



IN HIS "LODGE," Duane Steele sat at his fly-tying table, starting an Adams fly for fishing season. During the winter, Mr. Steele spends his nights in the basement retreat, tying flies for the summer.

Sport of fly fishing lasts all year for superintendent

By **KIMBERLY BRANDT**

Fly fishing season may only last from June 1 to September, but learning to tie your own flies can stretch the sport throughout the year, even on the coldest nights.

Duane Steele, superintendent for the Oberlin School District, says he started fly fishing as a child. He not only ties his own flies, he makes his own rods.

"The reason you tie the flies is not to save money," he said, "but you do it during the winter to stay involved in the sport."

A fly is an imitation bug which fish will hit because they eat and live off of real flies and bugs which land on the water's surface. Fly-tyers try to make the imitation ones look as much like real flies as possible.

Downstairs in Mr. Steele's home is what he calls his "lodge," a place where he and his dog, Sporty, hang out tying flies, reloading shotgun shells, working on photography and watching sports on television.

The basement is his, he said, except for the laundry room, which he leaves to his wife Bonnie.

There are several things he likes about tying flies, he said. One is all the gadgets and another is the enjoyment of tying them and then seeing a fish rise to one.

Mr. Steele said that he started tying flies when he was 8. Now he has a cabinet to hold supplies, three vises attached to a desk and a lighted magnifying glass. He fishes about 80 percent of the time for trout and 20 percent for bass.

He said fly tying has its tradition. It's not restricting, even though most people play by the rules. The traditional patterns are recorded in books, which show how a fly should look, colors, size, the type of wings and the like.

There are millions of fly patterns, Mr. Steele said, but he usually uses an Adams. He starts with a size 18 hook and a small bunch of chicken feathers.

The hook, smaller than his pinkie, is attached to a vise under the magnifying glass. He then wraps strong nylon thread half way down it.

He then looks at the saddle or the back of the feathers. Off the saddle, he finds a hackle, which is basically a single feather. Off of the hackle, he pulls two small pieces which he ties

onto the hook as the fly's wings.

Flies have to be a certain color or colors and this one is gray. He then attaches a tail.

"The tail should never be more than twice as long as the actual fly," he said, cutting off the waste.

Muskkrat or seal fur usually makes the body. However, Mr. Steele says he has started to use a combination of wool and yarn.

He then ties a hackle on to make the wings stand up. With an Adam fly, it needs to be brown and gray in color. The head is added with black thread. Mr. Steele said he uses a dab of glue to hold the knot in place.

When the fly is done, he said, it should land with its feet, that is with the hook down, when dropped on a table or in the water.

The Adams is a dry fly. It sits on top of the water.

Mr. Steele said he mainly ties dry flies because he likes the way they look. Most of the flies he has learned to tie come from books, which now line his bookshelves and desktop in the lodge.

One of the neatest ones to tie, he said, is a quill fly, for which you use peacock quills.

He said he mainly ties 18, 16, 14 size flies. Size is determined by the gap between the hook and the end of the shaft. All flies basically start the same, with the thread, and then change depending on color.

Mr. Steele said men who tie flies can't be too critical of their wives' hobbies because they have to have a tool or gadget for everything

Very rarely, he said, does he buy a



THE INTRICATE DETAIL required to tie a fly forces Mr. Steele to use a magnifying glass with a light. To start the fly, he must wrap a nylon thread half way down the tiny hook, which is held by the vise.

fly unless he wants one as a prototype so he can make it at home.

Once a year, he orders the hooks, hackles and other equipment for his hobby, but occasionally he happens to find something he has to have.

During the season, he stops tying and goes fishing.

In the summer, he said, one of his favorite things is to pack his gear in the truck and leave for the Snowy Range in Wyoming at 4 a.m., fish all day and get back to Oberlin around 1 a.m.

Fly fishing, unlike many sports, is

solitary. Although you go with other people, you don't fish with them and you don't talk while fishing.

Mr. Steele said that although his sons have the equipment to tie flies, he supplies them for the season.

By the time you catch two good-sized fish on a fly, he said, the hackle is normally torn up. And if you don't catch anything on the fly, you take it home and start over.

"If you tie flies, the enjoyment comes from not only tying them," he said, "but then attracting a fish, regardless if you catch it."



