

The Barbless Hook

February 2021

Edited by Mark Spruiell



tri-valleyflyfishers.org

President's Message

by Albert Mansky

Hi All,

Well, we're finally into 2021 and out of 2020, in more ways than one, if you get my drift. I'll not get into politics, but like the saying goes "out with the old and in with the new."

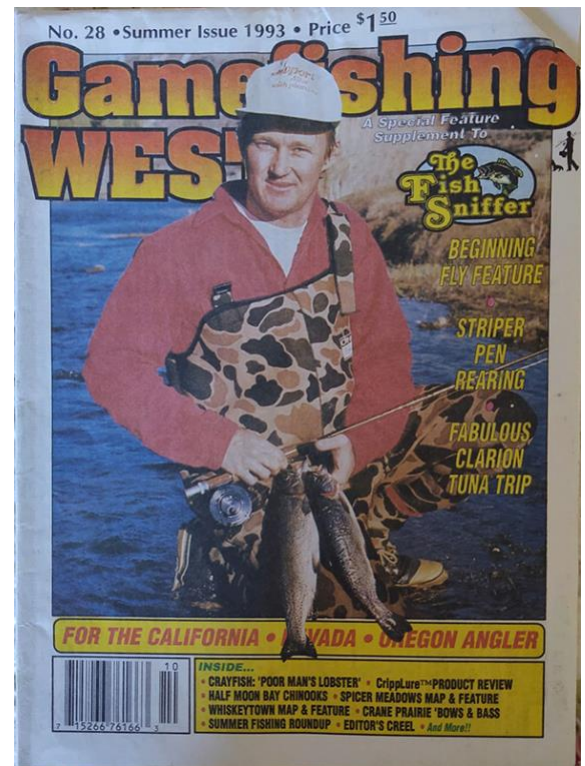
I hope this message finds you all in good health and spirits. I haven't had a chance to do any fishing, like some of you lucky ones. Tax season is just around the corner, so I'm gearing up for it. Being a retired accountant, it can be a very taxing time of year. Excuse the pun.

Being one of those "old timers" 75 and over, I tried to make an appointment to get my vaccination shot, but they were totally booked up. So much for the start of round two. I hope many of you are, who are eligible, can sign up for the waiting list.

I'm looking forward into 2021, that we can finally move forward and enjoy the sport of fishing like the days of old. With new and more vaccines soon to be coming available, I'm hoping that we have finally turned the corner.

With all that said, be safe and hopefully we all can catch that big one that we either missed last year or didn't have the chance to fish for.

Al



Blast from the past! Our illustrious (or notorious?) treasurer Chris McCann featured on the cover of a fishing magazine from 1993.

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Fly Fishing Show Canceled

Alameda County Fairgrounds has been designated as a COVID-19 vaccine distribution center. In addition, emergency medical services will take over all of the primary buildings at the fairgrounds and the main paved parking lot with an announced end date of July 4. This effectively ended the Fly Fishing Show's hopes of rescheduling the event in the spring.

New Members

The club welcomes the following members who have joined us over the last few months:

Greg Blandino
Robert Chacon
Michael Freitas
Elden Hinkle

James Kirchner
Scott Rosingana
Kyle Wagner

We're all looking forward to the time that we can meet them in person at a club event.

