

Creel Notes from the



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



March, 2006

President's Riffle

Omnino physicus iactus muscarius

The Inland Empire Fly Fishing Club is celebrating its 50th anniversary May 20th. I presume some of our members would like to attend that celebration in Spokane. So, I've asked **Perry Barth** to be our liaison with the IEFCC. Perry will have information on the program and places to stay in Spokane.

I was invited by the President of the Olympic Fly Fishers, Joe Conner, to attend their March 8th meeting in Edmonds. As you might have expected, they have a great group of members. When they do their fishing reports a fine is levied on all those who have not been fishing – an interesting idea, eh? Perhaps our Ghillies will think about that idea.

Sonny Tremoulet, one of the OFF members, showed off some beautiful, personalized fly boxes that he custom crafts. Sonny's boxes are a different style than the beautiful boxes our own **Dick Brening** and **Chuck Ballard** make.

The club roster will be produced after the March meeting. If your photo is missing or outdated (e.g. hackle getting grey or sparse) you can either e-mail a digital photo to **John Schuitemaker** or see **Jim MacDonald** at the meeting and have a picture taken. If you have any questions about your roster entry or have information about someone else's listing, please contact **John Schuitemaker**.

Dues are past due as of March 1st. If you haven't paid your dues yet you can be reinstated for an additional fee of \$10.00. And, If you think you qualify for the significantly reduced "senior" rate talk to **Mike Wearne**.

Hooray! **Ron Dion** stepped forward to become the Chairman of the Outdoor Activities Committee. That doesn't mean he has to do all the work preparing

for the outings and making sure everything is taken care of at an outing. In fact, he will be tasking an Outing Manager and one or more assistants for each outing.

If you have ideas about an outing location, please let us know. There's nothing that says we can't have more than one outing per month or on the same date for that matter.

Plastic Progress - Our Ghillies, **Pat Peterman** and **Peter Crumbaker** will be able to process your credit card for your dinner, etc.

Again a word of caution... - The College Club's Coat Room shouldn't be considered secure. Anyone can walk in the front door and have ready access to the room and whatever you may put in there.

The Beginning Fly Casting class starts April 6th at 6:30 PM. See the announcement on page 7. It will be held every Thursday night for 6 weeks. We still have space available so if you know someone who would benefit, please let them know about the class.

All fly-casting is physics

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Boyd Aigner fly tying competition dates extended

By Bill Neal, Awards Committee Chairman

To encourage participation, the dates for the Boyd Aigner Fly Tying Competition have been extended. Fly patterns for the Competition are now due at the April 18, 2006 Members' Meeting, rather than the March Meeting. Patterns will be displayed and judged at the May Meeting, and the Award will be presented at the June Meeting. Information for the Competition is in the February Creel Notes, and contestants can also contact Bill Neal or Dick Scales for more information.

2006 Lambuth Award.

The WFFC's most important award was presented to Ray Gould of Edmonds, Washington, at the February meeting. In addition to recognition for his personal attributes of humor, optimism, and generosity, he was lauded for his contribution to the history, craftsmanship, and innovations in crafting cane rods. He has made over a hundred and sixty rods, and has repaired and restored rods sent to him from all over the country. His two books, Constructing Cane Rods: Secrets of the Bamboo Fly Rod, and Cane Rods and Tapers were available for review at the Wet Fly session, and are now available from the WFFC Library. Gould has also served in leadership roles for Northwest Fly Anglers club, Olympic Fly Fishers, and West Coast Rod Builders Bi-annual Meeting. Gould was accompanied by his wife, former State Senator Sue Gould, and it was Sue who gave Ray his first book on cane rods, initiating his interest in cane rod building. A dozen guests included long time fishing partners and members of The Northwest Fly Anglers.



Ray Gould accepting the Letcher Lambuth Award from President Bob Birkner.

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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.

What's Happening at Dry Falls? *By Steve Raymond*

If you're among the many WFFC members who like to fish Dry Falls Lake, then you know the lake has suffered critically low water levels over the past decade. More recently, it also has suffered a severe decline in its trout population. Creel censuses historically have shown an opening-day catch rate of about 8 fish per rod, but that has fallen to a little more than 2 fish per rod over the past two years—a decline of nearly 75 percent, which probably indicates a similar decline in the trout population.

