

PICAYUNE



"NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTH FLORIDA FLY FISHERS"

APRIL MEETING
MONDAY
APRIL 21st

NORTH FLORIDA FLY FISHERS
MAILING ADDRESS:
P.O. BOX 7044
GAINESVILLE, FL. 32605

MEETINGS HELD:
3RD MONDAY EACH
MONTH AT THE GIRLS
CLUB OF ALACHUA
COUNTY
2101 NW 39TH AVE.
MEETINGS BEGIN AT
7:00PM

2002 CLUB OFFICERS

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WHAT'S HAPPENING

Club members:

Meeting Announcement:

2003 April Meeting Program: Casting Program with Captain David Rodriguez. The weather is mild and it's daylight savings; let's spend some of our meeting time outside and polish up our casting skills. Bring your rod & reel!

COMING UP:

Looking Ahead:

May 2003: "Steinhatchee Reds" with Captain Sam LeNeave

June 2003: "The Diversity of Amelia Island Fly Fishing" with Captain Russell Tharin

Club Outings:

It was a beautiful day to be on the water on April 5th where about 10 club members attended the scheduled outing to Lake Santa Fe. Most members reported catching bluegill. We hope to schedule the next club outing to a saltwater destination. Details will be provided at the club meeting and via email.

SOUTHEASTERN COUNCIL FEDERATION OF FLY FISHERS

2003 CONCLAVE AND FLY FISHING SHOW

MAY 15-17, 2003 GULF SHORES, ALABAMA

GULF STATE PARK RESORT, GULF SHORES, ALABAMA, 36542

Please consider attending the southeastern council conclave and fly fishing show. The show offers great fly tying and fly casting workshops, free casting clinics, vendors selling their wares, expert fly-tying demonstrations, raffles, informative talks and a very entertaining Live Auction. Last but not least, the conclave offers a meeting place for folks from throughout the southeastern U.S. who share the same passion as you do. I attended last year, had a great time and I'm looking forward to attending again in May. Registration forms will be available at the March meeting. You may also download a registration form from the Federation of Fly Fishers Website at:

<http://www.fedflyfishers.org/downloads/03%20registration%20form.pdf>

Please visit the NFFF website at www.nfff.netfirms.com for the latest information on upcoming speakers, events and outings.

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE ALACHUA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE IS SPONSORING:

"BOAT SAFETY DAY"
April 26, 2003, 8-4 pm
Santa Fe Community College

The main purpose of Boat Safety Day is to educate the public. Folks will have the opportunity have their boat inspected. A host of public and private organizations as well as fishing clubs will be there to demonstrate the importance of watercraft safety. Here are just a few organizations that will be attending:

Florida Fish & Wildlife
US Coast Guard
Shands Hospital
Brasingtons
US Customs
Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club
Bass Masters of Gainesville

We've been invited to represent our club as well. Club members interested in promoting safe boating while fishing to the general public should contact the board. If there is enough interest in the club we can register for the show and show off our watercraft. This would be a great opportunity to demonstrate fly fishing and fly tying to our community!

ANNOUNCEMENT

On Saturday May 10th, the 4th annual Kids Outdoor Festival will be held at the Whitehurst Ranch near Williston. This event is sponsored by the Gainesville Chapter of Ducks Unlimited. The festival will feature numerous interactive outdoor sports, educational and conservation activities, under the guidance of skilled instructors from dozens of Gainesville area organizations.

This event is designed to encourage youth appreciation for nature and outdoor activities.

Call John Ebbs at 352-870-0280, to receive a registration form or if you have any questions.

Ducks Unlimited, the world's largest wetland and waterfowl conservation group, is a not-for-profit corporation with over 1,000 members in North Central Florida. In North America the 700,000 Ducks Unlimited members have raised over \$1.6 billion to restore, protect and enhance over 10 million acres of waterfowl habitat.