2021 TVFF Board of Directors

Officers

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

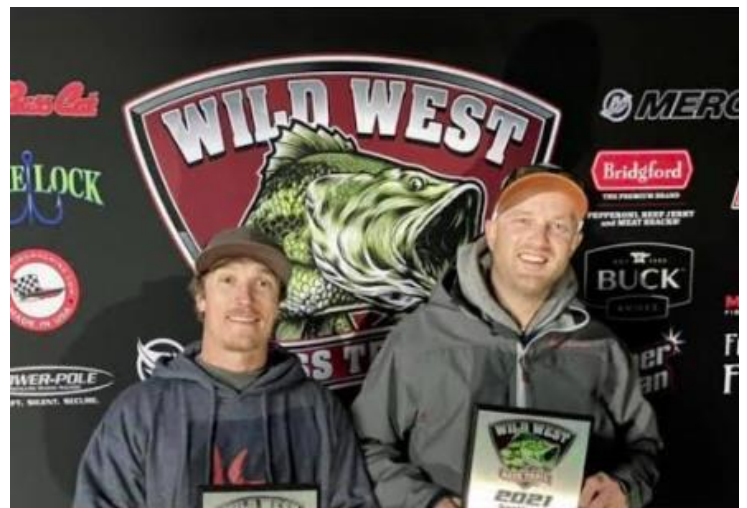
Directors

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

February Meeting – Float 'n Fly with Ryan Williams

Ryan Williams will be doing a presentation on the fly fishing Float 'n Fly technique he and his partner used to win the Wild West Bass CA Teams Tournament in early January this year on Lake Shasta for an \$8,000 payout. Ryan's team beat over 180 other teams fishing conventional gear.

The talk will focus on the technique, rigging and flies for fishing the Float 'n Fly for winter and spring bass and trout in lakes and reservoirs. He will also talk on the basics of how to approach and fish bass ponds in preparation for our upcoming trip to Kistler Bass Ponds later this year.



Ryan is donating a few of his now-coveted Float 'n Fly Components to our meeting raffle.

Raffle Information

For the club's next meeting on Thursday, February 4th, winning participants in the raffle will have their choice of the first seven items below. Item 8 (the Powell 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, February 2nd. An email will be sent to you prior to the meeting with your ticket numbers. If you have not received the email by noon on the day of the meeting please contact me, Steve Johnson, at 925-980-5433.

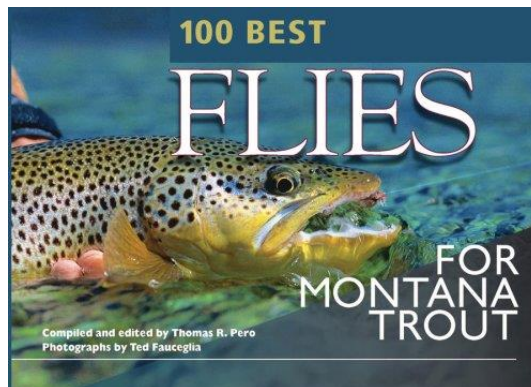
Cost of tickets are:

- \$1.00 - 1 Ticket
- \$5.00 - 6 Tickets
- \$20.00 - 25 Tickets

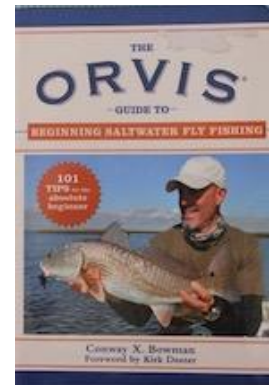
The raffle items are listed below.



Klamath River Access Map



100 Best Flies for Montana Trout Book



Orvis Guide to Beginning Saltwater Fly Fishing Book



Premium Floatant 1oz



Water Gremlin Split Shot BB, 3/0, #7, #5
- 78 pieces



Plier with nippers -
condition used/good



Small clousers – maybe #6 hook



Powell Sweet P 704-3 fiberglass fly rod (7'0" 4wt 3 piece rod with case)

Fly Box News

Jim Broadbent

It has been a crazy and strenuous year that most of us have been going through, not having as much contact with family and friends, interruptions in our daily routines, etc. Hopefully this will soon be over and our TVFF meetings will be able to resume.

In these troubled times, following in the footsteps of Franklin Roosevelt, our president will serve a third term. In recognition of his leadership in 2020 we present him the traditional presidential fly box. As all past presidents will agree, it is a treasured memento which hangs in a prominent location of our homes or offices.



Shown in the picture below are club member tied flies. From left to right: Birds Nest (Gary Turri), Adams (Robert Nishio), Blue Wing Olive (Robert), Foxtail Pupa (Jim Broadbent), 2020 Egg (Jim B), Gotcha (Daniel Kitts), Caddis Pupa (Jim B).

