

# On The Fly



E-glades exotics and West meets East friendship. P12++



Docklight success for Andy Constantinou (top) and Mangrove blow ups for Walt Ruda. P18

## Take the Hog Roast Survey. P6

# On The Fly

May 2016 Volume 26, Issue 5



Ray Cianci fishes the famous San Juan River. P17



South Skyway Outing. Here fishy, fishy. P11

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## *President George Haseltine...*



*"I witnessed an amazing thing on the Everglades trip."*

Never underestimate the value of your presence in another person's life; and theirs in yours.

I announced at one of our outings that the members of Suncoast Fly Fishers enrich my life. There was an immediate call for hip boots because they said it was getting pretty deep. But, it is true: our lives are enriched by the time spent with friends and what better setting than on the water with a fly rod.

I witnessed an amazing thing on the Everglades trip. Besides the fact that hundreds upon hundreds of fish were caught, I saw men's and women's attitudes change as we enjoyed a fish fry at noon on Saturday. I heard people say "I'm here to fish, not eat." I'm not going to get off the water for a fish fry." "I'm not cooking." "I'm not going to be there." And so on.

Ken Hofmeister had arranged the fish fry and introduced me to Randy from the Cocoa club the night before. Randy volunteered to cook for all of us. All we had to do was supply and clean our own fish.

Well, I got the cole slaw, beans, watermelon, plates and utensils and had them there around 11:30 that morning. Then the boats started showing up. Lots of boats. There was a flurry of activity as lunch was prepared. You could tell that the other club had done this many times and they were good at it.

To make a long story short, a good time was had by all. We broke bread (well, fish) together and talked for over an hour. Ken had the foresight to see this happening even when there were so many "nay-sayers." In his wisdom, he knew that this time together would enrich our lives and that it did. Thank you Ken Hofmeister and thank you Suncoast Fly Fishers for enriching my life.

See you at the next General Meeting and Outing.

*George*



*Hey Truk, well done. FYI, the BOD has asked Truk to be the new outings chair.*

# Suncoast Fly Fishers News 'n' Notes

## Thursday, May 19 meeting

- Our fly tier and presenter is Allen Wyatt of the Andy Thornal Fly Fishing Shop in Winter Haven. His focus is fly fishing for Florida bass and bream.
- Sign up to help Youth Fly Fishing Camp this summer. See Tom Gadacz.
- Club rods are ready for practice before the meeting.

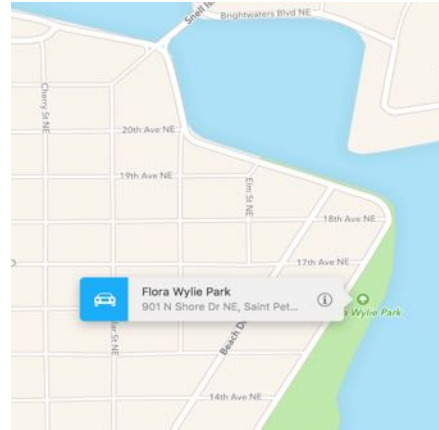
## Saturday, May 21 St. Petersburg Urban Outing. Targeted species: ladyfish

- Downtown St. Petersburg Urban Outing.
- Lunch at noon at Flora Wylie Park on North Shore Drive.
- Bring a chair to sit in at lunch.

## Thursday, June 16 meeting

Our speaker is Gina Russo of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Center in St. Petersburg.

- Her topic is "Catch and Release Techniques: Fishing for Conservation"
- Alan Sewell will tie his snook fly which has been successful at catching linesiders on docklights..



Flora Wylie Park, North Shore Drive, St. Pete

## Saturday, June 18 Docklight Outing

### Our club keeps growing

On May 1 Suncoast Fly Fishers of St. Petersburg had 133 members including 20 family members and five honorary members.

### Volunteers Needed, Youth Fishing Camp.

#### E. G. Simmons Park, Ruskin

Saturday, June 16, 12:30 – 3 pm

Saturday, July 12, 12:30 - 3 pm

We are participating in the E. G. Simmons Youth Fishing Camp this year. This is a great event where we instruct youths to fly cast. We have all the equipment but need volunteers to help with the sessions. Please contact Tom Gadacz: [thomasgadacz@yahoo.com](mailto:thomasgadacz@yahoo.com) or call [706-726-7899](tel:706-726-7899). Also sign up at the May 19 meeting. E. G. Simmons Park, 2401 19<sup>th</sup> Ave N W, Ruskin, FL 33570, [813-967-5988](tel:813-967-5988) [813-671-7655](tel:813-671-7655)

### Fly Shop Manager Needed at St. Pete Fishing Outfitters

- Flexible hours
- Full time or at least 3 days per week
- Knowledgeable about fly fishing and fly fishing equipment
- Prefer fly tying experience
- Local area fly fishing expertise

Call 727-317-4949. Ask for Daniel

### Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing

- John Craig reports vets recently fished using flies they tied and everybody caught fish.
- Craig reports that the fly rod building program led by Alan Sewell is going well.

# Suncoast Fly Fishers News 'n' Notes

## Club Outings Locations for 2016

May--Downtown St. Petersburg Urban Outing

June--Night Light snook outing

July--Picnic Island, Tampa

August--Lake Maggorie, St. Petersburg

September--Chassahowitzka River

October--Hillsborough River, Carl Hanson  
tournament against the Tampa Bay Fly Fishing  
Club (SFF is host.)

