



Volume 15, number 3

June 2012

**The June meeting of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild** will be held on Saturday, June 16, 2012, at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum, Old Route 17, in Livingston Manor, NY. Lou Kasamis will be discussing tying the traditional Catskill dry fly and tying the Light Cahill and the Adams.

Of Lou and others like him, angling historian Mike Valla wrote on the Sparse Grey Matter bulletin board, hosted by Joe Fox and the Dette Fly Shop: “As I've tried to point out in other writings, and in discussions with others, there are many followers of the Catskill tradition. I can easily name a dozen of my friends, from my era starting in 1960s, who have been tying Catskill flies for decades. . . . They never hang out on blogs, forums, or at ‘in-person’ gatherings. You’ll rarely see them at a tying function. Some will occasionally—yet rarely—attend a major show. . . . They often go into seclusion, preferring that the hobby of fly tying stay a ‘personal’ relationship married only to hooks and some feathers and some history. There are a lot of them out there. More than you might imagine.”

Lou Kasamis is one such legendary tyer. “He started with a Universal fly tying kit and Dick Stewart’s *Universal Fly Tying Guide*,” Valla noted, “But it was Eric Leiser’s *Complete Book of Fly Tying* that sent him soaring.” In the same thread, Ted Patlen wrote that Lou “tied a dry that I have in my collection that has the minimal number of turns of thread that can be used . . . I forget the number, but it was exceptionally low . . . he counted the turns and removed any he deemed unnecessary.” It “was sensational.”

One Lou Kasamis sighting occurred when his Ginger Quill won the Second Annual Southern Appalachian Fly-Tying Contest, beating flies by the likes of Chris Helm and Nik Dahlin. Come enjoy this rare chance to hear Lou Kasamis talk about his craft and the tradition of tying the Catskill dry fly.

### **Submissions Wanted: Guild Show Fly Plate**

The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild is putting together a fly plate of traditional Catskill dry flies to be used at shows as an educational resource and as an example of the tradition and its continued life today. Members wishing to do so may contribute flies for display in the plate.

After some consultation, we’ve settled on the following patterns as representative of the traditional Catskill dry fly: Quill Gordon, Light Hendrickson, Light Cahill, Isonychia, March Brown, Green Drake, Coffin Fly, Red Quill, Cream Variant, Conover, and Gray Fox.

All those wishing to submit flies should do so as soon as possible. You can either bring your submissions to the June meeting or mail them to me by June 30, 2012:

Joe Ceballos  
711 Amsterdam Avenue  
Apt. 16G  
New York, NY 10025

I will acknowledge via e-mail or a phone call each fly received. In the case of multiple submissions, the best example will be determined and used. I would also like recommendations for an individual to make the fly plate.

—Joe Ceballos

## Bill Leuzler Elected Treasurer

At the May meeting of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild, Bill Leuzler was officially elected treasurer of the organization, following the separation of the office from that of the secretary under the revised bylaws. In addition to receiving renewals, as in the past, Bill will be keeping the books, which will simplify the administration of the organization in multiple ways. The guild profusely thanks Bill for agreeing to take on this job.

## Tyers Needed in September

We need volunteers to help staff a table at the Sullivan Country Heritage Faire at the Bethel Woods Center for the Arts on September 9, 2012. The event is devoted to “interpretation of Sullivan County’s rich history,” and the Catskill angling tradition should be represented. If you’re interested, contact Judie DV Smith, darbee1@juno.com or (607) 498-6024.

## Rendezvous a Success

Despite the kind of spring that had people already out on the rivers, not inside tying, thirty-eight tyers and many visitors enjoyed the 2012 Fly Tyers Rendezvous, sponsored by the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild. The raffle for the flies and fly box donated by Jan Edman of Sweden was won by Mike Canazon. Many thanks, as always, to Leslie Wrixon for organizing it, Ken Kobayashi for providing the lighting, and to the setup and cleanup crew.

