

# John B

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## SPEAKERS

Dave S, John



Dave S 00:00

I have another special fly fishing founders episode for your listening pleasure today. I have john billing on the show this week to tell the story of how he created the largest non commercial fly fishing Facebook group on the planet. This is the wet fly swing fly fishing show.



00:15

Welcome to the wet fly swing fly fishing show where you discover tips, tricks and tools from the leading names in fly fishing. Today, we'll help you on your fly fishing journey with classic stories covering steelhead fishing, fly tying and much more.



Dave S 00:30

Hey, how's it going, everyone thanks for stopping by the fly fishing show. And today's episode I talked to john billing to dig into the Facebook group that he created and has become the largest in the world. We hear about the resources in the fly fishing community and how it all got started plus, where john is heading next with the group. So without further ado, here's john Billings. How's it going, john?



John 00:55

I'm great. Dave. How are you doing? Rob I am here in Australia. So good start.



Dave S 00:59

Let's That's right. That's right. Is this the door on time? Do you do you get up at 5am? a lot?



John 01:06

Nine. I'm not trying to be an early riser, but I do like the exception this case to talk to you, but it's all worth it.



Dave S 01:11

There you go. There you go. Yeah, it's it's, it's noon our time. So. So it's, yeah, definitely a little bit of a gap there. I've, I've had a few. Let's see, I think I've had a couple of Peter. Peter Morris was the last fly fishing guru I had on from your area. So we'll probably dig into a little bit of that. But yeah, I want to touch on the Facebook group.



John 01:32

Go ahead. So I've seen it the most very well, you know, I've been involved in fly fishing, casting instruction together. So because he's a thought master casting instructor and I'm a casting instructor myself. So you know, I spent a lot of time together and running clinics and things like that Dan in Australia, so



Dave S 01:53

Oh, awesome. And I didn't realize that Yeah, I knew what I didn't realize you were from Austria. I knew that the Facebook group obviously is a worldwide, you know, people all over the place. But yeah, I didn't realize you're down there but obviously you guys have a ton of fly fishing resources and rivers and waters and so yeah, we'll probably jump into a little bit I did want to touch on you know, definitely the Facebook group and then talk about what you have going on there. But maybe you can just start us off by telling us where you how you first got into fly fishing.



John 02:25

Yeah, sure. I mean, like most, most like this is I think it was my father who got me into it as a young child I grew up in in Tasmania down in the southern part of Australia, where there's a lot of wilderness areas and fishing and outdoor activities is quite a popular sport pastime for people. So a lot of my time as a young child has been following my father and as he was fly fishing in in lakes and pristine areas in Tasmania, and so I got the I got the bug at a very young age and initially My job was dog Judy and because we had a pet dog and I said to spend time money looking after him, he didn't go running off into the wilderness somewhere and then as I got a bit older and started getting a bit, a bit more mature and stronger and I started fly fishing myself, I got my first rod and reel set when I was about 11, I think, which was a Shakespeare fibreglass two plus six ride ride with a matching Shakespeare graphite reel and then caught my thirst trout when I was about 12 I think on on that, on that read. My dad and his father walked away off over to the mountain somewhere and left me alone looked after the dog with my own rod and reel and I saw a fish cuddling around in the shallows and promptly managed to get a little bird machuca fly out to the fishing and managed to take it in and I just panicked and tuna hold the thing back into the into the shore and set a very taboo myself biting into Dead came back and, and from there I was just so yeah started a very young age. I moved from Tasmania to mainland Victoria in my early 20s. Chasing work and careers and things like that. Didn't do a lot of fly fishing in that period of my life because there were other things that took precedence but then picked up again in my early 30s. And since then I've been actively chasing fish in salt water and fresh water around Australia and New Zealand. Some other places as well. So that's cool.



Dave S 04:35

That's cool. Yeah. You that's the awesome thing to see. I mean, this group that you've created, is grown into I think it's over 60,000 people now it's it's one of the biggest Facebook groups for fly fishing. How did you how did you start that group and where did that idea come from?



John 04:53

Um, well originally, like I said, when I was getting back into fly fishing of 2010, we started the group But knows, at that stage, there's a lot of fly fishing related content that was popping up in Facebook because Facebook started become more popular in a global sense. And a lot of the information that was coming up was was very useful when a group of friends in line we said look can be good idea for a good sort of centralized all the access to this information somewhere so that not only so that we share it with other people, and make it a resource that that we could call on whenever we needed to. So

started the group of us September 2010. So we're coming up with nearly two years since it's been running. And as I said, in that stage, it's it's grown to the level just nearly 60 and a half thousand members as of today. So the support has been amazing and, and the active members too. So I mean, I'm looking at the stats this morning, I think of the 68,000 members that we've had nearly 44,000 of them actually active members within the last month. So it's amazing that they're not just people who don't join and sit there passively, they actually contribute and posts and share And all that sort of thing as well. So it's, it's a fantastic, fantastic thing and quite proud of it too. So



Dave S 06:06

that's cool. Did you have any idea when you got started? It was gonna become the one of the largest groups in the world?



