Some of you may find it a little disconcerting to view Reel Lines on a computer, rather than holding a nice hard copy in your hands. I hope the color photos and the fact that we are saving both paper and postage by not mailing the newsletter strikes a positive chord with you and that you will not really miss having the paper in hand.

Sometimes, though, it is nice to have that hard copy, especially if you want to refer back to an article or if you contributed an article and want to show friends and family that you were actually volunteering and not just trying to get out of doing some household chores.

Of course, we archive the newsletters on our Web site, allowing you to refer back electronically. Also, it’s easy to e-mail the link to friends and family for that all-important proof. (“See, it’s not just another fishing trip! I’m teaching folks how to fish!”) I hope the ease of sending the link and accessing other links through our newsletter add to the enjoyment of the newsletter for you. Please let me know if you actually need a hard copy. We will print a limited number for special purposes … like keeping our volunteers out of the doghouse!

On a special note, please join our Angler Education family in welcoming Kevin and Molly Cunningham’s new son, Cole James Cunningham. Our newest little angler was born on December 21 and weighed in at 7 pounds, 6 ounces. I wonder how long it will be before he catches his first fish.

(Continued on page 2)

S.K.I.F.F. is Leaving the Dock

BOB MAINDELLE

As a Central Texas fishing guide, I concluded a presentation to the Austin Fly Fishers (AFF) last February, expecting the usual follow-up questions. The presentation concerned fly-fishing during a dry springtime. It was interesting enough, but nothing that would warrant an early-morning phone call the next day.

So, with a bit of curiosity, I took a call early the next morning from one of the club’s officers, Ron Cruse. Ron was really excited; I could hear it in his voice and his excitement was contagious. Because I also serve as the children’s pastor at my church near Fort Hood, I had casually mentioned my efforts to take the children of deployed soldiers out fishing with me as part of my ministry.

(Continued on page 2)
will take for Kevin to get a rod in that boy’s hands! With Kevin taking some time off in January and February to learn the ropes of being a daddy, those of you in the Houston area are welcome to call me if you need assistance. Kevin said that he will be checking phones and e-mails from time to time, but if you need something that won’t wait for Kevin, I will be happy to help out.

2009 was a banner year for our program. We know that you volunteer because of the smiles and thanks you get from folks you teach to fish, but each year we recognize our volunteers with a small thank-you gift. For those who go above and beyond (100+ hours of volunteering), we have a special category of volunteerism. Previously, we called it our “100 Club” but now are referring to that award as our “Top L.U.R.E.S” award. L.U.R.E.S. stands for Loyalty Unequaled Remarkable Enthusiastic Service.

Those top volunteers are listed on page 10. Three cheers for our Top L.U.R.E.S!!

S.K.I.F.F., continued

Something about meeting these children’s needs rang a bell with Ron and the AFF. Ron and his peers brainstormed a plan to become a fundraising mechanism to equip me to take more kids fishing and more often than my personal budget would allow. In a matter of minutes, the blueprint for S.K.I.F.F. was born. The acronym stands for Soldiers’ Kids Involved in Fishing Fun.

S.K.I.F.F. works like this: I identify kids or take referrals for military children with a parent deployed in harm’s way. I then coordinate a convenient trip time with parents. On trip day, I provide all safety and fishing equipment needed for a four-hour excursion by boat. I target panfish and white bass and see to it that the kids never come home empty-handed. The Austin Fly Fishers give each child a hat, T-shirt and goody-bag, all free of charge to the family.

As this newsletter goes to print, S.K.I.F.F. has evolved from a concept into a real mechanism for meeting real needs. I have logged 14 four-hour trips with 28 children, with more waiting.

Until you’ve been around the military culture, you can’t understand what a serious impact the extended absence of a parent has on a family. Some of our soldiers are on their third deployment. That’s 40 months of their children’s lives missed. The spouse left behind is doing the work of two. It’s tough even for the strongest of families and marriages.

To refer a child: Bob@HoldingTheLineGuideService.com or www.KidsFish2.com 254-368-7411

To donate: SKIFF@roncruse.com

Jay Smith (previous page) and Robert Smith (left) show off their catch.
Reel Lines

Virginia Roberts examines fish anatomy at Bass Brigades Camp.

Bass Brigade Rewarding Experience

VIRGINIA ROBERTS

Electrofishing, seining, fish habitat and fun: What do these things have in common? They are all things I experienced as a cadet at the 4th Battalion Bass Brigade.

I’m a junior in high school and this is my second year participating in the Texas Brigades. The Texas Brigades is a youth leadership camp which focuses on wildlife. Each camp is fast-paced and deals with one specific area of wildlife.

