



Keeping Your Sanity During The Pandemic Random Observations about Fishing Related Topics

Have you been wondering what's going on fishing wise during these unprecedented times? So were we, so we asked around a bit and here are a few tidbits of information that we came up with. First and foremost, as everyone already knows, "local" fishing options are extremely limited at best. Local beaches are closed (and the closures are being enforced with significant fines), although as of this writing Orange County beaches are open with access severely limited due to parking restrictions, a few Ventura County beaches are open, as well as a number of Santa Barbara County beaches. Local lakes and reservoirs are closed with the exception of Castaic Lake and the Lower Lagoon, but this could change at any time. John Dalton reports that the West Fork is in great shape water wise and fishing for small rainbows is generally good with a variety of small dry fly attractor patterns. The Sierra trout season will remain closed until June 1 this year, but the open-all-year waters remain open to fishing if you can reconcile travel and fishing with the state and local stay-at-home orders, as well as pleas from Mammoth Lakes and even the Henry's Fork to "please stay at home and do not come here!" Oregon recently suspended all non-resident fishing and restricted even residents access to many lakes and rivers; Washington is closed to all recreational fishing, both residents and non-residents alike; and Idaho has suspended the sale of all non-resident fishing licenses until further notice. There are murmurings that some of these restrictions may be relaxed or lifted in the near term in response to push-back from guides and commercial interests. One of our members, the intrepid

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MAY 2020 MONTHLY MEETING

Date: Tuesday, May 19th
Wet Flies: 6:00 PM / Dinner: 7:00 PM / Program: 8:00 PM
Place: St. Augustine the Sea Episcopal Church
1227 4th Street, Santa Monica, CA 90401
Cost: \$30 per person (dinner or \$10 per person, program only)
Parking: Our parking structure across the street is most convenient.
Posted rates first 90 min free, \$2 first add'l hour, \$1.50 - \$2 each add'l hr., \$20 daily max. E-Pay: pay \$5 to \$7.
1234 4th Street, Santa Monica, CA 90401
TO MAKE RESERVATIONS: RESERVE ONLINE
OR CALL THE HOT LINE 310-316-1559
OR MAIL IN THE FORM ON PAGE 30

In person meeting canceled due to Covid-19. May be moved to a Zoom meeting, look for an email link from the club.

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Keeping Your Sanity...

Fishing Fanatic, saw all of this coming and high-tailed it out of town at the first mention of the shutdown. Mel has been hunkered down on the Green River in Utah for over a month where he's fishing the baetis and midge hatches daily and doing quite well. *See the accompanying photos.*

In the meantime until our fisheries reopen, many of us have been restocking fly boxes and experimenting with tying new fly patterns. There won't be any excuse this year for being caught short of flies once the season gets going again. Loon Products recently sent around three recommended resources for fly tying tutorials that many of us have used and are well worth consulting on-line – ***Charlie's Fly Box*** in Arvada, Colorado, ***The Caddis Fly Shop*** in Eugene, Oregon, and ***Dakota Angler*** in Sioux Falls, S.D. That brings us to our own version of "support your local businesses" and indeed this has particular application to local restaurants which are hurting big time. For us fly fishers, however, our local fly shops – Fishermen's Spot and Marriott's in particular – are businesses that we want to survive and be available post-pandemic. At [Fishermen's Spot](#), Dave Shaffer and Steve Ellis are filling orders over the phone which you can then swing by the shop and pick up at the front door by prior arrangement with Dave. Similarly, at [Marriott's](#) in Orange County, Kevin Bell is doing his best to keep the shop fully stocked and is filling internet orders and "take-out" orders for pick up. Kevin is also regularly offering pandemic discounts on select items so check out the Marriott's website.

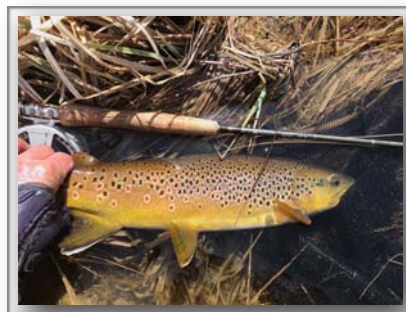
WFF club activities have been greatly curtailed but have not come to a complete halt. In the interest of the health of our members and out of respect for the stay-at-home orders, we have found it necessary to cancel fly tying classes, monthly dinner meetings, board meetings, the TIC fry release, and even the venerable annual Kelsey Lake outing (although the Lake remains open and Al Smatsky reports that it has the best water level and clarity in years). But these cancellations are only month-to-month, and we will be looking for the earliest SAFE opportunity to resume regular club activities. In the meantime the board is considering the use of ZOOM or other video conferencing software to conduct the May board meeting, and possibly a monthly speaker presentation if it can be scheduled before there is a general reopening. In the meantime, and first and foremost, keep safe and stay healthy. When (not if) this crisis subsides, we all want to be out on our favorite lake or river doing what we like to do best.



On the Green River, UT



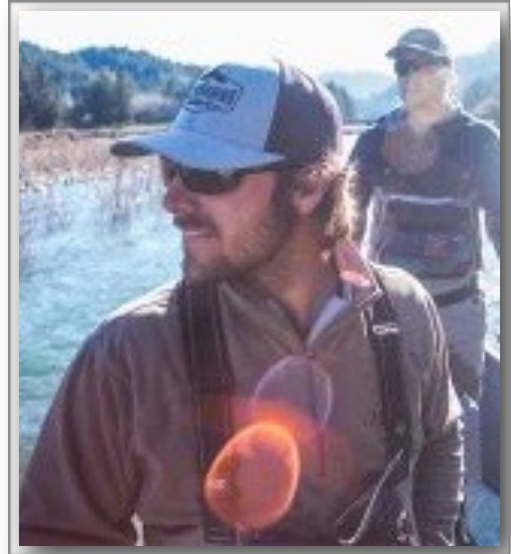
A couple of Mel's social distancing friends



The Rivers Of Northern California – A Guide's Eye View

With Anthony Carruesco

Before you start planning that trip to Montana or Colorado, take time to marvel at the year round opportunities a mere eight hour drive up the 5 freeway. Anthony and his guiding team at AC Fly Fishing are ready to show you the Lower and Upper Sacramento, Klamath, Pit and McCloud rivers. The menu includes rainbows, browns and pacific steelhead in the State's most beautiful settings. Based in Redding, Anthony has put together an exceptional team of guides with decades of cumulative experience. The rivers around Redding can be fished from a drift boat or by wading – nymphs, dries, streamers, single hand or Spey – the choices are as varied as the rivers themselves. The small towns in the area offer plenty of diversion for the non-fishing spouse or partner.



