



The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild *Gazette*

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There is presently no September meeting scheduled for the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild. An election for the positions of guild president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer will be conducted virtually in February 2021. Information regarding the procedures for nominations and voting will be sent in the near future to all members via email.



Agnes Van Put

Happy Birthday Agnes Van Put!

A constant presence at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum, Agnes was officially inducted last year as a Catskill Legend. A cherished member of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild, Agnes works tirelessly to support the fly-fishing community and has warmed many a body and spirit at events with her hearty soups and her unequalled hospitality. On August 15, 2020, Agnes celebrated her 104th birthday. Everyone in the guild joins to extend our love and appreciation with a loud, “Happy Birthday Agnes!”

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>. The cost of dues is still only ten dollars.

President’s Message

By Joe Ceballos

As summer winds down I continue to hope that everyone in our family of members and friends is safe, doing well, and looking forward to better days.

I ask all who managed to get out to fish, did some fly tying, or who have any special moments to share, please do so by sending in pictures for all of us to enjoy in future issues of the *Gazette*.

The Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum has posted that it will be open Friday through Monday, from 10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. Guidelines for our guild meetings are to be determined. We could consider an outdoor tying gathering in late September or a time in October. We could meet at the Beaverkill for some fishing. Possibilities exist for online video meetings and presentations as other organizations have started. I’d like to hear from members regarding these options, so please contact me

at sajefu@aol.com and give your opinion. We'll contact our members by email to update everyone on these decisions.

All too quickly our summer seems to be fading away and fall is rapidly approaching. For those who enjoy fall fishing, this is certainly a great time to be outdoors. On a fishing trip several days ago I noticed October Caddis, which might seem early, but were nonetheless a hatch most welcomed.

This time of year, cooler temperatures bring back the fish, as well as the Blue-Winged Olives: those small flies, sizes 18 to 22, and sometimes smaller. Sure, we like them—if you're still lucky enough to be able to see them. Later in this issue, I'll share a pattern that I enjoy using.

The guild's history project continues to grow under the direction of Paul Dolbec, and he has now compiled a well-organized book archive. The fifty-four titles are listed with descriptions pertaining to subject matter separated into seven categories. This archive will be made available to the membership as a resource, and will hopefully provide guidance for those wishing to learn more about a subject.

This leads me to suggest a particular work by Frederic Halford: *Halford on the Dry Fly*. This rather short book is an excerpt from his 1889 book, *Dry Fly Fishing in Theory and Practice*, and is an extremely in-depth treatment of dry-fly fishing. In my opinion, past and contemporary writings have almost nothing more to offer. The things that have truly changed over the years since Halford's books were published are the fly-tying materials, their availability, and changes in rods and reels.

Lastly, in the many years that I have been tying flies, I've never found hackle pliers that have suited my tying. I have tried the traditional English type, EZ type, rotary, tear drop, Dr Slick, and Tiemco—all to no satisfaction. However, after watching a video from one of our members in Italy, Umberto Oreglini, in which he uses unique hackle pliers, I contacted him for an opinion. Umberto recommended the Cottarelli hackle pliers as the best he's ever used. I ordered the Cottarelli pliers, and although they aren't cheap, I have been extremely satisfied with their performance.

Catskill Plein Air

By Lois Ostapczuk

Plein air, or more precisely, en plein air, is a French expression that refers to outdoor landscape artistry. It also embodies looseness in the painter's brush strokes in an effort to capture the feeling of open-air spaces while engaging in landscape painting outdoors.

Decades ago, my husband and I were drawn to the Catskills by his love of trout fishing, plus job offers that we each had. He would eventually pursue two different career paths, while I soon became a stay-at-home mom raising a family before returning to teaching elementary school. After twenty years of teaching, and with our children becoming parents, I retired and pursued several longtime interests and hobbies: one being landscape painting.

For the most part I am self-taught, but initially sought help from the Olive Senior Art Class. It was there where my passion for this pastime grew. I've since taken a few classes and workshops offered by local artists, and during the last few months, spending more time than usual at home, I've watched various YouTube videos.

Currently, I mostly use watercolors to create paintings of water, mountains, landscapes, trout, and other topics of interest. My main goal is the sheer enjoyment this pastime brings me, much like the angler who drifts a dry fly over a trout that will be quickly released after it's caught. Sometimes I paint plein air style outside, but more often I do my paintings from photos that my husband captures when fishing or while we hike together.

