

# Creel Notes from the



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

Website: [www.wffc.com](http://www.wffc.com)

Member of



MMXXIII No. 1

January, 2023

## President's Riffle

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1/1/2023



Happy New Year to All! May each of you fish 365 days this year and never get skunked!

Okay, that seems a bit ambitious, but this is my first "President's Riffle" and I wanted to get out on the water with enthusiasm for the Club and our sport.

Before we get into our hopes and dreams for the New Year, though, I want to recognize all of last year's officers and committee chairs for their hard work on our behalf. Three members in particular stand out for their contributions to our Club. Our immediate past president, Dave Spratt, oversaw our return to in-person meetings, after two years of Covid shutdown, and our move to a meeting venue centrally located and that the Club can afford. Thanks, Dave, for your leadership in those accomplishments. Jim Goedhart led our fundraising efforts this year, collecting donations and putting together virtual and live auctions the proceeds of which will go a long way to funding the Club's mission. Thanks, Jim, the Club couldn't function without the money generated by that event. And, as he has for the past several years, Neal Hoffberg brought us excellent speakers each month. We know that organizing those programs is an arduous

task, so thanks, Neal, for all that you do.

As we enter 2023, I've been reflecting on the ways we further the Club's mission and what we may do to improve our work in the coming year. That mission is stated in the Club's bylaws:

- A. To improve and increase the sport of fly fishing.
- B. To promote and work for the betterment of streams and lakes that support trout, steelhead, or salmon.
- C. To encourage and advocate the conservation and increase of trout, steelhead, and salmon in the waters of the State of Washington.
- D. To promote a campaign of education against pollution in streams, lakes and estuaries in the State of Washington.
- E. To encourage and assist others—particularly young persons--to become fly fishers and true conservationists.

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# Awards Night

## JANUARY AWARD CEREMONIES

By Bill Neal, Awards Committee Chairman

January is awards month at the WFFC. At our members' meeting we will be recognizing various individuals who have distinguished themselves through service to the Club and the fly fishing community for the year 2022.

The Club's Awards include the following:

Letcher Lambuth Award, given to a flyfisher within Washington, Oregon, or British Columbia for sig-

nificant, and lasting contributions to the sport of fly fishing. Our recipient is Phil Rowley, of BC, but on the night of our meeting he (and Rick Hafele, a prior recipient of this Award) will be teaching an entomology course, so presentation is being postponed to our March members' meeting.

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

Tommy Brayshaw Award, presented to a member for exceptional service to the community in the furtherance of the purposes of the Club.

The Awards Committee reserves the right to present other awards as they see fit. We look forward to seeing you at our meeting.



Veteran members, Mike Wearne, left, Bill Redman, Hugh Clark, and Pete Baird enjoy dinner and get ready to raise the paddle to Kris Kristofferson, right.

# Creel Notes

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# On the Fly

## The Meeting in Reel Time

by David Ehrich

The casual side of things began with mingling, cocktails, hors d'ourves, and lots of catching up. Members dressed up for the occasion with The Hawk setting the standard for eclectic beauty: wide brim hat, embroidered gold flies on red silk jacket, and a belt buckle big enough to cause damage. I mingled with many ex-presidents and other notables.

Dinner buffet featured salmon, beef medallions, and other delicious treats. The buffet moved along so rapidly, I was taken aback being used to long lines and slow service at the Tennis Club. Bravo!

David Spratt commenced the official action by entertaining a motion to suspend regular business which quickly segued to a reading of Robert Service by the esteemed Pete Baird. Pete reached to the back shelf of Service's oeuvre, for a reading of "The Ballad of Blasphemous Bill." Pete recalled from memory this epic poem about a promise made and promise kept to bury a dubious character in the wild out-back of the Yukon, with the temperatures at 69 below zero. Pete took us through dead cold to the site of Bill's death, frozen with a shit-eating grin and sadly in need of thaw to fit into the tomb of his desire. Saw out, the job of burying Bill got done which led only to more circumspection by the narrator; how will they fit me into the coffin when I'm frozen stiff.

Keith Robbins took up the mic and sold the proverbial Jackson for



the handsome price of \$115. From there, bidding commenced in the usual generous style of club members. Some bargains were had, other folks bid on the more generous side of things. The financial future of the WFFC is well in hand.

Kris Kristofferson took over for the raise the paddle section of the evening, a chance to donate money to help support the \$15,000 of donations the WFFC Foundation gave in 2022. You weren't there? Don't worry, give Kris a shout and write a check. Donation levels started with Hugh Clark coming in at \$5000! Several members came in at the \$1000 level, choking up Kris and other members. And the generosity continued. I think my table alone was generous to the tune of several thousand. We reached the matching gift of \$3000, bringing in a handsome total.

