

WindKnots

A monthly publication of the Texas Flyfishers

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January 2005

TFF Announcements

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

WE HAVE A NEW MEETING LOCATION

Please note the January meeting will be held in a new location: the American Red Cross building on the north side of Highway 59 between the Kirby and Buffalo Speedway exits. Enter through the main entrance and find us in Classroom A to the left. We will no longer be meeting at the Holiday Inn on I-10 near Antoine.

Captain Steve Soulet will be our guest speaker at the January meeting. Capt. Soulet is a Galveston guide and an excellent fly tier. We hope you can join us Tuesday, January 25 at 7:30 p.m. (Doors open at 7:00.)

South Padre Island Outing

By Rick Rawls

After several delays, the annual South Padre Island outing was set. It took place in October and was scheduled to take advantage of mild fall weather. Most years, it is in the middle of the summer. The turnout was very good. Seven of us made the trip. But instead of the cool weather we were expecting, Port Isabel was having record high temperatures.

Strong winds in excess of 25 miles per hour made for tough conditions. But that did not stop any of us. We fished Mexiquita Flats on Thursday and discovered some other great places on Friday. We landed a few fish on each of these two days. On Saturday, we went to a place accessible from Highway 100 directly across from Port Isabel High School. We got on the water just before sun-up and there was not a ripple on the water. We could not believe it. The morning fishing proved good and everyone caught a few fish. There were some great hook-ups that proved too much for the fisherman. The fish threw the hook and left the fisherman empty-handed. That did not discourage anyone, but got the adrenaline flowing.

As the day progressed so did the wind and we ended our outing late in the afternoon. We headed back to the motel to get ready for dinner at the Shrimp Haus. We had the honor of being joined by Captain Eric Glass, a local fly fishing guide, and swapped stories about the day's fishing.

I think everyone had a really good time on the outing. There were three newcomers to this year's trip and they each enjoyed themselves. This is my favorite outing because the fishing around SPI is incredible. You can catch anything from mangrove snapper to tarpon. Next year, we will again have the SPI trip in October, and I hope those of you who could not make it this year will join us.

President's Corner

by Jerry "Buggywhip" Loring, president, Texas Flyfishers



2004 ended well for the Texas Flyfishers. Our club remains financially sound, has maintained a solid base of active members, and conducts successful programs such as fly tying classes, outings, casting clinics, *Wind Knots*, special events, and monthly meetings.

Change does come. The monthly meeting place for the last four years is no longer available. We are in negotiations with various locations around Houston. Our goal is to maintain the quality of the monthly meeting location but lower the expense -- not because we need the money but rather we would prefer to spend more on other programs. Our January meeting will be at the American Red Cross Building located on the outbound service road of Highway 59 at Kirby Blvd. We will see how that goes. Other locations are being looked at, too, so pay close attention to your Demon Dialer and the *Wind Knots*.

The first fishing show of the year is the last week of January. We need a dozen or so volunteers to tie flies and help run the complimentary booth. Please call Rick Rawls. His phone number is in the list of officers. These events give the Texas Flyfishers exposure and generate new members. After all, we, like all other organizations and businesses, have a normal attrition rate.

The fishing news is mixed due to the fresh water runoff in the Texas Coast and the open floodgates on the Guadalupe. That, coupled with the time of year makes for a lean month or two. Other locations must be considered. The south Texas coast for saltwater could be quite good, weather permitting. Other Texas rivers such as the Llano come into play for rainbow trout stockings. Of course, world class brown trout action, so often overlooked, is available during the Arkansas winter.

So keep your backcast short and your loops tight. Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, and may next year be wonderful for you. Thanks for supporting the Texas Flyfishers.

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Volunteers Needed for the 2005 Houston Sportsman's Show

The 2005 Houston Sportsman's Show will be held on January 27th through the 30th at the George R. Brown Convention Center – Hall F. We need volunteers to man our booth where we will promote the club and tie flies. In addition, we will have a casting pond where we will provide fly casting opportunities and instruction. Please contact Rick Rawls at 713-830-5446 (home) or 713-666-7100 (work) if you have any questions or would like to volunteer.

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Upcoming Meetings

Our February speaker will be Ken Richards. He runs a guide service on the White River and other streams in Arkansas. He has donated a trip for auction at the annual TFF auction event.

Pete Barrett, the author of the *Sheepwagon to Alaska* article, will be our March speaker. Pete fishes from Utah to Alaska and back every year and guides clients along the way.

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Introducing the Question-of-the-Month

Everything you ever wanted to know about fly fishing but were too afraid to ask...

