

# Creel Notes from the



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



June, 2012



## Good News!

What happened to the month of May?!?

I was admitted to the hospital on April 30<sup>th</sup>, the day before the WFFC Board meeting. Fortunately, the meeting went forward without too much of an interruption. I want to thank members of the board for

their efforts.

I hated to miss the May general membership meeting. Jack Mitchell is instrumental in planted that seed of enthusiasm for fly fishing. He guided a float trip down the Yakima and a trip to Issacson Lake early in my fly fishing "career". I have always admired his sense of joy about fishing.

There are two short pieces in this issue of Creel Notes concerning upcoming activities. One is the event at Rattlesnake Lake during Seafair. We will need to know who can help for this event, or who can contribute the use of a float tube, boat, etc. We will also need help on the BBQ portion of the event. The other item I want to mention is the outing to Scottish Lakes High Camp. This is a good event to include children.

From a very personal point of view, I received so many emails, phone calls, and get-well cards from club members. All of these messages helped me in my recuperation effort. Thank you so much.

It is good to be back!

Mike

## Seafair US Navy Club Activity

by Mike Wearne

This is an activity scheduled for August 4<sup>th</sup> on Seafair weekend. Basically the plan is that we would collect any Navy personnel who are interested in spending a day fishing in the morning of Saturday, August 4<sup>th</sup>, and take them fishing at Rattlesnake Lake. Then at a predetermined time, we will reassemble for a picnic of burgers, dogs, and fishing tales.

At the end of the day, hopefully we can present each member of the Navy with a "take away", i.e., a small box of flies. This means that club members will need to contribute a collection of basic flies to be distributed.

What I am asking of members is to set aside that first weekend in August, and join in a WFFC activity that has the potential of being a regular event.

I have asked Roger to put a signup sheet on the website. We have twenty guests coming to this event. Hopefully we can have twenty club members show up and participate. If you cannot make it, but can provide a float tube or waders, let me know.

Please call me if you have questions. Thanks.

## Inside.....

This Month's Meeting	2
On the Fly	3
Preston Singletary Honoreed	4
Chopaka Reports	4
New Member Candidate	6
Fly Tying with Youth	6
Scottish Lakes	7
Blair Alexander	7
Tackle for Loan	7

## This Month's Meeting: Stann Grater

Stann combines a lifelong passion for fly fishing and 15 years as professional fly fishing guide and fly casting instructor helping clients "Unlock the Mysteries of Fly Casting".

Stann has worked as an international fly fishing instructor for the Orvis Company since 1996, and has taught fly fishing at the Orvis Fly Fishing Schools located in Coeur d'Alene, ID; Manchester, VT; and Barnsley Gardens in Adairsville, GA.

Because of his experience and expertise, Stann is in demand as a Fly Fishing Instructor to some of the world's best fishing lodges: Vermejo Park Ranch, NM; Spotted Bear Ranch, MT; High Lonesome Ranch, CO; and Fernie Wilderness Adventures, BC. Just to name a few.

In March 2009 Stann joined Gonzaga University and Eastern Washington University as an Adjunct Professor of Fly Fishing. In July 2006 and 2007, Stann assisted the Government of the Bahamas with the Orvis Bahamas Certified Guide Program. Stann has been a licensed and insured guide in Washington since 1996, and guides the local waters in and around his home town of Spokane, Washington.

Meeting Fly Tyer: **Walt Swanson** will tie an extended body Callibaetis.



## Casting Lessons from Stann Grater

Stann Grater, our speaker for our next meeting on June 19<sup>th</sup>, is an Orvis certified casting instructor and is offering casting lessons on one of the lawns at the Seattle Tennis Club prior to the June meeting. He will have a video setup so you can get an immediate playback of your casting which can be critiqued. The cost is \$25 per person for this 1 to 2 hour lesson. Those interested should call **Bob Burdick** at 206-920-5948. He will provide rods, reels, and lines.

## 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.

## On The Fly *by David Ehrich*

Where's Mike?

With the aplomb necessary and his tie on straight, **John Gravendyk**, our First Vice President, opened the meeting to applause as he filled our President's shoes for the night. No guests were in attendance. John thanked **Steve Sunich** for his tying demonstration leading to a friendly exchange between rivals, with some claiming that Steve has moved well beyond "the Great One". Speaking of whom, without humility, Bob moved on to introduce our guest speaker, Jack Mitchell, from the Evening Hatch, who lead an informed presentation on the Klickitat and Upper Columbia.

