The Cast

Sonoma County California
Volume 45, Number 4
April 2018

Walt Kruse and Mike Spurlock -
Pursuing Pacific Sailfish in Guatemala

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

President's Message

Spring is here…

Had enough of the winter of 2018? I certainly have. Just when we thought we were about to get some good snowpack-building, reservoir-filling precipitation, Mother Nature took us back into California drought territory again - kind of like Lucy teasing Charlie Brown to have a try at kicking that football. That's not to say we didn't get any rain this winter. In fact, our club had to cancel two outings, one in January and another in March, due to heavy storms. But overall, it would have been nice to have an "average" winter, whatever that is these days.

Enough of sitting around tying flies and day-dreaming of last year's best days fly fishing! It's time to start planning for this year's outdoor adventures and making them happen. This month we have club outings to Pyramid Lake (Lahontan cutthroats) and the Lower Sacramento River (wild rainbows), followed by our Annual Trout Opener at Baum Lake during the first weekend in May. The best way to make sure you get in on the action is to sign up for these outings at our club's monthly General Meeting or at our website at www.rrflyfisher.org .

And if your fly-casting arm has gotten rusty over the winter, you might want to take the opportunity to do some practicing at our club's casting pond in Galvin Park. Now that daylight savings time has begun, our expert instructors will be waiting for you there each Thursday evening, from 4:30 till 7PM (weather permitting). It's time to switch from those 8-weight steelhead sticks into the lighter finesse of

dainty trout wands; our guys can help you make that transition easily.

So don't let this season get by without have some fly fishing adventures. Blink twice, and it will be gone.

See you out there,

~ Ed Barich

Fly Fishing Film Tour - F3T

April 26th 7:00PM, at the Rialto Theatre - 6868 McKinley St, Sebastopol, CA 95472.

The original and preeminent exhibition of fly fishing cinema, The F3T is a one-of-a-kind experience. For the second year, **Redwood Empire Trout Unlimited** hosts this popular event, which gathers together fishy folk of all ages to enjoy epic adventures in fly fishing around the world.

This film is a fundraiser for RETU, where we put 100% of your ticket dollars and donations to work restoring our local watersheds. Doors will open at 7pm, so please join us for a pre-event get together where you can purchase goods and food, socialize, view auction items and see introductions for Redwood Empire Trout Unlimited. Last year we nearly sold out! **The film starts promptly at 7:30pm**.

**** Richard and Christie Geernaert will make chili before the film festival for the first 16 RRFF members to respond by email to Christie at christiegeer@gmail.com.*

Newsletter Editor

WANTED!!

Are you familiar with MS Word and Desktop Publishing, and do you have editing skills? Will help!

Please contact Steve Tubbs - steve@inspiri2.com

Al Smatsky with a nice Permit…

April General Meeting

Wednesday, April 11th – 7:00 pm

Central Valley Shad – with Al Smatsky

Encouraged by a lifelong friend and fishing buddy more than 45 years ago, Al purchased his first fly rod for a trip to the Yuba River to fish for shad. From that point forward Al was "hooked for life", and since then has been fishing from Alaska to South America in pursuit of most fresh and saltwater species.

In 1977, Al joined the Delta Fly Fishers and quickly made friends with anglers who shared his same interest. As an active board member and past-president (twice) the club grew to over 100 members, which it still maintains today. Serving as Program Chairman for over twenty years, Al also had the opportunity to meet many wonderful and talented fly fishermen who helped expand his knowledge of our sport. In 2003, Al was awarded the honor of "Life Member" for his service to the Delta Fly Fishers.

Al has always been an avid traveler and planned trips to Alaska for himself and his friends starting back in the early 1980's. In 1989 he made his first bone fishing trip to Christmas Island, and has since been hooked on saltwater fly fishing. His belief is that a fishing trip should be more than just "fishing", it should also be an experience.

In 1994, Al started his own business, *Excellent Adventures,* offering "hosted" and "un-hosted" fly fishing trips to affordable destinations from Alaska

to South America. Guided trips include his first love, American Shad in Central California, as well as Steelhead in Northern California.

Please join me in welcoming Al Smatsky as our guest speaker for our Wednesday, April 11th General Meeting. Although now retired from the speaker circuit, Al has agreed to share his Central Valley Shad program with us. He will present the techniques, timing, gear and optimal water conditions that contribute to success when targeting our central valley shad runs.

