THE LOOP

The Federation of Fly Fishers Journal for Certified Casting Instructors
Summer 2009

Five Essentials

by Bill & Jay Gammel

This article is reprinted from the FFF Booklet called 'The Essentials of Fly Casting'

Editor's note: Many copies of this article exist both in print and on the web, but this is the original complete with pictures scanned from the booklet. It will be posted on the FFF web site for download.

Through many years of studying modern fly casting instruction, we have identified what we believe to be the five essential elements of fly casting. Each essential element will be explained and the visual recognition of both a good and a bad cast will be discussed. Comparisons of the best fly casters in the country have shown that styles of casting are unique to each caster. However, the five essentials discussed in this booklet represent the common thread that ties all good casters together. If all of the following essentials are properly executed, good casting will be the result; if all the essentials are not correctly performed, you cannot be a complete caster.

The five essentials are as follows:

1. There must be a pause at the end of each stroke which varies in duration with the amount of line beyond the rod tip.

In all types of casting, a weight is used to provide resistance against which the rod is bent to store energy for the cast. In plug or spin casting, it is the weight of the lure which bends the rod. This weight is concentrated in a relatively small lure which hangs a short distance below the rod tip. After making a back cast with such a lure, no pause is necessary before starting forward with the rod. Conversely, in fly casting it is the weight of the fly line which bends or loads the rod, and this weight may be distributed over ten, thirty, or even fifty feet of line. Because this line must be straight in order to properly load the fly rod a pause, which varies in duration with the amount of line beyond the rod tip, is essential to allow the line to straighten. (See Figures 1a and 1b). If the line line does not straighten between the back and the forward cast, the potential casting weight of the line is reduced and the rod will not load properly. This will cause a weak, sloppy cast, or in extreme cases the loop will collapse.

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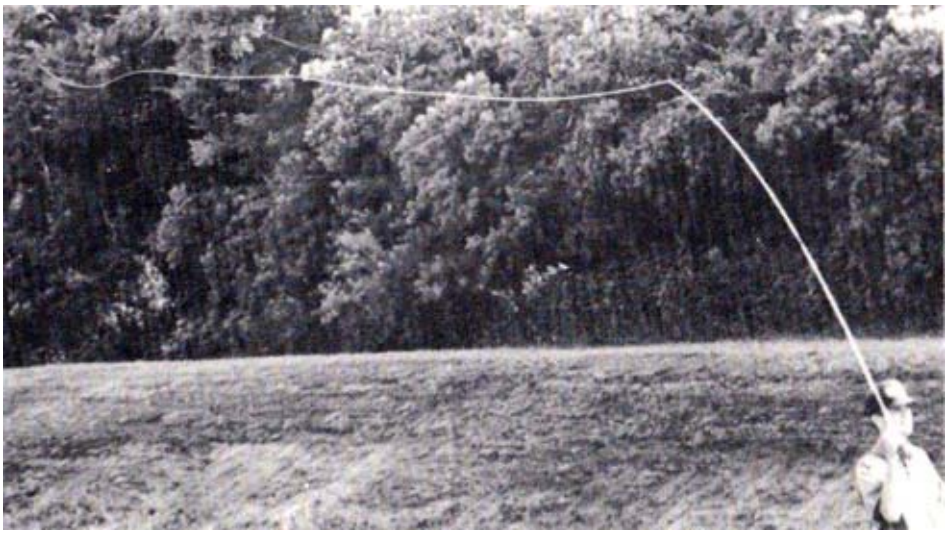

Figure 1a. This short line is completely straight and is ready to be cast forward.

In order to achieve the correct amount of pause on the back cast, some instructors advocate watching every back cast. Certainly, it is appropriate to watch the back cast occasionally. However, we strongly recommend that the caster not watch every back cast. We have found there are problems associated with watching all of the back casts that are more difficult to correct than any slight problem with timing. As long as the line length is constant, the pause on the back cast is the same as the pause on the forward cast. If the caster keeps this in mind, he will learn to time the back cast pause simply by keeping it the same as the forward cast pause. The correct pause is essential for successful casting and therefore should be practiced from the beginning. You must also remember that the rod does not have to be motionless at the end of the back cast. Some casters advocate using a backward drift while others leave the rod stationary. Either style is fine as long as the rod does not drift forward before the line is straight. This is called creep, and is a common mistake which wastes valuable stroke length that cannot be regained without causing the rod to unload prematurely.

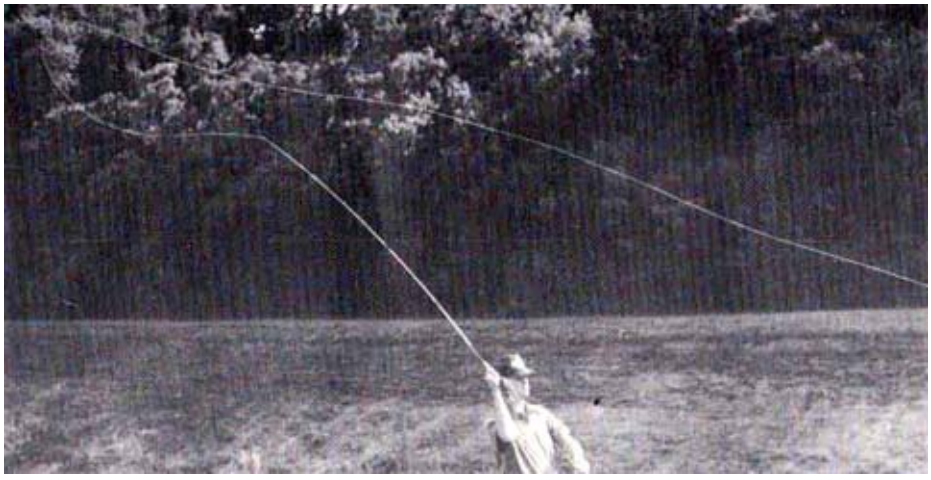

Figure 1b. With a longer line, the pause must be longer.

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2. Slack line should be kept to an absolute minimum

To apply power to the cast, the line must be anchored either with the rod hand against the handle or more commonly in the line hand (the hand not holding the rod). If the line is not anchored, the line and rod will slide relative to one another and will keep the rod from bending or loading. Even though the line is anchored, slack may still be present and needs to be removed before the next cast is made. Slack in the casting system causes the caster to waste some of the casting stroke removing slack, without properly loading the rod or moving the fly. If there is no slack in the casting system the fly will move as soon as the rod tip moves. There are many causes of slack. A few of the more common ones are: movement of the fly line by outside forces such as water or wind, starting the cast with the rod tip too high, rough, jerky application of power, and poor timing between the back and forward cast. The most common cause of slack which many casters overlook, is the belly of slack that forms between the rod tip and the water when starting the cast from a position with the rod tip high in the air. This is illustrated in Figure 2. To prevent this from happening, start a cast with the rod tip pointing at the water. This allows you to start with the most efficient back cast.

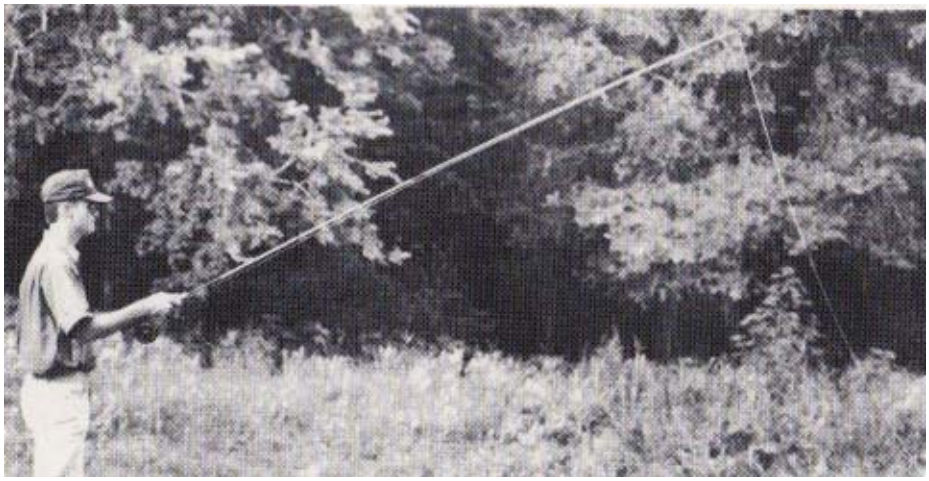

Figure 2. Incorrect rod position, a common cause of slack line overlooked by most casters.

3. In order to form the most efficient, least air resistant loops, and to direct the energy of a fly cast toward a specific target, the caster must move the rod tip in a straight line.

Because the fly line must follow the rod tip, the straight line movement of the rod tip is the only way a fly caster can form a straight line cast. This is true for both the vertical and horizontal planes. In the vertical plane there are three common paths that the rod tip can follow. It can travel a straight line from one end of the casting stroke to the other, which is how a properly shaped loop is formed. It can travel through a convex path (one that is higher in the middle of the path than on either end) and the loop will be wide or fat. If the rod tip travels in a concave path (the tip is lower in the middle of the path than on either end), the loop will tail or cross. These loops, and the rod tip paths which produce them, are displayed in Fugures 3a, 3b and 3c. the rod must also move in a straight line horizontally, without right or left deviations. A rod tip path that slices to the right will cause the line to curve to the right, while a rod tip path that hooks to the left causes the line to curve to the left.

The most efficient way to make sure the rod tip moves in a straight line in the horizontal plane is to pick a taget and make sure the line always moves straight away from the target on the back cast and directly at the target on the forward cast. To ensure the rod tip moves in a straight line in the vertical plane, you must combine the correct stroke length with the correct application of power. For instance, if you are trouble with wide loops, either the stroke is too long or not enough power is being applied. Sometimes both errors are made. To correct this problem either the stroke must be shortened or more power must be applied. Sometimes both

(Continued on page4)

corrections are necessary. Stroke length is the first possibility to consider. If you are getting crossed or tailing loops, the stroke length is probably too short or the power is applied in a jerky, uneven manner, or possibly both faults exist. In this instance, the fault is probably with the application of power. Make every effort to apply power as described in essential five. The stroke may need to be lengthened if applying power correctly does not solve the problem.

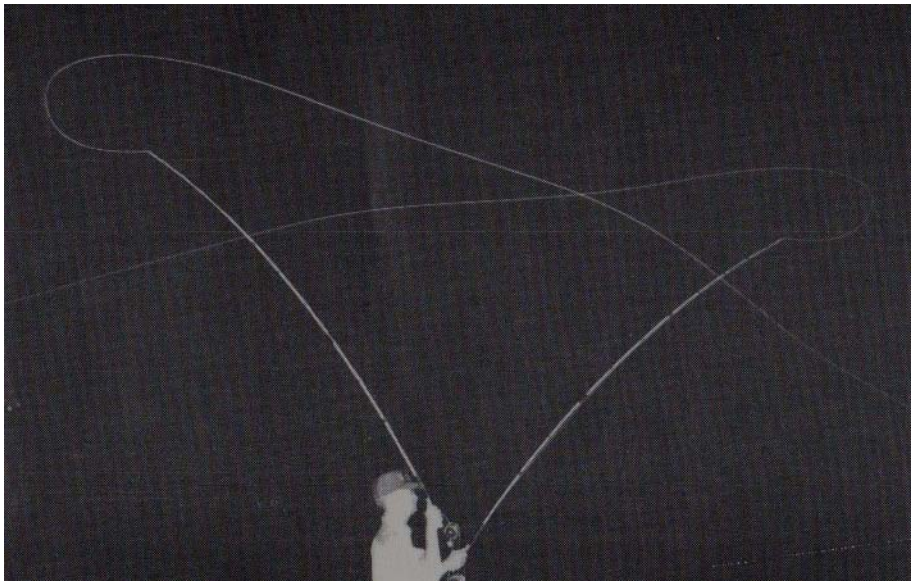

Figure 3a. A good loop and the staight line rod tip path which produces it.

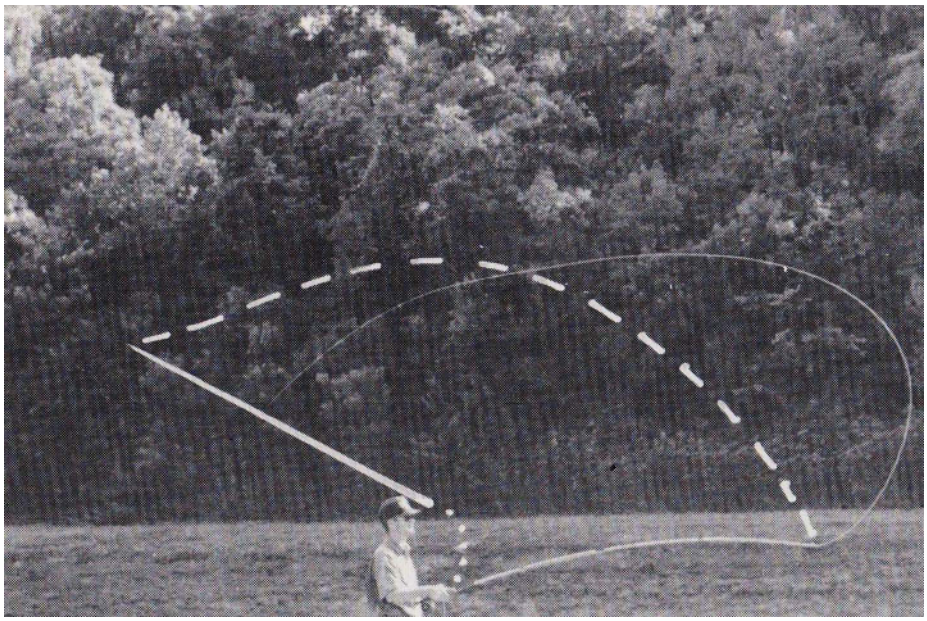

Figure 3b. A wide loop and the convex rod tip path which produces it.

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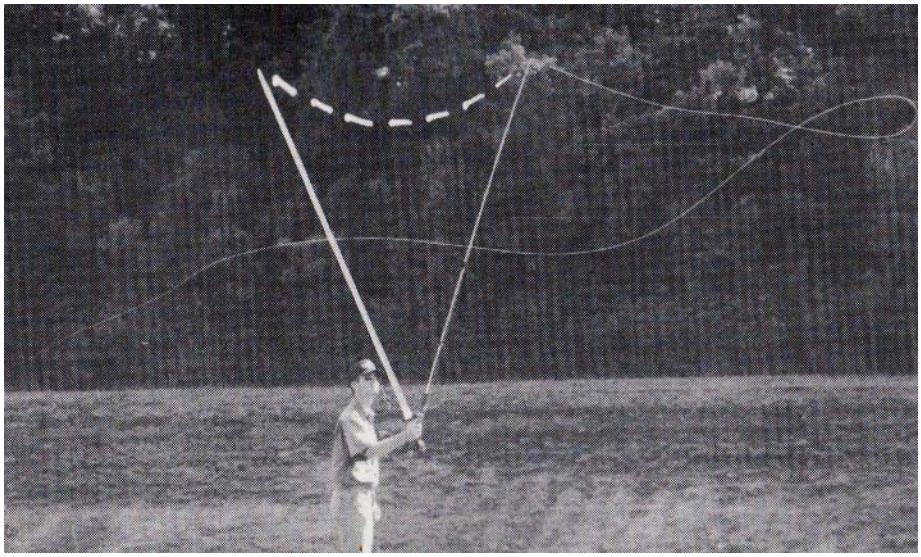

Figure 3c. A tailing loop and the concave rod tip path which produces it.

