



The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild GAZETTE



Volume 18, number 2

March 2015

The March 2015 Meeting of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild will be held on Saturday, March 21, 2015, at 2:00 P.M., at the Rockland House on Route 206 in Roscoe, NY. We will be tying flies to donate to Project Healing Waters, so bring your tools and materials and enjoy an afternoon of tying together for an excellent cause.

Project Healing Waters is dedicated to the physical and emotional rehabilitation of disabled active military-service personnel and disabled veterans through fly fishing and associated activities, including education and outings.

Honorary Member Ballots

To honor the contribution that Bob Osburn has made to preserving and carrying forward the traditions of fly tying in the Catskills, members of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild have proposed making him an honorary lifetime member of the guild. The guild by-laws require that the membership vote on this measure, and for members who receive a hard copy of this newsletter, the ballot is enclosed. If you receive the *Gazette* by e-mail, you will have received a ballot in the U. S. mail.

Please mark and return your ballot as soon as it arrives, and help us honor a man who has done so much for the guild, for fly tying, and for fly tyers in the Catskills.

The Fly Tyers Rendezvous

The Fourteenth Annual Fly Tyers Rendezvous, sponsored by the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild, will be held on Saturday, April 11, 2015, from 10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum Education Building, Old Route 17, Livingston Manor, NY.

Note the new location. This year's Rendezvous contributes to the energy around the First Cast ceremonies held by the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum. (See the calendar below for more on Opening Day ceremonies.)

Join us for a day of camaraderie, reunion, and fly tying. Come hang out with some of the most talented fly tyers in the Northeast. There will be over forty tyers present. And from 10:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M., there will be a silent auction benefitting the guild's current activities. with flies, tools, books and other offerings—donations accepted, as well.

Everyone is welcome, and the Rendezvous is free to everyone. Lunch will be available.

If you wish to tie, space is limited, so contact John Kavanaugh by e-mail at FlymanK@optonline.net or by phone at (943) 586-3673.

After the Rendezvous, join us for dinner at the Rockland House. Social hour, 6:00 p.m. Dinner, 7:00 p.m. Salmon or chicken parm, \$24.00; prime rib, \$28.00. You must make a reservation by April 6—call Judie at (607) 498-6024 or e-mail her at darbee@juno.com. Or mail a check top Catskill Fly Tyers Guild, P.O. Box 663, Roscoe, NY 12776 and include your choice of entrée.



Calendar: Opening Day Events

The Anglers Reunion Dinner, March 31, 2015, at the Rockland House, \$25 per person. Social hour at 6:00 P.M., dinner at 7:00. Call the Rockland House, (607) 498-4240, for reservations. The dinner will feature a PowerPoint presentation by Judy and Ed Van Put describing the various differences between hatchery trout and wild trout. Then join us at Junction Pool at 7:00 A.M. on April 1.

The First Cast Celebration, Saturday, April 11, 2015, 7:30 A.M. at Junction Pool, with refreshments made available by the Roscoe Chamber of Commerce. Guest celebrity to be announced. The official First Cast will be around 7:45 A.M.

The Two-headed Trout Dinner, Saturday, April 11th 2015, at the Rockland House. starting at 6:00 P.M. A six-course meal will be served, from appetizers to dessert. Tickets are \$45 and include a breakfast the next morning at the Community Center, sponsored by the Kiwanis. There will be door prizes, a cash bar, silent auctions, raffles, and more. Call Marge Zanger for tickets and for information at (607) 498-5464.



Good Foundations

When I was a boy, I kept my tying materials in a small Plano tackle box, the one with the tray that swings up when the lid is lifted. I had very few materials back then . . . some wool, thread, a few swatches of fur, some barnyard chicken feathers, and three boxes of hooks. When I last closed that box, it was 1980.

Then I got older, took up fishing and tying again, and I went looking for my materials box. My dad had saved it for me, on a shelf in his detached garage. I took it off the shelf and sat it on the bench. When I opened it, there was mostly dust, some tanned skin devoid of hair, an empty card of wool, and three boxes of hooks. After twenty years, some bugs had gotten to it, and the only thing left were the hooks.

