MONDAY’S GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

April’s meeting will feature Keven Kleveno’s recent trip to Brazil and his quest for peacock bass. Join us for the fun, seeing Keven get is immunizations to his panic of not having enough flies to the gear they took. View photos of the area, wildlife, and hear Keven’s passion for returning. April 1st!

No foolin’!

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The General Membership Meetings are the first Monday of the month and are held at 6:30PM at the BP Energy Center, 900 East Benson Blvd, Anchorage. Please check the calendar on the website for more information.
BARRA DEL COLORADO FLY TYING PROJECT

If you are reading this article right after it arrived in your Inbox, Damond Blankenship and Rich Johnson are teaching fly tying to a group of 10 locals in a small rural community in the northeast corner of Costa Rica. Nice gig right. Well, we hope so…

Damond has been exploring fly fishing guide options in Costa Rica for the past few years. This January he met a lady in the town of Barra del Colorado who has been looking for opportunities to generate income for a group of locals. Since the community is small, rural, and isolated; with eco-tourism and fishing the only two industries, the conversation turned to fly fishing, fly anglers, and flies for their local fishery.

The river (Rio Colorado) estuary is known for its year-round tarpon and snook fishing, and big ones at that. However, most of the fishing is done with bait and/or plugs. Damond discussed the idea of developing a fly-fishing clientele for her business and how fly tying, specifically patterns geared towards their local waters, could generate a source of income for individuals within their group. She asked if Damond could possibly return and teach fly tying to the group.

Once back home, Damond talked to Rich and they decided to run with the idea, and make it happen. Now the hard part - funding. The goal is to help these people in Barra del Colorado “kick start” a fly fishing/tying business, and neither Damond nor Rich have the disposable income available to just write a check. We have front money to use, but it needs to be paid back. So, we started a Go Fund Me page to raise the funds needed to purchase vises, tools, and materials for the ten locals that are interested in the week-long tying classes.

We rough estimated that it would cost somewhere close to $3000 to fund the project, and thanks to Alaska Fly Fishers, Mike Brown at Mossy’s, and Peak Vises we were able to purchase almost everything we needed at a price that is keeping us in our projected budget. We still may have some expenses bringing everything into Costa Rica (import tax on value over our personal limit), but that’s an unknown.

At this point (March 20th), thanks to some generous friends who made early contributions, we are just over a third of the way to our goal. Now we’re asking for your support. To help our efforts, please click the link below and contribute what you can. It doesn’t have to be a huge amount, anything and everything helps. If half of the current AFF members contributed as little as $20, we’d exceed our goal of $3000 in no time. We’d really appreciate your help with this project.

www.gofundme.com/f/barra-del-colorado-fly-tying-project

A couple of last-minute thoughts:

Damond and Rich are paying for all their own expenses; none of the funds raised will be used by them. The vises, tools, and any extra material from the workshops will be left with the
Barra del Colorado group. Any extra funds raised, beyond the actual expenses of this project, will be used to purchase and send additional tying materials to group.

Don’t miss the fact that this is a good-will project, and having the Alaska Fly Fishers known, and liked, will not be a bad thing for any of us considering a future trip. I’m sure we’ll have photos, stories, and as much fishing information as we can gather. Watch for updates in the future.

PRESIDENTS’ HOOK

As we noted our January article, one of our goals was to get information out to our members. Dan Redfield was the speaker at the March Meeting. I was traveling back from Seattle where I had my right knee replaced. From what I have been told, Dan provided a great presentation. I am sorry that I missed it.

The April Meeting will feature my trip to Brazil to fish for Peacock Bass. I will try to start with getting my Yellow Fever shot to panicking that the 120 Clousers that Mike McCrum, Randy Guintu, and I had tied was not enough. The rods, reels, lines, flies, and leader material we (Michael Lee and I) purchased and used while fishing. Yes, we learned a little about what to use, how to use it, and perhaps what we could have done differently. Our guide took us to oxbow lakes that we were the first to fish last season. The stories we help create, the people we meet, the friends we made, and way we wish to go back. I will include photos of the structures we were fishing and some stories about river dolphins and alligators. I could use the whole article to talk about Brazil and why I am going back.

