



The Barbless Flyer

The mission of the Spokane Fly Fishers is to provide a family friendly organization for promoting the sport of fly fishing through education, application, and conservation



January Speaker Drew Evans House of Fly

Fighting the Wild Bass (and Carp!)

Our Wednesday, January 8th meeting offers a deep dive into the essentials of targeting Bass and Carp on the fly. Starting with Bass, Drew Evans will cover the key gear and rigging techniques for targeting fish in all three water columns. He will share strategies for success throughout the year, as well as insights into using light Spey setups for Bass, an approach that's both effective and exciting.

When shifting focus to Carp, Evans will share his personal obsession with these challenging and rewarding fish, highlighting the importance of this fishery. He'll cover the basics of gear and rigging, how to locate Carp on a flat without spooking them and introduce the essential "Drag-n-Drop" technique for successful hookups. Evans will also discuss the annual Jurassic Flats Carp Clave, an event that supports the growth of freshwater flats fishing, and why it's so important for the community. Get ready for an engaging session filled with valuable tips, techniques, and the passion that drives Drew's love for these unique species.

Drew Evans is the Manager of House of Fly in Lewiston, ID, and Co-Operations Manager at Ballistic Fly Lines. Whether he's chasing hard-fighting Carp, Smallmouth Bass, or Steelhead in the Lewis-Clark Valley, or hunting for the elusive Bull Trout and West Slope Cutthroat, Drew is always in pursuit of the next fish. Beyond the local waters, he takes anglers on unforgettable adventures through House of Fly's hosted trips, from casting for Redfish and Sheepshead on the sun-drenched flats of Texas to exploring the world-class fisheries of Belize and the Bahamas. With a passion for fishing and a sense of adventure, Drew makes every trip an exciting journey on and off the water.

Dine with Us! For \$5 (cash only), you can join us for a hot dog, soda, chips, and a cookie!



Prez Sez

By Brad Collins for Kevin Brannon



Although I find it hard to believe that it is 2025 already, I'm truly looking forward to the new year! Spokane Fly Fishers continues to attract new members, offer great programs, and provide an environment for friendship, learning new things, and yes, fishing! I'll admit that I was nervous when a few of our most influential and dedicated members decided to take a much-needed break and step away from some responsibilities. However, other members stepped in and are already preparing some great programs for the 2024-2025 year. I am full of hope and excitement for what's to come.

Our annual Christmas party was a lot of fun as always and the food was amazing! Thank you, Carla Ferguson, and Linda Howe, for hosting and thanks to everyone who brought food. We counted 30 people there including spouses and guests, and no one walked away hungry.

We start our regular fly-tying classes this month. Below are the dates and locations for the two classes:

- Beginning Fly Tying – Saturday, January 4th at 10:00am at Sportsmen's Warehouse (6720 N. Division)
- Intermediate Fly Tying – Thursday, January 9th at 6:00pm at Spokane Valley United Methodist Church (115 N Raymond Rd, Spokane)

Please register for one of these classes through our website.

I hope you all have a great 2025! Happy New Year!



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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
				6:00pm SFF Monthly Board Mtg		10:00am Beginner Fly-Typing Class
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
			7:00pm SFF Membership Mtg Fighting the Wild Bass	6:00pm Intermediate Fly-Tying Class		
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
				6:00pm Thirsty 3 rd Thursday Fly-Tying @ Lumberbeard		
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

A Year In Review

By Brian Soth

As we approach the beginning of a new year, I thought it might be useful and appropriate to update our members on the club's finances. To use a weather metaphor our current financial situation is mostly sunny with some potential clouds on the horizon.

I estimate that our total assets by the end of December 2024 will be approximately \$34,800. (This is an estimated figure because at the time I wrote this article the December books were not yet closed.) We've allocated these assets between our checking account, a money market fund, and two Certificates of Deposit. The CDs are new over the past fiscal year and is an income source we've never had before, generating roughly \$1,000 in that period of time.

Our fiscal year runs from June 1, 2024, to May 31, 2025. We project that for the fiscal year through December our net income will be a negative \$1,145. This is not particularly concerning as we are usually in the red a little bit at this time of year because revenues from the fly school have not begun to come in and one of our two big fundraisers, the raffle in March, has not yet occurred. Also, we've prepaid a couple of significant expenses.

Generally speaking, we're enjoying fiscally sunny weather and no rain. We see some small clouds on the horizon, though, regarding the fly auction (the other of our two main fundraisers) and memberships. The auction generated less revenue than budgeted and much less than has been the case in the past. More concerning, in my view, is that it was not well attended and the income it produced seemed to be increasingly dependent on a few generous individuals. By the time you read this the Board will have done a debrief on the auction to determine whether we can turn this around.

