

The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild



GAZETTE

June 2007

The June 2007 meeting of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild will be held on Thursday, June 21, at 7:00 P.M. at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum's Educational Building, 1031 Old Route 17, Livingston Manor, NY. Bill Leuszler will tie a size 16 Parachute Sulphur.

Hook: Mustad 94840, size 16
Thread: Orange
Dubbing: Mix of orange and yellow fur
Hackle: Cream, white, or light dun
Post: Goose body feather

Bill will supply the goose body feathers for those who will tie along with him. The pattern was selected by Bill to match a hatch on the water at this time of year.

The Annual Catskill Fly Tyers Guild Picnic will be held on Saturday, August 18, from noon to 4:00 P.M. at the Elsie and Harry Darbee and Matthew Vinciguerra Memorial Pavilion at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum, 1031 Old Route 17, Livingston Manor, NY. Mark your calendars and look for more information in the August issue of the *Gazette*.

The 2007 Catskill Fly Tyers Guild Rendezvous: A Report By Mike Hogue

The 2007 Catskill Fly Tyers Guild Rendezvous was another successful event. We had about fifty tyers this year, ranging from the popular Fishy Fullum to Ted Patlin and his brother Bob, with their Fly-Tying Outlaws display. This was also the first year we had an international visitor: Jan Edman, from Sweden. Jan tied several of his traditional Swedish patterns and was very happy to be on hand for a visit to the Rendezvous.

Several other notable tyers included: Ed Engelman (with his latest tying vise creation—this year, it was based on a blowtorch!), Harold Williams (with his collection of whimsical flies), and Rich Borgardus and his realistic flies. Dave Brandt



Jan Edman

showed a few lucky folks how to tie a fly without a vise, while artist and fly tyer Tom Babock showed us his collection of scroll-sawed wood cutout flies. Ralph Graves was on hand to demonstrate his traditional patterns. Some of the Global Fly Fisher gang (Bob Petti, Chris Del Plato, Darren Bua) were on hand to demonstrate traditional New England streamer patterns.

Following the Rendezvous, we had a small reception at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum, sponsored by the museum and its executive director, Jim Krul, that was enjoyed by all who attended. Thanks to all the tyers who traveled to show us their best patterns, designs, and latest flies. Special thanks also go out to Ken Kobayashi for his lighting setup, to the Rockland House for use of their rooms, to Tom and Martha Mason, Judie DV Smith, and all the other guild members present for helping to set up and organize the event. Our little get-together is quickly becoming a well-recognized regional fly-tying event. With your continued support, we can continue to hold this event for many years to come.

Guild Members Tie at Pequest Open House

By John Collins

The Pequest Trout Hatchery and Natural Resource Education Center in Buttzville, New Jersey, held their Open House event on March 31 and April 1, 2007. Guild members Charlie Bates, Elmer Hopper, John Kavanaugh, Brian McKee, Mark Romero, and Misa Ishimura volunteered their time at this event. Even though we didn't book any new members, all had a great time and handed out many mail applications. I also would like to thank Paul Murphy for getting me the pins, patches, and applications for new members and also Andy Sutton, who booked space for the guild at this event. Also a special thanks goes out to Mark and Misa for coming down to tie, which the directors of the event thought was very nice, considering they live in the Catskills, and also to Brian McKee, who again attended even though he was on crutches. This is an annual event, and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Fish and Wildlife people who run it have invited us back again next year to be a part of the program.

Clearwater Junction: A Report

By Bud Bynack

On Friday, June 8 and Saturday, June 9, near the peak of "bug week," the Theodore Gordon Flyfishers held their third annual Clearwater Junction fly-tying event at the Rockland House, in Roscoe, NY, a fundraiser for the organization's conservation projects fund. Substantial donations at the door replenished the organization's coffers, as did raffles and silent auctions at the awards dinner held on the evening of June 9, where Delaware guide Jim Serio received a conservation award, Arthur Stoliar received a lifetime achievement award, and Jessica E. Rogers, a Ph.D. candidate in ecology and evolutionary biology at Columbia University, was awarded a \$2,000 scholarship for graduate study in conservation biology.

