



Volume 13, number 2

April 2010

The 2010 Fly Tyers Rendezvous, sponsored by the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild, will be held Saturday, April 17, 2010, at the Rockland House on Route 206 in Roscoe, NY. The setup crew will be in at 7:30 A.M., tyer setup is at 9:00, the doors open to the public at 10:00, and the event concludes at 3:30 P.M. There will be a reception at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum to follow and an informal gathering for dinner at the Rockland House in the evening. For more information, contact Leslie Wrixon, fly-tying chair, at www.lesliewrixon@yahoo.com or at (508) 733-8535.

The Rendezvous is free to all. If you come, please support the Rockland House by buying lunch. Also, renew your membership, pick up a copy of the latest DVD featuring Catskill Fly Tyers Guild tyers, and support the guild by buying raffle tickets for the 2008 Fly Tyers Rendezvous Fly Plate.

The May meeting of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild will be held in the Education Building of the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum on Old Route 17 in Livingston Manor, NY, on Thursday, May 20, 2010, at 7:00 P.M. Gerard Zazzera, a professional fly tyer from Carbondale, PA, will demonstrate two patterns he favors for late the spring and summer, the Isonychia and the Coffin Fly Parachute.

Gerard started tying at twelve years old, when he was given a Noll fly-tying kit. He lived close to the East and West Branches of the Delaware and the Beaverkill, and as his interest in tying grew, he began production fly tying. He has tied for shops throughout the Northeast, particularly two in the Roscoe area.

Isonychia

Hook: Mustad 79580, size 10
Tail: Dark dun Microfibbets
peccary
Body: Mahogany Superfine dubbing
dubbing
Post: Dark dun Hi-Vis or Antron yarn
Hackle: Dark gray dun

Coffin Fly

Hook: Mustad 79580, size 10
Tail: Moose body hair or
Body: Cream Superfine
or your own favorite
Post: Gadwall or teal feathers
Hackle: Grizzly

In addition to the above materials, if you wish to tie along with Gerard, you'll also need your favorite brand of superglue. A technique for finishing off the fly at the post,

rather than behind the eye, and the sail wing on the Coffin Fly make Gerard's tying unique. The sail wing is two flank feathers tied concave side to concave side for the post.

Catskill Fly Tyers Guild DVD ***Fly Tyers, Volume 2: A Guild Sampler***

The new guild DVD, *Fly Tyers, Volume 2: A Guild Sampler*, a two-disk set featuring Larry Duckwall, Agnes Van Put, Bob Osburn, Bill Leuszler, Ralph Hoffman, Dave Brandt, Tom Mason, Dave Pabst, Ralph Graves, Keith Fulsher, Allan Podell, and Ken Zadoyko, is now available to guild members only for a donation of \$20.00, with a limit of three DVD sets per member—\$30.00 for nonmembers, which includes a guild membership. Shipping and handling is a flat media rate of \$3.00, whether you order one, two, or three DVDs. Make checks payable to the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild and send them, with your name and mailing address, to Erin Phelan, Catskill Fly Tyers Guild, P.O. Box 586, Westbrookville, NY 12785.

Guild Notes: February Meeting

Dave Brandt was reelected president. A motion was carried, following the publication of the by-laws, to revisit and reevaluate the by-laws in ten years. As required by the by-laws, a new standing Audit Committee was formed, consisting of Dave Brandt, Mike Canazon, and Jeff Phelan.

Mary Dette, in view of her gracious contributions to the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild and the Catskill tradition, was named an honorary lifetime member of the guild. Previous honorary lifetime member have been Winnie Dette, Fred Oswalt, Helen Shaw, Eugene Raponi, and Russ Malone.

DVD: Only 30 of the first 100 copies of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild DVD *Fly Tyers, Volume 2: A Guild Sampler* remain, and the meeting decided to order 100 more, once again available to members only for a donation of \$20.00 per set and to nonmembers who become members.

Museum Tyers Needed: Open dates remain for tyers to tie at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum. If you'd like to tie there, contact Erin Phelan at the museum at (845) 439-4810 or flyfish@catskill.net.

