



The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild GAZETTE



Volume 21, number 6

Twenty-Fifth Anniversary

November 2018

There is no November meeting of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild. Stop by the guild table and say hello at the International Fly Tying Symposium, November 17 and 18, 2018, at the Sheraton Parsippany Hotel in Parsippany, NJ. See the ad at the end of this issue of the *Gazette*.

Tyers Needed

If you'd like to tie for the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild at the International Fly Tying Symposium, November 17 and 18, 2018, at the Sheraton Parsippany Hotel in Parsippany, NJ, or at The Fly Fishing Show on January 26, 27, and 28, 2018, at the New Jersey Convention and Expo Center in Edison, NJ, call John Kavanaugh on his cell at (973) 219-7696 and leave a message with your contact information, or contact Nicole March at catskillflytyersguild@gmail.com.

Guild Questions? Contact Nicole

If you or someone you know has questions about receiving Catskill Fly Tyers Guild e-mails or about receiving the *Gazette*, the person to contact is the secretary, Nicole Marsh, at catskillflytyersguild@gmail.com. She also can fill you in on guild participation in upcoming events, issues related to social media, hats and patches, and anything else you may want to know about guild meetings, policies, and offerings.

October Fly-Rod Golf Outing

I confess that I had my doubts. Usually, fly fishing and golf are regarded as in some way inherently antithetical. After a bad day on the water, it's said that one is tempted to declare, "That's it. I'm taking up golf"—or vice versa, said by golfers after a bad day on the links. Lengths of graphite broken over the knee may or may not accompany such vows.

But despite October 20, 2018, turning out to be a cold, gray day in the Catskills, the Catskill Fly Tyers



Guild's outing in lieu of a business meeting turned out to be a lot of fun. However, the rod setups provided by Beamoc TU president Jeff Foster required some casting adjustments. The short leaders were tipped not with yarn flies, but with Thingamabobbers: golf balls, get it? The result was more like casting a worm and bobber than a fishing fly, but judging by the hoots and hollers from such noted ~~worm~~ fly casters as former guild president Dave Brandt and current president Joe Ceballos, participants mostly were up to the challenge. Scores were kept, but then politely and mercifully ignored. Secretary Nicole March provided excellent sandwiches, we signed up some new members, and despite the weather, a good time really was had by all. Don't miss the next outing.

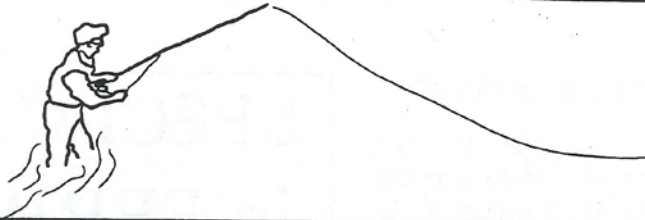
—Bud Bynack

Looking Back Upstream



From the May 2000 Catskill Fly Tyers
Guild Newsletter

CATSKILL



FLY NEWS

UNTITLED—By Phil Chase

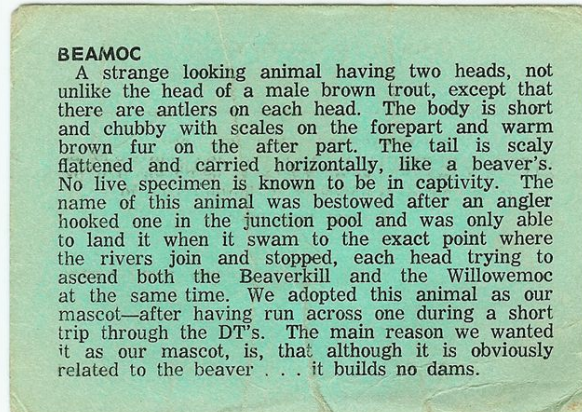
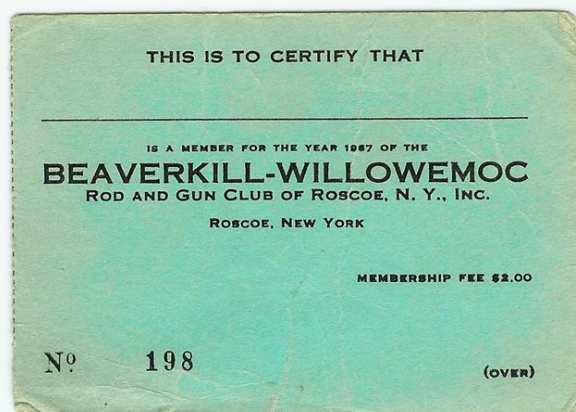
I've used lots of parachutes—Dorrado, Hendrickson, Adams, etc. and they are all terrific. I would rate them as my most effective patterns for discriminating trout. When Scott Quinn mentioned a parachute caddis pattern I was caught off guard but when I heard 23" brown the reality set in and I knew it made sense. I'm not sure this is the fly you referred to or the Cinberg or Catskill Clipper.

