

Catskill Fly Tyers Guild

Vol. 1, No. 2, March, 1998

MEETING NOTICE

March 21st, 1 PM, Rockland House, Roscoe

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Comments, articles, etc. are welcome, encouraged & needed. Send to: Allan Podell, 100 Glen Ave., Elmira, NY 14905 or if you prefer, e-mail address: apodell@stny.Lrun.com

A WILLOWEEMOC BONANZA - Al Himmel

In June of 1995, I drove upstream from Livingston Manor and parked at the first pull off. Entering the stream at that point, I fished upstream and caught several stocked trout. Not being a snob about stocked fish, it was easy for me to take trout without moving from the easy access, however I had the good fortune to move on upstream, despite the fact that no fish were taken after one hundred yards or so from the original spot. I knew this to be typical of stocked fish. Continuing on upstream to an old rip-rap deflector, my hair winged coachman induced a super 14 inch trout to take the fly. Why super you ask? Because it was so beautifully colored and fat, and the tussle to keep him from returning to his lair lasted a good five minutes or so (well it seemed like five). With this initial encouragement, I continued upstream for another mile to the last old bank deflector, while catching and releasing a dozen or more fish, including two rainbows and several brookies, in addition to the more numerous browns. It was at the last deflector that my journey was rewarded with the most amazing sight. A pod of shad, all of the two and three pound variety, hung in a pool at the end of the deflector. For two hours I tried to get them to take a fly, but without any split shot or weighted flies my fortunes were doomed to failure. I finally snagged one with a bead head caddis, only to have him take off like a rocket and leave me without a beadhead or a prayer. As Doug said, "I shall return".

Update: During subsequent trips to the same area, '96 &

'97 produced two distinctly different aspects of trout fishing. The reason I make this sojourn is that I have a morning to kill before tying at the CFFC, I '96 I fished all the way to the flat rock shaded area without a rise or any indication that fish were present. At the tree stump bend a superb sixteen inch rainbow trout rose from the heavy water at the head of the pool. Of course it took me by surprise and only the luck of the Irish made it possible to land, photograph and release such a beautiful fish. Unbelievably on the next cast a clone rose to the hairwinged coachman (a Wulff with calf tail wings), and provided the end of the days activity, despite an additional two hours of fishing upstream.

During '97 the fishing was as good as it gets with many stocked and small browns, in addition to an occasional brookie. Which do you prefer? Big uns or lots of em?

BAMBOO RODS - Dick Smith

As a collector and fisher of bamboo rods, I've been noticing more and more anglers using them on the stream the past few seasons. Not the short (6'-7') high grade, (Gillum, Garrison, Payne, etc.) so-called "collector" rods, but rather the full length (8'-9 1/2') light line rods by many different makers, some long gone and some still with us.

Classic rods by H.L. Leonard, F.E. Thomas, the Edwards family can be had in the 8 1/2'-9' lengths for a 4, 5 or 6 weight line, for about the price of a quality graphite rod. Rods by Heddon, Philipson & Granger have a serious following and can usually be found for a little less money.

Current rod companies Winston, Thomas & Thomas, Orvis, etc. and individual rod makers Walt Carpenter, John Gallas, Jon Parker to name a few can supply you with a brand new, beautiful creation for \$1,000 - \$2,000. All of these rods have several things in common, the most important of which is the action of the rod itself. If you fish graphite, any bamboo rod you pick up will feel soft and slow, and in some cases they are. A half hour of lawn casting will usually slow your stroke down enough to let you appreciate the smooth, suppleness of bamboo.

These rods flex with 10' of line out or 40', and when you get the feel of them, 70'+ casts are possible, although rarely needed. Think about covering a piece of your favorite trout water. A 40 or 50' cast to a rising fish is a pretty long shot, and most of the time we are probably fishing closer. This is the situation where bamboo has no equal. Instead of whipping 10' of line back and forth at high speed (because it's not fully loading the rod) a bamboo rod allows you to slow down, let the rod do the work and deliver a fly as delicately as if you had dropped it on the water by hand. Even at range, these rods flex fully and load evenly, and are so pleasant to cast.

