

# Alpine Fly Fishers

Our next meeting will be on

Tuesday

October 23, 2012

We will be meeting at the

Puerto Vallarta

215 15th St. SE

Puyallup



Charter  
Club



## The Dead Drift - October 2012

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### **President's Line**

*By Larry Gibbs*

We bid goodbye to one of our long standing club members at our September meeting. Howard Inks has decided to leave us all behind and move rod, reel, and boat to that great state of Montana. Howard will be missed, but not forgotten. We know where you live Howard and I suspect some of our club members may venture forth and make the short drive to Thompson Falls.

By the way everyone, the Thompson River, which is located really close to Howard's new place, has a great Mothers Day hatch of Salmon Flies. The large trout move into the river and follow the hatch as it progresses farther and farther upstream. You can fish a dry, like a Salmon Fly or a large Orange Stimulator if you want surface action. Otherwise, you get right down along the river and make short casts upstream with either a black stonefly nymph or a black Woolly Bugger. Cast right up against the rocks and strip in your line at the same speed the river is bringing the fly back to you. The fish tend to congregate along the shore picking off the stonefly nymphs as they try to crawl out. That can really be fun. Just don't fall in the river.

Another great river that Howard is very close to is the Clark Fork. Both upstream and downstream from Howard's is great fishing ranging from trout to both species of bass and pike and other warm water species. All within an easy hour or less of driving.

Howard has been doing a great job as the club secretary but now that position has fallen vacant. Stephen Neal has offered to take over so I accepted his offer. He will continue in that appointed capacity until our club meeting in December when we accept and vote in all of the Alpine Fly Fishers Board of Directors. We always get so many nominations it can be overwhelming. Yea, right :) I am accepting any and all nominations for the various BOD positions including the presidents position. Please email me if you want to belong to the Board Of Directors.

I hope everyone had a great summer with lots of fishing and camping. I have managed to fish the Yakima River a couple of times and also I have made several trips to Montana to fish the Clark Fork. I must admit, this hot summer has slowed the fishing down on both rivers. I did not make it up to Leach Lake, maybe next year?

Speaking of the Clark Fork River, make sure you read Stephen Neal's 'Back of Beyond' for this month, 'Exit Zero'.

Good fishing.

Larry

# Federation of Fly Fishers

Fly of the Month

## March Brown Soft Hackle

October 2008

By Bob Bates



It is almost November, and at this time of the year fingers are getting cold, hatches getting sparse and insects are getting smaller. So right now I am thinking about next spring when there are nice hatches.

One nice spring hatch at least for the Western U.S. and Canadian anglers is the March Brown (Genus *Rhithrogena*). Depending on location, hatches start from late February (costal Oregon) to mid-May (Alberta, Canada). These mayflies are large enough, sizes 12-14, to attract hungry trout. For some species the nymphs thrive in fast turbulent streams, and other species prefer slower waters even placid meandering mountain streams. So be sure to talk to friends in your fly club or other local anglers. Fly shop personnel are usually the most forthcoming.

Jeff Childress of Idaho Falls, ID tied this version of a soft hackle pattern for us at the 2008 NW Fly Tyers Expo in Albany, Oregon. "Wonderful fly," he said. Jeff fishes it on the South Fork of the Snake River. He uses a floating line and a leader that is the same length as the rod. He casts one quarter upstream and mends the line so it does not get ahead of the fly.

### Material list:

**Hook:** Mustad3906B, size 12 but sometimes down to 18

**Thread:** Orange 8/0

**Rib:** Gold Mylar tinsel

**Body:** Hares ear dubbing, dark

**Hackle:** Brown partridge

### Tying steps:

1. Put thread on hook starting behind the eye and wind backward to a position on the shank over the point.



2. Tie on the Mylar ribbing.



Continued on Page 3 →

3. Dub hare's ear, trying to taper the body larger forward. One of the biggest dubbing problems for new tiers is using too much at one time. Keep it sparse, and always spin it in the same direction between the thumb and first finger. Putting pressure on dubbing while twisting helps control it. When all else fails put a little dubbing wax on the thread.



4. Counter wind rib. For the new tiers that means winding the rib in the opposite direction from how the thread is wound. If there are some scraggly hairs just trim them off.



