



## *President's Letter, November 2020*

Suncoast Fly Fishers,

We are having an Open House! This is something that I would like to see as an annual tradition. This year our open house will be on ZOOM and our special guest speaker will be Andy Mill. This will be our chance to invite the public to see what it means to be a member of Suncoast Fly Fishers and I for one think it means a lot.

First, I would like to remind everyone what it means to be in SFF during a normal year. To begin with we have *On The Fly*. Thanks to Bill AuCoin, his co-editors and the many contributors, this is by far the best newsletter that I have ever read. In a normal year we get together every month, except December, for our monthly meeting. There is usually something to eat and drink. One or more fly tyers demonstrate their latest creation. Boy, do I miss Smitty. Everyone has a chance to meet up with their friends in the club and we have a local expert or notable personality speak on a topic of interest. There are special meetings where all are invited to participate in a tie-a-thon and enjoy free pizza. There is the Trash and Treasure live auction each January with the always entertaining Alan Sewell serving as auctioneer. Of course, everyone looks forward to our annual business meeting and a chance for a good snooze.

Each month we usually give away a free subscription to *Tail Magazine*. At the end of each meeting there is a raffle with all kinds of items up for grabs. I have more fur and feathers from this event than I will ever be able to use. Sadly, we lost our beloved rafflemiester, Dave Barson, earlier this year. Each month we host a fly-fishing outing at a local fresh or saltwater venue. There is always a great meal. Some special treats include smoked brisket, our BBQ rib challenge and the annual chili cookoff at the Don Coleman classic.

Casting is the essence fly fishing, and we have many events to learn to cast or sharpen your skills. There is a casting session before each meeting, in the summer, when the days are long enough to provide enough sunlight. We normally have at least two casting clinics taught by master certified casting instructors and we always have a series of practice sessions to improve the chances for our members that want to compete in the Big Gun Shootout hosted by the Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club each November. Every week the club conducts a live fly-tying class hosted by Bruce Evensen. What a great opportunity to get started in fly tying or to learn new patterns and techniques.

Then there are special events. Our annual Christmas party in December. The trip to the Everglades in the spring. Our annual Hog Roast and Silent Auction. If that isn't enough, check out our website and Facebook page.

That was then and this is now. Covid-19 has taken over our lives', but it can't slow down our club. We have canceled or postponed many in person events, but we still have a lot to offer. Since the pandemic we have totally revamped our website and social media platforms. We are holding board meetings, member meetings and even fly-tying classes on ZOOM. We won't be gathering in person for lunches, but we are still holding fly fishing outings each month. And just for the record we still have the best newsletter that I have ever read. Join us for the virtual open house on Thursday November 19<sup>th</sup> featuring Andy Mill.

Stay safe and keep fishing!

*Rick*

Rick Warfel, SFF President