



The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild GAZETTE



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The May 2017 meeting of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild will be held on Saturday, May 20, at 1:00 P.M. in the Rod Makers' Workshop below the Wulff Gallery at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum, 1031 Old Route 17, Livingston Manor, NY. Gary Moleon will be demonstrating and discussing how to tie leaders for the Catskill streams.

The 2017 Fly Tyers Rendezvous

The annual Fly Tyers Rendezvous, sponsored by the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild, brought visitors to the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum on the Saturday after the museum's Opening Day celebration. Tyers demonstrated special patterns and discussed tying history and techniques with attendees, the silent auction brought over \$500 to the guild's Education Fund, and both visitors and tyers enjoyed meeting and greeting old and new friends.



Many thanks to John Kavanaugh for chairing the event, Nicole March for making it run smoothly, and to all the other guild members who helped out during setup, cleanup, and during the day.

Anglers Market

The fourth annual Anglers Market will be held on Saturday, May 27, 2017 from 10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. at the Community Hall near the firehouse in Roscoe NY. Come and see the many tables of fishing and outdoor goodies. We may have what you are looking for! Refreshments will be available.

Fly-Tying and Fly-Fishing Shows Moving

The Somerset, NJ, venue that has hosted The Fly Fishing Show and the International Fly Tying Symposium has been sold. The International Fly Tying Symposium, to be held on November 11 and 12, 2017, is moving to the ballroom of the Marriott Hotel in Lancaster, PA, and the Fly Fishing Show, to be held on January 26, 27, and 28, 2018, is moving to the New Jersey Convention and Expo Center in Edison, NJ.

Tenkara Day

There will be a free presentation by Misako Ishimura on the history of Japanese fly fishing , including Tenkara rods, on Saturday, May 20, beginning at 10:00 A.M., in the Wulff Gallery at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum. Mr. Miyoshi Shiozawa had planned on giving the presentation, but a personal issue has prevented his coming to the United States for the event. Instead, he will work with Misako to prepare her talk. There also will be question-and-answer session at the end of the presentation with Mr. Shiozawa participating live via speaker phone.

Beginning at 1:00 P.M., Chris Stewart will demonstrate tenkara fly tying in the museum, and Misako Ishimura will present a tenkara casting workshop for all levels of casters on the lawn near the pond. Vendors of tenkara rods, lines, colored tippets, and tenkara fly-tying materials will participate in the event, as well. There also will be a sandwich lunch available

When Dr. Hisao Ishigaki hosted the first tenkara workshop at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum, on the third Saturday in May 2009, a Google search for “tenkara” in English would have yielded no results. Things certainly have changed, and now the third Saturday in May should be “Tenkara Day.” At least five major tenkara events are planned to happen internationally.



The Opener

The most important day of the year recently passed. It wasn't my anniversary, birthday, or other trivial date that some deem noteworthy or special—it was Opening Day of the New York State trout season. It's a day that I reflect on

even months later, even when the weather is warm and mayflies are in the air. It holds my thoughts at work, at play, or lying in bed at night. It's the unlocking of the door to angling in the Catskills and the beginning of another year of fishing, exploring water, and seeing friends. The opening day of trout season is my favorite day of the year.

The 2017 opener was extra special, however. For the first time in eleven years, it landed squarely on a Saturday, a rare occurrence indeed. This may not be something special if you reside a few blocks from Junction Pool or your home is just downstream from the second angler pull-off on the upper Willow, but for a working man from out of town like me, it's all-important.

The weather during this year's opening weekend was much like every April First, regardless of what day it lands on. This is something that rarely deviates. It was cold, with snow flurries and stream water temperatures in the mid to high thirties, ice on the rivers' edges, and snow on the banks. Trout don't move very much in these conditions. and they are not aware of season openers.

A big fly is what I use in these conditions: a stonefly nymph, size 6, with a woven body, heavy with lead and brass, and with long rubber legs for movement in hopes of provoking a strike from a lethargic fish. This is my fly of choice for raking the bottom of frigid streambeds where a trout doesn't look for your fly—your fly has to find him.