4. The length of the stroke must vary with th amount of line past the rod tip.

If you are casting a short line you will need a short stroke to move the rod tip along a straight line. If you are casting a longer line the extra weight causes the rod to bend much deeper, and a longer stroke is necessary to keep the rod tip moving in a straight line. This is where the problem of creep arises. If the rod is allowed to creep forward there will not be enough stroke length to properly load the rod for a long cast. This ia a common problem when lengthening the stroke for a long distance cast.

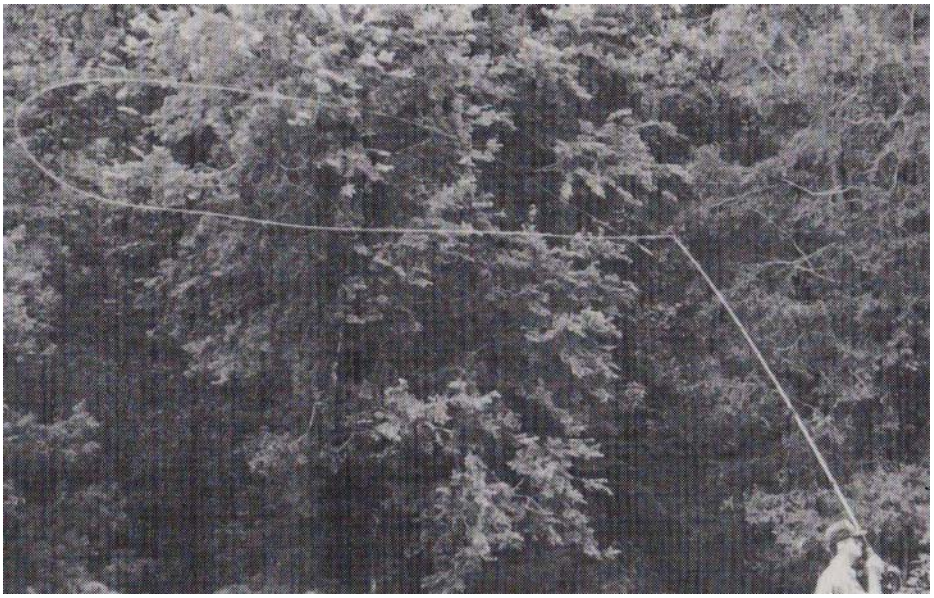

Figure 4a. Short line, short stroke.

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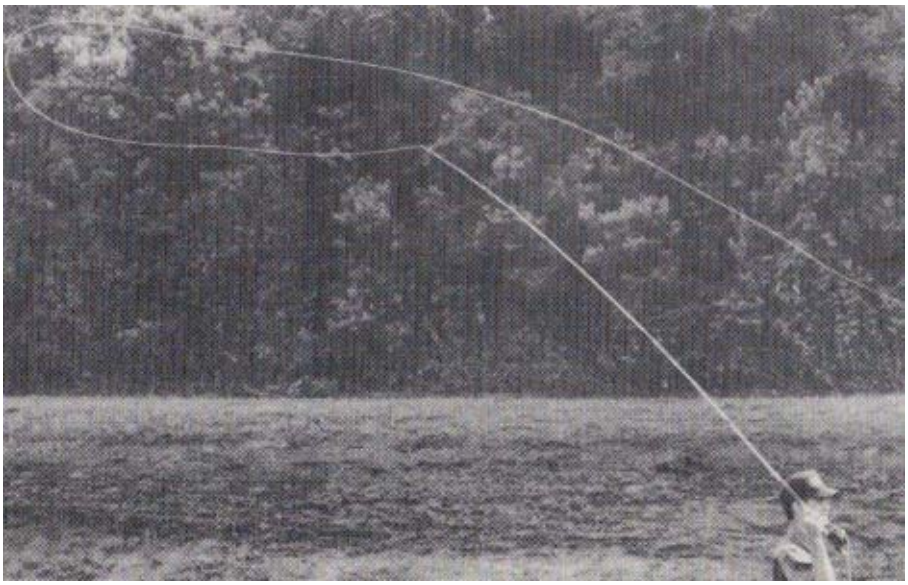

Figure 4b. Longer line, longer stroke.

5. Power must be applied in the proper amount at the proper place in the stroke.

The amount of power needed for each cast is influenced by a number of factors including the amount of line to be false cast, the total length of the cast, wind direction, the weight of the line and rod and the type of cast to be made. As shown in fugure 5, the majority of this power should be applied after the rod has reached a position perpendicular to the plane of the cast. In other words, the power should be applied slowly at first, gradually increasing to a peak at the end of the stroke. There should be a crisp stop at the end of the casting stroke forcing the fly rod to come out of its bend. As the rod straightens or unloads a loop is formed.

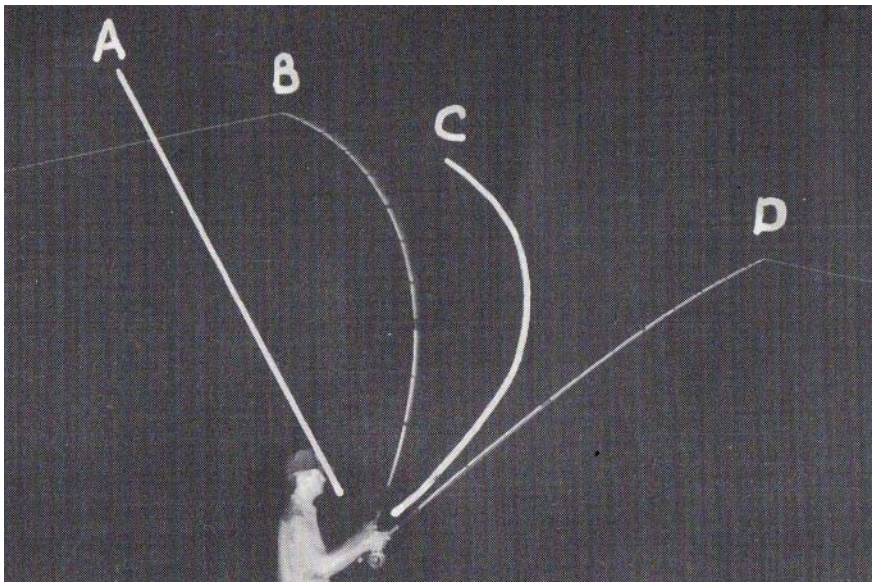

Figure 5. A to B, power is increasing; B to C, power is greatest; D is the end of the stroke.

These are the five essentials of good fly casting. these essentials will enable you to achieve the proper loading and unloading of the rod, which should be the goal of all good fly casting. The correct loading and unloading of the rod allows you to first store energy in the rod and then transmit it to the fly line. Letting the rod work for you in this manner is the most efficient way to cast a fly.

Avoiding Casting Injuries - Conditioning vs. Training

by Dr. Gary Eaton, MCI

Many use these TWO terms interchangeably. In an effort to promote professional standards, we want to refine our thinking. Both ***training & conditioning*** represent primarily physical activities. Non-physical readying pursuits fall under the category of ***'preparation'***. The end application for these preparations involves casting a fly to a target including targeting fish.

Conditioning - the strength and coordination activities performed while not using the devide (fly rod) that eventually will be required to pursue the intended task (flycasting or fly fishing).
SO, a practice device built upon a fly rod handle but not primarily designed for casting to a fishing target becomes a ***conditioning*** device. Examples include FLY-O, Micro Practice Rod, Mel-O, etc.

Stretching, weight-lifting, hand-casting, spin-fishing, aerobics, martial-arts, dancing, push-ups, and calisthenics may all serve as ***conditioning*** activities. They remain ***conditioning*** activities even if performed while holding a fly rod. Therapeutic exercises done in a rehabilitation program define conditioning below the threshold expected for a specific end application.

Training - Activities performed to enhance performance with a specific device (fly rod) while using the device in its intended form.

Casting to targets in the yard and seeing how far you can cast against a tape measure exemplify ***training***. Practicing your double-haul, throwing curves around the shrubs, or preparing for your FFF certification test during a lesson fall under ***training***, also. Tutoring from a Master or CI usually enters the category of ***training*** even at times you are not holding a fly rod.

Reading The LOOP is ***preparation*** because it does not involve a primarily physical action. Studying DVD's, books, articles, web sites and responding in an on-line study group reside in the same category. They are ***neither conditioning*** nor ***training.***

Taking a FFF certification test, fly fishing, instructing flycasting and competing are considered ***end-applications***. Usually, they constitute one's intended purpose for doing all of the other stuff.

Participating in various casting games or informal 'casting competitions' are ***training*** because your are using a fly rod and line. ISE and ACA Casting tournaments could be considered as ***training*** for fishing AND are ***end-applications***, too.

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Over-training and Injury
When one practices a few casts with a heavier line weight outfit (9 instead of 5), they are intentionally over-training.

When one goes from seven-foot to a twelve-foot leader for accuracy, they are intentionally over-training.

When one casts maximum distance beyond what will be expected on their exam, they are intentionally over-training.

When casting to six inch targets when the exam requires twenty-four inch accuracy, they are over-training.

When one casts with a very small diameter, low mass leader that represents a much lighter leader than they will use, they are intentionally over-training.

Casting large profile or weighted flies that are bigger or more massive than one will use constitutes over-training.

Making the task more difficult than one will be required to perform is a shrewd way to train through those performance slumps and progress plateaus. This technique is best applied in limited amounts so injury and fatigue do not interrupt practice regimens.

Casters should exercise caution in these pursuits lest injury befall them Experiencing pain, muscle burning, reduced capacity or other warning signs of oner-use injury provides opportunities to act wisely.

STOP!

ICE the area of focal symptoms (remember not to apply cold directly to skin).

REST the area completely until no symptoms persist.

Re-start at a lower level of intensity and duration.

If pain arises in multiple areas, new joint noises appear, motion becomes newly limited, numbness or tingling present in any area, or swelling stays beyond 48 hours, get thee to a physician for proper treatment.

Dr. Gary Eaton will be writing a series of articles for the Loop dealing with avoiding casting injuries.
Part Two is called 'Conditioning versus Training'.
Gary is a MCI from Missouri.

THE QUEST FOR PERFECT LOOPS THROUGH SHOOTING AND DRIVING

Floyd Dean, MCI

ACCELERATION

If fly line were shaped like a wing, it would have lift. The push pull, non-stop and maintaining of rod speed methods would work. But our fly line is more like a bullet, round and long, the forces of gravity are great on the long line. As the bullet leaves the barrel it will reach its greatest speed, (muzzle velocity), one foot out. With no more outside forces to move it faster, (acceleration) it will start to lose speed and fall.

A150 grain 300 Weatherby Magnum rifle bullet has a muzzle velocity of 3540 feet per second and a drop at 500 yards of 22.6 inches and a velocity at 500 yards of 2155 feet per second. It has a net loss of 1385 f/s. This 22.6- inch drop is trajectory; this 1385 f/s loss is deceleration, not acceleration. If you videotaped this 300 Mag 150 grain bullet shot from a rifle and hitting a paper target at 500 yards, would this be acceleration? No, it would be deceleration. Your bullet lost 1385 f/s of velocity over the 500-yard flight. If you ran the tape backwards, you would see the bullet gains 1385 f/s, leaving the target at 2155 f/s and entering the barrel at 3540 f/s. Now, that's acceleration, smooth, powerful, controlled acceleration. Just what you want in a good fly-cast.

PUTTING ACCELERATION AND CONTROLLED STOP TO-GETHER

A chauffeur must drive carefully. He must accelerate and stop with control and push all of the traffic laws to the limit without getting a ticket. Any inefficient driving will end in a missed flight or meeting. It's not the chauffeur's fault that he has to push the envelope. The big suit and cigar in the back seat that signs his paycheck is always in a hurry. If the boss would announce, "James bring the car around I have a flight to LAX in two hours". James might say, "Very good sir". But no, the call sounds like this, "James my flight leaves in 30 minutes, and don't get a ticket".

If the boss's head bounces back and forth at each stop sign and the martini spills on his Italian double breasted suit, our chauffeur, come Monday morning will find himself in line at the unemployment office. What will he do to keep his job and get to the airport on time? Our chauffeur went to the Better School of Driving and Fly Casting. He learned to drive fast and stop fast with smooth control. No bouncing of heads in the back seat means our chauffeur's head will not roll.

Here is how to stop a car with no front-end dip or bounce. Accelerate to 37 Mph, speed limit 35 Mph, maintain 37 Mph as long as you can through that city block to the next stop sign. Our driver needs to know exactly how much road, at a given speed he will need to stop that car safely, smoothly and under control. In each block the speed is kept as high as possible for as long as possible to gain valuable seconds to make the flight. He needs to feel the car, as the fly-caster needs to feel the cast. Now apply the brakes hard and fast with control. Just before the car comes to a halt, ease off of the brake pedal a little as you stop

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Relaxing your foot off the brake pedal in the car is like relaxing your hand after the positive controlled stop in fly-casting. The car's suspension will not over compress and then re-bound upon stopping, causing the bouncing of heads. This uncontrolled heavy foot stopping in our car and the death grip on the fly rod is what causes bounce, sine waves, creep and the keeling loop. The rod tip and car hood must not ever dip down and bounce out of control. To control your stops in the car and fly rod you need to back off on the brake pedal just as the car stops and back off on the grip as you stop the fly rod. This will reduce dip in your hood, bounce in your rod tip and slack in your line and neck. No whiplash.

Try this the next time you and your buddy are on that long boring drive to Montana. Somewhere between Reno and Wells, Nevada you will find many sections in the road that are wide, long, and straight. These sections of highway are well divided with two lanes going east to west. The shoulders are wide, well marked and paved. Find a spot where you can see at least a mile in ether direction. You must have good brakes and tires on the car and the road must be dry. There should be no other cars in sight. Pull over and use the wide shoulder only. Safety first. Let's tackle acceleration and stop and put them to the test.

Put your fly fishing buddy in the back seat so you can see his head in the rear view mirror, a seat belt is a must. If you have a crash helmet, by all means use it. You might even want to put a neck brace on him. You need to put acceleration and stop together with control. Accelerate to 55 Mph as fast as you can smoothly and safely; try not to slam his head into the rear seat. No burning rubber, as you reach 55 Mph apply the breaks hard and fast with control. Watch your buddy's head with one eye and the road with the other. You don't want his head to bounce at all. Try this exercise every 10 miles or so. Remember to control the gas pedal and break pedal. Eventually, you'll get the feel of acceleration to a controlled stop. Put a bottle of water on the hood. Accelerate to 55 mph; if the bottle rolls up over the windshield, your acceleration was out of control. At 55 mph slam on the brakes with control, the bottle should fly off the hood and shoot down the road like the loop from the rod tip. Then you will have made the equivalent of a good fly cast. Good controlled acceleration to a positive controlled stop. If you get busted by the Nevada State Troopers be sure to tell them that you are just practicing your fly casting, but don't mention my name.

