



I know the line is loose, but I was using my phone and nervous.
Maureen Sullivan, Camano Island outing

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President's Message Wayne Balsiger

Welcome to 2024. Thank you for your support of me as your 2024 NFA President.

Holiday Party: Thanks to all who attended the Holiday party. It was great to see several members I had not seen in a while. Thanks to all who donated goods and services for the auction and raffle. I have not seen the final numbers, but it looks like we made over \$2,000

for the club. Let us know what you thought of having it as a potluck at the Haller Lake Community Club.

We are busy setting up schedules for 2024.

January 18 Meeting: The January interactive presentation continues our tradition of previewing the Outings calendar. The Outings Calendar for 2024 is still growing. We have a lot of "perennial favorites" which will be included next year, for example the Yakima, the Methow, Coffee Pot Lake, etc. But we are always looking for possible new outings. During the past year several members have made suggestions for trips they would like to see included in the schedule. And we need interested members to lead a trip. It's a good time to volunteer.

Education: The **Fly-Tying classes** are scheduled to start February 20 and registration will soon open on the website.

Fly-Casting Classes: We are looking for your ideas. We don't have an instructor currently.

Monthly Raffle: We are looking for a volunteer to be meeting Raffle Chair, as you know we have a raffle each meeting. Let me know if you are interested in helping with this activity.



Garage sale?? Do we want one this spring? Do you have any gear you want to sell?

Annual Dues: Time to pay your dues if you have not done so. Still a bargain, do it today via the website.

And finally... Winter can sometimes seem unbearably long as we wait for spring fishing. However, there are still plenty of fishing opportunities ranging from chironomids in lakes to winter steelhead. **If you are looking for people to fish with, the club maintains a "find a member to fish with at: <https://www.northwestflyanglers.org/find-member-to-go-fishing>**

Wayne



Membership – Susanne Staats

We're past New Year's Day but it's not too late to wish everyone a healthy and happy 2024. January kicks off the year with a reminder to all members to renew their dues. We have approximately 138 members in our club, of which 100 are active. Active means those who are in good standing with full member benefits (e.g. listed in member directory, current with dues, etc.). Let's try to increase active membership. If you have not yet renewed your membership, I hope you will do so in the next few weeks.

Nicholas Crain was inducted into NFA at the November meeting. Further information on Nicholas will be forthcoming in a future FlyPaper. Please welcome Nicholas if you see him at a meeting or club event.

Susanne

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There is a Lot to be Thankful For – Nick Sherman

As the temperature dips to the teens today, we can sit by the fire and reflect on the many positive aspects of 2023.

- The pink salmon run was epic this year, yielding furious action from the Puget Sound beaches and the rivers. It was encouraging to see pods of harbor porpoises feeding on the same baitfish, pointing the way to where the salmon were.
- Western Rivers Conservancy (with NFA support) acquired property along the Yakima River, connecting other already protected portions of riverfront. This filled in the missing links order to convey it safely into public hands rather than developers. Western Rivers hosted our NFA outing at the pristine private campsite on the water a little south of the footbridge at Umtanum Creek Recreation Site.
- The restricting culvert at Meadowdale Beach was replaced with a bridge allowing restoration of the salmon habitat and better access for casting to salmon and sea run cut from the sand beach.
- The club was able to enjoy a peaceful day of fishing on the Cedar River, the focus of much of our conservation effort.
- The Coastal Cutthroat Coalition has been making an impact to improve Sea Run Cut habitat for a species largely neglected by the WFW.
- Elwha River dam removal at 10 years has largely succeeded in restoring natural ecosystem.
- This was an amazing year to watch the salmon return at the Chittenden Locks fish ladder.



