

Where Does the Time Go?

It seems just like yesterday that we emailed the Christmas newsletter for 2016, hung our stockings in hope that St. Nick would arrive and celebrated the 12 Days of Christmas at Whiting Farms. Now here we are at the end of February! Where does the time go? Before we turn around twice, spring will be here with all the joy of spring fishing.

It truly is amazing how quickly time passes yet you too may have a different perspective of how long it takes to raise hackle after reading Dr. Tom's article. On the other hand, time certainly must fly quickly for dealers such as Far West Fly Shop whose online business is booming! Now, if you enjoy the clock moving quickly, don't take a family vacation with Colette. Adam offers suggestions for how to utilize all of our time well for this sport we all love. Our fea-

tured tier extraordinaire, Cheech Pierce, lends some advice that is, what else other than, timely.

Speaking of timely, have you found yourself tying soft hackle flies lately? We have a timely and Eggs-tra special deal for you! The Brahma Hen Cape, perfect for collars on nymphs and wet flies, will "fly" off the shelf! The ladies in the office think the Brahma is soft and cute. While we all agree, we love the Brahma more when it's in your hands this fly tying season. So check out this month's special.

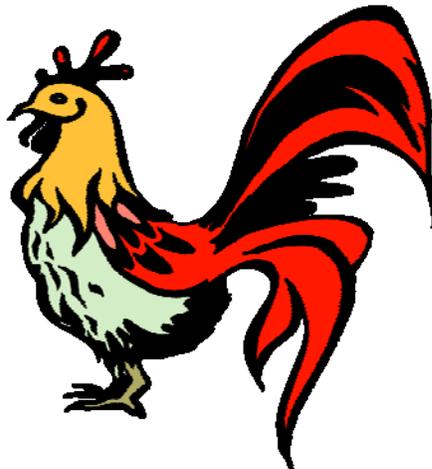
So where does the time go? We still don't quite have an exact answer. But, if you turn the TV off, read the newsletter, tie some flies, shop local and fish more this year than you did last

year, time just might move a little slower because you will be doing more of what you love.

*Dr. Thomas S. Whiting
 and the Whiting Team*

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A Different Perspective on Hackle

BY DR. TOM WHITING

I must be getting old. I look back onto this little hackle project, and pretty clearly remember my thoughts and intents when I set out on it. But it now strikes me that what I thought then is way different than how I look at the endeavor today.

Back when I was first exploring the idea of getting into the hackle business, around 1987 while I was at the University of Arkansas pursuing my Ph.D., I can recall thinking “now this sounds interesting. I would do this as a hobby let alone a business”. So I set about researching it, starting phone relationships with Henry Hoffman and Ted Hebert, and methodically trying to get my head around how it had been done and how might I do it. From the outside, though no one ever described it to me as such, it sure looked like a can't fail/get rich quick endeavor. I quickly learned in 1998 when I started Whiting Farms it was anything but that, and my graduate school hubris was quickly replaced with a humbling string of anything that could go wrong did. And to this day I don't harbor romantic memories of the early years. Rather, I remember gut churning anxieties of scrambles to just survive and not go under and I am truly grateful I had no viable exit opportunity, otherwise I might not be writing this today. I just had to make it work, somehow, some way. But enough about the bad old days.

Now, 28 years later, my perspective has gradually shifted from mostly ambition towards a sense of responsibility and legacy. I am certainly grateful for the interesting challenge of the endeavor, which was vastly more faceted than I ever anticipated. The rewards have been much more than just financial. This arch has made me realize that these cherished dry fly hackle lines will go on beyond me, as they were passed onto me by the hacklemen that preceded me, and I should do the same for the hacklemen that will succeed me. It is a continuum, or it should be, and I shall make it my goal to see they make it soundly into their next chapter. Hopefully the new lines that have totally originated at Whiting Farms; the American Hackle, Spey Hackle, High & Dry, Brahma hen products, and a few more still in development, will carry on in concert with the

foundation fly tying genetic lines.