To complicate the fishing on Opening Day, unseasonably warm temperatures in late March had melted most of the twenty-plus inches of snow in the mountains. The creeks were high and fast, not terribly discolored, but by no means clear. I traveled upstream to a rarely fished place that I hoped would be fresh and untouched, a place where I could drift my first fly of the year, and it would be the first fly of the year to drift through there.

The run is small, but deep. Two large rocks deeply embedded in the streambed funnel white water into the head of the pool where it deepens rapidly. The far bank is clifflike and heavily eroded as time and gravity slowly gain the advantage against root and rock. The fishable bank boasts a rock wall taller than my five-foot ten-inch height and makes for a picturesque background when viewed from the tail of the pool. It is here I lob the ungodly creation of floss, bead, and rubber into the white water on a slack leader, feel it hit bottom, and tighten to lead it through the depths. I repeat this again and again, varying distances and angles in hopes of covering completely the bottom I cannot see, but can feel. The leader passes my

position, and I feel a change, an unnatural slowing of the drift that is neither rock nor branch, but trout. I lift, feel the surge, and in near disbelief I have hooked my first fish of the year, on the opener!

The trout is big, not enormous, but I have gotten pretty good at guessing length to within an inch just by the bend in the rod. My initial thought is nineteen inches . . . maybe twenty. He rolls, and I feel leader grating against rock. He stays deep, and I get better footing farther downstream to stay behind him. I am able to move him into the fastest part of the stream, hold him there, and hope this wears on him enough to tire him out. He darts across, and for the first time I see him, bright yellow belly, thick and long, and my knees get weak.

I don't really recall what transpired in the next ten seconds or so. I know I was down on one knee, net extended toward the trout, his head, softball sized, just below the surface. I could clearly see the fly in his left upper jaw. Seven feet away . . . six feet—I reach a little farther with the net, the rod is completely behind me, and just as if he had exhaled it, the hook comes out, and he's off. He hung there in the slack water for just a moment, broadside, and I could clearly see his size . . . twenty inches, at least . . . and then he was gone.

I lose plenty of fish for various reasons, but this one hurt. No broken tippet, no bent hook, and no apparent reason why. Just a fish that was almost in, almost captured on camera, almost something to show my friends and maybe brag a little about.

It's the New York State opener, and I always think about it.

Looking Back Upstream



Painter Hats **By Chuck Coronato**

The old photographs were like buried treasure. My mother would carry them to the kitchen table in a large cardboard container, lift the lid, which was torn and flattened at the corners, and lovingly tell stories of people captured in time by the snapshots. I have no idea what ever happened to that plain white box, which bulged at its sides with a lifetime of memories, but I can still see in my mind's eye a favorite photograph. In that picture, the mischievous eight-year-old boy with thick, Coke-bottle eyeglasses and unlit cigarette dangling from his lips is me, and the middle-aged guy with a stern expression applying the end of a paintbrush to the kid's face is my father. I'd just swiped a cigarette from his ever-present Kent-brand pack of smokes, and he's mock threatening to paint my face if I don't put it back. We're both wearing hats—painter hats—and they say "Tungol" on them. Tungol's paint store was a local place, and when you purchased the gallons of paint that you needed for a job, you also got hats that kept splatters out of your hair. Those hats, flecked with multicolored spots of stray paint, were always part of the scene when my dad was working one of his many projects, to the point where I thought head coverings came in only two varieties—a Yankees cap or a Tungol's hat.

