

The Cast

*The Mouth of the Russian River,
January 20, 2020*

Sonoma County
California
Volume 47, Issue 2
February 2020

President's Message

Got Cioppino?

The month of February is known for steelheading on the Russian River, and also for our RRFF Annual Cioppino Dinner. For those of you who are new to the club, the dinner is our biggest social event and fund raiser of the year, and it is an evening you will not want to miss. The event will be held the evening of Saturday February 15 at the Veteran's Memorial Hall in Santa Rosa. We will be serving excellent food and drinks, with Steve Tubbs leading the seafood cioppino cooking crew and John Frenzel's team manning the barbecues to create delicious steak and chicken entrées. As in previous years, we will be having a raffle and silent auction of fly fishing-related items as well as valuables and services of general interest. And of course, the best part of the

evening is a chance for you to get together with our 162 members to trade fish stories with friends you may not have seen in years.

So right now, you are probably asking yourself, "What can I do to make this year's event a success?" Glad you asked! Here are some tips from your Prez:

- **Buy your dinner tickets early** – To prevent over or under purchasing food, our Dinner Planning Committee has to make a guess each year on how many guests will be attending. If you know you will be attending, why not buy them today and do us all a favor? You can mail in a check using the form at the end of this newsletter. Or easier yet, go to our website at rrflyfisher.org and use your credit card.
- **Donate valuable items for the raffle and silent auction** – The majority of funds raised

by this event come from items that members donate. Those funds are used to support our monthly meetings, casting pond activities and education programs.

- **Participate in the Raffle and Silent Auctions**
– You know you are going to see things there that you want – bring cash for raffle tickets and your credit card for the auction items. You get the goods and you help fund club projects – that's a win-win!
- **Volunteer to help at the Dinner** – A dinner this big takes a lot of work, *and with many volunteers we can spread the load* so that all members can enjoy the evening. Contact Ed Barich at ebarich@sonic.net or 707-539-4608 and I will find something for you to do.

But the most important tip of all, show up for the dinner and have a great evening.

Looking forward to seeing you there,

~ Ed Barich

January Outing Report – Yuba River

We had a quite a turnout for our annual trip to the Yuba River which was held the first weekend in January. This outing had to be rescheduled a couple of times due to high water, but we were finally able to make it for the first club trip of 2020.

Members spread out for fishing all over the UC property with some choosing to hike quite a distance for a better change at a wily rainbow or even a steelhead, which were also in the river system following the salmon. The skwala stoneflies had begun to make their appearance during our time on the river, and catching the hard fighting Yuba rainbows on large imitations was quite exciting.

Almost everyone caught fish on this trip, employing varying techniques to do so: swinging wet flies, nymphing under an indicator, drifting dries, and stripping streamers.

As always, the food was fantastic on this outing. Ed prepared a nice lunch consisting of sandwiches and hot soup on both Saturday and Sunday. Dinner was held at two local dining establishments (Mexican and German).

Everyone agreed that they cannot wait to return to this beautiful location to fish the river again next year.

