



# The Lower Columbia Flyfisher

June 2018

Issue

**Meeting: Tuesday, June 5, 2018**

**Time: 7:00 PM**

**Place: Longview Country Club Card Room**

**Next board meeting** - Board meetings suspended for summer. Next board meeting is Sept 18th

## **PROGRAM:**

## **Honoring Norm**

We have lost a great one, we have lost a friend. Life has again proved how fleeting it can be, and how little we are in charge of it. What a so very short time ago we learn of Norm's illness, how suddenly he is gone.

But he hasn't left us alone, oh no. Norm left us a rich legacy of memories, each unique to whatever relationship we had with him. Jeff, having spent a significant amount of time with Norm and his family over the past several years, received the great honor of being asked to speak at Norm's service. Next page is text of Jeff's memories with Norm, as shared at his funeral.

The entire flyfishing world was touched by Norm and mourn his loss. We learned during the service the Norvise website received over 22,000 tributes in the week following Norm's passing.

We encourage you to voice your memories and experiences with Norm. Feel free to share these during club meetings but we appreciate it if you write them down and submit them to the newsletter. Each and every one will be published in upcoming months.

There is no formal program other than remembrances of Norm and fishing reports as June begins our summer season. We will continue to hold monthly general meetings at the Country Club through the summer, however board meetings are suspended until September. Jim Williams will officiate June's meeting while Terry is away.

## **Swofford Pond Bluegill and fish fry outing** this Saturday, June 2

Water is at a good temperature, fish are ready and, I have heard the catching has been great. Fish areas of overhanging trees, mud flats and shallow water (1-2 feet) near the shore, where you may see Bluegill nesting. If you don't catch them right off, move to a different spot. Bright colored poppers should buy you lunch.

Speaking of lunch, Jerry and Bob Buchman will be sponsoring the outing, with Jerry manning the fry pan. Remember to bring your fillet knife as you are responsible for cleaning your lunch.

Get out as early as you desire and put a few 'gills into your pail, but be sure to get down to Tacoma City & Light, Mossyrock Park about noon or so to skin your catch in time for a fish fry lunch. Don't forget the parking fee, \$5/vehicle at my last recollection but might bring a couple more in case inflation hits the park. We will be meeting all the way down, near the boat launch parking area.

Directions are; US 12 (White Pass Highway) east from I5 to the town of Mossyrock. At the light (as you reach Mossyrock) turn right from US12 and go through town to a "T" in the road. Turn left at the "T" and go about 2.5 miles to Swofford Rd. Turn right on Swofford Rd. to the lake, about 3 miles. To get from the lake to the park for the picnic, go back on Swofford Rd to the intersection (3 miles) and turn right rather than left to go back to Mossyrock

Hope to see you there!

## Ode to Norm; Jeff's eulogy at his service

Good afternoon and thank you for being here. My name is Jeff Sowders. Ruthe asked me to say a few words about Norm today. I'm not sure I can say just a few words about him as there are many words that can be used to describe Norm.

I have known Norm casually thru the LCFF club for many years, but in the past 4-5 years I have gotten to spend more time with him and gotten to see more sides of him.

I travelled with him to fly fishing shows where I assisted him while he demonstrated his fly tying system. That's where this shirt comes from. BTW, I'm guessing there are 100s of these shirts in the closets of people who have assisted Norm or by professionals who use his products. If these people weren't spread all over the US and here today, I'm sure this church would be overflowing with his fans and the people who loved him.

I have fished with Norm numerous times in the past few years, and I would sign up in a heartbeat to go on any trip which Norm would be on. These were great adventures and not just the fishing part. The cooking, the cocktails, the stories, . . . all of the little things that made these outings so memorable.

Glenn Gee and I assisted Norm many afternoons assembling his products. He appreciated the help, but I think he looked forward more to us hanging out with him and visiting, telling stories and discussing fishing techniques. I thanked Norm recently for helping take me from fly fishing 101 to a bachelor's degree with all the help and knowledge that he has passed on to me. I may not be able to fish with him again, but he has given me enough of his flies to last the next 10 years, and I guarantee that I will be thinking of him whenever I tie on one of them.

