

The Newsletter of The Connecticut Fly Fisherman's Association

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From the vest of the President



On February 4th we held our first Expo/Banquet since the Covid Pandemic arrived in 2020 and we are happy to tell you that everything went as planned. The change in venues from Maneeley's to Nomads required extra work and planning by Roger and Kurt but as usual they pulled it off without missing a beat.







Nomads extra space did allow us to add two Fly Casting seminars to the event that were not possible at Maneeley's. Both of these casting sessions were well attended and next year we will do our best to offer these again with a better set-up to hear what the instructors are saying. Two other slide show seminars hosted by Steve Culton and our featured guest for the day Rick Little were held in a room off the vendors area. Both seminars were well attended and well presented. The vendor floor area was well laid out and had a nice variety of items for sale and useful information about the organizations occupying tables. We did not know what to expect for attendance so we were pleasantly surprised when we tallied a record number of paid attendees enjoying the day. A good number of CFFA members braved the sub-zero temperatures and showed up early to assist the vendors with their setup. We thank all of you for volunteering your time and effort to perform this important task.

Our evening banquet at this new location also went well. Most all of the reports we received were positive. Kurt once again coordinated our banquet along with assistance from his wife Debby and their two wonderful children. Our raffle offered a nice variety of prizes and it went as smooth as it ever has. Our featured guest speaker Rick Little presented a program that reminded each of us the many reasons we choose fly fishing as an integral part of our lives. I witnessed many people shaking Rick's hand after his presentation for a job well done. We had 100 people attend this year's banquet compared to 147 in 2020 and we believe the lower number was caused by health concerns more than our new location. Your continued membership and attendance at these events are admired and appreciated. The funds collected are used to promote fly fishing throughout the year and contribute to the printing and delivery of our CFFA Newsletters.

Annual Awards

Ted Barbieri Award:

This annual award named after our first CFFA president (1967) is presented by CFFA's current board of directors to a non BOD member that has donated their time and effort, throughout this past year, to help our CFFA attain its goals.

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Our March speaker will be Dr. Andrew Bade from Deep the program will be on wild trout management and he will fill us in on new fisheries changes. He will also talk about the state of the Farmington Rive. He has been a biologist at DEE since 2019. His expertise is in Black Bass but is ready to answer question about survivor strain brown trout as well as wild trout management. Previously he worked in the walleye management in the Great Lakes. Remember our new location in Wethersfield at the Pitkin Community Center.

I want to thank Chuck Koteen for taking the pictures you see again we know it takes away from his time during the day as well as dinner to do this. Also Carl Ochino wrote another wonderful story this month for us to enjoy

Despite reduced CFFA activities the last few years due to Covid this member continued to promote the pleasures of fly fishing. This year's recipient was instrumental and responsible for creating our new annual tribute to the late Gary LaFontaine held on the banks of the Salmon River in the month of May (Caddis Time). Most of you know this but for those of you that don't, Mr. LaFontaine began his fly fishing adventure right here in Connecticut and was a dedicated member of CFFA at that time. He contributed many articles to our CFFA newsletters and most all of them can be currently read if you visit our CFFA website. This annual tribute has now replaced our regular CFFA indoor May meeting.

This year's recipient was also part of a team that created the Fly Fishing 101 class for the C.A.R.E. Program, a volunteer based fishing education division of the Connecticut D.E.E.P. In 2022 three sessions were conducted around our state where participants of all ages learned the basic fundamentals of fly fishing and in 2023 the plan is to double the number of classes.

This effort did not go unnoticed and our CFFA BOD is honored to present this years Ted Barbieri award to Rick Liegl.

Scarlet Ibis Award

This annual award goes to a current BOD member and is picked solely by the current president of CFFA. As if holding down two of our CFFA BOD positions (secretary & membership chair) isn't enough this individual always assists with our Fly-Tying School, Fly Fishing School, School for the Deaf fly-tying classes, and provides our coffee and cookies at every meeting. Last spring, I asked if he would survey the access road to the upper abutment pool before the stocking truck was going to deliver us trout for our float stocking and his answer like always was yes. He is a tremendous asset to CFFA and I am happy to give this year's Scarlet Ibis award to Phil McCormick.

