

# The American Fly Fisher

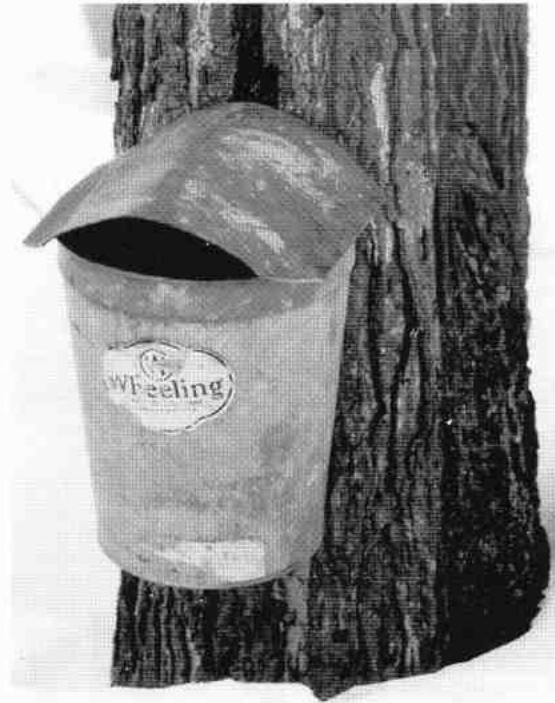
*Journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing*

SPRING 2000

VOLUME 26 NUMBER 2

# Sweet Spring

Achor-Hoch



WHILE I LIVED IN PENNSYLVANIA, I knew I could believe in spring again when my friends and I would start tapping sugar maples at our college's biological field station. There might be a foot of snow on the ground, but that sweet steam on the face as the sugar boiled down meant that water was beginning to move—in tree veins and in streams.

This issue of *The American Fly Fisher* features a few Pennsylvanians. Our good friend Gordon M. Wickstrom has provided us with an essay about Vincent C. Marinaro, without doubt one of the best-known Pennsylvania fly fishermen in history. Wickstrom discusses Marinaro's importance to the sport of fly fishing in the twentieth century and offers us his personal and philosophical reflections on the man. Wickstrom, who now lives in Boulder, was on the faculty at Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster when he and Marinaro crossed paths. "Vince Marinaro: On Point of Balance" begins on page 12.

"S. A. Neff Jr., Angling Artisan: Caught by Trout, Piscatorial Books, and Fine Binding" is about a Pennsylvanian, by a Pennsylvanian. The Museum is will be exhibiting Neff's works in our galleries beginning on July 9—to whet your appetite and encourage your attendance, we've tried to tantalize you with a

two-dimensional taste. Elisabeth R. Agro, assistant curator in the department of decorative arts at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh, originally contributed this piece to the Sardoni Art Gallery's *The Collector as Bookbinder: The Piscatorial Bindings of S. A. Neff, Jr.* Among the titles that Neff has transformed into works of art are the Museum's own *A Treasury of Reels* by Jim Brown, and Vincent C. Marinaro's *A Modern Dry-Fly Code* and *In the Ring of the Rise*. Agro calls Neff's work "alluring to those who appreciate masterly design, high-quality binding, and (perhaps) trout." We imagine our audience will like the trout part. This article begins on p. 2.

Spring at the Museum brings the regular bustle of dinner/auctions and preparations for our annual festival weekend (see announcement on page 24). In addition, staff have been busy preparing our traveling exhibit of "Anglers All 2000" for its debut at the Museum of the Rockies in Bozeman, Montana, on June 3 (see page 28). We hope that many of you will be able to join us for these events.

And one more Pennsylvania fact: this journal's copy editor, Sarah May Clarkson, lives in Pennsylvania now and has sugared those very same trees I once did. It's a sweet small world.

KATHLEEN ACHOR  
EDITOR



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*Preserving the Heritage  
of Fly Fishing*

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ON THE COVER: *This Thomas Gosden portrait was used for a frontispiece in T. P. Lathy's The Angler (London: J. H. Burn, 1820). From the collection of S. A. Neff Jr.*

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EMAIL: amff@together.net WEBSITE: www.amff.com

# S. A. Neff Jr., Angling Artisan: Caught by Trout, Piscatorial Books, and Fine Binding

by Elisabeth R. Agro

Barbara Runnette



Figure 1. S. A. Neff Jr. in his library.

*The Museum is pleased to host “The Collector as Bookbinder: The Piscatorial Bindings of S. A. Neff Jr.” in our Manchester galleries July 9 through September 29, 2000. The exhibit features twenty sets comprising more than seventy boxes and Neff’s bindings of classic fly-fishing books, including the Museum’s own A Treasury of Reels. Before its stay at the Museum, the exhibit will have visited the Cleveland Museum of Natural History and the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, among other venues. An opening reception is planned; for details, contact the Museum.*

*S. A. Neff Jr. is a discriminating angler, an active bibliophile, a renowned binder of angling books, and a skilled photographer. He has devised and dressed his flies and finished his own rods for more than thirty-five years. His angling library contains more than 2,000 volumes, primarily about trout fishing, dating from 1600. He is a president emeritus of the Pittsburgh Bibliophiles. Aside from giving lectures and workshops, Mr. Neff divides his time between angling for trout and creating sets of bindings for his library. Unfortunately, his schedule does not permit commissions from other collectors.* —EDITOR



This article originally appeared in *The Collector as Bookbinder: The Piscatorial Bindings of S. A. Neff, Jr.*, copyright 1999, The Sardoni Art Gallery. Reprinted with permission.

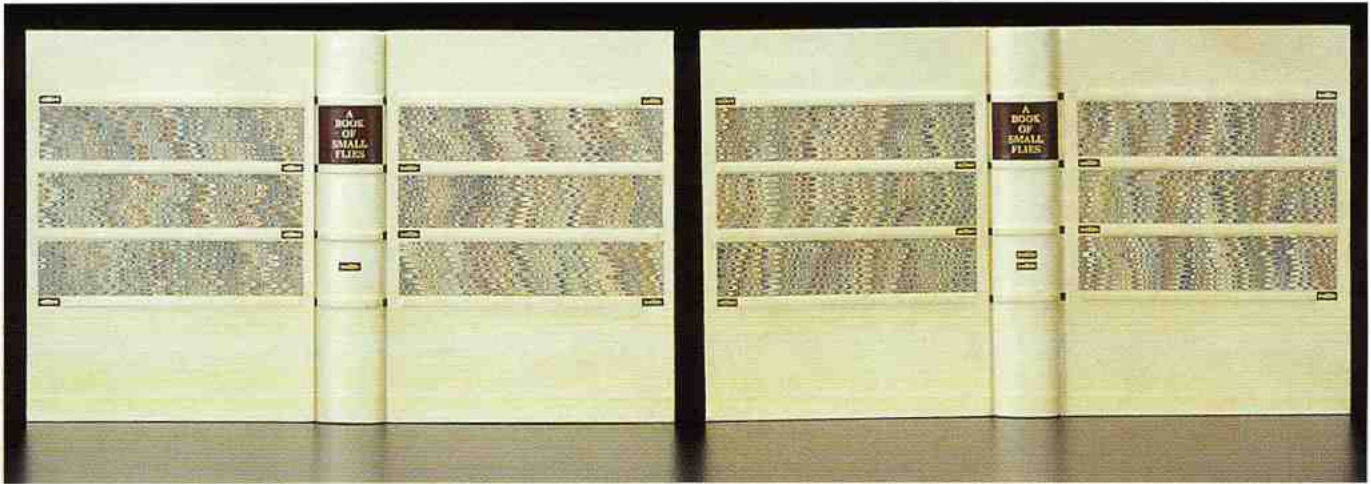


Figure 2A. A Book of Small Flies. Two full vellum boxes containing a unique four-volume set.

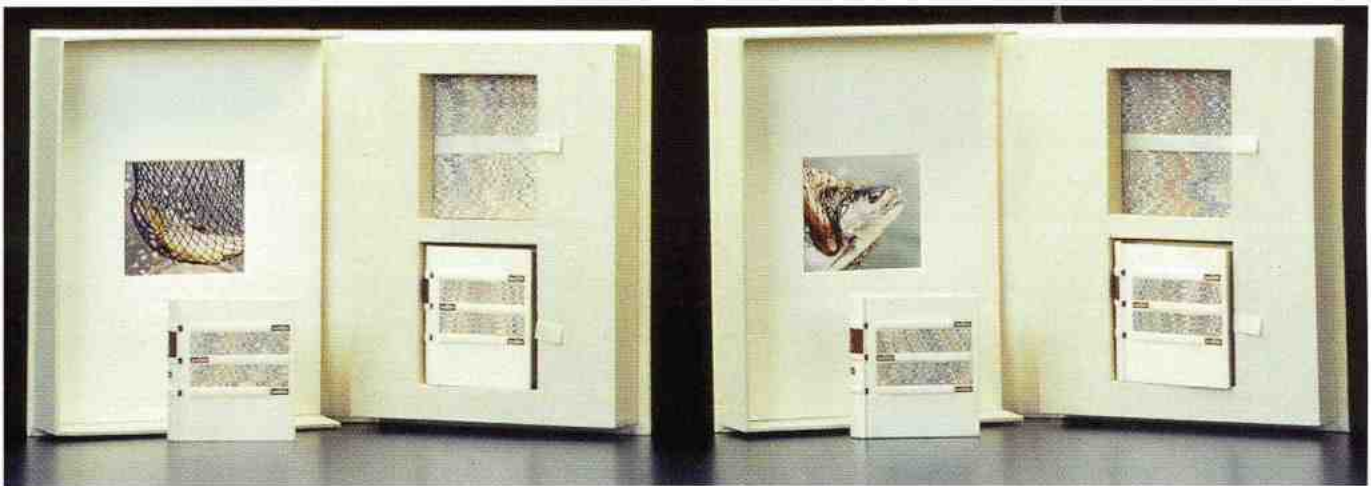


Figure 2B. A Book of Small Flies. The boxes open to show contents: two pairs of miniature boxes bound in matching vellum. Volume I: text; Volume II: actual flies; Volume III: color photographs; Volume IV: materials for dressing small flies.

THE WORK OF S. A. NEFF JR., piscatorial book-binder, is alluring for those who appreciate masterly design, high-quality binding, and (perhaps) trout. At a mere glimpse of his work, the viewer is mesmerized—transfixed by each binding's exacting beauty. Neff literally ensnares (or should I say hooks and reels?) his viewer into his world, assembled in goatskin and Japanese paper. The essence of S. A. Neff Jr. consists of three inseparable and integral elements: he is a devout angler, a collector of angling books, and a piscatorial fine binder.

The piscatorial bindings of S. A. Neff Jr. illustrate not only his passion for trout angling and collecting books on angling, but also his work as a fine binder for his personal collection (Figure 1). Neff's fancy for fly tying and trout angling began

when he was fifteen; in the forty-five years since, he has waded trout rivers throughout the United States, Ireland, England, and Central Europe. Because he wanted to know the trout and its environment, Neff began to collect old angling books. With his first purchase, at the age of twenty, he embarked on an education in aquatic entomology, the devising and dressing of flies, the hand-crafting of fly rods, and the understanding of piscatorial history. As Neff's collection of old angling books grew, he found himself caught up in their history and significance as books. He joined the Pittsburgh Bibliophiles, of which he was a member for seventeen years and president for two. His library now contains two thousand volumes on fish and fishing, focusing on books prior to the twentieth century, with some dating as far back



Figure 3. *A Modern Dry-Fly Code* (left) and *In the Ring of the Rise* (right). Both volumes are case-bound in Italian cloth with panels of Japanese dyed and gilt papers. The Code shows the Letort Spring Run with a sulphur dun; the Ring reveals a feeding brown trout in the stream.

