FFF ClubWire
Welcome to the March 2010 issue of the ClubWire e-mail news service for clubs.

- FFF Member e-newsletter –
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- National Fly Fishing Fair & Conclave – Education, Inspiration, Celebration –
August 26 – 28, 2010 – West Yellowstone, Montana

West Yellowstone has to be on of the all time favorite locations for the FFF annual gathering. You can bring the entire family and be assured of finding many things to do that fly fishing enthusiasts as well as family members can enjoy.

One of the great things about the Fly Fishing Fair is that there are many activities going on at any time. Primarily the FFF presents the Fair to provide an educational experience for the beginner fly fisher to the advanced by providing topics on anything and everything about fly fishing. These opportunities come in the form of workshops which are available for a fee, to other offerings such as free programs and demonstrations.

Workshops will start on Tuesday August 24 and run through Saturday August 28. They are presented by experts on topics such as fly tying, fly casting, rod building, and on water fishing. Workshops with a classroom setting will take place in various locations including the Holiday Inn, the high school, and various other meeting spaces. On water classes will take the attendee to nearby stream and standing water locations. In addition to general workshops, there will be a women’s program and a kid’s camp.

For those interested in attending the Exhibit hall and free demonstrations these will be available during August 26-28. The exhibit hall will be located at the Union Pacific Dining Hall with indoor and some outdoor spaces that will include both commercial and non-profit exhibitors. Entrance to the Fair is included with your advanced registration or by just showing up and paying the day pass fee.

The day pass fee can be purchased at the show and is only $5.00 for adults, kids 15 and under are free when accompanied by an adult. Saturday August 28 will be FREE entry for everyone.

Costs to take workshops vary so check our schedules and registration pages on our website at www.federationconclave.org for more information. It is requested to sign up in advance, however we will be offering numerous walk-up workshops on-site.

- National Fly Fishing Fair & Conclave – Lodging Options -
Click here to see list http://www.federationconclave.org/Default.aspx?tabid=4868

- FFF Is On Facebook –
Check it out: http://www.facebook.com/pages/Federation-of-Fly-Fishers/15116188893
Out in the Gulf, a weedline would be a great opportunity to find a variety of gamefish. In shallow water, weeds can be a real nuisance, especially when flyfishing. The “dog days of summer,” bring weeds and floating grass that can made a day of fishing very trying. Last evening I was out with a friend and we fished the early stages of an incoming tide where redfish mixed with mullet in very skinny grass covered water. My friend’s Exude tail on a light jig head easily slid thru the grass as the sides of the plastic bait protected the hook, which rode point up. A Texas rigged Slugo-type bait is also very weedless. Johnson silver minnows with a built in weed guard could also be used in this instance to avoid constant snags and fouling. When fly-fishing, do we have any options to make life easier for us during the summer months?

During the closed snook season, I love to fish docks close to the passes, especially at night. When the wind is blowing, which is most of the time, docks on the windward side always have weeds stacked against the shoreline. Snook can be seen in and around the weeds where a cast with most flies will foul when stripped a few feet. These fish will never show interest in a hook draped with “greens.” One option is to use a surface offering made of spun deer hair, like a Dahlberg Diver that is designed to ride with the hook point up, or where the deer hair is not trimmed near the hook point. If you happen to have your fly land on the dock or drape over one of the lines on the dock it will not hookup if gently teased past the obstruction.

Mangrove shorelines require accurate casting to get at snook and reds that love to hide under the overhanging branches. An exposed hook will snag and require moving the boat to the snag to free it, ruining the whole area. The vertical deer hair will protect the hook, but the soft texture will compress when a fish engulfs the fly. When fishing for largemouth bass with flies, a deer hair mouse designed like this is very effective around lily pads and thick grass. Will a snook take a mouse?

Bendback fly designs are very weedless, especially when a stiff material is used to cover the hook point and they are dressed a little on the heavy side. I often use a combination of synthetic and natural deer hair for this application. Using light wire hooks without additional weight will also help.

Monofilament weed guards have been used for years and have many designs. Mason is a good material for this choice as it is stiffer than most leader material. Most tackle shops have it in small spools. Fifteen to thirty pound test will suit most situations depending on hook size. A single or double strand tied at the bend of the hook when the fly is first started is brought to the eye of the hook and secured as a last step before finishing the head. The “loop” that is left around the hook point protects it. Monofilament tied at right angles to the hook near the eye is frequently used in single or double strands. The tying thread is wrapped behind to keep it in position before the head is completed. This last method is my least favorite.

