

LINES



AND



LEADERS

DECEMBER 1971

C.F.F.A.

Vol. LXXI No. 4

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.....

At the end of a gratifying year, I want to thank each one of you personally for what you have given C.F.F.A. during 1971. Even those who contribute only with the dues payment, help us immensely as we strive to strengthen our activities in all fronts.

Legislatively, we have the minimum flow bill under our belts, and are priming ourselves for an assault on restricted-permit reservoir fishing, among other things, when the next Legislature comes up for election in the fall of 1972. We are also making ourselves available to Commissioner Lufkin's department if they feel that some conservation bill needs strong support in the next session.

We have continued to work on at least one public water project each year. This year we trimmed a lengthy area of brush along the Farmington River in Burlington; and, of course, our experimental project on the Jeremys' continues to grow and thrive. We finally discovered an ideal site for rearing trout, and have 1,000 fat, sassy browns in a hatchery-type pool in Southington, -thanks to the State's Cooperative Program.

Our private facilities program, which has lagged, is now beginning to come alive. We do have the small pond in Somers, but that had been about it to date. Now the pond in Chaplin, (in the Storrs-Willimantic area, - for those who have never heard of Chaplin), appears to be shaping up; and though it probably won't be really ready by opening day of '72, it certainly will be in '73. More appropriately, we have good prospects of getting a medium sized native brook trout stream in the same area for this coming season. Your president has seen it, and is excited at the prospects.

We have continued to offer educational and entertaining programs, and our banquet this February promises to be a blockbuster. Bring your friends, and get them to join C.F.F.A. They'll be glad they did !!!

Vin Ringrose
President, C.F.F.A.

Merry Christmas Merry Christmas

"LINES AND LEADERS" is a Connecticut Fly Fishermen's Association, Inc., periodic publication distributed to its membership and allies of Conservation. Mailing Address: CFFA, PO Box 42, Windsor Locks, Conn. 06096. Forward all Manuscripts and material for publication to this address, attention of "Editor". CFFA Regular membership meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month, September thru May, 6:45 PM Fly Tying Clinic, 7:30 PM Regular Meeting. These meetings are held in the Downstairs Auditorium in the Federal Savings & Loan, Downtown Windsor, Main & Broad Streets, Windsor, Connecticut.....Officers & Board of Directors meet on the first Wednesday of each month thru-out the year."Organized to Preserve and Promote the Pleasures and Traditions of Fly Fishing and to Conserve Game-Fish Waters".....

CFFA OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS - 1971

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M E M B E R S H I P R E P O R T

by Ken Parkany, Membership Chairman

In June of this year, the Treasurer and the Membership Chairman met to consolidate the the records and duties of members and membership. Prior to this time, the responsibility was shared, imposing undue burden upon the Treasurer and created a potential confusing record situation. As a result of this meeting, we have prospered in the following direction: All membership applications, both new and renewal, are mailed directly to the address of the Membership Chairman. After processing, the Membership Chairman forwards the dues to the Treasurer, and also forwards names and addresses to the Corresponding Secretary for addition to the mailing list. In addition, names and phone numbers are forwarded to respective committee chairman in which the member has expressed his interest..... Our membership year runs from January 1 thru Dec. 31st. However, a new member joining between October 1 and Dec. 31 will automatically be carried into the next year without remission of additional dues. Members in this category carry membership cards marked 1971/72..... Some statistics:

Total Membership as of 12/20/71 - 188 (in 1970 - 185 - 9/30/70)
The 188 breaks down as follows: 96 renewals, 92 new. Memberships: Junior 6, Life 2, Regular 134, Family 38, Supporting 6, Honorary 2.

A closer look at the above, indicates approximately 92% are regular plus family

members. Membership records show that of the 92%, approximately 42% are not affiliated with any committee. And, how many of the remainder are active? For each past achievement of the Connecticut Fly Fishermen's Association, a new goal arose to take its place. These endless goals provide enough of a variety of work to utilize the talents of each and every member. Why not make (and keep) a New Year's Resolution to do your share. Wish each and everyone the "Best of Holiday Seasons" and Good Luck astream in the coming year.

Ken Parkany, Membership Chairman, 503 Bush Hill Road, Manchester, Conn. 06040.

C O N S E R V A T I O N C O M M I T T E E A C T I V I T Y R E P O R T
by Lou Patria, Chairman-Conservation

Monthly meetings have been held at the home of 'Doc' Ringrose throughout the year. In general, meetings were well attended and we desire to have more members take part so that this committee can become more effective thru more members ideas, plans and opinions. You do not have to be a member of the CONSERVATION COMMITTEE to attend. Come to the meetings and find out what you club is accomplishing in STREAM IMPROVEMENT and in our new and growing facilities -- the REARING POND in Southington and the new POND in Chaplin.

As soon as weather permitted, Work Sessions were scheduled, - one Sunday per month starting in March. Our main project continues to be the JEREMYS', but we did schedule a day on the FARMINGTON, brush cutting in the area below the Collinsville Dam with State Biologist John Orintas. Our projects on the JEREMYS' this year (1971) included three (3) new LOW ROCK DAMS, two of which are at the upper end and one at the lower end of our EXPERIMENTAL stretch of the RIVER. All three of these structures were well constructed and immediately proceeded to back-up excellent pools which have been named: STONEWALL POOL, APPLE TREE POOL, LOG POOL, --trout were found in residence in all of these newly created pools during the shocking census on October 31, 1971.

Some repair work has been done on the older dams, all of which are functionally sound. Our WORK GROUPS have become knowledgable enough, so that structures completed are durable and perform what they are intended to do with very little maintenance.

Of great importance to the entire membership is our most recent project -- the REARING POND in Southington which was completed within an eight (8) day period and is now busy fattening approximately 1000 already ctachable size TROUT, which will provide some of the supply for our 1972 STOCKING program. Work has been started at the CHAPLIN POND and a follow-up wrk session is planned for Sunday, Dec. 12, 1971. It appears that we will have this water available some time in 1972.

