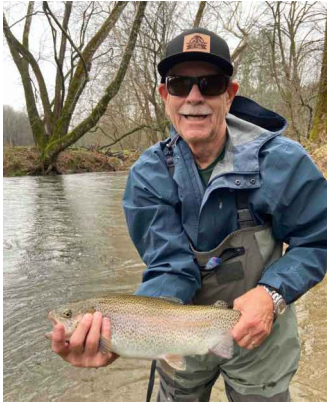


# On The Fly

*Newsletter of the Suncoast Fly Fishers of St. Petersburg*

**April and May club meetings and outings have been canceled but you and your fellow members are on the water, observing proper social distancing, and catching fish!**

*Rainbow Trout 12*



*Go or no go to Cuba 14-15*



*Pond snook 11, 17*



*Upper Bay mackerel 13*



*Weedon snook 19*



*Middle Bay redfish 17*



*Picnic Island 19*



*Pass-a-Grille Beach 17*



*Bartow Bream 'n' Bass 17*





## *SFF Outgoing President's Letter*

Hello Everyone,

This will be my last message to you as the now Ex-President of the Suncoast Fly Fishers.

I have had the fortunate opportunity to work with some of the finest people on the planet. And, believe me, you can look forward to the leadership of your new president, Rick Warfel.

The good news for me is that I will get to continue to serve on the Board of Directors. I do believe that the new Board will work to make the next few years even better. I must say, it has been a glorious 4 years and I thank you for every minute of it.

I am grateful for your cooperation, enthusiasm and involvement as we planned, scheduled and carried out a lot of exciting outings, meals, meetings and even a Christmas Party.

The thing I am most grateful for is your friendliness. You showed our guests that they are welcome. How do I know? Because many came back and joined; some even their first night!

I encourage you all to stay involved. Volunteer for some of the many opportunities that will be presented to you in the future.

Please continue to promote the fine art of Fly Fishing, Tying, and all of the other aspects that we have available.

There are many more adventures that await those of you who would take advantage of them. Adventures not only in location, water type, and fly selection, but also in fellowship with others who are of like mind and love fly fishing as much as you do.

Farewell from here for now and remember;

*Never lose your sense of adventure.*

*George*

George Haseltine  
SFF President 2016-20

## President Rick Warfel: SFF Adjusts to Coronavirus



*President Rick Warfel*

The SFF Board of Directors met on a conference call April 2 and most of the discussion had to do with how our club can best deal with Stay-at-Home orders and Stay-Safe precautions during this coronavirus period.

### **New officers and board members are seated**

Members typically vote on the new slate of officers and board members at the March meeting. But since we didn't have a March meeting, the board voted to go ahead and immediately seat the officers and board members recommended by the nominating committee. It was essentially a formality since nominations were closed at the February meeting and all of the candidates were unopposed. Rick Warfel will serve as president and Quin Berry will be your vice president. Tom Gadacz remains treasurer. David Redd is secretary. James Davis has joined

the board. Outgoing president George Haseltine will sit on the board for a year as past president. Bob Burkard, Cliff Nigh, Karen Warfel, Ryan Sollars, Bruce Evensen, and Bill Scarola will make up the balance of the board.

### **Cancellations, postponements**

The club will not have any functions during the months of April and May. The board will continue to meet by voice or video conference. The annual Everglades Canal outing has been canceled.

The Hog Roast has been postponed until the fall and we will decide later exactly what form it will take. The Hog Roast is one of our main social events and our primary fund raising event. Until we get this back on track, we will tighten our belts a little bit as a club. For now, there will be no new guided trips. We will continue to raffle off *Tail Magazine* subscriptions once meetings resume.

Going forward we will get the club back to business as usual as soon as possible but there is a possibility that we will need to extend the suspension of club activities for an additional period of time. We will keep you posted.

We can't wait to bring back everything that we do and get SFF back to being better than ever!

*Stay safe,  
Rick*

## Tom Gadacz: Coronavirus Considerations for SFF Members



*Tom Gadacz MD*

1. Please **do not attend** any meetings or other gatherings:

A. If you have traveled internationally to countries considered high risk by the CDC. Currently, those countries are China, Iran, South Korea, Italy, and Japan. There may also be community clusters developing in the US that warrant avoidance of meetings as well.

B. If you are coughing, sneezing, or have a fever.

As of April 1 meetings are banned and a stay at home policy is in force.

2. If you find yourself coughing or sneezing, please cough into a tissue or your arm. Dispose of tissues carefully.

3. Wash your hands with soap thoroughly for 20 seconds during the day and especially after using the restroom and before eating. Video of proper handwashing:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3PmVJQUcm4E>

If there is no place to wash your hands consider using a hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol.

4. Hand wipes are most effective in destroying the virus on surfaces such as your cell phone and grocery cart handles.

5. Avoid personal contact and use elbows and virtual hugs rather than handshakes. Keep a distance of at least 6 feet from others. Covering your nose and mouth areas with a scarf or cloth is being recommended when it is necessary to be out in public.

6. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

7. Seek medical attention if you have a fever or develop any respiratory (breathing) symptoms

*Tom*



## Meetings, Outings, and More

*Some may still be going, but it's no longer a club event*

### EVERGLADES OUTING

- April 22 – April 26
- 

*Canceled*

### THURSDAY, MAY 21 MEETING, WALTER FULLER PARK

- TIE-A-THON and free pizza. Bring your vise and materials. Bill Scarola will coordinate.
- 

*Canceled*

### SATURDAY, MAY 23, OUTING

- Sunshine Skyway Bridge with picnic lunch at the USCGC Blackthorn Memorial, North Skyway Rest Area.
- 

*TBD*

### THURSDAY, JUNE 18 MEETING, WALTER FULLER PARK

- Docklight fishing panel (TBA) -- tutorial with questions and answers
- 

*TBD*

### DOCKLIGHT OUTING

### FRIDAY-SATURDAY-SUNDAY, JUNE 19-20-21 Friday - Saturday-Sunday, OUTING

- Fish docks or beaches from Friday night through noon on Sunday.
- 

### TIE-FLY MONDAYS WITH BRUCE EVENSEN

*Canceled until further notice*

- On most Mondays, starting at 6 pm, Bruce guides club members and other fly fishers through all the steps it takes to tie different flies. On the second Monday of each month Bruce teaches his Fly of the Month for the next outing.
  - Bruce's Fly-Tying Studio is 531 80th Avenue N. St. Petersburg.
- 



## Notes & News

### **A note from Woody Miller who manages our Facebook site**

Members are encouraged to go to their Facebook account and visit the club's Facebook page. I have posted items of interest such as videos, fly tying patterns, and stories that might be of interest to not only members but also might get those who want to fly fish or who are fly fishers but don't know anybody else who does.

*Woody*

### **Scott Russell manages our club's **Mayfly Project** participation**

I wanted to let you know that we have had to postpone our **Mayfly Project** until things normalize. That said, we plan to get things rescheduled ASAP once they do. St. Pete's Foster care youth are going to be matched with members of the Suncoast Fly Fishers who will help them learn fly casting, fly tying, and catching fish on the fly. If you are interested in being a mentor and/or learning about other opportunities to get involved in the St. Petersburg project, contact Scott Russell at 727-403-8165 or at [russellti@me.com](mailto:russellti@me.com)

*Scott*

### **New club website on the way**

Dennis Marquis updated the board on a meeting Dennis and Rick Warfel had with Craig Smothers. The website is complete and all pages are complete. However, further enhancements are needed as far as detail and some functionality.

### ***New date TBD***

#### **SFF members invited to take a tour of a USF marine research vessel**

Our tour will begin with a 20-30-minute overview of the research being conducted by the College of Marine Science followed by the tour. The research being conducted by the school is quite impressive and should be of interest to our members. If you want to attend please contact Cliff Nigh at [cliff.nigh@gmail.com](mailto:cliff.nigh@gmail.com) so he can inform you of the new date.

### ***So far, so good***

#### **Zups Resort, July 14-19**

Want to catch 100 smallmouth bass per day? Yep, that's Zups Resort on Ontario's Lac La Croix. Bill Scarola reports that the club member trip to Zups is still on as of now. Mike Simmons is the go-to guy. Bill is going, too, tentatively, but waiting to sync his schedule with visiting relatives. He'll bring fliers to the next meeting.

---

### **What flies are you tying?**

With the stay at home order, we're guessing that many of you are spending more time at the tying bench. What have you been tying? What is your favorite fly to tie, fresh or salt? What's your fly tying tip to fellow members to save time or whatever? Email me (with or without photos). Bill AuCoin, editor

[wmaucoin@verizon.net](mailto:wmaucoin@verizon.net)

# We are Suncoast Fly Fishers of St. Petersburg

## Aims and Purposes

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

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

## Monthly Meetings. Guests welcome.

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

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

## Monthly Outings

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

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

## Visit our website and Facebook pages, too

[SuncoastFlyFishers.com](http://SuncoastFlyFishers.com)

Facebook.com

(sign in from your personal account)

## Club and FFI Membership combined

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

###

## Suncoast Fly Fishers

P. O. Box 40821

St Petersburg, FL 33743

[www.suncoastflyfishers.org](http://www.suncoastflyfishers.org)

