

Creel Notes from the



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



April, 2011



President's Riffle

Mid April here in the Great Northwest. I was born and raised here. Lived my entire life (except for five years in the '80s) in the Seattle area. Either I am becoming an old grouch, or the fall-winter-spring weather is getting wetter and longer. This winter is about the worst I have endured. The fishing for late-winter wild steelhead was a complete bust, as all the rivers seemed perpetually blown. I look forward to the spring lake fishing season, but it is still cold and ... WET! Frankly, I am really sick of all this rain and I am sure many of you share that same sentiment.

However, as I write this, our annual WFFC spring Dry Falls outing is just one week away (April 15th – 17th). Despite fighting a bugger of a cold and flu, my spirits are raised (more on "spirits being raised" later) with the prospect of being out on my beloved Dry Falls. For me, it marks the true beginning of the spring trout season. I remember my first couple of outings on Dry Falls 35 years ago ... strapping a canoe to the top of my parents' Volkswagen bug, fishing regular mono on a spinning outfit, and trolling a big March Brown dry leaving a "V" wake. I caught fish, believe it or not, and have been fly fishing ever since. Through my college years, my buddies and I had some truly memorable outings, including tapping kegs of beer the night before Opening Day, staying up all night, and being on the water at daybreak. To this day, Dry Falls remains special to me and I know it is a very special place to many in this club and to the WFFC.

We are all aware of the declining water level in the lake. Because the lake is so dear to us, we have convened a committee (**Callahan, van de Erve, Raymond, and Schorsch**) to look into the cause and see if there is anything we can do to reverse that trend. Callahan and

van de Erve conducted a re-con mission a couple of weeks ago to look at the dam at the end of the arm. They reported no water flowing over or under the small impoundment. On a positive note, they did observe the water level to be as high as they had seen it in awhile. Perhaps we will get some fishing in the Aquarium next weekend?

As of this writing, we have well over 35 people signed up to attend. This will be a lot of fun. The club will be providing steaks, the BBQ, and beverages for all in attendance. This year's Dry Falls Outing marks the presentation of the First Annual Dry Falls President's Trophy. The trophy will be presented on Saturday night around the campfire after dinner and will be awarded to the largest trout caught that day on Dry Falls Lake (measured in **documented** inches to the nearest half-inch). Although we are fishermen, we are **honorable** fly fishermen in an honorable club, so one's word is good enough. This is a consumable trophy that will surely lift the "spirits" of the winner and perhaps those others in attendance.

Let's pray for warmer, calmer, and sunnier

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weather ... and some big fish! See you on the water!

Your WFFC President for 2011,
Rocco Maccarrone

This Month's Program - Doug Rose presents "Olympic Sea-Run Cutts"

Doug Rose will be the speaker at the April meeting. He is the author of three books on fly fishing on the Olympic Peninsula. He was the editor of the *Washington River Maps & Fishing Guide* produced by Frank Amato Publications. He has written twelve articles for fly fishing magazines. He is the "go to" fishing guide on the Olympic Peninsula area.

Fly tier: **Jim McRoberts**

Dry Falls Outing *by Dave Schorsch*

A last-minute reminder! The Dry Falls outing is this coming weekend, April 16th and 17th at Sun Lakes State Park! Bring your bugs, light lines, and best appetizers! You can soak chironomids for tiddlers, or hunt the shallows for thumpers, just show up for Saturday happy hour around five or so. Sign up on the website so we can have a good count for the steaks provided by the club. We will be at sites 26 and 27 in the back of the campground. See you there!

WFFC Rosters To Be Distributed

Rosters will be distributed this month at the meeting or through the mail, but in the interest of lowering costs, this will be the last year that the roster will be provided in paper format.

The Creel Calendar

Dry Falls Lake, Sat., April 16th, and Sun., April 17th

Chopaka Lake Outing, Sat., May 28th through Tues., May 31st

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, steelhead, and salmon 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 *by Pete Baird*

Every once in a while, I have an opportunity to write an upbeat report. How many people do you know who have celebrated their 103rd birthday? Well, it happened today, our very own **Frank Headrick Perry** did a great job of bringing this celebration to fruition: arranged the invitation list, brought the birthday cake and a right proper card for all of us to sign, and various memorabilia/shadow boxes, as well as staffing the kitchen duties.

