Up-to-Date News:

Want the latest and most up to date information? Don’t forget the club’s web site. http://www.ecpowellflyfishers.com/
Just copy the address and insert it into your address block and you’re on the way. It’s filled with the latest of what’s going on and when and where to go along with lots of good and timely information.

Calendar of Events

Feb 9  
Board Meeting, 1055 Portola Valley Dr., Yuba City, 7 PM

Feb 10  
General Meeting, Lincrest School, MP Room, 7:00 PM
Program: Hogan Brown

Feb 17  
Fly Tying, Lincrest School, MP Room, 7:00 PM

Feb 20-22  
The Fly Fishing Show, Pleasanton

Feb 20-22  
Baum Lake Fish Out

Mar 3  
Board Meeting, 1055 Portola Valley Dr., Yuba City, 7 PM

Mar 10  
General Meeting, Lincrest School, MP Room, 7:00 PM
It’s hard to believe 20 years have passed since I served as President in 1994, and it is also hard to believe the club is still experiencing the lack of support by the over 80 members currently on our roster. At the January Board meeting we discussed ways to get more participation by the membership to serve on various committees that are in place for the benefit of the membership. As President I felt we needed to make it mandatory to serve on a committee or the Board or an Officer at least once every 3-4 years. The board did not share my sentiments and instead decided to have me put together a list of duties for each committee and go over those duties at the January General meeting, with the idea that once the membership knew of what was required they would be more amenable to volunteering their services. I sure hope the board in their wisdom is correct and this works. It would sure make my duties as President a lot easier. Here is the list of committees and duties I spoke of at the January General Meeting. As you can see from the list, we have a number of vacancies that need to be filled right away.

I would like thank one New Member, Bob Gunderson for stepping up and expressing interest in helping with Conservation, Egg delivery for Salmon Steelhead Program and Helping with donations and more for the Banquet.

Vern Kuska has also expressed interest in helping on a committee but hasn’t yet decided on which one, Thank you Vern.

For those new members who may feel uncomfortable or left out because you don’t know anyone, volunteering is a great way to get to know the other club members and them, you. For those long time club members, I urge each of you to mingle at the General meetings with new members you Don’t Know and make them feel at home! At all fish-outs my goal to have a more experienced angler pair up with one or more novices to show them the ropes and make them feel like they have made the right choice by joining our family.

Two volunteers are a great start but we need more.

You can call me at 530-674-0491 evenings or weekend or e-mail at itszuke@comcast.net

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**Committee Duties**

**Newsletter** Bob Long – **Need Help** Organize all articles, information on events, committee reports and programs provided by board and members in an acceptable format on a monthly basis for 10 months of the year. All articles sent to newsletter should be in Microsoft Word format (but an email will work most of the time) and all photos should be sent in the largest size and resolution possible. Bob prefers all articles be delivered no later than the Sunday following the regular club fish out which is held the third Saturday of the month.

Part of the responsibility of each Committee chair or designee should plan on providing updates on their particular programs, monthly for some or at least quarterly to let the membership what is going on with your committee.

**Programs** Mark Ruef – **Need Help** Find and arrange for a speaker for approximately 8 General meetings throughout the year. Provide an annual budget for the year to present to the Board for approval. Write an article for the newsletter on upcoming speakers as well as a detailed account of the speaker for the current month and provide an introduction at the general meeting and assist with projector/computer set-up.

**Fish outs** Walt Zukas – **Need Help** Organize and support 10 fish outs per year scheduled on the 3rd Saturday of each month as well as assist with any special fish outs throughout the year, half of the fish outs on still waters and the other half on rivers and streams. Provide an article for the newsletter on the fish out for the following month and cover the Where, When, What and How as detailed as possible. If can’t pre-fish the destination then find out what is happening bases on current reports. Provide a write up for the newsletter the day after the event on the outcome and report any special faux pas for consideration of the toilet seat award. If food provided as part of the event help organize food and details or recruit assistance from the board and membership.

**Membership** VP responsibilities Mark Ruef

**Fly Tying** Walt Alexander – (Need Help one to teach to experienced tiers and another to teach Novices), teach fly tying techniques and patterns once per month at the Lincrest MP room the third Tuesday of each month. Provide an annual
budget to the board to purchase supplies and inventory or solicit members for materials. Write up a monthly article for the newsletter with details and directions on the various patterns. Try to try patterns that may be used at the next fish out.

Conservation Ed Brown, Jim Fujii and Doug Fujii – Report to the board local issues of interest related to fly fishing and events that the club might want to participate. Check with various agencies on current and proposed stream improvement, fish-rescue, riparian habitat improvement etc. DFG, Yuba Sutter Fish and Game Commission, YCWA, UC Davis Foothill Field Station. Help enlist and organize membership participation with assistance of the board.

Raffles Alex Reyno and Denis Davis No Vacancy

Refreshments Fred Mowery – No Vacancy - keeper of the club coffee pot, Provide coffee and snacks for general meeting 10 months out of the year, maintain an annual budget and purchase supplies as needed and report to board and treasure cost on an annual basis if not covered by donations from general meeting.

Librarian Mark Ruef – Can Use Help - Distribute and track books and cd’s leant to members at the monthly general meeting 10 months per year. Provide annual budget to the board for approval to purchase new books and videos and write article for newsletter from time to time listing popular titles and solicit requests for a wish list.

Web Master Walt Zukas – Need Help Keep club website up to date publish information on meetings, articles of interest, monthly newsletter, fish outs and all pertinent information. Provide annual budget to board for cost of domain and web hosting and design package from go-daddy.

Salmon Steelhead Education Program Greg and Kathy Payne No vacancy but help needed to distribute salmon and steelie eggs to area classrooms twice per year, Must be available during regular daytime hours. Need Help with Distributing Eggs.

