

# Stream Lines

Champlain Valley Trout Unlimited  
Chapter 138 Newsletter



Winter 2025

**New Stream Lines Format!** For a more compact e-newsletter, longer articles are linked: look for "**click here to read more...**" following intros to featured pieces! Let us know what you think: [StreamLines@vttu.org](mailto:StreamLines@vttu.org)

## President's Message



When I think about Champlain Valley Trout Unlimited (CVTU), I think about our members. Our members come from diverse backgrounds, united by a shared passion for trout fishing. Fishing offers a wonderful escape from our busy lives, allowing us to slow down and connect with nature. It is a special activity that can be enjoyed by all and can truly be a lifelong pursuit.

One of our early members was Rhey Plumley, who had a significant impact on CVTU and the fly fishing community in Vermont. As some of you know, Rhey recently passed away, and CVTU has decided to dedicate this issue to his memory.

Even if you didn't know Rhey personally, we can all honor his legacy by introducing someone new to this wonderful activity of fly fishing and offering them a new way to enjoy nature.

*-Aaron Todd, CVTU President*

## In this Issue

*This issue of Stream Lines promises to be a keeper. In addition, we're excited to bring out the first in a series of **Casting Clinic** columns by guide, FFI Certified Casting Instructor (and CVTU member) Mark Wilde. We'll also hook you up with a full rundown of this year's **International Fly Fishing Film Festival - IF4-25** will screen at the Essex Cinema on April 2nd, You won't want to miss it! Here's the rundown:*

*Winter Recap*

*Remembering Rhey*

*Trout in the Classroom*

*Casting Clinic*

*IF4 - 25 Film Festival Preview*

*Last Cast - The Rivers Project*

*Featured Fly - a Vermont Original*

## Winter Recap

CVTU Board member Jesse Smith opened the doors of his business, *The Overland Shop*, for our first two events of the winter. The shop's extensive floor space and high ceiling proved ideal for a mid-January casting demonstration by Mark Wilde, along with a burgeoning rummage sale of contents from the CVTU storage locker. In February, we returned to the Overland Shop space for Guides Night, featuring a selection of guides from around the region. We returned to the Doubletree in South Burlington in March for the Membership Roundup, a chance for chapter members to get together with the CVTU Board to explore possibilities for future directions and activities.

While attendance was somewhat higher than the previous year, turnout for any one gathering remains well below 10% of our overall membership, suggesting the need for a careful survey to discover what folks might be interested in doing together as a chapter. Watch for it in a future email.



Jamie Eisenberg reports that weekly fly-tying sessions were well-attended the winter, providing participants with a chance to get together, to learn and to load up those fly boxes for the upcoming spring season!

### ***Remembering Rhey***

If there's a heartbeat pulsing in the life of our Trout Unlimited chapter, it paused one day last December when Rhey Plumley passed away. As longtime CVTU pillar Janie Merola McKenzie wrote on the chapter's Facebook page, he was a friend and mentor to many. The heart and soul of the Classic Outfitter shop, Rhey was also an early president of the growing CVTU chapter, an apostle of fly tying and fishing, and a magnificent spirit.

At Janie's urging, a number of his friends and followers have contributed their best memories of Rhey, some of which we share here. A complete collection of these memorials to Rhey Plumley, and a small photo gallery, has been assembled and posted to the CVTU website, <https://www.vttu.org>

[Click here to read more](#) about this great friend and mentor.

### ***Reflections on Rhey Plumley - by John Austin***

Rhey was the eternal optimist and pragmatist which was often reflected in his advice, which he was happy to offer. I remember occasions when I'd be discussing with Rhey where to go fishing, or when to go fishing, or what fly to use, or why the fish weren't cooperating, and he would say, "just go fishing – just fish".

[Click here to read more](#)

### ***Rhey Plumley - a Tribute - by Bill Grover***

Former students write to me to reminisce about their experiences in those first months of College and sing the praises of "that gentle guy with the scraggly beard," who took the time to care about them in ways that moved well beyond the traditional classroom experience. Rhey spread joy and a sense adventure. He taught them to slow down and be awake. He modeled how to be a good human.

[Click here to read more](#)

### ***Thank You, Rhey*** - by Jamie Eisenberg

I had no idea that fly fishing was going to be one of the most important passions of my life when I stumbled upon it over thirty years ago. I taught myself to fly fish on the Israel's River in Lancaster, NH by using the Orvis Guide to Fly Fishing. I was totally inept. I got tangled up in my line, lost countless flies, fell into the river on every outing, but I had a blast! I even caught a couple of fish.

[Click here to read more](#)

### ***Some Rhey Moments*** - by Peter Shea

The only time my fly line backing ever saw daylight was when Rhey exposed it every March. He did this for some portion of two decades. Rhey was as devoted to serving the angler, as he was committed to the love of trout and angling. And, during that epoch span, he kept my dark secret: I could not tie an effing nail knot to save my life.

[Click here to read more](#)

### ***Trout in the Classroom***

Right about now, brook trout fry being raised in Trout in the Classroom tanks around the region are being released from the confines of their breeder baskets to swim in all 55 gallons of their tanks, where they will continue to feed – and grow!



[Click here to read more](#)



### ***New Feature - Casting Clinic with Mark Wilde***

CVTU member Mark Wilde is an FFI Certified Casting Instructor and lead guide at Uncle Jammer's Guide Service. We're happy and fortunate to present the first installment in this issue! Mark welcomes comments and questions: [unclejammervt@aol.com](mailto:unclejammervt@aol.com)

Many anglers start their backcast stroke with the rod tip somewhere between the horizontal and 45° to the horizontal. This practice limits a caster's ability to make an effective backcast, but can easily be corrected by starting with the **rod tip at water level**. Improper starting position can cause problems with two other fundamentals in your cast.

[Click here to read more](#)



### ***International Fly Fishing Film Festival***

What's more fun than braving mud and snow squalls for some early spring fishing? It's getting together with TU friends to watch great fishing adventures on the big screen! Plan now to join us **April 2** at the **Essex Cinema** for this year's screening of IF4-2025!

CVTU's major fundraiser of the year, The International Fly Fishing Film Festival - IF4™ leading fly-fishing film event, consisting of coveted fly-fishing films produced by filmmakers of the globe and showcases the passion, lifestyle, and culture of fly fishing. It is the gathering of the fishing community and a celebration of friendship, stories and more!

[Click here to read more, see movie trailers, and get tickets!!](#)



*IF4 is made possible in part by the generous support of The Small Boat Exchange  
"The Small Boat Exchange... northern Vermont's premier, small boat dealer, full line Yamaha dealer, outboard specialist, fishing kayaks, sailboats, and all round great first step for boaters"*

## **Last Cast – See Something, Share Something with the RIVERS Project**



Let's admit it: we're blessed. For most of us, our home waters are pretty close to home. That means it's pretty easy for us to get out on the water. It also means we have a responsibility to keep an eye on it, especially when there are symptoms that suggest that things aren't as good as they should be. With the Trout Unlimited RIVERS project, there's an easy way to record, report and gather information on issues small and not-so-small.

[Click here to read more](#)

## **Featured Fly**

It's not altogether clear how many other states, if any, have an official fishing fly, but Vermont does. Thanks to the wisdom of the legislature, as written into law in 2014's Bill H. 589, and the persistent campaigning of CVTU's Rhey Plumley, the "**Governor Aiken Bucktail Streamer**" stands among the Green Mountain State's official icons.

As Rhey himself related, the fly was originated sometime in the 1940's by Russell Merriman, a friend and fishing companion of Governor and later Senator George Aiken,

[Click here to read more and see the recipe.](#)



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