Your exhausted, whip lashed buddy proclaims, "Winnemucca to Wells is all mine." You reluctantly climb into the back seat, buckle up and don the neck brace. When you and your buddy reach Montana you'll be masters of your rods. You will accelerate and stop with control, no sine waves, no creep, no bounce, no keeling loops and no tailing loops. Sorry about the ticket.

Tight Loops! floyddeanflycasting.com

Preparing for FFF Casting Instructor Certifications:

by Rick Williams, CBOG [MCI, THCI]

Part 1: THCI Cast Descriptions and THCI tasks
Part 2: THCI Lesson Plans, Cast Descriptions, Fault and Corrections

How should you prepare for a FFF CICP (Casting Instructor Certification Program) instructor exam? This is probably the most critical question one can ask when embarking on the journey to CI, MCI, or THCI certification, because good and thoughtful preparation is the key element to having a successful certification experience.

I define a successful certification experience as one where your performance and discussion with the examiners during the test is representative of your current knowledge and casting skills. Hopefully that results in certification as an instructor, but where it doesn't, a good examination leaves you with a clear understanding of how close you are to the mark and identifies what tasks or concepts need additional attention or correction prior to testing again.

There is no single recipe for how to prepare for a FFF CICP instructor exam; however the FFF website has good study guide suggestions for the THCI, extensive suggestions for MCI preparation, but surprisingly little on preparation for the CI certification. Fortunately, many FFF instructors have shared their journeys and preparations over the last few years in The Loop. These articles provide invaluable examples of how various people have translated the general information on the FFF website into specific preparation activities for the various exams.

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For the Casting Instructor (CI) exam, look to Pat Damico's "Test Preparation" (Loop Spring 2005), David Diaz's "Roadmap for Certain Success: Preparing for the FFF Casting Instructor Certification Test" (Loop Fall 2006). Also look to the Virtual Fly-Casting website (www.virtuaflycasting.com), which was put together by instructors Frank LoPresti, Matthew Handy, and Matt Evans.

For the Master Instructor (MCI) candidate, Jim Valle's "The Master's Odyssey" (Loop Fall 2006) is insightful. Two-Hand (THCI) preparation has been addressed by Larry Aiuppy's "Cast Scripting for the THCI exam" (Loop Winter 2008) and most recently by Soon Lee's "My THCI Journey" (Loop Winter 2009).

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In this article, I present the method I used to prepare for the THCI exam – a 3-4 year journey that culminated in 2.5 months of intensive study and practice before the exam (and a long list of deferred home projects). I offer this not as a 'recipe' for THCI prep, but as an approach or a model that can be adapted and personalized by each candidate for their own study and preparation. The information is presented in two accompanying Power Point files, though representative pages are shown in this article to illustrate the two files.

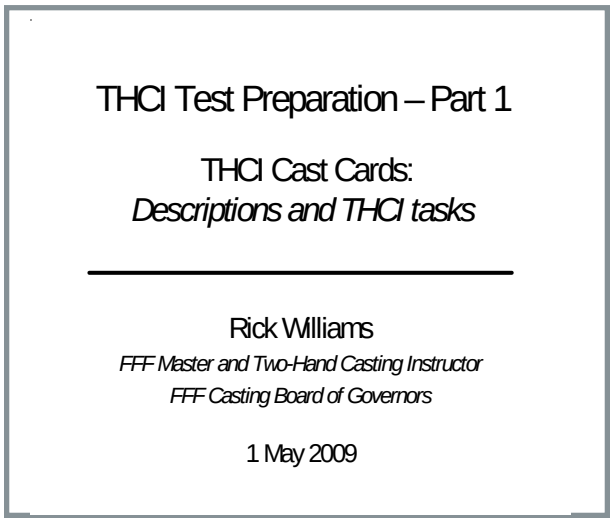
THCI Test Preparation – Part 1

THCI Cast Cards: *Descriptions and THCI Tasks*

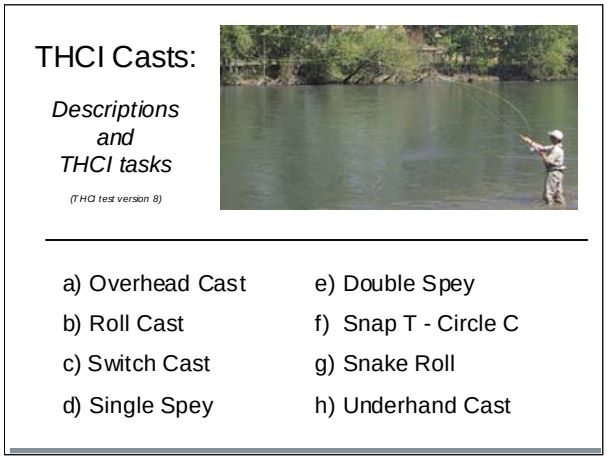
[see accompanying Power Point file on the web site: THCI Prep Cast Cards_Williams_5-1-09]

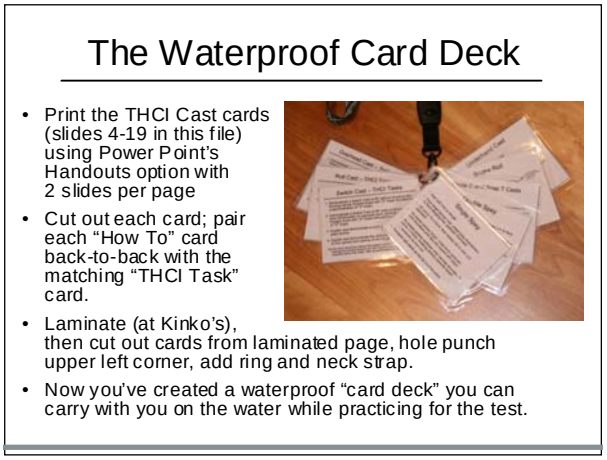
The purpose of this file was to create a waterproof set of cards to take on the river as a self-teaching and practice aid.

The completed deck of cards consists of eight waterproof cards, with each card having a 'How To' cast description on one side, and on the other side, a complete list of all the related THCI exam performance tasks. Notice in the photo that the cards are attached to a lanyard, so I could wear them around my neck tucked into my waders while I was practicing casts and THCI tasks.



The THCI test has many casting performance tasks, some that differ only slightly from one another; such as a change in casting angle from 45 degrees to 90 degrees. Consequently, it was often hard to remember (and practice) all the various THCI casts. Having the THCI Card Deck as an on-stream reference aided the quality of my practice time.





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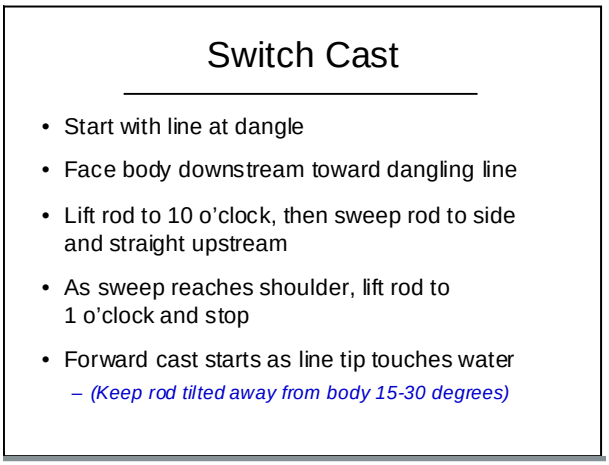
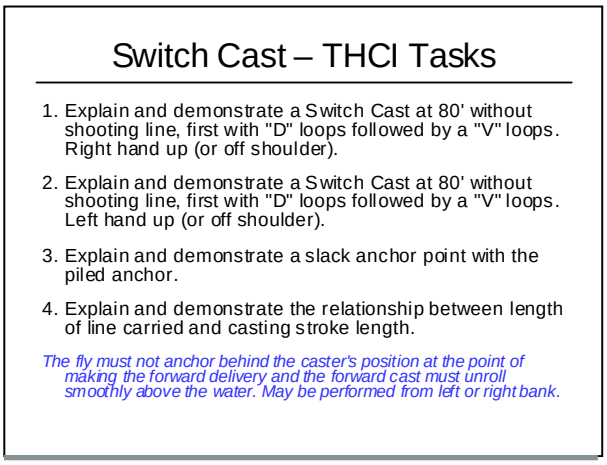
The Waterproof Card Deck slide (above right and in the accompanying Power Point file) gives instructions on how to print the cards and turn them into a waterproof card deck. The hardest part of making the cards (and it's not hard!) is taking the paired back-to-back cards to Kinkos (or some other postal mail service outlet) and having the cards laminated in clear plastic laminate. Place two cards into each plastic (8.5" x 11") sleeve and position them so that each card has at least ¼ - ½" clear margin around it after the lamination occurs. Cut each card out leaving a sealed airtight margin around it of ~½". Leave extra margin along one side or top edge so that a hole can be punched through and a ring and lanyard placed.

Examples of the 'How To' card and its corresponding THCI Task card are presented below for the Switch Cast.





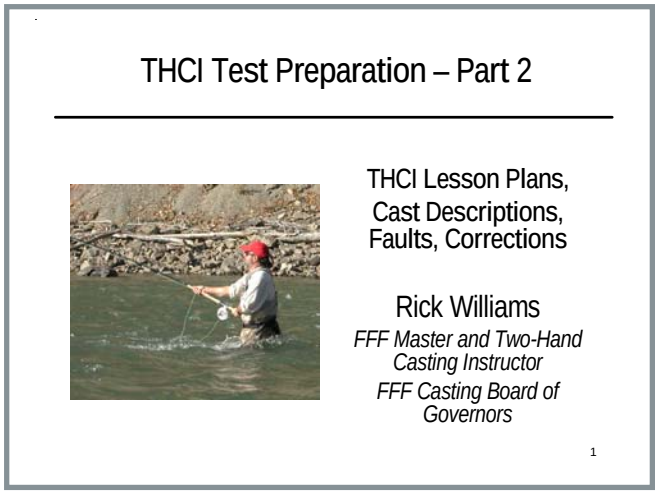
I found having these cards on stream and in my practice kit to be very helpful. I hope you'll take the time to make a set and use them in your THCI preparation.

THCI Test Preparation – Part 2

THCI Lesson Plans, Cast Descriptions, Faults and Corrections

[see accompanying Power Point file on the web site:
THCI Lesson Plans_Williams_5-1-09

The purpose of this file was to organize my thinking about how to teach two-hand casting with various class sizes and lengths ranging from a two-hour introduction, such as an instructor at a fly fishing specialty shop might do for a client before a fishing trip, to a full-blown two-day class. Consequently, I developed lesson plans for four different class scenarios.



Examples of the range of classes and the specific goals and timeline are shown below for the 2-hour class. Various lesson plans are covered from slide 3 to slide 13 in the accompanying Power Point file. The lesson plans presented are ambitious and depend upon the students' progressing smoothly through the listed sequence. However, things often don't go this smoothly, so the class schedule and goals almost always require some modification to fit the students' progress, the weather, and the local river conditions.

Two-Hand Classes

Lesson Plans for various Two-Hand Classes:

a) 2 Hour Lesson
b) Half-day School
c) One-day School
d) Two-day School

Note: The lesson plans are ambitious and dependent upon the student progressing smoothly through the sequence. This doesn't always happen!

Experience shows that the class schedule almost always need to be modified to fit each group of students' skill advancement, as well as local weather and river conditions.

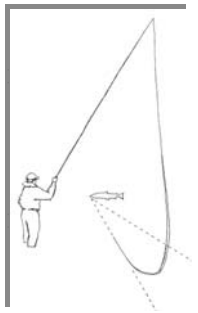
3

2 Hour Lesson - Goals

The goal of this 2 hour class is to introduce a student to the Two-Hand rod and a couple of fundamental Spey casts that can be used immediately for fishing.

The class focuses on the Double Spey and Snap T casts, their essential elements, common errors, and their correction.

At the end of the class, the student may be able to fish with a Spey rod using the Double Spey and Snap T casts.



2-Hour Class Schedule

0900-0910	Equipment Set up / Safety	*Grass-Beach*
0910-0920	Overhead Cast	*Grass-Beach*
0920-0940	Roll Cast and Switch Cast	*River Left*
0940-1020	Snap T / Circle C Cast	*River Left*
1020-1045	Double Spey	*River Right (if possible)*
1045-1100	Wrap Up & Final Questions	
1100	*Adjourn*	

5

Two–Hand Casts:

Descriptions, Uses, Faults, Corrections

a) Overhead Cast
b) Roll Cast
c) Switch Cast
d) Single Spey
e) Double Spey
f) Snap T – Snap C
g) Snake Roll
h) Underhand Cast

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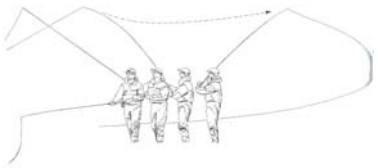
The next section of the accompanying Power Point file focuses on each of the Two-hand casts performed in the THCI exam. I wanted to prepare short clear descriptions for each cast and a concise list of common casting faults and their corrections. The shorter and clearer something is, the easier it is to remember (especially during the THCI exam!); so the second part of the presentation (slides 14-39) focuses on casting faults. For each cast, its use is first described, and then a short scripted "How To" presented, then common faults, their causes, and their corrections described. Examples are presented for the Single Spey.

Single Spey



- Most efficient for small change of direction
  - *25-60 degree angle change*
- Precise timing required
- Use with upstream wind
  - *Right hand up on River Left*
  - *Left hand up on River Right*
  - *upstream anchor placement*

Elegant, rhythmic, powerful cast

Can cast very long lines

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Single Spey – How To

- Start with line at dangle
- Face target across river, rotate body downstream to face dangling line; upstream foot back
- Lift rod to 10 o'clock, then sweep rod to side and upstream
- As sweep passes target, rotate body upstream until shoulders and hips are square with target
- As sweep passes upstream and reaches shoulder, lift rod to 1 o'clock, finishing directly opposite target
  - *Accelerate into back cast*
- Forward cast starts as line tip touches water

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Single Spey – Faults and Corrections

- Crashed Anchor or Bloody L
  - *too abrupt addition of power or too short of a sweep*
  - *too much dip between lift and end of sweep*
- *Anchor skips out behind caster*
  - *too much power and/or too much lift at end of sweep*
- *Too much line stick and forward cast fails*
  - *waiting too long to make forward cast – "splash and go"*
  - *Lifting lower hand ("trunking") and dumping line onto water*
- *Poor anchor placement; poor energy into back cast*
  - *Many varied causes*

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Weights of various head lengths: *Proposed AFTMA Spey Line Ratings*

	Head or Belly Length			
Line Weight	*Sh. Head (in grains)*	*Short (in grains)*	*Medium (in grains)*	*Long (in grains)*
6	250	420	460	600
7	300	470	510	650
8	360	530	570	710
9	430	600	640	780
10	510	680	720	860
11	600	770	810	950
12	700	870	910	1050

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Finally, the presentation ends with a few slides on Spey line types, lengths, and weights (in grains) by line size (see example above right) that are relevant to THCI exam preparation.

