

WindKnots

A monthly publication of the Texas Flyfishers

Volume 23 / Issue 10 October, 2004

Ron Begnaud at the October 26th meeting!

Capt. Ron Begnaud of Lake Charles, Louisiana, will tell us about sight fishing for redfish on the flats and in the marshes of the Calcasieu Estuary in southwest Louisiana.

October 26, 2004, 7:30 p.m. (doors open at 7:00). Holiday Inn, I-10 Katy Freeway at Antoine

First Red on the Fly

by Bettie Ford

I had a lovely time fishing in the Redfish Rodeo in August and the fun just kept on coming at the banquet Saturday night. You all are funny and quite the pranksters, two qualities I really like in a fishing club. In the raffle, my friend Barry Evans won a fishing trip with Capt. Tom Horbey in Port O'Connor but was unable to use it, so, lucky person that I am, he gave it to me! I booked a trip for September 15th and impatiently awaited the big day.

I left my home in Bandera the afternoon of September 14th and drove to Bulverde to pick up my friend Martha, and then we were POC-bound. By the time we reached Seadrift we were starving, so we stopped at a restaurant called Barkett's where I had some of the best gumbo I've ever tasted. Yum! Duly satiated and quite tired we began the final leg to Port O'Connor. Now, I drive an Audi TT Roadster which is almost always fun, but the maneuverability came in handy in an unexpected game of "dodge the frog" we were forced to play on the way to the motel. Those little suckers were everywhere! It was like this huge migration of the tree frog. (We later learned that we should have been prepared to dodge hogs as well, but ignorance, as they say, is bliss.) We arrived at the motel unscathed, although I'm afraid some unfortunate frogs did not fare as well. I assuaged my feelings of remorse by concluding that they were, in fact, suicidal. The next morning when I popped the trunk there was one lone-soldier tree frog, clinging meekly to the edge of my trunk with his little suction-cupped toes. I nudged him off with my fly rod and he continued on whatever pilgrimage tree frogs deem necessary to make.

But about the fishing . . . We met Capt. Tom Horbey at the dock at seven a.m. and got under way. We were in his big boat. Now I drive a kayak so I don't know boats, but it was very nice with the wheel at the back and a platform in the front which, being balance-challenged I declined. The bow was fine for me. I was using a flyrod, a lovely Sage that belonged to Tom, and Martha was using a spinning reel and lure. We headed down the Intracoastal and made our first stop in some small lakes somewhere near San Antonio Bay. Capt. Tom took a few moments to give us some instruction, then we threw to some tailing reds without much luck. The tides were unusually high due to Hurricane Ivan, so spotting tails was not the easiest of tasks. Tom decided we might have better luck fishing the sandy edges of the Intracoastal, so off we went.

We didn't have to wait long before Tom had the boat positioned and the first cruising red spotted. He is an absolute pro at spotting the fish in the distance and getting his boat perfectly positioned to make your cast as easy as possible. Although I'm getting better at it, it is still quite difficult for me to spot the fish, and Tom insisted that we actually spot the fish before making a cast. By the time I could see the fish it was about 30 feet in front on the boat

coming our way. With the boat and the fish moving toward each other it doesn't leave much room for error, so the first cast really counts. I missed that first fish and many after that. Now it was Martha's turn. She made an absolutely perfect cast to a red and he took the lure immediately. She released him unharmed to be caught another day.

It was my turn again and I missed shot after shot although I came pretty close several times. I couldn't look at Capt. Tom. I didn't want to see a grown man cry. Martha caught a black drum and another red blind casting. I was getting really frustrated so we took a break. I had just sunk my teeth into my Granny Smith apple when Tom yelled for me to get ready; a huge red was coming. Tom said it was probably a ten pounder! I wanted that fish. Martha wanted that fish. Tom wanted *someone* to catch that fish, but none of us could catch that whopper. It was gorgeous. Somewhere in Tom's ice chest there's a Granny Smith apple with the imprint of my teeth, a memento of a wonderful fish.



Martha's black drum

Well, perseverance pays off, and I finally made a decent cast to a red and it was nice enough to bite. It was no monster, but it was my first red on the fly, something I've been after since I started fly fishing a year and a half ago. When I brought it up to the boat Tom sarcastically yelled, "Where's my gaff?" and Martha yelled, "Get the net!" "Oh, no net can hold a fish this big!" exclaimed Tom. Cute. Really cute. It was actually really funny, but I loved that fish and that moment. I set it free with extreme gratitude.



