

Creel Notes from the



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



December, 2009



Hello All!

I hope the season finds you with all the good things.

Man, it has been cold out. Still, there is no snow to shovel and that does not break my heart. Time passes and it will get warmer.

Can't say I'm longing for spring yet, but I must admit I've thought about it.

As the year ends, so ends my tenure as your President. I thank you for the opportunity. I haven't gotten as much done as I'd hoped, but many of you have moved the club forward. I thought that it was significant that at the last board meeting, a couple of people heading committees for the first time mentioned the rewarding feelings they had as a result of volunteering for a more active role in the club as a committee chair or member. I must admit that during these past years, the rewards I have received by participating in club activities have been a multiple of the effort required.

The new Education Chair, **Jim Higgins**, is getting ready to kick off the Fly Tying classes after the first of the year, to be followed by casting classes in April. Might be a chance for a Christmas gift there if you know someone who has been thinking about either.

Your new administration is chomping at the bit to get going with their agenda. Thanks to those who allowed our nominating committee, ably headed by **Jim McRoberts**, to put forward their names. It looks like an outstanding slate of officers for the new year. Outings will be looking for ideas as well so if you have some suggestions, let's get them on the calendar. The Outing Committee can always use a hand.

And yes, the New Year approaches. I will pass the gavel at the January meeting. I am thinking about how to make a contribution to the club and to our sport next year. I hope that many of you will attend an outing or help out on a committee, especially if it has been a while

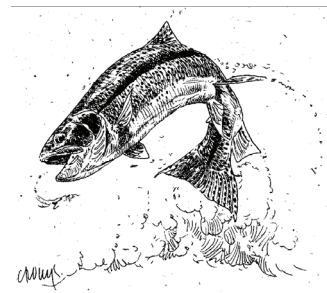
since you have done either. We need you to be there.

I look forward to seeing you at the Christmas Party. **Peter Crumbaker** says he has everything covered, and some great food and raffle items will continue our tradition. Bring a friend if you can and want to, but I hope each of you will attend.

The very best to you and yours for the holidays, each and every one.

Thanks again, and Go Fishing...and take a friend.

Pat Peterman
President, 2009



Inside.....

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| This Month's Meeting | 2 |
| New Officers and Trustees | 2 |
| On the Fly | 3 |
| Grande Ronde and Snake | 4 |
| Salmon River | 5 |
| Fishing Slovenia | 5 |
| WETBUNS 2009 | 6 |
| Membership Dues | 7 |
| Fly Tying Classes | 7 |
| On-line Marketplace | 7 |

Christmas Party 2009! by Peter Crumbaker

Our Christmas Party is coming together very well, and also very quickly. It is just around the corner on December 15th. So far we have items from Gamakatsu, Griffin vises, Simms, Sage, Dr. Slick, ExOfficio, Patagonia, Nor-Vise, Classic Accessories, Steelhead Diner, Kelly Galloup's Slide Inn, Deneki Outdoors, and much, much more. We also have some wonderful heritage items that I think many of you will be very excited about. One package that I just can't contain myself on is a rod used and engraved by **Wes Drain**, as well as his fishing journal from 1941, and some flies! This amazing package is a wonderful mark to the 70th annual Christmas Party, but not the only one. There was a wonderful response to filling the fly boxes made by **Dick Brening**. A gorgeous fly plate made up of winners of the **Boyd Aigner** competition. And plenty more to be proud of!

Just a reminder, beverages will be available on a suggested donation basis, just like the old days of the College Club. One change is that bidding will be done by numbers assigned to you at the registration table to help make keeping track of the winners a bit easier. If you are worried about finding the location, please don't. It is seven blocks south of the stadiums on 1st Ave South. It's located at the corner of S. Hanford St. and 1st Ave. S. (3200 1st Ave. South, Seattle, WA 98134). Parking is ample, but will also be marked.

Looking forward to seeing everyone, and if you have any concerns, feel free to contact me at wolf_fenris2nd@hotmail.com or (206) 356-5570.

