

# Casting Times



## Santa Clarita Casting Club

### Master Caster and Dean of Fly Fishers: Lefty Kreh

#### Items of Special Interest

- Intro. to fly fishing basics class peaks interest (p. 1 story)
- There's plenty to keep fly fishers busy this fall (p. 2 "Events")
- "My dream is for an FFF International Academy...." Mel Krieger (p. 2 "Letter")
- New products news (p. 7 story)

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I crave instruction. Yes, you read that correctly. I love to be taught. It's the best and fastest way to learn anything. Whether it's golf, guitar, tennis, writing, investing, fly tying, or fly casting, instruction by knowledgeable teachers makes all the difference.

Live demonstrations, instructional videos, books, magazines, how-to guides, television shows, and even YouTube demonstrations are my classroom. You probably use some of these aids yourself.

I find that the old way of teaching yourself: dependence upon that small measure of natural ability that gets you to a certain point of "Hey, this isn't so hard," then developing lots of bad habits that result from a lack of instruction and that you have to eventually un-learn, then going out to buy all the best equipment thinking (or hoping) that that will make the difference and that you can shortcut the long learning curve, then finally realizing that you cannot become proficient on your own, is not efficient, effective, or conducive to longevity in a sport or to obtaining the fullest enjoyment.

I've seen in action or been the recipient of fly fishing instruction by Joe Libeu, Joe Humphreys, Ray Bianco, Bob Middo, Bill Heard, and Mel Krieger, and these guys can make eager stu-



dents out of anyone. I'm sure that each of these instructors subscribes to the axiom "Perfect practice makes perfect." "But how," you ask, "do I practice 'perfectly?'"

I'll tell you how. You find a qualified teacher or teachers and study everything you can about their technique, philosophy, and

approach to the sport. If possible, you engage them for private or group instruction. Failing that, you buy their books and videos so that you can study their methods until you get them right. And you practice, practice, practice. And one of the best teachers in the field of fly fishing is the venerable Lefty Kreh.

Lefty, besides being a walking encyclopedia of fly fishing, is an innovator, speaker, writer, world traveler, photographer, and inductee into the Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame and the Fly Fishing Hall of Fame. As such, he has been described by author Frank Woolner as "...the best teacher of fly casting I have ever seen." Is this someone that you would like to take instruction from? You bet it is. And that's why I have reviewed Lefty's book *Advanced Fly Casting...For Greater Distance and More Effective Fishing*. I hope you enjoy Lefty's insights. If you do, then buy the book, read it a couple of times through, and practice, practice, practice.

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### Season's Community Class: Basic Elements of Fly Fishing by Connie Bullock

The Santa Clarita Casting Club held its first community services fly fishing class with the City of Santa Clarita. The class was held at the Aquatic Center on Centre Pointe Drive.

We had a good turnout of people who wanted to learn anything and everything about fly fishing. The real treasure was the support from other clubs and organizations. Several members of the Long Beach Casting Club, Sierra Pacific

Club and Sierra Pacific Adventurers showed up to lend classroom instructions and on-the-water casting. We even had one of the Santa Clarita Commissioners join the class.

The class was for four Sundays and consisted of: Class One was an introduction to fly fishing, rods, reels, lines, leaders, tippets and on-the-water instruction on the roll cast; Class Two was on knots and how to pull it all together with

instruction on the pick-up and lay down cast; Class Three was about fly selection and some entomology with instruction on the false cast. The final class was on resources stewardship, fishing etiquette, reading the water, casting presentation, and line handling.

The class was definitely well received, and the Director of the Center asked if we would consider holding the class again; so stay tuned for the next series of classes.

## Third Anniversary of SCCC: The Story: The Movie

In recognition of the Santa Clarita Casting Club's third anniversary, the story of the club's humble beginnings may bear repeating. And no, there is no movie in the works, but if there were, "A Casting Club Runs Through It" might warrant consideration.

