

***THE
LEADER***

***VOICE OF THE
GRANITE BAY FLYCASTERS***

September 1988

GRANITE BAY FLYCASTERS
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THE LEADER

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yet. Maybe someone out there has some equipment or knowledge to help someone get started. We will see him at the next club meeting I'm sure. Will we see you?

Oh yeah, before I forget. A very special THANK YOU to Jim Victorine and Frank Stolten for the demonstration to the Boy Scouts on August 23 rd at the Carmichael Elks Club.

Reminder, we will be at Denio's October 8 th. We have many items to sell that were donated to us. Funny thing about it is, we need people to catch the money that will be thrown at us for our merchandise. So, grab you catchers mit and haul it out to Denio's on Saturday, Oct. 8. See you there.

Last Minute Notice. September 16,17,18 is the FFF conclave at REDDING. It's not to late to be there. Big, Big, Big happenings.

September Club Meeting will be held at our clubhouse at Granite Bay. Sept. 8, 7: 30 pm sharp. We will be nominating two replacements for the leadership of our club. Dave Davy's has resigned as GBFC Treasurer, and Morris Schlesinger has resigned as Director. We will have to fill these positions. We will need your input for these decisions. Please show up to cast your VOTE or stay home and stitch up your mouth. Don't worry about being voted into something, you can always say "No, Thanks".

\$\$\$\$\$ EDITOR'S CORNER \$\$\$\$\$

I was asked to be an assistant editor for Joe Phelan. I considered it, called Joe and talked it over. Joe has been our editor for a year donating his time so you would have "The Leader" in your home by the 2nd Thursday of each month. I wish to personally say "THANK YOU" to Joe and all those who have helped him put out "The Leader". Joe has decided to resign as editor. I was asked by Jim Victorine if I could get something out and I said sure. I am not an editor, I can barely write. The articles I submitted to Joe to put in the newsletter were written by me but, they were HEAVILY edited by a friend of mine.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

AUGUST

It is with regret that I inform the membership that Dave Davy, club treasurer, and Morrie Schlesinger, a board of director have resigned their position. Both for health reasons.

Thank you gentlemen for the jobs that you did do.

I hear rumblings and negatives from the membership. Some justified and some not.

When I became Granite Bay Flycaster's president I mentioned I would talk to the members straight from the shoulder. We have some folks in our club with a crummy attitude who complain to other members instead of bringing their thoughts to the board members or to me. Their chit chat changes the attitudes of those other members. This is a real shame.

There is no getting around the fact that things are not running real smooth. We are still a young club and we have the ills of growth, and will for sometime. We will gain and lose members. This happens in the best and biggest clubs. But those members who hang in there and come to the meetings and offer their support are the ones who will benefit. One person who really needs the support is your program chairman, Ken Winkleblack. He brings us fine monthly programs and it is ^{my} wish that we appreciate them and turn out in good attendance. ^

I know that the newsletter doesn't reach everybody. This is real unfortunate. The newsletter keeps us informed and ties us together. Joe Phelan has done his best along with a bit of help and assistance from members to get it out.

There is one thing to remember. As a member, YOU know the time, date and place of our meetings. That never changes. We always have a program, raffle and refreshments. The club has never let you down in that respect. The meetings are always informative and interesting. So make an effort to attend and enjoy. For the members with an indifferent attitude towards the club and those who feel burned out, take a look back over your shoulder. We really have come a long way. A fine club house at a great location with a whole lot to look forward to. We joined our club to be with others that have the same interest FLYFISHING and all that goes along with it.

Let's join in and make this club or ours better for us and for those who have not yet joined our ranks.

PRESIDENT

Jim Victorine

!!!!!! Let's Go Fishing !!!!!!!

September Fishout planned for Saturday, the 24th. MARK your Calendar. Smallmouth bass fishing on Lake Clementine with Jim Victorine as Fishmaster for this trip. Float tubes and prams are highly recommended. It is not advisable to fish from shore.

We will meet at the Coffee Cup in Auburn. Take the Foresthill exit turn right. At the intersection turn left and the Coffee Cup is in the Raley's parking lot. (I hope you can find the place!). We will meet @ 6:30 am have breakfast and leave @ 8:00 am. Be there and enjoy the day, OR read about it in next month's LEADER.

RUMBLINGS about October's fishout. Feather River fishing for Salmon/Steelhead. MORE about this later. If you have a suggestion talk to Brad.

IMPORTANT.... You don't want to miss the general meeting in October. We will have the BIG, BIG raffle for the Ross Reel and Loomis rod.

Our elections WILL be coming up soon. Talk it over with your fellow club members. Nominate and VOTE for the people you want to represent your club. If you don't speak up and use your VOTE, you have NO right to gripe.

