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TO ENCOURAGE FLY FISHING  
AS A METHOD OF ANGLING

# MCKENZIE *Flyfishers* ESTABLISHED 1964

## Our March 20 program

# Nymphing for success

*Expert Garrett Lesko takes a  
more traditional approach*

Tired of hearing too much about Euro nymphing? This program is for you! This is a non-Euro presentation on the traditional and latest in nymphing techniques.

Did you know that 90 percent of a trout's diet is from sub-surface feeding? And usually near the bottom of the river or lake. That means nymphing will almost always catch more fish. And our April speaker will talk about exactly how to do that.

Nymphing is not what brings most fly anglers into the sport, but it is an incredibly effective way to catch fish. In this presentation **Garrett Lesko** will break down the many ways of presenting your nymphs, gear to use, flies to tie/buy, and other helpful tips on how to get into or improve your nymph game. This way you can be part of the 20 percent of anglers catching 80 percent of the fish.

Garrett is an Oregon-based fly tyer and fly fisherman. He has been featured as a "Master at the Bench" in American Fly Fishing Magazine,



## CLUB CALENDAR

- **April 17 — monthly club meeting at Gratitude Brewing at 6:30 pm**
- **April-May — March Brown outings**
- **May 3-5 — Crooked River outing**

articles published in Fly Fishing & Tying Journal, had flies showcased in Favorite Flies of Oregon, and has been a guest on the *Wet Fly Swing Podcast*, *The Fly Fishing Insider Podcast*, and *The Fly Fishing 97 Podcast*.

He has also been a regular club speaker at fly-fishing clubs in Oregon and beyond. He enjoys using his 15-plus years of experience in the fly-fishing industry to teach fly tying through his local club where they livestream their monthly tying night. You may also have seen him at one of the many fly-tying expos and shows he has tied at such as the Northwest Expo, Reedsport and Roseburg Fly Tying show, the Fly Tyers Rendezvous, and The Fly Fishing Show.

Garrett was also recognized as the "Fly Tyer of the Year" in 2024 from the Oregon FFI. He truly has a passion for teaching and showing others the joys of fly tying and fishing either through live demonstrations or articles through magazines or his blog.

*The President's Corner*

# Fun, service and fishing

*Auction success and volunteer opportunities are opening*

By Roger Stover

Those of us who attended our March meeting in person had a ball. Lots and lots of visiting with fellow members, sharing stories, telling lies, drinking and eating and, oh yeah, bidding up the many high-quality donated goods and trips in our annual auction. Another successful year of (mostly) internal fund-raising in the bag, making it possible to continue the McKenzie Flyfishers tradition of providing financial support to our regional nonprofit fishery resources organizations (more on this below). Thank you, fellow members, for your awesome generosity.



We have two service opportunities coming open for members to volunteer, and I'm asking you to consider taking one of them to support your club. Both are currently handled by Carolyn Mason, who is expanding her role with Casting for Recovery and needs to free up some of her time to do so. Carolyn will continue to take care of Keep Our River Clean and the Clean Highway activities, but she is stepping away from Library and Google Services. Library is pretty simple: Keep track of the books, tapes, DVDs, etc. that are in our storage facility, bring select items to meetings for those wishing to check them out, and collect returned borrowings and take them to the storage facility each month. Google Services, aka Listserv, involves oversight of our online functions that are hosted by Google. The primary

responsibility is to monitor and manage the club group email, which includes logging in to the see if messages have been sent to the club email address and then forwarding such messages to the appropriate club member, usually a board member or committee chair. The other main duty is to manage the club's Google Drive content, primarily archiving various documents in the appropriate folders. Experience with email programs, online filing and basic computer skills are required. Please contact me

directly if you are inclined to help out here.

