



INDIANHEAD
FLY FISHERS
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Rod Jones	549-0430
Mike Bishop	549-1549
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Meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday of
each month at Idaho Pizza,
17 W. Commercial St., Weiser.
Fly tying demo at 6 pm,
program at 7 pm.

Committees

Budget: Jim Gulu, Lynette Jones

Conservation and Youth:
Mark Sands, Nando Mauldin,
Rick Walters

Education: Perry Kelley,
Garry Swindell

Fund Raising: Lynette Jones,
Sarah Gulu

Historian: Suzanne Orwig

Library: Rod Jones, Ken Gissel,
Dick Garrett

Membership: Mike Bishop,
Bill Betts

Newsletter: Perry & Sally Kelley,
Mary Thompson, Dick Garrett,
Ray Perkins

Outings: Mike Bishop, Al Sillonis

Programs: Tiffany McPheeters

Publicity: Mark Sands

News Caster

January 2012

President's Message by Bob Maki

Thanks to all who attended the Indianhead Flyfishers Christmas Party was a great time. Many thanks to **Jim Gulu** for a super job of getting a nice selection of Idaho Pizza's finest to start off the evening. Perry Kelley's brain teaser of a quiz was great fun. I don't know if anyone got all the answers right, though certainly all enjoyed its challenge. A big thanks also to **Sara Gulu** and **Frank Thomas** for being our Santa Clauses and getting the gift exchange completed in what had to be record time despite some minor confusion. Additionally, contributions made to the Elks Christmas baskets were greatly appreciated!

Congrats to **Mark Thompson** on the 50/50; it's nice to know you can still get a Christmas Bonus after you are retired.

I want to also acknowledge our editors, coordinators, and contributors to our newsletter. A lot of work goes on behind the scenes to make this happen every month, so thanks again for all you do. **Dick Garrett, Mary Thompson, Perry & Sally Kelley, Ray Perkins** are our newsletter committee and some double as contributing writers as well. If you'd like to submit an article or pictures for the newsletter, just let them know and they will help you get it done.

Cool weather keeping you indoors? It's time to put another log on the fire, relax and read a book or watch a video. Rod Jones will have the club's library available during meetings. The library is loaded with a great selection of books and videos that are free for all club members to use; come in and check some out. Speaking of libraries, the Weiser Public Library carries current editions and some back issues of *Northwest Fly Fishing & Fly Tye* magazines. We sponsor these magazines for the library so we can conduct fly tying classes there. By the way, fly tying classes will resume there on the third Tuesday of this month.

As I reflect back on this past year of fishing, I have to say it didn't take long to bring to mind what was the most rewarding experience. It wasn't the catching of native trout in a mountain lake, or catching bass in Oxbow, when I took my new pontoon boat on its maiden voyage last spring. No not even the 12-lb. Lahontan Cutthroat I had the good for-

Soft Hackle a Fly For All Seasons

by Perry Kelley

What concoction is made out of metal, feather, thread and fur, is designed solely to fool fish, that has been recorded in history and literature for over six centuries? It imitates nothing in nature but suggests many. It lacks color, appears translucent, adapts to many different aquatic settings. It is constructed with some materials that are vibrant with color and other rather bland materials that are really not intended to become wet. In water it gives the impression of aquatic life that can be in trout streams and ponds found world wide. It is the epitome of simplicity and the zenith of effectiveness. With careful adherence to presentation detail, an angler can use this as the total lure in almost all waters and conditions.

This sounds like a TV ad for a miracle lure, one that uses batteries, effervescence tablets, glow in the dark paint and recorded sound. No, it is not that complex, for I am talking about the soft hackle fly; not a fly pattern, but a style of fly that has caught fish for hundreds of years and will continue to catch fish for hundreds more. This article will discuss the basics of tying soft hackle patterns and some of the presentation techniques used to fish them.

There are many soft hackle patterns; some are merely fur bodies with a sparse hackle others are more elaborate with tails, wing cases, ribbing, bead or cone heads and wings. For most of our use, simple is much better. Because soft hackles evolved from the British Isles and some of the English materials used make the fly as effective today as hundreds of years, this will be our starting point.

First, the hook. The traditional hook is a short shanked wet fly hook with a sproat bend. The actual shank (eye to the beginning of the bend) is actually somewhat shorter than a regular hook bend. Picture a hook with the bend beginning at a point directly above or slightly before the hook point. Several hook styles can be used but almost all soft hackle flies are tied with a shorter-than-normal body. The weight of the hook helps hold the fly in the most effective level of water.

Next, the thread. Pearsall's Gossamer silk thread is the universal thread of choice. Several reasons: one silk thread historically has been used by fly tiers for hundreds of years. Silk has the property of holding color when wet. When tying with Pearsall's you must wax the thread. If not, the thread will unwind

when you release the tension. The length of the body is important. The body must not extend past the point where the hook bend begins. Quite often this will be directly above the point of the hook.