Member Reports

Feather River Steelhead Weekday Trip – Denis Haire

Sometimes things line up just right: the moon, the stars, the weather, and a great group of fellow fly fishers. This is how the world looked for me as we descended on the Feather river in the pursuit of the elusive

steelhead. Having heard reports of how challenging these fish can be (being skunked is a real possibility) and the recent success of our fish meister, my first-time steelhead adventure had me nervous and anxious. The three-hour drive to the river gave me time to think about what lies ahead: cold water, wading staff, heavier tippet, small flies and the need for a bigger net. Little did I know the net size would be a clue.

Having heard the stories of the opening day crowd from a prior scouting trip, I was anticipating the parking lot to look like a beehive of activity. Having rained the previous day and with a little bit of fog just lifting, I was amazed to see only three other vehicles as I pulled into the meeting place! I was the first to arrive and as the others pulled in, no other vehicles arrived for fishing. Our group for the day consisted of Alan, Rob, Todd and myself. Being the newbie, I kept my eyes and ears open for as many tips as I could absorb. One comment that stuck with me was Rob's comment about seeing a smaller net: "What are you going to catch with that? Butterflies?" Again, another clue.



Todd rigging up



Alan and Rob getting ready for cold water

Having put on warm socks and extra layers, our boots on and waders up, it was off to the water! Almost forgot, need to complete that steelhead card before going down to the river. Don't want the warden to have a field day with us....

On a glorious sunny and bright morning, Alan led us down the path past the hatchery to the wonderful little side channel just off the main river. The pool we would be in for the day was full of riffles and good current, and later what I would discover to be "bathtubs". Surprisingly, we were the only people in the pool. Thinking that we would be out in the main river, I had rigged up with heavier gear. Alan was gracious enough to let me use one of his rigs for the day that was better suited for the conditions. I learned a lesson on that! The water temperature was reported to be a balmy 49°F. The water was surprising clear after the recent rain. The glare

on the water was a killer, so the challenge was on. After a quick refresher on high sticking and working a small float and even smaller flies (size 14 to 16) through the holes (almost euro style), I was on my own.

Of course, it was Alan who had the first fish to show us they were there! I had the opportunity to watch him play the fish (especially on lighter gear) as I ultimately netted his fish. It was then I realized why you need a big net! Having never seen a steelhead I was amazed by the coloring and size of this majestic fish.



Alan (fish whisperer) with his first of many fish today

Having learned from that, and dancing around the riffles and listening to Todd say “They are stacked up here” and “another one just went by me” I hoped I could at least hook one. Understanding the hooking (and on barbless no less!!) to landing ratio is about 30%, I felt fortunate to simply see these fish.

As I was drifting a San Juan worm and small (size 16) flashback pheasant tail on a seven-weight rod I saw a slight hesitation of my indicator. Hmm... I gently raised my rod and noticed a slight tug. After this subtle hit I could feel the bend in my rod! My first thought was please do not run downstream over the falls as I am not the nimblest in the water. As it turned out he turned and ran upstream and I had to chase him down. This is where those “bathtubs” and the encouragement of Rob (my net man) came into play. After navigating around and sometimes through these depressions I ended up in a flatter area which made the anticipated landing easier. Rob’s wisdom of playing the fish ultimately helped bring the fish to his net. And boy was his net full! After stopping to catch my breath, Rob and I took a look. A beautiful 24-inch wild steelhead, and as thick a football that took the small nymph. After taking pictures and helping the fish recover, I released this trophy back. This is truly stuff of dreams and things lining up just right....



A happy introduction to steelhead



Release for another day...

The rest of the day proved to be productive for the others as I did not get another strike (at least I think).



Rob thought this was a small one...

The strategies for the day included Euro style presentation with larger attractors including olive and black rubber legs as well as squirmies. Trailers included red butt nymphs, black mayfly nymphs and red copper johns. I heard Alan was using a perdigon style fly for one of his many fish. Typical tippet used was 3X on a 7wt rod. All of the fish in the system we saw, both hooked and landing, and jumping out of the water were all so big and healthy. The total count for the day was around 6 fish landed (maybe more) so believe our landing ratio was well above the average.