The genesis of the Santa Clarita Casting Club is fairly common. Some enthusiasts with an idea, passion, and a vision get together and decide to form a club for like-minded fishing enthusiasts with the

same vision, passion and enthusiasm. What sets this club apart from most other casting clubs, however, is the founding members' desire to offer a local club to fly fishers who have not previously belonged to a casting club. When combined with the seeming paradox, that most of the original board members are, or have been, members of the renowned Long Beach Casting Club and wanted to replicate that rewarding experience in

Santa Clarita, it makes for a dynamic club.

Of all the ways to begin a casting club, this one may combine the most unexpected mix of ingredients: coincidence and fate. It began with a former Long Beach Casting Club president who had a desire to start a club in the Santa Clarita Valley.

She met another fly fishing enthusiast over a copy of Fly Fisherman magazine while riding the train to work. He

shared his concern that there was no casting club in a valley of over 165,000 residents--a city right on the way to Mammoth Lakes, no less. They began to scheme.

Later, this same former club president met another fly fisher from the Santa Clarita Valley at a friend's birthday party in Auburn, California. She let him in on her newly-hatched scheme for a

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*"No fly should be held in doubt, as long as the durned thing catches trout"*  
*Anonymous*

## Open Letter From Mel Krieger to Fly Fishermen Everywhere

One reel manufacturer has opined that Mel Krieger "is unquestionably the top fly fishing instructor in the world." That's quite a far-ranging compliment for a guy who began his career bait casting for black bass in Texas and Louisiana.

Recently, Mr. Krieger, a Federation of Fly Fishers (FFF) Hall of Farmer, hit upon an idea for starting what amounts to a fly fishing university. He refers to it as an "FFF International Academy." In order to reach a wider audience than his reading audience and students from the Mel Krieger School of Flyfishing with

his idea, he wrote an open letter to the fly fishing community at large asking for their support.

Below are a few of the most noteworthy excerpts from his letter that you may want to ponder or affirm directly with Mr. Krieger at his e-mail address: [mel.krieger@mac.com](mailto:mel.krieger@mac.com)

"My dream is [for] an FFF International Academy (university, learning center, or whatever) of Fly Fishing. We have tried to be a museum; failed! At our best, we are completely overshadowed by the American Museum of Fly Fishing and the

Catskill Museum. Conservation--we are a far cry from Trout Unlimited and a dozen other very effective organizations...."

"Our focus should, no must, be education--the enhancement and growth of our sport. This academy can do that. It can not only be the center of fly casting and fly tying for the U.S. It will be the center of FLY FISHING for the world."

"COURSES--I could name hundreds from certification tests and classes for guides and casting

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## Upcoming Events

11/14 7:00 pm Monthly Club Meeting

11/18 6:00 am Casting Clinic at Alameda Park

12/8 6:00 pm Christmas Party

11/17 9:00 am Bob Marriott's 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Fly Fishing Educational Fair

12/1 8:00 am Casting Clinic at Alameda Park

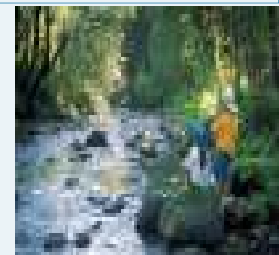
12/9 8:00 am Casting Clinic at Alameda Park

11/18 9:00 am Bob Marriott's 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Fly Fishing Educational Fair

12/4 7:00 pm Board of Directors Meeting

12/23 8:00 am Casting Clinic at Alameda Park

12/25 Christmas (Opening of Lots of Fly Fishing-Related Gifts!)



Future Fly Fishers? Start 'em early on casting lessons

## The Lure of Fly Fishing - Part Two

### by Bill Creitz

The best people are encountered while fly fishing. They are enthusiastic, passionate, quirky, patient, thoughtful, generous, observant, selective, tireless, committed, adventuresome, opinionated, traditional, gregarious, engaging. More stories can be told about fly fishermen than about the fish they catch. They will flock to a fishing show, dressed alike in their kaki shirts and logoed fishing caps, and will, as one, embrace the latest fly line or miracle floatant. At the same time, they will hike miles upstream or canoe days into the backcountry to avoid encountering another fishermen to catch fish no one has ever hooked.

