



# SANTA CLARITA CASTING TIMES

VOL. 3 ISSUE 1 - JAN. 2009



## Great Party at Piru Creek

By Gary Pintar

The Piru Creek recreational dam busting party was a great success. We had fun, we got wet, we broke dams, and we had a good lunch under a wonderful oak tree. My thanks go to the volunteers from Fisheries Resource Volunteer Corps (FRVC), Santa Clarita Casting Club (SCCC), and Sierra Pacific Fly Fishers (SPFF) for their participation. We had twenty volunteers. We broke up close to thirty dams. If you do the math, you get an idea of how hard we worked. We cleared all the dams from Frenchman's Flat to the first bridge. I do not know about the other volunteers, but on Sunday I felt the effect of every rock that I moved on Saturday morning.



I said we had twenty volunteers, but my sign-in sheet had only nineteen names so I am missing one. If you were there and your name is not on the following list, I want to know who you are. I want to thank the following people for giving up a precious Saturday to make a small piece of the earth just a little bit better: Dave Dassler, Steve and Rachel Ferreira, Ellie and Charles Britton, Dwayne Ehlers, Chris Taylor, Tom Walsh, Roger Factor, Bruce Lancedyke, Del Anderson, Richard Wisman, George Collins, Michael Levy, Connie Bullock, Glen Short, Bill Creitz, and Andrew Hayward. This was a multi-group function, and it would not have been a success without the contributions of all three groups. I want to thank SCCC for providing drinks. That ice-cold water that we had when we were walking back from the bridge was as sweet as it gets. The FRVC provided hot dogs, buns, and all kinds of condiments. And SPFF provided grill (thanks Andrew), hot links, and potato salad. *(Continued on page 3)*

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## President's Message

I just wanted to say thank you to all who attended the SCCC Christmas dinner on Saturday night. Once again, we had a great time ... the food was yummy, the group was great and we heard Christmas carols sung by Robynn Creitz, making it so lovely. Another special thanks for my wonderful Winston 9' 4 wt rod ... I am so tickled, along with the great gift certificates ... thanks to each and everyone of you for making this a very special time.

This year the Ray Bianco Appreciation Award went to Bill Creitz for all his contributions to the club over the last years. The Most Improved Casting Award went to Frank Avila as he has worked extremely hard to improve his casting, which has made him a better fisherman, and then a special thank you award was given to Ray Bianco for his tireless efforts in keeping us all casting every other week at Almendra Park. Have a happy and safe holiday season and we look forward to another year at SCCC.

## Trout Stocking Halted at Piru Creek

By Gary Pintar

No trout stocking will occur at Piru Creek until at least 2010. This is because of a lawsuit filed against the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) by two conservation groups. The lawsuit alleges that stocking non-native trout in the streams has a negative impact on the natural environment and endangers the sensitive species that cannot compete. I have singled out Piru Creek, but it is just one of about 100 bodies of water in California that are involved in this court ruling. Other local streams include Upper and Lower Big Tujunga Creek, Little Rock Reservoir, and the East and West Forks of the San Gabriel River. Most of California's lakes and streams are not currently impacted by this ruling. The DFG has posted a table on their website that includes all the trout planting locations and whether they will be planted or not ([www.dfg.ca.gov](http://www.dfg.ca.gov)).

This lawsuit began back in 2006 when the Center for Biological Diversity (<http://www.biologicaldiversity.org>) and the Pacific Rivers Council (<http://www.pacrivers.org>) argued that trout stocking was damaging the ecosystem for a number of endangered and sensitive fish and amphibians. According to the website for the

Pacific Rivers Council, "DFG has never formally conducted an environmental review of its stocking practices and their impacts on freshwater ecosystems." The intent of this lawsuit was to force DFG to scientifically clarify where fish stocking was harmful to sensitive species and where it was not harmful. The result of the suit was that DFG was instructed to perform studies that were due by the summer of 2008. When the studies were not completed, the parties went back to court. A compromise deal was forged in November of 2008 that allowed DFG more time to complete the studies in exchange for temporarily halting fish stocking on a number of specific bodies of water.

As one would expect, there are many points of view regarding this court ruling. There will certainly be an impact on the affected bodies of water and the people that fish those locations.

What do you think the environmental studies will reveal about trout stocking and the impacts on sensitive environments? California is a trend setter; do you think that this is just the beginning of a new trend that will spread across the nation? Should those listed streams become catch and release? What do you think will happen when all of the "put and take" fish are taken from these specific bodies of water? Will the sport fishing industry go broke because fishermen can no longer find fresh meat to kill? Should the sports industry get a bail out?