Jack, his wife, and his stable of guides run over 150 trips a year on these "new" rivers. They have two lodges, one above the Klick and another on the Upper Columbia as well as a long-time guiding service on the Yakima. After sharing some trophy shots of the home waters, Jack moved on to his newer waters.

The Klickitat drains the south side of Mt. Adams and really qualifies as a glacial stream. It is a high-gradient river that flows through some of Washington's most remote areas. The salmon on the Klick rarely see sunlight so they fish well in the middle of the day. The Klick features catch-and-release steelhead as well as Coho and Chinook. The key is knowing how to fish in less-than-clear water. First off, don't assume that visibly muddy water from the road is as muddy as you think. If you get out of your vehicle, you'll find about two feet of visibility. Lucky for you, these salmon are fishable in high sunlight.

Cool nights (50 and below) mean clearer water in the morning. Under these conditions, wade low on the river in the morning, then drive upstream after lunch and find clear flush in the afternoon. Wading is best under 2000' cfs and the June 1 opening features fresh fish if you can get the right water conditions. Things mellow out in July, which makes for better wading and visibility.

There's some good water mixed in with class 4 rapids starting at MP 10, but Jack sees few anglers competing with the white-water guys. He starts most of his trips after MP 6, which features good water until it clouds up at MP 2. He pointed out a few

swing sections around MP 15 and MP 16 where any Joe can get in, swing a fly, and stand a good chance.

Jack fishes 80% Muddlers, both on dry lines and sink tips. Otherwise, he likes a purple bead head leech egg-sucking pattern and for low light, a char-treuse Muddler. He sees a few Chinook in cloudy water, good amounts of Coho, and hungry steelhead. Occasionally, trout dig in behind the spawners and fish well with egg patterns. But he rarely targets rainbow. Good times are had with stripping dries on this river. He also finds drift nymphing effective.

Jack showed us some successful two-handed casting and catching in a narrow fast section above the hatchery. His wife put a good fight up and managed to land an "Oh My God" times 20 sort of fish.

In review: learn your Glacier Cycle, fish char-treuse, and avoid the river Sept 15<sup>th</sup> to Oct 15<sup>th</sup>. When hunting season starts in October, the river opens up.

The Upper Columbia, two hours north of Spokane, is a year-long fishery. The regulations follow the rules at Lake Roosevelt even though it's really a river at that point. The best time of year is Feb 15<sup>th</sup> to April 20<sup>th</sup>, May 25<sup>th</sup> to July 30<sup>th</sup>, and September through the first two weeks of October.

Mixed in with wildlife, Jack owns a lovely place along the river and likes to take people out on boats in the spring between 50,000 and 70,000 cfs in power-jet sleds. Drifting is fine in the fall in lower, calmer water. He also takes in waders just below the town of Northport in the Spring and on Boundary road in the summer and fall. He showed us some handsome rainbows, some above 27", and nearly as wide around. In the big flow (above 200,000 CFS) catch the channels and current lines.

The hatch season is mid May through July, from PMDs to caddis to drakes. Big fish migrate up from Lake Roosevelt and residents thrive as well. Most are native with some landlocked steelhead, cutts, and rainbows. Big water is best for nymphing, usually targeting between the surface and 4 feet. The river is too big (usually about 25' deep) to nymph the big water, so he targets fish working bugs during a hatch. The summer is best with drifting, swinging, and retrieving soft hackle flies in the surface film. The crazy currents and back eddies make soft hackle deadly. The hatches make any season ripe for reward, but look for terrestrials in the fall along with Pat's Stone flies. Anything from 3 - 5 wt. works.

*(Continued on page 4)*

Jack ended the presentation with fly recommendations. To summarize: soft hackle and lower profile dries. Whatever you fish, retrieve whatever you use an arm's length at a time. They like the action. Questions from the learned gentlemen ensued.

From there, John moved us on to break with an advertisement for hot items, including a 2-for-1 guiding rate for one of Jack's ranch stays. Next **Bob Burdick**, "Master Fly Tier and Reformed Braggart", announced this year's winners from a high class of flies. He took comfort in the fact that he sat out this year because he thinks he might have lost to this year's competition. To that end, **Hugh Clark**, **Chuck Ballard**, **Ron Dion**, and **Walt Swanson** were each category winners. The Big Kauna of tiers this year is **Chuck Ballard**, who joins the elite on the plaque, an honor he has not enjoyed for ten years.

