Welcome to the January 2010 issue of the ClubWire e-mail news service for clubs.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

- FFF Member e-newsletter –
If your not getting our monthly FFF Member e-newsletter and would like to. It’s easy to sign up. Go to http://visitor.constantcontact.com/manage/optin/ea?v=001oqwWjY62mfmliHsoPjzZRg%3D%3D and just enter the e-mail address you would like it to be sent to.

- Affiliate Club Dues Notice 2010 –
The Club dues notices were mailed November 15th, 2009. As most of our Clubs know …. Affiliate Club dues are due Jan 1st of each year. Please be sure to have someone check your Club PO Box. The dues notice for Affiliate Clubs can be found on the FFF website with dues calculations. So that if for some reason yours does not arrive you can simply print it off and mail in by Jan 1st, 2010. http://www.fedflyfishers.org/Portals/0/Clubs/DuesNoticeAffiliates2010.pdf

- FFF Conservation Corner – For more information contact conserve@fedflyfishers.org
Check out these pages on our site:

Announcements
The Steelhead Committee of the FFF is an important voice for the wild steelhead and salmon of the Pacific Northwest. The quarterly publication, The Osprey, has just found a new home. A website will house current and back issues of The Osprey, as well as provide up to date information on the current status of wild populations, fish counts and important legal cases. The new website allows better access and improved navigation for those interested in issues on wild steelhead. Take a look at the new site today!

The FFF wants your best catch and release images for new web content. We are currently developing new web information for our website on proper catch and release techniques, philosophy and gear. Share your best catch and release photo with us. Select images will be used on our website to help teach others the best way to handle and photograph fish for release. For specific guidance on appropriate photography to be submitted, and to participate send an email to the Conservation Coordinator. Any photos used will display photographers name.

This year at the FFF 2010 Conclave in August, we will be offering a variety of training sessions. Training will be offered on everything from required club tax forms to what it takes to conduct a conservation project on your local water. Training sessions will be offered free-of-charge. Stay tuned for more information on how to participate. If you have any information you would like to share on club conservation that would be helpful to others, please contact the Conservation Coordinator.

Conservation News
The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has launched the Angler Registry and just created a new website in an effort to register all saltwater anglers. The Marine Recreational Information Program, or MRIP, is a new tool that
will help NOAA and anglers work together to help ensure the long-term sustainability of America's recreational fisheries and the health of our oceans. The MRIP will provide important information about ocean species, catch rates and more. If you would like to read more about this important program or register, visit the Angler Registry website.

- Northern California FFF Fly Fishing Hall Of Fame –
FFF NCC is proud to announce the induction of Mike Michalak into the Fly Fishing Hall of Fame. Mike’s contributions to the art and sport of fly fishing will be recognized as he becomes the 30th inductee into the NCC FFF Fly Fishing Hall of Fame. Saturday evening March 20th, 2010 / Napa, CA. For more information and tickets please visit the FFF NCC website http://www.nccffl.org

- FFF Annual Conclave 2010 –
The location for 2010 will be in West Yellowstone, Montana. The dates are August 23 – 28. More information will be posted to the site in the coming months. Mark your calendars!

- Big Horn Youth Adventure 2010 –
The Big Horn River Alliance & FFF will be sponsoring and producing the Big Horn Youth Adventure 2010.

The dates for 2010 will be June 24 through 27 with a travel day before and after. This Adventure will include four days of guided fishing with experienced, professional Big Horn River guides and four two-hour sessions at the tying vise being taught by professional fly tiers. We are expanding the program to include more evening activities such as ‘You-row-it Carp Tourney’, Casting Games, Fly Tying Games and other activities.

All FFF clubs and councils are more than welcome to encourage applications from young fly fishers.

APPLICANT REQUIREMENTS: Any youth, male or female, ages 14 thru 18. All applicants must: ‘KIND OF’ know how to fly fish and ‘KIND OF’ know how to tie flies. We are seeking youngsters who want to experience the joy of a ‘big time’ fly fishing adventure and are willing to return home to mentor other young people and encourage others to take part in the great activity of fly fishing. All meals, lodging, airport shuttles and guides will be provided free of charge. Air transportation to Billings or transportation directly to Fort Smith must be secured by the participant’s parents, guardian or fly fishing club.

