



# *Fly Lines*

*The official publication of the British  
Columbia Federation of Fly Fishers*

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**2004 BCFFF Annual General Meeting**  
Location: Bastion Hotel, Nanaimo, B.C.  
Date: Saturday, May1, 2004  
Host Club: Island Waters Fly Fishers

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## On our Cover

A set of Bill Nation flies dressed by Bill Jollymore, a long Nation admirer and authority on Nation's life. At the BCFFF 2000 AGM we honoured Nation and placed a wreath at his Kamloops grave. Jollymore spoke about Nation and said:

*By placing this wreath we commemorate the memory of Bill Nation, who blazed the trail for all of us who enjoy fly fishing for Kamloops trout today. He has been gone for 60 years, but is not forgotten, his innovative fly patterns faithfully served a whole generation of anglers, and the boldest of his ideas for improving fisheries are only now beginning to be realized.*

*Indeed, it might be said that Bill Nation was a man far ahead of his time, but that would not be quite correct, he was, in fact, a man for ALL*

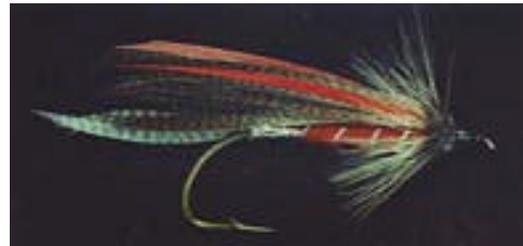
*time. He was first to unlock the secrets of the Kamloops trout, the lakes they lived in and the*



*Bill Jollymore at Nation's Grave*

*and the insects inhabiting those lakes, and the knowledge gained through his discoveries guide us still. His humble nature and dedication to the arts of angling serve as an inspiring example that we would do well to emulate today.*

*So thanks, old friend, for showing us the way. May you rest in peace and forever fish on quiet waters.*



*Nations' Red*

## From The President

Those of you who are familiar with the past few issues of Fly Lines will notice that this one is certainly not as well designed and eye appealing as the previous three issues by Loucas Raptis. Loucas is multi-talented perfectionist with technical skills that I do not have. Loucas 'Spring edition was to feature Bill Nation. Unfortunately, Loucas had to resign as editor and web master. A new work position, a brand new baby and commitments to his art work and other things all conspired to overload Loucas. Thanks, Loucas for the work and I hope your life settles down in the coming years. This issue covers two themes: Nation and our AGM.



On May 31, 2003, BCFFF members came together on the banks of beautiful Okanagan Lake to celebrate 30 years as advocates for fly fishing and fish conservation.

Attending were representatives from fly fishing clubs in Comox, Qualicum Beach, Parkville, Nanaimo, Duncan, Victoria, Vancouver, Coquitlam, Kamloops, Vernon, Kelowna and Penticton, as well as other members. Don Peterson (former Director of WALP Fisheries and now Acting Executive Director of the new Fresh Water Fisheries Society) and Al Martin (Acting Director of WALP Fisheries) joined our AGM. Don spoke of the Stewardship Panel's work and of the new Fresh Water Fisheries Society set up to take over and manage the province's fresh water hatchery program.

This 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event was hosted by the Penticton Fly Fishers at the Penticton Lakeside Resort and Casino. As part of the "Celebrating our Past" theme, Peter Caverhill, Gil Sage and Don McDermid assembled a pictorial display recognizing those 30 years. Also, we released our new document *History of the BCFFF* (see <http://www.bcfff.bc.ca/BCFFF%20History%20Final>). At the dinner in the evening, we recognized the past chairs and presidents. Bill Yonge the BCFFF's founding president is the only leader that is not with us and Rex Schofield, BCFFF's second chair and Yonge's best friend, spoke about Bill and his dreams for the BCFFF. If he were alive today, I think Bill Yonge would be proud of the organization he founded. A few past chairs and presidents had other commitments and couldn't join us, but many did. Gord Bacon, now living in Ontario, traveled the farthest to be with us, Gil Sage, Dave Kearney, Harry Friesen, Bob McNichol, Ian Beveridge and John Warren were all there to receive recognition for their leadership of the BCFFF. Gil Sage, with his two terms (2 years each) as Chairperson, lead the organization for the most years in leadership service. Ian Beveridge received additional recognition with a special appreciation award to recognize all his efforts over through the late 1990s which were restructuring years.

British Columbia's fly fishing community is rich in talent and we recognized some of that talent on May 31. Doug Wright of the Osprey Fly Fishers was awarded the Arthur William Nation Award. This award recognizes Doug's skills as a young conservationist, fly tyer and fly fisher. It was especially pleasing to recognize Hermann Fischer of the Kamloops Fly Fishers for his innovative fly tying skills. Hermann received the Jack Shaw Fly Tying Award. Jim Kilburn received our Angul Award for his contribution to BC's fly fishing heritage. Jim has long been recognized as a British Columbia fly fishing pioneer. His "BC Flyfisher" articles written in the late 1960s into the 1970s show a man with an inquiring mind and a passion for the sport of fly fishing. About Kilburn, Roderick Haig-Brown wrote in the "Foreword" to *British Columbia Game Fish* published in 1970, that he, "may well be the first really solid expert of fly fishing for trout of the interior lakes." This was quite a compliment to receive from one of the world's greatest fly fishing writers. This year, the BCFFF is proud of the fact that we were able to publish Jim's *The Compleat Kilburn* and because of that Jim's writings will have a more lasting place in British Columbia fly-fishing literature. A look back to the people, places, and things of our past helps to give context and relevance to

our organization and what we stand for. We give the Gilly Award to our elder statesmen for service to fly fishing. Over many decades, Mike Maxwell has given graciously to the fly fishing community. Denise Maxwell accepted Mike's award for him.

I'd like to tell you about a fellow who passed on this past spring. Martin Tolley was a BC fly fisher who influenced many of us as we matured as anglers. Of course Roderick Haig-Brown is one who had a profound influence on Me. When I started fishing in earnest back in the latter part of the 1960s I read Haig-Brown's books and I learned a lot. However, I never did meet him in person. Martin Tolley was one of the first real live steelhead fly fishers that I actually met. I can't remember exactly when or where we first came together? I do recall talking with him on a number of occasions and the most memorable to me were the casual conversations with Martin at Fergie's on the Cheakamus River. This was around the time that the Totems were founded and Martin was the president. Before Tolley moved to Port Alice on Vancouver Island, I would bump into him fishing with some of the other founding members of the Totems on the Squamish system, usually on the Eagle Run or Wilson's Riffle.

