



# CHICO AREA FLYFISHERS

## CAF April 2023 NewsLetter

**Next General Meeting, Wed. April 12th 6:30pm Fly Tying The Lakeside Pavilion 7:30 speaker**



### President's Line April, 2023

This rain and snowpack is amazing considering they "were" predicting another drought winter... But...look at the latest tally straight from the latest report, April 4th, 2023: SODA SPRINGS, Calif. – The snow survey in the Sierra places California into potential record-breaking territory.

The April survey historically marks peak snowpack- at Phillips Station in the Central Sierra officials measured over 126" of snow- 54 inches of water content- which translated into 221% of average.

Statewide readings tallied up to 237% of average that puts us in a tie with the winter of 1952 for the highest snowpack ever.

For the moment, it's a tie. But more data is still rolling in.

Officials said there have been two other years where April's snowpack has been greater than 200% of average: 1952, 1969, and 1983. Reported by news.

Those lakes that were dry and rivers that weren't flowing are "soon" going to be planted with fishermen around their shore-lines; casting onto water for their first catch of the year... that exciting fishing trip will be happening soon!! Spring is in the air; it is amazingly beautiful out there in case you haven't gone for a ride and seen and smelled the wildflowers blooming in all their incredibly splendid colors; it sure puts a smile on my face!! We are so blessed to live where we do!!!

Hope you can make our next meeting with Denny Rickards. He's very knowledgeable about still water fishing. You should bring a friend and neighbor to hear about how to flyfish...they would love it as well: Wednesday, April 12th, 2023. Starting at 6:30pm, Denny Rickards will tie some of his legendary flies, followed by his presentation at 7:30pm . Location: Lakeside pavilion at 2565 California Park Drive in Chico.

I'll see you there!!!

Pat Sleeper  
President, CAF

### April Guest Speaker: Denny Rickards By John Cowan

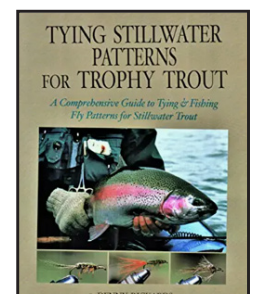
This next meeting, Wednesday, April 12th, 2023, Denny Rickards of Crystal Creek Anglers will be joining us. At 6:30pm, he will demonstrate tying some of his flies, followed by his Stillwater presentation at 7:30pm. He will have flies, books, and other things for sale at the meeting.

For well over thirty years, Denny Rickards has had an opportunity to fish and guide anglers over some of the most challenging trophy trout waters in the Western United States. His simplistic approach and techniques on presentation have accounted for browns over 20 pounds, cutthroats to 15 pounds, and rainbows in excess of 16 pounds.

Over 250 days a year are spent doing what he loves best: guiding, writing, tying flies, conducting fly fishing schools, and field testing developing tackle manufacturer's products.

As a professional fly tier, his suggestive patterns have appeared in various outdoor magazines and are on display at Cushners Fly Fishing Museum in Florence, Oregon. Based on past reviews, his books and companion videos are now considered the "bibles" for fly fishing lakes.

When he isn't fishing or guiding, many hours are spent studying trout behavior, their habitat, and the various insects found within their environment. His knowledge and ability to teach others were a prerequisite to establishing his fly fishing schools/clinics which have become a priority for anglers seeking the ultimate from their angling experiences.



# The Sabertooth Award

## By John Cowan

Each year at the Annual Fundraising Dinner, CAF announces their award winners. The Hall of Fame Award (Stan Thomas, 2023); The Walt Kobler Memorial Award, aka "The Golden Zipper" (Redge Hawley, 2023 and 2001); The Press Powell Lifetime Achievement Award; and The Sabertooth Award (Pat Hallin, 2023).

As a relatively new person active in an officer position of the club, I have become interested in exactly what the history is of some of these awards. Some of them are straight forward, some of them are not. I found that The Sabertooth Award, is one of those whose origins is becoming lost in time.

The criteria for getting this award is simple "Presented to the member who has worked over the years to promote our sport through participation in club activities." The recipient for 2023 is Pat Hallin, a dedicated club member who has served on the board of directors for several years. Each summer, this year on June 24th, Pat and Pam Hallin have a club BBQ at their cabin at Lake Almanor, followed by a fish out at Geritol Cove for the Hex Hatch. Pat is a perfect example of one who deserves this award. However, the name "The Sabertooth Award" caught my attention.