Others present were **Earl George** (98), **Hu Riley** (90), **Gil** (89), **Bill Redman**, **Ron Dion**, **Bob Birkenner**, **Chuck Ballard**, and me. Frank relaxed in his favorite chair in the living room of the still well-kept home that he built 57 years ago. Although his hearing and mobility are a bit impaired now, and he's not planning to renew his driver's license that expires tomorrow, his mind is still sharp and he entertained us with numerous stories from the past. Furthermore, he had no trouble extinguishing the three candles atop the numerals "103" with a single mighty blow.

Take this as a sign guys—if you work at it and can retire six rods that have each subdued 100 steelhead, you too have a chance of reaching a ripe old age. So, be well and fish on!!



Standing: Perry Barth, Gil Nyerges, Pete Baird, Earl George, Bill Redman. Seated: Frank Headrick, Hu Riley

Casting Forward Heals One Pattern at a Time *by David Ehrich*

“This is the first time I’ve been fishing sober. I think I might do it again – it was fun,” said Robb, a participant in the club’s new outreach program, Casting Forward.

No one in the WFFC will find the therapeutic qualities of fishing surprising, but the feelings of competence and accomplishment engendered by Casting Forward (CF) in Seattle’s homeless and transitional population reaches a whole new level of therapy. Robb is typical of the men and women who have been rediscovering forgotten talents after years of addiction, living on the streets, or a myriad of other difficulties.

Robb, who casts from a wheelchair, went on to say, “The program teaches me that I can do all the things I used to do on crack, sober. I’m learning how to be patient,” he said between puffs on his menthol after bringing in his first trout.

Greg Crumbaker saw vets with deep wounds, both internal and external, find solace in Project Healing Waters (PHW). Through various channels, he heard about a program that settles homeless people into normal lives. The program is led by Downtown Emergency Services at Canaday House in Seattle. Putting two and two together as wise men often do, Greg decided to apply the same ideas for this population, many of whom are vets as well.

Housing First, the program that runs Canaday House, works under the novel theory that transients are best taken off the streets when restrictive sobriety rules are relaxed enough to get people in the program and taking advantage of counseling services. Surprisingly, the program saves money. The homeless often tax emergency services and jails. Homeless men and women safe and warm at Canaday House are a bargain compared to cold and sick in the ER or County Jail.

City officials estimate that Housing First saves the city \$4 million annually by keeping residents off the streets. But having a roof over your head is just the first step. Residents receive counseling and take responsibility for their lives in new ways. Here’s where Greg and the crew come in.

Starting last summer, Crumbaker arranged for WFFC members to tie flies with residents every Thursday evening at their downtown facility. Mem-

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bers **Brian Hata, Jim Macdonald, Mike Wearne, Per-Olav Christiansen, Warren Gibbs, John Prudden,** and **Maury Skeith** teach basic patterns, providing the tools and materials.

Volunteers are taught to leave their own agenda questions at home. However, Crumbaker points out that when these folks sit around and talk about challenges of tying and fishing, they talk of other things, “and that’s good.”

One resident who rarely said a word to the staff, first opened up to his instructor and now talks to counselors and other residents. “We do not understand the long-term social effects,” says Crumbaker.

The payoff comes when the residents load their fly boxes and head to Bill’s Pond. In early March, Casting Forward participants met WFFC members and some PHW alumni at the pay-to-play lakes near Orting. Club members set up rods and tied on fresh tippet for their guests by the “medium” pond as kids caught their first fish at the kiddie pool and large families watched dad bring home the bacon.

Bill’s Ponds is a “catch and *can’t* release” pond where anglers with spoons, worms, and flies cast to hungry plants in shallow water.

Ray, fishing on a fly tied by Laura, drew first blood and reeled in a five-pounder. He said of CF, “I like the companionship and learning to tie flies.”