Anthony Carruesco

Anthony found a passion for fly fishing at a young age. Following that passion to the foothills of gold country and beyond to the vast tundras of Alaska and finally back home to Northern California, where he has turned his passion into a career. Growing up in competitive sports and being a former collegiate athlete, his drive to persevere and always find his clients fish is apparent on the water. A natural leader, Anthony has put together a group of like minded guides with superior work ethics that want nothing more than to see their clients have a great time and be successful on the water. His confidence and positive demeanor is infectious, and a trip with him is certain to make for some of his clients most memorable vacations. When he is not guiding, you'll find him chasing the white ball on manicured fairways or chasing anadromous fish on the coastline. Anthony and his guides are keen to teach – they expect and welcome anglers of all skill levels and can provide all the gear that a newcomer might need. In his words, "The team at AC Fly Fishing has worked extremely hard to build our reputation as the top lower sac fly fishing guides that Northern California has to offer. We take great pride in creating the gold standard when it comes to guided Fly Fishing here in the North State. With decades of cumulative experience whether it be Trout, Steelhead or Bass, our guides have mastered the best freshwater fisheries that exist in the Northern California. We consider Redding, CA our base of operation where we are ideally situated in the middle of Northern California's premier freshwater fisheries. Before booking your next fly fishing trip, please read our reviews below and weigh your options carefully. Come and experience a guided fly fishing adventure a cut above the rest."

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The Rivers of Northern California

The AC Flyfishing website (www.acflyfishing.com) is full of testimonials to this amazing and often overlooked fishery along with the latest fishing reports.

Anthony will be presenting his show remotely using the ZOOM platform and will leave time for questions at the end of the evening.

[Ed. – As of this writing the WFF board has not yet determined whether our club will participate in the remote presentation of this program through Zoom or other video conferencing. Please continue to consult the WFF website and watch for an e-mail notification for any developments regarding remote viewing options.]



Board of Directors

President	Board
Vice President	OPEN
Secretary	Celia Carroll
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Treasurer	Art Antolick
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Dinner Reservations	Ken Trabert
Inventory	Clay Dodder
Database Manager	OPEN
Conservation	OPEN
Outings	Peter Haight
	Larry Carroll
Webpage	Larry Carroll
Newsletter	Rich Peters
	Michie Hirooka
	Clay Dodder

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New Member Committee	Reece Lewis
	Leslie Riley
Spring Super Raffle	OPEN
Conservation Super Raffle	OPEN
Hotline	John Dalton
Casting Classes	OPEN
Fly Tying Classes	Peter Haight
Trout in the Classroom	Celia Carroll
SW Council - FFI Rep.	Celia Carroll

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Wildernessflyfishers@gmail.com

To join WFF, visit our website
www.wildernessflyfishers.org

Monthly Board of Directors Meeting

The monthly Board Meeting, held the Tuesday, one week before the monthly dinner meeting, will be held at 271 4th Street, Santa Monica, Ca 90405. Parking permits provided by hosts. Meetings start promptly at 7:00 PM. All members are welcome. New members are especially encouraged to attend. Come and see how your club runs and you might pick up some fishing tips, too.

Minutes of Board Meetings are available to members on the website's [Document Library](#)

On line for May.
Will be done via Zoom on 5/5.
Contact Celia Carroll at
ccarroll186@aol.com for an invite.

COMING EVENTS

For more information go to the WFF website [CALENDAR](#)

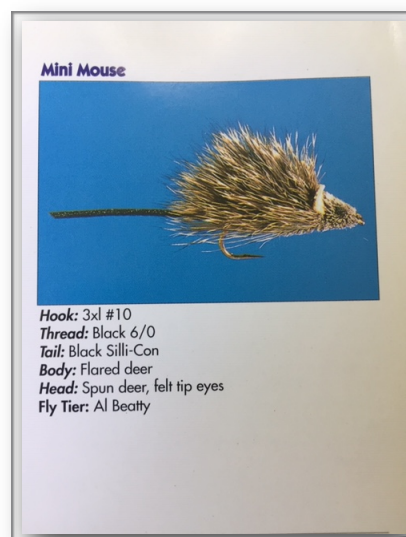
WFF Fly Tying Hopefully Sat. May. 23

WFF Fly Tying

The classes are from 9 am to about 12 noon on the 4th Saturday of the month at St Augustine Church, 1227 4th Street, Santa Monica, CA 90401. Park across the street in the city parking structure. See page 1 for parking rates and address.

This month we are again going to try tying the Mini Mouse. A pattern developed by Al Beatty. A great fly for Kelsey and beyond.

Here is an example and a recipe of the Mini Mouse from the Fly Tyers Encyclopedia. Peter has everything needed, but tiers can bring their own supplies if they wish. **Note: As of publishing we plan to have fly tying but please check the website for any update as the St. Augustine Church campus may still be closed on the 23rd.**



2020 Trout in the Classroom Concluding Information

From January 17 until March 16, the annual Trout in the Classroom (TIC) program was thriving. Former WFF member, Jim Drummond delivered the eggs from the state hatchery to the schools on January 17 and conducted an art program for Ms. Schnauss' students. Regrettably, El Marino Language School was unable to participate because long time El Marino volunteer Mike Nabours was recovering from a back injury.

Four teachers managed the 2020 program in their classrooms: Linwood E. Howe third grade teacher, Lisa Schnauss and Culver City Middle School seventh grade science teachers Tom Kim, Crystal Neuhaus and Phyllis Yarbrough. All four teachers managed full, healthy tanks of Rainbow Trout fry. Every tank contained over 30 fish.

As the area initiated safe shelter measures to deter spread of Covid-19, all Culver City public schools closed on March 16, one day ahead of the fry-release date at Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area. I assisted teachers in collecting and releasing their fish alone at Hahn park.

