
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

STUDENTS STORM THE SCHOHARIE

On Saturday, May 20th, students from the fly-fishing courses gathered with TU members to test their trout knowledge against the residents of the Schoharie Creek. Instead of snow, as in years past, the only flurries were of sporadic March Browns on the water. A cool and damp day didn't keep the crowds away, and many were rewarded for a hard day's fishing with at least a few fish landed. If only the fish were as large as the submarine sandwich that Dave Rudloff brought to feed the gathering of hungry fishermen.

For the most part, members teamed up with students to learn new spots to fish and work on various techniques. Those present included Hank Theiss, Dick Riccio, John Libruk, Bob Fisher, Dave Rudloff, George Goth, Bob Novak, Joe Reina, Justin Seeley, James Bates, Linda Burger, Steve Algeria, Dave Turco, Sean Ewing, Dale Becker, Robert and Kailee McKeon. Justin

SPRING CLEANING

Members of the Columbia-Greene Rip Van Winkle Chapter of Trout Unlimited didn't need to search to come up with a good excuse to be on the stream recently. Leaving their spouses and families to tend to the yard work, members of Trout Unlimited took part in their own version of spring cleaning.

On Sunday, April 30th, volunteers spent the morning collecting trash from the Claverack Creek in Columbia County, while on Sunday, May 7th, the cleaning efforts were focused on the Shingle Kill in Greene County. All told, almost eight truckloads were collected, including an old bicycle, a rusted mattress, and a slew of Styrofoam coffee cups. Many volunteers then passed the afternoon fishing the pools they had just cleaned, further prolonging the yard work that awaited them at home.

Thank you to the following volunteers for giving their time towards these good causes: Cole and Dave Rudloff, Hank Theiss, Wendy Neefus, Steve Matheke, Bob Fisher, Dick Riccio, John La Rocca, John Jaronsik, Joe Reina, George Goth, Justin Seeley, Bob Novak, and Tracy Lamanac. **Your efforts are appreciated by all who fish our local streams.** Justin

FLY-TYING WORKSHOP AT AGROFORESTRY

On April 27th, several chapter members participated in a fly-tying workshop sponsored by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Greene County at their Agroforestry Resource Center on

Route 23 in Acra. The workshop consisted of two fly-tying demonstrations, each followed by a hands-on tying of the featured fly.

The workshop began with the chapter's secretary, Justin Seeley, demonstrating the tying procedures for the Woolly Worm. Following his lead, thirteen or so apprentice fly tyers, wound chenille bodies and palmered grizzly hackle on a streamer hook to make their own Woolly Worms. Members Dick Riccio, Ron Baumann, Dave Rudloff, Joe Reina, George Goth and Hank Theiss guided the students "one-on-one" through the fly-tying steps...(Thanks to all!)

The Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear was tied next. The tying of this nymph pattern was demonstrated by Wendy Neefus, ("Dr. Lead" as he is known by his fellow chapter members). The new fly tyers, many of them in grade school, then tackled this nymph, a smaller and more complicated pattern, with their newly acquired tying skills.

At the conclusion of the Hare's Ear, Dick Riccio, the chapter's stocking chairperson, explained Trout Unlimited's conservation mission and our chapter's activities in Columbia and Greene Counties. The Cooperative Extension provided refreshments.

The Cooperative Extension was represented by Andy Turner, the Executive Director, Angela Talarico, their Office Manager and Liz LoGiudice, an Extension Educator.

For those members with varied interests, the Cooperative Extension sponsors a Spring-Summer Program with workshops on gardening, forestry and birding. Most workshops are held at the Argroforestry Resource Center. To learn more about the workshops or to sign-up for one, call the Cooperative Extension at 518-622-9820 or e-mail them at greenec@cornell.edu.

George Goth, EDUCATION CHAIRMAN

2006 TROUT RELEASE PROGRAM CONCLUDING

The season for releasing trout into local streams is approaching a successful completion. At the time of this writing there are still several more stocking days left but the largest majority of hatchery fish have found new homes in local streams, lakes, ponds, creeks, freezers and stomachs in both Columbia and Greene Counties.

In Columbia County the following places have received fish: Kinderhook Creek, Claverack Creek, Taghkanic Creek, Roeliff Jansen Kill Creek, Kline Kill Creek, Queechy Lake, Weed Mines Pond, and Ore Pit Pond. Greene County water bodies that received fish are Catskill Creek, Basic Creek, Batavia Kill Creek, East Kill Creek, Schoharie Creek, Kaaterskill Creek (and its downstream section known as Cauterskill Creek), Colgate Lake, Greens Lake, and C.D. Lane Park Pond. One-year-old (7 to 10 inches) and two-year-old (10 to 16 inches, with some even larger) brown trout were stocked in most of the streams, and rainbow or brook trout were put into the ponds.

