

On The Fly

Newsletter of the Suncoast Fly Fishers of St. Petersburg

The June Docklight/Beach Outing is a Go

Docklight/Beach Outing 10-11-17



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You will always catch fish 9





President's Letter

June, 2020

Suncoast Fly Fishers,

If you are anything like me, you are growing tired of staying home and social distancing and of the fear and uncertainty of dealing with the Coronavirus.

I want to be able to go out for dinner and a movie or walk into a store without wearing a mask. Many people are doing just that. More and more they are relaxing their guard.

Most of all I want to be able to meet with my friends, share some food and have SFF restart our club meetings. Many of you may be ready for that but this is still a serious situation and we have a responsibility to protect our members as much as we can. So, for now, we won't be holding our regular meetings in person.

We will be hosting an online dock light panel this month on Facebook and we are looking at holding future meetings using ZOOM video conference technology. In addition, we are getting ready to launch a brand new website and it is going to be awesome! We are planning to resume our monthly outings.

This month will be our regular Dock Light and Beach Fishing Outing. As usual we will be fishing on our own and you can send photos or videos of your results to the outings committee. We won't be gathering for a meal.

In the coming months we should be able to find a way to hold regular outings and to get together to tell fish stories even if that means we need to use creative ways to socially distance and share a meal. An image comes to mind of the boy in the bubble with a fly rod sticking out of it.

The end may not yet be in sight but it is out there.

Stay safe and keep fishing.

Rick

Rick Warfel
SFF, President

Meetings, Outings, and More

Suncoast Fly Fishers launches Internet Video Series

Tune into Facebook every Monday at 4:30 pm

- Tune into Facebook.com/scff2020 every Monday to see the latest presentation. Bruce Evensen kicks off the series with some entertaining fly tying videos.
 - Videos of Bruce tying his Schminnow and Red Rouser are already up and running.
 - Next up: Tie the Mylar Mullet on Monday, June 15. It goes live at 4:30pm
 - Watch for a special midweek showing of the Fly of the Month, the White Docklight Shrimp, Wednesday, June 17th at 4:30pm
 - We will be featuring other guest tyers and topics in the coming weeks
-

Docklight and beaches outing is ON... just like always.

JUNE OUTING, Friday-Saturday-Sunday, June19-20-21

- Fish docks or beaches from 8 pm Friday to 8 am Saturday, then again from 8 pm Saturday to 8 am Sunday.
 - You can fish anywhere in the general Tampa Bay area.
 - The outing prize goes to the fly fisher catching the longest snook. Send in a photo.
 - Got a winner for the annual tournament? Reds, seatrout, snook, ladyfish. Be sure to send in a picture.
-

Now we can tie flies with Bruce Evensen on the Internet

Online fly tying with Bruce Evensen

- We can't tie flies with Bruce in person but we can tie with him online on [Facebook](#).
 - Next up: Tie the Mylar Mullet on Monday, June 15. It goes live at 7:30 pm.
 - Then on June 16 or 17 tune in to watch Bruce tie his White Docklight Shrimp.
 - Other videos are already up and running. Watch him tie his Schminnow and Red Rouser
-

Can you say ZOOM?

JULY 16 MEETING? Not in person but...

- Our club's computer whizzes are working out details for a virtual meeting.
 - More info to come.
-

Will we have a picnic lunch at the July outing?

JULY 18 OUTING

Saturday, July 18. Yes.

Lunch? Maybe BYOL

- The outing committee is searching for a place where we can fish and meet for lunch safely.
 - It'll probably be a BYOL – Bring your own picnic lunch. And do not share it with anybody. BC virus.
-

On the horizon...

- New club website will be unveiled in 2-3 weeks. Stay tuned to www.suncoastflyfishers.com
- Check out our club's [Facebook](#) site, too.
- Auction. We didn't have an annual Hog Roast this year but we may have an online auction instead.
- Fly Market. It's like a flea market only much more fun. Tentatively September 12.
- Big Gun Shootout practice sessions. Quin Berry will organize practice for SFF.
- Holiday Season Ugly Sweater Party and Silent Auction.
- Hog Roast. Probably in March, 2021.

We are Suncoast Fly Fishers of St. Petersburg

Aims and Purposes

The Suncoast Fly Fishers, Inc. (SFF) is an organization of fishing enthusiasts who love fishing with the fly rod. We welcome all people of all ages with similar interests, regardless of their fly fishing skill level. We enthusiastically teach those that wish to learn or improve their fly casting, fly tying and related fly fishing skills. SFF meets monthly where we talk fly fishing, tie flies and most months feature a speaker with a program highlighting local fly fishing opportunities.

Suncoast Fly Fishers (SFF) is a non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization. SFF is a charter member of the Fly Fishers International (FFI). SFF is a member of the Florida Council of FFI. SFF supports the conservation of natural resources, boating safety and fishing regulations.

Monthly Meetings. Guests welcome.

Third Thursday of every month (except December) at St. Pete's Walter Fuller Park Rec Center, 7891 26th Ave. N. 6 to 8:30 pm.

Directions to our meeting at Walter Fuller Park. From 22nd Avenue N turn North on 72nd St. N. Turn left (West) on 26th Avenue N. Then turn right into the rec center parking lot.

