The Acute Angler

MARCH 2017 **Volume 50, Number 2**

GOFC News

COBIATHON MAC ATTACK

Cedar Key— April 29th

SIGN UP:

Prior to start the Tournament Committee must be provided with boat name, size and make, captain's name and name of all anglers on board. Also, the committee must be advised of any lady or youth anglers participating. Sign up online in advance here (by 9:00 pm the evening before the tournament.)

START:

First safe light on day of tournament from any port – GOFC communications are on VHF channel 68.

WEIGH IN:

Cedar Key City Park: All fish to be weighed must be in line at the scales no later than 5:00PM. Scales open at 4:30 PM. Winner will be announced at next club meeting.

AWARDS/PRIZES:

COBIA
1st $75 2nd $50 3rd $25

KING MAC
1st $75 2nd $50 3rd $25

SPANISH
1st $75 2nd $ 50 3rd $25

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, March 28nd

Vet School, New Lecture Hall

Join us as Rick From RICKS RODS come to talk to us about fishing rod selection

Raffle Prizes:

- First Prize – Framed art work from Rick Davidson
- Second – $20.00 garys tackle box gift certificate
- Third – 15.00 gift certificate to garys
- Fourth – 10 dollar gift certificate to garys

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, April 25th

Vet School, New Lecture Hall

Captain Clay Shidler will be back to talk about fishing crystal river . Clay has always been a great presenter and we are so happy to have him back once again. Clay will have his schedule so if after the meeting you want to book a charter this will be the day to do it.

Debby will be available to collect dues from any member at the next meeting

NEW SHIRTS ARE IN $15.00

AVAILABLE FOR SALE AT MARCH MEETING ALL SIZES

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.

A Pinch of History

For years, Dick Bowles, one of GOFC's founders, wrote a weekly column on fishing for the Gainesville Sun. We ran one of these columns a few months ago in our GOFC newsletter. Dick's column was called "A Pinch of Salt" because it mostly dealt with salt-water angling. Club members often referred to it as "A Pinch of Truth" with a wink and a nod. Dick was a good writer and his columns were always fun to read. Gary Simpson of the Tackle Box now writes one for the Sun every week, and he can tell you that it is not the easiest thing to do, week after week.

In any case, I'm certainly no Dick Bowles or Gary Simpson, but I am going to borrow Dick's title and write a piece every once in a while called "A Pinch of History." I have some of GOFC's early records and I'm looking for more. As I go through these, I'll bring you the results. It is fun to compare our activities now with activities from thirty, forty or fifty years ago!

For example, back on March 29, 1969 a member named John Ellett, fishing out of Crystal River caugth 33 Spanish Mackerel. The next day, still at Crystal River, he got 72. He was trolling "yellow jigs."

The "John Ellett Trophy" was not started until 1973, so 43 years ago. There were seven different species: king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, trout, redfish, cobia and grouper. There was also a category called "Unusual." This did not have to do with a particular angler as far as I can tell, although John Patrick probably won this category as much or more than anyone, but rather the species of fish. "Unusual" was defined as "large silver trout, blackfish, black drum, dophin, barracuda, or the like." The Trophy was given annually, in February or March, as it is still today.

The number of species in the Ellett Contest has changed over the years and today we have ten, and we don't always have an "unusual" category.

While I don't have enough data yet to be sure, it does appear to me that the fish entered have changed. For example, back in May, 1971, three grouper were entered for that month's prize. (Monthly prizes were awarded by the Club for many years.) The biggest grouper was 25 pounds, the next was 20, and the third 18.33. I don't think we have had a month like that for a while. Later that same year, in October, the three largest were 27.75 lbs, 25 lbs, and 22 lbs. The 25 lb fish was caught on a "yellow salty boogy." I'm going to have to do a bit of research on this lure. It may be that this was the drink that was served at the Awards Banquet, rather than the lure used.

