

# Penobscot Fly Fishers NEWSLETTER

**December 2025 Edition**

## **From the Home Pool**

Our next dinner meeting will be on **Wednesday, December 3, 2025**. Social Hour and our featured fly tyer is at 5 pm followed by dinner being served at 6 pm. Dinner is available for \$15, but not required to attend the meeting. A short business meeting, including election of Directors and Officers of the club's Board of Directors, will follow dinner and then our speaker for the evening will have the floor. Read on for further information about the speaker and his topic.

Our monthly dinner meetings are held at the **Penobscot County Conservation Association** clubhouse at 570 N Main St in Brewer. As always, the meetings are open to the public, so grab a friend and join us for a great meal, fellowship, speaker and some wicked good fly fishing stories. This month's dinner will be roasted pork with a vegetable, salad, rolls, and dessert. And, of course, coffee and tea.

The speaker for our  
December 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting is  
**Jason Smith**  
Of Milo

Read on for more about this underwater video  
expert



## Speaker of the Month (cont'd)

Jason Smith has a YouTube channel named Maine Freshwater Exploration Going Deep where he posts his underwater drone videography and photography. Jason and his work has also been featured in local news stories. But instead of watching YouTube, come to the meeting and meet Jason. With his remotely operated drone, Jason travels all over the State exploring the underwater world of our lakes, ponds, and rivers. He will be showing us some of his underwater footage from well-known Maine flyfishing locations. We will be seeing some fall spawning colors and watching what the fish are up to. An example of what we will be seeing:



## Election of Club Officers and Directors

December's meeting is when we elect our officers for the coming year and fill any open director seats on the Board. Officers are elected for a two-year term, and Directors are elected for a three-year term. The nominating committee is presenting the following slate of nominees for our vote at this month's meeting.

**President:** Alden Brown  
**Vice Pres.:** Steve Mogul  
**Treasurer:** Don Corey  
**Secretary:** Ernie MacDonald  
**Directors:** Dan Groshon  
Bob Jardine

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## Fly Tying Symposium

This year's Maine Fly Tying Symposium is set for Sunday, December 14, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm, at the PCCA clubhouse, 570 N. Main Street in Brewer. The building will be open for tyers to set up at 9 AM. There is NO COST to tyers or the public to attend.

Tyers can sell their wares but must be tying as the focus of the day is fly tying. There will be full tables and half tables available. We will try to honor your preference. You do not have to be an experienced fly tyer to participate. This is a fun day of tying, socializing, and interacting with the public. If you are interested in being a tyer, please contact Symposium organizer, Don Corey via email at [donald.corey@gmail.com](mailto:donald.corey@gmail.com), text or call (207) 478-3173. Come join the fun! Coffee and sweets will be available, donations accepted.

## Free Raffles!

Over time the club has received donations of various fishing and outdoors gear. Instead of trying to sell it, the Board has decided to raffle it off at future monthly meetings. Best of all, the raffles will be free. Everyone attending the general meeting will receive one ticket (no meal purchase required). Then, during the business portion of the meeting, we will draw the winning ticket/s. Prizes include rods, reels, fly tying materials, books, etc... So come early and often to enjoy good company, an interesting speaker, and maybe leave with a new piece of gear.

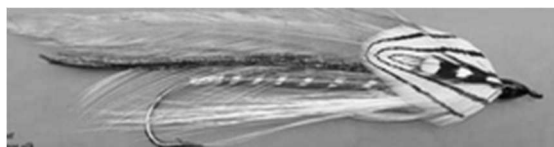
## Recent *Gray Ghost Awards*

At our November meeting, the Gray Ghost Award recognized Sam Yoder, Abby Yoder, Tim White, and Elizabeth White for their longstanding dedication and commitment to the Penobscot Fly Fishers. Active in the Club for many years, Sam has served in several valuable positions and donated his time and talents endlessly, especially to Cabin Fever Reliever. Abby has videographed many Club events & provided



*From left to right: Sam Yoder, Tim White, Elizabeth White, Don Corey, Paul Markson, Rob Dunnnett, Alan Gray, Ed Dailide ( recipient Abby Yoder was not present)*

invaluable time to the Brewer High School Fly Tying classes. Tim and Elizabeth have served the club in many capacities, especially with their dedication to organizing and running Cabin Fever Reliever event efficiently and effectively. Thank you, Sam, Abby, Tim, and Elizabeth. Here they stand with previous recipients of the Award.





