



The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild *Gazette*

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As has been our practice, there are no meetings of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild during summer months. The next meeting will take place in September.



Taylor Ostapczuk with a wild rainbow trout from Esopus Creek.
Taylor enticed the 'bow with a Hair-winged Royal Coachman.

President's Message **By Joe Ceballos**

Let us all welcome summer and hopefully the end of COVID-19. The hot weather brings challenges to trout anglers, but none that we are not equipped to deal with. Every season has its warm spots, so we look to options with other waters or other activities.

In the Catskills, we are fortunate to have four tailwater trout fisheries, and on hot days they can still provide some trout fishing. As always, ensure that water temperatures are acceptable for

reviving captured fish (use a thermometer), and let's be respectful of other people who are sharing the water.

I'm very happy that in June, we were able to have our first real meeting in quite some time at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum. Without a doubt, it sure felt good to see people face to face. The meeting was well attended, and everyone present had a great time tying.

The theme of the meeting was Sulphur patterns. There are currently several sizes and variations of Sulphurs hatching in our waters, and the main hatch will continue for another few weeks. The meeting's attendees tied a variety of patterns to match the hatch, and a full PDF will be prepared and emailed to our membership featuring the flies tied. One example is the pattern tied, and photographed by Mark Sturtevant that you see here.



Sulphur CDC Comparadun:

Hook: Dry fly, sizes 16 to 20

Thread: Primrose 14/0 or 12/0

Tailing: Pale ginger hackle barbs, splayed

Body: Kreinik silk dubbing, blended yellow

Wing: Trout Hunter CDC puffs in light natural
dun and sulphur yellow

We thank Bruce Concors for bringing some tying materials that belonged to our beloved Dave Brandt to the last meeting for a special guild sale. Money from the sale will be distributed between Dave's family and CFFCM. There are still some excellent necks left in various colors, and they will be available for sale at the guild's table at this year's Summerfest at the museum on August 21.

Our guild meetings will resume in September, and they will be mayfly oriented and centered on the predominant hatch in September—Blue Winged Olives. There will be a discussion of the various patterns and the materials used to tie them as well as any relevant history associated with the fly. An email will go out in advance of the meeting with date and time specifics.

Enjoy the rest of the summer; it seems to pass quickly after the Fourth of July. And I hope to see you at Summerfest or at our September meeting.



Lois Ostapczuk's Biscuit Brook Weir

The Biscuit Brook Weir

By Lois Ostapczuk

More often than not, my landscape paintings are inspired by photographs that my husband takes while wandering the Catskills and its rivers in search of trout. But once in a while, a painting is inspired by its historical significance and a friendship.

According to the angling historian in our partnership—my husband—the Biscuit Brook weir at Frost Valley is only a foggy memory to the few who knew of its existence. It has been almost a full decade since Hurricane

Irene destroyed both it and Pigeon Lodge alongside the stream dam in 2011. There aren't many anglers still about who can recall it, or who can tell stories of the big brown trout that used to hide under the wall on the left side of the weir. So, if you ever go searching for this structure, it's not to be found, except in the image of this watercolor.

I wanted to paint something meaningful for a good friend of ours—Frank Skidmore. Biscuit Brook holds fond memories for Frank, now a longtime North Carolina resident, who fished Biscuit many times. The last time that he fished it was with his father. For decades, Frank has generously made important donations to our local Trout Unlimited chapter, while also supporting many other worthy trout and conservation causes. Thus, it was the least that I could do for all the help he's rendered to our Catskill rivers.

View more of Catskill artist Lois Ostapczuk's paintings by visiting:
<http://catskillwatersart.blogspot.com/2014/02/blog-post.html>

Isonychia and Preston Jennings

In 1970, when my wife and I relocated to the Catskills, initial Esopus Creek fishing outings were filled with wonderment and excitement. It was a period of transition, from chasing Garden Sate hatchery trout to wild fish, which taught me lessons from the school of hard knocks. For the first three years, we lived in a Kingston apartment complex, but eventually we settled in a home that's just minutes from Five Arches Bridge and my Esopus. I can recall early trips where I'd explore the Esopus after an IBM workday. There's one such set of outings that are as fresh in my mind today as if they'd only happened last week.