November--Weedon Island Preserve

December--Don Coleman Classic at Fort DeSoto Park with other fly fishing clubs in our area



*Get ready. June outing is our docklight outing.*

## Antique fly rod for sale? Anybody?

Good afternoon Mr. Haseltine,

I have a bamboo fly fishing rod circa 1950 my father brought back from Japan. It is in a wooden box with flies and has never been used. It still has the tag.

Ebisu brand split bamboo, fly and casting combination.

Fly: 3 piece with extra tip, 8'

Casting: 2 piece 5' 4"

Reversible butt

Test lb Fly: 10lbs

Test lbs casting: 15lbs

Saotsune Fishing Tackle Mfg Co., Ltd, Tokyo Japan

I am in the market to sell it but have no idea of its value. Is there anyone in your group who would be able to take a look at it and give me an idea what it is worth, if anything? My dad wasn't a fisherman. I have no idea why he bought it so it doesn't hold any sentimental value and it seems silly for it to be sitting on a closet shelf.

I live in Sun City Center

Pat Laskowski

813-963-2324

*Got used fly gear that you no longer use? Offer it for sale here. Email Bill AuCoin at [wmaucoin@verizon.net](mailto:wmaucoin@verizon.net)*

## Kelly Sobczak: Do It Yourself E-glades Canal Fishing

They've lived in and fished Colorado and Alaska. Now Florida residents, Kelly and Wes Sobczak, with fly rods and a 14-foot skiff, are fly fishing the Sunshine State with a passion. One expedition was a February do-it-yourselfer to catch exotics in Miami-Dade's drainage canals. Kelly Sobczak was our April speaker and slide-by-slide she showed us how it's done. You'll research it on FWC website pages. You'll tie and gather up lots of flies. You'll fish for Mayan cichlids, oscars and butterfly peacock bass and much more. Plus, if you've got an extra morning, then do what Kelly and Wes did -- catch bonefish in Biscayne Bay. Bring your 8-weight and floating line, lots of flies, and a spirit of adventure. You can do it. Thank you Kelly Sobczak!



*Kelly Sobczak tied baby peacock bass flies. "Call it what you want," she said. There was one for every member of the club. One key to success, Sobczak said, was to research ramps and other info on the MYFWC website.*



*At the April meeting Kelly Sobczak delivered a thorough tutorial on fishing C100 and E4 drainage canals around Miami-Dade. She also talked about how she and husband caught bonefish on their own in Biscayne Bay.*

## Question of the Month for Suncoast Fly Fishers

**Florida is blessed with lots of good fly-fishing water, salt and fresh.  
Where do you prefer to fish, in fresh or salt water? Why?**

Andy Constantinou: *Saltwater. I live by the sea.*

Joe Dail: *Salt, because it accommodates my lack of accuracy.*

Norm Sande: *I prefer salt water for the variety of fish available to be caught.*

Rick Yarn: *Salt water. I like to wade.*

Bob Morrison: *Fish both fresh and salt water.*

Ron Kelley: *Salt water. I like the variety of fish. When in Florida, wading the flats.*

Dayle Mazzarella: *I love a mountain stream with cool air, cool water, and a breeze through the trees. But I fish whenever I can!! And I love it all.*

# Take the Hog Roast Survey.

## SFF Survey on 2016 Hog Roast and Silent Auction

**Suncoast Fly Fisher: Please do not sign your name. Bring the completed surveys to the April or May membership meeting or mail it to: Suncoast Fly Fishers P.O. Box 40821, St. Petersburg, FL 33743-0821**

Please circle your evaluation of the categories below. Please enter any additional comments at the bottom of this sheet or on the reverse side.

Overall Event	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Length of Event	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Location	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Appearance of the Room	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Recorded Music	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Program					
Glen Pla	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Year in Review	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Quality of Food					
Pulled Pork	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Ribs	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Chicken	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Smoked Wings	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
BBQ Beans	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Cole Slaw	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Garlic Bread	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Beverages	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
SFF Logo Cake	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Chocolate Pudding	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Member Only Door Prize					
Alan Sewell 9-10W Rod, Reel, Case and Tube	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Grand Raffle Prize					
Pescador 10 Kayak WiPaddle and Vest	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Live Auction					
NuCanoe Frontier 12	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Silent Auction					
Silent Auction Items	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Guided Fishing Trips	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Castling Lessons	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Member Tied Files	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Bucket Raffles	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Awards Ceremony					
Vision and Values Award	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Fishing Awards	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor

**COMMENTS & SUGGESTIONS:**

# ***We are Suncoast Fly Fishers***



## ***Aims and***

### ***Purposes***

*Suncoast Fly Fishers (SFF) is a non-profit 501(C) 3 organization and a charter member of the International Federation of Fly fishers.*

*Suncoast Fly Fishers are dedicated to sharing their total fly-fishing experiences and to developing interest in fly fishing in both fresh and salt water. We promote and teach both fly fishing and related subjects of fly-tying, rod building, fly-casting and knot tying. Through collaboration, fellowship, conservation and sportsmanship we help members become more skilled, have more fun, and be more productive in the sport. SFF supports the conservation of natural resources, boating safety and fishing regulations.*

#### **Suncoast Fly Fishers**

P. O. Box 40821  
St Petersburg, FL 33743-0821  
[www.suncoastflyfishers.org](http://www.suncoastflyfishers.org)

Club email address...

