

On The Fly

Newsletter of the Suncoast Fly Fishers of St. Petersburg

Casting = Catching. P10



December's Chili cookoff and Comraderie Outing. P6



Tie this fly. P9



Jack Collins: Applaud Now. P8



Tie the White Death fly. P11



Elms-Evensen-Mitchell-Hays-Nolan-Warfel 2025 Outing Trail Tournament winners

Species	Winner	Length	Outing (Month)
Longest bream	Tim Elms	9-inches	Fresh and/or Salt (June)
Longest black bass	Bruce Evensen/Tim Elms	22-inches	Everglades (April)
Longest Peacock Bass	Tim Elms	18-inches	Everglades (April)
Longest redfish	Robert Mitchell	28-inches	Fresh and/or Salt (June)
Longest snook	Mark Hays	30-inches	Fresh and/or Salt (June)
Longest seatrout	Mike Nolan	20-inches	Lower Tampa Bay (May)
Longest ladyfish	Rick Warfel	21.5-inches	Middle Tampa Bay (Nov.)



SFF President David Redd

President's Message

January promises to be an exciting month for Suncoast Fly Fishers. First we will have our annual Trash n' Treasures event. Alan Sewell will again be our auctioneer. That in itself is worth the price of admission.

Remember, this event is traditionally one of our bigger fund raisers for the year. Please consider donating any items you may no longer need or want. The proceeds from the event help fund things like our outings, the SFF USF Scholarship Grant, The Mayfly Project, and rent for our meeting space. So bid big, bid often and take home some treasures.

Then on January 24th, Suncoast Fly Fishers will host a casting clinic in cooperation with FFI Florida Council. The focus for the clinic will be to cover the required tasks to pass each level of the FFI Casting Skills Development Program, the bronze, silver and gold. Participants will have the opportunity to practice any of these skills and then focus on the ones they wish to improve alongside instructors. The clinic will be led by club member and Master Casting Instructor Dayle Mazzarella and his host of instructors. So save the date and come learn and have fun. Hope to see you there.

Lastly it's time for membership renewals. If you haven't done so already, please renew your membership as soon as you can. Memberships can easily be renewed on the club website under the Eshop tab or at the January meeting.

Looking forward to a great 2026,

David

We are Suncoast Fly Fishers of St. Petersburg

Aims and Purposes

The Suncoast Fly Fishers, Inc. (SFF) is an organization of fishing enthusiasts who love fishing with the fly rod. We welcome all people of all ages with similar interests, regardless of their fly-fishing skill level. We enthusiastically teach those that wish to learn or improve their fly casting, fly tying and related fly-fishing skills. SFF meets monthly where we talk fly fishing, tie flies and most months feature a speaker with a program highlighting local fly-fishing opportunities.

Suncoast Fly Fishers (SFF) is a non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization. SFF is a charter member of the Fly Fishers International (FFI). SFF is a member of the Florida Council of FFI. SFF supports the conservation of natural resources, boating safety and fishing regulations.

Monthly Meetings. Guests welcome.

Third Thursday of every month (except December) at St. Pete's Walter Fuller Park Rec Center, 7891 26th Ave. N. 6 to 8:30 pm.

Directions to our meeting at Walter Fuller Park.

From 22nd Avenue N turn North on 72nd St. N. Turn left (West) on 26th Avenue N. Then turn right into the rec center parking lot.

Monthly Outings

Club members meet up every month for a fly-fishing outing and lunch. Usually it is scheduled on the Saturday after the monthly meeting on the third Thursday of every month.

Contact us by mail: Suncoast Fly Fishers, P.O. Box 40821, St Petersburg, FL 33743-0821

Visit our website and Facebook pages, too

SuncoastFlyFishers.com

[Monthly Calendar](#)

[Facebook.com/scff2020](https://www.facebook.com/scff2020)

Online Pay Portal: Pay dues, donate, purchase

<https://suncoastflyfishers.com/eshop/>

Membership. Welcome new members: Simon De Gagne, Largo

Our club now has 112 members including 14 family and six honorary. Annual membership is \$50 (\$40 for seniors) and \$60 for families. That includes benefits and annual membership in [Fly Fishers International](#) and the [Florida Council](#) of Fly Fishers International.