One of the early club members was a retired California Department of Fish and Game Warden, Gene Mercer. Gene started working as a game warden, or an apprentice at least, in the Summer of 1927. His passion for the outdoors, and the love and respect of all things wild made this a perfect job for Gene. Chronicled in the book "Sabertooth" (Terry Hodges, 1988, T&C Books), Gene's commitment to his work fell under "lifestyle". Warden Mercer worked 7 days a week, 24 hours a day for his entire career. He even fought the CDFG (now the Cal Department of Fish and Wildlife) when they began to require that wardens work no more than eight hours a day and only work five days a week. When he refused to comply, the Captain drove up from Sacramento to meet with Gene. Gene didn't attend the meeting citing that "it was his day off."

Gene quickly earned the reputation of one that you do not mess with. He had high standards for himself and for other wardens wearing the same badge. Often, he used a sharp-tongue to hold his colleagues to his high standards. For this, Gill Berg, a fellow warden, gave Gene the nickname "Sabertooth". As Gene aged, without slowing down, that nickname evolved to "Old Sabertooth". Many shortened it to just "Saber".

In Terry Hodges' book, a reader can see that Mercer's love for the environment and all the parts in it drove him to have compassion and protect it wherever and whenever he could. Working during the depression, Gene went out of his way to help those who were less fortunate. He also was ruthless on those who took advantage of the natural resources, particularly those who poached as a living. In Butte County, it was big business for some poachers to "drag" flocks of waterfowl by surprising and blasting into flocks taking to wing. In a few seconds, poachers could kill hundreds of birds, and wound many times more that would not be recovered. The poachers would sell the birds to restaurants in San Francisco. Mercer recounts poachers flying onto the M&T Ranch and dispatching dozens and dozens of pheasants to be loaded back onto the plane and fly out before being caught. Gene had to fight corrupt judges and juries in Butte County who were more sympathetic to the poaching way of life. Mercer learned to file his criminal cases in Sacramento for offenders to experience any repercussions of their actions.

Gene Mercer retired in 1962. His retirement lasted for only a day, for after that, he volunteered, doing what he had been doing all along for another fourteen years. The Chico Fly Fishing Club began in 1972. I'm not sure if Gene was part of the original group of people, along with Tom Peppas, to start our club. In 1988, Ray Narbaitz and Bert Robinson, refiled our club as a non-profit entity and renamed the club "Chico Area Flyfishers". According to Ron Leger, Gene was a very active and vocal member of the club.

I'm still trying to figure out who instituted "The Sabertooth Award" and when it was done. One thing I do know, based on what I have found out about Gene Mercer and his dedication to our natural resources, along with his determined and tireless efforts to protect them, earning "The Sabertooth Award" is no small, insignificant feat. Congratulations to Pat Hallin for earning the award for 2023. Congratulations and thank you to all the past recipients.

1993: Rex Thompson; 1994: Lee Dickey; 1995: Randy McKean and Jan Lang; 1996: Bob Smith; 1997: Bert Robinson; 1998: Ron Leger; 1999: Roger Bevers; 2000 Denny Todhunter; 2001: Marv Turner; 2002 Lionel Valley; 2003: Paul Hendricks; 2004: Mark Adams; 2006: Dana Miller; 2007 Val Bowlby; 2008: Don Sleeper; 2009: Dennis Boyd; 2010: Pat Sleeper; 2011: Terry Mich; 2012: Eric See; 2013: Larry Willis; 2014: Frank Spiteri; 2016: Tom Rosenow; 2017: Elden Hinkle; 2018: Lincoln Gray; 2019: Keith Kelly; 2020: Pete Wiik; 2022: Steve Pereira; 2023: Pat Hallin.

# Update: Salmonids in the Classroom

By John Cowan

One of the great programs that CAF supports is the Classroom Aquarium Education Program (CAEP), however, the old program name "Salmonids in the Classroom" is a better title, in my opinion. This is one of the more rewarding programs that I am personally involved in.

CAF provides funds to help kindergarten through high school teachers purchase aquaria and water chillers to raise fertilized Chinook Salmon and Winter Run Steelhead eggs in their classrooms. Each participating teacher goes through a training through the California Department of Fish and Wildlife in order to be permitted to raise the eggs to the fry stage. Beginning April 6th through April 20, 2023, students will be releasing their Steelhead fry into the Feather River.

When the classrooms receive their eggs, the eyes are visible. Students watch the eggs hatch to alevin, then develop to fry. I can personally attest to the dedication that local teachers are putting into teaching their students about the life cycle of these fish. I'm very impressed with how excited the students are to teach me about the life cycle of the salmon and steelhead when I come to visit their classrooms!