At Bass Brigade we became conservation ambassadors, spending the week learning to conserve and protect our water resources. Throughout the week, professors, Texas Parks and Wildlife personnel, biologists and many other volunteers immersed us in a multitude of learning activities about fish habitat, seining, aquatic plants, fish anatomy and much more. Information about this program is on the Web at www.texasbrigades.org.

All in all, camp was awesome, and I highly recommend it to other youth interested in the outdoors. From leadership skills to basic ecological knowledge, attending this program has benefited me in many ways. I now feel even better prepared to teach the Texas Parks and Wildlife Angler Education program.
Using Google Earth to Plan a Fishing Trip

KEVIN CUNNINGHAM

A hundred years ago, anglers had very limited information and relied on lucky guesswork to decide when was best to go fishing. Today, with the advent of the computer, there is so much information that the average weekend angler can use when planning a fishing trip. Hundreds of Web sites and programs have been designed to fill some needed niche in the fishing world. Some you have to pay for; others, you do not.

In our line of instruction (and personal fishing pleasure) we appreciate the resources that are free, quick to access and easy to use. Google Earth is one valuable asset that you can use when planning a good fishing trip.

Google Earth is a satellite-imaging program that can be used for a variety of purposes. Like many computer programs there is a free version and a fee-based version. For our recreational purposes the free version will suffice. The program itself can be downloaded at http://earth.google.com/.

Below you can see what the Google Earth interface window looks like. Similar to other Windows programs, you can see the task bar items and buttons. On the left-hand side there are three boxes: Search, Places, and Layers. For our purposes you will only need to worry about using the Search function. Once you’ve downloaded and installed the program, type your address into the Search or “Fly To” line. Once you press Enter, the satellite image will zoom in from the global view you see below down to the neighborhood and house you live in. It may be a little off, but you will definitely see the detail of your house. You will most likely be able to identify your car if it happened to be in the driveway when the satellite image was taken. Take note that the image shown in the free version is not current and may be up to a year or two old.

In terms of fishing, the satellite images are invaluable for scouting locations you have heard about and getting more details of areas where you have already been. Most importantly, the satellite also provides details about the shorelines, bottom contours, and depths of fishable water bodies.

Last March I did a presentation at Fly Fish Texas on fishing Galveston Bay and used Google Earth to provide images and details about recommended fishing spots. Here are two images used in that presentation, one of Jumbile Cove and another of San Luis Pass.

In the image of Jumbile Cove, above, you can see the houses to the right and the different fishable areas in the cove itself. There are fingers sticking out into the cove, circular spartina grass flats and mud/sand variations in the bottom type. What is most apparent in the image is the unique drop-off, or cut, at the upper middle part of the picture. It looks like someone started to mow the lawn and stopped.

The image below is of San Luis Pass. In addition to the exquisite shoreline detail, you can see the geomorphology of what years of strong tides have done to the shifting sand islands behind the pass. You can also see the deep cuts running between the islands, which make for ideal fishing highways. On the front side of the pass is the beachfront, where you can see the whitecaps of waves lapping over the sand bars.

The ability to see these locations in detail can make all the difference in choosing where to fish, especially if you have a boat. Furthermore, Google Earth also provides GPS coordinates at the bottom of the image wherever you place the pointer. You can also export the images in Google Earth to files, or copy and paste the images to documents like we have done here. Printing these images before you head out to the site is also very helpful when scouting the area.

Although this article describes only a fraction of what Google Earth can do, it shows how easy it is to use the computer to plan fishing trips. This application, combined with weather tracking, wind changes and tidal flow, makes a good tool to find the calmest water when fishing on the coast. I hope you take the time to play with this little toy and see what a difference it makes. If you would like any help working the program or if you need a tutorial, feel free to contact me any time. I hope this helps you plan better fishing trips and fishing events.
Don’t Lie About Fish, Unless You Do It Big

While preparing for this issue of Reel Lines, I was looking through other submissions, partly out of curiosity, as well as checking content and even seeking inspiration. So thanks, Kevin, I needed a little help.

Back in college days at Southwest Texas State University (which I refuse to call by any other name), I spent as much time as humanly possible along the banks of the San Marcos River, if not actually within its wet embrace. I found that being in the river’s presence soothed me, and so it was a great place to go to avoid responsibilities, like going to class.

On one particular stroll through Rio Vista Park, I spied a pecan tree that had been uprooted by a storm the night before. The near-gale-force winds had pushed the tree over, and its crown lay about midstream, just a few inches above the water’s surface.

A motion caught my attention. I turned to see a fox squirrel making its way across the trunk. As the tree rat neared what had once been the very top of the tree, it seemed to be taking more care as to where it placed its feet.

As I watched this event unfold before my eyes, I wondered what possessed this squirrel to crawl out to the tree’s extremity. And then I saw it—one solitary pecan dangling just a few inches above the water.

