

**Subject:** Member Meeting - Annual Holiday meeting

**Date:** Monday, December 12, 2016 at 10:19:03 PM Hawaii-Aleutian Standard Time

**From:** Alaska Fly Fishers

**To:** Casey Andrysiak

*Featuring Fish Talk, Tying Clinic News, and more!*



# FLYLINES

*Official Newsletter of the Alaska Fly Fishers*

**DECEMBER 2016**

## ***PRESIDENT'S HOOK***



First, I would like to take a moment to give my appreciation to the members who were attended the November 7 General Membership/Annual Membership meeting; and to congratulate and welcome the new and returning members to the executive board. Following the business meeting, longtime member and newsletter contributor Bill Hauser gave a great, informative presentation to the club.

Now for the meat of the column:

As I was getting Christmas decorations out and separating my fishing gear to store for the rest of the winter – I have pretty much resigned that my fishing season is over, I realized that this month's President's Hook would be a great forum to share with/remind folks about the best ways to store or winterize their gear. By doing that, several things would be accomplished. If you have not done so already, and are not planning any more trips this year, now is a great time to not only wrap up a great year but also prepare for a better year in 2017. As you go through your gear, you can discard old, broken, outdated items. But also make a list of what you need to replace, repair, obtain for next year. It seems that this time of year people are always looking for "what would be a good gift?" Having worked in retail, I often would hear "He/She is so hard to shop for" or "what do I get for the gal/guy who has everything?" Well, the list of what you make from the project at hand can easily double as a gift ideas list. Or even something to refer back to when you are doing your own gift shopping and find a great deal. So I decided to go through my gear, piece by piece and give a brief overview of best practices and things to avoid. Later in the Fly Lines will be the article on winterizing/storing your gear. Sorry, a bit too much for The President's Hook (but now, I have piqued your interest!).

We are still in need of a few members to help with a few major roles with the club: We NEED a new treasurer (an executive board position), and an Auction coordinator. As you all know, the AFF Auction in April is the club's major fundraiser for the year, and unfortunately revenues were down this year from the numbers in 2015, therefore we are looking for an individual (or two), who can continue the success of our event and hopefully bring up the numbers in 2017! Ben Rowell, the outgoing treasurer and Auction coordinator the last two years has graciously agreed to assist those who are willing to step up and help out.

Our next meeting will be Monday, December 5, 2016 at 7pm at the Anchorage Elks Lodge in the Northway Mall and is the Annual Members/Christmas program. In addition to the member presentations, we will have a gift exchange (recommended gift value \$20) – the club typically has 2 or 3 additional higher value gifts somewhere in the mix, to go along with the Fly of the Month, AFF Merchandise drawing, and Ghillie Raffle which should have some desirable prizes this month. PRIME RIB DINNER will be served for only \$15, please let us know if you plan to eat so we can get enough – either notify a board member or on the website.

I look forward to seeing you all at the meeting, but if I don't see you Happy Holidays!

May the Fish be with you,

Patrick Malone

President, Alaska Fly Fishers

December 5th, 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm. Location: Elks Lodge, Northway Mall.

This is our annual Christmas meeting and gift exchange. Bring a wrapped gift, value not to exceed \$20.00, please.

## *FISH TALK* by Bill Hauser and Richard Nelson

### GLACIER SALMON - *Part I*

This Fish Talk is somewhat different from most and I am fond of saying that I have been involved in the business of fish biology more than 50 years and I am still learning. Not long ago, I learned of "Salmon World" and more recently I encountered their website and this report by Richard Nelson. This is not new information but he has packaged and presented it quite nicely. (I have edited and deleted some sentences to reduce the length.) Bill.

#### STRAYING SALMON

It was high summer in Glacier Bay National Park but I couldn't see a trace of the ice that gave Glacier Bay its name. It was hard to imagine that just two centuries ago, Captain George Vancouver reported a solid wall of ice at the present mouth of the bay, with a vast glacier spreading away toward the north. Amazingly, thanks to the world's fastest glacial retreat, this has now become a massive complex of open waterways more than 60 miles long.

I'd come here to meet Dr. Alexander "Sandy" Milner, a biologist from Birmingham University in England (formerly, from Anchorage). Each summer for 35 years Sandy has worked in Glacier Bay, where he studies the development of salmon runs in streams that emerge as the ice retreats.

