



ALAMO FLY FISHERS

February, 2012

San Antonio, Texas

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AFF MEETING

TUESDAY
FEBRUARY, 21ST
ALAMO HEIGHTS
PRESBYTERIAN

February

by Joe Mitchell

Excitement is building and spring is just around the corner. Warm weather has some of us itching to get our lines wet and try out the new flies that we have spent the winter creating. Pray for rain as we are getting nearer to our annual White Bass outing at Colorado State Bend Park in March. Details will be covered at the February meeting.

Cast iron and Dutch oven cookers prepare. It won't be long and the Colorado Bend Saturday night fish fry will have the first annual cast iron dessert cook-off. Sources tell me the competition once again will be hot and tasty. I am sure we will all look forward to judging the results. Volunteers who will teach casting and fly-fishing in general are needed for that day. Please contact our outings director to Walter Ross to help out with this event.

We hope to provide impromptu outings very soon which will be announced by e-mail and happen as fishing hot-spots are identified, or private access is authorized locally. These will be unscheduled and short notices for those who may not be busy. Often these fishing trips are planned at the weekly fly tying. Even if you don't want to tie a fly, stop by and see what everyone is up to.

We extend a warm welcome to all the new members who joined recently. Some expressed a desire to understand the mysteries of fly-fishing, and others are new arrivals in town. We hope to help your addiction with the life-long love of fly-fishing. I encourage you to contact any club officer with any special needs or requests on a topic. Welcome aboard and come join us soon, as you will never meet a stranger. Whether you **are searching for fishing, boating, or other skills there we've got someone who can help you.**

As we enter this New Year, let us all join in a partnership to promote our sport in a spirit of good will and sportsmanship to the public. We will all gain from the experience. Extend the outdoors to those not yet so fortunate. Our number one rule is to have fun!

My thanks to everyone behind the scenes who works so hard to make this organization enjoyable and productive. The dues, raffles, and fundraisers help very much. Countless hours are donated by your officers to produce the newsletter, scheduling, presentations, education, accounting and all the events we enjoy throughout the year. I am proud to be part of this fine group of dedicated and hard working individuals who make it look easy and my job much easier.

Thanks, and tight lines to you all!

Joe Mitchell

President

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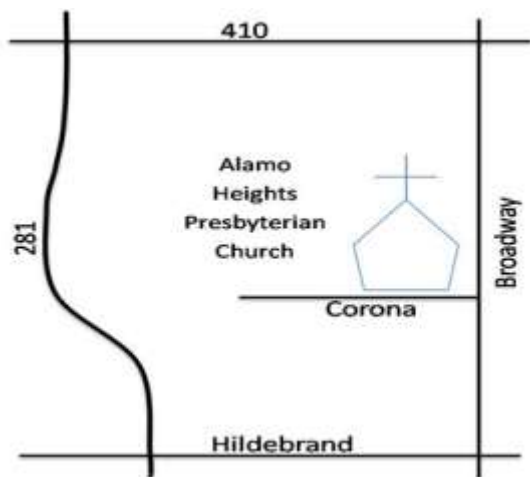


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Conservation	Mike Copeland	(210) 342-0766
Web Master	Mike Lee	(210) 832-5217
Newsletter	David McWilliams	(210) 478-6534

REGULAR ACTIVITIES

- Meetings are held the third Tuesday of every month, 7 p.m. at Alamo Heights Presbyterian Church, 6201 Broadway.
- Fly tying sessions are held every Tuesday at 7 p.m., with the exception of meeting night. Bring your vise and tying gear or just come and share in the discussion.



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Kevin Stubbs



The Speaker for February is Kevin Stubbs, lead guide at Expedition Outfitters which provides float and fish adventures targeting Guadalupe Rainbow Trout, Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass, Stripers, Rio Grande Cichlids, Carp, Sunfish and Long Nose Gar on the upper

and lower Guadalupe River, San Marcos River, Devils River, Llano River, and other spring fed streams.

