

First Coast Fly Fishers

March 2011



Saturday, Apr. 16

**Practical Casting Day
With Mac Brown**

• Salt Run Outing Sat., March 26

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*2010/2011 FCFF Banquet:
Great Success, Great Time*



Banquet Photos by Woody Huband

"Harry Middleton brings to fishing the lyric reverence of Haig-Brown, McGuane, and Chatham."

—Jim Harrison

IN THAT SWEET COUNTRY

Uncollected Writings of
Harry Middleton



Selected and Introduced By Ron Ellis

Harry Middleton: New Compilation for Top Southern Outdoor Writer

by Jason C. Sheasley

Orion climbs through the trees and drags the moon along with it. As the night grows longer I move my camp chair closer to the fire, more for light than warmth. A full moon bathes the Forest Service campsite and its pale light covers the ground like newly fallen snow. On this October night the temperatures remain unseasonably warm, perfect for camping in late fall.

I relax by the fire with a tin cup of bourbon and a copy of *In that Sweet Country*, the recently published collection of essays by Harry Middleton. Middleton died in 1993 but he still is considered one of the finest writers known to sporting literature. Now some 17 years after his untimely death, improbable prayers have been answered; there is a new Harry Middleton book to enjoy. It is a collection of 35 previously published stories, and one poem, written between 1983 and 1993, on the cusp of Middleton's increasing recognition as a new voice in Southern sporting literature.

The Great Smoky Mountains that surround me were Middleton's true love and inspiration. He wrote of them often but never as beautifully or movingly as in his 1991 book, *On the Spine of Time*. Middleton regularly traveled from his home in Alabama to camp and fly fish in the Smokies. Like Middleton, I'd come here to bathe my soul in the cool trout streams.

From the firelight one particular essay stands out: *The Eye's Great Catch*.

It is fall now, and on this damp morning the bold colors that mark the thick forest look like an artist's palette that has been left out in the heavy dew, the colors moist, rich, running one into the other so that there is, it seems, no clear definition between the reds and oranges, the soft yellows and burnt oranges, the moody browns. High up, the mountains seem on fire, burning with lights that glow but never consume.

Middleton's words leap off the page and paint the landscape before me—words written 19 years ago about Hazel Creek, one of the streams he frequented in the Smoky Mountains. It is because I share Middleton's addiction for cold water streams and trout that I am visiting this sweet country.

And it was with some manner of discipline and restraint that I held off reading *In That Sweet Country* until I came to Hazel Creek and these same mountains. When I packed for this day on the water, I put Middleton's book in last so that it would be easily accessible freside.

This new collection of essays was pulled together by nature writer Ron Ellis (<http://www.ron-ellis.com>) with the assistance of Harry's widow, Marcy. She told Ron that her husband had begun to make notes for a new book before he died. She thought the title of this work-in-progress was something akin to "In that Sweet County." After going through his papers, though, she couldn't confirm that. Still, the title was perfect for this collection.

In That Sweet Country is a portrait of a man at work. From the late 1970s, until his untimely death in 1993, Middleton was a working writer who wrote for a handful of newspapers and magazines, most notably *Southern Living*, where he wrote the "Outdoor South" column from 1984 to 1991. The three dozen essays in this book originally saw light in 11 different publications, among them *The New York Times*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Gray's Sporting Journal*, *Field & Stream* and *Smithsonian*, and others.



WORDSMITH HARRY MIDDLETON

Middleton's three most popular books, *On the Spine of Time*, *The Earth is Enough* and *The Bright Country* are all fly-fishing related. While his first love is undoubtedly fly fishing, Middleton was a consummate outdoorsman. Something his grandfather instilled in him. When selecting pieces for the collection, Ellis sought out essays to showcase Middleton's other interests such as deer and turkey hunting. These essays exemplify Middleton's love for hunting, fishing and the outdoors.

In That Sweet Country's essays are grouped into six categories: Arkansas, Smoky Mountains, Days Afield, Journeying, Gadgets & Gear, and Wings, Wind & Wonder. They achieve the same lyrical heights as his books, and most of them are written for mass publication, meant to appeal to the non-sportsman. That they also appeal to the veteran

hunter and fisherman is a testament to Middleton's skills as a writer.

For the new Middleton reader, *In That Sweet Country* is a great introduction to the man and his writing. In an interview with *Southern Literary Review*, editor Ron Ellis eludes that a second volume of essays is in consideration. One hopes that it is not another 17-year wait.