Acknowledging the superiority of Laura’s fly tying, he gave the killer streamer back and Laura began deliberate and gentle strips of the line. CF allows her to “meet people outside of Canaday House that I would not normally meet,” said Laura.

One club member distracted Ray from helping Laura “too much” and Alan, a vet and participant with PHW, supervised Laura from a distance. Alan described his experiences at PHW as transformative. “At first it was one of those appointments I had to go to.” After three or four times tying, he “kinda fell in love with it. It helps my mind wander away from the pains.”

Alan, who at one time could only move his fingers and arms with difficulty, now stood next to Laura and patiently gave her tips on how to strip line. All of a sudden the water in the tennis court sized pond came alive and Laura’s rod tip dove as the rod bent.

With shaking hands at the reel, she slowly eased the rainbow toward shore while Ray got the net. Cameras clicked. After a short fight, Ray scooped up

a trout so large it bent the net handle. Standing with the rod in one hand and a big smile, Laura watched club members knock some sense into the big ‘Bow, and she waited eagerly by the scale to see it hang at 9 lbs.

Alan smiled. This was his second time helping CF. “These guys at CF and PHW are just great guys. I don’t mind sharing a little of my time because of what PHW has done for me.”

Roger, a wiry quiet guy, was the lone holdout as Greg doled out sandwiches. Roger ignored the lunch bell and kept on casting. **Warren Gibbs**, who was Roger’s guide for the day, gave him a little space and Roger went to work with enormous back casts into the pond behind him. He attracted more interest with his back cast than by his deliberate stripping. Taking a little advice, Roger sped up the strip and a 4.5-pound ‘Bow rewarded his patience. **Jim Macdonald** sprang into action with the net and a small bat, moving in for the merciful kill as Roger stared blankly. But success is infectious. As other residents and volunteers congratulated Roger, a slight smile developed as he stood for the camera.

Jeremy, a residential counselor, said, “fishing is one thing, fly-tying is way more important. The classes provide a stabilizing effect without being yet another counseling appointment.” CF creates a small community for people who generally keep to themselves. The fishing trip gets them into this community and out doing something, said Jeremy.

Although volunteers see the same residents every week, sharing personal details is discouraged. Greg instructs them to keep the conversations on fly tying and fly fishing. “There’s nothing in there that’s dangerous, so residents work on social skills.”

Robb, who took a second trout from his wheelchair with Jim’s casting help and a spring-loaded reel, stood up for the final fight leading Greg to joke, “we even heal the lame.”

If members are interested in Project Healing Waters and Casting Forward, give Greg Crumbaker a call.

REPORTS

Lake Lenice Report *by Mike Santangelo*

I arrived at Lenice Wednesday, March 2nd, around 11:30 am, and found the parking lot had only three vehicles in it. It was partly cloudy, no wind, and 45 degrees. In other words, very nice.

After setting up camp and getting my gear and pram to the lake, it was around 1:30 when I got a line into the water. The first cast was a takedown, but he unbuttoned himself. The next two casts each brought a fish to hand and then the tease was over. The dry spell started and the wind kicked up. However, it wasn't raining.

I think that there were three, maybe four, people on the water. I never really saw everybody at once, but considering that this was Opening Day, the lake was empty.

Water temperature ran around 38 - 40 degrees. After a while I figured out the pattern for catching. The fish weren't everywhere, nor were they in their usual haunts. Once you found them, it was two or three takedowns, and then it was time to move on. During the course of the afternoon I had nine come to the net.

I used a different technique for chromomiding. Instead of a single-hand rod, I went with an 11'



A Lake Lenice trout

5-weight switch rod and used a short Skagit head to launch the flies. It works really well. Better distance, the long leader turns well so no tangles, no false casts, nor a need to stand in the pram to try and position the line better. I thought it may be difficult getting the fish to the net, but there were no issues. In fact, I was able to play the fish further from the pram (and the anchor lines), and just pull the fish into the net when he appeared ready. One issue was that the Rio Skagit head has a bit of memory and doesn't lay out straight even after stretching it. Using an indicator, that doesn't make much difference. Without an indicator, the curves in the line would make it harder to see the take.

