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July 2014

The Annual Catskill Fly Tyers Guild Picnic will be held on Saturday, August 16, 2014, from noon to 4:00 P.M., at the Elsie and Harry Darbee and Matthew Vinciguerra Memorial Pavilion at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum, 1031 Old Route 17, Livingston Manor, NY.

Please bring a dish to share (appetizer, main dish, salad, or dessert). Bring your own plates, silverware, and your own beverages. Guests are welcome. You must contact Judie with the number of people who are coming and what dish you're bringing to share. A few people wait to see what we need on the list. E-mail her at darbee1@juno.com or call (607) 498-6024.

There also most likely will be our annual casting contest, presided over by casting-game commissioner Gary Sweet. Also, as in the past, bring a rod or two—cane, glass, or even graphite—so people can play with each other's toys.

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

Note that there is no guild meeting in July.

The Guild at the Pennsylvania Fly Fishing Museum Heritage Day

It was a beautiful day at the 12th Annual Heritage Day hosted by the Pennsylvania Fly Fishing Museum. We had a good turnout of tyers —Mike Romanowski, Jessica Lettich, Dan Thomas, Tim Bartholomew, and me. We sold five T-shirts, two DVDs, and two members renewed their memberships: Dan Thomas and Grahame Maisey. Our table had a great deal of attention from attendees, and we are looking forward to attending the event again next year .

—Allen Landheer

Renewals and New Members

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

Contemporary Catskill Fly Tyers: Ken Tutalo **By Bill Leuszler**

During a sunny, but cold morning in April, I sat down with Ken Tutalo, owner and operator of Baxter House River Outfitters. He shared with me his perspective not only on fly tying and fly fishing, but the challenges he faces in the fly-fishing business. Services

available through Baxter House River Outfitters include fly-tying instruction, guided float trips, guided upland and big-game hunting, lectures and seminars, fly-fishing supplies, and fly-tying materials. Ken wanted to highlight the venture he calls Beaverkill Valley Hackle. He has been raising birds for the fly-tying trade with hackle that he believes is different from what's commonly available from the usual suppliers. But I was especially interested to learn more about what he bills as "innovative local fly patterns."

Ken was born and raised in New Jersey. In the company of his father, grandfather, and family friends, he began his immersion in the Catskill fly-fishing experience at a very early age. With encouragement from his grandfather, he was already tying at age eight. Within a few years, he was supplying flies for all his fellow Catskill adventurers. During fishing season, he came to the Catskills as often as possible. He remembers staying at the Red Rose Motel and fishing the East Branch.

It was not until 1996 that he started tying commercially, however. He never sold wholesale in those years—his business was only to individual customers by word of mouth. In 2001, with support from his wife, Michelle, he bought the Baxter House, hoping to provide comfortable and affordable lodging, augmenting an already established guiding service. Guiding, most often on float trips, has been the foundation of the business, and there are six guides working out of the shop now.

As we spoke, forty thousand flies of all kinds were stocked in the Baxter House fly shop's bins, ready for the upcoming fishing season. There are a number of tyers who contribute to these bins. Ken said that he ties fairly little these days, but those who do tie for the shop do so under Ken's supervision. Both his guide service and his fly sales are focused mainly on fishing the Delaware River.

I took a good deal of time to look at the flies available in the shop. The selections are a bit different from those seen in other Roscoe shops. The dry-fly patterns included hair-wing Comparaduns, cripples, thorax dries, hackle-wing dries, and CDC spinners, in addition to flies in the traditional Catskill style. There was a large assortment of nymph patterns, too. Most, if not all, were some form of beadhead nymph. Another selection really stood out. These were large streamer patterns intended to represent baitfish—really big flies, some over six inches long.

Ken's philosophy of fly design was developed through years of observation. A guide has little time actually to fish, and yet at the same time, he has a great opportunity to observe. What Ken has concluded is that trout balance out their efforts to obtain food with the energy expended in those efforts. Trout, he believes, seek a "vulnerability" in their prey, and Ken tries to reflect that vulnerability in his fly designs. Two very popular fly types available in his shop are Knocked-Down Duns and a variety of cripples. Ken's cripples and Knocked-Down Duns imitate adult mayfly duns that are not perfectly formed and are struggling in the surface film, making them easy prey for trout. The shop's most popular patterns, in order of preference, are the Ice Caddis Pupa, Knocked-Down Duns, the Red Quill Cripple, and the KT Flash Pupa.

