



NEWSLETTER FOR JUNE, 2009

THE MEETING

We will meet Tuesday, June 2 at BJ's located at 900 N. 1st Street, Hamilton. (It hasn't moved from that last time we convened there.) General fish tails start at 6:00 pm and the program starts at 7:00 pm. Dinners and your favorite libation are available. Just to set it up, you will be quite alone if you show up for Club meetings in July and August, 'cause there ain't any. You should be fishing instead of hanging with old farts. But, of course, there will be somebody show up then, so we'll have a candid camera ready for you. And while it isn't an official member meeting, we will hold the July 11 Pig Roast at lake Como (see below).

THE SPEAKER

Michael Howell, owner and editor of the Bitterroot Star and founding member of the Bitterroot Protection Association, will speak to us about the recent Montana Supreme Court decision on the Mitchell Slough.

THOSE WHO SPAKE

Dave Schmetterling, FWP fish biologist based in Missoula, gave us an illuminating talk on the effects, current and expected, of the removal of the Milltown Dam on Clark Fork and Blackfoot River fisheries. Thank you, Dave.

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

River Safety Reminder

It has been awhile since the news of Dick Galli and his tragic river accident touched us all on May 6. According to news reports, three fishermen in a raft became entangled in shrubs or debris on the Bitterroot River downstream from Anglers Roost. Their raft overturned, ejecting all three. Two men made it to safety and the third, Dick, continued downstream where he became hung up on other debris. Imagine if you can, trying to swim in high and fast waters of the Bitterroot during this seasonal snow melt condition while hypothermia begins to settle in. It's easy to look back at this tragedy and second-guess those involved.

Truth is most of us can probably put ourselves in those same conditions. We all make mistakes. Some of us have experienced a dunk or two and can relate to that hypothermia feeling in water so cold even breathing is a struggle. I have been dumped from my kick-boat and experienced the struggle of getting my thoughts together for a successful recovery.

With today's safety equipment, including rafts that tame the meanest rivers, and communications devices that keep us in touch with the push of a button, it's easy to downplay the dangers we face as anglers each day. And while it's hardly fun to consider what may go wrong, doing so just might save your life.

It all starts with life jackets, but doesn't end there. What would you do if your boat overturned or sprung a major leak, or lost a couple oars? What would you do if a member of your party suffered a heart attack? Preparation and preplanning is everything. Playing through potential scenarios makes you consider and hopefully address circumstances that can lead to disaster. Give it some thought each time you enter the water, whether it be a lake or a river. Discuss with

your floating group what they might do should an emergency present itself. Your life or that of a friend or loved one may depend on it.

Please, be safe.
Ed Couchman

PIG ROAST

The First Annual FFB Pig Roast is happening Saturday, July 11 at Lake Como. Start time is 5 pm. The Club will provide: roast pig (and two inebriated roasters), Couchman Dutch oven baked beans, paper plates, plastic tableware, plastic cups, bbq sauces, paper towels, extra tp, garbage bags and so forth. Bob Fickett and Rich Morrissey will purchase from their own meager retirement funds a keg of beer and place an empty can in front of it in hopes of some recoupment. If you wish to quaff anything else, BYOB. There are no restrictions on having alcohol at Lake Como.

All Club members and Club wannabes plus guests from far away states are eligible to attend. Bring your houseguests. There will be no cost per se but we will pass the hat for donations. You are also asked to bring a side dish. If your last name starts with a letter in the following categories, please bring the item(s) indicated. Our preliminary estimates are that about 80 folks will attend. So bring your item(s) for about 40 folks. If your last name starts with:

A thru G: bring a potato salad, pasta salad or green salad
H thru L: bring rolls, corn muffins or potato chips
M thru R: bring desserts
S thru Z: bring appetizers

We will be in the second picnic area on the north (right) side of Lake Como. There are five large picnic tables and several of us will bring additional folding tables. You should bring camp chairs for your party. There is an outhouse. The Forest Service levies a \$5.00 parking fee per vehicle. These permits can be obtained at Forest Service offices throughout the Valley and there are forms to fill out at the Lake. For us old farts, the Golden Eagle Pass is sufficient.

There will be casting contests for accuracy and distance. Some rumors are circulating about a cast off between panda food and graphite. In addition, we are

working on a spey casting demo and lessons. Modest prizes will be available.

Now, listen up folks, it's impossible to plan this kind of event without knowing fairly accurately as to the number of attendees. There will be signup sheets at our June regular monthly member meeting. In addition, you can call Rich Morrissey at 381-5611 but **PLEASE** tell us if you're coming and how many will come with you.

