

## The Finesse of Fly Fishing

By Tom Tripi

I'm sitting in front of a comfortable fireplace on December 31; its 38 degrees outside, and for the first time in ten years, there's a threat of snow. No, fly fishing is not the top item on the agenda today, but for some of us who are compulsive about a few things, there's always something that has to be done, regardless. I was just thinking about what the day means – it's the last day of the year, and the last day of the first year of the new millennium. In a way, it's been a full "last" day for me, so to speak.... I did a little astronomy last night and early this morning (it's my fulltime hobby when ever its clear at night)...designed an ad for a new line of flies that will be out this spring, tied a few prototype flies for a book that will be out in 2002 or so, and then decided to write. I had just finished reading a few articles in the *Journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing*. Most were about the artistic style of fly fishing at the turn of the last century (i. e. late 1800's, early 1900's). There were photos of people fishing in tweed waist jackets and ties, plying the water with long, graceful bamboo rods. It looked like the "art form" that it was, and is. Then I was thinking, why do you hear of others talking about fly fishers as being snobs or better than other persons who engage in the more typical angling pursuits? Is it because fly fishers have gained an inside knowledge concerning where to fish and how to fish, or why fish take a fly so small that you need a jewelers loop to attach it to a leader, or, even better, how does one makes a plastic coated line look like *linear art* in motion? No, fly fishers do not have innate knowledge, they are no better than others, and they learn like everyone else. If anything, fly fishers seem to have a natural curiosity concerning the form and function of material and elements. Most of fly fishing is learned, and, then enjoyed. *FINESSE*, as a fly fishing art form, then comes with practice, patience and the application of learned experiences. This "new" year every one would be much for the better, if they would stop and think about the process and procedures used in their personal interpretation of the art of fly fishing. Is your casting adequate, or do you need a tune-up to correct a few problems, and perhaps gain 30' in accurate distance; have you seen a few recently published flies and can't quite figure out how they're tied; or do you need help working out the new twists and turns that apply to fly tying? The 21<sup>st</sup> century brings with it an abundance of communication tools, from the Internet and videos to personalized instruction, both from individual instructors and through clubs and associations. There is just too much information available now-a-days for someone not to be able to learn new techniques and correct old problems. So, make a

resolution, now, to learn something new, correct a nagging problem, or to teach others what you've acquired. You'll be one step closer to achieving *afinesse* in fly fishing that others only yearn for.....HAPPY 2002!