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

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

## AUTHOR AND GUIDE TO VISIT!

Bert Darrow has loved fly fishing for years and since his retirement from the telephone company he has continued to pass on his valuable experience in fly fishing as a guide and instructor...and most recently, as an author!

One of the new teaching methods I encouraged in our casting class this year was starting the beginner for the first lesson, in an open stance and having the student watch the line during both the forward cast and the backward cast, in order to establish timing of the cast. This method was borrowed from Bert's new book, Practical Fly Fishing: How to Fish and Cast Naturally. He also likes to use music to teach casting, timing the cast to a 4/4 beat. I encouraged Bert to bring some copies of his book (which sell for about \$25) with him...John and Justin; this book is a must for your libraries!

Bert will also enlighten us with a slide presentation featuring the Catskill Mountain Streams. This is an evening you will not want to miss! We are very lucky to have such a high profile individual put on a presentation at our small, but ever-growing TU group. See you on June 21<sup>st</sup>!  
Hank

## BILL BEATS THE BLUES

Bill Millard was our guest entertainer-educator at the May meeting. Unfortunately our business took much longer than usual to conduct, and his presentation was undeservedly cut short. Bill is an expert fly tyer and he should have had adequate time to make his presentation. So, Bill, on behalf of our chapter, I offer our apology for short circuiting your program and hope that you will accept another invitation sometime this Fall to do another one for us.

In addition to the delay, Bill missed having supper and was not feeling too well. Despite these aggravations, he gave us a shortened version of fly tying tips and instructions that caught the attention and imagination of even the most talented tyers in the chapter. Among his suggestions was one to purchase pre-sized hackle, which can save much time due to their accuracy, compared to searching for one from a neck or saddle.

Questions were asked about such things as his technique for tying on wings (use a little dubbing material to prevent slippage) and goose biots (cut them on a diagonal so that thread bites into it better). He demonstrated the use of Uni-Flexx and how to vary the tension of the stretchy material in order to shape the body of an insect. These are just a few of the many tips told by a man who did not lose his sense of humor by making remarks like, "Now I know what a dog

feels like going to the bathroom over a briar patch,” and that he hasn’t “found a fish yet that can count the legs” (in relation to stoneflies).

So, Bill, thanks not only for your expert advice in educating as well as entertaining us in your own unique way, but also for your generosity to our chapter. The latest donation of your hand tied flies was given as the free door prize, and we still have several more sets to give out at future meetings. Also, your newest contribution of fly-tying materials will be put to good use by the chapter. Once again, I hope you will accept our apology for infringing on your time. Dick

## **THE JUNE/JULY C-G TU SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE**

June 4 – Saturday **Olana Fly-Tying Demonstration and Casting Lessons**

PLACE: Olana Pond

TIME: 12:00 Noon

June 19 – Sunday **Father’s Day Fishing with Fran**

PLACE: Ooms Pond

TIME: 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

June 21 – Tuesday **Slide Show Presentation of the Catskills** by Bert Darrow

PLACE: Regular C-G TU Meeting - Cairo

TIME: 7:30 p.m.

July 7 – Thursday **New Lebanon Town Summer Youth Program (for 12 and 13 year olds) Fly-Tying Demonstration and Casting Lessons**

PLACE: Canaan Town Park

TIME: 10 a.m. – 12:00 Noon

## **ANNOUNCEMENT**

*Trout In The Classroom* has become an increasingly more popular program in the few years of its existence. Lately it became clear that we needed a person in the chapter to be a liaison for any inquiries made about it and to coordinate activities associated with it. I am happy to announce that Fran Martino, the Environmental Educator for the Columbia Land Conservancy, Inc., and a member of our chapter, has volunteered to be that representative. Congratulations and thank you Fran, for taking on the responsibility and leadership for that promising educational program.

Dick

## **FROM THE EDITORS: THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH**

*“Really, the only thing a psychiatrist can do that a good guide can’t is write prescriptions.”*

JOHN GIERACH

Still Life with Brook Trout

## 2005 STOCKING PROGRAM WINDS DOWN

The stocking program for Columbia and Greene Counties is winding down. This year as in the past few, one-year-old and two-year-old trout were available. The largest bulk of them were brown trout but a few rainbows were put in at selected locations, mostly at lakes or ponds. The program got started late due to extremely wet, and in some cases, flooded conditions in the early part of the season.

It also was an unusual year because of the number of conflicts that existed. The conflicts simply consisted of “same day stocking” for both counties. This common predicament posed a problem for any volunteer who wanted to attend an event. It meant that the person had to decide which county to stock and if the individual wanted to stock the Kinderhook Creek and the Schoharie Creek but both were being stocked the same day, then a choice had to be made. This caused the volunteer group to be spread a little thin on occasions. At any rate the job got done and the following locations have had fish releases at least once, and several of them have received two or more stockings:

Greene County: Schoharie Creek, Batavia Kill Creek, East Kill Creek, Colgate Lake, Cauterskill-Kaaterskill Creek, Greens Lake, Catskill Creek...I do not recall that the West Kill Creek was included in any of the announcements, but that also may have been done.