The Learning Curve



ORVIS LEAD INSTRUCTOR TRUEL MYERS DEMONSTRATES OPPOSITE SHOULDER SET-UP FOR AN OVERPOWERED RIGHT CURVE CAST

Use the curve cast to get fish in hard-to-reach places

by Gordy Hill

from *Casting Masters Workgroup*

[Here Gordy discusses two types of curve casts, the overpowered and the underpowered. The overpowered curve is the more well known, but top casters like Mac Brown and others daily use the underpowered curve to create drag free drifts. In an underpowered cast the loop never it does not straightens and it falls in a 'U-shape' or a 'C-shape,' as though it had run out of power.—Ed.]

For underpowered curve casts, I'd favor it done in either of two ways:

1. By the caster, painting a large letter "C" in the sky with the rod tip while casting in the slightly off-vertical plane while the rod tip is moving ever more slowly. Follow with lowering the rod (rod fade) slowly as the curve falls to the water. For a bigger curve, slip some line and make a bigger "C."

Use this cast when wind is not an issue or if there is high brush or trees on either side.

2. The caster makes an underpowered side-arm cast (off-horizontal rod plane) with low, diminishing line speed forming a curve to one side which falls gently to the water. This can be done to either side.

When to use it when fishing ? When a curved layout is desired without the need for the curve to go around a high obstruction such as a tree. (It can be dropped over a rock or low obstruction). OK if you have no obstructions close by on either side.

For the overpowered curve cast :

1. Use an off-vertical or (better, yet) an off-horizontal rod plane. (Side-arm cast)

2. Plan the curve layout so the fly goes to your left if you are right handed or to the right if you are left handed.

3. Make a highly accelerated cast with an early stop so that the rod tip flexes quickly in the direction you wish the fly to go.

4. HOLD TIGHT with no follow-through. The fly goes in the chosen direction. THEN ROD COUNTERFLEX SENDS THE BELLY

OF THE CURVE IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION.

With practice, you can form nice neat curve layouts of various sizes.

Can be done to the opposite side in back hand or fore hand mode. to place the curved layout with fly to the right. (Not required for Task 5.)

Uses for fishing ? Numerous. This curve can be placed around high obstructions. Since it is a high line speed cast, it works better than the underpowered curve casts in wind. As with mends, it can be used to negate currents and/or for yielding a drag free drift.

When fishing, I augment counterflex by moving my rod tip to the side opposite that in which the fly is going if i want to; a.) Make the curve layout much larger. b.) Make it more angular. c.) Make it a right angle hook layout with a well timed sudden mend. THAT IS OK FOR FISHING, BUT WILL NOT PASS ON YOUR EXAM, BECAUSE THE MOVE TO AUGMENT COUNTERFLEX IS CONSIDERED A MEND.

Both casts are simply described by Mel Krieger.

Another way to make an overpowered curve cast is the wrist flip or forearm flip to one side done with the rod less inclined toward horizontal than with the method I described, above.

This has been well described by Jason Borger.

Joan Wulff called the overpowered curve cast, the "RECOIL CAST". In her book, she describes both overpowered and underpowered curve casts complete with simple layout drawings.

Al Kyte has described, "COMBINING MOVEMENTS TO FORM A CURVE IN THE FLY LINE" ... Another approach to learning overpowered and underpowered curve casts.

Bibliography

THE CAST, by Ed Jaworowski, 1992, pp. 130 - 137.

THE ESSENCE OF FLYCASTING, by Mel Krieger, 1987, pp. 126-127.

Jason Borger's *NATURE OF FLY CASTING*, by Jason Borger, 2001, PP.181-183.

Joan Wulff's *FLY CASTING TECHNIQUES*, by Joan wulff,1987, pp. 162-164.

ORVIS GUIDE TO BETTER FLY CASTING, by Al Kyte, 2008, pp. 129-133.

Tying The Baitfish Bunny



by Tom Regina

The Bunny Baitfish was originally tied as a tube fly by Alberto Jimeno. However I have chosen to tie it as a standard streamer and have made some modifications to the original to better adapt the fly to a streamer hook. (You can see Jimeno's original pattern at www.flyangleronline.com). Because this streamer has a relatively long rabbit fur zonker strip wing I have added a monofilament non-fouling guard at the hook bend to prevent the wing from fouling the hook gap or point when the fly is cast.

