

WindKnots



A monthly publication of the Texas Flyfishers

Volume 23 / Issue 3 March, 2004

Don't Forget!

Monthly Meeting

March 30th, 7:30 p.m.

(Doors open at 7:00)

Bill Gammel, Essential Elements of Fly Casting.

Bill is a master fly casting teacher. You will learn something.

Holiday Inn, I-10 at Antoine

Going once, going twice, ...

There's not much that's more fun and exciting than going to an auction. And every year, the Texas Flyfishers host a great one. This year, as always, there will be a terrific selection of things to bid on – fishing trips with professional guides and with club members who really know their way around the lake, river, or coast; fly rods, reels, lines, flies, tying materials and tools, books and magazines, fishing togs, waders, and whatnots.

Much of the merchandise is new, top-drawer stuff donated by local shops. And then there are those lightly used items donated by our members that go at truly bargain prices.

Mark your calendar now for March 20th. The place is the Bethany Christian Church, 3223 Westheimer next to Lamar High School, just west of Kirby and east of Buffalo Speedway. Silent auction begins at 10:00. An outstanding spaghetti lunch is served at 11:45. This is a family-style event, so bring the young fly fishers. Live auction begins at 12:00 and should last until about 1:15. After that we close the silent auctions. We'll try to get everyone out by 2:00.

Our annual auction provides over half of all our income each year, funding our meetings, outings, speakers, and instructional classes. You can help make it a big success by donating fly-fishing-related items as well as attending and bidding. Bring your donations to I Fly, The Anglers Edge, 5000 Westheimer, Suite 620, Orvis Houston, 5848 Westheimer, or either of the Cut Rate Fishing Tackle locations, 8933 Katy Freeway or 12800 Gulf Freeway. If you can't make it to one of those places, call Rick Rawls or Jerry Loring (numbers on page 8) to arrange for a pickup, or bring them to the auction.

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Future Meetings

At our April meeting we will be doing something new. We have invited the vendors who have generously supported our club over the years to show their wares at our meeting. Orvis, Angler's Edge and Cut Rate will demonstrate the latest gear featured in their stores and each will have some special offers to the members present.

Woody Voigt, one of our own, has been fishing many of the famous tailrace fisheries for years. In our May meeting he will tell us the hows and wheres of this type fishing. His presentation will be well timed to prepare us for the upcoming season on some of the finest western tailrace fisheries in the nation.

President's Corner

by Jerry "Buggywhip" Loring, president, Texas Flyfishers



March 2004 has been selected as the starting gate for the Texas Flyfishers to go electronic. Our monthly newsletter, *Wind Knots*, will not be mailed out in mass after March. Members are asked to access *Wind Knots* via the Internet by logging on to www.texasflyfishers.org. More and more clubs and organizations are using the Internet to communicate with their members, and we're joining the trend.

The advantages of electronic delivery are many. There is a permanent record available forever. Copies are easy to view on line and you can print out as much or as little as you like. It saves the club money to the tune of \$1 plus change per copy. This per item cost, times +/- 325 members each month, plus some spare copies, gets us to nearly \$4,000 annually very quickly. That's about 25% of our annual budget. Spending a lot less on producing *Wind Knots* will allow us to spend more on other things.

Please take notice, though, that no one will be left out. If you do not have Internet access, we will print and mail you a copy of the newsletter each month. If you haven't contacted us yet about receiving *Wind Knots* in the mail, please see the box, below.

Moving forward, the Web site for the Texas Flyfishers will be improved, probably with the hiring of a professional. Our research and study indicates the act of adding data and updating pages is the less complicated portion of Web site management. The real task comes in design and programming. We may use professional help to redesign some of our Web site and make data input and updating easier for our webmaster, Norbert Burch. Norbert is to be commended for wonderful work over a four-year period, and has agreed to continue on for another year, and more if needed. Thanks, Norbert.

Another improvement to our organization is the creation of a new communications committee. The purpose is to enhance communications between club members and committees, the Web site, and of course, most important, *Wind Knots*. Mike Willis has indicated an interest in this position and has several good thoughts regarding interaction and communications within the Texas Flyfishers. This committee would be a positive step.

The flip side to this scenario, if it materializes as forecast, is the need to replace Mike as the special events chair. In reality, this will be an opportunity for an aspiring member to step up and join in the active management of TFF. The special events committee is most important because it places TFF in the spotlights of both the public and the sporting industry.