Columbia County: Kinderhook Creek, Kline Kill Creek, Roeliff Jansen Kill Creek, Claverack Creek, Taghkanic Creek, Queechy Lake, Weed Mine Pond, and Ore Pit Pond.

Dick

## THANK YOU STOCKING VOLUNTEERS

There are many members of Trout Unlimited who devoted a lot of time and effort to the stocking program. There are also quite a few folks who do not belong to TU but would be considered “friends” of TU who also volunteered. I am very happy at the number of TU participants in this seasonal program. In many instances the overwhelming majority of stockers belonged to TU and our chapter was extremely well represented. Your participation and dedication to this important program deserves to be recognized and applauded. It represents a phase of TU commitment to be involved with local events and service to the community. It allows folks the opportunity to catch a trout that, otherwise, might not have been available to members of the fishing populace.

Even though you perform this task with little or no public recognition or appreciation, I would like to thank you for your time, dedication, and involvement with this program. You receive nothing but the knowledge of a few nice fishing spots and you should be commended for your interest regardless if it was for one day or many days. So, as Chairman of the Stocking Committee for Columbia-Greene Chapter of Trout Unlimited, I would like to recognize you folks and thank you for all your efforts...I'm sure that John Leck and Walt Bennett, the county coordinators, also appreciate your participation. I apologize to anyone if I left you off the following list of participants: Gene Bartels, Kim Costigan, Sal Cozzolino, Ron Decker, Vinny Dubois, Bobby Fisher, John Jaronsik, Fran Martino, Lou Martins, Bill Millard, Wendy Neefus, Joe Reina, Howard Reznikoff, Dick Riccio, Justin Seeley, Hank Theiss, Cheryl Tobin, Gary Walkley, and Court Wright.

Dick

## La ROCCA'S CORNER – “Fish Tails & Fish Tales”

“Warm woolen mittens...whiskers on kittens...silver white winters that melt into spring...” so go some of the lyrics from that wonderfully schmaltzy Broadway show and movie, The Sound of Music. I can tell that I have not been on the creek enough this season when, instead of real experience, I have to just think about...

### A FEW OF MY FAVORITE THINGS

When you don't fish enough, fantasy has to suffice. Fantasy for me usually begins with some pleasant reality or memory and builds a little from there. (I am basically a pretty dull guy.) Experience a pleasant reality enough times and they become “*favorite things*”. So when I conjure up some fly-fishing fantasies they are most frequently a collage of *favorite* elements and experiences. I have been doing some major conjuring of late because I've not been on the water nearly enough this season. The last time it happened was this past Sunday when I set off to fish and ended up driving around for a couple of hours just looking at trout streams. And that was the genesis of this *favorite things* theme, one that prompted me to do some very basic and highly scientific research!

So, in this fantasy I am on my *favorite* riffle and run on one of my *favorite* local rivers: the Esopus, a little below Phoenicia where the railroad runs right up against the south bank and the river races hard against a jumble of huge boulders and riprap and finally slows into a deep hole. The research, a huge sample of responses (12) of Trout Unlimited chapter members, reveals that most fly fishermen are fairly open to sharing their *favorite* rivers and creeks and even sharing, at least generally, their *favorite* spots on those waters. Not all, however, feel that way: “If I tell you I'll have to kill you!” was a response that got my attention. I think it was in jest! Last Sunday's fruitless drive, by the way was enough to kill this fantasy of mine: the Esopus was running the color of Georgia clay both above and below The Portal, and I just could not bring myself to even get out of the truck. I did see two hearty souls chucking weighted nymphs into the slush, but I couldn't do it.

My research also revealed that while all of the respondents listed home waters, only one indicated that his home water and his *favorite* trout stream or river were one and the same. The geographic range of favorite waters took in five states: NY, CT, VT, NH, and PA. In some ways it might be an indication the grass is always greener...rather, the water is always more productive...on the other side of the state line. Interestingly, of those who responded that catching a big fish was “their most memorable experience on a trout stream,” all indicated that those big fish were caught in waters close to home. And while the number of responses was not sufficient to talk about statistical significance, twenty-one inches seems to be the trout size that makes for a “most memorable” experience, or twenty-one and a half inches if you are fishing with your son! Unless, that is, you quote the size of your trout in pounds; one survey participant did. “First trout on a dry fly” was a high point of memorable experiences...the low point mentioned was “falling into” a *favorite* trout stream.

So back to my fantasy. The day is warm but overcast, and I am hip deep about midway along the far bank of the big hole. I've got my *favorite* rod, a 9-foot, 4 piece, graphite Double L from

LLBean, and I am drifting my *favorite* fly, a Prince Nymph, down through the hole. The research revealed that respondents' choices of rods was diverse, ranging in length from 7 foot to 9 foot, and varying in line weight capacity from 3 weight to 5 weight. Orvis made more than a few of them; those who did not specify rod blank material I assumed to be using graphite (not good practice from a research perspective); and a few respondents were clear that bamboo was their *favorite*. One rod was home or custom made, and one clear *favorite* that came through in the survey with real love was "the one that I own...old no-name." Two respondents shared my *favorite* fly, the Prince Nymph and one noted a Hare's Ear, which is my second *favorite* fly. There were those with no clear *favorite* ("whatever is working") and those who listed three *favorites*. More than half of those responding indicated that their *favorite* fly was a nymph or wet fly; no bucktails or streamers were listed.

