



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



Where the Giants Swim

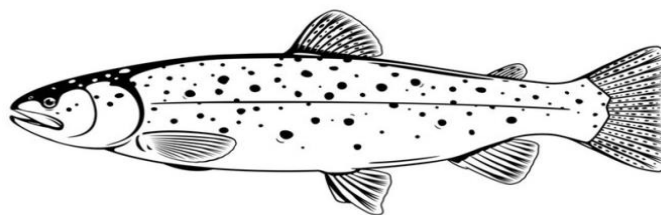
Bill White



The featured speaker for our January 14, 2026, Spokane Fly Fishers Club Monthly Meeting will be **Greg Thomas**, presenting Where the Giants Swim. He will focus on adventure fly fishing in Montana and beyond. Greg will also intertwine the art of storytelling, not that fly fishers need too much help telling whoppers.

Greg is an inveterate fly fisher who heads up the *Angler's Tonic* website (www.anglerstonic.com) dedicated to fly fishing. He writes for various publications, including *The New York Times*, *Forbes Alaska*, and *Gray's Sporting Journal*. His books include *Flyfisher's Guide to Washington* and *Flyfisher's Guide to Montana*. He is the former managing editor of *Big Sky Journal* and the former editor-in-chief of *American Angler* and *Fly Rod & Reel* magazines.

Greg spends considerable time in Alaska each year when not chasing trout and steelhead, or trout-setting on tarpon in the salty environs. He lives in Missoula, Montana with his trusty Labrador retriever, Rye, and spends part of his life telling two teenage daughters, "Do as I say, not as I do," a tact that's effective . . . only part of the time.



Prez Says

Al Odenthal



The end of the year is upon us and provides a great opportunity to reflect on the exciting and rewarding activities of the Club. In addition, we are looking forward to 2026 and already starting to get programs set up, outings planned and implement some changes to how we engage within Spokane Fly Fishers,

Our third set of programs for the 2025-2026 season has been completed. Thanks to Chip O'Brien, Kevin Knight, and Bill White for orchestrating such a fine program lineup for us. The Winter and Spring programs look great!

December brings us to our Annual Christmas Party: An Anglers Holiday. Rather than our usual pot-luck-Carla Ferguson meal at St. Francis, the Board has arranged a dinner event at Longhorn BBQ in Airway Heights. So, register now on the Club's website to attend on December 10th. Space is limited so register early!

We've incorporated some new elements into each of our regular membership meetings for the remainder of the 2026 season. Some of these new elements include:

- Door prizes each month,
- Silent Auction of quality tying materials and flies at each meeting,
- Introductions of new/recent club members and guests,
- "Get to Know Your Club Members" segment featuring a seasoned member of the Club speaking about their particular interests and expertise, and
- Presentation by a Committee Chair to better acquaint us with the people who make the work of our club happen. Hopefully, you'll hear from a member in your area of interest and be comfortable contributing your talents.

The November "Fly Auction" has been combined with our Spring Raffle night so our fundraising extravaganza will now be in March. New Board member, Cassandra Collings, is our lead for this event and she'll need a bevy of runners, recorders and help to make this event a success. Don't be shy...we welcome any and all to make this a smooth operation.

The Fly-Fishing School is scheduled to begin in March. Bill Wagstaff is our leader once again in coordinating this event with the capable audio-visual assistance of David Marshall. For all those individuals you come across who have expressed an interest in learning the basic elements of fly fishing, this is a fabulous opportunity at a great price. Club members, their significant others and children enjoy a reduced cost. So, check the website for information and pricing. The class is limited to ensure a quality experience. We have a waiting list EVERY year so get the word out early...this makes a great Christmas present for an outdoors minded individual.

As you can see, we have an active club with a lot of moving parts. Don't forget to check the "Outings" list on the website for winter fishing days / locations that Mike Sportelli has put together. He's got a great list of upcoming outings.

And to each and every one of you, may you have a wonderful Holiday season with family, friends, and fellow club members. We wish you all the best in the coming year.

