

# Creel Notes from the



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



March, 2008



## President's Riffle

Fellow Fly Fishermen,

Are you starting to get that little twang? That itch, that nervous little feeling that you have to get your waders on and a rod in your hands soon or you'll go crazy? Indeed, those are sure signs of spring fever, and I have a pretty good case of it myself.

Just last week I was over in the Cle Elum area at my cabin, and still sinking up to my thigh as I attempted the short trek down to the river without snowshoes. When I finally reached the bank, I noticed a trail in the snow made by a few elk that had crossed the stream there. They too are probably ready for the snow to melt so they can head to higher ground. But even though there is still plenty of snow around, I know that the skwalas are starting to emerge throughout the Yakima valley, and slowly winter is losing its grip. So it's time to get ready guys—our Dry Falls outing is just a month away!

I know that it's only a month away because we have a new Outdoors chairman, and he gave the board a preview of the outings schedule last week. I'm pleased to announce that **Robert Tovar**, a fellow who has been a member for less than a year, has taken on the task, and already has a lot of great ideas. Please congratulate and thank Robert next time you see him.

Although the fishing can be fun, certainly the best part of our outings is the camaraderie they generate. Although I've seen some pretty tight lips while out on the water about what fly or technique one might be using, there are usually some great fish stories swapped around the campfire later that night. Mix that with some good steaks, some fine beverages, and you have the makings for a nice weekend with like-minded friends, and that's what our outings are all about. If you haven't been on

one yet, or haven't been on one for a while, make this the year to do so and you'll be rewarded with the joy of friends both old and new.

Speaking of fine beverages... don't forget that this month's meeting program will feature the learning about, and the sampling of, some of the finest brown water from Kentucky. This should make for quite a "spirited" evening.

Just remember, no matter how much whiskey you've had, you can usually still fish. I can't say the same for other activities.

Tight lines to all,

Bill Kuper



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## March Meeting is on Wednesday!

March 19th is the date, Wednesday is the day, for our March meeting. Each member will be treated to an array of Bourbons. Stuart Ramsay will deliver commentary to help us appreciate them.

Stuart MacLean Ramsay, trademarked as The Scotch Guy, was born and raised in the Highlands of Scotland. Writer, editor, and public speaker, Ramsay is a leading expert on spirits, cocktails, and craft beer. He has been a newspaper columnist for the Portland Oregonian, the American correspondent and contributing editor for Britain's Whisky Magazine, and is currently contributing editor for Santé Magazine and The Malt Advocate in the United States.

## March Meeting Business

Take note of the following for the March meeting:

- Home Waters Business. This committee has been busy, and has a proposal for club members to vote on at the March meeting. You won't want to miss it.
- Outing Schedule. **Robert Tovar**, the new Outdoor Committee chairman (Bravo, Robert!), is in the process of compiling the list of club outings for 2008. He already has a nice list of outings, but he is also asking for suggestions. At the March meeting, there will be one suggestion card at each table. Bring your ideas and jot them down.
- Drink tickets were tried at previous meetings and found not to be necessary. From the March club meeting forward, no more drink tickets will be used or sold. If you have tickets that you have not used yet, please bring them with you to the March meeting and we will reimburse you for them (see **Jim Macdonald**). Please do not attempt to use them at the bar anymore.

## Sign Up for the June Meeting with Tom Douglas

Sign up on our Web site for the June 17th meeting at the Palace Ballroom for the Tom Douglas cooking event. Last year it sold out. It is the only meeting that you can bring your sig. other to. The price this year is \$38 pp., and Tom will be showing us how to cook 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.

## Happy Birthday, Frank!

At our February meeting, we celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of one of our most distinguished members, **Frank Headrick**. For longer-term members, it was an opportunity to remember good times with Frank. For shorter-term members, it was a chance to get to know this man who has been a member of the club virtually since its inception.

