



January 2014 Newsletter

**January meeting – Tuesday January 7th at 6pm
BJ's Restaurant - Hamilton**

Happy New Year fellow Fly Fishers! The sun is shining, the birds are singing and the flowers are blooming. Wait! That's only happening in Key West – here we're still chipping ice out of the woodpile and fantasizing visions of ice-free streams and Skwala stoneflies being sucked under the surface by hungry rainbows. Spring hasn't sprung yet but it's just around the corner so it's time to fill those fly boxes with your favorite killer patterns, clean your fly lines and patch those leaky waders.

It's also time for New Years Resolutions. You know, loose weight, clean out the storage shed, and paint the barn – dull stuff like that. Why not make a resolution you will enjoy doing and are likely to keep – MORE FLY FISHING IN 2014

The (Incoming) Presidents Message

Happy New Year everyone! May you all have many tight lines this coming year and maybe the fish of your life. I am looking forward to the upcoming year and the many events that are on the club's schedule. As a volunteer organization we (the club president and the board) rely on your support and interest to function. As your new President I ask for everyone's support, for it is that support that has made this organization the success it is today.

In the doldrums of winter I urge you to take advantage of some of our warm winter afternoons (40-50s) that can offer some excellent fishing – you will find little competition.

Be sure and join us on January 7 for our annual video composite of photos of our members past fishing year. Always enjoyable.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any suggestion for club activities etc. at sduff1@aol.com.

May we all cry fish on many times this year.

Doug Duff,
President.

The (Outgoing) Presidents Message

As we begin 2013, I realize how thankful I am for this club. In a conversation with its founder, Phil Romans, a few days ago we reviewed our purpose and contributions to the fly fishing community. We have a lot to be proud of and it really revolves around you the members and your board of directors.

I personally want to thank all of you for your attendance and participation. Too numerous to name are the people who have given so much time and energy to

making this club what it is. To all the board members, past and present. To volunteers and fund raisers involved in river restoration and charitable giving.

Highlights to remember:

- Great monthly programs arranged by Jay Melzer.
- Informative, entertaining newsletters from Rich Morrissey.
- First participation in "Casting For Recovery", with Peg Miskin
- May Fly Fishing Clinic, thanks to Kathy Lowe, Greg Chester and others.
- Bitterroot Water Forum restoration of a bank on the East Fork with Heather Mullee.
- Stafford Pond Special Needs Day with Leon Powell and crew.
- Enjoyable Annual BBQ at Steve Lilburn's with Rich Morrissey at the grill.
- Wonderful flies tied by Frank, Greg, Chuck, Phil, Dave and others.

I know I missed some events and folks, please forgive my memory, but know that we will be hard at work planning events and programs for 2013.

See you Tuesday night,
Jim Cline

The rumors you've heard in local literary circles are true. Yes, the venerable Rich Morrissey has retired as Newsletter Editor.

After umpteen years of faithful service as your Editor and dispenser of fly-fishing wisdom Rich will be taking a well-deserved break. Perhaps now he'll have time to finish the great American novel – the one he's been working on since eighth grade. Thanks, Rich, for enriching our lives and expanding our vocabulary with your prose.

After an exhaustive worldwide search (Sula to Missoula) I was chosen (coerced) into becoming your new Editor. My plan is to carry on the work of my predecessor and perhaps expand the scope of the Newsletter in several areas. I have always felt that aside from the camaraderie, the exchange of information both inside and outside our meetings was of great value. Knowing where to fish and what to do when you get there is information we all want and need. The verbal exchange of information at our meeting has some value but even better, I believe, is a thorough written trip report that includes detailed information about the location, the fish and the best technique for catching them. Accordingly, I've included a Trip Report in this issue on one of my favorite still waters, Quake Lake. I have persuaded several other members

to contribute Trip Reports and they will appear in future issues. I encourage all of our members to consider submitting a report and photos, if available, on a particularly successful outing. Email your report to me at dwwestover@comcast.net .

I also encourage our members to contribute articles of a technical nature that may benefit our members. We are a club rich in experience (translation – lots of old farts among our members) and the newsletter is a great way to share information on techniques, gear, boats and successful fly patterns.

“I fish better with a lit cigar; some people fish better with talent”. ~Nick Lyons, Bright Rivers, 1977

The January meeting program will be the “Annual FFB Slide Show”. Jeff Lowe has been busy assembling the photos members have submitted depicting their piscatorial triumphs during 2013. Don’t miss the annual parade of photoshopped fish and plastic grins – heck, this year we might even see a shot of Phil Romans with a trout longer than 8 inches!!

