

The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild



GAZETTE

Volume 11, number 2

April 2008

The 2008 Fly Tyers Rendezvous will be held on Saturday, April 19, 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 the East. Lunch will be available. After the Rendezvous, support the Rockland House by joining us for dinner there. The Rockland House supplies free space for guild meetings and the Rendezvous. Make your reservation now at (607) 498-4240 or early on April 19.

This event is sponsored by the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild and is free and open to the public. 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, the Rendezvous is “a friendly, interactive, informative chaos.” Come be friendly and informed and participate in the fun.

That includes participating in the fly swap that is a regular feature of our meetings. Whether you’re tying at the Rendezvous or just hanging out, bring two flies to swap—one for the swap and one for the guild’s collection. On a tag, write the name and size of the pattern, your name, and the date tied. We can supply film canisters to hold the flies, if you need them.

Mike Hogue will be in touch with everyone who has signed up to tie. We are requesting flies from each tyer who ties at this year’s Rendezvous for a fly plate to be raffled off next year. We are still working on the one from last year because we did not get the signatures we need to go with the flies. This year, we need smaller flies than the ones we’ve received from some tyers in the past. Large flies overwhelm the proportions of the plate.

The May meeting of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild will be held on Thursday, May 15, 2008, at 7:00 P.M. at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum. Leslie Wrixon will tie several versions of Vince Marinaro’s classic, the Jassid

Leslie Wrixon’s credentials as a fly tyer are impressive. Among other distinctions, she is on the pro staffs of Mustad and Regal, the boards of directors of United Fly Tyers and the North Eastern Council of the Federation of Fly Fishers, and was the official fly tyer for Team USA at the 2006 Fly Fishing World Championships in Portugal.

Leslie is traveling from the Boston area and has asked if any guild member in the Roscoe area could put her up. If you can help, contact her at (508) 733-8535 or e-mail her at lesliewrixon@yahoo.com.

Jassid

Hook: Fine dry fly, size 16 to 22

Thread: Black 8/0

Body: Black dry-fly dubbing with no guard hairs

(Variations will use porcupine hair, peacock herl, or stripped quill)

Hackle: Black, short, palmered

Wing: One medium to small jungle cock nail



The Guild DVD Series

Ken Kobayashi is about to start putting together the next DVD in the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild “Fly Tyers” series. He’d like to get feedback from the guild to determine if there are particular tyer/fly combinations that members especially would like to see on this DVD. Please rank your favorites. Ken has moved since the last *Gazette* went to press, and these are his new coordinates: e-mail him at kennethkobayashi@gmail.com, call him at (917) 553-4050, or write him at P.O. Box 426, Roscoe, NY 12775. Once again, Here’s the list from Ken’s video log.

Ralph Graves: Light Cahill/Klinkhammer style, Lake Erie King, Green Drake (various patterns), Coffin Fly, Brown Bivisible, March Brown Emerger, *Isonychia*.

Tom Mason: March Brown “Biggun,” The Usual, CDC Blue-Winged Olive, Sulphur, Katterskill.

Bill Leuszler: “Dubbing Techniques, A Historical Perspective,” Hendrickson.

Agnes van Put: Lee Wulff Fly.

Ted Patten: Variant, Big Fluff Cream-Colored Emerger

Larry Duckwall: “Darbee Stories,” Bivisible, Spun Deer-Hair-Bodied Fly, Red Quill.

Ken Zadoyko: Black Stonefly, Extended-Body Soft-Hackle Caddis.

Floyd Franke: “Tying Philosophies and Techniques,” “Conceptual Elements of Fly Tying.”

Keith Fulsher: Thunder Creek Fly.

Bob Osburn: The Usual, Snowshoe Rabbit Emerger.

Dave Pabst: Orange Cahill (Sulphur)—mentions “when I tied this for Mrs. Darbee,” *Isonychia* Soft Hackle, Au Sable Wulff.

Allan Podell: March Brown “PITA” (Pain in the Ass), Extended-Body March Brown, Standard March Brown, Sulphur Quill-Body Comparadun, Size 32 Mayfly, March Brown Comparadun, Dark Cahill.

Sam Scafidi: Red Quill.

Mike Hogue: Mike’s Spuddler.

Dave Brandt: American March Brown, Flatwater Pale Ginger (from pp. 63–64 of Harry Darbee’s book), Two other versions of the March Brown.

Ralph Hoffman: No description.

Phil Chase: The December 2007 guild meeting: Herman Christian, the Neversink, and the Bumblepuppy fly.

