

# The Barbless Hook

March 2023

*Edited by Mark Spruiell*



[tri-valleyflyfishers.org](http://tri-valleyflyfishers.org)

## March Meeting – Wednesday Mar. 1<sup>st</sup>

### Pre-Meeting Clinic – Knot Tying – 5:45-6:30pm

We continue our Club pre-meeting clinics with the first in a series of knot tying sessions. This month we will be concentrating on the two key knots in fly fishing, the Improved Clinch knot and the Surgeon's knot. The clinic will last from 5:45 until 6:30 when the doors open for the normal monthly club meeting and social gathering. You will need nothing to attend and there is no cost. We will have practice materials available for everyone.



### Guest Speaker: Jim Roberts – NorCal Fishing and Techniques and Equipment – 7-9pm

We are fortunate to welcome Jim back to our club. This month he will be here in person to speak to us about equipment and techniques for fishing in Northern California waters.

For over two decades Jim Roberts has guided, explored and fished the area around Mt. Shasta and the Yellowstone/Montana areas. Jim will talk to us about his experiences and share tips about where and how to fish the Northern California area.

Jim is a sought-after speaker. With thirty years' experience and his professional training as a teacher, Jim is able to share his knowledge to help other anglers make it to the next level. His goal both on the water and at a presentation is to make fly fishing instruction as fun and rewarding as possible. After 30 years his passion for chasing any fish with a fly is matched only by his desire to teach others about fly fishing.

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## President's Corner

### Marty Loomis

Our 2023 Installation dinner was a great success. For those who made it, the food was great as usual and it was fun seeing members we have not seen for some time. Congratulations to the new Board of Directors and Officers for 2023. It's going to be a great year.

As I write this, it's the last day of 2023 Fly Fishing Show. I always felt we are very lucky to have the show in our backyard and not have to travel far to take advantage of it. My favorite part is looking at all the new products coming out. One can very quickly become a gear head with everything that claims to make our sport so much easier and I'm sure will help all of us catch more fish. I really enjoy going to the seminars about opportunities and classes from the leading people in our sport. Personally, I think we are very lucky in where we live with the many and varied fishing experiences available to us.

Our very own Gary Turri will once again be offering pre-meeting casting and improvement lessons this year. Starting in May and continuing through to October, Gary will be offering free and let me repeat that, free casting lessons. Anyone who has worked with Gary in the past knows what a great opportunity this is. Something new this year is the Fly Casting Development Skills Program where you can earn the bronze, silver, and gold level casting skills levels. Several of our club members have recently earned their bronze level. Everyone says they can cast until they can't.

## It's Auction Time!

### Denis Haire – Auction Chairman

The TVFF Silent Auction is back! This is our fundraising effort in support of our club missions of education and conservation. This year's event will feature a range of items from equipment to buddy trips. Here are the particulars:

When: April 5, 2023  
Time: Preview starts at 6pm. Bidding opens at 7pm.  
Where: Cornerstone Fellowship Church (across the street from Costco Livermore)  
348 N Canyons Parkway, Livermore CA

We are still accepting donations! Please contact me.

## 2023 TVFF Board of Directors

### Officers

<b>President</b>	Martin Loomis
<b>Vice President</b>	Alan Wyosnick
<b>Secretary</b>	Al Mansky
<b>Treasurer</b>	Chris McCann
<b>Past President</b>	Jim Broadbent

### Directors

<b>Auction</b>	Denis Haire
<b>Conservation</b>	Gary Prince
<b>Education</b>	Rob Farris
<b>Outings</b>	Mitchie McCammon
<b>Fly Tying</b>	Jim Broadbent
<b>Membership</b>	Greg Blandino
<b>Newsletter</b>	Mark Spruiell
<b>Raffle</b>	Steve Johnson
<b>Refreshments</b>	Gary Prince
<b>Speakers</b>	Dave Fontaine
<b>Trout in Classroom</b>	Daniel Kitts
<b>Webmaster</b>	Mark Spruiell

## What's New for this Year's Auction?

Curious about items that will be available? A website and catalog have been created to allow for a preview of the items. Here is the link:

[TVFF Auction 2023](#)

Items will continue to be added, so check back often!

