

Creel Notes from the



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



August, 2006

This is a good time for you to visit some of our local fly shops to obtain the materials you need for those new patterns you are working on. Then you'll need a new rod, reel, and line to give the patterns a fair test, right? Why support the local shops? Well for one thing they support our Raffle Master, **Dave Hawkinson**, in his quest to provide top notch items for the raffles he sets up for us. I've noticed new flylines and hand tied flies just to name a couple of the items. Of course a lot of you have been visiting those shops all along and that's great!

I've heard and personally observed that fish catching wasn't as good as in past years at HiHium Lake, B.C. this year. I caught 46 this year as opposed to 127 last year. When the catching is off it's time to try new patterns, etc. That's why I was reminded to mention our local fly shops.

There was a full moon to contend with this year... So now I'm re-reading Bernie Taylor's book, **Biological Time**, and rescheduling for a trip during a new moon.

As I mentioned at our June meeting we've been invited to participate in the Northwest Women Flyfishers' October meeting for a slide show of Winslow Homer's work. The meeting is on the third Tuesday so the current plan is to hold our regular membership meeting at REI in October. Committee reports will be made in the Creel Notes or postponed to November.

Here are some comments stolen from the Internet:
Winslow Homer grew up in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and is acknowledged today as one of the world's greatest watercolorists. He

served as a pictorial correspondent during the Civil War, participating in several Union campaigns. About this same time, he began painting in oils. What is not so well known was that fly fishing was Homer's passion. More than 50 of his fly fishing paintings were brought together for the first time for a showing at the Amon Carter Museum in Forth Worth, Texas. "Homer fished and painted, working out of exclusive clubs in the Adirondacks in up-state New York, as well as in Quebec and Florida. He aimed to sell his paintings mostly to affluent fishermen. Homer sold his paintings for \$75 to \$150 at the time, pictures that a century later have brought as much as \$4 million. That's partly because of the painter's reputation as a major American artist."

Mel Kreiger said, "Homer knew his fishing as well as his painting. Fly fishing is kind of a genteel thing. It's kind of a... it's kind of a dance. It's a quixotic little game that we play that... that's hard to capture. It was a really nice experience walking around at the show, even though I'm not, you know, I'm not an art critic or anything. It just made me feel very good. I could relate to this guy.

Bob Birkner

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At the July membership meeting, President **Bob Birkner** proudly announced that the Federation of Fly Fishers has honored **Don Simonson** with appointment to the lofty position of Casting Board of Governors. For those unfamiliar with Don's accomplishments, and even those who are, should note that this recognition is fitting and among the highest of honors granted to anyone in our sport.

Don has been leading the WFFC charge for fly casting education in Seattle for many years now, tirelessly putting in many hours of preparation and instruction for both advanced and beginning casters. He has written articles regarding casting technique, published in our own Creel Notes and in other publications as well. Don has been instrumental in educating several WFFC club members on their way to attainment of FFF certification as Instructor and Master Certified Instructor.

Don's compatriot's in the Casting Board of Governors include such noteworthy folks as Joan Wulff, Mel Kreiger, Tim and Steve Rajeff, Al Buhr, Al Kyte, Simon Gawesworth, Gary and Jason Borger, Bob Jacklin, all legends in fly fishing and fly casting. Don's commitment to The Federation of Fly Fishers is further noted by his Life Membership.

Congratulations, Don, on an honor well deserved. The WFFC salutes you and the endless energy you contribute to our sport. You bring respect to our club and the art and science of fly casting.

Craig Koepler

AUGUST MEETING ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS AND GARAGE SALE

Our August meeting will have four round table discussions. **Preston Singletary** will talk about coastal cutthroat fishing in fresh water. **Leland Miyawaki** will discuss beach fishing. **Nathan Keen*** will provide tips on trout fishing the Yakima River in the fall. **Les Johnson** will take you through the saltwater tackle he uses for fishing from Alaska to Baja.

There is also the annual garage sale, so bring serviceable stuff that you no longer need but leave the junk at home. Bring items that have been used but not abused. Have them priced and ready to go. You may also want to bring enough change to take care of purchasers who bring \$100 bills.

Les Johnson, Program VP

*Nathan is coming off of a bout with mononucleosis but is hoping to fill his chair for the roundtable.

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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.

Fishing by the Book

A review by Mike Wearne

Every so often I am able to discover another wonderful fly fishing book. Although the book may have been in print for some time, it is new to me. This experience is similar to discovering a special spot on your favorite river, which may have existed for centuries, but it is new to you.

