

FINNY FACTS

Archived version

AUGUST 2004

San Diego



Fly Fishers

Cleaner Water. Brighter Streams. Better Fishing.

Volume 9, No. 8

August Meeting

It's Time Once Again for the Annual Fly Tying Round Table

The August meeting will once again feature our fly tying roundtable. Our fly tying demonstrations will feature some of the club's most accomplished fly tiers sharing some of the most effective patterns. There will be dry flies, wet flies, nymphs and streamers. Both freshwater and saltwater patterns using a variety of natural and synthetic materials will be featured.

Club Master tier **Gary Hilbers** will be rounding up our best fly tiers for a full evening of demonstrations. As of the date of this article a list of tiers was not available, but in the past we have had our Fly of the Month Chairman Tom Smith, Larry Sorensen, Jim Reeg, Eileen Stroud, and Jim Tenuto among others, volunteering their time and knowledge.

This is a night that will have something for everyone...so don't miss it.

REMINDER

Volunteer hosts for the August meeting
(report at 6:15 PM):

George Kovacevic and Calvin Weddle

Thank you, Mona Morebello

California Trout Opens Office in Eastern Sierra

by Jim Edmondson

The Eastern Sierra is known for its rugged beauty, sparse population, and incredible angling opportunities. The area plays host to the full gamut of anglers, from bait to fly, many of whom travel long distances to fish the area's fabled waters including the Owens River, Hot Creek, East Walker River, and Lake Crowley. However, development and increasing water demands are jeopardizing the prolific trout fishing in the region. In response to these threats, CalTrout opened a permanent Eastern Sierra office in the town of Mammoth Lakes in June, 2004.

Led by Rob Lusardi, CalTrout's new Eastern Sierra Manager, the organization will focus its conservation efforts on water rights and water use issues as they pertain to the rapid growth and development of the town of Mammoth Lakes and its expanding resort industry. These efforts are directly related to CalTrout's conservation goals in the Eastern Sierra that include

protecting and restoring Hot Creek, the Upper Owens River, Rush Creek and the Owens River gorge fisheries.

For the past three years, Lusardi has worked as an environmental scientist and GIS analyst for an environmental consulting firm in San Francisco where he authored ecological feasibility study/risk assessment documents for the U.S. Department of Defense, created and analyzed GIS data, while managing complex natural resource projects. Before environmental consulting, Lusardi worked for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife conducting salmon and steelhead research. Additionally, he was a research assistant at the University of Massachusetts and led students in backcountry trips. Lusardi is an avid angler who also enjoys backcountry skiing and winter camping and is very interested in the escalating conservation challenges that persist in the Eastern Sierra region.

"CalTrout is fortunate to attract a young man with such considerable talent and keen interest in this region. We feel Rob is an excellent match for our Eastern Sierra Manager position and will represent our members very

MEETING NOTICE

Monday, August 2nd, 2004

7:30 PM

Sequoia Elementary School
4690 Limerick Ave.

(See map on back page)

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: AUGUST 2004

It is mid-summer and lots of our members are out fishing, which is after all why we joined the club. Thanks to **George Kovacevic** and **Rich Strobel** for the great article in last months Finny Facts and the brief presentation at the July meeting on their trip to the Panguitch area of Utah. Shows that a little research and a sense of

adventure can lead to a great trip. We look forward to hearing from other members about their trips this summer.

Dick Mount has done a great job resurrecting the week-end trip program. He is off to the Kern River area on his latest trip. We look forward to hearing about the trip from some of our literary members.

Louie Zimm reported on an exploratory trip he and two other club members made to Alaska to test the suitability of a previously conventional only camp for fly fishing. They had great results and Louie will lead a group to this new found area next June. Be on the lookout for an announcement with the details.



GEORGE GATES

Despite a late start (new janitor) and some high temperatures, Ken Hanley entertained as promised. Wow, can this guy get excited about fishing. As in for any kind of fish in any place imaginable. Ken really emphasized the diversity of the local San Diego saltwater fishing. We also have

some great warm water fishing with our many lakes and the San Diego and Sweetwater rivers. Speaking of the Sweetwater, I just read the Sweetwater Reservoir will open for fishing on July 25th for the first time in its 100 year history. Rumor is that the reservoir is loaded with fish. Let us know if you give Sweetwater a try, hopefully it will live up to expectations.