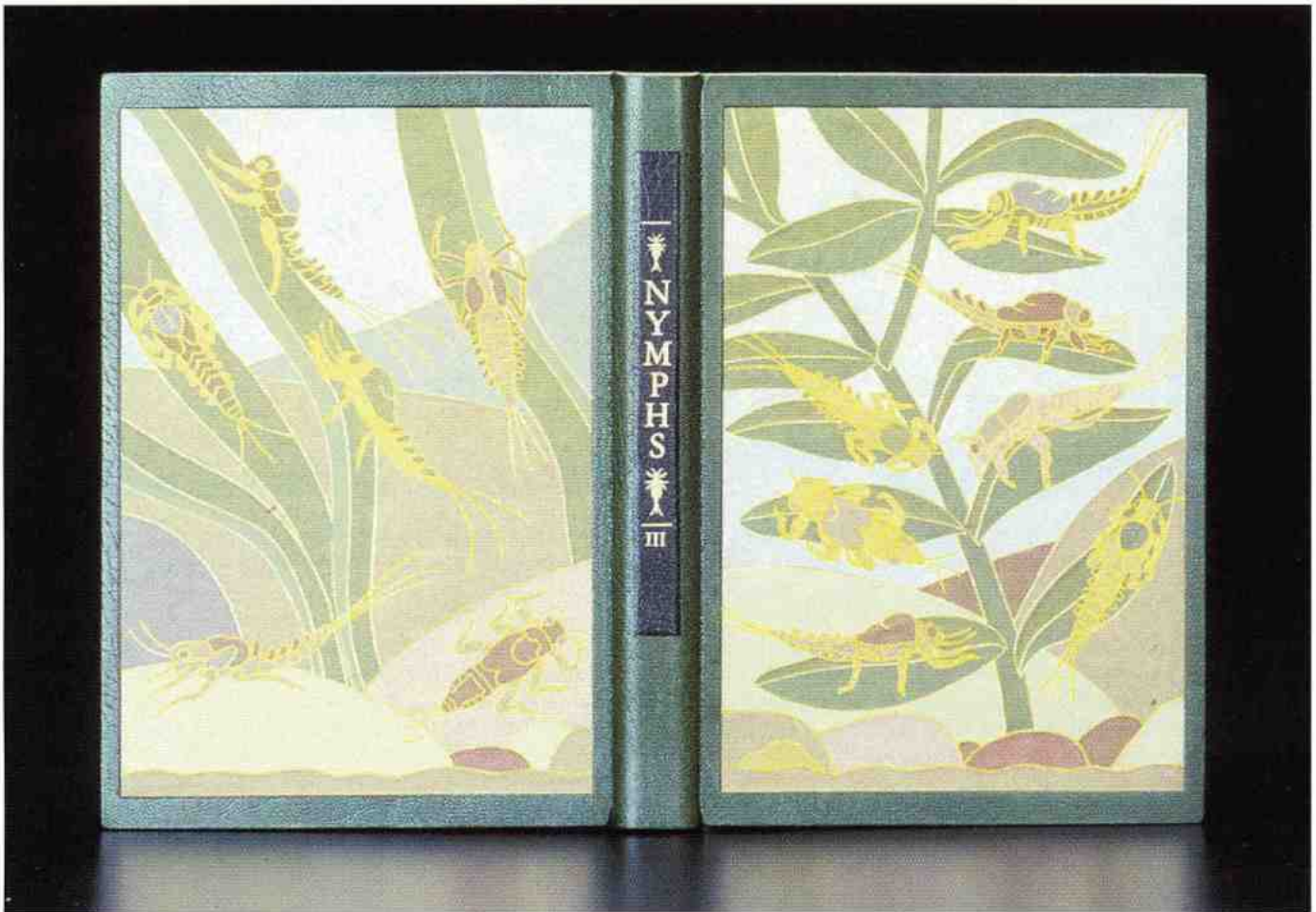


Figure 4. Essay from *The Masters on the Nymph*, Volume III. Bound in full goatskin with panels of Japanese dyed and gilt papers. Contains the author's manuscript, photographs, and publisher's correspondence. The panels portray nymphs in a Catskill river and a Western limestone stream.

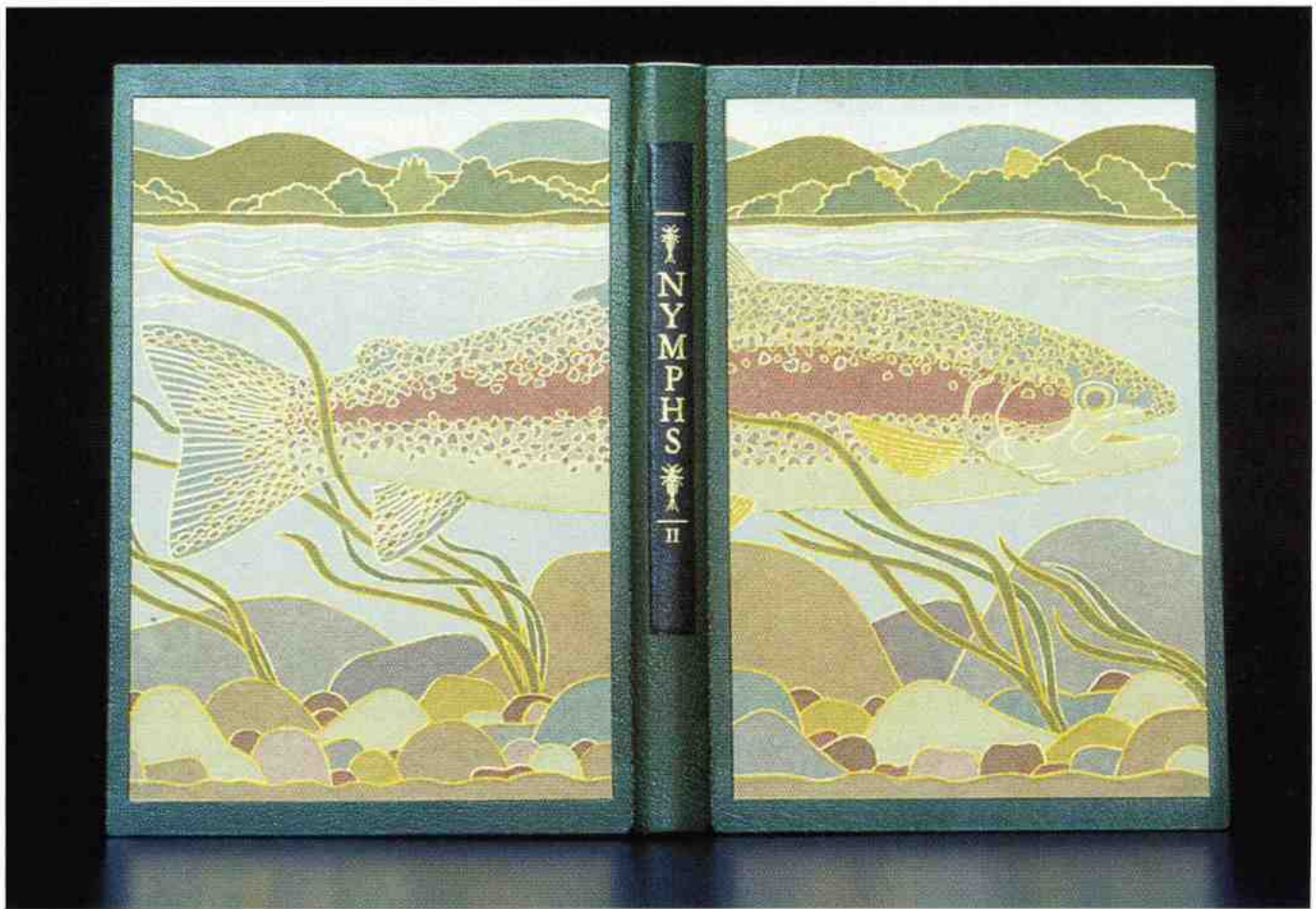


Figure 5. *Essay from The Masters on the Nymph. Volume II. Bound in full goatskin with panels of Japanese dyed and gilt papers. The panels depict a rainbow trout in a Catskill river.*

as 1600. This collecting enthusiasm propelled him to the next logical step: the care and restoration of his fine collection.

In 1982—in order to make small repairs on some of the books in his growing collection—Neff took a few simple workshops in the Pittsburgh area on binding methods. Reflecting on his late start as a bookbinder, Neff often refers to T. J. Cobden-Sanderson (1840–1922), known as the father of modern bookbinding, who also began his career as a bookbinder at middle age. Realizing that he would not have enough time to learn all the various methods and styles of binding, and being an autodidact by nature, Neff struck out on his own, teaching himself procedures that would be most applicable to the care and repair of his personal library. Neff soon realized that his twenty-five years as a graphic designer and illustrator, coupled with his long experience as an angler, provided him with the skills and design sensibility needed to become a bookbinder. “My development of hand-to-eye coordination during my longtime activities as a designer and fly tyer inadvertently trained me in bookbinding,” he said.<sup>1</sup>

Since 1982, Neff has continually added new methods, techniques, and materials to his bookbinding repertoire. Initially, he worked in quarter- and half-leather, then in full leather with simple gilt-stamped designs (the stamping dies are of his own design). After taking a vellum workshop in 1985, he began creating half- and full-vellum bindings. With this new skill, Neff created his first multiple set of bindings and boxes for *A Book of Small Flies* (Figures 2A and 2B). This unique edition, origi-

nally a two-volume set, comprises four volumes bound in full vellum over raised foundations with marbled paper panels and on-lays of goatskin. Neff created two additional volumes, which include objects beyond the text, such as materials used in making flies and photographs taken by Neff based on the text of the book. This set was the first four-volume set of angling books to contain a related grouping of all these piscatorial materials. *A Book of Small Flies* marks the beginning of Neff’s serious commitment to bookbinding. It was the first work Neff exhibited nationally and was selected for inclusion at the juried Guild of Book Workers’ 1986 national exhibition.

In 1988, Neff began to experiment with Japanese dyed paper to create decorative panels, using it in conjunction with Japanese gilt paper to provide a linear definition between the shapes. He used this technique on a set of two bindings in a box, *A Modern Dry-Fly Code*, second edition, and *In the Ring of the Rise*, both by Vincent C. Marinaro, published in 1970 and 1976 respectively (Figure 3). The two volumes are found within a drop-back box portraying the Cumberland Valley, which provides the viewer with a glimpse of what is contained inside. The image found on the decorative panels of each binding represents the main subject of that volume. *A Modern Dry-Fly Code* investigates the methods of fly fishing on the Letort Spring Run in the Cumberland Valley in Pennsylvania. Neff portrays this small river, including an image of the predominant variety of mayfly, the *Ephemera dorothea* (Figure 3). He depicts the stream in detail on the panels for *In the Ring of the*

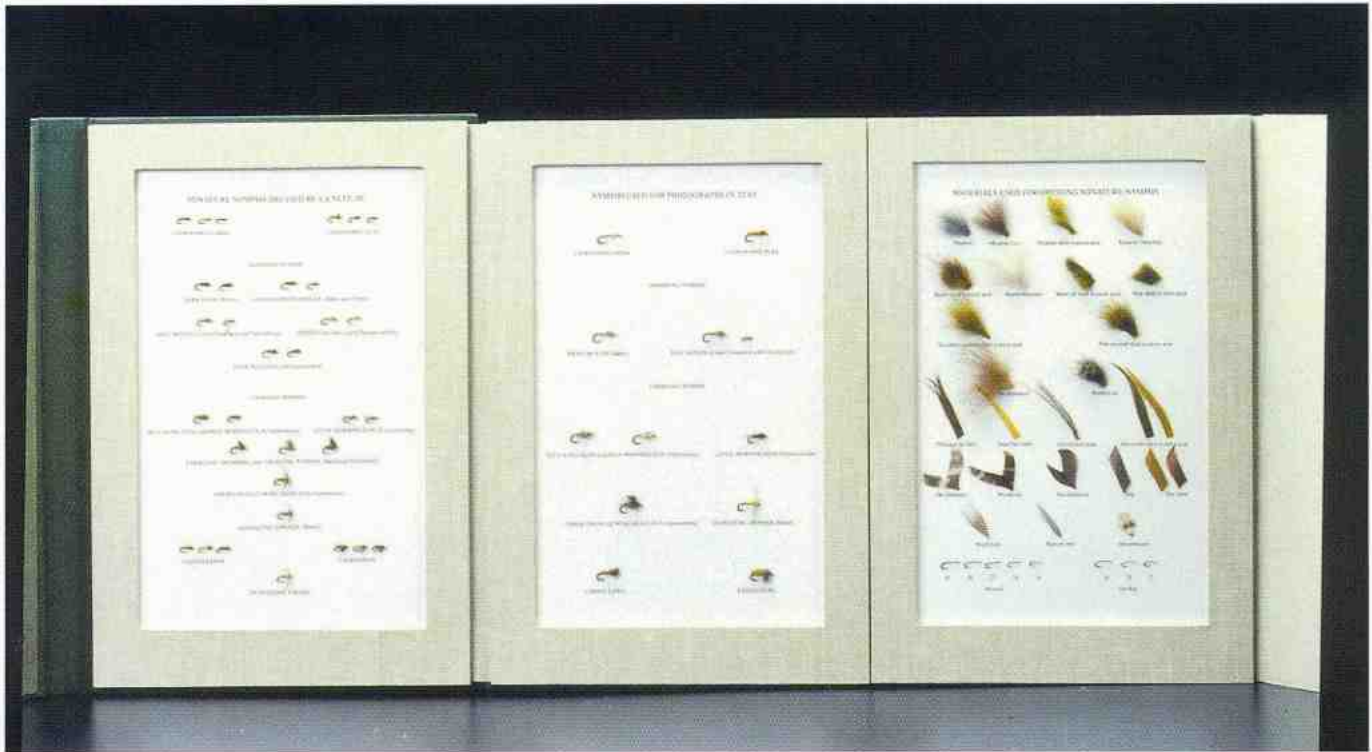


Figure 6. The folder in Volume II of *Miniature Nymphs*, open to show actual flies and materials.

*Rise*, which thoroughly examines the feeding habits of the Letort trout. Neff includes an illustration of a trout that has just risen to the surface for a mayfly, resulting in a rise-form or “ring of the rise” (Figure 3). The viewer is first struck by the image of the Cumberland Valley on the box. Neff says, “The viewer moves into the valley when looking at the covers of the *Code*, and finally to the river’s surface with the covers of the *Ring*.”<sup>2</sup> This application of pictorial panels to foretell the contents of a box and bindings was the beginning of a style formula for Neff.

Neff further developed this innovative pictorial panel technique. The application of panel decoration in combination with box sets containing two or more volumes imparts a particular expression to Neff’s work. He says, “I have always been interested in creating sets of books, rather than simply putting a cover, albeit a decorative one, on a book.”<sup>3</sup> Neff calls these sets “containers” because they usually hold items such as actual fishing flies, photographs, letters, and reels in addition to the text of a book or essay. As an observer of Neff’s work, I am more inclined to call these box sets “environments.” Each panel draws the viewer into the subject explored within a box and volume. The specific angling materials placed within each box further the experience of the subject. Giving the subject matter of each book careful consideration, Neff essentially documents the specific angling environment on the panels of the box set and the bindings it contains.