Paying dues: Dues can also be paid via cash, check or credit card at any club meeting, outing or event. Annual memberships can be paid online through the website -- SuncoastFlyFishers.com -- or by mailing a check to SFF, PO Box 40821, St. Petersburg, FL 33743. You can also pay by credit card by calling Karen Warfel at 813-505-3162.

Suncoast Fly Fishers

P. O. Box 40821
St Petersburg, FL 33743
www.suncoastflyfishers.org

Club Officers

Pres: David Redd
Vice Pres: Jack Collins
Secretary: Tony Piazza
Treasurer: Karen Warfel

Board of Directors

Quin Berry, Bill Scarola, Bob Burkard, Bruce Evensen, Cliff Nigh, John French, Bill AuCoin

Casting: Pat Damico, Dayle Mazzarella

FFI Liaison: Pat Damico

Conservation: Cliff Nigh

Fly Tying: Myron Hansen, Bruce Evensen, Bill Scarola

Hog Roast: Open

Membership: Karen Warfel

New Members:

Webmaster: Tim Elms

Facebook: Cliff Nigh, Anne Mitchell

Outings: Bob Burkard, David Redd, Bill AuCoin, Quin Berry, Anne Mitchell

Outreach, shows: David Redd, Bob Burkard, Bill Scarola

Succession Plan:

Programs: Board of Directors

Publicity: Bill AuCoin

Social media: Anne Mitchell

On The Fly

Editor Bill AuCoin, Abby Gambrel, Anne Mitchell, Bob Hood, Tim Elms, Marshall Craig, Kevin Kelly

Committees--Members are encouraged to serve on one or two committees. Do you? If not, speak to one of the officers at the next meeting.

Meetings, Outings, and More

2025 Tournament Trail Longest Fish Winners

- Elms, Elms, Elms. Evensen, Mitchell, Hays, Nolan, and Warfel
- Congratulations, all. You'll be getting recognition and more at the March Hog Roast

<i>2025 winners: 2025 Outing Tournament Trail</i>			
Species	Winner	Length	Outing (Month)
Longest bream	Tim Elms	9-inches	Fresh and/or Salt (June)
Longest black bass	Bruce Evensen/Tim Elms	22-inches	Everglades (April)
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January-15 Trash 'n' Treasures meeting

- January 15 Trash 'n Treasures meeting. This is one of our big fundraisers. Donate gear you no longer use for the auction. Proceeds go to the club. (You're going to get some real good deals.)
- Bob Burkard chairs the nominating committee and he will introduce other members of the committee and outline the election process.
- The committee will announce its recommended slate in February. Members vote at the March meeting.

Saturday, January 17, Outing, Weedon Island Preserve

Weedon Island Preserve

- The preserve opens at 7 am. Fish anywhere around the park.
- The member catching the longest ladyfish will win a \$10 gift certificate.
- There is a kayak/canoe launch area and several places where you can wade in including nearby Riviera Bay. And there are walking trails down to the Tampa Bay shoreline.
- Fish anywhere around Weedon Island south of Gandy Blvd. and north of the Venetian Isles subdivision.
- Wade fishers are welcome to meet up with Bill AuCoin in the main parking lot at 8 am.
- Picnic at noon: We'll have a picnic and it's going to be at Bruce Evensen's fly tying studio next to his home at 531 80 Ave. No. St. Pete. BYOB. You can park on the street but if there are no empty parking spaces you can park at one of the nearby lots on 4th Street N. Bruce is going to give us a show-and-tell of his impressive fly tying room and invite members to join him and others to tie flies on Monday nights.

