



# The Tippet

December 2001

## President's Message

Seasons Greetings everyone,

Now that winter has fallen on our world it is time for many of us to turn to other things than fishing to occupy our time. This year is looking very good for skiing, sled riding and the like. Or one might turn to some indoor activity such as fly tying to pass the time. Perhaps it would be wise for all of us to spend some time with friends and family to ensure that our stockings are stuffed with something other than coal this year. You might even want to start dropping hints about that new fly reel or vise you have had your eye on.

If none of that sounds appealing to you then you may want to join a small group of individuals I am a proud member of. All you need to do is head down Lewiston grade and walk out into the frigid river of your choice in the hopes of coaxing an icy steelhead to your fly. It all sounds so appealing that it continually amazes me how small our group is. But we are a dedicated bunch and it is shaping up to be a fantastic winter.

If you are one of the more intelligent members of the club, you may want to check out the fly tying sessions that occur on

tuesday nights at Tri-State. I have been hearing great reports from all who have attended.

Our speaker this month will be a fellow fly fisherman, Greg Haller of Lewiston, Idaho. He has been working diligently with area tribes and interest groups for the past few years on improving the situation in the Snake river. He will be discussing water-quality and salmonid issues facing the Snake river drainage. Be sure to have plenty of questions ready for Greg as he is very interested in providing all the information he can. This is the last meeting of the year and the last meeting of my Presidency. I would like to thank all of you for allowing me to give back a little bit to a sport that has given me so much. It has been a lot of fun and I hope I served the club well. ( I considered stating that I will miss being President but feared that might land me in a second term.) The Clearwater Fly Casters is a wonderful group of people I am proud to be a part of.

Happy Holiday,

Your Prez  
John D. Toker



## Backcast

### Fishing Reports

Steelheading on the Clearwater seems to be picking up. Apparently Jim Palmersheim hooked into a steelhead just after getting his waders wet.

### New Business

The new editor for the Tippet is Zac Sexton. This is his first issue.

Tim Cavileer resigned from handling the newsletter as he got too busy with work, designing the web-page and family. He also would not mind fishing once in a while.

### Clearwater Fly Casters 2001 Officers

President John Toker  
Vice-President Jim Siebe  
Secretary/Treasurer Shirley Engerbretson  
Conservation Chair Jim Palmersheim  
FFF Representative George Johnson  
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CFC membership dues are \$20/year for individuals, \$25/year for families, \$10/year for students, \$50/sustaining and \$300/lifetime.

Meetings on 2nd Wednesday, Sept - May, at Lakey's Grill, 300 S Grand, Pullman, WA

## Editor's Note

This is my first issue of the Tippet. You may be getting this a day later than normal. I appologise. I am still learning some software and the process of printing and delivery. I would like to thank Tim Cavileer for his help showing me the ropes. Tim has done a great job. I can only hope to do half as well.

I am a student at the University of Idaho, studying fishing and journalism; probably in that order. I have spent the past several summers surveying streams for the Forest Service in Minnesota and Wyoming. I have tied flies commercially for Hunter's Angling Supplies and various fly shops as well as individuals. I also write a column in the Outdoors section of the Lewiston Morning Tribune, as well as freelance some work to the "Catalyst," a newspaper out of Boise.

I am originally from Buffalo, Wyo. and grew up fishing headwater trout streams. I learned the Bighorn river in SE Montana just after learning to cast a fly rod, while in high school. I went to school at Northland College, in Ashland, Wis. where I learned midwestern salmon, steelhead and warmwater fishing. I look forward to polishing my skills as editor and journalist. Feel free to call or e-mail to indulge me with your comments, good or bad or otherwise. Also, feel free to tell me where you've been fishing and what you've been using!

<“))==={ Zac Sexton

## Book Review

"Home Waters; Fishing with an Old Friend," Joseph Monninger, Chronicle Books, San Francisco, 1999.

Here's a book for those of you who love both fly fishing and dogs. I didn't know the two could go peacefully together until I picked this one up. The vision of a trout dog was just too much for me to contemplate. Monninger is a writer who discovers his aging golden retriever Nellie has a series of lumps along her torso. After a visit to the vet to have them removed he fears the worst - cancer. Not wanting to know exactly what they are,

## Upcoming Events

**December 11, 2001** 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Fly Tying at Tri-State in Moscow.

**December 12, 2001** 6 p.m., Clearwater Fly Casters meeting at Lakey's Grill in Pullman.

**December 18, 2001** 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Fly Tying at Tri-State in Moscow.

he declines to know the results of lab tests. Instead, he takes Nellie from their home in New Hampshire on one final (for her at least) great trout fishing trip west to Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho, with a few stops in between. Along the way, Monninger examines his life, his dog's life, and where they're each headed, geographically and existentially.