As the squirrel extended its little clawed feet to grasp the pecan, the water below exploded in a frothy, white foam. A largemouth bass (must have been a 15-pounder!) burst from the water and grabbed the poor squirrel by its head, ripping it from its perch. I never saw the squirrel surface, so I assume the fish ate it.

I stood on the bank motionless, wearing an expression of shock, and stared at the point this all took place. I really couldn’t believe my own eyes. What an incredible sight!

I continued to watch the water where the squirrel and bass disappeared. After about 10 minutes I saw the water begin to ripple. Slowly the bass raised its head out of the water, replaced the pecan to its twig and slipped back beneath the surface.

Got any good fish stories to tell?

Fish on!

Try These Cheap Teaching Aids

KEVIN REICH – Area Chief, Hale Center, Texas

After doing several classes a month and wondering why folks of all ages were still afraid to handle fish, I had to ask why.

After talking with a number of people, I realized that the first reason was that everyone was afraid of sticking their fingers in the fish’s mouth. The second reason was they were afraid of getting finned. With my wife’s help, I built some of the bottle catfish (see Web site below) Larry Condra had shown me during a teaching class. The pipe cleaners sticking out of the bottle do a good job of showing how to avoid the fins. Then came the hurdle of teeth. Folks just seemed to be very cautious about being bitten by the fish. I needed a good way to show what many fish teeth are like.

One day at work we were in the process of sanding down some equipment and I had purchased some 40 and 60 grit sanding disks. As soon as I had one of them in my hand it dawned on me that it would be a good way for students to grasp the idea of teeth in a fish’s mouth. Now I hand out a couple of these sanding disks for the class to pass around and explain to them that the species that we have in our area lake have teeth just like this. We deal mostly in bass, crappie, channel catfish and bluegill sunfish. I also explain to them that other species will have sharper and larger teeth and to always look before you put a finger in their mouths.

Once they identify the species of fish that they have caught and remember the sanding disk, I have found they will now handle the fish to unhook them properly for release.

For directions on how to create your own water bottle “catfish” teaching aid, see Reel Lines, January 2008, page 11 — www.tpwd.state.tx.us/publications/pwpdpubs/media/pwd_br_k0700_0162_01_08.pdf
TPWD Program Breaks Down Urban Barriers to Fishing

A growing new program is helping make inexpensive, convenient fishing opportunities available for urban Texans. This year, the program is offering two new lake sites in the Dallas-Fort Worth area for family-friendly catfish and trout fishing.

The Neighborhood Fishin’ program, which is a joint effort of Texas Parks and Wildlife and local governments across the state, is trying to overcome the biggest barriers to fishing that city-dwellers face by bringing fishing opportunities into the cities where they can be available to families who might otherwise never have the chance to give fishing a try. Two new Dallas-Fort Worth area locations bring the total number of Neighborhood Fishin’ sites in the DFW area to five, for a total of 14 locations throughout the state. A map of Neighborhood Fishin’ locations can be found on the program’s Web site.

In Denton, the new fishing lake is South Lakes Park’s Pond. The 187-acre park has two ponds as well as a full slate of park amenities such as hiking trails, picnic areas, playgrounds and athletic fields.

The other new Neighborhood Fishin’ location in the DFW area is at Mesquite City Lake. The 11.8-acre park includes picnic tables, a tennis court, a baseball diamond, a waterpark and an activity center.

These lakes are the perfect setting for training aspiring anglers. There is easy bank and dock access to the water, so no boat is required; and the regular fish stocking makes it more likely that a novice angler’s first experiment with fishing will be a gratifying one. Those 17 and older will still need to have a valid fishing license.

Each of the sites is amply stocked with fish throughout the year. During the winter months, each of the Neighborhood Fishin’ sites will be stocked with rainbow trout every two weeks, part of a massive trout-stocking effort that will see more than 270,000 hatchery-reared fish added to Texas waters over a three-month period. The 2009–2010 winter trout-stocking schedule is online. During the summer months, Neighborhood Fishin’ sites are stocked with catfish every two weeks, ensuring that there will always be a plentiful supply of hungry fish.

“With the addition of these two sites, more fishermen and families in the DFW area will have easier access to this great program,” said Rafe Brock, TPWD Inland Fisheries biologist for the Metroplex. “The Cities of Denton and Mesquite have invested a lot of resources in developing their fishing opportunities in the past. By joining the Neighborhood Fishin’ program, they have committed to providing a great fishing opportunity for their citizens.”

On the Net
www.neighborhoodfishin.org
www.tpwd.state.tx.us/troutstocking/
www.tpwd.state.tx.us/learning/angler_education/tackloan.phtml
Fly Fish Texas—A Yearly Ritual

WALTER McLendon

We are in the planning stages of our 11th Annual Fly Fish Texas, to be held at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center in Athens, on March 13, 2010. We began this event in 2000 as a joint effort between the fly-fishing clubs in Texas and TPWD to introduce fly-fishing to all Texans. After 10 years, it has become a yearly ritual for me.