Of the roughly sixty tyers demonstrating their skills and patterns, nearly half were members of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild, thanks to the strong conservation ethic that prevails among guild members and to the efforts of the event organizers, guild members Mark Romero and Mark Thompson. Your *Gazette* editor also covered the event with professional photographer Richard Franklin for an article to appear in *Fish & Fly* magazine on the state of the fly-tying art and the fly-tying artists on the East Coast. In fact, however, the event was much more ecumenical than that,

with tyers from the United Kingdom, Ohio, Arkansas, and Oklahoma, as well as tyers who work closer to the Catskills, and tyers who work in idioms far removed from the classic Catskill style, as well as eminent practitioners of that and other traditional styles.

The spectrum of tying styles ranged from Mark Romero's "Jazz Flies," which he compares to jazz solos, improvisations based on a stated melody, never the same twice, but based on traditional full-dress salmon flies in their adherence to classical elements and proportions, to the authoritative traditional Catskill ties represented by the work of Joe Fox and the traditional full-dress salmon flies presented by Ohio tyer Eric Austin.

Romero's flies, tied on huge 8/0 and 9/0 blind-eye hooks and with art-style bead bodies such as you'd be more likely to find on a necklace, both of which he obtained from tyer Ronn Lucas, whose work was featured in the Summer 2007 issue of *Fly Tyer* magazine, are essentially works of art, although as he noted, if you could find a fish big enough and aggressive enough, it might eat one—provided you could cast the thing. Austin echoed this art-for-art's sake theme from the other end of the spectrum. He enjoys tying "by the rules" and noted, with some embarrassment, that one of his flies had deviated from proper proportions by displaying a married wing of forty-one sections, a feat of virtuosity executed simply because he could do it. Austin said that even if there were no fish, he'd still tie for the sake of tying.

Cutting across the spectrum of tying styles ranging from innovative to traditional was another range of concerns and interests, from the purely aesthetic to the purely pragmatic. As with the innovation-tradition spectrum, there were many overlapping stages in between—innovation is always based on something, and despite the proliferation of tying materials and even of techniques, there are a limited number of things that human fingers can do around a hook and have the results come out well.

Romero and Austin are a good representatives of the aesthetic pole of the spectrum, while guide and conservationist Jim Serio perhaps could exemplify the pragmatic pole, although many tyers spoke of being motivated by essentially pragmatic concerns. Serio ties "guide flies"—flies that are easy to tie, because clients lose a lot of them and "lose 'em quick," as he put it. Serio ties oversize spinner imitations for the simple reason that he and his clients can see them better in the dark—spinners with an uncommon amount of Antron for wings, tied on an up-bent "swimming nymph" hook, with cyanoacrylate glue (Zap-a-Gap) on the thorax, which soaks into the butts of the wings and keeps them perpendicular to the body. Here, necessity has literally been the mother of invention.

The same might be said of the highly innovative ties of British tyer Roy Christie, but for a somewhat different reason. Like Serio, he, too, began with a specific problem to solve. "My stuff's about presentation," he said—specifically, about presentation on the small English streams and still waters that he fishes. (You don't need the solutions that he arrived at on big, fast Western rivers, he noted.) Because he believes that a sunken tippet near the fly is essential to fooling fish under the conditions he faces, as early as the mid-1970s, he devised a "backwards" tie, with the abdomen of a midge or mayfly nymph or emerger tied—very, very sparsely—back from the eye of the hook and the thorax and the wing on an emerger tied at the bend. And to fool selective trout, he began to concoct dubbing mixes with five base colors in each and as many as twenty added hues to match the complexity of natural body colors as seen by fish in the water. "It's all about light patterns," he said. Finally, because a stream he fishes restricts angling to dry flies during a certain season, and because he favors flies with sunken bodies to sink the tippet, he had to come up with a way to tie such a fly that nevertheless floated with at least 50 percent of it above the surface. He invented an innovative

way to tie a parachute hackle in a mono loop at the bend of the hook, a technique that both satisfied this restrictive regulation and proved more durable than the usual parachute tie.

