



Volume 17, number 2

May 2014

The May Meeting of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild will be held on Saturday, May 17, at 1:00 P.M. in the Catskill Rodmakers' Workshop and Heritage Craft Center on the lower level of the Education Building at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum, 1031 Old Route 17, Livingston Manor, NY. The May program will feature a surprise guest tyer. Come and be surprised.

Note the changed meeting time and location. The June 21 meeting will also be at the museum, as will the annual picnic, on August 16, at the Elsie and Harry Darbee and Matthew Vinciguerra Memorial Pavilion

Catskill Flies Today

In "The Divided Wing: Some Thoughts on Our Catskill Tradition," in the February 2014 Gazette, Bill Leuszler argued that "because our favorite rivers have changed, we are adapting the Catskill style to new environments. I hope that in the future, the Catskill style will continue to evolve . . . I also hope that members of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild will be more receptive to ongoing contributions made to the Catskill style. By continuing the development of the Catskill dry fly, we are contributing to the development of a uniquely American fly-fishing culture, just as Theodore Gordon did in his day." Here is a response to that article.

I think Bill has reframed a very important aspect of what we have been clumsily struggling with for some time. In discussing what constitutes a "Catskill fly," we were moving forward from the traditional flies of earlier times and were floundering around with a very unfocused catch-all, "flies that can be fished in the Catskills." Bill has thought this out and makes the linkage between the flies and the rivers—Catskill flies for Catskill rivers. This is a discipline that can move us forward with some flies that have developed since the traditional set of patterns and allows for future designs. I think Bill's truly thoughtful contribution is exactly what we have needed, a sound way to qualify newer flies as "Catskill" patterns. We can fish Turck's Tarantula on the Beaverkill, but it's not a Catskill fly. I would encourage the guild to consider this idea of Bill's seriously. In proposing a way to think about the nature and status of Catskill flies today, he's come up with something original and valuable.

—Paul Murphy

Fly-Tying Program Report

Members of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild held an intermediate fly-tying program this year on five Sunday afternoons in March at Gander Mountain in Middletown, NY.

This year, at the suggestion of Bob Osburn, each week, a tyer volunteered to lead the group by teaching a pattern of his choice. This approach was very successful and introduced the participants to some unique patterns: soft hackles, with Bob Osburn; hellgrammites, with Kevin Storms; leeches, with Sean Jordan; the March Brown dry, with Bill Leuszler; and the Turkey Tail Stone Fly, with Kevin Storms. Other participants were Don Stewart, John Moissett, Nolan Casale, and Ed Drybred.

Thanks to everyone, especially Gander Mountain, for making this a special event. We look forward to seeing everybody next year, in March 2015.

Tyers Needed, PA Heritage Day

The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild will have a table at the 12th Annual Heritage Day hosted by the Pennsylvania Fly Fishing Museum, Saturday, June 14, 2014, from 8:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. in Boiling Springs, PA. If you'd like to tie at this event, contact Allen Landheer at superflytyer@gmail.com or (570) 269-1617.



Angler's Cove: Crossroads of New York City's Fly-Fishing Culture, Part 7

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: I think you told me that Helen Shaw was among the notable people who passed through Angler's Cove.

Merrill: I can't say that I knew Helen well, but I met and chatted with her on a number of occasions. Those brief meetings, along with her books, were enough to help temper my tying skill, and I'm glad I had that opportunity.

My first fly-tying book was *How to Tie Flies*, by E. C. Gregg, and my second book was J. Edson Leonard's *Flies: Their Origin, Natural History, Tying, Hooks, Patterns and Selections of Dry and Wet Flies, Nymphs, Streamers, Salmon Flies for Fresh and Salt*. Both of these books piqued my interest in tying and also helped me to tie some reasonable flies.

I developed some sound basic techniques, but I also fell into some poor tying habits. Colonel Henry Siegel, the proprietor of the Angler's and Shooter's Bookshelf, suggested that I purchase a copy of Helen's now-classic work, *Fly Tying*. That book demystified many of the fly-tying operations that were problematic for me as a self-taught tyer, and some years after the book's publication, when I took a formal tying class from Keith Fulsher, Helen's book remained helpful, because it enabled me to ask appropriate questions about tying techniques that may have remained obscure without the knowledge imparted by her text.