We have had almost all our luck on size 14 on the Delaware (80% of the time). On the parachute caddis in Kaufmann's book [*Tying Dry Flies*, by Randall Kaufmann, 1991]:

I start off with a touch of super glue near the eye, wrap back then forward until 20% to the eye. Using calf body hair (I also really like posts made of 1/8" cylindrical closed cell foam—trim to 1/8" high after the fly is complete—white or yellow). I tie it in with the tips to the right, then trim the butts 1/8" and wrap back almost to end of butts, then go around front of post taking thread around butts and repeat until the post is perpendicular. Then wrap over the thread to secure. At this time you could wrap around the base of the post in preparation for the hackle about 1/8" up.

I use a dubbing loop spinner even with dry flies. Of course it isn't necessary for dries but it's great for nymphs. Dub the body to the post (to keep the wing flat). I then take my spinner which still has 1/2" of dubbing and swing it out of the way and tie on the turkey flat to the body.

Proper preparation of the turkey is a must. Using Dave's Flexament, I put a small amount with my fingers on the tail feather. Separate about 1/8" to 3/16" and cut it out. You want to use the wing away from the butts for more flexibility. The length you are going to tie in will end up about the hook gap distance back from the bend and will be 'V' shaped or rounded if you wish. When tied in it will fold over and cover about 1/2 of the size of the body. Dub color: dark in the early season (a green egg sac is a nice addition). Then I tie in a grizzly hackle size 14. A nice thing about parachutes is that you don't need a grade A hackle for a good fly. Then dub behind the post and one turn in front. Let spinner hang with bobbin and wrap 3 or 4 turns of hackle. Tie hackle off and trim. Dub to the eye. Tie down, trim dubbing loop and whip finish.



Stoneflies and the EHSF

Stoneflies, in the world of taxonomy, are the order of insects known as Plecoptera, a Greek-derived word meaning folded (*pleco*) wing (*ptera*). As a youthful wannabe fly fisher, the first three books I read were Ray Bergman's *Trout*, Art Flick's *Streamside Guide*, and Ernest Schwiebert's *Matching the Hatch*. These were my Bibles, and these three works unlocked numerous trout secrets for me. However, back in the 1960s, stoneflies didn't seem to get much press among anglers. Flick set aside three pages, plus a couple more sentences on the topic, Schwiebert six pages of ink.

It was actually Schwiebert who ignited my interest in stoneflies. Schwiebert's description that stonefly nymphs are found in purest, coldest, swift waters, with two long tails and twin wing cases, while adults fly have folded wings and fly like minihelicopters, really fascinated me. Yet years passed before other books offered much more on this subject.

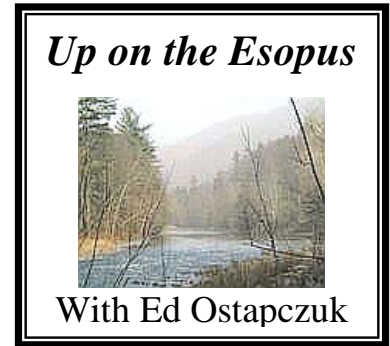
Unintentionally, perhaps, I may have skipped a few authors who produced material on the matter, but fast-forward to 1980 and *Stoneflies*, by Carl Richards, Doug Swisher, and Fred Arbona, Jr., the first book dedicated to Plecoptera. Shortly after, Eric Leiser and Robert H. Boyle produced *Stoneflies for the Angler*. Before these two books, I could have looped back to Ernest Schwiebert, because his 1973 edition of *Nymphs* expanded the subject of stoneflies to a couple lengthy chapters, but covered only their immature phase. Then, in 2007, he dedicated a fair portion of the second volume of *Nymphs* to stoneflies.