But aesthetics still matter, even to those whose primary goal is just to catch fish, and pragmatics still matter to those who value aesthetics. *Gazette* columnist Andy Brasko, who fishes size 6 and size 8 wet flies from Ray Bergman's *Trout* almost exclusively, after holding up a color plate in Bergman's book and asking "When's the last time you saw beautiful flies like that?" exclaimed immediately: "But they *catch fish!*" And aesthetics and pragmatics are by no means mutually exclusive. As perhaps is fitting, it was Mary Dette who had the last word on the subject at the awards dinner: "A good fly is one that's tied with proper proportions and doesn't come apart when you fish it."

The "I" and the "Y" and the Apostrophe: A Letter

Dear Bud:

I have been quietly tying flies for more than sixty-five years, having been taught at age thirteen by a then-famous Putnam County fly tyer named Dave O'Neill. (Dave was often the subject of cover paintings on *Outdoor Life* magazine during the 1930s and '40s. Is anyone else old enough to remember those great J. F. Kernan paintings?) Dave liked teenagers, and he gave us lessons in the feed store in Carmel. If my clergyman father had known how vulgar and profane Dave was, I am sure he would never have allowed me to participate!

Please allow me to weigh in on the discussion about the word "tyers" in the guild's name.

For whatever piddling amount that credentials may be worth, I have been a journalist/editor/writer for more than fifty years—senior science editor at three major publishing companies (Doubleday, Lippincott, and Cornell University Press) and a communications faculty member at two universities (Cornell University and the University of Georgia). I try to use the English language carefully.

I cast my vote for continuing to render the name "The Catskill Fly Tyers Guild" exactly as it is. "Tyers" is not necessarily a possessive here (any more than "Citizens National Bank" is), so why clutter it up with an apostrophe? As you have pointed out, there is another widely used word spelled "tiers" with an entirely different meaning and pronunciation. So why not eliminate any chance of confusion or ambiguity by using the British spelling, "tyers"? And finally, everyone accepts the word "tying" as spelled, so why not "tyers"? Well, maybe this opens up the possibility of spelling "tied" and "ties" with a "y," but hey, logic seldom applies when it comes to the English language.

Cordially,
Alan Mark Fletcher,
Ithaca, NY

P.S. The spell-checker on my computer doesn't recognize the spelling "tyer," but how much does a computer know?!

Many fly fishers have a pattern that is an old reliable or that just brings out fond memories of times past—a fly that will always be found in their fly boxes. For me,

this pattern is the Gold-Ribbed Hare's Ear wet fly. This fly was one of the first wet flies I ever tied sixteen years ago. It caught fish for me on a very tough stretch of water that has become my home water, the Ken Lockwood Gorge on the South Branch of the Raritan River.

The gorge—known as the KLG to most anglers who live in New Jersey—was always said to be a tough stream for rookies. I found this to be true. When I was a rookie myself, I tried to fish this section and was skunked on numerous occasions. I tried everything in my fly box, from dries to nymphs, and could not as much as get a trout to look at one. I was even insulted by a fish that was jumping all over, taking insects, but not my fly. The last pattern in my fly box was a very ugly-looking Hare's Ear wet fly that looked more butchered by me than tied by a human. I was so beaten I put this fly on in a desperation, made two casts, and felt a big tug. I was so excited that I couldn't remember what I was supposed to do next.

Needless to say, I lost that fish. But that day I caught two beautiful trout and lost numerous others. I was excited that fish took the first wet fly that I had ever attempted to tie, not to mention trout from a stream that was tough for rookies to fish. It was this day that pushed me into the world of wet flies. The rest is history.

