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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

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## “HECK OF A FISHERMAN; GREAT GUIDE; TERRIFIC FLY TYER...”

Those were the words of endorsement I got from one of our most respected chapter members when I mentioned to him that I had lined up **Judd Weisberg** as a speaker for our May chapter meeting. I can't remember how I first connected with Judd, but it was more than 20 years ago, and the words above applied to him back then too. I remember his patience in trying to teach me to tie a simple nymph and his many favorable comments and hints about our local trout streams. My most enduring image of Judd, however, is one of him in the bow of a canoe on a remote Adirondack pond laying out long tight casts and hooking scrappy brook trout...while the rest of us (then spin fishermen) watched in awe!

If he's not fishing, guiding or tying, he's making beautiful furniture; he'll focus on the fishing when he joins us at our May meeting. While Judd lives right on the banks of the Schoharie Creek, we've agreed that he'll talk mostly about the Delaware system which we do not hear a lot about at our meetings. Go to [www.fishwithjudd.com](http://www.fishwithjudd.com) or [www.juddworks.com](http://www.juddworks.com) if you want more info in advance.

John La Rocca, ENTERTAINMENT CHAIRMAN

## BALSA WOOD *FLIES!*

Remember the days when you could go to the village store and buy, for a dime, a balsa wood airplane that could be assembled in about five minutes? You could then *fly it* and by adjusting the wings forward or backward it would do loop-the-loops or loop and then glide. By bending the rudder slightly, it would turn left or right depending on which way it was turned. Well, our own Rick Bobrick introduced us to a new use for that balsa wood. He has changed its use from a verb to a noun. What used *to fly* (a verb) has been converted to *a fly* (a noun). His conversion is to construct an ant from balsa wood that is used as *a dry fly* for catching fish. For more details and instructions on making Rick's version of the McMurray Ant, check out HANK'S FLY BOX, next in this issue...and add a new lure to your fly box!

This interesting hands-on presentation was a success judged by the members at the meeting who completed this simple-to-make unique dry fly. Rick is packaging and selling an entire kit that will make approximately 48 ants of various sizes for about \$15.

Thanks, Rick, for taking the time to present us with a new use for an old wood.

Dick

## HANK'S FLY BOX – The McMurray Ant

As many of you already know I have asked you to share your favorite patterns with fellow members. Trout love ants and this month Rick Bobrick gives us his version of Ed Sutryn's McMurray Ant...thanks for sharing one of your favorite recipes, Rick!

1. Select the correct size balsa square stock for desired hook size:  
#12 or #14 = 3/16" balsa    #16 or #18 = 1/8" balsa    #20 or #22 = 3/32" balsa
2. Use needle to form a hole in the center of the stock to a depth of approximately 1/2".
3. Use emery board to shape the corners of square stock forming a rounded, blunt head.
4. Use razor blade to cut head of ant to about the same length as the diameter of the balsa.
5. Insert needle through back (un-sanded end) of ant head to complete through-hole.
6. Insert monofilament line through center hole in back of ant head; use lighter or candle flame to melt a "knob" on end of line; cut line to a length of approximately 2".
7. Use needle to form a hole in the center of the stock to a depth of approximately 3/4".
8. Use emery board to shape corners of square stock forming a rounded, blunt abdomen.
9. Use razor blade to cut abdomen of ant to a length about twice the diameter of the balsa.
10. Insert needle through back (unsanded end) of ant abdomen to complete through hole.
11. Insert 2" piece of monofilament (with ant head at opposite end) through center hole in back of ant abdomen.
12. Slide abdomen against head; cut protruding monofilament to a length that is 1/4" longer than the ant head itself; use lighter or candle flame to melt end of protruding line down to a length about the length of the ant head.
13. Slide head away from small melted monofilament "knob"; use straight pin to apply \*glue to monofilament line below "knob"; slide head back over glue, rotating to spread; use thumb nail to gently press "knob" flush into front of head. Repeat this gluing procedure for abdomen.  
(\*Use Zap-A-Gap or Silicone Sealant/Adhesive as a waterproof bonding agent.)
14. Use brush to apply black gloss paint. A simple drying rack can be constructed by cutting a series of narrow, 1/2" deep V-notches in the long side of a shoebox. Paint abdomens first - hang to dry; paint heads last - hang to dry.
15. Use black thread to tie painted, two-piece balsa body to center of hook; add one or two wraps of black hen hackle at center tie in point; trim top and bottom. You have just completed the most productive terrestrial pattern ever devised!

