

Velveeta Cheese by Frank Koubek

In reading the newspaper recently, I came across an article by a lady recalling her mother's old recipe for macaroni and cheese and also melted cheese sandwiches using velveeta cheese. I hadn't eaten velveeta cheese in years, but its mention jogged my memory back almost 50 years to my days as a member of the NOL Fishing Club. You are probably wondering about the connection between velveeta cheese and the NOL Fishing Club-----so, read on.

The NOL Fishing Club was founded circa 1958 when a bunch of us anglers came together after reading a notice on the Arcade bulletin board. It stated that anyone interested in forming a fishing club should come to a meeting in Room 5-219 (classroom next to the Auditorium) at 1200, during our lunch break. Besides myself, those attending became charter members. At the outset, there were probably 20 to 30 members. Some of the people I remember who participated over the years included Darrell Bordelon, John Jarus, Frank Bis, Mo Lieberman, Vernon Upthegrove, Ed Abrams, Fred Mihalow, Hal Pazourek and of course many, many others whose names are lost to my defunct memory bank. Our organizational structure was rather informal, although we had a president, a treasurer, and an equipment custodian who also was the librarian for our angling books. Our meetings were held monthly (more or less) in the early days and focused on "the experts" giving informal how-to talks on where the best fishing spots were and included handouts of hand drawn maps and tips on how to catch the big ones!! I believe Darrell Bordelon was our first president. He was good at organizing our meetings, getting members to give talks, helping the less experienced anglers (producing handouts, maps, etc.), and sharing his wealth of experience and background. Like a handful of our members, Darrell was an accomplished trout fisherman, which was an area new to me—a Baltimorean; I was better versed in salt water fishing. In the NOL Fishing Club, I expanded my horizons into trout fishing, including fly tying and fishing the trout waters of Maryland. To help us, the club began to buy various angling books, gadgets for making lures, and fishing rods. We also held evening parties about once a year over at Miller Hall wherein we and our spouses shared an evening of comradery, feasting (raw oysters, too), and watching sport fishing movies that we borrowed from a local sporting goods store.

One of the big pluses of the club were the informal fishing outings that we went on----sometimes just 2 or 3 people and other times as many as 5 to 10 people. One such outing I vividly remember took place in the Spring of 1960-----here's where the velveeta cheese comes in to play; so read on!! A bunch of us decided that we would take a day off, and fish the upper reaches of Rock Creek in Montgomery County in the Rockville area. The creek had been stocked earlier in the week with trout by the State Fish and Game people. We agreed to meet at the Avery Road bridge over the creek at 0630. When all had arrived, Darrell suggested that we fish upstream in classical trout fishing fashion. By this time, we had all donned our waders or hip boots, and we then began fishing upstream, casting our artificial lures or bait on to the waters. While I had some artificial lures, as a novice trout fisherman, I opted to fish worms with spinning tackle, and in just minutes, I hooked into and landed a beautiful 12-inch rainbow trout. What a thrill!! I let out a whoop as I scooped the fish into my landing net. Darrell was at my side instantly, admiring my catch and congratulating me on catching my first trout, ever. Darrell's expression was, "The first time you ever wet your creel is a wonderful experience!!" And, indeed, my beautiful rainbow trout was soon nestled into my creel, which was slung over my shoulder. Darrell had hardly finished his praises when I heard a cry of disgust from one of the other anglers. He was an expert, veteran trout angler who treated me with scorn because I had used a common garden worm to catch the club's first trout of the day. He had yet to catch a

fish, and later struggled for hours to net just one or two small trout (7-8') with his beautiful, hand-tied, artificial fly. He was probably taking his frustrations out on me.

As the day wore on, we all congregated back downstream below the bridge to a spot that was attracting a lot of attention. One of our members had brought along his wife who had never fished for trout; but as luck would have it, she had caught her limit of five large trout in the big pool below the bridge. When quizzed by the other anglers on how she did it, she replied and you guessed it, "with VELVEETA CHEESE balls wrapped around my hook!" She had plenty of the cheese with her, so the empty creel fisherman talked her into sharing her cheese with them. When I got there, they were all feverishly fishing the big pool with velveeta cheese, and catching trout! A little later, our scornful, expert fly fisherman (who had needled me earlier about my worms) arrived at the pool. He sneered at the cheese fishermen and exclaimed, "(expletive deleted) That we men should keep our wives at home where they belong, barefoot, and pregnant." A remark not befitting most of the anglers that I have known over the years. However, in time, as I got to know this fellow better, I came to believe that, though inappropriate, his chauvinistic remark was no doubt made in a moment of frustration and anger. Fortunately, not everyone heard the remark. There were either out of earshot or too busy with their cheese fishing! The remark notwithstanding, a good time was had by all---all but one anyway; and was just one of the many pleasant times we had over years of the NOL Fishing Club's existence.

POST NOTE: Using velveeta cheese to catch trout was not a novel idea. It had been used extensively (and probably still is) by "non-purist" trout anglers to catch their daily limit. Cheese balls, salmon eggs, corn-kernels, marshmallows, crickets, worms, helgramites, grubs, balony slices, chicken livers, etc. were considered legal bait by the Maryland Fish and Game Commission. TO EACH HIS OWN!

Editor Note: I grew up on the Slippery Rock Creek, which was the best trout stream in Western Pennsylvania. So I had to try trout fishing. I bought mismatched waders for \$2; a new fly rod and reel; and ordered a fly making kit through the mail. Let me tell you fly making is difficult. The kit came with beads, feathers, hooks, and line. Most of my flies had so much glue and line on them that they sank. I was told morning was a good time to fish. I did, and like Frank, caught my first one, just the minimum limit size. I was super excited and rushed home to show my Mother. She cleaned it for me; and I had several small pieces of fried trout for breakfast. I will only add that our neighborhood had one man, who just had the knack for trout fishing; he always caught his limit. Most of the other men struggled. Maybe, they should have used velveeta cheese.