Three questions are frequently asked of me in almost every conversation that I have with fellow anglers: Do you really fish wet flies in size 6 and 8? Do you put the same effort into tying your fishing flies that you do for your show flies? Do you make any specific changes to the flies you use for fishing?

Let’s address these questions in order. Yes, it is true that I fish all my wet flies in size 6 or 8. The smallest I have fished has been a size 10. I started out, like everyone else, fishing with wet flies in size 14 and 16, and I had some success. Then I was talking to Don Bastian, and I said something to the

The Wet-Fly Corner

With Andy Brasko, a Genuine Wet-Fly Fisherman



effect that tying these beautiful flies in the larger sizes is nice, but I couldn't believe that they catch fish or that people even fish with them. Don informed me that people do indeed fish with wet flies in the larger sizes and that in their day, wets in these sizes sold very well.

Taking this statement as a challenge, I started fishing wet flies in size 6. So there I was in the Catskills, fishing what I thought was a large fly that would scare more fish than I would ever catch. Boy, was I wrong. I caught just as many trout with a size 6 wet fly as I ever did with size 14s and 16s —if not more. I became intrigued with this discovery. Every time that I set out in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York, I fished with size 6 wet flies.

The most interesting selling point for me came in the fall while fishing the Beaverkill with Mark Romero. I was fishing a size 6 wet fly called the Captain. I had what appeared to be a take, but the fight was so easy that I thought maybe I had snagged a small tree limb or had gotten tangled up in some type of vegetation. When I brought the fly in, I discovered that a three-inch rainbow had attempted to eat it. I was amazed that a little guy went after such a large fly—the fly was sticking out of its mouth with the barb of the hook barely in the side of its jaw. The fly looked like it was wedged in its mouth, rather than hooked in its jaw.

If size 6 flies work so well, then why fish size 8s? Because they work when size 6s don't. I was fishing on a dark, rainy, cool day and was using a size 6 Black Prince wet fly. During the first hour, I got skunked. I tried every fly pattern in my box and did not understand why nothing was working. In desperation, I tied on a size 8 Black Prince. Two casts later, I picked up my first brown. I fished about another hour and landed four to five more fish.

So until the trout tell me that they will not take these larger wet flies, you will always find me fishing with them. The only fly that I will never fish in a larger size is the Black Turkey. This was the fly that Ralph Hoffman showed me how to tie. I fish this fly in size 16 in honor of Ralph and all the trout that this fly has caught for me.

To answer the second question, I put the same effort into tying my fishing flies that I do into my show flies. I have found that my tying consistency has increased, and it does not take a lot of effort to get one or two flies of show quality to appear. As other tyers have found, with practice, the speed with which I can tie a show fly also has increased greatly. Whether it's a fishing fly or a show fly, I feel that a fly that is tied well and looks nice is the only way to go. That is the standard to which I hold myself.

For my fishing flies, I make only one modification. I do not tie in a beard or false hackle. Instead, I use a full-collar hackle. I feel about this the same way that Harry Darbee did: A beard or false hackle serves no useful purpose. In fact, in my fishing experiments, I have taken more fish with wet flies with full-collar hackles than with flies with a beard or false hackle. The full-collar hackle adds a lifelike appearance to the fly. Also, fishing flies with full-collar hackles keeps up the tradition of how wet flies were tied across the Atlantic before they were brought to the United States.

I hope I've motivated some readers to fish with larger wet flies and to try fishing a classic winged wet fly with a full-collar hackle. I truly feel that you will be pleasantly surprised with the results.



Photo by Annie Brasko

Full-Collar Fishing Flies: The Yellow Sally (l.) and the Oak (r.)

Looking Back Upstream



The Envelope . . . Please!

By Roger Menard

It was Hendrickson time, the third week in April. I arrived at the river's edge early that day, 1:45 in the afternoon, as I recall. There was enough time to have a small lunch, tea, and to observe. The river was high, but clear. Barring heavy rains and swollen rivers, early season fly hatches can be fairly predictable once the hatch has begun. On the previous day, Hendricksons began coming off the water at 2:30 P.M., daylight savings time.

Nature is generous to the angler who has dreamed all winter of this very moment. To start the season successfully is good for an angler's well-being, if not his sanity. *Ephemerella subvaria* comes early enough in the season to give a fly fisher a needed lift. Oh yes, there will be some good hatches to follow, but he is also aware of the dog days of summer and difficult fishing conditions. For now, let him enjoy moving water, larger flies, reasonable fly tackle, and rising trout.