This committee was the brainchild of past president Bill Waldron. Bill, a retired insurance underwriter and agency owner, knew the value of publicity and asked to be the first chairman. Mark Lucas and Mike Willis followed as chairmen, and because of their efforts, our notoriety grew and with it our membership roster. The primary function of this committee is to staff various hunting and fishing shows with TFF volunteers to provide information about the club, tie flies, and assist in casting lessons and demonstrations.

As you can see, change is in the wind. The wind is favorable.

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If you don't have access to the Internet . . .

. . . Please send a letter or post card to Corey Rich, 1900 N. Memorial Way, Houston, TX 77007, if you do not have Internet access and need to have a copy of *Wind Knots* printed and mailed to you. Write legibly and make sure you give the address to which you want your newsletter sent.

ABOUT WIND KNOTS

Wind Knots is your monthly newsletter, and it needs your help – otherwise we'll run out of things to print. Email your articles, photos, artwork, graphics, fishing news, tall tales, lies, and letters to the editor to corey.rich@aya.yale.edu or fax to (713) 864-7488 not later than the 10th of the month for that month's issue.

If you have digital photos, please send them 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 WordPerfect or Microsoft Word. Please turn off "smart quotes" or "curly quotes." 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 will be 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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Jerry Loring's Five Favorite Port O'Connor Flies

In order, my favorite flies for the Port O'Connor area are:

1. Furry foam crab, tan or olive, # 4 long-shank hook, with red/blue flash
2. Glass minnow / bay anchovy, # 4 long-shank hook, dressed sparsely
3. Standing Shrimp, # 6 long-shank hook, ice chenille under streamer hair, burnt mono eyes
4. Roadkill, # 2 or 4 hook, all barred hackle, red/black flash
5. Big-eyed bendback, #4 hook, barred hackle over chartreuse body of fish hair, big yellow head, red eyes



The Guadalupe One Fly, March 2004

by Jerry Loring

The members who braved a dicey weather forecast recently were rewarded with a good day of fishing on the Guadalupe River. The group gathered at 9 a.m. for fresh breakfast tacos handed out at the tailgate of a "Found On Road Dead" F150. The new portable (???) grill was put to use and performed admirably. A cool wind started to gin from the north. Visiting guide, Captain Scott Graham, ambled by and forecast rough morning weather.

A successful fishing scenario seemed improbable around 9:30 a.m. when a northern squall line blew hard from the direction of Canyon Lake. For thirty-five minutes, hard rain danced and hammered on the trucktop while your outing leader listened to Travis Tritt and Brooks & Dunn on the stereo. After the squall line passed, I emerged from the truck to find no one in the parking lot. Most were already on the river, rain or no rain. What troopers they were.

The flow rate was +/- 300 cubic feet per second, which is fishable. Only the brave and most fit wade the river once it reaches 500 CFS. Six hundred CFS and higher is a no-no for wading, but still fishable in a boat, kayak, or float device.

The strong wind turned to a breeze. For the remainder of the day, the sun was not bright, but not hidden either. With the weather improving, the catch turned on. Tom Lyons directed (waded and walked) Joe Schauf and Annette Blythe downstream in the general direction of a not so secret place named "Ponds." Troy Miller drove further downstream then walked back upstream to the general direction of "Ponds." You might get the picture here: "Ponds."

The outing participants emerged from the river around 4 p.m. to eat chicken fajitas and tally the day's catch. Everybody either had bites or landed a fish or two. John Sutjak and son Chris latched on to a good rainbow. Joe Schauf fought a nice rainbow and released it before landing. Annette and Tom Lyons were battling head to head for the winner's circle until Troy Miller came from behind and passed everybody by several fish.

The leader found an old picture from an outing past when Bill Waldron was cooking for an outing with piney woods in the background. In the picture was a sign advertising the price of Waldron's culinary efforts. Now, the tacos served at the 2004 Guadalupe One Fly were voted 10 to 1 better than Waldron's past efforts, but his sign was so original, a replica was placed above the grill.

TACOS & FAJITAS

TFF Members	Free
Other Fly Fishers	25 cents
Bass Fishers	\$15.00
Bait Fishers	\$100.00
Politicians	\$1.00 + \$500.00 tax

All in all, it was a good outing. Thanks to Clarke Thornton for asking me to lead. Keep all rivers wild.



LAST TRIP OF THE SEASON

by Don Puckett

I didn't know at the time it would be my last fishing trip of the year.

