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President's Message August 2015



When summer was half over, what began as a late start for a late spring turned into a warm summer very quickly. Now rivers such as the Beaverkill and Willowemoc are low and warm and are experiencing almost drought conditions. The tailwater rivers in the Catskills are still in good condition to receive water, because the reservoirs that can supply them are at very good levels for this time of year. The average capacity for the New York City reservoirs is about 5.6 percent higher than normal at the writing of this message.

Since our last *Quill* was published, the TGF board of directors has voted for two new directors to replace directors Lauren Suter and John Barone. The new directors are Bill Blumer and Warren Stern. They will fill out the terms of Lauren and John, respectively. Bill Blumer was also elected to fill the position of treasurer and has already immersed himself in the operations of that position.

Besides working with the board as a director, Lauren also served as our treasurer and did a great job for TGF. We wish him well and good health with his pursuits away from his board activities.

John Barone also served as more than a TGF director. For many years, John and Steve Lieb were vice presidents and cochairs of the Conservation Committee. John led TGF's efforts to prevent casino gambling on the Neversink, to help reduce the size of the impact of development on Belleayre, and to help keep the Catskills free from "fracking." We wish John a great future in his practice of environmental law.

On Wednesday, July 1, this year, I attended the opening of the Maurice D. Hinchey Catskill Interpretive Center in Mount Tremper, New York. The opening was well attended by leaders of numerous organizations representing a cross section of many types of groups, from outdoor recreation, to conservation, to business. This interpretive center has been in the making for at least thirty years, and it has finally become a reality. It will help promote the Catskills and all that they have to offer to visitors and local residents. At the opening ceremony, Department of Conservation Commissioner Joe Martens spoke about the history of efforts to make the center a destination for people visiting the Catskills, but he also spoke at length about Maurice Hinchey's involvement in bringing it to life. As a U.S. congressman, Maurice was a recipient of TGF's Conservation Award at our Conservation Fund Dinner in Roscoe, New York. I urge our members to visit this new facility if they are in the Mount Tremper area or if they just want to learn more about what the Catskill Mountains and Catskill Park offer to the public.

Finally, the Horse Brook culvert removal project is well underway. This is another project that has been ongoing for years, but that has now finally been started, with a completion date in the near future. The project should have been completed a number of years ago, but as with many matters that involve government, things do not always work the way we would like. But this has been a very worthwhile investment of time and money for conservation, and now it is happening.

Bert Darrow, President
Theodore Gordon Flyfishers

The 2015 TGF Farmington River Outing

Bud Bynack

On July 9, a group of TGF members gathered in the Peoples State Forest Park in Barkhamsted, Connecticut, to enjoy a day of fishing, introduce some members to the Farmington River, share a lunch, and talk about fishing and conservation. Those who stayed overnight also has a pleasant dinner at Chatterly's, in New Hartford.

Attending were Bert Darrow, who organized and hosted the event, Joe Ceballos, Pete Diminico (and his dog, Roxy), Pat Key, Lauren Suter, Bill Blumer, Warren Stern, David Kramer, Avram Schlesinger, John Happersett, Gloria Happersett, Laura Happersett, Merrill "Doc" Katz, John Goldenski, and me. This is a pleasant way to get to know other TGF members and the wonderful Farmington River. Look for it next year and plan to attend.



A Memory of Mother's Day

Merrill "Doc" Katz

It was the latter part of April 1979, and I was completing my graduate work at Penn State. Jody was working for the university's Land and Water Research Institute and was also an active member of the Penn State Choir. My in-laws had planned a trip from Connecticut to State College so they could visit us and attend the forthcoming Mother's Day Concert. Jody and I discussed the possibility of inviting two of my closest fishing pals, Dave Holmes, a Pennsylvania state trooper, and Steve Sywensky, owner of Flyfisher's Paradise, a well-known Central Pennsylvania fly shop, to the concert and then to join us at our home for a gourmet dinner. I suggested that May 13 would not be a good day to invite these folks to dinner, because the Hendrickson hatch was about to peak, and fishing might be a higher priority. Jody argued that they had been fishing the "Hendersons" all week and that their wives would appreciate a night out. I acceded to her wishes, contacted them, and much to my chagrin, they agreed to attend. I was selfishly hoping that they would refuse so I could excuse myself from the concert and go fishing.

