Welcome to the December 2011 issue of the ClubWire e-mail news service for clubs.

Have a great Holiday and a happy New Year !!!!!!!

- Christmas Quotes from The Quote Garden –

Christmas waves a magic wand over this world, and behold, everything is softer and more beautiful. ~Norman Vincent Peale

Christmas is a time when you get homesick - even when you're home. ~Carol Nelson

He who has not Christmas in his heart will never find it under a tree. ~Roy L. Smith

I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round, as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys. ~Charles Dickens

Christmas is the gentlest, loveliest festival of the revolving year - and yet, for all that, when it speaks, its voice has strong authority. ~W.J. Cameron

The best of all gifts around any Christmas tree: the presence of a happy family all wrapped up in each other. ~Burton Hillis

One of the most glorious messes in the world is the mess created in the living room on Christmas day. Don't clean it up too quickly. ~Andy Rooney

Happy, happy Christmas, that can win us back to the delusions of our childish days; that can recall to the old man the pleasures of his youth; that can transport the sailor and the traveller, thousands of miles away, back to his own fire-side and his quiet home! ~Charles Dickens, The Pickwick Papers, 1836

There has been only one Christmas - the rest are anniversaries. ~W.J. Cameron

'Twas Christmas broach'd the mightiest ale;
'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale;
A Christmas gambol oft could cheer
The poor man's heart through half the year.
~Walter Scott

Christmas is a necessity. There has to be at least one day of the year to remind us that we're here for something else besides ourselves. ~Eric Sevareid

Our hearts grow tender with childhood memories and love of kindred, and we are better throughout the year for having,
in spirit, become a child again at Christmas-time. ~Laura Ingalls Wilder

May Peace be your gift at Christmas and your blessing all year through! ~Author Unknown

I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. ~Charles Dickens

Never worry about the size of your Christmas tree. In the eyes of children, they are all 30 feet tall. ~Larry Wilde, The Merry Book of Christmas

Christmas is the season for kindling the fire of hospitality in the hall, the genial flame of charity in the heart. ~Washington Irving

Gifts of time and love are surely the basic ingredients of a truly merry Christmas. ~Peg Bracken

Isn't it funny that at Christmas something in you gets so lonely for - I don't know what exactly, but it's something that you don't mind so much not having at other times. ~Kate L. Bosher

At Christmas, all roads lead home. ~Marjorie Holmes

Instead of being a time of unusual behavior, Christmas is perhaps the only time in the year when people can obey their natural impulses and express their true sentiments without feeling self-conscious and, perhaps, foolish. Christmas, in short, is about the only chance a man has to be himself. ~Francis C. Farley

It is Christmas in the heart that puts Christmas in the air. ~W.T. Ellis

For centuries men have kept an appointment with Christmas. Christmas means fellowship, feasting, giving and receiving, a time of good cheer, home. ~W.J. Ronald Tucker

Even as an adult I find it difficult to sleep on Christmas Eve. Yuletide excitement is a potent caffeine, no matter your age. ~Terri Guillemets

Christmas is a time when kids tell Santa what they want and adults pay for it. Deficits are when adults tell the government what they want and their kids pay for it. ~Richard Lamm

Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of love! ~Hamilton Wright Mabie

Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen. ~Author unknown, attributed to a 7-year-old named Bobby

Christmas is forever, not for just one day, for loving, sharing, giving, are not to put away like bells and lights and tinsel, in some box upon a shelf. The good you do for others is good you do yourself...
~Norman Wesley Brooks, "Let Every Day Be Christmas," 1976

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The Best Gift Ever!
By Clay Gill – Taken from the Alamo Fly Fishers Newsletter

I remember a fantastic guided trip my wife gave me years ago. A dream trip for me and one where everything went as planned. I would never have done this for myself. You don’t think about things like this. As a family man you are busy
with everyday activity and weekends are for chores, the yard, or family fun. When someone gives you a gift certificate for a getaway it is really nice. They are saying, go have fun and enjoy! You deserve it, and we want to say thanks! The gesture alone is overwhelming, and then the trip is even better! You never forget this.

