the buzz on the flyfishing biz

Angling TRADE

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Fly Casting?/ My Favorite Professors/
Wagner’s Top 10 Teaching Tips

March 2009 AnglingTrade.com
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Joseph Meyer
Joseph Meyer is Angling Trade’s guest writer from among the retailer ranks. He owns a fly shop, “One More Cast,” in Illinois, and has made a successful business out of teaching and developing fly anglers of all ages. Welcome aboard, Mr. Meyer.

Will Rice
Will Rice is an important part of the Angling Trade team. His off-the-beaten-path pieces add flavor to our mix, especially when he goes one-on-one with industry icons for “They Said It.” You might also notice that he’s a regular feature writer with The Drake.

Jay Cassell
Jay Cassell is deputy editor of Field & Stream magazine. His latest book project, The Gigantic Book of Hunting Stories (Skyhorse Publishing), contains, among its 800 pages, two very poignant entries penned by the late Lee Wulff... do check the book out.

Joe Cermele
Joe Cermele is further proof that Angling Trade is more than happy to poach writers from other magazines, especially the world’s leading outdoors publication... he’s associate online editor for Field & Stream. Cermele is our “Undercover Angler” in this issue.

Monte Burke
We’re proud to have hooked Monte Burke, a staff writer for Forbes, and author of acclaimed books (Sowbelly, Leaper), into writing for Angling Trade while he was still young. Hell, he’s still young, but you’ll find no greater talent with words in this business.

Joe Tanami
Roy Tanami is one of the best-traveled writers/photographers in the flyfishing world. In the last issue, we reviewed his new book, Angling the World. Now we’ve put him to work on a photo-essay from the Louisiana Bayou... tough payback.

Jeff Wagner
Jeff Wagner has written often before for Angling Trade. In this, the “teaching issue” we just had to include him, because he’s not only a writer, he’s also one of the best casting and fishing instructors in America. See Wagner’s tips for further proof.

Angler’s Accessories

Many accessories on the market today are imported. A lot of companies try to talk around that point. Angler’s Accessories will always give you the real story. We look for the best products at the best prices available. No excuses. No double-talk.

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THE WEBSITE FOR THE BUZZ ON THE FLYFISHING BIZ

We’ll Always Give It To You Straight.
In our little flyfishing business realm, we might adapt that thinking to: “Sell a man some flies, and he will fish for a day; teach a man to flyfish, and he will be a loyal customer for a lifetime.”

 Granted, I come from a family where my mother, my wife, my aunt and others are (or were) involved with teaching. But I believe you don’t have to teach school to be an educator, or more importantly, to leverage teaching in your business. In fact, I’d say that the ability to teach is the keystone for success, no matter what you do.

 The good doctor cures, but the great one also coaches patients how to stay well. The good writer entertains, and also informs. A good pilot gets you from Point A to Point B, but when you’re bucking around in a turbulent holding pattern over O’Hare, it’s the one who explains what’s going on that earns my appreciation. A good flyfishing guide can show you where to catch fish, but the hallmark of the great guide is that he or she leaves you with the undeniable sense that you got smarter—that you became a better angler—having spent time together.

 Admit it, we all remember the teachers and coaches back in our school years who made a profound impact on us in one way or another. (Granted, if you’re like me, you may have forgotten the ones who gave you detention or bad grades.) But the teachers who made a real positive impact, well, we cannot help but remember them with gratitude.

 In many ways, we all still have teachers, beyond the classroom. Charlie Meyers of the Denver Post (also the editor-at-large for this magazine) is now my favorite teacher. When I write pieces for Field & Stream or Angling Trade, before they go out to the readers, I always run them by Charlie, because he inevitably comes back with tips that make me better at what I do.

 Do you think for a minute that the average person who flyfishes doesn’t remember or appreciate the person who helps them climb the learning curve? Why do you think Lefty Kreh is the icon he is? Sure, he’s an engaging guy with millions of stories to share. But I’ve personally watched Lefty take a rank beginner, and inside of five minutes, have that person tossing beautiful, dancing loops out the end of a fly rod. His innate ability to instruct is, to me, what sets him apart from the rest of us flyfishing mortals.

 I’ll admit something else. The companies I cover most in this magazine, I do so because their people are effective educators. I don’t have to guess what their message is, or what their products do, or why you readers might be interested in them. They make my job easier by helping me understand information.

 My point—and, as such, the theme for this, the seventh issue of Angling Trade—is very simple. Given the shaky economy, we’re going to make each of our 2009 issues focus on specific ideals and tactics that can help retailers, guides, and others in the industry survive and grow their businesses. In my mind, that must start with education. Teaching. Make people better at what they do, and they will inevitably find you, in fact, seek you out, and reward you with their business.

 Yes, it’s that simple. Be salespersons, be business operators, be facilitators, be confidants. But in some form or format, be a teacher, a coach, or a mentor to the people you work with, and you’ll add value to your business.

 As such, we’ve included a wide range of perspectives from some of the best writers (and teachers) in the business to elaborate on this theme in the following pages. And as usual, I’m eager to hear your responses and ideas. You can contact me directly at kirk@anglingtrade.com.

 -Kirk Deeter, Editor

There’s an ancient Chinese proverb that goes: “Give a man a fish, and he will eat for a day; teach a man to fish, and he will eat for a lifetime.”
**The Product Buzz**

**Field Test: New Simms Boots Earn High Marks**

Whether the Simms “StreamTread” wading boot becomes the footprint of the future likely will be more a matter of angler conscience than official stipulation. But at a time when the fishing world is abuzz over the spreading impact of various invasive species, this much is certain: this rubber-sole boot offers the first workable alternative to the spread of nasty organisms such as whirling disease, didymo and mud snails via boot soles.

“We have scientific evidence that felt moves these invaders around,” Dave Kumljen, executive director of the Whirling Disease Foundation, said of a problem that becomes increasingly more critical with the discovery that WD is making rapid incursions into endangered cutthroat trout populations, even at higher elevations.

An avid angler, Kumljen has another observation—that StreamTread performs very well, even under tough conditions.

“I took them to the Gallatin River, one of the more difficult streams to wade. It was icy and slippery. I gave them a good going over. The grip is damn good.”

An Angling Trade test on Colorado’s South Platte River under perhaps less demanding circumstances produced a similar result when rubber hit the rock.

None of this foretells the immediate extinction of felt, the gold standard of upright wading since most of us can remember. But it does offer a viable option at a time when the sport is clamoring for environmental relief.

Trout Unlimited has appealed to the industry to eliminate felt by the year 2011. Simms has pledged to purge its sole by 2010. Amid rumblings that other suppliers soon will follow suit in the development of an alternate grip, New Zealand has outlawed felt in its waters and Utah’s Division of Wildlife Resources has stripped the old standby from the boots of its aquatic staff.

Despite these developments, Kumljen doubts there’ll be a rush by wildlife agencies toward an outright ban on felt, leaving the matter as an article of personal scruple.

