

ALAMO FLY FISHERS

NEWSLETTER

Issue XVII, No. 11

November 2002

Just One More Cast



By Clay Gill
President – Alamo Fly Fishers

My hat is off to the die-hard groups of adventurers who made it to the Padre National Seashore Friday November 01, only to find water over the beach blocking our 4x4 path to “Big Shell“. Our group rendezvoused at the National Park Pavilion and found a high tide prevented our travel south. We were going, despite the rain and wind, but there was little or no beach to drive on due to abnormally high tide. We hope to make this an annual trip each year. Reports in the newspaper indicate large numbers of Jacks, Mackerel, Reds, and Sharks in the surf now. This is reportedly going to continue until December as these large fish bash a mullet migration. Surf guru-Billy Sandifer was quoted in the Express Outdoors page as saying the calm days after frontal passages are best at the “Big Shell” beach areas. Guide Jeff Waugh has reportedly seen these large predators in the bay area inside the Port Mansfield jetties recently, according to outdoor news reports. The time is right. This action occurs just a few yards off the beach!

We are trying to do a make-up trip very soon and anyone who might be able to go possibly on a weekday, contact us soon for details. This will be a quick notice departure during the next couple of weeks. We will cruise “Big Shell” in search of feeding frenzies in the first gut just off the beach. If possible, we will try again in the same area -called the “elbow” past mile marker 25. Holler soon if you can come and camp with us. This fishing can be wild and wholly. You could get a record book fish here.

This was the third outing to be punched out by “El Nino”. We will not say die, and plan to try the San Marcos River next weekend if Jon King concludes the logistics for that drift trip with our club friends from San Marcos. Stay tuned to the web site for the details of that outing on November 09.

We hope to keep the fall and winter fishing going and anyone with suggestions or destinations for the continuity of activity, please contact a club officer. Trout action will also be addressed soon, as the stockings begin and Jon King hopes to put together afternoon trips, with dinner to get out this winter.

Thanks for the help to all those who assisted on

October 29, at the last outdoor skills session for casting this year. Casting sessions can still be addressed by request during the winter. If you are a new member, or need special attention, please contact any club officer for those needs.

We have been told the Colorado Bend State Park is full for the “Spring Break” weekend March 22/23, -2003. We will be going for our annual weekend White Bass trip there. If you do not have an individual reservation yet, the club has an additional group area reserved at the park. Jon King will be taking reservations and payment at the next meeting to reimburse the club for this pre-paid additional camping we booked last month before the park reservations filled. It will give us space for twenty-four more people on a first come-first served basis. If this outing is new to you, it can be exceptional fishing and lots of fun. The Saturday fish fry is the highlight of this event, and families really enjoy this one.

It is not too early to re-new your dues. If paid September or later they carry over for next year. Also- do not forget the Christmas party and raffle on December 07 at 6:30. We will have great prizes and food at Tommy Wilson's BBQ on Wetmore Rd. We have a party room and food will be provided. Contact John Marfin at the next meeting to indicate the number of persons for the food order due on November 22. You can pay at the door or the November meeting, and price will be 10.00 dollars per adult and 5.00 dollars for children. There are some super rod, reel, gear, gift certificate, and guided trip prizes. Get your tickets soon for this fundraiser, which greatly benefits the club efforts. Imagine winning the Sage and reel.

Jon King hopes to schedule some day trips in January to prevent cabin fever. If anyone wants to hit the Trout pools contact him at the meeting to pick dates for a day trip and dinner afterwards. We hope to keep the fishing going year round, and refuse to let this crazy weather get in our way forever.

I want to extend a hearty thank you to Mike Richards for his fine work on this newsletter and our website. He is an absolute gentleman and a fine friend to this organization. Let us also salute all the hard working club officers and chairpersons who strive to make things happen for us. Thank them if you get a chance for their tireless efforts. They keep our wheels greased, and make my job easier.

Let us not forget the providers of our raffle prizes who support us. Be sure to thank them also for the support they provide when you fill those Christmas lists in their shops, or see those generous persons.