Monthly Outings

Club members meet up every month for a fly fishing outing and lunch. Usually it is scheduled on the Saturday after monthly meeting on the third Thursday of every month.

Contact us by mail: Suncoast Fly Fishers, P.O. Box 40821, St Petersburg, FL 33743-0821

Visit our website and Facebook pages, too

SuncoastFlyFishers.com

[Facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com)

Club and FFI Membership combined

Suncoast Fly Fishers currently has 125 members including 15 family members and 6 honorary members. Annual dues are payable in September. This also includes benefits and annual membership in **Fly Fishers International** and the **Florida Council** of Fly Fishers International

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Suncoast Fly Fishers

P. O. Box 40821
St Petersburg, FL 33743
www.suncoastflyfishers.org

Club Officers

Pres: Rick Warfel
Vice Pres: Quin Berry
Secretary: David Redd
Treasurer: Tom Gadacz

Board of Directors

Bill Scarola, Bob Burkard, Bruce Evensen, Ryan Sollars, Cliff Nigh, Karen Warfel, George Haseltine, James Davis

Committees--Members are encouraged to serve on one or two committees. Do you? If not, speak to one of the officers at the next meeting.

Casting: Pat Damico, Dayle Mazarella
FFI Liaison: Pat Damico
Conservation: Cliff Nigh
Fly Tying: Myron Hansen
Membership: Tom Gadacz
New Members: Rick Warfel
Webmaster: Dennis Marquis
Facebook: Woody Miller
Hog Roast: Open

Outings: Bob Burkard, David Redd, Bill AuCoin

Outreach, shows: David Redd, Bob Burkard, Bill Scarola, Tom Gadacz

Raffles: Dave Barson

Succession Plan: Rick Warfel

Programs: Board of Directors

Publicity: Bill AuCoin

On The Fly

Bill AuCoin, editor; Duane Mertz, Anne Hays, Bob Hood, Tim Elms, Marshall Craig.

Bob Burkard: May's Virtual Outing Review



Bob Burkard, Outings Committee

Lots of Suncoast Fly Fishers went fly fishing on the third Saturday and Sunday in May and they sent in reports and photos which have been posted on our **Facebook** site. Scroll down after this and you'll see photos and reports, plus other random shots.

- The target saltwater fish was spotted seatrout. And the winner is....Mark Hays. Mark landed a 17-inch spotted seatrout.
- The target freshwater fish was bream. And the winner is....Tim Elms. Tim caught a 9-incher in one of his neighborhood ponds.
- We offered a prize for the best selfie with a fish but nobody sent one in. We also offered a prize for the best non-angler commentary. Alas, no submissions.
- We have a prize for the best fish video. We had two great entries, one from Tim Elms and one from Annie Hays. And the winner is...Tim Elms. Go to the club's Facebook page, scroll down and watch Tim catching a "Savage Tilapia."
- And all the members who fished the virtual outing are winners, too. Many waded fished from the Blackthorn Memorial rest area on the Sunshine Skyway. Fishing was slower than slow, but thanks to Jack Collins, who caught a 34-inch snook, we didn't get skunked. Thank you, Jack.



Mark Hays' seatrout



Jack Collins' skyway snook



No worries; just a little Florida shower.



The rain stopped. Duane Mertz and Bob Burkard waded out to give it another go.



Barry Salzman, Bob Burkard, and Chris O'Byrne are ready to wet some fly lines.

Bob

Annie Hays: Casting into the Maelstrom.

Dad, Robert, and I decided to brave the strong wind to fish in our favorite spot just off Pinellas Point. Two weeks before that, we caught about thirty trout on our spinning rods. However, fishing with three people in the boat is a whole different challenge with fly rods involved.

Dad's little boat got blown all over the flats even without a strong tide. It took a while for us to find fish, but I caught the first one. As I got it to the boat, I thought it might be a small silver trout. But then I noticed the yellow fins and realized it was a skipjack. Dad couldn't find the de-hooker, so he beat the skipjack on the side of the boat to stun it before grabbing the pliers.



Annie kisses trophy baitfish on the fly.

After a few more casts, Dad brought in two 17-inch speckled trout on a white bucktail fly. Shortly after that, he caught a small jack. There are few things more fun than fighting a jack on a fly rod since even the babies fight so much.

I caught an even smaller jack on a smaller bucktail fly than what Dad was using. However, Robert was still out of luck.

One thing that we demonstrated on that trip was the difference between saltwater fly line and limp, freshwater fly line. Robert got tangled up in his inexpensive freshwater line so many times he nearly gave up fishing. Luckily Dad had an extra 9-weight rod on board with proper line. Although fly line is expensive, it is a worthwhile investment to have a few options on your trip.

As we arrived at our final fishing spot of the morning, we found a school of whitebait swarming the surface. I was tired of catching the motor so I put my rod away and let Robert stand in the back of the boat. Finally, after about four hours of fishing, Robert's line went crazy. He pulled in his first mackerel on a fly. It was about 16 inches long, and he was using an E.P. fiber baitfish pattern fly. Dad hooked one just as big a minute later.