Although we continue to have a total membership of over 200, we are seeing a slow rate of attrition that we would like to arrest. Some of our long-time members have become less active or have not renewed their memberships for various reasons, and the recruitment of new members needs to be enhanced to keep our total numbers up. This is not unique to our club by any means; we see this same phenomenon with clubs across the country. You can help solve this problem by talking about the club with your fishing buddies who are not currently members, and even suggesting to fly-fishing-curious friends that they enroll in the fly school or attend one of our outings as a guest.

It's my pleasure to serve as your Treasurer and I look forward to working with you over the remainder of my term in office.



New Year, New You?

By Ken Moore



Happy New Year! For the past five years, I have used this article at this exact time of year to encourage you to set your fly-fishing goals and bucket list adventures for the new year. Establish a New Year's resolution for the sport you love, something you can win at. I will always be an advocate for gathering knowledge and experiences. The foundational roots of this club were created to assist you in getting there on your timeline with no pressure—everything from educational classes, a fly-fishing library, group outings, and professional guest speakers. I am always keenly searching for tips to acquire and pass on to you and my customers to enhance your experience on the water. We should all seek knowledge to try for ourselves and share the wins and misses with our mates. At a minimum, it enriches your life just that much more. But is "more stuff" the answer to our fishing collective?

I had a client and his wife with me a couple of years ago. As I sat there preparing our fishing gear for the day, I had a fair amount of gear on the table. Imagine looking at 24 packs of tippet, six tippet spools, and over \$4,000 of flies distributed amongst eight large boxes, tippet rings, nippers, and six \$1,000 fly rods. The wife inquired, "Ken, how much of this?" pointing to the collage of gear on the table, "Do we have to buy?" I callously answered – "oh, not this much to have a good time fly fishing." That was a moment in time that I would like a re-do, a mulligan in the game of golf. Do we need more to catch a trout?

For the last two years, I have started a new journey, a road less traveled, an evolution to strip away from the marketing side of this sport and simplify my fly fishing to its core elements. The ol' "less is more" approach to fly-fishing. I still guide fly-fishing on the weekends, and for my clients, I still carry way too much gear on the water in my attempt to expect the unexpected. But when my wife and I are fishing alone, don't be surprised to see me with a simple chest box or vest on. Maybe just one leader in my pocket, three tippet spool sizes, and one or two boxes of flies. If you regularly read this article, you know I track almost everything I do when fly fishing. I have calculated that having less gear and fewer flies with me has cost me two percent of my typical daily fish count. Is that significant, two percent? That depends on your wants, desires, and goals for the day or that trip. I am fond of saying- "Life is an experiment; there are very few absolutes." The same is true with fly fishing. We try something new; we pull from our collective learnings of years on the water. Fly fishing has very few absolutes—no rule books. I encourage you this year to set a few fishing goals for yourself. It could be as simple as fishing once in the spring, summer, fall, and winter to the trip of a lifetime. Or to make that perfect cast in one cast.

Fish hard, my friends.



Beginner Fly-Tying Pattern

Zebra Midge by *Vail Valley Anglers*



Hook: Tiempo/Umpqua 2488, sizes 16-22

Bead: Silver, 1/16 (or try different colors as well, tungsten is preferred for more weight)

Thread: Black, 70 denier or 8/0

Body: Silver Ultra Wire, small

If there was one fly to fish all year long this could be it. The small nymph represents a midge, which can be found in almost all river systems. You can tie these patterns in a variety of different colors and sizes using different beads, thread, and wire. It is a fast and easy fly to tie, that can provide you with some basic fundamental skills of tying a fly.

Click [here](#) for a complete YouTube instructional video.

Intermediate Fly-Tying Pattern

By Chet Allison

Gurgler by *Tightline Videos*



Note: This recipe is the original Gartside version

Hook: Mustad #34011 or 34007 (SW), sizes 4-2/0

Thread: UTC 140 Denier, red

Tail: Blue & white buck tail, silver Krystal flash & Flashabou

Body: Crystal chenille

Back and lip: Uniform strips of foam

For a complete YouTube instructional video, click [here](#).



A Note from Idaho Dept of Fish & Game

An Overlooked Winter Fishing Opportunity

Idaho Fish and Game says: Never say “Ahh, it’s just a whitefish” again. Take advantage of this overlooked and underhooked fishing opportunity with a pretty tasty reward!

Looking for an excuse to wader up and tie on some flies or jigs? Look no further than one of Idaho’s native unsung heroes: *the mountain whitefish*. Mountain whitefish, the disco ballish, tight-lipped river dwellers that populate a majority of Idaho’s streams and rivers, are often overlooked and underhooked.

Before we get into the benefits of whitefish fishing, there are a few misconceptions associated with the species that need to be cleared up.