John 06:14

No, not at all. It certainly wasn't the intent. Given the amount of work that's involved in obviously administrating and looking after the group to is certainly wasn't something we planned on at that point in time. And now we have a number of moderators and admin people who help me do the maintenance work on the site and keep people under control and review all the new members because as you appreciate in in the Facebook world, there's a lot of spam accounts and fake fake accounts and things like that, that people are trying to to get access to your site for various reasons. So the administration load on it takes a little bit of time. So I'm very grateful to the other members and moderators needed help keep everything running smoothly. So you



Dave S 07:00

Go and and how did you so the admin and the moderator How many? How many of those people do you have helping you out?



John 07:07

I think there's about eight of us registered now. And they're all over the world so deliberately tried to make sure that we had global coverage because as you appreciate as the group grew and now primarily, a lot of the membership comes from the States, I think there's about 35 to 34,000 members roughly from the US. So it's well over half. well over half the membership is in the northern northern hemisphere. And so coming from Australia, being the administrator, the timezone didn't do as much favor so we had a

couple of people who are willing to to stand up and and help us from from the US. And so that's been a godsend, because it means that we've got basically 24 hour coverage around the clock around the globe. So hopefully we can deal with issues quickly when they crop up and keep everything running smoothly. So



Dave S 07:55

that's right. How do you how do you find those people how to have those people become means



John 08:02

basically through the association through the group. Like there's various posts and chats and things that we would be and we pick up on, people have a vested interest in what we're doing and are really keen to try and contribute and help out. So we offer to them too, if they're willing to come on board and then moderate some of the content and things like that. So, and again, some of them are the friends who I started the group out with in the first place as well. They've carried characters through the journey as well. So it's, it's been a it's been a joint exercise from a lot of different people, but much appreciated.



Dave S 08:35

Gotcha. Yeah, it seems like it's almost, you know, I mean, there's so much information there. It's almost overwhelming, you know, you get on there. I just typed in, you know, fly tying. And the cool thing is, there are some ways to sort on there and stuff. What would be your record if somebody hadn't been? Maybe you could start off first. You know, somebody who hasn't been to the group. I'll put a link in the show notes to where they can find it, but what can you describe it to That person Well, what the group's like, you know, what sort of content? I mean, do you know what's going on all the time, what contents out there.



John 09:08

Um, pretty much I mean, we don't actively monitor every single feed that comes up. Because looking at the stats again, this morning, there was submit 10,000 posts or something in average is a week. So that's a lot of content for people to try to keep on top of it, then administrating it. Now there's some tools in Facebook that allow us to keep on top of keywords and things like that. So any content that comes up that's outside of the

group's rules gets flagged automatically. So there's some things in there to help us in terms of Facebook tools, but other thing is actively the members themselves can record content that they don't think is appropriate or is breaking the rules as well. And most of the stuff that we deal with as moderators and admins comes through those channels. In terms of how the group's structured I mean, like most Facebook groups, there's a there's a news feed that goes on the people who post fire And videos and things go through the newsfeed so if you go to the main page you'll see the the the most current news feeds coming through in in that page there's also a area which you've got file storage set up where people can have various documents and things like photographs and Word documents, PDFs and so forth. And there's a lot of content content in there especially we put up in the early days things around a lot of the stuff that people regularly asked about and things like you know, what is the right floor fly along and for particular rated flow? And what's the difference in the writings between different followings and what does the different numbering mechanisms mean and what's the what's the typical hook, size ratio and all those sorts of things. So there's loads up there that have all this content on them. Now literally a lot of that stuff you can just Google now anyway and find it in a lot of different pages. But remember, back when we started the group, a lot of that information was more difficult to find. So we, we were how we were housed in the, in the file section of the, of the community. So there's access there that people can go to and look absolutely.



Dave S 11:14

So okay, so that makes sense, basically, I mean, you got all this content, the cool thing, it seems like the group that obviously it's a group, so you're able to, you know, unlike Google, where you search for stuff, you can't really necessarily talk directly here, you're getting feedback. I mean, somebody posts in your, that person's probably going to get 10 to 20 comments, right, right off of that thing. They posted, something like that.



John 11:34

Yeah, it was, again, I was looking at some of the content has been posted lately. And then some of the some of the posts are giving are 10 15,000 engagements with people and that's comments or likes or all that sort of thing. So it does vary, the content does reach out a lot to to the members and like I said, the members are actively participating in what's going on in the group. And then one of the other things I'd like to point out with badminton moderators, as we do it All gratis we don't take any kickbacks or gratuities or anything from from companies or members wanting to you know basically pay us or give us or give us goods and services in relation to favorable treatment and one of the things I was actually very keen on and adamant about when we especially group up is it would be a free and open community for people to share information with no commercial

involvement at all so yeah, so that's one thing I think it's self decided let people know that that their content is free and distributed without any without any strings attached. That's cool.



