

The Newsletter of The Connecticut Fly Fisherman's Association

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April 21 2025 is meeting

From the vest of the President



We had a great meeting in March. Pete Aarrestad, Director Fisheries Division, Bureau of Natural Resources, presented a program that concentrated on the trout and the flows in the Farmington River. In summary our Farmington river trout are doing very well. The Brown Trout survivor program continues to be a model of success and there is more natural spawning and successful reproduction of wild river born brown trout every year. Last falls annual electroshocking, performed to supplement the survivor program, captured approximately 40% wild brown trout. We also learned from Pete that with the passage of HB-5355 our state now has greater control over water releases from Colebrook and Goodwin Dams that feed the West Branch of the river. Many of you voiced your support for this bill and I applaud you for doing so. The new control, especially during summer droughts, will improve the river qualities for both the aquatic invertebrates and the trout that live there. This meeting was very well attended and I was very happy to see a good number of our recent beginner fly tying students attend. Let's continue to welcome all first timers to our events and give them a good reason to return. John Walker and Ted Rzepski demonstrated fly tying prior to the meeting. This is very much appreciated and if anybody else would like to demonstrate a pattern or a special tying technique we would love to have you. Anything fly fishing related can be demonstrated such as knots, leader construction, etc. The more we have to offer at our meetings the better.

When you receive this issue of our newsletter our Beginner Freshwater Fly Fishing School will be happening. Twenty new students will be learning about the equipment, aquatic invertebrates, knots, strategies, and methods they should know to catch a trout on a fly. We have the

classroom sessions and the casting instructions covered but we need volunteers May 3rd for the river lessons on the Willimantic River TMA. To be clear you should not feel that you need to be an expert to assist with their stream education. If you can wade a river, present a streamer, a wet fly and a dry fly you can share these skills with one of our students. All of us Fly Fishers have received some instruction along the way and now it is your chance to pay it forward. Please consider donating a few hours on Saturday morning May 3, it does make a difference. I believe it is one of the most important things you can do as a CFFA member. Contact Pete Naples at flyon054@outlook.com

Our Fly Tying sessions held at the American School for the Deaf have concluded until next March. They were coordinated once again by Kevin Fuller and assisted by 8-10 CFFA members. All that's left is a field trip in May when the students can try their new creations on the trout at the Willington Fish and Game Club.

Now that Spring has sprung the Newington chapter of Project Healing Waters has resumed its outdoor field trips. Many CFFA members assist Farmington Valley Trout Unlimited with this program throughout the year. Just recently we helped the enrolled veterans fine tune their fly casting techniques at a Community Center in Middletown. We have also tied flies throughout the winter when meeting in person and attended Zoom meetings on other weeks. If you would like to join as a volunteer or know of any veterans that might be interested in joining this chapter please have them contact me and I can put them in contact with Don LaChance who leads the chapter.

Gary





Do remember that these people and the folks that buy tables are our annual day each year support CFFA. None of the big box stores do.

Editor



Our program for this month will be: Fly tyers round tables. Roger will have 12 of our members showing us all their secret flies they use I am sure :-)) anyone wanting to bring their own tools is welcome to do so and sit with a tyer and learn. Meeting is April 21st

Rick wants to remind everyone to join us for the 5th Annual Tribute to Gary Lafontaine on May 10th we will have our 5th annual Gary Lafontaine day at 9:00am to 3:00pm Salmon River, Colchester Connecticut, Gulf Road, Picnic Area

This event is in honor of Connecticut's most influential fly tier, long time CFFA member, Gary Lafontaine. Gary's books revolutionized sub surface Fly fishing. Sadly, Gary's life was cut short due to A.L.S. Fly tiers are welcome to bring a chair, folding table, vice and materials to tie flies. The theme of the day is Caddis patterns but any and all fly's can be tied.

9:00am Fly Tying - This is an informal gathering of fly tiers. Everyone is responsible for their own table and materials.

11:00am We will give Gary's friends time to say a few words about Gary's influence on fly fishing. Fishing is available on the river all day.

