

50th Anniversary

The American Fly Fisher

Journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing



WINTER 2018

VOLUME 44 NUMBER 1

Winter Ready

Scott Hacking

READY FOR WINTER? Jan Harold Brunvand is. This devoted downhill skier and fly fisher, whose most recent contribution to the journal appeared in the Summer 2017 issue ("On Lunkers, Tiddlers, and Other Terms for Big and Little Fish"), sent this photo to some friends on Thanksgiving, including yours truly. "I don't have skis with a turkey design," he wrote, "but these brook-trout beauties are suitably celebratory for the holiday." The limited-edition, custom-made skis, featuring the art of Nick Mayer, were made by Parlor Skis in Boston, the sale of which benefited the museum. (Note Brunvand is donning his AMFF T-shirt and hat as well.) At photo time, Brunvand was waiting for the first big snow of the season and at least 2 or 3 feet of fresh powder before the inaugural run. If you want your own pair of trout skis, check out our online shop at amff.org.

Whether we're ready for winter or not, it will have arrived in Vermont by the time you read this. As has been our recent winter tradition, we celebrate the first issue of the year by featuring a painting from our collection on the cover. This year it's *Watching the Sink—Permit*. Trustee Fred Polhemus graciously offered to tell us about the artist and his work; you'll find "Mike Stidham: Interpretation of Light and Color" on page 21.

The writer/editor/fly tier Vernon S. "Pete" Hidy (1914–1983) had been nominated to the Fly Fishing Hall of Fame several times over the years, but few remembered his contributions to the sport. This isn't surprising, given his natural tendency to avoid attention. A full list of his publications didn't even exist in one place. It was tough for those who nominated him to build a convincing case.

But in 2006, after his mother's death, Lance Hidy inherited his father's collection of correspondence, essays, and fishing and tying equipment, which had been stored away in cardboard cartons. "My father's untold story was hidden in my attic," he says. And as writers, historians, and collectors began to contact him about Pete and his mentor, James E. Leisenring, Lance Hidy began to organize the archive. From this, he was able to put together a detailed chronology of his father's life, which became the nomination that led to Hidy's October induction into the Fly Fishing Hall of Fame. We're pleased to share it with you. "Vernon S.



Jan Brunvand holding his AMFF Parlor Skis.

'Pete' Hidy: The Chronology of a Reluctant Fishing Icon" begins on page 2.

Among those featured in our 2011 exhibition, *A Graceful Rise: Women in Fly Fishing Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*, was fly tier Sylvie Malo-Clark. On 22 June 2016, on the Restigouche River, Malo-Clark broke the Larry's Gulch Lodge largest-salmon record. Cathi Comar, in "The Catch of a Lifetime" (page 24), tells us about the day that culminated in Malo-Clark's personal best.

The museum is pleased to announce that in October, Jim Klug received our 2017 Izaak Walton Award (page 23) and Ray Smith was named our 2017 Volunteer of the Year (page 28). But we're sad to report that the fly-fishing world has lost another of its greats with the passing of Keith Fulsher, inventor of the Thunder Creek series of flies, in August. On page 26, Trustee Richard Tisch remembers his friend.

The arrival of 2018 means that the museum is turning fifty. Watch our website for word of celebrations. Do you have memories about the museum that you'd like to share with us? We may include them in an upcoming issue. See our call for your submissions (page 27), and send me something by March 1.

KATHLEEN ACHOR
EDITOR



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The American Fly Fisher

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Vernon S. "Pete" Hidy: The Chronology of a Reluctant Fishing Icon	2
<i>Lance Hidy</i>	
Mike Stidham: Interpretation of Light and Color	21
<i>Fred Polhemus</i>	
AMFF Honors Jim Klug with the 2017 Izaak Walton Award	23
The Catch of a Lifetime	24
<i>Cathi Comar</i>	
In Memoriam: Keith Fulsher	26
<i>Richard Tisch</i>	
Museum News	27
Contributor	28
ON THE COVER: Watching the Sink—Permit, oil on canvas by Mike Stidham mounted on panel (30 x 24 inches). From the collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.	

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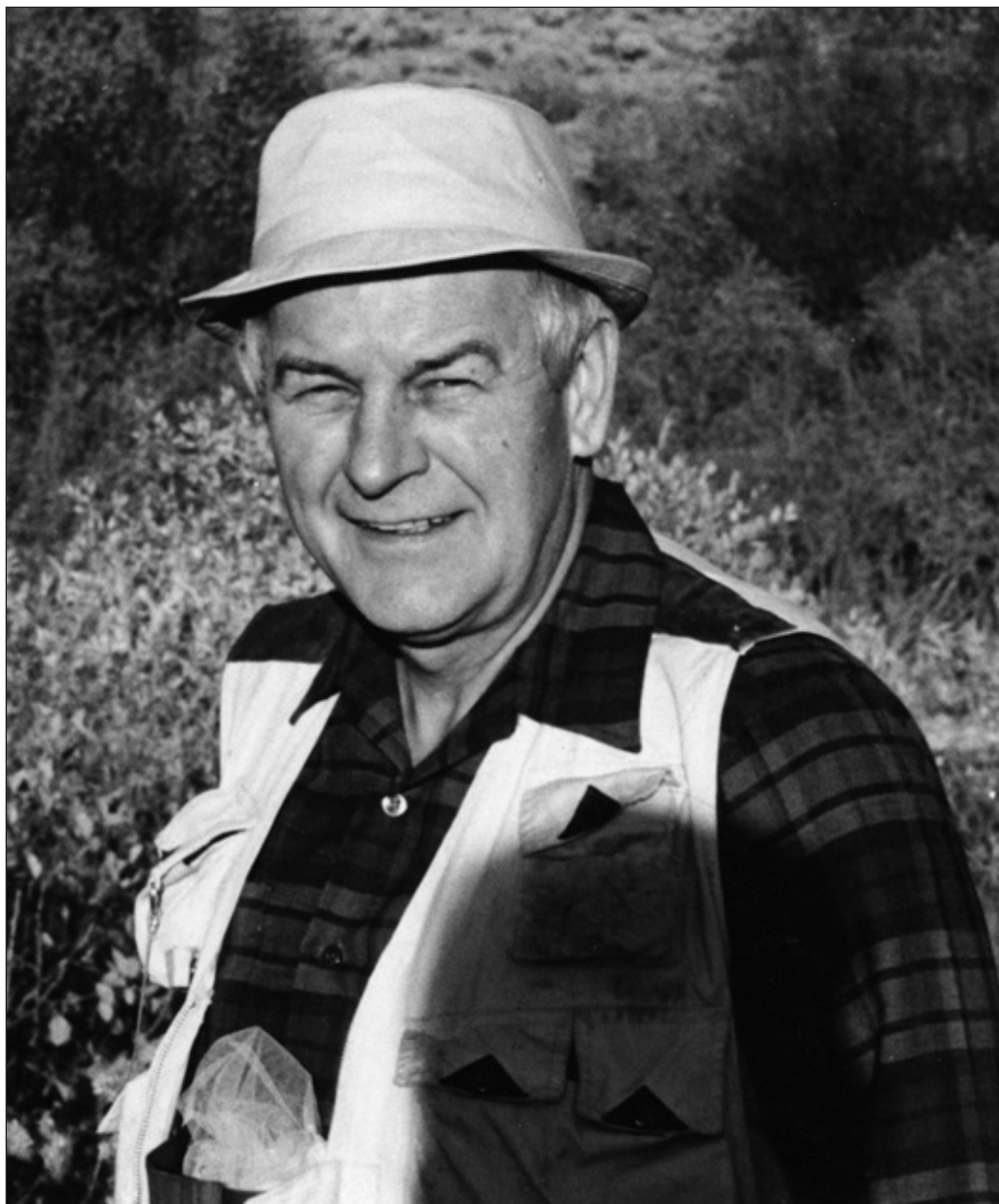
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Vernon S. “Pete” Hidy: The Chronology of a Reluctant Fishing Icon

by Lance Hidy



Pete Hidy, ca. 1972. Photograph by Elaine Hidy. Hidy archive.

ON 7 OCTOBER 2017, Vernon S. Hidy—my father, Pete—was inducted into the Fly Fishing Hall of Fame at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum, in Livingston Manor, New York. He had been nominated several times over the years, but because relatively few remembered his many contributions to the sport, he was repeatedly passed over. This was typical for my dad, who shunned attention and refrained from self-promotion. He never compiled a fly-fishing résumé or even a list of his many publications. Consequently, none of the people who nominated him had access to the information needed to build a convincing case.

V. S. Hidy was a fly-fishing editor, writer, photographer, conservationist, and innovative fly tier. He founded the Flyfisher's Club of Oregon, coined the word *flymph*, and campaigned tirelessly for James E. Leisenring's place in the fly-fishing pantheon.

My father's untold story was hidden in my attic, stored in cardboard cartons inherited when my mother died in 2006. Even though I had given up fly fishing in my early twenties, I, like my mother, was protective of this archive of my father's correspondence, essays, trout flies, tying materials, reels, fishing vest, and fly rods. Eventually—as fishing writers, historians of fly tying, and collectors contacted me seeking information about Pete Hidy and his mentor, James E. Leisenring—I dutifully began to examine the archive and analyze it. To corroborate my research after an interval of forty years, I resumed fly tying and fishing myself.

I am particularly grateful to two men, Jim Slattery and Terry Lawton, who, beginning in 2010, did more than anyone else to inspire me to start organizing my father's archive and—more importantly—to understand it. Slattery visited twice, sorting through the vintage trout flies and papers. He also allowed me to photocopy Leisenring letters and manuscripts that had once been among my father's papers, but which he had acquired after my mother auctioned them in 1996. Through Slattery I became acquainted with the members of the International Brotherhood of the Flymph and their online Flymph Forum, of which he was a cofounder. Slattery also introduced me to Terry Lawton, the English fly-fishing writer and journalist, who was frustrated by the dearth of information about Hidy and Leisenring. Lawton and I enjoyed a lively trans-Atlantic correspondence as I probed the Pete Hidy archive and shared my discoveries. I am grateful for the accuracy and grace with which Lawton reported, in his books, on the contributions of both men.



Above: Pete Hidy at his tying bench, 1940. Jim Leisenring asks Hidy to tie the winged flies to be photographed for *The Art of Tying the Wet Fly*. Jim can't do the delicate work because his fingers have been roughed up doing stone masonry in Allentown, Pennsylvania, for the Works Project Administration (WPA). Letter from Jim Leisenring to Pete Hidy, 12 November 1940, Hidy archive.

Inset: One of a set of hackle identification cards made by Hidy, ca. 1973–1975. Hidy archive.

ONE OF THOSE RARE SPIRITS

From his first published words until the end of his life, Hidy never wavered from the idea that fly fishing was to be pursued for pleasure and that trout streams were “sanctuaries,” where, through the art of angling, one could enjoy a “contemplative conversation with nature.”¹ Furthermore, he would never violate this sanctuary by ever speaking ill of any person. Hidy's correspondents sometimes tried to engage him in criticism of mutual acquaintances, but he always deflected the discussion toward shared pleasures. Roger Bachman, who long worked with Hidy on the editorial team for the *Creel*, observed, “After Pete left town the *Creel* team fell into tense battles, which Pete had smoothed over when he was here. . . . Not only was his smiling grace the glue that made the *Creel* work flow, I think we all missed seeing him regularly.”² Arnold Gingrich, angling writer and editor, and cofounder of *Esquire* magazine, wrote of Hidy, “He is one of those rare spirits who could, almost single-handedly, give a sport a good name.”³

In contrast to those anglers who measured their pleasure by the number and size of fish caught, Hidy offered an alternative. He called it the Fisherman's Law, and put it on the cover of one of the last issues of the *Creel* (November 1978), the

journal that he started in 1961 for the Flyfisher's Club of Oregon: “Fishermen may find unexpected pleasures more enjoyable than the ones they seek.”

This was true to his nature. Even his description of childhood fishing in the flatlands of Ohio sparkles with memories of such pleasures:

I liked to explore the stream named Paint Creek that flowed through the pastures and on across the countryside to the old Hidy Cemetery, where many of our ancestors and relatives are buried. . . . I learned to fish with worms and crawfish for bass, perch, catfish, and carp, and during the hot afternoons I would see blacksnakes in the thickets where I picked blackberries; and I got acquainted with many birds up in the trees I climbed for fun and juicy cherries and mulberries. . . . When it rained, I would take a kerosene lantern, a long, one-piece bamboo pole, and a can of worms and go fishing for catfish. The sounds of the owls and big bullfrogs and falling rain made music in the night.⁴

Equally revealing is the opening sentence of Hidy's first published writing: the succinct, 237-word introduction to Reuben R. Cross's *Fur, Feathers and Steel*: “As one learns fly-fishing and learns to love its *beauty, artistry and lore*, he comes across the name of Rube Cross” [*italics mine*].⁵

Hidy would offer his finest expression of fly fishing's "beauty, artistry and lore" in his 1972 book of photographs and extracts from angling literature, *The Pleasures of Fly Fishing*. The preface stands alone among all of Hidy's writing as a credo for his life in the sport. Toward the end, he explains how it happened that his creel was more likely to contain a camera than a trout:

The angler's camera, like his rod, becomes an intensely personal tool. Ultimately, his collections of slides and prints are as great a source of pleasure as his tackle and flies. Not for themselves as things, certainly, but for their power to evoke the magic of the days spent on the water. . . .

For the angler, pictures are a record of our passing through a valuable and irreplaceable environment . . . the sim-

ple joys of appreciating the changing moods and beauty created by clouds, wind, sunlight, and shadows. . . .

