THE LOOP

The Federation of Fly Fishers Journal for Certified Casting Instructors
Winter 2007

Reflections and Thanks

By Jim Valle

This time of year always seems to bring some retrospective thinking: reflection on past accomplishments and planning future goals. As I look back on the year and my journey to the FFF Master Instructor, I realize how many great flycasters and true teachers it took to get me here. I would like each of you to know the impact of your efforts, no matter how small. As I continue forward in a new journey as a Master Instructor, I wish to share my regards with all who love to teach.

Randal Kaufman: Thanks for all the patience in the beginning, a long time ago. Throwing my flies in the campfire and all the laughs on stream — you were my introduction to fly fishing and tying.

Lefty Kreh: At a demo in NJ we cast together and that is all it took. You inspired me to learn more. Your books and videos, especially the Little Library, continue to be a resource. I try to put as much fun in my teaching as you do, but no one does it like you!

Macauley Lord: Your CI class was terrific. Your slow casting amazed me and challenged my abilities. Your sincerity along the way opened my eyes to what makes a good teacher.

Tom White: Beyond your great course, the hour or so we spent casting together was a real breakthrough for me. Watching you cast and teach is simply amazing.

Gordy Hill: Your "Electronic School" made all the difference and continues to challenge my knowledge and teaching. Your patience, understanding and friendship are ingrained in my teaching style.

Dusty Sprague and Chuck Easterling: Your encouragement and dedication to teaching kept me in the game. Chuck, your thought provoking and sometimes headache producing questions moved me to a Master's way of thinking and understanding. Dusty, the real journey began at the end of my first attempt and you were the springboard. I now understand what it means to be the examiner, especially on the close ones! As I said before, you did the right thing and I am better for it!

Bruce Richards: Before we ever met you amazed me by answering my numerous e-mails so quickly and completely. Now that I know you a little better I am totally blown away by your natural teaching ability and style. You showed me how to teach.

Joan Wulff: We have only met at conclaves and shows. Your books, videos and Fly-O are all well worn

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Jim Valle spent 5 years as a Naval flight officer, lived in Oregon for 10 years and then relocated to the coast of New Jersey. He currently teaches a 15 hour course "The Art of Fly Casting" at a local college and instructs in LL Bean's Outdoor Discovery Schools in NJ and VA.

Reflections and Thanks (continued from page 1)

from replay and repetition. Your approach is the model for my classes.

Sheila Hassan: We met in a conclave course a couple years ago and afterwards we sat talking about teaching and you were so very positive and helpful.

Floyd Franke: Your encouragement came when it was really needed. The few hours we spent casting in the snow were invaluable. You were waiting to congratulate me and it was real important for me that you were the first!

Allen Crise: I had heard your name but never met you until the test. Always a teacher, your probing questions offered me the opportunity to fill in and show some depth. I learned something important about examining that day.

Bill Hassan: You also were there to understand my understanding. Again, a teacher's approach to the exam and a good one, which I will continue.

Phil Gay: What can I say, Brilliant! The ability to recognize true talent, what a great attribute! I'm kidding! Actually, the test you gave was the toughest. The questions were simple but so profound. You made me cover it all. I must have been ready because I truly enjoyed the challenge. And I learned something, the Master Instructor test has to be tough or the accomplishment just wouldn't be there.

These are 14 very wonderful people that make up my Master Instructor's journey and of course there are many more. I truly appreciate the knowledge and passion you shared with me along the way. The journey is just beginning and who knows what lies ahead. I have always thought there was something special about teaching fly casting. It is different than teaching a job skill or the like. Students are willing, eager and open.

And so for each of you, you have left your imprint on me and in turn on everyone of my students.

Listen with an open heart,
Take the Time to Learn from your Students.
Give the student Time to Learn.
Be Sincere. You can touch a Caster's Soul,
Who will forever carry your Imprint,
In every Cast, On every Stream!

BOG Nominations

Dear Master Instructor:
The FFF Casting Instructor Certification Program is accepting nominations to the Board of Governors. If you wish to be a candidate, deliver the necessary nominating papers to Barbara Wuebber at the FFF office (e-mail: fffoffice@fedflyfishers.org) *by midnight April 31*.

What is required?
A candidate must be a Master Instructor, nominated by two sitting Governors. Election requires a one-third affirmative vote of the full board, though a candidate can be vetoed by two negative votes.

How many seats are available? The answer is unknown at this time. Though six Governors are scheduled each year for renewal, the six have until May 1 to declare their intentions to stand for re-election or stand down. Assuming all six request renewal, votes for new candidates will not be considered unless at least one of the six is rejected. Only then will the new candidates be considered, competing with each other for any vacancies that might occur. Given that we might see no vacancies this year, is this process a waste of your time? That is something only you can decide, but I would point out one important consideration: Success depends on the Governors knowing who you are. Even if you aren't elected this year, it is still good to introduce yourself. And there are no limits on how often you can run.

What should your nominating letter say? There are no set criteria, but I recommend a cover letter and resume. Do your best to convey who you are and what you would contribute as a member of the board. Details such as classes you've taught, certifications you've participated in and any work on the board's committees will help. Above all, demonstrate your understanding that being a Governor is no mere honorary title. Yes, the position is an honor, but we're looking for workers. We're looking for Governors who will teach, who will test, who will serve.

If you have any questions, you are welcome to contact me at home by telephone (504-392-7511) or by e-mail (tomjindra@cox.net).

Regards,
Tom Jindra,Chairman, Casting Instructor
Certification Program Federation of Fly Fishers

How to Increase FFF Membership

by Pat Damico

Last evening I was invited to the Board of Directors meeting of a local fly fishing club to explain the benefits of FFF membership. The president thought that I could help him convince the board of the many advantages of an FFF alliance. The previous weekend, at the Florida Sportsman Show in Tampa, I had introduced Pete Greenan to our club president and of course Pete told him the advantages of being a FFF member as well as having the club become an affiliate. Pete Greenan had arranged for us to have a casting pond staffed by Certified Casting Instructors next to our booth. At the meeting, after explaining the many advantages as well as reading a letter from Pete, a few of the members asked the question that always comes up, "What are we getting for our money?"

What follows are my thoughts for demonstrating the value for the money of FFF membership. Last February I gave a free casting clinic to seventeen club members on a Saturday morning. When we finished, I gave each of them a certificate good for a six month FFF membership. This collectively was worth over three hundred dollars. How many took advantage of this and also renewed for a year is unknown.

I am an FFF Certified Instructor. Some Master Instructors devoted time to help me prepare as well as test me. The guidelines are constantly improved and many people work hard to keep the process at a very high standard.

In January 2007 the club asked me to teach another casting clinic and I agreed. Rather than charge a fee, I told them I would present the clinic free to FFF members. Anyone else would be charged a fee equal to what a one year membership would be for their category. Therefore, a senior would pay twenty-five dollars, a junior fifteen, regular members thirty-five, etc. The fee would be used to pay their yearly membership that day. This way they will get something immediately for their fee as well as enjoy the many regular benefits. The president asked who would pay thirty-five dollars for the clinic and almost everyone raised their hand.

A casting clinic could be scheduled the same time the following year when renewal is due. An interim follow up clinic can also be given in six months. Is there a reason why we can't do this everywhere? Our instructors are constantly giving free time to students; why not take advantage of all the qualified people in the program to increase our membership?

Pat Damico is a Certified Casting Instructor from St. Petersberg Beach, Florida.

