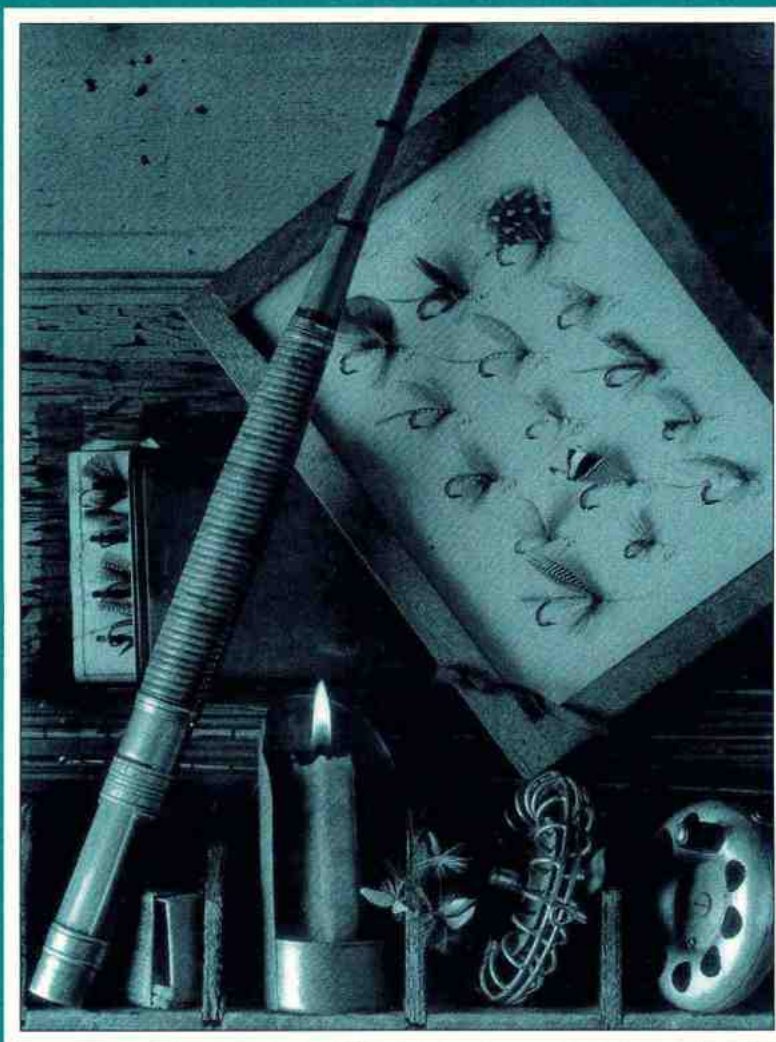
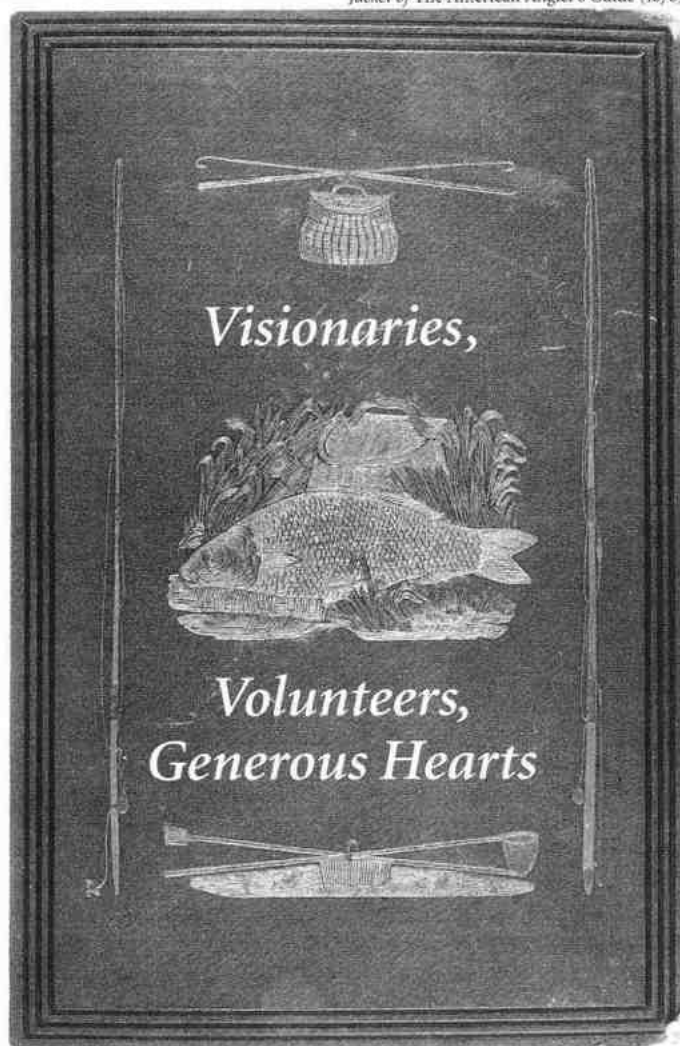


25th Anniversary Issue
THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF FLY FISHING



The American Fly Fisher

SPRING 1993 VOLUME 19 NUMBER 2



HERE, FINALLY, is the anniversary issue of *The American Fly Fisher* that celebrates the twenty-fifth year of the American Museum of Fly Fishing. The challenge of producing this issue has been both daunting and exciting because it became The Official Place where our quarter of a century was to be properly documented and celebrated. But to my dismay I discovered that there is no way to do editorial justice in a mere thirty or forty pages to the myriad dedicated visionaries and volunteers, generous hearts, eccentric characters, and high-powered movers and shakers who have appeared on our stage. So with that real practical constraint, the decision was made to ask the key players in the Museum's history to write their stories and let them tell us what it was like way back when. Herewith we gain the distinctive insights into the past and its pleasures in the first-person narratives by Leigh Perkins, Gardner Grant, Dick Finlay, Paul Schullery, and the rest.

Compiling this issue of remembrance has given me much to think about. I read every single page of every issue of *The American Fly Fisher*—nineteen years worth—and the minutes of every annual trustee meeting in order to gain

an accurate time sense of presidents' and staff tenures, and yearly business matters. This reading provided me with a bird's-eye view on the expanding nature of our growth—albeit with an occasional jarring contraction. When you look at the big picture, most of the petty grievances and financial disturbances of this institution (like those of any) recede into a healthy background, while the undying spirit of this place—propelled always by those two human jet engines, Leigh Perkins and Gardner Grant—blossoms like a long-lived, hardy perennial that just keeps coming back year after year, bigger and more beautiful.

We'd like to give special recognition to some people whose names appear again and again in the early issues of *The American Fly Fisher* for a wide range of contributions, all of whom made a real difference to the Museum and for whom space did not permit fuller tribute: Susie Isaksen, Joanna

lost—those inimitable saints, Dick Finlay and Joe Pisarro.

Although I have tried my hardest not to make mistakes in chronology and/or fact, or omit important contributors and volunteers, there are bound to be errors as well as names I unwittingly have not included, so I please ask for your understanding if that is the case. We'd sincerely welcome letters from readers who would like to set the record straight.

We hope you take the time in the fever of the fishing season to savor and enjoy this most auspicious anniversary of *your* museum. Perhaps you might be so inspired by what you see in the following pages that you will open up your checkbook and send the Museum a special birthday present! I hope so. As always, let us hear from you, and—as always—happy fishing.

MARGOT PAGE
EDITOR

Sheridan, Kay Brodney, Romi Perkins, David Ledlie, Arnie Abramson, Ken Cameron, Steve Raymond, Anne Secor, Dick Kress, Maxine Atherton, Paula Wyman, and two gentlemen without whose day-to-day help, guidance, and editorial contributions this issue would have been



THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF FLY FISHING

Preserving a Rich Heritage for Future Generations

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The American Fly Fisher

Journal of The American Museum of Fly Fishing

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Table of contents listing articles such as 'Cause for Celebration', 'A Few Memories', 'Hermann Kessler (1904-1993) and the Birth of a Museum', 'Arnold Gingrich (1903-1976)', 'Austin Hogan: First Curator, Founding Editor', 'Leigh H. Perkins: The Art of Giving Something Back', 'FIRST PERSON: From the Father of the Museum', 'Gardner L. Grant: Guiding Light, Strong Back', 'FIRST PERSON: During My Watch', 'Recollections', 'A Quarter Century to Build a Museum', 'Paul Schullery: Premier Historian', 'FIRST PERSON: Taking the Museum Personally', 'FIRST PERSON: On Growing a Museum', 'FIRST PERSON: From the Basement Up', and 'The Museum's Collection from Then to Now'.

ON THE COVER: Items from the collection which appear on the Museum's twenty-fifth anniversary poster (see page 36). Photograph by Terry Heffernan.

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Cause for Celebration

WHEN GIVEN the opportunity to appear in permanent print on the subject of the American Museum of Fly Fishing, I rose to the fly with naive avidity and immediately sat down to describe in compelling and sagacious prose what inspires our commitment to preserve the heritage of our sport with a museum. I now understand the conceit of that ambition and the impossibility of the task. The explanations seem incomplete when held up to the reality. Like fly fishing, there is much to our commitment that is intensely personal and incorporeal.

The most basic charter of the Museum is the preservation of what is referred to as the objects of the sport. During my association with the Museum, I have been able to spend at least a little time with most of the items in the collection. I have admired the unfished Paynes, pondered the now-retired Gillums, and inspected some of the synthetic era's prototypes that represent only a small portion of the Museum's 1,500-odd rod inventory. I have picked carefully through the near-1,000 reels, some of which were recently featured in the Museum's award-winning book, *A Treasury of Reels*, by Jim Brown. I have even guided myself through the 30,000-piece fly collection, pausing briefly at each catalog number. It took me two weeks. And there is much more: manuscripts, artwork, and a sumptuous library.

But the objects could be stored in a hermetically sealed vault and still satisfy the mission to preserve them. Instead, the Museum is alive with the buzz of human activity. Visitors, from the mildly curious to research-minded scholars, exceed 7,000 annually. Over three million people have viewed the Museum's traveling exhibit, "Anglers All," since 1985, and in the past four years membership has expanded by 60 percent.

And four times a year, the Museum's flagship publication, *The American Fly Fisher*, brings rigorously researched history and visual delights to its subscribers. It is a marvelous dialogue, beautifully produced, and for some members this journal is their primary participation in the Museum's activities.

For other members, participation is more intimate and immediate. A band

of more than 140 volunteers donates time and energy to promote and support over a dozen annual fund-raising and public relations events, man the Museum galleries, and provide services too varied to describe. Others are called on to accept the responsibilities of trusteeship to nurture and safeguard a public trust. Finally, there are those who have made a professional career commitment to our organization and who make it work on a daily basis. A submission recently filed with the American Association of Museums describing many of the tasks that our staff performs is an inch and a quarter thick.

The American Museum of Fly Fishing is much more than the repository of the dusty relics of fly-fishing's past. It is vibrant, alive, forward looking, all the while preserving the heritage which defines our sport. And though I have failed to define what inspires our dedication and commitment, I nonetheless have provided strong evidence of its vigor and health at age twenty-five. This, I think, is ample cause for celebration. Happy anniversary.

WALLACE J. MURRAY III
PRESIDENT

IT HAS BEEN ESTIMATED that America had only 600 museums in 1910. By the outbreak of World War II, 2,500 museums were in operation. In 1986, the *Official Museum Directory*, published by the American Association of Museums, listed over 6,000 institutions. One of the most interesting of the 3,500 museums established in the post-war years is the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

Founded and chartered in 1968 by a disparate group of like-minded visionaries, the Museum is now celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary as a nonprofit, member-oriented, educational institution. We are one of some 10,000 museums in America today. Still, we remain one of the most unique, and, given our current status, our future is bright. Though we may call ourselves a "sport museum," fly fishing, as we all know, is much more than a sport. It is also an art, a craft, an industry, lifestyle, and, for many, a singular passion.

In a traditional sense our Museum is both a repository and a conservatory: we exhibit, publish, conserve, educate, and entertain. Still, the Museum has also evolved into something much more than an exploritorium (my word)—we are the keepers of the accumulated heritage of fly fishing. We are also standard bearers of this sport's history and we intend to remain as such in the years to come.

In these challenging economic times, more and more museums have been concerned with survival. The Museum has managed to overcome hurdles that have caused many other museums to stumble and fall. In the museum world we are a "keeper." And in the process we've matured—individually and collectively—through the efforts of a talented board, an exceptional group of volunteers, and a loyal membership; by embracing and adhering to standards set by the American Association of Museums; and by dedicating ourselves to serving the public. Now, more than ever, we are living out the dreams of our founders. We have truly come of age.

You will learn about the birth and realization of these dreams, and the colorful history of our Museum, in the pages that follow. You will also learn about the people who, over the course of a quarter of a century, have dedicated themselves to the Museum and its mission. For ultimately, it is the people—our founders, the special benefactors, the officers, trustees, members, the staff, donors, volunteers, and special friends (collectively known as our Museum family)—who have shaped and built our Museum.

It has been an honor to serve the Museum, its board, volunteers, and members for the last five years, and a pleasure to serve a museum that is clearly destined to accomplish great things in the years ahead. Let us look back and celebrate twenty-five years of dedication, hard work, growth, and unforgettable memories. And, let us recognize the talents of all those who have worked long and hard so that our Museum could become the keeper of a magnificent heritage. Happy anniversary, American Museum of Fly Fishing!

DONALD S. JOHNSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



A Few Memories

by Dick Finlay

I REMEMBER SITTING DOWN with Hermann Kessler in the upstairs conference room of the old Orvis factory on Union Street going over ancient stuff, some from the attic, as well as old books, ledgers, and artifacts stored in the built-in desk in that room. Those meetings took place in the summer of 1963 when Hermann was photographing material for an article which appeared in the May 1964 *Field & Stream*, "Americana of Angling" by Harold Blaisdell, an up-the-road fisherman/author from Pittsford, Vermont.

Several years later, sometime in 1966, Adele Finlay and I drove Wes Jordan to the Williams Club in New York for his evening talk at the Theodore Gordon Flyfishers. It was at this meeting (at the bar actually) that Hermann presented to Leigh Perkins his idea for a museum. Six months later Leigh expressed interest in pursuing the venture to Hermann, and after many phone calls a board of trustees was formed and Hermann was elected the first president.

The Museum was originally housed in a small wing of the Orvis showroom in 1967 (once the womens' clothing de-

partment, which had been moved to larger space within the store). To announce our presence, signs different than the store's were needed, so I went to the local library in Manchester Village, looked up old sign lettering styles and sign shapes circa 1850, then had them reproduced for the entrance.

The Museum's quarters soon doubled in size. The front wall was moved out and aligned with the front of the main Orvis showroom; the front windows replaced with exhibit shelves, storage drawers, and cupboards; a display cabinet was scrounged from the store and centered in the back room; and pictures hung on all available wall space.