But what about those of us who are F. M. Halford types, anglers who like to offer trout a dry fly? Based upon half a century of wandering the Charmed Circle waters in the Catskills, I have found stoneflies to be an important source of trout food. They are more than a Western phenomenon for trout anglers. On the Esopus Creek, from the late summer into the early fall, the large, dried-up shucks of *Paragnetina immarginata*, commonly called the Beautiful Stonefly, are often seen. When they are about, a size 14 Yellow Stimulator or a size 12 Tulle Seducer will often produce results. In the absence of either of these patterns, often a large Ausable Wulff will work just as well.

For summer headwater streams, where wild brook trout and some browns frequently abound, Little Yellow Sallies and Little Lime Sallies are often the most important hatch. In fact, Leiser and Boyle noted, "The nymph of *Isoperla bilineata* is very important for anglers over much of North America." Well if the nymphs are important, they have to hatch into dry-fly life forms. Often, my best summer dry-fly fishing is with a Yellow Sally pattern or with a size 16 Lime Trude for Little Lime Sallies.

In the June 2012 issue of the *Gazette*, I wrote about the Fluttering Caddis and Leonard M. Wright, Jr., noting that a size 14 Ginger Mink-Tail Caddis is a great imitation for Little Yellow Sallies. Since then, I've substituted my own pattern, which I find easier to tie and more durable to fish. I call it the Elk Hair Stonefly, or EHSF.

I'm not one for designing my own fly creations, but to this simple pattern I lay claim. It was spawned by combining the best elements of a few well-known fly patterns, including Craig Mathews's X-Caddis, a real favorite of mine, which has a bit of Len Wright in mind; the Mormon Girl, a wet fly; and, for just a hint of the Adirondack legend, Fran Betters, hot orange thread. Where Little Yellow Sallies abound, this pattern will catch wild trout, plus, it's easy to tie and fun to fish.



Elk Hair Stone Fly (EHSF)

Thread: Hot orange, à la Fran Betters

Hook: Mustad 94840, size 14 to 16

Tag: Red floss—an egg sack
borrowed from the Mormon Girl

Body: Yellow LaFontaine touch dub

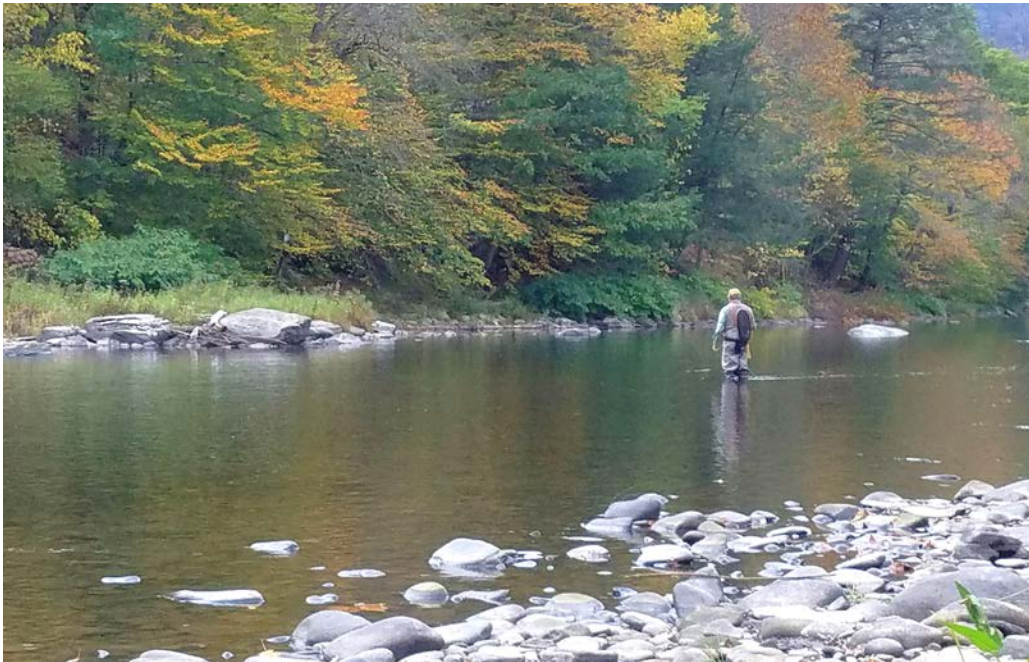
Wing: Stacked blonde elk hair,
tied downwing style and clipped at the eye



CJ's Flies
With "Catskill John" Bonasera

The Water, the Mountains, and the Air

My sixteenth Catskill trout season is almost over—sixteen years hiking through woods and fields, walking the banks, wading in water low and high, and when I hit it right, in perfect flows. After sixteen years, I've learned a lot about trout and the environments they live in, but mostly, I've learned how much I still need to learn. I have heard it said that fly tying is a school from which you never graduate, but trout fishing is a school in which it's even harder to get a complete education.