It was anti-climactic to have such an end to the 2020 program. Jim Solomon and Jim Drummond began the program in 1996. This is the first year we missed WFF members' sharing their love of fly fishing with young students at the release site. Members usually staff four instruction stations during the school field trip: Entomology, Casting, Fly Tying, and Fry Release.

We hope for a return to the program in 2021 and better times!

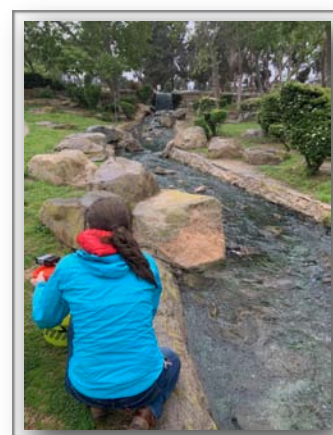
— Celia Carroll, TIC Coordinator



Tom Kim with his classroom aquarium earlier in March



Lisa Schnauss catches fry for release at Hahn Park



Crystal Neuhaus releases her classroom fish into the Hahn Park stream



My Patagonia Story

By Scott Clark

I've always wanted to fish Patagonia with its unspoiled scenery, big rivers and huge fish. Well, that's not exactly how things turned out!

I was talking to Steve at the Fishermen's Spot one day and he said I should go with his small group to Estancia del Zorro (Ranch of the Fox) in Patagonia the second week of January 2020 for 6 days of fishing. I spoke with my wife, Cynthia, and we jumped on the opportunity. Cynthia doesn't fish, oh she'll give it a go because she's a gamer, but she doesn't dream of fishing like the rest of us. Steve said there were a bunch of activities she could do to keep her busy, which turned out to be an understatement. This was back in September of 2019 when we agreed to go. We went to book our flight with LATAM Airlines through a travel agent and they were already substantially booked. That was a bit of a surprise, but January is their summer and there aren't many airlines servicing Chile.

The plan was to fly 10.5 hours to Santiago, spend the night, then fly the next morning to Coyhaique (population 55k) which is about a 90 minute flight south. Since our flight was scheduled to land at 7:00AM in Santiago (population 6.8M), we decided to do a little sightseeing. Cynthia loves cooking and fine dining, so we picked a hotel in the hip section of town with lots of great restaurants and shops nearby. The rest of the group stayed at what I would call the Century City of Santiago. Well, it turns out our hip little chichi area was in the heart/dead center for the civil unrest and protests. As we were walking around the streets we noticed that many buildings were covered in graffiti, vandalized and every single sign and traffic signal destroyed. Police were not abundant so citizens were acting as traffic cops at every intersection. We had heard about the protests, but we didn't realize we were in the heart of all the fun until around 11PM when we were awoken by beating drums, the smell of teargas and the buzz of hundreds of protesters marching through the streets. We got up the next morning to find hundreds of beer cans in the street. As a side note, it's the same old story of corruption, calls for socialism, bigger pensions, higher wages, etc.



Our hotel room looks out over this street.

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My Patagonia Story

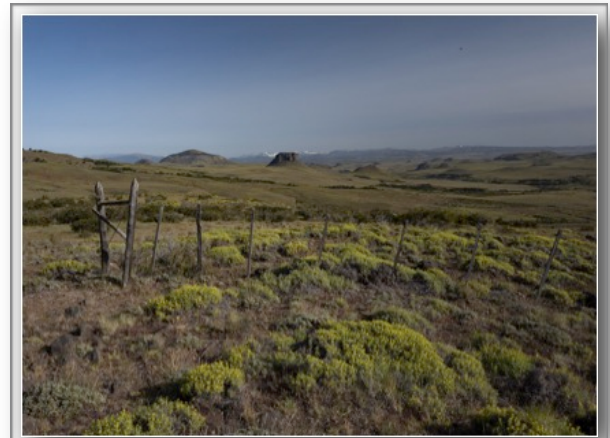


Our flight over the snow covered Andes Mountains to Coyhaique was amazing.

We landed and then it was about a 90 minute drive to Estancia del Zorro, a 15,000 acre working sheep ranch that has been in the family for generations. The lodge is beautiful, the rooms large with great views of the area, and the food was over-the-top!



The area for miles and miles around the ranch is sparsely populated.



My Patagonia Story

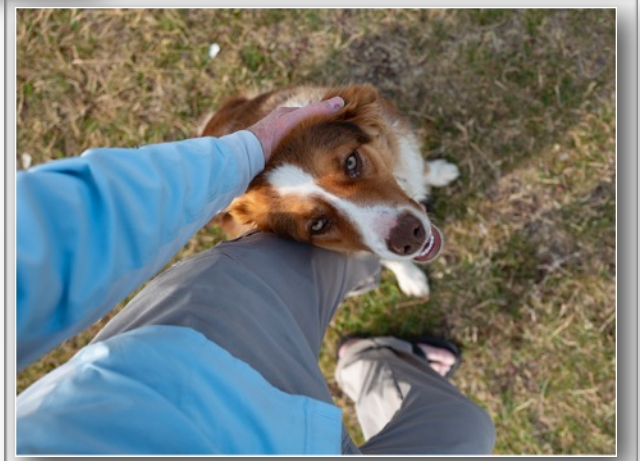


What I never realized was most of the land is private and inaccessible to the local citizens and way too far from the major city of Santiago to get any fishing pressure. If the Estancia didn't own the land they simply got permission to go on a neighbor's property. Every gate was locked and it was abundantly clear no one had visited many of these streams in years.



Typical family home used by the gauchos.

