

# Alpine Fly Fishers

*Our Next AFF Meeting  
Won't Be Until Tuesday*

**September 24, 2013**

*We will be meeting at the  
Puerto Vallarta  
215 15th St. SE  
Puyallup at 6 PM*

*No Meeting In August*



Charter  
Club



## The Dead Drift - August 2013

### In this issue:

#### Pages 2 & 3

*FFF Fly Of The Month  
- Gun Metal PTN -  
A Fly Fishing Quote*

#### Page 4

*AFF Board of Directors  
AFF Meetings 2013  
FFF Events in 2013*

#### Page 5 & 6 & 7

*Back of Beyond  
- Great Skinny Water -*

#### Page 8

*Calendar  
Editor Information  
Mailing Address  
Board of Directors*

### **President's Line**

*By Larry Gibbs*

In late June I went on a fishing trip to the Missouri River near Cascade, Montana. Down around Pelican Point, Brooks Sanford and I noticed a rather large rattlesnake swimming across the water right towards us, so I got my camera out. Brooks decided, for reasons totally unknown to me, to row the boat out of the way of the poor snake, heck, he was just looking for a resting spot out of the sun. That is when a Blackbird flew down and attacked the snake. The bird actually pecked at the snakes head then rose up a foot or two and hung in the air above the snake, calling out like mad. That was a sight to see, and I managed to get a photo of it. That is one of my 'problems' when I am fishing, I spend a lot of time looking at the wonders of nature and thus I miss more than a few strikes. So be it. I enjoy the wild animals and will trade a chance to see them at the loss of a few fish to the boat.



I hope all of you are getting out to enjoy nature, wet a line and catch a few fish. So far the weather this summer has been rather nice to us. When you consider what is happening around the rest of the country, I think the northwest is a good place.

Late July and I just got back from a trip to the Clark Fork River and Flathead River in western Montana. Carroll Hall and I went over there for some trout and smallmouth bass fishing. While we had hot days and low water, it was nothing like what Stephen Neal faced on his John Day River trip down in eastern Oregon. Check out his story and photos on pages 5 through 7. "The Great Skinny Water Smallmouth Expedition of 2013". It is a good story and shows the hardships faced by members of our club.

Remember, our next club meeting is on the 4th Tuesday of September, the 24th.

Good fishing.

Larry



# Federation of Fly Fishers

## Fly of the Month

### GUN METAL PHEASANT TAIL NYMPH

August 2007

By Bob Bates



There have been many variations of the Pheasant Tail Nymph since Frank Sawyer, River Keeper on the Avon, first tied it in the early 1900s. Gary Barnes, Rigby, ID, was tying this fish catching version at the 2007 Western Rocky Mountain Council Fly Fishing Exposition, in West Yellowstone, MT June 30, 2007.

Pheasant Tail Nymphs imitate several mayfly nymphs so you want to move the fly through areas where fish might be feeding on them. In shallow moving water I usually use a floating line and throw the fly upstream near shore and then work outward, wading if appropriate. (Too many anglers immediately wade into a stream so they can fish the far bank, and they scare near shore fish.) Let the fly drift drag free. This fly is not heavily weighted so you might need a sink tip line or non-lead weight on the leader to reach some fish. Lake fishing has its own approaches. Floating, sink tip and full sinking lines are all useful. If you are alone in a boat you can rig up five rods and be ready for a variety situations and water depths. One time a floating line, a pheasant tail nymph and cooperative rainbows made me late for dinner. This version of the Pheasant Tail Nymph might have worked better. Unless the mayflies are hatching you might have to go down for the fish. You want the fly to move just over the weed beds so use a countdown method to control the depth. If you start picking up weeds shorten the time you let the line sink. Also vary the retrieve until you find something the fish like.

There is more information and history on the Pheasant Tail Nymph in the Fly of the Month September, 1998.