CONCLAVE 2007

42nd FFF Conclave

Where: *Livingston, Montana*

When: *July 31-August 4, 2007*

Style: a Different Approach

By Jeff Wagner

To define style and differentiate between substance and style, we must first define the cast. Here are a few definitions:

Default Style: Casting form used when the caster is under no out of the ordinary constraints

Fishing Style: Style used when fishing (should be innumerable)

Style (Wagner's): Anything done during fly line delivery that does not affect the desired outcome of fly delivery (definition of the cast)

Loop Shape: The shape (outline) of the top leg and bottom leg of the unrolling fly line

Loop Size: The distance between the legs of the unrolling fly line

Stroke Length: Distance the hand moves during the cast

Stroke: Path the hand takes

It is my belief that style, in its strictest definition, would have no positive or negative connection to the cast. What a caster does with the way they move is the style of the cast. It is also my opinion that the principles of casting can be used when defining style, since style can dictate how the principles are followed. However, the principles of casting can also be used when defining a cast, which is essentially what we are doing when we are examining each person's casting stroke — looking at a cast performed in a different way.

A cast can be defined as how it follows or does not follow the casting principles.

1. The rod tip must travel along a straight line.
2. Vary the length of tip travel according to the amount of line outside the rod tip. (Longer cast, longer stroke.)
3. The pause between each cast to allow the line to straighten must get longer as the line gets longer (correct timing). Learn to vary the timing and the stroke length to maintain the straight-line path of the rod tip.
4. The power must be applied at the proper place, at the proper time (with a deceleration at the end – stop).
5. Slack must be kept to a minimum.

For example: a Straight Line Vertical Cast is defined:

1. Rod tip follows a straight path
2. Tip travel matches the distance being cast.
3. Pause allows the line time to straighten
4. Progressive speed up to a stop
5. Little slack

Add a few more parameters:

Vertical casting plane and loop plane
10 MPH head wind
40 feet to the target

Another example would be a Reach Cast:

1. Rod tip travels in a straight line up to the point of loop formation, then sweeps 90 degrees to the side from the original fly delivery direction.
2. Tip travel matches the distance being cast.
3. Pause prior to the delivery, allowing line to unroll.
4. Progressive speed up to a stop.
5. Slack in the leader and end of fly line desired (for this example).

Add a few more parameters:

40 foot to the target
10 mph head wind
Vertical casting plane and loop plane

Now that we have the definition of the straight line overhead vertical cast, we can define style as anything

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that does not affect the above (stance, grip, arm position, wrist movement). The ambiguity comes in when we talk about what is a straight line path of the rod tip. It is evident that no path is perfectly straight, all have some deviation so that the fly line will pass over the rod tip. I would suggest that as long as the parameters of the cast are met it passes the test. For example, I could make the straight line overhead vertical cast with a very wide loop, possibly even a non-loop, but I would have some slack. With a tighter loop I am more likely to have less slack. By tightening the parameters we are more able to define style within in a particular cast definition.

Observing two different distance casters, we will note that each has a different style and each caster often has a slightly different loop shape. The rod tip of each caster is moving in a different path. While it is very close to straight, it has some movement that creates a different loop shape and is a product of style. The same can be said of many different casts. If one caster is using a long side arm stroke and another a very tight over-the-shoulder stroke both may achieve the same distance, but with different loop shapes and very different body movements – different style. The loop shapes may be from a different stop, follow through or possibly acceleration affecting the rod tip. The differences would be very slight, but still differences. If the difference grew it may become a casting error, such as a tailing loop. In which case we can then use the principles to examine what is happening. In truth we can simply state the essentials as one general rule: The fly line follows the path of the rod tip.

Even something as seemingly simple as timing can be thought of in terms of style. I am sure I will get some frustrated expressions on this statement. But, whether making a short cast or a long cast the timing can be different with each casters stroke if it is longer or shorter, faster or slower. For a particular style of casting there may be an optimum timing, but I don't think there is a universal optimum timing. Again, thinking in terms of a variety of casts we come to a point where timing is a relative term.

To expound on this point the stop, as mentioned above, can also be part of style. No caster has been shown to have an instantaneous ceasing of motion. But, casters have differing degrees of a rapid deceleration of the casting hand. The issue of timing is similar to stating that we must have tension against the rod tip. This is simply untrue if we have enough stroke length or haul length to take up the slack. Would this make the most efficient cast? —— no. Could we still get the desired result? —— yes. I am not advocating that it is good to have slack in the system. In fact it can be quite a hindrance. To make some casts more efficiently it is imperative we have minimal slack, while in others that is our goal. A good example is in distance casting. Steve Rajeff can throw as far as he does with a relatively short stroke because he has loops with less slack than anyone else. Jim Gunderson can throw just as far using a longer stroke, but Jim has more slack. His longer stroke allows him to remove the slack. Waiting a bit longer than when the line has straightened as traditionally taught can give more pre-load to the rod and allow for a shorter following stroke. Not waiting until the loop fully unrolls and then coming forward can be done in consideration of backcast space, taking up the extra slack in the unrolling line with the hauling hand.

To consider many of these topics we must consider the cast and the situation. For each there may be an optimum, but not a universal. Style cannot be defined as efficient or inefficient unless we put the style in context, citing a situation or circumstance. We should all be using different styles, which are biomechanically pleasing to our bodies because of stature, conformation, flexibility and strength.

I do believe that we can direct a student in finding his/her style; however, most people will find a style on their own. An instructor may look for areas that might be helped by a change in style. For example, when looking at a persons off-vertical to casting side form with a casting plane and line plane parallel to the ground, we see tailing loops. Could it be that the student is bending unnaturally at the elbow causing a

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lift at the end of the stroke and consequently a tail? It might help to have the caster bend over slightly turn 45 degrees to the target and bring the elbow slightly in front of the body, a much easier position to move in unless you are Gumby. By the way what ever happened to him?

In conclusion, I would like to stress a few important points:

1. A good caster should be able to change styles as easily and necessary as wind shifting directions.
2. Do not change a casters style unless there is a good reason —— health, new fishing situation, etc. Showing different styles for use is different than trying to change a caster's form.
3. There is no right style. There may be better styles to use when teaching about loop shape, casting from a flats boat, and casting in tight quarters on a small trout stream; however, there is no universally correct style.

My teaching method as it relates to style includes five steps:

1. Show the cast briefly often pointing out the loop shape.
2. Show the basic straight line cast and talk only of the mechanics —— progressive speed up to a stop and try to make the tip move in as straight a path as possible. Both of those are very short descriptions, only giving the student a skeletal framework of the stroke. They will fill in the rest with their style.
3. Discovery — ample time.
4. Assist each student with their stroke, examine how they are moving and assist them in moving in that way.
5. Then speak of style, as the way each person moves.

This approach is different in that I do not talk about the position of my arm or where the rod stops. By doing this you are invoking movement thoughts into the caster's mind. Saying stop at 11 o'clock or vertical makes the person believe vertical is the best way to cast. I will be the first to admit this approach takes some time to get right and the description must be good. As a prelude you might ask your class to stand in a circle and throw a ball to you standing in the middle. Turn to each person as they throw and evaluate how they throw and give students on the other side of the circle a chance to see different throwing styles. This exercise can lead to a discussion on differences in how each person throws the ball and how that might relate to casting.

To define style we must define the cast. To define the cast use the essentials of flycasting and look at the specific casting parameters. With this method many of us will have a much easier time of differentiating between substance and style.

Jeff Wagner is a Master Instructor from Fort Collins, Colorado.

