

Patriots on the Fly

JANUARY 2026

## MEETING INFO.

Our next meeting  
will be:  
**Thursday, January 15**  
@ VWF Post 1500  
Willoughby, OH



- The first recorded use of artificial flies for fishing was around 200 AD in Rome.
- "Match the Hatch" is a technique used to catch fish by imitating their natural prey.
- Trout are the fish most commonly targeted in fly fishing.
- New Zealand is home to the most extensive fly-fishing spots for Trout.
- The Kenai River in Alaska is known as the World's Best Salmon Fishing location.

## PRESIDENTS MESSAGE



**HAPPY NEW YEAR EVERYBODY!  
2026 is here!**



This year will be filled with POTF opportunities and continued personal GROWTH! All you have to do is join us!

First and foremost, know that your leadership team has been working hard behind the scenes to make changes based on the feedback you provided last Fall.

You wanted more social time, so we tightened up the monthly gatherings. Burgers and Flies has been moved to the 3rd Thursday evening class time and will be referred to as the Sling Pack social. Come early. Grab a burger. Share fishing stories. Show off the flies you tied. Get to know your fellow Veterans!

Based on additional feedback, preferences regarding fishing locations were split down the middle, so POTF will continue to offer river, pond and trout club fishing opportunities in 2026. To increase "catching", our annual Willoughby 100 will take place this Spring. Details will be announced when the date is finalized.

Please know we measure our success by ENGAGEMENT, so please join us as often as possible! We also ask that you help our mission by spreading the word about what we do with other service-connected Veterans.

See you on January 15th!

*Diane*



***All the News You Need to Catch !***

# ***New Schedule for Third Thursday Meetings***

Moving forward, the THIRD THURSDAY class schedule at VFW Post 1500 will look like this:



6:00 pm—6:45 pm	Sling Pack Social
6:45 pm—7:00 pm	Vice Set-Up
7:00 pm—8:00 pm	Patriot Fly-Tying Instruction
8:00 pm—8:45 pm	Speaker Presentation/Ambassador Fly-Tying
8:45pm—9:00 pm	Room Breakdown



## ***Curriculum Update***

As you know, ALL service-connected POTF Veterans receive a 3-ring binder to keep class handouts. Please continue to bring your binders to each class, even if it is full. Full binders are an inspiration for our newbies!

In January, everyone WILL receive an updated Table of Contents because the Board approved a change to make the POTF curriculum a one-year program instead of a two-year program.

What does that mean for you?

That means you will get the same amount of info (or more!) in a shorter amount of time.

That means your path to Ambassadorship (IF you choose to do so) is quicker.

That means the curriculum is predictable and repeated every year for your review.

We plan to draw on outside resources for guest speakers. You'll get to meet more anglers in the fly-fishing community and it will keep things fresh and interesting!

As always, we hope you continue to join us at POTF events forever!



## **SPECIAL EVENT**

This 2026 HOLDEN ARBORETUM EVENT will feature guest speaker LANCE STURGILL. Lance is a combat Veteran with a fascinating history. He currently resides in the Cleveland area. Lance will be sharing techniques on how to save money by making your own BRAIDED LEADERS and BRUSHES for fly tying. After that portion of his presentation, additional materials will be provided so you can tie a fly using one of his brushes!

After lunch, Lance will change gears and focus on Skagit casting. Skagit casting is a modern fly-fishing technique used primarily for targeting steelhead and salmon. It is effective because anglers are able to cast efficiently in tight spaces.

So, bring your fly-tying vise-tools and your COFFEE MUG to the Thayer Building at Holden Arboretum on Saturday, January 31st. The address is 9550 Sperry Rd., Kirtland, OH 44094. Arrive by 9:30 AM. It will conclude at 2:00 PM.

As in previous years, POF will provide a light breakfast and a lunch. Remember to bring your own coffee mug. There will be a prize for **THE MOST AMAZING COFFEE MUG**, so make sure to have fun with that! This contest is open to all Ambassadors, Patriots and Volunteers in attendance. The vote for the winner will be taken at the event.