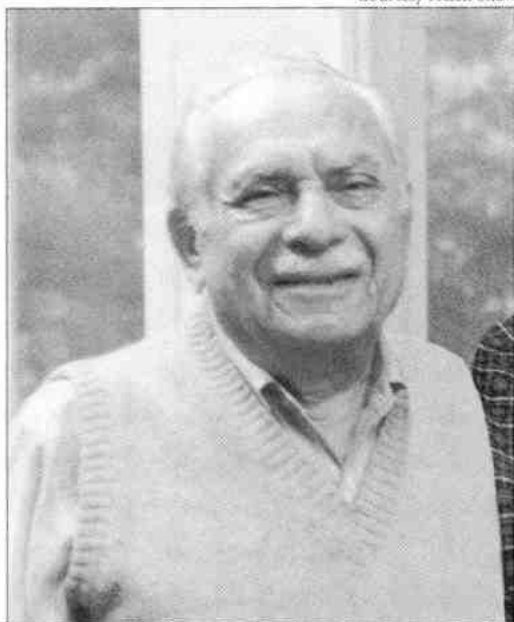
A cabinetmaker constructed a large glass-sided, glass-topped exhibit case to be used in the center of the new room. One night before any exhibit was created, I placed a fisherman mannequin in the case completely dressed in Hodgman waders, Orvis fishing shirt, Lee Wulff Tac-L-Pak, ArctiCreel, Sharpe collapsible landing net, and a fully equipped Orvis impregnated Battenkill

fly rod. Next morning, of course, I invited the office staff in to view the ghostly creation, and grinned at the shrieks and comments from the women.

That exhibit had a brief run. The regular exhibit of vintage Orvis items was soon installed: the original mountings of flies from which the fly plates for Mary Orvis Marbury's *Favorite Flies and Their Histories* were created, as well as old rod-making and fly-tying tools, ledgers, catalogs, and scrapbooks. The Museum had begun to grow.

Those of us who have been so fortunate as to have been associated with the Museum in one way or another from its beginning can recall the remarkable parade of people who have contributed to its conception and growth. Hermann Kessler came up with the idea; Leigh Perkins said, "Do it." Arnold Gingrich soon became president and Austin Hogan curator. The list of individuals—contributors of interest, time, talent, and dollars—has grown from stars to constellations. It's a treat now to be one of the oldies still around the place who watch the new folks go about the business of making our angling history come alive. 

Courtesy Helen Shaw



Hermann Kessler (1904-1993) and the Birth of a Museum

by Joe Pisarro

THE IDEA OF A MUSEUM dedicated to the preservation, collection, and display of the artifacts and memorabilia of fly fishing first “surfaced” in 1963, and it sprang from the mind of the late Hermann Kessler who died on January 28, 1993.

At the time, Kessler was (and had been for twenty-eight years) art director of *Field & Stream* magazine. Kessler was a superb photographer; publisher Nick Lyons says that “virtually everyone today uses the techniques that Hermann developed for photographing the fly-tying instructional sequences for his wife Helen Shaw’s book *Fly Tying*.” He also invented the shadow box with the help of William Cushner’s framing skills.

In 1963, Kessler combined a Battenkill vacation with research for an article the magazine was preparing on antique tackle. He sought items that he could photograph and use to illustrate the article. His search led him to the Orvis Company and to their virtual treasure trove of items, such as the display of flies and fishing photographs that had

been assembled by Mary Orvis Marbury and exhibited at the Chicago World Fair in 1893. Despite having been in storage for almost seven decades, the exhibit was in remarkably good shape and just begged to be displayed again. And that was only one of the items uncovered by Kessler, some of them dating back nearly to the year of the Orvis Company’s founding in 1856.


An idea began to form in Kessler’s creative mind. Surely, he thought, these precious objects deserved better than to remain hidden away in basements and warehouses. One thought led to another and to the inevitable conclusion: a museum devoted to fly fishing, a sport that was centuries old, at least 200 years old in America alone.

But it remained only an idea for Kessler until 1965, the year Leigh Perkins acquired the Orvis Company and became its president. Kessler presented his museum idea to Perkins at a legendary Theodore Gordon meeting in 1966, and Perkins not only agreed to donate the Orvis collection to the forthcoming mu-

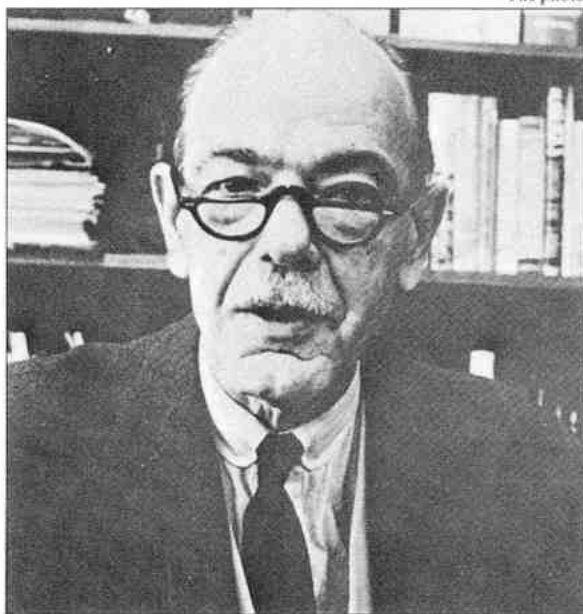
seum (which opened in a room in the Orvis store in 1967), but also agreed to appeal for donations of fly-fishing artifacts through Orvis publications.

Finally, in 1968, the Museum—known at first as the Museum of American Fly Fishing, a name that was changed in 1984 into its more-inclusive present appellation—was incorporated as a nonprofit educational institution and a board of trustees was assembled. Appropriately, Hermann Kessler was named its first president.

Thus, what began as the notion of one man has grown over these twenty-five years to boast the largest collection in the world of fly-fishing artifacts and memorabilia, and has become the leading conservator of its history and traditions. Housed in its own landmark building in Manchester, the Museum plays host to thousands of visitors from all over America and from foreign lands.

Little did Hermann Kessler imagine what he had wrought with that seemingly simple and obvious idea in the summer of 1963. 

File photo



Arnold Gingrich (1903-1976)

ARNOLD GINGRICH served us well, with devotion and self-sacrifice, first as a trustee charting the course of a beginning museum, then as our third president [1974-1976]. His inspirational leadership gave the Museum a heartbeat which was strong, steady, and vibrant, sounding loud and clear wherever fly fishers gathered.

In time all great men have their biographers and Arnold Gingrich will have his. They will begin with his birth in Michigan, his early love of reading and music, his graduation as a Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, and then the editorship of *Apparel Arts*. Most certainly the biographers who write of his business career will emphasize the founding of *Esquire* magazine and his part in its development. Over the years, he turned what was a magazine for gentlemen interested in the sartorial arts into a literary publication whose stable of authors included such greats as Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, John Steinbeck, H.L. Mencken, Dorothy Parker, Sinclair Lewis, Tennessee Williams, and the many oth-

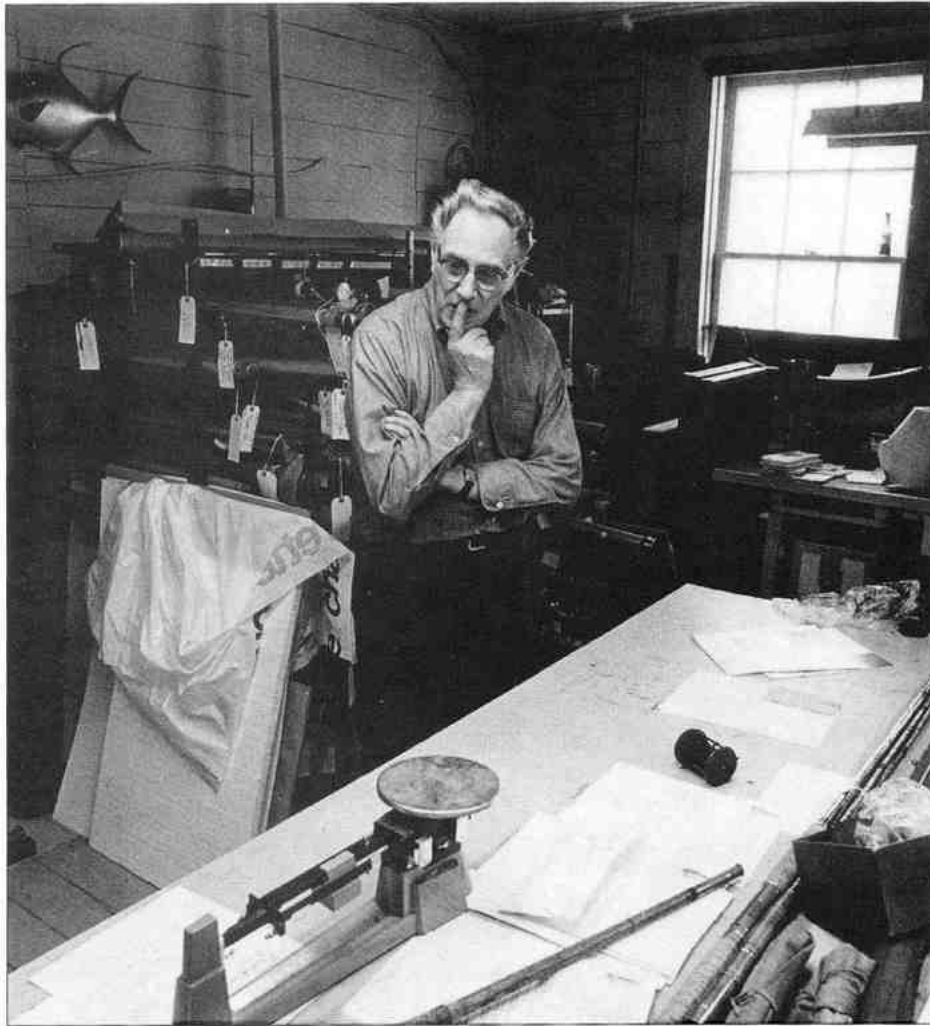
ers who were the leading writers of their day.

The biographers who will emphasize his love of fishing will relate the seemingly strange circumstance of a boyhood without fishing. The fair rewards started out of Chicago in 1925 with plug-and-spoon fishing for bass. Then came the fly rod and the catastrophic years as a suffering beginner. He notes he was almost fishless for two decades, until he moved to Switzerland in 1945 and then experienced the fishing Edens of Austria and Germany. In other years there was the saltwater fishing with Hemingway; the salmon of Quebec, Iceland, and Connemara; and forever the trout of the Beaverkill and the Esopus. It was on the Esopus he met Hewitt and it was there in the Catskill Mountains he came to know his beloved Midge rod. From then on the Gingrich way of fishing was with the lightest of bamboo, the finest of leaders, and the smallest of flies. He became a 20/20 man—limiting himself to a 20-foot leader and a fly no larger than size 20. He was considered one of the greatest living fly fishers.

His other great love was for the literature of angling. He read Walton once a year and there was no one more knowledgeable concerning the ancient angling classics. His many articles and books on the subject attest to his learning and scholarship. Undoubtedly, this sensitivity to literature carried over to *Esquire*. In 1968 he received the Henry Johnson Fisher Award, the Magazine Publisher's Association's highest award. Arnold authored nine books, including those on fishing.

For over two decades he willingly gave to the causes of conservation serving as a director and trustee of such organizations as the Theodore Gordon Club of New York and the national Federation of Fly Fishers. At the annual meetings of these societies, and at our own Museum meetings, no one served more ably and with such charming grace as a master of ceremonies. Arnold Gingrich was the well-tempered angler. Perhaps his coining of the phrase was prophetic. ~

(Reprinted from *The American Fly Fisher*, Volume 3, Number 3 [Summer 1976].)



Austin Hogan: First Curator, Founding Editor

AUSTIN HOGAN, JR. was born on March 7, 1909, in Johnstown, New York, to Austin and Margaret Hogan. It was in the environs of Johnstown that Austin learned about fly fishing and by the time he was a teenager he was driving his father's model-T Ford to his favorite fishing holes. He received an M.A. in education from Columbia University in 1938 and worked in the engineering field until his retirement in 1955.

Between 1955 and 1978 he spent most of his time researching the history of fly fishing in North America. He and his wife had an apartment in Cambridge and on virtually a daily basis, Austin

would avail himself of the libraries at Harvard, the Boston Public Library, or the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester.

He read everything he could get his hands on that was even remotely related to fly fishing. He is one of the few people we know who has perused every single volume of the *American Turf Register*, the *Spirit of the Times*, the *American Angler*, and *Forest & Stream*. By the time he joined the Museum as its first curator in 1970, he was considered a leading expert on American angling history. During the summers he vacationed either in Maine (the Rangeley or Sebago

regions) or in the Adirondacks. He was given the Sportsman of the Year Award by the New England Outdoor Writers in 1973 and was made an honorary trustee of the Museum in 1983.

Austin was the founding editor of *The American Fly Fisher* from 1974 to 1978. His other publications included *American Sporting Periodicals of Angling Interest* (1973) and *The Orvis Story* (1980), coauthored with Paul Schullery. He was a member of the Federation of Fly Fishers and the United Fly Tyers. He died on May 7, 1985.

(Reprinted from *The American Fly Fisher* Volume 12, Number 4 [Fall 1985].)

Orvis file photo



Leigh H. Perkins: The Art of Giving Something Back

by *Geoffrey Norman*

THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF FLY Fishing owes a lot—indeed, its very existence—to the vision and amiable tenacity of one man, Leigh H. Perkins. For most sportsmen who have bigger fish to catch, if not to fry, this would be a sufficiency of good works for one life. But for Perkins, dedication to the Museum is just one good deed among many, a way of giving back a little to a world, and a way of life, that has been astonishingly good to him.

If Perkins was not born a sportsman, then it could certainly be said that he was raised that way. He was his mother's fishing and bird hunting companion from an early age. On salmon rivers in Canada, duck marshes in Ohio, and the plantation quail fields of north

Florida, he learned to do things the right way and that there was much more to sport than the simple taking of fish and game. He became not merely good at fly casting and wing shooting but, more importantly, a deeply committed conservationist as well.

How many young men go off to college, as Perkins did when he enrolled at Williams, with their bird dog for a roommate? On fall weekends when other students were thinking of football games and fraternity parties, Perkins was heading across the state line to Vermont and the bird coverts where he still hunts. Consider this testament to his enthusiasm: one opening day he went hunting in spite of what he thought was a cold or a case of the flu. As the day

wore on, he felt worse and worse until he finally had to crawl back to his car. When he finally checked into the infirmary, he learned he had polio. It was, mercifully, a mild case. Since then, he has missed only one opening day—he was getting married. "It was," he says, "a case of terrible scheduling."

While he was at Williams he also fished the Battenkill River, and that is where he can be found during the month of May. The Battenkill became Perkins's home river in 1965 when, after selling a successful business in Cleveland, he bought the Orvis Company in Manchester, Vermont. It was the beginning of a wonderfully successful business story.

When he bought the company, Orvis

File Photo



Left: Leigh Perkins brought H. Norman Schwarzkopf to tour the Museum in September 1991. Above: Leigh and Romi Perkins (also one of the original trustees of the Museum) hunt for red-legged partridge in Spain.

was selling a few split cane rods and some angling accessories. But the supply of cane was problematic—trade with what was then “Red China” was illegal and the old stocks were nearly exhausted—and fly fishing itself was a kind of eccentric second cousin to other kinds of fishing. The company was sleepily coasting on its one hundred-year-old reputation. Perkins changed that, to put it mildly.

Orvis had about half a million dollars in annual sales when he bought the company. Last year, the figure was \$90 million. But admirable as those numbers are, they only tell part of a tale which is vitally important to anyone who cares about sport, and the future of hunting and fishing, in these times.

Last year fly fishing finally was certified in the only way that really matters in American culture—Hollywood made a movie about it. And the closing credits of *A River Runs Through It*, Robert Redford’s respectful treatment of the Norman Maclean novella, give “special thanks” to the Orvis Company. The movie folks are not the only people who owe at least a nod of gratitude to Orvis and to Perkins. The list includes all of us who care about the world of sport, in general, and about fly fishing in particular.

When he took over Orvis, Perkins realized that before his company could prosper, the sport it depended on needed robust growth and acceptance as well as a certain amount of protection. He is a salesman to his bones and he undertook to sell not just rods—traditional split cane and the new, faintly heretical graphite—but fly fishing itself.

