

# The Loop

<http://www.fedflyfishers.org/castingcert.html>

## *The Federation of Fly Fishers' Journal for Certified Casting Instructors* a u t u m n 1 9 9 8

### **WHAT ARE YOU TEACHING?**

*by Paul "Sodie" Sodamann*

IT HAS BEEN ONE YEAR since I received my FFF Instructor Certification. During this past year, I have had the opportunity to develop and teach a fly fishing class for one hour of college credit for Kansas State University. With only sixteen actual class hours, it is a challenge to get everything covered. As a result, I have had to look very closely at what it is I am trying to teach. And I think every instructor needs to do the same. Are you teaching fishing, or are you teaching fly-fishing-related skills? I believe there is a big difference between the two.

I explain to my students that I am not teaching them fly fishing, I am only teaching skills which are a part of fly fishing. If you are trying to teach fly fishing, then you need to have some access to water, fish, and the necessary equipment to successfully catch and release fish. The skills needed to teach fly fishing as a whole are more complex than those needed to teach only casting. The reason I point this out is that some instructors teach while guiding, whereas others teach in a controlled environment.

Regardless of teaching locale, the motivation and desire of your students is quite important. If they want to catch fish as they learn, then you'll have to deal with all the distractions that rise from that. Teaching on a river bank is wonderful, but just be sure that your goal of teaching fly-fishing-related skills, or teaching fly fishing, matches the students' desired outcome.

A controlled environment might be a better place to teach fly-fishing-related skills such as casting. The students will be more apt to concentrate on what the instructor is saying and on what it is that they are supposed to be accomplishing. At the same time, factors which make the teaching of casting difficult on the water can be reduced or eliminated. After sufficient time has been spent in the controlled environment, progressing to a water-front situation (with its many variables) is an easier task. Here the skills obtained in the controlled environment can be further practiced and refined. The final step might be to take the students on a fishing trip where their new-found skills will hopefully be successful.

Student motivation is a major factor in successfully teaching any subject. If the students arrive with the proper motivation to learn, then teaching becomes easier.

However, if the teacher-misinterprets the students motivation or if the teacher is presenting information which is contrary to the students desired outcome, learning is hampered. Fly fishing skills and actual fly fishing are two different things. Make sure you know what it is you are teaching and what it is the students expect to be learning.

*Paul "Sodie" Sodemann, Ph.D., is a seventh grade science teacher in Manhattan, Kansas. He operates a small fly shop out of his home and is Vice President of Conservation for the Southern Council.*

## TEACHING CURVE MENDS

*by Gary A. Borger*

CURVE MENDS ARE NOT CURVE CASTS. Curve Mends are made *after* the cast has been completed. Thus, it is possible to make a Curve Cast and follow it with a Curve Mend. The advantage of the Curve Mend is that it is a mend, and as such can be placed anywhere along the length of the line (to curve around obstructions, or fall up on a current tongue, etc.). A Curve Cast always curves the end of the line.

A Curve Mend is an aerial mend (made after the cast

and while the line is dropping to the water). It's really nothing but two Reach Mends made in opposite directions, one immediately after the other. For example, to make a Curve Mend with the apex of the curve lying to the right, the rod is reached to the right and then back to the left. To make a Curve Mend with the opposite orientation, the rod is first reached to the left and then to the right. Varying both the length of the reach and the time between the two reaches will vary the curve size. Two small reaches make a curve with a small amplitude; two large reaches yield a large amplitude (*Figure 1A*). One reach followed immediately by the other makes a curve with a short wavelength; a slight pause between the reaches gives a long wavelength (*Figure 1B*).

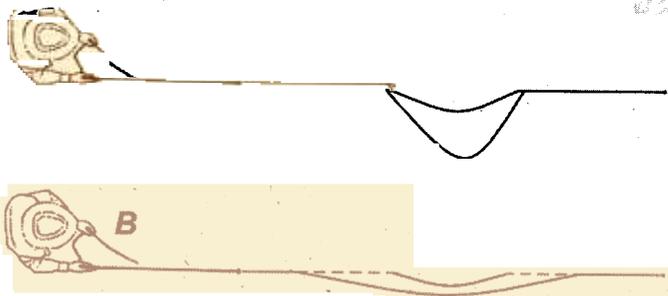


Fig.

