

THE CURVE BALL GENE

by Gary Fuller

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In the middle of my first year of organized sports, the team manager told me that, “hitting a curve ball is a genetic thing. Some people can see the base ball as it leaves the hand of the pitcher, determine quickly that it is going to curve and anticipate where to meet it with the bat. Some people cannot.” It was a polite way of telling me that I should move on and choose another sport.

Taking up baseball was not my idea, At first you follow the advice of your elders, but having been led down the wrong path once made me less than anxious to listen to any new plans. I decided to strike out on my own search. I was looking for something safe, that did not require you to wear protective clothing. Something that was not dependent on the weather forecast and did not require a great deal of physical exertion. I chose fly tying.

I saved carefully and ordered a beginner fly tying kit from the Herter's Company. It was perfect. I was the only one that knew how the strange tools I received in the kit were used (sort of) and the possible outcome of this new endeavor. Every one in the neighborhood played baseball, but there wasn't another kid for a thousand miles with a fly tying vise. Yes sir, this was cool.

After the initial excitement wore off and everyone walked away scratching their heads, I got down to business. When I looked in the box for the first time, I secretly wished it contained the curve ball gene I had been diagnosed to be lacking, I struggled through the crude instruction booklet and spent weeks trying to complete my first fly.

I am convinced now, after more than sixty years of fly tying, that there must be a similar gene stuck somewhere on a chromosome that predisposes someone to take up fly tying. You can either fritter away countless hours at the fly tying bench or you cannot. It's a “genetic thing.” How thankful I am that I could not see a curve ball and became a free agent at the age of thirteen.



My first trout fly... the bivisible.