

Lee J. Sorensen Memorial Trophy: Mid-Valley (Albany) Steelheaders

STEELHEADER OF THE YEAR



As I accepted this award from the Mid-Valley (Albany) Chapter the names engraved on the trophy humbled me. I know (or knew) all of the recipients. But do all of you fellow Steelheaders know who they are? If not, here is a brief summary of what I remember, lest we forget their contribution(s) to the activities we so much enjoy.

John Snelling, summer 2017

Lee J. Sorensen

Lee was last the Historian of our club. The picture shows Lee promoting the Albany Chapter. Vicky Heintzman, who knew Lee years before I did, summarizes his contributions best: *“Lee was quite an ambassador for the Steelheaders, especially our chapter.”*

“I found one (picture)! Taken approx. 1980. He's standing in (sic) alongside a bright orange chapter banner I made in his signature pose with his arm up in the air. . . . He's even wearing a chapter jacket. Glad you're following through with the Sorensen Trophy story.”



1997 Fred Briggs: Fred's daughters and I committed Fred's ashes to the South Santiam River several years ago. One of the Giants of the club, Fred did it all. I am sure he held most offices in the Club. Well known for being a consummate plug fisher for Steelhead and salmon, Fred was always asked to share his knowledge about tuning plugs. As Fred shared his historical knowledge with me I learned the Albany Chapter had large fish-a-longs years ago, including campouts and picnics.

Picture of a special hole Fred showed me. We miss your acid wit and warm handshake Fred. Keep your hooks sharp!



1998 Don Wenzel: You will see Don at most all Chapter meetings. Don always shares his most recent fishing trip for salmon, Kokanee, Steelhead, and more. A retired engineer from HP, Don's expertise facilitates Club building projects: boat ramps, slides, windmills for pond aeration, pumps for Cheadle Lake, handicapped access structures. Unless he is talking about the latest Chinook or Steelhead he caught Don is quiet and behind the scenes. Don is another member who has held all Chapter offices.

Here is Don at a Clinic table. Thanks for your help Don.

1999 Reese Bush: Reese, now gone to angling heaven, served as Chapter president 10 years or so ago. Best know as the raffle ticket sales "king", Reese made more money for the Chapter than nearly everyone else. He was compensated with many prizes for his work.

Here is Reese with an Alsea winter Steelhead.



2000 Marvin Antrim: You will see Marv at most Chapter meetings. As the long time volunteer coordinator for "Fly" casting at the Cub Scout Lock-In, or solicitor for help during kids fishing derbies, Marv always inspires us with his detailed explanation of each event and the importance of volunteering. I wonder how many hours of help by the Mid-Valley Chapter Marv has reported to ODFW and the Association in Milwaukee?



2001 Don Heintzman: Don (and wife Vicky), the historical backbones of our Club. Known as the door prize chief, Don assembles prizes, sells tickets, and gives out the goodies as tickets are drawn from the brown bin. Did you know Don gives out \$5 of free tickets to anyone who brings in a bag full of discarded line found near the river? Don is also one of the few to be recognized as Steelheader of the Year at the Association Banquet in Portland. Don and Vicky have organized Chapter Banquets and summer picnics for as long as I can remember.

I recognize the South Santiam and a large summer Steelhead in this picture. Quiet and unassuming – thank you Don.

2002 John Edwards: Long time member, John has been Secretary, Vice President, and in charge of the refreshments. Best known for his talent with lead (anchors and weights), John is a stalwart. John knows the rivers and has shown me a productive hole or two on the Alsea.

In this photo John is guiding Wounded Warriors for trout on Foster Reservoir.



2003 Steve Christensen: Steve served a term or two as President. A lover of the fly rod, he has told us about many a late summer Steelhead caught on the South Santiam River; these babies can be large – I know! Steve has also reported on trips to exotic waters for bonefish and other saltwater delights.

2004 Steve Babjar: Rarely missing a Chapter meeting, Steve was the long-serving coordinator of hatchery spawning help at Foster Hatchery on the South Santiam. Thoughtful and usually quiet, when Steve talks everyone listens to his deep, resonant voice.