Fly fishermen are passionate about their sport. They will own twenty high-end fly rods (three or four of them bamboo), four vests, ten "Made in England" fly reels, and dozens of fly boxes, yet they will spend hours on the Internet to locate that one fly supplier selling his offerings for ten cents less than the local fly shop—and then will spend all dinner long bragging about their purchases and comparing themselves favorably to Warren Buffett and Peter Lynch for financial acumen; all this to catch and then release a few wild trout.

Fly fishermen will drive to the ends of creation to arrive in time for that one Baetis hatch that lasts maybe an hour and will then pore over a vice, into the wee hours, in order to create that one perfect imitation—and several variants for good measure—to improve the odds the next afternoon. However odd these traits may seem, they serve only to endear fly fishermen to their comrades in arms. We may laugh, but we wholeheart-

edly agree: fly fishing brings out the best in people and the best people.

Good casting is its own reward. I know fly fishermen that do more casting on grass and casting ponds than they do for fish. To the uninitiated, that may seem ludicrous, but to the fly fisher who revels in the execution of a perfect cast; the unrolling of a tippet that lays the practice yarn gently, like thistledown, on the surface of the pond; the satisfaction of a double haul that extends nearly to the reel's backing; and the spey caster who slings his line directly, as if by magic, to the very center of a small practice hoop 190 feet away, it is nothing if not logical.

The feeling, even for the novice, of the line unrolling perfectly behind you, loading the rod, and then the abrupt speed up and stop with the forward cast that results in a delicate delivery without those pesky wind knots, is a thing to relish. Whether bamboo, graphite, boron, or fiberglass, the rod—an extension of the arm—becomes an almost-magical wand that, when waved about in the proper manner, produces exceptional satisfaction.

The challenge of casting delicately to a wary trout in clear water amid conflicting currents protected by a brushy overhang is the supreme undertaking for a fly fisherman. And we thrive on that challenge.

A good fight from a worthy combatant and the eventual conquest is another of the reasons I love fly fishing for trout.

Trout lured to a fly have been called scrappy, acrobatic, tenacious, resourceful, dogged, shy, skittish, malevolent,

stingy, and a thing of beauty. All are accurate depending on the circumstances.

Trout on a fly exhibit a range of primal instincts—survival being the foremost. When hooked, they race down and then up the length of a pool; they leap and tail walk across the surface in a dazzling display of aerobatics vaguely reminiscent of a damaged Sopwith Camel; they dive for the bottom and sulk; they are adept at wrapping your tippet around underwater structure or tangling your line in water-cress and weeds; they explode through the surface like a submarine blowing its ballast to trap a tiny dry fly; they gently slurp that same dry fly then, almost instantaneously, spit it out in disgust; they strike a well-drifted nymph by charging directly at you, then change directions just as you begin to get the line back on the reel only to snap the tippet with the radical maneuver. I've seen trout purposely head-butt a Dave's Hopper and then inhale it in the most delicate manner imaginable. In short, trout on a fly exhibit more tricks, greater slight-of-hand, than does David Copperfield at the Mirage.

A worthier opponent on a fly rod there isn't. The above reasons, some say "excuses," for pursuing the wonderful sport of fly fishing for trout, simply scratch the surface of why so many, for so many decades, have become enamored with this rewarding sport and this quintessential competitor. Personally, I can't wait for spring to don waders, vest, and casting shirt and, fly rod in hand, to engage this formidable, yet vulnerable, adversary on its own terms. Are you with me?

### Open Letter From Mel Krieger to Fly Fishermen Everywhere (continued from page 2)

instructors to the many casting and tying classes to a potent KID'S CAMP."

"INSTRUCTORS--the best in the WORLD--many from the U.S. of course, but also from other countries: Lefty Kreh for saltwater, Steve Rajeff for analyzing the distance cast, Goren Anderson from Sweden for underhand casting, Dave Whitlock and Darrel Martin, and Rafael from Spain, and Morales from Argentina, Piam from France, Stavmo from Norway. They

must be well compensated. The gurus in our sport are vastly OVEREXPOSED AND UNDERPAID. David Ledbetter, a golfing teacher, commands \$10,000 per day."

"This university, this comprehensive library, this complete [center for] updated fly fishing equipment [and] teaching aids (video cameras and the like)...[would attract] the best known teachers and experts in the WORLD, [and] would absolutely become the center of fly fishing for the world."

