



Fly Fishers of the Bitterroot
Hamilton, Montana

NEWSLETTER FOR MARCH, 2010

THE MEETING

Boy, oh boy, have we got a full platter this time around. This newsletter will try to hit all the stuff going on, but you've better come to the meeting for all the grisly details. We will convene Tuesday, March 2 in the hallowed and increasingly crowded halls of BJ's located at 900 N. 1st Street, Hamilton. All the fun and general fish tails start at 6:00 pm and the program starts at 7:00 pm. Dinners and your favorite libation are available. And, there is an increasing plethora of fishing stories of current vintage. (We're not talking about Phil's huge steelhead ever again.)

THE SPEAKER

We will spend some time fishing in Alaska with Dick Powers, owner of Whalers Cove Lodge. This is Alaskan wilderness fishing at its finest. Dick and his wife are Bitterrooters.

THOSE WHO SPAKE

Since February was the potpourri, we all spake, some more than others.

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I have been out of town for two weeks and, from some reports, I have missed some good winter fishing on the Bitterroot. If you want solitude while fly fishing, then winter is the time. Nice warm winter afternoons can

make for some excellent fishing. By warm I mean in the 40's or 50's, which are not so unusual for the Bitterroot Valley in February and early March.

On returning to the Valley we drove along the Salmon River just over the hill. We saw many drift boats and bank fisherman between Salmon and North Fork but no one fly fishing. That probably means that the steelhead are still in the deeper holes and pretty much inaccessible to fly fisherman. Once they start to move up river to spawn there should be some pretty good fly fishing. The run last fall was large and most of these fish over winter in the Salmon-North Fork area or below before moving up river another 50 to 100 miles or so to spawn. Some complete a journey of almost 700 miles but remarkably that doesn't mean that they are not still in pretty good shape when they are in the North Fork area.

I wish I had better news about the snow pack. As of February 22, precipitation was at 58% of normal and snow water content at only 52% of normal. This will probably make for some pretty low river flows this summer, and, depending on the temperatures, possibly river closures. The Bitterroot has the lowest snow pack in Montana. In contrast, the Smith River basin is slightly above average. Thus, there could be good water conditions for those of you planning on going on Joe Sowerby's float trip, which I highly recommend. Hopefully, here in the Bitterroot we will get some significant late snow and some good rains in May and June, which will help the flows and lessen the fire danger.

Bob Pearcy, President

ODDS AND ENDS

Missing Net:

At the potpourri last meeting, a net offered for sale by Phil Romans has been declared missing and not paid for. Did any of you think the stuff on the white elephant table was freebies?

July Meeting:

Several members have asked why we do not have meetings in July and August. There are two reasons: Phil Romans, the first Club President, was gone on his Alaska trip and there was a feeling people were simply too busy in that period of visitors and travel. We have now scheduled our Pig Roast in August (see below). What do you think about a July meeting? Rich

Morrissey is taking comments on this topic and promises to be kind to all who offer their opinion

WWTG:

Howard Friedberg and Rich Morrissey, supplemented with off the cuff remarks by a few grizzled beards, will attempt to provide enlightenment about **Where** and **When To Go** fishing in and around our beloved Bitterroot. There will be a no-host lunch at Papa Bear's Den, which is part of Mitchell's Cafe. This fine establishment is located behind the Hamilton Fiesta en Jalisco and Victoria Station Casino in Tammany Square at the north end of Hamilton off Hwy 93. We will start at noon, Saturday, February 27. We will cover the Bitterroot main stem, both forks, major tributaries, the Blackfoot, Missouri, Clark's Fork, Browns Lake and Georgetown Lake. There will be handouts: hatch chart, maps, access info, fly identification, etc. And you can have all of our meager fund of knowledge. All secrets revealed, honestly. No charge.

Casting Clinic:

Free fly casting clinic for members of the Fly Fisher's of the Bitterroot. On March 6, at 9:00 AM on the south side of the Main Street Bridge in Hamilton, we will have a casting clinic. We will cast from 9:00 am to 10:00 am for beginners and anyone who wants' to review the basics of casting. It's a great opportunity to begin to practice for the season.

From 10:00 am to 11:00 am we will go over more advanced techniques. If you choose to take a look at the clinic in advance, please look up the CD by Joan Wulff "**Dynamics of Fly Casting**". You can purchase it online or on Amazon.com. I have one copy that I will loan.

The third hour will be "Tips and Techniques" plus some distance casting. At about noon, we'll head for lunch somewhere for those who are interested. If you have a friend who would like to attend this class, for liability purposes he or she must join the club. Membership applications will be available at the clinic. Membership dues are \$25. Casters must supply their own rods and reels, and must wear a hat and glasses. No flies with hooks will be used. Yarn will be available. Please call Phil Romans at 363-0744 to sign up, or email Phil at romans@aol.com. You may also sign up for the rowing class (below), but there is no date set as of now.

