

Clearwater Fly Casters

November, 2003

The Tippet

From the President's Desk

Finally! I made it to the St. Joe this week and found it in a relative state of desertion as reported at our last meeting. The fish seem to have moved into the big holes. Actually, I only looked into one hole, at Prospector Creek. The fish there were able to entertain me for the rest of the day. There was the usual pod of a hundred or so fish under the bridge. They appeared to be in a winter stupor, attracted to nothing on the surface. An occasional fish would pick up something off the bottom. The upper end of the pool was often alive with fish feeding at the surface. The surface looked like continuous rain impact. I'm not sure what they were feeding on, but they ignored all flies except size 18 (and I presume, smaller) with some gray hackle on it. A few fish could be fooled with the usual elk hair caddis, but mostly flies over size 18 were ignored regardless of color. I also tried a chernobyl ant to attract 'bigger' fish. They nibbled around it without acknowledging its presence. They immediately took an 18 bear paw fished as a dropper on the ant. When they beat the hackle off of it, I fished it with only the peacock hurl. The fish ignored it sans hackle. They also beat on Adams and mosquitos, but only in size 18. I don't have any smaller than that. I also tested these fish with different types of tippets, clear vs brown, and small vs. larger diameter. Nothing mattered except fly color and size. The results were 17 fish landed, mostly 10 to 13 inch, and the bull trout is still in there.

We have a winning candidate for our Alspach scholarship. He will be announced at our November meeting provided I can contact him by then. His interest is in genetics of rainbow trout in aquaculture.

Our program for the November meeting with feature Reid Miller's discussion of salt water fly fishing off Australia's west coast. See you all there.

Bruce Frazier

With the coming of the new year comes a change in club leadership. Don Shearer takes over as president and Tim Cavileer takes the number two spot as vice president. With that occurring, nominations for a new newsletter editor will be taken at the next meeting.

Upcoming Events

- November 12, 2003** Clearwater Fly Casters monthly meeting at the Best Western - University Inn in Moscow, Idaho. Reid Miller guest speaker: 'Fly fishing the salt water off Australia's west coast.'
- November 19, 2003** 5:30pm Conservation/Executive meeting at the Daily Grind in Pullman, WA.
- December 10, 2003** Clearwater Fly Casters monthly meeting at the Best Western - University Inn in Moscow, Idaho. Alspach Memorial Scholarship Award Winner will be the guest speaker. Topic: TBA.
- December 17, 2003** 5:30pm Conservation/Executive meeting at the Daily Grind in Pullman, WA.

Treasurer's Notes

It's time to pay your dues! and perhaps win a fabulous prize. The Executive Committee is offering an incentive to pay your 2004 dues early. When you pay your 2004 dues, in addition to being a member of a really cool club, you will get a coupon to fill out and place in the **Membership Incentive Jar**. At the January meeting there will be a drawing for three great incentive gifts. The incentives gifts will be a net made by our own Bill Hendrix; a net made by Bob Clark, and a fly box filled with flies donated by club members. For information on how to donate flies contact Jim Palmersheim at jamesp@turbonet.com.

Club dues are for the calendar year from January December. The dues amounts and categories are \$10 for students, \$20 for individuals, \$30 for families, \$50 for sustaining membership (basically, this is one year's dues plus a \$30 contribution for club operations), and \$300 Lifetime membership. One coupon for each of the above categories will be allowed.

Be sure to fill out an information coupon when you pay your dues so that you will be eligible to win one of these fabulous prizes. If you are not able to attend the January meeting, you will still be eligible to win. Just be sure to fill out the coupon and return it to Clearwater Fly Casters, P.O. Box 2149 C.S., Pullman, WA 99165 before the January meeting.

The **2004 Angler's Calendars** will be available at the November meeting. They will be sold for \$12 each.

