

APRIL 2006

On The Fly

DON COLEMAN PASSES AWAY

It will be strange walking into the April meeting and not seeing Don Coleman there tying flies. Don, a welcome fixture at SFF meetings, a fly tying and fly fishing guru, and dear friend to all, passed away on April 5 of a massive heart attack.

Beverly, Don's wife of 60+ years, has taken his ashes back to the family home in Binghamton, NY.

DON COLEMAN'S LEGACY

Don Coleman lives on when Suncoast Fly Fishers smile at each other and teach others to tie flies even better. His spirit continues as we strive to teach others to cast well and to share our knowledge.

Your SFF Board agreed to: Name the December Ft. DeSoto outing the "DON COLEMAN CLASSIC;" to have a special memorial outing in July at Blackthorn, a favorite spot of Don's; and to make a collection of Don's essays on fly-fishing available to all members.

For our Everglades trip, we'll be staying at the LaQuinta Inn on Peters in Ft. Lauderdale. Call (954/476-6047) for reservations or check at the front desk for dinner plans and fishing log information.

Fish are fat, hungry, and waiting. We have a good crowd going April 28-30.

MARCH OUTING

Many redbird and snook were sighted at the March outing at Fred Howard Park near Tarpon Springs. However, they were not biting. Most of the members took to the Kayak Trail and others waded the flats on either side of the causeway.

Several members caught trout, with Alan Sewell landed a prize-winning 20-incher. This is the largest trout caught all year. Lunch was celebrated with grilled venison kabobs provided by Mark Hays. If you missed it, you shouldn't have.

LAKE PASADENA IN APRIL

The April outing will be at a favored spot - Lake Pasadena. The last outing there was so successful that a return was scheduled due to popular demand of the members.

The idea is to catch even more fish from this fertile bass and bluegill factory than was caught last time. A boat is vital so be prepared to sign up with a partner at the April meeting. Maps and tips on fishing this lake will be available at the meeting.

OUTING PREVIEW

May -- Night snook fishing.

June -- City Pond Rodeo Roundup

July -- Blackthorn Memorial

Ken Hofmeister

TOURNAMENT FINALISTS 2005-2006

SUNCOAST FLY FISHERS

Club Officers

President: **Ken Hofmeister** 727/521-1637
Vice President: **John Zientarski** 727/391-1480
Secretary: **Alan Sewell**
Treasurer: **Joe Bolesina**

Board of Directors

Ken Doty	Mark Hays
Ken McKinnon	Charlie Most
Richard Oldenski	Art Tassoni

“On the Fly”

is the monthly newsletter of the Suncoast Fly Fishers (SFF), a not-for-profit organization offering fly fishing and fly tying instruction to members and visitors. Club membership includes newsletter subscription. Send e-mail submissions to:

cemost@tampabay.rr.com

Snook ---- No entry
Trout ----- Alan Sewell (20 inches)
Redfish ---- No entry
Open ----- Robert Fischer (Mangrove
Snapper - 12 inches)
Bass ----- Charlie Most (14½ inches)
Sunfish --- Mike Tassoni (9 ½ inches)

CANOE FOR SALE

Bill Lakus has a 16-foot Kevlar canoe for sale. Made in Vermont by Memphremagog Canoe. Has two cane seats and comes with two wood paddles. Also has a Canoe Stand for storage. \$650 firm. Contact Bill at 727/393-7637.

LOCAL FLY FISHING GUIDES

Captain Pat Damico, Tampa Bay; 727/360-6466
Captain Mike Homer--Tampa Bay; 727/418-5005
Captain Ray Markham-----Sarasota & Tampa Bay
941/723-2655

REMRANCES OF DON

I first met Don Coleman on a Tuesday evening in 1992 at Carl Hanson's house. I had just moved to St. Petersburg earlier that year and I was really pleased to find some other fly fishermen.

Don and I hit it off right away. We found that we had many things in common; we had fished many of the same Catskill trout streams and we both had an appreciation for the outdoor sports. We started a friendship that lasted for the next 14 years.

Don was a man of many talents, and I couldn't possibly do him justice in the short space available here. After serving in the Navy as a radio operator on World War II troop convoy escorts in the North Atlantic, he earned an engineering degree from Cornell University.

If you drive through upstate New York, you'll likely drive over many roads and bridges designed by Don. He served as Broome County Commissioner of Public Works for many years before retirement.

He designed and built his own house. He did everything himself from digging the foundation, mixing and laying the cement and laying all the bricks, the plumbing, roofing – the works.

You see, Don's father was a stonemason and bricklayer and Don learned those skills at an early age. Some time in the distant future if his house is ever sold, the new owners will get a heck of a surprise if they try to revise the wiring (which Don also installed) because the interior walls are also solid brick!

Don was an excellent fly tier and caster; and he thoroughly enjoyed learning new methods and the application of new materials. As much as Don loved learning these things, he enjoyed teaching them even more.

Over the years, hundreds of new fly tiers have sat at Don's table at Carl's house and at John Homer's shop and have learned the art of fly tying from him.

(cont'd)

His philosophy was – if it takes more than ten minutes to tie a fly, it isn't worthwhile.

