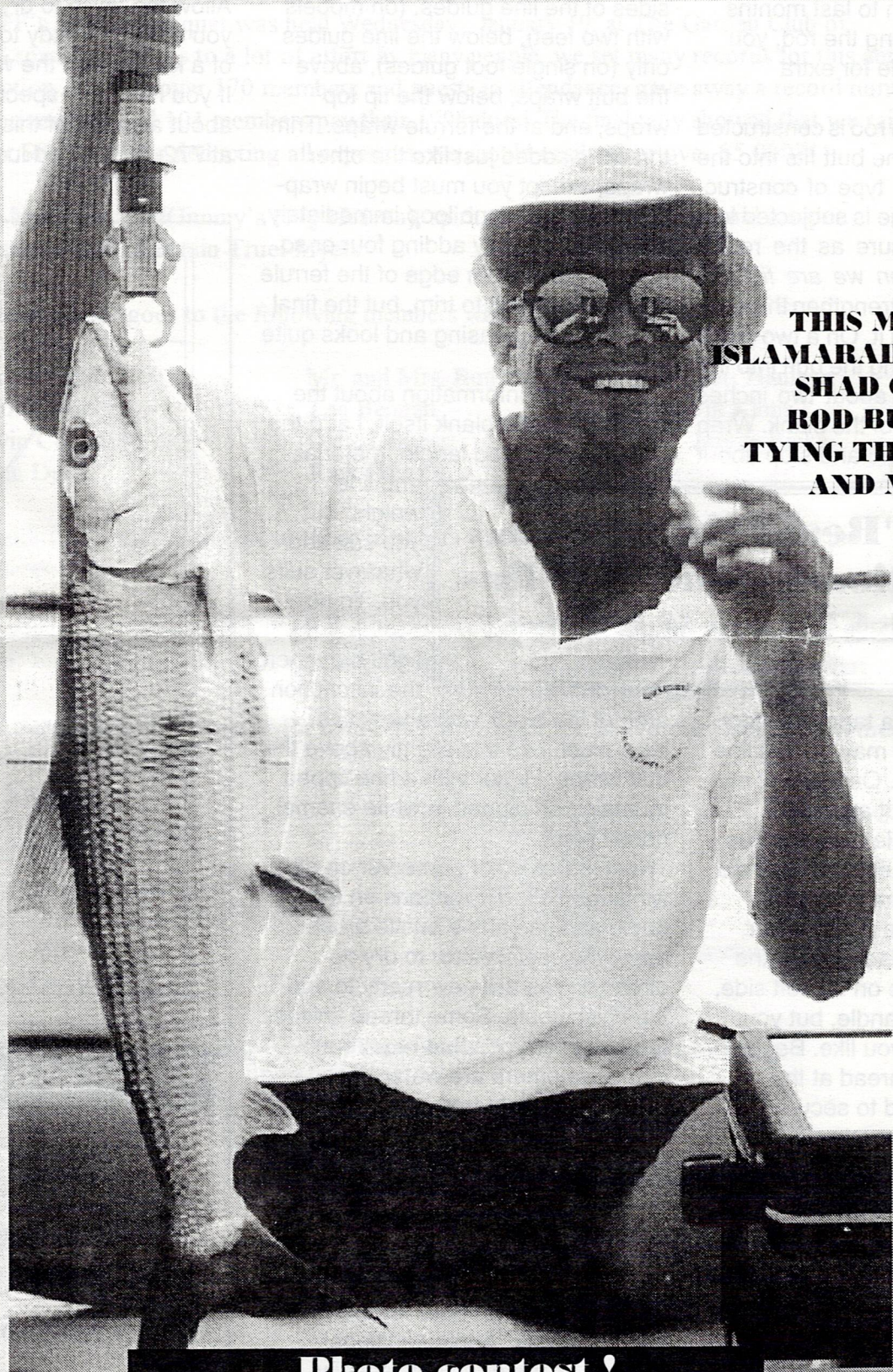


# FIRST COAST FLY FISHERS

FEBRUARY 1996

JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA



**THIS MONTH...  
ISLAMARADA BONEFISH  
SHAD OUTING  
ROD BUILDING  
TYING THE MERKIN  
AND MORE !**

**Photo contest !  
See inside for details**



# Rod Building

By Kevin Cohenour

In this, the last installment of *Rod Building*, we will complete our rod. Just a quick addition to last months article : Prior to flexing the rod, you *must* wrap the ferrule for extra strength.