Some of the early Totems were keen steelheaders, but it was Tolley who penned a few articles on the sport for Jim Railton's magazine *Northwest Sportsman*. Martin's "Steelhead on the Fly, First Break your Bait Rod," "Steelhead on a Fly, There Isn't any Other Way," and "Steelhead a Take of Pure Artistry" all provided sparks which eventually kindled the flame that turned me into a steelhead fly fisher. I am grateful to Tolley for that. However, Tolley also laid the foundation for my interest in BC fishing flies. In Railton's magazine in the late 1960s, Tolley wrote a number of articles on British Columbia flies. I saved those articles and in the mid-1990s the pieces on the Black O'Lindsay, Carey Special, Tom Thumb, and the Cumming's Fancy proved valuable references for my *Fly Patterns of British Columbia* book.

The lean tall figure with silver white hair, casting a Hardy Koh-i-noor bamboo fly rod, was a familiar figure on the Dean, Morice, Marble and Squamish for many years. A man with not many monetary resources, Martin Tolley was a keen fly fisher who pursued the sport with a passion. Born in England on December 25th, 1931, Martin Tolley passed away on February 19, 2003. With his passing, we lost one of BC's great fly fishing characters.

The AGM, dinner, awards ceremony and auction were enjoyed by all and in closing I want to thank the Penticton Fly Fishers for being a gracious host. We will be in Nanaimo on **May 1<sup>st</sup> in 2004** with the Island Waters Fly Fishers the host club. Please mark that date on your calendar and join us there.



**Art Lingren**  
President



## 2003 AGM Fundraiser

A special thanks to those who donated items to our fund raiser. Please support those who support us.



Babcock Fly and Tackle  
Stillwater Sports  
Berry's Bait and Tackle  
Hub Sports  
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Frank Amato Publications

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Van Egan  
Cowichan Fly Fishers

Kamloops Fly Fishers

Highwater Tackle  
Ellie Hanson (estate of Herni  
Jomini)

Bob Giles  
Hermann Fischer  
Sam Saprunoff  
Howard Paish  
Fred Watts  
Castaway Fly Fishing  
Club  
Island Waters  
Flyfishing Club

Grace Turner

Tonight I'd like to continue that theme by remembering Bill Nation in perhaps a little different way. We all know about his famous fly patterns—you probably learned more about them from Art Lingren and Bill Jollymore this afternoon—and thanks to Roderick Haig-Brown and other writers, we know much about Nation's forward-looking ideas for improving the fishing at Paul Lake and other waters.

But what do we know about Bill Nation himself? What about the man, and his personality? At this distance in years, it's difficult to get a grasp on these things, to be able to tell what he was really like—or, more relevant to a group of anglers, to know what it was like to fish with Bill Nation.

The only people who can really answer that question are those who actually did fish with him, and sadly there are very few of them left. I personally know of only one, but it has been my good luck to talk with him and add his recollections to those of several anglers I was able to interview before they departed to fish in other waters.

From their accounts, the written remembrances of others who knew him, plus some of his own correspondence, I've tried to piece together a scenario of what it might have been like to spend a day or two fishing with Bill Nation in the early 1930s, when he was at the peak of his reputation as a guide at Echo Lodge on Paul Lake. I admit it has been necessary to fill in a few blank spots in the narratives I've gathered, but I think for the most part what you're about to hear is as accurate as can be, considering the lapse of more than six-score years.

So, with that preface, I'd like to invite you now to join me for a couple of days of fishing with Bill Nation. A little imagination will be necessary for this to work—some of yours as well as some of mine—and it might help if you

**Bill Nation: Steve  
Raymond's Keynote  
Address to BCFFF  
Meeting, Kamloops,  
BC, May 27, 2000**

This is a fine gathering and I'm glad to be part of it. I'm also very glad that you've taken the time during your annual meeting to schedule several events honouring the memory of Bill Nation. I think that is altogether appropriate on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passing of this man who contributed so much to the lore and legend of fly fishing for Kamloops trout.



Bill Nation in 1936

just sat back, relaxed, closed your eyes and listened—and that way, if you should also happen to doze off, no one will be the wiser.

So come with me now to a day in late June of 1932. You've just arrived in Kamloops by train, which is by far the fastest, most convenient way to reach this outpost in the remote British Columbia interior. By prior arrangement, someone from Echo Lodge is waiting at the station to meet you and load your baggage into a wood-sided station wagon for the trip to Paul Lake. Even though it's only 12 miles, the drive takes about an hour because the road, still many years shy of its first payment, is wet and slippery after recent rain.

It's early afternoon when the station wagon finally pulls up under the shade of the trees around Echo Lodge and J.A. and Vivian Scott, the proprietors, come out to greet you. They quickly show you to your quarters, make sure you're settled comfortably, invite you for tea, and tell you what time dinner will be served in the lodge dining room. And finally, that evening, when dinner is over, comes your long-awaited introduction to Bill Nation.

His appearance surprises you a little. He's not a big, rugged outdoors type, as you might have expected; instead, this man who put Kamloops trout fly fishing on the map is small and slender and looks rather like someone who spends most of his time writing tedious sums in thick ledgers. His large, horn-rimmed glasses give him something of a scholarly appearance, and his long hair is parted a little to the right of centre and combed straight out on either side in the fashion of the day. Only his dress—an old sweater worn over a faded shirt and faded trousers—plus the ruddy marks of sunburn on his face, give evidence that this is a man who spends most of his life outdoors.

His manner is at first diffident, almost shy, and you find it hard to believe this is the famous guide you've heard so much about. But he wastes no time getting down to business: speaking softly, he asks to examine your tackle, and you take your rods out of their cases and hand them over. Of course they are all made of cane, because nothing else was available then, and Nation looks them over with a practiced eye, joins the sections together, flexes each rod in the air, and finally pronounces himself satisfied.

Then he asks to see the flies you've brought along, and when you open your fly boxes he shakes his head and says, "These will never do. But no matter; I have plenty of my own, and they are guaranteed to kill."

Next he asks for your reels so that with the help of one of the other guides—Jack Morrill or Alex Vinnie—he can un-spool the braided silk lines and stretch them between a pair of trees overnight so they will be ready to fish in the morning. Finally he asks for your "casts," or gut leaders, and takes them to soak overnight in a pail of water so they will be pliable enough for fishing the next day, when you will carry them in round tin cases lined with water-soaked felt pads. Today we'd think these things a terrible bother, but back then they were simply what you had to do in order to get ready for fishing, and you did them as a matter of course.

Next morning, after a leisurely breakfast at the lodge, Bill would go through his own little ritual of consulting the barometer, by which he set great store. You're in luck; the reading is favourable; if it were otherwise, he might have declared it useless to go fishing that day, and nothing much you could have said or done would have persuaded him to change his mind.

Next he would help you rig up your rods and then lead you down to one of the big Clinker-built wooden rowboats at the lodge dock. Since there would be no insects hatching early in the day, he would likely start you out fishing with one of his famous attractor patterns, such as Nation's Special or the Nation's Fancy. When he was satisfied the fly was tied properly to the end of your gut leader and everything else was ready, he would take the oars and steer the boat along the edge of a shoal.