In my young eyes, my father could do anything, so when I asked him to take me fishing, I wasn't surprised that he seemed to know his way around a rod, reel, and how to make little dough balls of bait from a loaf of white bread. After he'd put in another full day of work, we walked more than a mile to our fishing spot. Picture the opening to *The Andy Griffith Show*, where a father and son are walking down a wooded dirt road in the country, heading to the local fishing hole. The difference was that we were walking concrete sidewalks and city streets to the heavily polluted Passaic River. The setting wasn't exactly bucolic, but it didn't matter, because we were together and going fishing. I couldn't fling my bread bait more than ten feet with the clunky baitcasting setup, but my father assured me that the big ones would be close to the bank. Despite his words, there were no big fish close to that bank. In fact, I didn't catch anything or even get a nibble. But that evening, I was introduced to the lifelong habit of staring into flowing water with anticipation. Before walking home, we paused to look at an old submarine that was on display in a park that's adjacent to the school where I've now been teaching for

more than thirty-three years. A very large slice of my life has taken place within two hundred yards of the spot where my father first took me fishing.

What is it about fathers and sons? The man who could do anything in my childhood years seemed clueless when I reached the late teens. I was sure that I had all of the answers in life, while he had none. If I refused to eat a piece of food that fell on the ground, he would say, “You have to eat a pound of dirt before you die,” and I’d sarcastically say, “well OK, *then I’m just not going to eat a pound of dirt!*” Just about the time that I was out of school and learned how difficult it was to earn a living on my own, this man who knew absolutely nothing for several years started resembling a genius. I wondered how my father suddenly got so smart. As years went by, the face I saw staring back at me in the mirror started looking more like the guy in the old picture that was holding the paintbrush.

My father eventually retired, and I’d developed a passion for fishing that started from that one evening of bread dunking so many years before. We hadn’t fished since that time, and I thought it would be a great way to spend time together if I drove him to one of my favorite places and put a fly rod in his hand. I was sure that he would just love it as much as I did, but he expressed no interest and always came up with excuses not to go. No matter how badly I wanted my father to fish with me again, I eventually understood the message that it wasn’t Dad’s thing. It was just something he once did for a little boy who asked.

My father lived a fairly long life, but his health went into sharp decline shortly after my mother passed. He fought gamely throughout his lengthy period of illness, and my sister and I took pride in seeing the look of surprise on doctors’ faces when he repeatedly showed for follow-up appointments that they didn’t think he’d live to keep. On a September morning that was also the day of his wedding anniversary, dad finished his pound of dirt, and we lost him.

I was in rough condition, completely exhausted, and with a big hole in my life, but I still planned to go to work, because my father always believed in showing up and getting the job done. When my boss saw the thousand-yard stare in my eyes, she all but ordered me to go fishing instead of coming to work and being around students. I took a few days off, but it would be a couple of more weeks before I followed the fishing advice.

When I finally went fishing, it wasn’t because I was looking forward to wetting a line, but more because I just didn’t know what else to do. I was an emotional open wound and wasn’t finding pleasure in things that were normally enjoyable. I reflexively headed for a remote spot that would require a long, leisurely drive through rolling hills, past trees starting to show some autumn color. The clear stream flowed at a low level, but would probably be worth fishing in the deeper pools and behind the larger boulders of pocket-water sections. I didn’t catch anything at first, but then started making some unusual choices, selecting flies buried deep in the box and casting to spots that I routinely ignored. It was as if decisions were being made *for me*—not *by me*—and I could do no wrong. Trout sipping tiny insects in a glassy pool ignored my midge, so I put on a very large deer hair ant. They ate it up. I later presented an olive emerger to an eighteen-inch brown that was sipping, *close to the bank*, just like dad said the big ones would be. A few hikers walked by as I landed that trout, and a pleasant conversation followed. The day was unexpectedly becoming the kind of outing whose success and rhythm would be hard to repeat, with moments when my torn world seemed to be repairing itself.

When I returned to my car, a young man was parked next to me, gearing up. He was new to fly fishing and asked if I’d caught anything. During our conversation, I showed him how to add tippet to his leader using a Blood Knot—feeling pleasure once again in teaching—and gave him a few ants. Talking on, he was familiar with my school and where I grew up. When I asked how he knew about those places, he replied, “My family owned Tungol’s paint store.” There was no way that I could explain to him how much it meant to hear those words.

I’m not a very religious man. I tend to use logic and probability to explain away claims of miracles and seemingly mystical connections. But in this case, on that day, I believe my father finally decided to go fishing with me again. He was just waiting until I needed it the most.

