

The Barbless Hook

December 2021

Edited by Mark Spruiell



tri-valleyflyfishers.org

December Meeting

Devin Olsen – Modern Nymphing

Join us on December 2nd as Devin Olsen gives us a Zoom presentation on **Modern Nymphing: European Inspired Techniques**.

Devin started fly fishing in Yellowstone at age 9. Within a couple of years, it became an addiction he could not shake, and he begged for rides to local streams until he could drive. He started competing at age 19 and made Fly Fishing Team USA in 2006 when he was 21 years old. He has competed in 11 consecutive World Fly Fishing Championships with Fly Fishing Team USA. He has earned a bronze individual medal and silver and bronze team medals from these championships and numerous medals from competitions in the United States.

Away from competitive fishing, he holds a bachelor's degree in Ecology and a master's degree in fisheries science. He worked as a fisheries biologist for several years before starting his company [Tactical Fly Fisher](#). He has produced two instructional films *Modern Nymphing: European Inspired Techniques* and *Modern Nymphing Elevated: Beyond the Basics*, and authored the book *Tactical Fly Fishing: Lessons Learned from Competition for All Anglers*.



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President's Message

Albert Mansky

Well, 2021 will soon be coming to a close, with a brighter New Year ahead of us. Hopefully we will be able to finally put this pandemic behind us and move forward with the loosening of restrictions so we can again begin to feel like things are getting back to normal. My first try at organizing a fish outing was a failure due to Mother Nature. A group of us were going to float the Lower Sacramento River for Steelhead Trout, but that last big rainstorm that kicked off our rainy season just muddied up the river so bad that it was unfishable. If we get any more rain in the near future, the Lower Sac will not be fishable until late spring or possibly even early summer. It's that BAD.

Our December meeting is when the club conducts an election for new Officers (if necessary) and approves the slate. Here is the slate of Officers for 2022:

President	Marty Loomis
Vice President	Alan Wyosnick
Treasurer	Chris McCann
Secretary	Al Mansky

Since we're not meeting in person yet, we've requested your approval for this slate via email. If you haven't already done so, please check your email and send a quick reply.

Starting in January, we are planning to start having our monthly club meetings in person at the Livermore Rod and Gun Club. We are working on having a combination of a Zoom meeting for those of you who can't make the meeting in person for whatever reason, and an in-house meeting. One of the ways that our membership has supported our club is through our club raffle, held at the end of our club meetings. The sale of raffle tickets has greatly diminished in the last few months with no tickets being sold at our November meeting and only a couple of members buying tickets the last few months. If you don't see what you like being raffled, tell Steve Johnson what you would like to have raffled out in the coming year and we'll see if we can fulfill your wishes.

Next year I'll be turning over the Presidency that I've held for the past three years to Marty Loomis, your current Vice President. It has been my great pleasure serving as your President these past three years. I look forward to working with Marty in a different capacity on the board next year. In the meantime, stay safe and healthy and I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting.

Al

2021 TVFF Board of Directors

Officers

President	Albert Mansky
Vice President	Martin Loomis
Secretary	John Price
Treasurer	Chris McCann
Past President	Roger Perry

Directors

Auction	Open Position
Conservation	Gary Prince
Education	Rob Farris
Outings	Martin Plotkin
Fly Tying	Jim Broadbent
Member at Large	Ron Dueltgen
Member at Large	Tom Vargas
Membership	Todd Hyrn
Newsletter	Mark Spruiell
Publicity	Open Position
Raffle	Open Position
Refreshments	Gary Prince
Speakers	Dave Fontaine
Trout in Classroom	Daniel Kitts
Video Library	Steve Johnson
Webmaster	Mark Spruiell

New Member

TVFF welcomes new member **John Murphy**. Glad to have you John!



Raffle Information

For the club's next meeting on Thursday, December 2nd, winning participants in the raffle will have their choice of any of the items except the rod. The fly rod will be awarded last. As always you must be present, or in this case still online, to win. Tickets must be purchased online through the [club store](#) by end of day on Tuesday, November 30th. An email will be sent to you prior to the meeting with your ticket numbers. Cost of tickets are \$5 for 6 tickets, and \$20 for 25 tickets. The raffle items are listed below.