The Slate of New Officers and Trustees

At the November WFFC meeting, the new slate of officers and trustees for 2010 was announced by **Jim McRoberts**, Chairman of the Nominating Committee. The following people will lead the club next year:

- President: **Ed Sozinho**
- 1st VP (Membership): **Peter Crumbaker**
- 2nd VP: **Keith Robbins**
- 3rd VP: **Earl Harper**
- Treasurer: **James Morrison**
- Secretary: **Leland Miyawaki**
- Ghillie: **James Macdonald**
- Asst. Ghillie: **Don Barton**
- Trustee: **Andrew Bennett**
- Trustee: **Craig Koepler**

Thank you all for volunteering—and thanks in advance for your commitment.

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Scott Hagen '09 Jim Young '09

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

Our President, **Pat Peterman**, saved me from re-discussing the re-discussion of the discussion of our choice of meeting place. If I had a free share of Google stock for every member who has a problem with the STC and seems to remember some golden era when all meetings were good, the drinks were cheap, and the parking always next to the door, I'd build my own club and rent it out.

During a delicious salad and wonderful steak, Pat made our various guests welcome, skipped the fishing reports, and moved to a joke contest. Things took a while to warm up, but once the bedroom was entered, the gloves were off and things got fun. I can print nary a word, but I can tell you that we made fun of Californians, Montanans, old ladies, bad marriages, goats, and their offspring.

Moving on, Pat let in a few fishing reports. I reported on a few rainbows to hand on size 14 BWOs during a short hatch around noon. They seemed to enjoy smooth deep water.

Fishing reports were interrupted as **Bob Burdick** threw down a challenge to **Kris Kristoferson** to join with him in sweetening the pot for the **Boyd Aigner** Fly Tying contest. Bob is going to throw in last year's winnings if Kris will do the same and enter the contest. Evidently, Bob is tired of winning and wants some competition. Start tying, boys, because the prize might just get you a blue-ribbon rod and reel. Kris accepted the challenge.

The Nomination Committee shared next year's slate of brave men running for office. **Jim McRoberts** nominated an excellent slate led by presidential candidate, **Ed Sozinho**. Ed promised a new focus on conservation.

Steve Sunich, who did a great job with programs took a burst of applause. Other business was short and sweet. Soon-to-be-president, Ed Sozinho, interjected a fishing story that involved rivers in Yellowstone, a guide with his hip out of socket, and very little fishing. He survived.

Peter Baird reported on no less than seven members. **Phil Baker**, a member since the 1950's, passed away this fall. **Frank Headrick** fell and broke a rib, but is recovering. **Andy Hall** fell and broke his pelvis. "**Hu**" **Riley** has been in the hospital for six weeks after they found cancer. Hu is recovering and hoping to get home for the holidays. **Fran Wood** continues to recover and will soon be back to meet-

ings after having his heart valve replaced. **Les Johnson** shows lots of improvement and friends are encouraged to arrange short visits. **Walt Walkinshaw** has had trouble recovering from a bad fall a year ago. He uses a wheel chair and needs full-time care. He and his wife plan to move soon to Horizon House. After Pete's report, several members shared heartwarming stories of Phil Baker and his love for fishing.

Jim Higgins, Education Chair, wants you to give the gift of fly-tying class, starting in January. **Jim van de Erve**, Editor of the Creel Notes, asked if any members would help him and **Ron Tschetter** with production and editing chores when fishing gets in the way of editor duties.

Celebrating our 70th Anniversary, Heritage Night kicked off with a table full of veterans remembering anglers, activities, and projects gone by, all backed up with some photos, of men who appeared familiar except they had hair and were thinner. All of the memories were record for posterity, assuming digital images will last as long as the wonderful record available to members in our publication *Back Casts*.

Gil Nyerges took us back to the founding nine members. Starting with getting the Stillaguamish designated fly-fishing only above Deer Creek. Next they turned their attention to Pass Lake. Despite setbacks, these early members attracted attention of others like Gil who stepped into the fray. Gil had some wonderful photos that helped members meet



Heritage Night Panel: Bill Redmond, John Callahan, Gil Nyerges, Steve Raymond, and Pete Baird

(Continued on page 4)

some of the old timers third-hand.

John Callahan took us back to the early days of Lenice Lake. Given the historically bad stocking plans, the WFFC developed better fish for these particular waters. Members also helped with paths and outlet stream rehabilitation.