A better variation of this is one that Lefty Kreh prefers and uses almost exclusively. Instead of plain mono, he used nyloncoated wire, the type used to make bite guards or wire leaders for toothy predators. Berkley makes a product, Steelon, in thirty pound test, which I use for all weed guards attached to the head of the fly. A piece is cut from the thirty-foot spool that is long enough to cover the hook point. It is attached as the head is completed. Flatten the end with small pliers and tie it in place. A few wraps of thread in front of, as well as behind the wire, will secure it. Use head cement, like Dave’s Flexament, that will penetrate the thread to really secure the wire to the hook. Cut the end so that it’s slightly longer than the hook point and also flatten this end finishing it at right angles to the hook.

Steelon can also be used to make an effective weedguard for hard body poppers. For foam heads, heat a needle and penetrate the body at a forty-five degree angle to the hook. Cement the nylon coated wire in place with crazy glue or epoxy. Cork or balsa bodies are best prepared with a Dremel or small drill using a bit a little larger than the wire’s diameter.

Don’t let floating vegetation discourage you from using your fly rod. Morning and evening have many aggressive fish prowling the flats. It’s one of the best times for skinny water action. Even if you don’t tie your own flies, many of the above applications can be added to your favorite finished flies in a few minutes. If you need any additional information, feel free to contact me.
Small Fry by Ron P. Swegman  
The Whitefish Press, Cincinnati, OH 2010  
116 pages, soft bound, illustrated, B&W, suggested price $24.95

For many urban fly fishers their whole fishing year revolves around a few holiday and vacation day outings to streams and lakes some distance away. But there is so much more that is available if you care to look. The author provides the urban fly fisher with the necessary knowledge and outlook to find a variety of close to home fishing opportunities. Granted they don't include legendary trout streams or vast Atlantic salmon or steelhead rivers. But they do provide opportunities to stand in water and cast a fly line. And these opportunities can be realized within walking or biking distance from home. Opportunities to get an hour or a half day of fly fishing with willing adversaries. All one has to do is think small. Small waters, small fish in both size and fly rod popularity, but certainly not small in tussle and spunk. This little book will get you into the game and provide you with lots of ideas for getting to fly fish and visit the waterside many of times between those more elaborate and exotic fishing trips. Likewise, the information about tackle is also well designed for thinking small as it comprises a minimalist approach suited to a stroll or bike ride to the water. Overall, the book itself is well written and a pleasure to read. This is a good one to add to your urban angler book shelf.

Casting Tip for TBFFC: 4  
By Pat Damico – Taken from the Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club Newsletter

An efficient loop can only be formed then the fly rod tip travels in a Straight Line Path, our next essential. The fly line always follows the direction the rod tip is traveling when the rod stops. Besides a straight line path, the rod tip can travel in a convex direction, one higher in the middle, causing a large loop, or in a concave direction, where the tip is lower in the middle, forming a tailing loop when the line crosses itself. If you want to make a curve cast, directing the rod tip to the right or left at the stop will cause the end of the fly line to curve in the same direction, very useful for casting around obstructions. Tracking the rod tip in a straight line will direct the energy of the cast properly allowing the line to unroll efficiently. When practicing outside, use the house roof line as a guide for vertical rod tip positions or the straight edge of a lawn or driveway as a guide when casting more horizontally. As you carry more line, the rod loads or bends more but still tracks in a straight line path. One of Lefty’s tips is to make your casts so that your fly is directed at the rod tip.

The Fly Fisherman – A Dedication Poem

Submitted by Ed Hart – F.F.F. Member - All rights reserved, unauthorized reproduction in any manner is prohibited

Today is the day, I'll wade a stream,  
to catch a trout would be my dream.  
To tie a fly, that can cast all day,  
to catch a trout the old fashion way.

Follow in my footsteps, if you dare,  
being in this river, that I must share.  
Sure this river runs shallow or deep,  
the banks will be slippery and steep.

Standing midstream at casting a fly,  
for a trout may be feeding near by.  
A twitch on the line the fly is gone,  
a large brown, now the battle is on.

Landing this big brown will take time,  
my eight-foot fly rod, tip up, tight line.  
Loosing my balance, to fall in this brook,  
them to have this big brown throw the hook.
There will be days spent sharing the river with others some may pass your way and words may be exchanged. Being a good sportsman that you are, even if he or she fishes close, just walk away, enjoy the rest of the day.

This poem is dedicated to those who walk away.

