

The Cast



Sonoma County California
Volume 48, Number 8
September 2021

Mike Spurlock's grandson, Wyatt, holding his native 'Leopard' Rainbow
Aniak River in Western Alaska. (See Mike's story below.)

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What's going on in September?

Here is an update on Russian River Fly Fishers activities:

General Meetings – September is usually the month when the RRFF gets back into action after a summer lull by beginning our monthly meetings, and on September 8 we met in-person at Santa Rosa Veteran's Memorial Hall for the first time since March of 2020. We did it in "hybrid" style by having members present there (wearing masks) and others attending remotely using the Zoom video app. Charlie Schneider, our Conservation Chair, gathered a panel

of Trout Unlimited and Cal Trout experts to talk about the current drought and how it is affecting trout and salmon in Northern California. We plan to continue this method for General Meetings in the next months and hope that more members can attend in-person as the COVID situation comes under control.

Casting Program – The casting pond at Galvin Park is OPEN and we are continuing to have casting clinics on Thursday evenings, 4:30PM to dusk. The pond is in great condition since it was drained and cleaned this summer and our casting instructors will be there to help both beginners and advanced casters improve their techniques. Remember that the clinics are open to the public, so invite your friends who may be interested in trying the sport.

Club Outings – Due to the closure of National Parks and Forests by wildfires, the September Manzanita Lake outing was cancelled. However, outings are planned at Lewiston Reservoir in October and Pyramid Lake in November. See the calendar on our website for details and to add your name to the sign up lists.

Membership and Dues – Our club roster now includes over 200 members. If you did not pay your club dues in 2020, you should have been invoiced in June for the 2021/22 year. For those of you who already paid, our thanks. For those of you who have yet to “get around to it”, you will find that it’s easy to pay on our club website, www.rrflyfisher.org Note that after September 30, we will be removing non-paid members from the club roster.

Our new CAST editor – Dave Stone has volunteered to become the new editor of our monthly newsletter. Please welcome him to the job and feel free to offer content that he can use in future editions – our members often provide the most interesting articles.

Despite the recent drought and wildfire conditions, I hope you can all get out on the waters this fall and enjoy all the blessings that nature provides us.

Tight lines,

~ Ed Barich



*Check out the Russian River Fly Fishers
on the Internet at*

www.rrflyfisher.org

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

RRFF GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, October 13th

7:00 pm – The Lodge Room,

**Santa Rosa Veteran’s Memorial Building. You may
join us remotely, if you wish, by using Zoom.**

Join us for our **October General Meeting**. I’m working feverishly on three possible guest speakers. Check back later for the October line-up and another worthwhile presentation for our entertainment!

Come early to socialize with your RRFF friends and to share the camaraderie of our fly-fishing community.

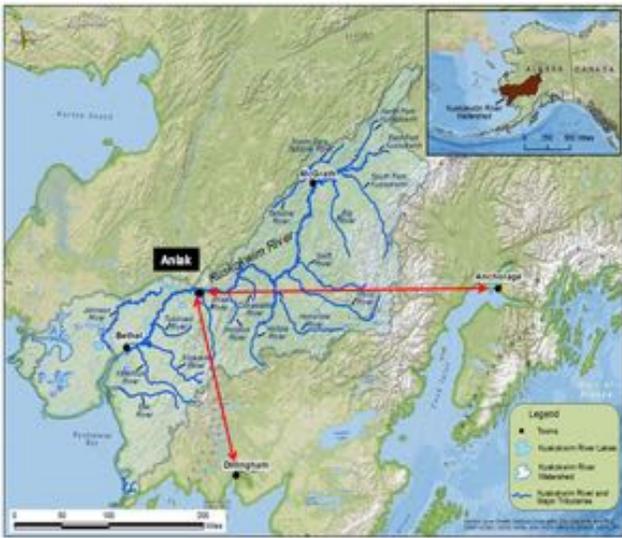
Penelope Gadd-Coster, Vice President & Program Chair

BACK TO THE ANIAK

**Recent Alaskan Fishing Trip
by Mike Spurlock**

In 2009, I first fished the Aniak River in Western Alaska. At the time, I stayed at the Aniak River Lodge, a tent camp, and the only lodge on the river. It was located approximately 40 miles upstream of the village of Aniak, population 500, where the Aniak River joins the Kuskokwim, a major drainage. A few years later, that lodge was abandoned when the river changed course leaving it high and dry. It was rebuilt with cabins at a new location a few miles away.

In June 2020, before the season could open, that lodge burned down. In 2021, it was rebuilt and reopened in June with 7 spacious 2-person weatherproof tents with propane heaters, hot water showers and flush toilets. Given the remote location and complex logistics, this was quite an accomplishment.



In early 2021, my fishing buddies were looking for a venue, having put money down previously on a different trip that was cancelled due to Covid. We decided Alaska would be a safe bet and settled on fishing the Aniak River the last week of August. My son-in-law Jason and 11-year-old grandson Wyatt live in Dillingham, Alaska and wanted to learn to fly fish. With a tent/guide slot still open, I signed them up. That is what a grandpa is for.



