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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

## HAPPY NEW YEAR 2006!

**DON'T FORGET  
OUR FIRST ANNUAL C-G TU BANQUET  
JANUARY 7<sup>th</sup> !**

Freehold Country Inn  
COCKTAILS: 6:00 p.m. DINNER: 7:00 p.m.

**All are welcome, whether you fish or not.**

**GREAT RAFFLE PRIZES**

Banquet Tickets, \$30 per person. Please make checks out to: Columbia-Greene Trout Unlimited.

**BERT DARROW, GUEST SPEAKER "Fly Fishing the Catskills"**

**In case of bad weather listen to WHUC (12:30 AM ) or WGNA (Country 107.7 FM),  
or call Wendy Neefus (518-828-6645 or 518-828-1321) or Hank Theiss (518-851-9442).**

### **CATALOG NIGHT BECOMES SOCIAL EVENT**

John LaRocca proposed and led a night of light amusement as our entertainment for the December meeting. His request at the last meeting was for each attendee to bring some type of fishing catalog to the meeting. Many of us brought the old standbys like Orvis, Cabelas, Feathercraft, and L.L.Bean but he brought in a canvas bag full of catalogs, many that most of us had never seen, that he has collected over the years. He spoke briefly about them and passed out many to share as he concluded that this would be a social night to browse through and discuss them as we savored goodies like donuts and cookies with enough coffee and cider to wash it all down. The gathering shortly became what I believe he hoped it would be – a time to relax and socialize with members and friends as the room was filled with conversation and buzz about many topics including, surprisingly enough, fishing.

It was a pleasant evening giving us a chance to reconnect with chapter members in an informal atmosphere...the only thing missing was a nice warm fireplace. Thank you John for presenting this opportunity to become reacquainted with our chatty fishing friends.

Dick

## FROM THE EDITORS: Hank's Thought for the Month

*"Don't let a day pass when you don't do something for someone who can't repay you."*

DEAN SMITH

University of North Carolina Basketball Coach, Retired

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*The Current is your newsletter...the editors just try to put things of interest together each month. We encourage you and are very pleased when TU members contribute articles, ideas, stories, fly recipes, etc. to be included.*

*This month we are happy to highlight a list of helpful hints from "Dr. Lead," Wendy Neefus. Thanks Wendy for this month's addition to the newsletter. Those of us with "cabin fever" can dream about spring.*

*Hank*

## FOUR REASONS WHY MOST FLY FISHERMEN DON'T CATCH THEIR SHARE OF TROUT

### THEY HAVE:

**"CEMENT FEET"**...they don't move enough or cover enough water.

**"THE HANG-UP SYNDROME"**...afraid of losing flies or rigs on the bottom, and thus, don't use enough weight.

**"DRY FLY FIXATION"**...fish dry flies when there are no fish rising. They should be fishing under the surface.

**"BEEN MISINFORMED THAT SWINGING A NYMPH IS NYMPH FISHING."** It's fishing a nymph "wet fly style." Nymphing is upstream dead drifting and seeing the take instead of feeling the take. It's so deadly it should be outlawed!

Suggestions by Wendy Neefus, AKA "Dr. Lead"... "Take 2 BBs, and call me in the morning."

## FROM THE EDITORS: Justin's Chuckle for the Month

"A recent survey showed that roughly two-thirds of all fishermen never eat fish. This should surprise nobody. Fish is brain food. People who eat fish have large, well-developed brains. People with large, well-developed brains don't fish. It's that simple."

ED ZERN, *To Hell With Fishing*

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

It is distinctly human behavior. One way or another we all do it; we tell stories. The behavior is certainly not limited to fishermen, although some of us have honed the behavior to an art form. “Art” may be too strong a word for what we do, but some of us are well-practiced. The disposition to craft tales may be inherited; my father was a master at it. The stories we tell may recount real situations and events, and some are pure fiction and fantasy...just plain made up. This one is for Sophie and Ellie and Kibo, and for you and yours if you so choose.

### **CHRISTMAS TREE TROUT**

Once upon a time, not so very long ago, a man planted a tree. Actually he planted many trees; actually he planted many thousand trees. They were the kind of trees that stay green all year long, the ones whose leaves do not change color in the autumn, or fall off their branches when late-October winds blow and November rains swirl through the woods. They were the trees that add life and a little color to the muted grays and browns of the landscape in late fall and early spring, the same ones that seem to add a little warmth when the world sparkles under a blanket of snow. They are called evergreens.

And that was exactly why the man planted all those trees...because his family and families around the world especially liked the way those always-green trees look during the winter...liked them so much that they began to bring the trees right inside their houses at this time of year. By now you probably know that the trees the man planted were Christmas trees. He planted so many of them because he hoped that his friends and neighbors and other people too would use them for Christmas trees.

When he first put the trees in the ground they were very small so they were not too hard to plant. Because that was so, he planted them in many different places on the old farm where he and his family lived. He planted them in long straight rows with the same space between them all the way around each tree so that there was room for each tree to grow tall and full of branches and straight up in the air. He planted pines and spruces and fir trees...all evergreens. Some years he gave them tree food called fertilizer, and some years he asked a friend to cut the weeds in between the rows so nothing would get in the way of the trees growing straight. And when the trees were about as big as the man's children, he started to trim almost every tree. And when the man's children were about as big as the man, they and their friends began to trim the trees every year.

Within a few years it was time to cut the first Christmas tree. The family went out in the snow and cut a beautiful tree for their home and one for each of their friends and relatives. Within a few years they were cutting hundreds of trees and selling them to people who wanted beautiful, green, tall and full Christmas trees. And then, more quickly than expected, the trees grew too big to be Christmas trees; they became instead lovely green, permanent groves on the hills and in the valleys and hollows of the old farm. Deer and squirrels and a few rabbits found homes among the trees, and birds of all kinds were very happy in the shelter they provided.

