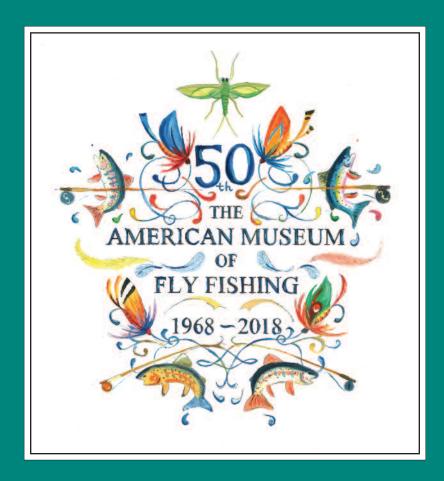
Soth Anniversary

# The American Fly Fisher

Journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing



# Fifty

was reading a newly submitted manuscript the other day, one by an author I'd published before. It was so beautifully written that I was oohing and ahhing out loud to Sam Pitcher, captive at the next desk, forcing her to listen to particularly good passages. "[Author's name] is my favorite," I declared. "Too bad you couldn't list him in 'Fifty Favorites," she replied. Indeed.

"Fifty Museum Favorites" is the heart of this fiftieth-anniversary issue. Staff had a great time choosing some of our mostloved pieces in the collection. Of course, to list only fifty meant we had to edit our original way-more-than-fifty list. Take a look at what made the cut (page 12).

Sam's point led me to think about the authors of the *American Fly Fisher*. Without question, the opportunity to work with good fly-fishing writers and historians is the best part of my job. I figured I'd edited at least fifty authors over my nearly twenty-three years with the journal and wondered whether I could list them here as my own fifty favorites. The tally, however, turned out to be a whopping one hundred forty.

This number shocked me, frankly. It doesn't even include staff writing. Many authors wrote only one article; too many have passed away. Some wrote short pieces because we asked them to: memorial pieces, book reviews, art commentary. Some have written for us many times and feel like pillars of our publication.

The world of fly-fishing historians is small. We're lucky to know both seasoned historians and amateurs curious enough to follow leads, do some research, and write for us. We're lucky to know a few conservationists who can show us how current practices are making and determining history. Our authors' words are as much a part of the museum as its artifacts.

But now, back to our fiftieth. In the spirit of our twenty-fifth-anniversary issue, we've continued the museum timeline presented there, reprinting the original pages from 1993 and flowing right into the next twenty-five years. Look for it on page 2.

We called on some good friends to help us celebrate, too, including trustees (former, founding, emeritus, and current). Ted Rogowski, James Hardman, and Richard Tisch share some museum memories (starting on page 10). John



The editor with Fred Kretchman, one of her many authors, at the museum's 2010 Fly-Fishing Festival. This particular author also happens to be the builder of the editor's favorite fly rod. Photo by Jim Hardman.

Mundt raises a glass to this milestone with "A Golden Jubilee Toast to the American Museum of Fly Fishing" (page 21). President Karen Kaplan honors our history and looks forward (page 28).

We had a big celebration in May in New York City. Coverage of that event begins on page 23, and we include remarks made by fly-fishing legends Nick Lyons (page 25) and Joan Wulff (page 26). Nick had addressed the crowd at the twenty-fifth-anniversary event, and we felt both lucky and honored to have him with us again.

Although author/former trustee/museum friend John Mundt has more than once mistakenly remembered my presence at the anniversary celebration in 1993, I didn't arrive on the scene until 1995. None of the current staff dates back that far—except one. Copy Editor Sarah May Clarkson, who predates me by about five years, appears on the masthead of both landmark anniversary issues. It has been my privilege to work with her for twenty-three years, and if I do ever make a fifty-favorites list, you can bet she'll appear at its top.

> Kathleen Achor Editor



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# The American Fly Fisher

Journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing

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## 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.



The 1968–1993 portion of the timeline first appeared in the Spring 1993 issue of the *American Fly Fisher*.

## 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 accomodate the enlarging Museum's needs.



Lye Brook Pool



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.



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 longestrunning secretary to the board of directors (1975-1984).



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 gutsnelled flies.

#### 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.

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.



## 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

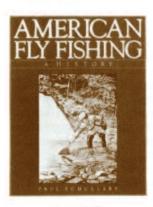
## 1983

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



#### 1986

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

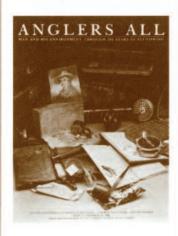


## 1987

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 fundraising 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.



# The Second Quarter Century

ND SO WE continue to fifty. Editor



#### 1994

The museum celebrates its late-1993 national accreditation by the American Association [now Alliance] of Museums. The Warren Gilker salmon weathervane, which can be seen atop our museum building, is donated. The museum receives a collection of Edmund Garrison rods.

#### 1995

Richard G. Tisch is elected president (1995-2000). Craig Gilborn is named executive director. Kathleen Achor joins the staff as managing editor of the journal.

#### 1996

Kathleen Achor is named editor of the journal. The journal is awarded first place by the New England Museum Association for design of scholarly journal. The Frank Woolner collection of flies is acquired. The museum receives two original paintings by Ogden Pleissner: The Battenkill (oil, below) and Wind Cloud (watercolor). John Mundt receives the Austin Hogan Award.





#### 1997

The Heritage Award is established and presented to Leigh H. Perkins. Gary Tanner is named executive director. Frederick Buller receives the Austin Hogan Award.

Sara Wilcox joins the staff as special projects coordinator. AMFF launches its own first website at amff.com. The Heritage Award is presented to Gardner L. Grant. John Betts receives the Austin Hogan Award.



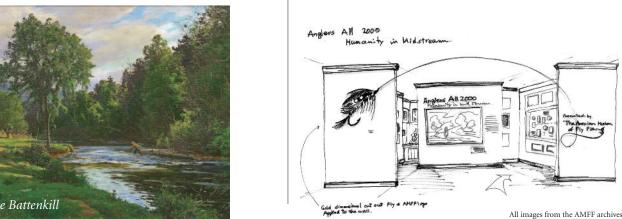
Gardner Grant and Leigh Perkins at the 1997 Heritage event.

## 1998

AMFF celebrates its thirtieth anniversary at its annual festival weekend. Board President Richard Tisch reports on the state of the museum in the Spring journal. John Price is named journal art director.

#### 1999

The Anglers All traveling exhibition is announced for 2000. The Heritage Award is presented to Bud Lilly. Pamela Bates Richards receives the Austin Hogan Award.



#### $1994 \sim 2018$

#### 2000

Anglers All: Humanity in Midstream opens at the Museum of the Rockies. Robert G. Scott is elected president (2000–2005). Yoshi Akiyama joins staff as collection manager. The Heritage Award is presented to Nathaniel Pryor Reed and George Harvey.



#### 2001

Anglers All travels to Utah Museum of Natural History, then to the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco. The museum acquires Prince Charles's fishing vest. An oral history event is held in Salt Lake City and includes Leon Chandler, Lefy Kreh, Paul Schullery, Dave Whitlock, Bud Lilly, Stu Apte, and David Ledlie. Nick Lyons donates his nearly 1,300-volume angling library to the museum. The Heritage Award is presented to Lewis W. Coleman.



#### 2002

AMFF announces acquisition of new property in Manchester Village. Staff moves to the carriage house on the property. *Anglers All* travels to the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. The Heritage Award is presented to Foster Bam and Yvon Chouinard.

#### 2003

Ground is broken for the new museum building. Yoshi Akiyama is named interim executive director. The Heritage Award is presented to Nick Lyons and Mel Krieger.

#### 2004

Yoshi Akiyama designs new AMFF logo. In October, AMFF reopens its doors at its new location. **Sara Wilcox** is named art director of the journal. Gardner Grant donates his library to the museum.



#### 2005

The museum's grand opening celebration and dedication is held in June. *Anglers All* opens the new AMFF exhibit space. **William C. Bullock III** is named executive director. **Nancy Mackinnon** is elected board president (2005–2007). The museum receives the Dean Sage collection.









#### $1994 \approx 2018$



#### 2006

The amff.com website gets an update. The museum hosts the Batten Kill Bash, the first step toward reinstituting the Fly-Fishing Festival. The family of Roy D. Chapin donates his library.

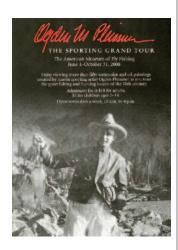
#### 2007

AMFF opens a joint exhibit, Seeing Wonders: The Nature of Fly Fishing, with the Peabody Museum of Natural History at Yale University. At home, the museum opens 40 Years: Reflections on the Sport and Art of Fly Fishing; The Heritage of the American Museum of Fly Fishing on the eve of its fortieth anniversary. George R. Gibson III is elected president (2007-2009). Sarah (Moore) Foster joins the staff as project coordinator. The museum receives a large collection of Lee Wulff items. The Heritage Award is presented to Stanley Bogdan.



#### 2008

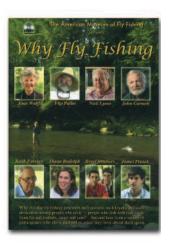
Catherine E. Comar is named executive director. Ogden M. Pleissner: The Sporting Grand Tour opens in June. The Fly-Fishing Festival is held in August, bringing back the tradition of an annual event. AMFF begins developing public programs, which eventually include Fit to Be Tied, Hooked on the Holidays, Spring Training, the Ice Cream Social, and Iron Fly. The Heritage Award is presented to Joan Salvato Wulff. Fly on the Wall: The Artwork of William Cushner opens in November.