Banquet Committee Larry Ingram The annual Banquet is the clubs major source of income to run the club and events. Every year the banquet committee requests help to solicit donations from local businesses and the response is Dismal. This year and all subsequent years every member will be asked to team up with another club member and given a list of business to contact. If every team contacts 6-8 business this process will go much quicker and take the burden for the few who do this every year. Need Help Collecting Donations

Ed Hobbs Introduction to Fly Fishing Walt Alexander Organize event in conjunction with the City of Yuba City Parks and recreation department and plan and provide training for this program. Enlist the aid of other club members to present specific skills. Present an annual budget to the board of directors of ECPFF and write articles as needed to publish in the monthly newsletter and website.

Rod and Reel Loaner Program – Ron Gaston and Ed Brown- No Vacancy - Must be present at all General Meetings to provide equipment to members as needed and keep track of equipment and contact those who are tardy on returning equipment. It was recently brought to my attention that one member has had a rod for a year. The program was designed to give all members a change to try the virtues of different equipment and once you decided on what you like to go out and buy your own outfit. The board feels 60 days is sufficient time to decide. I will recommend a fine for those abusing the privilege.

Walt

Miscellaneous Information

EC Powell Fly Fisher Coffee cups are available for sale at our General Membership meetings for $3.00 each; See Alex Reyno to buy them.

2015 Club Membership Dues are now due. If unable to attend the General meeting you can mail in your dues to EC Powell Fly Fishers P.O. BOX 1135 Yuba City CA 95992, $25 for individual Membership and $30 for Family Membership. You must be a member in good standing to attend any club fish outs.
**ECPFF Fish Outs 2015**

**February 20-22, 2015 Baum Lake Burney** details at meeting and Newsletter
Currently there are 2 members signed up for this event and usually 25-30% who sign up cancel, for one reason or another. In order for me to justify my time along with other duties I am asking better participation of 10 or more people out of over 80 members or this event will cancel.

You will need a float tube, pram or pontoon boat and dress for winter weather. Tackle 3-5 wt. rod, floating line, long leaders, midge patterns and other small flies in dark brown and olive worked best last year. There are 4 motels, Green Gables, Shasta Pines, Burney Motel and Charm Motel, the number for reservations is 530-335-2201 or 530-335-3300, the rates are around $80 per night and if two share a room for 2 nights that would help for those willing to share a room. I Snore so unless you do too, I would not be a good choice to share a room, unless you have some really good ear protection! Some will probably go up Friday or Friday night to get an early start on Saturday. You can sign up for this at the February General Meeting or call me, Walt Zukas itszuke@comcast.net 530-674-0491.

**March 21, 2015 Lake McCumber Shingletown** meet at Lake 08:00 leave Yuba City 06:00 details at February General meeting. Currently 10 sign-ups. Fish Out is a go!

Lake McCumber has rainbow and brown trout, and although they don’t generally grow large (average fish are 10-14 inches) they are plentiful and often respond aggressively to flies. McCumber’s rainbow and brown trout will readily eat streamers fished on intermediate lines, or nymphs and midge pupae suspended under small indicators. If I was only able to have 4 flies in my fly box to fish this lake they would be an Olive Stillwater nymph, black leech, Pheasant Tail Nymph size 14 or 16 and a red Copper John size 14 or 16. I would bring two rods in the 3-4 or 5 wt. categories, one with a floating line and one with an intermediate line. It is impossible to fish from shore so a pram that doesn’t leak or float tube is required. It is a two hour drive from Yuba City or maybe a little longer depending on conditions. This 85-acre reservoir is on the North Fork of Battle Creek west of Lassen National Park. It is popular with fly fishers attracted to the wild brown trout fishery. Only boats powered by electric motors or Armstrong are allowed on the lake. Lake McCumber is surrounded with tall conifers, enveloped in clean crisp air and watched over by soaring eagles with sharp talons. A medium sized impoundment, the lake is considered "just right" for tubers, prams and Goldilocks.

Lake Facts: When PG&E placed a dam across the N. Fork of Battle Creek, they created a lake that offers great fly fishing for rainbow trout and brown trout. Nestled amongst Ponderosa and Jeffery Pines, bald eagles and osprey can be observed cruising the lakes surface, vigilantly hunting for fish. Although no gas-engines are allowed on the lake, boats with trolling motors are. Anglers can easily fish from float-tubes and pontoon boats as well. McCumber is a quiet and personal location.

Lake McCumber is located east of Shingletown off Highway 44 East from Redding; there is a sign on Hwy 44 to turn north to the reservoir. The unimproved boat launch is on the West side and is provided by PG&E and has parking and a port-a-potty.

**March 28, 2015 U.C. Davis Foothill Field Station Fish out and Picnic** details to follow.
Currently 22 sign ups this is a --go! For the Yuba River Fish out on Saturday March 28, 2015 we will meet at Perko’s in Yuba City and leave at 8:00am and arrive at the Field station gate at 8:45 more or less. The club will provide lunch. Someone will be at the gate and will have everyone’s pass as well as the key. You can use anything from a 9’ to 10’ rod in #4 to #6 weight line size. Switch rods are getting popular on the river too. You need a floating line and a sink tip for swinging streamers. Have some fresh 9’ 5x leaders for fishing dries, for indicator nymphing most use level tippet material in 3x, 4x and 5x and some level 2x tippet for swinging streamers on a sink tip line. Have some fresh match tippet material in 3x to 6x. The best bites coincide with hatches at sunrise, late morning and early evening. Early on, Pale Morning Duns and tan or green flies that match the caddis hatch. Later in the day, Golden Stones, Hoppers and Little Yellow Stones, Tan Hemingway and the Elk Hair Caddis. Favorite patterns for nymphing include Glo-bug variations and flies that imitate mayflies and caddis pupae. Olive sculpin or wooly buggers, Black AP Nymph or buggers. Waders, wading boots, wading staff and dress for the weather.

