The Acute Angler

Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club

Volume 48, Number 1

February 2015

It's now easier than ever to renew. Just go to the "Join now!" tab on the GOFC website (http://www.gofc.us/wp/join-now/), fill out the form online and pay using PayPal. The annual dues are $50 which covers the entire Family!

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WHO'S WHO AT GOFC

PRESIDENT:
LEROY HOLMES

VICE-PRESIDENT:
HAL WILSON

SECRETARY:
JAY PEACOCK

TREASURER:
DEBBY KNOPF

Upcoming GOFC Events

Seafood & Awards Banquet February 27th:

Come celebrate GOFC award winners with great eats and good company. The menu includes, spiny lobster tails, crab legs, shrimp, fried fish and an assortment of side dishes. Bring a desert to share and your favorite adult beverage, the club will supply soda and bottled water. The event will be held at Ken & Debby Knopf's boat barn and will start at 6:30 PM. The cost is $20 per person. Directions to the Knopf's house will be emailed to each club member.

Sheephead Shootout March 7th:

The event will be held in Cedar Key. Weather dates will be March 8th and March 14th. Four great prizes are up for grabs! GOFC members can enter for free, non-member fishing from a member's boat is $10. All contestants much have a valid Florida Fishing License. We will start at first safe light on day of tournament from any port – GOFC communications are on VHF channel 68. Weigh in will be at Cedar Key City Park. All fish to be weighed must be in line at the scales no later than 4:30PM. Scales open at 3:00 PM. Weights of fish will not be posted until all fish are weighed. The GO or NO GO decision will be sent out by email and posted on the GOFC website (www.gofc.us/wp/) by approximately 7:00PM on the day before the tournament. The maximum conditions under which this event will be held are 2 to 3 foot seas.

Month Meeting March 24th:

The monthly meeting will be held at the vet school as usual. This meeting will be a great one. This is a great opportunity to learn how to catch the various popular fish species in our home waters. The format for this meeting will be short presentations on fishing techniques and likely locations to catch amberjack, cobia, flounder, grouper, Spanish and king mackerel, redfish and trout. After the presentations are complete the presenters will move to a station they have setup to display the tackle they use for their particular species. This will allow the audience to mingle amongst the various stations in order to ask questions and view the rods/reels, tackle and lures up close. This meeting format has been very popular in the past. Rumor has it that GPS coordinates for likely locations to catch some of the species will be distributed at the meeting!

The mission of the Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club is to promote and support recreational saltwater fishing in the Big Bend area; to provide educational and recreational experiences for its members of all ages; and, to promote responsible conservation of saltwater resources.

President's Message

Hi everyone,

it that time again for the great Seafood and Awards Banquet. I would like to invite everyone one out for some great food and company, and don't forget there will a dessert contest again this year. For all new members this is a great time to mingle and get to know the club members better . There will alot of awards given out. So come hungry and I'll see you at Ken and Debby Knopf's boat barn

Leroy Holmes
GOFC-President

Fishing Report by Cliff Clark:

Hello Fellow Anglers

A quick update on the bite this past week. Redfish/trout and Sheepshead are in the Suwannee River. Try deeper holes in the East Pass and nearby Creeks. Sheepshead are being caught on the offshore rocks, However their size and numbers should increase in the following weeks. Good Luck!

Recent Club Catches:

IMPORTANT GOFC CONTACTS

WEBSITE: www.gofc.us

GOFC MAILING ADDRESS:

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Charlie Courtney
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NEWSLETTER EDITOR:
Austin Williams
austin@mcgriffwilliams.com

What does it take to have a winner in the annual photo contest? Three things help a great deal: Action, Emotion, and Composition. Below are some examples of each using some personal favorites from your editor's photo library.

