



## President's Message: December 2023

It is great to be part of a club like Suncoast Fly Fishers. As we come to the end of another year, we have much to reflect on. This is the first year since the onset of the pandemic that we were able to hold all our events in person without the need to cancel anything due to Covid.

Here are some of the highlights from 2023. Our January meeting kicked off the year with the annual Trash and Treasure auction. This is always an entertaining event. Alan Sewell was the host and auctioneer. He knows how to pick the trash from the treasure and how to get you to pay as much as possible for items in either category. He will be there to entertain you again at our next live auction on January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

We had some great speakers. Walt Durkin gave a terrific presentation on negative low tide fishing for redfish. He told us the how, when, and where to catch them. Founding member Rick Redd told us about the glory days of Tarpon fishing on the Gulf Coast. Justin Tramble of Tampa Bay Waterkeepers and Peter Clark from Tampa Bay Watch educated us about the state of the bay and their efforts to improve our water quality. We heard from guides Brad Lowman, Matt Foster, and our own Pat Damico with their unique perspectives on the sport and our local fishery.

Our Hog Roast this year was a combined banquet with SFF and the Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club. It had to be one of the best ever. We had over one hundred people in attendance and there was a very positive energy in the room. Our speaker was fly fishing legend Chico Fernandez. Look forward to another great SFF/TBFFC combined banquet on April 6<sup>th</sup> next year.

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 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.

Fishing at the outings was a little bit suppressed from the red tide that hammered the area the previous two years. It has not had much of an impact this year and we expect things to start picking up as we move into the new year. Our last outing of the year is coming up on December 30<sup>th</sup>. It is the Don Coleman Invitational fishing tournament and chili cookoff with our club, the Tampa club, and Mangrove Coast from Sarasota. Fishing should be good, and everyone can look forward to another great meal.

This is also the time for all of us to renew our SFF membership and it has never been easier. You can pay by check or with credit card and you can renew on our website [SuncoastFlyFishers.com](http://SuncoastFlyFishers.com) . If you have any questions about your membership, please contact Karen Warfel, ph. 813-505-3162, email [kmwarfel@yahoo.com](mailto:kmwarfel@yahoo.com) .

We are looking forward to a great year in 2024. I hope to see all of you at our meetings, outings, and special events.

*Thanks. Stay safe and keep fishing!*

*Rick*

Rick Warfel