My buddies and I flew to Anchorage, spent the night, and flew to Aniak the next day. Later that day, Jason and Wyatt flew into Aniak on a Cessna float plane and landed on the river. We met our guides, changed into waders, rigged up our rods and headed to the lodge in 7 skiffs, fishing along the way.

Each day, we rotated guides and had different river beats where the target species varied somewhat. Fishing was good. We caught rainbows, silver salmon, Dolly Vardens, grayling, and pike. The Aniak is one of the few rivers that

have sheefish, but none were caught in our week. I had caught one in 2009 (photo below).



Sockeye were spawning and were the main source of food for the rainbows, *dollies*, and grayling. Rainbows averaged about 20 inches (some were up to 27 inches) and were mostly taken on beads and flesh flies using 6 weight rods with floating lines. Also, when the sun came out, we did some top water mousing which produced a few bows and grayling. For silvers, we used pink streamers on 8 weights with floating lines.

Wyatt picked it up quickly and caught a lot of fish each day. He is hooked on fly fishing now. Wyatt landed a 'Leopard' Rainbow. That unique trout can be found only in a few Alaskan rivers, the Aniak being one of them.



One evening, Wyatt got a quick lesson in tying flies and from that time on, he wanted to tie each evening immediately after getting off the water. From that point on, he also insisted on fishing with his own flies. The photo above is Wyatt holding the Coho he caught on the Aniak River using his own fly.

We fished mostly from the boat but did some walk and wade. We did not see any bears but there were lots of tracks around so the guides each carried a gun.



After the last day, we had an early morning wet and cold one-hour boat ride back to Aniak. I went on to Dillingham with Jason and Wyatt to spend a few days visiting the rest of the family. As we flew to Dillingham in a Cessna float plane, we flew over the Wood Tikchik State Park (largest state park in the US). When we spotted moose, bear or caribou, the pilot would sometimes circle around for a better view.



All in all, facilities were comfortable, food was very good, guides were great, and it was a very enjoyable adventure. Fishing was like my prior trip 12 years ago. It was particularly fun to see my grandson get hooked on fly fishing.

In retrospect, this was a somewhat risky trip with the Covid Delta variant spike that has recently taken over. Had I known that would happen, I probably would have backed out before we made our commitment in April. The commercial flights to and from Aniak were all fully masked. The lodge had no such restrictions, and we had no idea whether clients or staff were all vaccinated. However, to my knowledge, no one has had any Covid problems.

Mike Spurlock

IMPORTANT MESSAGE

From our RRF Treasurer

Membership dues were late as of August 1st. Any unpaid dues on October 1st will result in the membership lapsing per the by-laws. Lapsed members will not receive The CAST or other information about club activities. Please use PayPal to pay the invoice or send a check made out to RRF and send it to:

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

Thanks,
Spencer Bader
RRFF Treasurer

RRFF WINTER FLY CASTING CLINICS

The RRF Casting Pond in Dan Galvin Park

Held on the first and third Saturday of each month, from noon until 2:30 pm (weather permitting).

Our first Winter Fly Casting Clinic will be held on Saturday, November 20, 2021 These events are **FREE** and are **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!** Beginners are always welcome. We do have some equipment available for your use at the Casting Pond if you do not have your own. Won't you join us? See you there.



CORDELL BANK

NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

Recently, I was appointed as one of two **Sonoma County – Community at Large** representatives to the **Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council**. This is a 3-year appointment.

This means that I am a spokesperson for our Sonoma County residents regarding the issues that directly affect the **CBNMS**, and (more generally) for our oceans, rivers and the other 13 National Marine Sanctuaries. To find out more about the CBNMS and what we do, please visit the website:

<https://cordellbank.noaa.gov/>

If you are a Sonoma County resident and would like me to present related issues to the Advisory Council on your behalf, please feel free to contact me at steve@insp2.com or at 707-867-6806.

~ Steve Tubbs

Join the RRFF on Facebook

We currently reach **1,107 member followers** 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>



STEELHEAD IN THE CLASSROOM

RRFF COACHES NEEDED FOR 2022

By Karl Joost

Just a few words and photos tell the story—how important is it for kids to learn and experience real science—not just from books, but right there, in their classroom observing their tanks as the steelhead eggs hatch and develop into fry, and eventually they will thrive in a creek or stream. And then out in the field the children will see, touch, and smell the life of steelhead, experience the creeks, enjoy the fragrance of an alder canopy, while exploring the life cycle of fish, so, they can talk about the important things going on in these environments and yours back in the classroom.



This year, and for the past six years, here's how you can help—we'll ask for coaches to support classroom teachers and students in the following ways:

1. Help teachers master their hatching tank set up, answer questions, and assist when and where needed.

2. Deliver eggs to schools on Wednesday, **March 16th** and Wednesday, **April 13th**.
3. Listen to children share their enthusiasm and knowledge about the fish hatching in their classroom tank and share your enthusiasm with them.
4. Help the kids have a successful day when it's time to release the fry by getting fish into transport buckets and to a stream.



As coaches, we'll strictly follow the rules regarding masks, vaccination certificates, social distancing, and interactions. These rules will change as we go into the new year and we will do everything required for the safety of the kids, teachers, parents, and coaches.