Guild Program Chair: We need someone to volunteer to set up the guild's meeting programs when Paul Murphy moves out of the area. Only five meetings—May, June, September, October, and December—need programs. Help make them memorable.

Tyers Needed—Roscoe's September Outdoor Expo: The Roscoe Hose Company is holding an Outdoor Expo on September 25, 2010. This event will have vendors of all types of outdoor activities, including fishing, hiking, biking, camping, and hunting. The event will be held at Roscoe's forty-acre Firemen's Park. The goal is to raise money for the Roscoe Fire Department and get more families involved in outdoor activities. We expect at least fifteen hundred to two thousand people to attend this event. The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild plans to be there. If you'd like to be part of the guild's presence at this event, contact Judie DV Smith at (607) 498-6024 or by e-mail (preferred) at judiedvsmith@yahoo.com.

2008 Fly Tyers Rendezvous Fly Plate Raffle

Only 200 tickets are available for the 2008 Fly Tyers Rendezvous fly plate—\$5.00 each, or five for \$20.00. The fly plate has been expertly framed by Ted Patlen. The drawing for the plate will be on April 17, 2010, at the Rendezvous, at the Rockland House. Send a check plus a stamped and self-addressed envelope (if you want your ticket stubs) to Erin Phelan, Catskill Fly Tyers Guild, P.O. Box 586, Westbrookville, NY 12785, or purchase tickets at the Rendezvous.

Pequest Open House

I would like to thank the tyers who donated their time and efforts to this year's Open House at the New Jersey Fish and Wildlife's Pequest Trout Hatchery and Natural Resource Education Center. The tyers who graciously donated their time on Saturday were Anthony Giaquinto, Elmer Hopper, Chally Bates, and Andy Brasko. And Anthony gave a fly to literally every youngster who happened to be interested in his creations. Sunday's tyers, Jessica Lettich, Allen Landheer, Andy Brasko, and John Kavanaugh all also tied some very nice creations.

A special thanks goes out to Jessica Griglak, who invites the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild to participate in this event and helps coordinate it every year for New Jersey Fish and Wildlife. However, this year was special, due to no-shows. The table next to the



guild's was empty, and I asked Jessica If we could spread out and use the space, She graciously agreed and said to put in as many tyers as would fit comfortably. In fact, Jessica asked if we could fill the space again on Sunday. So basically everyone who tied at this event put in a good six hours at their vises. We also gained a new member, had one renewal, and sold a decent number of fly-plate raffle tickets. Thanks again to everyone who donated their time to make this one of the guild's best ever appearances at

the Pequest Open House.

—John Collins

Andy Brasko, Allen Landheer, John Collins, and John Kavanaugh

C'mon, guys—smile!

It was twenty-one years ago that I first saw how effective wet flies truly are. From 1989 to present, I have been on a quest to find books that contain patterns for wet flies. In 1993, I purchased *Flies for Trout*, by Dick Stewart and Farrow Allen. On page 14, you will find the pattern of this issue's featured fly, the Blue Dun. What intrigued me about this pattern were these simple words,

The Wet-Fly Corner

With Andy Brasko, a Genuine Wet-Fly Fisherman



which were written below the picture of the fly as tied by Mark Waslick: “We know of a fly-fishing shop manager who rates this pattern as his number one searching fly for spring trouting.”

Well, this was all it took to set me off like a Roman Candle on the Fourth of July. I thought, “With a statement like that, the fly has to be good.” Boy, were those words an understatement. In the spring of 1993, I tied and fished this pattern on one of the newer streams that I was learning about —the Pequest River in New Jersey.

I remember that day well. It was a Saturday in April, around 9:30 A.M., and my wife, Annie, was fishing with me. I tied on a trusty Hare’s Ear wet fly and did not have any luck, so I opened my fly box, saw my Blue Duns, and gave one a go. On about the fourth cast, I caught my first fish ever on the Pequest River. I made a few more casts and again was rewarded with another trout. Annie looked at me and asked what I caught them on. I told her it was one of the Blue Dun wet flies that I had tied the night before. I gave one to Annie, and she started getting hits and caught a beautiful brook trout.