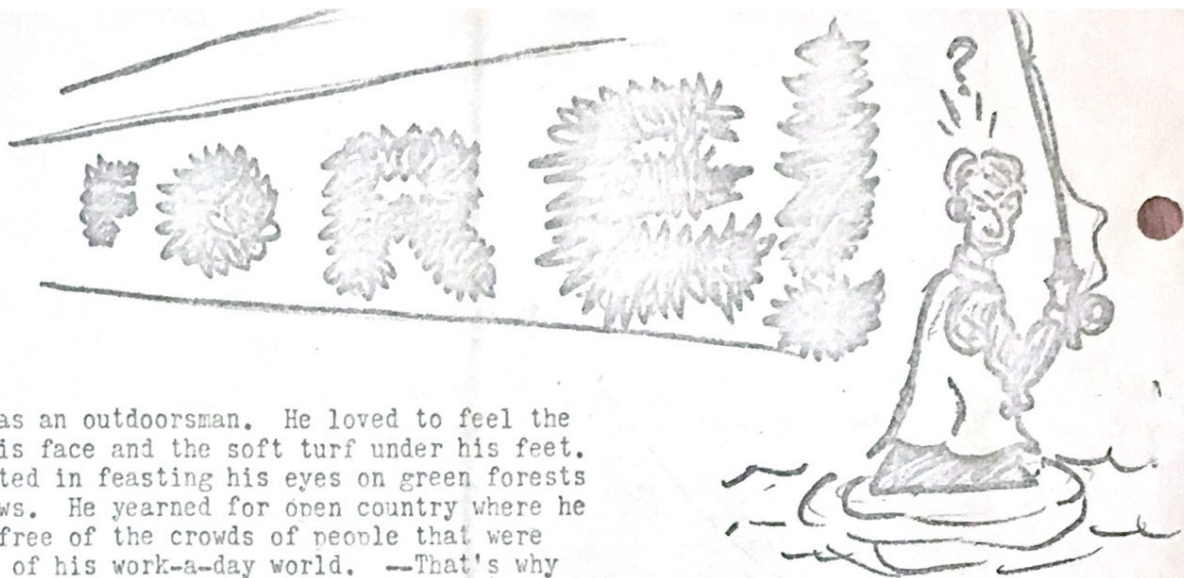
To date in 1971, approximately 350 MAN HOURS have been expended in work sessions by this Committee and other members, ---for which, this CHAIRMAN is very pleased and truly appreciative.

During the latter part of 1971, the BOARD OF DIRECTORS authorized the purchase of much needed equipment, permitting us to a much more effective job during our work sessions. So, we now have a new Chain Saw and a heavy duty Winch for jockeying heavy logs into position.

A BUDGET for proposed operating equipments and expenses for the year 1972 was filed with the BOARD OF DIRECTORS, and was approved at the December Board Meeting.

SUPPORT YOUR CLUB -- JOIN A COMMITTEE -- AND WORK ON IT !!!!

CONSERVATION CHAIRMAN Louis R. Patria, 7 Ellsworth St., East Hartford, Conn. 06108



Charlie was an outdoorsman. He loved to feel the wind in his face and the soft turf under his feet. He delighted in feasting his eyes on green forests and meadows. He yearned for open country where he could be free of the crowds of people that were the curse of his work-a-day world. --That's why Charlie played golf.

He played as often as his family and job responsibilities permitted him to. In the early spring, he was the first one on the community golf course; and, as fall turned to winter, he was often seen standing in absorbed solitude surveying a favorite fairway as he mentally planned his strategy for playing the hole. It was at such times, when he played most often alone, with the cold numbing his hands and cutting into his lungs at each breath, that he enjoyed the game the most. To be alone in the elements, at one with nature; this was the ultimate restorer of a man's emotional balance, and he always returned home from these solitary forays refreshed and happy.

By
Karl Van Valkenburgh
Vice President

Charlie was not a misanthrope, -- far from it. But there was something, he had to admit to himself, about being crowded by one's fellow man that contributed to a feeling of tension -- of competitiveness, perhaps. The more people are brought together, the more they seem to hurry, the more impatient they become, the greater is the compulsion to protect one's position and to try to pass the person ahead. Charlie ruminated often on this subject of late. Players were appearing on the course in greater numbers these days, and it made him faintly uneasy.

At first, he remembered, he had hardly noticed the insidious surge of humanity. He had simply adjusted his playing schedule to avoid them.

Gradually, though, the game he had loved assumed a new and unwelcome dimension -- that of position and maneuver necessitated by the ever present pressure of other golfers. The timing of his arrival on the course was determined not by his own desires, but by the ebb and flow of humanity. He had to telephone a "starter" in advance to reserve a "starting time". Once on the course, he hustled from tee to green -- irritated by the slowness of the golfers ahead of him, badgered by the impatience of those behind. A shot sliced into the rough now meant more than just a poor score for the hole. It also slowed down the other golfers near him and increased the stress of maintaining his playing position on the course. Often he simply dropped another ball and took the penalty strokes rather than endure the impatient cries of "FORE" from the other players.

He couldn't afford to play at a private club, and increased demand was forcing the costs of equipment and green fees on public courses up to a point where they were a strain on the family budget.

The decision was inevitable, --he would give up the game.

The change was not as traumatic as one might think. Golf just wasn't any fun for

Charlie anymore; and besides, he had rediscovered the sport of his childhood --fishing.

How delightful it was to find oneself again in natural and unspoiled places. To feel the good medicine of solitude drain the tensions from his body. As often happens with men whose hearts beat to the meter of nature's poetry, he progressed quickly to fly-fishing and drank deeply of its many delights.