For more information and applications please contact:
Frank Johnson, 11 Spring Creek Lane, Sheridan, Wyoming 82801 - Phone 307-672-5164 or cell 307-752-7083 - Email bghrnhkl@wavecom.net

For more information visit the Big Horn River Alliance web site at: www.bighornriveralliance.org

There is a complete report on the 2009 Adventure as well as many pictures, and comments from the kids and their parents. Thanks for your interest. www.bighornriveralliance.org

Casting Tip for TBFFC: 2
By Pat Damico – Taken from the Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club Newsletter

We will take the first of five Essential components of a technically correct cast. Different instructors will occasionally say they use three or four essentials, but their definition will usually combine the five essentials we will discuss. Bill and Jay Gambell in their excellent booklet available from FFF, “The Essentials of Fly Casting,” first published in 1993, is still the indisputable standard.

There must be a PAUSE at the end of each stroke, which varies in duration with the amount of line beyond the rod tip. In order to cast a fly, the rod must bend or load. The weight of the line loads the rod in fly casting. The more straight line outside of the rod tip, the more the rod will load. A beginner should frequently watch his backcast to make sure the line is almost straight as it unrolls before the forward cast is begun. If the length of fly line is constant, the amount of pause is the same on both the forward and backcast. When false casting, not allowing the fly line to touch the ground or water, gradually increase the length of line and the amount of time you wait or pause before starting to move the rod tip in the
opposite direction. As an exercise, begin false casting with only a few feet of line outside the rod tip. Increase line a foot at a time and monitor your timing, when it looks and feels right, with nice tight loops, add a foot of line and continue. Waiting, or pausing, too long will allow the line to completely straighten and gravity will take over causing the line to fall at the same time unloading the fly rod and destroying the cast. To unload the rod properly at the end of each strode the rod tip should have a crisp stop. Short cast, short pause; long cast, long pause.

What Are Trout Really Thinking?
Submitted by Daryl Crowley – West Michigan Hacklers Club

Did you ever wonder what goes on in the mind of a trout? What in the heck are they thinking? Thinking? Of course the logical assumption is that they are cold-blooded creatures, incapable of any conscious thought, merely reacting to their environment or external stimuli. Cautious? Yes, of course, this seems obvious but surely they are not "self-aware," or cognizant of their own mortality, let alone conscious of humans or their methods. They don't "know" what eagles or anglers are; just that dangers exist that can reach into their watery realm, so they have learned to be shy of shadows or intrusions into their world. Trout cannot "think" as would you or I. Or can they?

Those of us that have been chasing these elusive creatures for more than a few decades have questioned on numerous occasions the "scientific logic" that would have us believe that trout are merely reactive automatons, little more than animated vegetables, acting on instinct and fear. The experienced angler is not so quick to demote the trout to the status of low-grade imbecile. A well-known FFF fly-tier was giving an excellent fly tying demonstration to our club and was trying to make a valid point about a trout's perception of a fly. She remarked; "A trout's brain is the size of a pea; how freakin' smart can they be?" To which I responded; "Evidently....., pretty freakin' smart." There was a round of laughter....nervous laughter. It was a humorous response, not meant as challenge to her statement, but it seemed to ring an ominous bell in the minds of our well-seasoned club members. I could hear our collective minds reeling with the horrible realization that these not-so-freakin'-smart-fish have been making fools of us for a long time. What does that say for the angler? Maybe we're not-so-freakin'-smart!

One of the hallmarks of an intelligent species is the ability to communicate and while I have never actually heard a trout conversing with his fish friends, it seems obvious that they must. This is evidenced by the fact that within moments of my arrival at the river, every fish in the stream knows I am there. The skeptics would say that I'm just clumsy and that I have signaled the fish of my arrival by being "un-stealthy." While this may account for the sudden cessation of rises in my immediate vicinity, it does not account for how fish a quarter mile downstream also immediately cease their activity, unless trout are "passing the word" of my presence. I submit then that this is proof of communication and therefore sentience on the part of the trout. And the evidence doesn't stop there.

