



Michigan Fly Fishing Club

Todd Schotts

Fly of the Month

Look, it's that "Rat-Faced McDougal!" No I am not talking about a nickname for some dangerous or shady character, but the famous fly from yesteryear for our September 2017 Fly of the Month.

The "Rat-Faced McDougal" was created back in 1939 in Roscoe, New York by tiers Harry and Elsie Darbee, a husband and wife fly tying team. In 1935, Harry and Elsie started E.B. and H.A. Darbee Fly Tying Business. They tied many different patterns, from other tiers and their own creations. One of the most famous of their fly patterns is the "Rat-Faced McDougal." The original pattern was a hair body dry fly called "H.A. Darbee's Special Mayfly" that later got the name "Beaverkill Bastard" because of mating the deer hair body (like a bass bug) with the materials of a trout fly. Then a friend of the Darbee's, Percy Jennings, wanted the fly tied in a smaller version; eventually that is how the fly became the "Rat-Faced McDougal." The Darbee's were known to take famous dry flies and add the deer hair body, for a unique fly. Besides changing flies to float like a cork, they also had a fly called "Darbee's Spate Fly" (a salmon fly) and the "Two Feather Fly" just to name a few.

The original pattern was tied with hackle tip wings, but the book *Catskill Flytier: My Life, Times, and Techniques* by Harry Darbee, mentions that white calf tail wings are even more visible than the hackle tips that were originally used in this pattern and just as successful. I know this first-hand. For the waters I fish here in Michigan and in the

Smokey Mountains, I used pink calf tail for the wings making the fly extremely visible.

For this month, we are going to use the original pattern with hackle tip wings. As the body is deer hair, this makes the pattern extremely buoyant and a great fly for fishing rough waters. When tying this attractor fly, the larger sizes of this fly is a great evening fly pattern and is easier to see both for fly fishers and the fish.

When fishing this pattern, fish it like any other basic, normal type of dry fly, although now you will be able to fish the rougher waters. Another great feature of this fly, with it being so buoyant it makes a great indicator fly for the "Hopper/Dropper Rig." If you are wondering what species to tie this fly for, it is really an all purpose fly pattern for about any species of fish.

Until next month, Tight Lines and Snazzy Flies.



HOOK: *Standard Dry Fly sizes 16-10*

THREAD: *Gray 3/0 or 210 denier for the deer hair, White or Tan 8/0 or 70 denier for rest of the fly*

TAIL: *Ginger hackle fibers*

BODY: *Spun and shaped Deer or Caribou body hair, tan or grey*

WING: *Grizzly Hackle Tips (or Calf Tail)*

HACKLE: *Ginger Hackle*