

# The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild



# GAZETTE

December 2007

**The December Meeting of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild** will be held on Saturday, December, 15, 2007, at the Rockland House on Route 206, Roscoe, NY. Phil Chase will demonstrate and talk about tying Herman Christian's version of Theodore Gordon's Bumblepuppy.

"This historic fly, originally tied both as a bucktail and as a streamer, evidently is the first of all the modern patterns of this type," Joseph D. Bates, Jr., wrote in *Streamer Fly Tying and Fishing*. It "actually is not one fly, but rather several related patterns as developed by Mr. Gordon over many years prior to his death in 1915." Gordon "evidently named the Bumblepuppy with a purpose, for the literal translation is 'whist played without rules,'" and "there are at least twenty known variations of the Bumblepuppy," according to Deanna Birkholm at Fly Anglers On-line (FAOL) ([www.flyanglersonline.com](http://www.flyanglersonline.com).)



Photo: FAOL

A version of the Bumblepuppy said to have been tied by Theodore Gordon



Photo: FAOL

A version of the Bumblepuppy tied by Herman Christian

## Herman Christian's Bumblepuppy

Hook: Streamer, from trout size to bass and larger

Thread: Black, 3/0

Body: White chenille. Thickness as to hook size.

Herman used "pipe cleaner"

Wing: Wild turkey tail feather, dark. White bucktail

Tail: Red hackle fibers

Hackle: Red and white

Phil will bring a photo for everyone of the last Bumblepuppy Herman Christian tied, in Alabama in May 1969.

He will also bring hooks and chenille. (Continued on page 2.)



Herman Christian in 1963

Photo: Phil Chase

## Theodore Gordon's Bumblepuppy

Tag: Silver and red silk

Tail: Scarlet ibis, two mated feathers, back to back and quite straight on hook

Butt: Red or yellow chenille; have tried black ostrich

Body: White silk chenille, ribbed flat silver tinsel (must be bright), body full, not thin

Hackle: Badger, large, long, and lots of it

Wings: Double or single, according to size of hook;

strips of white swan or goose, over white hair from deer, white bear, or goat

Sides: Jungle fowl, low

Shoulder hackle: Over wing, a good widgeon feather as long as or longer than the badger

Head: Red or yellow chenille, or black, plain, varnished

*Source: Dr. Andrew N. Herd, "Fly Fishing for Coarse Fish," in A Fly Fishing History, available on-line at [http://www.flyfishinghistory.com/coarse\\_fly.htm](http://www.flyfishinghistory.com/coarse_fly.htm).*

Phil Chase wrote the weekly "Outdoors" column for the *Middletown Record* from 1965 to 1978, coached for thirty-four years, and taught chemistry, physics, and Earth science at Port Jervis. He writes: "I met Herman Christian in June 1963, when he lived on the West Branch at Walton, pointed out by Harry Darbee. We visited often and corresponded when he moved south for a few years until his death near Liberty on February 13, 1973. Christian was born on February 11, 1880, and fought in the Spanish-American War."

## Meeting Dates, 2008

Saturday, January 19, 2008, 2:00 P.M., at the Rockland House.

Saturday, February 16, 2008, 2:00 P.M., at the Rockland House. *Materials Swap*.

Saturday, March 15, 2008, 2:00 P.M., at the Rockland House.

Saturday, April 19, 2008, 10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. *Fly Tyers Rendezvous* at the Rockland House.

Thursday, May 15, 2008, 7:00 P.M., at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum.

Thursday, June 19, 2008, 7:00 P.M., at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum.

Saturday, August 16, 2008, 12:00 noon to 4:00 P.M. *Picnic* at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum.

September 18 or 20, 2008, Thursday or Saturday, 7:00 P.M. or 1:00 P.M., at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum. We have yet to make a decision on Thursday or Saturday for September.

If for some reason the Rockland House is booked for a wedding or other event that would conflict with the above dates, we'll make other arrangements.