Some time ago Walt Walkinshaw gave me a package of fly fishing information. Included in the package was a series of book reviews by Letcher Lambuth. This collection of reviews was prepared for the Washington Fly Fishing Club in 1943. There was also a collection of photographs of flies by Letcher Lambuth. I copied the photographs and the book reviews and put both books in the library.

The last item in the package was the book, A Leaf from French Eddy by Ben Hur Lampman. This book is a gem!

There are seven pieces in the book. I hesitate to call them prose; it is more like poetry. The pieces are similar to a meditation on a general topic. The writing reminds me of the nature writing of Robert Travers' Trout Magic or Aldo Leopold's A Sand Hill Almanac.

Here are a couple of short selections from A Leaf from French Eddy:

"The proper sauce for trout, of course - the one requisite sauce - never appears on the platter. It is finely and inimitably blended of the wind in the cedars, the ceaseless gurgle and gossip of the stream, the odor of clover, perhaps - or of wet leather - the chill of a forest twilight, and a pervasive, healthful weariness that is itself a blessing."

or.....

"In a world too often open to criticism, for this reason or that, it has been providentially arranged that anglers never should grow up. This in itself is compensation for many a trouble and great variety of disappointments. For having tasted the freshness of a morning in mid-April, along some stream where leaps at least an occasional trout, what angler is not the younger for this? An eagerness that causes his fingers to fumble with line and leader, that dispatches a pleasing nervousness from head to heel, is the earnest of that zest for living which is lost, or, mostly at

the crossroads of boyhood and maturity by all save anglers and other excellent fellows."

My father passed away last December and we waited until January to have a memorial service. I am the oldest of the children; as such I spoke for the family at the service. My father had Alzheimer's the last few years of his life. Because of this I chose to read a part of Lampman's poem "What Could I be Forgetting?" from the book by the same name. It was a perfect way to end the service and remember my father.

Thanks Walt.

WFFC Fly Tier's Round Table *By Dick Brening*

Fly Tiers ... our Round Table will starting up again in September. It will be on the 2nd Wednesday, September 13th, 7 to 9 PM.

Summer has probably depleted your fly supply, so use this opportunity to begin to restock. The tying theme for this month will be to tie the fly that has worked the best for you this last year. I look forward to seeing a lot of variety. Come to tie or just kibitz.

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.



July 21-27, 2006 Domke Lake (above Lake Chelan)

By Don Gulliford

Weather fabulous for 6 days, especially for swimming in this 2200 ft. elev. gin clear creek fed lake. Rainbows and cutts in 16" range on black Spratleys or Careys with green bodies, but since July down deep around 40 ft or more-good for my new sink tip line. Virtually nobody at or on lake, perhaps due to \$200 round trip airfare or \$59 boat round trip also from Chelan - plane advantage is ability to take lots of coolers/ice and assorted luxuries. Ospreys and eagle residing this summer. Click Creek fire above Moore Point started Wednesday afternoon and I flew over fire when I left on Thursday afternoon, seeing CH-46 Chinook and Huey dropping water right along shore of Lake Chelan--wind running fire put huge clouds up so fast and high they looked like thunderheads. True Life Adventure Trivia: As reported a few years ago, I had a ruddy duck float into my float tube on Merry, *asleep*, and rudely awakened with a BOO! when alongside--two immature goldeneyes floated in to where we were standing in Domke casting...avian innocence.

Wenaha Canyon July 15-22. *by Hugh Clark*

Dave Erich led **Hugh Clark**, **Maurice Skeith** and **Marvin Young** into the canyon for a six night and 26 mile hike. Northwest Flyangler described this destination in a spring issue. After an eight hour drive, the three of us met Dave in Troy, Oregon, where the Wenaha River joins the Grande Ronde. Dave was just finishing a 2500 mile motorcycle trip and was ready for hiking and fishing. We stayed and dined at the modest but friendly Shilo Inn and they arranged to ferry us to the top of the canyon to Elk Flat. We

put on our packs and headed down to the "forks" where the north and south forks meet. We stayed there for two nights and then in three additional campsites down stream, hiking 5-6 miles per day.

On the upper river three bull trout were caught and released; the largest was 20 inches. Each day the fishing got better, but almost all our fish were 6-10 inches, and included steelhead smolts and rainbows. Mid and down river we each caught 20-30 of these small fellows each day, with an occasional 10-14 incher. A fourth 18 inch bull trout was also released.

