

Flatland Fly Fishers

Wichita, Kansas

www.flatlandflyfishers.org

Volume 26 Issue 4

Presidents Line

April, 2008

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

**Bluegill Fest
Calendar
April Program**
Page 2

**Fishing The
Toilet Bowl** (part 7)
Page 3

Women's Clinic
Page 4 & 5

Winter Program Review
Page 6 & 7

**Salida Trip
Club News**
Page 8

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Anyone who would like to share pictures or articles for the Newsletter should contact the editors at:
07editor@flatlandflyfishers.org

April is one of my favorite months, for after the long winter it is the time for renewal. Spring rains wash everything clean and fill our lakes and rivers, plants and trees start popping that beautiful spring green, birds are singing, grass is growing and everything in nature is happy. In my opinion April is also one of the best times of the year to fish since temperate basses, crappie, bass and other pan fish are eager to bite with longer days and warming waters.

I try to find as much time as possible to get out and enjoy this time of year as I am always anxious to test those new fly patterns that I thought up over the winter and fine tune my equipment and fishing techniques. I also look forward to some much needed backyard casting practice, which I try to do every day for just a few minutes. The key to becoming a proficient caster and a better fly fisherman is practice, and believe me ten minutes a day can really make a difference. All great casters practice regularly. You don't realize how out of shape you get over the winter and it always takes a couple of weeks to get my casting form back in tune. I work on tight loops, distance, double hauls, and accuracy, but not necessarily all in the same session. I usually work on one thing for a couple of evenings then move to the next, and I never practice for long periods, for when I get tired I quit. For me, fishing time is not practice time and my day of fishing is always more enjoyable and productive if I'm not dealing with a sore arm or shoulder. I can't stress the importance of casting practice.

The club has two events planned for spring fishing. On April 12th we will be meeting at Buffalo Park for some bluegill fishing. This is an opportunity to catch some pre-spawn fish and if needed get some fishing instruction from other club members. Dwan says there will be food too! Then on April 26th, we will be heading to Salida Colorado to fish the Arkansas Rivers famous caddis hatch. There are still openings if you wish to go. Look for details on both of these events elsewhere in this newsletter.

Get out this spring and enjoy the great outdoors. Good fishing, and see you soon.

Stuart



Stuart with a nice Stripper

Next Meeting April 3, 7:00 P.M.



Bluegills on April 12

2008 Activities Calendar

Bluegills, the introductory species for most fly-fishers in our region, can be caught using numerous types of flies including dries, wets, nymphs and streamers, at nearly any time of the year. Spring and summer are my favorite seasons to target these adrenaline pumped pan-fish.



Some of my favorite flies for bluegills and other sunfish, include surface patterns like ants, beetles, spiders, small poppers and my personal new found sweetheart, a variation of Jack Gartside's SW Gurgler. This tone down version accounted for more big sunfish that I caught last spring and summer than any other fly in my box. At the right times throughout the year, the bluegills, green sunfish and many others will literally blow this fly out of the water!



Come join the the fun at Buffalo Park on April 12th starting around 8 am. Hot dogs, brauts, hamburgers, chips and drink will be available.

April 3, 2008

Flatland Fly Fishers Club meeting 7 p.m.
Program Stuart Weniger "How To Prepare Raw Material"

April 10, 2008

Board Meeting 7 p.m.
Ark River Anglers

April 12, 2008

Bluegill Fest at Buffalo Park 8 am

April 29, 2008

Boy Scout Fly Fishing Hutchinson Fair grounds
See Rick Brown for details

April 29-30, 2008

Salida trip (see article on page 8)

May 1, 2008

Flatland Fly Fishers Club meeting 7 p.m.
Program: Beginner, accuracy and distance casting

May 8 , 2008

Board Meeing 7 p.m.
Ark River Anglers

April Meeting

So you have acquired the perfect material for that super fly you want to tie sometime. You put it in a drawer for future use, and then comes the day you pull it out to use it and you find bug casings in it and the hair of feathers are falling out of the skin. Then you start looking at all those expensive hackles and materials in the next drawer and noticed that same thing is happening to them. What went wrong? As a taxidermist for over 30 years I have been asked many questions on how to prepare a bird skin or an animal hides for fly tying purposes. The process is simple but vary important so that you don't risk having all your materials compromised. At the next meeting I plan to address material storage, bird and animal skin preparation and other issues that could compromise your tying materials and pose health risks to you and your family. See you then.