Much ado is made about the importance of floating a dry fly without a trace of drag. The assumption being that trout will detect something unnatural in a fly that drags in the current. Nonsense! I believe trout are intimately familiar with what a line and leader are. They probably can even tell the brand of knotless leader just by looking at it. How can that be? I have no idea, but consider the places that trout station themselves for feeding. Do they take up a feeding position in a spot clear of over-hanging brush with no cross-currents? Never. They only seek places that deny the ability to present a fly. They look for current seams that will tie your leader in a knot. They hang out six inches below a little leader-grabbing-stick, which offers no current break or shelter, the only reasonable advantage of feeding there is that it's an impossible spot to lay down a fly that's attached to a leader. There can be little doubt of their intelligent use of resources. The devious bastards!

We have all watched these so called "dumb creatures" scrutinize a #22 fly as if it were some kind of binding legal contract with fine print. I can barely distinguish a #18 Hares Ear from a #20 Blue Winged Olive when I'm holding them side-by-side in good light, yet a trout can pick out either tiny ruse as it shoots through a choppy riffle at dusk, probably noting it was tied with a new shade of brown poly-dub mixed with platypus fur. I have no doubt it's immediately recorded on some sort of Fish-Internet-YouTube as every trout will then come up and look at my fly, not with any intention of eating it of course, but just to have a first hand look at a fly that actually includes platypus fur. Without a doubt Fish-Talk-Radio is instantly abuzz: "Flash - New This Year - Platypus Fur - in other news; Orvis introduces a new line of hooks..." News travels fast in trout circles and they remember. Trout are insidious. We think ourselves adept at deception, but this is a delusion. When we enter the river, we are immediately out-of-our-league. Trout seem fully aware of our feeble attempts to deceive them. Selective trout? The only thing they are "selecting" is the manner in which to
frustrate us. Maybe today they will only rise in water too deep to wade, or on the far side of a log parallel with the bank. Perhaps they will refuse our fly, not once, not twice, but maybe dozens of times. Why would a trout, that can differentiate subtle differences in a #24 midge, continue to rise to the same #12 Royal Coachman over and over and over? Ok, maybe twice, or maybe even three times, but after the 15th time, even a moronic trout would know that this is the same fly he had just refused for the past dozen casts. But of course he knows it's the same fly and could probably tell you if it was tied by a right or left handed fly tier. He just continues to rise because he knows it's driving you crazy. He is calculating how long it will take before you break your rod in half and chuck it in the river.

Trout also have a sense of humor, warped humor for sure, but humor none-the-less, a characteristic found only in higher order species, like humans or chimpanzees, or trout. Trout find endless delight in only sipping flies that appear to be within an inch of our offerings. They know we are carefully following the progress of our fly, attuned and ready to strike at the slightest indication of a take, and then they come up and pretend to eat a fly right next to our fly. We haul back hard to set the hook, the fly touches nothing and we are promptly hung in the bushes behind us. That takes planning my friend - skilled, tactical planning. How many times have you observed fish "rising" steadily but you can't seem to see what they are taking? They're not taking anything; they just know we are gullible! All those times a fish followed your streamer right up to you only to slowly drift back down into the depths without striking - you were snookered. They just do that to freak you out and there is no end to their pleasure in doing this. Do we amuse them? Are we clowns? Do they find us amusing?

You might be tempted to accuse me of being anthropomorphic in my assessment of trout intelligence, but I assure you I do not come to these conclusions hastily. Nor am I delusional. It's not paranoia when they really are out to get you. After more than 50 years of careful observation it seems undeniable that trout not only think, they communicate, they plan, they execute, and they are probably adept at theoretical calculus, and if they had opposable thumbs they would be extremely dangerous. Beware! They're out there; they're plotting and planning even as you read this. If you think I exaggerate, then the next time you do full pratfall in the river (and of course you will), before you rocket yourself upright gasping for breath, take just a moment while underwater to notice all the faint bubbly laughter.

