

# Valley Angler

## Time To Tie Some Flies

by Bill Thompson

High winds and cold rain has managed to keep me inside and out of action. I might have been able to have ridden out the rain, but the one thing fly fishers fear the most is wind. As a result I have been driven to the tying bench and in all honesty it is good to be back.

My first intention was to start by tying flies to replenish my own depleted fly boxes. However, the minute I sat down to tie I started to experiment with a bunch of new materials that I had collected over the summer. I did a lot of bass fishing last summer so I was interested in tying up some new bass patterns for next year. A friend of mine from Maine, Gary Larson ties a lot of unique flies for bass and pan fish. A couple of his flies have been lying around the shop for a couple of years now and it wasn't until last summer I had a chance to try them out. One of his streamer patterns turned out to be a real killer. The bass fought over this thing.

Like I said Gary thinks outside the box and this fly is proof. The fly uses all synthetic materials unlike your typical Maine streamer fly. The wing is a combination of various colored craft fur and crystal flash. The head of the fly is dipped in silicone similar to the salt water flies tied by Bob Popovics. The end result is a fly that, "moves water". Big fish react to sound and real bait fish do just that when they move through the water. The silicone creates a head that is both light and flexible while allowing the fly to keep its shape as it moves through the water.

Needless to say I had to put my own stamp on the fly. I didn't want to tinker with the basic design, but I did want to give the fly the added advantage of being somewhat weedless. To accomplish this I changed the hook. Gary uses a Mustad 3366 which is a wet fly hook that has been used as a bass bug hook for years. My choice was to use a Mustad 79666 sometimes known as a "keel style" hook. The, "Keel Hook" allows you to tie the fly upside down so that the point rides up rather than down thus making the fly, "almost weedless".

The bad news here is that the 79666 hook has been discontinued for quite some time now. Somewhere along the line someone had given me a large supply of these hooks and they have been setting in a box for years and now I finally had a use for them. This is, as my Mother often says, one of those things that happens to you as you grow older. Just about all of those things that you have grown accustomed to and like go out of style and they don't make them any more. I haven't tried it yet, (because it will be some time before I run out them), but, I think you could make your own "Keel Hook" by doing some skillful bending of a regular streamer hook.

I any event I think I have come up with a pretty good hybrid and I am already looking forward to trying it out this coming spring. If you too have been driven in and feel the need to tie please join us Saturday mornings at the North Country Angler. From 10:00 to noon we have an informal, "Lie and Tie" get together. We welcome all skill levels from beginner to expert. It is a great way to learn how to tie flies or sharpen your skills. We especially welcome beginners because it makes the rest of us look good. Should you be a true expert and wish to join us you are more than welcome, but please try to dumb it down a bit so we don't look to bad.

See you on the river.