



Stanley Tuttle “trout fished” from his tying bench!



**Stream Blazer**

**Stanley Tuttle 1941-2015**

Buffalo Creek, Joes Fork and Linville River, Patterson, North Carolina

Stanley began fly and tying flies in 1960. His early mentors were Tony Woods, “Cap” Wiese and Newland Saunders. His favorite fly rod was a Fenwick 7 ½-foot which was built for Stanley by Tony Woods. His largest trout caught was a 26 ½ inch brown trout caught in the New River, North Carolina.

He worked in furniture his entire life. His hobbies were naturally in his wood workshop (which “Cap” Wiese helped him build) in hand turning wooden bowls and making small items for friends and family.

Rita, his wife for fifty years, and his daughter Camilla tolerated his fly fishing habits. But his son Monty and grandson Bryan are following in his footsteps as avid fishermen. Stanley has three grandsons, two granddaughters (both are school teachers) and a great granddaughter. Family was more important to him than fly fishing, yet fly fishing and fly tying was a very big aspect of his life.



**Stream Blazer Stanley Tuttle**

**1941-2015**

## Fly Fishing with “Cap” Wiese

We left out one morning at around six am on a trip to the lower end of Boone Fork Creek. On our way up Highway 321 near Blowing Rock, lying on the side of the road was a dead skunk. “Cap” wanted me to stop. He got out and picked it up holding it like it was a baby, and smelled it. He finally got into the truck and said that if he could bottle that smell, he’d have his wife wear it at all times. I told him that he would never have to worry about her running around on him and he roared with laughter.



**Stream Blazer Stanley Tuttle**

**1941-2015**

## STANLEY TUTTLE



DAVID PREWITT | NEWS-TOPIC

Stanley Tuttle of Lenoir turns a small bowl on the lathe in his workshop. Tuttle suffers from emphysema but continues his love for woodworking.

# At peace in his workshop

Woodcarver inspires those around him with battle against emphysema by honing his craft.

**KIM GILLILAND**  
kgilliland@newstopic.net

Stanley Tuttle centers the small piece of mahogany on the wood lathe. His hands are gnarled. An accident with a wood saw claimed three fingers of his right hand. Still, armed with a lifetime of experience, Tuttle expertly shapes the piece of stock into a bowl.



Stanley Tuttle

His workspace is tight. Specks of wood dust aimlessly drift through the air. Pegboard panels hang on the walls, and tools of his craft fill every inch of space. It is a cold, rainy afternoon, but Tuttle, 70, doesn't mind.

Tuttle wheezes mightily when he gets up, each breath a struggle. A large tank by the door pumps life-sustaining liquid oxygen, later converted to a vapor, into what is left of his lungs.

Tuttle is in the latter stages of emphysema, a disease that has ravaged his lungs for decades. He only has days left, his wife Rita says. But for these precious moments, the 8-foot by 16-foot workshop is his home.

Tuttle's grandfather was George Kincaid, founder of Kincaid Furniture. His dad, the Rev. Bernard Tuttle, married Edna Kincaid, George's daughter. Bernard opened Tuttle Wood Products after Kincaid was sold. The family business was sold in 1981.

Two years after retiring and quitting smoking, a habit he picked up at age 13, a then-52-year-old Tuttle received the diagnosis. Bernard had died of emphysema, so Tuttle was familiar with the toll the disease took on its victims. Tuttle wondered how much more time he could have had if not for the cigarettes.

See TUTTLE | 5A



DAVID PREWITT | NEWS-TOPIC

Some examples of Stanley Tuttle's handiwork are seen in his small workshop.

## TUTTLE

Continued from 1A

Emphysema is a destructive disease of the lung in which the alveoli (small sacs) that promote oxygen exchange between the air and the bloodstream are destroyed. Smoking is the primary cause of emphysema, which makes it a preventable illness. But it was also in Tuttle's genes.

Tuttle was placed on oxygen as the disease worsened. Faced with his own mortality, he and Rita began to travel, hitting 44 of the 50 states over the next few years. Tuttle would strap a portable oxygen tank to his back and use the larger tank at night. During a visit to Las Vegas Tuttle was able to free himself of the cumbersome devices for three days. It would be the last time.

With time on his hands, he began churning out pieces from his little shop next to their Hillwood Drive home in the Palmetto area of Caldwell County, using rough pieces of wood given to him by friends, or left over from the

Kincaid plant. From his expert hands emerged turkey calls, clocks, jewelry boxes, bowls, trout fishing flies, just about anything he set his mind to. He holds up a piece of wavy maple that was once destined to be spit into firewood and donated to a needy family by Yaddin Baptist Church. This piece was given to Tuttle. It is now a shiny button bowl.

Tuttle would fashion a cedar chest with wood left over from an old wardrobe for his daughter Bethany. For his grandson Bryan, a baseball player at Pfeiffer University, he crafted a wall shelf to hold baseball memorabilia. For Rita, Tuttle carved out an ironing board, which she still uses.

"It has given me a determination to accomplish something," Tuttle said between gasps of air. "I need something to keep my mind occupied, or else I'll think about something else."

Despite the distractions his work shop and family provide, Tuttle must endure a round-the-clock ritual to keep him alive. Every four hours, he's hooked up to a mist nebulizer that pumps a mist of Albuterol to open up his

airways. Restful sleep is out of the question.

Doctors long ago stopped worrying about the dust kicked up by the woodworking machinery. His lungs are too far gone, they say, for it to cause any more damage. Let him keep doing it, they would tell Rita. Still, Tuttle finds it harder to work as his breathing becomes more labored.

The chunks of wood waiting their turn on the lathe began to outnumber the finished pieces. These days, he mostly swaps stories with the many friends who stop by. They while away the hours catching up on the local gossip or just solving the world's problems. Other times he sits alone, writing in his diary.

Tuttle understands the gravity of his situation, and meditates a lot. Yet he hasn't stopped living.

"I hope my story will be an inspiration to others who suffer from emphysema," he said.

Tuttle looks at his shiny wood bowl and smiles. His work is done.