The fly fisherman with a camera in his creel leaves his sanctuaries scrupulously unmarked . . . carrying on his contemplative conversation with nature . . . achieving a certain relationship between himself and wildness . . . within a large solitude . . . perceiving the music of the river. When he kills a fish or two for the fire, he does so in the spirit of "harvesting the crop." With his camera, however, he harvests an inexhaustible, perpetually renewable resource of pleasure.⁶



*This photograph by Pete Hidy is similar to one in *The Pleasures of Fly Fishing*, 1972, pages 86–87. The identity of the fisherman and the river are unknown, but it might be the South Fork of the Boise River near Mountain Home, Idaho. The whereabouts of the original prints reproduced in the book are also unknown. Hidy archive.*

During 1933–1934, pleasure could be elusive. The Great Depression caused the Hidys, like countless other families, to become economic migrants. Hidy, his two younger brothers, parents, and grandparents were forced to leave Ohio, seeking refuge with relatives in Buckingham Valley, just north of Philadelphia. His college education cut short after only two years and, the nation in crisis, Hidy looked to see what pleasures his new Pennsylvania home could offer to a fisherman. He learned that 70 miles north, in the Pocono Mountains, was one of the finest trout streams in the East: Brodhead Creek. Never having fished for trout in Ohio, he would take a look.

Immediately Hidy fell in love with the feather fly, the affectionate term he used when remembering those early days, when he was in his early twenties. He even started fly-tying lessons. Having taken up journalism in college, he also embraced the literature of fly fishing, which some insist is the oldest and most excellent literary tradition of any sport.

Not long after immersing himself in the art of fly fishing, Hidy attracted the admiration and friendship of two of the most distinguished fly fishermen that America has ever produced: Reuben Cross (1896–1958) and James Leisenring (1878–1951). Letters from those days reveal that Hidy fished with each man and was responsible for introducing them to each other.⁷ Did the three ever fish together? It would have been a notable event, but the archive is silent on the subject.

What we get a sense of, though, is the kind of good faith and friendship that Hidy engendered. His love and enthusiasm for the sport always shined through, but there was also his self-effacing nature, which came perhaps from his journalistic instinct to deflect attention from himself and to shine the spotlight on others—in this case, his friends Cross and Leisenring.

Now it is time to turn the spotlight on Pete Hidy.

THE CHRONOLOGY

1914—Vernon Stanford Hidy is born August 9 in Springfield, Ohio. He is nicknamed “Pete.”

1932–1934—Hidy completes two years at Wittenberg College in his hometown of Springfield; the Great Depression cuts short his studies. In his final semester, fall 1934, a journalism professor inspires him to choose journalism as a career.

1934—After his father loses his job as a train dispatcher and a bank forecloses on their home, Hidy, his parents, grandparents, and two younger brothers are given refuge by his aunt and uncle, Emma and Ross Stover, at their 5-acre farm in Buckingham Valley, near Doylestown, Pennsylvania, north of Philadelphia.⁸ Hidy’s father shares an automobile with his son,⁹ allowing Hidy to land a position as a traveling salesman selling typewriters for the Burroughs Company.

Hidy begins fly fishing and takes fly-tying lessons from Miss Wilson at H. J. Noll’s fly-tying materials shop in Germantown.¹⁰

1935—At age twenty-one, Hidy becomes a frequent guest at Charles Rethoret’s Hotel Rapids on Brodhead Creek in Analomink, in Pennsylvania’s Pocono mountains, 70 miles north of Doylestown. It is there, on the stream, that Hidy meets the local fishing legend James E. Leisenring, known as Big Jim.

1936—Although thirty-six years apart in age, Jim Leisenring and Pete Hidy become friends and fish together. Leisenring invites Hidy to his home in Allentown to learn the Leisenring method of fly tying, which is heavily influenced by the British tradition, learned from the books of W. C. Stewart, T. E. Pritt, G. E. M. Skues, and others. Hidy becomes a voracious reader of books on British fly fishing.

1937—In New York’s Catskill mountains, Hidy meets Reuben Cross, the prominent fly-tying author and production tier of Catskill dry flies, who is eighteen years Hidy’s senior. They, too, become friends and fishing partners. Cross is impressed by Hidy’s fly-tying skill and by his knowledge of the British wet-fly tradition, which is not familiar to him.

1940—Hidy is chosen by Reuben Cross to write the introduction to *Fur, Feathers and Steel* (Dodd, Mead). This is Hidy’s first published work.

1940—On March 8, Leisenring presents Hidy with his handmade *Colors and Materials* book and inscribes it to him.

1940—Leisenring and Hidy begin corresponding. Forty-three letters from Leisenring to Hidy have survived. The earliest one is dated 19 March 1940 and the last one 23 June 1949. All of Hidy’s letters to Leisenring were lost.

1940—Reuben Cross reaches out to Leisenring, sending him (through Hidy) some prime-quality hooks. Leisenring is deeply impressed and, in a July 11 letter, asks Hidy to thank Cross. At the same time, Dodd, Mead (Cross’s publisher) becomes interested in Hidy’s proposal for the Leisenring book *The Art of Tying the Wet Fly*, but does not offer a contract yet. Nonetheless, as a journalist, Hidy persuades Leisenring to write down the same fly-tying techniques that he taught to Hidy in private lessons. Hidy rewrites and edits the text, and submits it to Dodd, Mead & Company in October. They approve the manuscript and sign a contract with Hidy on November 1.¹¹ On November 12, during the homestretch of preparing the book for publication and finalizing the illustrations, Leisenring closes a letter with, “Let me hear from you about Rube and you,”¹² suggesting the possibility that Cross (who was writing the introduction to the book) and



Jim Leisenring and Pete Hidy looking at Leisenring’s wet-fly wallet made of felt pages with a soft pigskin cover, 1940. Hidy archive.



The Dodd, Mead series on fly tying. Pete Hidy wrote the introduction to *Fur, Feathers and Steel* (1940), which opened the door for the third book, *The Art of Tying the Wet Fly* (1941), which Hidy produced with Jim Leisenring.

Hidy were planning to visit Leisenring in Allentown together to go over final details. Leisenring continues to mention Cross kindly in future letters to Hidy, but there is no proof that Cross and Leisenring ever meet face to face.

In his introduction, Cross proves his goodwill toward the project, being careful to give equal credit to both, as the following extract reveals. (Hidy declines to acknowledge this equality until the second edition is published, in 1971, and he is given equal status as coauthor on the title page.)

I have a . . . great deal of respect for Pete and his particular types of nymphs and wet flies as created by himself and Jim Leisenring. I have seen them take trout in Catskill, Adirondack and Pennsylvania streams where and when a great many other patterns and lures have failed to raise a fish.

The angling fraternity of America has long stood in need of a good book describing the whys and the wherefores of the wet fly, which in recent years has been happily restored to its rightful place in anglers' kits. The wet fly, I am convinced, will take more trout consistently throughout the season than any other type of lure.

It was with keen delight that I learned of *The Art of Tying the Wet Fly* by Pete and Jim, for I know of no other two more enthusiastic anglers more capable at this task.¹³

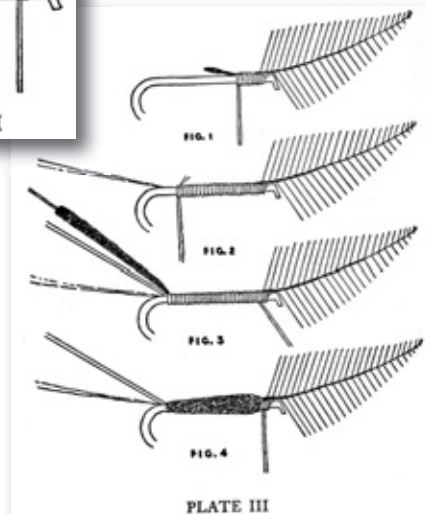
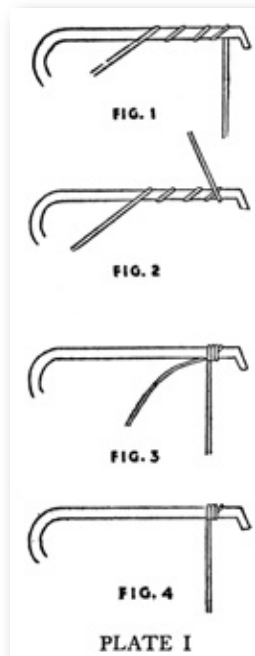
1941—*The Art of Tying the Wet Fly* is officially published by Dodd, Mead & Company on February 11, price \$2.00. The title page states that the book is by James E. Leisenring, as told to V. S. Hidy. Hidy splits the modest royalties with Leisenring.

THIS INSCRIPTION WAS WRITTEN BY "BIG JIM"
LEISENRING IN PETE HIDY'S COPY OF THIS BOOK.

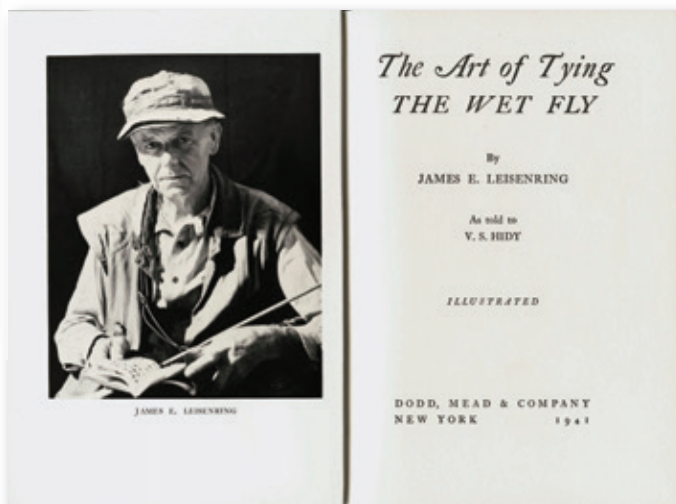
To my friend Pete Hidy
who never refuses to lend
a helping hand If it
would not have been
for Pete you would never
had the pleasure of this
book

James E. Leisenring
R. D 60 Allentown Pa

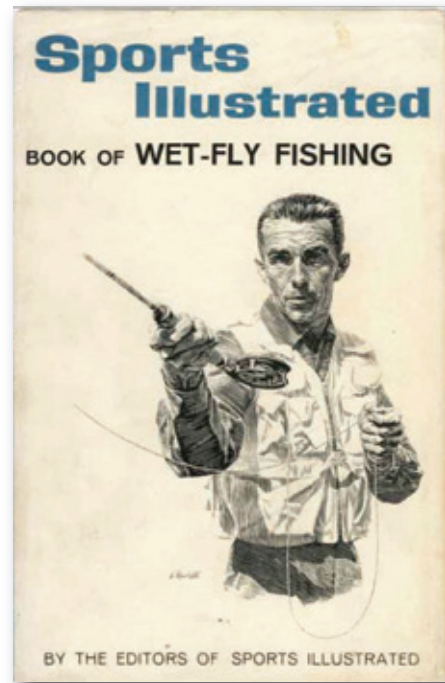
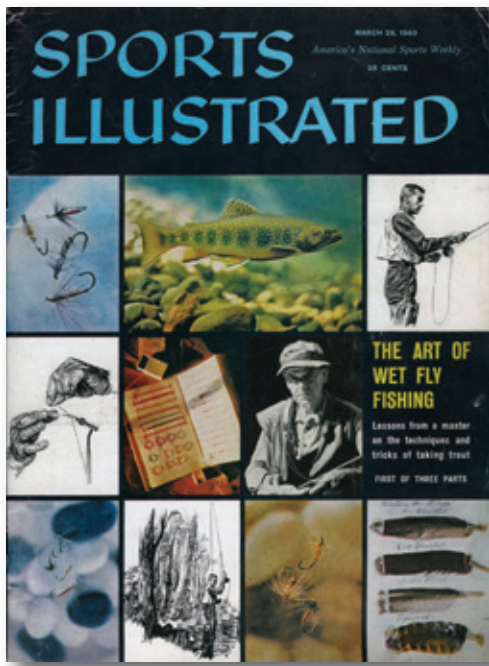
Jim Leisenring's inscription to Pete Hidy in
Hidy's copy of *The Art of Tying the Wet Fly*.
Photocopy of the inscription, Hidy archive.



Illustrations showing Leisenring's basic tying sequence. From *The Art of Tying the Wet Fly*, pages 40 and 44 in the 1941 edition.



The title page from *The Art of Tying the Wet Fly*, 1941.



1943—Hidy meets and marries Elaine Ruth Williams, a registered nurse from Lankenau Hospital and member of the Philadelphia Defense Council's Medical Corps.

1944–1945—After a work deferment, Hidy joins the Navy. He attends the U. S. Naval Reserve Midshipmen School at Cornell University, becoming midshipman third class by the time the war ends in 1945.¹⁴

1946—Hidy and his wife Elaine move to La Grande, Oregon. Hidy works as a sportswriter for the local newspaper. I was born in April.

1949—Hidy's new job as a salesman of paper products causes the family to move to the Los Angeles area, where they reside until 1956, when his employer, Pak-Well Paper Products, transfers him to Portland, Oregon.

1951—Jim Leisenring dies on September 30 at the age of seventy-three. In two letters to Hidy, Richard G. Clark—a close friend of Hidy's and Leisenring's since 1941 and a member of the Anglers' Club of New York—reports that at the time of his death, Leisenring possessed \$9,000 in cash (\$85,000 in 2017 dollars). This contradicts the often-repeated myth that Leisenring died penniless. Clark also reports that Leisenring's family burned his papers, presumably because their value was not understood. Unfortunately, the papers include not only all the correspondence from Hidy, but also approximately sixty letters from G. E. M. Skues.¹⁵

1959–1960—Hidy contacts *Sports Illustrated*, proposing a tribute to Leisenring. The editors respond positively, asking him instead to write a much longer piece to be serialized over three issues. Leisenring's portrait appears on the cover of the March 28 issue.