For two consecutive June evenings, I flogged the Esopus between Five Arches and the Trestle with little luck, while chrome-sided rainbows fed with dark mayfly shucks coating creekside rocks. After the second frustrating evening, while driving back to Kingston, I remembered reading Arnold Gingrich's *Well-Tempered Angler* and the chapter titled "Preston Jennings for President—or, There Is a Royal Coachman." Returning to the apartment that evening, I reread that story, rediscovering Preston Jennings and *Isonychia*. The next day, returning to the Esopus for a third consecutive evening, I finally did quite well catching those rainbow trout, fishing a Royal Coachman during a heavy *Isonychia* hatch, thanks to Arnold Gingrich and Preston Jennings.

In the March 2018 *Gazette*, Ed Van Put authored a piece about Preston Jennings and the Royal Coachman that he titled, "Is There a Royal Coachman Hatch?" It was based upon an article originally published in *Esquire*, a magazine that Gingrich founded. In fact, Arnold Gingrich befriended Preston Jennings at Dick Kahil's Rainbow Lodge years prior. Gingrich would stay at the Lodge as an Esopus Creek angler, while Jennings often came by to demonstrate fly tying to the fishing guests.

Gingrich's book introduced me to the best Esopus Creek mayfly hatch—*Isonychia*. In the following days, I wrote to Arnold Gingrich about those three Esopus Creek incidents, and I still have his response safely tucked away. Later that year, I acquired a Crown Publishing reprint of *A Book of Trout Flies*, and I was intent on learning more about Preston Jennings. Although this book is Catskill based, with deep Esopus Creek roots, it didn't provide much detailed information on the Jennings *Isonychia* nymph pattern. Thus, for many years, I relied upon the *Isonychia* pattern that Ernest Schwiebert provided in *Matching the Hatch*. That pattern and most peacock herl bodied flies, such as a Leadwing Coachman or a Zug Bug, worked well enough for me. However, there was always something missing due to not knowing Jennings's *Isonychia* Nymph recipe and its strong connection with my Esopus Creek. Besides that, Preston Jennings's life was also somewhat mysterious to me.

Then, in the year 2000, I bit the bullet—forking up the money to purchase a copy of the Paul Schmookler and Ingrid Sils voluminous work, *Forgotten Flies*. A fair portion of this book was dedicated to "The Prismatic World of Preston Jennings," and contained numerous color photos of flies associated with him, plus personal information on the angler's life.

According to Schmookler and Sils, Jennings was born on January 27, 1893, in Williamsburg, Virginia. He had two sisters and a brother. Beyond that, little more is known about his childhood. He attended Medical College of Virginia, and during World War I he served with the British forces. After returning stateside, he and his wife Adele lived in Brooklyn before moving to Manhattan. He worked with the U.S. Shipping Board but later became a sales engineer at Filtrine Manufacturing Company until he retired in 1953. During those years, he fished the Catskills and other places near and far, and he became acquainted with Art Flick while researching *A Book of Trout Flies*, which was originally published in 1935. He often stayed in Woodstock while fishing the Esopus and other Catskill waters,

Up on the Esopus



With Ed Ostapczuk

and he could be found at Dick Kahil's Rainbow Lodge in Mount Tremper, where he met Arnold Gingrich. He died at age sixty-nine, reportedly of a heart attack, on February 3, 1962. His obituary was published in the *New York Herald Tribune*. Preston Jennings was an early Catskill entomologist, quite the angler and fly tyer of trout and salmon flies, plus a friend of the late Charles DeFeo—another prominent tyer featured by Schmookler and Sils in their book. This is but a summary of Jennings's life; there are many pages of information to be found in *Forgotten Flies*.

Not only did Schmookler and Sils provide background on Preston Jennings, they also supplied details on Jennings's *Isonychia* pattern, which for me was much sought-after information. John "Catskill John" Bonasera wrote a "CJ's Flies" *Gazette* article on this pattern in 2010 that can be found on the guild's website. It was my goal here to add some information on Jennings himself, plus a photo of an *Isonychia* nymph that Jennings tied for onlookers at Rainbow Lodge. The fly in the photo is the property of Ed Kahil, a son of the late Dick Kahil. This pattern is a staple in my fly box come the second brood of Esopus Creek *Isonychia* in late summer through early autumn. Although the Jennings recipe calls for a size 8 hook, I tie my version on a size 10, Mustad 9671.

