

The loop

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A History of the Federation of Fly Fishers' Casting Instructor Certification Program

*February, 2010
By Macauley Lord*

Except where otherwise noted, all names mentioned in this document are current, former or emeritus members of the FFF Casting Board of Governors.

Abbreviations:

- BOG-** [Casting] Board of Governors
- CCI or CI-**Certified Casting Instructor
- CICP-** Casting Instructor Certification Program
- FFF-**Federation of Fly Fishers
- MCI-**Master Casting Instructor
- THCI-** Two-Handed Casting Instructor

This history is selective. Based on a combination of all-too-human memories and incomplete archival materials, it omits much. For reasons of brevity, it omits details of the tens of thousands of hours of work by men and women whose names may not even be mentioned here. Unless otherwise noted, all endnotes refer to materials in the FFF archives.

Beginnings

Mel Krieger had a dream. Having written perhaps the most acclaimed flycasting book of all time, having trained flycasters and their instructors across North America and Argentina, and having founded a fishing travel company, he set his sights on a big idea. Why not, he wondered, do for flycasting what the sports of golf and tennis had done to promote competency in their instructors? These sports had an official certification process for their instructors. Aspiring golfers and tennis players could readily find a qualified instructor in their field merely by contacting the certifying bodies in the respective sports and requesting the name of a qualified instructor in their area. For tennis, it was the United States Professional Tennis Association; for golf, it was the Professional Golf Association.

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Mel's original vision did not include the FFF. A few years before the FFF entered the picture, he had tried to start up a program under the aegis of a different organization. In the 1980's, he had a meeting at his home with Al Kyte, Tim Rajeff and others to discuss the idea but it went nowhere.¹ Eventually, he approached the FFF's VP for Education, Judy Lehmberg, about his idea. She persuaded the FFF board to approve the program and she chaired the first planning meeting of the program—there was no Board of Governors yet—at the FFF Conclave in Calgary in July, 1992.²

Here's how Mel described it to *Fly Fishing Retailer* magazine in 2000: "The FFF established this certification program with fifteen of the best-known names in American flyfishing. Our goal was to enhance the sport of flyfishing in three important areas: 1. To educate flycasting instructors; 2. To establish communication between instructors; 3. To offer learners a more accepted entry into our sport and a more qualified group of instructors."³

After announcing the idea at the FFF Conclave in Calgary, Alberta, in July 1992⁴, Mel wrote a letter to those fifteen names on August 4, 1992, asking them to join him and the FFF in the effort.⁵ The Casting Board of Governors (BOG) was incorporated in the fall of 1992 under the auspices of the FFF. Its founding members were iconic figures in American fly casting or fly fishing. They were:

Gary Borger	Bruce Richards
Leon Chandler	Allan Rohrer
Chico Fernandez	Barbara Rohrer
Jim Green	Doug Swisher
Lefty Kreh	Lou Tabory
Mel Krieger	Dave Whitlock
Al Kyte	Joan Wulff
Steve Rajeff	

The Board's early bylaws called for each Governor to be appointed for life; most of the Founding Governors served on the Board for many years. But the challenge of coming to agreement on standards of testing and certification were great. With distance-casting styles ranging, for example, from Joan Wulff's to Lefty Kreh's, would the FFF endorse one style over the other? What would be covered on the test and how would it be administered? Would Certified Casting Instructors be required to join the FFF? These were just some of the questions that had to be resolved.

The first BOG meeting was held at Park High School in Livingston, Montana, at the 1993 Conclave. Judy Lehmberg remembers: "From the beginning it was quickly apparent that there were at least two camps in the room, the Mel camp and the Lefty camp. When you consider how many well known, good flycasters were in the room it was amazing they got anything done. The one thing I remember throughout that meeting and my entire time spent with the program was that Allan Rohrer, Barbara Rohrer, and Leon Chandler were extremely congenial, easy to work with, and went out of their way to help in any way they could."⁶

Lefty Kreh and Dave Whitlock left the board within the first two years of its incorporation and were replaced by Barry Beck and Al Buhr, thereby keeping the Board's number at fifteen.

The Flycasting Instructor Advisory Committee

The Board quickly established an Advisory Committee to offer advice and suggestions to the BOG and to grow the public profile of the CICP. The Board appointed Committee members by fiat. Appointees received an elegant diploma that read, "_____ is an Outstanding Flycasting Instructor and is Therefore Recognized as a Member of the Flycasting Instructor Advisory Committee".⁷ It was dated and contained the facsimile signatures of the FFF President and Secretary and all the founding Governors.

The Board moved remarkably quickly to grow its profile in the flyfishing industry.⁸ One appointee to the Advisory Committee remembers his elation at being named to such a prestigious body, only to learn with a phone call to the FFF office that he was now one of over 200 members!

Mel reflected on this in 2000. “Our beginnings were a bit rocky. We set standards too low and we offered honorary certification to many established flyfishers and casters, hoping to gain acceptance in the flyfishing community.”⁹ By late 1994, the Advisory Committee had served its marketing purpose and was disbanded.¹⁰

The First Tests

Initially, the test consisted solely of a performance portion. The equipment standards were the same as today’s and the test requirements were:

- Roll cast 50 feet [The examiner could adjust the distance if roll casts had to be made on land];
- Roll cast, off-shoulder, 45 feet;
- False cast five or six times, using the rod-hand only (no hauling), presenting the fly to a target approximately 40 feet away, demonstrating reasonably good timing and a controlled loop. The fly must land reasonably close to the target area;
- Cast tailing loops and wide loops on demand.
- Demonstrate the single and double haul.
- Cast a minimum of 75 feet.

By July, 1993, a written test had been proposed—it would consist of multiple-choice questions—in addition to the performance test.¹¹ Joan Wulff was concerned about the overall testing process. Voicing concerns that some Governors and Masters echo to this day, she wrote to the Board in July, 1993, that she was “uncomfortable certifying anyone to be an instructor without requiring them to demonstrate their ability to teach.” She continued, “I believe that each of us who does the certifying can create a test for the applicant in which he or she must actually teach. I, the certifier, can be the pupil and incorporate faults into my casting that an instructor must be able to deal with...It’s teaching that concerns me. Let’s address it.”¹²

Joan’s clear-eyed reasoning and respectful tone notwithstanding, Mel would later describe the Board Governors, obviously with great fondness, as “fighting like caged lions,”¹³ a sentiment later echoed by Al Buhr and by FFF VP Judy Lehmberg, who chaired the first meeting. A Governor who joined the Board in 1996 recalls that, by that time, most disagreements among the founding members were agreeable, and that Governors generally interacted with a degree of comity and mutual respect.

It should be noted here that the Board consisted entirely of volunteers, although some did charge a fee to test applicants.¹⁴ Many were name-brand fly fishing professionals with demanding schedules, jobs, and families. Combine these factors with the uncomfortable truth that no two Governors agreed closely on how casting should actually be taught and you had a prescription for inertia. Joan’s suggestion to incorporate a true teaching component into the test was not formally implemented.

In what was probably the first of many revisions, Al Kyte and Mel Krieger spent three days together in December (as Al recalls), 1993, rewriting the proposed written test.¹⁵

Mass Certifications

As soon as the program was rolled out and announced to the public through the fishing magazines and word-of-mouth, there was a flood of casters interested in the program. Says Judy Lehmberg, “I knew the program was becoming popular when I started getting phone calls at 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning from people in France, Spain, Italy, etc., who wanted information about it (and didn’t know anything about time zones, apparently). People were calling from all over, not just from overseas, wanting to know how to get certified.”

Many of the first tests were given *en masse*. While some applicants were truly interested in teaching, some had no background or interest in teaching and were interested only in seeing if they could cast as well as a “real” casting instructor. With so few Governors spread so thinly around the country, and with some being inactive as examiners, it simply wasn’t possible to carefully examine each applicant to assess his or her aptitude for teaching flycasting. Combined with the complication that some of the applicants were friends or fly fishing business associates of the Governors, this led to many people being certified who were not qualified to teach casting.

Tom White reported in the first issue of *The Tailing Loop*, “Steve Rajeff & I tested 31 applicants and certified 29 as instructors. Most of these were former students. It’s gratifying to see people progress in the sport. I feel there will be people who will be teaching without being certified but as an organization we can make them better instructors through the sharing of knowledge.”¹⁶ Tom’s observation about the sharing of knowledge underscored the most important reason for founding the program: Get instructors to talk to each other about what and how they teach and the tide of teaching will inevitably rise, lifting instructors and students alike.

Because of the low standards for certification in the early years, the Board actually voted to require that all those certified prior to the 1995 Conclave be retested. Coming to its senses a few months later, it rescinded this decision.¹⁷

The Written Test

The early written test was further developed by Steve Rajeff and Gary Borger and was revised in 1996 by Dave Engerbretson.¹⁸ It consisted of 36 true-false and multiple-choice questions, just as it does today. Applicants had to get 30 questions correct to pass the written test *before* being eligible to take and pass the performance test. During the early years, many who were unsuccessful on the written test were debriefed by a Governor about which questions he or she missed and why, and then simply went home with no experience on the performance test. Governors were sometimes hard-pressed to test all the applicants; the accepted limit on applicants one Governor could test in a day was six! Consequently, they often didn’t have time to run someone who had fallen short on the written test through the performance test as a courtesy and as continuing education. Seeing the lost potential in that way of doing things, it is now BOG policy that the teaching workshop, the written test and the performance test may be completed successfully in a 12 month period, but in any order.

The Master Test

At the 1995 Conclave in Livingston, Montana, the BOG gave its first Master Test. The thirteen applicants took the written component—which was dropped shortly afterwards—in a classroom at Park High School. Applicants judged by the graders to have answered sufficiently well were matched up with two members of the BOG and went outside to perform the casts required on the performance test. The required distance cast then was 90 feet. Hopper fishing must have been great that day: it was hot and dry, with winds gusting to perhaps 30 mph. The examiners made accommodations for the conditions but both governors had to be in agreement that the applicant met the standards. Eleven applicants passed.¹⁹ Of those, most eventually joined the BOG.

The written component of the test consisted entirely of essay questions and proved challenging for the examiners to evaluate uniformly. It gave way at the next year’s Conclave to an exclusively oral component.

Early Governance

The early Board's governance went through rapid changes. The FFF understandably wanted to be sure that the BOG coordinated its efforts with the mission and goals of the Federation. Accordingly, the first Chairs of the BOG were not Governors; they were appointed by the FFF. They were called FFF Assistant Vice Presidents for Casting and reported to the FFF's VP for Education, who oversaw the management of the program.²⁰ Some of the early FFF Education VP's and Assistant VP's for Casting included Judy Lehmburg, Tom Travis, Tom Theus and Susan Halblom and Jack Sherrill. The Board, consisting as it did of many people who were accustomed to a high degree of autonomy in their flycasting lives, chafed at having people who were not fellow crazed casting wonks (although all were passionate flyfishers) appointed by the parent organization to herd them.

The Board of Governors Expands

With a new tier of testing and with many people around the country clamoring to be tested, the Board saw that it was too small. The Board therefore added ten new Governors between the 1995 Conclave in August and the spring of 1996. Of those, most became very active in the work of the Board. Tom Jindra eventually served as Chair, two became editors of *The Loop*, approximately seven served on the Board's Executive Committee and nearly all became active in testing. This represented a significant change for the BOG. Most of the new members were *not* iconic, household names in the sport. Rather, they were simply professionals who were passionate about casting and teaching. That most of the newcomers had passed the Master Test was no accident. The Board recognized that it needed a way to assess the pool of talent across the continent—Denise Maxwell, being the first Governor from Canada, internationalized the Board—and the Master Test was the perfect way to attract exceptional instructors to the Board.

The Quest for Autonomy

At one point, the Board was so upset with its relationship with the FFF that it came extremely close to taking the entire program to the American Casting Association. Of that dark time, Al Kyte said, “only the appeals for patience by Bruce Richards kept us in the FFF.”²¹

In 1997, the FFF finally bowed to BOG objections and relinquished its direct control of the Board. Jack Sherrill had been serving as the FFF's Assistant VP of Casting²² but had also passed his Master Test. To the BOG he was One Of Them. In a balletic organizational maneuver, Jack was named to the Board of Governors, making him the first Master Instructor and BOG member to chair the Board. Two other members joined the Board that year: Floyd Franke would later succeed Jack Sherrill as Chair and Tom White would win the BOG's Mel Krieger Award in 2008. Their appointments began a tradition of BOG members being named who had passed their Master Tests. Although it would not become policy for a few more years, the BOG was now giving strong preference to Masters, to those who had “come up the hard way” and were recruited for their demonstrated abilities more than for whatever stature they may have had within the flyfishing industry.

An early desire of Mel's was that the program be as inexpensive as possible for its members. In 1996, the Certified Casting Instructor examination fee was \$50.00. An additional \$50.00 fee was due upon passage and a \$25.00 annual fee was required to remain certified. In the first three years, the program did not require FFF membership but the FFF in 1996 began requiring that all certified instructors become FFF members. Tom Jindra, who was President of the FFF then (and later Chair of the BOG) made the decision.²³ At the time, he wrote, “Rather than isolate participants in the Casting Certification Program from the organization by merely providing a certificate, it is our goal to strengthen the fly fishing community by uniting program participants through FFF membership.”²⁴

The “Basic Test” Becomes the CI Test

Prior to the Master Test, there was only one designation. It went by a variety of names over time that ultimately coalesced at “Certified Casting Instructor.” The one that made some Governors want to slash their own waders was “Certified Caster,” a name that implied that the test had nothing to do with *teaching*. After the inception of the Master Test, the original test came informally to be called the “Basic Test.” With Governors holding each other to higher testing standards, the success rate of applicants tested was dropping.

The “Basic Test” surely wasn’t basic to most who took it! One applicant told a Governor that he was more nervous about his Basic Test than he was during the oral exams for his PhD. To honor the difficulty of the certification, the BOG changed the name from Basic Test to Certified Casting Instructor (CCI or CI) Test in 2000.²⁵

Some Statistics

YEAR	Certified Instructors	Master Instructors	CBOG's
1998 ²⁶	592	41	28
1999 ²⁷	629	50	30
2000	726	66	33
2001	748	69	32
2002	868	77	30
	# certified during this year	# certified during this year	
2003 ²⁸	78	8	30
2004	82	23	30
2005	61	11	30
2006	109	15	30
2007	98	25	30
2008	135	19	30
2009	122	24	30
Total CI's as of 2-11-2010		Total MCI's as of 2-11-2010	
1,385		218	

The renewal rate—those who renewed their membership as CI's and MCI's—was growing dramatically. The renewal rate went from 70% in 1995 to 90% in 1997 to 94% in 2001. The program was working! Or was it?