So what's wrong? About a year ago I started pushing the WDFW to try to find out, and now it seems the effort is about to pay off. Jeff Korth, the district biologist, has been given some additional resources to survey the lake this spring and try to figure out what's happening.

Korth and I met recently to discuss the situation. I offered my personal theory that low water is responsible for the declining trout population. Critically low water, especially in the fall, has made it possible for waterfowl to uproot much of the weed growth in the shallow areas of the lake, destroying insect habitat and leading to a noticeable decline in spring hatches. That alone could affect trout survival, but low water also has exposed the trout to severe predation from ospreys, cormorants and especially Caspian terns, whose numbers seem to be exploding in the Columbia Basin. So predation undoubtedly is responsible for the loss of many trout.

Some of this was new to Korth and he agreed low water is

probably responsible for at least part of the problem, but he also thinks there may be some sort of strange interaction going on between triploid and diploid rainbow trout in the lake. Triploid (sterile) rainbow have been stocked in Dry Falls for the past several years, along with regular (nonsterile) diploids. The triploids theoretically should survive better, live longer and grow larger than the diploids, but so far triploid survival has been unaccountably low—so low, in fact, that Korth has stopped planting them in Dry Falls, at least temporarily.

But there are still other possibilities. Brown trout also are still being stocked in the lake and could be preying on smaller rainbows. However, as Korth pointed out, browns have been in the lake a long time and this hasn't been a problem in the past, so there's no apparent reason why it should suddenly become one. Another theory is that heavy fishing pressure during the summer could be responsible for trout losses. Evidently many chironomid fishermen fish the lake in July and August, anchoring in deep water and using electronic depth finders to position their imitations near the bottom. When they hook a fish, it's brought suddenly from cold, deep water to much warmer water at the surface, and even if the fish is released it may die later from thermal shock. But as yet there's no hard evidence this is happening.

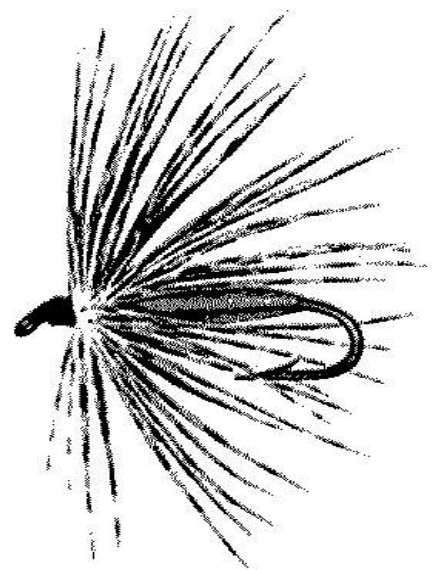
Another possibility is that if water is somehow escaping from Dry Falls—not just from seepage but through an open fissure somewhere—then trout may be escaping, too.

Poaching is not a serious

problem at Dry Falls because poachers are always fearful someone may be watching from the scenic overlook, so that possibility has been discarded. Also, there's no evidence—yet—that the lake has been invaded by undesirable fish species. Dry Falls is the **ONLY** selective fishing lake in the basin to remain free of such infestations, which makes it even more valuable as a resource.

Korth plans to net about 200 trout from the lake sometime in April and examine their otoliths—ear bones—to try to get a firm handle on comparative survival rates of triploid and diploid trout and perhaps draw some conclusions why the rates differ. Efforts also will be made to pinpoint where or how water may be escaping from the lake and what might be done about it. Stay tuned for further reports.

Meanwhile, what about fishing prospects at Dry Falls this season? The best we can hope for, Korth says, is that the fishing "will be no worse than last year."



REPORTS

Rio Grande, Tierra del Fuego, Argentina

By Scott Hagen

Jay Deeds and I departed SeaTac for Buenos Aires about noon on January 18th, arriving mid morning of the 19th. We spent the rest of the 19th and the 20th living large in the city. Had some great meals and “vino tinto”, and almost got whiplash looking at the gorgeous girls while sipping cervesa at the many sidewalk cafes. We departed very early on the morning of the 23rd from the domestic airport for Rio Grande, the largest town on the island of “Isla Grande, just south of the Straits of Magellan. We were met by some of the guides and on the way to the fishing lodge, we stopped for a huge meal at the estancia’s headquarters and a tour of the world’s largest sheep shearing shed, where employees were busily engaged in shearing the ranch’s 64,000 sheep.