The typical graphite rod is constructed tip over butt style (the butt fits into the top section). In this type of construction, the leading edge is subjected to a great deal of pressure as the rod is flexed (*say as when we are fighting fish, or casting !*). Strengthen this area by double wrapping it. On a two piece rod, begin by inserting the butt into the tip, begin wrapping about two inches from the ferrule end of the blank. Wrap toward the ferrule end and stop about

1/16th of an inch from the end. Wrap the thread back over itself, stopping about 1/8 inch from the starting point.

This will help make a tapered effect.

On some rods you may have a line guide near a ferrule. On three of my rods I only had about an inch of ferrule that I was able to wrap, plus the wraps on the guide, but that did not seem to effect the strength.

If you are installing a hookkeeper, now is the time to place it near the handle. I place mine on the left side, slightly above the handle, but you can place it where you like. Begin with wrapping the thread at the winding check. Wind to secure the hookkeeper. (Some are two legged like a guide), if you do not install a hookkeeper, wrap up above the handle about one inch. Wrapping here gives the rod a finished look.

Move to the top section and wrap down from the tip top about 1/2 inch. I like to add trim to the thread wraps. A complementary color looks professional, but so do contrasting colors.

For instance, I like silver trim with blue thread wraps. I add trim to both sides of the line guides, (on models with two feet), below the line guides only (on single foot guides), above the butt wraps, below the tip top wraps, and at the ferrule wraps. Trim thread is added just like the other wraps, except you must begin wrapping over the mono loop immediately, since you are only adding four or so wraps. The bottom edge of the ferrule are more difficult to trim, but the final effect is very pleasing and looks quite professional.

I like to add information about the rod blank to the blank itself. I add the owners name, rod length, material,

and line weight, but you can add whatever suits you. To accomplish this, lightly roughen the inscription

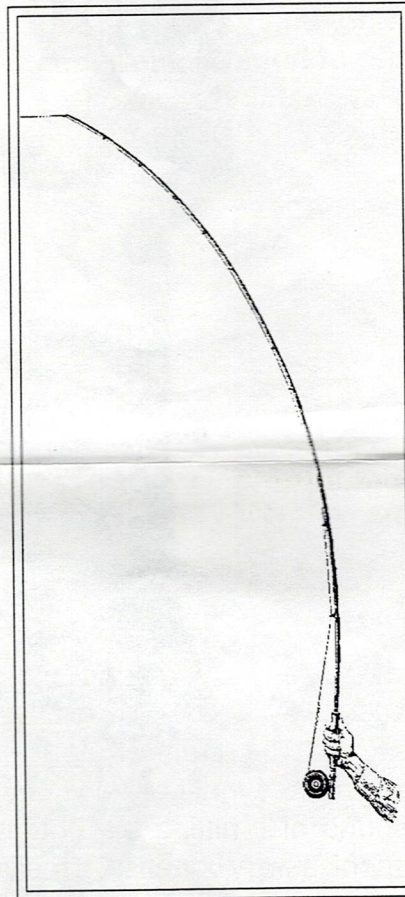
area of the blank with a very fine steel wool. I do this slightly above the butt wraps. I letter with a fine tipped fountain pen dipped in white enamel hobby paint.

Next, brush color preserver on all windings. Follow directions on the bottle and use a fine bristle brush to apply the coats. Allow to dry as directed. You are now ready to add the finish coats. Some thread finishes are two part types that require mixing, while others are water based and brush on straight from the bottle. In either case, use as good a quality, fine bristle brush as you can get and rotate the blank as you apply finish. You must rotate the blank every ten minutes for an hour or so after you have applied two part finishes. Rotate the rod for half-an-hour for the water based finishes. Apply additional finishes as the directions specify. *Above all*, resist the temptation to touch the finish to see if it is dry.

Rub some paraffin onto the male end of the ferrule to ensure a tight fit. Allow the finish to dry completely and you are then ready to take your one of a kind rod on the water.

If you have any specific questions about any part of this series, call me at 772-7257. Good luck, Kevin.

