

The Cast

Russian River Fly Fishers

Sonoma County, California
Volume 50, Number 2
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Russian River's mouth wide-open
Photo by Mike Spurlock, Noon 01.26.2023

Since June 1977
Visit our website at
www.rrflyfisher.org

President's Message By Penelope Gadd-Coster

And hopefully more rain to come! This has created some issues with trees down, mudslides, flooding—this is the downside. There is an upside and that is much needed water for our own needs, our crops, and most of all, what the fish need! I do hope that we get more rain, not deluging downpours, but what would be more of an average rainfall event sometime soon. Seeing the reservoirs filling and the rivers flowing makes my heart sing for the fish that inhabit them and an appreciation for what they must go through to survive our ever-changing environment.

The river flows and sediment levels are getting to fishable levels. With the mouth of Russian River open

and February just around the corner, you know what that means—Russian River steelhead migration. It's time to pursue that fish of a thousand casts!

Note: Before you decide to fish a river, call 707-944-5533. This is the low-flow closure hotline for Central Coast Rivers (including Russian, Napa and Gualala). North Coast Rivers hotline can be found by [clicking](#).

January 19-22 was the International Sportsman's Expo in Sacramento. I went to look for a Spey rod and I was not disappointed! I also helped to promote the club with NCCFFI and talked with a lot of people truly interested in fly fishing. I also ran into a few club members there like Cat Kaiser. It was great to talk to people interested and wanting to learn more about fly fishing. The next event I would like to share is the

Pleasanton Fly Fishing Show during February 24, 25 & 26, 2023. I am looking for a reel and maybe another rod, and maybe a new hat.... Would love to meet you out there. Let me know if you can make it!

Casting Pond—I can't say enough about how lucky we are to have a pond along with great instructors, Steve Tubbs, Jeff Cratty, and Don Shaw. They put in the time to teach us how to improve our casting and answer our questions. And Doug Mackay and Don that faithfully execute the needed maintenance when the pond and our shed needs it—what an energetic team we have at the casting pond.

I hope you will take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to learn from our casting pond team. And then there is the camaraderie that comes with spending time at the pond. January brought the first meeting of some of our Club women. What a great day I had getting to know some of you, and I look forward to meeting a more of you! When you decide to come out to the pond—bring a chair, something to drink, your rod and have a good time!

And don't forget the General Meetings (see information below). Please come to the Vets Hall or join us online for a Zoom meeting. I look forward to seeing you there. You don't want to miss the presentations Mike Borba has put together. Bring your fly fishing friends, family—all welcome.

THANK YOU for your membership and I look forward



to seeing you at the meetings, the pond, and at an outing! Penelope

RRFF General Meeting

Wednesday, February 8, 2023, 6:30 PM
Lodge Room, SR Vets Memorial Building
By Mike Borba

Tactics for fishing streams, gear, and a discussion of several Northern California streams are the subjects of our February presentation by Michael Malekos. Michael has written articles for over a twenty-year period for California Fly Fisher Magazine. Articles in the past three issues include how to read water. He also runs Casting A Rise Foundation, [click here](#). This

foundation is a nonprofit organization that raises funds through fly-fishing events for many other nonprofit organizations including the Shriners Hospital for Children, Habitat for Humanity, San Francisco Food Bank, and many others. I urge you to check out Casting A Rise Foundation. For more information, [click](#) for his life story.

[Click](#): Preview raffle table fly-fishing rod/reel donated by Lee Soares at this month's General meeting.

Steelhead in the Classroom Tank Assembly Workshop

By Karl Joost

We're looking for volunteers to help us assembly the water tanks that will hold the developing steelhead eggs. The eggs and tanks will be eventually delivered to the Sonoma County schools whose teachers and students are participating in the program, Steelhead in the Classroom. Those eggs develop into fries, and those fries will be transported to Russian River tributaries and with some luck, they will develop into steelhead.

Please consider joining us at this fun workshop. Here's a map how to get to Sonoma Water, Water and Energy Education Center near the Wohler Bridge from Hwy 101, [click](#).

Let me know if you can make it. We can use as many of you as want to participate. Hope to see you there and there's lots to do. It's all fun.

- Attach foam insulation to each tank
- Make up the under-gravel filter assembly
- Package gravel, thermometers, pumps, and chillers
- Look over the list of classrooms participating this year
- **Title:** SIC Water Education Center, Tank Prep
- **Time:** Tue, Feb 07, 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM,
- **Location:** 9703 Wohler Rd, Forestville, CA

Fly Fishing 101 Memoir

By Greg Jacobs

One of my favorite memories of my dad is a photo without either of us in it. It is a photo of trout lying on

a nylon creel, next to two fly rods. My mother took two photos of the fish, one her black and white Polaroid (Anyone remember them?). The other photo, a color Polaroid (below).