Dave S 12:37

Yeah, that's probably a big reason why you're the group has grown probably people realize that right? That it's not a big they're not going to get advertised or spam to and all that stuff. That makes sense.



John 12:50

Yeah, I guess you'd have people appreciating the fluffy world is that there's a lot of you know, pro staffers and things to people that are fine, the will and happy to participate. and promote the gold, silver or their products, but we're trying to clear that and just keep everything open and free so that people know that some what's getting shared is, is being done so on the basis of the content and its and its validity to the group rather than in.



Dave S 13:14

Yeah, it's interesting. We, we have a little, you know, a Facebook group, you know, private group and, and it's, you know, I see it already just a struggle, it's just a small group, but, you know, you get companies coming in there and posting a lot of, you know, a lot of their stuff, and it's obvious that, you know, it's their stuff and it's not you start to wonder, like, Where's the value, you know, and that, is that something you struggle with? I mean, how do you if somebody in there say they're just posting you know, it's helpful stuffing, for example, like this podcast, right? I could go in to your group. I have post a few links to episodes over the over the years, but, you know, I mean, I've got like 140 episodes, you know, but I don't post episode in in there every week, even though if I did right, it would get out to a bunch of people. Do you bounce that? What would you tell somebody that you know what I mean? Like there's content, but it's really it's somebody's own content.



John 14:08

I think the the volume of the membership in the group and the fact that they are actively participating sort of balances that out in a time like because, I mean, the number of people get exposed to that sort of content. And so you get a very balanced discussion about the pros and cons of whatever it is, it's being put up and sound a commercial sense of somebody from a fishing company or a guiding company or something, post

something. There will be a lot of feedback just through the nature of the membership participation. And so I think that helps provide a balanced feedback on on those particular There are of course trolls and spammers and people like that in any group that sometimes need to be brought under control. But in the in the most cases, the people in the group are pretty, pretty genuine and pretty willing to help them participate in discussions. And what's the view? So I think that's the main thing that helps keep everything balanced.



Dave S 15:04

Gotcha. Gotcha. And I look at what I'm doing, you know, and that is a struggle because timewise You know, there's a lot of different things you can spend your time out, obviously, you know, you have this good group going, but it's hard to get in there and interact, right and put a lot in. So if someone like myself or another podcaster was to post a link, you know, if they did a weekly show every week, would that be something? That would be kind of okay, or more frowned upon if they were just kind of posting that and then replying to comments that were posted on on that episode.



John 15:35

Yeah, absolutely. No, we encourage that sort of participation from from anybody who's got content that's fly fishing, like, I mean, that's the main the main stipulation with the group is what never gets put up there is strictly for fly fishing related and not sort of a link to other types of fishing or other types of products that don't directly relate to fly fishing. So that's really the only caveat that we put on things as the Man, let's keep it related to fly fishing, they follow the rules in terms of, you know, being respectful of each other and, and those types of things. But other than that, yet people are free to post whatever they like. That's why fishing loaded, and hopefully they do.



Dave S 16:15

That's cool. Well, that's good to know see, and I, I always thought that I was kind of was going to be maybe a little spammy if I was posting I mean, I think the content that I'm putting out with the podcast is great. I think that you know, obviously we're having an interview here and digging into helping people understand a new resource, right that haven't seen your group. And I'm always thinking about that, right? I'm always thinking about who's listening to this show and how and how can I help them so you know, that's good to hear. I'm glad and maybe there'll be some other podcasters that listen and maybe post in your group so so yeah, stay tuned I'll be I'll probably be adding some sub

links as we go out of it. Check it out. But I do see it's fine your group because, man, there's so much activity, it takes up my feet and in my Facebook, right I'm parts of a lot of groups and it's like, oh my god, that's all fly fishing community, right? Because they're So much so it's, it's pretty awesome. It's an active group.



John 17:05

Yeah, and I think that's part of the the trap for people if you want to call it that is that you can get stuck on there for a long long time searching straight into the stock that people post and participating in learning and, and that sort of thing. So it is an immersive experience that people can sort of lose themselves in the grip of it simply because like you said, there's so much content and so much active participation that as a fly Fisher you're always learning something new or seeing new approaches or new techniques that people are using. And so it's a great way of picking up on those sorts of things and thinking about how you can apply them in your own efficient situations and



Dave S 17:37

exactly, that's great. Well, there's a you know, definitely a lot of research I what I did want to touch on flight time just for a second. I'm not sure how much flight time you do, but I was curious if somebody was a search flight tying in the group, you know, say they want to get some information on skating patterns for for steelhead. Is that something that You know, you they could find you think on there?