#### 2009

AMFF receives reaccreditation with the American Association [now Alliance] of Museums.

Gadgets & Gear: Twentieth-Century Innovations in Fly-Fishing Equipment opens over the summer. The Sherman Bridge is dedicated at the museum's casting pond. James Heckman is elected president (2009–2013). Why Fly Fishing, a DVD produced by AMFF and Miracle Productions, receives an award at the Columbus International Film and Video Festival. The museum begins using social media via Facebook.



#### 2010

The Gardner L. Grant Library is dedicated. *Memories on the Water: A Photographic Journey through Fly Fishing's Past* opens at the museum. AMFF receives two oil paintings by Stanley Meltzoff: *Three Permit and Crab* and *Drifting Blue*.

The Heritage Award is presented to Casting for Recovery. Reeling in the Years: The History of the American Museum of Fly Fishing opens.



#### 2011

A Graceful Rise: Women in Fly Fishing Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow opens. The Leigh H. Perkins Gallery is dedicated. Working with Burr and Burton Academy, the regional high school, the museum adds a wheelchair-accessible casting platform by the pond. Lefty Kreh donates his collection of fly-fishing memorabilia. The Heritage Award is presented to Paul A. Volcker.





#### 2012

The museum films an interview of nine saltwater pioneers at the International Game Fish Association (Stu Apte, Flip Pallot, Chico Fernandez, Lefty Kreh, Nick Curcione, Joan Wulff, Nat Ragland, Bill Curtis, and Mark Sosin). AMFF receives a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to archive the journal online. The Ambassador Program is created to raise awareness of the museum, its mission, and programs. Twitter is added to AMFF's social media outreach. The AMFF Junior Committee (now Anglers' Circle) is formed. Several artists donate paintings, including Arthur Shilstone (Strike Near the Mangroves, watercolor), Thomas Aquinas Daly (Some Sunny Day, watercolor), and Michael Stidham (Watching the Sink—Permit, oil). The Heritage Award is presented to Orri Vigfússon.



#### 2014

AMFF celebrates the fortieth anniversary of publication of the journal. Thanks to the 2012 IMLS grant, back copies of the journal become available online. AMFF joins the North American Reciprocal Museum Association. The Izaak Walton Award is established and presented to Ed Jaworowski. AMFF holds a Rare Rod Rendezvous for members. The

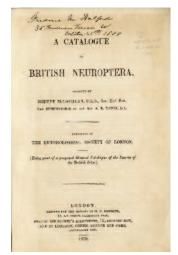
Karen Kaplan is elected president (2015–). The museum holds a Rare Reel Rendezvous for members. The Heritage Award is presented to Tom Brokaw. The Izaak Walton Award is presented to Tom Davidson.



#### 2016

The journal publishes Richard C. Hoffmann's transcription and translation of the Haslinger Breviary Tract, the earliest recorded collection of fly-tying patterns known to exist. The museum hosts a viewing of the Breviary at the Anglers' Club of New York, courtesy of Maggs Bros. Ltd. (London). Richard C. Hoffmann receives the Austin Hogan Award. AMFF becomes a member of the New England Museum Association and the International Sports Heritage Association. The museum launches a new website at amff.org. AMFF holds a Rare Read Rendezvous for members. The museum acquires

two Frederic M. Halford–annotated volumes published by the Entomological Society of London. **Robert Ruley** is named executive director. The Heritage Award is presented to Ted Turner. The Izaak Walton Award is presented to James Prosek.



#### 2017

AMFF initiates a summer outreach program for kids. The museum receives a Cultural Facilities matching grant from the Vermont Arts Council to create and install a permanent fly room. Sarah Foster is named executive director. The museum holds a Rare Flies Rendezvous for members. The Heritage Award is presented to Tom McGuane. The Izaak Walton Award is presented to Jim Klug.

#### 2018

AMFF celebrates its fiftieth anniversary. On Fly in the Salt: American Saltwater Fishing from the Surf to the Flats opens in Manchester before traveling to the National Sporting Library and Museum in Middleburg, Virginia. The museum collection now includes more than 6,000 books, 1,300 rods, 1,100 reels, and thousands of flies.



#### 2013

The Wonders of Fly Fishing exhibit opens, funded by Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership and the Orvis Company. Richard G. Tisch is elected president (2013–2015). AMFF begins posting photos to Instagram. The Heritage Award is presented to Leon L. Martuch.

museum receives an oil painting by Stanley Meltzoff, *Striper* 14—Deal Pilings, Rooting for Shedders. The Heritage Award is presented to Robert E. Rubin.

#### 2015

AMFF's inaugural Deborah Pratt Dawson Conservation Symposium is held in March.

SUMMER 2018

9

# Birds of a Feather: The Founding Days of the Museum

by Ted Rogowski

T ALL STARTED IN 1968 with a bundle of bamboo fly rods—some rare—in a corner of the Orvis shop. Leigh Perkins was trading a new rod at twenty percent discount for your old bamboo rod, and Hermann Kessler, husband of Helen Shaw (a fly-tying legend in her own right), saw a Leonard rarity among the turn-ins. Having also recently come across the magnificent fly panel display created by Mary Orvis Marbury, Kessler noted, "These belong in a museum!" Thus, the germ of the American Museum of Fly Fishing was born.

The creative genius of Leigh Perkins was not to be denied. Leigh offered Kessler Vermont bait that would attract him, Ed Zern, Arnold Gingrich, Gene Anderegg, and me more strongly than Vermont cheddar: an invitation to hunt partridge over two champion Perkins spaniels. This was an organizing crew who couldn't resist bird hunting Vermont woods after drafting and legal sessions on several October Saturday mornings: a fly-fishing museum we shall have! Room and board for the five guests was conveniently arranged at the Perkins residence with sheets thrown over couches, sleeping bags borrowed from the teenaged boys, twelve scrambled eggs (*medium*, please!), and half a loaf of

bread at each breakfast sitting. Gingrich dried dishes as well as he punctuated the grammar of *Esquire* magazine.

At the hunt, the pair of retrievers carried an awful trait: regardless of who downed the flushed bird, the bird was retrieved and returned directly to Leigh. (They knew who was in charge of roast partridge for dinner.)

So, the very first museum was a rack of fine bamboo fly rods set along the far wall of the Orvis shop. The weekend ventures orchestrated by Leigh yielded the museum charter, the IRS 501(c)3 paperwork, and four Vermont partridge for the dinner table.

 $\sim$ 

Upon graduation from Columbia Law School in 1956, Ted Rogowski practiced in New York City with Cadwalader, Wickersham and Taft. Fishing and hunting experiences were gained with the Mid-town Club each Wednesday at Manny Wolf's Chop House. His career law practice was with the Environmental Protection Agency, first in Washington, D.C. (1966–1972), then in Seattle (1972–1992).

# It's the People Who Count

## by James Hardman

OR THE PAST twenty-five years at the American Museum of Fly Fishing, I have been a volunteer—a helper, a facilitator, a photographer, and at times a builder—but most of all, I've been an observer.

Most of my time was spent cataloging our reels. We have evolved through at least three database programs, each with upgrades and advantages. Tours of our exhibits now online will ultimately lead to online access to our archives. We are setting new standards of professionalism.

And it's the people who count. It helps that we share the common passion and interest of the sport and history of fly fishing, but over the years, the people who made our museum "go"—our trustees, our directors, our staff, and our volunteers—have pulled together to maximize our individual strengths.

Abraham Lincoln practiced a management style that remains relevant today and has been embraced by several of our directors: get out of the office, get to know the people, plant the vision, listen to the people, and pull them together to make things happen. This was described as "management by wandering around" by Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman Jr. in their 1982 book, *In Search of Excellence*.

If there is one quality that truly sets our museum apart from so many others, it is our presentation. Our exhibits and our journal are striking and well respected. The content, artistic impact, and "telling the story" have been impressive.

If we are to celebrate anything in our fifty-year history, it is our success in marrying vision with effective management. As a friend from Jersey City put it, "We done good." Our museum people have done good. Three cheers for our people: for their vision, wisdom, financial support, effort, creativity, and accomplishments!

And a hearty *huzzah* to everyone who has made it happen these past fifty years—and to those who make it happen today.

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Trustee Emeritus James Hardman is a machinist and has studied, collected, and restored early reels for more than forty years. His most recent contribution to the journal was the two-part "Synthetics in Fishing Tackle—What's in the Mix: Natural Rubber, Gutta-Percha, and Modified 'Stuff," which appeared in Winter and Spring 2012 (vol. 38, nos. 1 and 2).

#### MUSEUM MEMORIES

# Fifty Years

## by Richard Tisch

ASMALL MUSEUM achieving a half-century life span is notable. I have been a trustee of the American Museum of Fly Fishing for about a quarter century. My tenure is neither an achievement nor notable, but it is a happy circumstance for me. A few other trustees share this longevity, with one far exceeding it and some almost reaching it. Such loyalty by many, however, is notable. Why do these trustees—and almost three dozen other women and men—devote their time and energy and annually donate hundreds of thousands of dollars to this modest nonprofit in rural Vermont?

Why do many others, former trustees, other members of AMFF, and unaffiliated people give to this charity?

Why are there staff members of this wonderful museum with tenures matching mine?

Why does AMFF even exist? (Some of my nonfishing friends have asked me this question.)