**Features To Consider When Selecting A Fly Reel**

By John Berry – Taken from the Mid South Fly Fishers Newsletter

As I have written before, the fly reel is just a fly line storage device until you hook a big fish. Then it quickly becomes the most important piece of gear you own. When you go to a fly shop or look in a catalog there are literally dozens of choices. They vary widely in price, come in a variety of colors and shapes and all make some pretty impressive claims. Which one do you buy?

There are a lot of different types of reels. We all remember Grand Pa’s automatic reel. It was really pretty cool. It had a strong spring in it that could wind in any excess line pretty quickly. They have been around forever and are easy to maintain and do a great job. The disc drag is a technological breakthrough. It is just
like the brake system on your car. They can be adjusted to put just the right amount of tension on the fly line. I am a traditionalist, in that, I mostly fish reels with spring and pawl drag systems.

Cheap reels are stamped from sheet metal. They are flimsy and unreliable. Moderately priced reels are made from cast aluminum. It is an inexpensive material and is reasonably strong and reliable.

The high dollar reels are lake turned from a solid block of aluminum. This not only makes them stronger but ensures that they will run true at high revolutions per minute (rpm)

Most reels come with interchangeable spools. The spool is the part of the reel that holds the fly line. If you have interchangeable spools you can buy multiple fly lines and put each one on a different spool. This allows you to easily change from a floating line to a sink tip or a full sinking line. You should have a five weight line and a six weight line on separate spools. This would allow you to use the same reel on two or more different rods. I have spare spools for most of my reels.

The current trend in fly reels is to manufacture them with larger arbors. The arbor is the hub on the spool. If you have a larger arbor you can crank in more line with a single revolution of the spool. There are mid arbor and large arbors.

The simple fact is that they are significantly heavier than a reel with a conventionally sized arbor. Over the last few years fly rods have become lighter and at the same time fly reels have become heavier and heavier. It is not just the large arbors that have added weight. The switch to disc drag systems from spring and pawl drag systems has also increased the weight of these reels.

I have never understood the allure of the large or mid arbor reels. Their increased weight does not balance as well as that of conventionally sized reels. I have never been in a situation where I had so much slack line out that I wished that I had a larger arbor to crank in the slack quicker. It is a cure for a problem that I do not experience. I would rather fish with a lighter reel.

When choosing a reel pay particular attention to their capacity. What sizes of line will they hold and with how much backing? Backing is the thin Dacron line that is attached between the reel spool and the fly line. It acts as an insurance policy in case a fish takes a long run (longer than the fly line). I want a reel that will hold the line I am buying it for and one hundred yards of backing.

Whatever you choose, have the fly shop install the backing and fly line for you. This will make everything easier. If you are going to use your reel in salt water make sure that it is designed for that purpose. Many of the high priced reels on the market are not designed to survive the abuse of salt water. At the same time, there are several moderately priced reels that function well in salt water.

Take a bit of time when you choose a reel and make sure that it compliments your rod and your fishing style. It will help you become a better fly fisher.

**Is Your Fly Pattern More Important Than How You Present It?**

By Pat Damico – Taken from the Tampa Bay Fly Fishers Club Newsletter

A book that should be in every saltwater fly fisherman’s library is, “Fisherman’s Coast,” by Aaron J. Adams, Ph.D. Described as, “An angler’s guide to marine warm-water gamefish and their habits,” this book has been a revelation on how to fish different fly patterns. The author spends a lot of time discussing different types of prey found in every type of shallow saltwater environment. Color and size, as well as movements are presented in detail. Aaron’s most recent book, “Fly Fisherman’s Guide to Saltwater Prey,” continues his quest and not only describes and contains photos of prey, but has detailed tying instructions and patterns that closely duplicate each life form.

Freshwater trout fishermen frequently wear a wool patch on their vests to dry fly patterns used that day. Did you ever notice that the most successful fisherman usually only have a couple flies present, while others may have a dozen or more? What does this tell us? Can we apply this information to improve our saltwater success? Could it be that the way a fly is presented is more important than the pattern itself? If you “match the hatch,” exactly, why aren’t you having as
much success as you should? Think about how many times your beautiful fly improved as fish after fish destroyed the fly until only half of it was left.

