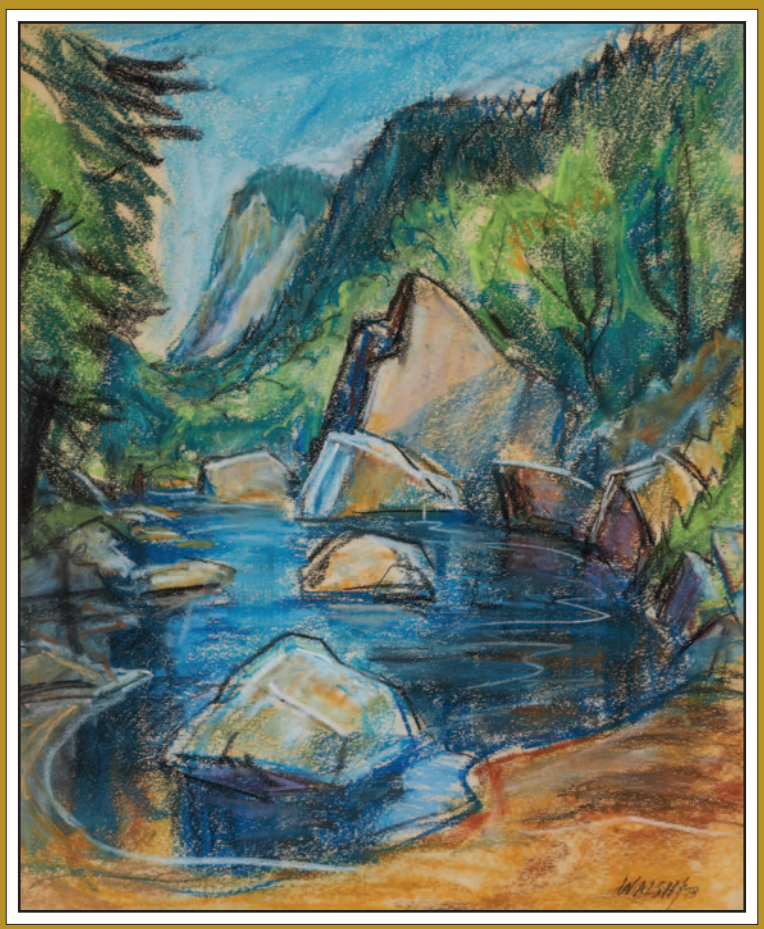
The American Fly Fisher

Journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing



SUMMER 2024 VOLUME 50 NUMBER 3

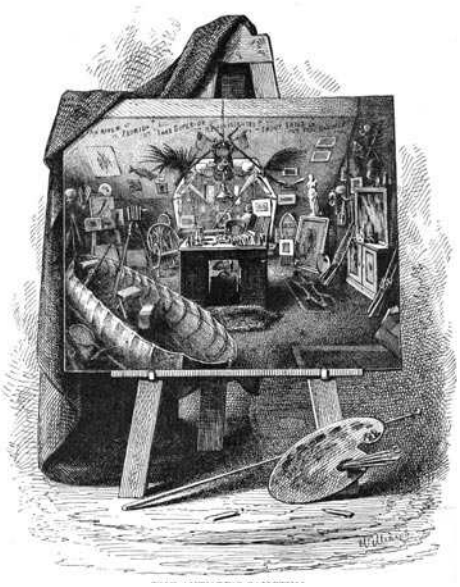
"You Fish, I'll Paint"

Here in the northeast, summer is fleeting. For anyone who likes to do anything besides fishing (yes, such people exist), there are only so many days in which to get it done. For artists, light happens—and then is gone.

For twenty-three years, Christopher Pibus fished with the painter John Walsh (1907–1994) in North Country trout rivers. Walsh's reputation was based on his abstract nighttime streetscapes, but his love of angling in the northern Adirondacks ultimately produced a portfolio chronicling the region's rivers from the 1960s to the early 1990s. "You fish, I'll paint," Walsh announces, and Pibus explains, "The gear in the trunk reflected our two-sided intentions: chest waders, loose fly-rod sections, and vests all in a jumble on one side and a paint-spattered pochade box and folding easel on the other." Pibus has a gift for presenting biography while telling a first-person story, weaving in highly relatable human moments during days on the water. Join him (page 12) in "Finding the Light: Adirondack Art and Angling with John Walsh."

In 1970, Warren Shepard wrote an article for *Fly Fisherman* in which he stated that the Manhattan Brass and Manufacturing Company was responsible for the production of the patented 1874 Orvis reel. Unfortunately, the article not only lacked a source for this information but also became the source others cited in their own writings. In her chapter on reels in *The American Sporting Collector's Handbook* (1982), however, Mary Kefover Kelly pointed to AMFF as the holder of a "receipted bill" as evidence. Curator Jim Schottenham eventually located this invoice and other paperwork deep in museum storage. "These documents," he says, "should answer several questions and reveal information shared for what I believe is the first time." Take a look at these exciting finds in "Reel Revelations: The Manhattan Brass and Manufacturing Company and the Orvis Patent Reel" (page 8).

In September, AMFF heads west to present the 2024 Heritage Award to the Jackson Hole One Fly Foundation at its One Fly tournament. Our 2022 Izaak Walton Award honoree, Paul Bruun, has been a part of the event since its 1986 inception, so we asked him for a history and some insider stories. He did not disappoint. "The Jackson Hole One Fly: Camaraderie + Competition = Conservation" begins on page 2.



From Thomas Sedgwick Steele, Canoe & Camera *(Boston: Estes and Lauriat, 1882), frontispiece.*

Scott Biron—international fly-tying instructor and AMFF ambassador—kicks off a series of occasional pieces about flies and tying traditions on page 21. "The Birth of the Tandem Fly and Early Patterns" offers some explanation and history of the tandem fly, notes arguments as to its origin, then homes in on Doc Sanborn's Nine-Three. Biron will be tying the Nine-Three tandem fly at our annual Fly-Fishing Festival August 10 at 3:00 p.m. local time, both live and via Zoom. Be sure to check it out!

Within these pages you'll also find a tribute to Art Kaemmer—pediatrician, outdoorsman, and longtime trustee—who died in January (page 23). You'll find Rob Oden's review of Doug Lyons's *Fly Fishing Guide to the Battenkill*, which he calls "a superb complement to what has gone before" among writings about the river (page 18). You'll find a wish list from our curator (page 25) and a list of upcoming events (26).

Have you visited us online to check out the new members-only forum? Turn to page 28 for instructions on how to get started.

Then go outside.

Kathleen Achor
Editor

The American Museum of Fly Fishing is the steward of the history, traditions, and practices of the sport of fly fishing and promotes the conservation of its waters. The museum collects, preserves, exhibits, studies, and interprets the artifacts, art, and literature of the sport and, through a variety of outreach platforms, uses these resources to engage, educate, and benefit all.

We welcome contributions to the *American Fly Fisher*. Before making a submission, please review our Contributor's Guidelines on our website (www.amff.org), or write to request a copy. The museum cannot accept responsibility for statements and interpretations that are wholly the author's.

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ON THE COVER: *John Walsh,* Wilmington Notch, West Branch Ausable River, *pastel and charcoal on paper, 1978. From the collection of Christopher Pibus. Photo by Mike Lalich.*

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The Jackson Hole One Fly:
Camaraderie + Competition = Conservation
by Paul Bruun

The Jackson Hole One Fly Foundation (JHOFF) has hosted the legendary One Fly tournament every September in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, since 1986. Each year, forty select teams put their angling skills to the test over the course of two days, with each angler allowed just a single fly. Paul Bruun, our dear friend and recipient of the museum's 2022 Izaak Walton Award, has been involved with the One Fly since the beginning. Here he shares myriad tournament stories, offers insider advice, and introduces some of the visionaries who make this philanthropic sporting event possible.

The tournament captures the spirit of friendly competition while celebrating the generosity of its participants and partners. The JHOFF uses monies raised from the event, along with partner matching funds, to support stream conservation and habitat rehabilitation projects along the upper Snake River and its headwaters in Yellowstone National Park. To date, the JHOFF has raised more than $3 million, partnering with other programs, agencies, and organizations to yield a total of more than $25 million for selected native cutthroat trout conservation projects.

The American Museum of Fly Fishing is thrilled to honor such an incredible organization with the 2024 Heritage Award. The foundation has dedicated itself to the conservation of our waters, and we look forward to highlighting the rich history of the tournament, their conservation pioneers, and the camaraderie and community that the event feeds year after year. We began the celebration with a dinner, auction, and panel discussion at the New York Yacht Club on April 18 and will officially present the award at the One Fly tournament in September.

Sarah Foster
Executive Director

A September Saturday, chilly and still dark, began by loop-knotting a No. 6 floating Muddler Minnow to a Herculean tippet of 12-pound Maxima. Time will never dull my vivid day-one memory of that Jackson Hole One Fly.

At the last moment, John Simms requested that I fill out the LifeLink/SIMMS team in that inaugural 1986 event. This sudden conversion—from drift-boat guide to angler—was surprisingly stressful! I vowed that no sunken lodgepole snags, willow overhangs, bad knots, or multi–Snake River cutthroat chewings would demolish or steal the certified-bombproof Muddlers by master tier/friend Jay Buchner. Each day's Muddler attracted and released many cutthroat, remained fishably intact, and keyed an exciting and satisfying two-day adventure.

The same challenges continue to provide the One Fly's unique appeal. Against a backdrop of surprise arctic winter storms, blown-out river conditions, Olympic swimming demonstrations, lost boats, trout-robbing ospreys and pelicans, Chernobyl Ants, Double Bunnies, Lime Trudes, sumptuous feasts, and epic auctions, the annual Jackson Hole One Fly event is flourishing as it matures into a celebrated fly-fishing world phenomenon.

Raising Conservation Dollars

An introduction to the Jackson Hole One Fly begins by addressing criticisms that fly fishing is too individual and restful to be a team competition. One Fly founders gently explain this is an *event*, not strictly a *competition*. That pitting your *one fly against native cutthroat trout* is a challenge that many wish to take on is exemplified by the waiting list to become one of the forty teams. Despite a handful of highly competitive fishing-industry pros hiding among some teams, the event's success comes from its exceptional gathering of generous friends old and new who celebrate conservation and their love of fly fishing.

As Dennis Butcher—my longtime physician (retired) and a twenty-plus-year Jackson Hole One Fly Foundation (JHOFF) board member—carefully explains, cold-water trout resources are the really big winners. Dennis has successfully steered JHOFF efforts that have raised and funded more than $3 million since 1993. Combining that amount through partnership programs with state and federal agencies and environmentally focused organizations has resulted in more than $25 million for river, wildlife, and aquatic habitat improvement projects throughout the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and the West.

Returning from an early 2024 South American fishing adventure, Dennis reported that after one lodge owner's eager greeting, his conversation immediately became a bombardment quiz about the Jackson Hole One Fly origin, operation, and results. Wherever Dennis's fishing excursions land, everyone wants to hear about the One Fly; its burgeoning success is well recognized internationally.

Too many outdoor recreation events pay only lip service to the already overused environments they overrun. Such added pressure leaves these venues no better from increasing wear. Population growth dynamics, climate change,

All photos by Neal Henderson

A guide attempts to untangle an anglers's fly from streamside brush during the 2019 competition. Courtesy of the Jackson Hole One Fly Foundation.

and increased mineral/agricultural developments that impact western waterways demand inventive research to maintain survival of resident cold-water species.

Without outside assistance from such sources as Trout Unlimited, Grand Teton National Park Foundation, and the JHOFF, even the most efficient and financially robust federal wildlife and state game and fish departments cannot fund and implement all needed restoration work. To better appreciate this event's goals and successful impact, take a look at its recent projects on the Jackson One Hole Fly website.[1]

Early Days

Launched in September 1986, the One Fly was the inspiration of noted Jackson fly tier, sporting-goods store founder, fishing guide, and author Jack Dennis. A dozen years earlier in his fly-tying career, Jack was tasked with tying one favorite fly for each of a group of early Jackson float-fishing guides. Requirements for each fly were that it should resist self-destruction, catch trout, and be present after the friendly, all-day trout-a-thon.

Sometime later, Jack conceptualized a fly-fishing event similar to the now-eighty-three-year-old Lander One Shot Antelope Hunt conservation fundraiser, in which each member of eight three-hunter teams is given one bullet for a daylong hunt. Governors regularly captain their state teams. The best team-hunting harvest results in a year of bragging rights.

Jack's incisive plan to declare a One Fly winner after measuring each four-member team's total inches of released cutthroat trout was so intriguing to writers and local sportsmen that the event easily promoted itself into life. Bridger-Teton National Forest and Grand Teton National Park granted permits. Along with supreme efforts from his Jack Dennis Outdoor Shop staff, aided by its influential shop partners and local businesses, Jack rounded up prizes like fine artwork, Sage fly rods, and Cortland lines from generous sponsors and signed up twenty-four four-member teams for the first two-day event.

The One Fly's direction and details were capably steered by Outdoor Shop managers Larry and Sue Bashford. Thanks to her detail skills and magic touch, Sue became JHOFF's first and only executive director. Working with hand-picked volunteers, her osprey-like depth perception and battle-tested experience encompass logistics, sumptuous banquets, electronic scoring, raffles, auctions, registration, and team hand-holding. It's always a treat when her Vince Lombardy–like whistle galvanizes a noisy, beer-swilling pre–One Fly guide meeting into instant silence. Since the One Fly expanded into three new sections of the Snake River in Swan Valley, Sue's quartermaster supply depot/office incredibly marshals the eighty daily float-fishing guides (with two backups), their vehicle shuttles, plus breakfast, box lunches, and beverages for those guides and forty four-person teams tackling the Snake in Wyoming and Idaho.

The One Fly is the supreme fly-craft durability challenge and breeds creativity. Success hinges heavily on a combination of angler/guide skill, fly resilience, and luck. The early years favored traditional dry/wet offerings such as Trudes, Stimulators, Muddler Minnows, and Western Coachmen.

Then came the avalanche of nifty newcomers led by Guy Turck's Tarantulas and Scott Sanchez's hefty Double Bunny rabbit fur streamers. Another signature Sanchez creation was the Convertible, a fly with built-in variety, including rubber legs for early-morning wet-fly stripping. As the day warms, scissor snips and drops of fly floatant transform the Convertible into either a downwing imitating caddis/stonefly or sailboat-wing drake dry. The One Fly thrives on innovation.

Zany and colorful, unsinkable large and small winning foam patterns boosted One Fly evolution. This list also includes the unfathomable size 18 Hen Spinner

A myriad of flies, including his Convertible, adorn Scott Sanchez's hat in this 2014 photo. Courtesy of the Jackson Hole One Fly Foundation.

SCORING

LANDED TROUT:
Less than 12" = 2 points
12" = 2 points + 10 points
13" = 2 points + 20 points
14" = 2 points + 30 points
15" = 2 points + 40 points
16" = 2 points + 60 points
17" = 2 points + 80 points
18" = 2 points + 100 points
19" = 2 points + 125 points
20" = 2 points + 150 points
21" = 2 points + 175 points
22" = 2 points + 200 points

BONUS POINTS:
Add 50 points per inch for trout over 22 inches

Other bonus points:
If total number of trout landed is between...
30–39
Add 50 bonus points
40–49
Add 100 bonus points
50+
Add 150 bonus points

An additional 25 points are awarded for each day that an angler keeps their competition fly all day.

and a San Juan Worm, winning South Fork patterns, which in succeeding years were fished by Jackson attorney and fun-loving expert contrarian Peter Moyer. Only floating lines are allowed today, which encourages weighted streamers and modern tungsten nymphs. This surge in sinking-fly popularity has heightened guide-performed subsurface heroics: i.e., *swimming* fly rescues.