When we got home, Captain Dad cleaned the fish, Deckhand Robert cleaned the boat, and I broiled the mackerel on a baking sheet with olive oil and Everglades Seasoning. Thankfully, none of us pierced our ears with our flies, but Dad's trying to convince Mom to let him keep the nose ring.

Annie



Mark's 17-inch seatrout



Robert Mitchell decided not to measure his seatrout.

Tim Elms: May Outing Bass and Bream. And Tilapia.

Tim Elms

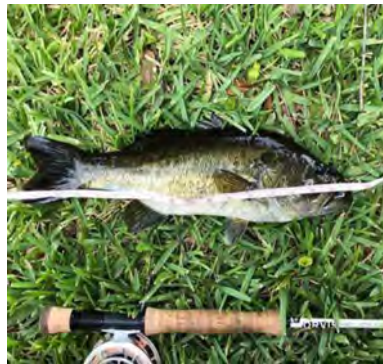
I had a very good couple of days. Since we had the opportunity to fish wherever, I fished my home waters. Here is my biggest of 28 bluegills. (copper nose) 8.75" and my largest black Bass from the weekend 17". Caught the Bluegill on a dry cricket fly and the bass on a diving frog.

Did you know Copper Nose Bluegills are native only in Florida just like the Florida Black Bass? They aren't a hybrid as many suggest just a sub-species that tend to grow faster than their northern cousins.

Strip strip strippppppp!



Tim's winning 8.75-inch bream



Tim caught a nice black bass, too.



Watch the Facebook video of Tim catching a tilapia in one of his neighborhood ponds. Log on to [Facebook.com/SCFF2020](https://www.facebook.com/SCFF2020)

Tim

Gary Sundberg: WhooHoo...Dunedin Causeway Trout

WhooHoo.

Trout caught off the Dunedin Causeway, May 24, 8 am, outgoing tide.

I caught it on my 7-wt TFO on a Deceiver Fly tied during Bruce Evensen's Monday night garage party.

Gary



Jack Collins: My snook at the virtual outing



I want to thank you, Bill, and Bob for suggesting the virtual club outing this month at the Blackthorn Memorial, Skyway Bridge. It was great to see you and the other guys who made it out after our self-imposed seclusion from the virus.

The late start on the day meant a nice "warm" afternoon of fishing. I had lubed up with 50 SPF, full face and neck buff, shades, and Tilley hat. Secured, I wet waded into the 80 degree water.

The beach areas were filling with families behind me with the channel water churning from power boats and jet skis. I took a few warm-up casts to get my fly out on the water as I slogged through the prolific turtle grass toward the firm footing of the sandbar. There was a light breeze over my right shoulder, favorable for my right handed cast. After multiple casts, it soon became apparent that all the boat traffic had released a stream of grass into the moving tide. Then with swimmers drifting into my back-cast, I searched for some social distance.

I was soon rewarded for my persistence with the strike I was hoping for, a leaping snook. Then just as suddenly the eight weight rod went slack. Disappointed, I started taking up the slack but saw she was headed right for me. The line tightened again with another leap as the point of the hook reminded us both that she was hooked. I buried the butt of my rod into my stomach and leaned back with the rod pointed straight out toward the pass. A third leap with a little less energy and I started to gain line. Her energy spent, she glided alongside and she rolled over to let me remove the hook and take a couple of pictures. A quick measurement against my rod ended the encounter with a smile as that 34-inch golden beauty glided back into the grassy shallows.



Jack's outing winner -- 34-inch snook.

The fly is a Bruce Evensen creation. Like most of his flies, I don't recall its name. I searched a couple of our pattern books but couldn't find a comparable name. It's obviously a baitfish pattern as you can see. It is a simple pattern with pale chartreuse buck-tail and gold flash topped with badger hair along with red eyes. I like big red eyes. Lefty Kreh always said simpler flies are the best.



The winning fly. Evensen tied it.

I think it had just enough flash to catch the snook's eye because she inhaled it. I had to reach deep into her mouth with long nose pliers to dislodge it and got teeth marks on my other thumb from holding her lip. You can see the frayed line from her teeth on the 15-pound test. I probably would have lost her if she fought much longer.

Jack

Mark Hays: All the Fish in Your Own Backyard



Mark gets ready to fish the lake at Walter Fuller Park. His super-smart Labrador Retriever checks the knots.

He's never been skunked at this lake.

Sometimes we feel the urge to travel thousands of miles in search of exotic fish and grand adventure. Who doesn't want to brag about the peacock bass they caught in the Amazon or the rainbow trout in Yellowstone? But many times, the best fishing available is just down the street.

Lately, I've been fishing Walter Fuller Park right behind the club hall. I've caught fish every trip. If you decide to fish Walter Fuller Park, you'll have to watch your back cast. I see this as a way of enforcing social distancing.



The lake at Walter Fuller Park is just a short walk from our club meeting room.

I've been catching small bass sized 8-14 inches and very large bluegill ranging from 6-9 inches.

The fly of choice has been a white muddler #8 with the old yellow 4 weight and a quick retrieve. Try it before a meeting sometime this summer while we have daylight prior to starting. The best part is you don't need a boat or leaky waders.

Mark

Mike Hoppe: Popper Bass in his Backyard Lake

I wasn't able to fish the virtual outing. In place I am getting some early morning practice with the bass in the small lake behind my house.