But how do you give that perfect gift at Christmas. Especially for someone who has what he needs. You struggle to find that perfect new item they do not have. Most likely the well meant item is a duplicate and will be returned. Outdoor types have a lot of gear and junk. Bags to carry it, and clothing specific to the activity. Fly fishing gear is really complicated to a beginner. A fly fisherman on the water has stuff hanging off a vest and looks like a walking toolbox. Most have all this stuff!

I know it is thoughtless and generic but give me a gift card. I know what I want. It sure beats returning another tie and shirt that is a size off for me. Sorry….but you can’t beat the good ole cash cards. They really talk, and bad gifts walk.

What I miss is an old fashioned home town fun place to shop for Christmas gifts. The good ole mountain fly shop you remember visiting with a hot pot belly stove and people stopping by to gab about the weather or the most recent big fish photo on the bragging board. This is a place where you can find a gift for someone selected with care and advice. And when you leave you get a warm hand shake from a friend who cares about you and treats you like family. You don’t see that at the mega pro stores now. It was the place your Dad took you “to go for a visit”.

As Alan Jackson wrote in his song about the “Little Man”, those friendly family places are falling by the side to big huge internet or mega suppliers who herd you in or speed your items by shipper to your door. More and more people shop like this. Quantity buying power has made prices drop, and imported items flood the market. But what happens to the little man in little specialty stores, or that mountain town shop trying to provide a seasonal service in competition with the mega or e-stores. Next year it might be a tanning salon when you drop into town.

God bless the “little Man”. He built this country, and times are really changing. May he prosper somehow. I will always remember how it feels to have places where these kind of folks congregate. You feel like family. They are my kind of people. Warm, friendly and fun, they deserve support and praise.

I pray they continue to get support from their loyal fans. I will support them. That is what family does. You look out for one another. May they hang on, and weather these growing trends. You can never beat great personal service or advice.

Merry Christmas to you all. Have a wonderful and prosperous New Year!

**My Michigan King Salmon Fishing Trip**

By Wallace Ziprik III – Taken from the Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club Newsletter

I have wanted to take a King Salmon on the fly for a few years. It wasn’t until October 2011 this would be successfully accomplished.

I have a close buddy named Dan who lives in Grand Rapids MI which is roughly 100 minutes from the Pere Marquette River. One morning we drove up to Baldwin MI to try it out for ourselves.

After stopping at the Pere Marquette Lodge and Fly Shop, we confirmed the kings were indeed running and our chances of landing one were good, providing we did our part. Fly recommendations were given (egg patterns, etc.), so our next step was to find the fish.

We went to the Rainbow Rapids section of the river early that afternoon. Upon getting out of the car, we were both awestruck to observe these big torpedoes with fins swimming up river! I felt like a kid with buck fever. We put on our waders, Dan went downstream and I went upstream.

Unfortunately, these fish were traveling and showed no interest in our offerings! We tried two other nearby river sections. It wasn't until late that afternoon I had my first hookup. The fish ran down river and broke me off after a two minute fight. (Leader failure. Welcome to salmon fishing.). There were no other hookups that day, so we went back to Grand Rapids heartbroken.
I was exhausted after what could probably be best described as a scouting trip, so I used the next day to rest and regroup. The day after, I drove myself back to Baldwin (Dan had to work.) and got some better information from the fly shop. This time, I would be working out of the public access point off of 72nd Street.

I was in the river around 8:45 with no other anglers in sight. Heading east, I saw lots of torpedoes with fins, but not one wanted to eat. I kept moving forward until I finally found a hole where the fish were stacking and proceeded to fish it and the nearby gravel bars as if this were a steelhead trip.

Around 10 AM it happened, but it would not be an easy fight. A nice king was hooked in the back of his tail with an egg pattern fly. A great exchange took place with me and my 9 wt. and this fish. There weren't too many places to beach him as water depth varied from several inches to several feet, but I FINALLY got him to shore after a 45 minute fight. Pictures were taken, the fish was resuscitated, and then I resuscitated myself and basked in the reflections of the first major fight with a king salmon that I had just won.

