



ALAMO FLY FISHERS

September 2009

San Antonio, Texas

Page 1 of 12

AFF MEETING

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER
15TH

ALAMO HEIGHTS
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

DIRECTIONS ON PAGE 2

WHAT'S INSIDE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.....	1
CLUB INFO.....	2
OUTINGS OUTLOOKS - SEPTEMBER 2009	3
PARTICIPATING IN "REEL" OPPORTUNITIES.....	4
A TRIBUTE TO WOMEN ANGLERS.....	4
SCOUTING REPORT.....	6
JUST ONE MORE CAST - SIGNIFICANT CONNECTIONS.....	7

Addicted to Fly Fishing... Need Help!

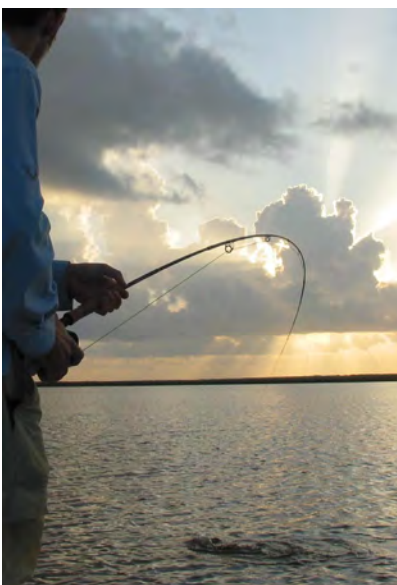
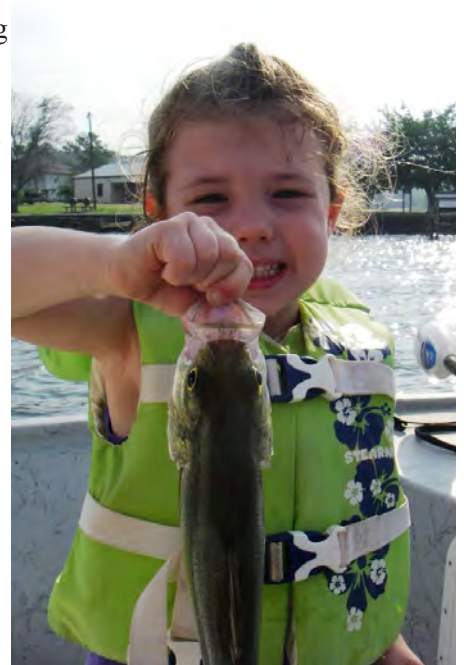
BY ROB BURLINGAME, AFF PRESIDENT

It's hard to believe that September, fall football and dove season are finally here. Even harder to believe was spending a whole weekend without seeing triple digit temperatures! It seems that this year has flown by, despite its many challenges and changes. But the time has come for the temperatures to start inching down, the waters to cool a little, baitfish to ponder their annual southbound migration and some of the best Texas coast fishing to begin! This may just be my favorite time of the year!

September also marks our third annual "Women in Fly Fishing" month. With a wife that is nearly as addicted to the sport as I am, our annual tribute to women holds a special place for me. Many of my articles this year have encouraged members to bring a friend, kid or total stranger fishing with you... why not your wife or girlfriend! There is nothing that can equal quality time with that special someone when it is mixed with a few tight lines and splashing fish! I am proud to be part of such a great club that supports our women anglers. Make sure you are at our meeting this month to let the ladies know how important they are to us and the sport.

Having been a member of this club for a little more than six years now, I am still amazed at how much knowledge and experience lies within arms reach to those who are bold enough to ask for help. Whether you need help with your casting, tying flies, finding fishing spots or just want some company on the water, there is always someone in the club willing to lend a hand. I know that both my wife and I would not be close to the fishermen we are today without the patience and mentoring that this club has provided. Many of you have seen the accelerated learning and success that can occur when members of this club band together and take a newbie under their wing. Sharing our invaluable information is one of our club's founding mantras and is one of the greatest benefits our club has to offer.