- Our club had the benefit of great speakers taking the time to present topics. We started off with WDFW discussing the controversial status of fish pens in Puget Sound. Jon Covich, representing Fly Water Travel, is their expert on fly fishing in Cuba. Leland Miyawaki, a local legend, presented an informative and entertaining talk on fly-fishing from shore for coho salmon. Robert Triggs spoke on sea run cutthroat trout (SRC), habitat preservation and fishing techniques. Todd Floyd entertained us with a recounting of his amazing trip where they targeted Peacock Bass in the heart of the Amazon, Agua Boa Amazon Lodge, Brazil. Todd also described his Dolphinfish tracking efforts in Loreto, Mexico. Ryan Smith, managing owner of Avid Angler, provided a wealth of information on fishing the north Puget Sound beaches and rivers for SRC and salmon.
- We are thankful for our outings coordinator and our outings hosts who brought the Pacific Northwest to our members. Probably missing a few, we fished Munn Lake, the Yakima River, Lone Lake, Coffeepot Lake, Chopaka Lake, the Deschutes River, the Methow River, Rock Island Fish Camp in BC, Eglon Beach, Camano Island, Clark Fork, and the Skagit River. We highly appreciate our veteran members who know the flies to use and how to fish



the location. We are thankful for our fishing friends who enable the shuttle runs and carpools.

- The Fly Tying Classes instructors have been so interesting and entertaining that many learning fly tying students come back for a another dose within a few years! ☺ Compared to recent years, we had a respite from smoke unless you had a Ross Lake permit for September. The night skies over Clark Fork and the Methow were stunning.
- Our wishes are few. Let's hope that Pass Lake and Chopaka return to their former glory. May our back casts stay high and out of the branches. Let us see the dry fly in the current and let us set the hook which the indicator twitches.

Overall, with fishing and with life, we can quote Ray Wylie Hubbard. "And the days I keep my gratitude higher than my expectations. Well, I have really good days."



NFA Holiday Bash – Nick Sherman

Thirty-six guests displayed their culinary prowess and opened their pocketbooks at the potluck holiday party held at the Haller Lake Community Club. The venue was conducive to conversation and telling tales about fishing exploits, plus there was adequate space to display the silent auction items. Over \$2,000 was raised.



Mealtime at Haller Lake with the silent auction tables in the background.

Susanne Staats deserves a world of credit for managing the entire Bake Sale. This undoubtedly spilled over into a fantastic assortment of the dessert table. Mel and Eric Olson prepped the prizes and set up the auction items. Eric diligently sorted a mixed mess of flies and organized them into sellable selections with help from Mel. Bruce McNicholas worked with outside shops and stores for donations to the auction. The grandson of John Martin (NFA member) donated items, including a bamboo rod made by hand at Dawn Holbrook's class in 1977. People who helped set up on the day of the banquet were Peter Rubenstein, Peter Maunsell (plus cash out), Rich Wilkins, Bill Denzel, and Norm Hill.

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The quality and variety of the appetizers, salad, main course, and desserts made for a fine feast where no one left hungry. Many thanks to the cooks!



The dessert selection.



Digging into the main courses.



President Wytold Lebing concluded his tour as Club President by hosting the awards ceremony. The Service Award is given to a member who made outstanding contributions to the public through the aims and purposes of the club. The Service Award is not required to be given on an annual basis. The club was honored to present the Service Award to Tom Quinn for his field work at the UW research camps in the Bristol Bay region of western Alaska. This contributed to the denial of permits for the Pebble Mine. Tom was recognized at the White House (see June 2023 Flypaper).





Tom Quinn receiving the Service Award

Dave Campbell and Gary Todd were recognized as founding members of the NFA, both have belonged to the club since the beginning in 1972. See a separate write-up in this edition of the Flypaper.



Dave Campbell recognized as a founding member!



The Merit Award is given to members who made outstanding contributions to the club during the past year, determined by the club officers. Since none was given in last year due to Covid disruptions, the award was shared by two. Brett Schormann and Nick Sherman were recognized for starting up the Flypaper again.



President Wytold with Nick Sherman and Brett Schormann
Wytold's favorite moment was handing the baton to incoming president Wayne Balsiger! Thanks to Wayne for stepping up for another term leading Northwest Fly Anglers.



Old and new presidents Wytold Lebing and Wayne Balsiger.



Dave Campbell and Gary Todd Recognized as Founding Members of the Northwest Fly Anglers – Nick Sherman

For over 50 years, these men have underpinned the NFA. Lifetime Memberships were awarded to both in 2001. 23 years later, they still bring their wealth of experience to others.