Kevin Stubbs has many years of experience in the outdoor industry and a diverse background. He started guiding in South Texas while in college running quail hunts with his pointers and labs and became one of the first guides on Baffin Bay. He moved on to learn guide fly fishing on the Roaring Forks River in Colorado from some of the best in the business. After spending many seasons working and guiding in Colorado and South Texas, Kevin moved to Seattle, Washington, to fish and escape the Texas heat. He made a transition to an outdoor media firm representing hunting and fishing magazines and TV shows. While in Seattle, he was hired to work in the sales and marketing department of StreamWorks and Scientific Anglers. In 2001, he left Scientific Anglers to resume guiding and outfitting.

Kevin is one of the premier guides of the Devils River, one of the most pristine rivers in Texas. Kevin will share some of his adventures in his 20 years of experience floating and fishing the Devils River. If you think you might be interested in a high adventure outing like this or just hearing some great stories, this is a program for you.



Upcoming Events

- **February 4th:** Houston Fly Fishers would like to invite you to the 20th Annual Dr. Ed Rizzolo Fly Tying Festival at Bethany Christian Church, located at 3223 Westheimer, Houston, TX 77098. Hours from 9:00 am until 4:00 pm. Admission fees are: Adults - \$10.00; Students and Seniors (62+) - \$5.00; Children under 12 - Free ; Family - \$15.00.
- **February 18-19:** The AFF has been asked by The Wildlife Committee to provide a fly casting lessons to youth. Volunteers are needed. Contact david.mcwilliams@hotmail.com
- **February 24-26:** GRTU Troutfest 2012, a Fly-Fishing Banquet and Exposition will be held on the Guadalupe River at [Rio Raft Resort](#) on the 24th, 25th & 26th of February 2012. Classes, and local shopping will surely provide enjoyment for the whole family! For more information go to <http://grtutroutfest.org/>



Fly of the Month—Thunder Creek

By Rob Burlingame



When thinking of flies that imitate baitfish, the first to come to many of your minds will be the infamous Clouser Minnow. This month, I will introduce you to another effective pattern that was originally produced for taking trout and salmon in the **northwestern US. This month's**

pattern is the Thunder Creek.

The Thunder Creek is a very effective pattern for mimicking small baitfish in nearly any stretch of water. You will find them to be effective for trout on the Guadalupe. You can also catch bass, panfish and catfish on other hill country rivers. This pattern will catch white bass and crappie, especially when they reach their annual spawning patterns. In a short **statement, this fly will catch any fish that eats baitfish when it's** presented correctly.

This fly is also very adaptable. You can tie it in any color that bucktail is offered in. you can use squirrel tail for smaller patterns for a unique barred appearance. You can wrap the hook shank with different shades of sparkle braid or tinsel. For a flashier appearance, add krystal flash between the colors. Change the color and size of the eyes you are using. Play with a variety of sizes and colors until you find the best match for the local baitfish. The only hard and fast rules when tying a Thunder Creek are (1) create a prominent head on the fly, (2) tie the body fairly sparse to imitate young (and partly translucent) baitfish and (3) apply eyes and cement to the head. **Beyond that, it's up to your imagination.**

Since the Thunder Creek has very little weight to it, it is best to throw on a weighted leader or sinking fly line to get the fly into the strike zone. You can present the fly by swinging it through ripples or current seams. You can also use a short strip presentation to twitch the fly through calmer or deeper waters. Similar to fishing a clouser, presentation methods are almost as variable as the color options.

This fly is yet another tried and true specimen to add to your freshwater fly box. In fact, I have a hunch this may also be a producer on the flats, though I have yet to try that! The Thunder Creek is an inexpensive and quick pattern to tie, so there is no reason not to add a few to your arsenal. Follow the steps below and get a few in your box for this year. After a few field tests, you will be glad you did.

Materials:

Hook: Long Streamer Hook (like Mustad #9674) in size 6-10

Thread: 6/0 or 140 weight, color to match fly body

Thread: 6/0 or 140 weight, red

Body: Buck Tail, two colors of choice, one light, one dark

Flash: Sparkle Braid or Tinsel, Krystal Flash (optional)

Other: Stick on eyes or paint

Other: Head Cement or Epoxy

Other: Drinking Straw

Tying Steps:



1) Start the thread close to the hook eye



2) Tie in your choice of body flash. For sparkle braid, tie in at the head and wrap backward to about the hook bend and back to the hook eye. For krystal flash, tie several strands that extend a small amount beyond the

hook bend.