"This project would not eliminate the FFF conclaves, it would enhance them. [It would be a] great training ground for instructors who are striving for greater recognition and offering inexpensive instruction for our members."

"I plan to send this message to everyone I know who cares about our sport."

*"All men are equal before fish."*

*President Herbert Hoover*

  
**Club Information**

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**Famous Fishermen's Favorite Flies**

"The Clouser Deep Minnow, which I frequently tout as being a superb fly for all species of fish, is a great streamer pattern for trout" Lefty Kreh

"Almost every serious fly fisherman carries a selection of Muddlers [Minnows] in his vest. They are easy to cast and very effective, but most of all, they are extremely versatile....Muddlers adapt to more fishing situations than any other fly." Doug Swisher and Carl Richards

"In smooth water conditions it [the Comparadun] has proven so reliable, adaptable and durable that I would not consider being without several." John Van Derhoof, LBCC newsletter editor

"Unquestionably the most important wet fly for beginner or expert is the Woolly Worm." Byron Dalrymple

**Master Caster and Dean of Fly Fishers:  
Lefty Kreh (cont'd from page 1)**

Advanced Fly Casting...For Greater Distance and More Effective Fishing by Lefty Kreh

"I consider the double haul to be an exceedingly useful tool....Every great fly caster uses it...[however] too many casters use the double haul not as a beneficial tool but as a way to throw their casting mistakes over a longer distance faster."

"Easy for you to say," I thought after reading the above. "You're an expert. I've tried double hauling." But what followed was the missing piece that, for me, made this observation useful: "The closer the two hands are together when double hauling, the less likely for slack to occur in the line."

The comments on the double haul, one of fly fishing's foundational casts are, as usual, insightful and to-the-point—what fly fishers have come to expect from master fly fisherman and author Lefty Kreh.

It's easy to see why Lefty Kreh is one of America's favorite fly fishing authors, not just for his exceptional insights, but for

his ability to convey ideas and distill years of on-the-water experience into a form that less experienced fishermen can understand and apply. *Advanced Fly Casting...For Greater Distance and More Effective Fishing*, another of Lefty's Little Library of Fly Fishing offerings, is no exception.

With predictably excellent casting instructions, photos, and in-depth discussion of over 20 basic and special situation casts like the standard roll cast, roll pickup, reach cast, tuck and skip casts, and slack line cast, Lefty imparts a decidedly authoritative yet versatile and innovative approach to his instruction. Witness the following tips:

There are four principles of proper casting: (1) the rod is a flexible lever which moves through varying arc lengths depending upon the

casting distance required; (2) you cannot make any good cast until you get the end of the fly line moving; (3) the fly line and the fly are only going to travel in the direction in which

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*L.K. (continued from page 4)*

you accelerate and stop the rod tip at the end of the cast; and (4) the size of the fly line loop is determined only by the distance that you accelerate the rod tip at the end of the cast. And the faster that you accelerate over the distance, combined with a quick stop, the farther the cast will travel; and

The side roll cast, which is generally a fairly short cast, no longer than 35 feet or so, will permit you to deliver a fly under brush that hangs more than two feet off the water surface. As soon as the rod stops on the backward motion, the rod tip is lowered to the side so that the rod is parallel

to the surface of the water. It is extremely important that the rod be parallel to the surface before the forward roll cast is begun. Note that if the rod is tilted at a high angle, a bad cast will result. The rod is swept forward keeping it as parallel to the surface as you can make it.

"Elimination of the tailing loop from your cast is...one of the most important things you must do to become an advanced fly caster" opines Lefty. And with that as an introduction, this master caster and teacher launches into several chapters of expert instruction that includes the following:

- The best way to load a rod is to begin the back cast with the line on the water
- Vital to a good roll cast is ensuring that the line in front of you comes to a stop even if only for one second
- The rod should be gripped firmly only

during the speed-up and stop phases of the back and forward casts

- To lift a considerable amount of line from the surface or to make a longer cast, the rod tip should be positioned well below the belt before beginning the back cast
- The most efficient casting position is with the foot opposite the rod hand placed 18 inches forward of the other foot
- To eliminate tailing loops (1) make a positive back cast that will cause the line to unroll behind you; (2) carry the rod forward in a straight line; (3) speed up and stop the rod in the direction you want the line to travel; and (4) as soon as the rod tip stops, tilt the rod tip downward very slightly with your thumb

If you find yourself casting about for a good book on fly casting, look no farther than *Advanced Fly Casting...For Greater Distance and More Effective Fishing*. Lefty's little book contains a large helping of practical advice, a few tricks for the advanced caster, and a lot of practical applications to make you more productive, whether on the practice pond or the trophy tailwater.