Fishing reports featured Osprey victimizing Hugh Clark's morning; Chuck Ballard fishing Rat Lake; I hooking up with three great hatches on Rock Creek in Montana during medium water in April; and **Robert Thorpe** fishing his heart out in Chile near Puerto Vargas.

I'm sure there was business conducted after the break, but I needed some sleep. We'll have to hope they got things right while Mike recovers.

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## Preston Singletary Honored

At its Ellensburg Conclave, the Washington State Council of the Federation of Fly Fishers inducted **Preston Singletary** into their Fly Tyer's Hall of Fame. Preston joins past inductees John Newberry (2007), Harry Lemire (2008), Steve Brocco (2009), Bob Bates (2010), and Darrel Martin (2011). Congratulations, Preston!



## Chopaka Lake, Memorial Day Weekend, 2012 by Dave Schorsch

What happens when 40 or 50 friends go fishing together? You have a really good time!

We had sunshine and dry weather for the whole weekend, for the first time in recent memory. The wind blew in every direction every day, and was even flat calm once or twice. The mayflies hardly showed at all, but the fish were looking for them anyway, taking dries of many types each day. The damsels picked up the slack though, building up to a monster migration and hatch Monday. I took about 18 fish on a yellow/olive nymph before switching to an adult pattern on top. It's amazing to watch the fish gulp the big cartoon fly. They kept smashing the foam fake as I drifted with the wind towards happy hour. What a way to wrap up the day!

Saturday Happy Hour was awesome, with the grill hot and side dishes galore. Members, spouses, kids, and guests outdid themselves with savory cheesecake (spicy, not sweet), meatballs, pasta dishes, etc., on top of the usual appetizers. Wine and beer flowed as meat was grilled and music played around the fire. Forty-two souls shared the evening and the sunset. A couple fishin' fools headed out to drag leeches in the dark, reporting much later that fishing was great! Mark and Ben did that every night, followed by beer and fire watching till late. I salute their bladder capacity!

Sunday breakfast was well-manned, and well-attended, with blueberry pancakes and sausages served up from multiple stoves to the hungry throng. **Dick Brening** and a cast of "several" did the heavy lifting. Fishing was pretty good, being the "in between" day that many of us regulars have come to expect there. You get one on a green nymph, one on a bivisible, one on a leech, etc. I got eight on a gold beadhead black leech on a full sinker, the fish liked a black ant all day under the bushes, too. A dozen fish later, you head for the party again.

The Sunday tradition at Chopaka has been "Tempura Night" for several years, and the crew did



an outstanding job this year. Slaving over a hot stove, Jim and Scott turned out terrific fish to a happy crowd. The side dishes were great, and the Bohlin Grilled Duck/bacon/jalepeno appetizers were awesome. More tunes, more fire, more fun. A couple fools went out late again and reported hot action all over the lake. I decided to try it again myself the next night.

Monday dawned bright and calm, only to turn into a howling wind after breakfast. A quick row (blow?) to the shallow end showed damsels hanging in the reeds. A pale damsel nymph did the trick and made the day. A dozen and a half fish later, I switched to a dry adult pattern and had fish gulping on top the rest of the day. Damsels were hanging on the reeds everywhere, and fish were taking "cripple" type emergers in mid-lake. A lot of the crowd had headed home by then, so we had the evening around our own campfires. Ron Little and I headed out at dusk to drag leeches. We hit three fish in ten minutes, and promptly knocked BOTH oars into the lake. It's hard to find black oars in the dark, so we rowed back in to shore with our rods and reels. Slow and embarrassing. But the fire and good company last night at camp made up for it. Ben found one oar on his way in, and the other was right behind the boat next morning.

Tuesday was cleanup, with lots of help! An uneventful drive home wrapped up a great Memorial Day weekend.

Thank you to all who helped, packed, cooked, played, hauled, set up, and took down. Couldn't have done it without you! You all made this a trip to remember!

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### Lost Camera: Ron Little

Ron Little lost an Olympus digital camera at the Chopaka outing. Did anyone find it?

