



NEWSLETTER MARCH 2011

THE MEETING

Those of you patiently waiting for the skwala hatch may notice that this newsletter is earlier than usual. (The impatient are still tying flies or into their third cocktail.) The divine Judy Patton and I will be frolicking in Mexico soon and will, sadly, miss the March meeting. So I must finish this opus and scatter it to the ether and mails before we travel to the land of sun and warmth. (Remember those things?) BUT, the Club moves forward! All you good souls will convene Tuesday, March 1 at BJ's located at 900 N. 1st Street, Hamilton. Ya'll have had all winter to polish your bending of the truth. Come and hoist a beverage of your choice and share nourishment with fellow fly casters, flingers and flubbers. General fish tails start at 6:00 pm and the program starts at 7:00 pm. Judy and I will miss you.

THE SPEAKER

Most of you will recall with pleasure the talk given by Tony Tomsu last year. Tony has a business in Stevensville manufacturing steel dye wing and body cutters for flies. They are available in our local fly shops. And he may well speak to that, seeing as how the skwala

hatch is coming on and all. But Tony also is a fly fishing instructor at University of Montana. (And I foolishly had thought that the curriculum only extended to underwater basket weaving.) Tony and several of his students traveled to Ireland last year and placed third (fourth?) in international casting competition. Not bad; not bad.

THOSE WHO SPAKE

To the melodious strains of The Grand Canyon Suite, we witnessed pictures of a number of our Club's members astride mighty mounts in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. There were magnificent pictures of large trout and some so so pics of the flabby scenery. What wasn't shown, given the obvious limitations, were the sore rears of our brethren. It was a very nice presentation. Thanks be to Cliff Gibbons.

THE PRESIDENT ' S MESSAGE

Greetings, fish chasers:

Yet again, our snowy winter has driven me to the tying table instead of the river. I had already caught an 18 inch cutthroat on a dry skwala by this time last year, but unless the weather forecast is wrong, I don't see getting a fly on the water for at least another week.

My time spent on Wednesday nights tying at the brewery and Thursday night attending Chuck Stranahan's class (with what seems like half of our club members) is finally paying off as my tying is improving, and I have a few new patterns in my arsenal. But the itch to put them to use is increasing, even as the snow falls. Both Bill Bean and Jeff Gray have tying tables set up at their shops and will be happy to help you learn a new pattern or two, and Chuck assures me his shop will be opening soon, so you can get geared up for spring fishing.

The Bitterroot Buggers program commenced last Tuesday, with an amazing *fifty-four* kids signed up. Please join us on Tuesdays at the Westview Center from 6:30 - 8pm to help with tying if you are able to help. You need not be a master fly tyer in order to provide guidance to a first time tyer...

Sign up sheets for our FFB/BRTU May fly fishing clinic for beginning and intermediate anglers are available at either Bill's and Jeff's shops, or you can contact me or Greg Chester for more information.

Keep thinking warm thoughts and hoping for spring's arrival.

Fish on.

Cathy Lowe, President

FLY OF THE MONTH

Phil's Skwala

Submitted By Phil Romans

This fly was developed with the help of a lot of people: Greg Chester, Dennis McIntyre, John Foust, and so on. The main difference with my version is that it's a lot smaller than the average skwala. Since we get actually three hatches during this season, the skwala, the nemoura and the capnia (all stoneflies in varying sizes), I decided to go with a thin wire, long shank hook in a size twelve, and even a fourteen. It may imitate either a small skwala or a large nemoura, therefore covering two hatches, or can be modified slightly to fit either hatch more closely. I had my best year ever last year using this fly during the skwala hatch. It floats really well, and presents a thin, low profile, and it's a killer although it can be hard to see.

Hook: Montana Fly Co. 7022 2XL wire (hopper/attractor). Sizes 10-14

Thread: Olive 6/0

Body: Olive foam
(wrapped)

Egg Sac: Black foam

Wing: Olive or gray wing
material

Post: Orange or white
polypro yarn

Hackle: Olive

Hint: Keep the body and
wing thin



FISHING REPORT

It's still Montana, so we're still looking at snow squalls outside our frosty windows. And

yet,... and yet. The sun shines a little brighter and warmer on its occasional flickers through the scudding clouds. The River flows darkly but free of ice. And the early morning mists rising from the River blend with our dreams of large skwala stone flies struggling to rise from the water's surface. The skwalas are coming!

Cliff and I fished Tucker East the other day and found the entire stretch upstream to be filled in and shallow. Very few fish and very little habitat for them, Best to wait until after spring floods on this stretch. On the other hand, Cruise Director Pierre had a good day just down from Florence Bridge. Five good fish in an hour, he says. That's all I've heard.

ODDS AND ENDS

Fly tying:

It's on! Wednesday evenings at the Hamilton Brewery. 5:30 pm. All skill levels welcome.

Membership:

You should be proud to a member in our vibrant Club. We have 84 paid memberships ad a number of complimentary members. And we grow every month.

Smith River Trips Available:

Joe Sowerby of Montana Fly Fishing Connection in Missoula has once again offered our Club discount Smith River trips. He normally charges \$3700 for a five night trip (first night is in White Sulphur Springs motel). Our charge for a self-guided trip is \$1200, the same it was two years ago. This is a great trip. You get all food and guides who prepare it and wash the dishes. They set up and take down camp. You row yourself in one of Joe's rafts. Four nights on the Smith. Ask anybody who has been. It is a fine trip!

This year, Joe has offered us the following dates: May 12, 21 and 29; June 6; and July 12. If all who have indicated interest actually follow through, the July 12 date has only one opening left. The other dates are still open for any of you interested. Our Cruise Director, Pierre, will speak more on this at the meeting.

Buggers:

The Buggers has started. This program teaches beginning and intermediate fly tying to kids 14 and under. The Buggers is entirely run by volunteers. While it is sponsored by the Hamilton Chapter of Trout Unlimited, our folks have traditionally been very involved.

This year, some 54 kids signed up. This is huge! And this number will strain the abilities

of those who usually show up to help unless they get more volunteers. You do not have to count yourself an expert. These kids are just beginning. But what a wonderful opportunity to instill our passion for our sport in the next generation. The Buggers meet every Tuesday evening, 6:30 to 8:00 pm at the Westview School in Hamilton. Turn out and help!

FOR FUN

Everyone seems to be in such a hurry to scream 'racism' these days.

A customer asked, "In what aisle could I find the Polish sausage?"

The clerk asks, "Are you Polish?"

The guy, clearly offended, says, "Yes I am. But let me ask you something. If I had asked for Italian sausage, would you ask me if I was Italian? Or if I had asked for German Bratwurst, would you ask me if I was German? Or if I asked for a kosher hot dog would you ask me if I was Jewish? Or if I had asked for a Taco, would you ask if I was Mexican? Or if I asked for some Irish whiskey, would you ask if I was Irish?"

The clerk says, "No, I probably wouldn't."

The guy says, "Well then, because I asked for Polish sausage, why did you ask me if I'm Polish?"

The clerk replied, "Because you're in Home Depot."

THE AUTHOR

As said above, Judy and I will miss all you gal and guy codgers. When next we meet, we'll all have skwala stories. I've already made up two or three. You can reach me at 406-381-5611 or richmorrisey@q.com. I encourage newsletter ideas.