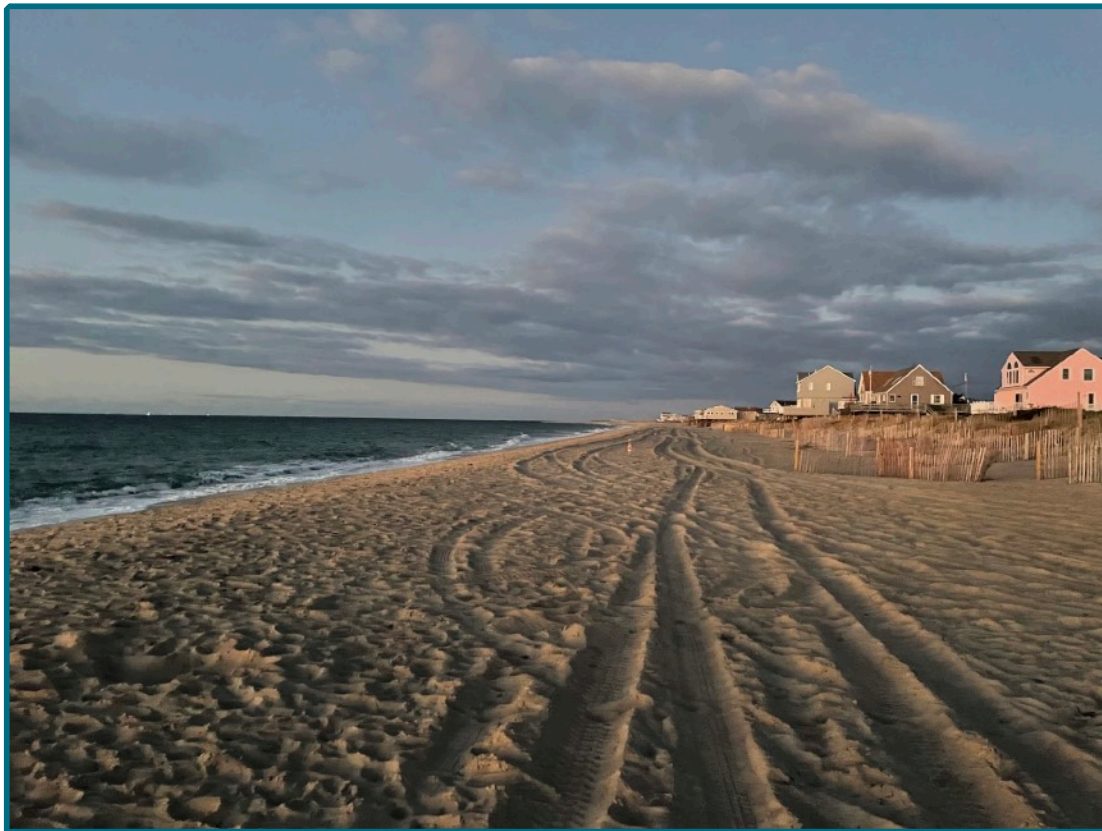




America's Oldest Saltwater Fly Fishing Club

THE CURRENT

"The lifeline of the estuary and knowledge"



A Month Of Giving

December and November marked one of our biggest charitable events. We donated food to the food pantry, tied flies for veterans, and received a donation from a special group of individuals. More about this group on [page 5](#).

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



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Follow Us On Instagram!

@Rhody_Fly_Rodders



Happy New Year! The winter weather has finally caught up with us. We are starting to get more snow. Remember the last few snowless years? We didn't use a shovel much. Unless you're down south most of us stay warm inside. Do you want to know how to keep busy this winter? Read the section on "Winter Months Ahead" on **page 12**.

North Kingstown Food Pantry was the recipient of our recent **Holiday Food Drive**. We donated **42 pounds (!)** of can goods. The Pantry collects food from half a dozen churches, several local super markets, and now a fly fishing club too! Your generosity helped families in need. Well done everyone! A picture of our donation can be found on **page 9**.

The **December Tying Meeting** was a success with many flies tied. A special thank you to all who made this night possible. Pictures from the event are on **page 9** and a more detailed message is on **page 12**.