My version, as well as Jimeno's is tied without added weight. I normally fish streamers on

a sink tip line with a short heavy leader (2X or 3X). The weight of the sink tip and the wet fur and hide of the rabbit strips are weighty enough to quickly submerge the fly in all but the fastest currents. You can dress the Bunny Baitfish streamer with added weight if you will be fishing it with a full floating line and/or in fast currents. This weight can be in the form of non-toxic wire wrapped as an underbody or as a beadhead or conehead.

The Bunny Baitfish is speedy and easy to tie and can be tied in many colors or color combinations. The narrow, supple strips of rabbit fur give it a fluid swimming action that is highly mobile underwater like marabou. Rabbit fur hide strips maintain wing and tail shape much better than limper marabou. And as a bonus, rabbit fur hide strips are easy to work with. For a more in-depth schooling on the uses of and techniques of tying with crosscut and zonker rabbit fur hide

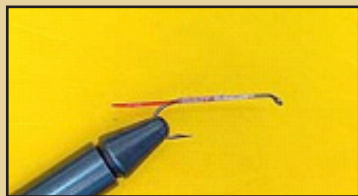
strips consult "*The Fly Tier's Benchside Reference to Techniques and Dressing Styles* by Ted Leeson and Jim Schollmeyer."

Alberto Jimeno originally designed his Bunny Baitfish as a tube fly for river smallmouth bass fishing. I have used my interpretation of the streamer to catch and release many trout on rivers and streams of western North Carolina. Art and I will give the bunny a try on the Little Tennessee River in North Carolina in hopes of enticing some bronzebacks to hand. I mostly cast the Bunny Baitfish quartering upstream, give it time to sink then retrieve it with quick

short strips through good trout holding water and feeding lanes. I will also cast it quartering upstream, allow the fly to sink.... and

keeping connected with the fly let it swing downstream while twitching the rod tip to impart action to the bunny. When the streamer starts to rise at the end of the swing I will retrieve it with intermittent short and long strips and pauses through a current seam.

Tying Materials and Instructions: Hook Mustad 9672, 3XL, size 4; Thread Gudebrod GX2, white 107; Non-Fouling Guard 30-Lb. Clear monofilament; Tail/Wing Olive rabbit-crosscut rabbit strip; Head Gudebrod 8/0 black 118 thread, painted eyes, epoxy bit zonker strip; Body White



1. Debarb the hook and fix it in the vise. Using a jam knot start the thread 3/16" back from the hook eye. In neat touching turns wrap the thread back to the hook bend. Cut about a 2" piece of monofilament from the spool. (Note: Red monofilament is used here for illustration purposes). Bind one tag end of the mono to the far side of the hook for a distance of about 3/8" forward from the hook bend. Form a loop in the monofilament that extends past the end of the hook about one hook gap. Secure the other tag end of the mono to the near side of the hook.



2. From the front of an olive rabbit or zonker strip cut the hide so the total length of the hide portion of the wing is equal to the hook length plus the mono guard loop. (Note: When cutting the hide work your scissors through the fur so when you cut the hide you will not cut the fur). From the back of the wing hide measure a distance equal to the length of the mono loop plus 1/4". Work your scissors or bodkin through the fur at this point and separate the fur down to the hide. Where the fur is separated and without trapping fur with thread wraps, tie the strip onto the top of the hook at the hook bend so the hide extends over and 1/4" beyond the mono loop.



3. From the front of a white crosscut rabbit strip, strip away about 1/8" of fur and cut the hide to a point. Lift the front of the olive wing back out of the way. Just in front of the olive strip tie in the white rabbit strip by the point, hide side up with the fur flowing back. In quick spiral wraps return the thread forward to the thread tie on point.

4. In tight touching, but not overlapping wraps, palmer the crosscut strip forward to just past the thread tie on point. With each wrap stroke the fur to the rear so as not to trap any fur under successive wraps. End the last wrap at the top of the hook. Separate the fur down to the hide and tie off the crosscut strip with several tight thread wraps. At a shallow angle cut away the tag end of the crosscut strip.



5. Separate the palmered fur from the top of the fly body to the sides. Pull the front of the olive strip tightly over the top of the fly and tie it off just in back of the hook eye with several tight thread wraps that can be allowed to trap some fur. At a shallow angle cut away the tag end of the olive rabbit strip. Bind down the strip tag end. Whip finish the thread wraps and cut away the tying thread.

