

Lines & Leaders

www.ctflyfish.org

April 2013

The Newsletter of The Connecticut Fly Fisherman's Association

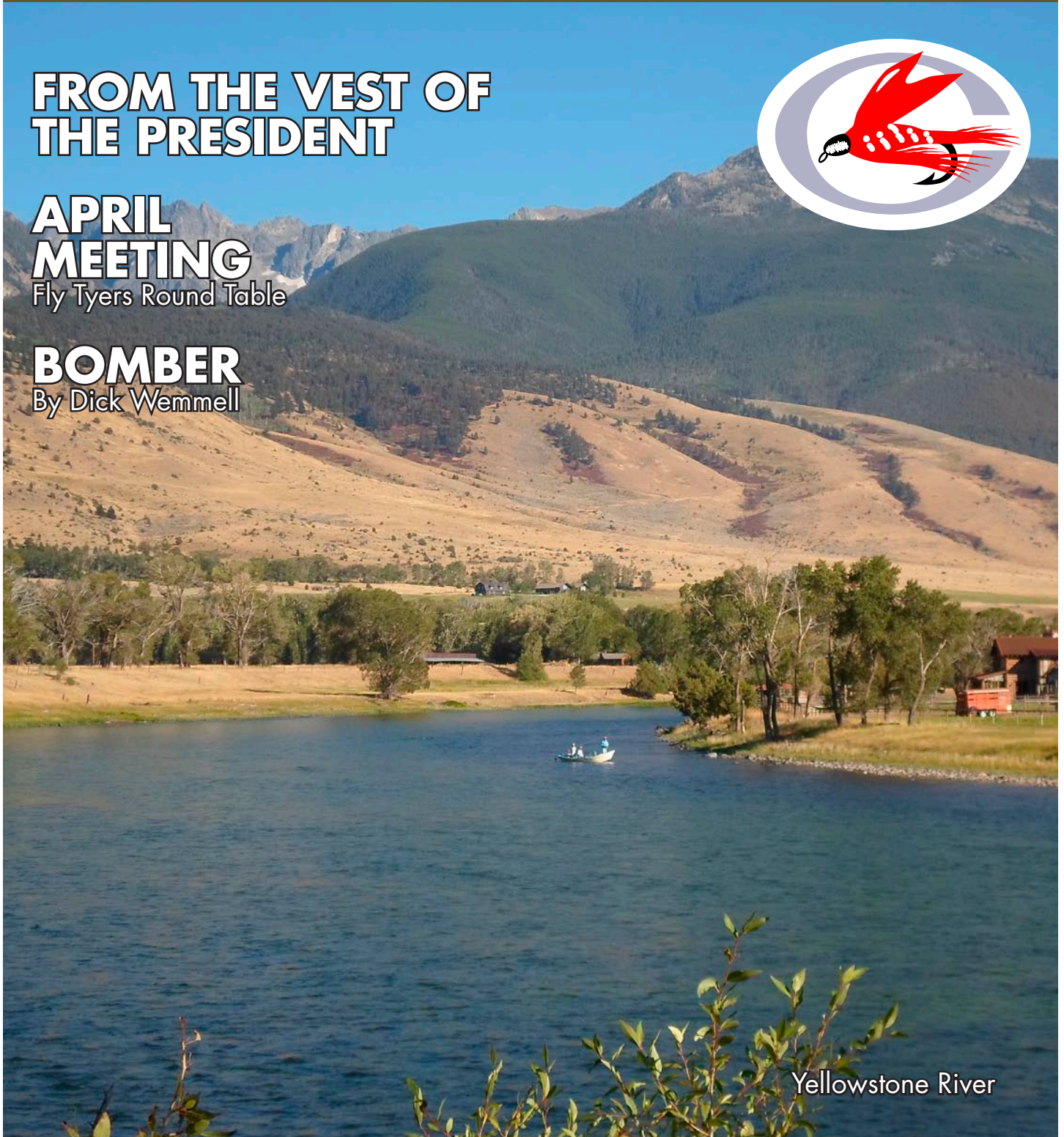
FROM THE VEST OF THE PRESIDENT

APRIL MEETING

Fly Tyers Round Table

BOMBER

By Dick Wemmell



Yellowstone River



From The Vest Of The President

"... without cult, ritual or mystery the soft hackled fly can be fished by anyone."

The Soft Hackled Fly
Sylvester Nemes

The program at our monthly meeting on April 10th will

be the annual Fly Tyers Roundtable. Our meetings are always open and free so grab a friend and join us when we host some of the best local fly tyers creating at their vises.

Bob Winot is organizing another cleanup of the riverside trails at the TMA on the Willimantic River on Wednesday April 24th. Our cleanup last year was very successful and we had a great time doing it. We'll finish with a club sponsored visit to Willington Pizza II. See Bob for more details.