The river is easily wadeable and in fact crossable in most areas. Long riffles are punctuated by beautiful holes up to estimated eight feet deep. Successful flies included stimulators, other stone imitations, caddis, hoppers, and beadhead nymphs. One bull trout took a crayfish imitation. The trail varied between easy and clear in ponderosa forests, tougher in densely brushy areas where the trail is near the river, and 3-4 100-300 foot climbs up the canyon walls each day, often on loose scree.

Our major danger was the very high temperatures!. We would rise early, hike from 7:30 to around noon, and each day the last two hours of hiking were in 90 degree bright sun. The last day when we reached Troy it was 102 degrees. Regular attention to drinking was very helpful in keeping us on our feet. September would be a far better time for this hike, but other commitments dictated our choice.

Ornithologically the area is rich. Seen and/or heard were osprey, golden eagle, red tail hawk, black headed grosbeak, robins, red-eyed vireo, flickers, Swainson's and hermit thrushes, yellow and yellow rumped warblers, wood peewee, dusky flycatcher, olive sided flycatcher, cordilleran flycatcher, rufous throated hummingbird, towhee, cedar waxwings, dippers, rock wren. winter wren, vaux's swift, redbreasted nuthatch. Puzzling were ten to fifteen birds at the lodge feeding on insects put up by the grass sprinkler. Al-

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though I got very close, it was dark. Say's phoebe was my best bet, but I have never seen them so concentrated before.

Grand Ronde River, July 12-13 *By Dick Stearns*

Not exactly ideal conditions, weather-wise: the temps were over 100, but what the hey, the river was there and we were passing through anyway. We had reservations at the Hells Canyon Lodge on the Snake and had a day to kill, so we drove upriver from the SR129 Bridge and found the WDFW access sites virtually empty. By nightfall it was cooling to a tolerable level, so we pitched our aluminum tent and with low expectations, I strung my rod with a dry line. There were lots of periwinkles clinging to rocks and since there was a full moon, I figured a salmon candy pattern might work early in the morning after the trout were keyed on the nocturnal caddis hatch.

And I was right. On my first cast before the sun was illuminating the hills high above the canyon, a bright 12" rainbow inhaled the fly on its upward arc, clearing the water and self-setting the hook. Several casts later yielded almost as many, ranging from 10 to 14 inches, all nickel bright without any characteristic color save for a slight blushing around their gill covers. After stopping by the camper for morning coffee and my usual and accustomed peanut butter toast, I finished out the morning experimenting with hopper patterns, after observing their flurry about my feet as I walked back to the river. As the sun reached the water, and the temperatures started climbing back toward 100, my enthusiasm for stumbling along the shore without a wading staff soon diminished and I declared my fishing day to be a success.

Loreto, Baja California *by Bob Young*

On Sunday, July 30th a group of about 26 anglers arrived in Loreto. There had been glowing reports of good fishing. The targeted species was the fabled Dorado. These fish are also known as Dolphin in Florida and Mahi Mahi in Hawaii. They get to be big brawling fish up to 80 pounds (usually caught by gear guys fishing with 12" mackerel) but fortunately in our group only about 8 fish in the 40-50 pound category were hooked. I say fortunately because in the very warm, humid climes of Baja a long struggle can be very draining.

The origins of this trip started under the tutelage of **Les Johnson** during his days at the Swallows Nest. The group leader for the last couple of years has been Peter Hylander. Peter owns and operates a company called Seattle Saltwater and has been enjoying this fishery for many years. **Perry Barth and Gil Nyerges** were paired up until Gil had to withdraw because of back problems. Perry could not be deterred. Other Northwesterners composed the majority of the group and all are primarily fly fishers.

In recent years the fishing had been pretty slow for Dorado but Sailfish, Marlin, Bonita and Rooster fish picked up a lot of the slack. This year the Dorado were back in force. Reports had circulated that everyone was catching fish of substantial size. The number of rods broken demonstrated the indisputable evidence of this. The group before us had broken 17 or 18. Our folks turned out to be slackers in this regard as I think we broke only one or two. Maybe we were just better fishermen.

Over the decade that I have been going on this trip things have improved dramatically. Almost all of the boats are now "super" pangas of about 24 feet with well finished, clear of obstructions, interiors. Most have 75-100 hp Mercs or Yamahas. The guides are pretty much tuned in to the desires of fly fishers and our intense desire to hook up while casting to fish and our in-

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clination to catch and release. Some are still using the nets our group supplied several years ago. The week started out on quite a downer. Six or seven of us had our luggage misplaced by Alaska Airlines and didn't get our fishing gear until Tuesday evening. We had all been subjected to the stupid rules restricting the transport of hooks and lines in carry-on. As those experienced in this form of combat fishing (actual combat with the big fish), most everyone had brought along extra rods and reels and collectively pooling our equipment we were able to get everyone out on the water. Personally, I had planned on providing gear for Perry and had rods enough for that purpose but my reels and flies had not arrived so they had to come from other 'compadres'. But it all worked out.