CONGRATULATIONS

New Master Instructors

Thomas Harper
Phoenix, Arizona

Abram (Woody) Woodland
Redding, CA

Jim Penrod

Rod Acceleration

By Bruce Richards

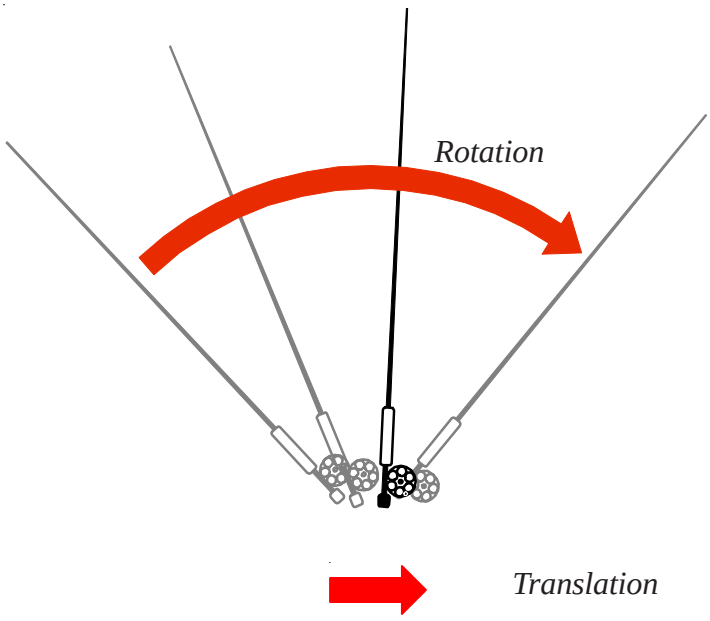
Flycasting is really quite simple. We make two simple motions with a fly rod, accelerate, then decelerate, and a loop is formed. But as instructors we know that getting those motions just right is critical to making a good cast.

We all know that stopping the rod abruptly is necessary to make a tight loop, but is it really clear how the rod should be accelerated? There are certainly a variety of descriptions of rod acceleration in the numerous books and magazine articles on flycasting, but most are pretty vague.

Rods can be accelerated in two ways, by rotation, and/or translation. (Please see diagram below) Translation is when a rod is moved without changing the angle of the rod butt. Rotational acceleration (or angular acceleration) is when the rod moves by changing the butt angle.

Rotational acceleration is most commonly a result of bending the wrist and/or elbow when casting and is by far the most important motion in casting. Rod translation can be an important part of some casts, especially distance casts, but for all casts rotation is far more important. *It is this angular acceleration that is being discussed.*

There is some misunderstanding of how a rod should accelerate to make the best loops. We all know that to make great loops, it is necessary for the rod tip to travel in as straight a line as possible from the beginning of acceleration to loop formation. How we accelerate the rod largely determines how the rod will bend and that is the primary controller of tip path.



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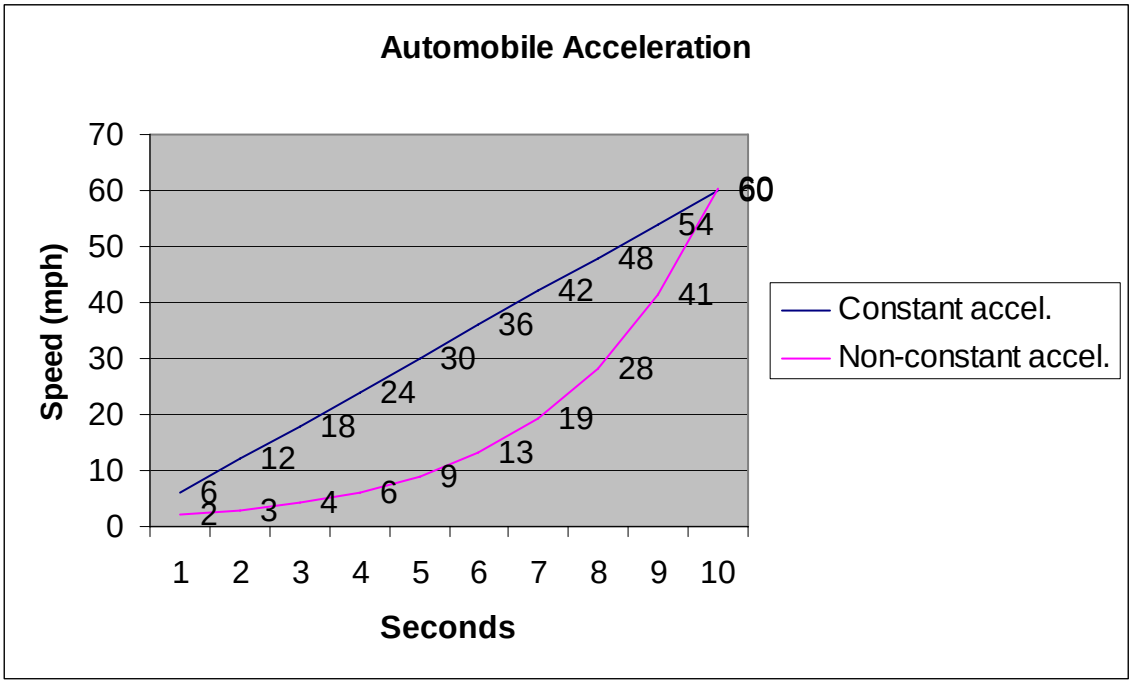
Most of us instruct our students to accelerate the rod *smoothly*. That is good instruction, but what does that really mean?

Work done with my business partner, Prof. Noel Perkins at the University of Michigan, developing the Sage Casting Analyzer (SCA) has clarified a lot of things we thought we knew about flycasting. Rod rotation happens quickly and it is very difficult to see precisely, leaving instructors to largely guess what is happening based on the appearance of the loop. Being able to very accurately measure rotational acceleration has allowed us to very directly relate rod acceleration to loop size and shape.

Before I continue, it is important that we all have the same understanding of some basic physics terms. Acceleration is the rate at which an object changes its velocity. Velocity is the rate at which an object changes its position. For our purposes we will focus on the magnitude of velocity which is what we commonly call speed. Just think of speed as you would normally use the term ---- how fast an object is moving. The speed that is so critical to flycasting is the speed with which you rotate the fly rod and this 'rod speed' is measured directly by the SCA. Sometimes these terms are used interchangeably when talking about rod motion and that causes real confusion.

To maintain a straight rod tip path we have found that it is necessary for rod angular acceleration to be constant from the beginning of rotation to the stop. Rod SPEED is slow at the beginning, fast at the end, but the rod must ACCELERATE at a CONSTANT RATE to make the best loops. I still occasionally hear instructors advocate slow acceleration at the beginning of the stroke, and a fast burst of acceleration at the end, but that does not lead to a straight tip path and great loops. This kind of ACCELERATION, slow in the beginning, fast at the end, is the hallmark of the average loops that most casters throw, not the great loops they want. Done to an extreme, tailing loops result.