But beware, soaking up too much information may lead to a serious condition... Fly Fishing Addiction. You should all take caution, as I have seen numerous cases recently pop up amongst club officers and members. Common side effects can include



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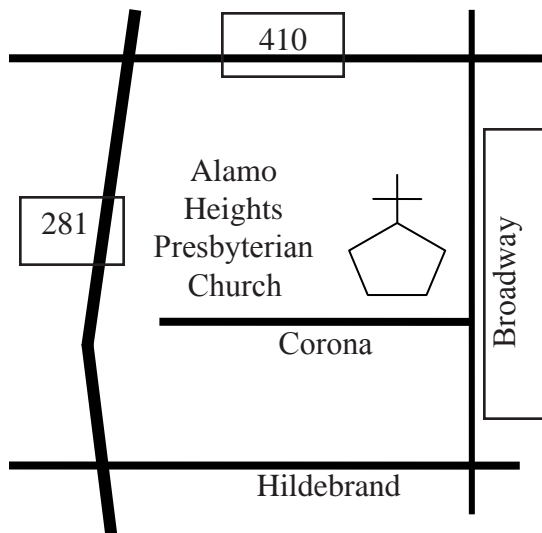
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ALAMO FLY FISHERS OFFICERS

President	Rob Burlingame	(210) 885-3730
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Web Master	Rob Burlingame	(210) 885-3730
Newsletter	Andy Niland	(210) 651-4359
Conservation	Ed Niehaus	(210) 829-4011

REGULAR ACTIVITIES

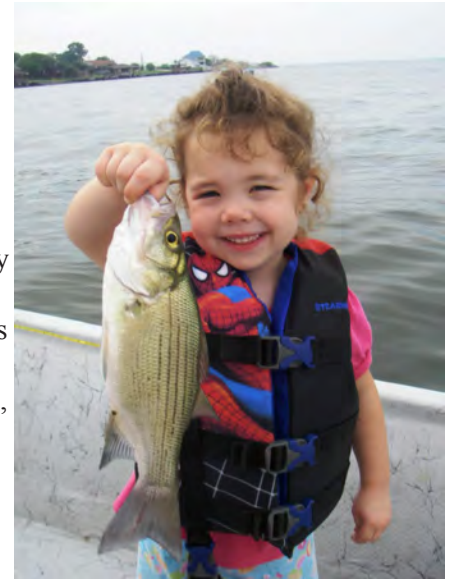
- Meetings are held the third Tuesday of every month, 7 p.m. at Alamo Heights Presbyterian Church, 6201 Broadway.
- Fly tying sessions are held every Tuesday at 7 p.m., with the exception of meeting night. Bring your vise and tying gear or just come and share in the discussion.



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repeatedly tying the same fly (Magic Fly Syndrome), jittery sensations when away from the water for more than two weeks (Lack of Fishingitis), constantly “practicing” fly casting in grassy fields or on your front walk (Grass Bass Disorder), collecting truck loads of fly boxes filled with all colors and sizes of flies (Fly Boxitosis), dedicating



a room or corner of your house to fly tying and fishing (Fly Roomatoma), and developing a severe competitive drive when discovering your buddy just beat your personal fishing best (Trophy Envy). The only known treatment for serious cases of Fly Fishing Addiction are to immediately find the closest fly fisherman and share a skill with them they do not already know. You should also seek help immediately from as many amphibious physicians as possible, found scattered along the Hill Country Streams and Texas Flats.

OK, so fly fishing addiction is not really as bad as it seems. In fact, it is what draws us all together as a club and the shared interest makes our meetings, outings and impromptu gatherings so much fun! We have all seen members join, members go and members come back throughout the years. The faces of the club may change, but the love of fly fishing and the welcoming nature have always remained. And it’s not just a love of one type of fly fishing. In fact, I was somewhat surprised when we collected surveys a year and a half ago at just how diverse our club is. Our membership is made up of all skill levels. We are almost evenly split between those interested in salt water and fresh water. A vast majority either tie their own flies or have done so in the past. Some of us prefer wading, some kayaking and some boating. Some prefer the toothy tangles of the jetties and others prefer an afternoon of perch jerking therapy. Show up on a non-meeting Tuesday and you are likely to find a variety of flies being tied. They say that variety is the spice of life, and we surely have it at AFF.