## Club Officers

Pres: Rick Warfel

Vice Pres: Quin Berry

Secretary: David Redd

Treasurer: Tom Gadacz

## Board of Directors

Bill Scarola, Bob Burkard, Bruce

Evensen, Ryan Sollars, Cliff Nigh, Karen

Warfel, George Haseltine, James Davis

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

Casting: Pat Damico, Dayle Mazzarella

FFI Liaison: Pat Damico

Conservation: Cliff Nigh

Fly Tying: Myron Hansen

Membership: Tom Gadacz

New Members: Rick Warfel

Webmaster: Dennis Marquis

Facebook: Woody Miller

Hog Roast: Open

Outings: Bob Burkard, David Redd, Bill

AuCoin

Outreach, shows: David Redd, Bob

Burkard, Bill Scarola, Tom Gadacz

Raffles: Dave Barson

Succession Plan: Rick Warfel

Programs: Board of Directors

Publicity: Bill AuCoin

## On The Fly

Bill AuCoin, editor; Duane Mertz, Anne

Hays, Bob Hood, Tim Elms, Marshall

Craig

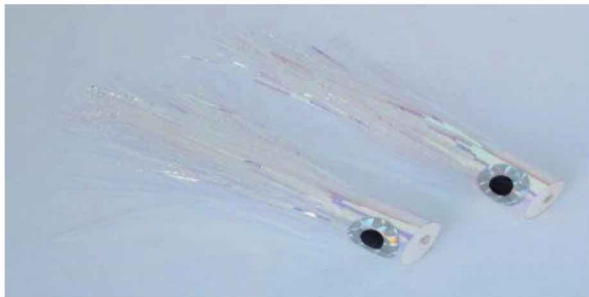


Lavne (Smitty) Smith

## Smitty's Fly Box : Jumping Jack Flash

From the **April 2018 issue** of *On The Fly*

### Tying Bench – Smitty's Jumping Jack Flash



#### Materials:

Hook: Mustad CK74SNP-SS Saltwater Popper Hook size 2 to 2/0

Thread: Danville Flatwaxed Nylon, white

Head: Foam cylinder (cut to size - 1/4" to 1/2")

Tail: DNA Hologofusion white or similar

Flash: Flashabou Pearl Skirt: Flashabou Fringe 4" opal

Eyes: Flat Holographic silver (matched to cylinder size)

Cement: Favorite CA Cement (Zap-a-Gap, Loctite or Super Glue)

Coating: Solarez UV Resin

NOTE: This fly can be tied as a tube fly as well. Just use your favorite tubing material and saltwater hook.

#### Tying Sequence:

1. Prep fly head by drilling hole through the center, then marking hook shank with a couple thread wraps where end of head sets. \* If you are making this a tube fly, after drilling hole, insert tube into hole to extend about 1/4" past head. (See notes at end before starting step 2 and 3.)
2. Back-wrap thread toward hook bend slightly and then tie in a bunch of Hologofusion to length you desire for tail and then fold remaining Hologofusion back, tie down and trim to match. It should extend about 1" or more past fringe. (See photos for reference) This entire process should be done to smoothly encompass hook shank and end up with folded end at thread mark from step 1. (That would place tail flush with back of head)
3. Repeat step 2 with 8 to 10 strands of Flashabou Pearl.
4. Cover front of hook shank with CA Cement. Slide head onto hook shank to abut tail material and have only the hook eye protruding. Allow to set. **is**
5. Measure and cut Flashabou Fringe to fit around head of fly with a slight overwrap. Cement in place with CA Cement.
6. Place appropriate size eyes on either sides of head.
7. Coat head front and sides with UV Resin and cure with UV Light.

\* If you are making tube flies, attach tail materials from steps 2 and 3 to tube extending from back of fly head.



## Bruce Evensen: Mylar Mullet



*Bruce Evensen*

*This is the fly that Bruce was going to teach at the March 16 session but it was canceled because of the corona virus. Thanks to Bill Scarola for tying this fly and providing us with the photo and instructions.*



### **Materials**

Hook- 3407 size# 1 or 2, and or stinger same sizes.

Tail- shown - white bucktail, but you can use any colors you wish.

Flash- Flashabou pearl or other colors

Head- palmered Chenille, medium length, pearl and various colors\

Eyes- holographic stick on eyes, medium or 5mm.

Glue- super glue and epoxy

Thread- Flat waxed in white or mono thread

### **Tying sequence**

1-Wrap hook from eye to bend

2- Add a clump of bucktail about 2/3rds down shaft. 2x hook shank length

3-Attach some flash to bucktail

4- Cut about 3" of your palmered chenille and tie in behind hook eye.

5- Palmer chenille back to just cover the start of the bucktail and flash. Be sure to allow chenille to flow backward to form a tapered head. You can apply some super glue before palmering to hold it securely in place,

6- Attach eyes to head. Be sure to keep them above the shank.

7- If desired you can UV epoxy the front wrap of chenille.

Note: mixing colors of pattern can complement your chartreuse and white Clousers, deceivers, and other patterns.

## Tom Gadacz: How to make your own hand sanitizer



Tom Gadacz, MD

The Purell brand is the most popular commercial sanitizer.