5. Strip fuzzy fibers off a brown speckled partridge feather. Tie it in by the tip with the dull side facing the hook.



6. Trim excess feather tip.



7. Then wrap partridge no more than twice around the hook. Secure and trim excess partridge feather. Finish the fly with a small neat head and a whip finish. If you want, put a little head cement on the head.



**Closing comments:** This is a great pattern that is fairly easy to tie, and it catches fish. What more could you ask for? Tie a few and try them before the March Browns start coming off. It also looks like a pattern that would work when chironomids are getting ready to hatch.

## October Guest Speaker

**Michael G. Martin**

### Going With the Flow

Michael Martin will present a Power Point presentation on fly fishing several Washington streams and rivers. The program includes tackle, stream "anatomy" and some entomology.

Michael holds a degree in Biology from Western Washington University. He has worked, under special grants, as a stream quality specialist for Washington State Department of Ecology, the US Forest Service and an environmental consulting firm. He collected water samples, monitored streams, classified salmonid habitats, recorded flow data and worked on stream rehabilitation. At present, Michael is currently employed by Wholesale Sports, as an assistant fishing manager, in Federal Way, Washington. With a passion in fly fishing, photography, and a life membership in the International Federation of Fly Fishers, I have fished and guided in the Pacific Northwest, the Rocky Mountains, Alaska, and on the classic chalk streams of southern England.

## Alpine Fly Fishers

Remaining Meetings for 2012

Fourth Tuesday of the Month (except December)

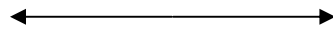
October 23 & November 27

Christmas Party - December 11 (Second Tuesday)

## Fly Fishing Related Shows in 2013

Washington Sportsmen's Show

January 23 – 27 ——— Puyallup Fair & Events Center



The Fly Fishing Show returns to Washington State in 2013.

Lynnwood ——— February 16 & 17

## FFF Events in 2013



Next year this great show, the Northwest Fly Tyers Expo, will be held again in Albany, Oregon. Friday and Saturday, **March 8 & 9, 2013**. Plan to attend.



Also next year, the Washington State Council will bring you the Washington Fly Fishing Fair in Ellensburg. Friday and Saturday, **May 3 & 4, 2013**. Don't miss this one, it is a great event!!!!



The Federation of Fly Fishers International Fly Fishing Fair will be held in West Yellowstone, MT. This will be a FALL gathering, September 24 - 28, 2013.

# Back of Beyond

By Stephen Neal

*In Wildness is the Preservation of the World*  
"Henry David Thoreau"

## Exit Zero

At seventy plus miles an hour the fence posts blur in my peripheral vision. Larry's pickup tires grip the concrete of I-90 as we pass through the farming country of the Columbia River Reclamation area. Every time I drive this section of I-90 it makes me think Texas in the 50's. Maybe it is the town names listed on the large green freeway interchange signs, Odessa, Lind, Ritzville, Ralston and Tokio. Maybe it is the wide open views, big sky and empty space; or it could be the earth's oldest river, the nearly constant hot dry wind blowing towards the Columbia River Gorge with nothing to slow it down except a barbwire fence. For sure it is not the I-90 freeway, or the enumerable center pivot irrigations systems, our air conditioned pickup, with comfort ride suspension and Starbucks coffee. My remembered 50's had rutted dusty dirt roads; crops that were flood irrigated with water from ditches full of muddy water. The trucks and cars of the 50's were air condition when the windows were rolled down, the only thing cool was the canvas water bag strapped to the hood in case the radiator overheated. We felt every bump, rut and pothole in the road through our tailbone, where the primitive suspension delivered it. Coffee was black, homebrewed or from a road side diner, served in a metal cup poured from the dented thermos clamped between your knees, there were no cup holders.

No not Texas or the 50's but still the feeling was there. Larry and I exchanged stories as the miles slipped beneath the trucks tire treads. Stories of early hunting and fishing trips with our fathers; then our own hunting and fishing trips as we became older, our takes on these events changed over time, just as our view points on our own experiences changed as age added wisdom and a longer distance view point on life. Larry and I settled into the comfortable camaraderie of life stories, finding many shared values despite dereferences in family life and schooling. From different life circumstances we both assumed roles of peace makers and caretakers in our personal and professional lives.