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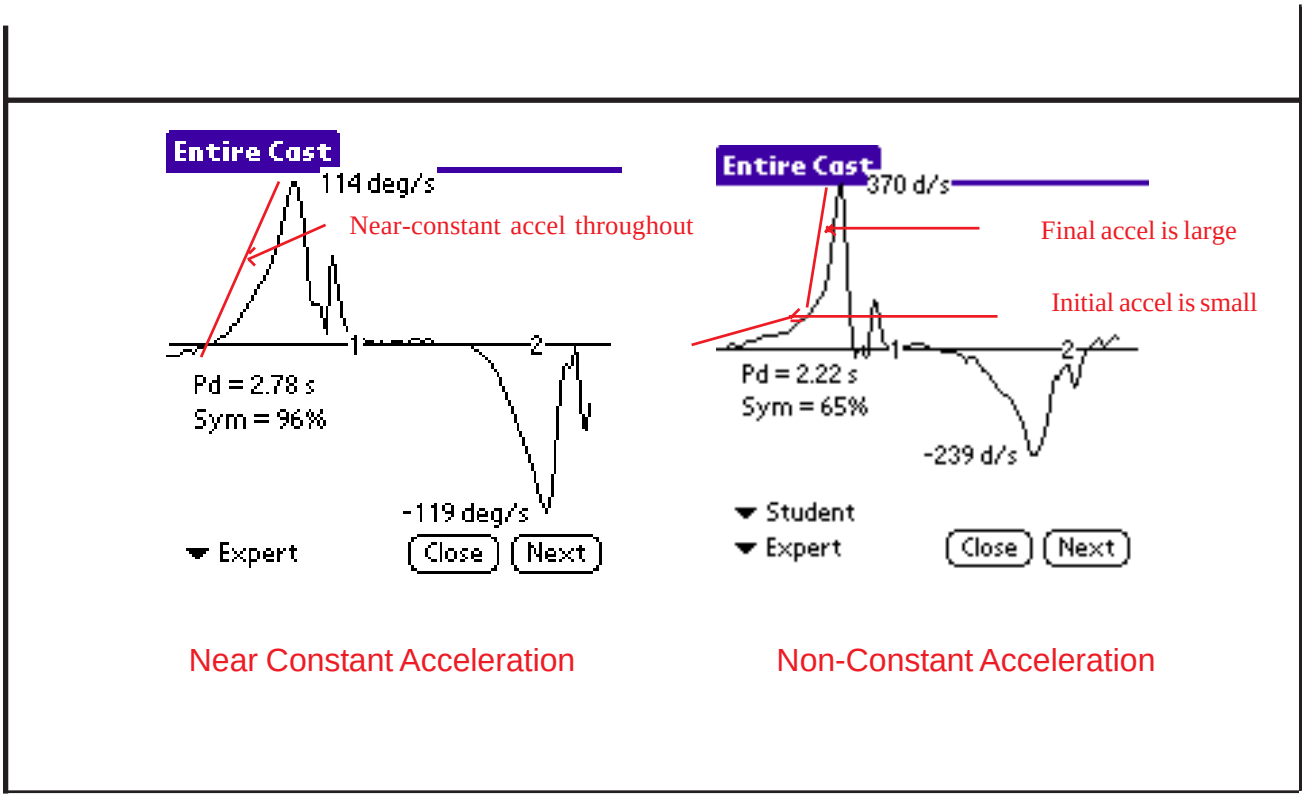
We have analyzed thousands of casts in the last 4 years and have found that the best loops are always made with constant rod acceleration. We have analyzed many top casters using very different casting styles, but find that how they accelerate the rod is virtually identical, resulting in great loops.

Here's an automotive analogy for constant acceleration. We want to accelerate our car from 0-60 mph in 10 seconds. Constant acceleration would be to accelerate to 6 mph in the first second, to 12 mph in the second, to 18 mph in the third second, 24 mph in the fourth, and so on to 60 mph after 10 seconds, a gain of exactly 6 mph for every second that elapses. This is the *smooth* acceleration most of us instruct.

If we were to accelerate the same car with the kind of non-constant acceleration we often find in our flycasting students it would accelerate like this: 2 mph in the first second, 3 mph in the second, 4 mph in the third, 5 in the fourth, 8 in the fifth, and so on to 60 mph after 10 seconds. See the diagram below to see what this kind of acceleration looks like.

Now lets take a look at a couple of typical casting analyzer charts to see what rod acceleration looks like in real casts. Keep in mind that these charts are essentially the same as the automobile acceleration chart, except that speed is shown in degrees/second of rod rotation in one, miles per hour in the other. The chart titled "Near Constant Acceleration" shows rod speed and you can see that the change of speed, the acceleration, shows as a pretty straight line, nearly constant acceleration. Now compare that to the "Non-Constant Acceleration" chart. You can see that the acceleration is characterized by a much more curved line, much less constant acceleration.



Near Constant Acceleration

Non-Constant Acceleration

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Rod Acceleration (Continued from page 9)

A much better cast was made with the near constant acceleration cast because the rod was bent very progressively and this resulted in a straighter tip path. In the non-constant acceleration cast the rod was bent little by the small acceleration early in the cast, but was bent a lot later on by the large acceleration at the end. The large change in acceleration observable in this cast likely resulted in a tailing loop.

When we tell our students to accelerate smoothly we are, in essence, telling them to rotate the rod with constant angular acceleration --- very good instruction. Telling them to accelerate less at first, then more, later, will not get the result you want. In nearly all cases of casting problems caused by improper rod acceleration, we find that the problem is slow early rotation, as seen in the chart on page 9. Merely getting your student to skip this part of the cast and delay rod rotation for a fraction of a second often results in remarkable improvement. Look at the line labeled *Final accel. Is large.* You can see that if it was carried straight down to the bottom of the chart, rod acceleration would have been nearly constant. The problem with the cast is the early, slow rotation, titled *Initial accel. Is small*. If you can simply get your student to delay rotation for a fraction of a second longer, the problem is usually solved.

FFF's Initial Continuing Education Workshop Held in the Northeast (How the Best Get Better)

By Rod McGarry

A special continuing education program for Certified Casting Instructors, run under the auspices of our *Casting Board of Governors Committee for Continuing Education,* was held in Marlboro, MA in January. Some 39 attendees from 9 states and 2 Canadian provinces participated in the four hour workshop. They were made up of three members of our casting Board of Governors, one Board of Governors-Emeritus, six Master Casting Instructors, one Two Handed Casting Instructor, and twenty-eight Certified Casting Instructors. This initial event was driven by our Casting Board of Governors desire to find a way to deliver a unique continuing educational experience to Certified Casting Instructors.

Committee Chair Tony Vitale worked with his group members most of the last year developing format and suggested programs. Our BOG approved and recommended that we initiate these events at its annual meeting at the Conclave. Tony reported that he called on MCI Rod McGarry from Maine to organize and facilitate this initial workshop. Rod recruited a respected group of widely recognized instructors with exemplary casting and teaching skills, drafted an agenda with them, and together they linked their capabilities through a unique teamwork approach.

BOG Dennis Grant from Nova Scotia opened the program with an interactive session on Teaching Techniques. He focused on both the practical and interpersonal skills needed to get behavior change in the teaching environment. He was followed by BOG-E Macauley Lord who illustrated with video examples how to diagnose casting errors with slow motion/frame-by-frame video analysis. The audience could clearly see the errors develop through arm, rod and line movement. CCI Brad Gage, the keeper of the Sage Casting

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From The Editors

Many thanks to all our contributors to the Winter Loop. We wouldn't be able to put together the Loop without instructors who provide us with great material. If you have some great reference material that you have put together or an article about your teaching, let us know. We can share it with our members.

Bruce Richards (BOG) has provided us with a great discussion of rotational rod acceleration and rod translation, which has recently been a lively topic on some list serves. (More than lively!)

Rod McGarry (MCI) has provided a nice update on the success of FFF's First Continuing Education Workshop. We always stress that involvement in the Casting Program is not an end when we pass our 'test', but a beginning. We continue to learn more about casting and more about teaching and our involvement in the Casting Program is a commitment to pass this on to our students. We need more continuing education!