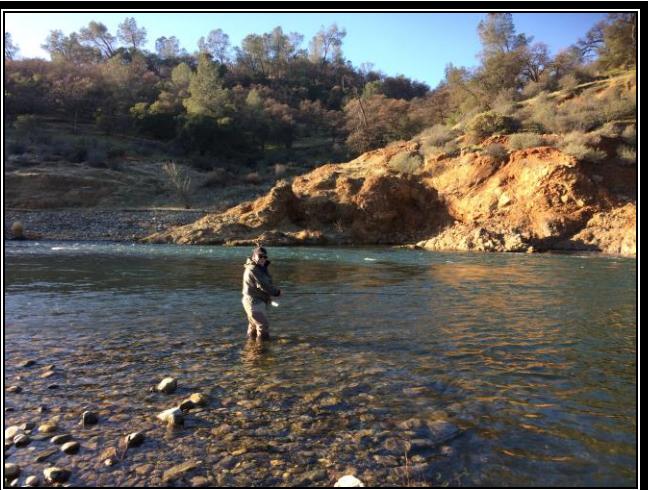
~ Editor



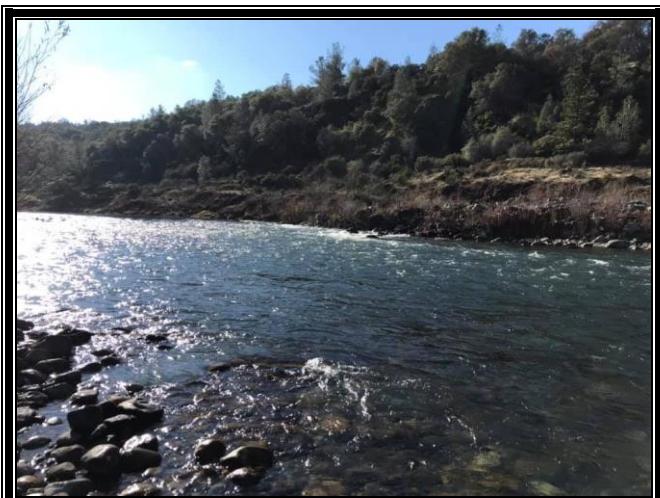
Jeff and Malcom – high above the river



Malcom with his catch – a beautiful rainbow



Swinging a fly through a tailout



The Yuba - A beautiful river

2,500 Steelhead say "Tanks a lot!"

Thanks to David Berman from Sonoma Water and his talented intern, Shelly Spriggs for staging all the materials for tank assembly at the Sonoma Water Education Center on the Russian near Wohler Bridge.

Wow! Exceptional teamwork and talent from Jeff Cratty, Bill Laurie, Gregg Wrisley, Tom Greer, Andy Crichton, Kevin Ostrom, Lori Brendlinger and Ethan Rodman, 50 (yes, FIFTY!) tanks were insulated, kitted with chillers, undergravel filters, thermometers and other necessities for hatching and raising steelhead in the classroom.

Many Steelhead in the Classroom coaching tips were shared and friendships made with new coaches, Andy and Kevin. Tom's new puppy, Stella, kept everyone on their toes!

New elementary teachers and their children will be using these tanks all across Sonoma County beginning in February.

~Karl Joost



Group Photo



Assembling the tanks

A Grain of Salt

Learning to fly fish can be an intimidating process, especially if you allow your limited knowledge and developing skills to keep you from practicing on the water in actual fishing situations. This is not to say that spending time at a Casting Pond or on the grass

in a local park, discovering some of the fundamentals of fly casting, will not assist you in your early efforts on the water. The reality is that most of us choose to fly fish not to spend our days at the Casting Pond but to visit those incredibly beautiful ecosystems where fish live - sparkling waters that offer us the opportunities we seek for discovery, and likewise provide our souls with nourishment as we immerse ourselves in the natural world. No matter your skill level, practicing your fly fishing on the water is perhaps the single most effective learning tool that you can employ. It will demonstrate your shortcomings with an emphasis that is location and condition specific, while celebrating your accomplishments even when you may accidentally stumble upon them. These insights from actual experience will have staying power, and their lessons will not be easily forgotten.

Fly fishing is a process of discovery. No matter your skill level, any time on the water offers an opportunity to observe and to further refine your understandings of those ecosystems that you visit. As you fly fish, moment specific situations will challenge your knowledge, suggest new skills and techniques for you to master, and redefine your understanding of the world around you. As your ability to perceive deepens, you will discover a new relationship with fly fishing as a vehicle for this discovery. This is a very personal evolution. Each of us learns at our own pace, based on what we bring to our experience and on our abilities to let go of misconceptions as new information is presented. Effective observation requires us to focus our attention beyond ourselves and on the world around us. This change of focus may be the single most important reason that many of us practice fly fishing, and is certainly reflected in the adage, "It's not the catching, it's the fishing!" The opening of our awareness, the expansion of our perceptions, and the integration of these into a more inclusive worldview are the very things that soothe our spirit and inspire us to seek more.

