



Volume 14, number 1

February 2011

## Memberships Renew in February

**And this is February.** If you receive the *Gazette* by the U.S. Mail, check the date to the right of your name on the envelope to see if you need to renew. If you receive the *Gazette* by e-mail, your renewal date should appear next to your name on the address line.

Membership is only \$10.00 per year. For renewals, send a check, your current address and phone number, and, if you wish to receive the *Gazette* by e-mail, your e-mail address to:

**Bill Leuszler, P.O. Box 79, Wurtsboro, NY 12790**

Couples can join at the same single-member dues rate of \$10.00.

**The February meeting of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild** will be held on Saturday, February 19, at 2:00 P.M. at the Rockland House on Route 206 in Roscoe, NY. This meeting is the annual **materials swap**, combined with the **annual meeting** mandated by the bylaws.

## President's Message: The Materials Swap and Annual Meeting By Dave Brandt

Managing materials is what fly tying is all about. Learning differences in how various feathers behave, or how well, is how one becomes a good tyer. And traditional Catskill flies are for the most part tied with natural materials that just feel better in our hands than many of the modern materials used to fashion so many other patterns and forms of fishing flies. Much of my own pleasure comes from the fact that a choice piece of fox fur is much more pleasant feeling than a hank of Krystal Flash.

So over time, every tyer acquires a large variety of fur and feathers, and most serious and longtime fly tyers (that is, many of us) come to own vast arrays of tying stuff as a result—mounds of pretty feathers and luxurious patches of fur—with no hope of using it all in ten lifetimes. What could be better, then, than to have a time and place for many tyers to gather, having brought some of their excess excesses, meeting primarily to swap materials with each other? That's why the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild annual materials swap exists.

The problem arises, however, that many would-be swappers have to tend their own piles of surplus treasures and thus are not free to visit other people's piles. This situation has more or less turned our swap day into a flea market, with money, not

materials, changing hands. While this may be fine for some, it does not reflect our original intent and does not work for others.

Our sincere hope is that many of you will be there actually to swap and will find ways of doing so. Perhaps minimizing your own bunch of stuff would better allow you to visit and swap with the other tyers. But do come to swap, as well as to buy and/or sell. Any ideas on making it a more fun day for all will be welcomed by the management.

Also, since this is our annual meeting, we will be considering amending our bylaws to separate the jobs of secretary and treasurer and electing a new vice president. Our nominating committee is pleased to offer (perhaps as a ritualistic sacrificial offering) the name Joe Ceballos to be considered for vice president position. The VP spot traditionally has led to the presidency.

If you would like to place another name in the hat, your own or someone else's, please do so. This should be done in writing prior to the February meeting or from the floor at that meeting. Feel free to mail any candidate's name (snail mail is best) to Dave Brandt, 239 West Street, Oneonta, NY 13820.

And remember: memberships renew in February. If you haven't renewed at one of the recent shows, do so now. Bob Osburn has asked to step down from the job of membership coordinator, and Bill Leuszler has agreed to take over. See the reminder box above for the new address for renewals. We thank Bob for his efforts—and this will not be the only time or the last time we say so.

**The March meeting of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild** will be held on Saturday, March 19, 2011, at 2:00 P.M. at the Rockland House on Route 206 in Roscoe, NY. We will be tying flies for Project Healing Waters.

For several years, the guild has been tying and donating flies to Project Healing Waters for use by rehabilitating veterans on fishing outings sponsored by the organization. Our association with Project Healing Waters was established by Bob Cohen, a guild member who headed up the organization in New Jersey, where they are working with veterans at the Lyons VA Hospital. Vets are taken fishing at several spots, including the State of New Jersey fish hatchery in Pequest, where they fish with gear donated by tackle manufacturers.

Bring your vise and materials to the meeting and tie some flies for this great cause. They will be used mostly by beginners, so streamers and larger wet flies will be a better choice than small dries.

If you can't make it, tie some flies at home and send them to David Bucko, 168 Lee Avenue, Belford, NJ 07718.

