

#GettingToKnowDOS—Dr. Matthew Sweet



Dr. Matthew Sweet

Photo credit: Michael Hilleary

In this issue of *Surgery Synopsis*, staff interviewed Dr. Matthew Sweet, Associate Professor, Division of Vascular Surgery.

Synopsis: What was the last book you read?

MS: *Crossing to Safety* by Wallace Stegner. It's a great book about two couples who become friends in their early professional lives. The story is about their time together

many decades later, so it's about friendship, love, aging, loss, what it is to have dreams and goals in life. The other book I recently read was called *GT* which is about how to fish for giant trevally (fly fishing is one of my favorite hobbies). I generally enjoy reading fiction, but I read a little bit of everything—biographies, different kinds of fiction, and then technical books on fly fishing.

Synopsis: What is the next book on your list?

MS: I have a bunch of books I've been meaning to read including *Moby Dick* which has been on my list forever. I've started it several times before and have gotten about 300 pages into it but haven't quite finished it yet. Another book on my list is *Fives and Twenty-Fives* by Michael Pitre, which is a novel written by an Iraq veteran about a road repair/bomb disposal platoon.

Synopsis: Any favorite movies or TV shows?

MS: I recently watched *Anthropoid*, which is an incredible movie based on the true story of two Czechoslovakian resistance fighters who parachuted into Czechoslovakia to kill Hitler's third in command, who he had installed after taking over the country. I also recently subscribed to Amazon Prime, which was a horrible mistake because now I don't read as much. I recently finished *The Man in High Castle*, which was very well done. It's the story of what might have happened if the Nazis won WWII—they drop a nuclear bomb on New York City and take over the US east of the Rockies, and Japan invades and takes over west of the Rockies. So the story is basically about the US resistance fighters with an interesting sci-fi twist.

Synopsis: What is something you accomplished this past year that you are proud of?

MS: I caught a steelhead on a fly I tied myself, and I caught a wild steelhead by myself on the Olympic peninsula. You can go fishing with a guide and they tell you to cast away and

you're likely to catch something, but when you go by yourself and you catch something on your own it's a combination of luck and doing things right, and then doing it with a fly you tied yourself is very satisfying.

Synopsis: What is a favorite travel destination?

MS: I used to be really focused on cycling and went to Europe to ride in Italy, France and Spain. More recently I've been travelling to fish. British Columbia has some of the best steelhead fishing in the world, and it's just a few hours away. In May I went to Christmas Island which is a small island in the Pacific, halfway between Hawaii and Fiji. It's this beautiful island with a big lagoon and great saltwater fishing. One of the unifying features of all these places is the absence of cell service and internet.

Synopsis: What is your dream travel destination?

MS: There are too many to pick just one. I'd like to fish in Patagonia, New Zealand, and Kamchatka (in Russia).

Synopsis: So are you fishing most weekends?

MS: Fishing is very seasonal so when it's good it's good, but it's not always so. When I'm not fishing I do a lot of cycling and bit of trail running.



Dr. Matthew Sweet fishing off Oahu
This fish is a file fish—a species of trigger.

Synopsis: Do you have a goal for the coming year?

MS: I really want to catch a trigger fish. I'm interested in the GT fish but it's the trigger fish I really want to catch. I've hooked six of them, but four times they broke the hook on my fly and twice they swam into the corral and cut my line. Their mouth

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is made of bone because they chew coral to eat the crabs and fish that live in it, so they can bite through the metal hooks. They are just incredibly strong fish, these little bulldozers, so even when you hook one the chance of landing it is low.

Synopsis: What do you do when you catch them? **MS:** I just catch and release. **Synopsis:** Do you have any other upcoming goals that aren't fish-related? **MS:** [laughs] Not really.

Synopsis: Do you collect anything?

MS: I used to collect jazz music but that's tapered off. I was a big jazz-head when I was in residency. **Synopsis:** Do you play jazz? **MS:** I played piano as a kid and I played bass when I was in college. But I was horrible—not just bad—I was horrible, like Elaine's "little kicks" dancing in *Seinfeld*. Horrible.



Dr. Matthew Sweet fishing for steelhead with his dog, Atticus.

Synopsis: What would you be if not a surgeon?

MS: If I wasn't in medicine, I would love to be doing something outdoors. Maybe something like a park ranger. I wouldn't want to work all alone or somewhere like the deep in the recesses of Alaska but I would love to be in the mountains, doing something with my hands and working outdoors.

Synopsis: Are you team iPhone or Android and what is your favorite phone app?

MS: iPhone and I like Instagram. **Synopsis:** For fish photos? **MS:** Yup, for fish photos. **Synopsis:** Do you post any of the photos? **MS:** No comment [laughs]—OK, yes I do.

SAVE THE DATES

**DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY
HARKINS SYMPOSIUM &
68TH ANNUAL
DR. ALFRED A. STRAUSS LECTURE**
Friday, October 13, 2017
Harkins Symposium
7:00am—2:30pm, Alder Auditorium
68th Annual Dr. Alfred A. Strauss Lecture
4:00pm, Health Sciences Building,
Hogness Auditorium

**4TH ANNUAL FULL SPECTRUM OF
HEART FAILURE THERAPY:
MANAGING THE TRAJECTORY**
Friday & Saturday, October 20–21, 2017
Four Seasons Hotel, Seattle, WA

**DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY
RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM &
24TH ANNUAL HELEN AND JOHN
SCHILLING LECTURE**
Friday, February 16, 2018
**Department of Surgery
Research Symposium**
7:00am—2:30pm, UW Tower Auditorium
**24th Annual
Helen and John Schilling Lecture**
3:00pm, UW Tower Auditorium

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GRAND ROUNDS**
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