

President's Message

by Mark Borserine

The beginning of another fine year

As we enter a new year, I have come to the end of my 'official' term as Club President. The 'plan' was that Cliff Newton would take the helm the first of the year but Cliff has had a tremendous job offer on the West Coast and as I write this, he and Vicky will be arriving at their new home in Coos Bay, Oregon. It was a tremendous step 'up' for Cliff and we wish them all the best. I want to thank them for their years of valuable service and support to the club; special thanks go to Vicky for her willingness to remain as webmaster (despite the distance) until we can find someone to take that position. Travis Knight has taken over the position of Membership from Cliff; we welcome Travis to the group of Officers.

My official position is therefore as 'Interim' President until and if a replacement is found – duties are the same,

nomenclature has changed!

I want to thank everyone who has helped so much the last two years. All the club officers have been supportive, which shows in our membership and attendance. Something I am very proud of is that compared to other clubs around the Council, we are nowhere near the largest but we consistently turn out as high or higher percentage of our membership to our meetings! All of your Club Officers deserve our thanks but the following deserve special mention:

- Dave Andrews, our immediate Past President and member of the Board who, during his term as President, literally straightened out the Club financially and installed a financial reporting system that we continue to use. Our Treasurer these past two years, Paul Bennetts, has been very effective in continuing us on the 'straight and narrow'.

HOAFF Meeting

Monday, January 15 - 7:00pm

Clint Wilkinson

Ozark Guide discusses his favorite flies (and how to tie them) and methods for fishing the tailwaters; White and Norfolk

- Jim Mattes deserves special praise for his sheer bravery in taking over the Auction, which was very successful despite some last-minute 'crises'. Thanks to Dan Zimmerman for helping Jim also.

- Tom James has become much busier in his profession, an indication of his success; but we also know that it has put a great strain on him and we are grateful for his continued dedication to the newsletter.

Continued on p. 2

Spring Program - Mike Lawson

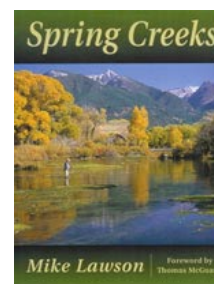
Saturday, February 17, 2006 • 9:00 am to 4:00 pm



Renowned fly fisherman, guide, fly tier, and founder of the Henry's Fork Anglers fly shop, Mike Lawson, is also the author of *Fishing the Henry's Fork* and a contributing editor of *Fly Fisherman* magazine.

His new book, *Spring Creeks* is packed with solid information for fishing spring creeks from Mike Lawson's years of flyfishing experience.

Club members: \$40.00 Nonmembers: \$50.00. Registration fee includes a catered lunch.
 Community of Christ Church • 79th & Mission Road



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Spring White River Outing

by Mark Bors erine

We are holding an early Spring Outing at White River Trout Lodge which overlooks and has fishing access to 'The Narrows' on the White River. We are doing this on March 2,3,4 with the hope of coinciding with the 'shad kill' on the Tailwaters which is famous for producing some of the best numbers and largest of fish of the year! We have engaged the entire Lodge for two nights, the 2nd and 3rd. It can accommodate up to 16, the more we get the less it costs everyone! Jim Jorgensen and I will be providing Breakfast Saturday & Sunday, Box Lunches Saturday & Sunday and a meal of Barbeque on Saturday night. The plan is to have the entire outing cost about \$55 a day for meals & lodging; Clint Wilkinson will have a team of guides available for those who

want to engage their services. Since we've engaged the Lodge, yet can cancel all or part of the reservation within two weeks of the date, we are asking a deposit of \$50 from anyone wishing to come. You can give me your deposits at our Annual Banquet, January or February Member Meetings or mail a check to me at 4001 West 87th Street, Praire Village, KS 66207-1907, (913) 915-1002 (cell), MAJBORSER@aol.com.



President's Message

continued from p.1

As we enter a New Year, I want to encourage the general members to become more involved in the club either as an Officer or a member of a Committee. Special areas needing help are Outings, Newsletter, Conservation and we could sure use a Secretary since I've been doing that as well as President! Consider 'giving back' by 'pitching in'.

We have a lot of activities right here at the first of the year beginning with our rescheduled Winter Outing and Annual

Banquet on January 13th, Clint Wilkinson presenting at our January 15th meeting, Spring Seminar with Mike Lawson on Spring Creeks February 17th (at the Church not the Discovery Center) and an early Spring Outing 2,3 & 4 March at White River Lodge. See the articles on each in this newsletter!

Another request – we desperately need articles and photos for the newsletter! Don't be shy about writing something or sending us a picture!