The three-volume set *Miniature Nymphs: A Chapter from The Masters on the Nymph* (1989) exemplifies this angling environment (Figures 4 through 6). This set contains text, actual trout flies dressed by Neff and materials for making them, manuscript, photographs used in the text, and correspondence with the publisher. On the box are scenes of limestone and freestone rivers, two of the earth’s three river types.

The highly detailed images of a brown trout in a limestone river, rainbow trout in a freestone river, and nymphs on the bottom of the rivers appear individually on the bindings of each volume. The pictorial panels found on this set inform the viewer of the contents of each volume.

In 1990, Neff began experimenting with full goatskin bindings over raised foundations, flat on-lays, raised on-lays, and blind tooling. Neff integrated these new techniques with his decorative panels and boxed-set formula. *Catskill Rivers*, written by Austin M. Francis (1983), was bound in 1991 and is a product of this integration (Figures 7 and 8). The covers on the box and volume are incredibly fine. Neff describes the design as follows:

The panel on the front cover depicts the trout of the Catskill rivers; the brook trout (leaping downward) declined at the end of the nineteenth century, to be replaced by the brown trout (moving upward). The vivid colors of the panel are in direct contrast with the subtleties of the binding. The dark green on-lays quietly set the scene on the book’s cover for the three bands of bright blue raised on-lays symbolizing the Catskill rivers.<sup>4</sup>

Revealing the connection between the box and the binding, Neff states, “There is no apparent relationship between the box cover and binding [at first glance] until the book is opened to reveal the front doublure [a decorative panel on the inside of the binding] portraying a scene on one of the rivers.”<sup>5</sup> This Catskill river environment is made whole by a second river scene, which appears on the back doublure, and aquatic insects, which are found in the foreground of each panel.

A set consisting of two volumes housed in an inner and outer box made for Rodolphe L. Coigny’s *Izaak Walton: A New Bibliography, 1653–1987* (1989) represents Neff’s interest in creating twentieth-century designs based on seventeenth- and



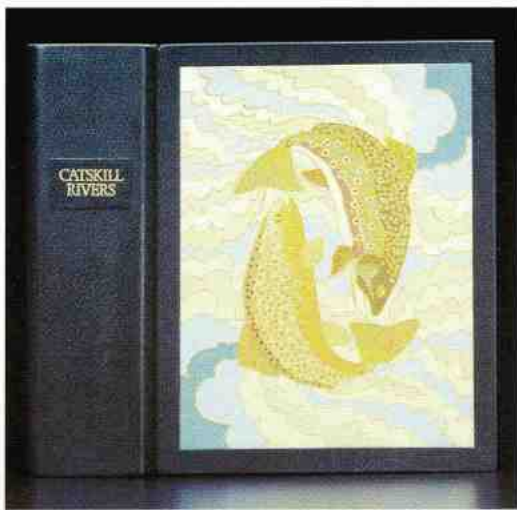


Figure 7. Catskill Rivers: Birthplace of American Fly Fishing. A full goatskin box with a panel of Japanese dyed and gilt papers, portraying the decline of the brook trout and the ascent of the brown trout.

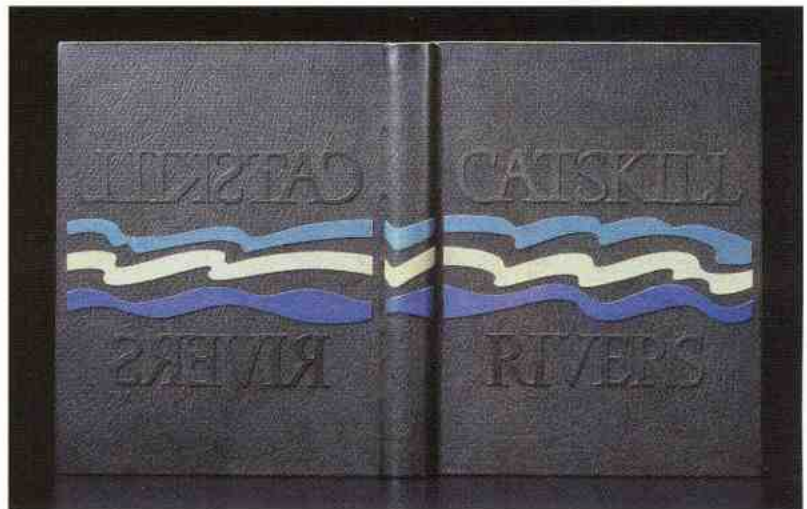


Figure 8. Bound in full goatskin with raised on-lays of the same leather. The three flowing shapes symbolize the major Catskill rivers.



Figure 9. Izaak Walton: A New Bibliography, 1653-1987. The outer box opens to reveal a triptych of Japanese dyed and gilt papers. The panels portray Charles Cotton's fishing house on the River Dove, built in 1674.

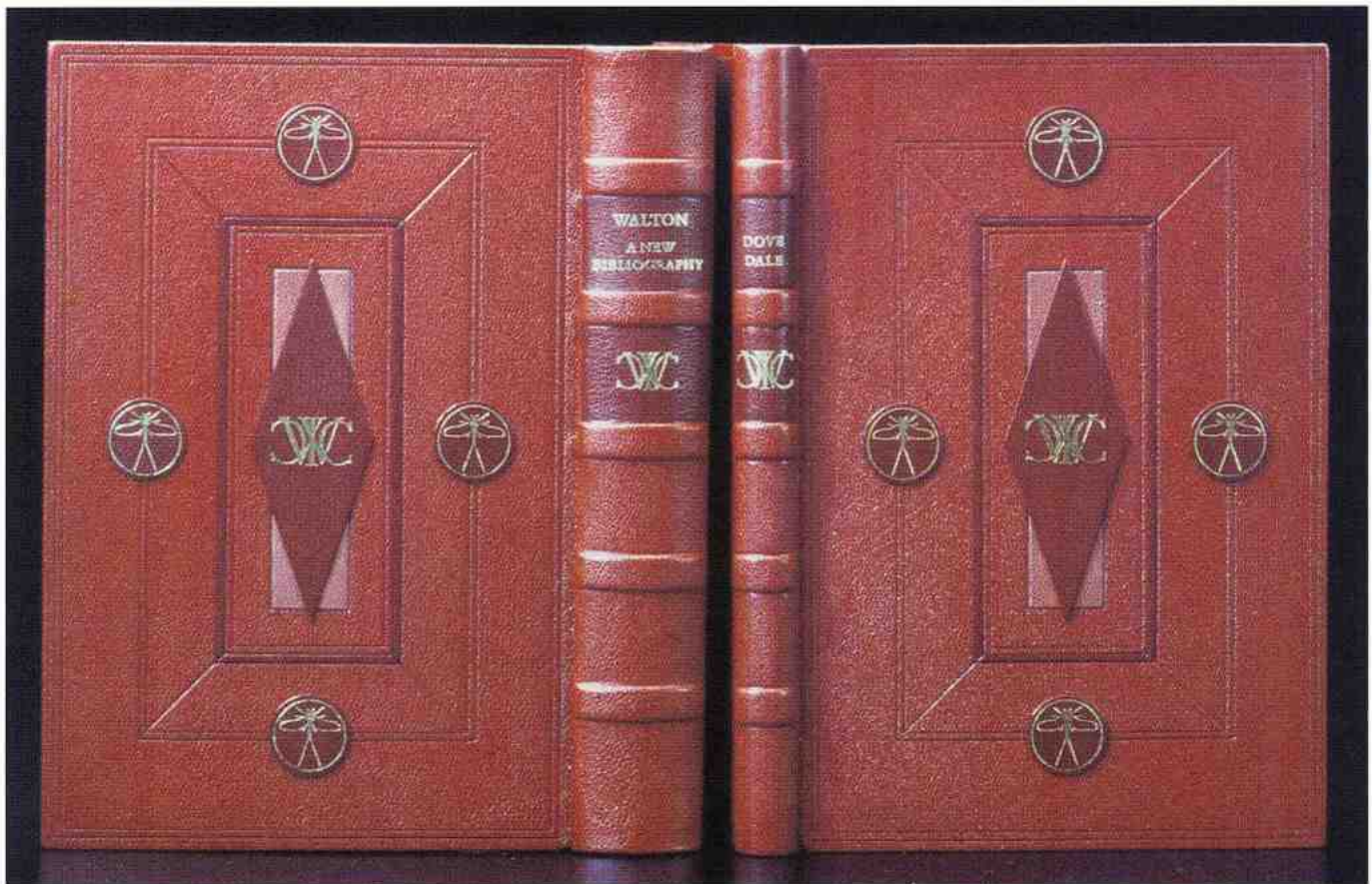


Figure 10. Izaak Walton: A New Bibliography, 1653-1987. Volumes I and II are uniformly bound in full goatskin with a twentieth-century version of a seventeenth-century panel design.

eighteenth-century panel designs (Figures 9 and 10). "As a twentieth-century binder and binding designer, I can immerse myself in period design, but to attempt to produce a similar design would simply be making a facsimile, and not actually a personal aesthetic effort," states Neff.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, he decorated these bindings with a twentieth-century version of a seventeenth-century panel design.

Of particular note in this container are the interior of the outer box and the cover of the inner box, which form a triptych (Figure 9). When the viewer opens the box, he or she finds a scene depicting Charles Cotton's Fishing House, *Piscatoribus sacrum*, on the River Dove in England, which ran through Cotton's estate. An angler, poet, and close friend of Walton, Cotton memorialized their friendship in the cipher IWCC (Izaak Walton/Charles Cotton) inscribed on the keystone above the door to *Piscatoribus sacrum*. Neff uses this cipher as a decorative element on the box and binding, thus linking them to Walton, Cotton, *Piscatoribus sacrum*, and the River Dove. Two aquatic insects found on the river long before the seventeenth century are also in full view in this container. In this boxed set, Neff creates a twentieth-century version based on a seventeenth-century binding style, effectively juxtaposing two periods. He accomplishes this by binding both volumes in a seventeenth-century style, including a doublure panel depicting an angler of that period and another portraying a modern angler in the same setting, using the IWCC cipher as a decorative motif, and including contemporary photography of what he calls "the relatively unspoiled beauty of Dove Dale and the river."<sup>7</sup>

Neff designed this set to be experienced in stages, which he feels makes it "more complex and interesting than a simple binding."<sup>8</sup> The panel decorations, together with the binding techniques described here, aid Neff in achieving his goal of developing a sense of movement through space and history within his containers.

Since 1992, Neff has continued to excel at binding and creating pictorial panels. His recent bindings and containers include *A Treasury of Reels* (1995, Figures 11 through 13), *The Angling Letters of S. A. Neff Jr. and J. S. Hewitson* (1997), and *Angling in Hibernia* (1998, Figures 14 and 15). *A Treasury of Reels* is a two-volume set that contains text and actual nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century fly reels. These are housed in a drop-back box, which is embellished by designs that mimic ten actual reel designs. The volumes are contained in a chest with a bas-relief of a brook trout on the top. *Angling Letters* is a grouping of correspondence, dating back to 1965, between Neff and Hewitson. Neff has organized each decade in a drop-back box. Also included are photographs Neff took to illustrate a point from one letter for each year of the correspondence. *Angling in Hibernia* is an autobiographical work of Neff's angling experience in Ireland. This impressive five-volume set contains text, related photographs, flies tied by Neff, materials used for making Irish trout flies, and a life box containing piscatorial objects. These works represent Neff's persistence in striving to perfect his skills as a binder and binding designer. The combination of Neff as artist, angler, collector, and binder—coupled with his vivacity and dedication—result



Figures 11 (left) and 12 (above). A Treasury of Reels. A “treasure chest” contains a two-volume set in full goatskin, with brook trout in bas-relief on the lid (above) and corner devices in raised goatskin on-lays.



Figure 13. A Treasury of Reels. Volume II: A box in full goatskin with raised on-lays, uniform with the text volume, contains six actual fly reels.

in the achievement of high quality in his work.

Although the combination of talents and interests Neff exhibits would seem to be unique, his work can be placed within a historical framework. Thomas Gosden (1780–1840) should easily come to mind for bibliophiles who collect sporting books. Gosden described himself as a “bookbinder, publisher, and printseller.”<sup>9</sup> Like Neff, he was an outdoor enthusiast and a lover of books who brought his enthusiasm for angling to his work.<sup>10</sup> Gosden is best known as a binder whose angling books are stamped with small piscatorial and emblematic designs.<sup>11</sup> In 1819, he published T. P. Lathey’s poem *The Angler*, which he embellished with a full-length portrait of himself outfitted with a fishing rod and net as a frontispiece

(Figure 16). In this engraving, Gosden signals the depth of his knowledge of angling and angling literature by including the IWCC cipher of Walton and Cotton on the plinth upon which he is leaning. The portrait verifies William Loring Andrews’s description of Gosden as “a true disciple of Izaak Walton.”<sup>12</sup> As a fly fisherman of trout, a book collector, and a binder, Neff has continued in the tradition of Gosden as a twentieth-century sporting bookbinder and enthusiast (Figure 17).