I was amazed how well a plain, drab fly had worked. I have learned over time that this fly has worked for me every year in April on all the streams in New Jersey and Pennsylvania that I have fished. It seems that once April is over this, pattern is not as effective.

Believe it or not, I have not fished this pattern in the Catskills. I had the pleasure to speak with Ralph Hoffman, though, and he enthusiastically informed me that the Blue Dun and the Iron Blue Dun take trout in the Catskills consistently. I do plan to fish this pattern this year in the Catskills.

Keep in mind that way back then, I fished like a normal angler and tied this fly in size 14 and size 16. This year in the Catskills, I plan on doing the same, but I will also experiment with—you guessed it—a size 8.

From all my years of fishing with wet flies, I have learned that simple, drab-looking flies seem to catch the most fish. I hope all who read this issue’s column will consider tying and trying this fly. Have a great spring fishing season, and please wade safely.



Photo: Annie Brasko

The Blue Dun (*Flies for Trout Pattern*)

Andy Brasko’s Blue Dun

Hook: Wet fly, size 8 to 14
Thread: Black or gray
Tail: Medium blue dun hackle barbs
segments
Body: Natural gray muskrat fur, or similar
dubbed
Hackle: Medium blue dun
Wing: Gray duck wing quill sections
Head: One coat of Griff's Thin,
two coats of Griff's Thick

Hook: Mustad 3906, size 8
Thread: Blue-gray Danville 6/0
Tail: Paired natural (slate) duck quills, four
Body: Natural gray muskrat fur, touch
Collar: Medium dun hen cape
Wing: Paired natural (slate) duck quills
Head: One coat of Griff's Thin, two coats of
Griff's Thick

Tying Notes

When I started tying this fly, I did not have or understand the list of materials called for in *Flies for Trout*. I did not know that gray duck quills really were natural duck quills (slate) or that dun came in more than one shade. As a consequence, I developed this pattern over the years to suit my own needs.



Remembering Leonard Wright By Bill Leuszler

Right now, I am sitting in my kitchen, watching the snow fall slowly outside, holding a book, *Trout Maverick*, a 1996 compilation of Leonard Wright's shorter writings. In it is an inscription, written and signed by Wright, that reads "For Billy Kelly: Friend, next-door neighbor, and mighty angler, warmest regards, Leonard Wright."

Younger and newer members of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild may not be familiar with the name Leonard Wright, and I hope this reminiscence will serve as an introduction. For those who remember or knew him, I hope it brings back memories.

Leonard Wright was quite important to fly fishing during the 1970s and 1980s as a result of his writings on both fly fishing and fly tying. His overall contribution to the sport is best reflected, I believe, in his *Fishing the Dry Fly as a Living Insect*, published in 1972. This book focused on a variety of technical aspects of fly fishing and is not directed at fly tyers per se. His book *Neversink: One Angler's Intense Exploration of a Trout River* (1991), focused on "the river itself, and, inseparably, the Neversink Valley that creates and sustains it," is also valued by many readers, but again is not directed at fly tyers. However, another book, *Superior Flies*, published in 1989 as part of the Cortland Library series, is unique and was at one time my go-to book for learning the proper proportions for tying dry flies.

My first encounter with Leonard Wright was in the early 1980s at the old Catskill Fly Fishing Museum in downtown Roscoe. The entire "museum" was housed in a small storefront on Stewart Avenue. Leonard was one of the first tyers that I saw demonstrate at that site. At the time, I was just getting into the sport of fly fishing, having been mainly

attuned to casting Mitchell 300s for largemouth bass prior to that. Looking back now, two things stand out about that experience: his approach to the actual process of tying and his emphasis on tying caddis patterns.

I'm sure that it's not too hard for most of us to understand what it was first like to be faced with that curse, the match-the-hatch disease. I had already been struck with it when I saw Leonard Wright tie at the museum, having been overwhelmed by Ernest Schwiebert's monumental work of that name. But I'm sure it's much more difficult to imagine a time when every fly fisher didn't carry Elk Hair Caddises in his or her fly box. It simply wasn't the popular pattern that it has now become. In the 1980s, a number of tyers were developing their own unique caddis patterns. How many of us remember chasing around Mr. Woodchuck (or far worse, stopping to pick up his smelly road-kill brother) to tie Eric Leiser's Chuck Caddis? Wright's caddis pattern was named the Fluttering Caddis. This was the pattern I saw him tie at the museum, and I was fascinated by his approach to the whole demonstration.