When was the last time you had a skin screening done by your Dermatologist? You should have one every year due to the amount of time we spend outside. Most medical plans will cover the cost of the check up. I have mine done at the end of every fishing season and recently had a Basal Cell Carcinoma removed. They caught it early because I go for yearly check-ups. Many of my friends and clients have encountered this situation over the years too. I've learned to always wear sun block. I also wear long sleeve shirts and pants on the boat. Please take heed, catch it early, so it doesn't get out of hand!

It's that **time of the year to re-new your membership**. It's a modest \$30.00. There are many benefits to being a member like pizza night, the spring barbecue, tying night, guest speakers, the fishing outings, and so much more. We have fiscal commitments we must meet, and all proceeds go to activities that benefit our members. Our board and other help is volunteer. Please remember to pay your dues. Payments can be made at the January Meeting or you can mails a check to John Pope, 6 Canonchet Drive, Portsmouth, RI 02871. More on this on **page 16**.

Capt. Ray Stachelek

Capt. Ray Stachelek



President
Rhody Fly Rodders

Preview



Tuesday, January 20, 6:00pm

Riverside Sportsman Association
19 Mohawk Dr., East Providence, RI 02915



January Presentation

The flats are arguably the most challenging place to target stripers with flies. It's what Chris Kokorda lives for. Chris will be joining us at our next meeting to give a talk on targeting stripers in shallow water. His territory is mainly the Cape Cod Flats, but what you learn will help with all shallow water fishing. This presentation will include strategies, techniques, tackle, flies and other details for stalking stripers and sight fishing. Be sure to come with questions, as Chris enjoys interacting with his audience.



For the past 20 years, Chris Kokorda has been a shore guide, casting instructor, and fly tyer on Cape Cod. Growing up, Chris honed his fly fishing skills by exploring the waters of Connecticut. In 2006, his passion for fly fishing led him to Massachusetts where he managed the fly shop, Fishing the Cape. There he gained experience as a professional guide and casting instructor. For the better part of the last decade, he has served as head instructor of the Cape Cod Saltwater Fly Fishing School.

Before Meeting Fly Tying

We will be tying flies before the meeting. After all we are a fly tying club too. Armand would be proud. He always tied before meetings and was proactive in sharing his knowledge.

Three Fly Rods and Artwork for Sale!

Three fly rods and an original art piece are being auctioned in a running silent auction until the February Meeting. Take a look and make a bid!

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.

A Month Of Giving

The Blackstone River System Fly Fishing Association has been running an Annual Christmas Breakfast Fundraising Event for many years. All proceeds from the raffle are given to the RFR as a match for the money raised from the sale of flies that are tied by the RFR's at their annual fly tying meeting. We are so thankful for all the help and support that we receive for this great cause. The organizers for the 2025 event were **Wes Wyatt, John Fischer, Roger Earl and myself (Ed Lombardo)** along with so many other friends from many Rhode Island Organizations: **RFR, RI Trout Unlimited, UFTRI, RISAA, WRFFC, WPWA.**

Every year these organizations all play a big part in this Holiday endeavor. Not only do members come to breakfast, they provide us with many raffle prizes as well. There were so many prizes this year; at least 30 or more! These consisted of fly fishing vests, books, flies for both fresh water and saltwater, fly tying materials and more. We can't thank everyone enough for attending and being so generous and kind for this fundraising event. Thank you to all for the overwhelming support and kind donations, so greatly appreciated. We raised **\$420.00** this year which was given the RFR Treasurer John Pope at our last RFR meeting. These funds, along with last year's fly sales will be sent to **Project Healing Waters**, our 2025 Charity.

"A Happy, Healthy New Year everyone, and God Bless" Ed.



By Ed Lombardo

Mark Ellis

Warren, RI

How long have you been a member?

1 year

Favorite flies?

Betsy, Bender, olive/white Unique Hair Clouser, Halloween

Favorite places to fish?

Brewster Flats, Bass River, Bearse Shoal in Chatham

Boat or shore fishing?

Both. I have a 17' Boston Whaler Montauk

Favorite species to catch?

Striped Bass

Favorite fishing partner?