~ Joe Banovich

Steelhead in the Classroom

Update – March 22, 2018

The RRFF coaches have just finished delivering eggs to the classrooms, and have been helping new teachers get started with the teaching program. All of our classrooms have received eggs as of yesterday - the delivery dates were February 21st, March 7th, and March 21st. The eggs should hatch into alevin within 5 - 10 days (or so) after delivery to the classrooms, and then absorb their yolk sacs ("button up") and eventually become free-swimming fry.

The aquarium tanks are kept at a temperature range of around 50-degrees Fahrenheit, using a special chiller unit manufactured by Ulf Moren, of Nova Tec in San Rafael. The RRFF donated thirty of the 10-gallon tanks, and 2 back-up chillers, to our local Steelhead in the Classroom program. The tanks use a normal gravel filter, and employ a power unit to pump water by the chiller. Foam insulation is used to assist in maintaining the cold water temperature.

Out of the 22 teachers that our RRFF volunteers coach, 12 are new to the program this year and 10 have previous experience. The experienced teachers generally do not need much, if any, help from the coaches.

Our contact at the Sonoma County Water Agency is David Berman, who coordinates the local egg distribution from the Warm Springs Fish Hatchery. David has run the local end of the program for over 25 years.

Ethan Rotman oversees the whole northern California CAEP/Steelhead in the Classroom program. The program is operated by the CA Department of Fish and Wildlife, and they issue the permits to program participants, enforce the rules, and maintain ownership of the eggs and fry during the classroom process. The completed Steelhead in the Classroom permit must be returned to CDFW within 3 days of the release of the fry. Teachers can be dropped from the program, and required to retrain, if their permit is not handled in compliance with the established guidelines.

At this point, everything is well underway and we anticipate the release of the steelhead fry in late April and early May. The RRFF participation in, and donations to, this year's program has been phenomenal!

~ Karl Joost, 707-483-6172

CASA VIEJA LODGE

From the cover…

Mike Spurlock and I went to Casa Vieja Lodge to fly fish for Pacific Sailfish on February 6th to 10th. The Lodge, located in Puerto San Jose, Escuintla, Guatemala, truly offers 5-star services. We were met at the airport by the lodge transport van, an ice chest of beer, and (upon arrival at the Lodge) were greeted with a "Welcome" cocktail. That was all before check-in, and fails to include the unique appetizers served each day around poolside.

Our quarry was the Pacific Sailfish, *Istiophorus platypterus*, which are abundant in the Pacific Ocean off the coast there. They are known for their beauty and tremendous burst of speed for short distances. It was great to see that Guatemala has a national policy which makes it illegal to possess a sailfish, and every effort was made to revive and release each fish quickly, even those caught with bait on circle hooks.

We fished for 3 days aboard the *Pez Raton* with Captain Franz Hoffman and his mate, Donnie. This is a very comfortable and well-maintained 35' Contender powered by twin 300 hp Yamaha outboards. Mike and I really liked this open boat, especially the fact that you could walk all the way around the cockpit while fighting fish, which came in very handy on a double that we pulled-off. All gear was provided. We used an 8.5 ft. 14-wt. 600-1000 grain Temple Fork Outfitter TiCr2 paired with a Tibor (*The Pacific*) reel.

After breakfast, we arrived at the boat each morning at 7am, following a short ride from the lodge, hopped on board and were off. Our lunches, snacks and drinks, which we requested the day before, were already loaded. The fishing grounds were typically from 20 to 40 minutes from the marina. When the fishing commenced, three teasers (hook-less "hoochies", some with a ballyhoo pinned to it) were deployed. The Captain, mate, and either Mike or I, controlled the teasers. We would troll these until the frenzied action began, with Franz yelling, "VELA, VELA!" (which literally means "SAIL, SAIL"). We would all jump into action, he and the mate would begin pulling their teasers toward the boat and either Mike or I would "flip the switch" on the third, while the other grabbed the fly rod and

prepared to cast.

The sailfish normally followed the teasers in, and (if it did so) Franz would yell, "Cast, Cast" while shifting the boat out of gear. "He's watching, he's watching…strip it - strip it!" Sometimes the magic happened - the sailfish would swing on the popper, we would strip-strike, and the battle was on. Typically there would be a powerful, very fast run accompanied by beautiful frenzied aerial displays, followed by a second prolonged run, a strong battle (with the boat providing chase) and hopefully punctuated by another series of jumps. The mate would then "leader and release" the fish, within about 15 minutes. We had several sailfish landed each day, and they were beautiful!

