
The Newsletter of the Columbia-Greene Rip Van Winkle Chapter #569 of Trout Unlimited

TU...TO CONSERVE, PROTECT & RESTORE NORTH AMERICA'S COLD WATER FISHERIES & THEIR WATERSHEDS

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

ATTENTION MEMBERS AND FRIENDS: EVALUATE DECEMBER'S MEETING PLACE

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday December 21, 2004 at 7:30 p.m., at the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Greene County Building in Cairo, not at O'Brien's Restaurant. The membership has decided to look at other places to gather. We will be attempting to evaluate the Cairo facility to see if it fulfills our needs for meetings as well as other activities, such as the fly tying and fly fishing courses given by our chapter. If you have never been to one of our meetings, or if you attend occasionally, or if you are a regular, now will be a good time to come and assist the chapter in making a decision on this particular location. We expect to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of each place. If, for example you do not attend due to a dislike for having meetings in a facility that serves alcoholic beverages, this will give you an opportunity to see whether or not this meeting place would meet your standards. There will be lots of things to think about in making this decision and your participation and opinions will be appreciated.

Dick

DIRECTIONS TO THE CCE BUILDING: Go from four-lane Route 23 to the Cairo exit at the McDonald's (Route 32). Make a right at the next light onto Main St (Route 23B). Continue on Main St. about 3/4 mile west to the next light (a Mobil station is on the left, Bank of America on the right) and make a left on Mountain Avenue (County Route 24). Go up the hill about 1/10 mile and make the next right at the sign that says "Angelo Canna Town Park." Go down the hill. The brick CCE Building is straight ahead. Proceed around the building to the back. Enter at one of the back entrances.

Dave Griffin

La ROCCA READS ANOTHER AUTHOR'S "FISH TALES" AND ENTERTAINS OUR GROUP

John La Rocca's stories have entertained us in the pages of this newsletter for some time now, so it was a special treat when he brought books by *his* favorite authors to the chapter's November meeting. John read selections from Harry Middleton's, "The Earth is Enough." Especially enjoyable was his hilarious reading of the story about a young lad who spends a fly-fishing summer in a cabin in the Ozarks with two bachelor uncles. "Fly fishing," the old anglers tell him

with a gleam in their eyes, "will leave you broke, scandalous and pitied by the rest of polite society."

Thank you, John, for a great evening!

Dave Griffin

EVERETT NACK'S LEGACY AND WORK LIVE ON!

As most of you already know, on August 9, 2004 we lost Ev as a result of an automobile accident. At our February TU meeting he gave us a very informative and entertaining presentation about the Hudson River. One of the topics Ev discussed was the once healthy population of sturgeon in the river. He also explained how he and his sons were involved in a project to net sturgeon to transport to the Susquehanna River in PA. This stocking took place more than a decade or two ago. More recently, as the health of the Hudson River drastically declined so did the sturgeon.

On October 1, 2004 Governor Pataki participated in the release of about 110 Atlantic Sturgeon from the US Fish and Wildlife Service Hatchery in Lamar, PA, some as large as four feet in length. They are believed to be offspring of sturgeon collected by Everett Nack from the Hudson River many years ago. Gov. Pataki said the release "illustrates the tremendous progress we've made restoring the health of the river. The Register-Star stated "The plan...identifies priority actions designed to improve water quality; clean-up toxic contaminants; restore fisheries; protect open space and scenery and improve public access to the river."

Ev was determined to make people aware the river was being polluted and decreasing the fish population. I'm sure he would have been very happy to learn of the return of the sturgeon to the Hudson River...the sturgeon he worked so hard to help.

Hank

FROM THE EDITORS: THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

...is a quote from Everett Nack's grandson, taken from

Our Town, Claverack Community Quarterly, Fall 2004, with permission:

People call him an environmentalist, even a legend in his own time.

For me, the only role that mattered was grandfather. He always had time to be my granddad.

MICHAEL NACK

THE CURRENT ON"LINE"

IF YOU RECEIVED THIS NEWSLETTER BY MAIL AND HAVE AN EMAIL ADDRESS PLEASE CONTACT ONE OF THE CO-EDITORS SO OUR TU CHAPTER CAN SAVE MONEY ON MAILINGS.

Also, if anyone doesn't want to receive the newsletter any longer please notify one of us:
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La ROCCA'S CORNER – “Fish Tails & Fish Tales”

I first wrote about fishing more than ten years ago and for Christmas presented my brothers and selected friends with copies of a small volume of anecdotes which I titled “Trout Remembered.” Some of those stories featured the only trout native to our area, the brook trout. Here are a few more memories of and reflections on this wonderful old fish.

