

Creel Notes from the



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

www.wffc.com

Founding Club of the FFF & members active in the FFF



Monthly Meeting Notice

March 19, 2002

LII No. 3

The College Club, 505 Madison St.

Seattle, Washington

Phone: 206-622-0624

Wet Fly Hour 5:30 PM

Dinner 6:45 PM

Remembering Walt Johnson

by Tim Bohlin

Friends knew him as the "Gentleman on Oso" for generous humility and "Sasquatch of the Stilly" for a unique brand of shyness. Many of the people that inspire us were themselves inspired by Walt. Boyd Aigner described Walt's flies as jewelry. And Al Pratt wrote a covetous scribble in the *Creel Notes* after observing Walt and Frank Headrick communing with pet fish in the Elbow hole...one seen "licking Walt's hand" shortly before release. Enos Brander was certain winter steelhead would not take the fly...so certain he spent hours searching the upper reaches of the Skagit looking for Walt's little red sports car. A 15lbs hen hangs on Walt's wall as quiet evidence to the contrary: caught on a red shrimp in December just below Marblemount.

Walt seemed pleased but never arrogant about his notoriety. He was particularly proud of the juxtaposition to Lee Wulff in the Orvis catalogue advocating the use of midge rods and the dry fly for steelhead and Atlantic salmon. His flies were featured in publications across the US and in Norway. Walt's flies have a delicacy that is hard to replicate by the most accomplished tiers. At the same time his art is from the river as opposed to the desk. He knew the value of contrast, yellow, purple, black, the caddis, the crane fly and the shrimp. The spectral spider, deep purple spey, migrant orange, and black secret all have practical applications. His one infidelity was with Lady Caroline. The state record cutthroat hangs above his stove...caught in an undisclosed location to preserve the promise to a friend. Walt caught larger sea run in the early 90's that was released.

Walt was a great story teller that spoke interchangeably about friends old and new: Steve and Karen Gobin, Mark Segesser, Rick Miller, Ralph Wahl, Frank Headrick, Russ Miller, Al Knudsen, Sandy Bacon, Enos Bradner, Bob Arnold, Craig Shrieve, Wes Drain, Dale Bly, Bob Betzig, George and Ken Mcleod and the list goes on. Walt's sensitivity was obvious as would relate details of minor conflicts that occurred many years before. That same keenness was alive when he talked of past fishing experiences: the 15lbs Thompson fish that tugged like a trout to his feet and then race-horsed to the center of the river before smashing the leader. Or the 3 1/2lbs Stilly cutthroat that gulped the first spectral spider ever cast...into a logjam below Cicero. Some people have told me that Walt was not as approachable

during the years his wife June persevered a long costly struggle with throat cancer. Walt was rarely judgmental but had a polite disdain for spey rods, river boast, scented or weighted flies and anything resembling fishing gluttony...real or contrived.

The circumstances that molded Walt's perspective are no longer available to us. He observed Syd Glasso's work to apply red lead to the front sections of Ashway Crandall silk lines to develop the first sink tip fly lines...and he experimented with the poor casting results. And he was there when Syd totaled his Porsche on an icy Olympic Peninsula road. He fished the Elbow hole in its heyday and grew up on Rose Hill when Kirkland was farmlands. The family blueprint paper business supported his fondness for nice things: cane rods, Hardy reels, sports cars and the motorboat that young Walt used to 'cruise' Juanita beach. The Boeing brothers bought their first roll of blueprint paper from the Johnsons. A Ferry took them across Lake Washington everyday to their downtown office. He knew the value of keeping secrets having fished with Ralph Wahl at Mystery Lake and his steelhead Shangri La on the lower Skagit. He was reluctant to share any information about this even after Ralph's passing.

A greater sense of loss comes from knowing how special Walt was and that social, economic, environmental, circumstantial variables that made him that way are gone. Future fisherman will be inspired by his art and ethic...but inevitably something will be lost in the translation.

