



# The *Tippet*

March, 2010

**Clearwater Fly Casters**  
**www.clearwaterflycasters.com**  
**A Federation of Fly Fishers Club**



## March Speaker: Chuck Stranahan, “Fly Fishing Norman MacLean Country”

**Chuck Stranahan** is known among his professional peers as one of the most talented fly tiers of this era – a recognition the angling public is now coming to share. A long-time professional fly tier and guide, he is also a writer, instructor, and speaker on a wide variety of topics at fly-fishing clubs and sportsmen’s shows.

He began fly tying at eight, and was tying flies commercially at age twelve. He fly-tied his way through college as an Orvis commercial fly tier and through a ten-year career in education, before opening a full-time fly shop in 1979. He learned the fly tying craft from masters such as Cal Bird, Polly Rosborough, Darwin Atkins, and Andre Puyans. His style blends their techniques with his own innovations. His fly patterns are becoming standards throughout the West, and are featured in books by Jack Dennis, Gary LaFontaine, Greg Thomas, John Holt, and Randall Kaufmann.

He learned fly casting and fly rod design and manufacture from some of the masters who shaped the sport, beginning as a college student in San Francisco on the Golden Gate Angling and Casting Club ponds. Over the years he fished with many of these same mentors, honing his own skills as an angler.

He is a program regular at regional and national Fly Fishing Federation Conclaves. He has been active in FFF activities since the late ‘70’s, and has been recognized for his conservation efforts as a recipient of California Trout’s Streamkeeper award. Chuck has been seen on television’s Fly Fish America Television Magazine, and the PBS News Hour.



His flies, noted for their aesthetic qualities and durability, have gained a loyal following because they out-produce more widely known patterns. Until recently, most of them were available only to the “underground army” that Chuck tied for personally. Fortunately, many of Chuck’s patterns, such as the Light Caddis Variant shown at left, are now available to a much wider audience. They are now distributed nationally to fly shops through Doug’s Bugs/Frontier Flies, where Chuck is a marketing consultant and fly designer.

He lives with his wife Jan in the Bitterroot Valley of Montana, where he runs “Chuck Stranahan’s Flies and Guides” (<http://www.chuck-stranahan.com/index.htm>).

## Calendar

**Mar 10: CFC Meeting, Chuck Stranahan, “Fly Fishing Norman Mclean Country”**

**Mar 18: Fly Tying Night, The Fly Shop, Moscow 7-9 PM: The Bead Worm**

**Apr 14: CFC Meeting, Mac Huff, “Steelhead Flyfishing Catching Techniques”**

**May 8: Amber Lake Fishout**

**May 12: CFC Meeting, Bryan Irwin and Gary Loomis, Coastal Conservation Association Representatives**

**Aug 23-28: FFF Annual Conclave, West Yellowstone, Montana**

## Information

**The Tippet is available as a PDF file on our web site. Please submit information to the Newsletter Editor.**

**Meetings 2nd Wed:**

**Wet Fly Hour: 5:30 PM**

**Dinner: 6:30 PM**

**(buffet, \$16 per person)**

**Program: 7:30 PM**

## Backcast to February Meeting

**Guests:** Kevin Netcher, Kevin Peterson, and Rich Gaylor

**New Members:** Dave Uberuaga, Howard Davis, Dan Steel, Bill Buvel, Ray Templeton, Michael Stolp

**Fishing Reports:** Mike Decker reported a big goose-egg for the past three weeks – presumably he was referring to steelheading. David Yonge caught a nice steelhead about Christmas time, but he more recently floated the Ronde with a guide and Don Johnstone from 8 am until dark. The river was packed with fishermen, and they got not a strike. George Johnson reported witnessing Keith Stonebreaker and a guest from “back east” catch large numbers of steelhead at the junction of the Imnaha and the Ronde on two different days.

