



Reading the Water

September 2003

MEETING

Monday

September 22

Welcome: 6:30 P

Program: 7:15 P

Skyline School
Auditorium

606 Lomas Santa Fe
Drive

Solana Beach
(Map—Back Page)

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September 22 program—Members Present Night

We have had a year of terrific programs, presented by the likes of Mel Krieger, Ed Engle, Brian O'Keefe, and others. But the best is yet to come.

Our speaker for the month of September is...well...you. We have a club of very active fly fishers. Many travel throughout the lower 48, Alaska, Mexico, New Zealand, Belize and other countries in search of great fishing, and a number of our members have had some terrific fishing trips this year. And what they have to report about their travels is invaluable—for example, check out Jamie Chatham's report on Southern Oregon on p. 5



How I spent my summer vacation!

Programs presented by members always make for informative and entertaining evenings, and you will not want to miss this one. It's a chance to not only hear about the candid experiences of our own members, but to get short reports on a

number of destinations in one evening. Don't be surprised if you find yourself making reservations for one of the destinations the next morning!

We still have openings for speakers.

All you have to do is

put together a 10 to 15 minute slide or PowerPoint presentation. Give Pat Case a call at 858-523-1017 to get on the agenda for the evening. See you there...and be ready for a great time.

Election of new Board members and officers

The time has flown since our first meeting last November, and the year is quickly coming to an end. The end of the year is also when we install new officers and directors.

We have a total of five directors, who

have done a terrific job in getting the club on solid ground. But it is now time to bring in some new blood. Please give some thought to lending your wisdom as a director in making the club even better. Give Pat a call at 858-523-1017, or e-mail to red20hook@aol.com.

President's message

Hopefully you had a great summer, and had the opportunity to get out and do some fishing. For yours truly, I have pretty much had to be content with watching others fish at the OLN tournament at Three Forks Ranch—see Helen Condict's report starting on page three.

I have to admit that I went to the OLN tournament a bit jaded: What is this BS about competition fly fishing?, I thought. Isn't that the stuff of bass fisherman?...the guys with shirts emblazoned with patches from rod, reel, and boat manufacturers, drag racing to fishing holes with outboards whose horsepower exceeds their IQ...you know, red-neck morons with spinning rods? (I don't mean to slight spinning rods—I own a couple myself.)

But I have to admit I came away from the event with different ideas. There were a number of interesting stories over the two days of the competition—many of which came out when the cameras were off. There was the story of Ty and his young, last minute pick-up partner, "Kid Garrett," as I dubbed him. There was Jim and Whitney, who made it all the way to the finals, to their disbelief every time they made it to the next level. And the two brothers, and all the other relatively young anglers we didn't get a chance to talk to on a personal level.

In virtually every case, the motive was simply to take advantage of this unique opportunity to test themselves against their peers.

For me, one of the interesting things that

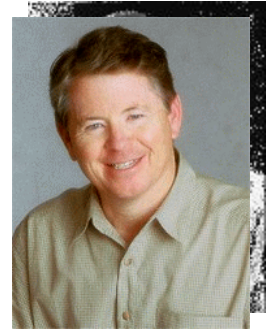
came out of the competition was being privy—from our omniscient view point—to the strategies of the anglers when fishing under pressure. As with other forms of competition, it is one thing to catch fish—which we can all do—and quite another to catch *only* two big fish, bigger than anyone else's, in a couple of hours.

I don't know what sort of story Barrett Productions will put together, but I encourage you to try to catch at least part of the program—which will be a multi-part series of 30 minute segments starting in September or October—because I guarantee you will learn something from these anglers, some of whom may be the next Lefty Kreh or Mel Krieger.

We are looking forward to the rest of the year. This month we hear from our own members. Speaking of which, we still have room for one or two more people to give a 10 or 15 minute talk on their adventure—either from this year or the recent past.

In October we have Angie Gerken, on fly fishing Alaska, and Jim Repine will give a program on fly fishing Chile in November.

In December, we are planning on a little Holiday get together. I think everyone who attended the July meeting at Tony's Jacal will agree the different venue was a nice change, and a terrific chance to socialize and share stories and tips with your fellow members. Let us hear your ideas!



Patrick Case, President

“As with other forms of competition, it is one thing to catch fish—which we can all do—and quite another to catch only two big fish, bigger than anyone else's, in a couple of hours.”

Why compete with a fly?

Why compete with a fly? Many anglers passionate about the *quiet sport* of fly fishing, and keeping it quiet, say competitions have no merit, are just plain silly, and don't prove you are a great angler. So, from behind the scenes at an upcoming OLN Fly Fishing Masters competition, I tried to unearth just why anglers compete with a fly.