Scoring Barbless

From the beginning, One Fly organizers were dedicated to less handling and impact on native Snake River cutthroat. After the R-Lazy-S Ranch team (Stephen Vletas, Tyler Allred, Mike Banville, anchored by Reynolds Pomeroy) and Pomeroy's dominating second-day 454-inch catch on the Lime Trude, a minimal handling process was urged. Floating near Pomeroy's impressive 1986 Sunday performance, I observed how frantically busy his guide, Scott Hocking, stayed, measuring all fifty-four trout!

By 1987, the twenty teams were required to use barbless flies. Current scoring was rewritten, with all "landed" trout less than 12 inches automatically scored two points without added handling and measuring. *Landed* was defined as when the guide touched an angler's leader. Barbless hooks encouraged harmlessly shaking off smaller trout.

A measured 12-inch fish is a "par" catch, worth ten points plus the two points per fish (twelve points). Increasing trout sizes advance in per-inch segments with a 14-inch trout worth thirty-two points. A 22-inch trout collects 202 points. Every inch above 22 inches nets fifty extra points. Each angler may measure eight fish but score only the best six plus remaining two-pointers. Keeping your fly all day is worth twenty-five points.[2]

Colorful Memories

From the One Fly's inception, the anticipation and excitement generated by eager guides, their anglers, and the breathtaking-but-always-demanding big-river surroundings have guaranteed colorful memories. One Fly guides are usually on top of current river conditions and select the best sections. Wiser anglers involve their guides in fly selection even when the choice boils down to what flies to eliminate.

Much like the Lander One Shot Antelope Hunt attracts celebrities, so has the One Fly claimed its share of fly-rod-wielding notables, beginning with Jack Dennis's longtime friend Curt Gowdy, the legendary sports announcer, *American Sportsman* TV host, and Wyoming's *Cowboy at the Mike*. Other well-known guests include early astronaut Gen. Joe Engle; Gen. Chuck Yeager, the first pilot to break the sound barrier in the Bell x-1; *NBC Nightly News* anchor Tom Brokaw; actors Tom Skerritt (*Top Gun*, *A River Runs Through It*) and William Devane (*Knots Landing*, *Space Cowboys*); Wyoming Governor Mike Sullivan; iconic fly anglers Lee and Joan Wulff; noted saltwater fly-fishing pioneer, author, and filmmaker Stu Apte; former Penn State fly-fishing director Joe Humphries; and Merlin Olsen, Los Angeles Rams defensive tackle turned actor.

Until 2023, Scott Hocking had guided in every Jackson Hole One Fly. In addition to toting the first overall winning angler, Scott's notable memories include a ruddy duck's successful net and release after it nabbed his bow caster's Turck's Tarantula while floating between Deadman's Bar and Moose. When considering his vast Jackson river experience, Hocking sadly recalls those contestants who ignored his fly recommendations. Not surprisingly, they got skunked.

I rowed contestants in twenty-four early One Flies. After successfully convincing Bridger-Teton National Forest managers to expand permitted fishing outfitter use through the Snake River Canyon, I later encouraged the One Fly to include the new section. Scott Hocking was one of the earliest drift boaters I convinced to join me, along with Art Becker, in the whitewater section.

From left to right: Tom Brokaw, Paul Bruun, and Tom Skerritt at the 2010 event. Courtesy of the Jackson Hole One Fly Foundation.

Measuring a cutthroat at the 2013 competition. Courtesy of the Jackson Hole One Fly Foundation.

Scott was an early owner of the revolutionary Northwest River Supply portable inflatable drift boat. During the One Fly, a sudden loud hissing sound sent the Admiral of Hoback Junction racing back to his home base. This time, the replacement he grabbed from his guide-boat fleet had an already proven resistance to jagged Snake River Canyon rocks.

The Snake River Canyon humbled me as well. An unexpected wind gust flipped our Super Puma inflatable from an elevated wave top amidst Lunch Counter Rapid. Thankfully, nobody was hurt and no gear was lost. The wreck did noticeably shorten our fishing day!

Bob Williamson, thirty-plus-year participant and veteran JHOFF board member, has enjoyed a lot of great fishing, winning, and top scores along the way. One of Bob's most satisfying memories happened after the hook point on his signature foam BSF stonefly snapped soon after launching at Wilson Bridge. (Broken hooks come from flies hitting rocks, fly rods, and boats. Hook points break in fish mouths. Along with mysteriously vanishing flies, hook failures are regular agonies of defeat among One Fliers.) After that, the Casting Cajuns' team captain was ready to head home. But Bill Happersett, a top Snake River veteran, handed Bob a file and pliers and recommended he re-bend and sharpen the size-8 hook, retie, and continue fishing. Bob complied, measuring several nice fish, including an 18-incher, to complete a rewarding day.

One of the most entertaining One Fly moments happened early on when a father-and-son guide team arrived at the always-crowded Moose Landing, then adjacent to Grand Teton National Park Headquarters. The pair shared the same vehicle, stacking their rafts on one trailer. After launching both rafts, this guide duo was so eager to hustle their contestants downstream, each thought the other had parked their Suburban and trailer.

Oops!

This was a busy Saturday, and the fishing guides floated away just before the first fleet of scenic float-trip rafts arrived from upstream. The great Moose raft jam had begun. Joe Burke was a new One Fly volunteer who received the first call from a park ranger screaming why was a vehicle listed in the event *abandoned* on Wyoming's busiest boat ramp?

Another Joe Burke favorite happened a few years later on the upper part of the Snake while guiding Tom Christie, the late captain of the enduring Wyoming Team. While fishing a run in Grand Teton National Park, Tom casually said he was returning to the boat for his red waterproof Sharpie marker. Colored pens are popular to change fly colors during the day. "If you'll wait a minute, Joe, I'm going to turn this whitefish into a cutthroat trout for you to measure," Christie explained, wearing a perfectly straight face.

Veteran Idaho guide Doug Easter (Bunny), long-standing mentor, fly tier, and mascot of the Thomas & Thomas team, landed squarely in historic One Fly annals for making the first *skin dive* to recover his snagged trout and fly from a deep-water cottonwood limb. Naked September Snake River swimming is a chilling experience.

Lost foam fly patterns occasionally float to the surface after breakoffs on snags and fish. Miraculously they are recovered . . . sometimes. While leaning over to release a fish, one contestant's clippers accidentally snipped his fly line. Spotting the half-line floating away, he snagged it and completed the day by using a spare fly reel and leader.

Some of the calmest One Fly anglers ultimately snap when faced with the surprise of breaking their rod or losing a fly because of either (1) failing to cut back the leader and retie it after hours of casting or (2) not taking time to eliminate a fly-losing wind knot. One of the milder reactions on record came after landing a 25-inch-plus cutthroat on a favorite Muddler fly pattern. Noted fly-tackle-developer-turned-metal-sculptor John Simms was

Anglers fishing the Snake River Canyon at the 2017 competition. Courtesy of the Jackson Hole One Fly Foundation.

beyond astonished when he returned from the lunch break on the nearby bank to discover his fly rod (and fly) had vanished from the anchored drift boat! Wind or current probably tweaked the boat. Somehow such unnoticed movement caused the rod to disappear!

When NFL Hall of Fame defensive tackle Merlin Olsen showed up to meet with Snake River cutthroat trout, it was a treat to visit with the Los Angeles Rams great who later was a network color analyst sports announcer before starring on TV in *Little House on the Prairie* and *Father Murphy*. Olsen was always a keen fisherman. He grew up in Logan and skipped bigger-name school scholarship offers to stay home and play for Utah State. Today the USU football field is named for him.

On his first morning floating the Snake below the South Park Bridge, an impressive cutthroat grabbed Merlin's fly. The fifteen-season player who anchored the Rams's famous Fearsome Foursome defensive line reacted as one might expect: solidly! Timidly his guide counseled, "Mr. Olsen, these are just trout and not NFL running backs we are trying to catch!" This timely coaching tip came a little late. Merlin's one and only fly for the day and the cutthroat were both gone.

In 1997, the One Fly migrated to Livingston, Montana, while the International Fly Fishing World Championships were being held on Jackson's Snake and nearby Greys Rivers. Unseasonable rain muddied the Yellowstone River, and rules prohibiting sinking line and a fly larger than a size 6, 3x-long hook were suspended. Dennis Butcher was smiling and assumed the top catch was his during a lengthy giant-fish battle. His smile disappeared once he recognized that a massive common carp had slurped his streamer. Only trout inches count!

After he arrived in Livingston, veteran One Fly team captain Stan Chatham remembers serious quizzing from Montana outfitters asking whether Wyoming guides really packed chainsaws to rescue flies during the event. Stan referred them to popular creative Jackson fly tier, guide, and gadgeteer Scott Sanchez, who always packed an extension branch pruner in his South Fork Skiff. For extra-tall fly rescues, Sanchez boosted anglers on his shoulders!

During the World Championships in Jackson, many of the visiting foreign anglers questioned if there would be enough fish in the Wyoming portions of the Snake and Greys Rivers because these rivers are celebrated for their wild trout populations. International anglers know a majority of their contests are held on venues stocked with trout beforehand. The Snake River system's abundant wild cutthroat population was an exciting surprise to them. This native fishery continues to thrill many other anglers accustomed to experiencing hatchery-stocked waters.

Bringing in a fish against the backdrop of the Grand Tetons at the 2017 event. Courtesy of the Jackson Hole One Fly Foundation.

A Snake River cutthroat, photographed in 2011. Courtesy of the Jackson Hole One Fly Foundation.

The Holland Factor

Until now, silence has shrouded a JHOFF phenomenon that is best described as the Holland factor. In recent years, during any Sunday evening awards banquet inside a basketball arena–sized tent on Snow King Resort's upper hillside, a glance toward the stage reveals a person blurred in rapid motion. As lighthearted deejay emcee and resident humorist Mark "Fish" Fishman warms the crowd, many will recognize that blurred figure as One Fly President and Auction Chair John Holland. John looks as if he has swiped the god Mercury's speedy winged shoes as he systematically whizzes through the awards—with point-guard skill—accurately dishing prizes, plaques, and special recognitions to weekend winners.

To understand the impact of the Holland factor, observe the consistent upward rise to six-figure results after the Thursday night auction. Holland's explosive financial production is reminiscent of the nitrous-oxide systems that generated superior performance by overpowering World War II Spitfire and Mustang fighter planes. "John's a fund-raising juggernaut beyond anything the fishing and conservation worlds have ever witnessed!" reports Brian O'Keefe, a respected fifty-year outfitter, photographer, and fly-industry sales veteran. Not only speedy, Mercury is the god of commerce, financial gain, and good fortune.

The 2024 One Fly

On the second weekend in September, forty teams again will celebrate native cutthroat trout on the Snake River in northwest Wyoming and southeastern Idaho. Other events rarely improve overworked venues, but One Fly participants take pride in knowing how wild cutthroat and other native wildlife have and will continue to benefit from this one. For example, more than 80 added stream miles of Snake River tributaries—Spread Creek and the Gros Ventre River—have been reconnected by the removal and reengineering of derelict irrigation structures, funded in part by the JHOFF.

That project's significance was further emphasized when Dennis Butcher was recently asked to identify his choice of the most satisfying JHOFF effort. The twenty-plus-year One Fly angler, board member, and project wrangler acknowledged how the joint cooperation between Grand Teton National Park, Bridger-Teton National Forest, landowners, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Trout Unlimited, and Jackson Hole One Fly in essence created two new river corridors of spawning, migration, and holding habitat.

Curt Hamby, popular World Cast Anglers fishing guide and recovering Texan, delivers this crystalline insight from his 2023 essay, "If We All Get Involved, We All Win," on the JHOFF website.

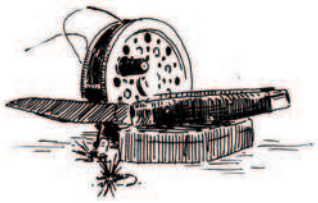
> But winning isn't really what the One Fly is about for me, and I say that knowing that I have worked hard to win, and I'll still shoot for Top Guide each year. Just as fun is the surprise of learning who I'll get to fish with, and the opportunity to fish a spectacular section of the river that is often taken for granted. I'm grateful that our rivers are healthy with good numbers of native and non-native trout. I'm grateful for the One Fly and other organizations tackling the impacts of drought and water quality on our local streams. . . . Because I get to visit fisheries around the world, I've seen how advocacy makes a difference between fisheries that have prospered and those that are no longer viable. Advocacy often just starts with being aware and curious—so when you are out on the river . . . be sure to ask your guide about the challenges our renowned waters are facing. They know what is needed, and they know how you can help. And if we all get involved, we all win.[3]

Team fly fishing may not deliver the adrenaline-charged excitement of other recreational events, but no organization boasting such minimum overhead has generated more conservation-improving waterway and river projects than the Jackson Hole One Fly Foundation. If you're seeing more Snake River cutthroat trout, consider thanking the JHOFF and its partners.

~

ENDNOTES

1. Projects, Jackson Hole One Fly, www.jacksonholeonefly.org/projects. Accessed 26 February 2024.
2. A complete list of 2024 rules can be found at www.jacksonholeonefly.org/sites/default/files/JHOF_2024Rules_Final.pdf. Accessed 21 June 2024.
3. Curt Hamby, Guide's Corner, "If We All Get Involved, We All Win," https://www.jacksonholeonefly.org/article/guides-corner-if-we-all-get-involved-we-all-win-curt-hamby. Accessed 26 February 2024.



Anglers begin their day at the 2006 competition. Courtesy of the Jackson Hole One Fly Foundation.

Reel Revelations: The Manhattan Brass and Manufacturing Company and the Orvis Patent Reel

The phrase "everything old becomes new again" is commonly uttered when referencing old fishing tackle compared to new. In thinking of this oft-used line, I was inspired to do some research on both the phrase (which led down myriad Internet rabbit holes) and the idea of old becoming new, particularly as it relates to vintage tackle.

Former AMFF Trustee Warren Shepard did not have the benefit of the Internet when he wrote an article for *Fly Fisherman* magazine in 1970, in which he revealed information for the first time that would be repeated in other publications and generate conversations with reel collectors for decades, both online and off.

In the October 1970 issue of *Fly Fisherman*, Shepard's article on the history of American fly tackle focused on early American patent reels, leading off with information on the still-popular 1874 patented reel from Charles F. Orvis.[1] He provided great detail about the manufacture of the famous reels Orvis designed, including the cost to Orvis for tooling and the number of reels included in the first order. Shepard's reporting that the Manhattan Brass and Manufacturing Company of New York City was responsible for the production of the reels was of great interest to reel collectors and particularly Orvis historians. The only thing the article lacked was a source for that information.

Other well-respected historians and researchers repeated this information in their own articles and books, including Paul Schullery in *The Orvis Story*[2] and Jim Brown in *A Treasury of Reels*.[3] AMFF's own *American Fly Fisher*, in the spring of 1979, repeated the Manhattan Brass and Manufacturing Company information, citing Shepard's article as the source.[4]

Within the last two decades or so, interest in the Orvis Company and the tackle they offered has been on the rise, with new research being conducted by ardent collectors looking for more and greater detail into the history of both Charles F. Orvis and his company. Naturally, the reels have garnered a fair amount of scrutiny, with the source of Shepard's revelation a major topic of discussion. Some have even suggested that with a lack of evidence, the story may have been conjecture, perhaps repeated often enough to become accepted as "fact."

