Blue Ribbon Flies located in West Yellowstone, MT offers an informative free weekly newsletter on what’s going on in the Madison River and Greater Yellowstone Region. In a recent issue, they included this article by John Juracek who speaks to the ‘Value of Observation’ on any waters you are fishing. All of us know the truth in this statement, but few do it. Why? Because we’ve geared up for the trip for 3 days, sorted through our fly boxes 10 times, making sure to bring back-up tippet material, floatant, weights, indicators, and oh yeah, license! We hit the road (often very early), drive too fast (often for hours), sometimes hike in (usually longer than expected) and we arrive at the water ready to explode and launch casts ferociously!
I really like Juraceks’s comment, “The water is always open and forthright, always, willing to share the necessary information regarding how to fish it”. Typically, we jump to that first cast before we:

- Watch the surface for rises
- Kick over a few stones to see what’s crawling around
- Watch the air for insects rising
- Check out the birds; are they feeding?
- Where’s the breeze coming from?
- What’s the water temperature?
- Slow down, take a deep breath, and then make that first cast.

Yogi Berra sums it up, as only he could, “You can observe a lot just by watching”.

The Value of Observation
by John Juracek

One of the most valuable but least practiced aspects of fly fishing is observation. Observation as in simply taking a few minutes to study the water you're about to fish in an effort to learn what's happening. It's amazing the success to which this basic tactic leads, yet I almost never see anglers anywhere other than on the Henry's Fork spend even a brief moment watching the water before they wade.
in and begin casting. (Who knows, maybe the anglers I watch are just prescient; oh, to be so lucky.)

Here's a typical Madison River scenario: Visiting anglers drive to the river, string their rods in the parking lot, tie on flies suggested by the help at the local fly shop, walk down to a likely hole, wade in and begin casting. They cover the obvious water, move on to the next hole and repeat. An occasional change of fly is thrown in along the way, too.


But seldom is it the most productive way. Sure, our anglers might catch some small rainbows on weighted nymphs in a deep pocket, but what about the big brown(s) they failed to see rising subtly in the shallows? Those fish are long gone, spooked by adventurous wading or by getting lined.

Please don't misunderstand me. I'm not passing judgment on a particular approach or method of fishing. We're all free to participate in the sport in the manner we so desire. But I do think that when we choose our method, we should do so with a full awareness of all the
possibilities. And the only way to know those possibilities is to observe the water. No one, expert or otherwise, can always predict in advance where to go, what time to be there, how best to fish, and what flies to use.

But the river (or lake) will always tell us what our options are, and what the best way of fishing will be. I can't emphasize that enough—the water is always open and forthright, always willing to share the necessary information regarding how to fish it. We merely have to be patient enough to give it a chance.

Back to our anglers on the Madison. Had they spent five or ten minutes carefully watching the water, they might have noticed the big brown in the shallows sipping flies from the surface film. They could then have made their choice: cast dry flies to feeding fish, blind fish nymphs in the pockets, or whatever else suited their fancy. To each his own, but my point is that at least now their choice is fully informed. (By the way, my example is not hypothetical—this exact situation plays itself out daily on the Madison for much of the summer. And in my experience, most anglers given a choice would pick fishing for big fish on dry flies.)

I think that one reason observation is given short shrift by many anglers is that it has somehow become disconnected from the act of fishing. Too many fishermen think that if they aren't actively casting, they aren't fishing. But observation is an integral element of our sport, and for the complete angler it is inseparable from any other aspect. Observation is fishing.

So next time you're out, take a few minutes and watch the water before wading in and casting. Give yourself a chance to meld into the fishing landscape, discover what's happening, and become part of it. I know you've traveled a long way and are anxious to cast. So am I. But I assure you that ten minutes of calm observation will yield far greater results than you'll get from ten minutes of random casting. Have fun and good luck.
The next time your spouse questions you about the time spent on the water fly fishing, try responding as follows: “Dear, did you know that fly fishing has several health benefits associated with it?” That may cause your spouse to glance at you with just a hint of skepticism and possibly a degree of curiosity, but perhaps he or she will lean in a bit closer to hear the science behind this seemingly self-serving claim. Hey, it works for me. It might work for you too.

Besides the obvious benefits of being out in nature hiking, paddling, climbing, wading, walking, casting, or rowing—not to mention the exposure to Vitamin D from the sun (that, if adequate, can help prevent osteoporosis, high blood pressure, type 1 diabetes, depression, and cancer)—a recently-published study in “BioScience Journal” found that “regular exposure to nature can, among other things, help reduce feelings of stress and even improve your self-esteem, for up to seven hours [afterward].” The study’s authors even concluded that “…some experts believe that the best way to take care of your mind is to go on a fishing trip.” I couldn’t agree more.