Here's what I came for – my first redfish on a fly

We fished a while longer and Martha landed a ladyfish, but there were storms on the horizon and it was really hot so we called it a day. I couldn't believe the number of reds we saw that day. A more experienced angler would easily have caught a dozen or more fish. Capt. Tom will put you on the fish and he's a heck of a nice guy. I had a blast. Lots of fish, lots of excitement and tons of laughs. Thank you Texas Flyfishers for the trip, thank you Martha for sharing the trip, and thank you Capt. Tom Horbey for being such a wonderful guide and such a good sport!

President's Corner

by Jerry "Buggywhip" Loring, president, Texas Flyfishers

As the year winds down, I step back and take account of the various activities of the Texas Flyfishers and how very gratifying our programs are. Involvement with the Texas Flyfishers goes slightly against the strain of independence in my soul because there was a time when "independent" had a deeper meaning. Attitudes do change. Now the attraction, education, and entertainment associated with TFF is irresistible.



After fifteen years you might expect the luster to begin to fade, but that is not so in my case. The first five years were all about learning and being educated to the mores and techniques of flyfishing. The second five years centered on involvement with the club as outings director, auction chairman, Redfish Rodeo chairman and secretary. The last five years was service as vice president of programs and president.

I missed *Wind Knots* editor and treasure positions because there are particular qualifications for those two that are best suited for others. Witness Barbara's comment about the fashion in which I maintain the household checkbook. All the participation in TFF has been rewarding in one form or another.

Looking deeper into the last ten years, education and learning have been replaced somewhat by teaching others. Not that there is nothing else to learn. To the contrary, the technology in rods and lines has changed considerably, and continues to do so. Second, the nature of fishing is dynamic, as are conservation and government issues.

This gets back to how enjoyable TFF is. The speakers for our monthly meetings have been from the top shelf for several years now. Thanks to Frank Schlicht and Troy Miller, those fly tying and casting classes could not get much better. Every outing I go on seems better than the last. While catching fish is important, the outing proper has become the keystone. Scott Fossum and Clarke Thornton, serving as saltwater and freshwater outings chairmen respectively, have provided excellent results for their efforts. The evidence is clear they enjoy their own outings as much as the participants do.

Somewhere in the activity mix of TFF, there appears the social aspect. That benefit, maybe the most important of all, should be discussed on a broader scope at a later date. For now, because the events our club hosts are sincerely entertaining, a great goal would be to attend and participate in every program and outing. Thanks to all for your elbow grease.

CAPTION CONTEST



This photo of a couple of fishermen is for real, taken on the recent trip on the beachfront near the Mansfield jetties. Your challenge is to submit a caption for the picture. The category is humor or sarcasm. Submit your entry to *Wind Knots* (c/o corey.rich@aya.yale.edu [put **"Caption Contest"** in the e-mail subject line or it won't be opened] or mail to Corey Rich, 1900 N. Memorial Way, Houston, TX 77007) for a \$20 prize. The executive committee will determine the winner. Deadline is November 30.

OUTINGS

Our outings schedule is a continuing work-in-progress. Here are the trips we have currently scheduled for the rest of 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

October 21-24. White and Norfolk Rivers in Arkansas. Camping on the river at Quarry Park at the foot of Norfolk Dam. Trip leaders Gary Evans, (h) 281-339-3156, (c) 281-851-1852, jokid@pdq.net, and Troy Miller, (h) 979-865-5117, (c) 281-382-7250, troy.miller@ev1.net or troy.miller@bakerhughes [F].

October 23-24. South Padre Island, Texas [S]. Rick Rawls, 713-830-5446, rick55@ev1.net, trip leader.

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

November 13 - 14. Nighthawk Bay (Bird Island Basin) in the Padre Island National Seashore in/near Corpus Christi/Port Aransas. (New date and location). We'll camp at the camp ground in the park Friday night 11/12 thru Sunday noon 11/14. Kayak, boat and walk-in opportunities abound in both the flats and the surf. Trip leader is Bruce Heiberg (h) 281-550-2993, (c) 713-305-0608, bheiberg@signalcreek.net. Contact Bruce for details.[S].



Scott Fossum - salt



Wisconsin King

Fred Tooley felt compelled to visit his new grandson in Wisconsin recently, and found some time to go fishing on the Milwaukee River, a tributary to Lake Michigan pretty much in downtown Milwaukee. Part of the compulsion to see the grandson was that it just happened to be in the middle of the annual king salmon spawning run. Fred reports the temperature was in the 40s and the wind was pretty nippy. The fish in the picture was 28 inches long. He caught another 35 inches long. The fish were caught in shin-deep water using salmon egg imitations that the fish attacked more to reduce competition than for food. The 35-incher took 25 minutes to land with an eight-weight and 12-pound tippet. Great fun!