Armed with the confirmation of our club’s diversity,



Outings Outlook - September 2009

As many of you know, I struggled when I started saltwater fly fishing with this club about nine years ago. I've always been drawn to the salt, but at times it was difficult. Sight casting to fish in shallow water was a new concept. Heck, fly fishing in saltwater was a new concept for me! I had used a fly rod to catch sunfish and small bass on poppers around the dock at the lake, and even caught some rainbow trout on soft hackle in Colorado on a family vacation years ago. But now to consider using a ridiculously light weight rod for big fish, in the wind, at the coast – it never crossed my mind! I tried it and at first didn't have a clue about what I should be doing. I had no idea where to fish, or even what I was looking for. I was still trying to learn all these new leader knots. I'd read and heard others talking about "tailing redfish", but I'd grown up fishing the coast during the summers and never saw any tailing redfish. How could I have missed it? I struggled with all of these new concepts.

My biggest mistake was forcing my son Reece to struggle along with me. I had already been a successful fisherman, and fly fishing was just a new challenge for me. I failed to realize that to keep Reece interested, he needed to be successful catching something – anything. Fly rod or not, he needed to feel the excitement of something tugging on the other end of the line. In the beginning, Reece was anxious to go fishing with Dad, but my mistake was not making it fun for him. Regrettably, Reece lost interest in fishing and focused his attention on other outdoor hobbies.

In the mean time, I stuck with this fly fishing challenge and have started to figure out a few things. More often than not, I now find and catch fish on the fly rod. I am also happy to report that Reece still makes an occasional obligatory fishing trip with me from time to time. When I do get his attention for a weekend or so, I try to make sure it is a fun experience. Recently, I took the easy way out and hired a guide for us. I wanted Reece to get a taste of spotting fish from the bow of a boat in shallow water. I wanted him to feel the excitement first hand. He has


heard my stories, and seen my pictures, but sometimes experiencing it first hand is the only way to get it. It is an adrenalin rush to spot the fish, make the cast, see the gills flare and the tail kick, and then feel the line instantly go tight. Once hooked on those drugs, we're all addicted for life. Reece did get a taste, and I think he will be back for more.



It appears our weather pattern is finally starting to change, and the forecast for cooler wetter conditions are at least mentioned. It is about time and none too soon for that change to happen because this is start of the best time of year for flats fishing at the coast. September, October, and November are without question the best months to find redfish and drum in shallow water. Pray that meaningful rains will fill our lakes, rivers, and reservoirs for productive spring freshwater fishing, but make plans to visit the coastal bend for some saltwater action soon. There are several opportunities coming up for large and small group outings. Let me know if you need help planning a trip, and consider signing up for any of the following events.

October 3-4, 2009 is one last trip to Fence Lake aboard the Skimmer. Our overnight outing there last month was so successful we decided to try it one more time this year. It is a perfect Tentcot opportunity with

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5
September 2009



Participating in “Reel” Opportunities

There is a certain convenience utilizing online resources for angling education. You can inquire on the latest tactics within an online forum, watch animated knot instructions, read various blogs posted by guides and other experts, or even take an online casting class via YouTube.com – all without leaving your study.

At least I used think it a convenience... now I'm not nearly as convinced.

I've been a member of Alamo Fly Fishers for a little over a year, and without a doubt I have learned more from my interactions with the club than I have in 10 years surfing the web. (For a guy who's career was launched with the advent of the .com boom, that's quite a statement.