An Australian survey reports that people typically experience relaxation and stress relief from recreational fishing. The two studies basically conclude that—surprise!—there are both physical and mental benefits to fishing. From my experience, I would add belonging to a fishing club to that list of things that benefit us physically and mentally. Now stay with me here.

Admittedly, a fly fishing club is no Twelve-Step program (although fly fishing, as therapy, might be a candidate for successfully promoting positive behavioral change). However, being involved in a club like ours—comprised of friendly, helpful, supportive, enthusiastic, communicative,
and generous people—is certainly good therapy no matter how you characterize it.

In this increasingly social media-driven society, there is the illusion that there is a sense of community when there really isn’t one. For instance, you can have a thousand “friends” on Facebook and have no friends. A club like the Santa Clarita Casting Club, where a diverse group of people interact face-to-face around a common interest, is a welcomed antidote to the faceless, impersonal on-line community that is so often touted as the technological barometer of popularity where users seek to maximize their “likes” by being the most outrageous, non-conformist, or confrontational. Who of us would want to trade a humorous fishing report, a helpful product review, a spirited question-and-answer session following one of our excellent PowerPoint presentations, or a story about the plight of one of our members deserving of the annual Kazy Award for a faceless Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook exchange!

Ultimately, our club is about people and about cultivating relationships around a shared passion. My annual fishing trip to southern Utah is a good example. A few years ago, Chris Taylor and I drove 10 hours from Santa Clarita to Circleville, Utah. On the trip up and the trip back, we never once turned on the radio or the CD player or consulted Facebook; we simply talked—about anything and everything—for the entire 20-hour round trip. I got to know Chris really well and he got to know me just as well. In fact, the same thing happens every time I join the gang on the Utah trip. It happens on your trips too.

I often tell my son that, if you talk to people long enough, you find at least three things: first, they have an interesting story; second, they know someone you know; and three, you can learn something from them. But you can’t do that effectively on social media; it takes face-to-face interaction—like what happens in a club setting and on outings. You get the point. So, I hope that you will take advantage of everything this club has to offer in 2019.

And don’t forget that fishing and friendships are good for you: for both your mental and physical health.

See you at the next club meeting.
Earlier this month I took advantage of a break in the stormy weather and made a few trips over to Hollywood Beach in Oxnard to try my luck in the surf. It had been a few weeks since I fished the surf and even longer since I had visited Hollywood Beach with a fly rod.

Unlike La Conchita which is one of the Club’s favorite beaches to fish with its gently sloping shoreline, Hollywood Beach can be difficult to fish and wade because of its steep banks and late breaking waves crashing on the shoreline. This is especially true at high tide. But at low tide, Hollywood Beach can be an excellent option especially when good structure in the surf is at play.

If storms along the coast have a silver lining for fly fishermen, it comes in the fact that the high breaking waves create this structure—or simply put depressions in the bottom—where fish find their way to move about with some ease to search for food churned up by in the surf.
My hunch to fish this beach at low tide paid off. On my first outing I hit the beach at about 6 am, to coincide with low tide. I found a likely looking piece of water that had good depth and a rip current in it. It proved to be a good choice and I was into my first hook-up almost immediately.

In the course of about 2 hours I took about a dozen good-sized perch and a shovel nosed shark. I had another 6 or more—uhhhh, let’s call them long-distance releases—which I believe were perch. I nearly caught a trio of joggers as well who snuck up behind me. Fortunately, they called out just as I was about to enter my backcast. Yikes! I guess it was a wake-up call for me to be a bit more aware of others on the beach as I fish.

The following day I decided to try my hand again at Hollywood Beach. I was back at it at low tide and hit the same 3-4 holes where I did well on the previous day. As I was walking the beach I noticed some nice-sized mullet breaking the surface. Mullet will jump in the surf for a variety of reasons. It’s believed that they’ll jump when pursued by predators, or to shake off parasites or just to seek more oxygen. Whatever the reason, they were going airborne that morning. I’ve seen mullet jumping a few times before at Hollywood Beach, but I never had any luck fishing for them. They’re not known to take a fly
easily, so honestly I didn’t give them too much attention.

The bite was off on Sunday, but I managed to catch a few large perch and then I had a good hook up. At first I thought it was a large perch, but when it stayed deep and gave ground grudgingly to the pressure I put on it, I switched thoughts and believed I had a corbina on the fly. Playing it on the reel, there was some nice give and take action where I let it run at times, and gained ground and reeled in when I felt it tiring. After what seemed to be about 10 minutes, I brought it to shore and realized it wasn’t a corbina but a mullet…a nice surprise!