I woke at 0400, checked the weather forecast and packed the rest of my fishing gear. After a quick breakfast I was on the road. The fog was bad. When I got to the Vils valley it was even worse. The speed limit was 100 k.p.h. (60 m.p.h.) but I was lucky to do 70 k.p.h. (40 m.p.h.). Temperature was in the high thirties, no ice on the road. About fifteen miles from post I saw a military convoy. Obviously heading to Hohenfels, where I live. Chance meeting on the road? Of course. But it reminded me that I am still part of the whole. Not that long ago I was one of the soldiers driving those trucks, tracks, etc. Now I am waiting to join the rest of America, as a civilian. I have been a soldier so long that it is part of my identity. My first name has been "Sergeant" for so long I sometimes forget to respond to "Don"

I signed in at Range Control by 0630 and was at the lake by 0700. Still dark, giving way to gray. The fog was still thick. I hooked up the air compressor and filled the belly boat as I got dressed. This was cold! What was the air temperature? That doesn't matter, the water temperature did.

I found a better place to launch from than last time. A gently sloping gravel bed that I believe used to be a road before that lake was made and the road was flooded. It was still gray and the air thick with the morning fog. I slowly, without ripples, made my way to the center of the lake. I took the binoculars out of one of the side pockets and started scanning the water. No movement, no wind, fog. I made my way towards the area that I had hooked the big pike earlier this fall.

I saw some ducks approaching in the distance. They passed quickly, voices silent, wings whistling in the morning air.

The surface temperature of the water was 35°f. There was still no surface movement as I moved west along the shoreline. God! I must be desperate. The water is cold. I am cold. Nothing is moving, except me as I slowly make my way west. Actually I don't seem to be moving at all.

Why am I not moving? For some reason I've stopped. I turn around and look. That shimmer that I saw earlier isn't fog or the gentle ripple of wind borne waves. It's ice! And I'm stuck. I've run the rear of my belly boat up onto the ice. Wriggle, twist, and turn as I might I am still stuck. Think it through. All you have to do is break it off. Hammer? Close enough. I bring out the priest, a club that delivers last rites to any fish I decide to keep. It turns out that the ice wasn't very thick. I was just stupid enough to get enough of my tub over the edge that I had no leverage. As I back away I could hear the ice crackling and ringing as the ripples of my passage go under it. It seems almost to sing, clear bell-like notes rejoicing in the calm of the morning. I make the ice sing some more before deciding that it is time to go. My feet are frozen, fingers numb, face a mask as I make my way back to the car.

I pulled the valve out of the inner tube in the belly boat and stuff it in the trunk. Idling the car, heater going full blast, I pour myself some hot herbal tea and thaw out. That really wasn't so bad was it? I was trying to convince myself that it wasn't. After all I still wanted to catch something.

After much (almost five minutes) of deliberation, I went back to Range Control. I then signed up to go to the creek. The Thumbach shouldn't be frozen yet. By this time it was about 1000. Plenty of time left. I parked my car, switched rods, and started fishing.

I started just below the spillway, just 100 meters from the edge of my boundaries. I fished every pool that was open for the next mile and a half. I used my lightest rod and a nymph with a strike indicator. The terrain was rough and I occasionally had to cross the stream to get a better angle for casting.

I came across a new run made by the beaver. A slick trough cut into the ground running into the creek. A couple of hundred feet I feet later I understood why some of the waters appeared deeper than I remembered. The beaver had built a new dam and raised the water level in quite a few places.

I reach my self-imposed distance limit, a mile and a half at the concrete bridge, and started back, covering the same holes and any that I may have missed on the way down. Three miles of water covered and not one bite. And now big flakes of snow were falling, melting on my face and dripping off the end of my nose.

My last stop was at the "Dead Pool." This was about fifty feet above where I had started. I switched to a small black-nosed dace, a minnow imitator, and made a few casts. The entire opposite shoreline was iced over. I dropped my fly onto the ice and dragged it across to the open water. Correct fly fishing technique would have been to accurately place the fly right next to the shelf of ice. I just wanted to get some casting practice in.

After about a dozen or so casts I felt the weight of a fish. Nothing dramatic, just weight on the end of my line. I set the hook and felt connected. The rod throbbed as I brought the fish to hand. It was a perch, German "Barsh," of about eight inches long. As I looked at him lying in the frozen grass, gasping for oxygen, I realized that this would be my last fish of the season. Not really understanding why, I gently picked him up, walked down to the water, revived him, and smiled as he swam away.