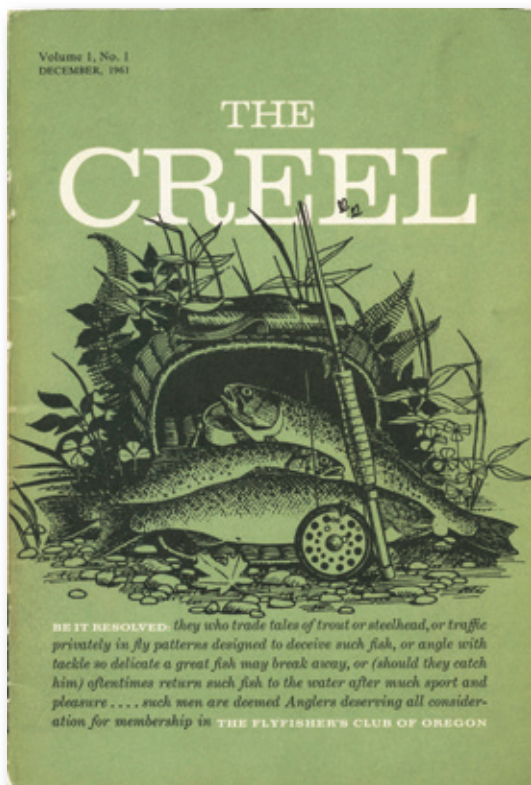
1960—Hidy introduces the term *Leisenring lift* for the first time in the April 4 issue of *Sports Illustrated*.¹⁶

1961—Hidy's three-part series is consolidated into a hardcover book for the *Sports Illustrated Library*. Fly-casting champion Johnny Dieckman is on the cover.¹⁷ Hidy is still intentionally keeping a low profile. When the Oregon fly fishers realize that he is living among them, right there in Portland, they are eager to meet him and size him up. Once again, Hidy makes a good impression, and big projects ensue.

Above: Hidy's 1960 *Sports Illustrated* articles on fishing the wet fly appeared on March 28, April 4, and April 11; the photograph of Leisenring with his wet-fly wallet appears on the first cover (left). A year later, the series was compiled into a hardcover book for the *Sports Illustrated Library* (right).

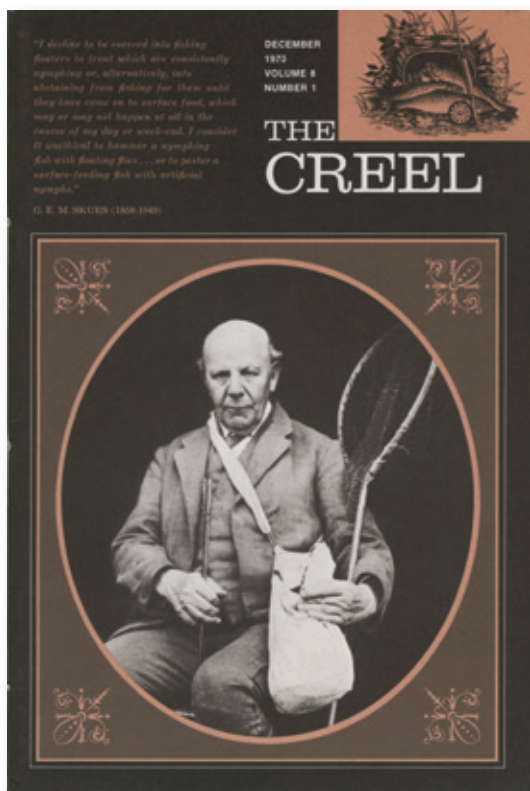
Below: Pete Hidy, scratchboard portrait by Anthony Ravielli. *Sports Illustrated Book of Wet-Fly Fishing*, page 56.





Above: The first issue of the *Creel*. Upon seeing volume 1, number 1, Sparse Grey Hackle (Alfred W. Miller) writes to Hidy, "The *Creel* is as good a job of producing a non-commercial publication as I recall ever seeing."

Below: The December 1970 issue of the *Creel*, featuring Hidy's article "A Salute to Leisenring and Skues."



1961—Hidy founds the Flyfisher's Club of Oregon and is elected its first president. Hidy's mentor in this daunting undertaking is Alfred W. Miller (pen name Sparse Grey Hackle), whose fly-fishing essays also appear in *Sports Illustrated*. Richard G. Clark, who knows Miller through the Anglers' Club of New York, probably introduces him to Hidy. In a series of amusing responses to Hidy's requests for advice, Miller uses his experience with the New York club to detail principles of club governance, financial management, and editorial guidelines for a club journal. Hidy tells Miller that his advice was "decisive in and vital to the formation of the Club."¹⁸

Hidy's personality is felt in the official purposes of the club, which emphasize the *art, pleasure, delight, and mystery* of the sport:

- a. To preserve and perpetuate the traditions and **art** of fly fishing.
- b. To assist members in the interchange of information and knowledge relating to the **delights** and **mysteries** of fly fishing in Oregon and other areas of interest to members.
- c. To aid, encourage and promote the development of a state program of "quality" fishing to the end that the public will find fish of greater size and fighting qualities.
- d. To provide instruction in the **art** of fly fishing to the public and to provide fishing trips to young boys showing promise in the **art** of fly fishing and whose circumstances would preclude them from such opportunities.
- e. To provide an organization of Oregon fly fishermen designed for their **pleasure**.
- f. To hold luncheon and dinner meetings at intervals specified by the members or their elected officers.
- g. To publish semi-annually a publication to be known as *The Creel* recording the angling accomplishments, adventures and speculations of the members and other fly fishing devotees.
- h. To hold outings at selected rivers or lakes for the **pleasure** of members and guests.
- i. Ultimately, to provide and maintain a club room or rooms for the social convenience of members and their guests, the safe-keeping of a club library, and the display of such trophies or memorabilia of the **art** of fly fishing the members may see fit to cherish and preserve.¹⁹ [boldface mine]

As specified in item g, Hidy forms an editorial team and launches the *Creel*, the journal of the Flyfisher's Club of Oregon, as he had specified in the club's list of purposes. After receiving volume 1, number 1, Miller writes to his protégé:

The *Creel* is as good a job of producing a non-commercial publication as I recall ever seeing. . . .

You have, of course, neglected one useful tactic, i.e., the slow, moderate start. When the first number is merely pretty good it gives you an opportunity of showing improvement on the succeeding issues. As it is, you have set a standard which is going to keep you fellows humping to maintain, let alone exceed.

I thought you all would come up with something good but I certainly was surprised to see it this good.²⁰

The goal of two issues per year proves unrealistic; the *Creel* appears only twenty-one times over its twenty-one year run, ceasing in 1982, shortly before Hidy's death. The finest compliment for the *Creel* comes from Arnold Gingrich, cofounder and editor of *Esquire* magazine and author of *The Well-Tempered Angler*, *The Joys of Trout*, and *American Trout Fishing*. He writes:

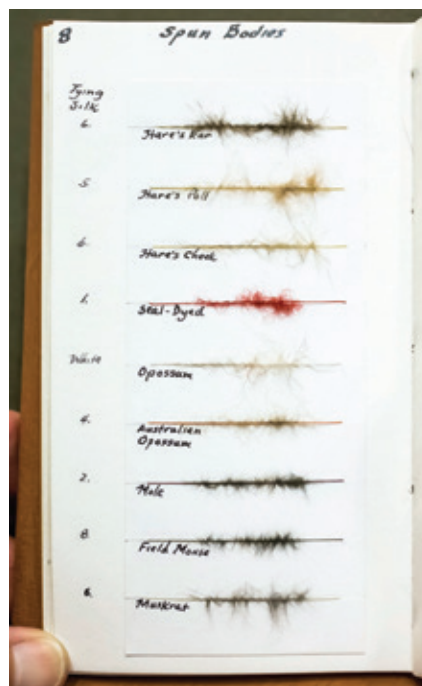
As editor of *The Creel*, the beautiful and distinctive organ of The Flyfisher's Club of Oregon, Pete Hidy was a trailblazer in bringing a civilizing overlay of appreciation of the traditional and historic lore to the then generally rough and ready state of Western fly fishing in general. To my mind, V. S. Hidy can never be praised enough, for he showed the way, like a lantern in the dark, long before such journals as *The Flyfisher*, *Trout*, *Fly Fisherman Magazine*, and *The American Fly Fisher* were ever dreamed of. He is one of those rare spirits who could, almost single-handedly, give a sport a good name.²¹

ca. 1962–1964—Hidy coins the term *flymph*. Although the term is briefly criticized for being unscientific, time proves Hidy correct in believing that it clears up the confusion caused by using the term *nymph* for two distinctly different wet-fly methods. Imitation nymphs, Hidy agrees, could be weighted and fished on the stream bed. But the hatching or emerging nymphs—part nymph, part fly—and other submerged insects that are active just below the water's surface fall into a totally separate category that had never before been given its own name. Even Leisenring, in his 1941 chapter on nymphs, had been guilty of mixing up these two separate wet-fly methods. Hidy had been powerless to fix this editorial problem at the time, but twenty-some years later, he offers his solution:

FLYMPH—A WINGLESS ARTIFICIAL FLY with a soft, translucent body of fur or wool which blends with the undercolor of the tying silk when wet, utilizing soft hackle fibers easily activated by the currents to give the effect of an insect alive in the water, and strategically cast diagonally upstream or across for the trout to take just below or within a few inches of the surface film.²²



Flymphs tied by Pete Hidy. Photograph by the author.

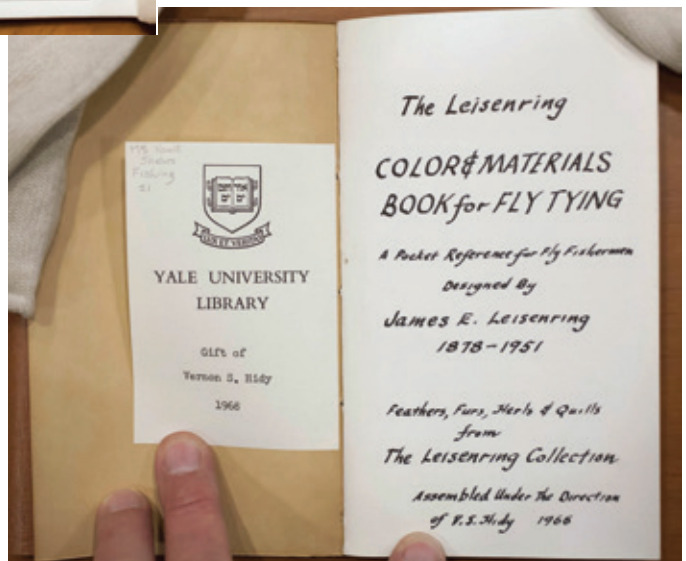


1965—Hidy participates in the founding conclave of the Federation of Fly Fishers. From their website:

Lew Bell and Lee Wulff presented the first draft of the Constitution at the 1965 meeting, and Wulff suggested the reel emblem of the Federation. Many other nationally known fly fishers were present, including Ted Trueblood, Ed Zern, Pete Hidy and Polly Rosborough. A new creation, one that would represent the interests of fly fishermen was under way, and as time passed the famous who affiliate with the FFF seems to have included just about anybody who was anyone.²³

1966—Hidy supervises assembling *The Leisenring Color & Materials Book for Fly Tying: A Pocket Reference for Fly Fishermen* Designed by James E. Leisenring, 1878–1951, a limited-edition, handmade book on fly-tying materials.

Hidy's own calligraphy appears on the title page of the handmade Leisenring Color & Materials Book for Fly Tying: A Pocket Reference for Fly Fishermen Designed by James E. Leisenring, 1878–1951 (right). He also provides all of the specimens of feathers, spun bodies, and other materials (above). Photographs by the author.

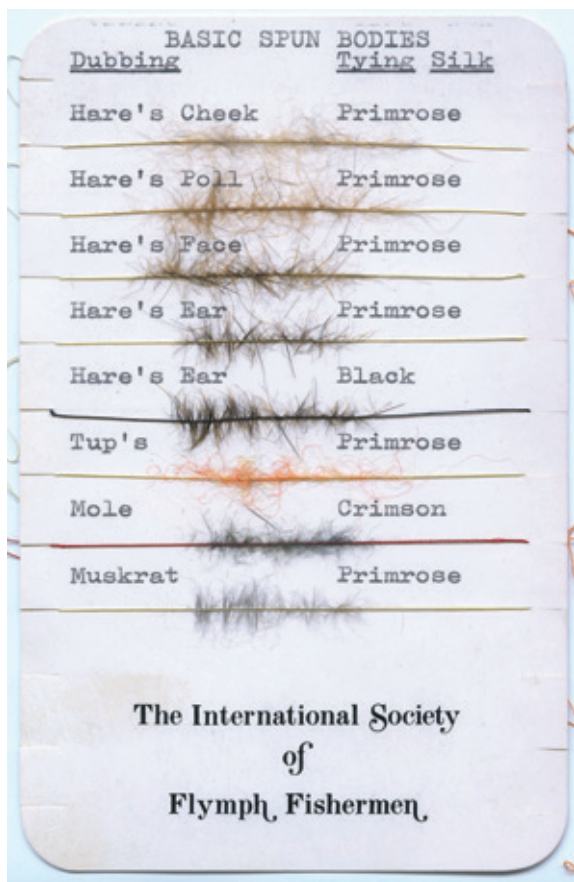




Richard G. Clark gave this block (above), handmade from cherrywood, to Hidy. Clark used a round file for the shallow groove, then sanded it to a glass-smooth finish. Slits for securing the silk thread at the tail end and on the right shoulder were cut with a sharp knife. A blade was set into the base for cutting thread. A brass brad was tapped in as a loop-post and four more as guides after clipping off their heads and sanding them smooth.