He was unlike many of the other tyers I saw do demonstrations at this time. Anytime I saw him tie at the museum, he was dressed in a conservative manner, as if he were going to work at an office. There was a quality of the English gentleman about him. He may even have worn a tie. He made the demonstration very special in this way.

Also, all of the valued materials for his caddis patterns, including the top-quality spade hackle he used for winging, were neatly packed in small paper envelopes. Obviously, I thought, with these materials packed the way they were, there must be something really special about that fly—and about the man.

What really set him off from the other good tyers that I saw back then, including Walt Dette and Eric Leiser, was that he seemed not to be in it as a business. What I now have come to realize is that his business wasn't fly tying, but writing.

Wolfgang Saxon wrote in Wright's *New York Times* obituary on September 6, 2001:

Leonard Wright was born in Boston, the son of an investment banker, and went to Milton Academy. His studies at Harvard University were interrupted by service as a fighter pilot in Europe. In early 1945, his p-51 Mustang crashed in Germany, and he was held prisoner until the war ended that May. After graduating from Harvard in 1947, Mr. Wright worked for the advertising agencies Batten, Barton, Durstein, and Osborn and J. Walter Thompson and for *Look Magazine*. From 1971 to 1978, he was marketing and promotion manager at the *New York Times*, to which he also contributed articles.

I assume that none of the members of the guild have ever seen Wright's Fluttering Caddis pattern in any of the shops. In many ways, it has become a thing of the past, never having established a mass appeal—the destiny of many of the fly patterns developed over the years.

Wright's Fluttering Caddis

Hook: Mustad 94833, 3X fine, size: 10–18

Thread: 6/0

Body: Fur, dubbed

Wing: Spade hackle fibers (down-wing style)

Hackle: Rooster

In *Caddisflies* (p. 78), Gary LaFontaine says “The original wing material, high-quality spade hackle fibers, is neither durable nor readily available. Mink-tail hair makes the fly more useful.”

Wright’s books are another case altogether. They are good reads for guild members for two reasons. In addition to identifying many of the shortcomings of the British traditions in our sport, most of his writing focused on actual fishing done in the area of the Catskills. *Neversink* reflects twenty years of fishing (and living) on the upper stretches of that river. As Christopher Lehmann-Haupt wrote in his review of *Neversink* in the *New York Times*, “The reader will learn . . . not the rote lessons of stray disconnected facts that so many fishing books try to teach you,” that is, “how to read the stream, select a fly, how to cast, how to hook and land a fish—but instead an exercise in environmental reason, a picture of the world in which all those lessons fit together naturally.”

Superior Flies and another book written by Wright as part of the Cortland Library series, *Stone and Caddis Fly Fishing*, are among my favorites. The intended audience for *Superior Flies* is actually not fly tyers themselves, but the sportsmen who purchase flies from them. I appreciate the book because its illustrations, done by John White, focus effectively on identifying good fly proportions and because the book is definitely biased toward patterns effective on Catskill rivers. *Stone and Caddis Fly Fishing* is one of the books I go to when I want to restock my fly boxes.

The opening chapter of *Fishing the Dry Fly as a Living Insect* is titled “The Fly That Fishermen Forgot.” Let’s not forget Leonard Wright. If you haven’t done so, find and read his books. I’m confident you won’t be disappointed.

The Yips

By Bud Bynack

Nobody seems to want to talk about this, but it’s more common than most people seem to think. I know I may be breaking some kind of taboo here, but it’s about time that somebody did so. It’s not as if this were something to be ashamed of, after all. It happens too often, to too many people. It’s time to come right out and admit it. So let me be the first to say, “Yes, I’ve had the yips.”

