

Creel Notes from the



P.O. Box 639, Mercer Island, WA 98040



February, 2008



President's Riffle

Fellow fly fishermen,

The year is still young yet many exciting events are already unfolding!

One of the projects I'm most excited about is a new place to call our "home water"—at least for the short term. All the details will be presented at the general meeting, and because it involves a large expenditure, the general membership will be voting on approving the funds to go towards this at the March meeting. I encourage you to ask questions and find out as much as you can about the project. I met Kris Kristoferson, Greg Crumbaker, and Ed Sozinho at the site a few weeks ago on a cold, clear day. It was beautiful, and the water is quintessential fly water—riffles, pools, flats, structure—a little bit of everything. But one of the other great things about it is that it is quite wadeable, so it makes a great place for our group to meet, then make the short walk to the river, and spend the day fishing together.

Another great project was brought to the board's attention by Jim McRoberts, who spoke to us about *Project Healing Waters*, a program begun some time ago by the FFF and TU to help our war veterans by engaging them in fly tying, fly casting, and water outings. From the PHW website: "*Project Healing Waters salutes all of our brave Armed Forces and Veterans. We pledge to serve those who have come home wounded or injured by aiding in their physical and emotional recovery by introducing or rebuilding the skills of fly fishing and fly-tying.*" What a great project! If you'd like to be involved, contact Jim McRoberts, as he is heading up the volunteer group to work with the VA.

Helping out war veterans is nothing new for WFFC members. The very man whose 100 years we are cele-

brating this month, Frank Headrick, visited hospitals and taught fly tying to Italian and German prisoners after WWII. As you'll find as you read the article inside, Frank was also a big part of creating many of the storied fly-only waters of our region. That pioneering group was a bunch that really got things done! As Frank said, "We enjoyed fighting for closures and politicking for restrictions, but mostly we enjoyed being with each other and learning from each other."

Gentlemen, what will they say about *us* in 60 years? I hope it will sound very similar.

Happy Birthday, Frank, and thank you for all that you've done for this club and this sport we all love so much.

Tight lines to all,

Bill Kuper



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February WFFC Meeting

This month's meeting will be a celebration of Frank Headrick's 100th birthday (on March 4th). There will be photographs and remembrances, family members and toasts, cake and a panel discussion, all to fete Frank. Don't miss it!

Other meeting notes:

- The bar will be cash only from now on. Due to logistical hassles, we have decided to do away with the bar tickets purchased at the front table. So bring cash if you want to drink!
- 2008 Budget Vote at this month's meeting! Copies of the proposed budget will be distributed around the tables.
- Peter Crumbaker will bring wooden tags to the Feb. meeting.
- Boyd Aigner update: We have found larger display boxes, so the spec for sculpin is to fit within a box that has an internal length of 3 ½ inches.

Home Waters Opportunity: A Vote in March

by Kris Kristoferson

Mark your calendars and be sure to attend the club's March meeting (Tuesday, March 18th), when we will be discussing an exciting WFFC Home Waters project. Following that discussion, the members will be asked to approve a resolution authorizing the Board to pursue this project and to enter into an agreement implementing it on terms and conditions that the Board determines to be appropriate, to include an annual expenditure of up to \$2500. Look for details between now and then on the project that has already received preliminary approvals from both the Home Waters Committee and the WFFC Board. If approved by the general membership, this Home Water would serve our club in the areas of member fishing, Outings, Conservation, Education, and Youth.

Speaker/Program Schedule, First Half 2008

by Keith Robbins and Steve Sunich

February 19

Frank Headrick Centennial Celebration — WFFC's elder statesman turns 100. This will be a birthday party to remember.

March 19 (Yes, that's a Wednesday!)

Bourbon Tasting! – Stuart Ramsay — Colonel Ramsay presents the Belles of Kentucky Bourbon. Or the Thoroughbreds of Kentucky Bourbon...

April 15

Travis Rummel - Living the Dream — Felt Soul Media founders discuss the joy and pain of making fly fishing films.