There is much to be learned from others, but it is also imperative that this information find a new life and resonance within you. This requires you to make what you learn your own. When teaching fly casting, I often remind those I assist that proficiency is 95% practice and 5% instruction. The practice time is where the information that you have heard

becomes a part of you, where you translate and integrate it into your own expression. You will process this information in increments, picking up pointers when you are ready for them, perhaps discovering more through reading and video, always building on your evolving understanding. Fly casting is uniquely expressed by each person who throws a fly line. There are certain fundamental principles that govern loop control and presentation, but these become components of personal style as each angler develops their own abilities. This same personal understanding continually evolves throughout all levels of fly fishing, as it does also with our understanding of all that we perceive. The integration that we practice through our fly fishing can help us realize the connections that surround us in every moment, and bring our attention to a more inclusive appreciation of our existence.

Each of us brings a unique perspective and understanding to our efforts at fly fishing. With this in mind, I feel that the greatest opportunities for observation and learning occur when we are actually fishing. It doesn't matter that you may have little idea of how to present a fly, where to fish, or what to do with a fish if it happens to find itself at the end of your line. On your own, in the classroom of the moment, you will *experience*...and then begin to develop skills that will address that experience. If others are fishing near you, you may take the opportunity to put the fly rod down and observe how other fly anglers approach the water, where they fish, and the techniques that they employ to present their offerings. Perhaps some of these observations will inspire you to try them for yourself. In this way, through experiential trial and error, we all begin to build a foundation for our personal understanding of fly fishing. As we visit more waters, the repertoire of experiences that we draw from increases. Over time, we begin to cultivate our discoveries and to refine our knowledge, developing personal preferences based upon our own efforts, preferences that evolve as we immerse ourselves even deeper into the ecosystems that entice us.

The beginning fly fisher has a fresh viewpoint that is not cluttered by "dos and don'ts". I recall one summer on the fabled North Umpqua River in Oregon when a few friends and I were fishing the "Camp Waters" near the Steamboat Inn. Camping next to us at Susan Creek was a fireman, brand new

to fly fishing, who had come up from the Portland area to “give it a try”. He had no fly fishing training, was unsure how to fly cast, and queried those around the campfire about fly selection, leader set-up, and any other suggestions that we might care to offer. At that time of year, the special regulations for summer steelhead on the North Umpqua designated only unweighted fly lines and flies (no weight of any kind was permitted), so we gave him our suggestions and went off to bed. Late the next evening, the fireman returned to his trailer. Around the campfire, he told us that he had been fishing the entire day and had managed to land two steelhead. As the rest of us had been completely skunked, we asked him how he had done it. He shared that he had situated himself on a ledge adjacent to a whitewater rapid where the river constricted into a chute before plunging into a deep, narrow pool. As it was a clear, sunny day, he guessed that the fish would be deep, holding along the ledge-rock walls. Not knowing how to fly cast, he stripped his floating fly line from his reel and worked it beyond his rod tip, then launched all of it into the rapids, where the white water took his fly line and drove it, and his fly, down deep at the head of the pool. The river hydraulics fished his fly for him, and over the course of the day his line came tight twice on North Umpqua steelhead.

To me, this is a perfect illustration of using the skills that you possess to fish a specific location, as well as a lesson on implementing whatever is necessary to get the fly where you want it. It doesn’t matter whether your techniques are fine-tuned, your fly cast an expression of beauty, or your understanding complete. Fly fishing is a process of observation and discovery, taking us beyond what we know and offering the opportunity to learn something new. It can take us outside of ourselves and present memorable moments of insight and clarity. Key to this is our willingness to get on the water and just do it. The fireman was new to fly fishing, but his lack of experience did not deter him from the adventure...and on that day on the North Umpqua, he was the more successful fly fisherman.

In our enjoyment and discovery of fly fishing, there are valuable opportunities to learn from others. Whether we observe other fly anglers on the water, seek instruction in fly casting and fly fishing, query the Internet, attend classes, read books and articles,

hire guides, or watch instructional videos, there are numerous ways that we can shorten our learning curve and obtain new information. Our progression in any endeavor comes when we are ready for it, and our questions can only be answered as they present themselves. As our understanding evolves and includes more, so too do our questions. But again, until we make the information that we receive part of our own experience, until we integrate it into our personal awareness, it remains something external to us. The words of others are based on their experience, and although valuable do not truly have meaning until we incorporate them into ours. Insights gained through observation need to become part of our practice and experience. The experiences of others are a reflection of their own development and are based on their understandings. It is always possible that these understandings are incomplete, or colored by personal bias, or have overlooked (or forgotten) simple lessons that were once known. There are always anomalies in fly fishing. There are always those times when you “do it all wrong” yet a fish responds, and your line comes tight.