The May meeting will feature a presentation by Rich Johnson on how to use our small cameras and smart photo cameras to take photos that can be submitted in the October 2019 Photo Contest. Rich and Lance have worked it out between the two of them on who will be running the 2019 Photo Contest and who will be entering photos. Rich has volunteer to oversee the 2019 Photo Contest to be held in October. The October meeting will be at the King Street Brewery. The Board is looking at having either a silent auction or a gear swap along with perhaps having the meeting catered as well. Please stop Charlie or I to give us your opinion on the basic outline for the October Meeting. Also, remember this is a chance to learn how to beat Lance’s submittals in the 2019 Photo Contest.

Currently, we are not planning on a structured meeting at the BP Energy Center during June. Charlie and I, with support from the Board, are recommending that AFF Members take advantage of two great events in June. The first event is the Spey Clave on the upper Kenai River on June 1, 2019. Mark Huber has been the coordinator for the last several years. As we get more information on the Spey Clave, we will get it out to everyone.

Pudge Kleinkauf has asked for AFF support June 8-15th for the visit of Maxine McMillian, the 15-year old World Champion of Fly Casting. She is visiting to do a book signing for Pudge’s new book, The Girl with the Fly Rod. AFF is sponsoring a brunch on Sunday, June 9, 2019 at the Inlet Towers Hotel. We are also working with Pudge to see if we can schedule a demo and brief class on fly casting by Maxine.

See you all on April 1st at 6:30 pm at the BP Energy Building.

Charlie and Keven

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__FISH TALK__ by Bill Hauser

Paddlefish have been around for about 300 million years. They evolved with the dinosaurs and have changed little since that time, but these shark-like plankton-eaters have managed to outlive the dinosaurs.

Paddlefish are commonly found in 22 of our United States. Of these, only five states - Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri, Arkansas and Illinois - allow the fish to be caught commercially. Anglers commonly catch paddlefish by snagging (plankton just does not work as a bait). Paddlefish can grow as large as 200 pounds, making them one of the largest freshwater fish species. They are most commonly found in the Mississippi River Basin in areas that have large bodies of water set aside for irrigation or power generation.

Caviar, made from sturgeon eggs, comes mainly from protected species in the Caspian Sea, in what was once the Soviet Union but paddlefish roe can be processed as counterfeit caviar. Caviar from the prized Beluga sturgeon, which can weigh more than a ton, fetches as much as $50 an ounce. The finest caviar can fetch $100 an ounce when sold to restaurants, gourmet suppliers and luxury travel providers. Illegal trade proceeds total an estimated $125 million a year. Overfishing has made sturgeon scarce and five of the Caspian's six sturgeon species are now endangered, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. These are considered the single most valuable wildlife resource anywhere in the world today. Now, international restrictions on the commercial importation of sturgeon caviar has caused extreme pressure to be placed on the paddlefish populations in the United States because one pound of processed paddlefish eggs can fetch $250 or more.

Here are some facts about this prehistoric fish which really hasn't evolved much since the Jurassic era.

- Paddlefish have a resemblance to sharks not only by shape, but also by their skeletons, as well. Both paddlefish and sharks have skeletons made of cartilage and not bone.
- There are only two living species. One in North America and one in China.
- The North American paddlefish can approach 7 feet in length, but the rare Chinese species may exceed 20 feet in length.
- They have no teeth and eat with their mouths wide open, funneling water and straining out plankton (microscopic plant and animal life).
- They have gray bodies with deeply forked tails and long bladelike snouts that look like spatulas.
- Their flattened snout may make up 36 to 52 % of their total length.
- The underside of a paddlefish's paddle is covered with taste buds that help it find places where plankton is abundant. The paddle is not used to dig.
- They have tiny eyes but no scales.
- They usually are found in water that's deeper than 4 feet. They gather in schools to spawn in the spring when the waters are on the rise. Females release their eggs and fertilized eggs adhere to gravel or sandbars.