Hidy modified Clark's design by adding additional guide pins and scratching eighth-inch increments over 2½ inches. All photographs on this page by the author.



ca. 1966—Hidy redesigns the Clark spinning block. In *The Art of Tying the Wet Fly*, chapter 7, "Spinning a Body," illustrates the single most original aspect of Leisenring's fly-tying technique. Leisenring spun the body on his trouser leg, above the knee, trapping a dubbing of fur or wool in a little twisted rope of gossamer silk. He made these by the dozens and stored them on 4-inch cards, notched on the sides, organized by color and dubbing.

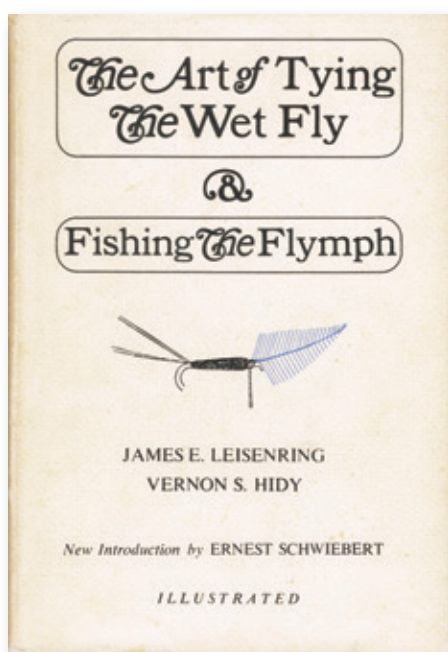
Richard G. Clark, the member of the Anglers' Club of New York who becomes a pupil of Leisenring's after the book is published in 1941, senses that Leisenring's technique for spinning bodies is important enough to deserve research and development. He writes: "This method requires a degree of skill and conduces to an untidy trouser leg, so I developed a spinning block to achieve the same result more easily and tidily."²⁴

Wanting to share the block with others, Hidy begins making his own simplified design out of inexpensive strips of pine. Instead of the groove, Hidy lays down a white synthetic strip to contrast with the dubbing. A thumbtack on the front secures a tiny plastic bag of dubbing, which one accesses with tweezers through a slit on its front. Hidy still likes to spin on his knee, so he glues felt to the bottom to secure the block. This block design is accepted by fly tiers around the world. (The most authentic and well-made Clark blocks, which I approved, are currently being handmade by William Anderson [williamsfavoritedesign@gmail.com]).

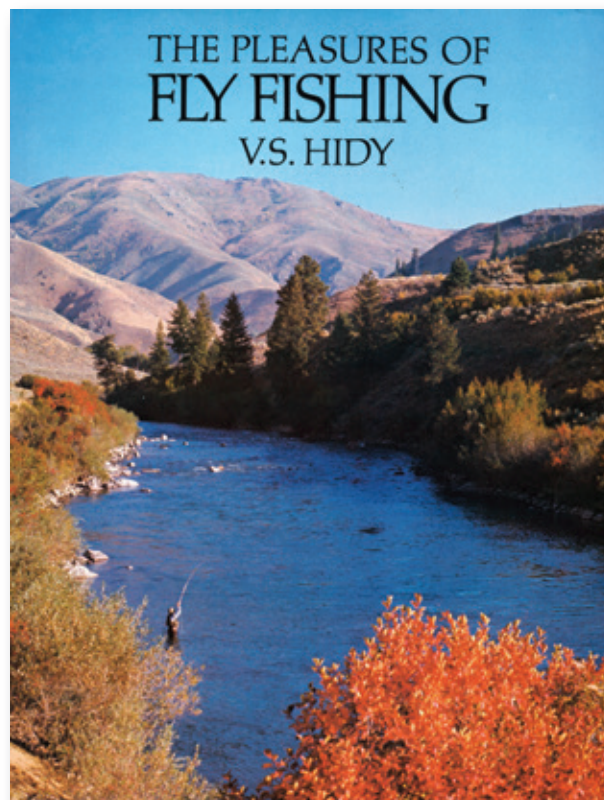
Clark's description of the block is published in the *Anglers' Club Bulletin* (vol. 47, no. 3, October 1968), a few months after his death. Hidy promotes the block at every opportunity and includes it in the 1971 edition of *The Art of Tying the Wet Fly & Fishing the Flymph*. He instructs many fly tiers in its use, giving away dozens of his handmade blocks and notched cards. Gunnar Johnson, Dave Hughes, and Allen McGee are among those who publish the Clark spinning-block technique in their books.

1970—Vernon S. Hidy, "A Salute to Leisenring and Skues," in the *Creel* (vol. 8, no. 1, December 1970). In this cover article, Hidy first notes that in the United States, Leisenring was the counterpart to Skues in England, exploring and promoting wet flies during a time of dry-fly dominance in both countries; then, he formally makes his case for the term *flymph*, to distinguish the second kind of wet-fly fishing that Skues and Leisenring (and their predecessors) described but had never clearly differentiated from nymph fishing. Saying "we believe it deserves wider circulation," editor Paul Schullery publishes a longer version of the article in the *American Fly Fisher* nine years later.²⁵

Left: Hidy made samplers of spun bodies to show different combinations of silk thread and dubbing furs. Silk is preferred because, unlike synthetic thread, it will hold the twist and not come apart when removed from the card. Hidy archive.



The covers of *The Art of Tying the Wet Fly & Fishing the Flymph* (Crown Publishers, 1971) and *The Pleasures of Fly Fishing* (Winchester Press, 1972).



1970—Hidy becomes a member of the Anglers' Club of New York.
1971—Second edition of *The Art of Tying the Wet Fly*—under the title *The Art of Tying the Wet Fly & Fishing the Flymph*—is published by Nick Lyons at Crown Publishers, this time with Pete Hidy credited on the title page as coauthor; introduction by Ernest Schwiebert.

When Lyons opens the door for Hidy to write new chapters for the second edition, Hidy takes the opportunity to accomplish several goals, building on his “Salute to Leisenring and Skues,” which had appeared the previous year in the *Creel*:

1. To put Leisenring into the context of the British tradition by crediting influences such as G. E. M. Skues and T. E. Pritt, who should have been mentioned in the 1941 edition but were not. (The only reference to a British writer in the first edition was to W. C. Stewart, whose spider fly patterns were among Leisenring's favorites.)
2. To explain why the term *flymph* was coined to distinguish the ancient category of wingless *hackle flies*, fished just below the water's surface, from deeper-water *nymphs*; and to distinguish it from the ambiguous term *wet fly*, which, to most American anglers, meant fancy flies with wings.
3. To offer a more versatile—and traditional—method of presenting the flymph than the Leisenring lift, which is of relatively limited use. In a style that would be familiar to British North Country anglers, Hidy recommends simply “casting diagonally upstream or across so the flymph may swing a little in arriving at the feeding zone of a trout.”²⁶ Hidy's approach of keeping the fly in the top few inches of water, with a little intentional drag, is adaptable to many different stream conditions, unlike the specialized technique that Leisenring described in the first edition. The Leisenring lift (the term coined by Hidy in 1960) begins by sinking the fly down through several feet of water onto the stones in the stream bed, then guiding its ascent across the

current—passing in front of the trout's nose, of course—on its way to the water's surface.

1971—Pete Hidy writes a warm tribute to his friend Reuben Cross for Cross's book *The Complete Fly Tier* (Freshet Press). He closes his introduction with:

A day spent with Rube Cross always had a superior quality because you seemed to be in the center of the world of trout fishing. His knowledge of fish and insects, his appreciation of the sport of fly fishing and his enthusiasm for the beauty of Nature impressed everyone who knew him. I do not know if he is honored in any Anglers' Hall of Fame* but he should be. His contribution of knowledge, skill and technique to the art of fly tying has been great and he personified the spirit of friendly generosity which adds so much pleasure to the sport of fly fishing.²⁷

1972—Publication of Vernon S. Hidy's *The Pleasures of Fly Fishing: Photographs and Commentary on Streams, Rivers, Lakes, Anglers, Trout & Steelhead, Including a Selection of Memorable Observations from the Classic Writings of Angling Literature*, with eighty-seven photographs by the author in color and monochrome (Winchester Press). Foreword by Sparse Grey Hackle. Passages from Hidy's favorite angling literature were given importance equal to that of the images. Hidy's preface is unique among his writings: a credo in which he reveals the sport's meaning to him. He describes “[a] contemplative conversation with nature . . . achieving a certain relationship between himself and wildness . . . within a large solitude . . . perceiving the music of the river.”²⁸

One reason that Hidy was a popular speaker was that he shared photographs of the fly-fishing experience, mostly taken in Oregon and Idaho. Anglers who visited his home were also likely to be offered a private slide show in the basement, near the fly-tying bench.

*In 1999 Cross was inducted into the Fly Fishing Hall of Fame at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum.



The ten Orvis flymphs tied to Hidy's specifications are Watery Dun, Pale Watery Dun, Iron Blue Dun, March Brown, Iron Blue Nymph, Old Blue Dun, Black Gnat, Tup's Flymph, Hare's Ear, and Blue Dun. Collection of John Shaner. Photograph by the author.

1972—Publication of *Sports Illustrated Fly Fishing* (J. B. Lippincott Company) by Vernon S. Hidy and the Editors of *Sports Illustrated*; illustrations by Anthony Ravielli and Kyuzo Tsugami. This edition is a derivative of the 1961 *Book of Wet-Fly Fishing*, minus the fly-tying instructions but expanded to include techniques for fishing dry flies, nymphs, streamers, and bucktails.

1972—The Orvis Company collaborates with Hidy to issue a boxed set of ten flymphs. The accompanying flyer, written by Hidy, is a succinct explanation of how to fish the flymph.

1972—T. Donald Overfield, in his *Famous Flies and Their Originators* (Adam & Charles Black), features a chapter on V. S. Hidy, along with nineteen others: A. Mackintosh, A. Ronalds, J. Ogden, J. Wright, M. Rogan, S. Marryat, F. M. Halford, T. Gordon, G. E. M. Skues, W. J. Lunn, R. Wolley, R. S. Austin, J. W. Dunne, J. E. Leisenring, P. J. Jennings, A. Flick, F. Sawyer, O. W. Kite, and P. T. Jacobsen. Overfield wrote of Hidy:

Hidy's time spent in the company of Leisenring provided the groundwork that has produced one of the most painstaking and thoughtful angling fly-dressers in America. Whilst appreciating, and using, the dry fly when conditions dictate such an artificial, it is in the realms of the nymphal stage of the natural insect, and in particular the emerging nymph at its transitional stage, that Hidy's main interest and experimentation lies. This critical stage in the development of the fly had not been studied in such depth prior to Hidy. Even the great Skues did not devote a particular part of his researches into this aspect of the nymph. To describe this somewhat ignored period in evolution Hidy, in 1963, coined the name "flymph," now a recognized part of the angler's language, to describe the artificial dressing that simulates the transitional stage from nymph to dun.

Hidy maintains, with some justification, that the period when the nymph is most active, just before it breaks the water surface, is a much neglected part of the craft, considering that Skues' style of nymph dressings do [*sic*] not provide the best artificial representation of the insect at that critical period. Skues, writing in *Nymph Fishing for Chalk Stream Trout* (1939), stated that no artificial fly, hackled either profusely or lightly with full-size hackles, could be classed as a nymph. Skues considered that the lightly hackled fly, cast upstream, was taken by the trout to be a dun, shipwrecked at the moment of emergence. Yet it is precisely this lightly hackled fly that constitutes the flymph, and highly effective it is too.

Just what is the flymph? It is a wingless artificial dressed with a body of such materials as to obtain the maximum effect of translucence, the hackle fibres of just the right flexibility so that they are easily activated by the flow of the stream to simulate the struggling, moving insect, in particular that period in the life cycle of the nymph when it is extremely active, swimming up through the last few inches of water prior to emerging through the surface film. Hidy readily agrees that he is carrying on the ideas of Leisenring, though he has perfected that particular branch of angling to a far greater degree.²⁹

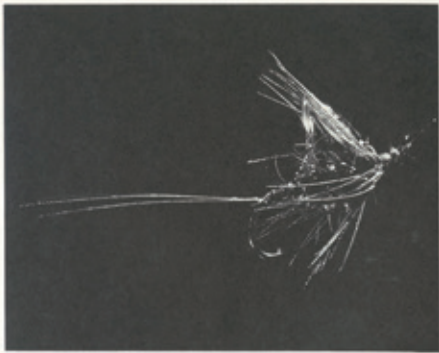
1972—Hidy begins a rich, ten-year correspondence with Danish angling writer and fly tier Preben Torp Jacobsen. They exchange flies, feathers, and other fly-tying materials. Preben helps introduce Hidy and the flymph to Scandinavian fly fishers.

