

The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild



GAZETTE

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December 2008

The December meeting of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild will be held on Saturday, December 20, 2008, at 2:00 P.M. at the Rockland House on Route 206 in Roscoe, NY. Dave Brandt will tie three Klinkhammer patterns. Bring your vise and tie along. This is a great opportunity to learn from one of our master tyers, so don't pass it up. Tying at the presentation will make you think about the techniques involved, and you will be able to ask the tyer about what may be going astray with your fly. It's all about learning.

For the patterns Dave will tie you will need:

Thread: Any color, 8/0

Hook: Small (size 14 or 16) light-wire grub hook

Body: Peacock herl, pheasant tail

Dubbing: Olive, tan, and pale yellow

Wing: Gray and light blue poly yarn

Hackle: Light grizzly

The January meeting of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild will be held on Saturday, January 17, 2009, at 2:00 P.M. at the Rockland House on Route 206 in Roscoe, NY. At this meeting, we will tie flies for use by the women attending the Casting for Recovery retreats. Those able to make the meeting will sit around a table tying flies until a one-quart jar is full—well, almost full. The flies will be given to the women at two retreats held at Frost Valley.

The attendees are breast cancer survivors, some having been recently diagnosed and others well into their treatment. The weekend starts on Friday afternoon and extends until Sunday afternoon. Orvis supplies rods, waders, vests, and women to run the event. On Sunday morning, I arrive with fly boxes supplied by Trout Unlimited, courtesy of Ron Urban. Boxes full of flies tied by the guild are distributed, and we are off to the stream in search of brookies.

The flies needed are what you would use on a small stream for native brook trout: dries as well as wets and nymphs, size 12 to 16, are best. If you are unable to attend and would like to contribute flies for the program, they can be mailed to Hank Rope, P.O. Box 150, Big Indian, NY 12410. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

—*Hank Rope*



Tyers Needed for The Fly Fishing Show, Somerset

The Fly Fishing Show at Somerset will be held on January 23, 24, and 25 at the Garden State Convention Center in Somerset, NJ. Any tyers who would like to tie there should contact Paul Murphy at pmurphy100@comcast.net or call evenings between 7:00 and 9:00 P.M. at (908)-879-7929. Our roster of tyers fills fast, so don't postpone making a decision about tying there. If you have mentioned tying to me, please contact me again, because it's possible I have not recorded your offer and would not like to leave you out through an oversight. Joe Ceballos will chair this show, but is not able to give it full attention until January 1. Meanwhile, I am compiling a roster of tyers.

— *Paul Murphy, show chair emeritus*

Commemorative Plaques Awarded

Just like diamonds—real diamonds, not the manmade, industrial diamonds that can be manufactured in short order, but the kind that take oodles of time to come about: that's the character of the individuals who have been key in the survival and success of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild that the guild recently honored with commemorative plaques in their names.

That long process also seemed to be reflected in the time it took to get the awards done. It has probably been a couple of years now since we decided to thank Hank Rope for his lengthy service (or should I say "servitude") as our president. We had hoped for a nice little ceremony to be attended by all those who would be on hand for our Rendezvous . . . the one taking place in the spring of 2007. We were some time in deciding just what we were going to do to recognize Hank for his tireless efforts on our behalf. When we decided on a simple plaque, we also decided that it would be a grand and fitting thing also to pay homage to those who actually conceived the idea for a group whose goals would be to preserve the heritage of Catskill flies and the history and traditions of those who created them. The two tyers who first thought to form such a group are Matty Vinciguerra and Floyd Franke.

By the time all these plans were in the works, our 2007 Rendezvous had come and gone, so we thought we might make presentations at an upcoming meeting, giving us some time to settle on the details. It was decided that small plaques would fill the bill, with one to be obtained downstate, the others ordered from a local house. It would seem that we were at last ready to honor the founders and our not too recently retired president.

It was not to be. As we were arranging for Matty's citation to be housed at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum, Hank developed ticker troubles. This meant he couldn't be with us for a bit, so we regrouped and decided to make individual presentations when we could.

The two plaques going to Floyd and Matty read as follows:

In recognition of your efforts to help bring about the birth of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild in February 1993. Your concern and help in preserving the Catskill style and your ability to teach and pass it on have been key to the strength of our guild. We thank you.

With Matty's plaque going into the museum, it means the guild will have a permanent place there, which is a bonus. We managed to get Floyd to a meeting during the late summer and surprised him with a small presentation, thanking him for his part in our conception and for serving as our president during the early years. He seemed sincerely moved by our small commemoration.