***Salvelinus fontinalis*...BUT WHAT'S IN A NAME?**

If you read anything about brook trout you are likely to find in the opening paragraph of the piece a sentence that begins something like, “Actually, the brook trout is not a trout at all...”, so why should I break with tradition or not tell it like it is? Our esteemed brook trout is actually a char. “So what?” I say, and happily include this char in my trout fishing world as nearly all of us do. It is fun to understand...or try to understand...the genetic differences between the char and “true” trout and salmon, but even more fun, I think to seek and catch them just like the browns and rainbows most of us see more frequently. Another way that the brook trout is a little different is that, perhaps because of their ancient lineage, they are known by many names: brookie, native, squaretail, speckled, eastern brook trout, Aurora trout, mountain trout, salter, coaster, New York char, and on and on. One authoritative book I've read actually listed 43 names by which the brook trout is known! By whatever name, however, I am willing to bet that these “trout” share a place in many of the journals - if not written, then mental - that we trout fishers often keep; they do in mine.

My journal entries go way back. I've written about the little brook trout that my brothers and I accidentally squashed in a pool-building endeavor in a small stream decades ago in Bear Mountain Park. I've often recounted the story of a big – 16 inch or so – brookie that brother Paul (with help from mom) handlined up onto a dirt lane bridge somewhere in New Jersey when some of our earliest fishing tackle malfunctioned. I remember also a scarred old stocked but holdover brook trout that brother Steve snaked out of the “beech tree on the bend pool” on our first home water, the Hackensack River. As teenagers the three of us caught many brookies, stream-bred natives, in a little rill in Sussex County, New Jersey that we knew as “the glen”. The spot was a small but beautiful plunge pool on a tiny creek that ran through a culvert in front of Fred Notaro's home in Beemerville. Fred was a beloved early outdoor mentor to the La Rocca boys, happily sharing effective techniques and his secret spots.

Fred also took us fishing for lake trout on Canoe Lake, seventy miles north of the border in Canada. On one of those trips he told us about Horseshoe Pond in a wooded area adjacent to the main lake and named for its shape which featured a set of steep cliffs that made up the center of the horseshoe. One day we explored, found the pond, and fished it. We caught nothing, but on the way out we met a rowdy group of French Canadians. They spoke no English but spoke loudly; we heard them long before we met them on the trail. When we did meet we inquired with the universal, “How did you do?” A fellow with a wicker creel responded without hesitation by displaying the most beautifully colored 18 to 20 inch brook trout that I had ever

seen. After some head nodding, huge smiles and a bit of chin scratching, the same gent said “Squaretail!” He did not have to tell us.

Many, many years later, after we moved to Medusa, I began to fish a string of Adirondack ponds with a wonderful group of local friends. We’d catch lake trout and splake, a brook trout-lake trout hybrid, but our main quarry was the brook trout in a constellation of 6 or 8 small ponds into which we would carry and then launch our Sportspal canoes. The trout were all stocked since most of the ponds had been “reclaimed” (poisoned to rid them of “undesirable” species that over the years had been introduced – inadvertently or on purpose – into these waters). Most of the brookies we caught were 9 to 11 inches long; every once in a while a bigger fish would come in. Then on one autumn expedition a pair of the guys found a pod of spawning brook trout, and a couple of 18-inchers came to the net. A year or so after that, in a tiny pond with no name on the topo map, I hooked and landed a 19-inch, 3 pound 15 ounce brookie. The fish was just shy of the mythical 4 pound brook trout that our crew had begun to talk about, and is the only fish I’ve ever had mounted. That was before the “catch and release” ethic had taken hold with me. I am not sure what I would do if I caught the same fish in the same spot today, but I am thinking that it too might go on the wall.

Brook trout will surprise us sometimes, especially about where they are. We often know that they are present in the waters we fish, but when we find them we shake our heads and smile with a little amazement as if to say, “They **are** here.” A couple of years ago brother Steve, who lives in Westchester County and has a tiny – really tiny – stream running through his back yard, sent me a photo of two small but mature brookies resting in a pocket in his backyard trickle. James Prosek, author and artist whose watercolors of trout – especially brook trout – are now famous, writes in one of his books about a population of brook trout residing in a small but constant run of water in a section of the median of Interstate 84. Ten or so years ago my fishing buddy, Tom, and his brother-in-law (and boyhood friend of mine), Sean, were canoeing the Pamet River in Truro on Cape Cod. We have vacationed there for almost 20 years but are still intrigued by the Pamet which bubbles up from springs just over the dunes from the Atlantic Ocean at Ballston Beach and runs west for less than two miles to empty into Cape Cod Bay at the southern end of Corn Hill Beach. When Tom and Sean returned from their paddle on that day they showed off a very heavy 14 to 16 inch brook trout. Originally claiming that there was such a strong hatch of mayflies on the Pamet that this feeding trout had not seen them approach and had been done in with a canoe paddle, they later admitted that they had found it dead. I was so fascinated that I called the Commonwealth’s local District Wildlife Office and learned that the fish was likely a “salter”, a native (or maybe stocked) brook trout that had taken to the salt water of the bay and then returned, significantly larger, to the cold, fresh water of the Pamet. The technician had no clue about the cause of its demise.

