



## **NEWSLETTER FOR FEBRUARY, 2012**

### **THE MEETING**

Since we're all sitting around waiting for winter to happen, might as well get together and recall the fishing of seasons past and the good times to come. We shall convene our seasonally truncated group at our usual meeting on the first Tuesday of February, being February 7, at BJ's located at 900 N. 1st Street, Hamilton. General fish tails start at 6:00 pm and the program starts at 7:00 pm.

### **THE SPEAKER**

Drew Miller is a guide and outfitter for the Grizzly Hackle Fly Shop in Missoula Montana. He was born in Southwestern Pennsylvania where he grew up fishing the technical streams of the East Coast. Drew eventually followed his dream and moved to Montana where he has been guiding for 15 years. During that time he has traveled the world pursuing his dream in such places as Chile, Mexico, Belize and Alaska. Drew prides himself on teaching clients and others about fly fishing and fly tying techniques for trout, salmon, steelhead and saltwater species. Drew enjoys spending time away from fishing with his beautiful wife Nicole and his yellow Lab Max.

Join Drew as he presents "Fly Fishing for Spring Steelhead on the Clearwater River, ID". Drew has been chasing these sea run rainbows for over 20 years and offers full disclosure on some of his steelhead tactics. The Clearwater River in Idaho is home to one of the largest steelhead strains in the lower 48. Spring fishing on this large river and some of its tributaries can be truly exciting. Combine the understanding of how fish move and feed during the unstable spring condition with several fly fishing tactics and you can catch these fish.

### **THOSE WHO SPAKE**

The January program was a delightful video composite of photos of our members, usually grinning manically while holding some elongated example of the piscine species. "What we did last summer" was put together by Bob Pearcy and Jeff Lowe. I understand copies of the video may be available to members and a copy should be at the February meeting to play for those who missed it.

## **THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Welcome to the New Year! I want to thank Rich Morrissey for the last newsletter. He introduced the new board and thanked those who so faithfully served and have now resigned.

As I take over the helm of President I am in gratitude to those who have held this office previously. One of the things that is so vital about the founding of this club and the succession of officers is that almost all are still actively involved. Their passion for fly fishing and the club activities is still strong.

That leads me to the encouraging you to become as involved as you desire. In most organizations 10-20% of the members do 90% of the work. I believe we do better than that. However, we need you to serve where you can. We have many opportunities to contribute. Here is an incomplete list:

- Trout Unlimited has the "Buggers" program to teach young people how to tie flies which begins in February. Details to follow.
- FFB May Fly Fishing Clinic, led by Greg Chester and Cathy Lowe.
- Special Needs day of fishing a Stafford Pond in July, Leon Powell has organized this for three years and this will be his last.
- The Annual Picnic in August at Lake Como.
- There are various activities that come up throughout the year that are announced at the meetings and in the minutes.

Lastly, our new Program Chairman, Jay Melzer, has a wonderful lineup of speakers for the spring and early summer. Speakers from various parts of Montana and the West. At our February 7th meeting we have Drew Miller the lead guide from Grizzly Hackle Fly Shop speaking on "Fly Fishing for Spring Steelhead on the Clearwater River, ID".

We look forward to seeing you at the next meeting.

Jim Cline, President

## **FLY OF THE MONTH**

The Klinkhamer Special  
*by Frank Murabito*

The Klinkhamer Special is a fly of European origin that has proven effective as a cripple/emergent pattern the world over. It is more of a style than a specific pattern in that it can be tied in different colors,

materials and sizes to imitate a wide range of different mayflies. The consistent features are the hook shape, the parachute wing and the peacock herl thorax. The hook is a fine-wire scud type hook which has the advantage of providing a large hook gape but a short shank for the body. Thus the pattern here is a size 10 hook but it has a body length of about a size 14 mayfly tied on a standard dry fly hook. The hook is bent with needle nose pliers about 3/16 inches (For a size 10 hook) behind the eye to provide a flat spot for the thorax and to give a greater drop down of the abdomen and shuck below the surface. This is easier for larger rather than smaller hook sizes that require a shorter flat spot. Alternatively, Partridge and Daiichi manufacture Klinkhamer hooks with the proper bend. The peacock herl abdomen is the most difficult step as the herl is quite fragile. To increase the strength and prevent unraveling if a strand breaks, tie in three herl strands and twist with the tying thread to make a rope of peacock herl.

### Recipe

Hook: Tiemco 2487 #10

Thread: Tan, 8/0 or 12/0

Wing: White Antron or polypropylene yarn

Shuck: Zelon

Thorax: Peacock herl

Abdomen: Tan thread

Hackle: Medium ginger



### Secrets of Fly Floatants

*Bob Percy*

A fishing buddy, Ken, and I were on the banks of Slough Creek last fall speculating about what the fly floatant Frog's Fanny really is and other mysteries of driers and floatants. Voila, an article in this month's issue of "The California Fly Fisher" lays it all out and Ken has extracted the nuggets of wisdom that are most useful. I thought I would pass them on.

- 1) Gel or paste type floatants- There are many brands. Nearly all are silicon-based. An advantage is that part of a fly can be waterproofed, leaving the rest to sink. This is important for emergers and cripples.
- 2) Frog's Fanny- a hydrophobic fumed silica powder that leaves a water-repellent residue on the fly.
- 3) Tiemco Dry Magic - a gel floatant, but the only one that is formulated for CDC as it is non-matting. Use it sparingly on CDC, followed by a hydrophobic powder such as Frog's Fanny.
- 3) Shimazaki Dry Shake and Loon Top Ride- are combination products containing both silica gel (drier) and hydrophobic fumed silica floatant powder. Good for CDC. You can make your own as described below.