We still had hopes of giving thanks to Hank at the 2008 Rendezvous, but his convalescence was lengthy enough so that we missed this date, as well, having to settle for a rather brief and sparsely attended affair during a regular meeting held at such a time as to not allow much room for a long speech by either myself or Mr. Rope. The plaque we presented to Hank read as follows:

In appreciation for your dedication at many years at the helm of The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild,
March 31, 2008.

Hank was even dragged temporarily out of retirement and pressed into to service to close the meeting so that I might get promptly to yet another one.

—*Dave Brandt, President*

The Guild at the Danbury Show

Our booth was set up in the main room this year, and we had plenty of table space. Many thanks to our tyers, who as usual did a banner job. The crew consisted of Mark Romero, Misako Ishimura, Pete Peterson, Bob Osburn, Andy Brasko, Bud Bynack, and yours truly. We had the usual success, with Pete our Pied Piper attracting a good number of children and giving them fly-tying instruction. All left with a fishable fly that they had tied themselves. Some of them paid return visits.

We also had Andy give a fellow wet-fly addict some useful tips on folding feathers for better palmering. Mark and Misa also did their share of handing out methods and tips to tying enthusiasts. Bob and Bud did their usual yeoman's job.

We signed up four new members and sold some raffle tickets and badges, as well. I would like to thank everyone who tied for helping make my task easier and Jim Krul for the nice space he provided for us. I would also like to thank Judie DV Smith for making up the packages of guild materials and then meeting me halfway so I did not need to go all the way up to Roscoe to get them. For the guild, it was all in all not a bad show.

—*Ed McQuat, show chair*

The Guild at The Symposium

At the 2008 International Fly Tying Symposium, held at the Doubletree Hotel in Somerset, NJ, November 22 and 23, the guild was represented by eleven exceptional tyers: Andy Brasko, Elmer Hopper, Michael Stewart, John Kavanaugh, Dan Caruso, Mark Romero, John Collins, Brian McKee, Bruce Pollock, Darren Rist, and Al Ampe. We picked up five new members and a number of renewals and sold raffle tickets for the great fly plate of mounted flies from the last Rendezvous. As always, our tyers had show visitors admiring their skills and maybe started some youngster on the road to tying.

The guild is grateful to these tyers who gave their time to presenting the guild and its purpose to the fly-tying show attendees. As usual, Judie Smith put in much time and work getting us the space

at the show and giving us direction to pull it all together. We also owe thanks to Chuck Furminsky, who generously gives us a complimentary table at these events.

— Paul Murphy, show chair emeritus

Tying Events: Changes

The next Catskill Fly Tyers Guild Rendezvous, which will be held on April 18, 2009, will be cochaired by the originator of the Rendezvous, Mike Hogue, and Leslie Wrixon, who will then be assuming responsibility for the annual event. “I have decided to inject some new blood into the program,” Mike writes, and “I have asked Leslie to step in to help with inviting the fly tyers and with creating some new programs and unique events.”

Leslie Wrixon is vice president of United Fly Tyers, serves as fly-tying chair for the Northeast Council of the Federation of Fly Fishers, and is on the board of governors of the FFF Fly Tying Group. She is well known at fly-fishing and tying events across the country and internationally.

If you would like to tie at the Rendezvous, contact Mike Hogue at mhogue@twncny.rrcom or (607) 347-4946 or Leslie Wrixon at lesliewrixon@yahoo.com or (508) 733-8535.

The 2009 Clearwater Junction tying event in support of the conservation programs of the Theodore Gordon Flyfishers will be held in the autumn, rather than in the early summer. It is scheduled for September 26 and 26, 2009. Watch the *Gazette* for more information as it becomes available.

Jack Gartside

Jack Gartside has been diagnosed with small-cell lung cancer and has been in the West Roxbury, MA, VA hospital undergoing a course of radiation and chemotherapy. The good news is that tests show the cancer is isolated and has not spread to other parts of his body. You can send him a card via snail mail to Jack Gartside, 14 Beach Road, Winthrop MA 02152 and it will be delivered to him. A bunch of good friends in the area are getting your messages to Jack. There have been some wonderful messages, and they give him a lot of strength.

—Bob Mead

It's almost the end of the year, and the holiday season is once again upon us. Before I get into this month's featured fly, let me say that it has been an honor and a pleasure to be able to write articles on wet flies for the *Gazette*. I hope all of you have enjoyed reading these articles as much as I have writing them for you.

