

WIND KNOTS

APRIL 1990

APRIL MEETING

Date: April 24, 1990

Place: The Apollo Room
Travelodge Tower
2828 Southwest Fwy.
(Kirby Exit)

Time: 7:00 p.m.
Fit To Be Tied

7:30 p.m.

Main Program:

Dennis Bitton, publisher of the Federation of Fly Fisher's magazine, premier cold water fisherman and conservationist.

SUNFISH SPECTACULAR

Remember the announcement about the Sunfish Spectacular in last month's WIND KNOTS? Well, that was just a joke. It's not really going to be on Easter. The *real* date is Sunday, May 6, starting at sunrise. This year's venue is Landrum Creek, located 1½ miles south of Montgomery on FM 149. Or take I-45 north to Highway 105, west to FM 149 and south 1½ miles. Travel time is a little over an hour from Houston.

Because Landrum Creek actually has fish, unlike locations of past Spectaculars, they charge money. Cost per angler is \$30 for adults, \$15 for kids under 12. Fishing is catch and release. Bring your own lunch. The Texas Fly Fishers will supply beer, wine and soft drinks.

Tournament director and FFL (Former Fearless Leader) John Scarborough says Landrum Creek is suitable for the whole family. The lakes are full of fish and easily fishable from the bank or canoe, float tube, Kikk-Boat, etc. (No power allowed).

As usual, the complete rules, caveats and codicils are secret and there will be no attempts at fairness. You may, however, win if you catch the largest sunfish and get it to the weigh station in time, alive, and after weighing it in, return it to the lake alive.

Given that there will almost assuredly be fish caught this year, the Sunfish Spectacular should be one of the club's best events. For more information, call John Scarborough at 465-4656.

In this issue...

- John Hannah on *Fly Reels of the Past*
- Ken Jacoby with fishing news
- Bev Edwards on the Medina
- Jack Ellis on Jon Wallace
- Terrible poetry
- Capt. Corey on starting in salt

TIE FLYING

Intermediate Classes: St. John's Church annex, room 010, Westheimer at River Oaks, 7:00 p.m. to 9:30. April 19 - Hair Spinning with Mitch Whitney. May 17 - Humpies with Ed Rizzolo. No reservations required, just come prepared to tie.

Advanced Class: Saturday, May 19, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Registration and continental breakfast at 8:00 a.m.) Topic: bass bugs - hair spinning and hair stacking with Mitch Whitney. Space is limited and reservations are required. Cost will be approximately \$25, which includes breakfast, lunch and materials. For info, call Dr. Ed Rizzolo, office 643-5775, home 997-2789.

BOOKS



by John T. Hannah

Fly Reels of the Past, by John Orrelle. Frank Amato Publications.

A book like this shows me how much I still have to learn about fly fishing.

I'm thinking of occasions when large fish have taken me into my backing and I have decided that the time was right for me to increase the tension on my reel's click. John Orrelle tells me that I've been doubly wrong.

First, a reel's check (click) system is not supposed to brake the run of a fish -- it is there to prevent the line from overrunning, when pulled off the reel by a fish or by the angler's stripping. If I tighten the click I am in danger of damaging the pawl. The mechanism that puts the brakes on a fish is the reel's *drag* system, if it has one.

Secondly, as a fish takes out line it has to work progressively harder because of the resistance of the line moving in the water. I should be trying to reduce the drag

-- not increase it -- if I want to stay connected to the fish. Makes sense.

I also learned that a book such as this is essential for collectors if they are to deal with the complexities of identifying old fly reels. Often, for example, a manufacturer would put his name on a reel made by someone else. This occurred when the manufacturer was also a distributor and he marketed the work of other makers along with his own. Further, some model names or nicknames (such as feather-light) have been used by more than one maker. So it's not surprising that it takes a 150-page book to sort all these things out. Orrelle has apparently done a good deal of original research, making use of old catalogs as resources. You get the impression that this is a definitive work on the subject of fly reels and it has been badly needed.

