

The
Catskill
Fly Tyers
Guild

Gazette



Volume 16, number 1

Twentieth Anniversary Issue

February 2013

The February meeting of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild will be held on Saturday, February 16, 2013, at the Rockland House on Route 206 in Roscoe, NY, at 2:00 P.M. This meeting will feature the **annual materials swap**. It is also the annual meeting for the election of officers and the delivery of committee reports. (See the copy of the guild's bylaws printed in this issue of the *Gazette*.) Bring at least a few items that are earmarked just for swapping, while also feeling free to bring some things for sale. And don't forget the regular fly swap.

Memberships Renew in February

And this is February. If you receive the *Gazette* by the U.S. mail, check the date to the right of your name on the envelope to see if you need to renew. If you receive the *Gazette* by e-mail, your renewal date should appear next to your name on the address line.

Membership is only \$10.00 per year. Couples can join at the same single-member rate of \$10.00. Send a check, your current address and phone number, and, if you wish to receive the *Gazette* by e-mail, your e-mail address to:

Catskill Fly Tyers Guild Membership, P.O. Box 663, Roscoe, NY 12776-0663

Do it Now!

Twentieth Anniversary: The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild was founded in 1993 by Floyd Franke and Matthew Vinciguerra. That makes 2013 our twentieth anniversary. See Dave Brandt's reflections on the guild's birthday in "Looking Back Upstream." Guild member Bob Albrecht, who created the masthead we've been using for the *Gazette*, has provided a new masthead to commemorate the event. The guild is once again grateful to Bob for his elegant graphic design.

The 2013 Anglers Reunion Dinner: Winter may seem endless, but Opening Day is just around the corner. The annual Anglers Reunion Dinner will be held on March 31, 2011 (that's Easter Sunday this year), at the Rockland House on Route 206 in Roscoe, NY. Please call the Rockland House at (607) 498-4240 for reservations. The dinner is \$24 per person, tip included. Please make your reservations with the Rockland House ASAP. You can pay at the door.

The Annual Catskill Fly Tyers Guild Fly Tyers Rendezvous will be held on Saturday, April 20, 2013, from 10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. at the Rockland House on Route 206 in Roscoe, NY. Please join us for a day of camaraderie, reunion, and fly tying. If you'd like to tie at the Rendezvous, contact Leslie Wrixon, Fly Tyer Chair, at lesliewrixon@yahoo.com or (508)733-8535. Flies of any type may be demonstrated. Come and tie and/or just hang out with some of the most talented fly tyers in the Northeast.

Silent Auction: We are planning a silent auction at the Fly Tyers Rendezvous. All proceeds will benefit the Educational Programs Fund. If you have an item you'd like to donate, please contact Judie DV Smith at darbee1@juno.com or P.O. Box 663, Roscoe, NY 12776-0663.

Raffle: We are raffling off an HMH Spartan vise and a collection of rare materials, including polar bear, Australian possum, seal's fur, and other exotic things. Proceeds benefit the Education Programs Fund. Raffle tickets can be bought through the mail. Tickets are \$5 each or three for \$10. Please provide a self-stamped, self-addressed envelope for your ticket stubs. The winner is responsible for pickup or mailing expenses. Send your check to Catskill Fly Tyers Guild Raffle, P.O. Box 663, Roscoe, NY 12776-0663. The drawing will be at the Rendezvous on April 20, 2013, at 2:00 P.M. at the Rockland House in Roscoe, NY.

Rendezvous Dinner: After the Rendezvous this year, we're planning on having a group dinner at the Rockland House, formalizing the informal post-Rendezvous dining event that has occurred in the past. Social hour at 6:00 P.M., dinner at 7:00, menu and price to be announced. We may also have some sort of program. If you're interested in attending, contact Judie DV Smith at darbee1@juno.com or P.O. Box 663, Roscoe, NY 12776-0663.

Tying Class: Bob Osburn and Bill Leuszler, with some help from a few others, will be offering an intermediate fly-tying class this spring from 1:00 to 3:00 P.M. on the four consecutive Sundays of March: March 3, 10, 17, and 24, and on April 7 at the Gander Mountain store, Route 211 in Walkill. Participants will be expected to bring their own tools. However, all materials will be supplied at no charge. This class will be identified as a program sponsored by the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild. Pass the information on to anyone who inquires about tying classes.

The DVD *Fly Tyers, Volume 2: A Guild Sampler*, a two-disc set, is now available to both members and nonmembers at \$20 each. You can order by mail, adding \$3 postage for one to three sets. If you order by mail, send a check to Catskill Fly Tyers Guild, P.O. Box 663, Roscoe NY, 12776-0663.