—Judie DV Smith

## Casting for Recovery

The January Guild program is our annual tying session to donate flies to Casting for Recovery. The meeting will be held on Saturday, January 19, 2008, at 2:00 P.M. at the Rockland House on Route 206 in Roscoe, NY. Members are asked to bring their materials and a vise to the meeting and tie flies to be used in the program. Should you not be able to attend, consider tying at home and sending your flies

to Hank Rope, P.O. Box 122, Big Indian, NY 12410. This cause needs our support. Please put aside time to help.

## The Arts of the Angler Show Report

The Arts of the Angler Show was held on November 10 and 11 in Danbury, CT. The show was busy on Saturday all day until about 4:30 P.M., when it tapered off. Sunday was quite a bit slower, but with good numbers still in attendance in the morning and early afternoon. We signed up two new members; they each also bought cloth badges.

The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild booth seemed to be the busiest in our area, with lots of people sitting watching and asking questions. Pete Peterson had an extra vise set up on the customer side of the table and proceeded to instruct a number of people in different fly-tying methods. (Pete for years has run a fly-tying class in Connecticut for the benefit of Trout Unlimited.) Some of the people returned after going around the show to ask additional questions (or maybe to get more of the free cookies that we had on the table). One of our guest tyers was a nine-year-old boy who completed a fishable Saugatuck Special. Also, by the end of the show, we had donated about two dozen flies to the Brotherhood of the Jungle Cock for use in their kids' programs.

The booth was very ably staffed by Misako Ishimura, Mark Romero, Pete Peterson, Mike Stewart, and Mark Shane, along with yours truly. I would like to thank them all for their help, not forgetting Barbara Peterson for supplying the cookies.

Many people asked for and were given advice and tips on easier tying methods. One thing that drew attention was my old upright vise that I use specifically for tying parachutes and Water Wisp-type flies. Misa's and Mark's vises also attracted attention.



—Ed McQuat

*Pete Peterson and Ed McQuat at Danbury*

## International Fly Tyers Symposium Report



*Hank Rope and Kurt Huhner at Somerset*

On behalf of the guild and myself, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank each of the tyers who volunteered to work the International Fly Tyers Symposium on November 17 and 18: Hank Rope, Mike Stewart, Bud Bynack, Kurt Huhner, Misako Ishimura, Mark Romero, Sam Decker, Brian McKee, and Charles Bates. It was a job well done. Thanks for taking the time to come out and support

the guild.

We signed up eleven new members and had four renewals. We even sold two pins and two patches.

—*Joe Ceballos*

## The Fly Fishing Show East

The Fly Fishing Show East will be held January 25, 26, and 27 at the Garden State Exposition Center in Somerset, NJ. (See the ad elsewhere in this issue.) The guild has again been asked to participate and will have a table for our tyers. If you wish to tie, contact Paul Murphy at pmurphy100@patmedia.net or call him evenings from 7:00 to 9:00 P.M. at (908) 879-7929.

The show hours on Friday are from 10:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M., Saturday from 8:30 A.M. to 5:30 P.M., and Sunday from 9:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.. You may request a day and time to tie, and we will make every effort to accommodate you, but cannot guarantee that your request will be honored, because there may be conflicts. Tyers are given admission to the show on the day they tie, courtesy of the guild. We also remind you that you will be representing the guild and are expected to tie appropriate patterns. Traditional Catskill patterns are appreciated. The cutoff for requests to tie is December 31, 2007. No requests will be honored after that date.

—*Paul Murphy*

## Didymo Found in Northeastern Trout Streams By Mike Hogue

Didymo (*Didymosphenia geminata*), or “rock snot,” is an invasive exotic weed believed to have originated in New Zealand. This weed coats rocks and, basically, kills all the natural materials (including bugs and plant life) with which it comes in contact. Eventually, the weeds become so thick that the streambed is covered with them. This summer and fall, two of our region’s streams were discovered to contain this weed: the East Branch of the Delaware River and the Battenkill River. Anglers who fish these streams need to exercise caution to keep wading boots and shoes clean in order to limit the transfer of this weed. Any shoes that contain felt can transfer the spores of the weed to another stream when wet. If, for example, you fish the East Branch in the morning, hop in your car, and travel to the West Branch, you can transfer didymo. You should dip the shoes in 3 percent solution of bleach or change shoes and wear a dry pair of waders to another area.