Let's have another great year! Call or text Karl Joost at 707 483-6172 to find out more and sign up. Or you may email Karl at joosts@pacbell.net

LIFE TRIBUTE*

Craig R. Johnston

November 15, 1942 - September 10, 2021

Member of The Russian River Fly Fishers and one of the Founders of the RRFF Casting Pond.

Craig Johnston passed away peacefully on September 10th, 2021 surrounded by his loving wife, Cheryl, of 58 years and their two daughters Tracy and Susie.

Craig was 78 years old. Born November 15, 1942 in Kenosha, Wisconsin to Dr. Russell and Virginia Johnston. He had one brother, Perry Johnston. His six grandchildren (Alec, Kennedy, Chandler, Luke, Campbell, and Stella) called him "Baba" and cherished the wisdom he shared about life, travel, education, hunting, fishing and of course the need to learn to play golf. Craig moved to Santa Rosa in 1945, where he continued to live for the rest of his life.

Craig played on the golf team and was a member of the Beta Fraternity at the University of Oregon (1960-1964) and then attended UC Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco (1964-1967). He practiced Estate Planning in Santa Rosa for 40+ years.

Craig served as President of the Sonoma County Bar Association, President of the Santa Rosa Active 20-30 Club, Member of The Russian River Fly Fishing Club and one of the Founders of the RRFF Casting Pond. He and Cheryl belonged to Santa Rosa Golf & Country Club for 56 years, where Craig won the Club Championship.

In his later years, he would say "I have lived life to the fullest and have no regrets" and advised his family to do the same.

There will be a private Celebration of Life held for Craig on a date to be determined. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the [American Diabetes Association](http://www.diabetes.org) (www.diabetes.org).

*Excepts taken and edited from 09/14/2021 Press Democrat's Life Tribute ~The Cast Editor

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Calendar of Events

RRFF Thursday Evening Fly Casting Clinics – Held every Thursday during Daylight Savings Time (weather permitting) – 4:30 until 7:00 pm. This event is FREE and is OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!

Beginners are welcome.

October

Thurs. Fly Casting Clinics, 4:30 until 7:00 pm

13th RRFF General Meeting – 6:30 at SR Vet's Hall

14th - 17th Lewiston Lake (Ed Barich, Trip Leader)

Sept.—Manzanita Lake Outing is CANCELLED because of the Dixie Fire!

Nov. 4th - 6th—Pyramid Lake (Chris Castellucci, Trip Leader)

PLEASE FOLLOW ALL COVID-19 PROTOCOLS!

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 & Program Chair: **Penelope Gadd-Coster**

331-0762 ynegrape@gmail.com

Secretary: **Brendan Galten**

364-1671 galtenb@gmail.com

Treasurer, Membership: **Spencer Bader**

974-4823 sdbader@yahoo.com

Webmaster: **Mike Spurlock**

(415)-599-6138 mikerrff@gmail.com

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

765-1787 steve@inspire2.com

Member at Large: **Don Shaw**

477-5928 donjanshaw@comcast.net

Outings Chairman: **Chris Castellucci**

763-2017 chrslucci@aol.com

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

575-5709 demackay@sonic.net

Raffle Coordinator: **Gregg Wisley**

823-5572 gwriss@yahoo.com

New Member Mentoring: **Jeff Cratty**

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Steelhead in the Classroom: **Karl Joost**

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Member at Large: **Tim Reuling**

887-9734 tim@reulingvineyard.com

Member at Large: **Mike Borba**

987-8117 mikeborba1954@gmail.com

Coordinators

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

974-2651 Leesoares74@gmail.com

Casting Pond Monitor: **Binky Castleberry**

477-2805 fsh2xsbc@earthlink.net

Conservation Coordinator: **Charlie Schneider**

217-0409 bikecharlie@gmail.com Redwood Empire Trout Unlimited (RETU)

Conservation Coordinator: **Tom Greer**

494-9772 tgreer@gizmodesign.com

The Cast Newsletter Editor: **Dave Stone**

953-9816 gemstone@sonic.net

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).

Name _____ Date _____ Referred by _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____ E-mail Address* _____

Main Interests in the Club? _____

Occupation _____ Signature _____

Please mark one of the following categories:

I'm applying as a new member (check circle below):

JOIN ONLINE @ www.rrflyfisher.org

- Single membership** - \$50 annual dues
- Junior membership** - \$25 annual dues
- Family membership** - \$55 annual dues
- Gold membership** - \$1,000.00 (one-time)

Existing membership renewal (check circle below):

RENEW ONLINE @ www.rrflyfisher.org

- Single membership** - \$50 annual due
- Junior membership** - \$25 annual dues
- Family membership** - \$55 annual dues
- Gold membership** - \$1,000.00 (one-time)

Check any area(s) 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 the membership dues for the following fiscal year. The RRFF fiscal year runs from July 1st to June 30th.

**NEW MEMBERS: Please mail this application to:
Russian River Fly Fishers, c/o Spencer Bader, 3310 Conifer Drive, Santa Rosa, CA 95404**