Dave Tharp said he was tying flies and ran out of reasonable sized hooks, so found himself tying Sparkle Duns on size 20s. That didn't last long, and he has obtained some larger hooks. Reid Miller reported spending a day fly fishing in far Southwest Costa Rica, in the Pacific and the salty inlet of a river there. His guides (the captain and an interpreter) had no experience with fly fishing and were surprised when he caught fish, even if they were just some big-eye jacks and a baby barracuda.

Cliff Swanson sent the newsletter editor a picture from an early spring trip in which the Youngbloods were “about to jump into The Joe”, so I thought it might look good here. See what you're missing!



**Announcements:** Zack Funkhouser from Kelly Creek Flycasters talked about the Northwest Fly Fishing Expo to be held on Saturday, February 20, at the Quality Inn in Clarkston. Trey Combs will be the honored guest and banquet speaker.

Club President Paul Agidius announced that the Amber Lake Fishout would be on Saturday, May 8, as this will allow Idaho residents to buy a short-term fishing permit in Washington, rather than a full year license.

Mike Decker indicated that he would be holding a fly fishing outing on Elk Creek for SEL employees and anyone else interested again this year, on the free fishing day, June 12. Last year, some club members helped him give instructions and helped supply gear for beginners to fish with. He asked for help again this year. If members are interested, they can contact Mike at (509)336-7905 or [mike\\_decker@seline.com](mailto:mike_decker@seline.com).

Lavon Frazier, subbing for husband and club treasurer Bruce, reminded club members that dues for 2010 are due this month. She also passed on information from Mal Furniss that he had a Norlander vice for sale on Craig's List, if any member is interested.

Dave Tharp announced that he had the club videos with him tonight, and anyone wanting to check one out should contact him after the meeting.

Steve Bush followed up on his announcement last meeting that the club was committed to helping Boy Scouts with fly fishing merit badges, and that he was coordinating this activity. He asked that members contact him if they are interested in participating.

**February Speaker:** Pat Devney – “Columbia Basin Lakes and Rocky Ford Creek”

Pat gave us a verbal update on a number of lakes in the Washington Central Basin. These lakes have come into existence as a result of the Columbia Basin Project, with the building of Grand Coulee Dam and associated irrigation, elevating the water table.

Pat started by talking about the lakes in the Quincy Wildlife Area, a few miles NW of George, WA. He indicated that both Bourke Lake and Quincy Lake have nice browns and rainbows in them, with lots of 12-14 inch fish and carryover fish of 20 inches or more. Dusty Lake is under selective gear regulations, meaning that single, barbless hooks are required, and no fish can be kept. This lake requires about a half mile hike to reach, and it is a perfect lake for a float tube. It is a deep lake and has both browns and rainbows. It has quality fish of at least 5 pounds. Stan Coffin Lake has warm-water species in it, but should not be ignored by fly fishers.

The other part of the Quincy Unit involves a few, small walk-in lakes near Exit 143 off of I90, just east of the Columbia River. The total water is only about 10 acres, but there are fish over 25 inches in some of them. Lakes Lenice, Mary and Nunnaly on the Lower Crab Creek drainage have been rehabbed and are fishing well now, with fish averaging 18 inches. Beda and Brookies Lakes, off Dodson Road about four miles south of I90, have big fish in them.

The north end of Potholes Reservoir has largemouth bass going 8 pounds. Some Desert Lakes Unit lakes, such as Harrison Lake, are being rehabbed at present. Seep Lakes Unit lakes, such as Hutchinson Lake, have bass, as do Long Lake and Soda Lake. There are some small lakes next to Mardon Resort that are not fished much, and they have nice fish in them. Quail Lake continues to be a quality restricted fishery and is fishing well at present.

In the Grand Coulee below the dam, Park and Blue Lakes should produce 40 fish days, if they are fished with chironomids and changing depths to find where the fish are hanging. Currently, there are persistent problems with Lake Lenore, and the days of catching many, large fish are over until this is resolved. The problem is not known at present. Dry Falls Lake is well worth fishing in a float tube, as it is a protected lake and is usually calm when other lakes are rough in the basin wind. The fish are 22-24 inches.