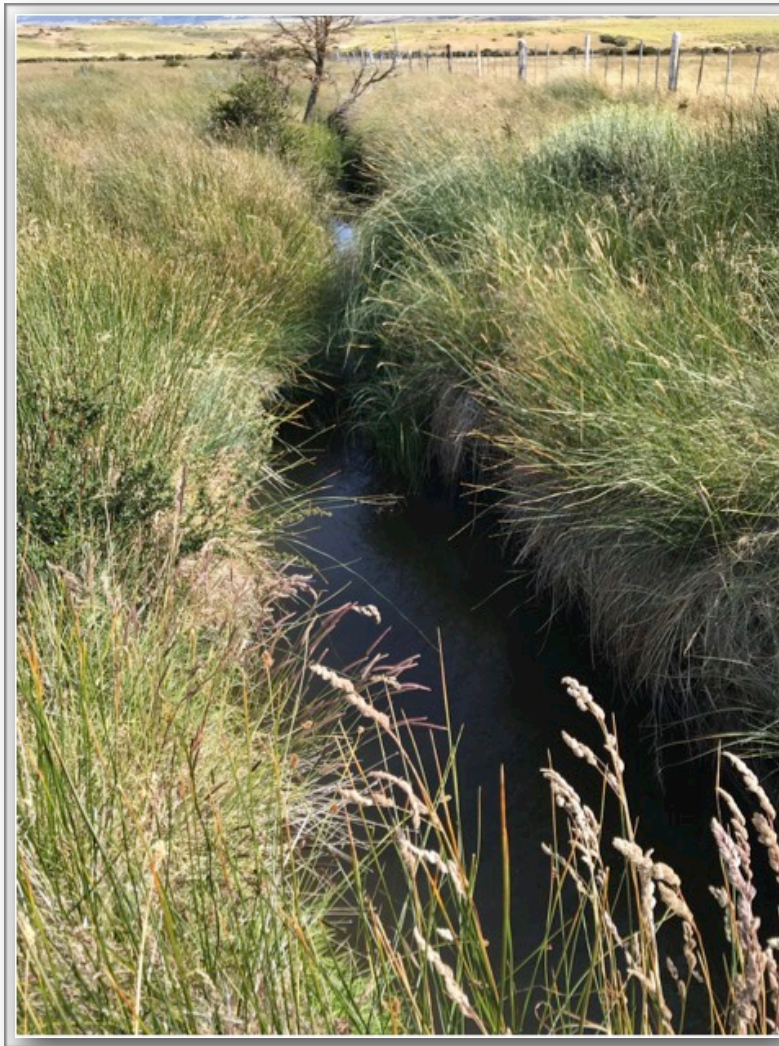
The sheep dogs are amazing to watch as they round up the sheep. This little guy was probably past his prime and just wanted a little loving.



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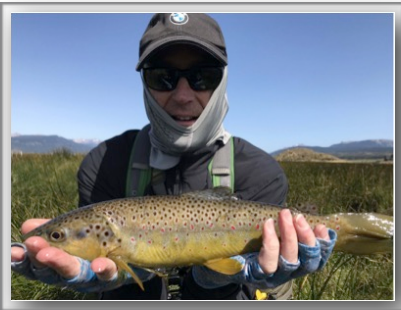
My Patagonia Story

The next morning, we were all chomping at the bit to get going. After a great breakfast from our French trained chef, we all headed out in groups of two (plus the guide) to our own rivers. After a 30 minute drive over bumpy dirt roads we head off-road. I was a bit confused because I couldn't see any river except this little 2 foot wide drainage ditch we drove over a few times. When the guide, Christian, stopped the truck and said "let's do it", I thought, OK we're going for a long hike to our spot. Nope, this is the spot so grab your pole. We walked over to the "drainage ditch" and I couldn't believe this is what we were going to fish.



Honestly, I was a little perturbed because I wanted at least an Owens River (Mammoth Lakes) size river to try my hand at Euro nymphing as introduced to me by Devin Olsen (guest speaker at WFF). How am I supposed to fish this, I said to the guide. He said take your grasshopper and crash it through the tall grass and watch what happens.

My Patagonia Story



As you can see from the photos these were big fish which live under the banks and the action is fast and crazy. I can't tell you how many fish I caught, but it was non-stop.



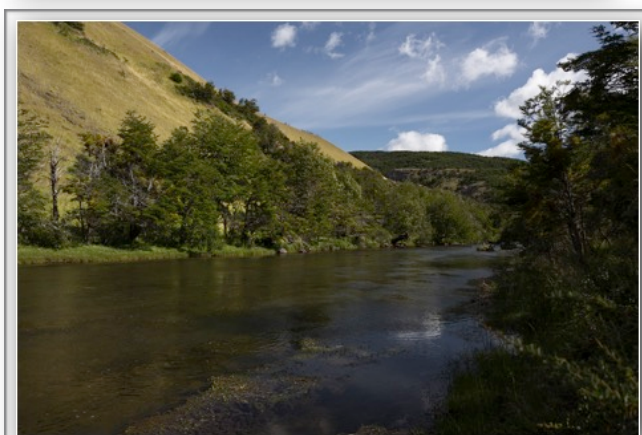
Everyone came back for dinner that night with plenty of great stories.

I impressed upon my guide that I was in pretty good shape and willing to walk/hike a long ways to fish untouched waters and that's exactly what we did every single day. My guide said some of streams we fished haven't been touched by anyone for years.

My Patagonia Story



We hiked down this steep bank which is the only accessible point for this section of the river. We fished the water upstream for about 2 miles where another guide picked us up.



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My Patagonia Story

Here is Gabriel holding a typical size brown trout. For me it was all about the numbers: I wanted non-stop action and I didn't care how big the fish were. Most everyone fished with terrestrials and dry flies, but I stuck with Euro nymphing and was rewarded with 50 to 75 fish days. I'd characterize these fish as high school drop-outs and not very choosymy kind of fishing!!!

My guide estimated that one of the fish I caught in this little stream shown above was close to 5 lbs. No hard evidence here because the Brownie squirmed out of my hands before the guide could take the photo.

The guides brought along a beautifully prepared lunch every day with Chilean red wine, but frankly I never stopped until the last day to enjoy the lunch because I was waaaaaay too busy catching fish.



There were so many different waters to choose from that suited most everyone's needs. The Estancia doesn't have any large rivers around it, rather the other lodge, Cinco Rios Lodge, is where all the big waters are located. I would say most of the rivers were the size of the East Walker River (Bridgeport) and many smaller. The spring creek, shown above, is 400 yards in front of the lodge and deceptively deep and slow. It holds monster brown trout ranging in size from 24 to 33 inches. Everyone fished this river and caught fish in the 23 to 27 inch range.