**April 25, 2015** to be decided by the new fish out committee
May 16, 2015 to be decided by the new fish out committee

June 20, 2015 Annual Yuba River Shad Fish Out and Picnic Details to follow
We usually have 20+ for this event so this is a go!

These are all the fish outs currently planned and if you like to these events and want to continue the tradition we need 2 members to step up and take over the duties for the fish outs.

For all members please make these events a success! Attending the fish outs show those planning these events your appreciation of their work and commitment to provide a successful fish out.

Helping the Younger Fly Fishers

I was recently asked if I would help a younger person learn some of the things that we, as older fly fishers, have learned over the years. I have been active in the Mentor program and so I thought this might be some of the same. Was I pleasantly surprised? The young man that I spent the better part of three days proved to make me a better fly fisher.

We spent three days fishing Baum Lake with his brother and four others. One of the others was the person that I have been a mentor for during this past year. While helping the younger person I was able to watch my “mentee”, and saw firsthand that this person has progressed from a rank beginner to an accomplished fly fisher. He caught more fish than I so I suppose you could say that the time spent with him was a success.

Now back to the younger person; throughout the three days he asked questions, gladly took advice and benefitted from it. The second day on the lake he caught twice as many fish as I. Was I upset by this? Not at all. With the information that I was able to impart, he became a very good fly fisher. His casting improved as well as knowledge of the sport. Throughout the three days, his Grandfather, who was with us, was seen grinning from ear to ear as both of his grandsons caught and released over 50 fish. To say this was a heartwarming trip is putting it mildly.

I look forward to being able to fish with my grandson, now 18 mos., like Denis Davis and Jim Tanner have done and continue to do.

I bring this to your attention to remind all of you that the young are the future of this sport and we need to do all we can to help them advance and to love the sport as we do. So, if given the chance to take a young person fishing, do it! You’ll be a better person and fly fisher for it.

Larry

Rod Loaner Program

Thanks to E.C. Powell Fly Fishers club members, our rod loaner program is becoming a success. At this time, there are eight rods and reels out in field in the hands of members and, hopefully, catching a few fish. There are still 6 rods that don’t have reels or fly lines (four 7-weight and two 9-weight). Dust off some of those reels and fly lines and bring them to our next general meeting in September.

Ed Brown

Pyramid Lake

It’s again time to start thinking about Pyramid Lake and those big trout that inhabit the lake.

I have reserved the Sutcliffe Inn, where we have stayed for the past 5 years. It sleeps 7, has two bathrooms, a full kitchen and dining area complete with flat screen TV.

Dates for this year are:
March 31 to April 2nd        April 7, 8 & 9          April 13, 14 & 15
We have openings for all dates. The cost is $75 plus your license. I’ll ask for a deposit as we get closer to the dates. Signup sheets will be at all the meetings.
Rods and lines – 6 wt. or heavier with a floating line. Indicators and flies (Chironomids) can be purchased from
Johnson’s. Waders are optional but a good idea as we may fish where you wade to about mid-thigh.

The lake has an every expanding population of “Pilot Peak” strain of trout that grow quickly and fight really hard. Fish
in the 20+ lbs. range have become more and more abundant. And, where we normally fish you can sit in a chair and
never get your feet wet.  

Larry Ingram                          844-1947

Basic Fly Casting
By Walt Alexander

Casting is the most important aspect in fly fishing and the hardest to learn, so I thought for those that are just getting
started into this sport that maybe I could give them a few tips that will drastically reduce that learning curve. I know
this from my own experience I wish there had been someone to give me a few tips when I started, it would have saved
me a lot of headaches along the way. I have been fly fishing for about 40 years and I have only become comfortable in
my casting in the last few years. Why? Because I did not completely understand the dynamics of what went into a
good cast. If you watch a number of great casters you will see many different styles of casting. But they all agree there
are a few basic rules that must be followed for a good cast and if you do not follow these rules you will never become a
good caster. You can get away with violating some of these rules on a short cast, but it will really hinder you later when
you want to make a long or accurate cast. So it is very important that you get the basic cast down pat before moving
on to more complex casts. One thing to keep in mind is that it is just as easy to learn a bad habit as it is to learn a good
one, but it is much harder to break that bad habit once it is ingrained into your brain. I know this from experience
because I had to break a lot of bad habits. I believe that this is the reason it is easier to teach someone who has never
fished before how to fly cast than someone who has. Another thing to keep in mind is that fly casting is not strength
related but is all in the timing, I believe that this is why it is normally easier to teach women, as opposed to men, how to
cast. Men have the habit of trying to muscle their way through the cast and a lot of bad things happen as you will see
shortly.

In the past few years I have participate in the Introduction to Fly Fishing class sponsored by Yuba City Parks and
Recreations. Not wanting to teach these students any of my bad habits forced me to analyze just what goes into a
good cast. It also allowed me to see the major problems that most people seem to have in making a good cast and
ways to correct these problems. It also started me watching others casting in fishing situations and I was amazed at
how many people that have been casting for years have many of these same problems. This in itself has made me a
better caster. So even if you are not new to fly fishing, and if you will keep an open mind, and carefully analyze what I
am about to tell you I think it can improve your cast.

