

Mid-Missouri Trout Unlimited



Cross Currents

September 2005

President's Message – Jon Deal

Fall can mean an improvement in trout fishing in Missouri. This is a good time for terrestrials. Hoppers and beetles can work well on the Meramec, Current, and Little Piney. Darker bodies on hoppers and Madam X's may work better than yellow bodies. Attractor dries can also work well on the Little Piney. Madam X's and stimulators are relatively easy to tie and, in different sizes and body colors, can cover a variety of situations. The white fly emergence on the Meramec can also be good, but you may want to skate the fly (try a white Wulff). The tricos on the Current can be fantastic in the morning if you like to fish very small flies. Be sure to have male and female spinners. Midges have been working well at Taneycomo and at Bennett. Midges have been also been "killer" patterns on the Norfolk/White in Arkansas. Midges in sizes 16-20 and in colors such as brown and red have been effective.

The weather is getting cooler and it's just nicer to be out on the rivers. Fall trout fishing can be great, so if you have been cooped up in air-conditioned structures all summer, now is the time to get out and fish.

New Chapter Web Site

Visit the chapter's newly revised Web site, now online at www.midmotu.org. Send your comments and suggestions to Jim Washabaugh (washabaugh@mchsi.com)
Thanks Jim!

August Chapter Business

- The 20 copies of "A Good Day's Fishing" by James Prosek should be in soon so they can be distributed to the Columbia Elementary school libraries. Bryan Chilcutt will be creating a bookplate with the chapter logo for the books.
- "Kid's Fishing Day" at Bethel Park has been scheduled for Sunday, November 6th, the first Sunday after the fall trout stocking.
- Board elections are just around the corner. Recommendations in October for a vote in November.
- John Wenzlick and Curt Morgret will be heading to Denver, Colorado for the Trout Unlimited Annual Meeting (September 7th -11th).

MEETING NEWS

August 2: Mark Van Patten – Mark presented a program on production of *The Tying Bench*, his popular weekly television show on fly tying. *The Tying Bench* is filmed at Mark's home and the beautiful forest backdrop is his back yard. Mark noted that a major challenge in producing a show is making sure that the time slot is filled precisely. *The Tying Bench* is broadcast by many stations across

the country and locally by KMOS at 6 pm on Sundays. <http://www.thetyingbench.com>

September 6: *Missouri Mayflies*, Dr. Bob Sites and students, MU Department of Entomology

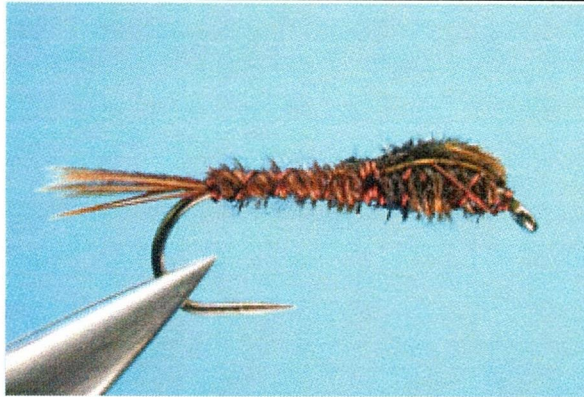
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Sawyer Pheasant Tail Nymph

My good wife Mary recently gave me a first edition copy of Frank Sawyer's *Nymphs and the Trout*. Sawyer's pheasant tail nymph may be his biggest contribution to current fly-fishing. It is interesting how the tying of this nymph has evolved over the years (and perhaps over the pond). This photo and tying description is something close to the original.

Bill Lamberson



Fly and photograph and tying instructions:
Hans Weilenman

Hook: Tiemco 3761 or equivalent

Thread: Fine red copper wire (other colors can be used)

Tail, body and thorax: Red/brown fibers from cock pheasant center tail feather

(I will describe how I tie this nymph, explaining also where I deviate from Sawyer's method and why. The final result of either method is very close. Use whichever you prefer.)