(cont., pg 2)

Bamboo Rods, cont.)

There is also an individuality about bamboo. A friend-fellow collector about 20 years ago, went to the Leonard Shop in Central Valley to look for a Model 37 Leonard. There were seven or eight new ones in stock and we examined, flexed and cast each one. Although they all cast a 4 line beautifully, there were subtle differences in every one of those rods. One was not better than the other, just different. Some were a little faster, some a little slower. That's one of the most fascinating facts about bamboo, each one is an individual creation.

There is also something about varnished wood that I really like. 'Pride of ownership' is a phrase that's been associated with bamboo rods for years and there really is something to it. At the end of the season, I go over the rods I've used and check them for chips, frayed windings, etc. and it's a labor of love. Bamboo rods really are works of art.

A new book on the subject is out and it is excellent, Fishing Bamboo by John Gierach. If any of the Guild members are interested in trying a bamboo rod, feel free to call me at (607) 498-6024. Good fishing...

LETTERS OR COMMENTS RECEIVED

From Howard Strathie: My latest pet peeve (and they say the older you get the more quickly irritated you become) is,....large arbor reels!

It is the outside diameter of the line on the spool that creates and limits the amount of line retrieved with a single crank, not the damn arbor. As a matter of fact Abel sells both large and regular arbor reels with interchangeable spools. Same reel, less capacity. What you do give up with a large arbor reel is space for backing. Why not create a, so-called, large arbor reel yourself with what anglers have used for years...backing? And if you try to use the "weight" argument listen up. When I was a little shaver, back in the 50's, some reels came complete with cork arbors in case you did not need a lot of backing. A quarters worth of cork will do the same for you in the '90's. Mark my words, some one with a \$700 large arbor reel will run out of backing on a bluefish or a salmon and wish to God he had his old Medalist with 200 yards of Micron back! Nuff said!

Howard adds that Al Brewster had colon surgery earlier this new year and would probably appreciate hearing from acquaintances. 131 Lietrim Circle, Centerville, MASS. 02632 Phone number: (508) 428-9298.

Lowell Branham, Copy Editor for the News-Sentinal in Knoxville, Tenn (EDITORIAL - no date available)

"P.T. Bamum would have loved a lot of modern-day fly fishermen. The reason is because fly fishermen have to rank as some of the most freewheeling conspicuous consumers ever to come down the pike. In other words, just the kind of gullible suckers that would have warmed old P..T.'s heart.

If I were peddling Florida swamp land or stock in non-existent diamond mines, I'd top my prospect roster with the membership rolls of T,U, and the F.F.F. and the subscription lists for "Fly Fisherman" and "Fly Fishing" magazines. Why? Because anyone who would pay the kind of prices that a great many modern-day fly fishermen routinely shell

out for the stuff they go fishing with would have to provide rich pickings for even a bumbling scam artist. Not only do fly fishermen pay through the nose for their gear, they seem to derive a certain masochistic pleasure from being taken to the cleaners. Instead of feeling ashamed of the ridiculously inflated prices they pay, they actually boast about them." Mr. Branham specifically describes what he means and ends his commentary with the following:

"What makes fly fishing gear so expensive? I'm sure the folks who make it and sell it could provide a whole bunch of long winded explanations. But the answer is simple. Fly fishing gear is so expensive because so many fly fishermen have no better sense than to pay outrageous prices. And as long as fly fishermen continue to pay, that's the way it'll stay".

EDITORIAL - A. Podell

From Fly Tackle Dealer magazine: "If, for instance the customer is buying or already has a \$500 rod, but is crying about the price of reels, don't start him out with low end reels. Show him a reel equivalent in quality to the rod. Point out", as a representative for a renown fly shop in California says, "***There's something sacrilegious about putting a \$100 reel on a \$500 rod***". How does that grab you?