As many as 1,000 people a year have attended this event to take advantage of our many seminars, classes and demonstrations and, of course, to fish TFFC’s ponds. Since 2000, we have added a quarter-mile-long fly-fishing stream, the new Conservation Center with additional presentation rooms, and a pavilion at Wetlands Pond #2.

That pavilion has made it possible to conduct Basic Fly Fishing classes during the event. Morning and afternoon three-hour classes will be held this year, limited to 25 students each. Participants will learn casting, knot tying, entomology as it pertains to fly-fishing, fly tying and essential equipment of fly-fishing. A Basic Fly Fishing Angler certificate and pin will be awarded at the conclusion. Rods, reels and flies will be furnished so that participants can test their newly learned skills in the adjacent two-acre fly-fishing pond. Instructors will be members of the Dallas Flyfishers and Texas Freshwater Fisheries staff under the direction of Bill Sargeant.

In our Angler’s Pavilion beside the fly-fishing pond, a roundtable of fly tiers from all over Texas will demonstrate their skills, and special tables of instructors will teach beginners to tie flies. About 16 seasoned fly-fishers and fishing guides will present one-hour presentations and teach classes on various subjects including how to choose and prepare equipment; fly-fishing strategies; and where to fly-fish in Texas.

Spending a day at Fly Fish Texas gives families the opportunity to get the feel of casting a fly rod, to catch trout, bream or bass in the ponds, to find and inspect aquatic insects that our fish thrive on, to watch fish take a fly in the water through a glass wall and to visit special vendor booths. Fly Fish Texas will start you on the road to exploring the wonderful art of fly-fishing in Texas.

Dallas Flyfisher Lou Montanaro teaches the art of fly tying.
GULF COAST COUNCIL OF FEDERATION OF FLY FISHERS
CONCLAVE YOUTH PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION TO THE BASICS OF FLY FISHING TO BEGIN A LIFETIME SPORT

WHEN: Saturday April 10th, 2010 from 1:30 – 4:00 PM

WHERE: Convention and Civic Center, New Braunfels, TX.

CONCLAVE YOUTH PROGRAM: For youngsters, age 10 – 18 years. No charge to participants.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

Fly Tying – Learn to tie a renowned classic fly pattern.

Casting – Learn to assemble the rod and its components for fishing. Learn the mechanics to making a 4-point cast.

Knot Tying – Learn to tie a number of basic knots.

Aquatic Habitat – Learn the importance of and to identify living aquatic insects as well as other organisms present in our Texas fresh water tributaries “they are what fish feed on”. This unique session will be presented by Ms. Ann Miller the TPWD Aquatic Education Coordinator.

Awards – Following completion of the Class the participants will the TPWD Basic Fly Fishing Certificate, Pin, Fish Identification Card and other related course handouts.
The Llano Bug

GUY HARRISON – Area Chief, Kerrville

The originator of this fly, Kevin Hutchison of the Austin Fly Fishers, says that it was “tied by committee.” It started out as a simple foam bug, but fellow anglers kept adding additional materials to it. Now, we have the true “Llano Bug.”

In our Hill Country streams and ponds, this imitation will take all species of bass and sunfish along with an occasional channel catfish from mid-May to mid-October. Since it is constructed primarily of foam, it will float until it is chewed almost beyond recognition (sans legs and all). In some situations, I add a trailing nymph tied to the bend of the hook. Tie it! Fish it! And you will become a convert, I assure you.

MATERIALS

- **Hook** – Mustad #3906B; size #10, 8, or 6
- **Thread** – color to match the foam, but not necessary (any color will do)
- **Overbody** – 2mm. closed cell foam (favorite colors are yellow, tan or dark brown) cut to twice the length of the shaft of the hook. The width should equal the gap of the hook. Cut one end of the foam strip in the shape of an arrowhead.
- **Wings** – Deer body hair, usually natural color.
- **Legs** – Rubber legs, various widths depending on hook size. Colors should match foam and can be left solid or marked with stripes.
- **Antennae** – Rubber leg material. Thin in width.