Orvis, under Perkins’s leadership, launched a program to make the sport much more understandable and accessible—to demystify it. In addition to designing user-friendly tackle, Orvis offered fly-fishing clinics to the uninitiated who might have been daunted by the sport’s reputation for purist ritual and sheer physical difficulty. The clinics translated the old devotionals from “Latin” and those who attended were delighted to discover that they could learn to cast, and do the other necessary things, in two days.

The clinics became a widely copied institution and had an incalculable af-

fect on the growth of the sport. “We never made any money on the schools,” Perkins says. “It was sizzle, not steak. But they did what they were supposed to do.” Which is make more fly fishers.

The more people who cared, it seemed obvious, the better the sport’s odds for survival. And if some of the more procrustean members of the angling fraternity objected to the new popularity—they seemed to think fly fishing should be a closely held secret—they would have a hard time arguing with Perkins’s efforts to water the source of the tradition and to preserve the resources upon which it depended. He donated space in his store to artifacts and this led to the creation of the Museum. For years the Museum *was* Perkins. He and his friend Gardner Grant cajoled the necessary contributions and hired the necessary curators and, in general, tended to the Museum until it could survive on its own as it now does.

Perkins has been a strong supporter

Orvis file photo



Leigh tying on a #22 trico on the Battenkill, his beloved home river. Leigh, now chairman of Orvis, is a national director of The Nature Conservancy.

The
Nature
Conservancy

of all the right conservation groups—Federation of Fly Fishers, Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy—and when you have his support, you get more than lip service. You get both time and money. He served on the boards and he dedicated a percentage of his company's after-tax profits to the causes he so fiercely believed in.

If you went to a fund-raiser in Manchester during the eighties, you would inevitably see Perkins there, doing his part to drive up the bidding on a Pleissner print. And if you hadn't planned on going, and he knew you at all, you would probably get a call and an invitation to sit at his table. Those were hard invitations to turn down. Perkins does not so much badger you into doing something you were not inclined to do as infect you with his own irresistible enthusiasm so you wind up wondering how you could ever have not wanted to do the thing in the first place.

It was at one of those dinners, after

one of those persuasive calls, that I first met Perkins ten years ago. I became a friend and admirer then (could you tell?) and I still wouldn't know how to turn the man down, even if I wanted to, which I don't. I've learned to ride along on the coattails of his enthusiasm. It is a great journey.

I have fished the Battenkill with Perkins. Hunted for quail with him in Florida. Sharptail in Montana. Grouse in Vermont. Fished the Test and the Itchen in England with him. That's only a slight portion of his annual itinerary. If you want to find Perkins, you check the calendar for the finest sport available at that season. If it is June, try Islamorada where he will be on the flats after tarpon or bonefish. September? Check the spring creeks in Wyoming and Montana. April? Likely you will find him turkey hunting in north Florida. And so on.

In the time I have spent with Perkins, I have been struck not so much by his ability, which is considerable and understandable, given all the practice, but by his sheer undiluted enthusiasm. He can't get enough. He never calls the hunt for rain, which is not surprising in someone unwilling to let a mere case of polio keep him out of the field.

Among the many enduring images I have of Perkins afield is one from the

River Test. It was one of those days when the spheres were perfectly aligned so that we had both fine crisp weather and an absurdly abundant hatch of green drakes. We began taking rising fish before lunch and we continued to take them through the afternoon and into evening. Leigh was happily fishing with the latest Orvis innovation, the one-weight rod, and routinely landing fish of 18 inches with it. As the light faded, I looked upstream to see how he was doing; he had taken a seat on a little bench—after ten hours of it you get tired—but he was still casting. While I watched, he took fish on half a dozen consecutive casts. He was laughing happily as he released each fish, dried the fly, and searched for another riser. I believe if we'd had a moon he might have stayed on the bench all night.

A little later, as we made our way back to the fishing hut through the gloom, he said something that I have heard often enough but which seemed especially appropriate that day, "Well," he said, "I don't believe I gave anybody any reason to feel sorry for me today."

He never does.

GEOFFREY NORMAN is an editor of Forbes's *FYI*, a contributing editor to *Outside* and *Esquire* magazines, and the author of seven books.



The Museum when it was housed in the Orvis Company in Manchester, Vermont, circa 1967.

From the Father of the Museum

by Leigh H. Perkins

AROUND 1966, after I acquired the Orvis Company, I was attending a Theodore Gordon Flyfishers dinner at the Williams Club in New York. Herman Kessler, one-time art director of *Field & Stream* (and married to the superb fly tyer Helen Shaw), mentioned to me that somebody ought to start a museum on fly fishing. Being fairly young and bushy-tailed, I said, "OK, we'll look into it." Orvis had recently established the *Orvis Record Catch Club News* (which has since expanded into the hugely successful *Orvis News*), a great medium for communicating with the fly-fishing community. The success of the *Record Catch News*, and the selling of the idea of the American Museum of Fly Fishing to the public, was due to the impressive talents of the *News's* editor, Baird Hall.

The Orvis Company's Route 7 store had lots of memorabilia hanging around, the centerpiece being a wooden carousel of wonderful photos and Mary

Marbury flies, which comprised the plates of her book *Favorite Flies and Their Histories* (1892), and which was put together for the Chicago Columbia Exposition in 1893. The Orvis Company had a small wing off the store where we were dabbling in ladies' clothes, but not too successfully. It was my thought to get rid of ladies clothes (it turned out that was a bad idea—they're now a major profit source for Orvis) and devote one small room of the store to the Museum, thus getting the memorabilia out of the main store and allocating all that room to selling space.

To fund the early Museum, I talked the famous, local artist Ogden Pleissner into doing an original painting of the Lye Brook pool on the Battenkill (which at that time was my favorite fishing hole), and allowing us to make prints, the sale of which would launch the Museum. Ogden very generously consented to do so. We then put together a small board of directors, established the Mu-

seum as a charitable organization, and announced the concept and the sale of the prints in the *Orvis Record Catch Club News*. The prints were offered for \$75 each and we were able to sell out long before the prints were actually produced, providing us with a nest egg to establish the Museum.

Arnold Gingrich, one of our most active early board members and the second president, recommended the most incredible curator for the Museum—Austin Hogan. Austin started out as a part-time volunteer director of the Museum. I think if we created the Museum for nothing else but to air the incredible character of Austin Hogan, it would have been a worthwhile venture. He was one of the most irascible old curmudgeons that I've ever known, but he was brilliant and witty, too. I'm sure he had a profound affect on everybody he came in contact with. When it came to telling stories, Austin could top any of us, and his usually came from far out in left field.



Left: One of the first boards of trustees, 1970. First row from left, Dick Finlay, Dudley C. Corkran, Alvin Grove, Ted Rogowski, and Wes Jordan. Second row, Milford K. Smith, Hermann Kessler, Clayton Shappy, Leigh Perkins, Donald DuBois, and Raymond Kotrla. Third row, Austin Hogan, Ben Schley, Jane Gingrich, Arnold Gingrich, and Harry Darbee. Not pictured are Warren Shepard and Gene Anderegg.

Below left: Mary Orvis Marbury's panels were one of the first exhibits in the early Museum.

Below right: Austin Hogan, the Museum's first curator, points out a fly's merits to an early Museum visitor.

Orvis file photo



File photo



Initially, the Museum had a pretty small budget and the Orvis Company picked up whatever we couldn't raise through the board of directors. From there on, it had a life of its own. As we attracted more and better trustees, the Museum finally became independent—which it never would have become without the very able help of Gardner Grant. Not only was he personally very generous, but he was able to put the arm on many other interested anglers in support of our Museum.

The Museum is, in large part, the product of its four executive directors: Austin Hogan, Paul Schullery, John

Merwin, and Don Johnson. Each of these individuals contributed a great deal and the Museum grew depending a lot on their strengths and interests.

One of my functions was to make sure we had an executive director and that once the director bowed out or got stale, and it was time to pass the baton, to make sure we replaced him. The financial situation of the Museum has fluctuated erratically, and my other function was, along with the able assistance of Gardner Grant and Foster Bam, to go out and raise money to balance our budget. Sometimes it was more fun than others, but it has always worked

out. I can remember at one point getting pretty discouraged about the amount of effort required to pump money and breathe life into the Museum and was told by Austin Hogan that there really was no choice. Once the Museum was created, there was no way of killing it. It would always survive in one form or another. I'm sure he is right, and at this stage we are all very proud of the Museum's renovated quarters, new displays, this fine magazine, and the "Anglers All" traveling exhibit.

I feel comfortable that we, as a team, have done a good job in preserving the history of a delightful way of life. ~

K. Fulsher



Gardner L. Grant: Guiding Light, Strong Back

by Joe Pisarro

IT'S A JUNE EVENING; a soft darkness has fallen over a house that sits on a bluff high above the Beaverkill. The house has been designed to blend into the Catskill wilderness. Such a quiet time is an appropriate close to a day of productive fly fishing on this most historic of American trout rivers. Over its purling waters hover the ghosts of Theodore Gordon, George LaBranche, Ed Hewitt, Lee Wulff, Rube Cross, Sparse Grey Hackle, Roy Steenrod, and countless others who have left their mark not only on the river but on the sport of fly fishing itself. America may be a Johnny-come-lately to a sport that can be traced back as far as 5,000 years, but many of the advances in fly fishing have, at least in the past century or so, come from devotees in this country. And more than a few of those advances originated and developed on the hallowed waters of the Beaverkill.

On this June evening there emanate from the house the sound of a piano and the strains of "Satin Doll." Seated on the screened porch, several guests enjoy the quiet solitude and the music of their host, Gardner L. Grant, who is a

man of many parts with a fondness for jazz, particularly the music of Duke Ellington. His love of music is exceeded only by his passion for fly fishing and for the environment that nurtures the waters and cradles the fish.

Gardner's love affair with fishing began in the fresh and salt waters of his native New England, though during his boyhood years in Rhode Island he had not yet become acquainted with fly fishing. It was only later, while spending his college summers in Maine's north woods as a registered fishing guide, that he was introduced to fly fishing. Before long, Gardner was preaching the gospel of fly fishing and diligently practicing it every time he picked up a fly rod—an implement that became his exclusive companion whenever he went a' stream, or a' lake for that matter, and eventually, a' sea.

Though college interfered somewhat with Gardner's fishing, he did manage to graduate from Yale, followed by an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School, and a lifetime of fly fishing spread in front of him. When the fly-fishing bug bit him, it bit him for good, and, as any

devoted fly fisher will tell you, there is no known cure for that ailment. Except, perhaps, another day of fishing.

After college, Gardner found that he needed a livelihood. As a start, he formed a company that invented automatic toll collection machines for use on turnpikes, bridges, and tunnels, and after successfully managing that company for a number of years, sold it and looked for something else to do between fishing trips.

His intense love for fly fishing led him, inevitably, to a deep concern for the environment and its protection and preservation. Because he was in a financial position to do so, he turned more of his attention and his efforts to "giving something back," as he put it. So in 1969 he became a founding director and first treasurer of New York State's Environmental Planning Lobby, the beginning of a deep lifelong involvement with environmental causes and organizations, an involvement which has not slackened to this day. He became an early believer in the "catch-and-release" principle, agreeing with Lee Wulff, longtime friend and neighbor on the Upper

File photo



Gardner Grant explains an architect's model of the Museum's proposed building in West Yellowstone, Montana, to Curt Gowdy in 1981.

Beaverkill, that "a game fish is too valuable to catch only once." To this Gardner added that in fly fishing "you can have your cake and eat it, too. A fish taken on a fly can usually be returned to the water unharmed so he'll be there for you or someone else to catch another day." As far as Gardner is concerned, any fish—fresh or salt water—that will rise to a fly is a legitimate fly-fishing quarry. Though if pressed, he will admit that trout and Atlantic salmon are his favorites.

Despite his frequent fishing jaunts, along with operating his own real estate investment and management firm, Gardner has devoted much time and effort to various environmental and conservation causes and organizations. In 1970 he became a consultant to those working on the reorganization of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. He followed that by serving as chair of the State's Commissioners' Council on Environmental Conservation, a position he held from 1972 until 1976 under three separate New York governors.

His efforts and involvement in environmental matters were not limited to government agencies; he was and remains closely associated with a number of clubs and organizations active in environmental and conservation work. Following two years as its conservation chair, Gardner was elected president of Theodore Gordon Flyfishers in 1971, an 800-member angling and conservation group based in New York City; he held that position until 1974 and remained on its board of directors for some years thereafter. He was an early advocate of the Federation of Fly Fishers, a national confederation of fly-fishing clubs and

served as its president 1976 from 1978. From 1979 to 1991 he was a director of Trout Unlimited and in 1989 was presented with its Distinguished Service Award. Since 1980 he has been a director of the Atlantic Salmon Federation and is a director of the Catskill Fly Fishing Center.

In 1974 Gardner was organizer and co-chair of a series of Wild Trout Symposia, conferences co-sponsored by several federal departments and national fishing organizations. He appeared before the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works in 1981 to deliver a statement on acid rain on behalf of the American League of Anglers, of which he was then vice president. Along with all those activities and many others, he has somehow managed to eke out time to write articles for a number of publications.

It is a wonder that he actually finds time to fish. But he does manage it somehow. For a number of years, he has been making at least one trip a year to Iceland for Atlantic salmon. In pursuit of salmon and other game fish he has traveled to many lands and waters. In 1987 he led a Trout Unlimited group that was invited to what was then the Soviet Union to fish for Atlantic salmon on the Kola Peninsula. The trip proved to be pretty much a bust (wrong time of the year), so the fish were not in the

rivers, but the mosquitoes were plentiful. Only one salmon—a small one—was taken on the last day and that one by Gardner.

Gardner's trips to Iceland have usually been more productive. On one occasion there he helped avert disaster. A film crew from the television program "American Sportsman" was on hand to film Bing Crosby catching an Atlantic salmon. Crosby did his best, but no fish would come to his fly. Meantime, the television crew stood idly by waiting for something to happen. Crosby finally laid aside his rod to take a breather. At that point, Gardner picked up his rod (only one person at a time can fish on Icelandic rivers), made one cast and was into a fish. He quickly passed the rod to Crosby who then played the fish while the cameras rolled. When the program aired, there was Crosby on the screen, skillfully playing and landing a salmon!

Because of Gardner's deep interest in environmental concerns and the history and traditions of fly fishing, it was inevitable that the American Museum of Fly Fishing should attract his attention. In 1974 he was invited to join the Museum's board of directors and in 1981 served as its president and then chair. He remains one of the most actively involved trustees.

Gardner and his wife, Ellen, now divide their time between their homes in Purchase, New York, and Jupiter, Florida, where he can indulge his fancy for saltwater fly fishing during the winter months while the north is locked in snow and ice. But as spring approaches, their thoughts turn more and more to that house perched on a bluff high above the Upper Beaverkill. ~

File photo



During My Watch

by Gardner L. Grant

LEIGH PERKINS ASKED ME to join the Museum board in 1974 and I have happily served on it since. It is hard to believe almost twenty years have passed.

In the seventies many fly fishers thought of the Museum as an offshoot of the Orvis retail store or as “the Orvis Museum.” It became increasingly apparent that if we were to become a strong independent institution with a clear mission, we had to change that perception. In 1981 I became president of the Museum and Errol Champion became president of FFF, the Federation of Fly Fishermen (as it was then known), a position I had held a few years earlier. We discussed the fact that the Museum needed to become physically independent of Orvis and Errol came up with the concept of a home for fly fishing in the United States which, as he put it, would house the sport’s history and heritage (the work of the Museum), and its teaching, ethics, practice, and conservation interests (the activities of FFF). The idea was attractive and there appeared to be a real synergistic relation-

ship. The boards of the two organizations voted to mount a joint fund-raising campaign to implement the concept in West Yellowstone, Montana. The Federation, more than ten times the size of the Museum, was to play the lead role.

