

The Cast



First fish on a fly rod for Shelley Wishovich

Sonoma County
California
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President's Message

Adapting to Change

The events of the past few months have given us ample opportunities to adapt to change, although many of us would have been happy to pass on some of them. Many simple freedoms that we used to take for granted are now hard to obtain or even forbidden. But things are beginning to loosen up with many public lands are becoming accessible with some restrictions. As this evolves, I hope that all of our members can once again experience the outdoors while keeping themselves, their families and others safe.

Since we have not had a club General Meeting since March, the RRF Board would like to try having a virtual meeting on Wednesday June 10 at 7PM. Our Program Director Don Shaw has arranged to have

Andrew Harris of Confluence Outfitters talk on "Redding Area Fisheries." Although the virtual meeting format will not allow for the usual "meet and greet" experience we are used to, we hope you will all enjoy the topic. I will be emailing our members a link to this live Zoom meeting, which you can view on your PC or smart phone using the free Zoom app.

When you have time to spend, be sure to visit our website (<https://www.rflyfisher.org>) or our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/russianriverflyfishers>) for useful information and links to other sites related to the world of fly fishing.

(virtually) Tight lines,

~ Ed Barich

Fly fishing 101 – The Benefits of Fly Fishing

In this time of Coronavirus and social distancing, the benefits of fly fishing move into the forefront and become readily apparent as the fly angler seeks the soothing balm and solace of time on the water. In my last article, we touched briefly on some of the reasons why an angler might choose to pursue learning to fly fish, and we outlined some of the differences between fly fishing and other methods of angling. I would like to now explore the benefits inherent in fly fishing should one choose to immerse themselves in its seductive waters.

As a prospective fly fisher, or seasoned student, what inspired you to learn to fly fish?

From my perspective, the single most appealing aspect of fly fishing was (and is) the discovery of a new relationship with Nature and the natural world. The benefits of this are far-reaching and ongoing, enhanced by every visit to those incredible aquatic environments that support fish. Even without a fly rod in hand, my understanding and appreciation of all ecosystems has been augmented by my pursuit of fly fishing. Success in fly fishing builds from observation. Your abilities to observe the world around you, and correctly assess what you are seeing, are the fundamentals of becoming a successful fly angler. This requires you to get on the water, stop your internal dialogue, and immerse yourself in the moment.

There are spiritual ramifications here as well. So much of our day to day existence is co-opted by the dialogue that we as human beings generate, it is truly beneficial for us to be able to stop that narrative, escape from it, and find a new perspective from which to engage the world. Nature offers an opportunity to do just that. There have been countless studies as to how immersion in Nature benefits our health and wellbeing. Fly Fishing is a perfect vehicle to initiate this immersion. Because its success is dependent on observation, the very act of “standing in the water and holding a stick” focuses our attention on that water and on the world that encompasses it. In demanding our attention, it requires us to stop all thoughts that are not about fly fishing and to seek communion with

our immediate surroundings. It becomes essentially a meditation of the moment. Initially, we may see little more than the visual attributes of the ecosystem before us, but as understanding develops we begin to see some of the interrelations that combine to form this complex and unified environment. As we expand our awareness, we discover that everything is interconnected and plays a part in the whole, an insight that can extend to (and include) each one of us.

Fly fishing can be a means of escape from the seemingly all-important and limiting perspectives of our day to day existence. By focusing on the world outside of our internal dialogue, we can discover a new and more inclusive relationship with all that surrounds us. Early in my fly fishing journey, I was caught up in the process of a divorce. My weekend trips to the Sierra, and my time spent fly fishing on rivers, lakes and streams, helped provide me with a new perspective during this turbulent time. The immersion into Nature gave me a break from my daily problems and allowed me to replenish my spirit. Ultimately, it began to change the way I viewed and interacted with the world...and my understandings about the unity of all things. This has been an ongoing benefit. I find that I now seek this change, and strive for new perspectives and deeper connections as I explore this mystery that unfolds us.

