



# AUSTIN FLY FISHERS

February 2017  
Volume 19, Issue 2



Club Meeting  
Thursday, February 16  
6:00 Fly Tying and Social Hour  
7:00 Presentation by Pat Vanek  
White Bass fishing in Waco

Charles Cresswell with white bass  
caught on the Nueces River  
Photo by Brandon Rabke

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## President's Message Matt Bennett

I hope all of you have been able to get out a fish a bit with the nice weather we've had over the past month or so. We haven't had much of a winter at all. I'm already getting reports of white bass being caught on the Lower Colorado and elsewhere with the weather being as nice as it is this early. As I write this we're scheduled for some more rain early next week, and the brief La Nina event seems to be subsiding, which spells good news for our water situation the rest of the year.

We have lots of events coming up over the next few weeks that I want to make you aware of.

First, this coming weekend February 17-19 is Troutfest in Sattler, TX at Lazy L&L campground. If you have a ticket to the banquet (which are sold out) then it is Friday evening. The main events are free on Saturday and Sunday and include tying, workshops, speakers, casting and more. This is one of the great fly fishing events in Texas and was sorely missed last year. I encourage all of you to make it out if you can.

Three shows are happening in the Dallas area on the weekend of 3/10-11 - Fly Fest, Fly Fish Texas, and the Texas Fly Fishing and Brew Festival. We will have club members participating in each of the events and I'll be talking about them more at this week's meeting.

We continue to look for new blood to join our board. If you're interested in further serving the club in a more official capacity in any way, we can likely make a spot for you. Right now we have needs for someone to help immediately with merchandise and cast-

ing. We'll also need a new president at the end of this year as my term is coming to an end. Please think on this and consider helping out. We can't have a club without folks to help lead, and most of the board has been on for quite some time now.

We're hoping to get a few outings together for this spring. If anyone is interested in hosting a white bass trip, trout trip, or anything else, please see Dave Bush to coordinate. We can't have outings without a host, so I encourage you to consider hosting an outing this year. There's not much more involved than setting a date, time, and meeting spot for folks. Please see any of the officers if you have questions.

## Financial Report

by Shawn Riggs

1/1/2017 - 1/31/2017

**Beginning Bal. Checking \$14,837.50**

### Income:

Dues (AFF&FFF)	\$498.80
Auction	\$320.00
Merchandise	\$45.00
SKIFF	<u>\$500.00</u>
Total Income	\$1,363.80

### Disbursements:

Internet Services	\$7.89
Refreshments	\$22.02
Speaker expense	\$150.00
Website	<u>\$400.00</u>
Total Disbursements	\$579.91

**Net \$783.89**

### Unencumbered:

Unallocated Funds \$5,599.36

### Encumbered Funds:

Casting for Recovery	\$2,628.17
SKIFF	\$7,145.97

**Ending Balance-Checking \$15,657.39**

## February Speaker – Pat Vanek

I started fly fishing at around age 10 or 11 with a Martin glass rod and model 62 reel from an S&H Green Stamps store. Some of my love for fishing Hill country streams and other small creeks comes from the fact that I caught my first fish on the fly, a fat red breast sunfish, on Turtle Creek in Kerrville on that rig. I still have it today.

I have been fishing for spring run white bass in central Texas for over 25 years now, it's truly one of my favorite times of the year. Over those years, I've learned, mostly the hard way by spending countless hours on the water, and by the helpful advice of other fly fishermen, how to successfully find and catch white bass as they travel upstream from our reservoirs to spawn. Someone once said that white bass are the perfect fly rod fish, if not, they are close. Although they can be caught in deep, slower pools, my favorite way to target them is in crystal clear, skinny, flowing water. Most times in this scenario, you can see the fish take the fly! I really enjoy sharing my knowledge of fly fishing for white bass with others both on the water and off.

In addition to white bass, I've been known to throw a fly at everything that might eat one, bass, carp, channel cat, drum, reds, sunfish...you name it! Currently when not fishing, hunting, or tying flies, I am at home near Crawford with my wife and 10 year old triplets (going to have to get a couple more kayaks!) I am also very active in the Waco Fly Fishing Club, having served as an officer for many years.



## Nueces on Fire by Charles Cresswell Photos by Brandon Rabke

Participating in an event that becomes memorable can reach the level of an experience. Prior to The Drought, the AFF group enjoyed as one of its yearly outings a trip to Brandon Rabke's family ranch near the town of Three Rivers. White Bass were in the Nueces River, hopefully for the taking. I was ready to give it another try when Brandon asked me if I would be interested in White Bass fishing now in 2017.

