

FACES IN THE STREAM

A Monthly Conversation with a UCCTU Member

Tom Hayes, Membership Chair & Board Member, Interviewer

January -- Ken Mock, UCCTU Member 11 Years

Tom: What attracted you to fishing and especially fly fishing?

Ken: I'd have to say first that I grew up in Huntington, New York, which is located on the north shore of Long Island. I fished the Long Island Sound for blues, flounder, snapper and sand sharks from my 13' Boston Whaler. I even caught lobsters with several traps that I put out. Fly fishing didn't enter the picture until 30 or so years later, after I took up trout fishing -- albeit with a spinning rod, spinners, night crawlers and meal worms. Some work friends from Pittsburgh (after I moved to Atlanta in '87) invited me up to the Allegheny National Forest north of Pittsburgh for a weekend fishing trip. We battled wall-to-wall people fishing on Opening Day; I caught 20 or so stocked rainbows, and logged several miles trekking through foot deep snow. That sealed the deal and I've been fishing ever since. The transition to fly fishing came after several of these annual excursions. I watched some of my buddies catching rainbows and brook trout on the fly. Once I tried it, I had to get my own rod for the next year's trip.

Tom: With all that fishing, do you have a best catch story?

Ken: Not so much of a 'best catch' story (although the lunker rainbow I caught recently on the Davidson River would qualify), but a best 'getting to the fishing spot' story. For one of our annual adventures in north central Pennsylvania, we decided to fish in the Hammersley Wild Area. One of the group said he was familiar with the trail system and we could save a lot of time hiking in our camp gear if we took a certain 'guaranteed route.' After five grueling miles of climbing and crawling up and down the sides of mountain after mountain with full and very heavy backpacks and fishing rods in hand we finally made it to the Hammersley Creek campground. After setting up our tents we heard some giggling and talking not too far off and then spotted a troop of girl scouts on a ridge above us. They were standing next to their ride! We then realized that we had hiked five painful miles and could have driven almost to the same spot. We never let our friend forget that trip.

Tom: Having lived in Roswell for over 20 years, do you have a favorite place to cast a line? And, what flies get you the most fish at the spot?

Ken: I'd have to say Judges Shoals on the Chattahoochee is one -- if not my favorite -- place to fish close to home. I enjoy the mile hike down the trail from Jones Bridge and the shoals are easy to navigate. Lots of fish hide in amongst the rocks and along the far bank. My best producers are the Pink Frenchy and the Blue Assassin.

Tom: You told me that fly tying is now one of your hobbies. How did you get started?

Ken: You can't be a member of TU and not be interested in fly tying. I'd sit at meeting after meeting listening to members talk about the flies they were working on and speakers talking about the flies they tie and use on their home rivers. It got to me. I bought a Peak vise and asked UCCTU veteran tier Bob Foster for a lesson. Wow, can Bob tie flies, and does he ever have the materials --- boxes and boxes of everything you can imagine. After that first lesson, and a slightly ragged Wooly Bugger, I was on my way.

Tom: Ken, what's been your involvement with UCCTU beyond being a member?

Ken: I've stepped up twice to serve over the past few years, first as Membership Chair and later as Fundraising Chair. I feel strongly that every chapter member should experience the satisfaction of holding a leadership role. It doesn't take a whole lot of time and we always need new people coming to the forefront with fresh new ideas.

Tom: What do you personally take away from being a TU and UCCTU member?

Ken: I'd have to say I've developed some fantastic friendships over the years and have enjoyed fishing some beautiful rivers with some great new friends. I also now have a stronger respect for the environment and really enjoy pitching in on our local river clean-ups and stream re-building projects. It seems that a day doesn't go by that someone from UCCTU calls to talk fishing. If not, you can usually find me down in my basement at the fly tying bench working some new creations.

Ken is a Senior Consultant with Smith Communication Partners in Atlanta. He and his wife Kay have lived in Roswell since 1987. They have two married daughters. There are also three cats prowling around their house in Roswell.