Good luck on the journey toward Two-Hand Instructor Certification. It can be a richly rewarding odyssey fraught with difficulty and frustration, moments of giddy excitement when something finally works, or glorious epiphanies when you finally "get" some important concept; but most rewarding of all, will be the astonishing generosity from fellow instructors and two-hand casters of their time and expertise for your benefit.

Acknowledgements

I'd like to acknowledge the mentorship of Simon Gawesworth, Al Buhr, and the late Mel Krieger to my development as a two-hand caster and a Two-Hand Certified Instructor. Each of them started as a teacher and mentor and ended up as a cherished friend and colleague. I'd also like to thank Greg Pearson for the generous loan of some illustrations of Spey casting, also used in Simon's wonderful book.

Rick Williams (MCI, THCI) is on the Casting Board of Governors and lives in Eagle, Idaho.

Outside looking in (sort of)

One person's journey to becoming a Certified FlyCasting instructor.

By Ron Pedegana

On Feb. 12, 2005 I passed my instructor certification at Marilyn & Tony Vitale's home in Sammamish, WA. I drove up from Portland, Oregon the night before with my wife Vickie who is my own personal cheerleader but that is not how I got here.
That started 3 years ago when I tested for the first time with Masters Tony Vitale & Don Simonson conducting the exam. To say it did not go well would be a gross understatement. I didn't cast well, couldn't hit the targets, some casts I couldn't execute and even worse I had NO teaching platform. Tony & Don were not rude or demeaning in any way, but it was clear that they could not pass me at my current level. They wrote down some things I needed to improve on and I left. You have to understand I have been fly fishing for fifty years. I had some serious holes in my casting and had not refined my teaching skills.

The next year I went through the 'sour grapes' phase. I was frustrated. You have probably heard or remarked these same phrases: "they have made that test so hard NO one can pass", or "they have theirs and they don't want you to get yours" "they won't pass anyone, you know what's-his-name, he's an incredible caster and he failed." And "they are just protecting their turf".

I had to take a good look at my goals for a change. I had to ask myself, how can I get what I want? Maybe I needed some instruction. Duh! I needed an instructor; I needed the best I could find. I sent an email to Tim Rajeff, who luckily lives ½ hour from me. I didn't know if he gave lessons, with a full time business to run. He answered me the same day. and told me not to be discouraged about not passing the exam on my first attempt, most people don't. I made an appointment for my first lesson.

The day of my lesson I arrived at Tim's house. We sat down in his office of Rajeff Sports. He asked me some questions about what I wanted, my goals and things like that. From the very beginning Tim was always asking me questions, how I was doing this, or that, what makes this happen or not. That lesson was about 1 ½ hours. He gave me some typed pages about the rules of good casting, a bunch of books, one of which was written by a golf instructor and a whole list of things to work on. The weird part was most of it did not involve casting, some of the items were, to write in my own words the fundamentals of good casting, provide diagrams of what makes up a good cast, and lesson plans for teaching my own classes, explain E=Mc2 or how many stomachs does a Llama have, It was crazy.

I left for home a bit confused. I did my home work over and over until I thought it was pretty good, I wrote out the elements of casting, how they effect loop construction, good and bad. Finally I made some diagrams on my computer and printed them.
My next session with Tim occurred about a month and a half later. I showed up with an arm load of stuff and 1 fly rod. We went through my homework; Tim made some suggestions on my lesson plans and changes in my diagrams, with cautions about not trying to load too much on your students at any given time. He urged me to build a solid foundation, don't over teach, he certainly lives by those rules.

(Continued on page 17)

By now I am into this venture 2 ½ hours of lesson time and we have casted maybe an hour of that time. The rest of the time instead of throwing line we are throwing around terms, tip travel path, convexed, concaved, power application, tailing loops!! When exactly is this guy going to teach me how to cast? By this time Tim has a beautiful casting pond 60 feet by 160 feet, probably two feet deep with a concrete walk around and to my utter amazement we are actually casting on it. Tim points out some things in my stroke that I should work on, my back cast is too pretty, too soft, shorten your stroke. I want you to hear that line slap the rod on your back cast. Tim's making more notes; work on these areas, set up targets, cast off shoulder ½ of the time. Work more on this, work more on that, record what to say to your students, play it back see how it sounds.

With all this to learn , my practice schedule has really ramped up, I have a rod at work, practicing at lunch, practice at home, with a church yard close to my house I can practice on a large expanse of grass, this convenience allows for more practice. My neighbors now think I've lost my extra spool, "Look Martha the nutty guy is out in the rain again casting yarn at wicker plates." They just don't understand.
By now I've scheduled my test for February 12, 2005 "D-day". Four weeks to go, and predictably we get hit with an ice storm and I cannot practice, without risk of mortal injury. Huddled in the house I rewrite my fundamentals, clean lines, tie flies. Tim would be ok with this, I am still thinking about all this stuff. Because of my schedule and Tim's we agree on getting together on the 29th of January, two weeks before my test. Tim and I now have a routine, he is busy and I don't waste his time or mine. Even though he is my instructor I enjoy my time with him. We share a common interest; he has a great sense of humor, but now its crunch time. The plan for my lesson today is to go through some hypothetical test questions. We go through a zillion possible questions.
Tim making notes, always the notes; Tim grades me as maybe passing. More work ahead, with a deadline looming.
Tim commented on how far my casting had come in two months, however he noted I should work on the following items, Off shoulder accuracy, pile cast, reach cast, explain and demonstrate, section of the test. "Be sure what you explain is what you demonstrate", do not use absolutes in explanations, use sometimes, may cause, or possibly. He wishes me luck and says he will see me at the flyfishing show the weekend of my test.
Taking the title of a book "A Funny Thing Happened to me on the way to the Forum" my fundamentals are now sentences, instead of paragraphs, some a couple of words or terms, don't over teach, leave room for self discovery.
In all this writing and thinking about what's involved in creating nice tight loops, solid control 40 feet of line, etcetera, I had developed a solid base that I could wrap my own brain around. All this had a positive effect on my casting. I now understood the elements so well, I could recognize my own deficiencies. When something didn't work as it should I knew exactly why. I think Tim knew this would happen all along. I now had the tools to teach, even myself.

Sat Feb 5th
My test is a week out. Practice is a top priority. I put in 3 hours in the pouring rain, 35 degrees, it's winter in Oregon. I am actually looking for more opportunities to fish in this crummy weather, which seems more appealing than throwing yarn at wicker plates.

Sun. February 6th
I go to the grade school playground. There is a covered outdoor basketball area with enough room to cast and semi dry, same weather different day.
On this day things are really coming together. I am hitting most of my targets, they are only 10" in diameter, and the test targets will be 30". It's raining so hard there is ½" of water on the blacktop, perfect for roll casting. I am casting in the rain again. 3 hours, 4 times through the test, I head for home, wet, cold and pretty pleased with myself.
(Continued on page 18)

Mon. February 7th

I have decided to take Thursday and Friday off, Thursday for the Sportsman's show in Portland and Friday to get everything ready for the test, and my last day to practice.

Saturday February 12th–4:30a.m

I can't sleep.

I sneak out of the hotel room and try not to wake my wife. I am in the lobby of the Hotel in Redmond,WA 10 miles from Tony & Marilyn Vitale's home. A little coffee will help and the morning paper, but I am not reading, instead of words, I am seeing perfect loops gliding over green water. Suddenly, the perfect loops in my mind turn into huge going nowhere loops. In an instant my next loop is a tailing loop, that falls in a pile of fly line macramé. I come back to reality.. I can't have these thoughts going on. Not today. Come on buddy, you have gone through this test at least 30 times, you can do this. I am a mess.

Tim's words come to me; "You have paid your dues, put in the time, you're ready, you are going to ace this thing." Easy for him to say he is still asleep.

I need my wife, my rock of positive reinforcement; she might be awake by now. I get 2 more cups of coffee, one for my wife to replace the "swill" they provide in the rooms, and 1 for myself. This is the NW after all—home of Starbucks—coffee is serious business around here! Fortunately my wife is awake and she senses my state of mind. She says " I want you to think about how it is going to feel when you pass and you are a certified instructor, achieving a long term goal." She has decided to stay at the hotel and study. She is going for her Master's in nursing; she knows something about goals and commitment. It makes my goal pale in comparison but this is MY goal.

I checked my gear for 27th time, to make sure I hadn't forgotten anything; I wouldn't want to forget my reel or something stupid like that. I have decided to take the test with my 5 weight; every rod has a different feel. I know what this rod likes, I know its soul.

This is it, I am ready to leave.

My wife offers more encouragement, and gives me a kiss for luck, and I'm out the door.

It is 9am, my test is not until 10am but, I don't want to be late. In my nervous state, I get lost somewhere in Redmond. This is not the Redmond of my childhood. I grew up here but things have really changed in 40 years. Somehow I find my way back on track and soon I am on the road to Tony & Marilyn's. I am still early, so I drive up and down the road to waste time and try to relax. Finally I turn into the driveway. It is 9:50. I park on the gravel, and get my gear from the trunk. Marilyn greets me at the front door and says

"I remember you" She was there when I tested the first time. Tony Vitale and Don Simonson are there also, we shake hands and sit down at the dining room table. Since it has been so long since I tested the first time, I will have to take the written portion again. I don't have a problem with that.

Everyone leaves the room to give me some quiet. The written exam is harder than before, true or false and some multiple choice. The questions I don't know I skip and will come back to later. I finish the test, Marilyn comes back and grades it. I have missed 2. One answer was "all of the above". I hate those, so undefined like vanilla ice cream or white cars. The other one I put up a minor protest, Marilyn wins. By this time Jimmy Lemert has arrived, he will be my other tester. We shake hands and go outside to the casting course, located between the house and a pond full of large trout, every flyfisherman's dream!!

I string my 5 weight and Marilyn helps me stretch my line. The game is afoot and there is no turning back. Marilyn explains the test process. She and Jimmy will huddle and score me after each phase. I'm already demonstrating my short casting stroke, my rod is shaking all over the place and I am not even casting yet. I've been through this test thirty times on my own, but this is the Olympics, I may have nailed my triple axel every time for a year, today I could fall, it happens. Tim's words and my wife's words come to me and flush my doubts.

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I'm standing at the casting position surveying the course, three 30" rings at 20, 30, and 45 feet, they look like they cover the length of a football field to me. Out beyond the last target is a piece of pvc pipe at 75', my double haul distance mark. It looks like it's in Idaho. It's raining lightly and hovering in the 30s, wonderful, I have been casting in this for months, we rip through the first four (4) phases of the test, things are cooking, and I am in the zone. The next test phase is accuracy, 3 targets, 4 different disciplines, overhead, overhead off shoulder, roll cast and roll cast off shoulder. I cruise through the 1st part but now my nemesis, overhead off shoulder, the limited range of motion in my casting stroke makes it difficult to cast in plane, keep the top on top and straight. I hit the 20' target; I miss the 30' target. Jimmy calls for short break. He stands next to me "you're just nervous, you are doing great, get your focus back and we'll go at this again. I check out, I'm seeing perfect loops over grass, no big loops or tailing loops. I'm back in the zone, I finish this section, pretty straight forward, no huddle, you either hit the targets or you don't , not subjective.

We go through the explain and demonstrate section. Tim's sitting on my shoulder saying "Be sure what you explain is what you demonstrate." This section has five parts, we get through them pretty quickly and I'm done. Jimmy and Marilyn escape to the side of the course to huddle, my fate in their hands. I'm not sure; I've done better in practice. After what seems like a week and ½ they return to my side. Jimmy has his world series of poker face on, and I can't read Marilyn either. Jimmy says "you want to give him the news? Marilyn extends her hand, "Congratulations you are an FFF certified instructor". There's a lot of handshaking, hugging and jumping around, and not just me!!! My eyes are wet, it must be the rain. After a short celebration, Jimmy has my rod and is drawing loops with the line on the grass, and showing me some of the things he uses in his classes, Marilyn jumps in and shows me how to better control my pile cast and little different stroke for the rollcast. Peculiar behavior for some one guarding their turf, I think. Jimmy and Marilyn are compelled to teach, they can't help themselves, and I understand them.

We exit to the house; Tony and Don shake my hand and congratulate me. I fill out the form for FFF, pay for my test. Tony hands me the phone, Tim's on the other end, he is at the fly fishing show in Bellevue. I give him the good news and thank him for all his good instruction. He responds with "it was all you, I never had a doubt, and you were ready. I hang up and head out the door. Everyone is going to the Fly Fishing show, and I am not going to hold them up. While driving I call my wife and tell her the news, she is happy and excited. I will see her in a few minutes, I look over to the passenger side of my truck, the reel I used in my test, a 50 year old pflueger medalist jiggles on the seat. It was a gift from my father when I was 8 years old, all the paint is worn off, the frame is tweaked, the spool wobbles it's an old friend, we have caught 1,000s of fish together. My father really started this journey of mine. Taking his eight year old son out and giving him the basics of flyfishing and a lifetime of pleasure.

My father was a master fisherman and a man before his time. He had great regard for nature and the quarry we seek. We practiced catch and release our whole lives together, we just called it "letting them go". He has been gone for some time now, and I really miss him right now, but I see his smile and feel his pleasure with what has happened this morning, his life long student has now become the teacher. If you have someone in your life you enjoy do things with exercise that option soon and often, those times are not forever.

I pull over in Redmond partly because I'm lost and I need to call my big brother, he has pushed me for the last year on my quest, telling me about "the importance of setting goals, all that big brother stuff. He is a highly successful doctor, he knows about these things. After telling him I passed, were laughing and yelling, he tells me how proud he is of me. It means a lot to me. We fish together; I wish it was more often. I tell him I'm now certified to fix his double haul; I owe him so much more. Then he asks me, "so when are you going for your Masters, laughing again, achieving goals, big brother stuff. I thank him and hang up.

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I find the hotel, my wife and I check out, we have lunch at Spuds fish and chips in Juanita. We both grew up and met here, but its no longer home, home is Portland, Oregon. We are headed that way to our family, my son Jason "The artist" he doesn't fish much, has his own goals, he needs to talk to my brother. My daughter Melissa and her husband Jake they set up a website for my company "Fraudulent Flies" as Christmas present, and provided me with a hat with the company name and logo that I wore during my test. They have been with me through this whole thing. Our grandson griffin" the golden child" is at our house. My wife's sister is watching him. She has looked at my teaching diagrams, read all my stuff, she will be happy too.

