

The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild



GAZETTE

December 2006

The December meeting of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild will be held on Saturday, December 16, 2006, at 2:00 P.M. at Rockland House on Route 206 in Roscoe, NY. Take note of the time change. Mike Canazon will present a program on bamboo rods. He will focus on rod performance and what to look for if you are buying a bamboo rod, rather than on the technical aspects of rod construction.

Mike has been building rods for seven years. You will be shown old rods and new, be given some pointers on how to distinguish a quality rod from an inferior one, and—if weather and time permit—have the opportunity to cast a rod.

Order Mary Dette DVDs *Now*

By Ken Kobayashi



This is the last chance to place orders for the Mary Dette DVD before we put it into production. This is not your typical fly-tying video. It was taped in the very informal setting of a guild meeting, with all the banter and questions of the attending guild members. It's full of Mary's tying techniques, as well as her reminiscences of a lifetime tying Catskill flies. The DVD runs for approximately one hour and forty-five minutes and shows Mary tying nine different flies at two guild meetings, in August 2001 and October 2003.

The DVD is \$8.00 per copy, plus packing and postage. I'll include an invoice when I ship. Orders will ship toward the end of the year. If you've already e-mailed me to reserve your copies, I will be in touch with you, also via e-mail, to get your shipping address and to give you instructions on payment.

If you wish to place an order or to order more copies, you can e-mail me at kenkobayashi@verizon.net. If you don't have or don't like e-mail, you can write to me at 300 S. Broadway #1F, Tarrytown, NY 10591, or call me at (917) 553-4050. However you contact me, please let me know your address and phone number, in addition to the number of copies you wish to buy. Make checks payable to Ken Kobayashi.

January Meeting: Casting for Recovery

The program for the January guild will be tying flies for our traditional contribution to Casting for Recovery, a national organization assisting women recovering from breast cancer. Casting for Recovery schedules weekends at various locations to introduce women with breast cancer to fly fishing. The fishing itself is therapeutic, and the women also benefit from meeting others who are going through the recovery experience. Hank Rope, our past president, has been actively involved instructing and guiding these women in the Catskills.

Bring your vise and materials to the meeting on January 17 at the Rockland House on Route 206 in Roscoe, NY, at 2:00 P.M. Check the January bulletin to confirm the time and place.

Should you be unable to make the meeting, tie some flies and mail them to Hank Rope, P.O. Box 122, Big Indian, NY 12410.

If you have suggestions for programs, or if you would like to present a program, please contact Paul Murphy at (908) 879-7929 or e-mail pmurphy100@patmedia.net.

Note Meeting Time Changes. Beginning with the December meeting, the Rockland House has asked us to schedule our Saturday meetings an hour later, at 2:00 P.M., to make it easier for them to find someone to open and staff the place. Meetings also will now be held in the smaller of the two dining rooms—a place with more room and more light. If you haven't attended a meeting, come, enjoy one of our programs, and meet other members.

The 2007 Fly Tyers' Rendezvous By Mike Hogue, Fly Tyer Chairman

Mark your calendars for the 2007 Fly Tyers' Rendezvous, sponsored by the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild. The event will be held on Saturday, April 21, 2007 at the Rockland House on Route 206 in Roscoe, NY, from 10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. This is our sixth year. Last year, we had over forty tyers from all over demonstrating their skills.

The Fly Tyers' Rendezvous is a great chance to get together for a day to exchange ideas, patterns, and techniques. The program is free, open to the public, and will again be announced in a variety of national and local publications.

We are inviting tyers who have come in the past and will fill in with any new interested tyers as space allows. I will make every attempt to find room for all who wish to tie. Flies of any type may be tied and demonstrated. Contact Mike Hogue, Fly Tyer Chairman, 622 W. Dryden Road, Freeville, NY 13068; phone, (607) 347-4946; e-mail, mhogue@twcny.rr.com.

Our goal is to preserve the nonprofit nature of this fun event. To that end, our rules concerning commercial activity are pretty straightforward. Tyers will again be allowed to sell flies of their own design and making. Showing and selling tyers' collectibles, whether in picture frames, domes, or sets of flies, also is encouraged. Many folks who attend are looking for collectibles, so this is one way to offset some of your travel expenses. If a tyer is an author, he or she may also bring books to sell. Tyers also may provide commercial information about materials, hooks, and the

like. Limited amounts of materials may also be sold if they relate to the flies being tied. Tyers may also bring promotional materials related to guide services or companies they represent. Please use good judgment.