#### Materials list:

**Hook:** DaiRiki 075 #14-16

**Bead:** Glass gun metal blue bead

**Thread:** Griffith shear thread 14/0, tan or brown

**Rib:** Brown copper wire

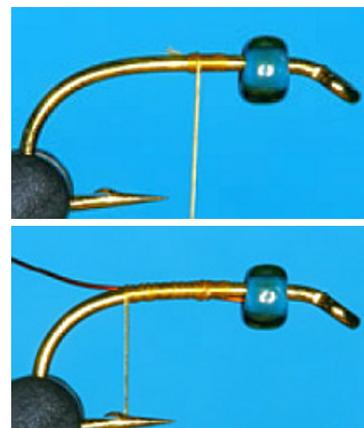
**Body:** Pheasant tail

**Throax:** Peacock herl

**Hackle:** Whiting Brahma or other soft hackles like partridge or pheasant

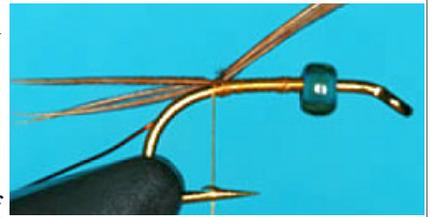
#### Tying steps:

1. Smash the barb down so it will easier to put on the bead and release the fish you hook. Slide bead to front before putting hook into vise. (If your fly shop can't get the beads try a craft store.)
2. Start thread at about the midpoint of hook.
3. Lay the copper wire on side of hook, and wind thread over the wire toward rear of hook. Stop winding just above the barb.

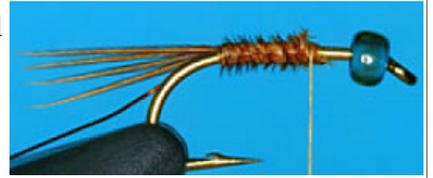


Continued on Page 3

4. Pull four natural pheasant tail fibers straight out from the shaft to match their ends. Cut them off and tie them on hook to give shank length tail.



5. Wind thread forward to a little in front of mid shank. Make first wrap of pheasant tail cover the tie down thread. Wrap remaining pheasant tail forward to thread, secure and trim excess.



6. Take one piece of peacock herl bend it around thread, secure it right at front of body and make a couple of wraps forward to a point that leaves a little space behind the bead. Tie off peacock herl and trim excess.



7. Take one wrap of wire at the tail so the fish's teeth will not damage it, spiral wire forward to front of herl, secure and trim excess. Wind the wire in the same direction as the peacock herl. Do a quick whip finish



8. Push bead back and bring thread in front of it. Hold feather by tip, stroke most of the fibers back and tie it in by the tip.



9. Wrap feather one turn stroking the barbs back as you wrap, secure and trim excess.



10. Form a neat little head, whip finish and trim thread.



Closing comments: This is an easy fly to tie, and Gary says that it catches lots of fish. To me it just looks like a fly that should catch fish. It has the magic of pheasant tail, a little peacock herl and a soft hackle.

### A Fly Fishing Quote:

*"Somebody just back of you while you are fishing is as bad as someone looking over your shoulder while you write a letter to your girl." ~ Ernest Hemingway*

# Alpine Fly Fishers – Board Of Directors

## **Board Of Directors:**

President:	Larry Gibbs
Vice President:	Bob Alston
Treasurer:	Duffy Christy
Secretary:	Stephen Neal
Webmaster/Director:	Steve Egge
Ghilly/Director:	Guy Magno
Outings Coord:	Bob Alston
Programs Coord:	Bill Aubrey
Librarian/Director	Bill Aubrey

Traditionally, at our December fund raiser meeting we also vote in our Board of Directors for the next year. As you can see, we have some duplications, those being Bill Aubrey and Bob Alston. It would be nice if they didn't have to wear two hats. All you have to do is toss yours into the ring and ask to be on the ballot. In the past we have not had an actual written ballot since we have not had more than one person wanting to participate in any particular position. That means we just ask the members who attend the December meeting to do a verbal vote for the Board of Directors. As long as the majority vote for the existing BOD, then every BOD member simply gets re-elected.