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More Walt Memories

by Gil Nyerges

I was among the fortunate to know Walt as well as I did. As the years went by, I learned many things about Walt from others who called him friend. He was a dignified, down-to-earth, true gentleman who loved the art of fly fishing and all its various aspects. He was an artist whether he was casting a fly in his favorite Stillaguamish waters, or sitting at his tying bench putting together his famous spey fly patterns. He was very generous with his flies. Although his flies commanded prices of \$50 to \$60 each(!), he was always ready to donate to the many fund raising activities connected with conservation projects throughout the country. He was not a superficial thinker. He formed his opinions and stands only after listening to everyone. When he took a carefully considered stand, he defended it staunchly and quietly. In all the years that I had contact with him, I never heard a negative or derogatory statement about him. He was modest to a fault and always tended to downplay his accomplishments. Although he was not a charter member of the WFFC, he was part of the originating group having been sponsored by Letcher Lambuth in 1939, and he served in every office except that of Ghillie. Walt was a gentle giant of fly fishing, and it may be that he will never be replaced. The younger members of our WFFC have a role model that I hope will create a quiet competition to emulate his standards. The Club will be all the better for it. He left a legacy.

God bless you, Walt.

Letters of Condolence

Letters to Walt's family should be addressed to (Walt's former address):

Club News

Laser Cut Wooden WFFC Badges

by Don Clough

Some new laser cut wooden WFFC badges were worn by members at the February 19th meeting and seemed well received. They are \$10.00 each, of which \$2.50 goes to the WFFC Foundation (The cost to Don Gulliford's laser vendor is \$7.50 each). Don's phone is 206.232.0183 or home fax at 206.275.3043 if you are interested. They look like this:



A Note of Thanks

by Pete Van Gytenbeek

Thanks to all of you who gave so much time and effort to the wild steelhead effort. Certainly members of the WFFC provided major leadership in what proved to be an overwhelming show of public support for the proposal. Doug Schaad, Les Johnson, Preston Singletary, Bill Redmond, Jim Mc Roberts, Pres. Kris Kristoferson and all the rest... Thanks.

Unfortunately we failed at the Commission level for which I shall forever feel responsible. I always felt we would win 5 to 4, with Fred Shiosaki one of our sure things. Somehow the dept. got to Fred and by the time I found about it he just wouldn't discuss it.

We'll just have to regroup and go again.

Club Outings for 2002

by Dave Schorsch

The following is a list of club outings that have been discussed at the March board meeting. I would like to say that this schedule will not change, but you never know what tomorrow will bring. Barring major protest, this should be it.

April 27-28- Opening Day/Spring Ritual Outing

There is still considerable discussion on what should be done here. Many want to go fishing somewhere good, while many want to return to the "male-bonding" type opening day of years past. It may also be better held the week after opening day. Let's call this the date, and work out the details between now and the April meeting.

May 4-5- Griffin Creek Planting, clearing, eating, and other fun stuff. Combination work party/outing. An official club outing.

May 25-27- Chopaka Lake Memorial Day weekend. Lot's of fun, lot's of people.

June 22-23- Hosmer Lake A great spot, lots of other places to fish.

July 27- August 4- High Lakes trip Destination to be determined.

September 7-8- New members outing Silvers, cutts, bows, browns? Date is set, location is open.

Also talk of Oregon (Deschutes River) outing in September. To be determined.

October 5-6- Dry Falls, Sun Lakes State Park Great trip! I'd like a lot of help with this one. We need entertainment, food, etc.! This is the trip to make!

November 9-10- Wet Buns outing, Joemma Beach State Park Terrific outing, great food and company! This is the date barring complications with the chefs.

There have been suggestions for other outings that WILL be incorporated into the schedule. Contact me for other info or ideas. 206.227.6134

March Program: New Zeland Fly Fishing with Joe Roope

By Richard Embry, Program Chairman

Join us this month to learn about trout fishing down under, one of the few places where one can catch wild brown and rainbow trout to 30 inches! Joe Roope, owner of the Castaway Fly Fishing Shop in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, will present photos and experiences taken from his very recent and past several trips to New Zealand. Currently 34 years old, Joe already has 25 years experience in the fly fishing industry; Joe's entry into the fly fishing business began at the ripe age of 9 when he tied commercially for Orvis. At age 13 Joe opened his own fly shop, and has been in the business ever since. Currently offering guide services in western Montana and southwestern Alaska, some of Joe's more recognizable past clients include Gerald Ford, John Stockton, and Karl Malone. Joe has been in several television shows, the most current a Trout Unlimited show guiding host Tim Linehan on the Clark Fork river in Montana..

See you at the meeting!