Our December meeting speaker was scheduled to be Tim Tollet, owner of Frontier Anglers in Dillon, MT. Unfortunately the severe cold and snow at that time prevented Tim from making the trip over the mountains to our Club meeting. Tim will, however, be our speaker at the May meeting. Tim is a very knowledgeable lake and stream fisherman and certainly worth waiting for – put the first Tuesday in May on your calendars now!!

Trip Report – Quake Lake

Most Montanans are familiar with Quake Lake. Many of us have driven by the lake on our way to fish the rivers and streams in and around Yellowstone Park. I suspect, however, that the majority of our club members have never stopped to fish this very productive stillwater.

Quake Lake was formed as a result of a significant earthquake that occurred on August 17, 1959. Over 80 million tons of rock and earth separated from Sheep

Mountain and hurtled down onto the Madison River effectively damming the river and killing 28 people camped in the Madison River Valley. The river backed up behind the slide and over a 30-day period created what is now Quake Lake.

The Corps of Engineers hastily constructed a spillway and eventually the Madison resumed its flow below the dam. Quake Lake lies between the Hebgen Lake dam (upstream) and the rock and earthen dam formed by the slide (downstream). This natural impoundment restricts the migration of its resident fish and provides almost ideal conditions for both fish and insects.

The first few miles of river below Hebgen Dam are genuine tail water with easy wading access and as a result are heavily fished. Even though pressured the stream fishes well and is worth wading for an afternoon if you tire of fishing the Lake. The tail water eventually becomes the Lake about two miles below Hebgen Dam.

Here the current slows and flows over shallow flats covered with a thick carpet of various aquatic plants. This is prime insect habitat and produces impressive callibaetis hatches (especially spinner falls) in July and August. The fish that feed here are smart and selective but can be fooled with a size 14 callibaetis spinner or emerger. Further down stream the lake deepens and widens and the current becomes almost imperceptible. Water here is 12 to 20 feet deep and ideal chironomid habitat. Shallower shorelines and flats produce healthy callibaetis and damsel hatches in late July and all through August. Here you are fishing timber – the still remaining forest that once was the valley floor. The most productive technique here is chironomids fished under an indicator in 12 to 18 feet of water. Fish your fly 1-2 feet off the bottom with 4x fluorocarbon. Size 12, 14 and 16 black or olive seems to be the most productive patterns. Occasionally brown or red will be on the menu. Bloodworms are effective early in the season (late July) and a callibaetis nymph fished under an indicator can be effective.

Early morning (7am or first light) until noon seems to be the most productive time for chironomids but I have had days when the catching was good until 4pm. The lake holds brown trout, rainbows, very big mountain whitefish and an occasional cutthroat or brookie. The average fish is 17 "to 18" – expect to release several fish over 22" in average day. My largest fish from Quake was a 10+ lb rainbow hooked on a #16 black chironomid.

If chironomids aren't producing try a Rickards Stillwater Nymph or bead Head Woolly Bugger fished on an Aqua Lux or Type II line with 12-14 feet of 4x leader.

Four to five inch steady pulls with four to five second pauses between pulls is a productive retrieve – but as always with lake fishing, be ready to vary your retrieve. Mini leeches (12 and 14) fished under an indicator and retrieved in slow 4 inch pulls are sometimes effective.

August is dry fly time on Quake especially in the early afternoon and the go-to fly is a 12 or 14 callibaetis dry or emerger fished on a 12-14 foot 4 or 5X leader . Hoppers and Spruce moth dries are productive in mid August through September. Prior to mid July the lake is usually off color because of runoff from Beaver Creek and Cabin Creek, which flow into the lake. Check with Blue Ribbon Flies (406 646 7642) in West Yellowstone or The Slide Inn (Kelly Galloup) (406 682 4804) for current conditions.

Quake Lake weather is usually very predictable. Mornings are normally calm and cool. Around 1pm a thermal wind blows down the lake and produces significant wave action. The wind doesn't usually affect the fishing but keep a close eye on the weather – if it continues to deteriorate head for the ramp.

Quake is most effectively fished from a boat or pontoon boat. If you use a pontoon boat I recommend you not venture more than a mile from the launching ramp. If you are downwind when the afternoon wind blows in you will get plenty of exercise getting back to the ramp. Car topper boats and drift boats are the ideal platforms for fishing Quake. A gas or electric motor is a necessity as the most productive fishing is up lake of the ramp. Be sure you have enough power to beat your way into 15 mph wind and waves! Be sure you have fore and aft anchors and plenty of holding power or you will be going for a sleigh ride when the wind blows.