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Reading Rise Forms

Larry Solomon

Over the fifty years that I have fly fished for trout, I have done so, initially, with the objective of catching fish with whatever fly type that was necessary, from a size 24 Trico to a size 4 Woolly Bugger or streamer. They all caught fish, but in recent years, focusing on surface-feeding trout has attracted my full attention. I try to schedule my trips astream to the times that I expect (and hope—it doesn't always happen) that some hatch will emerge and the fish will be "up." The challenge that Mother Nature presents when I play this game is to analyze the stage of the insect that the fish are feeding on and to present an imitation of that to the trout in the way that the natural insect is behaving. When the fish takes my offering, I win "game one," even though it may get off. Winning "game 2" is bringing the trout to the net for a quick and safe release. Unless you win game one, there is no game two.

For many, the typical reaction when top-water fishing is, "Hey, there's a rise. . . . Put on a dry fly." And quite often that's the correct response, once you have figured out what the proper insect is to imitate. However, many times, it's not that simple, which is where the fun begins for me. Having a bit more information and other options can help to increase your knowledge and success.

Quick Review

To read rise forms, you need to recall what you know about how aquatic insects emerge. Most of the time, this emergence takes place in the surface film, where mayflies or caddisflies use their nymphal or pupal shucks as sort of a launching pad. However, some of the mayflies emerge on the way up, and what the fish see is the adult, with its wings out. This is often true with the classic Quill Gordon (*Epeorus pleuralis*), an early spring hatch in the East. It is also the case with one of the Sulphurs, a fact that few anglers know. I'm sure there are others, as well.

In contrast, the caddisflies, rather than going from their larval form directly to adult, have an additional, pupal stage, and prior to emerging, the larva hibernates in its case (or builds one at the time, if it does not have one) for a period of about one week. Inside the case, it develops half wings along its side and longer legs that help it swim to the surface. It often also develops some tiny gaseous bubbles that help it rise to the surface. When Mom Nature says it's time, the pupa crawls out of the case, and up it goes, sometimes quite rapidly.

Because many stonefly species simply crawl out of the river to hatch, often at night, I won't be discussing them here. Fishing a nymph during that period and in general is quite effective. A few others hatch in the stream, and the adults of some species are available to trout as they return to the water to lay their eggs. For the most part, if stoneflies are on the water and trout are taking them, just imitate the insect that you see.

Reading Rises

This basic information helps us read rise forms and to understand what stage of an emerging insect a fish is eating. The various rise forms that you may see could be splashy . . . just a dimple . . . a classic head-dorsal-tail roll . . . just a nose or head . . . just a dorsal fin. . . a bulge in the surface . . . or even a rise with rings,

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Project Healing Waters (continued from page 1)

and congratulations. Highlights of the trip included a picnic lunch on Saturday, dinner at a local restaurant that night (for which the tab was picked up by a mysterious fellow who insisted on anonymity), a hearty breakfast on Sunday, and a beautiful mayfly hatch on Sunday morning. The trip was supported by donations and funds from the local and regional budgets of Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing (the New York City program and the New York/New Jersey Region budgets). Tackle and flies were donated by the Compleat Angler in Darien, Connecticut, and UpCountry Sportfishing in Pine Meadow, Connecticut.

Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing was founded by Ed Nicholson, a retired naval captain who served for many years and in many conflicts, including Vietnam. Captain Nicholson took up fly fishing while stationed at Idaho Falls in the 1980s, learning the sport on the Snake River and Henrys Fork. In 2005, while being treated at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Washington, D.C., Captain Nicholson (retired) decided to teach some of the wounded warriors who were receiving treatment and recovering from their injuries to fly fish. He started by taking them out on the lawn and teaching them casting. In no time, with the support of the Walter Reed rehabilitation staff, he created a program that appealed to the soldiers who were wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan, and they discovered (or rediscovered) the joys of fly fishing. Today, Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing has over two hundred programs in fifty states, with affiliate programs in Canada and Australia. Each program is managed at the local level by community volunteers and may be based at Department of Veterans Affairs facilities, Department of Defense military installations, or Warrior Transition Units. In 2014, Project Healing Waters served more than sixty-three hundred recovering warriors and disabled veterans by organizing casting instruction, fly-tying classes, rod-building classes, and fishing trips and events. The organization has more than twenty-eight hundred volunteers who together contributed more than one hundred and fifty thousand hours of time in 2014.