The lodge was very plush, with gourmet food and accommodations. The bad news was that there had just been three days of hard rain and the river was two feet high and the water was muddy, with less than two feet of visibility. The first two days we worked hard without a fish landed. By Monday the 23rd, the river was dropping and clearing, and we began to catch some “sea trout”, which are sea run brown trout. As the week went on, the fishing continued to improve, with Jay landing the big fish of the week, a 24.2 pound monster. The fishing is very similar to swinging a fly for steelhead,

except the guides want you to “jig” the fly a little bit during the swing. Many of the most effective patterns included white rubber legs, like on a Bitch Creek. Most of the takes are very aggressive, it feels like they charge and attack the fly, rather than just stop it. We used large flies and 200 to 400 grain 24’ tips to get the flies down. The last day, with the river down to just about normal, I switched over to a 15’ tip and did very well. The wind does blow there, sometimes very hard, but we also had a couple of calm days. The guests that have been going for several years were all griping about the worst year they had ever experienced, but Jay and I thought it was pretty good. Most of the guests landed about a dozen fish, with many in the high ‘teens. The toughest part of the trip was the 30+ hour trip back home.



(I imagine images like this were a comfort on the long trip home.-ed.)



Gowdy exemplified "Sportsman" ideal.

By Jeffrey P. Mayor,

Curt Gowdy, the epitome of sports television in the 1960's and '70s and host of ABC's "The American Sportsman" for more than 20 years, died Monday at age 86. The outdoors world has lost one of its most recognized voices and one of the best examples of what is good about the outdoors.

One of the joys of my childhood was watching "The American Sportsman" on Saturday afternoons. As the lone outdoorsman in our family, I was fascinated by fishing, intrigued by hunting. So on those Saturdays when chores, Little League or youth basketball allowed, I would eagerly tune in to see what adventure Gowdy was on, where he would take us that week. It was the first time I had ever seen anyone fish with a fly rod, tussle with a monstrous tarpon or travel to Africa to hunt exotic big game.

Gowdy's passion to enjoy his time afield, his sense of conversation and his down-home Wyoming demeanor have stuck with me ever since. As great as "The American Sportsman" was, it was a show created by Trevor Gowdy, that gave me the best insight of his father. In an episode of Trevor Gowdy's "Days of a Sportsman," Gowdy was fishing with Trevor and his other son, Curt Gowdy Jr. What remains with me today was the family footage interspersed with that shot while the three fished for trout. Those snippets of 8 mm. film revealed the essence of the elder Gowdy. It showed a young Gowdy teaching his two sons to fly-fish. Knee deep in some Wyoming river, Gowdy cut a figure very similar to that of Norman Maclean's father in the film "A River Runs Through It."

Gowdy offered constant reminders on casting and suggested where the boys should cast. In playing the role of a teacher, Gowdy was serious. At the same time, he let the boys learn from their mistakes, chuckling as their casts became a tangled web of fly line and fly. And it was hard to tell whose smile was bigger when one of the sons landed a large trout – the young angler or the proud parent. The episode should be required viewing for all parents who want their children to take up an outdoor sport.

Outdoors television shows have undergone a complete transformation since "The American Sportsman." Today, you can watch Ted Nugent proclaim his outdoor philosophy in reality-show

style. You can watch bikini-clad women battle with big-game fish. Like so much of life today, the shows have an edge to them, a frantic pace as hosts and guest seek to feed their need for an adrenaline rush. Lost in the televised pursuit of fish and game is the companionship so profoundly expressed by Gowdy. In so many ways, each episode of "The American Sportsman" was like watching a family movie. Gowdy and his companions laughed at each other's missed shots, they constantly joked, and they enjoyed each other's company in a wonderful outdoor setting.