May 20

Troy Detman - Salt and Steelhead

June 15

Tom Douglas - Cooking Crab cakes...

Creel Notes

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Club Aims and Purposes

The purpose of this club shall be:

1. To improve and increase the sport of Fly Fishing in the State of Washington.
2. To promote and work for the betterment of trout streams and lakes.
3. To encourage and advocate the conservation and increase of trout in state waters.
4. To promote a campaign of education against pollution in streams, lakes or Sound waters of the State of Washington.
5. To encourage and assist others — particularly young persons of high school age—to become fly fishers and true conservationists.

2007 Awards Recap

The club awards presented at the January meeting recognize members who have made outstanding contributions to the club or the community through hard work, dedication, and outstanding fishing prowess. (And yes, there are also some more humorous awards.)

Empty Creel: honoring exceptional dedication and contribution to the welfare of the club.

Presented to **Bob Birkner**, Past President (two years), former trustee, former treasurer, and involved in the casting and fly tying programs.



Pete Baird presents the Empty Creel Award to Bob Birkner

Tommy Award: honoring distinctive and meritorious contribution to the general community through furtherance of the aims and purposes of the club, in the spirit of Tommy Brayshaw.

Presented to **Kris Kristoferson** for many instances of community service: developing display boards; working on Camano Island stream enhancement; working on the “Come Wade the River” display in the Whatcom County museum; working on Reel Recovery Retreats; and promoting the establishment of, and coordinating, the Fly Fishing club at Garfield High School.

Half Assed Award: honoring various acts of—well, you know.

Presented to **Richard Embry** by Gil Levy, in recognition of a fishing buddy who promises



Bill Kuper presents the Tommy Award to Kris Kristoferson

to go fishing, but sad to say, doesn't make good on those promises.

Wet Socks Award: honoring special circumstances of suffering in the pursuit of fish.

Presented to **Mark Pratt**, who on the Scottish Lakes outing, in sheer defiance of inclement conditions, oblivious to fierce wind and white caps, float tubed around Lake Eileen as others huddled on shore—and did well fishing.

Hawkster Award: a special award honoring gusto in performing club duties.

Presented to **Dave Hawkinson**, procurer extraordinaire.

Boyd Aigner Fly Tying Competition:

Presented to **Walt Swanson** (earlier last year).

Membership Certificates: honoring the stalwarts of the club.

40 Year Certificate: **Pete Baird, John Dorn, Don Gulliford, Andy Hall, Curt Jacobs, Steve Raymond, and Bill Redman**

50 Year Certificate: **Philip Baker, Hugh Jennings, Gil Nyerges, Hu Riley, Dick Thompson, Walt Walkinshaw, and Fran Wood**

60 Year Plaque: **Earl George & Frank Headrick**

Not presented this year were the Letcher Lambuth Angling Craftsmanship Award, the Andy Award, or the Gold Button Certificate. Many thanks to the Awards Committee: **Pete Baird, Chuck Ballard, Dick Brening, Ron Dion, Kris Kristoferson, Don Simonson, and Chairman Bill Neal.**

REPORTS

An Afternoon with ... Frank Headrick by
Dave Round and Greg Crumbaker [from 1990]

(Editor's Note: This article was first published in the Creel Notes in November 1990. Update all year counts with another 17 or 18 years—which makes them even more amazing.)

This article is about a WFFC club member who just celebrated his 50th anniversary as a member of the WFFC. It's also about a fisherman who 52 years ago decided that a good steelhead rod was only good for catching 100 steelhead and then it needed to be retired. In Frank's basement are six such rods.

It all started in 1938 when Frank got a hold of some flies and took them apart to figure out how they were made. Being a masonry contractor, he was pretty familiar with cement, but this head cement was something else. Living in Bellingham, he decided to make a trip to a well-known fly shop on Broadway and gain a little more insight. Little did he know what was in store. The shop was the one run by founding club member **Dawn Holbrook**. Dawn had the fly tying supplies, and showed Frank some wonderful pictures of steelhead on the Stilly. They were probably some of Ralph's. To find out more on this steelhead fishing, Dawn suggested Frank go down the block and visit a bookstore where the owner was known to pursue this sport. Thus began a long and wonderful friendship with **Enos Bradner**.