My brother Stewart

How long have you been fly fishing and tying flies?

25 years

Any notable catches?

Three 38" Stripers on the fly. Still pursuing my 40

Any notable stories?

Can't think of any particular one. But my best stories are pitch black nights on the flats, or chucking 10" articulated squid flies in the rips at first light with my buds, for cow stripers



2026 RFR Challenge

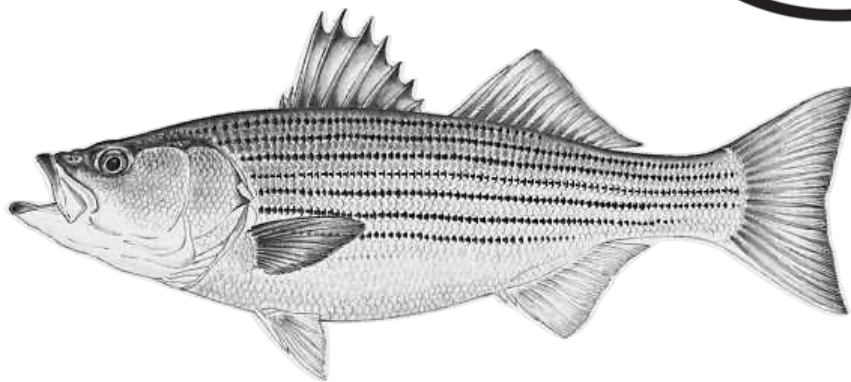
As we begin to think about the new year we would like to challenge our members to help us achieve RFR's 2026 goals. The 2026 RFR challenge is comprised of five simple components. Three of these you can complete from your recliner, and two you will have to leave your house for. By completing the 2026 RFR Challenge you will have a positive impact on our club!

The challenge:

- 1) Follow us on Instagram and friend us on Facebook
- 2) Submit a picture to rhodyflyrodder.newsletter@gmail.com for the newsletter
- 3) Introduce a fly fisher to RFR
- 4) Attend at least one meeting before spring
- 5) Attend at least one fishing event in 2026

Bonus!

Fish with someone new from RFR



RFR's instagram averages 960 views per month!

Website views were up 20% in December

Our Facebook has 1000 followers

RFR Facts

Increasing Our Engagement is a Key goal in 2026. Engagement is more than just social media. It includes bringing in well known presenters and broadening our audience through new, active, and diverse club events.

Smallmouth Crouser



I enjoy fishing for largemouth and smallmouth bass in the summer. This fly is basically a crouser, but I use it for smallmouth. It is a cross between minnow and crayfish.

- 1) Slide the cone onto the jig hook. The exact combination will need experimentation to fit.
- 2) Attach your thread at the bend of the hook and tie in craft fur to make a tail. Tie in your first set of silicone legs.
- 3) Tie in Ed's yarn followed by Crystal Chenille. Let both hang.
- 4) Wrap your thread forward adding silicone legs at the half way point and near the cone.
- 5) Now wrap the chenille forward and lock it down. Trim the excess. Be careful not to trap the legs as you pass them by.
- 6) Wrap Ed's yarn forward with spiral wraps and tie it down. Trim the excess. Again be careful of the legs.
- 7) Whip finish, apply some glue, and push the cone back over the knot. When the glue sets either add glue in front of the cone, or tie back in and whip finish in front of the cone.

