

Windknobs

A monthly publication of the Texas Flyfishers

Volume 23 / Issue 5 May, 2004

Don't Forget!

Monthly Meeting
May 25th at 7:30
(Doors open at 7:00)

TFF's Woody Vogt on
the San Juan, the
Green, and the Bighorn

Mule Slough Miracle

by Joe DeForke

Having suffered through several weeks of foul weather, my cabin fever was running at an all time high. I decided I was going to go fishing even if the conditions were not at their best for sight-casting. I'm sure you've been there with that same dogged determination: Damn the torpedoes, full ahead. Come hell or high water. I am going, period! I called my fishing buddy, Norbert Burch, to alert him of the upcoming weekend plan for the outing and found him to be in a similar mind set. Our only reason to bail on the trip would be an all out storm.

I was checking Weather.com and Accuweather every day hoping to see some positive change in the forecast from cloudy to clear, or even partly cloudy. Nothing but 80% to 100% cloud cover with a 30% chance of rain in the forecast through the weekend. The last weather check was made on Saturday afternoon and it was the same, no change. I was resigned to the fact that our fishing trip would be downgraded to just taking out the boat to burn up some old gas and to get out of the house for some fresh air. We encountered some light rain as we made our way down the highway to Port O'Connor. Our fishing spirits were a little deflated as we turned into Clark's Marina and viewed the heavy low-hanging clouds. No matter, this was the weather we were expecting.

Our game plan was to find some clear water over a sandy bottom. This combination would give us a chance to see fish even though we would not have very good light. We had our list of places that we knew would work to our advantage. We decided that our first stop would be in Mule Slough. We were in my boat which made me the Captain, and Captains are always "up" first. We had seen several reds as we were coming onto to the flat and this gave us some encouragement.

I had just taken up my position on the casting platform when I spotted several reds crossing in front of the boat at about 40 feet. I cast out in front of the lead fish but he bolted and spooked the rest of the pack. We had been drifting for maybe a minute or two when I spotted two very large fish off my starboard at the one o'clock position. They were out there around 90 to 100 feet. At first glance, they appeared to be drum or maybe sharks, but as the boat closed to 50 feet. I saw the huge black dot on the tail. I fired off a cast a couple of feet in front of the



lead fish. She ignored the little Clouser. The second cast went a bit too far so I frantically stripped the fly into their sight window only to have the larger fish follow it and then turn away. A state of panic was starting to set in to my mind and body. On the third cast I landed the Clouser a few inches in front of her nose and gave it the old Cruz wiggle. She spun on the fly in a huge boil of water and mud. The line came tight and I strip struck out of reflex. The loose coils of line leapt out of the basket. She was into the backing in a nanosecond. It was an awesome sight to see that red blistering across the flat leaving a rooster tail as the line cut through the water.

The fish towed us around Mule Slough for a little while, until we decided to stop the boat. Norbert got out and held us in place so that I could get started on the down and dirty. No matter how hard I pulled or what angle I used, I could not turn that massive head. The fish made a u-turn and headed back toward me. That is when we saw that she was fouled hooked. After another ten minutes of losing and then gaining line we finally brought the leviathan to hand. Norbert took some quick snap shots and I revived her and sent her on her way to make more babies for the future.

Neither of us had taken notice of the weather change, as we were occupied with this wonderful animal. The low clouds had given way to beautiful clear skies. We left Mule Slough to explore some of the other sites and ended up the day with a feeling of well-being. The fever had broken.

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Outing Report - Lighthouse Lakes - April 10, 2004

by Ralph Adams

Twelve brave kayakers departed from Port Aransas at dawn one recent Saturday morning for a great adventure led by Ralph Adams. The fun included catching lots of trout and reds. More than thirty trout were caught within 100 yards of the launch point. Almost all (maybe even all) of the group caught fish. The weather was mostly sunny with moderate winds. Many had their first opportunity to cast to tailing fish. Some met the challenge and some were frustrated, but all vowed to return. Some of the adventuresome paddled nearly ten miles and some paddled a total of a quarter mile.

Don't miss the next kayak outing at Estes Flats in May (see the outings schedule).

