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The Annual Catskill Fly Tyers Guild Picnic will be held on Saturday, August 18, 2012, 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.

Once again this year, instead of the guild supplying hamburgers and hotdogs, we're asking that everyone bring something to share and that some attendees bring a main dish—perhaps something like lasagna, baked ziti, or sloppy joes and hamburger buns. As before, bring your own plates and silverware and your own beverages. Guests are welcome, too.

The guild currently is without a secretary, and as a result, there won't be anyone coordinating what dishes people decide to bring. So just bring a favorite picnic dish that you think others will enjoy. If we have eleven versions of potato salad, we'll hold a potato-salad tasting!

Once again there will be a 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.

In addition, for the fly swap and guild fly collection, bring two flies that are alike—one to trade and one for the guild—if possible in separate film containers. See "The Guild Fly Swap" below for more on this guild tradition.

Tyers Needed: The Lancaster Fly Fishing Show

The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild will have a table at the Pennsylvania version of The Fly Fishing Show in Lancaster on March 2 and 3, 2013, as well as at the Arts of the Angler Show in Danbury in November, the International Fly Tying Symposium in Somerset, NJ, in November, and The Fly Fishing Show in Somerset in January. If you'd like to tie at the Lancaster show, contact Allen Landheer, the show chair, at superflytyer@gmail.com or (570) 269-1617.

Watch future issues of the *Gazette* for announcements for tyers needed at the other shows.

The Guild Fly Swap

By Allan Podell

When you attend a Catskill Fly Tyers Guild meeting, remember that at every meeting, a fly swap is scheduled. There are two reasons for you to participate in the monthly fly swap. First, you get to accumulate some really neat flies for fishing, to collect, or to use as models in your own tying. Second, the guild uses the flies it gets as

part of the swap for awards, prizes, or fund-raising activities, and some become part of the guild's archives.

You tie two identical flies. The swap is open to all types and patterns, but tying "Catskill" flies is encouraged. You then prepare two tags on which you write the name of the pattern, your own name, and when the fly was tied. Don't attach the tags to the flies, but place both in a 35-millimeter film container or pill container. Film containers are getting scarce, but usually will be available at the meeting. From each pair of flies you submit, one is kept by the guild and the other is placed in a bag. You get to select a container from the bag and keep the fly within. You may submit as many pairs of flies as you like. You will select a number of containers equal to the number of different flies you submitted. It's a fun way to accumulate new patterns and tying ideas.

Tyers Needed in September

We need volunteers to help staff a table at the Sullivan County 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.

The Guild Show Fly Plate **By Dave Brandt**

As noted in the July meeting notice, the fly plate that the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild will be taking to shows to exemplify the Catskill fly-tying tradition has been given over to a five-person committee. The scope of the plate has expanded and will contain more than just dry flies. Its size, the details of patterns to be included, and specific choices will be in the hands of this committee.

The committee has the final say in all matters regarding the fly plate. It's been suggested that if there are multiple submissions of the same pattern for the plate, we have the membership decide on which example will go into the display, but I think it might be months until we could work through such a process at meetings, and I think that for the sake of getting the project done in time for the fall and winter angling shows, all such decisions are best left to the committee.

I've suggested to them that a representative and accurate collection could be assembled from a couple of dozen different patterns and that all we need is a frame and display that is simple, portable, and instructive. The object, after all, is not to put together a display piece for a museum or a living-room wall, but to produce something that we can use to teach show-goers about the Catskill tradition.

I've also suggested that the plate simply display the name of the pattern, although we might note on the back which flies were supplied by which tyers. It is not the intent to create any competition within the guild or any hurt feelings over which samples ultimately get chosen. We thank all who have submitted or who will submit flies and recognize that with so many excellent tyers in the guild, the fact that the committee can choose only one example of each pattern means that they will have had extremely hard choices to make.

These and any other suggestions I've made to the committee are just that— suggestions. And that is the extent of my own involvement in the project, beyond simply receiving the flies submitted while Joe Ceballos is in Montana. We had to settle on an address where submissions can be sent, and I drew the short straw. So send any bona fide

Catskill flies that you wish to submit for inclusion in the plate to Dave Brandt, 239 West Street, Oneonta, NY 13820, before the September meeting.