These and many more questions will be considered as this story develops. Stay tuned.

# Great Party at Piru Creek

(Continued from page 1)

I want to especially thank Tom Walsh for carpooling a whole group of volunteers from the far corners of Southern California. Other special thanks go to Steve Ferreira for chipping in to do the barbeque at the last minute. Although Rachel and Steve brought their own lunch, Steve graciously stepped forward when I unexpectedly volunteered him. I want to also thank Rebecca Decker who drove all the way up to Frenchman's Flat from Laguna Hills, and then could not find us because we were on the stream. We are sorry that we missed you.

I am serious about finding out who that twentieth person might be. I was thinking we could have a contest and call it "Name That Derriere." When you see the photos below perhaps the missing person's identity will reveal itself. Another special thanks goes to Ellie Britton who provided the photos for this article. What would SPFF do without their historian, newsletter editor, and photographer?

It was a beautiful day. Our labor was hard, and we really put a lot into it. I felt it was worth it. When we arrived in the morning, the flow was low and each dam had backed up a significant amount of water. Mats of algae were floating in the slow moving artificial pools. By the time we finished, the stream looked the way a small freestone stream should look. It was flowing unobstructed and clear. It was not as wide or as deep as it was when we got there, but it looked revitalized. The water was oxygenated, silt free, and trout could swim from Frenchman's Flat to the bridge unobstructed. As a follow-up, Tom Wright and I were at Piru on Saturday October 18, and the dams were still clear. The flow was very low. I was thinking how glad I was that we had cleared those dams. If we had not, each of those pools would have been like a wading pool in a driveway.



I hope that we will get some good rains that will flush out the remnants of the dams that remain. Maybe next year we can do this earlier in the season before the dams get out of control. Thanks again for all of the help. Any time on the water is good time.

## Fishing CalTrout's Shasta Springs Camp on the Upper Sacramento River

By Aran Dokovna

In mid-October, five adventurous fly fishers visited CalTrout's fishing camp on the Upper Sacramento River. We had won the three-day, three-night adventure at the 2007 Sierra Pacific Flyfishers' annual auction. Present were Aran Dokovna, Dan Dokovna, Richard Reiner, Michael Tansey and George Weisenfeld. CalTrout provided the accommodations, the meals, and the fishing guide. We were honored to have an excellent guide, Craig Ballenger. Craig also is the author of *An Angler's Guide to the Upper Sacramento and McCloud Rivers*.

We fished the Upper Sacramento River for rainbows. Michael Tansey caught the most and the largest (maybe). We all caught fish, though no large numbers. The area is mostly a nymph fishery, although we did catch some on dry flies.



## Fishing CalTrout's Shasta Springs Camp on the Upper Sacramento River (Cont. from page 3)

There was a really good October caddis hatch each day, but the trout did not seem to notice. Scenery was spectacular. We all ventured down the tracks to the waterfalls, which were beyond fabulous.

I recommend this outing to everyone. Caltrout does offer it to various fishing clubs. If it becomes available to SCCC, don't miss the opportunity to go.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Lower Owens	January
Lower Owens	February
San Gabriel or Piru	March
Santa Ynez	April
Lower Owens	May
Elizabeth Lake Picnic	June 7
Mammoth	June 27-28
Denver Fly Fishing Show	Jan 9-11
Pasadena Fly Fishing Show	Feb 21-22
Fred Hall Show	March 4-8
Annual General Meeting	April 15

## Challenge of the Trout

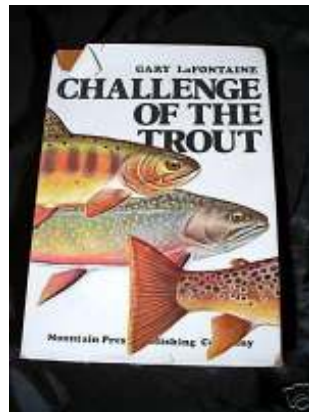
Gary LaFontaine

By Bill Creitz

Passion without excess. That's how I describe the tenor of author

Gary LaFontaine's classic *Challenge of the Trout* (Mountain Press Publishing Company, 1976). Gary weaves a rich narrative tapestry of trout stories, replete with memorable quotes and advice, without the excess details and restatements of the obvious that characterize some lesser fly fishing devotees' works. Here, Gary elevates trout-on-a-fly talk to the level of a Congressional address.