Stuart



Fishing The Toilet Bowl

Below the boats, the docks, and the rippling waters of our lakes, rivers, and streams, an important meal provider resides. Carnivorous fish, various scavenging mammals, and birds, such as herons, eagles, egrets, gulls and cranes depend upon gizzard shad for nourishment. Turtles will eat the remains of dead shad. According to Ken McClosky formerly of Kansas Wildlife and Parks, *Dorosoma cepedianum* by numbers is not only the most abundant fish species in Kansas, but also it exceeds the biomass of all other fish species combined. In fact, Cross & Collins (*Fishes In Kansas*) claim that some areas can produce as much as 1000 lbs. of gizzard shad per acre. For the most part, gizzard shad can be found throughout the eastern half of the U.S. and Canada, from Florida to northern Ontario and Quebec.

The Toilet Bowl, like most of North America, is blessed with large quantities of gizzard shad, an important member of the herring family. Dinner is served in the land of plenty! Fishermen use dip and cast nets to gather shad as bait for flathead and other species. Gar are especially pleased with the abundance of this biomass. Because gizzard shad is such an important food source for not only gar but for many kinds of fish, it is necessary to take a closer look at this species.

“Looking closer” is exactly the correct concept. I grew up on a silt lake in northeast Kansas and it was not until the lake management board decided to poison and restock the lake that I ever had seen a shad. Truckload after truckload was hauled to the bean fields for fertilizer. Where did they all come from? Was that the fish that was clogging the lake and keeping bass numbers low? Was it shad?

Actually, shad are omnivorous eaters of zooplankton and phytoplankton that are ground in a gizzard-like gut. While shad have teeth until they are about an inch long, their body becomes slab-sided and a long gut develops as well as a filtering structure on their gills. Thus, plankton are combed from the water particularly near the bottom of silty and muddy areas. Rather than shad being the “trash fish” our lake fathers might have rightly accused of stealing food from the various game fish, should it have been the many other fish species and birds that competed more directly for food? Indeed, it might be possible that the number of shad in the lake affect oxygen levels. Likewise, young fish of all species depend upon zooplankton and an overabundance of shad might also pose a problem with over-competition. Still, it is as likely that bass numbers were down because of heavy fishing pressure and the bad habit of fishermen emptying their minnow buckets into the lake (a source for the ever increasing carp population.)

Gizzard shad grow to about 4 inches their first year and will mature in 2 to 3 years. A typical lifespan is 3 to 8 years. Shad are particularly sensitive to sudden water temperature drops, especially when temperatures go below 45 °F. Large kills of shad can be observed in Kansas in the fall. During calm, warmer days however, large schools of young gizzard shad will shimmer at the water’s upper film, although larger shad seldom travel near the surface. As far as size goes, a person took an eighteen-inch shad that weighted two pounds from Lake Powel Reservoir. Indeed large, but the world record weighs in at 4 pounds, 6 ounces and was taken from the Indiana section of Lake Michigan. Imagine the striper it would take to eat this!

Female shad spawn pelagically (in open water) in large groups with each releasing up to 400,000 eggs. The sticky eggs sink and adhere to many materials. Thus, there are no nest sites and the adult shad offer no protection to the eggs or to the newly hatched fish.

Adult gizzard shad have a silvery blue-green upper back, silvery-white sides, and a dull white belly. The body is vertically flattened, leaving a “knife-edged belly”. The upper jaw extends well beyond the lower jaw (a distinguishing trait from threadfin shad.) There are a number of good fly patterns that adequately mimic these traits.

As far as humans eating gizzard shad, it seems that these fish of the herring family should make good food. Because they are filter feeders, few shad would ever be taken except by purposely pursuing them with nets or by snagging them. Because they live predominantly on benthos and plankton taken from the muddy areas, areas which often have a strong smell, I will leave it up to the bass, the eagles, and Bear Grylls to comment upon the palatability of gizzard shad. Gar love them.



Women's Clinic

Wow! What an experience. After attending this two day seminar I am more "hooked" than ever on fly fishing. This women's only seminar is one of the best kept secrets in South Central Kansas. The education provided by the club in fly tying, casting, and fishing was top notch. I was able to discover that fly tying is a very rewarding art and picked up numerous tips on casting, reading the stream, and presenting the fly.