Back to work! Within the hour, a second king would eat my fly, and this fish only took five minutes to land. Unfortunately, my 9 wt. snapped, so I had to pull out my backup TiCr, which was an 8 wt. That afternoon, there were about eight good hookups, but no more fish. Some fights lasted for 10-15 minutes, and the airborne stunts (360's midair) were incredible! I left for the day determined to get one more quality fish the next morning before calling the trip.

Fortunately, God saved the best for last! The next morning I went west and was in the water not much after 8AM. Eventually, I found a gravel bar next to a bend in the river with several good holes and LOTS of kings! For the first two hours, there were no quality hookups, so I decided to change flies. An egg sucking leech with an egg dropper was the combination of choice, so back to work I went.

I'm not sure how much snagging vs. catching exists with salmon fishing, but almost immediately things started happening. After casting diagonally into some stacking salmon, I hooked into one that did all kinds of airborne acrobatics before it went down river and busted me 15 minutes later. After re-rigging my 8 wt., I hooked into a second one! This fish did even more stunts than the previous one, but came off in the middle of a second airborne flip, again some 15 minutes later.

I thought I would be under gunned with only an 8 wt. but the fights I experienced had gone well with the equipment I had thus far. The third time would be the charm. After casting into a stacking school of fish, I hooked yet another king salmon that fought me as the others had, then the fish decided to take me upriver.

Then something never experienced before happened to me. This fish took me into my backing. Deep into my backing! Soon, I had more backing out than fly line. A couple of kayakers passed by and one offered to help, except he told me he thought the fish had wrapped me around a log and essentially, I was screwed.

Soon the fish stopped. I tried several times to turn it, but couldn't get it to budge! I REALLY wanted my 10 wt., but it was back home. That left me with the unfortunate conclusion there was nothing left to do but to point the rod at the fish and snap the leader off.

Scripture teaches us if you continue to do the right things when everything around you is going in the wrong direction, you will be rewarded. This same truth sometimes applies to fishing as I was about to find out. I pulled on my backing and nothing snapped or moved. I reeled down and lost control of the handle as the line tension was so great.

I cranked down hard on the reel a third time and the unexpected happened. Instead of my line snapping, the fish moved...back to me! I started to retrieve my backing and eventually, my fly line. It was as if the fish had said "I give up. You win!" Soon I would see I had hooked into the biggest king I had seen on the entire trip (and I had seen lots) and beached him a few minutes later.

I got my trophy on the bank and was able to take one decent picture of him before he flopped himself back into the river and swam off. Oh how I wished someone was around to photograph me with my prize! I called the trip after all this. The
people at the fly shop later told me a good Michigan king could run from 20-30 pounds and close to three feet in length. While I was not able to take actual measurements, I am reasonably confident I didn't miss these numbers by much.

God REALLY blessed me on this trip.

**Fly Tyers Bench – Golden Stonefly’s**
By Gene Rea – Taken from the Pikes Peak Flyfishers Newsletter

With the advent of winter upon us I got to thinking; what are some of my favorite winter patterns to prospect for hungry trout. One of my favorites is the Golden Stonefly Nymph, but what is a Golden Stonefly you might ask? Well, allow me to enlighten you.

Stonefly is the common name for the order *Plecoptera*. The sizes of these insects range from 6 mm to 50 mm in length (excluding antennae and tail filaments) Golden Stoneflies usually don’t exceed 38 mm but are the most abundant of all large stonefly species in the West and most preferred by trout. Stoneflies are usually identifiable by their two tail filaments, paired claws on each of the six thoracic legs, and two distinctive wing pads on their second and third thoracic appendages.

Golden Stones thrive in both unregulated freestone streams and in tail waters below deep bottom-release dams, so they are more common on more waters than the bigger Salmon flies.

Golden Stoneflies are roughly the same size as Skwalas (17-23 mm). The nymphs are a speckled yellow brown and the adults range in color from a rich golden brown to dark brown, with lighter tones around the legs and on the underbelly. They could be easily confused with Skwalas if it weren’t for hatch timing. Skwalas are early spring stoneflies, while Golden Stones are summer species, most prevalent in the month following the Fourth of July.