The **composition** *of this 1999 photo, taken while trolling in the Gulf Stream, emphasizes symmetry. The repeating pattern of 45 degree angles formed by the outriggers and the wake leads the viewer's eye to the center, which is framed by vertical and horizontal lines formed by the rods, antennas, seat back and T-top.*

This photo, which appeared on the cover of the December 2003 issue of Big Bend Angler, shows great **emotion**, *good eye contact by the subjects, and decent composition. The composition would have been better had the angler's rod not intersected the gaff man's face.*

The left photo, which appeared on the cover of the Fall 2005 issue of Big Bend Angler, shows great **action**. *The image was cropped from the full sized image on the right to isolate the action, and the angler's rod was erased from the upper left corner of the cropped image to reduce distracting clutter. The crop (plus a small amount of image rotation) also reduced distraction caused by the slanted horizon.*

Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club

Get to Know Your Club Officers and Board Members

Lou Graf

Years as a member of GOFC: 7 Years

Years on Board: 5 Years

Current Position on Board: Advertising and Merchandise

Previous Position(s) on Board: President & Vice–President

Motivation to serve on Board: I want to see the club continue to prosper and that won't happen without people willing to serve on the board.

Years lived in Gainesville: 7 Years

Occupation: Captain of Industry– owner of Phoenix Mining Equiptment, Inc in Cincinnati, Ohio. We manufacture overhead hardware for trolley bus and DC rail haulage systems.

Family members: Jan Graf (Spouse)

Favorite fish you like to catch: Gag Grouper, Dalphin and Wahoo

Port you fish from the most often: Crystal River and Palm Beach

Favorite fishing memory: In May of 2010, fishing out of Cedar Key, I caught a 33 pound Cobia and a 36 pound Kingfish in the same day. I was able to watch the Kingfish approach the bait from a couple 100 feet off. Silver lightening moving through the water and BAM! - The reel started screaming. –OR- Fishing off of Chubb Cay I lost the back half of a small blue marlin to a very big shark right at (almost in) the boat. A friend of mine was leaning over the side of the boat with the fish's bill in his hand working the hook out when jaws showed up for lunch. The piece we had left weighed about 45 pounds.

Fishing goals for 2015: Catch a BIG tuna and the Club's Big 10.

Goals for club in 2015: Continuation of our support of local artificial reef deployments and increased participation in club tournaments.

If you could go fishing with any famous person, who would that be and why?

Ernest Hemingway – To go back to the late 1930's and experience fishing the Gulf Stream off Cuba and Bimini on board *Pilar* (Hemingway's 1934, 38 foot Wheeler). In Bimini, at the *Complete Angler* (before it burned down), there was a small museum with a whole wall of photographs of Hemingway standing with his catch –Typically a dozen big blue marlin and/or giant tuna. He not only invented outriggers and the flying bridge, but developed a lot of the big game tackle and tactics which are common place today. To keep the sharks at bay, Ernie had a machine gun on board– you can't get any manlier than that!

I would also take the opportunity to introduce Earnest to the concept of Catch and Release.

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Cedar Key Grouper Fishing

Carlos Morales and I set sail towards the end of January in hopes to find some new Red Grouper spots. It was a bit chilly on the ride out but with low winds it was and easy trip out. We mainly fished between 25-30 miles offshore looking for rock piles and interesting bottom. In total caught 3 nice gags all in the 12-14 lb range, which had to be thrown back, and one red grouper. At one spot where we were catching a lot of grunts Carlos decided to drop down his Go Pro to see what we would see. Unfortunately his iPad died so we were not able to see the video until we go home, but man were there a lot of fish down there. The video can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7je9plFPX1M . It was a great day on the water!

