

June 2007

Contraband

Fly Casters

Tom Nixon Chapter

June Meeting: Tuesday June 19, 2007, Room 204 Kirkman Hall, McNeese campus, Lake Charles, LA. Fly tying 6:00 pm, Meeting 7:00 pm

Vice President's Message

This is normally Ron's spot, but I tried to contact him to get a President's Message, but haven't yet received anything. So I guess it's my turn.

Well the big news from the past month is that the first Gulf Coast Council Conclave and Expo has come and gone. From everyone that I talked to, things went very well for a first time effort. Could they have gone better? Of course and the council has taken note of that and is putting a list of things together that should be addressed and improved. Things should be much better next year. Speaking of next year, the council was very impressed with the facilities and wants to come back to Lake Charles next year if possible. Some improvements to expect: 1) the program will be done much sooner, and classes to be offered, free programs, special invited guests, etc. are scheduled to be listed on the GCC website (<http://www.gulfcoastfff.org>) by October. 2) the auction at the banquet will be better organized (we had people learning how to do an auction by the seat of their pants...our only real experienced person was Marc Pinsel, who was acting as the auctioneer) 3) more streamlined registration lines (one for pre-registered attendees, a second for walk-ins). These are only three of about 15 or more suggested improvements the council is trying to implement. Rest assured, things will be even better next year.

That being said, several people from our club

deserve special recognition: Ron Begnaud who was the Conclave Chairman, Danny Williams who was the Treasurer for the Conclave (and is also the Treasurer for the Gulf Coast Council), Ron Foreman (who was the Onsite Facilities chair, to take care of problems) and David Stewart, who seemed to be there to lend a hand whenever needed. My responsibilities were as the VP of Communications for the Gulf Coast Council, which included getting a viable e-mail list for members (still working on updating that, every time you finish, another e-mail address is no longer valid), sending e-mail announcements, and putting the program together (wasn't my fault it was so late...I can't put it together before I'm given the content...and I told everyone that, everything next year must be MUCH earlier.) I believe we acquitted our responsibilities as host club quite well.

Now that real summer weather is here (I'm sitting in my office listening to a late afternoon thunderstorm at the moment...it is time to think about fishing, so that's what most of rest of the newsletter will address.

Fishing Reports

Freshwater fishing reports from the Calcasieu River continue to be spotty, at best. I haven't heard of any large bass being caught. I think it safe to say that this fishery is still recovering from saltwater intrusion from the hurricane.

Saltwater fishing is a different story. Fish are

definitely being caught. My last two fishing trips with Ron Foreman brought to light a few interesting factors. We went fishing on Saturday May 26, but started late since both Ron and I were just plain tired and wanted to sleep in a bit. We ended up on the water in Calcasieu Lake about 10 am. Unfortunately the wind had come up to a fairly stiff breeze from the southeast, and we had to abandon our plans to fish the south end of the lake, as neither of us relished the idea of a very long and uncomfortable ride. We ended up ducking into Hog Island Gully and fishing the south bank in spots where we were somewhat protected from the wind. After a few casts, Ron hands me his brand new TFO 7 wt. rod that he bought at the GCC Conclave from Nick Chehotsky of Gulf Coast Tackle in Lake Charles. I'm trying to get used to the rod, and I tell Ron I think the 7 wt line he has on it (don't know what brand it was) seemed a little bit light. About the fifth cast, a fish hit the fly (a Pink Wonder, see the Saltwater Fly of the Month), and the fight was on. I don't know what type of leader was on the line, what tippet was on the line, and I'm playing a fish with my buddy's brand new rod...all conditions for playing the fish very gently. After a few minutes, a twenty inch redfish comes to the net, the most silver redfish I've ever seen. It was downhill from there, as the wind kept getting stronger and stronger as the day wore on. When we finally decided to pack it in, the wind was blowing a steady 25 mph at least with gusts up to 35. Not pleasant for any type of fishing.