Thanks to all who participated and made this trip a success: Ralph Adams, Scott Fossum, Jim Jackson, Austin Miller, Jonathon Miller, Larry Pitts, Rick Rawls, Barry Sandler, Jo Schauf, Fred Tooley, and Bud Turner.

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Mewis Ranch Outing - April 17

by Buggywhip Loring

The outing to Mewis (pronounced MAY-vis) Ranch near Bellville on April 17 was pleasant and relaxing. Pleasant because everybody caught something. Relaxing because the setting is just that. Mewis Ranch sits on about 400 acres atop a hill four miles east of Bellville on FM 529. Rolling hills, cows, four lakes full of fish, woods and pastures. The relaxing observation came from Frank Budd.

We owe the outing to landowner Roy Mewis and his good co-worker friend and TFF club member, Frank Budd. Frank fishes these lakes often and was tuned in to where the big bass were. He directed Gary "Quickcast" Evans to one such shoreline and the accompanying photo shows the four-pound result.



Mike Baldwin, Dick Kauth, Mike Baldry, Joe and Yang Burton, Pescado Pete, Troy Miller, Ken Brumbaugh, and Frank Budd assembled early in the morning and caught an amazing amount and variety of fish. Dick Kauth caught 91. Mike Baldwin landed 99. Joe and Yang Roberts caught 67. Gary Evans scored the biggest bass of the trip and 18 more. Mike Baldry netted 90. Ken Brumbaugh soared past everyone with a tally of 217. Troy Miller and Frank Budd were close, but could not break the 150 barrier.

As you can see, both the catching and the fishing stood up well against the noon meal, which was excellent. At noon we fired up the barbecue pit and grilled sausage from the local meat market. Local as in "Yak Sa Mas." The trimmings included tortillas, Valentina salsa, chopped green chilies and barbecue sauce. Yang brought some of the best Clementine oranges you ever peeled and these went well with the chilled watermelon wedges that garnished the table.

Lucky for the group, the potential threat suggested by Buggywhip at the last meeting that aggressive fish might bite through waders did not happen. There were a few bruises, but no injury could be proved to have been caused by an aggressive fish. This outing was a good one and maybe TFF will get a return visit in the future.

President's Corner

by Jerry "Buggywhip" Loring, president, Texas Flyfishers



Some of you may not be aware that your Texas Flyfishers club is recognized as a 501(c)(3) organization by both the Internal Revenue Service and the State of Texas. The benefit of this recognition is twofold. The most important is the image and status immediately conferred to the Texas Flyfishers any time our club speaks, acts, or conducts a program. Because we are tax exempt, another benefit is the eight-percent of our budget that we save and are able to spend on additional programs.

TFF was recognized as a 501(c)(3) organization because of our educational and conservation efforts. The educational programs include the fly tying classes, the casting classes, the monthly speaker meetings, and the Fly Tying Festival. At these events, instruction and training are presented to educate anyone who wishes to acquire the skills needed to be a proficient fly fisher. These events also present the history and appreciation of fly fishing as an honored and honorable sport, although that probably would not be a major consideration for the 501 recognition. This appreciation and attraction of fly fishing is real.

When I decided to get serious about fly fishing, it was because fishing with bait or a conventional lure had lost its allure. This is no brag, but in 1984 it was not a challenge to catch fish. I was looking for something more. Learning to fly fish was thought to be the new challenge. As the skills for fly fishing grew, so did a deeper respect for the sport. There exists a chasm of difference between conventional fishing and the sport of fly fishing. For me, fishing changed from how many caught to how did I fish. I am still not a purist, but the numbers of fish are not as important as the quality of the outing.

Back to the 501(c)(3) issue, it does bring certain responsibilities to our club. First, we must submit in a simple tax return to the IRS showing our bank statements, dollars spent, and our programs for the year. Second, there are some rules, which we are still learning, about how and where we can spend our budget. Any time one deals with the U.S. Government, the effort should be taken seriously and timely. That is the job of the officers of TFF and if you have input, please put it in.

