

# The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild



# GAZETTE

December 2005

The December meeting of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild will be held on Saturday, December 17, 2005, at 1:00 P.M. at the Rockland House in Roscoe, NY. Dave Brandt will be tying the American March Brown and discussing the feather used for the wings—heavily barred wood duck flank. Don't miss this. It's Dave Brandt.

## American March Brown

Hook: Mustad 94840, size 10, or equivalent

Thread: Tan to light brown, 6/0 prewaxed

Wings: Heavily barred wood duck flank

Tail: Medium to dark ginger hackle barbs

Dubbing: Your favorite March Brown-colored dubbing

Hackle: Mix of grizzly and medium to dark ginger



## Wanted: Fly-Tying Instructors

We need volunteer instructors for the free fly-tying sessions to be held at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum from 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 noon on April 19 and May 6, 13, and 20, 2006. This is a little later in the trout season than in previous years, and we hope for a better turnout of students and instructors, because we should get in some fine fishing after the class. Contact Bob Osburn at [mosburn@hvc.rr.com](mailto:mosburn@hvc.rr.com).

This class will feature a parachute dry fly, a soft-hackle wet fly, a Minimuddler, a Hare's Ear Nymph, and a Gray Fox dry fly. Bob says: "Why a Gray Fox? Well, I have a lot of mallard flank feathers, and this is one Catskill pattern that uses it for the wing. Also, this pattern calls for 'light fawn' fur from a red fox. I am OK with black and white, but all those colors in between confuse me, so I am going to depend on Ralph Graves to come up with the real McCoy. This selection of flies incorporates some techniques and material not covered in previous classes." Dick and Judie Smith will go through the tool kits and replace anything that's worn out.

**Survey—*An Intermittent Feature*** What are your favorite and least favorite dry-fly hooks for Catskill-style dry flies—and why? This seemingly innocent question conceals Pandora's box—

## the issue of proportions. Don't be afraid to open it. Tyers Needed for the Somerset Fly-Fishing Show in January

The Fly-Fishing Show in Somerset is on January 27, 28, and 29, 2006. See the ad in this issue of the *Gazette*. Because this is a three-day show, we can use more tyers than at the International Fly Tyer's Symposium. The guild provides admission to the show for the tyer on the day he or she ties. If you have not tied at a show, think about trying it. One of the great pleasures you'll experience is capturing the interest of young prospective tyers, maybe starting them out to carry on this great tradition, and you're sure to meet some interesting people.

If you are willing to tie at this show, get in touch with Paul Murphy at (908) 879-7929 between 7:00 and 9:00 P.M. or e-mail pmurphy100@patmedia.net and let him know approximately when you can tie on and on what date. In the past, we have been able to accommodate the tyer's preference, but we can't guarantee it. The earlier the tyers sign on, the easier it becomes to get an agreeable time, because it gives us more time to find someone who will switch. The cooperation in that regard has been outstanding. The cutoff date for signing is December 31. Don't put off volunteering, because the list fills fast and gets closed out.

## The 2005 International Fly Tyers Symposium—A Report

The guild was given an excellent table in the hall next to an entrance to the main showroom in the Doubletree Hotel for the International Fly Tyers Symposium on November 19 and 20. Judie Smith put together a new backdrop for us—pictures of Catskill tying legends, a colorful map of the area, and a notice of the Rendezvous for 2006. We had sign-up sheets for the Rendezvous at the table.

We signed on four new guild members, one lapsed member, and four renewals. There always were interested visitors at the table watching our tyers and asking questions. We have a strong group of excellent tyers who represent the guild very well, and most have offered to return for the January Somerset show. Tyers tied Catskill patterns throughout the show, and the guild thanks everyone for keeping to our mission.

Tyers participating were Kurt Huhner, John Kavanaugh, Mark Romero, Gary Morison, Frank Audino, and Dan Caruso on Saturday. On Sunday, we had John Collins, Brian McKee, Elmer Hopper, Leslie Wrixon, and Al Ampe. Carl Bradley offered to come from his featured bench inside, but as it turned out, we were able to man the table without bothering him.

Leslie is the first woman that I remember tying for us at a show. Other female members should think about doing so, as well. It's great fun exhibiting your skills and meeting other tyers to trade pointers.

John Kavanaugh brought a framed box of Catskill patterns, which was exhibited on an easel the hotel provided. He has offered to make one for the guild to use as a raffle item and can have it ready for the January show. We have tentatively accepted his offer, pending approval from the directors.

Thanks to all the tyers for their help. They are a great group of talented people who are generous with their time

—Paul Murphy, New Jersey Show Chair

## The 2005 Arts of the Angler Show—A Report

We had nine tyers signed up, however only six actually attended for their time slots. We had quite a lot of interest in our table and had the opportunity to show a number of young people how to tie a fly. We gave some flies to the children who sat and watched our demonstration as well as to a couple of adults who were interested in using our flies as models. We had several members renew and one new member.

The show was very well organized as far as the promotion was concerned and was fairly well attended. I did not attend the auction, so I cannot comment on that portion of the show.