## **The 2011 Anglers Reunion Dinner**

Winter may seem endless, but Opening Day is just around the corner. The annual Anglers Reunion Dinner will be held on March 31, 2011, at the Rockland House on Route 206 in Roscoe, NY. Please call the Rockland House at (607) 498-4240 for reservations. You can pay at the door.

## **The 2011 Fly Tyers Rendezvous**

The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild's annual Fly Tyers Rendezvous will be held on Saturday, April 16, 2011, from 10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. at the Rockland House on Route 206 in Roscoe, NY. Please join us for a day of camaraderie, reunion, and fly tying.

Please contact Leslie Wrixon, fly-tying chair, if you would like to tie at the Rendezvous. Leslie can be reached at [lesliewrixon@yahoo.com](mailto:lesliewrixon@yahoo.com) or (508) 733-8535.

## **Tyers Needed**

We need tyers to represent the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild at the new venue of The Fly Fishing Show in Philadelphia/ Valley Forge, March 5 and 6, 2011. (See the ad in this issue of the *Gazette*.) If you'd like to tie at the show, contact John Collins, show co-chair, at [flyjcfish100@msn.com](mailto:flyjcfish100@msn.com) or (908) 319-4592.

Also, contact John Collins if you'd like to help represent the guild at the Pequest Open House, April 2 and 3, 2011, from 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., at the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife's Pequest Trout Hatchery and Natural Resource Education Center, west of Hackettstown on Route 46 in Warren County.

## **Guild Web Site**

Thanks to the efforts of Grant Holzworth, the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild once again has a functioning Web site. The site now includes a fly-pattern library and an "Events" page that lists happenings of interest to guild members, including meeting announcements. Check it out at <http://www.catskillflytyersguild.org> and add it to your browser's list of favorites. Also: contribute upcoming events, essays, reminiscences, photos, artwork—anything you have that you'd like to see on the site. You can contact Grant at [webmaster@catskillflytyersguild.org](mailto:webmaster@catskillflytyersguild.org).

## **The 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 the 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 Philadelphia in March. 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](mailto:jphelan@hvc.rr.com).

## ***Favorite Flies, Favorite Rivers* Revision**

We're preparing a revised and updated edition of *Favorite Flies, Favorite Rivers*, a booklet that we give to all new members. It's a mix of patterns used by guild members on Catskill rivers. I got my first one long ago at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum when Allan Podell was tying at the guild booth, and I refer to it to this day.

I am helping with its construction, and what I need for this revision is for members to send me the names and dressings for a few of their mainstay flies, along with anything pertinent to their use.

What we need is the fly name, dressing, hook recommendation, size or sizes, the river where you like to use it, plus anything you want to include, such as water type, time of day you fish it, and so on. Describe it as if you were telling someone about it after a good day on the water.

All submitted flies will have the name of the submitter next to the fly's dressing. I am hoping to have a completed copy done for the season opener, so please help. Send contributions to John Bonasera, 900 Sandy Run Road, Yardley, PA 19067, or [jafabrication@hotmail.com](mailto:jafabrication@hotmail.com).

—“Catskill John” Bonasera

## **The International Fly Tying Symposium and The Fly Fishing Show**

This year's International Fly Tying Symposium was a good one for the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild. We had ten renewals and signed up six new members, plus sold a few DVDs. I would like to thank our Saturday tyers, Allen Landheer, Dan Caruso, Gary Morison, Paul Murphy, Elmer Hopper, and “Catskill John” Bonasera. Catskill John tied for the guild for the first time at the show, and I hope that this will be the first of many times for him and all our first-time tyers. I also would like to thank Sunday's tyers, Jessica Lettich, Mike Stewart, Brian McKee, co-chair John Kavanaugh, and first-timers John Czifra and Tim Mahoney.

Special thanks go to Paul Murphy and Joe Ceballos, who in the past were the chairpersons for the guild at these events. I hope John Kavanaugh and I will be able to manage these shows as well as Paul and Joe have in the past.

All I can say about this year's Somerset Fly Fishing Show is “Wow.” The guild had twenty-nine renewals and thirteen new members. I don't know if that's a record, but it's a pretty good number for 2011, and we couldn't have pulled it off if not for the tyers who volunteered their time and efforts to make this show a huge success.