For more information visit the Web Page at <http://cgtu.org> and look for fly tying information. You can also visit the contacts page and send an email to our expert Fly Tyer

## STREAMSIDE SESSION

The classroom portion of our chapter's fly-casting class is over. Twenty-three students from Columbia and Greene Counties braved Columbia County's Monday evening rush hour to complete the six sessions. One final class remains, the final exam, the streamside session, where our students can put to use the casting skills and techniques with the entomology and knowledge from our presentations.

The streamside session is scheduled for Saturday, May 20<sup>th</sup> on the Schoharie Creek. Students and the instructors will meet at the Art Flick Memorial on NYS Route 23 A at 9:00 a.m. for a day of fly fishing. The session will be held "rain or shine", so everyone is cautioned to dress accordingly...and don't forget your rod, reel, waders and wading staff.

The morning starts with a seining of the Schoharie to inventory the aquatic insects and invertebrates. The seining will give our students a chance to examine and identify the nymphs, larva and juicy morsels (to a trout) present in the Schoharie at this time of the season. Following the seining our students will team up with chapter members and test their casting skills with a nymph, wet fly or streamer.

A late morning or early afternoon break includes a streamside lunch of sandwiches, chips and soda, provided by TU. Lunch will give everyone a chance to rest, to trade experiences and talk about the "one that got away." It will also give everyone a chance to plan the afternoon fishing, and decide what part of the Schoharie to fish. We may just find a hatch of caddis or mayflies to give the students a chance to "match the hatch" with a dry fly...the graduate level of fly fishing.

I end this column by thanking our students for giving our chapter the opportunity to pass some of our skills and experience along. It not only helps you, but also helps us to sharpen and maintain our own casting and on-the-stream skills. Thanks to our chapter's volunteer instructors: Hank Theiss, Dick Riccio, Dave Rudloff, Tim Lippert, Joe Reina, Steve Matheke, Rick Bobrick, Justin Seeley, Bobby Fisher, Wendy Neefus, Lynn Lee, Ron Baumann, Todd Brightly and John Libruk...and a special thanks to Dave Griffin for the use of his booklet.

See everyone on Saturday, May 20<sup>th</sup>...and good fishing!                      George Goth, EDUCATION CHAIRMAN

## INFORMATIVE WEB SITE: NYC Watershed Access Permits

*From the NYC DEP website:*

"In order to responsibly provide recreation access to City property, DEP issues a comprehensive permit — The Access Permit — that allows for fishing and hiking on certain designated areas in the watershed." Properties requiring an access permit are supposed to be designated by signage, and are generally found near waters near reservoirs serving NYC's water supply.

For more information how to obtain your free permit:

1. Go to [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep)
2. Click on "About DEP"
3. Click on "Recreational Use and Permits." Here you will find the downloadable forms and the address to submit them.

Justin

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

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

Chances are you've had the experience of casting intently to a fish in a long pool to have a fellow angler sidle up beside you and cast to the same fish you were working. Occurrences like these make me wonder, like the title of an Ed Zern classic, Are Fishermen People?

However, the encounters we remember tend to be the pleasant ones with old or new acquaintances. In the essay "How to Stop Smoking" Ed Zern spins a tale of how, after having quit smoking for some time, he hooks into what he believes to be a large trout, but after a long battle realizes that it is a small fish that has snagged the dropper fly on a large wooden plank. Zern then slips on a rock, breaks his leader, and thinking he's safe from further ridicule emerges from the stream to a crowd of onlookers offering praise and condolences for having hooked and lost such a large trout. After the crowd has left, one angler offers him a cigarette and to Zern's chagrin, mentions that he'd hooked the same plank that morning.

There's a lot of humor in our fishing actions. As some may know, taking an unexpected swim is always funnier when your fishing buddies are present. No one does a better job of capturing the absurd and fanatical humor of fishing than Ed Zern.

