

The
Catskill
Fly Tyers
Guild

Gazette



Volume 16, number 6

Twentieth Anniversary

December 2013

The December meeting of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild will be held on Saturday, December 21, 2013, at 2:00 P.M. at the Rockland House on Route 206 in Roscoe, NY. Dave Brandt will be demonstrating some tying tips not usually seen—including tying quill bodies and how size really matters.

Don't forget the fly swap. Bring two flies of the same pattern—one to trade, and one for the guild—in separate containers and labeled with your name, the name of the fly, the size of the hook, and the date tied.

Tyers Needed for Somerset

If you'd like to tie for the guild at the Fly Fishing Show in Somerset, NJ, January 23, 24, and 25, contact John Kavanaugh at flymank@optonline.net, call his cell at (973) 219-7696 and leave a message with your contact information or contact him via his Facebook page.

Tyers Needed for the Fly Tyers Rendezvous

If you'd like to tie at the Fly Tyers Rendezvous, sponsored by the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild, at the Rockland House on Route 206 in Roscoe, NY, on April 26, 2014, there will be signup sheets at the guild booth at the Somerset show in January, or you can contact John Kavanaugh at any of the above addresses.

November Show Reports

The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild was very well represented by Pete Peterson, Bud Bynack, Robert Varela, Merrill (Doc) Katz, and yours truly, Ed McQuat, at the Arts of the Angler show on November 9 and 10 in Danbury, CT. We signed up or renewed thirteen members, sold some patches and a DVD, and imparted a lot of hints and information to the many visitors we had to our booth. I would like to thank all of the tyers who once again made my job of arranging the guild's booth and tyers much easier. I would also like to thank Erin Phelan for her assistance with badges and so on. I also owe a big thank you to our secretary, Judie DV Smith, for arranging the management of the guild's offerings at the show

—Ed McQuat

Thanks to John Bonasera, Elmer Hopper, Rick Fisher, Gary Morison, Kyle Majikas, Joe Scarangelo, Len Ruggia, Tim Mahoney, and Brian McKee for tying at the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild booth at the International Fly Tying Exposition in Somerset, NJ.

—John Kavanaugh

The Guild *Trout Flies* Project

The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild is completing and selling copies of *Trout Flies*, by Richard Salmon. This book, originally published by Sportsman's Edge Press in 1975, was literally a handcrafted work. Samples of the actual materials involved in the pattern recipes were attached to the pages of the book. We need guild members willing to volunteer to attach materials to uncompleted copies. Any guild member who completes three copies will be able to keep one.

Simply by supplying the materials for the flies in this book and attaching them to its pages, you can help support the guild and also acquire this rare and important book—the original editions currently sell for hundreds of dollars.

There were only 589 copies printed, and only 529 of the 589 were printed for sale. Included in the 589 there were 29 copies of the deluxe edition that were autographed, numbered, and remarked. Harry Darbee attached much of the material in the deluxe edition.

The guild has all the remaining saleable books in its possession. We are using only those signed by Richard Salmon and numbered. In the copies involved here, in addition to completing the process of attaching materials to the text, we need to make sure all the materials are the correct colors.

If you're interested in participating in this effort, contact Judie DV Smith at judiedvsmith@yahoo.com or (607) 498-6024.

—Judie DV Smith

The tools you'll need are the following.

- Elmer's Glue-All, a multipurpose adhesive. It is tacky and dries quickly and clear, so an errant smear disappears.
- A single-edged razor blade for cutting sample pieces from animal skins with the hair or fur intact. The skin offers a foot or base for the glue.
- Heavy-duty scissors for cutting wire, tinsel, quills, and so on.
- Curved-blade scissors for undertrimming glued-down materials for a neat look.
- A bodkin as glue applicator—the tip for small areas, or used at a low, flat angle for smearing.
- Tweezers for picking up and holding material too small for fingers.
- A plastic or metal clamp to hold the book pages flat. A spring-clip clothespin also works.
- A wood block weight for topping glued material flat. A small book also works.
- Small waxed-paper sheets to be placed between the glued material and wood weight—prevents excess glue from sticking to the weight or pulling the sample apart when lifted.
- Multiple sheets of newspaper as a glue pad for bodkin pickup or sample dipping.

