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Sweet Distraction

By Pat Slater

You're stressed out at work, behind on your "Honey do" list at home, or the weather has kept you off the water for far too long. Whatever it is, you're just plain grumpy! As you let your daydreams take you away, the picture in your mind begins to form. A beautiful morning, clear blue skies and a light breeze, your boat smoking across the water taking you to a magical honey hole only you know about.

Now picture that same morning

except you're on your way to the hospital for a chemotherapy treatment. At any age, facing cancer is terrifying but when you're just a child, it is difficult to comprehend unless you have dealt with it personally. It impacts the family as well; the anxiety level for the parents and siblings is off the chart. Over time, this stress builds to where everyone connected needs some kind of release, some

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Tip of the Month

Downriggers for Walleye By Tony Glynn

Last year I had downriggers put on my boat and I found out that if used properly it can be a very effective presentation.

The first thing I did was take the steel cable that came on the downriggers off and replaced it with a 150 lb test Power Pro, this did a couple of things for me: It eliminated the thrumming sound emitted from the steel cable. This, in my mind, can spook the ever-finicky walleye. And secondly, the thinner diameter of the Power Pro cuts the water much better than the steel cable, which in turn allowed me to use the smaller four-pound ball and still be able to see the downrigger balls on my Lowrance sonar even at speeds of two m.p.h.

Here are a few of the things downriggers can do for you:

1. Allow you to put crank baits on the bottom that would ordinarily not be able to reach.
2. Allow you to see your downrigger balls on the fish finder.
3. Allow you to put the downrigger balls at or above the arches you are marking. Since suspended walleyes generally feed in an upward direction

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kind of distraction.

This is where we fishermen can make a difference. I had that opportunity this past summer as part of a project with the Billings, Montana Walleyes Unlimited Chapter. In March of 2007, a member of a local cancer support group was the featured speaker at their monthly meeting and he was looking for help. Plans were made from that point to take area children with cancer fishing. They need something fun; something to do far away from hospitals, doctors, needles, and their illness.

I volunteered to be the Wyoming connection and was able to link up with a family from a nearby community. After working through some scheduling issues, a day was selected and plans solidified.

My partners for the morning were Trevor, a 5-year-old with leukemia, his two older brothers and their grandfather. I decided on a nearby trout lake, Buffalo Bill Reservoir outside of Cody Wyoming. I love fishing for walleyes but sometimes they can be tough to get into the boat. Kids want to (and need to) catch fish. I felt confident I could find some willing trout pretty quickly as opposed to hunting walleyes for several hours.

One thing to keep in mind if you plan a similar outing is that cancer patients who are being actively treated have very little endurance and stamina. I would suggest keeping the trip easy and relatively short.

I was waiting in the parking lot on the north shore—my Ranger 619 polished and fueled—rigging rods when they drove up. The two older boys bounded out the car all smiles but Trevor stayed close to his grandfather. I introduced myself and ex-

plained my plans for the morning and made sure Trevor was feeling well enough to head out. I unloaded the boat, got life jackets fitted properly and our adventure was ready to begin. Trevor sat on his grandfather's lap, still unsure of this, as I backed away from the dock. Tristan and Joey were laughing excitedly in their seats behind me. The boat was soon ripping across the glass reflections of the surrounding snow-capped mountains. Now Trevor was smiling.

I lowered the kicker as the boat came off plane and got it started to warm up. I had my trolling rods



Pat Slater poses with the happy crew of anglers

ready, line counter reels loaded with lead core and placed a couple of them in holders. I knew the trout would be running from eight to 20 feet down. Water clarity was fair considering the snow melt. I had changed out the lock snaps on the terminal end, replacing them with good quality ball-bearing swivels. Trout usually spin when hooked and can twist the leader into an unusable kinked up ball of mono; good swivels help prevent some of that. I had selected a different lure

for each line, color patterns that intel gathering before the trip had given me. I set each line at a different depth, one back 50 feet, the other back 100 and we were fishing.

