Entering into the water with a pair of fishing waders can be quite the adventure. Especially if it's your first time. As a young lad I wished I could wade out to where all the other fisherman stood.

It was the spring of 1972, the opening day of trout season that I finally joined the ranks. I would no longer be jailed to the bank looking at everyone else's back.

When walking down to the stream in my new boots I surely displayed a smile that reflected, "look at me world I'm a big boy now". Like a boat leaving the harbor, me and my new water proof waders pushed off. However I was quickly educated on how slippery those darn mossy green rocks were. And just how cold the fresh water is during April. The unexpected wipeout caused me to turn an embarrassment shade of red. Soaking wet I retreated back to the bank, drained each boot, rung out my socks and then geared back up before heading to a different location.

Even walking along the shallow side of the creek's edge was a challenge. Keep in mind at this point my legs were feeling like solid ice forms. Plus the remnant water each wader held weighed me down. But I dredged along like an underage drunken sailor until I arrived at a turbulent riffle. I would need to cross over it in order to fish the unoccupied place I had in mind.

Knowing how challenging it was going to be I decided go for it . What the heck I was already soaked like a freshly used sink sponge. How much worse could it get?

One foot in front of the other I began to place each boot firmly on the bottom. The current was way swifter than I presumed. I struggled to remain upright. But I pressed on until I got to the point where the water level was nearing the dreaded "can't go any deeper mark right above my knee". Praise The good Lord I didn't buckle under the pressure. As a rookie preforming a reverse direction U-turn midstream could have been devastating . If I would have slipped I would have been swept away.

Everybody up and down the stream was catching trout but me. I was so anxious to do the same. So back out in the current I went. Each boot firmly pressed the bottom I secured myself, clicked the bail over and made my first cast. The little yellow rooster tail spinner lit the water, however my retrieval speed was not fast enough and it quickly sank. Dang it was hung up on bottom. It was to deep to wade out to free it, so I instinctively began whipping the rod. The overhead motion worked. Released it whizzed by my head like a little yellow hornet, crashing into the bank brush behind me. After retrieval, I repositioned myself and made what I thought was going to be a perfect cast. But not to be. A limb decided to grab it.

What a disappointing site. Tangled and dangling it didn't seem impossible I could save the spinner. However I decided to start playing tug-of-war with the branch and sure enough it broke. The 6-pound line sure was strong. I battled the limb and saved my lure again!

Third time's a charm so they say. And there's some truth to that. Because once again replanted at my familiar stage midstream I finally made the perfect cast. When the lure landed the current it quickly began to flutter and flash. Two seconds later a trout smashed it!

I hollered for dad to come help. He quickly arrived with solid coaching advice and his net. It sure was a priceless moment. Looking back in time it ranks near the top of my priceless memories. Ironically, that 17 1/2 inch brown trout hooked me. For, I fell in love with fishing, helping me become the angler I am today.

As Always, Angler Al