I would like to thank those who tied at the show and especially Bob Osburn, Leslie Wrixon, and Kurt Huhner for not only tying, but also donating to the club the flies they tied. Thanks also go to Mark Romero for transporting out backdrop and essentials to and from the show and saving Judie DV Smith a trip.

The next stop on the traveling tyers tour is on January 6, 7, and 8, 2006, at Western Connecticut State University in Danbury. See the ad in this issue of the *Gazette*. We need many more tyers for this show, because it runs for three days.

If you can help out, please contact me at (203) 544-8014, [dmcquat@optonline.net](mailto:dmcquat@optonline.net), or 31 Pine Mountain Road, Redding CT 06896.

—Ed McQuat, Danbury Show Chair

## Where Do You Draw the Line?

By Gary Sweet

Where do you draw the line of origin between two patterns that are very similar? Can't two people be given credit for the same thing? Today, when an unprecedented number of materials for tying are available, as is access to ideas via the Internet and magazines and books, it is not uncommon for several different individuals to develop pretty much the same new style or fly or pattern. But this is not a new phenomenon. How much of a change in a pattern is necessary before it's legitimate for somebody else to name it again?

Fly tying isn't manufacturing, and its products generally aren't registered with the U.S. Patent Office. Origins tend to be obscure. Can you imagine how much money could have been made if the originator of the original Mickey Finn had patented the design? But who was that? At that time, the supplier was selling it as a Red and Yellow Bucktail. Joe Bates, in his *Streamer Fly Tying and Fishing*, credits John Alden Knight with its origin, but Bates also credits William Mills and Son as the source of the first Red and Yellow Bucktail used by Knight, based on correspondence with Knight himself. And before the name "Mickey Finn" was attached to the pattern, it had been named "The Assassin." Actually, when you examine view the fly on plate VII of Bates's book, it looks like the wings are married wing quills, not bucktail at all. So who originated the Mickey Finn?

Is written documentation of a specific pattern necessary or enough to confer credit for the origin of a pattern? William Mills and Son certainly had a list or catalog of the patterns it

distributed and sold. That would qualify as written documentation, but not necessarily documentation of the pattern's origin.

Suppose a popular writer is tying at a show and somebody shows him a new pattern, claiming to have designed it. The writer then publishes an article about the pattern, giving it a different name or even tacking his own name onto it. The writer is more apt to have an article published than the John or Jane Doe who claimed to have originated it—and of course there's only John or Jane's word that they did so. That's the way it sometimes happen in real life. Who gets the credit?

Many years ago, I was given a description of a fly to tie for someone and misunderstood that he was actually giving it to me to try. The original pattern was from Ed Story of the Feather-Craft fly shop in his newsletter, and since then I have made a few changes to the original pattern because I didn't have the body materials he used. It has become quite popular with people to whom I've given it to try. Even though it doesn't look like the original pattern, and I have renamed it, I still credit Ed for the original idea and pattern.

Unfortunately, we can't credit people we don't know. It would be *very* time consuming to scour the numerous magazines and Internet sites that publish patterns searching for patterns by others that might be considered the same thing that you just dreamed up. And even then, you would have to draw a line someplace between the two similar patterns. Where do you draw the line?

*Hey! That's not a rhetorical question. Let us know what you think.*

## Book Review

### ***Fish Flies: The Encyclopedia of the Fly Tier's Art***

**By Terry Hellekson. Published by Gibbs Smith, 2005; \$50.00, hardbound.**

Shortly after he had moved to Libby, Montana, Terry Hellekson suffered the loss of all his fly-fishing books, manuscripts, pictures, fly-tying tools and materials, and memorabilia from his own lifetime of angling and work in the fly-fishing industry, plus books and historical materials collected as early as the 1930s by his father, who was a guide on California's Klamath and Trinity Rivers. It was all stolen from temporary storage. Hellekson has turned this lemon into lemonade. The loss led to what he calls "an awakening." *Fish Flies* was originally published in 1995 (Frank Amato Publications), but the loss "forced me to look at my writing from a whole new perspective," he says. With access to the extensive fly-fishing library of fellow Libby resident Glenn Overton, of Overton's Wonder Wax fame, Hellekson has extensively revised and expanded *Fish Flies*.

Now issued in a single, restructured and reedited volume at less than half the cost of the original two-volume set, this work finally fulfills the original publication's sometimes thwarted promise. Plus, while this is a reference work, it also has considerably more to offer.

Hellekson knows fly tying, fly-tying materials, and fly-tying history. As a former commercial tyer, as a former importer of feathers and fur from around the world and the wholesaler of synthetic tying materials, as former a fly-shop owner, and as a life-long historian of the sport, Hellekson is uniquely qualified to produce a book that ranges from instructions for

beginners to judicious evaluations of the complicated origins of traditions and fly patterns in the Anglo-American angling heritage.

It is the overlap between personal history and the history of fly fishing, however, that transforms *Fish Flies* from a useful reference to be taken off the shelf and consulted into a volume that rewards being read, carefully and reflectively—although at something like seven pounds, it's not something you're going to stuff in your back pocket and read on the bus.