That in itself would have been celebration enough, but the evening turned out to be even more. It was also a celebration of the history of the club. We saw what the early days were like. We heard about many early club members, not only through the words of a panel of club members gathered to tell stories about Frank, but also through the stories of Frank himself. And not surprisingly, we were treated to fishing tips, tricks, and wisdom.

### Stories from the Panel

For the evening, **Pete Baird** put together a panel consisting of Frank's long-time friends, fellow club members, and fishing partners. This included **Earl George, Hu Riley, Gil Nyerges, Perry Barth, and Steve Raymond**. They sat with Frank, Frank's daughter Lita, and her husband Bill Shimeall. Unfortunately, Frank's son Bob Headrick, Bob's wife Judy, and grandson Mark had come down with the flu and couldn't make it.

**Earl George** was Frank's closest contemporary on the panel. At 95 (as of March 13<sup>th</sup>), the other member of the 60-year membership club, Earl started out by saying that "being a centenarian is not for sissies." He then harkened back to days when Frank would start a day by fishing the Stilly and end it by doing a full-day's work. In those days, a club meeting might be eight people, and yet it was an active membership. Earl made first mention of a club member who was one of Frank's closest friends and fishing partners, Enos Bradner. It would be the first of many references, an indication of what Bradner meant to Frank and the club.

Earl also gave us the first sage advice of the evening. "If you want to live to a hundred," he said, "don't die."

During this part of the meeting, Frank didn't have much to say as others regaled us with stories. But **Perry Barth** gave us an indication that Frank's silence would not last. Perry has driven Frank to club meetings in recent times, and has found that

Frank loves to talk fly fishing. "I don't have to talk much," Perry said. "It's like a vicarious experience of living through the 30's and 40's." Perry told the story of a day when Enos Bradner caught seven steelhead in three hours—only to have Frank catch eleven in the same period. He told how mad Bradner would get if he got skunked and Frank got fish. And he told the story of how Frank would retire a rod after he caught a hundred steelhead with it. He retired six of those rods, all of them cane.

Not surprisingly, the panel discussion was part toast and part roast. **Steve Raymond** told of the time that the vast majority of members caught a bug at a WFFC meeting, and how Frank was out in the middle of a stream when the bug hit him—without enough time to make it to shore. He told of Frank returning from fishing in eastern Washington in a wild windstorm that toppled an outhouse near Vantage—with Frank in it. This type of thing did not phase Frank, who had once been a boxer. On a float trip down the Salmon River, in the middle of nowhere, Frank got whacked in the mouth by an oar, opening an ugly gash. When no one else was willing to give him first aid, Frank took a mirror, some whisky, and sewed it up himself.

Frank's reaction to these tales? "Some of these lies are true," he said.

### Frank Takes Over

At a certain point in the evening, the panel's stories slowed down and Frank starting telling his version of events. Someone brought up "The Nymph of



*Frank Headrick with Family and Friends*

*(Continued on page 4)*

the Stilly,” which was filmed by one-time member and professional photographer, Howard Gray. This home-made fishing movie may sound like a treatise on insects, but it was actually about a scantily clad woman swimming in the river and being chased along the bank by club members. This opened the subject of the North Fork, where Frank owned property on the Elbow Hole, had a lot of great steelhead fishing over the years, and worked for fly fishing-only closures of the Stilly (as well as Pass Lake). Frank helped instill the club tradition of community service, winning people over by both hard work and good old-fashioned politicking. An example was when the club bought a local guy on the Stilly a rod and reel, at which point he realized that the club wasn’t so bad after all.

Of the closure work, Frank said, “It wasn’t work—it was really fun what we did.”

Frank told us about his family. He told of how his mother taught him to fish when he was eight. “She knew where the fish would hold,” he said. Frank’s daughter Lita related her memories of family life at the North Fork cabin, how she would walk along the bank as Frank fished, and how the family would spend every summer weekend there, enjoying his cooking. Frank wistfully talked about his wife of forty years, and how tough it was to get over her passing.