But hooks are the foundation of our creations, more important than any material we lash onto them. Without the hook, catching the fish is impossible. It's the basis of how a fish is caught, regardless of the dressing. Hooks are also something I take very seriously, in a fun way. I am a collector of hooks, mostly vintage and hard-to-find hooks, and to me, a Catskill dry fly just looks better on a prewar hook.

Today, we have such a vast array of hook manufacturers and styles that to have even one box of every style and size would require a huge outlay of cash and a pretty sizable space in your home to store them. So instead of going over all of them, which would require an encyclopedia-sized *Gazette*, let's focus on oldish dry-fly hooks—what would have been popular during the time period that some of senior guild members remember, up to around the 1980s.

To some of us, Mustad was *the* hook of choice for many years, in part because the availability and the quality of Mustads was good after the war put a stop to English hook production. Early on, at the turn of the twentieth century and into the 1940s, British-made hooks were common, because English hook manufacturers were supplying most shops in the United States. For fifty years, Firms such as Allcock, Martinez and Bird, and Alfred Willis were using Sheffield steel to forge, bend, and form the hooks that Catskill fly tyers were clamping in their vises.

Making hooks is a tedious job. Working with very small-diameter steel wire and forming it to be consistently sized and shaped proved to be difficult for all hook makers. Many of the boxes had misshapen hooks, hooks with open eyes, hooks with odd-shaped barbs and points, or brittleness due to overhardening or “soft” hooks from underhardening. It was normal to have a few rejects in every box, and in the case of hardening, sometimes whole boxes of hooks were unusable.

However, the hooks of old have a certain charm that modern-day hook makers have completely lost. The color of old steel, the antique bends, even the “surprise in every box” are lost in modern hook

manufacturing. Chemical sharpening, microbarbs, and smooth, shiny finishes open up opportunities for creativity, but the vintage patterns we love don't look quite the same on them.

Fortunately, the old Mustads are easy to find. Most tyers already have them and continue to use them, and the old patterns still look great on them. I have noticed that in the last few years, the prices have crept up to slightly above what a box of comparable newer hooks costs. Old Mustads are much easier to find than the older British hooks, they have that classic look, and in some cases, the flies we tie were originated on them.

I know its a whole lot easier to order some brand-new shiny hooks or to grab them off the wall of your local fly shop, but if you don't already use them, tie a Quill Gordon on a size 14 Mustad 94833 sometime and tell me it doesn't look *perfect* on that hook.

Two Barbers from Walden, Two Catskill Dry Flies

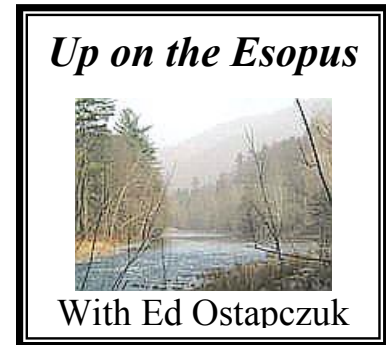
Back in December, Dave Brandt asked me if I would look into a trout fly called the Dutchman. At a recent guild meeting, a member remarked that it was an old Catskill dry fly that could be on the verge of becoming forgotten. Dave supplied me with a few leads and ideas—including a the hint that barber might be involved—and then suggested this might a good topic for a *Gazette* article, not only documenting the fly pattern itself, but also reminding readers that a primary goal of the guild is to keep old trout patterns alive, not letting them slip out of sight with the passage of time.

For some reason that I cannot fully recall, I associated the originator of the Dutchman with that of the Katterman. I asked several different folks about both these patterns and their possible creators, and I appreciate all the help they rendered. After several false starts, blind allies, and dead ends, I learned the story of two barbers from the village of Walden and their dry flies.