## The Fluttering Caddis and Leonard M. Wright, Jr.

When I was a young wannabe fly fisher growing up in the Garden State, if memory serves me correctly, most of the fly-fishing entomology literature I could lay my hands on discussed only the stately mayfly, with very little information about caddisflies and stoneflies, if any at all. In fact, I believe Ernest Schwiebert’s *Matching the Hatch* was one of the few books that broached these subjects in something other than a cursory fashion. And I also remember many a day on Jersey’s Big Flat Brook fly-fishing-only section when blizzard caddis hatches were about, yet I had little reference material to assist my learning process. Thus, in 1972, when Leonard Wright’s book *Fishing the*

### *Up on the Esopus*



*Dry Fly as a Living Insect* was released, I was all over that hardcover like a proverbial fly drawn to honey.

Wright's book was one of the first to discuss the importance of caddisflies in some detail, but it was full of heresy also, and I remember great debates among fly fishers about the worth of this text. Not only did Leonard Wright introduce his Fluttering Caddis there, but he also discussed the concept of "the sudden inch," fishing a dry fly with movement, plus across and downstream, and not dead drift upstream—an unheard-of concept among gentlemen dry-fly anglers. As if that wasn't enough, he later followed this book up with *Fly-Fishing Heresies*, an almost in-your-face work of more unorthodox ideas with additional information on caddisflies and his Fluttering Caddis pattern. Wright's second book was published in 1975.

In both his books, Wright covered his Fluttering Caddis in only a generic fashion. He never really provided specific patterns, but just discussed how to tie a "fluttering-type" caddis dry fly. Well, for someone like me, this approach came up a bit short. I needed detailed dressings. This much I will say about Wright's advice: he noted that "after hours of frustration" he had concluded that the wing, tied downwing style on his Fluttering Caddis, needed to be tied with "spade hackle fibers." Now I had two strikes going against me in the pursuit of tying Fluttering Caddis—no specific pattern information and no ready source of spade hackle. However, in due time, both problems were solved.

In 1977, Larry Solomon and Eric Leiser released *The Caddis and the Angler*, a true classic and a great reference for fly fishers wishing to know about caddisflies and various fly patterns to imitate "bugs" belonging to the order of Trichoptera. Interestingly enough, Leonard Wright wrote the foreword to this new book. In addition, these authors included tying directions for Len Wright's "Skittering Caddis." Not only had the pattern's name changed slightly, but Solomon and Leiser sensed and appreciated the inability of the average tyer—like me—to obtain a sufficient quantity of spade hackle. So they provided four caddis dry-fly patterns for a Mink Wing Caddis. Thus the wing of Wright's original Fluttering Caddis evolved from spade hackle to mink tail fibers.

But there's more. I didn't have to wait until 1977 to start tying what I came to call a Mink Tail Caddis, and that's with good reason, mind you. Sometime prior to the publication of *The Caddis and the Angler*, I came upon a catalog from Sam Melner's Fly Fisherman's Bookcase Tackle Service, which I believe was one of the first mail-order discount fly-fishing suppliers. Melner's catalog included four specific patterns for Len Wright's Fluttering Caddis, plus four patterns for Larry Solomon's Delta Wing Caddis that would eventually be included in Solomon and Leiser's book. Melner provided no names for any of these patterns, but coded them A through D, with each letter referring to a specific color for the body, wing, and hackle. Melner also substituted mink tail for the spade hackle in Wright's Fluttering Caddis wing. Melner, Solomon, and Leiser all suggested that Wright's Fluttering Caddis would be useful if tied in sizes 14 through 20. And this is how I came to tie and fish a caddis dry fly that Leonard Wright originally called his Fluttering Caddis, only I knew it as a Mink Tail Caddis courtesy of Sam Melner. And this is also how I came to be a collector of numerous mink tails of various colors.

For many years, Wright's Fluttering Caddis or the one Melner called a Mink Tail Caddis was my favorite caddis dry fly. However, with time, other patterns replaced Wright's Fluttering Caddis, except for one I devised myself—at least, it wasn't listed in

Melner's catalog. The profile of the Fluttering Caddis is also perfect for adult stoneflies, so I tied a ginger version to imitate the small Yellow Sallies often found on headwater Catskill streams. Not only is it a fine dry fly for brook trout when Sallies are about, but I have also caught a few nice Neversink browns using it. In fact, one day several years ago, this ginger version accounted for an eighteen-inch wild brown on the West Branch of the Neversink.

