

Creel Notes from the



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

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President's Riffle

Welcome to 2018 and hopefully another great year for the Washington Fly Fishing Club. Last year was a banner year due to the outstanding work of the clubs dedicated volunteers and we can look forward to more of the same this year. Before leaving 2017 completely behind it is my great pleasure to once again thank all those responsible for the incredible Holiday Party Fundraiser, which broke all records for monies raised for both the club and the foundation!

Thanks to all who had a hand in producing the event, creating flies and fly boxes and other works of art, seeking donations of gear, trips, cuisine and vacation lodgings, acting as MC and auctioneer selling tickets and working behind the scenes to keep track of who bought what. Finally, thanks to all of you for so generously raising your paddles and bidding up the price of all these goods and services in order to fund the work of the WFFC for another year. Well done.

The first good news for the club in 2018 is that the Education Committee received enough signups to



Lets all do Mike a favor and proactively pay our 2018 dues without turning him into a bill collector.

once again hold its beginning fly tying class and as I write this, the lucky students already have a session or two under their belts. Next up are the fly-casting classes. The situation here is a bit more uncertain. At the November Dinner Meeting Committee Chairman Pat Peterman offered to personally start an instructor training class that would result in four new FFI certified instructors from our member ranks. This represents the minimum number of certified instructors that Pat feels are necessary to host the classes and he will only hold the instructor class if he has four or more volunteers. At this point two members have stepped up and committed but we are still lacking two volunteers. Please consider volunteering for this important position. You will gain one on one instruction from an FFI Master Casting Instructor (Pat) and do your club a real service. Pat's offer is only good for about two more weeks. Contact Pat directly to find out more and hopefully sign on.

continued on page 5

Inside this Issue

Page 2...Future Outings: March & April

Page 3...Awards and Fly-Tying Competition Announce

Page 4...Big Rocky Ford Trout on a Small Glass Rod

No Tie Required

Bill Neal reported that the annual Letcher Lambuth award for 2017 would go to Tom Fulk. Neal said he will be recognizing the efforts of all those who helped with the holiday fundraiser at the awards meeting. This year's award banquet will not require coat and tie as in previous years.

Foundation Supports Youth Conservation and Fly Fishing Academy

Club Support for youthful flyfishers. In past years the Northwest Youth Conservation and Fly Fishing Academy has received a donation from the WFFC Foundation.

This year the club also made a donation to the Academy. Last year the USFS created a posting highlighting the Academy and their efforts to get young people to enjoy the out-of-doors. It is a very nice report on the activities of the Academy. It can be found at this site: <https://www.fws.gov/news/blog/index.cfm/2017/7/19/Connecting-Young-Fly-Fishers-with-Nature>. Be sure to click on the 'see more' button for complete article.



Future Outings

Happy new year and tight lines to all! It's time we start planning the outing schedule for next year, and to that end, I'd like some help from all the active club members!

While it would be nice to know where what and when for all the outings, ten months in advance, it ain't gonna happen. We build the schedule as we get suggestions and current info., then add it to the roster of proven outings that lots of people enjoy. Changes to the environment, water access, and management curtail opportunity as well as create it. Some waters are finally being managed for quality fishing here on the west side of the state, and some that we've enjoyed for years have faded. With that said, I need some help in choosing angling adventures for the club, and our own members are the experts!

If you have had a great angling experience, and think it would be a good venue speak up!

A few examples: A couple of us fished Nahwatzel lake south of Shelton with fine results early last spring, we held a "day trip" for the club there two weeks later, and almost everyone caught big rainbows! 17 members showed up, and trout were caught to 5 pounds! A couple months later another couple members fished Cooper lake, did very well, reported back, another "day trip" happened, and some members caught more big trout than they had ever seen in their lives! Magic can happen! Short trips, affordable in every way, should be our goal.

Salt water, or fresh, your outing ideas count. Outings don't have to be big "Chopaka-esque" affairs. A day trip, or short weekend, with a sack lunch can be terrific breaks for us working types. Don't be shy about making a suggestion, or volunteering to host an outing. There's lots of help available, so speak up!