With **Vern Wescot's** retirement we missed our usual refreshments, espe-

cially the cold drinks, at the July meeting. We have good news. **Maria Goldman** has volunteered to be our monthly refreshments hostess. Thanks Maria. She does travel from time to time so we will need some back-up to cover for Maria when she is away. **I know everyone will appreciate your helping out in this area, so if you can help please let Maria or me know.**

Next months program will feature some of our own expert fly tiers. This is always a favorite as you have the opportunity to watch the creation of various styles of flies with a variety of techniques. This event is being organized by **Gary Hilbers**, thanks Gary. I hope you can attend. I myself will be away on my first fishing trip of the year. Work certainly is the curse of the fishing class. Look forward to seeing you in September.

Cal Trout Open Office

continued from page 1

well," said Brian Stranko, CalTrout's Executive Director.

Lusardi and CalTrout will work proactively to mitigate Mammoth Lakes' runaway growth trend and water use. With a permanent presence in the area, CalTrout will build an environmental coalition and work to inform the local community and other Californians about the ecological risks of continued devel-

opment and a regional population boom. Central to this message is that rapid development and consequent water needs can compromise the Eastern Sierra's coveted trout streams and natural ecology, which could have a severe negative impact on the region's recreation-based economy.

"My words to the Southern California fishing community and its clubs is that I'm all ears and would love to hear what they have to say about issues that are important when considering the

conservation of Eastern Sierra waters," said Rob. "We're always looking for input and for help, whether we're developing a coalition, restoring the CalTrout kiosk at Hot Creek, or launching a letter writing campaign."

To reach Rob and share your conservation views — or best secret fishing spots in the Eastern Sierra — give him a call at his new office or write him at



More on Whirling Disease

Specifically on my loused-up version in the July issue for which I apologize. It went to press without any proofreading.

In this issue I will attempt to describe some current control strategies for reducing or eliminating the damage being done to our trouts by the WD parasite

(*Myxobolus cerebralis*). There has been about 10 years of active research since the parasite hit the Madison River population of rainbow trout and a lot of research done mostly in vain and of little value and only weak hope.

The most certain finding is that anyone using the infected streams must very carefully and thoroughly wash off all muds and debris at the infected site and not transport it to non-infected areas; this means EVERYTHING brought into the infected area-used or not. The parasite can survive in wetted hands and gear until reaching a non-infected area. All fishing clubs are well checked out on these procedures so I will concentrate on other promising methods of containment or eradication.

First, be aware that the WD involves two hosts - a salmonid fish and an oligochaete worm, *Tubifex tubifex*, which is very common in soft muds. This worm produces very many microscopic spores into the water from



BOB WISNER

which they are ingested by young trouts. The spores infect the soft cartilage and the brain tissue and cause an erratic movement, mostly whirling, hence the name. Deformed vertebrae, bent tails and black tails also result. Some infected fish survive to adults but are sterile. At death of a host fish the spores are released to infect again.

No cure is known. Destruction and disinfection of infected waters is the only known solution to wild populations; neither is feasible as yet.

The infecting spores can withstand -20° C for at least three months. Also they can remain viable during passage through guts of predators, such as the northern Pike (*Esox lucius*) and birds such as the black crested night heron and the mallard duck. There have been reports from Europe of the spores surviving in dry ponds for 12 years. It seems that there is a deep layer of slight but constant moisture adequate to support the spores.

