



# The Cast

## Russian River Fly Fishers

Sonoma County, California  
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Member Dave Stone with his first shad. View of the Lower Yuba River's right-bank. Story page 2.

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### President's Message By Daniel Powers



Daniel and his recent Sacramento River Striper.

#### Biography

Daniel is a 4<sup>th</sup> generation Petaluma native. He graduated from Santa Rosa Junior College and Sierra

Nevada College with a Degree in Fire Science. After graduation he began working for Marin County Fire as a Seasonal Firefighter. Then, he transferred to California Department of Fire (Cal-Fire). In 2009, Daniel decided to follow in the footsteps of his Grandfather Don Ramatici and Uncles Paul and John Ramatici. He assumed a position as an Account Executive with the Don Ramatici Insurance company based in Petaluma.

Daniel sits on the Board of the Russian River Flyfishers, now as our new president. Also, Daniel is an active member of the Petaluma Sunrise Rotary, and Northern California Engineering Contractors Association. Throughout the years, he has been involved in Petaluma Active 20-30, City Technology Board, Petaluma Peoples Service Board, San Antonio

Volunteer Fire Department, and the California Feed & Grain Association.

In his spare time, you will find Daniel doing various outdoor activities like fly fishing, including participating in and leading outings with the Russian River Fly Fishers. He can also be found enjoying wild game hunting, backpacking, and traveling.

### ***Daniel's Plans for the upcoming year:***

I encourage you to attend the July 18<sup>th</sup> RRF BBQ at the pond. This event is in lieu of our July General Meeting. This is an opportunity for me to meet you as your new president. Bring your appetite, rod and reel for some casting pond practice, and your favorite folding chair. Pot-luck dishes are always welcome. Also, I want to thank you for voting. It's an important democratic component of our club.

- I plan to work on reaching out to our club's membership to help you become more interested and involved in our RRF fishing outings.
- I'm interested in meeting individual club members to discuss and receive feedback on how we can improve our club.
- I plan to spotlight individual club members in our monthly newsletter, The Cast.
- I want to thank our membership for entrusting me to guide our club during the next two years. I look forward to meeting you and going on RRF outings together. Please feel free to reach out anytime if you have questions. You may reach me at <https://www.rflyfisher.org/contact-daniel-powers.html>.

**Editor's Note:** See page 9 to review our other newly elected board members and their responsibilities.

## **Stripping In Shad** **By Dave Stone**

Mike Spurlock made the call to reserve a couple of days of anadromous shad fishing on the Yuba River months ago with guide, Al Smatsky. Many of you know Al from the RRF General Meeting days way back before my time. "I don't know why they called me back to talk to your club members so many times," he told me. "I always told the club audience

the same thing each time." After fishing with Al for two full days, it was easy to tell why our club wanted to hear his General Meeting presentation over and over. He is a wealth of fishing information and knowledgeable of locations where and when to land shad.

Al knows his shad stuff and he certainly knew where to fish for shad on the Yuba River and other hot fishing spots too. He grew up in Lodi and has been fishing since he was a kid. He's a very good fishing guide and safe boat pilot. He is extremely familiar with all the river snags, submerged orchard trees from recent storms, bends, and turns of Yuba River. Al knows where to drop anchor without hesitation. He knows the Yuba like his favorite well-read book.

We met Al at 7:00 A.M. at the parking lot of Save Mart on the Marysville side of the Feather River to pick up lunch; Al then launched his boat and we boarded with our fishing gear. We took off from the Feather River dock with a roar and crossed the Feather going with the downriver flow. After a few hundred yards we banked left hard into the mouth of the Yuba River where it converged into the Feather. Swerving in a jet boat is quite the thrill.

"Is there a shad run up the Feather?" I asked. Al told me there is, but he prefers fishing the Yuba over the Feather. Both rivers receive shad runs, but "The Yuba is a very clear river compared to the Feather and the Yuba doesn't have the traffic the Feather has." It was his river to explore and learn as a young man, he told me. He would find ways to drive his truck over an orchard dike (that is no longer there) bringing friends with him right to the Yuba's lower left-bank. One of his friends had been in a motorcycle accident and couldn't manage walking down the steep riverbank to fish. So, Al would back his truck down the riverbank with his buddy sitting on the lowered tail gate so he could cast from the truck's bed.