According to the federation of fly fishers there are 885 certified instructors and 96 masters certified instructors in the world. Doing the math on that I think there are more people playing professional football. Hey, where's my 15 million dollar contract? That is not the motivation here; the majority of us have real jobs, teaching fly fishing is not a full time career. I teach and get paid for it, A 3hr lesson of 4 students may cost about the same as a good fly line, You may have a dozen of those, my compensation from this pays for some new equipment and more time on Tim's pond. I won't get rich doing this. In my real job I make signs, I used to be a sign painter, now it is all done with computers. I am making some banners for Marilyn Vitale for something she is involved in called "Casting For Recovery" for breast cancer patients and survivors. I'm on the phone discussing the details of the banners with Marilyn, size, colors, etc, In the middle of this Marilyn pops in with more input on my marginal pile cast, how to control the distance, the path the rod should take to put the cast wherever I want. This wonderful woman is possessed with teaching; I can only hope to be as good as she is, protecting their turf, what a bunch of garbage.

Things of value are difficult to obtain and inherently rare. If there were a million instructors, the standards would be considerably lower, instruction would suffer, if FFF handed these out like bingo cards just to raise revenue, the program would be meaningless. This test is hard, too hard, I don't think so. I have friends I fish with who are excellent casters, they are not instructors, but this is not a casting tournament you have to show the ability to teach.
Some who read this will think I wrote this just to promote business, I can't defend against this thought, if you desire to be a better caster, seek out your mentor., knock years off your learning curve, catch more fish and enjoy it more.

In writing this story I realize the readers might think I am pretty full of myself, I did not discover the cure for cancer, or perfect world peace . I obtained a personal goal. In the whole scheme of things it's probably quite meaningless. I am not a perfect fly caster, I'm not yet a great instructor, we all have limitations, I have mine .In my classes I pursue that one element that makes it all come together for each student, when it happens I get a great sense of fulfillment from it, that is my motivation. In my pursuit of this goal I have cornered lots of instructors at sport shows and the like, These professionals never once cut me off and said show me the money they gave info freely, they enjoy doing this, like I do.

One of the side benefits of all this practice and thought about casting and fishing is I have become a more complete fisherman. Don Simonson said "flyfishing is about putting your flies where the fish are" Sometimes easier said than done.

One my favorite rivers to fish is the Metolius, located in central Oregon about a 3 hour drive from my home, I fish it maybe 3 or 4 times a year, each time I leave with more respect and a little more understanding of this the awesome environment

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The Metolius is a very demanding river. gin clear water, complex braided currents, confined casting environment and smart fish. A good day on the Metolius for me might be 4-5 fish, I cherish each one. 24" Rainbow, and bull trout the size of Salmon. One of my fishing buddies, made the comment that some rivers are shotgun rivers, you can be pretty loose with your skills, and still be successful, the Metolius is a Violin river and you have to know how to play it. I'm bringing a new songbook to the river this summer. My new improved pile cast, compliments of Marilyn Vitale, and a host of other arrangements, I'm a much better fisherman from what I have learned in the last year. and I can't wait for the Green Drake hatch in June.

You may wonder how this journey ends, I can't say.
I would like to have my Masters certification some day, more casts, more knowledge, more time on Tim's pond with Tim telling me my backcast is still too pretty. Right now I'm scheduling classes, refining my my teaching skills. I'm also fishing the Clackamas river, my home river, throwing big flies to double digit trout, way more fun than tossing yarn at wicker plates.

You may think I have put Tim Rajeff in a bad light in this story. You could not be more wrong. When I stated that I wanted to get my certification, Tim changed his lesson plan. He gave me tools, the knowledge, to be an instructor, he knew the casting would follow. Had I gone to him just for casting instruction we would been on the pond the entire time, that is a sign of a gifted instructor; adjust your lesson to match the goals of your students.

Your goals may different than mine, whatever they are, schedule a class, don't wait fifty years like I did. A good instructor is another set of trained eyes to see deficiencies in your cast. In Tim's case he can hear a good cast!!

Someday maybe I will be your instructor or I may have an 8 year old boy in one my classes and light a fire in him the way my father did for me, someone might buy him a nice reel and this story will start all over again, that would make me feel pretty good.

Thanks Dad, Thanks Tim

Loop Editors - a change

Liz Watson & I have been co-editors of the Loop for a few years now. Spring 2003 was our first issue.
We had to interview for the position - Macauley Lord was the previous editor and as much as he wanted to leave as editor, he made sure that it was in good hands.(he made sure we could spell, knew some grammar and could write a piece when required).
Both Liz & I had lots to learn. There were times when we (or maybe just me) – were pulling our hair because it was a new program and it wouldn't do what we wanted. Maybe we just didn't know how to ask...Things are definitely better now.
Together we accomplished many things with the Loop. We became a web only newsletter and saved some trees (and money). Definitely a forerunner and ahead of our time.
We went from a newsletter of maybe 8-10 pages which had to be printed and mailed - to its current size of 40+ pages. It is loaded with a wide variety of information and hopefully everyone finds something in it to read as well as learn something. All of the back issues are posted on the web site which was a major feat.
It was a big shock to go back and read our beginnings. Trying to round up articles, asking for articles, (begging for articles) etc. There was a definite learning curve to ensure we had 'stuff' to print.
Liz has decided to step down both as a governor and as co-editor of the Loop.
It has been a great journey and I wish her well. So a big thank you to her and you can be sure that we are very proud of what we have accomplished.

Denise

Teaching 7 Principles of Fly Casting

I use the acronym, ***"SCRATCH 'n SNIFF"*** to help students understand and remember the substantive principles of flycasting. I explain using these easy to understand and remember examples to learn the physical phenomena of flycasting.

S stands for an image of "soap on a rope." Some years ago, 'Soap on a Rope' was a bath product that was a bar of shower soap suspended on a piece of rope. Now, make the rope 10' long. I use a block of wood tied with a piece of 10' rope as my example. In order to slide cast the soap on the floor the longest stroke length, there can't be any slack in the rope. Likewise, slack in the fly line will diminish the effective stroke length of every cast we try to make with a fly rod. The rope and the fly line must start the casting stroke straight.

C stands for "curve ball." This emphasizes that a pitcher can throw a fast ball faster and more accurately than a curve ball because the ball travels in a straight line path. So it is with flycasting. The closer to a straight line rod tip path the more energy will be directed at our target and the tighter the loop will be.

R stands for "rifle." Imagine you are holding the middle of a long barrel in your rod hand. The back cast is that part of the rifle barrel that is behind you and the front cast is the rifle barrel in front of you. This teaches the 180° principle in flycasting. If we want to lower the front cast, we must first raise the back cast to maintain the straight rifle barrel. Generally speaking, whichever way we want to direct a cast, we must first make the back cast in the opposite direction.

Imagine too that the rod tip travels down that inside of the rifle barrel as you make a cast. We know that a rifle is more accurate than a pistol. That's because the longer rifle barrel is more accurate than the shorter pistol barrel. So it is with flycasting, the longer the straight line path of the rod tip, the more accurate the cast.

The further away my target is, the longer and more powerful the rifle will need to be.

A stands for "antenna ball." Most of us remember the round Styrofoam, 'Jack in the Box' heads or the orange 76 balls that were stuck on the end of the car radio antenna. Now imagine the antenna and ball is on a dragster.

As the dragster accelerates the antenna bends back in response to the acceleration. (Forget the effect of the wind for the purpose of this discussion). The more the dragster smoothly accelerates the more bend occurs in the antenna. Then at the point of maximal acceleration imagine that the dragster slams into an immovable low concrete retaining wall and crashes to an abrupt stop. The antenna counter-flexes and hurls the antenna ball in the direction that the dragster was accelerating and suddenly stopped.

So it is with fly casting. The fly line goes in the direction that the rod tip accelerates to a stop. The height of the loop formed is proportional to the distance that the rod tip dipped from the rod straight stop point to the point of maximal counter-flexion. The shorter the distance of the acceleration to a stop, the narrower the loop formed will be. The amount of acceleration needed is proportional to the distance we wish to cast.

T stands for "tennis ball." This teaches us that the presenting edge of a tennis ball is small like a narrow casting loop and the presenting edge of a beach ball is wide like a large loop we cast. It is easy for students to understand that they can throw a tennis ball further and more accurately than the larger beach ball.

(continued on page 22)

C stands for a cast. Visualize a bright white plaster of Paris cast on your arm that is either a short plaster cast on their wrist or a long plaster cast from their wrist to their elbow. This teaches and reminds them that to keep a rifle barrel straight cast we use a short stroke to make a short cast and a longer stroke to make a longer cast. The C can also stand for 'comfort' because in flycasting we only need to use a stroke as long as the cast we want to make. We'll also be able to fish longer if we use the shortest stroke necessary to make the cast needed.

H resembles a goal post. Can you see it? Goal posts make us think of football and half-time. Half-time is the memory trigger to think of "timing." Good timing occurs when just as the cast fly line is about to straighten out without slack, we start the cast in the opposite direction. The timing pause will be proportional to the amount of line you have out.

The style issues in "Sniff" begin reminding us that the "SN" makes me think of 'stance'. Then the physical variables like stance, grip, elbow position and body motion are style issues and can reasonably vary between casters.

The "FF" stands for fly fishing equipment. That means the rod stiffness, reel direction, and fly line type are all style issues. Fly fishers can use a wide variety of equipment and catch lots of fish.

These explanations are usually understood and remembered by students and hopefully used to help them learn and become better casters. I admit the plaster of Paris visual doesn't have an action component but it does help students remember the principle.

Les Rosenthal, CI
Gig Harbor, WA.

Les, a retired small animal veterinarian, became a CI in Whitefish, MT in July '08. He fishes mostly around the Puget Sound area but often capitalizes on travel opportunities.

Designing Fly Casting Leaders (con't from page 24)

Three section tapered leader "standard" 60/20/20% proportions for general use

As a rule of thumb the common formula for general purpose leader design is approximately 60% butt, 20% taper and 20% tippet. These percentages can of course be adjusted according to purpose e.g. leaders for gentle presentation or to combat drag may have shorter butts and longer tapers and tippets and indeed the leader in total may be longer than normal whereas leaders for delivering a heavy or bulky fly will have extended butts, steep tapers and shorter tippets and the overall leader length is made shorter than normal. Nine feet is the most popular general purpose leader length and most are between that and 12 feet long. Much shorter leaders from 3ft upwards are commonly used for pike fishing and in conjunction with sink tips and sinking lines for salmon and steelhead where the short length helps to keep the fly down at the same depth as the line. Stillwater anglers occasionally use extra long specialised leaders up to 20 feet in length to achieve the most subtle presentation for buzzers but they can only be used in favourable weather conditions and casting direction.

Designing fly casting and fly fishing leaders.

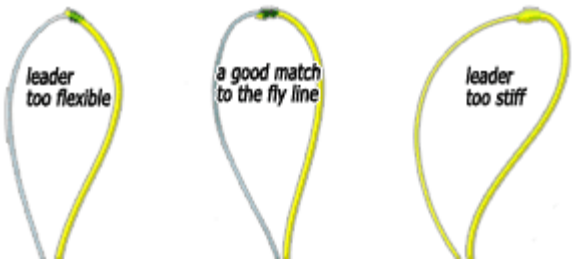
Ally Gowans

The leader is concerned with the connection between fly line and fly and it can conveniently be thought of as three parts, the butt which attaches to the fly line, the taper which provides the transition between the butt and the tippet controls the energy flow and fine-tuning the characteristics of the leader and the tippet that provides the final connection to the fly. All parts of the leader are important but they need not be complicated and certainly should never contain any more pieces of monofilament than is necessary to achieve the desired result. Ultimately it is you who must be happy with the way that your leader performs but beware; leader design cannot compensate for faulty casting technique, but bad leader design may well cause poor presentation and exaggerate the effect of casting faults.

Leader turnover is always important.

Fly line manufacturers take great pride and care in designing the profile and tapers of their products. The front taper of a fly line is designed with the purpose and range of likely fly sizes to be encountered in mind. For best results the join between fly line and leader should be as non obtrusive as possible and so a nail or needle knot connection is likely to perform better than a comparatively heavy and bulky braided loop attachment. Recognising the convenience and popularity of loops many of the latest designed fly lines come with small factory made neat and relatively inconspicuous loops for leader attachment which is a useful improvement for those who like to use loop connections and largely overcomes the criticism of braided loops.

The leader butt section is attached to the fly line and should have characteristics similar to the tapered end of the fly line in order to transfer energy from the line to the butt section and hence smoothly along the leader. If the butt is too flexible it will hinge, if it too stiff it will be very difficult to control or make tight loops, the perfect transition will have similar flexure to the line itself. Three scenarios are illustrated and the suitability of the leader butt material can be judged by comparing the relative stiffness of the fly line and leader, if the leader is too flexible it will hinge at the join, if it is just right the transition will be smooth and if the leader is to stiff the fly line will be flexed by it.



Comparison of leader butt qualities

The tapered section in the middle of the leader then transmits energy from the butt section to the tippet. Fly size, the target fish species and the prevailing conditions determine the preferred characteristics for the choice of leader make up materials. Proprietary knotless tapered fly leaders of many types and sizes can be purchased and these are suitable for lots of uses but for some situations it is better to custom make tapered leaders with materials of your own choosing or at least it is fun to experiment with different recipes for bespoke leaders to suit you purpose.

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PEARLS....

From a Master Study Group

Hosted by Gordy Hill

Pearl #1 - Comments on Direct Instruction - Loop Spring 2009

From Gordy -

As you may know, Macauley Lord has been one of our most energetic and effective teachers of flycasting for years. I recall that he was head of the LL Bean school for a long time, past editor of the LOOP and is now retired as Emeritus CBOG member.

My own opinion is that this was a well written article. The concept of "Direct Instruction" has been around for quite some time. Thus I don't agree with the title in that I feel this is not an entirely new paradigm, though by his own statements it is a new approach for the the author. Some of our finest instructors use this method when the goal is to have the student learn as quickly as possible to make basic flycasts in order to fish.

Lefty Kreh has used a variation of this method for years as he teaches his students to cast without burdening them with a lot of flycasting theory and/or physics. One could call this the "KISS METHOD".

As Macauley Lord stated, one must go beyond this method when teaching those who wish to be effective instructors. At that level, a good foundation in flycasting theory is needed as background information no matter what method these instructors will be using as they teach.

Macauley was careful to note that while most students will benefit from this method, that there are a few who learn not only by the conventional methods of seeing, hearing, and doing, but also by understanding (cognition). These flycasting students may be engineers, scientists, mathemeticians, etc. who have become accustomed to learning by study and in- depth understanding of their fields of endeavor.

I must admit, I have been guilty of "overteaching", leading to students becoming lost in the process. I've worked hard to avoid this in recent years.

My own experience is that a certain amount of understanding leads to better teaching. Instead of teaching by the oversimplified "just do it this way" method, a low dose of very basic flycasting mechanics can help achieve retention. Examples include things like Lefty's principles and Bill Gammel's "Essentials".

In the end, I think one must tailor the level of teaching to the student. **"Different strokes for different folks."** I do recommend reading Macauley's article in the new edition of the LOOP :- Spring 2009

From Dave Leger -

I'm one of about 15 CIs that teach 15 minute free casting lessons to the public at the Chicago fly show and the Minn. Fly show for John Breslin. Typically we will do 350 to 400 lessons a weekend. For me being a new CI (several years) this teaching opportunity has been outstanding. For us non-guide or non-in-the "business" CIs it's hard to get that kind of teaching experience anywhere.