**"Resist the temptation to touch the finish to see if it's dry"**



## Quote of the month

**"Catch and release, of course, has generally increased the size of fish by a full 35 percent or more"**

Nick Lyons,  
on memories of a released fish



# At Vlse

## Tying the Merkin

### Materials :

**Hook #2 - #8**

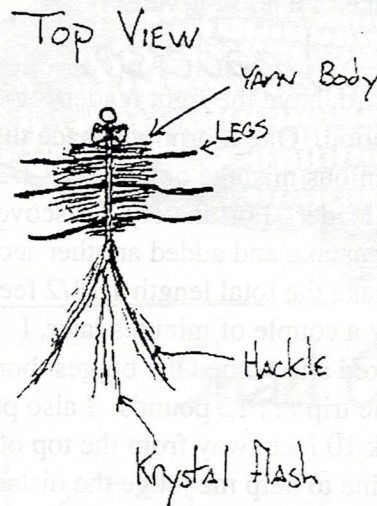
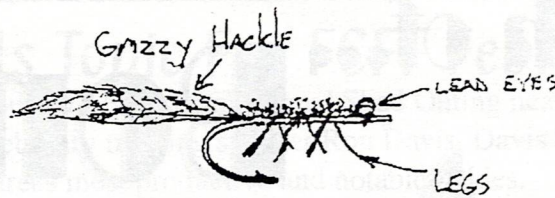
**Body** Brown rug yarn (Sparkle yarn)

**Thread** chartreuse

**Claws** 2-4 Brown grizzly neck feathers slightly longer than length of hook & 4 strands of krystal flash in brown or pearl

**Lead eyes** 1/50-1/100 (Weight depends on sink rate required)

**Legs** Rubber bands or Rubber Hackle-silly legs (available at any Fly fishing shop)



is too light, the fly will not reach the bottom in time for a bonefish to find it. The same holds true for redfish as the Merkin is a proven pattern on reds also. However the redfish will not spook as easy if your fly 'crashes' the bottom.

First 1/2 way down the hook shank tie your thread in and wrap to bend of hook. Now tie the claws with the feathers spaying outwards, two on each side. These feathers should point up wards so as when the fly rests on the bottom the 'claws' point

at a slight upward angle. This also helps orient the fly so it allways lands hook up. Now lay a piece of yarn across the hook shank. (The peice should be about 1 1/4 inch long) Center it on the shank and tie down with figure eights. Four wraps is sufficiant. Next add a leg and repeat the procedure used for the yarn. The leg should extend beond the yarn an inch or so. Now, tie in

two pieces of yarn as before. Next... another leg. Next.....another single yarn piece. Then...a leg...and last one more yarn. (This is only a guide line, you can vary the spacing of legs-yarn to fit your likes...I do it one way, you may like another) Now I tie in the lead eyes. The eyes are tied on top of the hook shank as were the legs and yarn. Some people may

**If your fly is too heavy the sound of it hitting the bottom can spook a wary Bonefish.**

prefer to tie the eyes on first.....I like to do it last. The eyes should end up as close to the eye of the hook as possible. Next I like to cement the eyes with super glue...again, this is personal prefferance.

You now trim the body to the profile shown.

Something you may want to add to the fly is a monofilament weed guard.

First a note about the weight ....

Warren Hinrichs and I used Merkins in the Keys to succsesfully catch bonefish to 12 pounds. One key factor in a Merkin fly is the sink rate. Whatever the size of the fly, you should arm yourself with flys' in differant sizes so that as you move into deeper or shallower waters your fly reaches the bottom in aprox 2.5 to 3 seconds. If your fly is too heavy the sound of it hitting the bottom can spook a wary bonefish. If the fly

## Trout Fishing in North Carolina

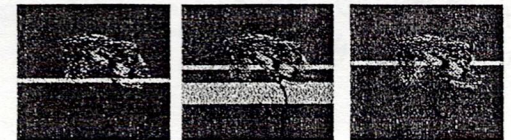
By Danny Knesak & Kevin Cohenour

The North Carolina trout presentation at the November meeting was really informative and it got our trout-fishing juices flowing. So, over Thanksgiving weekend we drove to Bullhead Creek in Stone Mountain State Park, NC, to enjoy some of that wonderful scenery and catch a few of their native fish.