I'm told that there are more March Browns emerging from the river bottom lately, and my experience yesterday on the McKenzie with Carolyn Mason added proof to the rumors. We had several March Brown

sightings, mostly airborne, among

lots of caddis flies fluttering out of the bankside brush and bouncing on the water surface. We also saw a small number of trout heads breaking the surface, but not in numbers that would indicate a big hatch. Now that the big rains appear to be behind us, we should see the flows drop and overall conditions improve enough to induce some quality MB action. Jim Rhoten, our March Brown Outing fishmaster, tells me we have some 14 boaters and 16 passengers signed up for the club March Brown outing period. It's time to pair up and make your plans to float the rivers.

I know you've all been eagerly awaiting this news: the MFF Board of Directors approved the 2024 budget! Kidding aside, it is always nice to be part of a budget process that is not dominated by looking for places to cut expenses. Because of our membership dues receipts and successful auction results, we are in the enviable position of having modest surplus funds this year. The Board approved adding \$750 to our Picnic/60th Anniversary budget to help the committee make it special. (Stay tuned for details of the "special"

part, which will be announced as we near the event date.) The remaining surplus will be split 50-50 between supporting our conservation partners and adding to our club’s reserves.

We also elected Doug Cattel as club secretary, to complete Lorne Johnson’s term. Lorne had to resign from his secretary and board duties in order to care for his wife, who is

undergoing cancer treatment. Good news on that front: Barb Johnson is responding very well to her initial treatment. We wish her well and support Lorne’s “family first” decision. And, when you see Doug be sure to thank him for graciously stepping in.

See you at Gratitude Brewing Wednesday, April 17.

## Greg Pitts, 1948-2024

Greg Pitts of Eugene, who was president of the McKenzie Flyfishers in 1992 and went on to be president of the Federation of Fly Fishers, died of cancer Saturday April 6. He is survived by his wife, Mary Jo Pitts, and their son. Greg was a real estate developer who, at one time, served as a fishing guide on Oregon’s Deschutes River. A full obituary is not yet available, but we know he was born Dec. 27, 1948 and lived in Tucson, Arizona before moving to Eugene. This photo of him some years ago

about to go wet wading in the chilly Metolius can be found on his Facebook page.



## 2024 OUTINGS SCHEDULE

DATE	LOCATION	FISHMASTER
April/May	March Brown Madness	Jim Rhoten
May 3-5	Crooked River	Stevie Brehm
June 28-30	Blitzen River	Greg Williams
July 17	Club picnic	Jeff & Joanie DeVore
July 19-21	Umpqua bass (Big K Ranch)	Steve Hackett
Aug. 23-24	North Fork Willamette	Al Eckerdt
Sept. 6-7	Gold Lake (Death to Char)	Board of Directors
Sept. 14-16	Upper Willamette	Greg Williams

Outside of our regular outings, club members are encouraged to **get together to fish** anytime, anyplace. Invite new members along, share locations, boats, campsites, skills, flies and fish tales.



# Auction raises record revenues

We had a remarkable annual auction March 20, thanks to Greg Williams and his crew, and by the time all the analysis was done, our net income was a little over \$9,000, after expenses of around \$500. For comparison, Greg says, we cleared about \$10,000 in the huge 2019 auction, but our expenses then were around \$4,000, and it took about five times more work than this year's auction. This year's biggest auction item was a fine wooden drift boat donated by Mark Rauch that sold to Bill Neel for \$2,000.

Raffle winners were Mike Matthews for the dry fly basket and Spence Reid for the Big K getaway. Auctria recorded all the digital raffle tickets, and all Greg had to do click an "Award Prize" button. "We used the same payment/delivery method that worked well for us last year," Greg says. "Next year I intend to rebuild the auction website, and better security will be an important part of the job."

Greg had a lot of help behind the scenes from Steve Brehm, Doug Cottel, Al Eckerdt, Tom Fauria, Steve Hackett, Jim Rhoten and Roger Stover. "Thanks guys! We couldn't have done it without you. And my deep gratitude to everyone for your financial support, your enthusiasm and your friendship," he says. "The auction is a hard job, but the payoff is well worth the input. Thank you for allowing me to be of service to the club."



