

Clearwater Fly Casters

February, 2003

The Tippet

From the President's Desk

Here it is, almost February. The days are starting to get longer. Flocks of robins are back-did they ever leave? Catkins are hanging on the willows along the lower section of Steptoe Canyon. Can spring be far behind? On the other hand, ice fishing just got started on Spring Valley Reservoir.

The fly tying event at Tri-State was good for the Club. We were able to pass out literature and talk to several potential new members. Passers-by seemed to be interested in what we were doing. I think we need to do this again. John had tables set up on the main floor where shoppers could easily find us. I hope that Tri-State also received some benefit from this effort.

Last Saturday I stopped at Traditional Sportsman in Lewiston and presented owner Mark Lamb with an opportunity to be represented at our auction in March. I also met Steve Overley, owner with wife Mikki of Flies Right, Fly Tying Company. They recently moved to Lewiston. Steve is the inventor of the Spotlight Caddis emerger. You may have seen it in a recent newspaper from Orvis. Steve will probably show up at Burgers and Flies in February where you will have a chance to visit with him. He has a couple of ideas for programs to be presented to our club at a later date.

The program for our February 12

Club meeting will be presented by Kevin Nibur, outdoor photographer and graduate student in Materials Science at WSU. His quest for original photographs has taken him on adventures through places ranging from as near as Pullman to as far away as Africa. He will share his thoughts on photography and the importance of understanding the differences in the way a photographer may see a scene with his or her own eyes versus the way others may see that scene through the resulting photograph.

I have invited Ken Gebhardt to present the program at our April meeting. He will discuss the project on Bird Creek as well as other projects that have been accomplished on other tributaries of the St. Joe. He is interested in a longer term relationship with area clubs, beyond the Bird Creek project. Timing of the work on Bird Creek does not mesh well with our proposed St. Joe fishout, so those who contribute work probably will need to make an extra trip to the St. Joe. The conflict is that there can be no work on the creek until after July 15, in deference to the spawning of the cutthroat trout. If we wait until after July 15 for the fishout we will need to forego the presence of Bill

Hendrix and his Dutch ovens. These choices can be voted on at the February meeting, but I suspect the proposed dates of July 11-13 with Dutch ovens will win out over July 19-21 with willow switches.

The February meeting will also feature the drawing for the Four Doctors. This will be your last chance to get your name on the board for \$10 per square. Also remember that this is our Valentines Day meeting, bring yours.

Bruce Frazier

Back Cast

Guest. Don Johnston was back for a visit at the last meeting - Good to see you Don!

Fishing reports. Bob Harwood spent some time down on the Amazon and printed nineteen different kinds of fish ... while Don Shearer and Tim Cavileer braved Rock Lake in early January for several browns and rainbows.

Speaker. Wasn't that a great presentation by John Toker? Did you catch the photograph of that 43 inch (22 in girth) ~32 lbs rainbow? And he said he caught a larger one just a few days before. Wow!

Tim Cavileer



The new Idaho license plate featuring Idaho's official state fish, a native cutthroat trout, is now available statewide at your local county assessor's auto license office.

Burger and Flies 2003

When: Saturday, February 15, 2003

Time: 3:30 to 9:30pm or come whenever leave whenever (auction at 7:30 pm)

Where: 2900 S. Mountain View Road, Moscow, Idaho

Directions: 1st right past Tidyman's going east off the Troy highway. Mountain View Extension. Go to the end of the road look for the Lewis residence. We will be in the shop out back.

What to Bring: Fly tying gear, money for the auction and a great attitude.

What's provided: Fly tying gear, dinner, beer, pop, and a great atmosphere.

Who to call: Joe McGurkin
(h) 208-882-7798
(w) 208-882-5531
Email: mcgurkin@moscow.com

Book Review - Tim Cavileer

Hatch Guide for Western Streams

Jim Schollmeyer

Frank Amato Publications

ISBN: 1-57188-109-3

This book starts out with a short introduction on Water Types and Fishing Techniques and then jumps into the nuts and bolts of, well, ... hatches. If you've seen any of Jim Schollmeyer's books you know that he's a first class photographer and this book simply adds to his long list of accomplishments.