Fly Tying Round Table

by Dick Brening

March Meeting: Tuesday, March 26th
7 to 9 PM

Place: Mercer Island Covenant Church, 3200 78th S.E. (S.E. corner of 78th S.E. and SE 32nd). Just south of the Mercer Island business district. Off street parking is available off 78th S.E.

The Mystery Material Revealed!

At the February meeting, Dick Scales showed us some of the unusual materials he used in tying his award-winning flies for the Boyd Aigner competition. The mystery material he used for the legs on his Joe's Hopper and for the extended body on his Damsselfly was ORAL B Super Floss (dental)! Super floss appears to be a versatile material that has the flat ribbon structure of normal dental floss with a fuzzy section in the middle. Dick dyes the floss or uses a colored pen to obtain the colors he needs for the flies. In addition, the flat section of the floss can be teased to produce a wispy trailing shuck for a nymph. He then showed us how he made the damsselfly wings from a material called Swiss Straw. Now we all know what his secrets are. Although, I think he probably has a few others yet to be revealed.

Chuck Ballard showed us some dumbbell eyes he makes for his damsselfly nymphs. He strings two beads the same color as the nymphs body material on a piece of monofilament and melts the mono to capture the beads in a dumbbell form. The finished eyes appear to have a transparent iris. I also demonstrated how I made the eyes for the damsselfly I entered into the Boyd Aigner competition. I started with a short piece of the polypro yarn that was used for the fly's body and by gripping the center with a narrow forceps I hold each end next to an alcohol lamp to melt the material and form a dumbbell shape. This produces an eye of the same color as the body, similar to the real insect.

In March the theme for the Round Table meeting is Steelhead Fly Patterns. Come and share the ones that work for you, no holding back! You and your guests are welcome. Come to tie, watch or just share ideas.

If you have any questions on directions contact Pete Baird or me at the club meeting or give me a call.

Scottish Lakes Trip Anybody?

by Michael Wearne

I am proposing a WFFC trip to the Scottish Lakes High Camp in mid September. Scottish Lakes High Camp is located south of US Highway 2 in the Lake Wenatchee area. This would be a great mid-week trip. We would likely have the place to ourselves.

The Scottish Lakes High Camp is a resort primarily oriented to cross country skiing and snow shoeing. In the fall, the resort becomes a base camp for hiking and fishing. The cabins are basic, not fancy, but very functional. There is a main lodge, with a dining area, an outdoor hot tub, and a sauna. Access to the facilities in the fall is via a well-used Suburban.

The web site of the resort is www.scottishlakes.com.

There is a parking lot located on Highway 2 near Coles Corner. No meals are provided by the resort. This requires preplanning on the part of participants. Fortunately there is no limit to the amount of goods that can be transported from the parking lot to the High Camp.

I fished here last September on Lake Julius. The fish were healthy rainbows. I stopped only after hooking myself due to some sloppy casting!

There are several lakes in the immediate area. The information on the various lakes from Walcott's Lakes of Washington is as follows:

Lake Julius, 12.8 acres, 4,950' elevation

Loch Eileen, 24.8 acres, 5,200' elevation

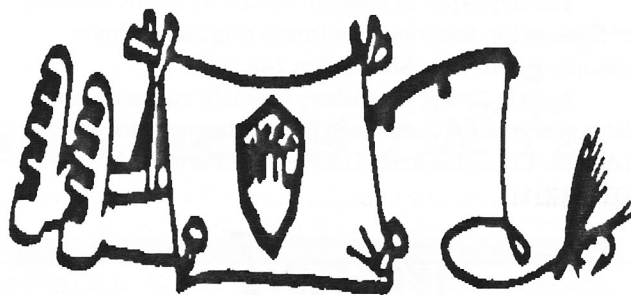
Lake Donald, 12.4 acres, 5,200' elevation

Chiwaukum Lake, 66.6 acres, 4,950' elevation

Lake Ethel, 15.6 acres, 5,400' elevation.

I am willing to be in charge of the logistics of this trip.

Think of it as Pete Baird's High Lake trip without a great deal of hiking!