Shirley Engerbretson



Tying One On

Mike Huffman - *Southwest Missouri Fly Fishers*

When I hear the term purist, the hackles rise on the nape of my neck. When I hear an individual apply the term to himself, I dive out of laughing distance and look for the least harmful direction to vomit. Purity, even as a concept, is heavily suspect at least in the latter part of this century. After all, even the driven snow has some hereditary acid rain content. So at best we are dealing with a relative issue and not an absolute.

I won't use commercially raised worms. I won't throw a plug with more than six treble hooks. I wouldn't touch a spinning rod. I don't tie with any of those synthetics (except maybe nylon thread, mylar tinsel, and a few non-bone fish hooks). I only fish dry flies upstream, and only at certain times. "Are we to suppose that the purist of the pure simply false cast, waiting for a trout to leap free of the water and snatch their virgin undampened offering out of the air" Why not? Hell, that would go a long way toward explaining those days we got skunked.

Secretly, I believe self-proclaimed "purists" are retreating from some preexisting state of being they're embarrassed about. In their sleep they're tortured by visions of finding themselves naked, on opening morning, ankle deep in the most popular corn hole on the river with a tangled spin cast outfit in their hands, and without their pipe or even their Latin Thesaurus. An angry mob is closing in around them, including all the classmates they snitched on in school, threatening to pummel them senseless and leave the carcass for the crawdads and bluegill to pick clean.

The whole condition would be pretty humorous if it wasn't for the fact some newcomers to the sport are actually put off by such buffoons. I found myself amongst a few last year on the fly fishing only stretch of a Connecticut river. As luck would have it, I caught and released a couple of nice browns. When I arrived at the car, I was approached by two of these well appointed and expensively outfitted fellows. Recalling that I hadn't seen them catch any fish, I casually laid my vest over the keeper ring of my rod, and braced myself for some interrogation. Well, after engaging in some talk about the cost of their equipment, how the Fish and Game Department hadn't been stocking enough, in relation to the income and import of the "average" angler in these waters, they showed nymphs, and other assorted and quite trendy offerings. Then they dropped the question. What was I using? When I produced the somewhat mangled #6 bright purple woolly booger there was a spastic moment of silence, and a slight shifting of weight to their rear leg, as if it was Kryptonite or something. They just didn't quite know how to handle it. I could have only guessed what they were mumbling to each other as they ambled away, but I had the giggles all the way home.

(via the FFF ClubWire)

Book Report

"The charm of fishing is that it is elusive but attainable. A perpetual series of occasions for hope."

- John Buchan

Beloved Waters by Paul Ford
Frank Amato Publications, Inc.
Portland, OR, 2000
98 pages, softbound
not illustrated
reviewed by Bruce E. Harang

This small book contains eight short outdoor stories that carry the reader into a place where only dreams are found. Not only do the stories transport the reader into them, they evoke wonderful memories each reader has of his own outdoor memories. Centered on fishing these stories are a personal journey of the author. But a journey that allows the reader to gaze through the author's eyes and see the wonders of nature as the author saw them. The descriptions of the weather, the creatures, and the sensual perceptions are amazingly well done. The reader cannot help but smell the tidal muck, and hear the prehistoric squawking of the heron.

Many of us have traveled similar roads, but few of us can so sensually describe them with the written word. This is a wonderful winter read in front of a warm fire. When you are tired of reading commercials about far off hot spots, and blow-by-blow descriptions of how to catch large fish this book will bring you to a place where you can once again remember wonderful days afield.

(via the FFF ClubWire)

OLYMPIA - A package of proposed sportfishing rules for the 2004-05 fishing season is available for public comment.

The proposed rules, which govern the recreational harvest of game fish, food fish and shellfish, will be the focus of a public hearing before the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission during the commission's December 5 and 6 meeting at Fort Worden State Park in Port Townsend. The commission is scheduled to vote on adoption or modification of the rules package at its February 6-7 meeting in Room 172 of the Natural Resources Building in Olympia.