Mr. Shepard's wife and fellow tackle historian Mary Kefover Kelly provided the first clue to the source when she contributed

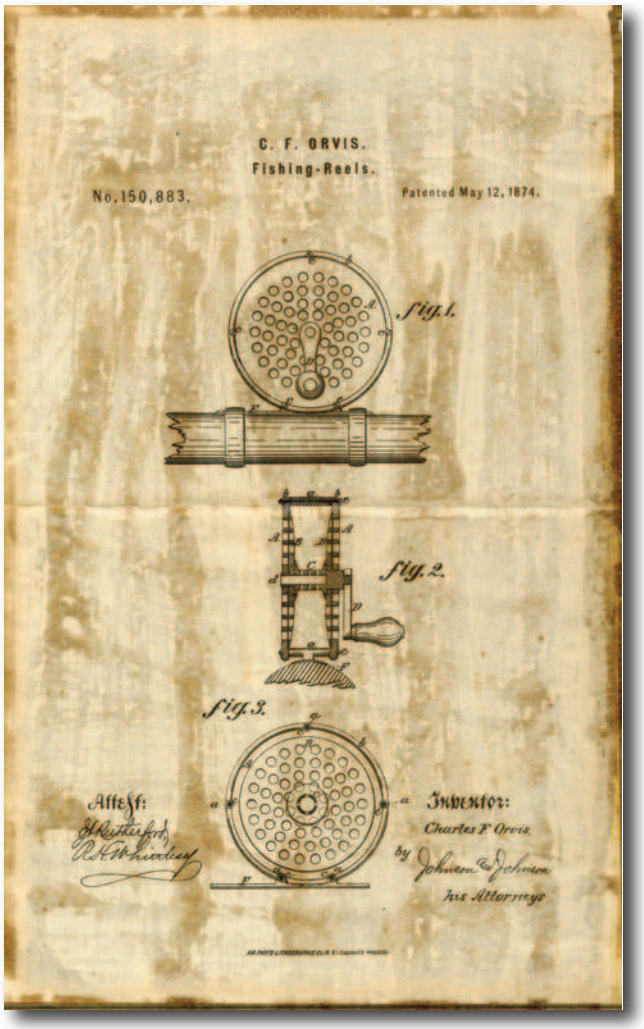
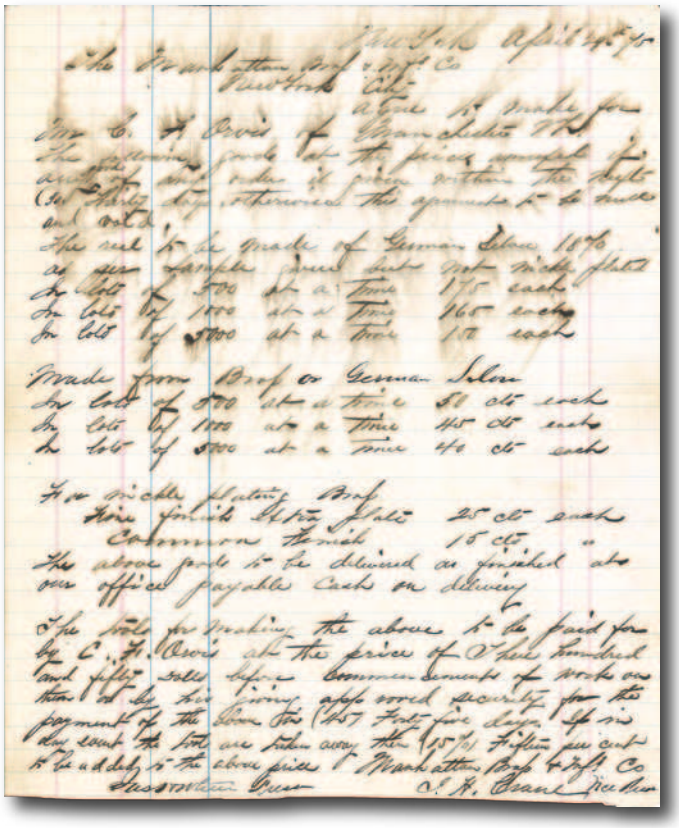
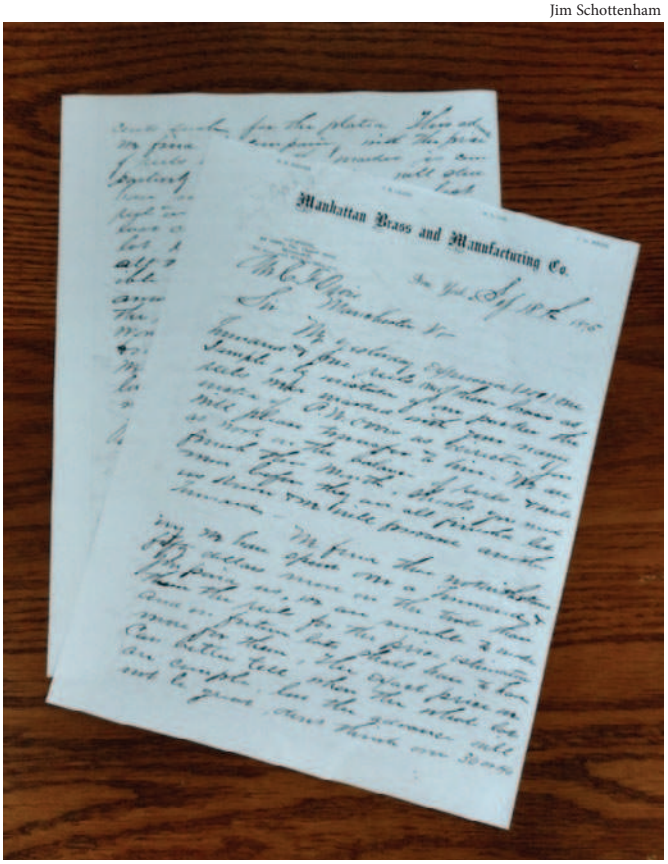

C. F. ORVIS.
Fishing-Reels.
No. 150,883. Patented May 12, 1874.
fig. 1.
fig. 2.
fig. 3.
Attest:
Inventor:
Charles F. Orvis
by Johnson & Johnson
his Attorneys

Illustration for U.S. Patent number 150883, issued to C. F. Orvis on 12 May 1874, for his "Improvement of Fishing Reels."



Letter from Manhattan Brass and Manufacturing Company dated 29 April 1875 that provided Orvis with the available cost options for various reel finishes. AMFF permanent collection. Gift of the Orvis Company. 1982.103.002.

Jim Schottenham



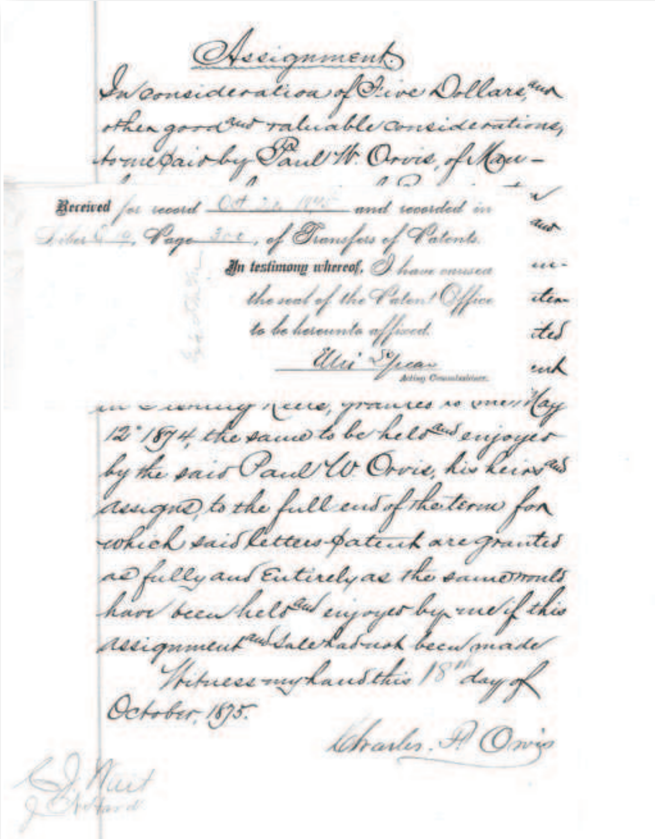
Right: Letter from Manhattan Brass and Manufacturing Company dated 18 September 1875 addressed to Mr. C. F. Orvis, alerting him of an initial shipment of 101 reels and requesting additional funds to cover the cost of tooling used to manufacture them. AMFF permanent collection. Gift of the Orvis Company. 1982.103.003.

to the revised edition of *The American Sporting Collector's Handbook* in 1982. In her chapter on reels, she states, "According to a receipted bill on file with the American Museum of Fly Fishing in Manchester, Vermont, Orvis, who was a manufacturer of rods, had the first dozen of his patent 1874 reels built by the Manhattan Brass Co., New York."[5]

"On file" with the museum presumably meant that an original, or at least a copy, was in the museum's holdings somewhere. It took some time, but I eventually located the originals nestled inside the pages of a very fragile, very old scrapbook assembled long ago, carefully stored in an archival box that had remained undisturbed since its discovery by Mr. Shepard in 1970. The documents related to the Orvis patent reel included a 29 April 1875 letter from the Manhattan Brass and Manufacturing Company addressed to C. F. Orvis outlining the production costs of reels made with various finishes, a subsequent letter sent to C. F. Orvis on 18 September 1875, and the invoice for the tooling required to produce the reels. In addition, I was surprised to see an official U.S. Patent Office assignment letter, date stamped 20 October 1875, requesting (and subsequently granting) the assignment of one-half of the rights to the Orvis Patent Reel to Paul W. Orvis, Charles F. Orvis's nephew. These documents should answer several questions and reveal information shared for what I believe is the first time.

In the earliest letter (29 April 1875), the Manhattan Brass and Manufacturing Company gives Orvis the available pricing options for reels made of German silver as $1.75 each for 500 reels, $1.65 for 1,000 reels, and $1.50 for an order of 2,000. A rather substantial discount was offered for reels made of brass, priced at 50 cents each for 500, 45 cents each for 1,000, and 40 cents each for 2,000. The application of nickel plating over brass was an additional 25 cents each, an option that Orvis selected, given the lack of any plain brass examples known. One final note of interest from this letter was the payment request of $350, signed by Manhattan Brass Vice President J. H. Crane before the commencement of work.

The next letter addressed to Mr. C. F. Orvis, dated 18 September 1875, provides us with numerous revelations, starting with the statement, "We yesterday expressed one hundred and one reels, one of them brass as sample," clearly indicating at least one plain brass example existed at one time. This first sentence goes on to state "the reels were marked with your name instead of P. W. Orvis as directed." This came as a bit of a surprise, because the young nephew of Charles is not commonly



Assignment

In consideration of Five Dollars and other good and valuable considerations, to me paid by Paul W. Orvis, of Man–

Received for record Oct 20 1875 and recorded in Liber [illegible] Page [illegible], of Transfers of Patents.

In testimony whereof, I have caused the seal of the Patent Office to be hereunto affixed.

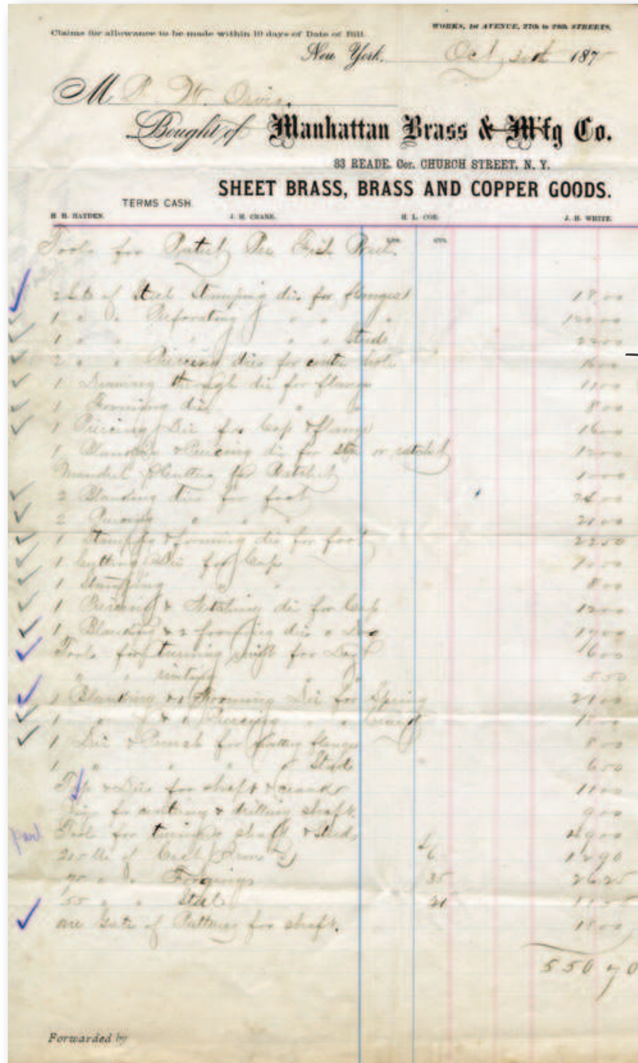
Ellis Spear
Acting Commissioner.

in Fishing Reels, granted to me May 12th 1874 the same to be held and enjoyed by the said Paul W. Orvis, his heirs and assigns, to the full end of the term for which said letters patent are granted as fully and entirely as the same would have been held and enjoyed by me if this assignment and sale had not been made.

Witness my hand this 18th day of October, 1875.

Charles F. Orvis

The U.S. Patent Office granted the request of Charles F. Orvis to assign half of his patent rights to P. W. Orvis "in consideration of five dollars and other good and valuable considerations . . ." AMFF permanent collection. Gift of the Orvis Company. 1982.103.005.



Claims for allowance to be made within 10 days of Date of Bill.

WORKS, 10 AVENUE, 27th & 28th STREETS.

New York, Oct 30th 187

Mr P. W. Orvis

Bought of Manhattan Brass & Mfg Co.

83 READE, Cor. CHURCH STREET, N. Y.

SHEET BRASS, BRASS AND COPPER GOODS.

TERMS CASH.

H. B. HAYDEN J. H. CRANE H. L. COE J. H. WHITE

550 70

Forwarded by

Invoice mailed to Mr. Paul W. Orvis, dated 30 October 1875 and marked paid*, with line-item pricing for each tool used to produce the Orvis fly reels, totaling $550.70, on Manhattan Brass & Manufacturing Company letterhead. AMFF permanent collection. Gift of the Orvis Company. 1982.103.004.*

associated with the fishing tackle business and was not listed in the patent issued to C. F. Orvis on 12 May 1874. Paul Whitin Orvis (1853–1911),[6] son of Frederick Orvis, was listed as a sixteen-year-old "clerk in hotel" in the 1870 Federal Census[7] and in the 1877 Manchester, Vermont, City Directory as being resident at Equinox House.[8] I can find no directory listings that tie him to anything other than hotel-related occupations in the 1870s. Nonetheless, Paul was assigned half the rights to Charles's invention per the document in the museum's collection, received by the patent office on 20 October 1875, which states,

> In consideration of five dollars and other good and valuable considerations, to me paid by Paul W. Orvis of Manchester in the county of Bennington and State of Vermont, I do hereby sell and assign to said Paul W. Orvis, an undivided half of all my right, title and interest in and to the letter-patent of the United States No. 150,883 for an improvement in Fishing Reels granted to me May 12, 1874, the same to be held and enjoyed by the said Paul W. Orvis, his heirs and assigns, to the full end of the term for which said letters-patent are granted as fully and entirely as the same would have been held and enjoyed by me if this assignment and sale had not been made.

This at least explains the mention of Paul in the September 18 letter, but it also brings new questions to mind. What was the connection between Paul and the reels? Was this simply an effort by Charles to involve his nephew in the business? Perhaps more documentation will turn up to answer these questions.

Continuing with the September 18 letter, Manhattan Brass explains to Orvis that because they "have spent over a thousand and fifty dollars more on the tools than you paid us, we are unable to make the reels for the price estimated," noting that they thought an additional 30 or 40 cents each for the plated reels would be needed. Perhaps to soften the blow, the letter goes on to say, "This advance we find by comparison, with the price of the reels now in the market is comparatively little. And you will still have the cheapest & best reel in the market. We do not think it would be out of place to ask you to make us whole on the tools. We cannot of course insist on this but state the facts and leave the matter to you." It seems P. W. Orvis indeed paid an additional $550.70 for the tooling required to build the reels, evidenced by the last of the dated documents discovered at the museum: an invoice marked *paid* (Kelly's "receipted bill") dated 30 October 1875, which itemizes all the necessary stamping dies, tools, and jigs.