-Austin Williams

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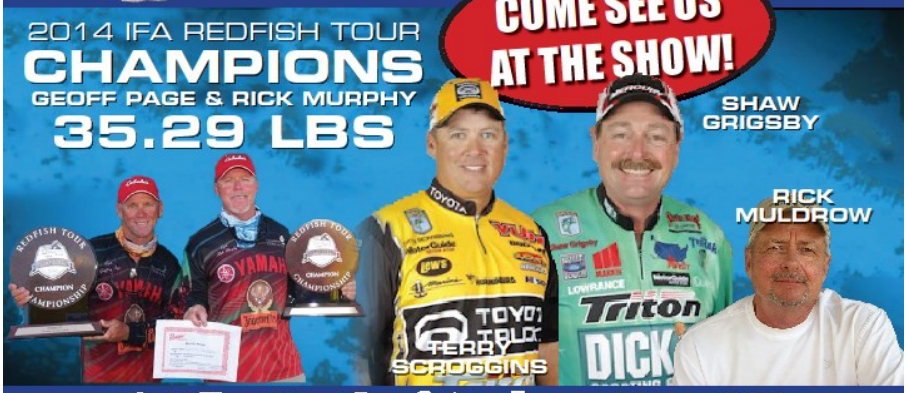

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Gulf Council Update– Gag Grouper

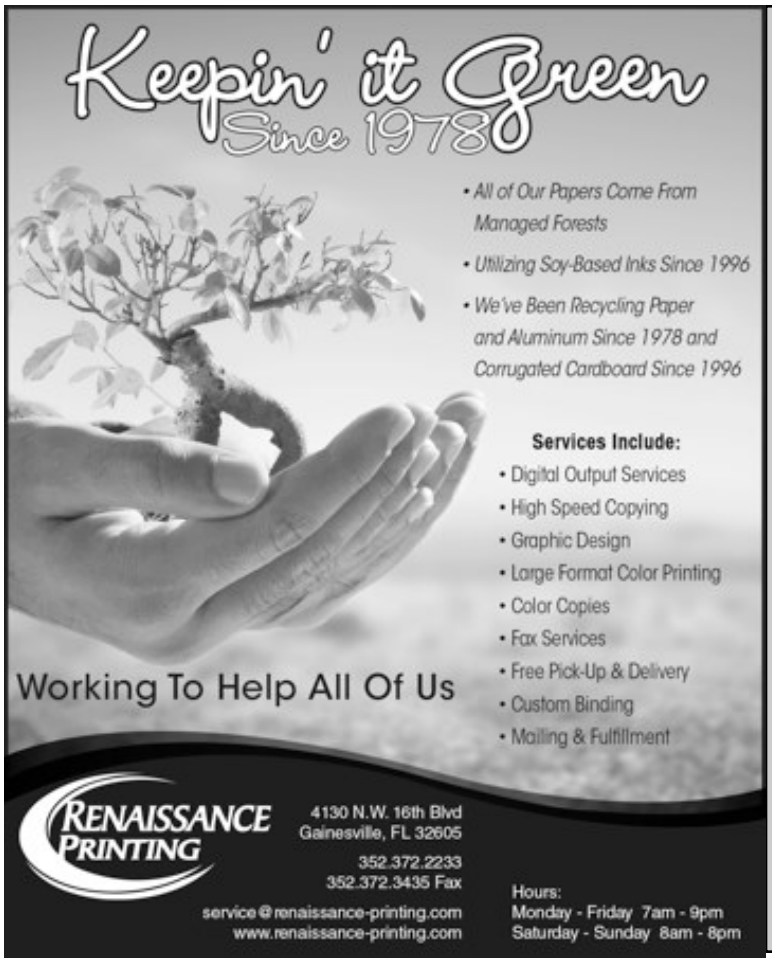
Last year, a stock assessment concluded that the gag stock was neither overfished nor experiencing overfishing. The SSC initially recommended only a small increase in ABC out of concern that a large red tide event that occurred over the summer may have had a negative impact on the stock. In January, the SSC received a presentation from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute that modeled the impact of the red tide event. The model concluded that mortality of gag in 2014 due to red tide was no worse than in normal years. Consequently, the SSC revised its ABC recommendations to include 5.21 million pounds in 2015, an increase of 67% over the current ABC. Based on the revised ABC recommendations, the Council asked staff to begin a framework amendment to increase the gag ACL and Annual Catch Target (ACT) and to look at season options.