Responding to the TU plea, Simms began experiments more than a year ago, ultimately in partnership with Vibram, the Italian company with 70 years of experience in boot sole manufacture. The result is a sort of ‘tri-star’ design for maximum purchase and a rubber compound that emerged from a series of tests.

Simms’ own testing, both in and outside the firm, produced mixed opinions. “Some said they liked StreamTread just the way it is,” said Kumljen. “Others said it’s better than any other rubber but not as good as felt,” said Diane Bristol, director of marketing and brand management.

For the latter, Simms will offer a “HardBite” stud system specific to this Vibram sole, scheduled to arrive in shops in late February. Bristol emphasized these studs can be arranged in any pattern, or number, to suit the individual wader or stream condition.

-Charlie Meyers

**Cortland Launches New Line**

Cortland’s Precision PE+ Crystal line is formulated with a blend of polyethylene and special copolymers. Built on a nylon monofilament core, the PE+ Crystal’s patent-pending crystal-clear jacket is naturally lighter than water, eliminating the need for micro-balloons or other agents to make it float. This results in a smaller diameter floating line with less wind resistance when casting, and less disturbance when the line hits the water.

The hard, ultra-smooth PE+ line jacket finish also has a lower coefficient of friction, so it shoots silently through the guides and casts faster and farther than equivalent PVC-coated floating lines. This also makes it more resistant to cuts/abrasion and is fused to the monofilament core with an almost unbreakable bond so nail knots hold securely and there is never any separation of jacket and core. The PE+ jacket is also UV stable, will not absorb water, is highly resistant to chemicals -- and won’t soften or dissolve when exposed to DEET, gasoline or most other solvents. And, unlike PVC-coated fly lines, they are 100% recyclable.

Smith’s Riverside Impresses

Another AT field-tested recommendation: Smith Optics recently introduced the Riverside, a sunglass model that melds a classic look with updated feel, and features the company’s Techlite fused to the monofilament core with an almost unbreakable bond so nail knots hold securely and there is never any separation of jacket and core. The PE+ jacket is also UV stable, will not absorb water, is highly resistant to chemicals -- and won’t soften or dissolve when exposed to DEET, gasoline or most other solvents. And, unlike PVC-coated fly lines, they are 100% recyclable.

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and tapered lens tech (144) glass lens technology. Techlite is highly durable and scratch resistant, as well as exceptionally light. Riverside comes in various polarized lens tints suited for different fishing situations, including polarchromic copper and amber, as well as blue and green mirrors. They also sport spring hinges and temple and nose pads for secure fit, and are recommended for medium to large faces. MSRP ranges from $159 to $179, and like all Smith products, they’re backed by a lifetime warranty. See smithoptics.com for more details.

**Vintner Offers Premium Program for Fly Businesses**

StoneFly Vineyards (stoneflyvineyards.com) is a Napa Valley winery dedicated to pairing the rich traditions of flyfishing and fine wine making. In addition to serving an outstanding collection of fine wines, a key element of program to be of service to our colleagues and friends in the flyfishing business. Everyone is thinking about ways to retain their best customers and strengthen relationships with key partners. This program is a winner for everyone, helping businesses show gratitude to their best customers and partners, providing the recipient an outstanding, personalized gift and allowing us to demonstrate our wines and commitment to the angling community."

To enroll, submit a short application to StoneFly Vineyards to verify status as a fishing business or organization. Once accepted, the business can order StoneFly Wines at a generous discount and work with the StoneFly team to customize a high-quality greeting card. StoneFly Vineyards then ships the gift package (card included) to the chosen customer or partner.

**Nautilus Creates Spool for Gelspun Backing**

Nautilus Reels recently introduced the GSPool for the NV 8/9 reel, designed to offer flyfishers who use Gelspun (GSP) backing a spool that will hold 200 yds of 65lb gelspun with a WF9F fine line. Features include a ribbed arbor that will prevent the gelspun backing from slipping. This ribbed arbor also gives the sensation that the backing is floating within the arbor when viewed from the side, and promotes faster backing drying after use. The Nautilus NV 8/9 GSPOOLS are ported to reduce weight and retains strength, weigh 5 oz less than the 8/9 spool and is available now in black or brushed silver anodizing, as a reel or just a spare spool. MSRP is $275 (spool only), see nautilusreels.com.

**Redington and RIO Products Int. Inc., announced the hiring of David Visnack as director of marketing and merchandising. In this newly-created role, Visnack will help Far Bank strengthen its current business within traditional channels while also reaching out to new categories and new markets.**

Having successfully grown international brands as director of marketing at SmartWood and vice president of marketing for Buck Knives, Visnack will oversee the marketing teams for all three Far Bank brands. Leveraging his experience in the outdoor and apparel industries, Visnack hopes to further develop these brands so that they can leverage new product opportunities that deliver maximum profitability to Far Bank and its retail partners.

“Our continued focus is to drive value to our retailers and consumers, and marketing is a big piece of the equation, especially for retailers,” said Far Bank president Travis Campbell. “We see this new role as an evolutionary step in our vision and approach to Far Bank’s brand growth. We recognized David’s past accomplishments in growing brands, David’s brand-centric approach to clothing and accessories is right in line with our strategy. We look forward to his experience and guidance in further developing and capitalizing on the strengths of each brand while building a cohesive, nationally recognized ‘house of brands’ built around the principles of innovation, quality, conservation and the flyfishing lifestyle. An added benefit of bringing David on-board is it gives Marc Bale, our chairman, the ability to focus even more on our core business and our retail partners.”

**Far Bank Hiring David Visnack as Director of Marketing and Merchandising**

Far Bank Enterprises, Inc., parent company of Sage Manufacturing, Redington and RIO Products Int. Inc., announced the hiring of David Visnack as director of marketing and merchandising. In this newly-created role, Visnack will help Far Bank strengthen its current business within traditional channels while also reaching out to new categories and new markets. Having successfully grown international brands as director of marketing at SmartWood and vice president of marketing for Buck Knives, Visnack will oversee the marketing teams for all three Far Bank brands. Leveraging his experience in the outdoor and apparel industries, Visnack hopes to further develop these brands so that they can leverage new product opportunities that deliver maximum profitability to Far Bank and its retail partners. Our continued focus is to drive value to our retailers and consumers, and marketing is a big piece of the equation, especially for retailers said Far Bank president Travis Campbell. “We see this new role as an evolutionary step in our vision and approach to Far Bank’s brand growth. We recognized David’s past accomplishments in growing brands, David’s brand-centric approach to clothing and accessories is right in line with our strategy. We look forward to his experience and guidance in further developing and capitalizing on the strengths of each brand while building a cohesive, nationally recognized ‘house of brands’ built around the principles of innovation, quality, conservation and the flyfishing lifestyle. An added benefit of bringing David on-board is it gives Marc Bale, our chairman, the ability to focus even more on our core business and our retail partners.”

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**Quote-worthy**

**The People Buzz**

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**The People Buzz**
Far Bank’s VP of sales, who had been handling these marketing responsibilities, the ability to focus exclusively on driving sales for the organization.”