We turned next to sea-run cutthroat. WFFC and Fish and Game augmented dwindling runs with hatchery fish based on brood stock caught by club anglers. Joining other clubs, members clipped fins at the hatchery, finding the work hard and occasionally bloody. Fortunately enough fish survived to be let out to sea, tagged and ready to go throughout Puget Sound. Shortly after planting the fish, they found schools of fish still pooled at the landing being hunted by anglers of all ages. After shooting fish in the barrel all day, he decided it was a good idea these cutts didn't get far enough away to breed. All in all, members came to the conclusion that the whole project was a waste of time. What changed the tide was designating catch and release and the sea-runs started to recover naturally.

Peter Baird introduced us to some of the early High Lake trip participants, some now gone and many who haven't worn shorts that short in some time. Pete did his best to put a chronological roster together back to 1975 and a trip to the Enchantment Lakes. From there, Pete listed all the trips he could remember sprinkled with memories. Some of the older shots showed off some beautiful fish, flat stomachs, thick woolly socks, and bad hats.

Members enjoyed a stroll down memory lane and young members got a taste of club history.



*Larrie Elhard inducted by Gil Nyerges,
Richard Pierson, and Don Schroder*



Grande Ronde and Snake *by Jay Deeds*

Four of us – **Jay Deeds**, his brother Craig, **Jim McRoberts**, and **Scott Hagen** – fished the Grande Ronde starting on October 23rd. The weather was favorable with sunshine and occasional clouds, no rain and little wind. We fished mostly below the bridge (catch and release only) with good success. Craig had never fished for steelhead and was delighted to hook and land a nice wild fish on the first morning. We fished the Ronde until noon on Sunday with all catching fish. I even went above the bridge and killed a hatchery fish. I had forgotten how good steelhead tastes, as that is the first steelhead that I had killed in many years.

On Sunday afternoon, we were met by our outfitter and taken to his lodge on the Snake River in Idaho, nine miles upstream from Heller Bar. The trips up the river to the lodge and our daily trips up and down the river for fishing were spectacular, especially with the fall colors. Wildlife sightings included bighorn sheep, wild turkey, and deer. A typical day on the Snake starts with a sumptuous breakfast followed by a morning of fishing two or three sections of the river. A shore lunch and a short mid-day rest are followed by a full afternoon of fishing, arriving back at the lodge just before dark. Time then for cleaning up, cocktail hour around the wood stove, followed by a delicious dinner. We even picked up a World Series game on the TV.

Not a bad way to go and we got to get up and do it all over again the next day.

Fishing on the Snake was excellent to say the least. It was the best that we have seen in several years. Our outfitter was able to put us onto fish at almost all of the runs. It was up to us to hook and then land the steelhead though. Wild fish dominated the catch. Most of the fishing was done with floating lines and swinging flies. We did use some type 6 and type 8 tips on occasion. The fish were not large. Scott's 27-inch fish was the largest.

Unfortunately, we had to leave at noon on Wednesday. We fished the Clearwater above Lewiston on Wednesday afternoon with no luck. We all

headed home on Thursday morning knowing that we are all going back again next year.

Salmon River Report *by Scott Hagen*

Stephanie and I departed for Salmon, Idaho, about 5:30 am on the first of November, and arrived at her old boss' house 616 miles later, just in time for dinner. Bill and Peggy Bernt operate Aggipah River Trips, and do wilderness float trips and guided fishing trips up and down the Salmon River, from above the town of Salmon to its confluence with the Snake. The next morning, Bill took us on a float from the launch in town to Tower Creek, very close to where his house is located. It was cold and clear, and a classic case of "you shoulda been here last week". I did hook and land one steelhead, but several days the previous week, his clients hooked more than a dozen fish per day.

The next three days we were guided by one of Bill's guides, a very nice guy and an excellent guide named Loren Anderson. Loren has been fly fishing for decades and worked with **Pete Van Gytenbeek** back in the '70s to get Armstrong Spring Creek opened to public fishing.