Cortland used 10wt Floating Line



Used Shooting Head with integrated running line



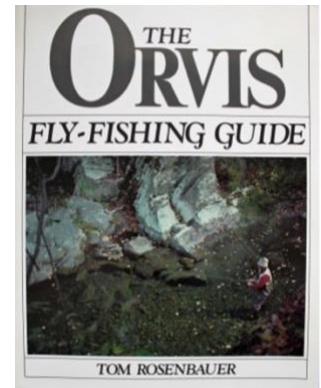
Montana Fly Company Horseshoe double zinger



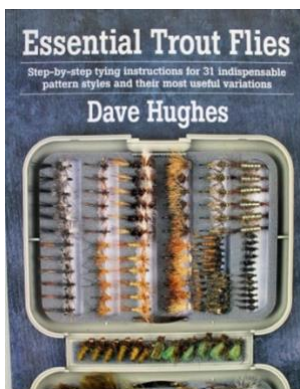
Montana Fly Company Cork Floatant Caddy



Nordica Fishing Lanyard



The Orvis Fly-Fishing Guide by Tom Rosenbauer



Essential Trout Flies



Maxcatch Premier 9', 4 piece, 10 weight, fast action carbon fiber fly rod

Outings and Activities

There are no more outings scheduled for 2021. There are still limited spaces available for the Yuba River event on March 5th and 6th. This is fishing private UC water. If you've never been to the UC property on the Yuba, it is a special place to fish.

Martin Plotkin, Outing Coordinator

Fly Tying Get Together – January 3

We're planning to restart our monthly **in-person** Fly Tying meetings on January 3rd. Jim Broadbent, the club's director of Fly Tying, will select a pattern for the meeting. Members bring their vises, share materials, and get some practice tying the pattern. More details to come later.

Monthly Club Meeting – January 6

Join us **in person** or via Zoom on January 6th as we reopen the clubhouse at the Livermore Rod & Gun Club after nearly two years. We'll make an announcement as soon as we've finalized the speaker.

International Sportsmen's Expo – January 20-23

The [ISE at CalExpo in Sacramento](#) is billed as California's largest annual gathering for anglers, hunters, boaters, offroaders and others seeking outdoor adventures nearby or around the world. It's worth a day trip even if you're only interested in checking out the offerings related to fly fishing.

Beginning Fly Tying Class – Starts February 7

Our [beginning fly tying](#) class consists of four sessions taking place each Monday in February from 7-9pm at the Livermore Rod & Gun Club. The class will be taught by three experienced club members to give you a solid foundation to tie your own flies. Classes will cover tools, tying materials, streamers, nymphs, dry flies, and most importantly the techniques to get the fur and feathers to stick to the hook. All tools and materials are provided, and homework will be assigned. Limited to six students.



Pleasanton Fly Fishing Show – February 25-27

The [Fly Fishing Show](#) returns to the Alameda County Fairgrounds and never fails to provide interesting seminars and lots of exhibitors willing to take your money. The show schedule has not been published yet, but you can buy tickets for the show as well as for the International Fly Fishing Film Festival (iF4) on the 25th. Make sure to stop by the TVFF booth and say hello!

Lower Yuba River – March 5-6, 2022

Our club events on the Yuba will be on the private property owned by the University of California. We have contracted for TVFF's exclusive use of the facility for the weekend, with a maximum of twenty anglers per day. There is approximately 2.5 miles of available river that is the tailwater section a mile or so below Englebright Dam. The river has easy and level access, so it's ideal for those less comfortable in heavy current wading situations, although that is also available for those Euro Nymphing.



The UC facility is on many acres in a pastoral valley leading down to the river. Most of the research here is for cattle, grazing land management, and erosion control so it is very quiet with no nearby roads, ranches, or houses. There is a covered picnic area for use that sits above the river with 8-10 picnic tables and a restroom that is also available on site. All in all, it's a very scenic and serene site.

BBQ lunch included! Visit our [event calendar](#) for all the details.

Member Reports

Klamath River – James Kirchner

If you've been following the fishing reports from pretty much any shop in Northern California, then you've probably heard the Klamath and Trinity have been fishing exceptionally well lately. With the solid report and having had a very successful trip the same time last year, a buddy and I planned to spend a few days in the middle section of the Klamath for steelhead and half pounders.