Fly anglers are a curious bunch. So we have decided to launch a new section in the *Wind Knots* for members to exercise their curiosity and pose questions about topics relevant to any aspect of fly fishing. Sample topics include, but are in no way limited to, technique, tackle, fly tying, and watercraft. The question will be selected from among the hundreds of likely submissions from the readership (via e-mail: ralphnchristineadams@earthlink.net). And of course, answers will also be selected from among the readership's responses. The first month's question comes from Corey Rich:

What kind (brand and model) of fly line is best for winter fishing in Texas, where the air and water are cold and you want a compact, heavy head that will load the rod for relatively short casts of 30 to 40 feet?

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OUTINGS

Our outings schedule is an ongoing work-in-progress. Here are the trips we have currently scheduled for 2005. As always, this is a work in progress and subject to change.

To volunteer as a trip leader, contact fresh water outings chairman Clarke Thornton or salt water outings chairman Scott Fossum. Their telephone numbers and email addresses are on the Executive Committee listing later in this issue. Fresh water trips are designated [F], salt water [S] in the listings below.



January 7-9, 2005. Lower Mountain Fork River, Broken Bow, Oklahoma. Trout [F]. Float or wade as you wish.

January 29, 2005. Guadalupe River, Sattler, Texas. Trout [F]. Warm up for the "One Fly" tournament.

February 20, 2005. "Guadalupe One Fly," Guadalupe River, Sattler, Texas. Trout [F]. Float or wade as you wish.



Scott Fossum - salt

Clarke Thornton March – Port Mansfield. Leader needed [S].
- fresh

March 18-20, 2005. "Sowbug Round Up," Mountain Home, Arkansas. Trout [F].

April 3, 2005. Yegua Creek, Newman's Bottom, Texas. White Bass [F].

April – Lighthouse Lakes kayaking, Aransas Pass, TX [S]. Ralph Adams, leader. Kayak rental available nearby.

April 17, 2005. Location to be determined. Bass & Panfish [F].

May 7, 2005. "Sunfish Spectacular," Seven Lakes, Damon, Texas. Sunfish & Bass [F].

May – Brown & Root Flats kayaking, Aransas Pass, TX [S]. Ralph Adams, leader. Kayak rental available nearby.

June 11-12, 2005. Llano River, Junction, Texas. Bass & Panfish [F].

June – Louisiana Madness, Lake Charles, LA [S]. Leader needed.

June – San Jose Island kayaking, Rockport, TX [S]. Kayaking from Captain Sally's mother ship. Leader needed.

July 9-10, 2005. Frio River, Uvalde, Texas. Bass & Panfish [F].

July – Port O'Connor jetties, Port O'Connor, TX [S]. Leave POC docks Saturday afternoon, fish all night, return Sunday morning. No boat required, but boats needed to ferry participants to the jetties. Camp Saturday night on the Matagorda Peninsula or stay up all night and fish.

July – "Port O'Connor One Fly" tournament, Port O'Connor, TX [S]. Scott Fossum, leader. Rotating crystal trophy up for grabs. Most inches of fish caught on the first fly you tie on wins. Boat or kayak needed.

August 6, 2005. San Marcos River Float Trip, San Marcos, Texas. Bass & Panfish [F].

August - "Redfish Rodeo" [S]. Jerry Loring, leader.

September 10, 2005. Location to be determined. Bass & Panfish [F].

October – South Padre Island, TX [S]. Rick Rawls, leader.

October 1 & 2, 2005. "Padre Island Surf Fest". Four-wheel down Padre Island and fish the surf [S]. Optional

camping on the beach.

October 8, 2005. Seven Lakes at Damon, Damon, Texas. Bass & Panfish [F].

October – Nighthawk Bay (Bird Island Basin) in the Padre Island National Seashore in/near Corpus Christi/Port Aransas. Kayak, boat and walk-in opportunities abound both on the flats and in the surf. Leader needed.

November 6, 2005. Guadalupe River, Sattler, Texas. Trout [F]

December 2005. No outings.

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Paying Your Dues

By Tom Lyons

Last year I wrote an article about all the times I ran aground with my new flats boat. I still get heckled about my tendency to go shallower than my Maverick was designed to go. Even after writing that article, I had the misfortune of hitting a shell reef at the Rodeo last August. I put Bill Waldron smack-up against the front deck of the boat. He survived the experience, but I don't think he will go red-fishing with me again.

My son has more patience than I, yet knows even less than I do about the bottom contours of the various bays in the area. On numerous occasions, I have propelled him across the boat due to sudden stops on top of sand bars. He does duck-and-hold every time we even think about entering the Lagoon. I am particularly good at misjudging that area and often pile into the sand at cruising speed. But he still comes back for more. By now, he has caught a few redfish on flies and the thrill has him hooked.