Another feature we will have this year is on-line pre-bidding. This will allow members to start bidding for items before the in-person event and finish bidding on those items at the in-person event. More information to follow on this...



## Fly Fishing Show Wrap Up

The TVFF booth was a great success at the show this year. Thanks to everyone who volunteered to work in the booth, and especially to membership director Greg Blandino, education director Rob Farris, and outings director Mitchie McCammon for organizing the event and producing the promotional materials. If you didn't make it to the show, here's a picture of our booth before the show opened:



Also, if you missed the fly fishing film festival, there will be screenings this month in Larkspur, Palo Alto and Orinda. Check the [show schedule](#) for more details.

## Outings and Activities

### Yuba River Fishing & BBQ – March 4-5

There is still space available on this trip, but each day is limited to just 20 people. The cost for each day is \$45 per person which includes the BBQ lunch. It is always fun to trade fish tales over lunch at the picnic tables. The weather can be unpredictable at this time of year. Last year we had snow in Grass Valley. Sign up for one or both days. You are responsible for your own lodging if you choose to stay overnight. Fishmeister: Rob Farris.

Register separately for [fishing on March 4](#), [fishing on March 5](#) and to [volunteer to help with the BBQ](#).



### Intermediate/Advanced Dry Fly Fishing – Starts March 8

These sessions are designed for fly fishers with existing practical dry fly experience that wish to advance their skills and dry fly techniques. The [class](#) is scheduled to coincide with the key entomology hatches during the spring season.

### Fundamentals of Fly Fishing – Starts March 15

TVFF offers the popular Fly Fishing Fundamentals [class](#) taught by experienced club members for new and prospective members, and especially for those beginners just starting their fly fishing journey. No equipment is necessary for participation in this class as the club has sufficient rods and reels for beginners to use. The course objective is to educate and prepare new fly fishers with sufficient depth to enable each attendee to fully enjoy the sport and begin to effectively fly fish on their own in both streams and lakes. The course this year consists of six sessions, including four classroom sessions, a three-hour casting instruction session, and an on-stream practical session with instruction.

### Lower Sac Guided Trip – Apr 27-28

The Lower Sacramento River is a world-class rainbow fishery right in our backyard. [This trip](#) will be two days on the river, guided by [NorCal Fishing Guides](#). The fish are large, 16-20+ inch fighters that give a good battle coming to the boat. Lunch is included on the river. Guides are happy to provide their own pre-rigged rods for anglers. Don't forget to buy and bring your Steelhead Report Card. Your fishmeister is Ron Dueltgen.

### Hat Creek Salmonfly Trip with Baum & Manzanita Lakes – May 12-15

This is a three-night, four-day [trip](#) to explore the 3.5 miles of fishable wild trout water at Hat Creek. Arrive on the first day with late evening fishing, then three full days of fishing to follow. It is scheduled for the traditional large Salmonfly and Golden Stonefly hatches that occur during this period, as well as several other hatches. The third and fourth days will be on Baum and Manzanita lakes. It is recommended to utilize a watercraft on

both lakes, although fishing can be and is often successful from the shore locations as we did last year. This trip is currently fully subscribed but there is no cost to join the waitlist.

## Chasing the Heritage Trout Challenge – May 24

This [class](#) is designed to prepare club members for scheduling and completing the California Heritage Trout Challenge. To qualify for the Challenge, six different native trout must be caught within their historic range. The historic range, for the purpose of the Challenge, includes the trout's native distribution in California, prior to human influence (pre-19th century), and all waters that feed into this watershed. The course will focus on explaining the Heritage Trout Challenge in California and its objectives and benefits for the fly fishing community.

## Truckee Watershed Camping Trip – June 16-18

This is our annual three-night, four-day [camping trip](#) headquartered at Logger Campground, Stampede Reservoir with three days of fishing the Big Truckee, Little Truckee, and Milton Lake for rainbow and brown trout. It coincides with the peak of multiple aquatic hatches in the area and will include river wading opportunities and an optional day of fishing at Milton Lake. Fishing techniques to be used include traditional indicator nymphing, Euro nymphing, streamers, and dry fly techniques. Your fishmeister is Rob Farris.