Tea finished, I stood on the bank and thought about what must be transpiring beneath the surface, in the hidden world that we anglers never see. I could only imagine hundreds, if not thousands of nymphs crawling on the river's bottom preparing to make their exit from the water, only to mate and start the cycle all over again. Trout, on the other hand, were gorging themselves.

Little boats with dun-colored wings erect began drifting by on the surface, dancing on tiny legs. The ever-shifting current congregated flies into feeding lanes. Trout, being opportunistic, moved into position, picking off mayflies at will, delicately at first, then with precision, and finally slashing with authority. An hour later, the hatch had reached its peak, with trout rising the entire length of the pool.

I worked my way into position at the lower end and cast my fly to the nearest rising fish. It was promptly taken, a nice-sized brown trout of about fifteen inches. During the following two hours, I covered the pool from bottom to top, rested the water, returned to the tail, and started all over again. I forget the number of trout taken, but there were a few good-sized fish. I do remember how pleased I was.

The environment of a river can affect the colors of insects of the same species, lighter on one river, darker on another. I use the traditional Catskill method of tying, but adjust colors as I see fit. I tie two Hendricksons, Light and Dark. The Light Hendrickson has divided lemon wood duck wings. The hackle and tails are a dark blue dun, and the body is a creamish-tan fox fur mixed with claret-colored fur. My Dark Hendrickson also has divided lemon wood duck wings, preferably a feather with darker

bands. The hackle and tail are blue dun, more on the darker side for a smoky effect. I always check the back of the hackle, because I prefer a more somber shade, as opposed to the light or silvery color. The body is a grayish hare's ear (guard hairs removed) mixed with claret-colored fur. They are both tied on a Mustad 94840, sizes 12 and 14.

Truthfully, it doesn't get any better than this. For a septuagenarian, to enjoy a good breakfast, tie a few flies, fish the afternoon hatch, and be home in time for a quiet dinner is most acceptable.

My wife, a great fishing companion, has often made the comment, "If they awarded an Oscar to a mayfly for all-around performance, the Hendrickson would be a top contender." I have to agree. "The envelope . . . please."

Rodger Menard is the author of My Side Of the River: Reflections of a Catskill Fly Fisherman (Black Dome Press, 2002). He was a charter director of the Theodore Gordon Flyfishers and is a member of the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum, the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild, and Trout Unlimited. A conservationist, he was instrumental in obtaining artificial lure-only regulations on the Amawalk River in southern New York. As an avid fly tyer, he has sat alongside the vises of his friends Harry and Elsie Darbee, Keith Fulsher, Charlie Krom, Herb Howard, and Matt Vinciguerra.

Book Review

Fly Fishing for Striped Bass

By Rich Murphy. Published by Wild River Press, 2007; \$59.95 hardbound.

Biology is destiny, it's sometimes said. Biology hard-wires a considerable portion of a fish's behavior, so if you understand the causes of that behavior, you are well on your way to angling successfully for that fish. It is possible that no one on Earth has devoted more thought with more dedicated passion about the behavior of striped bass and how to angle for them with a fly than Rich Murphy, and *Fly Fishing for Striped Bass* is crammed with insights about tactics, flies, tackle, and approaches to angling for *Morone saxatilis*.

It is also stunningly produced, like all Wild River Press books, with amazing graphics, charts of sea-surface temperatures, aerial photographs of beaches, estuaries, and other angling sites, historical photographs, drawings of casting techniques, photos and drawings of prey species, watercolors illustrating particular angling tactics, and sidebars describing them or just telling good fishing stories. It's a complex and multidimensional reading experience. There's always something of interest in the pages ahead, but it also repays slow and careful reading.

The opening chapters lay out in detail the fundamental biological characteristics of the striper's anatomy, the way it moves through the water (even the physical attributes of salt water itself), its metabolism, its growth pattern, its sensorium, its feeding, schooling, and migratory behaviors, and what all this means to the angler trying to locate and attract feeding fish. Murphy is an engineer who inspects bridges and culverts for the State of Massachusetts, and boy, does he know his hydrology. Here and throughout the book, he's almost psychically in tune with what the dynamics of flowing water feel like from a fish's point of view.