Al is friendly, inventive, and a smart fishing guide. He happens to be a practicing ground engineer, but above *all*, he is a knowledgeable and passionate fly fisher with a good sense of humor.

Mike started casting from his boat as soon as Al dropped anchor in the middle of the lower Yuba. I stood on the bow deck and Mike, with more experience, stood in the stern area where he back casted to river-right with skill and distance. Immediately, he was fighting a lively female shad that liked his fly tied by none other than our very own club master fly tyer, Lee Soares. I used the brightly colored shad flies I purchased from Chico's fly shop, **FishFirst!**

Mike was racking up and landing fish after fish. I couldn't do anything but stare at his prowess. He had landed at least ten fish in a short time before I had my first one. Then I started to catch on to the technique needed and finally landed my first feisty female.



Mike hooked a shad that imitated a baby tarpon's aerobatics.

The females were larger than the males. However, what really caught our attention were multiples of male shad trailing the hooked females as we striped them in. The water was so clear that we could see the males bumping her with their heads. As all of us were watching this action, Al spoke up telling us, "The males are trying to get the female to release her eggs so the males can fertilize them." Al added, "shad, unlike salmon, don't create *reds*." Apparently, female shad release their eggs while swimming upriver and the males do their best to fertilize the released eggs as they drift downriver. It was all intriguing.

Even though Al told us he wasn't a *counter*, Al estimated at the end of our first day Mike had landed fifty shad or more while using his single hand rod from

the boat and his Spey rod when wet wading in the afternoon. I wasn't close to that number, but both of us were having a so much fun as we striped in shad after shad all day long without counting. However, I thought Al's estimate of Mike's catch-rate was dead-on. We landed an amazing amount.

The next day started like the day before: meeting Al at the Save Mart, launching his boat at the Feather River ramp, motoring up the strong Yuba current, and anchoring at the same spot we fished the day before. That trip upriver took about twenty minutes to reach from the Feather/Yuba River confluence.

Like everyone else, I can't predict how many fish I will land at the start of a fishing outing but based on what I had learned the day before, I developed a ton of new confidence as I started to prepare for my first cast. It would become an even better day of landing shad.

The day was hotter than the previous day. It was predicted to be in the high 90s, but the early morning felt cool and inviting. We started casting like we did the day before. Mike's first cast started to swing with the current and when his line reached 45-degrees to the side of our boat, I let rip with my cast 90-degrees to the boat's gunnel. We both started jigging (a term Al used to mean to yank on our sinking line with our left hand). This technique would get the attention of the shad. We followed his recommendation after our line passed the 45-degree mark. We continued this method between the 45-degree point and when our lines straightened out behind the stern of the boat; then, we would let it sit awhile and start jigging again while stripping our line in.

The second day started out slower than the day before, but we were eventually catching fish. After much action, it was getting close to lunch time, so Al lowered his electric motor, hauled in the anchor, and steered us under electric prop power to river-left to the same spot where we ate lunch yesterday. We ate sandwiches and cold watermelon. It was a perfect lunch and it hit our hunger spot.

After lunch we both switched into our wading boots and gravel guards to wet wade. The water was a little cooler the day before, but the day was much hotter,

and the river temperature felt ideal and refreshing. I walked downriver from Mike about 70 feet. We were both waist-deep or so, and about 35 feet from shore. Confidently, we each had our Spey rods ready to hook and strip in shad.

I began to strip in shad, sometimes two in a row. I was on a roll and upriver so was Mike. We weren't competing—we were just having fun. However, I decided to count. After landing twenty shad during that afternoon, I stopped counting—*why bother?*

After two plus hours of “Spey-O-Rama” casting for shad, both of us were exhausted and craving liquid. We retreated to the shore and Al was waiting with tasty, sliced watermelon.

When we rested and downed multiple slices of watermelon, the sun still blazed overhead as the afternoon started to fade, so we decided it was a perfect time to call it a day. Al lifted his electric motor out of the water, fired up his jet boat, and we roared downriver swerving and dodging as we headed for the Feather River dock and boat ramp. It was another thrilling boat ride and an unforgettable day of shad fishing. At the end of the day, I felt content.