From the launching ramp make a U-turn and go about a mile east up lake and find a spot in the timber about 18 feet deep. If you aren't into fish within 30 minutes move to another spot and keep moving until you find fish. Also, don't hesitate to change patterns and size and/or vary the depth you are fishing.

Quake is never crowded and on many occasions we have been the only boat in the area we are fishing. Give it a try – I think you will enjoy the scenery and the fishing!

P.S. If you have specific questions call or email me.

Denny Westover

dwwestover@comcast.net

206 605 0404



Quake Lake timber and healthy brown taken in mid August.

Your Editor received a hand scrawled note in the mail recently signed in pencil by someone who called himself "San Juan Worm". He claimed to have something to contribute to our Club Newsletter and asked for a dozen size 16 Olive Quigley Cripples in return. A late night meeting was arranged at the Wally Crawford put in and under cover of darkness a small fly box was exchanged for the essay published below. The mysterious stranger promised to contact me again – perhaps there are more essays in our future.

Mesmerized

by San Juan Worm*

I haven't put much stock in all this discussion about fussing 'round with the genetics of things. I suppose there could be some good come out of tweaking some infinitesimal part of something else so small you can't see it without a gazillion dollar microscope. Reminds me of trying to see the eyes on some of the flies in my battered plastic cases. At least the magnifiers I am forced to carry around my neck when astream only cost a couple of bucks, not a gazillion.

Anyway, I know well-meaning guys in white frocks are about here and there swirling beakers with what looks like urine samples. And all to make something good

for us, like a potato genetically altered to immunize us from beriberi or acne. They even put one of those labs just upstream from where I fish. It looks harmless, but I guess if you hear the horn blow, you grab your waders where they leak and kiss it goodbye. The stories they tell children around here is the stuff of Hollywood about genetic mutations run wild, like a Japanese monster flic on steroids. Honestly, now, all it is is feckless imaginations using illegal chemicals instead of good old bourbon as stimulant. None of this really concerns me because Nature does the same thing all the time. Yes, Mother herself tweaks these little code things and makes slightly different subspecies all the time. That's why we don't all resemble sea cucumbers, except for my Uncle Rankin. We've evolved. It's Darwin, Baby! It's Mother Nature as an unredeemed genetic gambler.

But what's happening on my favorite trout stream has gotten out of hand. (If you think I'm going to tell you what and where my favorite trout stream is, you're not a trout guy. It's the military policy: you don't ask and I don't tell.) I will tell you that the river is largely a rainbow fishery with more than adequate hatches. I last divulged its existence and location to my first born after he turned 25. My other spawn have to wait.

Lately, the trout have been undergoing rapid and significant alteration, in strange ways. First, they are jumping more. And I don't mean after hapless flies in some hatch. No, they are leaping clear the way salmon and steelhead do when they reach freshwater. I was always told that this leaping was an attempt to splash off the sea lice which attach themselves to the salmon and steelhead in salt waters. But I believe that these trout are just leaping for joy at the thought of all that sex awaiting them. God's bones, I jump around like that when I get anticipatory. But, as is said, that's another story.

My fish (*n.b.* the strong sense of possession) are jumping out at all times with mouths closed. And, unless I'm missing a sea change in breeding seasons, these trout are a' leaping at the wrong time of year or, better, at all times of the year. Something else is beneath this surge into our environment of air from their watery course.

The second change was more subtle at first but has become more obvious, particularly as its effects have become all too obvious. As noted, my trout are primarily rainbows. That means they have multicolor flashing sides of brown, black, green and red dots underlaid with a slash of red or reddish pink. I used to think of these colors as beautiful, particularly when manifested on a 22" slab side. What happened was these color combinations began, very rapidly began, to intensify into

magnificent iridescent displays of reds, sunrise pinks, opalescent greens, topaz blues, papaya oranges, ... well, you get the picture. Lots of really cool colors. But that's not all. The colors on each trout began to move and flash like a wall in a 1970's New York LSD club. These trout and Gracie Slick would understand each other. Each time one of these trout would leap into the air, it was like a flashing aurora borealis. It was all so damn gorgeous that I put down my fly rod the first time I saw it and stood transfixed as in some, well, I never really inhaled so I can't say exactly what it was like. It sure wasn't a stupor; I ain't stupord, you know. But it was mesmerizing, totally mesmerizing.

The problem is that it was so totally mesmerizing. Soon I and all the other rotund dandies with overstuffed fly vests were just standing still in the river watching as the rainbows jumped, cavorted and displayed. We stood slack jawed (okay, perhaps more slack jawed than usual), expensive fly rods dangled loosely in the current, oblivious to the pull of the current on our hypothermic legs, and unsightly drool running down one corner of our mouths. We became hypnotized, mesmerized, bewitched, befuddled and dazzled, ... and drooly.