Regarding the Katterman (pictured right), I spoke to Frank Kuttner, because I thought he was its creator, since it appears to be his signature pattern. He told me that he didn't originate the Katterman. Then Ed Van Put informed me that he interviewed Emil Katterman in 1986 about the origin of this dry fly. Ed was told that "it was first tied in the 1920s by Adam Unverzagt, a barber from Walden, New York." He added, "When Adam passed away," Emil Katterman had "Elsie Darbee tie the pattern." Ed also mentioned that members of the Beaverkill Trout Club might have relied upon the Dettes to tie the Katterman, a fact confirmed by others.

Per the *1930 United States Federal Census*, Adam Unverzagt was born about 1875, was married with one child, lived in Orange County, and was a barber, and was then fifty-five years old. According to information received from the Village of Walden's Town Clerk's Office, Unverzagt did in fact live in Walden, and his barber shop was still operational into the early 1940s. Ed Van Put further confirmed that Unverzagt purchased property along Esopus Creek in 1915.

Regarding the Dutchman (pictured left), Dave Brandt put me in touch with guild member Bruce Concors, who also has a Walden background. Growing up in the 1960s, Bruce knew another Walden barber named Billy



Taylor, and Bruce credits him with originating the Dutchman. How small a world is this? Two barbers from the village of Walden originated two traditional Catskill dry flies. Did they know each other? Could Unverzagt have influenced Taylor? It's hard to say.

Art Lee's *Fishing Dry Flies for Trout* provides pattern information for both the Dutchman and the Katterman, plus a color plate that pictures them side by side. Harry Darbee's *Catskill Flytier* also mentions Unverzagt and his Adams March Brown.

The patterns, per Lee's *Fishing Dry Flies for Trout*, are as follows.

Katterman

Hook: Dry fly, size 12 to 18
Thread: Brown
Wings: None
Tail: Light ginger hackle tips
Body: Peacock herl, ribbed with fine gold wire and brown palmered hackle
Hackle: White

Dutchman

Hook: Dry fly, size 8 to 14
Thread: Black
Wings: White calf tail, titled forward and oversized
Tail: Brown and grizzly hackle fibers
Body: Peacock herl
Hackle: Brown and grizzly, mixed

Also, for the Dutchman, Joe Fox supplied me with a similar, but slightly different dressing based family records. His notes called for a Mustad 94833 hook in sizes 12 or 14 with white deer hair wings, a tail of red saddle hackle, and coch-y-bondhu hackle, but the recipe retains the peacock herl body and black thread.

Thanks to everyone who assisted me with this article, especially Dave Brandt, Bruce Concors, Ed Van Put, and the Village of Walden. Pictured are a size 14 Katterman tied by Frank Kuttner, while I tied a size 12 Dutchman. (Photos by Ed Ostapczuk.)

The Kelsey Brook, Trout

By Ted Sypher

In the early 1960s, a group of us formed the Southern Tier Chapter of Trout Unlimited. One project we had was setting aside (with landowner permission) a one-mile section from stream improvement and a "No-Kill" area. At that time, no-kill practices were called "fishing for fun," a concept developed and popularized by the fisheries biologist Dr. Albert Hazzard.

We called upon Dr. Hazzard for his expertise, and on one of his several trips to the stream, he pointed out the number of brook trout fingerlings present. I decided an imitation would be in order. Thus was the pattern I call the Kelsey Brook, Trout, devised.

The pattern has evolved from the original to a trolling fly. The original has given me some very good fishing, and I recommend it for the early season. I have tied the trolling pattern only for display, but would appreciate hearing any fishing results.



Original Kelsey Brook, Trout

Hook: Mustad 9671, 9575, or similar

Thread: Black or dark olive

Tail: Red over white hackle barbs

Rib: Bright yellow floss

Body: Dark olive green chenille

Hackle: White over red, beard style

Underwing: Sparse gray squirrel tail

Wing: Two furnace hackles—for greater realism, furnace over golden olive hackles



Kelsey Brook, Trout Trolling Fly

Hook: Partridge CS15, or similar

Tail: White over black over red hackle barbs

Rib: Bright yellow floss

Underbelly: White bucktail over orange bucktail

Hackle: White over black over red hackle, beard style

Underwing: Sparse gray squirrel tail

Wing: Two golden olive hackles, flanked a furnace hackle on each side

Shoulder: Reeves pheasant body feather with ruffed grouse “eye” from the back of the bird

Looking Back Upstream



Angler's Cove: Crossroads of New York City's Fly-Fishing Culture, Part 9 Ernest Schwiebert

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'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.