Frank and Enos hunted and fished all over the Northwest. They always looked for new places and new patterns and most of the time shared that information. Once when **Walt**



Johnson wanted to fish the Texas Ponds and they were so tough to get into, Frank took him there but made Walt agree to wear a blindfold the last mile of the trip. Didn't want these hot spots to get overcrowded, I guess. Back then the Ponds held 18" brookies, whereas today there's not much more than frogs in there.

Primarily, Frank was a steelhead fisherman. That should read that Frank still is a steelhead fisherman, as at his young current age of 82 he has fished once this year. His first steelhead on the Stilly was on a dry at the Elbow Hole. He was introduced to this stretch by **John Mardesich**, who was a club member best known for his ability to splice fly lines. While the Elbow Hole was popular, so was The Flat and The Pocket, all just in range of Deer Creek. The seasons of the Stilly have long ago removed all traces of these famous holes. The man who owned this property used to charge the fisherman 25 cents to park and fish this stretch. Much of that area was later bought up by club members. For his ½ acre with 100 feet of waterfront, Frank paid \$600, which was \$100 more than what Bradner always reminded him he had paid.

In 1970, Frank received the WFFC 1st Largest Steelhead award for a 14-lb. 12½ oz. steelhead taken on an Orange Shrimp on the Stilly. He also won this award in 1945, 1950, and 1967. The award he is most proud of, though, is the First Honorable Mention in the 1950 Field & Stream Fly Casting Division. While Frank had a 10-lb. steelhead, the position ahead of him at 10-lb. ¼ oz. was held by Mrs. Frank Headrick.

Over the years, Frank was a great contributor to the club and to the environment that we all enjoy today. He represented the WFFC at the State's Sport Council and the King County Sports Council for eight years. He also worked closely with club members Johnson, Knutson, Bacon, Bradner, McLeod, Morrissey, Gilbert, Wahl, and Pemberton to have the Stilly closed to open fishing and after that turned the attack on Pass Lake. That restriction went into place in the early 1940's. This was the first lake so restricted, and thus it today is a sentimental club favorite, always having the honor of being the location of the club's first outing each year. Frank and **Letcher Lambuth** worked closely on these projects, and when World War II came, these two Champions of Causes went around to the area hospitals and taught fly tying to recovering veterans. As Frank said,



"Letcher owned a Chrysler and did the driving, which made me nervous, as he always asked me to tell him when we were coming to a RR crossing. He was going blind, but didn't want to discuss it."

One of the great satisfactions of fishing for Frank was the "joy of making do." Fly tying supplies came from Herter's in Olympia and Holbrook's on Broadway. The fancy stuff came from England or Nova Scotia. Flies, leaders, lines, vises, rods, etc. were all put together from bits and pieces and from the knowledge gained from other club members. "We weren't a monied group back then," Frank said. "We enjoyed fighting for closures and politicking for restrictions, but mostly we enjoyed being with each other and learning from each other."

Learning is still a part of Frank's life. He is currently enrolled in classes for Spanish and Creative Writing. This is in addition to picture framing that he does for several galleries in Edmonds, not to mention part-time stone masonry that he does for a local contractor.

(Original Editor's Note: Wading rivers and belonging to the WFFC is good for your health.)

Andros South, January 19-26 *by Steve Raymond*

"Pull yourself together, mon!" That was the guide's admonition to a nervous angler preparing to cast to the "biggest bleeping bonefish" the guide had ever seen. It became the rallying cry for our week on South Andros Island.

