

The Jack Sparks Central Texas Flyrodders Club

April 2004

www.centraltexasflyrodders.org

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Lake Waco in November Sunset

(photograph by John Sumner)

Next Meeting: April 13th

Meeting Location: 7901 Fish Pond Rd., 2nd Floor of the Bridgeview Center at Williams, Squires & Wren Law Firm.

Meeting Time: 6:30 p.m.

April Meeting will be a Swap & Shop. Don't miss this great opportunity to find some great deals. Bring your items you would like to sell or trade.

From the President: I believe Spring has sprung! The White Bass are running. Black bass are foraging. Jinger Michels says bream will be on the move very soon. It is definitely time to get your fly rod out of winter storage and get out on our local waters.

Our club will be offering monogrammed shirts and caps to you in the weeks to come. I plan to have samples for you to see at the April meeting. The shirts are the Columbia Bonehead fishing shirt. This is an all-cotton shirt with lots of ventilation and useful pockets. The caps will be an adjustable khaki low profile model that even fits my fat head! A big thanks to Salesman's Sample Outlet and Powers Embroidery for helping us offer you a high quality custom product at a reasonable price. (cont. on page 2)

I would strongly encourage to stop by Cal's store on Memorial Drive to try on the fishing shirts so you can get the right size, and see the other great Columbia products they are carrying.

For those of you who had a Spring Break, I hope it was a fun one. My brother and I had a great trip to the San Juan River in Northwest New Mexico. I don't think he and I have ever spent four days fishing—just the two of us. Even the drive up was fun as we had 15 hours to solve the world's problems and to grab a traditional New Mexican breakfast at the Frontier in Albuquerque.

When we first saw the river, we had a feeling it was going to be a challenging trip. The river was very low, flowing at only 250 cps. The lake was turning over, making the river water off color and carrying a lot of moss. We arrived in time to fish Monday afternoon and get the kinks out. We put in at the Kiddy Hole, and were amazed at the number of anglers on the river. It is obvious that our local Spring Break now coincides with most other schools.

We picked up our first fish in the shallow braided waters between the Kiddie Hole and the Upper Flats. Most of the fish we caught on Monday we caught sight fishing to small groups of fish. We caught "typical" San Juan rainbows in the 16-18" range, with an occasional fish pushing 20", and some "dinks" around 12". Over the next three days we picked up fish all along the main channel from the Texas Hole up to the Upper Flats, as well as the side channels. For the most part we had to work for the fish...covering lots of water to pick up the occasional fish.

Boyd outfished me and picked up fish on a variety of patterns including Chamois Leeches, Chocolate Emergers, Yong Specials, and Red Hots. I caught mine on San Juan Worms, UFO's, and Red Hots. As usual, guided clients were catching numerous fish, but it was noticeably slow for everybody else. I think Boyd was catching as many as anybody I saw on the river. He averaged 6-8 fish per day. I struggled to get half his total.

While very respectable, we view this as slow since we have both had 20+ days on the "Juan". Still, it was great to get out, fish together, and enjoy beautiful sunny days that started in the low 30's and warmed into the low 70's during the afternoon. The clear weather slowed the insect hatches, and we were limited to "chunkin' and dunkin'"—fishing with two wet flies, split shot, and strike indicators, as opposed to dry flies.

There was talk at the Christmas party of a club outing to the San Juan, led by John Maddux and/or Bob Hanley. If it happens and I can shake free, count me in. I think it would be a ball to have a group of us fishing the San Juan together.

We also kicked off the Fly Tying Fellowship at First Baptist Church of Waco this last Wednesday night. Eight guys showed up to learn the basics and work on our first woolly worm. Everybody left with a good looking woolly that will certainly catch fish, in spite of my inability to model a whip finish for the left-handed tyers!! We are off to a great start. Thanks to Bill Menefee and Bill Connally for showing up to help teach. There's always room for more if you'd like to join us Wednesdays at 6:00.

Don't forget the Swap and Shop this month. This is a great time to sell or trade some of that extra flyfishing (and related) stuff you are not using. I urge those of you who tie flies to bring some assortments of flies so that those club members who do not tie can purchase a good supply of flies for Spring, at reasonable prices. Bring your stuff, and your checkbook !

Tight Lines, Dale Connally

From the Vice President:

I hope you are planning on attending the April 13th meeting. It should be a fantastic swap and shop time. Please bring any fly fishing or fly tying equipment you want to trade or sell; as well as flies. The more people that bring things for sell or trade, the better it will be. We all have things that we haven't used in a while; so you might as well trade them for something you really want now. I know I need to buy some flies; because I don't tie myself. If you tie, come early and set up and tie some that night; then sell or trade them. See you there.