On the surface a story about a guy and his dog going fishing, this book made me examine my own feelings about both fishing and man's best friend (in my case, a precocious West Highland Terrier named Elvis.)

In the end, it became a life affirming commentary on the human - and canine condition. Quote: "Why is it a dog don't get to live very long, but he still got to die old?" - Unknown

(by Ed Estlow of the Minnesota Fly Fishers for the ClubWire Email NewsWire)

## INSPIRATION LADIES, LET HIM GO

I am not an avid fly-fisher although I am in the process of being converted, gradually learning the art and enjoying the time away from the busyness of everyday life. I was raised in St. Petersburg, Florida and from my earliest memories can envision myself salt water fishing off a local pier or seawall. I have lots of memories of fishing with my mother and grandparents before I ever started school. So my love of fishing and being in or on the water stems from those early days of my childhood.

Today my love for fishing and being in or on the water endures. My husband, Kevin, is however, the avid fly-fisher of the family and I am delighted that he is. I do say that in the most sincere manner. You see, I have come to appreciate what fly-fishing does for

him and for me. Kevin is a busy man. He works at least 50 hours a week, usually more, and travels a lot for his job. So when he comes home at the end of a long day or week for that matter, he needs refreshing. I have found that there is nothing like a day on the river to invigorate and inspire him. Sometimes I am able to go with him and other times I am not. But I always encourage him to go when he feels the need.

I realize there are a lot of things that seem pressing around the house, but it's just like when our children were babies and I thought the house had to be spotless all the time. But then events in life made me realize that the house would always be there, but my babies were going to grow up. There will always be time later for the stuff that needs to be done around the house. Life is fleeting and I want to grow old looking back on our time together as sweet and precious — not resentful and rushed and full of busy tasks and chores that seem to take up a lot of valuable time.

Now, this is not an endorsement for you fly fishers out there to run off to the river EVERY weekend and leave your families deserted! There are times when things need to be done. But it is encouragement for your spouses to learn the value in the time spent on the river. Kevin doesn't go every weekend or even every other weekend, but when he needs to go, I know that I need to support that. It gives him time to think, reflect, plan, and enjoy life at its fullest in the great outdoors. I have never felt neglected because of his desire to go fishing but instead look forward to reaping the benefit of how it makes him feel toward me because I do encourage him to go. Rather than thinking of it in a negative way I think of its positive benefits. It is mentally and emotionally healing. It is a relatively inexpensive hobby once the initial investment is made, and it is a safe sport considering alternatives such as race car driving, sky-diving, or chasing other women!

I guess I felt compelled to write this because I hear a lot of spouses complain when their partners go off to fish on a weekend day that could be used to accomplish a lot of other "stuff." To me, the benefits greatly outweigh the time spent away. So, the next time your loved one needs a refresher, a little time on the river may be just what the doctor ordered and I implore you to let him or her chase those beautiful trout! It will do you both a lot of good.

(by Kathy Humphrey of the Northeast Arkansas Flyfishers)

From the Tyers' Notebook

## COMMON PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

I have never met a tier who wasn't always looking for a better way to tie flies. The experienced tier has developed subtle techniques that help him avoid many of the pitfalls and common problems that plague the less experienced. This month I'm going to discuss some of those tying problems that can cause so much frustration.

The most common problem that beginning tiers seem to have is the crowding of their heads, especially on dry flies. The head often covers half the eye of the hook. Tiers are most often told to start further back and to leave more room, which is not bad advice but sometimes just doesn't solve the problem. So let us look a little deeper. Quite often the problem starts with the wings. You have the proper tie in spot, which will leave sufficient room for the hackle and the head, but then things get screwed up because you add two or three more wraps to the front part of the tie down area. This little mistake moves the "bend up" area of the wings forward just a tad and you lose valuable space needed to complete the fly.

Beginners can sometimes recover a little head-space by using their nails to force the material back slightly on the hook shank. This is not the ideal solution but it can remedy the problem without having to retie the whole fly.

Many tiers have problems tying small or sparse patterns. They tend to run out of room and their flies have the appearance of being

overfed. There are generally two things happening here. First is the use of too much material, and the second using too many thread wraps to secure it. For tiny and/or sparse flies try using half the amount of material you think you need and only two or three wraps to secure it. One little trick used by the masters of the full dress Atlantic salmon fly is to unwrap a couple of thread turns just before tying in a new piece of material.

Many problems happen with the durability of parachute-hackled flies tied around a posted wing. The problem often can be traced to faulty posting of the wing itself. The wraps around the wing base have a gap between them or a gap at the very bottom of the post in this situation. When this occurs there is a weak point in the wing post and when used the weak point will tend to act as a hinge. Pretty soon everything starts to come apart even if you have used a liberal amount of cement. Another problem often encountered with tails made of deer, moose or other hollow hair is the splaying of the tail fibers as the hollow hair is compressed. This can be avoided by tying down the tail material from front to rear. The first thread wraps should be very tight. Use less tension on the last few wraps at the rear to avoid crimping the hollow hair.