1973—Eric Peper and Jim Rikhoof edit an anthology, *Fishing Moments of Truth* (Winchester Press), illustrated by Milton C. Weiler. It includes V. S. Hidy's "Moments of Truth on the McKenzie," a tribute to three members of the Flyfisher's Club of Oregon: Dale LaFollette, Thomas Tongue, and especially the recently deceased Judge James W. Crawford. The jacket blurb lists the contributors:

Fishing Moments of Truth assembles the rare experiences of 22 of the most able and eloquent fishermen in the world. Included in the elite group of authors are Nelson Bryant, Angus Cameron, Homer Circle, Art Flick, Charles Fox, Arnold Gingrich, Grits Gresham, Roderick Haig-Brown, Pete Hidy, Ed Koch, Dana Lamb, Nick Lyons, Steve Raymond, Charles Ritz, Jack Samson, Ernest Schwiebert, Pat Smith, Robert Traver, Lamar Underwood, Charles Waterman, Lee Wulff, and Ed Zern. Most of the stories were written expressly for this anthology and are appearing in print for the first time.³⁰



Leisenring Spider (variant) tied by Hidy, who named it in honor of Jim Leisenring. This is one of the three step-by-step patterns in the *Sports Illustrated Book of Wet-Fly Fishing* (1961, pages 74–77). Photograph by the author. Hidy archive.



A MIMICKY FLYMPH — As shown above, the use of certain dubbings and hackles can create the phenomenon that I identify as "mimicky" because it goes beyond, but is related to, the quality of translucence. This has led to some interesting comments such as this note sent to me by my friend, Dr. Nat Wilson:
"I appreciate the flymph. The more I use of them, the more exciting they become. I rear a beautiful fish to one of your dark mahogany flymphs the last time up in the Rock Bank Hole just above Frustration Flats. When a trout rises to a flymph, he takes it so confidently!"

According to my research, we may now create mimicky flymphs and control the mimicky factor at our leisure with selected dubbings and hackles. Flymphs dressed deliberately to create mimicky appear far more sensuous, if not voluptuous, in simulating the natural hydrofuge (water resistance) of trout stream insects during metamorphosis at the flymph stage of maturity. I believe, therefore, that proper emphasis on mimicky holds great promise for fly dressers and fly fishermen in the future as it has for me and other anglers in the past.

To better understand this sensuous appearance, place the tip of this toothpick through the eye of the hook on which this flymph is tied and immerse it in a clear glass of water. After several dippings, dry it thoroughly with a piece of kleenex. Then dip it again.

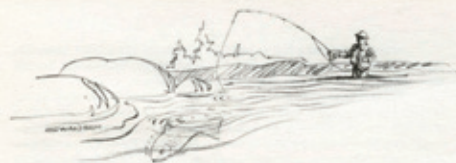


Trout have taken mimicky flymphs with such gusto in streams East and West that some sophisticated and experienced anglers have expressed astonishment. It is fair to observe, therefore, that such flymphs can heighten the fly fisherman's pleasure and feeling of suspense that Viscount Grey once described as "a delicious sense of impending discovery."

Pages from Hidy's *An Open Letter to the International Society of Flymph Fishermen*. Clockwise from above: Hidy's photograph of bubbles on a submerged artificial fly, a flymph and toothpick the reader was encouraged to immerse in water, two spun bodies, and examples of dubbing material accompanied by a J. Swanson drawing.

1973—Vernon S. Hidy, *An Open Letter to the International Society of Flymph Fishermen* (Gold Hawk Press), privately printed, one hundred signed and numbered by the author. Eight pages, sewn in paper wrappers. Two photographs by Hidy and two drawings by J. Swanson. Two flymphs tied by the author, a toothpick, and two spun bodies were mounted into the pamphlet.

In this essay, Hidy focuses on *hydrofuge*, the ability of spun bodies made with certain furs to resist water absorption, and *mimicky*, the ability to retain lifelike air bubbles when submerged. He instructs the reader to "place the tip of this toothpick through the eye of the hook on which this flymph is tied and immerse it in a clear glass of water."³¹ For possibly the first time in fishing literature, Hidy publishes a photograph of the bubbles on a submerged artificial fly. Angler-entomologist Gary LaFontaine, in his 1981 book, *Caddisflies*, concurs with Hidy about the importance of air bubbles in living aquatic insects. In the 1995 book *Wet Flies*, Dave Hughes follows up with his own photograph of bubbles on a submerged fly.



HARE'S MASK — Effective bodies for flymphs are spun from the mask of the English hare. Four shades of fur are used: clockwise from the top—hare's ear; hare's pull from between and around the ears; hare's cheek and hare's face.

Although spinning bodies requires a separate and special operation, I have found it to be very enjoyable and, in the long run, time saving. Certain accessories are essential and these are now available.

The beauty and value of the spun body must be seen and used in your fishing to be truly appreciated. In my opinion this will become a basic feature of all flymphs (and some dry flies) tied by amateur fly dressers in the future. Some of my friends have confided in me that flymph fishing and the use of spun bodies have opened new avenues of adventure for them as fly dressers and fly fishermen. For the first time they were able to deceive and hook some of the trout they found feeding selectively just beneath the surface. They also found a refreshing kind of excitement in the subtle swirls of water that signal the trout's take of the flymph.

Here are some examples of spun bodies:

Made on Crimson Silk

Hare's Pull on Ash

I trust that you will find this information as stimulating and as useful as I have through the years. If you do, I encourage you to share your own experiences with other members of the Society who, in turn, are sharing theirs. The reports from various regions will be summarized in future letters to enrich and advance the arts of fly dressing and fly fishing.

Sincerely,

V. S. Hidy

1973—Hidy serves as master of ceremonies at the Federation of Fly Fishermen's Northwest Regional Conclave, Spokane, Washington, May 11 to 13.

1973–1975—*Leisenring Source Book of Materials for Trout Flies*, two volumes in three-ring binders, shown in the three photographs on this page. Hand-assembled by Pete Hidy and donated to the following libraries: the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University; the Houghton Library, Harvard University; the Library, California State University, Fullerton; Princeton University Library; the Flyfisher Foundation, Portland, Oregon; and the Museum of American Fly Fishing, Manchester, Vermont. These two large binders expand on the pocket-sized handmade book of materials that Leisenring gave Hidy in 1940. Hidy's version includes a Clark spinning block, spools of silk, modern hooks, bulk samples of dubbing furs and hackles, a color-naming system for dyed wool and mohair, a photograph of Leisenring, and six flies tied by Leisenring himself.

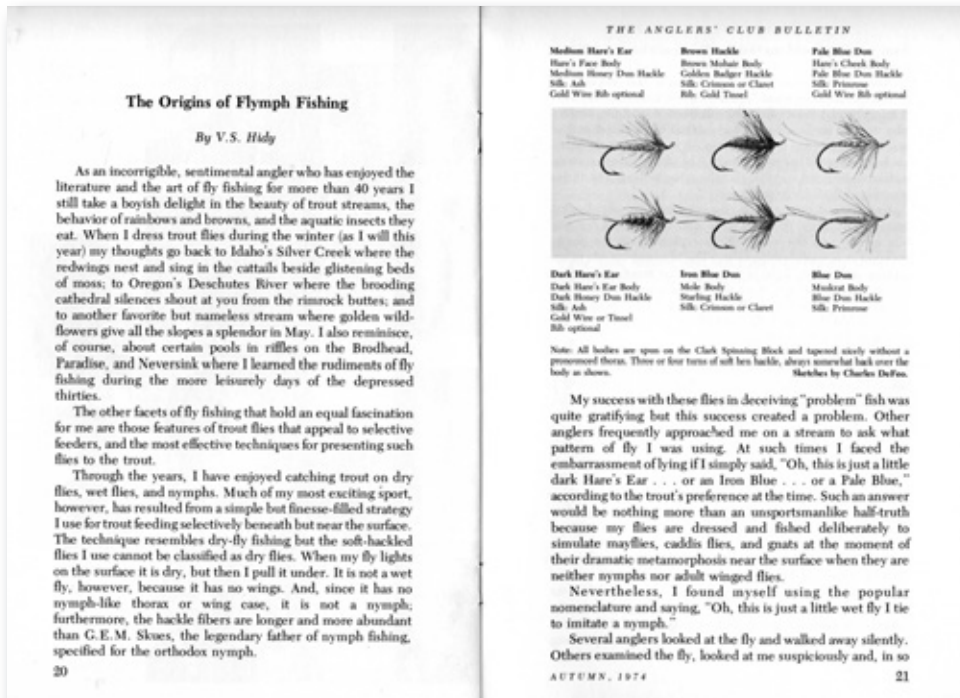


A page in the first volume includes three basic flymphs, spools of silk, and a Clark spinning block.

Six Leisenring flies: Breadcrust, Coachman, Iron Blue Flymph, Hare's Ear Flymph, Gray Quill, and Tups.

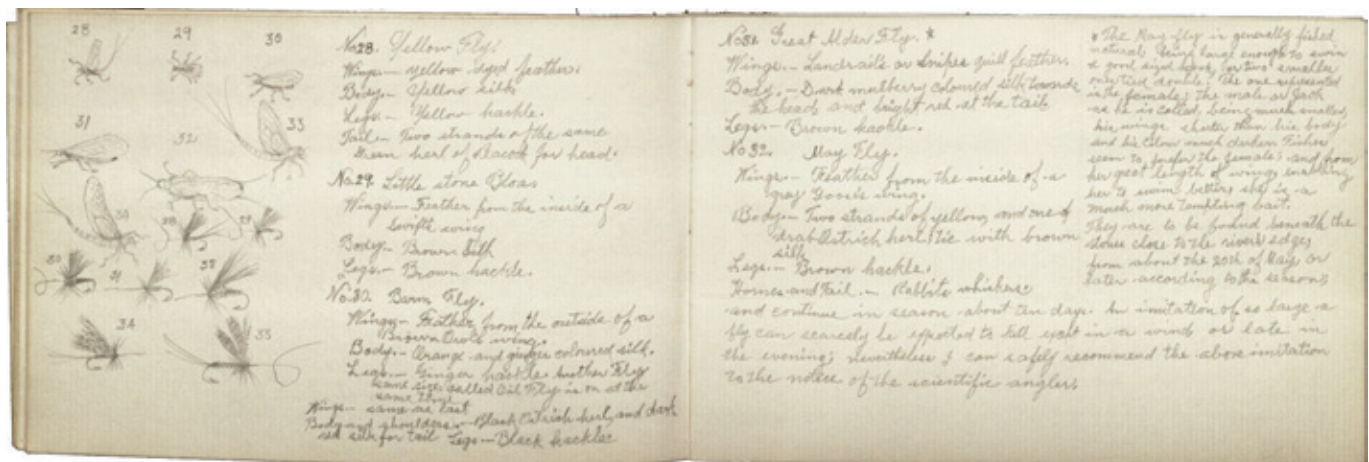


These pages from the second volume show wools and mohairs that were chosen by Hidy to coordinate with the colored feathers in Veniard's "Fly Dresser's Color Chart of Standard Dyes" on the right. All images are from the American Museum of Fly Fishing's copy of *Leisenring Source Book of Materials for Trout Flies*. Museum photographs by Sara Wilcox.



Pages from Hidy's article "The Origins of Flymph Fishing," illustrated by Charles DeFeo. From the *Anglers' Club Bulletin* (vol. 53, no. 3, Autumn 1974).

Below: This undated pencil drawing by Leisenring from John Jackson's *The Practical Fly-Fisher* (1853) was given to Yale University by Hidy.

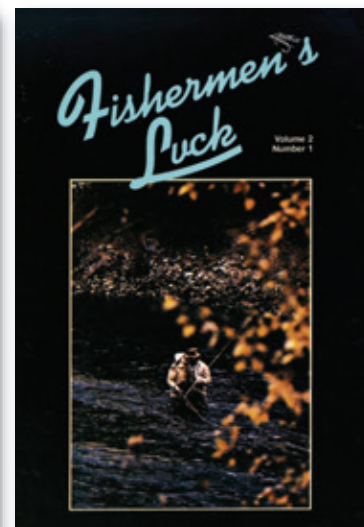


- 1974—Vernon S. Hidy, "The Origins of Flymph Fishing," in the *Anglers' Club Bulletin* (vol. 53, no. 3, Autumn). Illustrated with a drawing of six flymphs by Charles DeFeo. In four pages, Hidy explains the flymph's allure and why he found it necessary to coin the term. This is more of a literary piece than a how-to-do-it.
- 1975—Hidy donates two Leisenring manuscripts to the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University. One is Leisenring's pencil copy of the ten illustration plates and fly-pattern recipes from John Jackson's 1853 book, *The Practical Fly-Fisher*; the second is a part of the pencil manuscript for *The Art of Tying the Wet Fly*.³²
- 1976—Hidy is influential in talks between his employer, the Boise Cascade Company, and the Nature Conservancy, resulting in the establishment of the Silver Creek Preserve in Idaho.

1979—J. Michael Migel and Leonard M. Wright, *The Masters on the Nymph* (Lyons Press). Illustrated by Dave Whitlock. Hidy contributes twelve pages of text and photographs explaining the flymph, accompanied by Dave Whitlock's two drawings (below). More importantly, he explains the reasons behind the fly-tying techniques and materials that he used. Flymph-tying recipes are given for a caddis imitation (Partridge and Hare's Ear) and three Mayflies (Honey Dun, Blue Dun, and Iron Blue Dun).

1979—Hidy works with the Boise Valley Fly Fishermen to produce a journal, *Fishermen's Luck*, that is published in April. Its second (and final) issue appears in February 1981.

The covers of the two issues of Fishermen's Luck Hidy produced with the Boise Valley Fly Fishermen.



Montage of flymphs.



Artist's concept of mayfly and caddis-fly emerging stages with flymph imitation: (left to right) caddis pupa, flymph, mayfly emerger.

Two of Dave Whitlock's illustrations from Hidy's chapter on the flymph for The Masters of the Nymph (Lyons Press, 1979) by J. Michael Migel and Leonard M. Wright. Used with permission.