Don’t believe everything you hear

It’s fair to say that many passionate anglers who’ve seen their rod tip dip, thinking they have a feisty trout on the other end, only to reel in something else, have muttered the words: “Ahh. It’s just a whitefish.” Blasphemy. That whitefish on the end of your line has earned its stripes in Idaho, a fish that has called these waters home for thousands of years. While they might not be as charismatic as the rainbow trout, regarding them as “trash fish” or “bottom feeders” is nothing more than an insult and could not be further from the truth.

“Mountain whitefish are a fun species to target, especially in late winter when trout and other mountain stream species feed less,” said Joe Kozfkay, Fish and Game’s State Fisheries Manager. “Anglers have a pretty cool opportunity to catch these fish during this season, a lost tradition that often gets forgotten or overlooked.” Whitefish tend to hunker down in deeper parts of the river. Their placement in the water, combined with their mouth’s puckered appearance located beneath their face, often earn them the misnomer “sucker fish.” “Whitefish are actually members of the Salmonid family, which include salmon, trout, char and grayling,” said Kozfkay.

The interactions of distant cousins

In most cases where the two species coexist, Fish and Game has found that whitefish commonly outnumber trout by 5-10 times. But if whitefish are more closely related to trout, does that mean they’re outcompeting their distant cousins? Not according to stream surveys. Some anglers might have concerns about the whitefish/trout dynamic in mountain rivers and streams. Fish and Game fish managers have been studying this relationship for decades and learned from research that trout populations can be affected by flow, habitat conditions or even harvest, but competition with whitefish is not a real concern.

A quick and easy guide to mountain whitefish fishing

Whitefish are plentiful, bag limits are high, and they’re found in rivers and streams (and some lakes) all over the state. You can pretty much see them shimmering when the water’s low. They are more aggressive than other fish during winter. *And* they slurp up a fly or bait just as readily as a trout would.

So what’s the hold up? For starters, it shouldn’t be your tacklebox. Whitefish will generally entertain the same buffet of bait, flies and lures that your run-of-the-mill rainbow trout would. If you’re accustomed to trout fishing in the warmer months, chances are your setup will work just fine for winter season whitefish. You might need some thicker waders, but you won’t have to break the bank on custom flies or lures.

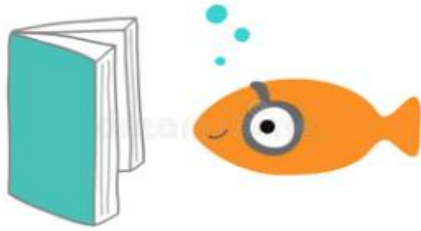
Whitefish will readily take a single salmon egg, chunk of worm or other bait, such as maggots. They will also take artificial flies, including dry flies. Remember that, compared to trout, whitefish have smaller mouths. A good rule of thumb might be sizing down your flies or lures. They're probably not going to get their mouths around a size 2 woolly bugger or a big bait hook with a glob of nightcrawler. Smaller is better. Recall that whitefish also tend to be hugging the bottom of the river or holed up in pools. You *might* entice one up to the surface to take a dry fly, but more often than not you're going to want to drop your fly or lure right in front of their nose. Try tossing a weighted nymph — either caddis, midge, or stonefly — through slow-to-medium moving water during the warmest part of the day. Look for water streaked with foam and drift your line down *with* the current. If your smaller fly doesn't have enough weight to get it down, or if the water is moving too quickly, you can always add a split-shot weight to your line to help sink your fly or lure. You can also achieve this with a double-dropper rig, or a heavy fly (like a bead-head woolly bugger) with a smaller weighted fly (like a **zebra midge** – see tying instructions, Page 6) tied about 12-18 inches back. Mountain whitefish gather in large schools, unlike trout, so where there's one there's usually several more.

HOT TIP: Whitefish have small, delicate mouths and are less aggressive when taking a fly. Try using a strike indicator, or a plastic bobber, 4-6 feet from your hook or fly. A well-placed strike indicator will give you a nice indication (as the name implies) when a whitefish flirts with your fly.

Idaho Fish and Game offers a generous daily bag limit on whitefish, usually 25 fish per day. Be sure to check the rules, though, on whichever fishery you plan on visiting to be safe. Anglers can capitalize on the abundance of whitefish and their liberal bag limits in a number of ways, including the supper table. Whitefish can prove to be excellent table fare worthy of any angler's palette.