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Fly Tying Festival Follow-Up

by *Frank Schlicht*

The 2004 Festival set a lot of new records: The number of tiers participating (approximately 50); the number of paid attendees (247); and revenue (about \$3,000). This would not have been possible if it were not for a number of very dedicated individuals who make up the Festival committee, to each of whom I would like to extend my deepest appreciation. I would like to specially thank Larry McAfee for suggesting A.K. Best as our featured tier.

The committee is already working on next year's Festival. We are exploring the possibility of getting Jack Gartside as our featured tier. A.K. highly recommended him. I have already talked to Verne Lehmsberg about he and Judy doing a shadow box (fly plate) construction demonstration. Verne responded favorably. We also hope to increase the number of tiers next year in an effort to make it even bigger and better. Mark your calendar now! It will be February 5, 2005 at the same location.

OUTINGS SCHEDULE

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.

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.



Clarke Thornton - fresh

May 22. Estes Flats kayaking, Rockport, TX [S]. Ralph Adams, leader (h 713-664-0491, w 713-767-8039, c 832-651-8166, ralph_adams@earthlink.net). Launch at Palm Harbor Marina. Kayak rental available nearby.

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.



Scott Fossum - salt

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].

August 28. This is a change. It was previously scheduled for October. South Padre Island, Texas [S]. Rick Rawls, leader (contact info on Executive Committee list, p. 7).

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 with Capt. Billy Sandifer and outing leaders Tom Lyons and Scott Fossum [S]. Optional camping on beach. See below for details.

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

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

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

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September 25-26 Padre Island Outing Announcement

by Tom Lyons

This year's Padre Island outing with Billy Sandifer will be held on the September 25-26 weekend. I checked with Billy and this is prime time for tarpon, jacks, reds and whatever else swims in that area.

We will be doing things a little differently this year. As we learned last year, it is difficult to keep a ten-vehicle convoy together and find a school of fish big enough for 23 people. This year we are having two days with Billy as the guide and we are limiting his clients to 16 people, 8 on Saturday and 8 on Sunday. We will schedule people so that nobody gets to go with Billy for two days unless everyone has had a chance to go once. If necessary we will draw straws or flip coins to fill second day openings if there are more wanting to go than we have room for. This method will keep Billy's convoy down to his vehicle and one other which keeps him out of the cat herding business. Scott Fossum will lead one day with Billy and I will lead the other.

The people who are not fishing with Billy will be fishing in the surf on their own as they would be for any other outing. We will set up a camp as we did last year and enjoy evening fishing and mosquito swatting.

I will be taking sign-ups for the outing and for places with Billy at the next meeting and by phone or e-mail. The places with Billy will go on a first-come-first-served basis. The cost for Billy's services will be \$100 per person per day.

I am looking forward to seeing many of you at this outing. It was a lot of fun last year. We saw tarpon and jacks and actually had tarpon hook-ups. This year many of us are more knowledgeable and perhaps more dangerous and are champing at the bit to get another shot at this surf fishing.

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What I've Learned About Summer Tailing Fish

by Mike Eberhard

One of the most exciting aspects of fly fishing in salt water for most anglers is seeing tailing fish. Prior to last summer, I had limited sightings, mostly in South Padre, and only occasionally in my home waters of Port O'Connor. For some reason my wife and I had a very productive summer last year, both seeing and catching tailing redfish. Since this is a trend I would like to continue, I began to think about what factors might have influenced this phenomenon. These are my observations. They may not be scientifically correct, but use them and let me know what you experience.

- Last summer, in an effort to beat the heat, we went out much earlier than in previous summers. We were on quality tailing fish between 6 a.m. and 8 a.m.
- The fish feed into the wind and current. Therefore, we set up walking with the current or wind to meet them coming toward us. Fortunately, there was light wind and we could see tails even while facing the sun.
- Many species of fish tail. Mullet tail, drum (black and red) tail, and trout tail. Learn to distinguish the different tails.
- Fish tail in a zone along a shoreline, sometimes right against the bank, sometimes out further. Find the zone and position yourself within casting range. Be patient and don't cast too soon. You must land the fly close in front of their noses, not behind or on top of the fish. Don't strip the fly too fast or you will just take it out of the zone.
- Go fishing during the middle of the week if possible. Less traffic means more fish.
- Fish do tail in the afternoon, usually on large flats adjacent to deeper water.