January 24 Casting Clinic

- FFI certified casting instructor Dayle Mazzarella and other experts will leader his yearly casting clinic at Campbell Park at 601 14th St. S. in St. Pete. Suncoast Fly Fishers will host this along with FFI Florida Council. The focus for the clinic will be to cover the required tasks to pass each level of the FFI Casting Skills and Development Program: bronze, silver and gold. Participants will have the opportunity to practice any of these skills get guidance from an instructor.

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Meetings, Outings, and More

February 19 Meeting

- Members of the Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club have been asked to share their secrets about catching redfish in February and, specifically, how they have caught them at Cypress Point Park which is the location of our February outing.
- Also, at the February meeting the committee will present its slate of recommended officers and board members. Nominations from the floor are also welcomed.
- Members will vote for officers and board members at the March meeting.
- New officers and board members will take office on April 1.

February 21 Outing

- February 21 outing: Cypress Point Park, Tampa.
- We always invite members of the Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club to join us.

February 20-21, 2026: The 5th Annual Waterman Fly Fishing Tournament

- The Waterman Fly Fishing Tournament is a two-day, fly fishing-only, catch & release redfish tournament with an optional Snook Calcutta with a 50/50 cash payout to be held on February 20th and February 21st, 2026.
- The two-day, photo submission format will make it possible for fisherman in this entire range to participate. The proceeds from entry fees, 50% of the Snook Calcutta and raffle tickets purchases directly benefit Tampa Bay Waterkeeper, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and their mission to advocate for clean water.
- For more information and to register for the tournament go to... [Tampa Bay Waterkeeper](#)

March 28, Hog Roast, St. Jerome Catholic Church



Steve Huff, IGFA
Hall of Famer

- This is our annual fun and fund-raising event with the Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club.
- Member Jack Collins heads the committee to score new and used products that can be on the silent auction tables.
- Our speaker is Capt. Steve Huff. Huff began guiding in 1968 in the Florida Keys after graduating from the University of Miami.
- Huff became the first full time professional fishing guide ever inducted into the IGFA Fishing Hall of Fame. Recently Huff received the Isaac Walton League of America award for modeling the "Compleat Angler" for his fly fishing leadership, mentoring, and conservation.

FFI Florida Council Expo

- Save the date: November 6-7, 2026.
- FFI Florida Council 2026 Expo at Plantation Resort on Crystal River

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Saturday, December 20 at Fort DeSoto Park
Member Tribute - Chili Cookoff - Club Invitational Outing



Bob Burkard, meetings-outings committee chair

Everybody's a winner

Our December 20 outing at Fort DeSoto Park was another fun event with lots of delicious chili to slurp. In fact, there were five different chilies on the table and everybody felt obligated to taste them all to determine the winner. Somebody forgot to ask for show of hands so it has officially been declared that they were all winners. Thanks to chefs: David Redd, Rick and Karen Warfel, Alan Sewell (Alan brought two, chicken chili and beef chili) and Bob Burkard. They were delicious and so was the cornbread; thank you John Connolly.



Chili cookoff. Everybody's a winner. Thanks so much to Bob Burkard, Rick and Karen Warfel, Alan Sewell, David Redd, and anybody else? Who else?

It was also our second Member Tribute outing in which members got to share their thanks and appreciation to Robert Fischer and former member and club president Ken Hofmeister who died of multiple myeloma in 2018. Suncoast Fly Fisher Al Pitcher shared some truly heartfelt fly fishing stories about Ken.

About 20 members arrived for this outing including a brand new member signed up by John French. Welcome Simon de Gagne. Plus we had three guests from the Tarpon Coast Fly Fishers -- Ray Canata, Terry Donne and Barbara Donne. They drove 100 miles or so to be with us at this annual "invitational" outing.

And the best for last. How was the fishing? Well, honestly, not too good. Mike Nolan etc John French caught the longest fish, a 14-inch seatrout, so he wins the \$10 gift certificate. Mike Nolan caught jack, a ladyfish, and a 12-inch seatrout.

