

The Cast



Russian River Fly Fishers

Sonoma County California
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KELLY AMES - the IRISH BAR
British Columbia, Canada

Since June 1977
Visit our website at
www.rflyfisher.tripod.com

Headwaters...

As we greet the end of Daylight Savings Time, the opportunities for armchair angling align invitingly with the longer evenings and shorter days on the water. Looking at this month's newsletter, I am pleased to see the contributions from our fellow anglers and to share in their flyfishing adventures. We have so much flyfishing talent available to us through our membership, and their stories are windows into places and knowledge of which we would otherwise be unaware. These stories bring our understandings to a new level, a more intimate sharing among friends.

My own adventure to Kiritimati Island is itself only a few days past, the memories and experiences still finding their place in my mind and my story. The evening chill welcomes me home, along with the fading light, a time when I am usually pensive and not moving peacefully into the night. On the equator, all is constant. Days and nights are of equal length, and on a desert island, the trade winds and temperatures repeat themselves day after day. As my memories coalesce, I will record them. But for now, in my mind's eye, I am still wading the sparkling flats and searching for bones and Chi Chi's, the outrigger awaiting, just off the edge, to take me back home...

~ Steve Tubbs

I call the story ... 'The Irish Bar'

Every Village of any consequence has one and that is as it should be. The young in our society are nurtured, shaped and molded by every strata of sobriety into people of solid timber in these fine establishments. The truth be known, governments have been founded as well as toppled within the hallowed walls of Irish pubs where there is the melding of the mind, the soul, and the Jamison's. The Irish Bar is of no small significance.

Our story begins many miles from the sea, on the waters of one of the great steelhead rivers of North America in the wilds of British Columbia. The river is unbridled, free to flow at the pleasure of our Creator and by her hand it is touched with a power which compels one's attention to its grace and beauty. This river is the stuff of legends and on one particular late September morning it was ever so pleasing to the eye. The early morning mist was lifting from the river's surface and the first rays of the sun were beginning to soften the chill. The Aspens glowed in their golden Autumn splendor and that soft amber backed by the deep blue-green of the majestic Northern Spruce and Hemlock forest. The morning was a good morning and held the promise of a fine day.

Kelly Ames, Heather Hamm, John Frenzel, and I navigated downriver bundled against the crisp

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wind and picked our way around the large granite boulders lying just below the river's surface. We anchored the boat in shallow water and rigged our two handed rods with Scandi floating heads and slow sinking tips. Rosie the Riveter seemed to be the fly of choice, but I tied on a Shamrock just for luck.

There were two runs separated by the boat. The run above us was somewhat shorter than the run below and deeper as well. We reckoned that Heather and John would fish the lower run and Kelly and I would split the upper run. The day before I had hooked two wild steelhead in the lower half of the upper run, and given that Kelly had yet to hook her first steelhead in this river, she would get that bucket and I would fish above. To properly fish the upper run, one needed to wade waist deep and some fifty feet out from the moss covered cobbles along the edge of the run. The bottom of the river was layered with greasy cannon balls interspersed with greasy basketballs and those between rocks the size of greasy Volkswagen Bugs. This run was a waders nightmare and only the foolhardy would attempt it without a wading staff.

We moved slowly out into the water and began the cast, swing, and step down pattern so effective in presenting the fly to every hold. I was some hundred yards upriver when I noticed that Kelly's rod was bent in a deep arc. Her reel was screaming, the line was flying, and the water was erupting with the silver of a wild steelhead. Kelly's expression seemed to be a euphoric smile superimposed on a look of sheer terror. Heather, John, and I worked our way to her with the net while she fought a long distance battle from her position out in the run. Her feet were planted firm on the hard bottom. One misstep and she would be looking at the beast eye to eye. The fish had taken her shooting head, 150 feet of running line and 300 feet of her backing and was holding far out and downriver.

