



# NOTES *from the Streams*

## “Is she driving the speed limit?”

After arresting an individual for boating under the influence, he was taken to Pennsylvania State Police barracks for processing. After going through the processing, myself, the trooper, and the arrested individual were sitting in the patrol room of the barracks, waiting for the man's girlfriend to arrive to take him home. We were all talking, and it seemed to take a long time for the man's girlfriend to arrive. The man said, “What is she doing, driving the speed limit?” I looked at the trooper and said, “I hope so.” The trooper said, “The last thing you need tonight is for your girlfriend to get a ticket on the way to pick you up.” —WCO Tyler A. Soety, Eastern Erie County.

## Fishing for phones

While on patrol with Deputy Waterways Conservation Officer (DWCO) Smith at Merli-Sarnoski Park, Lackawanna County, we saw a father fishing on the fishing pier with his two

young daughters. As we approached, the man stood up to greet us. He had his new cell phone on his lap. We heard a splash, followed by, “Oh no, my wife is going to kill me. I just got the phone two days ago.” His daughters tried unsuccessfully to hook the phone with their lines. The lake is about 6- to 8-feet deep at this spot. Then, he tried to swim down to see if he could recover it. DWCO Smith and I stood by in case he needed any assistance. He dived down a few times but was unable to locate the phone. He decided to cut his losses and continue fishing. As we were leaving, his older daughter said she was going to call their mom to let her know what happened. We figured it was our time to leave to save him from more embarrassment. —WCO Alec S. DeLong, Lackawanna, Wayne, and Susquehanna counties.

## That 1%

Most of the time, my job as a Waterways Conservation Officer (WCO) is routine. For example, I know that when the weather is nice, I will see lots of people engaged in various activities along our waterways.

Many of these people will have fishing equipment with them. Now, one would think that at this point my job should not be complicated. Either the individual is fishing, or he or she is not fishing. If the individual is fishing, the angler either has a license, or the angler does not have a license. Pretty cut and dry, right? Well, 99% of the time it is cut and dry. But, let's talk about the other 1%. In early spring, I observed two young males standing side by side along Dunlap Creek Lake, Fayette County, casting and retrieving repeatedly. I approached the two men and asked to see their licenses. They informed me that they did not have licenses and did not need them, because they were not fishing. It turns out, they had no hooks, just a heavy sinker on the end of each line. They were having a competition to see who could cast the greatest distance. Several weeks later, at Dunlap Creek Lake, I observed two males and a female fishing from one of the docks. I watched long enough to see each of them cast and retrieve several times. I watched two of the people remove what I assumed to be small fish from their lines and throw the fish into a bucket. I introduced myself and asked to see their licenses. They looked confused and said they did not know that they needed licenses. One of them reeled in their line to reveal that instead of a hook, there was a magnet at the end of the line. I checked the bucket, and there were miscellaneous pieces of metal in it.

Recently, I caught a glimpse of a fishing rod in a man's hand as he walked through thick brush near a wild trout stream. By the time I caught up to the man, I walked through spider webs and brushed many spiders off of me. I never saw the man fish. He did not need a license, because there was no reel or string on the rod. The man was out scouting for the upcoming archery season and was using this old fishing rod to knock the spider webs down

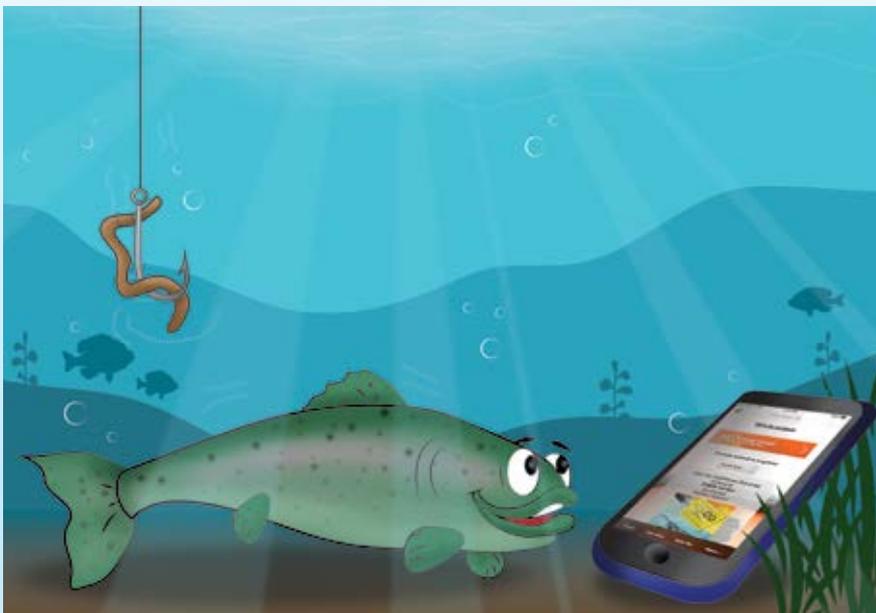


illustration-Andrea Feeney

so he did not get spiders all over him. That was the nicest spider stick I have ever seen.—WCO Scott D. Opfer, Fayette County.