Fred Tooley and a 28" king salmon on the Milwaukee River

Seven Lakes Outing

by Dave Kelly

Twenty-six people participated in the October fresh water outing at Seven Lakes in Damon. Among the bigger fish caught this trip, Annette Blyth caught a 3 ½ pound bass out of the swimming pool. Tom Lyons caught a 21-inch bass estimated at 6 ½ pounds (see story elsewhere in this issue). Maggie Mast, Linda Love's guest, is a 14 year old Amish girl who had never been fishing. She caught 17 fish, including a tilapia, which is believed to be more than anyone else caught.

The participants included Jeremy Cottrell, Jeff Mansell, Keith Waterman, Bud Turner, John Barnes, Kevin Hutchinson, Linda Love, Maggie Mast, Dave Kelly, Steve Goff, Dick Kauth, Jesse Pittman, Annette Blythe, Jesse Seals, Denise Seals, Joe Cooper, Tom Lyons, Bruce Heiberg, Gary Fultz, Clarke Thornton, Eduardo Davis, Kathlene Rose, Dave Simms, Tira Overstreet, and Corey Rich.



Clarke Thornton finds time to fish the swimming pool while cooking lunch for the crowd



Denise and Jesse Seals finish their Fly Fishing Academy accreditation under the watchful eye of instructor Tom Lyons



Annette Blythe and her 3 ½ pound bass



Linda Love and her 11 ½ inch bass

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Found at Seven Lakes –

Lens cap for Canon camera lens, 58 mm. Call Corey Rich, 713-861-1928.

Seven Lakes Whopper

by Tom Lyons

As usual, our freshwater chairman put on a good outing Saturday, October 9. The only thing he didn't do was fix the weather so the fish might be in a better mood to bite. Normally, Seven Lakes is pretty easy fishing for bass and bream but this Saturday it was anything but easy. The skies were leaden most of the day and the wind howled from start to dark. We did get some sun late in the day but even that little break in the gloom seemed to add to the lockjaw that the fish were having.

I worked with the Flyfishing Academy students for most of the day. They probably all think that none of the members there fish very well because nobody was getting many strikes and the few fish that were caught were small. I took them to the big lake, Duck Lake, to the very spot where I had done really well last year and couldn't get a strike to save my life. Jesse Seals finally caught a decent bass and we went to eat. After lunch the crowd thinned quickly and all of the Academy students quit so I started fishing in earnest.

Joe Cooper, Eduardo Davis and I hit Duck Lake hard for a while with no results. We literally worked the water to a froth. I decided to try the canal at the back of the lake. You could always rely on that area for a few bass in the past. At first glance it looked like we wouldn't even be able to fish this area because of the heavy mat of floating weeds. In the past this area was always open and had some decent fish against each bank that would take a well presented popper. I walked a way down the edge of the canal, which is really a small hill that looks down into the canal waters. The weed mat was solid except for a patch of dark water against the far bank so I decide to try to cast across the canal to that far bank.

I was using my home-tied deer hair popper with a double weed guard. In the mess I was fishing the double weed guard was the only thing preventing my popper from being continuously fouled. I had to make a long cast from halfway down the hill to reach across the canal and I had to keep a high back cast to prevent the grass and trees behind me from grabbing my fly. After a few hang-ups behind and after covering a few yards of shoreline I came to the fishiest looking water in the area. There was an area of overhanging tree branches and a log lying in the water. I figured this was the best chance I would have to hook a decent bass so I stopped, took off the frog popper and tied the old reliable solid black one with a white face and set myself to cast.

My first cast landed right on target in a small open area under an overhang. I let the popper settle and saw the water move around near it but didn't get the strike I expected. The moving, bulging water under the fly had my heart pounding and I was ready to set the hook but nothing happened. I fished the popper back with no takes, took a deep breath to settle my nerves and then executed the double haul of my lifetime to reach back in under the overhanging tree branch. My leader landed over one of the branches but it was not wrapped and it was way back under the other branches in the heart of the bassiest area. I eased the leader along the branch so the weed guard would let the fly go over the branch and the fly fall quietly into the water. Often when I do this, the fly either ties a nice knot around the branch or it flies back straight at me well out of the area. This time it floated down onto the water and landed dead center where I wanted it to. I let the popper rest until all the ripples were gone and then popped it once. All the outdoor writers talk about how the water erupts under their fly. The water didn't erupt but an obviously good fish took a good swipe at the popper and I hauled back with both a strip strike and a serious Orvis position rod lift. This was a good fish and I hooked her but I had 70 feet of weedy water get her through and a log to get her around before I could hope to land her.