Our adventure began when five of us—**Dave Schorsch, Keith Robbins, Steve Sunich, Randy Raymond**, and yours truly—boarded an Alaska Airlines redeye flight late January 17. We staggered off the airplane in Miami at 7 o'clock local time the next morning, rented a couple of cars, then had breakfast

at a Cuban restaurant in Little Havana. After that we toured a couple of cigar factories so Keith and I could indulge our evil habits. Everyone agreed, however, that the cigar factories smelled wonderful. "It's only when you light one of those things that it smells bad," Randy said.

That evening involved consumption of some fabulously expensive steaks and some sumptuous stone crab and key lime pie. Next morning we rendezvoused at the Lynx Air terminal, tucked away in a remote corner of the Fort Lauderdale Airport. Lots of people were waiting for flights, but nobody was behind the check-in counter. That's when we figured out that Lynx Air's schedule means nothing; they fly when they feel like it, not before. Our flight had been rescheduled from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. We finally got off the ground at 3:45. At least we got on the right plane; some people were waiting for a flight to Guantanamo Bay. Must have been visiting day.

The flight itself was uneventful. In fact, the pilots had a pizza on the cockpit dashboard and consumed it en route.

At the Congo Town Airport on South Andros we were met by a bus that took us to Andros South Lodge, where we spent the next week. We were joined on Tuesday by fellow WFFC member **Andy Bennett**, President of Deneki Outdoors, which owns Andros South. We were also joined by an angling contingent of five present or former North Carolina residents, who provided good (though heavily accented) company.

The weather for the week wasn't great. It was warm enough—usually in the 70s—but we had one day of sustained winds of 31 mph with higher gusts and heavy rain. Other days brought heavy cloud cover, occasional rain squalls and lesser but still highly annoying winds. Only one day was calm and sunny; not surprisingly, that day provided the best fishing by far. The tides also were high and we ended up fishing from flats boats most of the time; wading was possible only an hour or two each day.

The flats boats took us through an amazing labyrinth of cuts, channels, keys, mangroves, and endless beautiful flats. Some were as little as 20 minutes away, but one day we ran for an hour and 20 minutes before making our first cast. The runs through the creeks to the interior of the island were generally smooth going out, tougher coming back against the wind. The run to the far south end of the island was toughest because it was mostly through unsheltered

(Continued from page 5)

water. I ended up with a sore tailbone from all the pounding.

Despite the less-than-optimal weather and high tides, I caught bonefish every day, although admittedly on a couple of days the total was only one fish. The fish averaged 1 to 3 pounds with occasional larger specimens. On the single good-weather day, we were eating lunch when the guide called my attention to some approaching bonefish. Before I could put down my half-eaten cookie and cast, Randy pointed out a large fish coming from the opposite direction. I chose to cast to the large fish, hooked it, and stood transfixed while it spooled off all my line and perhaps 150 yards of backing before it stopped. Then it flirted dangerously with some nearby mangroves before finally veering back into open water. After a long fight that I think tired me almost as much as the bonefish, I landed it and it posed unwillingly for some pictures. Norman, our guide, informed me that I had just broken the 10-pound bonefish barrier.



Steve Raymond and a Bonezilla

Earlier I landed one that had seemed only slightly smaller. Our guide, however, said it was a five-pounder. I would have said 6. Upon seeing the photos, the other members of our WFFC contingent generously said they thought it would have gone 8. Thanks, guys.

I think everyone else experienced similar fishing, although you might hear a couple of one- or two-day skunk reports.

Randy and I fished with five different

guides. As a group, they were the most professional and accommodating I've fished with, and with one exception they were all easygoing, laid-back folks whose company we greatly enjoyed. But then nearly all the Bahamians we met were as friendly as the tourist brochures say they are.

The accommodations at Andros South were individual private rooms with freshwater showers that were most welcome after a long day on the flats. Weather permitting, we all gathered after the fishing day at the Tiki Hut bar on the beach and took advantage of the fact that liquor is included in the Andros South package price. Beer, wine, rum, scotch, bourbon, etc., were available, and consumption was such that I doubt Andy made a profit for the week.