I have a blog—CatskillWatersArt—of various paintings I’ve done that date back from my earliest days to the current works. If you choose to visit the site, I hope that you see personal growth since I’ve started.

As noted above, painting is my hobby that I enjoy doing—it’s not a source of income. Over the years I’ve donated several pieces to various nonprofit fund-raising events, which is something that I also get pleasure from. Earlier this year I painted a watercolor titled *Mount Pleasant, Esopus Creek*, as a donation to the Ashokan-Pepacton Watershed Chapter of Trout Unlimited.



Mount Pleasant, Esopus Creek

This Parker pony tress bridge—locally known as the Green Bridge—was reportedly built in 1934, connecting Mount Pleasant Road and Riseley Road to NY 212. It’d been closed to traffic for many years and was dismantled in the summer of 2020. It had long been an historic landmark and favorite place for the young of heart to jump into Esopus Creek below. The pool downstream of the bridge was a favorite of the late Preston Jennings. Jennings often stopped at Kahil’s Rainbow Lodge, located on NY 212, to interact with Esopus Creek anglers staying the night.

So, if the *Gazette* reader seeks to search out this Esopus Creek landmark, it is now a mere memory: captured on a painter’s canvas.

Editor’s note: Catskill artist Lois Ostapczuk’s paintings have been featured in an exhibit at the Catskill Watershed Corporation in Margaretville, New York. You can view her portfolio spanning more than six years of painting by visiting: <http://catskillwatersart.blogspot.com/2014/02/blog-post.html>



The Conover

Oftentimes, a particular fly will remind you of a special trout or a place where you used it. I know for me, the list of flies fitting that description is long. Whether the thoughts are of wandering tiny, unnamed trickles winding

through the Catskill’s dark hemlock forests, to the wide, slow-moving expanse of the Delaware River’s main stem, just looking at a fly brings back memories. One old dry fly—the Conover—brings back memories of a fly shop on Cottage Street, tucked off of the main drag in Roscoe, New York.

When I see a Conover, I see myself standing in the Dette fly shop, peering into their antique wood and glass fly bin, where so many before me stood doing the same, choosing a pattern for a special trout or place to cast it.

The Dettles first tied this pattern in 1934 for a man named Scotty Conover. It has since become a Catskill staple: one of those dry flies that you can depend on. It was one of my early go-to dry flies, especially when nothing was happening and you were just blind casting, searching for fish. A simple fly, with no wings, it is both relatively easy to tie and trouble free to fish. Delicate yet durable, it lands lightly on the water, floats well even in bumpy flows, and its design is simple enough that it's hard for a trout to find something wrong with it.

I like the Conover on a fine-wire size 14 hook, but anything from size 10 down to a size 20 would work. Consisting of a cream hackle-fiber tail, a blend of muskrat fur and red wool for the body, golden badger for hackle, and all secured with white thread as the Dettles often used, the result is a fly that is as attractive to our eye as it is to the trout's. It holds some real magic—and has for a long time.



Conover

Thread: White

Hook: Fine wire, sizes 10 to 20 (most often size 14)

Tail: Barbs of a stiff, cream-colored hackle

Body: Blend of muskrat fur and red wool

Hackle: Golden badger rooster

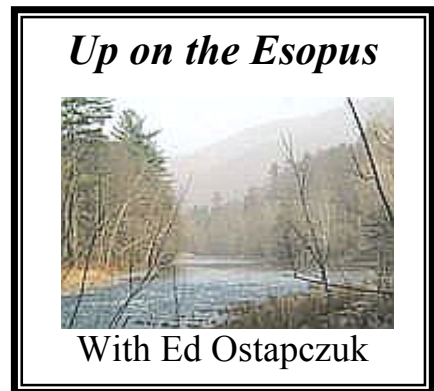
The Ginger Quill

A classic dry fly worth remembering

In the last *Gazette*, I wrote about the White Irresistible, a celebrated deer-hair-body dry that accounted for the first trout I ever caught on a fly. Here, I'll examine the Ginger Quill, which is perhaps a forgotten Catskill classic, and a pattern that used to be a go-to dry fly in my early fly-fishing days. Way back then, when I encountered rising trout, I attached a size 14 Ginger Quill to my leader without much hesitation.