Recipes differ slightly (for example, some recommend adding a scented oil while others keep that step optional). But there is general agreement that if you want to create your own hand sanitizer, you need to be aware of a few things:

To be effective, hand sanitizer needs to have a strength of at least 60 percent isopropyl alcohol. Since you're going to have to mix your sanitizer with aloe vera gel in order to stabilize it and protect your hands, most suggest that the mixture contain at least two-thirds 99 percent isopropyl (rubbing) alcohol and one-third gel.

- 2/3-cup rubbing alcohol (99% isopropyl alcohol)
- 1/3-cup aloe vera gel
- Stir
- Decant into a clean soap or pump bottle

The sanitizer is only effective if you cover your hands thoroughly and then let it dry. Squirting a few drops into your palms and then wiping your hands isn't going to help at all.

If your hands are heavily soiled or greasy, then, according to the CDC, a hand sanitizer isn't going to do much.

Given a choice, though, the best thing you can do is to wash your hands and keep them away from your face.

### **Oh, and about your phone?**

There hasn't been a lot of information (or concern) out there about spreading infection via your mobile devices, so don't sweat it. However, since your phone is, according to the CDC a "high-touch surface" you can use alcohol wipes to clean it off if you have any concerns that it was shared with someone who was possibly exposed to the virus.

*Tom*

## Tim Elms: Snook a day Keeps the C’Rona Away



*A big pond snook for Tim*

Howdy! I hope you and your loved ones are safe and home during these strange times. If you are a fly fisherman like me, social distancing is basically a way of life. There is no better way to stay away from others, enjoy our beautiful waters, and completely clear your head.

Of course, I have been exploring the ponds around me, and now that I am working strictly from home, I try to go almost every day. What’s my strategy? What flies? What time of day?

Yes, yes, and yes. I know fishing is usually better in the morning at sunrise or evenings at dusk, and for the most part that has been true for me, but I have found that my favorite fish to catch (snook) are pretty eager to eat any time of day (or night) in a pond. The hard part is finding them. The only way to find them day in and day out, or maybe a couple days later, is to put in the time.

Focusing on man-made structure is always a good start. Sea walls, culverts, conduit running out to a fountain or aerator, snook really rely on structure. When moving water is not really an option they really cruise around a lot. Watch for nervous water. Busting small baits. And even watch for bigger bass to suddenly move out of the way for a larger predator moving in on hunting spot.

My bass techniques are staying true to top water in low light and minnows when the sun is high. I catch bass any time of day with this strategy.



*Kermit the Frog catches bass*



*Tilapia is a nice change of pace*

Panfish! Heck yes. I sought out to tackle the elusive Blue Tilapia one-week last month. I see them on beds and they spook quite fast. But I found a game plan that works very well for me. I use a small bonefish pattern and cast past the bed. This will usually spook the male on the bed, but just drag the fly over the bed and let it drop in the middle of crater. The male Tilapia will return at some point to clean his bed for the ladies. When he picks it up to spit it out, just do a hearty strip set. Some fight like a giant oscar and some are lazy. Just be careful with the weeds as tilapia are much bigger and heavier than you think.

I have tried and tried for my tarpon in a pond since I jumped one last month, but alas nothing in my hands yet. My time is coming.

*Strip.Strip.Strip!—*

*Tim*



## Cliff Nigh: St. Pete Fishing Outfitters Trip to Blue Ridge



*Cliff Nigh*

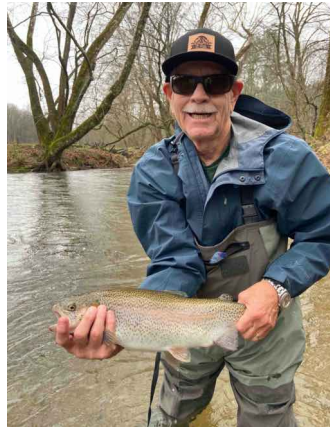
St. Pete Fishing Outfitters (SPFO) hosted their first trip in appreciation to those who have supported their Fly Shop and Fly Tying Classes. Thankfully, the trip was made before this whole COVID-19 mess hit the fan and ran from March 14 through 18. Twelve anglers, including several Suncoast Fly Fishers, traveled to Blue Ridge, Georgia to ply the Toccoa River watershed and nearby public waters.



*Linda Nigh and a fat Blue Ridge rainbow. The guides from Cohutta Fishing Company helped give everybody a memorable experience.*



*Karen Warfel's trophy*



*Rick Warfel is mighty pleased*

Our "cabin" was a 5600- square-foot lodge on the banks of the Toccoa that lacked absolutely nothing. The trip included a full day of guided fishing on Cohutta Fishing Company's private waters restricted to four anglers over a two-mile stretch of water. Cohutta Fishing Company is a Blue Ridge outfitter that worked with SPFO in providing a memorable experience for the group and did an awesome job in doing so. Daily meals were nothing short of gourmet fare provided and prepared by the

hosts. Believe it....no one went hungry.