We have been paying our dues and learning the ropes and the good news is we don't often hit bottom anymore. At the Maverick owners get-together, someone asked if we hit anything during the day's fishing and we could truthfully say, "No." It was a limited "no," however, because I hung the motor on a sand bar guarding the entrance to one of my favorite lakes. I didn't count this, though, because I knew it was there and was just trying to limit the distance I had to pole.

A recent trip brought ultimate evidence that my dues were paid. I went a whole fishing trip without getting hung-up. I even got into and out of the Lagoon with no sudden stops and put the boat on plane without plowing mud for a mile or two. Further proof that I can be trusted to fish Port O'Connor without installing seat belts in the boat is that I managed to get into and out of Pringle Lake unscathed. My biggest thrill of the day was managing to exit the lake on the right (correct) side of the red marker near Grass Island without getting hung-up.

I know these accomplishments won't prevent me from receiving the ribbings I always get about going too shallow. And that is not my intent. But by now, my dues are paid and I have the confidence to join the crew that ribs me. So I find somebody else newer to the game than I am, and put the ribbing to him.

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Sheepwagon to Alaska

By Pete Barrett

*The fly fishing starts in Utah and ends in Alaska
May 1st through August 30th, 2005*

Traveling north from southern Utah, I will follow the snow run-off as the streams clear. I will fish the Rocky Mountains up into the Canadian Rockies and then continue along the coastal mountains of British Columbia into the Yukon and Alaska, ending the journey on Kodiak Island.

I will spend a few days on most of the famous waters of the American West. Time on the water will be maximized by camping streamside in my off-road, comfortable, go-anywhere, Sheep Wagon.

The first three weeks of May will be spent in Utah on the legendary waters of Lee's Ferry, the Green River, the Boulder Mountain Lakes, Jones Hole, and Flaming Gorge. The high desert waters of Utah are spectacular at this time of year. Temperatures range from freezing at night to seventy degrees in the day. Brief periods of sleet or snow may occur in May. The trout are active and several hatches of biblical proportions come off at this time of the year. It

is a wonderful time to be in Utah; I believe it is the best time. I have a couple of avid fly fishermen who were with me on the Green last year who will be willing to tell you all about their trip.

From Utah, I move a couple hundred miles north to Wyoming, fishing the Upper Green, the Green River Lakes, and the New Fork in the Pinedale area. Then on opening day, Memorial Day, I plan to be in Yellowstone. I usually set up in the Canyon area of the park to access the Gibbon, Lamar, Madison, and Fire Hole rivers.

Following the Madison out of Yellowstone toward Ennis, Montana, I set up camp on the Beaverhead, Big Hole, or Jefferson rivers and cover the legendary waters of Lewis and Clark between Twin Bridges and Three Forks, Montana. By now it will be mid-June.

The North Fork of the Flathead and particularly the Blackfoot Reservation Lakes give anglers the chance to catch the largest trout of their lives, often in the thirty inch class. This is an extremely windy area with Glacier National Park generating zephyrs that howl off the icy mountain peaks and onto the grassy plains, but you can't beat the beauty of the place. One calm day and a personal record fish makes up for all the wind.

Crossing into Alberta, Canada, I will be fishing the Crowsnest, Oldman, Bow, and the dozens of streams that cross the Forestry Trunk Road as they flow out of Banff National Park. By the first of July my trip takes me to British Columbia to fish the Bull and Elk rivers near Fernie, BC. These waters are so great that guides in Montana take their clients to Fernie to fish. Fishing guides from New Zealand use their British Empire connections to summer (New Zealand's winter) in Fernie.

In BC, my trip turns northwest to the Coast Mountains and the Bella Coola, Dean, Chilcotin, and Blackwater rivers. Steelhead, Salmon, and huge trout can be accessed along a gravel road that cuts for two hundred and seventy miles from Williams Lake to Bella Coola. The Sheep Wagon makes an ideal camp in this grizzly bear habitat; an electric fence surrounding the Sheep Wagon insures a safe and peaceful night's sleep.

Traveling the Cassiar Highway from Williams Lake, BC over some 1,400 kilometers, I will hook a left in the Yukon and drive along the Swift River and Teslin Lake, stopping at some personal favorite streams for a few grayling and on into Whitehorse. Whitehorse is the only night on my whole trip where I plan to camp in a commercial area. A night will be spent in a Wal-Mart parking lot, along with a couple of hundred other Alaska Highway travelers. It will be a chance to re-provision, change the oil, rotate the tires, and get the latest news on the road ahead. By then, it will be around July 15, plus or minus a couple of days.

