



# LINES & LEADERS

Newsletter of the Connecticut Fly Fishermen's Association

Volume 27, No. 3

November 1999

Organized "To Preserve and Promote the Pleasures and Traditions of Fly Fishing and to Conserve Game-Fish Waters."

## NOVEMBER MEETING

*Charlie Place*  
*Fishing the Willimantic River*

This month's speaker will be our own Charlie Place, doing a program on fishing the catch and release section of the Willimantic River. Besides being our club president, Charlie is also a very good fisherman, writer and storyteller. Come and learn how and where to fish our home river.

**PLACE:** Veteran's Memorial Clubhouse  
Sunset Ridge  
East Hartford, CT

**DATE:** Wednesday, 10 Nov

**TIME:** Fly Tying - 7:00 p.m.  
Program - 7:30 p.m.

## CUTTING DOWN ON DESK CLUTTER

*(Reprinted from FFF September 1999 Clubwire)*

Here's a tip to help you cut down on desk clutter. Put one or two of those flexible magnetic strips on your bench. You could use them for holding your current selection of hoods or for holding completed flies to dry.

Another way to keep flies together is to cut a short length of monofilament and heat one end of the filament until it forms a bead. String your flies on the filament and keep them there with a clothes pin. It's also a great way to ensure there is no glue clogging the eye while drying.

*By Dick Eppinger of the South Jersey Fly Fishers*



## FROM THE VEST OF THE PRESIDENT

I was talking fishing with a bunch of fishermen at work and telling them that I didn't fish as much this year as I did last year. While I was talking about it I began to realize that I had been fishing quite a bit. Just not in the usual places. When I added it all up, I stopped feeling sorry for myself and began to wonder how I was going to get more vacation time next year. Realistically I guess I'll never reach "Trout Bum" status, but maybe "Trout Bub" could be within reach. Sort of a junior Trout Bum.

The Willi has been stocked with five hundred trout. November's program will feature pictures of trout caught on the Willi using a sinking line and a secret woolly buggler pattern. Also, a new fly called the Yellow Mustache. There must be a story attached to the mustache fly somewhere. The guy giving the program is not a bad guy and seems to know what he's talking about, but we'll just have to see.

This year's banquet speaker is Tam DiGristine. Tam has been fishing the waters of the Indian River and Mosquito Lagoon since she was old enough to tag along with her older brothers and hold a fly rod. Ever since she has learned to fly fish, she has spent almost every day on the flats in search of tarpon, red fish, snook, seatrout, jack crevalle and whatever else happens to be swimming by. She also ties her own flies. She writes for "Coastal Angler Magazine," a local magazine in Florida and for a few other web sites. You can find her articles at <http://www.camirl.com> and <http://ddi.digital.net/~garyc> as well as other web sites from time to time. Tam is going to be here for the Expo too. She will be giving an afternoon slideshow and a fly tying demonstration, so ask plenty of questions because with the arrival of Southwest Airlines at Bradley, weekend fishing trips to Florida may be within financial reach.

Ok guys and gals we need articles for Lines and Leaders. Fishing tips could just be three or four lines, same thing for fly tying tips. Fly patterns are ok. Stories about trips to local fishin' holes or far away places are fine. Heck, make up a story, we're fishermen ya know.

Take care,

*Charlie*





# Club News

- **Fly Tyers** – Anyone interested in tying flies at the membership meetings please call Steve Sawczuk, 747-5852. Don't worry about your fly tying skills. Anyone can pick up a tip or two just watching you. Give it a try! It is lots of fun.
- **Beginning Fly Fishing Seminar** - This year at the Civic Center Fishing Show the CFFA would like to sponsor a beginning fly fishing seminar. We are looking for a Chair. If anyone is interested please let Charlie Place, 623-9912, or any other Board member know.
- **Willy & General CT Fly Fishing Guide** - Ray Riley has agreed to Chair an effort to produce a guide for the Willy and other waters in CT. Anyone who is interested in helping out, please contact Ray.
- **Membership** - Bob Quinn reports that we have 318 members in good standing.
- **TIP Program** - For the first eight months in 1999 the TIP (Turn-in-Poachers) Program resulted in 28 arrests and 6 warnings out of 181 complaints filed for fishing related poaching.

