

First Coast Fly Fisher

March 2006

www.fcff.org

Jacksonville, FL



FCFFer Homer Bliss Lands Pacific Sail From Kayak In Guatemala Last Month

MEETING & SPEAKER

FCFF Meeting: Monday, Mar. 6, 7 p.m. -- Speaker: Capt. David Borries.

Capt. Borries is one of the area's most accomplished guides and an expert on picking up the nuances of sight fishing. David will speak to us on **READING THE WATER**. This month, something new at the casting pond: FFF Master Casting Instructor David Lambert Dick Michaelson will discuss the Square Cast, a method of distance casting which Lambert writes about on page 4 of this publication.

COMING EVENTS

March Outing: Saturday, Mar. 11 -- Hogan Lake. Come fish one of North Florida's private phosphate lakes. Much thanks to FCFFer Ernie Frey who's gotten us permission to fish Hogan Lake, just north of White Springs. Last venture in these

lakes FCFFers caught 10 or more 5-lb. bass and at least one nearly 10 lbs. Also available in Hogan Lake, bream and big crappie (aka) specs. Contact George Durrance, grdrbgay@bellsouth.net (904) 241-5697 to sign up or sign up at the FCF meeting, March 6. Fishers will meet at teh Cracker Barrel Restaurant on I-10 and Chaffee Road at 6:30, then convoy to White Springs. See www.fcff.org/outings for more information and page 6 for directional map.

April Meeting: Monday, April 3 -- Speaker: Capt. Tony Bozzella on Finding Fish in the Back Country.

April Outing: Lochloosa for Bass and Bream. More info at Meeting or Contact George Durrance, grdrbgay@bellsouth.net (904) 241-5697

FCFF Photo Page



Photo Captions: Top Left, Rick Palazzini's Photo, The Broad River, NC; Top Right: Eating at the Casting/Tying Outing; Bottom Middle: Past Prez Chan Ritchie's Girlie-Man Rod; Bottom Left: Fly Tying with Ted Mayhew

-Fisherman's Prayer

I pray that I may live to fish.....
 Until my dying day.
 And when it comes to my last cast,
 I then most humbly pray:
 When in the Lord's great landing net
 And peacefully asleep
 That in His mercy
 I be judged
 Big enough to keep.

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The Woolly Bugger

by Karen Brand



(Introduction by David Lambert: This year I watched helplessly as my old, ugly Plano streamer box floated away down a river, forever lost. I was sobered by the moment. Soon though, I began to view this as an opportunity to replenish my stock. I'd spoken for years about winnowing my stuff, consolidating fly boxes, removing those flies I never use. Now was the time to start. I asked half-a-dozen of the best freshwater anglers I know to supply me with a list of their most indispensable streamers. In every case, the first fly mentioned was the woolly bugger. [By the way, we Southerners often pronounce it woolly 'booger', as if it were some furry, yet slimy cranial offering.] The woolly bugger is so indispensable that it sometimes goes unnoticed, forgotten among the 100s of flies nestled unused in your streamer box. I'll go on record right now and say that the woolly bugger has saved more bad fishing days than any one freshwater fly I know. It can be tied weighted or unweighted, in virtually any color or size. Here is a well photographed instruction by Karen Brand, of the Northwest Florida Fly Fishers in Pensacola.)

Tail: Black marabou; **Hackle:** Black saddle hackle; **Body:** Large black chenille; **Head:** Black 6/0 thread

1. Flatten the hook barb and place the hook in the vise. Using a jam knot, tie the thread on the hook two hook eye distance back from the hook eye. In close touching turns cover the hook shank with a neat



thread base back to the hook bend.

2. Beginning at a point about 1/4 inch in front of the last thread wrap at the back of the hook, wrap about 20 to 22 turns of non-



lead wire over the hook shank stopping 1/4 inch behind the hook eye. Clip the wire tag ends as close to the hook shank as possible and smooth the sharp ends of the wire with your

thumbnail.

3. Over wrap the full length of wire with thread wraps to cover and lock the wire to the hook shank. Return the thread to the back of the hook shank.