*Another rainbow memory for Bill Scarola.*

Club members making the trip were Rick and Karen Warfel, Bill Scarola, James Davis, Rob Howell, Lori Henderson, and Cliff and Linda Nigh. Cliff and SPFO Store Manager Daniel Kroegel were the trip's hosts.

Better than our accommodations and superb dining, were our fishing results. Everyone caught fish and everyone either bettered their best cold water trout or came close enough to it that it wasn't worth arguing about. For some, it was the first rainbow trout they ever netted.



*Score one for Lori Henderson*

The only problem encountered with this year's trip is the challenge of trying to "top it" next year.

## Bill Scarola: More about those Blue Ridge, Georgia Rainbows



Thanks to Cliff Nigh for arranging all this. I got these trout on the guided trip on the "Tick" river on Cohutta Outfitters' private stream near Blue Ridge, Georgia.

The biggest is 21-inches, 3 to 4 lbs. Three were 20-inches And I also caught a 16-incher and an 18-ncher. All rainbows. I hooked 11 and netted six. Two of the lost fish were Giants!! 26-inches-plus.

Loads of fun!!

Flies that caught fish were the 'Y2K' yellow Orange, and an Orange Squirmy Wormy onn size 10 scud hooks!

*Bill*

## Andy Constantinou: Big! Spanish Mackerel in Upper Bay



Ken Moser and I had a very enjoyable day out with Captain Nick Angelo fishing Upper Tampa Bay.

*Andy*

## Gary Sundberg: Golf anyone?



I'm down to fishing golf course ponds! Positive side: plenty of room for the back-cast. And bass, too.



*Be Safe, Gary*



## Mark Hays: Social Distance Snook Fishing



Mark Hays

I never thought I would say this, but damn I miss you guys! No meetings, no Hog Roast, and worse of all, no outings. This is serious!

Last weekend, Annie, Robert, and I practiced social distancing by going kayaking at Clam Bayou. Robert and I had not put our paddles down to cast when Annie hollered that she had caught a snook. No, she was not fly fishing, but snook are almost as fun on spinning tackle.

Not to be out done, Robert caught a barracuda on his fly rod. He hooked it on small Clouser minnow.

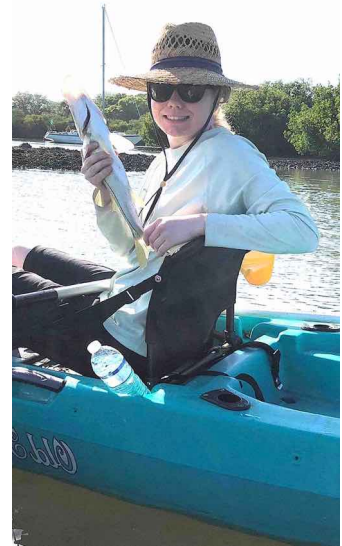


Robert Mitchell, Clam Bayou 'Cuda

I also brought my spin tackle, and I also brought in a barracuda and a snook. When we paddled back into the bayou, Annie caught a redfish in the same spot as her snook.

I could get used to all this social distancing if it means I get to fish during the week. However, let's not forget each other even if we can't meet as a group.

Mark



Anne Hays, Clam Bayou snook

## Robert Fischer: Bonefish in Cuba

I had a nice bone fishing trip to Cayo Largo in Cuba in March aboard the Avalon mothership. Members of our group caught tarpon, snook, and permit but bonefish was my focus. The average bonefish for the trip was four to five pounds.



Here's a big one that was caught in three inches of water with my 7-weight Orvis rod. His back was out of the water when I cast to him and he went 200 yards into the backing. We caught the next to last flight out of Cuba when we returned on March 21.

*(Be sure to read Robert's article on the next page about the Tampa Club members' fishing trip to Cuba in late March, virus be damned.)*

Robert

## Robert Fischer: Fly Fishing in the Time of Corona

*With apologies to Gabriel Garcia Marquez for the title*



Six of us had planned a trip to Cuba several months ago but when the coronavirus started intensifying we had some doubts as to whether we should go. So, on Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>, (a great omen also) we met at the Tampa airport with packed bags and internal conflict. Should we reschedule? Can we? Is the flight still available? How bad is the virus in Cuba? Well, what if we were to get trapped down there?

While talking about this, Wes walked up and put his bag on the ticket counter. OK, decision made for better or worse. We all checked in. The direct flight from Tampa to Havana was packed, but nobody was coughing so things seemed ok.

There was no in-flight service for drinks or snacks due to CDC requirements, but that's OK since it was only an hour.

Havana airport has two terminals. An old, crowded, rough conditioned one for the poor people, and a nice new modern one for the international travelers. They sent us to the old one. Of course, they sent us to the old one and of course one of Walt's bags got lost. (How do you lose a bag on a direct flight?) We waited around in the old terminal for 3 hours trying to locate the bag. No luck, so we took the cab to the Capri hotel in downtown Havana. It is a very nice hotel and the people could not have been nicer or more helpful. They assured us that the bag would be delivered to the hotel that afternoon or the next morning. A restaurant one block away was recommended for lunch and we dined on excellent Cuban food, beer, wine and dessert. Later that afternoon we took a tour of Havana in classic old American cars that were used as taxis everywhere. We've heard that a taxi driver can make more in one day than a doctor can make in a month. There is some free enterprise in Cuba, but not much.