Some of his most pleasurable moments came while standing before a promising run of water and planning his strategy. Working out a series of casting positions that would enable him to cover the water to best advantage was a stimulating mental exercise.

In the evening, after a few restful hours on his favorite stream, he would stroll back to the car across misty meadows, the air redolent with the fragrance of mint and sweet fern; the rays of the setting sun casting a mellow glow over all, and the mysterious soft cries of the night creatures falling gently on his ears.

Flyfishing, he thought, was certainly the ultimate balm for a man's soul, and the last refuge for kind and moderate sportsmen who looked for a measure of solitude in their recreation.

The years passed in tranquil succession for Charlie. His domestic happiness and the pleasures of his hobby were mutually enhancing. He took satisfaction in seeing his young son developing a gently poetic nature, as well as a love of the outdoors, and he inwardly rejoiced at the prospect of sharing many precious hours astream with his boy.

Things were going so well that Charlie hardly noticed the increasing number of fishermen he was encountering of late.

At first, he simply adjusted his fishing schedule to avoid them ----- .

THE BLACK ANT

by Joe D'Addario, Vice President

Each spring, with great anticipation, I await the time to view the construction of newly-built ant hills. This phenomena heralds the coming of the ants and soon these little creatures will be crawling over rocks and logs at my favorite stream, falling into the water and offering a tasty repast to the trout lying below.

Let me tell you a true story that actually happened to me, attesting to the great attraction that trout have for these ectoskeletal creatures.

The scene is the Paradise branch of the Brodhead, the date - June 20th. Below the highway bridge, is the long, quiet, flat tail of the Bridge Pool. This is very difficult water to fish, --very slow, extremely clear, and with very selective trout. The trout in this area are surface orientated; and on any given day, -all day long, they can be seen rising to surface life.

One morning, walked from the lodge to the bridge, and looking downstream; I spotted two huge trout, -one long skinny male, about twenty inches long, and his girl friend, --a beautiful fat female, equally as long, but much heavier. While watching both fish, my blood pressure suddenly soared when I saw the male rise to something on the surface. The female was content to lie on the bottom and let the world float by. It is quite rare to see a fish of this size undertake surface feeding.

In about fifteen seconds flat, I was at the tail of the pool with a hastily assembled rod, checked the leader, and after some deliberation, decided that the only fly to try was a #14 Black Fur Ant. And now for a long tedious stalk, spending approximately twenty-five minutes crawling into a casting position, - I cast over the huge male and was immediately rewarded with a deliberate slow rise and take. The son-of-a-gun almost tore the pool apart when he felt the sting of the hook. I played him carefully and started to gain the upper hand. Let me inject here that my tippet size because of conditions was down to 7x, -which proved to be a deadly mistake.

After playing the fish for what seemed to be time eternity, it appeared that he was finally tiring enough to be netted. Oh, how carefully I worked him in close, -very carefully lowered the net, --and then, that's when it happened!!! He spotted the net!! Decided he wanted no part of this procedure and took off on another long run up the pool!!!! This was more than the tippet could withstand, -and it very neatly parted, ----there, left standing, was a dejected fisherman as had ever lived.

Well, still one bright spot! The female was still there, somewhere. During the commotion, she had moved into hiding; and if not disturbed, she would move out into her feeding lane again. So I moved downstream to while away some time. My stomach decided it was time for lunch, so I started the long walk back to the lodge. Crossing the bridge, I stopped to look for her, (for I truly love to watch beautiful females), and there she was!! Unbelievably, as I watched, she rose and took something from the surface. I thought that I was seeing things, so I waited and sure enough, -she came up again.

Lunch was quickly forgotten; a repeat of the morning's stalk was initiated. My choice was again, the Black Ant; but this time a big juicy size #12, a trout of this size was going to dine on a mouthful. My casting was very inaccurate, one cast to the right-no response. One cast to the left-no response. Sheer Nervousness!!! Finally, a good cast, the fly floating perfectly over the female. She started up, took a good look, then slowly back down. I stopped, -decided she needed a rest and lit a cigarette. Waiting and watching for a few minutes, - which seemed to be an hour; sure enough! I didn't spook her, she rose again! This time, I very carefully cast over her and she slowly and quietly took the fly!! I wish that I could say a marvelous fight followed, ---but the truth is----she broke off on her very first run!

The successes that I have had with the Black Ant as a dry fly are too numerous to relate. They have worked on every stream I have fished; and are my ace in-the-hole under difficult conditions. The Black Ant has accounted for the Catch and Release of many a trout.

I shall now try to describe the best conditions when the Black Ant can be utilized. Naturally, a terrestrial has no value when a hatch of naturals are on the water. But, in late spring, summer or fall; when there is no hatch, the Black Ant comes into its own. The Black Ant is ideally fished in any good slow moving stretch of water, especially in areas where grass or logs are against the stream edge. The fly floats in the surface film; and will only drown in turbulent waters. I believe that it loses much of its effectiveness when sunk, though others might disagree.

Our own Jeremys' River is a very good ant stream; and the following pools are perfect ant water: The Henryville Pool, The Hewitt Dam Pool, Cruising Charlies Pool, Apple Tree Pool, Hemlock Pool. On one occasion, early evening, fishing with a member of CFFA; my success was astounding, I became so confident that I could call my "shots" as to where I would take a fish with the Black Ant.

There is no better dry fly for late spring, summer and fall fishing. The Black Ant should be carried in sizes from #20 to the big #12.

Give the Black Ant a good honest try under the right conditions and you will be enlightened.

SOME MATERIALS FROM THE ARCHIVES OF Ted Barbieri, Past President

Below find a reprint of an initial 'Minutes of Meeting' of CFFA, July 11th, 1967. This organization actually originated from some members of the Sportsmen's Club of Hartford and TGPer's, (Theodore Gordon Flyfishermen).