In the massive tome *Fish Flies*, Terry Hellekson wrote, "Ginger Quills have been around for many years" and may have "originated in Europe." He also added, "These flies have been in use in America for at least a century." On page one of *Tying Catskill-Style Dry Flies*, author and fly-fishing historian Mike Valla mentions that patterns with duck-quill wings, such as the Ginger Quill "were common in the fly boxes of Catskill fly fishers." He also wrote that McClane's *Standard Fishing Encyclopedia* displayed color plates of such dry flies tied by Elsie Darbee. Valla included this pattern in his collectible volume *The Classic Dry Fly Box*, and his book *The Founding Flies* includes photographs of this dry fly tied by Theodore Gordon, and also tied by the Darbees.

Mike wasn't alone in his admiration of the Ginger Quill. In *Trout*, Ray Bergman included the Ginger Quill in his 1951 list of dry flies that anglers should carry. Renowned fly tyers J. Edison



Leonard, in *Flies*, and Eric Leiser, in *The Book of Fly Patterns*, included this pattern in their plates and lists of distinguished dry flies. In fact, the appendix of *Flies* contains many letters of favorite flies that were written to Leonard, with the Ginger Quill listed several times.

Prominent angling author and my early on trout-fishing champion, Ernest Schwiebert, associated the Ginger Quill with *Stenonema* and Grey Fox hatches in his book *Matching the Hatch*. Alvin Grove, in his lesser-known classic *The Lure and Lore of Trout Fishing* did likewise, and provided a dry-fly recipe with a body that could be tied with either peacock quill or the center stem of a ginger hackle.

A.J. McClane followed suit in *The Practical Fly Fisherman*, once again noting that the Ginger Quill was a “popular and extremely effective fly throughout the season.” And he supported Hellekson’s contention that the “Ginger Quill was a British import” yet displayed “strong resemblance to several mayflies” that appear on American trout waters. Furthermore, McClane wrote, “The Ginger Quill is very successful when these naturals appear, especially in sizes 12 and 14.”

Pennsylvania trout fisher Charles Wetzel, in *Trout Flies: Naturals and Imitations*, joined the parade of anglers singing the praises of this pattern when he wrote, “The artificial can be recommended as being a good all-around fly, but it will be most successful when its prototype is emerging from the water.” Wetzel associated the pattern with March Browns when tied in larger sizes. The Ginger Quill even drew mention in Preston Jennings’s *A Book of Trout Flies*, though this Catskill author-entomologist is generally credited with the creation of the Grey Fox.

Not surprisingly, acclaimed angling author John Gierach sang the praises of this classic dry fly. In an October 12, 1991, *New York Times* Outdoors column, Gierach noted the following about tying the pattern: “It’s a lovely fly that you’ll admire for a few seconds before you drop it into your box and go on to the next one. Then, as soon as possible, you’ll throw it in a river and let a bunch of trout chew on it until it comes apart.”

I never knew any of this in my early fly-fishing years; it was just dumb luck that a Ginger Quill brought me angling success. For old times’ sake, I recently employed a Ginger Quill while fishing the upper Neversink River. I had a banner day catching many small wild brook trout, though my eyes have grown tired during the last fifty-plus years, and I had a difficult time locating the delicate dry fly in shaded, chilly waters.



Ginger Quill

Hook: Mustad 94840, size 14

Thread: White

Tail: Medium-ginger hackle barbs

Body: Stripped peacock quill

Rib: Fine gold wire, optional, to reinforce the quill body

Wing: Mallard quill slips, divided

Hackle: Medium ginger

Regarding the optional gold wire, it was a dear friend, Art Flick, who wrote in *Streamside Guide to Naturals and Their Imitations*, “As the peacock quills are somewhat delicate, I suggest that the body be wound with extra-fine gold wire.” While this comment was written in reference to Quill Gordons, it’s advice that I’ve long since heeded. Mike Valla did likewise on page 271 of *The Founding Flies*, specifically with reference to the Ginger Quill as tied by Harry and Elsie Darbee. The Ginger Quill is only one of several dry-fly patterns that utilize a stripped peacock quill body, and perhaps a somewhat forgotten fly that also calls upon the use of duck-quill wings.

