



DESERT FLY CASTERS *Forward Casts*

DESERT FLY CASTERS A BARBLESS CLUB



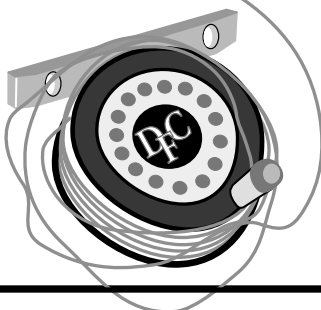
FEBRUARY MEETING:

Wednesday,
February 9, 2005
Dinner- 6:00 PM
Meeting- 7:00 PM

American Legion Post #2
2125 S. Industrial Park Ave.
in Tempe

THE LIGHTER SIDE OF LIFE:

*Never test the depth of the water
with both feet.*



Presidents Report- February 2005

Well, it's February and I can't remember the last time I was fishin'. This really isn't like me. I am usually out a couple of times a month. Seems that with all the rain, I just can't figure out where to go. Oak Creek, the Salt and the Verde Rivers are all out of the question due to run off. Reports from Seneca aren't any good either. Seems they haven't been stocking it as much as they have in recent years. Don't get me wrong, there are still fish to be caught just not the numbers we have seen previously. On the flip side, I am enjoying the rain that we so desperately need. Realistically, the fishing could be bad all the way up to June because of run-off but that is fine with me. There will be plenty of fish to be caught later in the season. It might be time for a trip to the San Juan or Lee's Ferry.

I am really getting excited about our upcoming day with Bob Clouser. His plane tickets are purchased, hotel reservations made and we are working on getting food for the event. Everything is coming together nicely. This all day event will be something that you don't want to miss! Since this is free for all DFC members, give Dave Weaver a call or come to the February meeting if you haven't paid your dues for 2005. You can reach Dave at (480) 820-0903.

The International Sportsman's Expo will be this month. The dates are 18th, 19th and 20th. If you signed up to help in the booth, expect a call from me to get things finalized. If you haven't signed up and would like to help, you can reach me at (480) 217-5089. We could really use all the help we can get this year. Not only do we have our own booth to manage but we also judge the casting clinic and this year the Federation would like for us to help with their booth on the 18th. You will get into the expo for free which means you can help for a few hours and then spend some time wandering around and looking at all the cool stuff.

Due to lack of interest and lack of a host, we have cancelled the February outing to Saguaro Lake. Don't fret, there will be plenty of other outings to attend. Next month, our Vice President Bill Thyng, will be hosting a trip to Point of Pines. I fished there several times last year and each time caught a lot of fish. Even if the fishing is poor, the lake is beautiful. The dates are March 11th-13th so mark your calendar. See Vince Deadmond at the meeting if you see an outing you would like to host.

Dave Foster from Marble Canyon Guides at Lee's Ferry will be our guest speaker for February. He always puts on a good presentation and it will be nice to see him again. Come join your friends and don't forget to come early for dinner.

See you at the meeting!

Cinda

DFC FEBRUARY MEETING.....

Dave Foster of Marble Canyon Guide Service. Dave will be talking about Lee's Ferry fishing conditions and suggestions on how to get the most out of a guided trip. Also, Dave will speak on some of the most common mistakes people make while fishing with a guide.

February Dinner Meeting Menu

DFC pays for the rent of the meeting hall by selling dinners before each meeting. By buying a dinner at the meeting, you can help the club pay for the meeting hall. The price of each Dinner is \$8.00, which includes gratuity. This month's menu will be: lasagna with garlic bread and salad. Come early and enjoy dinner with your DFC friends! *Dinner is served from 6pm to 7pm.*

IN MY HUMBLE OPINION

by Vince Deadmond

My computer files are full of short stories that I have written for the Desert Fly Caster newsletter. While re reading some of them I realize that I must have been desperate for volume, it certainly wasn't quality. I have stories about my dog, relatives, fish that I have known, fish that I would like to get to know, and other Desert Fly Casters with varying degrees of character. It's not too late for you to make a new years resolution to write a short story, or describe an outing, or an event where DFC members were involved. (fly tying, rod building, casting class, etc.) Your story does not even need to be current, some of you old timers could even write a story from the past. I know some of you keep a fishing diary, and that would be fun to peek at, just before the club visits that place again on an outing.