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My Patagonia Story

The fishing here was very challenging. The water was slow moving and clear and the fish would spot us 100 feet away. So my guide Christian would spot a large trout and I'd walk 100 ft. along the elevated bank until I was perpendicular with the fish and then cast over the bank. Christian would yell when he saw one of the big boys grab my grasshopper.



While I was fishing Cynthia was having a wonderful time with her guide Sabina. She visited local markets where artisans sold their handmade wool products; the museum of history in Coyhaique; helped the gauchos with sheering the sheep and dispensing the medicine; visited the roosting and nesting area for the huge Andean Condor; rode horseback with the gauchos to round up sheep; hiked around some of the pristine emerald lakes and glaciers; and, helped the French chef prepare a meal.



Here she is proudly showing the lodge owner, Sebastian, photos of the Andean Condor.

My Patagonia Story



Sabina was a great guide and she holds a masters in tourism.



Cynthia spent about 5 hours on the horse rounding up stray sheep. Every bush and tree seems to have big, sharp thorns.

My Patagonia Story



Steve (JPL scientist and all-round good story teller) contemplating tomorrow's trip while the others swap stories of their big day out on the stream.



After our trip to Patagonia, Gabriel (my secret weapon) sent me a few photos of a couple of streams he doesn't believe have been touched in the last decade that we will be visiting next year!!! By the way, Gabriel has a PhD in fisheries biology from the University of Belgium. He said the intensive sheep and cattle farming is damaging the waters. I put him in touch with someone from The Nature Conservancy who is doing similar research in Argentina.

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My Patagonia Story

The trip was a blast and thanks to Steve from the Fishermen's Spot for arranging the trip. We had a great group of people, lots of fun conversations, great fishing and incredible food. Let's put this way, we had so much fun that we've already signed up for the January 2021 trip.



Our young, enthusiastic guides were an absolute pleasure to fish with. Frankly, I knew they were eager to fish, so each day I gave my guide one of my rods and we fished together!



Young Man's Fancy

Young Man's Fancy

A short fly fishing story by Samuel Smith Webster Jr,
Gregg Wrisley's Grandfather



The Fisherman - SSW at Amos Elliott's Ranch
at Cloverdale, Calif. Year ? 1938-39

(Elliott ranch is currently The Old Crocker Inn, <https://www.oldcrockerinn.com/crocker-ranch-history/>)

Greg Wrisley of Russian River Fly Fishers recently found this story from his Grandfather Samuel Smith Webster Jr. and has made it available to all of the Southern California fly clubs. I very much enjoyed the story and how little has changed in the 80 to 90 years since this trip was taken by Samuel and his friends. At the very least it will make you anxious to make your way back to the Eastern Sierra as soon as things return to normal.

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Young Man's Fancy

Forward



About 6 months before the accident, Gregg at age 1 ½

I recently received a copy of my Grandfather's diary from my Aunt who found it in her basement. Sam Webster, the author, is my maternal Grandfather. He grew up poor on Chesapeake Bay. His father was a Waterman (harvested oysters etc. from a boat). The other part of his diary describes his time in the Navy during WWI. With the skills acquired in the Navy, he became a successful CPA and moved to Pasadena, CA (a nice bootstrap story). He was an outdoorsman and loved fishing - both saltwater and freshwater. I remember seeing his wooden boxes of bamboo rods in my parents' attic. About two years after I was born, he and my Grandmother were coming back from a trip to Oregon when their car was hit by an out of control semi-truck near Dunsmuir, CA. My Grandmother had injuries that stayed with her the rest of her life. Although my Grandfather was not badly injured, a doctor's assistant gave him a spinal injection to check for damage, which resulted in him being paralyzed from the waist down.

So all my memories are of him in bed or occasionally in a wheelchair, not a happy man. He died in 1969 at age 76. I've often thought of what our relationship might have been like if he hadn't lost the use of his legs.

I hope that you enjoy this look back into time as much as I did. There is no date on this story, but my best guess is that it took place during the 1930's.

Gregg

Young Man's Fancy

"IN THE SPRING A YOUNG MAN'S FANCY **

lightly turns to thoughts of love". The poet was undoubtedly right when he penned these immortal words, but he didn't go far enough. There are other things towards which a young man's fancy, or, for that matter, any man's fancy, turns during these marvelous spring days when the sap begins to run. For example, the golf bug drags forth from the dark recesses of the basement his bag of "trusty" clubs and shines them up in anticipation of chasing the elusive pill over the rolling greensward. Your baseball fan anxiously awaits the throwing out of the first ball by the president or lesser local dignitary and the sweet music of the crack of ash against horsehide. The lovers of nature think of hieing themselves forth to the desert to feast their eyes upon the profusion of wild flowers. And last, but not least, the devotees of Isaak Walton bring out the creel, rod and reel in hopeful expectation of piscatorial triumphs to come. Ah, there, my friends, is the sport of kings. To paraphrase the words of another illustrious poet, "Lives there a man with soul so dead, that never to himself hath said ** " this time I'll catch that big steelhead, or words to that effect.

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~~2~~

What true sportsman does not thrill in anticipation as he oils up the old reel, tests the whip of his rod and sorts out his various flies? In fact, many months before the advent of spring, and while yet the memory of that last hopeful trip in pursuit of the elusive trout is fresh in his mind, your real fisherman is lining up his friends and cronies of the same persuasion, and making plans for the "kill" on the opening day of the season. Sleeping bags are brought forth and aired, that bent leg on the gasoline stove is mended, and the rest of the camping gear inspected. If the fisherman's wife and family discover him in his den with a stack of old maps out before him that to the uninitiated eye appear as material interesting only to the elementary student in forestry, the symptoms are readily understandable and the wisest thing to do is to tiptoe silently from the august presence.

In the nature of things, the results of all this preparation and anticipation will have to be recounted before the blazing logs of winter fires, but lest the reader be in doubt as to the outcome of such an expedition it is the intention of the writer to give a first-hand account of a similar trip during the late lamented season,

Young Man's Fancy

for after all a fishing excursion to be made this year is much like one made last year, both in execution and results.

