

## FOUNDING OF THE WENATCHEE VALLEY FLY FISHERS

The organization of the Wenatchee Valley Fly Fishers was spearheaded by Bill Barnett and Rob Hannon of Wenatchee, and Jeff Meredith of Plain. An article by Dick Piper appeared in the Sunday edition of the *Wenatchee World* on April 22, 1984 describing their organizational efforts. A quote by Bill Barnett who describes fly fishing as a "solitary sport, the most enriching sport I know of" appears in the article. At the time the only obvious void in the state — without a fly fishing club— was the general area of the Wenatchee Valley. These three individuals felt there was a sufficient number of fly angling enthusiasts in the area to warrant a club—people who wanted to organize for "social, educational and political reasons." The article listed the phone numbers of the three for contact. An invitation form for interested individuals also appeared in the paper.

There were numerous meetings of Bill Barnett and Rob Hannon to do preliminary work and to answer "what's cooking or hatching" questions from the public about the formation of a new club. They had to put together the Who, What, When, Where, Why and How of starting an organization.

Around June 1984 a core group comprised of Bill Barnett, Rob Hannon, Gary Anderson, Ray Bull, and Greg McEwen formed an organizing committee which began meeting regularly to firm up a plan of action. Due to the need to accomplish many startup tasks they decided to put off the first organizational meeting until the Fall of 1984, on advice of experienced fly club leaders around the state .

Bill Barnett, Rob Hannon, Ray Bull and Gary Anderson attended a fly fisher seminar at Whislin' Jacks on the Tieton River Sept. 8-9, sponsored by the Northwest Regional Council of the Federation of Fly Fishers. There they were able to consult with the FFF leaders about the formation of a Wenatchee club.

On September 22 the Washington Council of the FFF held its Fall meeting in Wenatchee. Any local fly fisher expressing an interest in a club was invited to the meeting. After dinner that evening the Wenatchee core group met informally with officers of the council to get general advice and to formulate an agenda for a first organizing meeting set for Thursday October 18. A notice of that first meeting appeared in the *World* . It read: Attention Fly Fishers! First organizational meeting Thursday October 18th

at the Chieftain. Dinner and social at 6:00 PM, meeting starts at 7:30 — film and door prize!

Acting chairman Bill Barnett started that first organizational meeting promptly at 7:30 with 41 people in attendance. Gordy Young, a long time FFF member and senior advisor to the Northwest Council of the Federation was the featured speaker. He discussed the advantages of having a club and why a club should consider being affiliated with the Federation of Fly Fishers. Ray Bull, an organizing committee member, gave a brief review of proposed bylaws. Based on the results of a questionnaire made available during the meeting, the majority of those present preferred that:

- The club be named the Wenatchee Valley Fly Fishers
- The club be an adult-only club (minimum age 14 for membership)
- The meetings be held on Thursday evening of the third week
- An optional social and dinner session precede the monthly meetings. (The second and third of these have since been changed.)

A film, The Way of a Trout was shown. The door prize, a Wheatly fly box was won by Warren Travis. Acting secretary Gary Anderson recorded the events of that evening.

A second organizational meeting was held November 25 at the Chieftain with 30+ seriously interested in participating in a club attending. An overwhelming majority supported having a 100% Federation of Fly Fishers membership club, chartered under the FFF. Ty Duhamel, a local attorney interested in participating in the club, volunteered to be its legal advisor. He discussed the advantages that incorporation would have for the club. He suggested it would: limit the liability of the club and individual directors, allow the club to petition for tax-exempt status, and formalize the club so that it might exist as an organization over time. The proposed bylaws that had been sent to each person on the mailing list were discussed and approved after minor revision. Greg and Tori McEwen of Leavenworth displayed a proposed club logo. Bill Barnett, Len Padillo, and Ron Stallings volunteered for a committee to nominate club officers.

On December 13th the third organizational meeting was held at the Four Seasons in East Wenatchee. Acting chairman Bill Barnett called the meeting to order with 23 persons in attendance. Ty Duhamel summarized the prepared Articles of Incorporation and invited those who wished to be initial incorporators to sign them. Twenty three of those present did sign. Ray Bull updated the status of the prepared bylaws.

Preceding the election of officers, Bill explained the club offices and the responsibilities of the board of directors. Ron Stalling, chairman of the nominating committee, then introduced the slate of candidates. They were:

President-Ray Bull, first V.P.-John Connolly, second V.P.-Greg McEwen, Secretary-Gary Anderson, Treasurer- Rob Hannon, Ghillie- Mike Chambers, past acting President- Bill Barnett, and Directors Archie Mills and Dick Piper. Nominations from the floor were called for, there were none. A motion was made to accept the candidates by unanimous ballot and the motion was carried by those present.

On January 17, 1985 the first regular meeting of the Wenatchee Valley Fly Fishers took place at the Chieftain Restaurant with 15 members present. The dues structure proposed by the board of directors was presented. Three committees were formed: the projects committee, the outings committee and the membership committee. The Charter Membership list of 30 included: Gary Anderson, Bill Barnett, Brad Bockemohle, Scott Brixley, Ray Bull, Mike and Melanie Chambers, John Connolly, Lowell Doyle, Ty Duhamel, Rob Hannon, Kurt Hedeem, John Little, Greg and Tori McEwen, Dan Miller, Archie Mills, John Murio, Chris Nystrom, Dave Osburn, Len Padilla, Ken Paton, Pete Rich, Dick Piper, Bud Rechterman, John Schraecher, Glenn Smith, Ron Stallings, Mark Syria, Warren Travis, Gordon West, and Ray Wonacott. There was also a list of 28 prospective members.