## One Evening of Fly Fishing on Chopaka Lake *by Dick Brening*

Chopaka Lake was a mirror as I rowed my pontoon boat out from the shore and headed across the lake to the far shore. The wind had finally calmed, a change from the mixed, blustery weather since the WFFC Outing on Memorial Day weekend.

It was a Wednesday evening, mid-week, and yet almost every camp site was taken. The campground was brightly reflected in the water. My slow mooch while crossing the lake was uneventful, even though there were the occasional splashy rises that you often see on Chopaka at this time of the evening.

As I neared the far shore, I spotted a disturbance in the reeds near the water's edge, a fish working just under the surface. I cast a small Damselfly nymph, a simple olive marabou pattern tied on a size #16 TMC 2457, into the reeds near where I had seen the disturbance. The fish took it immediately and, luckily, it ran for the deep water, out and away from the reeds.

It was a great start for an evening of fishing. However, that was it for an entire hour just before darkness set in. Occasional splashy rises were seen, but no takers for my flies.

As the darkness began to take hold, I noticed splashy rises in the small bay area just to the right of the reed beds. I moved closer to be able to cover the area with casts. It was obvious the fish were actively taking a small surface hatching insect, but the darkness prevented me from identifying what insect was causing the excitement. I tried several mayfly dun patterns and a couple of other flies in my boxes, but the fish completely ignored my offerings. The insect



(Continued from page 5)

looked to be about 1/4 to 3/8 inches in size and a light tan color, but I found it very hard to see them in the low light level, and my efforts to catch one in the air was unsuccessful. In the last remaining light, I decided to tie on one of my size #14 emerger patterns that I had used successfully over the last few days during the Callibaetis hatch at midday. It worked. Over the next half an hour, I hooked and released five bows in the 18- to 19-inch range. Each a beautiful, bright, and strong fish. The fish were not bashful about taking the emerger pattern that I was using. I only wished I had tried it when I first saw the activity rather than when it was half over.

The action stopped just as abruptly as it began. I still am uncertain what insect they were taking, but I am pretty sure it was not a callibaetis. **Roger Rohrbeck** has suggested that “if they were mayflies, my guess would be *Caenis* (White-Winged Sulphur). They are by far the most populous stillwater mayfly, but are really small, and customarily emerge around dusk, so flyfishers rarely notice them.”

I headed back across the lake toward the campground, not bothering to mooch along the way. It was pitch dark. The campground was now alive with campfires, which by their reflection in the still water surface, made the crowd look like it had doubled since I had crossed the lake earlier in the evening. The sporadic splashy rises out on the lake were still occurring; however, their size seemed to have doubled also in the quiet of the night. *Caenis* (White-Winged Sulphur)... Hmm.

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## Vote on Prospective New Member at June Meeting *by John Gravendyk, 1<sup>st</sup> VP Membership*

JC Hungerford is being sponsored for membership in WFFC by Randy and Steve Raymond. Randy has this to say about JC:

“JC Hungerford was born in Arizona 29 years ago, but spent his formative years, at least from a fishing perspective, in Columbus, Montana. I have tried to expose him to a wide range of fishing experiences here in Washington, including winter steelhead on the Kalama (which he soldiered through with amazingly leaky waders), cutthroat on

Puget Sound, and the recent Dry Falls outing. JC is a much better fisherman than I am. He is kind enough to downplay that fact, and is also very polite regarding the small sizes and quantities of fish I have been able to direct him to thus far. He believes that steelhead exist because we once saw one from a distance. JC is one of the friendlier people you are likely to meet, and his youth and enthusiasm would make him a great asset to the club. He also appreciates good whisky and hoppy beer. He currently works with me as a civil engineer at Parametrix, and lives in Buckley with his wife Christie. They are expecting their first child in August (it’s a boy!).”

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## Fly Tying With Youth *by Bob Young*

On Saturday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, a number of WFFC members were in attendance at the Youth Fitness Expo at Comcast Arena in Everett. Our participation was put together by **Dick Brening**, who got us signed up and settled in. Dick and **Jim Young** went to Everett on Friday and set up our space. We had the WFFC information board set up with an additional banner advertising “Tie a Woolly Bugger - Cast a Fly Line”. Dick brought along enough tying gear for us to set up four tying stations and at times all our tying stations were busy with youngsters and even an occasional adult, tying flies.

