

The Barbless Hook

September 2021

Edited by Mark Spruiell



tri-valleyflyfishers.org

September Meeting

With the ongoing CALDOR smoke & fires near Tahoe, we need to defer Liz Weirauch's talk on Heenan Lake to October (see description below). We'll need to move to Plan B.

Plan B – Member sharing on “What I fished on my Summer Vacation” – Club trips or individual outings

Members are invited to share their recent fishing adventures, including Baja, Montana and others. Feel free to share pictures, etc. or just talk. Please contact Dave Fontaine if you plan to share pictures.

Plan A – Heenan Lake – Deferred to October

Heenan Lake can be a challenging place to fish. Liz Weirauch, owner of Anglers Edge in Gardnerville, is going share her local insights on fishing this lake.

Liz has been fishing her entire life, from the warm water fisheries of Michigan where she was born to the Rocky Mountains of Colorado and with her husband on the Pacific Ocean for big game fish and surf fish. A decade plus of fly fishing in the Eastern Sierra and teaching her love of the sport has given Liz a unique look at trout psychology and habits that will increase your knowledge and love of fly fishing. Liz loves fishing and is more than willing to pass on her excitement and gratification of enticing a fish to take a fly.

"Fly Fishing is the only hunting endeavor where the quarry can be released unharmed to be hunted another day."



Al Mansky and Rob Farris work on preparing the tri-tip for the club's annual BBQ potluck last month. Dave Meister was also a big help at the grill.

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President's Message

Albert Mansky

Hi Guys and Gals:

If you didn't make the August picnic, you missed a great time that was had by all. There was plenty of food for all and then some. I would like to thank all the members who brought something to share with your fellow members. If I sampled a little of everything, I would have probably put on five pounds. I would also like to thank our board members for their help in making this event the success it was.

In my opening statement, I asked the members to "think outside of the box". We are a fly fishing club, but we can do a lot more than just fly fish. I enjoy all types of fishing, with a fly rod, spinning rod and bait rod. What I'm saying is, if you have something on your bucket list, like deep sea fishing out of San Diego for tuna, or some other destination like Alaska, Canada, Iceland, etc., let Martin Plotkin know. If there are enough members who have similar interest in doing something different, maybe we can organize a trip. I've got two bucket lists going and it would take more than one lifetime for me to ever complete them.

With all the fires going on in the northern part of California, I'm pretty sure this has put a damper on many of your fishing outings, in addition to the low river flows, low lake levels and warm water temperatures. Hopefully things will pick up this fall if we get some rain. In the meantime, keep the faith for better things to come, stay safe and healthy.

Al

Raffle Information

For the club's next meeting on Thursday, September 2nd, winning participants in the raffle will have their choice of the first six items below. Item 7 (the Aventik 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, August 31st. 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 \$5 for 6 tickets, and \$20 for 25 tickets. The raffle items are listed below.

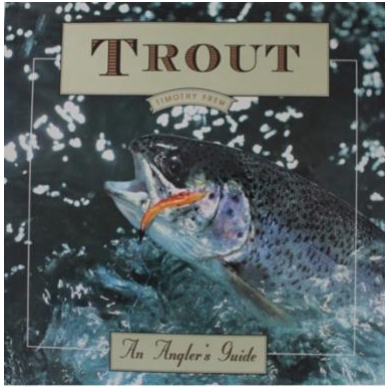
2021 TVFF Board of Directors

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Vice President	Martin Loomis
Secretary	John Price
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Raffle	Open Position
Refreshments	Gary Prince
Speakers	Dave Fontaine
Trout in Classroom	Daniel Kitts
Video Library	Steve Johnson
Webmaster	Mark Spruiell



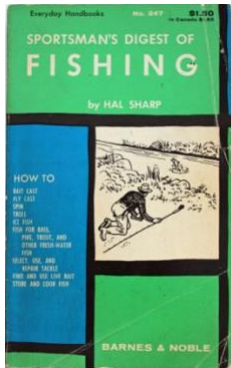
“Trout – An Angler’s Guide”
by Timothy Frew



Dritz Battery operated light and
magnifier with 3 different light outputs



Orvis 8 x 4.5 x 2 fly box



“Sportman’s Digest of
Fishing” by Hal Sharp



Fishing neck lanyard



Umpqua 2PK Pyramid Lake
Dropper Leader and “Little Red
Fishing Knot Book” by Harry
Nilsson



Aventik Z Short & Light Ultra
Compact Fly Rod, 6'8” 2/3
weight, 4 piece, with case

Club News

- Thank you to **John DeRouen** for your generous donation to TVFF. The club gladly accepts [donations](#) to fund our conservation and education efforts.
- TVFF welcomes new member **Deanne Bourne**. Glad to have you Deanne!