Anglers interested in preventing the transfer of didymo can take the clean angler pledge and contact Leah Elwell, Conservation Coordinator, Federation of Fly Fishers, 215 East Lewis Street, Suite 305, Livingston, MT 59047; (406) 222-9369 extension 102; (406) 222-5823 (fax); conserve@fedflyfishers.org. The FFF will provide a complete package of information about didymo. Please exercise caution and keep your boots clean and dry before fishing another stream.

The fly for this issue is one that is a very simple tie, but one that catches fish—the Quack Doctor. Sometimes just a bit of color and flash with

*The Wet-Fly Corner*  
With Andy Brasko, a Genuine Wet-Fly Fisherman



ordinary wings is all that is required to catch a rainbow, or my favorite gem of all, a brookie. That's the Quack Doctor.

This fly can be found in Ray Bergman's *Trout* on plate 7. This fly does not have a lot of history written about it. I looked for accounts in the work of Mary Orvis Marbury, Helen Shaw, and Terry Hellekson, among others, with no luck. The only thing I learned is that, as with many other wet flies, a lot of colorful bass flies caught the attention of trout anglers and were adapted by them. I also wondered if this fly was somehow associated with L. C. Quackenbush, a member of the Beaverkill trout club for whom Ruben Cross tied flies.

I have taken this fly as a special project for the upcoming 2008 fishing season and will be fishing it throughout the year in various Pennsylvania and Catskill waters. Because I can't find much history or documentation for on this fly, I think it's time that it started getting some attention. This past fall, I fished the fly with much success in New Jersey waters in size 8. It's a good thing that I am not a trout, though. I would starve to death from being too fussy. I think that I care more than the fish do how a fly looks. Are the proportions and size correct? Are the wings set just so?

This fly has taken both rainbows and browns and has been very productive when no hatches were occurring. I can't wait to see how brookies will take this fly. It has produced on clear streams, as well as in high and off-color waters. This simple, yet flashy deserves a try and spot in your fly box. I think if you take the time to tie it and fish with it, you will not be disappointed.

### **The Quack Doctor**

Hook: Mustad 3906, size 8

Thread: Black Danville 6/0

Tail: Red quill, three segments

Body: Silver Mylar tinsel, size 14

Beard/False Hackle: Red schlappen

Wing: Light brown turkey wing pair

Head finish: One coat Griff's thin, two coats Griff's thick, one coat black Prolac



*Photo by Annie Brasko. Caption, The Simpsons*

## Tedd Ward

Tedd Ward, 72, of Kissimmee, FL, died on Friday, November 30, 2007. He was the author of “With Soft Hackles for Eastern Rivers,” a chapter in Sylvester Nemes’s *Soft-Hackled Fly Imitations*. He visited Roscoe often. He is survived by his wife, Fran.

## How to Choose a Fly-Tying Vise

By Mike Hogue

Every year, I get a load of questions from folks just starting to tie, and I expect that other members of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild do, too. One of the most difficult questions to answer is “How do I buy a vise?” Let's start with one fact. Not all vises are alike, and the best vise for someone may not be the most expensive one. I have said this many times, and I will say it again: A good tyer can tie well on a \$15 Indian vise and create beautiful work. It is not the stove that cooks the stew. A good cook can make good food anywhere. Tools are not a substitute for quality materials or skills. If someone is just starting out, it may be better to spend money on lessons and materials than on tools. Lessons from a master make learning easier and quicker and will help beginners improve their skills much faster. I tied on an Indian vise for many years before I could afford the vise I wanted. I still have that vise, and it does work (sort of . . . I wore the jaws out by using it too much).