Last months editorial piece was about how some manufactureres go about setting their market strategies to include defining for us and telling us what fly fishing/tying equipment we ***must have*** in order for us to enjoy ourselves. I don't want this column to read like a broken record, but the comments above are examples of the the type of products they push; the arrogance of most shops; their disregard of our needs and belief that we are an ignorant group of customers. In general, manufacturers and shops treat us with disrespect, arrogance and contempt! They overprice products and constantly hand us a lot of bull to exploit what they offer. And since when does price necessarily reflect quality as cited in the quotation above? Do yourself a favor, if you feel you're being exploited or given a hard sell, walk out of the shop but make sure the owner/manager knows why. Go to a shop where you're listened to, your needs are understood, you're treated with respect, your business is earned as well as appreciated!

Quite the opposite, Fly Rod & Reel magazine gave one of its annual Kudo awards to the Thompson model 'A' vise. Now, here's a product that's simple, functional, has been around for decades, is guaranteed for life, is probably used by more fly tyers than any other vise, is often imitated and is inexpensive. I've had mine for 30+ yrs. and use it more than my Regal or Renzetti). I congratulate FR&R for bucking the trend stated above. **YOUR OPINION ???**

COMPARING SOME MAGAZINES - A. Podell

You do some pretty strange things when cabin fever sets in. That's the only excuse I have for comparing the quantity of text information in the 4 magazines listed. Maybe I just wanted to see how much actual information was in these magazines versus advertisements and/or dead space. Regardless, I thought I'd share the results with you. Defining the two(2) choices: cont., pg 3)

Comparing Magazines, cont.)

1. **TEXT** = written information, pictures or illustrations that support the premise of the article or report. The Front Cover and the Table of Contents page was considered TEXT in each magazine. The back cover of Fly Tyer = TEXT too.

2. **NON-TEXT** = advertisements, product information announcements from companies, pictures that simply take up space and empty space.

Magazine	Pages of:	Text	Non-Text	Total
FLY TYER (Winter, 97)		56.1	27.9	84
FLY FISHERMAN (12/97)		53.4	62.6	116
AMER. ANGLER (7/97)		54.8	45.2	100
FLY FISHING GUIDE (2/98)		24.5	43.5	68

My only comment is that both Fly Tyer & Amer. Angler use larger print and leave a little more space between columns.

This short report is not intended to reflect the topics or quality of the contents of each of these individual magazines or others that I did not review.

NOTES FROM THE NEVERSINK, WET FLIES (Pt, 1) ... by Bill Leuszler

Each year before a fishing season begins I set out a number of goals for myself. Last year, in 1997, two of my goals were: 1. To fish the lower Neversink more, 2. To identify successful wet fly patterns. After some significant failures, and some rather surprising successes I identified 3 wet fly patterns which I will continue to use in the coming years.

The first pattern that proved successful was the Greenwell's Glory. Although it is not a Catskill pattern I actually stumbled on to it in Rube Cross's book The Complete Fly Tier (Freshet Press, 1971). In this book he makes note of certain favorite flies of people he knew. "Elizabeth Grieg, the Scotch lass who came across the Atlantic several years ago with a wealth of fishing and fly-tying knowledge under her curly locks, sticks to the Greenwell's Glory and has been high rod angler for the day many times on some of the streams."

With this type of announcement I figured I would have to give this pattern a try. From the start it was a consistent fish taker. The pattern I used is described below. It is interesting to note that the British pattern itself, which is thought to have originated in the 1800's called for heavily waxed yellow silk thread for the body. The olive floss is thought to be similar in color to the yellow thread once that thread got wet.

From the start this pattern was consistently successful. I just had to figure out why. After a month's consideration I concluded that it is being taken for a caddis emerger. One of my main reasons for this belief beyond simply the colors in the pattern is that it would usually be taken on the retrieve, more often than on a dead drift. This wet fly is now a must for my trips to the lower Neversink.

Hook: #12, 3906 or equivalent

Thread : Primrose

Body: Light olive floss, with yellowish cast

Rib: Gold wire

Hackle: cochy-bondhu

Wing: Slate mallard quill

(Part 2, along with 2 more patterns in the next issue)

NATURE'S WAY ... by Floyd Franke

Two years ago I had the opportunity to meet and later spend an evening with a younger man who, I was told, was an avid fisherman and hunter. He was a most gracious host, taking the time to guide me through his trophy room and den. There I saw enough sporting equipment to outfit a dozen people. A grandiose collection of crossbows (some with, some without scopes) guns, rifles, rods, reels ... and on and on. I was captivated by a collection of flies he stored in some 30 or so Perrine fly boxes, each labeled with identifying latin and common names of their contents. None of these flies had ever been used. They were, I was told, to serve as "models" in the event my host ever decided to learn to tie flies.