When I asked about the preponderance of beadhead patterns in Ken's nymph bins, he reminded me of that old adage, "Flies are not always tied to catch fish, but to catch fishermen." Most of his customers favor beadheads for their subsurface patterns. Ken thought this was in some ways a good thing, because as a result, people have gotten away from using split shot, as they once did.

In the development of the flies he stocks, there are also clear indications that Ken has continued in the tradition of some of the earlier Catskill notables, such as Art Flick and Preston Jennings. But he goes beyond these writers, who focused mainly on size and color in their imitations, by incorporating additional knowledge of how the particular insects behave. For example, Ken believes that each genus and species of mayfly behaves

differently when it is hatching and emerging. Some stay on the water for a long time. Others move off the surface quickly. Some mayflies emerge below the film, others on the surface. A pattern design that acknowledges this difference is likely to be more effective. A parachute pattern, which has a low-riding body, will behave differently than a thorax pattern while on the water. The pattern's silhouette on the water is also an important aspect of its effectiveness.

I asked Ken what advice he might give to those just getting into fly tying. First and most importantly, he said, don't overdress the flies you tie. Then try to establish uniformity in the appearance of every fly of the same pattern.

Stop by Ken's shop at the Baxter House and take a look at the fly bins if you want to see what a contemporary Catskill fly tyer thinks his customers want and what will catch them the most fish. Also, look for the frequent seminars and lectures about fishing and guiding that he gives in the off season at clubs and shows. They are well worth it.



Angler's Cove: Crossroads of New York City's Fly-Fishing Culture, Part 8

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 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: You've mentioned taking fly-tying classes at the Cove with Dick Talleur. How well did you know Dick?

Merrill: I met Dick Talleur for the first time when we were both enrolled in Keith Fulsher's advanced fly-tying class at Angler's Cove in 1967. I was teaching physical education in the New York City public school system, and Dick was a young engineer with AT&T. One of my vivid memories of Richard was his inquisitive and analytical approach to fly tying, probably characteristic of his engineering background. We chatted often at the Cove, and those talks revolved around fly-tying techniques, tools, and materials. Shortly after completing the advanced tying class, Dick told me he was working on a book. *Mastering the Art of Fly Tying*, the first of his many books, came to fruition in 1979, some seven years after Angler's Cove faded from existence.

Mastering the Art of Fly Tying became a go-to reference for neophytes, as well for as accomplished tyers, during the decade of the 1980s and was at times difficult to come by. Talleur took a page from Helen Shaw's book by using sequential black-and-white photographs to illustrate important techniques. He also applied his engineering acumen to generate detailed analyses of hooks, tying materials and their applications, and a detailed analysis of hackle quality. It is not surprising that this book was a long time in development. We were not living in a digital environment at that time, and juggling a demanding professional career with a passion for fly fishing was not always an easy task. This book was worth waiting for.

I lost touch with Dick after 1972, because I decided that living in trout country in central Pennsylvania and attending graduate school at Penn State would be a good mix for me. But when I was teaching in the Midwest in the late 1970s, I ran into Dick at a large fly-fishing show at the Southfield Civic Center, just outside of Detroit. Dick was tying flies and promoting his recently published *Mastering the Art*. We renewed our acquaintance, updated our respective address books, and promised to keep in touch. But that was the last time I saw Dick. We did not keep our promises about staying in touch.

Bud: Ain't that the way things go so often, though.

Merrill: The fly fishing fraternity is a small one, and the ebb and flow of time short-circuits our relationships with people. It seems, however, that the bonds of friendship remain across time and distance.

In September 1987, I received an unexpected note from Dick. He had given some of his Cut-Wing Thorax Pale Olive Duns to Nick Lyons. Nick had been fishing some tough spring creek water in Montana. Dick noted that "Nick had upstaged a covey of experts using that pattern." He sent me a sample of this pattern to ties and said, "I hope you don't end up hating both of us—I realize this is a time-consuming fly and hardly feasible to tie commercially." I was pleased to tie these for Nick and had lots of experience tying them, having lived in Central Pennsylvania for some time before moving to Michigan. Dick told me to contact him if I needed further assistance. I sent a return note to Dick to determine the hook he used for the pattern. I suspected that it was a Partridge hook, and Dick confirmed this for me; an L3A Captain Hamilton, size 18.