As a result of the multiyear life cycles of the larger stonefly species, several different year classes live in the stream at any given time, and stonefly nymphs remain plentiful year-round, even after the adults have emerged. Since the trout see and eat nymphs all year, Western anglers should be prepared to fish them at all times—not just near peak hatch periods.

Nymphs are large and live in riffles and rocky, boulder areas with moderate to fast current. They often lose their grip and are taken all year by trout. An appropriate pattern dead-drifted near the bottom is effective. Choose your imitation carefully, however. Many fly shops sell a golden stonefly nymph that is golden in color, but the actual nymph is mottled shades of tan, black, and brown. However, when golden stonefly nymph molt, the new instar can briefly be a much brighter color. It's possible that trout key in on that brighter shade, which would explain why an imitation works when it seems to be unlike the color of the vast majority of the natural insects.

Golden Stonefly nymphs are important foods for trout on most Western watersheds through the entire year. In the weeks preceding the hatch, focus your efforts on the fast, rocky holding water near the banks. Barr’s Tungstones, Barr’s Tung Teasers, Pat’s Rubber Legs (brown/orange), Beadhead Hare’s-ear Nymphs, and Mercer’s Golden Biot Stones (#8-10) are a few of the more popular Golden Stonefly nymph imitations.

Don’t rule out fishing stonefly nymphs in January, basing your decision simply on the time of year, or because you don’t see any. Throughout the winter months, tumbling ice chunks frequently dislodge stonefly nymphs from the substrate, creating a feeding frenzy.

During emergence, stoneflies migrate toward the river’s edge and crawl from the water onto streamside rocks, willows, grass, and trees to hatch into adults. You’ll see evidence of this process in the form of their empty exoskeletons clinging to bridge abutments and boulders along the river.

Because the hatch occurs on land, stonefly nymphs transitioning to adults (“emergers”) are not available to trout during the emerging process. But the heavy concentration of nymphs along the stream banks during the migrating process increases their availability at certain times of the year. Nymphing along the river’s edge is highly productive during these migration periods.
Not surprisingly, adult stoneflies look similar to the nymphs, with the exception of the two pairs of veined, folded wings—two forewings and two hind wings—over their backs. Unlike mayflies and caddis flies, stoneflies do not produce mating swarms or spinner falls. Instead, they mate on land. Male and female stoneflies locate one another by drumming or tapping their abdomens on branches, tree trunks, and rocks. The male initiates one rhythmic pattern, which is subsequently answered by a female. Each species has its own unique drumming pattern.

Adult stoneflies consume fluid foods, and as a result sometimes live between one and three weeks before they find a mate. After they mate successfully, females fly over the water and drag their abdomens on the surface to deposit their eggs, but other than that, stoneflies rarely fly. They crawl to find and meet their mates.

The good news is that stoneflies are clumsy. They are easily dislodged by wind, and once airborne, they are poor fliers. They often end up in the water, where they flutter, creep, and clamber toward the shore, or drift aimlessly. If they aren’t eaten, they often drown and are washed downstream to be eaten submerged, as nymphs would.

The best dry-fly fishing occurs in the afternoon, when the adults come back to the water to deposit their eggs. The trout key on these egg-laying flights, and anglers can generally catch fish on the surface throughout the course of the day. Yellow and olive Stimulators, Rogue Foam Stoneflies (golden), and Amy’s Ants (olive) in #8-10 are excellent imposters.

**Casting Tip #25**
*By Pat Damico - Taken from Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club Newsletter*

Should I cast vertically or move my rod to a more horizontal position? At a recent casting clinic I asked if anyone experienced pain or discomfort while casting? The participant closest to me stepped forward and I had him stand and hold his rod where he usually begins a forward cast, which was almost vertical. Holding the rod from behind I asked him to start his cast. Against my resistance he experienced some pain. As he moved the rod more horizontally, I repeated the resistance and the pain dissipated. Clearly his best casting position was away from vertical. If experiencing pain while casting avoid the same casting position. When casting with a friend, try this simple exercise.