Letters to the Editor—Browns in the Neversink

From Allan Podell, via e-mail.

The article by Ed Van Put [“The Myth of Dan Cahill,” in the March 2017 *Gazette*] was very interesting. He considers there to be a discrepancy between what E. R. Hewitt wrote and the date that the Neversink was officially stocked. However, the information used as the basis for that conclusion seems incomplete and possibly in error:

Even though Edward R. Hewitt was known as a fishing authority, innovator, and author, his writings and statements were not always correct. For example, in his book *A Trout and Salmon Fisherman for Seventy-Five Years*, he writes, “I remember trying this on the Neversink, in 1885, in some large pools below Hasbrouck. I caught two large trout which were not like any I had ever seen in this country. They weighed three and three and a half pounds respectively. When I got them back to New York I showed them to Mr. Blackford, the Fish Commissioner of that time, and he said they were brown trout, perhaps the first ever taken in the Neversink, where, he said, they had been planted by Professor Von Behr in 1879. These were my first brown trout caught in this country.”

Von Behr was the president of the Deutschen Fischerei Verein in Germany. He did not stock the Neversink with brown trout in 1879, but he did send a shipment of brown trout eggs from Germany to Fred Mather at the Cold Spring Hatchery in 1883. Some of these eggs were sent to the state hatchery at Caledonia, where they were hatched and eventually stocked into New York waters in 1886; however, the Neversink was not stocked with brown trout until March of 1887, eight years after the claims made by Hewitt.

Let’s say that the commissioner was incorrect about the date (1879) when Mr. Von Behr planted brown trout in the Neversink, but that Von Behr actually sent eggs to Mr. Mather at the Cold Spring Hatchery in 1883 and that *some* were sent to Caledonia, where they hatched and were stocked into New York waters in 1886. Further, that the Neversink was not stocked with brown trout until 1887. So, what specifically does the comment mean when Von Behr communicated, “Mr. Mather sent *some* to Caledonia”? Perhaps unbeknownst to Von Behr, Mather stocked *some* of the eggs in other waters, too? Upon reading this section of the article, I don’t see that Mr. Hewitt’s claim that he caught two nice brown trout on the Neversink is inconsistent with when the river may have been stocked. The river may have just been “officially” stocked in 1887.

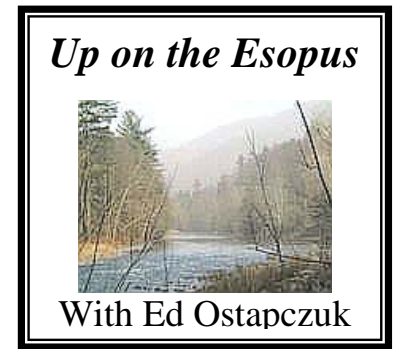
Regards,
Allan

Ed Van Put responds.

Mr. Podell’s supposition is a little confusing to me.

1. The official records of the State of New York reveal that the Neversink River was stocked with brown trout fry in March of 1887, from the hatchery at Caledonia.
2. Mr. Hewitt’s recollection that Von Behr planted brown trout in the Neversink is incorrect. Von Behr did not plant eggs in the Neversink or in any other American river; he resided in Germany, and as president of the Deutschen Fischerei Verein, he would not perform such a task.
3. Von Behr did not state that that “some of the eggs were sent to Caledonia where they were hatched and were stocked into New York waters in 1886”—I said it, based on my research.
4. Mather did not send eggs to streams and rivers in upstate New York.
5. There is no way of proving if the river was “unofficially stocked” prior to 1887. However, Mr. Hewitt claimed to have caught two brown trout of 3 and 3-1/2 pounds in 1885. A trout of this size would be either three or four years old. If they were three years old, these fish would have had to have been stocked in 1882, and if four years old, in 1881—Von Behr did not send brown trout eggs to the United States until 1883.