If you would like to demonstrate some of your flies, please let me know as soon as possible or by February 1, 2007. Whether you come to tie or just to hang out and learn from those who do, the Fly Tyers' Rendezvous is a blast.

Report: The International Fly Tying Symposium, 2006 By Paul Murphy, Show Chair

This year, the guild again was invited to participate in the International Fly Tying Symposium at the Doubletree Hotel in Somerset, NJ, on Saturday and Sunday, November 18 and 19. Judie DV Smith nicely handled the details of our relationship with the show, which is confirmed by the fact we have been invited back yearly—no small feat, because there is limited space. Our table was in a good spot in the hall outside the main show floor.

Our tyers were Kurt Huhner, Hank Rope, Mark Romero, Leslie Wrixon, Frank Audino, Gary Morison, Brian McKee, John Collins, Elmer Hopper, Misa Ishimura, Joe Ceballos, and Charlie Bates. Brian came even though he is on crutches—that's dedication. Mark jumped in on short notice when one tyer had to cancel. Gary Sweet again made table tents with the tyers' names and the guild logo. Al Ampe picked up our backdrop and is holding it for the January Somerset show. I thank all the people who volunteered to make this event happen.



Mark Romero and Leslie Wrixon tying at the show, with Paul Murphy looking on.

We booked eleven memberships, including one from Sweden and another from England—seven renewals and four new members. We also had a number of people visit us, admire our tyers' skills, and learn about the guild and its purpose. A sampling of the tyers' work was put into a fly box and given to the show to use as a door prize at a future event. We had our own drawing, as well—note cards with photos of Catskill rivers that Judie Smith had done, given away at our table in an hourly raffle.

The Fly Fishing Show in Somerset is coming up on January 26, 27, 28, 2007. See the advertisement in this issue of the *Gazette* for more information. If you are interested in tying there, please contact me: pmurphy100@patmedia.net or (908) 879-7929 evenings before 9:00.

Christmas and Fly Tying

By Mike Hogue

Christmas is always a wonderful time. I love the food, the music, and the gifts, but like most typical American males, I am impossible to shop for. Tools? Got 'em. Socks? Got those. CDs and DVDs? Got those, too.

And I'm not the only one who already has plenty of toys. What's a person to do? I find that one of the ways to bring pleasure to those on my list is to make things. Personalize something—make something that is a part of you and that is unique. Those are items we all treasure. Here are some gift ideas you can make for your friends and family—not to mention some ideas for things that you can make for yourself.

Pins and earrings are some of the easiest things you can make. The best earrings are generally flies tied on large hooks in patterns that are flat, medium-sized, and with a variety of colors. Usually it works best to use straight-eyed hooks in sized 6, 8, or 10. Wet flies are good choices, as are small streamers. In the current issue of *Fly Tyer* magazine, Bill Logan of New Jersey uses red and white foam to tie a pair of Santa's Little 'Hopper earrings. Check them out.

One of the keys to creating your own design is to cover the hook points. You can take some bead chain, clip off a bead, and glue it on to the point. At many craft stores, you can find earring hangers and attach the hook to the hanger.

Pins are pretty straightforward, too. Just tie small golden safety pins in the body of the fly, with the clasp side parallel to the hook. I glue bead-chain beads to the hook point on these, too. I usually tie pins on bright, stainless-steel saltwater hooks. You can also buy gold-plated salmon-fly hooks. These have balls welded to the point ends. The safety pin is welded to the hook, as well.

One really cool idea is make fly Christmas ornaments. Just find some transparent glass balls or small glass squares and insert a fly. Some use shredded Mylar as a bed to make it look like the fly is sitting on water. Still others use a fine piece of monofilament and hang the fly inside the ball.

One of the neatest flies to tie for an ornament is Ralph Graves's Christmas Tree. Ralph uses dyed Amherst pheasant feathers that he winds down the hook shank, and the result looks like a pine tree. Tied in red or green, this looks neat. Ralph then suspends those inside a clear globe ball. I have one, and it is really clever. Ralph also makes a whimsical Santa Mouse deer-hair mouse pin. The mouse has a hand-made hat, red eyes, and an Ultra Chenille tail and is spun of white belly hair. For a long time, Ralph wouldn't do these because the hat is so hard to make—it's a cone shape that is hard to fabricate and stick on the mouse's head. See if you have better luck.

There are several types of display domes, shadow boxes, and picture frames, all of which make great personalized gifts. Domes were originally made to show off pocket watches. They can be easy or hard to find these days, depending on your luck. I have seen domes with nice oak bases and domes with really ugly bases cut out of Masonite.

