

The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild



GAZETTE

April 2007

The 2007 Fly Tyers Rendezvous will be held on Saturday, April 21, 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. In the words of Allan Podell (see “Letters” below), the Rendezvous is “a friendly, interactive, informative chaos.” Come be friendly and informed and participate in the fun.

The May meeting of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild will be held on Thursday, May 16, 2007, at 7:00 P.M. at a location to be announced in the May mailing. Ralph Graves will be tying—this is the Klinkhammer program that was scheduled for the March meeting, when Ralph was snowed in by the Saint Patrick’s Day storm. Many thanks to Tom Mason for filling in to tie for those who braved the elements to attend.

Original Klinkhammer

Flexament
Zap-a-Gap

Hook: Partridge 15BN, size 8
Thread: Brown
Abdomen: Tan dubbing—absorbent
Thorax: Peacock herl
Wing: White poly yarn
Hackle: Dark ginger or medium dun

Eastern Green Drake Klinkhammer

Flexament
Zap-a-Gap

Hook: Partridge 15BN, size 8
Thread: Primrose
Tail: 3 pheasant-tail fibers
Rib: Very fine oval silver tinsel
???: Imitation wood duck
Abdomen: Cream dubbing—absorbent
Thorax: Same as abdomen
Wing: Yellow poly yarn
Hackle: Grizzly dyed yellow

River Cleanup

The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild will participate in a river cleanup held on Saturday, April 28, in conjunction with the Long Island Fly Rodders and Beamoc TU. Rendezvous at 8:15 A.M. at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum on Old Route 17 in Livingston Manor, NY. I encourage members to spend an hour or two helping remove streamside debris from last year’s floods. Bring waders or hip boots and gloves. Arrangements are being made to have roadside drop-off points for the town crew to pick up the debris. The Department of Environmental Conservation also is

providing seedlings and young trees for planting as stream bank stabilization above the museum bridge.

—Manny Zanger

The Theodore Gordon Flyfishers Clearwater Junction Fly-Tying Event, a benefit for the Theodore Gordon Flyfishers Conservation Fund, will be held on Friday, June 8, and Saturday, June 9, from 9:00 A.M. until 4:00 P.M. at the Rockland House, on Route 206 in Roscoe, NY. Entrance is by donation, and lunch will be served for a nominal fee. On Saturday evening at 7:00 P.M. (with cocktails at 6:00 P.M.), the TGF Conservation Committee dinner will follow the fly-tying event. Reservations can be made through the Rockland House at (607) 498-4240.

The Theodore Gordon Flyfishers are always in the midst of many different conservation projects, and they all require funding. All Catskill Fly Tyers Guild members are more than welcome to tie at the event. If you would like to do so, contact Mark J. Romero at (607) 498-9944 or by e-mail at markflies99@hotmail.com as soon as possible.

When I think about fishing in the upcoming season on the Willowemoc, I always think about English March Brown wet flies, size 6 and size 8, male and female patterns. Yes—as most of you guessed, I am talking about the patterns found in Ray Bergman’s *Trout*, plate 5.

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



I was fishing these flies two years ago below the bridge downstream of the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum. I cast and had a slow wet-fly swing beginning when all of a sudden, the line straightened, and I felt one fantastic pull. I lifted my rod gently and made sure the hook was truly set. To any wet fly-fisher, this is a joyful event, one that got my senses going and my heart pounding. I fought that fish for a while and finally landed it. It was a beautiful brown trout measuring 17¼ inches. As any good catch-and release-angler would do, I revived this trout, and it swam off on its own accord. It even insulted me by taking off quickly and splashing water in my face with its tail. I could not do more than laugh out loud. This was one of those feelings that make me thankful to be alive. I thanked God above for the catch and Ray Bergman for his stories and wet flies that I love so.

I kept fishing, just moving on a bit farther downstream, and hooked up with two more brown trout. I had caught three fish in a short period of time, and I was acting like a kid at Christmastime. After that third fish, my fly did not look so pretty. I changed flies and moved much farther downstream, landing six more fish that day. So there’s the story—a size 6 English March Brown wet fly taking fish on my favorite stream, the Willowemoc.