Bad Press

Having left the Board in about 1994, Lefty Kreh would tell *Fly Fishing Retailer* magazine in 2000 that the certification process, “wasn’t about teaching. It was about performance. Can you make a roll cast of 40 feet? Can you make a tailing loop? Can you do this? Those are competency tests, not tests on whether or not you can teach something. I’m a firm supporter of the Federation, but I’m just not a supporter of that particular program within the Federation... A good many of the people who are certified casters aren’t decent flycasters, let alone instructors... I think the thing has brought a lot of discredit to the Federation.”²⁹

Barry Beck had left the board over similar concerns. “I don’t think it’s working under the present program,” he said. “I know some people in the Federation have worked very, very hard to make this work, but I still don’t see that it is.” Seeing a need for more emphasis on teaching and followup after the certification, he said, “We never really evaluate these people after they’re certified... Does anyone really keep an eye on these

people, and say, ‘Hey, are they doing their job?’ Or, is it just some kind of title we give them that gives them free license to do whatever?”³⁰

Lefty and Barry were not alone in their disappointment over the program. Governors heard from CI’s and Masters regularly and from those who had been unsuccessful on the tests about what the Board should be doing to improve the program.

The Style Wars

Al Kyte had been studying the detailed mechanics of professional athletes for decades. In a pioneering study first published in 1993, he and kinesiologist Gary Moran filmed seven elite-level casters, including Lefty Kreh, Bruce Richards and SAGE rod designer Jerry Siem. They found big variations in the amount of and types of body movement the casters used to achieve long casts. They wrote, “Sometimes flycasting is presented as a precise sequence of movements, and any deviation is treated as an error. This tendency to teach style as if it were substance often leads to confusion about casting form.”³¹ Is there an instructor reading this history who has not at one time effectively attempted to impose his or her style as the “correct” or “best” way? Al had just named the elephant that had occupied the room since the birth of the CICP.

A manufacturer’s representative in the industry complained publicly about the style wars and his comments are still echoed in critiques of the CICP from casting instructors. He wrote, “When are you/we going to rise to the next level and provide our teachers with a single, core curriculum that conveys a simple, step-by-step learning program that is used and supported from coast-to-coast?” Citing the Professional Ski Instructors of America’s program as an example, and alluding to the style wars between casting instructors, he said, “When you travel from one resort to the next, you are given the same teaching regimen and not basically told to disregard the previous instructor’s \$75/hour wisdom...” What we have is a number of different methodologies of casting ...which, from what I’ve seen, truly confuses people..I would really like to see the appropriate players come to a table and leave the room with a unified format to teaching...”³² This was not to happen. As a former Governor said to an active Governor in 2000, “You’re a friend of mine so I can say this to you: You cast wrong and you teach wrong.”

The beauty of Mel’s vision was that getting instructors to be in the same room or on the same lawn together would bring them together in more than just the physical sense. It would happen when Bruce Richards and Mel Krieger—with their very different styles—would cast together and when Tim Rajeff would demonstrate the differences between his distance style and that of his brother. Tim’s description honored *both* styles. He would say, in effect, “Steve’s style is best for *him* and my style is best for *me*. There is a style that is best for *you* and it may not be the style in which your instructor casts.”

The Gammels’ Booklet

Bill Gammel and his father, Jay, wrote a casting booklet for the FFF in 1990, predating the BOG.³³ It laid out the essentials of casting as they identified them. The booklet remains highly regarded for its clarity, factuality and brevity. However, because it was sold by the FFF and recommended to all those who aspired to certification, many applicants assumed that it laid out the BOG-endorsed method of teaching casting. It did not. Like all the other books by members of the BOG, it laid out the *authors’* method of teaching casting. The BOG still did not endorse a single method of teaching nor does it today. While the diversity of Governor’s teaching styles was once seen as a weakness by many, it is today rightly seen as a strength.

The Borgers’ Tape

Jason Borger and Gary Borger created a videotape in 1996 documenting the most common casting errors that beginning students are likely to make. The tape was 13 minutes long and, like the Gammels’ book, is available from the FFF. For many applicants who were schooled solely on the commercial videos of Joan, Lefty and Mel with their beautiful casts, it was the first time they had ever seen videotape of *bad* casts. The Borgers, like the Gammels, completely donated their content to the FFF, showing the kind of generosity that remains a hallmark of the Board today.

The CI Test Is Improved and Standards Inch Higher

John Van Dalen and Bruce Richards were well acquainted with the shortcomings of the written test. Like any new product that is designed by a committee and then rolled out to the public, the test benefitted from the regular feedback of those taking and giving it. In 1997 and again 2000 (then with Floyd Franke), John and Bruce revised the questions that were confusing to applicants and even to some Governors.

With each passing year, Governors held each other to more rigorous standards in testing. Stung by the perception among many in the casting instruction world that testing standards were applied differently by different Governors, they worked to educate each other about the unusual situations they encountered while testing. They talked about which errors on the performance test were fatal and which were survivable.

The Tailing Loop and The Loop

FFF President Al Beatty and Gretchen Beatty edited the first volume of *The Tailing Loop*, the journal for casting instructors, in 1994. FFF member John Seidel began editing it soon after and continued doing so until FFF staffer Evelyn Taylor took it over in 1995. Macauley Lord began editing it in 1996, the first Governor to do so. It was later edited by Jason Borger, who changed its name from that of a definite bad cast to that of only possibly a bad cast. Jason also modernized its graphics. After another editing stint by Macauley, Denise Maxwell and Liz Watson took it over in 2003 and quickly digitized it, making it and all old issues available online at <http://www.fedflyfishers.org/Default.aspx?tabid=4469>. Denise remains its editor today.

Some seminal articles included Dave Engerbretson's Fall 1997 *Education of An Instructor*; Floyd Franke's Winter 1997 *The Lesson Plan*; Bill Gammel's Late-Winter 2000 *Distance Casting: A Method For Improvement*; Bruce Richards' Spring 1999 *A Six-Step Method*; and Al Kyte's Fall 2002 *Arm Styles*.³⁴

Standardizing Testing

In 1999 Floyd Franke led a formal effort to standardize the way that Governors assessed the results of a CI performance test. Floyd succeeded Jack Sherrill as Chair that year and brought an emphasis on professionalism to the Board's committee work and deliberations. Under Floyd's leadership, many of the contentious issues—there were still plenty—were hashed out in the months leading up to the annual meeting. This led to a dramatic increase in the Board's effectiveness. Most importantly, Floyd tackled the question of testing fairness and consistency, knowing that it was crucial to the credibility of the program.

From feedback they received from some unsuccessful applicants and from their own observations, it was clear despite their informal efforts at uniformity that different Governors emphasized different aspects of the performance test. Simply put, there was no consensus on what constituted a successful test. Floyd polled the Board and developed a document detailing the standards that applicants were expected to meet on every requirement of the test.³⁵ They include such things as the size of the loops permissible on various casts and the fundamental points to be covered on each of the oral/teaching questions at the end of the test. The same standards are in use today, with only slight modifications.

Feedback Form

Like all his actively testing colleagues on the BOG and among the Masters, Joe Libue had to fail many applicants. The standards were high and the pass rate on the test was low. Like all Governors and Masters, Joe wanted to see *every* applicant pass. To that end, he developed a form that examiners could hand to an unsuccessful applicant at the end of the test that would document exactly how the applicant had fallen short. It provided the unsuccessful (and often crestfallen) applicant at least part of a roadmap for success upon retesting. The form was incorporated into the tests in 2001 and remains an important part of the testing process today.

The Pain of Failure

People who take the tests offered by the CICP do so in part from a desire to become better instructors. But every applicant comes to their test with at least some vulnerability. In the case of some, that sense is very strong. For many, the outcome on their test is a validation, or repudiation, of who they are as a person. An ego is at stake, and hundreds of unsuccessful applicants over the years have been wounded by an adverse outcome. It would be hard to find a Master or Governor who, having delivered an adverse judgment of a test result, has not seen at least one of the following: crying, a physical threat, a legal threat (yes, this really happened), public character assassination and a variety of displays of angry and wounded behavior.

Gary Borger co-conducted a Master Test in 1996 that ended with the applicant indignant and offended at not passing. Afterwards, Gary drafted a letter for distribution to all prospective Masters about the difficulty of the test and the very high standards for certification. In his cover letter to the Board, he wrote, “Everyone should know going in THIS IS NOT A CAKEWALK; IT’S TOUGH AND WE INTEND TO KEEP IT THAT WAY.”

The Board adopted Gary’s proposed letter to the applicants word-for-word and today it makes up the opening words to all aspiring Masters on the FFF’s web site.³⁶ It reads, “Certification at the Master’s level requires more than just meeting a specified set of casting requirements. It also requires that the applicant have a broad range of experience in casting itself. Certification is the end of a process, not the beginning. The Master Caster must be the exceptional individual, able to teach others how to teach. These are rather demanding requirements, but they are the requirements that FFF wishes to be assessed.”

One Governor who had served actively for a few years understandably resigned from the Board because he no longer had the heart to tell candidates they had failed. BOG Chair Tom Jindra considered following him for the same reason, but, in his words, “...I decided I was helping more people than I hurt. A couple of years later, a phone call confirmed that I had made the right decision. To make a long story short, a young fellow who flunked my test decided to enroll in college, because I had inspired him. It was kind of hard to quit after that.”³⁷

The BOG Asks More of Its Members

Leon Chandler resigned from the board in 2000, having served it with distinction since its beginning. Floyd Franke, BOG Chair, and the rest of the BOG’s Executive Committee sent a letter to all the Governors in 2001 noting, “the inspiring example of Leon Chandler, who resigned from the board saying that there were others who could now contribute more than he. For his years of dedication and service to the program, the board named him Governor Emeritus, the only former Governor to have that honor.” He continued, “We are just a working board. The cost of our decision to cap our membership at about 30 is that it places a considerable work load on those Governors who are most active in the program. We now find that we need more participation from our members to meet the demand we have created.

... We ask each member of the Board of Governors to serve on an assigned committee or to participate in teaching workshops and certifications.”³⁸

Terms for Governors

Thinking that the Board needed a regular infusion of highly motivated Governors who wanted to share the increasing work load, Macauley Lord proposed that Governors now serve five-year terms. They could serve for as many terms as they wished, provided they sought and received the Board’s approval for a successive term. The terms would be staggered so there would never be more than six Governors leaving the Board or up for renewal in any one year. In 2003, the Board amended its bylaws to make the change. Since then there has been an average turnover of three or four governors each year.

The Rise of the Masters

Perhaps the most important change in the history of BOG came with true acceptance of the Masters as partners in the mission of the Board. It started with the BOG's annual meetings being opened to observation by all Masters at the 2002 meeting. Meetings are now open to observation by CI's, too. By late 2003, Masters were joining Governors in officially testing applicants. Prior to this, the testing load had fallen exclusively to Governors, making it very difficult for some applicants to find a tester, particularly in parts of the country not served by a Governor. For many, fishing shows and Conclaves were the only testing option but also for many, they were too expensive to travel to and attend. After the Board voted to enable two Masters to serve in the testing capacity of a single Governor both on the CI and Master tests, applicants nationwide found their options for getting tested and certified expand dramatically. All this had the effect of increasing both the Board's productivity and its sense of shared mission with the Masters. Within two years, the Board decided to accept its new members only from the ranks of the Masters and was inviting any Master who was interested to actively seek nomination to the Board.

Thus, it was Leon Chandler's gracious resignation that truly set the stage for CICP as we know it today. He could later be found in his retirement from the Board, floating down the Missouri to Wolf Creek in his kickboat and shuttling himself on a motor scooter over the dusty road, back up to Holter Dam.

The Master Test Study Guide

Dusty Sprague saw that aspiring Masters needed a study guide. As he prepared for his Master Test, he prepared rigorously. After passing his test and then conferring with other Masters and with Governors, he compiled an extensive document that laid a foundation for anyone studying for the test. He rolled it out to the public in January, 2002, at the Denver Fly Fishing Show. It was a big hit with those preparing for the test and the Board moved enthusiastically to embrace it. A committee headed by BOG Chair-to-be Tom Jindra worked with Governors and Masters to round out the Guide. It was then posted to the FFF site.³⁹ This spirit of taking one person's good idea and making it better through collaboration is a hallmark of the BOG throughout its history.

Gordy Hill and Tom White built on the push for better-prepared Masters and established a program in the Florida Keys that would rigorously prepare Master applicants to take the test. In doing so they created a successful model that would be widely admired. Gordy has expanded their program into the world's first online university for fly-casting instructors.

The Code of Conduct

In 2003, Tim Rajeff proposed that the Board adopt a code of conduct for examiners (this included Masters, along with Governors).⁴⁰ Tim was the first chair of the committee and, with the help of Tony Vitale's research, he drove the development of the code that was ultimately adopted by the Board. Phil Gay shared Tim's desire to rid the Board forever of even the appearance of conflicts of interest and was an important contributor to the effort. The Code was adopted in 2004 and it changed the game for all examiners. No longer were they permitted to test people who had paid them to be prepped for the test, nor could they test their friends or business associates. They *could* test mere acquaintances. (In situations where there was a potential for a conflict of interest, an impartial witness who was certified had to attest to the fairness of the test.) These new strictures made getting tested harder. But they eliminated something that had dogged the program in the first few years—the whispers that getting certified was more about whom you knew than what you knew.

Whatever Happened to FFF-Europe?⁴¹

A European affiliate of the FFF was created in the late 1980's, only to collapse in 1996. Though FFF-Europe failed, a number of its instructors were allowed to continue operating their own casting instructor program under the FFF name. But while the group chose to operate as an affiliate, they created standards different from those of the Board of Governors in North America. Their standards emphasized casting performance over teaching ability,⁴² the latter being a hallmark of the North American FFF testing philosophy.

That led to problems when Europeans who rejected the European program—one that emphasized casting skills more than teaching skills—asked to be tested under North American standards. In 2005, BOG Chair Tom Jindra concluded the situation was untenable and, in 2006, he ordered FFF-Europe to comply with the North American standards. Instead, it dissolved its relationship with FFF and reconstituted itself as the European Fly Fishing Association, or EFAA.

The CICP Goes Global⁴³

After separating from FFF-Europe, the BOG saw increasing interest in certification from non-North American (mostly European) fly fishing professionals. The Board responded by forming the International Committee to oversee international training and testing. The Committee has flourished and developed an exciting momentum behind the energy of Chair Dan McCrimmon, who had travelled much of the world professionally, and has developed testing agreements with fly-fishing organizations in places as far flung as Hungary and Malaysia. The Committee has now established the CICP as the leading casting instructor program in the world. Since its first trip—it was to Scotland in 2006—it has conducted testing events in the UK, Ireland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Denmark, Hungary, Russia, Japan, New Zealand and Australia! The result of these events is that many of the top fly fishing instructors around the world are now active participants in the CICP. As of this writing, in Europe alone there are three Governors, 45 Masters, 74 CI's and 18 THCI's who are certified under the BOG standards.

The Committee's Interim Chair, Denise Maxwell, speaks of the challenge of testing in international locations, in that it requires striking a delicate balance between tactful diplomacy and a clear definition of certifiers' expectations. Add in the difficulty of translating from one language to another and of differing casting terminologies and you have a challenge indeed! Dan McCrimmon echoes a recurring theme of the success of the CICP when he describes all the background work put in over the years to make the International Committee the success it has been. There's a lesson here for those preparing to take the CI or Master Test for the first time. Wanna make something good happen? Work at it.