## Rolling tackle shop

Patrolling Lake Nockamixon, Bucks County, I talk to a lot of anglers. One angler impressed me more than most. When this angler opened his trunk to retrieve his fishing license, I could have sworn I just walked into a tackle shop. There was tackle hanging down the sides and bags and boxes of assorted lures, hooks, and baits. The angler asked me if I have ever seen a musky fly. He proceeded to pull out the biggest fly I have ever seen that he made to look like a mouse. As impressed as I was with the fly, I was skeptical that something like that would ever work. I told him when he catches that monster, I hope I am the first person he finds to share the story. I am eagerly waiting to cross paths with this angler again.—WCO Peter N. Labosh, Northern Bucks County.

## The mystery make-believe nail salon

I was patrolling along a wild trout stream just outside of Clearfield, Clearfield County, when I noticed a bag of trash discarded close to the road. I pulled over, put on gloves, and looked through the bag to see if the responsible party left behind identifying information. I found two sheets of notebook paper, one containing a telephone number and address. The other page said, "Nail salon open, come on in." Both were written neatly in fluorescent pink highlighter.

I spent the next hour searching the internet for information relating to a local nail salon, and maybe one that was run out of someone's residence. My attempts at locating any local salon that could be a potential match fell short. When I called the number, someone would answer, but I would only hear dead air. With options running low, I visited the address and found no indication of a nail salon. Also, the apartment building's tenants did not recognize the number nor did they believe the other tenant had any

connection to a nail salon. As a last resort, I left a card and requested that the other tenant give me a call.

I received a call back from the other tenant, and sure enough the number matched the one found in the bag of trash. The woman on the other end of the phone explained that she and her daughter were playing "nail salon" together and that this was her trash. I laughed when I realized I spent a whole hour trying to locate a make-believe nail salon. I discovered that the trash was taken by a friend due to having perishables, and the trash was not scheduled to be picked up until the following week. The woman informed me that her friend claimed that a bear took the trash more than a mile away from his house to the site where I discovered it. She added, "But I do not believe him." "That makes two of us," I said. After a short conversation with her friend, it was admitted that the bear was as real as the nail salon.—WCO Justin L. Schillaci, Clearfield County.

## Follow the rules

This past summer, DWCO Walter Gutzan and I were patrolling Lake Wallenpaupack in our marked patrol boat. We observed a boat with an expired Kansas registration. The occupants (2 juveniles and 1 adult male) were fishing close to the Wayne County shoreline. We observed the occupants for a few minutes before conducting a boarding of their vessel. At the onset of the boarding, I asked the boat operator and owner for the vessel's current registration. The registration expired in 2018. The gentleman said, "I thought boat registrations were extended because of COVID-19?" He then said that he follows all the rules and never breaks any laws. As we continued through the boarding process, I asked to see life jackets for everyone onboard. He could only produce one. I then asked to see his throwable device since his boat was greater than 16 feet. Unfortunately, he was missing that as well. He was able to produce the required fire extinguisher, but it was not serviceable. Finally, I asked to see his fishing license. His head slumped downward as he said, "I

do not have one."—Sergeant Walter A. Buckman, Northeast Region.

## Teaching an old dog new tricks

I was patrolling Sheppard-Meyers Reservoir, York County, when I observed an older gentleman fishing and was unable to see his fishing license. I approached the angler and asked if he was having any luck. The man told me he caught a White Perch. I asked if he had a fishing license, and he showed me his license. I noticed a stringer holding only a small Bluegill. I told the man that the fish was a Bluegill, not a White Perch. He asked me if he was allowed to keep Bluegills, and I told him he was allowed to keep it, but a single lonely fish was not going to fill him up for dinner. He told me that he was there for a few hours and was having no luck. I asked what kind of bait he was using. He replied, "worms" as he pulled his line out of the water. I asked what he was fishing for and he told me panfish. I told the older man that fishing on the bottom for panfish is not the best way, and he should try a bobber. "I have never used a bobber, and I do not know what they do," said the angler. After looking through his tackle box, he found a bobber. I showed him how to put the bobber on his line. His first attempt at casting the line was not the best, as he attributed it to me making him nervous. He insisted I back up, because he was left-handed. I did as he asked and his second cast was a long, straight one. I told him that when the bobber was fully under the water, to jerk the line and reel. Just as he turned his head to ask me another question, I saw the bobber go under. I yelled, "You got one!" With excitement, he jerked the rod and began to reel in a fish. He turned to me and said, "You were right!" As he continued laughing, he pulled in a nice Bluegill. He told me he should not have doubted me and thanked me for taking the time to help him. I wished him luck with the rest of his fishing and walked away. As I walked back to my vehicle, I could hear the man giggling as he caught another fish using the bobber. WCO Rachael L. Thurner-Diaz, Adams and Western York counties.