

# The Jack Sparks Central Texas Flyrodders Club

March 2004

[www.centraltexasflyrodders.org](http://www.centraltexasflyrodders.org)

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*Lake Waco in November Sunset*

*(photograph by John Sumner)*

*Next Meeting: **March 9th***

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

*Meeting Time: **6:30 p.m.***

*Guest Speaker: **Matt Michels***

*"White Bass on the Fly. Matt Michels will present a discussion with video on tactics and locations for chasing White Bass during the runs. Matt has over 25 years of fishing experience and has been fly fishing almost exclusively for the past 16 years.*

*Matt will be tying several of his favorite patterns including the Cypert Bead Eye Minnow and the Elkins Marabou Minnow. Tying will begin at 6:30pm."*

*From the President:*

*The skunk is gone!! I finally caught a trout on the Guadalupe. After missing the club trip last month, I decided to try again this weekend. In fact, I'm writing this sitting in my camper waiting out a Sunday morning thunderstorm. The storm is lasting long enough to cost me the float trip I had planned. So I will have something new to try next time. (cont. on page 2)*

I fished yesterday with a friend who is a GRTU member. It was my first time to fish on the GRTU lease properties. We also sandwiched in helping with some stocking between our fishing. We then hopped around several locations to avoid the stocking trucks. The fish come from a hatchery in Missouri. In fact the Crystal Lake Trout Farm is near the state park where I learned to fly fish. I've been driving past it for years. It is a logistical miracle that they can ship the fish to Sattler, TX and get them stocked with volunteer help with very little fishkill.

The morning fishing started out very slow. I fished the first location for an hour with no hits, no evidence of fish. At the second place we went I finally got a strike though I was so surprised I didn't connect. One of our party broke the ice and caught a small rainbow. Dead drift fishing worked occasionally, but did not seem to be as effective as swing and retrieve methods. Best fly for the day was the venerable Olive Woolly Bugger. After lunch we visited the relatively new flyshop that has popped up on the river. You may faint to hear that I didn't buy anything—going against my “karma issue” that I believe I should buy something, even if a cheap token, from every flyshop I visit so as not to doom my fishing!

After lunch we headed to another location. It had some great riffles and runs between and below two weirs—Hill Country speak for a small dam. I worked a nice piece of pocket water and hooked up with a small Brown behind a rock. I played the small trout for a while and started to bring it in. I waded over to get the camera out to photograph my first Guad trout, even if it did resemble bait. As I reached for my camera, the fish decided he did not feel photogenic. I hooked a couple more, but lost them as well. At least we were in fish; we had hooked up on 10 fish between the three of us in a couple of hours. And we watched a two guys who “camped out” beneath one of the weirs. They were in a feeding lane and probably caught a dozen a piece.

We took a break so my buddies could put their tent down and pack up. We returned to the Kanz area, hoping we could fish the feeding lane. Not surprisingly, the two guys were still there, and hammering the fish. I bet they caught 50 fish between them, primarily on a small Prince nymph. I moved upstream back into the area where I had hooked up with the fish before. I promptly caught, landed, and photographed my first trout from the Guad. It was a monster 7” brown. I caught another similar fish about an hour later, and took a break to rest my back. Kinda thought I was done for the day. My buddies were back at the truck. As I joined them, I began to realize that they were changing leader etc. to make one more go at ‘em before dark. It was almost 6:00 p.m. at this point. As they got ready to go back to fishing, lo and behold, the two guys left the feeding lane.

I decided to rerig myself and give the Honey Hole one shot before dark. I put on a San Juan Worm and a #16 Bead Head Hare's Ear Nymph. One of my friends was already working the riffle when I got there. I missed a strike, and he lost a fish, breaking off his tippet. Suddenly my yarn strike indicator disappeared. I set, and thought it was a better fish. As I played him, I got a look at him. I realized I had a VERY nice trout on the line. I reached back for my dip net. I realized that I had left it at the camper during our last break. I think that balanced out my not making a purchase at the fly shop!

I made several attempts to move the fish onto a shallow rock shelf where I thought I could manage the fish for some pics before releasing. One time the fish avoided the shallow and headed for a piece of current. I was a little worried about the large fish getting in the current, but patiently waited for him to swim upstream toward where he had started. I finally got the fish over to where I could manage him. He was a beautifully marked 20” hook-jawed male Rainbow. My buddy took a couple of pics of him before I eased him back in the water. He had taken the small Hare's Ear. What a tripmaker!! I hooked up with one more nice Rainbow a few minutes later, maybe 14-16”, before darkness prevailed.