It's important to use fairly soft rods with short line lengths as well as having the drag set light. The mouths of trout are soft and they will often tear out the hooks during the fight if too much pressure is placed on them.

It wasn't long before a rod tip jerked back but it didn't hookup. I double checked the drag and it was fine. Just then the other rod tip went back but this time it continued to keep jerking. I knew I had the right depth and a couple of lures that they were interested in.

When fishing for trout that are going to be kept for a meal I like to get them on ice as soon as they are boated. I was prepared with a cooler loaded with crushed ice and some plastic bags. These fish were destined for the table of my guests.

The trout cooperated and each of the three boys got to reel in a couple feisty rainbows. Trevor tired quickly but his smile remained. One more high speed run back to the dock and our time together ended with some photos and a Mack's Lure Imperial Spoon given to each of the boys. I hoped they would convince their grandfather to take them out again so they could try their new lure.

With a little effort, some well thought out plans and an opportunity that is easy to find, we can all make a difference in someone's life. Your only reward may be a simple smile but I guarantee you will carry that with you a long time.

Steelhead Fishing On The Columbia "He Does It With A Dancer"

*By Hall-of-Fame Angler Stan Fagerstrom
Part 2*



No one is more qualified to tell you how to go about catching steelhead than a guide who makes part of his living getting them into his net.

In my last column I told you about one such guide. If you read that column you know the guide I'm talking about is Chris Roney, of Richland, Washington. Chris has been guiding on the Columbia River for steelhead and salmon for the past seven years. I also mentioned that the lures Chris uses for his Columbia River steelhead fishing are Mack's Lure Rock Dancer jigs. He trolls 3/8-ounce

Rock Dancers in purple or purple and black colors. It's one thing to know what lure he ties on. It's something else to know exactly how he uses it. Roney does most of his Columbia River steelheading on the river's big impoundment formed by McNary Dam. "The first thing I do each trip," Chris says, "is use my electronics to determine the depth at which the fish are holding. I've found that depths from 8 to 12 feet are usually a good depth at which to start."

While that might be a good depth to start, he doesn't hesitate to change.

"Sometimes," he says, "I've found them as shallow as six feet. On other occasions they've been 20 feet down." Like other experts, the Richland guide stays flexible in his approach. If one approach isn't getting hits, he seeks out the combination that does.

Boat speed is another important factor that gets his attention. "I've found," he says, "that I usually have the best results when I'm trolling just fast enough to keep the slack out of my line."

There's nothing fancy involved in the way Roney rigs up for his steelhead trolling. The rods he provides for his clients are all G.Loomis. The specific 9-foot rods he employs are the G.Loomis STR1084C.

"I really like these rods," Roney says. "They have a very sensitive tip but sufficient backbone to let you set the hook when a steelhead picks up your jig."

Chris fills his reels with 12-pound test monofilament. He uses about 18 inches of 15-pound fluorocarbon leader between his main line and his jig. He gets his jigs down where he wants by fishing them beneath a slip bobber that's slid onto his main line. He can determine how far he wants his jigs to drop by how far up the line his bobber is placed. He accomplishes that by using one of those handy Mack's Lure Stop Knots on his main line. The Stop Knots are especially designed for slip bobber fishing.

Chris does something else that he considers a key element in his consistent angling success. It's using a shrimp that he slides on beneath the bucktail skirt of his Rock Dancer jigs. These aren't just any old shrimp. Roney dyes those he uses with his own secret formula.

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Try This Fish Bake!

by Capt. Troy Walwood

You will need two medium sized walleye filets (Use Smile Blades to catch them; they taste better.)

Take a non stick baking pan at least 8x11 inches, one that can hold a pair of medium sized walleye filets, lightly coat with olive oil.

Place the filets in a mix of flour, black pepper and Lawry's Seasoned Salt, coating both sides of the fish.

Lay the walleye filets in the baking pan and cover with tin foil. Place in pre-heated oven at 375 for about 20 minutes give or take a few.