As our powers of observation increase, we begin to see some of the subtle interrelations that influence our aquatic environments. This is a skill set that evolves and strengthens with use. At first, we may find it difficult to even see a fish in the water but, as we begin to understand the clues that indicate its presence, this becomes easier. Knowing where to look, opportune “holding areas”, how to read water, and understanding the dynamics of cover, temperature, river and stream hydraulics, fish behavior, insect hatches and food sources...all of this combines (and is continuously updated by our experiences) to give us a base for our understanding whenever we enter the water. But the learning process is never complete, there is always a deeper connection and a new interrelation to be discovered. Fly fishing is an interactive process, an immersion into the environment and ecosystem, and a discovery of new understandings about where fish live and how they behave. Whereas the bait or spin

fisherman may develop an appreciation for the ecosystems they visit, their success is not as reliant on a deep understanding of that ecosystem. For the fly fisher, the level of their understanding is often the companion of their success.

The changing perspectives of a developing fly fisher often lead them to an appreciation of their quarry and a desire to do no harm. Catch and Release becomes a goal for many fly anglers, and is sometimes a required practice on trophy trout waters (and for other fish species as well). Although never 100% effective, if done correctly this practice can be very successful and can beneficially contribute to a thriving fishery. Fly fishing is very conducive to Catch and Release principles. Fly caught fish are most often hooked in the mouth area and, with the help of barbless hooks, the fly can easily be removed with minimal handling of the fish. Sometimes, when using a rubber (preferable) mesh net, the hook will simply fall out of the fish's mouth once the tension on the line has been removed. This can enable the fish to be returned to the water with little (or no) human contact. Also, following safe practices regarding water temperature and the quick fighting of a fish to minimize exhaustion, many fish can be returned with a high probability of survival. Catch and Release fishermen are urged to "keep 'em wet" and to not remove a fish from the water, avoid touching the fish as much as possible (and if necessary, wet your hands first), and only fish when water temperatures are favorable for a successful release.

The benefits of fly fishing are as inclusive as the new fly angler wishes to make them. The decisions of how far and how deeply we wish to immerse ourselves in this endeavor are ours alone to make. For some, the new perspectives that develop as they pursue fly fishing become addictive, and the escape into Nature becomes a sought-after advisor to the psyche, spirit and soul. Its insights influence all aspects of their lives and worldview. For others, it can be an occasional means of escape from the day to day...a touchstone that reminds us of a deep, interrelated mystery that is always present and awaiting discovery. Again, we choose how far we wish to take it.

What type(s) of fly fishing do you wish to learn?

There are a number of different methods of fly fishing available to the prospective angler. Generally speaking, these include Dry-Fly (fishing on the water's surface. Very exciting and visual!), and Wet-Fly (fishing beneath the water's surface, throughout the water column). Both of these methods can take place in either Freshwater or Saltwater. In all cases, the "flies" usually imitate natural food sources. Insects are fished as dry flies when they hatch and when they fall back on the surface as spent adults, or wet flies when they are in their nymph and larval stages in various parts of the water column. Other food items are also imitated – leeches, worms, terrestrials, mice, amphibians, ducklings, bait fish, crabs, shrimp – basically anything that can be part of a fish's diet in whatever environment they are being pursued.

Some anglers are dry-fly purists, and choose only to fish dry flies and top water presentations. Others choose to fish as the situation demands, sub surface when there is no top water action and on top during a "hatch" or feeding frenzy. It is quipped that 80% of the time fish feed subsurface...so a dry-fly purist is limiting their chances for success to that 20% of the time that a fish may be taking flies on top. My preference is to assess the situation and fish with whatever method seems to offer the best chance for success. Sometimes I will have two fly rods available, one set up for top water dry-fly action and the second set up to fish subsurface, hoping to take advantage of the more lucrative (80%) zone. That gives me the option to fish the more exciting "hatches" on the surface (and if I use a "dropper" below my dry fly, the nymphs that are swimming near the surface) when they occur. Otherwise, I spend my time exploring the water column using a variety of techniques and wet-fly options. That said, and the number of choices involved in just determining what method to employ when fly fishing, suggests the amount of observation and knowledge needed before you can even place a fly in (or on) the water with any hope for success. Not to Worry!!! (...but what's this about a dropper beneath my dry fly?)