Relatively new to fly fishing, although I grew up on a Wyoming cattle ranch fishing spinners on mountain creeks, I wanted to see why all the fuss. Barrett Productions of Missoula Montana, produces shows for ESPN and OLN, including filming for DU and TU, covered the event with a 20-person crew.



Fifty 2-person fly fishing teams from all over the Rocky Mountain region signed up—a few women, lots of experienced, full-time fly fishing guides, and others industry professionals. All seemed to have natural instincts for reading the water and spotting big fish, and thinking like fish.

This OLN tournament began with two days of stiff casting competition in Longmont, Colorado, just north of Denver, where the teams dueled it out, narrowing the field to eight teams. Distance casting was crucial, but accuracy in hitting a target from 20 to 45 feet away narrowed the field for the fishing segment held at Three Forks Ranch.

Three Forks Ranch (see article in June, 2003 issue of *Reading the Water*), a remote, 200,000 acre mountain spread, set the scene as host site—a serene place nestled just west of the Continental Divide, some 40 scenic, mountain road miles north of the world class ski area of Steamboat Springs, Colorado. Here, the elk roamed and bugled just outside the guests' log and stone cabins, near the spring-fed headwaters forming the Colorado Little Snake River, a river recently restored at a cost of \$5 million by owner David Pratt.

The teams drew for river beats for fishing the next day. This fishery, brimming with big rain-

bows, Germans, and recently returned Colorado cutthroat trout, made the fishing appear too easy. So as a surprise twist, the anglers had to tie as many dry flies as possible within 2 1/2 hours to be used for the next day's competition. Following this, dinner and a fuchsia and purple sunset fading into a Milky Way night on the range.

Up with the rising sun, anglers were on the water enthusiastic and early, with the cameras following their every move over the 2 1/2 hour competition rounds.

The first fish caught, no matter the size, counted at the inch scale-board held by each judge. Innovative tactics with the first few casts paid off for some anglers, as teams put out bigger flies to catch only bigger fish. For the winning team,

“Self-assessment was the reflective tone of the anglers, as there really is no other venue for these hot-shots to test their skills against their peers.”

Competitors in the upper part of the photo; camera crew in the lower right corner.

it was the mouse that landed the big ones, although grasshoppers were everywhere. Catches ranged from about 17 to 25 ½ inches, with the *only* woman in



the semi-finals out of three competition regions, Whitney McDowell (with partner Jim Hickey of Jackson Wyoming) to land this big trout.

Talking with the anglers in between rounds, there was a consensus they all felt the pressure of the clock and the camera. Round one left four teams standing—two teams from Colorado, one from Wyoming, and one from Texas, who all shared great composure with lots of camaraderie and sportsmanship for their fellow anglers.

Barrett's camera crew came from all parts of the west—some were freelance cameramen in between shootings for TV specials, and some were full time staffers. Carrying around 100 pounds of camera, batteries, and accessories between fishing beats, these camera people didn't miss a thing ... not an angle, not a frown or a smile, nor a slip into a fishing hole (of which there were several) or words between partners in finding the big fish. Everyone knew it was show time, and that they would be the anglers viewed by other anglers in the 15-series *OLN Fly Fishing Masters*

televised this Fall

Self-assessment was the reflective tone of the anglers, as there really is no other venue for these hot-shots to test their skills against their peers. The anglers echoed they all considered themselves students of the sport...students who never stop learning new tactics and styles. If the prize money was the driving force in winning, only sportsmanship was apparent here.

Today's sports competition, by its very nature, means publicity, celebrity status, high salaries, and million dollar endorsements, so it's inspiring to feel fly fishing, although not always such a quiet sport, remains, even in competition, a sport of camaraderie—sharing with peers, learning new tactics, and



outdoor adventure shared by fellow anglers just passionate about fishing.

The winners, whose names will be disclosed at airing, will join three other lucky angler team winners in Kansas City, where they will be whisked off by private jet to some undisclosed, but most likely exotic, location for the final episode of the OLN Fly Fishing Masters. For more information go to:

Helen Condict

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Competitor and camera crew on the river (left), the eight semi-finalists pose for a group shot (right).



Helen Condict

Fishing Southern Oregon

After attending the wonderful presentation by Marlon Rampy this past spring, I didn't need much encouragement when my fishing partners suggested I spend my bachelor party with them on the waters of southern Oregon.



Though Rampy eloquently described the Williamson and Wood Rivers and Upper Klamath Lake, the photos of the sizable rainbows were what prompted us to book our plane reservations immediately, even though our 8-day fishing vacation was not to come until the end of June. I couldn't recall much of what Rampy said, but the pictures left a big impression.