Unsurprisingly, these volunteers include members of TGF. Longtime TGF member Tamar Franklin, a rehabilitation psychologist and a neuropsychologist, is the New York/New Jersey regional coordinator for the organization. She and her husband, Richard Franklin, another longtime TGF member, volunteer hundreds of hours to the organization, leading fly-fishing trips throughout the New York area. Other volunteers in New York help with casting clinics in Central Park. During the colder months of the winter, the Jewish Community Center donates its gymnasium for casting and fly-tying classes indoors. Volunteers also offer fly-tying classes in their homes. Tamar introduced me to the organization several years ago, and I approached Sara Low and Bert Darrow about a trip to the Farmington. I didn't have to ask twice.

As TGF members, we share a love of fishing, of nature, and of the outdoors. But we, together with all Americans, share something else—a debt of gratitude to the men and women who have risked their lives in the service of our country and who now can use our help as they recover from wounds, chronic medical conditions, and other health issues. Volunteering for Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing is a small down payment on that debt and an experience that makes fly fishing even more rewarding.

To learn more about Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing, visit <http://www.projecthealingwaters.org>.

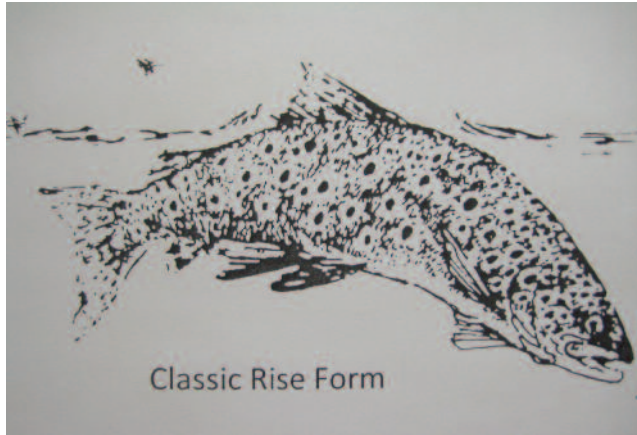


The hatch is on.



Reading Rise Forms (continued from page 4)

but no nose, dorsal, or head visible. All rises will make some rings, although some very are subtle. Confusing? Maybe a little, but wonderful to behold, because it says "Fish are feeding!"



have an idea of what hatches occur on the river you are fishing and what the progression of them is. There is often information available from local fly shops or the Internet, and many books have been written that discuss the progression of hatches in particular rivers or regions.

For the most part, if you see an insect on the surface (don't just go by what you see in the air), and the rise shows the head of the fish, or is a classic head-dorsal-tail rise, it is a good guess that they are taking a mayfly dun. Still, you should watch for awhile to see if the duns are in fact being taken. In contrast, if there are



duns on the surface, but they are not being taken, or if the rises appear to be just below the surface, and no part of the fish is seen above it, just a bulge or perhaps a dorsal fin, there is a good chance that they are taking the emerging stage, either as the nymph just getting to the surface or as duns with wings fully developed, a stage that is well imitated by a wet fly.

If you see a splashy or aggressive rise, it's a good bet that the insect is moving quickly, and the fish wants to get it before it's gone. This happens quite often with certain caddisfly emergences. You can often see a splash and then see a caddis adult fly away from the splash. The trout has missed it. When this occurred, an old friend used to keep his fly in the air with continuous false casts, sometimes ten to twenty at a time. When the trout rose again, he instantly put the fly right on the rise and almost always hooked that fish. The theory was that if the fish had caught the emerging caddis, and another then appeared right above him, he would take it, too, while if the fish had missed the emerging insect, he would pause for a moment, looking for it, and there it would be again—your fly. However, there are caddisflies that emerge in the film, similar to mayflies, and the rise form for them is slow, so you have to observe what is occurring and try to make a reasonable decision.