We stopped in Charlotte and bought our fishing licenses and trout stamps and arrived in Stone Mountain State Park by late afternoon. You have to check in and reserve fishing at Bull Creek, so after finding our way around, we drove to the nearby town of Cherry Lane and got a room in the High Meadows Inn.

After a pancake breakfast we checked in the Bullhead Creek, paid our \$4 a piece and reserved sections seven and eight. Plan to check in early to reserve the good spots on this creek. They fill up early. We reserved our spots at 7:45 a.m.

We strung our rods, put on waders and vests and set off up the trail with our fingers stinging in the 34-degree cold. We warmed quickly, however, as we hiked the 20 or so minutes to our sections. The trail is well marked at the beginning of each section, and



Continued on page 6



# In search of... **Bones**

By Capt. Warren Hunricks Jr.

*My bonefishing trip recently was very successful. . . and very windy. Tom Mitzlaff and I decided to fish for the large and spooky bones in the Islamorada area.*

*Every fishing trip is unique and, while I don't claim to be the Lefty Kreh of bonefishing, I think some of the following observations might make others' bonefish outings more successful.*

## Match the hatch

First, match the hatch, saltwater style. Tom and I spent several days trying different patterns before we found a fly that we had confidence in. Having faith in a fly gives you that extra edge to convince the fish it's lunch. I took a fish on a #6 tan Clouser, but decided later in the trip to use a #4 tan Merkin (crab pattern). After examining the stomach contents of a large fish, I kept the Merkin for the rest of the trip!

## Have patience

Second, have patience if you are getting very close to the fish. If you are constantly getting shots at tailing bonefish 30 to 50 feet away, slow down and get the perfect angle before delivering the fly. Cast only when you get a head-on shot or a front quartering angle. If you have

the right fly and can make this type of presentation, you have a very good chance of a hook-up.

## Leaders

Third, have the right leader for each situation. One morning I made the ridiculous mistake of using a 7 1/2-foot leader. Fortunately, I discovered the mistake and added another section to make the total length 10 1/2 feet. Only a couple of minutes later, I hooked and landed the biggest bone of the trip . . . 12 pounds. I also put a mark 10 feet away from the top of my fly line to help me judge the distance to the fly and the fish.

## Strip strike

Fourth, strip strike and quickly lift the rod when a bone takes your fly. I had a perfect situation

with a small school of bonefish swimming directly at the boat. The presentation was good and I saw the fish suck the fly into its mouth. I made a short strip-strike and, to my dismay, the fly darted right back out of his mouth. The fish quickly swam back over to eat it again. It inspected the fly right on the end of his nose before he rejected it and swam away. After close examination of the fly, I found that the lead eyes were crushed and turned sideways. I figure the fish rejected the crab because it didn't look as good

the second time around. Interesting observation, but the main point is this: Use the strip-strike technique. It works.

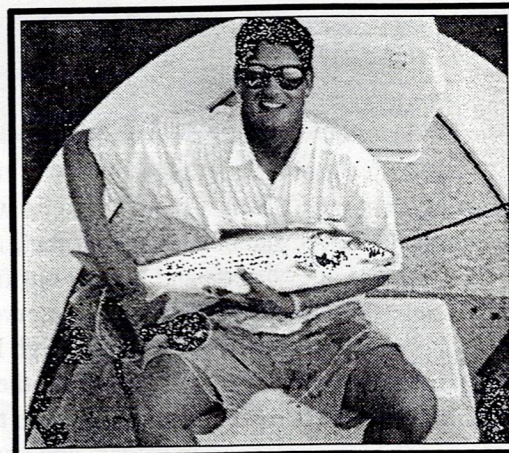
After the dust settled . . . maybe I should say after the white caps subsided . . . we boated four nice bones and had several break-offs. Think about these tips and observations, and tell me a fish story when you get back from your next bonefishing trip!

