

c.g. Daytripper Steelhead!

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Not even that first fish — bright silver and spotted beautiful, pulled from the rushing current after many minutes' valiant struggle to remain there — gave much indication of the kind of day the river, the forces of chance and the mighty winter-run steelhead held in store for us.

The second steelie, however — this one nothing less than massive, bigger than a grown man's leg, hunch-backed and hook-jawed and war-weary — erased all doubt: on my first-ever trip in search of one of Oregon's most storied species on one of its most famed angling rivers, I was to be gifted, along with the two veteran anglers who were kind enough to share their spot and many of their secrets, with the stuff of legend, several hours worth forever remembering, the kind of sweet success that swells a thankful angler's heart and fills many a dream with that most gleeful declaration — Fish On!

Even now, days after that fateful, freezing late-December morning, I marvel at the forces coming together to make it all happen — the rains that raised the river; the steelhead and their noble upstream mission; the bait placed expertly just so, just there, where the current slows and eddies behind that tree branch; the patience to wait just one second more for the definitive bite and later allow a hard-charging fish the opportunity to tire itself before picking up the landing net.

It's doubtful that even Cottage Grove's Tom Creager, the mastermind of the trip along with his son, Stewart, fully comprehended the perfection of the conditions on the Umpqua River when he visited the Sentinel office the previous day. Creager had been promising to take me steelhead fishing for some time, and that

Monday afternoon, something about the way the river was flowing made him call on me at work, though he hadn't wanted to. Ever-busy, especially around the holidays, I'd asked if another day that week might work as well. But no, tomorrow was the day, Creager told me. And how right he would turn out to be.

Unable to sleep that night, I busied myself reading about the next day's quarry. Steelhead fishing inspires a passion rarely witnessed in the angling world, as fishermen and women spend years honing their knowledge of the seemingly infinite variables that can mean the difference between a fish in hand and a good fish story. Volumes have been devoted to the proper curing of the egg sacs that draw a steelhead's magnificent sense of smell toward an angler's bait, the type of line that works best in low, clear water, the hooks that must remain razor-sharp to penetrate a fish's bony jaw. Without help, this Illinois farmboy could only hope that spectacular luck could put me in the path of one of these finicky, complex specimens.

Fortunately, I had the kind of help I needed, and on the early-morning drive, the Creagers shared a telling maxim: that five percent of anglers catch 95 percent of the fish, because, as Tom Creager so eloquently put it, they know what the hell they're doing.

After arriving at our destination, a swath of earth eaten away by the Umpqua to form a muddy, sandy bit of beach, father and son got busy rigging up three 8-½ foot poles to wrestle brawny, determined steelhead. A free-sliding weight of about six ounces would keep the bait in place just above the bottom while not alerting the fish to what waited on the other end of the line; a floating, glowing spinner placed just before the hook provided extra flash and kept the egg sac



photo by Stewart Creager

The second steelhead landed by the author on a recent trip, an expedition that featured bites from about a dozen of the hard-fighting fish.

off the bottom, and a special cure for the eggs aimed to tempt the steelhead's legendary sense of smell.

After rigging and casting three poles, there was little to do but wait, and looking back on it now, there would be more waiting than fish-wrangling that morning, but not by much. A half-hour or so brought the first definitive bite, though many of the dozen or so fish that took the bait that morning chose to nibble maddeningly before inhaling the eggs and beating a retreat.

What made conditions so perfect, Creager shared, was a combination of high, fast water and determined fish, fish that hugged the bank to take advantage of the lighter current there. While many of the day's steelhead nibbled, fish number two promptly wolfed the bait and bent the rod in half, threatening for a moment to pull it from its holder and take tackle and all back into the Umpqua.

After the solid hookup, the fish rolled at the surface, trying to shake the hook free, for the first time offering a look at his bulk with a splash that sounded like a third-grader's belly flop.

The next task — keeping the fish from entangling the line in a nearby downed tree — took two of us: one to fight the fish and another to attempt to move the log. With great luck, the fish headed back out to deeper water, humming line off the reel in a brave attempt to pretend that being tethered to a wild-eyed fisherman was in reality not a very big deal.

Only after the net closed around that behemoth buck steelhead did I begin to realize what had just happened — that I had, with considerable help, landed the fish of a lifetime, a dream fish, a veteran of more than one epic journey to the ocean and back and one of the more ruggedly beautiful creatures I'd ever laid eyes upon.

But there would be little time to savor the victory. Regulations on the Umpqua prevent the keeping of wild steelhead, so the fish, spent with the exertion of the battle, had to be released almost immediately to ensure its survival. This immediacy was a blessing in disguise, though, as it left little time to ponder the deliciousness of the specimens we'd slide, one by one, back into the mighty Umpqua.

Throughout the morning and early afternoon, the bite kept up in waves, and by the end of the day, we'd content ourselves with knowing that more fish had been landed than had managed to pull free from the hook, though not by a wide margin. In one of the most touching displays of generosity I've witnessed, the Creagers had allowed this green fisherman a chance to land every single fish that day, though they seemed to share equally the deep sense of satisfaction that we'd savor on the long drive home. It's a feeling I hope to never forget, and it is with profound thanks to all — the Creagers, the steelhead, the Umpqua — that I dedicate this account of one of my best days on earth.