The next morning Walt heard that his bag was at the airport. Not wanting to miss our bus at 11:00 am, he took a \$30 cab to the airport. The bag wasn't there. It was sent to the hotel. Back to the hotel for another \$30 and then Walt had his bag finally. We loaded up on the very modern Chinese bus, picked up four more fly fishermen at another hotel and headed to the port city three hours away. The main highway out of Havana was surprisingly well maintained, six lanes of concrete with landscaping medians, decent signage and minimal traffic. Hitchhikers waved dollar bills at the bus looking for a ride but we didn't stop to pick up any. It narrowed down to four lanes later but was still in good shape. After turning off the main road toward our port town we travelled through typical Caribbean island back country; small farms, big government farms, horse carts, old bicycles and motorcycles, unpainted houses, small resorts and roadside restaurants.

The cutoff to our boat was down a dirt road that we almost missed, but the host had a GPS and there was a car waiting at the road to guide us. This all seemed a bit sketchy because the road was barely wide enough for the bus to get by. But a couple of hundred yards later we were at a small shipyard and there was our beautiful mothership waiting. We unloaded, tipped the bus driver, and settled in our comfortable cabins. Lunch was served as we motored to our first stop about 3 hours away. Life was good

*In part 2 we'll talk about the fishing, the food, and the head on boat crash.*

# Dennis Marquis: Tierra Verde - Weedon Island - Skyway



It seems that spring has certainly sprung, the afternoons are hot and the water is warm enough to wet wade (which by the way I haven't done yet). I'm still using my waders. The month started off with promise as my wife and I, who frequent Fort DeSoto (2-3x/week), saw snook cruising the beach each time we went (we enjoy the beach just north of the fort/fishing pier/snack stand). I was just getting around to start fishing the beaches and then Covid-19 hit. There goes the spring beach fishing, at least for a while.

Using my boat, I have caught most of what I would typically catch as the season comes into full swing. Trout numbers and size are up (*IF* we were able to keep trout, we would easily be making the limit with plenty of 17-19"), Spanish mackerel are back (kept one for the grill recently) and so are the bluefish. Of course ladyfish seem to always be around, still landing some biguns (up close to 25"). I've never broken the 25" mark on a ladyfish. Have you? I have landed snook and reds (not big), even one great barracuda (30"). We had a pompano on and lost it.



Tim Elms with a Tierra Verde redfish

If you like fishing trout, as you go under the Tierra Verde bridge going east, look for the first red marker #22, turn to your port and look for a PVC pipe sticking up. When the water column gets to be about 3' start fishing. The trout have been hanging in this area, with several first cast hookups.

One area of disappointment for me is the lack of snook around the dock-lights where I live in Tierra Verde. Have you had docklight luck? They disappeared some time ago and have not returned. I made one docklight trip with a friend about a month ago and we did not see a snook all night. It was hard to believe.

Not to make it sound like I'm always catching fish, Bill AuCoin and I did a recent wade trip around Weedon for about 4 hours - ZIPPO! While we each had fish chase the fly, not one seemed real interested. There is hope; twice while untangling a fly from the mangroves I saw HUGE reds laughing at me as they left the vicinity. They are there. Fish or no fish, I never get tired of wading the east side of Weedon, especially into dusk. If nothing else you always have a magnificent view of the bay and Tampa on the other side as the sunsets. For me, it is truly one of the delights of living in this area. I always enjoy how quiet it is.



Tip toe toward the Skyway seatrout

While I tend to fish various size/color of Clousers, I have used gurglers and shrimp patterns with success, especially on the trout. Tony Piazza and I wade fished from the North Skyway Bridge rest area recently, it was a tough day as we did not get much action until we found an active current on the incoming tide close to the boat channel that parallels the bridge road. I tied on a shrimp pattern and would let it drift through the current, come tight and strip, I landed half dozen nice trout that saved the day. I'll admit the water was deep and I had to get up on my tip-toes to reach the fish!

Dennis



Bill Scarola and Bruce Evensen

March 22  
Bruce caught this 27-inch red tonight fishing the flats off of Fourth Street N. in St. Pete. Bruce caught it on a green bait fish pattern.



*Bill*

Chris O'Byrne: Bass and Bream in Bartow



Chris O'Byrne with a fat bluegill from Grassy Lake in Bartow.

I have had a couple chances to fish for bass and bream. There is some spawning activity. Bluegills are becoming less aggressive.

Slow sinking flies are bringing fish up.

These fish were caught on Grassy Lake in Bartow in early April. At this time of the year fly anglers tend to fish the smaller lakes that are not in the chain.