Our time spent on the water fly fishing is our classroom of experience. It is where we take our accumulated ideas and observations and try them out. Some of these will find validation and become part of our understanding while others may be discarded or may evolve into new insights. For me, fly fishing is about immersing myself in the environment, cultivating the present moment, and paying attention to the world around me. At its best, its focus is external...requiring my full participation. It is an *experience*, a practice that rewards observation and leads to discovery. The only way to access this is to actually fly fish, to lose the *ideas* that you don’t know enough and to immerse yourself in the healing water(s). Your knowledge will come, and it will be unique to you. Create your own experience, discover your own truths and rely on your own observations. Learn for yourself, and participate in the Mystery.

The experiences and discoveries of others are only theirs...and should always be taken “with a grain of salt”.

~ Steve Tubbs

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January Calendar of Events

January 2020 - Casting Pond Clinics on Winter Schedule = 1st & 3rd Saturdays 12 noon - 2:30pm

??? Flash outing to Gualala River Jan or Feb, depends on river flows (Ed Barich)

4-5 Yuba Trip Redo (Ed Barich)

8 General Meeting - Jon Baiocchi "Creekin the Lost Sierra (south eastern Plumas National Forest)" (Don Shaw)

15 Board Meeting

16-19 Sacramento ISE

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

RRFF Board of Directors

President: Ed Barich
539-4608 ebarich@sonic.net

Vice President: Doug Mackay
575-5709 demackay@sonic.net

Secretary: Vacant

Treasurer & Webmaster: Mike Spurlock
(415) 599-6138 mikerrff@gmail.com

Casting Instruction Chairman, Facebook: Steve Tubbs
765-1787 steve@inspiri2.com

Program Chairman: Don Shaw
477-5928 donjanshaw@comcast.net

Outings Chairman: Chris Castellucci
763-2017 chrslucci@aol.com

Membership Chairman & Pond Steward: Doug Mackay
575-5709 demackay@sonic.net

Raffle Committee: Paul Matzen
795-8885 ggbriogeman@att.net

Conservation Chairman: Vacant

Newsletter Editor: Marcus Pipkin
(615) 969-9200 marcus.pipkin@comcast.net

Raffle Coordinator: Gregg Wrisley
823-5572 gwrис@yahoo.com

New Member Mentoring Coordinator: Jeff Cratty
796-3691 rjcratty@yahoo.com

Steelhead in the Classroom: Karl Joost
978-3897 joosts@pacbell.net

Coordinators

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

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

Casting Pond Steward: Doug Mackay
575-5709 demackay@sonic.net

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

Saturday, February 15th, 2020

Please join us for our annual

Russian River Fly Fishers

SILENT
AUCTION

Fundraising
Raffle

CIOPPINI DINNER

\$50.00 per person

(\$15.00 for children 12 and under)

Social from 5:00 until 7:00 PM

Wine will be offered with dinner and you are welcome to bring a special wine of your choice!

Dinner will be served at 7:00 PM

Veteran's Memorial Hall - 1351 Maple Avenue, Santa Rosa

Donations: rrflyfisher.org or contact - Gregg Wrisley 823-5572 gwrис@yahoo.com (Sebastopol) or Doug Mackay 575-5709 demackay@sonic.net (Santa Rosa).

FOR MORE INFORMATION or to contact volunteer coordinator: rrflyfisher.org or Ed Barich 539-4608.

shear along dotted line

Cioppino _____ Steak _____ Chicken _____

Name _____

How many will attend _____ Telephone Number _____

Amount Enclosed \$ _____ Tickets are **\$50.00 per person**

Pay Online @ rrflyfisher.org or send payment to:

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

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* _____

Main Interests in the Club? _____

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

Choose 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.

Dues paid by a new member joining the RRFF after March 1st 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