Joan Wulff, Lefty Kreh, Tim Rajeff, and Steve Rajeff are all exceptional casters and if you watch them cast you will see
slight differences in their styles. There is a reason for this and I think Lefty Kreh said it best, it went something like this
“We are all built different, so we will cast different”. This being the case you will probably develop your own style of
casting. But first you must learn the basics of a good cast, and I don’t think anyone teaches this better than Joan Wulff.
I believe that Joan Wulff is a perfected example that shows that good casting is not strength related but is all in the
timing. Joan is a slightly built woman that won her first casting competition in 1937 at the age of 10. She is now 87 and
still fly fishing and teaching casting. She won the national distance casting competition for 17 consecutive years from
1943 until 1960 against all-male competitors and had a record cast of an amazing 161 feet. Besides I find her method of
teaching the easiest to follow, and learn, than the way most instructors teach casting. So let’s go through a basic cast
the way Joan Wulff teaches it.

First comes the way we grip the rod. The thumb should be placed on top of the handle with the rod gripped with the
middle, ring, and little fingers. The rod should be gripped with these three fingers at the base of the fingers, not in the
palm as most do, you will see why this is important later. This should be a nice relaxed grip, not a white knuckle grip. If
you grip the rod too tightly you will develop cramps in your hand after a few hour of fishing and this is meant to be a
relaxing sport, it is not intended to inflict pain.

Start with a short cast of 30 feet or less. I recommend doing this on the lawn as fish have a habit of distracting us on
the water and we cannot concentrate on just making a good cast. Pull out about 20 feet of line plus the leader beyond
the rod tip. Lay this line out straight on the grass and then pick up the rod. Grasp the rod as describe in the previous
paragraph, keeping the rod tip low, back up until the rod and line are in a straight line with no slack in the line. Now for the stance, if you are right handed your right foot should be slightly back, if you are left handed then the left foot should be back. This does two things for you, first it gives you a stable stance and second it allows you to turn your head and watch the back cast unroll. Watching the back cast is important to develop the timing necessary for a good cast. Next comes the position of the wrist. You will hear many instructors say that you want no wrist movement in the cast, it’s not that you don’t want any wrist movement it is that you want just the right amount of wrist movement. The wrist movement is what Joan calls the power snap and it will really put a little zing into your cast. So what is the right amount of wrist movement? At the start of the back cast it is easy, with the rod gripped as previously describe rotate the wrist as far forward as possible and squeeze with the three fingers gripping the rod. Look at the reel seat in relation to your fore arm, it should be against, or parallel to, the fore arm. There is one important principle that we must understand, a good cast is achieved by the rod loading (bending) in one direction and unloading (unbending) in the other direction. The loading and unloading is what transfers the power from the rod to the line, if you do not get the rod to load and unload properly you will never get a good cast no matter how hard you try. The biggest problem I see in this area is trying to force, or muscle, your way through the cast and a lot of bad thing happen as you will see shortly. The first thing we must do too load the rod for the back cast is make sure there is no slack in the line between the rod tip and fly. Start lifting the rod until you see the line leader connection start to move, or lift off the ground. At this point smoothly accelerate the rod, at the end of this acceleration snap the wrist back to a straight position, relaxing your three fingers, and come to an abrupt stop. Again look at the location of the reel seat in relation to our fore arm; it should form an angle of approximately 45 degrees between the reel seat and fore arm. During the acceleration portion of the cast your arm should rotate slightly at the shoulder raising your elbow about 1 foot. The acceleration and wrist snap has loaded the rod, the abrupt stop allows the rod to unload sending the line back into the back cast. Turn your head and watch the line unroll behind you, just before it unrolls completely start your forward cast. In your forward cast just reverse the sequence. Drop your elbow back down that foot, make a smooth acceleration with the fore arm, a power snap with the wrist, and an abrupt stop. The acceleration and power snap loads the rod and the abrupt stop allows the rod to unload sending the line out in front of you. Drop the rod tip down and your rod and arm should be back in the same position you started. The power snap is accomplished by pushing forward with the thumb while at the same time squeezing the rod handle back with your three fingers. At this point don’t worry about accuracy or distance, because there are many things we can do to attain these two things but only after you have mastered the basic cast. The main thing we are looking for is forming tight loops in our fly line, loops of about 2 or 3 feet. Why? Because tight loops have less wind resistance making them much more efficient. This will be important later when we add distance to our cast.

Another important rule we need to be aware of is that the line will follow the rod tip. The biggest problem I see in making the basic cast is breaking the wrist over on the back cast; the line will follow the rod tip, if the rod tip goes down it sends the line down; this causes several problems. First it opens up the loop, second it can cause the fly to hit the water, or ground, behind you, and thirdly you have to waste some of the energy in your forward cast, overcoming gravity, to get the line back up above the rod tip. The next major problem I see frequently is not bringing the rod to an abrupt stop at the end of either the back cast or the forward cast. This does not allow the rod to unload. This is more common in the back cast, some will allow their arm to drift back like they were going to throw a baseball. This kills the back cast and one thing you must always keep in mind is that your forward cast is not going to be any better than your back cast. In an interview I read with Steve Rajeff he stated that one of the biggest problems he sees is a poor back cast. If you are having a problem with your casting, chances are the problem is in the back cast. Why is this so? Because fly fishing is the only sport that requires both a good back stroke and a good forward stroke. All other sports require only a good forward stroke, so the forward stroke feels natural to us, the back stroke is unnatural. The third major problem I see is applying the power too soon in the cast; this is usually in the forward cast. This is the major reason for getting those dreaded tailing loops that can tie overhand knots in the leader that are commonly called wind knots. This is usually the result of someone making a poor back cast and are trying to compensate for it by making a stronger forward cast. The first two problems can be solved by making sure the wrist does not bend back farther than where it is straight with the fore arm and you bring the rod to a sudden and abrupt stop. The third problem is solved by gradually increasing the rod speed on the forward cast, don’t punch the rod at the beginning of the forward cast.