When I first started tying with his vise and bobbin, which BTW, I refer to as the Mercedes of fly tying tools, I would kid him about me spending too many morning with his videos trying to master some of the techniques that he does so effortlessly. Now, thankfully, we have those videos to continue to look at, and smile at some of the great memories they trigger.

One of the words that I think all of us would use to describe Norm. Generous. When out fishing he would want everyone to be successful. When he couldn't make the annual trip to Grass Valley last month, he sent along his big box with probably 2000 flies in it to share with others on the trip. If we were out fishing somewhere, and he would figure out what flies the fish were taking, he would wave you over and open his fly boxes to pull out what the fish wanted.

Another example of his generosity was being out to dinner with him one night and thru conversation learning about our young waitress struggling to put herself thru school with a number of challenges facing her. Upon leaving the restaurant, Norm left the waitress a very generous tip. I'm sure it wasn't the first time Norm helped someone out.

Another word that comes to mind is welcoming. Our fly fishing club can be intimidating to new guests who attend a first dinner meeting. Norm will usually be one of the first to go up and welcome the guest, probably after putting on a pre-meeting fly tying lesson for the rest of the club. Our club won't be the same without him.

Norm was a character with great character. He could mesmerize you with his down home, self-deprecating, dog-and-pony act at shows. I would be as fascinated watching him at the end of a 2 day show as I was with the first customer on Day 1. I enjoyed observing the affection between Norm and longtime customers, and professionals who would stop by his booth to visit and finds out what new gadgets Norm had come up with.

Other words to describe him – intelligent, creative, great problem solver. Norm graduated as an engineer from Cal Poly, a prestigious engineering college in southern California. He claims that he was at the bottom of his class, but I doubt it. He told me many stories, often with drawings, of ideas he helped come up with at Weyerhaeuser to improve efficiency, many that led to patents for the company.

One time I got a kick out of telling him about a chicken tractor a friend and I designed and built to use fertilizing my orchard. He knew that his son was having trouble containing his chickens, so Norm set about designing a similar contraption for his son and family. He must have made 4-5 drawings over a period of a week. Finally satisfied, he set about cutting out all of the materials for his chicken tractor in his shop, and then loaded the materials and drove down to Albany to assemble it. My tractor is a condo; his - a palace.

He built a gorgeous pram to fish out of and when he wasn't happy with how the seat in the boat limited his movement, he built another boat. He was a master craftsman.

I could go on forever praising many things I saw and learned being around Norm, but the last word I'll use to describe him is legend. He's a legend in the business, and a legend to those of us who know him. He was a lovely man who loved others and showed it. I feel sad that he had to leave us so suddenly as I know he was excited to continue his business, and spend more time with his family. We'll miss him, but we have great memories.

**We are sending \$1000.00 to Northwest Youth Conservation and Fly Fishing Academy** to support our two young men going this year, Aiden Moon, from Kalama, and Ivan Degner, from Longview. Every single penny goes to support the kids that attend the academy.

**LCFF Summer Outings:**

- Saturday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> Swofford Pond - Bluegill with fish fry – Hosts, Jerry Schroeder and Bob Buchman
  - Saturday, July 28<sup>th</sup> Leech Lake – Trout – Hosts, Terry Frost and yet to be determined. There is usually camping involved with this outing with official outing meal on Saturday. More to follow.
  - Saturday, August 25<sup>th</sup> Coldwater Lake – Trout – Hosts, yet to be determined
  - Saturday, October 6<sup>th</sup> Cowlitz River – Cutthroats – Hosts, Ron Pihl and Jim Williams
- If anyone would like to volunteer to help with any of this outings, please let a board member know.

**Last month's mystery water** was a toughie if you weren't familiar with the few landmarks in a couple photos. **Elochoman River** escaped everyone's guesses, a real surprise since Hal used to frequent it. Elochoman has been primarily a winter-run steelhead fishery. So - anyone's guess where we are this month? Hint; it's famous for a particular bug hatch this time of year.



## Greased lines

.....Thanks to all of you that have submitted articles.....I really appreciate them and...If you have not seen your submitted article .....I will be using them in future issues.....Thanks again and keep them coming.

.....If any of the rest of you have an article, editorial or fishing story for the newsletter, submit it to the Editor at least 10 days before the first of each month:

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