A visit to the FFF's *Find a Certified Instructor* web page⁴⁴ is a treat, as it now lists instructors in 25 countries, representing every continent but Africa and Antarctica. Need some casting instruction in Russia? There's a Two-Handed Casting Instructor in St. Petersburg and there are CI's in Moscow, Novosibirsk (Siberians need to double-haul, too) and Kandalaksha (suburban Murmansk.) This managed explosion of international talent has brought vital new expertise and diversity to the CICP and has brought the Program to the world.

The Two-Handed Instructor Certification (THCI)⁴⁵

Mel first proposed a spey instructor certification at the FFF Conclave in 1999 in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. It may have been the first mention of spey-casting in the state's history. A committee was formed, consisting of chair Mel Krieger, Al Buhr, Dennis Grant, Jim Green, Denise Maxwell and Tom White. The committee's makeup evolved over the next two years but the problem was that spey techniques were still alien to most of the BOG. The idea languished.

It was in Montana, at the 2001 Annual Meeting of the BOG. Mel banged the table and *shouted* at the four Governors—friends of his, all—who were sitting across the room from him. “You're cowards!” His volume increased, “You're all COWARDS!!” The four had pushed back at Mel's insistence that advanced spey techniques be incorporated into the Master Test and basic spey techniques into the CI test. He wanted to promote acceptance of two-handed techniques with single-handed rods, and not just with two-handers. Opposing close integration of spey techniques into the existing tests, the majority won the battle. But Mel blessedly won the war. The Board agreed to offer a stand-alone test in two-handed casting instruction by 2003. This action inspired many on the Board who were barely literate in spey to learn the techniques. (At this time, Board members had to know at least enough to assess a passable single and double spey on the Master Test.)

Bill Gammel is from Texas, which ranks right up there with Tennessee in its embrace of two-handed flycasting. Bill, in part because he was agnostic about spey teaching or techniques, was assigned to lead the speycasting gurus to agree on testing standards. He initiated a step-by-step plan with several goals to develop the performance test and study guide and a roadmap for program administration. By spring of 2003 a draft performance test was completed for review. At the 2003 Annual Meeting, the Board authorized the Spey Committee, as it was then known, to administer the program under the Board's aegis.

The group adopted a new name, Two-Handed Committee, to reflect the program's focus on the two-handed casting. (This was prompted in part by the increasing and enthusiastic use of spey techniques by Governors and Masters in their single-handed fishing and in part by the growing use of two-handed rods by flyfishers in the U.S.) In January, 2004, the FFF Board of Directors formally approved the THCI as an FFF certification program, allowing the program to give its first exams.

The committee named Simon Gawesworth, who had joined the Board in 2002, as the first examiner. However, because of the stain of favoritism and the overt "grandfathering" that had dogged the early CICP program, the Committee decided that all THCI examiners had to first pass the test themselves. In an elegant resolution of the chicken/egg dilemma, Simon Gawesworth tested Al Buhr, with Denise Maxwell as the officially qualified witness. After Al passed, he turned around and tested Simon, again with Denise witnessing. By the end of 2004, fourteen two-handed casting instructors had been certified. For the first time, the FFF had rolled out a casting instructor certification that has been largely free of controversy.

The test has been incrementally revised three times, mostly to clarify certain wordings, and is comparable to the Master Test in its rigor. Some statistics: By June, 2004, 19 tests had been given of which 12 passed. By the end of 2004, there were two more certified. By 2006, there were 24 certified THCI's. In 2007, 13 new instructors were certified and the THCI committee grew to seven members, each with a three-year term. By the end of 2009, there were 56 THCI's.

Al Buhr, who now chairs the Committee, contrasts the deliberations of the THCI Committee with those of some early meetings he remembers of the BOG. "There has been no fighting among Committee members. Many votes have been unanimous. While the Committee doesn't completely agree on all topics, all members work toward understanding and compromise, as we have from day-one."

Training and Testing Large Groups

More and more guides and fly shops today value the FFF instructor certification status they've earned and tout it as a way to stand out from their competitors. When Rick Williams received a request from a large western U.S. fly shop in 2007 to test its staff of 40 guides, he set up a training and testing sequence that took 18 months to complete.⁴⁶ It involved five other Governors and two MCI's in testing all the candidates and resulted in 23 new CI's and one new MCI coming into the CICP. That experience spurred the BOG to establish a Professional Development Committee. Headed by MCI Molly Semenik, its mission is to establish a protocol for and then implement group-testing events for fly fishing professionals. In a fruitful symmetry, that effort is coordinated with the protocols being used by the International Committee for its overseas events.

In response to the oft-stated desire for continuing education among those already certified and seeing a need to more broadly distribute the teaching insights of leading casting instructors, Al Kyte founded the Continuing Education Committee.⁴⁷ Al arranged for a yearly expenditure of \$1000 from the FFF to offset the travel costs for those itinerant Professors of Casting we know as Governors and MCI's. When Tony Vitale took over as Chair, he codified the procedure for awarding that money. David Diaz, who now chairs the Committee, nurtured a gathering organized by MCI Rod McGarry in Massachusetts in early 2010 of nearly 51 CI's, Masters and Governors. They came from 11 states—including Florida and Alabama—and from three Canadian provinces to learn about advanced teaching techniques, the state of the art in casting physics, tournament

casting—both accuracy and distance—and about volunteer teaching opportunities with children and disabled military veterans. Other continuing education events have been conducted in Southern California, Oregon, and Arkansas.

What a remarkable turnabout these two examples of large-scale teaching and testing represent for an organization that wrestled with itself and its destiny as much as the BOG did in its early years. One wishes to be in a room today with the late Leon Chandler, Jim Green, Mel Krieger and Allan Rohrer to hear them marvel at what has come of the all labors they invested long ago in their fledgling casting instructor program.

A Founding Member Chairs the Board

Bruce Richards chairs the BOG today. He and Steve Rajeff are the lone founding members remaining on the Board. Long-time Governors can recall many times when Bruce's cool head and warm humor lowered the temperature in an argument. It didn't hurt that Bruce, the world's foremost expert on fly lines, knew and worked closely with more people in the industry than perhaps anyone else alive. One Governor remembers how Bruce broke the bad news to an unsuccessful Master applicant at a 1998 test. Instead of sitting across the table from him with the other examining Governor, Bruce sat next to him. Bruce wanted him to know that he was *with* him in his journey to become a Master and not *opposite* him. When Bruce asked the aspiring Master how he thought he had done, he answered that he had not met his own standards. It was then easier for the applicant to hear the decision of the examiners; he had already come to the same conclusion.

Longtime FFF VP for Education Judy Lehmberg recalls a day in Livingston, Montana, in 1993. "The first BOG meeting was about to start and I was pretty nervous about having to run the meeting with all the famous fly fishers there. There was one youngish guy who I didn't know and I told him we were about to have a meeting so he would need to leave the room. It was Bruce Richards."⁴⁸

Dedication

To the memory of those founding members of the Federation of Fly Fishers Casting Board of Governors who are no longer here to read of what they built:

They taught us how to teach.

Leon Chandler
Jim Green
Mel Krieger
Allan Rohrer

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Gretchen and Al Beatty, for memories of the organizational state of the program in 1993.

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David Diaz, for a detailed history of the continuing Education Committee.

Floyd Franke, for warm recollections from his tenure as Chair of the BOG.

Tom Jindra, for a history of the demise of FFF-Europe, some of it included herein verbatim.

Al Kyte, for memories of challenges of the early years.

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Judy Lehmberg, for an extensive description of the early years.

Denise Maxwell, for her encouragement, for combing old BOG Annual Meeting minutes for THCI information, for her memories of the THCI's founding and of the FFF-Europe history.

Dan McCrimmon, for details of the FFF-Europe history.

Bruce Richards, for seeing this project through, and for staying in the room in 1993.



A bit of history....courtesy of Terry Ring, owner of Silver Creek Outfitters in Sun Valley, Idaho

Terry Ring, for a scan of his BOG Advisory Committee diploma.

Dusty Sprague, for his encouragement.

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Barbara Wuebber, for her able administration and for CICP statistics from the FFF office.

Joan Wulff, for invaluable documents from the earliest days of the CICP.

¹ Al Kyte, email to Macauley Lord, September 17, 2009.

² Judy Lehmberg, email to Macauley Lord, September 23, 2009.

³ Mel Krieger rebuttal [unpublished?] to "Who Needs It—Casting Certification?" J. Michael McGovern, *Fly Fishing Retailer*, June/July 2000.

⁴ Joe Libue and John Van Derhoof, "A Tribute to Allan Rohrer, 1928-2002," *The Loop*, Spring, 2003. <http://www.fedflyfishers.org/Default.aspx?tabid=4469>.

⁵ Allan Rohrer, email to Macauley Lord, March 2, 2001.

⁶ Judy Lehmberg email.

⁷ Advisory Committee diploma, Macauley Lord archives.

⁸ Just nine weeks after Mel invited the founders to create the Board, the Advisory Committee comprised 185 people. FFF staff, *Certification Committee as of 10/9/92*.

⁹ Mel Krieger rebuttal.

¹⁰ Tom Travis, in a letter [fragment] to the BOG, ca. Fall, 1993.

¹¹ Joan Wulff letter to Judy Lehmberg, for distribution to the BOG, July 24, 1993.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Mel Krieger rebuttal.

¹⁴ Judy Lehmberg email.

¹⁵ Al Kyte email. Al thinks it was in December, 1993, that he and Mel did the re-write.

¹⁶ Tom White, "Gratified Instructor," *The Tailing Loop*, Volume 1, Issue 1, 1994. <http://www.fedflyfishers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=ZoPqlFS36Uw%3d&tabid=4469&mid=3361>

¹⁷ Minutes, 1996 CBOG Annual Meeting, dated October 4, 1995 [sic].

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Macauley Lord, "Reflections On Taking The Master Certification Test," *The Tailing Loop*, Spring 1996. <http://www.fedflyfishers.org/Default.aspx?tabid=4469>

²⁰ *Casting Program Organizational Structure*, FFF document ca. 1996.

²¹ Al Kyte email.

²² <http://www.fedflyfishers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=WlSmQqXnyTY%3d&tabid=4469&mid=3361>

²³ Tom Jindra, email to Macauley Lord, January 4, 2010.

²⁴ "FFF MEMBERSHIP IN 1996," *The Tailing Loop*, Fall, 1995. <http://www.fedflyfishers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=EVfDZDkynFI%3d&tabid=4469&mid=3361>

²⁵ Minutes, 2000 CBOG Annual Meeting.

²⁶ Minutes, 1998 and 2000 CBOG Annual Meeting.

²⁷ Statistics for 1999-2002 are derived from *Casting Instructor Statistics*, FFF document distributed at 2003 Annual BOG meeting.

²⁸ 2003-2009 statistics are from Barbara Wuebber (FFF National Office), email to Macauley Lord, February 11, 2010.

²⁹ J. Michael McGovern "Who Needs It?—Casting Certification?" *Fly Fishing Retailer*, June/July 2000.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Al Kyte & Gary Moran "FLY CASTING: Substance & Style", *American Angler Magazine* (March/April 2000). <http://www.fedflyfishers.org/Portals/0/Casting/Master%20study%20guide%20articles/Al%20Kyte/SubstancevsStyle.pdf>

³² J. Michael McGovern "Who Needs It?—Casting Certification?"

³³ Bill and Jay Gammel, "The Essentials of Fly Casting," reprinted in its entirety in *The Loop*, Summer, 2009. <http://www.fedflyfishers.org/Default.aspx?tabid=4469>

³⁴ All may be found at: <http://www.fedflyfishers.org/Default.aspx?tabid=4469>

³⁵ FFF Performance Tasks and Certifiers' Expectations, ca. 1999.

³⁶ Masters Certification: Commentary and Overview. <http://www.fedflyfishers.org/Default.aspx?tabid=4458>

³⁷ Tom Jindra, email to Macauley Lord, February 18, 2004.

³⁸ Letter to BOG from BOG Executive Committee, January 16, 2001.

³⁹ *Master Test Study Guide* <http://www.fedflyfishers.org/Default.aspx?tabid=4459>

⁴⁰ Tim Rajeff, letter to the BOG, in *Minutes*, 2003 CBOG Annual Meeting.

⁴¹ Derived from Tom Jindra, email to Macauley Lord, January 22, 2010.

⁴² Dan McCrimmon, email to Rick Williams, February 3, 2010.

⁴³ Derived from Rick Williams, email to Macauley Lord, February 3, 2010; Denise Maxwell, email to Macauley Lord, February 14, 2010; Dan McCrimmon, email to Macauley Lord, February 14, 2010.

⁴⁴ <http://www.fedflyfishers.org/Default.aspx?tabid=4465>

⁴⁵ Derived mostly from Denise Maxwell, email to Macauley Lord, January 5, 2010; and Al Buhr, email to Macauley Lord, December 15, 2009.

⁴⁶ Molly Semenik and Rick Williams, "Casting Instructor Certification: Opportunities and Successes for Fly-Fishing Professionals, *The Flyfisher*, Fall/Winter 2009.

⁴⁷ David Diaz, email to Macauley Lord, February 18, 2010.

⁴⁸ Judy Lehmberg email.

Editor's note: It is surprising that no one really kept track of the history of the CICP over the years. Amazing when you realize that fact and then ask yourself what to do? How can we backtrack and fix this?

Macauley has done a fine job of taking on the project, doing the research, talking to the people who were there and then writing a very readable compilation.

Our sincere thanks to him for doing this. Read it and get an idea of our beginnings and how far we have traveled in almost 20 years (hard to believe we are almost 20!)

Big Timber

by Bill Higashi, BOG



Photos by Bill Higashi

Ours is a great time for fly rod geeks like myself. We can easily purchase rods made of graphite of various modulus, boron/graphite composite, fiberglass, and we can even enter a long waiting list to have a custom bamboo rod made by a modern master. Fly rods past and present greatly differ in action, tempo and power, leading to some confusion regarding the technique required to cast them.

I was raised on parabolic cane and glass rods, mainly because the local shop in my home town strongly pushed them. Basing on the enigmatic instruction in "A Fly Fisher's Life" by Charles Ritz, the guys who haunted the shop kindly taught me how to "squeeze", "zic", "bloc" and "stop." I don't know how well they understood Ritz's explanation because the text we were using was in English, and the language skill that we had was of high-school level at most. But luckily that book has a lot of drawings and photographs so we managed somehow. The book by a Japanese caster who learned from Ritz was of huge help too. We tried to copy the hand, arm and elbow movement as described in these books. It was the era before CD, DVD or YouTube!

