
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

As of March 1st there are

31 MORE DAYS TO TROUT SEASON!

STANDING IN A RIVER WAVING A STICK

The title of a 1999 book (above) by prolific fishing author, John Gierach, is also an apt description of both of our March meeting presenters. Visit a Columbia County trout stream virtually any day (or night) during the season and you are likely to find Bobby Fisher or John Libruk, and often both of them, doing exactly that...and more, catching 1600 to 1800 trout between the two of them in an average season.

As good as these guys are at catching trout, that talent is not what chapter members will hear about at our March meeting. Rather, it is the "waving a stick" business, and specifically "the sticks" themselves, bamboo fly rods, that we will see and hear about. These two TU colleagues are our chapter's experts on the subject. They will come prepared on March 21st to show us many of the dozens of bamboo rods (new and vintage) that they own between them...Winstons, Thomas and Thomas, Leonards, Paynes, Orvis and Winchesters (yes...Winchester); give us a brief history of bamboo rod-making; and explain at least a few of the "ins and outs" of the bamboo fly rod.

If you have ever wondered about intermediate windings, impregnated versus varnished, quad rods, greenheart, or wormholes in the wood, or even if you have **not** wondered, you'll enjoy and learn from John and Bobby. Hope to see you at the meeting!

John La Rocca, ENTERTAINMENT CHAIRMAN

ZIELINSKI SAILS THE CATSKILL

Most of us in the area have heard about the Catskill Creek...many of us have fished it. Some of us have met and stocked streams with Dan Zielinski...maybe you have not heard of him. He is the Aquatic Biologist for the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation who is assigned to our region. Dan was our guest speaker for the chapter meeting on February 21st.

His PowerPoint presentation, which included some terrific aerial photos of the creek, brought us up to date on research done on the Catskill Creek, a continuing project for the past 27 years. The central focus of the research, much of it represented by various charts, is used to determine if the creek should be stocked, where, with how many and with what species of trout. One chart

showed the numbers of yearling brown trout at various locations during the 27-year period. A similar chart existed for rainbow trout. Another one recorded water temperatures, and there were still others, all given life by Dan's comments.

In addition to all this interesting information, Dan spoke briefly about the Ten Mile Creek, its problems, due to flood damage done to the stream last year, and possible options to help solve them. Thank you Dan for the update and for taking the time to make your presentation to our group. One of the side benefits of attending the meeting was finding out where the fish are **not**. Thank you also for that, and for the entire *sail*...and in some instances assail...down the creek. Dick

FROM THE EDITORS: Hank's Thought for the Month

"The charm of fishing is that it is the pursuit of something that is elusive but attainable, a perpetual series of occasions for hope."

JOHN BUCHAN (1875-1940)

CASTING CLASSES BEGIN

The Chapter's Fly Fishing & Casting Course begins on Monday, February 27th with classes to follow on March 6th, March 13th, March 20th, March 27 and April 3rd. This season the course will be held at Columbia-Greene Community College at 7:00 p.m. Each of the six classes is divided into a lecture and a hands-on casting instruction. The fee for the fishing class is \$50.00. (Please note the weekday change to Monday and the location change to C-GCC from last season.)

The lecture portions of the course cover fly-fishing equipment, basic stream entomology, applying knots, reading the waters, fishing streamers, fishing dry flies and choosing a fly. A couple of these lectures will be PowerPoint presentations authored by fellow chapter members.

The casting portion will teach the basic casts...forward, back, side, reach and roll casts. Feeding, mending and stripping line will also be covered. A demonstration of the week's featured cast will be followed by the students practicing the cast. The casting portion of the classes also gives the students (and the instructors) the opportunity to try several different rods and line weights. Some instructors frequently bring a favorite fiberglass, graphite or bamboo rod to try.

Volunteers are needed for the casting portion of the class, since each class will be divided into two segments to facilitate the use of the college's gym. The lecturers and some casting instructors have signed up, but more volunteer instructors are needed for casting. Since each evening's classes are divided, more instructors will be needed than during past courses. This is also a good chance to try out that recent purchase or Christmas present in a warm, wind-free environment.

Please give the chapter a hand and help...to volunteer contact George Goth (622-0837), Hank Theiss (851-9442) or Dick Riccio (851-7002). George Goth, EDUCATION CHAIRMAN

THANK YOU!

This season's fly-tying course is over. Six students completed the six sessions and learned to tie 12 flies. All, including the instructors and assistants, seemed to enjoy the course.

The course could not have happened without the time, patience and enthusiasm of the instructors. Some came early to help students make up missed classes.