TYING INSTRUCTIONS

1. Lock the hook in the vise. Secure the thread with a jam-knot to the shaft of the hook slightly behind the eye.
2. Tie a thin rubber leg to both sides of the shaft of the hook with the legs pointing forward of the hook eye.
3. Spiral the thread in smooth wraps to the bend of the hook.
4. Tie on a strip of the 2mm. foam on top of the shaft by the tip of the arrow you fashioned at one end of the foam strip. The tip should be pointing toward the eye of the hook. The length of the foam strip should be almost twice the length of the shaft of the hook.
5. Tie on the underbody at the bend of the hook over the foam tip and slightly forward of it. Spiral the thread in smooth wraps forward to one-eighth inch behind the eye.
6. Pull the strip of foam forward snugly to form the back of the bug and secure the foam strip to the shaft of the hook about one-eighth inch behind the eye.
7. Cut a small clump of deer hair and even the tips. Tie on the deer hair by the butts over the foam body with the tips even with the end of the body.
8. Fold the foam strip that is projecting forward of the hook eye back over the body and secure it with thread wraps.
9. From a band of rubber legs select two legs of two or three thicknesses and twice the length of the shaft of the hook. Tie a leg on each side of the body with two loose wraps; position legs as desired, then secure them firmly to the body.
10. Use a bodkin to separate the front legs into thin individual legs on the each side.
11. Apply head cement generously to thread wrappings.
12. If desired, create an eye on each side of the head using a Sharpie pen or acrylic paint.
13. Your Llano Bug is now ready to go fishing.

A Very Nice Contribution

Texas Flyfishers holds a Redfish Rodeo each year and has been doing so for the past 23 years. This popular event, held in Rockport, drew fly fishers from as far as Oklahoma who braved the elements and turned in some impressive catches. With goals of promoting catch-and-release fly fishing and donating to conservation-minded organizations, the Redfish Rodeo is an example of how anglers can give back to the sport.

This year, Texas Flyfishers chose our Angler Education program as the recipient of a donation from the Rodeo. We send a warm and hearty thanks to Chris Sumers, David Lemke and the Texas Flyfishers for their generous donation. Our plans are to use those funds to equip youth, ages 10 to 18, who might not be able to afford fly fishing equipment, with their first basic fly rod and reel. Please watch for more information about this special offer that will be made available to youth who attend one of our youth fly fishing programs in 2010.
Top L.U.R.E.S. of 2009

These special volunteers have received our “Top L.U.R.E.S.” award for volunteering over 100 hours in 2009. L.U.R.E.S. stands for Loyalty Unequaled Remarkable Enthusiastic Service. Through this small recognition of their very generous contributions, we want these volunteers to know they have our deepest appreciation.

500+ HOURS:
STEARNS, HAROLD
EL PASO

200+ HOURS:
DURAN, GILBERT
AUSTIN
GARZA, WILLIE
AUSTIN
GERHARDT, ED
HOUSTON
MARTZ, KEITH
HIGHLAND VILLAGE

100+ HOURS:
ALMANZAR, RAUL
EL PASO
BROWN, JIMMY
SAN ANGELO
FLETCHER, KENNETH
SAN ANTONIO
FRANCO JR., JESUS
EL PASO
HOWES, MICHAEL
MCKINNEY
JANCO, MARY
MCKINNEY
MCKAY, MICHAEL
AUSTIN
MCLendon, WALTER
LUFKIN
NEYSES, DAVID
SPRING
TOMLINSON, JEFF
SHERMAN
WARD, IRPEL
EL PASO

Hunt and Fish for Free-Forever!
Drawing will be held June 30, 2010.
Save the Date!

April 30 – May 2, 2010
(Friday evening – Sunday morning)

Annual Area Chief Meeting
Parrie Haynes Ranch, Killeen, TX

What is an Angler Education area chief?

A goofy person who runs around trying to act like a fish!

Seriously, area chiefs are a small group of dedicated Angler Education (AED) instructors who have volunteered to help the Aquatic Education team recruit and train other AED instructors.

Area chiefs receive additional training that prepares them to hold instructor-training workshops and to support angler education in their communities. Area chiefs are exemplary in their ethics and their ability to represent Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in a positive manner.

How can you become an AED area chief?

- Become trained as an AED Instructor.
- Demonstrate leadership in the training of youth in your area.
- Communicate your desire to become an AED area chief to TPWD Aquatic Education staff.
- Attend the annual area chief meeting.

Other than Steve and Kevin kissing up to our volunteers, what really happens at an area chief meeting?

- Program updates and awards
- Informative guest speakers
- Advanced training opportunities
- Networking with others
- And squiggles, lots and lots of squiggles
When someone tells the tale of their fantastic fishing trip, you can pretty much predict what happens next. You hear the echoing questions. ... Where did you catch ‘em? What did you catch ‘em on? When did you catch ‘em? How did you catch ‘em?

These essential questions are at the heart of every angler’s pursuit when hunting elusive schools of fish. Knowing the answers to these questions can make the difference between a good fishing day and a disappointing one. Therefore, they define the business we are in as Angler Education instructors.

While we should do our best to at least introduce these questions during the basic angler education workshop, we won’t be able to cover them thoroughly for a beginner. The bulk of time in a basic course is spent equipping new anglers with the essential motor skills needed to go fishing—knot tying, casting and assembling basic tackle. We are able to delve into the questions above in only a superficial manner. So how should we address these questions?