There Is a Lot More to Fishing Than Catching Fish

By Bob Osburn

Here are some fishing experiences I am sure all of us have encountered. Only first names will be used to protect the guilty. 🐟

Don and I were on Sandy Creek, a hip-boot stream. Don wanted to go upstream and had to cross over a fence to do so. The fence consisted of a wood post with two bare wires on insulators, which spells “electric fence.” Don put one leg over the fence and immediately broke the world’s record for a standing high jump, not once, but three times before getting over. 🐟

Dave and I were on the Mongaup, a hydro stream. He wanted to fish the other side of the river. In those days, when two wheels were running, a gravel bar provided access with about two inches to spare with chest-high waders. The current pushed him off the bar, and he went under. When the current then pushed him to shore, he still had his hat, rod, and cigar. He emptied his waders, lit a new cigar, and went back to fishing. That’s a real fisherman! 🐟

Nick and I were on Johnson Creek. I located bedding salmon under a willow tree partially lying in the brook. Nick had a Fin-Nor reel that could stop a runaway truck. I talked Nick into fishing the bed. On his first drift, he hooked a salmon that tried to climb the tree. I will not tell you what he called me. 🐟

Walt and I were striper fishing on Cape Cod. I saw a small orange object off our port bow and pointed it out to Walt. He put the pedal to the metal until we reached a small girl in a plastic raft. I got her on board and proceeded to calm and warm her. We were about half a mile offshore at this time.

About halfway to shore, we picked up the girl’s uncle. He was swimming after her, and we found out that she was four years old. We felt this was our most satisfying catch ever and one we did not want to repeat. 🐟

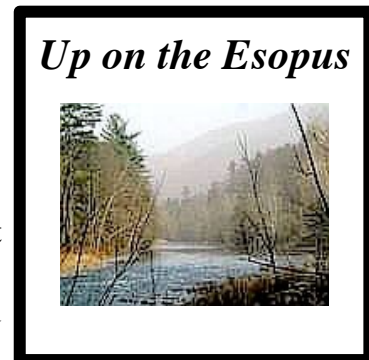
Don and I will never forget the day he got a fly in his eyeball or the time Tom got wet on our last day to keep his record intact. 🐟

Walt, Nick, and Dave are no longer with us, but I will never forget them and the other fishing buddies I have had over the years.

There is a lot more to fishing than catching fish!

The Brown Bivisible and Edward R. Hewitt

Although my collegiate education is heavily grounded in mathematics and engineering, I have forever been a Romantic history buff at heart. I’ve always thought it difficult to appreciate the present without some sense of the past: where we’ve been and what has transpired before. And though I grew up in the Garden State, one of the first



Catskill rivers I ever wet a fly line in was the East Branch of the Neversink, in the hamlet of Claryville. It was love at first sight with Theodore Gordon's river. It looked every bit of all that I ever read about how a wild, pristine Catskill trout stream should be.

After college graduation and relocating to New York to start a career, I met the Darbees during frequent visits to the Beaverkill and Willowemoc. In those early stages of my fly-fishing development, I never got too excited about the hackle for which Harry was famous. However, I did take an interest in the used and out-of-print books that Elsie was able to locate. Over time, I purchased several books from Elsie, but by far my two favorites are *Telling on the Trout* (1926) and *Hewitt's Nymph Fly Fishing* (1934), both by Edward Ringwood Hewitt. The second of the two is a small, thirty-one-page pamphlet with an original red price tag of seventy-five cents on the cover. I bet this little green brochure is worth quite a bit more than that these days.

I was drawn to both books for several reasons. As previously noted, one of the first Catskill rivers that I ever fished was the Neversink, and I wanted to read as much as I could about this legendary trout stream. Second, at the time, I was more of an avid nymph fisher than a dry-fly angler, and there was very little written-word guidance available about nymph fishing back then. I learned quite a bit from both books, and as I also learned at the time, Ed Hewitt seemed to be a forgotten fly fisher, yet he was a giant among Catskill anglers and a forward thinker, a man clearly ahead of his times. Remember, all of this occurred before some of the fine books on Catskill angling history by the likes of Mac Francis and Ed Van Put appeared on the scene.

With the passage of time, I've just about worn the covers off my copy of *Telling on the Trout*; I've read the book over and over, continually delighted by each rereading. I think it's fair to say that Hewitt gets credit for a few different historic fly patterns, including his hard-body nymphs, his Neversink Skater, and the Brown Bivisible. While I never took a liking to his nymph patterns, I do tie and fish those two dry flies on a fairly regular basis. Here's what the Dean of the Neversink had to say about his Bivisible—page 61 of *Telling on the Trout*: “There is no fly which will catch as many trout as the Bi-Visible fly properly handled.” He goes on to say that not all his fellow members of the Anglers Club agreed with him, but his personal experiences suggested otherwise.