Looking Back Upstream



Be a Trout **By Chuck Coronato**

The minnow lady lived in an old barn-red house that would've seemed right at place in the middle of nowhere had it not been located just off the exit of an interstate highway. My friend Carl and I would knock on her door as early as 5:00 A.M., and she'd sweep her dip net through corralled shiners while her cat pawed at dead baitfish on the ground that were victims of their attempted jailbreak from the tank. On the days that we purchased worms to go with the shiners, she'd always give the same advice delivered in a nasal-voiced command: "Keep them worms cold!" In those pre-fly-fishing days, the procurement of bait was job number one, and Carl insisted that a visit to the minnow lady was part of every trip's plan.

Carl loved planning trips. He was always at the conversational hub of discussions that led to action. Sometimes the plan was to fish, other times he'd organize a ballgame, and once, he hatched a scheme to make an impromptu visit to an Atlantic City casino with a bunch of us college punks when we were staying near the Jersey Shore in a camper that belonged to a friend's parents. Since the only clothes we had were T-shirts and jeans, we raided the camper's closets in search of suitable casino wardrobe. The storage racks lacked men's sport coats, so we emerged wearing women's blazers colored in pastel shades with sleeves that were several inches too short. Carl routinely made two proclamations about the viability of any plans. If the plan seemed sketchy, he'd say, "We're not exactly pros at this," and the times when everyone agreed that our idea seemed great, he'd hold a single finger in the air to get our attention and announce, "I just want to say one thing. It's going to suck without drugs." No matter the obstacles, he was up for anything.

The joy of being up for anything was on full display when Carl joined our small group for some camping and fishing at the Delaware Water Gap. He arrived late, in an alcohol-induced spirited mood, and decided that the best way to fight the dropping temperature was to toss my brand-new hatchet into the fire so we could burn its handle for fuel. I didn't get angry with him; it was just Carl being Carl, and since none of us really knew how to camp—and we were freezing our butts off—we started laughing uncontrollably and saying, "We're not exactly pros at this." Even the next day, when Carl's rocking back and forth nearly swamped an overloaded canoe that was paddled by some boy scouts who required a five-dollar bribe to ferry us across a wide side channel, the situation didn't seem dangerous: it just seemed funny.

I saw Carl do a strange-looking thing called fly fishing during that Delaware River trip. He slipped on a pair of Red Ball waders, wandered waist deep into the Big D, and started slinging line in all directions. I was intrigued by this new kind of fishing, but quickly lost any desire to try it when the only thing that he plucked from the river was a silvery fish small enough to blend nicely in the minnow lady's tank. I kept my faith in spin fishing—casting from the shore and hoping for a whopper—even when the whoppers turned out to be eels that were so slimy that I just cut my line to release them.

My first glimpse of fly fishing didn't thrill me, but I was about to be sucked into a new obsession. Carl did a lot of talking about how great it is to catch a trout, and he lobbied hard for our next destination to be a heavily stocked trout stream. I objected. I wanted nothing to do with fishing in streams, holding the belief that my bait would get stuck on rocks and snagged in shallow water. I persuaded my friend to accept the compromise of fishing a trout-stocked lake.

After an early morning purchase at our usual bait joint, we drove to Budd Lake, where Carl intensified his preaching of how great it would be to catch a trout. He went on and on about how trout

are the best fish, how you'd know that you had a trout when you caught one, how it would look like nothing else, and how delicious a trout tastes dipped in egg batter and rolled in cracker crumbs. It was a very impressive sales pitch, and when one of the minnow lady's cold worms was gobbled by something that put a sizeable bend in Carl's rod, I could see that he held his breath for a moment before saying, "This might be a trout." After several cranks of his reel, he said "I think this a trout," until his enthusiasm boiled over and he reeled faster, both of us hopping up and down and chanting, "Be a trout! Be a trout!" A little kid getting a new bicycle couldn't have a happier-looking face than Carl's when a foot-long rainbow flopped in the mud at the water's edge. He pounced on the fish, held it high in the air, and we screamed like a couple of lunatics.

Carl's was the only trout taken that day. But after that thrill, and after seeing first hand—a fish that looked like nothing else—I knew what I wanted to catch every time that I went fishing.

I haven't seen Carl in over thirty years. Word has it that he's living in Mexico where he owns a company. He always had a good head for business. On a recent drive, just before turning onto the interstate, I went down the road where the minnow lady lived. I didn't see her barn-red house. There's now a vape shop in the area where the bait store used to be.