First, special thanks go to Al Ampe, who delivered the table and chairs, even before John Kavanaugh and I arrived on Thursday evening. And also special thanks go out to Paul Murphy for delivering the show box on Thursday. Many thanks to our Friday tyers, Paul Murphy, Elmer Hopper, Allen Landheer, Chally Bates, and John Kavanaugh. Friday's weather was dicey, and Hank Rope couldn't make it down from upstate, but thanks go to him, also. Also many thanks to our Saturday tyers, “Catskill John” Bonasera, Joe Ceballos, Gary Morison, Dan Caruso, Tim Mahoney, and John Czifra, and last, but not least, to our Sunday tyers, Jessica Lettich, David King, Brian McKee, Paul Dolbec, and, to close out the show, Chally Bates. Also a special thanks go to New Jersey and Pennsylvania Shows Co-chair John Kavanaugh for making sure things ran smoothly all weekend long.

I hope this was the first of many January Somerset Shows that new tyers Catskill John, Tim Mahoney, John Czifra, and David King will be participating in for the guild. All in all, it was a great weekend for the best little fly-tying club in the northeastern United States. It's always nice to be able to showcase the talents of the guild's tyers at these events, because it's the tyers who make the guild what it is.

—John Collins, New Jersey and Pennsylvania Shows Co-chair



## Darbee Stoneflies

The stonefly will never be held in nearly as much regard as the mayfly, or even the caddis, on Catskill streams. Let's face it: we just don't see blanket hatches of

stoneflies, the water littered with spent bugs and trout gorging themselves on the seemingly never-ending waves of helpless naturals. However, the stonefly offers something mayflies don't. While we don't see them swarming all spring, they are present in great numbers *all year* and offer opportunities for good fishing at times when mayflies are scarce. Winter stoneflies, Little Black Stones, as they are called, hatch at times when mayflies are dormant. And from June on, I come across hundreds of stonefly nymph shucks on rocks, both in the middle of the stream and on the edges, sometimes ten or more on a twelve-inch rock. That alone shows you that the streambed is loaded with them, and with that many crawling around, some of the ones you don't see are floating helplessly in the current being picked up by the fish.

I carry a small selection of weighted stonefly nymphs, mainly for use in the fastest sections of stream where stoneflies live. They require highly oxygenated water, and fishing these higher-gradient sections where trout are used to feeding on them is a much-overlooked practice.

The two flies featured here were originated by Harry Darbee. The dry version was concocted in an effort to simulate a large adult stonefly that Harry came across while fishing between the village of East Branch and Fishs Eddy. He noticed the trout he caught were gorged on adult stoneflies, and he trimmed an Edson Dark Tiger streamer to imitate the hatching insects. Later, he came up with this dry-fly version, tied with a deer-hair body and dun spent wings. It offers a very good impression of an adult stone and can be fished wet as well as dry. Tied in sizes from 6 to 16, this basic style could be tailored to match any stonefly by altering the colors.

The dry fly as Harry tied it is as follows:

Hook: Size 8 to 12, 3X long

Tail: Pheasant tail fibers

Body: Spun deer hair, trimmed to shape

Wing: Dun hackle points, tied flat over the body

Collar: Natural deer hair, shorter than the wing, trimmed to leave a small head, Muddler Minnow style



His nymph version is a fly I use often. To me, it is one of the most realistic-looking nymphal-form stonefly imitations I have come across. It has the added bonus of utilizing split jungle cock nails, saving you the need to repair them. Originally tied with seal's fur, it could also be dubbed with your favorite buggy fur or fur substitute.

The dressing as Harry tied it:

Hook: Size 8 to 10, 3X long

Tail: Two pheasant tail fibers, split



Body: Amber seal's fur with a brown hackle-stem rib

Wing cases: jungle cock eyes, split

Hackle: Partridge, two turns

This fly could be wrapped with a lead substitute to help it sink faster, because a stonefly nymph fished deep is a productive one.