I believe that *Fly Tying* remains a seminal work for anyone interested in learning the art of tying. Arnold Gingrich dubbed Helen “the first lady of fly tying,” and while others may have been deserving of that title, the publication of *Fly Tying* in 1963 probably prompted that distinction.

Bud: Were there many women fly tyers or fly fishers during the time when you were working at the Cove? If they stopped in, how were they treated?

Merrill: Aside from Glad Zwirz and some of the female tyers in the Catskills, it was very rare to see a woman at the Cove. I do not recall seeing any women in the tying classes we held. There were some female fly fishers who occasionally attended Theodore Gordon Flyfishers meetings. We had women come into the Cove to purchase gifts for the male counterparts, and they were treated just as any other client might be. We always tried to put forth a friendly and cordial atmosphere for our customers, male or female.

Helen Shaw was not a frequent visitor to the Cove, either, but she stopped in periodically, especially when she was participating in a program at a monthly meeting of the Theodore Gordon Flyfishers. Once, when I knew she was going to be demonstrating her tying skills at TGF that evening, and I had her book with me, she inscribed my book for me and we chatted briefly. One look at her meticulous script spoke volumes about her fly tying. She applied the same discipline to her fly dressing.

Upon my arrival at the Williams Club, where the meeting was held, after some of the usual social dance, I made my way to Helen’s tying table. I watched her tie for awhile, and she asked me if I was having any particular tying problem. I told her that *Fly Tying*, with its photographs taken from the tyer’s perspective, coupled with instructional narrative, already had solved many of my tying problems.

Helen Shaw was not a production or speed tyer, and she told me so. She tied without the use of a bobbin and maintained tension on her tying thread by fastening it between a couple of rubber grommets at the base of her vise. She did not like to interrupt the tying process by tying off one length of thread, then beginning an operation with another length of thread somewhere else on the fly. She preferred a continuous tying sequence, without the use of half hitches, and preferred the continuous sequencing of pattern components with one length of thread. She also insisted on the concise placement of pattern components.

Helen also mounted her dry-fly hackles with the dull side toward the eye of the hook. This remains an issue for many tyers, and it certainly confused me when I began tying. Many tyers and most books recommended tying with the shiny side forward. I settled for the dull-side option—if it was good enough for Helen Shaw, it had to be good enough for me, even though Helen provided no rationale for doing this.

Bud: Is there a rationale? Or is it just a matter of personal preference and how one is taught to do it?

Merrill: Basically, it is a design concept that makes dry flies more efficient. By placing the concave side forward (dull side forward) on good-quality dry-fly hackles, the barbules of the stiff feathers are oriented toward the front of the fly. When a drag-free drift is complete, and the fly starts to drag, the angler will lift the fly from the water to begin a new cast. As the fly is being drawn against the surface tension, the forward-oriented hackle barbules are pushed toward the back of the fly by the surface tension. When the fly is finally aerialized, the hackle barbules spring back to their forward

orientation, and this springing forward throws off the water that has been picked up by the hackle and allows the fly to be recast without false casting. It gives your flies more time on the water during surface-feeding activity.

Bud: Interesting! So what fly do you think of when remembering Helen Shaw?

Merrill: It's difficult for me to find a "signature fly" for Helen Shaw. I certainly do not have any in my collection. Therefore I simply selected the Prime Gnat, a fly from her last book, *Flies for Fish and Fishermen*.

Prime Gnat

Hook: Mustad 3906B or equivalent
Tag: Flat gold tinsel
Tip: Orange silk floss
Body: Black ostrich herl
Hackle: Black hen
Wings: Black goose quill sections



Fly and photo by Merrill Katz.

Ed Van Put and the Able Mable

I first met Ed Van Put on Opening Day of 1970 while fishing the Willowemoc no-kill section with a good buddy. Ed was searching for a fish poacher, but stopped to inquire about our angling results, check our out-of-state licenses, and converse with us before moving on. About three months later, my wife and I relocated from New Jersey to the Catskills, and I contacted the Department of Environmental Conservation's New Paltz regional office, asking about Van Put. In short order, Ed wrote back to me. I still have his letter, and we've been friends ever since.