The shoal's outline would be easily visible through the clear water, and Nation would suggest either that you cast into the shallow water over the shoal or into the deeper water beyond it, depending on where he thought the fish would be feeding.

The Nation's Special would soon stir up a fish or two, each one a bright, lively two- or three-pound trout that Nation would land by hand, since he never used a net or a gaff. But these would be only a warm-up for what would come later, when the sun finally came full upon the water and the sedges started to stir. Then Nation

would tie on one of his Green Sedge patterns, or if he thought your casting left something to be desired, he might tactfully suggest switching to his Green or Gray Nymph, which he would tell you imitated real dragonfly nymphs, and have you trail one behind the boat while he rowed. He might also offer you a casting lesson, for by all accounts he was an expert instructor.



Nations Dragonfly Nymphs

As the hours passed and he grew more accustomed to your presence, Nation's shyness would disappear and he would begin to talk animatedly. Mostly he would talk about fishing—and not just the fishing at Paul Lake, but also at the Adams and Little Rivers, or at Peterhope or Hihium or Devick's Beaver, or other places, perhaps even Taupo or Rotorua in New Zealand where he sometimes guided in the off-seasons.

But the mention of Little River would really get him going. "It might be the most interesting fly fishing in the world," he would say. "You can see all your fish, as they are a quarter of their depth out of water, and tell their size and condition, and you must solve the problem of being able to spot the fly just in front of their noses. Use a line greased all the way to the end, and a 12- or 14-foot leader greased halfway, and a light Mallard and Silver No. 2 Fly. If the fish are upstream, cast just below them, about nine inches, and let the fly come downstream unchecked about three feet, then lift and recast. Strike at the splash; the least drag is fatal."



The Kamloops trout was Nation's trout

He would talk also about the insects in Paul Lake and other nearby waters, the sedges, damselflies and chironomids, and explain their habits and how they moved in the water, and why it was so important to imitate those movements closely with an artificial fly. He would tell about his efforts to tie flies that resembled the naturals, about the materials he used and all the effort it took to get them, and how he had to order many of them from Allcock's, Hardy Brothers or Veniard's in England, and wait weeks for their delivery through the mail.

He might explain how the light changed a little each day, and how those changes affected the reflective qualities of his flies, and how he varied their construction and materials to account for those differences. Sometimes the shape of the fly would need changing, too, he would say, but this could be done merely by a little "scraping or biting."

Perhaps he would also talk about his ideas for improving the fishery, for sterilizing trout to make them grow larger, or transplanting sedges to lakes that didn't have them, or introducing crayfish to provide a new source of trout food, or any number of other things that he thought might make the fishing better.

Whatever he talked about, it would serve you well to pay close attention, because in those days

Bill Nation was practically the sole source of information on fly fishing for Kamloops trout. There were no books on the subject then, no classes or clinics or seminars, no videos and no Internet, and information was hard to come by. But information was Nation's stock in trade: he had invested the time and made the observations necessary to learn more about the fishing than anyone else, and if you wanted to share in that knowledge you had to spend time with him, listen carefully, and watch everything he did. That was the only way.

But fishing wasn't all he talked about. As he grew more at ease with you, Nation's impish sense of humor would begin to assert itself. He might gently ask if you happened to be of Scottish descent, and if you said you weren't, then he might poke a little fun at the expense of Scotsmen. One of his favorite things was to ask if you knew why Scotsmen wear kilts, and if you made the mistake of saying no, he would explain it's because they are all born with tails, and kilts give them more freedom to wag their tails when pleased, or lash them when angry, or tuck them between their legs when in retreat. He seemed to think Scotsmen were easy targets for humor, much the same as "Newfies" are treated nowadays.

On the other hand, if you said you *were* of Scots descent, then Nation might invite you to join the Research Foundation of Canada, a tongue-in-cheek organization he claimed to have founded for the purpose of refuting all the ancient "calumnies aimed at Scotsmen." He would gladly accept your five-dollar membership fee, as long as you understood that one of the basic precepts of the organization was that the treasury would never be audited.

He would have you laughing as well as catching fish long before the day was over. And while his jokes might have been of the catch-and-release variety, you probably would have kept all the fish you caught without feeling guilty about it because the idea of releasing fish was virtually unknown in those days. And when you returned to the lodge, if you wanted a fish for dinner, Nation would select one and turn it over to the chef. He would take the others and clean them, which he would do by removing their gills first, then withdrawing the rest of their innards through the resulting cavity; that way it was never necessary to cut the belly of the fish, so that it would be intact for mounting if that was

what you wanted to do with it. When you were ready to leave, he would pack the fish in boxes between layers of moss covered with ice, and these would be taken to Kamloops and sent home to you by railway express.

On the second morning of your trip, you would travel by horseback to a remote lake high in the hills. Nation would carry your fly rods in an old golf bag attached to his saddle and his horse would lead the way up the trail. Your horse would follow, and if you were not accustomed to riding horses you would probably enjoy the experience for a while, until the steady motion began to rub you raw in some delicate portions of your anatomy.

But your discomfort would quickly be forgotten when you came in sight of your destination: a shining lake hidden in thick timber, with only a single little log cabin and a leaky old rowboat to indicate that you were not the first persons ever to visit. Nation would bail the boat while you got ready for fishing, then he would take the oars and row you out onto this strange and inviting water.

Later you wouldn't remember going ashore for lunch, nor would you remember that it had rained a little in the afternoon. You would not even remember the growing discomfort of the downhill horseback ride in the gathering twilight. And the reason you would not remember is because the fishing was so spectacular it crowded everything else from your mind. The trout were huge—at least 6 pounds on average, perhaps as much as 8, with some weighing even more: great, shining, husky trout that stripped enormous amounts of line from your reel and leaped to unbelievable heights. Never before had you experienced fishing like this, and you could hardly dare hope that you ever would again.

Of course you didn't land all the fish you hooked—you might not have landed even half of them—but each was a separate adventure in itself, a wild sequence of blurred line and flying water, fast-running reels and shouts of exultation. Together they merged into a vivid series of memories that you would carry all the rest of your days.

Next morning, all too soon, it would be time to leave Echo Lodge and head back to the railway depot in Kamloops for the first leg of your long

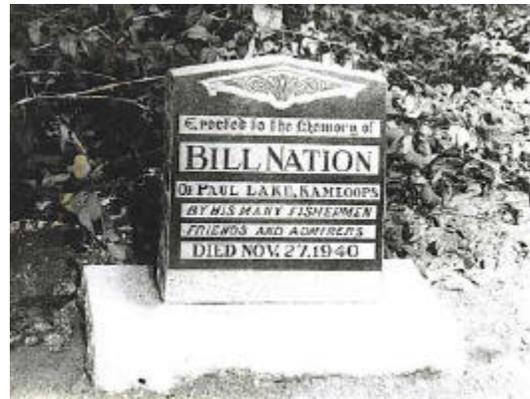
journey home. When your bags were safely stowed in the station wagon, you would say your farewells to Mr. and Mrs. Scott and Bill Nation. You would already have settled your account with Bill—ten dollars for two days of guided fishing, plus another dollar for flies—but you might also want to slip him an envelope with a generous tip—say an extra five dollars—just to show your appreciation for the wonderful time you'd had. Or, like some of his other clients, you might want to wait until you got home and then send him a book inscribed with a few personal words of appreciation.