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## COMING EVENTS

CFFA Board Meeting	3 Nov 99
CFFA Membership Meeting,	10 Nov 99
CFFA Fishing Trip	15-17 Oct 99
International Fly Tying Symposium, Somerset, VT	20-26 Nov 99
CFFA Board Meeting	1 Dec 99
CFFA Membership Meeting	8 Dec 99
Rod Building School	To be announced
Fly Tying School	6, 13, 20, 27 Jan, 3, 10 Feb 00
The Fly Fishing Show, Marlboro, MA	21-23 Jan 00
The Fly Fishing Show, Somerset, N J	28-30 Jan 00
Eastern Fishing & Outdoor Expo, Worcester	3-6 Feb 00
<b>CFFA Fly Fishing Expo &amp; Banquet Tam DiGristine, Fishing around Indian River and Mesquito Lagoon, The Colony, Vernon</b>	<b>12 Feb 00</b>
CMTA Fishing Show, Civic Center, Hartford	18-0 Feb 00
FRAA Banquet	4 Mar 00
World Fly Fishing Expo, Wilmington DE	11-12 Mar 00

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**ATTENTION ALL CFFA MEMBERS**

It is time to renew your membership for the upcoming year. Please fill out the enclosed form on this page, include a check or give it to Bob Quinn at the next club meeting. It is very important that this form be returned to ensure that we have your correct address and telephone number. A pre-addressed envelope is provided for you. We appreciate your membership over the past year and look forward to seeing you for many years to come. If anyone has a question about your membership status, you can call Bob. His number is on the last page of the newsletter. If you have already paid your dues or are a lifetime member, thank you for your support and please disregard this notice.

**THE REASONABLE ART OF FLY FISHING**

by Terry Mort

Abenaki Publishers, Inc., Bennington, VT, 1998  
205 pages, softbound, illustrated, B & W  
suggested price \$24.95

Terry Mort has spent a good portion of his career as a communications specialist. As such, he is a very good wordsmith and this first book about fly fishing is no exception. The book comprises chapters on a fly fishing overview, water, trout food, trout flies, trout behavior, fly fishing equipment, casting instruction, fly fishing etiquette, and fly fishing finesse. All sections are prefaced with a original collection of quotes by fly fishing names and many that are not. This book is a very good backup to a more traditional fly fishing instruction book. However, on its own it is a bit light on technique. It does provide the thinker with quite a lot of food for thought. This is a good place to find out "why" something is done in fly fishing more than "how" that something is done.

Overall a book well worth reading. An especially good companion to a instructional book such as Tom Meade's Essentials of Fly Fishing.

*(By Bruce Harang, Editor of the Smoky Mountain Fly Fishers of North Carolina)*

**WARM WATER CONSERVATION POLICY**

The FFF is developing a warm water conservation policy and we need your help. If you have input and ideas for consideration, please send them to Paul "Sodie" Sodamann, VP of Conservation for the Southern Council. (Sodie's e-mail address is pauls@manhattan.k12.ks.us). We would appreciate your passing this appeal to wildlife biologists, fisheries biologists and other interested parties.

The deadline for input is December 31st 1999.



## No Such Fish as A Muddler Minnow

(Reprinted from FFF Oct Clubwire)

Have you ever seen a minnow muddle? Well, then, have you ever seen a muddler minnow? I don't mean the fly. I mean the real thing.

This actually is a real fish, but it is not a real minnow; it is a sculpin. To be a bit more specific; the "muddler minnow" is the name of an artificial fly that resembles one of several freshwater species of the sculpin family. Wait, there is much more.

Most of the approximately 300 species in the sculpin family are marine and live only in saltwater. Individuals from some species may grow to be about 2 feet in length. (In Alaska, the fish that we call the "Irish Lord" is a sculpin... and I have no idea where the name, Irish Lord, came from.) The freshwater versions of sculpins, however, are much smaller (only a few grow longer than 4 inches) and there are only a few species that live in freshwater. Those that do, are stream dwellers and they usually live among the coarse rocky rubble in riffle areas.

