



Volume 13, number 6

December 2010

The December meeting of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild will be held on Saturday, December 18, at 2:00 P.M. at the Rockland House on Route 206 in Roscoe, NY. The featured tyer will be Ted Patlen, honored this past October at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum's Hall of Fame dinner with the Poul Jorgensen Golden Hook Award, recognizing tyers who have made a contribution to the art through education, promotion, new techniques or tools, new materials, publications, or instruction. Besides Hawaiian shirts, Ted is noted for his skilled tying and related talents—he has framed and mounted flies for us for our annual fly plate raffles.

Ted will be demonstrating Harry Darbee's Extended-Body Two-Feather Fly. The tail, body, and wings are constructed from one continuous feather, and the second feather is wound as hackle. A short-shank hook helps balance the fly, which was designed for delicate presentations on long, slow-moving pools where fish sipping naturals can inspect an imitation closely. The colors can be the tyer's choice, and any number of combinations will work together. Harry Darbee's original instructions for tying this fly can be found in his *Catskill Flytier*, pages 55 through 56.

Hook: Short-shank dry-fly hook, size 12 through 16
Tail, body, and wing: Spade feather, tyer's color choice,
or wood duck, or other suitable feather
Hackle: Dry-fly hackle, tyer's choice
Thread: Ted suggests white, or tyer's choice



This will be an interesting session, bringing a fly seldom seen today to our attention. Come join the fun.

2011 Guild Raffle

The 2011 Catskill Fly Tyers Guild Raffle for the benefit of our Education Fund offers the winner the choice of a Cortland Endurance 9-foot 4-piece 5-weight rod or a tying kit that includes a Thompson vise, basic tools, various fly-tying materials (including a tube of Overton's Wonder Wax), a tying station, and Helen Shaw's book *Fly-Tying*.

The drawing will be held at the Fly Tyers Rendezvous on April 16, 2011, at 3:00 P.M. in the Rockland House, Route 206, Roscoe, NY. Tickets are \$3.00 each or two for \$5.00. If first name drawn is not present, a second name will be drawn and given the choice. If neither person is present, the first drawn will be contacted and given the choice. The winner must make arrangements for pickup or delivery. Tickets will be available at guild meetings and at the guild table at The Fly Fishing Show in Somerset in January. Or send a check with stamped, self-addressed envelope to Erin Phelan, CFTG Raffle, P.O.

Box 586, Westbrookville, NY 12785, and your ticket stubs will be sent to you. If you have any questions, contact Erin at (845) 754-7456 or jphelan@hvc.rr.com.

Shhhh! It's a Surprise . . .

We received the following from Kim Murphy, daughter of guild member Paul Murphy.

My dad will be celebrating his eightieth birthday on Christmas Day, 2010. As a surprise for him, my family wants to compile a book of fishing-related anecdotes, photos, and birthday wishes from some of his fishing and fly-tying buddies. We know my dad would really enjoy documenting some of his fishing and fly-tying memories over the years, since this has long been a passion of his.

Please send your stories, birthday wishes, and photos to kim.james.murphy@gmail.com and cc judy.murphy@gmail.com (Paul's other daughter). Put "Paul's Birthday" in the subject line. If you prefer the time-honored, hand-written approach, you can send notes via snail mail to Judy Murphy, 8055B Old Receiver Road, Frederick, MD 21702. To allow us time to pull this together, we'd love to get any messages by December 15.

This request is being replaced with something else in the copy of *Gazette* that Paul gets—this is a surprise, and we don't want to tip him off. So if you talk to Paul or run into him, don't let the cat out of the bag—just send us your reminiscences, photos, and birthday greetings.

The X Factor **By Dave Brandt**

Fly fishers have to deal with at least three different situations that are more confusing than they need to be. Some of the problems stem from having to use archaic nomenclature and standards for measuring and using certain items essential to our sport. Other difficulties can befall the angler as a result of having been misled or even, dare I say, having been lied to.

Tippet sizes, that is to say, actual sizes, immediately come to mind. Monofilament that is larger than advertised could deny someone's catch record-book status, whereas a size that is smaller than marked (an unusual situation) can cause the loss of a fly or, worse, the loss of the fish of a lifetime.