Our Puerto Penasco outing in November is a good example of a story that has not been told. It was a well attended outing where many folks caught fish. Several people caught their first saltwater fish on a fly rod. Any member can submit a story to the Desert Fly Caster Newsletter just e-mail [Bob McKeon. \(rmckdesign@msn.com\)](mailto:BobMcKeon.rmckdesign@msn.com) You can even include pictures of your catch. It has not been a problem in the past of having too many stories.



A DAY ON THE LAKE

by Eric Larsen

Ever get the feeling that you have so many things to do there is no way to get them all done? And the last thing you ought to do is go fishing? Well, I had one of those days recently. I called up one of our club members, Rocky Minster and I asked if he wanted to go to Seneca Lake fishing Sunday morning. He wasn't sure. He had a lot of things on his plate too. We agreed to touch base Saturday evening and if it was going to work out fine and, if not, that was okay too. It worked out.

We agreed that I would pick Rocky up at his place at 7am. I was running a little late because while I was loading up my stuff the dog decided to wander out of the house and "water" various neighborhood car tires, a fire hydrant and other things that are known only to dogs why it should be watered. Anyway, I picked up Rocky and we took off for Seneca Lake. It was the start of a very nice day.

Seneca Lake is full to the brim with water and still turbid looking from all the runoff from the recent rains. The water temperature was 45 degrees, the air temperature working its way up into the upper 50's and the sun was shining. There was a bit of breeze at times just

enough to ripple the water. The goal of the day was to take it easy so we took an hour talking and rigging up to get on the lake. The trip was of special significance because this was going to be the maiden voyage of that cool looking Trout Unlimited pontoon boat Rocky won at the DFC Christmas Banquet. We fiddled and tinkered getting the thing assembled and aired up. Rocky stood back admiring his boat and we put in at the place where the club usually camps at the annual April outing (which is coming up by the way). We didn't have champagne but the put-in was muddy so we got it a little dirty which in my book is probably better than trying to break a glass bottle on an inflatable watercraft.

Rocky started off fishing a semi-seal leech with dropper and me a Chukar Peacock Lady. I was out about 5 minutes and I got what I thought was a bite. It was real subtle. Not the typical Seneca trout teaser where they bump the fly twice and then won't take it. A few minutes later I caught my first fish. Meanwhile, Rocky was getting the feel of his new boat rowing away with the oars. Somehow he managed to catch a fish too. I say "somehow" because Rocky was rowing, trying to watch where he was going, zig-zagging around the lake and still managed to keep an eye on his rod to land a fish. We were doing better than the tackle guys on shore and trolling in their john-boats. The fishing was steady but not crazy like Seneca can be. We would catch a fish about every 10-20 minutes. After about an hour or so, the 45 degree water was starting to make my feet go numb so we went in to eat lunch. After all, we were there to enjoy ourselves and hypothermia was definitely not in the plan.

After lunch, Rocky decided that fins might make it easier to fish once he got to where he wanted to fish using the oars. Kind of like a bass fisherman with a 75 horse Mercury outboard motor on his boat to get where he needs to and then use an electric trolling motor to fish. The fishing (or the catching I should say) wasn't as regular in the afternoon as in the morning but there was no mistaking a strike. I was parked next to the reeds on side of the lake getting ready to tie on a dropper. The fly on the end of the leader was dangling in the water. A fish came up and almost took the fly rod with the fly. We had a pleasant time in the afternoon. I field tested an idea for a fly I had for Seneca and it worked! (Look for the fly-of-the-month in either March or April's newsletter). Around 4:30 pm, the fishing kind of petered out altogether and it was starting to feel cold anyway so we packed it in. We stopped in Globe (or Claypool ...one of those places) and ate breakfast for dinner. We talked about everything from religion to politics which made the trip home seem to go faster. Rocky got

his new boat figured out. We had good conversation, good weather, good fishing and.....a day on the lake.