The course also could not have happened without the members of the Education Committee. The six, two-hour fly-tying sessions were just the tip of the iceberg. The committee spent many more hours last season with the review and editing cycle of the fly-tying manual. More hours were spent sorting, organizing and bagging the tying materials.

And finally the course could not have happened without materials. Hoffman and Whiting donated necks, capes and turkey biots. Chapter members and their friends donated thread, squirrel tails, deer hair, turkey feathers, pheasant tails, and duck wing and flank feathers. Hudson Valley Angler filled our order of hooks, thread, Mylar, dubbing, bead heads and rubber legs for their cost.

Thanks to all: Hank Theiss, Dick Riccio, Dave Rudloff, Tim Lippert, Joe Reina, Justin Seeley, Wendy Neefus, Lynn Lee, Ron Baumann, Todd Brightly, Bill Millard, Bobby Fisher, John Libruk, Vinny Sherburne and "Wild Bill" Newcomb. George Goth, EDUCATION CHAIRMAN

TROUT BROOKS & TROUT BOOKS:

A Look Into Justin's Bookcase

The sport of fly fishing has undergone countless changes in the course of its long history, especially in terms of tackle, technique, and flies. However, one thing that has remained a constant is the effectiveness of the soft-hackled fly. Sylvester Nemes has chronicled the history of tying and fishing with soft-hackled flies from the British North Country and here in the States, too.

Two Centuries of Soft-Hackled Flies (Stackpole, 2004) is a survey of the angling literature of soft-hackled flies featuring beautiful photographs of both materials and flies, and historical anecdotes about various authors. While much of this text is concerned with British flies and rivers, Jim Leisenring, a notable author, angler and meticulous fly tyer, revealed the effectiveness of these patterns on Pennsylvania trout.

In The Soft-Hackled Fly Addict (Stackpole, 1993), Nemes features more patterns and tactics set in the context of his many seasons of practicing the sport of taking trout with the soft hackles. He also reveals how his addiction to the soft-hackle began and was nurtured by reading the works of T.E. Pritt, and Edmonds and Lee. Surprisingly, as simple as they are to tie and as effective as they can be, they aren't all that popular among modern anglers. Perhaps they lack the flash that catches many anglers' eyes, but there is little doubt as to their appeal to the trout.

Soft-hackled flies have occupied a large portion of the sport's history, and certainly will remain for centuries to come. A number of them have emerged from my fly-tying vise this winter. The verdict is still out as to whether or not I'll become addicted to the soft-hackled fly; only time and the trout will tell. One thing is certain though, Sylvester Nemes has made it clear that soft-hackles are an addiction that you won't want to cure.

HANK'S FLY BOX – Rabbit's Foot Emerger

Fly fishers use the term *emerger* when they refer to aquatic insects that are changing from their immature form into adults. This transformation usually occurs in the water's surface film at which time the insects are highly vulnerable and an attractive meal to the trout. Fish are attracted to the upward movement as the nymphs swim to the surface and attempt to escape from their shucks.

Some materials that we tie on a hook to help an emerger float in the surface film include deer hair, closed cell foam, snowshoe rabbit's foot and CDC (Cul De Canard) feathers. The latter two are used in the Rabbit's Foot Emerger that Andy Cooper tied for the Seth Green Chapter of TU several years ago. The following recipe is how I have adapted his tying suggestions to mimic the March Brown Emerger:

THE RABBIT'S FOOT EMERGER

Hook: Scud or Sedge sizes 14-18

Thread: Size 8/0, brown

Tail: Trailing shuck of brown Antron

Abdomen: Tan dubbing

Wing: Snowshoe or cottontail rabbits' rear foot hair

Legs: Medium dun CDC

Thorax: Dark hare's ear

TYING DIRECTIONS:

1. Divide a piece of Antron in 2 or 3 equal parts depending on the size of the hook (2 for size 14, 3 for sizes 16 or 18)
2. Tie in thread and dress hook around the bend and halfway down toward barb.
3. Tie in an Antron tail extending about half the length of the shank.
4. Wind thread back to tail and dub an even, slightly tapered abdomen.
5. Tie in CDC legs about the length of gap.
6. Tie on hair from underside of rabbit's foot for a wing that is a little shorter than the abdomen.
7. Dub a dark hare's ear thorax and tie off.

FROM THE EDITORS: Justin's Chuckle for the Month

One day a fish warden is watching three blondes fishing in a local river and asks the ladies if they have fishing licenses. The first blonde replies, "We're not fishing, we are cleaning garbage from the river bottom." The second blonde lifts her line out of the water and shows the warden that she has a magnet tied to the end of it. The warden, slightly confused, shrugs his shoulders and tells the ladies to have a nice day. After he is out of sight, the third blonde looks at the other two and says, "What a stupid warden. Doesn't he know there are steelhead in this river?"