Although the particular rise form can often tell you what stage of the insect the fish is eating and help you decide what fly to put on and how to fish it, unfortunately, nothing is written in granite. Fish behavior can change with water level and weather changes. The purpose here is to give you some options to consider related to what you are seeing on the surface.

First, it helps if you

First, it helps if you

If it's a windy day, and the flies are being blown a bit, you might also see splashy rises as the fish try to catch them. At those times, it might be good to fish a fly with a somewhat heavier hackle and skitter it slightly across the surface. You might not want to use a 6X tippet, either, because the take can often be sharp.

If you just see a dimple, or just a ring with no visible rise, the insect was easy prey for the trout and was floating dead drift. If very few insects are visible (especially if it is late in the day), it's a good chance that the fish might be feeding on spinners that are laying or that have laid their eggs and have died. Sometimes spinners are difficult to see, because they usually lie flat on the surface, especially if you are not in the main current. They will usually come down on the water in the riffles above the pools and will be carried downstream in the main line of the current. When I'm not sure what is happening, I have often gone below the rising trout, waded out into the main current with a small fish-tank net, and found spent-wing spinners lying flat in the surface. I could then present the imitation of what they were eating. The feeding behavior can quickly change once a quantity of spinners becomes available. Trout love them, because they are an easy target. Your presentation *must* be dead drift.

But Mother Nature plays by her own rules, and winning game one, let alone game two, isn't always easy. Reading rises can take some imaginative thinking. The best way to make the point is to give you three illuminating examples. They occurred years ago, but are just as appropriate today.

A friend, Jay, was up from Texas in late May and wanted to fish the Catskill streams. It had rained the previous day, and the sky was still quite gray. Most of the waters were a bit high. After driving around, we found a pool on the Beaverkill that looked fishable. It was in the afternoon, some pale flies were hatching, and trout were rising. It was about the time of day that one of the popular Sulphurs, *Ephemerella dorothea*, often hatched. Trout usually took the dry-fly imitation of the *dorothea* nicely, so I gave one to Jay and put one on myself. Surprisingly, only one fish of more than a dozen to which we cast took the fly. I occasionally saw a dorsal fin, and they seemed to be taking under the surface film, not on it. I proceeded to catch a couple of specimen insects, and I was surprised. *Dorothea* is size 16, with pale gray wings, a pale body with a tinge of apricot color, and three tails. The insect I picked up was also size 16, with pale gray wings, a Sulphur-yellow body, and *two* tails. Hmmm. I remembered that I had read in Ernie Schwiebert's book, *Matching the Hatch*, that this insect, which he called *Epeorus vitrea*, often hatches about the same time as *Ephemerella dorothea*, but it emerges from the bottom as a fully developed dun, and a good match for it is a size 16 Little Marryat wet fly. I happened to have three of them in my fly box. Needless to say, Jay and I proceeded to catch eight or ten trout, up to eighteen inches. We cast the fly across and downstream, and the fish took it on the swing, very much like traditional fishing for Atlantic salmon. The rise form was simply a bulge and occasional dorsal fin in the surface.

Then there's the story of how I came up with the Flo-Merger pattern, which I discussed in the Winter 2015 *Quill*. It was reading rise forms that led me to develop this pattern. After three evenings on the Beaverkill and Delaware in early June, a friend and I were frustrated with emergence of *Isonychia bicolor*, just before dark. Flies were coming off, and fish were rising, but they were not taking our dries. Again, I never saw any part of the fish, and it appeared that they were taking something in the film.