Gulf Council Update– Red Snapper

The Council heard an update on the Red Snapper Stock Assessment, including information on the 2014 provisional red snapper catch estimates. The Council also received the overfishing limit (OFL) and acceptable biological catch (ABC) recommendations from its Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC).

The Council asked staff to prepare a framework action to increase the red snapper annual catch limit (ACL) based on revised ABCs using the 2014 provisional red snapper catch estimates. Because the SSC has not yet seen the provisional catch estimates or revised ABCs, they must review those estimates and determine whether to approve the revised ABCs. The SSC will meet via webinar February 19, 2015 from 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm eastern time.

The Council will then hold a special meeting via Webinar, March 3, 2015, from 1:00 pm - 4:00 pmeastern time, to review the SSC ABC recommendations and take final action on a framework action to increase the ACL accordingly.



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What's the Worst that Could Happen

This question is very common, particularly with parents of teenagers. Here, however, we are talking about on the water. There are any number of possibilities and it could be the case that the one that actually happens might be a total surprise. It is best to prepare for anything we can think of and hope those preparations are good enough for even the unexpected. So lets do a little drill here on paper so that our emergency procedures take place quickly and correctly.

We are on an offshore trip and we are out in fifty feet of water, likely outside the radio range of our VHF radio to reach Sea Tow. Waves are minimal and we are cruising at about 30 mph when we suddenly hit a submerged object which punches a hole in the bow below the water line. One angler, Bob, loses his balance and smashes his head against a T Top stanchion. He is on the deck unconscious and his face is a bloody mess. The driver, Jack, puts the boat in neutral and shuts down the engine. He and the other passenger, Sam, who seems to have injured, maybe broken, his wrist go to the guy on the deck and see that he is badly injured. Does he have a neck injury? Can he be moved at all? Is there arterial bleeding? There is no time to answer these questions because the bilge pump has come on and a lot of water is being pumped out.

This is a bad situation. There are multiple problems, so which to tackle first? The wrong decision now could really make things really worse in a hurry. Clearly the boat is taking on water and in danger of sinking. Jack, the boat's owner, tells Sam to get out the life jackets which are in the T-Bag under the T Top and put one on Bob and himself. Sam has to struggle with this because one hand isn't working very well. Jack opens a hatch and sees that the bilge is about half full of water already. He cranks up the engine hoping to give the bilge pump a little more juice.

There are no access hatches to the bow part of the boat, so if Jack wants to slow down the water inflow, he will have to grab a towel and jump overboard to try and stuff it in the hole. His boat has some flotation, but already seems to be settling a bit. If ever there was a time to call for help, this seems to be it. The radio is not on, so he turns it on while he is putting on the life jacket that Sam gave him. Sam is struggling to put a jacket on Bob. Jack pushes the CH 16 button. He may have very little time to get in a distress call, so what is the best way to do it? He has a radio with DSC but never bothered to connect it to his GPS. He has never actually made a distress call before and things seem to be happening pretty fast.

So, since this is all on a sheet of paper and not in real life, we can take a step back. The above is by no means out of the question. Jack, Bob and Sam are experienced boaters, with years of being offshore in all kinds of conditions. They are much better prepared than the four "football players" whose boat capsized off the coast of southwest Florida a few years ago. (Only one survived.)

We can go over the situation with our three guys above and look at doing some things differently, maybe a little better. I know I'm already thinking of changes I will make just writing this stuff down.

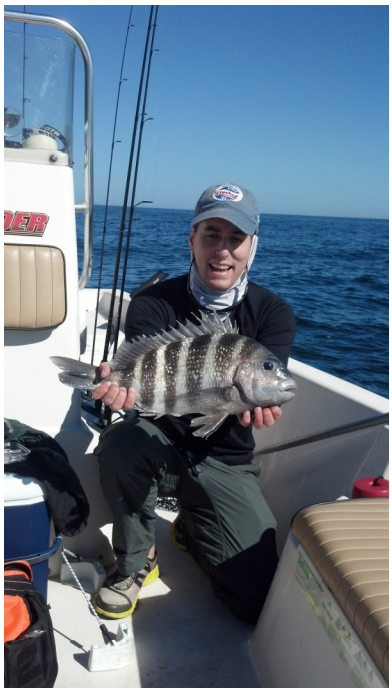
What about hitting a "submerged object" just underwater so you couldn't see it? How likely is this? Do you run out pretty early in the morning? Still kinda dark? Come in while the Sun is going down below the horizon? Run in fog? Rain showers? In a chop so low floating objects can be hard to see? It isn't that "out of sight" to hit something on the water and the faster you are going, the less time you will have to react and the harder the impact.