CONNECTICUT FLY FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION
Organized to Preserve and Promote the Pleasures and
Traditions of Flyfishing and to Conserve Game-Fish Waters.

MINUTES OF MEETING

University Club, Lewis Street, Hartford, Conn., July 11, 1967. Present were Messrs. Barbieri, Reiche and Percy.

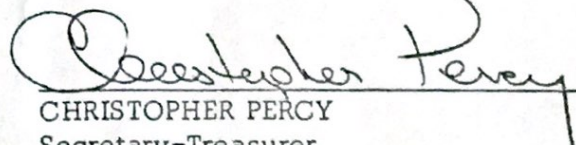
Following discussions of the purposes, activities and organizational alternatives, the above group reached these decisions:

1. Name: The name shall be "Connecticut Fly Fishermen's Association", on all stationery. The purpose clause above stated shall be used as warranted.
2. Organization: Entirely informal; no constitution or by-laws to be adopted; present organizational committee shall constitute governing directors, out of their group Barbieri to act as President, Reiche to act as Vice President, and Percy to act as Secretary-Treasurer. Another Vice President to be elected, or appointed, after formation of Association.

At such date in the future when activities warrant, questions of incorporation and qualifying for Federal tax exemption to be considered.

3. Membership: All those contributing \$5 for voluntary dues, to cover membership in the Federation of Fly Fishermen, mailing and incidental expenses for one year, shall constitute the active members. Fiscal year to commence January 1, 1967. No limit on membership set at this time.
4. Activities and Purposes: The principal purposes of the Association shall be:
 - a) Educational: to preserve and promote the pleasures and traditions of fly-fishing
 - b) Conservation: to conserve game-fish waters
 - c) Affiliation: to affiliate with the Federation of Fly Fishermen, and to promote the Federation and its objectives.

It is not contemplated that the Association will engage in any income-producing activities, no part of the voluntary dues shall enure to any member.


CHRISTOPHER PERCY
Secretary-Treasurer

Note: The second meeting was held at the University Club, August 1967. Present were C. Percy, C.Reiche, Dr. Ellis, Dr. Ringrose, K.Van Valkenburgh, T. Barbieri. The third meeting took place in Dr. Ellis office in Hartford. Present were K.Van Valkenburgh, V.Ringrose, Chris Percy, Doc Ellis, Mr. Glover. After reading the President's Message, Membership and Conservation Committee Reports at the beginning of this Newsletter, one can be tremendously proud of the progressive strides that have occurred from 1967 to 1971.

upstream to yesteryear— advice from

A report on surf casting with flies for striped bass has come in from E. G. Flint Jr., of Massachusetts. "Toward the end of last October," he writes, "I had my best fishing trip of the year. Got seven bass totaling 38 lb., with the largest running an even 10 lb. In all, I had eight strikes, but lost the first fish when the hook pulled out.

"That was the only fish I've ever got hold of that scared me! I was standing up to my waist in a swift, outgoing tide when he hit. It sounded as if someone had fallen out of a boat. The striper ran with the tide, and I soon found that my drag had no effect. So I clamped down on the spool with my thumb. That stopped the outrushing line, but with the tide pushing and the fish pulling, I found myself being drawn out into deep water. Naturally I took off the brakes. Well, when there was only about 5 yd. left on the reel the hook pulled out.

"I have no idea what that striper weighed, but I do know that I've never got hold of one so large."

●Silkworm gut will become soft much more quickly in warm water than in cold. After testing the material over a 15-year period, I find that it can be placed without fear of damage in water as hot as a tough finger can bear.

●A deeply hooked fish has a good chance of surviving if you cut the leader close to the hook or fly, and then return your catch to the water. The hook will usually work itself loose in a short time, without ill effects to the fish.

Be careful about unhooking the little ones. Small specimens are especially easy to damage with rough handling. All the stocking in the world won't help the fishing, unless you cooperate in every way you can.

●One day a swallow darted down and snatched up my Fan-wing Royal Coachman, which was floating down a smooth run. For a few moments I thought the bird was hooked as it struggled against the pull of the rod, but it finally dropped the fly.

Another time a large dragon fly picked up a floating artificial of mine and sailed away with it. It is amazing that this doesn't happen more often. Are dragon flies and birds more intelligent than our game fish?

The most suitable monofilament lines for spinning are sizes .008, .009, and .010 in. Occasionally I use size .007, but it must be handled very carefully, especially if the trout run to any size. Sizes .011 and .012 can be used, but they have a tendency to come off the spool in gobs of coils from time to time, and this can be devilishly exasperating. Soaking and stretching these heavier lines will make them more adaptable. But you have to do this before each trip, because the line recovers the stretch in time. And when it will no longer stretch, it has lost its strength

There is consolation in fishing, and also healing and peace. All true fishermen know this, whether they are just plain worm dunkers or skilled artists at other methods. And while we like to catch fish, we should not make this the whole object of angling. Rather, we should soak up the spirit of the outdoors

●When a strong wind is blowing in your face and you can't straighten out dry-fly casts, try shortening the leader, or better still, change it for one that is heavier and shorter.

With the wind at your back, you will find it helpful to lengthen your leader with fine strands.

Nylon fly lines are great floaters for dry-fly fishing, and very reasonable in cost. To be completely equipped, an angler should have lines of both silk and nylon. But you mustn't expect too much of a nylon line in the way of durability of finish. Since the synthetic material can't be impregnated with oil as silk can, the finish on a nylon line won't take nearly so much punishment as that on a well-finished silk line. For another thing, nylon stretches more than silk, and is much more elastic than any finish that can be put on it.

It will help a lot if you avoid stretching a nylon line to dress or clean it. It should not be pulled hard enough to stretch it beyond the elasticity of the finish, which is very little.