The Fluttering Caddis is easy to tie and easy to fish, whether you dead drift it or give it a twitch, à la Leonard Wright. Often when wandering the headwaters of the upper Neversink, I dig through my fly boxes until I find a Mink Tail Caddis to fish, in memory of the man who created the original Fluttering Caddis. In 2001 that man, Leonard Marshall Wright, Jr., was laid to rest in the Claryville Reformed Church Cemetery, not far from the banks of his beloved Neversink.

So here's to good tying, better fishing, and the man who introduced us to the Fluttering Caddis, twitching a dry fly, and other angling heresies—Leonard M. Wright, Jr., a lover of the Neversink and forward angling thinking. If you never have read it, pick up a copy of Len Wright's *Fishing the Dry Fly as a Living Insect* if you get a chance. It's still a good read forty years after it was first published. And if you do, perhaps this piece might help you understand the evolution of Wright's Fluttering Caddis.



*Two Mink Tail Caddises tied on size 14 Mustad 94840 hooks. One is tied with black thread, an olive Antron body, downwing-style wing of dun mink tail, and medium dun hackle. The other uses white thread, yellow LaFontaine touch dubbing, a ginger mink tail wing, and light ginger hackle.*



## Weaving Fly Bodies

I remember the first time I saw a woven-bodied fly, a Montana Nymph. I looked at that thing in wonderment. How could a chenille body be wrapped to look like that?

It was only fairly recently that I learned this trick, and now that I know it's easy to do, it still amazes me.

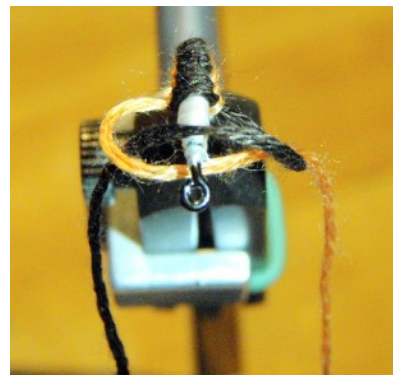
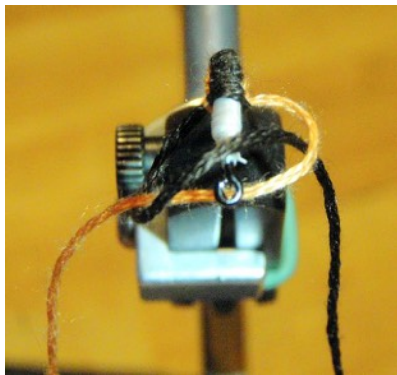
Probably the best use for this style of tying is to imitate stonefly nymphs. Many of them have a very distinct dark back and light underbelly, and the woven body imitates it almost exactly. When you use pale yellow and brown embroidery floss, the match to a natural stonefly nymph is uncanny. I have been tying these in all different colors, not just to match the stream bugs, but because it's just plain fun.



There are many ways to weave the bodies on these flies, and some give a slightly different effect. The way I first learned is so easy, I couldn't believe it when I saw it done. It involves an overhand knot or half hitch, and nothing more.

Place the hook in the vise and tie in the tail. Tie whatever material you are going to use (chenille, embroidery floss, Larva Lace, etc.) on the sides of the hook shank, light on one side, dark on the other. Then build a tapered underbody with thread. This is probably the most important step after the two materials are lashed down. I like to keep the back of the fly as skinny as possible and ramp the body up to three times the hook shank to give a tapered look. Put a whip finish on the thread after the body taper is done and cut the thread.

Turn the vise so that the eye of the hook is facing directly at you and take the two strands, one from the left and one from the right, and form a big, loose overhand knot under the hook shank. It's important to cross the light-colored material over the dark when forming the knot and always to cross the light-colored material over the dark in what follows. (See the illustrations.) When the overhand knot is tied, loosely bring the dark-colored strand and put that *over* the hook shank, with the light one from the other side under the shank and through the loop thus formed. So again, it's light-colored strand from one side over the dark-colored strand from the other side to form the overhand knot, then the dark-colored strand over the hook shank when tightening.



