



The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild GAZETTE



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The September 2016 meeting of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild will be a meet-and-greet at the **Partridge Fly Tying Days** event, sponsored by the Dette Fly Shop, held on Saturday, September 17, from 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum's Wulff Gallery, 1031 Old Route 17, Livingston Manor, NY. The day celebrates the art of fly tying, and the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild will have a prominent presence.

Stop by the guild table and say hello, then visit the many guild members who also will be there, tying on their own. And look for a talk on the Catskill tradition given by a guild member during the events of the day.

The Annual Catskill Fly Tyers Guild Picnic

The 2016 Catskill Fly Tyers Guild Picnic, held on August 20, 2016 at the Elsie and Harry Dare and Matthew Vinciguerra Memorial Pavilion at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum, was attended by thirteen members and two guests. As always, the food was plentiful, interesting, and very good, and the camaraderie was enjoyable.

The annual casting "competition" produced much hilarity, as usual, and, since someone must win, these were the winners: Accuracy at thirty, forty, and fifty feet—first place, the casting commissioner himself, Gary Sweet; second place, Frank Payne; third place, Bill Leuszler. Casting through a vertical hoop at thirty feet—winner, Elmer Hopper; runner-up, Chuck Williams.

Mark the third Saturday in August on your 2017 calendar and come join us at this laid-back event on a lazy summer's day.



President Dave Brandt welcomes picnic guests.



Kibitzing at the casting "competition."

Looking Back Upstream



Angler's Cove: Crossroads of New York City's Fly-Fishing Culture

As a young man, guild member Merrill "Doc" Katz was lucky enough to find himself working at a fly shop in Manhattan—Angler's Cove—frequented by most of the major figures in East Coast fly fishing and angling literature. In an ongoing series of conversations, I've asked him to recall what the angling scene was like in New York in the mid-twentieth century and some of the people he encountered at the Cove. Here, in the final installment of this series, he discusses the closing of this landmark fly shop.

Sunset at Angler's Cove

Bud: We've discussed many of the patrons who came to Angler's Cove while you worked there, but we've never explained what happened to the shop and its proprietors.

Merrill: Well, to understand that, we need to talk more about Bob and Glad Zwirz. They operated Angler's Cove on dual fronts. Glad managed the store and the retail end of the business, and Bob pursued his career as an outdoor writer and photographer. Glad was an attractive blonde and at one time was a dance instructor for Arthur Murray Studios. She had a warm and outgoing personality that was well suited to operating a retail business. She also was a knowledgeable angler with a diverse understanding of fishing equipment and an expansive grasp of fly tying and tying materials. Glad was warm and personable and well liked by the Cove's clientele. Bob, on the other hand, wrote for numerous outdoor publications and used these platforms to publicize the Cove, its products, and the people who worked there.

So there was a lot more going on for them besides Angler's Cove. Bob wrote numerous articles for a publication called *Saltwater Sportsman*, which covered saltwater fishing opportunities at local, national, and international destinations. He authored a regular column for *Sportfishing* called "The Long Rod," promoting recent developments in fly-fishing tackle and angling techniques. He also published a fishing annual and a fishing and boating annual, which explored numerous angling methods and destinations, along with articles and stories about people he met along the way. When one considers Zwirz's commitment to travel, writing, and publication, it is easy to understand why his appearances at the Cove were rare. And as time went by, the Cove began to show that division of attention.