DON COLEMAN (Cont'd)

Don was a lifelong student of fly-casting. Whenever a new video came out with some new or different technique, he was the first to get one.

He'd study it, make me study it, and then we would go out to one of the parks and put the new method to the test. It didn't take long to decide if there was anything really new or worthwhile there.

Don also loved shooting sports; especially upland bird hunting. Don was an accomplished target shooter and he conducted handgun training courses for local police departments in his home state of New York.

Don was a voracious reader. He read constantly, especially anything to do with fly-fishing. He would tie nearly every new fly he read about; try them for while and eventually reject most of them.

Now you might think that a man of Don's age would be a traditionalist and he was to a certain degree. Bucktail and saddle hackle were two of his favorite natural materials but he also experimented with all of the new artificial materials.

Don was never put off about learning new things, and that didn't apply just to fishing. Whenever he learned something new, he would write it up, and then he'd share his newfound knowledge with anyone who would listen. Don never lost his enthusiasm for learning or sharing his vast knowledge.

In recent years, Don frequently tied with EP Fibers and their many clones. He had recently cracked Enrico's tying techniques and he was very pleased with that fact.

Don had developed several methods of tying with these materials and had simplified some of the more complex methods employed by others.

One of my favorites is "Don's Dolly Fly" – everything on top like one of his favorite country singers. A good fly, simple to tie, easy to look at and it takes fish.

Don thoroughly enjoyed people. He loved meeting new people, especially if they were fly fishermen.

When we were out fishing, if he spotted another fisherman, he wasn't satisfied until he had cornered that person and got the full scoop on who he was, where he came from and the level of his fishing experience.

Don and I fished together about twice a week; we wade fished mostly, anywhere from the Skyway up to Honeymoon Island, occasionally over to Picnic Island in Tampa or Emerson Point in Manatee County. Most of the time, however, you'd find us at the Skyway or Ft. DeSoto.

In recent years Don's health didn't allow him to do the vigorous wading we had been used to and we started plug casting for bass in some of the local park lakes where we could find a park bench to take an occasional break.

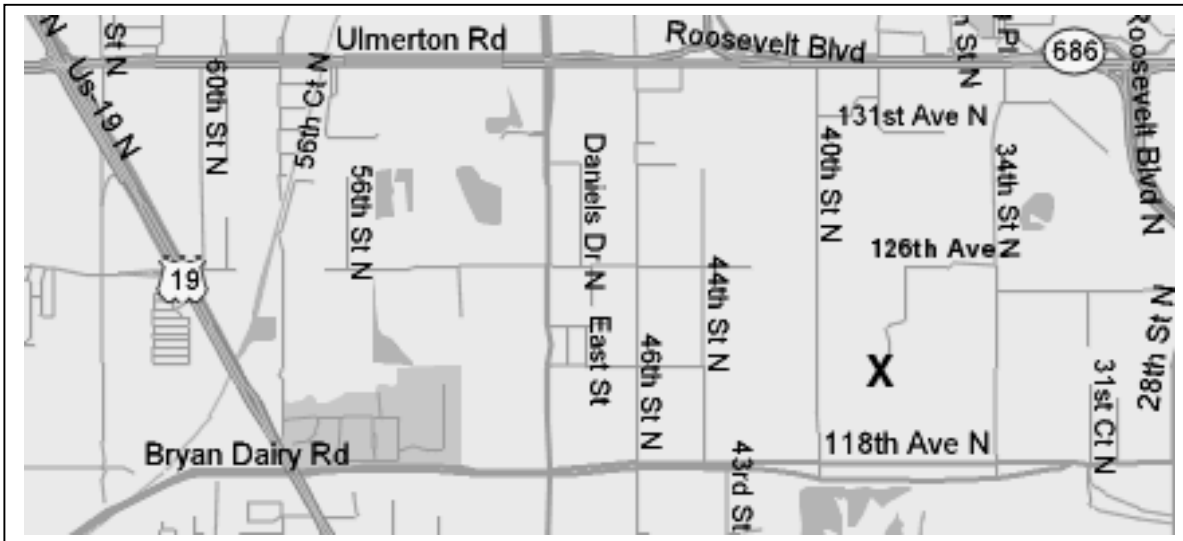
Sometimes, when the weather wasn't especially kind to older bones and joints, our outings would consist of a trip to Frida's Bakery for coffee and a donut, and then maybe a trip to one of the fly or tackle shops.

No matter how we spent the day, we always had a great time; testing flies, knots or leaders, debunking fly fishing myths, arguing politics, telling fishing and hunting tales, or solving the world's problems.

My life is so much richer for having known Don. I have wonderful memories of our adventures, and Don, I thank you old friend, for letting me share a part of your life. If there is a place for guys like us on the other side, perhaps we'll get to do it all again.

Paul Sequira

North ↑



Next Club Meeting:

Time: **6:30–7:00PM Activities, 7:00–8:30PM**

Meeting and Program

Location: **Wyoming Antelope Club, 3700 126th
Ave. North, St. Petersburg**

Program:

On The Fly

P.O. Box 10233
Largo, FL 33773