Since Gosden, many others have produced distinctive angling books. Some angling authors—such as William Blacker (1814–1856), W. H. Aldam (active mid-nineteenth century), Preston Jennings (1893–1962), and Charles Phair (1875–1943)—took their published works a step further by incorpo-

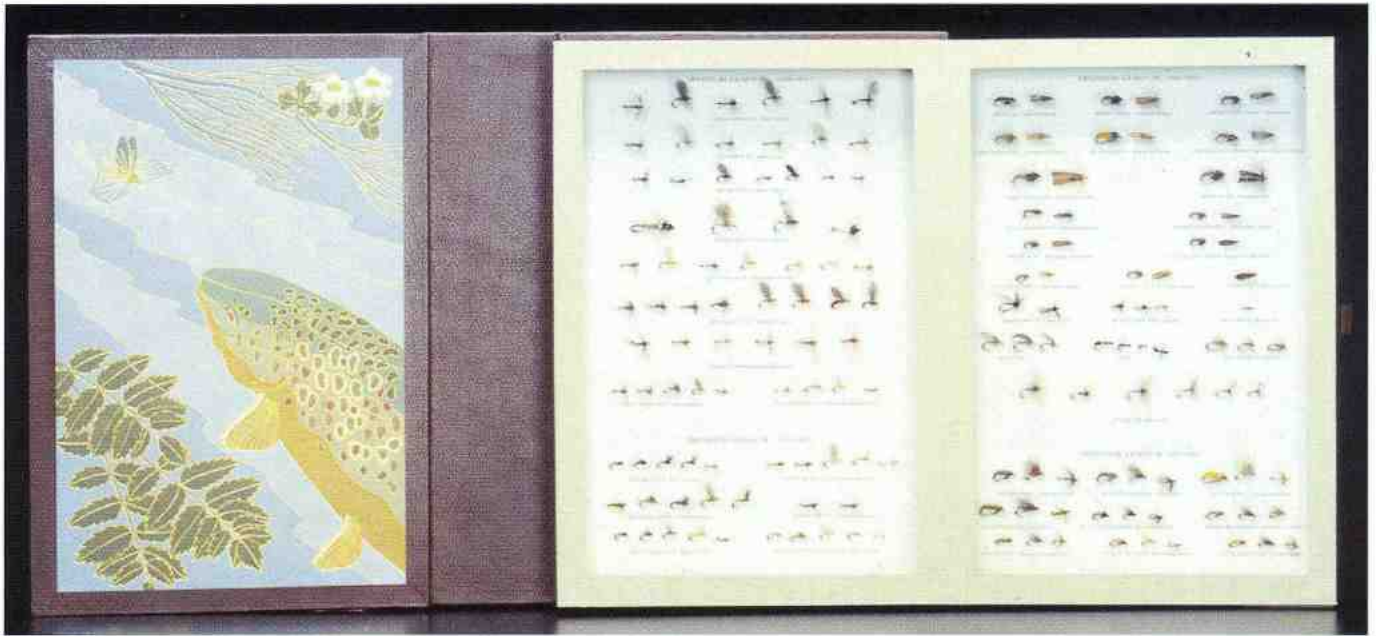


Figure 14. Angling in Hibernia. Volume III is open to reveal a panel of Japanese dyed and gilt papers portraying an Irish brown trout and 158 flies dressed by the author.

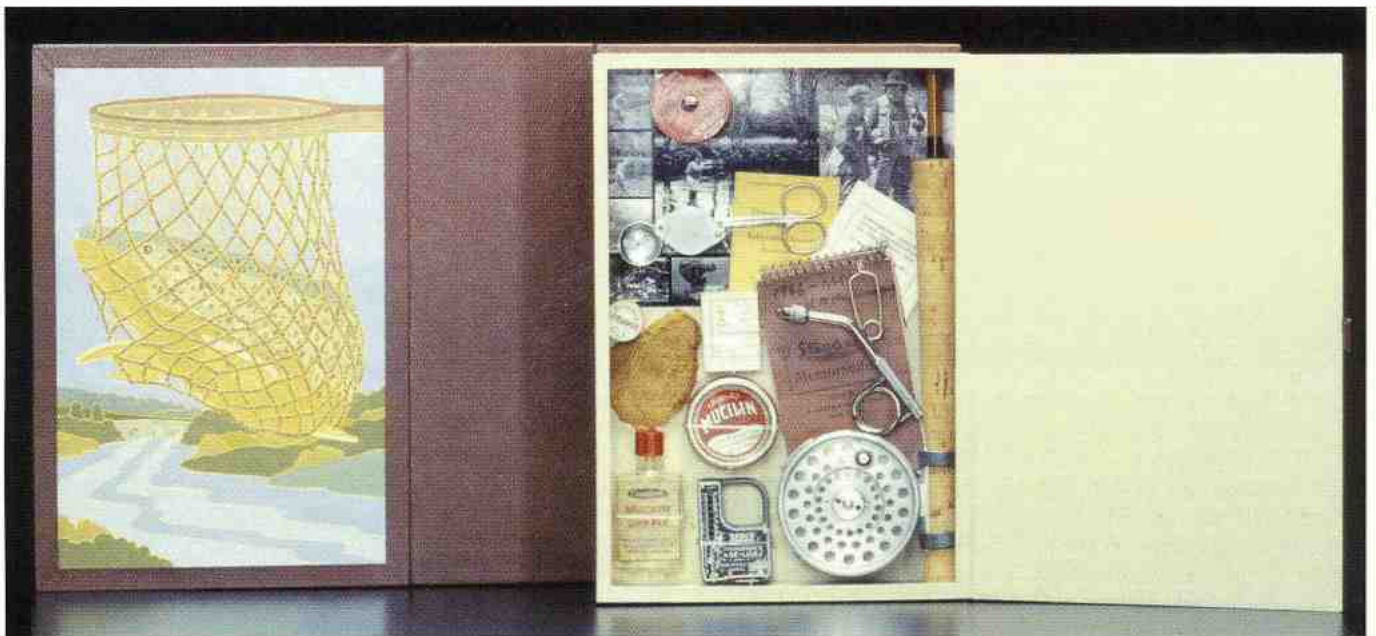



Figure 15. Angling in Hibernia. Volume V is open to reveal a panel of Japanese dyed and gilt papers and a life box with Irish angling tools.



Figure 16. Thomas Gosden's portrait was used for a frontispiece in T. P. Lathy's *The Angler* (London: J. H. Burn, 1820). Collection of S. A. Neff Jr.

rating flies and fly-tying materials into their texts. Blacker and Aldam, both British, published notable works in 1842, 1843, and 1876. They were followed by the Americans Jennings and Phair in 1935 and 1937, respectively. Although these books were deluxe editions, they were commercial in nature. In the twentieth century, firms such as Robert Riviere & Son and Sangorski & Sutcliffe were known to have produced magnificent bindings, but their binders were usually not anglers. Neff has followed in the tradition of Blacker, Aldam, Jennings, and Phair by incorporating angling materials into his angling "environments."

As a collector and binder, Neff can be placed in a special category of twentieth-century collectors of angling books who execute fine bindings for their personal collections. The depth of his knowledge of angling and of the content of each book in his library—along with his design expertise—brings the quality of his work to a high level. Each binding reflects his base of knowledge; each design is unique to the subject of the book. His pictorial bindings are exceptional, superbly executed, and innovative. S. A. Neff Jr. guides the viewer through an exploration of the history of angling for trout. His work becomes a lens into this fascinating and special world. 

Barry Beck



Figure 17. S. A. Neff Jr. on Fishing Creek.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Author interview with S. A. Neff Jr., summer 1998.
2. Guild of Book Workers, New England Chapter, *Exhibition Catalog*, 1989, entry no. 30.
3. Author interview with S. A. Neff Jr., summer 1998.
4. Guild of Book Workers, *86th Anniversary Exhibition Catalog*, 1992, entry no 7.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Author interview with S. A. Neff Jr., summer 1998.
7. Binder's Statement. Document from the files of S. A. Neff Jr. "Exhibit Proposal: A One-Person Show: The Collector as Binder," 1996.
8. *86th Anniversary Exhibition Catalog*, 1992, entry no. 18A.
9. William Loring Andrews. *An English XIX Century Sportsman, Bibliophile and Binder of Angling Books* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1906), p. 8.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7, 16-17.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 39-44.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

*Time moves slowly in fly fishing.  
The last time it moved appreciably in the  
United States was with Theodore Gordon.  
—John McDonald*

*It moved again in 1950.*

# Vince Marinaro: On Point of Balance

*by Gordon M. Wickstrom*

*With photos and captions from  
the collection of Richard L. Henry*



Richard L. Henry

*The morning this was taken along Pennsylvania's Penns Creek, Vince was showing several of us that green drakes found in the streamside foliage indicate a likely spinner fall that evening. We looked for the insects every morning and moved upstream as the hatch progressed.*

## THE TWO FACES OF JANUS

VARIOUS OF HIS FOLLOWERS in Pennsylvania's Cumberland Valley called him "Papa." Vince Marinaro, that brilliant, passionate, and irascible master of the fly, in 1950, on the exact point of balance between past and future of the twentieth century, published *A Modern Dry-Fly Code*, giving America its first thoroughly original work on fly fishing. It changed our sport forever.<sup>1</sup>

We think of him as the origin of all that we have come to know about fishing with flies imitating landborn terrestrial insects that happen into the water. We think of the famous Jassid with its jungle cock nail,<sup>2</sup> suggesting the insect's opaque

body; of Marinaro's powerful innovation in the configuration of the dry fly, his "thorax" tie with its high, clear-sailing mayfly wing amidships, X-tied with splayed hackle around a prominent thorax. At least as important is his opening our eyes to fishing that previously "unseen" wonderful hatch, the tiny tricorythodes, without which today's fly fishing would hardly be imaginable.<sup>3</sup> And more . . .

Marinaro was indeed the papa of a revelation, if not a revolution, and, I believe, the first fully modern angler. He stood in the tall grasses along his beloved Letort Spring Run like that old Roman deity Janus, one face looking back with deep admiration, even longing, toward the origins and traditions of fly fishing

in the British Isles and early North America; his other face gazing out in excitement onto the new horizons of the second half of the century toward analysis, technology, and science. To his east was the immense achievement of the nineteenth century, its history, romance, and tradition; to his west, the challenge of innovation and new solutions to the age-old problems of the fly fisher. Now that his life's story has slipped back into what we must now call the last century, we ought to give his legacy a closer look.

We need to listen carefully to the *Code*, to the dual messages of our Janus. When Marinaro writes of the past, of Halford and Skues and Harding, of Gordon and the early Americans, he uses language and imagery hinting of their



*Vince selecting a green drake pattern along Penns Creek. The net shown in this and the following photo was also used as a wading staff.*

time and place; language that is richer in metaphor, more expansive, classical in its resources, more “romantic” one might say. As though to honor the past, he tunes himself to what he so admires in Halford’s style, as if in the hope to take on some of its luster. He wants communion with the giants of angling history whom he so greatly admired.

But let him shift in a single paragraph, turning 180 degrees, to thoughts about the present and the future, and his style quickly takes on a different tone, dryer, more economical, analytic, and scientific. He knows and understands where he has been and where he wants to go. The reader feels and hears the emotion of ideas in his writing—this Janus standing pivotal in the twentieth century.

We may be tempted to speculate about where such pivotal figures come from. Do people of genius somehow choose just the right time and place in which to appear? Or is it that time and place, in their inexplicable mystery, choose them? Was Marinaro somehow chosen when he first came as a student to Cumberland County and Dickinson Law School in 1934, with the Letort itself flowing through town, as yet unappreciated in modern angling practice, not yet a part of our literature and collective experience?

A subtle movement was already under way to change the focus of American fly fishing from New York’s fabled Catskills

to this rural county of Pennsylvania and the Cumberland valley streams that Gordon himself had often fished with his wet flies as a boy and young man. Edward Hewitt and George La Branche had begun to visit these waters, trailing the glories of the New York tradition behind them. The limestone, chalk-stream-like meadow streams were new and exciting, profoundly different from Gordon’s Neversink. All was ripe for discovery—ripe for the likes of a Marinaro.

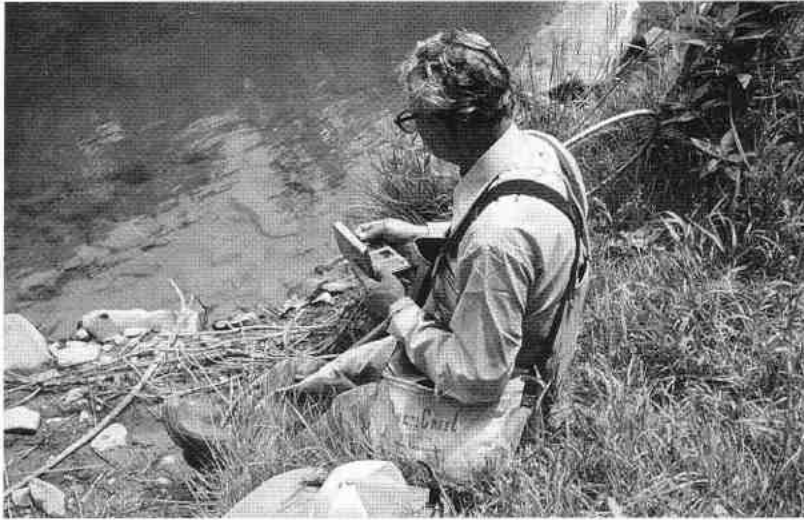
A new breed of local, serious angler had already begun to appear. In the 1940s, these capable, resourceful, innovative men formed the Fly Fishers’ Club of Harrisburg and challenged each other to develop ideas and tactics for their highly specialized limestone waters and their difficult trout. Vince Marinaro and his good friend and equally noted habitué of the Letort, Charlie Fox, brought to the club their fast-growing experience in fish culture, entomology, and fishing the Letort’s maddeningly difficult currents and insects.