Tips: *Hackle*: Smear glue on the dull side of the feather, position in the appropriate text box, cover with waxed paper, then rub the fibers outward from the stem (quill) to achieve original footprint of the now-wet hackle fibers.

Dubbing: Roll it into a ball and dip or apply the glue, position it in the box, top with waxed paper, and press flat with weight.

Tinsel, Floss, Yarn, Chenille: Follow the same procedure used for dubbing samples.

—Jack Pangburn

The 2014 Anglers Market

The Anglers Market, sponsored by the Roscoe-Rockland Chamber of Commerce, will be held on Sunday, May 25, 2014, at the Community Hall next to the Roscoe Fire House in Roscoe, NY, from 10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. If you'd like to be a vendor, the fee is \$15 per table, paid when you sign up. Set-up at 8:00 A.M. Space is limited. Contact Manny Zanger at (607) 498-5464 or beamoc@hvc.rr.com or Judie DV Smith at judiedvsmith@yahoo.com or (607) 498-6024.

Arnold Gingrich and the Cahill Bivisible Spider

My first encounter with Arnold Gingrich was in the fall of 1968, though only through his written words. In a small book shop in Menlo Park, New Jersey, I purchased a copy of *The Well-Tempered Angler*. The book jacket caught my attention, and I was famished to read everything I could about fly fishing back then. We would later exchange correspondence before finally meeting at a Trout Unlimited banquet I helped organize, held in Kingston in April 1974.

Gingrich was an opinionated, yet eloquent writer, and whatever he wrote was well worth reading; the narratives about his Catskill adventures still fascinate me to this day. In addition, we shared a common fondness for two rivers: the Esopus and the Neversink. They were at the core of the letters we exchanged. Gingrich may have experienced the best fishing years that the Esopus ever had to offer.

When Gingrich fished the Esopus, he frequented Dick Kahil's Rainbow Lodge in Mount Tremper and befriended Preston Jennings there. In *The Well-Tempered Angler*, Gingrich included a wonderful chapter, "Preston Jennings for President—or, There *Is* a Royal Coachman," that provides insights into Jennings, the Esopus, and the old Rainbow Lodge.

Gingrich's writing makes many references to the Cahill Bivisible Spider, which he reported purchasing "by lots of six and seven dozen" from William Mills and Son in New York City. He states that he fished it in a size 16 and used it on all the great Catskill rivers, not just the Esopus. In a later book, *The Fishing in Print: A Guided Tour through Five Centuries of Angling Literature*, he wrote: "My old Cahill Bivisible Spider, the most versatile fly I ever found for stream fishing, was a near twin of Mr. Hewitt's Bivisible Neversink Skater. I used to get them from Mills three and four dozen at a time, and once used nothing else for the entire season."

Up on the Esopus



Sadly, not much is known for certain about the Cahill Bivisible Spider, however. In all of Gingrich's writings that I examined, never is there a single mention of the recipe for the pattern. After looking through numerous period-related fly-tying books, I finally examined two old William Mills and Sons catalogs, one of which provided pattern information about flies they sold, but unfortunately, not about this one. Nonetheless, the Mills catalog did state the following about their Bivisible Spider flies—that is, about their Bivisible dry flies, not their spiders: "Flies similar to the above made with specially selected extra long hackles on one size hook only. No. 16." This hook is consistent with Gingrich's claim that he fished this pattern only in a size 16.

Nearly at a loss for definitive information on the Cahill Bivisible Spider, on March 31, 2010, I opened a thread on Joe Fox's Sparse Grey Matter bulletin board about this dry fly. The interest was amazing, with numerous suggestions and excellent ideas about what the pattern might have been. While the evidence is not conclusive, I think a fair adaptation of the Cahill Bivisible Spider can be made based on two fly-tying books: J. Edson Leonard's *Flies* and Donald Du Bois's *The Fisherman's Handbook of Trout Flies*. Both authors include a recipe for a Cahill Bivisible, which, based on information provided by the Mills catalog, could very well bridge any gaps between the Mills Bivisible dry fly and their Bivisible Spider. Based on everything that is currently known about the Cahill Bivisible Spider, I am suggesting the following as its pattern:

Thread: White
Hook: Mustad 94840, size 16,
 or favorite size 16 dry-fly hook
Tag: Gold Mylar
Tail: Wood duck
Body: Gray muskrat
Wing: None
Hackle: Brown, palmered, with a white collar



In memory of the late Arnold Gingrich, I have fished this Cahill Bivisible Spider while using my Orvis Superfine cane rod, another common interest between us. This dry fly has accounted for many small wild trout on both the Esopus and upper Neversink watersheds. It is a delicate dry fly, tied in the Catskill tradition.