KIRBY'S FISH

by Robert McKeon

Kirby had just eaten the peanut butter and jelly sandwich looking sheepishly in another direction as I approached my pickup. I had just finished talking with Gary, head wrangler of the fish and game department. Gary reminded me about the new regulations on the river and asked if I had seen any bait fishermen in the Flies Only section. Gary and I had known each other for over 20 years. He knew I'd be here in my favorite spot, Tuesday after the Opener. This was my first chance getting out to fish. My chance to rid myself of the winter doldrums. The river was always less crowded. Tuesday's I had this stretch all to myself. And, as Gary explained, because of rain last weekend he had his fill with rescuing two fishermen because of high waters. Luck would be on my side today as he deliberated- the river's wade able; the sun's warming; the insects would be teasing hungry trout and "...what's Kirby eating?"

My obedient dog, my companion of hunting and fishing expeditions was at it again. Kirby, an aged Golden Retriever, was still trying to look innocent, without much success, as I approached my pickup. The fly-fishing vest was crumpled and next to my waders, the torn empty plastic bag the sandwich was in tumbled slowly across the pickup bed as the breezes enthused it. There was dog slobber on my vest near the back zipper. Nothing else seemed out of place. My bamboo rod was still in place across the tailgate as I left it, along with the opened fly box I was searching before Gary pulled up.

Kirby knew he could get away with it, his educated nose, hunting instincts and anything yummy never let him down. I couldn't get mad, but so much for the treat after I fished today. It was always sort of a ritual after fishing this stretch just to sit on the tailgate, talk to Kirby, sharing a PB&J sandwich before heading back home. I could only sit in silence rolling my eyes back with disappointment. I needed to get in my waders to start of my early season trek.

Kirby and I shared quails, fly fishing trips and plenty of talks on the back of this old pickup for a better than 9 years. Kirby hadn't been out of my sight since I hunted up near Pierre, South Dakota below Harmon's small spread. Harmon's Golden Retriever, Cindy, had a small litter. Harmon's wife, Joey, insisted I take one of the pups. Harmon always treated me as part of the family when I hunted his land.

The last two years I realized many wonderful joys each time I came this way to fish. I learned to fish slower, look at the scenery attentively since my bypass surgery. I could smell the air with new kindness of being put on earth, a second rebirth each time I'd follow a path to the river's edge.

I consider my home waters, the Benton River, located in the northeastern tip of Walton County, an hour and half from home. The drive up here is always easy. By the time I get here I've unwound from the hectic city life. It's a short enough trip to where you can't have a bad day.

Grabbing my fly rod and helping Kirby from the pick-up we headed on the path to one of my favorite spots. The sun was glistening among the pines bouncing off the river's gentle currents, the ripples seeking colors of the coming spring. Wrinkled green reflections on the river's surface were present even though the foliage floor rested in drab browns. A leftover blanket of snow still remained in small patches. A breath of winter still hugged the far sides of the Benton.

It was nice to finally be on the river after the doldrums of isolation during the winter months. There was even a noticed prance in Kirby as he bounded ahead to investigate our return.

One of the first things I noticed was a fallen tree, a skeletal pine partially dipping into the edges of the river with its dead branches sticking skyward. The pine tree lay at an angle extending some 40 feet into the waters, a picturesque reminder beckoning a Winslow Homer painting. The new fallen pine tree was in full view, a peaceful old friend of nature now laid at rest. Its scraggly branches dipping into the river providing new currents for the hatches to collect in feeding lanes for a hungry brown.

My favorite spot on the river is a gravel bar fishermen know as "Woody's Point." Preordained by the locales or guides frequenting the river- someone years ago named them over a few drinks or a campfire. In fact some of the designated names date back to logging.

The only way one could reach Woody's Point was to get off the main path descending the small embankment

hanging on to various branches among the trees. Kirby was out ahead of me. He knew the river as well as I did. As always, there he was sitting by the group of boulders waiting for me. The gravel floor and sandy beach showed no sign of footprints. A good omen knowing I would be the only one to wade here. Trout always waited for my return. Woody's Point was a place to survey my pursuit of solitude too.



