

# Creel Notes from the



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



October, 2004

## President's Riffle *By Jim McRoberts*

**Catch 22:** You have read the book, seen the movie or heard the phrase. That is the dilemma for the steelhead fishing in the Upper Columbia River, the Methow River in particular. Since the steelhead are ESA listed you are not allowed to "take" a wild steelhead. However, there are plenty of hatchery fish to keep. The problem is that when 12 wild steelhead have been "taken" the **season is over**. WDFW is using a 5% mortality rate on "Catch-and-Release". This translates to 240 wild fish released. If we release hatchery fish so we can say we caught and released **22** steelhead in a day, a certain percentage of those are used to calculate the mortality for wild fish. WDFW wants you to take your two hatchery fish and quit so the season will last longer. You can come back several more times for hatchery fish and still release the occasional wild fish.

Dry Falls was tough! About 25 members and families attended. We also had two from the Evergreen Club join in the festivities. Thanks to **Mark DeWitt** and all his helpers it was a success. Thanks to all who brought **good stuff** to eat! The "Aquarium"

was shallow and muddy from the rain and wind on Friday night. However, the far end of the south arm was clear but also shallow. I fished there with **Gil** on Saturday morning and we each took a fish on, what else, a **Gil's Monster!** That was it for me. I tried other spots in deeper water but nothing! Sunday I went to Rocky Ford and was totally humiliated by uncaring fish! I heard of fish being caught on *pieces of lint* (# 22 BWO's). **Ron Pera** showed me a *speck of lint in his fly box* that caught a fish! I heard from Ron Little that he heard of a 5 pounder caught on a red and olive bloodworm. I will not give up. I shall return!

When you invite a guest please inform them of our dress code. We do not want them to feel embarrassed or out of place. **The December and January meetings require coat and tie.**

The last outing for this year, is **the famous "Wet Buns" bouillabaisse extravaganza!** It will be November 13-14. Make plans now!

The "Silly Season" is almost over. Remember to vote on November 2nd. You have to vote in order to be eligible to complain, if you are unhappy with the results!



**Wet Buns is coming!**

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## Northwest Casting Expo Results for 2004

On Saturday, September 26, the WFFC sent two teams of fly casters to compete in the Northwest Fly Casting Expo ("NWFCE") sponsored by the Washington State Council of the Federation of Fly Fishers. This was the fourth year of the event. WFFC Team A was comprised of **Steve Sunich, Craig Koeppler, Ed Sozinho, and Richard Embry**; WFFC Team B was comprised of **Tom White, Kris Kristoferson, Nathan Keen, and Chuck Ballard**.

The weather conditions were nearly perfect, and although the WFFC fielded two individuals who placed first in a category, for some reason most of the casters that day didn't perform as well individually as expected. However, the WFFC teams overall did well. WFFC Team A took first place in the Team Distance category; WFFC Team B placed first in Team Accuracy. Team A also repeated as the Overall Team winner.

Individual Accuracy and Distance winners from the four categories of casters (youth, seniors, women, and men's) competed at the end of the day for Overall Individual winner. **Tom White**, as the Senior Accuracy winner, and **Ed Sozinho**, as the Men's Distance champ, represented the WFFC. Ed was the returning Overall Individual winner from the 2003 NWFCE. The competitors ran through the new Danish Games course, eliminating a person at each station (see below). At the end of the event, **Ed Sozinho** lost in a close contest to the overall winner. Congratulations Ed for your fine finish!

New to the Expo was an event titled the Danish Games. Various casting stations were set up to emulate actual fishing conditions, with low score (fewest casts to achieve the various station objectives) determining the winner. At the end of the day **Richard Embry** was tied for first place in this event. Unfortunately, the Games stations were dismantled before the tie was discovered, so Richard and his opponent cast for distance to determine the winner, with Richard eventually losing to his opponent.

The WFFC was well-represented individually and by its teams. Congratulations, men!