The Jennings *Isonychia* Nymph:

Hook: Size 8, sproat

Tail: Tip of brown partridge feather

Body: Blended dark red and plum seal fur

Rib: Gold tinsel

Thorax: Peacock herl

Hackle: Dark furnace, short

My good friend and late Catskill Fly Tyers Guild member Aaron Hirschhorn, who sometimes stayed at Rainbow Lodge, told me that regulars there called this fly "the Esopus Nymph."

Yes, *Isonychia* mayflies reign supreme on the Esopus, and Preston Jennings is gone but not forgotten.



Looking Back Upstream



Moving Waters

By Ryan Dykstra

The water splits around the piling of a railroad bridge and picks up speed, unwadable on both sides, before spreading out into a wide, shallow section of riffles. From these shallow riffles, the river condenses into a turbulent pool along a steep, manmade bank of large stone, and bangs into a turn before easing into beautiful, deep pools with little obstruction. I have fished this section many times, but only briefly, because it comes at the end of an hour's worth of fishing away from the parking lot. The last time that I fished this spot, after crossing the railroad, I spent my entire hour along the stretch and proceeded to

hook and lose three trout. Why does it always seem to be three? For a late August, midday trip, I counted it as a semi-success. Walking back to the lot, I knew in the back of my mind, that with the return of the school year on Monday, my teaching duties would prevent me from spending time on the water, and shortly thereafter, my wife and I and our two boys would be living an hour away. It was a strange feeling to knowingly put away a fly rod with the probability of not getting on the water again during the season.

I have several vivid memories from the few years that I lived two blocks from the Pequannock River, most of them centered around bringing my two little boys. Of the two clearest trips in my mind, I can remember every fish and the pools they came from. The clearest memory of those fish involved a very long cast while my son Sammy knelt and threw pebbles into the water at my feet. Sunlight cut straight through the water the way only a July sun at noon does, and illuminated a small school of suckers holding midpool and midcurrent. At the head of the pool, a rainbow fed aggressively on everything that came its way. As Sammy tossed small rocks into the pool in front of us, I said to him, "There's a big fish up ahead, let's see if I can reach him." He paused his rock throwing to watch. I cast a Pink Squirrel beadhead on a long line and landed it a few feet in front of the feeding rainbow. The trout mercilessly attacked it, and I played the fish for a few moments as Sammy yelled out with unfathomable enthusiasm, "It's a huge fish!" If anyone else had spoken those words in that tone, I would have thought that they were mocking me. I brought it to net, and we admired our third stockie of the day.

Last July, my wife and I decided to uproot and move our family to Sussex County, New Jersey. I'm tempted to include "sadly" somewhere in that last sentence, though it's not a sad thing at all. Our family is growing, and we need more space. Our new yard is bigger, our new house is bigger, and our property taxes have reduced by a third. We see cows everyday. It was a no-brainer, really. But shortly after the move, I found myself missing the Pequannock.

My first fly-fishing outing as a Sussex County resident found myself and a friend fishing the confluence of Big Flatbrook and Little Flatbrook on New Year's Day. The drive was a thirty-minute pictorial feast through dairy farms and frosty fields. At a distance, we could see blobs of orange moving about the grass and stubble: pairs of bird hunters and dogs nosing about for what I assumed were pheasants. I'd never seen that before. We spent four fishless (yet exciting) hours running small nymphs through every likely looking pool in rivers where every bend resulted in a likely looking pool. We probably spent more time cleaning ice out of rod guides than actually casting: the temperature reached its high at nineteen degrees.

I spent the next few weeks researching and taking short exploratory trips to small streams that might hold trout. It was too cold to take either of the boys, and the limited winter light prevented anything later than an hour after work. I started with the streams closest to home and gradually expanded the circle, fishing, all in all, eight different streams before landing a brook trout—a number I find a little embarrassing. I largely relied on flies that had worked well for me near my previous home, which left me stuck entirely in ways that I assumed would work anywhere.