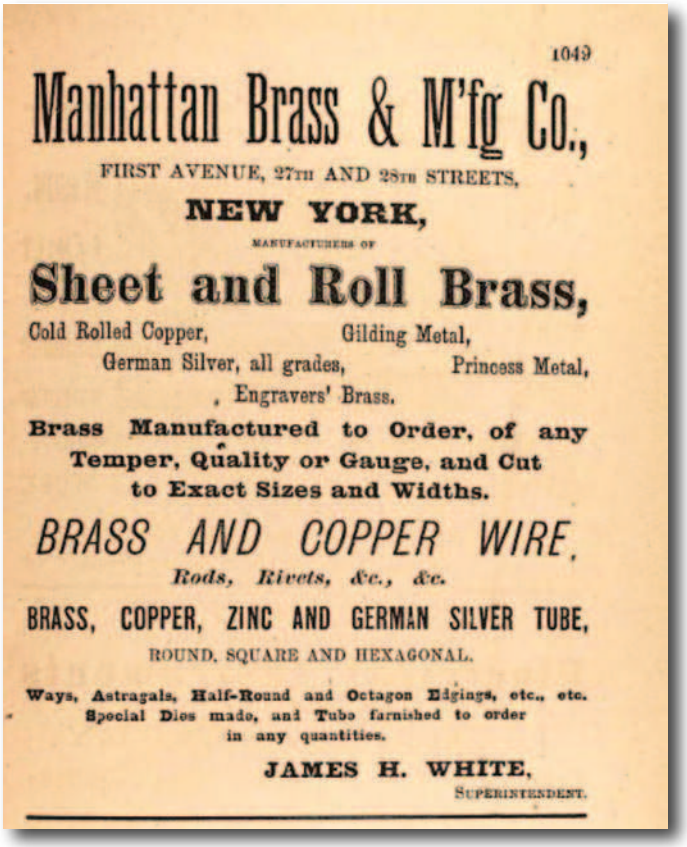
Why Charles opted to contract with the Manhattan Brass and Manufacturing Company is not spelled out in any of the documents, but based on company advertising and its location, the choice makes sense. Access to the New York City company was provided by steamboat between Albany, New York (a relatively short distance from Manchester, Vermont), and New York City beginning in 1807.[9] Early company advertising proclaimed, "Brass Manufactured to Order, of any Temper, Quality or Gauge," which Orvis could not produce in rural Manchester. With beginnings that date to 1865, the company employed 575 people[10] and stayed in business until 1926 when limited profits and the high price of real estate in Manhattan caused them to sell the plant and machinery. This somewhat aligns with the manufacture of the Orvis reel, last advertised in tackle catalogs circa 1915.[11] With a few updates to the design of the reel, the Manhattan Brass and Manufacturing Company has to at least be considered as the primary source for these reels during their run.

Finding the source—of manufactured goods, of information, of research material—can be a great detective exercise or a frustrating exploration. The museum holds historic and original documents about the 1874 patent Orvis reel. Warren Shepard revealed in 1970 the source of the brass and tools used in the manufacture of that reel. Fifty-two years later, that news is old, but has been enhanced with new details and information, confirming the adage that all things old become new again.

Jim Schottenham
Curator

Nathan George

Side view of the Orvis 1874 Patent fly reel. AMFF permanent collection. Gift of the Orvis Company. 1971.014.003.



1049

Manhattan Brass & M'fg Co.,

FIRST AVENUE, 27TH AND 28TH STREETS,

NEW YORK,

MANUFACTURERS OF

Sheet and Roll Brass,

Cold Rolled Copper, Gilding Metal,
German Silver, all grades, Princess Metal,
Engravers' Brass.

Brass Manufactured to Order, of any Temper, Quality or Gauge, and Cut to Exact Sizes and Widths.

BRASS AND COPPER WIRE,

Rods, Rivets, &c., &c.

BRASS, COPPER, ZINC AND GERMAN SILVER TUBE,

ROUND, SQUARE AND HEXAGONAL.

Ways, Astragals, Half-Round and Octagon Edgings, etc., etc. Special Dies made, and Tube furnished to order in any quantities.

JAMES H. WHITE,
SUPERINTENDENT.

Advertisement for the Manhattan Brass & Manufacturing Company as it appeared in the 1875 Newark, New Jersey, city directory, p. 1046.

ENDNOTES

1. Warren Shepard, "History and Development of the Fly Reel," *Fly Fisherman* (October 1970, vol. 2, no. 3), 38–39.
2. Paul Schullery, *The Orvis Story: 150 Years of an American Sporting Tradition* (Sunderland, Vt.: The Orvis Company, Inc., 2006), 21–22.
3. Jim Brown, *A Treasury of Reels: The Fishing Reel Collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing* (Manchester, Vt.: The American Museum of Fly Fishing, 1990), 57.
4. "The 1874 Orvis Reel," *The American Fly Fisher* (Spring 1979, vol. 6, no. 2), 12.
5. Mary Kefover Kelly, "Antique Reels," in Allan J. Liu, editor, *The American Sporting Collector's Handbook*, rev. ed. (Tulsa, Okla.: Winchester Press, 1982), 239–51, 248.
6. Paul Whitin Orvis, Find a Grave, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/57800318/paul-whitin-orvis. Accessed 16 May 2024.
7. The National Archives and Records Administration, 1870 U.S. Census, population schedules. NARA microfilm publication M593, 1,761 rolls (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).
8. 1877 Manchester, Vermont, City Directory.
9. John Merwin, *The Battenkill: An Intimate Portrait of a Great Trout River—Its History, People, and Fishing Possibilities* (New York: Lyons and Burford, 1993), 88.
10. William G. Lathrop, *The Brass Industry in the United States: A Study of the Origin and the Development of the Brass Industry in the Naugatuck Valley and Its Subsequent Extension over the Nation* (New Haven, Conn.: The Wilson H. Lee Company, 1926), 142.
11. Jim Brown, "Variations in the Orvis 1874 Trout Reel," *Antique Fishing Collectibles* (May–June 1986, vol. 1, no. 4), 15.

Finding the Light: Adirondack Art and Angling with John Walsh

by Christopher Pibus

"You fish, I'll paint."

With these words, spoken in a bemused British accent, John Walsh extracted his long legs from the car and announced our customary plans for an afternoon in the northern Adirondack woods. The gear in the trunk reflected our two-sided intentions: chest waders, loose fly-rod sections, and vests all in a jumble on one side and a paint-spattered pochade box and folding easel on the other. The July air was redolent of turpentine and damp pine forest floor as we began to follow the steep trail downstream, searching for tailwater trout and a hidden canyon near the town of Malone, New York.

I was a teenager when I first met John in 1971 on the shore of Lac St. Louis, in the West Island area of Montreal where we both lived. The lake in our neighborhood was formed from a broad section of the St. Lawrence River about 2 miles wide. Strong currents flowed across its breadth, eventually tumbling into the treacherous Lachine Rapids.

In spite of dire pollution, the lake produced a massive mayfly hatch each June, carpeting the streets in the evenings with millions of duns and spinners (eventually identified as *Hexagenia limbata*). As a child, I raced my bike through the undulating mounds of insects under the street lights, listening for the crackle beneath the tires.

Locally we called them shad flies, linking the hatch to the annual arrival of the anadromous Atlantic shad following their migration up the length of the St. Lawrence from the ocean. At the foot of the street where the Walsh family lived was a flat 50-yard stretch of shoreline with ample room for a backcast. The moving water was intimidatingly heavy and difficult to wade even 10 feet from the bank, but it was there that I first encountered John. Mirabile dictu, he was casting a dry fly to rising shad, surely the only person on the planet who could imagine and then hook fish so adroitly with a classic mayfly pattern on this enormous sheet of moving water.

We formed an unlikely pair, a skinny long-haired teenager who favored army surplus shirts, desert boots, and Russian novels alongside a tall, pipe-smoking engineer whose first passion was painting and who always looked ready to be delighted by what the world would bring him next. We fished together faithfully for twenty-three years, almost exclusively in the trout rivers of New York State.

Art and Engineering

John Stanley Walsh was born in East Sussex, England, in 1907. High drama entered his life in 1915, during the Great War, when he and his mother took passage to India to join his father, who was an officer (and band leader) in the British army. Shortly after departure, their ship was torpedoed, and years later John would recall sitting in a lifeboat as an eight-year-old mesmerized by distress flares, which he thought were fireworks from the crippled ship.[1]

Arriving in India on a later voyage, the family lived an itinerant military life through postings across the country. John's interest in visual art began with caricatures he sketched of soldiers and officers in his father's regiment. After the war, he returned to England, attended school in Brighton, and eventually completed studies in engineering. In the middle of his engineering apprenticeship, he began taking art courses in London at the Central School of Art.

During World War II, he served as an engineering officer for the Admiralty, the military department of the Royal Navy. In 1940, as the Battle of Britain reached its peak, he was sent to Ottawa for a project that took him across North America for the duration of the war, studying and advising on the conversion of factories to armament production.

The war years were critical to his development as an artist, in particular his lifelong fascination with urban landscapes (which he called "streetscapes") after dark.[2] He later wrote that "World War II drove me to painting night scenes simply because in those frantic days the night hours were the only time I could do anything remotely creative. Britain at night was hardly a fascinating place. . . . A rigid blackout covered the island, broken only by fires started with high explosives."[3] His wartime relocation to North America triggered an artistic rebirth: "I might never have graduated to night painting had it not been for one circumstance. I was posted to Canada, a job which . . . plunged me once again into a world of brilliant street lights, neon signs and endlessly varied and colorful shop windows."[4]

In 1942, John Walsh exhibited and sold his first pieces at the Kennedy Galleries in New York. As the story goes, he wandered into the gallery with a portfolio of drawings and asked, in his characteristically direct manner, whether they might be saleable.[5] Over the course of his lifetime, he had twenty-five solo exhibitions in Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa, and New York. His reputation was founded on his abstracted streetscapes depicting cities at night, where he transformed the conventional elements of urban scenes—roads, buildings, street lights—into pure energy, burnished with yellow and gold light that seemed to emanate from within.[6]

Alongside this affinity for making darkness visible, John had an abiding interest in pastoral landscapes, which often included moving water. His passion for angling in the northern

Adirondacks led him to assemble a portfolio that chronicles the region's rivers from the 1960s to the early 1990s.

Adirondack Pastoral

Over these years we principally fished four North Country waterways: the Great Chazy River in the early spring; the Salmon River near Malone and the Chateaugay River throughout the summer; and then, for special excursions, the West Branch of the Ausable River near Wilmington and Lake Placid.

The Ausable caught John's painterly eye above all others because of the sheer scale of Whiteface Mountain and the way the riverbed cuts its dramatic descent through Wilmington Notch, the Flume, and ultimately the Chasm. John favored the waters around Fran Betters's fly shop—the home of the Ausable Wulff—and especially the Flume Pool itself, which he painted and sketched numerous times. Betters never paid much attention to me, but he always listened to John with interest and amusement, probably because it was rare to encounter such a charming and talkative Englishman in the North Country, and also because John alone persisted in calling him "Frank."

Aspects of John's distinctive approach to landscape can be understood by comparing the *Flume Pool (Sketch)* he did on the spot to the oil painting completed later in his studio. John's daughter, the artist Pat Walsh, recently found the preparatory sketch for the finished painting I have in my collection. As Pat describes her father's practice, he characteristically worked from the representational to the abstract, simplifying forms and eliminating detail, and heightening the colors to bring out the scene's underlying drama. "I don't feel bound to reproduce a scene in exact detail," he wrote. "I change colours, forms and proportions as the muse requires."[7] His approach took inspiration from many sources, benefiting from the lively circle of landscape painters in Montréal (such as his friend Arthur Lismer,[8] a member of Canada's Group of Seven) in the 1950s and 1960s, and the admired New England colorist John Marin. Throughout his career John had an abiding interest in earlier European movements, such as Post-Impressionism and Fauvism, particularly the French artists Henri Matisse and Raoul Dufy.

The creative path to the finished painting *Rocks by the River: Flume Pool* accords with Pat Walsh's analysis. The neutral gray tones and rounded contours of the cliffs in the pastel have been transformed; the rock faces in the oil painting are saturated with sunlight and blue tones, and sculpted into totemic steps and ascending towers. All the rock edges have been sharpened to lead the viewer's eye upward to the sinuous wraithlike trees.

Ralph Thompson

Flume Pool (Sketch), West Branch Ausable River, *pastel and charcoal on paper, 1979. From the collection of Pat Walsh, with permission.*

Mike Lalich

Rocks by the River: Flume Pool, West Branch Ausable River, *oil on canvas, 1979. Author's collection.*

A few miles upstream from the Flume, the river passes through the narrows at Wilmington Notch, a stretch of water where great slabs from the looming cliffs have been strewn across the riverbed, creating hospitable holding water for trout, along with difficult wading.

One monumental rock dominates the landscape, towering 20 feet above the notch pool and providing an irresistible viewing platform for generations of young anglers who scramble up its smooth side. For many decades, a wing squadron of uncatchable trout have sus-

pended themselves in formation there, "eager, vital and with fins a-quiver,"[9] endlessly shifting their quicksilver shapes in the quest for feeding stations and current-borne sustenance.

In 1978, John sketched *Wilmington Notch* in pastel, looking downstream toward that monumental rock face. In the foreground is a sandy area of the streambed, bordering a small backwater. The composition creates a place of worship, with the eyes of the viewer following a visual path up the canvas, from boulder to boulder to the foot of the massive light-catching pulpit itself. The riverside is constructed of sharp geometric forms with the edges limned in black. A solitary wading angler in a red shirt is barely discernible downstream.