John 18:03

Yeah, absolutely. Like I said, there's, there's a whole range of active fly types who regularly post their flies on the grip, and also advice on how to how to fish them. I'm not actively a fly tire per se myself, I'm going to do Thai for a few flights here and there for my own use, but I'm certainly not doing that on a commercial basis. But there are a lot of commercial fly tires who do post photos and links to their own web pages we can buy by the flies by tires. So yeah, by all means, search through run through the content, you'll find which element



Dave S 18:39

Okay, and I'm just kind of looking here to see skating flies. I'll just put that in and see I'm just kind of curious how it comes up. So yeah, posts. So it looks like it post a link. Tim Cammisa is on there and it's just got a list of links and then I think you can sort right you

can sort by different topics. Yeah. Yeah, so there's just a ton of content. And then it looks like yeah, there's some, obviously Tim's got some good stuff going on tons of different names. So this is cool. How is Facebook? Ben, as far as you know, you hear all these crazy things about Facebook. And this is a this is a public group, right? This isn't a private,



19:19

correct? Yes, it's open to the



Dave S 19:21

public. And anybody right now can just start, they can join it. They don't have to wait to be approved yet.



John 19:25

You know, there's there's an approval process so that the group is public and visible to anybody. So you can see the news feeds and so forth. But to actually participate in post you have to become a membership. I started up a membership. And that just involves answering a couple of key questions about what's your background in fly fishing, why you want to join the group, how long you've been fishing for and so on. And they're basically filters to try and get out any of the bots and things like that that are automatically trying to throw up fake membership accounts. So and to be honest, probably about 50 to 54% of the applications that we add to the group are exactly that bots and spam. No kidding that we have. Now there's a lot of that going on. So that's probably a lot of what the membership filtering is, is that it would guard against. Yeah, yeah, no, unfortunately, it happens. But like I said that the tools that we've got for keeping on top of it help us make sure that we don't get anybody in there. It's not doing the right thing. And if they do, normally, we pick them up pretty quickly and block them from the sites and



Dave S 20:30

gotcha. And how does it work with Facebook as you hear these things, these stories about Facebook, how they're cracking down, and I think groups is the place where they actually are expanding as the Facebook pages where the you know, the Pete your followers don't really see it, do you? Do you notice changes in the Facebook group from Facebook algorithm changes affecting



John 20:50

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. There's certainly being far more vigilant in some of the algorithms are running against the group policies and and that type of thing. So in the background as, as admin, we get feedback from Facebook directly when they find content that they feel breaks their own community standards. And that may not necessarily be the rules of the group per se. But if something gets posted, photos get posted, content gets posted that breaks the community standards, they are pretty, pretty red hot on letting the administrators know that something's not right. And we're going to get the choice to go in and, and delete it directly or in some cases, depending on the severity of the content, Facebook will delete, the algorithms will delete it themselves and knowledge allows you that contents being deleted. So so they are definitely ramping up their vigilance on this type of content in groups.



Dave S 21:45

Gotcha. Okay. And, and so, you know, out of all the stuff that you've posted, you have an idea of what the most popular topics or a post or any of that stuff. Do you track that I'm just kind of curious.



John 21:58

Uh, yeah, bye. based on the feedback we get from members, probably one of the most contentious subjects that gets raised is the catching kill versus catch and release argument. All right? No. And normally, when that gets popped up, it creates a lot of mid feedback from people. And I can, I can see the argument from both sides. Because people sometimes are fishing in impairments where it's a requirement to get access to you have to take what you take what you catch. In some cases, trout fish like that, or an introduced species, and they're not endemic to the area that they're fishing. In other cases, trout are native to the areas that are fishing. And so the dynamics of that fishery, totally different. So, and again, because we've got a global audience. Sometimes the appreciation of the nuances of the fishery that people participating in are necessarily shared or understood by everybody. So that's probably that's probably the most contentious topic that gets brought up from time to time it'll, it'll raise a lot of MIT feedback, which is great. But sometimes you just have to rein it in because people Little bit to the top with what they're saying and the comments they're making. But



Dave S 23:04

that's right. That's right. Yeah, I didn't notice. And you can sort by by tag location, you can

choose a location. So there are ways to I mean, what would be your recommendation? If somebody's searching for again say, say they were searching for escaping flight, you know, fly tying patterns for skating for steelhead? How would they track down more exact, you know, instead of just just a bunch of stuff coming up?



John 23:28

Yeah, well, hopefully the people who are posting this stuff, we encourage them to use hashtags. And those sorts of tools as well, which helping the search algorithm. So if you're looking for hashtags related to a particular topic, that's probably the quickest way to sort and find all the tape in hashtags. Yeah, yeah. And that should pick up pretty quickly content that matches that search. Gotcha. Or even Yeah,



Dave S 23:53

just you can type in hashtag steelhead and see what pops up. For example, yeah, yeah, gotcha. Okay, okay, cool. This is this is good. Any other tips that you would get out there, you know, again, somebody coming to your, your group for the first time they just see this pile of information and some of it's relevant some of it's not, you know any other tips you would give them to get the most out of the group?