In warmer weather, with two cranky boys in tow, I hiked up a trickle of a stream in a narrow valley in High Point State Park. A soft rain fell onto blossoming tree buds, and the hammerings of a woodpecker reverberated around us. An early cast into a little plunge pool resulted in a missed brook

trout. The strike turned everyone's moods into excitement, and the boys watched fascinated, with Sam crouching along the bank beside me and Teddy strapped to my back in a hiking backpack. The stream turned out to be laden with small brook trout. A Pink Squirrel and simple Pheasant Tail delivered a handful of little trout. It was a moment of triumph and relief. It had been a long time since I had caught a trout, for a variety of reasons, but it felt like my life had regained some missing stability—a small piece of an increasingly complex puzzle.

This little excursion revived a sense of urgency in me, and every free afternoon I was loading hiking gear and fly rods into my jalopy and driving my boys down some two-lane roads in pursuit of brook trout gold. One Saturday morning, with a brief window, I rushed through the packing process to explore a stream a little farther down the drainage we had been exploring that was a significantly longer drive than usual. We arrived, deep in Stokes State Forest, with plenty of time for exploring, and with a new nymph pattern that I was dying to try out.



The author's sons: Sammy and Teddy. Photo by Ryan Dykstra.

I pulled Sammy out of the car, and he gasped: "Dad," he said. "Do you hear the water?" I nodded and he continued, "It's playing the river song." He floored me. I put Teddy in the backpack, grabbed my strung rod, and proceeded to bomb every little plunge pool with the new-to-me nymph. I didn't see a single fish, and I was shocked. The stream was beautiful and listed by the state as an official Wild Trout Stream. I was so convinced that I had the right pattern, but, lacking success, I turned to my fly box. I took Teddy off of my back and checked the pocket: no dry fly box. We hiked back down to the car to

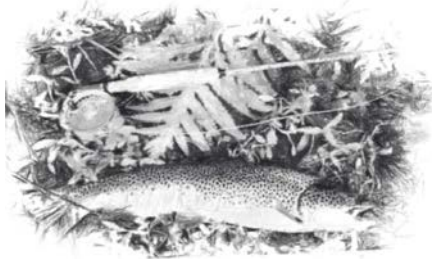
check the trunk: no dry fly box. The only box I had brought with me was filled with streamers. "What the heck," I thought, and pulled out the smallest fly: a size 12 Royal Coachman wet. It was a Hail Mary. I figured we'd hike the trail, enjoying the warm weather and a picturesque freestone stream, and we'd come back sometime soon to try fishing a little more seriously.

Back up the stream again, I decided to retry an unbelievable little plunge pool. On the second cast, a brookie came out from beneath a rock and smacked the Royal Coachman. A few pools later, I netted my second-largest brook trout. My excited, poor packing had forced me to experiment, and my success pointed out the narrow-mindedness I had taken towards my fly selection.

I'll be honest; the fishing that I do is not the fishing that I imagine in my mind. From a purely fishing standpoint, my trips are a little disappointing. Keeping both boys happy and working within their hiking abilities is seriously limiting to any extravagant plans, but I have realized that when I don't take them along, I don't have nearly as much fun. I see clearly how trips with them are better in ways that don't make sense. They both load the trips with their observations—hilarious and revealing; Sammy with his unique expressions, and Teddy with his pre-language, exaggerated gasps, and our

mutual, constant wonder at the surprises of our new home. There's a new town, new mountains, new streams, and new flies. There is always something tragic about moving to a new way of life, but one must move on. The rivers do, after all, and it is rather musical.

Casting Catskill Cane



With Mark Sturtevant

Cane Rods and Fly Lines

Like many things in the modern “industry” of fly fishing, fly lines have become something larger than life. There are several domestic manufacturers offering hundreds of different lines each, and at prices that would once have purchased a good, serviceable fly rod. For many budding fishermen, the formerly simple task of finding the same number on a box of floating fly line as scripted on their rod has become quite complex. Of course, the industry wants you to buy several different lines for every rod you own, so they will be the last to simplify the current state of affairs.

If you are drawn to fishing with bamboo fly rods, it seems as though the choices are much simpler and more limited—and generally they are. There are many bamboo anglers that stay with an old favorite, such as Cortland’s 444 peach-colored double-taper line, and fish nothing else. They reason that their rods were intended for double-tapered lines, and they stand pat with the manufacturer’s recommended line weight. Though that is a reasonable and sensible approach, you might be missing out on something special if you close your eyes to any and all experimentation with different fly lines.