Here is your chance to step up and voice your desire to be on the Board of Directors. If we have more than one person vying for any particular position then we will have a written ballot that will be passed out to the active club members who attend the December meeting.

If anyone wants to be the President, please feel free to apply for the job.

Give it some thought and if you want to join the BOD, please send me an email to let me know which position you would like.

Thank you.

Larry Gibbs — flytier015@q.com

## **Alpine Fly Fishers Meetings in 2013**

**September 24** — October 22 — November 26 — December 17

**(No meeting in August — Go fishing)**



INTERNATIONAL  
FEDERATION  
OF  
FLY FISHERS



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.**

On-Line Registration opens on July 1

# Back of Beyond

By Stephen Neal

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

## The Great Skinny Water Smallmouth Expedition of 2013

The ranch road down to thirty mile met all my expectations. It was dusty dry, fine particulates of face powder dust hung in the air as the tires compressed it first, and then flung it skyward. The ruts jolted the vehicle from side to side, punctuated by violent drops. The ranch road surface was dirt and crushed basalt that had been rearranged by micro burst flooding and a tractor pulled grader. The road was only passable due to the ranchers' tenacity to make a living in this semi-arid land of rolling wheat fields and sagebrush scrub and short grassed range land. I felt right at home. When we reached the bottom of the canyon and the John Day River, a thin strip of green grass outlined the river's edge; the rest of the landscape was stair step out-cropping of basalt, surrounded by a sea of short golden straw colored dry grass. We were deep in Eastern Oregon river country; we had descended through geological time, through uplift, volcanic eruption, plastic deformation and wind and water erosion, to the canyon's floor.

As we assembled our various rafts and pontoon water crafts, small mouth bass jumped from the river in pursuit of damsel flies. It wasn't long before rods were assembled and our hand tied insect and bug imitations made of fur and feather and other man made materials; (and like the old bible stories were told), we cast our bread (flies) upon the water it came back a thousand fold. We all were rewarded with catches, our first on this Small Mouth Bass fishing trip.



The planning for this trip began in June, 2012 and like many plans it changed, but the biggest changes were the last minute alterations, Eastern Oregon had significantly less rain fall than normal, for the winter of 2012/2013; and the summer had been hot and dry. The river's water levels were dropping fast, Steve Egge and Bob Alston spent some anxious days following water flows and extrapolating how low it would go; and what changes we would need to make, to make the trip a reality. The mother raft was scrapped and with it went the ice chests, cold drinks and our elaborate meal plan. Lighter loads, smaller water crafts and freeze dried food became our option to make it all proceed. So at a 130 cfs (cubic feet per second) we embarked upon our river journey, to fish for Small Mouth Bass, to enjoy non campfire conversations and the sampling of Bourbon, Scotch, and fine Cuban cigars. All liquid refreshments were transferred to plastic containers to save weight, but we were not leaving home without them. At 130 cfs the river was navigable but that was changing fast, there were no leisurely drifts downstream, we had to row to get to our evening destination, we earned every river mile. As the day progressed the river flows continued to drop. Each clear morning's sunrise revealed new rocks in the rivers bed. We added dragging, pushing and lifting to our paddling to get our water crafts through the water rock gardens that were springing up at an alarming rate. Mind you that all the pushing, pulling lifting and rowing was well interspaced with fishing. This was a fishing trip after all and we had our priorities straight. It is not the destination that is important but the journey. Our grave stone may only list our Name, birth and death dates but it is the time between that defines our life.

Continued on Page 6

We blamed Tom our pentagon representative for the timbre of the trip, on our drive out from Portland he had waxed eloquently on the Lewis and Clark expedition and how tough the men were, and what they had overcome to explore the west.

Well now, we were immersed in a reenactment, laughter makes the hardships of life go lighter so we laughed long and deep on this trip, but we still broke rod tips, lost cigar holders, fins, snapped oar pins, and twisted knees. But the fish still came to our flies and our evening were full of deep

discourses on life, freedom, politics, families, kids and life aspirations' and lots of laughter.

