

# The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild



# GAZETTE

February 2007

**The February meeting of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild** will be held on Saturday February 17, 2007, at 2:00 P.M. at the Rockland House on Route 206, Roscoe, NY. The February meeting will be the annual materials swap. Bring items you don't want and trade for something you do want. See Dave Brandt's "President's Message" in this issue for more about the swap and other annual events.

## Coming Events

**The March meeting of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild** will be held on Saturday March 17, 2007. The location will be announced in the March guild mailing—the Rockland House is booked for a wedding that day. Ralph Graves has offered to tie several Klinkhammer patterns. This is a "must see" program—it's Ralph Graves, after all. If you don't see it, you won't believe it. Plus, it's Saint Patrick's Day. 'Nuf said.

**The annual Anglers Reunion** will be held on Saturday, March 31, 2007, at the Rockland House on Route 206 in Roscoe, NY, sponsored by the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild and the Rockland House. Social hour is at 6:00 P.M., and dinner is at 7:00 P.M. Dave Brandt will be presenting a slide show. The cost is \$22 per person, tax and tip included. Reservations must be made with the Rockland House, (607) 498-4240, as soon as possible.

**The Fly Tyers Rendezvous** 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. Come see forty-five-plus tyers from all over. Lunch will be available. This event is sponsored by the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild and is free, open to the public, and again will be announced in a variety of national and local publications. The Fly Tyers Rendezvous is a great chance to get together for a day to exchange ideas, patterns, and techniques.

## Delaware No-Kill-Section Rumor Debunked

Rumors are circulating to the effect that the Department of Environmental Conservation is planning to eliminate the no-kill section on the West Branch of the Delaware River from Deposit downstream, starting in 2008. That is not true. Guild member Ed Ostapczuk contacted Norm McBride, fisheries biologist for DEC Region 4. McBride replied: "I do not know how this unfounded rumor got started. We have no plans to eliminate the West Branch No-Kill. I would appreciate you getting this fact out." Spread the word.

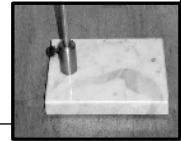
## ❧ For Sale ❧

15 bamboo rods (fix-up rods) w/ several extra butts and tips	\$35 to \$75	1494½ reel	\$20
1 STH Cayuga reel w/ 333 WF5 line	\$75	1 Martin 65 reel	\$10
1 STH Salt #2 cassette reel	\$125	1 Bronson 370 reel w/ two spare spools	\$25
1 Cortland Rimfly reel	\$20	1 Orvis reel case, large	\$10
1 Orvis DXR reel 9/10	\$175	1 S.A. System 1 reel, 7/8	\$35
1 Orvis Madison reel	\$40	1 South Bend 1140D auto reel	\$6
1 Berkeley reel		1 Shakespeare 1836 auto reel	\$8
w/ spare spool and two lines	\$25	1 Shakespeare 1837 auto reel	\$10
1 Pflueger Medalist 1495AK reel	\$15	2 Ster-Line reels	\$10 each
		1 Pflueger 1774 reel	\$10
		5 L. W. Holmes Co. reels	\$5 each
		I also have several old glass rods; call for descriptions and prices.	
1 Pflueger Medalist			

For the above items, call Ron Kozlowski, (570) 942-6333  
RR 1, Box 1092, Nicholson, PA 18446

**Winston IM6, 8½-foot 2-piece 5-weight rod** in excellent condition with original bag and tube: \$300.  
Contact Manny Zanger, (607) 498-5464, or [beamoc@hvc.rr.com](mailto:beamoc@hvc.rr.com).

**Marble Pedestal Vise Bases.** Fit any standard vise shaft. Normally \$45, but \$40 for guild members. Call Richard Bradley, (845) 439-4059, before 9:30 P.M. any day but Tuesday or Thursday.



## River Cleanup

Last year's floods left enormous amounts of refuse in Catskill area rivers—everything up to and including several kitchen sinks. Manny Zanger has proposed scheduling a river cleanup this spring on a Saturday in April on a date to be determined by those who attend. Interested members should contact Manny by e-mail at [beamoc@hvc.rr.com](mailto:beamoc@hvc.rr.com) or by calling (607) 498-5464. Participants will need to bring waders and gloves.