AMFF is one of about 35,000 museums in the United States (that number is greater by far than the total of Starbucks and McDonald's in America—this is a good thing). It is one of more than 1,500,000 nonprofits in the United States. But it is also the only museum *in the world* with such a remarkable number and variety of fly-fishing artifacts: rods, reels, flies, books, artwork, etc. And people still donate to it. In the past six months, the museum has received a collection of more than two hundred angling books; several limited-edition books; a Seamaster saltwater fly reel; fifteen new flies developed and tied by a renowned western fly fisher; and a three-piece, 10-foot

Calcutta cane rod. This is just a sampling of recent donations, which, I expect, will continue.

So what are the answers to these questions?

Here are mine: I love fly fishing and have for more than fifty years. I love the pristine streams and rivers, the flats and oceans in which game fish swim. I love the challenge of casting flies to them, often without success. I love the deliberate rise of a trout, the slashing strike of a northern pike (yes, a pike), the soaring leaps of tarpon, and unforgettable pulls of Atlantic salmon. And I love the surroundings in which all these fish live. As well, I believe E. T. Brown got it right: "When they go fishing, it is not really fish they are after. It is a philosophic meditation."\*

Finally, I suspect many other devotees of the museum share these feelings and want to ensure, as I do, that the joys of fly fishing and its rich tradition are available to others.

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Richard Tisch is a trustee and past president of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

\*E.T. Brown, Not Without Prejudice: Essays on Assorted Subjects (Melbourne: Cheshire, 1955), 142. Cited in Jeffrey S. Cramer, ed., "Appendix: Misquotation and Misattributions," *The Quotable Thoreau* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2011), 466, the misattribution being "Many men fish all their lives without ever realizing that it is not the fish they are after."



**SUMMER 2018** 

# Fifty Museum Favorites

THE BEST PART of working at a museum devoted to fly fishing is being around the equipment, art, literature, and historical documentation of our sport. For this issue devoted to our fiftieth anniversary, museum staff sat down to list fifty of our favorite items in the collection. We wish we'd had space to provide a photo of each item on the list; you can find images of a few more online at www.amff.org/our-collection. Now sit back and enjoy this short tour of the museum, and come see us in person soon.

EDITOR

All images from the AMFF archives except where noted



**Six Theodore Gordon handwritten letters:** four to Theodore Peck, a relative of Gordon's on his father's side, and two to Guy R. Jenkins, a friend and one of the founders of the Theodore Gordon society. Kate Achor transcribed them for publication in the Winter 1996 issue. Which means she got to *hold* them.

The Bubble, a watercolor by John Betts (b. 1937). To celebrate the museum's thirtieth anniversary, a limited-edition run of 300 prints was made, all remarqued by the artist. "I love the subtlety that permeates this piece," says Sara Wilcox, "from the delicate shades of blue and green to a special moment, one that is perhaps the essence of fly fishing, conveyed without words."

Winslow Homer's bamboo B. F. Nichols Rod. Homer (1836–1910) was a leading realist painter of the late nineteenth century. Born in Boston to a wealthy family, he apprenticed as an artist and set up his own studio on his twenty-first birthday. Within a year, his art was being regularly published in *Harper's Magazine*. He moved his studio to New York City in 1859. His style began to change, and his popularity and critical acclaim grew. Homer finished *Two Guides*, the first of his Adirondack pictures, in 1876. He followed this with many more fly-fishing and Adirondack scenes. Homer moved to Scarborough, Maine, in 1882, and a decade later won a gold medal at the Chicago Exposition. "Winslow Homer's Adirondack pictures cannot be rivaled," says Sam Pitcher. "I hope that one day AMFF will be able to display an original Homer alongside his fishing rod."

Ernest Hemingway's bamboo Hardy Fairy rod. Hemingway (1899–1961) was author of such novels and stories as *The Sun Also Rises* and "Big Two-Hearted River." He won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1954 "for his mastery of the art of narrative, most recently demonstrated in *The Old Man and the Sea*, and for the influence that he has exerted on contemporary style." The Hardy rod is accompanied by a typed letter (written by his son, John H. N. Hemingway, and dated 2 September 1972) that explains that this rod and one other "were the only items of trout tackle he had with him when he first came to Sun Valley in the Fall of 1939." The following year the Railway Express Company lost Hemingway's tackle trunk, which represented years of accumulation. He was so discouraged that he never fished again.

The Preston Jennings fly collection. This collection is made up of more than 1,100 flies that were gathered by Preston Jennings while researching fly-fishing subjects. It includes flies by many of the twentieth century's most famous tiers, including Skues, Gordon, Jennings, La Branche, Hewitt, Harding, Southard, De Feo, and Gill. Jennings wrote *A Book of Trout Flies* (1935), the first comprehensive guide to American insect life and the patterns that emulate it.





A Fly Dresser's Work Bench, oil painting by Catherine Wood (1880–1939) accompanied by five salmon flies from Aberdeen, Scotland. This is a beautiful example of William Cushner's shadowbox-framed work. Cushner (1914–1992) spent years acquiring flies from collectors and tiers and fly-fishing artwork from a variety of sources under the guidance of artists and anglers.

Gordon M. Wickstrom's play, The Great Debate: A Fantasia for Anglers, Being the Imagination of a Contest Between the Two Leading British Anglers of Their Day on the Matter of the Floating Versus the Sunk Trout Fishing Fly. This imagined Halford/Skues debate was first performed on 6 November 2005 in Boulder, Colorado, and subsequently published in 2006 by the Whole and Ancient Company of Anglers and the American Museum of Fly Fishing. Kate Achor would have loved this piece even if the published version hadn't been dedicated to her.

Martin J. Keane's Classic Rods and Rodmakers. Especially in winter, as anglers are contemplating the season ahead, the staff at AMFF receives many e-mail requests to help identify rods, reels, and flies. If Deputy Director Yoshi Akiyama is working on multiple projects, which is often the case, we use the resources at the museum to answer these questions ourselves. Keane's book is always our first stop when it comes to rods. A pristine copy resides safely in the library, but our office editions are lovingly worn through constant use. With insightful text and illuminating historical drawings and photographs, the book begins with early rods and their evolution and goes on to examine the greatest rodbuilders in fly fishing.



Bogdan reel collection display. This was originally curated and created by Yoshi Akiyama as a traveling exhibit that made its debut at the 2007 Heritage Award dinner honoring Stan Bogdan (1918–2011). It includes reels, tools, Stan's fishing hat, and his favorite salmon rod and reel: a three-piece, 11-foot Fenwick fiberglass rod with Bogdan reel model o. His craftsmanship is unparalleled, and his reels are coveted not only for the smoothness of their workings but for their incredible durability.

Mary Orvis Marbury panels. In preparation for the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, Mary Orvis Marbury (1856–1914), daughter of Charles F. Orvis (1831–1915), compiled and created hinged wood panels to represent the Manchester, Vermont–based C. F. Orvis Company. Each panel featured flies tied at the company's fly shop paired with photographs of well-known nineteenth-century fly-fishing locations in the United States and Canada. While conducting research for *Field & Stream* magazine in 1963, Hermann Kessler found these panels in attic space above the Orvis Company rod factory attic. He recognized their historical significance and later approached Orvis President Leigh Perkins about establishing a fly-fishing museum, which led to the founding of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

Jim Hardman

Tom McGuane Seamaster. Writer Tom McGuane's personal tarpon reel is emblematic of the pinnacle of reel making and a superlative artifact from the fascinating period of saltwater fly fishing in the Florida Keys in the late 1960s and 1970s. The Seamaster was invented, designed, and handcrafted by Bob McChristian Jr., who pioneered and promoted light tackle angling in Florida. This 1960s reel is engraved to Tom McGuane.

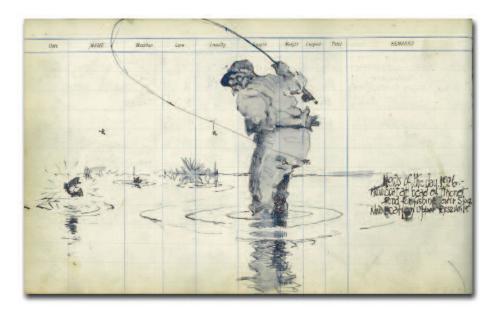




Arnold Gingrich's copy of Walton's Compleat Angler, printed in 1759, the oldest book in our library. Sara Wilcox says, "I scanned the illustrations on a few of its pages several years ago, and it was humbling to know I was holding an object older than the founding of the country I live in."

Frederic M. Halford's annotated copies of the Entomologist's Monthly Magazine, vol. XXV, June and July 1888, nos. 289 and 290, in which he wrote pattern names by the insects listed (see page 9). The description of the [Lang's] lot began, "A unique offering of the utmost importance in angling history, documenting, among other revelations, that October 25th, 1888, marks the very day that Frederic M. Halford (1844–1914) gave intellectual birth to what has since been called 'match the hatch' fly fishing." On that day, Halford met with noted entomologist Reverend Alfred Edwin Eaton (1844–1929), the author of two critical Ephemeridae papers, and with his help matched the often nebulous common names anglers used for the natural flies with specific insects and their scientific names, scribbling his annotations in the margins, producing what biographer Tony Hayter described as "a system of nomenclature and recognition" and beginning a new era in dry-fly fishing.

The line-braiding machine from the Cortland Line Company. In a Winter 2010 article for this journal, Jim Hardman explained, "Manufactured by the New England Butt Company of Providence, Rhode Island, this machine dates from the 1930s. Running sixteen spools of Dacron filament, it produced about 15 yards of braided fly-line core per day. Newer machines are slightly more productive but still look much the same. Plan to watch this machine operate on your next visit to the museum. The spools of Dacron filament follow machined tracks, moving in and out, weaving the advancing filament into braid. The track layout determines the style or pattern of the weave, and tensioning devices control the tightness of the braid. An overhead spool collects the finished braid, storing it in preparation for packaging or for fly-line production."