With crabs, for instance, most fisherman fish a good pattern ineffectively. When discussing snook, the author reveals that stomach contents in colder weather show a very high number of crab parts. This finding was reinforced when our Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club had an outing close to Cockroach bay. Dressed for a cold windy morning with water temperatures below sixty degrees, we were all wading and fly fishing except for one person nearby who was using live shrimp with spinning tackle. During the first fifteen minutes, he caught two redfish and a snook casting into a deeper hole and just letting his bait sit on the bottom. None of us fly fishing had a strike. I switched to a weighted crab pattern and with a sinking tip line cast into the deepest part of the water in front of me. After waiting until I was sure the fly was on the bottom, I made short, one inch slow strips. My third cast stopped abruptly, almost like being snagged, and when I strip set the hook, I felt some head shaking. I thought I had a redfish on because the fish just, “Bulldogged,” along the bottom. When he tired and came to the surface, much to my surprise, it was a decent snook. I told my companions what I was using, and continues to fish. Soon, another snook took my bottom-hugging crab pattern. After releasing the fish, I again shouted, “Put on a crab pattern!” Two more larger snook were later released. Every fish caught that morning fell to the same technique. Others fishing the same pattern were not fishing slow or deep enough to duplicate natural bait. Instead of changing to multiple patterns, presentation was the key.

Our spin fishing friends who use a DOA shrimp successfully follow my friend Capt. Mel’s advice, “If you think you are fishing it too slow, slow it down even more.” This will tell you how to fish shrimp patterns.

Size and color of these patterns should not be underestimated. Use a shrimp or crab pattern that closely matches the bottom you are fishing.

The Next Best Thing
By Neil Gross – Taken from the Red Cedar Fly Fishers Newsletter

For many of us the next best thing to actually fishing is talking or reading about it. These days we can also readily listen to fly fishing podcasts or even watch fly fishing movies. This section of our newsletter will be devoted to sharing favorite books, podcasts, movies or even stories.

If you have something that you would like to share then type it up and send it to our newsletter editor.


The authors name may be familiar to you. He was recently interviewed by Zach Matthews for the November 24, 2008 Itinerant Angler podcast (season four, episode two) (see http://www.itinerantangler.com/podcasts/podcast52.mp3).

Zach’s introduction for Mr. Lyons was as follows: “Nick Lyons is the founder of the Lyons Press, a longtime columnist in Fly Fisherman magazine, and a true literary luminary of the sport of fly fishing. Listen to his intelligent and insightful commentary on the nature of publishing fly fishing books, the lasting impact of Norman Maclean's great work, and the search for his successor.” The Itinerant Angler Podcast is, by the way, an excellent production. It is available through iTunes or directly at the Itinerant Angler website. Perhaps we’ll talk about Zach Matthews and the Itinerant Angler in a future newsletter.

The first thing to be said about Nick Lyons is that he is an excellent writer. Reading his prose is a delight. He evokes wonderful mental pictures of fly fishing and portrays the people in his stories in an amusing, sometimes hilarious and thoughtful manner.

To wet your appetite for this writer here is an excerpt from “Bright Rivers.” To set the scene Nick has left home (New York City) early on a Saturday to fish a stretch of the Delaware. There has been talk of large rainbows and Nick and couple of friends are lucky to have a local fish biologist to take them to a good pool. It is four o’clock when he and his friends finally link up with Ed, the biologist, and drive to the river. It has begun to rain steadily and Nick doesn’t have
his rain jacket as, he says, “about six years earlier when I’d gone outside my apartment to wait for Mike, it had been sunny.” The rain has dampened both Nick’s spirits and his cigar, which he can’t keep alight. “I fish better with a lit cigar” he says. He is despondent. After suiting up and walking about a mile along an old railway line they began to fish however only Ed was catching. From here we’ll let Nick tell the story.

But finally, about eight-forty, just after the light grew dim, two splendid events took place: the rain stopped and the fish began to rise ferociously, dozens of them. I promptly lit a new cigar, clipped off my large nymph, and rummaged around in one of my fly boxes for a No. 16 Adams. Well, I was going to make a day of it at last—or at least a fifteen minutes of it. I could taste the rise and run of one of those sleek rainbows.