John 24:20

Well, the quickest way probably just to have a look at what's going on is if you go to the group and just look at the the media and photos that have been posted up rather than the content and they'll give you a feel for the type of, I guess fishing scenarios that people are covering a lot of it is is freshwater trout, steelhead, that sort of thing because a lot of people are coming participate from the northern Americas and Canada in the US so forth. But there's a lot of saltwater fly fishing content is now getting shared and that's coming from all over the place. I know there's there's been a big push on in Australia in the last five years or so in in the salt water environment because we have closed Seasons for our freshwater fishing basically were in Australia so when the seasons closed and the cooler months down here we tend to go and look for the saltwater species in the warmer climates that we can chase So, so saltwater fly fishing is certainly becoming a far more popular pastimes and that's worth checking out some really cool things that people are doing in that in that space that are worth looking into. Okay,



Dave S 25:27

cool. And so what do you think is the most it sounds like the wild versus hatchery are killing fish? What is the most common question you get on there struggle from from people with a common theme?



John 25:40

It's not really a question. It's more of a point of view so that there are the pro catching kill and grill people are quite rightly able to catch and make a meal out of the fish that they're catching around both salt water and fresh water is not just one particular environment or species. So and then and then the the The other side of it are people who are pro catch and release and advocate for letting fish go, because you know, they either don't consume a lot of fish or they let them go to the court again, another time by somebody else. So personally, I tend to practice catch and release most of the time. And that's only because the fishery that I'm fishing in is a dedicated trout fishery and I don't particularly like trout as an eating fish. There's there's other species of fish that are 30 a week instead of trout. So I don't tend to kill a lot of fish that I catch in that environment, but then there's some fishing in salt water. In Australia, we do a lot of fishing for bear Monday, and related saltwater species here and those who shall tend to keep it the legal size because they're great at fishing. And so I consider the the argument from both sides and then they said there's no right or wrong situations, just whatever is unique and appropriate for your fishery, and also in your own individual circumstances. Something



Dave S 26:59

okay. And what about, you know, as far as the Facebook group, you know, you've grown this thing up to over 60,000? if somebody wanted to grow their own Facebook group, what what sort of tips would you give them



John 27:12

have a lot of patience. Yeah, and have content have content that is has value, because that's the thing that you can you can go around and post links to your own groups and a lot of different groups at your own at your membership or members of yourself. And that's a way of getting the word out there. But if the content that you have on the group isn't a value to the people who are participating in it, then they'll just leave the group. Yeah. And so that's been the key, I think, to growing the group and retaining the membership is that the content that you've got, has to have value to the to the membership. So make sure that what you're posting and what people are posting, is, is credible. And is of value to what they what their interests are. The dis tools within Facebook that allow you to look for

particular search words and rules that you post around access to the group that are validated as well so there's tools in there to help you do that. But primarily it makes sure that what's the what the group is about is true to itself so the content matches what the group says it does. And that it has value to the membership.



Dave S 28:22

Okay, perfect. And now and what is your you know, your home water I mean, you're down in Australia what what is the, you know, thing you fish most often.



John 28:35

freshwater for trout mainly. He live in Melbourne in Victoria, in southern Australia. So I have family back in Tasmania as well so I get back there and fish for freshwater fish. Again, trout, mainly down there. I also get away like I said in the winter months down here and go up to the northern part of Australia in the tropics in Darwin and chase. Um, saltwater species in that area to get away and do an occasional trip to New Zealand chasing trout in that in that country as well. And we've got a couple of trips coming up to the Pacific Islands next year mostly post COVID. And all the international flights get resumed trip to Christmas Island next year to chase bonefish and that sort of thing too. So I've got a wide interest in in a whole different species of fish I just find it interesting challenge because I've been asked to constructed myself it's interesting to try and use those skills to present a fly to different fish in different environment to to get them delivered. So



Dave S 29:42

yeah, that's cool. And are you an hour? I'm not sure what you do for your day job. Are you in the fly fishing industry? Or is this something you kind of do on the side?



John 29:53

No, it's it's purely, purely my own personal interests outside of my main at my day job. I'm the Operations Manager I'm a company that says we're probably the largest rule testing organization in the world, in Melbourne. So that's my day to day job. But the fly fishing stuff certainly keeps me busy. And outside of that, we've got a, I'm also the chairman of a company called mending cast in Australia. We run the casting for recovery and recovery programs, which people use will be familiar with on those programs down here in Australia, too. So that's, that keeps me busy. Outside of my normal nine to five day job.



