

# Creel Notes from the



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



November, 2009



Hello All!

The trees are multi-colored, the mountains are starting to show some white, and another fall comes to pass. I have heard many fish stories about the largesse of the Columbia River system in gift-ing steelhead to fisherman. Hope

many of you are getting out there more than I am.

The Yakima Home Waters project is under contract, and thanks go out to **Mike Wearne**, **Rocco Maccarone**, and **Kris Kristoferson** for making it happen. We will be planning the build-out of our facility at the site next, and **Jim Macdonald** is in the process of creating an ID system to identify club members for its use.

This month we celebrate our 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a club at our dinner meeting. **Steve Sunich** has tapped many of our senior members to relate some stories from the founding and shortly thereafter. There should be some fish stories beyond compare.

The nominating committee has informed me that they have completed nominating your officers for next year. They will announce the candidates at the dinner meeting next Tuesday. I feel they have done a great job of recruiting and vetting our officer slate, and know the club will be in great hands next year. I also remind you that there will be nominations from the floor accepted if you feel someone was overlooked who you think would make a good contribution.

**Don Simonson** informed the board earlier this year that he would be stepping down as the Education Chair, and **Jim Higgins** has emerged as his replacement in that role. Our club has a long and rich tradition of teaching fly fishing skills to the public, especially youth, and Jim should do a good job of carrying on that tradition. He will need help, and I hope you contact him if you are interested in participating on this excellent committee.

As Thanksgiving fast approaches, I hope that the season finds you and yours in good health and cheer, and that the holidays are shared by those you care for and who care for you. I will be looking forward to our Christmas Party under the leadership of **Peter Crumbaker** for the revelry and the opportunity to wish each of you a Merry...

Go Fishing... and take a friend.

Pat Peterman  
President, 2009



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## This Month's Meeting *by Steve Sunich*

This month is WFFC's 70th anniversary, and November is typically Heritage Month. Please join everyone for some heritage moments and hear the true history of different special projects and events of the club. The history will be very interesting as four or five different WFFC members, who have first-hand knowledge, will present their historical accounts in pictures and words. There will be a big benefit to those younger members, self included, who might want to know more history.

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## 70<sup>th</sup> Christmas Party Update *by Peter Crumbaker*

Well, gentlemen, and two ladies (elves), it is time to get pumped up with enthusiasm and be filled with anticipation. The 70<sup>th</sup> annual WFFC Christmas Party is just around the corner. So far we have some wonderful and generous donations made by Abel Reels, Smith Action Optics, ExOfficio, Misty Mountain Manufacturing, Nor-Vise, and more. I have also been on the phone with our hosts, SoDo Park by Herban Feast, and they are excited and eager about our upcoming event on December 15<sup>th</sup>. I believe the food and venue will be to everyone's liking, as there is ample parking, easy access, and alcohol will be on the donation system. As you can tell, I'm quite excited about it, and hope that you are too.

**What I need from our members are:** photos submitted for the slide show, any donations that you have been forgetting to contact me about, and most importantly register as soon as possible. You can mail in your registration or register online as early as the day after our November 17<sup>th</sup> party honoring 70 years of the club. Early registration is very important as we will need as accurate a count as we can get, and you will be subject to paying extra if late.

If you have any questions at all, please feel free to contact me. I have looked forward to our Christmas Party for roughly the last 10 years, and this year I feel it more than ever. 70 years!!! Very exciting. Looking forward to seeing you soon.

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## Fly Tying Classes Starting *by Jim Higgins*

On Thursday, January 7, 2010, we begin our famous eight-week fly tying class. It will be held at Mercer Island Covenant Church starting at 6:30 pm. Our gifted instructors will start you with the basics and lead you through some of the more advanced tying steps by teaching you to tie 15 different patterns. I am sure you know someone who would benefit from this class—maybe your fishing partner? Only \$45. **"Great Gift for the Holidays."** To register, or for more information, call **Bob Birkner** at 206-542-4623.