I fished for about an hour and a half before it started to rain. That’s when I decided to call it quits. I figured it was a good time to head home to warm up and to hang around the coffee pot.

**SOLDER HEADS - JOHN PARMENTER**

When it comes to tying and fishing surf flies, I have a pet peeve. Maybe it’s a little thing, but I get really annoyed when the barbell eyes on my flies start twisting on the hook while I’m fishing. The time spent stopping to check the fly and adjusting the eyes before recasting is a
nuisance and time that would be better spent with the fly in the water. At least that’s how I look at it.

The beating the fly takes in the surf and the struggles with fish grabbing and fighting on the fly are causes for the eyes twisting on the hook. I’ve tried different methods of getting the eyes to stay put on top of the hook where they belong but with limited success. I’ve tried different tying threads of different sizes and different techniques of wrapping the thread. I’ve tried different epoxies on the wraps of thread as well. All of these methods have slowed the twisting problem, but none have eliminated it.

I gave it some thought the other day and had a bit of a fly tying epiphany if you will. I thought why not solder the barbell eyes to the hook? What could it hurt to try? So I took my idea to the garage/work shop and put it into play. After a few attempts of trial and error, I came up with a plan that worked well. Using a Dremel tool, I ground out a small pocket from a piece of scrap wood, large enough to hold the eyes in place while I soldered them. Then I notched the wood across the pocket to a depth where the hook, with its point upright, was just
touching the bottom of the bridge between the eyes. The notch was made long enough to let the hook slide, allowing me to adjust the distance from the barbel eyes to the eye of the hook so I could gauge just the right amount of room for a head on the fly. I found I could then secure the hook in place by sticking a bodkin through the eye of the hook. This freed up both hands while I melted a drop or two of solder onto the joint and spread it across the bottom of the eyes.

Anyway, to my surprise the crazy thing worked and the eyes held fast to the hook—cool! I found that using the mold I could solder quite a few eyes onto hooks in very little time (without toasting my fingers too badly). The next step was to tie some flies and go out and field test them. Now just for the record, I tie most of my surf flies in a size 6 on Gamakatsu SS15 saltwater hooks and use medium sized Pseudo Eyes in nickel color with yellow, green or red eye colors—but having said all that, I don’t see why the soldering process wouldn’t work with similar hooks and eyes. By the way, the drop or two of solder adds a little extra weight to the fly which is another bonus when you consider you want the fly to ride down on the bottom where the fish are feeding.

I went back to the vise and tied some Mrs. Bates flies, which is a flashy orange-bodied pattern with a short, burnt orange ostrich tail and a
white topping. It’s one I’ve had good success with up and down the beaches in Ventura County.

Well, I gave my new “solder-head” flies a test on two separate mornings (see the article above), and I’m happy to say they came through like champs. On my first outing, the first fly I fished got beaten up pretty badly both by the surf and by fish, but the eyes never budged from riding high and centered on the hook. What a kick not to feel a need to check the fly over and over again and to stop and adjust the eyes! I actually lost that first fly and a second one that morning because of a faulty leader, but the eyes on both flies stayed consistently attached in place. I finished the morning with a third fly, and like the others, the eyes stayed solidly in place.

The following day I fished the same fly from the previous day and once again, the eyes held firmly set on top of the hook and never budged. Well, it’s been a case of “so-far so-good” on the field testing, and there will be more testing once the surf calms and the water clears again. But going forward, I have good reason to be confident that the eyes will hold tight to the hook without rotating.

So now the question has to be asked: before tying surf flies is it really worth the extra effort to solder the eyes on a hook? Well, I think that all depends on the tyer, the number of surf flies s/he plans to tie—and whether the tyer is bothered by the problem of eyes twisting on their flies. For me it’s time well spent in order to eliminate this cock-eyed surf fly pet peeve I have. It’s a small victory, but I’ll take it. So yeah, it’s worth it.
The April 17th monthly club meeting will be the Santa Clarita Casting Clubs AGM (Annual General Meeting). Along with membership renewal, this meeting includes annual financial review, upcoming events, and Board of Directors elections for 2019-2020. In addition, there will be pizza and drinks, so that makes it a lot more fun. The available BOD positions are:

• President
• Vice President
• 2nd Vice President
• Treasurer
• Correspondence
• Membership

Give it some thought as we could use some new people with new ideas. If there is any interest on joining some of us on the SCCC Board, please let one of the current Board members know. Thank you.

