

WIND KNOTS

FEBRUARY 1990

FEBRUARY MEETING

Date: February 27, 1990
Place: The Apollo Room
Travelodge Tower
2828 Southwest Fwy.
(Kirby Exit)
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Fit To Be Tyed
7:30 p.m.
Main Program:
Video on trout fishing

MARCH, APRIL CLUB MEETINGS

March brings us the inimitable Jimmy Nix with a program on salt water fly fishing. Jimmy has recently returned from Costa Rica where he battled billfish on the buggy whip. He'll no doubt be unable to refrain from mentioning his exploits there, but his salt water presentation is more broad-based, covering everything from marlin to piggy perch.

In April, Dennis Bitton, editor of the Federation's magazine, *The Flyfisher*, will present a program on trout fishing in Utah.

ENTOMOLOGY

Judy Lehmborg and Ed Rizzolo will conduct an entomology class on insects of the Yellowstone area. There will be specimens and microscopes for your viewing pleasure. St. John's Church Annex, Westheimer at River Oaks, March 15, 7:00 p.m.

TFF KID'S DAY

Jon Wallace of Angler's Edge is organizing an outing for TFF kids at the Landrum Creek Hunting Resort on April 29. The function, aimed at kids from 10 to 16, includes a tying session in which they will learn to tie a wooly bugger, then fly fishing on the lake. The Federation of Fly Fishers is making tying equipment and fishing gear available.

Landrum Creek Resort owner John Martin has provided a special rate for the kids of \$10. Kids should pack a lunch.

The event runs from 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Transportation is up to the parents, but Jon will attempt to put together car pools on a best-efforts basis. Parents must sign a liability waiver.

Please sign up with Jon Wallace at Angler's Edge, 6360 Richmond, by April 14. For more info, call him at 266-4493.

JANUARY MEETING

Jack Ellis emerged from the piney woods of east Texas to put on a great presentation about fishing the swamps and farm ponds of his area for bass, bream and the fearsome grinnel. In addition to giving us a good show, Jack has agreed to become a regular contributor to WIND KNOTS. His first offering, on the new uniform sinking lines and the fly tying challenges and opportunities they offer, is in this issue, page 3.

In this issue...

- John Hannah reviews a classic
- Herb Penning urges membership in the FFF
- Jack Ellis on uniform sink lines -- and worms
- Eliot Tucker on salty fly box variety
- Capt. Corey on clickers
- Ken Jacoby with fishing news
- An old editor's lament
- And more!

FLY TYING

Ed Rizzolo will have a make-up session for the beginners class on March 1, at the usual time and place. This will be an all-purpose session and will cover anything you missed or would like to see again.

The regular Thursday evening sessions at Angler's Edge continue, 6360 Richmond Ave., 6:30. These are hands-on tying sessions. Bring tying gear and materials. For info on the week's topic, call 266-4493.

TFF intermediate classes will begin the third Thursday in April and will continue monthly through the fall. Watch this space for more details.



BOOKS



by John T. Hannah

The Old Man and the Sea, by Ernest Hemingway. Chas. Scribner's Sons. 1952.

What is the best fishing story ever written?

Is it *Moby Dick*, or maybe *My Moby Dick*? Or one of the tales told by Sparse Grey Hackle, or Ed Zern? Certainly one candidate for the distinction would be Hemingway's short opus about old Santiago's monumental battle off the coast of Cuba.

The author's characteristic style is suited for telling a fishing adventure. His prose is as taut as the line that held the great spearfish, as cutting as the incisors of the ravaging sharks. It's all action: many Hemingway sentences are devoid of adjectives. There are pages with no adverbs.

What makes *Old Man and the Sea* such a fine fishing book, I think, is that it illustrates how much there is to the sport besides the fish. If the pleasure and excitement of fishing were simply catching fish, we could all just line up at the fish tank at the Boat Show. But in this story, as in our own experience, there's a lot going on besides fish-catching.

