



The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild GAZETTE



Volume 18, number 4

July 2015

The Annual Catskill Fly Tyers Guild Picnic will be held on Saturday, August 15, 2015, 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.

Bring a dish to share (appetizer, main dish, salad, or dessert), and your own plates, silverware, and 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 and leave a message.

There also most likely will be our annual casting contest, presided over by casting-game commissioner Gary Sweet. 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.

CFTG at PAFFMA Heritage Day

The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild attended the Pennsylvania Fly Fishing Museum Association Heritage Day in Boiling Springs, PA, at the Allenberry Resort on June 20, 2015. Thanks go to the tyers—Tim Bartholomew, Dan Thomas, and Dick Smith. Judie DV Smith supervised. Many people were in attendance. The winner of the Darbee catalog was Bob Eichler from Frederick, MD.

Program Chair Needed

The highlight and principal attraction of all meetings of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild is the program that is presented, whether it is someone demonstrating how to tie a particular fly or a special technique, or explaining the history and ins and outs of cane rods, or discussing other aspects of fly fishing in the Catskills. Help make our meetings exciting events by volunteering to contact potential presenters and arranging Catskill-oriented programs for upcoming meetings. Because some meetings, such as the annual materials swap, the picnic, and the meetings where we tie for fly-fishing therapy groups, have dedicated programs, all we need is someone to arrange five programs a year. Call Dave Brandt at (607) 433-2924 if you're interested.

High School Freshman Submits Flies for Project Healing Waters

The apple doesn't fall far from the tree sometimes. Guild member Mark Lewchik's daughter, Lindsay Lewchik, recently tied and donated two dozen Woolly Buggers for the Project Healing Waters tying event coordinated by John Losapio on June 27. Congratulations to Lindsay for doing this as a service learning project at Old Lyme High School. Are there other younger guild family members ready to rise to the challenge and donate some flies for Project Healing Waters or Casting for Recovery?

—John Merola

Classics Revisited

It is one of fly fishing's greatest attractions that the actual fishing is accompanied by a vast and endlessly engaging conversation. We have been conducting this conversation in print for many centuries now, and we always seem to have more to say.

—Paul Schullery, from his series introduction to Stackpole's Fly-Fishing Classics library.

It occurred to editor Bud Bynack and me that a trip back to some of the classic volumes of fly fishing might be an interesting continuing feature for the *Gazette*. I'll begin the conversation by recommending the six-volume Fly-Fishing Classics series published by Stackpole and edited by angling historian Paul Schullery:

Theodore Gordon on Trout: Talks and Tales from a Great American Angler

Halford on the Dry Fly: Streamcraft of a Master Angler

Skues on Trout: Observations from an Angler Naturalist

Stewart on the Wet Fly: Lessons from a Master Tactician

Norris on Trout Fishing: A Lifetime of Angling Insights

Mottram on Fly-Fishing Mysteries: Conversations of a Scientist Angler

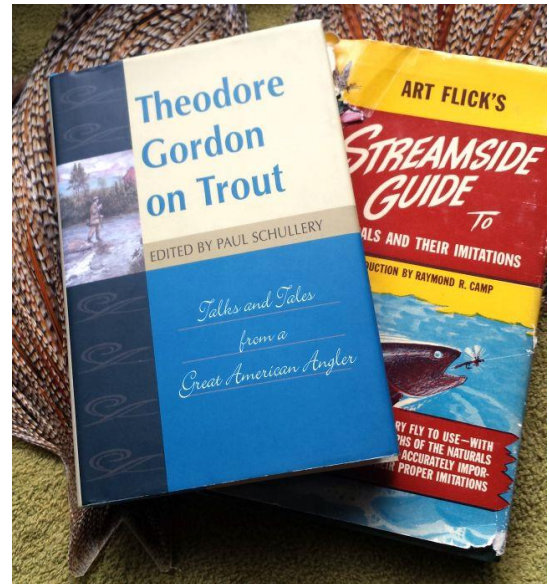
These pocket-sized volumes contain carefully selected examples of the writings of each of these authors. Schullery has done a wonderful job assembling the work of some of the great minds of fly fishing and fly tying in an easily accessible and moderately priced format. In addition to selections from three of the canonical authors of the sport, Theodore Gordon, “the father of dry-fly angling in America,” the dry-fly advocate Frederic Halford, and wet-fly apostle G. E. M. Skues, Schullery has collected works by the less well-known Scottish writer William Clouston Stewart (1832–1872), as well as by Thaddeus “Uncle Thad” Norris (1811–1877), America’s principal fly-fishing author before Gordon, and by the British writer James Cecil Mottram (1879–1945), called by Arnold Gingrich the “unsung genius of English angling literature.”