One of the premier fishing waters in the Central Basin is Rocky Ford Creek, located between Moses Lake and Ephrata. Between the hatcheries, the stream is often crowded, but try the middle of the week or in the off-prime season. It is one place where dry flies can be fished to 18 inch average fish, but there are fish to over 12 pounds in there. You can't get into the water, and great stealth is necessary. If the fish see you, they will not move much, but they will quit feeding. The myth is you must use exceptionally small flies on super-light tippets, but Pat claims he fishes it with #12 flies on 4X tippet, or he uses big streamers. He says that, "Emergers (dun cripples with trailing shucks) work better than ordinary dun patterns." Pat showed the club some pictures he took of big fish taking *Calibetis* off the surface. These sequences were quite spectacular. Since he was obviously visible to the fish in these pictures, he must have stood still there for a long time to get those shots.

For driving directions and access points, see the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife web site, under Wildlife Areas – Columbia Basin Wildlife Area, and click on the link to Access Sites and Facilities. For more information, or to get Pat to take you to some of these places, he can be contacted at Pat's Atomic Guide Service, (509)989-9365. His web site is [www.patsatomic.com](http://www.patsatomic.com). You can get local information, flies and gear at Pat's Atomic Fly Shop, located at 1019 W Broadway, Moses Lake, WA 98837.

## Fly of the Month: The Bead Worm

(from the website for Fly Craft Angling with Philip Rowley)

**Hook:** Partridge Klinkhamar Special PX15BN (#12-#16)

**Thread:** Gudebrod 8/0 Red

**Body:** Red or Green Holographic Mylar

**Rib #1:** Red V-Rib

**Rib #2:** Fine Gold, Copper or Silver Wire

**Head:** Red Glass Bead



**Tying Instructions:** De-barb a Klinkhamar hook and slide a red glass bead onto the shank and forward to the hook eye. Attach the tying thread directly behind the glass bead and cover the hook shank with tying thread. Using open wraps spiral the tying thread back to the rear of the glass bead. Tie in the wire ribbing material along the entire length of the hook. Take a length of V-Rib and trim one end to a point. Tie in the V-Rib by the point on top of the hook shank so the flat side faces upward. Once initially tied in by the point, pull on the V-Rib to reduce bulk, use tight thread wraps to secure. Bind the red holographic Mylar in place along the hook shank. Advance the tying thread forward to the rear of the bead. Wind the holographic Mylar forward over the hook in close touching turns. There should be no gaps between the wraps. Use appropriate tension when wrapping to keep the body slender and neat. Wind the V-Rib forward in open wraps. Position the V-Rib during the initial wrap so that the round side faces out. Tie off the V-Rib and remove the excess. Spiral the wire rib along either the front edge or rear edge of the V-Rib. Tie off the wire and twist and break away the excess. Cover the tie off area with tying thread whip finish and then coat the entire fly with brushable super glue for added durability and shine.

## **Special Announcements**

### **Interesting Talk: Conner Museum Chat on Northwest Fishing**

Dennis Dauble, who has studied fish ecology in the Pacific Northwest for more than 30 years, will present “History of Fish and Fishing in the Columbia Basin” on Thursday, March 4, at 7 p.m. in Heald Hall Auditorium (Room G-3) on the WSU Pullman campus. This will be a free public lecture, with a reception to follow in the Conner Museum, where the author will sign copies of his book *Fishes of the Columbia Basin*, published by Keokee Books in 2009. Dauble’s presentation looks at fish and fishing and their place in the culture of the Pacific Northwest. He will discuss fishing practices of Northwest Indian tribes, the influence of white settlement on fish populations, and relationships between contemporary water-use practices and fisheries management. (submitted by Gary Thorgaard)

### **Reminder: Bring Items for the Raffle to the CFC Meeting on Mar 10**

## Travels with Trey

(special report for the web-based newsletter by Reid Miller)

On Friday, February 19, 2010, Nancy and I drove down to the Quality Inn in Clarkston under invitation from the Kelly Creek Flycasters to attend an evening with Trey Combs, author of several fly fishing books and well-know salt water fly fishing innovator. He was to be their special guest at the North Idaho Fly Fishing Expo the next day. I took my books which he had authored, *Steelhead Fly Fishing* and *Bluewater Fly Fishing*, and got him to sign them. Trey commented that my copy of the latter was somewhat of a collector's item, since they only put out a few copies with that cover before realizing it had a conventional tackle big game fishing boat on the front, which could not be used for fly fishing. They quickly changed the cover for the rest of the printing. He and I chatted a few minutes about salt water fly fishing experiences and the influence his book had on my interest in that sport.