*Tim and Elizabeth receiving the Gray Ghost Award  
November 5, 2025*

## **Cabin Fever Reliever**

February 28 is the scheduled date of the 2026 Cabin Fever Reliever. The CFR committee is looking for volunteers. Tim and Elizabeth White are securing exhibitors for the day now. There will be more speakers and exhibitors representing family outdoor activities and offering more hands-on activities. Ernie MacDonald will be arranging speakers, so please contact Ernie if you have ideas for speakers. A change this year is that the Club's Board of Directors voted to waive all exhibitor table fees. In exchange for not paying a fee, exhibitors are asked to donate an item or items of similar value to the silent auction. At the December general meeting, Paul Markson will begin circulating a volunteer duty roster. There will be a CFR committee meeting at 5:30 p.m. before the December 3 general meeting.

## **The Club Library**

As was announced in the September newsletter, the club's library of fishing and fly tying related books will be discontinued because there is a lack of interest in the books. Paul Markson has volunteered to dissolve the library of all materials. Paul's plan is this: beginning in January, Paul will bring to the club meeting two totes of books and offer them for sale for \$5 each. What is left behind will be offered to various libraries and organizations as a donation.

## **PFF Dues 2025-2026**

The membership year expires on May 31 each year. Dues notice emails went out in May of 2025. For those that have paid, thank you for your continued support. If you haven't, please consider doing so. The dues are a tremendous help to support the club and our many activities. Dues can be paid at the monthly dinner meetings, they can be paid online, and they can also be paid using Paypal via the club's website.

The club's mailing address is: **Penobscot Fly Fishers, PO Box 651, Brewer, ME 04412**

## **PFF Swag**

Swagmeister **Mac MacDonald** reports that items ordered will be available for pickup at the meeting. Hats, fly boxes and some apparel will also be available at each general meeting. If you have any requests or ideas for club logo items, please share them with Mac.

## **In the Bow Seat**

**In the Bow Seat** will become a regular feature in our newsletter. Each month we will feature one PFF member, answering the same eight questions related to fly fishing and the Penobscot Fly Fishers. If you would like to be a featured club member In the Bow Seat, please contact the Newsletter Editor at:

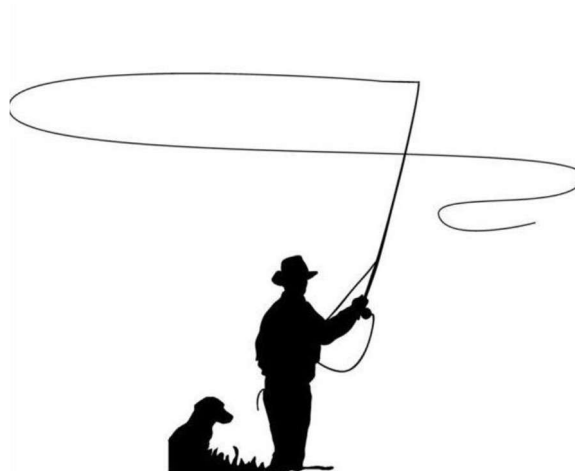
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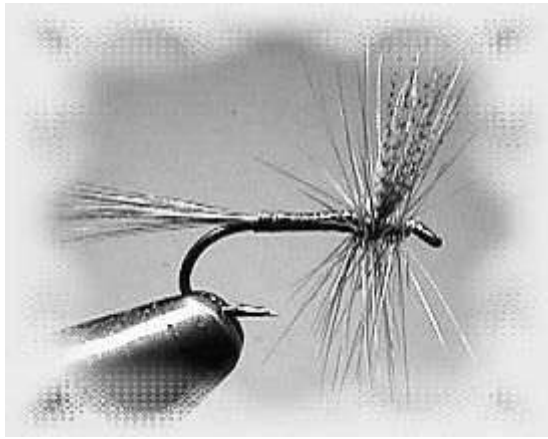
***This Month's Featured Member: Alden Brown***

1. When did you begin fly fishing?  
***About 7 years ago.***
2. How did you get started?  
***I began taking fly tying lessons with the PFF. Because of a bad shoulder, I took the class two times before I could fish.***
3. Do you have a favorite type of fly fishing (small streams, big rivers, trolling, casting for pike, etc...)?  
***I love every type of fishing I have tried. But, no more ice fishing for me, too cold!***
4. Would you like to share one of your favorite fishing spots with the rest of the club?  
***Swan Lake, trolling for togue.***
5. What is your favorite fly pattern? Why??  
***Any dry fly. So much fun to catch fish on a dry. But I catch more fish on a nymph.***
6. Where would you go to for a dream fishing trip?  
***Back to Montana. I fished the Big Hole River 4 years ago.***
7. Why did you join the club?  
***The club is the best way to learn more about fly fishing.***
8. How do you wish to be involved with the club and its numerous programs?  
***I am currently on the Board of Directors; and have accepted the nomination to be the next club President.***