[pres\\_vp@suncoastflyfishers.com](mailto:pres_vp@suncoastflyfishers.com)

#### **Club Officers**

Pres: George Haseltine  
Vice Pres: Rick Warfel  
Secretary: Dick Miekka  
Treasurer: Karen Warfel

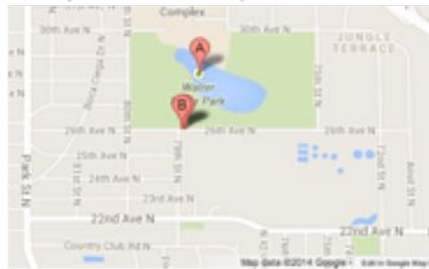
#### **Board of Directors**

John Craig - Tom Gadacz - Jeff Heer -  
Bob Burkard - Bruce Evensen - Rick  
Yarn and Tom Trukenbrod

#### **Committees**

*Volunteers needed. Please speak to any officer or director at the meeting*  
Casting Skills -- Pat Damico, MCI, and Dayle Mazzarella, MCI  
IFFF Liaison -- Pat Damico  
Fly Tying -- Myron Hansen  
Membership -- Karen Warfel  
Webmaster -- Dick Miekka  
Hog Roast - -Karen and Rick Warfel  
Club Outings and Lunches - Tom Trukenbrod  
Project Healing Waters -- John Craig, Terry Kirkpatrick  
Raffles -- Dave Barson  
Programs -- Board of Directors  
Newsletter, publicity -- Bill AuCoin

**Monthly Meetings are the third Thursday of each month except December from 6:00 to 8:30 pm, Walter Fuller Park Recreation Center, 7981 26th Ave N., St. Pete**



#### ***Directions to our meeting at Walter***

***Fuller Park...***From 22nd Avenue N turn North on 72nd St. N. Turn left (South) on 26th Avenue N. Then turn right into the recreation center parking lot

<http://suncoastflyfishers.com/meetings.html>

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. SFF is a non-profit, 501(C) 3 organization. SFF is a charter member of the [International Federation of Fly Fishers \(IFFF\)](#). SFF is a member of the [Florida Council of IFFF](#).

**By U.S. mail:** Suncoast Fly Fishers, P.O. Box 40821, St Petersburg, FL 33743-0821

**Join. Renew. Application at [www.suncoastflyfishers.com](http://www.suncoastflyfishers.com)**



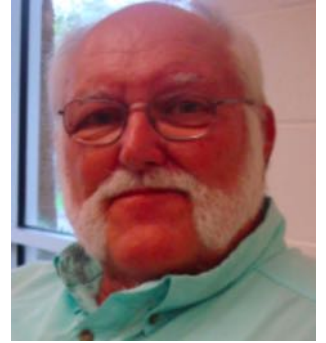
George Haseltine, co-chair

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## Suncoast Fly Fishers Outing Reviews and Previews and Annual Tournament Update

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*The SFF Outing Committee is co-chaired  
by George Haseltine and Capt. Dan  
Bumgarner with help from Truk  
Trukenbrod and John Craig*



Dan Bumgarner, co-chair

### **REVIEW ... South SunshineSkyway Rest Area**

Dan Bumgarner reports...

On our last outing at the South Skyway I275 rest area the designated species to catch was trout and none were caught. Rick Warfel did catch a flounder and that was pretty much it. It pains me to say it but all the good fishermen must have gone south on the Glades trip. On the positive side we did have over 100 percent participation;18 signed up and 20 showed up.

### **REVIEW ... Everglades Canal Exotics Do Not Disappoint**

*President George Haseltine reports...*

Python run over by a trucker (ask Mark Hays), alligator steals a trophy sized bass, (they got pictures!), no love bugs, sunny, clear days, cichlids, oscars, brim and bass by the hundreds(yes hundreds), a well-attended canal side fish fry, kayaks, canoes, Gheenoe's, and boats (Oh My!), "No Public Access" signs at all the boat ramps, (Cleared up by a FWC Officer who said it meant access to the Everglades Proper and not the canals, Whew!), great accommodations, good fellowship with each other (and another club)and lie swapping at its finest. What more could you ask for? Less than 364 days until the next one. Plan on it. See you there. Never lose your sense of adventure.

*Tom Trukenbrod sent in this report...*

Our club's annual Everglades Canal fly fishing trip April 22-24 was the outing for actually *catching* fish. More than 20 members of Suncoast Fly Fishers invaded the Everglades Canals to bring back tales of catching many bream, Mayan cichlids, oscars, bass, and gators. Actually a few members got a head start on the 19th. There is even photographic evidence shown elsewhere in this newsletter. (No photo shopping has been used).

From Tuesday to Sunday the waters of the canals along Alligator Alley and Route 27 were covered with watercraft of all kinds. The true adventurers were the kayakers led by Bruce Evensen. With aggressive gator's around, was that really the best decision? But, they were not gator bait and they all had a great time catching fish. There was no mention of a fly that did not catch fish; spiders, beetles, Clousers, wooly buggers and others were all productive.

As happens every year the numbers put forth of the total catch continues to grow in leaps and cast nets. The highest number heard was from a Cocoa club member--250 fish in one day. 30-plus per hour? Could that be real? That said, there were many reports of from 80 to more than 100 fish per person caught on Friday and again on Saturday. This year as usual was a great experience for all.