I would personally like to thank everyone that was involved with this seminar. The education you each provided and the time that you gave to this venture truly helps to prove that your club and this seminar is top notch. Thanks again!
Carol List



Dear Gentlemen of the Flatland Fly Fishers Club,

Thank-you for a first-class, fun-filled Women's Fly Fishing Clinic this past weekend. The knowledge and professional techniques that everyone was so eager to share were very useful and easy to apply while practicing. Accommodations were superb and the lunch on Saturday was very yummy! Both days were well worth the price of admission, not to mention the vest and box of hand-tied flies that you gave to each lady. I will take the information and skills that I learned with me every time I fish. Thanks for opening a whole new world for me to enjoy



I really enjoyed the casting clinic I attended on Saturday, March 15. Doug Meyer did a great job of giving instructions on how to cast. Rory (sp?) then assisted me with using these technics to cast on the water — he showed a great deal of patience. Jeanetta Bolin





Women's Clinic

I attended the Women's Fly Fishing Clinic March 14th and 15th. I have to say, that it was much more than I ever expected. Friday night we tied some great flies with the help of some wonderful members of the Flatland Fly Fishers Club. Saturday we learned how to cast a fly rod. Something I thought I would never learn to do. Then we actually got to catch fish. I think at one point, Gary almost had a heart attack, but those strike indicators are hard to see. To top things off, we had a wonderful lunch of fish stew, steamed trout, pasta salad and dessert fixed in a dutch oven. I had a wonderful time and would do it again in a minute. Thank you. The Flatland Fly Fishers Club is a great bunch!!

Brenda Stover



Andrea Paguetto



Nancy Rodriguez



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Winter Program Review

On Saturday February 23rd Bill Edrington and Larry Kingrey of Royal Gorge Anglers in Canon City, CO gave the Winter Presentation. There were a total of 48 people in attendance. Bill and Larry both have a vast amount of fly fishing knowledge, especially along the Arkansas River in Colorado where the clubs annual April outing is held.



Stuart visiting with Bill

The presentation began talking about the Magic Triangle; which is bordered by highways 285, 291, and US 50. The Arkansas River begins as snowmelt from the Rocky Mountains around Leadville and is an unobstructed freestone river until it reaches Pueblo where it is dammed into a reservoir. Bill talked about some of the areas around and on the river to fish. One lake he mentioned was O'Haver Lake south of Salida that provides excellent dry fly opportunities. Browns Canyon north of Salida provides good float trip angling. Big browns lurk throughout the river, but seem to congregate between Parkdale and Spikebuck and should be targeted at night. The largest concentration of 20 inch fish are found in the Canon City Park; and is due to the Long Nose Dace which provides a good food source for the large trout. After talking about the area Bill introduced Larry to tie some flies. I have been familiar with Larry's patterns for a few years now, and really like his patterns and the simplicity in tying them.

On my first trip to Salida I bought a few nymph patterns of Larry's at the shop and never used them on that trip. It was later in the year while fishing in Missouri that I caught a Caddis fly and turned it over to inspect the color; where I noticed the bottom of this fly was identical to Larry's Brachy Pupa with its burnt Olive micro chenille. The fly caught fish and I was sold on Larry's designs; after that trip I came home and tied a dozen each olive and tan. Most of Larry's patterns with pictures and recipes can be found on the Royal Gorge Anglers website.

Bill talked about mayflies on the river and Larry tied the Cold Turkey Baetis, which Bill said was his favorite BWO pattern. Stoneflies became the topic and Larry tied the Arkansas Rubber Leg Stone. After lunch the talk turned to the famous spring caddis hatch, Bill calls this hatch the Tax Day hatch since it occurs in Canon City around April 15th. They talked about how to fish this hatch from dusk to dawn. In the early morning Bill recommends fishing Larva patterns dropped below a heavily weighted fly, and before lunch he fishes a bead head pupa below a fly. After lunch an unweighted pupa hung below an adult dry, which covers both stages of food in case the trout are not keyed on the adult. One thing Bill stressed was to fish at dusk and after dark for the egg layers and spent caddis. Larry tied his foam Better Caddis, which I have used and really like it's flotation; it never sinks. After the presentation the two answered questions and signed books.

I found the program very informative and have been on the club trip three times now, and plan on going this year. I would encourage anyone who has never gone, to come along and enjoy the fishing. Last years trip was the best trip I have been on. Everyone participated in breakfast and dinner together, where we could all share our stories of the day. It also didn't hurt that we hit the caddis hatch perfect, as the fishing was phenomenal.

Visit the Royal Gorge Angler website where you can find information about the river and the flies to use. Bill also has a weekly email newsletter that you can sign up for that is very informative. Check it out and go fish the Arkansas.