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

What does a fish say when it runs into a brick wall? Dam!  
FROM THE INTERNET

## **REQUEST FOR PUBLIC SERVICE ACTIVITY**

When the community asks for a request from our chapter we must keep in mind the TU mission statement... "to conserve, protect, and restore North America's cold water fisheries and their watersheds"...and decide if the request agrees with that goal. In order to evaluate that more efficiently, before the chapter can approve a commitment, we need the following information at the time of request:

1. Date
2. Time
3. Place
4. What is TU expected to do?
5. What is TU expected to provide?
6. How many people will be served?
7. Are there any other significant factors or considerations for TU to be aware of to make the decision?

Hank and John LaRocca

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

Two disparate thoughts, one an old set of brain connections and the other passages from a recently read novel, trigger this story line. Long hours of driving in New Jersey include frequent glances over roadway bridges to the sometime trout streams that run below them, “sometime” because most are trout streams of the “put and take” variety, courtesy of a fish hatchery in Hackettstown. Ivan Doig’s novel, Bucking the Sun, is set in Montana and includes a lyrical paragraph describing the spring snowmelt and rush to the Missouri River that creates the classic spring high water of the flats and foothills below the Rocky Mountains.

### LARGE STATE...”SMALL WORLD”

More than ten years ago my work brought me to Helena, Montana for a project with the Montana Department of Transportation. A map check before my first flight west revealed that Helena, the capital, nestles in the valley of the Missouri River. A brief information search uncovered the state’s “blue ribbon trout water” designation for large sections of the river, and closer map review revealed, of course, a network of tributaries and smaller waterways feeding the “Mighty Mo.” I figured that even if I did not have much experience with big water like the Missouri, I could certainly catch a few trout in the smaller tributaries. What I did **not** figure was the time of year; my first trip was in the spring so I planned an extra two days at the end of the work and packed my travel rod, a minimally stocked early season vest and waders...then I got pretty excited about the prospect of fishing water in storied Montana!

Three days of meeting the DOT leadership and doing some introductory workshops for managers and staff, and I was done with the first phase of the project and ready to fish. I’d made the obligatory stop at the best fly shop, Paul Roos Outfitters, which I now see advertised in all the journals, and I learned that I was there at precisely the wrong time. As it turns out, there are two “early seasons” for trout in many of our western states. First, there is the brief period when it is warm in the foothills and lowlands but still very cold in the mountain snow fields; streams and rivers are fishable, sometimes wonderfully so, because the big melt has not started. Next, **after** the wild race for lower elevation that the snowmelt makes, there is another “early season” when the water recedes and edges toward the normal summer flows. That second early season is sometimes well into summer here on the east coast. Unaware, I had timed my trip for about a third of the way into the wild rush of water off the mountains.

Down but not out, I made a round of inquiries looking for word of any flowing water that I might fish without undue risk of drowning, and was directed to a little creek 15 or so miles west of Helena on national forest land. I grabbed a packaged hero sandwich at the ever-present fast-food gas station on the edge of the city (at 27,500 of population, Helena hardly qualifies, but in Montana it makes it easily) and headed west. The forest service road that paralleled the little creek was easy to locate, and so was the “little creek”...it was a raging torrent. But I was there, so nothing to do but carry on. The gravel road ran side by side with the water for miles, and between the road and the creek was an unbroken string of barbed wire with periodic “posted” signs. Frustrated, I finally pulled into the driveway of a big RV that looked occupied and with some misgivings, knocked on the door.

A few seconds later the knock was answered by a gentleman who looked down at me and said, “Hey, don’t I know you?” Translated: “What the heck are you doing out here?...it’s the weekend and I’m off duty.” It was the Commissioner of Montana DOT whom I’d met a couple of days before at the briefing I’d given to DOT leadership. “Small world” we both said to ourselves and the commissioner proceeded to tell me that I could fish anywhere; the wire and signs were not meant to keep trout fisherman away. He also opined that it would be very difficult to catch fish in the flood. “Any suggestions?” I asked. “Echo Lake,” he replied. “You might even catch a grayling up there.” I spent the next few hours adding split shot to stout leaders tipped with big nymphs, drifting the terminal tackle through eddies and the slowest fast water I could find, and got skunked.