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# False Casting with Quill Gordon



## *“The Time I Guided a President”*

My dear Penobscot Fly Fishers, I am back in Maine. Finally. For those who paid attention back in September, you may recall that I had relocated down to the Florida Keys while the house in which I reside here in Island Falls was being transformed into a minor movie set. All part of daughter Thea’s success with her nationally televised cooking show (now seen in Canada as well). Instead of dealing with the noise and dust and burly men and general hubbub of a long construction project, I spent the summer and early fall with my brother at his Islamorada sport fishing lodge. Over those months I fueled many a boat, painted many a cabin, and held much court beneath the shade trees. I did try to tie some bonefish and permit flies for the clientele but found them too big and feathery for my taste. And, thanks to my Patriotic duty of monitoring the Cuban radio broadcasts, there was no invasion of The Conch Republic from across the strait. Just fine music from the fine Cuban people.

But, on to what I am being paid for. Recently the editors of this fine publication reached out to me and asked if I would be willing to submit a column every other month or so. I initially declined, thinking I had not much to offer such a skilled and astute collection of fly fishers. And, after nearly 75 years of writing for newspapers and journals and periodicals, I felt I had run out of things to write about. Being well over 90 now, my fly-fishing is pretty much confined to casting for sunfish in our pond down behind the house. Then the idea was floated of dusting off a few of my favorite stories from years past, some “Old Chestnuts” as they said. After much cajoling and something nearing bribery by both editors of this newsletter, I was convinced to make such an attempt. So this will be delivered for your December enjoyment. What follows is the story of fishing with a former U.S. President and of his help in launching my writing career.

First, some background about my upbringing needs to be told as a lead-in. I grew up in Liberty, New York with a single Mom and two younger half-sisters. My Father, Theodore, died before I was born so I have no memories of him. Only stories. The half-sisters resulted from Mom remarrying to what can best be described as a scoundrel. As soon as the stock market crashed in 1929 and the Great Depression began, he skipped town, never to be seen again, leaving the four of us to fend as best we could. And fend we did! Life in Liberty, NY was not harsh but not easy either, so we never really noticed that the country as a whole was suffering from economic strife. We just kept our heads down and continued to move ahead. Mom took in laundry and mending and did some baking for the local Catskills resort hotels, helped by my younger half-sisters. Being then in my mid-teens I spent my non-school hours unloading freight cars down at the depot and working at the feed and lumber yard to earn money for the family. And, while Mom was always very strict about us kids putting school first, when time allowed I was off afield hunting and fishing and exploring.

Thankfully we had many friends during this time to keep an eye on us and help out when needed. One of those people was one of my late-Father’s friends, a man by the name of Roy Steenrod. Mr. Steenrod, or Roy as I was soon calling him, was somewhat of a local authority in town. He initially worked in the Liberty post

office, which was how he met my Father. Later, he became a New York State Game Protector which was a fancy name for what Mainers know as a Game Warden. Roy was also known as a skilled and reliable Guide and outdoorsman throughout the Catskills region. Additionally, he was one of the few people whom my Father taught to tie flies, particularly the “new” dry fly patterns of the time. The two met when Father, who lived in nearby Neversink, would come into the Liberty post office to receive packages of fly tying materials sent to him by friends in the United Kingdom. Lastly, while Roy will always be known as the man who “invented” the now-famous Henderickson dry fly pattern, to me and my family he was part friend, part mentor, and part savior. Someway, somehow Roy saw potential in a shy, hardworking young man; and decided to take me under his wing.

One evening in May of 1935, Roy came by our house after supper. As usual, he brought a pie baked by Mrs. Steenrod. When I came to the door, he asked politely to speak with my Mom. No hellos or small talk as we had become accustomed to over the years. Worst of all he was wearing his uniform and his patrol car was parked at the curb. Naturally all manner of worry and anxiety immediately began to form. While I always fished and hunted fairly and by the rules, this was a worrying situation! “What did I do to bring the local Game Protector to my house?” Roy and Mom went into the sitting room, closed the door, and talked for perhaps five minutes. When the door reopened, I was summoned into the room. “What was my crime? What will be my sentence?” were my only thoughts. I remember to this day sitting on the parlor chair across from Mom and Roy, who immediately recognized my concern and anxiety. Seeing the fear on my face, Roy broke out into his big smile and said almost laughingly “Don’t worry young Mr. Gordon, I am not here about anything you did wrong. Rather, I am here because of everything you do right and I need your help.”