Thus, the teaching of the Curve Mend should follow on the heels of teaching the Reach Mend. Students should be taught to reach varying amounts of the line different distances by varying both the timing of the reach and the distance the rod is moved. To reach the entire line, the rod must be reached to the side immediately after the cast is made. If there's a short pause after the cast followed by a reach, only the rear half of the line will be reoriented, the front half will be straight to target. If a long pause follows the cast, then the reach will only reposition the line just in front of the rod tip. Thus, by adjusting the timing of the beginning of the reach, the caster can reposition only that portion of the line that needs to be adjusted.

The same applies to the curve. A long pause after the cast will place the curve right at the rod tip. A medium pause will place the curve half way out the line. When the Curve Mend is introduced immediately after the cast, the end of the line curves. A Reach-Right/Reach-Left Mend will curve the tip to the left, and visa versa.

*Gary A. Borger is a member of the Board of Governors and is fond of having Curve Mending competitions with his son. He lives in Wausau, Wisconsin.*

## SPEY CASTING CALL (THE SEQUEL)

by The Editor

THE LOOP IS STILL LOOKING for submissions concerning the teaching of Spey Casting. If you've got a little something that you think would benefit other instructors (especially those who may not yet be comfortable with teaching Spey Casting) *The Loop* would certainly appreciate the input. And don't be concerned with submitting a Pulitzer-level manuscript; I just bought a fresh box of red pens and I'm itching to use them.

## STATE OF THE LOOP

by The Editor

THE LOOP HAS GONE ELECTRONIC. That is, *The Loop* itself now has a presence on the World Wide Web. Nestled into the Casting Instructor Certification Program's Website, the section devoted to *The Loop* contains a sprinkling of articles from past issues. The idea is to provide both a retrospective of content as well as a way for those interested in becoming Certified (or just inter-

ested in learning more about fly casting) to see an additional bit of what the Program is all about.

That brings me to this: If you will be submitting an article to *The Loop*, please indicate whether or not you are willing to allow for its possible re-publication on the Program's Website. Not all articles will be re-published, but it saves everyone involved time and energy if permission (either yes or no) is known beforehand. Thanks.

## GET LINKED

by Jim Abbs

DO YOU WANT TO ENHANCE your listing on the FFF Certified Casting Instructor Website? Now you can have a link from your FFF Web listing to your own Website or E-mail address. To take advantage of this benefit contact the FFF Webmaster (Jim Abbs) at [accwritr@itis.com](mailto:accwritr@itis.com) or give him a call at (608) 238-5214.

Jim Abbs is the FFF Webmaster and loves the TML command `<BODY  
BG COLOR="#FCFFAA">`.

## NEW GOVERNORS

*Congratulations to the following new members of the B.O.G.!*

*Jason Borger - Wisconsin  
Bill Cairns - Vermont  
Phil Gay - Virginia*

## NEW MASTER INSTRUCTORS

*Congratulations to the following new Master Certified Instructors!*

*Dave Barron - Missouri  
Dan Bell - Alberta, Canada  
Donaldson Lawhead - Minnesota  
Scott Timothy - Idaho  
Rhea Topping - Virginia  
Peter Wacko - Alberta, Canada*

## COMING EVENTS

*Pre-Registration is REQUIRED!  
Contact Evelyn Taylor at (406) 585-7592*

*STAUNTON, VIRGINIA - November 14; Mid-Atlantic Council Conclave; Basic with Phil Gay.*

*PORTLAND, OREGON - January 8 & 9; International Sportmen's Expo; Basic & Masters; Must preregister by December 31.*

*SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA - January 14 & 15; International Sportmen's Expo; Basic & Masters; Must preregister by January 4.*

*SOMERSET, NEW JERSEY - January 29 & 30; The Fly Fishing Show; Basic & Masters; Must preregister by January 21.*

*SAN MATEO, CALIFORNIA - February 4 & 5; International Sportmen's Expo; Basic & Masters; Must preregister by January 27.*

*SEATTLE, WASHINGTON - February 11 & 12; International Sportmen's Expo; Basic & Masters; Must preregister by February 1.*

*DENVER, COLORADO - February 26 & 27; International Sportmen's Expo; Basic & Masters; Must preregister by February 17.*

*CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA - Feb 27 & 28; The Fly*

Fishing Show; Basic & Masters; Must preregister by February 21.

**SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH** - March 5 & 6; International Sportmen's Expo; Basic & Masters; Must preregister by February 21.