As we move forward this spring the trails along the Willimantic River will be groomed. Bob Winot 860-571-1914 will be coordinating this event.

Pete Naples 860-620-2317 will be coordinating our beginner fresh water fly fishing school and our fly tying lessons at the American School for the Deaf led by Kevin Fuller 860-819-5120 will also happen this month. If you want to assist with these events contact one of the leaders listed above. Finally on the 20th of this month our monthly membership meeting will be held in Wethersfield.

Gary







Purple Rein

By Carl Ochnio



Attempting to describe what consti-
river can be a challenge. There are
just lines up and the takes come fast and furious. Anglers certainly relish those special moments. After my next
dazzling day on the river, my hope is that one of my golfing friends will ask, "How did you do today?" Then I can

tutes a good day on the
outings where everything

proudly report I shot par, a fish out of every hole. Anglers should be willing to admit that taking credit for a productive day is akin to accepting praise for a successful rain dance. The explanation can be as simple as just good timing.

Flipping the coin, there are times when you slip into a pool filled with rising fish, select a matching pattern, and present countless drag-free drifts in exchange for a barrage of steady refusals. As frustration slowly builds, one patiently starts changing flies every fifteen minutes, for two straight hours, and still goes home smelling like a skunk.

Ever overhear an angler rationalize a tough day with the phrase, "Well, it was just good to get out." The response is as credible as that of a friend who proclaims that he enjoys dining at Hooter's because of the food. Landing a few fish, or even a particularly selective one, will brighten any day.

What makes a day on the water remarkable? Would it be just one net-filling trophy, or the sum of many seemingly inconsequential things that total up to make it memorable?

For example, last fall I spent an overcast and sometimes drippy morning on a local river targeting Atlantic Salmon. The gray and overcast sky provided a striking contrast to the green pine trees and the yellows and reds of the hardwoods. Deer wandered down to the water's edge to take a sip. It wasn't a Chamber of Commerce Day, but it was serene and soothingly quiet.

The only other angler on the river was Z, a high school football teammate from 50+ years ago. It was simply chance that let us recently cross paths and discover we shared a passion for fly fishing. Now, we get together a couple times a year. I look forward to these outings as we swap bits of information on what has happened in our lives since the "old days." It's an odd contrast, sharing history, yet still enjoying the moment. Connecting with an old friend in this way is a reminder that you were actually young once.

Now Z is good-humored, easy-going and fun to spend

time with. There are some people I will catch sight of at the hardware or grocery store and want to purposely avoid. The tactic employed in these circumstances is to quickly do an about-face and hightail down an opposite aisle.

Z is someone I would never choose to ditch. He is the type of person with whom, even despite long absences, I just pick things up right where they were left off. For some reason, I can effortlessly slide right back into those long-ago yesterdays. I guess some things are not meant to be understood, just enjoyed.

Who would have ever predicted this former tight end would become an avid bamboo rod collector and an ardent fly fisher? Over all the years we have probably been wading the same rivers and streams. It's hard to believe we never bumped into each other earlier.

On this outing, Z had successfully landed a salmon. The only thing missing from my day was that I had not put a fish into my net. I was in a perfect stretch of water and could have moved along on to another spot, but just felt the presence of salmon.

My streamer of choice was the legendary Micky Finn. It had become my "confidence" fly as I had landed a number of fish while using it. After what seemed to be a thousand casts, my allegiance to it began to steadily decline. This change of heart and transition to another pattern generally does not happen quickly. The history I had with this classic fly had been pretty solid to that point. Once the thought of changing my offering cropped up, it took another twenty minutes before my enthusiasm finally eroded.

A decision was made. I pulled in my line and took out my nippers. The trusty Micky Finn was removed and placed on my fly patch to dry out, ready for another day. I opened my fly box and waited for something to catch my eye. Scanning rows of flies is similar to picking the winning Power Ball: the possibilities are right there; you just have to choose the winners.

My eyes zeroed in on a streamer I had recently tied. It was something new and unlike the trusty Micky Finn, it

was made completely out of synthetic material. In creating it my goal was to put together a fly that would be durable, flashy and unique. What was different about it was that it had a fair amount of purple in it. Unbeknownst to me at the time, purple is regarded as an inspirational color that can spark the imagination and often associated with magic.