While pursuing his big fish, Santiago encounters flying fish,

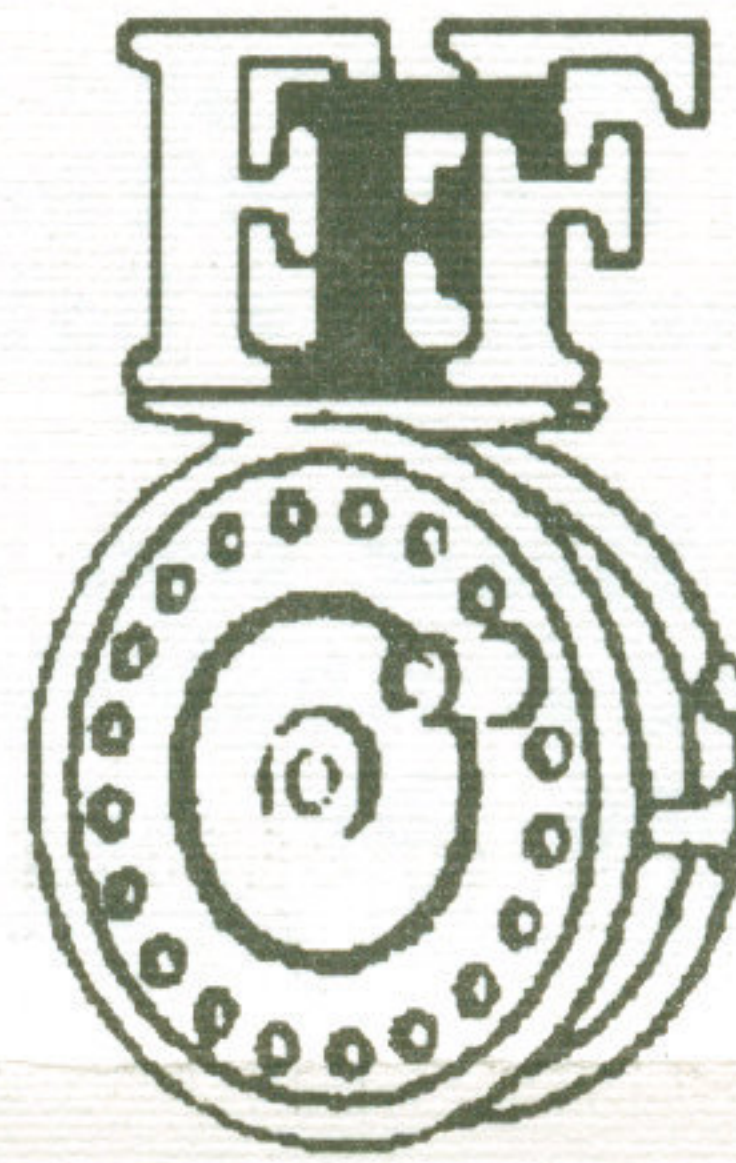
Portuguese men-of-war, sea turtles, birds, sharks, and the glow of plankton. "He knew no man was ever alone on the sea." His boat and tackle have roles in the story. The weather is a prominent player. The fisherman's skills and weaknesses are part of it, too.

To a lesser, and usually less dramatic extent, there are always things going on around us while we fish. Our environment, our tools, our strategy, even our luck, all make what we are doing interesting. None of us is likely to have a fishing adventure, or a fish, of the magnitude of Santiago's but we can relate to him on another level. We talk to our fish and to ourselves. We endure the bad weather and contrary currents; we try to solve problems. We come ashore hurting and tired. And, in the end, we're somehow fulfilled by it all.

THE FEDERATION

by Herb Penning

The Texas Fly-Fishers have historically provided funding through donations to many worthwhile causes. The sources of this funding are varied: our annual auction, membership dues and monthly meeting raffle collections.



Over the years TFF has given generously to the Federation of Fly Fishers to support its programs and goals. Regionally and nationally, funds have been raised through conclaves and their on-site activities.

Individual Federation memberships also provide funds for the FFF. But in reality, being a conservation organization is expensive in order to pursue

activities that will enhance our outdoor experience: national and state legislative issues, lobbying activities, direct mail and so on.

Many FFF members freely give of their time and talent in support of conservation -- but it takes money to fuel and support. One Federation staffer I spoke with pointedly told me that "each Federation member is the Federation and helps to set policy, programs and goals by his individual support."

TFF does not require dual membership in both our club and the Federation. But we hope that you will truly see the merit of the Federation of Fly Fishers and join, or if a member, think about joining at a higher level.

Don't be a taker, enjoying the benefits without participating. Be a giver. Remember the fellowship, the clinics that helped you learn, the club members who teach. These are all benefits that you enjoy. Help the Federation to grow and accomplish its goals. Join today!

CLASSIFIED

For sale: 17' Boston Whaler Montauk. 1983 boat, 1 yr. old 90 h.p. motor, T'n'T, stainless steel prop, galvanized trailer, VHF radio, Ritchie compass, troll motor, new battery, Bimini top, 86 qt. Igloo seat, teak rod holders, Humminbird depth finder. \$9,395. 960-1614 days, 496-3660 eves.