After considerable struggle, I developed enough skills to cast these parabolics. A pointed loop, flying close to the water surface, started to form. However, I soon found out that such tip-resistant rods are not as enjoyable for smaller fish living in our streams (a 12" fish is a trophy). So I asked my friend to loan me a light Fenwick graphite rod, pretty new back then. It was a well-made progressive rod, with a delicate enough tip and resistant butt. I went to the casting pond, rather jubilantly to test it out, but to my surprise I didn't seem to be able to cast it; at least my forward loops looked really open and bad. I started to think what was wrong with my casting method. It was a tough experience for my small pride

(Continued on page 18)



Big timber #1



Big timber #2



Big timber #3

Now I know. The reason I failed when I first tried to cast that progressive Fenwick was my fixed notion of ‘flycasting.’ It should change. It should change according to the rod you use, the line you cast, the length of line you cast, the line speed you want to generate. When I teach intermediate and advanced classes, I bring in as many different rods as possible... super-fast, stiff rods like Sage TCR, a slow graphite rod made by Daiwa, powerful bamboo parabolics by Pezon, soft Winston Stalker glass rods, short and heavy parabolic glass rod by Berkley, and middle-of-the-road Fenwick HMG and Scott G2, all in 5 weight. They are so dramatically different that students get confused at the beginning. They start to ask me “What is the best way to cast a glass rod?” or “What about a cane rod?”

There is no such thing as “The Best Way,” I tell them. Then I stress the importance of SLP of the rod tip. The movement of the rod tip generates the loop. Our shoulder, elbow, arm and hand work in unison to move

Casting sequence using a super hard short rod (made from a scrap saltwater spin rod). The tip is marked bright yellow, so the students can easily watch its path. To draw SLP the casting hand moves in a big concave path.

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Casting sequence below using a medium action graphite rod, simulating a 15-yard cast. The hand movement is close to a straight path.



Progressive #1



Progressive #2

the rod, thus the rod tip. Because rods tend to react differently to the power input, we have to adjust our body movement to draw a SLP.

Usually I will start the demonstration with a short piece of thin, square timber. It is an extremely hard rod, not easily bending. In order to draw a SLP and cast a tight loop with this “rod,” your hand has to move in a dramatically concave path. Then I pick up a super fast rod, sometimes combining it with a line one weight lighter, and cast it. I have the student observe the loop, then my hand movement. It is also traveling in a concave path too, but is less dramatic compared to that of the timber rod.



Progressive #3

(continued on page 20)



Parabolic #1



Parabolic #2

Next I switch to a very soft glass rod, and cast with the exactly same hand movement. Of course it tails miserably. However if I modify the hand movement and try to draw rather convex path over a wide stroke, the tip starts to travel straight, resulting in a tighter loops. Then I tell them. "Somewhere between these two extremes, there is the right hand movement for you and the tackle.

It is for you to find it out, and the loop tells you! I learned the importance of flexibility myself after a big struggle, but your students don't have to take that long route!

Casting sequence using a full parabolic cane rod, simulating a 15-yard cast. The hand movement is rather convex, with some pull-in motion at the end of the forward stroke.



Parabolic #3

PEARLS....

From a Master Study Group

Hosted by Gordy Hill

Pearl #1 - The oral questions you might be asked on the CI test....

This is an excerpt from the CI Study group - a vintage pearl from ‘ol Al’.

Explain rod loading: You know how to do this. The answer MUST include:

1. How the line weight and inertia along with air and/or water resistance act as resistance to the movement of the rod to bend it during acceleration.
2. That this stores energy in the bent rod.
3. That this stored energy is released as the rod is stopped and straightens.

(Remember....a rod can “do” only one thing.....STRAIGHTEN.)

re the casting stroke as it relates to changes in distance. (You got that one right.....short cast-short stroke, long cast-long stroke.)

Explain and demonstrate good “timing” when false casting.

1. Timing is the cadence between the forward and back strokes.
2. Timing is good when THE PAUSE BETWEEN STROKES IS LONG ENOUGH TO ALLOW THE LINE TO STRAIGHTEN FULLY WITHOUT LOSING TENSION AND FALLING IN THE PROCESS.

You got the one about casting into a head wind right. The main principles for this answer are:-

1. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM: The wind tends to blow the line back toward the angler.
2. TIGHT LOOP
3. INCREASED LINE (LOOP) SPEED
4. CHANGE OF LINE PLANE (TRAJECTORY) ie. HIGH BACK CAST / FORWARD CAST DIRECTLY LOW TO THE TARGET, MAINTAINING 180 DEGREES BETWEEN THE FORWARD AND BACK CASTS.

Explain and demonstrate casting with a cross wind blowing into the casting side.

1. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM: The wind blows the fly and line into the caster.
2. THERE ARE MANY SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM.
 - a. If the wind is mild, use a side-arm horizontal cast.
 - b. If the wind is strong, pick up and make the back cast over the casting arm shoulder, and the forward cast over the opposite shoulder.
 - c. With a very strong wind, you can pick up and make the back cast over the casting arm shoulder, and the forward cast overhead.(The strong wind will take the line and fly over the opposite shoulder)
 - d. The caster may use a cross body cast over the opposite shoulder for short casts.
 - e. ““““ a cross head cast over the opposite shoulder for a longer cast.

- f. The caster may cast with the opposite hand.
 - g. The caster may turn around and place the back cast to the target (Barnegat Bay Cast)
 - h. The caster may elect to turn and use 2 forward casts on the downwind side. (Galway cast)
-

With the question on narrow to wide loops....don't forget that the standard answer is that the path of the rod tip determines this. Convex (doming) path yields an open or wide loop. A straight line path yields a tight loop, (and a concave path yields a tailing loop.)

ALSO REMEMBER WHAT TOM WHITE TAUGHT US...THAT THE WAY TO MAKE A CONTROLLED WIDE LOOP IS TO STOP AND UNLOAD THE ROD FARTHER BELOW THE ONCOMING LINE.....AND THE WAY TO MAKE A TIGHT LOOP IS TO STOP AND UNLOAD THE ROD HIGHER....JUST BELOW BUT CLOSE TO THE ONCOMING LINE.

On the casting part, the failures I see are commonly these:

1. Failure to make really slow tight loops for demonstration....and then to be able to speed them up without fouling them up.
 2. Failing to have practiced all of these things WITH ONE HAND.
 3. Failure to make neat tight loops on the back cast.
 4. Failure to make a tailing loop on command.....best, here, to do it slowly, use an easily seen creep, and then too much power too soon. Some flunk by using the method of shoving the rod tip up into the path of the oncoming line.
-

5. On the reach cast:

- a. Failure to sweep the rod WAY OUT TO THE SIDE....AT 90 DEGREES FROM THE ANGLER.
 - b. Failure to slip line as this sweep is made so that the fly isn't pulled back from the target
 - c. Failure to end up with a STRAIGHT LINE BETWEEN THE ROD TIP AND THE TARGET.
 - d. Failure to describe (EXPLAIN) that this is used to yield a drag free drift for a dry fly, cross current of a river or stream.
 - e. Failure to finish the cast AND THEN DEMONSTRATE FOLLOWING THE DOWNSTREAM PATH OF THE FLY LINE AT THE SPEED OF THE CURRENT so the fly doesn't start to drag.
-

6. On the accuracy casts:

Requires MANY repetitions of practice at targets20', 30', 45'

It's not enough to be accurate. You must demonstrate a nice relaxed form. This includes neat tight loops on the back cast and forward casts.

A good tester will be looking for the practiced and deliberate change of **trajectory** for each different distance. He'll be looking for TIP CASTING for the close target, MID FLEX ROD LOAD for the intermediate distances, and BUTT LOADING for the distance targets. (I must admit....that you don't really need to adhere to all that for the distances on the Cert test....a good caster can easily hit the 45' mark without butt loading.)

He may also be looking for change in style between the close targets and the distance ones ...closed stance and strictly vertical for the close ones, and a more open stance off vertical stroke for the distance targets. For some testers this is recognized as strictly a matter of style... one of choice for the caster. Others want you to know the difference even if you don't adhere to them and some don't address this. On the Master's exam, they might ask you WHY you changed styles for these differing distances.

Except on a windy day, most examiners don't favor your "drilling" the fly into the target. A nice easy hover technique seems pleasing to most.

Be sure to practice the target accuracy casting over the opposite shoulder! Some were able to do it fine off the casting arm side, then couldn't do it off the other side.

Remember...you must start with the fly in your hand, and make several false casts before you deliver the fly to the target.

Roll casting:

Main thing to practice, here, is the nice egg shaped tight loop. Everything else is easy. Remember...for the distance roll cast, you may haul...and you need a lot more line behind you. Practice tight low loops. AND DON'T FORGET TO PRACTICE THESE OVER THE OPPOSITE SHOULDER.

Low horizontal casting:

Make sure you know the principle of increasing line speed as you go more horizontal and lower, to keep the line from touching the ground.

Good luck!

Pearl #2 - Another vintage gem from Al's group....from Tony Loader

OK you have a student that is casting tailing loops. You have watched him and you decided to have him do something to stop the tails. Tell us what was causing HIS tailing loops and what you did to correct it? (Invent a problem and solve it)

- * State what causes a tailing loop then.
- * Apply the 6 step of Bruce Richards
- * Apply the 6 essentials

Problem:

The caster is practicing pick-up and lay-down casts. He is commencing his pick-up too abruptly. A combination of the inertia of the line and water friction loads the rod. Once the line leaves the water, however, the friction component is lost. Load diminishes therefore, causing the tip to rise and thus describe a concave path. A tailing loop results.

Solution:

The caster should commence the back cast stroke so as to deliberately “peel” the line off the water at a constant rate. He can measure the required rate by watching the “waterfall” which forms at the junction of the line with the water. If he maintains this “waterfall” at about one inch high, as it runs away from the him towards the leader, the lift off speed is about right and the rod is being properly loaded. When the “waterfall” reaches the leader (but not before), a power snap can be made to complete the back cast.

When the lift off speed is right, the line will be taut and at 90 degrees to the rod butt, in the instant before the power snap. If the lift off is too slow or hesitant, the line will sag, introducing slack into the back cast.

A Tailing Loop is formed when the rod tip follows a concave path, rather than the desired straight-line path, during a casting stroke. Inappropriate power application, or, less commonly, misalignment of the forward and back casts, can cause this undesirable tip path.

Various scenarios can set up the caster to make a tailing loop. Some are:

- * Creeping
- * Slack in the cast
- * Trying to cast with too narrow an arc
- * Trying to cast with too much power
- * Pushing the rod rather than pulling a bend into it
- * Starting the stroke too fast (as above)

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- * Slowing the stroke prior to the stop
- * Finishing a haul before the stop
- * Trying to cast with less than 180 degrees between the back and the forward casts

A Six Step approach to solving the problem above would be to:

1. Observe what the line did (made a tailing loop)
2. Understand what the rod did to make the line so (concave tip path)
3. Understand what the caster did to make the rod move so (excessive early power)
4. Change the caster's actions (smooth application of appropriate power)
5. Observe the effect on the rod (proper loading giving SLP)
6. Observe the effect on the line (good loop formed)

Essentials can be listed as follows:

1. Ensure that there is minimal slack line
2. Add power appropriately
3. Pause for an appropriate time to allow each loop to unroll
4. Make the tip follow a straight line path (SLP)
5. Vary the stroke length to suit the length of line to be cast
6. Accelerate the rod at a constant rate to a Positive Stop (and arguably)
7. Ensure each forward and back cast is made at 180 degrees to the other.

In the example above, the caster has violated Essential #2, which caused a violation of Essential #4, which made the tailing loop, which itself violates Essential #1, by introducing slack into the cast.

Pearl #3 - Things I learned as a young boy....

“Why do we use such a long rod to fly fish with?” This is often asked of me. If I said to cast with, that would be a half-right answer because there are people that do not need a rod to cast a fly line. Even this ‘ol man’ can cast about 40–50 feet without a rod. Adding a fly rod gives me some protection from the fly and also gives me a lot of control. To be able to flycast is only a small part of fly fishing. Let me tell you why I learned to cast.

When I was a small lad, we had a neighbor that had a small lake or stock tank as they are referred to here in Texas. To me it was the spawn of many of my daydreams and big ideas. Like a raft trip to Tom Sawyer, or a frog hunters glory ground. I would develop great plans while safely on shore. My school studies would often have a lull that would lead into inventions to skim the waters. Float past the grass or be able to cast out past the drop-off a mere twenty feet.

There was just one small problem with all the plans. Mr. Perry, the villain of many of my great ideas concerning “the Pond”. You see it was HIS pond. He had stocked it with catfish, bluegills, and black bass that had come all the way from Florida. He did not allow anyone to fish in his ‘lake’ unless you paid him to do so. Now that was a challenge to me. Not that I could not come up with some money by mowing grass or digging up worms to sell. It was that “the Pond” was right there, where I could see it everyday. I was held in a position that made the fishing in the pond a must do thing. There is no adult reasoning for the pains I would go through just to try to fish “the Pond” and not get caught by Mr. Perry, the intended target of my most insidious plans. Like the potato in the exhaust pipe of his big black truck. The time I placed cheese on the manifold of his iron wheeled tractor was one of the “did-not-go-as-planned” ideas. He saw me do it from his lookout place on the back porch over looking “the Pond”. Dad had some words for me that night that brought out confessions and promises from me about Mr. Perrys tractor and cheese. The catfish bait story did not work long.

When I tried to fly cast at night, the sharp eyes of Mr. Perry would pick me out against the reflection from the surface of the pond, or he would hear me as I lost my footing and fell in. He would warn me that “If I catch you using a fishing rod to take any of my bass, I will take it upon myself to take the fishing rod and break it over you backside.” Now this was the straw that made me start my long range plans.

First I spent some time in the Library at school, researching the longest cast. It would have to be about 25 feet. Then when that plan was wash-up due to lack of hi-tech reels, I started working on a folding fly rod. This was going well until I got to the part of test casting. To say it came all apart will suffice. I was in the town’s “Flyshop” with Uncle Bill one day and a man that went by the name of “Lefty” was showing off some great casting and telling just how to do it with something he called “double hauling”. He was making the fly line cast out better than 60 ft with only the tip section of the fly rod!

‘Shorter rod that was the answer. Sure if I could just learn how he did this trick cast I could cast from back in the bushes, there by avoid falling in and not being seen by Mr. Perry. What a plan - if I could cast with a very short rod I could hide it anywhere. Imagine casting 60 feet with a rod so small you could hide it in your pants leg. Or better yet no rod at all. May be just a ‘dead branch. Or maybe... well you get the drift. This small boy just had his imagination put in gear.

Now how did Mr. Lefty get that line to shoot out that far? I just had to learn ‘the trick’ and I would be catching bass at “Mr. Perrys Pond”.

“The cast can not be made until the end of the line is moving” said Mr. Kreh.

“The rod hand must be moving the rod fast and speeding up to a Stop “ he continued.

“Then a tug on the line will load the rod and cause the line to form a loop and carry the fly in the direction the rod tip was going when it was stopped” So that is how I was introduced to long distance fly casting with a short rod. Just like Mr. Wulff would carry in his plane.

After a few weeks of dry land practices I got so I could get the line out about 30 feet. Then I found that if I used a rolled-up magazine as a rod I could get out another 10 feet. I was on to something. Now the only problem that I was having was the “Fancy line”. Mr. Kreh was speaking of a line that was coated with PPC or CPV or some such stuff that makes it easy to care for. But that line was over \$15.00 at the hardware store. No way I could afford that. I would just have to use the old silk line that Gramps was using on his old bamboo rod. If I could just find the red can of grease to dress the line.