Kelly carefully worked her way out of the run, down the green moss covered bar, and into a position below the fish. Once in command, the epic battle edged her way and she soon swung her first wild Skeena Steelhead into the waiting net. As the mighty steelhead lay in the net, the barbless hook fell free of his jaw as if to underscore the quality and finesse of the Lasses' technique. There were high fives all round, pictures of the object of her quest, and

much celebration. The release was successful and the brute made his way into the sanctuary of the shadowy depths of the river.



The baptism complete, we retired to the comfort of the moss carpeted boulders on the bar and multiple flasks appeared as if from thin air. Kelly commented that the green of the moss on the large boulders, the trees, and the beautiful river scene conjured pleasant memories of earlier times with her Dad in Ireland.

At that solemn moment, John proclaimed, as we all raised a wee dram of Jamison's; "This run will, forever more, be known as the 'Irish Bar'". And so it was that a new 'Establishment' was born on the banks of the mighty Skeena River!

Here's to Ya, Lass!!

~ Big Pierre

NOVEMBER GUEST SPEAKER **TRAVIS JOHNSON - SPEY CASTING**



Travis Johnson is both student and instructor in the art of fly casting and won the men's overall title at the 2014 Jimmy Green Spey-O-Rama at the Golden Gate Angling and Casting Club on April 12 and 13. He set a new world record of 198 feet for the longest ever spey cast in competition and also set a new world record of 721 feet for the total of the four required casts.

Travis grew up in Brightwood, just down the street from The Fly Fishing Shop in Welches,

Oregon, where he currently works as fishing guide and fly fishing instructor, among other capacities. His experience on the water has taught Travis how to find the toughest of fish with success and says his presentation will be on spey casting and finish with a piece of his home waters in Oregon.

Join me in welcoming our guest speaker at the **Wednesday, November 12 General Meeting.**

~ Joe Banovich

RRFF Program and Speaker Chairman

MONO, MILTON, and MOLARS

It never fails. I plan a fishing trip of more than two or three days, make arrangements with guides, reservations for motels, pay my friend for the cost of our cabin, and on the eve of the trip, a dental problem rears its ugly head. This summer was no exception. I had planned a trip to Truckee, then drive down 395 to meet up with friends at the June Lake Loop near Lee Vining. I was supposed to leave on a Friday, but my molar (#19 if you really have to know), started bothering me on the Monday before. My dentist only works Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, so I could not call them until early A.M. on Tuesday. The minute Kelly, the office manager, heard my voice, she immediately said, "Okay Greg, what is it now - you must be going fishing!". By Thursday I was seeing my endodontist, the root canal guy. He did #19 fourteen years ago, and this time I had an infection around it. Without much hesitation, he said, "It's gotta' come out". "But I am leaving tomorrow", I said. He took pity on a fly fisherman, and gave a week of antibiotics. I was allowed to leave on my trip the next day, but first had to make an appointment with an oral surgeon for the following Friday.

I met up with my favorite guide, Jay Cockrum, in Truckee, Saturday morning. Instead of fishing a warm, and low Truckee, he suggested we head north on Highway 89 and turn off to Milton Reservoir. According to him the water was still cold at the higher elevation and the lake, although pretty small, was loaded with wild 12 to 13" brownies. Forty-five minutes after leaving Truckee we arrived at Milton, and went out on the water in his drift boat. We had great action for several hours until the wind came up.

I headed on down to Markleeville the next day, and tried the East Carson in the morning. The water was quite discolored, and I thought there must have been a thunderstorm higher up the watershed. I later found out there was actually a mudslide. I don't know why I bothered, since no one else was fishing. I did land one foolish fish who made a mistake in the muddy water.



Next stop that afternoon: the West Walker along 395. I went over Monitor Pass and headed down 395, reaching the river after a root beer float in Walker. I always catch nice 12 to 13" planters and holdovers right along the highway. Some are even a little larger . . . a lot larger. The water looked low, but I stopped at a spot that looked like a possibility, and started fishing a Prince nymph and Red Copper John under an indicator. First, I did get the typical 12" trout. Second try, I was completely taken by surprise. I hooked a real pig. After several minutes I managed to get it to the bank. It was obviously one of those trophy trout they routinely stick in the waters of Alpine County. It was over 20', and probably 4 to 5 pounds. A very pleasant surprise for sure.