Another major problem that Steve Rajeff says he see in casting is improper alignment. What he is referring to here is not making the back cast and forward cast in the same plane. If you were casting over an imaginary line and you let your back cast and forward cast fall to the ground they should both land on this imaginary line. I see some that will curve the cast around the body on either the back cast or forward cast or even both. This decreases the efficiency of the cast.
Next let’s take a look at the stroke. The stroke is the distance the rod travels horizontally during the cast. Most instructors use the face of a clock as an aid for the proper stroke. They use 10 o’clock and 2 o’clock as reference points. I don’t particularly like this because all casts are not made from 10 to 2. For example a short cast requires a short stroke and a long cast requires a longer stroke. A short stroke may only go from 12 o’clock to 2 o’clock, where a long cast may be from 9 o’clock to 1 o’clock. It makes more sense to me to use the degrees of rotation. From 10 o’clock to 2 o’clock is 120 degrees. For most of my casting I reduce this stroke to about 90 degrees. What determines this angle is the number of degrees between where the rod is stopped on the back cast and where the rod is stopped on the forward cast.

The next problem I frequently see is not abruptly stopping the rod on both the forward and back cast. Why is this? Because this is not a natural thing to do. If we were swinging a baseball bat, a tennis racket or a golf club, the follow through is very important. If we were throwing a baseball or a football the follow through would be important. A follow through is just something we have learn throughout our lives. Fly Casting is the only sport I know where there should be no follow through; we must stop the rod at the end of the stroke.

Tim and Steve Rajeff both agree that one of the most common problems those new to fly casting have is getting the proper acceleration and stop in the cast. They both use a simple training aid in instructing their students to get this proper acceleration and stop. It is a paint brush and water. They credit Tony Vitale of Seattle for coming up with this. Tony was on the Federation of Fly Fishers Casting Board of Governors and has been teaching fly casting since 1964. I have used this training aid and find it very effective for developing the proper stroke. The problem usually develops in the forward cast; the power is applied to early in the stroke. If this happens the rod tip dips and we get those tailing loops, also part of the power is directed vertically instead of being directed in the direction of the cast and the line does not roll out properly but lands in a pile. What should be done is to gradually increase the acceleration of the rod and bring it to a stop in the direction we want the line to go. This not only solves the tailing loop problem but also gives more distance to the cast. So here is how the paint brush works; dip the brush in water, grasp the handle as you would a fly rod, move your arm up to the stop position of the back cast, now make a forward cast. All of the water should shoot straight out in the direction of the cast; if any water goes vertically you are not making a proper stroke. You are applying power to early in the stroke.

Another problem I see often with beginners is not allowing the line to roll out completely on the back cast before starting the forward cast. This can cause a lot of bad things to happen. It can cause buggy whipping the line and possibly snapping your fly off. It introduces slack into your forward stroke and the rod will not load properly. It causes a wide, inefficient, loop and it can also cause tailing loops.

As mentioned before when I first took up fly fishing I did not have anyone to show me how to cast and did not have any books to read or videos to watch so I developed a lot of bad habits. After many frustrating years I decided to forget everything I knew and go back to square one. I started reading the books and watching the videos and it was only after learning how to make a proper basic cast that fly fishing really became a pleasure. There is nothing more satisfying than seeing that line roll out and settle gently on the water. Even if you are not catching fish you will get a lot of satisfaction out of making a good cast. In order for this to happen you have to get the proper stroke ingrained into your brain. I found it was easier to do this without a rod, or at the most only the butt section of the rod, in your hand. This way you don’t have to worry about a good tight loop but just concentrate on getting the proper acceleration and stop in your stroke. You will feel the muscles working and you will develop a muscle memory. And this is something you can do almost anywhere, you can do it while watching television, you can do it while drinking your morning coffee, you could even do it at your desk, but I don’t recommend doing in a crowd; or they may send the men in the white coats after you.

Only after developing the proper stroke should you pick up the fly rod and practice casting the line. Keep the cast short, about 30 feet or whatever you can comfortably manage. Don’t worry about accuracy or distance, because there are many things we can do to attain these but only after you have perfected the basic cast. Concentrate on watching the loop unroll both behind you and in front of you. Practice until you can consistently get a nice tight loop with no tailing loop. If at any time the loop goes sour remove the rod from your casting hand and again practice that basic stroke using only your arm, wrist, and hand. Keep in mind that this sport is no different than any other sport; the more you practice the better you will become. If you are casting properly the cast should be almost effortless because the rod is doing the hard work for you. If you are getting a sore arm you are not doing it properly, so either reevaluate your
cast, or better yet have a competent caster evaluate your cast, to see where the problem is. It is hard for someone to see their own mistake but easy for someone who truly understands the basics of casting to spot.

What we are striving for here is a cast with nice tight loops that rolls out completely. You may be able to get away with a wide loop on a short cast, but if you don’t get a tight loop it will come back to haunt you later when you try for accuracy or more distance. Many make the mistake of trying for accuracy or distance before they have mastered the basics of fly casting. In many fishing situations a 30 foot, or less, cast is sufficient, but if you want to be consistently successful on stillwaters you will have to extend the cast to 50 to 60 feet, which is not difficult if you first learn the basic cast. If you want to fish salt water you may have to extend the cast out to nearly 100 feet, I can’t help you here because I have never fished salt water.

So there you have it, the basic cast. But casting is not something you can learn by reading about it, it is a hand’s on thing, and requires a lot of practice, until the movements are ingrained in your brain and are automatic. With practice you will develop a muscle memory that will accelerate the rod and stop the rod at the proper points. When this happens you will see a vast improvement in your casting and fly fishing will become much more pleasurable. Casting is difficult to explain in writing and much easier to demonstrate. So if anyone is interested maybe the club can set up a casting clinic. Next month we will add some distance and accuracy to our cast.

