

VOLUME 51

NOV 2016

NUMBER 08

NOV MEETING

Thursday, Nov 17, 2016 @ Farmhouse Restaurant

Wet Fly / Social Gathering: 6:00PM

Dinner / General Meeting: 7:00PM

President's Message:

By: Jim Paget

None submitted this month.

This Month's Presentation:

By: Editor

This month's presentations are by you, the members, telling of your fishing exploits over the past year. Come and witness the merging of audio and video, fact and fiction, presented by your fellow Club members. Here's the line-up:

Deene Almvig: Coho Fishing Trip to Northwestern Vancouver Island

Russ Asbury and Dan Ballard: Near Disaster on the Hoh River

Carl Hendricks: Fishing in BC and Idaho, 2016

Richard Raisler: Fishing for Steelhead on the Grand Ronde

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Fly of the Month:

By: Robin LaRue

BLOOD WORM

Chironomid Larva



Hook: Tiemco 200R size 10, 12

Thread: Red Uni-Thread, size 6/0

Tail: 4-5 red marabou feather tips

Body: Red Floss or Red Holographic Tinsel (keep body thin)

Rib: Fine Copper or Black Wire 5-7 turns

Head: Red Tying Thread

Overcoating: Sally Hansen's "Hard as Nails" or Clear Goo UV Light Epoxy

IFFF Conservation Grant Impact:

Submitted by: Danny Beatty

An IFFF conservation small grant to the Wenatchee Valley Fly Fishers helped secure over a mile of river access for the public in a recent joint venture spear-headed by Trout Unlimited and Wenatchee Valley Fly Fishers. Efforts are underway to transfer the property to the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife to provide public access for angling and other non-motorized recreation at the mile-long stretch of the Wenatchee River. [Click here to read the thank you letter>>](#)



Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
September 27, 2016

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Confessions of a Chironomid Fisher - Part 1

Submitted By: Robin LaRue

After Phil Rowley's presentation at the Fidalgo Fly Fishers meeting in February I got to thinking about when I became addicted to Chironomid fishing. A review of my Stillwater fly boxes shows an overwhelming number of slots, maybe on the order of 85%, are filled with a variety of sizes, colors, and bead head Chironomid imitations. The remaining slots in the fly boxes are filled with wet flies, nymphs, leaches, some shrimp and a few dry flies. As I look back at my conversion from sinking lines and wet flies to dry lines, strike indicators and Chironomid imitations there were a few memorable events that moved me towards the "Dark Side" (indicator fishing).

The first event occurred at Peterhope Lake, a clear water lake with large shoals or sunken islands that is located between the towns of Merritt and Kamloops, British Columbia off of Highway 5A. In the late 1970's shortly after the Fidalgo Fly Fishermen club (now Fidalgo Fly Fishers) was formed, a group of six Fidalgo Fly Fishers made an annual Fall trip to fish lakes in British Columbia. For several years, during the first week of October, they would make their annual pilgrimage north to fish either Roche Lake or Peterhope Lake. Fishing was considered good at this time of the year with each angler catching 2 to 10 fish between 2 ½ and 4 pounds. Occasionally a 5 pound fish would be caught during the trip.

These trips were made before the engineering marvel known as the Coquihalla Highway was constructed. We would leave Anacortes at 5:00 pm on a Thursday evening and travel north crossing the border at Sumas, Washington. Continuing north to Hope, British Columbia, turning northeast onto Highway 3 through the site of the great Hope Landslide and then traveling southeast through Manning Provincial Park, almost to the Canada/U.S. border before turning north traveling through the towns of Princeton, Aspen Grove, and Merritt, and finally arriving at Peterhope or Roche Lake about 2:00 am in the morning. This road trip was a drive of seven or eight hours. After a couple hours of sleep we would fish all day Friday and Saturday, leaving Sunday afternoon about 2:00 pm, and returning to Anacortes around 9:00 or 10:00 p.m. in the evening so we could go to work the next morning. The core group of fly fishers was Dan Coleman, Russ Willis and myself, the other three slots were filled by various club members that we could convince to make the trip and split the cost of gasoline and cabin rental.