Tony Piazza: Social Distancing on the Beach



April 7  
I walked Pass a Grille beach from 1st to 10th Avenue today. I saw several snook in the wash area. I caught and landed two on a pearl Mylar minnow and a white hackle fly. Great social distancing day. *Tony*

## Myron Hansen: Tied from a piece of an old carpet

March 24

Last night I went out dock light fishing. In this time of “human” social distancing, I decided to take my dog Harry with me. My wife told me dogs aren’t capable of catching or spreading the coronavirus so it was okay.

Before heading out to the lights I tied up a couple of crystal schminnows as my fly of choice. A while back Walt Durkin gave me a fly he had tied. It had a small piece of orange yarn on the underside just before the bend. The yarn represented an egg sack. Walt’s fly wasn’t a schminnow, but I added egg sacks to mine.



I couldn’t find any orange yarn around the house and I didn’t want the social contact of going into a store. So instead I snipped a piece of reddish fiber off an old scrap of carpet. One fly (the only one I fished) hooked seven trout and two nice mangrove snappers. The fly survived (pictured above) and is no worse for wear.

*Myron*

## Tim Elms: Find your own ponds. They’re great.



*Tim with a hefty pond snook. Snook are a freshwater fish, too, you know!*

Fly fishing his neighborhood ponds, Tim Elms is catching lots of bass, snook, bream, and tilapia. His go to flies are poppers, white Clousers, and deer hair frogs. But where, exactly? Tim ain’t telling. Find your own pond.



*Who knew? Bass love white Clousers.*



*One of Tim’s bass, caught on a deer hair frog fly.*

*Tim*



## Marshall Craig: Weedon Snook on the Mystery Fly

March 18



*That's me with a Picnic Island snook.*

I fly fished Picnic Island and Weedon Island with Bill AuCoin. We worked the mangrove shorelines which rewarded us with a few snook but they made us work. The winning fly floated then dropped just below the surface on the first strip. On the stop it stayed right there, almost suspended in the water column with its tail fibers shimmering. *Here snookie, snookie.* Some years ago I bought three or four of them at Economy Tackle in Sarasota. I can't remember the name of the fly. I gave my last one to Bill and he caught two nice snook with it.

The sad news is the snook destroyed the fly. And it was my last one. It had a foam or a cork head shaped like a garden trowel with the point forward so that it carved out a little vee-shaped wake in the water. The tail was long streams of white bucktail and translucent, shimmering fibers that would breathe in an out with a strip/stop/strip retrieve. A nice fly. But what was it? Anybody?



*Mystery fly*



*Bill caught two snook on the mystery fly.*

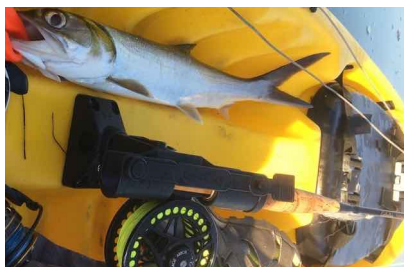
*Marshall*

## Chris Sprowl: Kayak and Wade Fishing Weedon

I have been spending some time kayaking and wading around Weedon Island preserve. When the water is moving I have had good luck catching small snook on white flies. Unfortunately, it has become quite crowded recently. I have seen some very large snook and redfish in singles, but no luck catching them.

*Cheers, Chris*

## Tom Trukenbrod: Huge ladyfish in South St. Pete



I caught this 25-inch ladyfish while kayak fishing on the flats east of 56th Ave South in St. Pete. I caught it on a secret weapon I tied at Bruce Evensen's fly tying studio. Quite a fight!

*Truk*

## Capt. Pat Damico: Captain's Corner



### Do you get strikes, but fail to get a hook-set?

Inshore fly fishing is steadily improving as general conditions get better. A question I hear a lot is, "Why do I miss so many fish?" The person is either new to fly fishing or has had most of their experience as a freshwater trout fisher. On a trout stream, most fly fishing presentations have the rod tip elevated and use a very thin tippet material attached to the small fly sporting a very sharp hook. 5X tippet material may break at 4 pounds of pressure. A slight lift of the rod when a trout takes the tiny offering is all that is required to get a solid hook set. Fly rod tips used are often softer than in saltwater so the combination requires little effort. In saltwater, the rod tip should be in a straight line with the fly line and

kept on the water's surface. Manipulation of the fly is not with the rod, but with the line hand by using varying stripping techniques to mimic the shrimp, crab or baitfish pattern on a much heavier tippet, often a minimum of 20-pound test. I tell clients to set the hook when anything is felt. This is accomplished by pulling the line with the line hand only and driving the larger hook into a much harder mouth. Once the fish is hooked, the fly rod can be elevated or moved to either side to put pressure on the fish. Trying to set the hook with the rod tip is a prescription for failure.

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

## Bill Scarola and friends: Drum Rolls Please

Holy mackerel, this is one great fly!  
No *trout* about it.  
It's in *tuna* with the time.  
Without it, fishing would be *crappie*.