## 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.

# REPORTS

## On the Fly *by David Ehrich*

Our President, **Pat Peterman**, interrupted a good conversation about speeding tickets, soft-hearted judges, good fishing from ladders, and my acerbic nature, with a hearty welcome. Guest introductions competed with tender pork loin smothered in gravy. **Dyche Kinder** started the fishing reports, spitting in the wind of time limitations. The sum total was: got to the Duwamish, no reel. Dyche used his time fishing his friend's hook out of the cattails. Next week, they tried ladders to avoid the tangles to predictable results (picture the ladder legs in mud plus gravity, plus momentum, plus loose electronic devices = disaster).

We enjoyed reports of silvers in Alaska, reports of steelhead (sometimes known in former years as "large rainbow") on the Methow. On the serious side, one member fished with a friend in late-stage cancer who had a special day with friends. Sensing time slipping away, **Pat Peterman** offered a free beer to the shortest complete report. **Peter Crumbaker** got it with "Pinks on Pink on the Two Canon." We also heard about three inchers on the Yakima, great family time at Chopaka, a steelhead surge on the Grande Ronde, face plants in deep water, and 25 fish a day at High Hume.

That fun led to business. **Bill Neal** took the opportunity of Dave Hughes' presentation to the club to get around to some old business awarding Dave the Letcher Lambuth Award. **Preston Singletary** talked briefly of Dave's accomplishments in angling, especially the many books that members enjoy. Dave honored us with a brief telling of the "Big History" of the earth leading up to a "Big Thanks" for the award. In between he glossed over the origins of the earth, of fish, of man, of professors of entomology, of tolerant and encouraging editors. I left out a few details, to say the least.

Business ensued. **Robert Tovar** ran down the last two outings of the year: Fish Lake and WET-BUNS. **John Callahan** assured members that clear water, cool temperatures, and a pleasant forecast

would add up to solid fishing. Robert is looking for someone to lead the trip. Stay tuned.

Officer reports included **Steve Sunich** previewing Heritage Night. He invites any veteran member with knowledge of the club to get in touch with him and prepare to share some memories to our members. **Doug Schaad** gave us a run down on a few of the rule changes at WDFW. In short, say goodbye to hatcheries and their bastardized salmon cousins. Say hello to shorter and later steelhead seasons, more catch and release. Hope for the vigorous return and safety of wild steelies.

**Jim Higgins** has filled **Don Simonson's** big shoes and is heading up WFFC education. **Kris Kristoferson** shared the happy news of signing a lease on the Home Waters property. Hammer swingers should make themselves known to **Pat Peterman** or **Mark DeWitt**.

**Peter Baird**, who has been sending out reports via email, gave us a brief run down. **John Gravendyk's** daughter Hillary survived a double-lung transplant and is already out and about. **Les Johnson** has enjoyed regular visits from good friends at his recovery facility in Redmond. **Bob Young** noted some progress in regaining use of his left side. He enjoys visitors in the late afternoon.

**Peter Crumbaker** asked us to look out for donations for the Christmas Party this year to be held at Urban Feast in SODO.

Without introduction, Dave Hughes launched into his presentation "Reading Trout Waters."



*Pat Peterman presents Dave Hughes with the Letcher Lambuth Award*

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Starting with the premise that 25% of the water holds 75% of the trout, he discussed good ways to find trout. In the absence of rising or spotted trout, Dave looks at the water in terms of needs: food, protection, shelter from currents, suitable temperatures and oxygen, as well as spawning beds. After setting his terms for types of streams, he introduced the terms of a *holding lie* where they have everything they need except protection, a *feeding lie* that has food but little else, and a *prime lie* that has all the needs.

Riffles are rich in food because of provident insect environment. In the riffle, since the water level might be thin, trout look for protection. They feed on the bottom all the time, but they are close enough in a riffle to the surface to take advantage of hatches. Trenches, slick water between two sets of riffles, offer an even better place. And of course, trout love the seam at the edge of a riffle, where trout get the advantage of drifting food in calmer water. Fish to the head of a seam, because the big trout are at the top of a seam taking first rights of refusal.

A run is a near perfect area (protection in deeper water, a drifting source of food, and boulders that offer relief from the current). These fish may not always rise to the surface due to their depth. Fish these runs on the edges.

Pools, especially in mountain streams, are dug out of the creek by waterfalls or current hitting a big wall. In the spring, look for trout in the head of a pool trying to get ahead of the competition for nymphs. In the late summer, try the tailout of the pool because fish will wait for fallen terrestrials.