The Gold-Ribbed Hare's Ear wet fly as I have seen it in various pattern books is tied in numerous versions, for example in *Essential Trout Flies*, by Dave Hughes, *The American Fly-Tying Manual*, by David Hughes, *Flies: The Best One Thousand*, by Randall Scott Stetzer, and of course, *Trout*, by Ray Bergman. I have also seen this pattern tied with black wings and a tail of Hungarian partridge. As a new tyer, I found it to be a challenge to see which pattern worked best and caught the most trout. The pattern I found to be the best was from *Flies: The Best One Thousand*. I cannot tell you how many trout I have caught throughout New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania on this version. This fly is simple, yet effective, and has a beauty all its own. Browns, brookies, and rainbows have all been fooled by this simple pattern. With all the wet-fly patterns that I fish, I find myself always going back to my old reliable tie.

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



Gold-Ribbed Hare's Ear Wet Fly

Hook: Mustad 3906, size 10 to 12

Tail: Brown hackle, about 9 to 12 segments

Rib: Size 16 gold Mylar tinsel

Body: Natural hare's ear dubbing with a few guard hairs

Wing: Slate (natural mallard wing quills, both left and right)

Beard: Hare's Ear dubbing, picked out with a dubbing teaser



Gold-Ribbed Hare's Ear Wet Fly
(Recognize the jaws of the vise? It's Andy's original Thompson Model A)

Fly Flies

By Mike Hogue



At this year's Catskill Fly Tyers Guild Rendezvous, I demonstrated a fly that was of interest to several people who attended the show. A version of the article that follows was published in *The Flydresser*, the British Fly Dresser's Guild magazine, with photos by UK photographer Terry Griffiths.

We all tie flies, but how often have you tied a *fly* fly—other than a midge pattern, that is? On a recent fishing trip in upstate New York, I was reminded of just how obnoxious flies are, not just little no-see-ums, but bigger and more aggressive examples of the order Diptera—in this case, deerflies. I swatted and killed what felt like a million of those nasty, bad-attitude bugs. The bugs made me think of one of my patterns that was published in the Federation of Fly Fishers *Fly Pattern Encyclopedia*, compiled by Al and Gretchen Beatty. I wrote part of what follows for a magazine article and have also included this material in a book I am working on called *High-Tech Flies: A Wired Fly Tyer's Look at Fly Tying*. This pattern is a dead ringer for deerflies, which is just the ticket to use on hot days. I have used this pattern to catch warmwater panfish and bass, and as well as all kinds of trout.

One of oldest British Flies is the Bluebottle, which is a fly designed to imitate houseflies. Originally, the Bottle flies were tied as wet flies and often used chenille or floss. They were tied quite large by today's standards. I developed a new pattern using this idea to replace the older, larger pattern.

My interest in the Bottle flies developed while I was fishing Trout Run Creek, located in southeastern Minnesota, with my wife. This stream is a rich limestone spring-creek filled with loads of wild brown trout. It about forty-five minutes from the Mayo Clinics in Rochester, Minnesota, and about two and a half hours from the Twin Cities, Minneapolis and Saint Paul. From our home in Central Iowa, it was about a three-hour drive. This creek is part of the so-called Driftless Region, the only part of northern North America consistently missed by the glaciers of the Ice Ages, an area of limestone bluffs that borders the states of Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin in the upper Mississippi region. Many people travel to this area to see the scenic hills, ride bikes, fish, hunt, and camp. The entire town of Lanesboro where we used to camp is considered a historic district and it included in the U.S. National Directory of Historic Places. The town was also rated as one of the Top 10 Outdoor Communities in the United States by *Sports Illustrated* magazine. It's not exactly Montana, but still pretty nice.

Laura and I were out on the river fishing, and it was a pleasant early spring day, very sunny and warm. The stretch we were fishing is in a deep valley and is just loaded with wild trout. Laura started fishing, and then it happened: She got drilled by a deerfly, and another, and some more. She finally got so aggravated by them that she had to pack up and move. I kept fishing and swatting them and must have smashed a bunch of them. A few of the dead ones landed on the stream and floated downstream. I watched in amazement as fish moved out of the grass on the side of the stream, reached over, and ate them all. For fun, I sat there and smacked a few more of the deerflies, then tossed them in to watch the trout move and gobble each one. I began thinking that I had never seen a deerfly dry fly.