Dick passed on in 2011, and I regret that I did not get to thank him for furthering the art and science of fly tying. I could never hate anyone for asking me to tie a difficult pattern, and I like to think that all the people affiliated with the Angler's Cove and others probably helped Dick synthesize some of the ideas and concepts codified in his writings. Here's the pattern Dick asked me to tie for him and for Nick.



Talleur's Cut-Wing Thorax Pale Olive Dun

Hook: Partridge L3A Captain Hamilton, size 18

Thread: 8/0 primrose

Wing: Pale blue dun hen feathers, cut or burned to size and shape

Tails: Palest cream hackle barbules, split or fanned

Body: Palest olive dubbing

Hackle: Pale cream, sparsely tied, V cut into the hackle at the thorax

Ray Smith and His Fish Pot

Until a few years ago, chances are that not many fly fishers ever heard of Ray Smith, although he was to the Esopus what Art Flick was to the Schoharie and the Darbees and the Dettles were to the Beaverkill and Willowemoc. While Smith didn't write about fishing, he taught an army of

Up on the Esopus



young anglers how to tie Catskill-style flies.

The April–May 1951 issue of *The Conservationist* included Ray Smith in their “For New York Waters” article with the likes of Lee Wulff, Art Flick, Roy Steenrod, the Darbees, the Dettas, and others. His name surfaced once more when the Cecil Heacox included Smith in his 1969 two-part *Outdoor Life* classic “Charmed Circle of the Catskills” and again in the same magazine in a 1972 Heacox article “The Catskill Flytyers.” Mac Francis, Ed Van Put, and Mike Valla all dedicated ink to Smith in their books that followed. However, the most complete piece about this angler was probably written by Terry Finger in volume 3, issue 1 of the *Art of Angling Journal*, titled “Ray Smith: Fly-Tier, Guide and Dean of the Esopus.”

While I never personally met Ray, in March 2012, I did meet his eighty-six-year-old son, Calvin. The younger Smith called his father a “dry-fly man,” even though Ray is most likely best remembered for his wet flies. The elder Smith was a noted outdoorsman and baseball player, a local Phoenicia guide, a man of many trades and talents, and perhaps the best fly fisher the Esopus Creek ever produced. His mounted circles of wet flies under glass are celebrated Catskill angling treasures. And local fishing lore has it that the Esopus Creek’s famous Mother’s Pool was named for Ray Smith’s mother, Agnes Moon Smith. Smith’s mother was quite the angler herself, and when she was missing from around the house, often the reply to the question “Where’s mother?” was “She’s fishing down at Mother’s Pool.”

Included in my collection of angling artifacts are several mounted Ray Smith wet flies, plus a copy of a booklet of fly patterns that Smith gave to his tying students. I treasure both. Probably among the best-known Ray Smith patterns are his Red Fox dry fly and his Wild Turkey and Claret Gant wet flies. Not as well known, except to maybe a few of his tying students, is the Fish Pot, another wet fly. I had to do some digging to find out more about this one and want to thank an old fly-fishing buddy, Tom Emerick, for confirming much of my research.

Emerick recalled his early days as a twelve-year-old fly fisher wandering Esopus Creek tributaries with senior and much more skilled anglers. Back then, Tom would rely upon a Martin automatic fly reel, a stiff glass rod, and a set of three snelled wet flies on a 7-foot leader. One fly on that leader always was the venerable Leadwing Coachman. Of the two others, one could have been Smith’s Fish Pot.

The Fish Pot was used as the top fly and dapped upstream to induce the numerous small wild rainbows into striking, and it made a good account of itself, including attracting the occasional large trout. Emerick summed up his experiences from long ago as “good memories, for certain.” By the way, it was Emerick’s twenty-three-inch, four-and-a-half pound rainbow—caught in an Esopus tributary that Tom loved—that graced the walls of the Phoenicia Library for years until it was destroyed by fire in 2011.

The Fish Pot is very simple Catskill wet fly pattern. Anyone can tie it.