As a long time GOFC Bored member.....oops that should be "Board member," sorry about that, I can recall a lot of meetings where we discussed the contest rules, changed them, changed them back, and so on. Back in 1976 this was also happening. Dick Bowles wrote a letter to then President John Mitchell where Dick recommended a number of changes. Members often entered a fish at a monthly meeting without being present like they were supposed to. Dick proposed a rule saying if you weren't present your fish wasn't entered. He also noted that 35 species of fish were now listed as "Unusual" and suggested that this needed to be addressed.

By 1977, the Unusual problem had apparently been settled and at the March 1977 banquet, the top 3 Unusual fish, chosen out of 42 entries, were 1) 32 lb jack crevalle, 2) 5lb 8oz triggerfish, and 3) 5 lb grunt. That jack sounds more like an amberjack, but 40 lb'ers are common in the Gulf. They must be a load! The triggerfish was a gray triggerfish I guess, and 5.5 lbs sounds like a real prize. In 1984 member Patsy Adkins caught a 4' long billfish which she fought for 15 minutes before it "flew away" and this entry, the first billfish entered in the GOFC , was entered as Unusual!

Fishing Report

by Jay Peacock

Inshore fishing should really heat up as temperatures rise in March. Trout on the flats should become pretty cooperative and will readily hit live sprimp, jigs, etc.. Our ever-present redfish will be a good target on high tides. During the latter part of March Spanish Mackerel will invade the grass flats and reefs.

Looking offshore in March sheepshead will be a popular target as they spawn on relatively shallow reefs. Live or freshly dead shrimp is the bait of choice for these hungry fish. While red grouper are open gags are closed until June 1st. Seabass and grunts are a possible target offshore but remember that grey triggerfish are closed all this year in the gulf so you mush release any you catch. Amberjack season is open until June 1st and re-opens on August 1st. I will expand on techniques I use to target amberjack in the paragraphs below.

As reported in Gary Simpson's column in the Gainesville Sun: The much-anticipated sheepshead bite on natural and artificial reefs off the Big Bend is underway, and members of the Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club have the banded battlers' whereabouts nailed down. Dale Reed, Ross McElroy, Hal Wilson, and Chic Hinton ran Saturday out from the Cedar Key ramp to a wreck in water 30 feet deep. The men fished shrimp on the bottom around the structure to take 30 sheepshead. They harvested the 16 stoutest specimens weighing up to nearly 6 pounds.

Looking forward to April the kings and cobia should start showing up in numbers by mid-April just in time for the GOFC Cobiathon / Mack Attack tournament.

Amberjack prefer significant structure such as wrecks, artificial reefs and offshore springs. The deeper the water the better when looking for amberjack. I would not expect to find keeper sized AJs in less than 50 feet of water. REMEMBER: THE MINIMUM SIZE AMBERJACK YOU CAN NOW KEEP IS 34 INCHES! This means you will typically do a lot of catch and release of smaller fish to get to a keeper.

Amberjack typically hang out a bit higher in the water column than grouper and will often eat live baits dropped down for grouper before the bait ever reaches the bottom. The most common ways to fish for AJs are live bait on a fish finder rig or jigs. Dead baits are not typically very productive for AJs. I believe I have maybe caught one or two undersized AJs on dead bait.

Live bait fishing for AJs generally requires relatively large live baits such as pinfish, pigfish, or any of a variety of species you can catch on your way out to your fishing location. I prefer a live bait in the 3 to 8 inch long size range. I like to cut off a piece of a fin to make the bait swim abnormally. Use as little weight as necessary to get the bait near the bottom. I like to hook the fish in the back or near the anal fin.
(continued on page 5)

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You will usually get an AJ bite before the bait gets to the bottom so lower it slowly feeling carefully for a bite. The bite is often very soft compared to a grouper bite so you will need to pay careful attention. Once you feel the bite start reeling and hold on! Once the fish knows he is hooked the AJ will attempt to pull you in with him.

Jig fishing can be a very effective way to catch AJs. Both traditional lead head "bucktail" jigs and the newer butterfly style jigs work well. Diamond style jigs are very effective also.