Fly Fishing Simplified
By Bob Long

I’ve been concerned for some time that we, the Club, might be giving the impression through articles in our newsletter that our sport is way more complex than it really is at the basic level, where most fly fishing actually occurs, and for folks that are new to the sport I can see where that might be discouraging. In talking to Club members, for the most part, you’ll find that they went into fly fishing with a desire to fish for trout so I’m going to approach this article with that in mind. To illustrate what I’ll say down the road, I’m going to give you a synopsis of my entry into the sport and how I progressed over the years.

At age 8 I was given an old 3-piece fly rod (for whatever the reason) by a neighbor down the road, some form of fly reel, and a fly line that occasionally floated and had a mind of its own. This included a very brief lesson on how to rig it and how to cast at least a rod’s length of line (no more, no less). I was in a kid’s heaven! During this period of my life I was spending the summers with family friends who lived near Windsor and whose farm abutted the lower reaches of Mark West Creek. I haunted the creek with its green-eared sunfish using whatever flies could be obtained, which I suspect were mostly steelhead and/or Atlantic salmon flies off a card on a snelled hook. Whatever, they worked! I also discovered that if I was very, very careful, I could lob a grasshopper impaled upon said fly a short distance.

The next major change in my fly fishing career occurred when I turned 11 in that we moved to Sutter County with its wealth of fishing opportunities. It didn’t take long to sort out the fact that the Sutter Bypass and the adjacent year-round canals were less than 5 five miles by bike and that there were bass, crappie, bluegill and Sacramento Perch to be readily had with flies from Ray Gouge’s Firestone Store. I was also introduced to shad on a fly at Shanghai Bend by a friend of the family and found that I had to cast at least 30 feet to take them – that turned out to be a real struggle for a while. Juvenile stripers and carp were also not beyond my interest.

The following year I somehow fell under the mentorship of friends and/or family of our Club’s namesake and was introduced to small water (free-stone creeks) trout fishing, given some better used equipment and some instruction, and told to go forth, do good and avoid evil. I never looked back until I was well into my thirty’s and my interest turned to big fish and fly fishing lakes.

I like to think that a lot of us of my era entered the sport along much the same path and, thusly, had a bit of a knowledge base by the time we got to trout; I’m not so certain that that’s the case today. On the other hand, we have fly fishing clubs today, along with a wealth of books, which we didn’t have when I was coming along. So let me give you a few words of advice – fly fish for whatever, whenever, and where ever the opportunity exists for you. Don’t be concerned with failure as it all adds to your
knowledge base, but learn from it. The larger your knowledge base, the successful you’ll be in the long run.

If, however, your heart and interest are set on fishing for trout, by all means learn to fish for them on free-stone creeks; preferably those that you can wade right up the center in should you desire to do so. Generally speaking, one or two rod lengths of line is all that’s necessary and you’ll rapidly learn the necessary line management to cope with the moving water and reduce drag on your fly. A 7 ½ foot leader tapered to a 4x tippet should work fine. Casting is typically just a simple cast with no shooting of line involved which goes a long ways toward learning how to make an accurate cast. The dry fly patterns used are usually #14’s and of an attractor nature as the fish found in these small waters are generally opportunistic feeders and whatever floats well has a tendency to work. The fish in such water aren’t large but be they 8 inches, 10 or whatever, if you catch the journeyman size fish for the water, you will have been successful. Another major benefit to this type of pocket water is that should you blow a piece of water, there’s another pocket waiting for you just a rod’s length away. Can’t beat that with a stick!

My fishing partner and I walked into the above creek (it took about an hour) one day a few years ago and found it to be chock full of small brook trout. As we were both fishing 3-weight rods, there was no issue, and as I recall it, we didn’t take a fish over 12 inches. We had a great time! If you haven’t fished one of these small free-stone creeks before, give one a try; and what a great place to take a kid!

February Program

Our program this month will be by Hogan Brown, a fly fishing guide, who will address us on the Cast Hope Foundation, of which he is a founding member.

We are a group of fly fishing guides that started a nonprofit, Cast Hope Foundation, about 6 years ago with the goal of introducing low income and underserved kids and their mentors (parent, grand parent, big brother/big sister, friend, grand parent, anyone that is important in their lives) to the sport of fly fishing by taking them on free guided fly fishing trips. We have grown exponentially with the support of the fly fishing industry and outdoor industry to now include our Fest Fests where we give free fly rods, reels, flies, and terminal tackle to both kids and mentors that have been on guided trips and show interest in fly fishing. Along with our fish fest we hold many advanced clinics each year for kids that want to continue to learn about specific aspects of the sport, for example warm water fly fishing, fly tying, and steelhead fishing. Over the last two years we have also incorporated camping trips to many out of the way places. Just recently we went on a trip where we have begun helping a few of our more advanced anglers complete the California Heritage Trout Challenge. We will also be hosting a few destination trips to OR, WA, and WY this summer for a select group of kids that have been in our program for a few years.

As we have grown we have also incorporated conservation and sustainability education into everything we do. Our kids participate in steelhead and salmon restoration programs on their local water throughout Northern California through our steelhead restoration project as well learning about the in importance of conservation in their local watersheds. So, in a nut shell we are teaching kids to use their local watersheds, appreciate them, and become advocates to conserve them through the sport of fly fishing.

