

Creel Notes from the



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



November, 2012



President's Riffle

In 2007, R. Valentine Atkinson produced the wonderful book, Friends on the Water, Fly Fishing in Good Company. This was a collection of essays and book excerpts on the subject of the friendships we share while fly fishing. The contributors include John Gierach,

Zane Grey, Thomas McGuane, Norman Maclean, Chris Santella, and Ernest Schweibert. The friendships range from father to son, fishermen and their favorite dog, co-workers, siblings; you get the idea. The book is also inspired by the selection of Atkinson's wonder photography. I thought the book was great when I got it then and I think it is still at that high standard today. It captured that desire I have to share my fly fishing experiences with a good friend.

I watch and admire WFFC club members who have cultivated friendship over many years. I think this is a strength and legacy of club membership.

On October 25th, I received a phone call from Hawaii and learned that my best friend, Denny Roberts, had taken his life on the previous day. Denny was my fishing partner for twenty years. He was the guy with whom I took up fly fishing so that we could spend more time together. We shared so many fly fishing trips, it would fill this issue of the Creel Notes. One of our first trips was to the present location of the Yakima Home Waters. Denny and I would wear the skunk hat for many months, until by sheer dumb luck we caught trout. I have a picture on my desk from our trip to the Clearwater ten years ago. I can remember that trip as if it was last week. Our friendship captured the essence of what Atkinson expressed in his wonderful book. After knowing someone for thirty-five years, you become aware of more than their favorite author or R&B singer; you are aware of the soul of your friend. I shall relive many

wonderful experiences we shared, especially when I was fly fishing in good company.

On October 26th, I left for **Greg Crumbaker's** cabin near Darrington. I was to spend the weekend with Greg, **Per-Olav Christiansen**, and **Jim MacDonald**. All four of us volunteer at the Casting Forward program. This was an opportunity to talk, cook meals, fish, tie flies, and relax. The weekend turned out to be the perfect recipe for me. I brought along Atkinson's book to refresh my memory of what was expressed concerning long-term friendships and sharing. I was in a daze during the weekend, I am probably still, today as I write this, October 31st, in a partial daze. I left the cabin on Sunday, anxious to start the week ahead.

After a time to reflect, I know it is time to shift from casting into the frog water of regret and concentrate on the swifter water in the currents of life.

Thanks.

Mike

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November Meeting: Kurt Beardslee *by Bob Burdick*

The speaker for the November meeting will be Kurt Beardslee, who will be presenting *Caught Far From Home*. The harvest of Pacific salmon throughout the Northwest has dramatically changed over time. We have changed where, when, and how we harvest, as well as how many we catch and even why we catch them. All of these changes combined have changed the salmon itself as harvest has altered the physical size of the fish and changed the age at which they mature. Harvest has reduced their diversity and abundance and may have even affected their ability to survive over time. It is urgent that we completely reevaluate how harvest is affecting salmon recovery and how harvest must be changed.

Kurt will explain how the research that his organization has done shows the devastating effect that off shore commercial salmon fishing in Alaska, British Columbia, Washington and Oregon has on the salmon runs of our local Washington rivers, and especially how it will limit our expectations for a resurgence of the Elwha River. Consider that from 1920 through 1975 the average size of Chinook salmon returning to Washington dropped from 20# to 10#. In addition, 80% of the fish destined for the Elwha River are caught commercially off the West Coast of Vancouver Island.

Kurt is co-founder of the Wild Fish Conservancy; he has been the organization's Executive Director since 1991. Under his leadership, Wild Fish Conservancy has grown from a one-man operation with an annual budget of \$4,000 to an influential advocacy and research organization with a staff of over 20 professional scientists, advocates, and educators, and an annual budget of over one million dollars.

Kurt earned a BA in Advertising/Film Production from the Burnley School of Professional Arts in Seattle, Washington in 1969. He has been a professional Art Director, a successful and acclaimed furniture designer, and produced educational films for the American Science Foundation. He currently serves on the Advisory Board for the University of Washington's Center for Water and Watersheds, the Snohomish Salmon Recovery Technical Team, the Northwest Power Planning Council Artificial Production Review Committee, the Steering Committee of the Shared Strategy Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Board, the Native Fish Society Board of Directors, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Bull Trout Advisory Committee, and many other boards and committees. He lives in Duvall, Washington, with his wife Candace.

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.