The state of these hackle lines is something that is a bit difficult to articulate, or be readily understood by anyone who doesn't breed plants or animals, but I will try. Even though the genetic “lines” are made of some number of highly related individuals (a basic definition of a genetic “line”), these lines (in the breeder's mind) are comprehended as almost distinct individuals. Not only can the breeder picture them in the trajectory of their development (where they started, what they are like today, and where they are hopefully headed), they also know them intimately, and have a sense of what they need to get them to the next stage of their intended development. Because they are live animals they can't be just viewed as discrete parts, i.e., a life support system for a dry fly cape and saddle. Rather they have to be selected as a whole organism, including considerations of any defects, general vigor, suitable behaviors, and something that is hard to put a finger on, but I think of as balance. Sometimes I am not sure exactly why I keep or reject a particular individual, other than it just doesn't feel right, something in my sense of the lines says yes or no about the individual. Over the years, maybe from the huge number of roosters and hens I have handled, I have just developed a sense of what is right or wrong about an individual, or whether they are right or wrong for the betterment of that particular line. Conversely, when you know the lines so well and an astonishingly good individual turns up you can recognize when something is exceptional, or when you see a new trait that merits consideration.

Sometimes the lines have gone in unintentional directions. In the early 2000s, after so many years of intense selection for what is dry fly hackle, I started to see capes that were like the saddle in that the feathers never finished growing! This, initially, seemed exciting. But when enough of these continually growing capes came through the production system, their downside was more evident; the feathers would be so long they flowed down in front of the rooster's chests and got stepped on! Plus it made processing the pelts far more difficult. With saddles the entire feather tract was in this continuous growth, and we knew how to deal

with it. But the capes didn't lend themselves to this partial growth state. So I have pretty well bred this trait out of the dry fly lines.

Something interesting that has spontaneously transpired in the last 5 or 6 years is roosters that are now growing dry fly type feathers out of feather tracts that are NOT dry fly feather tracts. Some roosters have them coming out of their thighs and/or the tops of their wings. From a distance they even look different, almost shaggy like a woolly mammoth! I am just currently watching where this goes. My theory is that the steady accumulation of the genes that contribute to what we call dry fly hackle are getting so concentrated that their cumulative effect is to “invade” other feather tracts. This is where it is prudent to set up a “sub line” that actually pursues these traits. This sub line would serve as an advance guard, if you will, to show how a greater degree of this global dry fly feather pattern will manifest itself. The logical conclusion might be total dry fly roosters, a somewhat disturbing prospect possibly. But still worth exploring for at least academic reasons. Sometimes you learn most from the outliers.

Hopefully you readers have found these insights into hackle breeding interesting. It is its own truly niche endeavor. A few recent videos have come about that give some more visuals to what I have described above. One is a short feature done by CNN <http://www.greatbigstory.com/stories/the-feather-king/?xrs=CNNAAPP> Raising Roosters with The Feather King, and the other a truly off-the-cuff (meaning not rehearsed) Facebook Live recording <https://www.facebook.com/287322504765354/videos/631848480312753/> Fly Tying Hackle, Poultry Genetics, Then and Now, recording whereby I riffed on some of the issues addressed above. Plus there is a quite good feature story in the most recent edition of the flyfish Journal (issue 8.2). <https://www.theflyfishjournal.com/issue-feature/inside-whiting-farms-hackle-empire/> Inside Whiting Farms' Hackle Empire

As always, we appreciate your interest and patronage.

Thomas S. Whiting, Ph.D.



Far West Fly Shop

COSTA MESA, CA

In today's ever growing fly tying market, the BEST fly tying feathers in the fly fishing industry are produced and harvested by Whiting Farms, Inc. Far West Fly Shop was created specifically to procure and distribute the very best fly tying feathers and fly fishing gear to the fly fishers around the globe. Far West Fly Shop has been a Whiting Farms dealer since May, 2003 based in Costa Mesa, California.

Far West Fly Shop owner, Blake Leathers, continues a long family heritage of more than seven generations of fly tying and fly fishing family members. His father, grandfather, and great-grandfather were all fly tiers and were the foundation for his fly tying interest. He started tying his own flies to use for himself when he was very young. His grandfather owned and operated the well-known Woodland Fly and Bait Shop on the banks of the North Fork of the Lewis River in Woodland, Washington for several decades.

The North Fork of the Lewis River and adjacent river watersheds remain a rich environment for trout (Rainbow, Cutthroat, Harvest, Bull Trout), salmon (King, Jack, Chinook, Kokanee) and Steelhead. With local and sea run species, there are fly fishing opportunities almost every day of the year. This provided the foundation for his life interest for fly fishing and tying his own flies. The family history and experience passed down to him for fly tying and fly fishing was invaluable in launching Far West Fly Shop.

Offering premium fly tying and fly fishing supplies via the on-line eBay store, Far West Fly Shop serves nearly every major fly fishing region in the world. Patrons of our on-line fly shop are able to browse and view a very large selection of pelts that would be most suitable for their specific fly tying application. Far West Fly Shop currently enjoys customer sales volume split evenly between US and International markets... North America, South America, Europe, Scandinavia, Russia, Japan, Southeast Asia, China, Korea, Africa, & Australia.