Next up, the cheap person's gift: the raffle. Dick Brening read the numbers and members ran for the racks of great member-tied flies, generous donations of gear and other angler worthy merchandise.

After a short break, we took up more raffles. In the ensuing period, Jen and I looked back and reviewed the success of various auctions.

The real winner was the Italian dinner that Rocco and Jim put on for six people. That sort of experience had more value to people than a couple of the exotic overnight guided trips.

For the finale, those of us in the cheap seats, got our last chance. As per usual, I was among the lucky and took home some nice items including a pair of binoculars, enjoying the generosity of other club members' donations of quality gear. Others won beautiful hand-made fly boxes filled with quality and useful flies. No joke, Pat Becker won four fly boxes, giving them all away.

In review, the Mercer Island VFW provided a fine venue for the Holiday party, with room to move, room to mingle, room to dine. Members at my table enjoyed the causal nature for the venue, had some problems with parking, but gave a thumbs up to the switch; "it fits us." In addition, the food was sure yummy and plentiful.

### 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.

# Passings

The new year has not been kind to the WFFC with the recent passing of members Pete Crumbaker, Bob Birkner, and David Schorsch, and we remember Curt Jacobs who passed away earlier this Fall.

**Pete Crumbaker**, who died tragically of an allergic reaction to wasp stings, was a fresh voice in the club. Always up for the fun side of things, he could fish just as passionately for carp as he did for steelhead. His credentials as an angler were as solid as his credentials as a club iconoclast.

**Bob Birkner** was my first president as I slogged through a few terms as board secretary. Bob ran a steady meeting with the same deft qualities that he used to hold a rod. Where the club prospered under his leadership, many fish paid the price of his savvy. As my favorite ex-president, I never missed the opportunity to engage him in conversation and pick his brain for angling advice.

Back when you needed two sponsors to join the club, Larry Karlovich who knew me pretty well, asked a favor of his good friend **David Schorsch** to sign for me. I didn't know him well. But like a good godfather or uncle, David reached out and taught me about all sorts of things, never failed to hand me the right fly, and helped me understand the club and its sometimes frustrating ways. Many of you enjoyed his companionship on and off the water and David leaves behind many friends in the club. I never ceased to be amazed that he had any time for me - but that's sort of man he was. An

invitation to fish for sea-runs meant a truck, a cooler, a trailer, a boat, a long drive, a launch, and then great fishing made all the better by his solid advice. And then the whole thing in reverse. What a gift.

Having served with **Curt Jacobs** on several boards where he held onto the archives and mementos of

club history. I will always remember his cantankerous nature and fondness for letting people know where they have erred. He knew the club well.

Many of us have debts to these three members; many of us will happily repay them forward

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## 'Riffle' Continued

As to the first goal, to improve and increase the sport of fly fishing, there is no doubt that Covid hampered our work and enjoyment of the sport over the last three years. Our membership grew, but we didn't get out as much as we had hoped. We hope to return to a full slate of outings this year. To that end, the Club is in need of an Outings Chair, to head up an Outings Committee, and two or three other members, each of whom would agree to set up and host two or more outings in a year. We hope to keep the outings balanced between local day trips and more extensive overnights. Please contact me at [danferd.henke@gmail.com](mailto:danferd.henke@gmail.com) if you would be interested in serving as Outings Chair or an Outing Host. We'd like to get our outings up and posted as soon as we can. This is a fly fishing club, let's go fishing!

The Club also is in need of immediate assistance with its public outreach, that is, its social media presence and other publicity. Shoot me a line if you could help with that.

And we need help organizing

the meetings, particularly the food and drink. If you can pitch in with that logistical exercise, let us know.

In the coming month, I'll be writing about the other aspects of the Club's mission. I'd like to hear from each of you, about the Club and its mission, what you'd like to join in, what you think we could do better. Send me an email or give me a call.

Finally, let me leave each member with a modest challenge. Over the first quarter of the year, find one thing that you can do for or with the Club. It doesn't have to be a large commitment. Perhaps it could be coming to a monthly meeting and introducing yourself to a few members who you don't know or attending an outing. It could be volunteering to assist with one of the Club's committees or other events. There are many other opportunities on the committees. If you'd like to get involved contact one of the committee chairs or me. I'll hook you up.

Onward and upriver!  
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# Holiday Fundraiser



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The party starts with a visit to the Ghillies, James Emswiler and Shelly Scheff, clockwise from top left, and then a visit to admire the auction and raffle fly boxes. Nobody is happier at the Holiday Fundraiser than the outgoing President, David Spratt. The Hawk demonstrates the club dress code of the future. Jim Goedhart joins Marcia and Jerry Kindinger for a pre-dinner cocktail