But it can be hard to step out of your house and into a club full of new faces. Breaking the ice feels awkward, and there is certain vulnerability involved. Here are two secrets to get you over these concerns:

- 1) Everyone present was in your shoes once, too
- 2) Whether you've been guiding for 15 years, or if you've never so much as cast a fly rod, we're glad you came - I promise

Come in on one of our off Tuesdays and tie some flies with the gang. Don't tie? Just come watch and partake in some fish stories. Watch our speaker schedule and bring a friend to hear one you're interested in.

Aside from the obvious benefits of participating, there are some overlooked fringe benefits as well. I think it is safe to say everyone has been impacted to one degree or another by current economic conditions. I can't think of a more comfortable forum to discuss opportunities than with a group of like-minded fly fisherman. Whether you're looking for closer fishing locations to save on gas, or in search of a new career, the more folks you rub elbows with the more opportunities you'll find.

So mark your calendar for every Tuesday at 7 p.m. Bring your tying gear and an appetite for fly-fishing fantasies... and it never hurts to have a few business cards in your wallet just in case.

David McWilliams

A Tribute to Women Anglers

BY ROB BURLINGAME, AFF PRESIDENT

For the third year, our club has set aside September as the month to promote and honor “Women in Fly Fishing”. As the husband of an avid woman fly fisher and father of two sprouting fly toddlers, this month holds a special place for me. Since becoming involved with the Alamo Fly Fishers (and prior to my wife's fly fishing addiction!), the sport has seemed on the surface to be dominated by men. Most of the big name fly fishers are men, the TV shows have male hosts and our membership numbers have reflected an overwhelming majority of males for years. On the surface, this looks like a male sport.

But, truth be known, the deeper you dig, the more women anglers you seem to find. And many of them can out fish their male counter parts any day of the week. Yes, my wife can confirm my last statement! There are many great women anglers right here in our back yard. This page is too short to list them all, but I am sure we can all name at least a handful! A visit to one of our casting clinics can teach us all a valuable lesson. Women tend to pick up the mechanics of casting quicker than men. (This may have to do with the “macho effect” that usually kills our golf shots too!) Women seem to be more relaxed and rhythmic when they start learning to cast. This naturally leads to better and smoother casts earlier in their adventure in the sport. That naturally leads to more consistency and more fish!

The only area of fly fishing that women seem to fall behind in (at least with our club) is in the number that fill out an application to join! With the sport being conceived as male dominant, the only reason I can find is perhaps some intimidation to join a club that is deemed a “guy thing”. The primary reason for our September meeting is to invite women anglers into our club and assure them they are an important part of the sport we love and that we would welcome their participation in the group. We all understand that men and women are different, and they have different interests, expectations and methods of satisfaction. Bottom line...The Alamo Fly Fishers would like to attract and develop our club's programs and outings in a way that incite equal enthusiasm for fly fishing in both men and women.

This month's program will be an open forum for women to share their thoughts about fly fishing, what it means to them, about exciting programs like CFR or whatever else they would like to share. I also encourage those of you with a female fishing buddy to share what they have taught you about the sport or how they have enhanced your fishing

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

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camping on a shell reef to make this outing last an extra day. The cooler weather and a full moon should make for ideal conditions. For those who are not into camping, you have the option of returning to Rockport on Saturday afternoon. Maximum of 12 people on this outing, and spots are filling fast. Let me know as soon as possible if you are interested in this one!



October means prime time fishing in Texas. Saturday October 10th is the 23rd annual Redfish Rodeo in Rockport. This fly fishing tournament for two-person teams is time tested and sponsored by the Texas Fly Fishers. A new twist this year will include a club competition to see which club has the best fly fishermen. The more participation we have from Alamo Fly Fishers will help us win the club trophy and bragging rights for a whole year. More information and entry forms are available at www.texasflyfishers.org. Please enter today!

Saturday October 17th plan to be in Junction for Oktoberfisch sponsored by the Fredericksburg Fly Fishers. This event actually starts on Friday and features a whole weekend of events including transports upstream to float and fish the Llano River. It all takes place at Morgan Shady Park on the river in Junction. This is another well organized event at a premier, clear water, fly fishing destination. Go to www.fredericksburgflyfishers.org to register and get more information.