It is also possible to combine techniques (to some extent) and to fish both on the surface and below the surface simultaneously. Using multiple flies is a technique that can be applied to both dry-fly and wet-fly fishing, and can increase your chances of

fooling selective fish that are targeting specific food sources. I know that this sounds complicated, but fortunately there are a few tactics and fly selections that make this process much easier and can help you be successful even with only a rudimentary knowledge of fly fishing. Remember, fly fishing can be as inclusive as you wish to make it. Just because you are new to this sport does not mean that you cannot go out and catch a fish using a fly. Your decisions can be based on complicated observation and years of experience, or on simple alternatives and a more general understanding. It may also be helpful to remember that there is definitely something to be said for “beginner’s luck”.

But first things first. Next time we will explore the equipment that you will need (or should consider) for your initial foray into fly fishing. I will talk about rods and reels, fly lines, leaders, tippet and the tools that you will need to fish locally in Sonoma County and in the nearby Sierra. We will approach this from the beginner’s perspective, with an emphasis on getting you on the water and into fish.

Until then, Stay Safe and get outside...

~ Steve Tubbs

RRFF Casting Instruction Director

Steelhead in The Classroom

This story is contributed to *The Cast* by Ronni Sands. She teaches High School gardening, herbal studies, cooking, basket weaving and permaculture at Summerfield Waldorf School and Farm in Santa Rosa and is the author of the book *Growing Sustainable Children*. This was her **first time** working with us with *Steelhead in the Classroom*. Ronni really embraced this project and we thank the school for environmental teaching - we released into Santa Rosa Creek near where we found spawning redds. ~ Karl

Fifty-One Fry! - A Fantastic Fish Story from the Seventh/Eighth Grade Green Team

The Seventh/Eighth Grade Green Team were the keepers of the “Trout in the Classroom” project

earlier this year. They were able to help set up and monitor the tank, coming into the Bio-lab before school at 7:55am to check tank temperature and keeping daily temperature records.

Once we got the tank to the ideal temperature, the eggs arrived. The students were able to place these little pink balls, containing two eyes, into the tank on February 26. They were also able to see the eggs hatch and develop. These creatures go from the egg stage and then become an alevin, a newly hatched trout with a yolk sac attached to its stomach. This sac sustains them until they become a small “fry”. This fry stage happens when the yolk sac has run out of nutrition and the fry must now find their own food.

Due to shelter-in-place, the students never got a chance to see the alevin become fry. The alevin were already sheltering in place, but now I had to keep an eye on the tank temperature and, as soon as that sac disappeared, it became my job to feed them a very small pinch of food three times a week. Once the fry were all swimming up into the top regions of the tank, it was time to release them.

Unfortunately, the students also did not get to take part in this. But for every challenge, there is a solution. Karl Joost and Angela Morgan were our ever-present program sponsors. Without them, we would not have had the skills to even begin this project. Karl had a great plan. He would meet me at school, we would always be 6 feet apart, and we would put each of the students’ names on clear cups and release the fish with the student’s name spoken out loud as we released each fish. I had also invited Ry, our High School Math teacher, to join us with a video camera.

And Angela Morgan wrote a poem that she shared with us to recite as we made our journey to the creek right by our school. It was a glorious spring day, and the trees were all hanging heavy with their new foliage. The water was running clear and clean. The air tasted delicious. And it was so quiet! The release was a very special ceremony, one that I will never forget. With each student name called out, we had ‘distance fish release’. Ry took a video, and maybe someday we can all watch the “live streaming”!

You may ask, **“Why do we raise trout in the classroom?”** This activity helps the students learn about their local watershed, the value of aquatic ecosystems, and ways that we can all help to protect these waterways for the entire web of life. The tank itself was set up to reproduce the habitat in nature where these fish thrive. It called for cold, clear, unpolluted and highly oxygenated water with lots of hiding places, like gravel and larger rocks. When water tumbles over rocks and logs in the stream, the water gets oxygenated naturally. In previous months, the Green Team had been to this very same creek, picking up trash and enjoying the environment of the stream. And each time they went, they went with so much enthusiasm and came back with so much trash! They left the creek clean for their young “fry”.

These young fry are now finding their way along the Santa Rosa Creek or maybe even making their way to the Russian River. Nature has order and wonder. I am thankful that the students got to participate in the start of the fry’s journey. And I am thankful to Karl, Angela, and Ry for the support in keeping this project alive, no matter what!