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Bob Burkard: January 17 outing at Weedon Island

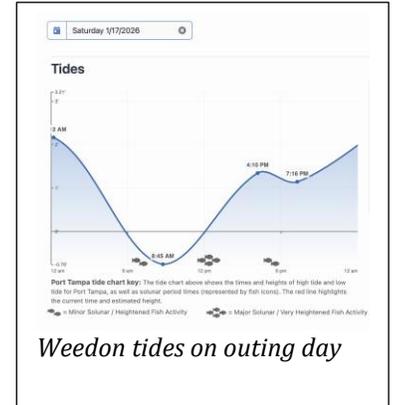


Bob Burkard, meetings-outings committee chair

The preserve opens at 7 am. Fish anywhere around the park.

The member catching the longest ladyfish will win a \$10 gift certificate. But measure all of your catches and you could take the lead in any of the saltwater categories.

Picnic at noon: We'll have a picnic and it's going to be at Bruce Evensen's fly tying studio next to his home at 531 80 Ave. No. St. Pete. BYOB. You can park on the street but if there are no empty parking spaces you can park at one of the nearby lots on 4th Street N. Bruce is going to give us a show-and-tell of his impressive fly tying room and invite members to join him and others to tie flies on Monday nights.



I always think of Weedon Island Preserve as one of the best fishing locations for fly fishers. You can fish the bay or the backcountry and there are lots of places to wade in and fly fish. You can launch your “big” boats on Gandy Blvd. Everybody should fish south of Gandy Blvd. and north of Venetian Islands.

Riviera Bay is great place for waders (not mucky) and ladyfish, our \$10 gift certificate target, like to roam around Riviera Bay in schools. I remember the outing here a couple or three years ago when we were catching ladyfish one right after another. And dolphin would circle around us and eat the ladyfish as soon as we released it.

Ladyfish aside, this is a good time of the year to catch spotted seatrout and redfish. They're going to be in areas with grassy/sandy flats and moving water. Take a picture. Measure it.

If you want to wade fish with others meet up with Bill AuCoin in the main parking lot at 8 am.

<i>It's time to take the lead in the 2026 Outing Tournament Trail</i>			
Species	Winner	Length	Outing (Month)
Longest bream			
Longest black bass			
Longest Peacock Bass			
Longest redfish			
Longest snook			
Longest seatrout			
Longest ladyfish			

Game on

Jack Collins wins FFI's Saltwater Fly Tying Award



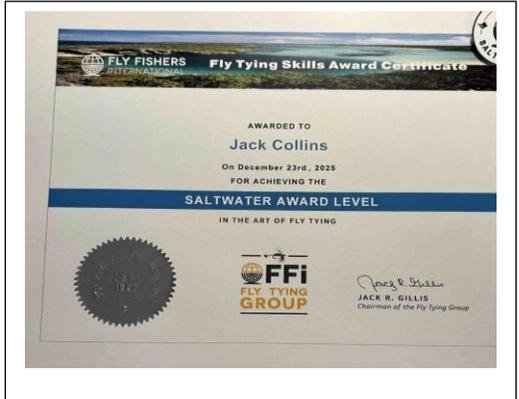
Jack Collins at the fly tying bench.

Suncoast Fly Fisher Jack Collins has won Fly Fishers International's prestigious Saltwater Fly Tying award. Here's his email notification to his Monday night fly-tying fellows:

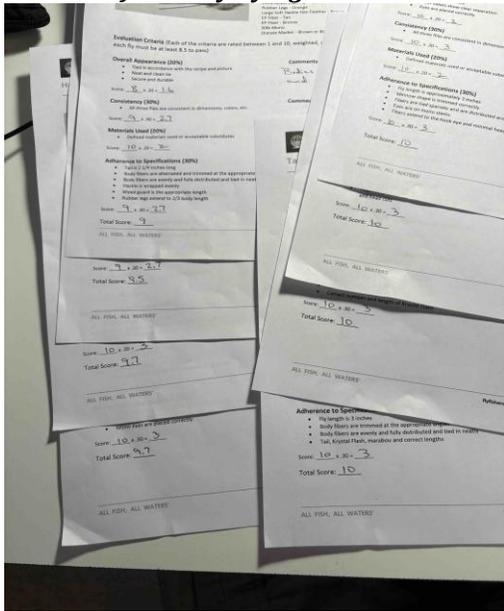
Guys -- I received the Saltwater Fly Tying Award for the 24 flies that I entered in the competition. Attached are pictures of my fly scores, the certificate, and a note from the evaluator regarding my toughest fly, EP Baitfish. I had trouble with the trimming on two others, too. Average score 9.7. As a bonus, I received a \$100.00 gift certificate for being one of the first ten participants to enter the competition.