### Third Anniversary of SCCC: The Story; The Movie (cont'd from page 2)

casting club, which he promptly agreed to join.

Soon thereafter, the former club president and schemer of new clubs shared her vision with a self-proclaimed trout bum and certified casting instructor living in Santa Clarita and viola, the humble makings of a

club were in motion. The final "ingredient" was the inclusion of a software salesman-turned-trout-addict-fly-fishing-novice and you had a five-member club; not bad for the once, but not for long, former club president.

That was in September 2004. Now, just a few years later, the Santa Clarita Casting Club boasts over 50 members, and growing, with an expanded vision for a clubhouse, casting pond, trophy case, and year-round community instruction.

### *Annual Club Picnic Brings Out the Best* by *Connie Bullock*

We had a nice turnout for the first annual Santa Clarita Casting Club picnic at Elizabeth Lake this summer—even the wind showed up. Eleven energetic people came bearing food and camping equipment. Ted and Maggie Aquaro showed up right behind me and helped set up camp, followed by Joe and June Viescas, Tim and Audrey Nelson, Frank and Marilita Avila and David and Abby Morley.

I arrived at what seemed like dawn (okay, it was 7:30) in hopes of securing a picnic table, but we didn't need the table as camping tables and chairs gathered comfortably around a big old shade tree by the water. Even at this hour, the wind was blowing but, thankfully, it calmed down and allowed us to get out on the water to fish.

The picnic provided the perfect excuse for a maiden voyage in my new Fish Cat pontoon boat. We looked like the Keystone Cops trying to get the frame and pontoons lined up correctly, but with the help of many of the members, I was soon out on the water casting away. Can you imagine how we chuckled when we discovered that the pontoons with the "Fish Cat" logo were facing the inside of the boat instead of the outside... but, hey, it floated beautifully and that's all that counts. We took turns paddling the pontoon boat and I think there are a few converts among us. Float tubes are great, but there's nothing like being up and out of the water with a pair of oars when the wind comes up.

Fishing proved challenging and we definitely need to do some research and get some

experience on how to fish the waters of Elizabeth Lake. A couple of our members, Rudy Brown and Chris Holm, are proficient on this lake but they couldn't join us. Hopefully, next year they can come and provide insight and instructions. The only one who caught anything was David Morley with his new Spey rod. I threw Woolly Buggers, terrestrials, and an assortment of nymphs with no luck; I did get exercise, however—from rowing the pontoon boat around.

One of the funniest (or shall I say, instructional) moments was the time we all spent looking for my fins. At one point they were tethered to the back of the pontoon boat, but as we all used the boat, the fins finally took a

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### Annual Club Picnic Brings Out the Best

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dive into the lake. Tim, Joe, Ted and I prodded and scuffed the water until it looked like a mud puddle. We had partial success: Tim found one of the fins, but the other one is resting peacefully at the bottom of Elizabeth Lake.

We finally took a break from "fin-diving" and had lunch. Ted and Maggie brought their killer brownies. They contained so much chocolate and caffeine that we were all buzzing around. Put mildly, there was no shortage of good tasting food.

The wind began again around noon, so we took a few more spins around the lake until it was nearly white capping. The hair was standing straight out in the back of our heads and you couldn't keep a hat on, so the one thing we learned on this first-time adventure is that we need to go early and get a jump on that wind. All in all, we had a great time. Plan now to join us next summer for the second

installment of "Wind in the Willows: Lake Elizabeth Conquers Local Casting Club."