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December

2025

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
01	02	03 6:00 pm Board Mtg	04	05	06	07
08 Holiday Party Register	09	10 6:00 pm Holiday Party Longhorn BBQ	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 Christmas	26	27	28
29	30	31 New Years Eve	01 New Years Day	02	03	04

Christmas Party: An Angler's Holiday

Bill White



Spokane Fly Fishers is wrapping up another great year of activities and time on the water with a special offsite holiday celebration. Join us for an evening of good food, laughter, and great company at **Longhorn BBQ** in **Airway Heights** on U.S. Highway 2, Sunset Highway. Members, family, and their guests are welcome!

Wednesday, December 10th

6:00 pm Social Hour, Buffet begins at 6:30 pm

The dinner will include a buffet barbecue feast of ribs, chicken, and beef with the usual fixings at the bargain price of **\$10 per person**. The Club will be covering the rest. *Ho, Ho, Ho!*

Non-alcoholic beverages included; alcoholic beverages available at a no-host bar.

Members need to [sign up online for the Christmas Party by Monday, December 8th](#) using the SFF website (www.spokaneflyfishers.com), at "Events," like any other event or outing. This allows the Club to arrange for space and food, as well as provide an accurate list of attendees. The main dining room holds 65 diners, and an overflow room is available... so sign up early!

A Christmas Holiday-Themed Fly-Fishing Trivia game will be held throughout the evening! No using your smart phones, lest you end up on the naughty list.



The Club will be collecting donations at the party for the Toys for Tots campaign. Please consider donating a new, unwrapped toy, game, or gift for a child. Financial donations can also be made via check made out to Toys for Tots.

Mark your calendars and get ready to celebrate the holidays with your fellow SFF anglers!

Outings Committee Updates

Mike Sportelli

The peak of our local flyfishing season has come to an end. The moment is bittersweet. Part farewell, part celebration. As the season closes a new chapter will soon be upon us. Until then, there is time to repair leaky waders that have been plaguing your left sock for the past several months, we can start filling those vacancies in our fly boxes and plan what destinations we want to explore next season.

Last month six (6) members had a great adventure on the Grande Ronde, the river float itself was worth the price of admission. What a gorgeous place. I look forward to doing it again soon. The November Hog Canyon Outing is catching quite a bit of interest, looks like we will have a good turnout!

Currently there are fourteen (14) outings that are hitting the events calendar for next season. Look for those (and others) to come up on the website and be available for signups from Dec 1st.

I love it when I see tenured members collaborating with new members out on the water or at a campfire after a day on the water, helping to develop their skills. We have lots of events coming up, the school, tying nights, conservation opportunities, these are more than just dates on a calendar, they are opportunities to learn from one another, and strengthen our club. Seasoned angler or new, your participation enriches the experience of everyone.

Tight lines to all!

I'll be seeing you out on the water.



October – Grande Ronde Outing

Call for Support - Volunteer List

Jim Athearn

Volunteers play an important role in our club activities. For example, this year we needed four members to help with the Amber Lake boat ramp rehab project and ten more for fin clipping at the Spokane Fish Hatchery. As we go into the new year, we would like to have a complete list of members who would be willing to help out whenever there is a new project and availability during the week, weekends, or both. This is not a commitment to any specific work but just gives us an idea of who to contact to determine your interest & availability when a need arises.



Please contact Jim Athearn on phone 509-590-5051 or jathearn99@aol.com to be included on the Volunteer List or for any questions.

Information needed is name, phone number, email address, and availability (weekdays, weekends, or both).

Thank you!

2026 Fly Fishing School

Bill Wagstaff



2025 School Outing, Amber Lake

The 2026 Fly Fishing School will start Thursday March 5, 2026. This is a great opportunity for club members to refresh your game or to share your fly-fishing enthusiasm with friends, your spouse, children, or grandchildren. Everyone who has an interest in fly fishing.