For the people who do not know me, I should mention that I fish exclusively with size 6 and size 8 wet flies. Fishing wet flies this size, I use an intermediate clear sinking line made by Cortland. Both patterns for the English March Brown worked well that day. Here are the patterns from Ray Bergman’s *Trout* with the modification I make to tie and fish these larger flies.

English March Brown Male



English March Brown Male

Body: Gray-brown dubbing
Ribbing: Gold tinsel
Tip/tag: Gold tinsel
Tail: Dark partridge
Hackle/beard: Partridge
Wing: Pheasant (dark)

English March Brown Female



English March Brown Female

Body: Gray-brown dubbing
Ribbing: Gold tinsel
Tail: Partridge
Hackle/beard: Dark partridge
Wing: Pheasant (light)

The Mylar tinsel I use for the ribbing and tail is size 16 or 18. For the body, I use Hareline Dubbin March Brown. Trying to get the traditional pheasant wings paired to tie wet flies in size 6 and 8 is not always easy. I have substituted light-brown turkey with a little speckling for the female pattern, and for the male, I use a dark-brown turkey or darker speckled peacock quills. Keep in mind that all the wing material I speak about is paired.

Editor's note: Andy has offered to do a continuing column on tying classic wet flies. Look forward to it in future issues of the Gazette.

The Classic Catskill Dry Fly: A Definition

By Joe Fox

My grandmother, Mary Dette Clark, and I were talking the other day about how there is so much misinformation about the Catskill dry fly. Here is a definition of a basic winged dry fly on a standard-length dry-fly hook.

The hackle is two times the gape of the hook; the tail is the length of the hook; and the wings are clearly taller than the hackle. (We have gauges, so each one is correct and, more importantly, the same.) The body starts above the barb of the hook and is smooth, tapered, and—I do not like this word, but—“tight.” (That is, for the most part, the body is not buggy when dubbing is used.) “Tight” is a bad word because it describes the appearance, not how it is tied. Plus, if you dub with a noodle, the way that we and many old-timers do, a loose body will give you a very different body than a tight one, yet still hold just as well.

The wings should have a shape like a “V” curved outward, mirroring each other. The amount of curve can differ from fly to fly, but finding a matching pair of feathers for each fly is very important. I won't get into the technique for posting the wings, but I do want to touch on how the wings were done.

When using two feathers, many times there is a lot of waste. Back in the day, tyers used one and a half feathers. They selected just as much as was needed, cut it off, then laid that on the table and selected the next wing. This may be why many feel that only one feather is needed for both

wings, since on small flies, 16s and 18s, one feather can supply enough fibers, if it's large enough. However, if tied in when still on the stem, then split, the wings will not curve properly. When cut off the stem, the fibers can be put front to front and tied in. This keeps the much-needed curve, uses fewer feathers, and they will mirror each other. Eric Leiser's *The Dettas: A Catskill Legend*, pages 158–61, shows how Winnie cut the fibers off the feathers for wood-duck wings and how she tied them in. It does not go very deep into why she did it this way, but it gives you the basic idea of how it was done.

And now for the most misunderstood part: the amount of hackle. These flies are tied for the fast Catskill waters, so saying “sparse” is not right, because, again, it describes their appearance. The proper way to describe the hackle would be “a straight, clean, fairly narrow hackle collar.” On a perfect fly, every hackle fiber would be at a 90-degree angle to the shank of the hook. When that happens, the fly will be very clean looking and *appear* sparse, despite the amount of hackle. The hackle fibers themselves should have a tapered tip with little or no curve. Feathers that twist will many times ruin the look of the fly, along with hackle fibers that have curved tips. It gives the fly a “buggy” look (I do not like that word for this, either, but it tends to get the message across), a look that is not proper for the style.

The head should be small—one turn to tie down each hackle and five turns for the whip finish. There should also be a gap just large enough for the gut cutter, so the whip finish does not get cut open. A good rule of thumb is about the distance from one end of the eye to the other end, if measuring forward. (Note: this is on a turned-down eye and is not the length of the eye. Confused? Good.) The heads are varnished.