That evening I met up with one of my fishing buddies in Lee Vining for dinner, and then we headed to Silver Lake Resort where we would meet two more friends later the next day. Monday morning, just the two of us fished Lee Vining Creek with some success. We checked out Hot Creek in the afternoon. Very, very weedy and low. I hooked several nice fish on a very small BWO nymph under a grasshopper pattern, but there was so much grass I could not land anything. You had to stick the flies in very small "windows" in the grass and hope for the

best. Not surprisingly there were no other fisherman on the stream.

Although the fishing was difficult that afternoon, I had an interesting experience in the Hot Creek parking lot as we were leaving. I noticed a guy getting ready to head down to the creek, and struck up a conversation. Chris Leonard was a teacher at nearby Mammoth High School and was also a new guide in the area. Of course, I talked to him about patterns for Hot Creek, and the Upper Owens where I was headed the next day. Then when I told him I was a retired DA, he really perked up and asked if I had known his dad, Rod Leonard. I had! Quite well, in fact. Rod worked for the Los Angeles D.A.'s office for many years, and did a lot of training for DA's throughout the state. I had conferred with him many times on legal issues! Unfortunately Rod had died suddenly of meningitis a few years ago. I praised Rod to high Heaven, and his son was very appreciative. In fact, he gave me a foam ant pattern to try on the Upper Owens the next day. Still, what a small world.



That night two more friends showed up at our cabin and Silver Lake Resort, and the next day we all went to the Upper Owens. I was getting nowhere, until I used that foam ant from Chris the day before. I started to pick up some trout, and returned to our cabin at Silver Lake in a much improved mood. I tried Rush Creek that evening but no dice. I had also picked up a few trout that day fishing Silver Lake from the shoreline.

Wednesday morning two of us went out on Silver Lake in tubes and had absolutely no luck. I had mentioned to the others I had heard there was some good action at Virginia Lakes back up 395 towards Bridgeport. They were at 9000 feet or so, and still cold. So we tried both Virginia Lake and Little Virginia Lake that afternoon. Two of us tubed both lakes, and did very well. I lost some nice trout, and landed others. At least

the weather was mild, the water was cool, and there was good action on midge pupa.

Thursday was our last day; last year all four of us fished Crowley Lake and caught some nice fish. This year two of us went out with Brad McFall, who guides Crowley, the Trinity, and the Lower Sac. His instructions were very simple: "I have two rules for you to follow. 1. Strike when you see any movement of your strike indicator. 2. Strike when you see any movement of your strike indicator." I tried very hard to follow the advice, and did well. Gene did even better. He caught a 20+ inch Rainbow that weighed at least 5 lbs, which took him to his backing twice. I landed a very nice Cutthroat, and a 20" Brown, and a bunch of other nice fish. It is still a surprise to catch big, active trout on a fly rod in the middle of the desert. And there is no doubt, Crowley is in the desert.

Oh yeah, I had that tooth pulled the next day. My wife and I went camping two days later, but that is another story.

~ Tight Lines,
Greg Jacobs

2000 casts, 3 steelies - 6 days on 70 miles of Klamath River, October 2014

My buddy called up and wanted to fish and camp out on the Klamath around Weitchpec. He says he would bring a drift boat, breakfast and most dinners and I am on tap for lunch – can't beat that deal!

I throw a couple of spey rods, camping gear and my trusty Streamside map into the truck and we agree to meet at Trogan's Bar near Johnsons, about a 7 hour drive. I stop at the Eureka Fly Shop and stock up on #8/#10 green herniators. They say, don't fish there, fish have moved up since the rains a month ago.