Details are on the SFF website, and the sessions include:

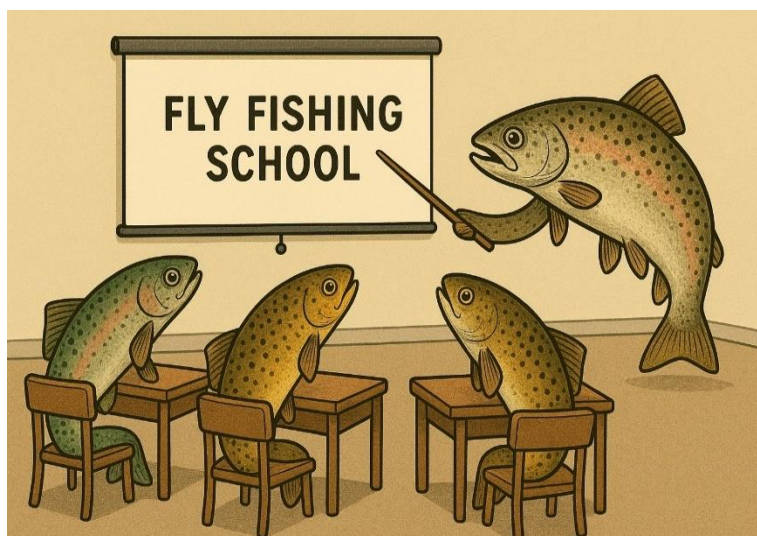
- Six (6) Classroom sessions (Thursday evening)
- Three (3) Casting classes (Saturday)
- Two (2) School Fishing Outings

The SFF fly fishing school is a bargain! Where else can you get nearly 18 hours of instruction and mentorship at these prices? The school also makes a great Holiday gift!

The 2026 school costs are:

- \$100 Club members
- \$ 50 Spouses, children, and grandchildren (ages 12 - 17)
- \$130 Non-members (includes a club membership fee)

Additionally, we are looking for volunteers to help during the Thursday sessions, Saturday casting classes, and the school outings. If you would like to volunteer for any or all, please contact Bill Wagstaff.



Making Fish Nervous

Ken Moore



This summer, a “miracle on ice” event happened in Idaho Falls, ID. The USA Women’s Fly-Fishing team won the World’s FIPS-Mouche Fly Fishing Championship, their first gold medal. But wait, the USA Youth Team also claimed gold at the FIPS-Mouche World Youth Fly Fishing Championship. As remarkable as both of these wins were, this is the third year in a row that the Youth Team has won the coveted Gold Medal (2023, 2024, and 2025). I believe in the idea that success leaves clues, and today I want to share one of our team’s favorite tactics for landing the trout that won them championships.

The technique we will discuss is a variation of the “duo.” On the surface, you know this as the hopper/dropper. I want to say up front; you can do this variation; it really comes down to two adjustments you need to make to increase your catch rates from what you are probably already doing. Let’s get into it.

The Rig

You will be happy to know there is no need to purchase a new fly rod for this setup (unless you want to, then have at it). The top fly that you select should be a buoyant, bushy dry fly. Tie this bushy dry fly to a tag or dropper. Your point fly should be a skinny bead head nymph. For this example, I will choose an Elk Hair Caddis and a 2-3mm Perdigon as my nymph. You would agree bushy dry fly and skinny nymph. (It goes without saying, don’t forget to apply floatant to your dry fly.)

Three tricks

1. Since you generally cast upstream and slightly across, **stop the rod high on your forward cast** - so that the nymph lands furthest upstream. **Hold all your fly line and leader off the water right up to the dry fly.**
2. **Let your flies drift for 3 and 5 seconds only.** Please do not allow your dry fly to suspend the nymph like it is a bobber.
3. **Choose the weight of your nymph so that it reaches its full depth within about 5 seconds after hitting the water.** Another reason to use the 3-5 second drift is that you will not snag the bottom as often. If the water is shallow, count to 3 seconds; if the water is deep, count to 4 or 5 seconds.

If you see a fish eat the dry fly, set the hook. If you see your dry fly or tippet stop, move sideways or under, set the hook. The advantage is that with no-fly line on the water, if you don’t hook up, you just recast and continue fishing.