I wish that the day Gingrich and I met, I had inquired about this pattern myself. If anyone knows the recipe for certain, please share that well-kept secret with the rest of us.

The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild Definition of a Catskill Fly

The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild definition of a Catskill fly was established in 1994 by a committee consisting of Martin Redcay, John Jacobson, Dave Brandt, Ken Mears, and Doug Fries and agreed on by the guild: The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild acknowledges any pattern known to have originated roughly within the Catskills and to have been designed largely for use there to be a Catskill fly. This would include the famous Catskill "style" floating flies created by the pillars of the American fly-tying fraternity, as well as the continually emerging dressings of contemporary Catskill fly tyers.

Looking Back Upstream



Angler's Cove: Crossroads of New York City's Fly-Fishing Culture, Part 5

As a young man, guild member Merrill 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 American angling literature. In an ongoing series of conversations, I'm asking 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.

Bud: It wasn't just writers, publishers, and fly tyers who passed through Angler's Cove, was it?

Merrill: By no means. Archie Walker appeared at the Cove in May of 1966. He and his dad were the brain trust behind the Walker line of fly reels. Archie and his dad were not happy with their declining sales volume, and Glad Zwirz told me they might be interested in buying Angler's Cove. Archie's mission was to evaluate the potential the Cove held for the independent marketing of the Walker reels and also to acquire a first-hand look at the Cove's daily operation.

Bud: I think a lot of people aren't familiar with Walker reels—I know I wasn't until I started talking with you.

Merrill: The Walker reels were modeled after the reels of Julian Vom Hoff. Walker reels were custom produced and machined to very fine tolerances. Ernie Schwiebert, in his epic two-volume edition of *Trout*, noted: "The Walkers are clearly to reels as the late Jim Payne was to rods—sworn enemies of any semblance of compromise, and passionate adherents to a standard of craftsmanship that in the old Vom Hoff days might have been taken for granted, but in this slapdash age seems downright eccentric, not to say fanatical." I don't know how many Walker reels were manufactured, but I know they are highly valued in today's market.

Bud: So these were, uh, real reel mavens.

Merrill: Right. For example, Arch modified the drag system on a Pflueger 1498 Medalist for me so that it would withstand the rigors of the salt. I had completed my undergraduate education in June of 1966 and had planned a long fishing vacation to Florida. I had a series of topographic maps covering the east coast of the state, and Archie marked some areas he thought would be productive. I appreciated his input, because I had little knowledge of the fishing opportunities there, and Archie knew a great deal about them. I believe that he had a preference for marine fisheries.

Upon my return to the Cove in the fall, Archie Walker returned, as well. He accompanied me to various distributors in Manhattan and Brooklyn, wholesalers and jobbers who helped us to maintain a supply of marketable products. He also gave me some fine flosses and a rather large assortment of French tinsels—he told me he no longer had the time to continue his tying.

Bud: So what happened to the buyout plan?

Merrill: After a time, the Walkers decided that Anglers Cove was not the solution that the Walker Reel Company needed. Before we parted, however, Archie was very generous and made certain that I had a Walker reel to fish with. It is a Number 2 Trout with an adjustable drag. Not many were made this way. It has a very smooth drag system, and it does a great job of protecting fine tippets. It has been my reel of choice for spring creek fishing, and I am fortunate to have this piece of fly reel history.



Photos: Merrill Katz



A Year's Flies

This is the time of the year when I stash away the gear, clean and lube the reels, wax the cane, and organize everything for the spring. Some still trek to the water and cast flies with numb hands, but my season is over when the leaves are all down. I wish I could enjoy trout fishing in the cold, and I do enjoy being outside in the winter, but subfreezing temperatures and ice-clogged guides are not my idea of a good time on the water.