In spite of this, we continue our plan and meet at Trogan's near the Yurok ceremonial site about 5 pm and pick our camp site. Plenty of room with only two vehicles there. A guy in a RV has been camped there since June has quite a spread with couches and tables under his awning. We find old Pete Dudley's camping site marked with a memorial. He died in 2013. For many years, Pete had been a regular summer/fall camper at Trogan's using his jet ski to get around the river and fish the best runs.

We crack a few beers and relax before dinner. No hurry, we have six days ahead.



Next morning, I am up at first light before breakfast and swing some flies using my 7wt and a Skagit line and hook 4 half pounders in 1.5 hours, a promising start. After breakfast, we do a shuttle and do a float from Young's Bar to Trogan's, fishing Capel and Metah Riffles. Weather was nice and the water looked good but fishing was very slow. Maybe the Eureka Fly Shop guys were right?

While drifting, we sneaked up and startled a bear prowling the shore.



Next morning, we pick up a few more half pounders at Trogan's and decide to bail out and head up river to Orleans and decide to stay a night or two at the Klamath Riverside RV Park to catch a shower. I put down \$20 for one night and we dump our camping stuff and get ready to head out to go fishing. We couldn't help but notice the crop of fifty 9 ft. high marijuana plants in the yard next door just over the 6 ft fence. Quite fragrant. Probably worth a small fortune.

Fishing riffles around Orleans the rest of the day we picked up half pounders and my buddy got two small adults at Green Riffle.

When we got back to Orleans, the guy next door was harvesting his crop. Had to get it in before the rains hit.

Next day we went to drift a section of water above Somes Bar. We decided to put in at a no name launch below Kissing Rock Rapids (map says "Eats Driftboats" and it looked quite challenging). The road down to the launch was not posted but it did have a cable across with a combo lock. My buddy tries 3474 (FISH) and presto, it unlocks and we are in! In five hours drifting, I hooked about 15 half pounders (12-14") and two small adults (3-4 lbs), my best day fishing. Ice Cream Riffle was the best run.



It started to rain that afternoon which caused the river to come up and get muddy, messing up the fishing next day but clearing later in the week.

Overall, during the week, we explored numerous gravel bars (4 wheel drive required for many), camped at four locations and did three drifts exploring about 70 miles of river between Ti Creek and Johnsons. Got to be careful where to drift to avoid dangerous rapids or falls. Good access, plenty of free camping, several RV parks available to catch a shower, no crowds. Using a 7 wt spey rod with Skagit line, floating tip, 9 ft leader, I landed three small adults and hooked about 40 half pounders, all on #8 and #10 green herniators. Not too bad for a steelhead trip.

~ Mike Spurlock

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

In the early morning of September 28 I boarded a flight at SFO heading to Anchorage, Alaska with a stopover in Seattle. Upon arrival at Anchorage I met an old fishing buddy from the 60's and his adult son.

We grabbed my bags, hopped into a rental car, drove a few miles to the nearest Fred Meyer's, and after collecting some groceries and beer, we headed south out on the Seward Highway for the Kenai Peninsula. One hundred miles plus later, we arrived at our lodging (Eagle Nest Resort) on the edge of the Kenai River in Cooper Landing.

We unloaded our stuff, went out and had a nice dinner, and hit the sack early with dreams of tight lines and strong fish.

The next morning after breakfast we dressed in multiple layers, morning temperatures in the low 20s, and we "waded up", ready to fulfill our dreams of the previous night. Our guide Fred (mysticfishing.com), with drift-boat in tow, arrived at our doorstep at the scheduled hour of 7 AM. Then it was down the road to our put-in ramp.

Trout fishing on the Kenai generally consists of two sections. The upper reach generally extends from the confluence with the Russian River down to Jim's Landing or a longer float to Skilak Lake. Early in the season most floats will be on this upper reach where the Reds (Sockeye Salmon) are spawning. Later in the season more floats occur on the middle reach, especially in even years when the Humpy's (Pink Salmon) spawn in that section of the river.



