

**The October Meeting of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild** will be held on Saturday, October 15 at 2:00 P.M. at the Education Building of the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum, 1031 Old Route 17, Livingston Manor, New York.

Halloween approaches, and in the spirit of that celebration, this month's program will feature a Mystery Guest. Plus, come dressed as Theodore Gordon and enter the Theodore Gordon costume and look-alike contest!!!



### **The Guild Picnic, 2011**

The annual Catskill Fly Tyers Guild picnic was held on Saturday, August 20, 2011, at the Elsie and Harry Darbee and Matthew Vinciguerra Memorial Pavilion at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum. This year, we were joined by members of the Neversink Chapter of Trout Unlimited, who contributed greatly to both the conversations and the spread of picnic fare. This year's casting contest was won once again by Jeff Phelan. One more win, and he will have to be relegated to the officiating squad. Judie DV Smith beat guild president Dave Brandt for second and third place, respectively.



### **“Dear Harry” A Letter from Roderick Haig-Brown**

Roderick Haig-Brown  
Above Tide, Campbell River, British Columbia

2 Nov '58

Dear Harry

When are you going to send me some of those good big flies of yours? The winter season will be coming up very shortly and I am most anxious to see if they will move up steelhead in winter conditions. Have only one big Ratface left, plus two or three of the smaller ones and one Irresistable.

I had a patchy summer steelhead season, but very good in spots and your flies not only float beautifully but move the fish up very well. They may produce more short rises than flies of the Wulff type, which float lower on the water, but I am not yet convinced of this.

The best to you both.

As ever.

Rod Haig-Brown

*Archival material courtesy of Judie DV Smith*



## Fall Streamers

I love the fall, especially in the Catskills: cold, crisp mornings, leaves changing, and early sunsets. But in most of our Catskill streams, the bugs are tucked snugly under

their rocks, and for most of us, fishing season is rapidly closing down. Yet the fall is also when big browns move into the tributaries to spawn. You have a really good chance of hooking a trophy fish in the fall, because spawning and cooler water makes trout more aggressive and likely to hit a swung or animated streamer.

Last fall was an eye-opener for me. I had previously not used streamers much, having tried them only a time or two before. I am much more comfortable short-lining nymphs or, during times of insect activity, drifting dry flies. I drove to one of my favorite spots, a tributary of the big D, and not expecting much action, set up with my usual two-nymph dropper rig. After two hours covering about 100 yards of water without even a sniff from a trout, I dug down in my box and found a size 4 Bumblepuppy that I had tied early in the year. After adding heavier tippet, I stripped out some line and cast to the far bank above a logjam, letting it sink and stripping it back six inches at a time. I had the rod almost pulled out of my hand when one of the new fall arrivals took it for a baitfish. I finally got the male brown near the bank and, after a quick measurement against the rod, removed the barbless fly from my first seventeen-inch streamer-caught brown.

I took another fish the same size out of that pool that morning and lost one even bigger—they are always bigger when you lose them—but what I took away that fall morning was a whole new respect for the long-shanked fly.

Fall opens a door to try something different and, dare I say it, to something more like *fishing*. You don't just cast a streamer and let it drift. You twitch it, strip it, swing it to add life and movement, and the takes are vicious. It's fun and rewarding to be retrieving your streamer and have a fish come almost out of nowhere, grab it hard, and run with it. They don't just take the fly, they smash it, so light tippets have no place in this scenario.

When tying these streamers, think sparse. Baitfish are thin and blend in well with their surroundings. They have a natural translucency that helps hide them from predators as they grow up. Keeping this in mind while tying them makes for a more realistic imitation. Less hair in the wing, thinner bodies, and sparser hackling lets your streamer sink faster, more freely, and look more like what trout eat. I like them in the bigger sizes, 2s, 4s, and 6s, tied on both long and short shanks, and I sometimes weight them for deeper or faster water. I also sometimes substitute the winging material, for example replacing bucktail with marabou, or "pin" a



Wet Bumblepuppy Photo: John Bonasera

quill-slip wing so that the fibers are free to move in the water. Anything you do that increases the action of the fly makes it more attractive when you are manipulating it with rod-tip action and as the currents bring it alive.

I don't carry a whole assortment of streamers, mainly just a handful of Catskill patterns. Walt's Dace and Gordon's Bumblepuppy are two with which I have had good success. I find that the actual fly doesn't seem to make a big difference, but the presentation does. Varying the retrieves helps to find what's working that day or even at that time of day, and if the fish are there, it won't take long for you to find one. You can cover a lot of water quickly, swinging and stripping flies, and fall trout just love a streamer.