Save Saturday October 24th to see Brian O’Keefe at the GRTU meeting in Sattler. Brian is a renowned



outdoor writer, photographer, and fly fisherman. He is the GRTU featured speaker, and well worth giving up a morning of fishing. His photographs and stories will beckon our desire for more days on the water. Brian O’Keefe co-produces a free electronic fly fishing magazine with Todd Moen called “Catch Magazine” that is unlike any magazine you have ever seen. Check out www.catchmagazine.net to see the latest issue with award winning photography. These images are sure to get your fly fishing heart pumping! Visit the GRTU website www.grtu.org for more meeting details.

I’m working on plans for an outing to the Devil’s River in early November or possibly next April – or both! Let me know if you have that same interest, or if you have some experience with fishing there. We need to talk!

It’s time to get involved and participate in another club outing. This time of year is guaranteed to be good. Try to invite a friend or family member to join you, and remember to make it fun for the younger generation – your future depends on it. It’s not always just about the fish! Be safe. I hope to see you on the water!

Todd Fleming
AFF Outings Director – 2009





SCOUTING REPORT

BY CLAY GILL

Howdy and welcome to the Alamo Fly Fishers! A family oriented organization, we only have one rule,--#1) Have fun outdoors! Education and instruction on necessary skills for fly fishing is ongoing all year. Outings are conducted regularly and speakers come to the regular monthly meetings to provide entertaining outdoor programs. In this group you will not meet a stranger. Everyone is welcome and anyone interested is encouraged to join us for a few meetings or outings to see if it works for you. You are very welcome to try out a meeting/outing anytime and join the fun. Learning with others gets you going quickly.

The fall transition period is near and fishing activity is regarded as the very best of the year. Bait migrations and large fish schooling make salt water very interesting for fly fishers. In freshwater fish schooling and top water action increases until the winter chill hits.

As this copy is composed, big storms just spun up in the Atlantic the last few days and may bring us some rain eventually. This is desperately needed for river drift trips we now miss so much. Pray for some life giving rain we need so badly. The rivers are in bad shape!

Todd Fleming has worked hard this year to put some great outings together for us and there will be many chances to hit the water this fall. Freshwater is a bust unless we get big rains but we can't say die! Hopefully we can fill up Canyon Lake and have some flow for Rainbow trout this winter. About the only good and consistent freshwater action right now is private ranch lakes being pumped to constant levels, and schooling action in lakes.

On the salty scene-the tiny Dusky Anchovy will be migrating soon in the surf-heading for exotic tropical places south. Jacks, Mackerel, Kings, Tarpon, Skipjack, Reds and Trout, will be close by and gorging. The seas are usually calm in the fall months and great for fishing!

This is sure-bet action by vehicle or boat/kayak to greatly increase your catch chances. With a 4x4 you can run and gun on the Big/Little Shell beaches, watching for this action. These huge "bait balls" migrate along the beach from the passes, and all the Predators will be following. The larger fish hang on the outside edge of these dark moving patches of tiny baitfish. They slash them all along the journey towards Mexico. Even large numbers of Sea Turtles were following these baitfish last spring on the way

up. A boat/skiff with trolling motor is ideal to chase the action quietly. This is non-stop action on a clam day.

One thing you can do to put a bend in your rod this fall is to watch for huge schools of Reds on the flats near the passes, and staging to feed and migrate offshore for the annual spawn exodus out to the Gulf. One way to spot the large schools is a wake they push as they chase Mullet and bait. It looks like a ridge of water and often has an orange copper color due to the school size. They rove around bashing everything. Work these edges and move up on them slowly, picking off the ones on the outside. A small popper or epoxy spoon will get smacked quickly. This can be some exciting action. This will be happening very soon-, best in September.