To say that Bob fished widely would be an understatement. Bob was a member of the Eden Woods Rod and Gun Club. It counted Larry Koller among its members. It was located on the headwaters of the Neversink, and it had a large tract of land and a small membership. It was delightful trout water, and I was privileged to have fished it on several occasions. He and Glad shared fishing time there, and both were fond of the Delaware's East Branch. Bob was an early pioneer of fishing in South America, angling to dorados in the Amazon basin, and he fished numerous rivers in Patagonia. He spent time fishing in the Florida Keys, the Smoky Mountains, and, when striped bass and blues were running in Long Island Sound, he took advantage of that action close to home. Bob used Connecticut's Candlewood Lake as a laboratory for field testing fishing and boating innovations. He fished Maine for landlocked salmon and smallmouth bass, and the Atlantic salmon fishing in the Maritime provinces of Canada did not escape his attention. He also fished in British Columbia and the Northwest Territories. Bob was not a fly fishing purist, either. He often had to field test equipment for lure manufacturers or tackle manufacturers. He used their equipment and promoted and evaluated their products in his writing and publications. But I know that Bob loved the fly rod and it was his preferred method of angling.

Bob Zwirz came out of the Marine Corps as a major, and many may not realize that he was a firearms expert. He was the eastern editorial director of *Gun World*, a periodical based in California—Robert Stack was the shotgun editor for this publication. Bob wrote numerous articles for *Guns and Game*, *Guns and Hunting*, *Guns and Ammo*, an occasional article for *Bow and Arrow*, and any number of articles for *The Shooters Bible*, published by Stoeger Arms. Bob was engaged in consulting work for Sturm Ruger (Ruger Arms), and John Olin (Winchester Western) and had been on retainer to Mossberg Firearms for a long period of time. In addition to his fishing, Bob was engaged in wildfowling, deer and boar hunting, and target shooting. The Cove never kept an inventory of sporting firearms, but we did have a federal firearms permit because of Bob's involvement with the recreational shooting industry. It also allowed us to fill the sporting firearms requests for some of our loyal customers.

By the late 1960s, the shop really needed an infusion of energy and money to restore it to its former prominence. Around 1968 the Zwirz's began to make a serious effort to sell the store to an individual or group who would refurbish the business and continue to provide the high quality of service that clients came to expect from Angler's Cove. Late in 1970, a chemicals salesman and a New York City lawyer agreed to purchase the business. The Zwirzs established an escrow agreement, and the purchasers agreed to refurbish the interior of the Cove and to infuse some cash to bolster an inventory that was waning.

I was never privileged to the specifics of the deal, but I know that Glad agreed to continue to help out at the store for a time and that Bob would continue to promote the business via his publications. I was asked to continue to work for the Cove as I had done in the past, and that sat well with me.

Business at the Cove moved along as normal. I worked from the fall through Christmas and into the spring—these were the busiest times of the year for New York City tackle shops. I worked as a lifeguard and assistant athletic director for the Catskills Pines Hotel in South Fallsburg during that summer. Upon returning to my full-time teaching position in the fall, I also returned to working part-time at the Cove. The business seemed to be sputtering along, and I noticed that nothing had changed. The store was still in need of a facelift and the inventory remained weak.

I continued to work through the 1971 Christmas season, and it was then that I realized that the business was in trouble. I was spending an inordinate amount of time on the phone speaking with clients. They were trying to buy products for the holiday season, and our creditors refused to fill any orders because bills were outstanding. It hurt to tell longtime clients, many of whom I came to know on a personal basis, to shop elsewhere. I contacted Bob and Glad after New Years and told them I was turning in my keys. Bob and Glad told me that the people who assumed ownership of the Cove had violated the corporate agreement that had been negotiated. The Cove was locked down in the spring and was in chapter eleven bankruptcy.

The Zwirzs filed a corporate lawsuit in the summer of 1972. That litigation, to make a long story short, was settled in favor of the Zwirzs. However, the sun had set on the small, personal fly shop that had provided a country oasis for city-bound anglers in the heart of Manhattan.

I went off to graduate school in the summer of 1972, but continued my friendship with Bob and Glad Zwirz. We spoke on the phone and corresponded by mail. When I visited my wife's family in Connecticut, I often made the drive to Ridgefield to visit. We had been friends for over twenty years, and we continued our relationship for many years beyond 1972.