Since the Red spawn had concluded it was no surprise that we put in at the lower Skilak landing to fish the middle reach. We commenced our trout fishing with six-weight switch rods, indicator nymphing with plastic

beads. Fred's supply of beads appears limitless in size and color ... how many fingernail polish colors are there?

Fred slowly back rows against the current and we seek a drag free bottom drift along the boat, and when the indicator sinks, be awake, there's no second chance. Hookups were common, often doubles, - I don't recall any triple hookups this trip. Most fish lengths were in the teens, some the low 20s and perhaps 4 to 6 per day were the football shaped, 25" plus (that's what we were looking for) fish.

Around lunch we typically spent time fishing for silvers (Coho Salmon). Some were starting to color up but others were bright and several still had sea lice indicating they were fresh from the ocean. We were fishing about 50 river miles from the river mouth at the Cook Inlet. We fished the Silvers with eight weight, 9 foot rods, casting and stripping bright multicolored flies.



Early one morning we were sitting in the drift-boat on the river in a misty fog and in the distance north of us we could hear, but not see, trumpeter swans on the river and to the east in the forest was the bark and howl of some wolves. We knew it would be another great day.

In summary, after four days, a good time was had by all, 60+ fish days, cold but dry, no one got dunked, no broken rods, no flies in ears or anywhere else, (although I carelessly bounced a barbell silver fly off the back of my head once). No 30 inch trophy rainbows were brought to the net this year, but there's always next time.

~Ted Morrison

Membership Dues - Last Call!

This will be your last RRFF newsletter if you have not yet renewed your membership for the 2014 / 2015 fiscal year. In the next few weeks, Ken Young (our new Membership Database Chairman) will remove from "Active" status all members who have not paid.

Please take a moment to remit your dues payment if you have not already done so. You should have an invoice and return envelope that you received a few weeks ago to assist with this process. Your membership dues enable the RRFF to provide our monthly speakers and the various club events that we sponsor throughout the year.

Thank you for your continued support!

RRFF Steelhead Clinic
Saturday, December 13th
8:00 am - Location TBA

Calendar of Events

Winter Fly Casting Clinics – Begin November 15th at 12:00 noon until 2:30 pm (weather permitting). Afterward, Clinics are held the first and third Saturday of each month.

November

- 12 General Meeting - Vets Building 6:30 PM
15 First Winter Fly Casting Clinic – 12:00 Noon

December

- 10 General Meeting - Vets Building 6:30 PM
13 Steelhead Clinic – 8:00 AM, Location TBA

RRFF Newsletter Submissions

If you would like to contribute to the RRFF newsletter, submissions are due by the fourth Monday of each month.

Please email submissions as an MSWord doc to our newsletter editor:

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Russian River Fly Fishers Membership Application

I acknowledge in this agreement, and fully understand that it is a release of liability. I further acknowledge that I am waiving any right that I may have to bring legal action or to assert a claim against Russian River Fly Fishers (RRFF) for its negligence. Any member who invites a non-member (including member's spouse and family) agrees that such guest is bound by the same conditions and agrees to so advise the guest. I have read this statement and agree to its terms as a condition of my membership in the Russian River Fly Fishers. This agreement is valid for all RRFF sanctioned events, (fishing outings, picnics, meetings).

Name _____ Date _____ Referred by _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Home Phone _ _____ Work Phone _ _____ E-mail Address* _____

How Can You Help the RRFF? _____

Occupation _____ Signature _ _____

* Required for e-mail newsletter

Please mark one of the following categories:

- I apply as a new member:** Single membership – \$50 annual dues
 Family membership – \$55 annual dues
 Junior membership – \$25 annual dues

- Existing membership renewal:** Single membership – \$50 annual dues
 Family membership – \$55 annual dues
 Junior membership – \$25 annual dues

Dues paid by a new member joining the RRFF after March 30th of any year will cover the balance of that year and also the membership dues for the following fiscal year. The RRFF fiscal year runs from July 1st to June 30th

Please mail this application and your check payable to: **Russian River Fly Fishers, P.O. Box 2673, Santa Rosa, CA 95405**