My dad and I caught those fish fly fishing with our fiberglass rods on a small creek in the southeast corner of Lassen Park. That creek was near Drakesbad Resort. I guess you could call it a dude ranch of sorts. It was a few old buildings at the end of Warner Valley Road out of Chester. Two years in a row my dad took my mother, my sister and me up there for a week. I was 13 and could barely tolerate my younger sister, but she would ride horses and stay out of my hair. There was no electricity in our cabin, and we spent the evenings around the fireplace in the ranch clubhouse. It was a great family vacation.

The ranch manager was a P.E. teacher and football coach in Chico during the school year. One day he said to my dad, "Jack, I know where you can take Greg and catch a nice mess of fish." My dad and I drove off, found the road where we had permission to park on private property, and took a short hike to the stream. I am not sure of the name of the creek. There are so many tributaries like the one we parked at that flow into the north fork of the Feather River. The coach was right. We caught lots of pan sized Rainbows. The fish displayed in the above photo were the highlight of my young life.

We came upon a section of the stream with a series of cascading pools. If we stood by one pool, we could not see over the edge of the next pool upstream. My dad carefully crawled to the lip of the pool and told me to get ready. He then told me where to cast my

fly, albeit blindly. *Bam*, I fought and caught a nice eleven incher. We went up to the next pool and he did the same thing. And I caught another. We did this at least one more time. Those fish are in the photos. My dad was not much of a talker, but I felt very close to him during those exciting moments.



Greg's dad with his two sisters displaying their Eel River catch

I received my first fly casting lessons from my dad several years earlier on Pieta Creek, a small tributary of the Russian River. He belonged to a hunting club near the Geysers before the geothermal development. Pieta flowed north of the Mayacamas Mountains. And at the time, it was full of steelhead in the winter and smolts during the summer. This creek was fed by springs, so it never dried up. Dad loved to hunt deer, pheasant, quail. And I went along, but what I really wanted to do was fish that creek after the deer hunt. Deer season was late August to early September. While the men took naps, exhausted from the hunt and playing poker all night, I took my rod down to the creek.

There were plenty of 12–14-inch steelhead trapped by low flows. At that time, the smolts numbered in the thousands and you could fish the tributaries of the Russian. In the early 70's, my dad was still hunting, but I had married, and had other demands. I missed the chance to witness the near 30-inch steelhead he caught on that small creek. That catch is still a talked about as family legend.

My dad like to hunt more than anything. He was born in Ferndale, and grew up mainly in Arcata, and then Ukiah. Although he did not talk about his childhood too much before he died at a fairly young age, I have found some great photos of him fishing on the Eel River, and maybe the Smith. They were proof he could fish as well as hunt. I think the photo of him holding what looks to be a half pounder which I am pointing at, was taken near the mouth of the Smith River.



Greg pointing to his dad's 1/2 pounder.

There is a photo of him, and his two sisters holding a day's catch from the Eel near Ferndale, (page 3).

I still have my dad's seven and half foot Fenwick rod and his Pflueger reel, and my seven-foot Fenwick and same reel. I also have the rods that are in the photo of the mess of trout. I don't have any more of the green nylon creels that we used that had a scale in inches printed along the top. And no more of the following flies either: Royal Coachman; Grey Hackle Peacock; Mosquito; and a Grasshopper, all of which could be purchased at a Long's Drugstore for about 50 cents (maybe less).

As mentioned, my dad was a man of few words, but I knew how he felt toward me, because of the many times he took me fishing with him. He always made sure I caught some fish before he did. Those were my favorite times with him. When I was young, he even showed me that wonderful "trick" of putting a slightly

melted Hershey's chocolate bar in a cold stream to make it firm up.

Interestingly my dad played the cornet, and I played the trumpet. Still do. In fact, a family that he had sold his cornet to 65 years ago recently returned it to me. It still had his initials on it. But that is another story.

Fly Fishing the South Fork Snake River, Idaho By Mike Kast

In 2017, my fishing buddy Don Shaw, RRF Board Member and I took a trip to Victor, Idaho. We fly fished the South Fork of the Snake River. We booked a two-day drift through WorldCast Anglers, [click here](#). The excursion included an overnight stay at their mid-canyon campsite called the Snake River Hilton.

Our overnight stop was a first-class facility that included staff, cooks, hard wall tents for two, a large open pit fire area with comfortable chairs and a chance to hear some outrageous fishing tales. The location was totally remote and located in some of the most beautiful countryside and massive rock formations the Snake River has to offer.