Greg was still working on the final data for the auction. Here's one fun fact: We sold 34 boxes of flies for a total of \$1,537. The boxes contained a total of 485 flies, for an average bid value of \$3.17 per fly.

There were four lucky winners of the incentive auction. These fellows had \$100 deducted from their auction bills. In one case, the total was less than \$100, so his bill was eliminated entirely. Dan Podolsky (14 tickets), Mark Rauch (37 tickets), Jim Rhoten (10 tickets), and Phil Johnson (11 tickets).

The incentive auction calculated points for our 57 bidders (plus 11 registrants who did not win anything). Tickets were given for registration, bidding once, each donated item, each won item, each raffle ticket purchased, and each cash donation (there was only one since this function did not work the night of the auction). There were 391 total tickets awarded.

"I'm not sure if this raffle catalyzed any significant action among the members, which was the point of the thing," says Greg. "We'll need to decide if this is something we want to do next year."

Greg Gore commented, "What an awesome job you have been doing for the club with the auction, everything is always smooth going and easy to follow! Thanks again for all your work."

Bob Bumstead said, "Amazing, Greg. Your work is heroic. It not only nourishes the lives of our members, but also those of our community. Just think of all those young students whose lives have been enriched by their experience in Salmon Watch." — *TJT*

# Crooked River bonanza May 3-4

By *Steve Brehm*

**Overview:** The Wild and Scenic Crooked River is a small tailwater known for its abundant fish and varied bug populations. Just east of Bend, the Crooked flows out of Bowman Dam and through 12 miles of beautiful rimrock canyon. Join us May 3-5 for riverside camping, or stay nearby in Prineville, Redmond or Bend. Dinner together will be Saturday night.

**The fishing:** The Crooked is open year-round and follows the Central Zone stream regulations: flies and lures only, no bait. It's all wade fishing and it's known for having mostly small fish and there are lots of wild Redband Trout and Mountain Whitefish in the 6- to 12-inch range. The river is also known for its turbidity, often looking cloudy as its nutrient-rich water flows from Prineville Reservoir, usually around 250 cfs. Close to Bend, the Crooked can get crowded, so expect to see other fly fishers.

This is a great river for newer fly fishers. It's easy to read the water, not many bushes in your back-cast and safe wading —

though a wading staff is recommended due to slippery footing. Shallow indicator nymphing and Euro techniques produce the most hook-ups, and dry-fly hatches are varied and profuse. A list of recommended flies will be provided later but small midge, mayfly, caddis and scud patterns are great.

**Gear recommendation:** A 4- or 5-weight rod with a floating line is perfect or bring your light Euro setup. Waders with felt-soled boots will be best.

**The camping:** There are abundant BLM campsites along the river, all first-come-first-served with picnic tables, pit toilets, fire rings and no water. Fishmaster Stevie and wife, Gail, will be at Palisades Campground 15 miles south of Prineville on Hwy 27.

**Directions from Eugene:** A three-hour drive will take you up the McKenzie, over to Sisters, through Redmond to Prineville. Stock up in Prineville for last minute supplies and water. Take Hwy. 27 south 15 miles to Palisades Campground. If you stay in Bend it's a 45 minute drive. Note: don't go to "Crooked River Campground" since it's not nearby.

There is a ton of info about the Crooked online, and our club has had several speakers give presentations on this desert gem.





# Munsel trout and brownies to boot

*By Jeff DeVore*

Two bluebird winter days in a row to begin our 2024 outings season — the McKenzie Flyfishers are on a roll. First it was Cleawox, in February no less, but then Munsel Lake was at its finest March 16, with fish caught, beans and hot dogs for all, and perfect, sunny weather. Some agreed that our outings are the only time we can eat this stuff without blowback, and then there were the brownies.

As for fish that were caught, Carolyn, Gail and Sparky asked for a photo, and there was discussion about a quarter of an inch difference between the two biggest fish (in the middle of the photo at right).