## Casting for Recovery

By Hank Rope

Our tying session at the January meeting saw a nice turnout of tyers donating their flies to Casting for Recovery. Their efforts were helped along by a promise of liquid refreshment for all who tied. Lisa Lyons of Morgan Outdoors generously donated the refreshments. I have also received flies in the mail from as far away as the United Kingdom. I wish to thank all who participated.

Casting for Recovery is a program to help women recovering from breast cancer. Fly fishing and all its aspects has been found to have very therapeutic properties—provided you do not take it too seriously. The physical movement required to cast, wading in a gentle stream, and, in my opinion, the peace and serenity that are found on a trout stream are all part of the Casting for Recovery weekend retreat. Corporate sponsors and individual contributions provide three days of

quiet meditation, group discussion, fly-fishing instruction, and a day on the stream. Volunteer instructors and guides lend their time and expertise with the fly casting and fishing.

The flies mean a lot to the ladies in the program. Although the flies are to be used for fishing on the last day of the retreat, many simply want to keep them as a memento of their trip. There will be two retreats at Frost Valley this year. If you wish to donate a few flies, please mail them to Hank Rope, P.O. Box 122, Big Indian, NY 12410.

## President's Message By Dave Brandt

“The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild”: Looking at our name now, I honestly can't remember just why I felt so strongly, almost fourteen years ago, that there be no apostrophe used in it. Maybe it is because I saw the guild as being made up of, not just belonging to, its members. I guess I still feel that way, even though I often see the apostrophe used by others writing about us—often enough to wonder, occasionally, if maybe we should have used the darned thing. Having gone that far, in a future piece, maybe I'll even address the issue of “Tyers” versus “Tiers.”

Anyway, that was some years ago, and we certainly have come a long way since those formative meetings called by Matty Vinciguerra and Floyd Franke. We've grown to be about two hundred strong, with members strung all across the country and then some. We have come to be the authoritative voice on all issues concerning Catskill flies. I remember posing a question that was so simple to answer and yet difficult enough that it took nearly a year to agree collectively on the solution. I felt it imperative that we know, or decide, just exactly what a Catskill fly is. What a task it was, taking us around a lengthy circle and back to basics. By now, rather than ask a question such as that, we get asked about any and all matters concerning traditional Catskill flies.

Our membership includes many with strong ties to the Catskill tying traditions and many talented tyers who tie beyond those narrow confines. Some are modern saltwater tyers using more in the way of synthetic materials than the fox and wood duck of the Catskill flies. We've become a very diverse, but capable bunch of fly tyers.

It's difficult to get a cross section of our membership to attend any given monthly meeting because of the travel distances involved, especially during the colder part of the year. It might be fun if we could routinely get more members and a more diverse group to attend our regular meetings. It might even change the course of events and the flavor of the activities of our monthly gatherings.

One of the affairs that the guild put together a few years ago has become a very well-attended annual event—the Fly Tyers Rendezvous. It was the brainchild of member Mike Hogue. The original intent was to simply have a *big* fly-tying get-together where members who didn't often see each other could be tying and chewing the fat with another tying neighbor. This would have been a nice idea had we been able to pull it off. It got too big, with too many tyers, and while you're explaining something to the tyer to your right, the tyer on your left is giving up trying to get your attention and gets into a different minihuddle, and so it goes. If it were just a big meeting, the rendezvous would probably have been a different kind of interesting event, but we'll never know, because it got too big for a meeting even before the first one started, and it turned into a small show, with the public coming in to buy.

The materials swap meeting similarly has ballooned, and now, while you're trying to swap with a member down the aisle, someone else waits to swap with you, and so on. A pure swap might be a wonderful meeting, but again, we may never know. This meeting is still a lot of fun and a great

way to unload, er, ah, divest yourself, of your excesses and take home someone else's junk, er, ah, interesting tying stuff,

I was really tickled to be involved with this group and its objectives right from the beginning, for many reasons. Defining our goals, our reason to exist, and actually creating our charter, such as it is, was great fun. Interestingly, I missed damned few meetings in the first decade, even though for me it usually meant an hour's drive or better. Slowly it occurred to me that, unlike so many organizations to which many of us belong, with the regular meetings, it seems, that must be attended, here was finally a group that was going to fun to belong to—fun and interesting, and with monthly meetings that would not be a must. The guild was going to be the guardian of all the traditional methods and techniques that went into the dressing of America's original flies.