## Lake Almanor – Chasing the Famous Hex Hatch – June 29 - July 1

This hatch of the largest mayfly we see in California (generally size 6-10) and only lasts from about the third week in June through the first week in July. The resident big browns, rainbows, and the large smallmouth bass chase and congregate to attack these adult, surface riding bugs about 45 minutes before sundown and 1/2 hour after dark. The lake action is right at dark so we have the day to relax or to fish some of the many local smaller streams in the area.



## West Fork of the Carson River Ladies Trip – July 15

Ladies, if you have felt a bit intimidated to fish with the guys, then this trip is for you. It is an easy trip with beautiful scenery and hungry little brook trout. This is a one-day up and back trip to the West Fork of the Carson River in Hope Valley. Wading and access is easy, but it is suggested that you do bring along a wading staff. The drive is approximately 3 hours up Hwy 88. Our day will encompass a full day of fishing with a streamside break for lunch; you will need to bring your own food and beverages. Drinks and dinner are available for additional cost at one of the small towns at the conclusion of the day. Your fishmeister is Mitchie McCammon.



## Member Reports

### Installation Dinner

We had a terrific turnout at our February club meeting for the board member installation potluck dinner. A big congratulations goes out to Mitchie McCammon for winning the Singing Reel award this year for her tireless efforts as our outings director.



### Entomology on-stream practical session on the Lower Yuba River – Rob Farris

Once again we returned to the Lower Yuba River for the annual on stream session of our Entomology class. It has always been very successful in capturing and identifying the multiple bugs that exist in this terrific watershed. If you are going to the UC Property Lower Yuba trip on March 3 or 4, our results might be helpful for what bugs are currently in the river system.



**You got to dig!!!**



**Tray collections**



**Mitchie & her fly box**

**Attendees:** Rob Farris, Denis Haire, Mitchie McCammon, Greg and Betty Blandino, Eugene Lee, Victor Polverino, Scott Rosingana, Rigo Ortiz and his daughter Bella, Cassie and Jason Ohms.

**Weather and water:** arrival temperature of 45 degrees and mid-afternoon temperature rising to 58. Water temperature of 49 in the AM and 51 in the PM, with water a bit high at 2,300 cfs vs. normal 1,100 flows. We found a beautiful day with little wind, and clear water.

We were not alone! A crowded parking lot at Hammon Grove filled with 15 cars and anglers from Tamalpais, Lance Gray with a client from Chico Fly Fishers, six Diablo Valley Fly Fishers, and 10 from Tri-Valley on the class session. We set up our “office” right on the gravel bar in moderate current (fast in the main channel) opposite Hammon Grove. The class showed a lot of enthusiasm and was having fun tracking down bugs in the water using their seine nets and observing the different identifying tails of both mayflies and stoneflies in our white specimen trays.

Watching the swimmers, clingers, and crawlers was fun to see because you don't completely understand how they move (those Blue Wing Olives are small and VERY quick) unless you see it in person. And what a great tool to impart movement for your flies. It was also amazing to see a captured caddis nymph try to build a house with the little gravel in the tray and was surprising how quickly it appeared to do so. We finished it off by having Mitchie match her flies to the real bugs. The lesson? The bugs are a lot smaller than you think so go small with your flies (except those big stonefly guys and girls).



**Skwala & Golden Stonefly nymphs**



**Hatching adult midge**



**Glossosoma Caddis Pupa**

We had great video work and assistance from Dennis Haire and Mitchie McCammon in capturing not just the bugs in the specimen trays but their sizing and locomotion. We found great examples of the typical Mayfly, Caddis, and Stoneflies, some of which will make it to our TVFF specimen display at the next meeting. We hope to make those videos available on the website in the near future for everyone’s benefit, as they are quite instructive.

Three hours of on-stream collection and identification work was followed with lunch on the picnic tables in what is becoming a TVFF staple; the dessert tray with cookies from Mitchie McCammon and chocolate bars from Betty Blandino. What a great way to refresh and top off lunch. And then it was gearing up time with leaders tied, flies selected, and wading back into the river to fish the afternoon.