Edward Van Put needs very little introduction. He authored *The Beaverkill: The History of a River and Its People* and *Trout Fishing in the Catskills*, two important histories of the region and its traditions. Plus, he has written numerous articles in various angling magazines. During his forty-year career with the DEC, he secured fifty-five miles of public fishing easements throughout the Catskills, an achievement for which anglers are forever in his debt. In 2008, he was inducted into the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum Hall of Fame. In 2009, the Sullivan County Historical Society presented him with their History Preserver Award. This quiet, modest individual has made a lasting impact on the Catskills. His knowledge of the region is impeccable, and he's the best trout fisher that I've ever known.

Ed created the dry fly called the Able Mable in 1992, naming it in honor of the late Mabel S. Ingalls. Thus far, I've seen this pattern mentioned in only two books, and neither of Van Put's books includes it. On page 191 of *Land of Little Rivers* Mac Francis includes a photo, dressing, and short write-up about the fly. And Mike Valla does likewise, minus the dressing, on page 209 of his *Tying Catskill-Style Dry Flies*.

Up on the Esopus



With Ed Ostapczuk

Van Put created this fly on behalf of the Woman Flyfishers Club on their sixtieth anniversary as a way to honor Mabel Ingalls, a longtime club member. According to Mac Francis, the club was originally “conceived by Julia Freeman Fairchild, Frank Hovey-Roof Connell, and Mary Ashley Hewitt” on the banks of the West Branch of the Neversink and the Winton Preserve waters. It was incorporated on January 28, 1932, with thirty-three founding members. Over the years, the club’s home waters have moved throughout the Catskills, but it is now located on the storied Beaverkill.

Dr. Mabel Satterlee Ingalls (1901–1993) was a granddaughter of J. P. Morgan and active in the community throughout her adult life. In 1937, Ingalls earned a Ph.D. in bacteriology and immunology and then in 1954 a master’s in public health, both from Columbia University. For thirty years, she was associated with various medical and scientific groups, plus, she served as an adjunct professor at the Columbia School of Public Health and the Albany Medical School. She also worked as a liaison officer between the World Health Organization and the United Nations. Late in life, she lived in Manhattan, yet was a longtime Orange County community volunteer. Not only was she a member of the Woman Flyfishers Club, but reportedly, she loved to fly fish for salmon in Norway. From all accounts, she was an impressive individual involved with distinguished social programs both stateside and aboard.

The Able Mable

Hook: Mustad 94840. size 12 or 14

Thread: Black

Wings: Flank feathers of a drake wood duck

Tail: Dark brown or chocolate hackle fibers

Ribbing: Amber cotton thread

Body: Mink fur dubbing, a few guard hairs left in

Hackle: One natural red-brown and one grizzly hackle, wound together

Ed told me that he ties this dry on both size 12 and size 14 hooks, but that he likes a the size 12 the best. He feels the fly is a good representation of a March Brown, but



that was not his intent when he created it. Mac Francis suggests that the choice of a mink body dubbing might be related to Mabel Ingalls’s family lineage.

Ed Van Put told me that the first time he ever fished this pattern was on the East Branch of the Delaware River in May 1992. That day, it accounted for two trout, a nineteen-inch wild rainbow and a sixteen-inch wild brown—a pretty darn good beginning for a Catskill-style dry fly with a well-heeled background.

Tied by Ed Van Put Photo by Ed Ostapczuk



Mixing Styles

I have grown to live with things as they are. I'm the type who doesn't deviate from the standard. I used to mix it up a lot as a younger man, always tinkering

with things to change them, most of the time with subpar results. My father told me, "They make it like that *because it works.*" When I took up fly tying, I went with my adult philosophy on the patterns I tie: read the dressing, tie the fly. No need to alter them much—maybe a different shade of hackle or body color, but for the most part, when you look at one of my flies, there is no argument as to what it is. In a nutshell, I guess that I am not a pattern designer.