The Wet-Fly Corner

With Andy Brasko, a Genuine Wet-Fly Fisherman



It's December, and I am still having reflections about the fishing this past June and July on the Willowemoc. It was in the late evening hours this summer when I was reintroduced to a pattern that has always been a staple in my fly box. The reason I hadn't fished this pattern for a long time is that my fly box is full of eye candy, and as a result, I tend to overlook the older patterns tied in subdued colors.

Well there I was, standing streamside, trying to decide which fly to tie on. It took me a few minutes to pick a fly, wavering from one pattern to another until I became frustrated and finally got it into my head to just go ahead and fish. So I picked up a Leadwing Coachman and said, "This old pattern has always worked and should produce just fine." I tied on the fly and on the second cast was rewarded with a thirteen-inch brown.

I released this fish, made a few more casts about three feet farther downstream, and received a violent strike from my favorite fish of all—a brookie. After I released that fish, I stopped fishing, cut the fly off the leader, and went with a two-wet-fly rig. The dropper eighteen inches above the end of the leader had a size 8 Leadwing Coachman, and the end of the leader had a size 6 Leadwing Coachman. That evening, this two-fly rig helped me to have one of my best nights of fishing in a long time. I managed to catch and release fourteen trout in two hours. The fish caught that evening were taken on the size 6, as well on as the size 8.

From previous field trials with this pattern, I have found that the size of the fly does not matter when *Isonychia* are present and active. The Leadwing Coachman has always been a highly productive wet fly for me. I have found this pattern to work in both the daylight and evening hours. I also have used this fly as a searching pattern when I was not sure what fly to use or if trout were present in the section I was fishing. When I've used this fly as a searching pattern I have always at least gotten a hit or landed a trout.

I have found this pattern to be the most effective when a full-collar hackle is used instead of a beard or false hackle. I hope you give this fly a try and a place in your fly box. Have a happy and safe holiday season with hopes that the new year will find all of you well.

Leadwing Coachman

Hook: Mustad 3906, size 6 or 8

Thread: Black Danville 6/0

Tag: Size 16/18 gold Mylar tinsel (if desired)

Body: Four strands of peacock herl

Wing: Slate (natural duck quills)

Collar: Coachman brown to brown hen cape

Head: One coat of Griff's Thin, two coats of Griff's Thick, one coat of black ProLac



This is one of the few flies on which I use only black thread for the entire fly. The peacock herl is reinforced with one strand of tying thread. The collar can vary in color from Coachman brown (the color I prefer) to brown. The tag for this pattern is optional, but I prefer to tie in the tag. I feel it's an enhancement to already affective pattern.

The wings are tied in on this fly before the collar. To get the wings to sit lower, build up a thread base about two-thirds the width of the peacock herl body. Then set the wings. If the wings are just a tad high, don't worry. Tie in the collar, and while you are winding the hackle, the wings will be pushed a tad downward.



In Memoriam

This column usually is a place where we remember great days on the stream, moments of insight (or of blindness) that the sport of fly fishing has occasioned, forgotten flies and techniques, and people who have had an influence on the sport and on our lives in it. The passing of three such people is an occasion on which they especially deserve to be remembered.

George F. Grant died November 2, 2008, in St. James Healthcare in Butte, Montana. He was 102.

George Grant was born in 1906, and worked in various office jobs, then was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1942, where he was promoted to the rank of staff sergeant after a few months and to master sergeant shortly thereafter. He was extremely interested in the tying of artificial flies for trout fishing, and in 1939, he secured a patent on a method of weaving hair hackles for fishing flies. Upon discharge from the service in 1945, he operated a tackle shop in West Yellowstone, MT, where he was assisted by his nephew, Francis "Fran" Johnson. The following year, he opened his own fishing-tackle store, Grant's Fly Shop, in Butte, which he operated from 1947 to 1951.

In 1967, he retired to devote himself to a full-time career in fly tying, fly fishing, writing about these subjects, and becoming an activist in the conservation of dwindling Western natural resources, particularly in connection with wild-trout streams. In 1971, Grant wrote and privately published a

small paperback book, which he called *The Art of Weaving Hair Hackles for Trout Flies*, and in the following year, he published *Montana Trout Flies*, both of which brought him national attention.

In 1973, he was the recipient of the Buz Buszek Memorial Fly Tying Award presented annually by the Federation of Fly Fishers to the tyer considered to have contributed most significantly to the advancement of the art of fly tying, and in 1979, he was presented the Arnold Gingrich Life Membership award by the Federation of Fly Fishers to honor those who have made major contributions to the art.