If you have not fished Big Shell it will be popping soon. Jacks will pile up in the surf and you spot them driving the beach. Have a larger rig, with plenty of backing and about a 17 pound break/class tippet between a shorter leader for your larger popper and the heavy bite tippet on the Jackfish end for abrasion resistance. On foot all you can do is hang on and give chase if it is over thirty pounds. You can see these fish surfing the waves bashing Mullet right in the surf. Expect this in a month or so and lasting until it cools down about Thanksgiving. These fish also hang just inside passes like Port O'Connor--along with Tarpon, feeding on bait.

For those who are just getting started join one of our outings. Come to a meeting and see the presentations that give specific info on particular fishing activity and over the course of a year -a balance of most of the available activity in Texas will be covered. Other areas like Alaska and the Caribbean will be addressed also.

The skills sessions are conducted as needed. So be sure to advise an officer of any special needs you may have at entry level. The safety in numbers and mentors along on the outings will get you going quickly. You won't meet a stranger and start catching fish quickly.

We will be collecting items, art, guided trips, books and anything related to fly fishing soon for the annual Xmas party. If you have anything to offer -it is not too soon to help us. If your guide service, camp, or lodge has anything you might offer please contact us. We will advertise throughout the year for you and appreciate all our friends who assist us all year long. Even a fly box with flies is very



Just One More Cast



By Clay Gill

SIGNIFICANT Connections

Fly fishing has changed in the last few years. People are not just catching Rainbow Trout with a four weight in spring creeks. New fraternities of sportsmen are seeking a new thrill pushing the limits of the fly rod system. The new popularity in salt water fishing with a fly rod has taxed the old conventional systems. People who venture out unprepared are finding all the weak links in the freshwater systems. Television and adventure video has promoted this new sport so many now pursue.

If you have ever had a large fish pull a short braided leader butt right off the end of your fly line you too know the frustration! Nail knotted mono leader butts also fail. It strips the outer skin off the fly line -on a big pull. The short braid butts provided in many fly lines are often the culprit! Fear not--there is a way to resolve this. And it is not hard or expensive to do. The remedy is really a better mouse trap!

As blue water fly fishing increases in popularity many (new to the sport) enthusiasts are finding out the hard way, typical Bass rigs fail quickly under extreme stress. After losing a good fish -or your whole line set-up including the backing, the aftermath requires homework to get back up to speed for large ocean going fish.

For years now savvy big game fly rodders have been using a braided leader material to build extra long leader butts and connect shooting heads. Gudebrod and Courtland make this product which is the basis for the little "shortie" you get with new fly line. It has a slide on connector to secure it. Toss it, -for large fork tailed ocean going monsters or even Tarpon. It will fail you. The same material in bulk constructed properly will be your salvation. It requires the purchase of this material in bulk. It is not expensive. A 12 inch section makes a super shooting head connect.

The Gudebrod braided leader material is the most popular, and most sought after. Constructed better due to twist/pick

count, it functions well. The big guns only use Courtland *if they must. The two best sizes are 35 Lb, and 50 Lb (16 strand mono braid) leader material. Use 35# for 6-8 weight --and the 50# for larger lines.

This braid is a great wind-on leader butt and has all the properties you need. The secret is in the length of the material you build with. The one provided with commercial fly lines is a few inches. When you build your own it is much longer to start with. Once you double it back into itself it incorporates a single nail knot to lock it. The Chinese handcuff grip on the line makes the solid bulletproof connection.



The process is too lengthy to depict here. It is not hard and anyone can do it. You make a simple homemade tool to do the double back where you pull it through itself and you nail knot it on the line. These loops can be long enough at the backing to even put the whole reel and line through to change lines if you must. It is easy!

How do I do this you ask? Jump on Dan Blanton's web site and the whole process is there for you. It is easy and fast. Run ("Getting Looped"-Dan Blanton), at Yahoo or Google and it will jump in your face. The hard part is finding some leader butt braid. You will need both sizes to start. Get a feel for the size necessary to cope with your line size. The 35# size gets tight to snake over the fly line once you get up in the big sizes. Experiment and use what works best for you. Test it by pulling hard!