UNIFORM SINKING LINES

The Fly Tying Challenge

by Jack Ellis

The new uniform sinking lines from Scientific Anglers are opening many previously closed doors to the warm water fly fisher. Most of us have always hated to use high-density lines. They cast like a bell sinker, are extremely difficult to pick up and strike detection is next to impossible. These new lines have alleviated, if not eliminated, many of these problems. Since the tip section is heavier than the belly, that horrible belly sag is eliminated, allowing the angler to feel a strike. Although not a joy to cast, they handle reasonably well and are much easier to pick up. I can pick up about twelve feet of line and go directly into the back cast without the usual initial roll cast. One false cast and you can make a good shoot.

The new lines are available in a wide range of sink rates and weights. I have tested an 8 wt. with a 4"/second sink rate and a 10 wt. with a 6"/second rate. I have used the lines in twenty feet of water at Rayburn, the Angelina and several deep ponds. I used a guide at Rayburn and made a difficult and controversial decision for which I have been much maligned by club members. So as to test the line and avoid getting all bogged down in fly patterns, I used a lightweight 4" plastic worm. I knew this was a sure thing, actually tantamount to live bait, and I wanted to see if the line would deliver the offering through dense coontail moss to the bottom-feeding bass the guide was taking on a standard worm rig. The results were phenomenal. I outfished him 4 to 1! Apparently this deadliest of all bass baits became even deadlier when unencumbered by lead weight. Obviously, none of

us cares to make a practice of fishing with such baits, but at least we know that we have the delivery system and can begin to address the fly tying challenges ahead.

My initial efforts with standard bottom-crawling patterns have not been successful for three reasons: (1) These flies gather moss, decayed vegetation and other debris around the eye and head, on the knot, behind the weed guard, etc., while the worm slides right through this stuff. (2) Although wool, deer hair and rabbit hide would seem to have a soft, natural texture, apparently they do not. The bass eject these flies far too quickly, before we can hit them. Remember, this is a very slow retrieve, not at all like fishing a streamer. It's about like trying to fish a bug blindfolded! (3) Weighted flies won't work at all for me on these high-density lines. They just drag in the bottom mud and gather debris. Flies for these new lines will have to be somewhat buoyant.

I feel the matter of texture is of paramount importance. We may look at some of the myriad soft foams and plastics for bodies and heads and find ways to affix them to a hook shank. A re-examination of some of the older keel patterns with mallard and pheasant flank weed guards is in order. In our heavily vegetated lakes we will require a totally smooth head and tippet connection, which probably means tying the tippet right into the fly in the manner of nineteenth century salmon flies. Hard, metallic or lacquered surfaces and obtrusions must be minimized.

We are on the verge of mastering big lake bass fishing, an area that has always eluded fly fishers. If we can "hold our own" in that environment, the possibilities for southern fly fishing boggle the mind. Remember, you creative tyers -- think soft, natural, lifelike to the touch, smooth, tapered and

knotless. You may have a famous pattern named after you!

Editor's note: Jack Ellis retired several years ago and moved up to the piney woods, where he fishes almost daily. This article first appeared in the Lakes Country Flyfishers newsletter in October, 1989, and Jack has been generous enough to allow us to reprint it here. Better still, he has agreed to provide articles for WIND KNOTS on a regular basis.

RETAIL ROUNDUP

Coming soon (maybe by the time you read this) to Orvis Houston, 5848 Westheimer, some exciting new merchandise. For the trout fisher, Orvis adds a 3/4 click pawl drag reel to its Battenkill series. It will hold lines from size 1 through 5. For big water (and big fish) fishers: the new D-XR Tarpon reel with a larger shaft than other D-XR reels for extra strength, twice the drag surface and a fool-proof screw-on spool attachment. The reel holds 400 yards of 30 lb. backing with a 10 wt. line. And for warm weather fishing, Orvis has a new mesh shorty vest, perfect for Texas or tropical flats.

Angler's Edge, 6360 Richmond, is conducting a bass fishing seminar and outing to the magnificent Lakes of Danbury on March 18 for those who already have fly casting skills and want to apply them to bass. There will be a morning classroom session, lunch, then an afternoon of fishing. Maximum enrollment is eight. Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis. Call Brooks Bouldin at 266-4493 for more information. Anglers Edge is also putting together a trip to Turneffe Flats Lodge in Belize on June 9-16. Bonefish are the primary target, but there are tarpon, permit and barracuda, too. Call Brooks for more details.

ON THE SALTY SIDE



by *Eliot Tucker*

A Variety of Flies

For years the only fly I would use for redbfish was a Gaines No. 2 Minnow Popper, a fresh water popping bug that I buy by the dozen directly from the manufacturer. I like the fly. Lately, however, I think I have liked it too much. I have learned that using a variety of flies is a lot more productive than slavishly returning to my favorite.