Jeff Wagner (MCI), Gordy Hill (CBOG) and Pat Damico (CI) have also offered some great ideas this issue.

Pat Damico has provided a great way of increasing membership and getting more people involved in the FFF. Lets see if this idea can be used by more instructors and clubs.

Thanks to Jim Valle for sharing his kind words about his mentors with all of us. Its very nice to know that the work we do so willingly is appreciated and acknowledged. As you can see, there were many people that helped Jim. I'm sure we don't know how many people we help when we work with students, even if it is only to offer encouragement. Keep up the good work!

Hope you enjoy these entries as well as our historical reprints on curved casts and the tower cast.

Master instructors should take note of Tom Jindra's letter regarding CBOG nominations. As always, we don't know whether our Board will be accepting new members this year but please take his words of advice to heart if you are considering applying now or in the future. Please contact Tom or any CBOG if you would like more information.

Livingston, Montana is the place for the 42nd FFF Conclave and the dates are July 31 to August 4. Are you booked to come yet? Mark it on your calendar and please try to attend.

When the Conclave is in Livingston, everyone is happy. It is a favorite place with access to good fishing, good campgrounds, great space for the Conclave events and friendly people. It's a bit like coming home!

Spring is on the way. A busy spring for all. The fishing shows are underway which means lots of certifications. Hope you are involved!

Got to go. Take care.

Talk to you soon.
Denise & Liz

THE LOOP STAFF

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You can have a link from your FFF website listing to your own e-mail address.
We welcome your submissions via e-mail or disk. Please attach a short (1-3 sentences) instructor biographical statement, including your location and Certification level. Please be aware that the back issues of the Loop are posted on the Program's web site. Any illustrations should be in TIFF or JPEG format.
The Loop reserves the right to decline any submission for any reason, and to edit any submission. Submissions may be to the editors or the National Office:

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TEACHING THE LONG DISTANCE ROLL CAST
by Gordy Hill

Picture this scene: Fish feeding 80 feet out in the lake and a pine forest with overhanging branches above and a carpet of pine needles is behind you. This is a perfect time to consider the use of a really long distance roll cast. I've encountered situations in the salt where this technique is useful ---- fishing for stripers from the sand bars of Peconic Bay or fishing for bonefish in certain conditions in the Bahamas.

Tom White is the best long distance roll caster I've ever seen. He can easily make a perfect layout with a rollcast to a target 90 feet out using a technique which he and I have been teaching. First , we need to change the students preconceived ideas about rollcasting. We start by emphasizing the idea that he or she is going to make a perfect forward cast to a target about 50 feet away. I start by placing the student's line out with the fly 55 feet behind the caster. The rod is held in a horizonal plane with the tip pointed right at the fly and held as far back as possible. The caster is told to make an easy forward cast to the target 50 feet out in front.

Having performed the horizontal forward cast several times, the student is lead by the instructor through a set-up consisting of the fly 1 1/2 to 2 rod lengths in front of the caster and a 25 foor long loop of line extending from the rod tip directly behind the casting elbow and 180 degrees from the target. The rod tip is aimed back at the apex of the narrow loop on the ground behind it and the rod is held way back with no slack between the tip and the end of the loop. The caster makes a standard forward cast to the target. This is repeated several times with careful attention to smooth acceleration with no spike of power until late in the stroke or when the rod is 90 degrees from the target. We add a single haul only after this task is perfected.

We now need to teach the caster to make the setup with no help from the instructor. Tom has the student place the loop behind the casting elbow with an underpowered vertical rod plane maneuver. I prefer to have the student accurately back cast a 25 to 30 foot tight loop back using a horizontal rod plane. We both emphasize that the set-up must be devoid of slack. Three points regarding the back cast loop pnn the ground are emphasized:

1) The loop must extend along an 180 degree line from the target, through the casting elbow and rod tip.

2) The loop on the ground must be narrow with parallel loop legs.

3) The rod must be pointed way back at the apex of the ground loop.

On water, the fly should be 1.5 to 2 rod lengths in front of the caster. This will vary when casting on grass. Repeated practice and adding a single haul allows most students to make 55 to 60 foot roll casts. Tom and I feel that success in teaching this cast involves some principles:

1) The student must develop the mindset that he/she is making a well executed standard forward cast following the static back cast layout.

2.) There should be no slack in the system. This means no sag in the line from the rod tip to the ground, no wide loop behind, and no curved back loop.

3.) As the needed distance increases, the stroke length and rod arc are increased for maximum tip travel. For extreme distances, this may include body motion and/or a step forward.

4.) As with any well executed forward cast, a smooth acceleration with "speed-up-and-stop" on the forward delivery is required.

With this method, no contrived anchor is needed, even when done on grass, because the needed load comes from the line behind the caster. This technique works best with long belly lines and fast rods.

Gordy Hill is CBOG member and a frequent contributer to The Loop.

FFF's Initial Continuing Education Workshop *Continued from page 10*

Analyzer in New England demonstrated how hard data stats properly used by Casting Instructors can help students improve their casting. Everyone got to see the charts and printouts that come out of the computer models. There was a good deal of discussion on how the combination of Dennis' Teaching Techniques could be applied to the findings we can get from Mac's Video Analysis and the hard copy from Brad's Casting Analyzer .

BOG Tim Rajeff kicked off the second half of the program explaining and demonstrating the variables (and compatibles) of equipment. Using his extensive knowledge of flycasting tackle design, Tim focused on strategies for selecting the appropriate rod, line, leader and reel to meet the student's casting needs. BOG Gordy Hill and MCI Jim Valle shared the platform in a lively and delightful clinic on the fine points of loop control. Their detailed drawings, examples of movement, and conceptual approach brought everyone back to the fundamentals that make flycasting so unique. It was a flycasting anatomy lesson at the graduate school level. Topher Browne co-writer and co-producer of the DVD "Spey to Z" capped off the presentation portion of the program bringing clarification to the differences and interchangeables of Spey Casting. Topher made it easier for the attendees to distinguish between the three different styles of Spey casting, Spey casting stroke fundamentals and the basic principles of Spey casting.

The Q & A session continued in the workshop room for another half hour and it is still going on thru e-mail and phone calls. All of the attendees were grateful for this event which gave them access to the experience, expertise and capabilities of top-notch casting instructors. It was an inspiring and instructional workshop.

This is how the best get better----------Certified Casting Instructor Continuing Education.

Great Lakes Skagit Casting - (continued from page 17)

Being familiar with the casts makes it easier to understand the rod's action. The rod action can be explained this way. The G. Loomis Dredger/Skagit series is designed with a moderate/fast taper and softer action to balance the medium stroke required to cast these short head lines.

The big advantage is once these rods are loaded they are much easier to keep loaded (think Belgian cast). I'm sure you could use a faster action rod so long as you adjusted your style accordingly. I've now spent a season fishing the Dredger type rods and one of the true joys has been fighting fish. Covering water more effectively at greater distances, these rods bend to the butt giving the feeling of a single hand rod.

In conclusion, I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to Tim Rajeff, Marlow Bumpus, Chris Seipio, Steve Choate, Ed Ward and Steve Rajeff for sharing their knowledge on the subject. I hope that in years to come more fly fishers will try the Skagit method when they fish their favorite Great lakes stream.

Rick Whorwood (CI, MCI,THCI) is from
Stoney Creek, Ontario, Canada

Presentation Casting: The Curved Casts

It is desirable to present a floating fly or a nymph to a shy fish in such a manner that the fly enters his sphere of vision before the line and leader, thus commanding his attention and triggering his feeding instincts before he has time to be distracted or become suspicious. To accomplish this it may be necessary to drop the leader on the water so that it curves around like a shepherd's crook.