Give these a try this spring, and instead of passing up that fast section of stream to fish the next pool, tie on a stonefly nymph and let it get down there where the trout don't see many imitations. You almost certainly will be surprised!

Were the plates in Ray Bergman's *Trout* that were painted by Dr. Edgar Burke representative of Bergman's flies as he actually tied them? It's a question much discussed by members of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild.

### *The Wet-Fly Corner*

With Andy Brasko, a Genuine Wet-Fly Fisherman



The answer is "yes and no." Dr. Burke did indeed paint with great detail the wet flies that Ray Bergman tied. If you look closely at plates 1 through 10, you can see the types of material used for winging on the wet flies and details in each type of feather used. The same holds true for the bodies, tails, false hackles/beards, and full-collar hackles. It's often said that Dr. Burke was very detail-oriented, and I believe this is clearly shown when you look at the flies in the plates.

But the size and proportions in Dr. Burke's fly plates are all uniform, and in real life, Bergman's flies were not uniform at all. His winging style varied, with some wings on wet flies laid back and down and others sitting a little more upright, while others were split wings. He sometimes tied wings with the shiny side of the feather facing out and at other times with the shiny side of the feather facing in. The wings on some of his married-wing wet flies were much larger than the wings on his flies with unmarried wings. The heads on his flies were not all that pretty when compared with the flies in the plates, either.

So why did Dr. Burke's paintings look so different from the flies that Bergman actually tied? Why did he impose a false uniformity? I think the answer involves both pragmatics and aesthetics.

Dr. Burke had to paint 439 wet flies in 9⅞ plates and still had to paint bucktails and streamers, steelhead flies, nymphs, and dry flies in the remaining 5⅞ plates. As a practical matter, Dr. Burke created a standard size that would be used for all the fly plates. I am not sure if this was his choosing or the result of Ray Bergman's input or of a collaboration of the two. But standardizing the representations of the flies also certainly helped lend an aesthetically pleasing appearance to the book.

Dr. Burke was not the only artist at the time who made flies look better than they were actually tied. The same thing was done by Don Ray for the *Noll Guide to Trout Flies and How to Tie Them*. You also can see the same thing in John Veniard's *Fly Dresser's Guide* in the flies that were painted by Eric Cumberland Owen.

This month's pictured flies are two flies that Ray Bergman actually tied. The Bergman flies were photographed from a collection now possessed by Allen Landheer, who bought them from Bob Mead. The one with the wood duck wing looks to me like a Quill Gordon, which isn't shown in the fly plates in *Trout* at all, while the one with the duck quill wing looks like it might be the wet fly called the Willow. Comparing them



with the flies in the fly plates, it's hard to say what they are—which is precisely the point. So when we tie and fish wet flies from Bergman's *Trout*, what are we really doing?



Ray Bergman dedicated *Trout* “To You All: The many good fellows I know and have fished with, and those whose paths may never cross mine except through the medium of these pages. This is my visit with you, our fishing adventure together. I trust it will be enjoyable, instructive, and memorable. When I am gone, when all who now read these pages have passed beyond, I hope *Trout* will continue to live, perhaps to instill in future generations a love and understanding of angling.”

To me this says a lot about Ray Bergman. What *Trout* is about is not how to make perfect copies of Bergman's flies as illustrated by Dr. Burke. It's about a love of fishing and how it's done. Bergman tied thousands of flies, around two hundred thousand, to be exact, to fill orders for his customers, for his books, and for fishing trips, and he had no one working for him to tie those flies. I can't imagine anyone tying that many flies and having to make each one look picture perfect. As a good friend once told me, he can imagine Ray tying a fly, then declaring it's good enough to catch fish. And then going fishing.

Ray Bergman didn't finish high school or attend college. He just truly loved fishing and passionately showed it. And he had a gift that not many of us are given—the ability to write as if he were talking to you. He became an editor for *Outdoor Life* and

wrote four books: *Fresh Water Bass*; *Just Fishing*; *With Fly, Plug, and Bait*; and the most famous of all, *Trout*. With his books and *Outdoor Life* articles, he became the blue-collar fisherman's fisherman. That's his real legacy to us and why he's my hero.