SMITH RIVER FLOAT REPORT

The intrepid dozen (and soon to be dirty dozen) Set out on May 19 for five glorious days of spectacular scenery, great camping, belt loosening eating and not a little alcohol. But, truth be told (just this once), the fishing amounted to a large low pressure zone. The water was turbid and dark. If your fly happened to knock a fish on the head, you had a chance of catching one. But this reporter recalls that a four fish day was top doggie. In a not unexpected turn, the Haglunds and Denny Westover caught the biggest and most. But the best part was the morning when Cliff Gibbons (our former prez) was ensconced on the camp throne enjoying nature at its best when one of a small herd of mule does caught sight of him and rushed at him with amorous intent. Cliff only saved his species purity by losing his dignity in standing up and waving off the doe eyed doe. There was also a little grumbling about the snoring level in the boy's town tent. Oh, well.

From the Hamilton Chapter of Trout Unlimited:

With the advent of warm – or at least warmer- weather, the streams are starting to come up briskly, but most lakes are still snowbound, so the expectant angler must expand his or her catalog of diversions. Here are a couple of things to ease the pain until the water comes down.

1. Article on the John and Elna Foust. John and Elna are certainly a couple of living legends, and not just locally. There is a lovely article about them in the May/June issue of Montana Magazine. The article was written by Rob Breeding, a former editor of the Ravalli Republic. You might want to head down to Chapter One Book Store in Hamilton and pick up the magazine. The magazine has a website, but this article is not viewable.

2. The “Boo Boys”. The same issue of Montana Magazine has an article about

Glenn Brackett and the Sweetgrass Rod Company. Glenn and a number of others left RL Winston a few years ago to start their own bamboo rod company and to pursue excellence and craftsmanship in the construction of cane rods. A few locals who will remain anonymous now have one of these rods after a long wait. The Boo Boys, who include long-time TU leader Jerry Kustich, have a terrific website which will have you wracking your brain and wallet trying to justify ordering one of these pieces of usable art. <http://www.sweetgrassrods.com> The article also has a photo of Glenn's legendary split bamboo bicycle which has become a feature in Twin Bridges. You have to buy the magazine to see this article, too.

3. The Norman Maclean Reader. Another reason to visit Chapter One is to grab a copy of the new Norman Maclean Reader, a collection of essays, letters and other pieces by Norman Maclean. Maclean is best known as author of A River Runs Through It. This compilation of Maclean's writing has a number of pieces never published before, including sketches for a book about Custer's Last Fight. The collection was edited by O. Alan Weltzien, an English professor at U Montana Western in Dillon, and he has contributed a superb introduction. Although not included in this collection, one of Maclean's stories that appeared in the same book as A River Runs Through It deals with early day Hamilton and Blodgett Canyon. This story, USFS 1919: The Ranger, The Cook and A Hole in The Sky, has no fish in it, but it is also a must read for every local. See if you can figure out where the bar, the drug store and the hotel were located in 1919 Hamilton.

4. 30th Anniversary BRTU Banquet. Planning is underway for the 2009 BRTU Banquet which will be Friday, September 25. If you would like to assist us, donate a unique item, or have an idea, please let me know by responding to Marshall Bloom at drtrout@mtbloom.net.

THE ERRATA

Fly Tying:

The Wednesday evening fly tying at the Brewery in Hamilton is suspended for the summer.

Cruises:

Cruise Director Pierre reports that ice is off Georgetown Lake. (And Skalkaho may open.) A number of us have gone the long way round and fished it. Each trip got better, with the last reported trip to be by Leon Powell and Rich Morrissey on May 26 who each caught about 20 fish in Piney Bay (all on red chironomids). One of Leon's tally was a gorgeous measured 24 inch rainbow. Pierre will organize a group outing to Georgetown the first week of June. Signup

sheets for carpooling, etc, are to be available at the June member meeting. Keep tying those chironomids.

For Fun:

I rear-ended a car this morning. So, there we were alongside the road and slowly the other driver got out of his car. You know how sometimes you just get soooo stressed and little things just seem funny?

Yeah, well I couldn't believe it... he was a DWARF!!! He stormed over to my car, looked up at me, and shouted, 'I AM NOT HAPPY!'

So, I looked down at him and said, 'Well, then which one are you?'

And then the fight started...

THE AUTHOR

It's still me because nobody else has experienced the temporary insanity which caused me to volunteer. But I'm always open to suggestions. You can reach me at 406-381-5611 or **rich@rkymtn.net**. I encourage intelligent input and generally discourage the other kind. Rich