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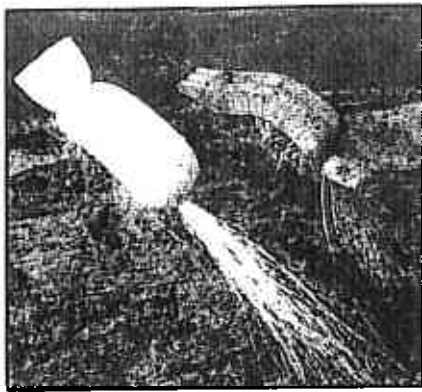
# FLY FISHING GUIDE

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**AUGUST – 2002**



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Gartside Gurgler (left) and a Wiggle Craw.

Jerry Stercho

really a slider either. With a good sharp tug on the line, it makes a modest popping sound and, with a steady retrieve, it creates a nice wake on the water like a struggling insect. The Gurgler is extremely easy and fast to tie. Tie in a tail of bucktail, add chenille or Estaz for body material, and fold over some sheet foam and you're done. This fly works under many water conditions and quickly becomes the favorite of many who have tried it.

Clouser's Floating Minnow really doesn't need much introduction. Created by Bob Clouser of Middletown, Pennsylvania, this fly has shown its effectiveness. Its construction of a foam head with a longer body made from bucktail or synthetics creates quite an attractive dish to a fish. This fly dips and wiggles from side to side when retrieved, and, when stationary, it sits in the water like a wounded minnow gasping for its last breath. It shows remarkable results when fished in flat water that contains an abundance of bottom-holding structure.

Chocklett's Disc Slider is unique in the way the foam is attached to the hook by fastening layers of rounded pre-cut sheet foam on the hook and tying it back at a 45 degree angle. With its rubber legs and marabou tail, it is a wonderful imitation of a wounded baitfish. Quickly stripping the line gives it a little dive and it quickly floats back to the surface. It's a fun fly to tie but a bit more time-consuming than some of the other foam patterns, but it is very effective and easy to cast.

A relatively new popper on the market is named the Commotion. This fly is extremely loud and dances around from side to side on the surface. Its most unique feature is its flat foam tail that accounts for much of the sound and bubbles the fly creates. I haven't had a

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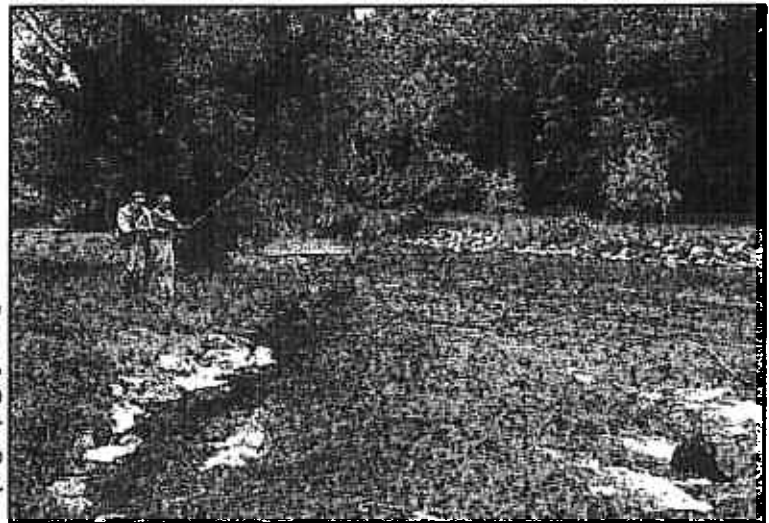
## FEATURED STREAMS

### PENNSYLVANIA'S LITTLE LEHIGH

by Barry & Cathy Beck

Located just west of the city of Allentown, Pennsylvania, the Little Lehigh is a true limestone in every sense of the word. Born in eastern Berks County, near Topton Mountain, the currents of the Little Lehigh will travel some twenty miles to the final confluence with the Lehigh River in Allentown. Within this mileage are two special regulation areas. The first is a Delayed Harvest section of water, restricted to flies only, that starts at the Lauderslager Dam and runs upstream approximately one mile. The second and most popular is a one-mile section under the protection of Heritage Trout regulations. This state program restricts the angler to a no-kill, flies-only policy, and it's on this Heritage Trout mileage that one will find the Dean of the Little Lehigh.

Rod Rohrbach is a unique individual. We've often described him as an ex-banker turned trout bum. For years, Rod's life has revolved around his little river. In 1993 he opened a fly shop on the banks of the Heritage section and each day is spent waiting on customers who seek advice and tackle to fool the selective trout that live behind the shop. We placed a call as we were writing this piece just to check in with Rod—a message machine informed us that the river was a little off color, but still fishing well. In an excited tone, we were also informed that the *Tricos* had started. The message ended with clear instructions on how to reach the shop via Fish Hatchery Road. The *Trico* hatch is one of the most important and most anticipated hatches on the Little Lehigh. It explained Rod's absence, he was doing what every trout bum would do at the peak of a good hatch.



Barry & Cathy Beck

The Little Lehigh sees a lot of angler pressure and the resident fish can be really selective. A few seasons ago we traveled south to visit Rod and to fish the Heritage section. We found Rod tying flies at a picnic table outside of the shop. His welcome smile and greeting were followed with a question, "Did you bring your 8X?" One look at the midge larva that sat in Rod's vise justified his question. "How small is that?" we asked.

"It's only a 26," Rod answered. Only a 26 we thought, a closer look at the fly showed a sparsely dressed black thread body and a tiny dubbed thorax, nothing more. "It's been the ticket," he happily explained, "the fish take them in the surface film." Uhm.