Recap

- **Keep all of your fly line off the water, right up to the dry fly.** The dry fly will skate on the surface of the water.
- Instead of doing one long drift (of say 7 to 11 seconds duration), **break up that long drift into two or more short drifts.**

How the Competitors Compete

The secret to fly fishing basically comes down to triggering a fish's reflex to feed without triggering its flee-for-cover reaction. The reason for the 3 to 5 second drift is that your nymph spends a greater proportion of each drift doing its most enticing maneuvers: the sinking phase or drop, and the upward sweep to the lift-off phase of each cast. If you do one very long drift, you get two very short phases of attractive presentation separated by a big, long boring bit in the middle. If you had broken that same drift down into three much shorter ones, you would have had six enticing movements as well as a little dead drift thrown in for the lazy fish. These short drifts should be 3 to 5 seconds in duration, and when all of them are completed, you will have covered the same area that your single, much longer drift would have travelled through.

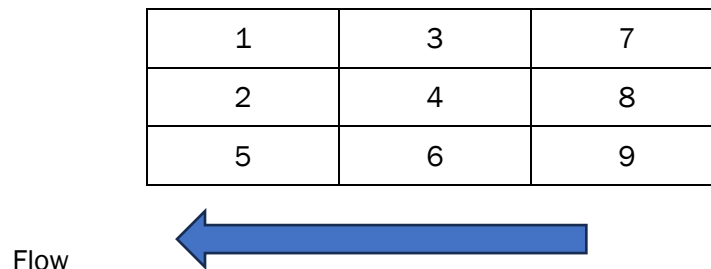
Trust me when I say this: if you are standing calmly in the water and your body is relaxed, trout will tolerate you. You will catch them usually within a rod's length of your body. When I guide in the Euro style, my clients are literally shocked by how close the fish are.

Breaking down the water

1. Mentally break the water in front of you into a grid pattern and systematically cast into each square.
2. Work the nearest squares first (never cast into the same square twice) and work across the stream from the downstream edge of the grid to the upstream edge. The numbers in each cell show my suggested sequence of casts- the first cast is to cell number 1, the last is to cell number 9.
3. Depending on the current (and various obstacles), there may be a different "best" sequence for casting into each grid cell - but the diagram shows a good suggested starting option.
4. Notice that the distance travelled in 3 seconds is not constant - it varies with the pace of the water, so the size of each grid cell will also vary.

Casting Grid

Drift Cell Length = Distance travelled in 3 to 5 seconds



Things to Avoid

1. Super long dead drifts- I KNOW IT IS TEMPTING because you are holding all your fly line and leader off the water right up to the dry fly. It will drift like a dream. The problem has two parts- the fly spends the least time doing its most attractive motions. AND you will line your fish way more.
2. Laying any casting line on the surface of the water. This reduces the quality of your drift, dulls your strike, slows your set, and possibly the worst of all, creates the dreaded “PLOP” sound you make as you lift your fly line off the water. In shallow water, that definitely tells the trout “I am here,” not what you want to announce.
3. Allowing the nymph to overtake the dry fly or even letting the weight of the nymph hang vertically below the dry fly.

Fishing the “Duo” is that simple, yet hard to believe. I have fished in this style since 2003, when Stuart Croft won the world championships, and it was his main tactic in that win. These simple strategies have doubled and even tripled my catch rate. I know for a fact that it is part of our national junior team’s strategy to win the next World Fly Fishing Championship. Try it the next time you are on the water.

It is a change, so give it some time to settle in.



Beginner Fly Pattern

Chet Allison

Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear Soft Hackle, FFI



Hook: Standard Wet Fly Hook.

Thread: Brown 6/0

Tail: Wood Duck Flank fibers

Rib: Oval Gold Tinsel

Body: Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear Mask Dubbing Fur

Hackle: Brown Partridge Body Feathers

www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYkHQPARRBM

1. Start the thread eye length behind the eye and wrap back to the bend of the hook, wrap forward to between the barb and the hook point.
2. Tie in the tail fibers at the bend, fibers are the length of the hook shank.
3. Tie in some oval gold tinsel under the shank of the hook at the bend of the hook.
4. Dub some hares ear mask on the tying thread and begin wrapping it forward about 2/3 the shank and tie off.
5. Wrap the tinsel in the opposite direction as the body, make 3 or 4 wraps of tinsel, and tie off.
6. Tie in by the tip and the vivid hackle color facing forward a Partridge feather at the tinsel tie off wrapping the feather 2 to 3 times stroking the feather fibers back each time. Stroke the fiber backward and build up a nice head. Put some head cement on the head and go fishing!