Ó 2010 Ed Hart – Millbury, OH

That Sinking Feeling!
By Clay Gill – Taken from the Alamo Fly Fishers Newsletter

As I write this the weather man is telling us it may snow today. Who would think the fishing for several types of fish has been great lately between cold fronts. This had been a good winter to be out fishing and action on overcast days has been outstanding all day long. A special tool in the arsenal has been sinking fly lines.

It takes some practice to use a sinking line, but the advantage of this great tool really makes it worth the effort. Homemade or store bought, the sink tip or a sink line allows fly fisherman ability to depth charge down to fish too deep for the sink length of a common leader on a float line. This capability puts you on fish that normally elude winter fisherman. Once you get the hang of the “feel” for the subtle strikes and “take”-bumps winter fishing offers, -it is amazing what you can do.

A twenty five foot sink tip line has been very handy this winter. For many years now we have bucked cabin fever and employed this technique to gain more time on the water. The fish are there and sound deep to the bottom in lakes, rivers or Ranch ponds. Fishing the very bottom of winter farm ponds locates all the fish.

You get Ants in your pants, and need to get out in the winter. Using a sink line is the perfect excuse. The benefits are greater than you think. As a large bird of prey lifted off Canyon Lake last week with a foot long fish we suddenly realized we owned the whole enchilada. For decades now we have enjoyed the solitude of winter fishing by layering on fleece, Gore-Tex, --and getting out for the Winter Sunshine.

One of our Grandkids-Emery just got her first Striper the other day. Amazing winter action occurs many know very little about. Stripers, (large schools), stratify near baitfish, often pushing them right to the surface. On the right cloudy day you might not even need sink lines to get down to Predator fish. This was one of those days, -gray and misty. Cold, wet, and windy, is not fun! But Stripers on the surface (busting bait),-is loads of fun. You forget the cold wind. Dressed right, it is big adventure. Those Stripers pushed loads of bait to the edge of the lake, corralling them. They were in about ten feet of water when they erupted at the surface, by our daughter’s boat nearby. Almost any lure gets smashed in this circumstance.

With water up and flows enhanced, sink lines have even produced well for White Bass lately. Recently we have been way up rivers where flows are very strong. Areas we usually wade fish are deeper now. It is best to stand on the bank and haul cast sinker lines out under the fast seam edge where unusually early schools of male fish are ganged up anticipating larger female arriving soon to spawn. Without lead eyed Clousers and sink tip lines, the need to bump the bottom for the “Whites” is almost impossible with fast flows. A simple count-down puts you on the bottom.

As we travel up river channels, you see so many things winter has to offer. Higher water tables produce waterfalls and flowing springs. Although the lack of color or leaves on trees makes it gray and dismal, you can spot wildlife better. Birds of prey, Deer, Turkeys and birds are easily seen. Most all wildlife is easy to spot as ground brush is gone after Christmas. The winter sky is a deeper blue. It is a real photo opportunity, sometimes stopping you in your tracks to shoot photos. Thank goodness digital photos are free! -We take hundreds on most every trip.

Remember to be patient if you try sinking line the first time. It is a superb tool-indispensable for deeper stratified fish sought with fly rod and reel. There are tricks to lifting it from the water, which is a chore. If you pull more of it in, then start a back cast -it helps. Lift the lineup also, to free more from the water film. You will figure it out. Books have been
written about it, but rest assured, it works very well. Sink lines have saved the day all winter on rural pond-lakes for sluggish Black Bass.

Charting a ton of Canyon Lake White Bass down twenty feet, a few years ago we marveled at the size and stratified uniformity of that pre-spawn congregation. They were staged to move upriver soon. On the electronics we noticed larger fish around the “Whites”. My son’s sink line brought up a large Black Bass mixed with those deep open-water White Bass. It was one of those great cold windy -Osprey days, when no one was there but us. The large Black Bass fell to our son’s Clouser dredged through deep open water. Just another high five --for sink tip lines!

You eventually learn to believe in sink line! At times, -it works really well!

Opening Day!!
By Ed Bang – Taken from the Tampa Bay Fly Fishers Newsletter

Just last week I read of another trout fisherman’s way of getting ready for the upcoming trout season. Catalogs had been dutifully pored over with pages turned down to mark new fly selections and leader materials. This was the time to decide on new light weight boots or choose to get one more season out of the old ones. Absorbing the descriptions of page upon page of the newest two to five weight space age fiber reinforced fly rods followed and conjured up in the angler’s mind, visions of days yet to be spent in knee deep riffles, surrounded by only the sounds and sights and smells of his beloved trout stream. A lengthy period of weighing the merits of one rod against another and reaching a decision as to whether a half dozen of each of the selected size 16 dries was enough, would then trigger an order. OK, we’re all set for another trout season.