Materials



Any Jig hook size 1 to 3/0



Any thread



Ed's Yarn



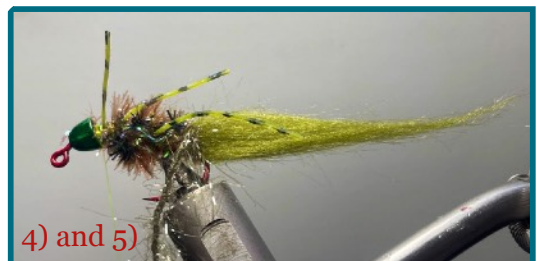
Crystal Chenille



Weighted cone



Craft Fur



December

JANUARY, 2026



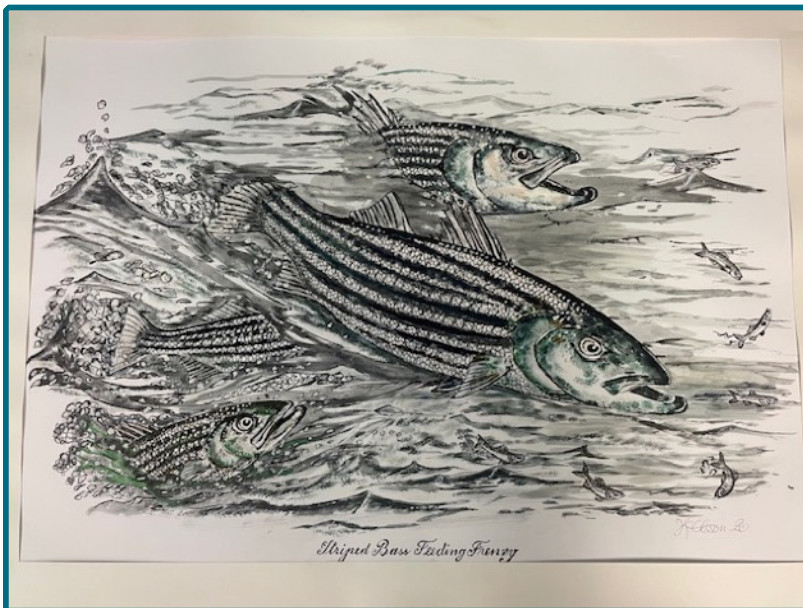
Fly Rod and Artwork Sale

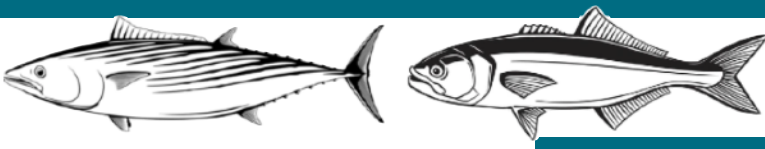
The silent Auction will end in February

Temple Fork Ti Cr X, 8 wt. 9 feet, 4 piece: Minimum Bid \$70.00
Temple Fork Ti Cr X, 7 wt. 9 feet, 4 piece: Minimum Bid \$70.00
Pflueger Medalist, 6 wt. 9 feet, 2 piece: Minimum Bid \$35.00



Original Artwork by Keld Olson: Minimum Bid \$60.00





What's New?

Korker Salt Sneakers are a newish saltwater boot made for the flats but useable in all salt environments. The boot is light and quick draining. It features flat laces and corrosive resistant eyelets. The Salt Sneaker was designed to be comfortable yet durable. If you are in the market for a flats boot or new wading boot, this may be a candidate to look into. Just make sure you do ample research as quality boots are hard to come by.



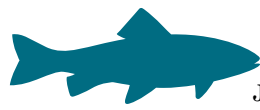
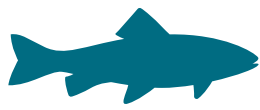
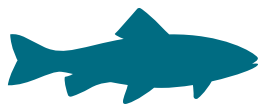
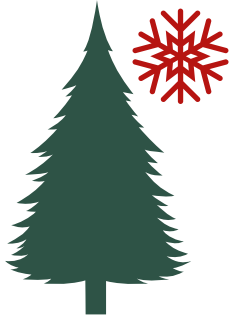
What's Worthless?

Are **spun and stacked deer hair heads** now worthless? I do enjoy tying flies with deer body hair heads, but I'm not sure they perform better than the easier to tie and more durable alternatives. Anytime I fish a slider or popper I reach for flies made of foam. Also, Fettuccine foam can make the same shaped buoyant heads as deer body hair. If I need a head that pushes water on a fly that sinks I usually pack dubbing or wool instead of deer hair. I hope spun and stacked deer hair heads are not worthless, but time seems to not be on their side.

What's Worth It?

Christmas is not only a wonderful time of the year to over eat and drink too much, it is also a great time of the year to pick up some alternative flash material for fly tying.