Referring to his new position, David Vinnack said: “It’s an honor to be working with such solid and iconic brands. Between Sage, Redington and RIO, there’s a long heritage of innovation, and I’m excited to be able to add to it. Far Bank brands are a link to the natural beauty that enriches the lives of their customers, so I’m especially excited to develop brand initiatives that support conservation efforts,” Vinnack continued.

Thomas Joins Fly Rod & Reel
Greg Thomas (an Angling Trade contributing editor) has joined Fly Rod & Reel as managing editor, as of that magazine’s March 2009 issue. He’ll be working from his home office in Ennis, Montana, and handling article proposals, editorial scheduling, editing, as well as writing and shooting photos for the magazine.

Writers/photographers can contact Greg with article ideas or photo submissions, or associate publisher Joe Healy (as can manufacturers or organizations with news/new products). Their respective contacts are gthomas@flyrodandreel.com and jhealy@flyrodred.com.

“Greg has a deep knowledge of flyfishing and of outdoor writing,” said Healy. “We’re lucky to have such an experienced pro joining us at FR&R, and also to have an editorial team in the Rocky Mountain West. Greg and I share a vision for the magazine: To keep FR&R a leader among the most surprising, entertaining, relevant and educational flyfishing magazines published today. We’ll be working with writers and photographers to push forward with the freshest ideas and best graphics.”

Ian Gordon Endorses Hardy in USA
One of the best known ghillies in Scotland and renowned spey casting champion has joined the Hardy & Greys Ltd. product development team as a consultant and is endorsing Hardy Spey lines in America. Ian Gordon, winner of the Jimmy Green Spey-O-Rama in San Francisco in 2004 and highly regarded in the US Spey Casting Community, praises Hardy for the invention of the Mach 55 and 65 Spey lines.

“These new Mach lines from Hardy are must-haves for the serious salmon, sea trout or steelhead angler,” said Gordon. “Technological advances in both coating and physical taper give the Mach II the edge - These new lines feel both slick and easy to cast, the taper on both the Mach 55 and 65 foot heads, importantly, make them suitable for both short as well as longer casts, turning over heavy as well as lighter flies.

Gordon will be attending The Jimmy Green International Spey-O-Rama and Fly Casting Festival in California, on April 17-19 (spey-o-rama.com) and Sandy River Spey Clave in Oregon (flyfshusa.com/spey-clave.htm) on May 16-17.

Mach Spey lines are priced from $199.00 to $599.00, see hardysusa.com.

Wolstenholme to Fulling Mill
John Wolstenholme, previously brand marketing manager for Hardy & Greys, has joined U.K.-based fly and fly tackle manufacturer Fulling Mill as the company’s director of sales and marketing. Born and raised in South Africa, Wolstenholme moved to the U.K. to be an Orvis store manager, then joined Hardy’s marketing team six years ago.

“I have known John for a long time now during which his career and standing within the industry have developed,” said Fulling Mill managing director Barry Unwin. “His appointment at Fulling Mill opens a new chapter for the company and I am absolutely delighted, not least because it means that I can spend more time on other aspects of the business (and fishing!).”

Wolstenholme’s Fulling Mill contact, effective April 1, is john.wolstenholme@fullingmill.com, phone +44 1293 778035.

Industry Icons Hosting Turneffe Flats Trips
A group of flyfishing experts – “Living Legends of the Sport” – are now hosting week-long excursions to Turneffe Flats in search of permit, bonefish and tarpon. Turneffe Flats guests for these weeks through May 30 will qualify for a $500 rebate to assist with airfare. According to Craig Hayes, the resort’s owner, “Fuel prices have dropped and so have our expenses. We feel it is only fair to pass some of our saving on to our visitors.” The rebate will provide free or nearly-free travel from many U.S. cities.

Upcoming hosts include John and Amy Hazel, April 4-11; Cathy and Barry Beck, May 16-23; and Chico Fernandez, June 6-13. For information, see tflats.com.

Film Tour Hits the Road
Big waves have hit one of flyfishing film’s largest purveyors of content and distribution, as it would appear that AEG Media, creator of the “Trout Bum Diaries” film series and the Fly Fishing Film tour, is no more. But the show goes on…

“Two partners and I bought the Flyfishing Film Tour from owners Terry Wolverton and Jim Crystal, ensuring that the tour will go on,” said Tom Bic, editor and publisher of The Drake.

According to Bic, the Tour is now called The Drake Flyfishing Film Tour and will be a partnership effort led by himself, Doug Powell and Chris Kieg. Powell and Kieg are both anglers and have experience working with Warren Miller Entertainment.

The Tour kicked off in February and will include more than 80 stops. The new owners are taking a fresh new view and approach to the tour that includes profit sharing with the filmmakers, but for the most part, are downplaying the change in ownership. “The average fly fishing film tour attendee doesn’t give a damn who owns the tour,” he’s just looking for an excuse to get out of the house on a cold weeknight in March,” concluded Bic. “And we aim to give it to him.”

The Flying Fish Film Tour includes short films from Felt Soul Media, Beattie Outdoor Productions, Confluence Films, Rollcast Productions, World Angling, Skinny Fis Productions, and more. This year’s lineup of films offers a truly global experience, showcasing footage shot in Papua New Guinea, Russia, New Zealand, Belize, India, as well as domestic waters from California and Colorado to Southern Louisiana and the Florida Keys.

To buy tickets, see the latest schedule, or watch trailers of the films, visit flyfishingfilmtour.com.

- Will Rice

Angling International is Official Media Partner of EFTTA and EFTTEX
Angling International, published by U.K.-based Top Corner Editorial and Design Limited, has been named the official media partner of the European Fishing Tackle Trade Association (EFTTA), and the group’s annual trade show, the European Fishing Tackle Trade Exhibition (EFTTEX), scheduled for June 12-14, 2009, in Budapest, Hungary. As partner, Angling International also publishes “Newsletters,” EFTTA’s monthly electronic newsletter, as well as related marketing and communication support materials. Angling International has also launched a special EFTTEX NEWS mini-magazine section to be integrated into four pre-EFTTEX editions of Angling International, designed to promote the event and its exhibitors.

“In my opinion, EFTTEX NEWS will give advertisers the greatest possible exposure to the worldwide angling trade, and boost (their) sales capacity enormously,” said Jean-Claude Bel, CEO of EFTTA.

For information on Angling International, contact Lucie Petrickova at lucie@angling-international.com.

Western Native Trout Initiative Announces Funding Grant and 2009 Project Request to the National Fish Habitat Board
The Western Native Trout Initiative (WNTI), a venture of the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and a National Fish Habitat Partnership, announced that it has received approval of a multi-state conservation grant that will fund the operations of the initiative through December 2011. The grant is from the annual real-allocation of unspent Federal Aid to Sportfish Restoration dollars.

“For the past two and a half years, the Western Native Trout Initiative has worked to develop a new approach to expanding the work being done to protect various species of trout…”
species of cutthroat and other native trout across the West,” said Robin Knox, WNTI coordinator. “The Western Native Trout Initiative has partnered with 12 western states, five federal fishery management agencies, and multiple public and private entities in a planning and project implementation effort that funds on-the-ground data collection and habitat improvement projects to conserve and enhance native trout populations. Over the past three years, 30 projects have been initiated and funded by this effort.”