The days were hot, triple digits was the norm in the canyon, so shade when you were not in the river became very important. On the third day of the trip we covered 13 river miles, we were beyond tired; the camp spot was oven hot so Steve, Brian, and Bob immediately began to erect shade. Seeing that my extra hands would not help much I pulled out my chair set it up in the river under the shade of a juniper, and began to filter river water for drinking. Missing me they came looking, they found me resting in nature provided shade in the river, quicker than spit, they abandoned camp and were in the river with me. We soon had migrated to deeper water shedding shirts and bearing scotch and tequila as fortification we greeted each new arrival with cheerers and drinks to celebrate the day's accomplishments. We were informed that we created a strange sight to those arriving river sojourners. Maybe so, but we felt cool, refreshed and inebriated as we soaked away the heat of the day deep in the John Day River Canyon.

After Tom arrived he sampled our scotch then proceeded to catch dinner and Gary prepped and cooked it; small mouth bass was that evening's appetizer. Kudos to catcher and cook!

On Hawaiian night we donned Hawaiian shirts, feasted on freeze dried sweet and sour pork, sipped scotch and played Bocce Ball, we like a challenge, manicured court lawns are for city folks, give us 10 degree slopes, hundred degree temps, rocks, roots and camp equipment for a playing field with old guys against young guys, then you have the right kind of environment for canyon bass fisherman. Our mornings started off with clear skies and fresh ground coffee, roasted the week before in Steve's coffee roaster, just a good shot of great tasting caffeine to start the morning right, we packed up and shoved off and began to row to our next fishing spots.

The John Day River cuts through our earth's second largest basalt mantle, the Columbia plateau. The Columbia plateau is a land of beauty and sparseness, the reddish brown tones of the basalt columns that frame



the river's edge are accents to the green, gray green and golden straw colors of the plant life that flourishes in this semi arid climate. Deer, and Mountain Sheep make this area home, it is not unusual to see them on the hill sides and on the river banks drinking in the early morning and late afternoon.

The John Day River flows freely—absent of dams for 281 miles from the Strawberry Mountains to the Columbia River. It is the second longest free-flowing river in the continental United States and the longest undammed tributary of the Columbia. The river was named for John Day, a member of the Astor Expedition, an overland expedition to the mouth of the Columbia River that left from St. Louis, Missouri, in 1810. Day wandered lost through this part of Oregon in the winter of 1811–1812. The absence of dams on the river causes its flow to greatly fluctuate throughout the year depending on snowpack and rainfall within the watershed. The highest flow recorded at a gauge on the lower John Day was 43,300 cubic feet per second on January 2, 1997. The lowest flow was no flow at all, which occurred on September 2, 1966, from August 15 to September 16, 1973, and on nine days in August 1977. The average flow at the gauge is 2,075 cubic feet per second. On the day we left the river for our homeward journey the flow had fallen to 88 cfs, we had survived the skinny water and had a wonderful fishing trip to boot. Lesson learned; don't go down this river at less than 200 cfs. River rock gardens are beautiful but make for a lot of work when rafting and fishing.

My thanks to Bob Alston and Steve Egge who made it all possible and to my fellow intrepid travelers, Pat Blackwell, Gary Blankenship, Tom Ehrhardt and Brian Palmquist each of them added immeasurably to the knowledge and enjoyment of this trip.



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

# August / September 2013

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Remember, no club meeting in August. See you in September!				1 August	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27 <b>NO MEETING !!</b>	28	29	30	31
September 1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24 <b>Club Meeting !!!</b>	25	26	27	28
29	30	Club Meeting — Tuesday September 24, 2013 We will be meeting at the Puerto Vallarta 215 15th St. SE, Puyallup at 6 PM				

Alpine Fly Fishers' 'The Dead Drift' is Published monthly by the Alpine Fly Fishers Club  
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If you have an email address allow us to send this newsletter via the internet. If your email address has changed recently, please share your new address.

Visit our website at [www.alpineflyfishers.org](http://www.alpineflyfishers.org)

**Board Of Directors:**

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