The impressive canyon walls were sheer to the river. We saw some wildlife including a moose. There was a bear which was unseen but left a reminder that bear was nearby. What I mean by a reminder is that during the night the bear got into our drift boat and ate our next day's provisions. At least he didn't leave that *reminder* bears are known to usually leave. All he left was a total mess and a cooler with the lid ripped off. Diner that night was awesome and served with plenty of bottles of wine and soft drinks. Prior to dinner, they also had on open bar with beer and other alcoholic options. Breakfast the next morning was equally tasty with standard fare and burritos that Don and I still talk about. Because of the bear, we ate left over burritos for lunch.

Enough on the food already, we came to fish! Don and I are both experienced fly fishers and we viewed our guide as the key to a successful trip. Our guide, Trevor, was a terrific professional, knew the river at

every turn, worked his tail off, and loved to laugh. Of course, he had several opportunities to do just that.

The fishing was beyond belief with beautiful healthy Rainbow and brown trout in every seam. We fished a double dropper rig under an indicator with Treavor changing flies at various depth throughout the day. When we got to the haul out, we said goodbye to Treavor, shook hands and parted as friends. All in all, this was not the most exotic and challenging of trips I ever took. But it provided great fishing, old man camping, lots of laughter, and making new friends.

RRFF Women's Voice By Penelope Gadd-Coster

Hello and welcome ladies! Saturday Jan 21 was our second *meet and greet* at the pond and what a great time I had meeting with Patty, Rosa, and Catherine. I heard great suggestions by all, and I look forward to our next gathering! **FEB 18—Saturday at the casting Pond at 11am will be our first formal meeting** before the casting clinic begins. I will bring drinks and snacks. Please let me know if you can attend. Please send me an email, [click here](#). Subject "Meet and Greet. This way I can let you know if there is a change due to the weather. I also had a chance to talk with Cat at ISE and look forward to more discussion with her.

Topics I walked away with after talking and listening to some of our women Club members:

- Scheduled meetings.
- Camping—how can we make that more comfortable for mixed outings.
- Adding an event for a women's outing(s).
- RRFF outings that are more local.
- Gatherings with other clubs.

Please feel free to send along more suggestions. Currently, I am putting off the Surf Casting outing. We have many other things we can do and great instructors within our Club to help lead us. I do want to share that I was inspired by our Club instructors to learn spey casting and now have my own spey rod. I'm presently looking for a reel. I'm really excited to give spey casting a go. I would also love to hear if you are looking for someone to fish with. Together we can create a list of

women that we can individually contact to possibly go fishing with, which was another suggestion that came up. That's all for now. I look forward to seeing you at the pond for our first *reel* meeting!

Fly of the Month Clouser Half and Half Minnow By Mike Borba

A good all-around striper and bass fly is the Clouser Half and Half Minnow, [click here](#). The video shows a good color combination, but you can change the colors to suit your needs. [Click](#) to also view in our website.

Materials list:

Hook: Gamakatsu B10S or Ahrex SA280

Thread: white 100 denier

Tail and wing materials: white and chartreuse saddle hackle, white and chartreuse bucktail or synthetic streamer fibers, peacock herl

RRFF Donations By Mike Spurlock

The RRFF Board of Directors have been recently discussing how our Club has been donating funds in the past and to whom. We are currently working on introducing procedures over the next couple of months that will keep our donation practices consistent with our club objectives and limited by the size of our monetary resources to amounts that we can afford and budget for each year.

The Board would like your input. Do you have a nonprofit organization that you would like us to consider for a donation? If so, please email me, [click here](#). I will work with you so your voice and suggestion can be heard by RRFF Board of Directors. And [click here](#) to review our Club's website so you can review the information that will be needed for the Board of Directors to review your suggestion.

We have RRFF Board members and non-Board members that have participated in various not-for-profit organizations, and they periodically ask the Board for a monetary donation, for example, Steelhead in the Classroom and Casting for Recovery (see page 6).



**Casting for Recovery (CfR)
We're Looking for River Helper Volunteers**

Ahhh...spring at the Indian Creek Lodge in the Trinity Alps. There is something special about a Northern CA Casting for Recovery Retreat where you wake up to the sound of geese honking and if you listen carefully, you can hear the Trinity River flowing through the lodge's backyard. You open your door and start the day by breathing in crisp cool air as you gaze on snowy mountain peaks. It makes you appreciate all that nature has to offer. And it's also an opportunity for fourteen breast cancer survivors to learn the new sport of fly fishing in a supportive and therapeutic environment. And by taking part as a CfR River Helper, you can make all this possible.