The trip that I am about to describe occurred the latter part of May last year. It was deliberately planned for this time to avoid the rush of neophytes who infest the banks of all available streams on the opening day, and who are just as likely to cast their flies - did I say "flies"? - but more of this later on - into the eyes of their neighbors as into the mouths of the hungry trout. For, be it known, that this fishing party consisted of real fishermen, or to be more specific, three real fishermen, as the writer lays no claim to piscatorial prowess.

First, there was Fred, who is a real dyed in the wool fisherman, and who would never, never - well, almost never - stoop so low as to attempt to fool an unsuspecting trout with a salmon egg. In fact, we have all heard Fred expatiate on the thesis that the use of such bait is the one cardinal sin, and anathema to all true fishermen. His forte is a consummate skill in fly-casting. Give him barely enough room to whip back his rod and he will cast his fly into a pool thirty or forty feet away, be it ever

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so small. The thought of using salmon eggs is so distasteful to him that he steadfastly refuses to include a jar of them in his fishing kit, lest in a moment of temporary weakness, when the blasted fish seem disinclined to have flies for breakfast, lunch or dinner, he might be tempted to use them.

As might be expected, Fred is also an ardent exponent of the out-of-doors life, and delights in hiking and tramping the mountain and forest trails, not alone in the search for elusive trout and game, but for the pure love of the thing itself. He is big and hard and perfectly at home on the upper deck of a horse. He has, by long experience, learned the hideout of the trout that "infest", so it is said, the many streams of the high Sierras, and knows all the trails that lead to the spot or spots where they are wont to banquet. This being so, what is more natural than that Fred should, by common consent, be accorded the leadership of this particular fishing expedition?

Next there was Hal, who aside from his sterling qualities as a good fellow, is about the handiest man imaginable on a trip like this. He is a good cook, and can mend the camp gear or cast a fly with equal skill.

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Young Man's Fancy

Whenever there is any work to be done about camp, Hal will be found in the forefront doing more than his share. He is a strong hiker, a good horseman, and experienced in tracking down the fish to their lair. Now, Hal has no aversion to the use of salmon eggs, and has on several occasions been observed stooping so low as to use grasshoppers and helgimites. He appears, however, to be partial to live grasshoppers, and if, shortly after the fishing begins, he is seen diving in the grass with his battered felt hat in his hand, we all know that the fish are not rising to the fly as per expectations, and that Hal is laying in a supply of his favorite bait. To give the devil his due, though, Hal always gives the fish a chance to take the conventional flies, and, while perhaps not so skilled as Fred, he is a good fly-caster. Hal is an engineer by profession, and knows all the answers, or professes to know them. He can rattle off the names of all the villages, roads and streams, and is rarely stumped on any question. All in all, one could hardly find a better friend or companion on a fishing trip than Hal.

Then there was Doc, the old cock-roach, who, when he is not chasing the errant trout, is a surgeon of no

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mean ability. Doc is something of an expert at fly-casting, and, like Fred, disdains to fool the poor trout with salmon eggs or any other form of bait. He has, however, on rare occasions been known to use bait, for he was once observed on a similar trip assiduously lifting rocks and stones from the edge of the stream in search of helgimites. When such a thing happens, though, one may well conclude that the fishing for that day has reached a low ebb, and amateur fishermen like the writer might just as well save themselves further trouble and effort by packing up the fishing things and hieing themselves back to the camp to bask in the sunshine and invigorating mountain air. In fact, Doc is such a devotee of fly-fishing that he makes his own flies, and has attained quite a degree of proficiency in the art.

The fourth member of the party was none other than your humble servant, who lays no claim to piscatorial prowess so far as fresh water fishing is concerned, although he does take pardonable pride in the results of his efforts with the denizens of the briny deep. This, however, is a fresh water fishing story, and the fly-fishing reader need not fear being bored with accounts of the writer's successful jousts with yellowtail, bonita,

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Young Man's Fancy

halibut and the like, than which there is in our humble opinion no better sport. As for trout fishing, it is a curious coincidence, that on every trip thus far taken the writer, as well as his companions, have been the unfortunate victims of weather conditions, and have been compelled to return home empty-handed.

This distressing condition has been variously attributed by fishing experts to the fact that either (a) the water was too high, (b) the water was too low, (c) the moon was too full, (d) the moon was not full enough, (e) the water was too cold, (f) the water was too warm, and so on, ad infinitum. Judged solely by results, I cannot even testify of a certainty that there were any trout at all in the streams visited, although it is rumored each year that many thousands of fish have been planted by the State Fish and Game Commission.

The term "poor fish" has been commonly used to describe human beings who exhibit great mental ineptitude, but this constitutes nothing less than gross slander when applied to the wily trout, who, with diabolical cunning, manages to elude the most expert fisherman and make him look like thirty cents.

Purely out of deference for the beliefs of my

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companions, I generally start fishing with flies, although this is not an invariable rule. After a few unsuccessful "casts", including time out spent in untangling the line from trees and bushes, I unhesitatingly and without shame switch to salmon eggs, worms, helgimites or what have you, feeling that the end justifies the means.

On this particular trip we had planned to get away immediately after work on a Friday afternoon. So, on the appointed day we loaded all the fishing gear and other dunnage into Fred's Cadillac and started on our way to the high Sierras, where the trout were expected to be ravenously awaiting our coming. A stop was made at Mojave for dinner, and at about sunset we made our way through Red Rock Canyon. This is a sight long to be remembered, with the last rays of the setting sun casting purple shadows about the turrets and temples carved by nature out of these strange rock formations. It reminds one of a miniature Grand Canyon of the Colorado.

Our scheduled destination was the north fork of the Kern River, where the boys had heard that the fishing was good, and we were to stop at the roadside place operated by one Billy Ball, who was, we thought, expecting us and would arrange pack horses for our trip in to

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the river the next morning. By the time we arrived at Ball's place it was quite dark, and we found Billy out in front of his service station hiding behind a growth of whiskers and beard that would have been the envy of Man Mountain Dean. Much to our surprise, it developed that Billy had never heard of our projected trip, and had therefore made no arrangements for us. He furthermore informed us that the water was very low on the north fork of the Kern, and we might have to do considerable searching around for pools deep enough to hide a lurking trout.