If you have the problem of the material continuing to twist around the hook shank as you tie it down you probably are making either one of two common errors. If you just place the material in the proper position and start to tie it in place with a normal wrap the thread will tend to carry the material around the hook shank. On tail fibers you can take advantage of this by holding them at a 45 degree angle to the shank on the near side of the hook as you make your first wrap. Done properly the thread will roll the fibers to the top of the hook as you continue your tie down. The better solution for all other situations is to use what is sometimes called the "soft loop". To accomplish this pinch the materials and the hook shank at the tie in point, bring the thread up the near side, over the top and down the far side without putting any tension on it. Now pull the thread straight down while continuing to

pinch the material. Repeat the soft loop wrap at least once more before releasing the pinch. With some materials it is advantageous to use a soft loop and a half. To do this simply bring the thread back up the near side before you tighten the thread by pulling straight up. Hold the pinch!

These are a few of the more common problems tiers sometimes have. Learn to correct these and you'll greatly reduce your frustrations. By far the easiest way to solve a particular problem is to ask for help from a friend who has already solved it. Good Luck.

(by Jim Cramer of the Russian River Flycasters of Santa Rosa, CA for the FFF ClubWire Email NewsWire)

## Whip Finish Knots

Some threads when pulled back through the wraps at the completion of the whip finish knot will twist up on themselves and either not pull completely through or will break off, ruining the whip finish. If you use your bodkin or scissors points to keep some tension on the loop of thread as you tighten the knot, you will avoid this problem.

If you have the problem of the thread slipping off the head as you are tying the whip finish, try using the tip of your left index finger to hold each wrap in position as you make the knot.

And lastly, while it is not a big problem, you will have a neater head and knot if you wrap the whip finish from the rear forward instead of the opposite direction. Done in this manner you will avoid having a short length of thread running over the whip finish wraps before it disappears under them. Wrapped from rear to front the thread from the last wrap will immediately disappear under itself.

(by Jim Cramer of the Russian River Flycasters of Santa Rosa, CA for the FFF ClubWire Email NewsWire)

## Bead Head Witness - Zac Sexton

Thread: 6/0 yellow Hook: #12 to #18 3x nymph

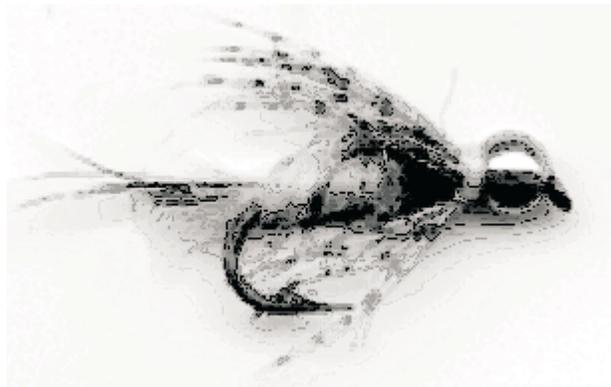
Tail: badger guard hairs

Body: badger fur

Rib: small round gold wire

Thorax: dark brown blended

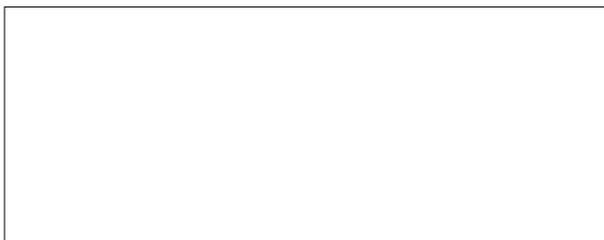
Collar: hungarian partridge



- 1) Secure four or five badger fur guard hairs for tail, leaving body fur attached.
- 2) Fold body fur over and secure so it is protruding over hook bend.
- 3) Attach gold wire and wrap thread back to tail.
- 4) Wrap badger fur around hook to build abdomen. Secure and clip excess.
- 5) Wrap gold wire four or five turns around abdomen. Tie off and clip wire.
- 6) Build thorax with dark brown dubbing. Leave room to wrap collar hackle.
- 7) Tie in hungarian partridge feather, tip first. Wrap two times. Secure and clip excess.
- 8) Build thread head behind bead. Cement head.

I developed the Witness while planning a recent trip on the Selway river. I wanted something with contrast, preferably for whitefish to take notice of. However, trout could not leave it alone. This fly accounted for more than ten Westslope cutts in two days of fishing. A great winter pattern.

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