With so many fly tyers now operating, new patterns are appearing in large numbers and considerable confusion results. It is wise to realize that patterns will continue to multiply, and that even with only a dozen or so in your box you are usually oversupplied. Also, that the basic patterns which started away back will still do the best all-round job.

On the whole, the average angler fishes with only a very few patterns. To be sure, he may carry dozens, but he has little faith in most of them and uses them only when nothing else works—which is hardly a fair trial.

Accidentally using a fly at just the right time will often make you think it is a marvel. If you happen to use that very same fly at just the wrong time, you will consider it an absolute dud.

Let's hope that when new patterns are developed as variations of old ones, their names will indicate that fact. For example, consider the Coachman, of which there are so many varieties. Well, there is one version that isn't so well known as it should be. This is a regular Royal Coachman bivisible that has a scarlet floss silk tag tied on top of the regular pheasant tippet tail. It is preferred by a friend of mine, Gene Johnson of Utah. I call it the Royal Bivisible Red Tag, which is self-explanatory. If called by any other name, it would only cause more confusion than already exists.

●When fly fishing with a long line, your strikes may be very disappointing. Often the fish is felt, but either is not hooked at all, or so lightly that the fly soon pulls free. The trouble is, a number of factors can affect a long line—principally waves, currents, and strong winds.

When you add curves or belly to your cast, these make it difficult to know just how powerful a strike is necessary to drive home the hook.

The logical conclusion is that your cast should never be longer than is necessary. When you occasionally need to try for a fish a good distance away, attempt to make an approach that will bring you closer before using that long line.

The shorter your cast, the easier it is to hook rising fish. It's surprising how much water you can cover by laying out only 20 to 30 ft. of line. But approach carefully, so you don't frighten the fish away at this range.

A leader with a heavy butt and quick taper handles better than a slightly tapered or level one. If you are having trouble with dropping a dry fly nicely the leader may be what's wrong. The heavy-butt, quick-tapered ones are more expensive than the others.

If there is anything more conducive to peace of mind than an open meadow brook on a warm and quiet day, I've yet to find it. It matters not whether the fish you are after are trout or sunnies, bass or large minnows. The pastoral scenery soothes the soul, the occasional fish bobbing your float or rising to a fly lends a keen bit of interest, and the infrequent glimpse of some wild animal or bird completes a picture that erases all care.

R. W. Hanson of Pennsylvania sends us a tip that might come in handy during the fishing season when you can't spare the rod for a new ferrule job. He says: "If the ferrules fit too loosely, just drop a tiny bit of solder on each male ferrule. Then rub this solder down with a piece of emery paper to get a neat fit."

Jim Peale of New Jersey has a theory that fish take the Royal Wulff fly for a grasshopper. He bases this on his observation that when he got best results with this fly the fish were caught in low water near overhanging banks where the hoppers abounded and were continually jumping in.

If I had to settle on three basic flies for all trout fishing, either wet or dry, I think I'd pick straight hackles and cheat with the bodies. Take brown, gray, and ginger hackle; use them with different bodies and in various sizes, and you could have an assortment to fill every need. Yet you could still call them by their basic brown, gray, and ginger-hackle name. Right?

The reason why dry-fly fishing is often better on cold days than on very hot ones may be that hardy insects linger close to the water when the weather is cool. They do this, of course, because water temperatures remain more constant than air temperatures.

the year 1952...

While high water, perhaps discolored, may call for the use of large flies or bait early in the season, often the streams are clear and not too high. Then small, dark flies will be better producers. So be prepared.

I find the Red Quill and the Quill Gordon to be good early flies in the East, say up to June 15 and even after, if the season remains cool. The insects that they resemble usually hatch from quite cold waters. Good fly sizes are 10, 12, 14, and 16.

Don Martinez recommends a dry fly of overdressed caribou or deer-hair body for fast and heavy waters. Make it the same as the Rat-face McDougal and Irresistible, but don't clip the body down to make it look solid. Instead, clip it quite long, so it looks fat and juicy. The result is something like a heavily tied Palmer, but since the deer hair is more buoyant than rooster hackle, the fly floats better.

The more bedraggled a fly is, sometimes, the better fish like it. But don't get the idea that it always works out that way. There are times when changing to a fresh fly after each fish does a nice job of seduction.

Body colors of flies are less distinct in a high light and more easily identified in a weak light. For this reason, fish are usually most selective to fly patterns in the early morning, at dusk, or on dull days.

● Ever notice the way some anglers act about wind? When it blows from the direction which they swear by for good fishing, they'll never blame the breeze when they catch nothing.

But let it blow from the "wrong" direction when their luck is poor. Then the wind—and nothing else—is the cause of their misfortune!

● In the eastern states, March finds the trout fisherman eagerly awaiting the opening day. Some of us already will have been out to look over a favorite near-by stream to sort of release our pent-up emotions. We may have found the banks deep in snow, anchor ice covering much of the bottom, a blustery, penetrating cold wind blowing that gave an even bleaker outlook, or we may even have encountered sleet or snow. But if the day was sunny, even though cold for March, the stream banks with southern exposure were thawing or bare. Possibly, too, the tiniest of flies may have been seen hovering around that first harbinger of spring—the skunk cabbage.

● A tapered line and leader aren't required to catch fish, but they sure do help. A rod that's a delight to hold, a line which seems part of the rod, and a leader which seems part of the line—they blend together to give balance, and make angling a sheer joy.

● The better the grade of gut, the rounder and evenner it is throughout its entire length.

MANY anglers have trouble working nymphs successfully because they have ingrained in them old habits of fishing wet flies across and downstream—with the attendant force of the current affecting the drag of the flies.

While you will occasionally get results with nymphs fished in the manner of wets, it is best to cast nymphs across or upstream so they can work without drag or imparted action of any kind—excepting a slight nudge now and then to make it appear that they have started to rise to the surface.