The next component often is the dubbing. Almost always the dubbing of choice is natural fur. The British love to use hare's mask, muskrat and mole. Quite often they blend mole (dyed brown or black or natural gray) and hare's ear. Because all insects have a mottling of color on their bodies, this is a very important step. Now the difference is quite interesting. One school of thought states that the dubbing must conform to the shape of the insect. Think about caddis, stone flies, May flies all have different and distinct shapes. The other option, and I think quite interesting and clever, is that the dubbing should be extremely light and loose on the thread. The dubbing should just slightly dirty the thread. When wrapped the dubbing is much like a halo around the body modifying the thread-body color. Different combinations of thread, dubbing will create different body colors. This can be confusing; fish perceive color different than humans.

One further variation is that some soft hackle patterns have a short thorax which will have an effect of the function of the hackle.

Herl, ribbing and quills are also used in soft hackle patterns. Floss and silk threads are quite common. A very popular pattern, Partridge and Orange, uses just the tying silk as a body.

The hackle is the major ingredient of the fly. To start, sparse is not only good it is completely essential. The Brits use some interesting hackles, some that are not legal to have in the U.S.

Woodcock, English Grouse, English Partridge, Golden Plover, Starling and Moorhen are commonly used. Golden Plover and Moorhen are not legal in the US. Most of our upland game birds make quite acceptable soft hackles. The criteria one should use choosing hackle material would be (1) color (complement and or contrast with body color) , (2) texture (will hackle be soft and absorbent enough to move with the water) and length. Generally the hackle is sized to be longer than the body. Because of the function of soft hackle, it is necessary to make the hackle longer than the body of the fly.

There are several methods of tying the hackle. I am going to suggest one method which I feel works best and is quite easy to tie. You first must prepare the feather. Pluck the feather from the hackle skin. Determine the size and color. Hold the feather so you are looking into the cup (concave) side. Stroke the hackle barbs downwards from the tip. Moisten the fingers of your hands to aid in the preparation. After stroking the tip you will have the tip feathers point toward the top of the feather and the rest pointing down toward the bottom. Now select the feathers you will actually use for the hackle. You will probably use 1/8 to 3/16 inches of feather. Below that you will again stroke the barbs you will not use on the fly downward. Then remove these barbs from the feather. You should now have a tip with barbs pointing upward, and hackle with barbs pointing downward and a stem. Now lay the feather on top of the shank directly behind the head of the fly. Tie in feather in the point below the tip and above the hackle. Wrap thread onto the tip making sure you make even wraps. Now you can wrap back to the end of the body. Reverse the thread direction a couple wraps and place on the dubbing. Wrap the dubbing to the point of the hackle. Remove excess dubbing if necessary and bring thread to hackle tie in point. You will probably need hackle pliers to wrap hackle. Moisten your left hand fingers. Take your thumb nail and make a slight crease on the hackle stem a tie in point on the hook eye side. This will keep the stem from twisting when wrapping. Begin wrapping the hackle. With your moist fingers, fold and stroke the hackle fibers. If you do this correctly all of the barbs will slope toward the back of the fly. Note the point the hackles start. Wrap one turn only to that point. Keep stroking the hackles. If the stem starts to twist reverse wrap and finish. With practice you will be able to control all of the barbs. Tie off feather, clip stem and remove errant fibers and make head. Cement and you are finished.

When wet the hackles will form a sheath around the body of the fly. The effect is a multi-colored body that looks very buggy. The impression is the hackles create the exo-skeleton, the thread and dubbing create the body. The hackles will slightly give movement to the fly.

Some of the techniques of fishing the soft hackle follow.

Fishing Soft Hackles

Now that you have learned some of the tying techniques for the soft hackle style, let us explore the next hurdle—presentation. To quote the immortal words of the revered old sage (in this case Winston) of angling with a fly, “the best store bought fly ain’t worth a crap if it don’t look like a bug to a fish.” Or, “Giv’ me a piece of shoe leather on a hook and I’ll swim it through a hole and catch a fish every time.” Jim, the local guru of presentation, stated in his best seller,

Catching Fish With Flair that fly fishing is 60% presentation, 20% fly pattern and 30% creative exaggeration when documenting the catch. Jim really knows his fly fishing but his math leaves much to be desired. Well you can’t say that he doesn’t give 110% to his sport. So how do you present soft hackle flies? I will briefly describe three techniques. Two of these methods are for streams and rivers and one is for still water. You will also develop methods on your own.

Nymphing From England comes the classic presentation for moving water. This method is somewhat similar to European nymphing. It is important to wade and recognize water that is likely to hold fish. You must develop a stealthy approach to the holding water. Using a long rod (at least 9 - 11 feet long) and a long leader (10 - 15 feet long) make sure your footing is secure and with 8 - 10 feet of line quarter cast upstream. Immediately do an upstream mend. You want the fly, leader and line to line up. Hold the rod at a 11 o clock position and pivot your body to follow the drift. Your line and leader should now form an elbow. This is important. Watch the elbow; if there is any movement in the line, assume it is a strike and set the hook. In other words, the elbow is the indicator. Allow the fly to swing at the end of the drift. With tension on the fly you now can gradually lower your rod. Move down a couple of steps and repeat the presentation. Work your way through the holding water. You control the depth of the fly by the weight on the hook or added lead. Normally you will fish near the surface.