PUNTA GORDA, BELIZE

At the end of February Eileen and I were eating dinner in The Emory Café in Punta Gorda, Belize, when two men at an adjacent table asked us about the fly fishing. A few stories later I discovered that they were from the Interlachen/Melrose area and that one of them, John Antunovich, had in fact been a member of the NFFF. (John sends his regards to the members of the NFFF. He still reads the Picayune.) We then started telling Dana Griffin fish stories, I'm sure enhancing the legend of Dana Griffin.

John built the Blue Moon Lodge for divers and fisherman on a caye off Placencia, Belize. His lodge was completely wiped out in the 2001 hurricane that came ashore near Placencia. Even the trees were gone.

One of the most rewarding parts of any trip is meeting interesting people.. John and Mike Mulloy are certainly interesting. They had taken the car ferry from Tampa to the Yucatan. Then they took the bus from there to Placencia and another bus on to Punta Gorda. They admitted to doing nothing in Punta Gorda and not starting before noon. I did get the impression that they are scouting out ports for a planned four month sailboat cruise from Florida to Belize with extended stops in Cuba and Mexico. I asked Mike if he had a problem with seasickness during storms at sea. He assured me that seasickness was not a problem as he was always too scared to become seasick.



Eileen and I were spending a few days in Punta Gorda, on a relatively spartan (for us) journey, so that I could get in four days of permit fishing. There are more than 100 keys, most with permit flats, within a 15 to 20 minute boat ride from Punta Gorda. In previous years I have fished these flats from Placencia, but the 35 mile boat ride is no fun, especially into the prevailing wind on the return trip. In prior years it was unusual to see another boat on the flats, but El Pescador has just opened a fishing lodge in Punta Gorda, and they are adding nine boats to the flats. Although there are bonefish in the adjacent channels, there are no bonefish on these flats. I am told that the water is too brackish. For bonefish it is necessary to go out to the great barrier reef, the second longest barrier reef in the world. The reef is about a 90 minute boat ride from Punta Gorda. San Pedro on Ambergris Caye, is located about 400 yards from the reef, and there are lots of bonefish flats nearby. Punta Gorda is located in the Toledo district of southern Belize. While development began in San Pedro more than 20 years ago, development is just now beginning in Punta Gorda.

The Emory Café is the best restaurant in Punta Gorda. A fresh fish dinner with beer costs less than ten dollars. For wine connoisseurs, the Café's wine list consists of a blackberry type wine, whose berries come from a tree in the middle of the patio. This wine has yet to be discussed in the Wine Spectator. Unfortunately, management does not always feel like opening; on those days one can eat at Grace's, about 200 yards up the street. Grace's does not have a wine list. Both restaurants attract many interesting people.

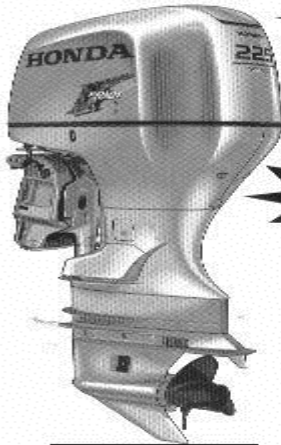
A permit in shallow water frustrates me more than any other fish I have caught on a fly. There are lots of permit in the crystal clear water of the flats near Punta Gorda. On a good day I had a permit look at my fly about every 30 minutes. At those times an incredibly large number of things can happen that prevented me from landing a permit. I am sure you have had similar problems so I will not go into detail. Two years ago Bill Allen hooked a large permit and after fighting the fish for about 15 minutes the stainless steel hook broke. I suggested that if he returned the fly to Orvis they would replace it. It is often difficult to be sufficiently consoling. The first three days, two with perfect fishing conditions, ten boats per day, there was one permit caught. At such times it helps to remember that the "journey is the reward."

If one wants to go fishing in the tropics, Belize is a nice country to visit. Fishing, diving, nature, and Mayan ruins are the main interests. The Belizeans are friendly and honest people. Accommodations exist for every pocket book. From Belize we visited the ancient Mayan city of Tikal, Guatemala, a short plane ride from Belize City.

AUTHOR "JACK SMITH"

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