**PENSACOLA, FLORIDA** - May 15; South Eastern Council Conclave; Basic with Tom Jindra.

## THE LOOP STAFF

*Those responsible...*

**EDITOR AND LAYOUT:** Jason Borger, [jason@jasonborger.com](mailto:jason@jasonborger.com),  
phone/FAX (715) 843-7878

**PROGRAM COORDINATOR:** Evelyn Taylor  
[74504.2605@compuserve.com](mailto:74504.2605@compuserve.com)

**ASST. VP, CASTING:** Jack Sherrill [sherrill@gj.net](mailto:sherrill@gj.net),  
phone (970) 434-1211

**C.I.C.P. WEBMASTER:** Jim Abbs, [accwritr@](mailto:accwritr@)

WELCOME your submissions via typewriter, FAX, disk, or e-mail. Please ease attach a *short* instructor bio (1-3 sentences), including membership status and Certification level. Please indicate whether

you are willing to allow for your submission's possible re-publication on the Program's Website. Any illustrations should be in black ink on white paper, or if submitted digitally, in TIFF format at 300dpi (if possible). *The Loop* reserves the right to accept or decline any submission for any reason, and to edit any submission as it sees fit. All submissions should be sent to the National Office:

**FFF Casting Program**

P.O. Box 1595

Bozeman, MT 59771

FAX: (406) 585-7596

e-mail: [74504.2605@compuserve.com](mailto:74504.2605@compuserve.com)

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## THE LOOP LIBRARY

*by Mel Krieger*

*Introduction by The Editor*

FLY CASTING INSTRUCTORS need a good reference library. This section of *The Loop* features snippets of casting knowledge from books and articles by masters of the art.

Krieger's book *The Essence of Flycasting* (Club Pacific, 1987) that deals with the Belgian Cast (or Belgian Wind Cast), one of the "must have" distance techniques of all time. Thanks so much, Mel, for allowing *The Loop* to reprint your work.

"THIS INTERESTING AND USEFUL variation of a basic flycast offers maximum control of the fly line and fly. It usually involves a wide separation of the planes of the backcast and forward cast (e.g., a sidearm backcast and an overhead forward cast), and a somewhat different rod drift between these casts. Named for its originator, Albert Godart, a world champion tournament flycaster from Belgium, the Belgian cast has variations that have been popularized in the United States by Charles Ritz, A.J. McClane, Lee Wulff, Ernest Schwiebert and others, with such descriptive titles as the oval cast, horseshoe cast, swing-around cast, wind cast and constant pressure cast. Let's consider this cast relative to other flycasts.

The Belgian cast usually has a slightly curved backcast somewhat similar to the rear loop in the roll cast, but in the air. Its real strength lies in its almost complete control of the fly line between the backcast and forward cast. The sideways rod drift, as you move the rod from a sidearm backcast to an overhead forward cast, actually pulls the line through the change of direction of the fly line, and you rarely lose control of the fly and line. This added control is a big help on windy days and when you are casting large weighted flies. I use the Belgian

often when I'm casting the faster, smaller-diameter sinking lines and shooting tapers. Another advantage of this cast is that the some-

what curved backcast, created by the wide separation of the planes of the backcast and forward cast, usually requires a little less space than a conventional straight line backcast. The shooting taper and the Belgian cast make a terrific combination when you need a long cast, but have limited backcast room. This pull-around, swing-around, constant-pressure, oval casting stroke is a winner. It's also very easy to learn.

Start with about 30 feet of fly line in front of the rod tip. Make a sidearm (horizontal) backcast and an overhead (vertical) forward cast. Backcast gently, using just enough power to get the line back into position. Swing the rod around, pulling the line into an overhead forward cast. Try to make the backcast and the forward cast one motion—a swing-around motion. Try to stay connected with the line as you change planes and directions throughout the cast. Try it with a longer line. Work with a shooting taper using both the Belgian cast and standard cast. Vary the distance between the paths of the backcast and forward cast, making narrow or wide ovals. Try it with a very short line and a narrow oval (the backcast just a foot or two to the outside of the forward cast), unloading the rod only on the forward cast.

I believe you'll find that you have another tool to work with in your fishing and casting and that the practice with this excellent cast will improve all of your flycasting skills."

*Mel Krieger is a member of the Board of Governors and a modern fly casting legend. He lives in San Francisco, California.*