Now we are beside one of those streams—Wolf Point Creek—with Sandy and two of his graduate students, Leoni and Jessica.

Let us consider the first thing everybody learns about salmon: They hatch from eggs in a river or stream, spend their adulthood at sea, and then flawlessly migrate back to spawn in the same stream where they were born.

Countless scientific studies prove salmon possess this amazing ability but research also shows a small percentage of salmon don't come back home. Instead, they stray and end up spawning in streams another than their birthplace.

This fact is more than simply interesting...it's also vital for understanding the history of salmon and their future in a changing world. Few people know this better than Sandy Milner. And as Sandy hustled to the spot where he had first begun studies in this stream more than three decades earlier. I imagined him working in this same place when he was a much younger man, and more importantly, when this was a much younger stream.

This day, everyone helped to set a couple dozen baited minnow traps in the stream, and then Sandy had a few moments to reflect. He explained that Wolf Point Creek is about 45 miles from the mouth of Glacier Bay, and sometime in the 1940s or '50s this very spot was still covered by an immense glacial face. But by 1977—when Sandy's research began—the rapidly shrinking ice had drawn back about a mile. At that time, the whole surrounding area—where the crushing ice once stood—was mostly bare ground except for small, scattered plants like fireweed. The creek itself was a torrent of murky 35 degree water. Today it's far slower, shallower and clear, with summer water temperatures up to 62 degrees.

In fact, a bit later we all hiked to a deep pool farther upstream, cool enough for salmon yet warm enough for

humans to take a dip. At the same time, I tried to envision the ice, several hundred feet thick, where we now had this idyllic swimming hole amid a green alder jungle, where thrushes and warblers chorus in the luxurious summer dawns.

The swim was a short break in a very long and concentrated workday. Back at their research site, Sandy and his crew emptied dozens of silvery "minnows" (i.e., salmon fry) into a tray of water laced with a mild anesthetic. Next they noted the species for every fish, recorded its length and weight, gently extracted its stomach contents into a vial for later analysis, then returned it to the stream unharmed. Months later in the lab, every tiny bit of food from thousands of trapped fish would be identified under a microscope to understand the diet for young pink, chum, and sockeye salmon, as well as Dolly Varden char that share the same waters. Modern biological research is remarkable for its focus on examining the meticulous details of living nature and converting these details into numbers for analysis, assuring strict objectivity and accurate conclusions. If this sometimes gets tedious, you wouldn't know it by the animated energy of these scientists, who obviously loved their work and had completely saturated themselves with the wild beauty of Glacier Bay.

#### BIRTH OF A SALMON STREAM

In the late 1970s, still early in Sandy's studies of Glacier Bay, another retreating glacier revealed the nub of a stream that became known as Stonefly Creek. Sandy Milner jumped on this rare chance to study a stream from the start of its existence, when it was totally devoid of life. Within ten years, Stonefly Creek had runs of pink salmon and Dolly Varden; and soon afterward there were also spawning coho and sockeye salmon. By 2001, up to 5,000 pink salmon were spawning in Stonefly Creek, and in Wolf Point Creek as many as 12,000 pink salmon had returned.

Genetic studies reveal each new stream is colonized by salmon from nearby waterways, so in the early years of Glacier Bay's ice retreat strays came from outside the bay. In more recent times, streams like Stonefly and Wolf Point Creek are colonized by strays originating inside the bay. And as the ice continues to recede, these fish might themselves colonize new streams farther up the bay.

Life blossomed and diversified, so that by 2002 Stonefly Creek also had more than 80 species of freshwater invertebrates, mostly insect larvae and tiny shrimp-like creatures, which are essential food for young salmon. Analysis of the water chemistry also revealed salmon carcasses were helping to fertilize Stonefly Creek with nutrients brought in from the Pacific Ocean.

Sandy Milner's research documents a process that's been repeated countless times since Glacier Bay's ice started retreating two centuries ago. In an astonishingly short time, rich communities of life have developed in these Glacier Bay streams, bringing brand new salmon runs to the Pacific Coast of North America.

**Look for Part II in January's AFF Fly Lines.**

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Do you have a question for FISH TALK? Contact Bill at [karebill@gci.net](mailto:karebill@gci.net).

Bill has published *Fishes of the Last Frontier*, *Life Histories, Biology, Ecology, and Management of Alaska Fishes* and *Letters from Alaska, The Inside to the Outside*.