One not-too-fussy trout made the mistake of taking my dry, and I pumped its stomach to see what it had just been eating. Voila! It had two *Isonychia* nymphs that had come to the surface with their wings about halfway out. In previous studies, I had seen this with other flies in a fish tank, with the body hanging down and the wings starting to come out of the wing case, right in the surface film. That night, I tied four of the first Flo-Mergers (Floating Emergers), with a body like the nymph and with a short deer hair wing up at a forty-five-degree angle. I put cream floatant on the wing only, and it floated the fly, with the body hanging under the surface.

The following evening, we were back to the same Delaware pool, and the same activity occurred. The difference was that we hooked about ten fish up to twenty inches. The Flo-Merger resembles an insect that is easy prey, a stage at which the fast-swimming *Isonychia* nymph has gotten to the surface and started emerging into the adult. The fly hanging below the surface might have been easier for the fish to see than the dry floating on top. It was the rise form that clued me in on all this. The Flo-Merger has been very successful imitating other insects, both mayfly and caddis. The only difference is that the caddis imitation has no tail.

In July, on Henrys Fork of the Snake, in Idaho, I spent two or three frustrating afternoons fishing to a caddis emergence, called *Helicopsyche borealis*. (Sorry about that, but there are no common names for most caddis species.) We'll call it the Little Brown Caddis (LBC). It is a common caddis across the country . . . size 20. There had been hatches of other insects earlier in the day, which had been rewarding, and when the LBCs started hatching, trout seemed to take them with a soft, but deliberate rise. Unfortunately, they were not rising to my imitation, which looked right to my eye. The hatch was sporadic for over an hour, both days. On the second day, not getting good results, I just stopped fishing and started watching with some small binoculars that I had. I could see the fish rise, but only sometimes did I see a dorsal and tail fin. It told me that they were feeding just underneath the film.

That evening, knowing that caddis emergence involves a pupa, I tied several of that size, with just a turn of fine lead wire on the shank. The next day, when the hatch began, my presentation was to cast downstream to the fish, stop the cast with rod tip high, allowing the fly to land about three feet above the fish, then drop the rod tip slowly, which allowed the pupa to sink a bit. I then stopped the drift just about where the fish was, which brought the pupa toward the surface. They loved it. I took half a dozen trout that I could not interest the two days before. The trout saw what they thought was an emerging pupa and took it just as it was getting to the surface, as they had been taking the natural insect, to my great delight.

It is very gratifying to win game one and game two, however Mother Nature has been playing the game that day. Reading rise forms is an important part of playing the game, and it's good to have several options in your game plan, so if one is not correct, you can try another. When something works, make a mental or actual note for future reference. In my early years, I kept notes of each day on the river: the date, hatches, weather, temperature (air and water), fish activity, and the flies that worked. These helped me understand of what had occurred and why. As I've said so often, observation and experiment are key to learning the game.



Roxy the Fish-Pointing Dog

Pete Diminico

This is a true story—a story for dog lovers, yes, especially for lovers of pointing breeds, but also a story with twists and turns regarding the fly-fishing world. Both of my Gordon setter companions, Brandy, and currently Roxy, have always had an affinity to “point” or chase anything with wings, including big Golden Stoneflies. This story revolves around Roxy, whose lineage is from several master hunter lines, and the pursuit by my friend Wally and me of some big browns on the West Branch of the Ausable River in the Adirondacks in June 2014.

The plan was, Wally would go upstream, and I would fish downstream, meeting back at the truck in a couple hours. It was midafternoon, and the hatches were on, including the egg-laying female stoneflies. Wally and I were excited to have timed things so nicely and hoped that great results would follow as we fished dry flies.

At sixty-six and with failing vision, it takes me much longer to lock and load my fly line and tippet. Roxy usually is very patient with me, waiting by my side while I complete the process. For some reason, this day was different. A whistle and a call to Roxy—no response. I meandered down to wade in and saw my dog literally jumping up and down with intensity, almost in panic mode. I had not seen this kind of behavior on the stream before. Immediately, when I looked at the water in her direction, I realized what this pandemonium was all about. A three-pound-plus brown trout was aggressively on the feed and porpoising completely out of the water. I saw a spent female stonefly on the water, then swoosh, it was gone.