Far West Fly Shop serves this global market with one of the larger and more diverse Whiting Farms offerings available anywhere. Currently, Far West Fly Shop lists approximately 1500+ Whiting Farms products. This broad and deep inventory includes both full, half and quarter pelts in nearly every genetic line that Whiting Farms has to offer the fly tier; American, 4



Whiting Wall at Far West

B's, Brahma Hen, Coq de Leon, Soft Hackle with Chickabou, Euro-Hackle Capes and Saddles, Hebert/Miner, High & Dry, Midge Saddles, Spey, Whiting Red Label, Winger Capes, Whiting 100's, Bird Fur, Bugger Packs, Intro Cape and Saddle Sets, Musky Packs, Schlappen in all sizes, Streamer Packs, Super Bou, Tailing Packs, and Variety Packs! The Far West Fly Shop inventory includes a full range of Whiting Farms grades, including: Pro, Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum. We are continuously expanding the depth and breadth of this inventory. One of the most attractive features of Far West Fly Shop on-line store is the customer enjoys the opportunity to select a specific item from a group of multiple pictured like pelts for their specific pattern and coloration (ie 5 separate pictured capes in Speckled Badger); just as if they were standing in our store...avoiding choosing a color & grade at random as featured with most large on-line stores.

A little insight about being a Whiting Farms Dealer: The Whiting Farms high quality

products are always in high demand; Whiting Farms fly tying feathers have a better price performance than any other brand! But, the high quality and popularity make it challenging to maintain a full complement of grades, colors and multiple color variations at all times. Even though we receive continual orders of 300-500+ pelts, they virtually sell nearly as fast as we can list the order; especially the higher grades.

In addition to stocking a full range of Whiting Farms products, our customers also select from an array of complimentary suppliers; such as Loon, Rite, Dr. Slick, Hareline Dubbin, Spirit River, and a host of others.

Although the Far West Fly Shop genesis was primarily fresh water based, each season we are attracting more and more saltwater enthusiasts by expanding our saltwater related supplies. Customers from Scandinavia, Hawaii, Australia, Mediterranean and the Caribbean are consistently growing in number.

Far West Fly Shop is proud to be actively involved in continually supporting our veterans with events monetary donations, fly tying materials and fly fishing gear and equipment.

We strive to provide superior customer service to all customers, while offering the very best fly tying materials and feather products the industry has to offer.

If you are seeking a certain feather coloration or pelt that is not usually found at your local fly shop, or would like to have more Whiting Farms products to select from, please visit our on-line eBay store. We will be more than happy to assist you in selecting the tying materials that would be most suitable for your application. We look forward to serving you.



Are the Roosters Dun Yet?
Poultry Genetics from the Accountant's Perspective
BY COLETTE MAYERS



Colette's Coop at Whiting Farms

Without giving away my age, I will say I am old enough to remember family vacations when we were all crammed in the car (with no electronics). If you remember these too, you'll also remember the frequent pleas from the back seat, "Are we there yet? Are we there yet? Are we there yet?" To which, after a scathing glance in the rearview mirror, the driver would reply, "We'll get there when we get there!" If this sequence repeated the reply quickly changed to, "Do I need to pull this car over?"

Working at a dry fly hackle production company occasionally feels similar to a yearlong family vacation. Those of us in the customer service end of the company can find ourselves in the "back seat" of the car continually asking "Are they ready yet? Are they ready yet? Are they ready

yet?" The reply is most often similar to "They are ready when they are ready". Thus we wait, at times impatiently.

With the exception of the roosters and hens, we all here at Whiting Farms understand how important your order is, how important your customers are to you and how important your business is to us. If only we could impress this understanding and sense of urgency upon the roosters and hens.

Aha! Maybe we could sync them to the Atomic Clock. Then, we could develop an app that would remind them when they need to be ready. Could this be as simple as turning on a gene? Hmmmm..... I must ask Dr. Tom. Or perhaps I'll just ask, "Are they ready yet? Are they ready yet? Are they ready yet?" I have a feeling the answer may be "No" to either question.

I will still always fondly remember those family vacations, even if it did seem to take forever to get wherever we were going. Please hang tight with us during the times when, we too, are waiting for the roosters to be "dun".

That's all from the coop. Until next time....