Feeling quite put out by Mr. Ball's evident lack of interest in such an important trip as ours, we left him to his whiskers and departed on our way. Somewhat farther on we stopped at a service station for gas - incidentally, we were doing this with alarming frequency - and inquired about the fishing in those parts. We were informed that good catches were being made in the Owens River, so we decided to push on to Bishop and get some sleep so that we might be in readiness for the slaughter of the morrow. Fred, however, was not enthusiastic, as he detests fishing in the Owens River. He claims that the water is too warm, and that if we caught any fish it would be no sport, and they would not be fit to eat. As

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it was getting close to midnight, we stopped at a hotel in Bishop, and, after taking a good healthy dose of snake-bite, retired for the night.

At the break of dawn we were up and getting dressed and were soon on our way to the Owens River, which by the way was only a short distance from Bishop. Arriving there we unlimbered the fishing rods and proceeded to set the banquet table for the finny tribe. The invited guests were, however, slow to appear, and we worked our way up and down the river, all the while casting tempting flies on the swiftly moving stream. I soon learned that if the trout doesn't take one fly, the thing to do is to keep changing flies until one is found that suits the taste of Mr. Trout. The theory seems to be that if the fish will not take a brown hackle, it is perhaps because they had brown hackle for dinner the previous night and are tired of it, whereas if they were fed a nice dish of royal coachmen they would go for it in a big way. There must be something wrong with the theory, though, for Fred and Hal and Doc tried nearly every fly in their kit without the least semblance of success. As for me, after casting a few flies around without a strike, I switched to salmon eggs, and finally to my surprise an eight-inch trout

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grabbed the hook and was promptly yanked twenty-feet up on the bank of the river. Things began to look more hopeful, but alas, the rest of the trout, if such there were, must have taken warning from the dire fate that had overtaken their brother, and nary another strike was had.

By this time the other boys were disgusted and wanted to get away from there as soon as possible and get to a new place that they had thought of, where the fishing might be better. I proudly exhibited my catch as proof that there were fish in the Owens River, but could not arouse any enthusiasm. We therefore piled into the car, returned to the hotel in Bishop for our things, and were soon on our way. The filling station proprietor in Bishop told us that fishing in the Walker River was good, so we thought we could do no worse than try it. Before we got there, however, we stopped at another roadside gas station, and were informed that the Walker River fishing was no good, but that the lakes around Rock Creek were yielding some nice catches. It is a curious thing how much misinformation one can secure about fishing conditions from the inhabitants along the roads into the high Sierras. One will go into detail telling how good the fishing is in Whoozis Lake, while the next man will

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flatly contradict him and assert with apparent authority that fishing conditions were never worse. The only sensible thing to do is for the angler to pick his spot before starting, and refuse to be diverted by roadside advice, much of which it is strongly suspected is of an interested nature.

Well, after driving around a bit, during which the writer took a well-earned snooze, we finally turned around and headed for Rock Creek, arriving there in the late afternoon. We were soon settled in a nice cabin, and decided to try out the lakes that were nearby, from which we were told that good catches were being taken. The lakes were beautiful, but none of us had any luck except Hal, who caught two small trout. We therefore returned to the Lodge, devoured a nice dinner, and after arranging for horses for the next morning, retired early. Fred had told us that Tamarack Lake was only a few hours' ride on horseback from the camp, and he would undertake to lead us to it the next day, where he felt sure we would all be well rewarded for our efforts.

Bright and early next morning we were up, had breakfast at the Lodge and by seven o'clock were mounted on our horses ready to begin what ultimately turned out

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to be a long and arduous trip. This was Fred's party and he led the way, as he was the only one who "knew" where Tamarack Lake was located and how to get to it. The elevation at the Lodge was about 7,000 feet and Tamarack Lake was said to be about 12,500 feet high, which is no mean climb. The horses labored up the mountain trails, and one never ceases to marvel at their ability to negotiate a trail that seems to go straight up. On and on we went until we finally reached a grassy meadow, where at our slightest inattention the horses would stop to eat grass. After about an hour we came to a fork in the trail, and Fred, upon considering the matter, finally decided that the trail leading to the right was the correct one. We continued on this trail for perhaps an hour, when it began to give out and we ran smack into a mountain apparently made out of loose stones and boulders. Doc and I felt that we had lost the way, but Fred thought otherwise and we started climbing on up over the rocks, until at last fearing that the horses would stumble and break their legs, we dismounted and began leading them by their bridles. After a half hour of this Doc became winded and had to sit down to rest, and I followed suit shortly after, both of us being quite soft and unused to

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the hard going. Hal and Fred continued on, leading their horses over the boulders, on which there was nothing remotely resembling a trail. Doc and I decided we would sit down and rest until they had reached the crest of the mountain, when, if they continued on, we would follow. They plodded on for perhaps an hour, until finally they reached the top, tied their horses to a boulder and disappeared into an opening in the hills. While we didn't wish them any hard luck, we surely hoped they were wrong and would have to return, as the prospect of dragging our horses over two or three miles more of rocks was very uninviting. Soon Fred and Hal reappeared, untied their horses and began the long return. Boy, what a grand and glorious feeling we experienced, and we began congratulating ourselves on our good judgment in not following.

They soon joined us, and we retraced our course to the spot where the trail divided. By this time I had had quite enough, and did not care if I never saw another horse, much less riding one; even the fine edge of our enthusiasm for the fishing was worn somewhat thin. Fred, however, was determined to go on, for he had agreed to take us to Tamarack Lake and he was going to do so or bust. If you knew Fred, you would realize that this was

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not only a matter of personal pride with him but was due to his grim determination to accomplish what he had set out to do. Hal, not to be outdone, seconded the motion, and if not raring to go, seemed at least eager enough. I didn't think Doc would go on, as he seemed quite winded from the climb over the rocks, but apparently he had recovered and also voted to continue. Although not lacking in determination myself - some call it stubbornness - I had had enough, and as I was not leading the party and had no personal pride to uphold, I would have been just as well satisfied to return to camp. Being outvoted, three to one, however, we decided to go on.