The fish went down into the weed mat, fought deep under the slop and built a huge glob of weed around my line where it entered the water. I pulled on her as hard as I could and not pop the leader and when she headed for the log I figured that would be the end. Sure enough, I felt everything come to a complete stop and I knew she was under the log and hung. I figured I had one chance so I let the line go slack and gave her some running space. After about three seconds my line tightened and the fight was back on. I got her head up which let some of the weeds slide off and got her to shore. She was a big bass!

The bass's mouth was big enough that I had no trouble getting my hand down to the deepest part of the back of her mouth to free the hook. She was a beautiful, very fat and healthy bass. I measured her to be 21 inches long and very well fed. I have no idea how much she weighed but I do know she was on the heavy side of what would be normal for a fish that length. She was such a beautiful fish I toyed with the idea of having her mounted but it just didn't seem right. I showed her to Eduardo and then put her back in the water. I had intentions of moving her back and forth to revive her but she blew out of my hand with a big push and was gone.

When I got settled from the big bass action I rose three more bass from the area, all, obvious good ones, but could not get a good hook set in any of them. Joe, Eduardo and I fished every inch of the area hoping we could

get some more bass to take but it wasn't to be. I don't think there was another strike for any of us the rest of the day.

The big bass was the biggest I have ever caught on a fly and I think the prettiest bass I have ever caught. I had toyed with the thought of quitting and giving up before trying the canal as a last resort. The sight of the weed mat almost made me quit again but I gave it a try anyway and ended up catching the bass of a lifetime. My nature is to not quit and I am glad I didn't!

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FIVE FAVOURITE FLIES

by Jeremy Cottrell

(This month we bring a bit of international flavour to our "Five Favorite Flies" column. Our resident Australian member, Jeremy Cottrell, offers three from the homeland and two from here that catch everything in Texas from bass and panfish to tarpon and jacks. Ed.)



AUSTRALIAN FLIES

The B.M.S. (Bullen Merri Special) is tied from synthetic live fibre (SLF) and is a quick to tie, durable and particularly effective pattern (as those at Damon's Seven Lakes can attest). Originally tied by Australian tyer Murray Wilson as a smelt pattern for Lake Bullen Merri, it is also popular in New Zealand and even salt water. In Texas it's quite a hit with the local largemouth bass and panfish. I've tied a number in pearl to try on the flats for specks and reds.

Instructions to tie can be found at:

<http://www.goulburnvlyflyfishing.com.au/Information/Fly%20Patterns/fly%2042%20BMS.htm>

The Tom Jones is another lake trout smelt pattern. It consists of a rabbit dubbing body, marabou tail and rabbit hair wings (I use wallaby hair in Australia). It is also a quick-to-tie, durable pattern that has been successful with local bass and panfish.

The Pink Thing is probably the #1 barramundi fly, but pretty much anything that swims seems to like it. It is often used with heavy lead eyes to probe deeper, discoloured water. The Pink Thing seems to be particularly effective on herring species here in Texas. I think it will also be particularly effective on jacks and snook. I lost the only one I

brought over to a rather large ladyfish on the North Padre trip. In northern Australia this fly is as ubiquitous as a Clouser, Deceiver or Crazy Charlie. The grizzly saddle runs down the midline, not offset such as the whistler patterns, and as shown in Lefty Kreh's *Saltwater Flies* (but I don't think the fish really care). Instructions to tie can be found at: <http://www.fishingcairns.com.au/page6-6.html>

TEXAS FLIES

I like the Rattle Mullet for it's ability to ride just below the surface, create an attention-getting splat on the surface when it lands, and create a commotion with rattle and flared deer hair. So far it's been an effective pattern for me on larger bass, and I'm looking forward to using it on the flats.

The Deceiver pictured is tied with a mylar tubing head coated with epoxy. It also has large amounts of Krystal Flash along the lateral line and a peacock herl back. That is probably my favourite fly at the moment as it hooked me two tarpon, five specks and innumerable ladyfish at North Padre. A real shame I only had one in the fly box at the time. I recommend that the rest of you don't make that mistake!



COULD IT BE TRUE?