Feet and then miles rolled beneath the wheels as our conversations carried us east, soon Washington was in the rear view mirror and a slice of Idaho filled our windshield, then just like Washington, Idaho too slipped behind us and Exit Zero was in front. Exit Zero is the first exit off I-90 when you reach Montana. Big Sky Country, the Treasure State or Larry's favorite fishing waters. We were headed to St. Regis, Montana to spend the next two days in a drift boat, fishing the Clark Fork River. Larry's good friend and guide Brooks Sanford would be our host on the waters of the Clark Fork River. All the preliminary fishing reports told of long days on the water with low fish catch numbers, low river flows and water temps at the upper end of a trout's comfort range. It was full on late summer fishing in Montana. No bikini hatch on the river this time of year the summer camps were closed as school was about to start.

Montana was dry, no rain since June, her rivers were down, and the country was tinder dry. Like the rest of the Western United States, fires were burning around the state. The air was dirty with dust and hazy smoke. We celebrated our Montana arrival with dinner at Quinn's Hot Springs Resort in Paradise, MT. The food service and atmosphere were all first rate. Definitely a sumptuous and welcoming treat; it was an epicurean delight, the food was so good we ate there two of our three nights of dining.

We awoke early and were ready to go at least 3 hours before Brooks was suppose to pick us up; we passed the time reading and trying to ignore the political ads on TV. Lucky for us Brooks was early. I am a novice to drift boat fishing and fishing with a guide, and I hoped I was wise enough to know what I didn't know, so I could let my ego go, opened my eyes and ears and listened to Brooks and Larry and do what was suggested. The short and long of it was we had two great days of fishing, I had great teachers and I tried to do what I was told and shown to do. Most fishermen, at least we working fisherman, day dream about being a fishing guide; what could be better than spending all that time on the water. But like all professions it has its ups and downs and it takes time to be really good at what you do.

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Being a guide is a mix of art and science, you also need to be a practicing human and fish physiologist if not a licensed one. Brooks recommended we fish a section of the river below 14 mile with a take out at Paradise. His sources and river knowledge told him this was the most productive water for the present conditions. It helped that it was overcast with a chance of thunderstorms. While the morning had been cool we soon shed our outer layers and got down to shorts and shirts. Brooks tied on grasshoppers and we made our casts. Brooks long practiced boat handling skills were on display, he let the river do most of the work and with judicious and minimal oar strokes we were rewarded with long flawless drifts. We were soon rewarded with fish takes. I missed my first three fish before my hook set matched the fish strike.

For me, it was a great day fishing, Larry considered it a good day based upon his previous fishing experiences on this water. Brooks kept us on catching water and pointed out the right seams, and when we put our hoppers there, the fish responded. The cloud cover and a river surface rippled by the wind from approaching thunder showers gave the trout enough security that they left the protection of their rock covers near the rivers bed and ventured forth to feast on our well presented hopper patterns. It felt right to get lost in the drift of the fly, to anticipate the strike and to lift the line off the water to present the fly for another drift. While I relaxed into the rhythm of fishing, Brooks worked hard,



changing hopper patterns and sometimes taking us over the same water twice because it wasn't as productive as it should have been. Between Larry and me, and because of Brooks' efforts, we landed over 25 fish and hooked up with over 35. The fish were beautiful, rainbows, cutthroat, cut-bows, browns and one squaw fish, and at the end of the day, where the Flathead River enters the Clark Fork, we caught smallmouth bass.

While fishing, Montana's river canyon country filled our senses, and we became part of the scenery; tourists pulled over at turnouts to watch us cast, truckers honked and waved, probably wishin that they were fishin. Our backdrop was a rugged rock canyon; the rocks were speckled with red and green lichen, the mountains sides were forested with summer dry pines, sagebrush and short golden colored grasses. Brooks claimed that there was a herd of mountain goats that grazed in this area, but they were too shy this day to be seen by us. The railroad lay on our left and a state road on our right, as we caught and released our piscatorial prey, the commerce of life passed us going both ways. We were caught in an eddy of peace in the bustle of life, ah Montana we thank thee.



