



February 2014 Newsletter

February meeting – Tuesday February 4th at 6pm
BJ's Restaurant – Hamilton

All the romance of trout fishing exists in the mind of the angler and is in no way shared by the fish. ~Harold F. Blaisdell, *The Philosophical Fisherman*, 1969

The Presidents Message

In my travels along the river this past two or three weeks there appear to be more fisherman out than in the past for this time of the year. Must be the mild winter days or early preparation for the coming skwala hatches.

Once again the FFB has a very active year planned. In addition to our annual events like the May clinic, the fishing day for special needs persons, and annual picnic, several cruises are on the docket. Some of these are repeats of last year that proved popular such as April on the Mo and Georgetown Lake in July. Check the Club's website or contact Mike Taylor for more information on cruises.

Fly tying on Wednesday night at the Bitterroot Brewery is in full swing. So come join us, even if just to watch and contribute to the fish tales while enjoying some good food and beer.

Looking for a rewarding experience? Volunteer for one or all of the Bitterroot Buggers sessions. You don't have to be an expert fly tier to help out. The program starts February 11 at West View School in Hamilton at 6:30 pm. to 8:00 pm. and runs for six consecutive Tuesdays, same time, same place.

Don't forget that your fishing license expires at the end of February.

Happy fishing.

Doug Duff, President

Have fly gear you aren't using? Sell it with an add in the FFB Newsletter.

Send your copy to dwwestover@comcast.net

The January Program

Hats off to Jeff Lowe for a very entertaining slide show. Jeff told me he started his editing with over 2000 images and ultimately presented some 200+. Our annual January photo presentation would not be possible without folks like Jeff and, of course, with out all you contributing your photos. Plan on taking more photos in 2014 and send them to Jeff so you can enjoy your 15 minutes of fame next January!

The February Program

Bikini Atoll!! Talk about exotic and remote fly fishing destinations – this place is #1 on the list. Located in the Marshall Islands and more than two days and several airline transfers from our west coast, Bikini Atoll is a saltwater lottery. More kinds of finny critters than you can count ranging from BIG sharks to bone fish and everything in between. Dan Shepherd, of the Grizzly Hackle Fly Shop hosted a group of adventurous fly fishers on a trip to Bikini last October. His presentation will highlight the adventure side of his trip and showcase the nearly 20 species caught on a fly rod. Dan promises to reveal details on a new fly that had them jumping in the boat! Don't miss this one – if not for the presentation then come to see if Dan is glowing green and emitting a rapid clicking sound...

“The water you touch in a river is the last of that which has passed, and the first of that which is coming; thus it

is with time." Leonardo DaVinci

Trip Report - The Blackfeet Lakes – by Rich Morrisey

Last summer, Judy and I set up a trip to the Blackfeet Lakes with guide Joe Kipp. Joe had spoken to the Hamilton Trout Unlimited, and we had enjoyed his lurid tales of monster trout on reservation lakes.

We stayed in East Glacier rather than Browning. And I recommend this. East Glacier is a little over five hours driving time, about 270 miles from Hamilton.

Our lodging was with Traveler's Rest just at the edge of town. This operation is a small number of stand alone cabins with limited housekeeping plus a barn with accommodations. It was clean, nice and very convenient. We will stay there again. Traveler's Rest is: email: bscalese@gmail.com; web site: trlodge.com; winter phone: 406-378-2414; summer phone: 406-226-9143. There are other accommodations. Try eastglacierpark.info/Motels.

There are a number of restaurants in East Glacier. Interestingly, probably the best is Serrano's Mexican. Also try Bison Creek, which has cabins for rent and offers boxed lunches for the fisherman. All these are fairly close to each other. The Sinclair gas station at the north end of East Glacier offers convenience food and, more importantly, Blackfeet Reservation licenses, which you will need to fish any of these waters.