Note: In one of his recent columns Capt. Corey bad-mouthed reels that don't click when the fish takes out line. John Orrelle reports in his book that, although Hardy and other makers have made reels with silent checks from time to time over the years, they have never been popular. They have been "generally avoided," as Corey generally avoided the new Abel.

FISHING NEWS

by Ken Jacoby

T-Bud Thomas, who builds those beautiful rods, has been using them with good results on Spindletop Lake near Winnie.

This membership lake holds sunfish so large that John Scarborough was stricken speechless for the first time in his life when T-Bud took him there recently.

On another outing, T-Bud and Dale Fontenot braved an East Texas sampler of weather (the wind blew from four different directions and the rain stopped only long enough for it to hail) and still caught 50 large bream, including a 10¼" shellcracker. Brooks Bouldin's BB Bug was the top producer. Ask T-Bud about this place if you're interested in hearing more.

CLASSIFIED

For Sale: Abel No. 2 reel. Right hand retrieve, 200 yards micron backing. \$300. Jay Herbert, 556-1597 days, 341-0216 evenings.

GCCA CRAWFISH BOIL

The West Houston chapter of GCCA is holding its 4th annual membership drive and crawfish boil on Wednesday, April 25 on the grounds of the Houston Polo Club beginning at 5:00 p.m. -- and we're all invited! Tickets are \$15 and include beer, all the crawfish you can eat, music and door prizes. There will be live and silent auctions, drawings and lots of conservation conversation. For more info, call GCCA at 626-4222.

MEDINA RIVER CANOE TRIP

by *Bev Edwards*

Our next outing will be a canoe trip down the Medina River on May 12. We took this trip last year and it was so successful that we are going to run it again. Last year we caught and released a lot of fish, the largest and most of which were caught by the lady anglers on the trip.

The Medina is a limestone spring-fed stream which flows from the hill country. The stretch we'll fish is about 40 miles north of San Antonio, between the towns of Medina and Bandera. This is rough ranching country. The water is exceptionally clear and clean. May is the best month of the year for this stream, because the water flow is stable and the weather is mild. Big rains can cause it to flash flood, so we have to watch the weather map the week before the trip. A few years ago a big rain took the Bandera Chevrolet dealership downstream.

The Medina is dangerous at high water, but at normal levels it's a nice white water stream. There are many twisting white water chutes, small falls, overhanging limbs, rocks and cypress trees in the river. This keeps you busy with a paddle between casts. There are rugged hills covered with cedar and live oak, laced with numerous raw outcroppings of limestone and sheer limestone bluffs. Free flowing springs are abundant, and large cypress trees shade the river. This is a great place to swim with a diving mask

to look at the fish. The trip is both scenic and exciting.

The Medina is loaded with Guadalupe bass, largemouth bass and perch. Take an old fly rod, because cypress limbs can snap your prized new rod. We will float fish the river banks, using popper bugs and wet flies. There are plenty of gravel bars to pull up on and wade some of the deep pools. We usually eat lunch and dry out on a rock bluff above the river. This is a wet trip, so wear tennis shoes and swimming clothes. Leave a dry change of clothes in your car.

It takes about five hours to drive from Houston to Bandera, so we'll drive up on Friday night and float all day Saturday. You'll need a canoe, which you can bring from Houston or rent in the hill country.

Ken and Kathy Plato are trip leaders, so give them a call at 664-2195 to sign up for the trip. Bring a canoe, life jackets, lunch and your fly rod and enjoy one of the best trips of the year.

REFLECTIONS ON THE POND

by *Jack Ellis*

I spent a great day with fellow fly fishing fanatic Jon Wallace of Angler's Edge in late February. Although three decades separate our ages, we found that fly fishing bridges the generation gap. It had been some years since I had fished hard from dawn 'til dark, with only a brief lunch break, on a

cold, windy winter's day. Jon's exuberance is contagious and I was gratified to find I still had the stamina to keep up with this talented and knowledgeable young fly fisher.