Strategies for controlling WD have been and are being devised and deployed. Foremost is the attempt to break the life cycle of the parasite by removing the tubifex worm host. This approach is more applicable to agriculture but recent experimentation with electricity suggests treatment of "hot

spots" in wild areas may soon be practical. Two students from Hamilton, Montana High School, using an electrophoresis chamber, found that after a 1,000 second (about 17 minutes exposure to low level DC voltage), almost all the worms were dead within 48 hours. Unfortunately, it would be difficult to transfer worms from field to laboratory for such treatment, but such treatments are being attempted. Thorough drying may be effective only in certain dry climates but *Tubifex* can form resistant cysts and live for 14 days in dried mud; if they are wetted occasionally they can survive for fourteen days. Also the worms may burrow down to depths where muds are always moist enough to permit spores to remain alive. They encyst and remain alive for unknown periods. If an encysted worm returns to normal moistures it is not known if it can produce viable spores.

Various chemical and thermal regimes have and are being tested, with some giving promise of severe damage to the infecting spores. But, the many and complex chemical formulae, and temperature data are too voluminous to repeat in detail here. Suffice it to say that the various calcium, sodium and potassium hydroxides and chlorides are effective in part but are fatal to non-target life.

Long periods of high heat and freezing are so far the most certain destroyers of the parasite but of little value in wild streams and lakes.



Golden Trout Project: an opportunity to volunteer

This year, CalTrout and Trout Unlimited are working with the California Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Forest Service in a collaborative effort to protect and restore the California Golden Trout. The Orvis Company and its

customers are supporting this restoration project along with other Golden Trout educational and monitoring work with grant funds. We usually read about these sorts of projects taking place in New England, Idaho or Montana. With TU's expanding interest and activity in California, we now have a unique opportunity to get involved close to home.

This summer and fall TU and CalTrout are coordinating a variety of opportunities for volunteers to participate in the restoration activities that will take



GARY STRAWN

place in Inyo and Sequoia National Forests and Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks in the southern Sierra. All of the activities involve active, outdoor activity, and some involve rigorous back-packing and/or hiking in the high country. Some of the activities involve catching fish for genetic

monitoring purposes, so fishing skills and equipment are required. In all cases volunteers will have to provide their own transportation to the starting points of the trips and will have to provide their own camping, fishing, outdoor gear, and food.

I apologize for the lateness of this notice. Some of the events have already passed, but it took a while for me to get this information. Some activities planned for the rest of the summer are:

July 24 to August 1:

Genetic sampling / monitoring group backpack trip.

Sept 4, 5 and 6:

Osa Meadows Stream bank and meadow restoration.

Sept 24 –29:

Templeton Barrier on the South Fork of the Kern. Electro-fishing the Kern and Strawberry Creek to monitor and remove non-native trout. 10 mile pack in from Horseshoe Meadows via Trail Pass. Contact Warren Lew (858) 576-1043 or email Warren.L.Lew@kp.org for info. He will be going on this one and hopes to catch some Goldens along the way.

Oct 9 and 10:

Monache Wildlife Area. Remove fencing for the winter.

For more detailed information and a sign up sheet, visit:

[and click on 2004 Field Schedule and Volunteer Sign-Up](#) or contact Warren Lew . 🐟

KEEP IT SIMPLE!

by Leon Chandler

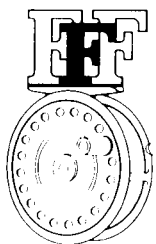
Editor's Note: The following article by the late Leon Chandler was originally published in the Tailing Loop (the FFF Certified Instructors Newsletter) in 1995. Leon was a true ambassador of our sport, his fly fishing instruction touched people all around the world. Leon

frequently told people that he thought he was one of the luckiest men alive being able to spend most of a lifetime involved in manufacturing, selling, and using fishing tackle products that only give pleasure to people. Leon was once quoted as saying - "I can't help but feel a bit sorry for those who have never fished with a fly rod. "

I met Leon for the first time last August at conclave and feel lucky to have had the pleasure. He will be loved and missed by all who knew him May he Rest in Peace.

I am bothered with the knowledge that a lot of folks out there are not fishing with a fly rod because of





By Roger Maler, President of the Southern Council FFF

The Dead Drift-An Oxymoron?

Many of us have stood, spitting out flies, in the midst of a west coast hatch so thick so as to obscure the water, without considering the underlying value of this experience. That simply being that the flies we meticulously tie, strain to present ever so lightly and laboriously mend to produce a “dead drift” are, in fact, intended to replicate something that is alive!