I attached the streamer to my tippet, rolled out my line, and sent it out for its inaugural flight. It hit the water, I let it drift and, what do you know, “fish on!” First cast, no less, on my own creation. It wasn’t the largest salmon of the season, but it was probably the biggest smile I had on my face in quite a while. As I brought the fish to the net, Z yelled up, “What did you get it on?” I was stumped, there was a moment of silence, and I might have said “a purple thing.”

After the fish was released, we agreed that it had been a good day, as we had both put fish into the net. We spooled up and hiked back to the trailhead. We finished up what remained of our morning coffee, polished off some outstanding donuts that Z had brought along, packed up our respective vehicles and headed back to our homes.

I began to think about my new fly, which I had called the “purple thing.” Maybe I was on to something. A brand-new pattern by rights ought to meet some basic requirements: it has to catch fish and be somewhat unique. Oh yeah, it should have a catchy name.

I already had confirmation that my fly caught fish. It was time to move on to the next phase, the name. This seemed easy: it was purple and I had immediately hooked a fish on a rainy morning, so Purple Rain seemed spot-on. I discovered that most of the names I considered were already in use. A YouTube search revealed that Matt, from Loon Outdoors, already had a Pheasant Tail Variant under that name. I moved onto Purple Reign, which turned out to be used by a number of soap, shampoo and a lipstick product companies. The next option was Purple Rein, which was already taken by a custom tack and horse apparel company in Oregon. Obviously,

this was not going to be easy. There was even a fly called Purple Haze.

It seemed as though I needed to take a different course of action. While reviewing many of the classic flies that I had grown up with, I noticed that many patterns were named after their creators. Bob Clouser’s Clouser Minnow, Lee Wulff’s series of Wulff patterns, Lefty Kreh’s Lefty’s Deceiver, John Barr’s extremely popular Copper John, and of course, Theodore Gordon’s Quill Gordon. Was I onto something? Nah, my first or last name just does not have any zing to it.

I was pretty full of myself and beginning to fly a bit too close to the sun. It is amazing how your imagination can run wild when given some space. At this point in life, time is winding down on leaving much of a legacy. Maybe immortality in a fly pattern would be my last good shot. The fly would even have a marketable tag line. “Purple Rein”- guaranteed to put a “halt” to a bad day of fishing!”

It is mindboggling how a fishing outing can take you to so many places. What’s amazing is all of the events, discoveries, and fantasies that I have just described began with just a few hours of angling. What were the things that contributed to make this a particularly memorable day? Simply an overcast and rainy fall morning, two salmon and one good friend. Mix in a nice quiet stretch of river, a few deer, donuts, cold coffee and a new streamer pattern that provided an opportunity to daydream.

So, what became of my new fly pattern? I have pretty much cooled my jets on the whole idea. Could Purple Rein possibly be the next big thing in fly fishing, a game changer? I seriously doubt it. Many fly tiers would aptly label it a “one fish wonder.” It will probably always have a presence in my fly box. Occasionally I will pluck it out to see if it has any magic left in it.

It is hard to predict what memories might be created by a simple trip to a river, stream or lake. Consider grabbing your rod, waders, and hook up with an old friend and see what happens.

Have fun and stay well!

Paul's FLY OF THE MONTH

Krap Nymph

Hook: 1x long nymph hook Size #14 & 16.

Thread: 6/0 Tan.

Bead: Copper Tungsten Bead Sized to match hook.

Weight: (Optional) 8 to 10 wraps of .025 Lead.

Tail: Olive-ish, Brown or Red-ish Krap Dubbing.

Rib: Small Copper, Gold, or Red Wire.

Body: Olive-ish, Brown or Red-ish Krap Dubbing.

Thorax: Olive-ish, Brown, Red-ish or Black-ish Krap Dubbing.

Wing Case: (Optional) Black or clear Bug or Nymph Skin; Coated with UV Resin.

Tying instructions and a video on how to tie this fly can also be found at <http://tightlinesflyfishing.blogspot.com/> . If you have any questions about this fly or would like to submit a Fly of The Month I can be reached at pdinice@frontier.com .



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