Tight Lines,

Mike



Bob Burkard: June Docklight/Beach Outing Is a Go



Bob Burkard sight casts to snook.

Our June outing is our long-standing and much celebrated docklights outing, and now it's our Docklights AND Beaches outing.

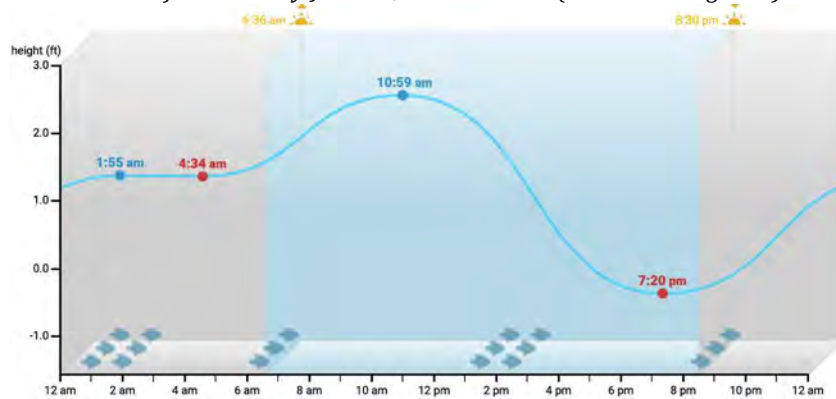
- Fish from 8 PM Friday to 8 AM Saturday, then from 8 PM Saturday to 8 AM Sunday.
- The outing prize goes to the fly fisher catching the longest snook. Measure it and take a picture. Email it to robertburkard9@gmail.com.
- Fish anywhere in Pinellas, Pasco, Hillsborough, or Manatee Counties.

Email them to suncoastflyfishersfl@gmail.com or text to 610-256-7781.

Outings Tournament

Don't forget the annual tournament, either. See the standings below. Can you beat these lengths for the annual tournament? Snook 34-inches, Ladyfish 25 inches, Redfish (empty), Seatrout 17 -inches. Measure it and shoot a picture of it. Then release the fish. Remember, FWC has ruled we must release snook, redfish and spotted seatrout until May 31, 2021.

Tides for Saturday June 20, Pass-a-Grille. (Tides4Fishing.com)



Depth of highs and lows and the times will depend on where you're fishing.

2020 Outing Tournament Leaders

Species	Length	Winner	Outing (Month)
Longest bream	9.5"	Tim Elms	Virtual outing (May)
Longest black bass	17"	Tim Elms	Virtual outing (May)
Longest snook	34"	John Collins	Virtual outing (May)
Longest redfish			
Longest ladyfish	25"	Mandy McGarry	Weedon Island Preserve (January)
Longest seatrout	17"	Mark Hays	Virtual outing (May)

Members Share Docklight Savvy. And Freaky Flies?



Ken Doty, Mark Hays and Ken Hofmeister (L to R) led a lively discussion at the June meeting about how to catch big snook and reds under residential dock lights.

Ken Doty: Use smaller flies. Bring three rods, two with floating line and one with sinking line. The marine patrol is out there so make sure you're legal. Keep your navigation lights on when you're fishing so other anglers know you're fishing that dock. Wear glasses because you don't want a Clouser hitting you in the eyes. Be polite to homeowners who are out on their dock. If your fly gets stuck on one, leave it there. You can tie another fly. Take off your shoes. Be quiet.



Mark Hay's box. Can you say gurgler?

Mark Hays: Watch the dock for awhile and work out a plan before you approach it. Fish gurglers. And fish them in the dark water, too, even along the seawall between dock lights. Snook cruise those seawalls. Use cheap line because, barnacles. Use 40-pound test bite leader. You can drop down to 30 or even 25 if you have to.

Ken Hofmeister: Clousers. Moving water. Bring two or three rods. Six weights. Eight-weights. Big fish are deep.

Alan Sewell: A trolling motor is a must, and you must point your trolling motor away from the dock so you can use it to horse a snook away from barnacle-encrusted piles. Crush your hook barbs and ask your boat-mate to smash his hook barbs, too. Alan doesn't remember exactly which fly it was but something stuck into his jugular with some speed and he wound up in the emergency room. Fish a short, stout rod. Alan's is 7'10".

Ray Markham: A GPS-controlled Pilot trolling motor is amazing. In anchor mode it will keep your boat right where it's supposed to be. Fish two-inch glass minnows with pearl crystal. Grass shrimp. Gummy minnows. Wood docks are better. All wood. New docks are worthless. Cast under docks; practice by casting under a bush in your yard.

Three of our club's most avid dock light fly fishers sat in front at the June meeting and shared some of their secrets for catching docklight snook, reds and trout. Also, prompted by moderator Ken Hofmeister, other members also went on the record with their hard-earned advice: members like Alan Sewell, Capt. Ray Markham, Bruce Evensen, Layne Smith, Capt. Dan Bumgarner, and Bob Morrison.