By July 20th, the Sheep Wagon is loaded on an Alaska Highway ferry in Homer to make the ten hour crossing to Kodiak Island.

Kodiak Island is a place where I lived for over a year, so it will be like coming home. The ferry ride is well worth the cost of admission and provides fantastic views of whales, seals, otters, eagles, and glaciers. The dining room also serves great food. Off-loading at the Kodiak dock puts us right in the middle of town and there is always a crowd on-hand to see friends coming and going.

It takes just a few minutes to be out of town and driving along the Buskin River with the huge U.S. Coast Guard base in the distance. There are only about a hundred miles of road on Kodiak, but there are several great places to camp along the road system. The electric fence goes up quickly after the Sheep Wagon is parked because Kodiak bears are the world's largest.

Kodiak is salmon Mecca and the bears get big by eating salmon.. There are runs of reds (sockeye), pinks, kings, and Dolly Varden, as well as steelhead and rainbow trout. This is the place where Alaskans come to fish and get away from the crowds. I will fish Kodiak from July 21st to August 1st.

On the second day of August, I will begin my return trip to Utah with fishing stops on the Kenai River, the Russian River, and Montana Creek.

If you are interested in a one week segment of this trip, I will pick you up and return you to the nearest commercial airport in the area you would like to fish.

I priced these trips at about one-third the cost of area fishing lodges. In addition to ground transportation, all in-camp meals and lodging in my Sheep Wagon are included.

For more information, you can contact Pete via e-mail at: Sheepwagon2ak@aol.com.

Tackle Talk - Fly Boxes (continued)

by Barkley Souders

Meiho has a series of multi-compartment boxes. I like these little boxes as they come in different colors and different compartment configurations. They are great for your nymphs and small trout flies (Emergers, WD 40, Tricos).



The newest in the series from Meiho are the waterproof boxes that have removable inserts. The boxes can be configured with flat foam, ripple foam, slotted foam, and multi-compartment inserts. They are a convenient size and come in several colors. Further, at about \$20, these are the best value for 2005.



The most popular boxes for the past couple of years have come from C&F Designs. These boxes are great for us older fellows. Model CF 101 is a favorite of trout fishermen. The five foam strips are slit on one side. It is easy to insert the smallest flies into the slots. You do not tear up the foam like in most boxes. The other side of the box holds five threaders and the ridge in the middle will hold another five threaders. There are different size threaders and each will hold a half-dozen flies. The good part of this is the ease of putting your fly on the leader. You insert the leader tippet into the wire threader and just pull up on the fly. Wow, it's threaded and you did not have to cuss. I took a marker and labeled each box according to the flies it contains. (Midges, Dries, Nymphs, Attractors, Stimulators). Expensive, but so was the trip to Colorado and New Mexico.



Back to where we started. Wheatley boxes. These fine boxes are made in England. They have been copied, but the copies by Okuma are not of the same quality. For the gift of a lifetime, consider one the many configurations available.



Thoughts on Guide Selection

By Ralph G. Adams, Jr.

From time to time, we could all do with a little professional help. Professional help for the 21st century fly angler might as well come in the form of a fishing guide rather than a psychiatrist. Guides tell better jokes. Their offices also have better bird-watching, and showing up with your camera will not provoke Freudian lines of question.

Fishing with a guide frees you from some of the details including worrying over tide tables, generating backup plans, filling the gas tank, and selecting flies. Guides prepare everything in advance and can be counted on to give the right advice and make adjustments as necessary. This allows you to focus exclusively on the business of catching fish.

A day with a guide is an opportunity to observe a professional angler; to see how he handles situations. If you have ever wondered which swirls to cast to, or what types of water and features to look for, or about how the running tides and changing seasons influence game fish, then a guide is probably for you. Watch your guide for clues. Ask him questions and incorporate his wisdom into your approach.

Before you can fish with a guide, however, you must first select one. Making a good choice is critical. I have fished with several guides in Texas and had great and some not so great experiences. The best ones were referrals from people who had fished with the guide in question. Good places to get a referral are local fly shops and outfitters. TFF club members are another excellent source. A sampling of the membership reveals a well-traveled lot. They have fished destinations throughout Texas, Louisiana, Alaska, the Rockies, the northeastern U.S., the Bahamas, Mexico, South America, Europe, the Indian Ocean, and even parts of the Pacific including Australia.

If you are a beginner or if you are bringing someone who is new to the sport, mention this to your guide and get a sense that he is willing and able to engage in a little impromptu teaching or demonstration of technique.