James Prosek, referenced earlier, has written a number of wonderful books in which brook trout figure prominently; Joe and Me and Young Love and Brook Trout are just plain enjoyable. Trout Reflections by David M. Carroll features stories, memories and natural history all set in classic New England brook trout habitat. Brook Trout by Nick Karas is certainly the most definitive book that I have read on our native char. The volume features scientific explanations of brook trout evolution, the history of brook trout angling (including the famous tale of Daniel Webster’s huge Long Island brook trout), and a travel guide to locations where the next world

record brook trout may be living. He also notes locations to angle for some ordinary sized brook trout as well. The books are all different, but all great stuff!

A couple of months ago I had my latest encounter with *salvelinus fontinalis*. I was on new water, the Neversink, with brother Steve and his friend Phil, and we were working hard with bead heads in water that was just a little up and a bit off color. The hard work was not paying off with many fish, and I got interested in some of the glassy slicks between the braids of current. There were no bugs on the water to speak of – certainly no rising fish, but I was tiring of the subsurface drifts with no bumps. I switched to a dry fly, a big Brown Elk Hair Caddis, and drifting it free in the slicks (with a twitch or two at the end of the float) promptly brought up a couple of nice browns. A few yards upstream from my last fish, one of those glassy slicks ran right up against the bank under a spreading hemlock. My lucky cast was just right and the big brown fly drifted unobstructed and free within inches of the bank. Three feet from landing, the fly was engulfed in a splashy rise, and a 10 inch brook trout came in, a perfect little fish all dark and green with white edges on the fins and just a touch of autumn red. It was a classic brook trout from a classic brook trout lie...but it was still a surprise.

HANK'S FLY BOX – Tying Speed

About four or five years ago I read an article in [The Fly Fisherman](#) titled “20 Ways to Increase Your Tying Speed” by Jim Cramer. I have picked out the 10 recommendations that I try to use myself and want to pass them on to you.

1. Organize your workspace. Before I start tying I always place my tools to the right, thread and head cement to the left, and lay out only the materials necessary for the pattern in front of me along with the recipe.
2. Establish a rhythm to your tying. Tie several of one size and pattern when you sit down at your vise.
3. Use the largest thread size with which you can neatly tie the fly. It makes little sense to use 8/0 thread on a #8 Woolly Bugger.
4. Cut off just enough. Cut off enough material to tie several flies, but not so much that it hinders your tying.
5. Avoid unnecessary handling of materials. This is very important with loose materials like deer hair.
6. Keep scissors in hand. Hold scissors with your ring finger...keeping thumb free as you tie. I still have trouble doing this!
7. Cut butt ends first. When feasible cut them before you tie them in.
8. Use short thread. Short thread outside the bobbin enables you to turn small circles faster and have better control.
9. Try touch dubbing. Touch dubbing goes on faster when you need a fuzzy body and you won't need extra time to pick it out.
10. Practice tying faster. Don't stop to admire your work after each step. However, I think it is a good idea to critique your fly after it is completed.

AND THE WINNER IS...

Fran Martino won the November Meeting door prize of 13 hand tied flies graciously prepared and donated by Wendy Neefus. It was a **free** door prize.

HUDSON VALLEY ANGLER PROUD TO ANNOUNCE...

Author / Publisher - Nick Lyons in store

Saturday, December 18, 2004 11:a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Signing his books and doing a short reading from some of his favorite works around noon.
Bring your own well worn copies or pick up some of his other works at the shop.

HUDSON VALLEY ANGLER 7396 South Broadway Red Hook, NY 12571 845-758-9203

C-GTU MEETINGS

EVERY MONTH: Our regularly scheduled meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. the **3rd Tuesday of each month (except July and August)** unless otherwise indicated.

THIS MONTH: Tuesday, December 21, 2004 – **FREE “FLY” DOOR PRIZE DRAWING**

MEETING SITE: Cornell Cooperative Extension Building in Cairo

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, January 18, 2005 – **FREE “FLY” DOOR PRIZE DRAWING**

COLUMBIA-GREENE RIP VAN WINKLE CHAPTER #569 OF TROUT UNLIMITED

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Keep current...with The Current! Dick & Hank (CO-EDITORS)