While unable to attend meetings, Gary contributed three articles to The Flypaper in 2023. Reviewing old issues, it is impressive, for instance, how Gary organized an outing or event for every month of the year in 1996. That included the January bald eagle float, Steel heading in February on the Sauk, Pass Lake, the Deschutes, Coldwater Lake, the first international outing to the Upper Skagit in BC, middle and north forks of the Snoqualmie, the Yakima, Wenatchee River in October for steelhead, and sea run cuts on Vashon in November. The high attendance at the outings was a testament to Gary's enthusiasm in sharing the angling experience.

The following biography is from the January 1996 Flypaper:

Gary is a charter NFA member, joining the club in 1972, the same year it was founded. He joined to learn more about fly fishing. He also liked that the NFA was coed.

Gary has held every club position – currently he is Outing Chair – except Treasurer explaining in part why the club is still solvent.

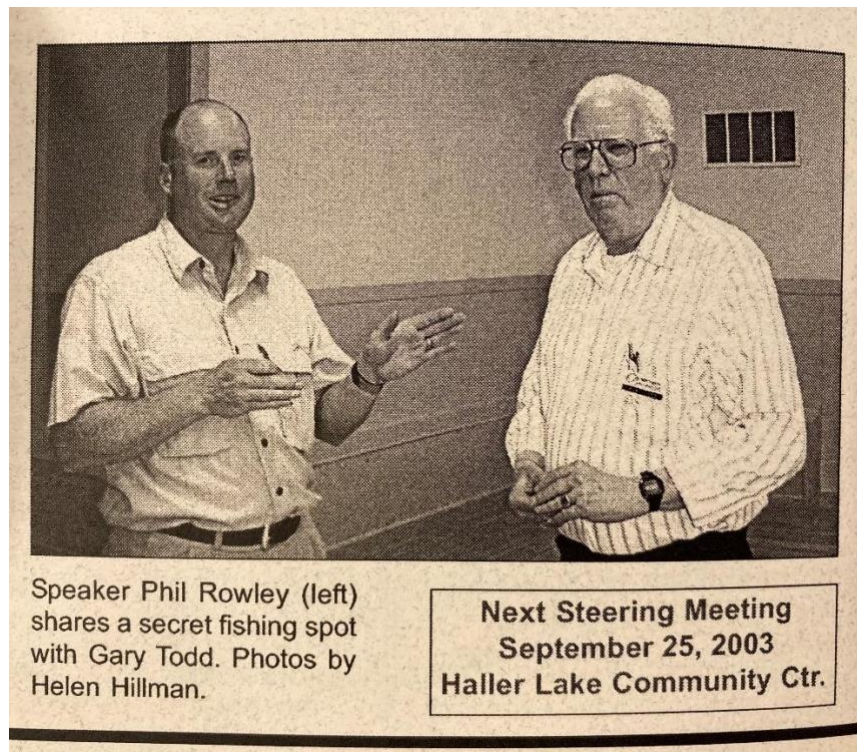
In real life, Gary is a CAD Drafter and lives in Duvall. He learned to fish from an uncle in Seattle.

His favorite place to fish is Oregon's Deschutes River where he fished the mysterious, but effective, Dirtfly Nymph and Royal Trude.

His favorite author of fly-fishing books is Steve Raymond. Gary has collected more than 100 fly reels.

We all thank you, Gary, for your enthusiasm and participation.

Working the math, we extrapolate that Gary now has collected 216 fly reels.



Gary Todd in the 2003 Flypaper

In his 54th year with NFA, Dave Campbell is still hitting the rivers and beaches hard, including the Methow River, Eglon Beach, and Skagit River. His donated fly, his choice of the riffle to fish, and his explanation of the technique accounted for 16 of 17 salmon that one couple caught on the Skagit. Dave's knowledge is extensive, and he is willing to share most everything (except precisely where he parked and waded the Stillaguamish).

We will republish below Dave's Flypaper submission from June 2000, as it shows pride in the club and his respect for other members contributions. It is also a thinly veiled cry for volunteers to keep this tradition going in 2024.



Dave Campbell mentoring NFA members at the Eglon Beach outing, September 2023.