## 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 work to the outlawing the use of salmon eggs in any form during the regular trout season.
3. To promote and work for the betterment of trout streams and lakes.
4. To encourage and advocate the conservation and increase of trout in state waters.
5. To promote a campaign of education against pollution in streams, lakes or Sound waters of the State of Washington.
6. To encourage and assist boys — particularly of high school age—to become fly fishermen and true sportsmen.

# REPORTS

**Crumbaker, Hata**, my nephew Josiah and I hiked into Wells Grey for five days of fishing on several of the feeder lakes to Myrtle Lake, a lake that many club members have portaged into in the past. The road to the trail head at 5000 feet is now impassable to cars and trucks, but passable by ATV. We found a young man who would transport our packs and inflatable rafts to the trail head, and speed our access to the trail head. We have remarked the trail to these little used lakes so we made good time in, inflated our rafts at the main lake, loaded ourselves and packs onto our rafts and paddled a mile to our wonderful campsite. No bugs, lots of rain especially at night, ospreys, loons, a goshawk, chestnut backed chickadees and nightly barking by pine martens who make it impossible to keep fish over night. Fishing was outstanding with wet and dry flies for kamloops trout in the 14-20 inch range, a few smaller fish. Every one got a fish 20 or more inches. On our best day Josiah and I each got 28 trout. The company was excellent, the cuisine improves each year. Crumbaker produced fresh hot chapattis for hors d'ouvres, and wild blueberry pancakes for breakfast. Fermented black bean and garlic sauce, and anchovy butter sauce livened up our daily dinner of very fresh trout. The lakes are in wonderful shape and with the highest water level I can remember leading to large very well fed fish.

## **Methow River** by *Leland Miyawaki*

Ryan Petzold and I fished Tuesday and Wednesday. We camped up Black Canyon and were on the water at 8:30am. I caught my first steelhead on a waked #6 Muddler at nine. Ryan picked up a couple swinging wets. I woke up another on a waked Turks Tarantula and missed a nice fish on a Waller Waker later in the evening.



*Ryan Petzold with Methow Steelhead*

We were fishing up around milepost 16 - 18. We took any and all dirt roads that weren't marked private and found tons of access, and hardly any fishermen. The fish are spread out all the way to Twisp, according to a the checker we spoke to.

Wednesday, I hooked three fish and landed two on dries before 11:30. Ryan also hooked three and landed two. The checker said we were the only ones catching fish! We each landed a wild fish just before we pulled up stakes and headed home at 5pm.

We both used floating lines and swung flies. I ended up with nine fish on with five to hand. Ryan did even better than I and also lost a hot wild steelhead that ran upriver into his backing and wrapped on a rock on the way back down.

## **Cowlitz River Report, September 29**

*By Leland Miyawaki*

Ah, the lowly and much-maligned Cowlitz - killer of wild fish and stuffed with hatchery brats! Fellow member, **Brian Lencho** and new-member-to-be (hopefully), Ryan Petzold, and I jetted around the Cow for a day. Unbelievably, we saw only two other jetboats, three driftboats and two pontoon boats in the waters we fished.



*Brian Lencho with a Cowlitz steelie*

We fished all the good flywater from Blue Creek down to Massey. It was a day for catching numbers. We took three steelhead, one king, one coho - all on swung flies as well as a couple dozen cutthroat. The largest cutts ran between two and three pounds and were caught in the heavy "steelhead water."

## **Adventures in Beach Fishing for Coho, Oct 2004.** By *Dick Stearns*

As the early fall runs of large Coho funnel through Johnstone Strait and Discovery Passage from

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Alaska, they school along the shoreline stretching south of Campbell River, attracted perhaps to the hint of fresh water from springs filtering through the gravel left by the receding Comox Glacier. It's a pretty place, the Comox Valley; a place we decided to visit for the summer in our motor home as we explored the rest of the Island in our Honda Element. It was here that I learned of these runs of Coho from a weekend neighbor in our RV park:

"This beach fishing is becoming great sport, particularly for the Coho and Pinks" said Dave Blamire, who just happened to be a senior member of the Comox Valley Fly Fishers. "When you tie into a big Coho from shore, it's a whole different ball game than from a boat as they don't want to come into shallow water and they'll make their case with long, screaming runs into your backing."

