

# Creel Notes from the



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



**December, 2008**



## President's Riffle

Fellow Fly Fishermen,

Well, that went by fast. Just a few more days left in 2009, and it seems like we just got started.

I'll take this opportunity to reflect a bit on the year that

was...certainly high on the list is that early in the year we were able to celebrate a fellow club member's 100th birthday. And that centenarian, Frank Headrick, joined us again at a meeting last month. Now that's good spirit!

Speaking of spirits, there were some great programs this year: bourbon tasting, the art and science of rod making, amazing salt water fly tying, crab cake cooking, and passionate young filmmakers sharing their work with us, just to mention a few.

For me personally, it's been a crazy year as I've co-founded a new startup company, and doing that while keeping our club moving forward in a positive direction has been challenging. But being President has been really good for me. Because I'm responsible for writing this column every month, I've been forced to stop everything else I'm doing, and reflect on the world of rivers, lakes, rods, fish, and flies. And more importantly, writing the Riffles has allowed me to reflect on some of the men of this club who ply those waters with those tools, men who do that and many other great things as well.

I'm in awe of some of our members. I'm in awe of how they can give so much of themselves for the greater good of the club, and for the good of so many others in our community. I'm talking about those who do things like spend time with wounded veterans, teaching them how to tie flies or how to cast, giving them something to look forward to...those who work with men in recovery from bouts with cancer, sharing their love of our sport with these courageous fellows, allowing them to take

their minds off their troubles for a while.

I write of those members who spend hours championing our causes in the political and conservation worlds...of those who tie flies, make fly boxes, give casting lessons...those who spend time visiting our sick fellow members.

There are so many members of this club who give of themselves in so many ways, I am truly inspired. And of course, this time of year we are reminded more than ever that the spirit of the season is all about giving.

So, as we embark on the new year, I encourage you to take a moment to think about how you can make a difference for the club. Think about the ways in which you too might give of yourself, not only for the betterment of the organization, but for the betterment of yourself. You'll get more out of it than you ever expected.

Oh--and let's catch a few more fish, too!

Tight lines to all in the new year,

Bill Kuper

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## Christmas Party 2008!

All right, gentlemen, the time has come! The time to get together for holiday merriment with your fishing buddies. The time to join in the raffle and auctions that include incredible fishing trips, cruises, lodging, gear, art, flies, and more. The time for the 2008 WFFC Christmas Party and Fundraiser on Tuesday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, at the Seattle Tennis Club.

Some info:

- You can still make your reservation at the members area of WFFC.com.
- Younger, healthy members, please use street parking.
- Check in after 5:00 pm; get your two drink tickets, program, and dinner ticket; verify your seat location; and then start partying.
- Buy raffle tickets—or Hawkeye will bug you.
- If you purchase a live auction item, pick it up immediately at the checkout station in the main lobby. If you purchase a silent auction item, pick it up immediately after the silent auction closes, same place.
- Dinner will be served entirely at the table, and you can buy a bottle of wine if you so choose.
- Have a blast!

Let's get ready to rumble!

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## 2009 Officers and Trustees

At the November WFFC meeting, the new slate of officers and trustees for 2009 were announced by John Callahan, Chairman of the Nominating Committee. The following people will lead the club next year:

- President: Pat Peterman
- 1st VP (Membership): Bill Deters
- 1st VP (Christmas Party): Peter Crumbaker
- 2nd VP (Programs): Steve Sunich
- Treasurer: Robert Burdick
- Secretary: James Morrison
- Ghillie: James MacDonald
- Asst. Ghillie: Michael Santangelo
- New Trustee: Scott Hagen
- New Trustee: James Young

Mike Wearne, Ed Sozinho, Rocco Maccarrone, and Ed Pettigrew are returning trustees.

Gentleman, thank you for stepping up to the plate—and thanks in advance for your commitment of time and energy to the tasks ahead.