What I call “the yips” almost never seem happen to the fly fishers you read about, but nevertheless they are one of the great common denominators of the fly-fishing experience, or at least that’s what I infer from hints dropped by people I overhear talking on the stream and on the Internet. The yips can strike anytime, but they usually happen when you first arrive at the river or lake that’s your destination.

Especially if you haven’t been fishing for a while, everything you do once you get to the water seems to screw up. You miss a guide while stringing up the rod, wrap the line around the rod instead of running it straight up the guides, drop the tippet material and lose it in the leaves, cut the tippet instead of the tag end when tying on the fly, try to put on your waders backward, slip and skid ungracefully down the bank, then plow unknowingly through a patch of poison ivy on the way to the water, fall on your butt wading in or launching, hang up your first cast on the bottom or in a tree, hang up your second cast in a tree or on the bottom, drop the tippet material that you cut to repair the

break-off and lose it in the water, drop your fly box in the water replacing the fly, hook yourself in an embarrassing place while trying to make the next, first good cast, then find that none of the knots you've tied will hold against the most gentle pressure. Your line then wraps around the rod while you're making further repairs, then around your legs, and eventually around your neck. Then you repeat the drill that involves dropping everything. And that's just for starters.

If only one or a few of these things happen, it may not mean you have the yips. However, each of them seems to happen together with others too frequently to most people, and all of them happen often enough. I've come down with what looked like symptoms of the yips while fishing all by myself, just in a hurry to get to the water. That kind of ineptitude is the same kind of goofiness I've exhibited when getting ahead of myself when engaged in other pleasurable activities that require simple motor skills. And I've come down with yipslike symptoms as a result of performance anxiety — for example, while no fewer than seven of my companions, some of them people I'd just met, abandoned their own fishing, one by one, to watch my antics as I attempted to demonstrate at least a minimal amount of competence casting a fly to a rising fish. But anything of the kind also can be a symptom of the onset of an advanced case of the yips.

When the yips truly set in, all the things I've mentioned—and more—happen to you. They happen sequentially, additively, one after the other after the other, until you begin to wonder what curse has been uttered against you that such things should occur in pursuit of such innocent recreation.

Thinking back on my too-numerous experiences of the yips, what keeps coming to mind is a famous passage from *Pilgrim's Progress*—that's by John Bunyan, not John Wayne—although you can find similar passages in any number of texts in any number of spiritual traditions and even in a few writings that claim to be philosophy. The hero of the story asks a shepherd he meets if he's on the right track. In seventeenth-century English, the obvious meaning of the answer, was, in effect, “Yes, this is exactly the right path.” However, the alternative meaning of the reply, a meaning that was simultaneously present even then, is the more common one today:

Christian: “Is this the way to the Celestial City?”

Shepherd: “You are just in your way.”

The reason you're trying so hard to get where you want to go is the reason you can't get there, and everything you do to get there seems to obstruct the fulfillment of that end. “You are just in your way.” That seems to me like a description of the yips on a fairly advanced level.

As I said, there's a long tradition of thought that tries to puzzle out this problem. In fact, some people don't even see it as a problem, but as an opportunity. It's the getting there—or the trying—that's supposed to be the fun, after all. Even the frustrations of fishing, not just the rewards, have a kind of value of their own. They clarify the nature of the situation. The first thing you tend to notice when the yips happen is that, whatever you do, whatever you have been doing, wherever you are, you are just in your way. But that's also a pretty fair sign that you are also on your way wherever it is you want to be, where things will reveal themselves as they should be in a moment of grace and beauty that is indifferent to place and all the hassles it took to arrive there. “Turn and face yourself,” a friend of mine once said, trying to explain how to make a difficult cast. In many ways, that's one of the things fly fishers constantly must do, and not just when fishing a difficult current.

☞ The Rockland House ☞

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

Asked and Answered

An Occasional Feature, with Al Himmel

Q: Who really wins the battle of wits between a trout and a Ph.D.?

A: As in most battles of wits, both claim victory. If the fish is caught and released, the Ph.D. just has a bigger vocabulary in which to stretch the truth. And if the fish never takes the fly, the Ph.D. just has a bigger vocabulary in which to stretch the truth.

(Answered in this issue by Bud Bynack, Ph.D.)



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.