Try organizing an intermediate or advanced workshop. Here, you can tailor your workshop specifically to address these questions however you like, based on your own personal interests or the needs of the target audience. Personally, I love teaching the advanced workshops for two reasons. First, teaching the basic workshops can get a little old, so it is a refreshing change. But, more importantly, I feel as though I am actually teaching people how to hunt or tactically fish more successfully. And that’s fun!

To plan an intermediate or advanced workshop around the questions above, I suggest you plan from one of two perspectives.

First, you can focus on a SPECIFIC SPECIES OF FISH. For instance, if we did a workshop on fishing for largemouth bass we would key in on the questions by first looking at the fish’s natural behavior. For largemouth bass, we would begin by explaining that the fish is an ambush feeder honing in on movement while hiding in wait for prey to swim by. This immediately keys us in to the bass’s preferred habitat—hanging around cover such as submerged trees, vegetation, rocks, ledges, drop-offs and cuts. We would explain how bass use these areas to ambush prey.

Next we can discuss the foods that bass eat (almost anything that moves) but specifically addressing prey as they relate to lures we use and, more importantly, the times of the year that those foods are available in that specific aquatic habitat (smaller minnows, larger minnows, crawfish, insect hatches, frogs, etc.). Time of year, time of day and related weather changes will dictate water temperatures, which determine feeding pressure, habitat selection, spawning times, growth rates, and most importantly, lure retrieval and selection.

Finally, after learning this information, we tie it all together in an applicable way by focusing on a location—the “where” question. By choosing a specific lake or water body, we can equip our students with knowledge they can directly apply to catch fish whether it be a pond, lake, stream or river. Most of the time we would choose a place where that type of fishing has a high probability of success during the time of year we are teaching the class. If the class could be taught on-site that would be ideal, but this is not always possible or feasible.

Another method is to focus on a SPECIFIC TYPE OF FISHING, like using artificial lures, surf fishing or night fishing. By focusing on a specific type of fishing, you can broaden the range of fish species available to those inclusive to the type of fishing being covered. For example, artificial lures can be used to catch a wide range of fish. When fishing the surf you could use artificials or bait and catch a variety of species. You could still target specific fish in these scenarios but you would have a wider, less specific knowledge from which to draw.

Under this teaching scenario, we would still try to focus in on a specific location and cover the underwater habitat, seasonal weather fluctuations and movement of bait/prey items in and out of the system, but we would do so in a way that reflects a variety of fishing techniques for that area. Take surf fishing as an example. You can wade with smaller tackle throwing live or dead bait or artificials along the sand bars that run up and down the beach. Or, you can plant a big rod in the sand and use a kayak to take a large chunk bait way out past the third sand bar for bull reds and shark.

These two methods of teaching an advanced class address the basic questions, but each approaches those questions from a different angle. Both are equally successful.

Look for Part 2 of “Teaching an Advanced Fishing Workshop” in the Summer 2010 issue of Reel Lines in which Kevin reveals several hands-on activity ideas for teaching advanced fishing classes.
Toyota Texas Bass Classic
This year the Bass Classic was moved from Lake Fork to Lake Conroe. In addition to the live musical performances (Julian Huff, Pat Green and Josh Turner) and the large exhibitor area, Texas Parks and Wildlife provided a number of Outdoor Adventure activities. Here, our Angler Education volunteers exhibited the Take Me Fishing trailer and led the Backyard Bass casting activity. Folks were able to enjoy climbing wall and archery activities, too. The Toyota Texas Bass Classic donated $250,000 to Texas Parks and Wildlife to support the Neighborhood Fishin’ program, the national Fish Art contest and to create interactive fishing display units for Angler Education. These museum-quality interactive displays will boost our presence at many outreach events just as our Take Me Fishing trailer has done.

Fly Fishing in Force
On September 26, the Montgomery County Flyrodders hosted a beginner fly-fishing workshop at Meadowlake Park in The Woodlands. Although the class was limited to 24 students, we were able to include two on the waiting list plus two of the park security guards in the class. After learning to cast, tying a Wooly Bugger fly and relating the “bugs” in the pond to the flies used in fly-fishing, students tried their hand at catching some of the bass in the lake. Thanks to the Montgomery County Flyrodders for sponsoring this class.