We left Livermore at 5am and decided to take the 101 to come up the Klamath from Weitchpec rather than the 5 and drop in from around Yreka. This way we could see how the Eel is looking and the lower part of the Klamath. On our way through the Eel it was looking surprisingly good and although probably too early for the fish to be in the system we quickly worked some runs to prospect. As expected, no fish, but it was good to begin finding the rhythm of our two-handers before three long days of fishing. Around 3pm we were finally on the Klamath around Weitchpec and Somes Bar and worked a few runs only getting a few bumps from the smaller fish.



The next two days were spent waking up at 6am to pack up camp and work every decent-looking run we could get to until it was too dark to see where the running line met our shooting heads. We got into a few good half pounders and even a couple adults but no adults to hand. The water both days was muddy and high for this time of year and the word around camp and down on the Trinity was that the bite had slowed to a lull. So considering the report and the conditions we didn't seem to be doing too bad.



Our 3rd day was warm and bright, and with the conditions the way they were, and the weekend boat crowds on the water, we decided to hit the road and get home early. All in all, a trip swinging flies for steelhead always beats working, so no complaints here.

Winter fish will hopefully soon be making their way into systems, and we'll have more opportunity and less crowds.

O'Neill Forebay – Bob McCollum

Good day on the O'Neill Forebay today. About two dozen to hand. Most were strong 16-18 inch fish plus a handful of 3-pound fish and one nice four pounder that tried to swallow my fly. By the end of the day, I had to tie on a new fly as the original was pretty chewed up.



Striper Outing at the South Delta – Martin Plotkin

Rob Fletcher and Robert Nishio in Rob's boat and Rob Farris and Martin Plotkin in Martin's boat were able to make the outing. The weather in the early AM was Delta foggy and by 11 burnt off into a bright sunny afternoon. We launched from Orwood and fished the Werner Dreger Cut from Orwood to Indian Slough, then to the light house at Discovery and finally old river in the area known as Daniel's Island.

Rob's boat landed over a dozen fish, mixed bass and stripers, mostly shakers. Martin's boat landed 1-1/3 fish (don't ask).

A good time was had by all.

Striper Outing at Discovery Bay – Barry Penner

Jim Knecht, Tom Olinger, and Barry Penner were able to make the outing. The weather was cooperative, no fog and moderate wind, less when in the fingers. After setup, good conversations, and talking strategy we launched at around 8:30 from the Discovery Bay Marina. After just a short kick or paddle one can begin fishing. There was very little boat traffic so we pretty much could pick our spots.

Tom was fishing an 8wt rod with integrated 24' sink tip primary with a chartreuse/white Clouser minnow pattern of different weights of eyes. He caught 1 striper, 1 largemouth bass, and 2 Red ear bluegills.

Jim also fished an 8wt with Rio integrated line with 30 feet of T 14 sink tip. Jim caught 2 16" stripers and 3 stripers of smaller size. He also used a Clouser minnow pattern.

I fished a 7wt with 15' of S 6 sink tip. I believe I was being hampered by not being able to get deep enough. I did manage to land 2 stripers.

We all agreed it was a great day of fishing. We are all pleased to have discovered a new place to fish which is very accessible to our float tubes or pontoon boats. We also are happy to have discovered some great fishing partners for outings in the future.

Trinity River – James Kirchner

You've probably heard that the Trinity and Klamath are fishing great and that steelhead numbers are the highest they've been in years. At least that's what I had been told by a handful of guides and shops. So a buddy and I decided to make a quick trip up Friday after work to fish through the weekend.

We pulled into Douglas City around midnight Friday night and set up camp. There was about 15 minutes of rain but other than that great weather. Saturday morning, we started at the runs right below Douglas City campground. This is a great, clean campground if you're in the area. Unfortunately, it closes Nov 8 for the season.

Being the traditionalists (masochists) we are, we only swing flies for steelhead. I could go down the rabbit hole on why everyone should only swing for steelhead, but we'll save that for another time.

I got into a couple small rainbows swinging dry lines and wet flies at the Douglas City runs. We eventually made our way down Steiner Flat Road to look for some more swinging water, eventually stopping at a pull out down the road that looked promising. There are many spots along Steiner Flat Road to fish, but I'll let you do your own exploring. With not much action for an hour or so my buddy Roberto eventually hooked into a decent 18" adult in a nice tail out we were working. I followed up later with another smaller fish that shook off while landing. The rest of the day was spent searching for runs, seeing lots of guides bobber fishing, and hearing a lot of "the report said it was fishing great".