And then I saw, in the very (dim) vestiges of my rational mind, the wonderful plot of Mother Nature. We were so mesmerized that we could not fish. Nature had evolved a trout so beautiful, it caused catatonic fits in all my brethren fly throwers. Why, we'd still be there, crusted with larval husks and bird droppings, had not a single passerby divined the spectacle. One by one this charitable soul waded out to our stiffening bodies and gently herded us back to shore and faced us away from the river whereupon we recovered whatever allotment of sense we originally brought to the river. He fished each out while staying unaffected by the brilliant flashes of pulsating color and light that burst into the air all around us. But he saved us and asked not a thing in return. I later learned he was a bait caster.

The river fishes no more, at least until they drop the fly fishing only special regs. But it continues to cause trouble because a country highway runs along side. It is inevitable that some of the drivers are fly fishermen whose natural and irresistible impulse is to look out over the inviting waters. The trout jump; the driver goes catatonic; the car crashes. No amount of warning signs have been able to diminish this hazard. However, I understand that Cabela's will soon offer a new form of sunglasses treated to block out all color from all life forms. We'll soon be able to see the way a deer does. Ain't life grand?

* San Juan Worm is an obvious *non de plume*. But if you were born as Bead Eye Peacock Hurl, wouldn't you use an alias?

The Editors Drift – Things I've learned (and ideas I've stolen from my fishing partners).

Landing and taking off. No, this isn't flight instruction; I'm talking about the process (and art) of bringing a drift boat or raft to the rivers edge and anchoring it. Seems simple enough. Just row to shore and drop the anchor – what's the big deal? For many of you it's not much of a challenge. You learned how to do it properly by trial and error or under the tutelage of an experienced rower.

For others, even some experienced rowers, they manage to land the boat but it's not a pretty sight. The most common errors I have observed are;

Anchoring the boat in water so shallow that the boat grounds (especially noisy and annoying in a glass or aluminum drift boat). When it's time to get underway again it's invariably a comedy of pushing and shoving and grinding of oars.

Anchoring in water that's at least six inches deeper than the top of your fishing partners waders. This always involves pulling up anchor and moving to shallower water.

Dropping the anchor with the bow pointed towards shore and the stern still in faster current. This usually results in the stern being swept further out into the faster current and an embarrassing backwards float while you hastily retrieve the anchor. The boat pinned to the bank by an onshore wind. This situation usually finds our rookie rower bumping along shore and grinding his oars in the shallows until he finds a deep spot and can eventually pull out into the current.

Undoubtedly, you have experienced these scenarios yourself (we were all rookie rowers at one time) or have observed these predicaments while on the river. Fortunately, two simple techniques can eliminate these embarrassing and annoying situations.

Landing – As you approach shore begin looking for a landing area with appropriate depth. You ideally want to be anchored in one to two feet of water. This depth eliminates banging and scraping and makes it easier for your fishing partners to enter and exit the boat.

As you approach shore begin to angle the boat at about 20 degrees from the shore with the stern pointed towards the shore and the bow pointed to midstream. When you reach ideal depth pull a couple of hard strokes on your outside oar (right oar if you are landing on river left) to move the stern into the shore and then drop the anchor. This maneuver positions your stern and anchor in slower, shallow water. Let out sufficient anchor line to hold the boat in the current. When the anchor holds the boat will swing towards shore and stop.

Taking off – In both calm and windy conditions this method will get you away from the shore quickly and efficiently.

Pull up the anchor and pull several strokes with your bankside oar (left oar if you have landed on river left). This will gradually move your stern out into the current. Once the boat is perpendicular to the shore pull away from the shore with both oars. Once you are in deeper water pull on the outside oar to reorient the boat downstream.

Try these techniques next time you are on the river – You'll look so good your fishing partners will want you to row full time!!!