“Ah,” I said to myself, “I’ve got this one!” My first cast, a size 12 Haystack, was refused, as were many more of the same. I tried a smaller fly—as size 14 Haystack. A few more casts, and nothing. Well, this fish was put down, so Roxy and I moved upstream a couple hundred feet to fish quieter water. I continued to mix it up with my selection of fly patterns, but to my chagrin, still nothing. With frustration setting in, I realized that Roxy was not by my side again. Yep—back downstream, Roxy was again jumping up and down and even coming close to a staunch point.

The axiom in the bird-hunting world is, “Always trust your dog on point.” I made quick haste to where she was, and there was that big brown on the feed again. I fumbled to put on another fly—a size 16 tan caddis. My dog watched patiently as I cast and made some good floats along the trout’s feeding lane. It was no-go again. This is why they call it “fishing.” The fish was again put down, and I hastily moved upstream to fish untested waters and to look for Wally, as well. I was starting to realize that the hatches were diminishing, and so were the rises.

It had been a little over an hour and a half with no hookups, and I was feeling a bit like a neophyte fly fisher. Again I looked downstream, and my fish-pointing dog was again going nuts. It seemed as if the only action happening was that fish rising. This time, I thought I had the magic formula to nail this brown—a size 18 Usual on a 6X tippet. Nothing—no splash, no refusal, just nothing. I looked down at Roxy, and her deep-set brown eyes echoed my disappointment.

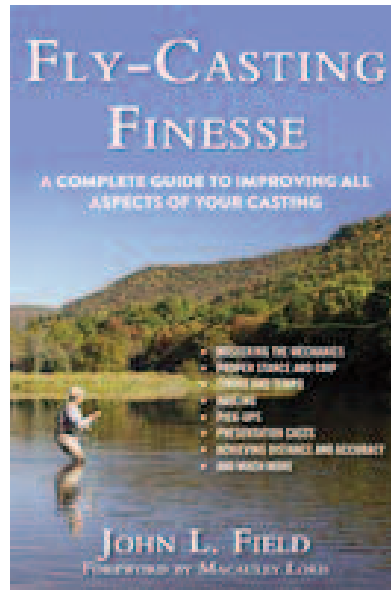
This had been going on for two hours by now, and it was getting time to leave. I just sat there in disbelief with my fish-pointing dog. Wally was fast approaching, and I sure didn’t want to tell him what a letdown I was to myself—and to my dog. As we met, suddenly, there was a big splash and an excited fish pointer. “One more cast,” I cried to Wally. “OK, but hurry up,” he said. Quickly, I cut back to a 4X tippet and tied on size 10 tan Haystack. I made one cast, and bang, the brownie took it and leaped completely out the water. Fish on!

Although Wally and I were excited, our joy could not compare to my dog’s. But Roxy is not just a pointer—she’s a retriever, and she was already settling in at the toe of the bank for a retrieve as I carefully battled this fish. As I maneuvered it toward the bank, Roxy grabbed it—softly—and I was able to take it from her. This big stocked brown went home with us, along with Roxy, my proud fish-pointing dog.



Fly-Casting Finesse: A Complete Guide to Improving All Aspects of Your Casting

By John L. Field. Published by Skyhorse Publishing, 2015; \$29.99 hardbound.



Books about fly casting are inherently paradoxical: you can benefit most from them by putting them down and actually doing what they can only discuss. In some ways, that’s true of books in general, as Henry David Thoreau’s book *Walden* repeatedly insists about itself. But as Thoreau also says, books can also get you from reading to doing: “There are probably words addressed to our condition exactly, which, if we could really hear and understand, would be more salutary than the morning or the spring to our lives, and possibly put a new aspect on the face of things for us.”

That’s the case with John Field’s *Fly-Casting Finesse*. There is so much there that what you will take from it and what you can put into practice on the water is what you are prepared to hear and understand, and that will likely be different for every angler. What makes the book

worthwhile is that there is plenty there for every angler, whatever skill level or conceptual grasp of fly casting he or she possesses.