We headed back to camp around 3 to get set up before any potential rain and to fish through the runs in Douglas City before night. Few signs of rising fish but nothing to hand for the rest of the night.

Sunday morning, we decided to head toward Lewiston where we heard there were signs of a lot of steelhead. We stopped at about every riffle between the Trinity fly shop and the old bridge in Lewiston without anything to hand. However, the salmon were everywhere, especially at old bridge. We saw a few boats pull fish while bobber fishing, even had a boat tell us to fish the redds and use a bead. I do not suggest this tactic.

All in all, it was a good weekend on the water. Definitely beats working, and always fun to swing a fly. I'd say if hucking a bobber is your thing and you aren't against fishing beads then you'll probably have a ton of fish to hand on the Trinity right now, the reports are consistently positive. If swinging is your thing, then you're probably accustomed to not putting out numbers, but you know the ones you do get will make the long days it worth it.

Gary Turri – Master Certified Casting Instructor

Congratulations to our own Gary Turri, who recently received his certification as a Master Casting Instructor from Fly Fishers International! This is the highest level of expertise that one can achieve as a Certified Casting Instructor.

The Master Casting Instructor Exam is quite rigorous. The exam was modified in 2018 and the new MCI Exam is even more difficult than ever before. The pass rate is very low, in fact Gary was the first Master Candidate in North America to pass the new test, passing the exam on his first attempt.

The first part of the exam is a test of casting skills that are performed on the grass and covers loop control, line control, accuracy, and distance. If the candidate does not pass the grass tasks, the exam is stopped. If successful, the casting skills evaluation then moves to the water and the master candidate must demonstrate their skill using various Single Hand Spey Casting techniques while wading. There is a total of 22 grass and water casting tasks that must be demonstrated using the high standard of performance that's expected of a Master Certified Casting Instructor.



The second part of the exam is all about the teaching of fly casting. This involves demonstrating casting faults and then describing and demonstrating the appropriate corrections. There are also several teaching scenarios that the master candidate must perform when asked by the team of examiners. The master candidate cannot

fail any of the teaching tasks. Those of you who have taken lessons from Gary already know that he can systematically introduce and demonstrate the fundamentals and intricate elements of a good cast.

The third and final part of the exam is an Interview and Discussion on various topics such as fly-casting principles and mechanics, fault recognition, teaching methods, fly fishing equipment, fly fishing techniques and etiquette. The candidate is expected to demonstrate substantial knowledge and understanding when answering any questions asked by the examiner team.

Gary credits his success to his main mentor Willy George, who is also a Master Certified Casting Instructor and highly respected in the global fly-casting community.

There are about 1300 Certified Casting Instructors worldwide, but less than 200 that are certified at the Master level. Currently, about 125 masters are in the United States.

Going forward, he plans to continue the mentoring of students who wish to become certified casting instructors. He will continue to offer [private lessons](#). And with his free time, he will get back to what he loves best, fly fishing of course!

Truck and SUV Advertising, Driving in the Stream!

Gary Prince – Conservation Director

It seems that several truck brands have embraced the showing of new trucks and SUVs driving in streams. All too popular in television and other internet video advertising. Nissan Trucks, Ford, and Jeep have run ads recently. It would seem obvious that it is very detrimental to the life of the stream and its inhabitants. I've seen a new Jeep Wagoneer spot that shows a fly fisherman casting an impressive tight loop, followed shortly by the vehicle being driven through a stream (as well as other outdoor activities). There has been some criticism against this communicated to the car manufacturers. For the most part, it doesn't seem to keep it from continuing.

A significant victory has just been made by Trout Unlimited who let Nissan Trucks know of the damage such imagery suggests. Nissan has responded that they will remove it, saying

We take conservation and respectful operation of our vehicles very seriously, and we are sorry that our imagery missed the mark. While we took several steps to safeguard the locations where we filmed the spot from damage, we didn't properly consider the impact that the simple use of the scenes could have. The spot has now been edited to remove those portions. We're also committed to making sure the future marketing and communications efforts reflect the expectations that our outdoor enthusiasts and conservationists have of us as a major off-road manufacturer.