At every stocking Trout Unlimited was well represented as volunteers gave their time and effort to ensuring its success. I can safely say that our organization and friends of TU were, time and again, the bulk of volunteers who showed up to help deliver fish to the streams so that anglers

can enjoy the experience of catching trout locally. Many volunteers participated in this activity and quite a few folks attended several stocking days. I feel that TU volunteers should be especially recognized and the following participants are members: Bill Cash, Mike Clarke, John Conlon, Ron Decker, Vinnie Dubois, Bobby Fisher, Rich Forlani, John Jaronsik, Wendy Neefus, Joe Reina, Howard Reznikoff, Dick Riccio, Justin Seeley, Hank Theiss, and Cort Wright. I apologize to you members who did not get included in this list. I could not attend all the events and I'm sure some of you got left out, but it does not minimize your effort and dedication. Despite the fact that I wanted to name the TU members I hope the rest of you are not insulted, because the importance of all the volunteers performing this work is much appreciated and it is truly critical for the success of this public program. Without all you folks who made the time to volunteer, there would be a less viable opportunity to catch trout in our local creeks, lakes and ponds.

As chairman of the stocking program for our chapter I am grateful and proud of all the folks who participated and for all your efforts to make this a successful program. So, **volunteers, congratulations and thank you for a job well done!** I wish all anglers who catch trout in both counties could know of your volunteer spirit so that they could appreciate the effort you made in order for them to have an opportunity to catch a trout. Dick Riccio, STOCKING CHAIRMAN

CATSKILL STREAMS' FUTURES IN JEOPARDY

The futures of the Esopus Creek and the East Branch of the Delaware River as premier fisheries could be in question. Plans for a substantial resort atop Belleayre Mountain, where the headwaters of these two fabled streams begin, include two golf courses, large-scale hotels and residential developments, and two sewage treatment plants among other features that would degrade the fisheries below. The demands for water that this would place on the watershed, coupled with runoff from golf courses and paved surfaces could potentially devastate these fisheries.

The Catskill Mountain Chapter of TU has spearheaded the massive undertaking of opposing this development. Along with other like-minded organizations, they have raised over \$250,000 to cover legal fees in this ongoing battle, yet additional funds are needed. Because of the success of our chapter's conservation banquet last year, we were able to make a contribution towards this cause. Additional contributions are appreciated and may be made out and sent to: Columbia-Greene TU, PO Box 733, Hudson, NY 12534. Justin

FROM THE EDITORS: Justin's Chuckle for the Month

Q: Why did the fly fisherman visit Area 51?

A: He needed some extra terrestrials.

FROM THE INTERNET

HANK'S FLY BOX – Early Season Black Stonefly

Many of you may remember that Bill Millard submitted his Early Little Black Stonefly Nymph to our April 2005 newsletter. Bill has recently devised a simple method to tie the dry fly version of the Early Season Black Stonefly. This is a good fly to put in your “memory bank” to tie over the winter for the early season stoneflies that we find crawling all over in March and April. Bill, thanks again for another valuable contribution to The Current.

Readers, please keep your suggestions coming in. I learn something new from each of your recipes and am happy you are willing to share them with everyone.

MATERIALS:

HOOK: Mustad 94840 - 18 to 14

THREAD: Black 8/0

RIB: Black saddle hackle (size to hook...stripped on one side)

BODY: Black dubbing very fine.

WING CASE: One black goose biot

INSTRUCTIONS:

Step #1: Start thread at the 4/5's mark of shank and wrap back to the hook point.

Step #2: Here attach the saddle hackle, (stripped on side against hook), leave hang, keeping it at the hook point.

Step #3: Dub thread very lightly and wrap up to the 4/5's mark and tie it down.

Step #4: Wrap the saddle hackle in OPEN wraps to the end of your dubbing, (about three wraps), tie it down and cut off excess.

Step #5: Now cut the hackle off the top and bottom of the fly's body.

Step #6: Tie on one goose biot with point facing to the hook eye...ADJUST it so that the back of biot goes just past the hook's bend, say 1/4 of inch.

Look at the real insect - imitates it very well.

FROM THE EDITORS: Thought for the Month

This quote was submitted by John La Rocca from the wonderful book he just finished reading - Bill Bryson's A Short History of Nearly Everything... (He also wrote A Walk in the Woods). John thinks that Trout Unlimited, with its conservation mission, bucks the trend...and is a little evidence to the contrary.