Intermediate Fly Pattern

John Barr's Meat Whistle by Tightline Videos



Hook: Long-shank jig hook (Mustad 32833NP-BN), sizes 1/0-2

Head: Copper tungsten conehead, large

Tail/Body: Rusty brown rabbit Zonker strip

Thread: Rusty brown, 6/0 or UTC 140-denier

Underbody: Copper brown/pearl Sparkle Braid

Flash: Copper Flashabou

Legs: Pumpkin Barred Sili Legs

Collar: Brown Grizzly Saddle Hackle

Thread dam: Rusty brown, 6/0 or 140-denier

Adhesive: UV-cure resin, 2 coats

www.youtube.com/watch?v=u1HX_T7YX1I

Note: Slide your cursor over the Youtube address, hold down the Ctrl button in the lower left of keyboard, and left click your mouse.



Fly Fishers International: Preserving a Legacy for All Waters

Claude Kistler

Fly Fishers International (FFI) is a global non-profit organization dedicated to fostering the legacy of fly fishing for all, in all waters. Since its founding in 1964 by the Mackenzie Fly Fishers club in Eugene, Oregon, and a group of prominent anglers, including Lee Wulff, FFI has grown into a strong voice for conservation and education. The organization's mission is centered on three pillars: Conservation, Education, and Community.

FFI is a major force in protecting fisheries and aquatic habitats through national and local conservation efforts. The organization has been involved in preserving critical ecosystems like Bristol Bay and the Florida Everglades. It also pioneered the "catch and release" practice in North America.

Through educational programs, FFI offers certifications for casting instructors and organizes annual events, including the annual "Fly Fishing Fair" recently held in Grand Rapids, Michigan. These programs help anglers of all skill levels improve their techniques and understanding of the sport.

The organization also fosters community through its vast network of clubs (e.g., Spokane Fly Fishers) and councils, connecting fly fishers across the globe. FFI is headquartered in Livingston, Montana where it also operates the Fly-Fishing Discovery Center, a museum dedicated to the sport's history.

For more immediate information, please access the FFI website at www.FlyFishersInternational.org. Membership rates beginning at \$35.00 and up offer numerous member benefits that will enhance your lifelong learning and enjoyment of fly fishing. Get to know your FFI.





The Spiritual Side Revisited

Larry Ray

Word has just been passed that the Club Christmas Party is going to be catered at a local dining favorite, the Longhorn Barbecue. This is a departure from our more traditional meal and venue (holiday ham and turkey, served in our regular meeting location). I, for one, welcome the effort at something new. There are always opportunities for traditional meals around the holidays. I am also one who would never push away a plate of barbecue!

Instead of a typical book review, I want to recall a time when this Club pulled together to create the most memorable Christmas gathering, I can remember. An event that displayed, for all present, just how resilient, adaptable, and creative a group of fly fishers can be when confronting with common purpose what might otherwise have been an unfortunate circumstance.

First, there was an air of uncertainty and foreboding in December 2019. Rumors of a virus that had apparently originated in China and was said to be easily transferred in the human population were beginning to be heard. While the first case didn't arrive in the US until the following month (January 2020), the rumors were unsettling. A few among us were already starting to wear masks.

Meanwhile, those who planned and prepared the December 2019 Christmas party for the rest of us did a truly masterful job. From decorations and ornaments, to entertainment, to food, it was well appointed and wonderful, like the old Christmas gatherings we can recall from childhood. The food was superb for an event that was essentially a potluck, and I ate more than my share! That glazed ham, prepared by Rick Newman, was rave worthy.