I do a lot of thinking about fishing. In fact, I don't believe that more than five minutes pass during my daily rituals when I haven't contemplated an event that occurred during the season. It may have been a big fish that came unglued and what I could have done to prevent it, or a perfect, unreachable lie where that you just know a good fish lived, but you couldn't get a drift to him. I think about the year's conditions and the effects it may have had on the health of the fish and the streams. I ponder gear selection and leaders, flies, and what my next pair of waders will be. Now that the end of

the season is here, my vision widens, because I have the time to think, as opposed to simply getting ready for the weekend.

When I started., sixteen years ago, I made a beeline to the popular water on every trip. Bigger water was the thing, and the history that flowed through those streams was what attracted me to them. I struggled the first two years, going fishless my first year and getting my first Catskill trout the second. I fished wet flies back then, enthusiastically swinging them downstream in anticipation of a strike that never came. Then I fished dry flies, then streamers, and finally nymphs. With each successive year, my angling arsenal and ability slowly improved, and the trout gradually came in more often. I was learning.

For me, it's become an all-consuming passion—so much to know—but I still remember how much fun it was in the earliest years, when I had a handful of flies, a cheap rod and reel, no net, and everything was so new. For me, ignorance truly was bliss, for I knew not the disappointment of the giant trout that got off, the impossible lie I couldn't drift a fly through, or the effects of low and high water on the trout. I knew only the water I stood in, the mountains that surrounded me, and the Catskill air I breathed.

The Fly That Saves the Day: The Light Cahill

By Dave Plummer

A classic Catskill dry fly originated by Dan Cahill over 100 years ago. A basic imitation of a Pale Morning Dun or a Pale Evening Dun, the Light Cahill fly is a standard that ranks right up there with the Adams. An assortment in all sizes is a must in every fly box.

— Orvis

Art Flick, of Westkill, N.Y., in his famous little *Streamside Guide to Naturals and Their Imitations*, said of the Light Cahill, "To this date I have never met a fisherman who had fished any stream where trout could not be taken on this fly. It is doubtful if any fly compares with it in popularity, especially in the East." The Cahill regular, or Dark Cahill as it is most often tied, was probably the fly that Dan originally created. It was a "particularly killing fly" for brook trout according to Bergman.

— Gerald Wolfe, "Cahills: The Rest of the Story," Fly Angles Online

One evening several years ago, while fishing in the East Branch of the Delaware River near Downsville, I was sharing a popular pool with three guys from outside the area whom I didn't know. No one was having any luck drawing the rising brown trout to the predominant sulphur-colored flies that were on the water. I was ready to go home, so I thought to try one more fly, something I could see. I had seen only a few Pale Evening Duns, but not enough to call a real hatch. My fly box yielded a Light Cahill, which I tied on and cast, and soon I was fast to a nice trout. I heard one of the other guys say to a partner, "Did he get a take?" The partner said, "Yeah!" Then they wanted to know what I was using. How they fared after that, I don't know because, I left for home.

A few years later, I was on the West Branch with a friend in the afterglow of a pleasant, but rather fishless day. The trout were gulping little Sulphurs, but mine weren't working for me, and I couldn't see them anymore in the twilight if they had been. In desperation, I tied on a much larger Light Cahill and netted a wild seventeen-inch brown after about the third cast.

Several weeks ago, I visited a pool on the East Branch where a friend said he had seen some large fish. I found one working among others close to the bank, and he seemed to dominate that section of the pool. Off and on he would casually sip two or three flies and disappear, showing up a few minutes later in another spot. His constant movement and the fact that he was ignoring my artificial

dorothea beside the naturals that he was taking not only frustrated me, but challenged me to persevere in my pursuit of him into the dusk of the evening. At 7:30, after changing flies thirteen times, I decided to try one more fly, and if that didn't work, I would go home. I picked out the size 16 Light Cahill, and with only one cast, he was fast to the end of my line and headed for his hiding place in the bank. My tippet held as I checked his run, and after a rough tussle, he was in my net being measured at eighteen and three-quarter inches. I slipped him back into the river, and he swam away.