Good bank water, when it fills all three needs, holds trout enjoying the convergence of two environments, the aquatic and terrestrial. Since bugs are leaving the stream for the bushes on the bank, trout key in on all of the stages. Look for enough depth to provide protection. Tail water with stable flows has deep, steep banks with lots of fish, while variable water stream banks have shallow sloping banks that are usually empty.

From streams, Dave moved on to still water. He stopped for a couple war stories. He suggests anglers take a high perspective if possible to get a view of trout. Or, camp on the lake near where you fish and observe the whole day and all its moods from that vantage point. Take note of the hatches and rises. When you see fish, put down your notebook and get fishing.

Dave likes shorelines to begin with and likes to get out and fish back to shore, imitating the pattern of typical food. If you don't see rises, fish deep into deeper sections in case fish are feeding on the bottom. Weed beds, buried streams, and drop-off zones are good places to explore.

Finally, Dave showed us a slide of a dry creek. The empty streambed gives a good perspective on where fish will be. Once you see the dry creek, you'll have the equivalent of x-ray eyes.

The more water you read, the more you can trust your snap decisions. In other words, go fishing, read the water, remember what you learn, and practice as much as possible. See you on the riffle (you take the thin part and I'll take the seam).

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## Fish Lake Outing *by Pete Baird*

Contrary to popular thinking, the Fish Lake trip did take place! Four hardy souls arose in the dark of early morn and set out for the scheduled outing: **John Callahan** from the Leavenworth area, and **Perry Barth, Mark Pratt**, and I from the Sound area. As we rode over, it looked promising. There was no rain, minimal wind, and only broken clouds as we rolled down the east side from Stevens Pass. But when we arrived at the lake, it was windy and never subsided for the duration of our stay. We fished the west end. Mark had his pontoon boat, John in his green Holland pram, and Perry & I sharing his 10' Livingston-like boat. All the fish taken were RB's, 12" or less, but all in very good condition. The lake bottom had prolific weed growth where we were. I took but one fish toward the end of the day. Perry brought two fish to hand, but one was foul-hooked and I've heard that one must count that as a minus one in their catch. Does that mean that Perry got skunked??

John took several fish, and then there's Mark, who fished another hour after we other three left the lake and retreated to the 59er Diner out at Coles Corner on Hwy 2. Mark claims to have brought 11 to hand out of 20+ fish on. The popular flies included a slim Gil's Monster; the red bead-head Olive Woolly; a lime-green bodied Doc Spratley; a small olive body, soft hackle, red bead-head nymph tied on a size 14 3x long hook; and a common old Self Carey, to mention a few. We didn't tangle with any of the larger fish we know to exist in the lake, but it is certainly worth a return visit.

## Douglas Lake Ranch *by Perry Barth*

On the third week of September, six of us went up to fish lakes on the Douglas Lake Ranch: **Gil Nyerges** and I from WFFC, Gil's friend Phil from Whidbey Island, and three guys from the Edmonds Fly Fishing Club. You get to fish several lakes by arrangement and there are only three boats at each lake. The wildlife was fantastic. Highlights for me included watching from my boat as a cowboy moved about 50 horses past us to another pasture. Missed a couple of fish from lack of attention. Then, one day a mom black bear and two 1st year cubs came strolling across the hill just above me and the kids put on quite a show. Missed two or three more fish.

Like most trips, fishing was good and bad. On Harry's Dam, Gil, Phil, and I had one of those days you dream about. Monsters, Woolly Buggers, and Doc Spratleys were doing great things. At lunch we got talking about all the dragonflies we were seeing. I had several conversations where they just hovered off the end of the boat as we visited. I was, of course, telling them just how beautiful they were. Then a light went on. For several years I had been toting a pattern around in my fly box that had the long extended bright-blue tail and had never used it. Duh! We all went to dry flies and when the fish I caught got through with me, there was a naked bent hook remaining. The memories of reading **Steve Raymond's** book *Kamloops* came flooding back to me. There we were, living the real thing. What marvelous fish they are, eh?