Commercially available substitutes for name-brand products:

- 1) For the gel and paste floatants, the most widely used substitute is Unscented Albolene Cleanser, available in most department stores. There is no substitute for the Tiemco Dry Magic.

2) A powder equivalent to Frog's Fanny, etc. is sold for bow hunting as Gateway Feather Powder. Do a Google Product Search for "Gateway Feather Powder" for sources and best prices.

3) The silica gel type desiccants are available in bulk as "silica gel flower drying crystals", maybe in craft stores.

4) You can make your own Dry Shake or Top Ride by combining the silica gel crystals with Gateway Feather Powder in a 50:50 ratio by volume.

For recharging desiccants, including combo types such as Dry Shake, the author recommends microwaving the stuff on high for about 30 seconds for two cycles, allowing the crystals to cool between cycles. For the combo products, it may be necessary to replenish the fumed silica powder (Gateway or Frogs Fanny) to restore the 50:50 mix because some of the powder stays on the flies when you treat them.

Notes added by Bob:

There are a few liquid fly floatants as well. Some are sprays that I have not tried while for others you dip the fly in the liquid. In the classic book "Trout" by Ray Bergman published in 1952, he recommends dissolving paraffin wax in white gas (naptha, Coleman Camping Fuel). It works! Additionally, Great Divide Outfitters fly shop in the Big Hole sells small bottles of a liquid floatant. Whatever it is, it is obviously home-made (the label is scotch taped on), but it works very well. After a fish, I usually rinse and blot the fly, dip it in the floatant and then false cast to dry it. There are also some "permanent" fly treatments such as Loon Hydrostop that must dry overnight before using the fly. I have heard that Scotch Guard for upholstery is effective at more or less permanently floating a fly when used in this way but I have not tried it.

### **Volunteers needed for the Bitterroot Buggers fly tying and fly fishing class.**

Tuesday, 2/14, 6:30 - 8:00 PM in the Westview School gymnasium located at 9th and Main in Hamilton.

Enter through the east doors facing 9th St.

Pattern: Black Woolly Buzzer

Don't forget to pick up a raffle ticket each night you help - there'll be a drawing for volunteers in April for a unmounted Monte Dolak print valued at \$175. The more you attend, the better your chances!

We'll be judging flies each night for those students choosing to enter. Be sure to pick up judging criteria sheet and instructor guidelines when you arrive.

Questions? Call Jeff at Western Flies and Guides (363-9099) or

Ria of the Keystone Program (363-5996)

Thanks in advance for your valued assistance -

BRTU and Keystone Enrichment Program

## **ODDS AND ENDS**

### **Fly tying:**

Every Wednesday evening, 5:30, at the Brew Pub.

### **FOR FUN**

Old story but still good to know!!

Railroad tracks.

The U.S. standard railroad gauge (distance between the rails) is 4 feet, 8.5 inches. That's an exceedingly odd number.

Why was that gauge used? Because that's the way they built them in England, and English expatriates designed the U.S. railroads.

Why did the English build them like that? Because the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the pre-railroad tramways, and that's the gauge they used.

Why did 'they' use that gauge then? Because the people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools that they had used for building wagons, which used that wheel spacing.

Why did the wagons have that particular odd wheel spacing?

Well, if they tried to use any other spacing, the wagon wheels would break on some of the old, long distance roads in England, because that's the spacing of the wheel ruts.

So, who built those old rutted roads?

Imperial Rome built the first long distance roads in Europe (including England) for their legions. Those roads have been used ever since.

And the ruts in the roads? Roman war chariots formed the initial ruts, which everyone else had to match for fear of destroying their wagon wheels.

Since the chariots were made for Imperial Rome, they were all alike in the matter of wheel spacing. Therefore, the United States standard railroad gauge of 4 feet, 8.5 inches is derived from the original specifications for an Imperial Roman war chariot. In other words, bureaucracies live forever.

So the next time you are handed a specification, procedure or process, and wonder, 'What horse's ass came up with this?', you may be exactly right.

Imperial Roman army chariots were made just wide enough to accommodate the rear ends of two war horses ...

Now, the twist to the story:

When you see a space shuttle sitting on its launch pad, you will notice that there are two big booster rockets attached to the sides of the main fuel tank. These are solid rocket boosters, or SRBs. The SRBs are made by Thiokol at their factory in Utah.

The engineers who designed the SRBs would have preferred to make them a bit larger, but the SRBs had to be shipped by train from the factory to the launch site. The railroad line from the factory happens to run through a tunnel in the mountains, and the SRBs had to fit through that tunnel. The tunnel is slightly wider than the railroad track, and the railroad track, as you now know, is about as wide as two horses' behinds.

So, a major space shuttle design feature of what is arguably the world's most advanced transportation system was determined over two thousand years ago by the width of a horse's ass.

Now you know, Horses' Asses control almost everything...

Explains a whole lot of stuff, doesn't it?

## **THE AUTHOR**

Judy and I are anticipating the skwala hatch and all the fishing to follow. We look forward to seeing each and all of you at our meetings and on the water this year. You can reach me at 406-381-5611 or richmorrisey@q.com. I encourage newsletter ideas.