Thanks to you all for helping me hone my skills over the years on Monday nights. The hours of tying paid off. Plus, I'll have some extra flies for the Hog Roast.

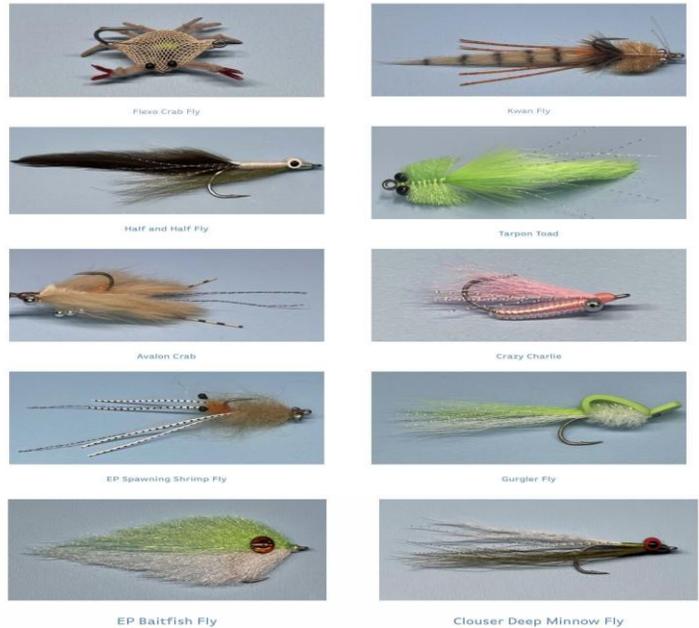
Jack received the FFI Saltwater Fly Tying Skills Award Certificate, the FFI Saltwater Fly Tying Skills Award Pin, and he'll be recognized in the Whip Finish Journal and on the FFI website. For more information about the program go [here](#).



Jack's Fly Tying Scores



Competitors Tie 8 of 10 Saltwater Flies



Jack Collins: Use What You Got

A surprise night at the studio. Create your own fly pattern!

At a recent Monday night fly tying gathering at Bruce Evenson's Fly Tying Studio we did something a little different than our usual guided fly-tying instruction.

A typical Monday evening of fly tying usually begins with a review of a Bill Scarola email. His email provides the name and picture of the fly to be tied. It also includes required materials and instructions for tying that evening's fly. However, this time Bill's email had a twist. It simply stated that Woody Miller was providing all the materials for a *Surprise Fly Pattern*.

Upon arrival, we received an instruction sheet for the evening's pattern. The heading of the instructions read "Use what you got FLY." The idea was that each of us was to tie a fly pattern of our own creation with the materials supplied.

We each received a bag of "Abnormal Materials" (see photo) which included a choice of a #1 or a 2/0 hook. These abnormal materials were a collection of various materials

from Woody's garage. We were also allowed to pick a few additional materials from a second bag of more common fly-tying materials.

To begin tying we were instructed to use our own tools, thread, adhesives, etc.

The rules were simple: tie a fly pattern of your choice. We should use at least three of the "Abnormal Materials." Also, we could use the more common materials in a larger bag. The final instruction was that once all flies were complete those creations would be judged by the participants. The fly with the most votes would win a "very nice prize." When all 10 flies were lined up for viewing the judging began. All flies were very creative, colorful, and made good use of the supplies, including the Abnormal Materials. The top three choices were selected by popular vote. Rapunzel by Gary Sundberg, Gurgler by David Redd, and Spawning Shrimp by Jack Collins which was voted the winner.