In Memory of John Nestor

by Gil Nyerges

John Nestor was an active member of the WFFC for a number of years when he was diagnosed with severe prostate cancer. He chose to drop out of the Club to fight it out and to defeat it. He did well for about 15 years, but the cancer spread to his bones and finally claimed his life on February 6th. John always enjoyed his association with many of the members, and especially enjoyed the outings. He was outdoor activities committee chairman for a year just before he dropped out. He was with us at Johnson Lake, Hihium, Hathhume, Lenice, Lenore, Dry falls, Pass Lake, Eliguk, Columbia basin Lakes, Eleven Sisters, and who can forget the time he overturned the boat and dunked us at Penrose Point, earning himself one of Al Pratt's Goofus Awards? He always enjoyed those fond memories. Even though he was disassociated from the Club for an extended period of time, I think it is appropriate to remember him as the good member and friend that he was.

Spey Rod for Sale

15' 4pc 10wt like new, \$400.00
Call Steve Clements, 206.784.1154

Saltwater Fishing Regulation Meetings

Your attendance at these meetings will make a big difference. The saltwater policy makers will have to hear the recreational fisherman's voice for a change!

For more information please contact Keith Robbins: 206.283.6680 home, 206.295.7031 work

Wednesday, March 20- North of Falcon #1 Public Meeting. 1st Session for developing and analyzing 2002 salmon seasons. Sheraton Hotel-Portland Airport 503.249.7638

Tuesday, April 2- North of Falcon #2 Public Meeting. 2nd Session for developing and analyzing 2002 salmon seasons. Holiday Inn SeaTac 206.248.1000

April 8-12- Pacific Fishery Council. Adopt ocean Salmon regulations and reach agreement on inside WA fisheries. Columbia River Double Tree-Portland 503.283.2111



WFFC Youth Committee

The Youth Committee needs your help!

If you can help at the following Youth Fly Fishing Education Series events please call Richard Embry at 425-712-0140 work, or 206-362-1342 at home, to sign up and find out exact location of each event:

Monday, March 25, 6:00-7:30 PM - Fly Tying. If you know how to tie flies you can help

Monday, April 1, 6:00-7:30 PM- Fly Tying.

Monday, April 15, 6:00-7:30 PM- Fly Casting. If you know which end to hold the rod, you can help

Monday, April 22, 6:00-7:30 PM- Fly Casting

Beginning Fly Casting Class

Date: Thursday April 11, 2002

Duration: 8 weeks

Time: 7:00PM till dusk

Place: Green Lake Casting Pier

Cost: \$25.00

Pre-register required

For more information or to enroll please call 206.542.4623

North Idaho Fly Casters 1st Annual Fly Show & Banquet

Coeur d'Alene Inn W. 414 Appleway Coeur d'Alene, ID Saturday April 6th

The following itinerary was sent in by Ron Mazurek now living East of the Mountains (WFFC East). Any questions regarding the event please contact Ron by phone at 208.687.9752, or by e-mail rmazure@kimball.com

9 a.m. - 10 p.m. 9:00AM Open Registration. 9:00AM Fly Tying Demonstrations begin. Vendors Exhibits open. 9:15AM Al & Gretchen Beatty. "History of Fly Fishing" 10:00AM FFF Casting Instructors "Fly Casting Instructions Begin" 10:15AM Blue Dun Fly Shop. Bill Marts "Fly Fishing in Mexico" 11:15AM Northwest Outfitters. "Fishing Spring Creeks in E. Washington" 12:00AM Fly Tying Demonstrations Break For LUNCH 12:00AM FFF Casting Instructions Break For LUNCH 1:00PM Fly Tying Demonstrations Continue 1:00PM FFF Casting Instructors: "Youth Casting Instructions Begin" 1:15PM Al & Gretchen Beatty. "History of Fly Fishing" 2:15PM Castaway Fly Shop. Joe Roope "Fly Fishing Alaska" 3:15PM Don Childress. "Fly Fishing in Argentina" 4:00PM FFF Youth Casting Instructions End. 4:15PM Clark Fork Outfitters. Don Dale "Flyfishing the Clarks Fork" 5:00PM Fly Tying Demonstrations End. 5:15PM Slide Presentations & Vendor Booths End. 6:00PM Mixer & Viewing of Auction & Gold Raffle Items Begin. 6:30PM Dinner Seating Begins: Gold Raffle & Auction Begin. 7:00PM Dinner is served / Dinner Speaker Introduced. 7:30PM Auction & Gold Raffle Continue. 10:00PM Dinner & Exposition Ends.