Now, allow me to wind the clock backward, let’s say 50 or 55 years for the benefit of dedicated fly fishermen too young to have experienced much of what follows. The end of deer season, the celebration of Christmas and a week later, the hoopla surrounding the end of yet another year signaled the true beginning of trout season in our home. To those who have read some of my earlier works, “The Birth of a Trout Fisherman”, and “The Birth of a Fly Fisherman”, it’s old news that I did not become a fly fisherman till well after mid life when a heart attack took me out of the work force and started my fly tying and fly fishing life. But, before that, I’d owned fly rods, usually fishing for my small stream brook trout with worms and tiny spinners. Casting was out of the question, as the stream- sheltering canopy of alders and hemlocks allowed nothing more than short little flips to root-laced under cut banks that these stream bred brookies seemed to love. The rod of choice was an inexpensive, nine foot, three section split bamboo medium action fly rod purchased years earlier when I’d first become a trout fisher. On its butt end was mounted a Pflueger Progress single action reel which did nothing more than store the Ashaway level six weight fly line. It was a very basic outfit and one guaranteed to give lots of years of service while needing minimal care. But while the reel and line needed little off season care the rod, subject to all kinds of incidental dings and finish- marring scratches during the season, was yet another matter. Added to this was the fact that these split bamboo rods had a habit of taking a ‘set’ over the course of many trips and to avoid fishing with a badly bent rod, some corrective measures had to be taken. Each of the three, six sided sections of the rod had to be stripped of their guides and multi coats of varnish, taking care to preserve the flat sides of each rod section. Then came the time consuming but never tedious task of scraping (with a piece of broken window glass), each rod part ‘till the original cane lay bare and ready for rewinding (on the opposite side of the piece) the line guides. Navy blue or purple were the colors on most of my wraps. When deemed ready for revarnishing, the rod was reassembled to verify that the ‘set’ had been removed by the reversal of the guides. Each person had their own method for applying varnish smoothly, but my own preference was to use the tip of one finger, dipped not too deeply into the varnish can. The sensitive fingertip could detect the tiniest rough spot on the cane as the finish was applied, and when each section was completed, it was hung by the line guide to dry. It often took eight to ten hours in a dust free room for the first coat to dry completely, and this procedure had to be repeated three or four times till the rod glistened as if it were new. When thoroughly satisfied that we’d done all humanly possible to return the rod to factory newness, it would be placed in its cotton sack, not to handled till maybe the week before the actual beginning of the season. This, then, concluded the most arduous part of the preparations.

Our attention now turned to the terminal end of the tackle. Leaders and hooks, tiny Colorado spinners and a couple of wooden barrels of lead split shot completed this task. But wait!! What’s this about a barrel full of split shot? Here we go with another history lesson.
We're stepping back in history to a time before plastic containers of any kind. See through cellophane wrappers were not durable enough to handle the rigors of constant openings and closings, so the least expensive of alternate packaging came into play. Both hooks and split shot were distributed in small cardboard boxes, and in readily available, small wooden, two part tubes, called ‘barrels’. They were durable, allowing hundreds of openings before failing.

Left to be addressed was the link between fly line and hook, the ‘catgut’ leader which was not from a cat nor was it gut. Whole books have been written on its origin, but the simplest version is that the best of leader materials started out as silk of some kind, and were treated, thinned till quite transparent, and packed in short lengths of different diameters. The worst part of using this material was its tendency to coil like the kid’s toy named “The Slinky”, requiring a period of soaking between the felt pads of the aluminum leader box before it allowed itself to be knotted. That’s just a little different from the ‘redi-made’ seven to twelve foot tapered leaders we use today.

Fly lines of the thirties, forties and fifties, differed greatly from the well engineered lines of today, and they also had to be cared for before they were fishable in the new season. Most of them were level lines with a thin fabric core surrounded by some type of oiled finish. You could encourage them to float only by liberally coating them with something called Muccillex (spelling?) and the line might need another coating before the morning’s fishing was done. In the off season, all this line dressing had to be removed; the line was then checked for nicks and hung in an airy spot to await the beginning of the next season.

For those of my fishing friends and readers old enough to have enjoyed or experienced most of the above, I hope this brings a smile to your face. For all others, I’d wish that it serves as a short history lesson about the sport we treasure so highly.