As the day came to a close, one thing came to mind: being grateful. I am so grateful to the club for offering these trips and making them very accessible. And to those on this day trip to help stretch my comfort zone. Having the luck to catch maybe a fish of a lifetime is one thing, but to have the friends to share it with is even more important.

My final reflection on the day can be summed up in a quote from Charles F. Orvis:

More than half the intense enjoyment of fly-fishing is derived from the beautiful surroundings, the satisfaction felt from being in the open air, the new lease of life secured thereby, and the many, many pleasant recollections of all one has seen, heard and done.

Tight lines.

Jan 5th and 9th Feather River Outings – Alan Wyosnick

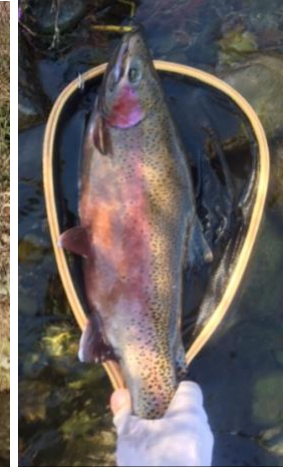
What could be better than spending time with fellow fly fishing enthusiasts under sunny skies in January? If you toss in some rod-bending steelhead you have the ingredients for two memorable days. Joining us this year were Gary Turri, Denis Haire, Ken Gotelli, Scott Rosingana, Todd Hyrn and Rob Farris.



This was the 3rd season of the Feather River January outings and each one has been a little bit different as you might expect with most river systems you visit on an annual basis. For this year the nice surprise was the average size fish were much bigger which is an indication some of them were most likely returning to the system for the third year. Due to the diminished rains so far this winter the water levels were about six inches lower and the temperature was 49 degrees versus 43 last year. That made for easier wading, warmer feet and safer conditions chasing hooked fish up and down the river. The water clarity was very good which allowed us to see more fish but the flip side is they were more skittish and indicator shy. For some unexplained reason our into-the-net percentage was lower this year at about 25% versus about 33% in previous years... frustrating at times but fun nonetheless to at least experience the adrenaline rush of some of those “freight trains” peeling line off your reel.

The exciting news was our tradition of a newbie to the river landing the biggest fish (24” plus) continued with Denis on the 5th and Scott on the 9th. Both fish took over ten minutes to land with Denis’s fish taking him 100

yards upstream and Scott had to chase his 200 yards downstream. Talk about beginners' luck, Scott hooked into his on the very first drift of the day on a size 14 Haystack nymph!



Our stats were about 48 fish hooked and 13 into the net. As with the previous years there was no one secret fly that was better than any other. The combination of a larger "attractor" fly up top (San Juan, Alevin, egg bead, etc.) along with a size 14-18 bottom fly (your favorite trout nymphing patterns) worked well.

It was a pleasure fishing with everyone and I'm already looking forward to next year!

Conservation

Gary Prince

Have some of us included the following initiatives in your New Year's resolutions? It's only the second month of the year, and what we "individually" do to take better care of the air, water, and land has an enormous effect on the quality of our fishing.

- Reduce, reuse and recycle
- Conserve water. A big one, as we are so far into a second year of light rainfall. Let's consider how we use it when washing cars, watering lawns and gardens, time in the shower, hosing off cement, etc. It took the recent drought years for me to understand my lawn still does well with two days of timed sprinklers, rather the five of yesteryears.
- Re-useable water bottles. Those large cases of plastic 16oz bottles are cheap and convenient, however less than 30% of those collected for recycling are actually ever recycled. TVFF will no longer be including them in monthly meeting refreshment beverages. Please bring your own re-useable beverage bottles.
- Filter water for home use. There are several good brands that can turn our tap water into cleaner, great tasting water. These can be attached to the water source or simply a filtered pitcher (like Brita). Saves money and packaging.
- Use less energy. There are many old and new ways to accomplish this.