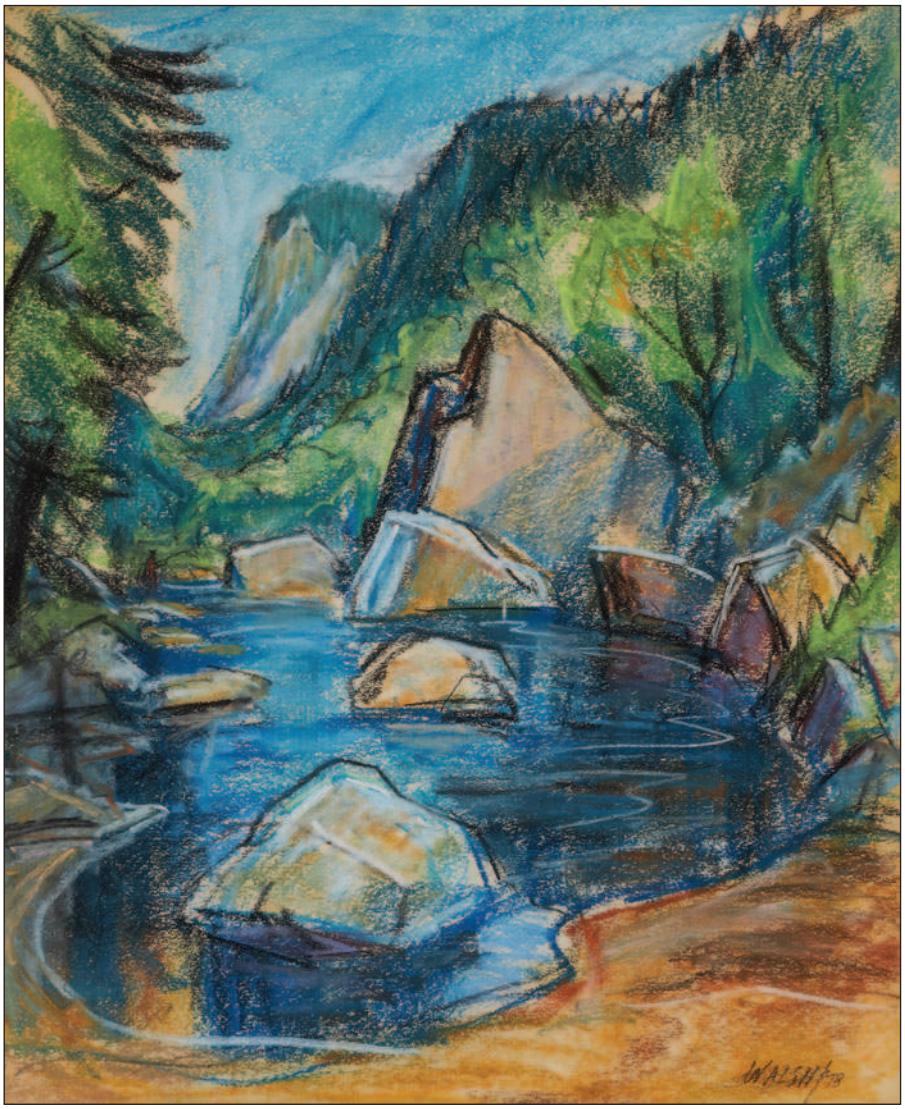
Flat Rock

"Flat Rock," said John one morning as we crossed the border into New York State near the village of Constable. "I want to take you to Flat Rock." His memory of fishing spots was prodigious, but he saw everything with a painter's eye for color and changing light, and had only an impressionistic grasp of directions. After he reached his mid-seventies, I became the designated driver, charged with finding the right turnoffs based on cryptic clues. John had special names for places and pools throughout the region, especially for the lesser-known rivers (like the Chateaugay and Salmon) that flowed out of the mountains north to Quebec.

I must have betrayed some momentary doubt as I pondered the many stretches of the Salmon River—our destination that day—where the riverbed was built of smooth rock plates.[10] He raised his voice slightly and repeated, "It's Flat Rock Road and it's somewhere along here." A few moments later I saw the road sign we were seeking. Down the hill was a single-lane bridge and a lovely piece of water that tumbled over a massive slate shelf.

Although we must have fished together more than sixty times over the last fifteen years of his life, I have only one photograph of John, knee deep in that river casting a line upstream. His eyes are on the water, following the path of a dry fly, likely a White Wulff, which he favored above all others. There is a peeled wading stick trailing downstream that I know was tied to his belt with a length of cord. In the photo the stick perfectly balances the way his hands reach expectantly upstream holding the rod and line. On his head is a straw hat from San Miguel Allende, the artist colony in Mexico where he went each winter in his later years.

Mike Lalich



Wilmington Notch, West Branch Ausable River,
pastel and charcoal on paper, 1978. Author's collection.

John Walsh fishing the Salmon River circa 1980.
Photograph by the author.

John's formative years as a fisherman took place in southern England, and his gear and casting style were quintessentially British. He used a 7-foot cane rod made by Sharpe's of Aberdeen, with brass ferrules and an early form of impregnated bamboo. He cast the little wand with a pristine wrist motion, on a rhythmic four-count just as Norman Maclean's father prescribed in *A River Runs Through It*.[11] On one of the tip sections of the rod, just above the ferrule, there was a small streak of oil paint, which I discovered when John's wife Marion bequeathed the rod to me after his death in 1994. The mark was unmistakeably ultramarine blue, a dominant color in John's landscape palette.

That day at Flat Rock, John stayed close to the pocket water below the bridge while I headed downstream to test a new theory. I had been reading the section in *The Dry Fly and Fast Water* in which George La Branche writes of finding brown trout in the small piece of soft water formed on the upstream side of a boulder. About a mile downstream I found two such boulders and two fine fish in "rather a taking mood," as predicted.[12]

Five hours had passed by the time I retraced my steps, chuffed and primed to tell John of my success. I found him slumped on the gravel beside the car, leaning against one of the wheels. His face was pale, and he asked me to find the can of orange juice he kept in the trunk for moments when his blood sugar dropped. I had fished too long, not for the first time. But he soon revived and wanted to hear about my adventure downstream.

"What fly were you using?" he asked. "Were they taking the White Wulff?"

Ralph Thompson

High Falls, Chateaugay River, *pastel and charcoal on paper, undated. From the collection of Pat Walsh, with permission.*

Chateaugay River

Our other destination of choice was the Chateaugay River, which lay just east of the Salmon, running straight north across the border before joining the St. Lawrence near Montreal.[13] John was partial to the river because of its rainbow trout, a convenient liquor store, and a secret spot he called Mr. Hoy's Pool.

The store was a reliable source of Jamaican rum, at half the price we paid at government-controlled retail in Quebec. The only complication was that Canada customs forbid travelers from bringing alcohol across the border unless they had spent forty-eight hours in the United States. For day-trippers like us, this was problematic, but John engineered a work-around. A big thermos was employed to decant a full 26-ounce bottle, and no one was the wiser. More radically, after a long evening on the water, we would cross the frontier at Cannon Corners without stopping via an unmanned post that still existed in the 1980s. Undefended border indeed: when you arrived after hours, a sign politely asked you report at Herdman, 20 miles west. As there was no barrier or gate, it was irresistible to drive on through.

We were only caught once in all those years, when an RCMP officer appeared at John's doorstep the following morning with a $300 ticket for illegal entry. John's plea—his diabetes required his timely return for medication—went unheeded. Rum is still cheaper in the U.S., but the northern border is now a grim and cheerless place, with barriers and surveillance looming over the landscape all hours of the day.

The Chateaugay was a first-rate rainbow trout fishery. Many anglers favored the pocket water closer to the Canadian border or the pool at the base of High Falls (which John captured in a sketch). But we thought the best stretch was Mr. Hoy's Pool, near Brainardsville. Evidently Hoy held the naming rights because he told John how to find it. By the time we fished there, no trace of the namesake could be found, and the footpath to the pool was unmarked and overgrown. One section of fine pocket water was accessible along the way, but the pool itself required

a twenty-five-minute hike through thick brush that finally opened onto a prospect above a classic bend in the river. John had a book of genuinely secret spots in the northern Adirondacks, but this was memorable beyond measure.

The main current hurried over a wide ledge and dumped into a broad smooth-surfaced pool, marked with two seam lines and a small eddy that seemed like an afterthought. Then the river changed its mind completely, turning abruptly and piling itself up at a right angle against a massive log that marked the corner bank. On our first visit, John had me present a Muddler Minnow with a sideways profile across the current below the ledge, and for many years there was always a willing trout to be found there. In my mind's eye, it remains the perfect architecture for a pool, quickening me with expectations whenever I find similar structures in other waterways.

Macomb Dam

In the late 1970s we began fishing the Salmon River more frequently because of the prevalence of brown trout in the section near Malone. Over the years John gave me a number of paintings, the most memorable of which is Macomb Dam, a study in oil from the trip to the river that opens this story.[14] On that humid July day in 1977, John did indeed paint while I fished.

I was initially skeptical when John said we would be fishing in a canyon, because the landscape north of Malone is gently rolling and benign as the Adirondack foothills give way to the pasture lands of the St. Lawrence valley. But the trail through the pine woods was rough going before it abruptly turned into a cliff-hugging footpath above a 40-foot drop to the streambed below. Looking upstream we could see the ruined brickwork from a nineteenth-century mill and beyond that the concrete face of the Macomb hydroelectric dam, which dated from 1899.

John explained that the site included a single turbine to supply auxiliary power to the town of Malone. The spillway was opened every evening, after a siren sounded. We would have a good afternoon fishing and painting but needed to be off the river in good time as the narrow canyon—no more than 15 feet across in places—would constrain the release and create a surge of water 3 feet higher within a couple of minutes.

John set up his easel on a wide slate ledge that gave him elevation above the streambed. He was attracted to four monumental white pines that reached across the river from both sides, their roots clinging to the rock walls and finding support amidst the old brickwork. The treetops crested the edge of the cliff above us. Even at the lowest level of the canyon, the flowing water caught the light while the southern wall lay in partial shadow.

The river was tea stained but clear, although it picked up sediment and cooler temperatures periodically from Lamica Lake upstream. A long stretch of pocket water followed the sculpted contours of the canyon; small brown and rainbow trout were lurking in the likely lies, which kept me occupied all afternoon.

John worked on his canvas, completing a sketch en plein air. He summoned me to have a look, saying he was pleased with the pines, but he kept working on the face of the dam, which was dry and featureless and troubling for its blankness. Eventually he joined me for some fishing and caught a memorable rainbow.

Near the shore, John found a pocket 4 feet deep. He snapped a short cast into the fast water at the top. As the White Wulff came to the end of its drift, a rainbow trout came rocketing off the bottom along a vertical flight path through the water and then continued straight into the air. We had seen this kind of acrobatic rise before but had never witnessed the long runway and raw speed under the surface that preceded and defined the take.

We packed up all the fishing gear and artist's paraphernalia, with the wet canvas itself cunningly fastened inside the painter's box. As the siren began to sound, we were making our way with "wand'ring steps and slow"[15] up the switchback trail. John had the easel and box, and I too had more than I could handle. Most of the light had gone from the woods, and we grew short-tempered and tired. When we reached the crest, we followed a secondary path through the forest, struggling into a graveyard of spruce trees, dead from the waist down. I began to hear a faint ticking sound. As we moved faster toward the car, the clicking accelerated at the same pace.

"Damn," said John. "My fly must have caught on a bloody branch."

We could just make out the pale fly line tracing its way back to the perfidious patch of spruce.

"Just cut the line," I muttered. "We'll never get it untangled."

"Easy for you to say 'cut the line,'" he snorted with disgust. "I'm going back."

I can see him still, a lanky black silhouette craning his head forward in concentration and picking his way through the trees and stumps, visible only against the fading crepuscular sky, like a woodcut from a medieval German story.

"I've got it," he called. "And I even found the White Wulff."

A few days later he invited me over to the house. "I have something for you," he said as he brought out the finished sketch: *Macomb Dam*. "It's nothing much, but you were there at the conception, and we had such a fine day." We looked it over and he put it in a battered frame from his studio, in which it still remains.

"You can see what I've done," he said. "I had to solve the problem of that dam."

In the final version, water is pouring over the face of the concrete, reflecting the afternoon sun and illuminating the whole canyon, finding the light as John Walsh's paintings always do.

~

ENDNOTES

1. The author is grateful to John's daughter, Pat Walsh, of Huntingdon, Quebec, for biographical details about her father, provided during interviews in 2022 and early 2023, and for her insights into the technical aspects of his works.

2. "Canadians Abroad: Industry's Artist," *Time* (Canadian edition, 1 November 1954), 29. Unattributed.

3. John S. Walsh, "Night Owl Artist Captures Moods of the Dark," *The Montreal Star* (28 September 1976), B-11. This article constitutes Walsh's most detailed account of his development as an artist and his methods for rendering landscapes in different media. It was subsequently quoted in reviews and profiles such as Claudia Cattaneo, "Versatile Painter Embarking on Another Career," *The Gazette* (Montreal) (29 August 1985), 5 and Janet Pirie, "Artist Combines Love of Painting, Travel," *The Chronicle* (13 August 1986), 25.

4. Walsh, "Night Owl Artist Captures Moods of the Dark," B-11.

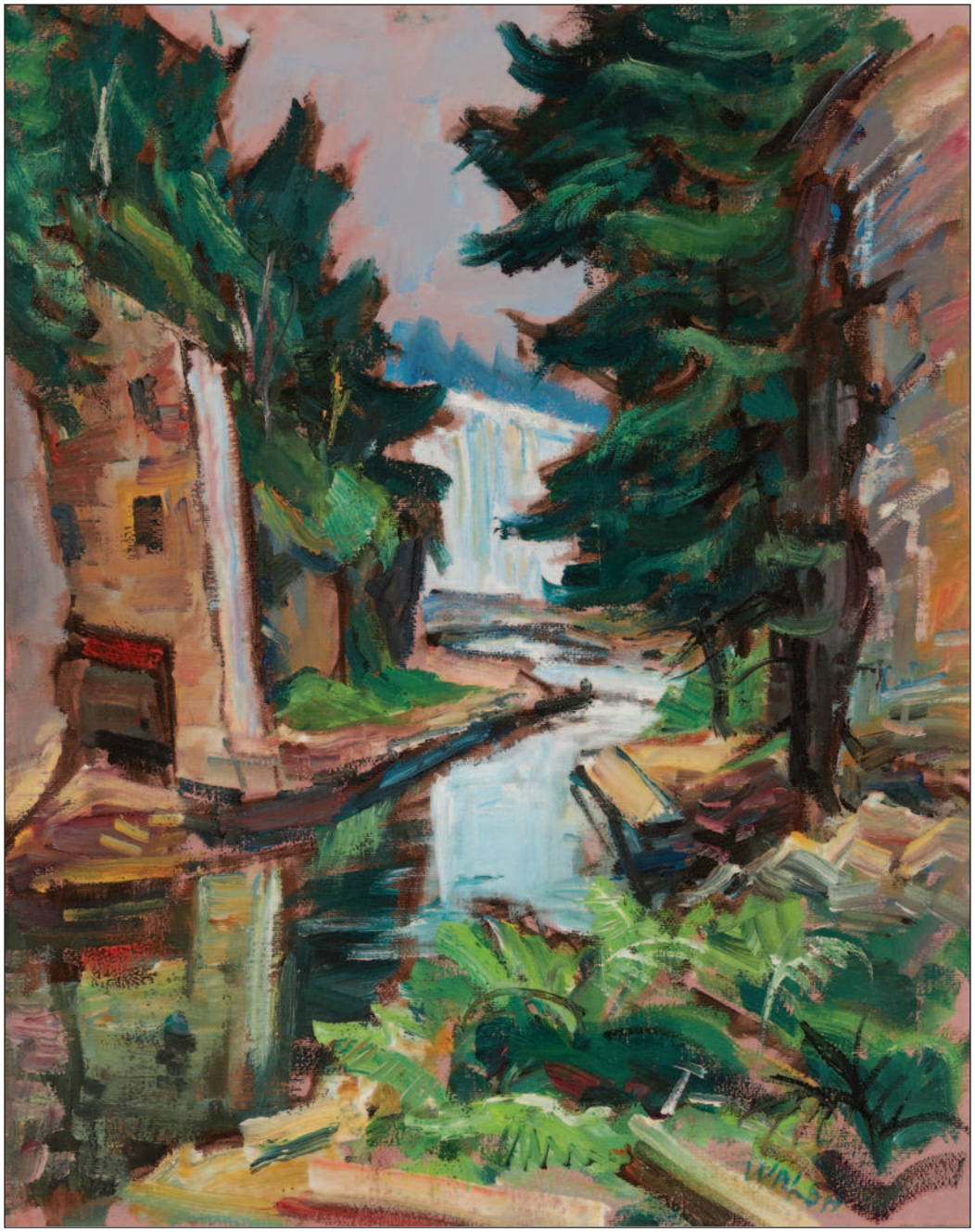
5. "Canadians Abroad: Industry's Artist," 29.

6. Paul Duval, "Scene Increases Hold on Canadian Art," *Saturday Night* (6 September 1947), 2. See also *John Walsh*, a biographical sketch prepared by Kinsman Robinson Gallery (Toronto) for the artist's one-man exhibition at the gallery from 26 March 1987 to 8 April 1987.

7. John Walsh, quoted in "Painting the Night Fantastic," *Bonjour* (Montreal) (September 1979), 23. Unattributed. See also John Walsh, "John S. Walsh Watercolourist," *American Artist* (June 1961), 62.