Day 2

Day 2 started out beautifully: no wind and clear skies. However, that quickly changed as a high overcast settled in, along with a persistent easterly wind. Wind from the west, fishing is best; wind from the east and fishing sucks. Takedowns were a long time coming and sometimes when they came, I wasn't paying enough attention. Around 2:00, the wind shifted to the west and fishing picked up a bit. However, the wind picked up later in the afternoon, and it was time to get off the water. I managed five fish for the day, around a fish an hour. All of the fish took the bottom fly, a size 16 blood worm that was positioned right on the bottom.



Lenice

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Day 3

Day three started out slow, but it must have been me. I watched a couple of guys dragging leeches doing pretty well. One of the fellows told me that they had done well the day before as well. The wind was down, the water calm. Bugs started showing around 11:30, kept up for about three hours, and then turned off. While the bugs were coming off, the fishing was good with a takedown every other cast or so, and around ten fish to hand. Some other folks were doing better at a certain spot, but there was a bit of a crowd there as the number of anglers had picked up. I am sure after this report, there may be even more, but what the hey.

Christmas Island, March 22-29

by Steve Raymond

This was my fourth trip to Christmas Island and **Randy's** second. Our flight from Honolulu was delayed because the flight data recorder on the Air Pacific 737-700 wasn't working, but they finally got it fixed and we arrived at Christmas more than two hours late. The delay actually worked to our advantage because it was after 5 p.m., and the customs staff was anxious to go home, so they waved us through without inspecting our bags.

When we arrived at the Captain Cook Hotel, where we always stay, it was nearly deserted. Only seven fishermen had stayed there the week before and only three the week before that. The other fishing operations on the island also are apparently suffering from a lack of customers. Everyone blames the economic recession.

Randy and I were the only Americans in our party of ten. The others included four guys from Denmark, an English or Irish girl married to one of them, two Norwegians, and a surgeon from Montreal. The Danes and Norwegians all spoke good English, but hung out together and didn't socialize much, so the French-Canadian doc became our only table companion.

The weather was less than optimal, with two days of heavy rain squalls, two days of high wind, and lots of cloud cover most of the time. That made

it difficult to see bonefish, especially for me, since I've lost nearly all vision in one eye. But most of our guides were very accomplished at seeing fish and thanks to them, we had pretty consistent fishing. The fish were exceptionally spooky, though, more so than I've ever seen them. The reason is a mystery; with reduced angling pressure, the opposite should have been true.

We finally got a break in the weather on our last day, with bright sunshine and little wind. We each got more fish that day than any other, and Randy had his best day ever. We both ended up catching more bonefish than we did on our last trip.

Randy caught the biggest. His guide said it would go 7 or 8 pounds. I got a couple the guide said would go 6 pounds, though I would have said 5. We also got several fish in the 3- and 4-pound class, but most of the bones we caught ranged from 12 inches to a couple of pounds, as they usually do.

Our best fly was a variation Randy tied on the Christmas Island Special. The variation was to add a couple of rubber legs to the pattern. What a difference that made! It was far and away our most effective fly.

The guides worked us pretty relentlessly. We fished eight or nine hours most days, walking and wading several miles in the process, and we were nearly worn out by week's end. But we thoroughly enjoyed the trip.

We also enjoyed the people of Christmas Island. I've always felt sorry for them—they are among the poorest people on earth, with little prospect of ever having anything more. Yet they also may be the happiest people I've ever met—a lot happier, I'd guess, than many people you and I know. That made quite an impression on us, and we left Christmas Island with the feeling that instead of returning to the "real world," maybe we were leaving it behind.

Cutts on Lake Sammamish *by Don Gulliford*

Launched at the State Park boat launch, 48 F. and sunny; about 2 miles down the lake past the weather buoy, the cutts started hitting our Tiger Perch and Frog patterns, the fish being about 15 ft. down in 90 ft. depth. Almost all chrome bright and stuffed with sticklebacks.