WNTI submitted the following list of native trout habitat projects for funding in the 2009 project year:

- Georgetown Road Relocation Project, Bear River Basin, Idaho for Bonneville Cutthroat trout
- Honey Creek Diversion #2 removal in Oregon for Redband trout restoration
- Panther Creek fish passage barrier removal in Washington for Westslope Cutthroat trout
- Fish and habitat restoration in Santa Clara Creek in New Mexico for Rio Grande Cutthroat trout
- East Fork Bear River Canal fish screen placement in Utah for Bonneville Cutthroat trout
- Remove two fish barriers in Stony Creek in Montana for Westslope cutthroat trout
- Lower Deer Creek protective fish barrier in Montana for Yellowstone Cutthroat trout
- Restore fish passage in Eccles Creek in Alaska for coastal Cutthroat trout
- Place protective fish barrier in McDermott Creek in Nevada for Lahontan Cutthroat trout

For more information, see westernnativetrout.org.

Quote-worthy

“A man who stops advertising to save money is like a man who stops a clock to save time.”

– Henry Ford

TROPHY REDFISH SCHOOL ON THE FLY

WHERE: Louisiana — “The Land of the Giants”

WHEN: January 7-10, 2010

HEADQUARTERS: Ritz Carlton, New Orleans

COST: $3500

INCLUDED: 4 nights lodging, 3 days guided fishing (2 anglers per boat), all meals, seminars and fishing transports.

PROGRAM INCLUDES: Seminars led by IGFA world record holders and the tournament guides in the area... and looking for the biggest redfish in the world-class accommodations, and New Orleans charm.

LEARN: Presentation techniques and tips, saltwater approaches for redfish, including weather and condition factors... and much more.

SEE: The French Quarter, the wild marsh, giant redfish, and the best saltwater experience in America.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU: Somethings new and different for your customers via a win an affordable, exotic experience... and ample outfitting (gear sales) opportunities plus referral fee.

NOT INCLUDED: Airport shuttles, alcohol, gratuities.

HOW TO SIGN UP: Contact Captain Gregg Arnold — call 504-237-6742. E-mail captgregg@gmail.com www.fishinthelandofgiants.com

Travel Highlight

The Bulls of the Biloxi Marsh — Trophy Redfish in Louisiana

At Ot dark 30 in the morning, as the Big Easy sleeped off the effects of the previous night’s party, and every night’s a party, it’s about a 45-minute drive from Greggs home in the city to the tiny fishing hamlet of Hopevale, in St. Bernard Parish, situated at the edge of the Marsh. Hopevale was ground zero for Katrina, and as if that wasn’t enough, it was more recently pounded by Gustav and Ike as well. Signs of the devastation are still everywhere, but Hopevale springs eternal, so to speak, and at the marina and boat launch, its all about courage, re-building, returning to oyster leases and the beat of the bayou, and, of course, catching big redfish.

“Forty feet in four seconds.” As a redfish virgin, I got all kinds of advice from my more experienced pals but this little pearl offered up by Deeter was the one that stuck in my head, playing over and over as Capt. Gregg ran us out in his Hell’s Bay skiff deep into a vast, sprawling maze of marsh grass and mud flats to a place he calls “The Land of Giants.” Here, according to Kirk, if I could just cast forty feet in four seconds, I might just be able to hook up with what might even be a world record redfish. Wouldn’t that beat all?

Now Gregg would probably tell you that while I could cast forty feet in four seconds, it was often in the wrong direction. Spotting the targets proved to be my main challenge at first, but I like to think that I improved somewhat over the four days we fished. Gregg might beg to differ, but during my time there, these were the highlights. Tim Romano (the supposed photographer on this gig) and I on one afternoon caught and landed no less than a dozen redfish none of which were under 20 pounds. I not only busted my redfish cherry here,
As “Why Fly Fishing” by Jeffrey Pill and "Having never been to a flyfishing DVD (video) in flyfishing, (Tom Bie) article on digital media..." \cite{Bie2009}

**Follow-Ups**

In response to the December 2009 Angling Trade/Tom Bie's article on digital media (video) in flyfishing, Fly Rod & Reel associate publisher Joe Healy wrote:  

"Having never been to a flyfishing DVD showing at a theater or college campus rec center, I can comment on how these events might recruit new flyfishers to the sport. Though I can say with a pretty high level of conviction that DVDs of such as “Why Fly Fishing” by Jeffrey Pill and The American Museum of Fly Fishing or Jean Wall’s or Mel Kriger’s casting..." \cite{Healy2009}

**Access Issue Update**

Thank you for the many poignant responses to our last issue focused on water access. In follow-up, the Salt Lake Tribune recently reported on a bill introduced in the Utah State Legislature by Rep. Ben Ferry, R-Corinne, that would effectively quash a Utah Supreme Court ruling in favor of public washing access on the state’s rivers and streams. Under the bill, sections of only 14 rivers would be designated open to recreational use by anglers. Also, Angling Trade regular Ben Romans also flagged a story reported in the Akselusin that outlined how a bill by Montana state Senator Rick Laible, R-Darby, aimed at redefining the terms “natural” and “natural water body” could ultimately limit stream access in that state. Please stay tuned to these issues as they unfold and look for further updates in Angling Trade. \cite{Tribune2009}

**Coming Soon To Your Shop?**

The “Undercover Angler” \cite{Cermele2009}

They’re Still Flying in Jersey \cite{Cermele2009}

"If there’s a recession going on right, you’d never know it." Those were the exact words of Hatch Reels owner John Torok on Sunday, January 25th—the final day of the Somerset Fly Fishing Show, here is Angling Trade’s take on the recent ISE show in Denver..." \cite{Cermele2009}

The experience on the river, the dance has been outstanding." \cite{Cermele2009}

\textbf{If you were an exhibitor and were disappointed at ISE, you might need a deeper reality check to help plan ahead. If you were expecting people to ride that elevator up to the show floor and start peeling off hundred dollar bills, maybe you need a new outlook.}

I don’t know of any other industry where manufacturers who provide product directly to their customers. I truly don’t think a little optimism is wringing hands, you have something positive to say.

My grandfather who farmed used to say a drought can kill the farm, but a crop wouldn’t. If the market price on soybeans was trending down, it was up to you to rotate to a different crop. The fact that ISE Denver was filled with people only underscores that the “base” (at least in this part of the country) is indeed alive and well. There is no catastrophic people drought. From where I stood, ISE benefited from the amped-up flyfishing presence in Denver, and flyfishing, as a sport, benefited from ISE. We can all do better, no doubt. Times are tougher than they have been in years. But what I saw made me feel more motivated to stop the hand wringing and worrying, and make plans to capitalize on opportunities ahead. \cite{Cermele2009}

- Kirk Deeter
I recently read a piece by Joan Wulff, called “The Evolution of a Fly Fisher.” In it, Joan describes all of the stages we go through as anglers. We can all relate to them, so let me repeat them here.