## Planning a Bonefishing trip ?

*If you are planning a trip to the Keys a few suggestions may help you have a better trip. Call ahead and book a place to stay. We stayed at The La-Jolla Inn, located in Islamorada. They have a boat ramp and dock.*

*Get a local tide chart and get the tide*

*variables for different areas. If you check with the locals, you can plan to fish different tide stages so you will be in productive water most of the day. And most of all, if you can afford it, hire a guide. What he can teach you in a day, you couldn't learn in a month on your own.*



**A 12 pound bone is a great payback for a trip to the keys !**

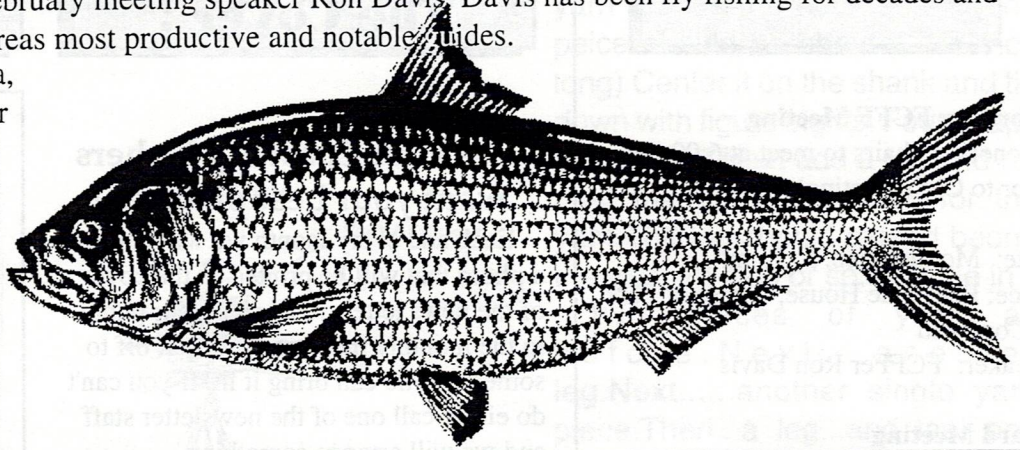


# Shad Fishing Is Topic For FCFF February Program

Planning on attending the 'Back Country Fly Fishers' Annual Shad Outing near Sanford next month? If you are, then you don't want to miss FCFF February meeting speaker Ron Davis. Davis has been fly fishing for decades and has taught the sport to many of the areas most productive and notable guides.

Davis, who lives in Raiford, Florida, restores classic and antique tackle for a hobby when he's not fishing for Bass, Shad, and bream.

Tackle, flies, and technique comprise the nature of Davis' Shad presentation, and he will entertain specific questions from the audience regarding the clubs upcoming Shad outing.



## Swap Flies and Lies !

*BCFF's Annual Shad Outing*

Back by popular demand, the Back Country Fly Fishers' annual Shad outing. Once again our FF brethren to the west have invited our club to join them for a weekend of Shad fishing on the headwaters of the St. Johns river.

This annual outing provides members of different clubs a chance to get together, camp out and swap stories. It's always a lot of fun and you may even get some new stories to tell.

The Back Country Fly Fishing Outing has been a great outing in the past and were hoping for a good turnout this year to represent our club.