Hogan’s bio is as follows: Growing up on the Lower Yuba River as an only child who had a bug collection and really liked catching fish with imitations of those bugs didn’t make Hogan the coolest kid growing up. Good thing he got over it and persevered. Deciding to start rowing a drift boat and guiding the lower Yuba instead of living in the woods bitter and resentful. Living in Chico, CA now Hogan guides for anything that swims, from trout to striped bass and carp to steelhead, he is at home in a drift boat or poling a mud flat for carp. Guiding the Lower Yuba River, Feather River, and
Lower Sacramento River for stripers, trout, steelhead, shad, carp, and bass has made him one of the most versatile and experienced guides in Northern California. His trout, bass, carp, and stripers flies have become staples in his home state of Northern California and throughout the West. Hogan is a Scott Fly Rods, Air Flo Fly Lines, and Echo Rods Pro along with being a Simms Ambassador and Montana Fly Co. Contract Tier. Hogan is also a connoisseur of fine ales and fermented grains, a home gardener, die-hard San Francisco Giants and Notre Dame Football fan, along with being a husband and father to two young boys. To learn more about Hogan, his take on fermented grains, hear his rants on his favorite teams, reviews of underappreciated and not really commercial indie rock bands, look at fish pictures taken in on cheap cameras or I phones, OR book a trip check out www.hgbflyfishing.com or the blog www.hgbflyfishing.blogspot.com.

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Fly of the Month

Halfback

By Walt Alexander

The Halfback is constructed with two of my favorite tying materials, Pheasant Tail and Peacock Herl. Like most great flies the halfback does not represent any one organism but could be taken as a number of food items. John Dexheimer, of British Columbia, is given credit as the originator of this fly. The Halfback has a strong following in both Canada and New Zealand, but for some unknown reason it has not caught on here in the United States. Philip Rowley wrote an excellent book titled “Fly Patterns for Stillwaters”. The pattern we will be tying is from this book with two minor variations. In his book Phil states this is a very impressionistic pattern that could be taken as a Dragonfly Nymph, a Damselfly Nymph, a Mayfly Nymph, or a Chironomid Pupa. There are also many in Canada that say “when trout are on Scuds a Halfback is the answer”. This covers a lot of territory, making the Halfback a very good searching pattern.

Like any great fly there are many variations tied by many different tiers. One variation is the Fullback, which has a shell-back of pheasant tail fibers over the body. Phil states he likes to fish this pattern with a white wingcase in the Fall, he feels this variation does a good job of imitating an immature Dragonfly Nymph. He also states that a slender pattern does an excellent job of imitating a Callibaetis Mayfly Nymph.

According to Phil the original pattern was tied using either Groundhog or Marmot hair for tail and beard, but today most patterns use Pheasant Tail or Rump fibers. We will be using Pheasant Tail fibers for the tail, wingcase, and legs. The two minor variations from Phil’s pattern and ours is the hook, we will use a Tiemco 200R, and the for dubbing loop Phil uses wire, we will be using our tying thread. I have seen patterns tied with various types of synthetic materials for the body and thorax, but I prefer to stick with peacock herl, there just seems to be something magical about peacock herl.

Halfback

Recipe: (from Phil’s book)

Hook: Tiemco 5262, #6-#14.
Thread: Black or olive 6/0 or 8/0
Tail: Pheasant tail or rump fibers.
Body: Peacock herl spun in dubbing loop.
Wingcase: Pheasant tail or rump fibers.
Thorax: Peacock herl spun in dubbing loop.
Legs: Tips of wingcase material.
Tying instructions:

1. Place hook in vise, start thread behind hook eye, wrap thread base back to tail, and tie in a slip of pheasant tail fibers for the tail. Advance thread forward to about 2/3 of the way up the hook shank.

2. Tie in 3 or 4 long peacock herls by their tips. Wrap thread back to rear of hook shank.

3. Make a dubbing loop and advance thread to about 2/3 point on hook shank.

4. Insert peacock herl into dubbing loop and twist into a rope, wrap rope forward forming body. Tie peacock herl off and clip excess.

5. Tie in another slip of pheasant tail fibers for the wingcase and legs with tips pointing out over the hook eye length of legs.
6. Tie in another 3 or 4 peacock herls for the thorax.

7. Make another dubbing loop. Advance the thread forward to about 1/8 inch back from hook eye.

8. Insert peacock herl into dubbing loop and twist into a rope, wrap rope forward forming the thorax. Tie off peacock herl and clip excess.

9. Divide the tips of the pheasant tail fibers into two equal portions, fold tips back along both sides of fly and wrap a thread dam in front of them.

10. Fold wingcase forward, tie off, trim excess, form a thread head, and whip finish.
Fly Rod Drop-Shotting
By Ed (Brownie) Brown

When the calm waters of West Valley Reservoir turn warm and hovers around 65-70 degree mark, I fish deep. The air temperature was 85 degrees at 6:00 AM this morning with no wind, so I rigged one 6-weight rod drop-shot style. I barely felt the grab of the heat-stressed rainbow; however, the terminal rig I was using contributed to my success.

I cast a #12 emerger to overhanging brush, a #3 split shot was pinched on at the very end of the tippet, not above it. The emerger sank quickly to the bottom and then was fished as if it were weightless. With the weight on the bottom and not between the angler and the fly, it was a lot easier to identify that subtle grab. I started using this specialized drop-shotting technique several years ago.

The powerful head of the WF6S6 full sinking line loaded on my first false cast while the short front taper guided my fly right on target. The sink rate of 6 ips took my fly to approximately 15 feet on a 30 second countdown and hovered there – that’s the depth where the trout were hanging out. These trout will sometimes take my fly on the fall before it reaches its target depth, yet the grab is usually soft.

The line is a light olive color with a dark green “hang marker” at the 15-foot level. I stopped my retrieve when the marker bump hit my tip-top guide, then I bump mended the line back through the guides so that the fly reversed course and started back down to the 18 foot depth. The fly hadn’t dropped more than a few feet when I felt a sharp tap and I drove the hook home with a quick salt water set. My reward was a ten minute struggle with a nice ½ stone rainbow.