4. For the tail, select a single long plume of

marabou. Grip the plume between the thumb and forefinger of one hand at a point equal to one hook length. With your other hand strip away the "fuzz" from the butt end of the feather quill. Place the tail on top of the hook shank so the thumb and forefinger "pinch" the hook shank and the feather at a point

even with the last rear thread wrap. Take 3 or 4 "soft loop" thread wraps, then 4 or 5 firm thread wraps at the tail tie-in point to anchor the tail to the top of the hook shank. Wrap the thread forward in closely spaced turns tying the stripped marabou quill to the top of the hook shank. Stop the forward thread wraps 1/4 inch from the hook eye. Cut away the tag end of the quill and take a few thread wraps to neatly cover the butt end. Return the thread to the tail tie-in point at the rear of the hook shank.

5. Select a long slender saddle hackle with barbs that are of a length equal to 1 to 1 1/2 times the hook gape. Tie the saddle hackle in at the last rear thread wrap point by its tip leaving about 1/4 inch of the hackle point pointing toward the front of the hook. Pinch-grasp the chenille 1/4 inch from its end and strip away the



"fuzz" from the inner thread core. Using the tying thread, tie on the chenille by the striped thread core directly over the hackle tip. Wrap the thread forward in close turns to neatly cover the hackle tip and the chenille thread core. Continue wrapping the thread forward with a few spiral wraps to the front thread tie-on point.

6. Wrap the chenille forward with adjacent firm turns to the thread tie-on point. Tie off the chenille and cut away the excess.

7. Palmer, (wrap or hackle) the hackle forward with equally spaced turns stopping just in front of the thread tie-on point. Tie off the hackle with several firm thread wraps. Cut away the excess hackle and wrap a neat thread head. Cut away the thread and apply head cement.

Square Casting

THE RIGHT ANGLE FOR DISTANCE CASTING

by David Lambert

Ask any guide from the Keys to Kuskokwim. What frustrates him most is booking an angler who can't cast a fly out of the shadow of the boat. Add poor casting skills to a nine-weight rod, a hefty fly, and a honking wind. Then bake all of this under a 95° sun for eight hours and you have the makings of a frustrating, joyless day for both guide and angler.

Face it, whether you're trying to throw a big fly through a stiff breeze or unleash 75 feet to a spooky bonefish, the need for a reasonably long cast is a reality—and a necessity.

Distance, however, is not always the goal. It's the caster who can rocket off 90 feet of line in a casting vacuum, or a windless, watered lawn, that can throw 35-50 feet in the blowy conditions we often fish.

Some years ago, Gary Taylor and I fished the false albie run out of Harker's Island, North Carolina. We had 25-knot winds, five-foot seas, and air temps in the lower 50s. Not exactly great conditions for throwing a fly. But the Albies were popping up all around, so we fished them, wind, waves, and weather and all. We'd both driven 11 hours, booked a room, and chartered a guide; we were there to catch fish.

A 50-foot cast wouldn't get the fly to the fish, so we both naturally threw distance casts to beat the wind. Gary threw his usual impeccable form; I threw a variant called the square cast, a stroke I've worked on for a couple of years.

If wind is an issue, or conditions call for long searching casts, the square cast will get a fly to the fish and keep you fishing longer.

This stroke incorporates the basic casting elements of rod tension, acceleration, tip direction, and stroke length. Most long casts begin with the caster slowly raising the rod tip while pulling the rod handle rearward. Once the rod tip reaches shoulder height or higher, the caster moves it backward in a straight path accelerating to a speed-snap.

The angle of rod lift is the key here. In a regular distance cast the rod tip usually is raised at a 45° angle from the water as the rod hand moves backward.

In the square cast, the caster lifts the rod tip straight up from the water to near shoulder height, then slowly pulls it backward, gradually increasing the tip speed until he/she makes the speed-snap-and-stop motion. Done properly, the rod tip will carve a nearly 90-degree angle, or a square angle, throughout the rearward stroke.

Before we get to the step by step, let's recall a few fundamentals about casting. First, a long cast needs a long

casting stroke. We start the modified square cast with a fully extended rod arm, creating a direct line from rod tip to shoulder.

We complete the backcast with our elbow fully extended, then move through the forward stroke and stop with our elbow again fully extended. Doing this increases leverage and gives us maximum stroke length.

Second, you need constant tension on the rod tip throughout the cast. Remove all slack from the line at the start of the stroke, slowly increase the rod tip speed through mid-stroke, then make the speed-snap-and-stop at the end of both the back

and forward strokes.