## Traversing the 45<sup>th</sup> Parallel Note

### By John Holdridge

Some 75,000 years ago, the Laurentide Ice Sheet began its creep across North America. At its peak some 21,000 years ago, it was some 2.5 miles thick, leaving major geological impacts on North America which linger to this day. Until June 24, I will be traversing the 45th parallel (halfway to the North Pole) from Michigan to Montana to study these geological wonders. It is purely coincidental that these areas happen to hold fabulous trout streams.

**Editor:** I'm hoping John will provide us with a follow-up story describing his adventure along the 45th parallel in next month's newsletter. Fingers are crossed.

## RRFF Women's Program

### Monthly Update

#### By Catherine Miller

The RRFF Women's Program continues to grow significantly. Many beginners have learned more advanced skills and have become quite capable fly fisher women. I will continue as RRFF Women's Program Coordinator with assistance from a team of co-coordinators, Pam Boyd DeCoite, Tracy Koenig, and Penelope Gadd-Coster. Simultaneously, the number of RRFF mentors for the women's program continues to expand. Working together we look forward to providing activities and outings for beginner and experienced fly fishers.

The Santa Rosa Casting Pond, Thursday evenings from 4:30-7:00 P.M., offers exceptional opportunities to fly fishers of all ability levels. This is the perfect time to increase your fly-fishing knowledge, develop your fly-fishing skills, and enhance your experience of fly fishing. Loaner equipment is available at the pond.

**Important Notice:** SUMMER SATURDAY CASTING CLINICS, noon to 2:30, July 27, August 24, September 28, October 26. These Saturday clinics are being offered by request to accommodate those who have a hard time getting to the Thursday evening clinics because of family dinner hour, work and/or commute conflicts. All members welcome!

July 10<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>—Truckee River Clinics for experienced (10<sup>th</sup>) and beginner (13<sup>th</sup>) fly fishers. Ed Barich and Don Shaw will be our leaders. This is a great opportunity to spend 4 hours on the Truckee River with other RRFF members learning from the experienced clinic guide, Pete Santley. This is a chance to learn several different types of fishing, along with learning access points on the Truckee River, and to practice safe wading. Currently there is a wait list for both outings.

July 20<sup>th</sup>— Golden Gate Anglers & Casting Club (GGACC) Women's Program Event Invitation—Lisa Pardini, Women's Program Leader has invited us to join GGACC women from 10:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. on Saturday, July 20<sup>th</sup>. The GGACC is in Golden Gate Park. The lunch will be a potluck with the main course being provided by the club. It will include casting, socializing and enjoying the day together. Please let me know if

you plan to attend so that I can let Lisa know how many RRF members to expect.

September 27, 28, 29<sup>th</sup>— Digger Creek Ranch—THERE IS AN OPENING FOR ONE MORE WOMAN. This outing includes private water fishing and a lodging facility located east of Redding. The property has two fishable lakes, Cookhouse and Island Lakes, as well as Digger Creek. We will be fly fishing for Eagle Lake Rainbows, Donaldson Rainbows, Lassen Trout and Brown Trout. There is lodging for 8 women in the Cookhouse Lodge. Four RRF mentors will secure their own lodging.

The Women’s Program Coordinating Team, with the assistance of RRF mentors, look forward to offering future fly-fishing outings for beginner and experienced fly fishers, a fly-tying clinic, a wading clinic and luncheons. We are eager to assist with implementing the RRF Skills Development Program for all Interested fly fishers.

If you have not already done so, check out the RRF Website for outing descriptions, signup sheets, and the photo gallery. The Cast, the RRF newsletter, is not to be missed for informative RRF program information and inspiring fly-fishing articles.