I want to emphasize that Marinaro did not develop in an intellectual, angling vacuum. He developed within the matrix of this extraordinary bunch of Harrisburg fly fishers. They had to have been an inspiration, being, as they were, a highly competitive, hotbed of fly-fishing ideas and experience. Genius thrives in just such a milieu, and Marinaro repeats this age-old route to

genius. One has only to think, for instance, of Shakespeare’s coming down to London to a hotbed of Elizabethan English and a new, fully professional theater exactly suited to his immense talent.

Of special interest is the practice of the Harrisburg Fly Fishers at their luncheon meetings to read short, formal papers about their ideas and discoveries, Marinaro appearing to have listened more than he wrote.<sup>4</sup> They had to have had a sense of themselves as occupying a special time and place and wanted carefully to record their works. That work, and his own great insights, came to fruition in 1950 with the publication of Marinaro’s *A Modern Dry-Fly Code*, a summa of all that he had experienced and thought in the decade of World War II.

The personal and professional development that brought him to fame in 1950 was purchased by early discipline and determined effort. It could not have been easy, coming down out of the mountains of western Pennsylvania and its freestone creeks to the gentler Cumberland Valley. He came, as a first-generation son of a tightly knit, extended immigrant Italian family—his father but one of the seven who came to this country. Vincent brought with him that all too typical burden of having to prove himself in the highly competitive “new world.” The implications of this common psychological baggage are all too



*Vince again selecting a green drake pattern along Penns Creek. In this photo, as well as the photo on the previous page, he's carrying a creel. Although he released nearly all of his trout, he often enjoyed some for breakfast on trips.*

well known. Young Vincent was only six when his father Giuseppe—a successful entrepreneur, merchant, and pasta maker—died. His mother Rosina, with the help of the boy's uncle Vincent, a priest in Butler, Pennsylvania, had all the care of her family, including her special fishing son, whose imagination must have been full of what his ambitious father would have required of him.

His brother Nicholas has said of the boy that he loved nature, loved to stuff his pockets with olives and cheese and take off into the woods alone to hike and to fish. By age ten, he was accomplished on the violin, but his mother had to admonish him for hiding copies of *Outdoor Life*, with Ray Bergman's influential columns, under his music in the piano bench.

For Vincent, and numberless young people like him, the main road to solid achievement and "getting ahead" in America had to be through a profession, which meant a solid education. Fortunately, his late father had been able to provide for it. Educated for the law at Dickinson Law School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, he subsequently made corporate tax law his bread and butter with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania at Harrisburg. There he had a lifelong and noted career without ever formally coming to the bar.

Cutting a distinctive image with his chiseled, Roman features, his piercing eyes, insistent speech, and Dutch Master cigar, he had to have been the very model of a smart, charismatic, aggressive young Italian on the way up in a wide open America—all the while clinging fiercely to his ethnic Italian heritage and traditions.

His accomplishments were wide rang-

ing. Replication of American Indian crafts, the violin, shotgunnery, gunstock design, archery, the culinary arts, superb photography, entomology, and the lecture platform vied with his mastery of every aspect of fishing, its tackle, and traditions. Probing scholarship and an experimentally inclined curiosity made him as near to what we would call an "intellectual" as any in American fly-fishing history.

Physically as well as intellectually gifted, he was said to have had phenomenal eyesight and the keenest powers of observation. His bent of mind was for the theoretical. His broad, contextual thinking brought everything possible to bear on an idea—its literature, its science, its lore, its romance, anything that might expand and validate the idea. With a theory worked up, he would attach to it fiercely and set out to develop the new hardware his theory suggested. Fortunately, he had the skills of hand to make it. What his mind could imagine, his hands could make.

#### WHAT EVERYONE WANTS TO REMARK

There were, undeniably, those who found him acerbic, stubborn, irascible. He certainly could be impatient and sharp with those he thought pretentious. He could also be jealous and secretive, as he was in the first days of his discovery of the jassid. On the other hand, I knew him to be gracious, generous, even gallant. He could pay the handsomest compliment, as he did when he told me that he often quoted an article I had written.

I think there can be little doubt that he was deeply pessimistic about the

world, which, I suspect, was only another way of thinking about his own life. I recall the deep melancholy of his little monologue in the back of a van headed for Falling Spring Run one Sunday morning. He allowed that a trout stream had to be in the end antithetical to modern civilization. He thought our fishing would soon be done for. But he also spoke that morning with innocent pleasure at seeing a butterfly on the meadow again—after DDT had effectively wiped them out. Perhaps his most powerful, much quoted public statement (it began as a paper for the Fly Fishers' Club) was on the horrendous urbanization that he saw destroying his beloved spring creeks. For a short time, in his despair, he nearly quit fishing.

On that same Sunday drive to Falling Spring, I experienced the Marinaro who has dismayed so many. I asked him about a particular interest of mine, James Leisenring, of earlier Pennsylvania fly-fishing fame. Vince was abrupt in his opinion that Leisenring was much overrated and that was that. Thrown onto the defensive, I caught myself thinking that perhaps Vince did not bear competition easily—in the way of all real champs. In championship, there's never room for more than one.

He felt neglected. His important work and its culmination in the *Code* had not been fully recognized or understood. Almost as soon as the *Code* was published in 1950, I was able to buy my copy from a remainders list! Putnam had given the great book but little promotion, and Vince was disappointed. The recognition that he craved came slowly and only then more from England. Slowly too, the legend of the Letort, the Yellow Breeches, Big Spring, and Falling





Releasing a fine Tulpehocken rainbow that took his trico imitation. The Tulpehocken Creek (Lebanon County, Pennsylvania), particularly near its headwater, was one of Vince's favorite streams in his later years.

Spring spread over the angling world. By the 1970s, these streams were becoming the water one wanted to be known as having fished.

Something of the problem of what almost everyone remarks about Vince's difficult personality may be explained by observing that while most of us buffer the expression of our opinions with hesitations, self-deprecations, even apologies, Vince's opinions burst forth lightning fast, fully developed like Pallas Athena from the head of Zeus. His views were instantly precise, never ambiguous or in the least apologetic. They could almost literally take your breath away.

Many are offended or at least seriously taken aback by people of this sort. To face off with a Vince Marinaro was to experience a genuine and original thinker, restless and on the intellectual prowl. One had either to stand to the pressure of his personality and ideas or get out of the way. If one wanted to compete, it meant competing with the champ.

We look for soft spots, places even of weakness, in others on which to fasten and justify our affection for them. For most, there seemed to be no soft spots at all in Vince Marinaro.

He tells us that he was always of a "somewhat nervous temperament." He even separated himself out from the Waltonian tradition of angling as a meditative, inner-directed activity, much to do with the spirit. He spoke of his aggressive absorption in the work of angling and of angling itself as a "blood sport." He thought that understanding the nature of angling as gentle and "contemplative" was a curious anomaly what with the fish's very blood on our hands. He was tough minded.

Still, my own experience was always with Marinaro the gentleman, expert in the graceful traditions of his European heritage. He was even willing to forgive my fond enthusiasm for Big Jim Leisenring.

But enough now about what everyone wants to remark.

#### MARINARO AND THE TROUT FLY

Anglers are quick to associate Marinaro with the advent of terrestrials into international trout fishing. It's hard to overestimate the importance of his promotion and codification of fishing to ants and beetles, crickets and grasshoppers, jassids and inchworms, all the tiny landborn insects and his innovative imitations of them.

Almost in the same breath, many will recall that he introduced us in the famous *Outdoor Life* article to the wonderful "hidden hatch" that he at first misidentified as *Caenis*, but in some chagrin came correctly to know as *Tricorythodes*.<sup>5</sup> The entire universe of insect minutiae became available to us, admittedly depending on the sudden availability in the 1950s of fine nylon tippet and the tiny hooks necessary for this kind of fishing.

In the *Code*, he tells us how he discovered the all-important *Baetis*, that tiny mayfly that everybody had overlooked. Our fly fishing today is unthinkable without *Baetis*, our essential little Blue-winged Olives.

He made much of the excitement of witnessing the coming of an altogether new insect to American trout fishing. The Japanese beetle found its way to these shores in 1916 and steadily established itself over the East and Midwest.

By the 1940s, hoards of them were eating up everything in sight—and falling into trout streams. The trout, like ducks, gobbled them up. Marinaro tried another Pennsylvanian's imitation made of a coffee bean glued to a hook shank. Finding it only marginally successful, Marinaro, on the theory that the trout could not discern the thickness of the beetle's body, but only an opaque outline of it, turned to using one or two large jungle cock nails flat on a hook shank with the added suggestion of legs and had a winning pattern beloved of Letort trout.

A major discovery came from his and Charlie Fox's careful, close-up examination of the Letort surface film. They found more extremely tiny insects than they had imagined possible. Among them were the tiny jassids, leaf rollers, and their ilk. As soon as they found the jassids and saw the trout feeding heavily on them, an imitation was sorely needed. The principle of the jungle-cock-nailed Japanese beetle was again the answer, although in this case, much, much smaller.

Lightly palmering a no. 22 hook shank wound simply with tying silk, trimming that palmered hackle close top and bottom, then adding a small jungle cock nail flat down over the hook shank, the famous Marinaro Jassid was born. And a killer it was—if a bit too delicate structurally.

A drawback, however, to the exciting promise of terrestrials was the short fishing season: April 15 to July 31 back then. Just when the "bugs" were coming into their own in the meadow grasses, rods had to be hung up for the season or turned on the bass. Frustrated Pennsylvania anglers agitated for extended seasons and eventually got them.



Marinaro fishing to a trico hatch on the Kline Farm section of the Tulpehocken. The trico was his favorite hatch here.

I recall reading the *Code* back then in Wyoming and getting excited about these new flies. Tying up a few of those Jassids, I took them to the rough-and-ready trout in the even rougher Shoshone River where they made fools of the trout in any little backwater where they could sit for a moment and do their stuff. The rare and beautiful jungle cock, always basic to traditional streamer and salmon flies, was now employed as something other than decorative cheeking.

Next were the mayfly duns. Marinaro wrote that the conventional modern dry fly, suggesting the mayfly dun, developed from what he called the “wet flies” of the *Treatyse* of 1496 and the flies of Charles Cotton in the seventeenth century. This development of the modern floating fly was, he insisted, “illogical.” Had the dry fly had an independent or a special development all its own, it would have been quite different, Marinaro explained. And so, as though to prove his point, he developed his own famous “thorax” dry-fly structure.

From his study of a trout’s vision, he believed that the dun mayfly’s wing was the single most noticeable thing about the insect from the trout’s point of view, and that the body was of little or no importance because it did not touch the water and so could not be seen by the trout as the fly floated toward the fish’s window of vision. He therefore placed large cut wings nearly halfway back on the hook shank, achieving in the process a better balanced fly. Around the butts of the wings he wound a dubbed thorax that in a natural, he argued, would just

barely ride the water’s surface.

Then in a masterful stroke, he wound one, sometimes two hackles at forty-five-degree angles around that thorax and wing butts. He wound them, not around and around like a conventional stiff dry-fly collar, but in an X-pattern in order to cause the hackle points to splay out from the hook shank fore and aft and from side to side. This fly needed fewer hackle barbules to float, and those few, he suggested, looked and behaved more like the real legs of a real mayfly dun. The big, prominent wing was, in this way, made highly visible (to both fish and man). At the rear were four long, stiff, widely splayed hackle barbules raised high for outrigging tails. Up front the dubbed thorax continued up to the eye where everything was tied off. It’s a striking fly, a fine floater, looking more like a natural and better balanced for riding a current. But it’s hard and expensive to tie. So much so that its precise form is almost never seen on the market. “Thoraxlike” flies, a semblance only of Marinaro’s original, have found a small commercial niche.

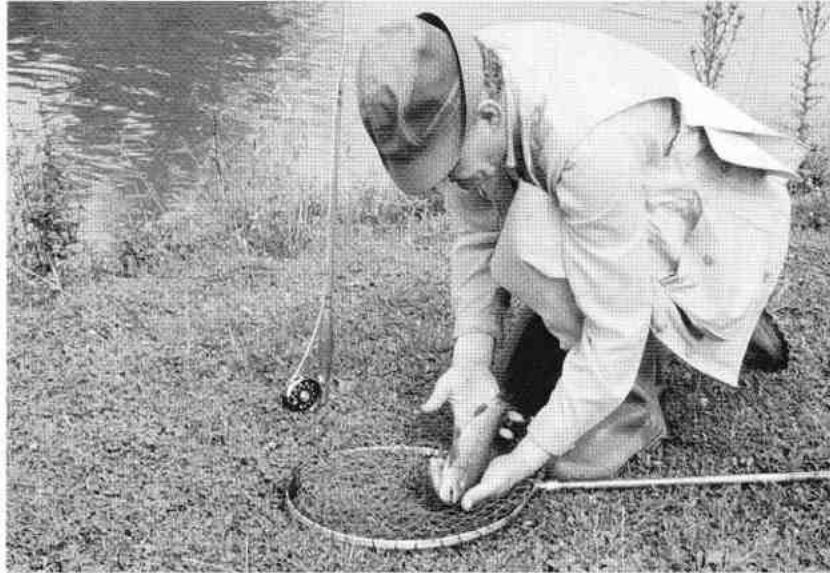
Of all his innovative flies, let it be said that Marinaro confessed that his favorite and most effective fly was always a tiny, in-surface floating cinnamon ant in a dubbed fur dressing of his design. He suggests that it was he who discovered these myriad, almost invisible, tiny ants in the surface film of the Letort.