## Creel Notes

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### Trustees

Richard Embry '06 Gene Gudger '06

Mike Wearne '07 Ed Sozinho '07

Rocco Maccarrone '08 Ed Pettigrew '08

### 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.

## On the Fly by David Ehrich

Yes, we can! Well, not really, because my computer didn't get going until after the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> fishing report. But from memory, our president, **Bill Kuper**, shook the gavel and wished the membership a good evening. We heard about good fishing from the Stilly (**Perry** was a week ahead of the opening and, surprise, found the river wide open) to the South Fork of the Raritan near Princeton, New Jersey. Some good days were had on the Yak, lean fishing on the John Day. Reports from Cabo were epic for marlin and lots of dorado (not on a fly). We also got a report from Zambia, which was updated to Namibia, that included a fish called Tiger Fish, which my tablemates determined to be big and mean. After that stunner, they came on fast and furious, but I only remember that **John Callahan** encouraged us to give Fish Lake a try. Guests competed with the fishing exaggerations and lots of fine gentlemen got a good taste of WFFC hospitality.

Members got a report from the Fly Fishing Federation via Montana resident and CEO of the Federation, **Pete Van Gytenbeek**. They hope to raise enough money to move the Triple F to Loveland, Colorado. Over all, the FFF numbers into the thousands, in 13 countries. Pete recognized the generosity of Sage in supporting the program. He promises to work on the issue of single-gender clubs that continues to raise hackles among some FFF board members.

WETBUNS was dry, fish were caught, and about fifteen enjoyed the bouillabaisse. **Peter Baird** reminded friends of **Dick Thompson**, to give him a call and further his recovery. **Doug Schaad** reported efforts on a successful steelhead summit. Reports from the WDFW regarding sea runs and salmon are not good, and members should not expect to fish the Sauk, Skagit, or Skykomish. If the Native-American anglers don't send in their report, the season might not open at all. Doug described the scene at WDFW as "bleak" with a decrease of 50% in angler days on the water, a significant decrease of out-of-state license purchases, as well as a sharp decrease in in-state licenses. Just in case you still had hope, Doug reported that the breaching of the Elwah promises serious mortality of below-dam fish that won't see recovery until 2024. Ouch.

Other business included opening of nominations for next year's board. **John Callahan** took the mic

and thanked the nominating committee. For the learning impaired, John had a PowerPoint presentation with photos of the nominees. See Pg. 2 for a full list. I just want to remind the newly elected: "Si te puedes!" which almost translates to: "Yes, *you* can!"

Prospective member, Larry Palmer, was praised in absentia, including a long career writing about horse racing, fishing, and other subjects for the Seattle P-I. Voting was quick and predictable.

Our program, introduced by **Captain Keith**, outgoing Program's Chair, featured Jerry Siem of Sage, who took to angling in Minnesota before he could speak. He guided while in college, worked for Winston, consulted streamside for Redford's epic, *A River Runs Through It*, and moved to Sage as chief rod designer. He started by honoring the experience in the WFFC and inviting us to Bainbridge to tour the factory. Rod design, for Jerry, starts with a graphite blank that feels right. He adds the guides and adjusts the butt until the whole package has just the right feel.

Graphite, the miracle substance behind modern rods, owes much of its development to Boeing and their research. Over the years, Sage has worked to match this unique material with the right tips, guides, and butt to give great action for the desired line. He gave a simplified explanation of the science of graphite, comparing the process to building a flimsy fiber into a "steel" strength shaft.

Jerry passed all these materials, of the various stages of build, around so members could touch the



*Jerry Siem talking graphite at the Nov. meeting*

*(Continued on page 4)*



“inside” of the rod. The audience kept their attention despite dozens of pieces passed around and palpitated. Graphite, in case you don’t already know, takes the slowness or “air pockets” out of the former standard rod-building material, fiberglass. He explained modulus. For example, a 50 million modulus rod has far less wave vibration at the tip. Wave modulation determines the waves in the line delivery. In other words, if the tip is vibrating, the line will go out in waves. Fewer waves mean a flatter delivery. Add the guides and the whole thing changes.

Sage also tries to shave material off the rod while leaving strength. He demonstrated a 00 weight rod and had an assistant hold the line while he pulled the 6X line nearly double, demonstrating the power and excitement of ultra light rods. Beyond all of the above, I’ll have to leave it to the engineers to understand. But we all know what it means to find the “right feel” to a rod. Think about the sort of person you are: walk fast, talk fast, or think deeply before you open your mouth. There is a rod for each type of person: deep flex to mid flex.

