

# Valley Angler

## New Books for Christmas

### by Bill Thompson

It would seem that it is that time of year again when its time to think about Christmas shopping. Apparently I am already a week late, at least according to the Conway Daily Sun and the folks at Settler's Green. If I remember correctly Christmas shopping traditionally began the day after Thanksgiving, not Veteran's Day. As always I am a little bit slow on the uptake, however, in a feeble attempt to make amends I am once again offering my picks of new fishing books, which have somehow managed to make it on the market just in time for Christmas giving.

As always there are plenty of new titles for fly tiers. You would think by now we would have exhausted just about everything that could possibly be said on the subject of fly tying. The first book on my list should put that idea rest. Just about every fly angler is familiar with the Copper John and its creator John Barr. At long last John has finally come out with a book on his famous patterns, entitled *Barr Flies*. Needless to say the Copper John gets a lot of attention in the book. John also presents several other great patterns as well and not only does the reader learn how to tie them, John also explains how he fishes them. Barr's book is by far my number one pick for best fly tying book of the year.

My second pick, in the fly tying category, goes to David Klausmeyer and his new book, *Unnaturals*. As the name suggests the book is devoted to tying flies with synthetics. I know a lot of tiers that would rather die than tie flies with anything other than natural materials, however there is something to be learned here and Klausmeyer does a great job getting the message out.

*The Fly-Fisher's Craft* by Darrel Martin is a must have for those who love the history and lore of the sport. Martin covers such diverse subjects as early flies, fly tying and fly design, making furred leaders and the building of wood fly rods. This book is a faceting look at the way the early pioneers of fly fishing practiced their craft.

Another book for the historian is *Bogdan* by Graydon R. Hilyard. This book is of special interest to New Hampshire anglers as it is the story of Stan Bogdan the great reel maker from Nashua, New Hampshire. Hilyard, as you may remember, wrote the excellent book on Carrie Stevens that appeared a few years ago. In the same vain as the Stevens book this work is the life story of Stan Bogdan and his famous reels. Again a must have book if you are a student of angling's past.

There are several new books that come under the heading of, "How to Fish". Landon Mayer has a title that should catch the interest of most anglers; *How to Catch the Biggest Trout of Your Life*. Needless to say it caught my attention. There is some great stuff here on reading the water, presenting the fly and landing and handling large fish. Mayer also gives some very interesting fly patterns as well.

Paul Schullery has a new book this year on trout behavior appropriately named, *The Rise*. As

you might expect Schullery covers the various rise forms that trout show when feeding. The author goes far beyond a simple explanation of how trout feed he also covers in depth on how to fish to the different rise forms. The photos by themselves are worth the price of the book. This a book for the thought full angler.

A great book for the not so advanced angler is Tyler Befus' *A Kids Guide to Flyfishing*. This book was written by a kid for kids, however, any novice fly fisher would benefit from reading it. I love the sub title: *It's More Than Catching Fish*. This guy really has it down and his book would make a great gift for any youngster interested in fishing.

This next book really doesn't come under the heading of being new it just has a new twist. Lefty Kreh's *Fishing Knots* has been on the market for a long time now and it is considered to be one of the best on the subject. What's new is that a DVD has been added. Now you can watch that blood knot being tied. If you have a hard time getting knots down then this could be the answer.

My favorite kinds of fishing books are those that just tell good stories. I call these books, "why I fish books". These are the kind of books that keep us sane during the long winter.

There are two new books this year with collections of short stories that are worth owning. Chris Santella's book *Fifty Favorite Fly-Fishing Tales* is a good one to start with. One of my old fishing buddies has a story included and that alone, at least for me, makes the book worth buying. Jeff Currier has a great yarn in here about his adventures fishing in Egypt.

Nick Lyons has assembled a huge collection of fishing stories in the aptly titled, *The Gigantic Book Of Fishing Stories*. This is one of those books that you should keep on your night stand. The list of authors included is the definitive list of "who's who" in angling literature. With this book you might be able to get through two winters.

For those who love Maine, *Tagewahn* is a must. OK I have no idea how its pronounced either. The book is all about Grand Lake Stream and the landlocked salmon that live there. The author, Dennis Labare, obviously knows and loves his subject. Labare covers the history and the people of Grand Lake stream with great affection and authority. The book was privately printed and does come with a healthy price tag, but well worth it.

Two other "fireside" books worth noting are *A Wisp In The Wind*, by Jerry Kustich and *The Trout Whisperers*, by Pete Bodo. Jerry Kustich is a maker of bamboo fly rods and the book is pretty much about his personal experiences learning his art and fishing. *The Trout Whisperers* is by Pete Bodo who writes the outdoor column for the New York Times. I bet he makes a lot more money than I do. To be honest I have not read the book yet. According to the dust jacket it is "a much needed parody of fly-fishing". See, I thought I was already doing that.

See you on the river.