Wherever you find yourself fishing, a day with a guide is a partnership. You and your guide must work well together. You must both be interested in fishing the same situations. Once you have a lead, call that guide and ask questions about what you should expect on a day afield with him. Some guides are famous for surf fishing. Others paddle kayaks in the bays or float rivers in canoes or drift boats. Some sight-cast to redfish from a poling boat while others blind-cast or troll offshore and tease the biggest brutes to within casting range. Maybe you are curious about a certain Hill Country river. Or want to be among the legends to fish Homosassa in March or the Chandeleurs in October.

It is important to be prepared with reasonable expectations and a good attitude. The expectations you bring on the boat are at least as important as packing the right equipment. Because even with professionals, twenty fish days are not guaranteed and the guide can only do so much. My various guided trips have netted catches ranging from a single hard-won fish to twenty easy ones. Anglers must be flexible. Having realistic ideas about your abilities and the conditions you may encounter will help you to be mentally prepared for any kind of situation regardless of wind, weather, and fish.

The sociological angles alone of fishing with a guide can make the trip worthwhile. Be patient and have a sense of humor. One moment you are directed to "cast well ahead of those fish," while in the next you are admonished to "cast ahead, but not too far ahead." You might find yourself at 0-for-18. On the last attempt, the fly landed right where you were looking, which was three feet behind the fish's tail. No matter, your guide has already begun scanning for the next target and remarks, not with malice but with the sincerity of someone speaking a great verity of the universe: "You want to put the fly in front of those fish."

They will humor your fly selection. The one you start the day with at the dock is, by definition, your favorite fly. It is new and an original, born of a daydream and exquisitely crafted over several evenings leading up to your trip. You consider that, in a subtle way, it conveys important things about you as a person and your philosophy as an angler. It highlights your skill at the tying bench and your knack for interpreting fresh, new ideas into traditional fly tying methods and materials. Indeed, this fly conveys your optimism about life and the world in general. "Hoooo-eee! That is some fly," says your guide delivering the accolades you expected. You begin a detailed explanation of the concept and development of your fly when you see him clip the line and hand it over to you. "Actually, if you don't mind, these ones right here have been working pretty good lately" and he rigs a chartreuse and white Clouser minnow.

For the already-convinced, fishing with a guide will teach a lot about fishing. And probably a lot about other things as well. Even the aces seem to get something out of fishing with a guide. They probably hire the experts more than beginners. That is an interesting observation in and of itself. But catching fish is not exclusively what the day is about. Putting a guide's skill and knowledge to work for you can make for extraordinary experiences. In the months ahead, leave the couch and get a referral. Talk to some guides and book yourself a trip.

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About *Wind Knots*

Wind Knots is your monthly newsletter, and it needs your help – otherwise we'll run out of things to print. E-mail your articles, photos, artwork, graphics, fishing news, tall tales, lies, and letters to the editor to ralphnchristineadams@earthlink.net not later than the 10th of the month for that month's issue. **Be sure to put the words *Wind Knots* in the subject line of your e-mail.** If you don't, I might think it's spam or worse and delete it before opening.

If you have digital photos, please send them via e-mail in .JPG format. If you have paper photos, mail them to Corey Rich, 1900 N. Memorial Way, Houston, TX 77007. Please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope for their return.

The preferred form for text – stories, letters, and so forth – is in Microsoft Word. Please try to keep your offerings in the 800 to 1,000 word range, or less. If you send photos along with an article, proposed captions are appreciated.

Wind Knots is posted on the club's Web site as soon as it becomes available. Check www.texasflyfishers.org regularly for the latest newsletter and other news of interest.

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WIND KNOTS CLASSIFIEDS

Space permitting, we'll run "Wanted" and "For Sale" ads for members of Texas Flyfishers. On a case-by-case basis, we may also run ads from non-members if the goods or services sought or offered would be of interest to our members. Send your ad by e-mail to ralphnchristineadams@earthlink.net or regular mail to Ralph Adams, [your preferred address here]. You may include a photograph of items to be sold if you like.



Texas Flyfishers
P.O. Box 571134
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Texas Flyfishers Membership Application

Please check one: New Application Renewal

To join Texas Flyfishers or renew your membership, please complete this form and mail it with your check to the address below, or bring it with you to one of our monthly meetings. All memberships expire June 30th of each year, and renewals are due July 1st. New members, please pro-rate your payment for the number of months between now and the end of June, inclusive. Our monthly meetings are held on the last Tuesday of every month (except December), beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Dues are for (check one): Individual at \$24 a year Family at \$32 a year Student at \$16 a year

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home phone: _____ Work phone: _____

Email: _____

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