This year the Northern California CfR Retreat will be held the weekend of April 7-9. Saturday will be spent teaching participants the rudiments of fly-fishing lore -- gear, knots, entomology and of course casting. On Sunday, the excited women will don their waders, grab their rods, and head down to the Trinity River where each woman will be matched with a "River Helper" guide. The river helpers are critical, both in providing a sense of security for women who are new to wading but also in selecting flies, helping with knots, deciding where to fish, learning to mend, and simply knowing what to do if they get a fish on the line. The women and their helpers only have the morning to fish, but it is enough to whet appetites for this new sport and bring big smiles to everyone's faces.

Please consider volunteering as a River Helper. To find out more about Casting for Recovery, check out our website by [clicking here](#). To find out more about River Helper Guide and complete an application, click on the horizontal menu bar *Ways to Help* and dropdown to *Volunteer Opportunities* and scroll down to read about *River Helper (Guide)* and then scroll down to *Apply to Volunteer*. Please contact me at my email address or call my cell number below if you have any questions, Suzanne Gulick.

Suzanne Gulick, Program Coordinator
Casting for Recovery - Northern California
Cell: (650) 703-2089
sgulick617@gmail.com

A Leading Breast Cancer Quality of Life Program

Casting for Recovery's program combines counseling, medical information, and the therapeutic sport of fly-fishing.
Our two-and-a-half day retreats are offered at *no cost* to women at any age and any stage of breast cancer treatment and recovery.
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Calendar of Events

Our next Saturday winter casting pond dates will be February 4th & 18th, noon to 2:30 PM. During the winter, our casting pond is open on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of each month—weather permitting. We are OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!

Beginners are welcome...

We have many RRF Fly fishing outings coming up during 2023. To view the signup sheets for those RRF Fly-fishing outings click below.

PLEASE FOLLOW ALL COVID-19 PROTOCOLS!

[Click](#) here for a complete list of upcoming RRF fly-fishing outings for 2023

How to Contact Board of Directors & Coordinators

If you want to contact one or more of the Board of Directors and/or Coordinators below, then click on this link, which will bring you to our website.

[Click Here](#)

The names of our Board of Directors and Coordinators will appear. You may click on a name and leave a message for any person below and our website will send it to their personal email address, and they will respond to your message.



RRFF Board of Directors

President: **Penelope Gadd-Coster**

Vice President & Outings Coordinator: **Ed Barich**

Secretary: **Brendan Galten**

Treasurer, Membership: **Spencer Bader**

Webmaster: **Mike Spurlock**

Casting Instruction Chairman, Facebook: **Steve Tubbs**

Casting Instruction: **Don Shaw**

Membership Badges & Pond Steward: **Doug Mackay**

Raffle Coordinator: **Gregg Wisley**

New Member Mentoring, Casting Instruction: **Jeff Cratty**

Steelhead in the Classroom: **Karl Joost**

Member at Large: **Tim Reuling**

Program Chair: **Mike Borba**

The Cast Newsletter Editor: **Dave Stone**

Member at Large: **Daniel Powers**

Coordinators

Day Fishers & Fly Tying: **Lee Soares**

Casting Pond Monitor: **Binky Castleberry**

Conservation Coordinator: **Charlie Schneider**

Conservation Coordinator: **Tom Greer**

Russian River Fly Fishers

c/o Spencer Bader
3310 Conifer Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95404



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).

*Indicates required field.

*Name _____ *Date _____ *How did you hear about us? Referred by? _____

*Address _____ *City/State/Zip _____

*Preferred Phone: Home _____ or Cell _____ *E-mail _____

Occupation _____ *Signature _____

*Circle a (Yes or No): I'm applying as a new member Yes / No or I'm renewing my existing membership: Yes / No

Single membership - \$50 annual dues Junior membership (live >75 miles from Santa Rosa or age 16-18 - \$25 annual dues.)

Gold membership - \$1,000 (one-time) Family Membership - \$55 annual dues—List family members: _____

The club would like to help you meet your needs. How many years have you been fly fishing? _____

Circle any areas you want help with: I would like help learning or improving my cast. I would like advice on fishing equipment.

I would like a lesson in tying knots I would like a lesson in tying flies I would like to have an experienced member mentor me

on local waters or on a club outing. Any other areas not mentioned above? _____

*How are you planning to pay? _____

Note: Dues paid by a new member joining the RRFF after March 1st of any year will cover the balance of that year and the membership dues for the following fiscal year. The RRFF fiscal year runs from July 1st to June 30th. IF YOU PREFER, YOU MAY JOIN OR RENEW ONLINE at www.rrflyfisher.org
OR NEW MEMBERS, MAY MAIL THIS APPLICATION TO:

RUSSIAN RIVER FLY FISHERS, C/O SPENCER BADER, 3310 CONIFER DRIVE, SANTA ROSA, CA 95404