Icicle tinsel for Christmas trees makes great flashabou, and it is dirt cheap. I have picked up 1000 18 inch strands for \$0.99. In some cases this holiday decoration and what you buy at a fly shop are literally the same product packaged differently. It is easiest to find silver and gold, but you may also find green, red, blue, purple, and the holy grail - transparent pearl. You can buy holiday tinsel on Amazon all year long, but in a store you can handle the product and see if the tinsel is the proper quality to substitute for fly tying material. If you do miss out on this special holiday shopping, Easter is another great time to buy alternative flash. The basket filler can work great, but sometimes is too curled to be useful. This is why icicle tinsel and this time of the year is superior.



Winter Months Ahead!



What can we do during the winter months as we wait for spring to arrive? Here are a few helpful suggestions.

- 1) Round up a few friends or members and have a fly tying session or get a bite to eat.
- 2) Get together with some fellow members and go to a fly shop or the Fly Fishing show.
- 3) Inventory your fly tying materials and organize your supplies. Afterwards order what you need.
- 4) Conduct annual gear maintenance. An article on fly line was in last months newsletter and another article on maintenance is on **page 13**.
- 5) Reflect and improve. What were your problems on the water? Maybe casting? Maybe your fly selection was not right? Maybe the wrong size flies? Now is the time to analyze these mistakes and make changes for the coming year.
- 6) Pen an article for the newsletter or plan a presentation for the club.
- 7) Exercise regularly to maintain muscle mass, flexibility, and range. The Gene Matterson Approach! It works!
- 8) Plan a well deserve fishing vacation to a warmer climate, break up the winter.



Fly Tying Night Success

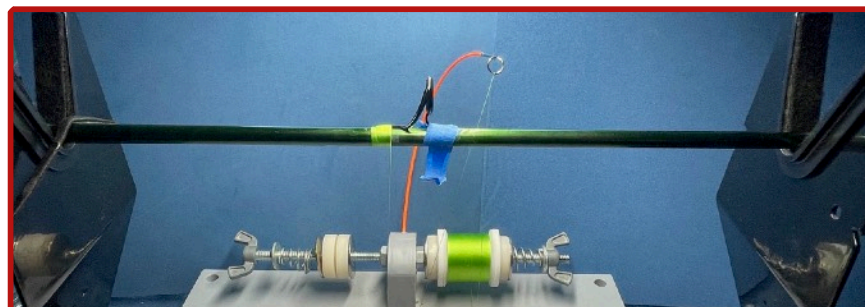
Thanks to all who contributed to make our fly tying night a success. The holiday desserts were perfect and we are grateful to those who provided them. The air was filled with friendly conversations and holiday Music. Thank you **Gary** for the sound system. **Susan Estabrook** did a splendid job co-ordinating this annual event. She put together this program and made it all happen. Our special thanks to all our talented mentors, **Ed Lombardo, Wes Wyatt, Jeff Perry, Ray Stachelek and Dennis Pelletier**. We counted on you heavily and all came through with flying colors. Thank to the members for coming to the meeting prepared ready to tie.

We covered fly lines last month, so this month lets focus on rods, flies, and leaders. All flies that were in your pack this year should be rinsed and dried. Once dry they should be checked for sharpness, sharpened if needed, and organized in your fly box. You can add some desiccant pouches to your fly box for extra rust resistance. Leaders should be removed from the line, coiled, and stored out of sunlight. Remember to label the leaders, so you know what they are. When you set up your first rod for next season you will need to replace any section with knots in it and the tippet. The butt section will be good to use again.

You should test your spare tippet material to make sure it has not expired. Monofilament under 25lbs lasts 1-2 years before it will consistently break under strain. While they say fluorocarbon lasts forever, I have found 5 years to be the expiration point in <30lb test. To test your tippet, tie a surgeon knot connecting it to a stronger section or tie it directly to a fly. Give the connection a few sharp pulls in quick succession. If it breaks cut back eight inches from the spool and try again. Test it multiple times moving deeper into the spool. Sometimes there is a bad section of material on the spool that needs to be cut away. Any spools of bad tippet under 8lb should be saved as you can use it as mono thread for fly tying. If you don't want it, you can give it to me.