The pandemic has kept me close to home for much of this fishing season, so I often walk to a nearby pond that is too shallow for trout, but has a nice population of panfish and bass. Passing time there with my fly-fishing gear has helped my sanity, but, sometimes, when there's a good bend in the rod, I want to talk to the fish as I'm stripping in line. I want to say, "Don't worry fish. I haven't got any eggs or cracker crumbs. You know what I want you to be." And maybe, by some miracle, it will be a trout, and Carl will show up at the edge of the pond, and we'll both jump up and down, and forty years of rust will fade away.

Casting Catskill Cane



With Mark Sturtevant

Adventures with Summer Terrestrials

My terrestrial heritage was formed in the limestone country of South Central Pennsylvania, haunting the water meadows of the Letort, Falling Spring Creek, and Big Spring Creek. I angled those fabled limestone spring creeks for twenty-five years, a period when the summer terrestrial season provided the bulk of the dry-fly fishing. I was fortunate to be mentored in my spring creek education by Ed Shenk and Ed Koch, and I shall ever remain grateful for the time spent with those gentlemen.

The terrestrial game on those waters involved learning the covers—the lies where shy wild trout hold and watch for food—and fishing them effectively. Effective fishing amounted to much more than making a good cast. Time on the water revealed the necessity for approaching certain reaches soundlessly, at the right time of day, to take advantage of shaded banks while avoiding sun angles that cast one's own shadow across the streambed. Getting there was half the challenge.

Once the approach was made, the fly was selected with a bit of intuition and experience. Trout hidden beneath overhanging banks and vegetation oft demanded a juicy morsel to draw their interest and elicit a rise. The Letort Cricket, a classic Shenk pattern that I eventually morphed into a version I call the baby cricket, was a favorite of mine. Likewise, a sizeable beetle, or during high summer, a

grasshopper, were attractive patterns for hidden browns or for Falling Spring rainbows. In more open pools, where depth and aquatic vegetation formed hiding spots for the trout, ants and smaller beetles would be the choice when rises were observed.

In twenty-six seasons of fishing Catskill rivers as a visiting angler I found limited opportunities to explore terrestrial fishing. The bulk of my fishing trips were taken during the spring hatches. As a confirmed dry-fly angler, I loved the countless hatch-matching opportunities these beautiful rivers offered, and they were opportunities not featured by my home waters. Once the regularity of coldwater releases improved on the Delaware River, I added an annual trip in July, as well as trips in August. My “summer jam” was destined for the sulphur hatch on the West Branch, though I would visit other waters when the crowds on that river put me in need of solitude. The side trips, and an occasional change of pace on the West Branch, provided my first taste of terrestrial fishing in the Catskills.

One eye-opener during a sulphur hatch stands out. After taking a walk to avoid the crush of anglers crowding a popular pool, I discovered a handful of good trout sipping sulphurs. I took a couple of nice browns, but they were supremely difficult, as they always are when the tiny sulphurs of July dance and wiggle on the surface of forty-eight-degree water mingled with steamy air.

One bulging brown drew a great deal of my attention, frustrating my ploys with multiple patterns of sulphurs and tiny olives. I knotted a size 14 beetle to my tippet and gently plopped it inches above the next bulge beside the grass. The trout was on it like lightning, and treated me to several long runs and deep bends in my two-weight rod. That fish taped out at better than twenty-one inches before being returned to the frigid flows.

The continual rains during my first summer in Hancock robbed much of the fishing time that I had retired to enjoy. During a day between storms when the river dropped and cleared just enough to wade, I went prospecting with my baby cricket pattern and took a pair of muscular brown trout, planting the seeds for explorations in the summer of 2019.

With the freedom to fish any day, I approached terrestrial fishing here as I had on the limestone springs: learning the covers, discovering the times of day to expect trout to be in those spots and on the lookout for some chance morsel of food. There were lean days to be sure, but in time, the same lessons were learned that the masters had taught on the spring creeks—now in a Catskill river context.

Once a reach was dialed in, fishing was planned for the perfect time of day. My approach differed from crawling about the meadows and peeking around bankside trees. Here, it was about careful wading in cool, deep water—with agonizing stealth. A slip of the foot meant a bow wave and a trout alerted.

Relying on specific tackle to suit the presentation that was required, an approach within forty or fifty feet of my target was paired with a seven-and-a-half-foot Jim Downes Garrison 206 replica four-weight bamboo—a miraculous rod that is stunningly accurate. As flows decreased and approach distances became more demanding, my twenty-year-old Thomas & Thomas Paradigm graphite rod allowed me to present flies on a long yet gentle four-weight line. Both rods have progressive actions that excel at casting feel and control, imperative for terrestrial presentations that must be fine and delicate in the low, gin-clear flows of summertime.