But I saw more than equipment that night. I saw a man obsessed with equipment. A fisherman whose only claim to fishing expertise was that he knew the best charter boat captains and guides and praise be, he had already booked them for the next year. By the end of the evening I was feeling empty inside, a sense of panic dogged me.

I talked about my visit with my friends and told them of the emptiness I had felt. Why had I felt this way? What happened in those brief hours that made me want to run into the night to seek the solace of nature's embrace? Gradually I have come to better understand my feelings

My earliest fishing experience that I can remember was when I was seven. My family had moved into a cottage along the Susquehanna River. The smells of the river on an early summer's still titillate my senses. As does the magnificent splendor of the deer woods after the first heavy snow. For forty odd years now I have been. My internal clock keeps pace with the changes within the seasons. I have lived and grown in nature's womb and have come to regard all fisherman and hunters as my brother, kindred spirits in nature's ways. And so I had reached out to embrace my new friend about whom I have spoken of earlier. Unfortunately his gospel was not of nature but in the equipment he had accumulated.

The young man's salvation it seems was placed in the ability of the prophets of technology to compensate for his own inadequacies, physical and otherwise. He studied his stacks of catalogs and magazines so that he might better understand the language and gospel of his kind .. hoop strength, PSI, high modules, compensated sink rate and so on. But regardless of how diligent his studies he is doomed. His quest for the ultimate technology can only lead to boredom and fiscal absurdity. But what about our sport, can it survive the onslaught of technology and media hype and those who preach its gospel?

Imagine if you can what fishing would be like if the number of fish caught, how many others saw you catch them, and the cost of the equipment used became the only important ingredients of our sport. Imagine if you can, fishing without noticing and appreciating the smell of the morning mist or the beauty of a sunset, the colors of a wild trout, the pressure of the water against your waders or the splashing rise of trout chasing caddis flies.

Thousands of people are coming into our (Cont., pg. 4)

(Nature's Way, cont.)

ranks annually. They only know fishing through their catalogs, videos and commercials. It becomes incumbent upon us therefore to share our knowledge: our experience, vision and wisdom of nature's ways. We must work to keep nature in the fishing experience. Not only for ourselves but for future generations as well.

PRESENTATION BY DAVE CATIZONE at Jan. meeting

Our monthly notice usually gives a brief description of what took place at the previous meeting. What will probably appear when you get your Feb. notice, reviewing the Jan. meeting, is that Dave Calizone gave a talk on a "History of Fly Fishing/Fly Tying in the Catskills". While that fact is true, it does not come close to reflecting the depth and breadth of his presentation, the amount of investigation he did, the quality of the presentation or the interest it raised. As difficult as it was, Dave restrained himself from deviating too much off what he had prepared and this certainly was not easy given the interest in the topics. "But that's another story", was a phrase Dave had to use on more than a couple of occasions.

The presentation was excellent. It gave us an angling history of a special place that we've come to know as the Catskills. I once took a boy scout troop to the Beaverkill for a fishing expedition. Prior to the trip I tried to instill in the boys some history, significance of the area, the legacy of where they were fishing and some of the people who were part of that legacy.

Dave's review helped me appreciate what I had tried to instill in these youngsters even more. I know one day, early this season, I'll be on some Catskill stream fishing by myself. I'll hear the water, the wind and perhaps some animals in the brush. I'll smell the early season flowers and whatever else the wind carries. I'll see the buds on the trees, maybe a hatch of duns or a spinner fall. Maybe an animal will come to the stream for a drink. In all probability I'll do the same. I might round a bend and if I'm lucky to have a section of stream to myself all my senses will be heightened by the sounds, sights, smells and feelings of everything around me. And these streams do have their ghosts. I always, regardless of how silly this sounds, feel that I'm casting my flies where some of the 'legends' cast theirs as well.