*Myron Hansen managed the fly swap. June's exchange was called **Freaky Flies** for flies made with strange materials. Specimens included flies made with paintbrush bristles and a condom. Hmmm. Something like **Sili Legs**?*

Smitty's Fly Box: Faux Clouser



Layne (Smitty) Smith

Because of the material, this Clouser will operate differently than a regular Clouser. Because it is 100% synthetic, it will sink like a rock whereas a regular Clouser with its deer hair body will sink much slower and even suspend if weighted lightly. So this Clouser should be used for those "reds" that are tailing and rooting up the bottom looking for food down in the dregs!!! Good Luck!

Smitty

Materials:

Hook: Mustad 3407 or 34011 size #2
Thread: Danville Flatwaxed Nylon white
Weight: Painted barbell eyes Medium to X-Small
Belly: Lighter Faux Bucktail
Flash: Krystal Flash or Flashabou to complement fly
Wing: Lighter Faux Bucktail
Overwing: Darker Faux Bucktail
Head: Thread head (color to match overwing)
Cement: SHHAN and Solarez UV Resin



Faux Clouser sinks faster with faux bucktail

Tying Sequence:

1. Place hook in vise and attach thread creating a thread saddle to hold barbell eyes. Tie the thread saddle at the $\frac{2}{3}$ mark of hook shank (if you want a swimming minnow action) or the $\frac{3}{4}$ mark (if you want jigging shrimp action), and then tie in barbell eyes and secure with figure-eight wraps with SHHAN.
2. Advance thread to front of hook and tie in lighter Faux Bucktail belly with close wraps of thread in front of barbell eyes changing to open wraps behind the barbell eyes to the bend of the hook and then return wraps to back in front of barbell eyes again using open wraps.
3. Rotate hook in vise 180 degrees and tie in another section of lighter Faux Bucktail as a wing to equal length of belly (keeping all thread wraps in front of barbell eyes).
4. Attach about 6 or so strands of flash using the "vee" method to lay back over the wing. Trim $\frac{1}{4}$ " longer than Faux bucktail. Whip finish and trim thread.
5. Change to darker thread and tie on overwing using the darker Faux Bucktail. Form a smooth thread head and whip finish. Coat head with UV resin and cure.

Bruce Evensen: White Docklight Shrimp



Bruce Evensen

This is the fly of the month I'll be teaching in my fly-tying studio. You can't be there but you can watch and even ask questions by logging on to **Facebook** on Wednesday, June 17, at 4:30 pm.

This white shrimp is a killer on dock lights and also on the beaches.

Bruce

Materials

- Hook: 3407 size 2
- Thread: Danville Flat Waxed Nylon (white)
- Front: White bucktail and white marabou
- Body: White Supreme Hair
- Eyes: Red shrimp eyes
- Legs: White round Sili Legs
- Legs: White Estaz
- Glue: Thick UV Loon



Tying Sequence

1. Use a 3407 size 2 hook. Wrap from hook eye back to the hook point.
2. Above the hook point wrap a small amount of white bucktail.
3. Add a half inch long piece of white marabou.
4. At the same point wrap two or three white Sili Legs on each side.
5. Tie in shrimp eyes, either white or red.
6. Tie in white Estaz and wrap back to the hook eye. Trim Estaz off the back.
7. Take match stick thickness of white Supreme Hair. Tie in 1/4 inch of it over the hook eye with two more inches going back over the hook bend and out.
8. Take Loon thick UV and put a bead where you tied at the hook point and take it all the way forward.
9. Take two strands of pearl Krystal Flash and put 1/4 inch bead of Loon UV from the front tip back for 1/4 inch. Lay the pearl Krystal Flash into the Loon UV pointing forward.
10. Set with UV light.

Tim Elms: Insanity?



Oooooo. Lots of teeth.

Howdy! I can't believe it's June! Technically I caught my first Tarpoonie the other day!!! WHOOHOO! BUT and it's a big but, that sneaky Silver Snake spit my fly as I grabbed his mouth and poof he was gone before I could document any part of my adventure.....after that I was asked, "IS fly fishing just a form of insanity?" You know, the old saying of doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.

I answered with a "hmmmm let me think about that"

For me, I fish with intent. Desire to learn and get better. And just plain enthusiasm. I know people who fish just to fish and do the same thing every time. Same bait/lure. Same rod/gear. And same spot. So yeah that's insane to me, but that's what they like and more power to them.

What about the concept of luck?

Is luck a thing in fishing...ABSOLUTELY! It doesn't hurt to be in the right place at the right time. And it helps to be just a fishy person.

But, every "lucky/fishy" person I know is all about stacking the deck in their favor to be more productive.

So, maybe look at fly fishing like playing single deck blackjack at a casino. At least you know your odds. You know what's in the deck. You are only trying to beat 1 person. And best of all if your table is full, you even get to see what other cards are showing. If I just sat at a slot machine all day waiting for that one jackpot, I *would* go insane.



William the bass man.



Mr. D. with his PD bass

I wanted to share these pictures of Dennis Marquis and Bill AuCoin. We had a couple days of chasing bass together and these two have inspired me to keep fishing, keep learning, and most of all keep having fun! The determination in both men is infectious. Stacking Decks for sure.

Lastly, I landed a gar on a fly! Sight fishing for these is so fun. They are hard to hook properly for sure, but put the time in and strip set hard. And then do it again!