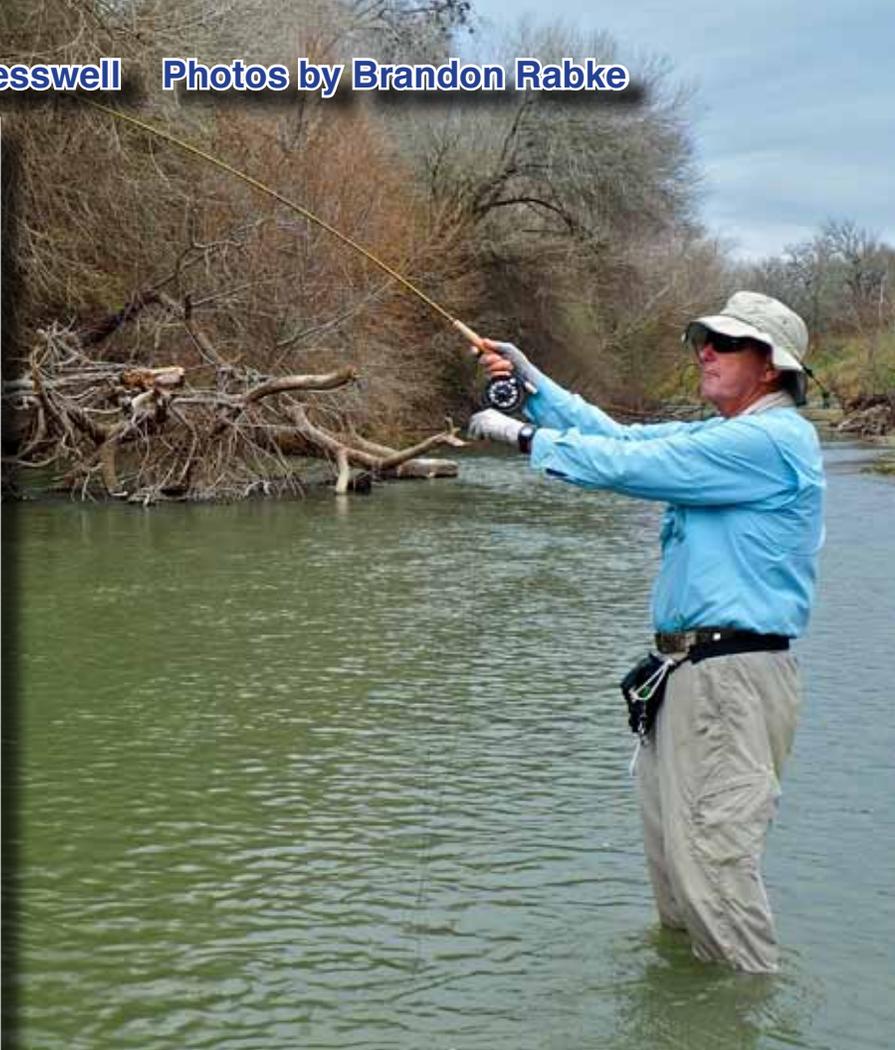
The plan we decided upon was to use his canoe as river transportation for both of us, and I would join in a two day outing if conditions merited. We both left Austin separately early on the 30th of January, before any Redbuds anywhere were in bloom. Meeting at the boat launch at 11:00 AM, Brandon opined that he had never seen so many trailers or vehicles parked, even on the weekends. For a Wednesday, something was going on. We paddled up to a favorite choke point about 20 minutes upstream. Almost by ourselves, we both got to actual fishing with our full sink lines around 11:45.

The day grew hotter with both of us thinking waders were unnecessary. Power boat after power boat, along with kayaks, passed returning to the launch area bearing huge stringers of White Bass. Years before I had paddled up the Nueces with some of the Austin group to the main choke point past which motorized rivercraft were unable to proceed.

Brandon has caught the bulk of the 10-15 fish we had landed in an hour and a half. Around 1:30 I asked a middle aged kayaker if he'd gone "all the way up", confirming he had, the obvious question brought this response "the river's on fire".

Brandon and I talked. It was nearing 2 o'clock, and we had made no preparations to be on the river at dusk or dark. Brandon estimated that we had an hour of non-stop paddling to reach our fishing destination. We could fish comfortably until 4:15, then begin the return trip to arrive in time to still have light to load the car. We went.

As we neared the shallowing fishing grounds, the many participants were not unwilling to share that the White Bass run was on. By the time we had used our allotted casting time, even I was able to obtain the "almost every cast" rhythm. Both of us had edged up to a wide riffles area where a lone fly fisherman had been dragging them in without respite. He was ready to share his experience which included a massive stringer of fish.



## Nueces on Fire Cont.

Finally Brandon and I began reaping the rewards of our quest. When it was time to return, already agreeing we would return the next morning, I found that a) a darker fly was more effective, b) instead of floating downstream, slowly retrieving my fly upstream into the current just above the shallow rock and gravel bottom brought dependable hook-ups.