And you would always remember Bill Nation as one of the most remarkable men you had ever met.

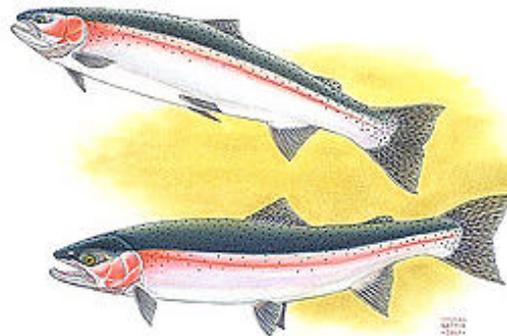
And that's why we still remember him today—because of who he was, and all the remarkable things he did, and for everything he means to the history and heritage of fly fishing in British Columbia. It's true his fly patterns and his ideas today no longer occupy center stage—they've gradually been superseded by newer patterns and fresher ideas—but that is the natural way of things, and disuse is not a synonym for disrespect. Nation's works have now passed into the realm of angling tradition, and tradition is important because it helps define who and what we are. It is also something that requires constant nurturing, and that is what we are doing now—nurturing Bill Nation's part of our angling heritage.

What would Nation think about this if he were here among us? I imagine he would be surprised, but not greatly so; despite his humble manner and his simple lifestyle, I have the sense that he was a man of more than ordinary self-esteem who had a pretty good notion of the significance of the things he did and of his place in history. But though he might not be surprised, I think he would still be immensely pleased that we remember him, and honor his contributions.

But what about the future? Will the next generation of anglers remember Bill Nation? They will if we meet our responsibility to nurture the tradition, to keep his name alive and his memory fresh.



I sincerely hope we will do that, and that perhaps 60 years from now someone else will stand in this place and remember the life and times of Bill Nation.



## 2003 Awards

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### The Arthur William Nation Award

Given to that a young conservationist/fly fisher, who is not necessarily a BCFFF member, for his or her efforts to exemplify the skill and craftsmanship towards the Arte & Science of Fly Fishing in British Columbia that Bill Nation personified.



This year's award goes to Doug Wright of the Osprey Fly Fishers who excels in the art and craft of fly tying. Besides that he is a blossoming writer and ardent fly fisher. He volunteered for fly tying duties at the BCFFF 2002 AGM in Vancouver and has been actively involved in fly tying activities through the Osprey Fly Fishers. In one way or the other the activities he pursues support conservation and promote fly fishing. Some of his achievements include:

- ? flies for The Osprey Flybox, for example the Corona, Georgi's Damsel
- ? product reviews for the Osprey newsletter
- ? won first place in the 2001 Logan Lake Flyshop under 16 category for his "Arizona Dragon"
- ? took first place in the adult Logan Lake fly tying contest in the chironomid category.
- ? "Arizona Dragon, Fly of the Month" article in *BC Outdoors*, Summer 2002 issue.
- ? has written a feature article for the upcoming issue of *Homewaters* magazine on another of his dragon flies, the Aftershaft Dragon.

His father says that his son lives, breaths and eats flyfishing and that he created a monster. Look out fish!

### The Jack Shaw Fly Tying Award

Given in recognition to that BCFFF master fly tyer who has excelled in the art and craft of fly tying.



Hermann Fischer of the Kamloops Fly Fishers is this year's master fly tyer. For many years Hermann's creativity and expertise have been freely shared with an ever widening circle of fly fishers. His innovations in crafting new fly patterns for B.C. lakes, in conceiving and making previously unheard-of tools for tying flies, and in discovering fly tying uses for unlikely materials continually evoke admiration and amazement in his club members and others. Hermann's fly tying stands in the best tradition of the genre.

Hermann always seems to be engaged in producing prodigious quantities of quality flies for various events such as the club's monthly meetings, annual awards dinner, auctions, and other fundraising venues. His contributions to the Kamloops Fly Fishers (KFF) are immeasurable, and his skills and generosity have touched many, many people over the years, both in his club and far beyond.

Hermann has conducted a weekly (from October through April) fly tying session open to anyone who wants to come. At the Kamloops Fly Fishers annual Spring Clinic for the public (about 50 attend every year), Hermann is always there to display his flies, demonstrate how they are made, and instruct anyone, young or old, who wishes to try their hand.

It is not only that Hermann loves to tie flies, he lives to tie flies. As hard as it may be hard to believe, some suspect that fly tying is even higher on his priority list than fishing.

### **The Angul Award**

Given to that individual, who is not necessarily a BCFFF member, for their outstanding contribution to the heritage of the Arte & Science of Fly Fishing in British Columbia.

The word "Angle," as our fraternity of fly fishers have come to know it, is a verb, and when used in its most familiar form of activity, refers to attempting to get something by sly or artful means, i.e., fishing with hook and line.

The origins of the word itself are ancient. "Angel" and "Angul" are its earliest Old English forms, whose original derivation is from the Greek word, "Ankylos" meaning bent, and the Sanskrit word, "Ankusa" meaning hook.

The naming of this award is a tribute to the ancestry of our fly heritage and the excellence surrounding its development as both an Art and a Science.



This year's recipient is Jim Kilburn who has long been recognized as a British Columbia fly fishing pioneer. His "BC Flyfisher" articles written in the late 1960s into the 1970s show a man with an inquiring mind and a passion for the sport of fly fishing. About Kilburn, Roderick Haig-Brown in the "Foreword" to *British Columbia Game Fish* published in 1970, says that he, "may well be the first really solid expert of fly fishing for trout of the interior lakes." Quite a compliment to receive from one of the world's greatest fly fishing writers. This year, the BCFFF is proud of the fact that we were able to publish Jim's writings and because of that they

will have a more lasting place in British Columbia fly fishing literature.

### **The Gilly Award**

Given in recognition to that BCFFF member who has continuously given exceptional service to BC's Fishery, the Sport of Fly Fishing, and the BC Federation of Fly Fishers.

It is important in the evolution of every organization to acknowledge and recognize the contributions and achievements of its elder statesmen. Understanding where we are is often helped by knowing where we've been, what has occurred, and who is involved.

A look back to the people, places, and things of our past helps to give context and relevance to our organization and what we stand for. Our present achievements and future hopes are but an extension of the anglers and angles of the past.