Jim covers the major food groups: mayflies, caddis flies, stoneflies and midges, breaking down each with a page on the natural opposite a page with three flies used to match them. Important stages of each insect are also dealt with sequentially. Photographs and insights into the life cycle of the natural is interspersed with helpful tips on fishing if this particular insect is found during an outing. What is pleasantly missing is the usual banter and bragging about big fish and impossible Cinderella outings turned into 'happy-ever-after' stories. What I didn't like was that the patterns for the flies featured are listed separately in the back of the book reminiscent of the first version of 'Flies of the Pacific Northwest' a feature that drove me crazy and was thankfully corrected in the second edition.

If you want to improve your ability in identify insects on stream and beef up your inspiration at the bench, then pick up a copy of this great 'small' book. Do yourself a favor though once you get the book, take it down to Kinko's and have it spiral bound. You won't regret it!

"Three-fourths of the Earth's surface is water, and one-fourth is land. It is quite clear that the good Lord intended us to spend triple the amount of time fishing as taking care of the lawn".

-- Chuck Clark, on Fly-fish

The Winter Take ... Once in a Blue Moon! - Tony McDonnell

The weather is overcast, the sky a dark grey. With water temperatures hovering around 34 degrees and low river flows, the chance of fulfilling your winter steelhead fantasy seems rather bleak.

When asked what I've learned in three seasons of non-stop fly-fishing for steelhead I felt rather reluctant to answer for many reasons. As a complete "novice" I have sought my mentors in many places. After fishing hard for steelies during the current and past runs, I am more amazed at what I don't know. I sometimes find myself somewhat overwhelmed at what lies ahead for me to learn. Just when I think I am getting better about fishing smarter I find out I really don't know a damn thing.

I have indeed learned that the bite of the winter steelhead can be a "scary soft" as noted Western River guide, Dennis Dickinson, describes it. To be successful when all the odds seem against you one must employ a variety of techniques and the wisdom of more seasoned veterans. Dennis is unusual in the sense that he seems quite willing to share a lot of what he has learned over the years with complete strangers. He offers the novice and seasoned fisherman alike a variety of helpful suggestions and tips. His web site (<http://www.flyfishsteelhead.com>) provides us with tried and true techniques that are recognized by many others.

To successfully catch winter steelhead under the extreme conditions described above one must realize that we are dealing with wary, sluggish and unpredictable fish. Author and Northeastern river guide, Matt Supinski, suggests that, at a water temperature of only 34 degrees one must look for takers at the tail end of deep pools. Fish will often move from the "belly" of the run to the shallow end in search of warmer water. Since these fellows have had bait, hardware and flies bounced off of their noggins for months now one must approach them with unconventional methods. Novice fly-fishers often make the mistake of being too rigid in their stream-side approach. Spooky winter fish may in fact demand that we switch from a "sink-tip" to a floating line equipped with a 10-12 foot leader. If you find steelhead in a shallow lie it may necessitate the delicate approach you would normally use on a summer fish.

Rick Markley and I have experienced great success this season employing a more favorable "flexible technique." When we have fished the "Blue Moon" under the conditions I describe we have had as many as seven hits and five fish to hand in a single day. Just as Dickinson describes, "As soon as your line stops and you think you are snagged against a rock, lift the rod tip and gently apply a little pressure, oftentimes, you will be blessed with the "head shake" of our winter quarry."

While our favorite fly has certainly been the "Blue Moon," Supinski encourages us to employ flies that exhibit "motion without movement!" Marabou patterns, speys, articulated and bunny leeches often suit the bill. The usual purple, black and neon blue colors have been successful as solids or mixed variations. Add a little crystal flash and you'll have an exciting and attractive fly.

Good fishing to you!

Get ready for the March Auction!

March's meeting will be the Club's fund raising auction. Donations and auction items can be given to Dave Tharp. Dave can be reached at 878-1769 or ics@pullman.com

Tips for Fly Tiers

Kids and Cats. Get a roll top desk for your tying table. Doesn't have to be high priced. Department or unfinished furniture stores have some that are reasonable. A computer roll-top desk from a bulk warehouse store has very nice dark finish, lots of drawers, two pull out shelves for a little extra sorting room and has room for a craft case in the CPU storage area that can easily be load with materials and tools for a travel kit. The legal size hanging folders are perfect for sorting necks and the slide-out keyboard tray is great for a reference book. A vise and tools can be set up in a wooden tying station that when I'm done tying I slide back into the recess for the computer monitor and then I can shut the roll-top. *Clyde Watson*

Scissors. I use scissors which are no longer available - damn shame. They were marketed by Orvis, made in Japan, are black, slightly bent in the handles, fit perfectly, and can be sharpened easily on a fine stone. When I heard they were not going to import them anymore I bought six pair. Three pair are still sitting in the desk drawer. Two pair have been in steady use for about 15 years now and the third is in my traveling kit. First thing I did with them was to grind the points down as fine as possible with a fine whetstone. Most of the scissors on the market now don't have fine enough points. It's easy to modify them but it takes time. You won't be sorry you did it. *Harrison Steeves*

Upcoming Events

February 4th, 2003 Fly tying night at TriState, Moscow, Idaho.