Ed Sens, the Forgotten Catskill Fly Tyer, Part 5: Personal Connections



This is the fifth and final part of a series on Ed Sens, the forgotten Catskill fly tyer. Initially, Sens was introduced to *Gazette* readers based upon a search of angling literature and the Internet. Several of his fly patterns were discussed. Then time lapsed before good fortune provided readers with significant first-hand information from Sens's family members. We learned the location of the Sens Neversink family farm and why this touted trout fisher disappeared from the Catskill scene, turning his attention to stripers and saltwater angling. We also were privy to biographical information based upon first-hand exchanges between Ed Sens and A. J. McClane. In this final article, readers will hear directly from people who personally knew Edmund William Sens, a man of many talents and loved by those who knew him best.

First is Ed Sens's granddaughter, Kim Borghardt, who offered information and introduced me to other family members. Kim wrote that when she was born, "Ed had pretty much given up fly fishing, though he had a 'back room' in the apartment where he kept his fly-tying equipment and would occasionally show me how." She went on to add that he was "very meticulous about his flies," and she admired "the dedication and patience he took in everything he did." Kim added that she had "plenty of opportunity to go fishing with him at all hours of the day and night, despite Grandma's insistence that it wasn't right for girls to come home stinking of fish." Not surprising was this comment: when they were growing up, "he instilled in his children and grandchildren a love of fishing." Sens was a steadfast teacher. But perhaps her most powerful and impressive comment about Sens was: "He was a great man, someone who understood that the joy of living is more important than making money." She also noted that her grandfather was very involved in working for legislation to protect the striped bass he came to love. Clearly Sens was an individual who embraced life.

Next is Ken Hutton, Kim's brother and Ed Sens's grandson. Ken wrote that "granddad was an exceptional man and full of wisdom. A serious angler indeed, who thought through every step and investigated his craft with passion." He added, "I remember Granddad taking me out on the Neversink as a kid and wading chest deep in the cold running waters. He said it was the only way to reach the trout and instructed me how to cast up against the flow of the river and allow the fly to sweep downstream and be taken in the swift eddy currents." Ken also confirmed that Sens "did indeed stop fly fishing to concentrate on saltwater striped bass fishing."

Kim's and Ken's recollections were shared by Ray Ovington in *The Trout and the Fly*. Ovington remembered Sens as "my mentor, responsible for the many of the patterns featured in my various books, a meticulous German who tied to match his personality." Oddly enough, according to Ernest Schwiebert's *Nymphs, Volume 1*, the Sens-Ovington connection was a chance meeting at the 1946 sportsmen's exposition. Ernest St. Clair, who collected nymphs with Sens and also tied for Jim Deren, persuaded Sens to set up aquariums with nymph specimens that caught the attention of Ovington, an outdoor writer.

And then there's Bob Hutton, Ed Sens's son-in-law, who has been a vital source of information about Sens. Hutton trout fished and chased stripers with Sens, becoming an accomplished saltwater angler himself. Bob said Sens was "the first fly fisherman I ever fished with." He singled out Sens's "attention to fine detail." He was a "perfectionist" and an excellent angler in both fresh and salt water. Hutton fondly added, "He was my fishing buddy, father figure, and mentor." Hutton confirmed that after Pop Sens sold the Neversink farm, it "became a hassle" for Sens to fish the Catskills, although Ed would continue to talk trout fishing at the drop of a hat—it was inbred with him. Both Sens and Hutton would occasionally fish the Neversink after the farm's sale, though Sens gave up trout around 1951. Bob disclosed that while it was often suggested Sens write a book on his nymph patterns and research, Sens did not want to invest the necessary time to complete such an undertaking. Hutton also revealed that Sens fished the Miramichi for Atlantic salmon and was quite the bamboo rod builder, plus the

owner of several Leonards and a Hiram Hawes cane rod that he kept long after he stopped fly fishing for trout.