I reminded Brandon on the 45 minute return to the ranch that I had to be back in Austin by 5 the next day as I had promised Ann I would be cooking fresh fish for her that evening. In order to enjoy reasonable time on the water, we would need to leave the main log home by 6 AM.

Where were the previous day's hordes? Overcast, trying to mist, upper 60's, I chose to wet wade. We were on the water beginning our paddle at 7:50. Three boatloads of serious conventional anglers passed us on our journey, and we never could catch the one kayaker who begin several hundred yards ahead of us. The actual time upstream to where we had ended fishing the day before was 1 hour and 14 minutes. I had promised myself I would only have to try to count caught fish for an hour, and then estimate total fish count. Brandon decided he would keep enough fish for his family Super Bowl, and I would keep two for Ann and me.

At 71 my memory is more intermittent than I care for. Brandon and I had the entire river to ourselves above the final choke point for fishing boats. Too many choices, as I began to despair of being skunked after nearly 16 minutes of fruitless fishing in what I considered fine, deep, drift able holes. Thoughts of counting fish evaporating. Brandon, having compassion, recommended fishing in the pool created by a fallen tree and sandbar directly in front of where we had beached the canoe. From approximately 10 AM until we had to halt the fishing to prepare for home at 11:45, our estimated catch for that time frame, at that place, was 75 to 125 total Whites. Fishing was so extraordinary, time was made by Brandon to take many photographs using his tripod including using his director's prerogative of posing me in front of the canoe in ankle deep muck. I exercised my imagination as to presentations, techniques, and all but tying on a dry fly. Why you might ask? The whites were so aggressive that simply pulling your fly to within a few inches of the surface 15 feet downstream in the upstream direction would incite plainly visible hits, near misses, turn outs, and flubs all in open sight. Our White Bass Experience.



## South Louisiana by Nils Pearson

A couple of days in January opened up for fishing with **Captain Jarid Malone** and **Captain Brandon Boyette** in Southern Louisiana. Brandon Rabke, Joe Andrezik, and I flew to New Orleans to take advantage of the opportunity to sight-cast to big reds. This was my third trip to the marshes of Southern Louisiana.

Unfortunately, our trip coincided with the wind storm that was sweeping through the South. On the first night (Sunday), we could literally see our house shake when it was hit by gusts of wind. Not good conditions for fly fishing.

Checking the forecast for Monday, the prediction was that the winds should drop later that day. So, we got out on the water late on Monday and the winds had diminished some what. We fished marshes that were protected from the wind and had limited success in finding reds in the murky water. Tuesday was a little better and we caught some reds along with the big black drums. Joe Andrezik caught a 44 lb drum, mine was 38 lbs, and Brandon's was somewhere in the same weight class. Wednesday was our best day by far. The winds had dropped, the water had cleared, and there were few clouds. I caught my personal best getting 10 reds to the boat and one at 15 lbs. Brandon and Joe also had a good day.

As we got off the water on this last day of fishing, black clouds were rolling in and rain began to fall. We were very fortunate to have slipped in a couple of days of good fishing between storms. And, as you would expect we had a good time fishing with Jarid and Baron.



Nils with 15 lb red



Joe with red



Brandon with red



Brandon with black drum



Joe with 44 lb black drum

## SKIFF Program by Bob Maindelle



From left: Addison Tinkelenberg and her brother, Charley Elgin, scored fish after fish during the morning's peak feeding time between 8:30 and 9:30. The pair landed 67 fish in four hours.

Dear AFF and Friends of SKIFF,

This past Saturday morning I conducted the first SKIFF (Soldiers' Kids Involved in Fishing Fun) program trip of the 2017 season. Aboard were Charley Elgin, age 13, and his nine-year-old sister, Addison Tinkelenberg.

I first became acquainted with this family when Charley's mom, Jessica, signed him up to go fishing with me through the Fort Hood SKIESUnlimited program.

As that trip concluded, Charley excitedly talked about his fishing experience which then caused his sister to want to give this whole outdoors thing a try. I also learned in talking with the kids' mom that her husband, US Army Specialist Sean Tinkelenberg, was deployed as a scout with the 3rd Cavalry Regiment to Afghanistan. I let her know that I could take both kids fishing, all expenses paid, via the SKIFF Program.

Jessica hesitated on setting a date because her husband's return date was drawing near, but was uncertain.

As it turned out, specialist SPC Tinkelenberg returned to U.S. soil this past Wednesday just in time for Addison's ninth birthday.

We continued on with our plans to take the kids out fishing Saturday, while Sean and Jessica used the morning to prepare for Addison's birthday party to be held at the bowling alley on Fort Hood with a handful of Addison's friends and, of course, her family.