REPORTS

Bruce Staples Presents *by Jim van de Erve*

Bob Burdick introduced Bruce Staples as one of the giants of fly fishing. Bruce has written three books on fly fishing, especially around southeastern Idaho and Yellowstone Part. He is a columnist for the Idaho Falls Post Register, and a superb fly tier, one of the few winners of the FFF fly tying competition, once a year to the best fly tier in the U.S.

Bob said that Bruce doesn't boast about all his accomplishments, unlike you know who.

Bruce led us on a tour of southeastern Idaho fishing destinations, starting with the Bear River, that at one time was one a great Yellowstone or Bonneville cutthroat stream, but is now degraded because of hydroelectric and irrigation. The next drainage over to the west is the Portneuf River, and that is one that he would recommend. Use the Lava Hot Springs as a jumping-off point. You can catch cutthroat, rainbow, and brown trout.

They had a very dry year in the greater Yellowstone area last year, and predictions are that they'll have the same thing, a cold, dry winter. You may want to visit the fisheries he talked about earlier in the season, June or July, not August or September.

Also in the southeast corner of the state are irrigation reservoirs that grow trout like you wouldn't believe. Double-figure poundages are common. Chesterfield, Twenty-four mile reservoir, Daniels reservoir, Springfield. The reservoirs produce some kind of cutthroat-rainbow hybrid. Twenty-four mile reservoir will produce fish up to eight or nine pounds, because the water is so rich. It's bicarbonate in the water, what exoskeletons are built with. It's usable carbonate.

In these reservoirs, fish scuds and nymphs, and damselflies when they are emerging. They've got gulpers (as in Hebgen Lake) everywhere, in both reservoirs and mountain lakes. During gulper season, their tummies will be full of sparkle duns. A #12 Adams will get you where you want to go. The fish take callibaetis in July, even as early as June, until September.

Bruce then moved north to spring creeks, many on the Indian Reservation of the Shoshone-Bannack Nation. There are some private spring creeks that you can fish, some for a fee. Also go for the many tributaries to the Snake River. The Blackfoot River is highly recommended. It's almost purely a cutthroat river. The Blackfoot River Wildlife Management Area is an 1800 acre ranch with six miles of river in it. When the rancher died, he said he didn't want it developed, and the state of Idaho bought it. Look for bends where there are holes that have big fish. Sometimes you can have it to yourself. Bruce doesn't recommend the part of the river below the dam until October because earlier there will be irrigation water in it, it's difficult to catch fish, and it's dangerous. You can have 20 to 30 fish days if you fish it with the right kind of presentation. You can get a 24-inch cutthroat.

Bruce talked a lot about drainages near Yellowstone that go out like the spokes of a wheel and sink into the lava rock. Medicine Lodge Creek, Birch Creek, Little Lost River, Big Lost River. Big Lost River is a tailwater fishery below a dam, for five or six miles, wonderful rainbow trout, brook trout stream with beautiful scenery. Late in the season, fish concentrate in the deep water, and move into the riffles to feed. The best fishing times are often in the overcast days. Go east to Little Lost River and Medicine Lodge Creek, toward Henry's Fork, a whole series of streams flowing to the east.



Gil Nyerges dispensing flies that work to new members Ben Davidson, James Goedhart and JC Hungerford

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Then, of course, there is Henry's Fork, Harriman State Park. However, you might look for a series of artificial ponds were either put in by Mormon pioneers or built by the Harriman's to entertain their guests, on the east side of Harriman state park. You can see it from the Mesa Falls scenic route road. The water is very rich. Mostly they are private but for a relatively small fee you can fish them. The fish in them can weigh seven ponds. Not to knock the river, it has its share of big fish, too.

Warm River, a major fork of Henry's Fork, comes in just below Cardiac Canyon. It's very scenic, and great with a three-weight fly rod. Robinson Creek, a major tributary of the Warm River, just outside Yellowstone Park, has brown trout approaching 24 inches. It's a good time of the year to be there. Rainbows, brookies, cutts, and browns. Also stiffies, a local name for mountain whitefish.

Near Yellowstone you can fish the Fall River; Corner Creek, a tributary to the Fall (take a 1- or 2-weight rod); and the Teton River, which flows into Henry's Fork. The problem is it is so scenic that you're looking at the scenery instead of fishing. A lot of it is private land, but in Idaho, as long as you're in the high-water mark you're legal. Even if you have to scale a fence by a bridge. People there will let you do it, because they know that the area needs the business.