The last day, we all ended up on Pike Lake. I don't ever remember the other guys I have fished with coming up and asking me, to quote Gil, "alright, what the hell are you using?" That was thrilling. I was getting a fish on every pass! The wind was howling and we had to mooch! The answer was a "squirrel zonker" fished deep. To outfish Gil!!!! That was a first for me. I'll have the pattern with me at our November meeting, so if you're interested, come on over at the break and I'll show you my fly!

## West Yellowstone Report *by Mike Santangelo*

I fished the West Yellowstone area in early October this year. It is a good 12 -13 hour drive from Seattle to West Yellowstone. To break up the drive, I decided to check out Fish Creek in Montana and then spend the night in Missoula. Fish Creek is about half the size of the more well-known Clark Fork tributary, Rock Creek. While the pressure on Fish Creek may not be as high, it is still a popular river. This was highlighted by the fact that the car that I followed into the access area had Missouri tags. Of course, my Washington tags made no statement at all. I counted about 10 anglers on the lower three miles of the creek. The weather was clear and sunny in the mid 60's with little wind. The fishing wasn't bad. I took several small bows on nymphs and had a few risers to my hopper pattern. I spent the night at Ruby's in Missoula. Not a bad place for \$85 per night. That evening I ate at Pearl's. They have a very nice buffalo steak on the menu.

The next day brought me into West Yellowstone. After checking in at the motel, I drove over to Henry's Lake. While it was in the mid 60's, it was windy and Henry's Lake was choppy. Trying to get out of the wind, I launched and fished in a cove on the west side of the lake, but with little success. I left the lake and took the north road to West Yellowstone going by Quake Lake and Hebron Lake. The wind howled at both of these spots as well. I stopped to fish the Madison where it enters Hebron Lake. There were a few takers but no fish to hand.



*The Gibbon*

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*The Firehole*

The following day I returned to the north shore of Henry's. The wind was down and the lake calm. It was easy to see fish cruising in water that was about six feet deep. Slowly stripping a small black leech on an intermediate line was productive. I brought 10 fish to hand by 1:00 pm. I decided to call Henry's a day and check out the park.

After acquiring a Park Fishing License at a West Yellowstone fly shop (you can't purchase them at the Park entrance), I went to check out the Gibbon. The Gibbon is a wonderful creek, but seemingly devoid of fish, at least for me.

I moved downstream below the confluence of the Firehole and the Gibbon, and fished a meadow on the Madison. There were lots of fish rising, but most were small. Sometimes there was an aggressive take on a hopper.

For day three, I returned to Henry's hoping for a repeat of the day before, but the wind had returned with a vengeance. After fishing for a while with only one take, I decided to check out the Firehole. Arrick's Fly Shop had a sign stating that the Firehole was fishing better above the Midway Geyser Baser where the water was cooler. Above the Basin, I found a nice meadow and walked in. The fish weren't large, but they were aggressive. A stealthy approach was necessary. I tried small heavy nymphs to get into the deeper holes, but hoppers and a black caddis pattern produced the best.

West Yellowstone isn't much of a town, and finding inexpensive and decent accommodation is a challenge. I stayed at the Lazy G Motel for \$61 per night. The room was large and clean. However, the room did not have AC. Finding a decent meal, besides a burger, in West Yellowstone is another challenge. Sydney's Mountain Bistro offers nice fare,

but is a bit pricey. Also, if you are going to eat there, arrive early or late; otherwise, expect to stand in line for a half hour or so waiting for a table. Another option is Wild West Pizzeria and Saloon. It has decent pizza at a good price, but after 7:00 pm, it isn't a place for kids. It is a saloon and it is West Yellowstone. I watched a woman at a pool table try and use a pool stick as a phallic substitute in any number of ways (all with her clothes on, of course). I would not have wanted to have to explain this to my child. But she sure had everybody cracking up with her antics.

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## **To the WFFC: A Wake Up Call**

*by Greg Crumbaker*

I joined the WFFC in 1983. At the age of 37, I was well below the average age in the club, and as one member noted: "It was good to have me as my joining dropped the average age of members to 66." Wonderful! Just joined and already contributing. In 1989 the club celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It was an evening filled with pride, camaraderie, and reminiscences of the club's achievements. And 50 years is an accomplishment. Most businesses or marriages don't make 50 years, but we did. I looked forward to the 60<sup>th</sup>. It was another proud and fine night. I didn't think about it then, but I was still well below the average age in the club. I next looked forward to our 70<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> anniversaries.

