

President's Message

It's another hot summer in the Sunshine State. Ronda and I have been taking a break from the dog days of summer heat and fishing of late. As the weather cools, the work of the Florida Council will heat up with our annual fall Fly Fishing Expo October 21st and 22nd in Kissimmee. It's the next big thing for our Florida Fly Fishing community.

The third annual event has evolved into one of the best fly fishing shows in the country. We will have some legends of the sport featured at this year's Expo. The Florida Council board has been graced with the hard work, leadership and guidance of some new board members including Flip Pallot, Andy Mill and Chico Fernandez. And this year Dave Whitlock, another icon of our sport, will be a featured guest and speaker at the banquet and auction Saturday night. For the first time we will also have a professional auctioneer. A splendid time is guaranteed for all.

Last year attendance was up almost 50%, mostly from word of mouth. Members around the state who have been to the Expo have told their friends and fishing buddies what a great time they had visiting the show, attending seminars, learning to cast and playing casting games. They talked about the free Friday night Pizza Pool Party, the banquet, auction and raffles. I'm sure they shared what they have told me at the Expo. Things like "This is Great", "I'll be back next year" and, "I learned to tie this fly, do that cast, or how to solve my tailing loop." Or they learned a new rigging technique, cast or presentation, or a new area to fish from the many seminars and guides in attendance. All agree the low cost and exceptional programs are a great value and once you attend most of us who love the sport make the Expo an annual trek.

This year we are at a new venue, the Worldgate Resort. Conveniently located 3 miles west of I-4 on Route 192, Worldgate will be more user friendly. The convention center entrance is on the Northwest side of the building and we will not have to walk through a maze of buildings to find the show like we did at the old Ramada. For room reservations, please call Worldgate Resort.

We have arranged a special rate and when you phone tell the reservation clerk you are with FFF to get the special rate. It's important that you book this way as the council has to guarantee a certain number of rooms to defray the cost of the exhibit and banquet room. Your room booking will help the council keep the cost down so we can continue to offer the Expo for only a \$10 admission for both days.

Our presenters and tiers come from all over America and the world. Most of the teaching volunteers have done many council and/or national events. They have not only been supportive, but they have told me that we have one of the best events they have ever attended. If you have been to one, I'm sure your looking forward to this year's Expo as much as we are. If you have never attended you'll be pleasantly surprised how much you will enjoy a day at the Expo. The show is open to the public so feel free to bring your friends who love or are interested in fly fishing.

August is the Federation of Fly Fishers National Fly Fishing Fair in West Yellowstone. There's still time to book your trip. As president of Florida Council I will be attending the business meetings and awards banquet representing Florida Council. Then I'll taking some extra days to explore the Golden Triangle of fly fishing in and around Yellowstone Park. National events are held every year and I recommend you try one. Fly Fishers from all around the world share the camaraderie and fraternal friendship of fly fishing. Sometimes I wonder if FFF stands for the Fraternity of Fly Fishers rather than Federation.

We are looking for help in promoting the Florida Expo in October. Vice President Roger Maler is sending posters, emails and press releases. Leaders of FFF clubs will be distributing flyers to fly shops around the state. All the information about the Expo is posted on the Florida Council web site at FFF-Florida.org.

I have written before that I believe many hands make lighter work. FFF members and clubs throughout Florida have worked together on the Expo, youth education, conservation projects, with Veterans through the Project Healing Waters organization and Casting for Recovery, a program designed for women who are breast cancer survivors. To many of us a small investment in time can and does make a difference to our sport and the habitat and environment we all treasure and enjoy. All FFF members and clubs are welcome to participate in FFF events and meetings including the Annual Meetings in February in Orlando. With a few more volunteers we could do a lot more. We hope you'll join us.

Council and club leaders have discovered the joy of involvement. While it does not take a lot of time to participate in an event or project, the satisfaction we gain and the friendships we make certainly make the time well spent. For me it's simply a labor of love. I love fly fishing and the mosaic of skills, learning and friendship that make up our sport. But we all enjoy the sport. Let's enjoy the Fraternity of FFF together too. Please join and support the FFF. If you fly fish, it's simply the right thing to do.

Stay hooked,

Bill Gunn

President, FFF Florida Council