Ray Smith's Fish Pot

Hook: Standard wet-fly hook, size 12

Thread: White

Tail: Soft grizzly hackle fibers

Body: Orange wool or floss—Gray Ghost color

Hackle: Palmered grizzly

One of my wet flies under glass tied by Ray Smith includes his Fish Pot, pictured left.

The Rackelhanen

By Nik Dahlin

In most of my sessions at the vise, I'm knocking out Catskill-style dry flies, North Country spiders, or other classic stuff. I find great inspiration from the tyers of the past, and I don't mind the extra time it takes me to tie their flies as well as I can. So what if I put them in a tree? I can always make more. But as much as I love the look and the process of creating a classic fly, as well as its appearance, I also can see the beauty of something really simple.

Here I will share with you a really simple Swedish creation. Some of you have probably already heard of it, because the creator was a buddy of Paul Jorgensen, and he visited the Catskills several times. It was created in 1967 by one of the icons of Swedish fly fishing, Kenneth Boström. Boström was fishing during a period of caddis hatches on a river called the Vänneån and cracked the code there with this fly.

The fly is the Rackelhanen. It is named after a bird you can encounter in the forests here in Sweden. It's a hybrid—it results from a romance between a black grouse and a capercallie.



The fly is in wide use all over the world and goes by many other names, including the Polysedge, the Rackehahn, and—a very exotic name indeed—The Honk.

In Sweden, loads of the fly-fishing fraternity have this fly in their boxes, in several sizes and shades. I first took the fly to my heart first a couple of years ago. I didn't like the look of it at first, but the wind has changed, I love to tie it, and it is one of those flies I put on when I don't feel like changing flies all the time. It floats like a cork, and if I like, I can pull it under the surface and it just pops up back again—perfect for me, because as I'm not the wizard I would like to be with my rod. The only thing you need to remember is to impregnate it properly, because polypropylene yarn will soak up water if not impregnated. I soak the fly in Tiemco Dry Dip, which works fine for me. I fish the fly free drifting, and I move the rod now and then to give the fly some movement. I also fish it like a swimming caddis by pulling it toward me. Basically, the fly suits all kind of situations in which you need a caddis pattern.

Hook: Partridge SLD, size 10 to 20

Thread: 8/0

Body/Wing/Thorax: Polypropylene yarn

Start by cutting up pieces of yarn for the dubbing, 10 to 15 millimeters long (around half an inch). Fluff it up so it can be used as dubbing.

Wax your thread and attach it behind the eye of the hook. Wind the thread to the end of the hook slightly beyond the bend, then back to the middle of the hook, leaving a nice foundation.

The yarn is kind of tricky to apply to the thread, so wax the thread some more and use small portions of dubbing. Start by first winding the dubbing back down beyond the bend of the hook, then back to behind the eye of the hook, but leave a space for the wing and thorax.

Cut a section of the yarn to for a wing. Tie in the wing on each side of the hook, first by laying the yarn slightly on the far side, securing it with four or five wraps of thread, then by folding back the piece of yarn and securing it on the near side.

Now apply wax to the thread , dub it, and create the thorax. Finish the fly with two whip finishes.

Cut the yarn to desired wing length, I usually cut it 3 to 4 millimeters (around a tenth of an inch, if that makes any difference) behind the bend of the hook.

Apply some head cement, and your new buddy is ready to go fishing.



“CJ’s Flies” will return.

Book Review

The Founding Flies: 43 American Masters, Their Patterns and Influences
By Mike Valla. Published by Headwater Books / Stackpole Books, 2013; \$39.95
hardbound.

Editor’s Note: Lou Kasamis reviewed Mike Valla’s important book in the October 2013 issue of the Gazette. Here is a longer (but nevertheless truncated) review that originally appeared in California Fly Fisher.

Mike Valla has brought together in one place for the first time an account of the major developments in the ways in which artificial flies were thought about, tied, and fished in the United States over the period from the mid-1880s to the late 1960s. The book covers what Valla calls the “archetypes . . . that eventually evolved into the contemporary fly styles we tie in our vises today and fish on our favorite waters,” told in terms of the contributions of “43 masters who helped make fly fishing and fly tying what they are today.”