6. For a neat head change to the 8/0 black thread and build a relatively large thread head.

7. Epoxy the head. (See "Keeping Epoxy in its Place" in the September 2005 issue of *Flies & Lies*). After the epoxy cures paint on the eyes. Allow the paint to dry and re-epoxy the head.

(Tom Regina is an esteemed member of the Flyfishers of Northwest Florida, Destin.)

FCFF Brings Casting Ace Mac Brown Here Saturday, Apr. 16 For Practical Casting Day

International fly casting luminary Mac Brown will join FCFF for a full day of practical casting Saturday, Apr. 16 at Doug & Theresa Moore's M & M Dairy, off New Berlin Road.

Mac is the author of *Casting Angles*, a fly casting book that is highly regarded worldwide. The ACA, FFF, and others have endorsed this text as a reference for instructors. Mac is an FFF certified Master Casting Instructor who lives and fishes from Bryson City, NC, in the Smoky Mountains.

Mac has written for *Fly Rod and Reel*, *Fly Fisherman*, *Angling Report*, *ESPN*, *Outdoor Life*, *Field and Stream*, *Fly Fishing America TV*, and many others.

He was angler of the year for *Field and Stream* in the late 90s. More recently he has coached the America's Team in the International Fly Fishing Olympics. Mac is a prostaffer for Ross Reels, Scientific Anglers, Richardson Chest Boxes, G Loomis, Simms and many others.

Mac started the fly fishing programs for Western Carolina University and is a regular contributor to Paul Arden's online casting website *Sexy Loops*, considered by many to be the most complete source for casting information and discussion in the casting world.

www.sexyloops.com

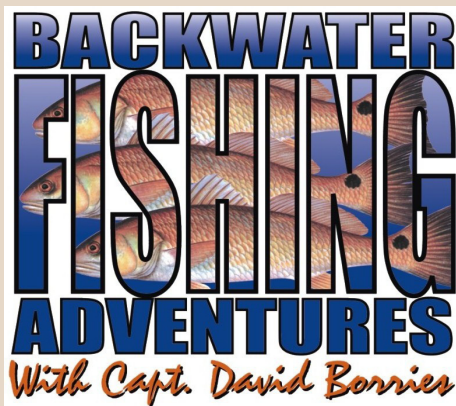
He has fished around the globe many times in pursuit of sport fish. The 40 years of knowledge and skill Mac brings to the sport of fly fishing have helped thousands of beginners and advanced anglers alike become more proficient in the art of fly casting. His enthusiasm and passion for the sport is contagious for all levels. Mac's website is

www.macbrownflyfish.com

This event starts at 9:30 a.m and is for dues-paid members only. The club will provide lunch and drinks.



MAC BROWN AT FCFF PRACTICAL CASTING DAY IN 2007





March Outing: Sat. Mar 26 April Meeting: Mon., Apr. 4

The March 26 outing to Salt Run will be hot. We will fish the incoming tide for reds, trout, flounder, and bluefish. There will be about two dozen members fishing. David Kudley is bringing his mother craft, the *Did-U-Wana* to the area and will have afternoon refreshments. We will meet at the St Augustine Lighthouse boatramp at 8 am.

Lunch will be served at 12 pm and will include the usual fare of hotdogs and hamburgers and drinks.

We have scheduled a Friday pre-outing at the Black Fly, 5pm, Friday, March 25.

With the water warming there are crabs returning and the bite should be active.

Contact Mike Harrigan for more info: maharrigan2@yahoo.com

The April Meeting, Monday, Apr. 4, features Capt. Larry Miniard talking about catching cobia on the fly, and other species.

Fishing For The Next Generation

photo and text by Woody Huband

I was the designated Superbowl baby sitter and my granddaughter (left) had a new Tinkerbell spinning rod, complete with internal LED lighting, supplied by Papa, it was time for her first fish.

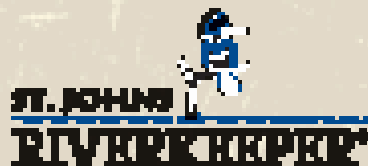
We went over to a friend's house in Palm Coast, chummed up some bluegills, and this was the result. Funny thing is that while my buddy and I were talking, she caught the fish entirely by herself.

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