Conditions could not have been worse. A frigid northeaster blew all day with water temperature in the mid-fifties. We started the morning at the Spring Creek area of Dam B with the intention of dredging the bottom of the creek channel with sinking lines and bottom-crawling flies. As luck would have it, the wind came right down the creek and although Jon could cast well in the wind, I couldn't hold the boat. We gave up on the lake and headed for the farm ponds.

Jon caught something in every pond we fished, but our best performance was at Cypress Creek Ranch at mid-day. Fishing from the bank we took five bass on uniform sinking lines and eel worm streamers in an hour's fishing. Considering the adverse conditions (the fish felt like ice cubes), this was pretty good. I was impressed with Jon's eel worm and intend to keep some in my box in the future.

Late afternoon found us back at Warm Water Ranch. I decided to retire to the camp house while Jon finished the day casting from the bank on the ranch lake. After a half-hour of much-needed rest I looked out the window and saw Jon running up the hill. Breathless and flushed with excitement, he exclaimed that good bass were chasing minnows in the shallow end of the lake. He rigged his

eight-weight with a floating line and we raced back to the lake. With only minutes of daylight left, we launched the flat bottom and I paddled toward the rising fish. Jon's first cast took a small bass. The next cast placed the big hair bug at the end of a half-submerged log. My heart stopped beating as a huge wake moved toward the fly. The big bass turned away at the last minute. Jon re-presented the bug and the great fish again passed and turned away. Successive casts failed to stir the fish again. Jon recognized the problem immediately and discussed it as we paddled back in the twilight.

Next time you're in Angler's Edge, tell Jon that you've heard that delicacy, small tippets and line visibility shouldn't concern the warm water fly fisher. Watch the hackles rise on his neck and prepare yourself for a 30-minute lecture!

RETAIL ROUNDUP

Orvis has introduced two new rods in its Green Mountain series: (1) An 8'9" 8-wt. Western, for bass and bones, and a great all around rod for Texas. It'll handle the large deer hair flies for bass as well as the wind on the Texas coast; and (2) a 9' 5-wt. 4-piece Spring Creek. Whether panfish or New Zealand trout, this rod will be a perfect travelling companion. Both available at a great price at Orvis Houston.

In other news, Orvis has bought the venerable Gokey Company, and now carries the full line

of Gokey luggage (seven pieces, from a garment bag to a brief case); Gokey shoes including a leather sole moc, an ankle-high lace-up and a traditional rubber sole four-eyelet moc; and Gokey's famous snake-proof boots, including custom-made boots for the hard-to-fit.

Angler's Edge now carries the new high quality SL reel from Streamline. It features an improved Ari T. Hart drag system, which performs as well as the best reels on the market, at an attractive price. The advantages of the Hart roller bearing drag system include reduced weight, immediate response to drag and no required drag maintenance. The spools are ventilated on both sides, can be changed quickly and are less expensive than other premium reel spools. The SL reels can be changed from right to left hand retrieve by changing out the bearing housing. The drag cannot be prevented from engaging by salt or grit. The click is muted and has a slightly higher pitch when retrieving than when line is being taken off the reel. If you prefer, the click can be disengaged for silent operation.

A good place to try your new SL is on the flats in Belize. Angler's Edge can help you with that, too. They're putting together a trip to Turneffe Flats Lodge from June 9 to 16. Bonefish are the primary target, but there are tarpon, permit, and barracuda as well. The trip is a bargain at \$1,500 which includes air, lodging, meals and guides. Call Jon Wallace at 266-4493 for details.

OUR GURU GETS OLD

Our guru, Brooks Bouldin, turned 50 recently, and a number of us gathered at his shop to chide him about it, drink a little barley pop and old grape and enjoy a repast provided by his lovely wife, Judy. The low point of the evening was a poetry reading by club president and terrible poet Mark Hollier. Just because you missed the party doesn't mean you escaped the doggerel.