To show our commitment to the work Trout Unlimited is doing to care and recover rivers and streams, we would like to make a \$10,000 donation to support your efforts.

Perhaps efforts made regarding the new Jeep Wagoneer spots can have similar results. We can contact Jeep executive Jim Morrison, who is responsible for sales and marketing strategic operations, at the address below:

Jeep
Jim Morrison
1000 Chrysler Drive
Auburn Hills, MI 48326-2766

Going to the Grave – The End of an 850 Mile Migration

Kris Millgate – Trout Unlimited Magazine

I find a dead drifter first. I panic. I'm too late. The Fork is full of dead fish. No headstones, no reaper, just graves. Shallow and uncovered graves, the decay of a marvelous migration complete with corpse.

Chinook salmon born in Idaho's Yankee Fork of the Salmon River flush to the Pacific Ocean to grow. They're finger length when they leave. When they return, they're longer than your arm. They migrate through four rivers (Columbia, Snake, Salmon, Yankee Fork) and three states (Oregon, Washington, Idaho) twice (to and from the ocean), to lay eggs once.

Salmon must swim against the current for 850 miles to return to their home water. They have warming ocean, towering dams and mobs of predators, us and other animals, in their way. Of the several thousand eggs hatched, only a few dozen make it back to their crib to spawn and die.

Historically, I would have had my pick of 3,000 salmon on the Yankee Fork, but I didn't know this drainage then. I know it now and now it's depleted. Before development of the West, the basin was so full of fish, tribes were named after them.



An adult Chinook salmon spawning in Idaho's Yankee Fork of the Salmon River, 850 miles from the ocean.

"People that came and lived in the Salmon Basin here were referred to as the Agaidika, which is the salmon eaters," says Lytle Denny, Shoshone Bannock Tribes' anadromous fish biologist. "To lose the agai is to lose our identity and so I made it a personal and a professional goal that we're going to get fish back here."

It's a lofty goal. Only 37 Chinook salmon returned to the Yankee Fork in 2020. Denny's crew walked its banks daily looking for spawners. When he sent me the 'spawn on' text I raced to the river two hours from my hometown. I followed these fish for four months from the ocean to Idaho so I have to witness their inevitable end.

I'm pacing the bank, the finish line, in my waders. I don't have my fly rod. I have my camera. I'm here to film the last mile of the 850-mile migration. If it was my day off, I still wouldn't fish. I've never touched, or caught, a salmon in Idaho. There wouldn't even be salmon and steelhead fishing seasons in Idaho if it wasn't for hatchery stock. Fish made by man provide a few salmon seasons, but leave the ones made by Mother Nature alone. They're protected by the Endangered Species Act. I don't need to hook them. I just need to see them, document them, prove they're here.

Cassi Wood knows they're here. She's Trout Unlimited's central Idaho project manager. She's overseeing restoration of the Yankee Fork. It was turned upside down for gold seven decades ago, but a few precious Chinook still find their way back somehow.

"The vast majority of responses we get from people is how exciting and can you fix it all," Wood says. "I love that."

I love that fish still return, but they won't last long upon arrival. Spawners die one to two days after laying eggs. They're vigilant until the permanent end.

They won't willingly leave despite their zombie status, but eventually the current's pull is stronger than their ability to stay and they're swept downstream. That's what I'm looking at. A spawned and spent sweeper. With deed done, death comes.

A redd, where salmon lay eggs, is close if I'm seeing a carcass. In the 1960s, there were 400 redds in the Yankee Fork. In 2020 there were 12. Not even a baker's dozen, but I'm near one. Each redd needs two fish, one male and one female. If one is out, the other might still be in. I tell myself to keep pacing and keep my wading boots out of the water. Search the riffles. Search for solace.

When I finally see the life I'm looking for, my eyes flood. I thought the first thing I'd do was roll tape, but I don't. I cry. The moment deserves reverence so I don't hit the record button. Instead, I watch a three-foot, sloth-speed slither weave in water so skinny that back and body are exposed. The nearly non-existent site blurs behind tears. I don't move. I don't speak. I don't hesitate to record with my mind before I have to document with mechanics.