Take a youngster fishing, have fun, -and tight lines to you! ■

November Meeting (Nov. 19) **Program**

Fly Fishing Northern New Mexico

By Jay Forrest, Vice President, Alamo Fly Fishers

Our speaker for November is Doc Thompson, a well-known fly fishing guide in northern New Mexico and a popular speaker at conclaves and banquets. Doc's program will explore the range of fly fishing available in the high country of northern New Mexico, featuring rivers and streams around the Sangre de Cristo area, such as the Cimmaron, Rio Grande, Red River, and Rio Costilla. In addition Doc promises to include tips for trout fishing. This promises to be a spectacular program as Doc is known for great presentations. Hope you can make it! ■

November Outing

Fishing the San Marcos or Blanco River

On November 9th, members of the Alamo Fly Fishers will fish with the Central Texas Fly Fishers (the San Marcos fly fishing club). The San Marcos club will choose the river to be fished (either the Blanco or San Marcos) and the time and place where the trip will begin. These decisions will be made by Thursday, November 7th. Refer to www.alamoflyfishers.org on Thursday night to learn the time and place to meet and other details of the trip. If you do not have access to the internet, you can call Jon King at 210-378-7414 or Clay Gill at 210-491-0555 for information on the trip. After the trip, club members will have Bar-B-Q with members of the San Marcos club. ■

Fishing for White Bass

By Jay Forrest, Vice President, Alamo Fly Fishers

I was thrilled to get Charlie Cypert to drive down to San Antonio to talk to us about fishing for white bass because I have had a really tough time catching white bass in previous trips, I knew Charlie knew white bass about as well as anyone, and I had heard him speak before. But I still wasn't ready for his October presentation. Charlie's experience showed and he really got into the details of catching white bass. From full sink lines, to flies, to retrieves, and rivers, Charlie told it all. And I am ready at last to catch white bass by the dozens! I can't wait till February gets here! ■

Refer to www.alamoflyfishers.org for:

- Updated information on club activities
- Cancellation of club activities

Bad Day At Big Shell



By Mike Richards

It was a good plan. We would meet at the Malaquite Beach Pavilion, drive down the beach together to Big Shell, and camp and fish there. According to the weather report, the wind speed would be from 18 to 20 mph, and the temperature would range from the mid 50s at night to the low 70s during the day. There was a 30% chance of rain. Alamo Fly Fishers could camp and fish in those conditions.

When we arrived at the pavilion, it was raining. Even though the odds were against rain occurring (70% chance of no rain), it was raining. The wind speed must have been 25 to 30 miles per hour. The tide was so high and the wind was so strong that the waves washed all the way across the beach and against the dunes. The beach road was covered with waves. There was no way we could drive the beach road to Big Shell.

There was no plan B. For most of us, this meant a leisurely dinner a Sea Island, and a three hour drive home. If the conditions had been good, the trip to Big Shell could have been exciting and enjoyable. Hopefully, we will try again to fish Big Shell, and hopefully the conditions will be much better. ■

Calendar of Events

November 9	-- San Marcos River
December 7	-- AFF Christmas Party
January	-- Trout Fishing (location undetermined)
February	-- Trout Fishing (location undetermined)
March 22-23	-- Colorado Bend
April	-- Activity undetermined
May 17	-- Bud Priddy One Fly Contest

Fish Where the Fish Are!

By Jay Forrest

Vice President – Alamo Fly Fishers

Having Charlie Cypert talk to the club last month served as a pointed reminder of how we tend to get in a rut, become a creature of habit, and ignore reality when we go fishing – we all too often fish the top two feet of water when the fish are on bottom! My own record of fishing for white bass stands as a monument for not fishing where the fish were!

Over the past five years I have fished for white bass three times and caught four or five fish over fifteen hours or so of fishing – not particularly good considering that minnow fishermen were catching fish every five to ten minutes. So I know the fish were there and I knew they would be deep, but I was clearly doing something wrong. My most recent effort deserves analysis and sharing.

Like so many fly fishermen, I prefer using a floating line. Knowing the water was only three to four feet deep, I figured I could get the fly down by using a heavy clouser, a long leader, and potentially stacking the cast a bit to create slack leader and casting upstream to let the fly sink before I began my retrieve. Thinking back, that part worked – I could tell I was getting the fly to the bottom and I was hanging up occasionally on rocks – as the fly dead drifted downstream. Once the fly line tightened and the retrieve began I was not hanging up – clearly the fly was rising from bottom.

I wasn't catching fish in the first part of the cast when the fly was on bottom, nor was I catching fish on the last part of the cast when I was retrieving. When my fly was on bottom I was not in good contact with the fly and either the fish weren't hitting the fly or, if they were, I couldn't feel them. During the retrieve portion of the cast I must presume the fly rose out of the strike zone.

As an experienced fly fisherman I sensed as much – and went to very heavy clousers. They were likely too big – scaring the fish to some extent, but they did snag bottom more – and I did catch a few fish before I lost the last one on a rock. But it was still clear I was not keeping the fly on bottom even though I was using very heavy flies.