Frank mentioned many club members from the early days, men like Letcher Lambuth, Ralph Wahl, Ken McLeod, Doc Brown, Harry Dunagan, Gordy Frear, Don Ives, John Story, Wes Drain, and Vince Sellen. He told of fishing and hunting with them, performing community service with them, meeting and having fun with them. He never minded sharing what he knew with them and others. “It’s sad that the older people are gone,” Frank said. “The memories are still fresh in my mind of all those people.”

The stories often came back to one guy: Enos Bradner. “He was the mainspring of the club,” Frank said. They were close as only good fishing partners can be close: fishing and hunting all over the state, goodnaturedly (and competitively) comparing fish counts, working on club projects together. They traveled on cruise ships in later years, although sometimes Brad didn’t have as good of a time as Frank did.

“Brad said he didn’t have any fun at all,” **Steve Raymond** said of one trip. “Frank was chasing women the whole time. Brad didn’t have anything to do.”

Frank tells it a little differently. While he was dancing with the women on one of those cruise ships, Frank said, “a daughter aged 23 latched onto Brad.” Frank went on to explain, “I wasn’t chasing women—I was teaching the young gals how to dance.”

“I was very fortunate to have had the life I had,” Frank said.

This was an extraordinary meeting, one with stories about good fishing, good times, and good people. Frank, for all the stories and all your contributions to the club, thank you. Happy birthday—and many happy returns.

**Pete Baird** put together the program and served as moderator. Thank you, Pete, for a great evening.



**Rufus Woods** by *Don Gulliford*

**Bob Young** asked me to check out Rufus Woods Lake for a possible outing, if I recall correctly. Woods is 30 miles long, backed up to Grand Coulee from Chief Joseph at Bridgeport. It is NOT pram water. Almost all the boats I saw, like the one owned by my friend Fred Slyfield, with whom I fished yesterday with his son and father, are 18-20 ft. jet sleds. They are powered by mostly (from what I saw) 175+ hp Suzuki jets, plus a 10 Johnson or other 4 cycle auxiliary, plus Minn Kota 55s or bigger. The river current is a steady 1.8 mph (our drift speed measured by Fred’s trusty GPS satellite among other tech goodies). 34 degrees F and corn snow—only the well-insulated can tough it out and handle the monsters—as in sturgeon and walleye. We threw the big ones (12-18 lbs.) back for breeding, and kept the little ones (picture).

Apparently no Colville license is needed if you’re only in the boat, but it’s needed if you’re bank fishing, of which I saw several dozen. I never fished Hosmer, but was told that dragging on the bottom was the only way to get strikes and that is how Rufus is fished. Bottom action sink tip only. I used and (sigh) busted off my #4 Spratley (sort of, about 3" long) and got other takes on a huge black marabou





*Don Gulliford on Rufus Woods Lake*

bead head also about 3+\" long with a 4 or bigger hook. Very slow, stagnant hits, no smashers, almost a nibble but when you strike—Katie, bar the door. The “bottom” gets located with depth finders. There are shoals ranging from 10 ft to 40 ft, where most fishing is done. The river, before flooding, must have been a sight. I have a friend who lived in Grand Coulee and recalls seeing freight car-sized kings beating themselves against the dam bottom the first year. So it is not, I think, an outing new location, but if anybody has a jet sled big boat, it’s a good place to bust off all your large flies on monsters. About a 2+ hour drive from Ellensburg.

Good job MC'ng, Pat.

## Ed Sozinho on Fishing Photography

At last August’s WFFC meeting, Ed Sozinho gave a presentation on fishing photography. Ed showed a steady stream of quality photographs, and discussed the technique behind them. The proof of the technique? The photos were sharp, compelling, and they told a story. Best of all, a fishing story.

A few of Ed’s tips and tricks:

### On Craft

- Compose your photos using the rule of thirds: divide the frame into nine equal squares, and place your subject (especially fisherman or fish) at one of the four points formed by the

intersections of those lines.

