



President's Message: December 2022

Two Thousand and Twenty-Two came in with a whimper but it is going to go out with a bang!

Our first meeting of the year was supposed to be Trash & Treasures, but Covid made a last-ditch spike in infection rates, and we were forced to revert to an online meeting. T&T was moved to February, and it was an outstanding success. Alan Sewel again made us believe that one man's junk is another man's treasure. He will do it again next month when T&T returns live and in-person to its traditional January time slot.

We had our annual casting clinic in January featuring FFI certified casting instructors. Master Certified Instructor Pat Damico led the clinic which was enjoyed by members of the public and all the local fly fishing clubs. Sadly, it was the start of some bad luck for Dayle Mazzarella and family. Wife Barbara shattered her ankle, and they could not travel to our area for the clinic. Later in the year, Dayle had shoulder surgery which put a damper on his summer guide season out West. Look for Dayle to join Pat and a highly qualified cadre of instructors for another clinic on January 14th, 2023.

Our member meetings featured some terrific speakers starting with Capt. Ed Walker chasing fly rod records for gag grouper and ending with Jay Tinsky teaching us the fine art of catching false albacore on the fly. Members Pat Damico, Mike Larkin, Tim Elms and Jim Swann entertained and informed us about tips and techniques, bonefish, tarpon and "sweet water" sunfish, respectively. Tampa Bay Estuary's Maya Burke, FWC's Gina Russo and SFF scholarship winner Jill Thompson Grim kept us up to date on the health of the bay and the fish that are in it.

Bruce Evensen and Bill Scarola have worked together to organize weekly fly tying classes for any of our member that want to learn and Smitty is always present at our meetings to demonstrate fly tying and share his special knowledge about the art of tying flies.

SFF participates in many special events and community outreach programs. This year David Redd organized a dedicated group of members to give several groups of young boys and girls an introduction to fly fishing and casting instruction. Bruce Evensen and Claude Neidlinger represented the club at the Florida Folk Festival at Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park in White Springs. Members tied hundreds of Clouser minnows that we donated to the Greater Tampa Bay Area Counsel of the Boy Scouts for their first fly-fishing only event.

Did I mention the food? The club provided free pizza for our Tie-A-Thon last April and our highly successful Open House just last month. We had gourmet smoked BBQ at our *Brisket by the Bay* outing last August. Our holiday party featured an array of goodies brought by members for the potluck dinner and coming up for the last outing of the year we can look forward to our Chili Luncheon Extravaganza at the Don Coleman outing on December 17th at Ft. DeSoto. I hope to see all of you there.

Happy Holidays and we look forward to another great year in 2023. Stay safe and keep fishing!

Rick

Rick Warfel