Mike Maxwell, this year's Gilly Award recipient, has been a life long fly fisher, first in England then in Canada for the past four decades and has been a champion promoter of fly fishing for many, many years.

## Dragonfly Nymphs

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By Douglas Wright



I clearly remember that miserable August afternoon. The wind had howled, there had been no hatches and the fish were not accepting anybody's offerings - a typical "bad day." The previous days had been very warm and bright; common during the times of the summer doldrums. I secured one of my new darner nymph creations using a Trilene Knot, waved four quick false casts and launched my clear intermediate sinking line onto the edge of a large chara weedbed. Patiently waiting for the fly to submerge to the depths of the lake, the line suddenly tightened and my rod was almost viciously torn out of my hand. The line stretched and the rod wobbled and bounced from the immediate headshakes of the large rainbow. The fish sailed out to the middle of the lake, peeling line off my reel as if there were no drag set at all! Still stunned, I quickly try to gain the upper hand of the fierce battle, palming the exposed rim of the reel and putting my rod to its max. The battle continued for a few added nerve-racking minutes, with two more hard runs and the classic acrobatic leaps the Kamloops strain is known for, the big doe was finally brought to hand. An honest four pounds, the eye blinding trophy was not so long, but very chunky! Rid of the newly successful imitation, I cradled the fish in the stained water until I felt the muscles within the wrist of the tail contract, and the fish darted out and down from my hands giving me a bit of a shower. I rinsed my hands in the warm lake water, picked up my rod, and made another cast in hopes of another spectacular experience. It seemed the fish were concentrated around this large weed bed picking off dragonfly nymphs in their preferred habitat. They would hit my offering as it sunk to the bottom of the lake, as I slowly crept it alongside the weed bed or as it hovered right above the thick vegetation. Dragonfly nymphs definitely saved the visit to this lake during the hot summer.

Dragonfly nymphs can play a significant importance for trout in stillwaters. Their availability throughout the year makes them a staple food source. Fishing dragonfly nymphs can offer spectacular fishing, especially when the carnivorous nymphs start their early summer migration towards the shore of the lake to emerge into the winged adult stage of their lives. Other times to consider fishing a dragonfly nymph can be during the times of the year when other insect hatches are not abundant, such as during the early ice-odd conditions, when the water is still cold and the fish are forced in the shallows, the late summer doldrums, or in the fall as a searching pattern. For many fishers, dragonfly nymphs are a favorite food source to imitate when there's no obvious hatches taking place. They often provide confidence when fishing unfamiliar waters because of their larger size and availability. When at a lake for the first time, many anglers, especially those who are new to the addiction, would most likely feel more confident fishing a size 6 dragonfly nymph than a size 16 scud. Whether anchored and casting, or quietly trolling in a float tube, a fish seldom refuses one's well presented dragonfly nymph pattern. To me, they offer great excitement. One minute you can be anxiously, but slowly creeping your imitation down by the lake bottom, and the next, your rod is almost torn right out of your hands and the reel begins to sing!

Although the dragons of the Lillulidae family, (commonly referred to as "sprawlers") are more widespread, the Aeshidae dragonfly nymphs receive more attention from anglers. Larger in size, often exceeding 2 inches in length, the Aeshidae, or "darker" dragonfly nymphs go out and hunt for their food, leaving themselves vulnerable to a hungry trout. The Lillulidae dragonfly nymphs patiently wait and ambush their pray, covering themselves with lake bottom silt and debris with their furry spider-like bodies. The sprawlers are quite a bit shorter than the darners, and have a flat, wide body. The darners on the other hand, are usually longer and their bodies are fat all around. Colourations for both species vary from lake to lake. Stillwaters with murky or stained waters will often have darker olive and brown dragonflies while clear waters will have much lighter coloured nymphs. Dragonfly nymphs camouflage well with their surroundings, and from my observations, the sprawler nymphs always appear to be a little lighter in colour than the darners. With these few features in mind, I

have designed several variations of other dragonfly nymph imitations that have been fairly productive for me.

### Arizona Dragon



Slightly less flashy than Phil Rowley's Draggin, my Arizona Dragon shares quite a few of the same features for waters that are clearer. My original has knotted pheasant tail for the legs, but I have tied some with rubber or silicone legs when extra movement is needed. The first few times I fished this pattern, I was rewarded with many fish that were eagerly taking this imitation. This really surprised me because I did not get a single sniff on one of my other dragonfly nymph patterns I just previously tried. The hits were strong and vicious – I've never been so alert before. After all, I didn't want to lose my favorite rod. It's a fairly easy pattern to tie and looks good in the water. I tie the Arizona Dragon in sizes 6 and 8, which covers most situations. Fished around weed beds is where this darner imitation can be productive. Try using a slow retrieve mixed with a few sharp, erratic pulls to entice an aggressive strike.

**Hook:** 3x long curved nymph hook, such as Mustad C53S or equivalent

**Thread:** olive 6/0

**Tail:** 10-12 strands of pheasant tail

**Underbody:** wool

**Overbody:** Arizona Synthetic Peacock dubbing spun in a thread dubbing loop and further spun with a fine copper wire loop.

**Legs:** knotted pheasant tail, or rubber or silicone legs

**Thorax:** peacock herl or same as body

**Wingcase:** brown or olive Raffia/Swiss Starw

**Eyes:** olive or black knotted ultra chenille

### Aftershaft Dragon



This is my favorite darner imitation. When carefully looked upon, the front of a dragonfly nymph's abdomen really pulses as they breathe. Because I am always looking for a way to attract a fish to my offerings by using a flashy substance or one that moves well in the water, I came to use filoplume for the thorax to suggest this pulsing motion. Filoplume, or aftershaft, is the little tag feather attached to pheasant rump or sometimes hackle feathers. They pulse and undulate in the water very nicely and add life to any fly. For me, the Aftershaft Dragon has been a successful fly when fished in waters that are generally clearer, where fish can be very inspective and shy, only accepting offerings that closely resemble the real thing. I usually tie this fly on a size 4 hook and sometimes a 6. This pattern is fun to tie and has been productive for me on a number of occasions and has earned a good spot in my fly box.