And indeed, when the fish started showing up, they seemed reluctant to school closer to shore in water less than ten feet deep. With gradual sloping gravel beaches, this meant wading out as far as possible, then casting as far as one's skill would allow. Shooting heads seemed to be the line of choice amongst the experts, and I was impressed with their casting skills, considering they had to haul sideways to keep their arms from flailing the water. Stripping baskets were sometimes helpful, but cumbersome, so twenty foot loops of running line held in one's teeth seemed the best method of shooting casts to fish rolling tantalizingly and just exactly out of reach, except to the deepest wader and/or longest caster. Now if this wasn't complicated enough, consider this: Every other hour the Powell River Ferry steams by, leaving a wake that sends everyone ashore lest they swamp; so it's a good time to rest arms, change flies and otherwise do a bit of socializing until the surf subsides.

It was on returning from one of these shore excursions, that I must have stepped through the loop of my running line. Not noticing my predicament until my first cast when, as luck would have it, a large hook nose male took my fly just as it hit the water and the line came very tight...through my crotch. Now it's easy to look back and figure how to land this fish gracefully: just play him off the reel with the line going into the stripping guide over, say, my right shoulder. Simple enough, but in the heat of battle I was more interested in getting my foot out of the loop...so to speak. Mercifully, in my struggle to get ashore whilst demonstrating a few clumsy pirouettes, the leader parted and I was able to reel the offending loop onto the reel without further embarrassment.

I glanced sheepishly at the row of fishers observing from their driftwood log, but if they no-

ted...and I'm sure they did...they didn't let on. Just one more thing I like about Canadians, I guess.

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### New Member Voting This Month

#### **Pat Peterman**

Sponsors - **Les Johnson** and **Mark DeWitt**

Pat began fly fishing with his father and (more usually) with friends while in high school on the North Fork of the Coeur d' Alene River. He is pretty much a self-taught fly fisher and is paying for some of those early casting mistakes now.

In the last five to seven years, Pat has become increasingly interested in fly fishing. He enjoys discussing flies and techniques, attending seminars and conferences, and reading an expanding range of material, and most importantly fishing.

Wants to serve on Education Committee.

Pat's other interests include cycling, backpacking, boating, camping, hiking, scuba, downhill and cross country skiing. He is a former assistant Scoutmaster and teaches MOFA (Mountaineering Oriented First Aid) for the Seattle Mountaineers. Pat would like to learn more about fly tying, environmental rehabilitation and historical preservation. He would also like to serve on the Conservation Committee and aspires to be our bartender!

#### **Peter Crumbaker**

Sponsors - **Greg Crumbaker** and **Andy Hall**

Peter is 26 years old and is the son of **Greg Crumbaker**. Peter's dad got him started fishing when he was eight years old and then into fly fishing when he was nine. He attended Gettysburg College where he majored in Anthropology/Sociology and did a concentration in Psychology. He fished the Yellow Breeches and found too many anglers near by and the fish, when hooked, would swim right to you. After college, Peter returned to Seattle where he worked for Starbucks in their business to business department. Peter moved to West Glacier, MT where he became a white water raft guide and spent a lot of time fishing the Flathead River with good friends.

Peter would also like to get more involved in conservation issues and processes. He currently works for Northwest Fly Fishing Magazine as an ad sales rep for the trips and fly shops side of things.

## Lendall Hunton, 1906 – 2004

By Steve Raymond

The death of **Lendall Hunton**, our last surviving charter member, was announced at the September meeting. Len, who was 98 years old when he died, had been a WFFC member 65 years. He was honored with a moment of silence at the meeting but his passing deserves greater notice.