Judy and I hired Joe Kipp to show us around the large number of lakes on the Blackfeet Reservation. We drove with him for a day and listened to Blackfeet legends and outdoor tales. Joe is an exceptionally nice man and very knowledgeable. His father pioneered recreational fishing on the reservation.

The geography is mostly treeless grasslands, although there are some foothills to the south in the reservation. There are lakes all

over, from low elevation (maybe 2500 feet) to over 7000 feet. Some are nestled in the foothills coming off the Glacier range. Some are out in the grass range. I do not recall seeing a sign to any of the lakes. There is simply a maze of dirt roads. Do not despair. The "best" lake, in Joe Kipp's estimation, is very easy to find.

The Blackfeet have a resident fish biologist who, according to Joe, has been very successful in managing the stocks of planted trout to enormous sizes. The lakes are very rich in biota, much like Georgetown. I believe all trout are rainbows. While one can fish from shore, you are better off in a boat with an electric motor. Rafts are certainly permissible but beware of the potentially high winds coming off Glacier Park. Ice off is typically April 15 to May 15 but will vary with the elevation of the lake you are fishing. The variation in lake elevation offers a variety of fishing through spring until midsummer. The flies are the usual suspects for lake fishing: chironomids, callibaetis, leeches, damselflies (wet and dry), etc.

Probably the best lake is one of the easiest to find: Joe Kipp Lake. You drive east out of East Glacier on Highway 2. Go maybe ten miles. You will see a settlement called "Blackfeet" on the left or north. (I do not think it is on maps but is composed of a lot of trailers.) There is an unmarked dirt road (the only one at this point) to the right or south. Take this about a mile to the lake. There is no formal put in but various places where the shore is a gradual incline to the lake. Follow the tracks. Joe Kipp Lake has trout to 12 pounds, with the average when Judy and I fished at about 17 inches. And lots of them.

Hiring Joe Kipp for a day would yield good information and show respect. Find Joe at Morning Star Troutfitters; 406-338-2785; blackfeettrout.com

Got Fishing Reports? Send you reports and photos to Denny Westover at dwwestrover@comcast.net

Bragging may not bring happiness, but no man having caught a large fish goes home through an alley. ~Author Unknown

For the second month in a row I found a plain brown paper envelope on my front porch. This time no note or request for flies, just the essay below. Whoever he is he must be enjoying the notoriety.....

Dangers of the Pill
By: The San Juan Worm*

No less an authority than the august *Washington Post* newspaper ran a front-page article recently about abnormally developed male bass in the Potomac River. Seems these finny guys are developing immature eggs in their sex organs. You might well ask why this made the front page in a world fraught with terrorism, hunger, constant betrayals of trust and poorly tied flies from Sri Lanka. Simply put, the Potomac River is the source of Washington, DC's drinking water.... By now, the reader is way ahead of me.

Yes, we are all concerned that our Congressmen may develop effeminate characteristics, if they ain't that way already. But to lower the testosterone level in DC couldn't be that bad, could it? On the other hand, even all us wise and even-tempered fly fishermen don't want our democracy run by androgynous mutants.

But this may be just the pointy end of the proverbial iceberg (not that there are many of those around anymore with all this global warming stuff). If the cause of bisexual bass is what the scientists are saying, all those drugs we pee out and flush down the toilet, what happens in DC isn't staying in DC. Any concentration of

population will soon be at the tipping point of flushed pharmaceuticals, and all downstream waters will become hotbeds of sexually confused fish. Our days of angling for river trout may be numbered.

Not that I really care whether a spawning fish gets that grin on its jaws, turns tail down and spews out eggs or milt or both. But as my good friend, Dun Caddis, says, confusion is a bad thing. And he ought to know. He's been confused all his life. But if the dear fish begin to spawn independently, there will be consequences.

First off, there will a rush to my high mountain creeks. Second, all those yokels who gather to snag spawning runs may have to learn to knit. Third, and much more sinister, the gene stocks will become monotone. No more genetically modified organism's compliments of Mother Nature. We all know the effects of breeding at home. Why, we only have to look to the south end of the Valley to understand this. Or go to the supermarket on Cereal Special Thursdays.