We had by this time been in the saddle for approximately five hours, as it was then about noon. Soon the trail began to go up again, and we continued to climb the mountains for another two hours. The trail finally became so steep that the horses had to stop every few yards, until at last we found it necessary to dismount and lead them the rest of the way. A clearing soon appeared, and topping the crest of a hill, there lay Tamarack Lake, flanked by two smaller lakes. I was so tired that my sense of appreciation of the beauties of nature were dulled, and I didn't care whether there were any fish in

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the lake or not. We tied our horses, unpacked our fishing gear, and each selected an appropriate spot on the bank of the lake. We had brought along our lunches, and now proceeded to devour them. Doc and Fred went around the farther side of the lake, while Hal and I picked out a spot nearer at hand. After eating our lunches, Hal rigged up his fishing tackle, but I had completely lost interest in the fish and looked around for a soft spot to take a well-earned nap. Hal seemed to consider my action something of a sacrilege, and after failing to interest me in the fish, fixed up my tackle and urged me to have a go at it. It finally decided to try my hand, and in less than five minutes I had hooked a big rainbow trout and landed him. This put a different complexion on the matter, and true to the instincts of a fisherman, even if not a fresh water one, I began to fish in earnest. I caught one more trout, but that was all. Hal had in the meantime snared two or three, but Fred and Doc on the other side of the lake had not had a strike.

Having reached the lake so much later than we intended, there was not much time left for fishing, so after a couple of hours we decided it was time to begin

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the return journey. Riding down the trail, while not as hard on the horse, seems much harder on the rider, though in this case it may have been due to the previous long hours in the saddle. I rode in first one position, then another, but none of them seemed comfortable, until I finally got off and led the horse. Walking, even in my state of exhaustion, was preferable to spending another minute in that confounded saddle. We made the trip back to the camp, in record time, but the precipitous drop of some 5,000 feet in such a short period affected my heart so that I almost dropped out of the saddle when we reached the corral. After washing up a bit, we had dinner at the Lodge, but I had no appetite, and my heart began pounding so that I had to return to the cabin and go to bed. Fortunately, good old Doc had his kit along, and he gave me some medicine or something, so that the next morning I was all right again.

All of us had apparently had enough, and it was decided to start home right after breakfast. The things were packed, the car made ready, and we were soon rolling on our way home, having had a very enjoyable trip. Lest this last statement be not understood by the uninitiated, it should be pointed out that, while a limit of trout is

the ostensible object of the journey, the lack of it does not serve to dim the pleasure to be derived from such a trip when congenial fellows get together.

After seven or eight hours of brisk driving, we were home again with our families, weary, but happy, until the vague symptoms of restlessness indicate that another "fishing" trip is in the offing.



Club Notices

Southwest Council Quarterly Report

April 25, 2020

By Celia Carroll, SWC Representative

To meet the needs of fly fishers home-bound by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Southwest Council (SWC) / Fly Fishers International (FFI) and its 23 member club representatives met online using Zoom. President Steve Schalla presided. Twenty-two representatives attended.

Highlights follow here:

SWC: Be sure to 'Friend' and follow Southwest Council on Facebook. They have many valuable postings and news about fly fishing. Attached is a screen capture of the delay for this year's trout fishing opener in three California counties.

SWC: Conservation projects are ongoing. Crayfish removal efforts continue on Las Virgenes Creek in Malibu, with 700 crayfish traps. Debbie Sharpton, Conservation Chair, asks for volunteer help beginning May 1. LA County has granted funding for the project.

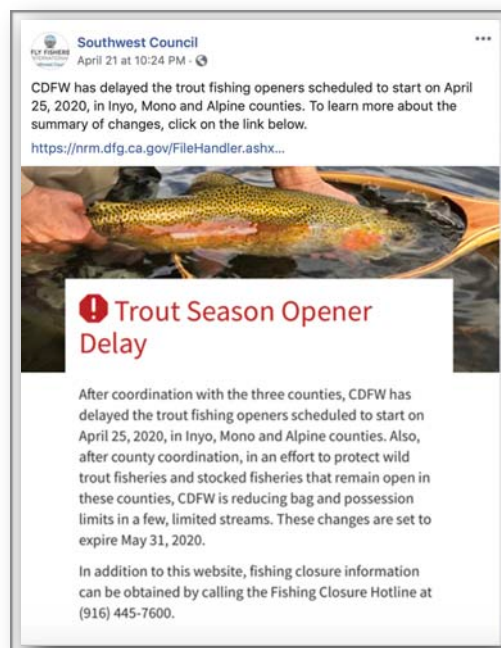
SWC: Youth Director, Carl Crawford. Carl hopes to involve his Outward Bound group in crayfish removal.

SWC: Special Projects Coordinator, Michael Schweit reported that the Glendale Convention Center will not be used for the next Fly Fishing Faire. Holding the Faire in conjunction with the Fred Hall Show next March is a possibility.

Michael is leading planning for the SWC Trout Rendezvous, modeled after the SWC Riptide Rendezvous. It is set for Saturday, February 20, 2021 in Pleasant Valley, along the Lower Owens River. It will be a one-day event on Saturday. Outings planners will want to consider this event during a popular month for club winter outings.

FFI: In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, FFI is postponing its annual International Fly Fishing Expo until next year. It was set for July, 2020 in Bozeman, MT.

FFI: Check the FFI website Learning Center for instructional videos, professionally produced, with very pleasing video and audio. To serve its members during the COVID-19 pandemic, FFI offers several Webinars online. On the FFI website, use the Events drop-down menu for the section "FFI Online." Meetings use the Zoom application. Current programs are interactive sessions for fly tiers (May 5), Jeff Currier's Global Fish Quest (May 6), and conservation efforts by the Bonefish and Tarpon Trust (May 7).



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Annual Dues:

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Please make your dinner [reservations online](#) or send in this coupon.
Your check must be in the club mailbox by the Wednesday, the week before the meeting.

Names _____

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May 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
3	4	5 Cinco De Mayo WFF Board Meeting via Zoom this month, 1 week early	6	7	8	9
10 Mother's Day	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19 Via Zoom WFF Monthly Meeting: Anthony Carruesco: "The Rivers of Northern California - A Guide's Eye View"	20 WFF Deadline for Newsletter Articles	21	22	23 WFF Fly Tying
24	25 Memorial Day	26	27	28	29	30
31	1	2	3	4	5	6