I just had a call from a friend that wants to get started in flyfishing. Gosh, do you remember how excited you were in the beginning of your flyfishing career. He had so many questions. Should I get a beginner kit? What kind of waders do you need? Which fly shops do you go to? We talked for thirty minutes and haven't even scratched the surface. I suggested for him to bring his wife to our club meeting, get to know some of you folks, ask questions and read books. I also told him not to buy anything,

SEPT. Program
For the Leader

In the past I have always received lots of positive comments on the "how to do it" technical type programs and have received many requests to have more of that type. It is however difficult to find such programs but I think we have a good one lined up for our September 8 meeting. Dave Hubka, one of our new members, brought to my attention an article in the July issue of Fly Fisherman Magazine on Float-Tube Strategies by Robert Alley and we noticed that Robert lives in Sacramento. A couple of phone calls tracked Robert down and he agreed to share his experience and techniques with us. In his article Robert covers line selection, sink rates, planning his casts, fly selection, how to explore unfamiliar lakes, understanding the daily cycles and annual cycles and even techniques for handling heavy weather in a float-tube. He will try to cover this whole range in his presentation and even throw in some examples from both local waters and some lakes in Arizona's White Mountains. So all of you float-tubers and would be tubers come hear how a real expert does it.

We have many interesting programs lined up for the future including: Dave Howard on local stealhead, Mike McIntire on trophy Alaska rainbows, Jan Kurahara on fly fishing the Eastern Sierra, Dick Gallend on intermountain trout of the Lassen area, and Bob Beck on Cal-trout. If anyone knows of a good program either their own or someone outside the club please let me know (call Ken at 988-7129 home or 785-4420 work). Also if you have a topic that you would like to see a presentation on tell me and I will do my best to find it for you.

PROGRAM CHAIRMAN

Ken Winkleblack

last time. After having the river to ourselves, we really resented seeing and hearing others --having to share their noise and hurry. But a quick twenty minutes later, we were landing at King Salmon and headed for showers (\$5.00) and a giant hamburger with fries (\$8.00).

We flew back to Anchorage on a Mark Air, full sized jet. With a six hour lay over, Bill and I hit a movie in town, had a drink or two and then got back to depart for Sacramento at 1:30 AM. After ten days away, it was nice to get back home.

It was really a wonderful trip. And, we have plans for next year to complete our goal of catching all five types of salmon. Chuck is going to take us to the Togiac for silvers, char and a mix of other salmon. And, we're hoping that Terry will be able to join us.

Were we to do the Branch River trip over, we would go three or four weeks later in the year to be sure the salmon were spawning. While we would miss the kings then, the silvers would be in and the really big rainbows and char would be feeding on salmon eggs --and salmon egg patterns.

Drifting Alaska's Branch River

The first time I ever heard of the Branch River was four years ago, in 1984. Terry Eggleston, Bill Crawford and I were with six others fishing together at Alaska's famous Brooks River. I'm not sure if the Brooks is more renowned for its July run of Sockeye or for its large grizzle population, but we were there for the Sockeye.

Fishing the Brooks is not a wilderness experience. While access is only by boat or float plane, nevertheless, there is a popular, well publicized, lodge there with a dozen or more log cabins. Guests eat meals together in a large room adjacent to a rustic bar in a corner. There is an oval fireplace in the center of the room where you can warm your feet while talking over the day's fishing. Not exactly roughing it.

The National Park Service operate a camp ground nearby. It accommodates about sixty people or so. And with lodge and camp ground located a very short hike from the river, there are lots of fishermen around.

Even with other fisherman nearby, the fishing is spectacular. If you and your gear can endure, you can have hundred salmon lays (and nights). The nine of us from the Sacramento Valley sometimes fished past midnight as it doesn't get dark till 1 AM or so. But fatigue and common sense soon take over putting the fishing day back to only eight or ten hours...

You don't need a lot of extra gear. Seven or eight weight rods, 10 foot sinking tip lines with lots of backing, and an abundance of sharply honed, barbless flies handles things. Sockeye Joes, Comets, Polar Shrimp and Silver Silvers all do well as patterns. A backup reel or two is important too. The line of us had five reels explode from these salmon, probably the hottest of all the salmon. The fish are silver bright, lust in from the ocean and in top condition.

But there are bears and bears have the right away. The huge rizzlies and their cubs know they need to feed heavily on these fish if they are to survive the winter. They sometimes put on five hundred pounds during the summer. So, bears are a dangerous nuisance especially when the fish are hitting --but they deserve and will demand their right a way. Watching a mother bear with her cubs charge across a river is a hair raising experience, even if she is charging someone else.

had caught them on dry flies before as part of the Brooks trip.) We were about a week too early to take trout or grayling on egg patterns as the salmon had not really started yet to spawn.

A day or so later, we started catching Pinks. These salmon are not too large, running about three to five pounds. But they like to hit flies (purple wooley buggers, pink pimps and red rockets) and do so aggressively. On the smaller rods, they were a lot of fun. Several times we got into large schools holding in slack waters and we caught them till we decided to move on to other waters.

We never did catch any silvers. We had wanted to catch them because neither Bill or my self have ever done so on a fly rod. We have, however, now caught the other four salmon species available in the West. And, Bill caught one Sockeye on this trip which was quickly converted into sashimi and salmon chowder, a Chuck Ash specialty.