Murphy follows a school of stripers from their birth in Chesapeake Bay through their migration north to his home waters on the Great Marsh in Massachusetts and back. The narrative is told in terms of the stripers' behavior during their migration and is therefore not simply a description of an East Coast phenomenon, since all stripers migrate. (There are sidebars dealing with other migrations, notably an extensive one on the migration of stripers in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, "the most modified and intensely managed estuary in North America," so the information is helpful to traveling anglers and fly fishers wherever stripers are found.)

Based on and reflecting all this information, Murphy presents a “suite” of flies designed to appeal to the way stripers identify and attack their prey. These constitute an arsenal of proven fly patterns, but what’s really valuable here are Murphy’s explanations of his approach to fly design and an ingenious technique he’s developed for tying large, but light and easy-to-cast flies with realistic profiles.

In four long sections on striper angling environments—beaches, estuaries, rocks, and flats—Murphy discusses tackle and tactics in great and fine detail, with abundant illustrations and accompanying angling stories. (These all could begin—but don’t—“It was a dark and stormy night.” Murphy seems to have a penchant for angling in a gale. He’s that kind of out-there guy.)

Working through these chapters—and also paying close attention to an earlier chapter on tackle—will reward any reader with an interest in saltwater flyrodding, because spread across them is a wealth of information and ideas that are the product of Murphy’s passion for striper fishing—obsession” is not too strong a word—and the focused, engineer’s intelligence that he brings to solving the problems that striper fishing presents.

Of particular interest to surf anglers are his adaptations of two-handed Spey and switch rods to the often extreme environment of the surf. Murphy acknowledges the heritage of West Coast steelheaders in the development of shooting-head systems that he uses and has a lot to say about developing heads to meet surf conditions—including the use of Skagit-style heads and casting techniques to deal with the frustrations of trying to cast two-handed rods using Spey techniques in a high surf that provides none of the stable surface-tension anchoring and rod loading that the flat water of a river affords. His innovations and techniques work: “The head can develop momentum sufficient to cut like a meteor though a 40-mph gale headwind,” he writes. “On occasion, I have been able to generate enough forward momentum at the head’s leading edge to propel it directly into a strong headwind, cut right through the top of the first breaker, kiss the crest of the second, and land unseen between it and the third breaker crest.” All on a dark and stormy night, of course. If you have caught the epidemic fever for two-handers, finding out what Murphy has done for that aspect of the sport is worth the price of admission.

He also covers other casting styles, from Mark Sedotti’s Singapore Sling to the two-handed overhead cast and a modified pendulum cast, as well as a number of different approaches to presenting a fly, sometimes so detailed as to resemble a guide’s “stand there, do that” advice for a specific situation. And what otherwise could be a tidal wave of information that would swamp a reader rolls on smoothly because Murphy has mastered his engineer’s inner wonk and writes engaging and often funny narratives, whether of his adventures or of the lives of the fish he pursues. Learning to think—and to fish—like Rich Murphy is worth doing, and this book will help anyone who has a taste for the salt become a better angler.

—*Bud Bynack*

Obituaries

Edward E. Eckel, of Roscoe, NY, a retired iron worker with Local 417, International Association of Bridge, Structural, and Ornamental Iron Workers of Newburgh, NY, died Monday, February 4, 2008, at the Catskill Regional Medical Center in Harris, NY. He was 71.

The son of the late Ernest O. and Anne Jadick Eckel, he was born June 15, 1936 in Queens, NY. He was an avid fly fisherman and enjoyed traveling to fish in many parts of the world. He is survived by two daughters, Sally Quinn and her husband, Michael, of Wallkill, NY, and Elizabeth Eckel of Connecticut; a son-in-law, William George Butterly III, and five grandchildren: Liam, Brendan, Ciaran, Katie, and Sarah. He was predeceased by his wife, Kathleen and a daughter, Patricia.

Memorial services and a celebration of his life were held on Saturday, February 9, at the Harris Funeral Home, Railroad Ave., Roscoe, NY. Memorial contributions in his name may be made to the Catskill Fly Fishing Center, P.O. Box 1295, Livingston Manor, NY 12758.



George W. Harvey, 96, of State College, PA, passed away at the Mount Nittany Medical Center on Monday, March 24, 2008. He was born on November 14, 1911 in DuBois, PA. George Harvey graduated from DuBois High School, where he participated in football, cross country, and track, and from the Pennsylvania State University in 1935 with a bachelor's degree in ornamental horticulture. He was captain of the freshman and varsity cross-country and track teams. In 1934–35, he was secretary of the athletic association at Penn State.

In 1934, as an undergraduate, he organized and taught the first angling and fly-tying class at the university, the first of its kind in the United States.