On June 2, Ron and I tried again. The tides actually looked somewhat promising. The tide was supposed to fall 2.30 ft over 16 hours (approximately 1.8 inch per hour, on average). We tried fishing with bait, all different kinds of artificials (Ron managed to catch both a croaker and a hardhead on an orange RoadRunner). And he was doing much better than I was. We decided to try a cut on Rabbit Island. While Ron was using the trolling motor and we were well outside the cut yet, I tried casting a Renegade spoon (imitation of a Krocodile spoon, in the unlikely colors of pink, silver and chartreuse and called "rainbow trout." I've never seen a rainbow trout with chartreuse on it in my life. This is a leftover from my Michigan days of chasing steelhead and salmon on the breakwaters of Lake Michigan). And a fish hits...and I can tell it is not very large....turns out to be another redfish, but he's only 15 inches. And that was it fro the day. When we got back to the dock, I took good note of the water level...it had only dropped 2 1/2 inches. In the seven hours we stayed out, it should have dropped just over six inches. What made the difference? Wind again.

The wind was from the south and more or less negated the outgoing tide. A stiff wind in the Gulf of Mexico area can do this relatively easily, since the tides are relatively small in size. So for most of the day, we were fishing relatively slack water...which is never good. You want water moving, not stationary.

Upcoming Events

One June 13-18, the Austin Fly Fishers will hold their Port O'Connor trip. Check the AFF website or contact Brandon Rabke, 512-467-2274 for details.

On June 16-17, "The Camp" Fly Fishing School, Breaux Bridge, LA will be held. Cost is \$200 for weekend. Instructors include Tom Jindra, Jay Clark, Keith Richard & Syd Smith. Contact Keith Richard at phone (337) 344-0908; FAX: (337) 322-0167.

On July 13-15 the Red Stick Fly Fishers will hold their annual Grand Isle Fly Fishing weekend. They invite members from all clubs to participate. The main site for the get-together will be the blue Dolphin. Beds there are going for \$81 for the weekend. If there is not enough room at the Blue Dolphin, arrangements have been made for a block of rooms at Ricky's (but you'll have to make your own reservations directly with Ricky's, but mention that you are with the RSFF function. Cost per night at Ricky's is \$80 for a 2-bed room with an 11% room tax (\$88.80 per night, approximately). I'm not exactly sure who you need to contact to reserve a bed at the Blue Dolphin, but I bet Catch Cormier would know (catch@laflyfish.com). This is supposed to be one of the best fishing get togethers along the Gulf coast. This year I hope to be able to make it myself.

On the Web

Larry Offner has just started a new site, called WarmFly (<http://warmfly.com>) dedicated to warm water fly fishing. This is needed, since many of the internet sites dedicated to warm water fly fishing are not very active, and for some content has stayed constant for years (nothing new!!).

The online magazine "Hatches" (<http://www.hatchesmagazinbe.com>) has a few new entries, "The Chicken or the Egg," fly tying on a Budget," Requiem for a four Weight," "Counting Coup," a featured online video, "Strikes." There will be a print version of Hatches come this fall (different content than the online version). Look for a review when it debuts.