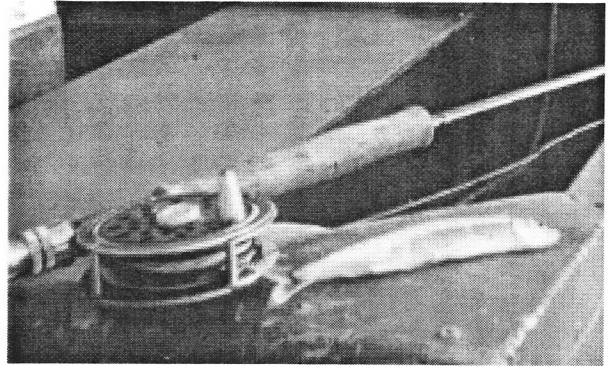
Fishing Reports

Don Gulliford, Cornet Bay, Whidbey Island- February 12, 2002

It can be done, and here is photographic proof of an absolute first in WFFC history!

That's right, a tasty SMELT on a tiny green bead head fly; no dip nets or ghastly jigs for a true sportsperson. Even the WDFW checker was most impressed.

Tasted great also. Although I prefer to eat fried whole, squeamish wives can put in hot water for about a minute until eyes cloud over, then pull swiftly down on head, and head and whole insides will all come free. Flour with seafood seasoning and hot canola oil= YUMMY.



Don Gulliford, Cranberry Lake, Deception Pass State Park, February 12, 2002

Good February weather, about 50 degrees, but the lateness of the afternoon afforded only an hour of fishing. Fishing and Hunting News claims monster browns in Cranberry at the deepest spot right in front of the convenient launch site. I tried a big black woolly buggler and a burgundy leech, but did not score. Neither did the other one or two fly fisherman I saw. But... a bank fisherman apparently did hook one of the monsters, because I watched him tussle for about 10 minutes until the fish came un-baited. I shall return.

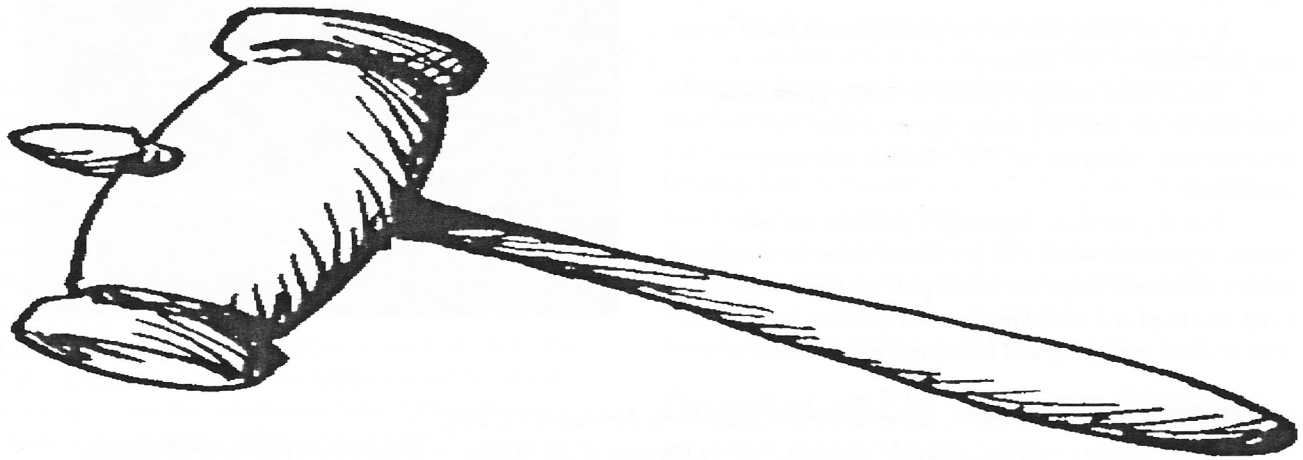
Mark Pratt, Pass Lake, March 1, 2002

As most of you know Pass Lake has never been a very productive body of water over the past 30 year's or so. Yes it does have some good size fish in it, but most are very reluctant to strike at most of our offerings, most likely do to being open year round and seeing or being stung by just about every pattern in the book. However, on this trip for whatever reason all that would not apply. This wasn't by any means my first trip to Pass. I've known it since the beginning of time thanks to a man known to many club members as lucky Al, my dad. Pass is perhaps the very first lake I cast a fly upon. I know this because I have a lot of pictures showing myself doing battle and netting trout in my fathers old seven foot pram back in 1965. Those were the good old days, and my first true experience fishing with members of the WFFC at their annual opening day outing. I've fished the place every year since then, drawn by unknown forces, rarely netting more than a couple of fish per trip as well as a few "skunks."