From 1935 to 1942, he was an instructor of physical education at the Mont Alto Campus (Forestry School), where he coached every sports team. From 1943 to 1973, he was an associate professor of physical education at the main campus of the Pennsylvania State University. During his tenure at Penn State, he coached freshman and varsity cross-country and track and taught seventy-two extension classes on angling and fly tying in sixty-eight cities throughout Pennsylvania. In 1947, Harvey developed and taught the first accredited university-level angling and fly-fishing course in the United States. He taught more than thirty-six thousand youngsters and adult students angling, fly casting, and fly tying.

Harvey was also an accomplished author, writing numerous articles in national angling magazines such as *Field & Stream*, *Pennsylvania Angler*, *Fly Fisherman*, and *Outdoor Life*. He authored the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's *Fly Tying Manual* and coauthored *Tie a Fly, Catch a Trout*. In 1986, he published the classic *Techniques of Trout Fishing and Fly Tying*. Additionally, he coauthored two scientific bulletins on the study of brook trout that were published by the Pennsylvania State University. Harvey was the recipient of numerous national awards, including the Flyfisher's Club of Harrisburg's Order of the Hat for his contributions to conservation and fly-rod angling, the Award of Merit from the American Association for Conservation Information, the prestigious Buz Buszek Memorial National Fly Tying Award in 1978, and the Federation of Flyfisher's National Award for Contributions to Fly Tying.

Harvey was an innovator at the fly-tying vise. He was the creator of fly patterns such as Harvey's Favorite, the Spruce Creek Fly, the Harvey's Stonefly Nymph, and the George Harvey Pusher Night Wet Fly. His fly-fishing leader design and slack-leader fly cast are used by fly-rod anglers all over the world. The flies he tied are cherished by fly-pattern collectors to this day.

Burial will be private, and a celebration of life will be held at a date to be announced. Donations may be made to the Joe Humphreys' Student Angling Fund. Please make checks payable to The Pennsylvania State University and indicate on the check the ACHAG Fund. Send donations to Mark Belden, Pennsylvania State University, Room 2 Intramural Building, University Park, PA 16802. Donations may also be made to the Central Pennsylvania National Multiple Sclerosis Society in memory of his late daughter, Sue, at 2040 Linglestown Road, Harrisburg, PA 17110.

A Letter of Thanks

December 29, 2007
Catskill Fly Tyers Guild
PO Box 339
Roscoe NY 12776

I am writing on behalf of the scholarship I received from the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild and would like to offer my genuine appreciation to your organization. Your charitable donation was put toward tuition for the summer of 2007 semester, when I worked as a wildlife technician for The Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory in South Dakota. This work served the requirements for my internship and completed the necessary work for my bachelor of science degree in wildlife management.

It is enriching to know that this scholarship has the potential to help other students interested in a career in the environmental field, as it did for me. Thank you for your generous contribution.

Sincerely,
Travis O'Dell

Travis O'Dell graduated from Roscoe Central School in 2003. He majored in wildlife management at the State University of New York at Cobleskill. He received the \$500 Catskill Fly Tyers Guild scholarship in 2007. His future goals are to help preserve wetlands adjacent to rivers and streams, which play a vital role in preventing the destruction caused by flooding, as well as provide habitat and aesthetically pleasing scenery. Preserving areas for future generations of humans to enjoy, as well as for future generations of fish and wildlife to inhabit, is his highest priority.

Editor's Note: Readers will notice that the volume and issue number information has returned to the masthead of the *Gazette*. Those who wish to keep the record straight can calculate forward from the January 1998 issue, which the archives show was volume 1, number 1.

The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild *Gazette* is issued six times a year to members. Membership is only \$10.00 per year. For membership renewals, send a check, your current address and phone number, and, if you wish to receive the *Gazette* by e-mail, your current e-mail address, to:

Bob Osburn, 3 Good Time Court, Goshen, NY 10924.

➤➤➤➤➤ Remember, memberships renew in February <<<<<<



This newsletter depends on all guild members for its content. Items from nonmembers

are welcome at the editor's discretion. Without the articles, information, for-sale or want ads, cartoons,

newsworthy information, and whatever else is interesting and fun that members submit, this newsletter simply becomes a meeting announcement. Send submissions to Bud Bynack, budbynack@verizon.net or 69 Bronxville Road, Apt. 4G, Bronxville, NY, 10708, (914) 961-3521.



Photos courtesy of Eric Peper

Harry Darbee and A. J. McClane in 1975

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*