The weather was typical of that around the Bristol Bay area of Alaska --ever changing. The days were often overcast and gray. Mist and light drizzles were frequent and twice it rained rather hard. Then things would clear to blue skies before clouds will start to form again.

Top quality rain gear and tents are a necessity to be comfortable --and we were. The temperature would be 45 or 50 at night and sometimes up to 70 during the day. Polypropylene long underwear is important not so much to keep you warm but to keep bugs and mosquitoes, of which there are many when the winds don't blow, away. And, lots of Muskol. Bill's motto was "a bottle a day keeps the mosquitoes away...have you had your Muskol, today"?

Some other fishing high points were a 25 pound king on that gave up just before I did on my five weight and 6 pound tippet, and a 40 pound king that hit a large, black and yellow, fly pattern of my own called "Bumbling Joe." Bill took a pair of acrobatic 24 inch rainbows one night on consecutive casts and on the last day got real hot on brightly marked Chums.

By day eight, we were happy to see the plane overhead as it looked for a place to land. We were now back into semi civilization having drifted past two, fly in lodges. Jet drive river boats zoomed by us as we packed our gear for the

Traveling with Chuck was not only interesting but educational. While he an ardent fly fisherman, Chuck is also a high school "Alaskan Science" teacher in Anchorage during the winter. With a background in botony, biology, geology, geography and history, Chuck is able to answer almost any question about the animals, birds, fish or terrain. Chuck made meals interesting too by adding, for instance, wild blueberries to the mornings pancakes or by picking other berries for an afternoon snack.

And, as the river changed from day to day, so did the fishing except that it was always good. We started to encounter more and more king and chum salmon. Switching from our five weight rods to our new Terry Eggleston made Sage seven-eight weights, we tied on larger, brighter salmon flies such as Pink Pimps and Red Rockets.

The kings were bright red but in great shape. They looked like huge, red torpedoes in the water but even larger on our lines. I had a 60-65 pounder in the air three times before he headed down river and I had to grab my backing to break him off before I got spooled. Bill had one only slightly smaller that exploded right in front of him. It also had to be broked off to save the line. On the second day, I landed a 25 pounder we kept to eat.

The chums ran from 13 to 25 pounds. With huge hooked jaws and dog like teeth, their now golden bodies had irregular red lines near mid fish and black vertical lines towards the tail. We landed more chums than kings, I guess, because they were smaller but they never quit.

I hooked one chum on the second day snagging him through the dorsal fin. After a fifteen minute fight, he got into the current and took off down river and I had to break the leader again. About ten minutes later, I got another hit and after fighting the fish for ten minutes, I saw my Pink Pimp in his dorsal fin again. I told Bill and Chuck I had snagged another chum but upon landing the fish, it turned out it was the first fish I had caught and I had caught him in the mouth this time, after all. Chuck said he had never seen that one before.

On our third day, we were catching grayling on small dry flies when Bill caught three, large Dolly Vardens in a row. They ran about 24 inches each and gave him a heck of a fight. Chuck said he had never seen a Dolly Varden on the Branch before and had never seen one caught on a dry. (Bill and I

But, I digress. My point is that Terry, Bill and I met an Alaskan fishing guide while at the Brooks Camp Ground that we really liked. Chuck Ash had lead a small group into camp as part of their trip with him. They arrived in Klepper craft, a very seaworthy, folding, two person kyack. And, over a dinner of Sockeye chowder and California chablis, he spoke of one of his favorite rivers, the Branch --which is the next major drainage north of the Brooks; a tributary of the Alegnac.

Chuck, who with red hair, red beard and blue bandana could pass for a younger Willie Nelson, talked about the runs of Chum, Silver and Pinks as well as great rainbow fishing. And Terry, Bill and I resolved that we would make that trip the following year. Well, we never did.

At least, we never did that next year. But last year, Terry guided from a lodge on the Alegnac and on his days off would run up river into the lower reaches of the Branch to fish rainbows not knowing that he was actually on the Branch. And, this past summer, Bill and I hired Chuck for an eight day float on the Branch.

Bill and I left Sacramento on July 28th on United flying into Anchorage. The following day we flew a 16 passanger Peninsla Air plane to King Salmon where Chuck met us. He introduced us to Clark, the bush piolt who would fly us to the headwaters of the Branch.

It was an hour's flight at low altitudte over the tundra in the nine cylinder rotory engined, red and white Beaver till we spashed down on the Branch. Within a hour, the plane was emptied of gear, the 16 foot rubber raft inflated and loaded and we were on our way with fly rods at ready.

Chuck knew why we were there. Within a thousand yards, we beached the boat on a sand bar to start fishing. It took only three casts before Bill and I each were into 16 to 20 inch rainbows. They hit purple wooley buggers drifted into slack waters and had us stumbling in and out of the current trying to help each other handle and photograph them.

The pattern for the next days became clearer. A new camp site every night, casting to under cut banks and snags from the raft during the day while moving and frequent stops to explore productive looking water that might be holding fish. We went six days without seeing another person or even a human footprint --though we saw moose and much bear sign.

GRANITE BAY FLYCASTERS

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Terry Eggleston	through 1988	721-5350
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