Read sample chapters at [www.billhauserbooks.com](http://www.billhauserbooks.com).

## DECEMBER GENERAL MEETING

Annual Christmas meeting and gift exchange. Please keep the cost to \$20.00 and under. 7:00 pm at the Northway Mall Elks Lodge.

## TYING CLINIC NEWS



The third Saturday of the month will be here soon and that December 17th is the Fly Tying Clinic at the William Jack Hernandez Fish Hatchery on Reeve Blvd at Post Road between 9am and 3pm. Since it is the holiday season, glass balls will be



available for creating a cheery ornament.

This session will be filled with lots of possibilities. **Pudge Kleinkauf** will be leading a table tying dry flies. **Dave Rooker** will introduce and guide beginners to tying. And **Charlie Hune** will demonstrate Norvise Techniques — answering all of the questions about how to make the most effective use of the vise and accessories that many of our club members have. What resources!



The winner will be chosen for the **One Feather - One Hook** challenge after the noon deadline. There was an error in preparations and if your “packet and instructions” did not include a feather you may substitute any brown hackle feather or email [cheryllynncline@gmail.com](mailto:cheryllynncline@gmail.com) to have one mailed to you. It will be fun to see what variety of flies comes out of this event and how the flies swim in the tank — and who wins! And then there are also the door prizes awarded on the hour with a chance for anyone showing up.

It is always interesting to see the materials and tools that members choose to bring to the clinic. The club has basic tools and materials for those who do not yet have their own set up. But the heart of every clinic is spending a relaxing time with other members and sharing the passion. There is a rumor that the traditional December snack will be on hand besides coffee and tea. Come in and warm up for the holidays — all day or a quick stop.

[Cheryl Cline](#), *Tying Clinic Coordinator*

## MEMBERS' CORNER

### Material Drive for Colony High School's Alaska Wildlife Course

'Tis the season for giving; so we're hoping you'll think of young beginning tyers this month by donating to the TU material drive for Colony High School. For details about this drive and the program at Colony High go to: <http://www.tu.org/blog-posts/alaska-holiday-high-school-fly-tying-material-drive>

Bring donated materials to the December AFF meeting, and see **Rich Johnson** who will be the TU contact for this project. If you can't make the December meeting consider contacting TU's Eric Booton at [ebooton@tu.org](mailto:ebooton@tu.org) to see what they can use.

'Tis the season – spread the joy!

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If you have an item to sell, something to share, or even a picture to post, please share it with the club. Contact the editor at [aff.flylines.ed@gmail.com](mailto:aff.flylines.ed@gmail.com)



## PROJECT HEALING WATERS UPDATE

### Tying Clinics

Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing (PHWFF) is dedicated to the physical and emotional rehabilitation of disabled active military service personnel and veterans through fly-fishing and fly tying education, rod building

and outings. The Anchorage program offers weekly tying classes at the William Jack Hernandez Sport Fish Hatchery located on Reeve Blvd on Thursdays from 5:30 to 7:30 PM through December 29th. Charlie Hune has led several tying seasons and is introducing new tying skills. The Wasilla program at the Wasilla Veteran's Center on West Point Drive meets on the first and third Wednesday of the month from 5 to 7 PM. Refer to our Facebook page located at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Project-Healing-Waters-Alaska/123753750975528> to obtain updates on activities. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at [PHWAlaska@gmail.com](mailto:PHWAlaska@gmail.com).



Above: Charlie Hune demonstrating tying at the Anchorage clinic (L), Mike Harsh instructing at the Wasilla clinic (R)

### **Volunteers Needed**

PHW Anchorage is seeking volunteers who are willing to help staff tying clinics in Anchorage and Wasilla. If you know how to tie flies and want to share your expertise with others and be able to talk about fishing, please stop by one of our tying clinics and check out the action. You will meet some new fishing partners who are eager to learn and have fun fishing.

Starting January 12th, Damond Blankenship will be teaching rod building to 11 participants over a period of six weeks through February 16th. If you have built a rod and are willing to assist, please contact Damond at 907 351-6810 or [damondent@gci.net](mailto:damondent@gci.net). The rod building sessions will be held on Thursdays from 5:30 to 7:30 pm at the William Jack Hernandez Sport Fish Hatchery.

Mailing address: 200 W. 34th Ave, Box 1233 Anchorage, AK 99503

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