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Annual Banquet/Bennett Spring Trip

Rescheduled - January 13 - 14, 2007

by Mark Borsierine

The Winter Outing & Annual Banquet that was canceled due to weather in December has been rescheduled for January 13th. The plans and venues are the same as in December. If you signed up for December and paid, you needn't do a thing; if you signed up and didn't pay yet, you also needn't do thing, we'll catch you 'at the door' – in other words, if you already signed up and there are no changes, we'll assume you're coming. If you didn't sign up yet, signed up but can't come, or there are changes in guests, etc. contact me at (913) 915-1002 or MAJBORSER@aol.com and we'll take care of it, including getting you a refund.

Spring Creeks by Mike Lawson

by Mark Borsierine

Knowing that Mike Lawson is on his way to be our Spring Seminar presenter on February 17th, I bought a copy of his book "Spring Creeks" and just finished reading it. Wow! Is hardly expression enough!

This book is not only a feast for the eyes, illustrated with stunning color photographs on the grand scale of the famous 'Arizona Highways' books of the past but wonderful line drawings as well. A non-fly fisher could pick this up off your coffee table and be 'rapturous' just looking at it; but, there is a wealth of knowledge herein as well!

Here in the heart of the Midwest, we think of Spring Creeks as being 'worlds away' in the West or in the East – Colorado, Montana, Idaho, Pennsylvania. But Spring Creeks are

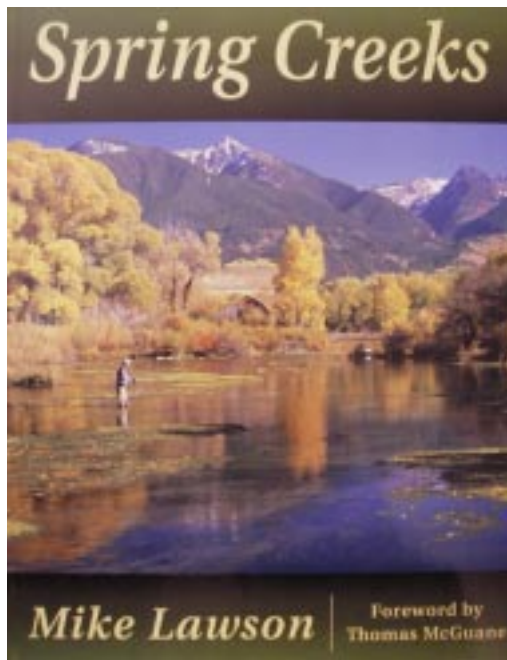
as close as Missouri's Trout Parks, all of which are Spring Creeks!

The streams a group of us fished in NorthEast Iowa in September are classic Spring Creeks and our beloved Tailwaters; Taneycomo, White River and Norfork share many of the characteristics of Spring

Creeks! The same tactics and techniques apply.

Mike's book is a wealth of information and inspiration for all of us, I can assure you that after reading this, you will look at our 'home waters'; the Trout Parks and Tailwaters with different eyes!

After reading his book, I am not only better-prepared to get more out of the February 17th Seminar, but I wouldn't dare miss it!



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Spring Seminar

2007

Saturday, February 17, 2007
9:00am - 4:00pm

Community of Christ Church
79th & Mission Road

Our Spring Seminar is on Saturday February 17th at the Community of Christ Church where we hold our regular meetings; NOT the Discovery Center since it was booked up. Our presenter is Mike Lawson from Montana, and his presentation is on fishing Spring Creeks.

Mike published a book on 'Spring Creeks' which I just finished reading and we are in for a real treat! If the presentation is anything like the book is, this also a must! We forget that Bennett Spring, which Mike mentions in the book is a Spring Creek and that Tailwaters also share similar characteristics to Spring Creeks.

So, even if you don't fish classic 'Spring Creeks' per se but do fish the Trout Parks and Tailwaters, you will not want to miss this presentation! Further information in on the website: www.hoaff.org.



Small Stuff

by Steve Jenkins

Is it part of the natural evolution of fly fishers that (finally) we get intrigued with smaller flies – the “small stuff”? Or is it giving in to frustration when the “big stuff” won’t work? I can’t speak for others, but for me maybe it was a combination. I guess there is little question that fly fishers don’t start in this sport with a size 22 pheasant tail nymph.

Okay, if your first real experience in fly fishing was with a guide on some famous western waters in the fall, you might well have been given the small stuff right from the beginning. But, I’ll bet that if you got into fly-fishing as a kid, or began on your own, there wasn’t a fly smaller than size 16 in your box. But, as your experience matured, the box probably began to hold more and more little things.

My first exposure to small stuff was on the Battenkill in New York. I was given two size 20 dunnish flies by Ralph, the proprietor of a diminutive fly shop near the river and about a mile from the state line. These flies were in response to my whining about the tiny bugs coming off the creek one evening and frustration in what to throw at them. This was probably thirty years ago. Ralph talked about a certain hole formed against the north bank by an

upstream run over some rocks and guarded by a large black willow tree. The fast water tailed quickly into this large, still pool that he said was “perfect” for blue winged olives.