The next morning fog hung in the morning air, but the forecast called for clear sunny skies with the temp's in the high 80's. We escaped the same old political TV ads, piled our gear in Brooks's pickup and hit the state highway. The fog cleared before we even launched the boat, Brooks' sources reported really slow fishing on the other parts of the river, so the decision was made to fish the same stretch of river we had fished yesterday. Our second day of fishing was not like our first, the sun was full on the water, Brooks worked twice as hard to get us on fish, his boat work was a beauty in and of itself, and our drifts were picture perfect. He tied on different flies and different patterns, changed out colors, took time outs to let conditions change and fished the same water twice but the fish would not leave the bottom. He switched riversides to cover more water but still they showed no interest. When they did rise they splashed the fly but did not strike, when we set the hook no fish was there; my second trout was fowl hooked on his dorsal fin as he splashed the fly; our final result were four trout until we hit the Flathead River. Here we dropped anchor and swapped our five weights for seven weights and we casts to smallmouth bass. We landed 14 of these fighting wonders on the swing where the Flathead current met the Clark Fork. While we caught and released our bass, Brooks breathed a little deeper, the small tension he was carrying slipped into the river and floated downstream. He had put us on fish, and Larry his friend and valued customer had had a good day on the water.

At the end of the day, when your gear is stowed, your rods are packed and you shake your guides hand, be sure to tip him/her, forget the number of fish caught or not caught. The man who sits in the middle of the drift boat or stands in river beside you, they have put in their time, they have spent countless hours on the river to learn its secrets and where the fish holding water is. They own, operate and maintain the boat that puts you where the fish are. He has paid for the gas, pickup, trailer, insurance and his guiding license. He supplies the flies, and leader, he ties the knots and straightens those knots that our errant and missed timed casts cause. He puts up with our learning curve and poor casts, if the kids have not slept the night before or his insurance will not pay a medical bill, he leaves it at home. He does not control the fish, the river or the weather. But every time he greets you for a day of fishing he puts his reputation and his knowledge on the line. He is a small businessman that does not get corporate tax breaks, or a pass on government regulations.

After Larry and I had said our thanks to Brooks and another great day on the river, we again ate at Quinn's Hot Springs, a small personal reward for a day well spent. My utmost thanks to Larry Gibbs for inviting me on this magnificent fishing trip, he also had me fish the first day from the front of the drift boat to insure I had a great fishing experience. My thanks and appreciation cannot be deep enough. My second



thanks is to Brooks Sanford, you sir are a great guide, may good things always come to you no matter where life takes you. I also want to thank Montana for you beauty, your waters and your ease of obtaining a fishing license and for the smell of sagebrush in your air. To my readers may your travel roads lead you to Exit Zero (Montana) sometime in your near future.

*“Many go fishing all their lives without knowing that it is not fish they are after” Henry David Thoreau*

**Brooks Sanford - Montana Fishing - Outfitter Lic #7435 - (406) 239-6640, [www.clarkforktrout.com](http://www.clarkforktrout.com)**

## Presentations

By Bill Aubrey

Well, another year starts. Hopefully, that means that most of us have been thrashing the air this summer. And, hopefully, we can line up a series of presenters as good as last year's. In my opinion, it was the best overall we have had in a long time. And the absolute cream came from within.

Steve Egge, Bob Alston and John Pennington got it going with their trip to Alaska. Great show. I jokingly asked Steven Neal at his first meeting if he could put on a talk about California. Yes he can! Thanks, Steven. And then Larry called and volunteered to do a program about Montana. And did he! Three great programs right there, the three best of the year, and the total cost to the club was zero. Hell, Larry did such a great job, Howie is moving to Montana. Thanks a lot, Larry. (Howie will do anything to get out of being the club librarian.)

Add to these really good programs by Dave at Puget Sound Fly Fishers on Omak (a last minute fill in for Anil) and a program on some BC lakes as well as Skip Morris and we did pretty darn good.

So here's the thing. The big question: What now? I need suggestions.

- ◇ Who do you want?
- ◇ What do you want?
- ◇ And, can you do a program?

Send me your thoughts at [billaubrey27@me.com](mailto:billaubrey27@me.com) or 253-678-3683.

Michael Martin is on tap for October, and some others are in the wind, but I need more input.

## Fly Tying Group

### Who Are We?

The FFF Fly Tying Group was started by the IFFF leadership at the 2007 Conclave (now called International Fly Fishing Fair) in Livingston, Montana. It is a group of, by, and for fly tiers. The goals of the group are to develop fly tying at the local, regional, council, national, and international levels.



Although we have a Board of Governors, we actually "govern" nothing. We are just tiers who have volunteered our time to serve the interests of tiers all over the US and internationally, too. The name was chosen by the IFFF leadership so that our name is similar to the Board of Governors of the Casting Group.