However, we have an opportunity to do much for our sport beyond what we might call preservation. With our participation in many of the fly-fishing shows and a presence at some of the regional gatherings, we are in a good position to invite youth to learn fly tying and to cultivate in them the same interest in the history of our sport that most of us share. I know that I'm guilty of not spending enough of my own time working along these lines, but I do what I can with many groups that I belong to, such as Trout Unlimited. If we don't encourage the youngsters, especially those who live where some modicum of good fishing still exists, we won't continue to have any of these great experiences ourselves.

We live in changing times—too quickly changing, lately—which is one reason I'm glad to be a part of The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild. I've come in recent years to know that I'm one who is somewhat resistant to change, so it fits to be helping to keep alive some traditions from many years ago.

## Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS)

By Gary Sweet

Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) is a fish disease that causes the hemorrhaging of the fish's tissues, including internal organs. Often, fish do not exhibit any external signs of having the disease. The disease affects all sizes of fish and not all infected fish develop the disease, but can continue to carry it and spread it to others. There is no known cure for VHS. . . . VHS was first confirmed in New York waters in May 2006 when it was linked to the death of round gobies and muskellunge in Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. More recently, VHS caused the death of walleyes in Conesus Lake. The virus has now been confirmed in round goby, burbot, smallmouth bass, muskellunge, pumpkinseed, rock bass, bluntnose minnow, emerald shiner and walleye in infected waters in New York State. To date, the virus has not been confirmed in trout and salmon from these waters and it is unknown whether this strain of VHS will impact these species.

—*New York State Department of Environmental Conservation press release*

Trout fisheries in the West have faced threats from whirling disease and from the proliferation of the New Zealand mud snail. Now, Catskill trout waters and other fisheries may eventually be threatened by infection with viral hemorrhagic septicemia. Although the virus has not yet been documented to affect trout or salmon, it does affect the walleyes, bass, and other fish species that live in the Delaware River system. The Catskills can't afford to have this kind of disease become established in any of its waters. If the disease is introduced into any of the private

lakes or impoundments in the Catskills, the virus could certainly be carried downstream into public waters.

According to the press release quoted above, “VHS can be spread from waterbody to waterbody through a variety of means, not all of them known at this point. One known mechanism is through the movement of fish, including bait fish.” Although fly fishers are unlikely to contribute to the spread of the disease—the DEC’s recommendations for preventing its transmission revolve around preventing the transportation of fish and other aquatic organisms between bodies of water—we have a clear interest in seeing that the disease is contained. Many Catskill Fly Tyers Guild members also participate in organizations more directly involved with fisheries conservation issues. If you do, take this notice as a heads-up. You can read more about the issue on the DEC Web site, [www.dec.state.ny.us](http://www.dec.state.ny.us).



## The Fly Fishing Show, Somerset, 2007

### A Report by Paul Murphy, Show Chair

The guild again was invited to participate in The Fly Fishing Show in Somerset. Tyers providing the audience with a demonstration of fly-tying skill were Joe Ceballos, Elmer Hopper, Darren Rist, Dan Caruso, Gary Morison, Kurt Huhner, John Kavanaugh, Mark Romero, Misako Ishimura, Charles Bates, Brian McKee, John Collins, Al Ampe, and Paul Murphy. This year we did not have as many tyers as in the past, and Elmer Hopper (seen below with the Dette DVD and the fly display) and John Kavanaugh did double duty. If you have thought about tying at these shows and have passed up the opportunity for whatever reason, keep it in mind for next year. We need the help, and you’ll enjoy it.

Al Ampe provided us with chairs and the table and set up everything, including the backdrop, Thursday night. Judie Smith put the skirt around the table to give it a finished look. John Kavanaugh brought his framed display of Catskill flies, which drew attention, as usual.



Friday morning was bitterly cold, but it didn’t seem to cut into attendance. We had the Mary Dette DVD playing, and thanks to Ken Kobayashi, we had thirty copies on hand to offer to members. All were sold, including the demo disk, which a new member bought Sunday afternoon as we were closing up shop. The disk was a wonderful draw. There were people stopping by to watch it from opening to closing every day.