Architectural plans were drawn, a professional fund-raiser was selected, the campaign began. Despite the best efforts of both groups, the support identified by the fund-raiser never materialized and the campaign failed to achieve its objectives, nullifying any move to West Yellowstone.

The Museum still needed to become physically independent a year later and its board decided to raise the funds to establish a new facility in Manchester, Vermont. In 1982, Paul Schullery resigned as executive director of the Museum to pursue other interests and in 1983 John Merwin was appointed to the position. My first request to the new executive director was “find us a home in Manchester,” and shortly thereafter, he did. Our board has continuously risen to the occasion and primarily through their funding efforts, we purchased our

existing building, renovated it in 1983, and dedicated it in 1984. It was a happy move—one that has had a positive bearing on the growth and stature, programs, professionalism, and support our Museum continues to enjoy.

In the early eighties two major exhibits, “The King Tut Exhibit” and “The Art of the Vatican,” toured museums throughout the country. It occurred to me that this was the way we must perform two of our most important functions—education and outreach. Only a finite number could visit Manchester, Vermont, to view and appreciate the Museum’s collections, but with a traveling exhibit, we could reach out exponentially. I spoke with John Merwin about this and he responded, “I like it!” After some thought he came up with “Anglers All,” *still* our major traveling exhibit, which opened at the California Academy of Sciences in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, in June of 1985 and has been seen by millions around the country since. This effort spawned smaller traveling exhibits and joint ventures with other institutions.



Above: Art Frey advertises a sculpture at the first San Francisco dinner/auction, held in 1980. Opposite: Incoming president Gardner Grant presents outgoing president Leon Martuch with the 1981 Arnold Gingrich Award at that year's annual meeting.

When the William Cushner collection of over 100 framings of flies and angling art became available in the mid-1980s, we started efforts to acquire it under John Merwin and completed it when Don Johnson took over as executive director. This six-figure, historically significant acquisition, the Museum's largest to date, was funded by a small group of trustees. Our trustees have always been a pillar of strength and they came through again in the late 1980s when we faced financial difficulty. In the context of trustee dedication, I will never forget Leigh and Romi Perkins (Mr. and Mrs. Leigh Perkins) bidding against each other for the same auction item at a Museum fund-raising event—and this happened more than once!

Membership dues and trustee contributions alone could not fund our operations. Unlike many Museums, we had no endowment fund and no truly major benefactor. Following proven fund-raising techniques of other organizations, we inaugurated an auction/dinner program that has grown to over twelve annual events across the country. This program not only produces needed funding, but exposes the Museum to many newcomers, increases our membership, provides access to potential contributors to our collection, inspires new exhibition opportunities, and, perhaps most importantly, creates aware-

ness of the Museum as a national institution.

In 1984 the name of the Museum of American Fly Fishing was changed to reflect its international focus; we didn't want to confine ourselves to collecting American items only, which the original name implied. So we became the American Museum of Fly Fishing, a more precise moniker and perhaps a little easier to remember.

During my terms as president and chairman of the board, we added staff, including Don Johnson as curator; started a Museum volunteer program under the leadership of former Theodore Gordon Flyfishers president Joe Pizarro; and published our first major book, Paul Schullery's *American Fly Fishing: A History*. Our programs and professionalism grew and we started the effort to gain accreditation from the American Association of Museums, an effort we hope reaches fruition during this, our twenty-fifth anniversary year.

We became a truly national institution, not only through our dinner/auction and traveling exhibit programs, but by the welcome addition of trustees from various parts of the country outside the Northeast. I can't mention all of those from other regions who have served us so well, but we must include Art Kaemmer, Wally Stenhouse, and Pete Bakwin of Illinois; Ivan Schloff of Minnesota; Lew Borden and Allan

Phipps of Colorado; Roy Chapin of Michigan; Dick Whitney and Keith Russell of Ohio; Earl Worsham and Marty Kline of Georgia; Bob Kahn, Curt Hill, and Sue Popkin of Pennsylvania; Mel Krieger, Ralph Stinson, Jim Van Loan, Jim Taylor, Freddy Fredericksen, Sam Van Ness, and Larry Gilsdorf on the West Coast; and we have to recognize past board president Art Frey of San Francisco for playing the lead role in making the Museum known on the West Coast.

After I stepped down as chairman, Don Johnson succeeded John Merwin as executive director, and new trustees came aboard and assumed leadership roles. Foster Bam, Bill Barrett, Bill Herick, Art Stern, Wally Murray, Wayne Nordberg, Dick Kress, and others picked up the torch from the old guard (i.e., trustees like me); they have done, and are doing, a great job. Don Johnson has grown into his position and has put together a fine staff. The Museum is financially stable, has a clear mission, and an enthusiastic staff and board capable of implementing it.

During my watch, as suggested in this brief account, we made some mistakes, faced some problems, but survived to become a stronger and more focused institution. We are poised for even more growth and I hope all who read these pages will play a part in it.





Leon Martuch (left) presents President's awards to Will Godfrey and Art Frey at the 1981 annual meeting.

Recollections

by Leon Martuch

BORN APRIL 30, 1928, in Saginaw, Michigan, Leon Martuch grew up in Midland, headquarters of Dow Chemical. He served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War, attended junior college, and ultimately earned a degree in chemistry at the University of Michigan in 1952, followed by a master's degree in 1954. Leon came home to Midland and worked for Dow Chemical until 1962 when he joined the newly formed Scientific Anglers to work with his father producing the original Air-Cel and Wet-Cel fly lines at the dawn of modern fly line manufacturing, a process which employed a formed plastic coating over a straight braided core. Leon sold Scientific Anglers to 3M Company in 1973 and continued on as a consultant for three years, followed by a period as a free-lance consultant.

During his career in the fly-fishing industry, Leon served as president of Trout Unlimited and as a member of its national board of directors. He and wife Shirley reside in Orlando, Florida, but continue to summer in Michigan.

ON MAY 13, 1978 I was elected president of the board of directors of the Museum at its annual meeting. At the time I was working as a consultant to the 3M Company to which I had sold Scientific Anglers, the fly line company founded by my father in Mid-

land, Michigan. By then I was no longer part of its everyday management, so when Leigh Perkins called and asked if I could devote some time to the Museum, I was able to say yes. The Museum was ten years old and still tucked away in a small wing of Orvis's retail store in Manchester. Despite the fact that it paid rent to Orvis for the space and operated as a separate entity, Perkins realized that everyone always said, "Oh, that museum; it's just a part of Orvis." It was time to make a break—the egg had hatched and had to get out of the nest. Beginning right then we established goals for the Museum:

1. Independence: acquisition of our own home and the income to maintain it.
2. Professional standing, i.e., accreditation.
3. Collection and exhibit improvement.
4. Respect for the institution in the angling community.

At that 1978 annual meeting and dinner/auction, we had raised the magnificent sum of \$2,984 and began to think about taking our show to the big city, perhaps Washington or New York. So early in 1979, we decided to run our first auction apart from the annual meeting; it took place at the Williams Club in New York and netted \$8,500, a real step ahead. Then, on March 18, 1985, we held

our second New York auction/raffle, this time at the Yale Club under the guidance of advance man Gardner Grant, who would succeed me as Museum president. This event had netted over \$12,000, due not only to increased attendance, but also to the growing list of contributors: manufacturers, companies, and individuals associated with the fly-fishing industry.

During 1978 and 1979, our main concerns were to establish our own home separate from Orvis's operations. Our exhibits were still in their retail store wing and the collection was stored in the old Orvis factory building on Union Street in Manchester Village, a historic site in itself, but not the most secure location for a growing collection of valuable antique fly-fishing memorabilia. It had become apparent that in order to meet our goals we would have to move to completely new quarters. Anticipating that we'd be faced with evaluating prospective new locations, we worked on establishing the criteria by which we could judge proposed sites. By December 1979, we had decided on the criteria by which any new home would be judged: facilities which could be accredited under museum standards, adequate storage and exhibit space, a prime location available to both the angling and nonangling public, and an adequately

safe place to keep the collection all under one roof.

In 1980 we received a proposal from the Federation of Fly Fishers to share a building with them, possibly in West Yellowstone, Montana, which would become a fly-fishing center. The idea of a combined facility caught the imagination of a lot of people, and had considerable public support as well as that of members of the Museum's board of trustees. Elaborate plans for this venture went awry, unfortunately, and ultimately the Museum acquired an empty building a half mile away in the historic district of Manchester Village, its present home.

At our annual meeting in 1980 dues were increased from \$15 to \$20 and sustaining memberships from \$25 to \$30. Then, in August 1981, Gardner Grant was elected president, and I was moved up to chairman of the board. In the meantime our membership had grown to 794. Likewise, our annual income had increased from \$25,440 in 1977 to \$48,939 in 1979, an increase of 92.4 percent, a trend which has continued.

By the fall of 1983, John Merwin had succeeded Paul Schullery as executive director; David Ledlie became editor of this publication; the Museum's board of trustees voted to acquire the building which it now occupies; and last, a new name was approved, a simple change from the Museum of American Fly Fishing to the American Museum of Fly Fishing. As reported in *The American Fly Fisher*, "It was felt that we are not just a museum of American fly fishing (although that is where our emphasis lies); rather our scope encompasses many items of an international nature. Our new name thus better fits our intents and purposes."

The Museum has been fortunate indeed to have had the help of an unpaid and unsung staff of volunteers. Many served before I became president and are still serving today.

Finally, I would like to praise a fellow trustee emeritus. All of the day-to-day Museum work and lots of the planning were done by Paul Schullery, who was executive director during my term as president. He made me look good. I am grateful for that and I am grateful also for his counsel and almost unbearable cheerfulness and good nature. Paul was totally responsible for the excellence of the magazine during the period when we worked together. Naturally, I am pleased to have my name listed with his and the four other trustees emeriti in this issue.



The Winds of Time

I'VE EXPERIENCED STRONG WINDS in a lot of places. As a child I watched my town on the Texas coast rush and scurry to brace itself against the blue norther which turned the sky black at midday. I've encountered winds in the prairie states, winds that had room for a 500-mile running start before they smacked into me, winds that could make a small car change lanes without warning. I've been met by winds, even on pleasant days, that made fly casting in Oregon's Rogue River canyon not only impossible but dangerous. But I've not encountered anything quite like the winds of Vermont. They aren't as big as the others, or as powerful, but they're mean. They come cutting through the winter nights up the Battenkill Valley, and as they rush and roar you can almost feel the mountain shiver. They seem to aim their strongest blasts at the old buildings in "the village," many of which now stand deserted, where Victorian tourists first discovered the many talents of Charles F. Orvis.

The old Union Street Orvis factory now houses the workrooms of the Museum of American Fly Fishing [today the American Museum of Fly Fishing-*ed.*] and when the winter winds come the clapboard structure creaks and groans like a drifting ship. Tile floorboards upstairs pop, and the pipes and radiators whistle and sing. The noise seems loudest at night, and most of those who have worked late here can recall nights when the building rarely stopped talking.

"Charlie sure was restless last night," we report to one another after a long evening's work. Charlie. We've created our own spirit to explain the endless racket and it could only be one person. Charlie knew the building better than anyone. We can see the bolt holes in the floor where he secured his first power tools and, even though new walls have been put up since he last set down his planes, we can imagine where he stood to study the arrangements in his shop.

And so now we wonder what Charlie thinks now that the rods he loved are returning to the building; rods retired from active service and stored in the Museum collection. Rods he built. Rods his competitors built. Maybe even some he fished with.

When the last of the old Orvis offices were being moved out, someone stopped to look over a small worktable. Carved into the crazed finish were the initials M.O.M., reminders of an even more mysterious figure, the lady fly fisher whose life was such a puzzle. Some nights the wind is so busy it seems that Mary must be up there in the attic, too—moving quickly about the old fly-tying room, pausing to look over a shoulder, to adjust a hackle. Or to listen as strains of Hoyt Axton and Willie Nelson drift up from below.

Charles and Mary Orvis are no more gone from this building than they are from the modern Orvis fly rod. The tradition here is almost palpable. The legacy has a life of its own. It flows through the building with the same patient determination that the Battenkill flows through the valley. The spirits are friendly. And somehow, for all its sting and bite, so is the wind.

PAUL SCHULLERY
The Orvis Story (1980)

A Quarter Century to Build a Museum

THE MUSEUM'S HISTORY is so rich and so complex—now that we have turned the ripe old age of twenty-five and entered adulthood—that it would require far too many pages and thousands of words more than we can offer to comprehensively document the past quarter century. To chart the growth of this splendid institution, we've put together this carefully researched and illustrated chronology that should accurately record for posterity the terms of board presidents, executive directors, and some staff, as well as describe some of the seminal events that have built our museum. EDITOR



1963

Hermann Kessler, while researching visuals for a 1964 *Field & Stream* story, visits Orvis (then owned by Dudley C. "Duckie" Corkran), the Manchester, Vermont, fly-fishing mail-order and retail company and its archives. He has an idea.

1965

Leigh Perkins becomes president of Orvis upon his purchase of the company.



1966

At a Theodore Gordon Flyfishers Club meeting at the Williams Club in New York City, Kessler mentions his idea to Perkins, who says six months later, "Let's do it."



1967

The Museum opens in rented spaces at the Orvis Company, Manchester, Vermont. The first exhibit showcases Orvis's rich archives dating to the mid-1800s. Appeals for financial contributions and donations to the collection appear in many magazines.

1968

The Museum is incorporated and granted tax-exempt status as a nonprofit educational institution under the name the Museum of American Fly Fishing.

1969

The original board of trustees is formed. Internationally known artist Ogden Pleissner grants permission for the Museum to sell prints of his painting *Lye Brook Pool* for \$75 (which the Museum will sell for \$400 in 1976), the income from which will give the Museum a sound financial base. Hermann Kessler is elected the Museum's first president (1969-1970).



1970

Austin Hogan is named curator and Capt. Ray Kotrla (Rtd. USN) is elected president (1970-1973). The Museum's square footage doubles in size and an Orvis conference room is converted to accommodate the enlarging Museum's needs.



Lye Brook Pool

1968 ~ 1993

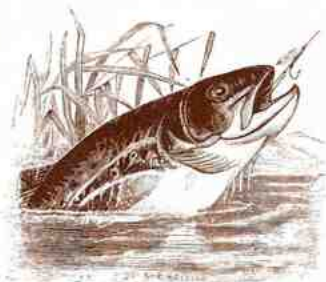


1971

The Museum's first brochure is published. An Associate membership is \$10.

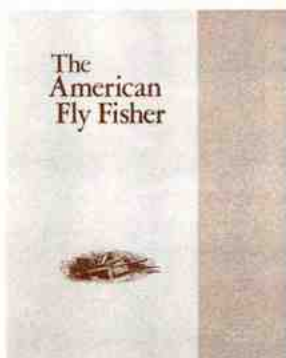
1972

Ken Cameron becomes a consultant to the Museum, later its registrar (to 1975), and then assistant editor of *The American Fly Fisher* (1983-1985). The Museum's membership consists of twelve Patrons, fifty-eight Sustaining, and 122 Associate members.



1973

An *Acquisitions Catalog* (1969-1973), compiled by Dick Finlay, is published; it includes Austin Hogan's important essay documenting the origins of our sport, "An Introduction to the History of Fly Fishing in America." Austin Hogan publishes separately his *American Sporting Periodicals of Angling Interest: A Selected Check List and Guide*, a valuable reference tool for fly-fishing students.