I had written my usual season's greeting card and note to Glad and Bob in December of 1994, and when she finally wrote in January, she told me that Bob had passed away. I wrote a letter and sent a greeting card to Glad in December of 1996; she never received it. Her neighbors intercepted her mail and sent me a card that told me that Glad had passed away in June of 1996. Both Bob and Glad treated me very well as a friend and as an employee. I have very fond memories of those days at Angler's Cove and very special memories of the Zwirzs and the many people I met there.

Bud: Thanks, Doc, for sharing these memories of the fly-fishing scene in New York City with us all.

Mouse

By Chuck Coronato

The appearance of spotted fawns on our front lawn was a welcome sight, and it's a joy looking at those beautiful, graceful animals, even though they're surely responsible for nibbling all of our hostas to stalky nubs. But when I see these deer, I also think of Comparaduns and caddis wings. What fly tyer wouldn't? The little slice of suburbia that I call home could provide an ample supply of useful tying materials, with rabbits, squirrels, geese, ducks, and a recent comeback of wild turkeys. The chubby woodchucks that make annoying holes on the property would be perfect for Fran Betters patterns, and this year's absolute population explosion of chipmunks . . . seemingly defying any kind of Malthusian limitations . . . look like they'd be a wonderful substitute for my favorite buggy dubbing, red fox squirrel. I covet the reddish-brown fur of those chipmunks, and when one of them lethargically crawled near me in heat-wave conditions, I could have whacked it dead or ghoulishly waited for it to keel over in the baking sun . . . but instead, I poured it some cool water. I just couldn't kill one of those joyful little rodents that chirp, playfully chase each other around, and if the ones billed as "Alvin and the . . ." are to be believed, can sing in three-part harmony.

There's a slew of dead-animal bits and pieces near my tying bench, all neatly arranged in little bags hanging on wall pegs or safely sealed in tight storage bins, but at the end of the day, I'm a coward when it comes to doing the dirty work that caused the demise of these reluctant donors to the craft. I'm guessing that I've got a lot of company among fly tyers regarding the matter of how we procure the fur and feathers that are the building blocks of our artful frauds. We may have some gorgeous hen and rooster necks in our possession, with descriptive names such as dun, furnace, variant, and cree, but how many of us acquired our prized collection via the route of hatchet and stump? I have a lot of respect and admiration for the fly fishers who hunt and trap their own materials. They seem more connected to the sport in an honest way. They kill, skin, and preserve hides, while I'm left confessing to the contradictions of eating meat, wearing leather, and twisting all manner of former animals around hooks, but letting my open wallet get those things for me . . . keeping a distance from "how the sausage is made."

The manufacturers of the faux leather sold under the name Naugahyde understood the public's desire to keep its hands clean and conscience clear when they launched a 1960s ad campaign that claimed that its product came from a mythic animal called the Nauga, which *shed its hide* to provide the seat covering that our skin sticks to in the booths of diners. Perhaps they didn't provide a covering with the luxury status of real leather, but they could reframe the product and appeal to a sense of ethical animal treatment, even among people who wouldn't even harm a mouse.

I caught a glimpse of the mouse from the corner of my eye as it scampered from underneath the kitchen stove. I've never had a mouse in the house before (so I naively believe), and although I wasn't about to start accepting unwanted boarders, I wanted to handle the situation humanely. The head of the science department in my school captured a feeder mouse that some students had bought from a pet shop and had released in the building as a prank. That mouse was given the royal treatment and became a valued pet. It was well fed, given much attention, and even slept like a prince on bedding of shredded purple paper, while just a few feet away, the students were carefully reassembling the skeletal remains of other mice that they extracted from autoclaved owl pellets. That's the way the dice roll for mice. Some are born to be fed to pet snakes, others get snuffed out by a silently flying owl, and every once in awhile a mouse gets to live out its days in the lap of luxury.

Inspired by the rags-to-riches story of the school mouse, I decided to capture my house mouse alive and bring it to school to replace the princely mouse, which had passed on. The task of capture was much trickier than I imagined.