Yep I had it all figured out. Super slick line, a tube to cast with, doing the double haul. I would be catching fish from “The Pond”.

The casting soon became my full time past time. I got so that I could get 20 ft then 25 ft and soon I was landing the end of the line at 35 feet that was all I needed.

The summer was fast ending the Bass were feeding along the weed bank. I was ready for the night of fishing.

Do you have any idea of how much noise a bass of 3 pounds can make when it flops along the grass beds? Have you ever hooked a cow on the back cast? They can sure make the line burn your hands when they take off running for some place else, without a boy standing around popping a whip. End of fly line, end of trying to fish in Mr. Perry’s Pond, I could not sit for a day or two. Something about roping the neighbors cattle... Only thing I learned was double hauling and never use a leader stronger than you can hold.....Allen Crise

Pearl #4 - Bill Gammel's article from Sexy Loops.....

This is one of the important articles written by another Texan, Bill Gammel (CBOG). After you have read this article, pick out a couple of words that would help you remember each of the 5 essentials. Write them on a piece of paper and place them by your bathroom mirror. Read them, recite them, learn them ,YOU will be tested on them.

Now I want you to add one more and that word is STOP.

Here is a recap of what you should have gotten. I noted these:

- 1.) Bill relates these essentials to the changes we must make in every day casting. (His “adjustments”)
- 2.) He points out that an overriding necessity for throwing a tight loop well is the STRAIGHT LINE PATH OF THE ROD TIP FROM SLP TO SLP. He qualifies this by noting that we try to get as close as possible to that. (In the real world, it’s an approximation. If one really could do it, he’d have a collision.)
- 3.) He states that the straight line path (SLP) represents true “tracking”. Very important to this concept is the fact that this SLP MUST BE IN THE VERTICAL PLANE **AND THE HORIZONTAL PLANE**.

(A violation of the latter gets into our latest discussions on the curving back cast, doesn’t it?)
(To the nit picking pundits, I guess we should say, “all planes”.)

- 4.) This SLP is the most important of all the essentials.....the others help bring this about.
- 5.) The longer your stroke, the more you have to bend (load) your rod. (Otherwise you lose your SLP).
6. Re: # 5.) The more you bend your rod, the greater must be your stroke length. (#5.’s corollary)
These two go way beyond, “Short cast/short stroke.....Long cast/long stroke”.
- 7.) We have all learned that there must be a pause at the end of each stroke, and that the pause should be proportional to the length of the cast and the amount of line carried out of the rod tip.
* Bill points out, however, that in adjusting our casts we must sometimes increase line speed. This introduces another variable:-
- 8.) The higher the line speed, the **SHORTER** the duration of the pause.
- 9.) He, then, simplifies and clarifies this concept by reducing it to its common denominator:

“THE PAUSE BETWEEN EACH CAST MUST VARY WITH THE AMOUNT OF TIME IT TAKES THE LINE TO STRAIGHTEN.”

To me, that provides an epiphany! For the first time in my brain, it clarifies the situation where you have to pause an even longer time when shooting or slipping line.....and then shorten THAT pause time when you have done the same thing but added line speed. (Up to that point, I had thought this was a hole in that particular essential.....especially as I tried to understand what Steve Rajeff had taught us about the use of overhang as the tool for determining the rate of turnover of the head and all that went with that concept.)

I’d love to see his article added to the Masters Study Guide. (With due attention to copyright laws.)
KUDOS TO BILL!!!!

Making adjustments on the fly..

by Bill Gammel

This article is reprinted from the Sexy Loops web site with the permission of Bill Gammel, Paul Arden and Eric Wonhof.

The world of Sexyloops is a wonderful place. You can come to the pages of Sexyloops and find the answer to thousands of questions. Some of these answers might even be correct. However, Sexyloops can't come with you to the lake, river, or bay. You must learn to use the knowledge gathered here and take it with you, making adjustments on the fly.

The art and science of flycasting poses a unique challenge when it comes to adjustments. Flycasting is the only part of the sport that literally changes between false casts. The wind conditions can be polar opposite from one false cast to the other and line length often changes from false cast to false cast. Couple this with a moving boat or fast swimming fish and you have a myriad of changing conditions. You must adjust your casting stroke as you fish. You will be constantly adjusting the stroke in order to achieve that Sexyloop. To be successful, it takes knowledge, understanding, and muscle memory.

In my experience as a casting instructor, I have found that the knowledge level of the average flycaster has improved over the years. The essentials of flycasting are more commonly known and accepted. The basic physics of the cast is even becoming common knowledge. However, many casters still lack the understanding and muscle memory to make the adjustments necessary to consistently throw Sexyloops.

In order to throw a tight loop in a straight line, there are five essentials elements to the cast. However, I want you to think about the mechanics of the cast in a slightly different way than simply there being five things that must be done.

There is one overriding result that must occur for a tight, straight loop to result from the cast. The rod tip must travel as close as possible to a straight line during the casting stroke. That is from Rod Straight Position (RSP) on one end of the stroke to Rod Straight Position on the other end. Now, a perfect straight line is theoretical, in reality we need to approach a straight line "as close as possible." In order for a rod tip to travel in a straight line from RSP to RSP, there are five things that must occur.

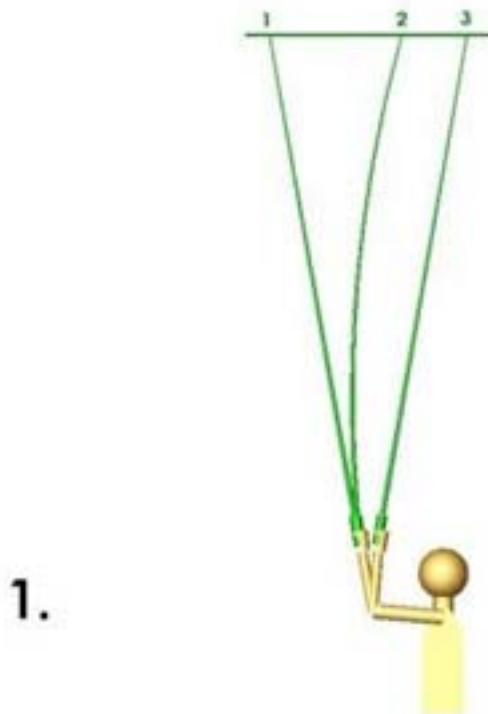
The first essential states that the rod tip must travel in a straight line throughout the casting stroke. The first time you heard this it was presented as the desired result, however, it is also an essential action. The rod tip must travel in a straight line in the horizontal plane and the vertical plane. The rod tip must travel from RSP to RSP with no right or left deviation. This is known as tracking. The tip must track straight. Also, the rod tip must travel from RSP to RSP with no (very little) deviation up or down. This is accomplished by properly executing the four remaining essentials.

The next essential I would like to discuss states that the casting arc or angle, through which the rod butt travels from RSP to RSP, must vary with the amount of bend placed on the rod. As the bend gets deeper, the casting arc must get wider. This is most often done by lengthening the over all length of the casting stroke. This is the foundation for adjusting your cast.

The pause between each cast must vary with the amount of time it takes the line to straighten. Very simply the line must straighten before the next stroke begins. Now, most of us try to predict the straightening of the line and catch it just as it straightens. To do this, you will need to think "go" when the loop still has a small amount of line in the top leg. If you wait until the line is straight to think "go," then it will take some reaction time to actually start moving. The line is falling at this point, and you lose the advantage of a perfectly taut line.

In order for the rod tip to move in a straight line, you must apply the power in a smooth acceleration from RSP to RSP. To achieve this, move the butt of the rod through a smooth acceleration to a crisp stop. The maximum tip speed should be reached at the second RSP just after the stop. This is very important when trying to bend the rod at the correct time in the correct amount in order to keep the rod tip moving along the straight line. Too much or too little bend and the rod tip will not travel a straight line.

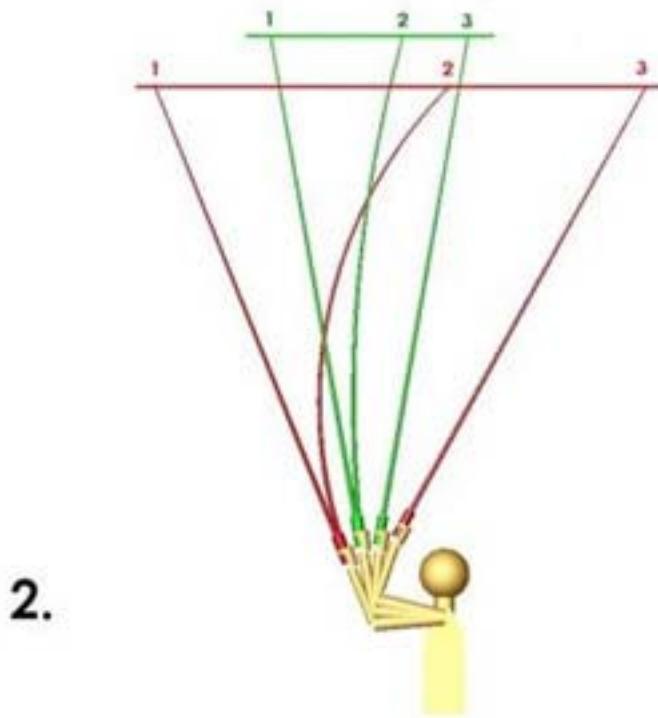
There can be no slack in the casting system during the application of power. You will learn to shoot line while false casting, but during the application of power, the rod tip must be pulling against a taut line. If this doesn't occur, then the rod tip will not travel along a straight line path. When you pull against slack, the rod tip will rise, because there is not enough load (bend) being placed on the rod. When the line finally straightens, the tip will dip sharply. Then you will inevitably stop the stroke too short causing the tip to rise. The tip will actually travel through the path of a sine wave, and this will cause a tailing loop.



Diagrams by Eric Wonhof

(continued on page 29)

Now, I am going to assume that you can false cast tight loops with 20 feet of line beyond the rod tip. Drawing #1 depicts the rod positions for a short 20 foot cast. Position 1 and 3 depict RSP, and position 2 depicts the deepest bend in the rod. Position 2 sets the height of the straight line path. There is only a slight bend in the rod, therefore the casting arc or angle at the rod butt between positions 1 and 3 is very narrow. Practice casting this length of line as softly as you can form the loop. Literally cast so softly you do not bend the rod, so softly your loops don't straighten, cast as softly as you can. Now, we know that you can't cast without bending the rod and you do want the loops to straighten, but practicing with this in mind will force you to cast as efficiently as possible. Do this until you are able to repeat the tight "u" shaped loops every time.



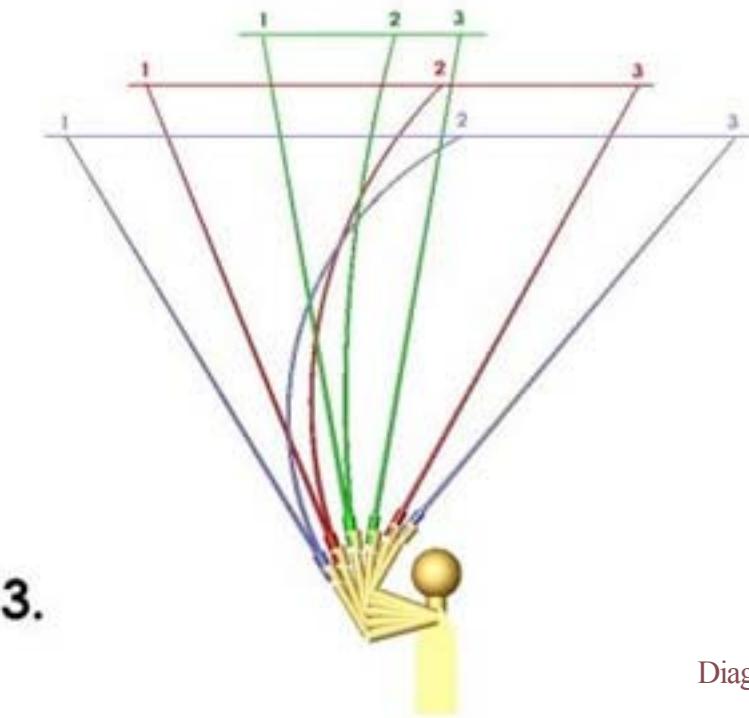
Diagrams by Eric Wonhof

Now, add one to two feet of line and begin again. There are two adjustments that should be made. The only change you have made is to add line. What will this do to the casting system? It will increase the bend in the rod. If the bend in the rod is increased, then the overall height of the rod tip will be lowered. (Note Drawing #2) The deepest bend in the rod will go from position Green 2 to Red 2. Thus, the straight line path is lower (red line) than it was before the addition of line (green line). If the straight line is lower, then the casting arc must get wider (position red 1 and 3). This is most often done by lengthening the stroke, however this is not the only way. The important thing is to widen the angle between position 1 and 3. By widening the casting arc, the tip of the rod at RSP (1 and 3) will be lower, matching the height of the bent rod at position 2. Keep in mind, changes between the green and red line are small because you only added a foot of line, therefore the angular change should be very little. If you had added a large amount of line the change is more drastic. There is one other adjustment that must be made. You have lengthened line, so it will now take the line slightly longer to straighten. Therefore, you must pause slightly longer to allow the line to straighten.

Do this drill one foot at a time from 20 to 40 feet. It is important to go slow and ingrain into your muscle memory the stroke for a perfect, efficient loop at each length of line. The more thorough you do this drill, the better you will be as a caster.

Now, start over with 20 feet of line. False cast as softly as you can. Once you are comfortable add a small amount of power or speed. I want you to accelerate from RSP to the RSP slightly faster than you were in the first drill. This will cause you to need two adjustments in order to keep the rod tip traveling in a straight line. (Note Drawing #2) Each time you accelerate faster from RSP to RSP, you will increase the amount of bend in the rod (Green #2 will become Red #2). Thus, the casting arc must get wider (Green Position #1 and #3 need to move to Red position #1 and #3). The pause between casting strokes will also be effected by the acceleration. The faster the line travels, the shorter the pause will be. Now, cast a little faster. Do this as long as you can throw a smooth tight loop.