3) Tie in a small clump of light buck tail, about 1 1/2 times the hook length, on the bottom of the hook so that the bucktail extends out over the hook eye.

4) Tie in a similar sized but slightly longer clump of darker colored bucktail on the top of the hook in the same manner.

(Continued on page 8)



SCOUTING REPORT

By Clay Gill

Howdy and welcome to the Alamo Fly Fishers! All are welcome and this family oriented organization welcomes you to join us outdoors for some great activity this year fly fishing the Lone Star State. Join us soon at a meeting or outing to get started and if you are new-we can help you get started. You **won't meet a stranger!**

Fishing weather has been mild and warmer and there has already been some White Bass moving upriver at Canyon. Stripers and Whites are in the area of the river mouth and some people are taking them suspended even now. They have been ganged up and moving toward the river a week or so and my son reports some decent catches down from his house there. **Get ready soon as it won't be long.**

There will be problems for some rivers on the White Bass scene this spring. It will be water problems as usual with the spawn run short of the places we know to go. So where do we go. If you have only been a few places like Colorado Bend State Park, near Bend Texas, you might not have heard of other locations where you can find some activity. Area lakes are so low right now. Check before you go for Whites!

From George West, up to Three Rivers the good fishing river there is the confluence of two rivers falling into Choke Canyon and running downstream by Three Rivers. The fish come up from Corpus Christi Lake where they are abundant. A good place to go is the public ramp, and launch a small boat or **kayak and fish the best kept secret known as the " Airport Ramp" . It is half way south to George West from Three Rivers,** and a sign denoting the small airport will put you on the ramp parking lot once you turn left going south.

The secret at this place is to go as far as you can upriver, and once you see gravel on the banks and maybe a few small Gators on the mud banks--you are where the fish like to spawn over the gravel bottoms there. It is best in late February and early March. First the smaller males-then the fat females **will charge up there and feed well on small flies. Don't go** alone, and take food and water. It is an adventure and there will be safety in numbers. A flat bottom boat and kicker work best, but flats boats do just as well. You can fish from kayaks also but need to go two miles to get to gravel bars. There will still be some fish near the ramp which is mud banks.

Coastal activity is slow but plentiful as always in winter. **If you are inclined to try for fish ganged up in the "holes"** as they do after frontal passages and generally during the coldest weather and water temps, fish the deepest potholes in the channel areas for fish in large concentrations. An example would be a harbor or basin. Do not block a navigable waterway, but looking at Google Earth, you will see dark spots on the zoom in of say a subdivision or harbor basin. Those darker spots on Google Earth are deep water.

Right on the edges of these holes and usually by rocks

and pilings will be large Trout. They will stay in the holes, but **venture up to the edges to feed. Don't tell anyone, but you too** can get some whoppers at this transition place near those markers I spoke of within sight of much activity, boats, and traffic. One spot we know is simply a tie up to a piling and fish toward rocks at steep drop offs for some great oversized Trout that feed those edges.

I cannot give you the coordinates. My son-in law is a big guy and has threatened me! The Reds will be in the bottom of the holes. They just lie on the bottom for a few days until it warms up-then hit the shallows again. Fish slower for them. The feeding Trout will be active.

Freshwater activity for Bass, Stripers, and the like is slow now. If you can get into ranch lakes now is the time to hit the ditches and holes or borrow pits of these lakes for concentrations of fish trying to find the most warm place there is for them. They too will be spawning but it will be mid February and they will be shallow again and generally structure oriented as they nest or pretend to. Let big females go as always! They make more fish!

Be sure to check the web site for activity coming soon and let us know if you need any skills classes. Casting, tying and knots can always be taught as needed. Please ask for help if you have special needs and let us know what you might like to see this year on the speakers.