I'm looking at one of the 37 fish that made it to the finish line. Of those 37, at least 24 got lucky. Each redd hosts 3,000 fertilized eggs. Those eggs will winter on the Yank, flush to the ocean for up to three years then return to their cribs as adults just like their parents did. That's the intention anyway, but most of them end up in unintentional graves somewhere else along the migration route. Females tend to build the bed and stand guard more often, so I assume I'm looking at a lady. She's drop dead beautiful. Her nose and fins are white with rot. There's a large gouged-out hole on her bottom half. Is that where her eggs once rode? There are scratches and nips on her top side. Eagle talons or osprey beaks? Her wounds are puzzling, but she's still pretty.

I see her even though she doesn't see me. I acknowledge her rare existence, her importance. I recognize the risk she took to get here.

I recognize my own risk to get here traveling solo during a pandemic. I have stitches in four places and a broken camera held together with duct tape. I fell apart on the journey just like salmon do. I know she's exhausted because I'm exhausted, but there's nowhere else I should be. Nowhere else she should be. She's doing her thing for fish of the future until her own clock stops and I have the privilege of witnessing the wild in her last mile. You can tell every last bit of her energy is going into the gravel. It's astounding. It's humbling.

Every few minutes she relaxes and the current carries her away. Like your pulse, there's a rhythm to it. I count the beats. She returns, she guards, she lets go again. That's my cue. Two steps and I'm in the flow. I keep my feet and camera away from her redd, and angle my lens so it will look directly at her when she comes back. My camera is smaller than your hand and wrapped with webbing around a flat, smooth rock the size of a dinner plate. The whole contraption is pitched underwater on the river bottom upstream from the action and well out of the hot zone. Her bed is not my bed to hop into so I make sure I don't.

I push record, take two steps out and I'm back on the bank before the next beat. I hide my shadow in the willows and wait for her return. It doesn't take long. She's so tired of going against the current, but she hates being away. She has to get back until there's no going back.

She's moving. I'm not. She swims over her redd and stops. I peek over the bushes and freeze. She hovers with strength the swimming dead shouldn't have. I squeeze my hands together with silent delight I didn't expect. She shimmies. I shiver. She noses a few pea-sized stones then settles in guard mode. I settle in to watch her hold until the pull wins again and she drifts away to start the dance again. Til death does she part.

I have the last act at the last mile. I'll add it to the rest of the shots I've collected from the ocean to Idaho. I have 25 hours of footage to shove into a 26-minute show. It's like shoving step-sister's foot into Cinderella's slipper. It's an impossible fit, but this whole journey proved impossible yet here we are. Her and I. Both of us are falling apart. One of us drifting away. The other fading away. Which one for what, I'm not sure. The distinction isn't sharp.

I knew this migration had a morbid end, but it's soul rattling nonetheless. It proves we're off, way off. We need to let the wild be wild. Not have to. Need to. We know nothing of what interrupting nature means for our own existence. If we did, we would choose otherwise and we would choose in unison. No arguing. No resistance. Just righting our wrongs because letting the wild be wild will be this planet's saving grace and ours.

Outdoor journalist Kris Millgate is based in Idaho where she runs trail and chases trout. Sometimes she even catches them when she doesn't have a camera, or a kid, on her back. Going to the Grave comes from a chapter in her second book, *My Place Among Fish*, which is the sequel to her first book, *My Place Among Men*. Her salmon film, *Ocean to Idaho*, is showing now. See her work at www.tightlinemedia.com.

Items for Sale

If you need contact information for a member, use the club's online [roster](#).

WANTED: 15 hp outboard motor in good running condition

Contact Hal Wilson

Gear Sale – James Kirchner

Simms wader/gear bag. Fits waders and boots in bottom compartment to separate from dry clothes and gear. Tons of storage up top for jackets, warm clothes, socks, etc. more compartments up top for access to fly boxes, reels, etc. bungee style rod tube holders on both sides. Water repellent material. These are discontinued. In great shape minus missing one stop button on handle. Doesn't affect use. Asking \$200 obo



Fly tying vices (see next page):

- Green bag kit with vice \$100
- Box kit without vice \$70
- Middle row vices \$50 each
- Bottom row vices \$75 each



Miscellaneous tools and materials (see next page):

- All tools \$5 each/set
- Chenille - \$10 for all
- Thread \$10/small set \$30 box set
- Or I'd take \$100 for everything in the photo