*Reviews and Previews continues on the next page...*



## PREVIEW...Urban Outing, Downtown St. Petersburg

Dan Bumgarner reports...

### Watch out ladyfish...

Our next outing is our urban outing and will take place on Saturday May 21 at Flora Wylie Park in downtown St Pete. Our designated fish will be the ladyfish so we should log some catches on this one. Of course we will not limit our efforts to ladyfish alone. The area offers very good opportunities for trout, snook, reds, mangrove snapper, sheepshead and there's even a possible crack at some tarpon.

The flats right in front of the park and just outside of Coffee Pot Bayou will provide good fishing for trout and ladyfish as the flat should be holding ample bait by then. If you are out on the eastern edge of the flat keep an eye out for LARGE sting rays coming up on to the flat. They are often followed by some nice cobia.

The marked channel out of Coffee Pot Bayou and the deep dredge holes along the western edge of the flat give travel ways for reds and snook and holding structure for numbers of silver trout.

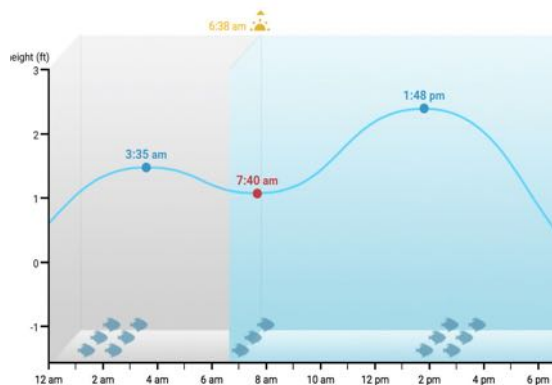
The docks, seawalls and mangroves in Coffee Pot are great habitat for snook and reds. If the storm drains are flowing the snook will often stack up in this area. Snook, mangrove snapper and a host of other critters inhabit the rocky jetties and shorelines around the yacht basin and the airport.

On the flats my first choice for flies would be minnow imitations and second would be various shrimp flies. Bendbacks and lightly weighted Clousers and deceivers should work well.

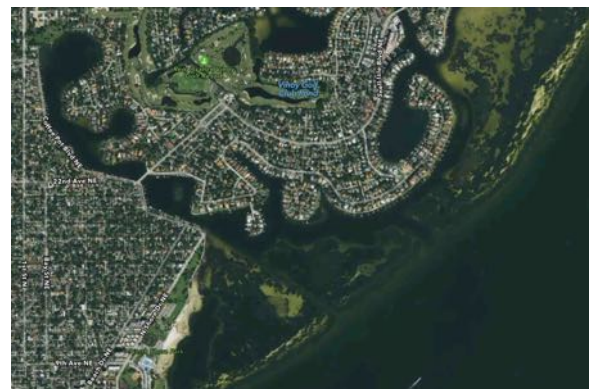
If you are there early and it is calm enough you could have a blast throwing top water poppers. Around the rocks, docks and jetties I would recommend dark weighted flies that imitate shrimp, crabs and mud minnows. An intermediate or sink tip line would also be helpful here.

Dan

### Urban Outing Tides



We'll have a falling tide at daybreak then, starting at 7:40 am, we'll have an incoming tide at the urban outing. Chart courtesy of [Tides4fishing.com](http://Tides4fishing.com)



Satellite image of North Shore Park (including Flora Wylie Park) and the surrounding waters including Coffee Pot Bayou, Brightwaters/Shell Isle flats and part of the Bayshore flats, top right.

### **Rick Yarn tells how he caught that redfish at last year's Urban Outing...and how Jeff Kopelman lost a bigger one**



I caught the redfish on a chartreuse and white Clouser, of course. I was wading just a few steps in from the seawall.

A funny story about catching that fish... When I got out of the car early that morning with all of my gear, I noticed that my net was still sitting on the car floor as I locked the door. I thought, "It's not worth the trouble. Just leave it. You never catch anything or anything big anyway."

Of course, when I hooked that fish, I realized I needed a net. I was fishing about 40 yards from Jeff Kopelman, and I yelled for him to bring me his net. As he got close, I noticed a swirl behind my fish, and pointed for Jeff to cast his fly in that direction. He hooked a much larger redfish. We had a "double" going. However, we soon realized that he had hooked my line instead, or so we

thought. I had my fish in, and Jeff's fly was still wrapped in a line that was attached to this large redfish.

Jeff fought that fish for a good while but the hook finally pulled from its mouth, and he lost the fish. As we continued fishing that morning and working our way up the seawall, we met two guys spin fishing who had two nice reds already in their cooler. One of them told us about a huge redfish that broke his line about an hour earlier. He couldn't believe it when Jeff described his broken line, hook, and redfish (almost) that he caught. Strange things happen when you're fishing. Jeff and I really wished he had landed that fish. We joked it would have been a fun one for our rules committee. Does it count if you land one by catching a loose line hooked to a fish rather than actually hooking the fish directly?

Moral of the story: Leave your net in the car, and you will certainly catch a big fish.