As I go through my fishing stuff spread out on my tying room floor, I recall the various trips and conditions, trout caught and lost. I remember sitting streamside to tie on a fly just before dark, looking at the water, the sky . . . taking in all that makes fly fishing so enjoyable.

Some flies are just magic, some not so much, and as I pluck them from pockets and dig out the ones I hastily dropped into my pack, flies that worked their way to the deepest crevices of the bottom, I remember some fondly, how they were just the thing for that time and place.

As I further my experience on the water with each passing year, I weed out some flies and add others. Like many of you, I have my confidence patterns. I typically start with those, and if things are right and the trout oblige, I nip them off and experiment with others, hopefully to gain a new confidence fly, but mostly just to have fun.

I thought I would compose a list of patterns I used from April to October. Some seemed to have the same attraction to trout as a fresh worm or cricket would, others drifted over the best places on a particular run to be ignored like poison. Below are the good, the bad, and the just plain rotten patterns fished on Catskill waters this year.

The good one is the Hare's Ear Nymph. And so it should be, since I feel that I could have as good sport as if I were using bait on almost any water in Sullivan County. Some anglers love nymphs, some hate them, but if you ask me, this fly is a trout magnet anywhere. I tie mine with a bead, half hidden under the wing case. Without exaggeration, I tie and lose over twelve dozen of these a season, give about half that many away to

friends, and would guess they account for 75 percent of my trout caught in a year. Of course, they can be tied without a bead, but some of the magic is lost.

For dry-fly fishing, I have a handful of patterns that have produced on many occasions when fish were taking on top, regardless of the hatches at the time. For top-water flies, I always lean to the classic patterns, and E. R. Hewitt's Bivisible, Art Flick's Dun Variant, John Atherton's Number 1, and a couple of his gold-bodied Variants have worked wonders on the various streams where I've drifted them. The Bivisible is just a marvelous fly, and even with heavy, stiff hackle it's rare that I miss a fish using it. You almost never see trout sip this fly—its' always a big splash and take.

Wet flies can be killing at times, too, but I don't have too many memorable outings using them. The ones I love are always the earthy shades, the Coachman, March Brown, and Alder, and on the upper reaches of the famous streams, where almost anything works well, they do great work. On many occasions, I have fished the gaudy wets, Holbertons and Cassards, but have never caught browns on them. Brook trout love their flash, though.

For streamers, the Bumblepuppy is deadly. It's my favorite fall fly. I target slower, deeper sections with it, and the takes are shocking. Another streamer that produces is Walt's Dace. Tied sparse, it's a great complement to the heavily dressed Bumblepuppy when a slender fly is needed.

Did I mention that I love nymphs? After my arm tires from reeling in trout after trout on Hare's Ears (Ha!), I test out different subsurface patterns. One that has proven itself is a simple caddis pattern with a light-green body and Hare's Ear collar, weighted either with some lead wraps or with a bead. The Catskill streams are loaded with caddisflies, and its no wonder these short-bodied, curved flies work so well.

One that *doesn't* work so well is a molted stonefly imitation. A few of my guild brothers and I were going round and round about these flies. Some say they are just the thing in riffled water, and others have heard they clean up anywhere. I have not touched a fish on one this year, and it's not for lack of trying. I hoped for a silver bullet, but got a dud. It tied mine with a white abdomen, thorax, and wing case, semirealistic style. I may try to soften the white with gray for next year, but don't count on it.

The East is a great place to live, with four seasons to enjoy. I love the winter break from fishing. It gives you lots of time to get ready for the spring, building up your enthusiasm for the new season. Sitting by the wood stove, you can catch up on your reading and tying or just dream about next year's trout.

Book Review

101 Favorite Dry Flies: History, Tying Tips, and Fishing Strategies

By David Klausmeyer. Published by Skyhorse Publishing, 2013; \$14.95 softbound.

Inspiration comes to fly tyers in many different ways. Some evenings, it comes from the bottom of a glass, although the results usually tend to look seriously weird in the sober light of the next day. And sometimes, the muse of fly tying (the tenth muse, Supaphyne), even actually inspires someone to create something new, beautiful, and—better yet—effective as a way of actually catching fish.