All sorts of contraptions are sold as live traps, and the internet is full of DIY suggestions for building your own, but I went with a pretty nifty-looking device that appealed to my fondness for Rube Goldberg machines, employing multiple tiny chambers through which the mouse seeks the bait and steps on a ramp that allows passage, which then springs back to block its exit. This may sound more

complicated than necessary, but if we wanted simple, we'd be fishing with worms instead of fly fishing.

It soon became apparent that the mouse did not share my delight with this apparatus, and night after night, it failed to produce an occupant, so I placed a very realistic deer-hair mouse pattern on top of the trap as a decoy. This failed miserably, as well, because it turns out that mice are not as gregarious as we are led to believe by cartoons. This was a tough blow, because my faith in cartoons is absolute. Cartoons have taught us many useful things, such as an Acme rocket sled received in the mail will invariably fail, and if you attempt to crush your adversary by dropping an anvil off of a cliff (particularly if you are a coyote), then the anvil will in some way land on *your* head instead.

While starting to have doubts about the accuracy of those animated lessons, I remembered a strong, consistent message in cartoons . . . that *animals will always outsmart people*. That dictum was proving to be true, and I became resigned to the idea that I would probably just have to live with this superintelligent mouse.

My live-and-let-live attitude came to an abrupt end when I found mouse droppings in a cast-iron pan. I fry eggs in that pan! The uneasy truce in our little war was broken by that salvo of excrement, and lethal alternatives replaced the gentle approach. That mouse would be toast. To borrow the phrasing of John Donne . . . the bell tolls for thee, Mickey!

Once again, killing this graduate student of a mouse with a straightforward, time-proven snap trap proved to be not so simple. My healthy, all-natural Trader Joe's peanut butter was too runny at room temperature and wouldn't adhere to the trigger mechanism, so I used my "superior human intelligence" and soaked a cotton ball with this delicious bait. The lure was placed next to the stove, and I heard a loud snap in the middle of the night as I was lying in bed. There was nothing more to do than awake in the morning and dispose of the remains. Case closed.

However, I didn't find a dead mouse by the stove. I also didn't find a mousetrap. Instead, the mouse had carried it away, and while I spent the next night contemplating Plan B, I heard rattling coming from underneath the stove like the ghost of Jacob Marley wailing and rattling his chains in front of a terrified Ebenezer Scrooge. I felt bad that the mouse was perhaps in pain, but the rattling soon stopped, and the next day, my wife told me that she found a cotton ball soaked in peanut butter in our driveway!

Harry Houdini had nothing on this mouse, and it foiled each attempt on its life until I bought a new gadget that had a yellow plastic bait-holding section with holes in it—it resembled SpongeBob Squarepants. One of those traps was duct-taped to the floor so it couldn't be moved, fresh peanut butter was smeared into the holes, and the mouse was soon no more.

I felt bad about killing a mouse that was just trying to eke out a subsistence living on my kitchen floor, but it was something under the circumstances that needed to be done, and although a blow-by-blow account of hunting a mouse may seem a strange tale to relate to fishing, I think that our relationship with other living creatures is one that is always open to examination. Life is a delicate balancing act, and in the end, I'm sure that it's a good thing, and respectful to our prey, not to take killing lightly. We're often reminded that this is a "blood sport," and since the dubbing animals . . . unlike the Nauga . . . do not shed their contributions, *we decide* who does the bleeding. I like to think this decision process achieves balance, and even a little atonement, in the wonderful moment when we briefly hold a trout, then watch it swim away.



Al Carpenter, Sr., and the East Branch Special

If you're a staunch East Branch of the Delaware fly fisher, then you probably fondly recall Al's Wild Trout, Ltd., and Al Carpenter, Sr. (1925–2003). The shop was located in Shinhopple, on the banks of this tailwater, where Al was a bottomless source of fly-fishing information. Though confined to a wheelchair and with a raspy voice from a tracheotomy, Al always had a smile on his face and a passionate willingness to share knowledge about the river, whether you made a purchase in his shop or not. He often sat on the back deck of his home with a pair of binoculars, scanning the pool below for insect and trout activity. While he was alive, we frequently traded e-mails on East Branch happenings. He often enlisted help regarding issues facing the river. Al Carpenter, Sr., was more than a shop owner, he was a devoted conservationist at heart. He loved the East Branch. After his death, several of his loyal following dedicated a stone bench along the river in his memory.