My first memory of Dr. Ernie Schwiebert is of that deep-green Tyrolean hat he sported. But my initial introduction to him was just through his first book, *Matching the Hatch*. Many of the patterns in that volume helped me to catch trout, and it remains a valuable primer for the angling entomologist. My first actual meeting with Ernie was at Angler's Cove. Ernie and Bob Zwirz were planning a trip to

Patagonia. At that time, during a brief conversation, Ernie told me that if he was going to redo any of his books, *Matching the Hatch* would be “one book that I would change very little.”

Ernie’s interest in fly fishing grew from his early experiences fishing in Michigan. One morning, while driving to the grocery store with his mother, she stopped the car at a small trout stream. In “Thoughts in Coltsfoot Time,” which appeared in the April 1976 issue of the Theodore Gordon Flyfishers publication *Random Casts*, Ernie wrote, “The most pervasive echo of that Summer remains the solitary fisherman wading upstream in those swift shallows . . . his fly line working lazily in the morning light.” It was “the genesis of a lifelong odyssey in search of trout and salmon.”

When Ernie traveled, he usually accessed remote fishing areas via chopper, small aircraft, or float plane. Ernie said, “I like playing tag with the mountains!” He enjoyed the challenges of trout fishing and said, in *Salmon of the World*, “Although there’s something lyric about all of the Salmonidae, there is something Homeric about salmon, and it’s the mystery of their pelagic migrations that is a primary factor in their mystique and charm.” He knew the magic of bright rivers tumbling toward the sea and was drawn to sea-polished fish in a taking mood. *Salmon of the World* is not long on words, but Ernie’s description of the Atlantic salmon fishing experience is unique.

I once cornered Ernie after he completed a presentation on Atlantic salmon fishing. Howard Tanner, then director of Michigan’s Department of Natural Resources, had decided to stock king salmon and later steelhead from the Pacific Basin into Lake Michigan. The lake trout populations had been decimated by gillnetting, and dead alewives were polluting Lake Michigan’s beaches. Tanner’s policy was designed to crop the alewife population. Many in Trout Unlimited feared that stocking Pacific Basin salmonids in the Great Lakes might be detrimental to resident populations of brown trout in Lake Michigan’s tributary streams. Ernie commented that we had a “tiger by the tail” and would be hard pressed to do anything about this. He was dead right. The Michigan United Conservation Club’s members cherished the idea of big fish in the Lake Michigan ecosystem, and they far outnumbered those in Michigan TU. Consequently, they had greater political clout. They prevailed.

The last time I saw Ernie was at my good friend Dr. Dan Crockett’s memorial service at the Kalamazoo Country Club in February 1999. We shared some Jack Daniels, reminisced about the past, and agreed that the cold-water fishery had lost a great friend and staunch supporter. I never suspected that this occasion would mark the last time that I would see Ernie. He passed away in 2005.

I know very few anglers with an angling résumé as broad as Ernie’s. His legacy rests not only in the scope of the fishing he was able to do, but with his ability to record that experience in writing. His two-volume *Trout*, his magnum opus, is a herculean work that offers a tremendous amount of information useful to beginning anglers, advanced anglers, and all those in between.

Ernie was fond of the Hendrickson hatch on the Pere Marquette when he was beginning his fishing career, so I thought a Hendrickson spinner pattern from *Matching the Hatch* would be a good pattern to include here. It is somewhat unusual by contemporary standards, because it is a spent-wing pattern with the inclusion of a dry-fly hackle. I think it is a nice pattern and one I might be tempted to fish if I ever see a reliable *Ephemerella subvaria* spinner fall.