Lisenring The second presentation, the Lisenring Lift, comes from America. This is a very effective method for rising or working fish. The presentation is somewhat similar to the English

See Soft Hackle Flies, page 4

President's message, continued from page 1

tune to land during the club's Pyramid Lake outing. What stands out more than all of these is my opportunity to share my fly fishing enthusiasm with some good friends from California and Nevada, who I joined at Gold Lake in the Sierra's this past fall. Only one of the six had even held a fly rod before, and I could tell from comments made they'd like to at least give casting one a try. I know now that I would have begun fly fishing years before I did, had someone just put a fly rod in my hand and said "just give it a try." The opportunity to do just that came that weekend for my friends and it has been exciting to see the results, not just that day, but now months later. A recent phone conversation revealed a couple of the guys, including one of their wives had already taken a lesson and signed up for more at their local fly shop. The buzz I'm hearing from them now is to hit some "fly only" water when we go in 2012. (I think they are getting serious) Our last evening around the campfire everyone was making predictions and when my turn came I suggested they'd all be using fly rods next time. Though they may not all have fly rod in hand next time, I don't think it will be long and the others will wonder what *is it* they are missing. What that *is* exactly I could not tell them, for I myself could not put into words the feeling one gets when a trout sips your fly off the waters surface and removes all the slack you were holding onto only a moment ago. That they all will get the fly fishing bug may never happen, but those that do I'm sure won't regret it.

From the campfire where stories are told that never get old, Bob

Soft Hackle flies (Continued from page 3)

method in that you must wade and fish downstream. Again place yourself above the working fish. The same setup (line and leader) will work for both methods. Quarter cast downstream using enough line and leader to swing into the rising fish. Keep as much slack as possible into line to allow the fly to sink. With rod tip right near the water let the fly drift and then gradually swing into the rising pod of fish. Then very gently raise the rod tip allowing the fly to ascend like an emerging insect. Because you have a direct connection to the fly there will be no doubt when a fish strikes. This is an especially effective method for emerging caddis flies.

Still water is different in that you have a tight connection to the fly. Soft hackles designed for still waters are tied somewhat different. First, color is important especially when fishing for brook trout. Partridge and Orange is a fantastic stillwater brookie pattern. Next dub in a short thorax to keep the hackle away from the body. The motion of the hackle is necessary to excite the fish into striking. Some of the stillwater soft hackle patterns are much larger than those used in moving water.

To conclude, soft hackle style fly patterns have much merit. Try them and catch a lot of fish.

On the lighter side:

Three blondes are sitting by the side of a river holding fishing poles with the lines in the water. A Game Warden comes up behind them, taps them on the shoulder and says, "Excuse me, ladies, I'd like to see your fishing licenses."

"We don't have any," replied the first blonde.

"Well, if you're going to fish, you need fishing licenses," said the Game Warden.

"But officer," replied the second blonde, "we aren't fishing. We all have magnets at the end of our lines and we're collecting debris off the bottom of the river."

The Game Warden lifted up all the lines and, sure enough, there were horseshoe magnets tied on the end of each line. "Well, I know of no law against it," said the Game Warden. "Take all the debris you want." And with that, he left.

As soon as the Game Warden was out of sight, the three blondes started laughing hysterically. "What a dumb Fish Cop," the second blonde said to the other two. "Doesn't he know that there are steelhead trout in this river?"

Fishing the Owyhee River

Dick

Perry wanted me to take pictures of some of the flies I have caught fish on this fall and winter in the Owyhee River. So attached is the "stuff" I use to tie the fly-both .doc and pdf and a picture of some variations of the fly-jpg. Use this if you want to.

I caught 8 crappie and 5 small browns on this fly Dec.29 just below the park in the Owyhee river. Al and I caught 15 or 16 good browns (14 to 25 inches long)earlier in Dec.on the same fly!

Mike Thomas

The following members have January as their due-date for renewal of membership. Please see Jim Gulu and pay ASAP so he doesn't have to get rough with you.

Grant Bauht
Tony & Tami Buthman
Jose Calderon
James Torrel

Owyhee River Winter Flies

(MT Mahogany Sub Bug)

Hook: Size 16-18, Fish Guy #540 or standard dry fly or curved caddis

Tail: Fuzz from base of brown feather; amber Zelon; natural CDC or wood duck fibers

Body: Black, mahogany brown or rusty brown Goose or Turkey biot -dark edge facing tail

Thorax: Mahogany brown camel dubbing or peacock herl

Wing (wing Case): none; Poly yarn; (CDC)





Santa and his helper —



A fishing rod is a stick with a hook at one end and a fool at the other.

Attributed to Samuel Johnson

January 2012

Coming Events

Jan 3 —IFF Board,
Beehive 7 pm

Jan 10 - IFF Membership
Idaho Pizza
6 pm Fly tying Demo
7 pm Program

Jan 13-14 Western Idaho
Flyfishing Exposition

Jan 17 —Fly Tying 7 pm
Weiser Library



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3 Board Meeting	4	5	6	7
8	9	10 Member Meeting	11	12	13 Western Idaho Fly Fishing Exposition	14
15	16	17 Fly Tying	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				