1974

The premiere issue of *The American Fly Fisher* is published; founding editor Austin Hogan establishes its format as "a mixture of past and present, vintage remembrance and modern research." Its lead article is a reprint of Theodore Gordon's "Some Trout Fishing Memories." Anne Secor is the art director (1974-1979). The Museum expands to three exhibit rooms in the Orvis store. Arnold Gingrich is elected president (1974-1976). The library now holds 826 objects, including books, letters, catalogs, photographs, and other ephemera.

Dana Lamb



1975

One hundred people attend the Museum's annual meeting and banquet which features noted writer Dana Lamb as guest speaker. Registrar David Ledlie reports that for the first time all major Museum holdings are recorded on file, including 383 fly rods, 277 reels, and 111 fly collections. The library has now cataloged 923 publications. Laura Towslee begins her tenure as the longest-running secretary to the board of directors (1975-1984).

Hewitt reel



1976

Carl Navarre is elected president (1976-1977) and *The American Fly Fisher* publishes its first color plates (an Austin Hogan painting and reproductions of early American trout flies). Maxine Atherton donates the beginnings of the Atherton collec-

tion: nine fly rods and the first fly reel made by Hewitt. The Museum acquires the angling library of Theodore Gordon. An Associate membership costs \$15.

1977

Paul Schullery is named first executive director (1977-1982). The first annual awards/auction dinner is held in May; sixty-six people attended and \$3,000 is raised.

Paul Schullery



1978

Paul Schullery assumes editorship of *The American Fly Fisher*, with David Ledlie as co-editor, when Austin Hogan retires. Leon Martuch is elected president (1978-1980). A "Museum Slide Show," advertised in the journal, offers a brief tour of the collection and an overview of angling history. The first collective index to *The American Fly Fisher* is published, compiled by trustee Kay Brodney. That issue also includes a report on the annual meeting's Nineteenth-Century Angling Outing, during which participants fished with lancewood and greenheart rods and gut-snelled flies.

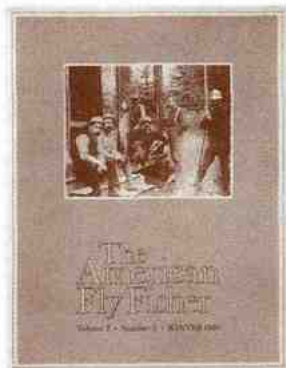
1968 ~ 1993

1979

The Daniel Webster rod is acquired (a 4-piece—only three pieces survive—12-foot rod made by B. D. Welch). It will become one of the Museum's most historically important objects. A New York City dinner/auction raises over \$8,000, thanks to the "guiding light and strong back" (according to the Museum's annual meeting notes) of organizer Gardner Grant.



Daniel Webster rod



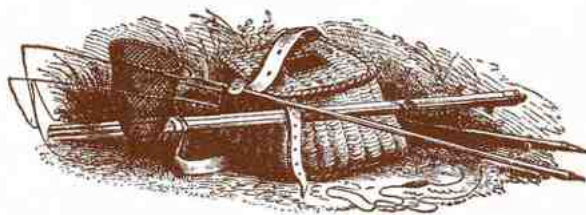
1980

The American Fly Fisher sports a new design by Mike Haller; an editorial by Paul Schullery reassures readers that the journal is the "same esoteric, light-hearted, and charming little journal you've all come to know and love, and if the face is new, the name is old, and so is the purpose—the pleasure of the membership." There is discussion at the annual meeting about finding a permanent home for the Museum. Plans quickly develop over the year to share a site in West Yellowstone, Montana, with the Federation of Fly Fishers. An Associate membership is now offered at \$20.

Fishing to the Museum of Fly Fishing, but decide to postpone formal adoption until the move to West Yellowstone is complete. The August ground-breaking ceremony for the International Fly Fishing Center in West Yellowstone, future home of both the Museum and the Federation of Fly Fishers, features speaker President Jimmy Carter. Bing Crosby's tackle is donated to the Museum. The first director of development, David Ottiger, is hired; he dies the following year in a tragic car accident. Joanna Sheridan is named registrar (1981-1984).

1982

The Preston Jennings collection is acquired and the dinner/auction program begun by David Ottiger is expanded. The first "State of the Collections Report" is produced by registrar Joanna Sheridan.



1981

The Museum acquires the historically significant 1873 Howells Leonard rod, the first-known 6-strip rod built by Hiram Leonard. Gardner Grant is elected president (1981-1984). Trustees decide to shorten the name of the Museum of American Fly

1983

David Ledlie is named editor of *The American Fly Fisher* and Martha Poole Merwin is named art director. The trustees vote not to relocate to West Yellowstone because of seasonal limitations and

decide to pursue an aggressive national exhibit program. John Merwin is named executive director (1983-1988). A new permanent home for the Museum on Seminary Avenue in Manchester Village is located and purchased.



The
American
Museum
of
Fly Fishing

1984

A collective index for *The American Fly Fisher* is published. The Museum's new building and galleries open May 26. Art Frey is elected president (1984-1985) and trustees vote to officially change the name of the Museum to the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

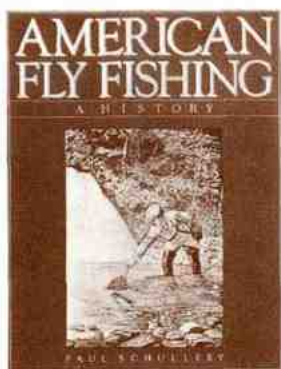
1985

The purchase of the William Cushner collection is arranged. "Anglers All," the Museum's new national traveling exhibit, is hosted for the first time by the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco. Lyman Foss is named deputy director of development and Robert Buckmaster is elected president (1985-1987). Alanna Fisher is named registrar (1985-1987). A Museum Assessment Program I (MAP I) Grant is awarded by the Institute of Museum Services. The Austin Hogan Award is established and presented to Richard Hoffmann.



1986

"Anglers All" appears at Chicago's Shedd Aquarium. The Frederick A. Sharf reel collection is donated. An Associate membership is increased to \$25.

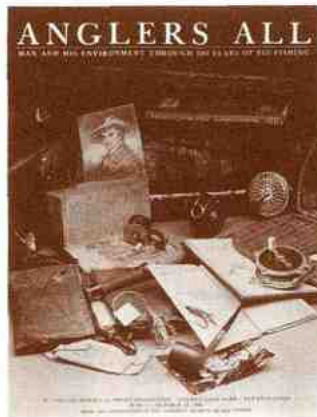


1987

An official collections policy is established. *American Fly Fishing: A History*, commissioned by the Museum and written by former executive director Paul Schullery, is published by Nick Lyons Books. Robert Kahn is elected president (1987-1989). Virginia Hulett is named executive assistant. "Anglers All" opens at the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences. Don Johnson is named curator and editor of *The American Fly Fisher*.

1988

The Museum acquires the Austin Hogan collection. "Anglers All" is hosted by the Denver Museum of Natural History. Randall Perkins is named art director of *The American Fly Fisher*. Don Johnson is named executive director.



1989

Leigh Perkins is elected president (1989-1991). An Institute of Museum Services Conservation Survey Grant is awarded to the Museum. "Anglers All" is hosted by the Bell Museum of Natural History, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

1990

Alanna Fisher is named curator/development assistant. The first Annual Museum Festival Weekend is held. A *Treasury of Reels* by Jim Brown is published by the Museum. A capital fund-raising drive to renovate galleries, acquire computer and audio/visual systems, and create an endowment fund is launched. The Joe A. Pisarro Volunteer of the Year Award is established and presented to Angus Black. Margot Page is named editor of *The American Fly Fisher*.



1991

Foster Bam is elected president (1991-1992). The first Museum endowment is established, and an expanded and renovated Museum is dedicated. The acquisition of the William B. Cushner collection is completed. President Jimmy Carter attends the opening of the Museum's exhibit at his Presidential Library. "Anglers All" travels to Wisconsin. The Museum is accepted as a candidate for accreditation by the American Association of Museums.



1992

Wallace Murray is elected president. A collective index to *The American Fly Fisher* is published. "Anglers All" appears in museums in North Carolina, Wyoming, and at Yale. Jon Mattewson is named registrar.

1993

In the Museum's twenty-fifth year, "Anglers All" is scheduled to appear at three major museums. The auction/dinner program has eleven venues across the U.S., and the Museum collection proudly includes 3,000 books, 1,500 rods, over 900 reels, and thousands of flies.



File photo



Paul Schullery: Premier Historian

by Tom Rosenbauer

THIS QUIRKY HOBBY of ours is fortunate to have a professional historian of Paul Schullery's caliber as its chronicler—he is the premier fly-fishing historian of our time. Former executive director of the Museum (1977 to 1982), and editor of *The American Fly Fisher* from 1978 to 1983, he is the author of the most current, most lively, and most iconoclastic history of American fly fishing, *American Fly Fishing: A History* (Lyons & Burford, 1987). Paul is now happily resettled within the boundaries of Yellowstone National Park, but those of us who live in southern Vermont, and were lucky enough to fish with Paul and enjoy his company, wish he could have stayed here longer.

Back in the late 1970s, I had to spend long hours in the photo studio of the old Union Street Orvis rod shop where the Museum's headquarters were also located. I knew no matter what time of day it was, Paul would be downstairs in his office. He was always an anchor for putting affairs into perspective and could demolish the latest fly-fishing idol with one precise phrase, while in the next breath praise some unsung hero who hadn't been published in the outdoor magazines.

I enjoyed doing road shows with Paul, notably the yearly Theodore Gordon Flyfishers day in Rye, New York. At that time Orvis was pretty much paying Paul's salary (since Leigh Perkins was the driving force behind the Museum), and he and I still laugh about "going off to spend Leigh's money," as neither of us had had much occasion to use an expense account. There were flagrant abuses, too, the most extravagant of which was the time we stopped on the road back to Manchester and ordered two *double* banana splits.

Paul Schullery has always been drawn to both academia and Yellowstone National Park. Unlike many of us, though, it is not primarily the fairyland of Yellowstone trout streams that beckons to Paul, but the rich body of natural history and the *history* of natural history that make up the Yellowstone archives which captivate him.

Born in Pennsylvania, Paul lived in Hershey with his family at the same time Vincent Marinaro was writing *A Modern Dry Fly Code* just a few miles away in Carlisle. Paul received his B.A. in history from Wittenberg University

in Springfield, Ohio, and shortly after graduation he took the job as ranger/naturalist in Yellowstone National Park. Paul worked in Yellowstone for six summers, 1972 through 1977, and also during the winters from 1974 to 1977. In between, he spent seven years commuting between Wyoming and Ohio earning an M.A. in American history from Ohio University. His thesis was a study of the Yellowstone archives.

After leaving the Museum in 1982, Paul tried to get closer to the Park. He moved to Livingston, Montana, to try to scrape out a living as a free-lance writer, of both the natural history essays that are the essence of Paul's career, but also some plain old hook-and-bullet prose. I can see him hunched over a keyboard grinding his teeth at having to crank out stories that would be homogenized in a midtown Manhattan office. In 1986, Paul moved back to Hershey to become an editor at *Country Journal*.

Paul was getting further from the Park, and no closer to the academic stimulation that he needed. It's not that Paul was lacking professional success. When he left Manchester he had five books under his belt, beginning with *Old Yellowstone Days*. At present he has



eighteen books to his credit, ranging from fishing stories written with Bud Lilly to four books about bears. His latest, *Pregnant Bears and Crawdad Eyes*, published by The Mountaineers in Seattle, was reviewed favorably by the *New York Times*. But Paul had no contact with history professionals. It took him four years in Livingston and two in Hershey to begin to make money at writing and by then he was burned out.

In 1988 a position in the research division of Yellowstone National Park opened. He was editing, overseeing publications, and writing everything from technical papers to essays. Now in charge of the Publications Group of Yellowstone National Park, he says, "I'm becoming a bureaucrat. I don't want to give you the impression I have power; I just have lots of things to do."

Paul's professional eye is far enough removed now that he can give us valuable insight into the health of our Museum. When Paul was director, he got the most pleasure from seeing *The American Fly Fisher* develop into a publication that was both interesting and desirable—a reason for people to join the Museum other than the abstract justification of being a fly fisher. But it was the raising of the professional standards of the Museum that makes Paul most proud of



his tenure in Vermont. "When I first became director, the director of the Bennington Museum gave me some advice: 'You're not going to finish a lot of things here. But you're going to start a lot of things.' The stature of the Museum in the museum community now is very satisfying to me. It's getting around to the best museums in the country. I was much more conservative about what I allowed to leave the building, but now pieces of the cross, like the Webster rod, are being sent around the country. It's the right thing to do—I'm just a worrywart."

When Paul looks at the fly-fishing history that is being written now, he finds it hard to separate personal opinion from what's really happening. He found the 1970s historically exciting, led by some people, most notably Arnold Gingrich, and Swisher and Richards.

The fly-fishing world seems to be lacking a sense of community and he doesn't see as giants any of the new people writing about fly fishing. "Who among those writing today will still be read fifty years from now?" he asks. But then he ponders a minute and remarks that, "There are so many fly fishers doing such great work, maybe we won't be taking any great leaps in the future. I think a higher percentage of the people writing today know more, technically, than did the hack of twenty years ago. And maybe those old legends were just blown way out of proportion."

Paul still loves to fish, although, as in other times of his life, he doesn't get the opportunity as much as he'd like. He probably enjoys fishing more now that it is no longer associated with deadlines and banquet speeches. And although Paul's favorite rods (I think the lightest line he regularly used on the Battenkill was a 7-weight), Woolly Buggers, and Neversink Skaters pulled some handsome trout from the Battenkill, they are more at home on the Gardner or the Yellowstone.

TOM ROSENBAUER, Orvis's vice president of merchandising (hunting/fishing), is the author of three books on fishing and a longtime Museum supporter.



Former executive director Paul Schullery and Orvis's master-of-all-trades Arnie Abramson address a serious problem in the old Museum workroom, 1981.

Taking the Museum Personally

by Paul Schullery

I BELIEVE I FIRST HEARD about the Museum from Charlie Brooks around 1975 or so. I was working as a ranger-naturalist and historian in Yellowstone at the time, and was already gut-hooked on fly fishing and everything to do with it. With a background in history (I would eventually complete my M.A. with a special emphasis on Yellowstone history), and a passion for fly fishing, I knew it was my kind of museum.

I do remember that Charlie was also the person who told me I should join the Museum, which I did in time to receive the inaugural issue of *The American Fly Fisher*. That first issue had a full-page picture of Theodore Gordon that I put up in my Yellowstone office. Prior to Charlie's telling me about the Museum,

I may have read something in one of the fly-fishing magazines, but it didn't mean much to me.

It was also Charlie, by then a trustee of the Museum (and one of my favorite fishing writers), who introduced me to the Museum's curator, Austin Hogan, and who told me in 1977 that they were looking for an executive director and that I should apply. It was their first salaried full-time position, he explained; Austin was going to have to let go of his volunteer position as curator for health reasons.

My work in Yellowstone had reached a sort of dead end at that point, and though I knew that eventually I must return to the Park, I also had the feeling I needed to be somewhere else for a while. Besides, I had already made a list

of good fishing regions I wanted to live in, and New England was near the top. Looking back, it all seems amazing that it worked out so perfectly; I never expected it to. Just as I was getting restless, here came a young institution that seemed to be advertising for the sort of person I suspect I was.