Hope to hear from you soon. My e mail is colvosdrifter@aol.com, phone 206-775-9948.

Creel Notes

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Club officers and chairmen can be contacted by logging in the WFFC website in the roster area.

Dear Members,

The Bendzaks still have the week of June 11 to 18 open at Hi-Hium for cabins Eagle Bay #1 & #2. That is the time window our group was there last year. Each cabin can accommodate a group of 6 or 5 people respectively on the main floor.

For those of you who are new to this experience – you as a group must bring your own food,

Missy can be reached via the following ways: PO Box 8 Savona, BC VOK 210 Canada Or (250) 373-2636, -- or -- mbendzak@hotmail.com

Awards

AWARD CEREMONIES; LETCHER LAMBUTH AWARD TO TOM FULK

By Bill Neal, Awards
Committee Chairman

At our January members' meeting we will be recognizing Club members and others who have distinguished themselves through service to the Club and the fly fishing community during the year 2017. Like last year, some of the presentations may be spread to the February meeting. In any event, both meetings will also feature a regular program. Please see the information about January's speaker elsewhere in these Creel Notes.

The Club's regular Awards include the following:

Letcher Lambuth Award, given to a flyfisher within Washington, Oregon, or British Columbia for original, significant, and lasting contributions to the art of fly fishing;

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.

Empty Creel Award, presented to a member for exceptional dedication and contribution to the welfare of the Club;

Tommy Brayshaw Award, presented to a member for distinctive and meritorious contribution to the general community through furtherance of the aims and purposes of the Club;

Andy Award, presented to a member who has "suffered most cruelly from the vagaries of "Murphy's Law" and

Half-assed Award, presented to a member for, well, you know.

Please note that we will be presenting the **Letcher Lambuth Award** to Tom Fulk, nominated by the Fidalgo Fly Fishers Club. Tom and others from that Club will be on hand at the beginning of the meeting to meet members of our Club. Please welcome them and congratulate Tom.

The Awards Committee reserves the right to present special Awards recognizing others for their accomplishments and contributions.

BOYD AIGNER COM- PETITION FOR 2018

By: Bill Neal, Awards
Committee Chairman

The Boyd Aigner Fly Tying Competition for 2018 has commenced. The objective of the Competition is to permit each participant to demonstrate his or her creativity and tying skills. Each participant is to submit a "best" fly in each of three categories. As before, the Members of the Club will be the judges.

Here are the 2018 patterns:

Grasshopper, size 10 hook;
Caddis nymph, size 14 hook; and
Articulated streamer, such as Galloup's Sex Dungeon, Circus Peanut, etc., size 2-4 hook.

The schedule for the Competition is as follows:

- February Members' Meeting
Display boxes distributed
- April Members' Meeting
Flies due
- May Members' Meeting
Judging
- June Members' Meeting
Winners announced

The winner will receive the special WFFC pin developed for the Competition, as well as having his or her name on a rotating plaque. Bob Burdick and I will serve as Coordinators for the Competition. Please contact either of us if you have any questions.

Thank you for your participation and good luck to all.

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(h) 206.232.0603; william.
neal@stokeslaw.com

Bob: (h) 206.329.5948; re-
burdick@comcast.net



Wimpy fly rod lands whopper fish at Rocky Ford

With permission from the
Spokesman-Review - Arti-
cle dated Dec 21, 2017

Fly fisher Don Childress of Sandpoint used a very tiny Size 20 scud to catch and release this 30-inch rainbow at Rocky Ford Creek in Grant County, Washington.

By Rich Landers, Spokane-Review

Don Childress is lucky he hasn't had a garage sale in the past few decades to clear out unused fly fishing gear.

The Sandpoint angler says an old, soft, fiberglass rod was the ticket to landing the Central Washington trout of a lifetime out of Rocky Ford Creek this month.

Childress caught and released a 30-inch rainbow from the fly-fishing-only stream while sight-fishing with a Size 20 scud pattern on 5X tippet.