Each volume was originally priced at \$16.95. Using the Gordon volume as an example, you get many of the great passages that appear in John MacDonald’s edition, *The Complete Fly Fisherman: The Notes and Letters of Theodore Gordon*, for a much less expensive entry fee. I own all six volumes. It is a wonderful set.

Take a trip back in time and study up, because in the words of the late William Blades, “Fly tying is a school from which we never graduate.”

—John Merola

Got a favorite classic work on fly tying or fly fishing that you’d like to revisit in print and urge others to read? Contact Bud Bynack at (914) 961-3521 or budbynack@verizon.net.



Looking Back Upstream



Eric Leiser and Wonder Wax

By Glenn Overton

Eric Leiser was the person who gave me a start. It was when he was at Sam Melner's Fly Fisherman's Bookcase. I had a round ball of wax that I had made up, and I asked Eric to give it a try. Eric was dubious, because he had seen many tyers bring in their fly-tying wax at the shop, but I told Eric that the wax was not sticky on the fingers—that was something one of my fly tying students had discovered. Well, Eric did try the wax, and he said that if I could come up with a special container, they would put it in their catalog. They gave me several containers from Italy—the type that pushes up the contents using a screw mechanism. They also were the ones who came up with the name “Wonder Wax.”

Eventually, there came a point when one ingredient was no longer made. It was a pain to use anyway, because it had water in it. So I did my research—remember, there was no Internet then—and I found suppliers for all the ingredients I needed. From then on, I had absolute control, and Wonder Wax came out so much better.

At fly-tying seminars and shows, I would demonstrate my dab method, tying a Hare's Ear Nymph.

To do that right, all dubbing material should lie horizontal on the thread so the thread forms a central core. If you wrap the dubbing around the thread like strips on a candy cane, the trout will tear the dubbing off the fly. For the thorax on the Hare's Ear Nymph, I don't spin the dubbing on the thread at all—I just wind it. I assure you it will stay, and you don't need to pick it out. Every time I did this at the seminars, I would sell a dozen containers of Wonder Wax. Over time, I got it in more than twenty countries around the world, and even today, people consider it the best ever made.

So there you are—Eric Leiser deserves the credit for launching Wonder Wax. Now don't let your fingers get caught in the whip finish, OK?

Scan of original Wonder Wax ad courtesy of Glenn Overton

NEW
FLY TYING WAX
With Adjustable Container

the
first
totally different
fly tying
wax

OVERTON'S
WONDER WAX
MAGNETIC-ADHESIVE
FLY TYING WAX

STICKS ONLY WHEN & WHERE
YOU NEED IT!

- No messy fingers.
- Cut cost on hard to get materials by increasing the life of your flies.
- Improves dubbing on pre-wax thread.
- Adjustable screw-bottom container.

ADJUSTABLE

PAINT IT ON

DABB DUBBING MATERIAL

SPIN

OVERTON'S WONDER WAX
BOX 1587, BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK 13902 (607) 748-8008

Designed and Manufactured by
GLENN C. OVERTON

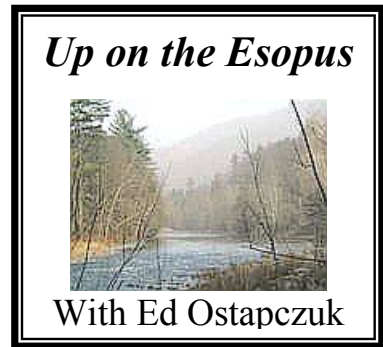


With “Catskill John” Bonasera

“CJ's Flies” will return.

Larry Koller and the Black Striped Minnow

I acquired a used copy of Larry Koller's *Taking Larger Trout* back in 1976, mainly because I associated Koller's name with the Neversink, and I am very fond of that Catskill river. The book was signed by its author, Lawrence R. Koller (1912–1967), with a July 1965 Phil Chase column about Koller taped to the inside front cover. Chase's *Middletown Times Herald Record* piece provided some background information and several leads for this article. Just like Phil Chase, Larry Koller wrote a *Times Herald Record* outdoor column, which gave him his start as a journalist in 1932.



However, Koller did much more than just write an outdoor column. By all accounts, he was the complete outdoorsman: an expert angler, superb fly fisher and tackle maker, excellent hunter, gunsmith, competitive shooter, outdoor cook, guide, and author. He wrote numerous outdoor books, with two of the first being his most popular. Among a few of his works are *Shots at Whitetails* (1948), *Taking Larger Trout* (1950), *The Complete Book of Freshwater Fishing* (1954), *The Fireside Book of Guns* (1959), *How to Shoot* (1961), *The Treasury of Angling* (1963), and *The Treasury of Hunting* (1965).