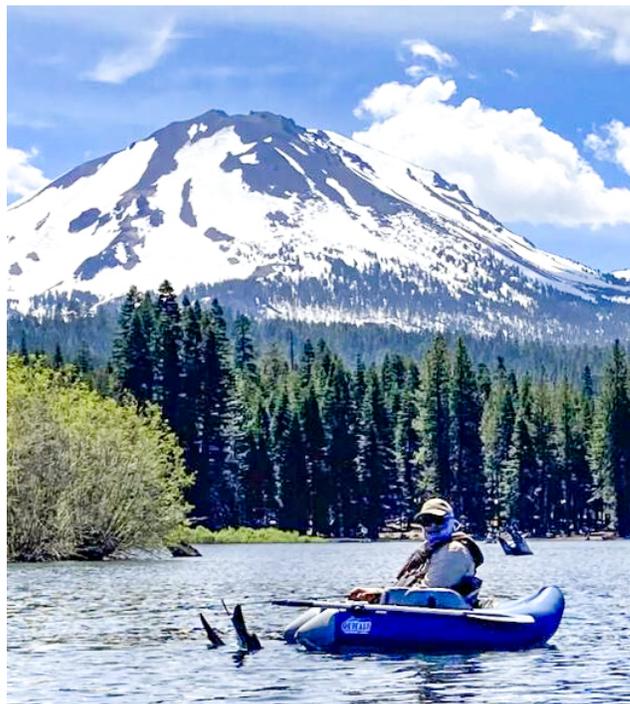
## Baum Lake May 30 – June 2, 2024 Outing Report By Ed Barich

This was the annual RRF club Baum Lake outing (formerly the “Opener”) where we camped at the PG&E campground in Cassel CA. Like last year, the mosquitos in the campground were numerous and nasty, causing us to wear head nets and repellent. Another wet spring in the Sierra.



John & Bob preparing their pontoon boats to float Fall River.

On Friday most of us fished Baum Lake in boats. I was using my kayak, while others had float tubes, pontoon boats or prams. Shortly after we got on the water, the fish hatchery guys showed up and dumped a load of 10-inch rainbows in the lake. I went upstream from the launch to near the planting spot and got into action right away. I was casting and stripping a red-beaded damsel nymph on an intermediate fly line, and it was one fish after another for about an hour. The only problem was they were all small fish and gullible. After stopping for lunch at the car, I went downstream to meet up with Jeff Cratty. He had caught many small trout in the morning, along with a few bigger ones. We saw some nice fish in the 14-to-16-inch range go by but neither of us were able to hook any. Reports from the rest of our group were similar for the day.



Kraig fishing Manzanita Lake with Mt. Lassen in background.

On Saturday, Joe, Kraig, Scott and I decided to drive to Manzanita Lake for the day to see if we could get some wild trout action. I got on the water first, about 8:30AM and paddled my kayak to the far west end of the lake. I could see a few trout rising and had some follow-ups on the damsel nymph, but no takers. I was using an intermediate line with a short, heavy 6-foot leader and figured that these fish were leader-shy. I switched to a 7ft 4x leader with a 3ft 5x tippet, and

shortly later, while trolling with the wind, caught a 15-inch rainbow. On later drifts I caught a 16-inch brown trout and another rainbow by stripping the damsel over deep water. After lunch I caught one more brown trout by casting in shallow water in the south bay of the lake near fallen logs. There were more fish to see there, but they were wary, and I was not able to entice them to take the fly. Although I had less action than the day before at Baum, this day was more satisfying due to the quality and wild character of the Lassen trout.



Ed's Manzanita Lake wild rainbow.

Other locations fished by members on this outing include Hat Creek, where Dan and Michael got some nice rainbows, and Fall River where John and Bob were able to land a beautiful 20-inch wild rainbow. There was one group dinner on Saturday evening at the Outpost Steakhouse in Burney, where we celebrated Scott's birthday and our weekend adventures on the local waters.



Happy Birthday Scott Thomas! Second from left.

## Fishing the West Branch of the Delaware River

By Bruce and Chris Riezenman

After visiting my parents in Manhattan, Chris and I rented a car and drove to upstate New York to the

town of Hancock in the Catskill Mountains. Our destination was the West Branch Angler & Resort on the West Branch of the Delaware River.

They say the Catskills is the birthplace of fly fishing in the US. If that is the case, I can understand why. I grew up in New York City and spent most of the summers in the Catskill Mountains. While not a fisher at that time, I explored the area thoroughly as I grew up. I have always thought that expanse to be one of the most beautiful places in the United States.