GRTU definitely has put some nice sized fish into the river, both Browns and Rainbows on this stocking. Fishing the Guadalupe for trout is certainly not a western mountain fishing experience. (cont. on page 3)

But I find it to be its own kind of Hill Country pretty scenery, and a much closer place to chase a trout or two. I do believe that the GRTU lease program is a bargain for the access and information it affords to members.

Closer to home, we hear through the grapevine that the Whites are heating up, especially at Colorado Bend. Keep those reports coming in. And don't miss this month's meeting to pick up some pointers from Matt.

## *Tight Lines, Dale*

### *Rank Amateur*

*by Matt Michels*

On February 7<sup>th</sup>, Jinger and I traveled down to Houston for the Texas Fly Fishers (TFF) annual Fly Tying Festival. When we were directed back to the conference room the TFF had commandeered, it was like walking into to a wonderland of old friends and totally awesome flies. For those of you who know how into tying I am, I am here to tell you that I was floored by what I saw. I'm not talking "oh that's nice" I talking "BAD-ASS" patterns.

We were graciously greeted and escorted to my tying spot by Frank Schlicht. As we walked in I felt like a prince in a room full of kings. The tyers we knew greeted us and as I passed each vise, I stared in awe at some of the patterns. Each tyer in turn looked back with the anticipation of a new tyer coming in to see what kinds of "magic" would appear. Even getting there at 2:00, there were still 30 to 35 tyers going strong.

For those who came to see the show, it was like walking through a shopping mall of flies, gadgets and materials. They would stroll around until they found a pattern to their likings or a technique they were interested in. Most made the circuit two or three times before settling because of the overwhelming diversity on display.

Across the room from me was AK Best, who is widely considered the greatest production tyer alive today. Many of us know AK through reading John Gierach's books, as AK is one of Gierach's favorite fishing buddies and cohort in crime. AK is also a good writer in his own right and was down for a book signing as well as speaking and tying. His "Production Fly Tying" is one of my staples. Alas, I would not be able to get away from my spot to meet him. To make matters worse, Frank told me that if we had been there for lunch, he would have taken Jinger and I along with he and AK.

While I didn't get to meet AK, I did have one bit of interface with him. Frank pops over and asks if I have some of this material and some of that, then he would run off again. What I found out was that AK was using some of my materials to tie a fly for the Fly Plate.

Along with AK were incredible tyers from the TFF and the infamous Roadkill Roundtable from the Dallas Fly Fishers. Mike George came all the way from Kansas and tied a Stingray that's as Frank put it "you could see swim". There were many of the people who tied with me at Fly Fish. Ray Chappa was hanging around and Marcos Enriquez with Orvis Houston was entertaining the crowd as well.

Frank was a wonderful host and seemed very excited to see us Waco folks. When he wasn't running all over the place in "organization/host mode", he was sitting down with us catching up on the club and all his cronies from our neck of the woods. Judging by the way all heads turned when he brought in a new tyer, he is also well respected at this event and with the TFF. Why he wasn't tying, I'll don't know.

Once up and tying, these greats came by to take a look at my flies and talk to me about techniques, tips and fly fishing around Waco. Jinger got to sit down with some of our old Fly Fish buddies and talk about the good times we had. It made me feel really good to be included in this cast of extraordinary tyers. I only wish Cypert had been able to make it down this year. He was unable to attend but I understand he is a regular at this event and I spent a great deal of time talking with people about him.

Frank, seeing that I was unable to get away from my seat, made sure that his guys brought over some of their artwork. I was again stunned at the incredible accuracy, skill and beauty of the patterns shown to me. One guy brought over a deer hair Croaker I though was going to swim out of his hand...awesome.

While I realize that Houston is a bit of a drive and a club outing had been scheduled for the same weekend, anyone who is interested in fly tying owes it to themselves to come down for this annual event. It is held the first weekend of February every year and cost \$10 to get in. In addition to the demos and instruction there are also raffles.

(cont. on page 4)

Everyone who came by was gracious and inquisitive. The tyers welcomed me into the group and I am humbled to have been asked to tie next year. They treated me as one of their own even though I walked away feeling like a rank amateur.

PS – Since returning I have been practicing and hope to add some tips to the Web Site soon.

*White Dog*

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