1991 - Wayne Luallen
by Dennis Bitton and Tom Leach

At Conclave '91 in West Yellowstone, Montana, Wayne Luallen of Visalia, California was named the 22nd recipient of the prestigious Buz Buszek Memorial Fly Tying Award. It was presented to him by long time friend, and fellow fly tyer Darwin Atkin, who asked Wayne's wife Donna, to join them at the podium. It was an electric moment. The 41 year old radiological technologist had been tying flies since he was 24 and had co-authored and taught the first five Atlantic salmon fly tying classes at FFF Conclaves. Well known and well liked, he was a popular choice.

Born and raised in a town near where he lives now, Wayne's early fishing experiences were with bait and involved bluegill and bass. By 18 he had started fly fishing and a few years later he started teaching himself how to tie flies.

"I actually believed at the time I could save money," Wayne recalls. "I suppose what really attracted me though was I always enjoyed anything that required dexterity."

Friend and fellow member of the Visalia based Kaweah Flyfishers, Tom Leach, had this to say about Wayne in the club's formal nomination for Wayne for the Buszek Award: "Over the years, many people have been recognized for their skills at fly tying. Most masters of the craft (and most previous winners of this award) are recognized for the visual quality of the finished product - the fly. With Wayne, his quality is obviously superb, but it is not the main issue - it's tying of the fly. He has clearly elevated the activity to a higher plane.

"Wayne has held a variety of leadership offices within our club, and has served on a large number of committees. In particular, he is credited with establishing and chairing our club's beginning fly tying classes and returns each year as an instructor for these classes and for other advanced ones. Wayne has also given programs and beginning an advanced fly tying classes throughout the state of California.

"Wayne's patience and inordinate ability to communicate well hold large audience at his bench longer than that witnessed for most other tyers with equivalent tying skills. Entertainment isn't his goal, it's the education and the enthusiasm that he hopes is contagious to his audience."

Known for many creative patterns, Wayne claims that most of his original patterns are adaptations of existing patterns. Among those he feels comfortable as calling his own are: White Top Deer Hair Caddis, All rounder Nymph. Mousecrat Skimmer, Sparkle Parachute, Counterfeit Cricket and BN'L Midge Pupa, a wonderful little pattern that involved the combined efforts of Gary Borger, Dick Nelson and Wayne.

Like many Buszek winners before him, a listing of all Wayne's credits and contributions to fly fishing would make a very long list. We hope you can read these few words and get a deep appreciation of the man, his work and his dedication.