By Ed Hogan

The morning started at 3 a.m. and it was daybreak when my brother-in-law, Bubba, and I arrived at Clark's Marina on Friday, September 17. The forecast was the same as it had been for the previous three weeks, hot and dry. Even though Florida was experiencing hurricanes, Texas had a high pressure located over her which kept her immune to anything but hot and dry weather.

We launched the boat and headed for Whitaker's Flats where we poled for about 30 minutes without any sightings. Then we decided to go to Mule Slough and fish the north bank starting at the east end going west so the morning sun would be at our backs. The water was about a foot higher than normal but was extremely clear on the east end. After about 45 minutes we were about half way up the bank and hadn't seen a fish and the water began to get a little cloudy. Decision time was approaching when we saw our first fish so with that encouragement we continued on. Soon after that we were making regular sightings of singles with some doubles thrown in. What we did learn is to not ignore the schools of mullet because an occasional redfish would be in the crowd. It was almost as if they were trying to get lost in the crowd or camouflaging themselves like a hunter does. After seeing about two dozen fish with several hookups we arrived at the end of the shoreline about 11:15 a.m. where it ended on a large broad flat across from Farwell Island.

As we lazily poled around on that huge flat trying to think of our next plan of attack the wind died down to nothing. Yes, it was perfectly still, flat and hot. Never seen it like that. We later learned a new record high had been set for that day, a 110 degree heat index. While I was still on the poling platform and Bubba on the deck, we continued to float around and had just about decided to move on when I looked over my right shoulder and saw two redfish coming toward us. This quickly changed to two redfish in front of four, then the water turned a golden bronze and it became obvious that it was a pod of 30 to 40 redfish coming across the flat. I turned the boat around and positioned it to be within casting range of their path. With the skill of a seasoned fisherman, Bubba tossed the fly into the pod and pulled one out. It really wasn't that hard. This caused the pod to go deep and quietly vanish as if it were an illusion. We couldn't tell which way they went but this was definitely the highlight of the morning. It was about 11:30 then and we decided to go back to the marina and have lunch in the cool of the restaurant. Later that day we went back out but didn't have any luck.

We had Saturday morning remaining before we had to be back in Houston. In a discussion Friday night, we concluded it would be best to go back to the same shoreline where we saw the two dozen or so singles and doubles. The forecast for the next day was the same as it had been for the last two or three weeks – hot and dry. This reminded me of something an older and much more experienced fly fisherman once told me. He said, "Redfish are creatures of habit. If they have consistent weather, they will be at the same place at the same time doing the same thing." Could that be true? I didn't know, but it gave me some encouragement for the next day. I thought it would really be a test to see if the large pod would show up again. With that in mind we planned to be back on the flat again at 11:15 a.m.

Morning arrived and we fished the same north shoreline seeing fewer fish this time but as planned, we ended up on the flat about 11:15 a.m. Leisurely floating around and not expecting to see anything we were busy surveying the flats and at the same time discussing what we would do next, when they showed up again. It was like a bronze tide coming toward us. We lined up again in their path and again Bubba cast into them. This time he

came up empty-handed, no excuses Bubba, and again they vanished, nowhere to be seen. I looked down at my watch. It was 11:30 a.m. The old man was right.

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Padre Island Surf Fest Outing Report

by Scott Fossum

Sixteen flyfishers met before dawn on Saturday September 24th in the Malaquite Beach visitors center for our second surf fly fishing trip with esteemed guide and personality Billy Sandifer. The outing had us fishing the Padre Island National Seashore from the 23 mile marker to the East Cut at marker 60. We fished in the surf, from the jetty, and in the Port Mansfield channel. Fish were caught in all venues.

To maximize fishing success, we split into two groups of eight. Each group was guided by Billy on either Saturday or Sunday and fished on their own the other day. Everyone caught fish. Jack Crevalle averaging 22 pounds were landed. Ladyfish, including a monster 3.75 pounder, pompano, speckled trout and even a redfish were caught. Numerous tarpon were jumped, but none landed. The six-foot tarpon seemed to prefer fisherman using eight-weight rods and 20 pound tippet. Despite the handicap, I witnessed an eight-weighter keep a six-foot tarpon on for six jumps and over three minutes. Most lasted for one jump.

The outing was about big fish. No stopping for anything but jacks or tarpon. Saturday held sunny weather and a moderate surf that made fish spotting easy. Everyone had numerous shots at in-range jacks and tarpon. Sunday was overcast and rainy with a large surf. The fish cooperated and were in the first gut (twenty feet from the sand). All in all, lots of fish were caught.



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

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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. New members, please pro-rate your payment for the number of months between now and the end of June, inclusive. 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: _____

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