**Hook:** 3x long curved nymph hook, such as TMC 200R or equivalent

**Thread:** brown or olive 6/0

**Tail:** 10-12 strands of pheasant tail

**Underbody:** wool

**Overbody:** brown or olive dubbing

**Back:** olive or brown Raffia/Swiss Straw

**Rib:** medium gold wire

**Legs:** knotted pheasant tail

**Thorax:** natural, brown, or olive aftershaft/filoplume

**Wingcase:** same as back

**Eyes:** brown, olive, or black knotted ultra chenille

## Bottom Walker



Spending much of their time amongst weeds and vegetation, dragonfly nymphs can be very challenging to fish. Snagging weeds and debris makes for a difficult and frustrating time on the water. Patterns like the Bottom Walker (made almost entirely of deer hair, a natural and buoyant material), originated by Alfred Davy, can be deadly when fished on a full sinking line. The line will be down and dirty in the weeds, while the buoyant materials will cause the fly to hover right over this structure, depending on the length of the leader. The wide profile of the Lillulidae nymphs can be hard to achieve in a fly design. This is another reason why deer hair is often used in sprawler patterns. Spinning and trimming deer hair is one of the easiest ways to create a pattern with this broad profile. By trimming the spun deer hair to a different shape, you can also come up with a buoyant darter imitation. The ribbing, which is made of a scruffy and slightly stiff dubbing, suggests the silt and small debris that the sprawlers use for camouflage very well, and gives the fly that added “buggy” look. I tie this pattern slightly different than Alfred Davy, but it resembles and basically is a Bottom Walker. Alf’s original recipe can be found in *The Gilly*, a terrific, detailed book on fly fishing lakes. This fly design has been around for years, and it is one of the most effective dragonfly imitations I know of. The addition of a hard monofilament weed-guard will further reduce the chances of hooking debris when fishing areas of structure. Tie a few in shades of brown as well, for greater flexibility when on the water.

**Hook:** 3x long curved nymph hook, such as TMC 200R, or any hook will do

**Thread:** 6/0, colour to match body

**Body:** natural deer hair, spun and clipped to shape

**Rib:** olive dubbing in a dubbing loop

**Legs:** dyed olive pheasant rump or mallard flank

**Wingcase:** peacock herl

**Thorax:** natural deer hair, spun and clipped to shape

**Beard:** natural pheasant rump or moose

## Virtual Dragon



Browsing through all of my bookmarked fishing websites one day, I stumbled across one of Al Campbell’s flies in the “Advanced Tying” section at Fly Anglers Online website ([flyangersonline.com](http://flyangersonline.com)). Al Campbell is a regular contributor to the site and ties an awesome fly!. The one that caught my eye was his “Virtual Stonefly”. The abdomen was very unique in that the underbody was made of different colourations of dubbing which could be seen through the translucent overbody of Larva Lace, giving the finished fly that mottled camouflaged look; very realistic! Al coupled this body design with a bunch of other clever additions to create a very realistic stonefly nymph imitation. This made me think that possibly I could use some of his ideas, mainly the body style, to create a realistic dragonfly nymph imitation, a “Virtual Dragon”. After several attempts at the vice, some cursing, and mind cramps, I finally ended up with a fly pattern that I was satisfied with. This fly will probably catch more fishermen than fish and I would not want to tie them commercially. It will put your tying skills and patience to the test, but it can be kind of fun to tie as well!

**Hook:** 3x long curved nymph hook, such as Daiichi 1270 or equivalent

**Thread:** brown or olive 6/0 or 8/0

**1<sup>st</sup> Underbody:** wool

**2<sup>nd</sup> Underbody:** mixture of different coloured dubbings (light, dark, olives, greens, browns, etc.)

**Back (3rd Underbody):** brown or olive  
Raffia/Swiss Straw marked with  
permanent or pantone felts  
(everything is then secured with mono  
tying thread)

**Overbody:** clear, light olive or tan Larva Lace,  
V-Rib, Nymph Rib, etc,

**Legs:** knotted pheasant tail coated with head  
cement or clear nail polish

**Thorax:** Arizona Semi-Seal #25 or your choice

**Wingcase:** tan Scud Back, large ¼"

**Eyes:** melted monofilament

Although these are some of my most favorite patterns, I do carry a selection of other well known dragonfly nymph patterns as well, and have had great success with them. The possibilities are endless and the only limit is your imagination. Fishing a dragonfly nymph pattern can produce surprising results. They are well known to bring out vicious strikes and big, aggressive trout. Next time you're on that favorite lake; don't be afraid to try a pattern of this staple food source.



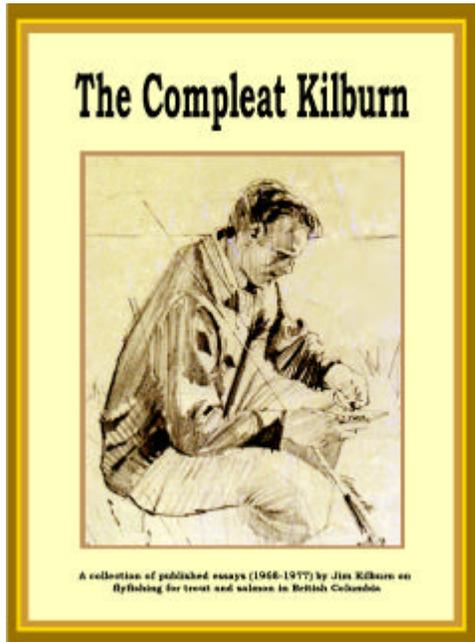
## Book Reviews

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### ***The Compleat Kilburn*, By Jim Kilburn**

Published by the BCFFF, 2003, \$25

Review by Ian Beveridge



*The Compleat Kilburn* was first published between 1968 and 1977 as a series of articles in *British Columbia Game Fish*, *Western Fish and Game*, *Western Fish & Wildlife* and *Western Angling*. It is a collection of angling wisdom, which for many British Columbians of that era, represented their first comprehensive access to the knowledge and skill sets which would enable their lifetime successful pursuit of trout and salmon using hook and feather tackle. While the entomological drawings demonstrate Jim's own artistic skills, the majority of illustrations represent the artistry of Jack Grundle, who was the publisher of the book and magazines in which the articles originally appeared.

The author displays a commonsense, reasoned approach to solving many angling conundrums, and his enquiring mind is always open to new solutions. As an ever alert student of nature and amateur entomologist, Jim Kilburn outlines the trial and error processes with resulted in fly patterns of his own design, as well as modifications to the work of others who had

chosen to accept the challenge of imitating nature's own creations. His persuasive logic is the basis of numerous angling theories, but he also insists that the ultimate solutions may never be achieved, and truly expects that each new discovery will serve as a catalyst for further improvement.

Although not intended as a diary, Kilburn's essays document a decade of experimentation and discovery in the evolving art and science of fly-fishing, and this book must certainly be considered an essential volume in any BC angling library. In effect it records a decade of fly-fishing history in the making.

Reading Kilburn's articles as I did several times recently during the computer preparation for the book's publication, reminded me of the many angling opportunities I had foregone because of business priorities, which rarely allowed me time to sample the delights and relaxations angling has always provided so generously in the Province of British Columbia.

This book has restructured Jim's articles into seven categories, allowing it to be enjoyed either as an interesting read from cover to cover, or as a reference work to be revisited as circumstances require. These divisions are: B.C. Sport Fish; Tackle & Techniques; B.C.'s Interior lakes; Fly tying; Vignettes; Matching the Naturals; and Insect - Life cycles.