TGF member John Field is president of the American Casting Association, and he really knows casting. One of the strengths of the book is that he has drawn together the insights of a variety of casting experts from across the spectrum of those concerned with the cast, from tournament casters such as Steve Rajeff to teachers whose emphasis is bringing people into the sport of fly fishing, such as Joan Wulff. But he is not a casting wonk—or not just a casting wonk. He is a dedicated fly fisher who has fished for a variety of species in salt and fresh water all over the world, and the focus here is pragmatic: improving your casting to improve your angling success and enjoyment, which of course can include enjoyment of casting itself, when the fish aren’t cooperating. Indeed, most of us learn to cast for purely pragmatic reasons: you can’t fish if you can’t make a rudimentary cast, and we just want to go fishing. But when situations arise in which our limited skills make fishing difficult, it’s too late to do anything to improve. As Field notes in the preface, “Half of the sport of fly fishing is the challenge of properly using the tackle.” This is a book for people who just want to go fishing, but need to improve how they do it.

There is a sort of dialectical play between casting and understanding casting. You learn to cast by casting—ideally with an instructor who can help you develop the physical skills needed for improvement, and Field is well aware that no book can substitute for personal instruction and correction. But for most of us, developing physical skills isn’t enough. To improve, we need to understand, as well—understand what it is we’re doing wrong, doing right, how, and why. However, what you can raise to the level of understanding about a physical activity like casting depends a lot on what you already have done physically. The learning curve is powered by a feedback loop between mind and body.

Duffer that I am, I haven’t progressed very far along that learning curve, despite my years on the water, and what I found most illuminating in *Fly-Casting Finesse* was Field’s early chapters, “Mastering Fly Casting,” which includes sugges-

tions on how to diagnose and cure flaws, along with the admonition that you get to be a better caster the same way you get to Carnegie Hall: practice; “The Loop and the Rod,” which explains with uncommon clarity the basic dynamics of the cast, illustrated by some of the book’s revelatory strobe-light photographs of loading and unloading fly rods; and “Casting Mechanics and Adaptation,” which covers stance, grips, strokes, and the various ways in which your cast—well, OK, my cast—goes kablooey.

That’s about casting, pure and simple, but most of the rest of the book deals with casting as fishing: “Presentation Casts,” “Presentation Scenarios,” and “Maximizing Casting Distance” on the water, with the real-world conditions of wind and weather that every angler faces. There is so much specific information here, from ways to sling a beetle imitation under an overhanging branch on a small tributary to how to present a fly to a teased-up billfish and how to prepare for a shot at a cruising tarpon, that what you take away will depend even more than in the discussion of casting basics on what kind of fishing you do and what kind of fly fisher you are.

The book concludes with chapters titled “Tackle” and “The Fly Casting Universe.” The former is not the sort of Cliff Notes discussion of tackle for newbies that some books offer, but an exploration of the current state of things by someone with knowledge of the business side of fly fishing who knows that the challenge of properly using the tackle involves understanding and evaluating it. The latter surveys the resources available to those who want to improve their casting beyond what insights a book can supply: schools, clubs, and organizations where an angler can find help and support from like-minded people.

If you fish, you cast. If you fish, you can expect that somewhere in *Fly-Casting Finesse*, there are words addressed to your condition exactly. You can’t ask for more from a book.

A Memory of Mother’s Day (continued from page 3)

The telephone rang on the evening of May 12, and Jody picked it up. “It’s for you,” she said “Joe Humphreys.” Our conversation went something like this: “Hey Katzy,” said Joe, “Saturday is Mother’s Day; Penns Creek will be free from angling pressure! Let’s fish it together!” My initial response was, “I can’t—we have plans,” but after a brief moment, I realized that good fortune had presented itself via the genius of Alexander Graham Bell. “I’ll call you right back. Let me see what I can work out.” Jody heard only my half of the conversation. I looked at her and never spoke a word. She said, “I know you would rather go fishing than sit in a crowded concert hall. Why not go?” The fact that an angler the caliber of Joe Humphreys invited me to fish with him had little to do with my decision. I would have jumped at the opportunity to fish with anyone on that day. I promised Jody that I would try to be home in time for our postconcert dinner, and “try” was the operational word.