Colette

accounting@whitingfarms.com



The Margins of a Fly Fisherman's Life

BY ADAM KRONEBERGER

Whether it be a wild or normal life you live, I know that because you are reading this, fly fishing has its own unique way of capturing your heart, attention and places of deep passion within you. Fly fishermen are often crafty, patient, creature admiring, nature and adventure seeking, caring people. And maybe I am biased or just incredibly narrow minded, but we fly fishing enthusiasts are the greatest kind in all of humanity. In all seriousness, something has been stirring in me about how I believe we can build and leave a legacy in the margins of our daily lives. The margins of our life are powerful places that can be some of the most fertile ground to start something very pure and rich from our souls if we are open to it. Let me give you some hypothetical examples.

Despite being beat down and exhausted from the high elevation sun rays, Kara had another fantastic day on the water guiding newbie clients into their first trout. The day is almost done but there is a little time left before the guide's ball cap, matted head of hair hits her pillow. Tonight will be a good night for a beer, frozen pizza and opportunity to crank out a half-dozen classic dries for tomorrow's trip.

Monday finally arrived for Matt, after what seemed like the busiest weekend yet, during which he showed over 20 houses. "It would be nice to have a weekends off," he thought. "But then again, the

fishing would probably be a circus." Matt should go grocery shopping and get his car in the shop, the way it's been acting up lately. However, "A day fishing, casting to feeding trout in the riffles is what I need." he says to himself.

Todd just cranked out five dozen flies and has two more dozen to go. This order is bound to Jackson Hole. Time to get up, stretch the legs a little and let the dog out. "This is the life. No boss around to tell me what to do and my office is my man cave. I need to swing by the post office later to ship out a few orders before it gets too late. Maybe if I have time, I will stop by the fly shop to say hi to the fellas and see how the fishing has been."

"Not everyone can be an accountant, but it has its perks," Jeff told himself. "The big tax season has finally rolled around again and I have no free weekends until May. But once tax season is over, me and a few buddies are planning a big week long trip to the Deschutes River." Every day, Jeff takes a moment to mentally escape, looking at pictures and dreaming of catching fish. Finding an especially awesome shot he says, "Oh cool, I'm going to share that post @fishingbuddy."

Now, I'm not telling you to think about fishing any less. However I am interested in seeing that we rally around this idea that we can make a difference in business, sports, culture, the environment, and most importantly the lives of other people. It's very unlikely that we come up with some type of billion dollar idea

that will revolutionize the sport of fly fishing right after reading this article. Yet, it gives me chills to think about the local fly shop that has cultivated an incredible community that has, without knowing it, been the village that it takes to raise a few of these shop rat kids and their flat brimmed hats. This doesn't have to be rocket science and I don't want to even attempt to tell you examples of what to do, but I can tell you that it helps if these ideas come from a place inside you that almost never sleeps.

You know what the hardest part is going to be? Getting started! My uncle use to tell me that the hardest part of owning a business is getting up in the morning. The margins, like I said earlier, are an interesting place where I think we have sometimes the most control to go where our heart wants and that's why I think it can be a breeding ground to creating or building a legacy. So start in the margins friends. Just like you hopefully change your fly once in a while, think about how you might be able to create some positive change around you in the small margins of your life that we so often overlook. Let's continue to create, give, love and teach as our sport so perfectly allows. I write this very article to you in the margins of my own life.

Adam Kroneberger

*Social Media/Pro Team
and Ambassador Manager*



**Adam Kroneberger**

Social Media Manager/Pro Team and Ambassador Manager of Whiting Farms
 If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Adam
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Matthew Pate



***Thank you all for representing and
 promoting Whiting Farms products!***

The Resurgence of Yard Birds - 4B Hackle from Whiting Farms

BY CLARK "CHEECH" PIERCE



Stonefly Soft Hackle

\$70 for chicken feathers? This is usually the question that pops into the new tyer's mind when they first see the price of a nice dry fly grade genetic hackle. In his mind, it's a better option to go over to the farm supply store and buy a baby chick for a couple bucks and go stick it in the back yard for a few months. Whether or not he does this, he'll eventually come to a realization that he'll likely never be able to produce anything in the same quality range unless he gets some serious education, inherits some birds with decades of history, and has an inordinate amount of luck on his side. On the bright side, he has a meal or two from his yard birds, and perhaps a few usable non dry fly quality feathers.

