

# The Cast



**Lee Soares & Jeff Cratty Evening  
Fishing - Bel Marin**

Sonoma County  
California  
Volume 47, Issue 9  
October, 2020

## President's Message

### An Asterisk Year

The COVID pandemic has had big effects on major league sports this year. Thanks to COVID-19, they have had to resort to shortened seasons, constant testing, and cardboard cutouts in the stands in order to adapt to the situation. Any sports records set this year will be tagged with an asterisk, indicating the abnormality of conditions in 2020.

Outdoor sports such as fly fishing have also had to adapt to the pandemic, but now thanks to the western state's exploding wildfires we have new challenges to our pastime. Since the beginning of the year, Cal Fire lists over 8,100 wildfires that have burned well over 3.9 million acres in California, with over 96,000 residents evacuated across the state.

For those of us who hoped to get outdoors and fish in the past weeks, this has put a major crimp in our plans. Earlier in September, all National Forest campgrounds were closed due to fire danger. Some of them have been reopened recently, although with restrictions such as no open flames (not even propane camp stoves). I checked the PG&E website and found that all of their campgrounds (except Rocky Point on Lake Almanor) are closed for the remainder of the year. Since camping allows for safer outdoor social distancing, all of this limits our options for safe overnight stays near popular fishing venues.

I can't make any predictions about the virus problem, but I do predict that we will (eventually) see some rain that will put an end to the fires for this year, so have patience. In the meantime, the club will continue to have monthly general meetings on Zoom with presentations on fly fishing topics, and on

clear days you can always access our Galvin Park casting pond for practice.

If you were able to get out and do some fishing this year, that is great. And if you were also able to achieve some personal-best record in the process, put an asterisk next to it to show you did it under the trying conditions of 2020.

Tight lines,

~ Ed Barich

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## Fly Fishing 101 – Fly Casting

*This is Part 5 of an ongoing series of articles directed toward the beginning fly fisher. I also hope that experienced fly anglers will find this informative and useful while encouraging others to discover Flyfishing.*

**“...if you have never picked up a fly rod before, you will soon find it factually and theologically true that man by nature is a damn mess. The four-and-a-half-ounce thing in silk wrappings that trembles with the underskin motions of the flesh becomes a stick without brains, refusing anything simple that is wanted of it.”**

~ Norman Maclean, *A River Runs Through It*.

In our previous four articles, I covered some of the reasons why we fly fish, the differences between fly fishing and other forms of angling, and provided a recommendation for a fly rod, reel and line combination that would be a versatile choice for the fly fishing opportunities available to a beginning fly fisher in Northern California. To revisit - if I could only purchase one fly rod to launch my fly fishing journey, it would be a 9-foot, 6-weight, medium-fast action graphite rod with matching reel and a weight-forward (WF) or double-tapered (DT) floating fly line. This setup will give me the opportunity to target a variety of species and will also perform well in wind, even when throwing larger flies.

For a beginner, perhaps the most intimidating aspect of learning to fly fish is fly casting. Unlike other

forms of fishing where the weight that is cast is attached to the end of the line, fly casting is accomplished by learning to cast the fly line. As we have noted, this is one reason why it is important that the fly rod, reel and line weight are all “matched”. In most cases, the fly itself has minimal weight, so the fly line provides the weight that loads the fly rod and enables it to deliver the fly to the fish. Learning to fly cast is all about learning to control your fly line. A fly line that is too heavy (or too light) for the rod you are using will make fly casting much more difficult than it needs to be.

We are fortunate in the Russian River Fly Fishers to have access to our RRFF Casting Pond in Dan Galvin Park. One of only four fly casting venues in our state, and the only casting facility north of The Golden Gate Angling & Casting Club’s ponds at the Anglers Lodge in Golden Gate Park, the RRFF Casting Pond was built by the RRFF and then donated to the City of Santa Rosa in 1986. We have hosted casting tournaments (as well as world champion fly casters) over the years, and continue to provide free fly casting instruction for anyone who wishes to learn. This unique resource is open to the public during regular Dan Galvin Park hours, excepting those occasions when the Russian River Fly Fishers offer specific club events.