Rods should be rinsed, dried, and prepped for any repairs that need to be made. Check the tip top for grooves. If there are grooves make a plan to replace the tip top. You can easily do this yourself. Check the stripping guides for grooves too. To fix these, a rod builder is your best bet.

Wash your stripping basket to remove sand and silt from the inside. Empty your pack and remove wrappers, pieces of line, and items you do not need. Repack it so you can easily pick it up and leave to fish. Rinse or wash your waders according to their care instructions. Dry them and check for leaks. It is better to fix leaks now then in the spring.



A Memorable Story: The 10 “Mend-ments”



God created, “This vast Universe,” in six days. On the 7th day he created mankind. God is “The Fisher of all Men.” He knew mankind had to do something with their idle time, so on the 7th day he also created the Rhody Flat Wing. He knew life on earth would be boring without some kind of outdoor hobby, so he opened up the waters of Harold Meadows (Palmer River) in Barrington RI to saltwater fly fishing. Man would have had eternal happiness at this point, but no lasting future existence. Thus, God created a partner, Eve.

Soon after God, spoke to some local tribal leaders on Nockum Hill, near Hundred Acre Cove. He knew Mankind would have difficulty governing their fishing existence, and needed some divine guidance here on earth. Therefore tablets established as a Code of Conduct were handed to these fly fishermen at low tide. These Tablets known as The Ten **Mend-ments**, were given to a tribe of eclectic vagabonds called the Rhody Fly Rodders.

- 1st Mend-ment:** Thou shall only use an Eagle Claw, 253NA, 1X short hook.
- 2nd Mend-ment:** Thou shall use no more that 4 stands of of Mylar.
- 3rd Mend-ment:** Pillows are not used for sitting idle, only to seat a flatwing.
- 4th Mend-ment:** Thou shall never use a fast-action fly rod. Spare the rod and you destroy the flatwing.
- 5th Mend-ment:** Thou shall only use floating fly lines. They aid in direction when walking on water.
- 6th Mend-ment:** Thou shall always have humility on the water.
- 7th Mend-ment:** Thou shall have limitless imagination and creativity at the vise.
- 8th Mend-ment:** Deception and Illusion shall not be a sin in a creation of a fly.
- 9th Mend-ment:** Thou shall have total respect for the environment and all God’s creatures.
- 10th Mend-ment:** Thou shall, “Pass on to all, who ask what you learn here.”



Destination: South Water Caye Belize

JANUARY, 2026

South Water Caye in **Belize** is not as famous as Ambergris Caye, but this Island is one of the best spots for a DIY fly fisher to vacation with a non-fishing partner. Located 14 miles from shore and right on the second biggest barrier reef in the world, South Water contains three small resorts and a few fishing shacks. Don't panic. These are not the resorts you see in Hawaii or the Bahamas. The island is small and will never have more than 20 guests on it at any given time. There are no roads and no cars. I have had the island to myself and have been there with 15 other guests. Neither time did it feel crowded.

While most visitors are there to sit in a hammock, snorkel, or scuba dive, the small island is home to one of the biggest schools of bonefish in the country. If you stay on the island you can walk the flats at sun up and in the late afternoon, yet enjoy the day relaxing or going on excursions with your family. I caught my first bonefish here years ago by myself with no guide. The staff at Pelican Beach Resort helped me dial in to the right flies and one staff member even joined me on the flat one evening to show me the ropes. In the two times I have visited this island, I have had shots at or caught bonefish, barracuda, nurse sharks, bonnet head sharks, permit and tarpon all without a guide while only fishing a few hours a day.

The three resorts on the island do not have any equipment or guides, but they can arrange a guide to come to the island and pick you up for a half day or full day of fishing. In Belize almost all the guides are independent contractors that will guide from wherever they can get a client whether it be a fishing centric lodge or a client from elsewhere. This can augment your DIY adventures around the island.



If you are traveling with family or your partner, it is a better experience for them if you do not stay in a fishing lodge. For example, Pelican Beach Resort on South Water Caye has or can arrange massages, yoga, kayaking, volley ball, snorkeling, diving, and eco tours. Meals are included and the beach here has been voted the best beach in the world multiple times. If you do fish here please be aware of stingrays. They are common.