As reasons for its trout-catching abilities, Hewitt credits the fly's enhanced ability to float in fast water while acting naturally in stream currents, plus its superior visibility due to the front white hackle band. He adds that the size of the dry fly and its hackles are much more important considerations than the wings and the body of a fly. He cites brown hackle as the most visible on the water, and the use of only hackle on the Bivisible prevents this pattern from becoming waterlogged. He adds that his conclusions were based upon seasons of experimentation and testing different types of dry flies.

While the Brown Bivisible might be among today's forgotten fly patterns, that wasn't always the case. *McClane's Standard Fishing Encyclopedia* includes it as a popular dry fly of the times. Ed Van Put, in his wonderful book *Trout Fishing in the Catskills*, writes that back in the 1930s, “the Bivisible was possibly the most popular dry fly in the country.” Mike Valla, in his fine book *Tying Catskill-Style Dry Flies*, devotes a chapter to this celebrated pattern, and Valla provides excellent tying instructions and accompanying photographs, so I'm not going to repeat those here. However, I've never tied my Brown Bivisibles with a tail, although Valla, McClane, and others do include a tail of brown hackle.

Long before I ever read anything by Hewitt, I read Bergman's *Trout*, the 1962 edition. Bergman noted that seven dry-fly patterns could suffice for all his angling needs, and among these were three Bivisibles: a blue, a badger, and a brown. I fished a Badger Bivisible, or Badger Spider, as I called the fly back then, before I ever fished a Brown Bivisible. But eventually I guess I relied upon Bergman's description of the pattern as "being simply a Brown Palmer tied with a white face" (page 184) to tie my Brown Bivisibles without ever referring to the recipe in the back of his book. In further discussing this fly, Bergman notes that while it "didn't look like much . . . the trout liked it so well that they wore it out" before he caught all the fish he desired. He concluded by stating that Bivisible flies were "the last word—the ultimate in dry flies." That's quite a ringing endorsement from a man who wrote one of the cornerstone books on our pastime.

When I finally read Hewitt's *Telling on the Trout* a few years after Bergman's book, I also relied heavily upon his description of the fly: "a Palmer-tied brown hackle on the head of which is wound a small wisp of white hackle." It's worth repeating that Hewitt wrote that "dark colors are more visible to trout from below than light colors, and, therefore, take more fish under most conditions," touting visibility to the fish as a main feature of this pattern. He added: "This fly is by far the best of any I have yet seen for all species of trout and it is based on a sound physical principle."



Photo: Ed Ostapczuk

All of this duly noted, the pattern for the Brown Bivisible is simplicity itself:

Hook: Mustad 94840, size 12 to 16

Thread: Black

Body: Two brown palmered hackles with a white hackle collar

If you want to be traditional, add a tail of brown hackle fibers or a brown hackle tip.

Every trout season, whenever I wander the East Branch of the Neversink, I often search its liquid confines with a size 14 Brown Bivisible in honor and memory of the Dean of the Neversink. The brook trout relish the Bivisible these days as much as they did eighty years ago, when it was the dry fly that belonged in every angler's possession. And my longtime friend and fellow guild member Aaron Hirschhorn tells me that he uses a size 16 Brown Bivisible on the Neversink below New York City's dam while pursuing its brown trout. Thus this old Catskill dry fly still accounts for itself in the twenty-first century, in an era of synthetics, foam-bodied flies, and genetically engineered hackle.

Born to a family of means and established station in life, Edward R. Hewitt became the patriarch of the Big Bend Club and caretaker of miles of water on the Neversink, an American pioneer of nymph fishing, an advocate of fine leaders and small flies, a forerunner of stream-improvement projects, with his wooden-plank pool-digger dams, and an experimenter in fish stockings—a fly fisher extraordinaire. For true Hewitt aficionados, I recommend picking up a copy of *Those Were the Days*, which he published in 1943. There's not much fishing information included, but it does cover Edward Ringwood Hewitt's life in great detail. In the book's final chapter, Hewitt writes: "I have

also made many new types of flies for both trout and salmon fishing. One trout fly, which I introduced, although it was not entirely a new design, is almost the most popular fly in use today. It is the ‘Bivisible,’ so named because I could see it and the trout could see it.”