Lunch of course



Skwala adult



PMD nymph

### Bugs found (nymphs and adults):

- Skwala nymphs, sizes 4-8's. Very mature and ready for hatching, displaying classic crawling behavior. Hiding under rocks set in trays. Heavy black bodied with mustard under thorax abdomen coloring.
- Golden Stoneflies: size 6-12's. Over a dozen of various sizes but most were in their 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> year of maturation and not ready to hatch yet. Maybe later this spring.
- Blue Wing Olives: size 18-22's and swimming like crazy all over the four trays. Over 30 of them swimming their little tails off (3 tails for mayflies).
- March Browns: size 16's but only a couple in a nice rusty coloring.
- Midges: size 18-26's and very abundant. Highlight of the day with seeing one hatch as the tray water warmed and it sprouted its wings right on the edge of the collection tray in front of everyone. And quite a large specimen for this time of year.
- American Grannom (Brachycentrus) Caddis: size 14-16's with the characteristic dark black head and chartreuse green body of the larvae stage found in faster riffles. Several of these captured in the nets observed wiggling in the trays outside of their customary plant-based material houses.
- Glossosoma Caddis: size 14-16 with characteristic brown head and cream body. A couple observed in mid stage larvae, and one found trying to build their stone house to pupate right in the tray.
- Pale Morning Duns: sizes 16-18 with only a couple observed, likely because of the high-water flow as these guys tend to like more subtle current flows.

### Afternoon fishing:

We were fortunate to have five new Club members in the class and fishing the river with us in the afternoon; Cassie Ohms and her husband Jason, Rigo Ortiz and his daughter Bella, and Eugene Lee. We had their TVFF mentors on the river with Rob Farris, Denis Haire, and Mitchie McCammon assisting them along the way. Two of our more experienced members, Scott Rosingana and Victor Polverino, risked the high water crossing and fished the opposite river side down quite a while searching for adult Skwalas (not so much luck unfortunately) with both Euro and dry fly styles. The searching Blandino couple, Greg and Betty, both headed downstream to fish around the big rock with a deep pool looking to catch a big rainbow sleeping to no success (or perhaps Gary Prince's four-pound sucker from last year...☺). And the remainder of us spread out over the north side of the river using indicators and Euro nymphing.

Unfortunately all that activity was to sharpen our skills for the UC Property event in two weeks with only one hard grab among the class. But everyone in attendance now clearly understands what prolific aquatic life exists in the Yuba and will be well prepared to put that to good use with multiple fly choices.

## Ken Tetzl

Not much to report. Duck season ended on an Ok note .....Quack, Quack..... Only been out fishing twice. One, to the Lower Stanislaus and totally skunked!! Slightly roiled water, no hatches at all and not one rise!! Two, to the Calaveras River below New Hogan. One 8" trout on my second cast and nothing else at all for the next 4 hours!!! Again, roiled water, no hatches at all and not a single rise!!! Kinda slow except for the very nice sunny weather both days.

## Casting for Recovery River Helping

### Suzanne Gulick – CfR Program Coordinator

Ahhh... spring at the Indian Creek Lodge in the Trinity Alps. There is something special about a Northern CA Casting for Recovery Retreat where you wake up to the sound of geese honking and if you listen carefully, you can hear the river flowing through your backyard. You open your door and start the day by breathing in crisp cool air as you gaze on snowy mountain peaks. It makes you appreciate all that nature has to offer. And it's also an opportunity for fourteen breast cancer survivors to learn the new sport of fly fishing in a supportive and therapeutic environment. And by taking part as a CfR River Helper, you can make all this possible.

This year the Northern California CfR Retreat will be held the weekend of April 7-9. Saturday will be spent teaching participants the rudiments of fly-fishing lore -- gear, knots, entomology and of course casting. On Sunday, the excited women will don their waders, grab their rods, and head down to the Trinity River where each woman will be matched with a "River Helper" guide. The river helpers are critical, both in providing a sense of security for women who are new to wading but also in selecting flies, helping with knots, deciding where to fish, learning to mend, and simply knowing what to do if they get a fish on the line. The women and their helpers only have the morning to fish, but it is enough to whet appetites for this new sport and bring big smiles to everyone's faces.