Some of our confusions could simply be made to go away with the advent of standardization. This might not help with tippet but could surely help fly tyers. Thread and hooks both get smaller as the size on their labels seems to increase. A size 18 hook is much smaller than a size 6, and 4/0 thread is considerably larger than thread that is labeled 8/0. If this isn't enough to confound the beginner, add to it that one manufacturer's 8/0 is much different than another's. There has been some discussion among thread makers about everyone working with the denier system, but now the definitions forming the basis of the denier system now seem to be in flux. Oh well!

Tippet and thread aside, though, it's hooks that provide some of the most puzzling puzzles. It was only recently that I finally put to bed the old question of the X factor. By that I mean that I've finally discovered, or, more accurately, finally been convinced that a size 12 that is 4X long is as long as a standard-length size 8, not a size 4. In other words, the increments starting with size 12 don't go size 10, 8, 6, and 4. The odd-numbered sizes

are in fact counted, even though you can't find many hooks in those sizes! So starting at size 12, for a 4X-long hook, we count larger to size 11, 10, 9, and then 8 . . . four times.

I've long sought a good answer for another dilemma of the X factor: What is the difference between a "short-shank" hook, a "1X short" hook, and a "1X short-shank" hook? One old-timer tells me that he thinks in fact they all mean the same thing. He thinks that whatever the label says is just the whim of the printer that day in the old Mustad factory.



Arts of the Angler Show Report

This year, we had quite a few returning visitors who were back for more samples as models for their own tying benches or just to use for themselves, because they do not tie their own. All of our tyers entertained the visitors to our booth with their ability, hints, and tips to make tying easier and more fun. We also answered a lot of questions about the guild, tying, and all the area rivers that we all fish. Pete Peterson and I concentrated on the Beaverkill, while Bob Osburn talked about the Neversink, with Hank Rope giving information on the Esopus.

Pete did his usual bit of instructing young tyers to produce and take away with them a fly that was fishable and would catch fish.

We sold some raffle tickets and signed seven new members, with four renewals. We also received a ten-dollar donation from the father of two of our child students.

Thanks go to Erin Phelan for all the help and support she gave me before and during the show. Judie DV Smith initiated a "show box" system for the supplies for the shows this year. I think this is an excellent idea, and with this year's experience under our belts, it will prove to be an easy way to organize the show supplies for each location.

I would like to thank all of the tyers who helped to make this show a success. Those who helped were Pete Peterson, Mark Romero, Bob Osburn, Bud Bynack, and Hank Rope. Hank Rope also supplied two additional tyers—two of his grandchildren.



—Ed McQuat, show chair



The Davidson Special

I have always loved flies with "Special" in their name. It seems they get that title from actually *being* special. During a meeting on-stream with an angler he didn't know, Theodore Gordon plucked a mayfly from the nearby bushes, tied an imitation, and gave the fly to his new acquaintance. The angler

hooked and landed a trout that had refused other offerings, and that fly became known as the Gordon Special.

The Davidson Special may not have a colorful story like that, but this fly certainly is special in its construction—at least the body is.

Mahlon Davidson owned and operated a general store and post office once owned by George Cooper. Located in DeBruce, not far from where George M. L. La Branche first cast his dry fly on what's now the private water of the DeBruce Fly Fishing Club, Davidson was one of the best tyers in the Roscoe area at the time, raised hackle chickens, and still constructed solid-wooden fly rods when most rod makers had started transitioning to bamboo. He tied and fished this pattern on the Willowemoc and Mongaup Creek. While the actual construction of this fly is much like that of many Catskill dry flies, the distinguishing characteristic that makes it “special” is the body. The dressing reads “Dyed pale green fox fur, from the bark of willows.” I am sure I could have blended up some pale green fox fur and matched this dressing closely enough, but I was curious to see how pale and how green willow bark dyes fox fur. Fortunately, strong winds recently had taken some willow branches down, and after a short walk through the woods along the stream, I found a shed willow from which I acquired the necessary bark.

There is something primal about dyeing materials from natural materials. It's exciting to watch the water turn from clear to a tinted shade, one you are anxious to see transfer to the material in time. I stirred in some light fox belly fur and watched the willow bark work its magic. After a few minutes, I scooped the fur out of the bath, set it on newspaper, then next to the wood stove, and sure enough—it was pale green, just as Mahlon Davidson said.

When dry, it actually has just a hint of green, ghostlike, but when wet, as a fly cast upon the water, it turns into that magical Davidson Special shade of pale green, the color that I like to think attracted trout 100 years ago—DeBruce trout, tethered from a gut leader and silk line to a solid bilberry fly rod.