Local students named to OSU Honor Roll

Names of students who have made the Scholastic Honor Roll Fall term have been announced by Oregon State University. A total of 861 students earned straight-A (4.0). Another 3,598 earned a B-plus (3.5) or better to make the listing. To be on the Honor Roll, students must carry at least 12 graded hours of course work. Students on the Honor Roll included:

From Cottage Grove:

Straight-A Average: Sara M. Singer, Senior, Graphic Design.

3.5 or Better: Sarah J. Canales, Senior, Microbiology; Gabriel Fremonti, Junior, Digital Communication Arts; Alexa A. Young, Junior, Digital Communication Arts. Creswell

3.5 or Better: Rex M. Henzie, Junior, Pre-Computer Science; Anton M. Higgins, Sophomore, Pre-Nuclear Engineering; Julia M. Jones, Senior, Biochemistry and Biophysics; Ryan R. Quick, Sophomore, Pre-General Engineering.

COMING UP:

912 Project

The next meeting of the Cottage Grove 912 Project will be Monday, Jan. 19 at 6:30 p.m. at Stacy's Covered Bridge Restaurant, 401 E. Main.

OSU Master Gardener Pat Patterson will provide instruction on how to build an in-ground and above-ground root cellar. Ms. Patterson is the former host of the Hatch Patch on KPNW, 1120 AM.

The meeting is open to the public and there is no cost to attend.

Fungi at Science Pub

The Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council hosts a free monthly public meeting series called the Coast Fork Science Pub on the fourth Tuesday of each month from 5-7 p.m. at the Axe & Fiddle, 657 Main Street in Cottage Grove. On Jan. 27, the Science Pub feature will be a presentation by Chris Melotti and Molly Widmer, mushroom aficionados with the Cascade Mycological Society (CMS). This talk will discuss the critical role of mushrooms and fungi in the ecology of Western Oregon forests.

The event begins with informal socializing, trivia, prizes and updates about the watershed for the first hour. Then the special science topic begins around 6 p.m.

FEAST meeting

Cottage Grove FEAST will meet on Saturday, Jan. 17 at Cottage Grove High School to look back at the progress of its first year and plan for expansion in 2015.

After the meeting, the group will tour the school's community garden site and a site for a possible hydroponics learning lab. Those interested are asked to watch for signs on River Road that will direct to the FEAST quarterly meeting that begins at 10 a.m.

FEAST says it has community gardening, school gardening, nutrition education, events introducing local farmers and much more planned for 2015.

Those who are new to FEAST can take a look at this website for an explanation of how the Cottage Grove food movement began last April:

<http://www.oregonfoodbank.org/Our-Work/Building-Food-Security/Community-Programs/FEAST?c=130652356835370244>

Native American cultural events at the Library

This month the Cottage Grove Public Library is featuring Native American books, artifacts and special events, and everyone is invited to attend. On Saturday, Jan. 17 will be a special event featuring an Event Blessing by Nez Perce elder and great-great grandson of Chief Joseph, Roy Hayes, Jr. The event is from noon to 4 p.m. and will feature Native items on display; how storytelling preserves cultural histories; Native American bead and leather work and the music of Native American Flutes featuring local flute makers and musicians. Events with Native American themes will also be held from noon to 4 p.m. the following Saturdays, Jan. 24 and 31.

OSU: Keep chickens away from waterfowl to protect against avian flu

BY KYM POKORNY
OSU Extension Service

Chickens populate thousands of urban backyards throughout Oregon — and in light of a recent outbreak of avian flu, people who keep flocks are urged to take measures to keep their birds healthy.

Jim Hermes, a poultry specialist with the Oregon State University Extension Service, said to lessen the likelihood of disease,

chickens should be kept away from wild birds, which carry the disease but don't get sick.

Avian influenza has been diagnosed in a small flock of poultry in Douglas County, according to the Oregon Department of Agriculture. The infected chickens and guinea fowl had access to a pond visited by a large number of waterfowl. The Oregon occurrence follows on the heels of a major outbreak in the Fraser Valley of British Columbia,

Canada.

Unlike other strains, the current virus (H8N5) is not a threat to humans and doesn't affect chicken meat and egg products, which are still safe to eat, Hermes said. Concern is for the commercial poultry industry.

Hermes said people have a responsibility to learn how to raise a flock before bringing chicks home. First, research the rules. Some cities allow only a certain amount of birds — three is a

common number. Others require a permit. Contact your city for specifics.

Roosters, because they are so noisy, are likely not allowed, which shouldn't cause dismay unless fertile eggs are a goal. Most people, though, raise chickens for the eggs.