## Messing with a Classic: The Rough Gordon

By Niklas Dahlin



Theodore Gordon's Gordon Quill, probably better known as the Quill Gordon, is one of my absolute favorites, both to tie and to fish, and both are equally important to me. I especially use it during our spring and fall fishing here in Sweden to cover the *Baetis* hatches. This fly works just as it is, but during a fishing session, I noticed that the water and my way of fishing required a slightly more buoyant Quill Gordon. I considered trying to become a better caster or a better fly fisher, but came to the resolution that there was no

point in that, so I decided to mess with the Quill Gordon and give it a body hackle that would give the fly longer drifts, especially in rougher water.

Normally, a body hackle takes away a lot of the effect of the body material. To prevent that from happening, I decided to peel off the fibers on one side of the body hackle. I learned to do that in Mike Valla's book *Tying Catskill-Style Dry Flies*. This and the fact that I wrapped the hackle quite sparsely gave the body the nice look that only a stripped peacock quill can give.

Another problem that I thought would be a stumbling block was the fact of that the hackle could slip on the quill body, I solved that by adding a thin layer of clear superglue before wrapping the body hackle.

This fly actually gave me a third place in the Southern Appalachian Fly Tying Contest in 2011. There's of course a lot to say about fly tying as a competitive activity, but anyway, I'm really proud. Even more important, I have used the fly this season, and it works just as I wanted it to.

*Nik Dahlin, of Strovreta, Sweden, is one of the Swedish members of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild who will be attending the International Fly Tying Symposium on November 19 and 20, 2011, in Somerset, NJ (see the ad in this issue of the Gazette). Stop by and say hello to Nik, Jan Edman, and the rest of the Swedes. Catskill-style dry flies, in particular, have a real following in Sweden, and these are incredibly talented tyers.*

In this past June's *Gazette*, I introduced you to a soft-hackle wet fly called the Honey Bunny. In this issue, I would like to introduce to you another soft-hackle wet fly that I call the Down-Wing Adams. This fly is not my own creation. It's a modification of two existing patterns—a hybrid.

Sitting at my vise, I was looking at my pattern books, and one had a picture of a Timberline Emerger. I looked at that fly and thought it looked close to an Adams in some respects.

Why would a wet-fly guy like me be thinking of a well-known dry fly, the Adams? Simple. Every Fourth of July, I camp in the Catskills, and this is the only time of the year when I fish with dry flies. I have come to learn that I need only two dry-fly patterns to catch a lot of fish. One pattern is the Carrot, and the second is the classic Parachute Adams.

I have always been extremely successful with the Adams dry fly and have taken a liking to it. So when I saw the Timberline Emerger, I said to myself, "Why not an Adams wet fly?" The only question was how to tie it.

I studied the picture of the Timberline and decided it would have to be tied as a soft hackle in the Timberline style. A tail made from the dry-fly's mixture of grizzly and brown hackle fibers seemed too stiff—I wanted the fly to look buggy and have an effect of an emerger. I thought the coloration and texture of hare's mask would make a great tail and would create a buggy appearance.

This past spring, I fished the fly exclusively in a two-wet fly-rig along with last August's wet fly, the Thunder. The Down-Wing Adams took fish like it was going out of style. In fact, both wet flies were doing so well that I pitted one against the other to see which would catch more fish, but the competition ended in a tie, so I cut off the Thunder and fished this new creation on its own. The brown trout were just hammering this fly, and it accounted for another seven trout for the night on its own.

I actually had tied this fly a few years ago and had given it to some friends, who reported back that the fly worked well, and I had posted this fly online, with others who had tied it reporting success, as well. I don't know why it took so long for me to fish this fly myself. I think it's due to wet-fly overload, but that's another story.

One of the things I love about fly tying is that you can come up with an idea for a fly or just modify another pattern, as I had done, then go fishing and have a great night. The adrenalin rush lifts your spirits so high that you forget about any problem that was on your mind. Then, as you're making that long walk back to your car, you feel that you are at peace with the world.

I believe this pattern will work well this fall, and it will be part of my field trials, along with some old reliable patterns. This fly deserves a place in your fly box and is a pleasure to tie. Get out and enjoy the fall with all the many beautiful colors that are starting to appear, and as always, I wish you tight lines.