The diagram shows acceleration, a very slow to fast movement that bends the rod. The speed-snap-and-stop motion at the end of each stroke supercharges the bend in the rod. When combined with a haul, the rod responds by quickly springing straight, which moves the fly line fast and far.

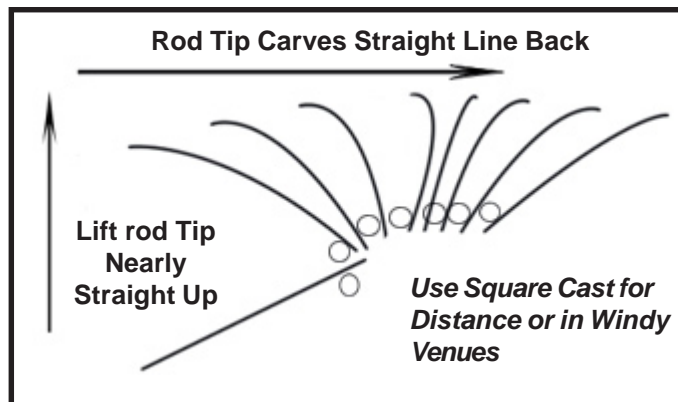
That's what we want.

Here's how we get it. Position yourself with both rod arm and line handling arm almost fully extended. Bend your right wrist fully down, and tuck the rod butt into your forearm. Turn your right shoulder slightly back and grab the line behind the first stripping guide with your left hand.

Start the cast with your rod tip in the water. Slowly raise your rod arm (and the line) straight up to just below shoulder height, keeping your wrist bent at its original angle. The rod and your thumb should be parallel with the water when the rod is at shoulder height. Notice that your wrist is bent at a near 90° angle and your elbow is bent slightly.

As you raise the rod to shoulder height, slowly pull the line backward, toward the reel. Your rod tip should reach shoulder height at about the same time that your line hand gets close to the reel. Timing is important.

Begin the back stroke acceleration slowly. Make a slightly sidearmed cast, keeping the rod tip at shoulder height throughout the back cast. Pull the rod handle backward in a straight line, bending the elbow and pivoting at the hips. The wrist stays bent and the rod hand moves on a line roughly parallel to the water. Remember, make the rod tip slowly increase in speed. A slow



Continued on Page 5

Square Casting

THROWING THE LONG CAST ~ ~ DISTANCE ISN'T ALWAYS THE GOAL

Continued From Page 4

acceleration fully flexes the rod because surface tension from the water tries to hold the line.

Increase the tip speed as your hand passes your body and begins to extend backward. Do this while turning your shoulders slightly. Your wrist must stay bent in its original position..

When your arm is near fully extended rearward, snap your elbow straight and make the speed-snap-and-stop motion. Force your wrist to stop at its normal 'at rest' position. If you break your wrist beyond its 'at-rest' position, you'll throw the line down to the water.

Combine the speed-up-and-stop motion with a short, very sharp haul. The line will shoot from your rod tip like a rocket.

Keep your line tight as your loop unfurls. When it has nearly unrolled, begin the forward stroke and keep your wrist in the straight position. Move the rod butt slowly forward, faster than the tip. Slowly rotate your hips and shoulders forward and bend your elbow, bringing it closer to your body. This keeps the tip on a straight, slightly rising course.

As the rod tip passes your body (your hand will be about a foot or more in front of your shoulder and your thumb will be pointing straight up), begin to straighten your arm. Make the speed-snap-and-stop motion when your elbow is nearly straight, no sooner. At the same time, lock your elbow straight and perform a short, quick haul. Your rod and arm will again be parallel to the water and the line will shoot out of tip at eye level or slightly higher. Let the rod drift slowly straight down to the water as your line settles down.

If your back cast and forward casts have mirrored each other, you will have made essentially two right angle motions, one after you've lifted the rod tip to shoulder height and you begin the rearward motion, and a second after you deliver the forward cast and your rod drifts straight down with the fly line.

That's it. Once mastered, you'll use the modified square cast whenever you need power or distance, from blind fishing a windy surf or casting across and down for Alaskan salmon.

All it takes to whip the wind is a little practice. . . and a little patience.

(The author is a master casting instructor on the strategic advisory committee for the FFF Casting Board of Governors. He is an outdoor writer who lives in Atlantic Beach, FL.)



Dana Griffin 111 Presented An Informative, Funny Talk About Fishing in the Amazon Basin for Peacock Bass Last Month

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