

# The Needham Sportsman's Club

## NEWSLETTER

February, 2006



## Putt's Favorite Flies

*By James Boesel*

Folks who've been with the club for awhile remember Putt. Rumor had it Putt caught so many fish here he actually named them! Putt was very open about how he fished and taught me how to tie some of his more successful flies. Super Bowl Sunday I came to the pond and people complained the fish weren't biting. Remembering Putt's advice about days like this, I strung on one of his flies, a Putt's Favorite, and proceeded to catch 5 trout in short order, much to the disbelief of others. Don't get me wrong, I've been skunked many times here,

but there are a few flies Putt created that can be very deadly here when all else fails.

These are not difficult flies to tie and you won't find them in stores, so at the next meeting if you'd like to learn to tie them, bring your vise. I'll supply materials but please bring your basic tools plus some brown thread and red floss if you have it. We'll be tying the "Putt's Favorite", Putt's size 18 Hornberg and his legendary "88" time permitting. We'll begin at 6:30 and trust me, if you can tie a "Woolly Bugger" you'll be able to tie these.

# Colonel Fuller, a Classic Wet Fly for Modern Trout

By Bob Lynch

Over the past couple of years, the fly that has caught many trout at the club pond is an obscure old wet fly pattern. I don't deny the effectiveness of new-fangled patterns like Woolly Buggers, but there is something satisfying about a trout with a bright, colorful wet fly in its jaw. The fly I use most often is the Colonel Fuller. I don't know who Colonel Fuller was; I envision a Down-East version of Colonel Sanders, fishing for brook trout instead of frying chickens.

I was introduced to this pattern at a fly fishing show a few years ago where I saw Don Bastian tying classic wet flies based on the patterns in *Trout* by Ray Bergman. The Colonel Fuller was one of the patterns he tied. When I got home I found that I had the materials for the fly, so I tied a couple of Colonel Fullers. Later that spring, I tried out one of the flies at the trout pond. It caught a couple of fish and became my instant favorite.

The fly seems to work best in slightly off color water early and late in the season. This makes sense because it is a very visible fly, but it does not look much like anything in nature. Once the fish get used to seeing a lot of food, they lose interest in this fly. I fish it with a floating line just under the surface with a slow strip, where cruising fish will find it. On January 20th of this year I used it to catch three trout in the pond. I usually fish the Colonel Fuller in size 10 because I think it has good visibility without being so big and bright that it frightens the fish.

As for the tying, I make the Colonel Fuller in two versions, a traditional married wing and a soft wing. The traditional wing is made of married feather strips (dyed duck, turkey or goose). The soft wing is made from schlappen fibers dyed the appropriate colors. I think the schlappen makes a fuller wing than marabou in a fly this small, and you can get a lot of wet fly wings from one schlappen feather.

The Colonel Fuller is on Plate Two in *Trout* by Ray Bergman. The pattern is like a cross between a Parmachene Belle and a Mickey Finn. The dressing is:

**Hook:** Wet fly (Mustad 3906B) (I often use a small salmon fly hook instead)

**Tail:** Black hackle fibers

**Tip:** X-fine gold oval tinsel

**Body:** Yellow floss

**Rib:** Fine gold oval tinsel

**Hackle:** Yellow

**Wing:** Yellow-Red-Yellow (strips of quill married together or schlappen stacked) I like turkey quills because the fibers are long and easy to work with and you can make a lot of flies from one feather

**Head:** Black thread (To make the body brighter when wet I usually tie that part of the fly with white or yellow thread)

## The Twenty Dollar Fly Light

Those of us who tie flies outside the house are always faced with problems of improper lighting. Plug-in lights are a pain and battery lights for fly tying are over priced. One day at Lowe's of all places I stumbled on a \$20 battery operated light that works great. It compares favorably with the fancy fly tying lights costing \$50 and more.

It's designed for use with gas grills. It's a 6 LED light which offers plenty of light although it's not quite as bright as a plug-in light. As you can see, it has a very long goose neck yet will fold up to fit in the average fly tying case. It has both a screw clamp and a magnet mount. When people see it they always ask where I got it, now you know too.