I *did* recall Rampy saying the fish—mostly native rainbows—run from four to twelve pounds, with the average fish going about six pounds. Now, I've had the opportunity to do some fly out trips in Alaska, as well as some trophy hunting on some of the lower 48's "pay to play" lakes, but I can honestly say I have not found a place where you can target and expect to catch trout every day that average six pounds and bigger.

However, we found trout fishing in southern Oregon to be *phenomenal*. And we did all of our fishing on a budget. There were no fly outs, guides or expensive lodges for us. Instead, we selected a campsite at Rocky Point Marina and Resort on Upper Klamath Lake as our main hub.

This wonderful place has not only camp sites, but cabins, RV parking, a small general store, and a fine dining restaurant built early in the 1900's.

One of the highlights of the resort is the "Trophy Board," where only fish above five pounds may be listed. Curiously, there are not as many fish on the board as one would think given the lake's reputation. We found the reason is that the lake just



doesn't get much pressure, and there seems to be the general feeling the fish aren't worth bragging about—the only explanation is the locals are simply jaded by the large fish commonly caught in these waters.

As a native of Southern California, I have grown accustomed to crowds on lakes like Crowley, where there may be 25 float tubes within eyesight. Not so

"...we found trout fishing in southern Oregon to be phenomenal.."

Jamie Chatham with Upper Klamath Lake rainbow (left), and Josh Liberty with monster Upper Klamath Lake rainbow

on the Upper Klamath. Our stay included the Fourth of July weekend, and we saw maybe only ten fishermen, including those far off in the distance soaking nightcrawlers with no success. This is big water, but we found our camp nicely situated on Pelican Bay, which is good-sized but does not even scratch the surface of the total acreage of the lake.



The “word” on the lake was to try leeches and wooley bugger-type flies. Denny Rickards’ book, *Fishing the West’s Best Trophy Trout Lakes*, illustrates some of those patterns, and they seem to be available everywhere in southern Oregon. But I would recommend having your arsenal ready prior to the trip, as the nearest well-stocked fly shop could be more than an hour away. However, the local general store often carries enough to get by.

In general, we found black marabou leeches to be an effective fly. By varying retrieves, we could usually catch fish when they cooperated. Around the evening campfire, one of us would swear that a slow crawl was the best way to go while another person would have success with an aggressive strip. Personally, I found both to work and I would change my retrieve as much to keep my attention as anything. And the strikes would come. However, despite the emphasis on leech fishing, I did catch many fish—

including my two largest, fish going in the 8-9 lb range—on #18 and #20 callibaetis imitations. I was surprised the hook held on these fish, considering the way they fought.

Using our kickboats, we all caught fish our first evening on the lake, which but us at ease. You can imagine the tension around the campfire had none of us even got a strike. But the conversation was all positive, with dreams of grandeur for the upcoming days.

We were not disappointed. Yes, there were those periods of the day when the fish just would not take, and those times were unpredictable. A person would do best by bring lunch and drinks on the water and just fishing through the slow times, because when these fish decided to chew it was as if some unknown force



flipped a switch. In fact, I erred badly on the first full day and pulled off the water to have lunch, only to learn that a member of our group, Mike LaPlante, had stroked about a dozen fish in the meantime. I arrived towards the tail end of the bite, but only managed a couple.

A clear intermediate line is a must, as is a fast action rod for punching line into a good breeze. Plan on using fluorocarbon and 2X-0X leaders—anything less

“But I would recommend having your arsenal ready prior to the trip, as the nearest well-stocked fly shop could be more than an hour away.”

Josh with another monster Upper Klamath Lake rainbow (left), and Mike LaPlante with trophy fish.

and break offs will be the story. There are weeds in the lake that fish will make a run for. We spent most of our time fishing in areas where we found springs—the water in these areas is cooler, giving the fish refuge from the warm water of the main lake, and there are fewer weeds. Nevertheless, the heavy tippet allowed us to really “put the screws” to the fish when necessary to keep the fish out of the weeds and other structure.

We didn’t find this water to be one of those places where you loose count of the number of fish you catch. There were no 50 fish days. Part of the reason for this is that it may take 15 minutes to get one to net. They do jump several times during a fight, but have something of a yellowtail quality to them where they stay twenty feet out for ten minutes, and respond with a sizzling run whenever you try to exert authority.

