

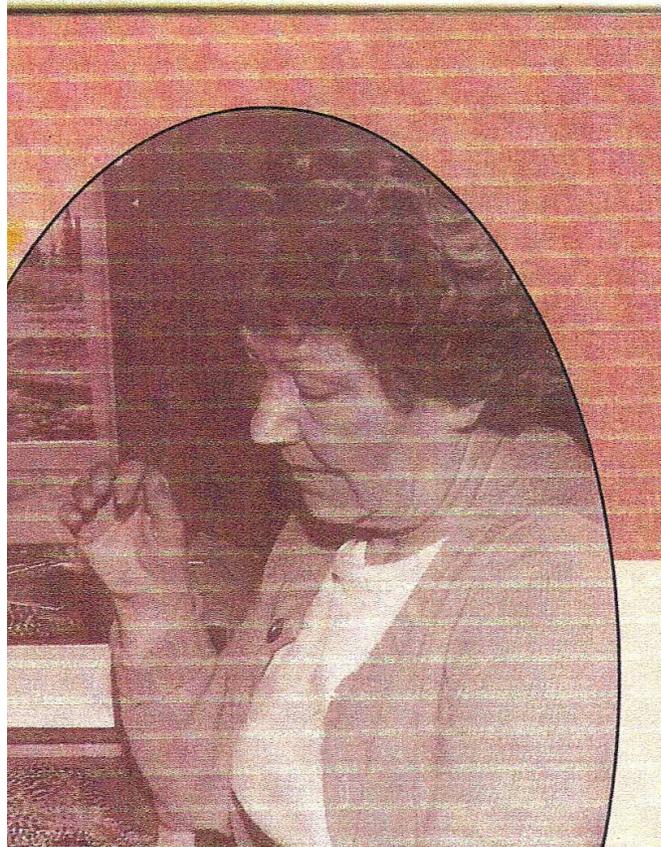
# *The Flies of Ann Schweigert*

By Tom Deschaine

Jack and Ann Schweigert opened the first of several fly shops in 1939, in Luzerne, Michigan. They remained in business until Jack's death in 1985.

Jack originally taught Ann to tie with the idea that she would be the shop's tier and he would be a river guide. Within a short period of time her expertise as a tier grew. She tied durable, quality flies and had a customer base as far away as Germany and Japan. It has been claimed that during her career as a tier for some 39 years, she tied upwards to one million flies. She retired from fly tying in 1978 due to poor eye sight.

During her tenure as a tier, it would be logical to assume that she would have created several fly patterns. Over the years the sports magazines, newspapers and other publications did credit Ann with several patterns --- most of which have been challenged by other tiers and historians. Her Grandson, John "Bear" Little who began his tying lessons with Ann, about the age of seven, and Mr. Dan Rivard a professional tier who took tying lessons from Ann, and actually tied in the shop for a short period of time after Ann retired; are willing to share with us what they know of Ann's original patterns.



**Au Sable King** has been attributed in the fly tying books to both Frank Cupp, a tier from Redford, Michigan and Ann Schweigert. Mr. Cupp denied being the creator and stated, "This is one of my favorite flies... it was introduced by Ann Schwiegert many years ago. I wouldn't be caught on the river without it." Both, Ann's grandson John "Bear" Little and Dan Rivard state that Ann was the creator of this pattern which originated



sometime in the 1950's. The pattern represents a generalized caddis pattern. Over the years I've found this fly to be a great producer of fish and I agree with Mr. Cupp... I wouldn't be caught on the river without it.

### **Au Sable King**

Hook: Mustad #94840 Sizes: 10-16  
Thread: Black, 3/0  
Tail: Dark Ginger Hackle Fibers  
Body: Peacock Herl  
Wing: Grizzly Hackle Tips, tied tent style, over the body.  
Hackle: Dark Ginger

**Au Sable Queen** is one of Ann's lesser known patterns from the 1950's. It never received as much publicity as some of her other patterns. It's an off shoot of her Au Sable King. The only difference is the green egg sac and the white deer hair wing. Dan has confirmed this pattern and added that it was designed to be used during the Grannom hatch from May through the 1<sup>st</sup> week of July. This is a very simple and effective pattern.