Dave S 30:32

That's right. And that's and those groups are that's that's part of the like, the cancer recovery, right?



John 30:39

Yeah, that's right. So casting crew covering is specifically breast cancer related. So it's a program that that runs free weekend retreats for women dealing with breast cancer and uses fly fishing as a way of helping them to, to overcome their problems and introduce them to an outdoor activity that they can take forward as part of their own Every and real recovery is similar in that it operates in the male cancer space. It's a little bit more generic and it covers all types of cancer. But the premise is the same that we run free weekend retreats for men suffering from cancer as a way of introducing fly fishing to them as a coping mechanism as a tool for getting them out into the outdoors and experiencing differentiating giving, giving them an interest that they can carry forward as part of their recovery from finances.



Dave S 31:26

Yeah, that's right. I had Hank Patterson on I think back in Episode 58. And he mentioned that his, his partner, Daniel actually died of cancer, but he went through that program I think before, you know, that helped him you know, get through a period of his life. So yeah, it sounds like it's a pretty good Why is there a if we want to



John 31:46

know i think i think i think Travis is actually one of the moderators one of the programs in Iowa or somewhere I think what he's what he's based to, so he's actively involved in every program now.



Dave S 31:57

There you go. Yeah, I said, I said, Hey, pass it, obviously but that's it. Yeah, Travis Travis shorts, right is his actual name.



John 32:04

Yeah, that's true.



Dave S 32:05

Yeah, I'll put a link in the show notes to that episode that was pretty cool because we I ended up talking to Hank Patterson at the start but we ended up really talking more to Travis and, and hearing some of the deep stuff that we got into So, so I think it was a good episode. Well, anything else we want to touch on here? You know, that we should know about with Facebook group, it just seems like there's so much it's almost almost overwhelming to try to cover it all. But anything else you want to touch on before? You know before we get out of here.



John 32:35

Like I said, just for those people who are interested by all means jump on the group. If you're not a membership, then click the membership button and join up. That doesn't happen immediately because like I said, the moderators and the administrators will have to go through and set the applications and make sure that people are legitimate and not program bots and things like that. So it may not get approved straightaway but it will happen within within 24 hours. So, jump on and have a look. By all means, post whatever you feel is appropriate that matches the group rules and actively participate. That's all I can really encourage people to do.



Dave S 33:11

Perfect. And let's, let's wrap, get out here with the rapid fire round here, here. So I started this I started this off the, the 222 is where I typically start off but I want to start first and just talk about other Facebook groups you follow. Is there are there any other groups that you are following out there? fishing or other love?



John 33:33

Yeah, I do have another Facebook group, which is called Tasmanian fly fishes, which is basically dedicated just to people fly fishing in Tasmania. So that that's another one that I ran. There's a lot of other groups that are members of which couldn't really list here because there's probably hundreds of them but all of those all those will be pretty much fly fishing related as well. So I get an idea of what's happening in in our groups and in other areas of the world. But that may relate to what we're doing in the community as well. So, yeah, it's certainly it's a fascinating fascinating thing to be a part of the market. So you never stop learning. There's there's always things evolving and equipment evolving and, and people looking at different flies and different fishing techniques. And it's all part of a learning curve. So,



Dave S 34:17

yeah, exactly. I had Dominic spin, Tosca was on and he was talking about how, yeah, his blog, the trout bitten blog is, you know, grown to it's pretty massive, right? He's got all this and it's just, he's just been writing over there and it and he talked about how he updates it, you know, he regularly updates posts because he's never gonna run out of stuff to write about and that's, I mean, obviously, with your group, there's gonna always be something how many people are in the Tasmanian group.



John 34:47

This just turn off thousand in that group. So it is a little bit more bespoke in that it basically just deals with people who live in Tasmania, efficient Tasmania, so there's not a lot of people outside of that of that location. That it members but but again, it's specific to their particular fishery and the content in there is, is interesting, given the type of fish that they're chasing in the environment, the pristine environment that the fishing.



Dave S 35:14

Yeah, cool. What What is it? You know, as far as the group, your bigger group, the fly fishing community, what was the you know, what are you most proud of with that group?



John 35:25

I just think the fact that its longevity has stood the test of time. Like I said, we're coming up for me to enter the university in September. So there will be a bit of a celebration on the group at that stage when we reach that milestone and the fact that we've maintained just steady growth in membership is really the thing I'm most proud of, because it means that like I said, the content on there is a value to people and people are actively participating in making it what it is because ultimately it's the membership that that make the group what it is because they're the ones sharing their own photographs in their own content and willing to discuss it with with other people. And without that the group basically has nothing to, to share. So I certainly think that members should members for their participation and their support of the group.



Dave S 36:13

Do you? Do you still post content on it?



John 36:17

Yes, I do. Not as regularly as I used to but, but when there are things in my life and my fishing experiences that I'll share, I'll certainly do post content on when did you start?