All these streams are worth visiting. If you come for a week, sure, you get a lot of fish in the south fork of the Snake River and Henry's Fork, but you'll see as many people as you do fish. Try these other rivers and creeks. Like Rainy Creek, near the south fork of the Snake, with cutts that reach over 20 inches. Palisades Creek, coming into the South Fork of the Snake, which has a nice trail up it, but cold, 45 or 48 degree, water. Bruce's favorite creek is Big Elk Creek (look for the Western Green Drake emergence in the first of August). There are mainly Yellowstone cutts in these creeks. This is high country. Fish get active as it warms up. Fish it from 2 to six in the evening. You can sleep in.

There are thousands of creeks you can fish. Bruce loves the Salt River drainage over the border in Wyoming. The streams that come out of Idaho into Wyoming are overlooked. Try Jackknife River, Stuck Creek, Crow Creek: Salt River tributaries that

flow east out of Idaho. You can fish a small creek and catch a 23 inch brown.

The main stem of the Snake River is a great fishery until irrigation water is taken out of it. This time of year until freeze out, you can get into a brown trout of a lifetime. Or rainbows. By Idaho Falls. You don't want to fish it in July or August because of irrigation water.

Bruce is a hired gun at Jimmy's All Seasoned Angler in Idaho Falls. They update the fishing report twice a week during the high season of May to September. Go to the web site if you're going to that neck of the woods. Also consider the Eastern Idaho fly tying, fly fishing expo every April, where there can be as many as 130 tiers.

Bruce's theme was that the Madison, Gallatin, and Henry's Fork are great fisheries, but some of the other fisheries that not too many people fish will give you just as good of an experience with a lot fewer people.

WETBUNS *by Dave Schorsch*

The WETBUNS outing lived up to its name this year at Joemma Beach state park. Even though we had the use of a shelter above the beach, a big blue tarp was needed to block the sideways rain that greeted us before Happy Hour.

At least a dozen hardy souls gathered to chop, peel, and dice the ingredients for our bouillabaisse. The fish stories flowed with the wine as the kettle began to boil. Reports ranged from honest skunks to "the best sea-run fishing in my life". Really. Very good catches on the beaches at Joemma and in the Vaughn bay area topped the list. Excellent fishing for chums at Chico creek also.

The wind died down some as it got closer to dinner time, so a fire was built in a portable fire place brought by Mark and Ben. Warm hands, warm backsides, and warm garlic bread just in time for the seafood stew! Special thanks to **Jim McDonald** for bringing the really tasty baguette bread!

A great assortment of appetizers and desserts added to one of the best bouillabaisse pots ever! Lots of help and lots of happy eaters make for an easy and fun outing. Special thanks to all you guys that made my partner Lynn feel so welcome. (Major attaboy for me....)

THIS is what makes this club great. Nobody else does this stuff. The Northwest as it's meant to be.

Starzman, Rat, and Jameson

by Chuck Ballard

Saturday 10/20/12, **John Callahan** and **Mike Nolan** and I fished Starzman Lake and Rat Lake, both near Brewster WA. The fish were running up to 14" and were accommodating. If you attempt going into Starzman, you will need a 4X4 as the road is really a challenge.

The lake is small and although is best fished from a float tube or pontoon boat, you could fish from shore .

After fishing about four hours, we migrated to Rat Lake and repeated the catching with a few to maybe 16".

The next day I went over to Jameson lake. It was very cold early, and after catching and releasing "many" recent plants around 12", I did manage one keeper, a 20" rainbow caught on a sixpack soft hackle. Jameson fishes really well in the fall, so keep this in your thoughts for next year.



Rat Lake

Texas Ponds Report *by Jim Macdonald*

On October 26, 27, and 28, four of us, **Greg Crumbaker**, **Michael Wearne**, **Per-Olav Christiansen**, and **Jim Macdonald**, met at Greg's Fishing Shack on the North Fork of the Stilly near Darrington. When we arrived in the late afternoon on Friday, the river looked pretty good, and we thought we had a chance on Saturday morning to catch anything that might be coming up, but in the early evening it started to rain and continued raining hard through the night and in the morning. The river looked more like a freight train than a river.