So here we are on the verge of our 70<sup>th</sup> and I find I'm not looking forward to it as I did in the past. Why? It took me a while to figure it out, but when I did, it gave me more of a depressed feeling. You see, at age 63, I'm still well below the median or the average age in this club. Pretty incredible that after 26 years I'm still below the average age. I found an actuarial table and it told me I've got 19 years to go. But if I'm below the average or the median, what about all those ahead of me. Estimating an average club age of 72, the table says they'll be around for another 12 years. The club is well on its way to extinction with the 75<sup>th</sup> being the last anniversary. A sad realization, but a fact.

After further thought, and being an optimist at heart, my spirits are back up again. You see, the 70<sup>th</sup> is our last anniversary and the 75<sup>th</sup> is not an anniver-

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sary, but a wake. How cool is that? Going to your own wake. Kind of surreal, but we're a unique group, so why not? I can just picture **Earl George** driving up in his Cadillac, looking like an undertaker, with **Frank Headrick** riding shotgun. (They're both off the actuarial charts.) We'll toast each other; discuss restoration projects at Lakes Hannan, Lenice, Nunnaly, Lenore, Jameson, Campbell (BC), Yakima River, Deer Creek; the club's 1973 publication of a 16-page pamphlet on where and how to fish rivers, lakes, and salt in the NW; the 1978 lawsuit where the club joined the Audubon Society and WA Environmental Council as plaintiffs against the WA State Dept. of Ecology and Natural Resources; or in 1980 when the Army Corp of Engineers dropped the proposal to put a dam on the Stilly at Oso after the WFFC threatened to file suit against them. What a night it will be. We will be missing the normal backslapping as too many members would get hurt. We'll use extra large name tags for the evening and we'll have audio cassettes available just like at the museums. It will be exciting, and I can tell you my spirits are rising and I'm again looking forward to our last anniversary, the 70<sup>th</sup>.

POSTSCRIPT: The 70<sup>th</sup> Christmas party is coming up December 15<sup>th</sup>. It is the biggest social event of the year. We have plenty of room at the Herban Feast and if each member invited a guest or two under the age of 40, and even encouraged the evening's guests to become members, we might postpone the wake. Death for individuals is inevitable, but not so for organizations. The Christmas party is a great opportunity. Don't waste it.

Comments or opposing views are welcome:  
greg@mistymtn.com.

## Member Contact Information

by Roger Rohrbeck

Is your contact information complete and accurate? Know how to verify what we have, and how to change it?

Your contact information is now maintained in our online database. Any WFFC member with a PC or Mac, and who has an Internet connection, can access and update his own contact information. For club members who do not have an Internet connection, the Roster & Labels Committee Chairman, **John Schuitemaker**, will update your contact info. Just communicate the change to him via his telephone number listed in your roster.

To update your own information, just access the member area of our website, [www.wffc.com](http://www.wffc.com). This is done by clicking on the member area link in the upper left (or lower right) corner of the screen. The first time you enter the member area, it is necessary to provide your member ID and password. After that, your PC or Mac will remember, and will relieve you of that burden.

Once on the member area menu, you will see the following instruction:

*If the following is not current, please use [member contact info change](#):*

- Member Name: Snerd, Mortimer
- Street Address: 123 Main Street
- City State Zip: Seattle WA 98104
- Email Address: [mortimers@abc.xyz](mailto:mortimers@abc.xyz)
- Home Phone: 206-000-0000
- Work Phone:
- Mail Creel Notes:
- Mail Roster:

Clicking on the member contact info change link (not here, but on your member area menu) will take you to a screen that allows you to replace your outdated or incorrect contact info. If you should have a problem doing so, just contact me, your Website Committee Chairman, **Roger Rohrbeck**, at either the e-mail address or telephone number listed in your roster. I will be more than happy to assist you, just not before noon.



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P.O. Box 639  
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Stamp  
here

November, 2009

### 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: Heritage Month

Join us as we relive the past and discuss the heritage of the Washington Fly Fishing Club.