Jerry prefers three-piece rods for a perfect combination of material to ferrule spacing. Since the popularity of travel rods continues to grow, Sage is working to get the same feel from four- and five-piece rods.

He demonstrated the correct method of putting the sections together. Keep your hands close together when joining sections. He also explained why some rods tend to flex to one side or the other, but you’d have to have been there to understand.

Rod design is heading in the directions of fly styles and sizes. Jerry watches trends in fishing and the flies anglers prefer. Rods are then designed to throw the fly of the day. Customers want multi-piece rods, so Sage designs them for strength and durability. Ultimately, finding the right rod is a matter of casting with the flies you prefer in a manner you are accustomed to, and buy what you like.

If you wonder why you should replace your SP or RPL+ with a new rod, Jerry suggests you fish your rod half a day and try some of the new material rods the latter half of the day. When you get back to the lodge, drink enough single malt truth serum and then decide which one felt better.

Old rods are not always forgotten at Sage. Some of the more successful designs (like the LL) are revisited and updated with better materials and engineering. Line design is also incorporated in rod de-

sign and since Sage and Rio are conjoined, they feel they have the perfect match.

If you wondered what the difference is between a high-end rod and a less expensive rod, Jerry answered that Sage makes each rod by hand and each rod is, in a sense, a custom rod. Better materials and better methods meet better design to create, in their opinion, the best rod possible. Lower-end rods speed up the process, skimp on the finishing, and average out the design to meet average expectations. In case you plan on breaking your Sage, they keep materials for all their rods on hand if you need to test the warranty.

I can tell you, by the number and intensity of questions, that the members were interested. Questions ranged from, “How long will my SP hold out?” to the ins and outs of blending modulus across the length of the rod. Jerry’s answers blended real language with technical data. You and I both know how many retired Boeing types bolster the Club, so you can guess the level of technical understanding. As for the English teachers, we just go with what feels good.



*New members Conrad Gowell, Ron Tschetter, and Michael Santangelo, inducted at the October meeting*

# REPORTS

**WETBUNS, Nov. 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> 2008** *by Jim Macdonald*

**Pete Baird** and I car pooled in his car and arrived at the group camp at Penrose State Park at 8 am, Saturday morning. I should mention at this point that it was misting at this time. Due to some prior commitments, neither Pete nor I could stay overnight and fish Sunday. It's amazing with gear and club stuff how fast you can fill up a car for a one-day outing, but we managed to get it all in.

**Dick Stearns** had brought his outboard and oar-powered Zodiac, when he decided to take **Conrad Gowell**, "new member", to Allyn to fish for chums. It didn't take much arm bending for Dick to talk Pete and me into using the Zodiac. After unpacking the car, and setting up for the dinner, and getting our gear on and rods strung, the weather had degraded to a steady downpour with wind. It wasn't looking like it was going to be a very nice day. We finally launched at about 10 am, and the rain started to taper off. It did rain off and on all day, but with some shafts of sun down through the clouds and wind gusts tapering off. It did pay to fish the lee side of Penrose Point, though, as it was too rough to fish the east side of the point.

Although we did see some large fish occasionally jumping, we were only able to catch some juvenile silvers: Pete, two, and Jim, one. One of Pete's silvers really did not look like a silver. I am guessing that it may have been a Dolly Varden, but I am not sure of that.

Now, **Mark Pratt** requires a paragraph all to himself and perhaps some kind of award that does not exist. It is pretty common for a good majority of the WETBUNS attendees to scatter to the four winds chasing their dream of monster fish and only arriving back at the campsite just in time for dinner. Most of them partner up if not for safety, but at least for comradeship, but not Mark. He at least informed me that he was going to fish Joemma Beach and took off with his pontoon boat. At least if he had not come back we would have known where to look for the

bones. When he did arrive back just about dinner time, he was a bit wet and beleaguered looking. He said that the waves were three feet high and that he had one hell of a time coping with the weather and trying to fish at the same time. He said it was probably one of the strangest days fishing he had ever experienced. I thought the shoe was about to drop and he was going to tell me he got skunked, so I beat him to the punch and asked him if he had caught any fish. He responded very simply, "Yes, 46."