The dressing for this fly is much like a Light Cahill, and it can be tied with a hackle-fiber tail for better floatability, but I like it with wood duck, the way it was tied originally. If you want to forgo the willow-bark dye bath, a suitable body color can be made with light fox, a pinch of Blue-Winged Olive dubbing, and a pinch of light green caddis dubbing blended together. You're looking for a creamy tan with just the slightest hint of green.



The Davidson Special

Hook: Dry fly, size 10 or 12
Wings: Wood duck, upright and divided
Tail: Wood duck fibers
Body: Red fox belly, dyed pale green
Hackle: Light ginger

This month's fly is one of my favorite searching patterns. I fish it as part of a two-fly or three-fly wet-fly rig. It was credited to the artist who painted the fly plates for Ray Bergman's *Trout*, Dr. Edgar Burke.

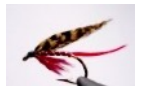
One of the reasons I love to fish with this fly is because when I catch a fish and people ask me what caught it on, I can reply, "A Telephone Box." I have gotten various responses to that. Some just give me a deer-in-the-headlight look. Some say (my favorite reply), "A *what?*" And some have urged me to go to a very hot and nasty place.

One of the remarkable things about this wonderful fly is that there is no mention of it in any of the works on fly tying in my library, whether by Terry Hellekson, Mary Orvis Marbury, J. Edson Leonard, Ray Ovington, Dave Hughes, or anybody. I have only seen this fly shown as painted by Dr. Burke in *Trout*. However, I have come to the conclusion that this fly was intended for brown trout. At least for me, that's been the case. No brookies have come to the fly in the years that I have been fishing it, and only once in a while a few rainbows. Dr. Burke in fact believed that targeting brown trout was for experts, while targeting brookies was for amateurs.

What do we really know about Dr. Edgar Burke? We know he was a surgeon in Jersey City, NJ, a painter, and an outdoor enthusiast. We know not only that he painted all the fly plates for *Trout*, but that he painted each fly from a real tied fly. The question—to

The Wet-Fly Corner

With Andy Brasko, a Genuine Wet-Fly Fisherman



which I'll return in my next column—is whether Burke painted the wet flies as they were actually tied by Ray Bergman or whether he used artistic license to make them look nicer, to make them all seem symmetrical, to fit the size of the plate, and to be more aesthetically pleasing. What we do know is that Ray Bergman thought of the Burke fly plates as the heart of *Trout*. For the second edition, when Bergman expanded *Trout* and added new and updated information, Dr. Burke created a few new plates. Shortly after the second edition was released in 1952, however, Dr. Burke passed away, and Bergman felt that something central to the book died with him. He would never expand the book again.

The Telephone Box is just one of those flies in which all the materials and colors flow together and complement one another. I've decided to start testing it more systematically to see if there is a time frame when it is the most effective. Try tying some of this lovely pattern and testing them yourself. And look for the February "Wet Fly Corner," when I'll have more to say about whether or not Dr. Burke painted Ray Bergman's wet flies the way they actually looked.



Photo: Annie Brasko

Telephone Box

Hook: Mustad 3906, size 8

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

Tail: Golden pheasant tippets

Tag: Peacock herl

Body: Two strands of orange Danville floss, wrapped back to front

Ribbing: One strand of Black Danville Floss

Full Collar Hackle: Brown hen cape

Wing: Paired dark brown mottled oak turkey with jungle cock

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

Tying Notes

The ribbing is constantly twisted while I wind it around the fly. This is a matter of the tyer's preference, but I believe that twisting the floss adds depth and definition to the fly. On the other hand, when tying the rest of the fly, I constantly flatten the thread to keep the head section smaller with all the extra materials that are tied in. For fishing flies, I add a

drop or two of Griff's Thin to stiffen up the pheasant tippets in the tail. The Jungle cock eyes are taken one from the right side and one from the left side of the cape. You will notice a slight curvature in each. Placing the concave side to the inside helps when tying in the jungle cock nails on the wing.



“My dear Darbee”

Archival material courtesy of Judie DV Smith

Edward R. Hewitt, 127 East 21st St. (off Gramercy Park), New York, NY

Aug. 21st. 1935

My dear Darbee,

I find that you have no telephone and could not call you up. If you would come over Friday afternoon about five o'clock we could look over my layout and try some fishing. This is not good now except at night and I don't like to have the water fished at night as it spoils the daytime fly fishing. My leg is better so that I can get around more but not fish any long time.