A day at Roche Lake October 1976 with Leo Hemmingson, Dave Rice, Robin LaRue, and Russ Willis (l. to r.)

Dan had a big orange suburban that would comfortably seat six people, one boat was tied on top of the suburban and a small U-Haul trailer towed behind the suburban carried the other five boats. For a few years we took Russ Willis's small motorhome and a pickup truck pulled the trailer loaded with boats. The motorhome increased the cost of the gas for the trip but it provided a little more space, plus it also allowed for marathon cribbage games, during the trip north.

On one trip to Peterhope we stayed at the resort on the shores of the lake. This resort has since been bought and replaced with a condominium complex. Calling the assemblage of small rundown wooden cabins a resort was perhaps stretching the definition of the word. However the large cabin had all we needed, beds for six people, propane lights and a big cast iron cook stove for heat and cooking. The facilities were located a short walk from the cabins and was complete with a half-moon cut in the door. The lake was just steps away from the front door of the cabin, what more could a fly fisher ask for?

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Russ Willis's Motorhome and Doug Abrams's Pick-up and Boats Returning from Roche Lake 1977

Marv Elliott, a member of the Club, had somehow gotten approval from the Canadian government to live and work at the resort for nine months. I think he convinced them he was an author doing research to write a book about fly fishing in British Columbia. At any rate, he had made friends with the resort owners and had the opportunity to spend his off hours fishing the lake. He told us about how the resort owners fished the lake. They would anchor their boat in deep water, then using a spinning rod and reel they would fish just off the bottom of the lake. They used eight pound monofilament with a one ounce sinker tied to the end of the line. About eighteen inches up from the sinker a small swivel was tied in with a twelve inch section of six pound leader attached to the swivel and a small (size 14 or 16) nymph was tied to the end of the leader. About twelve inches above this swivel an additional swivel and leader was attached with another nymph. The nymphs were hare's ear, pheasant tail or other nondescript nymphs. Marv called the setup the "Peterhope Jig Rig". The line was lowered until the sinker hit the bottom and then was reeled up a foot from the lake bottom. Then the rod was held very still until the tip of the rod started to move up and down, at which point the hook was set and it was "Fish On".

Of course the group was skeptical of what Marv said and we thought for sure he was "pulling our leg". However, I soon found out that it was all true. I was anchored up on the edge of a shoal and fishing the deep water with a sinking line and wet fly. I had been fishing for some time with limited success, a short distance away from me one of the resort boats anchored in deeper water and using the "Jig Rig" proceeded to hook, lose, and land four to six pound fish almost at will. Russ Willis tried to imitate the "Jig Rig" by putting a hare's ear nymph on a short leader at the end of his sinking line and letting the line sink down at the side of his boat. He did manage to catch one 3 or 4 pound trout with this method, but the group did not pursue this method of fishing.

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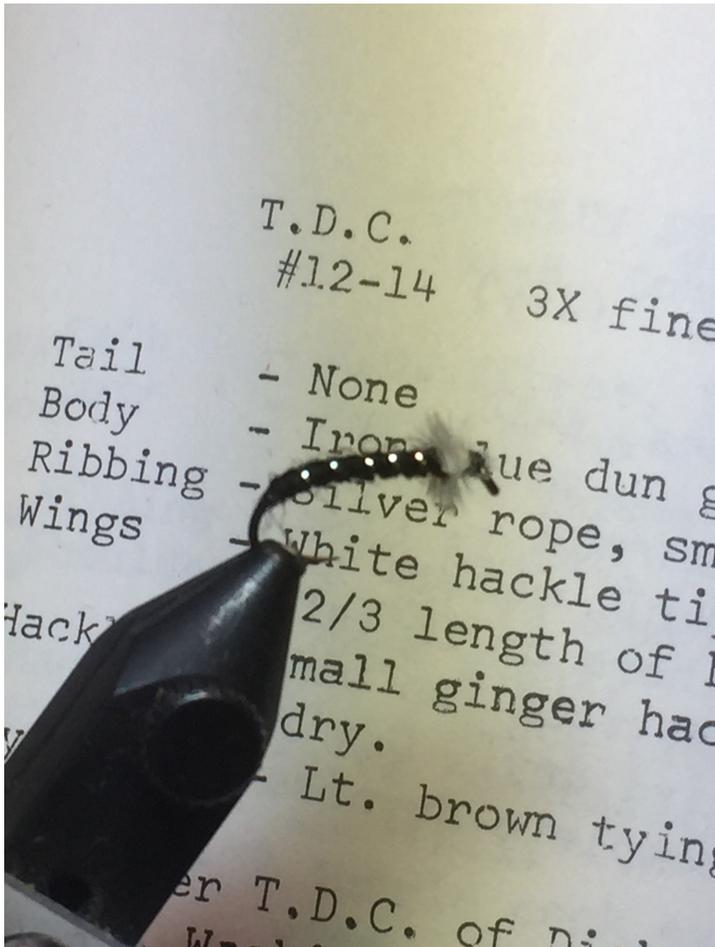