- Use sustainable energy. Any of you know how to build windmills?
- Buy more energy efficient vehicles. Use them less. (Reduce unnecessary trips.)
- Carpool (post Covid). It sure will be nice to share the driving, the jokes and friendly insults as we ride together again soon.
- Close curtains and shutters on cold and hot days.
- Set thermostats higher on hot days and lower on cool days.
- Dress more weather-appropriate.
- Wear your winter steelhead gear in the house, and you'd never turn the heater on, but I'd have to buy my wife some gear. Since we are the same height, I end up with some nice new gear.
- Use long lasting light bulbs and batteries (or rechargeable).
- Solar heating, replace inefficient home insulation, buy energy efficient appliances.
- Use re-useable shopping bags. Yes, this is a little different as we go through the Covid pandemic.
- Shop wisely. Buy what you need. Consider how much disposable packaging is included. Is it recyclable packing? Are you gonna eat all that you got at Costco?
- Plant a tree. Or buy a home next to one that inundates you with clean air and enough leaves to keep you working many days each year, raking, blowing, vacuuming and cleaning the roof gutters (four times and counting so far this year).
- Volunteer. More to follow in months to come regarding what we can do as a club, and individually.
- Pick up litter. Leave the places we visit cleaner than when we got there.
- Educate yourself and others about what's happening and what we can do.

I'm sure we are following some of these tips above and can continue to make even more improvements. Thank you for considering what you can do.

You May Be Killing Steelhead And Not Even Know It

Louis Cahill – Gink & Gasoline

STEELHEADERS ARE GENERALLY PRETTY SERIOUS ABOUT CATCH-AND-RELEASE, BUT IT'S LIKELY THAT MANY ARE MORTALLY WOUNDING FISH WITHOUT EVER KNOWING IT.

There are few species of fish as vulnerable as wild steelhead. These fish are beset on all sides by threats both natural and man-made. With their numbers dwindling, it's safe to say, every steelhead counts. It's vital that those of us who fish for them practice the best catch-and-release practices.



However, common landing practices can kill fish without the angler ever knowing. My buddy Andrew Bennett told me this story. Apparently, a team of biologists studying steelhead in British Columbia discovered this problem, quite by accident. These scientists were tagging steelhead with GPS trackers. They determined that

the least intrusive way to capture the fish was, well, the same way we do it. With a fly rod. They landed the fish, tagged them with the GPS device and released them. When they went to their computer to track the fish's progress they discovered something alarming.

Within two hours many of the fish they had tagged, and released in good health, were dead. They collected the fish and performed autopsies to determine what had gone wrong. In every case the cause of death was head trauma. It turns out that 'steelhead' is a misnomer. The fish's head is, in fact, its most vulnerable spot.

When landing the fish, the researchers had played them into shallow water where they would be easy to tail. As the fish came into the shallows they were on longer, fully submerged. Without the resistance of the water surrounding them, their powerful thrashing was able to generate momentum that is not possible underwater. The flopping fish simply hit their heads on a rock.

The fish appeared fine when released, but their injured brains began to swell and soon they were dead. It makes perfect sense if you think about it. Fish have evolved in an environment where hitting their head on anything with enough force to cause damage is almost impossible. Their brains lack the natural protection enjoyed by terrestrial species.

Luckily, this unfortunate outcome is easily avoided. The angler has a couple of good options. Landing fish by hand in knee deep water is a little tougher but much safer for the fish. You can grab the leader to control the fish long enough to tail it. After a fish or two it will feel very natural. When possible, it's best to use a good catch-and-release net. This is safest for the fish and easiest for the angler. A net helps you seal the deal while the fish is still fresh and requires little reviving.

Always control your fish once he's landed. Keep his gills wet and support his head in case he makes a sudden attempt to escape. Keeping him, dorsal fin up, will keep his range of motion side-to-side, making it harder for him to injure himself. When possible keep him in deeper water. Never beach a fish when landing him and never lay him on the bank for a photo. It's just not worth it.

Wild steelhead are a precious resource. Those of us who come to the river looking for them must lead by example and do our best to be good stewards of these remarkable fish. Their future is, literally in our hands.

Fish Landing & Handling Tips

- **Don't touch the gills**
- **Don't touch the eyes**
- **Minimize the time out of water**
- **Use a fish friendly net**
- **Resuscitate the fish if needed**
- **Use equipment that will not over-tire the fish. Don't fight them to death!**