To all our beloved members and friends,

If you haven't noticed lately, there have been many new changes with our newsletter, website and meetings lately. These changes have been necessary to increase our club visibility, align with our future goals. We have had many discussions with board members the past year, what's the best way to get the word out that we exist. We've discussed our presence at trade show, the cost of attending them, and the volunteers needed to attend them. We've discussed our presence on the internet. The internet gives us more readerships and access to the world. It's the way communication and access is done with business and sales today. We can be more flexible and get the word out instantly to our membership.

January is part of our membership Drive. It the time of year dues are due to cover all our expenses from hall rentals to website fees, presentations, and cookouts. Dues still remain as \$30.00 with all the inflation around us.

Important, Please Note: We have been lenient in the past continuing to send our newsletter to members who have not paid their dues. Starting February changes will be made to our newsletter email list. The clubs newsletter will only be sent to active or paid members. It is now important to pay your dues within the next two months. Anyone who hasn't paid or hasn't been active in club activities the last few years will be removed from the newsletter mailing list. They will no longer automatically receive the email newsletter each month. This is one of the benefits of being a paid member. Active includes attending meetings, fishing events, contributing to the newsletter or events, and/or communicating with the club. Paid means being in good standing with your membership. Exceptions may be made for hardship and other situations. Please reach out to castaflycharters@cox.net for more details.

Fret not! **Anyone who has been removed from the mailing list can still view the current and past newsletter on our website.** We also have a Facebook account with other important information available too. Life Time Members who haven't been active the last few years will have to refer to our website for the newsletter.

In closing, we have an active, vibrant club with meetings that are fun, educational, and beneficial. Don't forget the lasting friendships that have always bonded us together.

Best wishes,
Ray Stachelek, President, Rhody Fly Rodders.

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

Vice President:

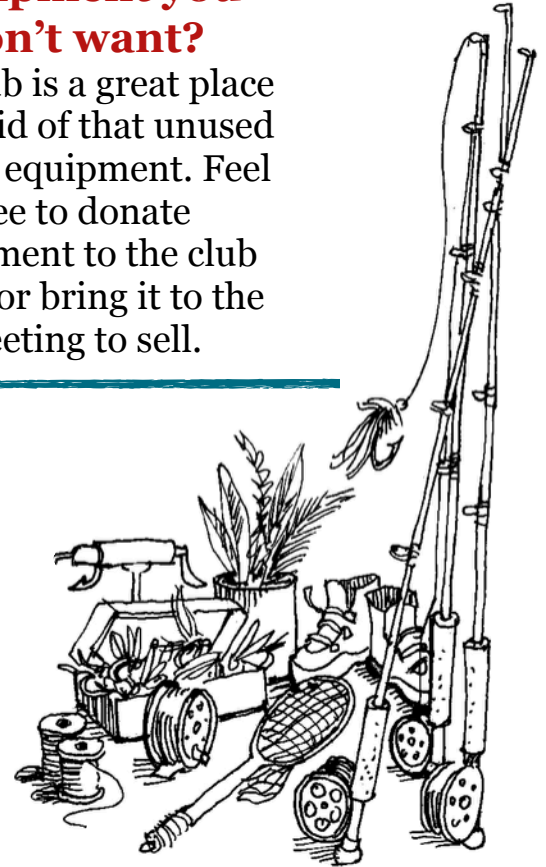
Paul Burmeister

Directors:

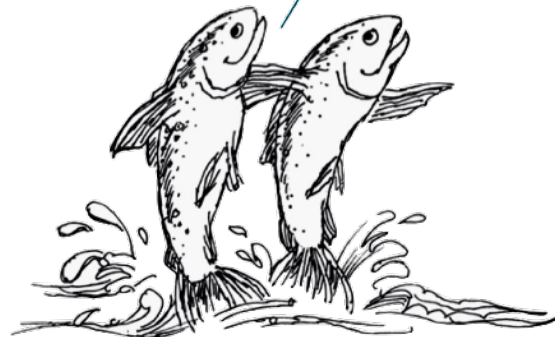
Jon Avery
Mark Ellis
Susan Estabrook
Gary Menard
Patrick Williamson

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**