Beautifully tied with light duck quill wings and grey body, tails and hackle, these were the tiniest flies I had ever held. I had to buy a leader because I was outfitted to fish 12s and 14s. I returned to the stream many times after this lesson by Ralph, but never saw the flies he referenced, even in the special hole he mentioned. I expect it was five years later before one of those flies ever saw daylight and hit the water.

In the meantime, as I began to learn the pattern of the bugs hatching on the Battenkill, there were no other small stuff opportunities until I learned about the tricorythodes, a tiny fly George Harvey calls “The Most Important Hatch” in his Techniques of Trout Fishing and Fly Tying, Lyons & Burford, NY, 1985 & 1990.

This queer little fly is on the stream in the morning in late summer and early fall. They run from about size 20 to maybe 24! And, on the Battenkill, when the fly is on, the trout go crazy. I heard other fishermen talking about this hatch, and I even tried to be on the stream at daybreak a couple of

times. But, I never positively identified the fly nor enjoyed much success until maybe 15 years ago. There are several patterns favored in different regions, but all are small. Plus, the spinner form of the fly is the most available, and your pattern – a dry fly – needs to sit flush in the film. Small fly, fished flush, early mornings, dark patterns – it can be mighty tough fishing. But, now I salivate thinking about tricos on the Battenkill.

Midges – I have tended to avoid even thinking about them. While living in Texas a few years back, I fished the tailwater trout in the Brazos River in February. These are stockies and mostly provide food for the big stripers that roam this river between the various lakes. But, Tom and I have had some fun times there. Most of our trout were taken on small stuff – generally small nymphs. However, one year even smaller nymphs wouldn’t work. After some investigation, including stomach samples from a fish we would eat for supper, we could see these fish were really keying on midge pupa, suspended in the water at the surface. We diddled with some of our small nymphs in the evening and hoped we were ready for the challenge in the morning.

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I missed bunches of fish using a size 22 small stuff I created from a hackled dry fly. The misses were clearly because I couldn't detect the strike in time to catch the fish. I remembered a leader I had made with several ½ inch segments of red fly line slipped over the monofilament. It was somewhere in the back of my vest. I waded to shore, dug out this leader (about 10 ft., 6 X), made the change and went to work. The red on the leader was visible even under 2-3 ft of water.

It worked like an indicator, but was subsurface. But most of the success was when the little red markers helped keep the leader up and the fly near the surface. We found that anything larger than 22 was a waste of effort. The next year, we came prepared, but then the trout seemed to like a size 14 hare's ear nymph, and I was just as glad.

Phil returned from Colorado a few seasons back touting a little black nymph he was using with success. At his request, I tied up several in 18, 20 and 22. He said the fish on the Frying Pan had eaten these things up. He was dragging this nymph on a 12-inch dropper, under a size 16 dry fly that doubled as an indicator. About a month later, I was there trying the same trick. But, I must have been doing

something wrong, because I only had about three fish after about three hours of work. Finally another fisherman – an "off duty" guide – took pity on me and said I should use nothing larger than 7 X leader. So, I cut down the 6 X, tied on three feet of 7 X and, "shazam", it worked. However, I didn't see much difference between a conventional pheasant tail nymph and the black.

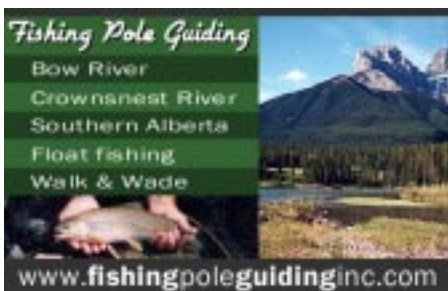
Tom and I now fish the White River in the fall, since I moved from Houston. And, generally, we use big, ugly streamers and soft hackles. However, one Friday afternoon as the stream was dropping, some tiny caddis began to emerge in the area around Wildcat where we were fishing. We noticed gentle dimples and splashes, particularly above a run of faster water. Moving to a better position, we could see some bitty-bugs coming off the water, and soon we were sure some fish were taking these things.

I switched to a 6 X leader and finally dug up a small deer hair caddis, tied on a size 18 hook. After clipping off some of the hair, I began working this over these fish. It wasn't pretty, but I managed six or eight fish, all small. Tom, upstream and out of sight, did much the same, but he started with a

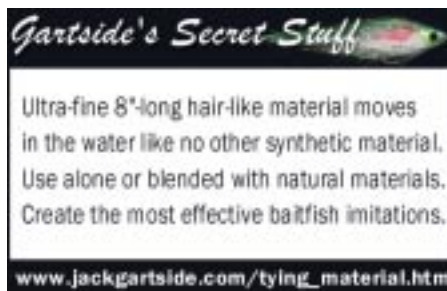
smaller fly. He did better, including one 16-inch rainbow. Now, we go prepared, each with a box of small stuff. But, so far we haven't run into this activity again.