As Dave noted and said, they've left their legacy to us and now it's payback time. It's our responsibility to cherish, preserve and transfer this heralded tradition to the next generation of Catskill fly fishers and fly tyers.

Dave, on behalf of everyone who attended the Jan. meeting, thanks for the presentation and I hope you'll consider expanding on some of the targeted areas of interest that you expressed. A.P.

A SERIES OF ARTICLES TO BEGIN: ... A. Podell

One reality of putting together a newsletter is getting information to print. Hopefully members will begin to submit more articles, letters, comments, etc. to fill what otherwise could be empty space. In the meantime you will see whatever is submitted plus, out of necessity, some things

I'll be writing. There'll be a series of articles reminiscing my upbringing and experiences in the area of the Catskills that I knew in the '50's, how it has progressed(?) through the next 2-1/2 decades and the changes I've seen. These articles will lean more to the flavor of the Catskills and my so-called 'development' as a fly fisher/flytyer. Don't expect to learn any preciously held secret tips, special tying techniques, or to find that secret location where the trout are "as big as your arm". I really hope these articles interest you. They may even jog some of your own memories and your own experiences. If so, jot them down, send them in and share them with us.

Answers to last months puzzle

ERROR: The scrambled letters in #2 contained 2 T's and 1 L. It should have been the opposite. The final answer wasn't effected. I apologize for any confusion caused!

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Blue winged olive | 6. Bumblepuppy |
| 2. Herman Christian | 7. Ringneck Pheasant |
| 3. March Brown | 8. Mylar |
| 4. Edward Hewitt | 9. Red Quill |
| 5. Hendrickson | 10. Coffin Fly |

UONESRRSEBC = REUBEN CROSS

OK. Who was able to unscrambled each group of letters and solve the final puzzle? I'm sure many of you did but I only received written responses from:
Roger Menard & William Yeomans,

THE EYES HAVE IT... By Floyd Franke

The frustration experienced when tying on a fly in the failing light of evening serves as a harbinger of thing to come. As a fly fisher who has seen 50 plus opening days, I am immediately drawn toward any aid which promises to keep me fishing well into the millennium despite my advancing years and declining senses.

A new hook from the creative mind of William Goetz promises to benefit any fly fisher who faces the daunting task of tying on a fly under conditions which render the eye of the hook difficult or impossible to see. This new hook, dubbed "Quick Eye", is being manufactured by Tiemco and carries the letter "Z" in the model designation.

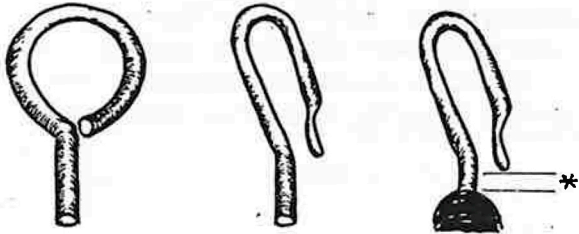
The distinctive feature of the Quick Eye hook lies in the shape of the eye which at first glance appears to be poorly formed. A noticeable gap can be seen where the end of the eye meets the hook shank. It is, however, this very gap that makes it possible for you to tie this hook onto your leader as easy as tying a loop (see drawing).

The fly dresser will find the new Quick Eye hook takes a little getting used to. It is, for example, very easy to close the gap between hook shank and eye with thread. Although this is recommended practice when using a traditional style hook, closing the eye of the Quick Eye hook renders it ineffective. It is important, therefore, to allow some bare shank to show just forward of the finished head (see drawing).
(cont., pg. 5)

(The Eyes Have It, cont)

Once the head space which includes the little bit of exposed shank has been established, body length and wing/hackle tie in points need to be adjusted proportionately in order to accommodate the now shorter than usual shank length. These proportions are very similar to tying a size 14 on a size 12 hook.

When all is said and done, using the Quick Eye hook poses only temporary problems for the fly tier. This is a very small price to pay for more fishing time at the end of the day or in the fading light of advancing years.