Fly casting proficiency is really based on one thing – practice! Whereas you may receive instruction and help identifying your casting missteps, it is up to the fly caster to take those pointers and incorporate them into their own casting style. Everyone has a unique casting style, and no two fly casters are exactly alike. However, there are certain fundamental principles that do need to happen in order to cast a fly line successfully. Casting instruction offers insights into these fundamentals, but that is only 5% of the equation. The balance, the other 95%, is determined by the practice time of the fly caster and their dedication to acquiring the “feel” of a properly cast fly line. Fly casting expertise is a never fully realized life-long pursuit and there is always something new to learn. It is part of the adventure of fly fishing, and as you explore and discover new areas to fish you also test and discover new ways of getting your fly to those fish. New situations, new solutions, all of this becomes part of your ever-expanding arsenal of fly casting capabilities.

Thankfully, you do not need to be an expert fly caster to begin fly fishing. Fly casting can be easily learned, especially if approached with a focus on skill-building that targets basic fly casting principles with the idea of getting the new fly fisher on the water. Beginning fly casters can be quickly taught fly casts that will give them the opportunity to catch fish. Two of these, the Roll Cast and the Pick Up & Lay Down Cast, are fundamental building blocks for more advanced skills but are also utilized by most fly fishers whenever they are on the water. Instruction in both of these fly casts is part of the beginning level of fly casting.

Following are the fly casting levels as presented by the Golden Gate Angling & Casting Club in San Francisco. These levels are based on the fly casting instruction milestones promoted by **Fly Fishers International (FFI)**, who has set the standard and also provides Fly Casting Instructor Training and Certification programs. For consistency, the Russian River Fly Fishers uses this same level format for our own fly casting program.

### **Level 1 – Beginning Fly Casting**

You will learn to:

- Set-up a fly rod & reel
- Roll Cast
- Perform the pick up & lay down cast
- False Cast
- Cast over the opposite shoulder

### **Level 2 – Novice Fly Casting**

You will learn to:

- Roll cast with both wide & narrow loops
- Control the loop size & trajectory on the overhead cast
- False cast at various distances
- Hit accuracy targets
- Use the line hand
- Shoot line

### **Level 3 – Intermediate Fly Casting**

You will learn to:

- Cast narrow loops on both front & back overhead casts & the roll cast

- Slip line while changing distance
- Single haul and return the line
- Consistently hit accuracy targets
- Make basic slack line presentation casts & aerial mends

### **Level 4 – Advanced Fly Casting**

You will learn to:

- Double haul
- Consistently hit accuracy targets at distance
- Use presentation casts (curve, tuck, bounce) & slack line aerial mends
- Cast in all types of wind
- Use basic single-handed Spey casts
- Make specialty casts like the Belgian Cast & the Salt Water Quick Cast

After reviewing the above levels, it is important to note that many fly fishers do not master all of the casting skills listed. Often an angler will learn the basic fly casts that enable him/her to fish a particular location and then add skills as their fly fishing takes them to new experiences where additional techniques are required. Also noteworthy, the levels listed above only cover a general knowledge of fly casting and do not reflect all there is to discover. A fly angler who is competent with all of the skills through the Advanced Level will have a good understanding of how to control the fly line in a variety of fishing situations and under a wide range of possible conditions.

**Fly Fishers International** (visit online at [flyfishersinternational.org](http://flyfishersinternational.org)) is an excellent resource for fly fishing and offers its members instructional materials on fly casting and instructor training as well as conservation, education, fly-tying, fly fishing resources and upcoming events. It sponsors the Fly Casting Instructor Certification Program and provides a standardized method of fly casting instruction that is widely adopted by fly casting instructors worldwide. Teaching materials as well as skills requirements are available to all FFI members on their website.

