

Some Neat Fly Fishing Products
by Jim Brady

I hope you have been enjoying some good trout fishing this spring, despite the high water. I tie some extra heavily weighted nymphs so the high water has given me an excuse to drown a few. Recently I was sitting at the tying bench replacing some nymphs that didn't come back and it occurred to me that a few products, all less than \$10, have made my fishing experience more enjoyable this year.

The water, as you have probably felt, has not only been high but cold. I have tried to prevent cold feet as seemingly as long as I have fished, cutting my teeth in Connecticut streams back in the '60's. A few years ago Brad Peete put me onto silk sock liners, thin socks you wear under your wader socks. I couldn't find the silk ones, but GOPC sells a version under the brand name 'Wigwam' for about \$7 a pair. Sock liners work by wicking moisture, which your skin constantly secretes, away from your feet. Sock liners are simply wonderful. As Mike Callahan put it, "Dry feet are happy feet." So true. I have found sock liners indispensable for winter and spring fishing. After a day clambering about Helton Creek in early March, nearly every part of me ached but my feet were warm and dry.

A second great item is removable split shot. Old style split shot had a slot in them you crimped around the leader; when you took them off it usually involved cutting and splicing the leader back together. I carry two kinds of the new style shot. One type ("Water Gremlin") has "wings" on the back side that you can squeeze together with your forceps to remove the shot from the leader. Then you can just drop it back into the container. Other types are soft enough I can peel them open with my fingernails. Either of these make it easy to adjust the amount of weight a particular situation requires and not just for a single use. My preference is for the big shot (at least BB size) that usually don't come in assortments marketed to fly fishermen but that you can find much less expensively at WalMart or even gas stations.

After bushwacking through what I discovered was a briar patch, I was re-introduced recently to "UV Wader Repair" made by Loon (also available at GOPC). This stuff epitomizes 'better living through chemistry.' Once I located the potential sources of my wet pants (one hole still had a briar stuck in it), I merely squeezed a small amount over the holes. The ultraviolet light-curable material set up in a few seconds; I let it rest for at least a minute (it will actually take several hours to harden but the leak is sealed almost immediately). UV Wader Repair is the easiest stuff I have ever used to seal leaks and works on breathable and neoprene waders. Preparation of the site consists of wiping off dirt or debris, the site can even be wet! Just apply a drop directly to the site and then expose the repair to sunlight. The only catch, and it's minimal, is that you should apply the drop in such a way the application is not exposed to UV light (a natural part of sunlight). You can do this by holding your hat down low over the site or draping your raingear over. As soon as the drop has been applied, remove the cover and go fishing! You don't even have to get out of your waders to repair them! This \$8 well spent. I carry a tube of this stuff in my vest.

Finally, and this may stretch the definition of fly fishing a bit, but during Christmas shopping last year I found a knife/scissors sharpener for around \$6 at Lowe's that is easy and safe to use ("Smith's Jiff Knife/Scissor Sharpener;" aka "Edgeware V-Slot Knife and scissor sharpener" at Bed Bath and Beyond for \$8.99). Not only are our kitchen knives now as sharp as new, but my fly tying scissors are wicked sharp. I don't cut the thread when finishing off a fly but merely slide a scissors blade along the thread. It's almost like using a razor blade. And it saved me a few bucks I was going spend on new scissors.

If you were not aware of any of these products, give them a try. They have made my fishing and fly tying easier and more enjoyable. If you have a product that you think others in Nat Greene might benefit from, submit a brief writeup to the newsletter, I for one will be glad to know about it. In the meantime, keep your nymphs on the bottom and your scissors sharp. Here's to warm feet, dry waders and good fishing!