"There's the perception that it's cheaper than buying eggs at the store," Hermes said, "but

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Worship Directory

WORSHIP WITH US

Calvary Baptist Church
77873 S 6th St • 541-942-4290
Pastor: Riley Hendricks
Sunday School: 9:45am
Worship: 11:00am
The Journey: Sunday 5:00pm
Praying Thru Life: Wednesday 6:00pm

Church of Christ
420 Monroe St • 541-942-8565
Sunday Service: 10:30am

Cottage Grove Bible Church
1200 East Quincy Avenue
541-942-4771
Pastor: Bob Singer
Worship 8:30am, 11am
Sunday School: 9:45am
Youth Group Mondays 6:30pm
AWANA age 3-8th Grade,
Wednesdays Sept-May, 6:30pm
www.cgbible.org

Delight Valley
Church of Christ
33087 Saginaw Rd. East
541-942-7711
Pastor: Bob Friend
Two Services:
9am - Classic in the Chapel
10:30am - Contemporary in the Auditorium

First Presbyterian Church
3rd and Adams St • 541-942-4479
Pastor: Rev. Bruce Cameron
Worship: 10:00am
Sunday School: 10:00am
www.cgpresbynews.com

"VICTORY" Country Church
Community Center Shepherd Room
700 East Gibbs • 541-942-5913
Pastor: Barbara Dockery
Worship Service: 10:00am
Message: 11:00am
"WE BELIEVE IN MIRACLES"

Old Time Gospel Fellowship
103 S. 5th Street • 541-942-4999
Pastor: Herb Carson
Sunday Service: 10:00am
Sunday Bible Study: 6:00pm
We sing the old time hymns.

Trinity Lutheran Church
6th & Quincy • 541-942-2373
Pastor: James L. Markus
Sunday School &
Adult Education 9:15am
Sunday Worship 10:30am
Comm. Kitchen Free Meal Tue & Thur 5:00pm TLC Groups
trinitylutherancottagegrove.com

6th & Gibbs Church of Christ
195 N. 6th St. • 541-942-3822
Pastor: Aaron Earlywine
Youth & Families Pastor: Seth Bailey
Services: 9am and 10:30am
Christian Education
Nursery for pre-k - 3rd Grade
www.6thandgibbs.com

United Methodist Church
334 Washington • 541-942-3033
Pastor: Jerry Steele
Worship: 10:00am
Adult & Sunday School: 9:00am
Comm. Dinner (Adults \$3, Kids Free)
Mon. 5-6:30pm
cottagegroveumc.org

Hope Fellowship
United Pentecostal Church
100 S. Gateway Blvd. • 541-942-2061
Pastor: Dave Bragg
Worship: 11:00am Sunday
Bible Study: 7:00pm Wednesday
www.hopefellowshipupcc.com
"FINDING HOPE IN YOUR LIFE"

Non-Denominational Church of Christ
1041 Pennoyer Ave * 541-767-0447
Preachers: Tony Martin & Robert Evans
Sunday Bible Study: 10:00am
Sunday Worship: 10:50am & 5:30pm
www.pennoyeravecoc.com
St. Andrews Episcopal Church
1301 W. Main • 541-767-9050
Rev. Lawrence Crumb
"Church with the flags."
Worship: Sunday 10:30am
All Welcome

Calvary Chapel Cottage Grove
522 E Whitaker • 541-942-6842
Pastor: Jeff Smith
Two Services on Sun: 9am & 10:45am
Wednesday Service 6:45 pm
Child Care 10:45am Service Only
Youth Group Bible Study:
Wed. 6:45 pm & Sat. 6 pm
www.cgcalvary.org
look us on facebook:
calvarychapelcottagegrove

Living Faith Assembly
467 S. 10th St. • 541-942-2612
Pastor Rulon Combs
Sunday School All Ages 9am
Worship & Children's
Church 10:30 am
"The Bridge" Saturday Evening Service 6:00pm
Youth ABLAZE: Wednesday 6:30pm
Children's Breakout Class:
Wednesday 6:30pm

Cottage Grove Faith Center
33761 Row River Rd. • 541-942-4851
Lead Pastor: Isaac Hovet
www.cg4.tv
Sunday Service: 9am and 11am
Full Children's Ministry available

Our Lady of Perpetual Help and St. Philip Benizi
Catholic Churches
1025 N. 19th St.
541-942-3420 / 541-942-4712
Pastor: Roy L. Antunez, S.J.
Euch. Liturgies; Sat. 5:30pm
Sun. 10:30am
St. Philip Benizi, Creswell:
552 Holbrook Lane • 541-895-8686
Sunday: 8:30am

Seventh-day Adventist Church
820 South 10th Street
541-942-5213
Pastor: Kevin Miller
Bible Study: Saturday, 9:15 am
Worship Service: Saturday, 10:40 am
Mid-week Service: Wednesday, 6:45 pm

Center for Spiritual Living
Cottage Grove
700 Gibbs Ave (Community Center)
Rev. Bobby Lee
Meets Sunday 3:00 p.m.
Info: 541-767-0182 (Mrs. "T")

Our Worship Directory is a weekly feature in the newspaper. If your congregation would like to be a part of this directory, please contact the Cottage Grove Sentinel at 541-942-3325.