Bill Scarola (l) and Jack Collins tie "Abnormal materials" flies.



Tyers had to use the "Abnormal Materials" from Woody's garage



Jack framed his winner, Spawning Shrimp, in front of the prize.



Gary Sundberg's Rapunzel fly.



David Redd's Gurgler

Overall, the evening was great fun. Everyone eagerly demonstrated their tying skills and showcased creativity, swapping favorite techniques and stories as they worked. Laughter filled the room, and the friendly competition brought everyone together, making this night memorable for all.

Jack

Tim Elms: BYE '25! Hello '26



Framed by some notables from November and December 2025

Howdy! Holidays are over and the temperature outside is almost perfect. The almost part refers of course to my preferred hot and rainy fishing weather.

Weekly Casting Fun

This year is starting out with a bang! Well, more of a woooosh of my fly line.



Casting has become a huge part of my fly fishing world over the last 2 years and it keeps ramping up more and more each month. If you haven't heard, the Big Gun Shoot out trophy was finally moved back to St. Petersburg where it belongs, and I plan to keep that title here in Pinellas as long as I'm capable.

If you want to join a group of us that fly casts EVERY week, please let me know. We meet every Saturday (schedule permitting) in St. Petersburg; we hit targets or work on our distance. It's not a clinic but more of a group effort.



Whether you're a seasoned caster or just getting started, you'll find a place here. Don't be intimidated—we're all learning together and having a blast while doing it.

Interested in joining our weekly fly casting practice sessions?

Email me



tim@suncoastflyfishers.com



Bruce Evensen

*Bruce Evensen / Bill Scarola Host Monday Fly-Tying Classes
Open to All*

Bill Scarola: "White Death"



Bill Scarola

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL! TIME TO TIE FLIES AGAIN...

Bill led fly tyers through the steps for the "White Death" fly on Monday, Jan. 5. Fly tyers meet up at 6 pm on Mondays at Bruce's studio located next to his home at 531 80 Ave. No. St. Pete. All are welcome. They can supply a vise and materials if needed. First timers are welcome! So come on over!



Materials:

Hook: Streamer type. I prefer a long shank sizes, 1, 2, and 2/0 . Stinger hooks and 3407 hooks work also.

Thread: Color to match the material used or red, black, white, olive, etc. flat-waxed thread.

Body: Rabbit zonker, white and olive.

Braid: Small braid in silver, pearl or gold. to wrap on the hook shank.

Glue: Super glue and/or UV epoxy.

Optional: Add sinking weight with cone or brass bead head. Or, lead-wrap the hook.

How to:

A. Wrap thread on the shank from the eye to the bend.. Return thread to the hook eye. Add lead wrap now if desired. If you use a cone or bead head, place it on the hook first then apply several thread wraps behind it to secure it in place. You can also add a drop of glue .

B. Starting at the hook eye attach your braid and bring thread to the bend.

C. Palmer the braid to the bend and beyond, leaving a 'TAIL' to extend past the bend approximately 1/2-inch. Or, remove the twine in the center and slide the braid onto the hook shank. Tie in it at the hook eye and cut off thread and re-anchor the thread at the bend to tie off the braid. Be sure to leave it hanging past the bend.

D. Place the zonker leather strip down. Be sure it's about an inch or more longer than the shank.

Tie the zonker in just behind the hook eye. Build up a short tapered head. and cut the thread off. Red and or black thread works well here.

E. Retie your thread in front of the bend by splitting the rabbit fur apart at the bend with your bodkin holding the fur apart to add the thread. Apply 2 to 3 wraps here and cut it off. Add a drop or two of glue to the thread wraps at the head and tail.

NOTE: A drop or two of Super Glue added on top of the braid will help keep the zonker on the top of the shank.