During a visit to Hidy in 1982, Gunnar Johnson photographs the original Leisenring Color & Materials Book. Appearing first as a pamphlet in 1983, the photographs reappear in Flymfer (1989), the Swedish hardcover book by Johnson and Forsling. Photographs courtesy of Gunnar Johnson.

1980—Preben Torp Jacobsen visits Hidy in Boise. Hidy tells Bob Wethern (Hidy's editorial partner on the *Creel*) about it:

Dear Bob,
Since writing to you, Elaine and I have again enjoyed talking with and entertaining our Danish friend, Preben Torp Jacobsen and 9 of his friends from Sweden. They arrived Sept. 1, and left Seattle Sept. 14, after spending 1 week in Idaho and 1 week in Montana. Preben and I have corresponded for about 8 years.

They fish waters of all types in Denmark, Sweden, Norway and the British Isles, most of them quite different from ours. Preben and two of his friends will write about their experiences here for readers of a magazine published in Sweden for the flyfishers in that part of the world, including Denmark and, perhaps, just a few Russian anglers.³³

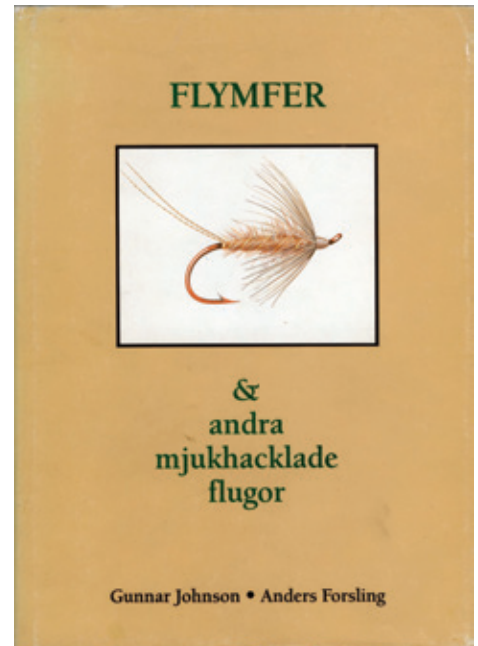
1981—Gunnar Johnson, following the example of his friend Preben Torp Jacobsen, begins a rich correspondence with Hidy. He explains Hidy's flymph to anglers in Scandinavia in the publication *Flugbindarbrev presenterar Flymfer av Vernon S Hidy* (12 pages). Included are four illustrations by

Johnson, an original flymph tied by Hidy, and a card with two spun bodies stapled into paper wrappers. This deluxe *Fly-Tying Letter* is the third in a series. It presents flymph history, theory, and technique, copying the format of Hidy's 1973 *Open Letter*. This is the first of several collaborations between the two men.

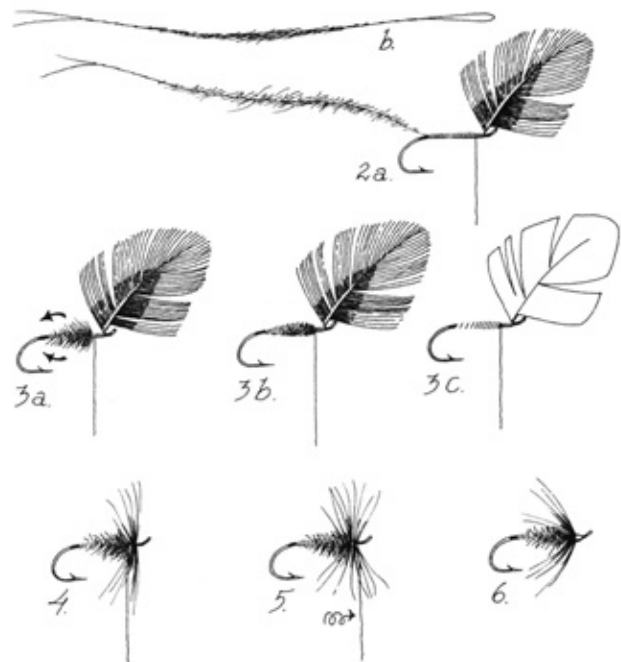
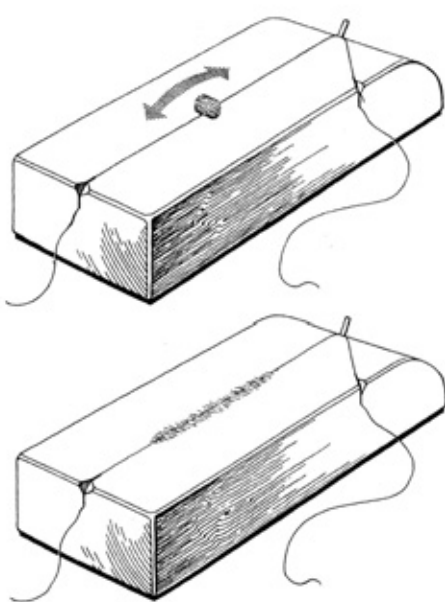
1982—Five months before Hidy's death, Gunnar Johnson visits him. The notes and photographs taken by Johnson are developed into the book *Flymfer*, published in Sweden in 1989.

1983—Gunnar Johnson and Vernon S. "Pete" Hidy, *The Leisenring Color & Materials Book*. Thirteen color photographs by Gunnar Johnson. Privately printed, later published as part of the 1989 book *Flymfer*. With a one-page introduction by Hidy, this booklet reproduces the handmade book of fly-tying materials given to him by Leisenring in 1940. Johnson photographs the book when he visits Hidy in August 1982. A box of the printed pamphlets arrive at Hidy's home a few days before his death in January 1983. Hidy's widow, Elaine, sells the original *Leisenring Color & Materials Book*—along with other Leisenring trout flies and manuscripts and Hidy's collection of angling books—in 1996.³⁴

- 1983—Pete Hidy dies January 24. He is buried in the Hidy Cemetery, Fayette County, Ohio, next to Paint Creek, where he fished during his childhood.
- 1983—After Hidy's death, the Flyfisher's Club of Oregon honors its late founder in a way that recognizes his editorial vision for the *Creel*, as well as his other contributions to angling literature: the Vernon S. "Pete" Hidy Life Membership Award is instituted to honor those who make extraordinary contributions to angling literature. Recipients thus far include Frank W. Amato, H. Lenox H. Dick, Rick Hafele, Dave Hughes, Ted Leeson, Tom McAllister, and Jim Schollmeyer.
- 1989—Swedish publication of a hardcover book *Flymfer & andra mjukhacklade flugor* [*Flymphs and other soft-hackle flies*] (Bodafors, Sweden: Flugfiske i Norden), about Pete Hidy and the flymph, by Gunnar Johnson and Anders Forsling with illustrations by Johnson. Included is *The Leisenring Color & Materials Book*, which was first issued in 1983.



The cover of *Flymfer & andra mjukhacklade flugor* by Gunnar Johnson and Anders Forsling (Bodafors, Sweden: Flugfiske i Norden, 1989).



This series of drawings by Gunnar Johnson from pages 75 and 81 of *Flymfer* show the tying sequence beginning with spinning the body on a Clark block. Used with permission.

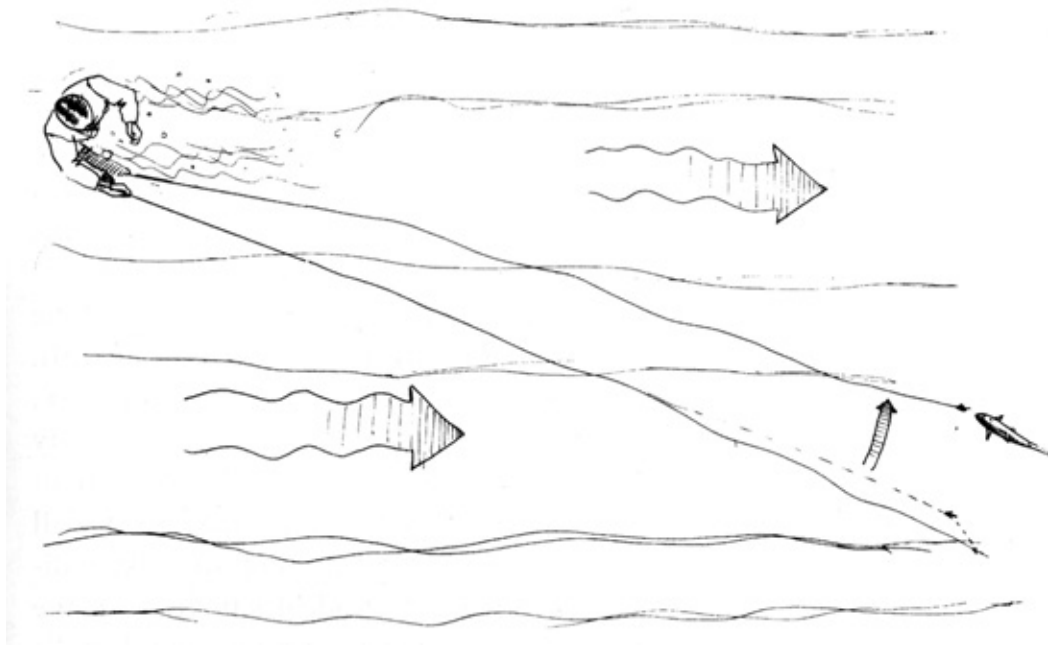
1990—The term *Hidy subsurface swing* is introduced by Dave Hughes in *Fly Fisherman* magazine,³⁵ who repeats it in both editions of his book *Wet Flies* (Stackpole Books, 1995 and 2015). When Hughes and Rick Hafele visit Hidy in Boise in 1980, Hidy gives them a flymph-tying demonstration, and they discuss methods of presenting the fly to the trout. In *Wet Flies*, Hughes remembers that Hidy “lamented that everybody came to associate both of them [Hidy and Leisenring] with the single method they covered in the first book, the Leisenring Lift. He said it was just one of many methods that Leisenring used, and that it was far from the most important. Pete described his own favorite method to me.”³⁶

Hughes pieces together the description, drawing from Hidy’s writing and conversations. Hughes points out that the Leisenring lift is a very limited technique that works only in water 2 to 3 feet deep, and with a fly that can sink all

the way to the bottom—preferably in conditions in which the angler can see into the water. The subsurface swing, on the other hand, is far more versatile, taking place in the top couple of inches under the surface, in many different kinds of stream conditions.

The effectiveness of the swing is that the slight underwater drag causes the fibers in the hackle to come alive. The movement of the fly resembles the swimming insect, struggling to escape into the air. This contrasts with a dead drift, which, as its name suggests, causes the fly to appear lifeless. Hidy let the flymph drag across the current, enhancing the illusion of life and of struggle.

Hidy is not the first to use this version of the swing, no more than Leisenring is the first to use the Leisenring lift. However, thanks to Hughes, Hidy’s favorite technique for presenting the flymph is given a name and becomes a standard part of the flymph fisher’s repertoire.



To execute the Hidy subsurface swing, cast a few feet upstream and beyond the lie of a feeding fish. Give the flymph a slight tug to pull it through the surface film, then let it swing in front of the nose of the trout. Illustration by Richard Bunse in *Wet Flies*, 2nd edition, by Dave Hughes and published by Stackpole Books, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, 2015. Used with permission.

HIDY IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

In 2004, admirers of Pete Hidy and Jim Leisenring launched the International Brotherhood of the Flymph. The IBF is an international group of fly tiers who use their online meeting place, flymphforum.com, to discuss the work of my father and Leisenring, and expand on it with their own experiments. The forum members have had a number of rendezvous in New York’s Catskill Mountains, on the Willowemoc, and on the Madison River in Montana. They have held several fly-tying events at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum in New York.

When the Flyfisher’s Club of Oregon celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 2011, they published online an illustrated tribute to Pete Hidy, which I wrote and supplemented with articles Hidy wrote for the *Creel*, the club journal that he initiated and edited. Today’s new chronology has evolved from that first effort, benefiting from additional research that enabled me to fill gaps and correct errors.

In *The Founding Flies* (Stackpole, 2013), Mike Valla’s beautifully written and illustrated book on innovators of American fly tying, eight pages are dedicated to Leisenring and Hidy, putting them into a larger context. Ten illustrations are related to Hidy alone. Because of these publications, and many others,

Pete Hidy and the flymph have become established as landmarks in the history of fly tying, recognized by virtually every writer who touches on the subject of soft-hackled flies.

But even with all of this attention, the totality of Hidy’s contributions had never been tallied in a single place. This chronology, having served its original purpose to inform the committee of the Hall of Fame at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum, is made public here, in a more polished form, for the first time. Yet even this list is incomplete and is not yet a full bibliography of his writing, his original fly patterns, or a portfolio of his photographs. Those will wait for future publications.

Pete Hidy discovered the pleasures of the feather fly as a very young man, during the darkest days of the Great Depression, and then dedicated the rest of his years to sharing his enjoyment with the world. Even I, Pete's son, was unaware of many details in his generous fly-fishing career until after delving into the archive. Pete would be especially grateful, as I am, for the support from the two principal American fly-fishing museums in Vermont and New York to draw new attention to a neglected chapter and character in American fly-fishing history.

ever, as I have gotten up into the Catskills three or four times in the last two years to pester Dangerous Dan Magrew Cross." As this article was being prepared, this letter was for sale by James Cummins, bookseller (<https://www.jamescumminsbookseller.com/pages/books/265550/vernon-s-pete-hidy/typed-letter-signed-pete-to-baird-foster>, accessed 24 August 2017).