Frank Benson-illustrated Tihonet Club logbooks. In 2006, the Tihonet Club (Wareham, Massachusetts) donated its annual logbooks—along with art, books, and maps—to the American Museum of Fly Fishing. The artist Frank W. Benson was a member of the Tihonet Club, and his beautifully illustrated notes grace the pages of these logs.



Wes Jordan photo. Yoshi Akiyama loves the aesthetics of this black-and-white photograph, depicting rodmaker Wes Jordan testing a strip of bamboo. While working for Orvis in the early 1940s, Jordan devloped a revolutionary process for constructing bamboo rod blanks with a special phenolic resin-based cement, then impregnating the blank with a Bakelite phenolic resin. The result was a bamboo rod impervious to moisture, cold, heat, and fungus.

Aldo Leopold's three-piece, 8½-foot bamboo E. C. Powell rod, acquired from his son, Carl. Leopold (1887–1948) is the author of *A Sand County Almanac* (published posthumously in 1949) and, as Harry L. Peterson noted in the Fall 2003 issue of this journal, "arguably the most important conservationist of the twentieth century. Leopold's writings and teachings are responsible for helping preserve and restore many of our favorite and most beautiful places to fish. Reading Aldo Leopold enhances our appreciation of our sport and of those beautiful places."

**Spike-mount reel.** This reel is a mysterious design of great age. Possibly of Irish origin, it continued to be made into the 1880s. Instead of the conventional reel foot, there is a spike on the base of the reel that fits through a hole in the rod butt. The reel is then fastened by a wing nut that threads up the spike until the reel is firmly in place.

Late Summer on the Battenkill, oil painting by George Van Hook (b. 1954). Van Hook was raised in Pennsylvania, lived and worked as an artist in the Bay Area of California, then returned to the east coast to settle in Cambridge, New York, about 20 miles southwest of AMFF's home in Manchester, Vermont. He attended Oberlin College and earned his B.A. in art at Humboldt State University. The vibrant work of Van Hook matches his colorful personality and witty charm. He has been featured in En Plein Aire magazine and in cover articles for American Artist magazine multiple times. We are fortunate to display his work at AMFF and grateful to call him a friend.

The Joseph D. Bates Jr. collection. The 303 flies that Joseph D. Bates Jr. selected for the twenty-four color plates in *The Art of the Atlantic Salmon Fly* represent what he believed to be the best he had to offer in his final work. To make his work complete and create his most definitive tribute to the history of the salmon fly and the art of tying it, Joe requested flies from the finest resources he had available and chose others from the thousands of flies he had collected. Unlike the flies used in other books that were either traded or returned to his collection, Joe elected to preserve those in his conclusive work. He had them mounted, framed, and placed in a walnut case, and, together, these framings serve as his final commentary on the salmon fly.

The Dean Sage collection. As John Mundt wrote in the Summer 2006 issue, "After carefully loosing the old leather straps from the crates, Peter [Corbin], Collections Manager Yoshi Akiyama, and I became some of the first anglers in generations to handle the old greenheart and bamboo rods, Vom Hofe reels, and assorted tackle that had sat motionless for decades in a Sage family attic. It had been more than a century since Dean Sage's passing, and it was exciting to ponder that these very rods and reels had once been alive with the pulses of *Salmo salar* tearing silk line across Canada's Restigouche River during the golden age of Atlantic salmon fishing in North America."



The hands of Helen Shaw. In preparation for the 2011 exhibition *A Graceful Rise*, the museum acquired the original black-and-white photos used in Helen Shaw's seminal work *Fly-Tying*. Published in 1963, her instruction book was unique both because it was one of the first flytying books written by a woman, and because the photographs, taken by her husband Hermann Kessler, were from the fly tier's perspective, making it easier for the reader to see and understand the tying process. This particular image features the crop marks added during the layout process.



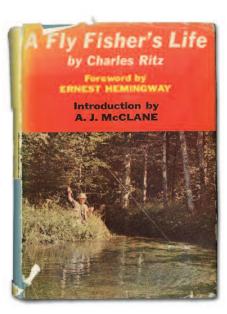


Reel with bas relief. This brass Birmingham reel is from the United Kingdom, ca. 1880. The maker is unknown, as is whether the bas relief scene on the side plates were originally part of the reel or a later modification. Other reels may be more important, but this is one of the most striking reels in our collection.

**Pinky Gillum rod.** H. S. "Pinky" Gillum was so called because of his red hair. He is considered one of the most illustrious rod makers simply because of the time he put into each rod. He pioneered, along with Jim Payne, the method of oven-tempering cane rather than tempering it with direct flame. He only built 2,000 rods in his lifetime, and John Atherton declared, "If I could only have one rod . . . I would ask Pinky Gillum to make it for me."

Russ Peak Zenith Fiberglass rod. Russ Peak is considered the finest maker of fiberglass fly rods. In 1939, he began producing the Zenith model out of his home in Pasadena, California, and demand led to the opening of a small shop. In *The Joys of Trout*, Arnold Gingrich remarks "The Stradivari of the glass rod, Russ Peak is to glass as Paul Young was to bamboo, a complete master, both knowing and caring." Peak built rods for fly-fishing luminaries including Gingrich, Lefty Kreh, and President Dwight Eisenhower.

Charles Ritz's A Fly Fisher's Life by Charles Ritz (Max Reinhardt Ltd., 1959). Ritz (1891–1976) was best known to some as chairman of the Paris Ritz, but better known to others as a passionate student of fly fishing. Ritz did extensive work on rod design and casting style—his "high-speed, high-line" method is still widely practiced, and Pezon et Michel, the French tackle firm, marketed his Parabolic rods for many years. He was also instrumental in developing the modern design of tapered fly-fishing leaders. A Fly Fisher's Life includes one of Sam Pitcher's favorite quotes, "The charm of fly fishing lies in our numerous failures and the unfortunate circumstances that must be overcome." A photo on the cover of early editions of the book includes Ritz's Tyrolean hat ("festooned with pins from all the clubs he joined, which I hand-carried from my lunatic young friend Pierre Affre," reports Nick Lyons) and landing net, both in our collection.





A bound manuscript, "Fishicians." In it, Dr. Walter de Forest Day describes in detail his sojourn to the Neversink River in May 1865 "in the company of an elite group of medical piscators," explains David B. Ledlie in a 1977 article. "The manuscript is laced with humor, contains many scholarly quotations, and reference is made in one instance of the inimitable George Washington Bethune—the 'American Editor' of America's first edition of Walton's *Complete Angler* (1847)." Pen-and-ink illustrations were provided by two of the party.

Bing Crosby's pipe, flies, hat, Meisselbach fly reel, and Orvis fly rod. One of America's best-known entertainers, Crosby (1904–1977) was also an enthusiastic fly fisherman. He was especially successful at fishing for Atlantic salmon in Canada and Iceland, often attributing his prowess to his ability to listen to what local anglers had to say in nearby tackle shops. During the late 1960s, Crosby worked vigorously for the protection of the Atlantic salmon from high seas netting. In fact, he became so identified with the battle that his more than 800 recordings were banned in Denmark. Sam Pitcher notes that these items—all donated by Crosby's wife, Kathryn—were the first items to catch her eye at the museum.

**J. R. Harris flies.** These are some of the oldest in our collection, with the earliest dating back to 1789. Arranged chronologically, they span more than a century, ending with a group of salmon flies tied ca. 1916. In between are wet flies, dry flies, and salmon flies of various sizes and colors, representing more than a hundred years' worth of fishing. They hail from the British Isles, particularly Ireland and England, and most are in excellent condition. However, what makes these flies so meaningful is not just their age, but the documentation accompanying so many of them. More than three-quarters of these flies include some form of paperwork—usually either a bill of sale or a letter—identifying the year the fly was tied. Having that kind of provenance for such a variety of fly types provides us with valuable historical insight into the evolution of flies, hooks, and leaders from the late eighteenth century to the early twentieth.

Tenkara rod with carved tip case. An 11-foot, 8-inch, 3-piece raw bamboo rod, wrapped with black silk and finished with a clear lacquer. Sara Wilcox notes, "I've never fished with a Tenkara rod, nor do I know much about this particular type of angling. I just love the intricacy of the carvings on the case."

**Fin-Nor Wedding Cake** reel, Gar Wood Jr.'s prototype machined aluminum saltwater reel. The Fin Nor Company contracted to build four sizes of this classic "Wedding Cake" style reel, produced between 1967 and 1976. The #3 reel became a go-to tarpon reel and the standard for future big-game reels that took abuse from fish and resisted corrosion.

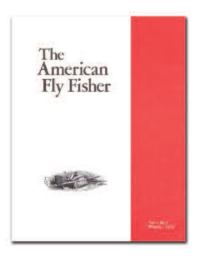
**Nick Lyons Library.** Nick Lyons, the founder of Lyons Press and a literary icon in the sport of fly fishing, donated his personal book collection in 2001. Among the nearly 1,300 volumes are Norman Maclean's *A River Runs Through It and Other Stories* (1976 signed first edition), George La Branche's *The Salmon and the Dry Fly* (1924 signed limited edition, 203/755), and Dame Juliana Berners's *A Treatyse of Fysshynge wyth an Angle* (republished in 1903 from the original 1496 text).