Everyone is responsible for their own food and beverages. Grills are available. ***If raining we will not tie flies,

but will still gather and fish.

Thanks!! See you then.



My Life & Times with Gary LaFontaine

How a Creative Genius Impacted the Lives of Fly Fishers Worldwide

By Ken Parkany

The Gros Ventre Giant – Part 2

When I met up with Gary later, I said so excitedly that I was almost out of breath when I finished: *“I met Jacqueline Knight earlier, the wife of the late Richard Alden Knight, son of John Alden Knight, inventor of the Solunar Tables, and I plugged your book. She’s also the author of ‘The Cook’s Fish Guide’ (Dutton, 1973) and her presentation is the same time as yours tomorrow. And she told me that her and her husband, fished the Gros Ventre a long time ago and they’d heard back then that there was a giant oversized trout in the river. Now do you believe me?”* Whew! All that in one breath!

“Really? Well, there are a lot of famous fly-fishers here. This is THE event to meet ‘em and greet ‘em, ya know.” Gary intentionally ignored my closing question about the giant trout. In response to him ignoring my question, I said mockingly, *“in a few years, Gary, can me and my friends come meet and greet you?”* He shrugged and walked away. I followed, not knowing how prophetic my comment was.

The next morning Gary’s presentation was well attended. This being his first public talk, Gary had yet to develop a polished delivery that came with time. But he did inject some of his corny humor that became the mainstay in all his later talks and also in a newsletter he later published.

The conclave ended that day and we said our goodbyes to Gary’s buddies. Early the next morning, as planned, we headed west out of Jackson Hole. Our fishing destination was the

Railroad Ranch section of the Henry’s Fork of the Snake River in Idaho. But first we had a stop at Dave Lawson’s Fly shop near the river.

Little did Gary nor Dave know then what lay ahead of them in terms of fame. In just four years, that was all about to change. Gary had his Classic **“Caddisflies”** (Lyons, 1981) published, which was so unique to angling literature that it truly ignited his rise to fame. His book is still the definitive book of the subject of caddis, both the insect and its importance to the trout’s diet.

Plus, little did the Dave and Gary know then that twenty-three years later, they would co-author **“Fly Fishing the Henry’s Fork”** (Lyons Press, 2000); or that Gary, would also be awarded by many organizations for his books. And little they know that years later, the two of them would team up with Jack Dennis as the Traveling Fly Fishermen, and be invited to speak and fish all around the world. I think during those years as world travelers together, I got post cards from Gary while they were in some exotic waters in the UK, New Zealand, and Europe. Many years later when he was battling ALS, I recall asking Gary where would he like to go that he hadn’t fished? “Chile”, He said, in South America.



Back to our journey out of Jackson Hole and, in particular, our Snake River destination, I held silent doubts. I mentioned earlier that Gary’s car seemed to be at an age of wanting to retire. Well, this little red four-cylinder barely made it up the mountain. Before we reached the highest altitude of the pass over the mountains, the thump, thump, thump, we heard delayed us while we changed a flat tire. Once that was done the little red four-cylinder began having altitude sickness. Gary had his peddle to the metal as we crawled along at 20 mph up the steep highway and cars came up behind

and passed us like we were stationary. Once we crested, Gary said, *"this little engine that could is in its glory now,"* as we coasted downgrade for many miles to a lower elevation.

We finally made to Lawson's fly shop parking lot without any further incidents. The shop was open and Dave was busy at his tying vise. After greeting and introducing me, Gary told him our destination was the Railroad Ranch section nearby. *"Great timing,"* Dave said, *"the Trico hatch is on."*



FYI, Trico is short for tricyrthodes, a small (size 22-24) dark bodied mayfly. But instead of giving us some

exact size imitations, Dave gave us some size 18 Trico Comparaduns.