10. Pencil manuscript in 1959 *Sports Illustrated* drafts folder, Hidy archive.

11. Contract, 1 November 1940, Hidy archive.

12. Letter from Jim Leisenring to Pete Hidy, 12 November 1940, Hidy archive.

13. Reuben Cross, introduction to James Leisenring, *The Art of Tying the Wet Fly* (New York: Dodd, Mead, & Co., 1941), viii–ix.

14. Letter from George Spargo to Pete Hidy, 11 October 1945, Hidy archive.

15. Two letters from Richard G. Clark to Pete Hidy, 21 October 1951 and 28 November 1957, Hidy archive. These two letters, six years apart, describe Clark's concerns over the disposition of Jim's estate after his death. Much of the content is the same, but each letter has details that do not appear in the other.

16. Vernon S. Hidy, "The Art of Fishing with the Wet Fly, Part II," *Sports Illustrated* (4 April 1960, vol. 12, no. 14), 51.

17. Vernon S. Hidy with Coles Phinizy, and the editors, *Sports Illustrated Book of Wet-Fly Fishing* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1961).

18. Letter from Pete Hidy to Alfred W. Miller, 10 March 1961, Hidy archive.

19. Robert O. Beatty, Lenox Dick, V. S. Hidy, Fred E. Locke, and Robert Wethern, eds., "Flyfisher's Club of Oregon, Origin and Purposes," *The Creel* (vol. 1, no. 1, December 1961), 32.

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21. Arnold Gingrich, *The Fishing in Print*, 323.

22. James E. Leisenring and Vernon S. Hidy, *The Art of Tying the Wet Fly & Fishing the Flymph* (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1971), 126.

23. Fly Fishers International, "International Federation of Fly Fishers: History," <http://flyfishersinternational.org/About/HistoryMission.aspx>. Accessed 18 July 2017.

24. Richard G. Clark, "The Clark Spinning Block," *The Anglers' Club Bulletin* (vol. 47, no. 3, October 1968), 33.

25. Paul Schullery, editor's note to V. S. Hidy, "A Salute to Leisenring and Skues," *The American Fly Fisher* (vol. 6, No. 4, Fall 1979), 6.

26. Leisenring and Hidy, *The Art of Tying the Wet Fly & Fishing the Flymph*, 155.

27. Pete Hidy, introduction, in Reuben Cross, *The Complete Fly Tier* (Rockville Center, N.Y.: Freshet Press, 1971), xi.

28. Hidy, *The Pleasures of Fly Fishing*, 8–9.

29. T. Donald Overfield, "V. S. Hidy," *Famous Flies and Their Originators* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1972), 163–64.

30. Eric Peper and Jim Rikhs, eds., *Fishing Moments of Truth* (New York: Winchester Press, 1973), dust jacket, front flap.

31. Vernon S. Hidy, *An Open Letter to the International Society of Flymph Fishermen* (Boise, Idaho: Gold Hawk Press, 1973), 5.

32. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, Gen MSS 834, box 6, folder 29 (Leisenring's Jackson drawings) and folder 30 (*The Art of Tying the Wet Fly*).

33. Letter from Pete Hidy to Robert Wethern, 15 September 1980, Hidy archive.

34. Elaine Hidy sold the original *Leisenring Color & Materials Book* at auction to Paul Schmookler (another Fly Fishing Hall of Fame inductee). Six years later, Schmookler reproduced many of the book's pages in his magazine, along with numerous other photographs and an article about Leisenring by Gordon Wickstrom ("Big Jim Leisenring, the Grand Old Man," *Art of Angling Journal* [vol. 1, issue 3, 2002], 9).

35. Dave Hughes, "The Subsurface Swing," *Fly Fisherman* (March 1990, vol. 21, no. 2), 30.

36. Dave Hughes, *Wet Flies* (Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1995 and 2015), 262 [2015 edition].

ENDNOTES

1. Vernon S. Hidy, *The Pleasures of Fly Fishing: Photographs and Commentary on Streams, Rivers, Lakes, Anglers, Trout & Steelhead, Including a Selection of Memorable Observations from the Classic Writings of Angling Literature* (New York: Winchester Press, 1972), 8.

2. Roger Bachman, e-mail to author, 22 February 2011.

3. Arnold Gingrich, *The Fishing in Print* (New York: Winchester Press, 1974), 323.

4. V. S. Hidy, "The Sketch of My Life," unpublished typescript, ca. 1979, Lance Hidy archive.

5. V. S. Hidy, introduction, in Reuben R. Cross, *Fur, Feathers and Steel* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1940), ix.

6. Hidy, *The Pleasures of Fly Fishing*, 8–9.

7. Letters between Pete Hidy and Jim Leisenring can be found in the personal archives of Lance Hidy and Jim Slattery.

8. Ross F. Hidy, *Ross Stover: That Sunny Man of God* (Concord, Calif.: Lutheran Pioneer Press, 1994), 43.

9. Letter from Pete Hidy to Baird Foster, 25 March 1941: "I do not have an automobile and my father's car is at my disposal when convenient to him. It works out well enough, how-



Flymph Forum members at the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum, June 2012. From left, Lance Hidy, William Anderson, Bob Kern, Allen McGee, Jim Slattery, Ray Tucker, Mark Liberton, Chris Stewart, John Shaner, Bill Shuck, Mike Hogue, Bob Dietz, Vickie Shadlock, Doug Duvall, and Tim Didas. Photograph by Lance Hidy. The Flymph Forum logo and International Brotherhood of the Flymph pin were designed by cofounder Mark Liberton.

Mike Stidham: Interpretation of Light and Color



*Waiting for Stragglers, oil on canvas mounted on panel
(36 x 48 inches). Image provided by Fred Polhemus.*

AT HIS STUDIO in the foothills of Utah's Wasatch Mountains, Mike Stidham is standing before a large canvas on his easel, wearing flips-flops and listening to reggae music on a cold winter day. He immerses himself in a sense of being out on a vast Bahamian flats, the thin water and mangroves brightly washed in sunlight and afternoon warmth. It is this feeling he effectively conveys and translates to the canvas. The image is so lit up the viewer almost needs sunglasses to look at it!

Born in 1954, Stidham was raised in the Coachella Valley in southern California and stalked trout in a variety of watershed systems extending from the Sierra to the desert southwest. Early on, he was a self-taught wildlife artist who distanced himself from tight renderings of his subjects, rather choosing to create a more interpretive, suggestive approach through broad brushstrokes and painterly expressions.

What sets Stidham most apart from other practitioners is his innate ability to paint his subjects from two completely different perspectives with such strong execution and conviction: what the sportsperson might see above water and from the prey's perspective, its world beneath the surface. There are sporting artists today, and in years past, who are true masters at one or the other, but not both.

No armchair angler is Stidham. He is as much at home on the water as he is in front of an easel. He guided for several years on the Henry's Fork of the Snake River in Idaho and, until recently, held the International Game Fish Association (IGFA) world record for a hammerhead shark taken on a fly rod. He knows the subjects he paints—in fresh or salt water—better than most, based on decades of pursuit of game fish in just about every imaginable setting.

When Stidham paints an above-water setting into which any angler could place him- or herself, he draws on decades of firsthand experience and knowledge. He imagines how the scene needs to be rendered and designed to convey the mood and feeling he seeks before ever laying brush to canvas. Stidham tells me, "The hardest part of creating any painting is coming up with a good idea in my mind, visualizing how the image will come together to be interesting and appealing, and then being able to translate that onto a blank canvas. Once I have the idea well planned out in my head, the execution of conveying this to canvas is the relatively easy part and should flow effortlessly."

When Stidham creates a scene of fish in their natural setting, that which lies beneath the surface, out of sight from the angler, he takes a quite different approach. Stidham imagines

that he is underwater, back flat against the floor of a Colorado stream, the cold current passing overhead. Or that he is lying in the shallows of a sun-drenched flats in the Keys or Bahamas, the gentle tide slowly carrying fish in and out of the shallows. In these settings, the approach is different, as is the execution, but the results equally compelling.

Stidham has a scholar's explanation: "There is magnificence and mystery in the environs where fish dwell, but we're on the other side of the surface plane. I don't think of myself as painting fish, rocks, and sand. I'm always searching to find better ways to see and create light, water refraction, how that refraction plays off the subject and enhances it, and to achieve color combinations that work together to properly illuminate this subsurface world. Every stroke of paint represents a hit of refracted light bouncing off rocks, sandy bottoms, and fish scales. My goal is to bring viewers to another realm that's right in front of them."

Stidham's interpretation of light and color—the artistic foundations of his oil painting—is what draws the viewer into his art. Upon close inspection of any of his paintings, we find a seemingly disorganized array of brushstrokes and colors that, as individual components, seem to create little context. But when viewed as a whole, the magic reveals itself to the viewer: his firm grasp of light and color combinations that create lively, evocative renderings of the subject. As Stidham offers in his own words, "I don't become a slave to the narrative. I paint perception and keep reality out of it."

Although Stidham works almost exclusively in oil paint these days, he is one of few artists who has also worked in other media, such as watercolor, hand-colored etchings, and original stone lithographs. Stidham's artwork has been the feature of T-shirts

sold through L.L. Bean, Nordstrom, and Simms, among others. His paintings have been featured in publications such as *Fly Fisherman*, *Rod & Reel*, *Outdoor Life*, *Western Art & Architecture*, and *Trout*, and he designed the 1992 Texas saltwater game-fish stamp. His original paintings are included in many prestigious art collections throughout the world, including the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

Stidham has been influenced by many painters over the years—some from days gone by and some his contemporaries. Among two for whom Stidham has particular admiration are western landscape masters Clyde Aspevig and Scott Christensen. "I have studied the works of both landscape painters and learned much about composition and design. Though I paint settings where one finds fish, both above and below water, they are landscapes just the same and many of the same rules apply," Stidham says. "A trout stream or flats environment is the best mirror of natural beauty. To me, it is so intriguing to see the effect of light bars in water bouncing off rocks, sand, and fish, absorbing color and reflecting it back. Sometimes, you can't begin to understand the simplicity of things until you ponder their profound architecture."

Mike Stidham really gets the spirit and feeling of a rocky river or flats setting that cannot be explained in words, and the mesmerizing allure of Stidham's oil paintings lies in his ability to transcend his subject. He uses shapes, colors, and carefully calculated brushstrokes that result in paintings that light up any setting. The world where fish live and anglers pursue them is a magical place to be.

FRED POLHEMUS
TRUSTEE



Watching the Sink—Permit, oil on canvas mounted on panel (30 x 24 inches). From the collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.



*Mike Stidham with a nice tiger trout.
Photo courtesy of the artist.*

AMFF Honors Jim Klug with the 2017 Izaak Walton Award

Sarah Foster

ON A TYPICALLY BEAUTIFUL fall day in Montana, an event taking place at the Riverside Country Club in Bozeman was anything but typical. Jim Klug, founder of the fly-fishing destination travel company Yellow Dog Fly Fishing Adventures, was being honored with the American Museum of Fly Fishing's Izaak Walton Award.

On October 5, our honoree was in the company of friends, family, and industry professionals as AMFF recognized him for contributions that he has made to the sport of fly fishing and the conservation of the waters that we fish.

Klug was introduced by Ian Davis, his business partner at Yellow Dog, who spoke warmly about his friend. Davis recalled the first time the two met with a funny story about Klug being the first customer in a fly shop that Davis had just opened in Breckenridge, Colorado (Klug turned out to be a sales representative for a fly-tying company). Davis knew immediately that he was in the presence of someone he wanted to be associated with for the rest of his fly-fishing career. Citing Klug's sales work, his photography, and his career with Yellow Dog, Davis called Klug the hardest-working man in the sport.

Davis went on to talk about the Yellow Dog Community and Conservation Foundation, their biggest passion project. YDCCF directly supports the conservation needs, community projects, and educational efforts in the twenty-one countries and ten states where Yellow Dog customers travel and where Yellow Dog does business. The foundation provides a mechanism for anglers to directly support the destinations and communities they care about on a grassroots level.

Jim Klug then took the stage and detailed oddities that he has experienced in his travels in search for fish—from being airlifted from a Bolivian jungle, to hopelessly wandering the alleys of Kashmir in search of beer for his film crew, to teaching an impromptu geography class to Guyanese schoolchildren. Looking back on his fly-fishing life, Klug recalled, "I have chased bizarre species, I've experienced exotic cultures, and I've found myself in more sketchy and uncomfortable experiences more times than I can probably count, each time swearing I would never discuss or mention it if I ever I made it home. But the neat thing is that all of these experiences, all of these things happened because of fly fishing. It's always amazing to me the places that this sport takes you. And in the end it's the places, the people, the memorable connections, and, most of all, the stories that have made this journey so fulfilling."

Klug commended the museum for being an entity that is truly dedicated to preserving the rich heritage of fly fishing, and credited the board and staff for appreciating that "the history of angling is about much more than simply catching fish. It is an important part of our American culture and tradition." He accepted the Izaak Walton Award with humility and thanked his supportive family and friends, especially his wife,



Jim Klug was all smiles as he accepted the 2017 Izaak Walton Award.

Hilary, for encouraging his ambitious lifestyle and being a steadying, supportive influence while he travels. Klug also noted that despite one colleague's remarks, just because he received the museum's award, it doesn't mean that he's old.

The museum would like to thank the following auction donors for helping to make the evening such a success: Beaverkill Rod Company, Bighorn Angler Lodge, Robert Cochrane, Confluence Films, Ian Davis, E & J Gallo Winery, Gallatin River Lodge, Hatch Reels, Izaak Walton Inn, Karen Kaplan, Jim Klug, Madison Valley Ranch, David Nichols, Orvis, Parlor Skis, REC Components, Scientific Anglers, Nick Selch, Silver Creek Outfitters, Simms, Temple Fork Outfitters, and Ted Turner.