Tail Chaser

*There was a fly rodder named Brooks
Whose casting was as sharp as his hooks.
While wading the flats in Belize one day
He spied a young maiden adrift in the bay.*

*The closer she drifted the more he viewed
For this buxom young lass was sunbathing,
nude.*

*When she saw him nearby, she sat up
and motioned
She said, "Come on over and bring your
sun lotion.*

*There's this place I can't reach and it's
starting to burn*

*And if you help me I'll gladly the favor
return."*

*Brooks said, "No thanks, young lady, get
out of the way.*

I'm chasing a permit and cannot delay."

*And as he moved away she heard him
explaining,*

*"Please understand, young lady, I'm not
complaining.*

*You have a beautiful body -- especially
your pecs --*

But a fly rod permit is better than sex!"

CAPT. COREY'S COMMENTS



by Corey Rich

Sad news: Eliot Tucker is retiring from writing his "On the Salty Side" column each month, though he's promised to do the occasional guest appearance.

I'll try to fill in from time to time with something salty, which I may be more qualified to do than writing about trout fishing. The last fresh water trout I caught was when the only place I *had* any hair was on my head. Caught it on a big, fat nightcrawler. *Tempus fugit.*

It always surprises me when someone around here says, "Some-day I'm gonna try this salt water stuff." Or, "You were just kidding about a redfish taking line so fast it burns your fingers, weren't you?" By all means, you should try it. And no, I wasn't kidding.

I just completed a story on getting started in salt water fly fishing for the new *Texas Saltwater* magazine (look for it in the

July/August issue), but the slant is wrong for TFFers. Those folks know a lot about salt water but nothing about fly fishing. I explained important concepts, *e.g.* the reel plays no part in casting, and that some lines float while others sink and they're all more expensive than the mono they put on their baitcasters.

The nice thing about salt water for those who know fly fishing is that it's easy, at least from a technical standpoint. Seldom a tree behind you. Leader length doesn't matter much. Tippet size doesn't matter much, as long as it's at least 10 pounds (but less than the breaking strength of your backing).

If I could have only one salt water rig it would be a graphite 9' 8-wt. with an SA Bonefish Taper floating line. The reel doesn't matter much for anything up to and including a big redfish. I have a nice Orvis SSS with a wonderful click on line-out, but I've caught lots of fish on the old Medalists, too.

For the Texas coast you *can* use anything from about a 5-wt. to a 10-wt., but anything below a 7-wt. is stunt-fishing (or risking getting blown out when you don't have to). A 7- to 9-wt. is the most realistic choice.

You might find a use for an intermediate or sink-tip line, perhaps in the Galveston Bay system where the water is generally deeper, but a weight-forward floating line will be the choice most of the time.

As far as fly patterns, Eliot's suggestion about taking a number of patterns is certainly well founded. Speckled trout and redfish are not nearly the picky eaters that sweet water trout are, but they do get into patterns related to the prevalent kind of bait in the water at any given time. Example: My favorite pattern is the Shrimpy, a simplified Brooks Shrimp design. Redfish love it. One morning I served Shrimpies to a half dozen reds. All refused. I gave up and went in. I stopped at the bait camp for a beer and noticed that the bait tanks were empty. No live shrimp. Delmer, the shrimper, said he hadn't caught a quart of shrimp all week. On a hunch, I ran back out to the flat. I tied on a Lefty's Deceiver in green and white that was supposed to look like a finger mullet. Apparently it did. Presentations to four reds: three ate the fly. (Don't ask about the fourth). Because there just weren't any shrimp in the bays, the fish were programmed to eat bait fish, or bait fish imitations.

My coastal fly box contains Shrimpies, Deceivers, Seaducers, a mylar/epoxy wobbler that imitates a gold spoon, Clouser Minnows and some experimental models I keep promising myself I'll test the next time I'm calf-deep in hundreds of fish and have caught enough to remove a winning pattern in favor of something unproven. The feathers will probably fall off first.

I'd suggest you hire a guide if you've never fished the briny before. I'd say that even if I weren't one. Local knowledge means a lot.