Fly Plate Update and Proposal: The fly plate representing the tradition of Catskill fly tying for use at shows will soon be completed. Thanks to all who contributed and helped make this a showpiece of the tradition that we wish to preserve.

Because the Catskill tradition has continued to evolve with the advent of new materials and the development of new patterns, it has been suggested that we assemble a similar fly plate to illustrate the vitality of Catskill fly tying today. We're soliciting a discussion of this proposal at meetings, along with ideas, suggestions, and recommendations for representative patterns and materials.

Guild Scholarship Support Pays Off: According to the Sullivan County *Democrat*, the Upper Delaware Council, Inc. announced the hiring of Travis O'Dell of Long Eddy as its resource specialist, effective October 9, 2012. O'Dell graduated from Roscoe Central School in 2003 and earned an applied science associate's degree in fishery and wildlife technology in 2005 and a bachelor's degree in wildlife management in 2007, both from the State University of New York at Cobleskill. The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild awarded O'Dell \$500 to help underwrite his last semester of college.

"I always have been and always will be a citizen of the upper Delaware watershed," O'Dell says. "It is an area I am familiar with and passionate about. I believe in and share the goals of the River Management Plan for protecting the river and landowners' rights."

Floyd Franke Presented with Lifetime Achievement Award: Catskill Fly Tyers Guild cofounder Floyd Franke was presented with the Lifetime Achievement in Fly Casting Instruction Award on July 11, 2012, by the Board of Governors of the Federation of Fly Fishers Casting Instructors Certification Program. The award is made "in recognition of having made, over many years, a significant contribution to the art of fly casting instruction."

The Black Art of Night Fishing

By Ralph Graves

It was the early 1970s, and I was tying at the Harrisburg, PA, Eastern Sportsman Show, I looked up from the fly I was tying, and there stood Jim Bashline. Jim had just come out with *Night Fishing for Trout*, and I bought the book from him right then and there. I asked him for a fly, and he took over my vise and tied one. I still have that Silver Doctor. Jim and I stayed friends, exchanging letters, until he passed away.

Like Jim, I always was a big proponent of night fishing. Jim called the Governor the king of the night flies.

Hook: Mustad 3906B, size 6 or 4
Thread: White, under the red floss tip; red, counterwrapped over the peacock body; black to finish
Tag: Fine silver oval tinsel, two turns
Tip: Red floss
Body: Peacock
Hackle: Dark ginger
Wing: Dark mottled turkey secondary



Jim said in his book: "If I only had one fly to fish, it would be the Governor."

One of my own favorite flies for night fishing is the March Brown wet.

Hook: Mustad 3906B, size 6 or 4
Thread: Orange
Tail: Brown partridge fibers
Rib: Gold oval tinsel
Body: Amber Sealex or other seal substitute

Hackle: Brown partridge
Wing: Peacock secondary

I tie this fly in the normal wet-fly manner. I use peacock secondaries for the wing, but mottled turkey secondaries are a good alternative. Sealex was a seal substitute marketed by Poul Jorgensen. Whatever body material is used, I think it should be applied in a dubbing loop.

I start off in the spring using darker-colored wet flies, such as the Leadwing, and as the season progresses, the flies I use get lighter. Into the fall, lighter flies, such as the Light Cahill wet, tend to be more successful. Try fishing some traditional wet flies at night, and you may find some of the big boys coming out to feed.

More Hoffman Wet Flies: The Black Turkey and Green Wisp

As winter plods along at its own stride, so does restocking my fly boxes for the upcoming trout season. I'm now done filling my 2013 streamer and nymph needs and moving on to tying wet flies.

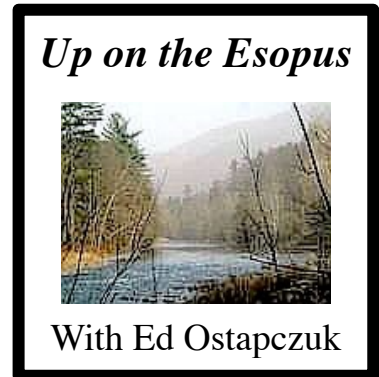
If there's a lost piscatorial art in these Catskill Mountains, it's the old wet-fly approach of swinging two or three flies on the same leader downstream of the angler. It's a tried and true trout-catching method that our forefathers often used to fill their wicker creels. And if ever there was a Catskill river made for wet-fly fishing, it's the Esopus Creek—the home waters of the late Ralph Hoffman.

