

# Creel Notes from the



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



June, 2006

## President's Riffle

The Ghillies asked me to restate the dress code for our monthly general membership meetings. The dress code remains **Business Casual** except for the meetings in December and January. Members wearing "Beach togs" or other inappropriate attire should expect the Ghillies to net appropriate fines.

On Saturday, May 20<sup>th</sup>, **Perry Barth, Gil Nyerges, Alan 'Swede' Peterson** and his wife **Linda, Ron Mazurek**, and I attended the **Inland Empire Fly Fishing Club's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** celebration in Spokane. (Swede is a regular member of the IEFFC now that he lives in Spokane). The Club's formative meeting took place on February 2, 1956. In attendance at that meeting were **Hank Reynolds, Enos Bradner, Walt Johnson**, and **Dawn Holbrook** of the WFFC! There's a comment on page 43 of "Backcasts".

A very nice crowd filled the ballroom of the Red Lion by the Park hotel. There was a display of memorabilia the members had accumulated since the club was formed. We viewed the display and visited during the "Leader Soaking" Social Hour. After a delicious prime rib dinner, **Hugh Evans**, the Master of Ceremonies, took the stage and presented autographed copies of a special book, "Rise Forms from the Past", to **Gil, Ron, Perry** and me. The book is a masterpiece of the Club's history similar to our "Backcasts" book. It was written by **Tom Chapman** especially for the anniversary celebration. I had the honor of presenting two fly boxes to IEFFC president **Jerry Cartwright**. The boxes were handcrafted by **Dick Brening**. Each contained eleven flies from our past Boyd Aigner fly tying competitions.

The MC told some interesting stories from the "Rise Forms from the Past" book including one about the club's pioneering efforts at sterilizing trout to see if they would grow bigger and live longer. The current triploid process is a lot easier than what they had to do with scalpel, needle and thread, but they proved the theory was valid. They've done a lot of other excellent

work on the lakes and streams on the eastside. Then **Tim Behrens** regaled us with stories from Patrick McManus' books as only he can. It was a great evening!

Those of you who attended our May meeting will recall **John "Lucky" Townsell** describing a fly tying program at Ft. Lewis/Madigan Hospital. The program is similar to the "Healing Waters" article on page 33 of the Spring 2006 issue of Flyfisher magazine. The "Healing Waters" program is underway at the Great Lakes Naval Hospital. Lt. Col. Perry, Battalion Commander and a fly fisherman, thought that tying flies, fly casting and fly fishing would be good occupational therapy for war veterans who are recovering from wounds. He checked around and finally, through the FFF, made contact with the Evergreen Fly Fishing Club (EFFC) where Lucky is a member.

Recently, **Walt Swanson, Jesse Scott**, past president of the EFFC, and Lucky went to Ft. Lewis and met with the people there to lay out future plans. They expect to involve other clubs, **Don Simonson** for fly casting, and other members of the WFFC. They're also training the physical therapists there to tie flies (none of them knew how and now several are competent fly tyers!).

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They can work with their patients when we aren't there. Lucky is also a member of the Northwest Fly Fishermen Club and got that club to donate several bags of fly tying materials. A big WFFC Thank You to John "Lucky" Townsell for getting involved and following through with this very worthwhile project!

At the May meeting previous recipients of the **Dunker's Award** happily applied an appropriate amount of dihydrogen monoxide to First Vice President **Mike Wearne** as a reward for his unintended swim at the Lone Lake outing. Club photographer, **Jim MacDonald**, presented an enlarged photograph showing Mike standing in the lake. For some reason his canoe isn't in the picture.

The 2006 WFFC Roster has been published. If you haven't received yours or have corrections, please contact **John Schuitemaker**.

GO FISH! – AND write up a summary of your results for the Creel Notes. **Bob Birkner**

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## WFFC Program Schedule for 2006

June 20 – Phil Davis

July 18 – Ron Dion

August 15 – Swap Meet and Round Table Discussions

September 19 – Les Johnson

October 17 – TBD

November 21 – TBD

December 19 – Christmas Party

The following corrections should be made to the listed outings;

High Lake, Aug. 3 - 8 (delete this outing. The only High Lake outing is Scottish Lakes High Camp).