So back to my fantasy. On the third or fourth drift through the deepest part of the hole there is just the slightest hesitation in the downstream float of my yellow fiber strike indicator. I notice it, lift the rod and have a fish. That captures **my** *favorite* recurring experience on the water; I wish it recurred more frequently than it does, but it happens often enough. It is my *favorite* because it is something that I learned and a skill that I have honed...at least a little. The first time I fished the San Juan River in New Mexico the young guide who was teaching me kept saying, "If that indicator even hiccups, you strike. You'll come up empty a lot, but you'll have fish more times than you would imagine." He was right, and now for me there is nothing more satisfying than being right on one of those faint hesitations in the drift that says a trout has mouthed the nymph. The most common *favorite* recurring experience revealed by the research was quite simple: catching fish. "Hendrickson spinner falls" and "Alder flies on the Housatonic in June" also made an appearance on the list. One well-read respondent's *favorite* recurring experience was fishing fabled waters, those of "notable literary significance" as he put it. I share that *favorite* also and have been fortunate enough to have done that on the Bighorn, the Yellowstone, and once, the Miramichi, as well as on those fabled close-to-home waters like the Neversink and Beaverkill.

Back to my fantasy. The trout I've hooked is a mature brown, and while he does not jump and run like the Esopus rainbows, he's golden yellow, thick and strong, and about fifteen inches long...a good, satisfying, east coast fish. I release the fish, watch him swim away, and look up to see a small garter snake slide off the rocks on the opposite bank, begin the swim across the pool, and have to tread water to let a beaver heading upstream go by. It should be no wonder that many of the "most unusual experiences on a trout stream" that appeared in the research were about wildlife. Loons on the Ten Mile Creek, a bobcat silently watching from twenty feet away, deer that materialize out of the streamside mist, a beaver that swims through the fisherman's submerged legs, an eel in the Catskill Creek...all were cited in my research findings. And then there was "hooking a dog on my backcast" and "finding a naked sunbather;" so much for wildlife! "Every time out something new and unusual happens" according to one respondent; and I'll add, "And we are delighted that is so."

Fantasy, of course, is wonderful. Experience, good experience, is even better! And no matter how much of it we get, we fly fishermen all need more. It's our *favorite*. John

## **HANK'S FLY BOX – Olive Loop Wing Emerger**

A few of us have been fortunate enough to catch a trout that measures 20” or more. In my case it was luck!...but in Ron Bauman’s case it may have been a good fisherman, a good guide, and the proper fly.

Last June at our members and friends “day on the stream”, Ron teamed up with guide Ted Petricini on the Schoharie Creek, and when we got together at the end of the evening to tell our fish stories, two of our group had the biggest smiles on their faces, as Ron told us about the 20” fish he had just released, with Ted’s help. I have kept the secret for exactly a year, but now think it is finally time to put the recipe in for the fly that caught that “BIG FISH” June 15, 2004. Long deserved CONGRATULATIONS Ron and Ted!

The following recipe for the Olive Loop Wing Emerger was taken from Flies for Trout by Dick Stewart and Farrow Allen:

HOOK: Dry fly size 14-18 (front ½ is bent slightly upward)

THREAD: Olive

TAIL: (Trailing Shuck) Clump of dun colored, crinkled synthetic fiber

ABDOMEN: Olive brown dubbing

THORAX: Same as abdomen

LEGS: Grizzly hackle dyed blue dun, wrapped over the thorax and trimmed on top and bottom.

LOOP WING: Same material as tail, tied over the top to the eye, forming a loop.

## **AND THE MAY WINNER IS...**

...John La Rocca, who won the FREE door prize of flies tied and donated by Bill Millard. Thanks again for your door prize donations, Bill!

**Those wishing to donate flies or other door prizes for the free monthly drawings should contact Dick Riccio.**

## **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 has changed their email address or doesn't want to receive the newsletter any longer** please notify one of us: Dick Riccio (518) 851-7002 newsletter@cgtu.org  
Hank Theiss (518) 851-9442 newsletter@cgtu.org

# C-GTU MEETINGS

**EVERY MONTH:** Our regularly scheduled meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. **at the Cornell Cooperative Extension Building on Mountain Road in Cairo, NY**, the 3rd Tuesday of each month (except July and August) unless otherwise indicated.

**THIS MONTH:** Tuesday, June 21, 2005 – **FREE DOOR PRIZE DRAWING**

**NEXT MEETING:** Tuesday, September 20, 2005 – **FREE DOOR PRIZE DRAWING**

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

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