FROM THE INTERNET

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

“Wouldn't that look great in the corner of a big trout's mouth!” was Dave's observation as he held out what looked to me like a foam rubber mini-monster, something my granddaughter might, in a few years, buy in a novelty store and then secretly plant on the kitchen table to scare the daylights out of her mother. “It's a Chernobyl Ant; the top piece is there for visibility,” was his response to my quizzical expression. Ever the novice, I was thankful for the semi-private lesson.

TUESDAY TYERS

Well, not exactly, it was Monday and I was in the back room of a country garage that might just as easily be a terrorist safehouse or the clubhouse for a secret society of pre-teenagers as the headquarters for a small group of serious trout fishermen. The latter was the reality. I was finally making good on an invitation that had been extended last year when the group began to formally meet – I guessed, as formally as this group does anything. Last year the meeting night was Tuesday, and when I decided that it might be the subject of an article, the title emerged quickly.

When I arrived on the evening of my visit the group was already in session. I pushed open the pedestrian door to the garage and found a cold room pretty much loaded with the equipment a commercial painter needs to make a living, assorted recreational paraphernalia, a tarp-covered automobile, and bags of quail food. It was a strange combination, but it confirmed that I was in the right place. That was an excellent start for me because I had completely missed it the week before; I'd driven around in the fog, back and forth for twenty minutes, and never located the garage. I knew that the host for this regular gathering had recently started a commercial shooting preserve; food for the birds is a necessary inventory item. “We're back here,” was the response to my tentative “Hello.” The voice came from a door nearly camouflaged in the wall. I scratched my baldhead and wondered, “Who are these guys hiding from...their wives?” I knew that was not the case because the week before one of their wives had told me where they were. When I pushed the door open I found that they were not hiding at all; the back room was dry and pleasantly heated...helpful, I learned, for keeping fingers nimble and materials in proper condition. I later learned that one of the guys used to, maybe still does, tie his flies behind his home oil burner!

Seated around a makeshift table in the middle of the space, Tim, Dave and Rick, were all hunched over their own fly-tying vises surrounded by bobbins, thread, floss, feathers, whip finishers and hooks. The enclosing walls and shelves were hung and stacked with equipment of all kinds – recreational/sport equipment and vocational/business tools as well. Also on the wall was a small but toothy mounted barracuda. There was no beer, no soda, no coffee, and no chips or cookies; these guys were all business! (Things, by definition, are never the same when there is an observer in the equation, so my bet is that there is not even much conversation in the room normally.) The three were each tying a different fly...an Adams-like fly called a Gray Coughlin, a Partridge and Yellow soft hackle wet fly, and Dave's giant and ugly Chernobyl Ant. All three seemed at ease with their materials and their skill level. This should not have surprised me; these fellows are veterans. Rick began to tie back in 1973; Dave started about 1988, and Tim is

the rookie, but even he has four years of experience. My own brief foray into tying flies some years ago left lasting memories of frustration and incompetence...so I was impressed.

To get real clarity, however, I just had to ask the assembled crew, “To be good at this do you have to be an artist or a craftsman?” I got some funny looks as a first response, but then there was unanimity. The prevailing wisdom among the “Tuesday Tyers” is that anyone, with some instruction and a little practice, can tie serviceable flies, flies that will catch fish. I decided then, that like playing the guitar, which I abandoned after six lessons and no mastery of even “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star,” I hadn’t stayed with fly tying long enough to give myself a reasonable chance. To tie beautiful flies they said, a certain element of art and artistic ability is required. Left unsaid, but for me it was quite clear, that serviceable flies are just fine; catching fish, after all, was the measure of success here. While there is a lot to it, and it can be consuming for some, fly tying is, after all, a means to an end. The “Tuesday Tyers” are trout fisherman first.

In the course of further conversation, (conversation during which the three tyers were actively engaged in the discussion but rarely looked away from or stopped the work at hand), I learned that none of them tied more than a couple of hundred flies in a year. Each figured they spend between \$100 and \$200 per year on materials and equipment. The Northeast Fly Fishing shop in Cobleskill took in most of those dollars, and the assembled crew seemed to feel good about that. Some portion of their materials was procured through catalogues; *Hook and Hackle* was the one source mentioned by name. I did not raise the topic, but after that part of the conversation I just had to do the calculation: it worked out to about a buck per fly...if you don’t count the cost of your time; and no self-respecting angler would ever count the cost of his/her time when it comes to anything connected to fishing! So that’s that!