I hope this helps. I am currently under a doctor's care for redfish tailitis. The symptoms are lack of sleep, a desire to wade into mucky places, an anxious casting arm, and a quick pulse. I wish this syndrome on all of you!

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Frugal Frank's Tips

by Frank Schlicht

For those looking for a good but inexpensive bodkin, a.k.a. dubbing needle, a good source is in the dissecting kits that most college freshmen who take biology have to purchase. These kits typically have one or two "teasing needles" in them, which have either round wooden or hexagonal plastic handles. As a former biology instructor, I found that most students are so glad to get out of the course that they simply leave their kits in the classroom when the course is over. If you know a student in such a course, you might request that he give you his kit when he is through with it. The scissors are good for cutting coarse materials, at best, and the tweezers are OK for picking up hooks, etc. You might even have use for the six-inch plastic rule.

A Stormy Trip

by Tom Lyons

Joe Cooper and I decided to go fishing in spite of the nasty weather forecast. We both had rain gear and figured we could sit out the showers if they had some lightning in them. Saturday, May 1, 2004 was not a day with a few showers and a little thunder.

We went bass fishing at a local set of pay lakes. Cloudy rainy days are made for bass poppers and it appeared we would have a classic cloudy rainy day with some wind but nothing to worry about. Saltwater fishing was out of the question so bass were the prey.

The day began well. We started catching bass on my favorite deer hair poppers and actually found some schooling bass in the middle of the lake. We caught a few out of the school and then went back to pounding shoreline cover. It started to rain and the wind picked up but we were catching fish and we were not yet getting wet. Just for safety's sake I put my hearing aids in my inside pocket so I would be sure they would stay dry. As it turned out they were the only thing anywhere near either of us that stayed dry.

The rain kept picking up but we kept catching bass so we ignored the weather. Then came the wind! When the lake started to whitecap and we started taking water over the rail we decided to head for shore. Then the rain picked up and got to the point where it hurt when it hit our faces. The wind was blowing so hard I couldn't hear Joe yelling that I was heading for an island I couldn't see. I found the island when the wind drove the boat up onto it and we really started taking water. We managed to get into the water and push the boat off the island. We then headed for the shore and made it after getting blown there because the trolling motor couldn't budge the boat against the wind.

We tied the boat to a tree and walked to the boat house. Both of us were soaked to the skin but the wind ebbed and the rain died down to a steady drizzle. We decided that we couldn't get any wetter so we went back to fishing. The high winds and hard rain had scared us almost as much as getting in the water in an area that normally has a good alligator population and looked like snake heaven. But the bass were hitting!

We fished in the rain another four hours catching bass on poppers at the best clip I have ever experienced. When the wind picked up again about 5:00 p.m. and the temperature literally fell to the point where both of us were shivering we considered leaving. Then we hit a school of bass on the feed and we warmed up for a while. We caught bass nearly every cast. They weren't big. Most were one to two pounds but we did get an honest three pounder that jumped four times.

When the school action petered out we were really shivering and decided we had better head for home. We ran with the heater on in the truck for the entire one hour ride home and I kept the heat on in the house all night. I finally got all my gear dried out late today and I have another rod to take back to the manufacturer, but that is another story. It could have been worse. We didn't have a life preserver in the boat, a rental, and we stayed out way too long. We both were probably an inch away from hypothermia and nobody knew where we were. All of this came to mind while Joe and I were pushing the boat into the teeth of a howling wind with waves crashing up against its sides. Had the bass not been hitting so well I would not have had such a good time.



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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. 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. **Be sure to put the words *Wind Knots* in the subject line of your email.** 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 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 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.

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:

Tunnel hull flats skiff. J-Craft, 17½ foot semi-custom hull made in Rockport, TX, with 2002 Yamaha 90 h.p.; stainless prop; 2003 aluminum McClain trailer with oil-bath hubs; 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.





Texas Flyfishers
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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. 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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