Then, as people began to sit and eat, something remarkable happened. THE LIGHTS WENT OUT! At first most of us thought it was momentary – who had leaned against the light switch? Then, after a bit, it became clear that it was something more than that. As the minutes passed, the lights remained unlit, and we realized we would be celebrating in the dark. And, at about that time, little yet wonderful things began to happen. People found candles and lit them. Others began to deploy flashlights, mostly those in their cell phones and tablets (say what you want about all this tech stuff, it can be a blessing on occasion!). And, with those efforts, the celebration continued unabated! A bit restrained or muted at first, but it proceeded nevertheless! Once, as I stood back along the wall and observed the whole scene, it took on the look of a candlelit dinner of old, with little pockets of members gathering at tables, obviously enjoying each other's company. The fact that light was restored near the end, after we'd eaten and most of the work had been done and clean-up was being planned for the following day, served to remind that God does, indeed, have a sense of humor!

Shortly thereafter COVID-19 arrived on our shores. I don't need to recite all that followed – you all have your own memories of what went down. It can be said that organizations such as ours suffered along with all the individuals who were afflicted. Many would say that there has still not been a complete recovery. All the more reason to recall the above Christmas event and its unique, reassuring place in the annals of our Club which serves to remind us of the spiritual side of our sport. In closing, I'd like to share some of the observations of others regarding that spiritual side:

From Dame Juliana Berners, “Also, you must not use this aforesaid artful sport for covetousness to increasing or saving of your money only, but principally for your solace and to promote the health of your body and specially of your soul.”

W.C. Prime wrote, in *Go A-Fishing*, “It is not every man who should go a-fishing, but there are many who would find this their true rest and recreation of body and mind. And having...learned by experience how pleasant it is to go a-fishing, you will find...that you are drawn to it whenever you are weary, impatient, or sad.”

And, finally, from Isaak Walton, in *The Compleat Angler: Venator:...* “So when I would beget content, and increase confidence in the power, and wisdom, and providence of Almighty God, I will walk the meadows and by some gliding stream, and there contemplate the lilies that take no care, and those very many other various little living creatures, that are not only created but fed, man knows not how, by the goodness of God of Nature, and therefore trust in him. This is my purpose, and so let everything that hath breath, praise the Lord: and let the blessing of St Peter’s master be with mine.” *Piscator:* “And upon all that are lovers of virtue, and dare trust in His providence, and be quiet, and go a/angling.”

The above were taken from *The History of Fly Fishing in 50 Flies*, by Ian Whitlaw, and from *The Complete Angler* by Isaak Walton, both of which are available in our SFF Library.

See you at the Barbecue!



SFF INFORMATION

Officers

President:	Al Odenthal
Vice President:	Bill White
Treasurer:	Mike Williams
Secretary:	Vacant
Sgt. at Arms:	Brian Soth
Director at Large:	Jim Athearn
Director at Large:	Bob Schmidt
Director at Large:	Cassandra Collings
Past President:	Paul Olsen (appointed)

Committee Chairs

Conservation:	Jim Athearn
Outings:	Mike Sportelli
Education:	Vacant
Programs:	Bill White
Membership:	Brad Collins
Fly-Fishing School:	Bill Wagstaff
Beginning Fly-Tying:	Chet Allison
Intermediate Fly-Tying:	Brad Collins
Publication Committee:	Vacant
Editor:	Keith Kuchner
Publisher:	Jacki Shear Brannon
Project Healing Waters:	Craig Adams
FFI Liaison:	Claude Kistler
Librarian:	Larry Ray
Volunteer Coordinator:	Vacant
A/V Coordinator:	David Marshall

Changing Member Information:

Change of Email Address: Log into our web page spokaneflyfishers.com and change the data on your profile form which is visible after you log in.

Club Mailing Address:

SFFC, PO Box 4141, Spokane, WA 99220

Spokane Fly Fishers Website



Visit Us on Facebook



SFF BUSINESS MEMBERS



**KEN
MOORE**

OWNER/HEAD GUIDE

509-953-8669

KENMOORE509@GMAIL.COM



Business Memberships are available for \$50/year or payment in kind including Honorary Membership. For non-members, please direct requests to the SFFC website or mailing address.

Tight lines!