With the deep, hard-wired satisfaction that everyone feels in the gut when similarly affirmed of success as a hunter, I reflected that the late Larry Duckwall had quoted Harry Darbee as once saying, "When they've been ignorin' ya all day, go to sumthin' like a big ol' hair-wing." The Light Cahill isn't a hair-wing pattern, but there is still something magical about this traditional Catskill dry fly, despite all the myriad modern variations out there.

Hook: Standard dry-fly hook, size 16 to 14

Thread: Pale yellow or Light Cahill Uni-Thread

Wing: Lemon wood duck flank feather

Tail: Very light ginger (per Art Flick; Ray Bergman calls for lemon wood duck)

Body: Cream dubbing (or red fox belly fur)

Hackle: Very light ginger



Editor's Note: For a skeptical historian's treatment of the story of Dan Cahill's origination of the Light Cahill (and of his stocking of rainbow trout in Callicoon Creek in the Delaware River system, though not of the fly's efficacy), see "The Myth of Dan Cahill," by Ed Van Put, in the March 2017 issue of the Gazette.

Book Review

Tying and Fishing Deer Hair Flies: 50 Patterns for Trout, Bass, and Other Species

By Tim Jacobs. Published by Stackpole Books; \$34.95 softbound.

Americans like to point with pride to the things that the United States has provided to the world that are uniquely American—jazz, baseball . . . monster truck racing. Somewhere on that list is the spun deer hair fishing fly. It is the product of an inquiring spirit that asks, "I wonder what would happen if. . . ." Several explosions, duds, or crashes of Rube Goldberg devices later, what results is the electric light, or the airplane . . . or the Deer Hair Frog.

To experiment with deer hair at the tying vise, a much less risky thing than the classic American "Hold my beer—watch this," you obviously need access to deer hair, something Americans have always enjoyed, while Brits have not, since deer hunting has been an upper-class preserve there. While classic American dry flies evolved from British patterns, adapted by the likes of Theodore Gordon and Reuben Cross, the deer hair fly is wholly a product of American ingenuity. Constructing fishing flies using deer was a natural outcome for American tyers who used local materials pragmatically to imitate what fish eat. That included developing new trout flies, but stretching back to the writings of the avuncular Thaddeus Norris after the Civil War, such innovation included bass flies and flies for other species, as well, since the trout snobbery of the British chalk streams hadn't taken hold in democratic America — yet. As Tim Jacobs points out in the introduction to *Tying and Fishing Deer Hair Flies*, the use of that material actually is American in another way, as well. "One of the first documented uses of deer hair was from James Henshall in his *Book of Black Bass* (1881). He described the Native Americans' use of deer hair 'bobs' for fishing for largemouth bass in the Southeast."

Jacobs adds: "Bucktail became a staple for the streamer patterns that were developed in Maine during the late 19th century. Don Gapen's Muddler Minnow and Joe Messinger's Bucktail Frog are both early examples of flaring deer hair to create spun deer hair heads." More recently, Dave Whitlock has contributed influential patterns to the development of the deer hair fly, and Jacobs affords him the recognition he increasingly is receiving as a major influence on American fly tying.

That brings us to Tim Jacobs himself and this book. Jacobs, who began fly fishing and tying deer-hair flies in Michigan and who now fishes, guides, and ties in Colorado, has been working with these materials for thirty years and offers what is the current state of the art on the subject. After a chapter on tools and materials, he covers the full range of flies tied with deer hair, from trout flies, to bass flies, to honking big flies for pike and muskellunge. Apart from Robert's Drake, a hair-wing dun pattern developed in Michigan in the 1950s and 1960s that features a bound-down deer hair body, many of the trout flies are familiar patterns, including the Humpy, Sparkle Dun, Deer Hair Ant, and Black-Nose Dace, although there also are treatments of modern bucktail streamers, including a Fish-Mask Bucktail (an updated Joe Brooks Blonde) and a discussion of building really large bucktails for pike and muskies.