Proud Tradition of NFA Casting Class

Dave Campbell, June 2000

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In early April, when Michael Gallavan stepped out on the Green Lake Casting Pier, fly rod in hand and eager students in attendance, he was carrying on a proud tradition of the Northwest Fly Anglers, a tradition that dates to the formation of the NFA in 1972.

It was a cold, wet April evening of that year when I first met Dawn Holbrook. He was teaching a casting class and I was one of his students. After the class, he invited us to coffee at a local restaurant where he showed us how to tie leaders and other neat fly-fishing stuff.

A few months later, Dawn along with Andy Hall and a few others founded the NFA, a new family-oriented fly-fishing club. Dawn was the first president and went on to head the fly-casting class for many years.

Over the years, the casting classes have introduced hundreds of people to the art of fly fishing. The classes have also proved to be an excellent means of recruiting new members to the club.

There are other club members who made significant contributions to the casting classes. Andy Hall, winner of numerous American Casting Association medals, has instructed and provided leadership. Gary Todd taught several classes in the 80s. When club founder Dawn Holbrook passed away in 1992, Andy, Michael Gallavan, and James Schmidt stepped forward to insure the continuation of the program. Peg and Bill Van Natter and many other club members too numerous to mention continued to assist in the most worthwhile endeavor.

For many, the casting classes have been an entry point to the wonderful world of fly fishing. Graduates of the classes have gone on to leadership positions in the club and the greater fly-fishing community. Most importantly, fly fishers make some of the best stewards of our lakes and streams. And so, the tradition continues.



Thoughts About Bob Young – Mark Conner

Always with a Ready Smile, Our friend, Bob Young

Our friend, Bob Young, a long-time NFA member, has passed away. I learned this after watching the flies that Bob had tied fly off the raffle table at the NFA Banquet Sunday night. After asking about Bob, I learned that he had been in hospice. David Williams let me know that Bob was no longer with us.

Bob was a kind and gentle man, always ready with a smile. He lives on through the flies that he so masterfully tied and generously gave to the club before his decline. Bob was charitable with his time, and part of his legacy is found through the many fly fishers he tutored over the years at the Northwest Youth Conservation and Fly-Fishing Academy – including one of his 'buds,' Sasha Conner. He must have had quite the patience and teaching acumen because he taught the double-haul cast that many of our members do not know how to perform today. But those who were his students can show you the technique, the way of the master, Bob Young.



Thank you, Bob, thank you for who you were, thank you for the kindness that you visited upon us, and thank you for giving freely of yourself to others.



Memories of Bob from his close personal friend, Carol Ferrara

Bob Young was a close personal friend of my husband, Les Johnson, for many years. After Les and I married, he also became my dear friend and accompanied us on many of our fishing trips. Bob was a humble and frugal man who never drew much attention to himself. For many years, he rented the small house behind Patrick's Fly Shop and visited there every day. Many NFA members first met Bob at the fly shop, where he worked part-time, always patient with his finicky customers. He drove a



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small truck and had no flashy possessions. And yet, when Les had a stroke, it was Bob who loaned me thousands of dollars to equip our van with a motorized seat that came out of the car so that I could easily transfer Les from his wheelchair. I hadn't asked. He just gave it to me. (I did pay it back over time). Another time, Bob helped move Les's daughter from California. Bob had a heart the size of a barn and was the best kind of friend anyone could ever hope to have. Besides fishing, Bob loved to swing dance. Who would have thought that? He would travel all over the US for swing dance events. He also loved ballet and would attend live captioned performances of the Bolshoi Ballet whenever presented at theaters in Seattle.

Bob had shirts made for each member of our wedding party, identified on the back as "Johnson Ferrera Wedding." I took Bob to lunch at Duke's on Lake Union earlier this year with our friend John Townsell. Bob was frail but managed well walking with a cane. After we ate, I thought he might be feeling tired and would want to get back to his assisted living facility. But when I asked if he wanted to go back, he said he wanted to go to Patrick's. So that's where we went, and Bob visited the store for probably 45 minutes; always the fly fisherman and forever fascinated by the craft of flytying. It was a good day for all of us.



