

Flyfishing

FALL 2018

& TYING JOURNAL



Special
Subscription Offer!
page 33



*Mountain Bike
Fly Fishing, 42*

*Hackling the
Wingless Wet, 14*

*Henry Hoffman
Super Hackle, 20*

*Dropper
Fly Wisdom, 34*

*In the Wake of
Lee Wulff, 46*

*Walter Johnson's
Steelhead Flies, 16*

Fly Fishing Through the Eyes of a *Physical Therapist*



The 2018 Casting for Recovery Southern Oregon Chapter Retreat Staff.

Front Row: Susan Coyle, Kim DeVries, Karen Kreft, Susan Bohn. Back Row: Beth Rumi, Rosemary Savard, Melanie Dines.

Susan Bohn, PT

“I’m never going to be able to do anything for myself again!” This is a lament I often hear when treating my patients. I’ve been a Physical Therapist for more than 25 years. On the Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit where I work, every single person I see has had a traumatic, often life-changing event that has landed him or her in a hospital bed. Frequently, my patients have had a stroke or brain injury, spinal cord injury, or cancer. Each person handles it differently, but without exception all are fearful of the future, becoming a burden, and losing their independence and freedom. My job is to help them see what is possible given their ‘new normal.’

This passion for my work, for helping people find hope, as well as my love of fly fishing and its transcendent qualities, has led me to volunteer for Casting for Recovery.

Casting for Recovery (CfR) is a non-profit organization founded in 1996 whose mission is to enhance the lives of women with breast cancer through a unique retreat program combining breast cancer education, peer support and the therapeutic sport of fly-fishing. The gentle, rhythmic motion of fly-casting can be good physical therapy for the arm and upper body to encourage increased mobility for women who have had surgery or radiation. On an emotional level, women are given the opportunity to experience a completely novel activity, fly fishing, in a safe environment among a supportive group of peers and leaders. According to the National Casting for Recovery website, “The program offers opportunities for women to find inspiration, discover renewed energy for life and experience healing connections with other women and nature. It’s powerful medicine!”

Every chapter of CfR is funded through individual donations and chapter-led fundraisers throughout the year. More than 80% of the dollars raised go directly to finance the retreats. All retreat staff members volunteer their time and talents in the service of this worthy cause.

CfR chapters hold more than eighty retreats each year across the United States, each retreat serving fourteen participants. To date, eight thousand plus participants have benefited from the CfR program. Retreats are typically two and a half days and include the support of medical volunteers who work in the field of breast cancer treatment. Along with the medical staff, the psychosocial support is comprised of Counselors and Medical Social Workers. The Fly Fishing Instructors provide education in fly-fishing equipment, fly casting, knot tying, and insect identification. Rounding out the CfR Team are the River Helpers, fourteen volunteer fly fishing enthusiasts who appear early in the morning on the last day of the retreat. Each River Helper



River Helper Abby McEnroe helps Valerie Alexander celebrate the catch and release.

stands together with their participant when she finally gets the chance to take to the water, applying all she has learned over the weekend.

The Southern Oregon chapter had its beginnings around 2002 with a group of six or seven women fly fishers who, according to CfR Southern Oregon founding member Kim DeVries, “would rent a house in or around Sun River and fish like crazy! Our motto: *never go to bed the same day you wake up*, came from

River Helpers and Participants find their spots on the banks of the Big K Lodge Pond.



late nights coming off the water, getting up the next day, and doing it all again." At that time, the women began noticing ads in fly fishing magazines about CfR. "We loved the concept, especially since two women in our group had dealt with breast cancer already and the rest of us had been touched in some way through friends or family. We already loved to fly fish and knew how healing it was to be outdoors and on the water. It seemed like a perfect fit for us to 'give back' and share our hobby with others." These women decided to bring Casting for Recovery to Southern Oregon. After finding an acceptable venue, advertising, marketing, and fundraising, they held their first retreat in 2004. Kim has been involved with the planning and implementation of the retreats ever since, serving as Retreat Co-Leader and Fly Fishing Instructor.