So on Saturday afternoon with the rain still coming down, we headed out for the Texas Ponds "No blindfolds required this time" and got there at just about dusk. The four of us geared up and pumped up our float tubes. Amidst rain squalls we slip-slided down to the lake and after a few hang-ups on submerged stumps found ourselves out in the middle of the lake. I latched onto a small bass and then the others started hooking up on larger bass probably in the 2 ½ to 3 pound range. They appeared to be small-mouth bass. They were real fighters and finally spit the barbless hooks. By this time it was dark and I finally got everyone lined up for a group photo and then in the dark spent some time finding where we had put in. We finally got back to Greg's Shack looking like four drowned rats. Dinner tasted pretty darn good and Greg was a great host.



Chico Creek Report *by Bob Birkner*

On October 29th, Baert Simmons of the Whidbey Island Fly Fishing Club, and I went to Chico Creek, following up on Dick Stearns' comment that the chums were in already. We arrived at 9:00 am while the tide was ebbing and fished 'til about 11:00 am, each landing one fish. We were wading out in the bay and I hit a particularly muddy spot. It was like stepping in glue. I had to really pull to get my right foot loose and shortly discovered I had pulled the entire sole from my boot. No problem, I'm getting rubber lug-soled boots to replace the felt soled boots anyway.

We had our lunch and rested up until the tide had turned. Then the fish started coming into the creek in groups of 6 or 8, one group right after the other. Many fish were fair hooked and after about an hour

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we left, retaining two fish each. All nice, solid fish. My best day ever on Chico.

Project Healing Waters Recap

by Jim McRoberts

2012 was another busy year with the veterans at the Seattle VA. Thirteen of our club members were registered volunteers and two others were part timers, plus we had three other part timers during the year. We contributed about 725 hours of our time for 64 fly tying classes and 12 outings. This allowed us to assist the equivalent of 185 veterans; however, some are counted more than once because they come almost every week. All this is supported by our WFFC Foundation and Project Healing Waters NW Region.

Our outings consist of catch-and-keep fishing at a Trout Lodge facility in Orting called **“Bill’s Fishin’ Hole”**, catch-and-release on the Yakima River, Trophy Lake in Port Orchard, and “Pooh’s Pond” near Port Angeles. The catch-and-keep allows us to have the fish smoked and enjoyed by the veterans and friends at the Seattle VA hospital. The veterans and their caregivers appreciate the chance to get out and have some fun. We enjoy it also! We have been doing this program since April 2008.



Bill’s Fishin’ Hole, Ready to smoke

Holiday Fundraiser by Bob Young

Fellow club members, the WFFC Holiday Fundraiser is just under a month away. Please note on your calendars that the fundraiser is on December 11th date at the Seattle Tennis Club. This is the second Tuesday of the month, not the traditional third.

I would like to go over why this fundraiser is so important to the WFFC. Even with our current streamlined 2012 budget, the WFFC has used all the income that the 2012 membership dues generated. In past years we have made up the difference by taking money from our savings account. At the rate the WFFC has been pulling money from savings, we could deplete our savings in a few years. It is imperative that this year’s fundraiser, at the very least, balance the 2012 budget.

In the current financial climate charitable donations are slow to come by and in many cases companies and shops that donated in the past will not be donating at all this year. We will continue to solicit donations as long as possible, but the reality is if we want to make money for the club, it is up to the membership itself to contribute.

How can you help the WFFC raise money? Donations of new items or services are wonderful. You can contribute cash to help subsidize the purchases that we will need to make to round out our auction items and raffle prizes. And finally you can do your part by bringing guests to the holiday fundraiser. Extra people will generate a lot of interest for our auction and raffle items. Fellow club members will be contacting you asking you these questions. Please give what you can.

It isn’t all doom and gloom, but the time that we could count on donations from the fly fishing industry is over and the membership needs to step up and to make this year’s fundraiser a success.

A final note, if you have some pictures of your 2012 fly fishing adventures that you would like to share with the club, please forward them to me so that they can be incorporated into the WFFC slide show.

Christmas Party Reservations

2012 Christmas Party Dinner Reservation/
Payment is now available through the WFFC website.

Online payment via credit card through our secure PayPal interface is highly encouraged. Alternatively, you can always print the 2012 Christmas Party Reservation Form, fill it out, write a check, address an envelope, apply postage, and mail it to us.