However big a step this may have been for the Museum, it was an absolutely enormous one for me. I left Yellowstone—the love of my life—late in 1977 for Vermont, having only the vaguest idea of what I would do when I arrived. As it turned out, there was never any problem finding something to do; the real problem was deciding what, among the long list of things that urgently needed doing, to do *first*.

It was an exciting time and almost an

ideal position for me. At twenty-nine I was just old enough to have accumulated at least a little background in the variety of professional fields that museum work involves—exhibit design and theory, interpretive planning, editing, public speaking, and the like—and I had been an avid fly fisherman and student of fishing history just long enough to know how intriguing that all was.

The Museum was ready for more, too. A decade of loving attention by dedicated volunteers had, at least in the view of the leadership, taken the Museum about as far as it could go without a more consistent professional presence. There was so much already done, but even more just waiting for someone like me to try to do.

The next five years were really busy and have already become kind of a blur in my memory. Creating all new exhibits, redoing the magazine, launching our auction program, struggling to increase membership, overseeing the acquisition of hundreds of new objects, tending to all sorts of administrative details, and constantly looking for ways to introduce professional museum standards into the operation, I never seemed to do anything well enough to satisfy myself, but I seemed to make enough happen that my officers and trustees were pretty pleased.

It was too often on-the-job training, but I had the safety net provided by the Museum's many friends, who were usually able to keep me from doing something really stupid. Whenever I think back on the important accomplishments of those five years, I immediately think of someone other than myself who helped make it happen.

The Museum has had a lot of heroes. In my time there, I consider Leigh Perkins of Orvis the most important, as he has been since the beginning, along with Gardner Grant and Leon Martuch. I could never express how much I learned from them. These were the guys who literally kept it going—who found the funds and reached into their own pockets (or cheerfully reached into the pockets of their friends) to make up the difference. I hope their accomplishments will be adequately celebrated elsewhere during this anniversary year because I'm going to pretty much ignore them here; they certainly must know how much I appreciated them and how much they meant to my work.

I want to tell you about a few others here, people who for little or no pay made a big difference—in fact, made my work possible. I know some of them

are still at it and they are the life of any small museum.

"Small museum" is a professional term in museum circles, not a derogatory or diminutive one. By far the majority of museums and historical societies are little, underfunded, and supported in good part by the labors of armies of volunteers and part-timers—the great heroes of historical preservation in this country.

Our Museum has had many such heroes, but when I think of the years I spent there, a few always come to mind. I always think first of Laura Towslee, the Museum's secretary for many years, who started well before I arrived there as the first full-time paid staff member. Her *real* job, which was more than full-time, was secretary to Leigh Perkins, president of Orvis. The advantage of that was obvious; between Laura and me, we could always reach Leigh about a problem that needed help from higher ground. From her eminent position at Leigh's right hand, Laura was also able to leverage a little extra "volunteer" work from the Orvis staff if the Museum had to get some project done fast.

Laura always took the Museum very personally; besides maintaining the membership lists and doing all the related paperwork (I still don't know how the secretary of a corporate executive found time to do this stuff, too), she had an instinctive sense of high standards for the institution. She spoke of the Museum with an almost imperial "we," and by example she convinced me to do the same. She also brought a dignity and class to our dealings with the public that was often beyond me. Like all great secretaries, she provided a sense of direction when the people supposedly in charge were just drifting around in a fog of administrivia. Like all great friends, she knew when I needed someone to listen to my various worries about work.

One of the first people to befriend me in Vermont was Richard Kress, a local fisherman and skier of considerable talent, and a patient Museum friend. That first winter he invited me to a local Trout Unlimited meeting to talk about the Museum, and then introduced me to the Sirloin Saloon in Manchester, which became my favorite restaurant.

Richard helped in a thousand ways. In 1982, following the tragic death of our new director of development right in the middle of the auction schedule, Richard simply took over the administration of our New Jersey auction; it occurs to me as I write that we should

have just tried to persuade him to work for us full time. Richard and I, along with the late Craig Woods, developed our own little fishing fraternity. We cruised the Battenkill, the Mettowee, and the West River, and had more laughs than any three people who are catching so few fish have any right to expect.

The main historian I called on during my years in Manchester was trustee emeritus David Ledlie, who was too far away (in Maine) for frequent visits, but who always had time to help. I doubt we actually met face to face more than four or five times in the whole five years, but David was always there when I needed him. Very few people, at that time, had a deep knowledge of fly-fishing history, and David's familiarity with the literature, especially the eastern, salmon-fishing, and European material, was priceless.

David and I shared many of the same hopes for the professionalization of the institution. Issues of accreditation, of collection storage and management standards, and of the Museum's public image came up in our conversations almost as often as did fly fishing. Most important, and certainly most fun, we regularly called each other to relate some new obscurity one of us had stumbled upon in the apparently endless realm of fishing history. That sense of discovery, that feeling of something important happening as we did our research, has never faded.

Shortly before writing this, Dave and I finally had a chance to fish together, something I think we'd only done once, briefly, when I was in Vermont. Dave came to Yellowstone for a week and met a great many of the local trout in as many of my favorite spots as I could find for him. It's nice when a long-distance friendship finally has a chance to thrive along trout streams.

The Museum workrooms were next door to the shop of Orvis's master-of-all-trades, Arnie Abramson. I still don't know what his proper title was, but Arnie seemed able to do anything, and it was obvious to me that Leigh Perkins counted on him heavily for everything from engineering advice to local real estate information.

Once Arnie got to know me, he gave me free access to the Orvis framing shop where he framed all the prints and other artwork the company sold. The shop was stocked with all manner of matting materials and equipment. It was like handing a young fly tyer the keys to the best-stocked fly-tying cabi-

net in town. Turning a museum director loose in a room like that was an act of wild generosity; soon I was able to set up reasonably handsome exhibits with matt-board backing and labeling mounted on smaller boards. Our only disagreement was that I could never convince him Orvis should buy a very expensive oval matt-cutter, so that I could use it to make exhibit backgrounds.

Now and then, Arnie would come into the workroom with a new print and ask my opinion of his matt choices. I think he usually had already decided what he liked best (and I have to admit, that even on my best days, his judgment about color was at least a little better than mine), but it was a great compliment that he considered me a useful second opinion. We would stand there, turning the print this way and that, maybe taking it out into the sunlight, until it was pronounced right or until he decided I didn't know what I was talking about.

I knew just enough about carpentry, design, and a lot of other things Arnie worked on all the time, that we could always find something enjoyable to argue about. And somehow, though he was one of Leigh's chief people, he still found time to build new exhibit cases, or cut out a nice stand to hang Arnold Gingrich's vest on, or do a hundred other things that required both technical skill and artistic sensitivity. He took my incessant pestering for some additional favor with saintlike patience. It's true that you can't go out and hire talent like his—you can only hope it comes your way.

Yet another Orvis employee who became a mainstay of the Museum while I was there was Michael Haller. Mike came to Orvis as art director, a position that seemed to evolve rapidly over the next couple of years. His artistic eye was instantly attracted to all the fine crafts and amazing gadgets in the Museum collection. He was responsible for taking many product pictures for the Orvis catalog, and very soon he was donating his time and using the Orvis photographic equipment, in a little makeshift studio, to create fine 4-by-5 color photographs for *The American Fly Fisher*.

Mike was chiefly responsible for the new design of the magazine in the fall of 1979. After Austin had given up editing it, in 1978, I worked as editor on it with another Orvis hero, Anne Secor, who had done the layouts from the beginning. But it was time to change the design, and so Mike and I worked a lot of



One of the early Museum's original displays when it was housed in Orvis. Below: Former registrar and journal editor David Ledlie.



late hours experimenting with various new approaches. (I think how easy this would be now with a good Macintosh; back then, every cover design had to be painstakingly drawn and hand-colored.) Some time around midnight we'd make a run to one of the local twenty-four-hour eateries for a sundae or some other fortification. Then back to work, occasionally stopping to see if any of the Orvis products he was supposed to photograph were edible, and if their packages could somehow be opened and emptied without evidence.

I have no idea how much money—in film costs, in film processing, and in hours of skilled labor—Mike simply buried in the larger Orvis bills (something I think he enjoyed doing more than he should have). I do know that his generosity continued long after he'd left and moved back to Indiana to open his own design company.

He got such a kick out of the magazine that he once flew himself, a professional photographer, and the photographer's large trunk of 4-by-4 equipment and film, to Vermont from Indiana. They were only in Vermont about twenty-four hours, but we pulled an all-nighter and stacked up about a year's worth of glorious large transparencies of various Museum treasures. If you have any familiarity with commercial art, you know what that would set you back if you tried to pay for it. It didn't cost the Museum a cent, unless maybe I bought the sundaes that night.

The American Fly Fisher is probably

the thing that gave me the biggest sense of accomplishment; being a writer and historian, I suppose that's not surprising. Thanks to the credibility Austin gave it from the start, and thanks to its many contributors, the magazine has always been the foremost source of information on American fly-fishing history.

But thanks to Mike, the magazine also became a distinctive and handsome presence. We won several prestigious design awards, including two Printing Industries of America awards for design excellence. I realized just what we had achieved when I looked through the awards catalog, and saw the cover of *The American Fly Fisher* on the page with the covers of *Audubon*, *Gourmet*, and a lot of other major-league publications.

As the Museum grew and became more of a handful to manage, we admitted we needed a registrar. We found a



An illustration from the Museum's first brochure, 1971. Below: Longtime secretary Laura Towslee.

Cheryl Wilcox



wonderful one, Joanna Sheridan, my first nearly full-time employee. Joanna had a strong background in library work and a happy and organized mind, and eventually she achieved great things in upgrading the Museum's collection record-keeping and storage. She produced the first "State of the Collections Report" in 1982, an institutional milestone. Though I had supervised people in other jobs, she was the first employee who ever made me appreciate the satisfaction of team accomplishments when I was in charge of the team.

There were many others, of course. The entire Perkins family was in many ways a constant blessing to the Museum. In those days, the Museum's reliance on Orvis for most of its support complicated its image a little; people routinely called it the Orvis Museum and didn't even know it was a nonprofit institu-

tion. For some, the Orvis connection was a convenient excuse not to get involved and help out an obviously good cause. They cultivated a willfully foolish notion that somehow Orvis was making money off the Museum; that the Museum exhibits, then in one wing of the Orvis store, attracted people to the store.

Anyway, the Museum's first family has always been the Perkinses. They were invariably kind and generous to the Museum, and to its young director as well. And the larger Orvis family was equally kind. Dick Finlay, John Harder, Bill Cass, Howard Steere, Tom Rosenbauer, Ruth and Ben Upson, the late Tony Skilton, and many others gave of their time and shared their expertise in many fields.

I could keep naming people, important people, but you must have the idea. I only intended to mention a few, to give some examples of the kind of care the Museum has had. The Museum's friends, as diverse as they were during my tenure, all seemed to share a common enthusiasm for the work. It is interesting to me now, looking back, to realize that they all had a good sense of humor; there were a lot of days when that was about the only thing that kept us going.


I left the Museum in 1982, returned to the West, and settled in Livingston, Montana. A few years later, John Merwin, my successor as director of the Museum, called me up to tell me he was resigning. I immediately understood why

he called. The job of director of this extraordinary little museum is unique, and I was the only other person who could understand just what it meant to have held the job—and just what it meant to leave it. For a little while we compared notes and laughed at memories, most about the human nature of fly fishers rather than museums or history. It made me realize what I suspect both John and his successor, Don Johnson, have also realized—that for all its society and all its wonderful friends, running the Museum can be a kind of lonely job.

And for all the beauty and satisfaction, the director's position had the reality checks of any other job. Human nature is irrepressible, and museums and other nonprofit institutions are notorious for internal conflicts; I don't dare paint the Museum as some paradise on earth. I have bypassed here all the tales of trouble and disagreement (even though some of them are really very entertaining). Austin, who watched helplessly from Cambridge as this kid from out west took over the institution he'd given years of his life to, drove me nuts sometimes; and Charlie Brooks and I eventually fell out over something to do with Yellowstone rather than with the Museum (at least I think that's what happened: friendships fade or last, always a little mysteriously). Sometimes all your energy, in any job, seems to go into just getting along.

But none of that should come as a surprise. Any institution that inspires the kind of love and commitment our Museum has can also inspire disagreement; it is inevitable. What is impressive about the American Museum of Fly Fishing is that, despite the occasional tussle, it continues to grow and mature.

I am delighted beyond saying by the progress that has occurred since I left. I see the Museum staffed by people with skills I didn't have, doing work I wouldn't have had the faintest idea how to do. I eagerly read each new *American Fly Fisher*, not only for news of the Museum, but also to see what the new editor and designer are up to (I don't always agree with them, either, but I have to admit they're better at it than I was).

I still feel a part of it, though I've been gone for ten years now. And, following Laura's example of so long ago, I still take it very personally. When I think of something the Museum has done or I see one of the traveling exhibits when it reaches some town I pass through, I still find myself pleased with what a good job "we" are doing. 

On Growing a Museum

by John Merwin

File photo



JOHN MERWIN is the author and/or editor of more than a dozen angling related books and has been writing professionally since 1967. His numerous articles have appeared in such diverse magazines as Town and Country, Field & Stream, Saltwater Sportsman, Fly Fisherman, Atlantic Salmon Journal, and many others. During the late 1970s, he was an editor at Fly Fisherman and during the 1980s was the founding editor and publisher of both Fly-Tackle Dealer and Fly Rod & Reel magazines. He is a former executive director of the American Museum of Fly Fishing and has also served on its board of trustees. His two newest books will both appear this year: The Battenkill, which profiles the trout river and its people, is being published by Nick Lyons Books in New York, and the massive New American Trout Fishing, an overview of modern trout tactics (Macmillan). Merwin presently serves as a director of the Battenkill Conservancy in southern Vermont, and is also a member of the American Fisheries Society, The Anglers' Club of New York, and the New England Outdoor Writers Association. He lives in southern Vermont. EDITOR

I PROTESTED, "But, Ted, the Cushner material is on Cape Breton Island! And it's the middle of winter. How are we going to get it to Seattle for an exhibit in four weeks?"

"You'll think of something," Ted Rogowski answered over the phone from his Seattle office. "This is too good a deal to pass up!"

During the winter of 1983-1984, Ro-

gowski was a trustee and had managed to talk the late Bill Cushner into selling his fabulous collection of framed flies and angling art to our Museum. Cushner had assembled and framed the collection during the 1960s and 1970s in Manhattan and eventually had moved lock, stock, and frame shop to his Nova Scotia retirement home. At the same time, Rogowski had convinced Eddie Bauer to sponsor—for considerable cash—a Museum traveling exhibit of Cushner's work in Bauer's northwestern stores, immediately. Cushner was also an old friend of mine from his New York days, so negotiating a long-term financial arrangement was relatively easy. Actually, getting the material was another story that's amusing in retrospect, but was rather harrowing at the time.