Wulff one-piece rod. Lee Wulff caught a record 6-pound trout in Canada using a one-piece 6-foot, 4-weight Orvis bamboo fly rod, proving that you don't have to have heavy gear to fish large salmon—any trout fisherman can go salmon fishing without getting a new heavy rod. According to Wulff, "If I can do this, any trout fisherman can do the same!"

The Battenkill, oil on canvas, ca. 1952 by renowned sporting artist Ogden Pleissner (1905–1983). In his words, it is "the mood of the picture . . . that is most important." In 2008–2009, the museum curated an exhibition dedicated to Pleissner's work and life. "This particular painting depicts a perfect day on our local trout stream," notes Sarah Foster (see page 6).

Lee Cuddy's rod. Lee Cuddy caught the first Atlantic sailfish on a fly—a 47-pounder off Islamorada, Florida—on 4 June 1964. The 9-foot fiberglass rod was donated to the collection by Lefty Kreh.



The American Fly Fisher, the (mostly) quarterly journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing. Volume 1, number 1, published in 1974, begins with "Some Trout Fishing Memories" by Theodore Gordon. The journal features articles written by some of the most respected fly-fishing historians today. There is no other fly-fishing publication like it.

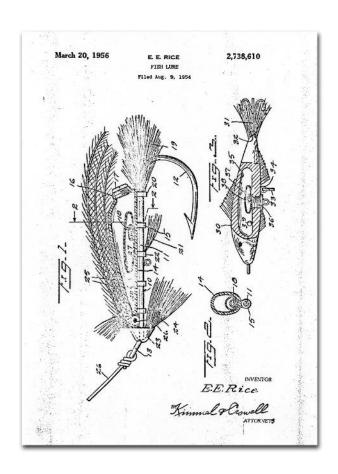
Helen Shaw presentation flies for Arnold Gingrich. This presentation case, displaying 100 flies tied by Helen Shaw, was given to *Esquire* founder Arnold Gingrich for the magazine's fiftieth birthday. Upon realizing what he had in his hands, Gingrich tearfully said, "I have never had a Helen Shaw fly: now I have a hundred. Nobody's worth that much." Sara Wilcox's favorite of the flies may be the one Shaw created to emulate *Esquire*'s logo, pictured below.



Jack Gartside fly collection. This collection includes more than 100 flies. Pete Nardini, our former communications coordinator, says, "I'm from Boston, so naturally I gravitated to our native son and everyone's fly-tying cabbie. The skill and detail that go into every one of Jack Gartside's flies—from fresh water to salt water—is incredible. He was a master at taking ordinary household objects like foam and making them into brilliant flies that produced a lot of fish. You can find little Easter eggs hidden in his flies that serve a purpose, either to shave weight or make the fly dance a little nicer in the water . . . to go along with a clever name."

**H. L. Leonard reel.** This model features composition panels of dramatically swirling red pigment against a black background. One of the advantages of the 1877 patent is a no-tangle handle design in which the handle travels within a formed rim. This improvement can be seen in nearly all Leonard reels.

Our permanent collection boasts more than 500 original and reproduction patent certificates. **This jumping bean fishing lure patent** (number 2,738,610) was filed on 9 August 1954. Edwin Everett Rice of Hamilton, Ohio, decided that the unusual attribute of the Mexican jumping bean could be used to the advantage of the angler. This lure became nothing more than a novelty item in the United States in the late 1950s.



Babe Ruth's bamboo E. F. Payne Rod. When welcoming younger visitors to the museum, this is one of the first things Sam Pitcher points out. "Every kid who loves baseball has heard of the legendary Babe Ruth," she says.

Hewitt reel. Edward Ringwood Hewitt (1866–1957) is one of the great figures of twentieth-century angling. He wrote voluminously on trout and salmon fishing, developed the Bivisible and Neversink Skater dry flies, popularized nymph fishing in this country, was an early exponent of dry-fly fishing for salmon, and was one of the first to help promote catch-and-release fishing. It is currently believed that Hewitt built twenty-two fly reels, mainly for friends and fellow members of the Anglers' Club of New York. At present, only seven Hewitt reels are known to exist, including the one once owned by Maxine Atherton, wife of artist and author John Atherton, pictured on page 3.

H. L. Leonard casting competition medals from Berlin and **London.** Aside from the beautiful 1800s craftsmanship that went into the medals themselves, these artifacts are historically significant in that they document the rise of Americans on the international fly-casting tournament scene. H. L. Leonard's numerous medals in our collection prove that he was equally as accomplished a caster as he was a fly-rod builder. He even created something of a family dynasty that was continued by his son-in-law, Hiram Hawes, who took home medals in London and New York City casting competitions.





The original flies shot as color plates for Mary Orvis Marbury's Favorite Flies and Their Histories. Mary Orvis Marbury (1856–1914) assumed responsibility for fly production at her father's company in 1876. In 1892, she compiled Favorite Flies and Their Histories, a book that featured fly patterns sent to her by anglers from all over the country. It was the first serious attempt by anyone to standardize the names of fly patterns in America. In the Winter 1998 issue of this journal, author John Betts wrote, "Two wooden boxes at the American Museum of Fly Fishing hold treasures more than 100 years old: the original flies used for the Milton Bradley (lithographers) color plates in Mary Orvis Marbury's 1892 book, Favorite Flies and Their Histories. These flies, sewn to framed cards, are the exact models for the color plates. Classic salmon and trout patterns are featured, as well as flies that are distinctly American: fancy lake and bass flies." These are a few of Kate Achor's favorite things.

John Quincy Adams's fly book. Son of the second president, Adams (1767–1848) spent most of his life in preparation for public life. After serving in Congress, he became secretary of state to James Monroe and was a major architect of the Monroe Doctrine. He became president in 1825, serving one term. In 1831, he was reelected to Congress, where he made himself known as an individual voice working toward the abolition of slavery. When his fly book was donated to the museum, it was found to have loose tobacco sprinkled among the pages—most likely to act as an insect repellant.



Prince Charles's fishing vest. Thanks to the efforts of Museum Trustee John Mundt, who wished to see an example of royal tackle permanently housed at the museum, in 2001 we acquired a vest that belonged to Charles, Prince of Wales (see page 7). Mundt wrote to the prince's private secretary outlining this hope and describing the museum and its collection. He concluded his letter by saying, "any assistance that you could lend to this endeavor would be greatly appreciated by all who love the beauty and history of this noble sport." A few months later, the museum received a wellworn fishing vest accompanied by a letter from Nigel Baker, assistant private secretary to the Prince of Wales. Baker explained that after a recent fishing outing, Prince Charles asked him to send the vest to the museum, stating, "The jacket is a trusted friend that has stood the Prince of Wales in good stead on many expeditions on the Dee and the Spey, and His Royal Highness is delighted that it may now find a suitable home to do justice to the great service it has done him." Baker concludes, "This comes with the Prince of Wales's best wishes to you and all American Fly Fishermen."

Glenn Miller's bamboo Paul Young Rod. Glenn Miller (1904–1944) was a big-band musician and bandleader who, as the leader of Glenn Miller and His Orchestra, racked up twenty-three chart-topping hits in just four years (1939–1942). Miller joined the U.S. Army in 1942, was transferred into the Army Air Forces, and created the Army Air Force Band. His plane disappeared over the English Channel on 15 December 1944, and his body was never recovered.

Vom Hofe Peerless reel. The Peerless reel is a rare little classic by one of America's best reel makers, Edward Vom Hofe.

**Livingston fly wallet.** This collection of fly wallets belonged to Robert LaRhett Livingston (1844-1907) and his son Robert Forsyth Livingston (1886–1950). Robert Forsyth Livingston, a resident of Long Island, worked in the marine insurance industry, built his own sailboats (as well as beautiful cabinets and weather vanes), and fished his entire life. What makes these wallets significant is that the Livingstons chose to inscribe them with memories from their fishing trips. Everything from the big catch to the inevitable fight with an elm tree was captured with incredibly detailed sketches ranging from the ultrarealistic to cartoon-style figures, all between beautiful vintage flies. The Livingstons even went to such lengths to make paper cutouts of their catches.



Project Healing Waters fly-fishing fly plate. These beautiful and patriotic flies, favorites of Kelsey McBride, were created to honor those who served and sacrificed for our country. The designer of the fly plate and creator of the Purple Heart Fly is eighty-year-old John Gort of Port Angeles, Washington. Mr. Gort recruited and trained tiers from the nine-ty-member Olympic Peninsula Fly Fishers Club to design and create each fly to complement its campaign theme. Sixteen one-of-a-kind flies were designed, tied, and mounted with the companion campaign ribbon. Because each fly is an original design using many hard-to-find materials, the project took hundreds of man-hours and nearly a year to complete. The dedication and talent of the club members was key to the success of this project. The fly plate was given to Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing in 2009 and currently resides in the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

# A Golden Jubilee Toast to the American Museum of Fly Fishing

by John Mundt



Poor Macbeth: his distillation of life's purpose and meaning—"but a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more . . . a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing"—scours the darkest depths of despair. Of course, life on earth is ephemeral, but its purpose can be meaningful, signifying much. There are moments worth celebrating.

Museums are meaningful, and their purpose is significant. They enrich lives by preserving what was important to the poor players who strutted and fretted before us, bring enjoyment and fellowship to the living during their hours upon the stage, and continue to tell the tale to those walking shadows who follow. Tales that evoke meaning are not told by idiots. The American Museum of Fly Fishing is such a purposeful place, and today, in 2018, I raise my glass in honor of its golden jubilee!