### **Au Sable Queen**

Hook: Mustad #94840 Size: 10-16  
Thread: Black, 6/0  
Egg Sac: Green Yarn  
Body: Peacock Herl  
Wing: Natural White Deer Body Hair, tied caddis style.  
Hackle: Ginger

**Hansen's Drake** is another of Ann's creations most probably developed in the late 1940's. The fly was named after "Dad" Hansen. Hansen was a loyal customer and friend of the Schweigerts. There has always been a lot of controversy surrounding this fly because of its close resemblance to the Borchers Special that was created by Ernie Borchers, canoe livery owner and river guide. The accepted story goes on to say that Ernie Borchers added a grizzly hackle to the brown



collar, the pattern then became known as Borchers Special. Others claim that the reverse is true; that Ann removed the grizzly hackle creating the Hansen's Drake. In either case, the adding or removing of a hackle represents a significant change to a pattern and is a legitimate reason to rename the pattern. Both, Ann's grandson and Mr. Rivard claim that Ann's, Hansen's Drake came first. This sentiment is strongly supported in an article entitled, "The Schweigerts of Roscommon," by Leland Day and also by Eric Leiser, in "The Book of Fly Patterns." In the words of the late Dick Pomeroy, who wrote the 'Michigan Fly Box' for many years; "the trout have popularized both of these older patterns and do not seem to care who first tied it." The fly is an excellent all around pattern that can be used throughout much of the season. Tied in sizes 12-8 on a 3X Long hook it can even be used for the *Hex* hatch. Although this fly pattern disappeared from the shops a few years ago, it still has a following of a few old timers like myself.

### **Hansen's Drake**

Hook:	Mustad #98440	Size: 10-16
Thread:	Black, 6/0	
Tail:	2-3 Pheasant Tail Fibers	
Body:	Mottled-brown Turkey Wing Fibers	
Wing:	Blue Dun Hackle Tips	
Hackle:	Brown, tied medium to heavy	

**Herring Drake** is a unique fly pattern. It was not created for trout but rather for lake whitefish, which Michigan sportsmen erroneously call 'herring' (hence the name Herring Drake). These fish live in deep inland lakes. The fish is widely distributed throughout the Midwestern States and Canada. In the early mornings and evenings when mayflies are on the waters, the lake whitefish will rise to dry flies on the surface. This pattern of Ann's was also from the 1950's according to Bear and Dan. The fly is tied typical drake style, however, please



note that it is tied on an inverted hook. This is a common practice with some bonefish, streamer, nymph and salt water patterns, but this is the only time I've seen this technique used on a dry fly pattern. Although it was designed for lake whitefish, I strongly suspect it might be effective on trout as well.

### **Herring Drake**

- Hook: Mustad #94831, tied inverse. Size: 6-10 3X Long
- Thread: Yellow, 6/0
- Tail: 3-4 Pheasant Tail Fibers
- Body: Natural Deer Body Hair, tied parallel to the shank of the hook, flared at the tail.
- Rib: Yellow thread, crisscrossed the full length of the body.
- Wing: Butts of the body hair pulled up and tied post style. Trim off the post to form a flat pad after the hackle is tied in.
- Hackle: Grizzly or brown

When Jack Schweigert died, in 1985, Ann finally closed the store and auctioned off the contents. Her fly tying bench sold for \$17.50. Soon after, Ann moved in with her daughter, Dottie Little in Las Vegas. Ann passed away on May 26, 2005, at the age of 95. She is sadly missed by family, friends and the fly fishing community.



**John "Bear" Little** was born in 1968 in Las Vegas. As a young boy, he spent his summers living with his grandparents, Jack and Ann Schweigert in Roscommon, Michigan. Ann started him tying a few simple patterns about the age of seven. Bear was about 15 when Ann retired and moved to Las Vegas. That's when she took Bear under her wing and shared most of her knowledge with him. For several years Bear tied commercially and supplied several shops in Illinois and Missouri with his patterns. He is now employed as a retail store manager in Queen Creek, Arizona where he lives with his wife Tonya and his four children. He loves woodworking and still ties flies. John shared with me that he is now teaching his two oldest boys the art of fly tying as he learned it from Ann.



**Dan Rivard** was born in Gross Point, Michigan. His family eventually moved to Roscommon. He started tying flies at about the age of seventeen. He was originally self taught but later became a student of Ann Schweigert. Dan has been both a professional and commercial tier, tying flies for shops in the Grayling, Gaylord and Roscommon areas. After Ann Schweigert retired he did some tying in their shop and eventually opened his own; 'Dan's Fly Shop' in Roscommon. Having suffered a stroke around 1985, he found the shop too strenuous. He closed the shop, but to this day, continues to tie flies for a few old friends and clients.

### *See you on the water.....*



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Fly tier and amateur historian, Tom Deschaine hails from Michigan where he maintains a website dedicated to old Michigan dry flies and their creators. His flies and tips have appeared in such publications as American Angler, Fly Tyer, Fly Fish America and Trout Fisherman.

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