As Joan observed, all beginners want to do is catch as many fish as possible. Once an angler gets through that stage, the next level is trying to catch the biggest fish. After that, many of us try to catch the hardest or most difficult fish.

Stage 4 is on giving back to the sport. It’s all about getting involved in conservation and preserving our heritage. Stage 5 is simply about getting out there, about enjoying yourself wherever you happen to be fishing at the time.

Stage 6 is where Joan really hit the nail on the head, as this concerns replacing yourself. “This is about bringing young people into our sport,” she wrote. “Unless we do this, our sport will be diminished, first in numbers of anglers and then, with fewer anglers working to preserve the habitat, in quality.”

In a nutshell, if we want to preserve the sport we all love so much, then we’d better not sit back and hope that other folks do it. If you’re a retailer and want your business to grow, this takes on a deeper meaning. Successful businesses don’t only sell more and more gear to repeat customers. Truly profitable stores also sell equipment to new anglers. Once a beginning angler buys gear from you, and walks out that door a satisfied customer, there’s an excellent chance he’ll come back again. So the question is, how do you get that new customer in the first place?

Teaching Kids
It starts with teaching. I live on a 30-acre lake 50 miles north of New York City. The lake is loaded with bluegills, stunted largemouths, some pickerel and perch. When my wife and I first moved there, I used to go down there with a 6-weight outfit and a Muddler Minnow and just catch bass after bass. Hooking 10 on 10 casts was not unusual. Not seeing any kids fishing was also not unusual. So, we devised a plan. After getting permission from the community, we started teaching kids how to fish...
we put up notices that there would be a kids’ fishing derby on the lake on the Saturday morning of Memorial Day weekend. The community offered to put on a barbecue after the tournament, which was more than we could have hoped for.

We scrambled after that, and got Zebco to lend us 50 rods and reels. We then got a tacklebox maker to donate some boxes for prizes. The local tackle shop, Bob’s, gave us three gift certificates, a couple of hats, plus a flat of worms. We bought hooks, bobbers, and split-shot from them, and made up a sign thanking Bob’s for his support of the derby. We bought spincast reels, bobbers, and worms. We bought hooks, bobbers, and spincast rods, which is how I started, in the back seat of my car next to his in the driveway. I went to bed totally exhausted but what gratifying work. There were many years of my life I probably tried too hard. I probably have enough years left to see him as a great companion and a great champion of wise methods of protecting our great fisheries.

Nick’s View
Nick Lyons echoes Joan’s view that serious fishermen are always those involved in your community. People who are involved in your community will notice. Like most people, kids like being involved in their communities. He also encourages people to take photos of their kids with their catches and hang them in the house for others to see. Like most people, kids like being heroes too.”

My Turn
I taught my son, James, how to fish on that lake where we hold the derby. I started him with a spincast reel, bobber, and worms, then moved on to spinning gear. In summers, I’d make a point of going down to the lake with him at least one night a week. We’d catch bass and bluegills, and just have a good old time.

When James got into high school, he got that attitude that many teenagers get. If you’ve ever had a teenager, you know what I mean. He knew it all, and I was dumber than dirt. At one point he told me he hated fishing and hated to read—two things dear to me. He was, of course, establishing his independence. We didn’t fish together for a couple of years after that. It killed me, but I’d go off on my own, didn’t even ask him to go with me, after awhile. But one night, I got home from work, and parked my car next to his in the driveway. I noticed a tacklebox and spinning rod in the back seat.

“Been fishing?” I asked when I came in the door.

“Yeah,” he answered in a typical teenage monosyllabic response. But that was okay, because I knew he had come back. Since then, we’ve been fishing together when it worked for our respective schedules. We hit local lakes, done some fly fishing on the Atlantic Ocean, even went to Alaska last year, where we both caught sockeye on flyrods. Now I’ve got a fishing buddy for life. Most important, I’ve replaced myself. You should too. •

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Am I Too Old to Teach Fly Casting?

Written by Joseph Meyer

After teaching fly casting for several years now, I have found that the line of demarcation is about 20 years old; younger than that and the metaphors that I use to teach fly casting are worthless. It must be a sign of my aging process but I am mystified that those younger students who come to me for fly casting instruction just don’t have the worldliness to grasp onto the tools that I have always used to illustrate the dynamics of the cast.

When I teach the false cast, I want students to get into a rhythm and to become aware that when casting a shorter length of line, they need to have a quicker casting cycle than they do with a longer length of line. A simple concept but it sometimes needs illustration to be grasped.

“Be like a metronome,” I advise my students, and at this admonishment I am often met with an owl-like stare. The eyes widen, and then blink repeatedly but no awareness sets in.

“You know, the thing that sits on top of the piano and keeps time”.

Nothing.

“But you told me you took music lessons!” Blink, blink. Nothing. When a beginner asks me about casting lessons, I tell them that it is easy to learn the basic cast. Kids pick up on it easier than adults, especially those that have had some musical training, so I always inquire about any music lessons that a prospective student may have taken. Yet the wood pyramid with the brass pendulum that graced the piano that every student plunked away at is a foreign concept to younger casting students.

“Well, if you don’t know what a metronome is how did you keep time?” They reply that the device used during their lessons was digital. Everything that comes out of a teenager’s mouth is said with that odd accent. Everything is digital. It’s the new Millennium.

So, we press on. I need to illustrate that they need to come to a more definitive stop on their forward cast and I ask that they pretend that they are swinging a hammer. The scenario is this: they need to drive a nail into a wall to hang a picture. The big old brunette at home always wants pictures hung at eye level so I borrow her advice and tell them that they need to drive the nail into the wall at eye level. Further, they need to swing a hammer big enough to drive the nail in with one stroke. This illustrates that they need to break their wrist at the very last second to apply power at the end of the stroke and come to a complete stop.

If they don’t break their wrist ever so slightly, I explain, they will be pushing the nail into the wall instead of driving it in. I want to remind them that when they are swinging a hammer, they normally do not hold it with a death grip but just tightly enough to keep control. It’s the same way with a fly rod.

This analogy works for me and has worked with every student that I have ever had who was older than twenty. I was slack-jawed speechless when a casting student told me that neither she nor her brother had ever held a hammer. “Never?” No, was her reply, they always had a workman do that kind of thing.

I am blessed to own a fly shop in a Chicago suburb that is surrounded by nothing but luxury. This brings beginner fly fishers into the shop and is an economic boon to me. The downside is that the...
of a Range Rover with a brush bar on the front. Now it’s my turn to offer up the Owl Look.

“Never swung a hammer, have you Punkin?” Pity.

Another common casting error that beginners (as well as an old fishing partner) make is to reach back for more power.

When executing the back cast, they tend to reach back for if they were making a softball throw, thereby lengthening their casting arc and losing power instead of gaining power. It typically happens when casting for distance or casting into the wind. The correct technique is to come to a more complete stop on the back cast, let the line unfurl behind you and then apply more power to a complete stop on the forward cast.

Lefty Kreh describes this as an acceleration to a stop.