Scottish lakes High Camp. The correct dates are Aug. 19 - 23.

Also; Contact Ron Dion if you would like to participate.

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## An Interesting Post on [washingtonfly-fishing.com](http://www.washingtonfly-fishing.com)

My father was one of the founding members of the Okanogan Fly Club and they spent countless hours at Chopaka improving the campground. The informative signs, the water pump and the improvement to the camp sites are just a few of the things they did.

Five years ago, I had the honor of attending the last Okanogan Fly Club meeting at Chopaka. The club removed Chopaka from their yearly rotation of meeting locations because they could no longer get into the campground on a consistent basis. It was a very sad affair and also quite ironic. The club that for decades volunteered countless hours at that lake no longer had room to fish it.

## 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.

## On the Fly *By David Ehrlich*

May 16, 2006

Our President opened the meeting with the call of, "Good evening gentlemen, I'm **Bob Birkner**, your president for 2006." Guest introductions ensued with the guests returning fire on their hosts. Of note, **John Farrar** introduced **Les Johnson's** wife, Carol who then introduced Donna Roberts, wife of our speaker amidst the gentlemen of the club. Just to keep it in the family, Les introduced our guest speaker who warned us against eating too much in the unseasonable heat or we might get sleepy.

Bob started the fishing reports with tales of high water and hunkered down Dolly Vardens on Prince of Wales Island. Steelhead were brought to net. Lone lake reports were simple and direct: "I caught fish." **John Farrar** boasted on the "finest season since 1986" on the Sauk and Skagit. With passion, John asked members to contact fish and game and to stop planting hatchery trout on these rivers that enjoy wild fish while anglers enjoy wild scenery. Calls for stewardship on the Yakima followed along with requests to open up upper waters of the Columbia. Such optimism about the Skagit faced contradiction almost immediately. The message; get a guide.

More exotic fishing reports included bonefish down south, BC waters and other toney places. **Perry Barth** took us back to reality with tales of Washington State Ferry food poisoning, fly boxes left on bumpers, keys locked in the truck and no fish besides. Skunk! **Dick Brenning** gave the sad news about rare trout in Dry Falls. Yours truly contributed to the negative average, while Dick claimed two a day. Les remembered older days at Dry Falls so windy that float tubers had to walk home around the lake.

Bob called Perry front and center and awarded him the WFFC Skunk Certificate, for meritorious



non-catches.

Fines followed for infractions made along the way by other loquacious and self-serving fishing reports.

Induction for **Jim Van de Erve** included the usual call to service.



Bob showed us the lovely fly collections in Dick's hand crafted fly boxes containing expert flies that he and Perry will present at the Inland Empire 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration. Corrections to the roster were requested. Members who want a wooden name tag should contact **Pat Peterman** as soon as possible. The dunker award featured member of the board, **Mike Wearne** who was caught on camera dunking his canoe at Lone Lake.



The rogues gallery of former winners licked their chops and brought weapons of mass destruction (verified by the UN) to bear on his person.

Les introduced our guest speaker, Don Roberts, first editor of Fly Fishing magazine and local expert on Columbia Basin rivers. He started off by

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denying his “expert” status and then proceeded to show some wonderful slides. His favorite time for summer Steelhead starts in April and goes to New Year’s on the Sandy, Grande Ronde and John Day. He likes flies that pulsate. His basic patterns include articulated flies without weight. He prefers adjusting weight with multi tips. He shared photos of a number of quarry brought to hand by such flies. Chinook are another by product of early summer fishing.

After the Sandy, we headed up the Klickitat. August under cool weather and clear conditions can be very productive as long as the glaciers aren’t melting and cooling off the waters. Don prefers a two-handed rod to get long casts with bushy shores close behind. Fish hold in late summer in slick water.