## *The Wet-Fly Corner*

With Andy Brasko, a Genuine Wet-Fly Fisherman





### **Down-Wing Adams**

Hook: Mustad 3906, size 10

Thread: White Danville 6/0 for the underbody, black Danville 6/0 for the head

Tail: Natural hare's mask

Body: Adams gray beaver fur

Full collar hackle: One grizzly hen cape hackle and one brown hen cape hackle

Wing: Two grizzly hen cape tips

Head: One good soaking coat of Griff's Thin, two coats of Griff's Thick, and one coat of Hard as Hull cement.

## **Book Review**

### ***Tying Flies with CDC: The Fisherman's Miracle Feather***

*By Leon Links. Published by Stackpole Books, 2010; \$24.995 softbound.*

If you've got a duck and want to cook *caneton à la Lyonnaise*, you're probably better off consulting something like Escoffier's *Guide culinaire* than *The Fanny Farmer Cookbook*. If you've got a bunch of duck-butt feathers and want to tie flies with them, it likewise makes sense to go to the source.

CDC (cul de canard) has become increasingly common in fly patterns created in the United States, thanks to the efforts of advocates such as René Harrop. It was in Europe, however, that the potential of the material for tying fishing flies first was recognized and developed, and the name most commonly associated with its promotion has been that of Marc Petitjean, a Swiss. In *Tying Flies with CDC*, first published in England in 2002 and republished here by Stackpole, Leon Links, who is based in the Netherlands, both examines the historical development of CDC flies in Europe and, in step-by-step how-to photos, illustrates techniques for creating many of the most important original patterns. He also includes brief contributions by numerous current fly tyers in Europe, the United States, and Japan, with recipes for and photo spreads or how-to photos of their most interesting flies and techniques.

The feathers from around the preen gland at the base of a duck's tail were being used to tie fishing flies as early as the 1920s in the Swiss Jura mountains. Research by

Marc Petitjean, whose interest in CDC goes well beyond the entrepreneurial, discovered a style of fly called a “Moustique” in that part of the Jura, tied by Maximilien Joset and Charles Bickel in towns about sixty miles apart. These classic CDC flies resemble wingless Catskill dries, but have a CDC feather wound around the shank where a cock hackle would be. Rather than propping the fly up in stiff barbs, the CDC moves and gives life to the fly.

Variations on that style gained more widespread recognition after World War II. French professional tyer Henri Bresson coined the somewhat sensational name “cul de canard” (“duck’s ass” is a reasonable translation), but such PR moves aside, the uses for CDC and the techniques necessary to implement those uses really began to expand in the 1980s. A Slovenian tyer and angler, Marjan Fratnik, frustrated by the fragility of Moustique-style CDC flies, developed the F Fly, essentially a down-wing, caddis-style application of CDC feathers at the eye of the hook over a thread body. And in the mid-1980s, the German magazine *Der Fliegenfischer* published articles on making dubbing-loop CDC hackles by Gerhard Laible and Robert Pfandl. In Germany, the technique became known as *Pfandeln*, “Pfandling,” a term that for obvious reasons of homophony never caught on here in the English-speaking part of the forest. (“He fondles his flies.”) In 1993, Laible published *CDC Flies*, the first book devoted exclusively to CDC, and he is recognized as one of the leading proponents of the material, but as I noted, the major popularizer of CDC material and its best-known innovator of tying techniques and tools has been Marc Petitjean, who has developed everything from midge patterns and emergers to streamers and steelhead flies.

The Fratnik and Laible/Pfandl techniques, with CDC tied down on tip of the hook shank or inserted in some sort of thread loop, perhaps using the split-thread technique developed by Marc Petitjean, remain the foundations of tying flies with CDC. The tyers from around the world whose patterns and recipes Links documents, however, have pushed the envelope in a variety of interesting ways, and as a catalogue of what can be and has been done with the material—that is, as inspiration for when you’re sitting at the vise with a particular problem of imitation to solve—there’s a lot to like here. The flies tied by Japanese tyers Ryo Shimazaki, Mingsugu Bizen, and Nori Tashiro are particularly stunning, as are the extended-body spent mayflies and midges by French tyer Jean-Louis Teyssié.