As I scanned my book collection for material on this article, I realized it was time to reread *Telling on the Trout* again. There’s still a wealth of information packed into that hardcover. And so, inspired by Edward Ringwood Hewitt, I have also just ordered a copy of his *Days from Seventy Five to Ninety*. I can’t wait to read that either, hoping to find some insights for the years that lie ahead of me.



Ray Bergman’s “Translucent” Dry Flies

Trout, by Ray Bergman, has to be one of the best “working” books I own. Never do I thumb through it without something catching my attention, and then I find myself rummaging through materials, looking for the parts to tie one of the hundreds of flies in those pages.

The flies spotlighted this issue have been a mystery to me, and quite honestly, they still are. I have been researching and asking everyone I know if they have any experience with these cellophane-bodied “translucent” dry flies. No one as of yet could give me anything more than speculation, and that’s what you’re getting from me, as well—my take on these patterns.

Aside from the body materials, these are like any other traditional patterns that we tie all the time. A few are original to the materials, but some are favorites that have been converted simply by using a different material for the body. In Bergman’s book, there are seven listed—eight, if you include the Woodruff, but he gives an alternative body of wool for that fly, so let’s say seven.

The featured flies I experimented with are the Grizzly Tango and the Honey Dun. I simply wanted to try a flank wing and a hackle-tip wing for comparison. The others in the series are the Gray Translucent, Light Cahill Translucent, March Brown American, Tango Triumphant, and the Pink Lady Translucent.

On the body of these flies, the use of cellophane is what makes them unique. I am not exactly swimming in cellophane as a fly-tying material, but fortunately, my craft-making wife, Andrea, had some left over from a project.



Photo: John Bonasera

Another material used for this type of body is celluloid. After looking for years, I finally found some that was packaged and sold by Herters. I haven’t used that particular material yet, because I wanted to stick to the dressing that Bergman provided. If locating colored cellophane becomes difficult, you could use a floss underbody and wrap clear cellophane over it. This would open up many more color possibilities.

There is nothing groundbreaking about tying with cellophane. I used Bergman hooks in size 12 for the experiment and built up a white underbody. I cut a one-sixteenth-inch-wide strip of cellophane about two inches long, tied it in at the hook bend like a piece of tinsel, and wrapped it forward with overlapping wraps.

However, what I found to be groundbreaking is the effect it gives. There is almost a glow, like a halo surrounding the body, and I can see why the name “translucent” was attached to this series. They look exactly the same when wet as they do in the vise, which is unusual with most other body materials. Many flies I see on the water, especially spinners, are clear, almost invisible, and I think this is what the fly was intended to imitate. The cellophane does a remarkable job of appearing, well, *translucent*! I am anxious to do the whole series in triplicate and give them a try the next time out.

Book Reviews

Ramblings of a Charmed Circle Flyfisher.

By Ed Ostapczuk. Published by Xlibra and available from Amazon.com; \$29.99 hardbound, \$15.59 softbound, \$3.49 for the Kindle and other e-readers.

There is a genre of angling literature that could be called “Anglers’ Lives.” It is by no means the Lives of the Saints—quite the contrary. But one reason why we welcome works by writers as different (and yet the same in so many ways) as Roderick Haig-Brown, John Gierach, Nick Lyons, and Seth Norman is that they write with a voice that has been shaped by their angling lives and write about their angling lives in ways that allow us to identify with, learn from, aspire to, or simply enjoy the experiences that have made them who they are.

Members of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild of course know Ed Ostapczuk from his column in this newsletter, and many have known him personally longer than they would like to admit. They probably therefore also are familiar with the premise of the book, as inscribed in the title: “In 1969,” Ed writes, “I read a two-part article written by Cecil E. Heacox that appeared in the March and April issues of *Outdoor Life* titled ‘Charmed Circle of the Catskills.’ That poetic, yet simple, set of articles about the Catskills had a profound effect upon my life.”

It sure did. As a Jersey boy discovering the Catskill Mountains, their streams, and their wild trout, as an engineer working for IBM in Kingston, and then in a second career as a junior high school math teacher, Ed was drawn to the Rondout, Esopus, Schoharie, Beaverkill, Willowemoc, Neversink, and Delaware waters—the Charmed Circle—but especially to the Esopus, as the paean to the long-suffering and resilient stream that is at the heart of this book makes clear. It is indeed “in my veins,” as he declares.