Not every fish was interested, and there were periods when they just weren't around, or when they were half-hearted and either faded away or just bumped the fly. There were even "angler errors" (imagine that) which resulted in a "sancocho", the word they used for a "miss" and akin to a strike-out in baseball. While trolling, it is also possible to come across marlin, dorado, tuna and other gamefish, and we did have a couple of dorado show interest but not attack the fly. At 5pm, we would return to the marina and ride back to the Lodge, where we were always greeted by the staff offering us the "cocktail of the day".

As I said, the service was impeccable. Side trips are also available, and Mike was able to include a trip to Antigua on his way back to the airport. The property was very well maintained and activities centered on the pool and an outdoor "tiki hut" style dining area/bar. Once at the Lodge, everything is included - all fishing gear, breakfasts, lunches, 4-course dinners, all drinks (including beer and well drinks) and daily appetizers of BBQ chicken wings, nachos, or prawns (depending on the day). It was a very relaxing experience!

Remember - Keep Calm and "No Sancocho",

~ *Walt Kruse*

UPCOMING RRFF OUTINGS

Lower Sacramento River - April 19 to 21
Christie Geernaert <christiegeer@gmail.com> has reserved 10 rooms for RRFF members at the Gaia Hotel in Andersen, CA (530-365-7077). Attendees should call the hotel to secure one of the rooms. Christie has a list of guides that may still be available. You could also contact the Fly Shop in Redding for guides. The Lower Sac in the spring has always produced good caddis and mayfly hatches. Since the drought is back, the flows should allow for good fishing conditions.

Memorial Weekend Lower Sacramento River Shad Trip
Led by Lee Soares, this annual outing has produced some fun days catching good-sized shad and the occasional striper. We camp at Verona and fish from boats.

See the description and sign-up for all these trips on the rrflyfisher.org website.

~ *Ken Magoon*

Check out the Russian River Fly Fishers on the Internet at

www.rrflyfisher.org

for outings information, RRFF events, member news, photos and more!

DONATE YOUR EXTRA FLY FISHING GEAR
to our RRFF Bargain Table (at every RRFF General Meeting).

A fellow member could use it!

Join the RRFF on Facebook

We currently have **881 members** on our RRFF Facebook page. You can keep up with the RRFF and our fly fishing and conservation community by joining us at:

http://www.facebook.com/russianriverflyfishers

RRFF Trout Season Opener

Cassel, California – May 3rd - May 6th.

Please join us at the **PG&E Campground in Cassel, CA** for this year's ***RRFF Trout Opener*** on **May 3rd to 6th**, the weekend following the actual opening of trout season.

John Frenzel, Steve Tubbs, Heather Hamm, Kelly Ames and Tim Grogan will again be your hosts for this event. Although last year the reservation system proved to be a little challenging, the RRFF tries to reserve the entire last loop of the PG&E Campground for the use of our club members and their guests. The RRFF will provide dinner on Friday and Saturday nights, as well as breakfast on Sunday morning, before we break camp. Otherwise, you will be responsible for your own meals. We will also recruit volunteers to help with food prep, dishes and meal clean-up, and to set-up and tear-down camp at our group site.

Please Sign up! We need to know how many people will attend so that we can purchase the necessities for feeding everyone. Please sign-up online at www.rrflyfisher.org or at our April General Meeting. Let us know how many will be in your party and whether you will be tent camping or staying in a RV or trailer. Tent campers often share sites.

Weather: We will be camping. Weather at this time of year can include snow, or it may be in the 70's or 80's. Night-time temperatures often dip below freezing. We have had a few Openers where it rained the entire week non-stop, others with no rain and warm conditions throughout. Suffice it to say that you need to be prepared for anything!

Area Rivers and Creeks: As this event will be held the weekend following the actual Opening weekend, all of the rivers and creeks in the area will be open for fishing when you arrive at Cassel. There are a number of possibilities fairly close to the PG&E Campground - Hat Creek, Rising River, Pit River, Fall River, Burney Creek, Lost Creek - all of which have (somewhat) controlled flows.

Baum Lake: Baum Lake is a dammed portion of Hat Creek and is just down the hill from the campground. The best way to fish Baum Lake is with some type of watercraft. Pontoon boats, kayaks, canoes, prams and small boats are fine and electric motors are allowed on the lake. NO GAS MOTORS! Float tubes can also be used, but please be aware that Baum Lake does have a current and you may find yourself hiking back to the launch area carrying your float tube if you get too far downstream. Whatever your transportation, you will want to bring an anchor(s) to help hold your position in the current. Baum Lake is stocked periodically with trout and does have some large fish that top 24". If the weather is warm, hatches can be quite good and dry fly fishing productive. Otherwise wet flies, including various small nymph patterns, will be the key to success.