Hendrickson Spinner

Hook: Mustad 94840, size 12, or equivalent dry-fly hook

Thread: Brown

Wing: White hackle points, tied as spent wings

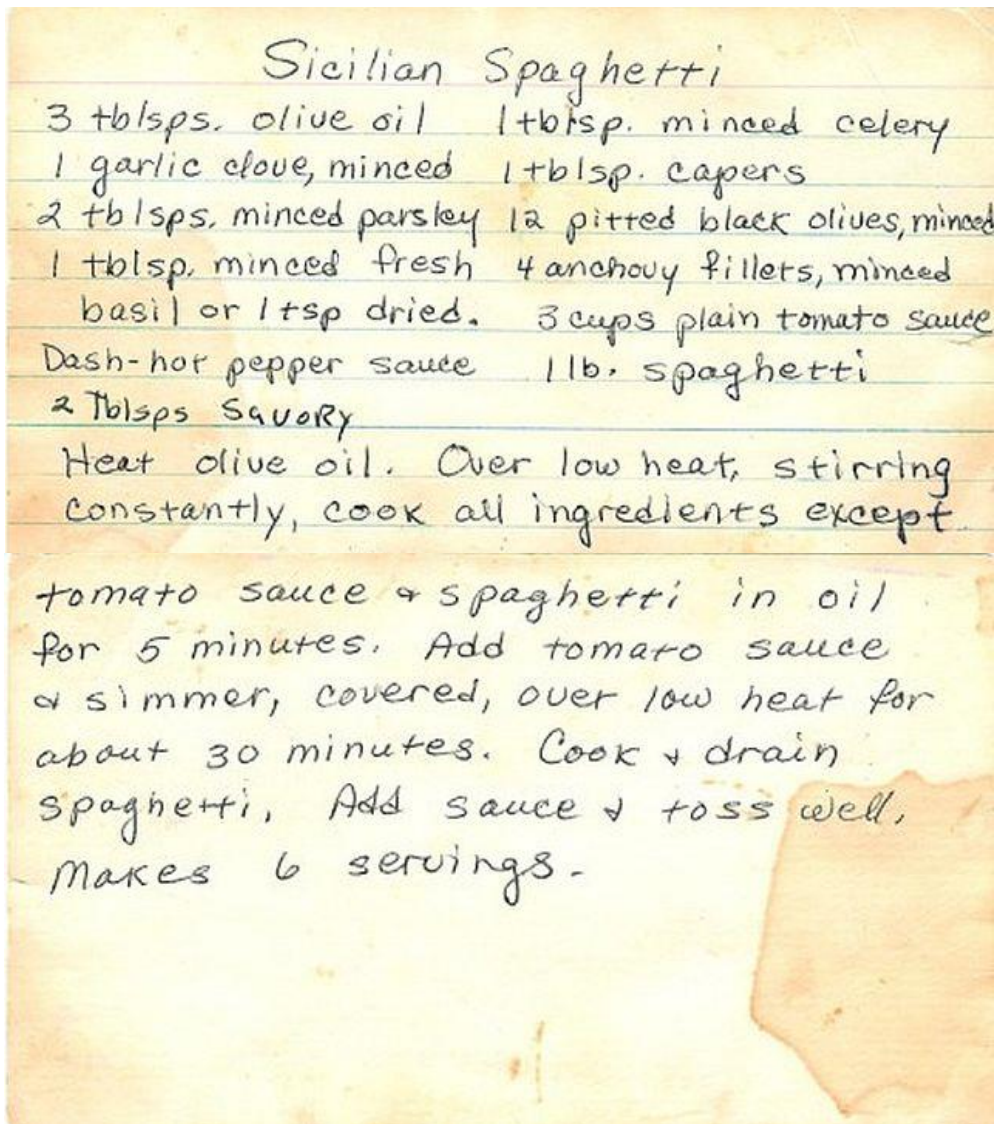
Body: Tip of tan fur, followed by a stripped peacock eye quill

Tails: Two long ringneck pheasant tail fibers

Hackle: Medium brown

Elsie Darbee's Sicilian Spaghetti Recipe

For tyers who want to carry the Catskill tradition beyond Mustad hooks, natural fur, and wood duck feathers, here's something to enjoy back in camp. (Courtesy of Judie DV Smith.)