In 1983, Jim Bashline interviewed Marinaro—an important audio document in which Marinaro advances his basic ideas with precision and charm. In

the course of the interview, he makes the singular point that the tradition of fly fishing qua fly fishing as we have it from the British and early American traditions meant mayfly fishing, fishing to the mayfly.<sup>6</sup> He notes that when a pattern—there were not many—bore the name of a terrestrial, it was unfailingly tied to look like our conventional, old idea of a mayfly dun. He suggests a blind spot in the theories of Halford and Marryat. One has only to think of the conventional Red Ant pattern, little different from a Royal Coachman but for its duck quill wing of dun rather than white.

By this strategy, by defining the tradition as seriously incomplete in its theoretical base, Marinaro at a stroke opened up historical space for an entire alternative universe of fly fishing—to his beloved Letort terrestrials! He, in fact, opens up the necessary space within the tradition needed for his own important work. Marinaro was possessed of a distinctly historical consciousness, an acute, clear awareness of where he stood or wanted to stand in the tradition—a most rare and little appreciated trait in Americans for whom history is dull and remote. We might say that Marinaro consciously designed his role in the history of fishing the fly and wrote its self-fulfilling gospel: *A Modern Dry-Fly Code*.

When we take a hard look at Marinaro’s flies, recognizing that many of them are more honored in the breach than in the observance, and that there are those who seriously challenge his analysis of how and what a trout sees, and that his flies



Vince ready to release a trout on Tulpehocken Creek. A prong built into the butt of his rod enables it to stand up and out of harm's way. This was a British innovation favored by Vince.

themselves have not had the acceptance they might have had, we may wonder why. Perhaps it's as though his flies were prototypes of ideas rather than their fulfillment. For instance, who can doubt the importance of the grasshopper to modern fly fishing? But who today ties Marinaro's difficult hard, butt-end-of-a-flight-quill bodied "pontoon" hopper described in the *Code*? Who today ties or fishes his thorax duns with their big cut wings—or altogether believes in them? Or who ties a mayfly spinner with a body of porcupine quill, impossible to keep from breaking off? Still, if we cannot find Marinaro's flies in the shops today, we nevertheless find those shops full with flies under his direct influence and inspiration.

Marinaro, I am certain, felt a deep sense of privilege, a genuine gratitude, for his "moment" in the history of fly fishing. His probing mind led him to define much of that history of the fly and to play an integral role in it. He championed the literature of the fly and its tackle, insisted on its science, and developed his ideas in the field. The pity is that some of those ideas tricked him into an unfortunate dogmatism.

*Coda:* Marinaro resisted the use of synthetics in flies and sneaked his tiny hooks.

## THE FISHERMAN

Marinaro the fisherman cannot be separated from Marinaro the rodbuilder. Over the course of his life, he became an accomplished self-taught worker of cane into highly unusual fly rods. They were

long, stiff, and—in the estimation of some—rather awkward tools. In any case, these finely crafted rods allowed him to keep his fly out of the high grasses behind him, to reach out over the troublesome beds of elodea, and most of all to pile up big "puddle casts," giving him a good float in the tightest of spots.

This casting a puddle of loose loops of fine nylon tippet, slowly to unroll at the whim of those complex Letort currents, could not have been, strictly speaking, "new." But, as with other aspects of Marinaro's achievement, he gave a local habitation and a name, a definition and studied technique to what fly fishermen had been doing almost instinctively in one way or another for some time.

Although his rods were big, his reels had to be small and light for his analysis of proper casting dynamics. Interestingly enough, screwed up into the reel seat of some of his rods, after the English fashion, was a heavy "turf blade"—a flat spike that could be reverse-screwed back into the seat and then used to spike a rod down into the ground. So spiked, the rod stood erect and unlikely to disappear accidentally in the high grasses of meadow streams—or get stepped on.

Those who admire Marinaro's rods have wondered that they were never manufactured to the trade, his tapers revealed and made popular. I understand that there was talk of it, but that in the end no company could or would give Marinaro control over production that he thought necessary if the rods were to bear his name. One suspects, also, that these rods were too specialized for

beginners, and besides, they had the sudden advent of graphite as fierce competition.

With his big rods, Marinaro advocated fighting a good fish with the rod held nearly at the horizontal, maybe only ten degrees above. He wanted the trout to wear himself out in runs and struggles directly off the reel and from his fingertips. He argued that if the rod were held high and the line or leader departed the tiptop at an acute angle, the physics were against the fisherman, and tippets would snap.

He was extremely cautious in his approach to a fish. He would risk long casts over grass and water weed in order not to frighten him. Once hooked, he tried not to alarm the fish unduly, but rather to put him to work against the careful odds of that low rod and reel drag. Some say he played his fish longer than was necessary.

Marinaro relished the difficult fish, the fish rising where no one could get at him. He relished showing bystanders how to do it. He would not infrequently offer one of these fish to a companion to try and play the role of the bystander himself. Some say that he caught no more fish than any other competent limestone angler; and that may be true, but the testimony is that he caught more of those "impossible" fish than any other. Those were the fish that he wanted and that interested him.

The last time I saw Vince was on the lower Letort, below Carlisle, newly restored to ecological health. A half dozen of us—including my wife, to

## Vincent C. Marinaro

**Born:** 2 December 1911, Reynoldsville, Pennsylvania.

**Died:** 2 March 1986, Newville, Pennsylvania (leukemia).

**Education:** Graduate, 1929, Butler High School, Butler, Pennsylvania.

B.S., 1933, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh.

LL.D., 1937, Dickinson Law School, Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

**Profession:** Corporation tax specialist with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

**Parents:** Giuseppe Marinaro, one of eight, born in Castelvetero in Val Fortore, Benevento, Italy, immigrated to the United States in 1893. Rosina Fero (or Fera?), born in Marianopoli, Sicily, in 1881. Married Giuseppe 11 November 1898.

**Siblings:** Vincent C., Marietta, Alphonse, Nicholas (still living), Theodore.

**Marriage:** Vincent and Martha Symons married in 1935 or 1936, in Pittsburgh. Martha born 1913; died 1978 (of Polish-German descent).

**Offspring:** Vincentia m. Czotter (eldest), Armand Marinaro, Theodora m. Roff, Giovanna m. Glenn, Sebastian Marinaro (youngest) d. 1997.

whom he was nicely solicitous—were visiting lazily on the bridge when someone noticed a good fish rising a couple hundred feet downstream. We all agreed that Vince should go after him and show us how it's done. Vince accepted the invitation and took off. Into his seventies by then and braced on his ugly broom-handle-wire-loop-of-a-combination landing net and wading staff, he ever so slowly worked his way into position for that trout. I thought he would never get there and nearly lost interest. Once there, though, he began effortlessly to unwind one of his great long casts, putting a little olive over the fish, and had him. A lovely 15-inch brown—a memorable performance.

Marinaro practiced catch and release, knowing well that our fishing depended on it; but he loved to eat fish too. So, no trout was automatically safe in his hands; although the odds were highly in its favor.

Building on the work of G. E. M. Skues, Marinaro came to know fully the ways in which trout rise to a fly. Over several years he painstakingly studied and photographed every variety of rise form. His *In the Ring of the Rise* (1976), with its careful analysis and astonishing

photographs of every detail of the rising event, is Vincent Marinaro's other invaluable literary and technical contribution to the sport, a beautiful and important book.<sup>7</sup>

### COMPENSATIONS

If Vincent Marinaro never felt adequately recognized for his great contribution to fly fishing, he surely had the grand experience of it. There was the long association with Charlie Fox, who had early purchased land in Carlisle along the Letort and lived there. Only later did Marinaro buy land, to be known as "Vince's Meadow," close upstream from Fox. Both were accomplished anglers, writers, innovators, and shared a scientific dedication, yet they were quite different each from the other. Fox was deeply interested in his work as an editor and in casting hand-carved cedar plugs off tournament reels from long, custom bait-casting rods to smallmouths in the nearby Susquehanna. He may have been as interested in flies for his beloved bass as for the trout down in his backyard. At least Marinaro fretted that he was.

There is some indication that late on

in their careers they drew apart for awhile. Marinaro may have felt at a loss in the face of his old friend's bassing. Fox knew well enough about the ups and downs of this "stubborn Italian" friend of his with whom, lying prone in the grasses of their meadows and watching their feeding trout, they developed Vince's revolutionary flies and new techniques. They made bold efforts together in fish culture—working, for instance, to transplant (unsuccessfully in the long run) the green drake *Ephemera guttalata* into the Letort. Together they fashioned spawning redds of imported gravel in the Letort silts. They applied every science that they could to their sport—up to a point.

Don Ebright, then a lad whom Marinaro sometimes took fishing, recalls how he was enjoined by the old master never "to try to overwhelm the fish with technology." Although Vince may never have fished a graphite rod, he had as little good to say for them as he did for plastics in flies. Science is as science does: the mysteries of fishing remain.

In 1980, President Jimmy Carter, a passionate convert to fly fishing, convened a weekend-long meeting of fly-fishing luminaries at Camp David. Marinaro accepted the president's invitation with real satisfaction and became a close fishing friend of Carter's, meeting with him on several occasions. The Marinaro collection contains a wonderful photograph of Vince with his pointed finger in President Carter's face.<sup>8</sup> Risky business, surely, with the President of the United States.

Marinaro mused that he had had to wait twenty-five years for the *Code* to receive the distinction it deserved in a new edition.<sup>9</sup> For it, in 1970, he contributed "A Backward Look," a new introduction. This essay seems to me the finest thing to come from his pen. It has none of the tensions, none of the insistence or edginess of his earlier work. It is the grand old man looking back on his life in some serenity and throwing yet more light on it.

He doted on his fame and felt he had much to prove—as much to himself as to others. Perhaps he had the most to prove to those immigrant parents and the great expectations they surely had for their little Italian-American boy who must have felt that he had to grow big indeed if he was to be grown up at all.

Letort Regulars, that gang of talented local anglers who regularly plied the stream and were buddies of Vince and Charlie, tell a wonderful story.

Vince and Bill Fritz were in Michigan



A lighter moment at the Camp David Fly Fishing Seminar of November 1980: (left to right) President Jimmy Carter, Vincent Marinaro, and unidentified guest.

to fish the Au Sable, a river that Vince had declared the Ideal Trout Stream. They were resting of an afternoon on the river's edge when Vince picked a rather nondescript rock from the water and began a grand apostrophe, a paean, in its praise: how this extraordinary object had come into being, all that it had witnessed over the ages, etc. Fritz felt a bit embarrassed, not knowing how to respond. To make matters worse, Vince insisted on presenting the "noble stone" to Fritz, who hadn't the faintest notion what to do with it and so thrust it ignobly into his waders and hauled it home.

Once home, and the story having got bruited about, Fritz knew that something had to be done with this "rock," and the idea occurred to him to present it right back to Vince with all the ceremony he could muster at a Trout Unlimited banquet in Vince's honor. Everybody enjoyed a laugh over another of their many shared "gotcha" jokes. Not to be outdone, Marinaro soon found occasion to present it back to Fritz, to everyone's increasing glee. And so it went back and forth between them, this ordinary chunk of rock in which so much significance had been vested.

And here the story rests a bit, while Vincent C. Marinaro, in the seventy-fifth year of his age, in Newville, Pennsylvania, died a hard death of leukemia on 2 March 1986. His secular funeral was held in New Cumberland, Pennsylvania.

There was to be yet more ceremony. In the old days before the season was extended past July 31, it was the custom of the Letort Regulars to meet on the

stream that last evening of the season for the ceremony they called "The Last Supper."

In March of 1986, the Regulars held a special Last Supper in the great man's honor right there in his own meadow. From the railroad trestle, Vince's ashes were dropped into the stream that he had made legend.

This was soon followed by a third ceremony: the tossing of the Fritz/Marinaro Noble Stone into the same spot on the Letort as had received his ashes.