School for Smolts – Mark Conner

The noble trout deserves the sanctity of the deep water, and if you cannot entice her up to your dry fly on the surface, then you are not a fly fisherman. –

Anonymous

I'd rather be catching fish on nymphs than not catching fish on dries. – David Paul Williams

No one has ever gotten into the backing with a tenkara. – Japanese proverb

When I tire of multi-tasking with my thumbs, answering 'respond now or else' texts and emails all day, every day, day after day; when I can no longer abide the middle-finger-bestowing Tesla

'emission elsewhere vehicle' non-drivers; when the insults pile up and overwhelm me, I cry "Enough," and retire to flycast the nearest freestone stream. Not so much to catch fish but for the Zen of it.

But the tech zombies are already there, combat fishing with \$10,000 rigs, muttering obscenities between gritted teeth, and selfie-posing for proof of a 'balanced' life. To escape them, I must go far – farther still, high up into the Blue Mountains of northeastern Oregon, to the upper, Upper North Fork of the John Day River - to the wilderness there.

For thorough respite from the urban hassle, for a dozen years, fellow fly fishing club members, my daughter, and I fished Oregon's lower John Day River. We liked to float down the stream for multiple days and even a week at a time. We took our time slow-fishing the thirty-mile wilderness segment from, why not, Thirty-Mile Creek.





We fished for the capstone Smallmouth Bass. One-hundred-a-day fish counts were common. Big bushy dries, hoppers, poppers; they all worked. Hopper with a dropper caught two fish every cast. Add another nymph, three. The ferocious predators feed in wolf packs. When the desert canyon heats up the water, their metabolism forces them to eat. Eric Olson once tied a strip of aluminum foil on a bare hook and it worked just fine. Cast out a giant imitation mouse or Hamster on a hook, and you'll have a gang of teenagers hit hard trying to bite morsels off.



The warm water lower river is now on the Instagram tour. Having too much fun splashing about, the mobs clog the stream and hog all the campsites, sometimes trashing them,

forcing the Bureau of Land Management to require permits for access. To escape the hordes on the lower river, one must go spartan, light-boat in extremely low water or not at all, with all your gear in a single backpack.

Some who have seen their favorite fishing spots overwhelmed, give up. For me, there is still too much left out there to love.

Since the river comes up in the afternoon and drops at night, its source is in snow country. The Blue Mountains to the east? The largest tributary up high, the North Fork of the John Day, begins as a ponderosa pine-shrouded cold-water trout-bearing mountain stream. The crowds have not yet found the headwaters; too skinny to float, safe from intrusion for now.

The upper, upper North Fork above Dale, Oregon, is still a remote Chinook Salmon and Steelhead smolt-rearing gem of a stream. In the highest elevations, the stream flows through a nationally designated eighty-five-thousand-acre wilderness. You can get there on a quick, four-and-one-half hour drive





down the interstate highways diagonally across Washington from Seattle by way of stream-proximate Pendleton, Oregon. Once in Pendleton, you are in the heaven the backcountry offers, so the one-hour drive to the North Fork is a treat.

Spurning further deliberations, early on a late July morning, I was “off like a prom dress.”

Stopping at the Pendleton Walmart for fishing licenses boosted my spirits. Compared to the other shoppers, I was not that fat after all. Tanking gas in Oregon reminds me of those carefree days of childhood when petrol was pumped and windows squeegeed by smiling attendants. US Hwy 395 (in Oregon dedicated to WWI Veterans) leads southwest through farm country, then



follows the stands of ponderosa pine, larch, Douglas fir, and spruce of the Battle Mountain Scenic Corridor to the invisible hamlet of Nye, and turns south towards Dale. The road drops into the carpet of luxuriant grass tussocks that enrich the stream banks of the North Fork tributary Camas Creek.

Where the Camas finds confluence with the North Fork, I turned east and upstream on unpaved Forest Service Road FS-055 along the river towards the Wilderness. Profound solitude was at hand. Just after NF-055 turned north and the river road became a tad rough, and given the low sun in the sky, with an eagerness to fish, I chose a spot above a lovely stream drift. The boondocking was abundant and riparian to the river.

Having lent my two and three-weight stream rods to my daughter, and upon seeing that my favorite cheap Redington Classic Trout rods were to be discontinued, I bought their three-weight 8’-6” fly rod. I ponied up more money for a quality, heavily forward, four-weight fly line. A novice caster despite 10,000 casts, I have counted every noodle. I prefer to line weight up an increment to better feel the line load the rod.