The description works in theory but needs illustration, and the next casting student was a young buck of about 19. I took the student’s fly rod away from him, laid it on the ground and told him that the fly rod on the ground is now the line on the saloon floor and that he would need to step up to the line to throw a dart. I told him that instead of a fly rod he now has a “pretend” dart in his hand and I asked him to throw the dart at an imaginary dartboard.

The next teaching step was to move the imaginary dartboard further across the saloon floor so that when he made his next dart throw, he wouldn’t reach back for more power, he needed to come to a harder stop to get the dart to fly farther.

The first time I used this analogy, I damn near broke my casting arm by patting myself on the back is self-congratulation; I was a genius in getting a point across.

From the 19-year-old I got that Owl Look again, blink, blink. Not only had he never thrown darts before but he was truly confused about the concept of a saloon. Here came the accent again.

“A saloon, is that, um, like a bar?” “No, dude, a saloon is not, um, like a bar, it is precisely a bar! It’s a comforting place where aging, harried fly fishers go to apply liquid salve to bruised egos after trout have made fools of them. As part of our therapy, sometimes we throw darts. You should try it sometime, it helps your casting stroke.”

Sometimes I think I am getting too old for this.

Raised by an educator, Joseph Meyer loves teaching out of his fly shop, One More Cast, in Countryside, Illinois.

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SPECS:
7.875” x 10.375”  LIVE
8.375” x 10.875”  TRIM
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They Said It:

Five minutes after (photographing) a sow and 2 large cubs from about 30-ft away, I was focusing on shooting the sow, trying to get her head to fill the entire frame when I became aware of a draft on my neck, it was one of the cubs behind me smelling my backside.

Interview by Will Rice

Name and age: Terry Gunn, 53
Title: Owner - Lees Ferry Anglers Guides and Fly Shop and Cliff Dwellers Lodge.
To earn a paycheck I: Guide fisherman on the Colorado River at Lees Ferry; I am also a flyfishing photographer.
The part of my job I love the most is: Two things - 1) Happy fish 2) Spending quality time on the crick with clients, sharing my knowledge of fly fishing and watching people become better anglers.
The part of my job I hate the most is: 1) Unhappy fish 2) Grumpy customers! (Not necessarily in that order but they often go together)
If I mysteriously came down with the avian flu my staff would most likely find me fishing...
“Smaller”? What fishermen in their right minds would ever say such a thing? Well, actually... we do...
In fact, we’re very proud of Smaller... but before you think we’ve lowered our fish-size expectations, relax... we’re obviously talking about Coefficient of Friction. And when it comes to fly lines and Coefficient of Friction – smaller is better – it means your line is slicker, and every fisherman knows a slicker line is a better line.
The RIO Labcoats have achieved this amazing 15% reduction with our revolutionary XS Technology, a pairing of two entirely new chemical compositions, creating a glass-smooth surface and a super slick coating that repels the accumulation of dirt and grime, and casts farther, much farther.
But that’s only a small part of the Big Science going on at RIO. In order to develop the world’s finest fly lines, it takes the most technologically advanced materials and manufacturing processes known to man, so we make sure The Labcoats have the finest of everything (and we nod approvingly during their frequent R&D Sessions to the river). We hook our lines up to exotic machinery that tests slickness and we formulate new copolymers to enhance durability. Our advanced tapers help with greater distance, improved accuracy, and softer presentations. Proprietary coating technologies, like our inspired AgentX and SFT Technologies, create a slick finish that lets your line float higher and shoot farther. And with specialized leader and tippet materials for any presentation, we’re sure you’ll be pulling on more big fish soon enough.
So, why does RIO put such a huge effort into Smaller?...
because your fly line matters, that’s why.
My Favorite Professors

Written by Kirk Deeter

Some folks look back on their distinguished academic careers, and fondly remember those sage purveyors of wisdom—professors—who shaped their lives... molded their intellect... honed their critical thinking skills... and ultimately made them the people they now are.

Having not enjoyed a distinguished academic career myself, I'm not one of them. Oh, I did have some great English teachers and professors who taught me how to put words and stories together, and I'm obviously grateful to them. But there are other "professors" I should thank for giving me insights and knowledge that I still use almost every day. Truth is, they gave me the substance upon which I have built an outdoor writing career. They didn't wear tweed jackets and talk behind lecterns… they wore waders, and worked rivets… or they worked a push-pole, and scanned the flats.

Some of my favorite professors, it turns out, are flyfishing guides.

Among them, Terry Gunn… professor emeritus of Yellowstone University Rusty Vorous… the esteemed Patty Reilly… professor Pat Dorsey… the dean of the flats, Bill Curtis… Chuck Naiser… Gary Taylor… John Flick… and a host of others.

About 15 years ago, my wife's cousins Andrew and Liz Steketee and I started a book project; we had no publisher at the time. It was, truth be told, an excuse to fish with great flyfishing guides. The premise was that guides are the living soul of the flyfishing world in that they shape opinions and share knowledge as much or more than anyone else. The book did get picked up by a publisher in 2002, and became Castoff. A sequel, Tideline, followed two years later.


Some manufacturers (Simms, Orvis, and others) and retailers (Blue Quill, The Fly Shop, and others) get that. Yet, as a whole industry, we need to do a better job of taking care of guides.

On the flip side, guides, as a group, must understand that they are, when all is said and done, ambassadors of the flyfishing world. They are the difference makers. Guides will ultimately decide how well this sport endures in the future.

The difference between a great guide and a good guide is teaching ability. I remember a conversation with guide Kea Hause, when he told me that he spent whole work days just sharing information, without even wetting a line. I thought, "How odd… yet how smart."

Terry Gunn once told me what Lefty Kreh told him (and I'm paraphrasing): "A great guide shares knowledge… he just doesn't demonstrate how to catch fish."

In my day job with Field & Stream, I get dozens of e-mails and letters related to the question, "How do you find a really good guide?"

And I tell them all the same thing. "The great guide is the one who makes you feel smarter—makes you a better angler at the end of the time you spend together." In other words, it shouldn’t matter how many fish you catch. What matters is knowledge.

Sharing knowledge.

I still remember knowledge shared by guides I've fished with… Dave Faltings showing me how to use an indicator dry fly at Silver Creek… the late Denny Brereton telling me, "Time on water equals fish." I remember Al Keller telling me to toss the trout fishing "tip-up" thinking out the window when it comes to playing a tarpon on the fly. I hear Conway Bowman tell me to "let big fish run, and let the reel do its job." I remember all the knots Patty Reilly taught me. I remember Chuck Naiser's advice on casting in the Texas wind. Pete Cardinal… let the bad cast ride. Amanda Switzer… play the breeze. Tim Mosolf… set the hook on instinct, not feel.

And I remember Steve "Creature" Coulter telling me the best trout fishing advice I ever got, as we were chasing tuna 30 miles off the Cape Hatteras shoreline: "Fish like changes. Key on changes in current and structure, and depth, and you'll find the fish… tuna, or trout."

"The great guide is the one who makes you feel smarter—makes you a better angler at the end of the time you spend together."