Amid all the fun of the stone, there is much to be learned about the nobility of things as sensed by a man like Vincent Marinaro. The nobility of things can be our legacy from the past and the promise of the future—if only, like Vince, we can look into the waters and find a touchstone for ourselves. ~

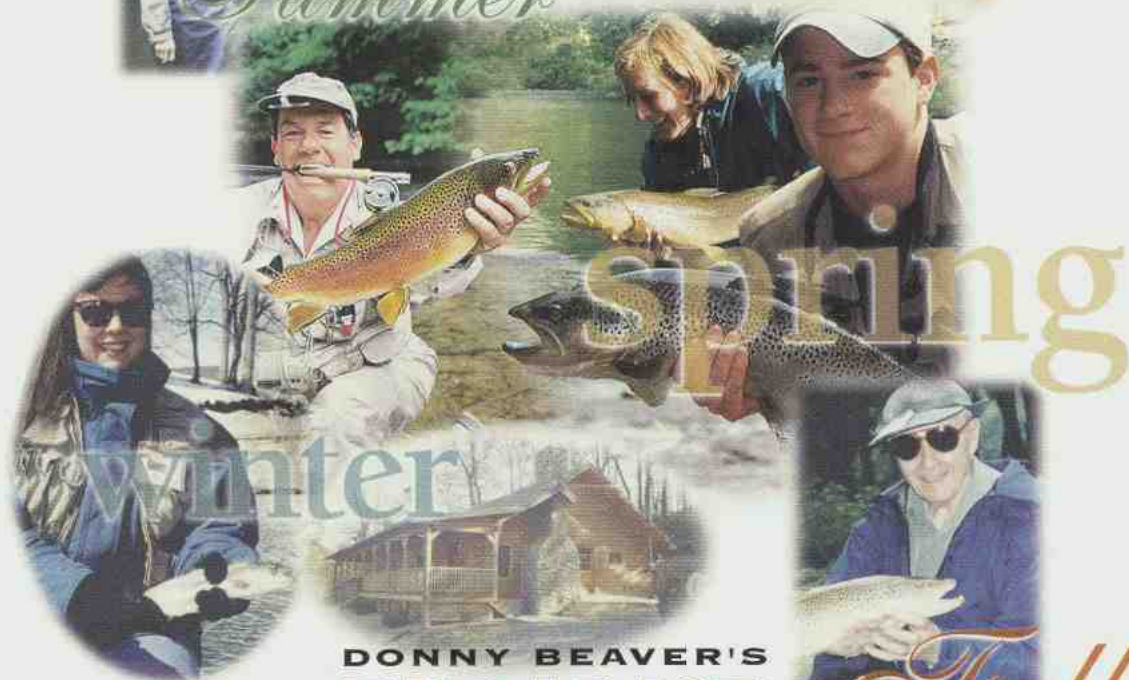
#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to Richard L. Henry of Lebanon, Pennsylvania. Without him, this essay would have been quite impossible. In the beginning, because Henry had long known and fished with Marinaro and is a writer himself, I urged that he write the essay or that we write it together. But he preferred to help me. Also, the cooperation of Don Ebright of Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, from his boyhood a fishing companion of Marinaro's, has been invaluable. Marinaro's eldest child, Vincentia Czotter of Middletown, Pennsylvania, has been of great help, as has her cousin and Marinaro's nephew Julius Marinaro of Bennett, Colorado. Marinaro's old friend C. W. "Bill" Fritz was generous in his help. My association with Marinaro was

limited to a time when I was on the faculty at Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Vincent Marinaro, *A Modern Dry-Fly Code* (New York: G. P. Putnam & Sons, 1950).
2. Joe Brooks. "Jassids—New Approach to Fly Fishing," *Outdoor Life* (March 1958), pp. 52–80.
3. Vincent C. Marinaro, "The Hidden Hatch," *Outdoor Life* (July 1969), pp. 48–82.
4. Norm Shires and Jim Gilford, eds., *Limestone Legends: The Papers and Recollections of the Fly Fishers' Club of Harrisburg, 1947–1997* (Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania: Stackpole Books, 1997), passim.
5. Marinaro, "The Hidden Hatch."
6. "60 Minutes Fly Fishing with Vince Marinaro." An audiotape interview with Marinaro conducted by Jim Bashline, Program One, KAP Studios, Inc., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1983.
7. Vincent C. Marinaro, *In The Ring of the Rise* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1976).
8. The Marinaro collection of tackle and materials was entrusted to Marinaro's son Sebastian, Marinaro being anxious that the collection be kept together. Before Sebastian's death at forty-eight of a melanoma in 1997, he had sought the aid of Don Ebright in the management of the collection. Ebright then continued to aid Sebastian's wife Margaret with the collection. It is being acquired by the Pennsylvania Fly Fishing Center and Museum at Allenberry, Pennsylvania.
9. Marinaro, *A Modern Dry-Fly Code*, 1970.



Wonder Dog, Bailey

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# Museum News

## In Memoriam: Hunter and Van Ness

The American Museum of Fly Fishing lost one of its best-loved, loyal, and generous friends when James H. "Bing" Hunter died at his winter home in Delray Beach, Florida, on March 23. He was eighty years old.

A trustee of the museum since 1992, Bing was an avid and expert angler who fished wherever in the world he could cast to trout, salmon, or saltwater gamefish. His favorite angling waters were the salmon rivers of Canada's maritime provinces, and he regularly visited some of the top-rated lodges on the Miramichi, Restigouche, and Cascapedia rivers. Between fishing seasons, his golf game was never neglected, and the same superb coordination and relaxed skill that enhanced his casting made him an awesome competitor on the golf course. The Hunters were longtime members of Manchester's Edwanok Club, where, for several years, Bing held the club championship.

On many of his fishing trips, Bing was accompanied by his wife Irene, herself a highly proficient angler who often, to his consternation, outscored him on the river. Other favorite fishing companions were son Jim and wife Joan of Williamstown, Massachusetts. Bing's last fishing trip, in late September 1999, was to Rocky Brook on the upper main southwest Miramichi. There, accompanied by Museum Trustees Richard Tisch and Ted Ferree and friends Hoagy Carmichael, Bill Rudkin, and Hut Ferree, Bing hooked and released five salmon.

Few people were aware of the extent of the Hunters' generosity, which included the creation of Hunter Park, Manchester's magnificent new recreational and performing arts center.

—TED FERREE

Sam Van Ness, longtime trustee, passed away on April 2. He was a trustee in the mid-1980s and a very active member of the San Francisco dinner/auction committee. During the first "Anglers All" exhibit in San Francisco, he was in charge of all entertainment, fly-fishing seminars,

fly-casting clinics, fly-tying demonstrations, and the wine-tasting reception. Sam was owner of a print shop, and donated the printing of all invitations and posters for the the first six San Francisco dinner/auctions. He was a captain in the U.S. Marines and served two tours of active service during the Vietnam War.

Sam was very active in Museum affairs, was a loyal contributor, and was always ready to help. Not only was he committed to the Museum, but also to fisheries and river conservation. He was first and foremost a delightful individual to be with on a beautiful California wild trout stream. Sam will be missed by his many friends.

—ARTHUR T. FREY

## Winter Shows

The Museum had a booth at several of the winter fishing shows this year. Because of the small size of the Museum staff, it was decided that we would do only four of the dozen or so shows held on the East Coast. We chose shows in College Park, Maryland (near Washington, D.C.); Marlborough, Massachusetts; Somerset, New Jersey; and Charlotte, North Carolina. These shows are produced by Barry and Gerry Serviente, who most generously donated booth space to the Museum at all four of their fly-fishing-only shows. At the Somerset show, the Museum had twenty feet of prime booth space immediately at the show's entrance. Barry had wanted something really impressive to greet the show's audience as they arrived, and the Museum filled this space with an exhibition of art and artifacts from the collection. It was a stunning display.

During all four shows, staff members Gary Tanner, Sara Wilcox, and Paula Welch received lots of help from area volunteers, including Trustee Pam Bates Richards, Bob Warren, and Peter Castagnetti. Many Museum friends and members stopped by to welcome us and chat, and many new members were enrolled. The Museum will continue to make an appearance at future shows so that a larger slice of the public knows both who we are and about the incredible heritage we are preserving for future generations of fly fishers.

## The American Museum of Fly Fishing

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Membership dues include four issues of *The American Fly Fisher*. Please send your payment to the Membership Director and include your mailing address. The Museum is a member of the American Association of Museums, the American Association of State and Local History, the New England Association of Museums, the Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance, and the International Association of Sports Museums and Halls of Fame. We are a nationally accredited, nonprofit, educational institution chartered under the laws of the state of Vermont.

## SUPPORT!

As an independent, nonprofit institution, the American Museum of Fly Fishing relies on the generosity of public-spirited individuals for substantial support. We ask that you give our museum serious consideration when planning for gifts and bequests.

## VISIT!

Hours are 10 AM to 4 PM. We are closed on major holidays.

## BACK ISSUES!

Available at \$4 per copy:

- Volume 6, Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4
- Volume 7, Number 3
- Volume 8, Number 3
- Volume 9, Numbers 1, 2, 3
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- Volume 11, Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4
- Volume 13, Number 3
- Volume 15, Number 2
- Volume 16, Numbers 1, 2, 3
- Volume 17, Numbers 1, 2, 3
- Volume 18, Numbers 1, 2, 4
- Volume 19, Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4
- Volume 20, Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4
- Volume 21, Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4
- Volume 22, Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4
- Volume 23, Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4
- Volume 24, Numbers 1, 2, 4
- Volume 25, Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4
- Volume 25, Number 1

## Dinner/Auctions

**San Francisco.** The Museum revived its metropolitan San Francisco dinner and auction on December 7 with Orvis San Francisco's Cheryl Hoey and Mel and Fanny Krieger as co-chairs. Our honored guest—longtime Museum trustee and supporter Arthur T. Frey—was unable to attend because of last-minute ailments requiring immediate surgical attention (from which he has recovered fully).

Sam's Grill in downtown San Francisco was the venue for this event, with owner Gary Seput as our most generous host. A capacity crowd dined on fresh West Coast seafood as several of Art Frey's fishing buddies and friends toasted/roasted him in absentia. After dinner, auctioneer Damon Casatico whipped the crowd into a bidding frenzy! One live auction item—an original watercolor by Luther K. Hall—had been damaged in shipping and pulled from the catalog, but Damon was able to sell this live auction slot (which consisted now of "absolutely nothing") for more than \$200!

Our thanks to the dinner/auction committee and to the staff of Sam's Grill for making our return to downtown San Francisco a huge success.

**New York.** The Museum's annual New York City fundraiser was held on February 24 at the Anglers' Club. Dinner chair *in perpetua* Ian Mackay hosted the



*The Anglers' Club of New York dinner/auction was a sold-out event. That's Trustee Ernest Schwiebert under the big fish.*

event to a capacity crowd and Mary O'Malley and her wonderful staff served up a mouth-watering feast, as always.

With Lyman Foss as auctioneer, the live auction—featuring donations from Trustee Emeritus Bob Johnson, Bill Pastore, Mark and Gary Sherman, Ian Mackay, Carmine Lisella, Jerry Bottcher and Rachel Finn of the Hungry Trout Motel, and Trustee Emeritus G. Dick

Finlay—was hugely successful for the Museum. And with Pam Murray holding guests hostage until they bought tickets, the five-rod raffle grossed more than \$3,000!

Special thanks to our New York Dinner Committee for filling the room

Gary Tanner



*San Francisco dinner/auction co-chairs Cheryl Hoey (left) and Fanny Krieger share a moment at the event, held at Sam's Grill.*

## Upcoming Events

### April 26

Heritage Award Dinner  
honoring Nathaniel P. Reed  
The Sky Club  
New York City

### May 20

Festival Weekend  
Trustees Meeting  
Annual Dinner/Auction  
The Equinox Hotel  
Manchester, Vermont

### June 24

Annual Saltwater Tournament  
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Further thanks to the evening's sponsors: Bill and Bayard Baker, Dick and Edie Ellis, Kirk Kellogg, John Mundt Jr., Tom O'Brien, and Ralph and Ann Marie Peters.

The dinner introduced the Museum to twenty-five new members, and we hope to see even more new faces at our fundraisers all over the country.

**In the Library**

Thanks to the following publishers for their donations of recent titles that have become part of our collection (all were published in 2000, unless noted otherwise).

Frank Amato Publications, Inc., sent us Jim Schollmeyer and Ted Leeson's *Trout Flies of the East: Best Contemporary Patterns from East of the Rockies* (1999); Steve Beck's *Trout-Fishing the John Muir Trail*; Bud Lilly and Paul Schullery's *Bud Lilly's Guide to Fly Fishing the New West*; Don Phillips's *The Technology of Fly Rods*; and Robert W. Streeter's *New York Fly-Fishing Guide*.

Stackpole Books sent us Dick Talleur's *Guide to Fly Tying*; Dave Hughes's *Essential Trout Flies*; Graydon R. Hilyard and Leslie K. Hilyard's *Carrie G. Stevens: Maker of Rangeley Favorite Trout and Salmon Flies*; A. Joseph Armstrong's *Guide to Pennsylvania Limestone Streams*; Gene Kugach's *Fly Fisher's Pattern Book*; and Poul Jorgensen's *Favorite Flies and How to Tie Them*.

The Lyons Press sent us James R. Babb's *Crosscurrents: A Fly Fisher's Progress* (1999). St. Martin's Press sent us William G. Tapply's *Muscle Memory* (1999), and Greycliff Publishing Company sent us Greg Thomas's *Best Flies for Idaho*.