In still waters, let them sink to the bottom first, then retrieve with very slow motion. I like to use the slowest of hand-twist retrieves, augmented by an occasional upward twitch of the rod tip. With the exception of dragon-fly nymphs, these creatures are largely incapable of much self-propelled motion, so that working them actively lends a most unnatural appearance.

Of some help to the inexperienced nymph fisherman is a dropper fly tied well up the leader. A bivisible is good for this purpose, and makes a fine indicator or bobber. When you see it act in any manner contrary to a natural drift, strike immediately. No matter how slight the motion—even if it only pauses—strike! Once you acquire this habit, and have taken a few trout by way of reward you are well on the way to becoming a nymph fisherman.

In going over my notes, I find that I first used a nymph in 1913; but it was 1920 before I tried one again. I didn't have much luck with the things at first and cast them aside until magazine articles renewed my interest in them. By 1926 nymphs had become a regular part of my equipment and I have used them ever since.

It is easy to cut down a regulation wet fly, tied on a heavy hook, and make it serve as a nymph. Keep fishing this sunken lure without drag, keep striking at the slightest hint of action.

Don't crush nicely tied dry flies in a container that is too small for them. For proper carrying the fly should be able to stand up without having the hackles or wings bent when the cover is closed. It is better to carry two boxes, each with a moderate number of flies, than one box jammed full.

If the fish are definitely interested in only one or a very few patterns, carry a small box with a number of these in it. Then you won't need to go searching through all the others when you need a replacement.

● Users of snelled flies will do well to buy them with eyed hooks. When the gut wears out at the head of the fly—as it will sooner or later—an eyed hook can be retied, whereas the other variety will be lost or must be discarded.

● You can repair a chipped enamel line easily with waterproof cement. Be sure the line is dry. If a line dressing has been used, clean the damaged spot first with soap or gasoline. Roll the line between your fingers while the cement hardens to prevent lumps from developing.

● One of the best times to fly-fish for trout is when the water starts clearing after a summer freshet. At such times discard worms, minnows, or other baits and get busy with wet or dry flies. If there are big routs in the water you're fishing, you'd better watch how you strike when a fish touches or rises. A coarse strike will often mean a broken leader and the loss of the fish you've always dreamed of catching.

● Flies for catching shad in the rivers of Connecticut usually are bright and flashy. Vivid orange hackle, tied on like a bit of bucktail, and a silver body make a good combination. A scarlet-and-silver effect also is good.

● Once when I'd lost my box of flies, and had only a supply of bait hooks to fall back on, I managed to catch a fair mess of trout on the bearded seeds of grasses. However, the trout were plentiful.

● Try to avoid putting a damp rod in its container. No harm may come to your equipment if it is stored moist for a few hours, say on the trip home. But trouble may start if the rod is left longer in this state.

A tight container and dampness are not good for any rod. Expensive equipment can easily be ruined by such conditions.

● You should avoid leaving a rod jointed so long that its ferrules corrode and cannot be pulled apart readily. Carbon tetrachloride is a good remedy for this condition. Pour some on the ferrule connection and give the fluid time to sink in.

When a thorough penetration has been made, the corrosion will dissolve, and the rod can be unjointed easily. Better try this before you break or injure stuck joints by attempting to pull them apart.

● Kinky leaders can be straightened out with the help of a section of automobile inner tube. First make sure that both the tube and leader are dry, then draw the leader through the tightly folded rubber.

Wet silkworm gut handled this way will probably become badly scuffed. Coil your leaders properly, soak them well before using, and you will have no straightening problems.

● More than once I have mentioned that a safety pin is a useful item to carry pinned to your fishing coat or hat. The humble fastener can even be used as an emergency line guide. Cut the pin at its middle, make loops of the two ends of the eyed piece, straddle these over the rod where the broken guide was, and then draw them tight with string passed through the loops. The resulting guide is a makeshift affair, but it will work—and that's what counts.

● Fly tyers will find that their work will go better if they eliminate all distracting background influences. A table covering of a neutral shade will help. So will keeping the work bench clear of stray scissors, hackle pliers, and feathers.

FLY TYING—

by Chauncy K. Lively

THE LITTLE BLACK GNATS

The tiny two-winged flies of the Order Diptera play an important role in the diet of trout. Their great availability as larvae, pupae and adults quantitatively compensates for their small size and trout eat them in surprising numbers. Midges, the mosquito-like Chironomids, are well known to all anglers; but equally important are the small Black Gnats of the genus *Hilara*. The latter appear



"Who wants flies? Let's go where there are some fish."

THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE

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over much of the season in huge swarms, flying in an erratic fashion a few inches above the water. In slow-moving pools trout are frequently tempted to leap clear of the surface to intercept the tiny insects, a situation gravely troublesome to the most inventive of anglers.

The swarms of *Hilara* are evidently related to mating and the individual insects within the swarms may be seen flying back and forth in an abbreviated zig-zag pattern, always alert to any small insect or bit of debris floating with the current. Occasionally one of the little gnats will dart down and pick a small, floating insect off the water. The prey is usually a midge, which is wrapped in a silken gauze spun by the male gnat and presented by him to his bride-to-be as a wedding gift. Many of the mating pairs get on the water and are taken by trout, providing a real opportunity for the fly fisherman.

The Fore-and-Aft Gnat pattern shown in the illustrations was originally tied as a dry fly representation of the mating *Hilara* and it has proved its worth many times, not only when *Hilara* were extant but as a general midge pattern as well. Generally trout take the drifting gnats and midges in a quiet rise form and it's not always easy to ascertain the size of the rising fish unless it can be seen.