WFFC Christmas Party Fly Box Raffle

by Dick Brening

Hand crafted fly boxes filled with beautiful flies tied by members will be a part of the fund raising raffle for this year's party.

Here is a sample of the fly boxes (black walnut with natural bamboo trim) and a dozen Foam Wing Calibaetis Dunn tied by this year's winner of the Boyd Agner Fly Tying Competition, **Chuck Ballard**. As in years past, there will be a large number of boxes filled with flies to test your luck and raise some dollars for the club.



Christmas Wreaths *by Mike Hurt*

During our October member meeting, we announced our 2012 Holiday Wreath Fundraiser. We have a new goal of selling 130 wreaths this season, so we need your help now to start getting orders in.

All orders must be in by Friday, November 16th, so time is running out.

For those of you who did not attend the meeting and are not aware of this exciting holiday event, the WFFC is continuing our wreath fundraiser this year by selling three types of locally handmade, fresh wreaths at great prices. You can view each of these wreaths and purchase them directly from our website at <http://www.wffc.com>. You may also download a color brochure from this Web site, as well as to take orders with cash or check. This year's order deadline is November 16th, so if you are interested in buying one or more of these wreaths, please do so by then.

You will notice the two options for delivery as noted on our website:

- I will pick up my wreath(s) at the designated Seattle location to avoid shipping cost.
- Please ship to my home address via UPS Ground at additional cost of \$17.05 per wreath.

I would recommend selecting the top option "I will pick up my wreath(s) at the designated Seattle location to avoid shipping costs" if the wreaths you order are for you, your friends, family, or co-workers in the Seattle area. The wreaths will be picked up from the vendor on or before November 29th from Shelton and will have them available for distribution to you as soon as November 30th. If you wish to ship a wreath to an out-of-town friend or relative, please select the shipping option. The shipping recipient should receive their gift from you anytime between December 4th and 7th. We will include a nice hand-written holiday card inside the package noting this gift came from you with any special wording you wish to enclose. If you want to bring your hand-written cards to the November meeting, please feel free to do so and tell **Chapin Henry** or me (**Mike Hurt**) who the cards go to.

Please place your order(s) ASAP. We will also have an order form at the November WFFC meeting where you can write a check or place your order with your credit card. Let's make this new fundraiser a huge success this year!



Washington Fly Fishing Club
P.O. Box 639
Mercer Island, WA 98040
www.wffc.com

Stamp
here

November, 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:

Kurt Beardlee presents "Caught Far from Home"

GENTLEMEN
THE 2012 WFFC CHRISTMAS PARTY
RESERVATIONS ARE \$65

Dinner price will increase to \$75 each if reservations are received after Dec. 1st., so RESERVE NOW!

FULL PAYMENT MUST ACCOMPANY YOUR RESERVATIONS TO BE ACCEPTED



TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11th, 2012

Seattle Tennis Club
922 McGilvra Blvd E.
Seattle, WA 98112



FEATURING THE 2012 WFFC CHRISTMAS BANQUET & RAFFLE

5:30 PM: Wet Fly Practice, Raffle Tickets Sales, Review of Auction Items

7:00 PM: Dinner: Choice of

Dinner until closing: Merriment, Raffle, Silent Auction, Live Auction, and More Merriment

IF YOU BRING TWO OR MORE GUESTS, WE WILL RESERVE YOUR TABLE SPACE IF YOU RESERVE BY Dec. 1, 2012.

Credit Card or PayPal registration in online (the Members section at WFFC.com). For checks, use the form below. If you have not yet contributed to the auction or raffle and want to, get in touch with Bob Young at 206-323-2189 or fishbum@seanet.com. If you would like to make a cash contribution, fill in the appropriate space on the form below and include that amount with your reservation fee.

(CUT ALONG THE DOTTED LINE AND MAIL FORM WITH PAYMENT)

MAIL IN THIS RESERVATION FORM NOW!!!
Checks Only, No Credit Cards Accepted With Mail-In Reservations

Name: _____ # in party: _____ # of reservations: _____

Others in Party: _____

Dinners - Total: _____ Chicken Piccata _____ Alaska Halibut _____ Eggplant Parmesan _____

Total payment enclosed: _____ dinners x \$65 each = \$ _____

I would also like to make a cash contribution toward the WFFC Fund Raiser \$ _____

Send this reservation form along with check to:

Bob Young, 2239 Eastlake Ave. E., Seattle, WA 98102