However, I am happy that others are, and I never tire of reading about or seeing the "new" patterns that people think up and, better yet, use with success. Let's face it, there are thousands of "new" patterns tied every year. Some are variations on a standard and some are totally different. And sometimes someone takes two standard patterns and morphs them together to make something different, yet familiar.



An Internet friend of mine—we will call him "Mack," because that's his name—came up with this variation based on a Catskill dry and the Comparadun. He has been tinkering with this design since 1987 and really likes the way it works on the water. It's interesting to me because while there are some flies tied like this, this one has a few sensible applications that make it a little more realistic while keeping it impressionistic enough to produce. Microfibbet tails and flank wings mix the new and the old, too.

The first thing that I really liked about the design is that instead of using a standard hook to match the insect in question, Mack uses a long-shank, smaller-gape hook. He explains that a Mustad 79580 in a size 16 is the same as a size 12 94833-40. Al Caucci went into this a little bit in *Hatches*, but rarely do I see patterns that use this approach. It makes for a lighter fly of the same size.

Another aspect that I liked was the "forward of the wing" hackling, something that is more mayflylike in appearance. Also, it's clipped on the bottom for a nice stance in the water. While this style of hackling does not make a terrific rough-water floater, it does leave a very seductive footprint on the surface in choppy or slower water, where imitative aspects are a plus.

This is a pattern that could be tied in all sizes for all Catskill hatches. I have already finished a batch for the Hendricksons, should winter ever stop and spring begin.

The dressing is as follows.

Wings: Flank feather, upright and divided

Tail: Microfibbets, split Comparadun style

Body: Dubbing, hatch-matching color of your choice, figure-eighted through the wings

Hackle: Hatch-matching colors—dun, grizzly, cream, and so on—mounted ahead of the wings, with a V clipped on the bottom

This is a great fly using common materials with a slightly different look. I am anxious to try it myself.

The Knot Snail Fly

By Jack Pangburn

Snails are not creatures that capture the imagination of fly tyers and fly fishers. But trout in lakes do eat snails and eat them in vast quantities. In some lakes, snail populations run in the millions. You will find them on shore rocks and slowly moving about on sunken logs. Once you take a look in the foliage of aquatic plants, you will realize that is the true home of the snail. Such an abundant food source is not ignored by trout. They actually root around in underwater weed beds in search of snails and scuds.

How do you fish a snail pattern? Because snails live mostly in thick beds of aquatic weeds, you must keep the fly in the feeding zone of the fish. Most often, snail imitations are fished in less than eight feet of water. A slow intermediate sinking line allows the angler to get the fly down to the proper depth and employ a retrieving method that pulls the line up a little and then lets it sink a bit, keeping the line just above the weeds while giving the fly a deadly rising-and-sinking action.