On a favorite limestone meadow stream in southcentral Pennsylvania there is a short, smooth-water stretch with a high bank on one side. The bank is covered with wild rose bushes which extend down to the water, creating an overhang of several feet in depth, under which the brown trout like to hide. I came to learn that, even when no fish were showing, if I crept up to the edge of the opposite bank and quietly seated myself behind a tuft of tall grass, I didn't have long to wait before a trout or two would move out into feeding position. One day I caught and returned a trout of perhaps eleven inches, taken from a pocket against the watereress just below the rose bushes. The next morning I returned and found what I assumed to be the same trout rising in the little pocket. Since no flies were visible on the water I guessed the trout was midging and accordingly bent on a #22 Fore-and-Aft Gnat. The first float

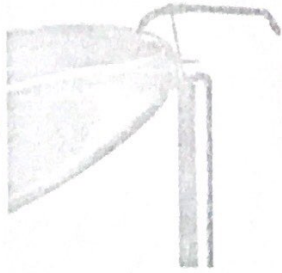
was met with the familiar soft rise but when I tightened a fine brown trout of some eighteen inches came cart-wheeling out of the water, throwing wet droplets against the grassy bank. With a screech of the reel he tore upstream, crossed over under a bed of watereress and fouled the frail tippet on a snag under the bushy overhang. I returned several times later that day, hoping the big trout would be tempted to feed on the emerging sulfur duns but I never saw him again.

Most fishermen find it beneficial to change to a different pattern of fly when a trout is raised and missed because the original pattern is often refused when it is offered a second time. I've had considerable success with the little Fore-and-Aft Gnat as a back-up pattern after missing a rise, particularly when there is no specific hatch on the water.

The pattern is as simple as possible and is extremely easy to tie. There are no tails (because real gnats have none) and the fly balances perfectly on its two hackles. I have long been partial to black-dyed kapok dubbed on the tying thread as body material but any fine-textured black fur may be substituted. The correct hackle is medium dun gray, preferably with that elusive, sparkling translucency so difficult to find these days. I also tie an alternate version with grizzly hackles because it's a little easier to see on the water in poor light. Whichever hackle is used, the barbules should not be longer than twice the gap of the hook. I use the pattern in sizes #20 through #24 and find the smallest sizes to be most effective on slow pools and glassy, smooth-topped runs.

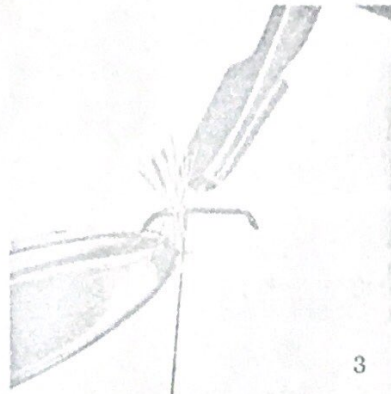
As a final note I would like to recommend the use of barbless hooks, particularly to the ever-increasing number of anglers who share the philosophy of catch-and-release. The barbs of most small hooks are out of proportion to the overall size, making it difficult to extricate the fly without damage to the trout and/or the fly itself. This is especially true when the hook is lodged in the tough maxillary. It's a simple matter to squeeze down the barb with pliers or tweezers prior to dressing the fly, making its subsequent removal from the jaw of a trout an easy, painless operation.

TYING THE FORE-AND-AFT GNAT



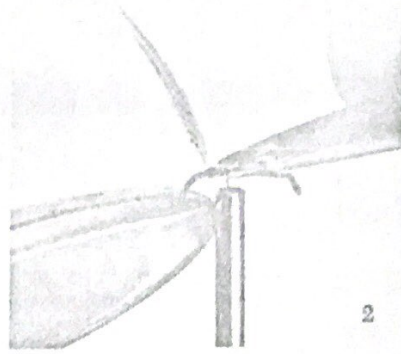
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1. Clamp a small hook (size #20 to #24) in the vise and bind fine black thread at bend.

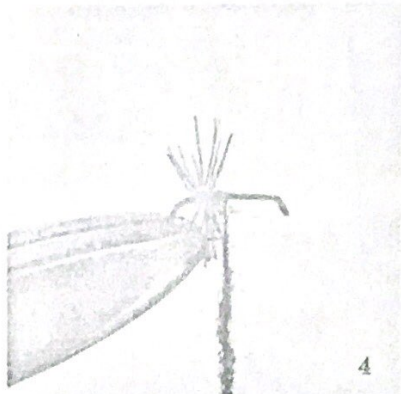


3

2. Select a medium dun gray hackle with barbules no longer than twice the gap of the hook. Strip away the webby lower portion and bind the stem to the hook so that the hackle stands at right angle and the glossy side faces the eye of the hook. Bend root forward and bind along shank. Trim excess root as shown.



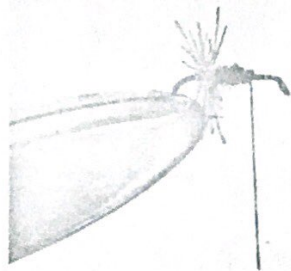
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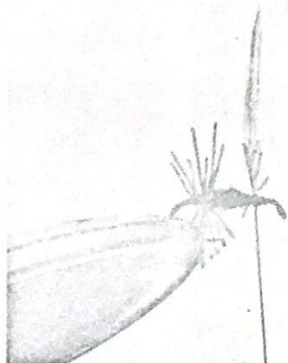
3. Grip the hackle's tip in hackle pliers and wind forward in close turns. Tie off with two turns of thread and half-hitch. Trim waste hackle tip.

4. Apply tacky wax or varnish to about one inch of the thread next to the hook. Roll a dubbing of black kapok (or any fine-textured black fur) around waxed thread with fingertips.



5

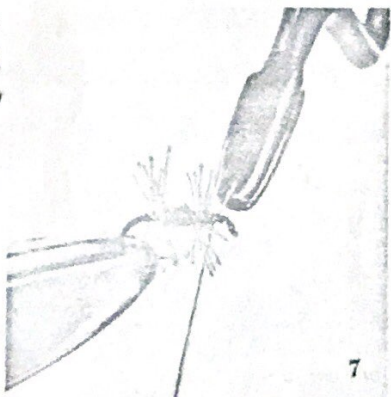
5. Wind dubbing forward two-thirds the length of shank and half-hitch thread.