Each vise has several advantages and disadvantages. When you group these things together, it should become very clear which vise fits someone’s needs. A good vise should have four basic features. First, it must hold hooks well. If a vise can't hold a hook, it's pretty much junk. Next, it must be durable and well made. Some inexpensive vises tend to have soft metal that will crack, break, or get grooves in the jaws over time. Third, it must be able to be locked down tight. Wiggly tools drive me up the wall. If it jiggles or moves, it belongs at a dance fever convention, not on a tying desk. Finally, it must be adjustable to hold a variety of hook sizes.

When buying a vise, it is a good idea to start with a budget. How much can the person spend? How much are they going to use this tool? If they don't plan on tying much or if all they want to do is tie a few patterns that they use a lot, maybe they don't really need a vise. They should consider buying flies with the money they'll save.

In any event, they should determine the types of flies they want to tie—what kinds and what sizes. If they fish only size 22s all the time, it is pointless to buy a giant vise that is built like a tank. On the other hand, tiny narrow jaws are totally worthless when trying to hold heavy, thick hooks. In other words, the kinds of hooks they will use will dictate the type of vise they need.

Also, what the features will they need? A full, true rotary vise? Do they need interchangeable jaws? A flexible head? Pedestal or C-clamp? What kind of warranty? Bright or dull finish? All of these questions sound a bit silly, but I can honestly say that one tool does not fit all of my needs. Each tool has several advantages, and I use a different vise for different reasons.

No one should be afraid to upgrade or trade vises. As skills improve, so do needs, and maybe the time arrives when it makes sense to upgrade to a new vise. People have changed styles, the types of flies, or the way they tie. Some of the new vises can make it easier to tie. For example, I was struggling with some repetitive-stress injuries, and I found that some tools were simply easier for me to work.

Besides, there's nothing wrong with treating yourself once in awhile. A few years ago, I bought a vise that I decided I'd get if I quit smoking. I still have that vise, and it reminds me of how hard I worked to get it. (I still don't smoke . . . almost eight years now.)

If someone has asked you about how to get started, they may already know this, but they never should be shy about asking questions. The only bad question I get is the one that isn't asked. They should talk to various tyers about what they like about a certain tool and what they don't like. Most fly tyers are generous to a fault and will help anyone who asks for help. Attending Catskill Fly Tyers Guild, Federation of Fly Fishers, or Trout Unlimited meetings and conclaves or fly-fishing shows is a great way to meet tyers and see how they use different tools. Asking how something is made or how to use something is a good way to learn. Most folks will offer assistance when asked. After all, that's what you're going to do, the next time someone queries you about getting started tying flies—right?



# **The Fly Fishing Show East**

**Garden State Exhibit Center, Somerset, NJ**

**January 25, 26, 27, 2008**

## **Show Hours**

Friday, 10:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.

Saturday, 8:30 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.

Sunday, 9:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

## **Admission**

**Adult:** \$15.00 for one day, \$25.00 for two-day pass,  
\$35.00 for three-day pass

**Children under 12:** \$2.00

**For more information, visit**

**[www.flyfishingshoweast.com/NJ/programs.htm](http://www.flyfishingshoweast.com/NJ/programs.htm)**

**or call 1-800-420-7582**





When you sit down to tie a fly, you take a seat at a very large, very old table. As you go through the magazines, books, and videos—taking and ignoring advice, learning tricks and shortcuts, discerning and taking sides in old debates, then picking and choosing a pattern, a style, eventually even an aesthetic stance—you participate in a long, complicated, and apparently endless conversation over those and many other matters. You join not merely a club, but a guild.

—Paul Schullery, *Cowboy Trout*

The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild *Gazette* is issued six times a year to members. Membership is only \$10.00 per year. For membership renewals, send a check, your current address and phone number, and, if you wish to receive the *Gazette* by e-mail, your current e-mail address, to:

**Bob Osburn, 3 Good Time Court, Goshen, NY 10924.**

**➤➤➤➤➤➤ Remember, memberships renew in *February*. ◀◀◀◀◀◀**



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



**A Note from the Editor**

See this blank space? It's what happens when guild members don't submit material to the *Gazette*.  
Contribute!