8. Arthur Lismer was a founding member of the Group of Seven, visionary landscape painters who came together in 1920 to create a bold new approach to the depiction of the Canadian wilderness. Lismer immigrated from England, and after many years in Toronto he moved to Montreal in 1940, the

Mike Lalich



Macomb Dam, Salmon River, *oil on canvas, 1977. Author's collection.*

same year John Walsh arrived in Canada to take up his wartime posting.

9. John Waller Hills, *A Summer on the Test* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1983), 15. *A Summer on the Test* was originally published in a limited edition in 1924, followed by a second edition with seven more chapters in 1930. The second edition was reprinted in 1983 by Andre Deutsch, with a new introduction by Anthony Atha.

10. The Salmon River described here is not to be confused with the river of the same name that flows into Lake Ontario near Pulaski, about 140 miles west, and which attracts legions of visitors in pursuit of migratory salmon and trout. In contrast, the Adirondack-sourced Salmon River flows north from Chasm Falls through Malone, crossing the Canadian border to join the St. Lawrence near Fort Covington. It is an underappreciated fishery, where it is rare to encounter other anglers.

11. Norman Maclean, *A River Runs Through It* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 4.

12. George M. L. La Branche, *The Dry Fly and Fast Water* and *The Salmon and the Dry Fly* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), 22.

13. The Chateaugay River rises out of the Chateaugay Lakes and runs due north through its namesake village to the Canadian border, ultimately joining the St. Lawrence on the south shore of Lac St. Louis.

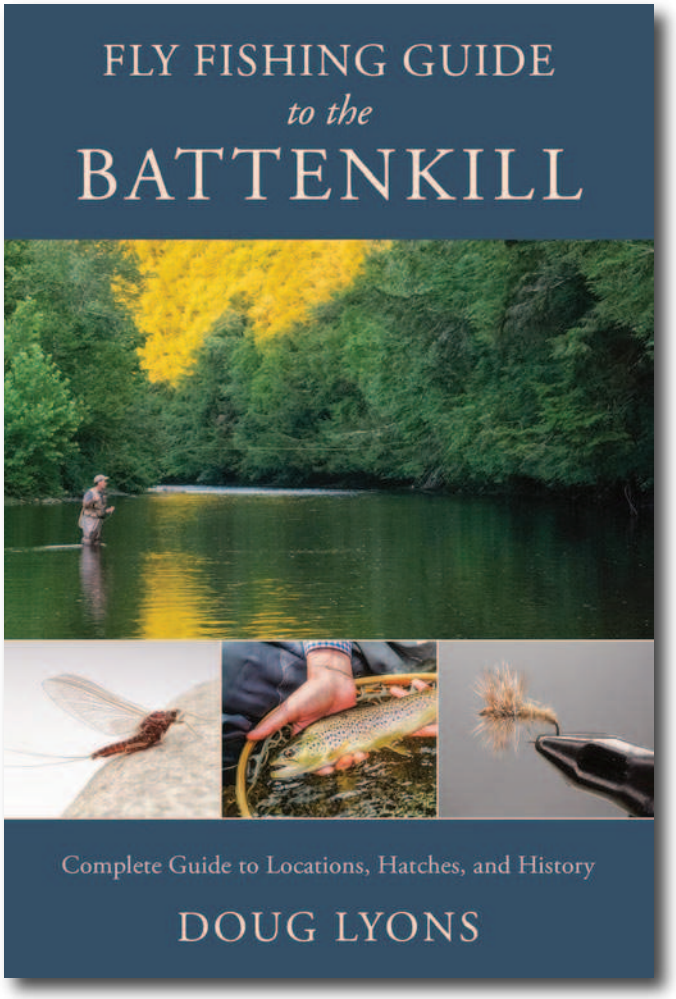
14. Macomb Dam is an example of a viable small-scale hydroelectric project, still common across New York and New England, which was recently certified by the Low Impact Hydropower Institute (LIHI Certificate #159, 26 April 2019). It is the farthest downstream power facility (of five) on the Salmon River.

15. The penultimate line of John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (xii, 648). John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (New Edition) (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1962), 308.

BOOK REVIEW

Loveliest of Rivers: The Battenkill

by Robert A. Oden Jr.



Growing up on the northern Great Plains, as I did, and fishing only the waters of the Rocky Mountains and farther west between the ages of six and eighteen, I considered the West's large, flat-water spring creeks to be the most demanding fly fishing anywhere. Getting a small dry fly to float drag free on a 4x tippet on Silver Creek, the Henry's Fork, or Flat Creek was just about impossible, at least for one with only a few years' fly-fishing experience. Back in the 1950s, 4x—about 2 pounds test—was the smallest tippet we dared to use.

For college and beyond, I moved east and discovered Pennsylvania's Letort Spring Run. These were the days when the area near this little gem was not crowded with fast-food chains and big-box stores, and when Charlie Fox did so much to improve the river. A friend of mine asked Fox why he added 5-inch-high gravel walls, parallel to the current, to the brown-trout spawning areas he had worked to improve. Fox replied, "Well, brown trout are like us—shy when spawning." The Letort, I swiftly concluded, was more demanding than the western rivers I had fished as a youth. It was exceedingly difficult even to crawl close enough to the bank to attempt a cast; and when one did cast, the results were rarely productive.

Later still, after college and graduate school, I moved to Hanover, New Hampshire, and began to fish the Battenkill in nearby Vermont and New York. I recall vividly an early morning in August, mid-1970s, when I fished the flat water below the Hill Farm Road Bridge, back when this was an open meadow, not the multiflora rose-choked area of today. There was a truly colossal Trico hatch going on. It was very early morning, and the tiny duns, followed by spinners, were everywhere. New to the Battenkill as I was, I false cast over the river. One false cast, and every one of the twelve to fifteen browns and brook trout that had been eagerly eating the Tricos fled in terror. And I had made that fatal false cast with a light outfit, a 7½-foot bamboo rod for a 4-weight line. "Merciful heavens," I thought, "can one not even false cast over the Battenkill?" Further experience confirmed that my question was entirely rhetorical: "Yes, one cannot." Nor, I soon discovered, can one wade while creating the smallest splash or wake. Sloppy wading will quiet a pool for hours.

Hence, my lasting conclusion: the Battenkill is the most demanding river to fly fish in the United States. But now, to the rescue, comes Doug Lyons's *Fly Fishing Guide to the Battenkill*. Many legendary skilled and experienced anglers have fished and written about this river: Lee Wulff, John Atherton, John Merwin, Tom Rosenbauer, Mike Valla, Jamie Woods, and many more. All write well and tellingly about the Battenkill. Still, it is no denigration of previous authors' books and articles to assert that Doug Lyons's recent volume is a superb complement to what has gone before.

There is so much to admire and respect—and from which to learn—in the volume that it's difficult to know where to start. So, let's start where Lyons does.

Parts 1 and 2 of the book, about half the volume's pages, are devoted to comprehensive accounts of the Battenkill from the West Branch, up by Dorset, Vermont, and the East Branch, flowing through East Dorset, all the way to Greenwich (pronounced "Green-which"), New York, and beyond. As Lyons follows the course of the Battenkill on this 60-mile journey, he pauses to describe every named pool (as well as a fair amount of water absent names). But he does far more than simply offer description. Lyons tells us, on the basis of considerable experience, how and where to fish each pool, often noting which large rocks or roots hold fish. Moreover, he informs the reader where to park and where to wade—and, more importantly, where not to wade. In *Fly Fishing the Henry's Fork* (The Lyons Press, 2000), Mike Lawson and Gary LaFontaine observe that "it really helps to know a river" (4). Doug Lyons really knows the Battenkill, and it helps.

Part 3 of this fine volume is devoted to tactics and hatches. Even casual Battenkill anglers are familiar with its two renowned hatches: the Hendrickson in the spring and the Trico in later summer. It turns out that there are a great many more hatches on the Battenkill than those of which I was aware. My ignorance stems significantly from my unwillingness to fish at or near dark on the Battenkill or any river; doing so simply feels too risky for me. I have fallen head over heels into flowing water three times in my fishing life: once in the Yellowstone, once in the northwest Miramichi, and once in the Brodhead's. Every time, I was astonished—shocked, really—by how swiftly I was carried downstream. The river may have been thigh deep when I fell in, but it was over my head by the time I righted myself. To be sure, Lee Wulff famously jumped off a bridge into the Battenkill wearing chest waders to demonstrate that such waders do not automatically mean one sinks to the bottom, as often alleged. Still. Still.

The hatches Lyons describes include *Paraleptophlebia adoptiva* (which I have experienced), several species of caddises and sulphurs, March Browns, Gray Drakes, and perhaps the strangest looking mayfly of all, the *Baetisca*, which looks like the result of a mayfly's mating with a housefly. For every hatch, Lyons provides photos and tying ingredients for appropriate flies. No fewer than thirty-two patterns appear in Part 3, plus an appendix with fourteen Atherton and Oatman flies. In my own Battenkill experience, the most effective of these are a variation of the Battenkill Flats Fly (I tie mine hackle-stacker rather than parachute) and the Rabbit Foot Emerger, created by Tom Rosenbauer, whose seasoned advice on fishing the Battenkill and other waters has greatly enhanced my own fly fishing. Rosenbauer's Rabbit Foot Emerger is a slightly unusual version of The Usual. My own rarely-fail emerger in recent years is a fly I first tied for the spring creeks in Paradise Valley, south of Livingston. It's a simple creation: shuck made of Antron/Zelon/Darlon, biot body, peacock herl thorax, then a mass of confused CDC hackle. My fly did not have a name until once, while fishing the same pool on the Brodhead's with a great friend, when I was catching as many fish as he was few, he asked me what fly I was using. I cast over to him, on the far side of the river. He grabbed the fly, examined the mass (or mess) of CDC hackle, and said, "Sure is a skanky-looking thing." Hence the fly's name—perhaps heedlessly, in retrospect—became The Skank; and The Skank continues to produce everywhere I have used it, including on the Battenkill.

Let me return to the hatches most known and publicized on this loveliest of rivers: the Hendrickson and the Trico. My experience precisely mirrors that of Lyons. Although the Hendrickson hatch continues, sometimes with great profusion (once, near the State Line Pool, every time I placed my hand on the river's surface, it covered at least a half dozen Hendricksons), the trout resolutely refuse to feed on the surface. On the other hand, both browns and brook trout seem entirely willing to eat both Trico duns and spinners on the surface later in the year. Lyons plausibly attributes Battenkill trout's unwillingness to feed on the surface to the increase in predators, especially mergansers (214–15). This makes good sense, but does not explain why the trout are so eager to take Tricos on the surface.

Robert A. Oden Jr.

Two examples of the Skank Hendrickson (left) and the smaller Skank Paraleptophlebia adoptiva *(right), all tied by the author.*

The fourth and final section of *Fly Fishing Guide to the Battenkill*, "History and Conservation," is worth the price of admission. Lyons proves persuasively that brown trout were introduced into the Battenkill in 1889, decades earlier than others have argued (179–83). This same portion of the book pays appropriate tribute to the work of many groups (Orvis; the Batten Kill Watershed Alliance; the Battenkill Conservancy; Trout Unlimited, especially their Home Rivers Initiative; the Nature Conservancy; the state of Vermont; and others) in

Robert A. Oden Jr.

Some favorite Battenkill nymphs. From left to right: Perdigon, Egan Frenchie, and Blowtorch Hare's Ear, all tied by the author.

improving stream conditions, preserving riparian habitat, and working over many years to end stocking trout in the Vermont section of the river (would that New York demonstrated equal wisdom). The analogy I often use in arguing against stocking is this: imagine that you are sitting peacefully in your own home when suddenly, without a knock or doorbell ring, a large group of intruders press in. The strangers don't know how to eat, they don't know where to poop—they destroy your ability to simply go about your life. That's what it must be like for wild fish when scores of stocked fish are thrown into the river.

The scientific work of the groups named above demonstrated that it was the absence of much woody substrate that accounted for a decline in trout numbers. "As Cynthia Browning, former director of the Batten Kill Watershed Alliance, liked to say," notes Lyons, "there was simply not enough furniture in the house" (208). Not enough large logs under which to hide, not enough wood in the stream to provide food for mayflies, caddis, and stoneflies.

In Part 4, as throughout, Lyons notes the welcome presence of wildlife along the Battenkill: barred owls, mink, and bald eagles, to which I would add red foxes (often at astonishingly close range) and all three accipiters (American goshawk, Cooper's hawk, and sharp-shinned hawk). The concluding pages of the volume also include the most balanced and fair-minded account of float tubers and drift-boat operators I have read. Rather than simply railing against both—as many of us have done when countless tubes float down the river—Lyons presents the case that the river does not belong to anglers alone, that ways can and should be discovered and implemented to allow both anglers and those floating the river to enjoy the manifold glories of the Battenkill.

Such is the sequence of the book's four sections. But this does not exhaust the volume's many virtues. There are superbly well-done photographs, the best I have seen of the Battenkill, including ones contributed by Andrew Walker and Thomas Ames. The book's attributes also include multiple examples of Lyons's questioning or demolishing conventional wisdom, e.g., "I think that the idea of super-aggressive brown trout chasing streamers as they prepare for the fall spawn is somewhat overstated" (176), although I would have written, less diplomatically, "is wildly exaggerated." In addition, Lyons is pleasingly, fetchingly modest. Thus, after hooking his first large Battenkill brown from a riffle just above where the Green River enters the Battenkill, he writes, "The fish ran hard to the middle of the river and exploded out of the water. Being inexperienced with this class of trout, I was simply a stunned witness to all that took place. That the fish would break off was a foregone conclusion" (155). Or another instance of modesty: a photo near the book's conclusion of Lyons fighting a fish is captioned, "Now and then even the author finds success on the Battenkill" (247). Finally, and charmingly, are the instances of humor Lyon provides. Like this: high water "is the time for those big, articulated streamers with obnoxious names" (175). And this: "Just above the trestle [on the lower Battenkill] there is a bit of boggy water that reminds me of the 'frog water' of the Au Sable in Michigan, which holds the famous *Hexagenia* mayflies. This water serves as habitat for Brown, Cream, and Golden Drakes on the Battenkill. And frogs" (112).

Fine prose, sound judgment ("if ever there was a river made for cane, it is the Battenkill" [133]), is there anything with which one might disagree in Lyons's *Fly Fishing Guide to the Battenkill*? Well, of course there is. Fly fishers are nothing if not opinionated and obdurate. For example, I do not think a Woolly Bugger, with which Lyons fishes, ever has a place in the Battenkill. So, too, my own success with nymph fishing does not quite correspond with Lyons's pronouncement that the Battenkill is not much of a nymph river, although he does modify this a bit when it comes to tight-line nymphing. I hook ten trout fishing Perdigons, Egan's Frenchies, and Blowtorch Hare's Ears for every brown or brook trout I hook on surface flies. But these are the admittedly cranky views of one who has been fly fishing for seventy years.

Because Lyons's advice is so sound and so precise (a final example: Lyons indicates with precision where a field that yields flying ants is located), does the publication of this estimable volume mean the Battenkill's peace will soon be vitiated or destroyed by the appearance of countless anglers? It does not. It does not because, to return whence we began, the Battenkill is too challenging, too demanding, too unforgiving of false casts or careless wading. The Battenkill—half freestone, half spring creek—is truly beautiful, but easy to fish it is not.