The show's focus wasn't about the stalk of a big elk, or the scream of a fishing reel. It was about friends enjoying the outdoors. I doubt there will ever be another show like "The American Sportsman." I know there will never be another Curt Gowdy. His death is a loss to all of us who enjoy the outdoor world. That saddens me

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WFFC Fly Tier's Round Table

By Dick Brening

The April Round Table will be on the 2nd Wednesday, April 12th, 7 to 9PM.

Outings to Dry Falls and Chopaka are just around the corner. So, the theme for April will be flies you use on the lakes of Eastern Washington. You can come to tie your favorite, share a new pattern or just observe and chat.

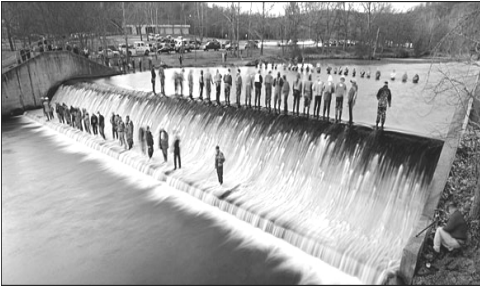
Note: There will not be a community dinner at the church that evening. (My apologies to your wives!)

Place: Mercer Island Covenant Church, 3200 78th S.E. (S.E. corner of 78th S.E. and SE 32nd). Just south of the Mercer Island business district. Off street parking is available off 78th S.E.

If you have any questions on directions contact **Pete Baird** or me at the club meeting or give me a call.

For Sale:

14' Dynous inflatable, 5 chambers, (Similar to Zodiac) with plywood floor board, 15 HP Johnson short shaft motor, 2 tanks. \$500.00 Contact **Dave White** (425) 821 3617 or **Paul Lingbloom** (425) 742 7983.



An Unusual Line Dance Greet the Trout Season

By TOM VAUGHN

At 6:30 a.m. tomorrow, a spectacle will unfold on the streams of Missouri's trout parks. It is a celebration and a fishing adventure in the same event. Anglers standing shoulder to shoulder will, at the sound of a siren, cast as one into the waters before them in the first seconds of Missouri's annual trout season. What drives the anglers to crowd together every year on the first day of March, enduring cold weather, cold water and unbelievable line tangles to catch a trout? Mike Mitchell, the hatchery manager at Bennett Spring State Park, which is near Lebanon, Mo., said tradition was an important aspect of opening day. "You have people coming here for years, knowing that it's going to be crowded and that it might not be a day for serious fishing," he said. "It's more like opening day of baseball season." The spectacle is a major attraction. Mitchell estimated that there would be more than 2,000 anglers at both Bennett Spring and at Roaring River State Park, which is near Cassville in southwestern Missouri. He said there would be slightly smaller crowds at the privately owned but state-assisted Maramec Spring Park, southeast of St. James, and Montauk State Park, near Salem.

Mitchell said that Missouri's program of trout stocking and management was unusual because of the opportunities it offered at its four trout parks and its 150 miles of state-managed streams. The concept of harnessing and direct-

ing the natural spring water to grow cold-water fish is a benefit resulting from the rare geological history of the land. The Ozark region is one of the most distinctive areas of North America. It features what is called a karst landscape: Dense limestone deposits laid down by ancient inland seas and dissolved by rainwater have created underground rivers that emerge as springs. Millions of gallons of earth-cooled water flow downstream in short branches to surface rivers, creating ideal trout water. Mitchell and his hatchery crew will rear about 420,000 fish to the 12-inch stocking size this year. For opening day, about 100 of these fish will be lunkers of at least 3 pounds, with some weighing as much as 15 pounds. The crew will stock about two fish for each angler for the opener and throughout the trout season.

Even though the streams will be crowded on opening day, the improved chance of catching a large trout is attractive. At the sound of the first siren, thousands of lines will be cast into the water, with anglers being careful to drop their marabou jigs or small spinners just downstream of the ones landing above them. The lures drift as they are retrieved, and the trout, now seeing food everywhere, go into a feeding frenzy for a short time. Fish will be caught quickly, lines will be tangled, and mannerly fishermen will reel their offerings out of the way after someone says, "Big fish on!" The big one may or may not be caught. Soon, the fish will see that these fakes are not food, but danger, and will become trout again. They will be finicky, wary, and will use their amazing, magnifying eyesight to make catching them more difficult. It is at this point, after the initial fast action, that anglers need to use better techniques. One of the best

is to drift a micro jig with a bobber above it just off the bottom at the speed of the current. It cannot drag; it cannot be pulled ahead by the line. It must be a drag-free drift. A small, lead spit shot or two can be placed 8 to 10 inches above the lure to get consistency near the stream bed, where the lure performs. At the slightest hesitation or jiggle of the bobber, the fisherman pulls with catlike quickness and hopefully will be fast to an athletic torpedo trying to use current and its own mass to break the two-pound test line.