While any route through the area is lovely, we chose The Upper Delaware Scenic Byway, Hwy 97 from Port Jervis to Hancock. The road follows the twists and turns of the Delaware River the entire way up. It is a beautiful road and well worth the drive. There is a great stop approximately midway to our destination, Narrowsburg. It is a small artsy town with good places to eat and an excellent location, better for provisioning than at Hancock.

We spent the last 4 days of April at the West Branch Resort. They have a great tavern and restaurant on the property. Probably the best food in the area. Great wine and bourbon selections!



Chris Riezenman with a brown trout, West Branch of the Delaware River.

As for fishing, we hired a guide to drift down for our first day of fishing on the West Branch and caught two

rainbows and a brown. We lost more than we caught, but it was a successful float. For a couple of newbies, this was a great boost to our egos.

The Resort sits on the river and has about a mile or so of private waters. You can wade only if you are staying at the resort. However, non-resort guests can float through that stretch of water. We waded the other two days, but caught nothing, which was par for the course. But we did see others landing quite a few fish. We were one day on the West Branch, and another on the Beaverkill River and Willowemoc Creek.

The East, West and main branches of the Delaware are all wild trout rivers and considered world class. I believe the Willowemoc and Beaverkill are both wild and stocked.

The fly shop at the resort is well-stocked. They are friendly and very knowledgeable. However, Trout Town Flies in Roscoe is the place to go. They sell the flies that they tie, and they have great knowledge of the rivers and spots near them: the Willow and the Beaverkill.

Roscoe and Livingston Manor nearby are two towns worth checking out. Both small towns, population 500 and 1000 respectively.

We will return to the West Branch Resort, drift with another guide and hopefully will have sharpened our game to land some on our own.

## Casting New Beginnings by Tracie Koenig

My dad invited me to the Delta to practice fly fishing during Father's Day weekend. I packed up the car early on Saturday and headed out to the island. I grew up on Ryer Island on Steamboat Slough but never took an interest in fishing back then; I just wanted to live in town like the other kids.

We usually fish with a spinning reel, so this was new territory for us. After a few practice casts in the harbor, we headed out to the slough. My prior casting experience was limited to the club's casting pond, and I tried to remember all the advice I had received from Don and Jeff over the past year. After about an hour,

I landed my first fish, a northern pike. Mission complete on day one. On day two, I caught another pike using a woolly bugger.



After landing her first fish with her fly rod, then Tracie successfully went after a bass.

I wanted to know what it would be like to catch a bass, so I walked the docks in the harbor and spotted a nice one near the boat ramp. Thanks to the RRFF knot and fly-tying clinic, I quickly tried three different flies before the big guy took my bait. Bringing him in was exciting, and of course, I shared the video with all my friends and family. Granted, this was not an "out in the wild" fish, but it did give me experience with setting the hook and reeling and stripping in my line too.

I came away from the weekend feeling accomplished. It was great to put the knowledge I had received from club members to use while fishing, and I know what

to do differently next time. Many thanks to the club members for their advice and good luck wishes.

Next up is a backpacking trip in the Sierra with my fly rod in hand.

**Editor's Note:** I'm sharing photos received from RRF members who have recently been fly fishing.



Good size Fall River rainbow. But who caught it, John or Bob?



Bruce & Chris' view of the West Branch of the Delaware River.



Michael wet wading & fishing, Hat Creek below Hwy 89.



Baum Lake boat launch area.



Adventurous friends: Michael & Daniel drop down from Hwy 89 to fish Hat Creek.



Joe landing a Manzanita trout.



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## Calendar of Events

The RRFF Thursday Evening Casting Clinics will begin on March 14<sup>th</sup>, from 4:30 to 7 pm. Those days and hours will continue to be held every Thursday evening (weather permitting) until the end of Daylight Savings Time, November 3, 2024.

We are OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!

Beginners are welcome...

We are planning RRFF outings for our 2024 seasons. To view the signup sheets for those RRFF Fly-fishing outings click below.

<https://www.rrflyfisher.org/club-calendar-and-trip-signups.html> here for a complete list of upcoming RRFF fly-fishing outings for 2024

## How to Contact Board of Directors & Coordinators

If you want to contact one or more of the Board of Directors and/or Coordinators below, then click on this link, which will bring you to our website.