6

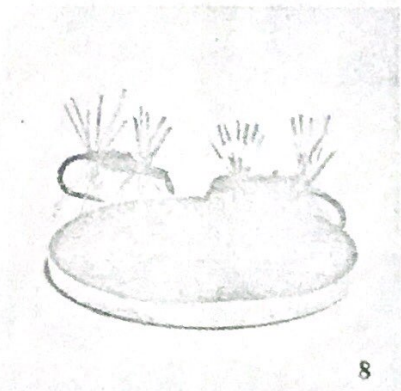
6. Select another hackle and repeat step #2, this time facing the glossy side toward the bend.

7. Wind front hackle forward and tie off, leaving space for head in back of eye. Trim waste hackle tip, then make a neat head with thread and whip-finish. A drop of head lacquer completes fly.



7

8. A penny's worth of Fore-and-Aft Gnats. On left is dun hackle version; on right, grizzly hackle.



8

Merry Christmas Merry Christmas

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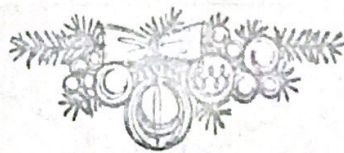
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JIM GILFORD, Ph.D., President
National Federation of Fly Fishermen

LEFTY KREH, National Sportsman and
Authority on Freshwater and Saltwater
Fly Casting, Fly Fishing, Knot Specialist,
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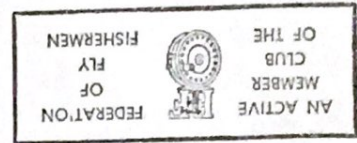
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**Peace
on Earth**

JEREMYS RIVER

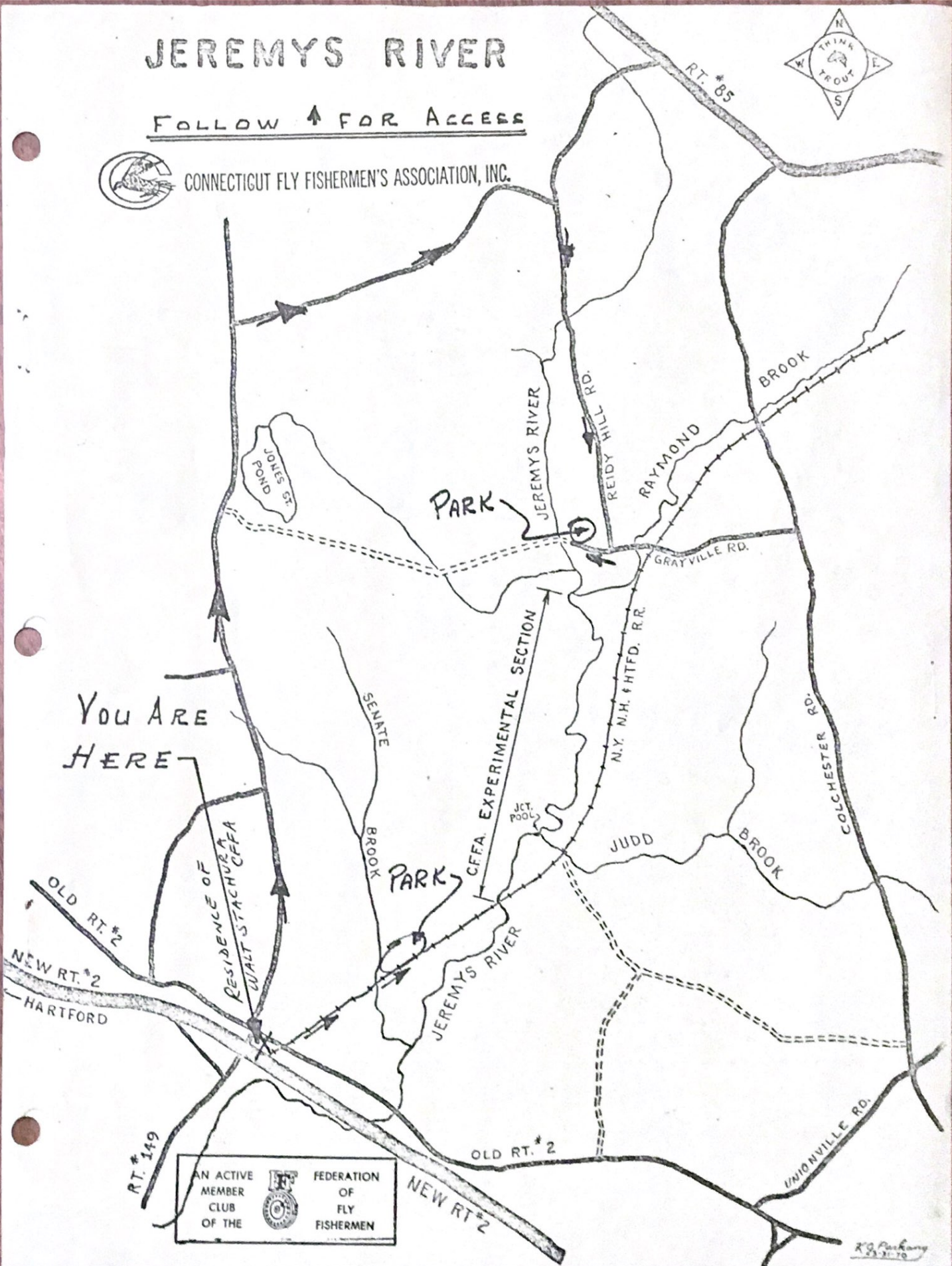
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