Freshwater Fly of the Month

Ironhead Chili Pepper



Hook: #8-12 fine wire dry fly hook

Head: 5/32" hematite bead

Thread: Black

Tail: Black marabou with a few strands of black flash

Body: Black metallic plastic canvas yarn, diamond braid or Estaz

Hackle: Grizzly, dyed dark olive, palmered over body

Collar behind bead: Copper metallic floss

Tying Instructions: this is a darker version of the original Chili Pepper, which sports a gold bead, copper body, grizzly hackle, orange marabou tail, and a collar of orange tying thread behind the bead. This version is obviously more subtle. Why Ironhead for a name? The bead head on this fly is actually a hematite bead from the craft store. Hematite is a type of hydrous iron ore (and it won't rust, since it already essentially rust...). Hematite is a relatively heavy mineral, so the bead is heavier than you might expect. The trick is that the hole in the bead is quite small, and you'll need to flatten the barb on a thin wire dry fly hook, and carefully bend the hook open using a needlenose pliers to get the bead on. After the bead is on, you'll need carefully restore the bend of the hook using the needlenose pliers. Using the black tying thread, secure the bead in place and then wrap to the bend of the hook. Tie in the black marabou tail. Tie in a few strands of black flash (not that easy to find!) over the marabou. Tie in the dark olive dyed grizzly hackle by the tip. Tie in the body material (in the fly pictured, black metallic plastic canvas yarn was used. Advance the thread to just behind the bead. Wrap the body material to form the body. Palmer the olive dyed grizzly hackle over the body and tie off just behind the bead. Trim off any excess hackle, and finish tying with the black tying thread by performing a whip finish and then cutting off the black thread. Form a

collar of metallic copper embroidery floss just behind the bead and tie off with another whip finish. If desired, add a drop of head cement to the windings.

This fly can be effective as a streamer (it's basically a bead head woolly buggler) and can also be fished successfully under a VOSI (vertically oriented strike indicator).

Salt Water Fly of the Month

Pink Wonder



Hook: Standard saltwater

Thread: Fluorescent pink

Eyes: Turned brass dumbbell eyes or lead dumbbell eyes

Wing: White bucktail, topped with a few strands of pink Krystal flash, topped with fluorescent pink bucktail or bucktail substitute

Tying Instructions: Yeah, so OK, it's a clouser, but a very bright one. This pattern was featured in the latest FFF magazine and was submitted by Al and Gretchen Beatty, who said it was one of their friend's favorite redfish flies. It did give me something to use some of my inordinately large supply of fluorescent tying thread (result of a stock person at Cabela's misreading a "2" as a "12"...1200 yds of fluorescent pink tying thread...I think I'm down to 600 yds after giving some away). Place the hook in the vise and attach the dumbbell eyes about 1/3 of the hook shaft length from the eye using figure eight wraps and cross wraps. Tie in the white bucktail in front of the dumbbell eyes. Rotate the hook 180 degrees (or take the hook out and place it upside down in the vise if you don't have a rotary vise) and tie in a few fibers of pink Krystal flash. Top that with the fluorescent pink bucktail. (The best assortment of dyed bucktail I've found is at Jann's Netcraft (<http://jannsnetcraft.com>), but it is listed as deer tail). Fish this as you would any Clouser. The fluorescent pink colors make it highly visible even in dingy water.

Calendar

Jun 19 NLFF Mtg., 7 pm, Camp Forbing, LA
Jun 19 CFC Mtg., 6 pm tying, 7 pm meeting, Room 204, Kirkman Hall, McNeese campus, Lake Charles, LA
Jun 25 ORFF Mtg., 7 pm, 226 Lakeside Dr., Monroe, LA
Jun 25 RFF Fly Tying, 7 pm, Wildlife and Fisheries Bldg., Quail Dr., Baton Rouge, LA
Jun 28 NOFF Mtg., 7:00 pm, Whitney Bank Bldg, 1441 Metairie Road, Metairie LA
Jul 3 AFR Mtg., 6 pm, Grace Presbyterian Church, 518 Roselawn Blvd., Lafayette, LA
Jul 9 RSFF Mtg., 7 pm, Wildlife and Fisheries Bldg., Quail Dr., Baton Rouge, LA
Jul 13-15 Gand Isle Fly Fishing Weekend, Blue Dolphin, Grand Isle, LA
Jul 17 NLFF Mtg., 7 pm, Camp Forbing, LA
Jul 17 CFC Mtg., 6 pm tying, 7 pm meeting, Room 204, Kirkman Hall, McNeese campus, Lake Charles, LA
Juy 23 RSFF Fly Tying, 7 pm, Wildlife and Fisheries Bldg., Quail Dr., Baton Rouge, LA
Jul 26 NOFF Meeting, 7:00 pm, Whitney Bank Bldg, 1441 Metairie Road, Metairie LA
Jul 30 ORFF Mtg., 7 pm, 226 Lakeside Dr., Monroe, LA

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