But enough of these dark musings! My fly is always half floating, not half submerged. Besides, I have a cure. We could outlaw flush toilets and return to those halcyon days of the outhouse. Why, there's loads of perfect parkland around the White House for pit toilets. And it would probably have the benign effect of keeping those pesky tourist citizens away from the serious business of running our government. And we could design two and three hollers to better induce bipartisanship. After all, after you've shared the throne with the other side, would you really be prone to throw shit at each other?

Of course, I can foresee issues arising with all those high-rise apartment buildings. Maybe we could go back to chamber pots. We'd need to designate the south side or something as the dumping side. But this could all be worked out in the name of preserving single sex bass and trout. I feel certain our citizenry would rise to the challenge much as a No, I won't go there.

On consideration, there is a downside to depositing our chemically laced offal in the ground. These long lasting chemicals will be taken up by the grasses, bushes and trees. There, they will be eaten by birds and small animals, such as squirrels. And I ask you to consider a bisexual squirrel. You think the females chatter? The noise would be deafening. And the poor birds. The female is supposed to sit on the nest and the male goes off to find food for her. I can see them all dying in a paroxysm of confusion and warring instincts.

It's all too much for this poor soul to contemplate further. All the interconnections. All the interdependencies. All the unintended consequences. Life has gotten too complicated for me. Think I'll go fishing.

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

My biggest worry is that my wife (when I'm dead) will sell my fishing gear for what I said I paid for it.
~Koos Brandt

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

On Fly Lines for Stillwater

It has been my experience that success in lake fishing has a great deal to do with the fly line you are using and how that line matches the conditions at the time.

Sure, fly pattern is important too, but the right fly fished in the wrong place just isn't going to catch any fish. So let's examine fly lines for stillwater fishing and learn how to take advantage of the Incredible variety of fly lines available for lake fishing.

If you are a lake fisherman you probably have a line inventory that consists of at least a floater and perhaps a sink tip and/or a full sinking line. If you have done a lot of stillwater fishing then you probably have acquired additional lines with various sink rates. Let's review the line types I have found useful in my own stillwater fishing and discuss their effective use.

Lake lines fall into two broad categories – floaters and sinkers. Floating lines aren't particularly complicated – pick one that matches your rod and you are set. You can fish dry or wet with a floater. It's the basic all around lake line. With a long leader (14-16 feet) it will fish emergers, damsel nymphs, callibaetis nymphs and chironomids. Under certain conditions it could be the only line you need. If you fish chironomids frequently then you may want a second dry line – an "indicator" or "cold water clouser" line. These lines have tapers that facilitate easier turnover of long leaders and weighted double fly rigs.

Once you go subsurface you have an amazing variety of lines to choose from. Fly line manufacturers would like you to own one of each of their lines and when you read the descriptions of the various lines they all seem essential. Aside from being effective these specialty lines are also expensive – so let's review the lines I have found to be most effective.

Slow Intermediate Lines

Rio makes three intermediates that I have found effective. In order of preference they are:

Rio Hover – this line is designed to sink at less than 1 inch per second and then not sink at all once you begin your retrieve. This is an absolutely essential line for effectively fishing shoreline areas with water depth of 2 to 6 feet. This depth holds most of the FEEDING fish in a lake and is where you will have your best success in the spring. Most intermediate and sinking lines sink too quickly and consequently drop out of the feeding zone and snag the bottom before you finish your retrieve. To avoid snagging the fisherman speeds up his retrieve – a slow strip pause retrieve is usually more effective in the shallows but impossible with the normal intermediate or sinker. The Hover line keeps the fly in the feeding zone for the ENTIRE retrieve.