Next, there are different types of life jackets. Most of us have on board the vest type. The ones rated "offshore" are pretty good, but rather bulky and would be hard to wear and fish at the same time. Much less bulky are the suspender type that can inflate automatically and/or with the pull of a cord. Maybe a good idea would be to have comfortable life jackets on all the time when on board. Ones that inflate automatically when in the water.
-Continued on Page 12

February Fishing

Back in late 2014, when GOFC's board was divvying up months each board member would contribute an article to the newsletter or magazine, I figured I'd have plenty of fish catching in the New Year to write about. After all, most of the largest trout I've caught have been in January or February and this is the time of year the kayak gets dusted off for fishing the creeks and very shallow near -shore flats. However, although I had been out on the water plenty of times, as of the end of January I'd failed to catch anything that was legal to keep. Which is not to say that I'd have preferred to stay home and do yard work, but I didn't have much of a fishing report.

The third day of January I took the boat out of Horseshoe Beach with my two sons with the goal of catching a few trout. Water temperature was 62-64 degrees and up towards Pepperfish Keys the water was clear and in the morning there was hardly a ripple on the surface. Although both my boys enjoy occasionally being on the water, they both rapidly tire of fishing if there's not a lot of action, so I was hoping to put them on a good bite. Within fifteen minutes of setting up our first drift in a few feet of water, my younger son (Nick) hooked a nice sized trout on a Paul Brown Devil. Unfortunately, the excitement of the moment got the better of him and he started reeling as if he was hauling a grouper out of its lair and the fish quickly came unbuttoned. A little while later he hooked another good sized trout, and unfortunately that one also came loose just as I got ready with the landing net. Other than that we caught and released a couple more trout that didn't come close to needing to be measured. Otherwise, there wasn't much more action although it looked as though there was at least one bluefish around – either that or a stray Spanish, because one or the other took off with about $7.50s-worth of the hind-end of the Paul Brown Devil lure, very much impairing its future fish catching potential.



The second Tuesday of January, Ken Knopf was rounding up a crew to go catch amberjack at the White City Bridge. I didn't need to be asked twice and given the captain, I figured I could fill in everything but the weight on the Ellett contest weigh slip before we left. Hal Wilson and I joined Ken on a calm but foggy trip out of Cedar Key making stops at Seahorse Reef, close to the Whistle Buoy and a couple more of Ken's numbers before we finally found some volunteers for live bait. By around 10:30 we had a good number of sand perch with the occasional grunt and porgy and headed off to the rubble of the White City Bridge. We noticed a lot of birds (mostly gannets) diving on bait as we approached the bridge and I saw a school of at least a dozen good-sized AJ swim past the boat as we were positioning to anchor. The water above and around the bridge rubble was thick with cigar minnows – so thick in fact that we couldn't pick up the structure for all the bait. Our hard-won live bait attracted no bites, nor did a variety of artificials. I even tried to 'match the hatch' with a 3/8 oz jig and soft plastic fished with light spinning gear – the real rationale being that I'd be bound to hook an AJ with such ridiculously light gear – but even this ruse didn't work. We pulled anchor after a couple of hours and Ken's big Everglades made short work of the ten mile trip over to 'The Barge'. Again, the structure was totally covered and obscured by cigar minnows, and no sign of amberjacks, grouper, or anything else that would bend a rod. Given the huge abundance of bait, perhaps it's not surprising that our offerings were ignored or overlooked.