The value of experimenting depends upon your style of fishing. If your longest cast is forty feet, and you take the majority of your trout at twenty, you will probably not gain anything by trying different lines. If you are a caster, and fish bigger water for the wariest and most selective trout, you could be missing out on quite a lot of joy and success if you don't try a variety of fly lines.

As a beginning, I want to take a look at some of the standard fly lines that are suitable for bamboo. Besides their venerable “peach,” Cortland makes a line called Sylk in both weight-forward and double-taper configurations. The lines have a smaller diameter for a given line weight and are more supple than many lines on the market. From Livingston, Montana, 406 Fly Lines also offers a suppler, smaller-diameter line in their Vintage Series, both in double-taper and weight-forward lines. Either the Sylk or the 406 lines are a better choice for certain older vintage rods that have smaller snake and stripping guides. These lines work great on more modern bamboo rods with larger guides, too.

Royal Wulff reintroduced the late Lee Wulff’s long-belly line designed for bamboo rods several years ago. The Bamboo Special is a weight-forward-style line with a long head or belly, which casts like a double-tapered line at distances less than forty feet. As is the case with the 406 lines, Wulff fly lines are made by Scientific Anglers to their own tapers and specifications. The bonus here is that you get lines designed for bamboo that offer the advantages of modern materials and coatings.

Of course, there are also hundreds of lines intended for fly fishers who use modern graphite rods. While I would not suggest that you try dozens of these different lines, some of them can be worth a cast or two. I have been fond of the performance of Airflo’s copolymer fly lines for decades, and Scientific Anglers’ Amplitude Smooth Trout line has proven itself to me as the best partner for some of my cane rods.

So why would you care to try out any of these different lines? In one word: performance! I have experimented with different fly lines for years, particularly as my interest in bamboo has grown. I have found that, although a handful of lines may cast really well on a particular rod, it is common to find

one that will make that same rod really sing! Keep in mind that all of these lines have different tapers. Their slickness varies, as does their diameter and air resistance, so all will give you a somewhat different feel on a given cane fly rod. The goal of experimentation is to find the one that suits you and your rod best.

I am not suggesting that you go out and buy half a dozen new fly lines, particularly at prices of \$100 or more. Talk to your friends, get together with a couple of rods, and trade lines for some casting. Believe me, you will recognize the best line when you cast it! It may take some time to get around to trying the various lines I have mentioned here, and that's fine. There is no rush—no one's schedule to keep but your own. Whenever you have an opportunity to try a different line on your bamboo rod, take a few minutes and try it.

I have many different lines that I have acquired during thirty years of fly fishing. I take very good care of my lines and tackle, as fishing and my tackle are dear to my heart. Fly lines that are well cared for and do not get fished every day can last many years. I clean my lines regularly, often after each day's fishing, to maintain peak performance and longevity.

There are rods I have had for several years that took me a few seasons to find the best line to fish. You can get surprises when you least expect them. The other day, I decided to try my 8-foot Thomas & Thomas Hendrickson with a four-weight line, feeling that its smooth, medium action could easily go down one line weight and still perform. I was satisfied with the lighter line until storm clouds gathered and the wind started gusting harder and harder. I had slipped an old CFO reel in the back of my vest with an Airflo WF5F line in case the four-weight wasn't working out. When I wandered over to the bank to retrieve my rain jacket from the back of my vest (not ten seconds too soon!), I switched reels, too. The Airflo was really nice on the Hendrickson.

The following day I was out again, and the wind was horrendous. I carried my Thomas & Thomas Paradigm, also an eight-foot five-weight rod, to deal with the blustery conditions. I had never tried that Airflo line on the Paradigm until I waded in amid all of those wind gusts. There was a good fish I had erred on the previous afternoon. He was hanging in ridiculously shallow water under an overhanging tree, and I simply tried to lay the fly down too close and spooked him out of there.

I had been standing in the middle of the river tossing my dry fly tight to the far bank with the Paradigm and marveling at how beautifully it was casting with that Airflo weight forward. When I got to the tree in question, I laid out a sixty-five-foot cast quartering downstream and tight to the bank, then immediately pulled another ten feet of line from the CFO and gently shook the slack out of the rod tip. That fly drifted down, down, down beneath that tree until the tiniest little ripple and ring appeared, and I commenced the battle that brought a beautiful twenty-one-inch brown trout to hand. The honest truth is that Airflo line made that cast work perfectly—despite the wind. The Paradigm was singing, and that led to the CFO getting its own chance to sing!