Rio Aqualux Midge Tip – This is a floating line with a 3-foot clear intermediate tip. A great line for fishing from 1 to 3 feet under the surface. This is an ideal line for fishing calibaetis nymphs and damselfly nymphs along shoreline areas. It's easy to pick up and recast. Use it with a long (at least 12ft) leader to avoid spooking fish with the wake of the floating section.

Rio Freshwater Outbound Short "Hover" - This is the shooting head version of the "Hover" line. Handy on windy days and when you want to cover a lot of water.

Scientific Anglers Mastery Series GPX Hover – This is SA's version of the Rio "Hover"

Airflow SuperDri Ridge Clear Delta Slow Intermediate (that's a mouthful). This is the slowest sinking "intermediate" line I am aware of – similar to the "Hover" but potentially stealthier because it's clear.

Royal Wulff Ambush Neutralizer line – This is a slow sinking intermediate with a shooting head profile.

See what I mean about variety! I consider a “Hover” type line to be an essential part of a lake fisherman’s line inventory. If you don’t own one you should – pick your favorite brand and watch your catch rate go up!

Fast Intermediate Lines

This category of intermediate line typically sinks 1 to ½ inches per second. Twice the rate of the “Hover” lines. The feeding zone this line covers is 2 feet to 12 feet but is most effective in 6 to 12 feet of water.

Rio Camolux, Scientific Anglers Stillwater Clear line and the Courtland “Camo Intermediate” are all excellent lines in this category. I favor the Courtland Camo Intermediate and buy a slower sinking version from Denny Rickards at his website <http://www.flyfishingstillwaters.com> This is an important line in your inventory Because it allows you to effectively cover the “middle” depths – and important feeding zone, especially mid day. This line is also a very effective trolling line because unlike a sink tip line it creates no fish-spooking wake.

Sink Tip Lines

In my view sink tip lines are typically over used by lake fishers. By it’s very nature a sink tip will only produce a single type of retrieve. Since the line is hinged at the junction of the floating and sinking sections, when retrieved the line and leader will always cause the fly to ascend towards the surface. This is ideal, of course, if you are imitating an emerging insect and is the very best use of the sink tip. It’s much less effective used to retrieve imitations that you want to swim along the bottom or want to maintain a constant depth over

the course of a long retrieve. Use an intermediate line in those situations.

Sink tips that I use are made by Courtland and sold by Denny Rickards at <http://www.flyfishingstillwaters.com>

(No, Rickards is not my brother-in-law, I just happen to like his product.)

Here's what I use.

Courtland 7 ft camo intermediate tip

Courtland 10 ft clear tip

Both these lines are very effective cast into shore, retrieved with 4 or 5 five-inch pulls and then cast again.

Fast Sinking Lines

The only fast sinking line I own and recommend is the Rio In Touch Deep Six. It is a full sinking line that sinks 6=7 inches per second. I use it exclusively for fishing chironomids in water deeper than 25 feet. This line is essential to a specialized technique that can be very effective when fish are sulking on the bottom and not feeding in the shallows. I will describe this technique in a future Newsletter.

The name of the game in lake fishing is to use a line and leader combination that allows you to control the depth and retrieve speed of your fly and to maintain that depth and retrieve speed for long as possible. Using the right line for the conditions is the key to catching more fish in lakes!

So, which line (or lines) to buy? At \$80 per you don't want to buy one you may use only once a year. Here are my recommendations in order of importance.

1. Floating line
2. "Hover" line
3. 7 foot Camo Tip
4. Rio Camolux

5. Aqualux Midge Tip
6. 10 foot clear tip
7. In Touch Deep Six

You can cover most situations with numbers 1 through 4 above. Bear in mind these line recommendations are based on my style and preferences. Your style and success may include lines I haven't mentioned – but that's what makes our sport so interesting – there are no rules!!!