The first article I wrote for this newsletter appeared in the February 2012 issue of the *Gazette* and was titled "The Black Bear and Ralph Hoffman." I learned quite a bit about fishing and tying from Ralph. It was always an interesting educational experience to watch and listen as he crafted his art in the vise while telling angling stories galore. Besides the Black Bear, Ralph was known for a couple of other wet flies that have accounted for their fair share of hungry trout. These are his Black Turkey and Green Wisp.

With little doubt, Ralph's Black Turkey is my favorite Hoffman wet fly and the most successful on the stream. It just looks like a fish catcher. I remember Ralph telling me that he would often fish this pattern in tandem with his Black Bear, the Bear on the point and the Black Turkey as a dropper.

Watching Ralph form the wing for a Black Turkey was truly educational. He would cut a single piece of material from a turkey feather, fold it over itself, tie the folded wing onto the hook, and then shape the wing. I've never quite acquired Hoffman's barbering skills in forming my wings, but his method is simple and fast, for sure.

In March 2003, Ralph was captured tying a Green Wisp on the guild's *Fly Tyers Volume 2: A Guild Sampler* DVD. I highly recommend the entire guild collection—it's very enlightening. Before writing this article, I reviewed the DVD, relearning a few tips from the master. Hoffman recommended tying the Green Wisp in sizes 10 and 14, with a size 10 being his preference for summer fishing, used as a dropper. He also gave the hook shank a dab of head cement to supply a bit of extra protection before wrapping the floss body. As for the specific pattern, I want to thank former guild president Hank Rope for information about it. Hank says, "Ralph was very particular about the shade of the floss



used to tie this fly. It was sort of an apple-green color.” I tie these flies on Mustad 3399 hooks, but I doubt that’s what Ralph used. Any standard wet-fly hook will work just fine.



Black Turkey

Hook: Standard wet fly, size 10
Tag: Gold tinsel
Tail: Black hackle
Body: Peacock herl
Hackle: Black, tied beard style
Wing: Brown turkey

Green Wisp

Hook: Standard wet fly, size 10
Tag: None
Tail: Apple-green hackle
Body: Apple-green floss
Hackle: Apple-green, tied
Wing: Folded wood duck

Another fly fisher well known for his wet flies, Ray Bergman, noted in *Just Fishing* that “wet fly fishing is a subtle art. . . . Masters of the art are few and far between.” If you haven’t tied or fished any traditional Catskill wet flies lately, try it—you just might like it, especially if you’re swinging a couple Hoffman wet flies downstream. Ralph Hoffman was truly a master of this subtle art.



CJ's Flies
With “Catskill John” Bonasera

Atherton Dry Flies

While going over the flies I used last year, I came across the little compartments in the corner of my Dewitt fly box that contain some of my favorite patterns, the John Atherton dry flies. Much like the dry flies in Art Flick’s *Streamside Guide*, Atherton’s flies are perfectly tailored to the streams of the Catskills.

Atherton’s flies are impressionistic ties, rather than hatch matchers. Atherton focused on light patterns, reflection, and what the trout sees, instead of on closely imitating a particular mayfly. His unique dubbing mixtures and materials are what set his patterns apart, and those patterns are beautiful to behold, both in the vise and on the water.

In tying books written from the turn of the twentieth century until around the 1960s, the materials commonly used are nothing like those used today. Atherton

employed not just oval tinsel, but seal's fur in many of his flies, and these materials were essential to the effect that his flies produced on the water. We need to seek to achieve the same thing with what's available today. There's a lot to learn from his dubbing mixes, too. Mixing dubbing to achieve shades that he considered "alive" is a lot more interesting than just buying a bag of Blue-Winged Olive dubbing. We often mix dubbing to achieve a certain color, but Atherton was mixing to achieve a certain *texture*, as well.

We could go on for several newsletters to cover all the Atherton flies (and we might!), but for now, let's focus on Numbers 1 through 6. These standard dry flies, tied in various shades to cover a variety of mayfly forms, could very well be all you would need throughout the entire season for Catskill trout fishing. Covering the whole spectrum, from light to dark, and using barred hackle sometimes mixed with solid colors, they make up a very buggy selection. And the ideas behind Atherton's dry flies lend themselves to experimentation when you turn to tying your own flies. When I bought Atherton's book, one of my friends in the guild remarked, "It may change the way you tie flies. It did for me." After reading it, I now know what he meant.