The little gravel island gave me a chance to get my bearings, where I could see a good portion of the river. This was part of the Tucker Wilderness tract, an 85-acre parcel bequeathed to the state by an automobile magnate in the early 1950's. The thick setting of pines, oaks, and alders had grown over the years. The occasional birch tree stood at attention with its barren branches outstretched beckoning the first spring bird to return. Its two track veins reaching various parts of the river united the heart of the county road some 1 1/2 miles back.

The waters were somewhat darker than usual with debris whirling in the current. A few small sticks floated lazily by. I spotted a rise just out and downstream that gave credence to my immediate mission wondering if the trout might accept one of my newly tied flies. Anxiously I eased near the edge of the gravel bar to cast my rod. The sipping trout was within my range.

Kirby was looking upstream unaware of my movement and my concentrated efforts to fish the dimpled rise. His tail indicated he was happy with his territory here with me as he pawed the gravel now next to me.

It was in my disgust, after some foolish casts that I should change flies. And, while I had my head buried in one of my

fly boxes Kirby gave off with a quick muffled "woof," almost playful in nature. I commented without looking up that he wasn't to go in swimming and to stay near me even though I didn't have a PB&J sandwich waiting for him. Kirby kicked up more gravel as he pranced gently brushing me against me now pawing at my leg. He got my attention as I folded my fly box and petted his hindquarters to settle him down. Kirby was anxious to share something upstream as he frolicked a little more feverishly. I grabbed at his collar, stroked his ears looked him in the eye reminding him he was a good dog, settle down, I loved him very much and to let me alone so I could fish. His perseverance was overwhelming as if he needed to tell me something- something right now! I knelt down next to him at eye level turned and followed his line of sight up stream.

I grabbed his ear playfully and kissed him telling him it was only some debris from the high waters. He was now to let me alone so I could fish. He licked at my face playfully. I could smell the PB&J.

Kirby straightened up, arched his back, cocking his head as his ears perked with excitement. He darted to the waters edge coming to a point as he steadied himself before barking again. The debris he had his eye on got my attention this time. It was a cluster of twigs about the size of a basketball. It was just a small clump of undergrowth floating towards us.

I let Kirby know what it was and not to worry reaffirming him of the good job he did spotting it. I intended to keep fishing wishing he'd settle down as long as he'd come out here on the point with me. The small brush pile floated close by as it swirled into a stronger current just beyond us. Kirby was not going to let this opportunity go by any longer as he closely followed it to the farthest section of Woody's Point. Kirby barked again while taking on a challenged position with his rump and tail set skyward. He was almost in the river at this point. He hesitated when I called at him reminding him he was not to go after the small junkie looking brush pile. Kirby came to a halt as I then gave him a sharp yell. He stood his ground as we both watched the dark brush pile slowly float beyond us.

I praised him again as I walked over and bent down to scratch him behind the collar. He sat down and looked up at me then looked out at the brush pile floating from our view towards the new fallen pine. All was good for about 30 seconds when he suddenly sprang up and leaped into the water to follow his brush pile. My obedient Kirby, never a dull moment, his inquisitive moments like this were never explained total confusion on his part as to what command had just registered or even if he tried to



Collectible DFC Pin available at FEBRUARY MEETING

*Proceeds from this pin will be
designated to our DFC commitment for
restoration at Canyon Creek.*

Help support our invironment with a 2005 DFC pin!

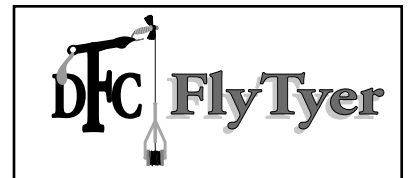
remember. Moments like this I suddenly realized what stress was. When I finished with today's fishing experience and coaxing Kirby from the water I was hoping the Bud beer truck would be parked right next to me in the parking lot.

I yelled and gave Kirby a command whistle. No response. He was gaining on the brush pile with each splash of his wake. I decided that I'd better hightail it down river, and catch up with both the brush pile and Kirby at the new fallen pine. Kirby seemed spirited as he churned after his prey. What a great hunting dog. What a great fishing companion. What a wet dog!