"This pattern sits in the water film surface and is very easy to see," Dave said. He claimed to have much more success getting hookups with the larger

pattern. Apparently, it more so resembled the hatching insect with its nymphal shuck still on. *"To the trout, a bigger meal"*, Dave surmised. So, after a few fly-fishing yarns and Gary bragging about his friend from back east, we headed to the parking trailhead. I noticed that Gary was always quick to inflate a friend's skill and diminish his own. Humility was in his DNA. Once at the parking trailhead, Gary and I donned waders, rigged up with the Lawson Trico pattern and began walking. We walked maybe a half mile or more through an open grassy meadow to the river. My first impression once at the river? The larg-



est spring creek I'd ever seen. Hundred or less yards wide, weedy bottom and only waist deep. Fish were rising everywhere, like raindrops. A bit exaggerated, but you get the picture. Our angling adrenaline rush was at a peak. Gary and I separated a bit and initially began casting with close casts. After catching and releasing a few 14-to-16-inch bows and browns, we started making longer casts. I almost got tired of yelling *"Yubba-Dubba-Doo"*. Gary and I both had much success. Dave Lawson's advice was perfect. As the afternoon drew to a close and our adrenaline was beginning to be replaced by hunger, we both concluded it was the end of a perfect day and week for that matter. I have no recall of what transpired after the memorable Railroad Ranch Trico hatch experience.

Who would have thought that twenty-five years later Gary would be in his fourth year of battling ALS in a nursing home in Missoula, Montana, at the young age of fifty-six. Unable to walk or do much of anything without assistance, Gary still had a breadth and depth of knowledge that he was now dictating for publication, or was answering questions of interviewers desperate for more of his angling expertise or his thoughts on a number of fly-fishing subjects. Gary was very gracious with his time.

Linda and I spent a long weekend in Missoula with Gary, his daughter Heather and her husband, in mid-December 2001. Just two weeks later, we were informed of his death. It was Friday, January 4th, 2002. I lost a dear friend. Flyfishers worldwide lost a legend.

Kevin Fuller and his friend Al the fish man went to New Hampshire to fish last fall. He shared his beautiful pictures with us from the trip.





Sulpur Perdigon
Tied by Paul Dinice
Tightlinesflyfishing.blogspot.com

FLY OF THE MONTH Sulphur Perdigon

Hook: Gamakatsu J20 Jig Nymph Hook Size #14.

Tying thread: Danville 6/0 Yellow.

Bead: Slotted Tungsten Gold Bead 3.0 mm.

Weight: .020 Lead or lead free wire, 4-5 wraps behind the bead.

Tail: [Mallard Flank Feather fibers.](#)

Rib: Ultra small wire Gold.

Abdomen: Golden Brown or Tan Antron Yarn .

Thorax: Yellow Thread.

Wingcase: Black UV resin or Nail Polish.

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



George Sullivan and I are CFFA members though we almost never attend meetings (except when they were Zoomed during Covid). We did attend the fly-tying lessons last January and loved it. I wanted to send this earlier in October but never got to it. I know you are always looking for newsletter content, so here's a blurb about our last fishing/hunting run



up to Maine.

Late last September (2024), we made our fourth annual trip to the Jackman-Moosehead Lake region. Usually, we split the dates between fly-fishing time and the start of grouse hunting session. This past year was no exception. Luckily, we were able to book a guide at the last minute. Scott Snell, from



Wilson's on Moosehead Lake, took us out on the East Outlet in the boat. We were the only anglers on the water that foggy morning and while it was cold, it was so peaceful and beautiful, it almost didn't matter we weren't catching anything. By mid-morning, three other boats and a few brave wading souls took to the fast current. It was then both George and I managed to catch fish. George had three hits, landing

two Brookies. The last one, possibly a salmon, slipped the hook. I managed to catch three Brookies in the space of 15 minutes (if that!). These were my first real fly-fishing catches in seven or so years, so I was thrilled beyond belief. While it's always nice to escape the work merry-go-round for a week, this year's trip beat all previous with excellent weather and fish on the line. What more could we ask for?

We'll be going back again in 2025.



Cheers,
Denise Long &
George Sullivan



Ever wonder what bugs look like inside a trout's stomach?



Lines & Leaders

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