**Change In Venue**

*By John Berry*

I had a two day guide trip with Keith and Chris. They are from Kansas and come down every year with a bunch of buddies from Kansas City. On the first day, I picked them up early and we drove over to my favorite spot on the White River, Rim Shoals. In the morning, we did well drift fishing on falling water. We caught most of our fish on Y2Ks.

Mid morning Keith hooked one of the golden trout that the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission had acquired from a commercial hatchery in Missouri. Over the past year, several of my clients had landed them but I had never gotten a good photo of one. This was my chance. I rushed to the back of the boat and retrieved my waterproof camera from my vest while Keith kept the net containing the trout in the water, so that the trout did not suffer. I got a great photo and quickly and carefully released the trout.

About eleven in the morning, the water had dropped low enough for us to motor up to the island and get out and wade a bit. I anchored the boat at the top of the island and took a minute to put on my fly fishing vest, my wading staff and connected my big net that I carry on my vest. Once I was properly outfitted, we headed down the island to my most productive area. I put Keith in one good hole and Chris in another.

We started experimenting with flies. Keith hit a really good fish on the Y2K and landed a couple of others that were not as big. I rigged Chris with a red San Juan worm with a brass bead. He was immediately into a good trout. When he landed it, I took a minute to carefully pump its stomach and release it. The only food source I found in it was a small black midge larva.

I walked up stream to Keith and we changed his Y2K over to a small (size eighteen) black zebra midge with silver wire and silver bead. I stayed with the 5X tippet. The water was falling out but was still pretty deep. As I walked away, I happened to turn around and notice a huge bend in Keith's rod. I asked if he thought it was a good fish. He assured me that it was. I walked back up stream to his location to assist in the struggle. The big bow finally surrendered to my net. It was a righteous fat twenty inch rainbow. It was colored up extremely well and took a great photo. We lovingly released it and watched it swim back into the riffle.

Chris had caught a few trout at his location but the action was starting to slow. I moved him to a new location and changed his fly over to a black zebra midge. He fished for a while and landed a trout or two. He said that his feet were
getting cold and he thought that his waders were leaking. It was around one o'clock and we were all getting hungry. As we walked back to the boat, we noticed that the water was coming up. We ate a hearty lunch and returned to the river. We switched over to cerise San Juan worms and finished the day drifting. We boated around thirty five fish with the catch pretty evenly divided between Keith and Chris.

The next day the guys wanted to fish some different water. I picked them up early and we drove over to Bull Shoals State Park with a brief stop along the way for ethanol free gas for my boat. We launched at the ramp below the dam on the Baxter County side and immediately began our drift. They were running the equivalent of two or three generators and the new habitat structures were pretty easy to spot. Despite drifting through a variety of water and trying several different flies, we did not get a bump all morning. We did not observe any other boat land a fish. I was a bit concerned. It was eleven thirty and we had not caught a single trout.

When the going gets tough, the tough get going. We loaded my river boat on the trailer and drove over to the White Hole access. I rigged the guys up with high water San Juan worms (tied on 1/32 ounce jig heads) in cerise and hot fluorescent pink. We began drifting down stream. Keith landed a trout, then Chris landed a trout and then they hooked up a double. I breathed a sigh of relief. We continued drifting and picked up a couple more. Six trout on one drift is pretty good. We continued to fish the area and pounded the trout. We ended the day with well over fifty trout.

It is amazing to me how you can do so poorly in one section of the river (a Catch and Release zone) and then move a few miles down stream and do well. Had it been a timing issue? Had the dam just received too much pressure during the shad kill? All I know is we moved and did much better. Sometimes you just have to give up on the water you are fishing and try something different.

**Keep Informed and Spread The Word**
We need more clubs to join the ranks to help in the conservation and education efforts of the FFF. If you would like to start a club or know of a club that might be interested in affiliating with the FFF please direct them to the Club Information pages below:

Please send an e-mail to [fffoffice@fedflyfishers.org](mailto:fffoffice@fedflyfishers.org) should your club have a fishing / tying event / banquet. We would like to add these events to our web site calendar of events. Provide the date, location, name of your club and a website address that I can link to direct our members for more information. The events calendar is on the following web page [http://www.fedflyfishers.org/Default.aspx?tabid=4513](http://www.fedflyfishers.org/Default.aspx?tabid=4513)

If you have great article that you’d like to share with other clubs please submit it to me.
Barbara Wuebber