Another loud command reverberated in the trees from my concerned, stressed out voice. Kirby acknowledged his intent with a good-natured bark, as he looked over my way reassuring me that he knew what he was doing. It was up to me to keep up with him. I was out of breath by the time I reached the fallen tree and dashed into the water giving Kirby another command shout. This time he eased up a bit and waded over to me as the brush pile lodged itself against the fallen tree coming to a halt. Kirby circled around by my left side standing at attention in chest-deep water staring at the brush pile. About the time I had something to say in this matter, Kirby barked loudly at the brush pile as if to tell it off in some form of dog gibberish. It was then I glimpsed a small flash of water just behind the brush pile. Kirby saw it too as he cautiously inched forward, as he cocked his head with excited anticipation. We both saw the water flash a second time as Kirby

jumped about looking up at me. There, again, a splash, not more than 5 feet in front of us. It was a nice 13 inch brown that was attached to the brush pile. We both moved in as I grabbed for my net, scooping up the tangled trout. Kirby had his nose in the net making it tricky to lift the net towards me. Kirby froze in place as I reached to cradle the trout still in the net. The trout had been caught dangling on a bait hook with three feet of monofilament line tangled in the brush pile. No doubt a captured moment left from the weekend. I took the hook out of its jaw and checked the trout over for any other markings. It looked a little exhausted, but healthy. I held it near Kirby's nose so he could sniff it as he wagged his tail glancing up at me with warm tones of a happy approval to his demeanor.

We released the trout. It was Kirby's first trout. We later shared the back of the pickup one more time. I dried him off as best I could with an old towel I kept in the cab. There was no PB&J sandwich waiting, nor a Bud beer truck. We talked about our fly fishing experience for the day and decided that because of our local involvement with the river all these years, we'd appropriately name the fallen tree, "Homer's Tree," the one just downstream from Woody's Point. Kirby slept peacefully next to me as we drove home.



...from Eric Larsen's flybox
CARIBOU HOPPER



Hook: Daiichi 1260 #10 (Curved Straight eye hook)
Thread: Gudebrod G Thread Clear (BCS93)
Body: Natural caribou spun and clipped
Underwing: Natural Church-window Ringneck Pheasant feather
Legs: Mottled Oak Turkey quill (dipped in Softex)
Thorax/Head: Natural caribou spun and clipped

Cast as a dry fly along stream and lake banks.

What makes this fly my fly of the month

I guess all the rain and warm weather has already got me thinking about summer trout fishing. Also, winter time is a time to "tune-up" my fly box. I like fishing hoppers but have always had a hard time finding a pattern that is easy for me to tie. I have a 1965 edition of a book written by George Leonard Herter (Professional Fly Tying, Spinning and Tackle Making Manual and Manufacturers' Guide Revised Fifteenth Edition). Apparently, the fly tying rage in the 1960's was spun hair bodies on flies. The book shows some pretty interesting flies made out of hair. I'm not great at spinning hair but I think I have found one thing that improves the process: "G" thread. The clear thread looks like and probably is monofilament. The thread is slippery so the caribou (also easier to work with) hair spins easily with this thread. Since it is clear, the thread doesn't show through the hair. The G-thread is strong so you can put quite a bit of torque on the hair. The only problem is the initial wrapping of the thread on the hook. Do 3 wraps at the bend of the hook forward toward the eye. Then take the thread BACK to the bend wrap forward two times. DON'T CLIP THE TAG END OF THE THREAD UNTIL THE BODY IS COMPLETE (or else the thread will unravel). Spin the hair to the Thorax. Do a couple of whip-finish knots and clip (or use a razor blade) to shape the body. Now you can trim off the tag end of the thread. Add in the wings and legs. Spin more hair, whip-finish and clip the head. You can use an old tooth brush to comb out any under fur in the caribou hair.