###

Bill AuCoin: Flyfisher Flyover



Fly fishing South Florida's canals -- This article focuses on the canals in Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties. "Most of Florida's canal systems were built during the mid-20th century, particularly between the 1940s and 1970s, as part of large-scale efforts to drain wetlands, control flooding, agriculture, and human habitation. Over time, these canals became popular for boating and fishing, and many are now managed for these uses." ([Fly Fisherman](#))

Where, exactly, are those juvenile tarpon? --- Bonefish and Tarpon Trust describes its major projects for the preceding and incoming years. One biggie is BTT's goal of locating essential juvenile tarpon habitat in Florida to help ensure healthy populations in the coming years. Four of six locations on the Gulf Coast are recommended for restoration. Two of those sites are Coral Creek and Rookery Bay in Collier County. ([Bonefish and](#)

[Tarpon Trust](#))

Can you log in to FFI? -- All Suncoast Fly Fishers are members of Fly Fishers International. I confess that I haven't been logging in to the FFI website in recent years but recently I decided to look up my user name and password and -- voila - I have opened up a world of terrific how-to information. If you're a fly tyer, be sure to download FFI's *Saltwater Fly Tying Manual*. And/or the Fall/Winter 2025 issue of FFI's *Flyfisher* magazine. If you don't remember your log-in user name and password send an email to Membership@flyfishersinternational.org. ([Fly Fishers International](#))

Fly fishing is therapeutic, too. Catching a fish on the fly is instantly rewarding. There's a vibe going around, backed by research, that fly fishing has long term therapeutic rewards, too. ([Midcurrent](#))

What do Steve Huff, Tom Rosenbauer and Flip Pallot have in common? The Izaak Walton Award recently was awarded to Capt. Steve Huff (our Hog Roast speaker) for his career embodying the legacy of conservation and sportsmanship. Previous winners include Flip Pallot, Tom Rosenbauer, and James Prosek. ([Midcurrent](#))

Fly Fishing Insights

(Pinched from the TBFFC newsletter)

"In every species of fish, there exists a wildness that makes them worth pursuing." – Daniel Fisher

"Every cast is an opportunity for a new adventure, a new memory waiting to happen." – Ethan Parker

"Fishing is my favorite way to escape the mundane and embrace the remarkable." – Sarah Mitchel

"Each fishing trip strengthens our friendship, deepening the lines we cast together." – Matthew Judge

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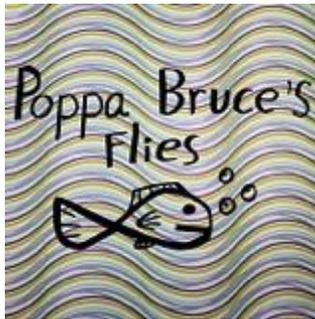
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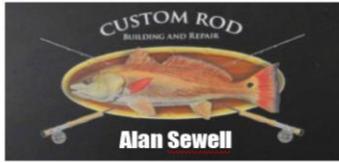
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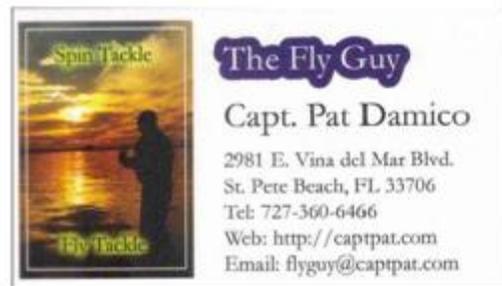


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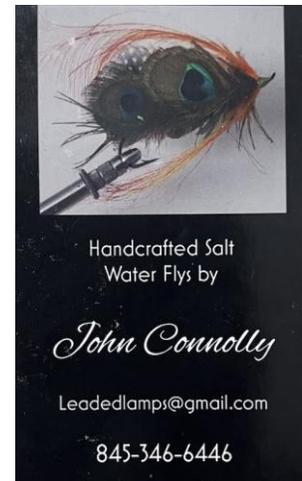
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