- They can live for about 30 years.

*This FISH TALK was derived and edited from articles that have been reported on the world wide web and from Encyclopedia of Fishes, Paxon, J. and W. Eshmeyer, 1995, Academic Press.*

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Do you have a question for FISH TALK? Contact Bill at karelbill@gci.net.

Bill has published Fishes of the Last Frontier, Life Histories, Biology, Ecology, and Management of Alaska Fishes and Letters from Alaska, The Inside to the Outside.

Read sample chapters at www.billhauserbooks.com

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**SPRING FLY FISHING SEMINAR - 2019**

Monday, April 15th, 22nd, 29th from 6:30 to 8:30PM - at the BP Energy Center behind the BP Exploration Bldg on Benson & New Seward Highway and Monday, May 13th 6:30 to 8:30P at 1st Baptist Church (downstairs) at 10th & L Street.

Our Annual Fly Fishing Seminar is filled with facts, fun, and talk of fish. Club members will lead discussions and demonstrations of all the basic information you need as a beginning fly fisher.

**Spread the Word!**

Pick up a flyer with more information at our booth at the Sportsman Show, stop in at one of the local fly fishing shops, or visit our web site at www.akflyfishers.net and follow the links under Programs & Events for flyers and posters for the Seminar.

**April 16th** - Discussion will cover the basic equipment necessary for fly fishing, with hands-on knot tying workshop the last half the evening.

**April 23rd** - This evening is an open session with club members demonstrating fly tying techniques, discussing and showing off effective local fly patterns. We'll also be following up with attendees for knot tying.

**April 30th** - A panel discussion featuring members of the Alaska Flyfishers, ADF&G fisheries biologists, plus shop owned and professional guides. Discussion will be open to attendees and cover questions on fish, fly patterns, and fishing possibilities in south central Alaska.

**May 14th** - We finish up the seminar by demonstrating and teaching basic casting techniques. The evening includes a brief discussion on the mechanics of fly casting by FFF certified master casting instructor Mark Huber, and an outdoor hands-on casting clinic.
Registration will be at the door on the first evening session you attend. Pre-registration is possible at the AFF booth at the Sportsman Show and online at www.akflyfishers.net.

Each fully paid attendee will receive a seminar handbook that follows each session's topic. Door prizes will be drawn for at the end of each evening and on the final session there will be a grand prize drawing for a complete fly-fishing outfit.

Admission is $45 for the General Public, $20 for AFF Members, or $15 per individual session.

*Admission for the General Public will include a year’s membership in the Alaska Fly Fishers.

For more information contact Rich Johnson.

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**FLY TYING CLINIC - MARCH 20th**

Saturday, April 20th, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm at the WJ Hernandez Sport Fish Hatchery on the corner of Post Road and Reeve Blvd. There's coffee, goodies, instruction, materials, tools and plenty of lies - uh - stories to go around.

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**MEMBERS' CORNER**

Did you know financial reports, board meeting notes, upcoming events, and more can be viewed on the website? Find out more about our club at www.akflyfishers.net. Login and explore the tabs. If you’ve not visited the site before, your login is your email and you create your own password.

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Please, if you want to have a strong club, become involved. The more people who participate, the better the club will become. If you have an idea for something you’d like to pitch, contact one of our co-presidents, Rich or Lance. Don't have a lot of time? We can still use your help. Don't be shy, contact our presidents or a board member today!

Not in Anchorage? You can still participate! Contact Lance or Rich or reply to this email to find out how!

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If you have an item to sell, something to share, or even a picture to post, please share it with the club. Contact the editor at aff.flylines.ed@gmail.com
Submissions to the newsletter are due no later than 2 Wednesdays prior to the first Monday of the month. Please type all considerations in a word document, in Arial font, size 12. Photos are to be attached separately in a .jpg file. Email to aff.flylines.ed@gmail.com.

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Content is the sole work of the contributor. Comments concerning grammar, punctuation, and general readability should be sent directly to the author of said content.