Dave S 36:27

When did you stop kind of regularly posting?



John 36:32

Basically, as I got more involved in the mending casting, casting for recovery, your recovery space because that's taking up a lot more time and a lot of the content on posting on those Facebook pages specific to those programs. So while there's some of that I do share back onto the flybys community because it is relevant on a broader, broader fly fishing sense. So I'm sort of split my time between posting content in in those groups and content back on the fly fishing community.



Dave S 37:00

That's right. That's right. Okay. And well we're gonna get out of here pretty quick. I just did I noted the 222. So, Top Tips top flies top resources and you know, we talked I guess, let's just think of your if you had to pick two flies You said you do some saltwater or you do some trout fishing. Let's just stick with the trout. What are your you know, if you had to pick two flies for trout? What what are you putting on tomorrow? Ah,



John 37:25

again, fishing in Australia is probably a little bit different to fishing in other places around the world. But in our fishery, I probably use a red tag as a go to dry fly. And I says it on the internet be the guy who is an employee.



Dave S 37:40

There you go. There you go. And what about other resources? So again, somebody is here. You know, I guess we just say generally talking about trout fishing somebody new to it other than your your group, which is a great resource. Where else would you direct somebody if you had a couple other resources? It could be another group, book, magazine, video, blog, anything yeah.



John 37:59

This this, there's so much there's so much content around. I mean, I've just actually become involved in the anchored webcasts put together by April Voki. So that that's one thing I've just started getting into himself. She's putting some some really, really great information up on her blog. Other than that, there's nothing that really comes to mind because there's just so much content that's being shared by people. April.



Dave S 38:26

Yeah, April is a big one. So now what are you dealing with? What do you what sort of content are you working with her on?



John 38:33

Nothing directly, then I was just, I'm just an active member, then dealing in breeding what she's been putting up. So all right. And some of the some of that contents been been been really careful with a lot of its,



Dave S 38:45

yeah, that's right. Because she's kind of she spends half her time down in your neck of the woods, right?



John 38:50

Yeah, that's right. I've actually met her a couple of times and her husband and nice. They spend half their time in Australia and half the time in Canada. So it's sort of split between the two companies. They can Trees so they've got a good appreciation of decision challenges in in both countries so



Dave S 39:06

yeah, yeah, cool and and this might be another hard one but as far as tips, what are any couple of tips that you know her hear about commonly or something that might help somebody? You know, say if we stick on trout fishing in your neck of the woods



John 39:21

will fly fishing and is really linked to fly casting. I'm coming at this from a fly cast instructors I'm declaring that upfront. Yep. But if people want to improve the fishing from my own personal experience, my fishing improved in leaps and bounds when I started working on my casting. So my encouragement to people is if you are having trouble, fly fishing or getting the knack of it or the technique, or you want to go to the next level in terms of saltwater fishing where you need bigger gear, longer casts heavier flies, you really can't do yourself any disservice by seeking out I credited fly fishing instructor. If you go to the fly fishers international website, there's a search function on there where you can look globally and find accredited casting instructors will be more than willing to help you out. So my biggest suggestion for people is to work on their casting, and I continually do that every week, just keep practicing and patreon improves, because that'll help by that you present fly. And the presentation is really no, it thought for some of the problem in getting fished, fished way before.



Dave S 40:33

Yeah, that's right. And the easy way to find a casting structure was just go to loads recommend go to the FF II website.



John 40:40

Yes, go to the flow fishes international website and there's a search function there and the instructors I think we can look for instructors that are registered all over the globe because the SSI program is a globally as a global program. So there's instructors all over the world who are registered in



Dave S 40:59

it. And do you get a lot of conservation posts in your group?



John 41:06

There are a few Yes. And a lot of is to do with local content because the particular issues cropping up in, in people's home waters and local government issues that people want to bring to the surface, which is fine. I mean, it's all it's all part of the challenges of having a fly fishing community and and the fisheries that they participate in. It's just as long as the discussion stays on track and doesn't become too emotive or too political. But yeah, there is a lot of conservation post content on YouTube, which is right.



Dave S 41:38

Yeah. And who's the next biggest group Facebook group? next to you? Do you have an idea, similar group of what you're doing?



John 41:47

I don't To be honest, because I don't really actively go and look and see everyone. It's not like it's a competitive thing where we're selling a product or you're promoting a particular company, so I don't actively go and look at Other groups, I mean, I know some of the commercial companies like sage and AWS and and those, those businesses will have more. More membership simply because of the products that they're selling. And people are interested in seeing what new products are coming up. But in terms of community groups like ours, I don't actively go and look to see what other what other groups have done.