One of our key fish hatcheries is again scheduled to be closed in the current proposed state budget. It was saved from the chopping block two years ago with help from CFFA and many others. The threat may be greater this time. Please consider contacting your state legislators to tell them this hatchery generates more economic activity than it costs, and that closing it will end valuable programs such





April Meeting

as Salmon in Schools, Trout in the Classroom, and stockings of broodstock salmon and sea run brown trout.

There is a very good reason that I seldom attempt to provide fly fishing instruction in this column: I'm neither an expert fly tier nor fisherman. However, I have received a lot of positive feedback each of the few times that I did offer advice here. So, I'm encouraged to try it again, especially now because we have so many new members who are new to our sport and are eager for guidance. Our Beginner Fly Tying Class this year had twenty students and the current Beginner Fly Fishing Class has seventeen students. These folks have been studying a wide range

of things, all important to our sport, but so much information can be a bit confusing. "Where do I start?" Seems to be at the core of many of their questions. I suggest that one place they can start tying and/or fishing is with soft hackled wet flies. Hopefully our more experienced members will also be reminded of a few useful things about "soft hackles", but I'm speaking directly to the beginners here. All that great classroom learning will soon be forgotten unless they start now to spend some time with flies at the vise or with flies on the water. Soft hackles are a simple way to make that start because they are easy to tie and easy to

The Connecticut Fly Fisherman's Association will present a fly fishing program on Wednesday, March 14, 2012 at the Veteran's Memorial Clubhouse, 100 Sunset Ridge, East Hartford, CT., at 7:00 pm

This month's meeting will be our fly tying round table. Twelve tyers will be demonstrating various fresh and salt water patterns. Admission to our monthly club meetings is free, and as always the public is invited to attend.

For more information and directions to the meeting or visit the CFFA website at www.ctflyfish.org

Vest Continued

fish.

They are also very effective trout catchers. The same soft hackled wet fly can give the impression of many different kinds of fish food including nymphs, emergers, adult insects that are drowned or depositing eggs, and even small baitfish. The simplicity and sparseness of these flies offer few things that trout can find fault with. The constant wiggling of the soft hackle suggests struggling prey, and that triggers strikes from predators. These flies work under many conditions in both streams and still waters, often without having to worry about matching a hatch. They are among the oldest known trout flies, but they've gone out of style lately and you don't see many in the fly shops or catalogs. The trout don't see many these days either.

To tie a basic, fishing-grade soft hackled wet fly you need any type of tying thread, any type of size 8 to 18 hook, some dubbing of almost any type, and a feather with soft fibers, which is virtually any hackle feather except the expensive ones with stiff fibers needed for dry flies. The point is that these are very forgiving flies that do not require highly specific materials. To get a feel for some preferred materials and to see some simple patterns, look up fly recipes for Partridge & Yellow, Soft Hackle Brassie-Green, March Brown Spider, Grouse & Orange, or Starling & Herl. If a specific ingredient is listed, and you don't have it, just substitute whatever you do have. Don't have "wet fly hooks"? Almost any hook (nymph, small streamer, dry fly) will do for these flies. The bodies of these flies can be made with dubbing or herl or wire or floss or stripped quills or some fibers from various quills, or just the bare tying thread – use whatever you have in the color you want. The soft hackle feathers are also interchangeable. Instead of a grouse feather use anything mottled with rust, brown or gray. Instead of a starling feather use anything dark colored. Investing \$20 or \$30 in a Hungarian Partridge skin, or

Coming Events

NEXT BOARD MEETING APRIL 3rd
NEXT CLUB MEETING APRIL 10th

Roscoe Trip:

May 17 - 19

Help Wanted:

Publicity, Website, or Banquet

CONNECTICUT RIVER SALMON ASSOCIATION

Spey Casting Clinic in partnership with Thomas & Thomas Fine Fly Fishing and Spey Casting – Northeast LLC Location: Thomas & Thomas, Greenfield, MA. Date: Saturday, June 8, 2013 Length: Half day (classroom, casting, plant tour & lunch) Class size: six Rods, Reels, Lines: Provided, bring your own for evaluation Lunch: Provided by Thomas & Thomas Cost: \$50 Contact: Tom Chrosniak - tchrosniak@comcast.net

Fly Fishing Film Tour

The Fly Fishing Film Tour is brought to Central Connecticut by Flyaddict.com and Edgeangling.com All proceeds from this event will benefit Rivers Alliance of CT, a small and efficient organization leading the charge to stop water diversion from the Farmington River to UConn.

More info on the Films: Fly Fishing Film Tour films

Suggestion: Call in sick. Fish all day. Hit the Film Tour!

Location: La Salle's Market 104 Main St., Collinsville, CT

(La Salle's kitchen and bar will be open!)