## Wide Open Plains of Montana by Connie Bullock

I was fortunate enough, again this year, to be able to go on a week-long fly fishing trip to Fort Smith, Montana to fish the Big Horn River. It's a trip that never gets tiring, mostly due to the fabulous fishing--a good guide helps too.

The one incident that burns in my memory is this one day after banking the drift boat right at a confluence which produced a strong, steady seam. I positioned myself right at an area that our guide, Beau, said held a "really big fish that no one has been able to catch for the last month."

So I am casting and repositioning and suddenly see a flash that looked like it had a chest the size of a football player. It took my breath away and shot my adrenaline over the top. I'm thinking to myself, "There's no way I'm going to hook into that fish," but I was wrong. After three or four more casts into the area, the trout hit like a Mac truck almost knocking me off my feet. Beau went bonkers because he knew the hook up was "that fish."

Now, the downside to this wonderful event is that the fish is in that really strong water. She took off like a shot with me right behind her. The only difference is she's swimming and I'm running in water up to my knees. She definitely had the home court advantage. My line was screaming out faster than I could run, taking me down to my backing, but the determination was there. This one was not getting away. This is when you realize how great guides are. Beau, was dragging me through the water, I'm reeling in as fast as I can and she's swimming faster than both of us. He started running ahead of me to clear the way of other fishermen and as we all rounded the bend, he netted this beautiful 25" female rainbow. It took about 20 minutes to bring it in and about 2 hours to come down. It was a beautiful, warm afternoon and I was done for the day. What happiness. I'm just going to have to do that again.



Now that's a grin



## NEW PRODUCTS NEWS by Bill Creitz

Fall is not the season that you usually associate with the showcasing of great new fly fishing gear; winter maybe, spring certainly, but not fall. Well, don't tell that to companies like Bauer, Fisknat, and Rio. Read on for some cool gear ideas for the fall fisherman or for placing under the fly fisher's Christmas tree.

Bauer, known for its exceptional fly reels, has released the new Rogue V-Arbor reel for line weights 4 to 6 and 12 to 13. What makes the V-Arbor different is its V-shaped bottom where the Dacron backing is stored. This design lets the backing be recessed while the fly line is stored in the flat, evenly-distributed reel arbor.

Because the Rogue V-Arbor (priced between \$315 and \$495) is machined from bar stock aluminum and stainless steel, it is promoted as the lightest reel in its class. Call 541-488-8246 or check [bauer-flyreel.com](http://bauer-flyreel.com) for more information.

Lightweight; constructed with UV-resistant rubber bags to avoid harming fish; crafted from exotic hardwoods like lyptus, zebra, and walnut; and with an unmistakable quality that you get only from handmade wooden nets, the new line of Fisknat lightweight nets are available in stream size to boat size models. As beautiful as they are functional, these nets are ideal for the trout bum in all of us. For additional information, check [fisknat.com](http://fisknat.com) on line or call 253-538-1084.

Rio, seemingly always in the forefront of line design, has released its new Advanced Flight Spey shooting head, billing it as a "quick-loading floating line for overhead, underhand, or Spey casting styles." At \$44.95, the two-tone green and yellow (green to avoid spooking trout and yellow to improve tracking) line in sizes 5/6 (340 grains with a 33-foot shooting head) to 10/11 (640 grains with a 42-foot shooting head) is priced to attract. Made for exacting presentations and with welded loops to

pamper the fisherman, these new lines merit a closer look. Call 208-524-7760 or visit [rioproducts.com](http://rioproducts.com) for additional information.

Star Inflatables ([starinflatables.com](http://starinflatables.com) or call 877-900-2628) has introduced its new Sport Bug inflatable "catamaran" sport boat complete with seven separate air chambers, seven-foot oars, an aluminum rowing frame, and optional swivel seats. The ultimate in inflatable drift boating, the Sport Bug is stable, can carry 900 pounds, sports a mount for a 25 horsepower motor, is constructed of 2,200 or 4,000 (depending upon the model) Denier PVC fabric, and beats the tar out of any aluminum rental boat I've ever seen. At \$1,849 and \$2,405, the Sport Bug is a bit pricier than your average float tube, but makes up for it in safety, stability, speed, durability, payload, and distance above the water. Call me when you buy yours, and we'll drift the Owens River together.



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