And finally Roger Menard, a Catskill Fly Tyers Guild member and author of *My Side of the River*, met Sens through a mutual friend, Harry Schadt. He writes about their interaction on page 114 of his wonderful book and also offered the following. “We had good conversation on several occasions about fly tying and Catskill fishing, particularly the stretch of water that Ed’s father owned on the Neversink.” Roger added, “Because Ed was such a skilled fly tyer in imitating natural insects and because of his ability to choose just the right fly-tying materials in so doing,” it “makes him an important contributor to the ‘Golden Age’ of the Catskills. I believe that his contributions should be recognized and preserved with the Catskill angling history and his name should be included in the long list of Catskill fly tyers.” After the Sens family farm was sold, Roger had the opportunity to sample their former waters, and he gave me the wet fly in the photograph here, tied by Ed Sens, in his memory—something I will forever cherish.



While Edmund William Sens may be the forgotten Catskill fly tyer, it is my hope that the five *Gazette* articles have provided readers a sense of his important and lasting contributions to Catskill fly fishing in general and to the development of trout patterns, in particular. In his day, Sens was recognized by peers as a premier trout fisher and tyer, a prodigy at nymph fishing, an accomplished night fisher, and clearly ahead of his time. And though he eventually stopped trout fishing to become an equally talented striped bass angler, his love of this pastime never diminished.

I would be sorely remiss if I did not, one last time, acknowledge the individuals who helped me and provided information for the Ed Sens articles. They are Wade Burkhart and Roger Menard—both Catskill Fly Tyers Guild members—Pat Wellington of the Neversink Association, Carol Smythe of the Time and The Valleys Museum, Kim Borghardt, Ken Hutton, and Bob Hutton. Thank you one and all.




Obituary: Phil Chase

Philip Donovan Chase, eighty-five, of Port Jervis, NY, died Tuesday, May 9, 2017. He was born July 31, 1931, in Port Jervis, NY. His father was a Port Jervis high school science teacher and renowned athletic coach, and his influence inspired Phil to win high school athletic recognition in football, baseball, and basketball. He earned a bachelor's degree from Cornell, graduating with honors in 1954. After several years of ROTC commissioned service for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, he returned with his family to the Port Jervis area, starting his teaching career at Warwick, NY, for two years before transitioning to the Port Jervis school district for twenty-nine years, where he chaired the science department, taught high school sciences, and coached many successful athletic teams. Phil was also an accomplished golfer, winning numerous tournaments, including the New York State senior championship.

An avid outdoorsman, Phil Chase enjoyed fly fishing and hunting and was an active member of many fishing and hunting organizations. He became a champion of environmental causes, particularly battling to protect the river systems of the Catskills for future generations. Starting in 1965, teaming with his wife, Merle, Phil wrote an outdoors column for the Middletown *Times Herald Record* for thirteen years. This served as a launching pad for disseminating information about many conservation causes, including battling against the pumped storage generating plant at Storm King Mountain, which would have devastated local fish populations, and successfully helping to stop the Tocks Island Dam, allowing the Delaware River to remain free flowing. For a time, Phil worked directly with engineers from the New York Department of Environmental Conservation and New York City's Department of Environmental Protection to increase New York City's reservoir releases, allowing healthier Catskill river flows. He developed a Water Watcher's program that tested area water systems for pollution levels, encouraging his high school students to participate and become enthusiastic environmentalists, ultimately resulting in the preservation of the health of the Neversink River and other area waterways. As an intervener with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Phil pushed for Orange and Rockland Utilities reservoir releases that gave new life to the Mongaup River. He also served as the local Deerpark representative for the Upper Delaware Council, which is in charge of seventy-five miles of the Delaware River, and helped advise a number of organizations involved in water management of the Delaware and Neversink Rivers. Over the years, he received numerous awards for his conservation efforts, and his fly-fishing and river knowledge developed to such an extent that he was chosen to guide Jimmy and Rosalyn Carter during a fly-fishing trip on the Delaware.

In lieu of flowers, those who wish to may make donations to the Port Jervis Educational Foundation, Port Jervis Wrestler College Scholarship Fund, the PJ/DV HS Golf Alumni Tournament Scholarship Fund, G.A.I.T at P.O. Box 69, Milford, PA 18337, or any local community organization of their choice.



 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.