I remember Al telling me about a dry fly called the East Branch Special, and I probably even purchased a couple that I can no longer locate. The fly was cream colored and a favorite for this tailwater, according to Carpenter. It was also a different pattern than the East Branch Special created



by Dave Budin, a Margaretville shop owner upstream of the Pepacton Reservoir. I wrote about Budin's East Branch Special in the October 2013 issue of the *Gazette*. So one day this summer, I stopped at Al's Sport Store in Downsville to talk to the owner and Al's son, Al Carpenter, Jr.

The younger Al Carpenter carries a vast supply of outdoor gear and quite a few flies, including the East Branch Special, in addition to operating the Downsville Motel at the base of Pepacton Reservoir. Al calls the dry fly a "Cinnamon Adams," a pattern he carries in sizes 12 through 16. He told me it was the creation of the brother-in-law of his

uncle and father—Art Patterson, who is also deceased. Patterson was a chemist by trade and a talented big-band drummer in his spare time. He lived in Oakland, New Jersey, and often fished the East Branch downstream of Shinhopple, plus Pennsylvania trout streams around Allentown.

Below is the pattern for the East Branch Special, recounted in memory of Al Carpenter, Sr., and Art Patterson, two men who loved the East Branch of the Delaware River. As Al Carpenter, Jr., told me, the river was his father's life.

The East Branch Special

Hook: Dry fly hook, size 12 to 16

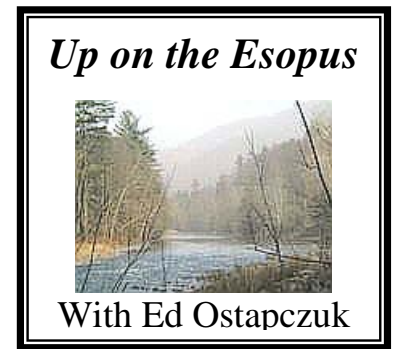
Thread: White

Tail: Brown and grizzly hackle

Body: Buff-colored fox

Wing: Two grizzly hackle tips

Hackle: Brown and grizzly





CJ's Flies
With "Catskill John" Bonasera

The DeBruce Club

Nestled above the town of Livingston Manor, off a winding country road in DeBruce, is a place filled with history, and tales of older times, and much more than I ever thought.

Everyone in the Beamoc area has heard of the DeBruce Club and the three miles of the upper Willowemoc that is heavily posted and has been untouched by development for over a hundred years.

The property consists of eighteen hundred acres in all, mostly thick woods bordering open fields in some places, with two cold-water ponds fed by some diverted Willowemoc stream water and supplemented by cold-water springs. There is a thirty-inch rainbow swimming in the big pond, but the ones I saw were only twenty-plus inches, finning at the inlet.

It was not my first visit to the club, though it was certainly the first time I walked the famed club water invited. Years ago, maybe ten, I mistakenly fished this trout-rich environment, completely by accident. I pulled off the road around midway along the club's property, walked to the iron bridge above where the Mongaup trickles into the Willow, and noticed a wire stretched across the stream. I assumed it was the end of their water and the beginning of mine. If there is such a thing as an honest mistake, I made one that day.

This time, I was invited to fish by my good friend John Checchia, owner of Will Hardware in the Manor, who has been an active member of the club for a number of years. He had been telling me about the club water, the fish they catch there, the bugs he imitates to catch them . . . and now I was going to meet him there after work, walk the stream legally, and cast to some of the luckiest trout in the Catskills, trout that swim in one of the prettiest sections of stream I ever saw.