Guides’ influence is seen every day on the water. When I fish Cheesman Canyon in Colorado, and see a fished-out brown yarn indicator, and I know that anglers is thinking about whether or not to add a "fuzz" more lead, I know that’s a Pat Dorsey disciple.

I worry that certain fly guides think scooping fish with their nets and tying on bugs is where it all begins and ends. And, granted, in certain places, a guide can make a good living doing just that. Add in a few colorful jokes, and the tip is a done deal.

Good for you… but that’s not good for flyfishing.

I’ve taken up part-time guiding as a moonlighting gig. And my goal now for every day I’m on the water is this simple piece of advice from Gunn: Leave the people you fish with at least one thing… one thing that they didn’t know when they showed up and put their boots on in the morning. That can be a new fly pattern, a tweak on the cast, a tip for landing fish, a bit of natural history… anything. But give them at least one thing.

That’s the only advice I have for other would-be guides. Give them, at least, that one thing. And it can come from anywhere. Maybe the lady you took out on the water yesterday had a trick in her bag you didn’t know before. Maybe you read it somewhere. Maybe you had a guide show you something years ago. Maybe it’s an old trick from your grandfather… but pay it forward.

Because you never know who that person is fishing with is, or what they might tell others… or write. Old, young, novice or expert… people ultimately remember their favorite "professors." Especially in flyfishing.
Communicating the ins and outs of flyfishing is one of the most important aspects of making a sale. Knowing how to present the information to make it educational is the key. Here are the top 10 things to think about. Are you...

Positive?
This doesn’t mean gushing with fake enthusiasm, but few people learn from a negative approach. Be constructive in your corrections and you will see a greater return from your time and energy.

Substantive?
You would think that teaching and learning would go hand in hand, but it’s amazing how presenters can talk for long periods without saying anything. Know what information you want to say and say it.

Planned and Structured?
Knowing what information to present is important. Having a plan to present the information is just as important. The best information in the world can be lost if you are disorganized. Write it, read it, review it. Then have someone else review it, then review it again.

Concise?
Make your explanations clear and to the point. Can I be any more concise?

Responsive and Flexible?
Watch your students if they are getting glassy-eyed, and make a change in your approach if necessary. Your elaborately designed informational posters may need simplicity instead of a designer with an art degree. At times, you may just need to take a 10-minute breather, allow the onlookers to sip some of the coffee you, of course, have on hand.

Humble?
A teacher that believes they have nothing to learn knows little worth teaching. Remember, each person in the audience has a different background, you can learn something from each of them. Present yourself as a student of your craft, not a know-it-all authority feeding your ego with every word you speak.

Confident?
Have confidence in what you are teaching and your students will have confidence in you. Be prepared, practice your presentation, refine your writing, and perfect your performance.

Respectful?
Respect your students and they will respect you. Sounds outrite, but it is true. Differing opinions, backgrounds, and beliefs will abound in any teaching format. You can acknowledge such opinions without taking credit away from you or your material.

Comfortable?
People learn better when they are warm, dry, and in a position that allows them to concentrate more on what is being presented than the condition of their derriere. Keep in mind, most of your students (especially the ladies) will want to know where the bathroom is almost as much as where the trout are.

Accommodating?
People learn in different manners. Know how to present information in many ways, be it knot tying, fly tying, casting, rigging, or layering clothing. People learn by feel (kinesthetics), by sight (visual), and by hearing (aural). When putting together your material think about how you can allow students to experience the information in each way, thus, expediting the learning process.

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I’ve Learned...

Written by Monte Burke

...that solitude has become paramount to me on the stream and having it is sometimes more important than catching a big fish. Flyfishing is an environmental movement of the mind.

...that sometimes mixing fishing friends doesn’t work out well. One autumn I invited a guy I had met in New York—to fish the Housatonic with me and my friend Charlie, of New York City—a New Canaan, Connecticut-native and a member of the Anglers’ Club and a high school classmate of mine from Alabama. North and South mixed about a high school classmate of mine from River with me and my friend Charlie, of New York—to fish the Housatonic. North and South mixed about a high school classmate of mine from Alabama. North and South mixed.

Casting the first hairy eyeball of many that day. After lunch, Charlie put in another tangly wash of ‘chev and sat against a tree like some backwoods Piscator, gazing out over the water. “Man, have you ever lost your favorite hat?” he asked of no one in particular. “I mean, gaaawd, I lost my favorite damn hat this week and it pissed me off to no end. I felt like an old friend gone up and died on me.”

I knew the hat to which he referred. It was an old black baseball cap that he always wore backwards. On it was the logo from our high school. I’d rarely seen him without it in the six years since we’d graduated. The sweatband inside the front of the hat had started out white. The last time I saw it, it was as black as the rest of the hat. NCG chuckled and replied: “Oh, yes. Yes, one time I did indeed lose my favorite sailing jacket. It was from the America’s Cup, a splendid Murphy & Nye that my parents bought me in 1989 season of D-III Williams College. Charlie would mention spring break and bikinis in Myrtle Beach. NCG talked about “summering” in Block Island. Wrenchingly caught in the middle, I quickly suggested we get back on the water.

Since then I have enjoyed being on the water with both Charlie and NCG. But never again at the same time.

...that the Henry’s Fork, though perhaps not what it once was, is still an awe-inspiring place.

...that, for whatever reason, I fish better when I hit the river by myself. When alone, fish “dower” (that is, with greater patience). That said, in general I have more fun when there’s someone there to share the day…and listen to my bragging.

...to appreciate the gentlemanliness of Atlantic salmon fishing, where it’s common to rest a pool, an individual fish and even yourself for a few hours between morning and evening fishing sessions. In these days of centerpin-liner-action, lip-stripping and general poop-pounding, that’s pretty cool.

...that catching a dozen bluegills on a yellow popper on a soft spring evening in Alabama is pretty tough. That said, in these days of centerpin-liner-action, lip-stripping and general poop-pounding, that’s pretty cool.

In 1862. The New Canaan guy (NCG, for short) was relatively new to flyfishing but had all the acoutrements: a brand new Winston attached to a Hardy, and a deerstalker hat straight from Sherlock Holmes. Charlie had his father’s old LL Bean rod, a Pflueger Medalist and big black wad of tobacco tucked in his cheek.

All was fine when we were on the water. “Man, have you ever lost your favorite hat?” he asked of no one in particular. “I mean, gaaawd, I lost my favorite damn hat this week and it pissed me off to no end. I felt like an old friend gone up and died on me.”

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...that catching a dozen bluegills on a yellow popper on a soft spring evening in Alabama is pretty tough to beat.

...to be careful around bonfires. A few summers ago, I was writing a profile about a big business honcho. I met the VIP at his fantastic Atlantic salmon lodge in Quebec, located on the mouth of the river. One evening after fishing he decided that we would have a bonfire on the beach and ordered some of his thick white sand on the beach. I dusted myself off for a bit and stood up. I was completely embarrassed (I was on assignment, after all) and was rummaging through my head for an excuse…when I realized I wouldn’t need one. Because, just on the other side of the fire, I saw...
to carefully monitor the music I listen to in my car before fishing because whatever I hear last is stuck in my head for the whole day. One careless flip of the dial, and I’m stuck with Celine Dion.