STANDARD

NEW "Z"

* REQUIRED
EXPOSED
SHANK

THE BLACK WOODCHUCK... By Phil Chase

Some of my most memorable evenings were spent at Harry Darbee's. In the early '60's I got carried away tying different style nymphs. Back in those days written instruction was hard to find on nymphs and when I saw a woven hardback nymph at Harry's I asked if he could tell me how it was tied.

Harry, with a gleam in his eye, said, "Let's take it apart and find out." I believe the price was \$.50 and a pattern Harry wouldn't tie and I was aghast at the thought that he would destroy such a beautiful and expensive creation. Harry dissected the fly (the remains of which I have today) and we agreed that perhaps 3 or 4 strands of 4x like leader material was the weaving material. Harry had given me a lesson as to how most of the Catskill patterns were duplicated by tyers at one time.

During the next few years after tying hundreds of woven bodied nymphs, primarily with nylon floss, I realized that suggestive patterns were as good if not better than realistic ones.

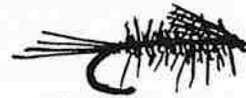
Fred Mason, with whom I grew up, was an outstanding but highly secretive nymph fisherman. His approach was simple: a light colored (yellow) nymph and a dark (usually dubbed beaver) nymph as a dropper. Which ever produced he switched to that pattern.

I mentioned beaver to Harry and again his eyes lit up and he stated, "Try this. It should be excellent dubbing for nymphs." He handed me a 2 x 2 inch patch of natural black fur. "What is it, Harry?" I excitedly asked. "Black woodchuck" he chuckled.

I trimmed the under fur and guard hairs off for the proper size of 10 and 12 wet fly hooks. Few people used a loop in those days of dubbing. The thread was simply waxed, looped and spun by a wire hook binding both the under fur

and guard hairs into today's familiar buggy yarn. Fred's nymphs were usually sparse and hackle palmered through the beaver and finished with a very short 'wing' of turkey.

I simplified the Black Woodchuck with sparse guard hairs for a tail, dubbed woodchuck body to the eye and a clump of wood duck laid back as a wet fly wing but only 1/2 the body length. The fly was deadly both locally and in the northern Vermont rivers. A waste of wood duck? Not when it's productive. The largest trout I ever hooked was on a size 6 Black Woodchuck at Callicoon on the Delaware. His tail looked 8 inches wide after a 20 minute fight and on his last desperate run in shallow, rocky water I swore off dropper flies.



Harry always nursed out the patches of black woodchuck to me. It was part of the fun we had. I still carry the pattern but then in the early '70's the damn Woolly Bugger came out of Pennsylvania and the woodchuck saw his shadow. But if you happen to see a black woodchuck

NEWS & NEWSWORTHY

1. There will be a dinner at the Rockland House Mar. 31st for the opening day of trout season. Expect more information to follow at meetings or other communications.
2. The CFTG will have a table at the T.G. Flyfishers show in Mahwah, NJ, on 3/14.
3. Guild patches are available - members \$2.00 for the first one and \$3.00 for additional. Non-members \$5.00. Guild pins are \$10 each or 2 for \$15. We also have iron on decals at \$5 (with instructions).
4. Members, please check your mailing label. The date on it indicates when your membership expires. Several members have not renewed because they probably are not aware of their membership expiration date. Check...!

5. NOTICE ABOUT The Meeting on March 21:
Ralph Graves says, "Bring your eyes, ears, pad & pen for techniques." Bring fly tying tools & materials like: golden pheasant tippets, flex cement, large hen hackle, flank feathers, duck quills, mallard, wood duck, etc., thread, floss, tinsel & hooks. Ralph will show you what you don't know!

Information about Ads per issue:

1. Cost for 5 lines, or any part thereof, is \$1.00
2. Cost for placing a business card ad is \$3.00
3. Please attach a check, made out to the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild, to your ad and send both to Allan Podell.

SEND for free list of used books on fly tying and fishing. Can send wish list to: Bill Leuszler, PO Box 79, Wurtsboro, NY 12790 (DBA Bashakill Books)