Since Koller's death, some of his writings have been republished, including a piece titled "Some Big Fish on the Neversink" that appeared in *The Legendary Neversink*, edited by Justin Askins. It is interesting to note that this 2007 volume was pieced together from several different chapters in Koller's 1950 book.

Lawrence Koller was born in Brooklyn. At the age of seven, he moved to Orange County, NY, to the hamlet of Finchville. Here, he would be close to his beloved Neversink River and the Shawangunk Mountains. In his early years, he ran a tackle shop in Middletown and wrote an outdoor column for the *Times Herald Record* until the beginning of World War II. During the war, he worked as a foreman in the barrel departments of gun manufacturers in New Haven, CT. After the war, he went on to become one of the most prominent outdoor writers in America during the 1950s and 1960s. Prior to his death, he served as editor and columnist for several different magazines, the last one being *Guns and Ammunition*.

There's little doubt that Koller wrote more about guns and hunting than about fishing, but my favorite work of his by far is *Taking Larger Trout*. It contains down-to-earth pragmatic information useful to all angler types. His approach to trout fishing is not rigid, as he acknowledges, and he provides insights into times when bait fishing is a better choice than fishing a wet fly or a dry fly. In fact, Koller wrote, "I am not addicted to bait fishing and probably never will be but most of my adult life has been spent in the heart of the trout country where bait fishing flourishes among local fishermen as the prime and most direct method of taking larger trout." One quickly realizes that Koller was not a dyed-in-the-wool fly fisher and clearly no stranger to bait and spin fishing.

Above everything else, I loved reading Koller's dissertations on fishing his Neversink and the Catskill streams in general. He even writes fondly about my Esopus Creek. In the book's foreword, the late Jimmy Deren sings the praises of Koller's skill at "taking larger trout on the 'Big' Neversink—one of the famous Catskill streams." However, with time's passage, Koller went beyond the boundaries of the Catskills in pursuit of trout and fish of other species, as is acknowledged in his 1963 *Treasury of Angling*. The dust jacket for this book describes Koller as "an angler for forty years" who "in that time has worked most of the major lake and streams of the United States and Canada in the successful pursuit of every game-fish species by every angling method."

Taking Larger Trout includes a very nice selection of recommended flies, many with a Catskill bent. One of the streamer patterns listed as the author's favorite is his Black Striped Minnow. My interest in this pattern was piqued after reading an article, "Ausable River, NY," in the March–April 2015 issue of *Eastern Fly Fishing*. Mike Valla provided the photos for this article and information on Koller's streamer. Valla refers to the fly as "Koller's Black Nosed Dace" imitation, suggesting Koller's intention was to imitate that pervasive minnow family.



Photo and fly by Ed Ostapczuk

In *Taking Larger Trout*, Koller provided the following recipe for the Black Striped Minnow.

Hook: Koller recommended size 4 or 6 hooks for streamers tied to take larger trout.

Thread: Black

Tail: Barred wood duck

Body: Silver tinsel over white floss

Wing: White bucktail underwing, natural brown bucktail upper wing. A badger hackle with a black center stripe is tied in on either side to simulate the natural black stripe of the minnow. Black ostrich herl can also be used as a substitute.

Throat: Orange bucktail

Shoulder: Jungle cock eyes

Jack's Hackle-Point Buzzer

By Jack Pangburn

When trout are taking small emerging mayflies, this buzzer is deadly. The gray muskrat body, brown hackle, and grizzly wings make it a pretty convincing imposter of many immature mayfly duns. A slim tail of gray Antron yarn or marabou gives the impression of a nymph's shed skin. Tie it on a short-shank curved light-wire hook similar to the new Partridge Klinkhämer hook.

A buzzer pattern serves two purposes. It not only represents an insect at a vulnerable stage of successful transformation, but also simulates those considerable numbers of insects that do not successfully emerge.



The pattern can be fished dead drift just under the surface or skated on top. Pause at the end of the drift, let the current pull the fly under, and wait. Retrieve with short, quick strips.

Jack's Hackle-Point Buzzer

Hook: Partridge Klinkhämer or other short-shanked, light-wire curved hook, size 14 to 22

Thread: Gray, 12/0 to 14/0

Tail: Gray Antron yarn, untwisted, or marabou fibers

Rib: Very fine gold wire

Body: Gray muskrat and SLF seal substitute, blended and dubbed

Wings: Grizzly hackle points

Hackle: Brown cock hackle



Oldies but Goodies from the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild Gazette

From volume 1, number 3, May 1998

For Your Information

By Ted Patlen

FYI: Part 1. The absolute only way to catch a fish is with a 92 weighted streamer fly on a 9-foot 6-weight high-modulus graphite rod, strung with a 200-grain sinking head. Of course the reel must be a four-ball-bearing, aircraft aluminum, high-strength, lightweight, high-end reel! I'd never be caught dead on Wagon Tracks using a cane rod or even use a fly tied with dead chicken parts! I also enjoy catching browns out of Cairns with a little ultralight spin-cast outfit and a Rapala. Am I doing ANYTHING wrong . . . illegal? No.