**The Pros and Cons of Introducing Your Wife to Fly Fishing**
*By John Berry*

Let me begin this article by saying that the smartest thing that I ever did was to introduce my wife, Lori Sloas, to fly fishing. We were not married at the time but it was the beginning of the most rewarding period in my life. As with any decision, there are many aspects to be considered. I am writing this from my point of view but it would be as effective from a woman’s. If you are not married, the same points apply to introducing a significant other to the quiet sport.

Sharing the same interests has a positive effect on any relationship. A day spent fishing together on a trout stream definitely qualifies as quality time. Being outside on a crisp fall day catching fish on a clear trout stream is my idea of fun. My favorite part of the day is after I have caught all of the fish that I require and I sit on a log watching Lori fish with my yellow lab, Ellie, by my side. When she hooks a good one, Ellie jumps into the stream and helps her land it, while I take pictures.

Since I began fishing with Lori I have noticed that I eat much better on fishing trips than I used to. The days of eating a can of beanie weenies cold from the can are over. Now there is a nice picnic lunch or a trip to a local restaurant. The same goes for your accommodations when on a fishing road trip. I used to camp or just sleep in the back of my ancient Volvo. Now we stay at a nice clean room in a nearby motel or better yet a quaint bed and breakfast.

The whole travel thing is better. Family vacations can now become fishing trips. Lori and I love to travel to Montana for some serious fishing. A trip to visit my grandchildren in Decatur, Georgia includes a side trip to the Smoky Mountains to fish for native brook trout. Lori and I were married in a tiny chapel on a trout stream in the Smokies.

There are of course disadvantages. My wife and I live in different time zones. I am an early bird. I naturally wake up at 5:00 AM and am as cheerful as a bird. That, of course, requires that I go to bed at a reasonable hour. Lori, on the other hand, is a night owl. She stays up reading every night and prefers to sleep in. She also likes to take a shower and do her
hair before hitting the stream. As a result, we don’t generally arrive at the river before noon. If conditions dictate, she will go earlier but that is generally not her first option.

Another disadvantage is that she frequently out fishes me. Lori is an intense angler and approaches any fishing trip as serious business. I have found that the days catch for each of us depends on which water we individually get to fish and of course there is luck. It is always a pleasure to fish with someone that knows what they are doing.

Her casting ability has surpassed mine. I have been teaching fly casting for over twenty years but my skills have leveled out. I am a competent caster but Lori keeps working at improving her cast. Last week at the Southern Council Conclave she had a casting class with John Wilson who is a Master Certified Casting Instructor. I was tying flies at the time, a skill that Lori has no interest in. She does however like the fact that I tie. This supplies her with flies to fish with. She will also buy flies. As a fly tier, this drives me crazy. I’m standing there thinking about how easy that particular fly would be to tie and she is thinking about how pretty it is.

If you are thinking that if your wife takes up fly fishing, you can give her all of your old fishing gear and buy yourself some new stuff, you are dead wrong. She doesn’t want your old stuff. She wants new gear. If you take the time and money to shop with her and make sure that she gets the proper equipment for her to be comfortable and achieve success, you will come out much better in the long run. If you are thinking about getting yourself a new rod, you might as well buy two of them.

When I weigh all of the pros and cons of involving Lori in fly fishing I think it was the best thing that ever happened to me. My best days are spent on a trout stream with her.

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Upcoming FFF Council Events

FFF Great Lakes Council / Grand River Fly Tyers – Celebration of Fly Tying
February 25, 2012
Contact for more information: Terry Walker 616-204-1669
Knights of Columbus Hall - 5830 Clyde Park - Wyoming, Michigan

FFF 47th International Fly Fishing Fair (formerly known as Conclave)
July 10 – 14th, 2012
Spokane, Washington
http://www.federationconclave.org/

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The FFF needs 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: For Charter Clubs http://www.fedflyfishers.org/Default.aspx?tabid=4358

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