Please consider volunteering as a River Helper. [Click here](#) to find out more about Casting for Recovery. [Click here](#) to find out more about River Helping and complete an application.



## In fly fishing, failure IS an option... (and that's just fine)

### Kirk Deeter – Trout Unlimited

While I was fishing the Delaware River with him several years ago, my friend, author Monte Burke, summed up the entire fly-fishing experience with succinct aplomb: “At the end of the day,” he said, “it’s really just about problem solving, like putting pieces of a puzzle together.”

How true! And I’ve found that the most dedicated anglers tend to be those who relish challenges, even simple ones like, “how am I going to trick *that* creature, hiding behind *that* rock, to eat *this* fly?”

Of course, there are many factors that affect your chances.

Can you see the fish? If not, do you at least have an educated hunch where it might be? Can you make a cast with fairly primitive tools that drops a fly in a spot where the fish will notice? Can you choose a fly pattern that looks enticing enough to prompt the fish to want to eat it? And, maybe most important, can you present that fly in a way that makes it seem natural enough that the trout will really be fooled?

If you can do all that, boom... easy enough. Nothing to it!

But I’m here to tell you that I’ve been doing this stuff a very, very long time. And still, more often than not, I fumble one of those variables, and I fail.

And I couldn’t be more grateful for that.

Because *that’s* what keeps me interested, and thinking, and pressing and learning. As far as I’m concerned, the day I stop learning will be the day I hang up my waders and stop fly fishing forever. I just don’t see that happening.

Still, I often hear from frustrated friends: “Oh, fly casting is so hard, I’ll never figure that out.” Or, “I’d fish more, but the knots you have to tie are so complex.” Or, “I thought I did everything right, and the fish ate my fly, but it got off before I could land it...”. Fine! Great! Sometimes when I’m fishing myself, I cheer for the fish!

Don’t quit. Don’t lose faith. It’s *supposed* to be difficult. Embrace that. Learning curves are cool, and they sure as heck shouldn’t be barriers, especially in a sport that connects you with the outdoors and all the wonderful feelings you can have as river currents wrap around your shins. At least it’s beautiful!



Talking through the puzzle



Obvious puzzle pieces

And know that if you need help, there are many people willing to [mentor](#), lend a hand, offer advice, whatever. We live in a world of “instant gratification.” And in the trout-fishing world, some guides have figured out ways to sidestep actually teaching how to fish, so that anyone who can hold a fly rod and lift when they hear “set” can land a fish. So much in magazines, and websites, and other media, has been dedicated to “dumbing it down.”

That’s fine, I guess. I’m all for simplifying and making the sport more inviting and less daunting. But problem solving always has been, and always will be, the essence of fly fishing for trout.

Any trout caught simply because a guide yells “strike” and nothing more is a “participation trophy.” I often wonder how many “participation trophies” [guides](#) should be handing out. A real “trophy” fish has nothing to do with how long it is, how fat it is, what species it is, or what line you used to land it. A real trophy is a fish you catch yourself... by your own means... using whatever skills you’ve developed, no matter how basic or humble they might be, with a genuine understanding of what it really took to get there.

Failure is, in truth, the key to satisfaction. Because when you do link all those variables together—you find the fish, you make the cast, you choose the bug, and you present it just right... and you see that big ‘ol snout come up for a sip... that’s the best puzzle you’ll ever solve. And that’s the greatest measure of success any fly angler can hope to realize.



Choosing the correct puzzle piece



Puzzle solved

## Items for Sale

If you need contact information for a member, use the club’s online [roster](#).

### Gary Turri

New in Box Floating Fly Lines at 40-50% Off:

- Scientific Anglers Amplitude Smooth Creek Trout WF-6, \$50
- Scientific Anglers Spey Lite Scandi Integrated 240 grain, \$50
- Scientific Anglers Frequency Magnum Glow WF-6, \$40
- Scientific Anglers Frequency Magnum Glow WF-7, \$40
- Cortland Trout Boss Double Taper DT-5, \$50
- Cortland Trout Boss Double Taper DT-6, \$50