On a number of outings I was fortunate to bring two or three fine brown trout to hand, and all with a small selection of terrestrial dry flies. This type of fishing was best during the “dog days” of late July and August.

One mid-August afternoon I stalked a favorite reach. Low flows demanded a fine and far off approach, so I carried the Paradigm rod, allowing me to place my beetle imitation in the shade along the bank, beneath overhanging trees. A big brown took the fly so quickly that I was caught placing the line under my rod-hand finger and striking late. The fish boiled vigorously and streaked for deeper water. The fly came away. I took a moment to compose myself, and began the slow stalk toward the

next lie. Concentrating fully, I presented the fly to allow a long drift in the shade. Hesitating at the little pop and bubble of the trout's subtle take, and then pulling the hook tight with the full arch of the rod, I was rewarded with a long run against the drag, with the fish making violent headshakes and changes of direction. This time the hook held firm, and I eventually led a brown trout in excess of twenty inches into the net.

I fished several more choice lies, moving one fish that refused to take. As the end of my afternoon approached, I saw one rise near the final lie and immediately lofted the line and dropped the beetle two feet above the after-rise. The fish took with a gentle bulge and the Paradigm assumed a dreadful bend as I fought to keep that leviathan from the rocks and snags. My heart was pounding when I was finally able to lead the brown into the net. The trout was gorgeous, and still vigorous in the cool water. Beside a grassy bank I slipped the fly free and held the netted fish in the river while I fumbled for my camera. Taping twenty-four and a half inches from nose to tail, it was the only trout I bothered to photograph last season—the pinnacle of a wonderful first summer of Catskill terrestrial fishing.

Fall started with drought conditions in September, and fishing stalled for a time until the first good rains of early October. The rains coupled with cooler days and nights refreshed the rivers, and the trout responded. Picture gorgeous Indian-summer afternoons, with strong breezes blowing terrestrials into crystalline currents, and shy wild trout sipping daintily in the shadows along the riverbanks. How perfect to finish off my dry-fly fishing for the season, with golden afternoons along the rivers, after bright mornings spent in the grouse covers.



Photographed and tied by the author are two successful terrestrial patterns: the Grizzly Beetle and the CDC Ant. A proven pattern this season, the Grizzly Beetle is designed to produce a light plop upon touching the water's surface and is tied using 1/16-inch black foam, black peacock Ice Dub, and a webby, slightly oversized grizzly hackle to provide visibility and a hint of movement. The CDC Ant evolved from a simpler, two-bump fly, to a more anatomically correct rendition using black fur to represent a gaster,

thorax, and head. Two wraps of dark hackle are placed between the gaster and thorax, and a puff of CDC in white or light dun is tied just after the hackle. Both patterns are tied on wide-gape hooks: preferably TMC 102Y in sizes 15, 17, and 19.

December found me busy at the vise, inspired by the year's fine terrestrial fishing to update some old favorite patterns and design some new ones. My anticipation to prove these flies grew throughout the winter, and a cold, fitful spring. If there is one constant of Catskill fishing seasons, it is change, as our weather never seems to be the same two years in a row.

True to form, summer conditions arrived early in 2020, and I found myself transitioning quickly from the mayfly hatches that highlighted early June. When high sun revealed cruisers sipping daintily despite the absence of flies, I turned to a couple of reliable terrestrials—one old, and one new—to solve the puzzle. June's hot spell turned into an extended heat wave and a drought that hampered the terrestrial fishing, to say nothing of the horrendous crowding that the limited areas of cold water have experienced during this strange and worrisome, pandemic-scarred season. Fishing slowed and proved difficult, until conditions improved in mid-August.

If the weather moderates in the days ahead, September and October could produce some wonderful fishing. Ants figured predominantly last autumn, and my boxes will be well stocked with a variety of them. I have a feeling that the Grizzly Beetle is going to be the workhorse over the month of September. I would still like to try my updated grasshopper patterns. I have seen little hoppers in the grassy areas, so the potential is there, but our topography tends toward very shallow water along the grassy meadow areas. Higher flows and the right wind direction might make for some interesting terrestrial fishing still to come.