**Dates:** Friday - Sunday Feb. 16-18th

**Location:** Near Sanford Florida on the St. Johns River (see map page 6)

**Accommodations:** Camping, no water or electricity, bathroom only

**Boat Ramp:** JJ Marina Isle. \$ 1.00 Launch fee. Rental Boats are available with advance registration.

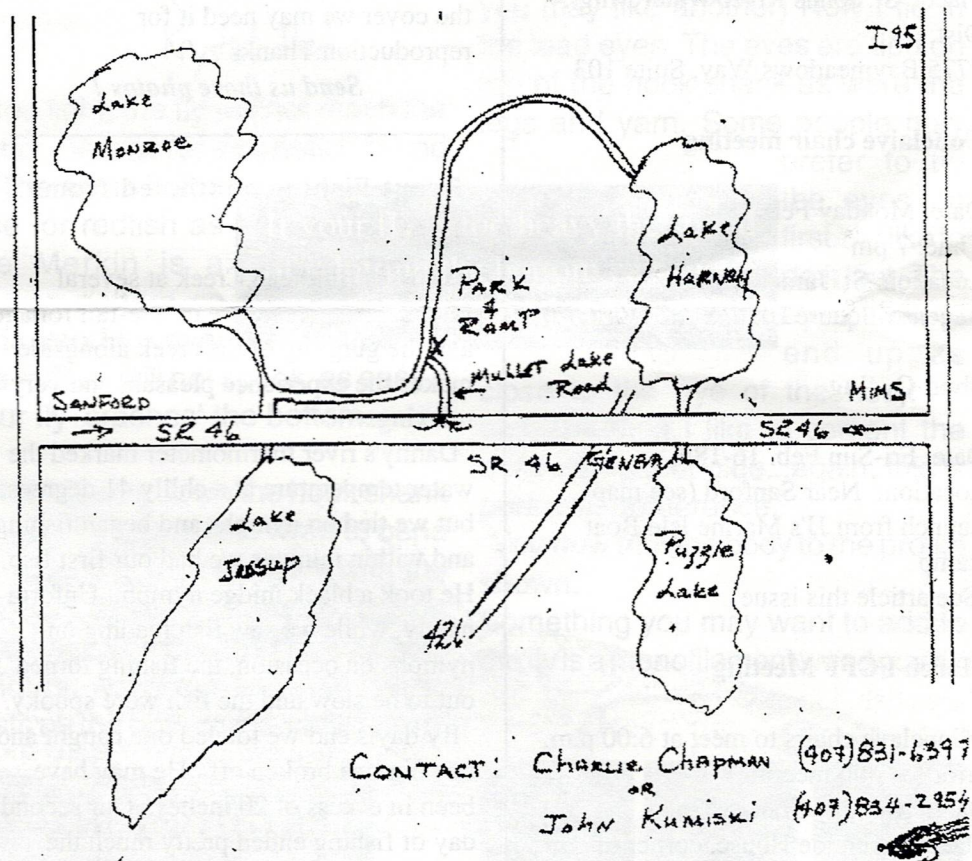
**Equipment:** 4 to 7-wt rods and lines with sink tip or full sinking lines.

**Flies:** Shad darts, sizes 4-8, in orange, chartreuse, white and red

**Where to fish:** See map, Shad tend to concentrate in certain areas, so, if you find fish, you can usually catch several.

**Further information:** Available at the February meeting. Contact Charlie Chapman, 407-831-6397 or John Kuminski 407-834-2954

## Shad Outing Map



## QUICK TIP !

I have a lot of people comment on the 'shootability' of my fly lines. People tell me that my fly lines always seem to shoot so well. The reason is simple : I always clean my fly line after a trip with warm water and a mild detergent. When you shower, bring your rod in with you...you can clean your rod, reel, and line all at once. When you finish, apply a good fly line dressing and your set for your next trip !



## Worth Noting

### February FCFF Meeting

( Conclave chairs to meet at 6:00 p.m. prior to Club meeting)

Date: Monday Feb. 5, 7p.m.

Place: Riverside House, corner of Park & Copeland

Speaker: FCFFer Ron Davis

### Board Meeting

Date: Monday, Feb. 12

Time: 7p.m.

Place: St. Johns River Water Mngt. Dist.

7775 Baymeadows Way, Suite 103

### Conclaive chair meeting

Date: Monday Feb. 19

Time, 7 pm

Location: St. James Building,  
Regency Square Blvd. Suite 201

### Shad Outing

Date: Fri-Sun Feb. 16-18th

Location: Near Sanford (see map)  
Launch from JJ's Marine Isle Boat Ramp

(See article this issue)

### March FCFF Meeting

( Conclave chairs to meet at 6:00 p.m. prior to Club meeting)

Date: Monday Mar.18, 7p.m.

Place: Riverside House, corner of Park & Copeland

Speaker: Nova Scotian Fly Fishing School owner Dennis Grant  
Topic: Fly fishing in Nova Scotia - Slides and Videos.

### Board Meeting

Date: Monday, Feb. 12

Time: 7p.m.

Place: St. Johns River Water Mngt. Dist. 7775 Baymeadows Way, Suite 103

## Your Photo On The Cover !

### The First Coast Fly Fishers want your best pictures !

Each and every month we will choose a photo that will be printed as the cover of the news letter. Just bring your photo to the monthly meeting or drop it off to someone who can bring it in. If you can't do either call one of the newsletter staff and we will arrange something.

Any fly fishing photo will do. If you can, find your negatives and keep them in a handy place. If your photo is chosen for the cover we may need it for reproduction.Thanks .