Trey gave an informal PowerPoint presentation about some of his travels around the world for fly fishing. He started by stating that there are very few truly life-changing events, and for him the first was his association with Harry Lemire which resulted in his interest in steelhead fly fishing. The second was the big boat trips for saltwater fly fishing on board the 92-foot *Royal Star* out of San Diego. These were long-term charters with 16 anglers, each of which carried 5 complete fly outfits. They were operated as the *Blue Water Fly Rod Invitational* that started 1992 and continued for a number of years. They carried a number of rubber skiffs with outboard motors. They would fish big bait balls, especially off Magdalena Bay on the west coast of the Baja Peninsula. These bait balls would attract large concentrations of striped marlin, as well as other big game species, and literally thousands of diving birds.

They would throw out bait, and hook marlin casting from the big boat, without the use of teasers. When a marlin was hooked, the angler would be sent off on a skiff to fight it, and another angler would hook another one. Sometimes, two anglers would be sent off in each skiff, with both hooked up, and the two marlin heading in different directions (of course). They once had a maximum of 17 simultaneous hook-ups, with a maximum of 50 in one day. Of those landed, a very high percentage would be released unharmed.

They discovered that it was better to keep a tight line on the marlin all the time and let them run to exhaustion, rather than to chase the fish with a boat. This tires the fish faster and eliminates most of the main trouble with these huge fish, which happens if they sound. It is virtually impossible to pump them up from the depths if that happens. Using the fixed boat technique, Trey clocked one of his marlin captures at only ten minutes.

On 22-day round trips, they could hit marlin just off the Baja coast and then motor out to some rocks 170 miles off the coast to chase wahoo. These fish are remarkable. They can run 100 yards in 5-6 seconds. They can make incredible leaps into the air, higher than telephone poles. Don't dangle your fly over the transom of the boat, as a hungry wahoo might just come after it and ram you instead. One of their anglers was only saved by a wahoo hitting the guard rail when it came after his dangling fly. Trey said that they quit the long-term trips on the big boat after a few years, because it was too easy to catch the fish they were after, and the challenge seemed not to still be there.

One of the best places in the world to catch a marlin on the fly is off Cape Bowling Green in Queensland, near the Barrier Reef. Trey said that the Mexican pangas were still the best bargain in off-shore fly fishing. He said if he only had five days left in his life to fish, he would for sure hit a couple of pools on The Dean for steelhead, and he would go after tarpon in The Keys.

Chinook Salmon can be taken in the open ocean on Sea Habits, using a sinking line and letting the fly go to the bottom in a shallow bay near a river mouth on a slack tide. The fly is then jigged slowly, and the salmon will hit it. Trey thinks some of the best salmon fishing in the world is for Chum Salmon in the tidewater in Alaska. A number of anglers come right off their beats on some of the best Atlantic Salmon streams in Scotland to fish these chums each year.

It was a very entertaining evening, and I hope that several of our members got a chance to participate in the Expo and to hear Trey's presentation on Saturday evening.



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*Clearwater Fly Casters*

*March, 2010*

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CFC membership dues are \$20/yr for individuals, \$30/yr for families, \$10/yr for students, \$50/yr sustaining, \$300/lifetime. Meetings are on the 2nd Wednesday, September through May, at the Best Western University Inn, 1516 Pullman Rd, Moscow, Idaho. Wet Fly Hour 5:30 PM, Dinner at 6:30 PM and Program at 7:30 PM.