My next three trips were in a vessel at the opposite end of the power and speed spectrum. Launching at primitive ramps south of Steinhatchee, I paddled my kayak a lot of miles looking for…….well anything! I first used one of the slow-sinking Paul Brown lures several years ago and swore that it had some kind of magical ability to home in on fish. I caught wintertime trout and redfish like never before and even flounder, pinfish and puffer fish couldn't leave this lure alone. However, I couldn't even catch oysters with this same lure in the last three weeks of January. Not in the creeks, not at the creek mouth, not out on the shallow flats over sun-warmed rocks. Not even a half-hearted nibble. Although I can't discount the possibility that I'd lost what little touch I may have had, I also didn't see any fish on any of these trips other than a very few mullet. I don't know where the fish were, but they sure weren't to be found around Sink Creek.

Had I sent this to Austin when I said I would (sorry Austin!), I'd have titled this report – Nothing but skunk. Fortunately (and predictably), I delayed finishing up the article and Carlos Morales suggested we go look for sheepshead this past Sunday (Feb. 8th). Just a few days after the full moon there was big tidal swing and a strong current over one of the artificial reefs out of Cedar Key. There was hardly any wind to complicate anchoring, so on the second attempt we managed to position the stern of the boat right over one of the arrays. It only took a few more minutes to confirm that sheepshead were present – shrimp pilfered off the hook with barely a tap to signal the thievery. A few shrimp later, one of the perpetrators was dragged to the surface – it sure felt good to feel the pull of a fish; I'd almost forgotten. We caught perhaps ten or so sheepshead, most of which weighed around 4lb on the boga grip. Other boats on nearby arrays were also catching fish which all looked to be of the same size. Most fish caught by Carlos and me were returned to go about their business, but we kept just a few to weigh and for dinner. Our largest fish were a perfectly matched pair, both weighing 4.4 lb and were males. Possibly the larger females have yet to join the males at the spawning sites, but a good sign that sheepshead spawn has started. More importantly, this is now a fishing report!

- John Byatt

What's the Worst that Could Happen Continued

One of our Club members fell out of the boat at the dock when launching his boat. He went straight to the bottom in eight feet of water and noticed that eight feet is easily enough to drown in. He had no life jacket on and managed to get back to the surface, but is now rethinking his nautical attire. The rest of us should do the same.

What about the choice of what to do when water is coming into the boat and there are bad injuries at the same time? On paper it is a no-brainer, right? Even if your best friend is lying there bleeding, when the boat sinks twenty five miles offshore or more, everybody on it will be in big trouble even with a life jacket on. This would be even worse in cold water. Warm water wouldn't be as bad; ask the sharks, they love it. Thus a distress call is the first order of business when a boat is sinking. Even if it has flotation, bad stuff can still happen. Remember the football players? Their boat didn't sink. (It was their mistake that caused it to capsize, but do you know how stable your boat would be with the deck awash?)

If you think there is a possibility of sinking, a distress call is a must. If you wait you might not get a second chance. Salt water sloshing around can short out batteries. Sinking down a foot means your radio antenna is that much lower with less broadcast range. So what kind of distress call to make?

There are several choices for distress calls and you should be prepared for all of them. Quickly doing a 360 degree scan of the horizon would show any other boats in sight. Fire up a flare if you have the gun type or stand on the highest point of the boat and wave a hand-held flare. You have up to date flares and they are easy to get to, right? If you have something like a SPOT unit, it should already be on and in touch with satellites and you can send an SOS by pushing a button. This will also transmit your location.

Your VHF radio should always be on and either scanning or on channel 16. If it is a properly installed DSC unit, the push of a button would also transmit an SOS with your location. (This will only go as far as your VHF radio signal can go, but in addition to the Coast Guard, other nearby vessels with radios on with DSC will also get your signal, and should come to your aid. You can also call the Coast Guard directly on your radio if you don't have DSC. There is a protocol to make this call to get the most important information into the shortest time. Have your GPS on a screen with the Lat-Long numbers on. Select channel 16 and say **"Mayday, Mayday, Mayday**. This is vessel (boat name). Position (read the latitude-longitude numbers from your GPS). Three people on board." Stop transmitting and wait for the Coast Guard to respond. If you don't get a response in a few seconds, transmit the same information again and wait again.