I quickly found out that Cushner had no facilities for crating and shipping a hundred or more framings because of his remote location. So I put a weather-proof cap on my four-wheel-drive pickup truck, made a phone reservation for the Bar Harbor (Maine) ferry to Nova Scotia, and headed north with a jug of coffee and my wife, Martha, sharing the front seat. When we drove off the ferry the next morning at Yarmouth on Nova Scotia's southern end, it was snowing hard and the highway was already cov-

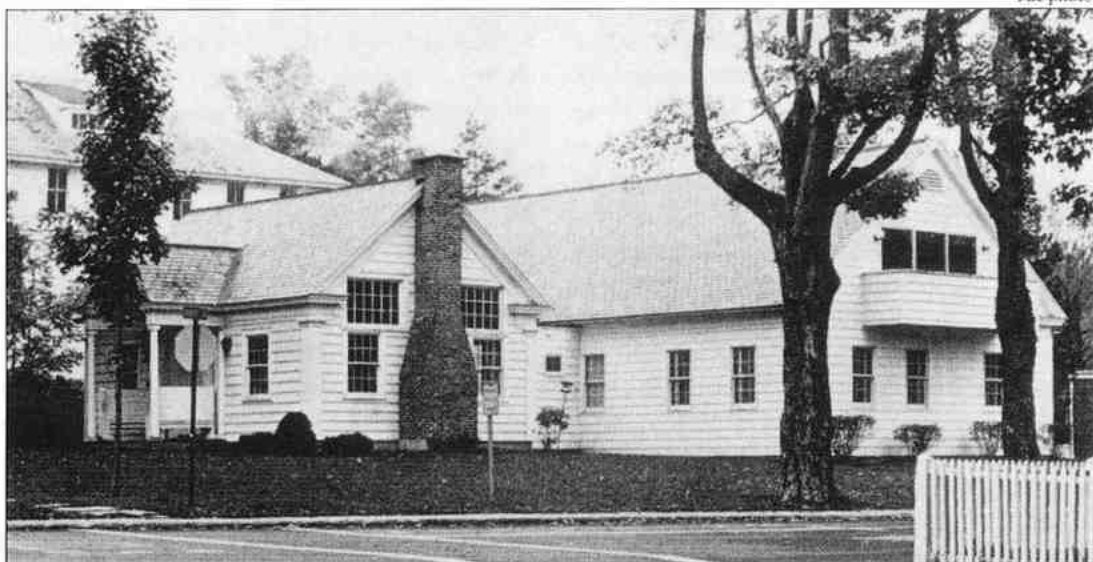
ered by six inches or more of blowing snow. It took us ten hours of crawling in four-wheel drive past stranded cars to reach Halifax—only half way to Cape Breton and a short drive in summer—where we grabbed the first available motel room. We packed towels around the motel door to stop the snow that was blowing through the cracks and fell asleep to the noise of an incredible wind.

I mumbled a lot things that can't be printed here while digging out the truck at dawn the next day, but having come this far it seemed best to keep going. It was still snowing and blowing hard, and the intense whiteouts caused by high winds forced us to creep along again for most of the day, finally making Cape Breton and Cushner's house sometime after dark. Cushner was amazed. So were we, for that matter.

The storm quit during the night, so in the morning we packed the truck with as many of Bill's framings as would fit and headed south, much faster this time since we had good visibility and were driving on hard-packed snow. At one point we took a small, coastal ferry as a shortcut across an estuary. I stood on the open steel deck looking at my ice-encrusted truck. We were, of course, the only ferry passengers. The deck hand walked over, glanced at my license plate, and then peered at me from the recesses of his hooded parka.

"Kind'a late, ain't'cha?" he asked.

We made the ferry at Yarmouth late that afternoon and fell asleep in chairs as the *Bluenose* corkscrewed through



The new permanent home of the Museum, acquired in 1983, is located on Seminary Avenue in historic Manchester Village, Vermont.

storm swells in the Gulf of Maine. Driving off the ferry into the darkness at Bar Harbor, I began to wonder if Customs agents had a sense of humor. I filled out the little form they give you on the ferry for U.S. entry. Where the form requested the value of goods being brought in, I think I put down a hundred thousand dollars. We drove up to the Customs booth, where I handed the form to an agent.

She gave the form the usual perfunctory glance, apparently seeing us only as tourists and then did a double take. "But you looked so simple!" She exclaimed. "What's in there?"

"No problem at all, madam," I said with more smoothness than I felt. "Just works of art. U.S. origin. Returning to the U.S., so there's no duty necessary." I took her around to the back of the truck and pulled out one of the framings. At the same time, I gave her copies of old newspaper clippings covering various past exhibitions of Cushner's work in New York, together with my Museum business card. She was convinced. And again we headed south, reaching home sometime before dawn. Within two weeks, our Cushner exhibit was designed, labeled, crated, and on an air-cargo jet headed for Seattle. It was—and is—an enormously popular exhibit, but as I remember it, getting there was definitely not half the fun!

I WAS HIRED as museum executive director on July 1, 1983, after having spent several years on the board of trustees. In that year, two publications that I'd been involved in starting—*Fly Rod & Reel* and *Fly-Tackle Dealer*—were sold to a company in Maine and I was looking for something to do locally. The Museum needed a director and it certainly seemed challenging enough, so I took the job. At the time, our Museum was at a crossroads. It had just extricated itself from a commitment to construct a large headquarters and exhibition center jointly with the Federation of Fly Fishers in West Yellowstone, Montana. At the same time, it was evident to both the board and me that the Museum had matured and was ready to become more independent of the Orvis Company, which had nurtured the Museum since inception and from which the Museum had been renting office, exhibition, and storage space since the late 1960s.

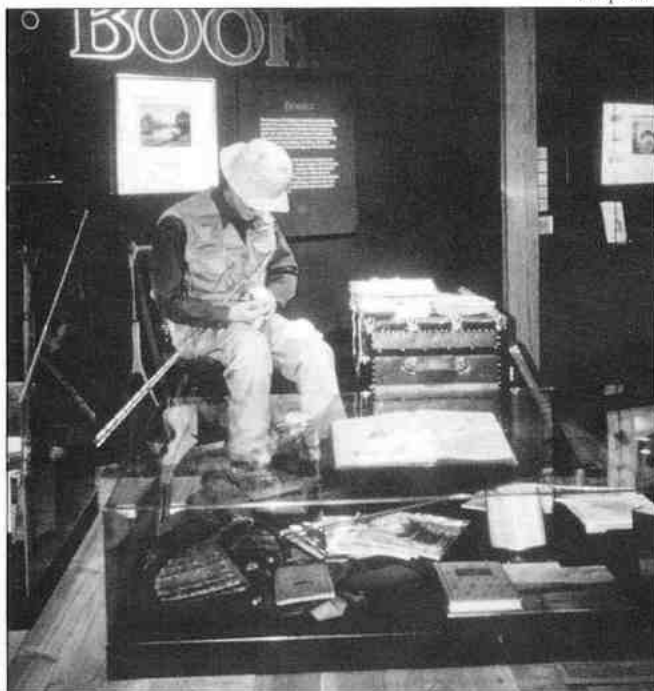
During this period a concept emerged that has proven to be one of the most important ventures undertaken by the Museum in the past two decades—namely, that of traveling exhibits. In the course of endless discussions about where the Museum might be located, I think it was Gardner Grant, then Museum president, who suggested that no single location could satisfy the Museum's international constituency of anglers, and that the greatest number of people could be best served by a series of traveling exhibits. That being the case, it didn't make too much difference where the Museum was

located, as long as its facilities were adequate for collection storage and curatorial and administrative functions, and as long as some local exhibition presence could be maintained. The traveling exhibit was—and has proven to be—a terrific idea.

From those meetings—and from what was basically Grant's concept—I wound up with two mandates: find a building and develop a traveling-exhibit program. So I went to see Harry Henderson, one of my old fishing buddies who was Manchester's town manager at the time, and told him we needed a building. He steered me to the Museum's present site: 5,000 square feet for which a local businessman was then asking \$240,000. There were some prolonged negotiations during which I was able to point out the tax advantages of selling to a nonprofit corporation and we got the cash price down to \$160,000.

After a building tour and a thorough review of the renovations I proposed, the full Museum board of trustees approved the purchase on September 8, 1983. There was enough cash for a down payment, so we obtained a mortgage from a local bank and closed on the property on November 11, 1983. A Capital Fund was established with a goal of \$250,000 to pay for and renovate the building as a museum. That goal was realized in only four years, and the mortgage was burned ceremoniously on December 5, 1987.

The winter of 1983 was a busy one as we worked with local contractors to get galleries ready for a spring opening. Gallery and office design ideas came



File photo



Left: "Anglers All," an immensely popular traveling exhibit, has appeared in eleven museums across the U.S. since 1985 and has been viewed by over three million people. Above: The William Cushner collection, a handsome exhibit of Cushner's framed artwork and flies, was hand delivered to the Museum by former executive director John Merwin via ferry from Cape Breton in Nova Scotia.

from many sources; design materials were provided by both the Smithsonian Institution and the American Association of Museums; former trustee Chris Cook, who at the time directed the Addison Gallery of American Art in Andover, Massachusetts, was a big help; and most importantly, I was often able to call on Martha Merwin, my wife, who former director Paul Schullery had earlier hired as Museum art director and who holds a Yale graduate degree in design. I mention this not only to give Martha all due credit—which is substantial—but also to answer the question I've often been asked as to why I hired my wife. She, in fact, preceded me as a Museum employee. The Museum's new galleries and building opened to the public on May 26, 1984.

Ogden Pleissner, the well-known sporting artist and Manchester resident, had just died, and an exhibition of his work seemed like an ideal opening splash. With considerable help from Mrs. Marion G. Pleissner, Ogden's widow, I was able to do just that. She graciously let me borrow paintings from the walls of her home and helped us to obtain others on loan from a variety of collectors. I distinctly remember walk-

ing through our gallery of thirty-odd Pleissner works and hearing a visiting matron declare, "My, what lovely prints!"

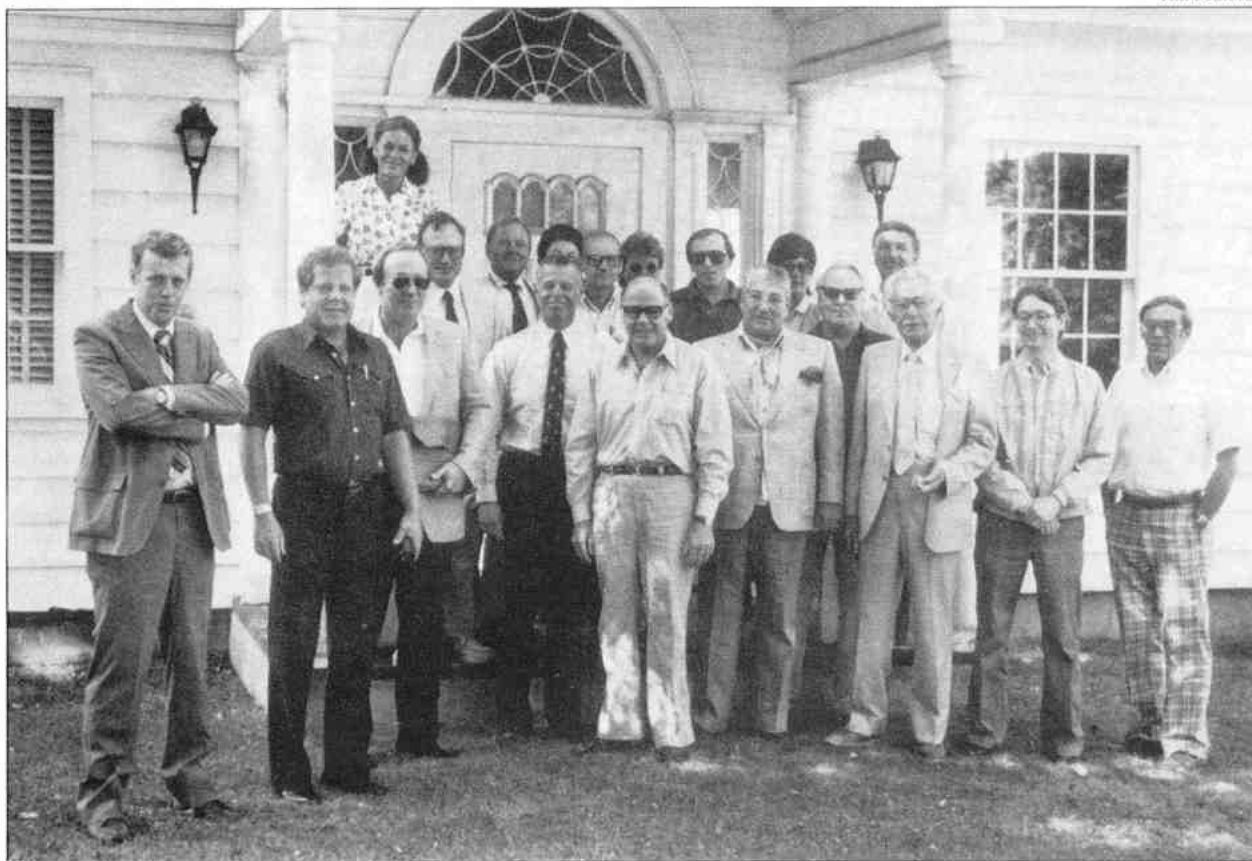
"Madam," I said in a deeply curatorial tone, "there are *no* prints in this gallery." She was impressed. So was I. In any case, such began our exhibitions of sporting art, which I'm pleased to see have been ongoing.

While all of this was happening, our West Coast trustees, led by Art Frey of San Francisco, were quite rightly agitating for some kind of increased Museum presence in their area. San Francisco is probably the most fly-fishing-active city in America and was a logical first choice to host a major American Museum of Fly Fishing traveling exhibit. Frey and the late Tim Bedford of Oakland, California, sold officials at the California Academy of Sciences in Golden Gate Park—San Francisco's major natural-history museum—on the idea. After a long series of meetings back and forth between California and Vermont, and several weeks of design and installation work at the Academy in San Francisco, "Anglers All" opened there for a run of several months during 1985. The name, by the way, hit me one day as I scanned

the Museum's bookshelves; it's the title of a short-story collection by the late John Taintor Foote.

During my tenure at the Museum, "Anglers All" also appeared at Chicago's Shedd Aquarium (1986) and at the Philadelphia Academy of Sciences (1987). In each case it was like a dream come true—millions (no kidding!) of visitors were able to see a major Museum exhibit that related fly fishing and its history to their region and to their natural environment. As Gene Behlen, a California Academy official with whom I worked and himself not a fisherman, put it, "It's a wonderful window on nature." The exhibit could, and did, appeal to and instruct almost anyone about the natural world, whether or not the viewer happened to know anything at all about fishing.

Although much less visible, there was also considerable activity within the Museum's operations during the same 1983 to 1987 interval, of which I'll mention just a few highlights. At the 1986 annual meeting, and at my suggestion, the trustees voted to have an independent financial audit conducted annually, both as a means of protecting the Museum's staff and to enhance the credibility



Museum members and trustees at the 1983 annual meeting. Front row, from left, former executive director John Merwin, Larry Gilsdorf, Mike Fitzgerald, Gardner Grant, Art Frey, Hank Siegel, Bob Johnson, Bob Buckmaster, Jim Brown, and Paul Bofinger. Second row, Romi Perkins, Mrs. Tim Bedford, David Ledlie, Laura Towslee, Dick Kress, Lillian Kilberg, and Marty Keane.

of the Museum's fund-raising efforts. Being able to give a potential donor a copy of such an audit eventually proved to be of significant help in soliciting financial contributions.

During 1985 and 1986, we obtained our first grant from the Institute for Museum Services, a federal agency that dispenses museum aid. In this case the grant was for a museum-peer review of our policies and procedures, a first step in the ongoing process of trying to obtain accreditation from the American Association of Museums. Among other things, that report suggested the formation of a series of trustee committees, which were duly established. From the Policy and Program Committee eventually came the Museum's first formal Collections Policy—defining what the Museum does and doesn't collect and how the Museum gets rid of what it doesn't want—which was formally adopted by the full board in December 1987. The Museum collection itself became insured for the first time in 1983, covering not only our own permanent

collection, but also those items borrowed for study or exhibition in Manchester or elsewhere. The underwriter—Chubb—was sufficiently impressed with the Museum's novelty to include a write-up of it in their corporate magazine. The collection, of course, was growing during the same interval, and major acquisitions included the Scharf reel collection, which came after extensive negotiations with the owner during 1985 and 1986.