Take a minute to watch the activity during a hatch or just one bug on the water and observe their movement and almost imperceptible vibrations emitting from them. This “lunch bell” is being broadcasted to every living thing who might consider this morsel as its next meal above and below the water. The point being a true dead drift may not be the most optimum presentation in every situation.

During my formative early fishing life I, by accident, discovered that trout would strike almost any thing that was moving on the surface. Casting a floating/diver Rapala many years ago, (yes with a spinning rod) the plug was dead drifting over a deep pool during a Coke break. The movement of my guide and his rowing effort was moving the plug in small twitches and

plops. Now as a warm water fisher almost from birth this action was gospel for torturing bass and brim to strike. Well as you might have surmised this also works on trout as well, as the astonished guide and I learned that day. Trout were smacking the twitching Rapala. The “twitching” technique is quite simple and may be happening to you now and again in the mending process or as a result of a poor “dead” drift. The normal reaction to “spoiling” the drift is to pick up and recast elsewhere fearing you may have spooked the trout in the area. Steady your nerves and rod and let the drift continue flicking the tip every 4-5 feet. The object is to *vibrate* the fly not pop it. At the end of the drift raise your rod and momentarily hold the fly in the current and very lightly swing the fly across the current skittering it on the surface. If you can, lift the leader off the surface too. Keep in mind the size of the fly and its natural counterparts’ possible ability to move on the surface. The best fly that I have found to do this with, because of its design, is the elk hair caddis 14-16. Also do not use a leader of less than 10-12 feet for all dry presentations longer if you can turn it over. When you apply floatant to your fly, also apply to the full length of your leader

and always keep your fly line dressed, at least twice a day!

A second lesson I have learned is that matching the hatch to the nth degree of detail and size could be reducing the odds of attracting a rise. Try a larger, maybe two hook sizes, to get some interest. Why compete with hundreds of the real thing? Toss an attractor or terrestrial in the melee. Try the twitching method above. If you are unequipped to throw dries at the instant of a hatch, keep fishing the same way as the feeding frenzy usually lowers the trout’s guard and the strike odds are good. The window of opportunity during a hatch may only be a few minutes as we all have sadly experienced. If you are nymphing try high sticking the rod and get your bug up near the surface and skitter it at the end of the drift. I have actually done this on a sink tip line with a wooly bugger and caught fish! Admittedly, not your classic stream side image. Don’t be a slave to protocol and tradition and you might be surprised with the results! Tight lines and dry waders to all,

Roger Maler, President of the Southern Council FFF

www.southerncouncilfff.org



KEEP IT SIMPLE

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the perception that the skills required to cast a fly line are too complex for them to possibly learn. I think this unfortunate atmosphere has been created by well-meaning “experts” who are oftentimes inclined to get carried away with their own expertise and talk and write in a manner that has a way of intimidating the novice beginner. As FFF Certified Casting Instructors, oftentimes the first important step is to put the student at ease by explaining that all the experts once began as novices and developing casting skills is a learning process - one step at a time. If the student is a golfer, it is unlikely he or she shot par the first time out. Neither can they expect to become expert fly fishers at the very beginning. But for many of us, hitting a golf ball straight and long is a heck of a lot more difficult than casting a fly line far enough to catch fish. My experience has been that most beginning fly fishing students already have some angling experience, probably as a result of fishing with either an open-face or closed-face spinning reel. Therefore, I feel my first obligation is to make certain they understand the differences in the technique of casting a weighted spinning lure versus that of casting an almost weightless artificial fly. They should comprehend that with a spinning rod, the weight and momentum of the lure *pulls* the line off the spool of the reel. However, because the almost weightless artificial fly is not heavy enough to cast with a spinning rod - in fly casting, we use a completely different principle, and that is to cast the *line*. Wherever we cast the *line*, the fly is sure to follow. Forget about the fly - concentrate on what the *line* is doing.