FEATHERS ARE USED for the wings and tail of the fly. For an Adams fly, light gray wings are attached, provided by chicken feathers.



Out Back

By **Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts**
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Creative pair volunteers to make costumes for play; daughter starts new job

NO! Kathie Lee Gifford is not our boss! Although, one might think so considering the "sweat shop" like conditions the little house next door is in. Jim and I both like to make costumes, so when the call for volunteers to help with the church's Easter cantata went out, Jim and I found ourselves with our hands in the air.

Now our little bed-and-bath inn looks like back-stage at the Met. We have old gold drapes in various stages of priestly or kingly garments. The lining has become grave clothes and long-forgotten, polyester yard goods are now peasant or disciple gowns and robes.

My husband is very creative and once he gets inspired; nothing is too much trouble to achieve his goal. Right now that goal is to make a Roman centurion's helmet out of paper mache. Said helmet is draped over a 10-inch diameter balloon, slowly drying to hardness. Once dry, the balloon will be popped and he can begin the detailing. It will be something.

I say, "Real men eat quiche. And sew." Jim is a better seamstress (or would that be tailor) than most women. His carpenter's eye allows him to make incredibly straight seams. And his comfort with power tools allows him to "put the pedal to the metal" on the Singer and really zip.

Dress rehearsal is next week, so that is our deadline.

My oldest daughter, Halley, called the other day all enthused with news of her new job. It's a government job (something to do with management and budget) just a block from the White House and I couldn't be more proud of her. She, however, is probably embarrassed at her mother's ignorance. During our conversation she told me of a recent trip she had taken to Seneca Falls, N.Y. "Seneca Falls?" I say inquiringly. "What's there?"

"What's at Seneca Falls?" she gasped, unbelieving. "You don't know what Seneca Falls is? It's ONLY the birthplace of the Women's Suffrage Movement! That's what!"

Well, Sor-r-r-Y! I didn't know.

But I do now.

Your children grow up and develop ideas of their own. I am an ultra-conservative Republican and she is an ultra-liberal Democrat and we have differing opinions on lots of things. The abortion issue is just one of many. We both agree, however, that we wish there were no unwanted pregnancies to even warrant the abortion debate.

When I told her that I had to take a couple of pies to Norton she wanted to know why. I told her that the Norton Chapter of Kansans for Life had a food booth at the Home Show and I had volunteered a couple pies.

She said, "Well, Mom, if anybody could wipe out abortion with her pies, it would be you."

I will take that as a high compliment. Not only for my pies, but for my opinion. She might not agree with me, but she does respect me.

I was throwing away an empty milk jug lid when Jim, with a deadpan expression, said, "You know, if we saved enough of those we could paint half of 'em black and then play checkers."

Where does he come up with that stuff?

My dear father-in-law confronted me last week with the accusation that I had scared him half to death. "Dad, what did I do?" I wanted to know.

"You wrote in that column of yours that you and Jim might join the Peace Corps! He can't do that! He's got too many things he needs to help me with first!"

Okay. We won't go for awhile.

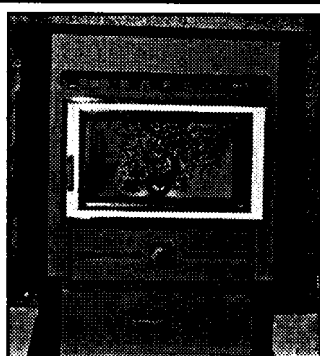
Here's an e-mail I got the other day for women who deal with high stress.

1. You! Off my planet
2. Well, this day was a total waste of make-up.
3. I'm just working here until a good fast-food job opens up.
4. Errors have been made. Others will be blamed.
5. Chaos, panic and disorder. My work here is done.
6. I'm not tense. Just terribly, terribly alert.

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It's Clean Up Time!

HAZARDOUS HOUSEHOLD WASTE CLEANUP

for Decatur County residents will occur on Saturday, April 14th between 8 a.m. and Noon. This event will be held at the county shop east of Oberlin. This program is designed to provide residents a place to dispose of their used oil, antifreeze, car batteries, lawn fertilizers and pesticides, latex and oil paints, unwanted chemical, etc.

If you have any questions concerning this program, please call the Decatur County Engineer's Office at 785-475-8111.

Herald staff photos by Kimberly Brandt