Editor's note: A resident of Hancock, New York, Mark Sturtevant can be followed on his blog, Bright Waters Catskills, at <https://brightwatercatskill.art.blog/>

Thoughts on *Land of Little Rivers* **A documentary produced by the guild's own Bruce Concors** **By Ed Walsh**

A couple of years ago, Bruce Concors mentioned to me that he was going to make a documentary about fly fishing in the Catskills. My first thought was, here's a guy who already tries to fit thirty hours into every twenty-four-hour day, so where's he going to find the time for such a time-consuming endeavor? But find the time he did, and the finished product, *Land of Little Rivers*, is a wonderfully developed production. It's a film that any of us who call these rivers our home waters must see.



Bruce Concors

I followed the development of the documentary on the website that Bruce and his team introduced, and quickly realized the finished product was going to be anything but ordinary. The photography, personalities, and storylines kept me interested, and wanting to see the documentary in its finished form. I've received the same response from folks that I've talked to who've already seen *Land of Little Rivers*, with "It was certainly worth the wait" being the standard response.

I thought it might be interesting to learn more about the production of this effort, and sat down with Bruce to talk about what got him interested in the first place, and about the development of the finished product.

Bruce told me that he didn't start out intending to produce a documentary. He was asked by his good friend Rob Lewis to help update and improve Rob's website. He asked another good friend, Dave Brandt, to lend a helping hand. After doing some research, they realized that there were scores of books available on fly fishing in the Catskills, but no documentaries had been made about fly fishing in this beautiful area. It was then that the idea of producing one themselves came to mind. Fortunately, Bruce knew an individual from his hometown of Walden who developed documentaries. The contact was made and a meeting was scheduled.

Oscar nominated director Aaron Weisblatt thought the idea had merit, and flew cross-country to meet with Bruce and Dave to tour the Catskill Rivers and towns, talk to potential contributors, and to develop an action plan. It didn't take long before Aaron realized the passion that Bruce had for this project, and the director committed to making the documentary.

After spending more than fifty years fishing the rivers of the Catskills, owning and managing a large sporting-goods business, and getting to know the people who support this wonderful sport, Bruce

knew who he wanted in the production. From Rob Lewis's sense of humor, to the graceful Catskill legend Joan Wulff, to the serious closing comments from Ben Rinker and Mike Canazon, the product is well crafted and delivers what fly fishing in the Catskills is all about: its people, its places, its history.

Over a two-year period, hundreds of hours were spent interviewing and filming dozens of guides, fly fishers, and people on and off the rivers and at local fly shops. Time was spent at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum, and trips were taken to the Ausable River in the Adirondacks and the American Museum of Fly Fishing in Manchester, Vermont, gathering needed information and interviewing contributors to complement the finished product.

Once the interviews and the information gathering process was completed, all materials were turned over to the editing, sound, and photography professionals who were under the watchful eyes of Aaron and Bruce, and a first-run version was developed. Many more hours were invested before the finished product was completed. Important to note here is that Bruce did all of the voiceover work, and even wrote and performed the song "Row Rob Row" that ends the documentary.

The film was first introduced at the 2019 Woodstock Film Festival, and received rave reviews. It was there that Bruce met with representatives from Cinema Libre Studio, an independent film distributor from Burbank, California. After negotiating with other distributors, Bruce decided that Cinema Libre was the right fit, and today he is quite satisfied with that choice.

Many times during our conversation, Bruce mentioned how important Dave Brandt was to the project. Dave was there whenever needed, and in Bruce's own words, "The documentary might not ever have been completed without Dave's support." Dave passed away in March, but his contributions are obvious throughout the video.

For those of you who haven't seen the film but want more information, you can find it at <http://landoflittlerivers.com/> where you'll find a well-produced trailer and details about the development team and participants. The documentary can be purchased at the following sites: Amazon Prime Videos, and Cinema Libre store <http://cinemalibrestore.com/>. It is now also offered at most of the region's fly shops.

Someone once told me that a good film should make you laugh, think, and maybe even shed a few tears before it ends. *Land of Little Rivers* did all of that for me. Congratulations and thank you Bruce Concors for a job well done.



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.



A Catskill-Style Blue-Winged Olive tied by Joe Ceballos

Hook: Mustad 94840 size 18
Thread: Rusty dun (Uni 8/0)
Wing: Smokey dun hen hackle
Tail: Dark dun rooster hackle barbs
Body: Olive Super Fine (Wapsi)
Hackle: Dark dun (Collins)