<https://www.rrflyfisher.org/board-of-directors--coordinators.html>

The names of our Board of Directors and Coordinators will appear. You may click on a name and leave a message for any person below and our website will send it to their personal email address, and they will respond to your message.

## RRFF Board of Directors

President: **Daniel Powers**

Vice President, Women's Outreach & Resources: **Penelope Gadd-Coster**

Outings Coordinator: **Ed Barich**

Secretary: **Brendan Galten**

Treasurer, Membership: **Spencer Bader**

Webmaster: **Mike Spurlock**

Casting Instruction Chairman, Facebook: **Steve Tubbs**

Casting Instruction: **Don Shaw**

Membership Badges & Pond Steward: **Doug Mackay**

Raffle Coordinator, Youth Education Chair: **Gregg Wrisley**

New Member Mentoring, Casting Instruction: **Jeff Cratty**

Outings and Clinics: **Pam Boyd DeCoite**

RRFF Fly-Fishing Skills Development Program: **Tracie Koenig**

Program Chair and Fly of the Month: **Mike Borba**

Women's Activities Coordinator, Outings and Clinics: **Catherine Miller**

## Coordinators

Fly Tying: **Lee Soares**

Casting Instruction: **Binky Castleberry**

Conservation Advisors: **Charlie Schneider & Tom Greer**

Women's North Sonoma County Outreach: **Leafa Fiore**

Fly Rod Building: **Rick Baker**

The Cast Newsletter Editor: **Dave Stone**

Steelhead in the Classroom: **Karl Joost**

## Russian River Fly Fishers Membership Application

I acknowledge in this agreement, and fully understand, that it is a release of liability. I further acknowledge that I am waiving any right that I may have to bring legal action or to assert a claim against Russian River Fly Fishers (RRFF) for its negligence. This agreement is valid for all RRFF sanctioned events, (fishing outings, picnics, dinner fund raisers, meetings, pond casting clinics, etc.) some of which are open to the public and all of which are covered by RRFF insurance. As a club member you are approved to participate in certain covered events which are not available to non-members: fishing outings and training for fly-casting certification.

**Note:** Private activities arranged by club members (not sponsored or approved by the club) are not sanctioned and will not be covered by RRFF insurance.

I have read this statement and agree to its terms as a condition of my membership in the Russian River Fly Fishers.

**\*Indicates required field.**

\*Name \_\_\_\_\_ \*Date \_\_\_\_\_

\*How did you hear about us? \_\_\_\_\_ \*Referred by? \_\_\_\_\_

\*Address \_\_\_\_\_ \*City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

\*Preferred Phone: Home \_\_\_\_\_ or Cell \_\_\_\_\_ \*E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_ \*Signature \_\_\_\_\_

\* I'm applying as a new member. Circle (Yes / No) I'm renewing my existing membership. Circle (Yes / No)

\*Check the boxes below that is applicable:

- Single membership - \$50 annual dues
- Junior membership - \$25 annual dues (age 16-18 or live >75 miles from Santa Rosa)
- Gold membership - \$1,000 (one-time) Family Membership - \$55 annual dues List family members: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership includes a woman who would like to be contacted by our RRFF Women's Group:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

The club would like to help you meet your fly-fishing needs. How many years have you been fly fishing? \_\_\_\_\_

Check any areas you want help with:

- I would like help learning or improving my fly-fishing cast.  I would like advice on fishing equipment.
- I would like a lesson in tying knots.  I would like a lesson in tying flies.
- I would like to have an experienced member mentor me on local waters or on a club outing.
- Any other areas not mentioned above \_\_\_\_\_

\*How are you planning to pay? \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** Dues paid by a new member joining the RRFF after March 1<sup>st</sup> of any year will cover the balance of that year and the membership dues for the following fiscal year. The RRFF fiscal year runs from July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>.

IF YOU PREFER, YOU MAY JOIN OR RENEW ONLINE at [www.rrflyfisher.org](http://www.rrflyfisher.org). OR NEW MEMBERS, MAY MAIL THIS APPLICATION TO:

**RUSSIAN RIVER FLY FISHERS, C/O SPENCER BADER, 3310 CONIFER DRIVE, SANTA ROSA, CA 95404**