Outings and Activities

The good news is that in the coming months five members are going to organize outings – the bad news is they're not as yet scheduled. The trips are **tentatively** as follows:

- Fall striper, in mid-November, on the Delta for folks with a boat – me
- Lower Sac float trip in Early November – Al Mansky
- Feather River, Steelies, walk n wade in early January – Alan Wyosnick
- Pyramid Lake Cutts in late fall or early winter – Dennis Rankin

We're seeking Fish Meisters to organize:

- Saltwater clinic with guide Phil Rowley or Bill Scharninghausen
- 1-day trout on the Stanislaus above Oakdale (an hour drive)
- 1-day trout on Putah (Rob interested?)
- Fall campout around Calaveras Big Trees
- Float Tube/Pontoon Bass Day on the Delta

Anyone who hasn't organized an outing and would like to do so, I'll team you up with an experienced Fish Meister. You don't have to be an expert, you just need to be interested in the activity to organize and coordinate.

Let's go fishin.

Martin Plotkin

Outing Coordinator

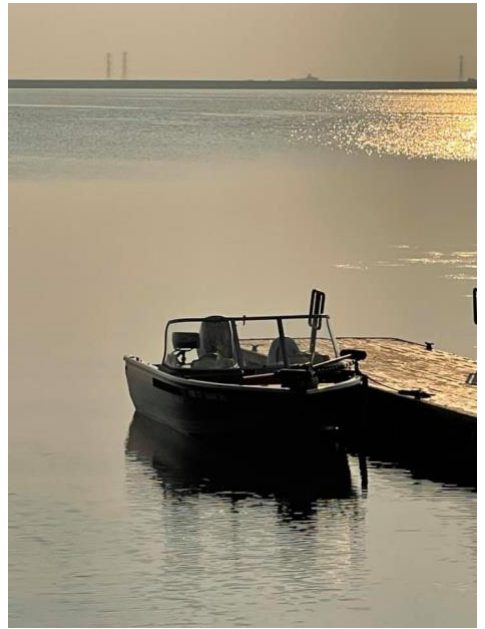
Beginning Nymphing Clinic – September 24-27

Jim Roberts will be hosting an intensive on-the-water clinic for beginners where students will learn how to safely wade, rig for nymphing, read the water and fish on the McCloud or Upper Sacramento Rivers. Expect to catch fish! The clinic will include everything: meals, flies, leaders, lodging and instruction. Attendees will provide their own fishing gear and licenses. See the [event](#) for all the details. **One spot left!**

Member Reports

Bob McCollum – San Luis Forebay

Smoky day at the Forebay. Wore my N95 mask while fishing. Caught a nice fish on the first cast. This tends to be a bit of a curse for me. If I catch a fish on the first cast, the rest of the day is tough fishing. Well, this held true yesterday as well. Only one bump and no fish the rest of the day.



Website Tips

Rob Farris

Going fishing lately? Have you checked the [TVFF Resources](#) page for water flows, weather, fishing reports, and road conditions? Ok, but have you checked for fires and air quality? No fun being out there in 100+ air quality, or maybe 1,000+ up at Tahoe recently from the Caldor fire. Or driving all the way up to find out that there's a new fire you didn't know about. So look to our expanded Resources page with air quality and fire map links to the most common fishing areas before you go. Stay healthy; the fires will work themselves through and we'll be back to un-encumbered fishing again soon.

Are We Taking the Safety of Trout Too Far?

Domenick Swentosky – [Troutbitten](#)

It seems that this is the summer of telling people how they should fish, when they should fish and maybe that they shouldn't fish for trout at all. It's also now common to tell people when they can take pictures, how they can take pictures or that they just shouldn't take pictures of their catch.

It's all getting a little out of hand. And much of the advice offered up is a step too far. This path leads to disaster. And we will lose what we love best if we keep going in this direction. My friends, we jam a hook into a creature's lip and drag it through the water for fun. That's fishing, and it's what we do.

Admit it. And if we continue the incessant worrying about trout safety, logic will lead to the end of our fishing altogether.



Does that sound extreme? Well, so do some of the current recommendations out there. And before you judge my views too harshly, please read on, and let me flesh out a few points.

**** Fish cold water. Fight 'em fast. Handle gently. Release quickly. ****

I think we've taken the safety of trout far enough. Let's educate every angler to these standards and stop moving the goalposts.

Water Temperatures

There is no doubt that catching trout in warm water is harmful and can be deadly to the fish. So don't do it. What's too warm? My cutoff is 68 degrees. 68-70 degrees has been the prevailing wisdom of science for years. Literature and media have always followed, until this summer, where suddenly, according to some, it's unethical to fish for trout if the water temps reach 65 at any point in the day.