While this is baking mix the following:

2 cups of Miracle Whip or mayo
2 cups of grated parmesan cheese (fresh is best)

2 teaspoons of lemon juice
1 tablespoon of flaked onion
2 tablespoons of dill sauce

After the 20 minutes of bake time check the fish and assure that they are not completely baked (not flaking apart).

Coat the top side of the walleye filets with the mix, be generous with the mix and place back into the oven without the tin foil on the pan.

Adding chopped chives or cilantro is a nice touch that dresses up the dish.

Leave in oven until the fish flakes; usually the mix starts to turn light brown.

Serve with steamed green beans and baked red skin potatoes (don't forget the butter and sour cream).

Enjoy your meal and share the recipe with fellow anglers, maybe you will have a new fishing partner for using all your Mack's Lures.

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"I've had fishermen want to buy my shrimp," he says. He'll tell you that his shrimp are usually died a purple or red shade, but I doubt you'll find out a whole lot more than that.

Roney chuckles if asked how he's able to determine when a steelhead has picked up his jig. "They don't leave any doubt," he says. "The instant your bobber disappears, the rod in your holder just goes nuts!"

As I've mentioned, Chris operates his own guide service. I've just told you about the way he goes after steelhead. He's just as expert at catching Columbia River salmon. The name of his guiding business is Mid-Columbia Excursions. You can reach him at his Richland telephone number that is (509) 430-5790.

Finally, there are a couple of other things to remember if you want to line up a trip with him. One is to give him a couple of weeks lead time to be sure you get to go out when you want. The second is to bring the proper clothing. It rains a bit in that region where the big Columbia divides the states of Washington and Oregon.

Chris provides all the fishing gear and carries spare rain gear but he rightfully points out that you're better off bringing your own foul weather gear if you want to be completely comfortable. From personal experience, I'd also recommend you bring clothing that will keep you warm as well as dry.

Like I said at the beginning of the first of these two columns about Chris Roney and his Mid-Columbia Excursions guide service, he's a guy I'm going to contact if and when I get into his area of the Evergreen State.

You'll be wise to do the same.



Here's the rig guide Chris Roney uses when he trolls for Columbia River steelhead. A slip bobber is used on his main line to control the depth of his lure.

Question of the Month

Welcome to our new monthly question feature! Feel free to contact us at bernie@mackslure.com if you have a question you would like to see featured!

Q: Who is the “Mack” in Mack’s Lure?

A: “Mack” is the nickname of Vern McPherson, who began making and selling his lures in 1969. Mack’s company grew into the great company we know today as Mack’s Lure company. Mack no longer owns the company but he’s still out there fishing away with Mack’s Lure products!

Downriggers... continued

this I believe is critical.

Now you might think that you have to run your lures 40, 50 or even 60 feet from downrigger ball but I have to tell you that’s not the case and in fact most of the guys I talked to while researching this method told me they run as short as six feet from ball, but mostly 10 to 15 feet back. By running a short lead like 10 feet back you don’t have to account for the diving depth of crank baits.

Another thing I would like to share with you is to add a little bling

to your downrigger balls; by this I mean attach a Mack’s Lure Hot Wings attractor directly to your downrigger balls, and this adds a tremendous amount of flash and can call fish from a great distance.

I also like to attach a Mack’s Lure Trolling Snubber directly to the Hot Wings, which allows you to read the rod better since walleyes often will not release the bait from the downrigger.

And lastly, I always match the color of my Hot Wings to the color of the harness I am running.



Photo of the Month

We want your photos! Send your photos to bernie@mackslure.com.



Sam Cole of Sacramento, CA with two Lake Amador rainbows of 4.5 pounds apiece. They bit an orange Mack’s Wedding Ring spinner. Captain Rene’ Villanueva of Stealie Dan’s Fishing Guide Service put him on the fish on March 8, 2008.

The Mack Attack is a free service provided to anyone who is interested by Mack’s Lures Inc. We need your input! If you know of anyone who would like to be on the mailing list to receive the Mack Attack, please forward their e-mail address to al@mackslure.com.

Photos, stories and comments are welcomed and encouraged. Please forward all content materials to bernie@mackslure.com.

THANK YOU!