Ray Perry

This is a really good article from Bill Edrington. (submitted by Dale Connally)

Bill is the owner of Royal Gorge Anglers in Canon City, CO and author of a new book, Flyfishing the Arkansas

Hello Everyone,

Because of the warm weather, the Caddis are hatching and there are so many fish up on them that the surface of the water is one giant rise form. **APRIL FOOL !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

Actually, that is not far away and I hope the description is accurate. A lot of folks have been calling about Caddis thinking that the warm days are moving the hatch up. Actually water temperature does not necessarily increase that much simply due to a warm day here and there. This weekend is supposed to be cold and wet, so water temps will stabilize and not rise. Caddis like 52 to 58 degrees and the average temperature now is about 45 or 46 with shallow water reaching 50 for a little while in the afternoons. Free swimming Caddis larvae, Rhyacophila, are in the water now and the fish are on them pretty hard in the afternoons. I like fishing one of Larry's Caddis Larva trailing a Copper John or Black Ice for a Baetis nymph. The wet weekend should bring exceptional BWO hatches. I have never seen this many BWO nymphs in the water. The fish are just waiting for clouds. Short, intense hatches during last Saturday's cloudy weather brought lots of fish to the surface. Saturday and Sunday should be perfect days for warm clothes and dry fly rods. Those are the days I like to break out the cane rods and take them for a walk. Nothing better than a short accurate casting rod with a 12 ft. leader and #18 quill body dry fly. Maybe for the cherry on top, I'll add an Iceberg Baetis emerger on behind the dry. Life does not get any better than sticking a few nice fish on the surface followed by a nice sip of 21 year old scotch while you watch the one you could not fool have his way with emerging bugs. I usually wind up staying until I catch him or the scotch runs out...whichever comes first.

Let's spend the next couple of weeks discussing Caddis if you don't mind. The one thing you need to know is that the hatch starts around the middle of April give or take a few days. I always expect to see a decent hatch by April 15th in the Canon City area. This is where it starts and honestly, it usually hangs around the lower river for a few days before it starts to mature up river. I really like the Canon City/Parkdale area for the first week of the hatch. This is where you have a chance of catching lots of fish on a dry, particularly in the afternoons. Mornings start out with larva and pupa and then shift to the adult if the weather allows. Caddis like the warm, breezy afternoons of April and can drive the fish crazy when they first start up. The hatch will eventually move up toward Salida as April progresses. Remember that Caddis will hatch on the dry days and BWOs will come off in hoards on the cloudy days. Either way, you will have lots of action. Expect water to stay low and clear until early May. (cont. on page 4)

Heavy showers might discolor the river temporarily, but major runoff does not occur on this river until generally around the second week of May. If snow packs keep evaporating on the drainage, there may not be much of a runoff at all.

Arkansas River snow fields are very high in elevation and do fall prey to these early warm days in the form of runoff, but they do evaporate somewhat as they have during this very dry March. Perhaps April will bring high snow this year. To fish the Caddis hatch, you will need a larva, a bead head or weighted pupa, and unweighted pupa, an adult, an Egg Layer, and a spent. If you do not stay late in the day, you can delete the egg layer and the spent patterns, but I can tell you honestly that this is the time the bigger fish show up to play. You can leave them for me if you like, but I suggest staying late and getting home at midnight if you have to.

Fishing is a sport that is often best early and late, so this is a good time to get used to it. You can go to our web site, www.royalgorgeanglers.com to look at patterns. These are not the only ones that work, but they are tried and proven. Any of the LaFontaine patterns are unbeatable and I suggest that if you tie, design some of your own. That always makes everything more fun. Next week we'll talk about how to fish these bugs. There are some little tricks that will make you a better "Caddis" fisher and we'll discuss those. If you've read the book, you already know what I'm talking about. If you haven't, then we'll cover as much of it as we can.

ARKANSAS RIVER:

159cfs Granite...286cfs Wellsville...278cfs Canon City

The river is low and beautiful due to the cooler nights over the past few days. There is virtually no color even in the afternoons now. The numbers of insect larva in the water is off the chart. Caddis larva, Baetis nymphs and immature stonefly nymphs are in abundance. Fish are on all of them including some real "Trout Candy" patterns such as Red Ice, Red Copper Johns, Sliver Ice, Chartreuse Copper Johns, and a variety of #16/18 nymphs. Fish are being found in prime lies in boulder fields and riffles to heavy chop. Baetis hatches on cloudy days are bringing fish out to the edges in slower water. All in all, nymphing is excellent with dry fly fishing holding out for clouds. Now is the time to plan at least one trip per week for about the next 5 to 6 weeks. This is not the time to do yard work, play golf or go to the mall. That stuff can wait for during runoff.

SOUTH PLATTE:

66cfs....

Some very large fish can be found in the lower end of the river below the gauging station. Egg patterns and midge larva rule as always. Crowded early, so go ahead and get in there if you want to go.

SPINNEY:

The lake opens Saturday morning at 5:30.....It will be the normal zoo on opening day. The lake is low and no trailer launches will be allowed. Expect fish to be feeding on egg patterns, scuds, midge larva and the occasional woolly bugger or two. Have fun.

OTHER STUFF:

The annual Spring Fling went off without a hitch and I hope everyone enjoyed it. Fishing was good on Saturday as the cold wet weather brought out a BWO hatch around 3 PM. Folks caught some fish, learned some tricks, and enjoyed barbeque. Thanks again to Jim and Amy at the Arkansas River KOA for their hospitality. If you didn't get to go this year, put it on your calendar for next. Isn't this stuff fun??????

Capire et Relinquere,

Bill

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