To help them better understand, I emphasize that the line is, in effect, an *elongated weight* and in order to cast the elongated weight, we must do things substantially different than when we are casting the concentrated weight of a spinning lure. The similarity is we are still casting weight and this leads to emphasizing the importance of the backcast and how vital it is to make the back-cast with enough force to allow it to straighten out behind - thus getting the weight of the line in position to load or ‘cock’ the rod. When the back cast is in proper position to load the rod, then it is only a matter of timing to make the forward thrust and to deliver the fly to the imaginary target.

I have found that at this point, the most difficult thing is to get the student to understand the importance of *making the rod tip control the line* - both on the back cast and the forward thrust. Most have a tendency to want to wave the entire rod, resulting in a wide loop that doesn’t go anywhere. I ask them to imagine there is an apple impaled on the rod tip and to imagine they are trying to “flip” it off - both to the back and to the front. I will place my hand over theirs on the rod grip and emphasize making the rod tip “flip” the line back then forward. Once they get the feel of this action, they are well on their way.

Don’t let beginners try to handle too much line. Forty feet is enough. Secure the line around the reel so they can’t strip out more. Too much line really messes up their timing. I prefer the first basic instruction to be on grass - away from the distraction of attempting to pick line off water. And at this point, I want them to merely pick up, throw a straight back cast, then lay down. Turn students sideways, tell

them to look back at the back cast - if it is high, straight and level, fine. If not, they must correct something in their stroke. They must learn to get the back cast in position to use the weight of the line against the rod.

If water is available, the next step is to teach the roll cast. Because it is easy, it gives them a sense of accomplishment and diverts attention from the tension of trying to make the line behave in the air. For the roll cast, the line must be drawn back slowly until it drapes behind the rod - then with a sharp, tip-action thrust, the line will roll out. And they are so pleased they were able to do it - usually on the first, second or third try. Then I like to have them alternate upon command - a few pick up and lay downs, then a few roll casts, a few more pick-ups, then a few more roll casts until they feel comfortable and fully understand the importance of making the rod tip direct the line where they want it to go.

These are the first easy steps in introducing a novice to the intriguing world of fly fishing. Everything else follows these very basic principles. Make sure the student is comfortable with these basics before moving on to the more complicated maneuvers, such as false casting, line control, picking line off the water, smooth presentation, etc. I usually recommend to beginners that they practice on still water for bluegill or other panfish. With just the pick up and lay down, and the roll cast, they can present small cork popping bugs or simple wet flies far enough and well enough to catch fish. With panfish, they will improve casting skills, learn hook setting, landing fish - even small ones. But the most important of all, they will have fun. And that’s what our sport is all about!

Remember - KEEP IT SIMPLE! 🌿



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858-274-2712.

Send change of address information, sign up for electronic version of newsletter, or Club membership renewal to:

Gordie Zimm

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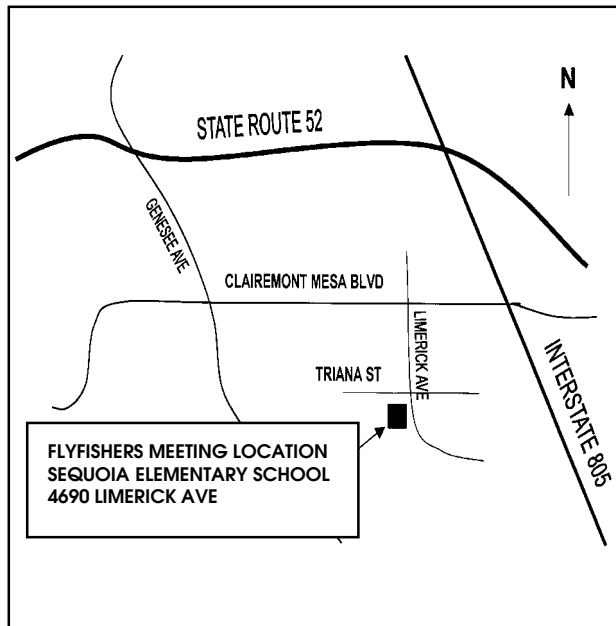
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