"Had to be a lot of luck involved to land it," he said. "The real secret was a very soft Winston glass blank leftover from the 1980s that I never got tied up because graphite came on the scene."

Rocky Ford, about 20 miles north of Moses Lake, emerges from the ground in the drylands as the product of irrigation runoff. The stream offers fly fishers a 3-mile spring creek experience. Because the water surfaces at roughly 52 degrees at Troutlodge Hatchery, the stream doesn't freeze, making it particularly attractive to anglers seeking open water and active fish in winter.

Fly fishing is allowed year round with single barbless hooks and no bait.

But with no wading allowed, it can be tricky to land rainbows of any size from the tule-lined shores,

especially in the glassy flat sections where fine tippets are used to avoid spooking fussy fish.

"After fishing the stream a few times and breaking off good fish because of my a fast-action rod, I had the blank tied up just for Rocky Ford," Childress said. "While it's not a great casting tool it certainly protects light 5X and 6X tippets."

Childress described the 9 1/2-foot fiberglass rod, which was popular in the 80s, as a really soft, almost wimpy 5-weight.

"Put it next to one of the graphite rods and wiggle them together and you see three times the flex – you can feel it down to the handle in the glass rod."

He said the virtues of the soft rod were immediately apparent. "I was breaking off fewer fish at hook-up and even as I manipulated the fish round the weeds," he said.

"You give up a lot of casting punch. I'm throwing a big open loop. I can't cast 70 feet with it, but I can cast 50 and that's enough."

Patience and discipline are required to hook trout in the shallow waters of Rocky Ford Creek regardless of the rod choice. After spotting the huge rainbow, Childress said he made about 30 casts. He was using a 12-foot leader and casting about 20 feet upstream from the fish to let the gentle but sometimes squirrely currents naturally drift and deliver a fly about the size of a mosquito.

"The scud had no weight and there was no indicator, so I couldn't actually see the fly," he said. "I try to get it down close to the bottom by the time it gets to the fish. I only had a rough idea where the fly was."

"Rocky Ford is almost like fishing in a laboratory," he said. "I've seen fish move out of the way of a fly and I've seen them open their mouths and chomp on a fly."

In this case, the lunker rainbow

didn't even seem to open its mouth. "It just moved over a little bit and shuddered," said Childress, who's fished for trout, steelhead and salmon around the world. "I've seen that before, so I set the hook."

There's an art to setting a hook on a 10-12 pound trout with what amounts to a thin curved barbless wire attached to a fine tippet that tests to less than 5 pounds of strength.

"I lifted the rod without holding the line," he said, noting that he let the fish set the hook against the flex of the rod and faint tension of the free-spooling reel. "At Rocky Ford, that makes all the difference. I've seen big fish break off against just the tension of the line when you're out to your backing."

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The rainbow reacted to the hook in its lip with an immediate long sprint. "I let it run on the spool," he said. "Even when the fish got in the weeds, the soft rod allowed me to free it up without breaking off."

About 20 minutes later, Childress guided the rainbow to shore. "It was way too big for my net," he said.

Fishing partner Julie Kallameyn helped him land the trophy, where they measured it at 30 inches before snapping a photo and releasing it to test the rod skills of yet another angler in Rocky Ford. In April, I used to take a few trips up there each Spring. There weren't a lot of fish, but they were big and strong, bright and wild. Since I can't fish there anymore and I am not willing to participate in the zoo that the rivers on the Olym-

pic Peninsula have turned into the last few years, I have been fishing the North Oregon coastal rivers, the Wilson, the Trask, the Nehalem, the Nestucca, and the Kilchis.

I usually take my camper and stay at the "Big Spruce" campground, north of Tillamook. On my way there, on the afternoon of March 12th, I could look down on the Trask River and see that it was totally blown out due to heavy rains the last few days. After getting the camper set up, I met my fishing partner, Mike Stevenson, guide Chris O'Donnell and his wife Cairn for drinks and dinner. Chris told us that everything was blown out except the Kilchus, but it would be fishable.