Book Review

Letters to Mack: Book One. Correspondence on a Fishing Life

By Tom McCoy. self-published and available on Amazon.com; \$11.99 softbound, \$4.99 Kindle.

"I fish, therefore I am," a piscatorial philosopher might write. Those of us who fish—who grew up fishing or who grew into it—find in it both a ground for who we are and a basis for bonding with others. "A fishing life" is in that sense a tautology: life and fishing just go together, and we go through that life together with the friends with whom we share it.

For Tom McCoy, that friend has been Mack. In *Letters to Mack: Book One* (the first of a series published by McCoy that now includes a second and a third volume, subtitled *Correspondence from Montana to Montauk* and *Correspondence from Islamorada to Pulaski*), McCoy shares with his readers letters to a old friend with whom he was "closer than brothers" in grade school and beyond and who the currents of life (the Vietnam war, families, jobs) carried away, then restored. Throughout the pains of career problems, family problems, and health problems, they have supported each other. "Our friendship

is about being there for one another,” McCoy writes, “both knowing that our relationship is a forever thing and not to be broken by our mutual misbehaviors or the happenings of the world around us or the miles between us.” And as these letters attest, the ground of that support and of their bond has been fishing.

At the beginning of *Walden*, Thoreau writes: “I . . . require of every writer, first or last, a simple and sincere account of his own life, and not merely what he has heard of other men’s lives; some such account as he would send to his kindred from a distant land; for if he has lived sincerely, it must have been in a distant land to me.” Mack now lives in Las Vegas, about as far from McCoy’s Long Island as you can get, and not just in physical miles, but *Letters to Mack* is indeed a sincere account that bridges that distance and that brings the two together on the basis of “a fishing life.”

It also is a collection of really good fish stories, well told. They’re not all about fly fishing, although there are plenty of accounts of fly-fishing trips to the Catskills, to the Adirondacks, and to the San Juan, as well as of saltwater fly fishing on Long Island. Some just involve being outdoors, bagging peaks in the Adirondacks, although they’re told in the voice of an angler who returns again and again to the mountain streams. And some involve conventional-tackle angling, mostly for striped bass and blues in the salt.

Always, in the background, there also is life as it comes to us, including the attacks of 9/11, job pressures, health woes, a lament for a beloved dog that had to be put down, and more. But in the foreground, pulling it all together, is fishing, and as McCoy writes, “It is not about catching the fish, it’s about being there.”

“Being there” is what the stories that McCoy tells are all about—the details, the texture, of a fishing life: early morning risings, losing big ones, searching for fishable water on a trip when the rivers are blown out. Here’s a passage from “Predawn Fishing,” chumming for stripers on Long Island Sound.

At 5 AM the birds are out working, The chum sinks slowly, and when the current is running it stays near the surface for a while. I cast toward the bow and near the boat to give the bait a chance to sink before the seagulls pick it up. The old gulls don’t work that hard. They wait 100 feet behind the boat for the chunks to fly off during a poor cast. Once in a while, as floating bait rises to the surface due to a tight line, the gulls will pick it up and your adrenaline spikes as the reel sings, but it’s just a gull.

As with angling itself, it’s the little things that add up to a fishing life.

And as with many self-published books, a reader who’s attentive to the sorts of little things that editors care about will whine about such issues in *Letters to Mack*, but anyone who likes a good story about the kind of life we anglers share will find enjoyment here.

—Bud Bynack

Obituaries

Dennis VanHoose, Jr., 59, of North Lewisburg, Ohio, passed away, Friday, January 30, 2015, at Memorial Hospital of Union County, Marysville, Ohio. He was born August 1, 1955, in Marysville and graduated from Triad High School in 1973. Dennis worked for several years at Marysville Middle school as a maintenance custodian. He was an avid reader, but, his true passion was fly fishing. He was a member of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild and an active participant on the Sparse Grey Matter fly-fishing forum hosted by the Dette Fly Shop. Dennis is survived by his wife of twenty-eight years, Kim, two daughters, three grandchildren, a sister, and a host of friends, especially fly fishers.



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.