The pictures are easier to understand than any description can be. You do the same thing, alternating from the left and right sides, and when you draw the knots tight, the colors are on the top and bottom of the shank. It's all about repeating. After the second or third knot, you can see the body starting to come together. Just repeat until the desired body length is achieved, retie the tying thread at the front, and lash down both tag ends of the body material.

The possibilities are endless, when you consider the number of wrapable materials available. The bodies are also very dense, so if you want a fly that descends rapidly in the water column, these are great flies to choose.



*Looking Back Upstream*

## **Sialis No. 1**

Courtesy of Ralph Graves, here is a reproduction (or rather, the reproduction of a copy) of the handout for a pattern devised by Catskill tyer Robert F. Morse to imitate the alderfly, *Sialis infumata*, a relative of the dobsonfly. Morse was a

founding member of the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum and a longtime Catskill angler. He passed away in 2006 at the age of eighty-three. If you experience angling



success lasting more than four hours when using Sialis No. 1 . . . look up to the sky and say a few words of thanks to Bob Morse.



## YANKEE FLY TYERS

Rockland Road • Roscoe, New York 12776  
Tel. 607-498-4415

By  
Robert F. Morse

In 1946 I first tied a fly which has been a killer for trout and which I think is worthy of a place in your flybook. I have been using the fly all over New England and on the Beaverkill in New York. I tie it on a regular #14 sproat hook.



Step 3 - Bend the bunch of bucktail backward and bind to the hook with the tying silk, keeping the entire bunch on top of the hook. Wind the thread back to the base of the first hump which was formed at Step 2. Repeat Step 2 & 3 until reaching the normal point of tie off. This usually will make 4 or 5 humps of hair depending upon the size of the bunch of bucktail you started with and how closely you crowded the tying.

Step 1 - Take a very small bunch of black dyed bucktail and make the tips even. Allow the tips of the hair to extend out over the eye of the hook for a distance about equal to the length of the hook. The butts extending out beyond the hook bend the same way. Bind the hair to the hook with black tying silk all the way back beyond the bend. Now wind the thread forward 4 or 5 turns.



Step 2 - Bend the bunch of bucktail butts forward and tie it down, keeping the entire bunch on top of the hook. Put as many turns of thread as required to equal the length of the little bump which is formed by the bunched bucktail.

Step 4 - Clip off the heavy butt ends of the bucktail as closely as possible. Now bend back the tip ends of the bucktail which had been left extending over the eye of the hook and bind them down forming a fine wing. Finish the head and laquer the head and belly. Snip off the bucktail tips in the middle of the wing, if desired, making a vee.

This fly is very quickly tied and you can use various colors of bucktail and thread for interesting color combinations, however, black  
continued next page



*Sialis #1, tied by Ralph Graves*

## FLY OF THE MONTH continued

has been the best. Size #14 hook has been the best although I have experimented with larger sizes. For a long time the fly has remained nameless. One day at Cliff Pond, at Roland G. Nickerson State Park in Brewster, Mass. there was a large hatch of (Sialis Infumata) Adler Fly. It was quite windy and the insects were being blown out over the water from the large boulders along the shore. The insects were fluttering and sailing across the water. The trout began to feed frantically, leaping out of the lake over a large area. It was a case of being at the right place at the right time. The standard pattern Alder Fly produced a few hooked fish but when I tied on the unnamed fly the action was terrific. I hooked and released

at least 50 browns and rainbows. The trout would take the fly dead in the water, that is, without any action being given to it, just like fishing with bait. It was only necessary to cast the fly and let it sink. Most every cast produced a strike.

Since many of the naturals were being drowned the trout evidently continued to feed on the drowned insects. I named the fly Sialis No. 1. I have used it each time I have observed the natural and have usually hooked some fish. Even when there are no naturals about the fly produces some good trout. It is best fished wet and very slowly. I have never seen another fly tied in this way and I believe this tie is original. I pass it along for anyone who is interested in an easily tied, durable fly. The fly always remains upright in the water, due to the buoyancy of the bucktail hair.

(Reprinted from United Fly Tyers "Roundtable" December 1968.)