Len may have been the least known of the eight men who signed the WFFC charter in 1939. That was due mostly to his career, which took him away from Seattle in the years following organization of the club, although he remained a Washington resident the rest of his life. Len was working as a young bank officer in Seattle at the time the club was founded, but the bank later sent him to manage its branch in the town of Raymond on Willapa Bay. Len spent the rest of his career in Raymond, then retired to Port Ludlow.

While living in Raymond, Len spent many hours fishing for cutthroat and winter steelhead in the streams flowing into Willapa Bay, mainly the Willapa, Naselle, North River and Smith Creek. The late Ed Foss and I once visited him there and found him to be a wonderfully generous host, especially in sharing his knowledge of the area. He sent us to the estuary of Smith Creek, which at that time boasted incredible numbers of sea-run cutthroat.

Len's enduring legacy is a fly called the Omnibus, which he developed as a sea-run pattern during the 1950s. Examining the stomach contents of cutthroat from some of the Willapa Bay tributaries, Len determined that crayfish were a major item in the diet of these fish. He decided to create a fly featuring the green, yellow and red colors of the naturals, and while the result didn't look much like a crayfish, it turned out to be a deadly pattern for sea-runs. It worked equally well when Len tried it for steelhead.

The pattern:

Hook: Usually No. 4-8  
Tip: Medium silver tinsel  
Tail: Red and yellow marabou, red on top  
Body: Peacock herl, full and thick  
Rib: Four turns of medium silver tinsel  
Hackle: Three turns each of dyed red and yellow saddle hackle, red in front  
Wing: White bucktail or calftail

In an article he once wrote for the Creel Notes, Len said he tried tying the Omnibus on many different types of hooks "from No. 6 Irish Limerick streamer hooks to No. 6 2X strong or 3X fine," depending on whether he was fishing for cutthroat or steelhead. "Prior to the availability of sinking lines, the hook on

occasion was wrapped with .020 lead wire for heavy steelhead waters."

The Omnibus has since also proved its worth as a summer steelhead fly. Its versatility is a good reflection of its name.

There are probably only a few WFFC "old-timers" who now even remember meeting Len Hunton, but I think they would all agree that in addition to being an accomplished fly fisher and tyer he was every inch a gentleman. He helped establish the Washington Fly Fishing Club and its traditions, and his passing truly marks the end of an era for the WFFC.

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### Upcoming Club Activities

#### **Beginning Fly Tying Class**

Thursday January 6, 2005

Duration: 8 Weeks every Thursday evening, 7PM to 9PM.

Place: Mercer Island Covenant Church, 3200 78th SE,  
Mercer Island

Cost: \$30.00 base cost. \$20.00 for DVD

Registration Required. To register or for further questions call: **Don Simonson** 206-932-4925 or **Bob Birkenner** 206-542-4623

**Don Simonson**, *Education Chair*

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#### **WET BUNS OUTING**

This year's Wet Buns Outing is at Joemma State Park again on November 13.

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#### **More on our October Presentation...**

Drawing on a combination of scientific, historical, sociological and political research, Montgomery, a professor of geomorphology at the University of Washington, traces the tragic and steady decline in salmon populations in Europe, New England, Eastern Canada and the Pacific Northwest. Montgomery's history of salmon moves from awe inspiring (their ancestors go back some 40 million years) to heartbreaking. All too aware of the possible bleak outcome for the salmon, David Montgomery concludes with provocative recommendations for reinventing the ways in which we make environmental decisions about land, water, and fish.



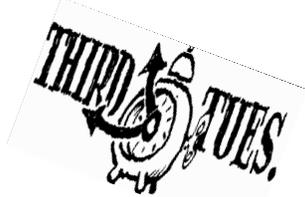
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## Meeting Announcement

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



October Speaker - David Montgomery, Author of King of Fish: The Thousand-Year Run of Salmon.

David's book is a passionate recounting of the history of the rise and fall of salmon in England, New England and the Pacific Northwest - with recommendations for bringing the salmon back. You don't want to miss his fascinating presentation discussing past mistakes and failures and how we might avoid doing the same in the future. (For more on Professor Montgomery, see page 5)