There is plenty of information here that is, of course, simply useful,—2,950 fly recipes and 695 flies illustrated in color plates. Some of this is new. There are 150 new streamer patterns added to those of the previous volume, for example.

But there are also expanded and reevaluated explorations of other aspects of the history of the sport—the role of Reuben Cross in the development of the classic Catskill-style dry fly, for example, and a history of the upright and divided hair-wing dry fly that frames and contextualizes a development usually attributed to Lee Wulff.

The historical information includes discussions of origins and related issues in the fly recipes themselves, and these help make the recipes fascinating reading. Hellekson has made scrupulous efforts to attribute patterns to their actual originators, one of the most fraught issues in fly-tying history (see Gary Sweet's "Where Do You Draw the Line?" in this issue) and one of Hellekson's passions. If he doesn't get these right, I don't know who does. His efforts to get to the truth, at least, can't be disputed.

The focus here is on what has made fly fishing the complex, yet simple, endlessly articulated and deeply rooted enterprise that it is. It's on the nature and origins of what endures in the sport. That makes it a work that should itself endure.

## Obituaries

Guild member Thomas H. Mosher, 58, of Waverly, NY, died unexpectedly on Friday, November 11, 2005, at the Robert Packer Hospital in Sayre, PA. He was an avid fly tyer and fisherman and visited the Catskill region often.

—The Catskill Flies On-Line Forum

André M. Puyans, originator of the A.P. Nymph and the loop-wing dry fly, died on October 25, 2005 at the Eastern Idaho Regional Medical Center in Idaho Falls, ID. Andy was born in 1936 and was raised in Garden City, NY. He started tying flies at the age of seven and, when he was nine, was stricken with polio. While hospitalized in Portland, Maine, he took on his first real professional fly-tying task, for 144 dozen flies. As a youngster, Andy spent many hours in the company of the Dettos, and he made it a point to learn what he could from the Darbees, Art Flick, and Ray Bergman, to name a few. His father would drop him off on his way to work so Andy could spend the day visiting the Wilmarth Tackle Company and the Angler's Roost in the Chrysler Building, where he was able to gain knowledge from Elizabeth Gregg and Jim Daren. Andy worked in the sporting-goods department at Abercrombie and Fitch when Abercrombie and Fitch was still a real sports shop. He moved to San Francisco in 1958 to set up the Abercrombie and Fitch tackle department there, and in 1972, he started Creative Sports Enterprises in San Francisco's East Bay. A man of Falstaffian wit and appetites, Andy taught literally thousands of

fly tyers and anglers on the West Coast, where to fly fishers for decades he was both a friend and a living legend.

—Terry Hellekson

The World of Fly  
January 6, 7, and 8,



Presented by **Flyfishing**

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**University**

**Supported and Sponsored by *American Angler, Fly Tyer, and Saltwater Fly Fishing Magazines, and Fly Fishing New England Magazine.***

**Show Hours:**    **Friday, January 5**    **11:00 A.M. to 6:30 P.M.**  
                         **Saturday, January 7**    **9:00 A.M. to 6:30 P.M.**  
                         **Sunday, January 8**    **9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.**

**Location: The O'Neill Center on the Western Connecticut State University campus, Danbury, CT.**

**Admission: \$10.00. Students 18 and under are free.**

**Official show hotel: The Inn at Ethan Allen. Special Show Rate is \$75.00. The hotel is located just after making the right at the exit ramp en route to the O'Neill Center. You must mention the show for this rate. Call 1-800-742-1776 or visit [www.eathanalleninn.com/](http://www.eathanalleninn.com/).**

**For more information contact Flyfishing University. Phone: (860) 354-3140; fax: (860) 354-3423 ; e-mail: [info@flyfishingU.net](mailto:info@flyfishingU.net).**

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## **The Somerset Fly-Fishing Show 15th Year!**

**At the Garden State Exhibit Center**

**January 27, 28, 29, 2006**

**Friday 10:30 A.M to 6:00 P.M**  
**Saturday 8:30 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.**  
**Sunday, 9:00 A.M to 5:00 P.M.**

**50 Atrium Drive, Somerset, NJ 08873**

**Admission: \$14:00 per day for adults. Two-day pass, \$24; Three-day pass, \$32. Under 12, \$2 per day.**

The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild *Gazette* is issued six times a year to members. Membership is only \$10.00 per year. New, first-time members also get a **FREE** copy of the booklet *Favorite Rivers, Favorite Flies*, as well as discounts on guild patches and pins. **WANT TO JOIN THE GUILD or GIVE A FRIEND a GREAT GIFT?** Just complete this form, then mail it and a check to: **Bob Osburn, 3 Good Time Court, Goshen, NY 10924** and indicate if it is a new membership or a renewal.

**\*\*\*\*\*Remember, memberships renew in February. \*\*\*\*\***

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Would you be willing to accept the *Gazette* via e-mail?

Yes (please provide) \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_



**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, BBynack@cs.com or 69 Bronxville Road, Apt. 4G, Bronxville, NY, 10708, (914) 961-3521.



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