## Attend a Casting Clinic

The next step in learning to fly cast is to attend a casting clinic, and to then practice your fly casting.

The Russian River Fly Fishers offers free casting clinics on Thursday evenings (from 4:30 until 7:00 pm) during Daylight Savings Time, and on the first and third Saturday of each month (from noon until 2:30 pm) during the remainder of the year (weather permitting). I recommend a 7.5 foot 3X tapered leader (about 10 lbs. test) and please tie a small piece of yarn (about the size of a lima bean) to the end (a few Overhand Knots will do the trick). No tippet is necessary for casting practice. **There are no hooks allowed at the Casting Pond!** Be advised that your leader will acquire knots as you learn how to control your fly line, so don't worry about using a knot-free leader for practice purposes. (However, you should always make sure that your leader and tippet are both knot-free when actually fishing!) During this time of COVID-19 standard safety protocols regarding use of masks and social distancing are in effect, and the RRF does not provide club equipment for use per Sonoma County guidelines governing shared equipment.

In my next article, I will relate some of the basic principles of fly casting and reiterate the concepts that your fly casting instructor will be sharing with you during your Beginning Fly Casting adventure. Until then, consider joining us at the RRF Casting Pond. There is no better time to practice!

~ Steve Tubbs

RRFF Casting Instruction Director

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## Club Website Update

We added to the home page a "Purple Air" link if you want to check the AQI (Air Quality Index) before venturing out to the casting pond. <https://www.purpleair.com/map?opt=1/i/mAQI/a10/cC0#13.82/38.42477/-122.66128>

Here are the best two flyfishing videos I found this month:

From Jensen Flyfishing: [Swamp Thing](#)

YouTube: [Fly Fishing Bait Balls at Pyramid Lake](#)

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## October Dues Update

It is appearing likely that we will not be back to normal operations, and as a result, we will not be asking for dues payments for the 7/1/2020-6/30/2021 year for the foreseeable future. We will continue with existing members not being required to pay dues, and new members can join for free. However, some people have been choosing to pay dues, and if you chose to pay them, we will gladly accept a dues donation.

We suspended all club social activities on 3/18/2020 due to Covid-19. The casting pond reopened in June, and we have limited instruction on Thursdays at 4:30 pm. In June, we also replaced our monthly general meetings with Zoom meetings. Our monthly fishing outings have been suspended indefinitely. It also seems likely that our annual February Cioppino Dinner fundraiser will not be possible.

In May, we announced that we would suspend dues payments for the July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021 year until things returns to "normal." We are saving money by not having to rent the Veterans Hall or pay speakers, but we do have significant ongoing expenses for insurance, The Cast newsletter and our annual donations to worthy causes (Steelhead in the Classroom and possibly Casting for Recovery). We have sufficient savings to make it through the year without dues, but it will leave a dent in our bank account.

Some people are choosing to pay dues in spite of our suspension, and if members choose to make this donation, you can go to the website to pay dues on-line, or you can mail me a check. It goes without saying that any contribution to the club would be very much appreciated.

[https://www.rrflyfisher.org/store/c1/Featured\\_Products.html](https://www.rrflyfisher.org/store/c1/Featured_Products.html)

Thank you.

Mike Spurlock, Treasurer

415-599-6138

20 San Domingo Way

Novato, Ca 94945

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## Virtual Zoom October General Meeting

We will be having a **General Meeting of the Russian River Fly Fishers on Wednesday Oct. 14 at 7PM** using the Zoom video sharing application. The speaker will be Patrick Mackenzie. His bio can be found at:

[www.mackenzieonthefly.com/about](http://www.mackenzieonthefly.com/about)

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## NCCFFI Update

RRFF Members: The following article is being forwarded to you from the Northern California Council of Fly Fishers International. Our club (RRFF) is an affiliate member of NCCFFI, which allows us to purchase liability insurance at group rates. Other membership benefits include access to educational resources, conservation scholarships and an equipment loan program. The article below reports on conservation activities that NCCFFI is engaged in. For more information, go to

<https://flyfishersinternational.org>

Article:

This report is provided to all our clubs and club members so you will know what we are doing, and why club-Council communications ARE SO IMPORTANT.