The rules package, which consists of 104 separate proposals, may be viewed and downloaded from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) website. Printed copies of the proposed rules also may be obtained by contacting the WDFW Fish Program at (360) 902-2700.

Written comments may be submitted during the Dec. 5-6 commission meeting in Port Townsend, or mailed before the meeting to Evan Jacoby, WDFW Rules Coordinator, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, 600 Capitol Way N., Olympia WA 98501-1091, or emailed to Jacoby at jacobesj@dfw.wa.gov. Verbal comments may also be presented in person at the Dec. 5-6 commission meeting.

Steps to Fresh Lines

by Steve Schweitzer from *On the Fly*, the monthly newsletter of the *Acadiana Flyrodders of Lafayette*

It pays to clean your fly line after every 3-5 usages or when you've fished particularly muddy, dirty, weedy or mossy water. I just had to retire a fly line I purchased in 1997 and have used consistently for much of my fly fishing over the years. I estimate the line has seen over 150 outings. But I wouldn't have had such good luck with the line had I not taken care of it.

How to Tell if a Fly Line Requires Cleaning

It's not too difficult to tell if your line needs cleaning, look for these clues:

- * You feel micro-grit on the line as you strip it in
- * For floating line, the first 10 feet or few meters of line doesn't float any longer
- * The line retains coil memory
- * The line has small cracks
- * The line feels brittle

If the latter two observations above are noticed, the bad news is that the line is on the last legs of life. The good news is a cleaning and re-invigoration of the line may add another season of use before you have to replace the line.

Materials

The materials are simple:

- Mild dish soap
- Clean rag
- Fly line dressing (discussion on this topic below)
- Line winder (optional)

STEP 1 - Soaking

Draw about a gallon or a few liters of hot water in a sink.

Add just a few drops of mild dish soap. Don't overdo it! All you need is enough to make a few bubbles and help loosen debris. Too much soap will leave a film on the fly line which may help it sink. (not good for floating lines!)

Strip out all the fly line IN LOOSE coils in the sink, ensuring each coil lies on top of the previous. This will help prevent the line from knotting up as it is cleaned in the next step. Allow the line to soak until the water becomes luke-warm; about 15-30 minutes or so.

STEP 2 - Cleaning

Taking a clean, moistened rag in one hand, draw the fly line from the sink through the rag. Apply mild pressure with the hand holding the rag to ensure the line is being "stripped" of all the debris and dirt. You'll know if you have enough pressure by hearing the line "squeak" through your hands.

LOOSELY coil the line on the floor at your feet in preparation for dressing the line with conditioner and allowing the line to dry for a few moments.

TIP: as you draw line through the rag, stretch each arm's length section as you would a leader, to straighten out the coils that have built up.

STEP 3 - Dressing

*Using a line winder, if you have one, makes applying line conditioner easier, but is not necessary.

* Taking another dedicated rag used for applying line conditioner, soak the rag with conditioner.

* As the line is wound on the winder, apply the line conditioner in the same manner as the line is cleaned in the step above.

Don't be afraid to be generous with the line conditioner, it's the stuff that will help protect the line in future uses.

Dirt Be Gone!

One fly line can hold a lot of dirt as show on the rag is used to clean the fly line in this example!

Fly Line Dressings

Many different manufacturers produce and sell fly line dressings. So, don't be afraid to try any one of them. But, I have found over the years a particular product, not even designed for the fly fishing industry, works quite well in cleaning and dressing fly line.

I like to use Rain-X windshield dressing. It is safe for plastics, as it clearly says on the bottle. Rain-X does a bang-up job of repelling water on windshields for months on end, so why wouldn't it work for fly lines?

I have used Rain-X since 1996. Never had I had a fly line become brittle or "melt-away" as some fly fishers may warn you of. I'm a believer in its use.