*Rick*

***It's a new year.***

**2016 TOURNAMENT LEADERS**

<b>Species</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>Leader to date</b>	<b>Outing caught</b>
Longest bass -	24-inches	Bruce Carlton	Walsingham Lake (March)
Longest sunfish			
Longest sea trout	16-inches	Ron Kelley/Mark Craig	Fort DeSoto Park (February)
Longest redfish			
Longest snook			
Longest ladyfish			

*Note: All fish entered in the yearly contest must be caught at a club outing and inside the defined zone. The new 2016 tournament started with the January outing at Pinellas Point/Bay Vista Park and continues until the final outing of 2016 at Fort DeSoto Park.*

## April's South Skyway Outing



*Duane Mertz plans his plan of action. Kevin Kelly photo*

Fishing was great but catching was slow at the South Skyway Outing in April. The fishing photography was great, also, thanks in large part to Kevin Kelly and his smart phone.

How slow was the catching? A couple of members reported they thought they felt little fish tap their flies; puffers maybe.



*Tom Gadacz armored-up against UV rays and he won that battle.*

Or perhaps pinfish?

Well, actually, some success was documented. Rick Warfel caught a flounder. Tom Jones caught some too-small seatrout but he wouldn't say where he caught them.

Sandwiches and chips and other goodies were great and eagerly consumed. Dan Bumgarner and Dave Barson set and cleared the tables.

And even though the catching was slow, the 10 or so wade fishers said they liked the easy access to the shoreline on either side of the South Skyway Rest

Area and they agreed we should return.



*With help from winds from the north, Ted Rich got some long casts toward the south. But the fish didn't care either way.*



*Clousers, gurglers, bendbacks, crabs, shrimp, deceivers, and more. They all took a swimming lesson but fish were not impressed.*

## Everglades Canal Outing: Kind of a Big Deal

*St. Pete and Cocoa Fly Clubs Meet for Fishin', Eatin' and Fun*

### PURSUIT OF A PASSION--TOGETHER

*By Ken Hofmeister*

Over a cup of coffee in April of last year, an idea was hatched. We were at a Ft. Lauderdale motel breakfast area, heading out for a day of fly fishing the Everglades. Why not get fishers from two clubs (Cocoa and St. Petersburg) together for a fish fry since we were fishing much of the same waters?

The idea was floated by a couple of boards and we tried herding a few cats. Fly fishers are a fiercely independent lot. We offered a few options and publicized the event. What a joy to see more than thirty fly fishers sitting around tables at a rest area in the Glades, boats anchored, devouring fried fish, hush puppies, and everything from watermelon to cake. "You catch 'em, you clean 'em, and we'll cook 'em." Bass, Bluegill, Mayan Cichlids, and Oscars were being cleaned at boat ramp, fried at the table. Randy Cleveland (Florida Fly Fishing Association) and helpers had those cookers going! George Haseltine (Suncoast Fly Fishers) brought drinks, slaw, beans, and watermelon. Even better was to feel, see, and hear the bond that held this diverse group together. They were passionate about this sport. From plumbers to physicians, kids to retirees, these people talked with enthusiasm about a common passion--fly fishing.



We swapped stories about the ones that got away. (I took the prize with a true story of a 9 ft. gator taking a large bass off my line-- pictures to authenticate). Actually, I wanted to land that gator on my 6 weight rod; but, my fishing partners wimped out and refused to help remove the bass and the fly. So, I practiced catch and release!

We talked of flies tied, rods built, conservation projects initiated, pollution concerns, and where fishing was best. We helped some in the area start a new Gold Coast Fly Fishing Club. Kids were given flies to try and told how to use them. Newcomers were coached and encouraged. Laughter echoed across the canal. Everyone learned something from someone.

We were alive! We were engaged in a passion-driven community.

*Ken*

*More Everglades Canal Outing Pictures on following pages...*



*This gator grabbed Ken Hofmeister's bass before he could get it into the boat. Al Pitcher's camera froze the action.*



*Ray Smith photo*



*Tom Trukenbrod hooks up with something exotic*



*Peacock bass Notch your fly rod with that one, Bill Scarola.*



*Ken Hofmeister (left) and Al Pitcher, above, enjoyed the fighting power of oscar.*



*Never enough oscars. Ray Smith shows off one.*



*Hilton Bruch with one of his peacock bass. He and Bob Burkard caught several.*



*Bob Burkard and one of his peacock bass.*



*Bruce Evensen with an oscar.*

# Everglades Canal Outing Photos



*Awaiting lunch, St. Pete and Cocoa fly club guys chat it up*



*Filleting all those fresh fish*



*Lunch is served*



*When lunch was served, suddenly, everything got very quiet*



*Tony Piazza, fishing with Kirk Burton, scored a double on a tandem rig.*



*Mike Besel with his first fly-rod bass*



*Alan Sewell and one of many oscar's that he caught.*



*Mayan cichlid. Then along came a spider.*

## Exotics in the Everglades

By Annie Hays



*Annie Hays and her dad, Mark*

Whenever the Suncoast Fly Fishers make their annual pilgrimage to Ft. Lauderdale for a weekend of late-April fishing, there are two things that they can count on: 90 degree weather and catching lots of small bluegill. However, when my dad and I made the trip two weeks later in early May we had cool

weather and caught many large Oscars.

I was a bit apprehensive to visit the sunbaked canals in south Florida this year as Dad insisted we go during the last cold front of the year. While I was looking forward to not burning my feet on the boat deck, the cold front had brought a typhoon strength storm across the state. Because low water-levels are essential to fishing the canals as this forces the fish to huddle closer to the middle of the canals away from the weeds, I was worried the fishing would be sub-par. I have a lot of fond memories of shirking my final exam studies to pull in one hundred fish a day for a whole weekend, and I didn't want to tarnish that legacy of trips.