Sean and Jessica were very, very appreciative for the opportunities opened to their children, and for the flexibility in scheduling to allow them to make the most of celebrating both Sean's return after his nine month absence, along with Addison's birthday celebration.

On the fishing side of things, we were able to land 67 fish, including 65 white bass, one largemouth bass, and one freshwater drum.

The water temperature hovered at the season's low thus far -- right at 53.8 to 54.1°. This is still several degrees warmer than the average water temperature

for this time of year, thanks to our very mild winter thus far.

All of the fish we took today were taken either using an "easing" tactic near the bottom, typically upon our arrival at an area, or using a "slow smoking" technique for fish that rose off the bottom while following hooked schoolmates after we had fished an area for some length of time.

"Homefront" spouses with a husband or wife away from home on military duty (not just deployments) are welcomed to call me at 254.368.7411 to arrange for free 4-hour outing for your children. Homefront parents are always welcome to attend, but are equally welcome to take some downtime from their own children and leave them in my care for this time on the water.

A huge thanks to the member of the Austin Fly Fishers for their support in leading the fundraising for this effort!

TALLY = 67 FISH, all caught and released

# The Fly Tyer's Corner Recipe by Mike Morphew

## Spoon Fly

Spoon flies have been a popular choice for many fly fishermen after those elusive reds on our coastline. It is not a difficult tying in fact very simple with only a few steps, and the bodies can be purchased to make life easier. Here is my recipe and remember colors can be changed for the body and tailing.

## Materials

Hook: saltwater short shank 6 or 4

Thread: any strong UTC will work to match the overall color of the fly

Body : choose a color of your choice (these can be purchased on Ebay for about \$2.50 for 10) or you can make them yourself.

Tail: a mix of flashabou and marabou fibers

Eyes: bead chain

Epoxy or a good UV resin



**Steps 1:** Place the hook in the vice and put on a base of thread and catch in a small bunch of flashabou and marabou

**Step 2:** Return the thread to just behind the eye and tie in a pair of bead chain eyes



## Fly Tyer Cont.

**Step 3:** Take the thread back to the hook bend and tie in the spoon by the tag, return the thread back to the eyes and create a slight curve on the body and then tie it down behind the eyes as shown



**Step 4:** Whip finish and turn the spoon over in the vise and smear epoxy or resin around the hook shank and the spoon to secure



## Fly Tying Tips by Mike Morphew

### Paper Towels

A great way to help with the clean up after a heavy tying session. Keep a paper towel on your bench and drop all your waste onto it, this helps with feathers flying about and dropping on the floor and of course keeps someone else happy!!! If you get my meaning. At the end of your session simple fold the towel up and throw all your waste away at one time.



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The following individuals who made presentations to our club in 2015/2016. Please follow the links to get more information on the services they provide. You won't be disappointed.

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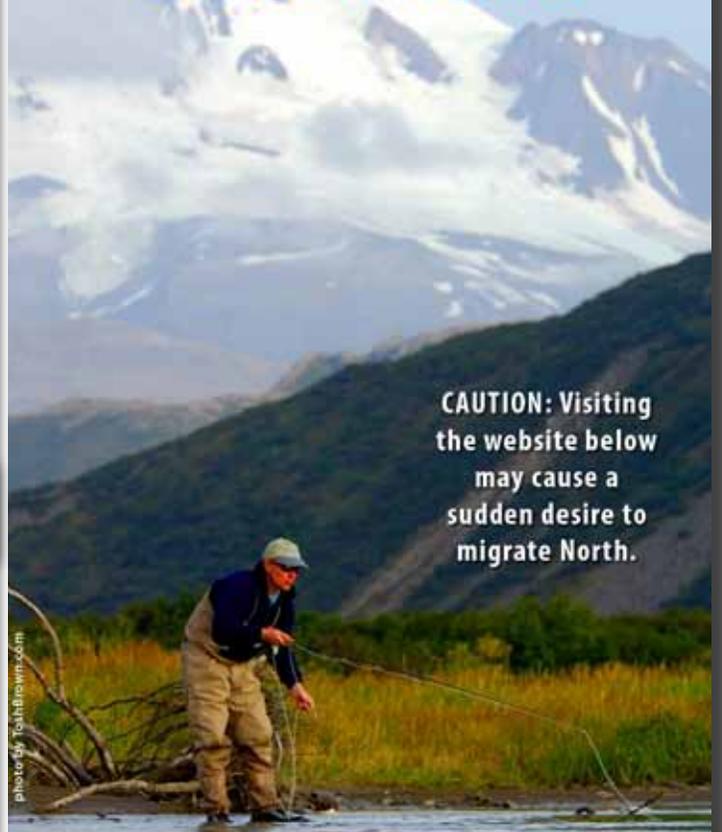
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