My usual partner, Dick Webster, who lives over in Victor, and I switched with Perry and his designated partner, who was also a newbie, for the first two days to get them up to speed on the fishing, the guides, the schedule and the boats. After two days they were on their own.



Perry caught on quickly

The day starts off with a wake-up call at about 5AM. A buffet breakfast is served at 5:30 and the boats are on the beach in front of the hotel at 6. The boats then head down by the marina lights to have live wells filled with 'sardinas' that are used for chum and then head out in different directions depending on the guide's recommendation and species sought after. The guides have anchored a couple of buoys out about 10 miles. These serve as fish magnets and many boats head directly there; and usually there were fish there. Before too long there may be as many as 20 boats milling about in the area. We began calling these gatherings as 'rodeos'. But it turns out that after all this action of fish fighting and feeding frenzy, things begin to fizzle out and boats tended to drift off trolling for another hook-up. This often resulted in more 'amigos' arriving to see what the commotion is. Tossing out a few 'sardinas' and a feeding frenzy starts again. The second fisherman in the boat usually then hooks up also. Our 'pangero' or guide, occasionally picked up one of the unused rods, flopped out a fly and bang, we would have a triple. What a fire drill that was. One time I was handed a rod while I already had a fish on. Reaching with my free hand, it turned out the two fish were going in opposite directions and I had two 12 weight rods, each pointed across my body. After releasing one fish, we got things back under control.

In the last few years many of the boats have acquired radios the guides talk back and forth about where fish are located. This would occasionally result in a new 'rodeo' with a number of boats gathered in a group. When this would happen, it was not uncommon to see several boats with double hookups and 15 to 20 pound flashing dorado jumping all over the place.

Dorado are super strong and fast and often make 100 to 150-yard runs usually leaping several times. The jumps are spectacular and sometimes quite a ways from

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where your line is pointed. When they get near the boat, they often sound, taking a full line straight down. This means a lot of work to power them up to the surface again because when they turn on their side they are difficult to move and it is here that most rods are broken. After this it is usually time for a break and some serious rehydrating.



This was my largest fish. About 35 pounds.

The fishing day ends about 12:00 or 12:30, arriving back at the hotel beach about an hour later. After a cold drink and a quick shower, everyone gathers on the patio for lunch. After that it can be a stroll uptown for some shopping, a visit to the local fly shop, a trip to the pool or just a siesta. A walk up to the local ice cream parlor is real treat. Great stuff. After dinner folks gather out in front of their rooms to repair tackle, sip some scotch or just tell stories. One such story involved the breaking of a rod on a huge squid, some of which range up to 50 pounds in this area.

The largest Dorado of the week was taken by the smallest member of the group. Peter Hylander's wife Maureen (Mo)

brought one pushing 50 pounds to the boat. Several other folks got fish of 35 pounds or more but the average size was around 15 or 20 lbs.

As there were some billfish in the area some folks spent time specifically chasing them. One was teased up with a teaser and at the right time the teaser was yanked and the cast fly presented. An 80-90 pound marlin was hooked and brought to hand.

As everyone had such a great week, when none of the luggage showed in Seattle on our return, it didn't matter much. We just sat around smiling waiting for the next flight, which arrived about an hour later with our stuff.

What a wonderful year it was to go to Loreto. The fish were in "big time" and it was a week for the "memory book". Dorado are beautiful, strong, and melt backing off your reel in big chunks in a matter of seconds. Many times when my partner Paul Meissner and I were part of the "rodeo", we had doubles and looking around at the dozen or so other boats, every Panga had a fisherman playing a fish and many of those were doubles. The fish were mostly 15 to 25 pounds, although our group did get some larger fish.

It was an economical trip that is a package with almost everything included. If you are interested in doing some warm water fishing next year, I suggest that you talk to Bob Young who can answer every question you might have. I almost forgot, the marine life is spectacular. And the brown Pelicans are real clowns and are hilarious to watch.

Perry Barth

More Photos from Baja



Two anglers casting from a Super Panga



Colorful fish



Dick Webster of Victor, WA with big 'un.





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here

August 2006

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

This month is our annual round table discussions and garage sale. Find out more on page 2.