He and Mom went on to explain that a very important person had signed-on with Roy for two days of trout fishing on Catskills streams. And that this person would be accompanied by several associates while he on the water. Roy was asking me to be his assistant Guide and help him over the coming days, doing whatever was needed, from fetching rain gear to preparing lunch, to replacing lost flies, to spending time with these associates while Roy was fishing one-on-one with the mystery VIP. Of course the first thing I asked was “Who is our Sport”? The answer was short and to the point; “Son, I cannot tell you now but you will soon find out, morning after tomorrow. And please, not a single word of this to anyone. Not even your sisters or your friend Harry (Darbee). I am counting on you to keep this to yourself until I say otherwise.”

I was instructed to be out front at 5:30 am the day after, wearing my usual fishing attire and to bring my fly wallets but no rod. I would be guiding, not fishing. Roy would supply everything else, including any flies I needed but did not have. Lastly, he hinted that I may want to bring a few of the old flies my late-Father had tied years ago and that I kept safe in a small tin box. “There is likely a great opportunity in this for your future, young man. And know that you were the first and only person I thought to ask for such an important job.” We shook hands and just as he arrived, Roy Steenrod was out the door and into the night.

When the day arrived, Mom woke me up plenty early and had a big breakfast ready for me. “I want you to eat well as these may be long days for you” she said. It was more food than I ever got and I think she didn’t want my still sleeping sisters to see how much I was eating. Of course she made sure my “usual fishing attire” was washed and pressed, had packed a hardy lunch for me, and made double sure I had my rain jacket and hat, and a sweater. Everything was packed into the little Adirondack pack basket which I always carried when fishing, a birthday gift from the lumber and feed store owner for whom I worked. Finally, Mom made sure I had that small tin of Father’s flies Roy had mentioned. “Right here, buttoned up safe in my shirt pocket” I said as Mom gave me a bigger-than-usual hug and sent me out the door to the curb where Roy was just arriving.

Liberty, New York is still a small town today. It was smaller in 1934. The drive out to Grossinger’s Resort from our house took all of five minutes. We motored over in the Steenrod’s station wagon, not Roy’s patrol car. As we drove up the long driveway to Grossinger’s we were met by one of the Sullivan County

deputy sheriffs who immediately recognized Roy. He kindly directed us to continue on and to park behind the main hotel complex where we would be shown where to go from there. Mystery indeed! Once there Roy stated to leave everything in the car and added "If you are carrying your pocket knife, best leave it here for now." Even more mystery! Upon walking up to a side door to the lower hotel building we were met by the Sullivan County Sheriff himself, as well as several well-dressed men whom I did not recognize. The Sheriff (whose name now escapes me) and Roy were well acquainted, being not just professional colleagues but long time "brothers of the angle" as well. He introduced us to the well-dressed men, one of whom appeared to reference a clipboard he was holding, and then said something to one of the others. The second well-dressed man broke into a big smile and said "Good morning gentlemen. So glad to meet you both. Mr. Steenrod, Mr. Gordon, please come with me!"

This second well-dressed man led us inside, down a hallway, and into a warm, well-lit conference room, which contained not only several more well-dressed men but also a huge breakfast spread. Mom needn't have worried about me eating well that morning! Another of the well-dressed men motioned for us to help ourselves to the breakfast and then whispered something to Roy. In turn Roy then leaned over to me and said "Young man, you are soon to meet our VIP sport for the next two days! Just follow my lead when we do." By this time I was so full of curiosity and, even if Mom hadn't given me that extra helping of breakfast at home, was too nervous to eat anything.

So, I just sat quietly and watched the others in the room. It didn't take long to notice that we two were the only ones dressed for a day of fishing on the Beaverkill. Obviously, we were the "locals." All of the others were attired more for some sort of meeting or business occasion. Suits, ties, nice shoes. All appeared very fit and well-groomed; handsome men if I may say. And although they seemed to know each other well enough, there was little small talk between them, and they more or less stood in various parts of the room, not in a group together. After what seemed like an eternity but was probably less than five minutes, a door at the front of the room opened and..... *To be continued next month!*

Quill Gordon  
Island Falls, Maine