Hi Members,

Recently Rudy sent an invite to all members to join up on the Slack application. Please let us know if you have NOT received the invitation. We are working on a presentation to review at the March 20 monthly meeting so we all know how to use it. We still have some issues to work out, but hopefully all will be ready by the next meeting. Look forward to hearing from you.Thanks much.
January 19th kicked off the Southwest Council quarter meetings and this meeting was the Management Day meeting. Great ideas and input were shared by the 15 assorted clubs who had representation at the meeting.

Michael Schweit talked about several of the upcoming events such as:

- **Fly Buy** 2/9/19 held at Long Beach Casting Club
- **Fred Hall Show** 3/6/19 thru 3/10/19 held at the Long Beach Convention Center
- **Rip Tide Surf Fishing** 5/4/19 possibly at Doc Wilder Beach, but still TBD
- **Fly Fishing Faire** 10/5/19 thru 10/6/19 held at the Glendale Civic Center with casting events at the Pasadena Casting Club

More information is to follow on each event, but make sure to get these events in your calendar to see if you can attend.

The Fly Buy has a ‘garage sale’ and some great items are available at a far less expense than original costs, so check that out.

Rich Bollinger of TIC (Trout In the Classroom) gave a terrific presentation on how well this program is going. For example, Deep Creek supports 60 classrooms in various school and it’s a huge success. It would be terrific if SCCC could get involved in this program, but first we need a school teacher willing to help support the program. If anyone knows of teacher who would be interested in doing this, please let me know and we can work with Rich to get it started.

A new program leader has been added to the SWC Board of Directors and that’s Karen Hall who will be the Women’s Program Director. Each club is to provide Karen with emails of their female members to start to put together a group of women that could be trained in casting, tying, gear, etc. If any of the members have a spouse, significant other, or friend who might be interested, please let me know at membership@scflyfishing.org or call 818-203-8922.

Casting for recovery has two new retreats coming up, one in May and another in October and new ‘water-helpers.’ They could use some instructors for the May event, so if interested, please contact castingforrecovery.org.
through to RETREATS, FIND A RETREAT, SOUTHERN CA.  For more direct contact, reach out to Teresa Adams at adams1649@gmail.com.

The Key Note speakers were Debbie Sharpton and Gary Applebee who have been involved in the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Project since 2012 in the Mammoth area.  They are working at the By-Day Creek, Wolf Creek, Silver Creek and Slindard Creek to help reduce the Brookies in these creeks to give the Lahontan Cutthroats a chance to reproduce.  For more information or involvement, reach out to Gary Applebee at gbapplebee@hotmail.com

The Management meeting then had breakout sessions consisting of Casting, Fly Tying, Conservation, Casting for Recovery, Membership, TIC, and Women’s Program.

In closing, Bill O’Kelly, SWC president, announced that he will be resigning his presidency at the end of his term.  He asked for assistance in a finding a new leader and if anyone has a suggestion to contact him (president@swcffi.org).

They will be creating a nominating committee to help with the process, but don’t hesitate to throw a name in the hat if you know of anyone who would be interested.

Hi All,

Volunteer shifts are filling up fast for the Fred Hall Show, but we still need additional help. Please take a look at the open shifts below and let me know if you would be so gracious as to help out. This provides FREE admission into the show and with a 4-hour shift, you’ll have plenty of time to see the rest of the show.
When working the booth, you will be greeting interested parties, finding out where they live and directing them to a nearby club displayed on a map on the SWC booth; talking about some of the projects the SWC is involved in as well as selling available merchandise.

The tiers will demonstrate tying a woolly bugger or other easier fly. Fly tying kits are provided with vices and materials. If anyone requires a light, bring it along with an extension cord. For any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Times</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, March 6</td>
<td>1:00 PM – 5:00 PM</td>
<td>1 tying coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5:00 PM – 9:00 PM</td>
<td>2 tying coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, March 7</td>
<td>5:00 PM – 9:00 PM</td>
<td>1 booth coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1:00 PM – 5:00 PM</td>
<td>1 tying coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5:00 PM – 9:00 PM</td>
<td>2 tying coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, March 8</td>
<td>5:00 PM – 9:00 PM</td>
<td>1 booth coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1:00 PM – 5:00 PM</td>
<td>1 tying coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5:00 PM – 9:00 PM</td>
<td>1 tying coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, March 9</td>
<td>3:00 PM – 8:30 PM</td>
<td>2 booth coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, March 10</td>
<td>10:00 AM – 2:30 PM</td>
<td>1 booth coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10:00 AM – 2:30 PM</td>
<td>2 tying coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2:30 PM – 7:00 PM</td>
<td>2 tying coverage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Connie Bullock  
SWC Volunteer Chair  
volunteers@swcffi.org  
818-203-8922