When using a buck tail jig drop the jig to the bottom and retrieve it fast in a very exaggerated jigging motion with the rod. You want lots of up and down motion of the jig as you retrieve it. Strikes will most likely happen mid way up the water column. I have not personally caught AJs with butterfly jigs but I hear they are very effective.

Look for some smooth seas this month to run out and stretch your arms on a feisty amberjack!

Ed Ellett, CPCU, CLU, CIC

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A Member's Boat

By Glenn Acomb

Returning from a 2010 fishing trip in Steinhatchee, I saw a Panga Marine 18 Skiff for the first time at a gas station in Steinhatchee. I was intrigued by the design of a pronounced deep V bow and a flat hull stern. For years, I had been fishing out of my 17' skinny-water Pathfinder tunnel hull, the "17T." While I liked my Pathfinder a lot, it was a rough ride and rather wet. Without much protected water around the Big Bend areas that I fish, there had been many windy days I just couldn't fish and often my back was quite sore on the end of my trips.

Several months later I drove to Sarasota to see Panga Marine's headquarters to learn more about their line of pangas. After more research, I learned that the panga design has been around for about 50 years, when the World Bank provided aid with Yamaha to support a Mexican design that could help fisherman of the Central America have a seaworthy, low-power design that can be launched from the beach (http://www.boatingmag.com/boats/history-panga).

I learned that Panga Marine is a highly regarded builder and has a fleet of pangas from 18' – 27'. I also considered a 20' and a 22' panga, but liked the versatility of the 18. Other panga builders do exist, but I liked the owner of Panga Marine, the many happy customers, and their build-to-order designs.

Since I mostly fish inshore or nearshore, I chose the 18’-0” skiff which has the signature Carolina-flare bow and a narrow beam of 6’-0”. I also selected a side console rather than center console which makes for a very roomy cockpit. My 18 Skiff floats in 8”. In keeping with a no-nonsense fishing skiff, I chose the no liner option, which makes for a 900 lb. skiff. Pangas are powered with far less horsepower than other boats, and I selected the new (at the time) Yamaha 70 4-stroke, the lightest outboard in its class. At WOT, and one other angler and gear, the skiff reaches 35 mph. Without a below-deck tank, I have two 6-gallon plastic tanks under the aft casting deck which I connected by a valve for convenience of switching tanks while under way. Initially, 12 gallons was a bit of a concern, but I never come anywhere close to burning it all.

Storage is another tradeoff of no liner, but it is manageable with forward storage under the casting deck, a bit under the console and under the aft casting deck. The rest of my gear is brought in a gear bag.

I added trim tabs, an 8’ Powerpole, an 80-lb Minn-Kota iPilot trolling motor and a 3-bank charger in the console. I also lined the cockpit with modular squares of Dri-Dek to be kinder on the feet and limit sound. At WOT and a normal load, the top end is 35 mph. The capacity of the 18 Skiff is 5 persons.

LETS GO FISHING

I got a phone call from Justin Magnifico said he booked trip to go fishing with Capt. Mario Castello out of Crystal River. We would have two other friends coming along Dale Reed and Joey Landreneau. We all met at the plantation resort where Mario docks his boat. He was waiting for us and ready to go. We got loaded up and got underway, the game plan was to go to shallow rocks and try to catch some grouper. Joey had brought some of his larger slick lures along which he designed for shallow water grouper. We were ready to see how they performed.

First thing in the morning we headed to some inshore rocks and grouper fished. After an hour, we caught some small grouper and decided we should try something different. The grouper bite was very slow so we travel south near the spoil banks out from Crystal River where we fished some scattered oyster bars. We started picking up a few speckle trout using a DOA paddle tail in gold flake . They were working very well with the trout and the bluefish liked them as well. The other productive color was dark purple with chartreuse tail on a chartreuse jig head. Joey was fishing

his slick lures and catching some quality trout. The chartreuse tail was the ticket on the slicks.