It includes detailed descriptions of angling techniques to be employed in lakes, rivers and oceans, interspersed with occasional forays into the politics of conservation. Scattered throughout are examples of Jim's dry sense of humour. His descriptive metaphors and similes reveal both the author's love of angling and his enquiring scientific mind.

There are stories of successes and occasional failures, and throughout, examples of evolving



fly fishing techniques, concepts and conclusions

from these relatively early days of the sport in this Province. Further credibility is added through references to, and photographs of such notable anglers as Werner Schmid, Martin Tolley, David Powell, Peter Broomhall, Bill Nation, Peter Caverhill, Wade Chernekoff, Tom Murray, Bill Brown & Jack Shaw.



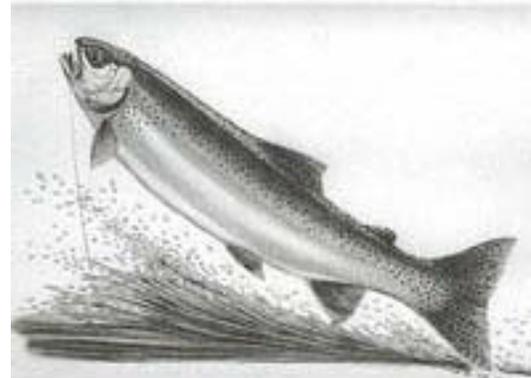
*The BC Federation of Fly Fishers is proud to have been of assistance in publishing this work and making the Kilburn articles available to yet another generation of anglers. We sincerely thank Jim Kilburn and Jack Grundle for their generous cooperation in this venture.*

**Rivers of Return By Van Egan**  
Riverside Publications, 2003, Campbell River

Review by Neil Cameron



For more years than he cares to admit, Jim Kilburn has been a respected fly fisher, fly tyer, experimenter and innovator. While his knowledge of fishy places is probably second to none in British Columbia, he remains reluctant to identify his favourite fishing locations, preferring to encourage others to do their own exploration. The waters named in this series, Lac Le Jeune, Tunqua, Knouff lake and others, are already well known.



Roderick Haig-Brown, in his forward to the now classic 1970 Jack Grundle publication *British Columbia Gamefish*, wrote "Jim Kilburn may well be the first really solid expert on fly fishing for the trout of the interior lakes".

**VAN GORMAN EGAN**

Jim's down to earth writing style and practical observations are guaranteed to be helpful to any angler, no matter how skilled, or where their own favourite fishing spots may be. A limited quantity of the book, specially priced for the event at \$25 (\$30 if mailed), is available for the first time through the BCFFF. To order a copy email Art Lingren at [artlin8@telus.net](mailto:artlin8@telus.net)

Van Egan's most recent book *Rivers of Return* is the perfect cast.

It is the 70-foot cast of a dry fly to the slick on the other side of the river, with enough of an 'S' thrown into it to allow the fly to work and be

taken. It is that long, arcing missile that catapults from rod and silex reel to the 'dime', the sweet spot -- that slick where walls of fast and slow water form the mystery of the back eddy. It is the flick of a spinning reel and rod that sends the spinner unerringly beneath the overhang and into the trout's lair.

It is all that and more. It is rare. It is refreshing. It is exquisite.

Egan's work of fiction takes place in the 1950s and 1960s and revolves around Will Fischer, a retired logging foreman who returns to fish the rivers of his working days. It is set mainly on northern Vancouver Island, with one variation to the mainland.

Unlike so many of the fishing books of today, it is not a self-professed how-to book. It is not a glorification of how big and how many. Instead Egan takes us into the mind of an angler, one who made his living from possibly harming the very rivers he loved. He takes us also to the mind of an angler who knows and feels the best of his years are behind him yet relishes both past and present.

And in all that Van Egan takes you into your own mind. It is difficult not to read the book and relate completely and honestly with Will Fischer; to taste his breakfast, to feel the bite of his rye, to smell the river as he smells it, to smile with his elation and to, perhaps, shed a tear for what was and will be no more.

As anglers we all go on our own sojourns. Despite the camaraderie of fishing with fine friends, there is a no more satisfying and fulfilling and necessary reward than fishing a river alone. In *Rivers of Return* you fish with Will Fischer. Yet as much as he is alone for the most part, so too are you with your own interpretations, your own understanding and an innate comprehension that, yes, you know just how it feels and it is right.

Egan's work was wrought from painstaking rewriting. From his original manuscript he took and digested input, not the least of which from renowned outdoors writer and editor, Bob Jones, and reworked and forged a writing that is as crisp and as clean as a winter's stream. (And he did so without the convenience of the cutting and copying and pasting of a computer. He did it all on an electric typewriter.)

If you were to read this book just for its writing, you will be the richer for it.

Also, throughout the book you will find original works from the fabulously gifted artist Loucas Raptis. Combined with the writing and the story telling, they are both well worth the price of admission.

In the end you get a strange sort of satisfaction. It is as if you know that the nuances and ebb and flow of all that is angling is sweet and is good. Which is how it should be I think, because Will Fischer, in a way, is all of us.

It is, perhaps, not right to talk of monetary implications of this book. But, then again, perhaps it is. Both the hard cover and the soft cover are wonderfully designed (you can see Raptis's hand in this) and come with their own dust jackets. More a boon to the collector as well is that there are only 510 copies being printed, of which there are only 130 hard backs, numbered and signed by the author.

The dust covers for both are in embossed gold title on 80 lb. classic linen. The hardback sells for \$48 (\$40 U.S.) and the softback is \$25 (\$20 U.S.).

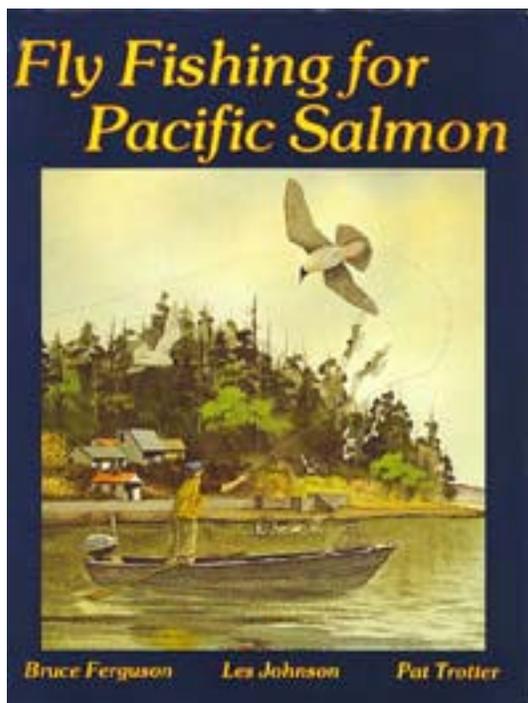
As a further bonus, while quantities last you can get a two volume set of *Rivers of Return* and Egan's other classic *Rivers On My Mind*, hardback for \$75 (\$60 U.S.) or a two volume set of both *Rivers* editions in softback for \$45 (\$35 U.S.). Please add \$5 mailing to B.C. \$6 elsewhere in Canada and \$7 U.S. \$1.50 each copy over one in all destinations. Order from Van Egan by calling 250 286-6527.