I also think I have figured out when my favorite works best and when it does not. A popping bug seems to work best when the fish are in a feeding mood and when the water levels are normal to high and when the wind is at normal strength. When the wind is very low, a popper may spook the fish. When it is very high, the fish do not seem to be able to hear its actions.

There are quite a few other flies that work well when the bug is a bomb. A heavily palmered hackle fly is a good choice in a high wind or in the surf if the fish are feeding. It is large, bright and pushes a lot of water. The fish can "feel" it, I think. A Brooks' Shrimp pattern is another good fly under these conditions.

When the fish are off their feed, and when water levels are very low, a very quiet and subtle fly is needed. I sometimes use a

brown bend-back pattern sparsely tied. At times a muddler type fly that sinks slightly will turn the heads of pouty fish. Dull brown bonefish flies are a good choice if you have one that will stay out of the grass.

All the foregoing are flies I now use when sight fishing. I have recently learned that there are among our number a group of hardy fly fishermen who advocate and practice blind casting for reds and trout, at times all day long. You will not catch me doing that, but I have watched Dave Hayward fish that way from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with scarcely a break. He uses several weird streamer patterns, some with eyes that sink (and cast) like a rock, and others that are much more sleek. They seem to come in all colors and in a variety of materials. There is no "pattern" to these flies that I can discern. They must work well. I have never heard Dave report a day on the water that did not produce twenty fish with at least one ten-pounder.

Try all these flies, and others. Learning when they will work and when they will not is part of the fun of fishing in the salt.

FISHING NEWS

by *Ken Jacoby*

Charley Thanheiser was fishing the deep run next to the island at the Kanz lease on the Guadalupe when he felt a hard pull and turned over the largest trout by far he had ever come upon on that river. Charley glanced downstream and saw that neither Anno Breitenfeldt nor Shelby Gibbs had noticed the missed strike. Displaying typical TFF sportsmanship he said nothing, but took careful note of the spot so he could sneak back later and catch the big fish.

That evening, while Anno and Shelby were busy connecting with lots of regular-sized

rainbows, Herr Thanheiser carefully readied his gear for combat with the leviathan. As he stepped into the water, something caught the corner of his eye. It was an osprey, coming in at a low angle like a World War II torpedo bomber. The Head Rat could only gape in astonishment as the bird hit the water, wrestled out the monster trout, and flew off with the fish.

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That personable Orvisite, Mike Barbee, spent a recent week at Casa Blanca Lodge in the Yucatan. This terrific trip featured a variety of water, from gin-clear shallow flats to waist deep blue water over weedbeds. The fishing was varied, too, with lots of barracuda providing a change of pace from the many bonefish that were landed. Mike's largest bone was a six-pounder, caught on a small Baited Breath.

Mike also had some good shots at a couple of permit, one around 40 pounds and the other a 25-pounder, but didn't hook up with either. The accommodations and food at Casa Blanca were great. If you'd like a brochure or have a question, call Mike at 783-2111 days or 861-2455 evenings.

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Ed Rizzolo has been calling us the past few days, but we have been missing connections. The good doctor has been to the Guadalupe this week with several other TFFers, and we feel certain he is not calling to tell us they were skunked. Because the deadline is here (and we all know how cranky and irritable our editor is about missed deadlines) we will have to report Ed's news next month. By then those fish will have grown considerably larger.

Call in your fishing news to Ken Jacoby at (409) 273-2991 evenings or (713) 873-6210 days.

CAPT. COREY'S COMMENTS



by Corey Rich

I was in a fly shop recently, fondling new reels. The proprietor proudly took one out of the case, wiped it gently with a soft cloth as a jeweler would an expensive watch, and handed it over. This, he explained, is the best money can buy. It should be, I thought, glancing at the price.

I did what you would expect. I turned the handle forward and back. I changed the drag setting and turned the handle some more. Truly silky and smooth. I looked for the button to engage the click on line-out. Not outside. I took off the spool. Not inside.

Excuse me, I think this one's broken. May I see another?

The proprietor's color drained somewhat. What's wrong, he queried?

The clicker doesn't engage on line-out, I explained, and I find no setting externally or internally. It must have been left out at the factory. Nice and smooth, though.

Oh, no sir, said the proprietor, color returning. Abel reels

are made that way. Did you notice that nice click when you reel in?

That's stupid, I said.

Are you calling Steve Abel stupid, the proprietor bristled?