Roman Moser Power Silk Tying Thread

This stuff rocks! When I first began tying flies (some fifty years ago) Danville thread and silk were about the only threads available. They worked well enough but in the smaller sizes were prone to breaking and tended to build up in all the wrong places. Then came UNI Thread and a half dozen other brands that represented significant improvements in strength and since they were twisted allowed the tier to flatten or tighten the twist as needed. A flytyer at any level could be happy with the vast selection of thread available today – except for one rather annoying problem...

Virtually all threads of smaller diameter tend to break if you put too much pressure on them. Even experienced tiers occasionally break a thread.

Wouldn't it be ideal if you could find a thread that;

Would never break – no matter how much pressure you put on it.

Was available in size 10/0 (suitable for hooks as small as 18)

Came in a number of colors
Could be used to tie patterns from size 18 dries to size 2 streamers
Could be flattened by spinning your bobbin so as to secure material with virtually no build up.

Roman Moser thread has become my go-to thread for 80% of my tying. I still use Ultra 70 and 140 for chironomids because I want to build up a thread body and favor Veevus 16/0 for very small dries and nymphs.

Roman Moser is imported from Germany and is only available from a few sources in the U.S. I buy mine from Kelly Galloup at the Slide Inn Fly Shop in Cameron, MT 406 682 4804.

http://www.slideinn.com/store/product_info.php?cPath=28_88&products_id=706

Like anything with a German trademark (Mercedes cars and Leica cameras) it's expensive - \$6.50 per spool but after you try it I think you will conclude as I did that it's a worthwhile investment in frustration free tying!!

If fishing is a religion, fly-fishing is high church. Tom Brokaw

Fly of the Month

The No- Brainer Chironomid System

By Your Editor

Your regular FOM Editor, Bob Percy is currently languishing in Argentina. Probably sitting on the veranda of some swanky fishing lodge sipping a Mojito and wondering what the poor people back in the Bitterroot are doing. Ah well, in spite of Bob's good fortune we must carry on with the Fly of the Month. Winter, and it's typical stay inside weather, is a great time to tie flies and this month I want to introduce a SIMPLE but very effective series of chironomid patterns that will cover most chironomid emergences you will find in Montana and British Columbia. Here's the basic recipe....

Hook: Alec Jackson Chironomid hook or TMC 2457 Sizes 10- 18
Thread: UTC Ultra 140 or 70 denier, black, olive, rusty brown, tan, red.
Rib: Red or silver UTC wire, size small
Gills: White antron or Oral B Ultrafloss dental floss
Bead: White, Black or Nickel
Coating: Sally Hansen's Hard as Nails or Clear Cure Goo Hydro

All of these patterns are fast and simple to tie and are as effective as more complicated chironomid patterns. They are tied with using only three or four materials that are easy to obtain from most fly shops. Properly coated they are very durable and will last through a full day of fast fishing. Using thread for the abdomen and thorax makes it easy to construct a THIN tapered body. Chironomids are thin and tapered; they don't look like the fat chironomids you see in the fly shop bins. Commercially tied chironomids usually have beads that are several sizes too large and bodies that are too fat – use a