Why 43? Well, “a book like this can be only so long,” and Valla’s criteria of selection were of necessity pragmatic. “Sometimes selection had to do with what information was available on a tier. . . . I would to cover Syd Glasso, a classic West Coast tier,” he writes, but it proved difficult to get my hands on enough good material concerning his flies and the development of his patterns.” And why the mid-1880s to the late 1960s? Because like any good historian, Valla deals with a time frame that provides sufficient critical distance to assess what has been truly important and what has endured.

The tyers covered, in the order he covers them, are Mary Orvis Marbury, Thaddeus Norris, Theodore Gordon, Reuben Cross, Walt and Winnie Dette), Harry and Elsie Darbee, Art Flick, Edward Ringwood Hewitt, John Atherton, John Alden Knight, Joe Messinger, Sr., Ray Bergman, Lee Wulff, Fran Betters, Eric Leiser, Elizabeth Greig, Helen Shaw, Lew Oatman, Keith Fulsher, Carrie Stevens, Joe Brooks, Don Gapen, Dave Whitlock, Art Winnie, Len Halladay, George Griffith, Jim Leisenring, together with V. S. “Pete” Hidy, George Harvey, Vincent C. Marinaro, Chauncy K. Lively, Ed Shenk. Franz B. Pott, George F. Grant, Don Martinez, Wayne “Buz” Buszek, C. Jim Pray, Ernest H. “Polly” Rosborough, Ted Trueblood. Cal Bird, and André Puyans.

Who got included and who didn’t “had nothing to do with the volume of new patterns that a ‘classic’ fly tier created,” Valla writes. “Len Halladay was selected for the influence of only one pattern,” but it’s a doozy: the Adams. Griffith was included because of the Griffith’s Gnat, although Valla tips his hat to Griffith’s contributions as a conservationist and a founder of Trout Unlimited.

A review like this can be only so long, too, and I’m going to limit myself to mentioning what I found most striking about *The Founding Flies*. For starters, the amount of research that went into it is impressive. Some of this ground has been well covered before, especially the Catskill line from Theodore Gordon, whose life, or what we can know about it, has been closely scrutinized for some time, through Rube Cross, to the Dettes and the Darbees. But more typical of what you’ll find is the sort of research based on the likes of issues of *Pennsylvania Angler* from the 1940s through the 1970s or “John McDonald’s now classic May 1946 *Fortune* article” that featured Elizabeth Grieg, along with tyers such as the Darbees and the Dettes.

And the inclusion of tyers such a Greig, whose simplified versions of classic wet flies appeared in the *Noll Guide to Trout Flies and How to Tie Them*, inspiring a generation of youngsters to become fly tyers, Mike Valla among them, is a revelation. I had not heard her name before. I had heard of Joe Messinger and the Messinger Frog, a bass pattern, but I never appreciated the complexity or beauty the pattern, and I never realized that it was Messenger who originated the Irresistible. Similarly, I’d heard of and tied Joe’s Hopper, but never had heard of its originator, Art Winnie, and of Chauncy Lively’s efforts at producing weighted streamers — proto-Zonkers — I was equally ignorant. However much you know about the history of American fly tying, I can pretty much guarantee that your own blind spots will be illuminated somewhere between the covers of *The Founding Flies*.

Another revelation is to be found in the extensive picture spreads of flies either tied by the featured tyers themselves, which are taken from museums or personal collections or tied by Valla or by others who have devoted themselves to learning and perpetuating classic tying styles. While it’s nice to see a Quill Gordon tied by Theodore Gordon, what really is enlightening are the examples of techniques that, at best, one has only read about. For example, I knew that Vince Marinaro advocated tying mayflies with splayed hackles in the thorax — the opposite of the tight, up-and-down Catskill style of hackling — but I didn’t really know what that meant and how radically splayed they were until I saw the photos of mayfly imitations he’d tied. And I didn’t know that Marinaro believed you actually don’t need to imitate the abdomen on a mayfly at all — that at least on the placid waters he fished, all you need is a thorax that floats well and that keeps the tails elevated out of the water, the way the naturals ride the currents. Wow — that’s rad.