2005 Don Heintzman: What did I tell you? Don is an important part of the Mid-Valley Chapter!

2006 Lon Jackson: Lon served on the Board of Directors. He has been active in helping with Wounded Warrior trips to Green Peter and Foster Reservoirs.



2007 Ted Franks: Another regular at Chapter meetings, Ted has a long history of fishing experience here in the valley and in southern Oregon. He is currently the coordinator of spawning at Foster Hatchery, having assumed the post from Steve Babjar.

Here Ted and I bumped into Dave Enge at the Church Camp hole on the South Santiam River. Both super nice guys!

2008 Bob Steagall: The consummate gentleman of our club. Luckiest door prize ticket holder ever. What else can we say about Bob. Lots! He and a small group from Lebanon attend all meetings in Albany. Bob has fished from Alaska to Mexico and beyond. He taught me to fish for Kokanee. Thanks much Bob.

Here is Bob, chasing Kokanee, at the helm of his boat on Green Peter Reservoir.





2009 Ken Selby: Long time Membership coordinator of the Mid-Valley Club, Ken left us too early. Anticipating a Buoy 10 fishing trip out of Hammond Oregon with his daughter, Ken checked out unexpectedly. Generous to all, Ken took me fishing for Kokanee at Green Peter, and for bottom fish and Coho in the ocean off Newport. His small ARIMA boat is a joy to look at and fish from. Thanks Ken. We truly miss you.

Here is Ken trolling for salmon off Newport Harbor.

2010 Duane Davis: You are talking to Duane. A story unfolds, and then you realize...it's another of Duane's endless collection of jokes. I'm sure Duane has a heart of gold.

2011 Ellen Compton: Northwest Steelheader and member of the Mid-Valley Chapter for decades. Ellen recently moved to McMinneville. Always sharing her latest trout fishing adventure, Ellen last served as the refreshments chair of the Chapter. No store-bought goodies here - Ellen baked them herself. Thank you Ellen.

2012 Ken Vaughn: Dr. Ken served the Chapter as Vice President for many years. As a physician, small woodland owner, and outdoorsman Ken always poses thoughtful questions to speakers at Chapter meetings. I'd almost say Ken is a scientist, the kind of doctor we all want.

2013 Bill Nyara: Former hatchery manager at the South Santiam Hatchery, Bill joined the Chapter as an honorary member. Smart move, as soon he was leading the group, serving in all leadership positions, lastly as President. While working for ODFW Bill helped put on some great Free Fishing Days for kids at Foster. It was during Bill's tenure that the Albany Chapter changed to the Mid-Valley name, recognizing the wide geographic homes of its members. Bill has a boat slide on the South Santiam and has graciously allowed many of us to use it.



Bill is pictured with a large Chetco Winter Steelhead.

2014 George Larson: Current President of our Chapter. Almost says it all, but here's the scoop. Recognized for leadership by ANWS in Portland, George has skillfully guided the Chapter in numerous large volunteer projects for the good of fishing in local rivers and lakes. To name a few: repair of four ramps/slides on the Alsea; built handicapped access on the South Santiam River at Pleasant Valley ramp; install aeration windmill at Adair Pond; currently working on a new restroom facility and boat ramp improvement at Mill Park on the Siletz River.



2015 Ron Pockrus: Currently Vice President of the Club, Ron has organized three years of fishing activities between the Wounded Warrior Project and our Club, including fishing with adults (and kids), and picnics. He is also a leader in nuts and bolts procedures for Chapter Meetings: master of ceremonies, agenda, room set-up, and other. Ron has generously shared both Salmon and Kokanee fishing trips with me.

Here is Ron with a fresh Chinook caught in the melee of the Alsea River jaws!

2016 Larry Bell: Past President Larry took over during a three year hiatus when the previous president stepped down. He was all in favor of guides talking at Chapter Meetings, which always brought in a crowd. In fact during one clinic type meeting, nearly 200 showed up. This is a problem you might like to solve, or continue having (especially for membership recruitment)!



2017 John Snelling: Northwest Steelheader since 1987. Past Board Member. Membership chairman. Organizer and participant in several clinics. Editor of the most current new member's guide. Fishes for Steelhead more than salmon, often solo.

John pictured here tying "yarnies" at the February 2016 Clinic