On the Frying Pan, in Colorado, small stuff is now a regular part of my gear. The stream is loaded with BWO flies (Baetis) and normally they are particularly abundant on cloudy days (which are infrequent in the fall). When in the east in late summer, you will always find a box of trico dry fly patterns in my vest. The trico "culture" can be esoteric. Some fishermen will use different sizes (all small stuff) and colors every morning when on the stream. How do they know when to switch?

Small stuff is an attitude. You can either go out on the stream naked of such flies, get surprised and have to improvise your own, or take a box full and remain hopeful. Mastering the small stuff is a confidence builder. And, if you get a buzz out of catching fish on flies you have tied, expect a buzz and a bang if that fly is a size 22 trico spinner, micro caddis or pheasant tail nymph. After a few years of experience, let's hope you won't sweat the small stuff.



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Twenty-Twenty Club



by John Berry

Yesterday I was fishing with my wife and fishing buddy, Lori. The going had been a bit slow and I decided to try a Dan's turkey quill emerger. This has been one of my go-to flies for over a decade. Dan had recently begun tying them in smaller sizes and he had given me a half dozen in size twenty two. I took my seven and a half foot 4X leader and tied on five feet of 6X tippet. I tied on the fly and cast at a forty five degree angle from straight down stream. I stripped the line as soon as it hit the water to sink the fly into the film. I let it swing in the current until it was straight below me. Then I cast again. I made no effort to mend the line figuring that the additional pressure from the drag on the line would help me set the hook.

I started working my way down stream. Three casts to the right, three casts to the left, and then I took one

step. I picked up a thirteen inch Brookie and stopped for a while to admire it. It was brilliantly colored and full finned. It looked like a wild trout. I continued down stream and then it happened. I felt a strong tug on the line and I instinctively set the hook. I saw a big splash and quickly identified it as a large cutthroat. He took off quickly putting me in the backing with one run. I stood my ground. The TFO rod was bent nearly double but miraculously the soft tip protected the small tippet and the tiny hook held. I was able to slowly work him in. He took several more runs but finally ran out of gas. I coaxed him into quiet water and slipped him into my net.

I called Lori over and asked her to take a photo. It was a beautifully colored male. He was fat and sassy and measured a righteous twenty two inches. I gave Lori the camera and we

quickly discussed the best way to photograph him. I gently lifted him from the net and posed. While Lori was focusing the camera he flounced out of my hands and took off taking the Dan's turkey quill emerger with him. At first I was heart broken. But upon a bit of reflection, I realized how lucky I was to catch such a great fish on light tackle.

I had caught a twenty two inch fish on a size twenty two hook. I had heard of the twenty twenty club. This is where you catch a twenty inch or larger fish on a size twenty or smaller hook. I have done this before as has my brother Dan and my wife Lori. I find it to be a rewarding challenge. If you are going to attempt this yourself there are a few things to keep in mind.

The first thing is that small hooks require small tippets. The weakest link in your tackle is not the small tippet

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but the knots in the tippet. Carefully form your knots and lubricate them with water before pulling them tight. Test them to ensure that they will hold. This would be a good time to use fluorocarbon which is a bit stronger and more abrasion resistant.

Second sharpen your hooks. Even small hooks need to be sharp to penetrate deep. There is not much



metal in a size twenty hook and you are going to need all of the help you can get to land a big fish on it. On my smaller flies, I try to tie them on wide gap hooks. A wider gap hook is going to result in a better hook up.

Third use a softer rod. A stiff rod will not protect the smaller tippets required for this challenge. Save the meat sticks for fishing woollies and other streamers. I like a rod that has a full flex. You can easily test your rod to see if it is soft enough. Rig up a leader on your rod with a 6X tippet. Tie the tippet to a fixed object. Pull the rod back and put tension on the tippet. Does the rod easily bend or does it break the tippet before flexing.

This is also a great way to learn how much pressure you can put on a tippet before it breaks.

Finally carry a big net. In my fifteen years of guiding I have observed that a large number of fish are lost within ten feet of the angler when he is attempting to land it. A small net is useless on a big fish and unnecessary on a small one. I carry the biggest net I can find and have found that it allows me to land a higher percentage of trophy trout and to do it quickly. Beaching fish is an iffy proposition. If done carelessly, it can injure the fish. They can be easily lost in the process particularly if you are using small tippets.

Keep this in mind and let me know when you join the twenty twenty club.

John Berry is a fly fishing guide in Cotter, Arkansas Trout Capital USA, and can be reached at www.berrybrothersguides.com.

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