Camping: Tents, trailers and motor homes are welcome. We will be sharing sites, so if you have a motor home or trailer, you may wish to arrive earlier to secure a spot as it can be difficult to find a space with the group if you arrive late on Friday. Last year, we ended up spread out all over the campground. Tent campers can make use of many spaces in the loop and will often share sites with the "hardsides". Each camper is responsible for paying for their own campsite and for making sure that the camp fees are equally shared by all in the site. There are charges for extra vehicles, so figure these into the campsite fees. The campground has pit toilets.

Group Site: Club festivities will take place at one gathering site where all meals will be served and the evening campfire will be lit. ***Please bring your own chair if you wish to sit around the campfire!***

Food: You will be responsible for your own food items except for Friday dinner, Saturday dinner and Sunday brunch. There is often a small charge ($10.00 or so per person for the weekend) to cover unanticipated food costs. You will need to bring all of your beverage needs for the entire time of your stay. There is potable water at the campground.

For more information, please contact *Steve Tubbs* @ 765-1787.

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Fax (707) 588-8035
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Calendar of Events

Thursday Evening Fly Casting Clinics – Held every Thursday evening, 4:30 to 7:00 pm (weather permitting). This event is FREE and is OPEN TO THE PUBLIC! Beginners are welcome...

April

5-8	**Pyramid Lake Outing** (Ken Magoon)
11	**RRFF General Meeting** (Vet's Hall) - 6:30 pm
18	**RRFF Board Meeting**
19-22	**Lower Sac Outing** (Christie Geernaert)
20-22	**Spey-O-Rama -** (GGA&CC - Golden Gate Park)
26	**Fly Fishing Film Tour -** (Rialto Theater)
28	**RETU Russian River Clean-up**
28	**Trout Season Opens**

May

3-6	**RRFF Trout Opener** (Cassel, CA – Steve Tubbs)
9	**RRFF General Meeting** (Vet's Hall) – 6:30 pm
12	**Casting Pond Cleaning** (Doug Mackay)
16	**RRFF Board Meeting**
24-28	**Memorial Day Shad Outing** (Verona, CA – Lee Soares)

Visit www.rrflyfisher.org for a complete list of upcoming events!

RRFF Board of Directors

President: **Ed Barich**
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Vice President: Doug Mackay
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Secretary and Outings Chairman: **Ken Magoon**
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Treasurer & Webmaster: **Mike Spurlock**
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Casting Instruction Chairman, Facebook: **Steve Tubbs**
765-1787 steve@inspiri2.com

Program Chairman: **Joe Banovich**
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Library Master: **Don Shaw**
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Member at Large: **Chris Castellucci**
763-2017 chrslucci@aol.com

Member at Large: **Mike Kast**
538-9762 michaelrkast@gmail.com

Membership Chairman: **Doug Mackay**
575-5709 demackay@sonic.net

Member at Large, Casting for Recovery: **Paul Matzen**
795-8885 ggbridgeman@att.net

Member at Large: **Ken Young**
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Conservation Chairman: **Derek Campbell**
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Raffle Coordinator: **Gregg Wrisley**
823-5572 gwris@yahoo.com

Coordinators

Day Fishers & Fly Tying: **Lee Soares**
974-2651 frommewee@comcast.net

Women's Activities: **Susan Bostwick**
815-5926 shbgold@gmail.com

Raffle Coordinator: **Christie Geernaert**
292-1304 christiegeer@gmail.com

Casting Pond Stewards: **Doug & Sage Mackay**
575-5709 demackay@sonic.net

Casting Pond Monitor: **Binky Castleberry**
527-9607 fsh2xsbc@earthlink.net

Newsletter Editor: **Steve Tubbs** (reluctant)
765-1787 steve@inspiri2.com

Russian River Fly Fishers
c/o Mike Spurlock
20 San Domingo Way
Novato, CA 94945

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 ❍ **Gold membership** - $1,000.00 (one-time)

❍ **Family membership** – $55 annual dues **JOIN ONLINE @ www.rrflyfisher.org**

❍ **Junior membership** – $25 annual dues

Existing membership renewal: ❍ **Single membership** – $50 annual dues ❍ **Gold membership** - $1,000.00 (one-time)

❍ **Family membership** – $55 annual dues **RENEW ONLINE @ www.rrflyfisher.org**

❍ **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**
c/o **Mike Spurlock, 20 San Domingo Way, Novato, CA 94945**