“It has always been my private conviction that any man who pits his intelligence against a fish and loses has it coming”. ~John Steinbeck

Fly of the Month

Fox's Poopah

by Bob Percy

Recipe

Hook: TMC 2302 size 14 or 16
Thread: 8/0, black
Underbody: Pearlescent tinsel
Abdomen: Olive vernille
Thorax: Black ostrich
Rib: Gold wire, BR size
Antennae: Wood duck flank feather

Legs

Olive dyed partridge

This is a California pattern originally developed by Tim Fox of the Fly Shop in Redding. It works well here too. It imitates the pupal stage of the *Brachycentrus* caddis genus, of which the mother's day caddis is a member. These caddis pupa cut loose from their case in riffles and drift for a few feet near the bottom before ultimately rising to the surface. There, the adults emerge from their pupal shuck. Although most fly fishers concentrate on the adult stage and fish dry flies, the heavy hatches provide lots of competition--for both the artificial and the many fly fishers. Often good fishing, and lesser crowds, can be had before the hatch or in its early stages by dead drifting a pupa pattern under an indicator or a dry fly. It can also be fished dead-drift near the surface or with a wet-fly swing in the current. The pattern is easy to tie.

Wrap the hook shank with pearlescent tinsel to create the illusion of air bubbles that caddis produce to aid their rise in the water column. The vernille is attached to the top of the hook shank with the wire ribbing. Before tying it in, singe the end with a match to create a pointed abdomen with a dark tip. Five turns of the wire ribbing is about right.



Heads up , all you dedicated streamer junkies (and wanna be junkies) !

Our very own Bob Prince, will hold a streamer tying and techniques class on January 11 at Jeff Gray's shop (now known as the Freestone Fly Shop). The fee is \$25 and includes beer and lunch. Call Jeff, (406 363-9099) for a reservation and details on start time and equipment requirements. If you are a streamer junkie (I admit it – I am) or you'd like to be one, this class could be your ticket to a lifetime addiction!!



An election Of Directors for the coming year was held at the December meeting and the slate of Directors as proposed was elected by the Club members present . Your new Directors (and some old names you've seen before) are as follows.....

Doug Duff President/director

Gary Brothers director

Denny Westover director

Chris Andersen director

Greg Chester TU Liaison/director

Jim Cline director

Leon Powell Treasurer/director

Rich Morrisey Secretary/director

Judy Morrisey Membership/director

Jay Melzer Programs/director

Mike Taylor Cruise Director/director

Bob Prince Raffle/director

Dorreen Romans Publicity/director

Phil Romans director

Pierre Satkowiak director

BITTERROOT BUGGERS

FEBRUARY 11-MARCH 25

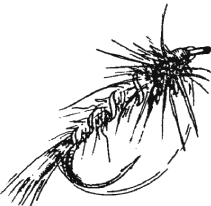
Join us for our 17th annual fly-tying class. This program is open to any child in the Bitterroot Valley, ages 8 to 14. It provides hands-on, small group instruction. Returning students have the option of participating in our advanced classes.

- ◊ *February 1: Registration Deadline (limited spots so register early!)*
- ◊ *Classes are Tuesday nights*
- ◊ *Hamilton*
- ◊ *Free!*

Registration forms available at: Western Flies and Guides or Westview Center

**For more information call:
375-9999 or 363-0033**

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and Keystone Enrichment Program



The Buggers need volunteers and instructors, especially for the fly tying and casing sessions. Get out of your easy chair and do something productive for our future fly fishers! Call today and volunteer! The Buggers need volunteers and instructors, especially for the fly tying and casing sessions. Get out of your easy chair and do something productive for our future fly fishers! Call today and volunteer!

To close out this months Newsletter a story of cunning and eventual comeuppance involving a member of the legal fraternity.....

LAWYER STORY OF THE YEAR This took place in Charlotte, North Carolina. A lawyer purchased a box of very rare and expensive cigars, then insured them against, among other things, fire. Within a month, having smoked his entire stockpile of these great cigars, the lawyer filed a claim against the insurance company. In his claim, the lawyer stated the cigars were lost "in a series of small fires." The insurance company refused to pay, citing the obvious reason, that the man had consumed the cigars in the normal fashion. The lawyer sued--and WON! (Stay with me.) Delivering the ruling, the judge agreed with the insurance company that the claim was frivolous. The judge stated nevertheless, that the lawyer held a policy from the company, in which it had warranted that the cigars were insurable and also guaranteed that it would insure them against fire, without defining what is considered to be unacceptable "fire" and was obligated to pay the claim. Rather than endure lengthy and costly appeal process, the insurance company accepted the ruling and paid \$15,000 to the lawyer for his loss of the cigars that perished in the "fires." **NOW FOR THE BEST PART:** After the lawyer cashed the check, the insurance company had him arrested on 24 counts of ARSON! With his own insurance claim and testimony from the previous case being used against him, the lawyer was convicted of intentionally burning his insured property and was sentenced to 24 months in jail and a \$24,000 fine. This true story won first place in last year's Criminal Lawyers Award contest. .

Thanks to Rich Morrissey for this little gem – always gratifying when a recovering lawyer can laugh at his former profession.