This being a history of “archetypal” flies and their creators, Valla can’t avoid the tricky and often explosively vexed issue of who created what, when. And he doesn’t. The book is unflinchingly full of origin stories, from the space for the Turle Knot behind the eye of Rube Cross’s classic Catskill dries, to the origins of Art Flick’s use of urine-stained

fox fur for the bodies of Hendricksons, to Carrie Stevens's creation of the Gray Ghost streamer, to Don Gapen's creation of the Muddler Minnow as a "cockatush" imitation — a sculpin — on the banks of the Nipigon River, to the multiple accounts of the origins of the Adams, and beyond. Where there are differing claims to the creation of a pattern, he says so and presents them, but when he has solid evidence for the origin of one of these archetypal patterns, he stands by it.

What is more interesting, however, is not his effort to account for origins, but the way he traces influences — from Messinger and his Irresistible to Harry Darbee's deer-hair-bodied Rat-Faced McDougall, for example, or ways in which the Dettles may have learned tying tips from Roy Steenrod, in addition to having reverse-engineered Rube Cross's flies when he refused to communicate his tying secrets, or the way in which Art Winnie's grasshopper imitation morphed into Dave's Hopper in the vise of Dave Whitlock. And those traces of influence continue in the work of the many present-day tyers whose enthusiasm for and research on these patterns he quotes and whose work frequently appears in the picture spreads.

The flip side of these origin stories is the attention that Valla devotes to the other flies that these tyers also tied — flies other than the ones for which they are known. From Theodore Gordon's multiple versions of his Bumblepuppy streamer, to Harry Darbee's Two-Feather Fly, to the steelhead flies of John Atherton, to Lee Wulff's molded plastic Form-A-Lure flies, to the different colors other than gray in which the original Adams was tied, to Jim Pray's steelhead flies other than the Optic series, to the other patterns tied by Cal Bird in addition to his Stonefly and Bird's Nest, the versatility, inventiveness, and artistry of these tyers is clear. They weren't just creative tyers. Most of them were also good all-around technicians.

Although the story that Valla has to tell begins in the 1880s in the East and ends in the late 1960s in the West, the organization of the book isn't simply chronology mapped over geography. From chapter to chapter, there are basic themes that give the book an underlying architecture — and it's not a list of forty-three different topics, either. Thus, an account of "the early birth of American fly-tying creativity" in the chapters on Mary Orvis Marbury and Thaddeus Norris leads to an exploration of the rise and development of the Catskill style of fly tying in the work of Gordon, Cross, the Dettles, the Darbees, Art Flick, E. R. Hewitt, John Atherton, and John Alden Knight, then to cross-influences between tyers and a broadening of geographical focus with the work of Joe Messinger, Sr., Ray Bergman, Lee Wulff, Fran Betters, Eric Leiser, and Elizabeth Greig. What follows that is in effect a history of the American streamer fly as tied by Helen Shaw, Lew Oatman, Keith Fulsher, Carrie Stevens, Joe Brooks, and Don Gapen, followed by a history of the grasshopper imitation in the works of Dave Whitlock and Art Winnie. In the process, the scene shifts to the Midwest, with the account of Len Halladay's Adams and the Griffith's Gnat, then to Pennsylvania for Leisenring's and Hidy's flymphs, George Harvey's patterns and teaching at Penn State, and the flies of Vince Marinaro, Chauncy Lively, and Ed Shenk. With a trip through Montana that looks at Franz Pott's woven flies and what George Grant did with the woven-fly technique, we finally make it to the West Coast with Don Martinez's adaptations of Catskill traditional ties to Western conditions, in addition to his development of the Woolly Worm, then Buz Buzek's innovations, especially for caddisfly imitations, in contrast with the mayflycentric Eastern tying traditions, Jim Pray's steelhead flies, and, with Polly Rosborough, Ted Trueblood, Cal Bird, and Andy Puyans, what amounts to a brief history of nymph patterns in America, with a backward glance at eastern predecessors in the nymphs of Hewitt and John Alden Knight. Maintaining that kind of structure in "a book like this," which ostensibly deals

with a large number of often very different people and conceptions of fly tying and fly fishing, is no small feat.

These are just a few of the reflections that a reading of *The Founding Flies* prompts. Mike Valla's previous book, *Tying Catskill-Style Dry Flies*, established him as a historian of one major American angling tradition. In its scope and depth, *The Founding Flies* stakes a broader claim for Valla as one of the country's leading historians of the art and craft of the artificial fly.

—*Bud Bynack*



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