## REQUEST FOR FLY PATTERNS

**From:** Bruce Ferguson, Les Johnson, and Pat Trotter

**For:** Updated edition of *Fly Fishing for Pacific Salmon*



We are requesting fly patterns from anglers who have either created or used regularly with success for fishing the five Pacific salmon species in fresh and salt water. We would like to see patterns developed since the publication of the first edition of our book (1985). We also welcome traditional, classic and vintage patterns that you use regularly. Fly patterns designed specifically for sockeye salmon actively feeding in saltwater are particularly important and rare. Patterns can be tied on either hooks or tubes. The pattern categories are:

**Zooplankton:** Krill (amphipods, cocapods, euphausiids) patterns, primarily employed to imitate pink and sockeye salmon feed but taken by all species at times.

**Baitfish:** Included in this category are: anchovies, herring, needlefish, Pacific sand lance and sculpin imitations. It should encompass all baitfish from small immature hatchlings to mature baitfish.

**General Saltwater:** This category includes patterns like Dan Blanton's Whistler series,

Lefty's Deceiver and other dressings that cover a wide range of baits by varying the fly size and material colors.

**Waiting Period:** These are patterns (usually sparsely dressed attractors) primarily employed in Washington, Alaska and British Columbia for salmon that are waiting in saltwater, off of river estuaries but not yet ready to move into natal rivers.

**Freshwater:** This category should include classic flies that still work (Comet, Polar Shrimp, Chief Fat Dog, etc.), along with patterns developed since the publication of our first book in 1985. Specie-specific flies (for chinook, coho, pink, sockeye or chum salmon) are of special interest.

## FLY RECIPE FORMAT

**Tier:**

**Originator:**

**Originator and Tier:** (If it is the same person)

**Hook:** Size and brand name with equivalents

**Thread:** Brand, color and size

**Tail:**

**Body:**

**Hackle:**

**Wing:**

**Eyes:**

If you need additional tying steps for your fly simply add them wherever they are required to complete the recipe. **Do not send detailed tying instructions as this is not a fly-tying book.** We will publish a high resolution individual color photograph of every fly selected and the recipe only.

**Tier's Note:**

*This is where you tell the reader a bit about the history and genesis your fly; how it is used, where it has been successful, who first showed you the pattern, or how you developed it, etc. This should be kept to a maximum of 300 words, or less so make every one a pearl. At the end of each tier's note we will put the contributor's name and home town. This is the only attribution to be given whether you are a nationally recognized name or an average tier like most of us. All flies accepted will be treated with equal importance.*

*-Joe Doaks*

*South Fork, Washington*

## ATTRIBUTION

In this sad day of people having their flies stolen by someone incorporating simple changes and

renaming the pattern we request that all fly contributors be honest. If your pattern is truly yours, say so. If it is a modification of another person's fly, say so. If it is a classic fly that you still like to use, say so. We welcome all legitimate contributions. **Always credit the originator.** Also, we will check every questionable fly for originality and attribution – and we have a very good network on Pacific fly patterns.

Send all patterns, carefully wrapped so they won't be crushed, with the completely filled out recipe on the form. Be sure to include your correct return address, phone number and e-mail to:

Les Johnson  
16530 NE 122<sup>nd</sup> St.  
Redmond, WA 98052  
E-mail: [les.johnson5@verizon.net](mailto:les.johnson5@verizon.net)

**CONTRIBUTORS OF FLY PATTERNS ACCEPTED WILL RECEIVE A SOFTBOUND COPY OF THE NEW SALMON BOOK UPON PUBLICATION. IF YOU SUBMIT AND HAVE ACCEPTED MORE THAN ONE PATTERN, YOU WILL STILL RECEIVE JUST ONE BOOK. WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE ALL FLIES IN HAND BY FEBRUARY 28, 2004.**

**We look forward to seeing your fly patterns in our new book.**

Respectfully,  
**Les Johnson, Bruce Ferguson and Pat Trotter**

## Fly Corner

By Art Lingren



### Nation's Special

HOOK: *Number 4 to 8*  
TAIL: *Six strands from a golden pheasant tippet feather*  
BODY: *Rear third of flat silver tinsel; front two thirds of black floss*  
RIB: *Oval silver tinsel*  
THROAT: *Speckled guinea fowl*  
WING: *Mottled grey turkey, enclosing a few strands from a golden pheasant tippet feather*  
SIDES: *Jungle cock*  
ORIGINATOR: *Bill Nation*  
INTENDED USE: *Wet fly for rainbow trout*  
LOCATION: *Paul Lake*

Developed in the 1920s for Paul Lake trout, this is one of Bill Nation's most effective patterns. About the wing on the Special, Nation recommended strips of grey mottled turkey feather be used and that the angler match the Special's wing mottle to that of the sedge or dun hatching. Bruce Hutchison in the chapter titled "For Anglers Only" in his book, *The Fraser* (1950), paid homage to Bill Nation and Nation's Special when he wrote:

*The Kamloops country was long the undisputed kingdom of Bill Nation. That extraordinary man, who knew trout better than any other British Columbian and had spent his life studying the insect life on which trout feed, chose to call himself a guide. Careless of fame or money, he would row you around Paul Lake, his favourite, or any other lake you fancied for a few dollars a day. After an hour's fishing with him the richest American tycoon was subdued and humble in this shy man's presence. Beside his life of innocence and*

*content, the perfect companionship of man and nature, your own life suddenly appeared for the failure it was. And what could you say for your skill when he could cast a fly and pierce the tail of any fish you pointed out among the autumn salmon horde? . . . .*

*His memorial is the Nation Special, the fly he constructed out of his unequalled knowledge of insect life and the appetite of the Kamloops trout. No fisherman can afford to be without Bill's masterpiece. (pp. 324-325)*

A most glowing tribute indeed. In 1936 Roderick Haig-Brown visited Paul Lake and Echo Lodge, during his research for *The Western Angler*, published in 1939, and in that publication provided additional testimonials to the effectiveness of Nation's Special. In his chapter on tackle and in his discussion of fly patterns for interior use, Haig-Brown examined the Honour Book kept by lodge owner, J. Arthur Scott. Of the 119 large trout between 3 1/2 to 7 3/4 pounds, 46 were deceived by a Nation's Special. There were 13 other patterns in the group, the closest rival to Nation's Special was the Jock Scott. With nine fish, it came in a poor second.

When dressing this fly for September fishing, Nation recommended that along with sides of jungle cock the fly dresser should add strips of red swan for "when the red dragons are around."



*Finis: From death comes life*



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