For the *negative curve cast* use your double-tapered floating line and a fine tapered leader. Standing with your left foot forwards, cast with either the horizontal cast or sideways-overhead cast so that the line forms a horizontal entry as it extends. Underpower your forward cast with a fairly wide entry so that the leader falls in a curve to the right instead of straightening out.

To cast a negative curve to the left, use a backhand cast in exactly the same manner.

By reason of its nature the negative curve cast is difficult to perform with a long line or with a following wind, but the *positive curve cast* over comes these problems, and can be used with

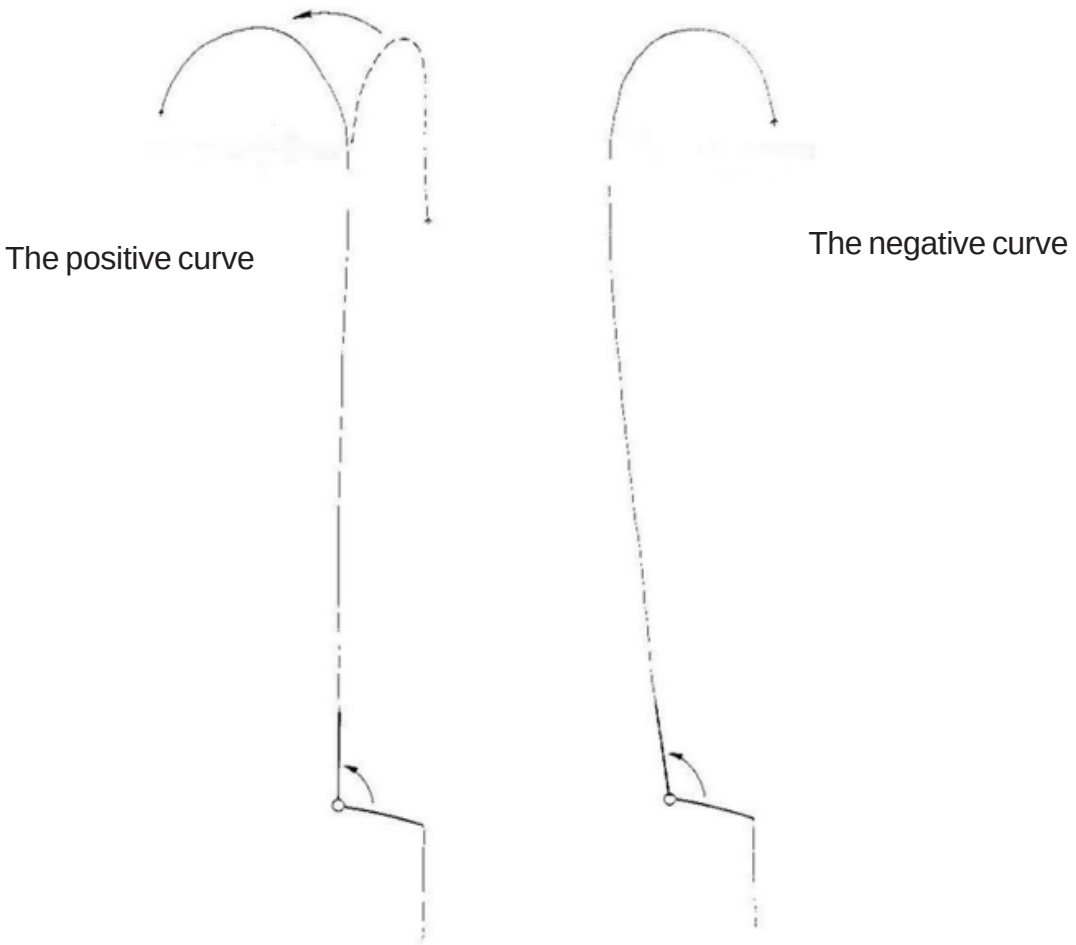

Figure 44. Plan of the curved casts

possibly a greater degree of precision. Furthermore, the positive curve cast may be used to place the fly behind an obstruction such as a rock or floating log.

Tackle for the positive curve should include a double-tapered floating line and a forward tapered leader. To throw a curve to the left, make a sideways-overhead cast with a narrow, almost horizontal entry, and use a little more power than would be necessary to cause the line to extend straight. The forward tapered leader should 'cowtail' around to the left, the fly alighting on the water first (See Figure 44). Be careful not to shoot too much line since the cast must check in the air in order to swing the fly to the left.

To cast a positive curve to the right, use a backhand-overhead cast.

Tower Casting *(continued from page 19)*

Immediately following the rapid lift of the rod at forty-five degrees you should begin to move your arms and rod into position for the forward cast, but without haste. As soon as the line, leader and fly have travelled upwards to their full extent, which is approximately when you have reached the correct position preparatory to the forward cast, the forward drive should be made, aiming high to counteract the downward trend of the line. Shoot the slack line as you would in the overhead cast, and bring the rod tip down in the follow through in accordance with the fall of the line to the water.

Practice with increasing lengths of line, right-handed and left-handed, shooting as much line as you can. Your maximum distance may be only about sixty feet, but the tower cast will enable you to fish your fly in some very productive waters wich might otherwise be passed by.

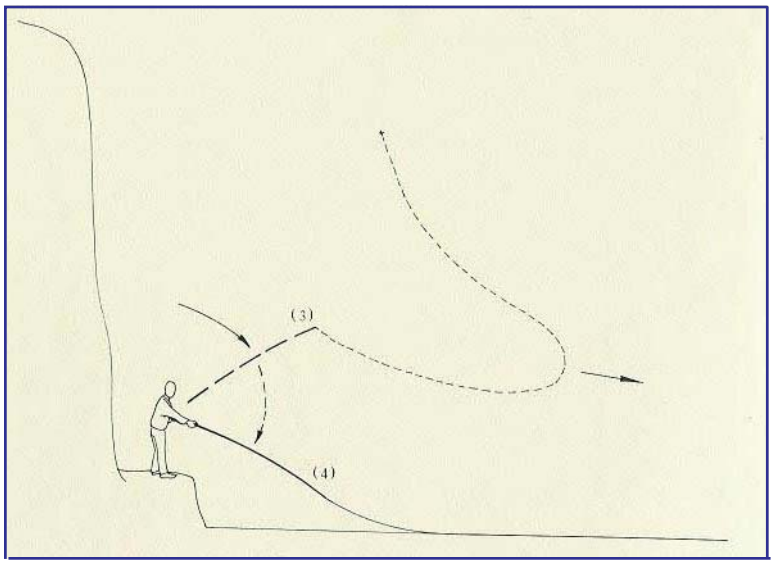

Figure 78. The forward cast and the low follow through.

Presentation Casting: The Curved Casts as well as *Tower Casting* were taken from the book 34 Ways to Cast a Fly by John G. Lynde. The book was printed in 1969 and we reprint the segments here with full credit to the author.

The interesting part of this for me (Denise here) is that the author and his wife lived in British Columbia and used to perform a 'Casting Ballet" with double-handed rods - to music. Early in my fishing career, I watched this performance and remember it well. Very nice casting! Watch for more segments from this book.