Chris picked us up at o'dark thirty and we set off for the Kilchis in the rain, arriving just after it got light enough to see. We did a half mile walk through a faint trail and then skidded down a muddy bank to the river at a lovely pool, big enough to split up. We spent a couple hours there, both of us going through the pool twice. It really looked fishy, but nobody was willing to come up and play. We spent the next two days walking into spots along the river, fishing some good looking water, and never got a touch. In the afternoon of day two, the rain changed from regular rain to a downpour and the Kilchus started to rise and get dirty. The next morning, Wednesday, Chris called and said the river was totally blown and there was no sense trying to fish, so Mike and I packed up, had a big breakfast, and headed home. It took two days to get my clothes and gear dried out!

The next Sunday, March 19th, I drove to Oregon City, just south of Portland, and followed the directions to the "Clackamas River Lodge". It turned out to be a brand new two story, five bedroom house, right on the river, and very nice-

ly furnished. There I met the two guides, Barrett and Mike, the chef Mark, and the three other guests, Gordon, David, and Tony. At 76, I am used to being the oldest, but not this trip. Tony is 87 and in better shape than me!! The river was one to two feet higher than optimal, with knee deep visibility, but fishable. We used jet boats to run up and down the river and swung through as nice of runs as I've seen anywhere. I would love to fish this river again when water levels were optimal. Nobody touched a fish on day one, but the great meals and good company made up for it. Day two, David hooked a fish and had it on for a few seconds, long enough to see it jump and know it was a steelhead. Day three, fishing just above the lodge, David hooked and landed a wild hen. It fought well but was pretty chewed up by a sea lion. Later that afternoon, fishing just below the lodge, I hooked a steelhead out in mid swing. Terrific fight, several jumps and runs, long enough for guide Mike to run up to the boat and get his landing device, called a cradle. It's two three foot long sticks with a piece of netting fastened between them. Anyway, we landed a "teener" wild hen. She had one scar on her belly from a sea lion. The next day we saw a sea lion about a mile below the lodge. This is all the way up the Columbia to Portland, up the Willamette several miles and then up the Clackamas for several miles!! That explains the bite marks.

We quit a couple hours early on Thursday so I could drive home in the daylight. This was a great trip. The guides were very good, the food and its presentation were right up there with the best, the water was very nice to fish, and I even landed one. I will do this one again.

President's Riffle continued

Our new 1st VP for Membership, past president Mike Mosczynski, is already hard at work bringing new members to the club and at least one will be inducted at the January dinner meeting. Lets all do Mike a favor and proactively pay our 2018 dues without turning him into a bill collector. The dues are now due and remain the same as last year; \$80 for Active Members, \$50 for Associate Members and no dues for Senior or Honorary Members. Use the WFFC website to make your online credit card payments. This is the preferred method of payment as it saves the Ghillie and the Treasurer a huge amount of administrative effort. You can still pay you dues at the January, February and March Dinner Meetings if you prefer.

Have you made your New Years fishing resolution yet? After talking with longtime member (and my sponsor) John Callahan I have decided that his rule of spending at least 25% of his fishing hours in search of new places to fish is a good one and decided that would be my resolution for 2018. To that end I spent last Saturday morning pouring over the Washington Atlas & Gazetteer and the afternoon tooling around the Western slopes of the Cascades eyeballing some likely spots with Katherine. What a joy! We really do live in a angler's paradise here in Washington. We can't wait to get back out there!

Hope to see
you on the
water,

John





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

January, 2018

Meeting Announcement



Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month at the Seattle Tennis Club, 922 McGilvra Blvd. E.

This month's program is on January 16. The Wet Fly hour begins at 5:30 PM and dinner is served at 6:45 PM.

January 16th WFFC Awards Banquet & Tim Essington on the UW Fisheries Department 100th Anniversary Celebration

Bill Neal will make a presentation of numerous awards made in recognition of club members (or others) who have distinguished themselves through service to the club and the community. Tim Essington is the Associate Director of the School of Aquatic Fisheries Sciences. Dr. Essington will discuss the history of the Department and the upcoming 100th anniversary of the Fisheries Department celebration.