OUTINGS SCHEDULE

As we explained last month, our outings schedule is a continuing work-in-progress. Here are the trips we have tentatively scheduled for the year. More may be added. Some may be dropped. There will probably be some rescheduling. Use the list for general planning purposes.



Clarke Thornton - fresh

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 elsewhere in this issue. Fresh water trips are designated [F], salt water [S] in the listings below.

April 10. Lighthouse Lakes kayaking, Aransas Pass, TX [S]. Ralph Adams, leader (h 713-664-0491, w 713-767-8039, c 832-651-8166, ralph_adams@earthlink.net). Kayak rental available nearby.

April 17. Jerry Loring's secret lake in Bellville, Texas for bass and panfish [F]. Jerry Loring, leader (contact info on Executive Committee list, p. 7).

May 9. "Sunfish Spectacular." Seven Lakes, Damon, Texas. Bass and panfish [F].

May 22. St. Charles Bay kayaking, Rockport, TX [S]. Ralph Adams, leader (contact info above in April 10 listing). Trip will begin at Cavasso Creek. Boaters can launch at Goose Island State Park. Kayak rental available in Rockport.

June 5-6. Port O'Connor jetties, Port O'Connor, Texas [S]. Scott Fossum, leader (contact info on Executive Committee list, p. 7). Leave POC docks Saturday afternoon, fish all night, return Sunday morning. Redfish, speckled trout, Spanish mackerel, jacks, etc. No boat required, but boats welcome to ferry participants to jetties. Camp Saturday night on Matagorda Peninsula.

June 12-13. Llano River float trip. Junction, Texas. Bass and panfish [F].

July 10-11. Crystal Lake, Manvel, Texas. Bass and panfish [F].

July 31. "Port O'Connor One Fly" tournament. Port O'Connor, Texas. Redfish, speckled trout, etc. [S]. Scott Fossum, leader (contact info on Executive Committee list, p. 7). Rotating crystal trophy up for grabs. Most inches of fish caught on the first fly you tie on wins. Boat or kayak needed. Captains with space and fishermen needing rides should contact Scott.

August 14. "Redfish Rodeo." Rockport, Texas [S].

August 21. San Marcos River float trip with Kevin Hutchinson, San Marcos, Texas. Bass and panfish [F].

September 11. Double Lake, Cold Spring, Texas. Bass and panfish [F].

September 25-26. "Padre Island Surf Fest." Four-wheel down Padre Island and fish the surf [S]. Optional camping on beach.

October 10. Damon Live Oaks Lake, Damon, Texas. Bass and panfish [F].

October ?? South Padre Island, Texas [S]. Rick Rawls, leader (contact info on Executive Committee list, p. 7).

November 7. Guadalupe River, Sattler, Texas. Trout [F].

November ?? Shamrock Bay, Port Aransas, TX [S].



Scott Fossum - salt



As you can see, we still need several trip leaders, especially in late summer and fall. If you'd like to lead one, contact Clarke (fresh water) or Scott (salt water).

Malaquite Beach

by Ralph G. Adams, Jr.

The road through Padre Island National Seashore winds among grass-covered dunes that cluster in humps like herds of green dinosaur backs. A brown hawk rode air currents high above the landscape as the intense heat of a midsummer Texas day receded into a pleasant coastal evening with the added effect of a light onshore breeze. It had been a good day of sight-casting from the kayak around the flats of Redfish Bay and I looked forward to an evening fishing the surf at Malaquite Beach.

I pitched my tent, rigged a rod, and followed the sandy path through the dunes down to the beach and the edge of the sea. The Gulf of Mexico stretched to the far horizon where it turned into a clear blue atmosphere. The sun lapsed in the west and the light was beginning to radiate lambent orange hues of late afternoon.

I waded knee deep in the water and peeled lengths of line from the reel and began casting. Invariably, the first minutes after entering the surf provoke scattered thoughts from the joyous prospect of catching fish to the risks of drowning or being eaten by a shark.

Sensational news stories aside, I know rationally that the odds of a shark attack are small and that eating chicken poses a much greater health hazard. But there is no getting around the fact that large sharks are there swimming and feeding along those same beaches where I waded. A friend of mine has flown planes over the Texas coast and tells of spotting sharks from the air. The small pale creatures splashing and fishing near these sharks were people who, equipped with the same knowledge, would have fled the waves seeking the safety of dry land.