The sculpin's body is thin and cylindrical. It tapers narrowly from the back of the head toward the tail. The head, however, is quite large compared to the body and it is broad and flat. (This appearance is what gave them an old common name "miller's thumb"... because their shape resembled an old miller's thumb which had been rubbed and worn broad and flat from years of rubbing and testing grain that had been ground by his millstone. Another common name, in some areas, is "bullhead".) Usually, sculpins are colored mottled brownish with a tinge of green and they have grayish-white bellies. The pectoral (i.e., side) fins are large and broad. Usually, sculpins have no scales, but some species have a few short spines on their gill covers.

I still remember the first time that I met a sculpin. I was about ten years old and I was fishing with angleworms for brook trout in a small northern Wisconsin stream. I don't remember if I caught any trout that day, but I do remember that I found a most bizarre little fish(?) on the end of my line. Ugly and cold. Slimy body, hard rough head. It was small, but it surely disrupted my concentration for trout fishing that day.

I think that sculpins are especially interesting because of their behavior. They live down among the coarse gravel of a stream bottom where they may be very abundant. They are easily overlooked, however, because of their small size, because they are so well camouflaged and because they usually hide between and under rocks. When they move, it is with a short, quick jerky forward burst followed by a gentle, quiet settle back to the rocky bottom. They feed more at night; usually, on aquatic insects.

In the spring, as spawning season nears, the males clean and hollow out a cavity for a nest under a rock. After the male attracts a female with a barking sound and a jerky display, he lures her into his nest where they spawn. Now get this; they spawn upside down. (Is this beginning to sound a bit kinky, or what?) The clutch of eggs is glued to the underside of the rock that forms the roof of the chamber. After the female has done her part, she leaves. The male guards the nest and fans the eggs until they hatch.

These little guys hatch in about late-May or June. By fall, they are still only about 1 or, perhaps, 2 inches long. They only live 5-6 years and they grow slowly - rarely growing longer than 3 or 4 inches so they make a nice morsel for trout and other predators. (Maybe this is when they become "muddled".)

(Continued on page 5)

### Colonial Sports

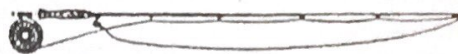
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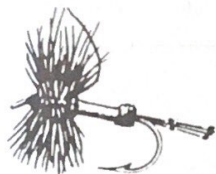


So, in summary; although there is no such fish as a muddler minnow, a muddler minnow fly is really a very good imitation of a small freshwater fish called a sculpin; which, although rarely seen, may be very abundant in cool and cold water streams around the world.

Sculpins are poor swimmers, but rely on their bottom-loving behavior and camouflage as protection. The male prepares a nest for the female and guards the eggs after they are laid...on the underside of the roof of the cavity. They can be an important prey species because of their small size.

Where they are very unusually abundant, they may be considered a competitor of trout or other larger fish because they may eat some of the same foods. Some people argue that they eat trout eggs and alevins, but all evidence suggests that the trout eggs eaten by sculpins are only eggs that are not properly buried and, thus, would not hatch anyhow.

*(Copyright Bill Hauser, a Fishery Biologist for the state of Alaska, and member of the Alaska Fly Fishers)*



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GUIDES



I am writing from experience. I have fished in Alaska six years with a guide and seven years in Canada with one. Trust me on this one. The cheapest part of your trip will be a guide. You will have fished the Will's, The House and Farmington and have learned that many sections of these rivers have few or no trout in them.

For example, if you go to the Middle West on a trip, you will find the same in those famous rivers. A guide will know his rivers and where to catch fish and what flies to use. He wants you to catch fish, as you will tip him according to how many fish you catch. He will have drink and some food with him. He will even have the hot flies with him for your use.

One thing to remember is that you are the client, so if at times you may disagree with him about lines and flies to use, follow your instincts, as it will often pay off. I will give you two examples.

On our first trip to Alaska, Charlie Place and I were boated to a pool called the Honey Hole. As I stepped out of the boat, I saw many salmon in the pool. My heart was pumped up, as I was to catch Pacific Salmon. As the pool was only three or four feet deep, the guide recommended a dry line and nine-foot leader with a bright fly. The fly that he recommended was a pink bunny fly that we had. After about ten minutes and no fish, Charlie and I waded to shore to discuss the situation. First, we noticed the river was murky as all Glacial Rivers are, so we did what experience had taught us--we would use dark flies. Next, all Salmon were swimming on the bottom, so we changed to heavy sink tip lines against the advice of our guide. Next a three foot leader. The flies we used were a pink head black wooly bugger and a purple wooly bugger with a pink head. These flies are called egg-sucking leeches in Alaska. We ended up with nine salmon each in a few hours. The purple as best and I used it about 90% of the time in the next five years. The river was full of trees that came down river as the banks eroded in the spring ice break up and the salmon was in these trees, so we lost a minimum of eight or more flies a day. Thank goodness these were so easy to tie. We ended up the most successful fishermen in camp.