So to the point, I believe that Macauley is correct when he suggests that for most people at the beginner level or who just want to fish, we may be taking the long way around so to speak by using or integrating the conceptual with the hands on. I, we show instructors with primarily a kinesthetic approach get most folks making nice loops with a lay down, easily in 5 to 10 minutes with very little "casting mechanics" being discussed, and double-hauling in one lesson if they have even a modest casting background.

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It really is the most bang for the buck way, relative to the amount of time spent, I think.
With that said though I believe we as teachers must have the in-depth knowledge that the FFF program requires to make any method work well, Macauley's or the more traditional ones. Fortunately, most students aren't in a race to progress and can be developed at a more relaxed pace with one or by using components of several different approaches that best suit the students needs.
The only absolute is that there are no absolutes.

From Dusty Sprague -

Excellent thoughts by Mac in his article in the LOOP. He is reminding us instructors to tailor our instruction for the purpose at hand, eg., keep it simple for those wishing only to make a decent cast to a fish — those students who don't need or want to know the 'why', just the 'how'.
It is very difficult for some instructors to avoid telling students how to build a watch, when all the student wanted was the time. The instructor's desire to share their knowledge is so strong. It takes courage and confidence to say little, even more if the instructor is getting paid for the lesson.
Certainly a key is understanding the student's needs/motives/desires — what do they want to get out of this session — to simply catch a fish or something more? Good instructors try to get an answer to that question before beginning a teaching session and they tailor their work to that need, hopefully erring on the side of brevity — its difficult to do. It pains me to think of the times I provided students with too much information - its probably the most common pitfall for an instructor.
Mac's points about simplicity, breaking new complex motions for the student into smaller parts, and using only positive examples/demos e.g., showing them good loops, not bad ones - are excellent.

From Scott Schwartz -

I agree with you that Direct Instruction is not a **new** paradigm however McCauley makes a great point reminding us to stop talking and get the students casting. There is a time and place for all types of instruction depending on our audience and time constraints however most instructors can be more effective if we talk a little less..
A few years back I read about the "ribbon dance"...(I'm not sure who the author was but they deserve much credit...likely an article in the Loop by one of our instructors). I tried it and it changed the way I start students casting. When I hand out the rods I ask everyone to PLAY with them for 5 minutes FIRST. The only demonstration I give is how they can paint circles like a helicopter and make figure 8's and play. The only verbal instruction I give them is to use about 20 feet of line and the line will follow the rod tip. This is without a doubt the fastest way for the students to get a "feel" for a rods action. No focus on right or wrong. No concentration on making a loop. No thought of effecting the principles. Within a minute every student gravitates to nice oblong loops due to their desire to cast as they conceive it. When we start drills focusing on loop formation students progress faster because they already have a great feel for the rod. An added bonus is "play time" relieves students performance anxiety as they are much more fluid and relaxed.
It is an eye opener to see students all casting nice loops with 20 feet of line in less than a minute with virtually NO instruction. Sometime we just need to get out of the way!

From Gary Kell -

I've been the lead instructor for the LLBean Fly Fishing Schools in the mid Atlantic region for the last few years and have learned much from MAC. He is definately an expert teacher and his approach does work. It works so well, I now use it in most all my lessons. Part of what makes it successful is getting the rod in student hands right away - no lengthy descriptions and demos that make the eyes glass over and the head spin.

(continued on page 27)

As instructors Mac would have us practice giving the group instruction in just 5 minuest or less!! Simple language and slow deliberate casting. We are there to teach not to show off!! The first cast students practice is what we call the 4-part cast (overhead cast) pick up, back cast, forward cast, presentation. A simple break-down of the fundamental cast in fly fishing.

Another thing that makes it successful for the LLBean schools is the team teaching approach. Instructors move through students with positive corrections...each trying the different techniques in their bag of tricks.

Usually one of the instructors developes a rapport with the student and finds just the right technique to bring success. It is just amazing to me how you can take 12 to 16 students (many never having flycast before) and within just an hour, most will be making good loops.

I must say that as the instructors move through the students we can and do explain more to those that are curious as to why or how it works and sometimes the "artist" types will say "show me that again"..... nothing like being able to taylor the lesson to the individual.

From Jim Gill -

I was asked if I would stand in as a "candidate" whilst a student coach was being assessed .... it came home to me that too much information dulls the senses and that my attention diminished rapidly as he proceeded to explain all the mechanics of the cast; appreciating the relationship of rod and line and so on, and so on and so on ..... I got very bored and actually never got to touch the rod at all .... technically he was sound but as a coach needless to say he failed. However, the important lesson for me, that is reflected in these replies, especially when at game and countryside shows where time is of the essence - it has to be simple with a quick result. Where there is a one-to-one then establishing rapport with one's candidate and then teasing out what the requirements and expectations are is the skill of the coach. I think the "building a watch - telling the time" says it all .....

From Mark Sedotti -

I read Macauly Lord's article. Once again, I learned what the terminology is for what I've been doing! And doing for many years now. Direct Instruction! It's how I teach. I didn't know there was a BILLION dollars invested on researchiong this either. How 'BOUT that. I really didn't even know anyone was teaching that way either, fly casting or whatever. I just know I got tremendous results, so I stuck with it. And if anything, tried to make it simpler as I went along.

That's funny. When I do a clinic I often don't even do an introdution any more. We just get out there, start casting, and I go from one person to the next. Maybe I sometimes give a VERY short introduction.

I do explain to people the reason why I do this too. I go into talking about what I saw Lefty do in a demo. At the end of some marvelous and entertaining casting he asks for a "volunteer" to come on up for some quick instruction.

Lefty: "OK, what's your name "
Instant Student: "Harold"
Lefty: "Alright Harold, make some casts."

Harold begins casting and it looks like the action of the classic "windshield wiper" You know "woop - whop, whoop - whop"

To which Lefty remarks: " Well Harold, It's obvious you haven't listened to a DAMN thing I've said for the last 45 minutes!"

Says it ALL!

(continued on page 28)

I really am SO concerned about giving too much information. VERY concious about not overteaching. Less truely IS more. And being efficient makes it (and you) SO much more effective.

I teach to the person's style. Rarely do I change it. I will give them from one to three things to change in their casting. Usually no more. Most people can't handle more than that, anyway. I don't want them overthinking. I don't want them over-concentrating. I NEVER want them to be overwhealmed. I want it to be easy, if it can be. And as easy as it can be. I want them relaxed and happy. I want them enjoying themselves.
I try to pick out the smallest changes I can have them make that will result in the BIGGEST improvements. Sometimes this is only one change. But it's significant.
Small changes because they're easier and faster to make than big ones are.
I also very often ask what they want to learn too. What kind of fishing they're going to do.

Beginners I teach in the basic Lefty Kreh way. Extension both ways, accellerate to a stop with a stiff wrist (or a short wrist arc if they prefer) Pause, and then go back the other way 180 degrees. Keep the hand moving parallel to the ground, and let the body flow with it if that feels natural. Simple as that.

I was smiling as I read Macauly's article! I anticipated disagreeing with it, before I started. The complete opposite happened.

Pearl #2 - Two-Handed Casting quiz from Kirk Eberhard

1. What is an ideal location for a two hour beginning two-hand casting class with four students? Why?
    a. Running water
    b. A pond
    c. Large grass area
2. What do you tell students about grip?
3. What do you tell students about stance?
4. What is your definition of a spey cast?

5. Define "river right".
6. Define "river left".
7. Define "Left bank".
8. Define "Right bank".

9.. Define "upstream wind" What casts would you teach ?
10. Define "downstream wind" What casts would you teach ?

11,. A body building, testosterone poisoned fellow insists on applying excess power and speed to the cast. Any suggestions on how to slow him down?
12. What is "spey waltz" timing ?
13. What is the difference between a SINGLE SPEY CAST and a SWITCH CAST ?

14. In as few words as possible, describe the main differences between a spey cast and a "straight line overhead cast" using a two handed rod.

(continued on page 29)

15. We hear the term BALANCED TACKLE . What is usually meant by this :
    a. When talking about single-handed straight line casting tackle ?
    b. When discussing two-handed spey tackle ?
16. What is a “white mouse” ?
17. What is meant by the term, “anchor” ?
18. What is a “D-loop” ?
19. Tell us one advantage of using the spey casts to fish a river ?
20. Which is the best angle of alignment between the target and the D-loop when making a single spey cast?
    a. 90 degrees.
    b. 45 degrees.
    c. 180 degrees.
    d. No particular angle of alignment.

21. A static/deadline roll cast relies on water tension for the cast to work. Why is this true?
22. A dynamic, energized, aerialized, jump roll cast is optimized by minimal line stick/anchor. Why is this true?

From Ally Gowans -

Jerry makes the comment that there is no separation between speycasting and other casts and of course casting is casting and the names are somewhat irrelevant, there is no difference. When I was young we would cast with our greenheart rods in any way that worked to get the fly where we wanted it. One day I was complemented on my speycasting and in some puzzlement I asked what the guy meant, then he explained that I was speycasting.

To my contemporaries casting was just casting and it was not until some instructors of the time (1960’s) started preaching about speycasting that I became more aware of the differences, the casts themselves were commonplace on many rivers. There are only two speycasts, the Single and Double and as I’ve pointed out previously all similar casts are just variations of roll casts and they can be made with any type of rod. Here in Scotland a Roll cast would seldom be done in a practical situation with a stationary line and the theoretical line between a Roll and what is now called a Switch cast is grey.

The traditional Switch cast was often done without an effective anchor and you would have called it an elliptical cast that sometimes displayed some water contact. The terms “spey rod”, “traditional action” and European action” originate from the USA I believe, they certainly did not come from Scotland or Europe. Rods have always been developed to achieve the best possible performance from the materials available, greenheart (especially) and cane rods are softer than glass or carbon rods but that is simply a consequence of the material and not because we wanted them to be soft. To make a carbon rod soft “traditional” (as understand the USA definition) is madness. Here a double-handed rod was traditionally called a salmon rod and a single handed rod, a trout rod.

Two handed is a much better description than “spey” rod and Al Buhr was very wise to name our test as THCI rather than Spey “something”.

The nice thing about the evolution of the roll cast is that it produces a fantastic array of versatile casts and presentations, most of the curves, wiggles, etc that we can do with a straight line cast can also be achieved with a roll cast with less effort. Perhaps the most surprising thing is that it has taken lots of fishers a long time to “discover” what others have been doing for ages. **Little of what we do is new** but progress with better lines and rods makes much of what we do much easier.

Check out the next page for some answers to the 2H quiz....

(continued on page 30)

Gordy's answers in red...

1. What is an ideal location for a two hour beginning two hand casting class with four students? Why?

A. Running water
B. A pond
C. Large grass area

B. Students can practice casts off either shoulder with equal facility and real "line stick".

Tony.... I'd have answered "A" ..... however you read the question better than I did. I guess the key word here is "beginning". With new casters, in the first two hours one might not complicate things by adding running water. Once the basic moves have been learned, however, then I think running water is a must for best results. G.

2. What do you tell students about grip?

Grip the rod lightly until the squeeze at the forward cast stop. For two handed rods, place the top hand near the longitudinal balance point for easiest fulcrum effect. Bottom hand at the end of the butt. Hands wider apart for long bellied lines, closer together for shorter bellied lines.

Yes. Not being a "dyed in the wool" speycaster, I find myself sometimes haveing to be corrected as I get my hands too close together ! G.

3. What do you tell students about stance?

Optional, but an open stance facilitates body turn and incorporation of larger trunk muscles thus can be less fatiguing.

Sometimes stance is "style". Sometimes it's survival. Here is Rick Whorwood's statement on stance

Stance is an interesting topic (#3) I teach an open stance so my students can see their D-Loop, anchor land, which helps with timing (less likely to rotate the shoulders etc). When I went to Spey-o-rama a number of years ago, the casters from Scotland (Ian Gordon, Bill Durry) used a closed stance, They won the comp.
It might be interesting to here the pro's and con's on the different stances, and why we would teach them.

4. What is your definition of a speycast?

A fly delivery method incorporating a back cast made under the rod tip, a water anchor and a change of direction.

OK. Might even consider: A member of the family of roll casts with change of direction .... or
A live line aereolized change of direction roll type cast.
Several ways of defining..... G.

5. Define "river right".

The side of the river on the right of a person facing downstream. Also "Right Bank" ***Yes***

6. Define "river left".

The side of the river on the left of a person facing downstream. Also "Left Bank" ***Yes***

7. Define "Left bank".

The bank of the river on the left of a person facing downstream. Also "River Left" ***Yes***

8. Define "Right bank".

The bank of the river on the left of a person facing downstream. Also "River Right" ***Yes***

9.. Define "upstream wind" What casts would you teach ?

Wind blowing against the direction of the flowing water. Single Spey. Snap T. ***Agree***

10. Define "downstream wind" What casts would you teach ?

Wind blowing in the same direction as the flowing water. Double Spey. Snake Roll. ***Agree***

11,. A body building, testosterone poisoned fellow insists on applying excess power and speed to the cast. Any suggestions on how to slow him down?

Give him a limber rod fitted with a heavy line and tell him that each tailing loop will cost him a dollar.

Raise the ante to $5.00 ! Many other ways of doing this. We'll see what others have to say. G.

(continued on page 31)

12. What is "spey waltz" timing?

Single Spey - "Lift 2 3, Loop 2 3, Cast 2 3, Drop."

Double Spey - "Lift 2 3, Sweep 2 3, Loop 2 3, Cast 2 3, Drop."

That'll work. G.

13. What is the difference between a SINGLE SPEYCAST and a SWITCH CAST?

The Single Spey incorporates a change of direction. ***Yes.***

14. In as few words as possible, describe the main differences between a speycast and a "straight line overhead cast" using a two-handed rod.

The speycast incorporates a backcast made under the rod tip, a water anchor & a change of direction. ***Yes.***

15. We hear the term BALANCED TACKLE . What is usually meant by this :

a. When talking about single handed straight line casting tackle?

A line of the rod manufacturer's suggested weight, on the lightest reel practicable.

Yes. Another way to put it: Proper match between line and rod. G.

b. When discussing two handed spey tackle?

A line of the rod manufacturer's suggested weight and a reel of such weight as will balance the rod longitudinally at about the preferred top hand position. ***Yes.***

16. What is a "white mouse"?

The characteristic spray from the line as it tears off the water surface during the "sweep" of a cast having a waterborne anchor. ***Yes ..... especially on the double spey. G.***

17. What is meant by the term, "anchor"?

The friction provided by the leader and any of the fly line in contact with the water surface immediately prior to the forward stroke of any speycast.

Yes. Some use the terms, "splashdown" and some say "line stick". G.

18. What is a "D-loop"?

That portion of the line bellying behind the rod immediately prior to the forward stroke of any speycast. ***Yes.***

19. Tell us one advantage of using the speycasts to fish a river?

Less unobstructed space required behind the caster. ***Yes.***

20. Which is the best angle of alignment between the target & the D-loop when making a single speycast?

a. 90 degrees.
b. 45 degrees.
c. 180 degrees.
d. No particular angle of alignment.

c. 180 degrees.

Agree.