The next morning I fished the shallow north end of the reservoir with a balanced combination of level sinking of 6 ips, a 9-foot section of 3x fluorocarbon leader with 8-inches of 3x fluorocarbon tippet and #14 slightly weighted mayfly emerger. The line, leader, tippet and fly all sink at similar rates – for a controlled sink rate; thus avoiding the exaggerated vertical arc that makes detection of a take difficult.

In the deep, south end of the reservoir I fish during the hot midday down to the 25 feet. To accomplish this I change my terminal tackle slightly in that I use a 9-foot section of 3x fluorocarbon leader with three #3 lipped split shot crimped on the end. I then tie on a dropper knot that may be relocated up or down the leader. It is tied 10-inches above the split shot and extended 7 inches to a #10 Blood Sucking Leach that has 10 wraps of .020 lead wire on it. This setup allows the leech to ride above the reservoir bottom.

I counted down the leech for a long 50-seconds to attain the desired 25-foot depth. I let the leech set there for the longest time and the only action it got was movement transmitted through my line from the rocking of the boat, due to increasing gusts of wind. I had taken a chance and dropped the leech behind a deadfall and counted on the 8-pound leader to pull any trout clear. Ten minutes later my line moved steadily toward the opposite side of the deadfall – I set the hook hard and moved the boat to the other side of the log as my rig was firmly attached to it. Since I’ve borrow a bass fishing technique I thought I would land this fish bass-style by sticking my thumb in its mouth, bad idea. This guy had the sharpest set of teeth I’ve ever felt! By landing this fish by hand I was also able to free the split shot that had hung up on the log.
Drop shotting with a fly rod adds a new dimension to fishing warm water reservoirs. This is a specialized technique where an emerger fly or bottom dwelling leech is cast to structures such as points, sunken logs and weed beds. The split shot is pinched on below the flies and not above them which allows them to be pulled straight down until they are just off the lake bottom. With suspended above the weight, it's easier to detect those subtle grabs.

When retrieving your fly, sweep the rod tip left and right. Hold the rod forward of the cork grip with your finger on the rod blank so you can feel the fish through the rod. Keep the line tight with your line hand so you may also feel the fish. Strip in the excess line and get ready to strip strike when you feel the slight movement to a sharp pull. This is your clue to give the trout some line which gives him time to get the hook in his mouth. How much line and time do I give him? I extend the rod tip as far as possible and with my line hand I feed more line out the rod guides; this shouldn't take much more than a few seconds as timing here is critical. This pause gives the trout time to turn away from you. Now, sweep the rod tip horizontally “slowly,” but firmly and strip strike with your line hand.

“Gone with the Wind,” the phrase I utter as I try casting in a stiff breeze. My accuracy is shot to hell, so I end up casting to the water. I refuse to leave the reservoir when the wind starts up. To combat the wind, I use heavy 8-weight rods, WF8S8 ips lines, short 9-foot 3x leaders and sparse, compact weighted flies that don’t fly in the wind. My casting strokes are done with my back to the wind with a modified (Belgium) roll cast; the powerful back stroke is preceded by a water haul and pulled horizontally to my rear (upwind). On the forward stroke the rod is raised vertically and cast easily downwind; the fly, of course, travels with the wind to its own destination and not necessarily one of my choosing. The brisk wind usually creates fish chops on the waters’ surface, which covers up the rise indicators anyway. With a good cloud cover and choppy waters, these trout bite more aggressively than they do in calm waters.

One 8-weight rod was equipped with a WF8S8, with a 24-foot sinktip line of 350 grains and sink rate of 8 ips. The leader was 9-feet of 3x fluorocarbon with three #3 split shots on the end. Standard 8 ips sink rate sinks to 33.3 feet in 50 seconds, so we add #3 split shot to accelerate the speed and the depth. The #12 weighted Blood Sucking Leech was tied on an 8” dropper that was attached three feet above the split shot.

The 24-foot sink tip has a tendency to “hinge” occasionally when cast and does arc during its descent. The preferred line is still a level sinking line of low stretch for sensitivity and solid hook sets and density compensated for good line control.

Not counting the obvious metaphor – all anglers are gamblers, fishing West Valley Reservoir is like playing roulette by tossing small artificial flies into a whirling morass. Still, we keep coming back!
January 24, 2015 ECPFF Fish Out Parks Bar Yuba River

Twelve members signed up for the fishout on the Yuba River at Parks Bar. Seven members attended. Craig Renke, Craig Barrick, Vernon Kuska, Mariano Domingo, Jim Mackensen, Mark Ruef and Walt Zukas.

We arrived at the river at about 8:00 am; it was cool and foggy and remained that way until noon. I’m not sure what happened in the afternoon since many had Honeydews and did not stay for the afternoon hatch since there were no hatches in the morning. The rocks close to the waters edges were covered with Stonefly shucks but did not see or find any adults. We saw very few feeding fish and one or two jumping clear of the water but no fish. There were quite a few other fishermen on the river with some coming all the way from San Francisco and the South Bay, but the fish were very uncooperative. We tried nymphs, streamers and dries without any success. Our two new members Mariano Domingo who fished with me and Jim Mackensen who fished with Craig Barrick learned more about different techniques and how to read the river to locate likely holding areas for fish. I was a pleasant day for an outing and the fish were out somewhere else too!

Feb 20-22 Baum Lake Burney
March 21 Lake McCumber Shingletown
March 28 U.C. Foothill Field Station Yuba River
April No Fish Out Need Fishout Chair
May No Fish Out Need Fishout Chair

Walt Zukas