When he first began to plant the trees there was one special place on the farm, a sheltered hollow in one corner of the property, that he thought deserved a special tree. He talked to his friend who knew all about trees and was told that a good tree for that spot would be balsam firs...very

special trees with a pretty smell and very green needles. Balsams were an old-time favorite for Christmas trees, so rows and rows of balsam firs were planted in that little corner of the old farm.

At first these trees did not grow very well. When they were small – seedlings they were called - they tasted very good to the deer and the rabbits, and many of them were eaten. And then it seemed that the ground was too wet in part of the hollow and the little trees really could not take firm root. But ever so slowly they began to grow. One little tree was especially slow to grow because it was right on the edge of a tiny stream of water that ran along the edge of the hollow. In the summer there was always water in the stream because it bubbled up out of a spring, and in the winter it ran cold and steely-black through the hollow on its long journey that ended, eventually, in the Hudson River.

As soon as this tree was big enough to trim, the man began to cut and shape it early every summer. Because he was a fisherman, every time the man went to the hollow to trim the now healthy tree, he looked very carefully in the stream to see if there might be a fish there. There never was. Then one year, when the tree was almost big enough to be a Christmas tree a small fish appeared in the deep spot in the water right under the branches of the tree. It was a trout, a small but brightly colored brook trout that probably came upstream from the Squirmer Valley Creek into which the little stream flowed. It was so exciting to see that fish after so many years of looking for one.

Six months later with snow on the ground and the tiny stream running black and clear and cold through the snow covered hollow, the man and his family went to cut a Christmas tree. They looked and looked at all the trees, and finally decided that the best Christmas tree among all the trees was the one right near the stream. So they decided to cut it. The man lifted up the bottom branches and was just about to begin cutting with his saw when he saw a flash of color in the water. It was the trout, now a little bigger than before and now full of color...greens and blues and creamy white with a little touch of red.

The flash of color startled the man and he stopped what he was about to do to watch the small fish. He showed his children, and they talked about the colors of the trout and how they were the same colors as the ornaments that they put on the Christmas trees that brightened their home every year. And then he told his children how the tree had probably protected the trout, especially in the summer when its branches provided the shade that made the water cool and dark for the fish. And after a few moments he made a decision: he would not cut the tree. He would leave it there to thrive and grow and provide a kind of roof over the pool in the little rill where the Christmas Tree Trout lived. So the man cut another tree, not quite as beautiful as that special tree by the water, but still green and fragrant and full. And the tree he cut brought light and warmth and joy to his house that Christmas.

All that happened many years ago. Now the tree by the tiny brook is one of the largest in the hollow...tall and stately. It is so big that it is almost impossible to see under it to tell if the trout still lives there. But every year, about this time, when the snow covers the ground and clings to the branches of the balsam firs in the hollow, the man and his family cut a Christmas tree. And when they do they always admire the big tree by coal-black water and imagine the Christmas Tree Trout swimming beneath its sheltering boughs. And they smile.

## **TROUT BROOKS & TROUT BOOKS:**

### **A Look Into Justin's Bookcase**

With the recent passing of angling great Ernest Schwiebert, it only seems fitting to revisit two of his better-known works. Remembrances of Rivers Past is a finely written collection of stories that span the globe, with some of the finest dealing with rivers right in our backyard.

As a vocation, Schwiebert planned architecture for airports and military bases, but perhaps his best piece of planning was choosing a career that took him to top angling destinations worldwide.

His avocation, trout fishing, placed him in the company of Vince Marinaro and Charlie Fox as they were revolutionizing minute flies and terrestrials on the Letort. The chapter "Grasshopper Wind" reveals Schwiebert's contributions to this movement and the part he played in developing the Letort Hopper, a favorite of mine, and more importantly a favorite of many trout.

Schwiebert also authored A River for Christmas, and his writing displays a zeal for angling akin to that of a child on Christmas morning. If that certain someone owes you a belated Christmas gift, these titles would serve you well. Ernest Schwiebert will personally take you with him on enough fishing trips to get you through the winter, and all without having to worry about packing suitcases and booking flights.

## **AND THE DECEMBER WINNER IS...**

...Ed VanAuken, a guest and neighbor of Dave Rudloff. He won a dozen hand-tied flies donated by Bill Millard.

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

## **UPCOMING EVENTS!**

**C-GTU Banquet**                      Saturday, January 7, 2006                      Freehold Country Inn

### **Annual Columbia-Greene TROUT UNLIMITED Classes at C-GCC:**

Fly-tying              January 12, 2006 - February 16, 2006              (6 Thursdays)

Fly-fishing              February 27, 2006 - April 3, 2006              (6 Mondays)

Seeking volunteers to help teach classes...please call George Goth at (518) 622-0837.

## **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.

**MEETING THIS MONTH:** Tuesday, January 18, 2006

**MEETING NEXT MONTH:** Tuesday, February 15, 2006

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

**Chapter Officers**

President	Hank Theiss	(518) 851-9442	Email - See "Contact Us" Page, President <a href="http://cgtu.org/">http://cgtu.org/</a>
Vice President	Joe Reina	(518) 701-3640	Email - See "Contact Us" Page, Vice President <a href="http://cgtu.org/">http://cgtu.org/</a>
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**KEEP CURRENT...WITH THE CURRENT!**

**Dick Riccio, Hank Theiss & Justin Seeley (Editors)**