From Ally Gowans -

3. What do you tell students about stance? The most important thing about stance is comfort and balance. Casts should always be made whilst casting into comfort so you should be positioned facing your desired casting direction in whatever way you can with comfort and balance. Spey casting with a genuine open stance I think is dangerous in a fast current and for me at least inhibits turning into comfort. However where you put your feet is often not optional and you should be able to make most casts with various foot positions. I give students the exercise of false casting from extreme open to extreme closed foot positions with SH rods.

(continued on page 32)

19. Tell us one advantage of using the speycasts to fish a river ? The whole reason for speycasts existing is to sensibly minimise the space required to cast, this is "the one advantage" of speycasts although we can think of other benefits like not cracking flies off so easily and less likelihood of flies tangling (in addition to the other answers you have received).

You're certainly right about some other benefits as well when river fishing. Going to two-handed fishing with properly chosen tackle has made it easier for some as they age. I've pointed out before that Jim Green was one example. Of course, one reason for this is that you have two hands sharing the workload. Another is that with one cast, one can gain needed distance and presentation whereas with single-handed casting, more time and effort is spent retrieving line from the dangle to start the cast and even more with false casting.

I've also been in a salmon fishing circumstance where I was using a 9' single handed rod, but the salmon were taking on the swing farther out in the river. The Europeans who were using long two handed rods (some 18' !) were able to place the swing out where it needed to be. They caught fish when I couldn't. It wasn't that they could CAST farther .... in fact those anglers really couldn't. But with those long rods it enabled them to place the SWING way out farther.

Pearl #3 - Technical stuff

Les Rosenthal had pointed out in one of his messages, that some of our material was technical. Here is my answer to him:

Your comment, **"I'm studying diligently but find many of your discussions a bit technical "** deserves a separate reply.

Our Study Group deliberations often go a good measure beyond what is needed as direct as well as background information to pass the MCI exam. Much more importantly, to help us be the best informed Masters we can be ... test or no test !

The last thing we intended was to present a list of answers to questions likely to come up on either the oral or the practical part of the test.

Last year, we did take the sample questions from the Master Study Guide and come up with answers .... but these were only ***sample*** questions. We offered a range of answers from members of the Group along with my comments.

This way, we avoid **"teaching to the test"** which I think is not a good way to do it... rather I intend to have us teach one another as we literally exhaust certain topics many of which have little chance of actually appearing on an exam.

As I do this, my "reward" is that I learn mountains of information from you... our members ! An additional one is the satisfaction I get from seeing so many of you candidates take the exams with confidence and pass.

Having Master candidates answer questions with a SHORT ANSWER backed up by a more detailed one I think is great training for them as they prepare for their orals.

PS: Note that our Group messages teach by TOPIC . One of the study habits I find so effective for MCI candidates is to do this with multiple references rather than simply reading each book all the way through.

I recommend taking each topic and looking it up in several books and other reference materials to gain the perspective and language of several different teachers and authors. The well-informed Master will then come to his/her own conclusions. This leads to much deeper understanding of fly casting and fly fishing.

This way, when taking the exam you may be asked a question the answer to which you don't have .... no problem. You can use the vast background information you have to think it through and come to a logical conclusion.

You'll note that we sometimes digress with joking comments and sometimes chide one another. This helps make it FUN ! An important ingredient as Lefty Kreh has pointed out many times. **Gordy**

(continued on page33)

Pearl #4 - Back Loops of Roll or Spey Type Casts by Al Buhr

First some notes and clarifications. The following are observations within my use and as well, observed being used by other casters/fishers. I will detail some differences of two specific methods, which in my opinion, is the inner core to back-loops. Having an option to contort or skew a cast (back-loop) greatly widens fishing opportunity, especially in popular rivers where easy access areas are often overfished. However, for some enthusiasts, a cast is bound by rigid rules, partly based on mechanics (within that method) and instilled by the reluctance to test boundaries, or to seek different ways.

In a single-hand overhead cast there are no absolutes; back loops and front loops can change in size, shape and plane. The 'why and how' to a cast is guided by the presentation or situation. In the same regard, a method or style in which a single-hand overhead is created can shift how a cast can best perform within a series of related tasks.

In common, a roll or spey-type cast there is no absolute to a back-loop (D-loop). The back-loop shape, depth, plane, and the level of energy applied at points of back-loop formation can all vary. The control of a back-loop (shape, plane, energy) is similar to the forward cast of a single-hand cast. For example, in a single-hand cast, the forward cast can be over-powered, under-powered, or skewed out of plane to create a desired effect or presentation. Likewise the back-loop (shape, plane, energy) can shift form, allowing the cast to fit within the confines of the situation. However, how and to what degree a back-loop can be altered is limited to the constraints of the casting method.

I have observed **two distinct methods** in forming a roll or spey-type cast; the **Straight-line** and **Constant Tension**. Each is effective, and interchangeable (to a degree). To compare these two methods, envision an overhead cast with parallel loops (Straight-line); versus a Belgium or elliptical type cast (Constant Tension). The Straight-line method, partly due to the "stop" (intentional commitment of directional energy) has limitations and is best to abide to the 180-degree principle. In the Constant Tension, a distinct stop is not employed in the back-stroke, allowing the back-loop to be altered (as to the shape, plane, or energy levels).

The Straight-line is very efficient mechanically; whereas Constant Tension is very efficient within the fishing situation, one element of the core differences. Straight-line enthusiasts can become entrenched with absolutes and may lose sight of a primary objective; presenting a fly with no - or limited back space area.

I believe it is import to acknowledge and distinguish Straight-line and Constant tension as separate methods; they are as two different faiths. Guiding rules or fundamental principles that encompass each method (Straight line or Constant tension) have many common points. However, Constant Tension allows a degree of latitude in the bending of fundamental rules. Those with a strong belief in the Straight-line tend to have misperceptions of the latitude in Constant Tension; very understandable in the 'flat world' view of a cast.

For instance, in an overhead cast, having loops near parallel, places opposing energies (back-to-forward casts) in close alignment. A Straight-line roll/speycast attempts to mirror this notion with use of a lineal lift and 'V'-loop. Due to the 'stop' and rod unloading to straighten (reloading in the forward stroke), only minor adjustments can be made. In Straight-line, all subtle variances need to stay within or near the casting plane. A good method, within its area of operation. **Brother Al.**

(continued on page34)

Pearl #5 - Aerial mend quiz....

Here is a list of questions on practicing aerial mends :

Answers #1

1.) Before starting practice, can you answer these brief questions about in-the-air mends ?

a. How would you define the term, MEND ? Repositioning of line to achieve a desired layout/float/swim

OK... Even better: "Repositioning the line AFTER THE CAST to achieve ..... " G.

b. Name at least two uses for an aerial mend. Promote a drag free drift. Adjust the swim/float of a sunken fly. Avoid an obstacle. Combat wind. Avoid lining a fish.

Yes. One might add : To counter a tongue of current (although this is one reason to gain a drag free drift, as you said.) G.

c. Tell us two differences between a curve cast and an aerial mend. A mend is made using rod movement after loop formation and can be placed anywhere in the layout. A curve cast is made using rod movement prior to loop formation and always affects the distal end of the line.

Agree. Dennis Grant and I were critiquing mends and curves a short while ago. He emphasized your last clause, "and always affects the distal end of the line."

My KISS PRINCIPLE way of looking at that it this. With a curve cast, the fly and leader should be part of the curved layout. With a mend, you should have a "bump" in the line along the course of the layout, but the fly end of the line should be straight beyond the "bump" (mend). G.

2.) You are starting to practice "wiggle mends". You wish to make a series of small mends and then a series of large ones.

a. How do you make the series of small (narrow) wiggle mends ? (Say 1' wide)

After the loop has formed, move the rod tip horizontally 1" either side of the loop plane for the desired number of times. Slip line as required to ensure that the fly reaches the target.

Yes. Key word, here, is TIP. KISS ans: "Wiggle the <u>tip</u> fast but not very far" (More tip than whole rod.) G.

b. What do you do differently to make your series of wide mends? (About 4' wide)

Move the rod 4' either side.

Yes. Key word, here, is ROD . KISS ans: " Move the <u>whole rod</u> back and forth farther with your arm " (Dennis also reminded me of this !) G.

c. You want to place a series of wiggle mends out at a distance with a straight layout between you and the first mend. How do you do that ?

Stop. Make the required mends. Cease mending before the loop unrolls completely.

OK. I like to add this: To place the mends way out at a distance, start wiggling IMMEDIATELY after the cast. Do it early and high. G.

d. When would you elect to do that when fishing ?

Presenting across a tongue of turbulent faster current when fishing a mostly even flow.

Yes. Might also consider using it if you are standing in slow water fishing downstream, when you have faster water farther down river. G.

e. Now you want to place a series of wiggle mends close to you with a straight line layout between the last mend and the target. How do you do that ? Stop/Wait/Wiggle

Agree. Do it LATE. Helps, too, to wiggle the rod LOW, closer to the water. G.

f. When would you use that technique when fishing ?

When the close line will be affected by that faster current ***Yes. G.***

(continued on page35)

3.) You are starting to practice single mends to the right and to the left.
a. What movements do you make to form one NARROW mend ? (About 18" wide)
Narrow (18") horizontal deviation then return of the rod tip
Yes. Move the rod tip just a short distance to one side, then back to the midline. G.
b. " " " " " " " " " WIDE mend ? (About 5' wide)   Wide (5') deviation and return
Yes. Move the rod a greater distance to one side then back to the middle. G.
c. " " " " " " " " " LONG mend ? (About 10' long)   Tip deviation followed by a delay then a return
Agree. the LENGTH of the mend is controlled by the time spent with the rod tip out to the side before bringing it back to the middle. G.
d. " " " " " " " " " SHORT mend (About 2' long)   Tip deviation followed rapidly by a return
Yes. Return should be to the midline. (As you know, if you return too far ... say beyond the mid-line, you end up with an "S" mend. G.
d. When would you use a narrow mend while fishing ?
To prolong a drag free drift when casting across a narrow faster current. To avoid a small obstacle.
Agree. G.
e. When would you use a wide mend while fishing ?
To prolong a drag free drift when casting across a wide faster current. To adjust the drift/swim of a sunken fly. To avoid a larger obstacle. When fishing to the bank from a drift boat.
Agree. G.
f. When might you elect to use a long mend when fishing ?
To place all of the layout on water flowing at the same rate.
OK. Some might argue that a reach mend would be better for that. I'd answer: To counter a wide tongue of current. G.

4.) Would you use targets as you practice these mends ?   Yes
That's what I'd do. Takes the guess work out of it. G.
5.) You want to place mends at various distances. What do you do differently in placing a mend at 35' from you than you did when you placed one at 15' ?   "Stop/Mend" as opposed to "Stop/Wait/Mend"
OK. Also: Make that mend low and later for the 15' mark. Make it higher and earlier for the 35' one and consider slipping line. G.
6.) Realizing that it may be difficult, you now want to place a mend way out there at 45' from you. How would you do that ?   Good loop, high line speed Stop/Mend/Shoot.
You got it ! Carry more line, sufficient line off the reel, high line speed, make it early and high, THEN SHOOT THE ENTIRE THING OUT THERE. Helps to aim and thrust the rod directly at your target to minimize friction between the line and the rod guides as you shoot so the mend isn't pulled straight with that high line speed. G.
Gordy

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Answers #2
My brief comments in his text in *red italics .... G.*
Here is a list of questions on practicing aerial mends :
1.) Before starting practice, can you answer these brief questions about in-the-air mends ?
a. How would you define the term, MEND ?
A mend is a change of position of the line before or after power application
I see it as performed after the cast. G.
b. Name at least two uses for an aerial mend.
Compensate currents or to avoid that the line falls on obstacles (rocks, weeds) in the water ***Yes. G.***

(continued on page36)
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c. Tell us two differences between a curve cast and an aerial mend.
A curve cast is made during the phase of powerapplication. You can´t affect the timing like you could do with an arial mend (can you?, not sure) ***The curve cast IS made during power application whereas the mend is performed after the stop of the cast. You are correct that the timing is different. Why ? Because movements made during the cast mainly affect the fly leg of the loop whereas movements made after the cast affect the rod leg. EXAMPLE: If you wish to place a tail way out at end of the line, you make the error DURING the cast and LATE. If you wish to place a mend way out there, you make the move AFTER the cast and do it EARLY. G.***
2.) You are starting to practice "wiggle mends". You wish to make a series of small mends and then a series of large ones.
a. How do you make the series of small (narrow) wiggle mends ? (Say 1' wide)
Move your rod tip in short series of wiggles (1' wide) ***Yes. G.***
b. What do you do differently to make your series of wide mends? (About 4' wide")
Same as above with wider movements (4'wide**)** ***Yes. (Best to move not just the tip, but your arm and the whole rod.) G.***
c. You want to place a series of wiggle mends out at a distance with a straight layout between you and the first mend. How do you do that ?
Perform your wiggles right after power application ***Yes. Helps to have a bit higher trajectory, too. G.***
d. When would you elect to do that when fishing ? When I have a faster current to the far side ***Yes. G.***
e. Now you want to place a series of wiggle mends close to you with a straight line layout between the last mend and the target. How do you do that ?
Perform your wiggles dalayed after powerapplication ***Yes. Helps a bit to do it low, also. G.***
f. When would you use that technique when fishing ? When the current is faster to my side ***Agree. G.***
3.) You are starting to practice single mends to the right and to the left.
a. What movements do you make to form one NARROW mend ? (About 18" wide)
a small and fast movement of about 18" ***Yes. (from side to side.) G.***
b. " " " " " " " " WIDE mend ? (About 5' wide)
a bigger and fast movement of about 5' ***Yes. (Perhaps just a little bit slower) G.***
c. " " " " " " " " LONG mend ? (About 10' long)
a bigger and slower movement of about 10' ***OK.... though it doesn't have to be a bigger or wider movement. Moving it out to the side determines the WIDTH of the mend. How much time it takes to do it determines the LENGTH. G.***
d. " " " " " " " " SHORT mend (About 2' long)
a fast movement of about 2' ***Yes. Movement out to the side, then return to the mid line. G.***
d. When would you use a narrow mend while fishing ?
slow flowing water ***Yes ... or a narrow tongue of current. G.***
e. When would you use a wide mend while fishing ?
Fast flowing water ***Yes. G.***
f. When might you elect to use a long mend when fishing ?
When the current between me and the target is more even ***OK .. or to counter a wide tongue of current. G.***
4.) Would you use targets as you practice these mends ? Yes ***Yes. G.***
5.) You want to place mends at various distances. What do you do differently in placing a mend at 35' from you than you did when you placed one at 15' ?
I perform the mend earlier after the powerapplication as I would do with one at 15' ***Yes. G.***
6.) Realizing that it may be difficult, you now want to place a mend way out there at 45' from you. How would you do that ? The principles stay the same! ***Correct ! However, you might wish to consider shooting the mend. (An option). G.***

(continued on page 37)