*Send us those photos !*

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Trout Fishing continued from page 3

it crosses Bullhead Creek at several points. The trees were in late-fall foliage and the gurgling of the creek alongside makes the experience pleasant and very relaxing.

Danny's river thermometer marked the water temperature at a chilly 41 degrees, but we tied on nymphs and began fishing, and within minutes we had our first fish. He took a black midge nymph. Unfortunately, while we saw fish feeding on nymphs on occasion, the fishing turned out to be slow and the fish were spooky.

By day's end we totaled one caught and one big one broken off. He may have been in excess of 20 inches. Our second day of fishing ended pretty much the same way, but the area of Bullhead Creek is so beautiful that you don't really mind. The creek has some really nice water that holds some very large fish

Producing flies on this trip were size 12 black midges (also in beadhead), size 14 gold ribbed hare's ear, and size 12 wet black ants. We fished with an 8-foot, 3 weight and a 7 1/2-foot 4 weight.

If you like the mountains and you like trout fishing, give Bullhead Creek a try, put plan to arrive early. The eight sections of the creek quickly fill up.

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Tom Mitzlaff

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Ken Bales

## Cold Weather Fishing

Looking for something new to try in the cold ?

Try taking a trip south to the Titusville area. There are two power plants a few miles apart that offer some good cold weather opportunities. All you do is fish in the area around the warm water discharges. Species such as ladyfish, snook, tarpon, blues,jacks,and trout make for some exciting fishing. The lady fish can really get thick, and like to hit small brown clousers. It has been said that tarpon to 80 pounds have been caught there during the winter months..So take a trip, and let us know how you do !



# FCFF ANNUAL BANQUET REPORT

by Curtis Loftin, Banquet Chairman

FCFF's Annual Banquet was held Wednesday, January 10, at The Garden Club of Jacksonville. Thanks to a lot of effort by many people, we set many records for this annual function. We had over 170 members and guests in attendance, gave away a record number of prizes and had 101 members pay their 1996 dues! The final tally showed that we raised over \$8,000. After deducting all expenses, we should easily clear over \$5,000!!!

We had great food (Jimmy's Hog Heaven), spirits (Neal Tyler & Sons.) and a super presentation by Captain Truel Myers.

Special thanks goes to the following members who contributed their time:

Tillie Knight	Mr. and Mrs. Bud Larson	Scott Hanigan
Jennifer Jockel	Lee Bennett	Bill Klima
Kevin Cohenour	Dave Lambert	Jimmy Ricks
Brian Dufec	Rick Cicconi	

In addition, a special thanks to those members who made contributions of prizes or services. They are:

John Bottko (The Salty Feather)	Jimmy Ricks (Jimmy's Hog Heaven)
Capt. Jerry Knight	Bill Castelli (Carlyle & Co. Jewelers)
	Brandy Cowart

Our silent auction accounted for over \$900 in receipts. Thanks to our Captains and their winners:

<u>Captain</u>	<u>Winner</u>
Capt. Warren Hinrichs	Dave & Tillie Knight
Capt. Brent London	Lucy Miller
Capt. Buz Livingston (1/2 Day)	Dr. John Hawkins
Capt. Buz Livingston (Tarpon Trip)	Chuck Sleeper
Capt. Jerry Knight	Curtis Loftin/Lee Hinrichs
Capt. Larry Miniard	Richard Clark

And a special congratulations to our prize winners. The big winners were:

Grand Prize: Sage Rod & Abel Reel	Ted Mayhew
Lamson Reel	Jim Crawford
Sage 10 Wt. Rod	Dr. Charles Joest
Flint River Guided Trip (For Paid Dues)	Ben Bishop
Taq-Heuen Sports Watch	Dr. Charles "Lucky" Joest
Other prizes	35 Other lucky soles!!

Happy Fishing in 1996!!!



## For Sale :

Orvis PM-10 907 & 909. Used less than three times. \$ 300.00 each. Abel 3n Reel with shooting head, Cortland Lazer Line 7 or 9 weight, used three times, 475.00. Abel 3N extra spool with shooting heat Cortland Lazer Line 7 or 9 wt, used once, \$ 175.00. Call Jesse Tremaine, 904-269-5110

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