The greatest magic comes when it is time for the students to release their fry into the Feather River at Riverbend Park in Oroville. Dr. Jada Smith, members of the Maidu Tribe, and myself set up var-

ious stations to make the release a very memorable field trip for the kids. There is a Food Chain Game where students play tag involving mosquitoes, salmon, and bears. There is a macro-invertebrate station where students can see organisms collected from the river bed that are food for fish. At this station, there are pictures to help identify the types of macro-invertebrates, and fly fishing flies that students can try to match with the actual organisms. There is a fly casting station where students can learn how to fly cast with practice rods. And, finally, the release station where kids release their fry into the Feather River.

Dr. Jada Smith and Dr. Anne Stephens are working on grants to expand this program. This will create more opportunity for CAF community outreach. CAF would like to be involved with helping teachers in Butte, Yuba, and Sutter Counties, but in order to do this we need more volunteers to help with this program. Specifically, helping students with fly casting, and the macro-invertebrate stations. The volunteer work is usually from 8am to noon, all the materials are provided and ready to go. And it makes a huge difference in the lives of these kids. If you are interested in helping out, please contact me. John Cowan (530) 966-0076 and jcowan58@yahoo.com.



Students looking at macro-invertebrates from the Feather River.



John Cowan assisting students with fly casting.

## Chico Area Flyfishers BOD Meeting Minutes 04/03/2023

Called to Order 6:13 PM by Pat Sleeper, President  
In attendance. Pat Sleeper, Don Sleeper, Larry Willis, David McKinney, Stan Thomas, Tom Rosenow, Dana Miller, Eric See, Elden Hinkle, Dana Miller, Lionel Valley, Mike Pickering  
Secretary Report. Minutes as published. M/S/passed.  
Treasures Report Dinner. John Cowan called in.  
Report submitted. Revised money received from Dinner \$22,243.12  
We pain Sons and Daughters of Italy \$2,500 for the dinner and services, they were quite pleased.  
VP Report  
Abbreviated as John was not in attendance.  
Speakers are all planned and listed on the website.  
Investments: Lionel Gave an excellent overview. Our investments are down, but all investments have beaten the S&P 500. Franklin/Templeton \$42,683 as of Jan 1, 2023. MFS at \$18,245. So we are stable and looking good.  
Fishout Luk Lake at Rolling Hills Casino. Some openings left. Rescheduled for April 8th.  
Project Healing Waters. Stan  
Motion for CAF to sponsor food for all PHWFF. Passed

### Old Business

Discussed Dinner and Bar

1. Credit Card Machine and cost. Discussed the cost of the machine and the charge for using the card, which was passed on to the buyers. We thought that in the future, we thought that

we should absorb the cost in the future. This was moved/seconded and passed.

2. Guide Trips. We should develop a bio for the guided trips so that people know who they are and allow them to also advertise on our slide carousel. A project we will work on.
3. Need to keep track of the number of drinks by registering the first ticket number as a basis for the count.
4. Next year all the members of the board will help out in sending out thank-you notes to the people and organizations that donated.
5. Look into KHSL advertising. Larry Willis volunteered to take this on.
6. Next year we will be asking Sons and Daughters of Italy for some dinner suggestions. Also thinking about asking them if some of the younger members would like to be runners for us.

### New Business

1. Display our yearly Award Plaque at Sportsmen's Warehouse. More to come on this.
2. Sponsor School field trips to the Feather River Fish Hatchery. Part of our Salmon in the Classroom project under Eric See. The schools do not have the funds to pay for a bus to provide a field trip to the Oroville Hatchery. For about \$250/per bus we can make this happen. General acceptance of the idea was voiced by all members. More on the in the near future.
3. Caltrout is in the middle of a project to help Big Chico Creek. We will contact them as we would like to participate. Pat volunteered.

Adjourned 8:10 PM

David McKinney Sec. CAF

The guest speaker for the Club's meeting in April will be Denny Rickards. Without a doubt, he is one of the most knowledgeable still water fishermen you will ever get the chance to spend some time with. It will be worth your while to attend the meeting on April 12th. This month's fly from the archives was featured way back in 2009. I always have some in my fly box to this day.