This is the Cross style, thought of by many to be the final stage of the Catskill dry-fly style. There are many other Catskill dry flies, including variants, skaters, palmered-hackled flies, wingless standard dries, and dries on long-shank hooks, to name a few. The Catskill style does not end at dries, however. Many tyers tied wets, nymphs, streamers, and so on. There are a number of guidelines that were used for these flies, as well. Like almost every part of this style, most parts are taken from other styles, mostly from Europe.

Obituaries

Lou Anne Bastian, 52, of 1740 St. Michael's Road, Cogan Station, died Thursday, February 22, 2007, in the Gatehouse of Divine Providence Hospital. Surviving, besides her parents, of Cogan Station are her husband of thirty-three years, Donald W. Bastian; two daughters, Kimberly A. (Marc) LeBlond of Simsbury, CT, and Lyneah M. (Michael Jr.) Hudock of Williamsport; and a brother, Larry W. (Sarah) Metzger of Ithaca, NY. The guild's sympathies go out to Don Bastian and his family.

John Warren Duncan, of Saint John, New Brunswick, was born on June 24, 1948, in Campbellton, New Brunswick, and was found, dead of a massive heart attack, slumped over his fly-tying vise, on February 10, 2007. He was one of Canada's most famous fly tyers. “Dunc” was known for his Atlantic salmon flies.



Anthony Francis Jansic, Jr., died at his home in Yorktown Heights on February 28, 2007, after a struggle with cancer. Tony was born in Cleveland, OH, on March 2, 1918. After graduating from high school, Tony served in the armed forces during World War II as a communications technician, repairing airplane radios and radar. After leaving the service, he attended Amherst

College and entered graduate school in Western Reserve University in Cleveland, OH, receiving his Ph.D. in child psychology in 1954. Throughout his academic career, he worked for City College of New York. At CCNY, he served as a psychology professor and program administrator for the graduate program in the School of Education. He retired from CCNY in 1981.

Before entering the armed services, Tony was briefly married and had a daughter. While a graduate student in Cleveland, Tony met and married Anna Spencer Roettger in 1947. Tony and Anna were married until her death in August 1995. Together, they raised three children. Late in life, Tony met and fell in love with Evelyn Baeyens, who remained his companion and by his side throughout his illness.

Throughout his life, Tony was an avid catch-and-release fly fisherman and conservationist. He was an enthusiastic member of the Amawalk Rock Rollers, a local stream-conservation group. Tony was a locally renowned fly tyer and lifelong member of Trout Unlimited, the Federation of Fly Fishers, and the Theodore Gordon Fly Fishers. His other hobbies included nature photography, playing the violin, solving crossword puzzles, reading, listening to classical music, and gourmet cooking.

Esopus Creek Court Victory

Confirming a stunning victory for fishermen and advocates of clean water, the U.S. Supreme Court denied New York City's petition for certiorari to overturn a federal court of appeals decision that prevented unregulated pollution of the Esopus Creek. . . . "We are not surprised that the petition was denied," said Professor Karl Coplan of the Pace Law School Environmental Litigation Clinic, which successfully represented the plaintiffs in the hard-fought case, "the Second Circuit Court of Appeal's decision was clearly in line with the Supreme Court's earlier decisions on the subject."

In March 2000, a coalition of fishing and environmental groups, including the Catskill Mountains Chapter of Trout Unlimited, the Theodore Gordon Flyfishers, the Federated Sportsmen's Clubs of Ulster County, the Catskill-Delaware Natural Water Alliance, along with Riverkeeper, sued the city in an effort to stop New York City's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) from discharging pollutants from its Shandaken Tunnel into Esopus Creek in violation of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA). Water from the Schoharie Reservoir, which travels through the 18-mile-long tunnel, carries extremely high levels of fine clay particles that turn the clear waters of Esopus Creek a muddy brown. Local fishermen began to call this stretch of the Esopus "Yoo-Hoo Creek" for its resemblance to the chocolate soft drink. These discharges from the tunnel diminished the quality of the Esopus, destroying its recreational trout fishery. Fishermen no longer fish downstream from the Shandaken Tunnel outlet. "Not only is this a victory for the Esopus and its wild rainbow trout, it is also a victory for the Clean Water Act," stated Bert Darrow, a fly-fishing instructor for over thirty-five years and permanent director of the Catskill Mountains Chapter of Trout Unlimited, as well as a board member of Theodore Gordon Flyfishers.