The next day, my last before the plane trip home, I made more inquiries, got directions to Echo Lake, drove south on Interstate 15 (fast - no daytime speed limit in Montana), and located and turned onto another forest service road. Montana has as many miles of road as New York State, but most are unpaved gravel, and this one was long. When I finally arrived at the lake I was surprised to find fifty or sixty cars parked and the small picnic area at one end of the lake crowded with families enjoying the warm, sunny spring day. No one, however, appeared to be fishing. Without much enthusiasm I strung up the rod, added a small Bead Head Prince, twitched back the first cast from a nondescript opening in the shoreline woods and promptly hooked an eleven-inch grayling. Sleek and slim, with the wonderful dorsal fin as advertised, it was the first of that species I’d caught, and I was pretty excited! I quickly caught another...then the action went to zero.

Half an hour later, in the midst of an absent-minded cast, I caught a glimmer of motion on the far shore of the lake and with some heavy duty squinting managed to discern another angler in a tiny cove. His casts looked practiced and smooth, so I decided to visit (and learn). Echo Lake is only sixty or seventy acres, maybe less, and following a well-worn path I was in the woods opposite the angler in just a few minutes. I watched intently as he stood thigh deep twenty yards into the cove, cast back toward the shore and hooked and released ten to twelve-inch cutthroats on about every fourth cast. The rises to his tiny Elk Hair Caddis were dainty swirls and his hook set was just as delicate but very effective. He knew I was there and seemed to know that I was there just to take it all in.

After a dozen or so released fish he waded in and introduced himself. I, in turn, told him what I was up to, and he proceeded to teach. The cutthroats were in the cove in a school getting ready to spawn. He pointed to a tiny – two-foot wide, no more – stream that emptied into the cove and took me to the edge to peer into a bathtub-sized plunge pool a few yards upstream. There were probably fifty trout packed into that little space. He told me the place to catch them was in the “staging area” in the cove; they would bite in the plunge pool too, but what would be the point? Virtually any tiny dry fly would get them as would a little brassy stripped through the shallow cove.

He told me his name (which I now can’t remember), said he had recently moved to Montana, worked for DOT, and better still, had grown up in New Jersey in the shadow of the Hackettstown

fish hatchery. He had cut his trout fishing teeth on stocked fish in the Musconetcong River. "Small world," we said aloud...nearly simultaneously.

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

"Any time you have an opportunity to make a difference in this world and you don't, you are wasting your time on Earth."

ROBERTO CLEMENTE - Louisville Slugger Museum

## **AND THE APRIL WINNER IS...**

...Gary Dodson who won flies hand-tied and donated by Wendy Neefus. (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 doesn't want to receive the newsletter any longer please notify one of us:**

Dick Riccio (518) 851-7002

Hank Theiss (518) 851-9442

Justin Seeley (518) 537-4685

Email addresses can be found on the Web Page at <http://cgtu.org/> on the "Contact Us" page.

## **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, May 16, 2006

**MEETING NEXT MONTH:** Tuesday, June 20, 2006

## **UPCOMING EVENTS!**

Saturday	May	6	GCSWCD Volunteer Planting Day At the Big Hollow Project on the Batavia Kill Watershed	9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
			<b>For more information: <a href="http://www.gcswcd.com">www.gcswcd.com</a> or call Dave Rudloff</b>	
Sunday		7	Shingle Kill Clean-up	Cairo Cornell Co-op Ext 9:00 a.m.
Tuesday		9	Education Committee Mtg.	George Goth's home 7:00 p.m.
Thursday		11	Banquet/Dinner Committee Mtg.	Joe Reina's home 7:00 p.m.
			<b>Anyone interested in joining the committee to help, <u>please attend this meeting.</u></b>	
			<b>Justin Seeley and Fran Martino will be co-chairs for this committee this year.</b>	
Saturday		20	STUDENTS' DAY ON THE STREAM - SCHOHARIE CREEK	9:00 a.m.

Art Flick Memorial Rte 23A, between Lexington/Prattsville  
Saturday August 5 Fly-tying Demo/Casting Lessons OLANA 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

**The Current is not printed in July and August when C-GTU does not hold monthly meetings.**

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

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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>
Secretary	Justin Seeley	(518) 537-4685	Email - See "Contact Us" Page, Secretary <a href="http://cgtu.org/">http://cgtu.org/</a>
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Lynn Lee	Ex officio	(518) 828-5402	Email - See Contact Us Page, Directors <a href="http://cgtu.org/">http://cgtu.org/</a>

**KEEP CURRENT...WITH THE CURRENT!**

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