Looking back over the three decades that have passed since I first unlatched the museum's front door at its former home on the corner of Main and Seminary, what I see in 2018 is an affirmation of the prospect that wide eyes first held in 1988. The place was, and still is, alive. I remember the revolving art exhibit openings by Peter Corbin, John Swan, Thomas Aquinas Daly, and Adriano Manocchia (to name a few), where casual summer cocktail receptions kicked off each event. There were tying and casting demonstrations by the sport's luminaries on the front and side lawns, book signings, and the annual fund-raising dinner at the old Equinox before it underwent major renovations in 1991. These were the waning days before the Internet epoch, when print on paper and verbal communication reigned supreme.

The people and places I've been introduced to through my association with the museum have brought great joy and satisfaction to my own hour upon the stage. Many of the players are still with us, and many have passed. They are too numerous to recount in a general reflection such as this, but they are there;

honored and preserved in our collection, on our walls, and in the pages of the *American Fly Fisher*. The names and faces of museum founders, staff, volunteers, trustees, dinner committees, authors, artists, tiers, rod builders, donors, honorees, and the subjects of the museum's researches are all there in both hard copy and online editions of our journal.



The author displays a sculpture by Trustee Walt Matia at the Heritage event on 29 January 1998.



Attendees take in the panoramic view at the museum's 25th anniversary gala at Hildene on 21 August 1993.



Nick Lyons (left) and Leigh Perkins share a smile at the museum's 25th anniversary gala at Hildene on 21 August 1993.

Those younger eyes full of prospect were dazzled further on 21 August 1993 during the museum's silver anniversary gala held at Robert Todd Lincoln's Hildene. It was a Great Gatsby—like setting on the rear terrace of that grand estate, where museum supporters and honored guests reveled together on that late-summer evening as we took in the view across the Batten Kill Valley. I recall the humorous remarks of the late Jim Bashline as master of ceremonies, the warmth and depth of Nick Lyons's reflections as keynote speaker, and the quiet gaze of Leigh Perkins with what appeared to be a sense of wonderment at how far the museum had come. That same year, journal editor Margot Page reported that the 2,000-page milestone had been reached in the *American Fly Fisher*. This year, Kate Achor, who took over for Margot in 1996, will be editing its 5,600th page!

By 2003, my service to the museum had grown to include journal contributor, dinner committee chair, and trustee. In that year, shovels hit the dirt to break ground for the museum's new and expanded quarters at 4070 Main Street. It was a major undertaking. A vivid recollection from that period was when then-President David Walsh blocked the door of the trustee meeting and exclaimed that no one would pass by him until the deal was done. Thankfully, it was done, and our present home is a beautiful and spacious one with modern amenities located in the heart of Manchester.

Attempting to completely capture who and what we are in these brief remarks is an impossibility, but it is well stated in our North American Reciprocal Museum Association description (https://narmassociation.org/the-american-museum-of-fly-fishing-2/):

The American Museum of Fly Fishing was established in 1968 in Manchester, Vermont, by a group of passionate and enthusiastic anglers who believed that the history of angling was an important part of American culture and tradition. The museum was

created to serve as an institution to research, preserve, and interpret the treasures of angling history.

Visitors to the museum can view in-house exhibits, participate in gallery programs, and make appointments to use the library or access the collections for research. . . . Some of the greatest masters are represented in the collection, including rod makers Hiram Leonard and Paul Young; reel makers Edward and Julius Vom Hofe and Stan Bogdan; fly tiers Helen Shaw and Theodore Gordon; and artists Ogden M. Pleissner and Stanley Meltzoff.

No disagreement here, but I would add that we are also a vibrant community united by a sport—no, I'll dare say an art—that has been codified and practiced for half a millennium. If we were to accept for argument's sake that the modern era of fly fishing can be traced back to 1848–1849 with the construction of the first six-strip split-cane fly rod by Samuel Phillippe, the American Museum of Fly Fishing has been witness and participant for more than a quarter of that time. It continues to stand watch over the sport's history and its developments today.

This is a year-long golden jubilee for the museum with a calendar full of special events and exhibits for all to share and enjoy. It is also much more than a celebration of a major anniversary; it is a tribute to the work and dedication of the many who brought us to where we are today. We've faced periods of challenge, and occasional division within our ranks, but it is a testament that over time we have endured to nurture and sustain an institution that has, and will, continue to flourish. God willing, I will look forward to celebrating the seventy-fifth and one hundredth anniversaries with vigor.

Cheers!

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Margot Page

John Mundt is a former trustee of and loyal friend to the museum.

# AMFF Celebrates Its Fiftieth Anniversary in New York City

CROWD OF MORE than 120 people gathered at the Racquet and Tennis Club in New York City on May 3 to celebrate AMFF's fiftieth anniversary at our annual dinner and auction. Leadership Circle guests were graciously welcomed to the cocktail reception hosted by AMFF Heritage Award recipient Paul Volcker and his wife, Anke. Attendees were able to enjoy a drink or two on a sultry evening and peruse a plethora of auction items kindly donated to benefit the museum.

AMFF Izaak Walton Award recipient James Prosek was a warm, thoughtful, and humorous master of ceremonies who also recited "The Song of Wandering Aengus" by William Butler Yeats. He recognized AMFF former and current trustees, award winners, ambassadors, and Anglers' Circle members in attendance, and was even able to acknowledge two of the original AMFF board members in the audience: Leigh Perkins and Ted Rogowski.

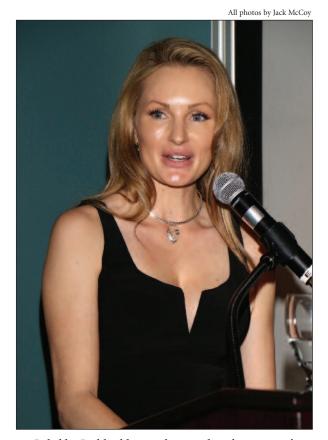
The live auction was both entertaining and lively under the gavel of museum friend and advisor Nick Dawes from Heritage Auctions. An especially touching moment occurred when longtime trustee Foster Bam made a very generous bid on—then donated back to the museum's collection—a fiftieth-anniversary watercolor painted by Deputy Director Yoshi Akiyama. (See the cover of this issue for a reproduction.)

Prosek then went on to introduce the featured speakers. AMFF ambassador Rebekka Redd—acclaimed traveling fly angler and CEO and founder of North Shore Women's Fly Fishing Association—took the podium to talk about how fly fishing has shaped and influenced her. "Just as my history in this world grounds and gives me roots, so does the American Museum of Fly Fishing and our fly-fishing history," she said. "The museum is celebrating fifty years of looking back, a strong and incredible collection of where our sport comes from, and where it's going. We embrace our history so we can confidently welcome our future. Most of us strive to live in the now. We strive to forget the past, to not worry about the future, and to focus on living in the moment. But how do we know where we are going without understanding the history of the things, people, and places we love the most? By looking to the past, we can better understand the present and predict the future."

Two AMFF Heritage Award recipients addressed the crowd. First Lady of Fly Fishing Joan Wulff received three standing ovations as she shared her thoughts on a lifetime of angling. Writer and publisher Nick Lyons, who gave an address in 1993 to celebrate our twenty-fifth year, spoke eloquently and lyrically about the museum. (You can find their remarks on pages 25 and 26.)

The evening culminated in a very special announcement. AMFF Trustee (and former president) Richard Tisch pledged up to \$100,000 in matching funds for gifts made to our endowment by our October 2018 members meeting. Please contact us at amff@amff.org to make a donation, or see the enclosed envelope for more details.

As always, but especially in our fiftieth year, we would like to thank our master of ceremonies James Prosek; speakers Nick



Rebekka Redd addresses the crowd at the museum's fiftieth anniversary celebration in New York City.

Lyons, Rebekka Redd, and Joan Wulff; auctioneer Nick Dawes; honorary event chairs Leigh and Annie Perkins; event committee Gary Grant, Karen Kaplan, Nick Lyons, David Nichols, and Richard Tisch; and the following auction donors and providers who helped make the evening such a success: Yoshi Akiyama, All Waters Fly Fishing & Guide Services, Arms Reach Yacht, Berkshire Rivers, Bighorn Angler and Steve Galletta, Drew Chicone, Mark Comora, Cortland Line Company, Tom Davidson, Nick Dawes, Deerfield Fly Rods, Harry Desmond, Paul Dixon, Douglas Outdoors, E. & J. Gallo Winery, El Pescador, Rachel Finn, FisheWear, Brita Fordice, Adam Franceschini, Sulu Grant, Luther Hall, Jim Heckman, Icy Palmer Candle Co., J. H. Becker Rodworks, Johnson Outdoors, Karen Kaplan, Carmine Lisella, Walter Matia, Ocean Reef Club, Orvis, Flip Pallot, REC Components, Restigouche River Lodge, Roger Riccardi, Rio Products, Royal Wulff Products, Frances Sargent, Scientific Anglers, Taf Schaefer Designs, Thomas & Thomas, Three Forks Ranch, Tightlines Jewelry, Wild Rivers Press, George Van Hook, and Joan Wulff.

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Clockwise from above: James Prosek ably served as master of ceremonies for the evening.

Founding Trustee Ted Rogowski takes a well-deserved bow.

Cocktail reception hosts Anke and Paul Volcker.

Auctioneer Nick Dawes working his magic for AMFF.

Jennifer Smith, Ann Franzen, and Sulu Grant enjoying the view from the Racquet and Tennis Club.

Board President Karen Kaplan, AMFF ambassador Drew Chicone, and Susan Chicone chat before dinner.