In addition to Upper Klamath, we also tried our luck on some other fabled wa-

ters, but with less success. We had planned to drift the Williamson, however, we did not do enough advanced preparation to find the proper put-in points, take-out points, obstacles, etc. and we decided that there was too much opportunity for disaster. Next year, I will do that drift but I’ll probably do it with a guide first so that I know the ropes.

We did put our boats in the lower Wood River and had limited success. There were some fish in there that we hooked up with but we ended up with that feeling that the bulk of the fish had not yet entered that river system, or that we were simply in the wrong area. Again, a guide would have been helpful. After learning our lessons there, we committed ourselves back to Upper Klamath where we continued to boat big rainbows until the trips end.

Jamie Chatham

“They...have something of a yellowtail quality to them where they stay twenty feet out for ten minutes, and respond with a sizzling run whenever you try to exert authority.”

Tom Loe fishing tips—low light periods

With the long days having anglers fishing low light periods and higher, faster water flows in some areas, it may be difficult for some fly fishers to see the imitations being cast to the trout. A good trick when fishing small dry flies or emergers in difficult conditions such as shadows or riffle water, is to use a larger higher visibility pattern as the target fly and drop the smaller imitation with a short 12-18 inch section of tippet from the bend of the big fly. A dry fly with a dry dropper so to speak.

Have several different colors in your vest

of strike indicator’s. Experience has shown me that in changing light and water speeds, the eye will pick up on yellows, reds and whites, with each novel situation. Mixed color poly yarn indicators, although more difficult to cast, work well in a diverse light spectrum.

Choose sunglasses that have wrap around sides, or panels to concentrate light and reduce glare. Polarized, amber colored lenses are the optimum choice for low light situations and are great for seeing colors and shapes.





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Deliver your message by advertising in *Reading the Water*. As the voice of fly fishing in North San Diego County, *Reading the Water* can provide you a direct hit to this affluent market. Copy must be in JPEG format.

The **annual rates** are as follows...

- Full page.....\$300
- Half page.....\$200

Please call Patrick Case at 619-787-2280 to discuss your needs. GSF reserves the right to refuse publication of any ad for any reason.



Call for speaker hosts

We still have openings for hosts for our speakers in 2003. For those of you with a guest bedroom, this is a rare opportunity to spend personal time with the best in our sport...teachers, guides and outfitters, writers, photographers, and other professionals. Think about it...fireside chats with Charles Jardine, getting personal tips from Ed Engle.

Besides a bedroom, all you need to do is get the speaker from the airport to the meeting, put 'em up for the night, be a gracious host, and get 'em back to the airport or train station the next day.

Here's what to do...go to the website—www.goldenstateflycasters.org—note the dates of the meetings and speakers, and call Patrick Case at 619-787-2280.



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Welcome to the Golden State Flycasters

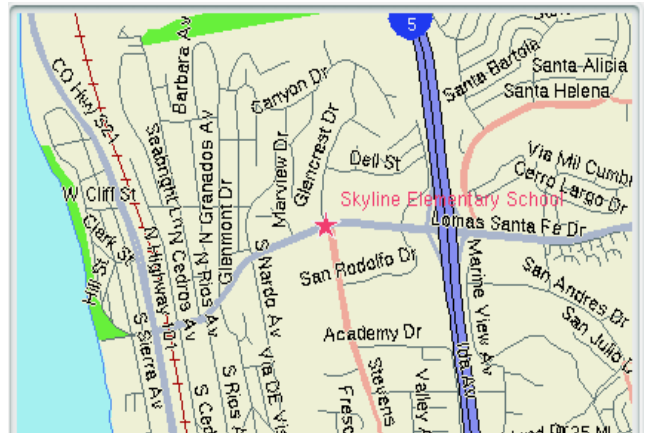
The GSF was formed in 2002 to serve the interests of fly fishers in North San Diego County, South Orange County, and Camp Pendleton.

Mission Statement

Promote national and international amateur fly casting competition; conservation and restoration of fisheries; and knowledge, support, ethics and social relations in the sport and art of fly fishing.

Map to meeting location

Skyline School Auditorium
606 Lomas Santa Fe Drive



Submissions to newsletter

Hey, you frustrated Hemingways and Steinbecks out there...we are looking for articles for Reading the Water. The best are personal stories that are entertaining, or provide information not found elsewhere. Have you fished an out-of-the-way place recently?...Come across a killer fly for a favorite river?...Have a hot newsflash about a fishery?...Send it in for publishing!



Most importantly, we want the newsletter to address the topics *you* are interested in. So please contact us to let us know your feelings. What do you want to see in the newsletter?

Please limit your article to a couple of pages, submit it in Microsoft Word, and *include photos or relevant images*. E-mail your submissions to: hrcondict@msn.com.