Although as a literary genre an Angler’s Life is perforce about waters and the pull they exert on the heart and the mind (and *Ramblings*, as the title promises, takes readers on a tour of the Charmed Circle), it is essentially about people—about the author, of course, but also about others who enter into the passions and experiences that an angler feels and shares. So we learn a lot about Ed himself, including his devoted work on conservation issues on the Esopus with Trout Unlimited, his conversion from a Schweibertian hatch matcher to a disciple of John Atherton’s impressionistic approach to fly tying, and his understanding of and enthusiasm for fishing “small water.”

But such books are also about the people encountered in such a life—the people who help define it and make it what it is. In *Ramblings*, that aspect includes first of all Ed’s wife and accomplice, Lois. It also includes the angling buddies who have shared Ed’s enthusiasm for fly fishing since their youth together in New Jersey: Stickball Finn, the Bowmaster, Sweetpea, Little Rich, and the Polish Prince. Their real names also

appear in the book, but like all good narratives, this is a story about characters—indeed, about character. And so there are the sorts of tales that only fishing buddies can tell on one another, such as the time that the Polish Prince managed to shoot himself in the head with an arrow. (No Polish Princes were harmed in the making of this tale.)

Then there are all the others: not just those who have gone before who also have written about the Catskills, such as John Burroughs and Theodore Gordon (and Ed is an avid reader and collector of literature on the subject), but also the people Ed has known who have enriched not just his angling life, but those of others, including Art Flick, Ralph Hoffman, and “Catskill Bill” Kelly.

From memories of staying at the Antrim Lodge in Roscoe (at just over four dollars a night) with the Jersey boys during the heyday of the bar there universally known as Keener’s Pool to, later in life, the season-opening and season-ending rituals of the experienced fly fisher, *Ramblings of a Charmed Circle Fly Fisher* resonates equally with those who have been there and done that and those who only wish they could say that they had. If you fish the Catskills or just wish you could, Ed Ostapczuk’s angler’s life is a something you’ll identify with, learn from, aspire to emulate—and enjoy.

***Vince Wilcox’s Naturally Artificial Signature Flies:
Learn to Tie the Best-Selling, Most Effective Patterns
Published by Lyons Press, 2012; \$29.95 spiralbound.***

Vince Wilcox is a traditionalist. He makes abundant use of UV Ice Dub, fuscina holographic tinsel, Micro and Midge Tubing for both dry-fly and wet-fly bodies, rubber legs, multicolored fluorescent Hi-Vis wing posts, blue wire, a cautery tool most often used by dermatologists, and pretty much any processed petrochemical product that he thinks will work, only occasionally using old-fashioned natural materials such as marabou and rooster hackle. But he is a traditionalist nonetheless.

Mary Dette once told me that “a good fly is one that’s tied with proper proportions and doesn’t come apart when you fish it.” Although in their materials and even in their shapes (many are tied on curved, scud-type hooks), Wilcox’s flies bear only the faintest resemblance to the creations of Mary’s parents, Walt and Winnie Dette, or those of Harry and Elsie Darbee, or those of Theodore Gordon and Rube Cross before them, he is carrying on the tradition of innovation that all these fly-tying pioneers established—the tradition of using whatever materials are available to create flies that anglers will buy because the flies actually catch fish. Flies that meet those criteria indeed have the proper proportions and don’t come apart when you fish them. Gordon, Cross, the Dettes, and the Darbees used what they could find (or create, in the case of breeding chickens for genetic dry-fly hackle) to implement their vision of what might be an effective fly that other anglers might want to buy, and Wilcox does the same.

Hence the subtitle—*The Best-Selling, Most Effective Patterns*. Wilcox is a “Signature” tyer for Idylwilde Flies (hence that term in the title), and part of the claim he makes for his flies is that they sell and that they sell because they work. Indeed, as he says, he started offering some of his creations with blue bodies, despite his own skepticism, because they work and because his customers wanted them. That entrepreneurialism, too, is part of the American fly-tying tradition.

Wilcox has a shop in his native Adirondacks, in northern New York, not far from the shop where another tying innovator used what was available (snowshoe rabbit’s foot and deer hair) to create flies that would work and that would sell — the shop of the late Fran Betters. But Wilcox came of age as an angler and a tyer in the Rocky Mountain West, where they appreciate both the glory that is geese (for biot fly bodies) and the grandeur that is foam (the Chernobyl Ant and its descendants). So he comes by his

penchant for using processed petrochemical materials from yet another tying “tradition,” if it can be called that. All flies are supposed to be artificially natural, in some way, but with the materials Wilcox uses, he reverses the emphasis. They are, naturally, *artificial*. Hence the rest of the title.