## Fly of the Month, April 2023

By: Ray Narbaitz

### Denny's Callibaetis Nymph

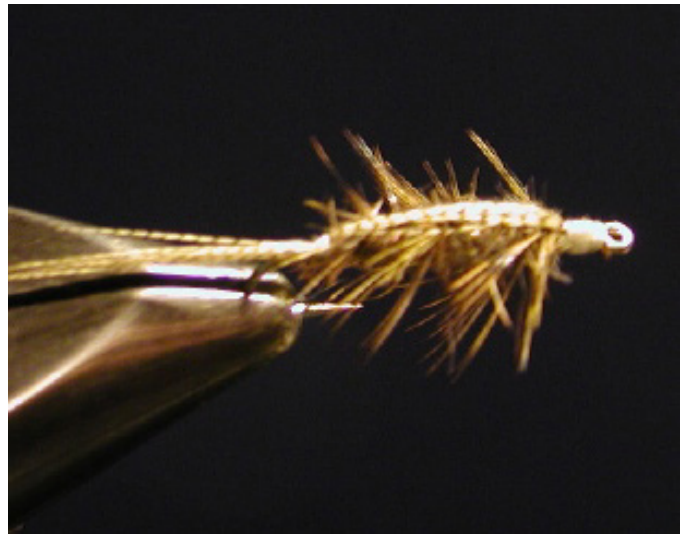
Ralph Cutter says that, taken as a whole, the Callibaetis is the most prolific, and therefore, most important Mayfly in still waters. On most of our still and slow water fishing, Midges will dominate in the winter. However, Callibaetis Mayflies, and, more importantly their Nymphs are available from early spring all the way through October. The Nymphs like weedy or grassy bottoms. Weedy lakes like McCumber are ideal. They will also be in slow moving waters like spring creeks, but they don't like fast moving water.

The Nymphs spend a lot of their time right along the bottom, just above the weeds and grass. When they are down there, the best fly to use to imitate them is the always reliable P.T. They spend a lot of time slowly floating up towards the surface, and then swimming back down. As they do this, they start to form a gas bubble on their backs, until they float to the top to emerge. Sometimes, using a Flashback P.T. helps imitate the bubble.

When the Callibaetis first start coming off in the spring, they will be at their largest. As the year goes on, they will get progressively smaller. You might start with a 12 in the spring and be down to 18's in the late fall. That being said, I usually fish a 14 or 16. This fly is meant to be fished at or just below the surface. Denny says he never fishes it more than 6-inches deep.

Today's F.O.T.M. was developed by Denny Rickards, thus the name Denny's Callibaetis. The fly can be tied with bodies ranging from light to dark, although I haven't found the fish to care that much. For that reason, I tie it with a natural Hare's Ear body. Still, having said that, they usually are sort of grayish in the spring, get lighter during the middle of the year, and then get darker again later in the season.

Hook...TMC2302 or 5262, or Daiichi 1260 or 1710  
Thread...Olive or Tan 6/0 or 8/0  
Tail...Wood Duck Flank  
Body...Dubbed Hair's Ear  
Rib...Fine Copper Wire  
Hackle...Small Grizzly, tied in tip first and Palmered 3-wraps  
Wing Case and Back...Same as Tail  
Head...Thread



1. Debarb the hook and place it in the vise.
2. Tie in the tail, but do not trim the excess. You will bring it over the back as the wing case as one of the last steps.
3. Tie in a Grizzly Hackle, tip first.
4. Tie in a piece of Copper Wire for the ribbing
5. Dub in the body the full length of the hook.
6. Wrap the ribbing forward.
7. Palmer the hackle forward, using three wraps only.
8. Take the excess Mallard Breast and pull it straight over the back like a long wing case and tie it off at the head.
9. Make a neat head, whip finish, and apply head cement.

Notes: If I do want the fly to appear a little darker, I'll just use regular Mallard Flank instead of the Wood Duck. It gives the fly a little grayer tint. I fish the fly on a floating line with a hand twist retrieve. I'll often fish it right in the middle of a hatch, as the fish seem to like it fine even though the adults are dancing around. The nymphs will sit still for them. The takes are seldom subtle. Sometimes on a lake like Manzanita, the fish will use soft takes. In that case, I'll put the fly behind a small dry like a Parachute Adams and use it as an indicator.

# Luk Lake Fish out

## Tom Rosenow

The CAF fish out for Luk Lake is now scheduled for April 8th morning half of the day. We have 3 openings available. The cost to attend is \$50. Lunch will be hosted as well. It may be rescheduled again if Luk Lake is not clear enough due to the rains or if the winds in Corning are above 12 mph. If it rains...well, were are in waders floating around in the water anyways :). Luk lake is a private lake at Rolling Hills Casino in Corning, CA. The lake is stocked with fish by the Redding Fly Shop. If interested, please email Tom Rosenow at [trosenow.chico@gmail.com](mailto:trosenow.chico@gmail.com) or text/call 530-520-3053.