“So let’s talk about your favorites,” I suggested as the evening was winding down, at least for me. (I don’t know what time the tyers call it a night.) “Favorite” anything is always a great question because you can see the mental inventories clicking through a respondent’s eyes before the answer emerges. Their favorite flies to tie: Pheasant Tail Nymph (with or without beadhead), Yellow Stonefly Nymph, and the McMurray Ant. Why? “Because I do the best job tying it,” and as it turns out, because it is a favorite fly selection to fish...true for all three. Biggest or most fish caught on a fly you tied: a couple of twenty-inch browns, and a thirty fish day on the Pheasant Tail Nymph. Although all were a bit reluctant to answer the last couple of questions, once the answers began to come out, it was evident that catching fish on flies that you tied yourself seemed to add a little something special to the experience.

The TU chapter’s fly-tying course was, I knew, in full swing, and at least one of the Tuesday – no, Monday – garage denizens was involved. “Is it more fun to tie or to teach it?” I questioned. With the wrinkled brow of indecision Dave finally answered, “Teaching is great fun, especially with a motivated student...but...” No question that the “Monday Tyers” are a motivated crew... and I enjoyed “kicking the pebbles” with them for a while in their hideout.

AND THE FEBRUARY WINNER IS...

...George Goth who won flies hand-tied and donated by Joe Reina. **(Those wishing to donate flies or other door prizes for the free monthly drawings should contact Dick Riccio.)**

OUR C-G CHAPTER'S VIDEO LIBRARY

Our club has a fantastic resource in its video library. It includes 11 fly-tying videos and 13 fly-casting/fishing videos. Please see Dave Rudloff to borrow tapes. Thanks again Dave for taking charge of their distribution.

VIDEO LIBRARY LENDING POLICIES:

1. The maximum number of videos any member may have on loan at any given time is two.
2. A deposit of \$10.00 per video will be held until the return of that tape.
3. The loan time limit for any one video is two months.

FLY TYING

1. Stonefly Patterns - James Bowen
2. The Art of Tying the Nymph - Skip Morris
3. Tying Dry Flies – A. K. Best
4. Tying Terrestrials – A. K. Best
5. Tying with CDC - Shane Stalcup
6. Tying and Fishing Caddis Flies - Gary LaFontaine
7. Lake Flies that Work - Bob Newman
8. Glass Bead Flies for Trout - Joe Warren
9. Life Cycle of the Caddis Fly - Rene Harrop
10. Life Cycle of the Mayfly - Rene Harrop
11. LaFontaine Originals - Beatty and Stimpson

FLY CASTING/FISHING

- A. Lessons by Lefty - Lefty Kreh
- B. A Casting Approach to Dry Fly Tactics in Tight Brush - Joe Humphreys
- C. A Casting Approach to Nymphing Tactics - Joe Humphreys
- D. Fishing the Dry Fly - Gary Borger
- E. Nymphing - Gary Borger
- F. Strategies for Selective Trout - Doug Swisher
- G. Nymphing Strategies - Joe Humphreys
- H. Joan Wulff's Dynamics of Fly-casting
- I. Fly Fishing the Beaverkill - Lee Wulff
- J. The Orvis Progressive Fly-Casting Method
- K. The Way of a Trout
- L. The Night Game - by Joe Humphreys
- M. Deep Water - (The History of the Ashokan and Schoharie Reservoirs)

Hank

UPCOMING EVENTS!

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|---|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|-------------|
| Annual Columbia-Greene TROUT UNLIMITED Classes at C-GCC: | | | | |
| Fly-fishing | February 27, 2006 - April 3, 2006 | (6 Mondays) | | |
| Sunday | March 26 | “All About Trout” | Taconic Park, Copake | 1-2:30 p.m. |
| Thursday | April 27 | Agro Forestry Fly-tying Class | Rte 23, Acra | 7-9:00 p.m. |
| Sunday | 30 | Claverack Creek Clean-up | Cashen’s Bridge, Roxbury Rd | 9:00 a.m. |
| Sunday | May 7 | Shingle Kill Clean-up | Cairo Cornell Co-op Ext | 9:00 a.m. |
| Saturday | 20 | STUDENTS’ DAY ON THE STREAM | | 9:00 a.m. |
| | | Art Flick Memorial | Rte 23A, between Lexington/Prattsville | |

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, March 21, 2006

MEETING NEXT MONTH: Tuesday, April 18, 2006

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

Chapter Officers

| | | | |
|----------------|---------------|----------------|---|
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| | | | |
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KEEP CURRENT...WITH THE CURRENT!

Dick Riccio, Hank Theiss & Justin Seeley (Editors)