Dave S 42:21

Yeah, it's it's probably, my guess is it's, yeah, probably more of a local group in your area, or there are some like fly fishing gear, buy sell trade stuff. Oh, there's another fly fishing group. I'm just kind of looking at. Yeah, so there's a few out there. But yeah, I think they're, they're all probably Yeah, there's one here that's got about 25,000 people. So yeah, there's a few other other resources out there for sure. And what's your plan now for the next the next year to five years down the line Are you just gonna keep kind of plugging away plugging away at it?



John 42:58

Well, up until the current situation emerged, we were actively looking at scheduling some more retreats for both the casting for recovery and recovery programs. But unfortunately, that's all been put on hold, as you appreciate with the situation with COVID and the terrible, terrible problems that we're facing globally in that sense. So really all that is on hold until we come out the other side of, of the common issue because now international travel and things like that is really going to be clamped down until they can find a vaccine and get it all under control. And so a lot of what we do down here involves participation from people in the States, like people like Stan Golub, who's the executive director, Bill recovery was planning to come down to Australia to help us run our programs down here. So that's been put on hold the fly fishing international program. We had testing events that we should do to be run here and in October and then they've been cancelled because we can't get people from the States out here to help us participate. So A lot of things that

we were planning in the next 12 months, two years, five years, really on hold until the current situation plays itself since right? So how is



Dave S 44:10

how is it going down there with with COVID? In your I know, in the US, I think we've definitely are probably the maybe the worst country at handling it so far. But how is it down your neck of the woods



John 44:22

where we're relatively fortunate, I think in terms of how we sit, compared to the global situation, our governments obviously close their borders relatively early. And I think we had the benefit of hindsight in that what was developing here was sort of happening two weeks behind Europe in America so we could see what was coming in that sense. So governments act pretty quickly to close their borders and clamp down on social, social, just so forth to get on top of it. And, you know, I'm happy that, you know, the term flattening the Kurvers is being achieved and they're looking outward. Relaxing some of the restrictions that they put on place in terms of Business, Business access and people getting out and about enjoying joining activities and socializing. I mean, we've only just as of yesterday in Victoria been allowed to go back fishing again. So yeah, that's, that's been a big thing from from the fishing fraternity point because as you appreciate people who have been locked down at home, who are used to getting out of the outdoors and using fishing as a way of relaxing and and dealing with their mental mental health, I found it difficult to know that we were allowed to go fishing again, at least it's going to help people.



Dave S 45:39

That's that's, yeah, definitely. Yeah. So I guess the next, you know, six to 12 months. Well, what do you think? What do you think it's going to be looking like any predictions on where we're going to be at or, or I guess anything new you got cut? I guess the real recovery is coming up, right, hopefully.



John 45:55

Yeah, I think that the crux of the issue, obviously globally is finding a vaccination. I think that's the only thing that I'm just going to slow the spread of divorce globally and obviously, as people become exposed to it and the expectation is that once you've had

your renewal is going to help slow the spread down eventually But the last thing you want is, you know, second and third waves of exactly. Infection spreading through countries. So I think we're going to be in a pretty pretty stringent lockdown in terms of international travel until such time as the vaccines are readily available and and proven to start to be effective and and of course that's going to have economical ramifications around the cloud. They're gonna last for several years that's Yeah, that's



Dave S 46:42

that's definitely probably a that's definitely a good take on it. Well, I guess we'll leave it at that john. And if they want to find you, anybody, they can just go to the fly fishing community, Search it up on Facebook and they can connect with you there.



John 46:56

Yeah, absolutely all send the message to one on the list of Doesn't that mean there so they can hook me up on the on the community page and send me a message as a plan.



Dave S 47:07

Perfect. Yeah, I think that's how I originally looked you up I, I found either on the admin and we we finally got this thing put together. So this is a good spec. Good to have Yod Yeah, just want to say thanks for coming on and sharing. You know a little bit about the group and you know, appreciate you providing the resource. I'll be maybe you'll see me in there a little more post in some of the upcoming podcasts. I know this one will be there when we get this one ready to go. So yeah, thanks. Thanks for everything you're doing.



John 47:35

Thanks, Dave. appreciate the support and hopefully, when this current situation sorts of server or get over the states have been catching up and they're fishing in your local waters sometimes.



Dave S 47:43

Exactly. Yeah, we'll have some steelhead ready for you. Alright job we'll talk to you soon. You want to find all the show notes and some of the links we covered just go to wet fly swing comm slash



47:53

JB.



Dave S 47:55

JB. If you want to find out more about growing your own Facebook group, head over to My new podcasts, the outdoors online marketing podcast and grab some tips directly from the marketers who are leading the industry in Facebook, and other social media platforms. That's outdoors, outdoors with an S online.co. I want to thank you today for stopping by and checking out the show really appreciate you for coming in and listening. And if you get a chance we'd love it if you can share this episode or any of the past episodes with somebody who hasn't heard of the wet fly swing show. Thanks again.



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