

# DANCING CADDIS

By Todd A.Schotts

For this month's fly pattern, I am going back a few years. It is a unique pattern that is a blast to tie, very effective with Trout, and is a simple pattern to sling bobbins to. I love tying this in its different variations. My fly boxes usually have some of these morsels inside them. This is none other than famed The Dancing Caddis by Gary LaFontaine.

If you are not familiar with late Gary LaFontaine, then here is the river report on probably one of the most creative and brilliant minds ever in the world of fly tying. Gary grew up in Connecticut, and at age 8 the writings mention he caught his first fish on a fly. Then at age of 15 he published his very first fishing article. As an adult, he and his wife migrated to the Montana area. His writings and knowledge of how materials effect the way it appears in the water on a fly are mesmerizing. The one book I feel changed the way we looked at the world of Caddis, and how to tie flies to make them act and look like the real thing is Caddisflies. Some of the other books are Challenge of the Trout (his first book), The Dry Fly: New Angles (his third book) which was eye opening on dry flies, Trout Flies: Proven Patterns (his fourth), and his last book Fly Fishing Mountain Lakes, plus his video tapes, DVD's, and the various videos on UTube. Unfortunately in 2002, he lost his battle with Lou Gehrig's Disease, but he leaves a legacy in the world of fly fishing and tying that will never be surpassed.

The two most famous flies Gary is known

for is LaFontaine's Deep Sparkle Pupa and LaFontaine's Emergent Sparkle Pupa. He has revolutionized fly tying with his various abundance of patterns. That is where this month's fly pattern The Dancing Caddis comes into the picture. With his various studies of caddis, he noticed when they either laid eggs or became spinners, that their true appearance was flush in water and left a full imprint into the surface of the water. Gary studied the dying females to get the true knowledge for this fly pattern. One thing that he noticed, that traditional fly patterns the hook acted like an anchor and hindered the fly to act like the female caddis's he studied. With his studies of the natural flies, he decided he needed to invert the hook to make it keel over or have the hook point riding up. This would let the pattern skate and flutter on the surface without any interference from the hook, to look more natural.

The original hooks he used were Swedish dry fly hooks that were designed in Sweden by Nils Eriksson and Gunnar Johnson. These hooks had an unusual kink about an 1/3 the way back from the eye. Hook manufacture Partridge first made them in 1979 (Partridge K3A Swedish Dry Fly Hook). Now you cannot find these hooks, or if you do they can be very expensive, but Gamakatsu has the C-16B Cripple/Emerger Hook which is very close to the original hooks. Plus, if you watch various videos online, I have seen these tied on regular dry hooks 2x long and 1x strong or even natural curve 3x hooks. Using the non-kinked hooks, the fly doesn't get the same exact movement that Gary's original patterns did. Whichever hook you decide to use, make sure it is a light wire hook with a wide gap. The hook is a very important aspect with this fly. The other very important aspect is the deer hair wing. When tying the wing, the wing should be



**HOOK:** *Gamakatsu C-16B Sizes 14 – 18*

**THREAD:** *Olive 80 Denier or 8/0*

**ABDOMEN:** *Micro Fine Dubbing, BWO Olive*

**WING:** *Coastal All Purpose Deer Hair*

**HACKLE:** *Grizzly Dyed Dun*



pronounced enough for a tent shape. With all of this put together, the focus is more on the width of the silhouette, than the length of the fly pattern, so as to make it effective.

The best way to fish this inverted caddis candy is to remember that the bigger sizes should be skittered across the surface for stillwaters. The smaller one's fish like and other dry fly patterns. You want to make sure you have a good drift on your fly in moving waters, as in skittering, skating, or just a dead drift. I have always liked casting across and letting it dead drift down the river like a spinner. You cannot go wrong fishing this pattern during one of the notorious caddis hatches for sure.

However you fish it, plan on tying some of these tiny Trout morsels up for your next year's arsenal of flies to match the caddis hatch. Until next month, tight lines and snazzy flies.