The food also was plentiful and good. We had conch fritters, conch stew, and conch fingers (fried in batter), which led to lots of bad jokes about big conches.

Schorsch came up with an apt description of the South Andros architecture: "It looks like Tijuana meets Moclips."

Andy had a guy shooting promotional videos during the week, and nearly every time we turned around he had a lens pointed at us. Schorsch gave him an on-camera interview that ought to earn him a free return trip to Andros South. Look for the video on the Deneki Outdoors website in a couple of months.

We kept getting Internet reports of freezing weather in Seattle, so at one post-fishing Tiki Hut session we decided the WFFC should have a winter outing in warmer climes like South Andros every year. It should be called the "Hot Buns" outing.

It was a good week. The only thing missing was you.

P.S. —About the angler who was told to pull himself together (he wasn't part of the WFFC contingent): He made the cast to the biggest bleeping bonefish the guide had ever seen, the fish took and made a long, long run—and then the leader parted. Some days are like that.

Rio Grande River, Tierra del Fuego
by Jay Deeds

I traveled a long way to Tierra del Fuego with my long-ago college fishing buddy, Fred Chana. Fred and I had planned this trip for almost two years. It was my second visit to fish for the fabulous Sea Run Brown Trout, or Sea Trout as our British friends call them. We stayed at the Estancia Maria Behety Lodge on the Rio Grande River, where we were joined by 10 other anxious fly fishermen. Our week was January 19-26.

The lodge is very comfortable with two people per room (single occupancy is available), a gathering room with open bar, a wader/wet room, and a dining room. The staff is very professional, and begins calling you by your first name almost immediately. The food is great and the wines outstanding. I think all of the wines were from Argentina. The owner selects wines from the 7,000 bottle cellar that he stocks.

The fishing day is broken into two sessions: morning from 7:30 until 11:30 and evening from 7:30 until 11:30. The siesta time midday is a very welcome and needed rest period as the nights are short. It is not uncommon to have dinner at 1:00 am. Each two fishermen are assigned a different guide each day. I did not fish the same water twice, even though I would have loved to fish some of the more productive pools over and over again. The river was in excellent condition—clear and dropping slightly each day. The weather was unseasonably warm, with temperatures reaching 70 degrees as we left for the evening fishing. This warmed the river and put

the fishing off a bit, according to the guides.

Flies used ranged from #4 Rubber Legged Woolly Buggers and Bunny Leeches, to #8 and #10 nymphs. I think that the pattern itself was not as important as finding a willing fish, and find them I did. During 6 days of fishing, I caught 5 fish over 15 pounds and a monster which tipped the scale at just over 24 pounds. I can't wait until January of 2009 when I plan to return.

Fruit and Flowers Report

Blair Alexander lost his wife Barbara on January 16. In lieu of service & flowers, Barbara ('Alex') requested, rather, your kind thoughts would be most dearly cherished. (Seattle Times, Jan 20/21, 2008)

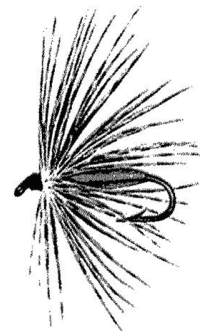
Dale Smith lost his wife Rhobie on January 19. The celebration of her life was held on Saturday, January 26, at University Congregational Church.

Pete Baird's wife, Lynn, has been experiencing bad spasms running down her leg from a dislocated disk in her back. She has been in and out of the hospital. She is home now, and is able to get around the house with a walker and negotiate the house stairs with help. Pete says that the pain is under control and she is slowly on the mend, but that it will take a while.

Please keep all of these families in your thoughts.



Jay Deeds on the Rio Grande





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February, 2008

Meeting Announcement



Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month at the Seattle Tennis Club, 922 McGilvra Blvd. E..

The Wet Fly hour begins at 5:30 PM and dinner is served at 6:45 PM.

This month: Frank Headrick's 100th Birthday Celebration

Join Frank, members of his family, and a panel of distinguished club members for this truly extraordinary event.