We came back in about 4 pm to help with the dinner preparations, and of course did not want to stop fishing. You just know that the next cast will result in another fish. In addition to the fish that we brought to hand, we each had multiple strikes that kept our blood moving.

Dick once again prepared an absolutely magnificent bouillabaisse, and with all the pre-dinner hors d'oeuvres and drinks combined with dinner and all the desserts, we were all walking around with our bellies dragging on the ground.

Everyone assembled around the campfire and had quite an evening. I have to mention that a number of late arrivals showed up just before dinner, which was a good thing as we had more food than we knew what to do with. Some of the culprits who come to mind were **Earl Harper**, **Dave Schorsch**, and **Ed Sozinho**. They all said they had been down fishing, but I think with the south wind blowing, they smelled the bouillabaisse cooking clear up in Seattle and decided they had to come down.

I don't know what happened Sunday as Pete Baird and I came back Saturday night.

From my viewpoint: Another Great Outing. Don't ever let the rain stop you from going on an outing.





## Los Cabos Fishing Report *by Paul Lesh*

One of the top fishing grounds anywhere on the planet includes the beautiful, warm waters of the Sea of Cortez and Pacific Ocean. Where these two magnificent bodies of water meet is the fishing capital of Baja California, Los Cabos. Marlin, dorado, tuna, roosterfish, wahoo, and barracuda all make their appearance as they strike many types of offerings from thousands of visiting fisherman.

My last trip to Cabo was over 16 years ago, when you could actually see the harbor. Couldn't believe how the harbor is now full of huge, expensive, and "decked out" sport fishing yachts. Most of these vessels were from California and other southern U.S. ports.

Fishing the Pacific side was truly incredible. My fishing partner, Rich Kincaid, and I fished in the 26 ft. "Judy" skippered by Doug Wilson. Doug spends extended time in Cabo to fulfill his fishing habit. Summertime is spent sport fishing in Alaska.

Our first day out we trolled the lighthouse area for dorado using mostly plugs and hoochies. Hooked and landed our first fish within 5 minutes. These fish can be spectacular jumpers, with many hurling themselves into the air 5-7 times in a row. I tried trolling a variety of clouser minnows in blue and chartreuse and a hot flash minnow mackerel, but with no luck.

Two days later, we headed out 24 miles to the "Golden Gate Banks" and were treated to a marlin frenzy. With 65 boats in a mile-square area, marlin were being caught everywhere. In five hours, we always observed boats fighting these marvelous fish. At one point, we cruised over to some working

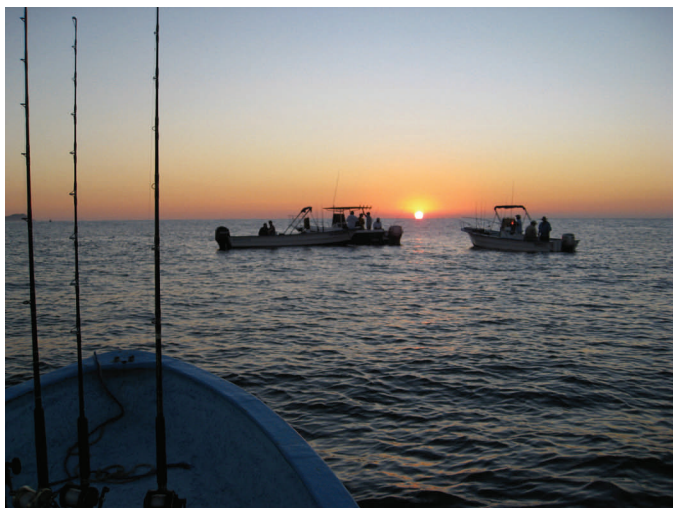


birds and got into dozens of marlin and sea lions feeding on mackerel. You could look down in amazement at these 150-200 lb missiles knifing through the surface froth.

We managed to hook four marlin before running out of bait (this was a totally carnivorous bite). I spent forty minutes fighting a fish that went 300 ft. down to the bottom of GGB, with little success getting it to surface. Skipper Doug put the boat in gear, and we literally pulled it to a more manageable depth. After four head wags above the surface, it was "ping", broke off 50# test. Because of the deep dive, color, and dorsal fin shape, we figured it to be a black marlin.