To put together a fly display in a dome, I take aquarium glue and glue river rocks in a mound, surrounded by a set of small corks, then stick my completed flies into the corks. These are

best for medium-sized flies, although I have seen big domes by Dick Talleur and others that have large sticks inside to display the flies.

The display boxes known as Riker mounts, commonly used for showing off insect and mineral collections, can be used to mount and display flies, too. These leather-framed glass boxes have a large cotton patch inside. They are useful for displaying flat flies such as salmon flies or streamers. They come in a variety of sizes, and you can glue cards to the back of the box for mounting. I have several salmon flies mounted like this—you can see them better without handling the fly. My company, Badger Creek Fly Tying, sells these mounts, so if you are interested, call me at the number listed below for a price quote.

Some clever tyers have discovered that the baseball-card cases that are used to hold collectors' cards make dandy streamer display boxes or boxes to display salmon flies. These are inexpensive and make a nice way to show off a fly.

Shadow boxes are thick frames that have a large edge. I get these at craft stores—many times, these stores have 50-percent-off sales on frames. You can display a whole set of flies and even include a picture. Old trout stamps and fishing licenses can make attractive displays. I have a set of shadow boxes I made using pictures of fish by Maynard Reese, a well-known duck-stamp illustrator from Minnesota, taken from a State of Iowa Department of Natural Resources poster series. I scanned the images and mounted them, then glued them to foam-core board. I then glued on corks and mounted the flies on them. I also have a frame of Tim Trexler flies in which Tim used bark as a backing. I have a collection of labels from the Salmon River wines sold by the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum, and I'm planning to display some flies in a shadow box with those labels. Adding pictures to a set of flies also can help to preserve memories of a memorable trip for a loved one or fishing friend.

Frames pose one problem: attaching the fly to the board. Some folks use small tubes and sew the fly to them. Others use hot-melt glue and glue the fly down. Still others use foam. Clear plastic sticks are another popular choice. These are often used by florists to arrange flowers. My personal favorite approach is to use small test-tube corks I get from lab supply firms. I glue the corks to a matte board and stick the fly in the cork.

Personalizing a gift for the holidays and using any of these ideas will go a long way toward making lots of people smile—and that will make you smile, as well.

Copyright © Mike Hogue, 2007. All rights reserved. Mike Hogue is the owner of Badger Creek Fly Tying and founder of the guild's annual Fly Tyers' Rendezvous. Contact him via his Web site: www.eflytyer.com, or call him at (607) 347-4946—leave a message and he will call back. Sometime in the future he will also actually have a real book of his patterns published.

Angling Notes: Swan Song on the Bighorn

Since the opening of the Bighorn River to public fishing, Jim Keech and I have made annual trips to visit our friend Art Pitts, who lives in Hardin, Montana, and fish that fabulous river. Being relative conservatives, we usually used to fish the Afterbay, Three Mile, and Thirteen Mile access sites as wade fishers, a process that becomes more difficult with advancing age. This year, though, we decided to hire a guide and float the stream.

Jim and his brother had fished the river two weeks before my son and I planned to fish it with the same guide, who just happened to be Art Pitts's son-in-law. Keech told me they had caught

sixty or more big trout a day, many in the twenty-inch category. His final advice to me was, “Do it the way the guide tells you to.” Little did I realize the ignominy of that advice.

My son and I managed to fish for three hours on our own on the evening of our arrival, and Brad caught five fish on a dry fly at St. Xavier Bridge, one a large rainbow, so as far as I was concerned, the trip was a success. Who could ask for anything more?

The next day, we floated with our guide, Todd Peterson, and learned the new technique . . . bobber fishing with a size 2 English bait hook wound with red copper wire . . . and did we ever catch fish. The number sixty may sound like an exaggeration, but it probably is on the low side. Many were over twenty inches, and all were the most beautiful wild fish the river has to offer. In all those previous years, we had never experienced such a super event. In fact, you might think it was Paradise regained, but that it surely wasn’t.

Any respectable fly fisher has to be dismayed at bobber fishing. All then are equal, the neophyte and the old pro—all catch fish, and every guide on the river has adopted the same technique. Call it what you will, it surely isn’t fly fishing. It was fun while it lasted, but as an octogenarian, now I have done it all, and that’s the end of that.