It turns out the deluge was not an issue, and this early-May trip was one of the best Everglades trips I have ever taken. On the first day I stuck to top-water flies while Dad insisted on trying sinking flies. My white spider followed by a brown

popper kept pace with his white muddlers all day. Normally top-water flies are the only way to go in those canals, but the fish wanted something different this year.



*Oscars tend to sink to the bottom and fight like large boulders.*

Besides the unique success of Dad's sinking flies, another huge change in the fishing was the fish themselves. Oscars were once considered incredibly rare, and it was a huge deal to catch one or two per trip. Mayan cichlids weren't quite as rare, but bluegill and large-mouth bass were always the dominant species. However, the warm winter this year did not kill the exotic fish, and the roles were reversed. Dad and I not only caught oscars and cichlids at about a ratio of 10 to one native fish, but the oscars and cichlids were enormous. The largest oscars we encountered were two pounds, and Dad only caught one or two large bass that hit three pounds.



*Only a few large bass caught on this trip, but that made catching them all the most rewarding.*

## Continued...Annie Hays: Exotics in the Everglades

For the second day of fishing I decided to try Dad's sinking fly experiment. We decided I should try a fly originally designed for brown trout, a cone-head muddler. This one fly that was already rusty and chewed with age caught at least 50 fish. Besides catching all of the aforementioned species, it also landed stump-knocker and warmouth bass.

Dad decided to try an experiment of his own by tying on first an orange cinderfly, then a yellow version. Both caught large oscar and they attracted some spotted-gar. As a side note, it is fascinating how much the gar look like small alligators. For anyone who has never caught one of these fish, they have the exact same mouth structure as a baby alligator.

### ***Fishing Alan Sewell's worm flies***

I'm not sure how to feel about using the worm flies that Alan Sewell gave us. Both times I used one, it caught plenty of fish. However, these flies are made out of the weakest rubber ever created, and after half an hour they are toast. If you don't mind going through a large box of them in one trip then they work just fine, but don't expect to bring any of these flies home from the canals.

### ***I did enjoy constantly guessing whether I had hooked a massive oscar or a rock***

On the final morning, Dad attempted to fish with some large sinking flies, but they fell far short of my simple white gurgler. It seems that there is no advantage to casting magnum flies at these fish other than a sore arm. One constant of the three days of fishing was that no matter what, there was always a school of fish lurking around every rocky shore. The lily pads were always a gamble, but even if the fish had no cover they always congregate around the rocks of the canals. Maybe a biologist will explain this phenomenon one day, but I was too busy pulling in fish to give the situation much thought.

While this year's trip to the Everglades yielded almost entirely exotic fish as opposed to the coveted bass, I did enjoy constantly guessing whether I had hooked a massive oscar or a rock. I also learned that stiff, tropical weather fly line is a kinky mess.

However, fishing with Richard Oldenski's beautiful fly rod that was given to me by his wife Jill made the trip all the more special.

*(RIP. Suncoast Fly Fisher Richard Oldenski MD died Dec. 12, 2015. Editor)*



*Mark Hays and a gar. It is rare to catch spotted gar on flies, and it is even rarer to get one in the boat without getting a finger bitten off.*



*Mayan cichlids are by far the most exciting fish to fight in the canals as they fight like crazy fish. Even if you choose to dress like the "Invisible Man" don't forget the sunblock on a trip to south Florida.*





## Ray Cianci: Fishing the San Juan River

Ray fished the famous river in May 2015

After visiting my son in Denver last

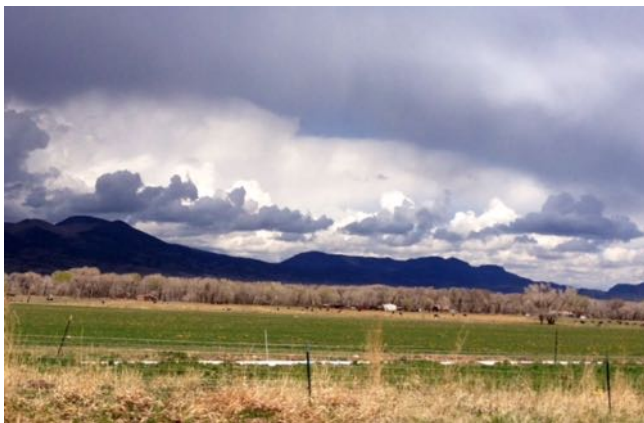
year, my wife and I drove south to the small town of Navajo Dam to fish the famed San Juan River. The drive down there took a full



day but the scenery was spectacular. The town itself is perfect, three or four fly shops, some cheap motels, and nothing else. Within a 10 minute drive from our motel was the river with easy wading access.



The first day I had a float trip with a guide named Bubba. His picture hung in one of the local fly shops holding a trout that looked like it must have weighed 30 pounds. We caught a bunch of really nice fish on small midge patterns, but no 30 pound hogs, and not once did he ever mention or use the famous San Juan Worm. It was stinking cold that day and raining but a day I thoroughly enjoyed. Bubba enjoyed talking and I learned a lot from him, which I put to good use the next morning when I waded the river by myself. The weather that morning was milder. Bubba had given me some secret guide flies which proved productive on big browns and rainbows. The fish in the photo is one I caught wading the second day. It was a great trip.



My wife Anna Ruth was a trooper, and put up with two days in Navajo Dam by exploring the local Indian culture and having a good book to read. After Navajo Dam, we drove through beautiful country to Taos, NM and spent a couple days exploring the local Indian culture and arts scene before heading back to Denver.