In 1973, he was appointed editor of *The River Rat*, official publication of the Montana Council of Trout Unlimited. For his years of service with this publication, he was named National Conservationist of the Year by Trout Unlimited in 1978. In 1980, Grant wrote a book called *The Master Fly Weaver* and in 1981 published another edition of *Montana Trout Flies*. These books were greatly expanded and improved updates of his previously published paperbacks, with extensive illustrations by Harvey Eckert. He has been featured in many books and articles on the subjects of fly fishing, fly tying, and conservation.

George Grant continued to fish the Big Hole River in the fall of the year when the water was low enough to wade comfortably until he was almost eighty years old and tied flies for fundraising until the age of ninety. A collection of his written works is published under the title *Grant's Riffle: A Collection of Thoughts, Ideas, and Memories*. Copies of it and of many of Grant's other books are available from the Big Hole River Foundation at www.bhrf.org/George%20Grant%20Books.html or (1-866) 533-BHRF.

Mel Krieger passed away peacefully in his sleep on October 7, 2008, shortly after his eightieth birthday. A longtime resident of San Francisco, Mel Krieger was born in Wisconsin. He is survived by his wife of fifty-one years, Fanny, his daughter Sharon, her children, Anika and Daniel, and his son Jan and his children, Kale and Hannah.

Mel was an avid fisherman and discovered his passion for fly casting at the Golden Gate Angling and Casting Club, where he remained an active member for over forty years. He became a renowned fly-casting instructor, teaching clinics all over the world. He was a pillar of the fly-fishing community and was considered one of the foremost innovative instructors.

Mel was the recipient of the 1999 Federation of Fly Fishers Ambassador Award, the 2005 FFF Lifetime Achievement Award, and in 2006, the highest award in fly fishing, The FFF Lapis Lazuli Ring. The federation has also established the Mel Krieger Fly Casting Instructors Award in his honor to recognize outstanding contributions to casting instruction and to the FFF Casting Instructor Certification Program that he originated.

Mel, a Northern California Council of the Federation of Fly Fishers Hall of Fly Fishing Fame inductee, was highly innovative and originated both the very successful Federation of Fly Fishers Fly Casting Instructor Certification Program and the FFF Guide's Association. The board of directors of the Federation of Fly Fishers has recently established a committee to pursue Mel's dream of a FFF Fly Fishing Academy.

He wrote *The Essence of Flycasting* and starred in four videos on fly casting and fly fishing, which have been translated into several languages. He tirelessly and freely devoted his time to events such as the annual Mel's Day teaching event at the Golden Gate Angling Casting Club that drew hundreds of people to the club to participate in these his extraordinary teaching occasions. Mel made friends in every corner of the world, where he shared his passion and enthusiasm for life. He was particularly involved in fly fishing in Argentina and with schools and an Argentinean Mel Krieger Foundation that supports fly-fishing education for children.

His love of life, his charisma, his connection to people, and his love of teaching will be remembered fondly by all who knew him.

Paul Ptalis. After a tough battle with cancer, a great friend to all and a magnificent fly tyer, Paul Ptalis passed away on November 17, 2008. Paul expounded on the creative thought process involved in the construction of classic Atlantic salmon flies and included his striking portfolio of favorite patterns in his book *Century End: A fly Tying Journey*. His signature pattern, the Roy G. Biv, will remain a mandatory “contemporary classic” pattern for present and future salmon-fly tyers. Paul Ptalis was a major contributor to the renaissance of the art of tying the classic Atlantic salmon fly. He was a member of the Anglers Club of New York, a trustee of the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum, and a very visible tyer and instructor at fly-fishing shows and exhibitions.

Paul will always be remembered for his exquisite creations at the vise, his warmth to everyone he met, and his unique ability to tell a story. He will be greatly missed in the world of fly tying. Paul is survived by his wife Marilyn and two children, Evan and Sara.

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



The Fly Fishing Show
The Garden State Convention Center
January 23, 24, 25, 2009

Show Hours

Friday: 10:00 to 6:00
Saturday: 9:00 to 5:30
Sunday: 9:00 to 4:30

Admission

Adults: \$15 for one day
\$25 for two-day pass
\$35 for three-day pass
Children under 5 free, under 12: \$2
Scouts under 16 in uniform: Free
Uniformed Military: \$10
Family Day Sunday: Two adults and one or more kids, \$25