This excursion was not all about the fishing, though. When I first arrived there early, guild member Mike "DeBruce" Santimauro, also a member of the club, was sitting on one of the benches that overlook the big pond. We chatted for a few minutes, then Mike went into the clubhouse and returned shortly with a cup of trout pellets. When we tossed them into the water, we were greeted by an enormous rainbow that made short work of the handout, but stayed around for more. Mike explained to me that the members don't fish the ponds, but sometimes they have kids there to try their hand at it.

When John arrived, before we geared up, he gave me a little overview of the grounds. The clubhouse has a full-length porch with plenty of chairs for relaxing after a day's fishing is over. Upon entering the building, I noticed a huge stone fireplace, rustic furniture, trout and deer mounts on the walls, photos of members past, and maps of the property. If you can picture in your mind an interior that just reeks of fly fishing and the outdoors, you will see this place. In the corner near the door, a fly-tying desk resides, materials spilling from the drawers. The floor at the entrance has countless divots from the studded waders of hundreds of anglers over the years, coming and going.

I learned that this structure was the year-round dwelling for the hatchery caretaker. Hatchery caretaker? What hatchery? Way back, before it was a fly-fishing club, the property was the location of the DeBruce Inn. A sprawling establishment catering to city folks looking to relax, it had a working farm for vegetables, a hydroelectric generator for electricity, a phone system for the grounds, and a trout hatchery, complete with concrete raceways where they brought trout up to catching size right there on the banks of the Willow. There was a nine-hole golf course, along with hiking, games, and of course, fishing. It was this area where George LaBranche tied his Pink Lady fly and cast it for the first time at the junction where the Mongaup enters the Willow.

Most of the original buildings are gone, including the Ward home, which overlooked the big pool across DeBruce Road that's named after him. Only the stone chimney remains. The concrete runways are almost unrecognizable—trees have grown to nearly full size around and through them. Scattered throughout the property are the remains left from other structures, which diminish in size with each passing season.

We fitted our rods together, strung them up, and made our way to the water. Various trails, some cut by machine and some just worn from anglers' wading boots, wind their way through the fields and woods to the stream. All the pools are named, some after members past and others from the structure that makes them recognizable.

My initial thought was that I didn't recognize it as the Willowemoc. The stream here seems faster, more powerful, even at the low flows we have now. I didn't catch on at first, but after awhile, it showed itself to me. It was the amazing structure, the unusually large boulders set in strategic locations, that not only make a safer and better haven for trout, but also increase the velocity of the water, aiding in oxygenation and cover, not to mention producing an extremely visually appealing waterway.

While I am a fast-water guy, it was the large pools he showed me that really impressed me. One pool was over two hundred feet long and over ten feet deep, if it was an inch. With water as clear as gin, you could count trout everywhere, and there was hardly a minute that passed when you didn't see a splash, a dimple, or a nose come out of the water. To call it a trout-rich environment would be a gross understatement. It was as if every fish in the river was in this one pool.

We walked to other spots, all equally pretty and all with good numbers of trout. We ended up by the road below the clubhouse, where I cast a dry fly at a foam line where some heavy water flattened out into a slow run. A trout took the fly, I set the hook, then immediately lost him. I usually swear and mutter to myself when this occurs at any other place, but here I simply reeled in, checked my gear, and sat on a boulder in the fading light until I couldn't see the water's surface. Smiling and enjoying the end of a fantastic evening at a historic place, I realized how lucky I was to be there, to be a tiny part of such a huge place.

When you sit down to tie a fly, you take a seat at a very large, very old table. As you go through the magazines, books, and videos—taking and ignoring advice, learning tricks and shortcuts, discerning and taking sides in old debates, then picking and choosing a pattern, a style, eventually even an aesthetic stance—you participate in a long, complicated, and apparently endless conversation over those and many other matters. You join not merely a club, but a guild.

—Paul Schullery, *Cowboy Trout*



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.