*Ray*

## Andy Constantinou: Docklight Snook in Apollo Beach



From Andy on April 27: "Nice -5-6 lb snook taken on shminnow fly at Apollo Beach dock lights last night."

*Hey, Andy, delicious, right?*

*Andy*

## Walt Ruda: Snook. Snook. And Snook.



I entered a 2 month long online Slam Tournament in hopes to get myself out there and fish more. The reds have been a battle for me lately but the snook are off the chart. This snook hit a gurgler in a back cove of mangroves along with a few more. The explosion sound of a snook hitting back there is priceless. Then on another day I set out early morning for a red but I cannot resist throwing that gurgler up against the mangroves ( love the topwater bite ). It was still dark when the first snook hit and I lost it but managed three more in the few hours I was out. If you want snook, this is the year for them for sure. I also have seen many monster snook in my travels along the mangroves. Go up on your leader size and get after them!

*Walt*

## Fly Fishing 101 at Bill Jackson's Shop for Adventure

*Sponsored by Suncoast Fly Fishers*

*By George Haseltine, President, Suncoast Fly Fishers*

Once again the IFFF and Dayle Mazzearella came through with two exciting, informative, "user friendly" Fly Fishing 101 classes at Bill Jackson's on April 16 and May 7.

Dayle was exceptionally well prepared. We started right on time and stopped right on time; evidence of his skill and experience in the teaching profession.

Barbara Mazzearella made everyone feel welcomed the minute they walked in the door, handled the paperwork and background support so necessary for a successful meeting. Thank you, Dayle and Barbara, for your willingness to share with us. What a great experience!

Our "after meeting" debriefings were a combination of his explaining his approach to enlisting new ideas. Those of us who were there to assist thoroughly enjoyed this time. We learned some valuable lessons about teaching fly casting: "Ask permission and then lay your hand over the student's hand for guidance, never take the rod out of their hand, don't dwell on a point too long", and more. It was great.

Thank you, Mike Sfakianos, fishing manager at Bill Jackson's, for enlisting people as they shopped for adventure, providing the space for us to use and then offering a discount and specials to our attendees. We had 22 sign up. Nine showed up at the April class.

The wind was not very cooperative both days. Nonetheless, Dayle had our attendees unrolling yarn lines from the short practice "rods" directly into the wind. How about that? These students were really excited about it.

Rick & Karen Warfel, Hugo Schmidt, and Bruce Evensen assisted at the April Class with Brian Clark, Hilton Bruch and Andy Constantinou assisting at the May Class. Tom Gadacz, Bob Morrison, and George Haseltine were at both classes to help Dayle and Barbara in any way they could. Each person was given a chance to introduce ourselves and describe our fly fishing experiences. We were given a packet containing SFF business-size information cards, membership applications, Dayle's business cards and other information. I forgot to ask permission to list the students' names so, SFF members, please introduce yourselves to any one new who shows up at our general meetings or outings.

The enthusiasm in the room and outdoors was truly inspiring. It was awesome to watch as the new interest they came in with turned to the discovery of a new "way of life." Dayle captured their interest from the start. Everyone paid close attention and asked some very good questions. They were even taking notes. He covered a brief history of fly fishing, basic knots, fly lines, rods, and reels and how to use a "noodle" to practice casting. Dayle also provided a list of references for further study. He even had old pictures of women in full length dresses standing at stream's edge casting. Dayle said from the start that he was not going to teach them how to cast, but simply give them enough class room instruction and hands on experience to help them unravel the "mystery" of fly fishing. And that he did.

*George*



*How's that feel? Dayle Mazzearella pulls like a big fish.*



## Capt. Pat Damico: Fly Casting Clinic. Tip #78

### Fishing Tandem Flies



*By Capt. Pat Damico, IFFF Master Casting Instructor*

Are there times when more than one fly is a good idea. Charles Meck's book, "Fishing Tandem Flies," explains in detail how and why to do it. There are many fresh water applications and also good reasons to use it in saltwater. One of my favorites for both is to combine a surface fly, popper, or large dry, with a smaller fly trailing near the floater. Next time you use a popper, tie a one foot length of tippet material to the popper's bend with an improved clinch knot. Select an unweighted baitfish imitation with a loop knot to the straight eye hook. Bendbacks work very well for saltwater, terrestrials for fresh. How many times have you had a large fish follow the popper and turn away? The popper's commotion gets him to the area and the trailer will close the deal. Cast as you would a weighted fly by opening the loop a little to prevent tangles. Worse case scenario is to have two large fish on at one time! Which do you land first? A fun problem that I hope you experience soon.