Pearland Kid Fish Fest
On Saturday, November 14, the City of Pearland held its annual Kid Fish Fest event. This is an outreach program designed to educate and provide hands-on fishing experiences to children. Bass Pro Shops partnered with us on this event to provide educational demonstrations about fishing and conservation. The pond was generously stocked prior to fishing, increasing the children’s odds of a memorable fishing experience. Over 2,500 people showed up this year for this free fishing event.
Houston Area Regional Report, continued

West Houston Fall Fishing Classic
The last big fishing event of the year fell on a Saturday, immediately following snow and freezing weather that Friday evening ... in Houston, of all places! The event included a basic fishing class in the morning followed by burgers for lunch, an advanced class in the afternoon focusing on trout and catfish, and a fishing tournament immediately following the advanced class. We had the pond stocked with 750 rainbow trout on Friday and had four game wardens on-site to encourage responsible fishing and to teach regulations during the two classes. The classes were almost full despite the near-freezing weather. This is a unique event because it was planned by Nick Christoffersen as his Eagle Scout service project under the supervision of our very own area chief, Tim Gebauer. Thanks to both of them for making this a fun and memorable cold weather fishing experience.

Houston Area School Updates
Eastwood Academy joined the ranks of Houston ISD Fishing Program schools this year. Under the tutelage of Junior Anglers and Hunters of America, Eastwood students learned to fish and went on their first school fishing field trip.

Lanier Middle School continued the fishing program into its second year and is one of the few schools to plan their fishing curriculum and field trips in the fall semester. After a fine showing at Mary Jo Peckham Park in Katy, Lanier plans to host several more fishing field trips in the spring. Way to go, Lanier!

Katy ISD continues to lay plans and gear up for another spring of angler education and fishing events. Hutsell Elementary has already set a date of March 27 for their Take Me Fishing family fishing event. Several schools have also set up fishing field trips to Katy ISD’s Outdoor Learning Center, which hosts a well-stocked catfish pond. In addition, on April 24, the Taylor High School Fishing Club will host the “Fishing for a Cure” Cancer Benefit Tournament at Mary Jo Peckham Park.

Thanks also to Karen Thornton, Mark Fobian and Thomas D’Andrea of Katy ISD for presenting our Angler Education program at the Texas Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance Conference in Arlington. They did an outstanding job of involving participants instead of lecturing to them about our program. Way to go, Katy team!
Throughout the morning, afternoon and well into the night of November 13, the Elm Fork Shooting Sports Club was a flurry of activity. This was the eve of our first North Texas Outdoor Expo, and the vehicles of various partners and volunteers were constantly streaming in and out of the grounds.

Then suddenly it was show time, 9 a.m., November 14, and we opened the gates to a flood of North Texans eager to experience new outdoor activities. After the smoke cleared and the last visitor had departed, over 4,000 people had squeezed a trigger, shot an arrow, cast a line, paddled a kayak and immersed themselves in new possibilities regarding how they might fill their leisure time in the future.

The story of our successful North Texas Outdoor Expo began less than four months before, when Robert Ramirez, Hunter Education specialist for North Texas, was charged with creating an Expo-like experience for this region. Our target date was set for mid-September to coincide with National Hunting and Fishing Week, but what venue could we use?

Enter Jeanie Almond of the Elm Fork Shooting Sports and Shellee Enfinger of Start Caring Wellness, two top-notch organizers. Within two weeks of initially approaching them, weekly planning meetings began. Partners like the Dallas Fly Fishers, Dallas Firearm Collectors and the Lone Star Bow Hunters, along with representatives of TPWD Inland Fisheries, Hunter Education, Angler Education, and Urban Outreach, all took an active roll in preparing for this event. There were many other players, too many to list here, who contributed to the planning and execution of the project.

Corporate donations were received from the Dallas Safari Club, Bass Pro Shops, and Classic Chrysler Dodge Jeep Mazda. The donations of in-kind service provided by Elm Fork Shooting Sports were not only invaluable to the success of the Expo, but critical as well.

The Expo activities were organized into villages. There were villages for target shooting, archery, fishing, sporting dogs, water resource activities, nature activities, fitness and mountain biking. Spread out over approximately 10 acres, event attendees were able to stroll through these villages, participating in activities and enjoying the beautiful fall weather. Shuttles, manned by the Elm Fork Shooting Club staff, carried folks from one side of the area to activities on the other side, allowing families with small children to explore the entire show.

At the end of the day, as Expo sponsors wearily took down tents and put away their wares, plans were already being discussed to make next year’s North Texas Outdoor Expo even bigger and more exciting.

North Texas Outdoor Expo will be back next year and, hopefully, for many, many years to come.
Family Fishing Events

Two family fishing events took place this fall in Central Texas. The Fredericksburg Fly Fishing club hosted their sixth annual Oktoberfisch Fly Fishing Festival on the banks of the pristine South Llano River in Junction. Approximately 150 people attended the three-day event. In addition to the leisurely float trips, where many bass and sunfish were caught, short instructional sessions were held for both the novice and the experienced fly fisher, including fly tying, fly casting and aquatic entomology. The weather was perfect for fishing and camping, which made it all the more difficult for me to pack up and head back to Austin after a delicious steak dinner with such an enjoyable group of fishing compadres on Saturday evening.