2011 Northwest Youth Conservation and Fly Fishing Academy

by Dick Brening, Youth Committee Chairman

This year the Northwest Youth Conservation and Fly Fishing Academy will be held from Sunday, June 19th, through Saturday, June 25th, on Hicks Lake in Lacey, Washington.

The academy is co-educational, for ages 12 through 16. The curriculum focuses on conservation, natural resource stewardship, and fly fishing essentials.

The cost including food and lodging is \$275.

This academy is hosted by Olympia Chapter, Trout Unlimited, and South Sound Fly Fishers, and is supported by the Washington Council, Trout Unlimited, and the Washington State Federation of Fly Fishers.

If you know of any youth who would like to go, please contact me as your WFFC Youth Committee Chairman, or contact Mike Clancy (360 753 1259) or Jim Brosio (360 943 9947). For more information, visit the website: <http://www.nwycffa.org>.

Reminder: Bring Your Fly for the WFFC Members Fly Plate!

by Gil Nyerges

In an effort to prepare a special item for the annual Christmas Party in December, I would like to request that each member (actives, associates, and seniors) submit his very favorite fly pattern to the Board by or before the October meeting. Dries, wets, streamers, nymphs are all welcome. It should be accompanied by the tyer's name, the name of the pattern, and the fish species that it is intended for (rainbow, brookie, sea run, native or Lahontan cutthroat, steelhead, salmon, or any of the larger saltwater exotics such as snook, dorado, sailfish, bonefish, permit, trevally, etc.). If a member is not an eager tyer, then buy a pattern, or ask your best friend to tie one for you -- the idea is to have every one of our 180 or so members represented.

In order to maintain balance in the presentation's appearance, there may be two fly plates. All patterns tied on trout hook sizes up to number 4 might be displayed on one plate, and larger patterns on larger hook sizes might be on a separate plate. That would be up to me as I see it developing.

Give your pattern to me, **Gil Nyerges**, or to **Rocco**. DON'T FORGET! This will be a very special collector's item.

In Hemingway's Meadow and Love Story of the Trout

Edited by Joe Healy

Reviewed by Mike Wearne

I noticed in a recent issue that the magazine *Fly Rod & Reel* had published a second collection of short stories in conjunction with their annual presentation of fiction with a fly fishing flair. Since 1994, the magazine has featured short stories and awarded a Robert Traver Award to the winning entry.

In Hemingway's Meadow was published in 2009; Love Story of the Trout was published a few months ago. There were 18 stories in the first edition and 15 in the second.

The stories in these books reminded me of Bruce Ducker's Home Pool, which was reviewed a couple of years ago. The stories are varied and do not necessarily focus on fly fishing.

The variety of contributors is surprising. Dave Hughes contributed the title piece to the second edition. Most fly fishers will recognize many of the authors: Pete Fromm, Scott Waldie, E. Donnall Thomas, Jr., Seth Norman, Charlie Gaines, and yes, Robert Traver.

The short stories are as varied as the passengers on the next bus you catch. There are stories of marriages gone bad, unsuccessful business ventures, the terror of a blue-water tarpon landing, and the quiet of a foxhole days before the end of a war. Most of the short stories are relatively short, 10 to 15 pages. One story is surprisingly long, 35 pages.

This story is titled "The Championship of Fly Fishing". This is an account of a world fly fishing championship event. Imagine the Super Bowl and the Masters combined into a fly fishing event. Think about a computerized reader board with scores, and fish embedded with microchips so that their response to the flies can be judged. Throw in some beer drinking, a wagering participant, and Scottish local police. All of the sudden you have the makings of a Carl Hiaasen novel!

You may just want to go to the basement, dig out your copies of *Fly Rod & Reel*, and read the old stories. Otherwise, check out these two books at your local fly shop. Both of these books are well worth the read.



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Stamp
here

April, 2011

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:

Doug Rose presents "Olympic Sea-Run Cutts"