Many modern lines are designed heavier than standard and are stiffer than normal lines in an attempt to load the extremely stiff, fast-action graphite rods the industry seems set upon selling to everyone. My Airflo is certainly a modern line; however, it is true to line weight and extremely supple, which is one of the things I have always appreciated about their copolymer coating. The slickness of the coating and ridged running line, along with that suppleness,



Photo by Mark Sturtevant

certainly brought out the best in my 1970s-vintage Thomas & Thomas bamboo rod, making me a better caster when it counted.

Don't immediately write off the half-size-heavy lines. Most bamboo rods will cast with a couple of different line weights. One or the other will feel better to you, depending upon your casting style. It's possible that the ideal lies between say a four and a five weight, so a carefully selected half-size-heavy WF4F line might be perfect for you. Read the manufacturer's description carefully and avoid the stiffer formulations and the shorter-than-normal heavier heads, as these are not the choice for dry-fly presentations.

If you are serious about your fly fishing, why not try to be the best you can be on any given day? After all, the trout will always be at their best! If you fish bamboo and believe that your vintage tackle is only capable of thirty-foot casts, then it may be time to rethink that premise.

Mark Sturtevant can be followed on his blog, Bright Waters Catskills:
<https://brightwatercatskill.art.blog>



Passing It On

Having experience at anything is a wonderful thing. Trying things for the first time can be exciting, but there's always the unknown and inexperience that can cause frustration. Fly tying is a great example of this. You have all of these expectations of how the flies will look, but the

inexperience shows in every one. Hours, and then years at the vise are what turn those ratty, inconsistent flies into tight, clean examples.

These days, much of the trial and error of the do-it-yourself learning curve can be avoided. The Internet is loaded with tutorials and videos walking you step by step through the tying process, and many times it gives you advance warning on how not to make mistakes. The authors explain why they do things the way they do, which materials are best, and make suggestions for substitutions if you don't have exactly what they're using. They even tell you where to get the items and the how much they'll cost!

It's the same thing with fishing. Tons of footage exists that gives advice on casting, rigging, the best times to target fish, and what the fish eat throughout the year. It's like having guides on your computer screen passing on all of their knowledge just to you!

There's a difference with fishing; however, which is that no amount of computer screen time will make you good at it. I know guys who had only been tying for a few months, and they turned out flies that were absolutely beautiful, learning only from watching videos. But I don't know anyone that watched his or her way into being a proficient angler. The variables are too great, with too many factors to take into account. There is just too much to know.

The majority of us reading this newsletter are from the pre-computer age. We learned how to tie and fish by just doing it. Some may have had a family member to get advice from; I had field and stream magazine, but mostly it was a hobby that took time in which to get proficient. I remember tying the best, because I did it a lot. It's the thing you can do anytime that you had some time. Fishing was another matter. Fishing required travel and lots of time.

I didn't catch my first Catskill trout until my second full season of going up. That was a day I will always remember. But just catching that lone fish didn't exactly flip the switch for me. I didn't get

another that entire season. It's said that even a blind squirrel finds a nut sometimes, and I was obviously the blind squirrel.

Admittedly, I didn't live in the Catskills, so a "season" for me was maybe six visits a year. But I was seeing and hearing of people catching trout all the time. I just couldn't do it. With no guidance, no fishing friends, and no real idea of how it's done or where to do it, it was clear to me that—just like tying—it was going to be a long learning curve.

After another fruitless morning in the summer of my third season, I was sitting on a stool in the Robin Hood Diner, feeling happy, but also frustrated with my inability to close the deal on these trout. It was then that I heard the bells jingle on the door, and two guys walked in—obviously fly fishermen. They had that certain "look," and judging by their age and demeanor it seemed to me they were well past the learning curve that I was going through. One was smiling that smile you wear for a long time after you've had a good morning on the water. The other was a little quieter.