The Casting for Recovery Southern Oregon Retreat is led by Karen Kreft, an avid fly fishing angler for nearly 30 years. Karen became aware of the CfR program when it first appeared in fly fishing magazines and realized the potential of the program. "I reached out to the original team in Vermont in hopes of assisting with their retreats," she said. "Each year, the brand recognition increased and I continued to believe in it from a distance!" In 2007, Karen was diagnosed with breast cancer. After the completion of her treatment, she applied to become a CfR participant to see with her own eyes how the organization operated. She found a "passion and respect for CfR and the CfR 'magic' with each increase of her involvement," from participant to eventual retreat leader.

I learned about the organization in 2008 through friends familiar with the program and I knew immediately CfR was something I wanted to support. Having been a River Helper for the past eight years, I was delighted to be invited to join the retreat staff as Fly Fishing Instructor for the 2018 retreat.

The retreat is located on the historic Big K Ranch in Oregon, nestled between Roseburg and Elkton. The North Umpqua River winds its way through the rolling hills and expansive valleys of the ranch. In addition to the Umpqua, there is a sizable pond nestled at the foot of the lodge. Big K Ranch is a shining

River Helper Kristen Kinsman gives pointers to Joy Loros with the idyllic Big K property as their backdrop.



Karen Kreft demonstrates "matching the hatch" to an enthusiastic crowd.

example of the type of venue CfR National requires for their retreats: a main lodge for meetings, excellent meals and sufficiently cozy cabins.

CfR retreats are three-day events. The women arrive on Friday afternoon and, before settling into their cabins, are fitted with their waders and boots. Various group gatherings encourage participants to share their stories and gain strength from the outpouring of support offered by those who have walked



Participants, River Helpers and Staff unite on the final day of the CfR retreat.

a similar path. Learning about fly fishing is a novel, shared experience bringing the women even closer together as they figure out how to string a rod, tie knots, cast, and collectively celebrate the excitement of the catch and release. Participants might be in any stage of their journey: recently diagnosed, in remission, or still receiving treatment. Many friendships are forged throughout the weekend. Participants are often touched deeply by their experience at the retreat, moving them to return to volunteer with the program, sometimes for many years!

One woman at this retreat symbolizes all that CfR hopes to accomplish. She has had a long and tumultuous cancer journey. She is still in treatment and said she hopes she has the energy to engage in all the retreat activities. What has kept her going throughout her treatment are her horses: "I can't ride them right now, but I spend time with them every day. Walking from the house to the barn is my exercise. My goal was to scoop one shovel full of manure every day, gradually increasing as I got

Joy Loros and Susan Bohn share a moment of appreciation and joy for their shared experience.



a little stronger. I can scoop three shovels full now. Soon I'll scoop a whole wheelbarrow full." She managed to attend all the meetings and fly-fishing related activities. On the final day, she wondered if she would be strong enough to stand and fish. "No problem," I told her. "I'll bring you a chair!" By the end of the session, she fished with her River Helper, mostly from a seated position, and caught and released a lovely fish. She was tearful and excited when I ran to her chair to congratulate her. "I never thought I'd ever be able to have fun again!" she cried. "And I can! I can have fun!" I held her and felt the power of the moment sink into us both. It was sublime.

Each participant comes to the retreat with her own unique story and the obstacles each faces is distinct. The common thread of their spirit binds them together in a way I could not have imagined without witnessing it myself firsthand. These women are warriors, literally, in a battle against an unseen enemy threatening to rob them of all they hold dear. They persist in the face of this threat, and their resilience is awe-inspiring.

This all-expense-paid weekend, offered to women who have journeyed through an emotional/physical/psychological odyssey and have emerged on the other side, gives us all another chance to renew our vows with nature and ourselves. We want to live unencumbered by pain or weakness. We want to revel in the pleasures of nature. Water is life itself. Immersion in that life-sustaining fluid connects us to our soul, our reason for being. Fly-fishing gives us the perfect excuse to return, again and again, to life, to water, to freedom, to hope.

Susan Bohn, PT is an avid Artist, Angler and CfR Volunteer living in Southern Oregon who's been a Physical Therapist 25+ years specializing in Rehab Therapy.

All photos are by Missy Sprouse, Trustee, Casting for Recovery. Missy is a partner in the Dallas based photography business, Sprouse and Neuhoff. She has been a professional photographer for over 26 years. <http://sprouseandneuhoff.com>

To learn more about Casting for Recovery, to donate, volunteer or apply to attend a retreat, visit castingforrecovery.org