Those kinds of thoughts tended to fall away once I picked up the rhythms of casting, especially so when I was faced with green water and a moving tide. The sea was alive and everything was in motion. The tidal flux enlivened a current parallel to the beach and I cast at angles to the flow and let my line swing down-and-across not unlike when trout fishing.

After a while, a flock of birds materialized. They were hovering close to the beach over a mob of fish and the whole of them were moving towards me. The fish splashed at the surface and there were few variables left to the situation.

The rest would be easy. Although truth be told, in times past I have shown a singular knack for taking those easy shots and messing them up. Call it choking, buffoonery, limited skills, or what have you. That same season I fouled lay-ups at downwind fish that were "right there." I lined snook stationed under pier lights waiting for the dinner bell and primed to strike a fly. My crowning achievement was to miss casting at a super pod of over one hundred redfish swimming in three feet of water in the Laguna Madre. Maybe I was struck by how the school looked like a huge red flower. Whatever the problem was, I missed that pod a second time as well. So show me a fish and I'll show you a flush.

But this school of fish on the beach was easy. The popping sounds and splashes and the raucous calls of diving birds were all around. And the strikes were marvelous. They hit the white and black streamer and levered themselves against the current. Baitfish jumped and the bigger fish flashed "right there" and swirled at the surface. I caught trout and ladyfish, the latter striking and leaping in almost the same exact instant. One ladyfish struck and launched into the air just a few feet in front of me and hung there at eye-level like a sliver of errant moonlight before throwing the hook and cart-wheeling back into the water.

Such encounters yield nothing if not a resounding sense of well-being. And as the flock dispersed and the action subsided I found myself over a mile from the starting point, grinning like a thief.

I reeled up and began walking and stayed just inside the edge of the water where the spent waves ran in sheets upon the sandy shore. A pair of black skimmers flew past with beaks open, slicing crisp lines in the thin water. The darkening sea resembled a rough plane of chiseled wood. The stars came out, a myriad of silver pinpricks buoyed upon a darkness flooding the universe entire. Among them was the Milky Way, shining clear and bright, an amazing congress of celestial beings.

I began thinking unconstructively upon the heavens. I considered the order of it all and for no less than twenty-six seconds I pondered the mind-blowing infinities of space-time and space-distance. I recalled a pull-out map from a National Geographic Magazine that displayed our galaxy in proportion to its size in the next larger galaxy. Our seemingly massive universe was but a tiny dot. In relative terms this means we are all just a bunch of very small tiny dots.

My philosophical starts and encounters with fish had left me unreformed. I cracked open a beer and sat on the beach and stared into that nighttime void of ocean. I listened to the waves and the intermittent hiss of sands carried by traveling winds newly arrived from journeys across the sea. And it was all very good. The main thing, after all, was that I was there and that the fish were there, and that the following morning would find me in the kayak before dawn searching for them yet again.



TEXAS FLYFISHERS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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WIND KNOTS CLASSIFIED

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 email to corey.rich@aya.yale.edu or regular mail to Corey Rich, 1900 N. Memorial Way, Houston, TX 77007. You may include a photograph of items to be sold if you like.

FOR SALE

1. Brand new G. Loomis 2-piece, 9x9 GLX. This rod is fresh from the factory and has never been cast. \$415.
2. Three year old Scott 3-piece, 9X8 STS. This rod is in excellent condition. It has been my back-up rod since I bought it. \$325. Geoffrey Griffith, mobile 713-858-3716, home 713-871-8525, geoff.griffith@prodigy.net

FOR SALE



Tunnel hull flats skiff. J-Craft, semi-custom hull made in Rockport, TX, with 2002 Yamaha 90 h.p., stainless prop; 2003 aluminum McClain trailer; 192 and 94 quart cooler seats with cushions; fly rod rack; Lowrance X51 digital depth finder; anchor and lines. Always garaged. \$12,995. Corey Rich, days 713-861-1928, evenings 713-621-6071.

Fly rod – St. Croix Legend Ultra 4-piece 6-wt. with fighting butt. Like new, used only four times. Includes rod tube with internal partitions. \$225. Corey Rich.



Neoprene waders – Hodgman's men's size large, lightly used. \$45. Corey Rich.



Texas Flyfishers
P.O. Box 571134
Houston, TX 77257-1134

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. Please pro-rate your payment for the number of months between now and the end of June, inclusive, if you are joining for the first time. Our monthly meetings are at the Holiday Inn on the Katy Freeway between Antoine and Silber 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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