I nodded to them as they walked by to sit in a booth, and the smiling one asked me if I was fishing. I told him, "Yes, I just got off the water, but I caught nothing." Our conversation deepened, and the one guy must have felt my pain. Some guys are just like that; they see a lost soul and need to share. He asked me where I was fishing, and I told him. He mentioned that at this time of year, those spots are fished very frequently and may not be the best areas to go, and I should look for places that are less used. He asked if I had an aversion to fishing smaller streams, and in so many words I replied, "If there is a chance of catching trout, I would fish anywhere." He gave his friend a look and said to him, "Should we tell him?" The friend said nothing, but my guy persisted. He then said, "Do you know any small streams around here?" I told him that I knew the Willow and the Beaverkill, and that's about it. He looked at his friend again, and again asked, "Should we tell him?" His friend made some hand gesture, and this guy just poured it on. He told me how to get there, where to park, where to enter the water, and where to exit. He told me how long the leader should be and what flies they will take. It was as if he had been there a thousand times himself, and everything he knew about it—I now knew. He ended the conversation with, "You won't get anything big, but you'll get a bunch of them."

He was right. It was everything that he said it was, and all the tips he gave me took the learning curve right out of it. I didn't catch anything big (not that time), but I got a bunch of them, and what that did for me confidence-wise was amazing. In one happenstance meeting, this stranger flipped the switch for me, which turned me on and started me on the path that I'm still walking. Because of his generosity, I went from wandering around lost, to knowing where to go and what works.

That little stream shaped me. Knowing that I could catch trout there led to me going back to the bigger water. Having confidence is key. Now the door is open, and you can learn at a new pace, knowing it's just the honing of the skills that will make it better. The trout are in there, but now they are catchable!

I would love to meet that guy again someday—to shake his hand and tell him what he did for me.

Meet Our Local Catskill Guides

By Ed Walsh

Jesse Filingo was born in Scranton, Pennsylvania, but a business opportunity saw his family move to Tennessee when he was five years old. It was also the age when he received his first fly-fishing outfit, a Pro Bass Shop 5/6-weight 8-foot fiberglass rod with a reel. He caught his first fish on that rod soon thereafter and began tying his own flies within a year. Although it took a few years to accomplish, he caught his first fish on a fly that he tied at age eight.

Jesse loved almost any outdoor activity, but fly fishing became his passion. When he started applying for college, he knew that he had to go somewhere he could fish and learn more about the

sport that would ultimately become his life's work. He could not have been more pleased when he received a letter of acceptance from the University of Montana, Missoula. He majored in environmental science, and of equal importance he became very proficient in his knowledge of fish and stream science. He also refined his casting ability to navigate the diverse currents and seems found on many of our great western rivers.

In his early years at the university, he really didn't know where his education might take him. He gave thought to becoming a fish biologist, game warden, or a park ranger. It was during his junior year that he was asked to try out for the university's fly-fishing team that would participate in the College World Fly Fishing Championship in Ireland. Jesse made the team and did well in individual events. His team finished a strong third behind two more-seasoned teams from Ireland. The University of Montana was the leading team on a USA squad that included Case Western and Duke.

It was then that he started to think about fly fishing as a career. He also realized that he wanted to get back to his roots in the northeastern Pennsylvania region. With some outstanding fisheries in the Lehigh Valley and the Upper Delaware River system a short drive away, Jesse knew the resources existed to build a business and a career in this area.



Jesse and Renee

He developed an action plan that would be considered different than most. First, he got a job in retail that would allow him time to market his skill set, and of course, pay the bills. Then he started visiting all the local and regional fly shops—getting to know the owners and staff. He coupled that with introducing himself to the fly fishers that he met on the area's rivers and by attending as many local Trout Unlimited chapter meetings as possible. He also made himself available for presentations at fly-fishing clubs and youth fly-tying sessions. He claims to have given out a million business cards (possibly a slight exaggeration), hoping that some of the folks who got them might be interested in hiring him as a guide in the future. He also started tying flies and selling them to local establishments. The recipe for one of his creations—Jesse's Gemstone Worm—is listed below.

Within a couple of years, he received his guide's license and purchased a drift boat. His energetic enthusiasm and outgoing personality led to some early contacts making their way back to hire him. In less than a year, he left the retail job to concentrate full time on guiding and growing his business.