Tuesday and Wednesday were again cold and clear, and while Stephanie landed fish back trolling plugs (her fly casting skills are not up to steelhead fishing yet), I got blanked. Thursday dawned just as cold, but cloudy. We fished a little lower on the river, starting at Tower Creek. I hooked and landed two hatchery steelhead, and so did Stephanie. The



Scott Hagen on the Salmon River

hatchery fish were promptly bonked to keep them out of the gene pool. The larger of my two fish, about 28", fought very well, with a good run and a couple of nice jumps. Not bad at all, considering how far she was from the salt.

The scenery and wildlife viewing were excellent, including eagles galore, some bighorn sheep on a hillside, deer everywhere, heron, coyotes, and the river itself is very pretty. It is a long way to go, but I think we will do it again.

Fishing Slovenia *by Mike Santangelo*

The Soca River sources itself in the Julian Alps along the borders of Austria, Italy, and Slovenia. As it makes its way to the sea, it becomes home to marble trout, which are the endemic trout species of this Adriatic river system. However, the Soca now has other trout species such as rainbows, grayling, and browns.

Slovenia is Europe in miniature. Never really a part of the Balkan Peninsula, it has a Germanic influence with an Adriatic touch. As an independent country, Slovenia is relatively young. It broke away from Yugoslavia in 1991 and entered the EU in May 2004. It is one of the wealthiest and most diverse of the new EU entries.

What has drawn fly fishers to the Soca since Roman times? For me the reasons varied. The beauty of the river is one. It is reputed to be the most beautiful river in Europe. Its waters are exceptionally clear. The prospect of a new trout species is another. Marble trout are particular to this area. Few crowds are another reason. The Slovenians keep the tourist and road infrastructure to a minimum in order to protect the surrounding and beautiful Triglav National Park. Finally, a more personal reason, my grandfather was in this region during the First World War. As an Italian soldier, he was seriously wounded during a gas attack. Counting soldiers on the battlefields along with the civilians behind the lines, almost a million people were killed on the Soca (Isonzo) front between 1915 and 1917. This is the front on which Hemingway based his book, "A Farewell to Arms."

The search, as almost any search today, began with Google. The Internet provided information about fishing license requirements and places to stay. As far as print information in English, the only real

(Continued from page 5)



Mike Santangelo Fishing in Slovenia

option is the Lonely Planet guide on Slovenia.

This fishing trip was in conjunction with a week-long family vacation. We spent two full days along the Soca. We stayed at the Pristava Lepena. The owners took an abandoned village located above the Soca and turned it into what can best be described as a dude ranch. While you fish, family members can tour the nearby villages in the valley or go hiking on the local trails. Other activities include bicycling, canyoning, kayaking, or rafting trips. The Pristava Lepena has a stable full of Lipizzaners for those interested in horseback riding. In other words, there is something for everybody to do and the prices are extremely reasonable.

The Soca and its tributaries are managed by two different entities. The Fisheries Research Institute of Slovenia manages the upper 10 km of the fishable Soca River and its tributary, the Lepenja. The Angling Club Tomlin manages the lower section of the Soca, about 30 km, and its associated tributaries. The cost for day tickets is dear. In fact, many Slovenians can't afford to fish the Soca themselves. A day ticket in the upper stretch runs between €50 and €60. A day ticket in the lower stretch runs €60. Multi-day tickets offer a discount. Many local hotels and campsites sell fishing licenses. The bureaucratic arrangement reminded me very much of fishing at Yellowstone National Park and the surrounding state-managed waters.

The fishing is outstanding. The water is crystal clear. When you fish during the day, you need to get

your fly under the rocks because that is where the fish are. You would think that in such clear water the fish would be easy to see and sometimes they are. However, like any of nature's creatures, they adapt to the environment. The 'bows take on a bright silver sheen, becoming nearly invisible. The grayling take on a yellow tinge that matches the river's bottom. And then, the big fish only come out at night. The problem is you can't fish before sunrise and after sundown.

Early morning and late afternoon fishing offer the best chances for the big fish. You can see them move out from under the rocks. Streamers and weighted nymphs work well. Just watch for the take and set the hook.

Smaller fish will hold in the middle of the water column in deeper pools. My best success came with light-colored nymphs such as a weighted Hare's Ear. For a fast strike, a San Juan was always a good initial fly to throw into a pool.