1. Take a piece of copper wire, about 12 inches in length. Attach near the eye like you would do with thread. Build up a slight thorax covering one-third of the hook shank, then wrap the wire to the start of the bend.
2. Even the tips of four fibers of the tail feather, clip close to stem. At the back of the hook shank tie in the pheasant fibers near the tips, forming a short tail, with two or three turns of wire.
3. Keeping the wire tight, wrap the fiber butts toward the eye in a **counter** wrap, i.e. if you normally wrap materials over the shank and away from you (as most of us do) then you wrap the fibers over the shank towards you. Trap each successive turn with the tip of your left index finger to stop the fibers unwinding. Your final wrap should leave the butts sticking straight up, right behind the eye. Please note that the wire is not wound with the fibers, but left behind until step 4.
4. In open turns spiral the copper wire towards the eye. These turns will 'cross' the wrapped pheasant fibers, re-inforcing the body and preventing the whole nymph coming undone when chewed upon by the fish.
5. After you have tied down the butts behind the eye, fold them back and make few wraps of wire between the eye and the pheasant fibers. Next take the wire in one open turn over the shank to just behind the thorax. Fold the butts back over the thorax and tie down with one or two wraps of wire, followed by a three turn whip-finish (preferred) or a couple of half hitches. Clip butts, apply a very small amount of (thin) head cement and the P.T. nymph is complete.

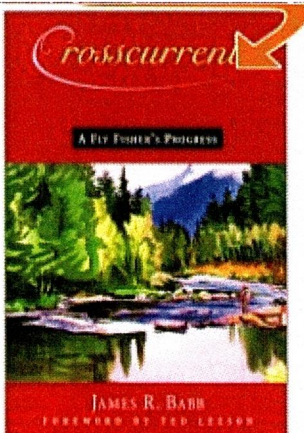
Instead of the two step approach I described, Frank Sawyer would wrap the pheasant fibers around the wire to form a rope and wrap towards the eye. There he would separate the fibers and the wire, tie down the fibers, move the wire behind the thorax, lap fibers back, wire back to front, lap fibers towards eye again and tie off.

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BOOK REVIEW

Crosscurrents and *River Music*

by James Babb. The Lyons Press, 1999 and 2001. Reviewed by Bill Lamberson

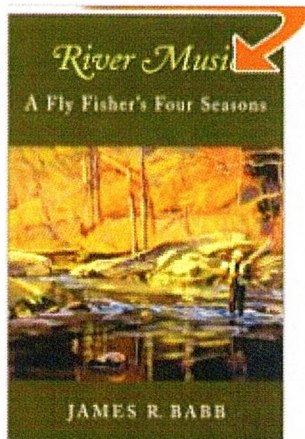


(cover photos from Amazon.com)

I had not come across James Babb's books until a recent visit to a bookstore in Madison, Wisconsin. Given that I visit bookstores and fly shops as often as possible and routinely first scan the books for fly fishing essays, I was surprised that these had not come to my attention. Perhaps you too have missed them.

Babb has been editor of *Gray's Sporting Journal* since 1997. These books largely are modified collections of his essays from *Gray's*. He is a native of East Tennessee, which doesn't make him unique, just different than most of the rest of us. As his finely bred Maryland wife, after her first visit to the soil of his roots, was heard to tell her sister, "I used to think there was nobody else in the world like him. But my God, there's *thousands* of them down there." But, there aren't thousands that write like Babb. His topics are more varied than John Gierach's, the writing not as literary as Tom McGuane's. His writing perhaps reminds me most of that of Harry Middleton.

Crosscurrents is subtitled, *A Fly Fisher's Progress*, and that aptly describes its content, essays on where Babb is as a fisherman, and how he got there. He writes of his personal experiences, as a child fishing for brook trout in mountain streams, bluegills wherever he could find big ones, and, when twelve, drowning in the outflow of a hydroelectric dam on the Tennessee River while fishing for catfish. He didn't die, at least not permanently, a catfisherman in a boat saw him go in, ran his boat among the turbine outflow and managed to gaff him and haul him, unconscious, out of the water.



Now a resident of Maine and editor of *Gray's*, Babb has had the chance to broaden his horizons. Still his tastes in fishing are eclectic, jigging for mackerel of a pier, fly fishing for blue sharks in the Gulf of Maine, taking the Atlantic salmon tour through the public waters of Quebec, and, of course, fly fishing for brookies in tiny streams in Maine.

In *River Music*, Babb organizes his essays across the seasons. Although that is a familiar pattern of fly fishing books, these essays are a departure from the normal fly fishing essays. This is a very entertaining book. You are never quite sure where an essay will take you.

James Babb's latest book is *Fly Fishing Fool*, The Lyon's Press, 2005.

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