The flies we tied were donated to the show for use as a door prize, and our tyers gave flies to the youngsters who stopped by. A number of visitors picked up information and asked questions about the guild, which may result in some mail-in sign-ups. Actual sign-ups, new and renewal, counted forty-two, which is the best we have ever done.

Thanks to all the tyers, to Al Ampe for setup and tying, to Judie Smith for getting the preliminary work with the show done and greeting visitors at the table, to John Kavanaugh for the

framed display, and to Nancy Bates for handling the table Sunday morning. The collective effort turned in a good showing for the guild. Again, thanks to all who made the guild's showing a success and our thanks to Chuck Furminsky of The Fly Fishing Show for offering us the space.

## Obituaries

**Donald Foster Leyden**, 87, of Brookfield, husband of Marian (Flink) Leyden for 64 years, died December 12, 2006, at Filosa Convalescent Home, Danbury, CT. He was born August 31, 1919, in Springfield, MA, son of James Alexander and Constance (Fowler) Leyden.

He graduated from the Pleasantville, NY, high school in 1937 and went on to earn a bachelor's degree in science at Pennsylvania State University in 1941. A veteran of World War II, Don was a lieutenant junior grade in the U.S. Navy in the armaments division. Following his service, he worked for Hampden Papers of Holyoke, MA, in the New York City sales office, commuting daily from his home in Briarcliff Manor, NY, until 1973.

In 1975, Donald and his wife moved to Brookfield, CT, and started Donmar Studio. His unique way of combining artwork and fishing artifacts in three-dimensional mounts can be seen in museums throughout North America. Extensive exhibits of his work appear in the Catskill Fly Fishing Center Museum in Livingston Manor, NY, and the American Museum of Fly Fishing in Manchester, VT.

For more than fifty years, Donald traveled extensively on fishing trips to Alaska, Canada, Iceland, and many islands in the Caribbean. He and Marian shared their adventures with the public through lectures and slide shows at the conservation organizations he cared so much about. These included Theodore Gordon Fly Fishers (where he was a founding member), Trout Unlimited (Candlewood Valley Chapter), the Atlantic Salmon Federation, the Connecticut River Salmon Association, and the Miramichi River Salmon Association. His other interests were big-band music and spectator sports, especially UConn women's basketball.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by two sons, Richard Leyden, of South Hero, VT, and Donald Leyden, Jr., of Florida; a daughter, Barbara Piper, of Sandia Park, NM; two brothers, Norman Leyden and James Leyden, of Oregon; one sister, Harriet Anderson, of California; three grandchildren, and one great granddaughter. A private memorial gathering will be held in the summer.

**Ralph A. Hoffman, Sr.**, of Shandaken, entered into rest on Wednesday December 6, 2006, at Albany Medical Center. He was 82. He was a lifelong resident of the Catskill Mountains. Ralph is survived by his wife of over sixty years, Elizabeth "Betty" Decker Hoffman; three sons, Ralph, of Taos, NM, retired U.S. Air Force colonel Steve, of Newburgh, and Lance, of Shandaken; his daughter, Fern, of Cypress, CA; and six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by one grandson.

Ralph was a highly decorated World War II veteran who had forty years of service in the U.S. Navy, retiring as a senior chief petty officer, and had over thirty years of public service with the Ulster County Highway Department, retiring as the Ulster County highway supervisor. He was a world-renowned expert on fishing and fly tying.

Ralph was one of the first members and chairman of the Shandaken Planning Board, a member of the Shandaken Senior Citizens Club, the M. F. Whitney Allaben Fire Hose Company, the Upper Esopus Fish and Game Club, the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild, the Catskill Alliance, Ashokan-Pepacton Trout Unlimited, the American Legion, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. He was a

licensed guide, a licensed pyrotechnical technician, a licensed pesticide applicator, and a New York State Forester. He was often referred to as a walking encyclopedia of knowledge on a wide variety of subjects, including gardening, nature, environmental topics, local plants, rocks, trees, insects, birds, Native American ways of life, and other mountain information.

Memorial donations may be made in Ralph's name to the local Ashokan-Pepacton chapter of Trout Unlimited, the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild, or the Fisher House, Albany.

## Ralph A. Hoffman By Hank Rope

December 2006 saw the passing of a tyer from the old school. Ralph Hoffman grew up in the Catskill Mountains and fished and tied flies all his life. Tying in the 1940s was much different than it is today. Patterns were jealously guarded secrets, and information was not shared. Money was also a concern for the average tyer—there was none. Flies were tied with available materials.