During our conversations, I asked if he has a business plan for the future. He told me that he develops a new plan every year but isn't afraid to adjust that plan as weather, economic changes, and stream conditions dictate.

One major change in his life happened in 2015, when he noticed an attractive young woman who was a member of the same health club that he attends. He explains that she didn't seem very interested in his advances at first, but Renee Schlittler finally agreed to go out on a date with Jesse. As they say—the rest is history. Jesse proposed to Renee on a hiking trip on Mount Marcy in the Adirondacks last year, and they are now working on their wedding plans.

Filingo Fly Fishing has a very busy schedule with float trips on the upper Delaware River system and an occasional wade trip in the Lehigh Valley. Jesse has a number of independent guides that he can call on to fill almost every occasion, and he hosts two summer trips with clients back to his college stomping grounds in Western Montana to fish the Clarks Fork, the Bitterroot rivers, and other local tributaries.

I've been on float trips with Jesse, and his passion for our sport became obvious as we traveled down the West Branch and Main Stem of the Delaware, searching for trout.

Jesse's Jemstone Worm:

Hook: Umpqua, size 10, U202 curved hook
Thread: Red Uni-Thread, 6/0
Bead: Glass bead of choice
Body: Micro Pearl Core Braid (red, pink, purple, root beer, orange)

Filingo Fly Fishing can be reached at www.filingoflyfishing.com or by calling (615) 428-5090.



T. E. Pritt's March Brown By Tom Mason



Fly tied and photographed by Tom Mason

The fly on the left is a March Brown from T. E. Pritt's *North Country Flies*. I used this fly with great success this year on the Beaverkill.

Hook: Allcocks 6812, wet, size 12
Silk: Pearsall's gossamer, light orange, 6a
Wing: Hen pheasant, folded
Tail: Partridge, tied forked
Body: Light orange silk, dubbed with hare's ear and yellow mohair mixed
Rib: Yellow buttonhole twist
Hackle: English grouse


Obituaries

Leigh H. Perkins Sr. Leigh H. Perkins Sr. passed away on May 7, 2021, at the age of ninety-three. Born in Cleveland on November 27, 1927, Mr. Perkins was well known as an outdoor sporting enthusiast and as a supporter of conserving land and water. He combined his interests in business and the outdoors when he bought Orvis in 1965. At that time, Orvis had twenty employees. Mr. Perkins turned Orvis into a respected name for sporting, apparel, and dog brands, and the number of company employees has grown to more than 700. He was one of the first executives to dedicate corporate earnings to conservation. The company donated five percent of pre-tax profits to conservation organizations beginning in the 1980s, helping to conserve fish and wildlife through organizations including Trout Unlimited, the Ruffed Grouse Society, the Nature Conservancy, and the Atlantic Salmon Federation. He retired as president and chief executive of Orvis in 1992. One of Mr. Perkins's

well-known quotes is, “There is only one reason in the world to go fishing: to enjoy yourself. Anything that detracts from enjoying yourself is to be avoided.”

New Members and Sharing the *Gazette*

It’s fun to share, and the *Gazette* is often shared by forwarding copies to friends who are nonmembers of the guild. If you do this, please encourage those readers to join our mission and become members. Joining the guild is as simple as clicking on this link: <https://cftg.limitedrun.com>.

 This newsletter depends on all guild members for its content. Items from nonmembers are welcome at the editor’s discretion. Your articles, cartoons, photographs, reports of information, and bits of whatever else is interesting and fun are vital to this newsletter. Send submissions to Chuck Coronato, coronato3@verizon.net or 412 Highland Avenue, Wyckoff, NJ 07481 (201) 723-6230.



Ted Patlen hooks into a nice fish and brings a buttery brown trout to hand.
Photos by Chuck Coronato.



CATSKILL FLY FISHING CENTER & MUSEUM'S

SUMMERFEST

Livingston Manor, NY | 9:00AM - 4:00PM
SATURDAY AUGUST 21, 2021
(rain date Sunday August 22, 2021)

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- CASTING DEMOS HELD IN THE FIELD
 - KIDS ARTS AND CRAFTS
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Drop by and see what the booths have to offer! For 20 years, Summerfest has been an annual occurrence and there's no better way to spend the day than to thrift and shop from our vendor tables!

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Stop by the guild’s table