Most charter boats came back with multiple flags proclaiming their catch for the day. Ten to fifteen marlin per boat was not uncommon. The best part is that each boat is only allowed to bring back one marlin per day, with most all being released. I can remember, 17 years ago, seeing 50-100 dead marlin, carcasses lying on an old boat ramp, rotting, waiting to be disposed of. Conservation has definitely begun to take hold in this tropical paradise.

The Sea of Cortez showed unusually warm (86 degree), calm water. With a good abundance of dorado and sporadic tuna, we were able to boat a dozen tuna and eight dorado in two days of fishing.



## South Branch of the Raritan *by Mike Wearne*

It was ice cold when I tried to leave Princeton, New Jersey, for the South Branch of the Raritan. In fact, it was so cold that I waited for about 10 minutes in the driveway, to warm up the car just to clear off the windows. I was not too sure where I was going. I wanted to arrive in Califon, New Jersey, as early as possible to scope out the river. I hoped my first stop would be in Somerville for coffee.

Actually, my first stop was at the police station in some unidentified township near Princeton. The extreme cold weather had caused havoc with some sensor gauge and the dashboard reading said that I had flat tires! The desk sergeant thought that it was just a malfunctioning indicator, so back on the road.

The South Branch of the Raritan was described in a feature article in the September issue of *Eastern Fly Fishing*. The river was described as easy access trout nirvana. Even in early November, at 30 degrees, I can attest to the nirvana factor. Reportedly the river is abundant with brookies and browns, but I did not see any rises. I did tag two nice browns in a slow pool. I fished in the Ken Lockwood Gorge area of the river near Califon. I had convenient access, several nice spots to myself, and it was a cold crisp day! I saw only two other fishermen on the river. I spoke with both individuals, reportedly the river is quite crowded in the summer time. It is open year around.

I went to Shannon's Fly shop in Califon—this shop was particularly helpful. There was a small stream flowing into the Raritan that flowed under the shop! I located this fly shop in the *Eastern Fly Fishing* magazine; like American Express, I don't leave home without it. In addition, there are several books on Pennsylvania fly fishing that detail information on trout streams.

Howell Raines, in his book *Fly Fishing through a Mid-Life Crisis*, returned to the South Branch again and again. As I will be returning to Princeton again, I will also return to this stream.



## Fishing by the Book *by Mike Wearne*

*A Place on the Water: An Angler's Reflection on Home and The River Home: An Angler's Exploration* by Jerry Dennis

The author of these wonderful books is thoroughly familiar with the Upper Peninsula area of Michigan. He takes the reader on trips only someone intimately acquainted with the environment would recognize. Most of the essays involve fly fishing. Other stories focus on family camping trips, canoeing Michigan rivers, and other trips within the region. There is a particularly humorous description of fly fishing attire, or lack thereof, in Yellowstone Park.

I had an opportunity to read most of the first book on a flight to the East Coast. It was a pleasure to get into the flow and rhythm of the essays. If you have ever read any of the Robert Travers books, you will have some idea of the rhythm, pace, and quality of the essays. In fact, Travers is featured in one of the essays, when he and the author spend a day together fly fishing, drinking, and talking about writing.

Several of the essays are fiction, and I was drawn into the stories. At the end of each, I sat there, silent, stunned, and amazed at what I had just read.

There is a reflective nature to both of the books. I have a partner with whom I share fly fishing books. I am trying to suggest to her that fly fishermen are high-minded philosophical types who are fly fishing more to be thoughtfully involved in their surroundings and are not fly fishing simply to avoid their daily responsibilities! I have taken her on trips to the Yakima and to Montana. I have shared several fly fishing books with her in an effort to influence her. I will be sharing these books with her.

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## Beginning Fly Tying Class *by Don Simonson, Education Chair*

Our annual beginning fly tying class will convene on Thursday, January 8, 2009. Start time will be 6:30 pm at the Mercer Island Covenant church. Registration is required. To register or to ask questions, please call **Bob Birkner** at 206-542-4623. Check the web site for duration, cost, etc.



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here

December, 2008

### 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: The WFFC Christmas Party and Fundraiser

Raffle, live auction, silent auction, friends, fishing, and the holiday spirit. See you there any time after 5 pm.