When I got home, I started looking through all my pattern books to find a similar fly pattern and came across some wet flies in some British and Scottish books. After a bit of experimentation, I updated these, changed the design to a dry fly, and then made a fat head of herl to resemble the head and eyes of housefly. I called it Mike's Holographic Bottle Dry.

When I tied up a bunch of these, I put them in my box in anticipation of my next trip. It wasn't long before I had a chance to use them. On my next trout outing, I came across a deer that had passed away by the stream. The deer was getting a bit funky, so there was a pretty big swarm of flies. I sat and watched as some of the flies bounced around and landed near the stream. Every once in a while, a brown would stick its head out and grab one. That happened several times, so I figured it was time to start fishing.

I tied on the fly fly, made a few drifts—and nothing happened. I cast again a bit tighter to the bank. A brown reached his head over, nipped the fly, and clamped down hard. I had him. I knew these patterns would work and have since kept a set of them in my box just in case I come across some more deerflies, horseflies, or houseflies on my outings.



Mike's Holographic Bottle Dry

Hook: Dry-fly hook, size 12 to 16

Thread: 6/0 black

Body: Blue or green holographic Flashabou

Hackle: Black, palmered

Wing: Dun CDC over cream or gray Antron

Head: Ostrich or peacock herl dyed green, blue, or black

- 1) Begin by running a thread base along the hook shank. This keeps materials from slipping and makes the tinsel body smoother.
- 2) Tie in two strands of blue holographic Flashabou. Tie in the hackle. The hackle size should be roughly the gap of the hook. I undersized the hackle so that the fly will float better.
- 3) Wrap the Flashabou toward the eye, leaving three eye lengths open. Tie off.
- 4) Wrap the hackle in even wraps and tie off.
- 5) Clip a small notch out of the top of the hackle. This will allow the wing to sit flat.
- 6) Tie in the Antron and clip the tag off so that the total length of the wing equals the length of the hook shank. Tie in the CDC flat on top of the Antron. Clip the tag ends off.
- 7) Wrap a head with ostrich or peacock herl and whip finish.

Fishing Notes

This is an attractor-type pattern that can be used when there isn't a hatch. But you will know if deerflies are out, because they love to swarm and drill the back of your neck. If you can stand sharing the woods with these critters, I think you will be surprised how well these imitations will work, if you give them a chance. Always be on the lookout for dead bodies of various things that will attract flies near the stream. It sounds gross, but fish do eat these bugs, and they are quite common. You don't even have to learn Latin to fish this hatch. These bugs are black, blue, or green and come in only about three sizes. Tie some bigger ones if you can't see dries very well. These do work, and they must imitate a good food source, since this is a very traditional, old pattern.



ZZZZZT!

Obituaries

Arthur Michael DeWitt, Jr., a sixty-year resident of Walker Valley and Otisville, died April 26, 2007, in Middletown NY. He was 75. He was born in Port Chester, NY, on November 2, 1931. He owned and operated a tree service and Art's Bait Shop in Otisville. He was an expert fly tyer. He is survived by brothers, sisters, nieces, and nephews.

Art was a member of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild several years ago and did a program for us on tying deer-hair flies. They were all colors and big. At one time, he sent a large box of bass bugs, probably 200, to be shown at a guild meeting.

Bill Leuszler writes: "One thing I can say for those who saw Art tie his bass bugs at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center was that for the rest of their lives, it was something they never forgot. When I spoke with him by telephone (he always called on holidays to wish me well), he always asked about the guild, saying that he wished he could make it to the meetings. I went a couple of times to visit him at his house. He showed me large plywood boards full of unique bass bugs, tied with store-bought sewing thread and deer hair. He always said he caught fish with them. He loved showing them and really got a kick showing them to a fellow fly tyer. He was a real character."

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*. <<<<<<<

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

are welcome at the editor's discretion. Without the articles, information, for-sale or want ads, cartoons, newsworthy information, and whatever else is interesting and fun that members submit, this newsletter simply becomes a meeting announcement. Send submissions to Bud Bynack, BBynack@cs.com or 69 Bronxville Road, Apt. 4G, Bronxville, NY, 10708, (914) 961-3521.