*...if you were designing an organism to look after life in our lonely cosmos,
to monitor where it is going and to keep a record of where it has been,
you wouldn't choose human beings for the job.*

*It's an unnerving thought that we may be the living universe's
supreme achievement and its worst nightmare simultaneously.*

BILL BRYSON

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

I was waiting for this day, knowing with certainty that it would come and with equal certainty that it would not be perfect. The rain would fall, hopefully in the right amount to bring the stream flow up (not a flood, but noticeable) and cloud the water (not to the color of chocolate milk, but maybe to a shade lighter than Yogi Berra's Yoo-Hoo). Finally, the rain had to fall on the right day; until retirement, work and travel schedules still call the shot.

WILD BROWNS

All came together beginning with a heavy rain on Thursday night, the first real rain in weeks. I took a different route to work on Friday morning, one that would take me over the third of five bridges that cross the creek along its length from source to terminus. Stopping on the bridge, I hit the hazard flashers and dismounted to peer over the railing into the stream. Almost perfect...and the green pickup in the fishermen's access parking lot testified that at least one other angler agreed. The night rains had abated, and stream conditions would not change much before late afternoon when I planned to leave the office...or so I thought. After the brief scouting venture I spent the rest of the day on the phone and at the keyboard shaking my head every time a torrential downpour rattled the screen on the office window. By noon retirement looked like the only option, but I persevered.

Somewhere in the vicinity of four in the afternoon I shut down, packed up, and drove home, crossing the first of the five bridges. Water volume in the creek had increased, but its clarity – or lack thereof – looked about the same. In a few minutes I was home, into waders and stringing up the old (shorter) fly rod. After adding just a bit of tippet to the existing leader, I tied on a bead head, sparkle-bodied Woolly Bugger. To the hook bend went another fourteen inches of tippet finished with a nondescript gray bead head nymph. Maybe the set-up was unconventional, but my reasoning was that it would be “chuck and duck” – actually, roll cast and duct – on the swollen little creek. With the rod in the back of the pickup, I squeezed, wader-clad and ready to fish, behind the wheel.

On the way to the creek I crossed the middle bridge again but decided to travel to and park near the next crossing up on the theory that the water might be just a bit lower and less turbid. It was raining hard again, but the creek was still fishable. I marveled about that, and in the course of a conversation with a friend the next day, he commented on the phenomena. Al is a lifelong resident of Medusa and has fished the creek since he was a boy. He noted that it takes much longer now for the creek to turn chocolate in a heavy rain than it did years ago. Things changed with the demise of dairy farming in the area. “When I was a kid there were countless cow paths that led toward the creek,” he said. They were raw dirt scars and when it rained the silt was in the creek very, very quickly. “Agriculture is all but gone,” Al remarked. “The cow paths are grassed over and the time it takes the creek to color up reflects that change.” I could testify to that; most of the water that was pouring into the creek from small tributaries was still pretty clear, even late in the day.

Minutes after parking in the access lot I was brushing raindrops off the bill of my hat but happily rolling casts into the long deep glide above the bridge. Half way up the run the strike indicator,

already submerged in the heavy water but still highly visible, jerked to a momentary halt, and I set the hook. The fish stayed deep, and I could not quickly judge the size of this first one in the heavy current. It felt good. I am sure I was smiling broadly through the heavy rain when the chunky eleven-inch brown came in and I twisted the nymph free. As the fish slipped into the still water in the lee of my boots I whispered to myself, “Wild brown...he was right there the last time I fished through here, but novice that I am, I needed cloudy water to catch him!”

The next fish came a few minutes later, a few yards upstream in the same run, about the same time I shivered and noticed that I was drenched right through the old – too old – gortex. The hit was less obvious but still significant enough for there to be no doubt. The faster the water is moving the more solid the hit; it seems they can’t afford to nibble when the food will disappear in an instant! After two quick, short runs another brown, the twin of the first, went airborne a rod-length away. More acrobatic rainbow trout are expected to perform like that. “Who said browns don’t jump?” I asked aloud to the dripping tree limbs and streamside brambles. “Stream-bred trout in little country creeks don’t read,” I said a little more softly, doubting that there was anyone around to hear me talking to myself, but in Rensselaerville one can never be sure. A moment later, while I still smiled about his antics, he was gone...a “self release!”

