

GO FISH: Club is part of church's community outreach

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to reach out to the Sisters community.

"We were asking what kind of platform we can build to create more community outreach, because we want to be part of the community, and caring for people who need help is our mission," explained Steve Stratos, Sisters Community Church pastor.

That's where the idea of a fishing club came about and Kutz, who is very active in the church, agreed to take the lead.

"We see this community as a beautiful place God gave us, and fishing is a way to get at that," continued Stratos.

While sponsored by the church, anyone who likes to fish is welcome, and Kutz has an e-mail list of about 120 people who have expressed interest in the group. About two-thirds of the 25 to 45 people who attend the monthly meetings are not church members.

"A lot of the people who come to the meetings are new to Sisters and they want to meet people and learn places to fish," said Kutz.

And that's exactly what the Go Fish Group is all

about.

Monthly meetings start off with time to tell fishing stories when group members relate their most recent angling adventures, followed by a short business meeting. A featured speaker is the highlight of each meeting who shares their knowledge and experience on various aspects of fishing, fish and conservation. Some recent speakers have included Jeff Perin, owner of The Fly Fisher's Place, Sisters bamboo fly rod craftsman Dave Dozer and his wife Maryann Dozer who is a Fly Fishing International Certified Master Casting Instructor, and Ryan Houston from the Upper Deschutes Watershed Council.

A variety of outdoor-related items are also raffled at each meeting as a fundraiser for the club, although next year annual dues will probably be established for members as a more reliable source of income, e a r m a r k e d primarily for the speakers program.

The Go Fish Group also has an ambitious lineup of classes and other programs in the works. Beginning on January 7 the club will be offering a

six-week fly-tying class to keep anglers busy when it's too cold and icy to be out on the rivers. They will also be holding a rod-building class starting on March 4.

A series of outings and fly-fishing classes are being planned for when the weather turns warmer, including a class for youth.

"This spring we want to get some teenagers together, teach them fly-fishing techniques, have them tie a fly and then go fishing with it," said Kutz.

Another on-the-water class being planned will involve pairing up experienced anglers with beginners to act as mentors. He's a firm believer that to catch fish on a fly, anglers need to know the kinds of insects trout like to eat, and he has some ideas for entomology classes to that end. The club is also working with other fishing groups in Central Oregon, such as the Central Oregon Flyfishers, to expand its speaker program.

Finally, Kutz and the Go Fish Group have a strong commitment to the catch-and-release ethic and conservation. He expects the club to eventually be regularly involved



PHOTO BY JIM YUSKAVITCH

Gary Kutz at home in Sisters at his fly-tying board.

in helping the Forest Service and other organizations with local fish conservation projects.

For Kutz, the Go Fish Group merges his dedication to help his church become more active in the Sisters community while introducing area residents to the joys of fishing and the natural world. Says, Kutz, "I enjoy the fishing, being on the rivers and in the beautiful outdoors that God created,

and fellowship with other fishermen."

The Go Fish Group meets on the second Monday of each month starting at 6:30 p.m. to talk fish and fishing, followed by the official meeting at 7 p.m. Meetings are held at the Sisters Community Church, 1300 W. McKenzie Hwy., Sisters. Meeting notices are also posted in *The Nugget*. For more information call Gary Kutz at 541-771-2211.

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