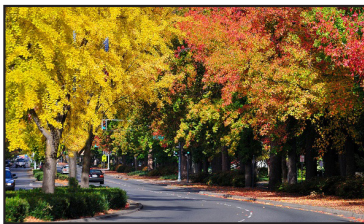
Also, Baum Lake and Hat Creek have been fishable during recent storm events. Baum Lake was relatively clear, and the snow was gone on March 18th when Redge Hawkley, Kyle Rosenow, and I traveled up because Luk Lake was canceled due to muddy water. We hooked up a few strong fighting rainbow trout, one at 21". We used both intermediate lines and floating lines with indicators. Successful flies used were dark green wiggle tails and black balanced leeches under an indicator 3 feet down. The midge hatch was very light. Fishing report that the dam was good for other lake visitors, but we stayed near the spring (boat ramp area) and floated down to the Tule Weed island, finding fish on both sides.

## CAF General Meeting "Speakers" 2022/2023

We truly look forward to seeing you at our next meeting; and, hearing "your" fly fishing stories! **Your excitement is ours!** CAF meets 8 months out of the year; and, presents a variety of exciting fly fishing-related programs throughout each year. Each meeting includes: monthly fly-tying demonstrations; variety of raffle prizes; refreshments; and, the very best stories about Northern California Fly fishing from our members. Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month; location: "The Lakeside Pavilion" on California Park Dr, Chico, CA. Live Fly-tying presentations: 6:30 p.m. @ General Meeting 7:30 p.m.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Speaker</u>	<u>Program</u>
April 12, 2023	Denny Rickards:	Casting and Line Selection for Stillwater Fishing
May 10, 2023	Gayland Taylor and Holly Swan,	Cal Trout Mgr. on Iron Gate

### Fall Came



### Fall Left



### Fall Stayed



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## Chico Area Flyfisher's Fish-out Schedule 2022-23

Future outings that Chico Area Flyfisher's provide to its Membership: These Club Fish-outs are designed to give fly fishers the best opportunity to catch fish and enjoy the outdoors. Our Club has many accomplished anglers who are willing to share their skills with others and you are only limited by willingness to become involved. From selecting promising locations and times, to helping those members new to the sport, we try to make these trips fun, exciting and successful. But...It's up to "you" to ask for help, if you desired to learn.

If you have one of those favorite spots that you don't mind sharing with others and would like to lead our fellow CAF members for a day of fishing, and fellowship contact Elden Hinkle ehinkle@aaproduct.com, Don Sleeper dnsleeper@gmail.com, Pat Sleeper psleeper@sbcglobal.net, Eric See eric.see@water.ca.gov and Tom Rosenow trosehow.chico@gmail.com who are our fish-out leaders.

This schedule may change depending on the fish bite or weather conditions and COVID 19 VIRUS status!!!

Date	Location	Fishout Leader
March 18, 2023	Luk Lake, Tom Rosenow	trosehow.chico@gmail.com (fee: \$50.) # limited
April 29th,	Opener	
June 24, 2023	CAF Hex Hatch BBQ 4: @ 307 Maidu, Almanor, no fee @	Please RSVP Pat & Pam Hallin: phallin@jbcusick.com or psleeper@sbcglobal.net RSVP: Pat Sleeper 530-228-9197 or Pat Hallin 530-518-5031
July 16th, 2023	Sunday, Pingatore's - Bass/BBQ, no fee: Please RSVP:	psleeper@sbcglobal.net
Sep 2 - 9, 2023	Dorado fishing, Mexico - Pat Sleeper	345-1197 - FULL
Sep 9 - 16, 2023	Dorado fishing, Mexico - Pat Sleeper	345-1197 FULL
Sep 16 - 23, 2023	Dorado fishing, Mexico - Pat Sleeper	345-1197 - 1 new opening
Sep 23 - 30, 2023	Dorado fishing, Mexico - www.patsflyfishing.com;	- FULL
Jan 12 - 17, 2024	Trophy bass fishing Lake Picachos, Mexico - Pat Sleeper	530-345-1197

### LOCAL GUIDES

Mark Antaramian	Mark Antaramian Guide Services	916.705.1207
PJ Bock	<a href="#">Bock Fly Fishing</a>	530.598.4087
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Joe Garza	<a href="#">J.A.G. Flyfishing</a>	530.570.0978
Bryan Rocucci	<a href="#">Big Daddy's Guide Service</a>	530.370.1001
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### LOCAL FLY FISHING SHOPS

Fish First!  
 766 Mangrove Ave  
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