Winter Program Review

Tying with Bill



Spencer and Larry



Upper Arkansas River Flies
from Larry Kingery

Larry's Rubber Leg Stormfly



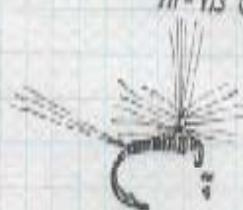
Hook: 3xl. Streamer #8-10
 Head: Cone Black or Orange 6/0 Thread
 Tail: 2 Rubberlegs, shank length
 Weight: Lead-free wire wrapped into cone
 Body: Varigated or twisted chenille, olive & orange
 Legs: Rubber, Varigated (3 pairs)

Larry's Iceberg Baetis



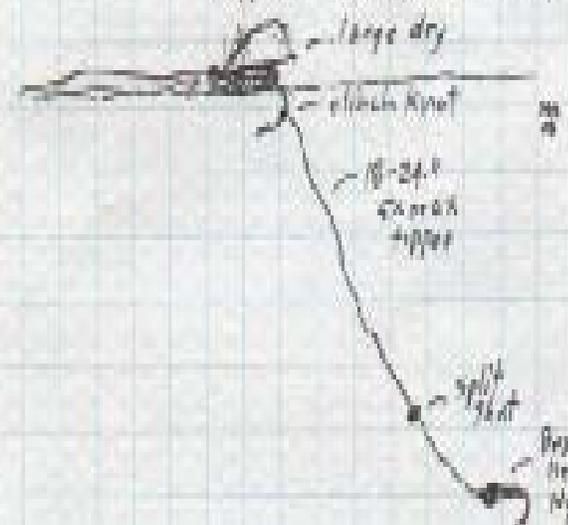
Hook: Scud #16-22 Gray Dun Thread 8/0
 Tail: Sparse Gray Sparkle Yarn
 Abdomen: Biot with natural rib, Olive Gray
 Thorax: Ice Dub, Brown Olive
 Wing Case: Tip-tied CDC Dark Dun
 Tuft: CDC end, cross-cut

Hi-Vis Quill Baetis



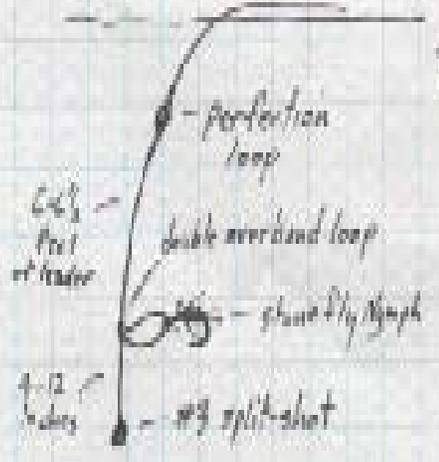
Hook: Standard Dry #16-22 olive Dun Thread 8/0
 Tail: Fibers, Cut-d-toward, or spade hackle fibers
 (shank length & seated on small thread ball to lift.)
 Post: Hi-Vis Turkey Flat cut at right-angle.

Hopper-Dropper Set-up



large dry
 Clinch Knot
 18-24" 5x strand tippet
 split shot
 Broad Head Nymph

Montana Dropper Set-up



perfection loop
 Clinch Knot of leader
 double overhand loop
 stone fly nymph
 4-12 inches
 #3 split-shot

2008 Salida Trip

We will plan to leave early on Saturday, April 26th, fish that afternoon through Tuesday, and return on Wednesday the 30th. Arrangements for accommodations have been made with the Days Inn in Salida (719-539-6651) at the special Flatland Fly Fishers Club rate of \$50.00 per room/per night including tax. Contact Jerry Donnelly or Kendal Rush for more information.

2008 Club Officer

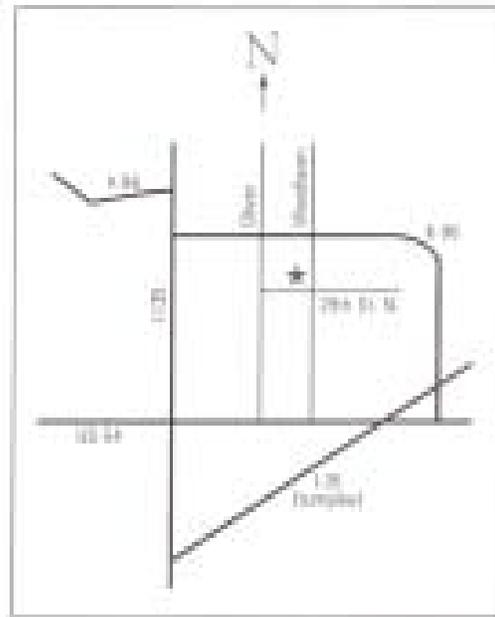
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Flatland Fly Fishers



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Wichita, KS
67201

Flatland Flyfishers meet monthly at the Great Plains Nature Center, located at 6232 E. 29th St. N, Wichita, KS



For Sale:

Cabela's neoprene waders size 10, \$35.00
Cabela's felt sole wading boots size 10, \$15.00
Cabela's fishing vest, large, \$20.00
Bag of fly tying tools, \$12.00
Packages of tying material including buck tails, hackle, hair, kip tails, feathers and more.

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