Captain Mario suggested that we move closer to the spoil banks where there were rocks. It was later in the day and the tide was starting to cover those rocks that had been warming up in the sun. Mario said there may be some larger trout and snook cruising along and hanging on the rocks looking to warm up. We started catching a few speckle trout after we made several casts on the rocks. We would let the bait go to the bottom and jig it up and down touching the rocks. When I felt the bite of the fish it felt like a trout but a lot bigger one suddenly I realized it was not a trout when my line started screaming off! The reel and I could tell it was something larger! I was being coached by everyone on the boat when they realized it was a large fish. I looked over my shoulder and saw Captain Mario getting his net out. Finally, I started pulling the fish towards the boat and I knew the snook was finally getting tired enough to be netted. Captain Mario scooped up the snook and he said that will be the first one that he is going to be able to take a DNA sample from this year. He also said they are looking to see if the fish are different than others in the state. He hurried up and pulled out a sample kit. He took a sample of the fin, measurement of the fish which was 33 inches, and a photo of me and the fish. I was very happy to help him out and enjoyed the fight the fish give me and I think the picture shows it all.

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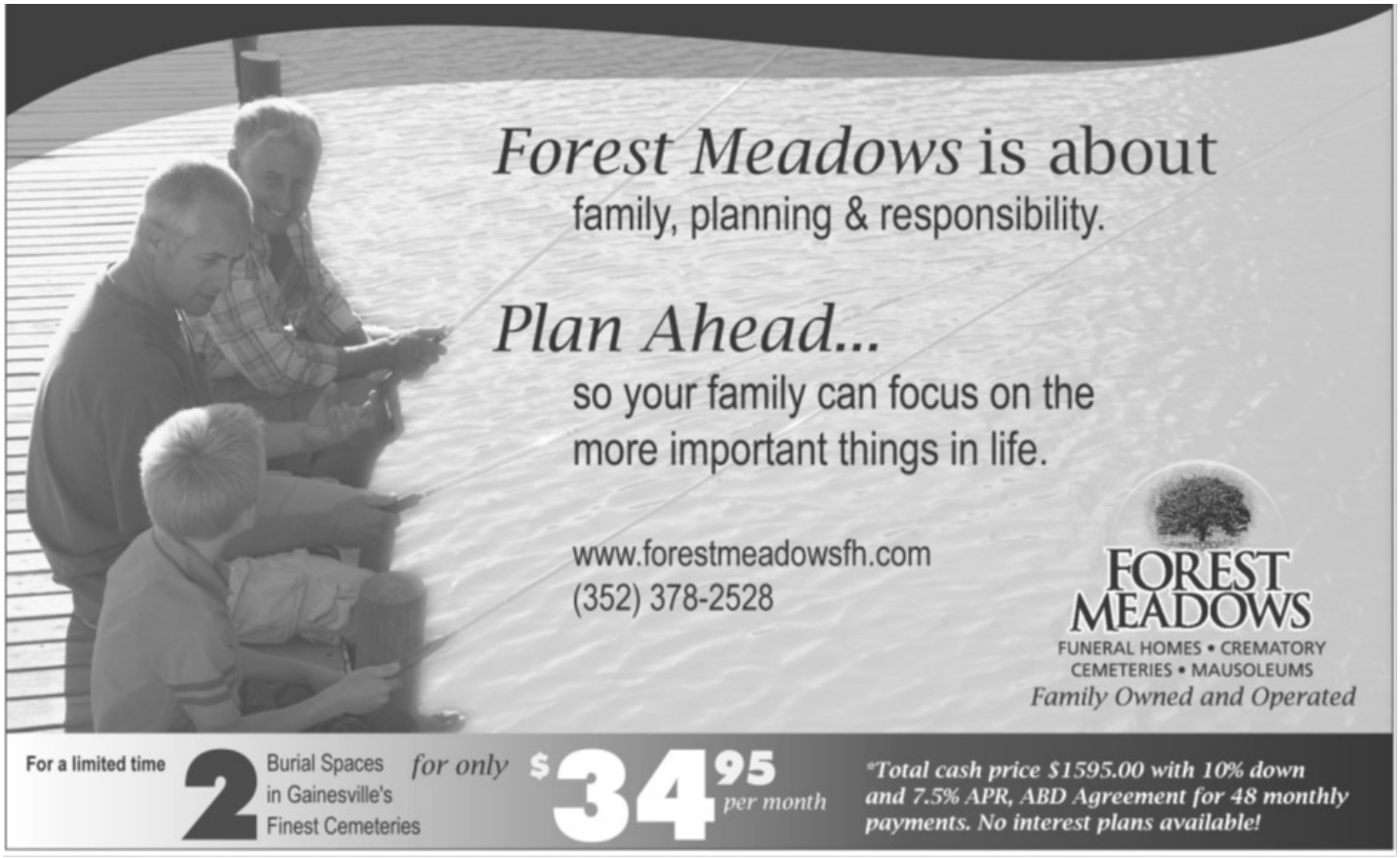