But sometimes, the muse, though bidden and though invoked by libations, refuses to descend and whisper in a tyer's ear. That's when a book like Dave Klausmeyer's *101 Favorite Dry Flies* comes in handy. Basically, it's a compendium of interesting ideas for creating variations on existing dry-fly trout patterns and a source of unusual approaches to the concept of the dry fly. The book consists of a picture of each fly, a fly recipe, and a very short text that relates a tying tip, a factoid of angling history associated with the fly,

or a fishing strategy for using the fly. *War and Peace* it ain't, but paging through it is a stimulating experience for a fly tyer. It makes you go "Hmmm."

Anyone who actually has 101 favorite dry flies must suffer from a severe inability to make decisions, however what the title refers to here is not Klausmeyer's own list of favorite dries, but the favorite patterns of a number of folks from around the country who contributed their favorites, plus a few of his own. Klausmeyer is the editor of *Fly Tyer* magazine, and he's clearly made use of his Rolodex. It's a diverse collection of contributors that ranges from Westerners such as Craig Mathews, Al and Gretchen Beatty, and guild member Al Ritt to East Coast tyers such as the guild's president, Dave Brandt, and Mike Valla, both exponents of the traditional Catskill style, as well as Keith Fulsher, Ted Rogowski, Ed Shenk, and Jay "Fishy" Fullum. Actually, the complete list of contributors reads a lot like the membership list of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild.

As a result of this diversity, there's a lot going on, and what makes you go "Hmmm" may be different from what interests me, but here's a quick overview. There are a fair number of traditional Catskill patterns among the 101, and they're interesting as provocations to innovation because many of them riff on the established Catskill formula, rather than just rotely repeating the canonical ties. Valla's Spirit of Harford Mills, a variation on the classic, palmered-bodied Spirit of Pittsford Mills, is an example, as are his Wemoc Adams and Batten Kill Badger. Indeed, one of the notable things about this compilation is that Klausmeyer has gone out of his way to promote the viability and vitality of flies tied in the Catskill style as an enduring element of the conceptual resources to which today's tyers can turn for inspiration.

There are also riffs on other, more recent patterns, such as Dennis Potter's Opal series, which uses opal Mirage tinsel for bodies on patterns such as the X-Caddis. There are patterns that exemplify interesting fly-design or tying twists, such as Gary LaFontaine's Royal Double Wing, and there are patterns that push the envelope for how to think about tying a dry fly, including Sam Swink's Transducer, which takes the two-tone-body concept of West Coast tyer Ralph Cutter's E/C Caddis to the extreme of building both a nymph and an emerging mayfly dun on the same hook — in size 16, no less — and Al Ritt's Struggling Green Drake, which builds a separate, articulated abdomen for the dry fly on a Wiggle Shank. Hmmm indeed.

You'll probably find something here that makes you go "Hmmm," too. As a source of inspiration, *101 Favorite Dry Flies* is worth having in your library And it's cheaper than good scotch.

—Bud Bynack

DEC Camp Sponsorship

The Catskill Fky Tyers Guild sponsors two kids to attend the summer DEC camp and still has one opening. If you know anyone who is interested in sending their child to camp, contact Judie DV Smith at judiedvsmith@yahoo.com or (607) 498-6024.

Winter-Spring Catskill Fly Tyers Guild Meeting Calendar

January 18, 2014: Tying flies for Casting for Recovery at the Rockland House, 2:00 P.M.

February 15, 2014: Annual materials swap, at the Rockland House, 2:00 P.M.

March 15, 2014: Tying flies for Project Healing Waters, at the Rockland House, 2:00 P.M.

April 26, 2014: The Fly Tyers Rendezvous, at the Rockland House, 10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.

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.



THE Fly
FISHING
Show



THE Fly
FISHING
Show



THE Fly
FISHING
Show

The Fly Fishing Show

The Garden State Convention
Center

Somerset, New Jersey

January 24, 25, 26, 2013

Show Hours

Friday: 10:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.

Saturday: 8:30 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.
two-day pass

Sunday: 9:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.
three-day pass

Admission

Adults: \$18 for one day

\$28 for

\$38 for

Children under 5 free, under 12: \$2

Scouts under 16 in uniform: free

Active Military: \$10

Cash only at the gate

Regardless of the weather, the show will go on!