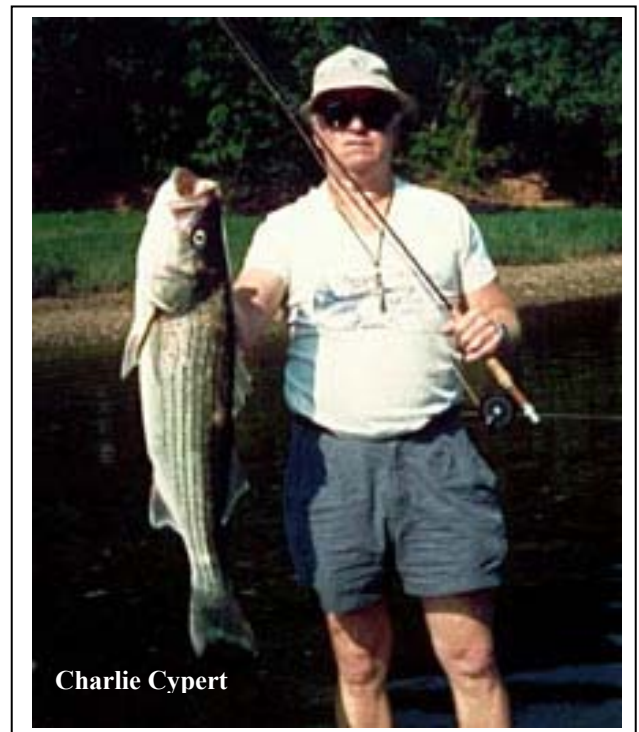
Looking back I should have switched to a sinking line, but that would have meant a quarter mile walk to the car and back, and I kept rationalizing that I couldn't do much better than I was – the flies had to be the problem! (Ha!)

As I listened to Charlie talk about how to catch white bass that experience flashed through my mind and the message was seared into my brain! I had been fishing where the fish weren't. If I got down another foot or so I would catch fish

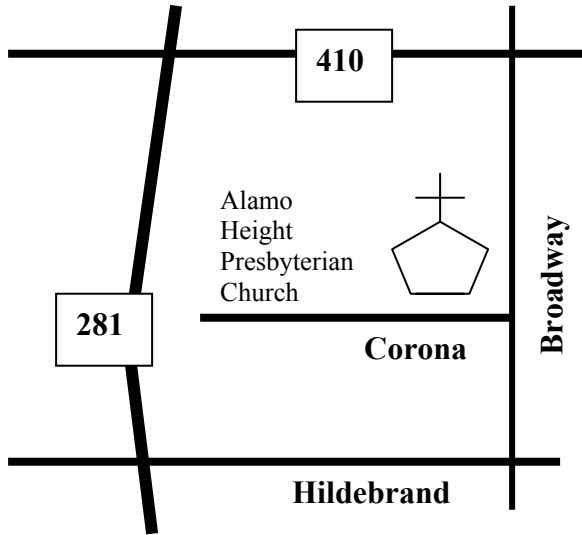
and I would need a full sink line just like Charlie suggested. Charlie verified what I had known down deep but refused to admit (so I could continue to use a floating line). With my new full sink line I will be ready for February!

One final kicker deserves comment. After the meeting I asked Bruce Young if he would like to talk about fishing for pan fish in the spring. Bruce said, "Yes, but I don't have the pictures." When I asked what kind of pictures, Bruce said, "Pictures showing where to fish. Most of the time when I watch beginners they are spending most of their time fishing where there are no fish!"

Given that I had just admitted to myself that I had been fishing above the fish, Bruce's comment really struck home. Put the fly where the fish are and you will catch more fish! ■



Where to Find Us



**Alamo Heights Presbyterian Church
6102 Broadway**

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.

Alamo Fly Fishers club officers

Clay Gill	President	491-0555
Jay Forrest	Vice-Pres.	490-3732
Todd Fleming	Treasurer	497-3062
Jon King	Outings	378-7414
Buddy Robichaux	Education	492-7125
Mike Richards	Newsletter	641-7268

AFF Web Site--<http://www.alamoflyfishers.org>

Local Fly Shops

Tackle Box Outfitters

6330 N. New Braunfels
San Antonio, TX 78209
210-821-5806
Fax 210-821-5807
tackleboxoutfitters.com

One Shot Outdoors

18720 Stone Oak Parkway Suit 105
San Antonio, TX 78258
210-402-5344
Fax 210-402-5365
oneshotoutdoors.com

Gruene Outfitters

1629 Hunter Road
New Braunfels, TX 78130
830-625-4440

Northwest Tackle Center

6850 Bandera Road
San Antonio, TX 78238
210-681-0009
Fax 210-681-0067

ALAMO FLY FISHERS
P. O. Box 6224
San Antonio, TX 78209

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Bulk Rate US Postage Paid Permit No. 00000

Mailing Address
Street Number and Name
City, State 98765