Indeed, my principal grump about the book is that there often are no how-to step-by-step for these and other interesting (although admittedly complex) ties. For the same reasons that CDC is attractive to fish — it’s supple, with its gossamer barbules surrounding a lot of air, and it moves—CDC isn’t the easiest material with which to tie. You’re basically tying little bits of air surrounded by fluff to the hook, and it can be hard to manage. The how-to sections here help, but as with most techniques, gaining some experience helps more, and perseverance furthers.

The flip side of that is that you can do things with CDC that no other material allows. I’ve tied some variations on a Petitjean mayfly emerger pattern, and they are incredibly buggy. CDC has other downsides, of course, including the propensity to get slimed (Hans van Klinken, of Klinkhåmer fame, even has an emerger pattern called Once and Away — “One and Done” in Americanese), but that’s why God invented amadou and Shimazaki invented Dry Shake. If you want to know what has been done and what others are doing with CDC, go to the source—*Tying Flies with CDC*.

—Bud Bynack

## Obituary

**Terry Hellekson** died on August 14, 2011, in Galesburg, IL. He was 72. He was born December 13, 1938, in Winnemucca, Nevada, the son of Herman Elmer and Lucille Diana (Edison) Hellekson. He married Patricia Hellekson on June 8, 2001 in Wheaton, Illinois. He is survived by his loving wife, Pat; three daughters, two sons, a stepdaughter, twelve grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

Terry Hellekson served in the U.S. Air Force for twenty years, with three tours in Vietnam. He received many citations and medals, among them the Bronze Star. After retiring from the air force, as proprietor of Fly Fishing Specialties, Terry went on to become one of the most successful wholesale and retail fly-fishing store owner/operators in Northern California. He and his wife Pat retired to Libby, Montana, to fly fish his beloved Kootenai River and later moved to Illinois to be closer to family.

Terry was a well known author of fly-tying books and adamant about truth in fly-tying history. He was the author of wrote *Popular Fly Patterns* (Peregrine Smith, 1977), *Fish Flies, Volumes 1 and 2* (Frank Amato, 1995), and *Fish Flies: The Encyclopedia of the Fly Tier's Art* (Gibbs Smith, 2005). Terry also was an advocate for teaching this art to others. The world of fly tying and fly fishing has lost an unwavering comrade. Memorials may be made to the Galesburg Rescue Mission or to the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum.

**NOTE:** There is no guild meeting in November so that members can attend the Arts of the Angler Show and the International Fly Tying Symposium. See the ads in this issue of the *Gazette*.

### For Sale

DST Quills for quill bodies and antennae. Smaller stuff for tails, legs, and so on. DST Quills are peccary/javalina hairs that I've specially treated and dyed—hence the name. The treatment makes the quills softer, more pliable, more durable, and easy to work with. They are much stronger than peacock or stripped hackle quills, don't require soaking, and the wrapped bodies have a nice segmented look. Send an e-mail with a snail-mail address for free sample pack and Information / Order Sheet to [apodell@stny.rr.com](mailto:apodell@stny.rr.com).



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](mailto:budbynack@verizon.net) or 69 Bronxville Road, Apt. 4G, Bronxville, NY 10708, (914) 961-3521.



The Catskill Fly Fishing Center and  
Museum  
Presents

# The Arts of the Angler Show

Saturday, November 12, 2011, 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

Sunday, November 13, 2011, 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

This is a full-service fly-fishing show focusing on the arts of the angler: fly tying, rod building, collecting, and destinations. In addition to offering the best in fly-fishing equipment, tackle, accessories, and collectibles, this show provides attendees with continued exposure to fly fishing and reinforces the importance of the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum and the Catskills. Educational seminars and programs are featured throughout the event.

At the Ethan Allen Inn,  
Exit 4 on I-84 in Danbury, CT

For more information, go to the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum Web site at <http://www.cffcm.net> or contact Erin, (845) 439-4810, or [flyfish@catskill.net](mailto:flyfish@catskill.net).

All proceeds benefit the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum





World's Largest Show For Fly Tying  
The 21st Annual International Fly Tying  
Symposium

November 19 and 20, 2011

Doubletree Hotel  
Atrium Drive, Somerset, NJ

SATURDAY: 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

SUNDAY: 9:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

ADMISSION

ADULTS: \$15.00 SATURDAY

\$12.00 SUNDAY

WEEKEND PASS: \$20.00

CHILDREN UNDER 16: FREE

This year's theme is "How Swede It Is." At least ten of Sweden's best fly tyers are coming to the symposium for their first visit, including Swedish members of Catskill Fly Tyers Guild. Their skill and creativity is amazing.