…that gearing up beside the car before a day of fishing is a episode didn’t make the story. But I’ll never forget it. I laughed his ass off while spitting sand out of his mouth. The Selection, Service & Value!

very pleasurable act.

…that although I always prefer to fish with a dry fly, streamer fishing from a driftboat can be a completely mind-clearing act. Yvon Chouinard once told me that streamer fishing put him into the same trance-like zone he used to get during his early days as a blacksmith. Atlantic salmon angling and western Steelheading can get you there, too, so can certain drugs. This is a family magazine, so I’d recommend fishing.

…that you cannot beat Tom McGuane when it comes to writing about angling “If the trout are lost, smash the state,” remains one of the more memorable lines from any fishing story I’ve ever read. And he opens a story called “Snapshots from the Whale” with this one: “I had as my guide that day a young man who was perhaps retarded, and whom we will call Alfred.” It’s impossible to stop reading after that start. McGuane combines a breezy cadence with powerful sentences, a neat trick. Reading and re-reading McGuane start. McGuane combines a breezy cadence with powerful sentences, a neat trick. Reading and re-reading McGuane

Dr. Denis Leary (yes, of course, it’s that Denis Leary from “Rescue Me” and standup comedy fame, the “Dr.” reflects a real honorary degree bestowed on him by his alma mater, Emerson College in Boston) has never been one to pull any punches. He’s made a career out of saying things we might be thinking, but don’t have the gall to actually say. This book is 240 pages of straight talk that you’ll find refreshing, if not downright hilarious.

Examples:

On George Bush Jr.: “That’s right, Junior. F**k this Herbert Walker blah blah blah bull****. Looks like a junior talks like a junior walks like a junior. Junior.

On the “does this make my [behind] look fat?” question: “I am convinced the burka was not invented by some crazed Arab hell-bent on following religions conventions—it was just a hungry husband who wanted to make his dinner reservation on time.”

On media double standards, and the Janet Jackson Super Bowl wardrobe malfunction: “One brown eye* sent everyone running for moral cover while the phrase ‘an erection lasting longer than four hours’ was peppered into the formative brains of our tiny, little children.”

On illegal immigration: “I gotta believe if Sweden was located right downtown Manhattan, legged blond chicks in hot pants and halter tops were sneaking over the border just begging to landscape our lawns, every single senator would be lining up to sign a bill not only allowing them in—but making sure their backyards got worked on first.”

A word of warning. Those are the tame excerpts from the book, and they took a good hour of reading and scour to find. In that regard, I should say that if you have an ounce of sensitivity or political correctness in your body, if you’re offended by f-bombs and frank anatomy lessons, walk, no run, the other way and forget this recommendation. A book with chapters including: “Your Kids Are Not Cute,” “Autism Shmautism,” “Famous Dead Kids,” and “Testicle-Colored Towels” is probably not your cup of tea. Or Chai Latte, as it were.

But if you just want something that will make you laugh out loud, this is some of the best comedic commentary I’ve read in a long time. Leary pulls off what only the late great George Carlin (Napalm and Silly Putty, When Will Jesus Bring the Pork Chops?) could do so well, and that is make us open our eyes, think, and then laugh — at ourselves, at life’s absurdities, even at its challenges.

And in my mind, given what we all wake up and flip the television news on to discover these days, a little more thinking—and laughing—might go a long way. It might just make you feel good, after all.
“For a long time, I thought about stuff like how much business I’d be doing if that other fly shop wasn’t there. It always was about fly shop wars, bad-mouthing the other shop, bad blood because of the opposition.”

At some point, his hating cap came off and his thinking cap went on.

“I took a step back from the whole fly shop thing,” said Leinweber, whose Angler’s Covey shop in Colorado Springs is the largest in the region. “Instead, of that other shop not being there, what if the pie was twice as large.”

The way to bake that idea, he deduced, was education. Real roll-up-the-sleeves, take-’em-by-the-hand teaching that makes things easy, both on the ego and the pocket book. To achieve this, he came up with something called “learning dollars.” The pigeon had landed.

“Sometimes we make it really tough on people to get started. The key is how easily we can bring people into the sport.”

We mentioned Leinweber’s notion briefly in a different context a couple issues back. Now for the details as it pertains to instruction. The basic premise is to make the intro as painless as possible, $20 for an introductory class. If the inoculation takes, then it’s $20 for casting and another $75 for a day on stream.

Next, the loyalty dollars program comes into play, a plan in which the customer gets $1 in learning credit for every $10 purchase.

“He can use it toward classes, a guide trip, private lessons, any service we offer. That includes a guides’ tying night, where customers can come in and actually tie favorite patterns with the guide, who keeps 70 percent of the money. It puts a little cash in their pockets during the winter and builds value and loyalty through learning.”

Ah, allegiance.

“A specialty shop that doesn’t build loyalty goes out of business,” Leinweber says flatly. “You’ll never win on price, you win on loyalty.”

It helps that the shop has casting ponds just out the back door, that learning-dollar lessons often lead to expanded private lessons, that the client has to walk past all that merchandise to get to the pond.

“If they use learning dollars for lessons and become more enthusiastic fly fishermen, they may come back and buy another rod. If they just go out and get frustrated, I’m not growing my client base.”

Several hundred miles to the northeast, Chad Miller faced a different challenge—not from another shop, but from a fish, or rather a mindset.

“We want to teach people to fish, not just to cast or even just to fly-fish,” Miller said from his Wildcat Creek Outfitters in Zionsville, Ind., near Indianapolis. “So many clients come in who have never fished before. Not fly-fished. Never fished, period.”

Couple this with the fact that the prevailing angling activity is stream fishing for smallmouth bass and you understand why grassroots education continued on next page...
Another revelation: “The bass guys who already know how to fish, they’re the easy ones and my best customers. All we had to do was teach them to cast. That’s the easy part.” Miller’s method is to teach smallmouth fishing on rivers, other warmwater species on lakes and to use a general beginner class to funnel graduates into the first two activities. The result is a steady flow of customers eager to learn.

For a third teaching perspective, we complete our bi-pod journey back cross-country to Denver, where Ethan Emery operates his Angling University in a classic educational mold. Emery’s day job is teaching High School science, which gives him particular insight into how the learning process works best.

“We run the school like a guide service, only with a focus on lessons,” he said of a concept he developed with partner Matthew Burkett and now operates out of Trout’s Fly Shop, with whom they split proceeds.

“As a science teacher, I believe people learn by doing, not just from a lecture, as with most lessons.”

His techniques include “expert groups,” wherein each student becomes an expert on a particular subject, then teaches that to his fellow beginners. Another is an “inquiry style” to discover the student’s prior knowledge while engaging them in the learning process.

The result is to eliminate the old lecture paradigm that often produces more boredom than retained information.

“Most beginners learn to fly fish in one day,” Emery said.

Another helpful element is that Emery has no financial involvement in a shop.

“We not luring them in to buy a lot of stuff, just making it easy to get them into the sport.”

Then they buy a lot of stuff. - Charlie Meyers

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