I was talking with Paul Black at Gudebrod and thanked him for a great product we just cannot find in the South Texas area. He agreed

the new interest in big game saltwater fly fishing created supply demand -but not in USA! Surprisingly his best business is Hawaii, Europe, Australia and South Africa. He is working on a distributor for South Texas but they seem to come and go. We need one here badly!



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the officers have been diligently trying to put together meetings, outings and articles that capture as many interests as possible. We also try to throw in a few new ideas to keep things lively. I am glad to be part of a group that works very hard to make this club the best it can be. Make sure you thank your officers when they do something you like! Hopefully we are succeeded in providing whatever it is that you hope to get out of this club! After all, the club is much more than its officers, it is each and every one of you who read the articles, come to meetings and outings or just share a love of the sport.

If you have been following my articles throughout this year, I have tried to include a challenge in each message. This one is no different. What I am encouraging this month is that you all provide your feedback and ideas to the officers so that we can continue to improve the club, whether through its meetings, outings, education, conservation, public service or its attraction to new members. Sounds easy enough, right?!? I can assure you that the officers will take your suggestions seriously and implement as many as we can.

Just think about what a few ideas have done for this club in the past. How did the annual white bass outing get started? What about the big shell trips? Or the One Fly tournament? How about the now frequent overnight Tarpon trips? I am excited to think of what our Fence Lake trips will look like in 5 years. And the new Lydia Ann tournament. All of these trips and tournaments started as just an idea with some momentum that boosted it into reality.

Our latest idea was even from a past member, Mike Lee (or probably better stated as a member on sabbatical, pending return). We are underway with a revamp of the web site that should help us all, thanks to some great ideas that Mike shared and is implementing. You will notice better photo galleries, an improved calendar and the addition of a Comments/Suggestion forum where you all can share your ideas!

I continue to be amazed at how much the club has changed since I joined six years ago. And, I continue to be amazed with the immense knowledge that lurks in the minds of our members. Let's all get excited about the club's future and try to come up with some new ideas to shape it into an even more involved, more fun and more rewarding group of Fly Fishaholics!



****** NOTICE ******

Announcing AFF's next CASTING CLINIC for 2009. To be held at Cambridge Elementary on Tuesday September 22 at 7 PM (1 week after the September Chapter meeting). Practice rods provided, or feel free to bring your own.



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welcome for the Christmas raffle. It will be here before you know it. The Christmas party is a lot of fun and many come home with early surprises!

Remember safety first outdoors. Have safety equipment and never take chances. The life you save might be your own! Play it safe-to fish another day. Get out soon, as the best time of the year is approaching. Catch and release if you can, and take a kid along soon and watch the smiles. They are our future and will be in charge some day. Make memories soon!

Top of the day to you! May the road rise to meet you-and wind always be at your back.



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experiences!

Be sure to make it to our meeting this month, Tuesday September 15th from 7-9 PM, to show your support for our women anglers. Everyone is welcome and we encourage anyone to bring a friend or spouse along to a meeting that is sure to be enjoyable!



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

You can order this great product if you look hard on the internet. Paul sent me some samples to keep me going. I hope to find it in San Antonio in the future. It was in Houston,-but the internet is still the most reliable way now. Order quantity and split it up -I guess. It's best for big rigs like the 12-14 weight big game systems.

Once you see the concept it is easy and super solid. The one thing you need is the "fish" (wire tool that drags the braid through itself). Malin solid fishing wire is best for this homemade tool. It will last forever. See the illustrations at Dan Blanton's web site. Give it a try and remember-just(1) one 8-10 turn nail knot with 10# mono to lock it down. Multiple nail knots diminish grip the braid has on the line.

This system assures you solid line/leader connections that won't fail you!



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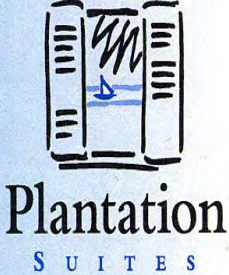
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