If you are interested in volunteering, visit our projects page where we will be posting information throughout the year. Our board meetings are held once each year at the International Fly Fishing Fair, and it is open to all members. Please check back for the exact date and time, as well as details about our Tiers' and Liars' BBQ event.

### Certification of Fly Tiers

This topic is usually the first on everyone's minds. Although we respect everyone's opinion, our position is that **we believe certification of tiers would destroy the individuality that makes tying so interesting and enjoyable.** Although casting may be able to be enhanced by certification, in our opinion, tying cannot be improved by certification. Our position regarding certification is clearly delineated by our position statement.

Visit the International Federation of Fly Fishers main web page at <http://www.fedflyfishers.org/>

Go to the Tying tab and open some of the links to the various Fly Tying Groups data. This is a good group to belong to, even if you don't do that much tying.



## My Sage Circa Rod

*By Larry Gibbs*

When the first mention of the new Sage Circa rod was posted on FAOL, I watched the video and just knew that I had to have that rod. I like the slow action of a bamboo rod for pocket water fishing so I figured the new Circa would be a great rod for dry fly fishing on the rivers of Washington and Montana.

I called Steve Worley of the Worley Bugger Fly Co. in Ellensburg, WA and ordered the rod, an 8'9", 5wt. Meanwhile I sent an email to Sage asking them what they felt the best fly line would be for their 5 wt Circa. They suggested the Rio Gold WF-5F, so I ordered that as well. Steve Worley sent me an email a couple of weeks ago saying the rod was in. I arranged to drive over to E'Burg to pick it up and go out on the river for the day with Steve.

On September 18th, I arrived at the fly shop and picked up my rod. I had already picked up my fly line on one of my trips to Montana so I had my reel pre-loaded with the fly line. Steve and I took off and hit the river. I really wanted to try out that new rod. I brought along my 6 wt ZXL and had it rigged as well just in case the wind got to blowing too hard.

We arrived at the river. The air was filled with smoke from all the forest fires burning in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains. This caused the otherwise cloudless day to have a thick haze to the air, which really defused the sun. We hit the water and on my first cast I knew that Sage had produced a fantastic rod. It was so light. As I made my cast the line shot out straight and true and set the fly down ever so softly. I could watch the rod bending all the way down to the handle when the rod was loaded. Pure perfection. It actually took me about 5 casts before I caught my first fish. That first fish was an excellent test of the Circa rod. We were anchored in the middle of the river. I was casting onto fast moving chute of water and hooked up onto a very fat and healthy 16 inch Rainbow. The rod handled the fish with no problem. It was bent almost double when I was bringing the fish to the boat, seems the fish took exception to being hooked and he did not want to come, diving down to the bottom instead and making me work on getting him back to the surface. You could feel every movement of the fish with that rod.



We got my fish to the boat and I handed my rod to Steve and told him to catch a fish. I really wanted Steve to be able to enjoy the rod as much as I did. He took the rod and after a few casts caught his first fish. We traded off and on all day, catching I have no idea how many fish. It was a great fishing day on the Yakima River and we caught a lot of fish. We did catch three of the larger trout, all in swift water. Even the smaller trout were a kick to catch.



I bought the 5 wt rod because I fish the rivers of Montana a lot and I knew I needed a rod that would handle some wind and larger flies. The 5 wt is the heaviest Circa rod that Sage makes. I wouldn't mind seeing it produced in a 6 wt.

I bet the lighter and shorter 2 & 3 & 4 wt rods would be a real kick on small pocket waters and streams.

The rod casts with great accuracy, or should I say it allowed us to cast with the accuracy. We could place the fly anywhere we wanted to. Alongside logs, under overhanging brush, quick casts into pockets of water between drooping branches, anywhere we wanted the fly to go. Yep, absolute perfection. The Circa is a great slow action rod. I just love mine.



# October / November

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	<b>1 October</b>	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	<b>23 Club Meeting</b>	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	<b>31 Hallow's Eve</b>			
				<b>1 November</b>	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	<b>22 Thanks-giving</b>	 23	24
25	26	<b>27 Club Meeting</b>	28	29	30	

Alpine Fly Fishers' 'The Dead Drift' is Published monthly by the Alpine Fly Fishers Club  
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Visit our website at [www.alpineflyfishers.org](http://www.alpineflyfishers.org)

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