Until next month when I might have proof of a Tarpon.

Strip.Strip.Strip!—Tim

Robert Fischer: Part 3: Fly Fishing in the Time of Corona

(Part 1+2 of Robert's trip are in the April and May issues.



Dinners were off the chart delicious. There were usually choices of meat, chicken, fish, lobster, pasta, several salads, side dishes and breads, fruit, soup and excellent desserts. The two chefs did an incredible job every night. There was one especially great chocolate cake called a *senorita*, that would have been right at home at Bern's Steak House. Breakfasts were also great; eggs or omelets anyway you wanted, meats, cheeses, fruit, breads, fruit juices and great coffee. The we packed our own lunches into Tupperware boxes and they were put into our boats for the day. The chefs even made gluten free meals for one of our guests. I think I would go again for the food, even if the fishing was terrible.

After dinner we retired to the air-conditioned salon for true stories, jokes, and Havana Club Especial Rum. Then to bed and a start all over again the next morning. Each day Ama made the beds with fresh linens and folded the towels into animals like swans, turtles, or rabbits. Nice! It's a tough life but somebody has to do it. Then there was the boat crash.

On Cayo Largo there are a few inside lagoons that are accessed by zig zag canals that are about 20' wide and 1/4-mile long. When the guides enter these narrow canals they announce on the radio that they are coming into the canal. Apparently the message did not get through. Walt and I were in one boat and 2 guys from Colorado were in the other boat. We came around a blind corner at 25 mph and there on our side of the canal was the other boat also at 25 mph. It's incredible how fast things happen in 20' at 50 mph. As soon as we saw the other boat Walt was thrown into mangroves and I was into the water. Fortunately, both guides did the right thing and turned hard right so the boats hit bottom to bottom. Had one boat gone over the top of the other it could have been much worse. We got Walt back in the boat, he had a small cut on his hand and some bruises. I only got a small bruise. But Bill, in the other boat, got a huge bruise on his hip. The guides were furious with each other. Wish my Spanish was better because I could have learned some new cuss words.

So back to the mothership and the captain decided to take Bill to the small clinic on Cayo Largo. Because the bruise was getting larger, and because Bill was 80 years old and only had one lung they decided to fly him to the hospital in Havana the next day. Unfortunately, he had to remain there until the flight home. His friend that accompanied him and returned to the mothership and said that the doctors and nurses were very professional and taking good care of him. Also being an American citizen, they were required to report his condition to the American embassy each day. FYI, your plane ticket to Cuba includes a \$25 charge for Cuban medical insurance. That paid for all the care he received. We hope that Avalon Charters will also comp him a return trip since he only got to fish two days.

Well, this is getting long so let me wrap it up. We had sporadic internet access so were able to confirm our return flight on Southwest was still ok. Lots of bad news about corona in Europe and travel lockdowns caused some anxiety in us all. If the flight was cancelled our backup plan was (1) to build a raft and paddle home, or (2) hitchhike to Guantanamo and see if the US military would give us a ride, or (3) to bribe the ship captain to take us to Key West and rent a car to drive home. Actually, staying on the ship was a pretty good idea, safe, isolated, good food and rum, good company.

The airport in Havana was crowded, about 20% of the people wearing masks but very few coughing. The plane was full but the flight was uneventful. Security was quick and easy and they didn't even take our temperatures back in Tampa. All the baggage made it home safe and sound. All in all, it was a great trip. Would I go again? Yes. Yes. In a heartbeat. Like all the Caribbean islands I've been to the people are warm and friendly. They rely on tourism as an important part of their economy and want you to come back. Hopefully, this bug will die out and the Cuban and American governments will stop picking on each other. Then trips to Cuba could only get better.

Marshall Craig: Lunch on the Big Piney River

Excerpted from Marshall's website, Craiglit.life



Marshall Craig

Oreos, of course, are best paired with a cold Budweiser

In a galaxy far away, when I was in my 40s, I would fish with my son, my brother, and friends on the Big Piney River in east central Missouri.

Our guides on the Big Piney were the Claytons, a family of farmers and winter-time logging truck drivers, or whatever else it took to put bread on the table. They were “good ol’ boys,” the highest accolade available in rural Missouri.

We would drift down the river in two 18-foot Jon boats, two paying cargo up front, each on a bench seat, and a guide aft, with a paddle and, if in operating condition, a much-abused electric motor.

The objects of our interest were the rowdy, bronze-backed smallmouth bass, as well as a motley collection of less respectable fish – bluegill, rock bass and warmouth. These panfish, however, were considered by local folks to be the best eating.

As the morning wore on, Ray, Ramon, or Tom, whichever two of the Claytons were guiding, would attach fish after fish to metal stringers clipped to the sides of their boats. Around noon, they would beach the boat on a shoal and the shore lunch ritual would commence. One guide would reach for a gunny sack stashed under his seat, pile it atop a battered, metal cooler and step ashore. He was the *chef de cuisine*. The other guide was charged with food prep. He would sit in the sand, feet out in the water, take a sharp Barlow folding knife out of his pocket, and one by one gut each fish with two deft cuts. He would then cradle the palm-sized panfish in a callused hand and scale them, sluicing out the body cavity in the stream. River otters, raccoons and minks provided clean-up service.