—Al Himmel

Book Review

Cowboy Trout: Western Fly Fishing as if It Matters, by Paul Schullery

The Montana Historical Society Press, 2006; \$17.95, softbound

The stories we tell ourselves about our past really are stories about who we take ourselves to be—or, sometimes, about who we wish we were. A lot of those stories are old, retold and repurposed for new uses, perhaps, but familiar in form nonetheless. Among them are the stories of “westwarding”—the westward march of progress or of empire, the West as a place of potential, rather than of constraint, and the East as the locus of corruption and stagnation, a place to flee by lighting out for the territories ahead of the rest.

In *Cowboy Trout*, angling historian and historian of the American West Paul Schullery both interrogates this story and repeats it in nuanced form. Read from an armchair by the fire during an Eastern winter, it equally prompts reflections about how we tell the same stories from an Eastern perspective.

That’s because, if we set aside the *topos* or commonplace of “westwarding” that informs the often overexaggerated differences between the East and the West in angling matters and in matters of culture in general, they are indeed often in fact the same stories. One example of this is the title essay, “Cowboy Trout,” a study of the introduction of nonnative trout species into the waters of the West—and beyond—and therefore also a consideration of the emergence and claims of the movement to preserve and to restore populations of native fish by eliminating introduced species. The essay ranges widely, from fish-farming practices in late antiquity and medieval Europe through the “acclimatization societies” that flourished in the colonial powers during the nineteenth century, “whose goal was to translocate whatever assortment of domestic or wild species of plants and animals was deemed best, from wherever they lived to wherever they were needed”: “One pictures some glum British gents wandering through an Australian (or South American or African) meadow,

until one of them suddenly brightens and announces, ‘I say, chaps, all this place really needs is a trout stream!’”

In the West, the cowboys often felt the same way. The accents were different, but the results were the same. In just one of the myriad ways that white settlers profoundly transformed the environment of the American West, they planted nonnative trout species where those species never had been found before: cowboy trout.

This story could of course be told about the East, as well, where the accents would be different yet again, but the results would be similar: “gentlemen’s trout,” perhaps. Instead of rainbows (and, later, browns) being introduced into cutthroat waters, we have browns (and Western rainbows) introduced into the waters of the native char. That, too, is part of the story that Schullery tells of the rise of the hatcheries necessary for translocating trout, often around the world, the subsequent prevalence of planting trout to cater to the expectations of generations of catch-and-kill anglers, and the eventual backlash in favor of native trout.

Fly fishing of course does play a role in the culture and cultural images of the American West, and Schullery gives the topic its due in the other essays in this collection. A story that in some ways equally well could be retold in only a somewhat different form about the East, however, is, oddly enough, “Dark Stones and Devil Scratchers.” This essay is concerned with that most Western of bugs, the Salmon Fly, *Pteronarcys californica* — the history of its entry into entomology and the history of its imitation by Western fly tyers.

The heroes of the piece are the Montana fly tyers and anglers who sought to copy this striking insect: Norman Means, with his balsa-bodied Bunyan Bug; Dan Bailey; Franz B. Pott, with his woven-hair flies; and especially George Grant, who carried on the Pott woven-fly tradition.

“It would make for a tidy conclusion to say that the Montana fly weavers were so independent because they were on a frontier of fly fishing . . . free from the hidebound attitude that comes from fishing waters that have been fished for hundreds of years,” Schullery writes. However, he knows that story won’t hold water anymore, because these Western tyers were well aware of and influenced by Eastern and European traditions.

Instead, Schullery concludes, the difference between Western and Eastern fly fishing is to be found in the response to a new challenge. “The milestone angling entomologies produced by Preston Jennings, Art Flick, Ernest Schwiebert, and others in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s were most heavily invested in the older English tradition of imitating mayflies.” In the West, though, there was this honking big bug—the Salmon Fly. It’s ugly as sin, but it opened people’s minds to new possibilities. That sense of innovation is now part of the story we tell ourselves about ourselves. The Yellowstone Valley and Silicon Valley, in that story, lie along the same narrative arc.

Of course, though, so do the valleys of the Beaverkill and the Neversink. Once upon a time, there were these mayflies—quite beautiful creatures, actually, some of them honking big bugs, too—and when Thaddeus Norris and Theodore Gordon and the Darbees and the Dettles looked at them, the experience opened their minds to new possibilities, as well.

—Bud Bynack

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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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.



The Fly Fishing Show

**Garden State Exhibit Center
50 Atrium Drive, Somerset, New Jersey**

For more information, go to www.flyfishingshow.com/somerset/