*Pat Damico, St. Pete Beach*

*Fly fishing guide Pat Damico charts in lower Tampa Bay. Contact: [captpat.com](http://captpat.com) (727) 504-8649*

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## Captain's Corner: via Tampa Bay Times

### Fly Fishing in the Wind

By Pat Damico, Tampa Bay Times Correspondent

Wind lately has been the most detrimental part of our weather. Some members of our fly fishing clubs have been using spin tackle because they felt it was too windy for fly rods. Inexperienced fly fishermen might be better off leaving the long rods for better wind conditions. You occasionally will see someone fly fishing in the wind who seems not bothered in less-than-ideal conditions. If you plan a distant trip, days without wind might be scarce, so learning to deal with wind is important. Keep your loops very tight, meaning the fly rod leg and the fly leg will not only be parallel but will be very close together. Cast very close to the water, holding the fly rod horizontal instead of vertical. Keep your rod, fly line and fly on the downwind side of you in a crosswind. Using a longer rod keeps everything away from you. Use smaller flies that are lightly dressed. Shorten your leader and make it heavier and stiffer than usual. Avoid open-water fishing, find areas where there is protection from islands, trees, buildings and bridges

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## Bob Morrison: Fly Fishing How-To

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### Flies and Fly Rods: Snap-Crackle-and-Pop

**Roll with the wind.** Dayle Mazzarella was right when he recently recommended the roll cast for use on windy days, especially when the wind is at your back. Since it is difficult to back-cast into the wind eliminating the back cast all together makes a lot of sense. Try it.

**The pause that refreshes.** I recently learned that making a short pause at the end of a back cast not only allows the line and leader to straighten out properly, but that the pause offers another benefit as well. If you don't pause, but start your forward cast early, you may snap off the fly because of the excessive acceleration at the end of the leader as it comes around the turn. This phenomenon is hard to understand, but believe me, it works, and I have the snapped off flies to prove it.

**How fish break fly rods.** When landing a fish don't let the angle between the rod and the line exceed 90 degrees, or the rod tip may be broken from a sudden surge by a strong fish. Better to keep that angle under 90 degrees at all times during the fish landing until the very last when you may approach it to get the fish into your net or into your hand.

**Try to look natural.** On loop knots don't let the length of the loop exceed the length of the fly, or the fly may become tangled in the loop spoiling the fly's action and ruining the cast. Keep that loop short, just long enough to let the fly ride free and look natural in the water.

*Go Get 'Em and Good Luck!*

*Bob*

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### More "Tips" from your fellow club members

Al Pitcher has a tip about how to make your fish look larger in the picture. Place it next to an action figure.



Bob Burkard has a face-saving tip about fishing a Clouser fly.

*The most effective way to fish Clouser flies (especially those with heavier eyes) is to swing the fly about wildly with long back casts until it lands in a tree or a bush, then pretend that you are fighting a fish for the benefit of onlookers.*

Need some fly tying materials? Shoot a wild turkey. That's what Pat Damico did while waiting for creek flies to hatch in Pennsylvania. A win-win day.



## Bill AuCoin : Flyfisher Flyover



**This is a good thing, right?.** Now, northwest Florida anglers from Pasco to Escambia Counties can keep only one redfish, not two. Declining stocks are the reason. Other red drum rules remain the same including no more than eight reds per vessel. No worries, I don't intend to put eight anglers in my boat. ([MYFWC](#))

**I'm going.** The word is that they've sold all the exhibit space for fly fishing companies at July's International Fly Tackle Dealer Show (IFTD) in Orlando in July. I went to

IFTA a couple of years ago. The fly tackle exhibits are in a special area in the same room as non-fly tackle firms exhibiting in ICAST the annual dealers-only show by the American Sportfishing Association. ([AFFTA](#), [ASA](#))

*Spring has settled over the Florida Keys. It's hot and sticky and still. You know how it gets.* That's the grab-you-by-the-shoulders lead-in to an article about Andy Mill and his tournament-winning passion for catching tarpon on the fly. Do you remember the Olympian skier named Andy Mill? Yeah, one and the same. ([Angler's Journal](#))

**And it's free.** You can read some of the same writers and fishing articles that appear in *Angler's Journal* by signing up to read "The Run" online ([The Run](#))

**Our Pat Damico was there.** Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing held a spring trout outing for veterans on a stream near Keeseville, Pennsylvania. Check out the ATV wheelchair they gave to Vietnam vet Mike Brojakowski. ([WNEP](#))

**Did somebody say "bargain?"** Want some unique fly tying materials at a low cost? I think I'm going to load up on *Frawg Eyes*, *Croc Eyes*, and *Fisch Eyes*. Eyes make the biggest difference, don't they? Thanks for the link, Smitty. ([Mad Scientist's Fly Tyers Dungeon](#))

**Nice camera work, too.** Al Pitcher pointed me toward this short video link. Flip Pallot, Consultant to the Outdoors, catches redfish in the Indian River and uses the opportunity to explain the essence of our club in sharing our experiences with others. ([Midcurrent](#))

**Smitty writes, "Try this in your free time.** Some people get a lot of satisfaction in catching a fish on a fly. Some, with talents that far exceed mine, get huge satisfaction making their own fly reels and, in this case, creating their own fly tying vise. Check out this piece of work. Don't you wish we had cold winters so we had more time for these projects? Answer: NO. ([globalflyfisher](#)).

**Abel Reels seeking "Able Women"**-- If you are a female fly fisher, you might want to check this out. Abel Reels is funding the *Able Women* campaign and the leaders want to know how fly fishing has positively shaped your life. Check this out. ([Abel Reels](#))

**News from one of our club's Special Friends.** Onos, one of our fly club's long-standing special friends, has introduced a new sunglass model for fishing – Pyramid – named after California's Pyramid Lake. Check 'em out. I own several Onos models, all with built-in bifocals for tying better knots while fishing. ([Onos.com/pyramid](#))

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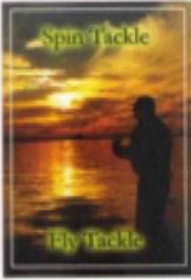
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