## A Little Help, Please

In late April, the home of this month's featured tyer, Lou Kasamis, burned down. Lou escaped with only the clothes on his back, and his mother perished in the blaze. Lou is gradually beginning life anew, but among the material things lost in the fire was a lifetime's worth of tying materials, tools, flies, and angling equipment. That, at least, can be replaced, and the community of Catskill fly tyers can help Lou get back on his feet by donating any materials, vises, tools, and fishing equipment they can spare. You can contact Lou at (845) 729-5733 or loukasamis@aol.com.

## Book Review

### *Matching Hatches Made Easy: 10 Steps to Catch More Fish*

By Charles Meck. Published by Stackpole Books, 2012; \$14.95 softbound.

When anyone begins a book by saying "I've had the benefit of fishing the hatches for more than 50 years," it's well worth attending to what they have to say. As Charles Meck notes, this is actually his ninth book about fishing hatches, beginning with *Meeting and Fishing the Hatches* in 1977 and continuing through *Pennsylvania Trout Streams and Their Hatches* (1993), *Patterns, Hatches, Tactics, and Trout* (1995), *Great Rivers—Great Hatches* (with Greg Hoover, 1996), *Trout Streams and Hatches of Pennsylvania; A Complete Fly-Fishing Guide to 140 Rivers and Streams* (1999), *The Hatches Made Simple: A Universal Guide to Selecting the Proper Fly at the Right Time* (2002), *Mid-Atlantic Trout Streams and Their Hatches: Overlooked Angling in Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey* (with D. Craig Josephson and Bryan C. Meck, 2003), *Arizona Trout Streams and Their Hatches: Fly Fishing in the High Deserts of Arizona and Western New Mexico* (with John Rohmer, 2005), and *Pocketguide to Pennsylvania Hatches* (with Paul Weamer, 2009).

And that's just the books he's written on *hatches*. Anyone who's paid any attention at all to angling literature over the past several decades no doubt has encountered writing by Charles Meck. The purpose of *Matching Hatches Made Easy*, he declares, is to "distill all I have learned about the hatches into an easy-to-read guide," and indeed, he pulls together insights and experiences from all those previous books and all those fifty years of angling experience.

As he notes in chapter 1, which is also Step 1, "Learn bug basics," in the "10 Steps" of the subtitle, specific knowledge of the life cycles and behavior of the bugs in any given hatch helps tremendously in knowing when, where, and how to fish that hatch. The book contains a lot of charts and other displays of such information. As someone who has to live by the adage "The best time to go fishing is when you can," however, and who therefore can't live the life of a dedicated hatch chaser, what I took away from the book was not the wealth of specific information offered in hatch charts and other compilations of insect behavior and characteristics, but the more general insights and observations about what works when one goes a-fishing with the aim of maybe matching the bugs one encounters on the stream.

For example, although opinions about the relative importance of a fly's coloration vary, most people agree that it is of some importance. What drives me nuts when I'm tying flies, though, are fly recipes that specify "color to match the natural." If I indeed knew that, I'd certainly tie my pattern in that color. However, as Meck points out, the specific colors of most aquatic insects, when they emerge, vary not only from stream to stream, but from time to time in the same stream and even from place to place in that stream at the same time. They even vary from the time that a natural first emerges to when it is fully emerged. I'm not willing to carry even more fly boxes than I already do, just to anticipate every contingency. What's a prospective hatch matcher to do?

Meck notes that you can anticipate general color patterns by season, because most bugs need protective coloration to blend with their environment. "The predominant colors of nature in early spring and winter are tans and grays," he writes, and the contemporaneous hatches of mayflies, caddisflies, and stoneflies tend to be darker shades of brown, tan, or olive, even black, while in the summer, brighter colors predominate, and in the fall, drabber, darker colors again prevail. You and I can anticipate the particular and still generalize, because he has.

Likewise, Meck has some general recommendations for the kinds of patterns that work best for matching hatches. He thinks ribbed abdomens are important imitative features on mayfly and caddis patterns, as are abdomens and thoraxes that are differentiated from each other by color. He thinks Catskill-style dries that sit up on the water on their hackles are unimitative and recommends trimming the bottoms of the hackles, thorax style, and he believes split tails are important features on mayfly dries. He thinks trailing shucks can trigger strikes and suggests carrying small slips of nylon stocking that can be hooked to the fly if that's what the fish are keying on. And when it's appropriate for the species of caddisfly, he thinks that adding antennae to an imitation doesn't just look cute, but catches more fish.