- The best subjects: fisherman and fish (fisherman hooking fish, fisherman fighting fish, fisherman holding fish, anything fisherman and fish).
- With a moving subject, move the camera along with the subject, keeping it in focus and blurring out everything else.
- Emphasize diagonals in composing your photos: they give a sense of movement and dynamism.
- Use a smaller aperture to get better depth of field (f16 instead of f4 or f8).
- Photograph other subjects when on a fishing trip: meals, kids, and animals. It will give you a better record of the trip for years to come.

### On Gear

- Use a tripod when possible. Steadying the camera yields better clarity.
- Use a split-field filter to mute a bright background and light the foreground.
- Use an underwater camera or waterproof housing if you’re worried about getting it wet.
- There’s some great equipment out there: find it, buy it, use it (For Ed: Canon Digital Point & Shoot yes; Leica Digital Point & Shoot, no).
- Find a good bag to carry your stuff. There are some good waterproof options out there.



*A Shot by Ed Sozinho: Feel the Elements*

## Adult Mayfly Identification by Roger Rohrbeck

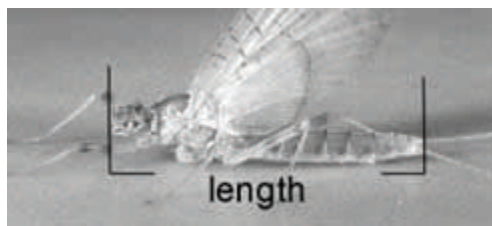
Most fly fishers will recognize the sailboat-like silhouette of a recently emerged mayfly. And most also understand that the mayfly is unique among insects, because it has two winged forms, dun and spinner. Fewer fly fishers are able to identify the winged mayflies that they observe, even to family level, let alone to genus or species. However, if you read this article to completion, and do the short exercise at the end, you will have taken a significant first step.

Identification keys in entomology texts rely on a series of couplets (either this or that). These couplets usually refer to extremely obscure features, which require a microscope to view. Most fly fishers would find navigating those keys to be impractical. Therefore, even those fly fishers actually motivated toward identification will often resort to looking at the color plates contained in mayfly entomology books, hoping to find a mayfly closely resembling the one that they are trying to identify. Does this work? Sometimes it does, but often it will simply lead to frustration.

So, how could someone (thusly motivated) help the fly fisher to identify winged mayflies? On reflection, it seemed possible that there were enough easily-observable winged mayfly characteristics that it might be possible to simply describe what one could observe, and use those observations to significantly narrow the possibilities. These simple keys include body length, number of tails, and gross characteristics of the fore and hind wings.

At this point, a question is begged: but why not color? And the answer is: color is (by far) the least reliable key, as it is highly variable in any given species. And in some mayflies, the color will undergo fairly dramatic change during the first half hour following emergence.

Anyway, getting back to more useful keys, mayfly body length is measured from the front of the head to the end of the abdomen, and does not include the length of the tails (see below). This can be fairly accurately guesstimated by most fly fishers, at least in terms of standard hook sizes.



As they come from the factory, winged mayflies have either two or three tails (see below). Just to confuse the issue, some species have three tails as a nymph, but only two tails as a dun and spinner. And in one genus of winged mayflies, the female has three tails, whereas the male only has two. Now really, what kind of planning is that?



All winged mayflies have fore wings (the large ones attached to the second thoracic segment), and most mayflies also have hind wings (the smaller ones attached to the third thoracic segment).

Fore wings can be characterized as either plain or marked/mottled (see below).



And hind wings can be characterized as obvious, minute, or absent (see below).



So, given the (apparent) feasibility of this winged mayfly identification concept, the next challenge was to actually develop and implement it. To be candid, this took many months to accomplish. However, a great deal was learned along the way, both about mayflies and about programming in JavaScript.