February 12th, 2003 6:00pm Clearwater Fly Casters meeting at the Best Western - University Inn in Moscow, ID.

February 18th, 2003 Fly tying night at TriState, Moscow, Idaho.

February 19th, 2003 5:30pm Conservation/Executive meeting at Rico's in Pullman, WA.

March 12th, 2003 Clearwater Fly Casters biennial club auction.

April 26th, 2003 Amber Lake Fishout.

Kudos ... To Don Shearer for stepping up, being a good sport and filling the role of vice-president! Can you say, 'Railroad?' Kudos also to John Read for organizing and setting up the January 18th Saturday fly tying session at TriState! Special thanks to Glen Murray, Debbie Bell, Bruce Frazier, Jim Palmersheim, Dave Engerbretson, Tim Cavileer and John for manning the fly tying tables! Kudos to Shirley Engerbretson for putting together the club informational handout!

Clearwater Fly Casters 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.

Knickers - February Fly of the Month

This pattern by Chad McPartland of San Luis Obispo, CA, has a proven track record. It is responsible for hooking fish in dozens of waters. There were always people around his tying table at the 2002 FFF Show in Livingston, MT. One of the reasons was the great bug he was tying with a good dialog of how to do it. Another, he gave out a printed materials list and tying instructions, which makes reporting on his fly easy.

There are several ways to fish this fly. In lakes some anglers use a full sink or sink tip line, cast and let the fly sink to where the fish might be. Then use a slow hand twist retrieve until a fish hits or you are ready to cast again. Some say that if you don't drag up a few weeds once in a while you are not letting it sink long enough. However, you don't want too many weeds and the fish might not be on the bottom, so the key is to experiment when necessary. Another way is to fish it on a strike indicator called "chironomid fishing" by some and denigrated by others as "bobber fishing." Decide how deep you want to the fly, attach a strike indicator to the leader at that distance, cast, let the fly sink and relax while you watch the strike indicator. Most of the time when a fish hits the indicator goes down forcefully, and you can set the hook with a sweeping arm motion. Sometimes it goes down an inch and pops up; then a quick set as the indicator starts down is worth a try. Fluorocarbon is a popular leader material because it sinks fast and is almost invisible in water. The strike indicator may be yarn; stick-on, flexible-foam patches; a variety of hard foam floats with or without tooth picks or a little corky with a tooth pick.

Streams provide many opportunities to use Knickers. If fish are occasionally taking bugs on the surface the double team them. Attach a dry fly to the main tippet, and suspend a Knickers under it. Dead drift the flies as long as you can. If the fly does anything strange (stop, move sideways or sink) strike. It could be only a rock but it also could be an 18- to 20-inch brown. At the end of the dead drift let the flies swing, lower the rod and lift up. Spend a little time with the flies hanging below you. Sometimes fish will hit after the fly hangs there for a few seconds. If there is no hope for a surface take then use a strike indicator. The usual rule for length of leader between the floating fly or indicator and the wet fly is: Use a leader that is twice as long as the desired depth for the wet fly.

*For information on how to tie the Knickers, please visit the FFF website at: <http://www.fedflyfishers.org>
(by Bob Bates of the Inland Empire Fly Fishing Club of Spokane WA, courtesy of the FFF ClubWire
Email Newswire)*



Hook: Dai-Riki 135, sizes 10-16
Weight: Brass bead
Thread: Black Uni 8/0
Rib: Medium amber v-rib
Body: Gold Mylar tinsel
Dubbing: Olive brown, Hairline Ice
Herl: Brown ostrich
Hackle: Hungarian partridge
Collar: Peacock herl

Clearwater Fly Casters

PO Box 2149 CS

Pullman, WA 99165

Our Next Meeting is ...

Wednesday, February 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!

If you haven't already, please pay your 2003 dues!