Collection cataloging took a giant step forward during 1983 and 1984 when I was able to convince Jim Brown, the noted reel authority, to not only catalog the entire reel collection but also write a book about it which the Museum would publish. By the time I left the Museum directorship in early 1988 the book was virtually complete. When it finally was published, it sold briskly, and its designer—Martha Merwin—received a design award from the New England Museum Association, quite a coup for our little shop in a very competitive field of much larger organizations.

Looking back, I can see the late Austin Hogan, the Museum's first curator, hobbling around the old Union Street storage rooms and complaining bitterly about his rheumatism. Austin was a good friend in those early years, always ready to help and to answer questions. Then Paul Schullery became executive director, often using my publishing office and coffeepot as a hideout from busy telephones at the Museum, a time during which we also became good friends. Paul brought considerable order and scholarship to the Museum, instituting the first real systems for cataloging and organizing the collection, most of which are still followed. Together with Hogan's curatorial creativity and Schullery's organizational talent, I feel as though I, together with the Museum's officers, trustees, and staff brought the Museum out of a closet by acquiring our first home and starting exhibition programs that were national in scope.

With considerable help from many, many people, it was an immensely satisfying experience. ~

From the Basement Up

by Donald S. Johnson, Executive Director



Margot Page

DONALD JOHNSON, former executive director of the Des Plaines (Illinois) Historical Society, was hired as curator of the Museum in September 1987 and named executive director the following year. An avid fly fisherman, Don holds a B.A. from Northeastern Illinois University and a master's degree in history from the University of Illinois at Chicago. He was a Ph.D. candidate in history at Loyola University when he joined the Museum.

As executive director of the Des Plaines Historical Society & Museum, Don directed both development and operations, including budget, grants, restoration, programming, newsletter publication, educational outreach, and collections management and conservation. Additionally, he acted as research coordinator and facilitated document and exhibits programs. The author of *Des Plaines: Born of the Tallgrass Prairie* (Windsor Publications, 1984), Don was also a member of the Kennicott House Restoration Commission (Grove National Historic Landmark, Glenview, Illinois); a board member of the Ernest Hemingway Foundation of Oak Park, Illinois; and past president of the Izaak Walton League of America, Des Plaines Chapter. He is an ardent outdoorsman and has canoed and backpacked extensively through the upper Midwest, Alaska, and Canada, especially the Hudson Bay area. In conjunction with graduate studies in British history, he has spent considerable time in Britain and Ireland. Don's passion these days is ice hockey which he enjoys on the juvenile level with his son.

For the last five years Don has acted as a combination executive/development director, which will change shortly when the Museum hires a development director, although he will continue to be involved in that phase of operations. With nearly 2,000 members and many friends, the

Museum requires that public relations be a large part of any executive director's duties, so Don usually can be found on the phone coordinating dinners, special functions, and national traveling exhibitions.

CRAIG THOMAS

I JOINED THE STAFF of the American Museum of Fly Fishing as curator on a rainy day in September of 1987. I particularly remember my first day because I spent a considerable part of it in the bowels of the Museum—the flooded basement—armed with a grain shovel, hastily purchased at a local hardware store, pushing water into a sump pump. Ah, the genteel world of museums!

It was an interesting introduction to be sure. One might even say that I started at the bottom and worked my way up. I had moved to Vermont from Chicago and left behind a museum where I had served as executive director. During my initial four months as the Museum's curator I missed the excitement of developing and launching programs and I particularly missed working with numbers of people.

But my stint as curator was brief—I was named executive director of the Museum in 1988. One of my fondest memories of that time was my first meeting with Leigh H. Perkins, one of the Museum's founders, and at that time, its treasurer. Leigh had seen it all and his salutation "glad we've got you" meant a great deal to me then, just as it

does now. The days that followed were often intensely exciting and I found the challenge of building the Museum to be positively intoxicating.

Our most immediate task in 1988 was creating a strong financial base for the institution. The Museum's dinner/auction program—our key fund-raising apparatus—had fallen on hard times and we all felt that if we could rebuild the program everything else would, in time, fall in place. To take on that task I was armed with a charter from the board and given the valuable aid of then-president Bob Kahn, past presidents Gardner Grant and Art Frey, and a host of other committed trustees. Thus, Virginia Hulett, Joe Pisarro (respectively the world's finest executive assistant and most dedicated Museum volunteer), and I set off to do battle with what we affectionately called our "dog and pony show."

We did well that first year, even better the following. In fact, the program, like our Museum, has been growing ever since, thanks to the interest and generosity of our supporters, particularly our volunteer dinner committees.

It was "on the road" that I discovered just how loyal a following the Museum had and how important the Museum and its mission was to our trustees and members. This realization prompted us to initiate a number of new "member-oriented" programs, such as our highly successful in-house art exhibitions and annual festival. We also began to strengthen the Museum's traveling exhibition program, and spent time spreading the gospel at sport shows, fairs, and club meetings. Getting the word out became a passion for us. Our work bore fruit, and what I like to call our Museum family, which is spread over the entire country and even into other parts of



The current staff of the Museum includes, from left, editor Margot Page, executive director Don Johnson, executive assistant Ginny Hulett, resident volunteer Joe Pisarro, and curator Alanna Fisher. Missing are art director Randall Perkins and registrar Jon Mathewson.

the world, developed and grew.

We've been fortunate to have had some significant successes during my tenure as executive director, including the completion of the acquisition of the William B. Cushner collection; the release of several noteworthy publications, including Jim Brown's masterful *A Treasury of Reels*; the growth of our membership; the renovation and expansion of the Museum building; the receipt of awards, such as the prestigious Institute of Museum Services/American Association of Museums Conservation Survey and Museum Assessment II grants; a 100 percent increase in income over four years; and, most recently, ongoing accreditation work with the American Association of Museums.

These are all meaningful achievements of which the entire Museum family can be proud. But the operative words are "Museum family" because it has been a team effort; if there is one thing I bring away from my experience at the Museum, it is the realization that when people work together all goals are within reach. To have been able to play a small role in orchestrating our suc-

cesses for the benefit of our members and the public in general is a satisfying feeling.

The sage tells us that if you want to succeed "surround yourself with the best people," and there is little doubt in my mind that the Museum's staff is second to none. In time, Ginny Hulett, Joe Pisarro, and I were joined by Alanna Dore Fisher, a multidimensional curator who signed on (for the second time; Alanna served the Museum as a registrar from 1985 to 1987) early in 1990. As our personable and energetic curator/development assistant, her contagious enthusiasm and never-say-die philosophy have been a boon to our Museum. A fine generalist who is equally comfortable dealing with exhibition preparation while simultaneously helping to plan dinner/auctions, Alanna has become quite knowledgeable about the finer points of collections management as well. In 1988, Randall R. Perkins came

aboard as art director of *The American Fly Fisher* and in 1989 Margot Page was named editor. More recently, we have welcomed the talented Jon Mathewson as registrar, and we're looking forward to adding a development coordinator to the staff soon.

From the first I've been blessed with an exceptional group of trustees. The term "trustee" is apt since it reflects a standard of care and absolute loyalty to an organization. Our trustees have performed magnificently—as a body and individually—in the five years that I've been at the Museum. They have also served as counselors on all matters of Museum operation and in their relationship with me as executive director. I have grown professionally and personally through my interaction with our board.

That grain shovel is still around, incidentally. The basement no longer floods, but we still use the shovel when it snows. It sits at the back door, and, for me, it serves as a reminder of just how far we've come and how much we've grown since 1987. It has been a great adventure and an education. I wouldn't have missed it for the world. ~

File photo



Former registrar David Ledlie and former editor Austin Hogan in the Museum workshop, circa 1976, weighing a vintage rod prior to its accession to the collection.

The Museum's Collection from Then to Now

by Alanna Fisher, Curator

THE COLLECTION is what gives a museum its purpose, its uniqueness, and its reason for being. And it is the collection that generally powers the growth of a museum. The monetary donations; volunteer interest, support, time, and effort; the donations of objects; and programming all come about because of a museum's collection.

The American Museum of Fly Fishing's collection is special in the museum world. One thousand five hundred rods, 900 reels, thousands of flies, 3,000 books, five original paintings, over 10,000 pieces of ephemera (including prints, etchings, posters, catalogs, periodicals, photographs and slides, brochures, and articles), and over 2,000 pieces of miscellaneous tackle are held in our permanent collections. The care and preservation of these objects, along with their interpretation and exhibition, are the mission and focus of this Museum.

In 1968 the Museum was born from the marriage of a singular idea—Hermann Kessler's idea—and a relatively small assortment of Orvis memorabilia stored in the old Orvis factory building

in Manchester, Vermont. The collection, such as it was, needed to be expanded as well as diversified in order to be worthy of the interest and commitment that the trustees anticipated. Appeals went out to magazines and newsletters, and donations started coming in almost immediately. In that first year twenty-one rods, ten reels, artwork, and some miscellaneous tackle was received, as well as a fine representation of original Louis Rhead reverse flies, Herbert Hoover fishing gear (the first components of our ever-growing personality/statesmen collection), and an impressive donation consisting of four exceptional rods: a Cross, a Leonard, a Thomas, and an Edwards.

Nineteen sixty-nine brought an even greater number of donations to the collection as word about the Museum spread: Mamie Eisenhower graciously donated Ike's much-used and well-loved Orvis graphite rod; a Hardy reel, original art by Schlecht, and prints by Kilbourne and Pope were among the many other donations. Divine rods, popping bugs, Hardy rods, Vom Hofe and Meisselbach reels were added to the collec-

tion in 1970. The biggest year for individual donations was 1973—162 in all—including more than 110 rods; seventy-six reels; many flies, some of which were Megan Boyd's; leather fly wallets and tackle boxes; a stained glass window depicting a fishing scene; the fishing memorabilia of Joe Brooks; and the extensive Hiram Hawes collection donated by his wife, Elsie.

Donations come from members, from friends, and through word-of-mouth, and all are accepted with great appreciation. In recent years we have been privileged to acquire many historically significant objects. The Frederic Sharf collection of over 250 reels was added to the Museum's permanent collection in 1986, and one of our members donated the Austin Hogan collection in 1988. The William Cushner collection of framed flies was officially added in 1991, which has provided us with a source of easily transportable components for our smaller traveling exhibitions. In 1991, the Museum welcomed the donation of over 1,000 flies tied by Edward Ringwood Hewitt and in 1992 Jim Taylor donated the first Garrison rod to the col-



In celebration of its 25th anniversary, The American

Museum of Fly Fishing proudly announces the publication of a limited edition poster and note cards.

Photographed by internationally-renowned photographer Terry Heffernan and designed by award-winning designer

Conrad Jorgensen, these four-color images capture the richness of some of the Museum's most beautiful objects.

While the 20" x 30" poster features antique tackle, each box of twelve 5.5"x

4.25" note cards includes six images of the tackle of renowned fly

fishermen Ernest Hemingway, Samuel Morse, Bing Crosby, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Daniel Webster and Winslow Homer. Both the

poster and note cards feature four-color images reproduced by Woods Lithographics in Phoenix using the propriety UltraDot[®] 600 printing

process. The poster is available for just \$19.95*; note cards are \$12.95.**



Purchased together, they're only \$29.95.

And the proceeds benefit the Museum.

Please make checks payable to AMFF and send to P.O. Box 42, Manchester VT 05254. Telephone orders: call 802-362-3300. Mastercard, Visa and American Express accepted.

* \$5.00 shipping and handling. ** \$3.00 shipping and handling. Each additional item, please add \$1.50.

A



Preserving a Rich Heritage for Future Generations

THE AMERICAN
MUSEUM OF
FLY FISHING
1968-25 YEARS-1993

THE AMERICAN
MUSEUM OF
FLY FISHING
1968•25 YEARS•1993

An Honorable Calling

THEY ARE SOMETIMES called governors, regents, directors, commissioners, or, in the case of the American Museum of Fly Fishing, trustees. The term, of course, is apt—it reflects semantically the standard of care to which such board members may be held. Trustees owe a duty of loyalty to the institution they represent. Essentially, they are private individuals who, as a body, hold the institution's assets in

trust for the public good. A trustee's ultimate responsibility to his/her museum is to ensure through his/her active and affirmative guidance that the institution's resources are prudently and efficiently managed to serve their stated purposes. Theirs is an honorable calling.

For the past twenty-five years the American Museum of Fly Fishing was fortunate to have been served by an ex-

tremely loyal, dedicated, and generous group of trustees. As a group, they have led the Museum to both institutional maturity and national prominence. What follows is an honor roll of all the distinguished individuals who have selflessly served the Museum from 1968 to the present in common purpose. The Museum will forever be in their debt.

DONALD S. JOHNSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Art Agnew
Albert I. (Pal) Alexander
Gene Anderegg
Stuart C. Apte
Maxine Atherton
E. M. Bakwin
Michael Bakwin
Foster Bam
William Barrett
Robert Barrett
Richard Bauer
Joseph Spear Beck
Tim Bedford
Bruce Begin
Harold Blaisdell
Paul Bofinger
Stanley Bogdan
Lewis Borden
Kay Brodney
Anson Brooks
Charlie Brooks
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Errol Champion
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G. Dick Finlay
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Arthur Frey
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Lawrence Gilsdorf
Arnold Gingrich
William A. Glassford
Willard Godfrey
Gardner L. Grant
George Griffith
Alvin R. Grove
Richard Hanousek
George W. Harvey
Terry Heffernan
William Herrick
Curtis Hill
Austin S. Hogan
James Hunter
Susie Isaksen
Alec Jackson
Robert Johnson
Samuel C. Johnson
Charles E. Jones
Wes Jordan
Poul Jorgenson
Arthur Kaemmer
Robert Kahn
Martin J. Keane
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Hermann Kessler
Woods King III
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Mel Kreiger
Richard Kress

Peter Kriendler
Don Labbe
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Bud Lilly
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Nick Lyons
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Wallace J. Stenhouse
Arthur Stern
Ralph Stinson
Louis Stoia
Forrest Straight
Peter Stroh
John Swan
James Taylor
Ralph Tingle
Richard Tisch
Prescott Tolman
Bennett Upson
R. P. Van Gytenbeck
James Van Loan
Sam Van Ness
Ralph Wahl
Archibald Walker
Richard J. Warren
Roger G. White
Dickson L. Whitney
Richard Whitney
Milton Weiler
Ted Williams
Shirley Woods
Earl Worsham
Donald D. Zahner
Edward G. Zern



THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF FLY FISHING, a nonprofit educational institution dedicated to preserving the rich heritage of fly fishing, was founded in Manchester, Vermont, in 1968. The Museum serves as a repository for, and conservator to, the world's largest collection of angling and angling-related objects. The Museum's collections and exhibits provide the public with thorough documentation of the evolution of fly fishing as a sport, art form, craft, and industry in the United States and abroad from the sixteenth century to the present. Rods, reels, and flies, as well as tackle, art, books, manuscripts, and photographs, form the major components of the Museum's collection.

The Museum has gained recognition as a unique educational institution. It supports a publications program through which its national quarterly journal, *The American Fly Fisher*, and books, art prints, catalogs, and newsletters are regularly offered to the public. The Museum's traveling exhibits program has made it possible for educational exhibits to be viewed across the United States and abroad. The Museum also provides in-house exhibits, related interpretive programming, and research services for members, visiting scholars, authors, and students.

The Museum is an active, member-oriented nonprofit institution. For information, please contact: The American Museum of Fly Fishing, P. O. Box 42, Manchester, Vermont 05254, 802-362-3300.