When the Coast Guard hears "Mayday" they assume you are in serious danger, sinking or on fire for example. If you just wanted to notify them that you were broken down you would have said "Coast Guard" three times instead of Mayday and given your position. Your position is critical so that they know where to look for you if you can't transmit anymore for some reason. They also need to know the number of people on board because if they do begin a search and find one person who is unresponsive, they need to know how many more to look for.

When they respond to your Mayday call, they will want to know the nature of your emergency, the nature of any injuries, a description of your vessel, and if you are moving. While you are responding, others on your boat should be working on the problem as best as they are able. In our paper example Sam might make the distress call while Jack ties on a line and grabs a towel to stuff into the bow hole. Once the Coast Guard is alerted, the sinking can be addressed and Jack can go over the side, with the line tied to the boat, to try to slow down the leak. (We can talk about on-the-water repairs another time.)

Once the leak is plugged enough so that the bilge pump can keep up or gain on it, Bob needs to be checked and bleeding stopped and other first aid given. If the leak is plugged well enough for you to run the boat, you need to start towards the closest port (not necessarily the one you came out of) and notify the Coast Guard of your new situation: the direction and speed that you now have and how well the leak is plugged. As you get closer to shore, you can try hailing the nearest Sea Tow and get them to escort you in, just in case. Again, keep in touch with the Coast Guard.

It might not be a bad idea for GOFC to have a program on first aid on the water once every year or so. I'm not sure that my first aid kit actually has the stuff I am most likely to need. It is also possible to test a VHF radio to see how well it is transmitting. (I have such a tester.) We might want to schedule a Saturday some time when it is not worth going out to check out new members' boats or any member's boats for that matter. The Coast Guard Auxiliary does this, but we could probably do a decent job.

Finally, as far as the member who abandoned ship at the dock, as his boat floated away, I suppose one could argue that it was available for salvage. We might need to look into the legal implications of all this; this particular boat is a pretty good one.

-Russ Roy

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Recent Club Catches

Weighslip Submissions

Ken Knopf
2.6 lb Seatrout
Lure: Shrimp
Location: Horseshoe

John Patrick
13 lb Gag Grouper
Lure: Sardine
Location: Crystal River

Dale Reed
5 lb Sheepshead
Lure: Shrimp
Location: Suwannee

Brittany Rothfolk
3.3 lb Redfish
Lure: Shrimp
Location: Horseshoe

Tom Bacsik
48 lb Cobia
Lure: bait
Location: St. Aug.

Ed Ellett
1.75 lb Seatrout
Lure: Suspension Lure
Location: Steinhatchee

Ross McElroy
1.2 lb. Flounder
Lure: Jig
Location: Horseshoe

Marcia Ellett
1 lb Seatrout
Lure: Trout trot
Location: Steinhatchee

Austin Williams
7 lb Red Grouper
Lure: Sardine
Location: Cedar Key

Ken Knopf
1.6 lb Seatrout
Lure: Shrimp
Location: Dallus Creek

Dale Reed
4.57 lb Sheepshead
Lure: Shrimp
Location: Crystal River

Carlos Morales
4.4 lb. Sheepshead
Lure: Shrimp
Location: Cedar Key

Hal Wilson
3.77 lb Sheepshead
Lure: Shrimp
Location: Cedar Key

Dale Reed
4.77 lb Sheepshead
Lure: Shrimp
Location: Cedar Key

John Byatt
4.4 lb Sheepshead
Lure: Shrimp
Location: Cedar Key

Lou Graf
1.25 Seatrout
Lure: Lure
Location: Dallas Creek

Dale Reed
3.24 lb Seatrout
Lure: Shrimp
Location: Crystal River

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