That's what makes this pastime so enjoyable. A person can decide what they want to use and how to use it just about whenever they want to. The only time we should voice our opinion is if/when the other person does something illegal. We are most probably seen as immoral and outlandish to their eyes.

For the sake of argument, we don't really need a vise to tie flies or a rod and a reel to fish with, but it sure is a lot more fun using equipment that we're happy with. A friend of mine once said to me, "Whatever floats your boat."

FYI: Part 2. Of all the classic, historic patterns that you have tied and used . . . which pattern(s) have you never caught a trout with?

If you are not familiar with me, let me explain that I am a streamer person. I'd much rather sling a streamer around than float a dry fly or drown a nymph, although I'm not purely a streamer-type guy. I do enjoy all types of fly fishing, but I'm not here to argue whether dry-fly fishing versus whatever is

better or not. I love the anticipation of that “fish out of nowhere” whacking a sunken bucktail more than the subtle take of a trout.

The two (and I’m sure that there are more) that come to mind are the Grey Ghost and the Mickey Finn. I’ve fished them over freshly stocked trout, through clouds of trout at famous fisheries known for their easy targets, and a few maddening times over wild landlocks. I’ve used them in most of the states from Pennsylvania up to New Brunswick. Not a single tug.

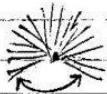
Tying Notes

By Glenn Overton

Thorax Dry Fly

Note: developed on the Beaverkill 1972

Nackle: is one size larger, tied in center of hook, square off with two turns, hackle palmered forward, make sure body under thorax can be seen. Square off with three or four turns in front. \wedge the bottom by forcing hackles to side. Got this idea from Charney Lively
 Wing any style: try using dyed mallard flank (dyed dun) for dun color wings, tied catwalk style.



force hackle to sides almost flat, trim center 1 size larger 14 hook use 12 hackle



Wing set back $\frac{1}{3}$ on hook



compresses to $\frac{2}{3}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ dia of eye



compara dun



compresses to $2\frac{1}{2}$ to $2\frac{3}{4}$ dia of eye

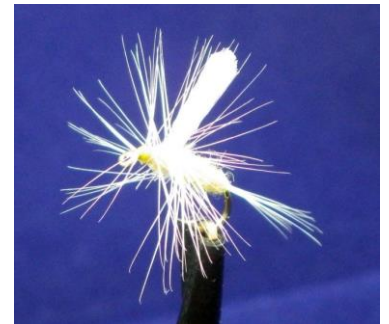
deer hair caddis



cut a ski tip & glue

On my thorax dry fly, the V on the bottom should be nearly flat.

Pull the hackles apart with your fingers left and right and trim out the hackle fibers on the bottom,



if needed. Otherwise, it won't float right. On a natural insect, the legs are on the side of the thorax, leaving the thorax open, as it is in the Comparadun tying style.

In my drawing of the Comparadun and Deer Hair Caddis, I can gauge the amount of the hair to use by the amount of hair that is compressed, as indicated. I have taught using these formulas and others on all my flies for my classes and also to copy other tyers. These drawing and notes are over thirty years old.

Scan courtesy of Glenn Overton

Bug Week

In the river, no fish rose.
In the air, birds were on the bugs:
Sulfurs, *Ephemerella invaria*,
Coffin Flies, *Ephemera guttulata*, big
Green Drake spinners: Coffin Flies
because of their white-shroud abdomens, black thoraxes.

But no fish rose.

Unlike the fish, cold Utilitarians,
misers of energy and paranoid,
birds are Romantics, originals
of the trope: life winged.

Red-winged blackbirds
appeared from nowhere,
intercepted Coffin Flies midair,
banked, lit, waited,
stalked the water's edge,
looking for Slate Drake emergers, *Isonychia bicolor*.
Swifts nailed Sulfurs as they
lifted from the stream.

And the bugs—the bugs were
doing what they must: finally elegant,
ephemeral as evening, no longer nightmare forms
crawling the river's cold stones,
slow and deliberate in flight, they
launched from the water,
launched from the shelter of grass.

It's said that rivers speak.
They have no need. It's we who must.
Fish do not rise. Birds wing. Bugs launch.
Ephemeral, they launch.
Ephemeral, they launch,
anyway.

—Bud Bynack



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.