Keen to fish, ignoring camp set up, I rigged the rod and tied on a size sixteen Parachute Adams. May I opine that, along with the Royal Wulff, the Adams is the most reliable surface fly? Or maybe I like them because the hackles of these flies



ride high, and I can see them undulate down the seam drifts. Only fishing dries, it was less about catching and more about casting and getting strikes.

Larger resident Brook, Rainbow, occasional Bull, and Cutthroat trout were upstream in the cooler feeder creeks, but plenty of eager Chinook salmon and steelhead smolts smacked the fly each cast.



The action brought a broad smile to my face. Why had I vowed to snip off the hooked part of the fly (not just the barb) if I were to catch a fish?

Catching interrupted the rhythm of rolling out the line, the gentle settling of the fly onto the surface of the water, the bobbing with the current, and the suddenness of the strikes.

After three or four casts I caught a feisty little six-inch smolt. Promptly released, I kept my promise to snip off the business end of the hook. I kept teasing them. The adolescents were getting much-needed exercise in preparation for their arduous anadromous journey ahead. They learned the futility of rising to artificial flies. To continue enjoying topwater action, I had to move up or downstream to begin new fly-shying lessons for the uninitiated. It soon got dark, and I enjoyed my flash-lit cold dinner followed by the wonders of star-gazing and, after sgriob¹, sipped cheap Evan Williams Bourbon, neat. Hell, it beats Four Roses.

To set up camp, presto, I pushed a button on the remote key that raised the rear hatch of my Subaru. Boondocking was easy because I had the ten essentials: a sleeping pad, a fart (sleeping) bag, a pillow, two new and improved wide-mouthed pee bottles, a wag bag hung on the circumference of a



Home Depot five-gallon bucket with a snap-on toilet lid, and the remote action



key to open and close the rear hatch. Sorry, that's only eight. I forgot the two mosquito screen sleeves that slid over the entire rear windows to solve the ventilation problem. No one can accuse me of conspicuous consumption.

Morning dawned thirty-eight degrees and a new cohort of smolts had replaced yesterday's graduates of my class in flybalking. The bright sun warmed my semigloved fingers. Same story: lots of strikes until the kids learned better. Hunger imposed itself, class was adjourned, and I had my morning coffee-laced smoothie using an ingenious USB-rechargeable portable blender that AI could never have invented. Unqualified for teaching graduate school with artificial nymphs, upriver destinations summoned. I broke camp with a flick of the remote tailgate closer.

1 Originally Gaelic, for the itchiness that overcomes the upper lip just before taking a sip of whiskey – Bill Bryson in *The Mother Tongue*

The Subaru took me to the easternmost, politically-incorrect 'Oriental' Campground, situated as far as you can travel before reaching a jaw-breaking, jeep-destroying dirt road. Beyond the nearly impassable two-track, the North Fork Wilderness hikers trail continues upriver to the resident trout feeder streams: Big Creek, with its tributaries, Winom, and others, where I repeat, even a few Bull Trout can be found. To tread the trail and fish the feeder creek emboguemments is to catch trout, even Westslope Cutthroats in the Upper North Fork itself.



In the latter part of the dry season, the creeks could be called rivulets. I needed my two-weight rod. For fear of the embarrassment of being seen using one, I eschew the tenkara, which telescope down so they can quickly be hidden down your pants leg. Cutting a reasonably straight willow branch, the longest I could find, I made a tippet-on-tippet fly line leader with first, five feet of number two tippet, then three and one-half feet of number four followed by four feet of 'authentic' number six tippet. To the end tippet came a number eighteen ant, which took a while to attach since I could hardly see the eye of the hook. (You can tie any knot if you can get the tippet through the eye.) If I were seen with this non-castable setup, I could always start beating the grassy banks and plead that I was clearing them of ticks.



Small stream trout startle easily. I crept up on my knees. DEET kept the ticks off but strangely attracted fleas. I thought about tying a number twenty-eight flea fly but gave up on an idea that awaited cataract surgery.