Never ones to argue with the local expert, we left Rod tying at the picnic table replacing the six midge larvae that now had a new home in our fly boxes. We walked upstream to a favorite section of flat water. Although it was a weekday, there were still a lot of fishermen to share the water with. The *Trico* and sulphur hatches were long over and, as Rod predicted, the trout were sipping in minute midge larva in the film. We must confess, it pains us to tie on 8X. 7X is usually our limit, but here we were and, as they say, when in Rome, do as the Romans do, so on went a piece of 8X and one of Rod's flies.

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## Featured Streams — cont.

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There is never a lack of targets on this section of water and directly in front of us were about seven feeding fish. Not large by most standards, maybe 9 to 12 inches long, but educated and selective, the brooks and browns were busy at their task. Cathy started first and I watched as she applied a small amount of fly floatant to her tippet just ahead of the fly. Her plan was to keep the midge larva suspended in the surface film to imitate the naturals that the fish were feeding on. The first fish to inspect the fly moved slowly to it and drifted downstream for two to three feet. It looked to me like it had its nose on the fly. Finally deciding against the imitation, it refused the fly and moved back to its original position. Cathy looked at me and mumbled something about this possibly being a very long day and we both laughed.

Her next cast came up with the same result but on the third cast the trout confidently sipped in the midge larva and she had a hookup. There were no earth-shattering runs, but the 10-inch brown gave a good account of himself and Cathy's reward was measured not in size but in knowing she had fooled him. But then, this is the Little Lehigh at its best, testing your choice of fly patterns, and your presentation. These fish will test your patience—every successful cast is darned near perfect and drag free.

It's small water and the perfect place for the light line enthusiast. You'll find that most of the regulars fish with 3-




Barry & Cathy Beck

and 4-weight outfits and the 0-, 1-, 2-, and 3-weights fit in as well. Although most of our fishing on the Little Lehigh has been ultra fine tackle and tiny fly patterns, it's not to say that a little off-color water from a summer thunder shower can't change the game plan. Off goes the 7X tippet and the size 24 midges go back in the fly boxes. This is the perfect time for 4X and a size 8 or 10 streamer like a black Super Bugger. Searching likely looking water with a fly like this can entice some of the larger trout in the stream.


This is also a stream that fishes well throughout the year including the months of January and February. The Little Lehigh is virtually ice free and water temperature friendly to the resident trout. These fish will continue to feed through the wintery months and you can almost always find rising fish here. I can remember lots of cold winter afternoons as a younger fisherman that

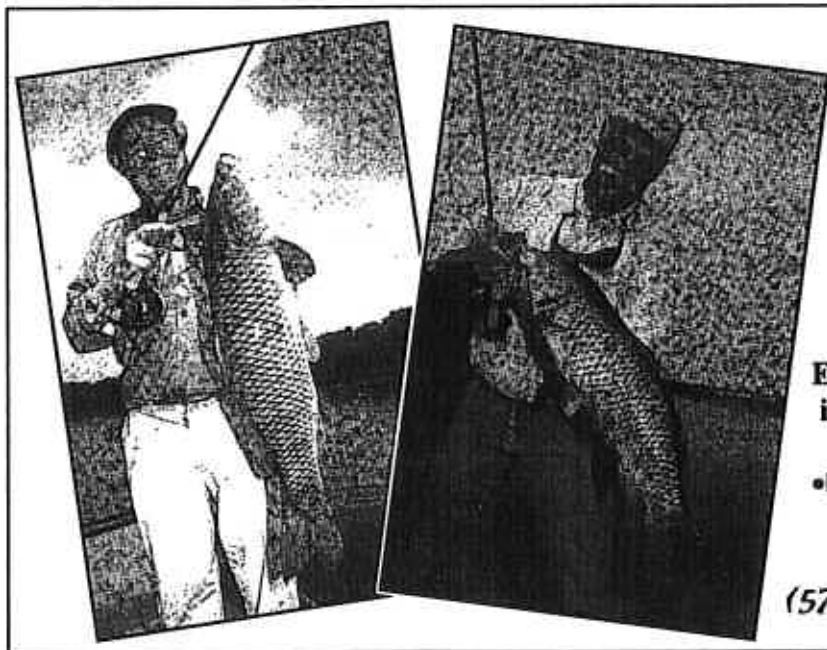
were shared with the other frozen dichards who braved whatever Mother Nature sent, determined to catch a trout. Our numb fingers struggled with that same 6X and 7X tippet material (we didn't have 8X then) and size 24 and smaller midge patterns. It was a great accomplishment to just get the fly threaded on the leader. Fly rod guides would often freeze shut, but for those who could put up with the winter conditions, fish could be caught.

If the special regulated water gets too crowded, there are other areas of open water to explore. It's amazing that this kind of fishery can exist in such an urban setting. If you have never fished the Little Lehigh it's truly worth a visit. Call Rod Rohrbach at the Little Lehigh Fly Shop for stream and hatch conditions at 610/797-5599. You'll be glad you did. 

*Barry & Cathy Beck* are world-class photographers and fly fishers. Their beautifully illustrated books are available in most fly shops. They live in Benton, Pa. when not traveling to the world's best fly fishing destinations.

## NEXT MONTH

In the September *Guide*, Mike O'Brien discusses "Transitional Smallmouth." Many anglers fail to make the adjustments from summer to fall smallmouth fishing that will make them successful. Read this next month to learn more. 



## PUT A LITTLE CHALLENGE, EXCITEMENT & FUN IN YOUR FISHING THIS SUMMER! Sight-Fishing for Susquehanna Bonefish

Enjoy the day as we pole the river flats  
in search of mudding and tailing carp

(Fish average 12-lb. to 20-lb.)

•Equipment/Flies provided •Lunch/Drinks•  
•8 hours on water •Casting instruction•

*Mike O'Brien*

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