The Deschutes gives up Steelhead and native Red Sides. Don prefers early and late fishing for salmon and holds up during the day fishing dry flies for trout. Late summer brings out the rattlesnakes. A staff is handy for warding them off and handling tough wades.

On to the Grande Ronde, three different rivers in one. The upper river flows through alpine zones, a middle canyon similar to the Yakima and then widens out into a big river in the lower section. With the structure of a trout stream, the salmon behave much like trout. Look for tents popping up to indicate fish on the run. Crowded waters require permission to join those in a run, heading at least 50 yards above and moving through the hole.

Lastly, the John Day receives salmon later than most because the farmers draw it down in the summer. Typically the fish come up a week after draw down in late

summer or fall. Access is tricky as ranch land is not always hospitable. As long as you stay below flood level, one is safe. Floating is allowed, but creates technical problems after Cottonwood take out because the falls impede boaters and its hard to carry boats out. Yet, the fishing is best between Cottonwood and the falls.

Our speaker received many questions reflecting years of experience on these and similar rivers.

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### **Fishing by the Book**

*By Mike Warne*

My grandson, Anders, is just over a year old. He is still too young to go fly fishing with me. He doesn’t know a baetis from a metro bus.

I anxiously await his growing to an age that we can spend time together on the Yakima or on the west side lakes. For the time being I am satisfied spending time with him sharing ice cream, stacking blocks, making truck sounds, jumping, and flying kites at Gasworks Park.

When I baby sit Anders I read to him. While he is awake I read Dr Suess and picture books. After he falls asleep, I read fly fishing books by James Babb.

James Babb, among his other achievements, is the editor of Grays Sporting Journal. He is the author of three fine collections of fly fishing essays. The books include Crosscurrents, Fly Fishin’ Fool, and River Music.

In his capacity at Gray’s Sporting Journal the author is invited on fly fishing excursions around the world. As a result, the reader is treated to a series of essays of fishing trips ranging from Cabo, the Gulf of Maine, Quebec, Belize, and Chile. Babb has an amazing ability to “put you in the center of the action”. These are delightful,

hilarious and thoroughly enjoyable stories.

Other essays discuss life during the dead of winter in Maine, the “call of nature”, and growing up in Tennessee. I tend to read during my bus commute trips to work. More than once I have burst out laughing, much to the distress of my fellow bus passengers. Apparently it is inappropriate to read books that provoke this sort of response in public!

Each of the essays includes a short introductory reference that can vary from a Woody Allen quote to a reference from Henry David Thoreau. This aspect of the essays and the literary references within each piece convinced me to start reading *Life in the Woods*. It certainly illustrates the depth of Babb’s knowledge and reverence for literature.

It is most enjoyable to read well written essays written by a thoroughly unapologetic fly fishing junkie.

Every so often Anders will slowly wake up, turn over and look out of his bed. What he sees is his grandfather slumped over and laughing uncontrollably on his bedroom floor. He will look at me for a minute or so, turn over, and go back to sleep. Anders has grown accustomed to this sort of activity and considers it normal when his grandfather reads in his bedroom.

Some time in the future; when he is grown and on his own, hopefully he will pick up one of these books and start to read a passage. The story may seem familiar, as if he read it before. He probably won’t even realize all of the pleasure his grandfather received from reading these essays to him so many years before. I know he will relish the essays in these three wonderful books.

*This month we only have pictorial reports. Either everyone who went to Chopaka got frozen fingers or hand cramps from catching too many fish.*



*Too many cooks? I don't think they spoiled anything.*



*Looks like the distaff side thinks things are just fine.*



*Telling it like it was.*



*A nice campfire sure felt nice!*



*Good thing he is not telling fish stories because he is surely not on the level.*



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here

## Meeting Announcement



Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month at The College Club, 505 Madison St.

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

June Speaker, Phil Davis

Phil Davis, executive director of the Hoh River Trust, will be our speaker. Phil's presentation is on the acquisition of 7000 acres of lower Hoh River property and what are the visions of the Trust members for it; nature trails, fishing and boat launch access, etc.