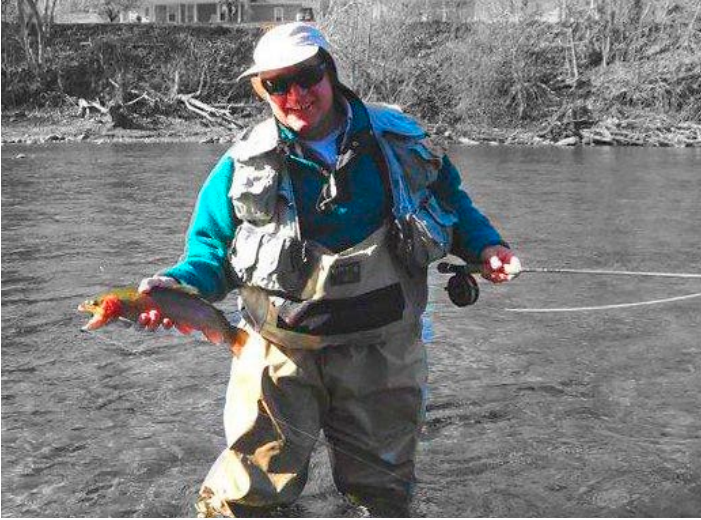
When: Thursday April 11th

Doors open at: 6:30pm

Show Starts at: 7:00pm

Tickets: \$20.00

Catch of The Month



This "Catch of the Month" was submitted by John Springer. If you have a photo of the great fish you have caught, please send it to the Editor at: todd.gorman@mac.com

Dick Wemmell's Fly Box



Bomber

Hook: #12 2X Long Dry Fly

Thread: Black 6/0

Body: Orange Opposum

Hackle: Brown & Grizzly

Wing: White Snow Shoe

Tail: White Snow Shoe

Fly tied by Dick Wemmell

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Vest Continued

pelt, will provide hundreds' of flies worth of various soft hackle feathers, most of them beautifully speckled. Partridge feathers are also sold in \$5 packets, but these can be messy to work with and they have far less variety of feather sizes and colorations than a whole skin.

Tying an effective soft hackled wet fly can be as easy as wrapping an abdomen without taper, building a dubbed bump at the thorax, and taking a couple of turns of hackle in front of the bump. Try different methods of attaching the hackle feather to find the one that works best for you and for the materials you are using. A little mess is alright, but if the hackle looks too messy just stroke it rearward while packing it against the bump with more thread wraps. Build a small head with thread and finish the fly at the eye.

Sometimes you'll have a feather with great coloration, but its fibers are too long. Here are a couple of ways to make them fit. Before making the bump, strip the fibers from one side of the stem and wind the stem on at the spot where the bump will be, but this time with the remaining fiber tips facing forward over the eye. Wrap the thread toward the eye over the fibers to one-half hook eye behind the eye. Take the thread back to the thorax and form the bump. Fold all the fiber tips rearward and lock them against the bump with thread

wraps, then finish the fly. If your feathers have fibers too long for that to work, you'll have to peel or cut off clumps of fibers from the stem. Tie in the loose clumps of fibers in front of the bump all around the shank so the tips reach to the bend. Pack the fibers against the bump, clip off the excess fiber butts and finish the fly.

The skills developed in making these flies will serve throughout your fly tying career. Practice making these flies on larger hooks and then progress to smaller ones. When you are happy with those results you can try moving on to similar flies that are slightly more challenging, such as flymphs and winged wet flies.

All that's required to fish these flies in most streams is a trout rod with floating line and an eight to ten foot leader tapered to about 4X. For calmer water I'll usually add a few more feet of tippet down to 5X.

The wrong way to fish soft hackled wet flies is in the bushes. Just about any other way can work. The traditional fishing method in running water is called "down and across". Cast diagonally (or quartering) downstream and allow the current to swing the fly back toward a point directly downstream of your position. If the fly has not been ambushed by that point, just let it hang there for ten or twenty seconds. Then try twitching it in the same spot with slight movements of the rod tip. At any time it's okay to feed more line out of

the rod tip to allow the fly to drift farther downstream. When you finally retrieve the line, do so with starts and stops, occasionally allowing it to slip back downstream a few inches. Start with very short casts and gradually go longer to cover different water.

To get the fly deeper, especially in fast current, cast directly across the current, or even somewhat upstream, which puts slack in the line allowing time for the fly to sink. This is a good time to practice some upstream line mends which also add slack. When you think the fly is at the desired depth, remove the slack until you come tight to the fly so the swing begins and so you can feel a strike. The swing phase makes the fly arc upwards through the water column like an emerging insect. Practice making the fly do that at a different place in the stream with each cast. You should also practice many other casting and line management skills while fishing soft hackled wets. Hooking a fish will always be a possibility as you practice. Streamer flies can be fished in the same manner, and some of these skills are also useful in nymph and dry fly fishing.

Your personal fly fishing journey will probably drive itself if you can just get it started. Have the confidence to get on the water because soft hackled flies can be fished by anyone.

><<)))*> Bruce



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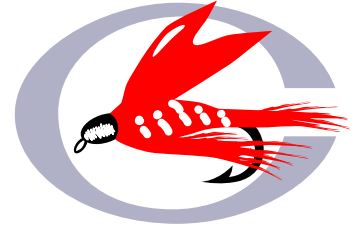
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 **Connecticut**
Fly Fisherman's Association

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