Good luck fishing this year and be careful outdoors. Cold water dangers are serious and frontal passages that catch you off guard are just as bad. Play it safe!





Just One More Cast



By Clay Gill

Silent Danger

When you are young you never think about being out in the sun. We get red and burn or blister at the beach and just say it will go away. It does. And the damage becomes accumulative. The injury to our skin over time is something we pay for later when the long hours fishing, swimming and being outdoors comes back to haunt us.

I had a family member who was told she basically needed to just not go out in the sun any more. The various testing and discovered damage caused this Dermatologist to advise her it was simply not ok to get any more exposure. The areas frozen and burned off were just an attempt to curb precancerous areas and the overall condition of her skin was so damaged she was told--no more sun!

Once you get to this point you are not going to repair the problem. You just try to make do with what you have left. They can pinpoint the heavily damaged areas and pre-determine where your problems will probably pop up. If scaly rough and dry patches are already popping up it is the precancerous warning so to speak of problems around the corner. If you ignore a Melanoma and it internalizes you can die from this problem. Early detection is the key to cure. Regular check ups are good.

As fisherman, we get plenty of sun. Lifelong fishermen and people who boat a lot have the need for protective clothing and lotions that squelch the suns blast as we enjoy the outdoors. We cannot stop living, but going out without protection is not good. It is a gamble and each burn is a step closer to your day with skin surgery.

There are some great lotions now with SPF factors that help. Clothing can cover areas that have taken beatings for years, and head gear now can cover not only your head top,

but your whole face. Guides have made them fashionable and these guys really need it. One guy we know in Aransas Pass who has been a Croaker soaker for a long time looks like a Gator! Wrinkles and spots on his spots are evidence of the decades in the sun. He has been cut many times and refuses to stop.

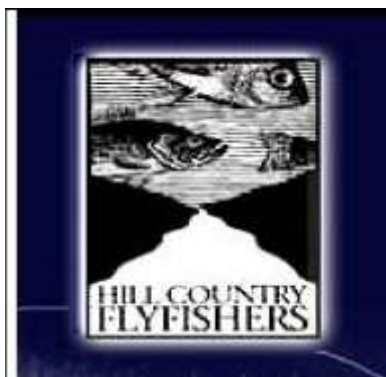
Jimmy Buffet once said that wrinkles go where smiles have been. It may be true but everyone who is light skinned and anyone who has had way too much sun all their life needs to be checked. Get examined for problems, you may not recognize. Winter sun is just as bad. It is accumulated damage you must be aware of and know your overall condition. A good doctor will tell you and treat problems before the lesser skin cancers or Melanoma internalizes --possibly killing you.

Places that bleed constantly or do not heal should be checked. Multi-colored areas that you are aware of or seem festered, are suspect. Even dark places that pop up and crusty places need to be checked. They can easily determine if they are cancer. Wait too long and you may need to have extensive disfiguring surgery.

It is scary, and no one wants to think about it. The **check up is easy to put off. Maybe next year. I'm ok. It is just a little spot. Maybe I can get it burned off or frozen later. That's** all I need to do. And maybe it will metastasize and internalize also. Can we afford to gamble. Not a chance. Skin cancer is real --and happens daily.

Learn more about it, and see a professional if you are one who like me has been in the sun way too much without the benefit of protection. I had a lot of fun and now it shows. I have been procrastinating for a while now. It is time get it done. Join me in determining what those spots might be. Lets all try to use proper protection from the sun. It may save your life if done in time. Educate children on these issues and start good practices now to protect your family. It will pay off!

Good luck fishing and get ready for some great times outdoors soon!



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(Continued from page 3)



5) Using the drinking straw, push the bucktail backward over the hook. While the straw is holding the bucktail in place, spread the bucktail so that it uniformly covers the hook.



6) Starting with a light and gradually increasing pressure, tie down the bucktail about 1/4 to 1/3 the way down the hook from the eye to form the head.



7) Whip finish and cut the thread. Using red thread, create a throat on the fly, whip finish and trim thread.



8) Apply a light coat of epoxy or head cement to the head and apply eyes (stick on or painted).



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