Very truly, Edward R. Hewitt (signed)

DVD Review

Stepping into the Stream

A film by Barbara Klutinis. Run time, 43 minutes, plus 30 minutes of additional features. Available from Barbara Klutinis, 3935 Cesar Chavez Street, San Francisco, CA 94131, \$25.00, which covers tax (where applicable) and shipping.

“So, like, what is it with this fly-fishing thing? I mean . . . what’s so great about standing around in cold water, catching fish, and then letting them go?” Sooner or later, every fly fisher gets asked a version of that question. Now, when I hear it, I wish I could flip open a portable DVD player and show them *Stepping into the Stream*. What Barbara Klutinis has done in this film is create an introduction to fly fishing that, while directed at women who might become interested in the sport, conveys its appeals so powerfully and poetically that, as with Jeffrey Pill’s *Why Fly Fishing*, it more than answers the “Why” question for anyone who asks it. The film should become a go-to resource for anyone who wants to understand fly fishing’s appeal or explain it to others.

Barbara Klutinis is a retired teacher of film studies at Skyline College in San Bruno, California, and San Francisco State University and an experimental filmmaker whose work has appeared to acclaim in many film festivals. She has now brought her skills to conveying what is so frequently addressed and so seldom addressed successfully in much of the literature of fly fishing—the spiritual and philosophical elements that are such an integral part of it—along with (and as part of) the ordinary pleasures (and frustrations) of the sport.

In *Why Fly Fishing*, Jeffrey Pill brought the sensibility of a television producer to the task of explaining fly fishing (he used to work with Barbara Walters). Barbara Klutinis instead brings the skills and sensibilities of an artist in the medium of film, and they prove to be well suited to conveying not just an sense of the reasons people give for fly fishing, but the feeling of the sport, of being there—of stepping into the stream. Both productions use a lot of talking heads to supply information—*Stepping into the Stream* features the elegant Fanny Krieger and a number of other women from California and the West, and the supplemental material includes interviews with several members of the Golden West Women’s Flyfishers—but one of the many strengths of the film is the way it doesn’t just discuss the many various appeals of the sport, but uses the medium of film to invoke them.

The section I found most riveting involves accounts of the ways in which fly fishing changed lives, as Klutinis says it did hers—especially Simone Geoffrion’s account of her realization that her high-pressure job was literally killing her. That sort of conversion experience is by no means gendered, and what follows these stories of the sort of deep-down difference that what happens on the stream can bring to anyone is a particularly stunning evocation of that ultimately inexpressible feeling. There’s a series of long, slow panning shots along Northern California’s Fall River, a wide and calm spring creek, shots accompanied by music and the voiceover of a poem. The passage ends, just after the poem ends (“the water boils / as a thousand trout rise / to celebrate their good fortune”), with a single trout leaping in the calm, but flowing water. Every time I see it, it brings the same unspoken gasp, inner smile, and psychological reverberation that the rise of fish to a dry fly does in the gathering dusk.

When I interviewed Klutinis about the film for *California Fly Fisher* magazine and asked her about moments like these, she told me that “film is like poetry: It has rhythm, metaphor, and visual imagery. Film has the advantage over other art forms in that it can play with or alter time and movement. Many of my earlier films have played with the concept of slowing down time and movement to let the viewer experience the poetry of motion inherent in movement itself.” In *Stepping into the Stream*, she noted, “many of the passages are slowed in time so the viewer can experience the lyrical motion of the green grasses in the Fall River or the resistance of the water to my wading in the opening.” In a sequence that shows a woman casting, she said, “I also slowed the casting down so that one could experience the cast itself.” As a consequence, she said, “the viewer, I hope, experiences on a subliminal level the poetry of the cast, the flow of the grass, the feel of the water as one walks through it. I wanted to create the antithesis of the slam-dunk editing-style work that is so in vogue now. The film is restful and meditative, kind of like fishing.” That’s indeed what happens in *Stepping into the Stream*. It’s the next best thing to stepping into the stream, and one of the best ways I’ve seen to explain to others why it’s valuable to do it.

—Bud Bynack

☞ The Rockland House ☞

The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild wants to express its appreciation and thanks to Tom and Marea Roseo, proprietors of the Rockland House, for making the facilities at that establishment available for the guild meetings and for their continued support. Please reciprocate with your patronage.



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 Fly Fishing Show

The Garden State Convention Center

January 21, 22, and 23, 2011

Show Hours

Friday: 10:00 to 6:00
Saturday: 8:30 to 6:00
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
Active Military: \$10