# Still Our Heart, Our Memory

## by Nick Lyons

WENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO I confessed here that on *my* twenty-fifth anniversary, I fished on the French Riviera for some elusive mullet. My fly was a hank of my wife's twenty-fifth-anniversary sweater. I can report precisely eleven follows to the Lyons Weed Fly. I noted then that the museum's vast collection lacked this unique artifact, and I

note now that it lacks my bare Carlisle hook and Lyons Pellet Fly. These are the core of the two little fish tales I'll tell because I'm beyond embarrassment at my age and value full disclosure and transparency.

I caught my first trout when I was seven in a low Catskill creek. I was a cunning little monster and caught everything that moved frogs, dace, worms, crayfish, newts, grasshoppers, beetles-and used most for bait. I even made money on my enterprise, selling the little frogs to the hotel comedian, Pitzy Katz, who put them beneath the turned-down cups at dinner. Later, I collected scrap fur in the garment district, traded it with Craig Mathews for flies, flooded the market with a large bag of nutria, and drew the admiration of Paul Volcker—economic thinkers both, deep calling unto deep. But I could not, after three days of trying, catch the strange fish whose snout protruded from under a log brace beneath a wood bridge. Not until I strapped an outsized Carlisle hook to an alder branch, slipped the hook into the fish's mouth, and yanked. It was a gorgeous trout, my first. I lied that I had caught it on a worm.

Thereafter I became an upright citizen and abided by all local mores and the coaching of my higher angels. I happily fished the Kennet in Berkshire with only a dry fly, upstream, to a rising trout I had to see before it saw me.

Then, a few years ago, I added more mendacity to my piscatorial sins. My late friend Knox Burger, one of the finest and toughest literary agents, was nearing his last days. He had shrunk to less than a hundred pounds and was mostly blind. He loved fly fishing, so I took him to a neighbor's spring pond but warned him that the gargantuan rainbow trout loved LIVER PELLETS more than delicious PMDs.

He was not to worry.

I had invented the Lyons Pellet Fly, made by Magic-gluing a no. 17 fine PrimaDoofus hook to a rounded piece of wine cork.

"No hamburger!" Knox barked. "Only flies."

He wore a T-shirt that proclaimed HONEST PROSE AND NERVES OF STEEL.



Nick Lyons at the museum's fiftieth-anniversary celebration in New York City. Photo by Jack McCoy.

I tied on one fly after the other, for an hour. Not a follow. Then I turned aside, attached the brilliant Lyons Pellet Fly, and naturally, on his first cast, he hooked a splendid silver thing the size of an otter, plump on pellets, the naturals here.

The fish rocketed away, leapt, and I grabbed Knox's belt so the fish wouldn't pull my frail old friend in.

When the great trout was in the big muskie net my neighbor kept, Knox passed his hand solemnly over its sleek body and growled triumphantly, "On a fly!"

I growled back, lying in my teeth, a big "Yes."

These auspicious events bookend my fishing life—from gigging and mendacity to faux flies and mendacity—and though neither the Carlisle hook nor the Pellet Fly nor the Lyons Weed Fly are in the museum collection, I would think less of this great place if they were. Its vast holdings and its commitment for fifty years to the history of fly fishing, to

the preservation of its words and images and artifacts, and the regular profiling in its fine magazine of the many folk who have contributed to our textured legacy—these and so much more have made it unique in the world.

But it is more. It is indispensable. As I said a quarter of a century ago, and believe more so today when I fish so much less, "No sport lives daily in its heritage more intimately than fly fishing."

The museum is the guardian of that vast heritage. No place protects more fully and with more care and imagination the astonishingly diverse world of fly fishing—what has been, what is, and what should be—than our museum. It is an intrepid guardian of our rivers, without which we would have little fly fishing. There should be more women fly fishing, of course, and the museum's *Graceful Rise* exhibit was a great new initiative among many.

So all thanks from my heart, and from everyone who fly fishes, to its staff, its officers, and to its essential band of generous donors.

People die. Events fade. Memory can live.

The museum, celebrating fifty remarkable years of definition and acquisition and growth, remains our heart, our vision, and our vital memory.

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Nick Lyons founded his eponymous publishing company almost forty years ago. He is author of more than twenty books (mostly about fly fishing) and hundreds of articles. In 1993, Nick delivered the museum's twenty-fifth anniversary address in Manchester. To have him address us again on our fiftieth anniversary is a great honor.

# The Magic of Fly Fishing

## by Joan Wulff

TFEEL VERY HONORED to have been invited to be a part of this fiftieth-anniversary celebration. This museum is vital to our sport, and I hope it has

no limit of years in preserving and sharing our history with coming generations.

Fifty years for the museum, eighty-plus years for me. My first conscious thought about fishing occurred at the end of a summer's evening on Greenwood Lake in New Jersey. I was six or seven and was invited to go bass fishing with my dad and mom. Dad fished with a fly rod; Mom rowed the boat. Not being a fisherman or a good boat rower, Mom was always too close or too far from the lily pads, as dad constantly reminded her.

With a mouse imitation bass bug, Dad cast into pockets in the lily pads. He'd let it sit until all of the disturbance rings had disappeared. Then he would twitch the rod and line and hop the fly back toward the boat. I watched and watched, in anticipation, and finally there was an explosion of water as a largemouth bass took the fly. To my young eyes, I saw it as a monster that lived in black water and did acrobatic jumps. When the fish was close to the boat, Dad handed me the rod. I didn't know what to do; I didn't keep the line tight, I just stared at the great head

with the mouse hanging in its mouth until, of course, the mouse floated free. I had lost Dad's fish! This tearful kid was promised that we'd get another, but we didn't that night.

However, something had happened to me. I couldn't wait to go fishing again but, more importantly, responding to Mom's experience as the boatman, the strong thought formed in my young mind: "It's better to be the fisherman than the rower."

And so I am: Lee Wulff tied flies for me for twenty-three years, and Ted Rogowski has tied for me for the past fifteen. I'm a lucky gal. The fifty years of the museum that we are celebrating are ones I consider the prime years of our sport—the years in which what was there to be discovered



Joan Wulff speaks at the museum's fiftieth-anniversary celebration in New York City. Photo by Jack McCoy.

and developed was! Those years were fertile for me personally as I followed my passion to analyze the mechanics of fly casting and created a language to go with them so I could be a better instructor in our school.

It was Lee and Nick Lyons who told me I had to write that first book. These were also the years in which Nick's own writings and publishing efforts were securing fly fishing's place in literature. As you know, no other sport has as much literature as does fly fishing. Thank you, Nick.

When I entered this sport, it was a man's sport. There were very few women with fly rods in their hands, and men were not particularly welcoming to them. I was accepted because I could cast.

Two things influenced women's readiness to be fly fishers over these fifty years:

one was the woman's movement for independence in the 1970s, and the other was Robert Redford's film [A River Runs Through It] in 1992. That film put more women than men in our school for twelve whole years. The effect has lasted: women make up close to half of our students now, and they embrace the sport for the same reasons as do men.

And men now offer a welcoming hand.

The museum's recognition of nearly fifty women in the wonderful exhibit *A Graceful Rise* in 2011 focused on women who had distinguished themselves in various aspects of fly fishing. There are a lot more now, and it is wonderful for me to have lived long enough to see this evolution. I wasn't sure I would. It was a long wait.

As I have said many times, I am an ordinary woman who has had an extraordinary life through the magic of fly fishing. It is a sport that, like art, crosses all social levels. And it's allowed me to bond with some of the best people in the world, including Paul Volcker, who, by the way, is the only angler I know who can make a 70-foot roll cast without raising his arm to begin.

You are the people I love, and I am grateful to have been with you for most of my life.

Cheers!

Joan Wulff has been a national casting champion, a book author and magazine columnist, and founder and teacher at the Wulff Fly Fishing School. She's been inducted into the IGFA Hall of Fame and is the recipient of the Federation of Fly Fishers Lifetime Achievement Award. Joan lives in Livingston Manor with her husband, Ted Rogowski, one of the museum's original trustees.





Kelly Bedford teaches Scott how to tie a fly at the Frequent Fly Tier event on March 10.

## Frequent Fly Tier

On Saturday, March 10, AMFF hosted Frequent Fly Tier, a gallery program with tiers Kelly Bedford and Paul Sinicki. Leanne and Scott drove from Lee, Massachusetts, to tie their first flies ever: Woolly Buggers. Scott told us that his grandfather loved tying flies, but when he was a young boy, he never got to the point of wanting to learn and now felt like he'd missed out. When he saw that we were offering a fly-tying lesson, he jumped at the opportunity. Kelly and Paul were great at teaching these first-time fly tiers. Scott and Leanne really enjoyed it and couldn't thank Kelly and Paul enough for their patience. Scott was really happy for the chance to see and learn what his grandfather had been interested in for so many years.

#### Recent Donations to the Collection

**John Zimmer Jr.** of Churchville, Maryland, donated a Seamaster tarpon reel. **Flip Pallot** of Miami, Florida, sent us his fishing pliers, fishing cap, leader wallet, and Costa sunglasses, as well as a copy of Neal and Linda Rogers's book, *Flip Pallot's Memories, Mangroves, and Magic* (The Lyons Press, 1997).

Lance Leach of Albuquerque, New Mexico, donated flies tied by George Grant of Butte, Montana: Black Jack, Dr. Mummy, Gray Featherback Nymph, Rough Hair Nymph, and Skycomish Sunrise. Rhey Plumley of South Burlington, Vermont, gave us a brochure about the Richardson Chest Fly Box (ref. no. 2222).