My hands began to tremble. All the old fever and expectation returned, all fatigue vanished. I fumbled with the fly, couldn’t get the leader point through the eye of the hook, raised the fly against the dun sky, manipulated the thin monofilament with the deftness of a surgeon, and at last got the pesky thing done.

Eight forty-five, and nearly dark.

The circles—rhythmic and gentle—continued to spread in the flat water where the current widened. Ed was at my left shoulder now, willing to forgo these fine last moments of the day so he could advise me. A saint.

“Cast to the specific rises, Nick, as delicately as possible. Some of these are really big fish. Over twenty inches. Strike them lightly.”

With not a second to lose, I took my dry-fly spray from my vest, held the Adams near my face, pressed the plunger-and went stingingly blind. The little hole had been pointed in the wrong direction. I’d given myself a triple shot of fly dope in the eyes, and even after I doused them with a bit of the Delaware I could barely see.

But I squinted bravely, puffed with vigor on my cigar-whose tip now glowed like a hot little coal in the dark-and began to cast in the general direction Ed was pointing.

“That looked about right,” he said as I laid out a surprisingly accurate cast to one of the inviting circles. I couldn’t see the fly but that didn’t matter.

“Can’t imagine why he didn’t take it,” Ed said.

When I miraculously repeated the feat, a good cast, he said, “They’re awfully picky sometimes. What have you got on?”

“A sixteen Adams.”

“That ought to do it.”

Another cast, my third good one in a row, a record. It was a magical, witching moment, the far bank receding in the swirling mists, the river sounds filling my ears, my squinting eyes seeing only that faint multitude of spreading circles. I could not see my fly but knew exactly where it was by estimating the distance from the end of my bright yellow fly line.

Nothing.

“Strange,” said Ed.

“Maybe this time.”

Still nothing—and nothing for the next fifteen minutes, when a moonless sky finally pulled the curtain on us and we began to head back up the long stretch of railroad tracks to the cars.

In the headlights I saw a strange sight, which I took the liberty of not reporting to my fellow anglers. There was no fly on my leader! There was only a blackened, melted end, as if, just possibly, it might have been burned through by a cigar.
Mike and I made the long trip back in silence. Had I really fished through the entire rise, the twenty minutes I’d waited for all day, with no fly? No doubt. I was capable of it. My face still smarted in the darkened car with embarrassment, my eyes still stung. I tried to keep my eyelids from drooping, and I tried to talk—because good talk with a good friend after a long day on a river is one of the best parts of any trip. But I was bushed.

I closed my eyes and dreamed of muscular rainbows dimpling to the No. 16 Adams, then skyrocketing out and taking me into the backing. That huge bend of the river was alive with rising fish and each cast was true. I heard Ed say,

“They’re awfully picky sometimes. What have you got on?”

And I answered, moaning, knowing I had developed a pattern even the experts had never thought of, “The emperor’s new fly!”

I had been looking for a Nick Lyon book for a while after listening to the Itinerant Angler podcast however could not find them in bookstores. I was lucky to spot “Bright Rivers” and a copy of “Confessions of a Fly Fishing Addict” at the GLC Fly Tying Expo.

Many of Mr. Lyon’s titles are available on Amazon either new or used. Some are available through the Capital Area District Library (www.cadl.org).


There are also quite a few collections and other works edited by Mr. Lyons. I know I’m going to enjoy working my way though these books as, after all, it’s the next best thing to actually fishing.

Keep Informed and Spread The Word

We need more clubs to join the ranks to help in the conservation and education efforts of the FFF. If you would like to start a club or know of a club that might be interested in affiliating with the FFF please direct them to the Club Information pages below:

Please send an e-mail to fffoffice@fedflyfishers.org should your club have a fishing / tying event / banquet. We would like to add these events to our web site calendar of events. Provide the date, location, name of your club and a website address that I can link to direct our members for more information. The events calendar is on the following web page http://www.fedflyfishers.org/Default.aspx?tabid=4513

If you have great article that you’d like to share with other clubs please submit it to me.
Barbara Wuebber