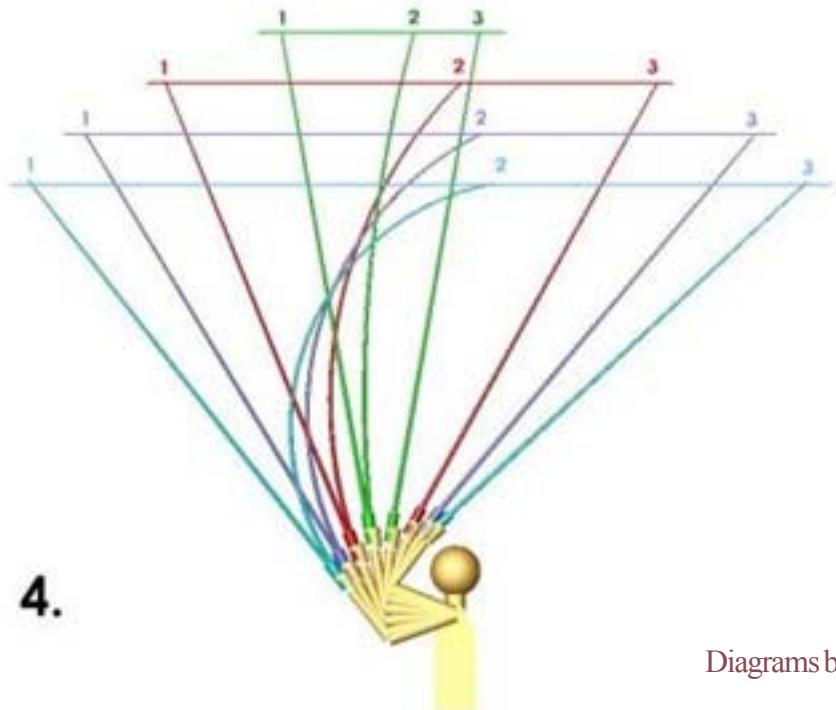
You need now to add one foot of line from 20-40 feet. At each length of line, cast from as slow as possible to as fast as you can smoothly. Make sure to make the appropriate adjustments for both extra line and extra speed. (False casting 40 feet at a quick pass will have you now casting along the red line.)



Diagrams by Eric Wonhof

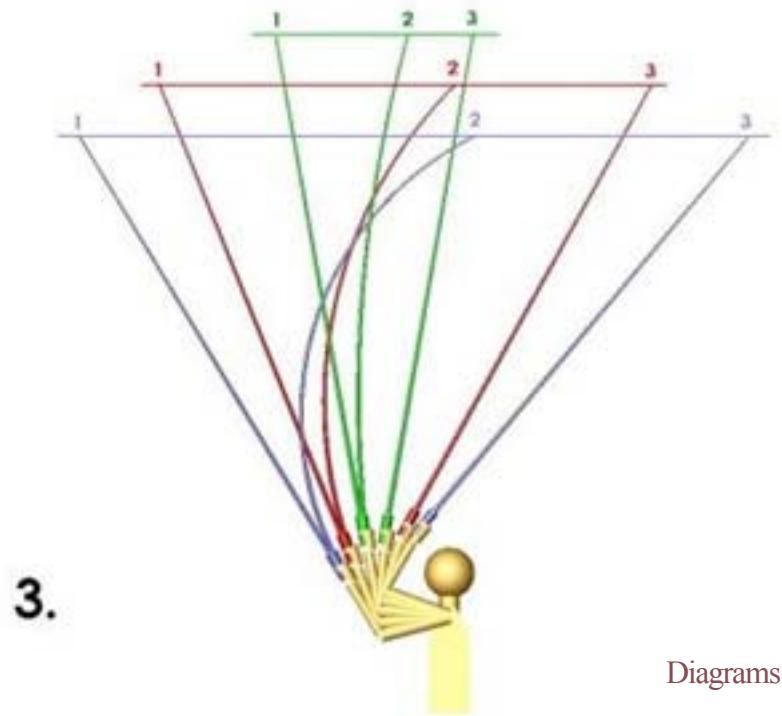
Once you have reached the 40 foot mark, you should add the double haul. The double haul will add extra bend to the rod and will increase line speed. Therefore, you must adjust your stroke. The casting arc must get wider and the pause between cast must get shorter. Now, add one foot of line and adjust. Do this until you have reached 55 to 60 feet of line in the air. (Note Drawing #3) You will now have a substantial bend in your rod with 60 feet and the double haul. This increased rod bend will have lowered the overall height of the rod tip. (From position red 2 to purple 2) The casting arc must be widened to keep the rod tips traveling in a straight line. (Red 1 and 3 must move to Purple 1 and 3)

Now, continue to practice throwing the perfect loop, the perfect loop faster, and the perfect loop longer. A really good caster can hold 80 feet of 5 wt. line in the air while false casting. Muscle memory is the key to success. You can not be thinking about this stuff on the river. Those loops need to just roll off your rod tip.



Diagrams by Eric Wonhof

Now, why did you have to go through all of that specific practice? (Note Drawing #4) If you have followed directions, you will have muscle memory of the perfect stroke for every amount of bend that you will encounter and you will have used every casting arc angle that will be needed. You are now armed with all of the muscle memory that you will need to tackle fly fishing and be very successful.

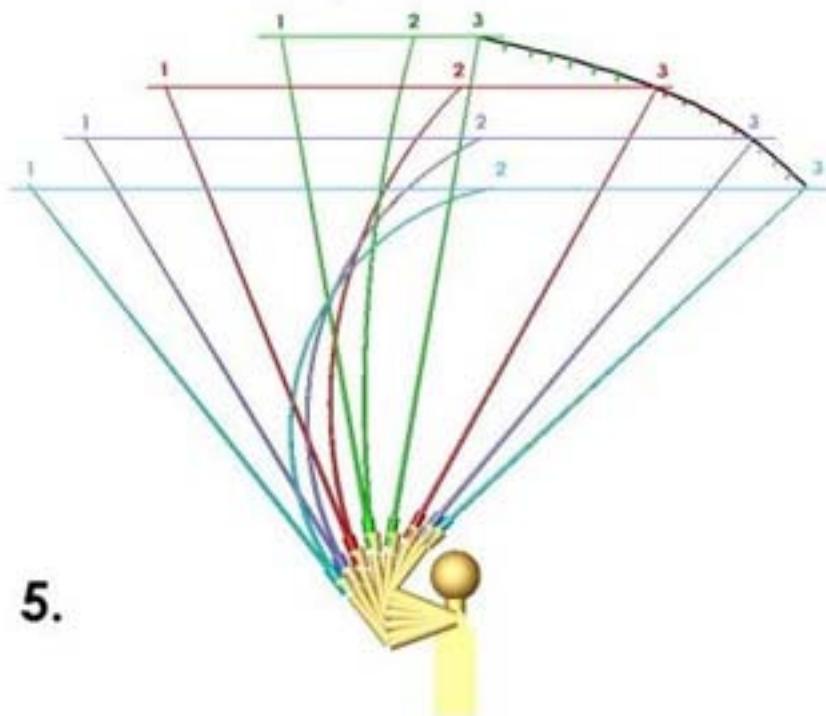


Diagrams by Eric Wonhof

Now, how do you use this mess? What does it help? You have got to have this muscle memory bank to handle the changing conditions of fishing. We will look at some fishing situations soon, but first let's look at what you must first understand. (Note Drawing #3) You are casting perfect 40 foot loops along the red line when a fish rises at 35 feet. So you strip in some line and begin to cast. You raise your rod to Red #1 and make the back cast to Red #3. However, there was a shorter length of line, therefore the rod had less bend and the rod tip traveled through the Green #2. (Red1 Green2 Red 3). This is a convex tip path and will cause a fat back loop. A forward cast of Red 3 to Red 1 with the tip traveling through Green 2 will throw another fat loop. You must adjust the casting arc until you are casting from positions Green 1, Green 2, and Green 3. This will give you a tight loop again. Therefore, when you see a fat loop, you should use a narrower casting arc. You must also use a shorter pause between casts. The shorter line takes less time to straighten.

(In most of the adjustment scenarios below, we will use the term "drift." This is a powerless repositioning of the rod that occurs between strokes.)

Let's look at another scenario (Note Drawing #3). If you are casting a 40 foot line with nice tight loops, your rod tip is traveling through Red #1, Red #2, and Red #3. A fish rises at 55 feet. You make an appropriate back cast with the rod tip traveling in a straight line. You shoot line on the back cast and start forward for the delivery casting. You start at Red #3 traveling through Purple #2 and Red #1. This is a concave path, and you will get a tailing loop. To fix this, you should adjust your stroke between the back cast and the front cast. Make a tight back cast with the tip traveling down the Red straight line. At Red #3 stop the rod and let the loop form, as the loop rolls back, shoot line, and drift the rod to Purple #3. Make the forward cast with the tip traveling along the Purple straight line. This will throw a tight loop to the fish at 55 feet.



Diagrams by Eric Wonhof

Now let's imagine that you are on the bow of a salt water flats boat. (Note Drawing #5). You have 20 feet of line out of the rod and the fly in your hand. The guide calls "fish, 80 feet, 11 o'clock." Point the rod tip at 11 o'clock and roll the fly forward into the air. Your rod tip will be at Green #1. Make a tight loop along the Green straight line, stopping at Green #3. As the loop unrolls let what will probably be a small amount of line shoot and drift the rod back to Red #3. Make a tight loop down the Red straight line and stop at Red #1. As the loop unrolls, let line shoot and drift the rod forward to Purple #1. Make a tight back cast along the Purple line; stop the rod at Purple #3. As the loop unrolls, shoot line and drift to Blue #3. Make a powerful stroke, driving the rod tip down the blue straight line. Stop the rod crisply at Blue #1 and shoot line to the target. Remember at each stage the pause between casts should get longer in order for the line to straighten.

Wind will cause a deeper bend in the rod for two reasons. The force of the wind itself will bend the rod, and extra power is generally needed to overcome the increased resistance by the wind. However, a tight loop is the best tool to overcome an adverse wind. Now, how do you throw a tight loop? You must keep the rod tip traveling along a straight line. We have seen these adjustments in other examples, but wind is slightly different. Wind is only applying force in one direction; therefore, adjustments that apply to one cast don't apply to the next. In this example, we will keep the line length the same. You are standing on the beach casting to giant fish, however the wind as usual is blowing off the water into your face. Now you have forty feet of line out. Raise the rod tip to Red #1 and make a soft, perfect back cast with the tip passing through Red #2 and stop the rod at Red #3. As the loop is unrolling, drift the rod tip to Purple #3. Make a powerful forward stroke along the Purple straight line. Now, as the forward loop unrolls, drift the rod back to Red #1 and repeat. In this case, you will have a small amount of bend going back and a large amount of bend going forward. Also, you must keep in mind that the line will unroll very quickly on the back cast and will take much longer to unroll on the forward cast. Therefore you must make the appropriate adjustments to your timing.

In summary, in order to throw tight loops in a straight line, you must make the rod tip travel in a straight line during the casting stroke. To do this, you will always need to eliminate right to left deviations in the rod tip path, eliminate slack, and accelerate the rod tip smoothly ending in a stop. Every other addition or subtraction to the cast will affect the amount of bend in the rod and the time it takes for the loops to straighten. You should be constantly watching your loops, and making the correct adjustments. By following the one foot at a time drill, you will develop a feel for every rod position that you will need. The more you practice these situational changes; the quicker you will be able to execute them on the fly.

Bill Gammel is one of America's most respected authorities on flycasting instruction. Bill and his father were responsible for identifying the "5 Essential Elements" that make up all casts. He's from Texas where they shoot people who throw tailing loops ("because they look like rattle snakes") - a wonderful caster, Board member and flyslinger.



Progressive Development Committee Event

San Francisco - California - April 2010

by Carl Zarelli



The Professional Development Committee continues to gain interest among organizations that see a benefit in the CICP program

While it may be a slow process to achieve the type of popularity it may deserve, some organizations are realizing that the CICP is not only good to further their guides teaching abilities but it is also good for their business long term.

Some organizations have felt this way and they have made a significant investment to see that their guides are properly trained and certified for the long term benefit of their business and the clients they serve.

The most recent successful PDC event effort was in San Francisco done in conjunction with Spey O Rama at the Golden Gate Casting and Angling Club. In organizing this event it was decided that in order to provide cost efficiency, we needed to be able to benefit from examiners attending the event. Close coordination with the Spey O Rama event was an important component to this year's PDC effort and success. Since I have been attending the Spey O Rama event for the last couple of years, PDC Chair Molly Semenik asked if I could help coordinate and work with her on the San Francisco PDC testing.

(continued on page 34)



Testing was initially requested by San Francisco's Leland Outfitters. As some of these testing events go, others also wanted to test to capitalize on the opportunity. Leland indicated they have a beautiful facility north of the San Francisco that they plan to use as a fly fishing school and to prepare candidates for the FFF tests. This certification process was their first step toward that goal.

The challenge with this testing event was to test 8 candidates in one day without disturbing the examiner's schedules at Spey O Rama. If you have been to Spey O Rama, you can appreciate the amount of activities that are going on at one time and the challenge to coordinate and test everyone in a day.

The passing rate was quite high and this is largely due to the efforts of George Revel and Josh Frasier of Leland. Their attention to the particulars of the test went a long way in the success of the Leland candidates. The PDC is pleased to report that 4 CI's and one Master from Leland passed together with one CI from the GGACC and a Japanese candidate. Such a high pass rate is uncommon and this speaks to the preparation that these candidates received from their mentors.

The PDC would also like to thank the following examiners for giving up their time for this effort;

Steve Johnston, Tim Lawson, Bruce Williams, Soon Lee, Lee Davison, John Vanderhoof & Bob Middo.

Without their time dedicated to this effort it would have become very difficult to have such a successful event. Thanks also go to the GGACC and Jay Grant who helped Molly and I coordinate this event in San Francisco.

The PDC continues to grow in popularity and serves as a model for testing of individuals within groups for advancement of the CICP program domestically.

We think it is fair to say that as groups see the value of certified instructors on staff the CICP program will continue to gain popularity and be viewed as the standard in casting certification.

Book Review

Single-Handed Spey Casting

by Simon Gawesworth. Stackpole Books, 2010,
245 pages, \$40 hardcover, ISBN 978-0-8117-0559-2

(This book review is excerpted from the review written by Bruce Richards for Fly Fisherman magazine with our thanks)

Simon Gawesworth is a world-class casting expert, both with single-handed rods and two-handed spey rods. His long, successful career as a competitive caster, and as an angler, instructor, and fly-line designer gives him the kind of diverse knowledge to be able to write a definitive book on casting.

Simon's technical skills as a flycaster, combined with his long experience as an instructor, gives him the ability to explain casting in a user-friendly fashion and in a writing style that is enjoyable to read. Reading about 'wiggly piles' of fly line and how the 'Heineken casts' were developed is both easy reading and makes perfect sense.

Starting with the basics, Simon explains the basic physics of how fly rods and lines work. Having dealt with the basics, Simon gets down to business. The book is designed to deal with difficult casting situations and to do so, he has separated the book into sections dealing with specific casting problems. These casting problems may be in front, behind and situations with multiple problems.

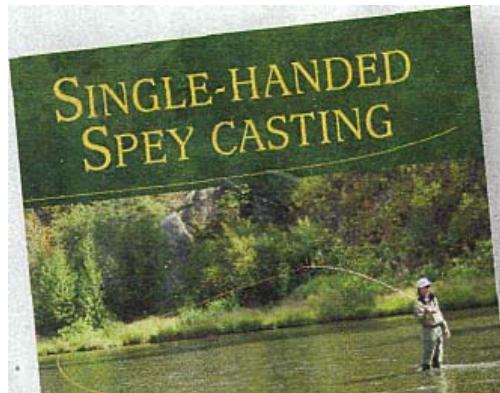
To solve these problems, Simon leads you to the solution, sometimes with a combination of several casts and not necessarily all spey casts.