*I would like to thank all those who helped me with this month's column: Judy DV Smith, Bob Mead, Ted Patlen, and Allen Landheer.*



## The Two-Feather Fly and Riffle Dun

By Dave Plummer

Ted Patlen's masterly demonstration in tying Harry Darbee's Two-Feather Fly at the December meeting of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild aroused some old memories—not of Harry, because I was never privileged to have made the acquaintance of the Darbees, Harry and Elsie, or of the Dettes, Winnie and Walt. The Beaverkill and Willowemoc were always farther away than my budget for gasoline and tires would allow when supporting a family with three little kids in the 1960s.

My fly-tying mentor, Tommy Thomson, always spoke of those folks in reverent tones, as do all of the writers and Catskill fly tyers of our era. My memories, sometimes foggy, are of pictures, phrases, and articles in books and magazines, so when I saw what Ted was tying, I sort of lit up. This is one fly type that has always interested me, but I haven't taken the time to tie it and hadn't even seen it in real life—only in pictures. I asked at the meeting if this was the same fly as one called a Riffle Rider. No one seemed to know, so Dave Brandt asked me to look into it a bit farther.

I found a picture of the Darbee fly that Ted was tying in Mac Francis's *Land of Little Rivers*, but no reference to any alternate name for the pattern. Several books later, still with no luck, I went to my notebook containing scraps of magazine articles that I had razor-bladed out of my piles of fishing magazines when I started using them for chairs and the wife said, "Out!" Under "Dry," I had filed a number of innovative patterns, and voilà, there it was. I was only half right. Instead of "Riffle Rider," it was called a "Riffle Dun," a uniquely designed look-alike, but credited by the author to Walt Dette.

The article, by John Betts, with photos by him, was published in the autumn 1998 issue of *Fly Tyer*, page 29, under the title "Parachutes." Betts writes: "The first example is the work of the late Walter Dette. He was the designer of the Riffle Dun, which appeared in an article by Ted Niemeyer in the May 1981 issue of *Fly Tyer*." Page 32 has a full page of step-by-step instructions: "Tying Dette's Riffle Dun, an All Feather Fly," pictures and all.

The two flies are similar in appearance, and they are undoubtedly fished the same way. They are air resistant, so they hover and touch down on the surface as softly as a wisp of milkweed seed. They are designed to "ride the riffles" with high visibility for the angler, tails and wings turned upward like a freshly hatched mayfly dun ready to launch into the trees.

Nevertheless, there are differences between the two. Harry's fly is a two-feather innovation, tied on a very short-shank hook. The main feather is used to fashion the wings and the extended body and tail. The second feather is hackle wound in the typical Catskill style, with barbs perpendicular to the shank of the hook.

Walt's Riffle Dun is a three-feather fly tied to a typical dry-fly hook. As on Darbee's Two-Feather Fly, the main feather forms the body and the tail. The wings—made from the second feather—are applied as on any Catskill dry, upright and split. The



butt end of the feather is turned upright to provide a post for tying the third feather, the hackle, with barbs parallel to the post, parachute style. Color selection for either pattern is whatever the tyer wants it to be.

Whose innovation was first is not the point. Perhaps they both came up with the same idea over a beer. My interest is in the concept, and one day I will be attempting one or both to be used along with my Hewitt's Skaters to induce a rise out of some unsuspecting trout from its hiding place in the fast water. I hope a nice big trout will be agreeable.



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



**The Fly Fishing Show**  
**Valley Forge Convention Center**  
**1160 First Avenue, King of Prussia, PA 19406**

**March 5 & 6, 2011**

**Show Hours**

Saturday, 9:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.

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

**Admission**

**Adult:** \$15 for one day  
\$25 for two-day pass  
**Children under 5 free, under 12:** \$2  
**Scouts under 16 in uniform:** Free  
**Active Military:** \$10

For more information and directions, go to [http://  
www.flyfishingshow.com/Philadelphia.html](http://www.flyfishingshow.com/Philadelphia.html)