Of course not. I've never even met the man. But the reel is stupid. Who the hell would spend the equivalent of a month's car payment on a new Suburban for a reel that tells you what you already know -- that you're reeling in -- yet doesn't announce loudly and proudly: We've got a whopper here? Watching your bonefish streak across the flat with no accompaniment save the sound of the wind; seeing your big redfish lumber into the backing in silence; hearing only the rattle and crash of your leaping tarpon with no scream from your reel is like, like... like fishing in only two dimensions. It's flat. I want to hear screams. Screams, I tell you. I want people around me to hear screams, too. I want to know the reel is agonizing over that fish. And do you know what else?

No. What else?

This thing wouldn't even make a good poacher's reel. Notice, sir, that nice click when you reel in?

TEXAS CONCLAVE

Don't forget: The Texas Conclave takes place March 9-11 in San Antonio. Lots to do and see: exhibits, tying demonstrations, collections, speakers like Jack Dennis, Chico Fernandez, Jimmy Nix, Tom Jindra, Jack Ellis and Duane Hada.

Registration forms and more information are available at Orvis Houston and Angler's Edge.

COMPLAINTS

Complaints have been pouring in that some of the stuff in previous issues has not been very edifying.

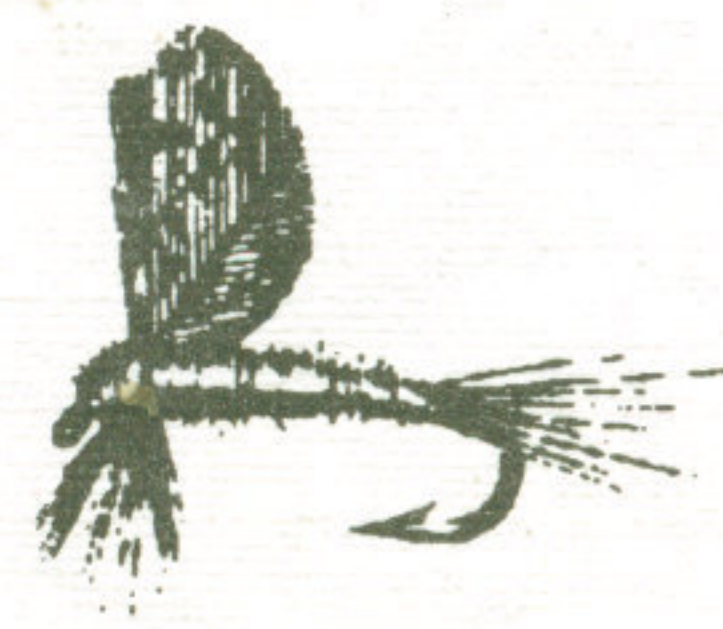
Where, the readers ask, are the instructions on how to tie a Rat-Faced MacDougall, about how to S-cast an upstream nymph downwind? Where, they continue, is the rich prose about bright rings on the water in the soft haze of an autumn dawn (when the bass bug drops as lightly as a shadow)?

You may well ask.

The truth is that the compiler of this newsletter is taking part in a worldwide newsletter editors' strike, protesting the fact that fishing club members don't send material in to be included in their newsletters. And we have resolved that so long as readers persist in withholding such pearls as are mentioned above, we won't print them.

So you're only punishing yourselves. Come on, fork over.

[This lament first appeared in the October 26, 1977, issue of the Texas Fly Fishers newsletter. John Hannah was the editor then. A lot of water has gone under the bridge since, but some things remain the same, among them that we welcome and encourage offerings literary and instructional from the membership at large. We'll also print your fishing-related classified ad free of charge, space permitting. Send your submissions by the 5th of the month to WIND KNOTS, 4801 Woodway, Suite 350W, Houston, TX 77056, fax them to (713) 960-0221 or call (713) 960-1614.]



WIND KNOTS is the Newsletter of the Texas FlyFishers - Houston, Texas,
An Active Member Club of the Federation of Fly Fishermen

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TFF EVENTS CALENDAR

<u>WHEN</u>	<u>WHO AND WHAT</u>	<u>WHERE</u>
Feb. 27, 7:00 p.m.	Club meeting: Trout fishing video	Travelodge Tower S.W. Fwy @ Kirby
Mar. 1, 7:00 p.m.	Beginners fly tying class: Make-up session	St. John's Westheimer @ River Oaks
Mar. 9 - 11	Texas Conclave	San Antonio
Mar. 15, 7:00 p.m.	Entomology class: Yellowstone bugs	St. John's
Mar. 27, 7:00 p.m.	Club meeting: Jimmy Nix -- Salt Water	Travelodge Tower

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FOR A
STRAIGHT
ANSWER



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FIRST CLASS MAIL - DATED MATERIAL

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