The photography is excellent showing the rod and line positions necessary to make the casts. Although hard to do, the photos match the written casting instruction.

A section at the end of each chapter is devoted to fault finding and this will help readers solve some of their problems.

If you are looking for a good read then this book will definitely teach you some new tricks.

This book would also make an ideal Christmas present for that flycaster/fisherman on your list. I know I will be adding it to mine. - DM



Gordy and the Casting Bear

submitted by Jim Valle



Gordy Hill and the Bear

What do you do when your instructor partner invites a local bear into your Conclave Saltwater Workshop???

After you gain your composure ... You teach him to make a saltwater cast!

Anything can happen at the Conclave!

There is nothing like it!

CIPC Communications

The Casting Program has not been doing a good job of communicating with its members and keeping you, our valued members up to date. We are working on the situation and part of the remedy has been the appointment of Sheila Hassan as our communications coordinator.

Sheila accepted the job despite a heavy work load in her day job so our thanks to her for tackling this job. Especially when a lot of BOG members hesitate to post their info, let alone their photos.

The 2010 BOG meeting minutes are still being finalized, a big task considering there are 8 hours of audio tape to listen to and condense into a coherent report. Barbara Wuebber and David Diaz are tackling this job.

These minutes summarize what went on in the BOG annual meeting but you still miss the atmosphere and camaraderie that is there. Try and attend if possible.

Those meeting minutes will be posted as soon as they are ready.

As new information is developed, it will be posted so keep an eye on the communications area for updates.

And if there is something you would like to see that isn't there, just let us know, we'll post if appropriate.

So if you have any suggestions how we can keep our members informed, please let Sheila know.

Sheila can be reached at: sheila@caster.com

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We welcome your submissions via e-mail. When you submit an article(s), please attach a short (1-3 sentences) author/instructor biographical statement, including your location and Certification level on every article.

Also be aware that the back issues of the Loop are posted on the FFF web site. Any illustrations should be in JPEG format and submitted separately, if possible.

The Loop reserves the right to decline any submission for any reason, and to edit any submission.

Submissions may be sent to the editors or the National Office:

The Loop is a quarterly publication of the Casting Board of Governors for the FFF Casting Instructor Certification Program.

From the Mike Heritage blog.....

Bean Count.....

Just to keep you informed, twenty-five beans have popped their heads up so far.

KISS, stirred up a storm. That and the fact I am having to think more about casting because I am helping a friend prepare for the FFF CCI test has really made me consider how I use the information I have learned over the years.

Anyone I help prepare for the test has stepped outside the usual boundaries of the student/instructor relationship. I no longer have to consider how little I tell them, or ways of getting a concept over simply. I now have to work out how to get the knowledge I have over to a potential CCI, someone who actually wants to know how things work. I find the whole process quite liberating because I can use the whole vocabulary of the fly casting language. I can expand and expound on the minutia I would normally steer well clear of. Questions are raised and my answers have to be considered (and hopefully correct). It even forces me to re-evaluate the way I look at some aspects of flycasting and flycasting instruction. I love it. I often wonder which one of us has learned the most in the previous couple of hours.

Lesson of the week; clean your fly line before going fishing. I didn't and suffered for it. Nothing makes you look a prize idiot more than a line that won't shoot through the rings cleanly.

Second lesson of the week; if you know there is going to be a hatch of Mayflies, take some bloody Mayfly patterns with you!

This is post number ninety-nine on this blog. I don't have a clue what number one hundred will be about but I should make the effort and make it a good one but more than likely I will just sit at the keyboard and tap out the first thing that comes into my head, as usual.

Oh. Good news of the week; Denise Maxwell has accepted an article I wrote for the FFF online ezine, The Loop. I will be a published author! I also gave her permission to raid the blog if she ever needed a filler. Apparently I use some English idioms that might need some interpreting for an American audience. Lets hope nothing gets lost in translation.

(June 10, 2010)

100 Not Out.....

An eventful week. Roger, Alex and I drove up to Wrexham to meet Mike Marshall, John and the rest of the BFCC gang for a meeting at the rugby ground. Before you know it the car park is full and we have thirty people waving fly rods around as if their lives depended on it. Nice people as well, so that's a bonus. How come only nice people take up fly fishing? Anyway, a great day was had by all, I hope. I didn't do very well in the competitions. I'm not sure why, perhaps I was just a bit distracted by all the instructing going on. However, it is nice to see some new faces on the leader board and some younger blood coming through.

My article, Comfort Zone, has been published in the FFF ezine 'The Loop' which is a very nice feeling. I hope it is taken for what it is and people enjoy it.

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Can't say the same about some of my posts on here being used though. That's an entirely different feeling, sort of gut wrenching. I have to admit that what I write here is generally not written for anyone but me. Yes, I hope the posts entertain and are, hopefully, informative, but their main purpose is to clarify some of the rubbish going around in my head. I very rarely sit and construct a piece. I mostly just sit here and type the first thing that comes into my head. It is a very odd feeling to have the posts taken away from the context they were written in and see them displayed where my idle musings are going to be read by the good and the great of the fly casting world. Denise Maxwell, the editor, was very generous (or perhaps foolhardy) in that there was very little, or any, editing done that I could see. Brave woman, I hope she keeps her job.

While on the subject of 'The Loop'; Denise told me she never gets any feedback or comments to any of the articles that are published. I find that a bit strange. On the face of it that means that everything written is taken as gospel and therefore above criticism. I am a child of the Sexyloops school of question everything and find the attitude of not questioning anything a bit odd, not to say disconcerting. I appreciate that a quarterly publication may be a cumbersome way of debating something but surely not everyone agrees with all the stuff that's written there, do they? To be honest, if I didn't get any comments I would worry that I wasn't being read at all. Perhaps Denise could persuade the FFF to link a forum to The Loop so that there is a bit more immediacy about debates to some of the articles. After all, if we didn't debate we would still be accepting that the primary purpose of double hauling was to load the rod and we all know that's rubbish (don't we?).

Here is to the next one hundred posts.

(June 16, 2010)

Why Did I Do It - Part 1

Surprise, surprise, I have just found another stats page and discovered I do have visitors. Welcome, whoever you are. You don't have to be embarrassed, there is a comments section and you are more than welcome to add some if you like. I promise not to wrap a five weight around your head the next time we meet.

So, what shall we discuss this week. As I am a flycasting instructor perhaps I should mention it now and then, not that I am doing much instructing at the moment as it's not really the weather for it, is it?.

Why did I become an instructor?. Good question, and a long story.

I had never considered I was instructor material. Not enough patience, not enough experience and not enough knowledge, not enough of anything really. It started with my first 'proper' lesson with Paul Arden. I was rather shocked when he asked me if I had ever considered instructing. I think I laughed at the absurdity of it while at the same time feeling slightly flattered that he thought I was good enough. I now realise it was a devise to get you to think more about the mechanics of flycasting and in that respect it worked because I guess that was the moment the seed was planted.

Initially I was much more interested in casting a five weight to 100?, when I got to 100? it then became 110?, and so it went on for a few years until I reached a point where, for one reason or another, I realised I had probably reached my peak as far as distance was concerned and I was beginning to get more interested in the 'twiddly stuff' as my wife likes to call it, accuracy, change of direction casts, slack line, curves, mends etc.

After a while I realised I needed some structure to my practice so I downloaded the FFF CCI casting test and worked my way through it. At some point I thought I needed to find out how good I was and the only way to do that was to put myself up for testing and that is the moment I decided to become an instructor.

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I will continue this saga over the weekend because my wife and I are being taken out to lunch by one of our sons, I wonder what he wants!

January 30, 2009

Why Did I Do It - Part 2

OK, so I had made my mind up, I would take the test. The next question was which organisation?, APGIA, AAPGIA, EFFA, STANIC or the FFF. I was only interested in two of them, AAPGIA and the FFF. In the end it came down to what did I want to do. Did I want my casting instruction to include fishing or not. I don't fish an awful lot for one reason or another and I did not feel comfortable with the idea of teaching fishing methods. The reason I ended up choosing the FFF is because they emphasise flycasting and the importance of learning to instruct properly. As a group of people they are very supportive, I knew quite a few of them either personally or via the Sexyloops board so it felt like I was joining a group of friends.

I wasn't too concerned about the casting element, practicing that was the enjoyable bit, getting the explanations right was a different matter altogether. As I read the test the first 17 tasks were demonstration only, ie the examiner would ask me to perform a cast and I would do it, I didn't need explanations until question 18. That misconception was nearly my undoing. I found out less than a week before the test that explanations were needed for every task. Near panic set in. But I am getting well ahead of myself here so lets go back to the beginning.

I wanted to keep my going for the test private, I didn't want the whole world knowing I had failed did I? but I knew I needed help with the technical stuff so a few 'mentors' had to be in the know so that I could get advise. I was a bit hamstrung by not being able to post questions on the Sexyloops board as that would have given the game away but the FFF website <http://www.fedflyfishers.org/> has loads of information on it if you dig around a bit and a lot of it is about the skill of instructing which was the part I was most concerned about.

There is no doubt that teaching is a skill on it's own, you need to say enough to explain but not enough to confuse and I knew I was a confuser. I used to do some informal instructing with friends, I never charged money because they were Guinea pigs and I let them know it. I was learning more from them than they were learning from me, I suspect that initially they went away understanding less than when they started. The feedback was that I talked too much!. I now try and give an instruction or explanation and move away for a while while the student gets their head around it, I will hover and just gently help them if required before we move on to the next phase but back then it was a bit wham bam thank you mam. Do this, do that, lets try this, NO, not like that you f***** idiot. See, I'm not a natural teacher am I?.

I will finish this epic tomorrow, or maybe not, it could go on for weeks.

BTW, my son only wanted to take his Mum and Dad out to lunch, I must stop being so cynical.

Drift....

If creep is a villain then Drift is a super hero, he rights the wrongs that creep does.

Technically Drift is any unpowered movement of the rod, after the stop, either in the direction the line is moving or in the direction of the following stroke.

!!!!, yes I see the blank look on your face.

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Drifting is what you do during the pause, that's why it's 'unpowered', it has no effect on the line, all you are doing is putting the rod in the best position for the following stroke. Mostly this is moving the rod tip up and back a bit to open up the casting angle. This is the creep killer, instead of creeping forwards you have just drifted back and opened up your stroke and killed Insidious Creep and good riddance. I hope (but doubt) we have seen the last of him. Drift is the ability to alter your casting angle to suit the conditions you are casting in, lets have a look at a few examples.

There is a strongish wind coming from behind you so your backcast has to be more powerful than your forward cast will have to be. If you move into your forward stroke from where you finished your back cast your casting angle would be too wide for the amount of power you are going to apply and the tip would travel in a too convex (domed) path and you would throw a very wide loop (not necessarily a bad thing with a following wind, but we are looking for nice loops this time, alright?). All you have to do is drift the rod forward a little bit as the line goes out behind you to reduce the casting angle and there you go. Nice loop by the way.

We have to do just the opposite if the wind is in our face. It's a relatively gentle backcast and where we stop the rod would leave us with too narrow a casting arc for the powerful forward delivery we want to make so we do the classic up and backwards drift that opens up the casting angle so we can power the line out against the wind without a tailing loop.

In general the more line we are casting or power we are going to apply the wider we drift in preparation for the next stroke.

(February 26, 2009)

Insidious Creep....

Insidious Creep. Sounds like a sneaky little character from a Dickens novel doesn't it? He's nasty little thief who steals something precious from you without you even realising it. In fact it often takes someone else to tell you that something has been stolen from you because you haven't noticed anything is missing.

Creep is a fault, I don't care what anyone else says. It is an involuntary movement of the rod in the direction of the cast, ie, you have stopped the rod on the backcast and instead of staying in that position while the line straightens behind you move the rod hand forward and/or rotate the rod forward before the start of the stroke proper. What does that rob you of?, casting angle. You now have less of it than you thought you had and you will now throw a tailing loop (see the Essentials). If you throw tails consistently, check to see if you are creeping.

Creep has to be involuntary, if you do it consciously then it is not creep it's drift and drift is not a fault. We will probably discuss drift in a future post.

Creep in a beginner is a sort of anticipation of the next stroke and is fairly easy to correct because their stroke is not ingrained in their muscle memory yet. Creep in an experienced caster can be more difficult to correct because they have developed a technique to compensate for it that has become ingrained in their muscle memory and once something like that gets ingrained, it can take a lot of effort on the caster's part to work it out of their stroke.

A lot of good casters don't realise they are creeping. When it is pointed out to them they make a conscious effort to stop but as soon as they get back into a casting rhythm it comes back again. This is the time to add drift to the repertoire.

(February 26, 2009)

From The Editor

Where has the time gone? I intended to have this edition of the Loop out before the conclave. Blame it on my lack of technology expertise - I intended to take the Loop on the road together with my laptop but anticipation of the trip didn't work out and the working documents stayed at home.

The Conclave was great. The event in West Yellowstone was a cozy, friendly event and everything went smoothly. Check out the bear situation on page 36.

Other than the tornado whipping through our campsite and the event hotel and exhibit building on the last day - all went well.

With the late date for the Conclave, it was definitely approaching fall weather - cool at night, warmish during the day. I didn't get a chance to fish out of West, but had the opportunity to fish the Yellowstone with Molly Semenik and John van Dalen. A very enjoyable day and a chance to socialize. Now if my trout skills would peak again! The fish definitely win with me unless they are suicidal.

After the conclave I had to rush back to Vancouver, do my laundry and head north for my steelhead guiding season. Thus the Loop languished again.

Now you might ask how I have time now? We have been hit by the 10-15 year flood that has our river up 3 feet and dirty. We have had fantastic, early steelhead fishing with healthy, happy fish and even happier anglers. This was the catch - you pay for heaven!

This issue has a historical bent to it. Please read the lead article about the origins of the Casting Program. Macauley Lord has done a superb job of researching the last twenty years and providing us with a good read. Having been there for a good portion of that time, some of the bumps in the road were smoothed out but please realize that we are almost twenty years old!

Hope you are as proud of that as I am!

Once again I would like to thank those authors who allow me access to their writings. Mike Heritage's blog provides some of the questions and answers that all of us go through at times. His musings are written in a humorous manner that should bring a smile to everyone. How was the bean crop?

The Pearls are mostly vintage pearls this time. Those study groups are a gold mine of information and I try to pick ones that are timely.

There were quite a few certifications at the Conclave. Aside from the successful THCI testing, the CI and MCI results were disappointing.

We were shaking our heads and wondering what had happened to provide such a poor result. Mostly it can be attributed to lack of preparation on the candidate's part and some to a bad day/nerves.

Bill Gammel has provided us with an update on his Five Essentials. I want to thank Bill, Paul Arden and Eric Wonhof for permission to reprint this article from the Sexy Loops web site. This article is a 'keeper' so read and enjoy.

The article on Serbia is a winner. Mostly a photo essay, it shows what our international members are doing. They are so enthusiastic and eager to spread flycasting and fly fishing to others.

Djordje was certified approximately a month before this event and his workshop looks fantastic. Both adults and children included.