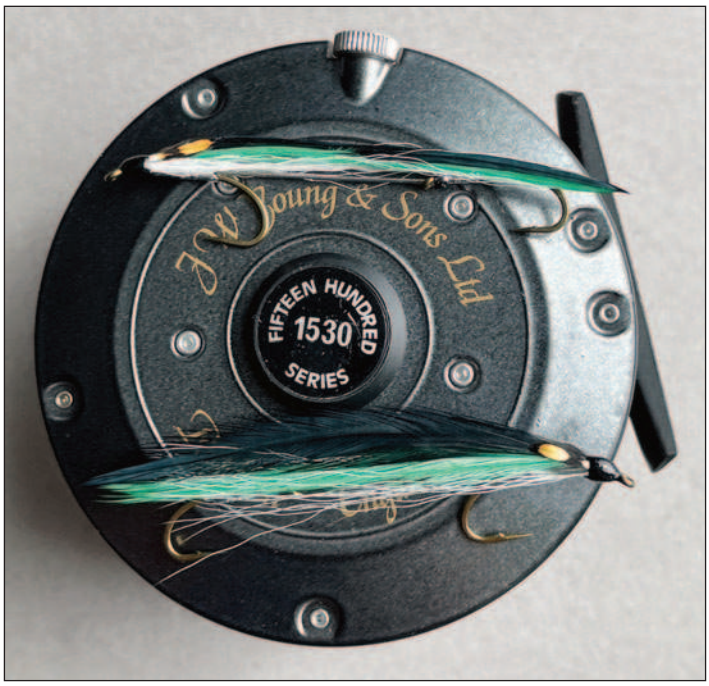
AMFF Trustee Rob Oden was a professor at Dartmouth College for fourteen years before eventually becoming the president of Kenyon College and then Carleton College. During his academic career, he taught hundreds of students about knots and bugs and fly casting. In retirement, he and his wife, Teresa, are fortunate enough to live in Hanover, New Hampshire.

Fly Fishing Guide to the Battenkill: Complete Guide to Locations, Hatches, and History
by Doug Lyons
Stackpole Books, 2023
$34.95 (paperback)
288 pages
http://stackpolebooks.com

The Birth of the Tandem Fly and Early Patterns

by Scott Biron

Scott Biron



The Nine-Three, tied by Scott Biron. The top fly is wet to simulate how it looks in the water.

Tandem flies are popular when trolling for landlocked salmon and trout. A tandem fly is a fly with two hooks. Originally the hooks were connected to each other with tinsel or gut; now they are connected with wire.

New England is considered the birthplace of the tandem fly as we know it today. Tandems were developed to minimize the problem of missing fish with short strikes. Most early single-hook trolling streamers had very long wings. When the fish took the fly, it often was behind the hook and would "short strike" the fly. This resulted in no hookup, and the fish was lost. Maine outdoor writer Gene Letourneau, back in 1949, estimated that four out of every five strikes were shorted.[1] The tandem allowed the rear hook to be farther back, making these flies more effective.

Herbert "Doc" Sanborn, Gene Letourneau, and Emile Letourneau (Gene's brother) were all party to the birth of the tandem fly. These three were hard-core anglers who loved trolling flies. Gene wrote a pamphlet on streamer fishing and the advantages of using tandems. Doc Sanborn developed a fly pattern called the Nine-Three, which he first tied as a single hook fly, then later as a tandem.

Here is where things get muddy. In *Secrets of Streamer Fly Fishing for All the Angling Family*, Gene Letourneau states that Emile came up with the two-hook idea.[2] Gene wrote the first tandem Emile tied was the Sportsmen Say pattern.[3] Then, in J. Edson Leonard's book *Flies*, there is a letter written to Leonard by Sanborn stating that the tandem was in fact *his* idea, and the first one tied was the Nine-Three streamer fly pattern.[4]

The tandem was revolutionary. Sanborn fashioned his early tandems using the metal body tinsel to connect the hooks. Emile Letourneau used gut to connect his hooks. Each used streamer hooks 3 or 4 XL in size 8 with the rear hook's eye ground off. Later they both switched to a shorter-shanked wet-fly-style hook and left the rear eye on, running gut or wire through it.

Today most tandems are tied using a size 4 stout wet-fly hook in the front and a size 6 in the rear. The wire connector

is almost always stainless steel, and often there is a plastic coating over it. Most average 2¾ to 4 inches long, but New Hampshire fly tier Jim Warner tied jumbo tandems for Lake Winnipesaukee that were 8½ inches. Rear hooks can be tied with the hook up or down. Personally, I tie them hook down, which reduces foul hooking and results in less injury and a safer release.

Although the Sportsmen Say is an effective tandem pattern, the Nine-Three is often considered Maine's second-most-popular fly, behind the Carrie Stevens Gray Ghost streamer.

Many fly tiers have modified Sanborn's original recipe. Traditional feather-wing patterns have their wings either tied on top of the hook shank or Rangeley style, tied in at 2 and 10 o'clock. The Nine-Three differed, with the light green hackles tied flat on top of the hook and with black hackles tied in on top of the green in an upright fashion. Sanborn wrote about his frustration with others tying the pattern incorrectly and shared that it doesn't look neat dry.[5] When it's wet, it closely resembles a smelt.

Smelt in Maine have dark backs and lighter bellies. Many of the lakes in the state have a tannin stain to the water, and my experience is that the flies with the dark backs often are more effective. Sanborn's Nine-Three wing offers a separation of the black and green colors. The green wing has tremendous movement in the water. The silver body and white bucktail belly all add up to a very smeltlike look. Use more bucktail in the early spring and less in the summer.[6]

Recently the American Museum of Fly Fishing was gifted one of Gene Letourneau's streamer books, as well as a framed photo of Emile and several of his flies. One of those flies is the tandem Nine-Three. I have seen a photo of one of Doc Sanborn's Nine-Threes. It appears that he tied the fly in the photo, but his wife also tied, and it could have been hers. We are in search for one of Sanborn's tandems for the AMFF collection.

I think it is safe to say the original tandem was either a Nine-Three or a Sportsmen Say. The Letourneaus were so convinced of the tandem's effectiveness that they applied to the U.S. Patent Office for a tandem fly patent, which was turned down on the grounds that fishing flies were too varied.[7]

~

Scott Biron is an AMFF ambassador, a master artist in the New Hampshire Heritage & Traditional Arts Program, and a national and international fly-tying instructor. He is on the ambassador pro teams of HMH Vises and Partridge of Redditch. Ewing has a signature series line of feathers that bear Scott's name.

ENDNOTES

1. Gene Letourneau, *Secrets of Streamer Fly Fishing for All the Angling Family* (Waterville, Me.: Letourneau-Nichols, 1949), 3.
2. Ibid., 4.
3. John Mundt, "Gilded Summers in Belgrade, Maine," *The American Fly Fisher* (Summer 2000, vol. 26, no. 3), 8.
4. Herbert Sanborn, letter to J. Edson Leonard, 19 March 1949, in J. Edson Leonard, *Flies* (New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1950), 293. Sanborn writes, "I do however take the credit for originating the double hook trolling streamer and getting it on the market for the fishermen to use. I lost many good salmon trolling with a single long shank hook and hence devised the two hook tandem. My theory was that the fish had too much leverage with the long shank and it was, while trolling, a question of them setting themselves. . . . The Nine-Three is my own origination, although I've heard of many others that claimed it."
5. Leonard, *Flies*, 293.
6. Ibid.
7. Mundt, "Gilded Summers in Belgrade, Maine," 8.

Join AMFF live or by Zoom on August 10 at 3:00 p.m. ET for a webinar at the Annual Fly Fishing Festival, where the author will tie a Nine-Three tandem fly.

Nine-Three Tandem
Body: Flat silver tinsel
Belly: White bucktail
Wing: 3 green saddle hackles tied flat on top of the hook with 2 black saddles tied edgewise on top
Cheeks: Jungle cock
Head: Black

Sportsmen Say Tandem
Body: Flat silver tinsel
Belly: Yellow bucktail length of body
Wing: 6–8 strands of peacock herl with 4 grizzly saddle hackles over them
Cheeks: Jungle cock
Head: Black

A tandem Nine-Three tied by Emile Letourneau. AMFF permanent collection. Gift of Richard Miller. 2024.017.001.

Art Kaemmer
9 July 1943–31 January 2024

Art Kaemmer, pediatrician and outdoorsman from St. Paul, Minnesota, joined the AMFF board in 1988 and served ten terms before resigning in 2017. In his words, "While I love the museum and its board dearly—and intend to continue indefinitely my financial support at its current (or greater) level—health, age, and other personal reasons make it unlikely that I can ever again attend board meetings or serve effectively as a trustee. A few years ago I introduced AMFF to my good friend, Rob Oden, and it appears that he (as I knew he would) is more than satisfactorily serving as my replacement. I therefore feel comfortable that my retirement from the board will not leave the organization in any distress."

Art approached his role on the AMFF board as he did everything else in his life—with full zest and commitment. Here that "good friend" of his, Rob Oden, pays tribute to his *good friend, Art Kaemmer.*

Sarah Foster
Executive Director

Family photo

Art Kaemmer.

Art Kaemmer's friends all have memories filled with vivid Art stories through which his active and often wild sense of humor shines. Every dinner party, every fishing-trip shore lunch, every glass of pinot noir was made the livelier because of his impromptu—and sometimes well-practiced—jokes. Perhaps his most lasting and memorable was the annual donning, at Halloween, of "Alice," his strikingly realistic gorilla costume. Art would stand in the trees beside his and wife Martha's front door, leap out, and, in his words, "Scare the crap out of the trick-or-treaters." The children learned to bring bananas for Alice, which—abundant at the close of each October 31—went to a St. Paul, Minnesota, food shelf.

After graduating from Carleton College (where he later served on its board of trustees), Art went to medical school and became a beloved pediatrician in the Twin Cities. Art loved the children, and the children loved Art. During Carleton trustee meetings, Art would on occasion step out, even after his retirement, to go to the aid of a child.

Still, we best remember Art as a consummately dedicated and expert fly fisherman. While fishing for redfish with Art near his family's winter residence on Captiva Island, I marveled at the skill of his double-hauled casts, almost Joan Salvato Wulff–like in their distance. In addition to fishing for trout through the United States, Art routinely traveled to the Whale River in far northern Quebec for Atlantic salmon and to the Bahamas and beyond for bonefish and the like. There were tales of catching the standard flats fish, but Art also had stories from the Seychelles and Christmas Island of milkfish and giant trevally—vivid, demonstrative, wide-eyed stories.

A great and loyal friend, a terrific fisherman, a generous supporter of the American Museum of Fly Fishing, Art Kaemmer was a splendid man whom many of us will long miss.

Robert A. Oden Jr.
Trustee

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF FLY FISHING

17th Annual Fly-Fishing

FESTIVAL

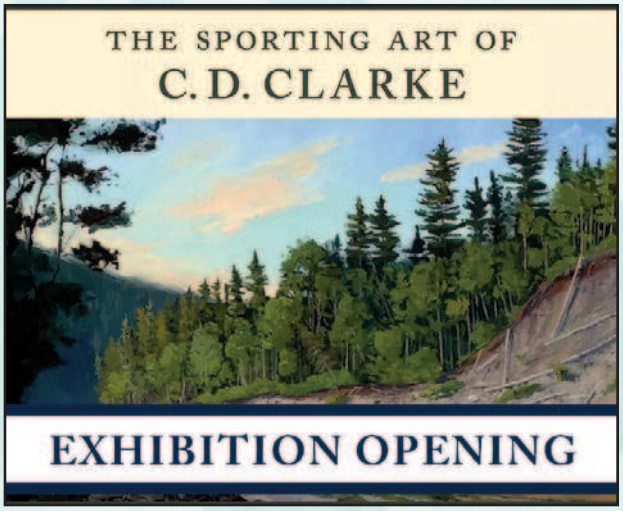
Saturday, August 10, 2024
Manchester, Vermont
10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Schedule of Events

- 11:00 am: Casting competition
- 12:00 pm: Saltwater casting seminar with AMFF Ambassador Kyle Schaefer
- 1:00 pm: Meet the Artist: C.D. Clarke
- 2:00 pm: Art workshop with AMFF Ambassador Rachel Finn
- 3:00 pm: Raffle drawing

Happening all day:

- Tackle appraisals with Bob Selb, Fred Kretchman, and Carmine Lisella
- Casting lessons with AMFF Ambassador Kyle Schaefer
- Vendors and nonprofits
- Fly-tying demonstrations
- Casting the Classics
- Local food and beverage trucks
- Children's activities
- Multiple museum gallery exhibitions
- Music by Shannon Roy
- Free museum admission all day



Visit amff.org for full schedule, complete vendor listing, and raffle tickets

Museum Wish List

The American Museum of Fly Fishing is actively seeking artifacts to enhance planned exhibits and general collection items we feel will augment our educational displays. These include:

- Horton/Bristol steel fly rod, circa 1887
- Tandem streamer flies tied by Dr. J. Herbert Sanborn
- Handmade fly reel by the late Robert "Bob" Baird
- Early Archimedian reel by Frederick Skinner, circa 1848

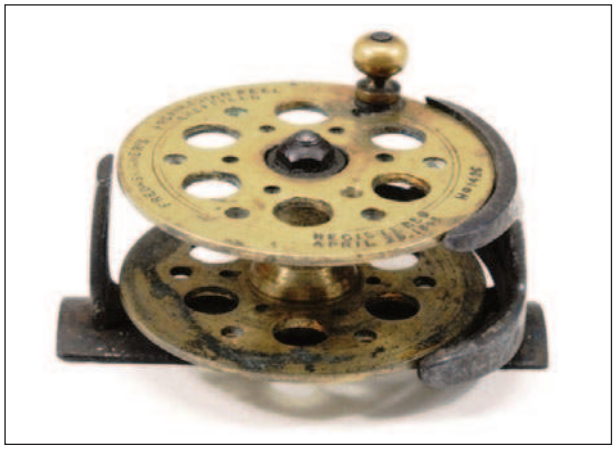
The museum wishes to thank Richard Miller for his recent donation of an original tandem streamer fly from the vise of Emile Letourneau, an item from the wish list published in the Fall 2023 journal.

If you have any of the above items and would consider donating to the museum's permanent collection, please contact Curator Jim Schottenham via email at jschottenham@amff.org or by calling (802) 362-3300.

Photos by Jim Schottenham except where noted

Everett Horton Patent Telescopic Fly Rod, circa 1887. This unique rod was issued U.S. patent number 359153. Using a wire inserted at the tip of the rod, the angler could then attach the fly line and pull it through the guideless rod. Ideally, the museum would like a complete rod with packaged wire and instructions.

Handmade fly reel by the late Robert Baird (1948–2011) of Salt Lake City, Utah. An exceptionally skilled artist, Bob made a small number of fly reels marked with his trademark "Diamond B" insignia, each unique and all using the highest-quality hand-fitted components. Photo by Robert Baird.



The Archimedian from Frederick Skinner dates to 1848 when the reel received registration number 1426 from the British patent office. Skinner's side-mounted reel predates its American counterparts by more than a decade.

A Nine-Three tandem streamer fly tied by the originator of the pattern, Dr. J. Herbert Sanborn of Vinalhaven and Waterville, Maine. The original tandem streamer, circa 1940s, was tied using two long-shank no. 8 hooks, filing off the eye of one hook and lashing the two together with tinsel. This method was quickly abandoned in favor of the Emile Letourneau improvement of using short-shank hooks tied together with wire or gut.

Museum News

Recent Donations to the Collection

Peter Corbin (Millbrook, New York) donated a collection of photographs from his personal excursions with saltwater anglers, including Stu Apte and Andy Mill. **The Estate of Ronn Lucas Sr.** (Fruitland, Idaho) left us a framed set of presentation flies.

Fred and Joan Lowenfels (New York, New York) gave us a set of flies tied by Rube Cross. **Lily and Andy Renzetti** (Titusville, Florida) donated a Renzetti Commemorative Grand Master Vise marking the company's fiftieth anniversary. **John Holland** (Jackson Hole, Wyoming) sent us an Ari Hart ARAS reel with opalized finish.

Edward Bovey II donated a digitized copy of Martin Bovey's film *Hewitt on the Neversink* (1940); Edward is Martin's grandson. **William R. Turek** (Hudson, Ohio) sent us a collection of instructional videos.