That's Carolyn's stringer, but Sparky's fish held its own, even after apparently banging its nose on the side of his boat, and did Carolyn accidentally drag her stringer over Gail's fish, thus leaving it out of the discussion?

Fortunately, there was more than one Big Dog available this year so everyone went home happy.

See you all out there, chasing those March Browns on the McKenzie and, hopefully, in even more of that long-awaited Oregon sunshine.



# Liars Lunch meets in person once again

By Ted Taylor

Our club's traditional Liars Lunch met in person for the first time in years April 5 and the lively, noisy gathering drew 18 club members. We might repeat this gathering every first Friday, either at this restaurant or another.

Our lunch was at Papa's Pizza on Coburg Road, which features an all-you-can-eat buffet of pizza and salad for about \$10. Thanks to club member David Quanbeck for researching restaurants that can accommodate us. Papa's has a private room in the back that we can use without charge.

For decades before Covid, Liars was usually held in a Chinese restaurant, family style. If someone arrived late, we would always find



room at the round table by squeezing closer until everybody's elbows were in each other's plates. We would tally up the total cost of the lunch and the price per person would be around \$5 or \$6 a head, but that cost went up over time.

Alas, the Chinese restaurants on Chambers Street and Franklin Boulevard are gone, and Covid sent us to Zoom in 2020. Zoom has proven to be popular and convenient, with members joining from home in their pajamas, or even when out of town. Stevie Brehm caught fish while on a Liars Lunch Zoom. Tom Fauria joined us while wading in a Tennessee

river, which was not a good idea since he dropped his phone in the water and had to go fishing for it. His Zoom image turned to a muddy yellow before going black.

But despite the convenience of Zoom, we also like to get together in person more than once a month. So stay tuned to see if and when we meet again in person. All are welcome!

## 2024 MFF Board and committee heads

President: Roger Stover  
 President elect: Caleb Hund  
 Secretary: Doug Cottel  
 Treasurer: Walt Petty  
 Directors at-large: Steve Hackett, Arlen Thomason, Mike Matthews, Terry Robinson

### Committees of the club

Annual picnic: Jeff & Joanie DeVore  
 Auction: Greg Williams, Jim Rhoten, Doug Cottel, Steve Brehm  
 Conservation: Dave Thomas, Arlen Thomason  
 Education: Barry Olson  
 FFI Rep: Steven Savill  
 Holiday party: Bill Neel

House: Jim Dougher  
 Library: Carolyn Mason  
 Listserv: Carolyn Mason  
 Membership: Tom Fauria  
 Newsletter: Ted Taylor  
 Outings: Steve Hackett  
 Programs: Al Eckerdt, Jim Rhoten, Jim, Mitchell, Bill Laing, Mike Brinkley, Dave Thomas  
 Technology: Caleb Hund  
 Website: Stephen Maher

### Projects

- Adopt-A-Highway: Carolyn Mason
- eDNA: Mike Brinkley, Dave Thomas
- KORC: Carolyn Mason
- McKenzie River Discovery Center: Bill Laing, Steve Hackett
- Project Healing Waters: Phil Johnson



### Our club's Life Members

- Jim Boyd
- Bob Bumstead
- Jim Dougher
- Skip Hosfield
- Bill Laing
- Hal Legard
- Glen Love (deceased)
- Frank Moore (deceased)
- Bill Neel
- Peter Patricelli
- Bob Rasmussen
- Mike Starr
- Dave Thomas
- Jim Williams (deceased)

### INVITATION TO JOIN

*You do not have to be an expert fly fisher to join the McKenzie Flyfishers. Our monthly meetings, now in person at Gratitude Brewery on third Wednesdays, are an excellent opportunity to meet other area anglers and share tips. Our meetings feature the best of regional and national experts on subjects dear to the hearts of fly fishers. And our outings and classes are wonderful ways to hone skills and learn local waters first-hand. Interested? Email Tom at [tomfauria@gmail.com](mailto:tomfauria@gmail.com).*

*McKenzie Flyfishers*

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