Meantime, the chef de cuisine had pulled a battle-scarred kerosene Coleman stove and a large fry pan out of the gunny sack. He would set the stove on the pebbled shoal, squatting, and fire it up. From the cooler came: a gallon can of vegetable oil; a plastic bag filled with a breeding of flour, cornmeal, and salt and pepper; a bag of potatoes; four or five large yellow onions; and a loaf of Sunbeam bread like we used to soak with water, ball up, and throw at friends in the elementary school cafeteria.

The breaded panfish would brown in the fry pan, hot oil snapping and crackling, as we waited, beers in hand, like dogs hovering around a kitchen table. The prep man would busily slice up potatoes and the onions. When the fish were done, draining on a brown paper bag, the potatoes and onions followed into the fry pan. On one of our earliest trips, a fisherman looked around and asked, “Where are the plates?” The chef responded, “Over there,” and pointed to the loaf of Sunbeam bread. Big Piney etiquette required that you plop a fried fish, together with a slice of onion and a slice of potato, on a piece of bread and pick from there, with your fingers. There was an occasional “ouch” when a particularly delectable morsel proved too hot. On his first trip, a newbie started to nosh his piece of bread. Ray exclaimed, “He’s eatin’ his plate!” Some things are just not done up the Big Piney.

If life were particularly good that day, one of us might have brought along a bag of double-stuffed Oreos. Oreos, of course, are best paired with a cold Budweiser.

Drifting down the Big Piney in the late afternoon, approaching the take-out point, some of us would be thinking about dinner. Maybe a stop at the Sonic Drive-In in Houston, 20 minutes south of Licking. Maybe a SuperSONIC Bacon Double Cheeseburger paired with an Oreo Peanut Butter Shake or an Oreo Cheesecake Shake. We wonder, did the Walgreens in Houston carry Pepto Bismol?

Marshall...The Old Road Peddler

Capt. Pat Damico: Captain's Corner



Tarpon fishing when there are so many boats

Do you know the "Golden Rule"

Many reports from local fly guides and serious fly fishers are filled with frustration. The number of boats on the water has never been greater. The difficulty of getting migrating tarpon along the beaches to accept a fly makes this a daunting task but can be compounded by the daily displays of poor manners by many fishermen. Casting a fly to relaxed fish has become much more difficult. Finding laid-up fish or fish daisy chaining is now a rarity. Chasing a school of visible fish with an outboard or even a fast running trolling motor

will put them on high alert and ruin everyone's chances for success, especially in the shallows. Spending time on the water will give you a good idea of areas that tarpon frequently travel giving you a predictable pattern. Anchor in those areas and wait for relaxed fish. Have a float attached to your anchor with a quick disconnect so that when a fish is hooked you can follow them and later return to your spot. In the shallows, a push pole is a stealthy way to go. If you see someone, "On the pole," they have to be in shallow water. Stay away! Apply the golden rule to your time on the water and everyone's success rate will increase.

Fly fisherman Pat Damico charts Fly Guy in lower Tampa Bay and can be reached at captpatdamico.com and (727) 504-8649

More Docklight Fly Fishing Tips

Docklight panel advice: Excerpts from the July 2019 issue of On The Fly

The panel consisted of long-time SFF members Mark Hays, Alan Sewell and Mark Craig. They shared their secrets about snook fishing gained over their collective 90 years of experience fishing local waters.

- When working dock-lights from a boat or kayak – safety is the number 1 priority. Always wear a good quality life vest, with a head light. Heavier kayaks are preferred. If using a peddle kayak, care must be taken not to get entangled with your line. Consider using a white stern light. Be on the lookout for submerged lines, automatic lights and other man-made entrapments.
- On moon-lit nights, white flies work well, while purple flies produce on darker nights. Size 4-6 flies are popular. Always tie eyeballs on your flies.
- Generally, the angler will have only one shot at a snook before they spook. You must sneak up on them. False casting is not recommended. A simple pick-up and laydown cast is best with a simple, very slow strip. If you make a bad cast, fish it rather than mending your line. As you take your shot at a snook, use a slow retrieve and watch the snook follow your fly to your boat.
- Best time to fish is 3AM to sun-up or starting one hour after sundown. New moons are better than full moons. Always fish moving water. Outgoing tides are more productive.
- A heavy rod is necessary as snook will often head for pilings or rocks when hooked to breakoff and the angler must be able to head the fish away from escape.
- If you hear dogs barking leave the area.

###

Fly Gear for Sale or Swap

Woody Miller is selling his Native Slayer Propel. 727-560-6086. Email clwpaddler@gmail.com



This kayak has a front bow hatch cover, 3" seat risers, anchor trolley, paddle holder, and upgraded Boonedox rudder. First \$1600.00 takes it fishing.

Alan Sewell has put a lot of gear up for sale. 727-470-4570. Email sewellalan@yahoo.com

- Three fly rods -- \$90. Lamiglas 2-piece blanks with custom wraps and top components. 6wt, 8wt, 9wt.
- YAK GEAR StandnCast. Fits all kayaks with gear tracks, or mount to hull with supplied hardware. Folds flat and stands up when pulled. Rod and paddle holder included. Items still wrapped in carton. Never used. \$95.00
- Humminbird TCR portable color depth and fish finder. Takes two 6V batteries. Transducer fits on trolling motor or on kayak hull. \$35.
- Humminbird dual-scan color fish finder and depth unit. Transducer mounted on adjustable shaft. Clamp-on bracket holds unit and shaft. Never used. Runs on 6V battery. \$60.