*Annual Festival Weekend  
& Celebration  
at the  
AMERICAN MUSEUM OF FLY FISHING  
MAY 19<sup>TH</sup> & 20<sup>TH</sup>*

**Friday Evening**

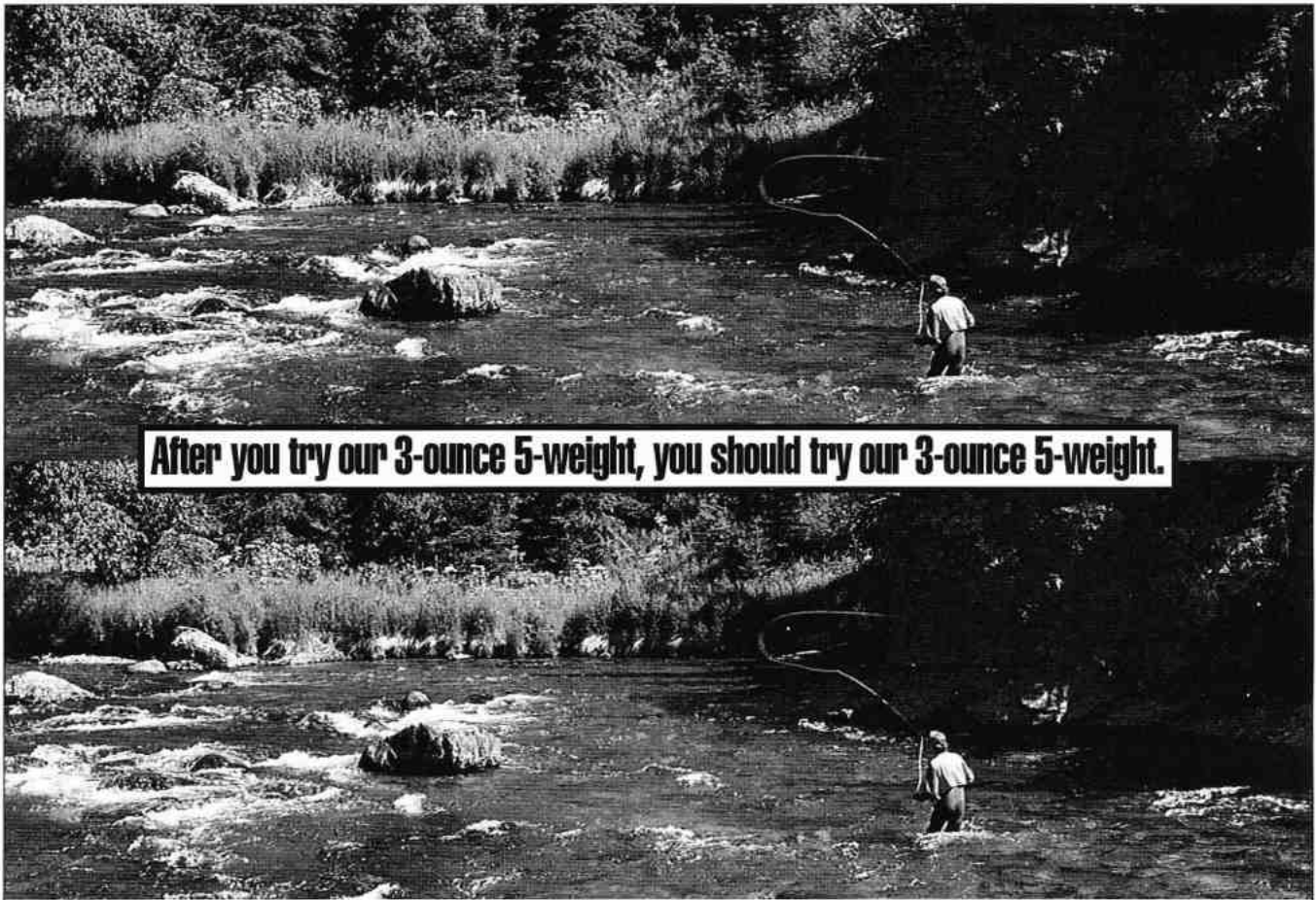
Join us at 5:30 pm for a cocktail party celebrating the opening of a new exhibit.

**Saturday - Open House**

Activities will include demonstrations by the Green Mountain Fly Tyers, rodmakers Fred Kretchman and J.D. Wagner, woodcarver Bill Card, bronze sculptor Mark Miramontes and much more.

**Saturday Evening**

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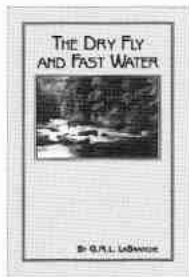
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## LETTERS

The story on fly fishing in Japan in the Spring 1999 issue ("Fly Fishing in Japan," by Jim Repine) makes the point that artificial flies and fly fishing have an ancient and independent origin in Japan.

The ancient form of fly fishing that developed in Japan, independent of foreign influence, is known as *dobutsuri*. Dobutsuri flies are quite distinct from any western flies and were originally used in angling for ayu (*Plecoglossus altivelis*, a salmoniform fish that feeds mainly on algae).

At a symposium in Japan in 1988, I asked Professor Hiroya Kawanabe of Kyoto University (now retired) about the antiquity of fly fishing in Japan. He told me that an "encyclopedia" (*Hontya Shokkun*) written in 1697 contains a reference to "fly fishing" on the River Oi in Shizuoka Prefecture.

The mountain streams of the main island, Honshu, have landlocked masu salmon (*Oncorhynchus masou*), called yamame in the north, and amago (red-spotted salmon) in the south. A charr, *Salvelinus leucomaenis*, called iwana, is also common. Both of these species are insectivorous and are caught on flies.

In 1952–1953, I fished for yamame and

iwana using both western flies and dobutsuri flies. At the time, because of low-cost labor, Japan was a major exporter of trout flies to the United States. I saw only imitations of western patterns and the indigenous dobutsuri flies, nothing in between.

The question remains whether Japanese anglers built on the tradition of dobutsuri flies to originate new patterns for iwana and yamame before any influence from western angling occurred in the late nineteenth century.

Robert Behnke  
Professor, Department of Fishery and  
Wildlife Biology  
Colorado State University  
Fort Collins, Colorado

John Price



Dobutsuri fly, with bead head and barbless hook, courtesy of Leon Chandler.

Upon reading the Winter 2000 issue, I was sorry to note that the photograph on page 16 improperly identifies President Grover Cleveland as the angler "... choosing a fly from his wallet." The individual is actually Andrew J. Bradford of Baldwin, Michigan. While "Old Brad" may not have received the fame and fortune of his presidential colleagues, the photograph itself is a significant piece of our angling heritage. I am delighted that the museum owns a copy.

The photograph is one of a pair featuring "Old Brad" that were issued shortly after the turn of the century to promote railroad fishing tourism in the state of Michigan. In addition, the two pictures were featured prominently in several sporting magazines, such as *Forest and Stream*.

I am pleased to own copies of the two photos and in recent years have loaned them to fly-fishing exhibits held at museums in Leland, Michigan, and at Michigan State University. The original photographs were published in slightly differing formats, but the one pictured in *The American Fly Fisher* is approximately 16 by 20 inches in size and was first published in 1904.

Robert Kohrman  
Mt. Pleasant, Michigan

The photograph we ran of Andrew J. Bradford was accessioned into the Museum's collection as President Grover Cleveland. Our apologies in getting this one wrong.

—EDITOR

## CONTRIBUTORS



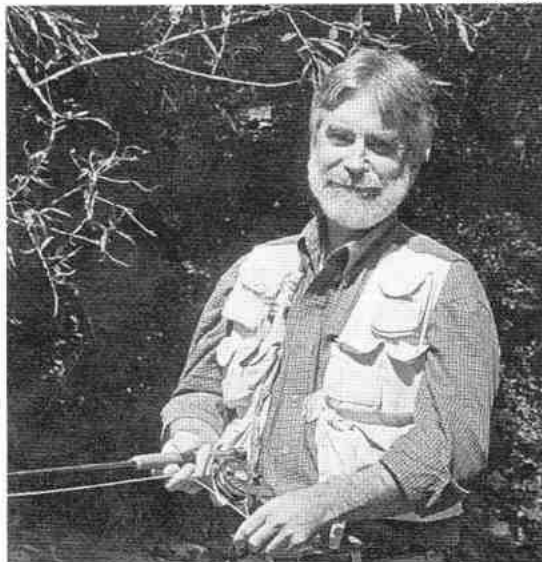
**Elisabeth R. Agro** is assistant curator in the decorative arts department at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh. She is drawn to the "arts of fire" (glass, metalwork, and ceramics), especially in relation to the history of dining and banqueting. Considering she is a die-hard "foodie," it would not surprise readers that she confesses to never having held a rod nor reel, but can be found most often wielding chopsticks at her favorite sushi bar.

**Gordon M. Wickstrom** is professor of drama emeritus and was longtime chair of that department at Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He is now retired to his native Boulder, Colorado, where he fishes, writes, edits, politics on behalf of trout and their waters, produces a theater group, and generally enjoys his old hometown. He last contributed to the journal in the Fall 1998 issue, with a Notes & Comment piece, "Contrasts in Trout Art."



# Opening Day

Margot Page



"ANGLERS ALL 2000," the traveling exhibition of the American Museum of Fly Fishing, will open June 3 at the Museum of the Rockies in Bozeman, Montana.

What did it take to create "Anglers All"? A simple question, with a complex answer. It took:

**Sponsors.** Without funding and support, the exhibition could not have been created. Even if cabinetmakers and printers do fly fish and think that the American Museum of Fly Fishing is the best thing since sliced bread, they still need to be paid for their work on "Anglers All." The final tally for the exhibition's construction will approach \$80,000.

**Designers.** Laine and Yoshi Akiyama brought their years of experience to the drawing table (quite literally) to create a visually stimulating and intellectually gratifying exhibition. Laine worked most recently with Walt Disney Imagineering as a show producer and production designer, and Yoshi was

the executive producer/designer of Tokyo Disneyland. The Museum is at maximum capacity for staff and collections, so we needed to find them a place to work. Former Trustee Charles "Buzz" Eichel provided space in a vacant shop he co-owns, at no cost.

**Advisors.** We tapped the knowledge of friends whose grasp of the sport's history helped us immensely—people such as Jim Brown, John Betts, Bob Hilyard, William Herrick, Marty Keane, Bob Warren, Paul Schullery, Pamela Richards, Ken Cameron, Ingrid Sils, Paul Schmookler, and Gordon Wickstrom. The exhibition gains its credibility through their input, freely given and gratefully accepted.

**Artifact donors.** Thanks to individuals wanting to see the history of fly fishing preserved and willing to place their treasures in our care, we have assembled one million (yes, one million) dollars worth of art and artifacts for this exhibition alone (never mind what's staying home in Manchester!). In this same vein, we are grateful to the many copyright holders who gave us permission to reproduce their images in the graphic presentations of the "Anglers All" exhibit.

**A staff** who was willing to work long hours, seven days a week.

"Anglers All 2000" will be on display at the Museum of the Rockies through January 2001. It then moves to the Utah Museum of Natural History in Salt Lake City, where it will be exhibited February 12 to May 21, 2001, and the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, where it will be exhibited June 17 to September 17. I hope you will be able to enjoy the exhibition at one of the host venues and believe it will make you proud to be a member of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

GARY TANNER  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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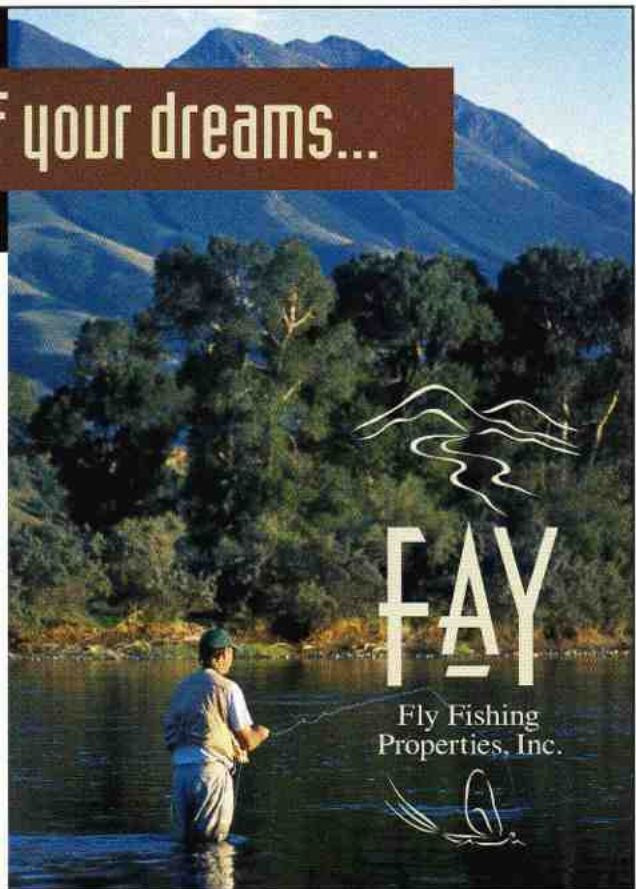
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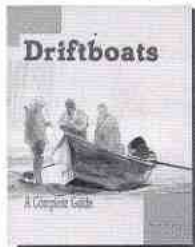
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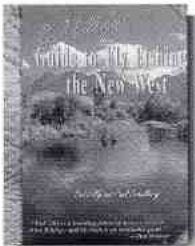
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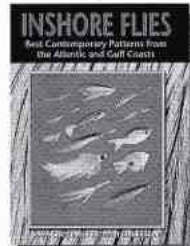
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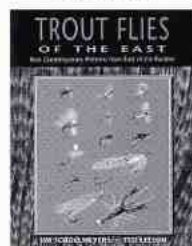
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THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF FLY FISHING, a nationally accredited, nonprofit, educational institution dedicated to preserving the rich heritage of fly fishing, was founded in Manchester, Vermont, in 1968. The Museum serves as a repository for, and conservator 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 collections.

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, and catalogs 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.