Great Lakes Skagit Casting

By Rick Whorwood

Mid-February 2006, I sat with anticipation awaiting the boarding announcement for the flight to Calgary. My thoughts drifted to spending the next few days with Tim Rajeff. How interesting this would be to have the opportunity to be with Tim and talk about the Airflo Skagit lines he designed; the same lines that I had been fishing with all last season. New to Airflo, the Skagit lines have the ability to turn over large flies and heavy sink tips. But more on this later!

Late summer of 2004, I sat in the same airport waiting for a flight west. On that occasion, I was to be part of a special group charged with *line testing* the new G. Loomis spey rods. This would be the first time we would actually get to see the entire collection of 24 rods ---- Traditional, Scandinavian, and Skagit. Other than the official unveiling at the Denver fly tackle dealers show; this would complete the G. Loomis project that had been a year in the making. It would also be the first time I would get to meet Marlow Bumpus.

Marlow along with Ed Ward, Dec Hogan and a number of other west coast anglers had been working on a casting style known as Skagit casting. The first evening before the three days of line testing, I was fortunate to get some *hands-on* instruction from Marlow. I quickly realized that this style of casting could open up many opportunities in our Great Lakes steelhead fishery. Being able to cast large (Bunny Strip wing) flies and heavy T-10 (tungsten) and T-14 tips would be a highly successful method here in the great lakes.

To get a better understanding of **'Skagiting'** I will review this method by breaking it down into its component parts: *the fish, flies, sink tips, rods and lines*. I will also touch on the casting style, as it suits the great lakes fishery.

The Fish (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) By late September and early October, Steelhead starts their migration into the great lake tributaries. These bars of chrome have fattened up out in the lakes praying on herring, alewives, smelt, chub, stickle back and other bait fish. Once they enter the rivers, they continue to predatorily feed.

Flies The great lakes has a history of different fly fishing methods; including the now infamous method known as *chuck and duck* and indicator dead drift fishing, to name a few. Ideally, the use of a small fly like a stonefly nymph or yarn flies that resemble a salmon egg are dead drifted along the bottom. This natural drift method is highly successful. When I began fishing with a two-handed rod, my mind set was to use smaller flies. I would often use streamer type flies in a size 6- 4 or 2's. I would never have considered flies sizes 1/0 or 3/0 as these were reserved for my western trips. A few years back, I had unsuccessfully worked a pool. I had taken a number of steelhead in this run before so I knew it should hold fish. As I opened my box and rummaged through it, I pulled out a Nicola; a rather large fly I had used successfully on a Thompson River trip in B.C. If memory serves me, I believe it was a 2/0. Midway down the pool, my fly was hammered by a steelhead. The more I thought about this the more it made sense - why not match the flies to the bait fish the steelhead had been feeding on all summer?

To reinforce this further, we need only to compare other angling methods. Pulling plugs and swinging flatfish, spoons and spinners have proved to be highly successful. My experience and these methods have convinced me to use Big Flies for Big Fish!

Sink tips As Steelhead move from the Great Lakes into the tributaries, their environment is constantly changing. Warm spells and cold fronts alternate varying the conditions for most of late September and early October. By the end of October, the Great Lakes region is in early winter mode with the weather progressively getting colder. In the early part of the fall, steelhead are more likely to chase down a fly offering. However, as the weather gets colder this is less likely. At this time, it's critical that you present your offering much closer to the bottom of the river. One of the challenges we face here in the great lakes region is the flow rates. An overnight shower can change the clarity and depth of a pool in short order. Fishing effectively means adapting to these ever-changing conditions. When Marlow Bumpus introduced me to the

Skagit system, it wasn't only the casting style that held my interest. The sink tip system that he and others in the Pacific northwest had been using was nothing short of genius.

His sink tip system was based on a total length of 12ft and built of sections of T-10 or T-14 and floating lines of 10wt and 12wt. The set of tips would start with 2ft of T-10 then 10ft of 10wt.floating line. Because the floating line section is 10 grains per-foot and the T-10 is 10 grains per-foot, the sink tip turns over without problems. The system has from 2-10ft of T-10, maintaining the 12 foot length by adding the appropriate length of floating line. The complete tip set also contains a straight piece of T-10 in lengths of 12 and 14feet. With the ever-changing river depths, this system can be adjusted to allow you to fish more effectively. What this means to the angler is that the tip length remains constant (12ft). This makes for a more fluid cast as the casting stroke and timing remain the same. My personal preference is to use the T-10 system for my 8/9 rod and the T-14 for my 9/10.

The ability to be able to change tips to suit the conditions and varying depths of different runs has increased my success rate. A good friend from western Canada, Bruce Kruk, taught me how to assemble these tips by splicing the T-10 and floating sections. Another option would be to use poly-leaders which I've found to be excellent when fishing the 6/7 or 7/8 Dredger/Skagit system.

Lines As mentioned earlier I had the opportunity to discuss with Tim Rajeff the ideas behind the Airflo Skagit lines

The Skagit head was designed to cast big heavy flies while getting the fly down deep to the fish. These heads are made up of a section of floating line containing enough mass (grain weight) to turn over the heavy tips and flies. A typical Skagit system for an 8/9 13'9" rod contains a section of floating 8/9wt. line joined to a sinking 12ft of T-10 (tungsten) tip. The combined line and tip measure about 45 feet.

The differences between the Traditional and Skagit lines lie in their weight to length ratio, the Skagit being much shorter. More concisely, a foot of Skagit line weighs more than a foot of Traditional line for the same rod wt. In terms of line design, Tim believes that the grain weight in the tip of the front taper needs to be sufficient enough to turn over the sinking portion of the line. A benefit of the Skagit head system allows the angler to change running or shooting lines and tips to suit the conditions. The over all length of most custom Skagit lines are 3.5 times the rod length. In our field tests, we found these lengths to suit our heads.

For clarity, I will combine the discussion on the Skagit cast and rod design action as they complement each other.

To understand the Skagit cast, it helps to review the single hand Belgian cast. The Belgian style cast (continuous tension cast) allows you use heavy tips and large flies. The idea behind the Belgian cast is to keep the rod under load (bent) throughout the entire casting cycle. In a typical single hand overhead cast the caster stops and pauses on the backcast. However stopping the rod on the backcast with a weighted line and fly can lead to disaster. Gravity sets in; the cast fails sometimes, resulting in damaged rods or impaled anglers. By keeping the rod under load you can make a cast with the heavy sink tip and weighted fly much easier with safety.

With this in mind let's look at the Skagit cast. The Skagit cast is slightly different than a traditional spey cast. With a traditional spey cast, the angler usually has more than 50+ ft. of line outside the rod tip throughout the cast. With this amount of line out, the casting stroke or spey movements, as I like to call them, are more pronounced (long line long stroke, short line short stroke).

Using a double spey cast as an example, let's look at the differences between a traditional Double and a Skagit Double. The traditional Double Spey demands that you sweep the line upstream then back around to form the D loop. Pausing to allow the longer line time to form this D loop, the caster then makes your forward cast. The Skagit Double makes the same sweep upstream, with only a slight pause, and then continues the casting stroke stopping only when the rod unloads at the forward stop. There are a number of spey casts that lend themselves to the Skagit style. They include: the Double Spey, Snap T, Circle "C" and a Skagit single with a Perry Poke.

(continued on page 13)

The Tower Cast

by John G. Lynde

Although the tower (or steeple) cast is derived from the overhead cast, I think it would be appropriate to group it with the Spey casts by reason of the conditions governing its use. It has been said that the Spey cast is extremely difficult to perform from a high bank; the tower cast is very easy to perform from such an eminence and since the line and fly are thrown above the angler's head instead of behind him as in the overhead cast, the tower cast makes it possible to fish even a canyon where neither cast would be feasible. Its chief limitation is that only a relatively short line can be cast.