On another beautiful October Saturday, several thousand people converged on the banks of the Colorado River for the third annual NatureFest held in historic Bastrop, just southeast of Austin. Activities included musical entertainment by Mr. Habitat (Bill Oliver), raptor and reptile shows, environmental education and nature activities, and recreational activities such as rock climbing, archery and paddling. On the fishing front, families were able to watch bass pros as they angled for the big one in the bass tank, and then try their own angling skills in TPWD’s backyard bass pond. The Take Me Fishing interactive education trailer was on hand to introduce folks to fishing basics and aquatic stewardship.

New Volunteers Forge Ahead

Central Texas staff and area chiefs, Tere Ramirez, Laurie Connally, Willie Garza, Gilbert Duran and Noel Rodriguez hosted four instructor workshops this fall, training 69 new instructors. Recent “grads” Dan and Jenn Hilliard are already planning to use their new skills. They will be offering an after-school fishing program for up to 15 lucky third-, fourth- and fifth-grade students in Taylor ISD. Beginning in January, a series of six lessons, each 45 minutes long, will be taught one afternoon each week. The final session will be a field trip to a local pond to go fishing! After-school programs can be a wonderful way to introduce youth to fishing since they often have more flexibility than programs held during the regular school day.
UPCOMING EVENTS

Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center

January 9, February 13 and June 12
Bird and Nature Walk — Expect to see 25 or more different species as we explore our Interpretive Wetland Trail and other areas of the hatchery. You are welcome to bring binoculars and field guides.

March 12-24
Fly Fish Texas — Fly fishers will converge on Athens for the tenth annual Fly Fish Texas event to share tips and techniques during seminars and hands-on demonstrations. Participants can tie flies, practice casting, and fish for bass, sunfish and rainbow trout in TFFC’s ponds and streams.

April 10
Outdoor Fools Day — Outdoor Fools Day is an annual event designed to acquaint East Texans with the outdoor resources available for them to enjoy. Members of various divisions of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, conservation organizations and outdoor-related businesses will have displays and conduct hands-on activities that teach outdoor skills such as archery, camping, kayaking, Dutch oven cooking and fishing.

May 8
Cinco de Mayo — Athens will celebrate Cinco de Mayo at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center May 2 with food, music, dancing and outdoor activities, in addition to the normal TFFC activities such as fishing, tram rides and dive-show presentations.

June 5
National Fishing Day — Celebrate the start of the summer fishing season June 7 with free food, a fishing contest, and free admission for children ages 12 and under.

Sea Center Texas

February 27 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Nature Day — This fun family event will offer a variety of educational programs and activities that introduce children to the wonders of nature. Walk-through exhibits, activities and crafts will be offered by various nature-based organizations.

February 27 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Nature Day Youth Fishing

June 5 8 a.m. until 10 a.m.
National Fishing Day Youth Fishing — Catch-and-release fishing at our marine fish hatchery and visitor education center. This event is available to guests 16 years old and younger accompanied by an adult. Anglers must bring their own gear and bait with barbless hooks. No artificial bait or treble hooks. Volunteers and staff will be on hand to assist first-time anglers.

Texas State-Fish Art Contest

Open to all Texas students in grades 4 to 12
Cash prizes for student winners
National recognition

Entry Deadline: March 31

Send Texas Entries to:
Texas State-Fish Art Contest
C/o Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center
5550 F.M. 2495, Athens, TX 75752

For rules and regulations visit: www.tpwd.state.tx.us/fishart

Sponsored by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Wildlife Forever, Toyota Texas Bass Classic and Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center
Go Fish! Events at Texas State Parks

Volunteers are needed to help teach fishing to young and old at these events. For event dates (there will be over 50 events) and contact information for the event coordinators, check our Web site at: www.tpwd.state.tx.us/newsmedia/calendar/?calpage=a0210

Life’s Better Outside Events

Volunteers are needed to guide folks doing the “Take Me Fishing Challenge,” to teach casting to kids and to help with other introductory outdoor activities. To volunteer, contact Trey Hamlett at (512) 389-4361 or Trey.hamlett@tpwd.state.tx.us

February 20 & 21
San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo

March 6 & 7
Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo

April 24 & 25
Buc Days at Corpus Christi

June 5 & 6
AlleyFest, Longview
Welcome, New Instructors!
July–December, 2009

We encourage you to team up to teach. It’s fun, easier, and a great way to support each other. Call the Austin office for contact information if you would like to team up with one of these new instructors. If we have accidentally left someone off, please let us know.

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<td></td>
<td>ROSE CONTRERAS</td>
<td>HURST</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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And the squiggly winner is...