In the past month we have been deeply involved in the on-going Klamath River negotiations for dam removal. This has hit a snag when the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) allowed license transfer, but kept PacifiCorp on the license. The states of California, Oregon and the Advisory

Board of our decommissioning corporation, along with Tribes, fishing groups and lawyers are working to find solutions to allow PacifiCorp to move forward with decommissioning without increased liability or cost. We have until December to get it done.

We are also deeply engaged in Bay-Delta water issues, mostly around what are called voluntary agreements on how water flows in the Bay-Delta will be increased to meet State Water Board minimums. We have spent the last 18 months working with water agencies to ensure flows will get better, but success has not been achieved. As of today, we are hearing the State Water Board is working to once again begin the regulatory process to establish flows for the Sacramento River system and Bay-Delta outflows. Back in December of 2018 the Board finalized minimum flows in the San Joaquin River system at 40% of unimpeded flows, with anticipated higher flows in the Sacramento system. We'll work to achieve it.

The state of California has filed a federal court suit to intervene in how power dam relicensing is done under the FERC process. At issue is meeting EPA water quality standards and California Environmental Quality Act standards below power dams. FERC changed its long-standing policy and now allows only one year from filing to evaluate water quality issues, and if more than a year is needed FERC simply waives the requirement. What this means is that dam operators will no longer need to meet water quality standards, meaning pollutions maximums are removed. This is unacceptable for both the state and fishery groups, and partners are likely to join this lawsuit in the future. We have to win this!

**The Northern CA Council, FFI is actively seeking a member of each of our FF Clubs to serve on our Board of Directors.** We feel the enhanced communication, and innovative ideas, input, and suggestions from clubs would be of mutual benefit, and improve outcomes for fly fishers in California.

The NCC serves as an 'umbrella' organization for all our clubs from conservation issues, to representation of fly fishers on regulation changes & watershed protections by DFW. We also represent clubs on legislative issues in Sacramento.

Also, the NCC Board makes decisions that affect you and your club. We bring fly fishers together by coordinate efforts for public events like the FF Show, ISE Show, and develop strategies to advocate for and act to improve our fisheries and watersheds. In order to do this effectively we must have representation from all our clubs. **We are your connection on issues you care about.**

Your commitment would be to attend monthly Zoom meetings, attend quarterly gatherings in Sacramento, and assist in events and actions that benefit fly fishing as well as your club.

We ask each club to place a club representative on our Board. Please contact Mark Rockwell, [mrockwell1945@gmail.com](mailto:mrockwell1945@gmail.com) , 530-559-5759 to answer questions or simply join us.

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## ***The Steelhead in the Classroom Program is on the Move***

It was obvious from the very start of the virus- the CAEP (Classroom Aquarium Education Program) would have to pivot, innovate and adapt- and in less than 3 months, major changes were underway:

1. A survey in May of all teachers in the program indicated that 80% of teachers were “likely” or “very likely” wanting to hatch even though teaching may be a distance format, possibly from the teacher’s home or classroom
2. CDFW is clear- Providing service to teachers is second to maintaining safety of coaches/teachers.
3. CDFW will provide protocols that allow no contact support to keep coaches safe
4. Coaches should expect to NOT enter any classrooms this year
5. CDFW will provide training/guidance on new procedures and materials
6. Coaches can provide support by email, phone, and/or Zoom at their discretion
7. Eggs will be delivered in a no-contact manner

With leadership from Ethan Rodman, an extraordinarily talented and energetic group,

including RFFF’s Tom Greer and Charlie Schneider, undertook to rethink and accelerate the program, helping teachers with their distance learning using new digital platforms.