The tower cast can be accomplished equally successfully with either your greased line or sunk fly outfit, and should be practiced both right-handed and left-handed. Since a high bank facilitates the tower cast, a suitable location should be selected.

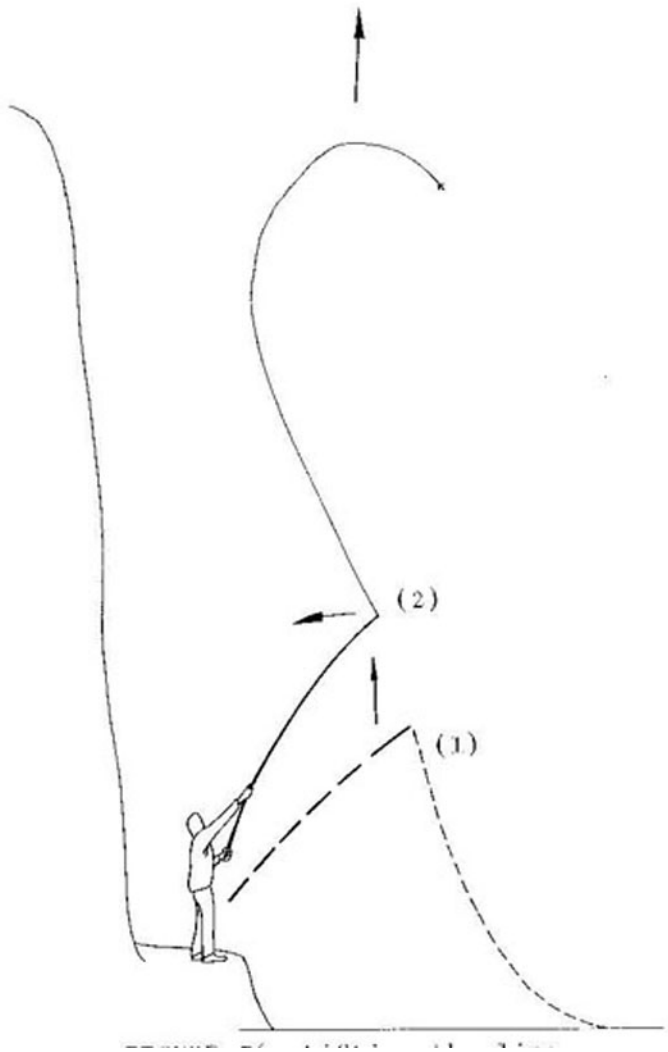

Figure 76. Lifting the line

Begin with about thirty feet of line. If you are fishing on the left bank, with the flow from right to left, stand with your right foot towards where you intend to cast and hold the rod for casting right-handed, with the butt as low as possible.

In the first phase, raise the rod to forty-five degrees. If this fails to surface nearly all the line, shorten it by pulling in the required amount of line with your left hand, catching it with your right forefinger. Most of the line should now be below the rod tip. In the second phase, lift the rod upwards as high as you can reach, maintaining the forty-five degrees angle: this will propel the line upwards in the form of a question mark (Fig.76). Immediately the lift has been completed, and while the line and fly are travelling upwards, move the rod into the vertical overhead cast position (Fig. 77). In the third phase, make a vertical overhead forward cast or a high wind cast, depending on circumstances. In the fourth phase, shoot line and follow through so that your rod tip stops close enough to the water to prevent retraction of the line by gravity. (Fig. 78).

The timing is by no means simple. The duration of the first phase depends on how long it takes to assemble the line below the rod tip without it becoming submerged after it has once been brought to the surface: it should still be in motion as you continue into the lift, or second phase.

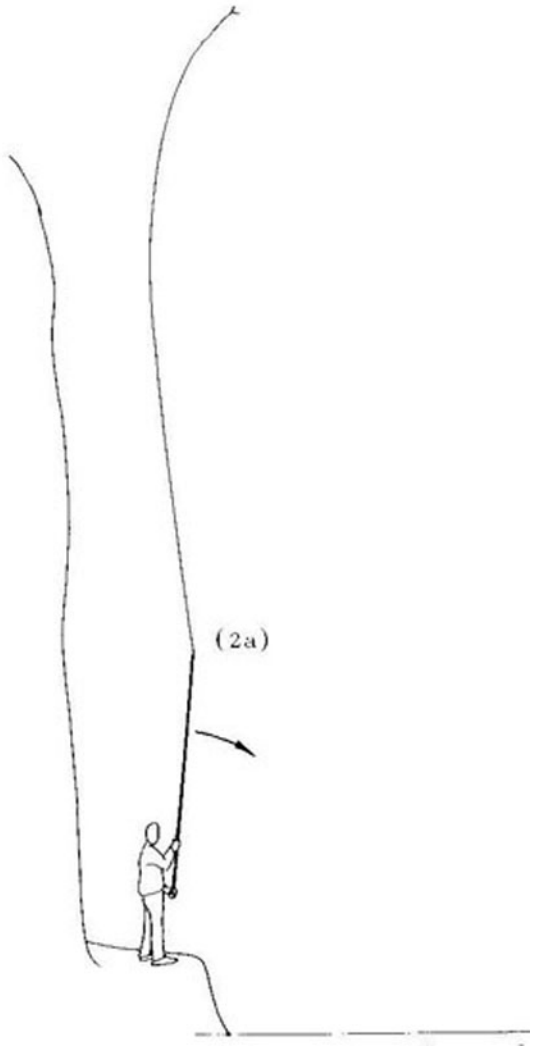

Figure 77. Ready for the forward cast

(Continued on page 15)

Coming Events for 2007

Fred Hall Show *San Francisco, CA*	*Feb 14 - 18, 2007*	*Instructor & Master* *John Till*
Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo *Itasca, IL (Chicago)*	*Feb 16 - 18, 2007*	*Instructor & Master* *John Breslin*
The Fly Fishing Show *San Rafael /Pleasanton, CA*	*Feb 23 -25, 2007*	*Instructor & Master* *John Till*
Kaufman Spey Clave *Seattle, WA*	*Feb 24 -25, 2007*	*THCI* *Dan McCrimmon*
Midwest Fly Fishing Expo *Warren, MI*	*Mar 2007*	*Instructor (only 1 spot available)* *Bruce Richards*
Fly Fish Texas *Athens, TX*	*Mar 3, 2007*	*CI Workshop Only* *Al Crise*
Fred Hall Show *Long Beach, CA* *(testing takes place at Long Beach Casting Club)*	*Mar 10 & 11, 2007*	**Instructor (3/10 Sat)* **Master (3/11 Sun)* *Joe Libeu*
Minneapolis, MN *Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo MN*	*Mar 30 - Apr 1, 2007*	*John Breslin* **Instructor & Master*
Redding, CA	*April 21- 22, 2007*	*Guy Manning* *CI Workshop Only*
Spey-O-Rama *San Francisco, CA* *For Additional Information, contact the Golden Gate Angling & Casting Club*	*April 13 - 15, 2007*	*Tim Rajeff*
Sandy River Spey Clave *Portland, OR*	*May 5 - 6, 2007*	*Al Buhr* *THCI*
Gulf Coast Council Conclave *Lake Charles, LA*	*May 19, 2007*	*Al Crise* *Instructor*

For additional testing opportunities, please check out the FFF Web site.
Please note the deadlines for registration.
Testing at these sites always depends on having people to give the test.
If you are a tester and will be attending any of these shows, please volunteer your time to help.

Good luck!