I learned this lesson when I first started tying, and I remember all too well the time I saved up enough to get my first genetic cape. I now have a decent collection of all the Whiting birds, and there isn't a dry fly that's out of the question with their range of colors and sizes. This being said, even though I had lots and lots of hackle, I had neglected the simple stuff. I really hadn't paid attention to any of the soft hackle offerings other than the odd dun hen cape here and there to tie BWO soft hackles and emergers. I'll just cut right to it - since I was introduced to the 4B lineup of hackle last fall, I have changed the flies that I'm putting in my boxes - especially with streamers and soft hackles. 4B stands for Bigger Better Bargain Birds, and I concur with that statement. If you use india hen necks or strung rooster feathers, you might not get the same quality or range of sizes you are looking for from pelt to pelt and package to package. These 4B birds carry the Whiting tradition of consistency and quality from bird to bird, even though the feathers might not have quite the pedigree of some of the genetic feathers found in some of the other lines. Whiting has truly evolved what was once a standard "yard bird" into a high quality fly tying product.



Mil Spec Soft Hackle

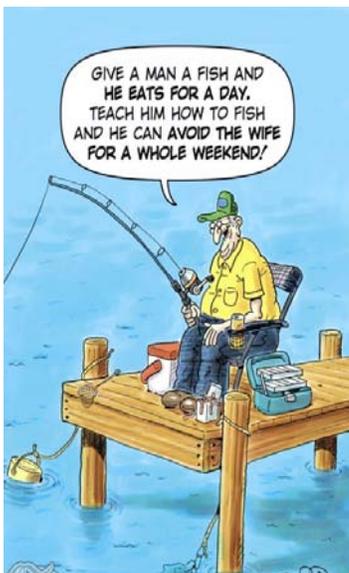


Yellow Soft Hackle

The two 4B products that I use the most are rooster saddles and hen capes. I tie a lot of big articulated streamers that call for schlappen, and the 4B rooster saddle has a very healthy selection of big, webby fibers that can be palmered for maximum bugginess. The hen capes are great because they have more webby fibers than say a Whiting red label cape, and there is a large range of sizes from #20 to #6. These "yard birds" have become more and more of a staple at my desk as I fill my flyboxes this winter, and they have spurred some very creative sessions from the vise that are sure to pierce some fish lips this year. So the next time someone balks at the price of expensive dry fly hackle, point them to the 4B rack, and remind them that fish eat soft hackles and streamers too.

~ Cheech

Clark (Cheech) Pierce is Co-Owner of Fly Fish Food in Orem, UT, and is a fly designer for Fulling Mill. Cheech has been tying flies for about 17 years and enjoys chasing trout with just about anything they will eat, especially streamers. www.flyfishfood.com store.flyfishfood.com



Fish-N-Chicks



Brahma Hen**BY PHIL TRIMM**

The Brahma Hen cape provides a slightly stiffer soft hackle with less web, creating a finer profile. When wet, the fibers lay over the fly, almost as if the fly is encapsulated in an air bubble. The small sizes each cape offers makes it perfect for midge patterns as well as larger caddis and mayfly patterns. Seven colors are available to match an array of patterns.



Super Brahma Midge:
 Hook: 1X short scud hook
 Thread: UTC 70 white/ UTC 70 black
 Bead: 2.3 mm black nickel
 Abdomen: Super Hair black and red
 Thorax: Peacock Ice Dub
 Wing Case: Pearl Krystal flash
 Hackle: Brahma Hen Cape Silver Badger



Soft hackle Hare's Ear Olive:
 Hook: 1X short scud hook
 Thread: 8/0 Uni-Thread Olive
 Bead: 2.8mm black nickel
 Tail: fibers from Brahma Hen Cape dyed olive
 Abdomen: Hare's Ear dubbing olive
 Rib: small gold wire
 Thorax: Hare's Ear dubbing olive
 Wing Case: peacock/ pearl Krystal flash
 Hackle: Brahma Hen Cape dyed olive

Hot Spot Soft hackle Hare's Ear:
 Hook: 1X short scud hook
 Thread: 8/0 Uni-Thread Fire Orange
 Bead: 2.3mm black nickel
 Tail: Hare's Mask from ear
 Abdomen: Natural Hare's Ear dubbing
 Rib: small, black
 Thorax: Natural Hare's Ear dubbing
 Wing Case: Peacock/ Pearl Krystal flash
 Hackle: Brahma Hen Cape dyed tan



Soft hackle Hare's Ear:
 Hook: 1X short scud hook
 Thread: 8/0 Uni-Thread Rusty Dun
 Bead: 2.8mm gold
 Tail: Hare's Mask from ear
 Abdomen: Hare's Ear dubbing natural
 Rib: small gold wire
 Thorax: Hare's Ear dubbing
 Wing Case: peacock/ Pearl Krystal flash
 Hackle: Brahma Hen cape cream badger