Other fishermen will sight-fish. They will stalk near a trout and try to drift a food imitation so directly to the fish that it literally only has to open its mouth. So little effort for such easy food - some cannot resist. Later, fly rods will be brought out to fish areas made sparse by anglers gone to break-fast. With many fishermen still around, however, traditional fly fishing will give way to roll casting, with extreme care in the back cast to make sure that what is hooked is not a fellow angler. The crowds will thin as the day ends, and the final siren at 6 p.m. in the trout parks of Missouri will signal that quieter times are coming. The midweek spring mornings before summer vacation and the calm evenings of mid-July will make the memory of opening day seem far away. That is, until next year.

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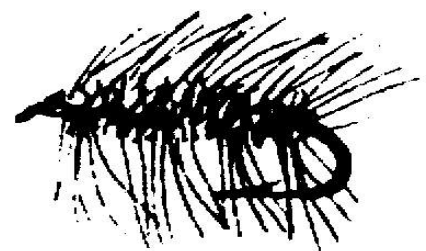




Photo Gallery

Beginning fly Casting Class

Starts Thursday April 6, 2006

Time: 6:30 PM to dusk

Duration: 6 Weeks

Place: Greenlake Casting pier

Cost: \$40.00

Registration required: Call **Bob Birkner** 206-542-4623 or **Don Simonson** 206-932-4925

Advanced Casting Class

Starts Wednesday April 5, 2006

Time: 6:30 PM to dusk

Duration: 4 weeks

Place: Greenlake Casting Pier

Cost: \$50.00

Class limited to 10 students.

Registration required: Student must have good basic casting techniques with ability to control the fly line showing nice tight narrow loops both on the back cast and forward cast along with being able to double haul. To register call

Bob Birkner 206-542-4623 or **Don Simonson** 206-932-4925 .



February speaker Harry Lemire ties before the meeting. Note there is no vise.



President Bob Birkner welcomes Joe Conner, President of the Olympic Flyfishers of Edmonds as part of his Get Acquainted policy.



Later Harry presented the club with one of his beautiful mounted flies.



Gil Nyerges inducts our newest member, Andrew Bennett.

Attention Club Members with Digital Cameras

Jim Macdonald, Club Photographer

I am looking for members with digital cameras with the capability to email digital pictures. We need more members taking pictures for the archives and creel notes at club outings and events official and unofficial. None of us attend all the outings so this would give the club the best chance of getting pictures from all the events etc. With a list of club members willing to do this we can communicate with each other before each event and find out who will be attending an outing or event etc. After the event all you have to do is email these pictures to me and I will take it from there. If you want special recognition for your prize winning photographs I imagine

ine Leland could be coerced into mentioning your name. Please call me or email me if you are interested in performing this function and we will all get together at the next club meeting on the 21st or the next one after these creel notes are published and discuss the details.

If you are worried about this detracting from you time fishing etc. it need not be a big deal as all you have to do in most cases is shoot one picture of the lake or river perhaps showing a couple of club members doing what they do best (Catching Fish) with a nice sunset or sunrise behind them in between the rain and snow showers. It's your call, the more pictures you take the more Leland has to choose from while editing the Creel Notes.





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Meeting Announcement



Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month at The College Club, 505 Madison St. This month that is the 21st.

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

Art Lingren will be our speaker this month. Art is one of British Columbia's premier authors and steelhead fly fishermen. He will speak on his exploration of the northern British Columbia mainland to locate new steelhead, salmon and trout fishing spots for a major BC lodge owner. If you are proud owner of one of Art's books bring it to the meeting and he may very well autograph it for you.