Atherton occasionally gives substitute hackle recommendations for some of his patterns. If you don't own cree hackle of every shade, from "very pale" to dark, don't fret. You can mix various shades of ginger and grizzly to achieve what he was seeking. I wrote about hackle mixing in a past newsletter and have been tying that way for some years, but Atherton brings it to a whole new level. In direct sunlight, his flies actually appear to be in motion, and the oval tinsel ribbing gives that little sparkle trigger that can sometimes keep the trout coming, rather than turning away.



Atherton Numbers 1-3

fox fur mixed with natural seal's fur and a small amount of hare's ear, ribbed with oval gold tinsel

Wings: Light wood duck

Hackle: Light cree and medium dun

Atherton Number Three

Tail, Medium cree (or ginger and grizzly)

Body: Natural seal mixed with bright yellow seal's fur (or fox belly dyed yellow, or dyed mohair)

Wings: Wood duck

Hackle: Light rusty dun (or ginger and medium dun)

Atherton Number One

Tail: Pale dun hackle fibers

Body: Very pale cream fox fur with oval gold tinsel rib

Wings: Light natural dun hackle points

Hackle: Very light cree (or very pale ginger and light grizzly)

Atherton Number Two

Tail: Light brassy or rusty dun hackle fibers (or a mix of light dun and light ginger)

Body: Light buff or pale tan

Wings: Light wood duck

Hackle: Light cree and medium dun

Atherton Number Four

Tail: Cree (or ginger and grizzly)

Body: Natural seal's fur and dyed red seal, a little hare's ear, and a little muskrat (the color should be a grayed, mixed pink), ribbed with oval gold tinsel

Wings: Wood duck

Hackle: Cree and medium natural dun

Atherton Number Five

Tail: Dark cree (or red-brown and grizzly)

Body: Hare's ear, tied very buggy, ribbed with oval gold tinsel

Wings: Wood duck

Hackle: Dark cree (or red-brown and grizzly)

This fly is the most generally useful of the group



Atherton Numbers 4-6

Atherton Number Six

Tail: Dark rusty dun fibers

Body: Dark muskrat or mole and some red-brown fur, such as dyed seal, to produce a body of brownish gray, rather dark, ribbed with oval gold tinsel

Wings: Bali duck flank, or bronze mallard, or dark mandarin duck

Hackle: Natural rusty dun (or a dark dun and red-brown)

Atherton generally recommends hooks sizes 12, 14, and 16 and states that he had noticed that many tyers and anglers of his time and earlier used hooks that he considered too large. Only on the Number Five does he use a size 10 hook. Because he considers it the "most useful," he feels that it could be tied in the largest range of sizes.

Looking Back Upstream

Twenty Years By Dave Brandt

Twenty years. A generation. A generation of fly tyers. This last generation of tyers has seen more use of synthetic materials and new-fangled patterns than any other before it. The result has been a drift away from traditional Catskill flies.

Most of you will remember Morgan Lyle's "Special Investigative Report" in the Summer 2003 issue of *Fly Tyer* questioning whether or not the Catskill dry fly is obsolete. The *Gazette's* editor at the time, Allan Podell, dove into the great debate, giving the magazine a right proper admonishment for even considering the idea. His letter to them was worded as if it had been suggested that our beloved Catskill dries *were* obsolete. Some time later, David Klausmeyer told me that this article had generated more controversy and mail than any other yet written. In my opinion, that article actually helped our cause considerably. I also want to add here that both Mr. Lyle and Mr. Klausmeyer are good friends, and I'd bet that each of them still carry at least a few of our good ol' Catskill dries.

The great majority of fly tyers and fly fishers that I meet concede that while many of the newer, innovative patterns have their place in the tailwaters (which didn't exist when the classic Catskill patterns were evolving), they maintain room in their fly boxes

and on their tying benches for many of the lovely and charming Catskill flies of yesteryear.

These older patterns and their history, as well as newer Catskill flies, are the reason the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild exists today. It's sometimes hard to say whether we're winning or losing the battle to carry the tradition onward, but I'd say that we are definitely winning! Our mere survival during these times of extreme change tells me that our cause is a worthy one among fly tyers. The many comments and questions I get as a participant at the fishing shows around the East also tend to support the idea that Catskill dry flies are still very much alive and well.

The last twenty years certainly have not diminished my own enthusiasm for tying or fishing Catskill flies, and I suspect that because of the influence of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild, many others, beginners as well as old-timers, are still happy to be pitching perky little Hendricksons up and across.