The second time Charlie Place and I did not agree with our guide, was fishing pike at Scott Lake Lodge in Canada. You always fish pike in bays that average 3' to 5' deep. Our guide recommended a dry line and nine-foot leaders tipped with 10" of steel leader that he sold us at \$4.25 each. Each leader package had three sleeves to use when attaching fly to leader. As pike twist the steel into a coil and you must cut the fly off and reattach your fly--we went through two leaders in a couple of hours. Charley became our savior. This cagey old

fisherman designed a leader that I use to this day. We had bought wire at K-Mart for 99 cents a spool. Two feet of heavy leader material and two feet of wire attached to fly with a two-turn clinch knot. About 15 cents a leader. The guide recommended 8"-10" flies. Ours were about 4 1/2" long and we had 100 pike days. We were catching many small pike to ten pounds; but we noticed the big ones lying in the mud. We switched to sink tip lines and starting catching bigger fish. Those in the mud would not rise up to flies about them. You had to drag it at eye level. Charley always designs new flies and they are usually the worst flies that I have seen. I watched him use one of these flies in a bay and land two at 22#, 1 at 24#, 1 at 26# and a monstrosity that he had tied from strips from an old mink coat. It is now known as the "Coat fly". Thanks Charley. I forgot the other weird fly he had with him was "The Rope Fly". He cut 6" from a red and white nylon rope. Tore it apart and tied the red and white fibers to a hook. Weird; but he also had success with this fly. Just think about it. You trust him to be president.

*Ernest Boutiette*

P.S. Remember that it was the guides that put us over fish, which lead to our success. I found them worth their weight in gold.

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**Connecticut Fly Fishermen's Association  
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Beginning Fly Tying, Saltwater Fly Tying, Rod Building Schools**

**Classes:** Classes will meet downstairs at Veteran's Memorial Clubhouse, Sunset Ridge Drive, East Hartford, at 7:00pm on the following evenings: Jan. 6, 13, 20, 27, and February 3 and 10.

<b>Class:</b>	<b>Beginning Fly Tying</b>	<b>Saltwater Fly Tying</b>
	1. Marabou Leech, Wooly Bugger	Honey Blond, Hy Tye
	2. Dark Cahill, Soft Hackle	Surf Candy, Squid,
	3. Tellico, Hare's Ear Nymph	Clouser's Minnow, Cross Cut Deceiver
	4. Blue Wing Olive, Light Cahill	Lefty's Deceiver, Whistler
	5. Poly Spinner, Hen Wing Spinner	Epoxy Shrimp, Slider
	6. Black Ant, Deer Hair Bug	Bob's Banger, Sand Eel

**Equipment:** All necessary hooks and materials will be furnished. Students must supply their own vise, bobbin, thread, scissors, etc. It is also suggested you bring a portable lamp with you.

**Class Size:** Fly Tying classes limited to the first 25 people submitting applications for each class.

**Tuition:** Fly Tying class: CFFA Members - \$35; Non-Members - \$45; 16 & Under - \$25

**ROD BUILDING CLASS**

Details and Schedule will be announced in the December issue of Lines & Leaders.

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**CFFA Enrollment Application**

Please PRINT the requested information. Forward application forms and tuition (Checks payable to CFFA) to Gary Steinmiller, Education Chairman, 27 Penwood Lane, Wethersfield, CT 06109

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

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CFFA Member \_\_\_\_\_ Yes / \_\_\_\_\_ No      16 or under \_\_\_\_\_

Check one:    1. \_\_\_\_\_ Beginning Fly Tying    2. \_\_\_\_\_ Saltwater Fly Tying

For additional information contact Ed Fidrych, V.P. Promotion, 951 Glastonbury Turnpike, Portland, CT 06480  
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