The other thing that drives me nuts on hoppers is the legs. It takes me a long time to tie knots in pheasant tail. I refuse to buy them already tied and the fly doesn't look right without legs. I have tried various types of rubber hackle and it doesn't look right in the water to me. The knotted hackle feather looks the best but trimming the hackle fibers is time consuming and unforgiving. I'm still experimenting with different materials. I like the way mottled turkey wing quill looks. Turkey tail quills work too but can get kind of brittle and break. Mottled turkey quill is flexible and has good color imitation (and can be dyed). I dip the knotted leg in Softex to for durability and to mold the shape although this step is optional. This has been the best so far. Another tip is to store the legs on the backs of Post-It notes on the sticky strip. This helps to make it easy to select the legs you want while tying the hopper. Have fun!!!



CONSERVATION NOTES ...with Eric Larsen

Most of the conservation activities right now are in preparation for upcoming events. We have Dana Bayer and Jim Warnecke on the ticket for the March meeting to give us the latest and greatest on Canyon Creek. We'll need to get a sign-up sheet going for the project at that meeting. More on this later....stay tuned.

I'll be going to the WCC with hopes to get a brochure printed up about the Bull Thistle. Patti Fenner of the Tonto National Forest put together a nice document that identifies and describes the plant and how to properly remove it. We hope to have the brochure ready for the February /March meetings for various clubs and the ISE show. The purpose of the brochure try to generate a broad outreach to people to inform them of the harm the

bull thistle can cause to areas where it is infested particularly Canyon Creek. This plant has no soil retention merits to it all and it tends to choke out natural vegetation. A lot of people go to Canyon Creek to hunt, fish, camp and just enjoy the outdoors. It's a beautiful place to visit. And while there, bag up some bull thistles on the way home.

As projects get going this spring, I'll start listing the project status reports again. There are lots of activities going on in the state. Hopefully, we'll see the White Mountain lakes full this year. The desert lakes already show promise of a good to great fishing season as water levels have risen all over the state. Tight Lines!!!!

FREE
for
DFC MEMBERS



BOB CLOUSER DAY

SATURDAY • MARCH 19, 2005

ST. MATTHEW UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
2540 W. Baseline Road • Mesa, AZ 85202
10:00 AM TO 6:00 PM

For DFC membership information please call Dave at: 480-820-0903

Come and enjoy this once in a lifetime special event with Bob Clouser and enjoy the friendship of other fly fishers. Participate in monthly meetings with guest speakers, fishing trips and a monthly newsletter keeping members in touch with the fishing community.

NOTE: DFC MEMBERS (all paid members in full for 2005 as of February 29, 2005) must make reservations no later than Wednesday, March 9, 2005 to attend...Call 480-820-0903 to confirm

Bill McBurney
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2005 Calendar Events

OUTINGS

The scheduled February Picnic has been canceled, lack of interest, lack of host. It's hard to get some of the early in the year outings off the ground. Hosting an event is something that anyone in the club can do. A host is basically a coordinator. Some outings are quite simple and require a sign-up sheet and a road map. Other outings require contacting guides, collecting deposits, securing lodging, and being the travel guide for the group. In many instances it can be a fun learning experience.

The rest of our outings schedule looks solid. We have good destinations in mind, and hosts lined up to ease the way. Here is our most current listing of outings.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Feb 18-20 ISE Sportsman's Show | July 29-31 Lee's Ferry |
| Mar 11-13 Point of Pines Lake | Aug TBA |
| Mar 19 Bob Clouser | Sept 3-8 San Felipe Mex |
| April 15-17 Seneca Lake | Oct 1-4 San Juan River, NM |
| April 28-May 2 Green River | Oct 28-31 Steelhead, MI |
| May TBA | Nov 10-13 Puerto Penasco |
| June 17-19 White Mountain Spectacular | Dec 14 DFC Christmas Banquet |

Notice the TBA outings with no date attached, this would be a perfect opportunity for you to pick the place and be the host. If you would like to host an outing give me a call. 480-982-7461 B or 480-984-4698 H.

Dave & Barbara Foster 1-800-533-7339
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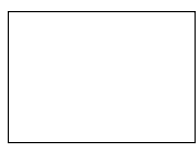
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