For anyone reading this article from a mailed paper copy of the "Creel Notes", it won't be possible to demonstrate the Adult Mayfly Identification screen at <http://www.flyfishingentomology.com/Adult Mayfly Identification.htm>. So here is an example of how using it actually works. You would simply select the following from the appropriate drop-down list in the online screen:

# of tails: **2**

Body length: **09 mm. (~3/8 in.) #14**

Fore wings: **marked/mottled**

### Hind wings: **minute**

When you would click the **Lookup** button on the screen, the list of possibilities is pared down to family **Baetidae**, genus **Callibaetis**.

For anyone reading this article online, please be encouraged to move to the Adult Mayfly Identification screen online and give it a try. If you would like to see the full list of genera, simply click the **Lookup** button without having pre-selected any observation choices. Each observation selected contributes by reducing the number of genera possibilities. Once the list of genera has been pared down as much as your observation selections allow, clicking a blue-underlined genus will take you to a screen displaying detailed descriptions of both the dun and the spinner for each species of that genera that is of interest to North American fly fishers.

If you should encounter any problems using the screens, or have any questions concerning aquatic insects, or would like to provide feedback concerning this article, please contact Roger Rohrbeck at the email address [FlyfishingEntomology@comcast.net](mailto:FlyfishingEntomology@comcast.net), and you will receive a prompt, courteous, and (hopefully) satisfying response.

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### Fishing by the Book *by Mike Wearne*

I started reading *Casting a Spell*, by George Black, without knowing what type of a trip I was initiating. In this book Black has created an in-depth historical study of the development of the bamboo rod in this country. This book is a handy reference document if your particular interest in fly fishing extends to bamboo rods. This book could easily be used as an auxiliary text in a study of the industrialization of the United States.

There is an endless supply of names, dates, and places that were part of the bamboo rod development. The time line in the front of the book starts in 1496 with Dame Juliana Berners's publication of *Treatyse of Fysshynge with an Angle*, and extends through the recent departure from Winston Rod of Glen Brackett, Jerry Kustich, and Jeff Walker.

The majority of the book is a biography of Hiram Leonard and Eustis Edwards. It was amazing to me

how interconnected were the lives of the earlier developers of bamboo rods. Black has done extensive research to delve into the lives of these people. The author has a passion for fly fishing and bamboo rods that is unmistakable. Throughout the book, this passion is exhibited by the effort he extends to "get the story".

There is a thorough discussion of the impact of the marketing of fly fishing by companies such as Abercrombie & Fitch. The impact of fiberglass rods on the market for bamboo rods is analyzed.

This is the type of book that a baseball fan would appreciate when the writer tours the location of old ball parks that were abandoned in the 1910s and 1920s. I am not interested in genealogy. I did enjoy learning more about this history of the development of bamboo rods. After reading this book, I think you will appreciate fly fishing more—I know I did.

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### Fruit and Flowers Report *by Pete Baird*

**Chris Rundall:** Good news!! As of about two weeks ago, Chris returned home to the Exeter House to once again brighten the apartment that she shares with Bill. She has a very special walker to get around with, the hot rod 4-wheels version, with sit-down accommodation, option for carrying oxygen assist, and brakes. She no longer needs oxygen full time, only after periods of exertion. Welcome home flowers are their way from the club!

**Lynn Baird:** Yes, that's my wife! I'm delighted to report that there has been progress in her recovery from the debilitating spasms she experienced in her right leg due to a protruding disk and pinched nerves in L3/L4 of her lower back. Her leg is getting stronger and she is requiring the walker less for mobility within the house. On March 13 she is scheduled to have a 2nd steroidal injection and possibly begin an acupuncture program shortly thereafter.



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Stamp  
here

March, 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: Bourbon Tasting with Stuart Ramsay

Colonel Ramsay presents the Belles of Kentucky Bourbon. Or the Thoroughbreds of Kentucky Bourbon...