We would also like to express our thanks to the staff at Yellow Dog for their assistance and for making us feel so welcome in Bozeman.



The Catch of a Lifetime

by Cathi Comar

Robert Nadeau



Malo-Clark struggling to lift the 47-pound, 2-ounce salmon before she was released.

Robert Nadeau



Another attempt to lift the salmon. (Notice the American Museum Fly Fishing cap on the chair.)

ON 22 JUNE 2016, AN ANGLER at Larry's Gulch Lodge on the Restigouche River broke the lodge's largest-salmon record. Simultaneously, she broke her own record, too. That angler is Sylvie Malo-Clark.

Malo-Clark is among the many celebrated in the American Museum of Fly Fishing's 2011 groundbreaking exhibition and book, *A Graceful Rise: Women in Fly Fishing Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*.

Sylvie Malo-Clark was raised in the Canadian province of Québec and attended St. Thomas University in New Brunswick. It was here, in 1977, that she met her husband, Canadian writer Peter D. Clark, and soon embraced the sport of fly fishing. Sylvie and Peter became quick angling companions and pursued trout and Atlantic salmon throughout provincial waters.

After completing her studies in business and education, Malo-Clark became a teacher in Fredericton, New Brunswick. Throughout the years, and between regular fishing excursions, she pursued her angling passion by expanding her knowledge of flies and fish. She brought her love of the sport to the classroom when she added the Fish Friends program to the curriculum. Sponsored by the New Brunswick Salmon Council, Fish Friends teaches children the life cycle of the wild Atlantic salmon and the importance of conservation and environmental issues. For her fifteen years of volunteer service to this program, the Atlantic Salmon Federation honored Malo-Clark with a certificate of appreciation. Now retired, she continues to

volunteer as a program coordinator, sharing her enthusiasm for Atlantic salmon with many children in the province.

Malo-Clark is a level II fishing guide in the province of New Brunswick and an active member of the International Women Fly Fishers. She enjoys re-creating her surroundings in paintings, especially in oil and watercolor, and two of her landscapes were published on her husband's book covers. Her bird's-eye maple fly boxes—a watercolor combined with Atlantic salmon flies—are sought after by discriminating collectors. She became an avid fly tier after learning from Peter (a master tier) and others, and she has used this talent to tie creations for friends and donate to fund-raising efforts. With Peter's help, she organized children's ten-week fly-tying programs at the Fredericton public schools. They still occasionally instruct fly-tying classes in the province.

Malo-Clark has far exceeded the typical undertakings of a passionate angler and has made many contributions to the sport of fly fishing throughout the past forty years. She participates in fly-fishing shows as a guest fly tier, fly-tying instructor, and speaker in Canada and the United States. She specializes in hairwing Atlantic salmon-fly patterns, and her flies have been featured in such publications as *Fly Fusion* magazine, the International Women Fly Fishers newsletter, and John Bryan and Rob Carter's book, *America's Favorite Flies* (Charles Creek Publishing, 2017). Her professional associations include being part of the Regal Vise Pro Staff, the Partridge of Redditch hooks team, and Lagartun LTD Pro team.

Of course, Sylvie and Peter spend much time on Canadian waters, pursuing Atlantic salmon in the Miramichi, Cains, Grand Cascapedia, and Restigouche rivers. They have caught, photographed, and released many fish over the years. But on 22 June 2016, Malo-Clark added this to her impressive fly-fishing résumé: the catch of a lifetime.

Larry's Gulch Lodge is situated along the Restigouche River in Kedgwick, New Brunswick. Malo-Clark first visited the lodge in 2009; throughout the years, she has caught Atlantic salmon ranging from 5 to 20 pounds. She arrived at Larry's Gulch on June 20 with a bounty of salmon flies (all her own ties), from size 6 to 4/0, to be sure she was ready for any river condition. This trip, she was assigned veteran guide Robert Nadeau. His thirty-three years at the lodge meant that he was familiar with the river and its many secrets.

The first evening of fishing was full of gusty winds and reluctant salmon. Malo-Clark was convinced that the wind prevented the fish from being tempted by her #1 Glitter Bear pattern. Day two was a bit more exciting, as Malo-Clark used the same pattern and hooked a 5-pound grilse—the first that year, according to the lodge's book. She hooked a couple more fish without landing them. She made another excursion to a different pool that evening, but she was unable to add another fish to the daily-catch log.

Day three was a day to remember. Malo-Clark started that morning where she had hooked two fish the morning before, as guide Nadeau was banking on some overnight activity. At around 9:00 a.m., using her #1 Glitter Bear, Malo-Clark made a cast, and BAM! As Nadeau moved the boat closer to shore, he saw that the fish was a large female Atlantic salmon. Malo-Clark held the line and fought the fish for forty-five minutes. Having lost a large salmon a year earlier on the Grand Cascapedia, she was determined not to lose this one! After netting her catch, Nadeau measured the prize: 48 inches, 47 pounds, 2 ounces. Malo-Clark struggled to lift the fish for a couple of photographs before the magnificent salmon was released back into the Restigouche.

Malo-Clark's catch was both the lodge record and her own. To this day, she marvels at the fact that her salmon migrated several times back to the Restigouche. The important conservation messages promoted by many fish organizations give Malo-Clark hope that salmon will continue to migrate and thrive and that other anglers will have opportunity to land the catch of a lifetime.



Cathi Comar is a former executive director of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

Linda St. Laurent



Malo-Clark signing the salmon log book with (from left) Maureen Bilerman and Shawn Bilerman (friends who made the trip with her), lodge manager Arnold Vautour, and husband Peter D. Clark.

Sylvie Malo-Clark



Veteran guide Robert Nadeau.

Sylvie Malo-Clark



The #1 Glitter Bear tied by Malo-Clark, on which she caught her record salmon.

Keith Fulsher

29 July 1922–11 August 2017

IT IS A SMALL STREAM in the north woods of Wisconsin, actually one of several in the state with the same name. Bright little flashes of green with orange underbellies—brook trout—dart through its waters, chasing minnows beneath the deadfalls and overhanging branches. Thunder Creek, a name belying its quiet flow, was the stream that more than fifty years ago inspired a series of baitfish fly patterns that have been used successfully by thousands of anglers: the Thunder Creek Series of bucktail streamers with distinctive, large heads. Keith Fulsher invented the patterns after casting standard streamers and bucktails, often with frustrating results, to these native Wisconsin trout in the 1960s. Keith offered his innovative flies to other fly fishers through his 1973 book, *Tying and Fishing the Thunder Creek Series*. The late Joseph Bates, an established authority on streamers and bucktails, called Keith's patterns "as true to life as artificials can be."

Appropriately, Keith is renowned for his contribution to American angling as a master fly tier. Many of us, in addition, were privileged to know Keith personally. He was a remarkably warm, thoughtful, and humorous man. Generous of spirit and positive in outlook, he would quite comfortably fit Izaak Walton's compleat angler: "he that hopes to be a good angler, must not only bring an inquiring, searching, observing wit, but he must bring a large measure of hope and patience, and a love and propensity to the art itself."

For many years and until his passing in summer 2017, Keith was a member of the Potatuck Club, an historically rich trout-fishing club in Newtown, Connecticut, where he regularly fished. As a fellow member, I saw him frequently and fished with him there. His regular fishing buddy for many years, however, was the late Gardner Grant, a former trustee and president of the American Museum of Fly Fishing. Their weekly gatherings on one particular pool of the Potatuck, especially during the spring and early summer months, were memorable. These were their unwritten but keenly observed angling rules: Law #1: Use only dry flies; Law #2: see #1. They would stand side by side, with one casting a 3- or 4-weight rod, long leader, and 6X tippet until hooking and catching (or losing) a trout or—often a matter of some dispute—sufficient time had passed to indicate that the caster had chosen the wrong fly. Then the other would use another dry fly and try to tempt the discerning trout. Friendly and continuous criticism of the other's choice of fly, casting technique, and/or playing efforts was expected and freely given. Gardner particularly relished this aspect of their sporting arrangement.

One lovely spring afternoon several years ago, during a members' celebration at the Potatuck Club, Keith, Gardner, and I were discussing flies, and the conversation moved outside the clubhouse to the President's Pool. Now, the President's Pool is reserved for the most "mature"—that is, older—members. Although I was not then qualified to fish this pool, I was asked



*Keith Fulsher holds a grilse in this undated photograph.
Image courtesy of Keith Fulsher Jr.*

to put on a Parachute Adams and see what I could do. Well, I couldn't do much, as it turned out. Other members gathered to join in the growing criticism of my efforts. But Keith, after a few minutes of my fruitless casting, suggested quietly that I try another fly. He handed me a size 10 Thunder Creek Blacknose Dace. I tied it on surreptitiously and cast it downstream and across the tail of the pool. It didn't swim far before a good trout—a brown—ate it. I landed it a few minutes later: 19 inches. Keith smiled; so did I. I smile now thinking of that and of Keith.

RICHARD TISCH
TRUSTEE



Museum News

AMFF Receives Grant

The Vermont Arts Council has awarded a Cultural Facilities Grant to the American Museum of Fly Fishing to create and install a permanent fly room that will display our collection of more than 22,000 flies. This collection consists of some of the most notable names in the history of fly tying, including Theodore Gordon, Megan Boyd, Lee Wulff, and Helen Shaw. It also includes the oldest documented flies in existence, which were tied in 1789 and have leaders made of Indian grass. The addition of a fly room will increase our exhibition space and enhance the overall visitor experience. We will be better equipped to host fly-tying events while providing relevant historical content. With the support of AMFF Trustee Nick Selch, who matched the grant in its entirety, the fly room will be open to the public this summer.

Meccawe Club Outing

The museum held its annual members' outing in September at the Meccawe Club near Bridgewater, Vermont. The event was a sold-out success, and everyone who attended—AMFF staff, board, and members—had a great time.

The Meccawe grounds are gorgeous. The 9-acre pond holds rainbow and brook trout. The 114-year-old clubhouse is a former schoolhouse that was pulled by a team of oxen to its current location.

We arrived to sunny skies and rising trout and temperatures. Some of us spread out along the shoreline; others floated the pond in club boats. The hot weather made it clear that the bite



Sara Wilcox

Friends gathered in the upper level of the museum office and storage building on September 14 to enjoy our oldest and most interesting fur and feather artifacts at the 2017 Rare Flies member event with Deputy Director Yoshi Akiyama.

was going to be early, and almost all of the fish landed were taken in the first hour. By lunchtime, the heat had won, and we retreated to Meccawe's screened porch and dining room for a delicious barbecue lunch prepared by club staff.

We very much enjoyed the chance to bond with our membership over fishing and food and look forward to our next event. Special thanks to Meccawe President John Houlihan and caretakers Mike Jones and Mary Dumas for their gracious hospitality. More information about the club can be found at meccaweclub.org.



Peter Nardini

A pair of anglers scout out a good spot to begin their morning of fishing at the Meccawe Club in September.

The museum is turning 50!

Do you have memories about the museum that you'd like to share with us? We may include them in an upcoming issue.

E-mail the editor at keachor@comcast.net, or mail your piece to the museum. Electronic files are preferred for longer pieces.

Deadline is Thursday, March 1.



Sara Wilcox

Artist Christopher Pierce from Shushan, New York, demonstrated his still-life techniques at September's installment of Canvas and Cocktails in the Leigh H. Perkins Gallery.



Jim Heckman

2017 AMFF Volunteer of the Year Ray Smith received his award at the annual trustee dinner held at the Dorset Field Club on October 21.

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

February 17

Gallery Program
Tie One On
Fly-fishing activities for all
followed by pizza, cash bar, and
Pig Farm Ink
Iron Fly Contest
2:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m.

March 10

Gallery Program
Frequent Fly Tier
Multilevel fly-tying instruction
10:00 a.m.–noon

March 24

Gallery Program
Frequent Fly Tier
Multilevel fly-tying instruction
10:00 a.m.–noon

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 up-to-date news and event information. To subscribe, look for the link on our website or contact the museum.

CONTRIBUTOR

Lance Hidy is a graphic artist and educator, best known for his poster design and his work as a book designer for Ansel Adams. Hidy designed Penumbra, a typeface family for Adobe. He is currently working in the Massachusetts state college system to make education more accessible for people with disabilities. After writing many essays on design history, this is his first on fly fishing. He lives in Merrimac, Massachusetts, upstream from the estuary of the Merrimack River.

Corey Davis



Sarah Foster Named Executive Director

Celia Kelly Photography



Sarah with her husband Lee, son Lain, and daughter Lila.

AS WE CELEBRATE the museum's fiftieth anniversary in 2018 and look forward to many exciting things—including the opening of our saltwater exhibition and the creation of a permanent fly room—the AMFF Board of Trustees is very pleased to announce that Sarah Foster has been named the museum's new executive director. A valued member of the AMFF team since 2007, Sarah brings a wealth of institutional knowledge to the position. She previously served as membership director and director of development, and was just recently promoted to the position of deputy director.

Sarah graduated from the University of Albany with a bachelor's degree in anthropology and business. She is a longtime resident of Shushan, New York, where she lives with her hus-

band and two children along the Batten Kill River. She is an avid barrel racer and serves as treasurer at her local church.

Over the years, Sarah has come to fully understand and execute all aspects of the museum's business. She has helped to guide us through some of the most successful fund-raising years in the museum's history. She is highly regarded by the board of trustees, many of whom have remarked on her excellent capacity for fully understanding and implementing policy. We could not hope for a better transition or more positive leadership as we move forward.

KAREN KAPLAN
PRESIDENT



Catch and Release the Spirit of Fly Fishing!

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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 Yoshi Akiyama at yakiyama@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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