I ventured a flick cast a la Huck Finn, followed by several low pick-up and lay-down casting maneuvers and caught a seven-inch Brookie. Damn it, I had forgotten to cut off the hook. Going back to strikewith-no-release fishing was more fun. A garter snake slithered by, wondering what I was doing down there - eating fleas? I overdid the bow and arrow cast and found that a nature-grown carbon-composite fly rod broke just like the fake ones. Sad to quit this place where I had not seen a person since leaving the paved road access the evening prior, I had no time for continued pretend-fishing because appointments with Smallmouth Bass lower down the North Fork called.

As it warms over the 44-mile section between Dale and Monument, North Fork Pisces transitions from all salmonids to dominant sporty bass, the genera mixed in the slightly warmed waters in between. Sasha and her buddy, master angler Peter Maunsell, fished smallmouth above Monument the year before and caught larger fish than they ever caught below. I chose Monument because there was nary another motel in the region. Grant County supports 7,233 souls over some 2.9 million acres. That's a whopping 400 acres per resident - my kind of stress-free space. There was no cell service, and the residents of the valley were proud of it.



They thought that city people are addicted to their phones and divorced from their communities, which was true.

The chosen motel in Monument, the only choice, advertised kitchenettes. I had contacted the manager over her landline, telling her we were fishers after smallmouth, unsure of where the public access was. The Public Lands BLM map I found on the internet was stamped “Public Lands as Indicated Are Inaccurate.” She assured me that she would personally show me all the great fishing holes. When I told her I was glad she had a kitchenette as there were no restaurants to be had, she said, “I’ll cook for you. You will not go hungry!” I thought, “Home-cooked food after a tiring day of scores of smallmouth strikes!”

Nothing could be farther from the truth; the home-cooked part, that is. When I arrived, there was the proprietress, not glancing up from her Wi-Fi internet-connected device, sitting on a picnic table in front of the “cook shack” trailer on wheels. The spoon was greasy, open from 11 to 6, where they served maybe one customer a day MAFA (Make America Fat Again) frozen, prebreaded, even partially pre-fried embolisms, ready for hot, rendered black bear fat.

Putting on my happy face, I said I was the guy coming to fish for smallmouth. Could she show me the fishing holes on my map? Without looking up, she responded, “Pffft, there ain’t no public access here; you have to go downriver towards Spray.” Astonished, I asked, “Really?” The owner, “Well, there’s the three miles of road access close to town where the locals go to cool off and wade. But that has been all fished out for years.” To further disappointment, she added, “The private land is not posted, and they shoot and don’t ask questions after.” Great. I inspected the motel room. The kitchenette emphasized the ‘ette’ part with a tiny microwave and, for table dining, a narrow, rustic navel-high slab of sawmill offal on wobbly stilts.



My daughter Sasha was on her way up from California to join me. I borrowed the motel landline and advised her to stop for dinner along the way. She did enjoy the crepuscular drive along the river from Mitchell, Oregon. The next morning, we made the best of it and moseyed over to the busy, dusty dirt roadside “public access” up from town, rigged up, and clambered down to fish. Sasha used my new rig and caught a few, but they were on sub-surface flies. Hot, splenetic - tired and crabby from a week of work and the long drive, she released her frustration: “I hate this place, I hate this rod, reel, and fly line and I told you that we should have gone downriver.” I said, “Well, let’s just break for breakfast.” We found another unadvertised cook house on wheels down the road where surprisingly they home-cooked meals. We shared a picnic table with an interesting clientele of illegal pot growers already in their cups at 11:00 in the morning.



Fashioning a new plan, we scurried up the beautiful drive to fish the trout water of the North Fork I had fished that morning and found a perfect stream drift in the cool shade of the mountain pines. Sasha was soon shouting, “Grab the camera and take some pictures. Look at me double-hauling with this little rod and shooting 50 feet of line,” catching smolts and tiny Mountain Whitefish and thoroughly enjoying the day.

We parted soon after dusk, Sasha for her work for the Forest Service in Northern California, and me to meet my brother and sister-law at their vacation home in exurban Sunriver, Oregon. But not before Sasha absconded with the despised rod, reel, and fly line she used to articulate her most elegant casts of the season.

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