~ Ronni Sands, Summerfield Waldorf School and Farm, Santa Rosa



Club Website Update

The club website <https://www.rrflyfisher.org/> has a few items that may be of interest while you are staying home

- Live aquarium with steelhead in member Tom Greer's house began April 15 with egg delivery, eggs hatching into alevin and growing into fry. Each week a short video of

status of fish with planned release to a local stream on June 12.

- [Young Man's Fancy](#), a short fly fishing story by Samuel Smith Webster Jr (Gregg Wrisley's Grandfather).
- A collection of over 30 [fly fishing videos](#) with new being added regularly the time.
- A series of [Fly Fishing Zoom Webcasts](#) from Fly Fishers International
- A 10 part 5-minute fly casting instructional videos by [Joan Wulff](#).

Dues Delayed Under Coronavirus for Existing or New Members

Given the uncertainty of being able to safely reopen our club sanctioned activities (General meeting with speakers, organized fishing trips, casting clinics), the RRF Board plans to delay billing for membership dues for the July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021 fiscal year.

- We intend to bill members when it is possible to safely resume.
- The amount would be determined and based on the fraction of the new fiscal year we will be open and we will give credit for prior payments for being closed since March 18.
- We will welcome new members now without requiring a payment until we reopen, again with the amount to be determined based on the future reopening date. In the meantime, we will continue to publish the monthly Cast newsletter to our membership. **Please stay safe.**

Casting Pond Under Coronavirus

As a part of the Santa Rosa City Parks, the RRF Casting Pond at Dan Galvin Park has reopened with limited use restrictions. Social distancing protocols are in effect. We ask that if you use the Casting Pond, you keep a rod's length (minimum) distance

between yourself and others. Because of continued restrictions on the use of shared equipment, there will not be equipment available for your use at the Casting Pond if you do not have your own. You are welcome to practice fly casting using your own equipment. Sharing equipment is not permitted. Please wear a face covering for those instances when you may be in close proximity to others. Fly casting instruction may be available at acceptable socially distanced standards. Again...please maintain at least one rod's length (approximately 10 feet) between yourself and others at the Casting Pond. Fly casting proficiency is 95% practice... **NOTE: All RRF Casting Clinics are cancelled during the Shelter in Place.** If you do use the Casting Pond, please respect all others and abide by all Santa Rosa City Parks rules and regulations, especially those restrictions implemented during the Coronavirus response. MAINTAIN AT LEAST ONE ROD LENGTH BETWEEN YOURSELF AND OTHERS! Wear a face mask when necessary!

Officers and Board of Directors Election

Please remember to return your ballots or vote online at: <https://www.rrflyfisher.org/> by July 1, 2020.

Ballots (available in the May Issue of The Cast) can be returned by mail to Russian River Fly Fishers c/o Doug Mackay: 1221 Olive Street, Santa Rosa, CA 95407

Virtual Zoom General Meeting

We plan to hold a virtual general meeting on Wednesday June 10 at 7PM. Andrew Harris of Confluence Outfitters will have a presentation on "Redding Area Fisheries". Ed Barich will be emailing members a link to this live Zoom meeting



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June Calendar of Events

**BEGINNING 3/18, BECAUSE OF THE
CORONAVIRUS SHELTER IN PLACE
ORDER, ALL CLUB MEETINGS,
OUTINGS AND FLYCASTING
CLINICS ARE CANCELLED UNTIL
FURTHER NOTICE. PLEASE ALL
STAY HEALTHY AND SAFE.**

RRFF Board of Directors

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 ggbriidgeman@att.net

Conservation Chairman: Charlie Schneider and Tom Greer

Newsletter Editor: Marcus Pipkin

(615) 969-9200 marcus.pipkin@comcast.net

Raffle Coordinator: Gregg Wisley

823-5572 gwris@yahoo.com

New Member Mentoring Coordinator: Jeff Cratty

796-3691 rjcratty@yahoo.com

Steelhead in the Classroom: Karl Joost

978-3897 joost@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

477-2805 fs2xslc@att.net

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](http://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](http://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**