Author and editor William Zinsser says that one of the characteristics of a good writer is that he is always visible just behind his words. Gary LaFontaine excels at this. However, while the fly fishing reading public is all but unanimous in its acclaim for Mr. LaFontaine's writing prowess, I (let me play the heretic here) believe that his acclaim should be based more on his success in fly fishing innovation, observation, and his passion to place his knowledge before the reader.



While reading *Challenge of the Trout*, I found myself wading through ponderous adjective phrases in order to get to the main point. The abundance of adjective phrases notwithstanding, the end result of the author's lavish description of riffles, runs, acrobatic fish, aggressive takes, profuse mayfly hatches, and on-stream strategies is a veritable feast for quote-loving, advice-seeking fishermen. Nearly every page contains a quote, quip, or tip that brings trout to life. And what held my attention throughout was the writer's enthusiasm for his subject.

Some of the most instructive and thought provoking quotes follow:

- "As a fly fisherman studies the intricacies of a river, the secrets of the insect cycle tattle on the trout"
- "The trout is a relatively simple creature reacting to stimuli in a basic pattern of response; thus the fascination of angling for the fly fisherman must lie in the infinite variables of environment that subtly shift the activity of the fish"
- "In the history of fly fishing there have been two divergent approaches towards fooling trout into accepting a dry fly as an actual insect. With contrasting reasoning, the artificial fly has evolved into either a flush pattern designed to float in the surface film or a hackle pattern designed to float on the surface film" (Continued on page 5)

# Challenge of the Trout

(Continued from page 4)

- Speaking of the famous Muddler Minnow, "...at moments, ugly is exquisite to trout"

Nothing so effectively captures the essence of *Challenge of the Trout* and Gary La Fontaine's philosophy of fishing for trout than his explanation for why we love this sport: "Perhaps the fascination of angling never falters because a fisherman never masters more than the generalities of catching trout. It is a game of specific moments and unique problems. Fish vary so much in habit and feeding routine from stream to stream that it is impossible to make dogmatic rules." The author follows his own advice to the letter in the pages that follow. He is never dogmatic about the rules for trout taking; rather, he is reflective and suppositional and instinctive about ways to outsmart wary trout.

The following tips represent the wisdom gained through years of experience and experimentation distilled into one- or two-sentence nuggets:

- "Many bulky [fly] patterns are designed for fast water as attractor creations, but actually in the fractured chop of a riffle, these flies appear neither gaudy nor over-sized. In turbulence, the patterns simulate vulnerable prey with a silhouette that excites a trout into a hurried curiosity attack"
- Exposed patches [of bottom] seldom hold prime fish during the bright part of the day, unless an emergence of insects moves the trout to forage in open water
- Sometimes, during a heavy hatch, showing the feeding trout something totally different will result in fish
- The best time for the dead-drift [nymph] technique occurs when trout hug the bottom strata

- "...the general minnow imitation [bucktail or streamer] provides the best chance for the fly fisherman to hang a brute trout during broad coverage of the water"

- Seldom on a trout stream is there only a single way of fooling fish—at glory-moments any standard ploy succeeds, but during the rare failure of every other method, the dead-drift nymph pattern usually discovers a few willing trout even under the worst conditions

- When fishing grasshoppers, wade to the middle of the stream, and cast back to within six inches of the bank using a Joe's Hopper or a Letort Hopper

- When fishing mayfly imitations, "The absolute avoidance of drag...proves crucial in the simulation of a spinner. Often a direct downstream slack-cast presents the fly in the most unhindered fashion"

Gary LaFontaine died in 2002. He is justly revered as an innovator, author, and fly fisherman's fisherman. His astute observations about trout habits and peculiarities have earned him a well deserved place in the gallery of fly fishing icons. *Challenge of the Trout* is a tribute to a great fisherman, a respected spokesman for the sport, and a master of the many generalities of catching trout.

In the opinion of Don Zahner who wrote the book's foreword, "*Challenge of the Trout* is a book that had to be written." Read it and you be the judge.