I’d not fished *below* the bridge in years and years, so rather than continue upstream casting through a hundred or more yards of nondescript water, I lumbered up the soggy bank and trod the path downstream to the bridge. Once below my attention was immediately focused on the roar and sight of a significant drop-off at the end of a sixty-yard gradient stretch. With a few minutes more of slippery wading I was standing at the edge of a swirling, bubble-filled pool with classic back currents and eddies on either side of the main flow. The spot is the result of the proper functioning of what may be the last intact “pool builder” stream improvement structure left on the creek. Cold, very wet, and severely doubting I could get my offering in range of the trout I knew must be in the hole somewhere, I made a cast.

And then I made another, and another, and another...I cast into the white water, into the bubbles, to the edges and to the seams. I walked to the tail of the pool, braced for the onslaught, and waded to the other side where I repeated the drill: head of the pool, into the bubbles, to the seams, around the whirlpool/eddy. Dead drift, twitch, strip-retrieve...throw a big stone into the pool. (No, I did not get that desperate or frustrated.) One more time, slow and deliberate, with only a dozen feet of line and leader combined beyond the rod tip, I guided the rig into the near-side eddy and toward the cribbing that formed the dam. And there he was...a couple of solid tugs, set the hook, and play him to the gravel at the end of the pool. The last fish of this wet adventure was about thirteen-inches long, and with the twist of forceps on the gray nymph, he was back in the pool...wild brown.

“Home water is alive and well,” I thought as I completed the short drive home and decided it was a good night for a small fire in the fireplace. Then I remembered that there were two-hour expeditions twenty years ago when I’d catch a dozen, sometimes more, wild browns. “Something has changed. This story is incomplete,” I thought as I pulled into the driveway. “It needs...**to be continued.**”

TROUT BROOKS & TROUT BOOKS:

A Look Into Justin's Bookcase

On a recent stocking excursion, after dumping our buckets of trout in the Roe-Jan, our own Wendy "Dr. Lead" Neefus said something to the effect that we were approaching the "sweet of the year." The Hendricksons were winding down, and any of a number of mayflies and caddis would soon be on the water, likely giving trout fishermen a lot of enjoyment and a little frustration too. Couple the fishing action with the abundance of wildflowers and birds that we find streamside among the newly green canopy of trees, and this time of year is tough to beat.

If ever there was a book that captures the excitement and promise that fishing holds, R. Palmer Baker's The Sweet of the Year (Wm. Morrow, 1965) is it. Izaak Walton may have penned (if plagiarism counts) the angler's idyll for England, but Baker's milkmaids and adventures of the Catskills are at the forefront of America's angling literature.

Baker, a lawyer by profession, proving that lawyers are not all bad, commented on his book, that "it is made up of stories and sketches, based on experience, which I hope will convey some of the pleasure and feeling which come to a trout fisherman who is raised to the sport in this part of the world." Writers such as Baker have certainly contributed to many anglers' pleasures and celebrations of our sport, making it that much sweeter.

AND THE MAY WINNER IS...

...Dick Riccio 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 HAVE AN EMAIL ADDRESS AND RECEIVED THIS NEWSLETTER BY MAIL
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, June 20, 2006

Have a good summer! **See you at the SEPTEMBER meeting...**Tuesday, **September 19, 2006.**

UPCOMING EVENT!

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

Chapter Officers

President	Hank Theiss	(518) 851-9442	Email - See "Contact Us" Page, President http://cgtu.org/
Vice President	Joe Reina	(518) 701-3640	Email - See "Contact Us" Page, Vice President http://cgtu.org/
Secretary	Justin Seeley	(518) 537-4685	Email - See "Contact Us" Page, Secretary http://cgtu.org/
Treasurer	Dave Rudloff	(518) 239-8397	Email - See "Contact Us" Page, Treasurer http://cgtu.org/

Board of Directors

Dick Riccio	Term ends 2007	(518) 851-7002	Email - See Contact Us Page, Directors http://cgtu.org/
Rick Bobrick	Term ends 2007	(518) 239-8443	Email - See Contact Us Page, Directors http://cgtu.org/
John La Rocca	Term ends 2008	(518) 239-6786	Email - See Contact Us Page, Directors http://cgtu.org/
Wendy Neefus	Term ends 2008	(518) 828-6645	Email - See Contact Us Page, Directors http://cgtu.org/
John Libruk	Term ends 2009	(518) 828-5694	Email - See Contact Us Page, Directors http://cgtu.org/
Dave Turco	Term ends 2009	(518) 851-7931	Email - See Contact Us Page, Directors http://cgtu.org/
Lynn Lee	Ex officio	(518) 828-5402	Email - See Contact Us Page, Directors http://cgtu.org/

KEEP CURRENT...WITH THE CURRENT!

Dick Riccio, Hank Theiss & Justin Seeley (Editors)