Those in attendance besides Dick were **Jim Young, Chuck Ballard, Ron Dion** and his son, **Tim Dion, John Gravendyk, Gil Nyerges, Gary Bergquist, and Bob Young.**

The event featured plenty of displays and hands-on opportunities for young people to get a feel for quite a number of fitness-oriented activities. Some of the activities included were archery, rowing, lacrosse, soccer, dancing, and tumbling. There was



(Continued from page 6)

even a rock climbing wall set up out in front of the entrance. These all got plenty of attention and there was a steady stream of parents with youngsters in tow.

Our single booth space seemed adequate when we first got set up. However, our fly tying activity was so popular that the event management stepped in and rearranged the spaces on one side of our area to allow us to expand and set up a second table with more tying stations. Fortunately, Tim Dion lives in Everett and was able to run home quickly to get a couple of additional vices and two more sets of tying tools. Now we were able to have six tying stations to handle the crowd.

Dick had plenty of brightly colored material on hand including samples of Woolly Buggers in a plethora of color combinations, so the kids could pick any combination they thought was “pretty” such as orange tail, tan body with purple hackle or red tail, and white body with blue hackle. We saw some pretty strange color combinations.

The event manager had graciously set up a nice isolated casting space for us out in front of the arena. But since our casting area was not nearby, we didn’t generate a lot of interest in casting. We did break out the yarn demo rod and several kids did waft it back and forth in the aisle in front of our booth. This gave them the feel of actually casting a fly line. Those walking by didn’t seem to mind.

One young man, about 16, from Granite Falls asked specifically about casting. Bob Young demonstrated with the yarn set-up and then took him outside for a hands-on practice session. Bob felt the boy got the gist of it right away. He seemed quite interested in fly fishing and is very likely to pursue it further.

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### **Scottish Lakes High Camp** *by Mike Wearne*

The WFFC outing scheduled for August 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> is to Scottish Lakes High Camp. The club has sponsored several prior trips to this location. Scottish Lakes High Camp is located south of Highway 2 in the vicinity of Lake Wenatchee. There are several lakes within hiking distance to the main camp, including Julius, Donald, Eileen, Ethel, and Chiwaukum. The website is [www.highcamp@scottishlakes.com](http://www.highcamp@scottishlakes.com). The phone

number is 509.763.3044. Each club member planning on participating is expected to make their own reservations with Scottish Lakes High Camp.

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### **Blair Alexander, Nov. 21, 1930 - April 21, 2012** *by Bob Young*

On April 21<sup>st</sup>, long-time member Blair Alexander passed away after a struggle with a form of body dementia. Blair was born in Oakland, California, and was an outdoor enthusiast from a young age. He later earned a marketing degree and went to work for a sporting goods store in San Francisco. After getting married and starting a family, the family moved to Santa Rosa, California, where he was employed by the Sunset Line & Twine Company. There he led the development of a successful array of fly lines.

After a short stay in Oregon, the family settled in Seattle, where he continued working in the fishing industry. After his subsequent retirement, he was asked to fill in for a shorthanded staff at Kaufmann’s Streamborn Fly Shop, and soon became the manager of their Seattle store.

Blair was a knowledgeable and outgoing representative of the flyfishing sport. I fished with Blair on occasions, and will remember him as a kind, warm-hearted gentleman.

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### **Tackle for Loan** *by Bob Young*

Would you like to go to Florida and fish for Tarpon and Snook, or go to Baja and fish for Dorado or Roosters, but you only have trout and/or salmon gear? Well, I may have a solution to that problem. I have quite a few “large” rods and reels that I am willing to let members borrow for that rare trip to warm water fisheries.

I have a couple of 10 wts, an 11, and two 12 wts that I am willing to loan to club members. I also have a number of large saltwater reels, sorry no Billy Pates, that have served me well. The reels are an older Shakespeare, a Taurus, and a Hardy. They come with floating and intermediate lines and a fast sinker.

The last time I was in Loreto, Baja California, I hooked a 40 pound Dorado that I didn’t have the stamina to get to the boat. I told my guide that 20 pounds was my new size limit.

So if you need some gear let me know.



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Stamp  
here

June, 2012

### 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:

Stann Grater presents: "Unlock the Mysteries of Fly Casting".