But the heart of the book, and the real interest for any fly tyer, are the chapters on spinning deer hair and the flies, ranging from trout patterns to humongous articulated muskie flies, that can be constructed in that way. Like fly casting, spinning deer hair involves physical skills—touch—that can be acquired only by doing it, and Jacobs make it clear that practice is necessary to get it right, but he provides a comprehensive introduction to the materials and tools necessary to make it happen.

The effects that can be achieved with tightly packed spun deer hair are stunning, and Jacobs clearly explains how to achieve them. In the hands of an pointillist artist such as Pat Cohen (check out his creations on the Web), these flies can be so tightly packed that they can seem to be made of a single substance—wood or plastic—not myriad little points of hair. To the relief of those of us whose flies still appear to be constructed of spun deer hair, though, Jacobs declares that “density has a function but is also a personal preference.”

The chapter “Spun Deer Hair Flies for Trout” rounds up some of the usual suspects: Dave's Hopper, the Muddler Minnow, and the Irresistible (no Rat-Faced McDougall), and those in the “Compendium” that accompanies this chapter (every chapter has one) are all well known. The meat of the book is in the chapters that follow: “Topwater Deer Hair Flies,” “Waking Deer Hair Flies,” “Diving Deer Hair Flies,” and “Deer Hair Flies for Pike and Muskie.” The first of these lays out the basic approach, implementing the lessons in the chapter “Techniques for Spinning and Flaring Deer Hair,” and helpful sidebars (another feature throughout) explain such topics as bass-bug proportions and adding rubber legs to flies that, scarily, will eventually be trimmed using a double-edged razor blade.

Trimming itself is a big part of constructing these flies and a prime way in which you can screw up an otherwise well-constructed fly. Jacobs has an interesting technique for dealing with the rear hackle collar on bass bugs, installed before the hair is stacked, spun, and trimmed—he just ties it down, then releases it when the trimming is done. And the chapter on big pike and muskie flies includes an innovative use of body tubing to construct a disc to flare the materials at the rear of the fly, something that other tyers of big flies will appreciate. But the real value of the book lies in its careful and clear instructions for spinning and stacking deer hair to create floating and diving flies for big fish.

The late Pete Parker used to demonstrate spinning and stacking deer hair in the Fly-Tying Theatre at West Coast's the International Sportsmen's Exhibition shows by tying imitations of helicopters—Bells, mostly, sometimes Sikorskys—complete with rotors and pontoons. It was an ingenious approach to teaching the techniques involved. You won't laugh as much, reading *Tying and Fishing Deer Hair Flies*, as we did at those presentations, but with practice, someday you, too, like Pete and many others before him, may find yourself sitting at your vise, thinking, “I wonder what would happen if. . . .”

—Bud Bynack



This newsletter depends on all guild members for its content. Items from nonmembers are welcome at the editor's discretion. Without the articles, information, for-sale or want ads, cartoons, newsworthy information, and whatever else is interesting and fun that members submit, this newsletter simply becomes a meeting announcement. Send submissions to Bud Bynack, budbynack@verizon.net or 69 Bronxville Road, Apt. 4G, Bronxville, NY 10708, (914) 961-3521.



The Arts of the Angler Show

Saturday, November 10, 2018

10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

Catskill Fly Fishing Center & Museum in Livingston Manor, NY

General Admission \$5.00

Food available for separate purchase



Get together with friends, fellow tyers, and vendors at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum's home on the Willowemoc, talk about fishing, and help chart the future of Arts of the Angler Show.



The 28th Anniversary International Fly Tying Symposium



November 17 and 18, 2018

**The Sheraton Parsippany Hotel,
Parsippany, NJ**

SATURDAY: 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

SUNDAY: 9:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

ADULTS: \$15.00 SATURDAY

\$12.00 SUNDAY

WEEKEND PASS: \$22.00

CHILDREN UNDER 16: FREE

Now located at the intersection of Interstate 80 and Interstate 287, with free parking, the International Fly Tying Symposium offers plenty of seminars, classes, and exciting fly tyers, including overseas artists demonstrating and lecturing. At last count, eight countries are represented besides more than eighty tyers from the United States. There will be more than 150 linear feet of materials, books, and DVDs on display and for sale, including what might be the largest selection of fly-tying materials ever assembled in one exhibit hall.

For more information, go to: <http://www.internationalflytyingsymposium.com>.