Hook: Wet or dry fly, size 10 to 14

Thread: Brown, tan, or pink

Body/foot: Antron dubbing

Eyes: A length of heavy mono, melted to a bead at both ends

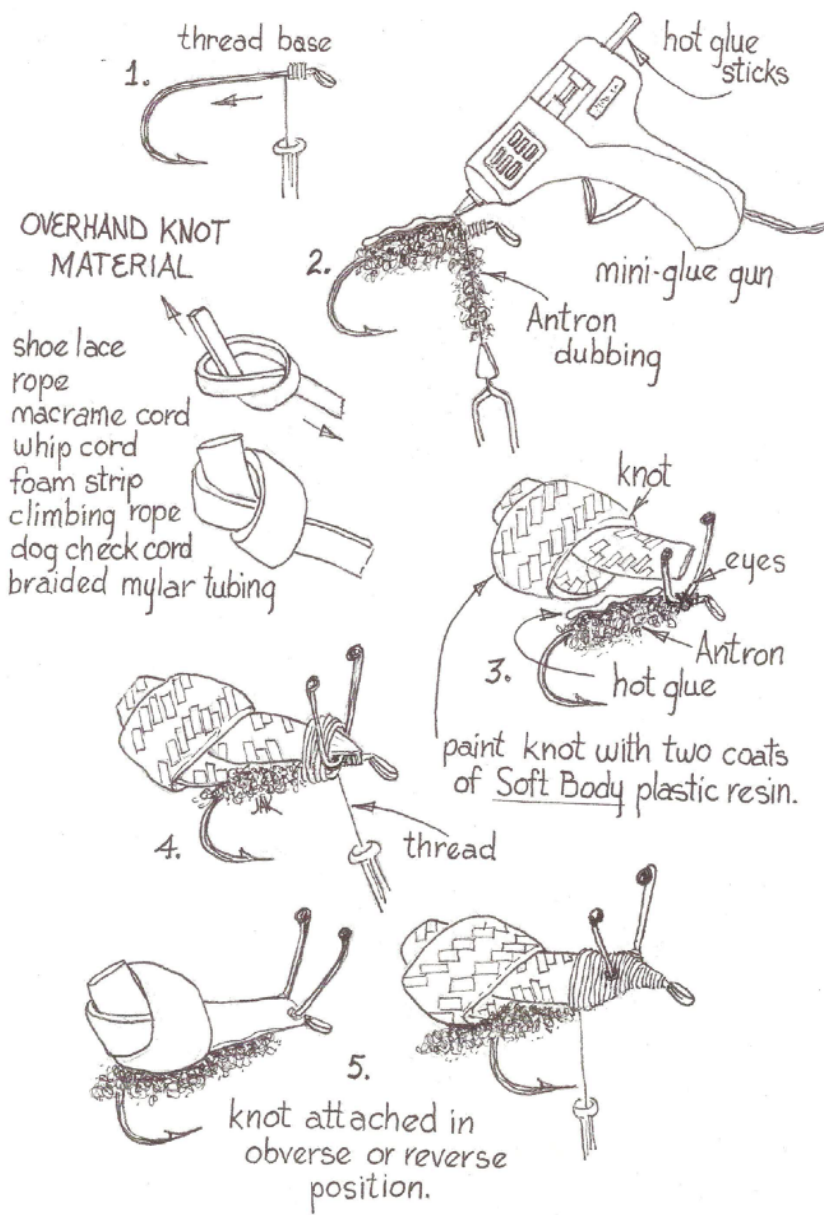
Shell: Black, brown, olive, or mottled shoelace, painted with Soft Body plastic resin, bonded to the body with hot glue and secured with thread between the eyes.



When construction is complete, recoat the snail knot with Soft Body and add a little character with a touch of Testor's gloss black enamel to the ball on the melted mono eyes, then pick out some of the Antron used for the snail's foot.

Weighting the hook is optional. Without it, the fly can be fished as a floating snail. The knot then serves as a balloon to float the fly with the snail's foot under the surface in the same position as a natural floating snail.

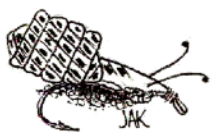




Blood Knot



overhand knot with end of cord passed through the loop two, three or more times - pulled taut.



sometimes called a "barrel knot."

Bonus Pattern: Jack Pangburn's Partridge Dabbler

The Partridge Dabbler is easy to tie and adaptable to various substitute materials. The shadow portrait from below the water's surface displays the characteristics of many flying insects. A few twitches of the Dabbler will create surface action with the same signals as a cook's dinner bell.

Partridge Dabbler

Hook: Dry Fly

Thread: Gray or tan

Extended abdomen: Tan, yellow, and orange SLF dubbing, mixed, in a spun dubbing loop. A few dabs of tying varnish on the thread will keep the body from unwinding.

Wing: White deer hair tied in midhook, butts facing the rear

Hackle: Partridge (or barred wood duck), tied in and wrapped at the same point as the deer hair wing

Head: SLF brown and tan, mixed, a darker shade than the abdomen. Finish with a very small thread head.



The extended abdomen will ride on top of the water's surface while allowing the hook and hackle points to penetrate below it.

—Jack Pangburn

Renewals and New Members

You can now send your dues to this address: Bill Leuszler, CFTG, P.O. Box 79, Wurtsboro, NY 12790.

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

☞ The Rockland House ☛

The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild wants to express its appreciation and thanks to Tom and Marea Roseo, proprietors of the Rockland House, for making the facilities at that establishment available for the guild meetings and for their continued support. Please reciprocate with your



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.