New questions to finish up on our discussion of MENDS :
Answers from **Al Crise in black**, Gordy in blue.
1.) Define an on-the-water mend.
Reposition of the fly line to improve drag free drift of the fly.
Yes. I'd add, "performed after the line has landed on the water." G.
2.) What is a VERTICAL HUMP MEND ?
After the 'stop' the rod tip is moved vertically placing slack in the rod leg.
Agree. Sometimes called a "pop mend". The rod tip is moved up and down to make vertical waves in the line. Then the line falls in waves of slack. Can be done with one "pop" or multile ones. G.
3.) When would you use it when fishing a stream ?
Short distances, down stream or weighted fly, to get it down in the water column *Yes. G.*
4.) Is it performed on-the-water or in-the-air ?
This is a In The Air mend. (Nature of Fly Casting pp.198)
It can also be used as an on-the-water mend. EXAMPLE: You have fish feeding down stream from you. You made a short cast with a dry fly. To make a good drag free drift to the fish, you make a series of small vetical mends ... Pop..Pop...Pop...pop.... The fly reaches the feeding area neither drowning or dragging. G.
5.) Briefly describe a REACH MEND.
Drawing the rod tip to the side (Up stream) after the loop is formed. Line is slipped or a cast past the target area with a draw back to set the slack.
Yes. Since it is a reach MEND, it is done after the cast. (A reach CAST is performed during the cast.. before RSP.) G.
6.) One author described a PARACHUTE MEND in text. Who is that ? Cite your reference.
Jason Borger Nature of Fly Casting pp.85 Yes. G.
7.) Briefly describe it.
After the loop is formed raising the rod to draw in some slack then letting it fall to the water's surface. Agree. G.
8.) What is a STACK MEND ?
Reposition of the fly line to improve drift. After the line in on the water moving the line up stream or across, to set slack where needed. By making an underpowered cast. Or Flip of the rod tip.
Agree. One can make a series of stack mends if, for example, fishing with a full sink line in an attempt to have it descend as far as desired in the water column. There are some tricks to this to prevent the fly line from crossing over the rod tip and tangling. Will address that at a different time.G.
9.) When would you use it when fishing ?
Most any moving water to improve the drift. Re setting the slack.
Yes. adding slack. Also, adding to the sinking of the line when desired. G.
10.) Would you ever make an on-the-water DOWNSTREAM MEND ? **yes**
11.) When ? **T o keep the drag off the fly line in multiple current paths. Longer drifts.**
Agree. Also, to avoid an obstruction (Flip a mend over it.) G.
12.) Briefly describe a PUDDLE MEND.
Loop is aimed just a little high. The rod is dropped to the surface faster than the loop/line drops this give a "S" in the rod leg of the line.
Yes. One could call that a "cast-mend". Same as the PILE CAST...the dropping of the rod after the cast itself would be the mend produced by what Mac Brown termed, "ROD FADE". G.
13.) For what is it used ?
Down stream mends, or cross current where multiple current paths occur to reduce drag. Yes. G.
14.) For making mends, which is more efficient... A short rod or a long one ? **Long**

(continued on page 38)

Pearl #5 - Aerial mend quiz.... (con't)

15.) Why ? **Better control of the slack or rod leg of the line. Further reach or over obstacles.**
Sure. Putting it another way, the extra length allows you to lift and move more line. The angler can move large amounts of line for huge mends with a 15' Spey rod. G.

16.) Would you ever add a CURVE MEND to a REACH MEND ?
Yes.
17.) For what reason ?
Compound casts are a mark of a good fisherman. They are better able to control the slack line and drift of the fly.
True. In this instance, we can call it a "compound mend". G.

18.) You are trying to place an aerial mend to counter a tongue of fast current 40" out on the river. What do you do with your line hand after your loop has formed ?
SHOOT some line to maintain the mend in the rod leg. This loop or mend is made just after the loop is formed. If you did not shoot the drag would pull the mend out.
Yes. In this case, LET GO OF THE LINE. (Also helps to aim the rod at your target and even thrust it a bit in that direction..... all done so the fast moving loop doesn't straighten out and ruin your mend on the way.)

19.) Back in the 1930's & 40's, there were very few salt water fly fishermen. Some of them fishing NE waters, use the term MEND to mean something very different from our present meaning.
Do you know what that was ?
Repair of the line to over come wave action.???
NOT a fair question. Only old F....ts like me who were there would likely remenber that to these anglers, the term MEND meant pulling back with the line hand after the cast (a strip) to straighten out any slack on the layout. G.
20.) Would you ever make two aerial mends after your cast ?
YES
21.) For what purpose ?
I call these compound casts. To make the line lay as needed. i.e. Fly set to the left with a hook mend and more 'slack' set up stream to the right as in a Z cast. Or Snake roll to get more 'slack' up stream in fast water.
Slack or puddle mends to get my slack over the sinking fly i.e. Beaded or Clouser style. Then set as much up current as I can. I use this in flats fishing the guts on a falling tide to get my fly down in the water column.
Casting just a little high, you have about 2 seconds to set your slack as needed.
Agree... though I'd call them compound mends. Some reserve the name "compound" to mean a mend within a mend such as the curve mend placed within a reach mend.
One might have two obstructions each one handled with mend .... two mends after one cast. OR we might use it to counter two seperate tongues of current as we place a fly beyond both for a drift.

(continued on page 39)

Pearl #6 - Ideal loop?

Question: What is an "IDEAL" loop ???

From Peter Morse: An ideal loop is the appropriate loop size, shape, and orientation for the presentation that is required.

From Gordy: When I accessed my messages, I figured someone would fall into the trap of saying "An ideal loop is a tight loop".

Gordy on loops:
When we use the term, "ideal loop" we must remember that this is only ideal for some but not all circumstances.

If I ask candidates the question: WHAT IS A "GOOD LOOP" ? The answer I'm looking for is this:
A good loop is one designed for the casting or fishing task undertaken.

Examples :
When distance or casting into a wind = A small, sharp, tight loop. (Made with an almost straight line path of the rod tip to which may be added a tiny upward and outward thrust at the end of the cast.)

When casting a weighted nymph = A well-controlled wide loop with the fly leg fairly straight and the rod leg lower. (made by placing additional convexity of rod tip path at the end of the stroke, even just past RSP)

When casting with the wind to take advantage of a "kiting effect" = A wide loop with the fly leg high and the rod leg straight. (Made by placing the convexity of rod tip path at the start of the stroke.)

When flipping a fly beneath a deep overhang on the river, the "MALONEY CAST" employs an out of plane tailing loop = A purposely done tailing loop with a side-arm (off horizontal rod plane) cast made with a concave rod tip path and control of power application such that the concavity is placed late in the stroke. (a super specialty "way out" cast rarely used.)*

When "designing" your loop to fit the task at hand, remember this: What you do ***prior*** to loop formation (at RSP) determines what happens to the fly leg. What you do ***after*** loop formation, determines what happens to the rod leg.

That "ideal" loop for a particular circumstance and task, may well be purposely designed with loop legs which are not parallel (as in the last three examples.).

The difference between things we do before loop formation and those done afterward also explains why we make a mend move early after the stroke to place it out at a distance.... whereas if we want to place a tail way out there at the end, we make the convexity in the rod tip path late and within the stroke.

* THE NATURE OF FLY CASTING, Jason Borger, p. 76.

Spain 2009

FFF Certification in Spain

by Chuck Easterling

The first FFF casting instructor certification in Spain took place on May 28-31, 2009. This event was co-ordinated and hosted by members of the CNL (Comision Nacional de Lanzado) and held near Segovia, Spain. The testing was held in conjunction with a CNL fly casting instruction event that was open to the public.

Lasse Karlsson and I were asked to conduct the testing and I will long remember the wonderful hospitality that was extended by the members of CNL. I think, however, the most memorable part of this testing were the casting discussions that took place despite the barriers of language.

Lasse Karlsson, Aitor Coteron, José Ramon Rodrigues and Chuck Easterling

Several CNL members emphasized that the FFF testing being held in conjunction with a scheduled CNL event was being viewed as one of the most important fly casting events ever to be held in Spain. During the CNL event one could not help but notice the presence of television cameras and the taking of several interviews.

Three new MCIs working on pantomime drill during my workshop. There are three people visible - From the left: *Cesar de la Hoz,* middle *Carlos Azpilicueta,* and right *Alejandro Viñuales*

Starting on the left and going clockwise: *Aitor Coteron, Jose Luis Serna, Jose Arbildi (Pepe), Raul Portes, Chuck Easterling, Alejandro Viñuales, Cesar de la Hoz and Lasse Karlsson*

The enthusiasm of those who attended the CNL event was impressive as was the skill of the CNL instructors. Lasse and I were asked to conduct public workshops and it was, at least for me, an experience to do this through an interpreter. It was evident, based upon the questions during the workshops, that fly casting is a subject of intense interest and serious study in Spain.

Congratulations to Carlos Azpilicueta, Alejandro Vinuales and Cesar de la Hoz who are now MCI's and Aitor Coteron, Jose Ramon Rodgiques and Jordi Babusci who are now CI's.

And a special thank you to Raul Portes for his hospitality and the friendship extended by him.

Upcoming Events for 2009

Ireland 2009 Baronscourt Estate Newtownsteward, N. Ireland Al Buhr Tom Woods	Instructor Master Two-handed International testing in effect for this location	Aug. 28-30, 2009
The Netherlands Schimmert, Netherlands Willliam van der Vorst	Instructor Master International testing in effect for this location	Sept 25-27
Mtn Home, AR FFF Southern Council Conclave Chuck Easterling	CCI (10) MCCI (2)	Oct 1-3, 2009
Sweden 2009 Malmkoping, Sweden Al Buhr Thomas Berggren	Instructor Master Two-handed International testing in effect for this location	Oct 9-11, 2009
Richland Center, WI David Barron	Instructor - FULL Master (2)	Oct 10 - 11, 2009
Lodi, CA FFF Northern California Council Conclave Eric Sherar		Oct 23 - 24, 2009
Russia 2009 Moscow Raf Mascaro	Instructor Two-handed International testing in effect for this location	Oct 16-17, 2009
Australia 2009 Jindabyne, Australia Soon Lee Brian Henderson	Instructor Master International testing in effect for this location	Oct 23-25, 2009
Orlando, FL Dusty Sprague	Instructor (10/23/09) FULL Master (10/24/09) FULL	Oct 23 - 24, 2009
Lodi, CA FFF Northern California Council Conclave Eric Sherar	Instructor (6) Master (2) Two-handed (1)	Oct 23, 2009
EWF Fly Fishing Show Monastery Furstenfeld, Germany William van der Vorst Uwe Kaptein	Instructor Master	April 17-18, 2010

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

CONGRATULATIONS

New Casting Instructors

Masa Mukaida – Japan
Becky Hulsey – Talking Rock, GA
Deb Bowen – Marietta, GA
David Barbieri – Marysville, CA
Gary 'Butch' Harper – Ketchum, ID
David Drake – Long Beach, CA
W. Bart Larmouth – Dallas, TX
Travis 'Tex' Moore – Dallas, TX
Bob Jost – Hailey, ID
Woodward 'Scooter' Gardiner – Ketchum, ID
Greg Bencivenga – Quincy, WA
Jordi Babusci – Spain
Jose Aitor Coteron – Spain
Jose Ramon Rodriguez – Spain
Kenneth Bachman, Jr. - Cherry Log, LA
April Vokey - BC, Canada
Sara Yeager - Peoria, AZ
Marion Tallon – Phoenix, AZ
Donna Walkuski – Phoenix, AZ
Barlow Bird – Spanish Fork , UT
Will Turek – Hudson, OH
Ryuichi Komatsu – Japan
Bill McMahan – Ketchum, ID
Adrian Psuty – Rancho Cordova, CA
Mark Borserine – Prairie Village, KS
Jim Rainey – Carlisle, PA
Mike Bordenkircher – Bellevue, ID
Mark Osmer – Ketchum, ID
Gene Steiner – Ketchum, ID
Terry Ring – Sun Valley, ID
Jess Kiesel – Ketchum, ID
Bret Bishop – Boise, ID
Erek Kooyman – Grand Rapids, MI
Taki Daisuke – Japan
Mark Ozog – Great Falls, MT
Don Childress – Sandpoint, ID
William Rakozy – Elk River, MN
Mike Callan – Greeley, CO
Wayne Suhr – Parker, CO
Kathy Kim – Placentia, CA
Mark King – Centennial, CO

New Master Casting Instructors

Stefan Siikavaara – Sweden
Alejandro Vinuales Guillen – Spain
Carlos Azpilicueta – Spain
Andrew Toft – Scotland
Tim Lawson – Pasadena, CA
Peter DeBaun – Hailey, ID
Keith Richard – Breaux Bridge, LA

From The Editor

Summer is coming to an end! The Conclave has come and gone already. We're already looking forward to the next one.

If you haven't attended a conclave, then you just don't understand the tremendous effect it has on us. Not only meeting friends again who we only see once a year but finally putting a face to a name is great as well.

The Conclave was in Loveland, Colorado. Loveland is about an hour north of Denver and the Denver airport - not far from the Wyoming border.

The facilities were fantastic - a beautiful hotel/convention centre that was 'pet friendly'. What a treat!

The weather wasn't the greatest and at least one workshop was chased off the water due to thunder and lightning and RAIN!

Camping in the rain is quite an experience as well. We nicknamed our camping spot the Village Swamp. No leaks but some fantastic thunder & lightning shows and buckets of rain plus some wind storms. Yuck!

It was truly an international event this year. We had members from Italy, Australia, Ireland and beyond.

The only drawback was that the casting and workshop facilities were about 15-20 minutes away from the hotel. There was lots of driving involved. Thanks to my GPS (which was a present intended just for this trip) I didn't get too lost although I was heading into the hills around Livingston on the way.

I have to tell you about my road trip to the conclave. It was fantastic! I drove thru some of the most fantastic scenery on the way home - in fact the whole way. However when you have done a trip a hundred times, you tend not to take in the scenery, but I drove thru some brand new country for me on the way home and it was spectacular. I left Vancouver, B.C. and drove to Calgary, Alberta to visit family, then headed down to Livingston (I know - its been too long to stay away!) and stayed with Molly Semenik. We went fishing on the Yellowstone for a day before I headed down to Loveland. My total trip was 4200 miles and round trip I drove thru B.C., Alberta, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado and then home thru Wyoming, Idaho, Utah, Oregon, Washington and home to B.C. What a trip!

In my report on the Loop, I expressed a sincere thank you to both Gordy Hill and Al Crise for their 'carte blanche' access to their study groups' material for use in the Loop. This is the Pearls column. I think that this material is so useful, not only if you are preparing for a certification, but it keeps everyone active and involved. The quizes are great and everyone should take them to see where you are and if you need to get more up to date.

The CBOG meeting went smoothly. We have some completed projects that you will see soon. The CI Committee has completed their CI Testing & Workshop Protocol. It will run in the Fall issue of the Loop as well as on the web site. Watch for an index of the Loop as well..... help - I'm out of space.

Take care and go fishing.

Talk to you soon.
Denise

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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:

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CONCLAVE Pics - 2009

Gordy Hill and Jim Valle in a workshop

A great young caster!

Peter O'Reilly and Denise Maxwell

A workshop at the school