**John Dreyer** of Ridgewood, New Jersey, sent us a collection of nine photographs of Bill Curtis. And **Chuck Dinkel** of Ijamsville, Maryland, donated four pencil drawings of flies tied by Austin Hogan.

#### **Upcoming Events**

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

#### All year

Free Fridays for Our 50th Complimentary entrance to the museum to celebrate AMFF's 50th anniversary

#### August 10

Community Celebration for 50th Anniversary 5:00 p.m.–7:00 p.m.

#### August 11

11th Annual Fly-Fishing Festival 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

#### September 20

Anglers' Club of New York Event New York City

#### September 22

Smithsonian Magazine Museum Day Live! Free admission with a Museum Day Live! ticket

#### October 20

**Annual Members Meeting** 

#### November 1

2018 Izaak Walton Award Honoring Rachel Finn Boston College Club

#### November 8

Members-Only Event AMFF Confidential: Behind the Scenes at the Museum 2:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.

#### December 1

Hooked on the Holidays 1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.

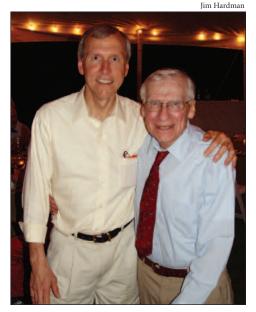
Always check our website (www.amff.org) for additions, updates, and more information or contact (802) 362-3300 or amff@amff.org. The museum's e-mail newsletter offers upto-date news and event information. To subscribe, look for the link on our website or contact the museum.



# A Message from the President

AMERICAN FLY FISHING

The original board of trustees in 1970. First row, from left: Dick Finlay, D. Clarke Corkran, Alvin Grove, Ted Rogowski, and Wes Jordan. Second row, from left: Milford K. Smith, Hermann Kessler, Clayton Shappy, Leigh Perkins, Donald DuBois, and Capt. Raymond Kotrla. Third row, from left: Austin Hogan, Ben Schley, Jane Gingrich, Arnold Gingrich, and Harry Darbee. Not pictured: Warren Shepard and Gene Anderegg.



Trustee Richard Tisch and the late Stan Bogdan at the museum's grand reopening celebration on 11 June 2005.

IFTY YEARS AGO, Hermann Kessler had the idea of creating a museum devoted to fly fishing—to preserving and exhibiting the artifacts and art, the legendary stories, the flies and photographs of our beloved sport—and Leigh Perkins made it happen. In 1966, the year after Leigh acquired the Orvis Company and became its president, Kessler suggested the idea to him at a Theodore Gordon Flyfishers meeting. Leigh agreed not only to donate the Orvis collection to the new museum, but also to solicit fly-fishing memorabilia through Orvis publications. The first museum opened in a room at Orvis in 1967. Today it exists in a landmark building in Manchester, Vermont, and hosts the largest collection of flyfishing artifacts in North America, a world-class fly-fishing library, and a preeminent art collection.

After a half century, we at the museum have much for which to be grateful. Extraordinary executive, curatorial, staff, and board dedication and leadership through the years have brought us to this milestone. Thousands of visitors have viewed our collections and returned to see them again. Our journal, the *American Fly Fisher*, has become a legendary literary repository for the scholarship and art of angling. It embodies the essence of our museum, is indeed its true north.

Our progress over the years has been rich and varied: fly-fishing festivals; Heritage events honoring legends of our sport; acclaimed exhibits, including *A Graceful Rise*, which honors women who fly fish; the Anglers Circle, our group of young leaders who are showing us the way through film digitization; an exhibit on salt water to launch in 2018; and our

ambassadors, who anchor us in regions where fishing happens. Our progress in collection acquisition and social networking is remarkable for a tiny museum.

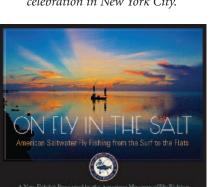
These elements testify to our development and advance, but nothing would happen without the individuals whose stellar contributions have lit the way forward. From Yoshi Akiyama, whose brilliant designs and superb taste have shown the world a beautiful museum, to trustees such as Richard Tisch, whose wisdom has guided the museum through its most difficult times, to Gary Grant, who, like his legendary father, Gardner, brings us extraordinary leadership skills, to Fred Polhemus, whose out-of-the-box thinking will make us embrace the twenty-first century, to Bob Scott, who has been the museum's premier éminence grise, to Woods King, who has offered everlasting stalwart leadership and support, and, of course, to Sarah Foster, the museum's executive director, whose efforts drive us forward. We are, of course, nothing without our enthusiastic membership, without whose strong and supportive help over all these last years we would not have existed. From Hermann Kessler and Leigh Perkins, to the very few I mention here, there have been hundreds whose devotion to and passion for this museum have brought us to fifty years. To all of them and to the many who will come in the next fifty years, thank you, and happy birthday to the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

> KAREN KAPLAN PRESIDENT, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

# A Standing Ovation



Founding trustee Leigh Perkins reminisces with Trustee Wayne Nordberg at the museum's fiftieth anniversary celebration in New York City.





The exhibition poster for On Fly in the Salt.



The Selch-Bakwin Fly Room.



Ernest Schwiebert, Bill Herrick, and Gardner Grant at the museum's grand reopening celebration 11 June 2005.

**▼**O MARK OUR fiftieth anniversary, we envisioned celebrating such a milestone in a variety of ways throughout the year. You only turn fifty once, right? With a lineup of events, exhibits, interviews, and articles, we set off. Driven by an editorial schedule, the wonderful compilation featured in this issue of the American Fly Fisher was first on the docket. It was a team effort. We perused the unique items that make up our collection, remembered the significant moments in our institution's history, and chatted with those who have lived through the chapters of AMFF's story. Next, we planned the annual gala in New York City. Guests arrived, the energy was extraordinary, and we were treated to words by some of our greatest influencers: Joan Wulff, Nick Lyons, Rebekka Redd, and James Prosek. It was during that event—with people who had gathered from across the country (from Florida to Maine, California to Canada) to celebrate the museum's accomplishments and its history—that it became clear just how bright our future truly is. As Joan echoed that evening, the American Museum of Fly Fishing has been vital to our sport for the past fifty years and it shall continue for another fifty and beyond.

As we continue through 2018, we are thrilled to open our saltwater fly-fishing exhibit, On Fly in the Salt: American Saltwater Fly Fishing from the Surf to the Flats, the product of several years of hard work. After previewing at AMFF this summer, the exhibit will travel to the National Sporting Library and Museum (Middleburg, Virginia, October 2018–March 2019), Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History (New Haven, Connecticut, April 2019–October 2019), and the Florida Keys History and Discovery Center (Islamorada, Florida, November 2019–February 2020). Visit us at one of these locations and learn the story of saltwater fly fishing.

Visitors to the museum will now be welcomed into the Selch-Bakwin Fly Room where they will be immersed in the rich history of fly tying. With great thanks to the Vermont Arts Council and Trustee Nick Selch, we have created a public space for programming opportunities, research, and reflection. I hope that all of our members have the opportunity to experience this firsthand.

I have mentioned just a few of the projects, programs, and initiatives that we are focusing on as we fulfill the strong and robust mission shaped by the boundless efforts of our dedicated board of trustees. In fifty years we have had 247 trustees, all of whom have helped shape AMFF into what it is today: an authority in fly-fishing history, a community of vast and significant supporters, and the holder of some of the world's most important fly-fishing artifacts. Although it would be difficult to acknowledge the individual guidance that each has lent, I have succumbed to compiling a list of all past and present trustees with their years of service, and invite you to view it by visiting the fiftieth anniversary page on our website (www .amff.org/anniversary). It is with extreme gratitude, and on behalf of the entire angling community, that I offer thanks to each and every one of our dedicated board members, past and present.

As we continue to check off our golden jubilee accomplishments, I stand and applaud the museum staff, the board, the members, and the angling community as a whole— it is a team effort, every step of the way.

SARAH FOSTER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



## Catch and Release the Spirit of Fly Fishing!

4070 Main Street • PO Box 42 Manchester, Vermont 05254 Tel: (802) 362-3300 • Fax: (802) 362-3308 E-MAIL: amff@amff.org WEBSITE: www.amff.org

#### Mission

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

The museum provides public programs to fulfill its educational mission, including exhibitions, publications, gallery programs, and special events. Research services are available for members, visiting scholars, students, educational organizations, and writers. Contact amff@amff.org to schedule a visit.

#### Volunteer

Throughout the year, the museum needs volunteers to help with programs, special projects, events, and administrative tasks. You do not have to be an angler to enjoy working with us! Contact Samantha Pitcher at spitcher@amff.org to tell us how we would benefit from your skills and talents.

#### SUPPORT

The American Museum of Fly Fishing relies on the generosity of public-spirited individuals for substantial support. If you wish to contribute funding to a specific program, donate an item for fund-raising purposes, or place an advertisement in this journal, contact Sarah Foster at sfoster@amff.org. We encourage you to give the museum consideration when planning for gifts, bequests, and memorials.

#### Join

Membership Dues (per annum)

Patron	\$1,000
Sustainer	\$500
Contributor	\$250
Benefactor	\$100
Associate	\$50

The museum is an active, member-oriented nonprofit institution. Membership dues include four issues of the *American Fly Fisher*; unlimited visits for your entire family to museum exhibitions, gallery programs, and special events; access to our 7,000-volume angling reference library; and a discount on all items sold by the museum on its website and inside the museum store, the Brookside Angler. To join, please contact Samantha Pitcher at spitcher@amff.org.

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



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