The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild is twenty years old this year. Happy birthday to us! May the next twenty be as much fun as the last, and may our guild keep passing the torch.

The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild Bylaws

Catskill Fly Tyers Guild Bylaws – Revised & Approved 7/31/11

Article I. Name of Organization – Catskill Fly Tyers Guild

Article II. Location – Roscoe, NY

Article III. The Guild was formed with the following purposes in mind:

1. Preserve, protect and enhance our Catskill fly tying heritage.
2. Work cooperatively to promote the education of present day fly tyers.
3. Provide a forum for the sharing of information.
4. Promote the development of a future generation of Catskill Fly Tyers.
5. To take any other action and to do other things incidental to, or necessary or desirable in connection with the foregoing purposes.

Article IV. Membership

1. Any person interested in the objectives of this organization shall be admitted for membership in the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild upon payment of dues.
2. Application for membership shall be accompanied by the correct amount of dues.
3. The Executive Committee may from time to time establish various honorariums for members with privileges, powers and voting rights as they shall determine. Admission to special membership will be by vote of the membership.

Article V. Dues and Expenditures

1. The Executive Committee shall recommend the amount of annual dues. The dues amount shall be approved by the membership at the annual meeting.
2. Dues are payable by the annual meeting (February). Members not paid by April 30 of that year shall be dropped from membership.
3. Normal expenditures shall be approved and checks shall be signed by two of the four Officers. Expenditures other than mailing costs, materials and printing shall be discussed at meetings and approved by majority of present members. Bills and receipts shall be retained.

Article VI. Meeting Of the Members:

1. The annual meeting of the Guild will be held in February. The place will be determined by the Executive Committee and the membership shall be given 15 days notice prior to the date in writing.

2. The regular monthly meeting – membership shall be advised by mail at least 15 days prior as to time & place.

A. Special – A special meeting may be called by the Executive Committee.

B. Quorum – Eight members shall constitute a quorum for conducting business at a regular meeting or a special meeting.

Article VII.

1. Elected officers shall consist of four Officers.

A. The President will be the chief executive officer of the Guild and will preside at all general, annual and special meetings. The President will appoint all standing and special committees. The term will be 3 years.

B. The Vice President will preside in the absence of the President and perform duties as assigned by the President. The term will be 3 years.

C. The Secretary shall record and maintain minutes of all meetings and report same to the Guild. Will also notify membership of the time and place of meetings and maintain the list of members. Coordinate publicity, activities and local events. The Secretary will preside in the absence of the President and Vice President. The term will be 3 years.

D. The Treasurer shall collect and deposit dues, pay bills, maintain the financial records and report on same at each meeting. Coordinate with secretary. The Treasurer will preside in the absence of the President, Vice President and Secretary. Term to be 3 years.

Article VIII. Committees

1. Executive Committee will consist of the 4 Officers who may conduct any business needed between meetings, approve expenditures not to exceed \$200.00 if the President is present and \$100.00 if he is not part of the executive meeting with an annual accumulated cap of \$500.00 of such expenditures, or call a special meeting if necessary before the next scheduled meeting.

2. Nominating Committee – President to appoint a chairman and two members to actively seek and be responsible for nominations and elections.

3. Audit Committee – President to appoint a chairman and two members who will review financial records and make report at the annual meeting for the previous calendar year.

4. Programs & Events Committee – shall consist of four members. Each will have specific duties covering meeting programs and special events.

5. Bylaws Committee – shall consist of 3 members who review the bylaws each year and address any proposal made.

6. Educational Fund Committee – shall consist of 3 members to review, in a timely manner, suggestions and applications from the membership for use of the CFTG Educational Programs Fund. They would review them with the Executive Committee and bring them before the membership for approval. All raffle monies go into this fund plus any additional monies approved by the membership.

A. An annual award of \$100 each to be given to a high school senior from Roscoe Central School and a high school senior from Livingston Manor Central School who submits an essay on the history of fly fishing in the Catskills or famous local fly fishing people to raise an awareness among the young people of the heritage of the area. Essays to be reviewed and selected by committee without further approval of membership.

B. Set up fly tying classes annually.

Article IX. Amendments

An amendment may be proposed by any member to be considered at any meeting. Should the members present fulfill a quorum, and vote to submit the amendment to the full membership, the Secretary will mail a ballot by postal mail with a copy of the amendment to the total membership within ten (10) days following the meeting. The ballot must be returned within thirty (30) days of the mailing. A two thirds vote of responding members will carry the amendment and will be reported at the second meeting following the mailing.



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.