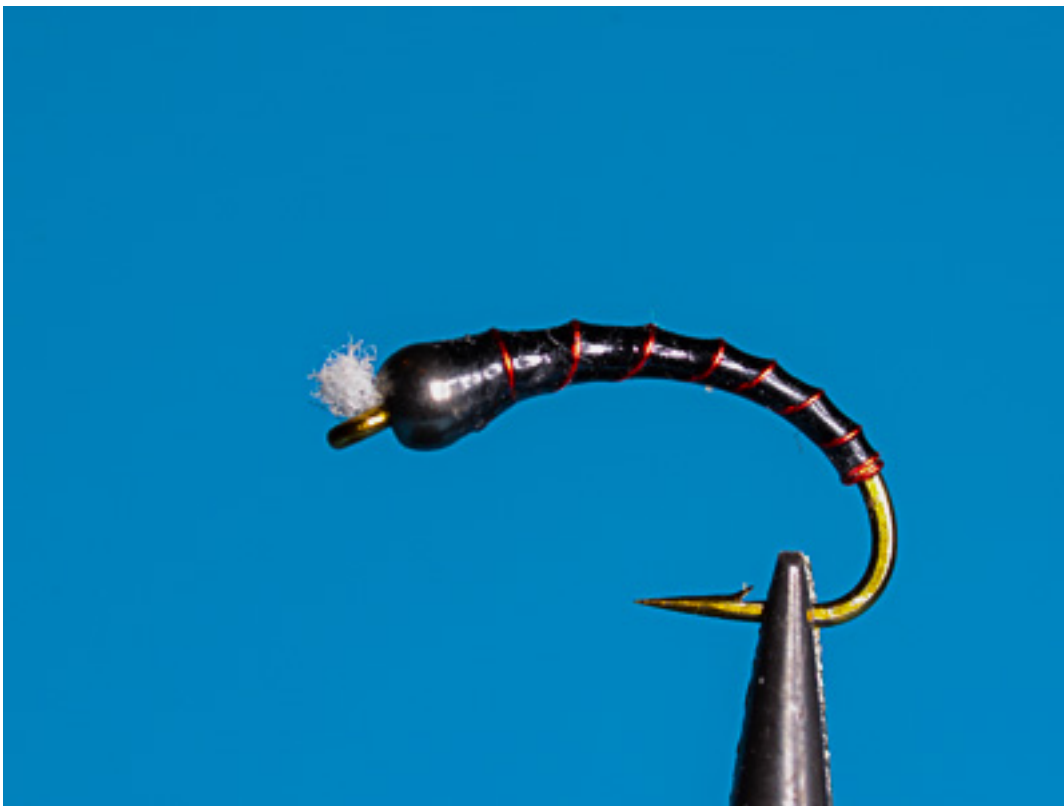
bead that is proportionate to the hook and body size. When in doubt err on the small size.

I've illustrated four patterns but there are dozens of color combinations. After all, there are 400,000 different varieties of chironomid in the lakes and streams of the world! Black, olive and red is the most common in our area but brown, tan and chrome also frequent our lakes. Most common hook sizes are 10, 12, and 14. If you use a white bead you can skip adding the antron or dental floss gills – however, I find the black bead/white gills version very effective so tie some of those also. The key to a smooth tapered body is the UTC thread. This thread flattens and spreads out on the hook making it easy to build a gradual smooth taper. As you wind the thread it will eventually twist – to flatten it out simply spin your bobbin COUNTER CLOCKWISE. I use regular beads rather than tungsten – a small split shot 24 inches above your fly will do the work of a tungsten bead at a fraction of the cost.

My preferred hook is the Alec Jackson Chironomid hook made by Daiichi. They are thin, sharp, very strong and have an offset bend which I believe aids in hooking.

Finally, it's very important to coat the fly. Coating protects the thread and wire from the fish's fine teeth and gives the imitation a glossy sheen and translucence similar to the naturals. Use at least two coats of Sally Hansen's or one coat of your favorite UV coating.

Have fun !!!!







Hell, if I'd jumped on all the dames I'm supposed to have jumped on, I'd have had no time to go fishing.

Clark Gable

Introduction to Flyfishing Course

Bruce Hemmings, a BFF member, will be teaching an Introductory Flyfishing course beginning Wednesday, March 26 and continuing weekly for six weeks through April 30th. The course includes two field trips on April 19th and 26th on the upper Bitterroot River. Classes will be held at Hamilton High School from 6:30pm to 8:30pm. The course is designed for beginner to intermediate skill 18 to 80. Bruce is an experienced instructor and fishing guide. The

tuition is \$24 (what a bargain- ed) and is free to those over 65. Call Bruce at 406 821 0007 for details and to enroll.

"My memory's not as sharp as it used to be. Also, my memory's not as sharp as it used to be." Cliff Gibbons



Articulated Streamer - "Barley Legal"