That means being suggestive, rather than imitative. In fact, one of the notable things about his creations is that many of both his subsurface flies and his dries are designed to work in several different hatch situations. Of his J. C. Special, which has a shuck of Diamond Braid, an abdomen of Midge or Micro Tubing, a parachute post of mixed fluorescent chartreuse, orange, and pink Hi-Vis material, an underwing of pearl Krystal Flash, speckled centipede rubber legs, a thorax of UV Ice Dub, and, finally, a wing of elk hair and natural dry-fly hackle, all on a curved-shank hook, Wilcox writes that it “can cover caddis, mayflies, stoneflies, and terrestrials with ease, and so I fish a J. C. Special throughout the season and regardless of hatch activity. . . . I simply adjust the size and color for the activity in a given area,” “matching” the hatch with something that could be taken to be any number of different critters, depending on size and color.

A lot of Wilcox’s creations are striking, and not just because they are blue and fuscia, like his Superman, with its blue wire body, blue tubing for legs, and fuscia-red wing (or cape—and with it, what else was he going to call the fly?), which “was originally created as a mayfly attractor,” but also works “during stone and caddis hatches.” Many, such as his Micro Mayfly dry, a Blue-Winged Olive or Pale Morning Dun imitation with an extended body made of cauterized tiny tubing with Microfibbets inserted in it and a clear plastic wing that can be left erect for a dun or tweaked flat for a spinner, not only look like obvious fish catchers, but have the palm-to-the-forehead, “Why didn’t I think of that?” quality of simplicity in innovation that stretches back from the invention of Velcro to the discovery of the wheel.

Then there’s the Dingle-Berry, cravenly marketed by Idylwilde under the name of the “Hanging Chad,” which transforms the design of the articulated nymph into a dry-fly–emerger/cripple combination, a further development of the J. C. Special, with a trailing nymph body added, attached with a loop of 20-pond fly-line backing. A lot of the flies presented here tend to follow a logical progression of development in this way, and the book is also structured to present patterns from the simplest to the most complex, as a way to introduce novice tyers to new and more difficult techniques. Like many interesting tyers, Wilcox has thoroughly thought out his use of materials and techniques, and the result forms a systematic approach to tying and fishing.

Some of Wilcox’s flies are striking because they are flat-out ugly, though, and that includes his Bunny Bugger, with its holographic Cactus Chenille, rubber hackle, and red UV Ice Dub, which, however, no doubt looks really enticing in the water. It also includes most of his terrestrial imitations, which push the Rocky Mountain tradition of foam-bodied flies to greater heights—or depths, depending on how you feel about big foam flies. His VW Hopper is designed to emphasize three prominent features of the grasshopper, its rear legs, compound eyes, and wings, and it looks sort of like a cartoon grasshopper drawn by someone in the middle of a really bad acid trip. But even if you don’t want to follow Wilcox all the way in working out the possibilities of foam-bodied flies, he has developed useful techniques for tying less radical creations, such as doubling back the foam at the head of foam beetle imitations to create more floatation.

Wilcox begins by stating that “creating effective, durable flies should be the goal of every fly designer” and that “in this book I’ve tried to demonstrate how to reach that goal through the combination of natural and synthetic materials.” It’s actually his emphasis on synthetic materials that places him squarely in the tradition of innovation in American fly tying. I don’t doubt that the Dettles and the Darbees would initially be taken

aback by the sight of some of Wilcox's flies, but they would recognize both the effort and the intention that has led Wilcox to write: "After years of experimentation, of trial and error both at the bench and on the stream, these are the patterns I've found to work best. And they've been tied in the most effective way I know, using a combination of materials. Whether using feathers or fur, foam or flash, I like whatever it takes to do the job."



Catskill Fins, with Willow and BK. A new feature, drawn by "Catskill John" Bonasera.



This newsletter depends on all guild members for its content. Items from nonmembers are welcome at the editor's discretion. Send submissions to Bud Bynack, budbynack@verizon.net or 69 Bronxville Road, Apt. 4G, Bronxville, NY 10708, (914) 961-3521.