I was fortunate in that Ralph shared some of his secrets with me. An ardent practitioner of the three-fly cast, Ralph tied mostly wet flies. Ralph's flies were available in shops around Phoenicia, NY. He tied mostly wets for Folkerts, while Ray Smith tied the dries. Body material usually consisted of wool, floss, tinsel, and peacock—all materials readily available and inexpensive. The wool had to be from a firm in New York City that's been out of business since the 1950s, though. Nothing else would do.

Ralph was an innovator when it came to tying. His method of tying a wing on a Leadwing Coachman was simple. He folded in half a section of mallard quill from the wing and trimmed it to shape.

The Leadwing Coachman was one of his favorite flies. On Esopus Creek, where today, as in the past, *Isonychia* rule, the Leadwing Coachman was and is a perfect imitation. It is also simple to tie with readily available materials. I have heard rumors that, in the old days, the wing was made with blue heron. That, of course, was before the bird was protected by federal law.

Flies from the late 1940s were tied not to attract fishermen, but to attract fish. Ties were far less complicated than today and not as colorful as those of the brook trout era. Few brook trout remained in the Esopus at the time Ralph was growing up. However, the creeks in the valley were loaded with rainbows and with what locals called "those damn German brown trout." Many thought the introduction of browns pushed out the remaining brookies. They harbored no such grudge against the rainbows from the Pacific, because they were considered the top game fish here. The three-fly rig used by Ralph was meant to target those 'bows, often hooking three at a time. Two fish on a hookup was not unusual.

Which fly went where on the dropper was determined by fishing conditions. A typical cast was with a Leadwing Coachman as the point fly, a lighter color in the middle, such as a Cahill, and many times the bob fly would be another of Ralph's flies, the Black Turkey. Ralph had perfected the use of the three-fly cast over the years. He would make the bob fly dance on the surface in a way that the trout found irresistible.

Ralph of course tied his own droppers, but in later years preferred those purchased "up north," where Ralph had a cabin. "Up north" was a remote lake in Canada. I still have some leaders he gave me. They are tied with rather stiff mono that is not tapered.

In late July and August, another of his flies was sure to be in the cast. The Green Wisp was a killer fly on Esopus rainbows. Ralph was with me once when I purchased chartreuse floss for the

body. I asked Ralph if it was close enough to the color he used. He shrugged and said, "I guess so," a typical reaction from him. About a week later, Ralph handed me a small paper bag. Inside was a piece of floss of the proper color and a few green feathers. That was Ralph's way.

### **Green Wisp**

Thread: Olive

Hook: Size 8 Mustad 3906 or 3906B

Tail: Green hen feather, sparse

Body: Green (chartreuse) floss, tapered from back to front, slightly heavier up front

Throat: Green hen feather

Wing: Wood duck flank, folded, not bunched, tied strait back

Head: Liberal amount of head cement on the head, the head being two eye lengths long

I am not sure who originated the method of dyeing mallard to imitate wood duck flank, however in the Esopus Valley, dyed mallard was the replacement when wood duck became protected.

A favorite fly for those big browns at night, the Black Bear, is another of Ralph's recipes. On a moonlit night, the rib was silver. With the stars out, it was gold. If it was a dark night, there was no rib at all. This was no casual preference. It was based on countless nights on the stream. With a rather large fly on a size 8 hook, on a dark night, Ralph usually resorted to a two-fly cast.

### **Black Bear**

Hook: Streamer hook, size 8 or 10

Tail: Red bucktail

Rib: Silver, gold, or none, as conditions warrant (*continued on page 8*)

Body: Brown wool

Wing: Black bear

Perhaps the fly Ralph was most proud of, though, was his Black Turkey.

### **Black Turkey**

Hook: size 12, usually Mustad 3906B

Tag: Small gold tinsel

Tail: Black hen feathers

Body: Peacock herl. Ralph liked to use a single thick herl. Before tying it in, he would treat the thread windings with head cement.

Throat Black hen

Wing: Wild turkey tail feather, folded shiny side in and cut

Ralph would never go astream without his Black Turkey. One even found its way into Ralph's final resting spot.

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.\*\*\*\*\*

Other *Gazette* contacts:

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E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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