Look for the SignUp Genius invitation. It will arrive in your email box in the next few days. *Please respond with a YES, NO or MAYBE so we know how much food to provide.* And, if you need a vise and fly-tying tools, [say so](#) in the comment box of SignUp Genius! (Otherwise, you'll just be sitting there looking handsome doing nothing while everyone else is tying flies! LOL)

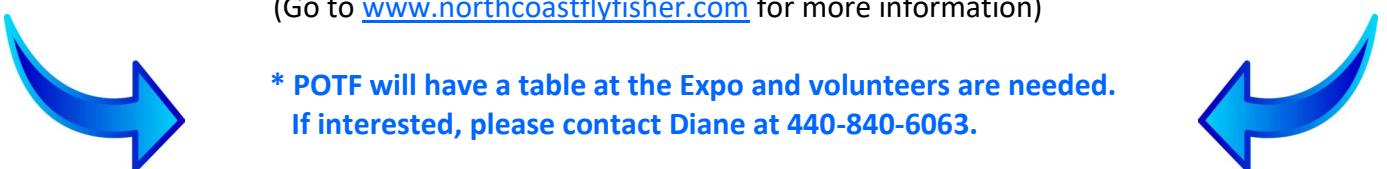
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## Upcoming Fly Fishing Shows

**FEBRUARY 7th**— Greater Cincinnati Fly Fishing Show hosted by Buckeye United Fly Fishers  
(Go to [www.buckeyeflyfisher.com](http://www.buckeyeflyfisher.com) for more information)

**MARCH 7th**— The North Coast Fly Fishing Expo  
(Go to [www.northcoastflyfisher.com](http://www.northcoastflyfisher.com) for more information)

**\* POF will have a table at the Expo and volunteers are needed.  
If interested, please contact Diane at 440-840-6063.**



# We're on YouTube !

Are you aware that Patriots On The Fly has a YouTube channel?

It's true! Winter is FLY-TYING SEASON, so we ALL should be stocking up our fly boxes with flies for the Spring Steelhead Run and our favorite Summer pond fishing events.

Go To [www.youtube.com@patriotsonthefly](http://www.youtube.com@patriotsonthefly) and watch as Fabio Malaspina, our Technology Chair, walks you through how to tie individual fly patterns.  
**Fabio posts new fly-tying videos *EVERY WEEK*.**



Check it out! Learn things! Follow along with Fabio and tie a fly or two! Then show off what you tied at the next Sling Pack Social.



If you are not receiving the SignUp Genius invitations, please reach out to Phil so he can update his roster with your current email address.

SignUp Genius is **THE METHOD OF COMMUNICATION REAGRDING EVENTS**, so getting you on that roster is imperative! Text your email address to Phil @ 440-487-0597.

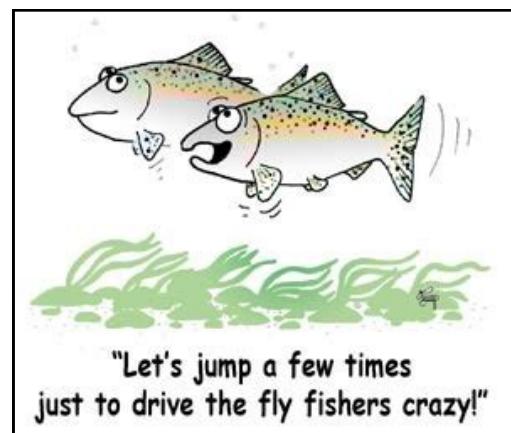


## PATRIOTS ON THE FLY WEBSITE!

Lisa Benjamin, our Website/Newsletter Chair, has updated the Events Page.

More events will be added as we finalize dates, but ALL the class information is up to date so you can plan accordingly. Use the link below to go our calendar.

[CLICK HERE](#)





## Ambassador News

If able, Ambassadors are invited to assist Volunteers during the Patriots Fly-Tying Instruction hour starting at 7pm. At 8pm, while others are focused on the guest speaker, Ambassadors can choose to have a fly-tying session of their own at the other side of the room. A list of Advanced Ambassador Flies will be posted on the website soon so Ambassadors can plan accordingly. POTF will provide materials; however, we ask that Ambassadors bring their own vises and fly-tying tools.

Also, an Ambassador/Volunteer camping trip to Mohican State Park (to fish on the Clearfork) is in the planning stage. It will happen in March and will hopefully coincide with the ODNR stocking schedule. Fingers crossed! Details will be announced as plans are finalized.

### EXCITING NEWS!

Our new Outing/Events Chair, Billy Koval, is working on our 2026 event dates now. If you have an idea for a new event or outing location, please text Billy at 440-552-0606.  
He'd love to hear from you!



### There's Still Time to Earn More Tickets!

The Kinzua Fly Fishing School Drawing will be held at the April 2026 Third Thursday class, so tickets will continue to be handed out at ALL Patriots On The Fly events until then.

- Remember, if you bring a service-connected Veteran to any of our events as your guest, you will receive 5 additional ticket for the drawing!**

Keep Thursday, May 21 (*arrival after 4pm*), Friday, May 22 (*instruction/fishing*) and Saturday, May 23 (*instruction/fishing & departure after dinner*) open in case you win! Plan on a 3 hour drive to get there.