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November 1-2 and 8-9 (Advanced Nymphing class)  
December 6-7 and 13-14

**2009:** January 10-11 and 17-18  
February 1/31-2/1 and 7-8  
March 6-8 (Women's Clinic) and 14-15

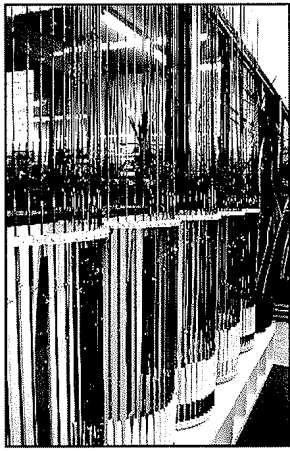
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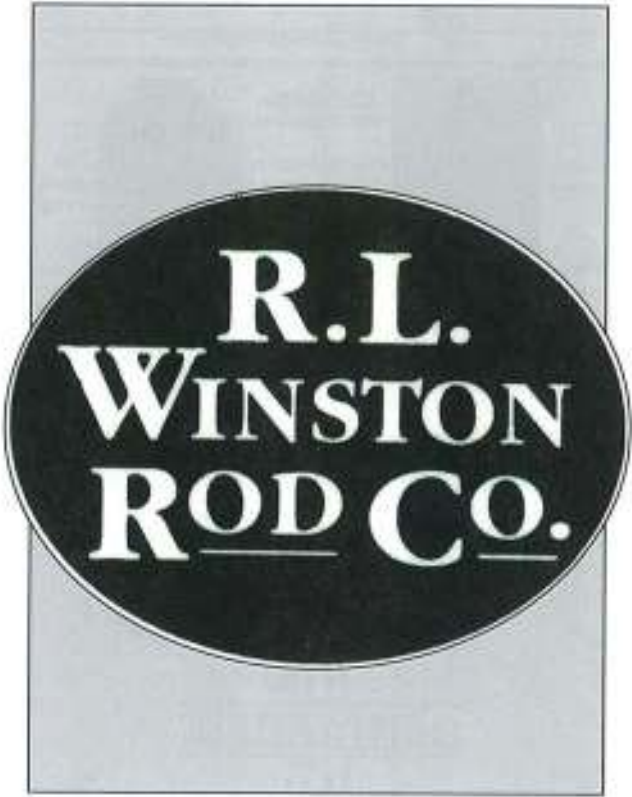
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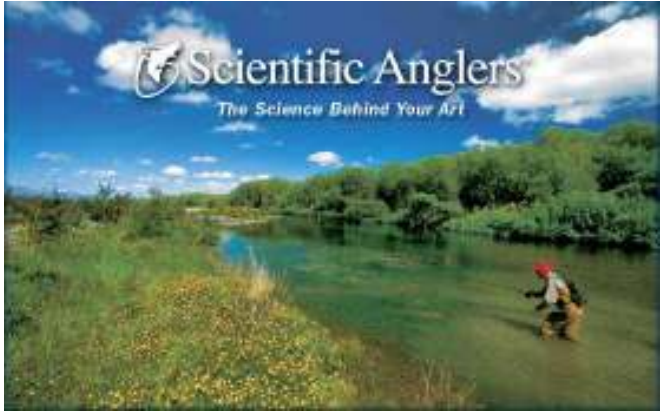
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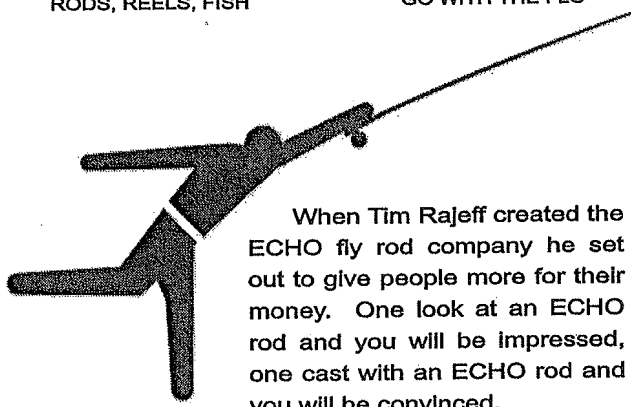
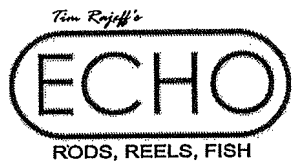
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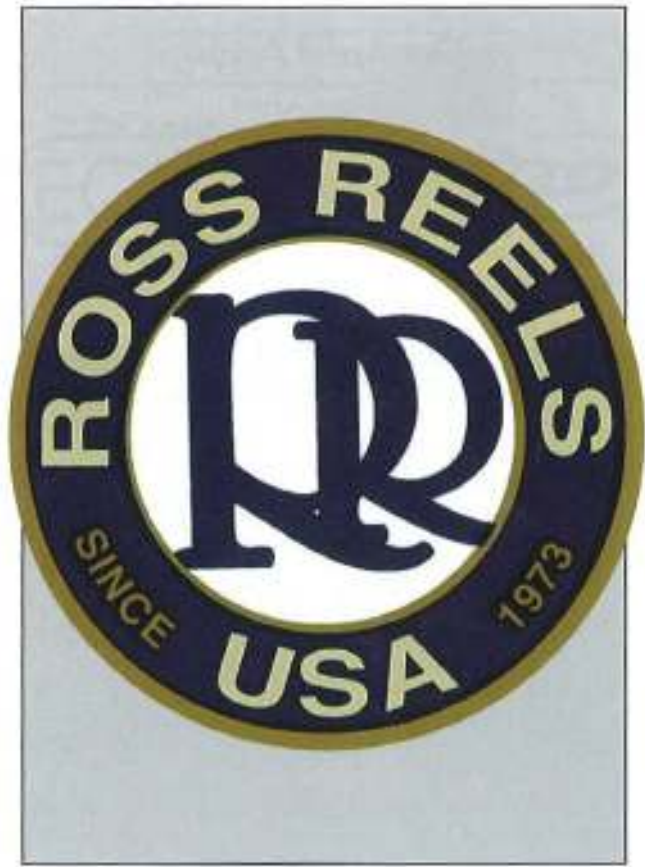
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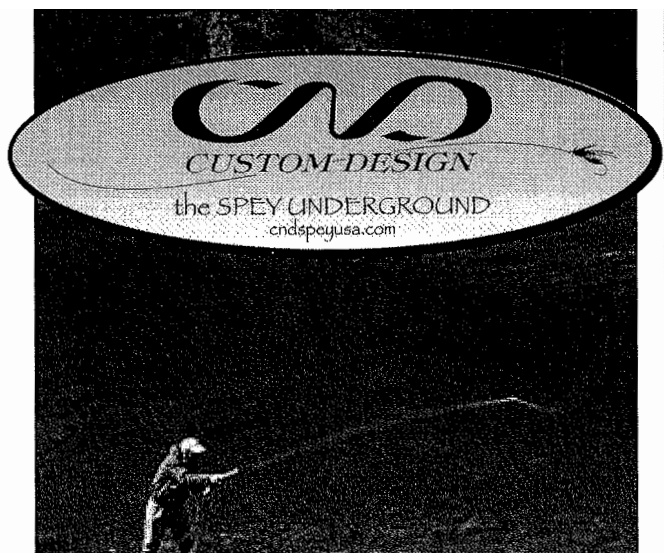
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# SANTA CLARITA CASTING CLUB APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