As I pushed off from shore around 10:30, something seemed wrong. The sun was out and the wind was nothing more than a ruffle on the water (very unusual for Pass). I wasn't more than 50 yards out before my rod started vibrating against the transom! Yep fish on, a very nice fat 18" bow that took my fly trolling at mach 1 and began leaping as would a silver running almost into my backing twice before giving up to the net. The whole day I was either getting a strike or a fish every 5 or 10 minutes. The strikes came just underneath the surface down to a depth of maybe 8 feet at the most. All told, between 10:30 and 3:30 I landed 18 fish mostly bows 16-21 inch's and two browns in the 22-23" range. I lost more than I'd really care to admit, but that's always part of the game, at least for me. No, I won't give away the secret pattern, but here's a small clue. Size 12 black/gray something you would have seen a lot of in a Bradner fly box. I plan on returning soon just to find out the truth. Luck fly or just lucky.



The *Creel Notes* is a publication of the Washington Fly Fishing Club. Subscriptions are free with membership. Articles and other materials appropriate for publication in *Creel Notes* may be sent to: *Creel Notes* Editor, 4244 1st Ave NW, Seattle, WA 98107, e-mail to kylelooney@attbi.com (e-mail is preferred). This issue of *Creel Notes* was produced by Kyle Looney. ***Creel Notes is printed by the second Tuesday of the month; article submissions must be received by the previous Thursday.*** Mail roster updates directly to Kyle Looney at kylelooney@attbi.com or the above address. The WFFC may be visited on the internet at <http://www.wffc.com>.



President's Riffle

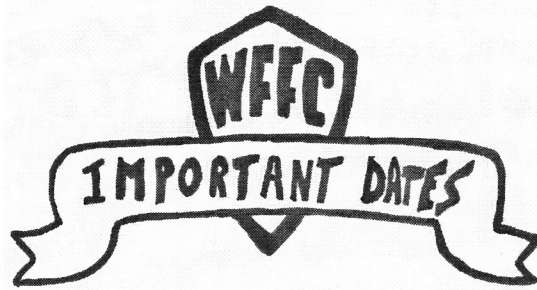
by Kris Kristoferson, President 2002

The first weekend in March, I joined many others fishing Eastern Washington's early opening lakes. It was sunny and very cold. Cold enough to observe a funny thing. At night, the water in my bottle, left undisturbed, remained liquid. Picking the bottle up in the morning jostled the water a little and it froze solid in the three or four seconds that followed. This little science demonstration was going on *inside* our tent trailer so you know it was chilly. I would sleep well the first half of the night and spend the other half struggling against the call of nature. For-saking a warm sleeping bag to stand around in my shorts . . . in the middle of a desert . . . at 3 am . . . in 15 degree temperatures . . . , well, I try to avoid that. I will say, however, that in finally conceding the battle, I *was* treated to a stunning sky full of stars.

The cold weather (and water 38-41F) didn't seem to bother the fish. They responded often enough to keep it interesting and they fought well when hooked. It felt good to engage the fish and get reacquainted with that exciting moment of the take. The breezes blew often enough to remind us just how cold it was but there were also times of absolute, glassy calm when we could feel the sun's heat penetrating the many layers of clothing. Spending a few days like this was just what the doctor ordered. Out in bright, sometimes blustery conditions, focused on fishing, seems like a "dethatching" for the human spirit. For mine, anyway. I had found too many good reasons not to reserve time for fishing, but, the fact is, we all need our regular dose of Vitamin F. Check out the WFFC outings calendar and make sure you are getting yours.



2002 President Kris Kristoferson at Hihium Lake, Fall 2001



March 2002

Tuesday 19th- WFFC Dinner- 5:30 PM College Club
Wednesday 20th- Luncheon 11:45 AM Camlin Cloud Room
Tuesday 26th- Fly Tyers Roundtable 7-9pm
Wednesday 27th- Luncheon 11:45 AM Camlin Cloud Room

April 2002

Monday 1st- Board Meeting
Wednesday 3rd- Luncheon 11:45 AM Camlin Cloud Room
Thursday 9th- Creel Notes Frozen
Wednesday 10- Luncheon 11:45 AM Camlin Cloud Room

