

Hal Janssen

Hal Janssen is a nationally known writer, artist, lecturer, and video personality. He has been fly fishing for over 50 years and has fished extensively throughout the North and South America for nearly every species of fresh and salt water fish. Hal's account of his first steelhead trip was wading wet in the winter because no one made waders for 9 year old kids in 1952. The old timers from the Golden Gate Casting Club adopted him, setting him up with a shooting head and teaching him to cast. Hal's self-confidence and fiery enthusiasm seem to guide him in everything he does.

Hal is one of the very few special people in the world with naturally polarized eyes that allows him to see better, correctly analyze stream conditions, and take fish repeatedly when others are unsuccessful, adding to his great ability as a world class angler. I remember Hal putting on a program at our club, many years ago, and talking about the scent we carry on our hands. He said that unless you happen to have the right pheromones, you should carry a small vial of vanilla extract to rub on you hands to mask the transfer of your scent to your fly and leader.

Growing up in the 50's Hal became an active member of a fishing group of San Francisco area fishing greats that represents the history of our sport including people such as: Jack Alamillo, Mac McPheters, Lou Morrelli, Grant King, Bob Nauheim, Russ Chatham, Frank Bertania, Bill Griswald, Scorpe Evans, and Bill Shaadt. This great group fished our Northern California waters when the runs were fantastic. They put in countless hours on the San Lorenzo, Pescadero, Gualala, Garcia, Eel, Smith, and Chetco Rivers. Dan Blanton remembers Hal as a charter member "on the line" at the mighty Smith River in the quest for over 50 pound chinook and 20 pound steelhead. Dan also remembers fishing the San Lorenzo River with Hal in the 60's when there were still very large steelhead and salmon. Dan tells us how well Hal took to fishing Costa Rica's tarpon and snook in the 70's and knows of no one more talented in every aspect of fly fishing. As a consummate stillwater authority, who fishes all waters, Hal has fished with notables Joe DiMaggio, Ted Williams, Phil Harris, Bill Rigney, Joe Brooks, Ted Trueblood, John 2

Goddard, Russ Chatham, Gary Howell, Ernie Schwiebert, and George Harvey. Because of their expertise, Hal and his compatriots led the way for all of us. As Ernie Schwiebert said about Lee Wulff, "Today's fly fishers stand on these guy's shoulders." The Alameda Creek Alliance has a photo of a 10 pound steelhead Hal caught under the Mission Boulevard Bridge in Niles, California in 1957.

Hal has been responsible for developing significant portions of the fly fishing equipment and concepts in use today. He and Scientific Anglers founder Leon Martuch developed S/A's wet tip fly line. He and John Agnew worked on the development of Sunset Line Company's fly lines, Sunset's Cannonball, the first tapered lead core line, and the invention of the density compensated uniform sink line. Hal came up with the idea of the Mastery Stillwater series of clear fly lines, and was part of changing Amnesia from solid to fluorescent colors. In 1978 he created The Fly Tyer' Showcase Box to display flies, the Rac Wrench, a fly fishing shirt, as well as fly rods and nets. He designed a signature line of hooks with Partridge-U.K., and consulted with a number of companies including the J. Kennedy Fisher Rod Company, Cortland, and Rio.

In 1979, he was one of the first in the Umpqua Feather Merchants contract tyers program. Today, over 70 Janssen fly patterns are manufactured and have worldwide distribution. Hal's patterns are on display at the William Cushner Fly Fishing Museum, the University of Idaho, and the Forestry Museum in Elvermum, Norway.

Hal's series of three 1980 videotapes: "Fly Fishing Secrets", was the first collection of instructional fly fishing videos, that were in part responsible for the explosion of fly fishing video titles available today. Hal founded the

Hal Janssen Company in 1979, the first exclusively fly fishing equipment distributor. For almost thirty years, until they retired in 2007, Hal and his wife Jane, worked with fly shops around the world.

As a fine artist, Hal Janssen has illustrated all the fly drawings and paintings for Anglers' Calendar for over 20 years and has illustrated many magazine articles. When Hal gets involved in anything he usually gets "Best of Show," as has been the case over the past 3

ten years that he has been actively involved in carving exceptional fish, mostly of trout in special woods. He calls them "Living Wood" to describe their unique life-like realism. In his spare time, Hal restores classic cars and has professional pin striper status through his induction into their Hall of Fame.

As a pioneer of saltwater, steelhead, stillwater, and float tubing techniques, Hal has written over 25 articles for leading fly fishing magazines. His June 1979 Fly Fisherman Magazine article kicked off the popularization of float tubing and he has contributed to 21 books as both an artist and an author. Hal gained broad recognition as an instructor for his still water fly fishing seminars and schools, for his many years of presentations to fly clubs, and for entertaining thousands as a member of the Coors Outdoor Team, and Ed Rice's International Sportsman's Exposition Pro Staff. He helped found the Diablo Valley Fly Fishers Club and is a fisheries consultant to Wilderness Unlimited, Cal Trout, the Smith River Advisory Council, Putah Creek Council, and the Alameda Creek Alliance.

He is an exceptional individual who has made significant contributions to this area and to our sport. In January 2010 Hal was inducted into the California Outdoor Hall of Fame.