Maybe the difference in those numbers seems like we're splitting hairs. But if you've spent many seasons on a trout stream, you understand that there's a world of difference between those three degrees.

Seasons on a trout stream will also teach you, firsthand, that there's nothing wrong with catching a trout in 68 degree water, if you play it fast and release it quickly. I've caught trout in a river that was too warm. I've made mistakes. The trout seemed sluggish, and it was obvious that I should stop fishing. That was decades ago, before I carried a stream thermometer. Now I take temps and don't fish over 68 degrees. But that's not good enough for the guy I met in the parking lot the other day, who offered me some unsolicited advice (with arrogance) that I should not be fishing that morning.

No doubt, his righteousness was fueled by the current extremism.

The Places

Climate change is real. It's your fault, and it's my fault. Unchecked, excess carbon in the atmosphere will spell disaster to our trout fishing, worldwide. And there's little if any time left to act on reducing carbon emissions in all forms. Seeing this any other way is just burying your head in the sand against facts and reality. The changes are already here, and there's no reasonable, fact-based argument otherwise.

Record temps combined with intense drought in *some* parts of the country have created conditions previously unseen by local anglers. This is happening in much of the west and in other areas of the United States. So by all means, please, [employ those hoot owl restrictions and close areas or whole rivers to fishing](#). I support these regulations when they're decided by a trusted group of experts with local decisions based on science. But I do not support the demonization of anyone who wants to do a little morning fishing in spring-fed water that's 65 degrees. And if they want to take a picture of a trout, provided they handle the fish safely, I'm good with it.

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Maybe the temperatures are hell-hot where you live right now. I get it. So give the trout a break. But in my backyard, and in other places throughout the country, the situation for trout is better than last year at this time. In fact, from June to the middle of August, we've had a little more rain than average, with fairly mild temperatures for weeks at a time. It's the best summer in a while, honestly.

Factor in the tailwaters, the spring creeks with good flows and the cold mountain streams, and there are plenty of places for trout anglers to catch a fish. But that's not part of the mainstream message right now.

The Lowest Common Denominator

Here's what's happening: Some of the trusted voices in fly fishing are offering blanket information for an entire community of anglers. And it's frustrating to watch. This kind of approach does very little in the way of education. Instead, it picks the lowest common denominator — the least experienced fishermen— and shapes a message for them.

So instead of teaching anglers more about finding cold water, the message is to stay off the water. No trout fishing for you. Instead of teaching people how they can safely catch trout in 68-degree water, the temperature for ethical trout fishing is bumped down lower and lower.

You can't trust people to fish at 69 degrees, so just tell them the cut off is 65. Right?

And you can't trust people to handle fish properly, so just tell them to keep trout in the water and don't take pictures. Let's tackle that one too . . .

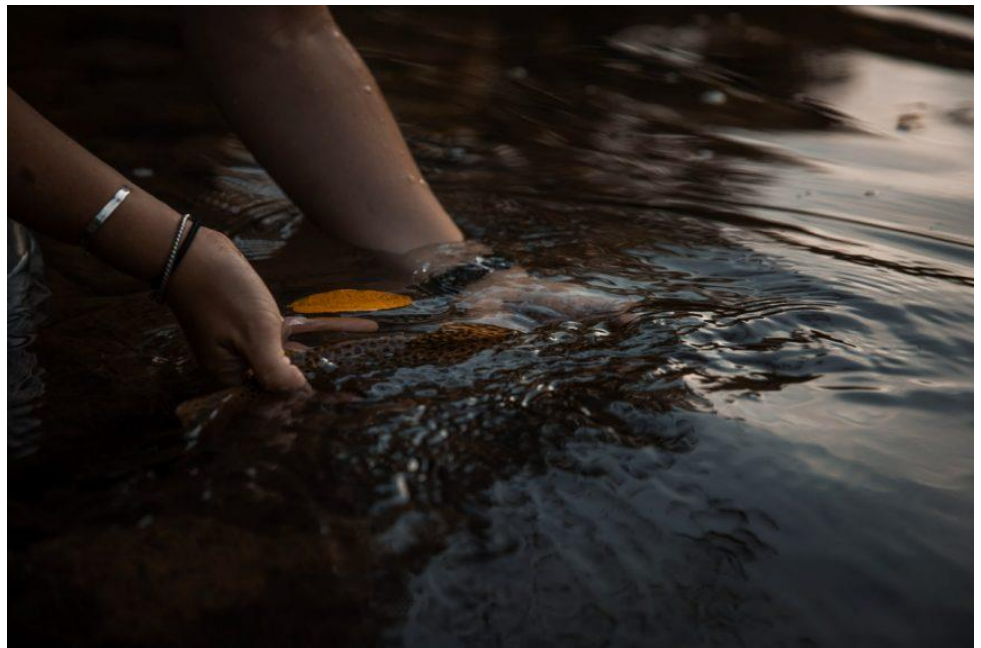
The Photos

If we lose trout photos, we lose anglers. And if we lose anglers, we will lose the waters and the vital protections necessary for the trout we so enjoy chasing.