Ocean kayak and extras from Frank Moss. Call and leave a message: 727-421-5354

Ocean Kayak, sit on top Prowler 15'. Extras include a paddle with tether, roof top car carrier, 6 plugs, sea anchor and lead anchor, two fly rod holders, one spinning rod holder, stick-it anchor pole, ceiling hoist, beach launch wheels, several nylon lines, a fly fishing vest. \$1,500.

Larry Lurie is selling his 16-foot Bass Tracker. Just \$4800. Email him at lawrencelurie@gmail.com

40 HP Mercury. Walk through Bimini top; Minn Kota Power Drive Copilot 55-lb thrust trolling motor. Lowrance color fish finder/GPS. Shortwave radio w/marine band, NOAA weather. Stereo AM/FM/W-CD. Boat cover; Minn Kota electric winch; 22-gal aerated bait tank; two 6 gallon gas tanks w/ tank switch; two new deep-cycle batteries; built in charger w/switch to run on either battery or both. PayPal.

Bruce Evensen made these beautiful items himself. Call him at 727-403-9010. Also, see much more of his fine art on "Poppa Bruces Flies" pages on Etsy<https://www.etsy.com/shop/poppabrucesflies>

- Hook or eyes holder hand made by Bruce Evensen, \$28.00
- Thread holder with one fly holder by Bruce Evensen, \$9.00
- Fly tying desk and tool holder, \$50.00
- Fly tying desk and tool holder made by Bruce 2ftx2Fort, \$85.00
- Epoxy glue holder hand-made by Bruce Evensen, \$24.00

Lynn Skipper has two fly rods and a reel. 813-542-3195. vintagevette@msn.com 813-541-3195

- ROSS FLY STIK HEAVY 10 wt 7'11" 4 piece with tube. Ideal rod for those night trips after snook under the docks where you need to horse them away from the dock quickly. Originally \$200, now \$100. Barely used with no nicks, blemishes etc.
- ORVIS TLS Power Matrix 4 piece 3 wt 8'4" Midflex with case. Originally \$175, now \$100.
- Orvis Battenkill ¾ wt reel with backing and 3 wt WFF line. Used one trip to Montana last year. Originally \$125, now \$75 OBO.

Want to sell or trade? Need some fly gear? Email [Bill AuCoin](mailto:BillAuCoin), wmaucoin@verizon.net

Bill AuCoin : Flyfisher Flyover



Staying up late is worth the wait. Docklight fly fishing is sight fishing. You'll see that snook come for it and suck it in. Memories are made of this. ([Florida Sportsman](#))

Catching bream got me hooked on fly fishing. Watching a bluegill nose up to a foam spider then smash it like a shovel is worth as much as catching that little guy, in my humble opinion (IMHO). Kudos to SFF member Chris O'Byrne for his salute to this amazing fly in his blog. ([Featherwater](#))

How to set up your kayak for inshore fishing. Are you rigging and loading your kayak with too much or too little gear? I never realized what a big fishing deal kayaks would become. But, here we are. ([SaltStrong](#))

Pass the popcorn. SFF member Toni Fernstrom passes along a recommendation to watch the documentary film "Artifishal. The Fight to Save Wild Salmon." *It's a must see for every serious angler and outdoors person, as well as for every (environmentally concerned citizen, said Toni.* ([Patagonia](#))

Look and Listen. And eat more popcorn: The music that backs up this fly fisher's video diary gets kind of addictive. H/T Pat Damico. ([Jazz and Fly Fishing on Vimeo](#))

Stock up on popcorn now! Fly Fusion Magazine and the International Fly fishing Film Festival have created the Stimmie Awards to recognize the best fly fishing videos. ([The Fishing Wire](#))

Did somebody say webinar? Check out this week's schedule of entertaining and instructive live online discussions and fly fishing talks. ([Fly Fishers International](#))

How much does your bass weigh? Well, now there's an app for that. Enter length and girth in decimal inches. It's still an estimate, but a good one. ([My FWC](#))

Ernest Hemingway's lost short story. His grandson only recently found this short story in the archives of a Boston library. *Pursuit as Happiness* is set in Cuba in the early 1930's. It might have been a try-out for his novel *Old Man and the Sea*. You'll start to feel sorry for the marlin. But people are hungry, too. As with his other novels and short stories, Hemingway subtly shares character insights that we pick up by "listening" carefully to the back-and-forth banter. ([Midcurrent](#))

Kill red tide? Drink more beer. We must all do our part to keep the killer red tide from invading Florida shorelines again. Well, here's a way we can help. It turns out there's a beer brewing byproduct with ingredients that kill red tide. The question is, can it be deployed in the right place at the right time? Researchers at the University of Maryland are working on it. This is just one of five innovative red tide research projects that are sharing more than a million dollars from Mote Marine in Sarasota. ([Mote Marine](#))

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