The second night we were there, it rained higher up in the mountains so the river took on the color of glacial silt and became a bit milky. This allowed the larger fish to stay out and away from the rocks until the river cleared around noon. Even in the milky water, I could see their shapes against the bottom. Seeing their takes on the fly was a different matter.

The Lepenja is a small tributary to the Soca. It offered some great dry fly fishing during the afternoons with a tan CDC caddis. Fourteen- to sixteen-inch trout held up in pools and in the gravelly flats just below riffles. A careful approach would allow you a couple of fish before they all spooked and retreated under the willows along the bank.

For information on the Pristava Lepena, go to: <http://www.levant.si/en/>

WETBUNS 2009 *by Peter Crumbaker*

WETBUNS? Well, yeah, I guess we can still use the plural tense seeing how two of us showed up who actually fished. There was, however, no shortage of rain on this outing, which made WETBUNS just feel all that more traditional. **Mark Pratt** was the 1st to arrive, and fished from maybe 10 am til 3 pm. During that time he landed four or six fish, a nice mix of coho and sea-runs. While he was head-

(Continued from page 6)

ing in to help with the prepping of the bouillabaisse, I decided to explore some other areas with my kayak. Working towards a marina where there were some pilings that I thought might be fishy, and watching an eagle rip apart a Coho on the bank, I decided to quickly turn around and head in. I had experienced my closest encounter to lightning, and if I have ever been closer, I'm more comfortable not knowing about it. From that point on, the rain was pretty steady-eddie up until about the time we finished a wonderful community prepared meal of bouillabaisse. Everyone in attendance pitched in, and it was fantastic. Those who I recall in attendance were **Dave Schorsch**, our bouillabaisse leader, **Craig Koepler**, **Larry Karlovich**, **Conrad Gowell**, a few significant others, and possibly more, but it's just so hard to recall when drinking to stay warm! I would say the success of the event happened after the fishing. It was a tough day on the water for all two of us, but good times were most certainly had by all and especially by those who camped out.

Membership Dues *by Bill Deters, 2009 VP Membership*

It's getting close to that time of year again for WFFC 2010 membership dues – January is just around the corner! Our club bylaws state annual dues are to be paid by the end of January. We've got some great programs that count on your continued support: Home Waters, Casting for Recovery, Outings, and Conservation, to name just a few. Again this year, it's easier than ever to reaffirm your commitment to the WFFC. Just log into the Members Only area of our club website, wffc.com – and with just a few clicks you can use PayPal to pay on-line, and our records are updated immediately. No stamp, paper, or envelope, no waiting for a processed check. It's fast, convenient, and safe. Or if you prefer, print or use a paper form and mail in your check, or pay at a dinner meeting. Just let the Ghillies know. Whichever method you prefer, the club, the fish, and the fly fishing community appreciate your support!

Fly Tying Classes Starting *by Jim Higgins*

Only a few shopping days left. Our fly tying class would make a great gift for that special someone. The class starts on Thursday, January 7, 2010, and goes for eight Thursdays. It will be held at 6:30 pm at Mercer Island Covenant Church located at 3200 78th Ave SE on Mercer Island. Our gifted instructors start with the basics and lead you through some of the more advanced tying steps by teaching you to tie 15 different patterns, "the ones that catch fish". **Would this class allow you to out-fish your partner?** I am sure you know someone who would benefit from this class—kids, grandkids, or the paper boy? Only \$45. To register, or for more information, call **Bob Birkner** at 206-542-4623

The Online Marketplace *by Mike Santangelo*

The WFFC Online Marketplace has a variety of clothing items to meet your outdoor needs. The Online Marketplace can be found in the "Member Area" of the WFFC Web site. Items for sale range from polo shirts to weather-resistant fleece jackets. Everything is offered in a variety of sizes and colors and will be shipped directly to your home. All of our clothing features the distinctive WFFC Logo. This month's featured item is the Tiger Mountain Fleece Jacket.

The Tiger Mountain Fleece Jacket offers year-round weather protection. With this triple-layer defense system of bonded microfleece, you're set for wind and wet in any environment. Inside/outside contrast adds to the overall appeal. This jacket comes in sizes XS through 4XL and is offered in five great colors. It is priced at only \$55.00.



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here

December, 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:

Christmas Party 2009!