

Mid-Missouri Trout Unlimited



Cross Currents

August 2005

President's Message

Some of you may recall that back in November 2003 I had a heart attack and quadruple bypass surgery while visiting one of my daughters in Boulder, Colorado. I mentioned that event in one of these columns and noted that, despite this near-death-experience, I did not have any revelations or insights of cosmic significance. I was back in Boulder in early June of this year and this time I did have an epiphany.

Actually, this epiphany did not occur in Boulder, but on the South Platte at the bottom of Cheesman Canyon. I had taken the antepenultimate space in the lot and by the time I got to the river at the bottom of the Gill Trail, it was cloudy, raining, and the wind was blowing up the canyon.

So, here I was on a famous tailwater that has been described as a "graduate school of technical fly fishing". This has been a catch-and-release fishery since the 70's and the trout can be finicky. I read that exact imitations were required because the trout see so many artificial flies. I couldn't see any fish at all in the off-color water and no fish were rising. I was feeling quite intimidated. That's when I had the epiphany (Webster's third definition): *This is just fly fishing!*

I may not be a great fly fisherman, but I do know something about this. This was a trout stream. I've caught trout. I can read water a little. Who ties flies that are deliberate misrepresentations of food organisms? Does anyone make deliberately bad casts? I had done some research and had talked to the guy at the fly shop in Deckers, so I had some idea of appropriate flies. I tied on a small bead head pheasant tail and hooked two fish, the first I broke off because I had, I admit it, a rather large adrenaline rush and the second I landed...a nice 15-16 incher. Yes, it was new water and yes, the trout are picky and eat the small flies typical of a tailwater, etc. But, it's just fly fishing.

It is also possible that the folks who write about places like Cheesman Canyon make everything sound a little more difficult than it really is. After all, if you write about how difficult the fishing is, won't the readers be more impressed when you write about all the huge, wily trout you caught? I think we can be intimidated when "experts" tell us how difficult the fishing can be [Just so you know, the Gill Trail was not nearly as arduous a hike (even coming back up) as I had been led to believe by what I had read. I hiked in and out in the rain while wearing my waders and felt soled boots and had no difficulty]. But remember, this is just fly fishing.

I'd like to write that I continued to catch fish after fish, but I was cold, the wind was blowing, it was raining, I had to meet my daughter for dinner back in Boulder, and I still had a long hike back up to the parking lot. So I left after the two fish.

By the way, my Lamberson bamboo rod worked just fine in all the wind. Bamboo may seem fragile and suitable only for upstream dry fly fishing on placid chalk streams, but remember: it's just a fly rod and this is just fly fishing.

Jon Deal.

June/July Chapter Business

Just fishing.

Bryan Chilcutt - Secretary

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MEETING NEWS:

June 7: The annual Bethel “Hot Dog Burn” at the Bethel Park pavilion. The chapter provided the dogs, brats and drinks, and we enjoyed side dishes and desserts brought by members. A few of the many members and family members that attended tried some fishing, and although the bluegill didn’t show up, a fun time was had by all.

August 2: Mark Van Patton – Mark will present a program on production of *The Tying Bench*, his popular weekly television show on fly tying. *The Tying Bench* is broadcast by many stations across the country and locally by KMOS at 6 pm on Sundays. <http://www.thetyingbench.com>

Photos from the Hot Dog Burn



(photos courtesy of Michael Riley)

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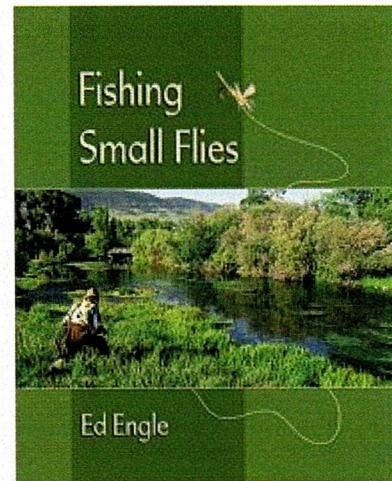
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BOOK REVIEW –by Jon Deal

Fishing Small Flies by Ed Engle. Stackpole Books, 2005. Reviewed by Jon L. Deal

Ed Engle is well known to readers of John Gierach because he is so often a central figure in Gierach's stories. However, Ed Engle is an author in his own right and this most recent book is a natural companion to his previous *Tying Small Flies* and *Fishing the Tailwaters*.

In *Fishing Small Flies*, Engle has laid it all out for us. In chapter 1, he dissects small waters, including tailwaters, spring creeks, freestone streams, and still waters. He covers tackle for small flies in Chapter 2, including leader formulae by George Anderson, A.K. Best, and George Harvey. Chapter 3 concentrates on how to find and spot fish when they are there. Nymph, dry fly, and emerger fishing are covered in chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4, on nymphing techniques, covers use of indicators and freestyle nymphing and multi-fly rigging. Chapter 5 includes a section on how to detect a strike when you can't see your fly – important information, especially for those of us who have trouble finding our large flies on the water. Chapter 6 covers how to strike, play, and land big fish on small flies and fine tippets. In Chapter 7, he discusses fishing the major small fly hatches and provides some excellent color picture of small fly patterns. The last chapter is entitled “Elements of Style” and is an insightful way to close the book.



Anglers new to small fly fishing, as well as accomplished small fly fishers, will find useful information in these chapters. We can all benefit from his discussion of rigging up for nymphing and how to fish with more than one fly. His many illustrations are simple and clear. His writing style is easy to read and he illustrates his points with descriptions of specific fishing situations that make you feel as if you were standing on the bank watching him fish.

Engle is a Western fly fisherman who still guides on the South Platte in Colorado. But what he has to teach us about small fly fishing is certainly applicable to the fishing we do in Missouri, Arkansas, Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Think of Taneycomo, the White/Norfolk Rivers in Arkansas and remember that even Bennett Spring is a spring creek with a healthy midge population. I strongly recommend that you add *Fishing Small Flies* (and *Tying Small Flies*) to your library. I don't think you will be disappointed.

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