In October 2001 and again in June 2006, the Second Circuit had unanimously held that interbasin transfers of polluted water require a CWA discharge permit. "The Supreme Court's denial resolves the question in this case that any transfer of pollutants between distinct and unconnected water bodies without a permit is illegal. Our tireless efforts over these last seven years have affirmed the plain language and intent of the Clean Water Act." said Daniel Estrin, supervising

attorney at the Pace Clinic. Now, with the resolution of this case, the DEP must pay a hefty penalty to the United States Treasury for violating the CWA: \$5,225,000.

Whether the city will indeed reduce the turbidity remains the subject of much contention. The plaintiffs in this case have sued the state's Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), contending that the permit the state issued to resolve this problem violates both state and federal law. As Bert Darrow noted, "This is not the end of the road. It is now up to the state to enforce the law and issue a permit that does not violate state water quality standards." The city is proposing to make only minor modifications to its operation of the tunnel. But the plaintiffs believe that a structural measure, such as a multilevel intake structure that would select only the clearest water to send through the tunnel, is necessary to solve the turbidity problem effectively. Governor Eliot Spitzer agrees. In 2003, then-Attorney General Spitzer recommended that the city employ a multilevel intake structure in the Schoharie Reservoir to reduce turbidity in the Esopus and to avoid building a water filtration plant.

"Hopefully Governor Spitzer will take the lead in resolving the turbidity problem so that the fly fishermen can return to the Esopus," said Ron Urban, chairman of the New York State Council of Trout Unlimited. "It's high time that Yoo-Hoo Creek was restored to its natural state, where the water ran gin clear. I look forward to a river that is cleaned up so that fishermen will never have to worry about high levels of turbidity," echoed Bert Darrow. Alex Matthiessen, president of Riverkeeper, concurred: "This is a tremendous win for the New York City watershed, its fishermen, and our environment. It is now the city's responsibility to live up to its obligation to ensure that the Esopus runs clear."

Press release from Riverkeeper at www.riverkeeper.org. Hat tip to Joe Ceballos for the link.

Letters

Dear Bud,

Having just read the February newsletter, I am prompted to express a few things. First and foremost, I want to say how saddened I was to hear of the passing of Ralph Hoffman. He was a nice gentleman, and I always enjoyed talking with him. My condolences to his family and close friends.

Second, I am not qualified and do not know whether it is correct or not to use the apostrophe in our name. I do not know whether it is "tyers," "tyer's," or "tiers." I do know that I am as guilty as anyone in that I've used all three interchangeably. Heck, we generally agree about what a Catskill fly isn't, but try getting agreement on what it *is*. That's not generally possible, so does anyone want to define, "Catskill Fly Tyer"? [*For one authoritative attempt at defining a Catskill-style dry fly, see Joe Fox's article above.*]

How do we get a more inclusive attendance at meetings that would expand the diversity of tying knowledge or demonstrations? One might ask: Shouldn't we stay confined to the Catskill style, since that is the focal point of our group? My response would be that we should figure out a way to increase attendance at meetings and that diversity is a good thing. Expanding knowledge, learning about techniques and materials that go beyond what you see in Catskill flies, can be beneficial and applicable to the totality of your capability. Similarly, I don't know if I'll ever need to make an eighty-foot cast, but it would be good to know I could if that situation presents itself. The Rendezvous is an event I look forward to every year. It has grown, and as it has, it's become more difficult to mingle and converse with the other tyers (that word again). I'm not saying that is a

bad thing. Short of establishing some confining rules such as specific time shifts or a significant reduction in the number of tyers, the Rendezvous can be described as a friendly, interactive, informative chaos.

Finally, let me say something about the materials swap. It is always fun! It is a way to get rid of stuff for more stuff. It's another winter event I look forward to attending. As Dave Brandt pointed out, it has ballooned. It has become a swap/sale, and often you'll see more than just materials. It is difficult to be a swapper and barter from one table to another. Another difficulty is the date. February is too unpredictable insofar as weather and travel conditions are concerned. Maybe we should take this into consideration in the future.

Regards,
Allan Podell

Allan—

The choice of “tyer” instead of “tier” in the guild’s name may be an issue that only an editor can get passionate about, but I hope we can discover more about the origin of it. Dave Brandt has promised to enlighten us, but if anyone else who was present at the creation has any information about why the choice was made, I hope they’ll chime in.