Fishing when I can, I can still try to follow Meck's other nine steps beyond learning bug basics: knowing the major hatches, fishing at the right time and the right place, and tying flies that match the shape and profile of the bugs (Steps 2 through 4). Step 5, "Be creative and unorthodox," is probably just as impossible to follow as most instructions to "be" something are ("Be spontaneous!"), but he has some practical suggestions, such as fishing dry flies—duns or spinners—under the surface, or twitching the fly, or unmatching the hatch. Step 6, "Rig multiple flies" and fish multifly rigs, he notes, is something he learned while fishing the West and took back to the streams of the



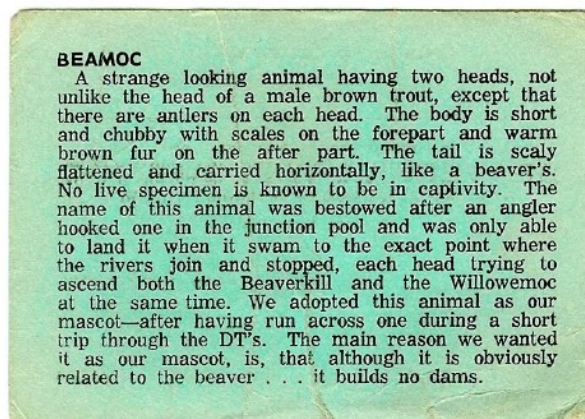
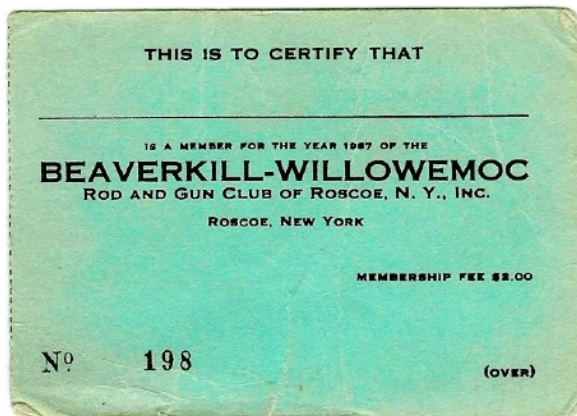
East. He's not talking about the traditional "cast" of multiple wet flies, but the various dry-and-dropper rigs that cover different stages of an emerging hatch at the same time.

In Step 7, "Use unconventional flies," Meck proposes the ultimate solution to the issues of matching colors, shapes, and patterns discussed above: tie simple flies using only materials that are white, carry a bunch of permanent markers and some scissors, and color and trim to shape the flies on the stream. His Color Matcher and Quick Trim patterns are practical, simple, and easy to tie and fish.

But where's the fun in that? What am I to do with my large and ever-growing collection of feathers, fur, and processed-chemical fibers? I prefer to move on to Step 8, "Observe nature." By that he means pay attention to the correlation between the timing of hatches and such things as the weather (cloudy, rainy, cool days not only make many bugs pop, but have the added virtue of deterring other anglers from fishing). He's also an advocate of what's known as "phenology," the study of "the relations between climate and periodic biological phenomena (as bird migration or plant flowering)," as the dictionary puts it, with the blooming of certain plants correlating with the arrival of specific hatches in uncanny ways — and all now occurring earlier than they did fifty years ago, according to Meck.

If you're lucky enough to be in a position to be choosy and can chase specific hatches, you can also take Steps 9 and 10, "Seek the dependable hatches" and "Pick your stream wisely." Any hatch is better than no hatch, but not all hatches are good hatches. One that goes on too long makes the trout jaded, and if the hatch is too numerous, your imitation gets lost among the naturals. And of course, the streams with famous hatches get crowded. Personally, I'd settle for having those problems.

—Bud Bynack



Scans courtesy of Glenn Overton

☞ 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 patronage.



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