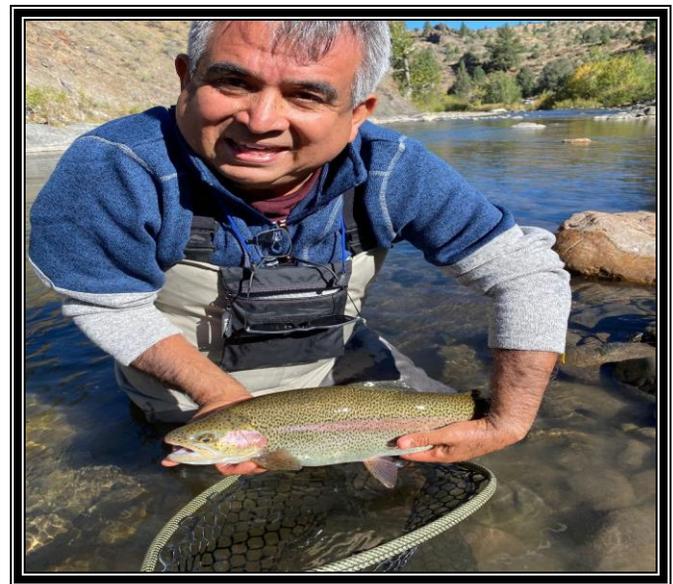
Workshops for coaches on how to use the new digital platforms so they can better support teachers are being developed. **However, the good news is that if a coach does not understand (or want to understand) the new stuff, that is fine. Teachers get it. and that is the critical part.**

**AND YES, coaches are needed for the 2021 support of classrooms- your help is needed!**

The coach in this new environment will be very valuable by being in touch and available to one or more teacher(s) by telephone, email, or other digital communication (such as Zoom, Verizon Messenger, and many other platforms). Areas of support needed are: tank set up, temperature maintenance, life-cycle development questions, your personal experience with many issues you have encountered.

Challenge yourself by staying upbeat and engaging in the best ways we can: be encouraging to the teachers and students and hatching steelhead in the classroom will continue.

To be a coach/or find out more about being a coach, contact any of these folks: Karl Joost [joosts@pacbell.net](mailto:joosts@pacbell.net) 707 483 6172 (cell), Tom Greer 707 494-9772, or Charlie Schneider 707 217-0409.



*A new member with a fine fish – East Carson River*

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## October 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

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Vice President: Doug Mackay

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Secretary: Vacant

Treasurer & Webmaster: Mike Spurlock

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Casting Instruction Chairman, Facebook: Steve Tubbs

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Program Chairman: Don Shaw

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Outings Chairman: Chris Castellucci

763-2017 [chrslucci@aol.com](mailto:chrslucci@aol.com)

Membership Chairman & Pond Steward: Doug Mackay

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Raffle Committee: Paul Matzen

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Raffle Coordinator: Gregg Wrisley

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New Member Mentoring Coordinator: Jeff Cratty

796-3691 [rjcratty@yahoo.com](mailto:rjcratty@yahoo.com)

Steelhead in the Classroom: Karl Joost

978-3897 [joosts@pacbell.net](mailto:joosts@pacbell.net)

Member at Large: Brendan Galten

364-1671, [galtenb@gmail.com](mailto:galtenb@gmail.com)

Member at Large: Penelope Gadd-Coster

Member at Large: Tim Reuling

### Coordinators

Day Fishers & Fly Tying: Lee Soares

974-2651 [frommewee@comcast.net](mailto:frommewee@comcast.net)

Casting Pond Steward: Doug Mackay

575-5709 [demackay@sonic.net](mailto:demackay@sonic.net)

Casting Pond Monitor: Binky Castleberry

477-2805 [fsh2xslc@att.net](mailto:fsh2xslc@att.net)

Conservation Chairman: Charlie Schneider and Tom Greer

**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 \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address\* \_\_\_\_\_  
Main Interests in the Club? \_\_\_\_\_  
How Many Years Have You Been Fly Fishing \_\_\_\_\_  
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 30<sup>th</sup>

**Due to Covid-19, Dues Are Optional. Donations are appreciated.**