“Tyer” is the British spelling, and as such would seem to be an unintuitive choice for the name of an organization dedicated to preserving an quintessentially American style of dressing flies. Some folks claim that using it avoids confusion with “tier” (pronounced “teer”), in the sense of “level,” as in “the Southern Tier.” But I think that for that reason, no one would ever write in a way that would lead to such confusion—“a first-tier tier,” for example—and we eagle-eyed editors would catch and revise it if they did.

As for the equally riveting question of the apostrophe, I like Dave’s explanation that he saw the guild “as being made up of, not just belonging to, its members.” And since it’s in the plural, it reflects the diversity of interests (or obsessions) and skills that members bring to the guild. That’s another reason not to try to define a “Catskill Fly Tyer”—or even a Catskill fly tier.

—Bud Bynack

[Editor’s note: I sent Glenn Overton a copy of the Mary Dette DVD and asked him about the exchange at the end of the section on tying the Green Drake, where Mary briefly discusses the tying wax she uses. I figured that if anybody knows about tying wax, Glenn does. He referred me to the recipe on pages 110–11 of Harry Darbee’s Catskill Fly Tier to give me an idea of the sort of thing that was involved (sixteen ounces of pine resin, one ounce of castor oil, and one ounce of beeswax—yikes!), then discussed his reaction to the DVD.]

Bud,

I sure appreciate the DVD on Mary Dette. It brought memories back to those wonderful days with the folks of Roscoe and the open and giving hearts that these people had. That is why so many learn this beautiful style of fly tying.

I hope I was able to answer your wax question. On silk threads, some would heat their wax and paint it on the spooled thread. Silk allowed the wax to soak in, but with these new threads, you have to run the thread several times through the fly-tying wax. The fly-tying wax the Dettes and Darbees used was more like a medium-hard taffy feel. If you’ve experienced making home-made

molasses taffy, you'll understand what I mean. My wax may have been good, but really, the wax those two families made was much better. It was almost impossible to untie their flies.

Being here in the Montana mountains since 1979, to review what I miss seeing was such a treat. I know that by watching Mary, I notice the mistakes I have made over the years. When Mary tied in her wood-duck wings, there were adjustments in gauging the material. At the area where the feather is attached to the hook, the width of the feather at the tie-in was three times the gape of the hook for each wing. To be right, keep an eye on her the next time you get a chance to watch Mary tie again.

When I watched Elsie Darbee, she had large flank wood-duck feathers, and she would take sections out, both left and right out of two different feathers, and Mary says on the DVD that she did that, too, at one time. For them, the tie-in area was equal to two times the gape of the hook. Again, you need to make adjustments, because some flank feathers are finer than others. Mallard flank is very fine, so you need much more of it. By watching a tyer, you can gauge the material they are using, and that can help a new tyer get the correct proportions without guessing.

Now for tails, that is easy. On the DVD, I heard someone ask Mary how many barbs were used for the tail. In my teaching, the amount of barbs you strip off one side of a quill is equal to the gape of the hook. That's what makes that easy. If you add two or three barbs more, that's fine also, especially when tying smaller flies. And the eye diameter of the hook eye can gauge the length of the head of the fly. A good example to give you an idea where to stop your hackle is on a streamer one and a half or two times the diameter of the eye of the hook.

When I taught David Pabst, missing a measurement by one thickness of a quill—about two hundredths of an inch—made him want to quit the class. I knew right then that something was special about Dave. He was starting to see things in fly tying and gauging that almost all other fly tyers will never see in their lifetimes. When he put it all together, he was one of my best tyers.

Glenn Overton



For Sale

Orvis bamboo rod. Flea model: 6½-foot 2 oz. two-piece with two tips.
Built in 1971 and in excellent used condition. \$725.00.
Contact Galen Wilkins at (607) 723-6715.

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. Indicate if it is a new membership or a renewal.
*****Remember, memberships renew in February.*****

Other *Gazette* contacts:

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Name: _____

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Telephone #: _____

E-mail address: _____

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

Yes (please provide) _____

No _____



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

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

—Paul Schullery, *Cowboy Trout*