Whitefish can get real big, real quick. In their first three to four years, a whitefish commonly grows to 10-12 inches in length. A mature whitefish can exceed even that, oftentimes in the 12-16-inch range. And the state catch-and-release record caught in 2022 came in at a whopping 21.5 inches long! The meat is not dissimilar from that of a trout. It's light and mildly fishy tasting, but yes, is incredibly bony — a premise that often causes anglers to pass them up. The most popular option is to smoke them low and slow in your backyard smoker. Smoking whitefish is one of the easiest ways to ensure your meal is bone-free. In the age of the internet, there are hundreds of smoked whitefish recipes out there worthy of your time. Do some research, experiment. See what works and what doesn't. And above all else, have fun fishing!





Larry's Book Nook

By Larry Ray

Tracing Fly Fishing's History through Its Development of Flies (Reprinted from the March 2016 issue of The Barbless Flyer)

Has it ever occurred to you that fly fishing's history could be traced through the development of the flies themselves? Not until Ian Whitelaw's 'The History of Fly Fishing in Fifty Flies' was donated to our Library did this occur to me. This volume proves that our history can be revealed by racing the development of our flies, making for delightful reading in the process.

Most of the fifty flies described in this book are generally known to us, making reading even more fascinating. The original "recipes" are provided for each. The first, the Stonefly, was tied on a "Handmade hook from a bent and tempered needle, with a hand-cut barb". Also, the tippet was "Horsehair whipped to the hook", as was usually the case before the advent of eyed hooks (a fairly recent development, having been pioneered by one H. S. Hall in the 1880's with a suitable knot being developed by Major W.D. Turle as described in other parts of this book).

Some of the facts contained in the book include:

"In about 200 BC an angling fly was described by the Roman Claudius Aelianus, who noted in *On the Nature of Animals*, "...in Macedonia there is a fly called a Hippouros that looks like a wasp. Fisherman don't try to use the fly as bait...". Instead, they "... wrap a hook with crimson red wool and attach two wax-colored feathers from a cockerel's throat." Palmered hackle flies appeared in as the 1600's and were named for the caterpillar they originally tried to imitate which in turn was named for pilgrims wandering throughout Europe in the middle ages.

Dubbing was first described by Thomas Barker in 1651 (two years before the first edition of Walton's *The Compleat Angler*). Dubbing used in a specific pattern was first described by Charles Cotton in his recipe for the Green Drake thusly: "And then take your dubbing which is to make the body of your fly, as much as you think convenient, and holding it lightly, with your hook, betwixt the finger and thumb of your left hand, take your silk with the right, and twisting it betwixt the finger and thumb of that hand, the dubbing will spin itself about the silk...".

Dry fly fishing only became acceptable in the mid-1800's. Before then, when a fish took a wet fly before it sank, it was generally considered to be coincidental. When, in 1865 Charles Ogden, using his *Ogden's Special* (a stiffly palmered mayfly imitation) proved to an audience on the River Wye that rising fish could be cast to and caught on winged and hackled, floating flies, shock grew to alarm that the method was so deadly it was banned on many waters for some time afterward.

Concurrent with the proven success of the stiff hackled "dry" flies, soft hackled spider ties also became favored. In 1857 W.C. Stewart lauded his *Stewart Black Spider* (tied with a black starling soft body feather) "...As a means of capturing trout, we rank them higher than the winged imitations".

No less an authority than Mary Orvis Marbury concurred, stating “The spider hackle is the favorite pattern with Mr. W.C. Prime, who considers its action upon the water extremely lifelike”.

While the original Coachman pattern (peacock hurl body, brown hackle, and white quill wings) was dressed in England by Tom Bosworth, carriage driver to Queen Victoria, as was the variant Leadwing Coachman, the Royal Coachman was in fact tied and developed in America. Coachman patterns had crossed the Atlantic to be very favored by American anglers. John Haily, a fly shop owner and tyer in New York City, added the red silk band mid-body to prevent the fraying and unraveling of the peacock hurl. When Mary Orvis Marberry, niece to Charles Orvis, showed the fly to her uncle, he is reputed to have dubbed it the Royal Coachman, as it was so splendidly dressed.

These are but a sample of the rich chronologies and anecdotes, tracking our sport from its origins through today, that fill *The History of Fly Fishing in Fifty Flies*. Find it in your SFF Library.



SFFC Information

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 Int. Fly Tying: David Marshall
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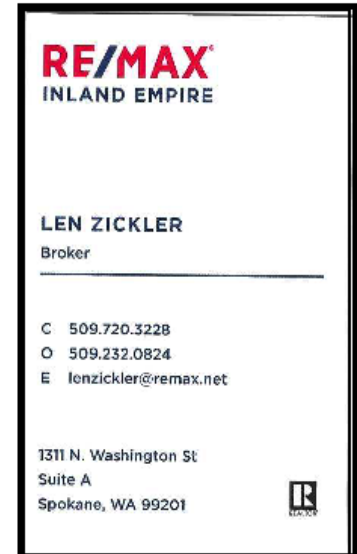
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