Michael Hackney (Groton, Massachusetts) passed along a copy of his and John Betts's *Reels and Making Them* (Reel Lines Press, 2011); **Ted Sypher** (Chenango Forks, New York) shared a copy of his book, *Soft Hackle Classic Atlantic Salmon Flies* (privately printed limited edition, 2024); and **Nick Lyons** (New York, New York) gave us an autographed copy of David M. Atwood's *An Angler for All Seasons: The Scrapbook of William K. Chip Stauffer* (Zanzibar Press, 2023). All three of these titles are welcome additions to the museum's library.

Upcoming Events

Events take place on the museum grounds in Manchester, Vermont, eastern time, unless otherwise noted.

July 11, 18, 25
AMFF Kids Clinics

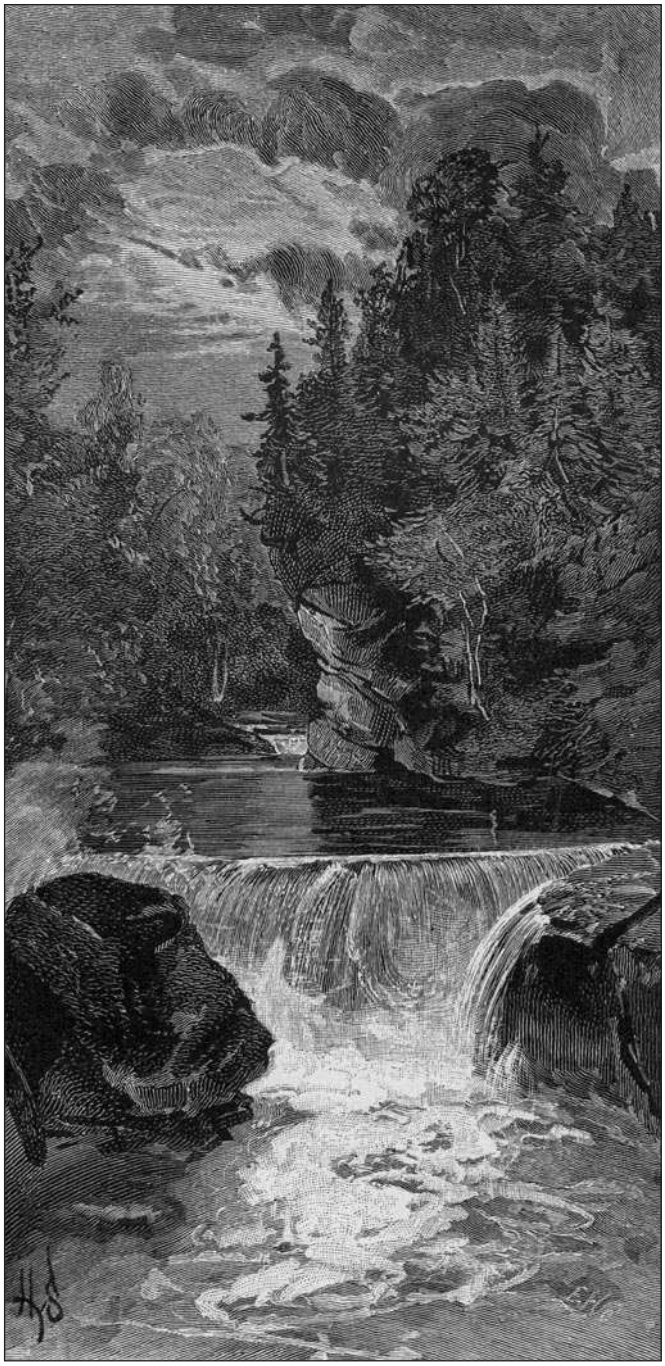
August 10
Annual Fly-Fishing Festival
10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

August 10
Streamer Fly Tying with Scott Biron
Via Zoom
3:00 p.m.

October 3
Annual Members Meeting
Wonders of Wildlife Museum and Aquarium
Springfield, Missouri

November 14
Izaak Walton Award honoring Guido Rahr
Log Cabin at the Presidio
San Francisco, California

Always check our website (www.amff.org) for additions, updates, and more information or contact (802) 362-3300 or amff@amff.org. The museum's email newsletter offers up-to-date news and event information. To subscribe, look for the link on our website or contact the museum.



From Alfred M. Mayer, Sport with Gun and Rod in American Woods and Waters, *Vol. I (New York: The Century Company, 1883), 413.*

CONTRIBUTORS

Neal Henderson

Paul Bruun (shown here guiding Tom Brokaw) has been a newspaper fixture in Wyoming since 1973, when he was hired as editor of the weekly *Jackson Hole Guide*. His column about the outdoors has appeared in weekly Jackson newspapers since. He served three terms (twelve years) on the Jackson Town Council, co-founded the South Fork Skiff drift boat company, and, in December 1978, began, edited, and co-published the *Jackson Hole Daily*.

Bruun was a northwestern Wyoming float-fishing outfitter/guide for thirty-seven years. He continues as a Patagonia Fly Fishing Ambassador. A lifetime member of Coastal Conservation Association and Trout Unlimited, he pens the last-page "Classics" column in *TROUT* magazine. He was inducted into the Catskill Center and Museum's Hall of Fame in 2021 and received the American Museum of Fly Fishing's Izaak Walton Award in 2022.

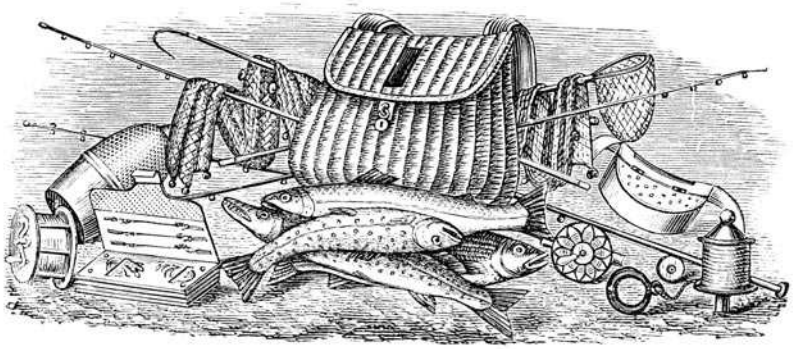
An early board member of the Jackson Hole One Fly Foundation, Bruun participated as a guide for more than twenty years and received the event's first Bob Carmichael Guide of the Year Award. Now retired, his columns continue in both the *Jackson Hole News & Guide* and *TROUT*.

Bruun enjoys fishing with his wife, Jean, in the West and in Florida over the winter. Jean is still a float-fishing guide on the Snake River and was the 2021 recipient of the now Carmichael-Cohen-Morton Guide Award from the Jackson Hole One Fly.

Dee Chatani

Christopher Pibus grew up near the shores of the St. Lawrence River in Quebec, and he has been inspired and sustained by moving waters ever since. He is a writer and retired lawyer now living in Dundas, Ontario. After more than fifty years of fishing in North American rivers and farther afield, he still grins like a six-year-old when he catches a trout.

Chris studied English and American literature at McGill University, then completed a graduate degree in English and a law degree at the University of Toronto. He practiced intellectual property law for forty years before resurfacing to begin writing the fishing stories he has been waiting all his life to do. He published his first piece in *Fly Fisherman* magazine in February 2023, and his story "Downstream from Wisdom" is included in a collection called *Wisdom River: Meditations on Fly Fishing and Life Midstream* (UpRoute, 2023). Special thanks to his literary mentors Robert Reid and Jim McLennan for their unfailing guidance and encouragement.

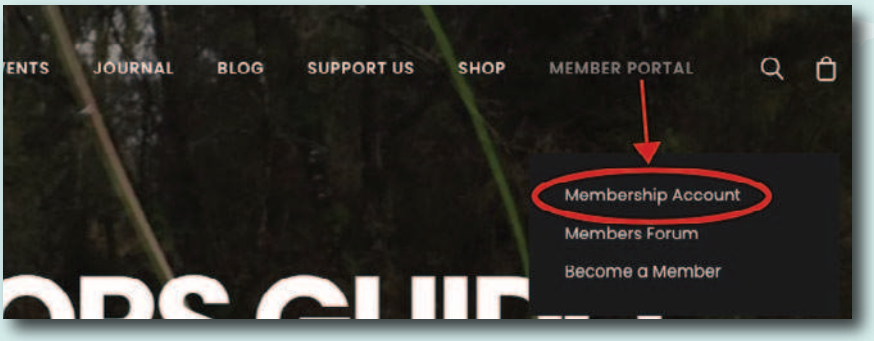


From Genio C. Scott, Fishing in American Waters
(New York: The American News Company, 1875), title page.

Getting Started Online

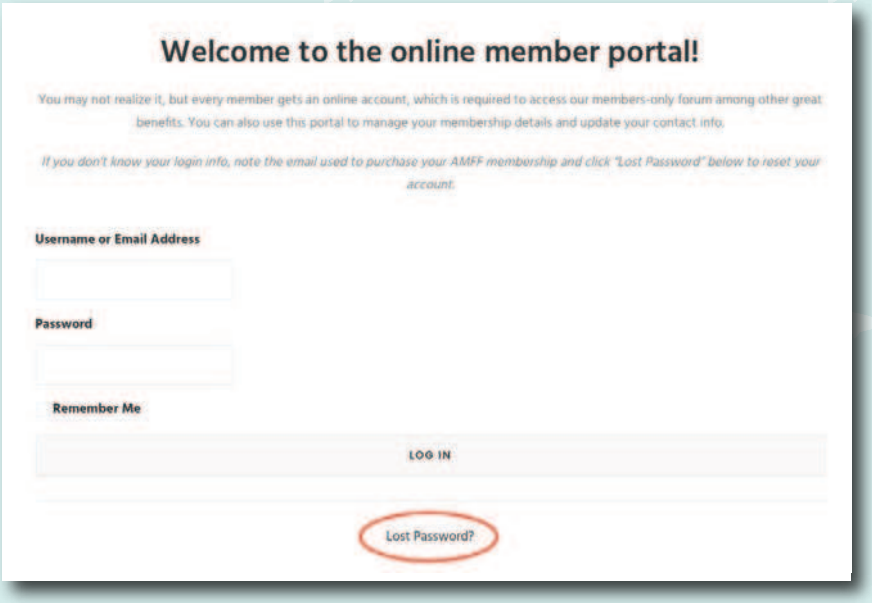
Interested in chatting with other readers about this issue of the journal? Have a question for Curator Jim Schottenham? Members can do all this and more in AMFF's new online forum.

If you're uncertain as to how to find your account page and activate your online membership, all it takes is a few steps to get started:



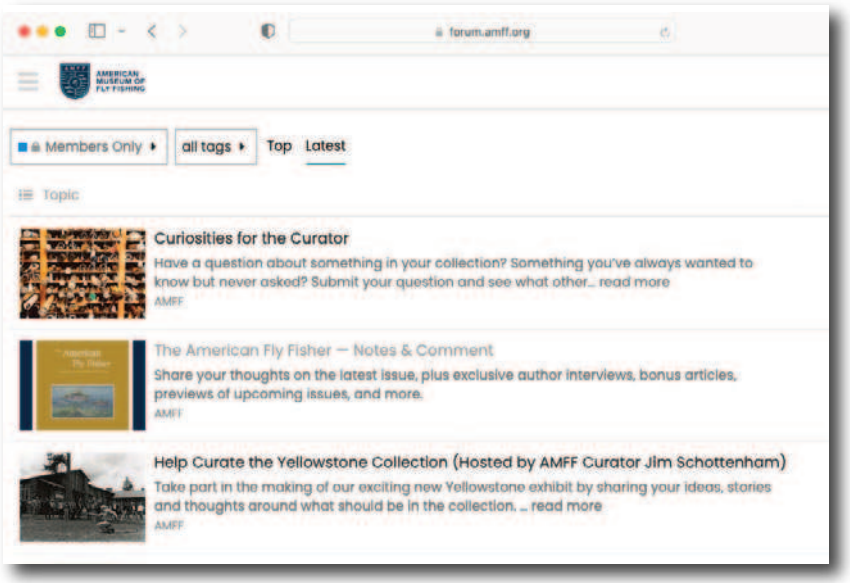
Go to amff.org, find "Member Portal" on the main menu, and then select "Membership Account."

Next, select "Lost Password?" and enter your email address on the next screen. Click the link in the email you receive from us to be taken to a new page. Enter your chosen password and click "Reset Password."



You'll be asked to reenter your email as well as your new password, and then you'll be all set. From your account page, you can access the forum, see your membership expiration date, and much more!

Growing Together



AMFF's members-only forum.

Here at AMFF, we are constantly reviewing our strategic goals and priorities while simultaneously evaluating progress. Every three years, however, we work through a long-term institutional plan, scrutinizing all aspects of our operation. As we embark on this journey again this summer, we'll be seeking input and guidance from our board, advisors, ambassadors, staff, and—you guessed it—our members!

Having just joined us in December, this will be Director of Membership Brendan Truscott's first time participating in this exercise. Brendan has been focusing on member benefits, experience, and representation; think partner discounts, best-in-class programming, and ways to represent the diversity of anglers and their fisheries. He'd like to put this flurry of activity in context so you can share in the excitement of our bold vision for the museum's future. He writes:

> Strategy is inherently experimental. To borrow from a key grade-school science lesson, the worst-case scenario in any experiment isn't failing—it's not learning anything at all. Fortunately, we've already found some proven winners. We're on track to more than double membership by the end of the year, and we believe our brand awareness is at an all-time high. We've added an online member portal to our digital arsenal, which will allow us to continue growing in a scalable and efficient way. The portal is also a crucial first step to developing remote-friendly membership benefits, such as digital exhibits. Read more about this on page 28, and visit our website to activate your account.
>
> We believe that growing our membership significantly over time will provide a much greater degree of financial and operational flexibility for the museum. However, our longer-term vision can't be reduced to a single membership goal. Instead, we think of it as a leading indicator of the place we hold in the fly-fishing community and our role in preserving the sport's rich traditions as it evolves and becomes more diverse.
>
> Most things evolve and diversify over time, but fly fishing may be particularly dichotomous. It's an ancient sport, but several constituencies of fly anglers have traditions that are better measured in decades than centuries. One can see these newer traditions unfolding in the rapid progression of saltwater fly fishing, the growing popularity of Spey casting and Euro nymphing, and the specialization of gear and tactics for warmwater species.
>
> Even if you don't seek out the new, you see it in your local fly shop when facing an ever-growing array of flies, rods, and reels (to wit: Orvis's newest rod comes in twenty-nine variants, and that's just for single-handed applications). Perhaps there's been even more growth, relatively speaking, when you look at things from a demographic or geographic perspective. Whichever lens you choose, it's clear that the landscape has become much richer, with many more nuanced fields of interest.
>
> All of which brings us back to today and our strategic review. As fly fishing continues to grow as a sport, we believe that the museum needs to evolve in a similar way. Now more than ever, we need a museum that connects and unites the entire fly-fishing community. There are many new histories to tell, personalities to capture, emerging traditions to track, and items to add to our collection. AMFF is ideally positioned to fulfill this role in the community because however new it may seem, nothing is likely to be truly novel. We'll be able to trace these developments back to earlier traditions because, well, that's fly fishing for you.
>
> To unite these smaller communities, we need to increase our organizational footprint, both physically and digitally. We should be reaching out and meeting these communities where they are. That's why we launched the new online member forum. It's why we started conservation classes focusing on different causes around the country, and it's why we're building partnerships with fly shops and guide networks in all of the major fly-fishing hubs.
>
> We're still in a nascent stage, with much more to come. Please check these things out and let us know what you like—and don't like. It's our job to discover what works over the long term, but by providing input, you can accelerate the process.

It is our hope that you, our dedicated legacy members, can better see the future that we are working toward—not just in the abstract, but in the tangible steps we're taking to realize this exciting vision.

Sarah Foster
Executive Director

EST. 2018

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