*Knock, knock.*  
Who's there?  
Tuna  
Tuna who?  
*Tunaround* and go fishing

### **Padump Bump Ching**

#### *Fisherman's Prayer*

*God grant that I may fish till my dying day  
And when the final cast is made and life slips away  
I pray that God's great landing net  
Will catch me in its sweep  
And in His mercy, God will judge me  
Big enough to keep.*

## Fly Gear for Sale or Swap

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

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

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**Larry Lurie is selling his 16-foot Bass Tracker and trailer. Just \$4800. Email him at**

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Boat cover; Minn Kota electric winch; 22-gal aerated bait tank; two 6 gallon gas tanks w/ tank switch; two new deep-cycle batteries; built in charger w/switch to run on either battery or both. PayPal.



**Gary Sundberg is looking for a good deal on a 4-piece, 7-weight fly rod.**

Email Gary at [thikr505@gmail.com](mailto:thikr505@gmail.com) or phone 802-922-5793

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**Tim Elms is looking for a flats boat push pole and a trolling motor with remote.**

Email Tim at [trelms@yahoo.com](mailto:trelms@yahoo.com)

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

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  - Thread holder with one fly holder by Bruce Evensen, \$9.00
  - Fly tying desk and tool holder, \$50.00
  - Fly tying desk and tool holder made by Bruce 2ftx2Fort, \$85.00
  - Epoxy glue holder hand-made by Bruce Evensen, \$24.00
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**UPDATED: Lynn Skipper has two nice fly rods he'd like to sell. He can bring them to the next meeting.**

Email [vintagevette@msn.com](mailto:vintagevette@msn.com) or call 813-541-3195)

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

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

## Bill AuCoin : Flyfisher Flyover



**Six things fly fishers can do indoors.** Number six is stay home and stay safe. I vote for go fishing but stay safe. H/T Pat Damico who adds, "This is a good time for members to write an article for the newsletter. Maybe their first. You could have a library of information for the future." Well said, Pat. Okay, Suncoast Fly Fishers, get to work! ([Fly Dreamers](#))

**So far, so good** – The red tide organism, *Karenia brevis*, was observed in recent samples collected from Southwest Florida but in modest amounts. FWRI continues to process samples, but not as many as it was before the essential-work-only order. Anyway, there are no red flags flying. ([FWC](#))

### **Why are there fewer tarpon in the Keys?**

Bonefish and Tarpon Trust is concerned and has released this video (great tarpon footage btw) describing tagging and research programs underway. If tarpon numbers are down in the Keys, wouldn't they also be down here? Just saying. ([B&TT](#))

**The unwritten rules of stream fishing.** This article is about stream fishing for trout, the unwritten rules that are supposed to prevent conflict. For example, you have the fly fisher who keeps wading downstream looking for fish. So, of course, the fisher on the move starts to invade the zone of the fly fisher who has been stationed in one place for a long time patiently working a seam or whatever. Uh oh. Don't call the sheriff. You know, we have the same problem on the flats. I like to keep moving casting toward the mangroves. Then, dammit, a powerboat crew arrives up ahead and they start fishing *my* shoreline. Wha? H/T Pat Damico ([Troutbitten](#))

**This article really gets down into the weeds.** *And that's a good thing.* It covers everything the fly fisher needs to be able to do to catch redfish on the flats. Well, everything except where to find them. But that's what guides can do for us. Go for it. H/T. Pat Damico. ([Mauser Fly Fishing](#))

**Fly Fishers International wants to know.** FFI has a survey for fly fishers -- members and non-members -- to learn more about our interests, needs and opinions. Personally, I would like to see them do more for saltwater fly fishing. It's not like I'm prejudiced or anything. ([Fly Fishers International](#))

**This virus is throwing us all for a loop.** IFTD 2020 in Denver has been canceled. And I just read that Simms has stopped production of waders and will now make hospital gowns. ([Bozeman Daily Chronicle](#), [Fly Lords Magazine](#))

**Do you know who this is?** He died three years ago, then somebody stole his ashes. They say this Biscayne Bay flats guide created the Bimini twist, and that he invented the first poling platform. Back in the 1970s he guided many celebrities including Ted Williams, Jimmy Buffett, Jim Harrison, and Tom McGuane. It is said he was the prototype protagonist for McGuane's novel *Ninety-Two in the Shade*. But our guy was blind in one eye so he didn't qualify for a guide license. So his fishing buddy Stu Apte and other friends wrote the Coast Guard and explained why he deserved a captain's license. And he got one. Good. Because he could always spot those bonefish a long way out. I caught my first and only bonefish fishing with him. ([Tampa Bay Times](#))

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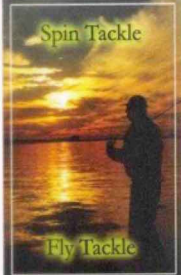
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