Rowing Class:

Look for a future announcement regarding a rowing class for members, coming soon. There will be a small donation requested for that class for gas to shuttle boats. If you have a friend who would like to attend this class, for liability purposes he or she must join the club. Membership applications will be available at the clinic. Membership dues are \$25. Floatation devices will be required for everyone on every boat. They will be supplied on each boat.

Fly Fishing Course for Hamilton High School:

Our Club, Fly Fishers of the Bitterroot, has been approached by representatives of Hamilton High School who asked us to put together a fly fishing class for its advanced physical education classes. We are asking the Hamilton chapter of Trout Unlimited to join with us in this project. It appears that there will be no or minimal cost to our clubs. However, the project will require substantial volunteer help, particularly in the casting instruction, to be successful. We would like as many fly fishers from both clubs to turn out to make this a winner. We have designed a tentative curriculum. The concept is to provide five sessions of ninety minutes each for two separate advanced PE classes, each having 30 students presumably, juniors and seniors). Five dates have been settled on:

Thursday, April 15, Monday, April 19, Friday, April 23, Tuesday, April 27 and Thursday, April 29. (Mark your calendars now!) On each of those days, we will teach two classes, one from 9:55 am to 11:25 am and the second from 12:38 pm to 2: 08 pm. (These are Hamilton HS's regular class schedules.)

The curriculum is heavily weighted to casting and based on the premise that you can only hold the students' attention for about 25 minutes at a time. Therefore, we will start each session with casting and end with casting with classroom time in the middle. The students will have a written test at the end of the five sessions, the test being designed by Hamilton High School staff who will attend the sessions. The casting can be accomplished outdoors or, if the weather is inclement, in the very large gymnasium. We are assembling rods. Chris Clancey has agreed to provide a power point presentation on fish identification and aquatic entomology as one classroom session. Eddie Olwell has agreed to provide the class on river safety. Jeff Gray has agreed to teach fishing knots. Our members can provide the balance of classroom instruction. Because of limited time, and

to avoid duplicative efforts of the Buggers Program, we will not teach fly tying.

We know that we will not reach every young adult taking these classes. But it is a wonderful opportunity to teach our fly fishing ethic to tomorrow's voters. Most of these young adults will remain in or return to the Bitterroot Valley. They will hold the future of this resource in their hands in the years to come. What better effort can we make than to teach these young folks our passion for our sport and our reverence for our resources?

We are currently contemplating inviting any of those interested in the class to attend, with a parent or guardian, our May members meeting. What is needed now is for the members of FFB and TU to generously donate their time and their passion for fly fishing to this effort.

Fly tying:

It's on! Wednesday evenings at the Hamilton Brewery. 5:30 pm. All skill levels welcome.

Membership:

As most of you already know, our Club started a dues program in September. The annual dues for an individual is \$25 and for a family, \$35. Please see Dorreen Romans, sitting in for Linda Powell, at the check in desk at our meeting or download an application form at www.flyfishersofthebitterroot.org. Just to brag a little, we already have over 70 paid members. Not bad for a little ole club. But more to the point, our Club is filled with activities and opportunities: a day fishing in a stocked pond for handicapped folks; stream bank restoration in conjunction with TU; the May Fly Fishing Clinic; Fly Fishing 101 at Hamilton High School; a casting clinic; a rowing class; Bitterroot River clean-up; the Pig Roast; various outings under the stewardship of our Cruise Director; and much more. If you yen to get involved, speak to any director or officer.

Pig Roast:

An early reminder: the Club's Pig Roast will be held Saturday, August 21 at Lake Como.

Told you it was a lot of stuff going on!

FOR FUN

Normally, I insert something humorous here. Today, I am going to exercise editorial license and do something else.

I believe:

That just because two people argue, that doesn't mean they don't love each other. And just because they don't argue, that doesn't mean they do love each other.

That sometimes when I'm angry I have the right to be angry, but that doesn't give me the right to be cruel.

That we don't have to change friends if we understand that friends change.

That no matter how good a friend is, they're going to hurt you every once in a while and you must forgive them for that..

That you can do something in an instant that will give you heartache for life..

That it's taking me a long time to become the person I want to be.

That you should always leave loved ones with loving words. It may be the last time you see them.

That you can keep going long after you think you can't.

That we are responsible for what we do, no matter how we feel.

That either you control your attitude or it controls you.

That heroes are the people who do what has to be done when it needs to be done, regardless of the consequences.

That money is a lousy way of keeping score.

That maturity has more to do with what types of experiences you've had, and what you've learned from them...and less to do with how many birthdays you've celebrated.

That it isn't always enough to be forgiven by others... Sometimes, you have to learn to forgive yourself.

That no matter how bad your heart is broken the world doesn't stop for your grief.

That our background and circumstances may have influenced who we are, but we are responsible for who we become.

Two people can look at the exact same thing and see something totally different.

THE AUTHOR

The flies are tied but all this stuff to do! I am ashamed to admit that I haven't fished yet. Hope that's not true for you. You can reach me at 406-381-5611 or rich@rkymtn.net. I encourage newsletter ideas.