This application should be submitted to any member of the Board of Directors or mailed to the following address:

Santa Clarita Casting Club  
27082 Rio Pecos Drive  
Valencia, CA 91354  
661-633-3460  
Attention: Membership Secretary

*Please print legibly*

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ SPOUSE'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ BUSINESS PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ OCCUPATION: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you learn about the club? \_\_\_\_\_

**CLASSES OF MEMBERSHIP & FEES**

Active Membership	Adult 18 & over	\$45
Family Membership	1 or 2 adults, any number of children 17 & under, at same address	\$55
Junior Membership	Youth 17 & under	\$8
Associate Membership	Adult living more than 50 miles away or physically impaired	\$22.50
<b>Initiation Fee</b>	<b>One-time charge upon membership signup</b>	<b>\$10.00</b>

*Dues for applicants elected to membership after January 1 and before March 31 are considered paid for the following membership year.*

**ACTIVE & JUNIOR APPLICATIONS**

Attached is my total remittance for \$\_\_\_\_\_, which covers my dues of \$\_\_\_\_\_ for the current year and my initiation fee of \$10.00. If I am elected to membership in the Santa Clarita Casting Club, I hereby agree to abide by the rules and the Constitution and Bylaws of the Club.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**JUNIOR APPLICANTS ONLY**

As a Junior member, I understand that if I become 18 years of age before April 1, I will immediately be transferred to Active membership with my dues considered paid through the following March 31. No initiation fee will be required.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ : Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

**FAMILY MEMBERSHIP APPLICANTS**

List the names of family members who are eligible, including the date of birth for all junior members (17 & under).

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Make checks payable to Santa Clarita Casting Club*

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