There may be other products on the market that work just as well. Just one word of caution: be sure the product is safe for plastics. If it doesn't say that, they don't even venture in trying it on fly lines. Products that are silicon based are your best bet. Silicon is fly line friendly. Fly lines are delicate, expensive strips of plastics and polymers that won't tolerate chemicals which can break down the coating, be careful in choosing alternate line dressings not intended for fly lines.

September 2003 Annual BBQ Fly casting results.

1. Dave Tharp	89	5. Tim Cavileer	84
2. John Read	88	6. Bob Clark	77
3. Gary Evens	86	7. Brain McNeill	76
4. Jim Palmersheim	84		

Clearwater Fly Casters' Officers 2003

President	Bruce Frazier	(bfrazier@pullman.com)	332-7346
Vice President	Don Shearer	(don@mail.wsu.edu)	432-6906
Secretary/Treasurer	Shirley Engerbretson	(sengerbr@moscow.com)	882-1687
FFF Representative	George Johnson	(gjohnson@pullman.com)	334-3135
Conservation Chair	Jim Palmersheim	(jamesp@turbonet.com)	882-4502
Newsletter	Tim Cavileer	(greencat@turbonet.com)	883-4572

CFC membership dues are \$20/yr for individuals, \$30/yr for families, \$10/yr for students, \$50/yr sustaining and \$300/lifetime. Meetings are on the 2nd Wednesday, September through May at the Best Western - University Inn, 1516 Pullman Rd, Moscow, Idaho. Wet Fly time 6pm, dinner at 7pm and program at 8pm.

Blue Hilton by Bob Bates

Its ancestor, Silver Hilton, is a fly that originated about 1950 on the Klamath and Trinity rivers in northern California. It is still popular on those and other steelhead rivers. Part of its effectiveness is attributed to the hackle tip wings that move in an enticing fashion when touched by varying river currents. In 1993 G.L. Britton, Spokane, WA decided that it would be even more effective with good steelhead colors. He dyed suitable materials Blue, Purple, Red and Green. With them, he tied a line of flies: Blue Hilton, Purple Hilton, Red Hilton and Green Hilton.

He considers these summer and fall steelhead flies that are best in decently clear water. Right now should be the ideal time to try these flies on the Grand Ronde, Snake, Clearwater and other steelhead rivers.

G.L.'s fishing instructions are typical of what we hear from steelhead experts. Floating line, quartering downstream cast, swing and pause at the end of the swing. Sometimes you need the longest cast you can manage, and other times a 30- to 40-foot cast is more than enough. "Control" is a key word.

Keep the line under control so a belly doesn't develop that will make the fly move so fast that a steelhead could never catch up. A reach cast might be needed to start and then a mend to keep the fly line straight from fly to rod tip. However, be careful with the mend so the fly isn't jerked a foot or two out of the intended path. A funny movement of the fly will tell the fish to look at something else. At the end of the swing let the fly hang for a while before twitching it back for another cast. More than once the swing was finished and I turned to ask my partner "Where are the fish?" when the steelhead hit. Sometimes there is no question about a strike, but other times you will only feel a tap. If you feel the weight of the fish then set the hook. The strikes that I like most are the ones that nearly jerk me off my rock.

Whenever you hook a steelhead, you are in for a ride you will not soon forget.



Hook: Alec Jackson, Spey, No. 3, Silver

Thread: Black 3/0

Tail: Blue dyed grizzly marabou

Body: Black chenille, fine

Rib: Small oval silver tinsel

Wing: Blue dyed grizzly hen saddle

Hackle: Blue dyed grizzly hen saddle

*See the full pattern online at
www.fedflyfishers.org*

Clearwater Fly Casters

PO Box 2149 CS

Pullman, WA 99165

Our Next Meeting is ...

Wednesday, November 12th, 2003

Wet Fly Hour 6:00 PM

Dinner 7:00 PM

At the University Inn Best Western

1560 West Pullman Road in Moscow, ID

Please Join us!