Maybe you say you're "tired of the grip-n-grins." Okay, so don't look at them. But I bet you have your own share of grip-n-grin style photos somewhere from years ago. Maybe you feel like you're past that phase now. Fair enough. But let others go through it. And don't condemn other anglers for sharing their achievements.

"Fish pictures are the grand compromise of catch and release. An Instagram feed with a full gallery of trout is replacing the stringer of dead fish for bragging rights. And that's a good thing. They look better alive anyway." — Troutbitten, *Holding a Trout: Their Heart in Your Hands*, September 2016

"The hero shots won't end. This is the compromise of catch and release. When C&R took over as the expected normal, that didn't change the angler's propensity to brag a little about his catch." — Troutbitten, *How to Hold a Trout*, May 2019



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Do you need to long-arm every trout that comes to your net? Probably not. But if we truly want the next generation to enjoy this sport, to become guardians of our waters and the trout themselves, then we must allow for some pride in the success of catching a fish — especially the bigger ones. Because most new (and old) anglers want to show off a trout now and then.

I sincerely believe we should take this caution for trout no further. Sure, for those who've been in the sport for twenty years, you may not need another trout picture. But to those new in the game (or hell, for those at any stage of the game) some anglers just want to record their accomplishment, document the moment and share their catch. Stop trying to take that away from them. Instead, educate anglers on how to safely handle a trout.

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Let me be clear. There is nothing wrong with a fish selfie when it's done the right way. A trout played quickly, handled with care, and held in the air for five seconds suffers no harm.

The principles of the [Keep 'Em Wet](#) movement are solid. The idea of keeping a trout wet as much as possible just makes sense. And when a trout is held above the water, if it's not dripping (a lot), then it's been too long. But I think a good companion movement and message would be, Fight 'Em Fast. Because the condition of a trout upon its return is more about how it was played — not just whether it was exposed to the air for five seconds. So let's hashtag that as well: #fightemfast

Let's also admit that we have an industry constantly pushing lighter rods and lighter tippet. Both tackle choices result in longer fights. So why not teach people better fish-fighting skills? Why not focus on better fish handling?

Likewise, the recent trend pushing anglers to take pictures of trout only under the water is misguided, in my view. And it's a step too far. I've taken underwater trout photos. It requires more setup and more time with the fish than a quick net job and lift to the camera. Think about that. You're asking (usually) inexperienced, would-be



photographers to perform an unusual skill while simultaneously managing a trout under the water. Also problematic, river clarity is rarely conducive for a great underwater shot.

Instead, the clearer message would be to refrain from taking trout photos completely. But I won't support that either.

It's a Blood Sport, Friends

I've offered these thoughts as a sincere counterpoint to some of what I see happening in the industry right now. My intention is not to cause anger or stir an argument among my peers, for whom I have great respect. I simply don't agree with some of the mainstream messaging out there. And most importantly, I think these messages travel a slippery slope.

Fishing is a blood sport. Its only removal from hunting is the practice of catch and release. I'm a firm supporter of hunting rights, and I do not agree with the views of PETA, an organization that believes catch and release fishing is unethical. We must accept that our acts of fishing will kill trout. On occasion, no matter how careful, we will accidentally kill a trout once in a while. Surely, we do everything we can to limit harm. But the practice of fishing is not kind to the trout we catch.

At some point, our worry about the perfect protection of the animal we pursue becomes so involved, so extreme, so overbearing, that the only logical step is to stop fishing altogether. I don't want that. And I don't think you do either.

If we're not careful, one thing will lead to the next. Again, I think we've taken the safety of trout far enough. Let's educate every angler to these standards and stop moving the goalposts.

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Fish hard, friends.

Items for Sale

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

Gear Sale – James Kirchner

Leland Fly Co Sonoma Series Steelhead reel. Was a backup reel and only used a few times. Comes with neoprene case, backing and big game mono shooting line. Good first spey reel or back up reel. Click n pawl drag. Asking \$150



Simms wader/gear bag. Fits waders and boots in bottom compartment to separate from dry clothes and gear. Tons of storage up too 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



Simms G4 waders size large king. If you know Simms, you know the G4's are what the guides use. Repaired many pin hole leaks but still going strong. Comes with opros belt rod holder. Only selling because I've grown out of them. Asking \$350 obo.



White River Hobbs Creek 9ft 5wt. Great cheap back up rod. \$20



Wet fly 3/4 reel with Dacron backing \$30

