

Valley Angler

Winter Blahs and the Echo Micro Rod

by Bill Thompson

Today is a snow day for the North Country Angler. We pride ourselves on hanging in on even the worst of days, but today it was just not worth making the trip from Freedom to North Conway. Our apologies to anyone who made the trip to the shop for a bottle of head cement. If you came in for a new rod please call and I will personally deliver it to you.

I am very happy for the ski areas and all the skiers that come to our Valley, but enough is enough. I am pretty sure I have shoveled snow every day this month. The problem now is what to do with it. I drove over to my favorite winter river yesterday only to discover that it was impossible to get to. Not that I had any intention of fishing considering the cold and the wind.

Ordinarily I would just hunker down by the fire and tie some more flies. The problem with this is that all my tying stuff is at the shop. Another option is go through my library and pick out an old book that I haven't read in a while. I shoveled a path to the wood pile this morning and have filled the log hoop by the fireplace, so this is a likely option.

I did pick up an interesting device the other day that may serve to relive some of the boredom. It is called the Echo Micro Practice Rod. The rod is a four foot two piece micro rod with a macramé line and yarn leader. The rod is small enough to be used inside thus allowing the angler to practice all year no matter what the conditions outside. This little rod is far more than a toy; it really does work. The concept is not new and many may be familiar with the "Fly-O" from the Wulff Company. The legendary Joan Wulff has been using this device for years in her fly casting schools. The Echo rod does differ from the Wulff product a great deal. Some of course will see this rod and reason that the same result may be obtained simply by attaching a piece of yarn to the tip of an old rod. True this does work, but the Echo rod is a perfectly balanced outfit and gives the feel of casting a full size fly rod.

The micro rod has proved to be a great deal of fun and is an ideal way to learn or improve your fly casting. It is possible to roll cast as well as single hand spey cast.

I brought one home the other evening before the storm and have been playing with it ever since. Now this little rod is designed for indoor use; however some caution must be adhered to. What was viewed as an amusing diversion by Janet has started to wear on her. She has a prized collection of antique glass brides' baskets that are proudly displayed along the walls of the kitchen and dining room. So far I have not hooked one, but I have come close.

It didn't take long for Summer to take an interest as well. I discovered, quite by accident, that she would respond somewhat like a cat when the yarn leader was cast in her direction. It is a lot like site casting to a big trout. I cast towards her and she grabs the end of the line and the fight is on. Like Janet she too has grown tired of the game and now finds it to be annoying. I on the other hand have grown quite fond of the device.

The Micro Rod is a great way to improve your casting and no matter what Janet and Summer think is a lot of fun. They sell for just over thirty-six bucks and could make you better caster providing you don't wreck your house.

See you on the river.