You have to understand that fly fishing and flycasting is just starting to grow in this region and to include children speaks to the future. A big thank you to Djordje and others who are doing the same.

And last but not least, a FFF Euro-Conclave is planned for Denmark next spring in conjunction with the Danish Fly Fair. Wow! Stay tuned for details!

***Talk to you soon.
Denise***

CONGRATULATIONS

New Casting Instructors

Gary Woodward - Jonesboro, AR
Dan Brown - Taylors Falls, MN
Ryan Allred - Medford, OR
Michael May - Gardiner, ME
David McCoy - Seattle, WA
Dylan Rose - Seattle, WA
Robin C Brown - Livermore, CO
John Hyde Ordl - Chiloquin, OR
Jay Grant - San Francisco, CA
Matthew (MJ) Jones - San Francisco, CA
Thomas Urbig - Germany
Don Urquhart - Australia
Eddie Schoenbein - Sonoma, CA
Robert Garber - Haltom City, TX
Misty Dhillon - Elliott City, MD/India
Gabriele DiFlorio - Romania
Milan Kupresanin - Croatia
Janko Bartolec - Croatia
Joel Oerter - Seattle, WA
Gabriele Di Florio - Romania
Magnus Toth - Sweden
Akos Szmutni - Hungary
Oliver Kuzmanovic - Serbia
Tamas Bacsai - Hungary
Lucian Vasies - Romania

Larry Levine - Heber Springs, AR
Stephen A Walker - Fairfield, OH
Don Horton - Burlingame, CA
Scott Gerlt - Columbia, MO
Rick Radoff - Rocklin, CA
Egor Babich - Ukraine
Wayne Pattison - Australia
Keith Westra - Fremont, CA
Dean Schubert - Santa Rosa, CA
Christopher Bassano - Australia
Jess Clark - Spokane, WA
Raymond (Lee) Watts - Wales, UK
Shaun Ash - Australia
Ivica Bratic - Croatia
Yevgeniy Fedorenko - Ukraine
Igor Stankovic - Serbia
Mike Kolaski - Pearland, TX
Djordje Andjelkovic - Serbia
Oleg Jeltovski (Ole Nord) - Russia
Yuriy Matukhin - Russia
Esa Raudasvirta - Sweden
Dmitriy Drozdov - Russia
Fredrik Hedman - Sweden
Magnus Hedman - Sweden
Ulrik Roijezon - Sweden
Mark A Hutchinson - Appalachia, VA

New Master Casting Instructors

Zsigmond Kovacs - Hungary
Erno Paskay - Hungary
Jim Solomon - Culver City, CA

Mary Ann Dozer - Corvallis, OR
Fredrik Hedman - Sweden

New Two-Handed Casting Instructors

Gary Bencivenga - Quincy, WA

Upcoming Events for 2010 - 2011

Kissimmee, FL

FFF Florida Council Conclave
Dusty Sprague

October 23 - 24, 2010

Instructor (6)
Master (2)

For more information,
Dusty Sprague or Gordy Hill

Korea 2010

Seoul, Korea

Nov. 4-7, 2010

Instructor
Two-handed

International testing event.
For more info and to register, go
to the web page for Korea 2010

Japan 2010

Nagoya, Japan

Nov. 4-7, 2010

Instructor
Master
Two-handed

International testing event.
For more info and to register, go to the
web page for Japan 2010 or contact Bill
Higashi

Italy 2010

Beregardo, Italy (Milan)
Raf Mascaro

Nov. 5-6, 2010

Instructor
Master
Two-Handed

International testing event.

For more info and to register, go to the
web page for Italy 2010 or contact Raf
Mascaro

Somerset, NJ

Fly Fishing Show
Gary Kell

Jan. 21-22, 2011

Instructor (6)

For more information contact Gary Kell
For more information on the show
[http://www.flyfishingshow.com/
Somerset_NJ.html](http://www.flyfishingshow.com/Somerset_NJ.html)

*Please see the FFF web site for registration deadlines,
testing class limits and contact information.*

Serbia workshop

by Djordje Andjelkovic, FFF CI



Place: Serbia, **Town:** Pirot, **River:** Nisava, **Date:** 03.July 2010

Djordje Andjelkovic is a recently certified CI from Serbia. He attended the Hungary 2010 event in May where he passed his CI. Please note that he is busy hosting a workshop here for both adults and children.

The workshop consisted of:

FFF Federation of Fly Fishers – about organization.

Fly Casting

- Mechanics and Physics of casting
- Casting Stroke
- Casting Arc
- Casting Length
- SLP – Straight Line Path
- Loop
- Acceleration – Power Application
- Pause
- Timing

*M₁Pick Up₂ L₃evels₄ Lay Down

- Wide Loop
- Tailing Loop

WORKSHOP with children

- about rod, reel, line and other
- basic cast



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Photos submitted by Djordje Andjelkovic



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Adaptive Casting Instruction - Techniques for Physical Limitations

*PRACTICAL APPROACH TO COMMON AILMENTS
THAT LIMIT FLYCASTING - SHOULDER PROBLEMS*

BY DR. GARY EATON, MASTER CERTIFIED INSTRUCTOR

Brian and I shared a common culture. We had both played and worked at hi-impact activities. Last year, his accumulated trauma caught-up with him and a talented Orthopedic Surgeon extensively re-built his right shoulder, reconnecting an adductor tendon that finally wore through. It was a complex intervention, but we spent some time before the surgery working on strengthening exercises and adaptive devices to ease his convalescence. We called it *pre-habilitation*.

Several weeks of rehabilitation with some skilled therapists meshed well with his desire to get back to fly fishing. When released by the surgeon, we played with a 3-weight. Nothing came easily and Brian gently worked through every glitch with solemnity and quiet determination. We identified signals he needed to listen to when his body told him to stop. He said I was . . ." as mean as the evil therapist" . . . and we both laughed. I caught him delivering a loop with elbow higher than his hand a few times. He avoided moving the elbow down. I lifted the light rod from his hand and said, "Let your arm go limp and drop your elbow." He did and I asked him, "Did that hurt?"

He said, "No. I am just anxious about moving my shoulder. I feel kind of awkward."

I reassured him that his surgery was a game-changer and that finishing formal therapy did not equal the stopping point of rehabilitation. A few sessions later the elbow and hand were still almost at shoulder level at the end of the cast. I ordered, "Don't move." I let him hold his rod up there until fatigue forced him to let it fall. I started him up again immediately. He did not have the stamina to hold the elbow up and the cast shot out with ease. His elbow rested low in front of him. I asked, "Is that feeling better?"

He laughed at himself and said, "Yeah, thanks."

Six months after surgery Brian still limits use of his 9-weight, but he fishes all day with his 5-weight.

DISCLAIMER – Casting instructors should neither treat any health condition nor give any medical advice. Problems present at rest or worsened by casting that do not respond to adaptations suggested should be referred for medical clearance before continuing any casting program. These articles intend to provide neither medical advice nor treatment.

A FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPT – AS CERTIFIED INSTRUCTORS SERVING OUR STUDENTS, WE MUST CHANGE PAINFUL MOVEMENTS - SUBSTITUTING ALTERNATIVE PAINLESS MOVEMENTS TO DELIVER A FLY. FEWER TWISTS, CAREFUL POSITIONING, ADAPTIVE GEAR, LESS FORCE, SLOWER SPEED; ALL MIGHT REDUCE POTENTIAL FOR IRRITATION. A PRIMARY RULE IS, "*If it hurts, stop doing it that way!*"

Recommendations reflect concepts of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation applied to movements of straight-line fly casting with a single-handed rod. Consider these simple adaptations when shoulder pain recurs despite proper medical care.

SHOULDER PAIN

Fly casting, properly executed, likely *causes* no new injury to shoulders of people well-prepared for the activity. Excellent technique may be defined as minimal work by the caster extracting maximum performance from the gear. Incorrectly performed casts by anglers who are poorly conditioned and improperly trained, more likely will aggravate existing frailties and flare-up previous injuries. Applying excessive force beyond that needed increases risk of ill-effects.

The popular press effectively raised awareness of injury to the “Rotator Cuff” as evidenced by the common self-diagnosis of this malady and frequent referrals from providers concerned about a “possible rotator cuff injury”. The Rotator Cuff is a group of four muscles that hold the head of the humerus (arm bone) into a shallow socket during *rotational* movements of the arm, like throwing. Strains of any of the four muscles, or any of a dozen other muscles in the region, can generate considerable discomfort. Most shoulder pain does not need surgery. Most rotator cuff tears require **no** surgical intervention.

In addition to muscles, inflammation of ligaments holding the vulnerable shoulder joint together may produce pain with movement and risk of instability. Tendons that attach muscles to bone may experience overuse and overload symptoms.

When pain limits casting, general rules of adaptation suggest;

- 1) rest
- 2) seek qualified physician care
- 3) decrease mass, length and line weight of casting apparatus
- 4) alter movement to diminish discomfort.

I learned a lot from Al KYTE in recent years. Being familiar with his article describing arm styles in casting might aid the Certified Instructors communicate with other well-read educators. <http://www.fedflyfishers.org/Portals/0/Casting/Master%20study%20guide%20articles/Al%20Kyte/arm%20styles.pdf> I consider neither casting plane nor elbow position to constitute a complete casting “style”. For almost every fly angler, many casting adaptations must be employed to address the variety of fishing situations encountered in a given outing.

ELBOW FORWARD POSITION

The most shoulder protective *style* is with the elbow forward throughout the cast. The higher the elbow *stays* and the further the elbow moves away from the body above the shoulder, the greater the risk for significant damage. Thus high elbow with elbow to side poses inherent risk of shoulder discomfort.

PRE-HABILITATION AND REHABILITATION

Proper conditioning needs to precede use of increased weight rods and to integrate with rehabilitation of shoulder pain. Resistance exercise builds strength while proper aerobic activity enhances stamina. *Therapeutic exercise prescription falls within the realm of trained sports and rehabilitation physicians and affiliated therapists. Refer to them appropriately.*

LET THE ELBOW DESCEND

Avoiding high elbow, especially to the side, provides less biomechanical potential for shoulder pain from angling. Misguided casters may keep the elbow elevated attempting, incorrectly, to “stabilize” the elbow.

SIDEARM DELIVERY - The sidearm cast carries less potential for injury if the elbow stays at or below shoulder height throughout the stroke. Sidearm casting plane utilizes more motion from the spine, hips and legs to generate the cast. Movement contribution from core body elements reduces the amount of isolated motion demanded solely of the shoulder. Low-elbow, sidearm plane might be inadvisable for those with spinal pain or leg problems.

Sidearm delivery often becomes a default adaptation for persons who suffered severe injury or did not fully rehabilitate after an episode of painful shoulder. Examples include tendon rupture, frozen shoulder, shoulder fracture or fusion, paralysis, polio, brachial plexus nerve damage, and failed rotator cuff surgery.

USE NON-DOMINANT SIDE

Few situations make one appreciate capacity to cast with either arm like a physical limitation. In addition to providing rest to the affected limb, one enhances the versatility for presenting a fly. More detailed recommendations for developing non-dominant casting may be found on page 8 of *The LOOP*, Winter 2010 <http://www.fedflyfishers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=GzuHp0rHwMA%3d&tabid=4469&mid=3361>

ROLE FOR TWO-HANDED ROD

Two-handed rods have enjoyed greater utilization in recent years. They might be seen as a double-edged sword, figuratively and practically.

On the positive, the hands typically operate at different heights relative to the shoulder. The fact that less shoulder range of motion is required seems one inherent benefit to shoulder pain sufferers casting with double-handed rods. The work of casting distributes between both arms as does supporting the mass of the angling tools.

Potential risks include, greater overall weight and longer length combine to magnify swing-weight. See the March, 2008 SL article *Measuring Fly Rod “Swingweight”* by Grunde Løvoll and Magnus Angus, at <http://www.sexyloops.com/articles/swingweight.shtml>. The opportunity to completely rest one side never arises unless the rod is set down. For these reasons, two-handed rod may be best tried after non-dominant side casting fails.

WORK WITH A LONG-STANDING ADAPTATION

If sidearm casting results from a severe structural injury, be cautious about enforcing a change in casting plane during instruction. Work with the style exhibited by the student. Apply your fundamental knowledge of casting mechanics to help them cast more efficiently *in their style*.

Summary of 8 recommendations for SHOULDER PAIN in fly casting students –

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| * ALLOW ELBOW DESCENT | * USE ELBOW FORWARD STYLE |
| * PHYSICAL CONDITIONING | * QUALIFIED FFF CERTIFIED INSTRUCTION |
| * NON-DOMINANT SIDE CASTING | * SIDEARM DELIVERY PLANE |
| * TRY TWO-HANDED ROD | * WORK WITH LONG-ESTABLISHED ADAPTATIONS |

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT SHOULDER RECOVERY

The painful shoulder complex demands careful and astute assessment, including imaging, informed by the thorough exam of a specifically qualified medical practitioner. My experiences cause reluctance to accept work-up by non-physician providers. However, a team approach richly expands resources available to recover. First do no harm; second approach treatment as conservatively as might help. Here we go back to Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation (R.I.C.E.). Not surprisingly, rest often helps, earning the inflated euphemism "*tincture of time*". Coordinated treatment usually benefits patients with less-than-catastrophic shoulder injuries. These patients recover with careful application of non-surgical therapy, injections, and coordinated bracing.

In dozens of fly casting shoulder pain referrals, I have never seen a **new** rotator cuff tendon tear from fly casting alone. Each time, careful patient history reveals previous high-risk activity with tell-tale symptom progression. Likewise, a completely disrupted rotator cuff tendon cannot recover from anything less than expert surgical repair. Partial tears and associated joint changes may worsen by continuing the same activity that caused the initial insult. The weakened and stretched stabilizers may gradually require adaptive maneuvers to accomplish everyday tasks. Sometimes the surgical repair of the tendon is one of the simpler parts of a shoulder fix. Muscle balancing, manipulation, exercise, acupuncture, massage, physiotherapy, injections, pills, and etcetera never re-attached the ends of a retracted tendon. If someone makes a claim for such, it defines improper diagnosis

My general observations about rotator cuff surgery survivors - Younger and stronger surgical patients recover more function than gray-haired, couch potatoes. If surgical intervention is extensive, with bone remodeling and many structural repairs, the end-result more likely includes compromised strength and function. Typically, stability and pain are rapidly improved. Post-surgical rehabilitation and adaptation continues long into the future. Some fine Orthopedic Surgeons have a real "knack" for these repairs and effect masterful reconstructions of complicated injuries. Patient attitude and determination to maximally recover remain intangibles that confound these generalities. Aggressive patients can overdo activity and injure soft tissues that were not part of the surgery. They need rehabilitative and adaptive help with shoulder pain. They also need to fly cast with a newly embraced *minimalist* approach of exquisite loops derived from delayed rotation, fine-tuned gear, and perfect timing. That's where the experience of an FFF Certified Master or Instructor works their magic, applying adaptations that help. GE

My sincere thanks to Gary Eaton for his superb series of articles to help us keep casting and fishing.
He sticks with me even though I manage to 'screw up' his article at least once before I get it right. DM