At the time I didn't comprehend what I was seeing, but now looking back on the experience I can recognize the beginnings of Chironomid fishing with a long leader. Fast forward to the mid 1980's to a spring evening on Pass Lake, the lake surface was dead calm with the rings of rising fish on the surface. I was fishing a sinking line with a Carey Special doing what I called "Mooch Fishing", a slow troll stopping occasionally to slowly strip in the line. I would then shake out the fly line and a slowly troll to straighten out the line, then slowly strip the line in, repeating this process while covering different parts of the lake. I was catching a few fish, however there was a fly fisher anchored up and casting a floating line, he was out fishing me by what seemed like a 4 to 1 margin. I did a slow troll past him and asked what he was using. He said a TDC, which didn't mean much to me. He said it was a size 12 hook with a black chenille or wool body, a silver rib and a white ostrich herl collar and black thread head.

Later in the evening as I was loading my boat in my truck I encountered the same fly fisher, I said something to the effect that I thought he had done quite well that evening. He said that he had been using a TDC, and gave me a couple to try next time I was out. He said the way to fish the fly was with a long leader that was "greased" to within 12 to 18 inches of the fly. By doing this and using a slow retrieve with intermittent pauses the fly would be presented just under the surface of the water. As I helped him load his boat onto the top of his camper van and I noticed the license plate on his vehicle "TDC1".

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The next day I checked the fly pattern book Pacific Northwest Fly Patterns by Roy Patrick, the owner of Patrick's Fly Shop in Seattle, and learned the fly had been originated by Richard Thompson. Thompson was a biologist for the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service, and the name of the fly was a contraction of the words "Thompson's Delectable Chironomid".



I used this method of fishing in the evenings when I saw fishing rising and taking insects off the surface or swirling and taking insects just under the surface (later I learned the insects were Chironomids). I never tried this method during the day, nor did I try to fish more than a foot or so below the surface, again I didn't see the whole picture.

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I don't recall the exact year, sometime in the early to mid-1990's I started seeing a few people fishing with "Corkies" (strike indicators) attached to their leaders on Pass Lake. About that time Dec Hogan, a local guide, made a presentation to the Fidalgo Fly Fishers. He talked about fishing the Skagit River for steelhead and searun cutthroat and briefly mentioned something called "Chironomid Fishing". Dec mostly talked about using long 14 to 16 foot leaders with a "Corky" threaded onto the leader with a toothpick stuck in the hole of the "Corky" to regulate how deep the fly would sink. He said the key was to watch the "Corky" and if it moved to set the hook. I thought to myself in an elitist way, "oh, bobber fishing, like when I was a kid". Again I missed the boat, and continued to fish with a wet line and the tried and true wet flies, or if the fish were rising the floating line and a TDC, or other small nymphs.

Editor's Note: The last portion of this article will appear in the December 2016 issue of the WAHOO.

Upcoming Events:

Fidalgo Fly Fishers Christmas Dinner and Meeting, Thursday, December 15, 2016, 6:00 PM at the LaConner Seafood & Prime Rib Restaurant, 614 S. 1st St., LaConner, WA.

Photos of the Month:

This space is blank; just waiting for your submissions.

Fly Shops:

The Confluence Fly Shop

2620 N. Harbor Loop Drive #9

Bellingham, WA 98225

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