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PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Good luck to all who will be fishing in the sheeps head shoot out this weekend they are out there go get on them. As far as club news goes we have most of the speakers lined up thank in large part to Dale Reed . Remember to get your newsletter articles and magazine articles in for your bonus points 3 points per article maximum of two for points. The magazine and newsletter generates about 75% of our club income from the advertisements so please contribute and if you use one of our advertisers let them know there advertising money was well spent Thank You. All articles can be sent to

gofcpublications@googlegroups.com

Time to renew your club membership

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, only $50 gets you a full membership through 2016 if you have not joined yet or are renewing.

If you'd prefer to support the US Post Office, complete the NEW MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL form (download from the website) and mail it to the GOFC Treasurer.

Debby Knopf, Treasurer
Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club
3324 W. University Avenue
PMB #337
Gainesville, FL 32607

Please make your check payable to GOFC.

Or just bring cash, a check or a credit card to the next club meeting and pay Debby at the meeting.

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THANK YOU, FREDDIE!

I've had the Panga Marine 18 Skiff for 6 years now and have enjoyed everything about it. I get many questions as ramps and I summarize this craft as a simple, affordable, versatile, and very seaworthy fishing skiff. As for shortcomings, there are few of any concern. The bow raises a bit high, so I installed extra tall cushions. All in all, however, there is much to appreciate with this panga especially when I can fish the day, burn about 7 gallons , and If I get caught in 3' seas, I can take them with confidence.

SHEEPSHEAD

Debby Knopf

It's the most wonderful time of the year! So, you think I'm a little late? You think I am referring to the Holidays? March Madness maybe? Nope. It's Sheepshead season! Oh, I know people can catch them other times too, but when I think of March my mind turns to fishing for Sheepshead. Let me tell you, that fish freaked me out with those teeth the first time I caught one! Their teeth are humanlike, only they are all over including the roof of their mouth. They seriously need a good dentist and I could recommend one!

I am also fascinated by the Sheephead's distinctive black, vertical bars running down their silvery bodies, which is why they are also called the convict fish. And true to their name, these fish are notorious for stealing bait. Their bite is so subtle. They don't strike bait the way I am used to. They move up to it and sort of suck it into their mouth. Then while they sit in one place, their grinder teeth crush the bait into smaller pieces. If the jig head did not crush, they simply spit it back out. All of this happens in seconds, and you never know you even had a bite. You bring up an empty jig head and wonder what happened.

I like to fish with shrimp or my favorite, the fiddler crab. When I feel something on my line – anything – I simply slowly lift my rod. It could be just pressure on the line that was not there a second ago. If I'm hung up on a rock, I feel a solid, non-moving structure. I then shake the end of my rod hoping it will free itself. But if, when I lift the rod tip I feel even the slightest movement, I lift higher and a little harder and begin reeling. It is usually a Sheepshead, and it will inhale the bait that is trying to escape.

So get out there and enjoy the spring weather and catch some Sheepshead before it's too late!