During the drive to Joe’s home, early on Saturday morning, it dawned on me that I had not contacted Dave and Steve and told them I was going fishing after all. I chuckled to myself as I envisioned them dressed to the nines, seated in a crowded concert hall, while I enjoyed communing with nature. I knew they were going to lambaste me for my oversight, and although it was true that I had invited them to attend the concert, I had never told them I would be there.

We laid plans for the day over coffee and sticky buns at Joe’s, jumped into his VW, and headed for Penns. Daryl Awarjo was joining, us but was driving on his own—something about being home for Mother’s Day.

We made the thirty-five-minute drive to Penns Valley, crossing some scenic ridges and valleys typical of Central Pennsylvania. We parked at the Coburn access and geared up. Joe was absolutely correct: there was no angling pressure. We had the entire river to ourselves, a rare occurrence on Pennsylvania trout streams at that time of the year. Although the stream was a bit turbid from the rain that had fallen in the

predawn hours, the fishing was quite good. Water temperatures ranged from fifty-nine degrees in the morning to sixty-one by midafternoon. I had rigged a cast of three flies: a Hendrickson nymph at the point, a Hare's Ear at the middle dropper, and an Emerging Caddis as the top dropper. My first cast into the bank brought a fourteen-inch brown to the Hare's Ear. I continued to fish the edges because of the turbidity. A majority of the fish came to the nymph at the point. By midafternoon, we had a mixed bag of rainbows and browns. The larger fish were in the twelve-to-fifteen-inch range, with many smaller fish also taken during the day.

I worked my way downstream toward the railroad trestle. I had just turned a nice trout when I looked up and spotted Joe atop the trestle, waving me out of the river. I waded to the far bank, walked the trail to the top of the trestle, and joined him. It was quite a change of pace for Joe to seek me out and call me away from the river. I told him that this was the finest day I had ever had on Penns Creek. I knew from past experience that our fishing was not over for the day and that "Hump" had something on his mind. It was about 2:30 PM, and Joe asked, "How are we doing for time? Let's make it over to Fishing Creek to see if we can find the Hendricksons."

We drove along Elk Creek to Rebersburg, accessed 880, and crossed over the east slope of Mount Nittany—a beautiful ride through the mountains. At Fishing Creek, we never found the Hendricksons, but we did catch some fat natives.

Time seems to move rapidly when you're enjoying fishing like that, and before we realized how late it was, daylight was fading into twilight. The air chilled rapidly, as it does in the mountains during the early Pennsylvania trout season. We packed our gear into Joe's Beetle, drove out to Route 64 West, and headed for State College. As we approached Mill Hall, the Red Horse Tavern beckoned to us. The day would not have been complete if we did not make a pit stop to drain a cold one. We finally made it to Joe's, and he invited me in so we could have one for the road. It was already 8:45, and I said I would take a rain check. The brief ride to my home gave me the opportunity to prepare a defense for the roasting I knew I was about to receive.

I had, of course, missed dinner. As I ambled into my apartment, smelling of fish and the river, I was greeted by a couple of disgruntled friends. They were seated on my couch, clad in their best threads, ties tightly clinched about their necks. They said nothing as they leered at me. Holmes popped a cigarette in his mouth and said, "What do you think of a guy who invites you to a concert and then goes out and fishes without you?" I gave Sywensky little time to speak, then responded by saying, "I never said I was going to that concert—I simply asked if you and the girls would like to attend."

I had, in fact, attended a concert that day. I had listened to the rhythm of the river and a cacophony of birds and had delighted in the song of the reel. I also had marveled at the myriad visual delights that can be afforded only by a beautiful trout stream.

Dave and Steve knew they were had, and I knew that as fellow anglers, they would understand and forgive my transgressions. We bent our elbows in a toast to the sequence of the day's events. I hold extremely fond memories of Penns Creek and Central Pennsylvania, because this was to be my last Mother's Day in limestone country. I also cherish the strong bond of friendship that I share with Steve and Dave, because we have fished many bright rivers together and are likely to do so again. We may even fish Penns Creek on Mother's Day.

