

# On CAZAZAs, Bus Drivers, and Other Miscellaneous Neighbors (that may be out there...)

By Steve Cox



Discovered just down the street at a garage sale, the Hilton family tackle box patiently waited sixty years for this Florida collector to find and preserve.

Last September, a quiet Saturday morning appeared, muggy and sticky (as they usually are). It was 6:30 am, and I was headed to my step-mother's house for our daily cup of coffee. Then it was on to my business to catch up on some paperwork. Being privileged to have my residence located a mere .6 mile from the office, if the truck runs out of gas, its no big deal, just walk home! My wife, Claudia, is up by 4:30 every morning. She always starts a fresh pot early, so my mug was armed and ready as I pulled out of the driveway.

I had barely traveled four blocks when I spotted a garage sale sign! With the usual sensation of adrenaline flow and increased blood pressure one gets when embarking on a treasure hunt, my curiosity piqued, and I turned in to find a place to park. The sale was at a house situated between two streets, and the sign was

posted on the street facing the rear of the property. A chain link fence surrounded the place, and enclosed a large carport with attached workshop and several storage sheds.

The chain link double gate was open, so I pushed on through the maze of junk piled high on tables at a 330 degree angle. I walked past garden tools, small appliances, 8 tracks, cassettes, and vinyl. Knitted pot holders, glassware, and unique kitchen utensils (as seen on TV!) abounded, as I scanned the semi-orderly mounds of rubble, searching, searching, searching...

Finally, I spied a mint ZEBCO 33 in the original box, with **no zip code** on the address. I opened the box, and inside, the shiny chrome reel was nestled with the Brunswick Corporation paperwork in a neat foldout arrangement. The pamphlet



Simple in their design, but very effective; the "Bus Drivers" are classic folk Florida lures. Pier baits don't get much cooler than these!

featured ZEBCO, Mercury, and other members of the new Brunswick conglomerate, complete with a **zip coded address**. Ah ha, I mused; a rare transition piece, from 1964 or 65! The reel had a colored adhesive dot price tag stuck to the top of the box, with obvious disregard for the potential damage it could cause to the cardboard upon removal. It was marked \$10.

About that time, I noticed a stocky, friendly looking man who appeared to be in his early to mid 60s, dressed in white shorts, white t-shirt, well worn jogging shoes and white athletic socks. He was, apparently, the purveyor of this trinket empire, and he said, "It's a beaut; never been in the water. It oughta be worth at least \$10." I said, "Maybe", and introduced myself.

The gentleman said his name was Mr. Roddy Hilton, and he asked if I knew anything about fishing tackle. I told him, "More than some, less than others," and I inquired if he had any other tackle besides the reel. Mr. Hilton said, "Yes, boxes and boxes of the stuff!" I pulled out a crisp \$10 bill and gave it to him, saying, "I'll take the reel if I can see the other tackle." Mr. Hilton asked me what I was going to do with the reel, and I told him I was going to sell it for \$25 at the next tackle show I attended. He replied, "Lots of guys come up and ask me if I have any tackle for sale, but you're the first one who's given me an honest answer about their intentions. Come on and I'll show you the other stuff."

Mr. Hilton and I started pulling old metal, wooden, and plastic tackle boxes off shelves in the adjacent storage sheds, at least

25 or 30 of them! I was brimming with anticipation at what might be found. With this many boxes, surely something good would be revealed...

Well, the first box was full of hooks. The second overflowed with lead weights. The third contained swivels and snaps and so on... line spools, bobbers, spare reel parts, rod guides and tips; every kind of neatly separated tackle imaginable, except for lures! I couldn't contain my disappointment, as Mr. Hilton kept dragging more and more from further back on the shelves. Fortunately, his daughter was manning the yard sale, so he and I could continue our futile search.

After 45 minutes, I found a plastic Barracuda hand line grip in a color I didn't have, so, Halleluja, finally... **something!** Mr. Hilton gave me the item for \$5, and said "That's all there is, except for the 'good stuff' in the house." Of course, I wanted to see the 'good stuff', but Mr. Hilton had to get back to help his daughter with the sale. He did say the sale would be over at noon, and if I could come back after 1 p.m., he'd try to find the rest of the tackle in the house. I agreed, and continued to my office where I resumed my original plan for the morning.

Upon returning at 1 p.m. sharp, Mr. Hilton was ready for me, and had located two more boxes of tackle, one metal and one plastic. As I inspected them, my heart sank. Each was covered in dust and grime. The first held four Paw Paw "Shiners" (two Shiner Scale, one Perch, and one Green Perch) in their original slide top boxes, an Isle Royal "Pikie" type in Perch in its correct yellow and black box, and three assorted Creek Chub "Pikies" and one "Injured Minnow", all glass eyed, all silver flash, and all in very rough shape. Several Arbogast "Baby Jitterbugs", one Pflueger "Pal-O-Mine", one Pflueger "Poprite" with a chunk of wood broken off the lip, one South Bend "Babe-Oreno" in red/white, one plastic Heddon "Chugger Junior Spook" in Black Shore, and two Porter "Sea Hawks" (one in a nice sky blue and cream color pattern) rounded out the lot. The Paw Paw boxes were crumbling, while the Isle Royal was in the best condition of the bunch.

Depressed, I turned to the final box, a rusted metal hulk that creaked badly when the corroded latches and hinges were forced to actuate. As the metal halves bound and squalled, more junk appeared. Lead weights, an old "May Wes" with the paint



The beautiful azure hue in this side view of the CAZAZA, with Uncle Charlie Edwards' characteristic lateral line dots.



The cream colored belly of the CAZAZA, with three red dots and the name emblazoned in stylish black, capital letters just in front of the tail treble.



These Porter "Sea Hawks" display the colorful chevrons painted on both sides of the lure bodies, similar to those on the "Bus Drivers" they were found with.

off the head, some oddly doctored Porter "Sea Hawks" with wire leaders attached; all these lined the top tray of the box. The second tray was empty, except for an unusually shaped blue lure with flat sides, lateral line dots, a cream belly with three red dots, two trebles, and "CAZAZA" marked on the bottom third of the lure. Its coloration was very similar to one of the "Sea Hawks" found in the plastic tackle box described previously. I thought it might be a Boone, since I was familiar with the Boone "Castana", and "CAZAZA" sounded similar. The lateral line dots (not a characteristic of Boone) reminded me of "Uncle Charlie" Edwards, although I'd never seen one like this before.

Continuing to dig to the bottom, a tangled wad of leaders and rusty "Mirr-o-lures" and "Sea Hawks" hid two small, clear plastic, hinged lid boxes which contained two more "Sea Hawks" and three unusual pier baits. These folksy baits, one red, one yellow, and one black, looked like small clothes pin lures with lead wedges inserted into the open end of the pin. The black bait had a single thickness of lead wedge, while the other two had a double thickness. A line tie was present above the open end, and a treble hook with screw eye was mounted in the closed end. The curling, peeling paint seemed to be very thick, almost epoxy-like, and white chevrons were hand painted on all three lures. Interestingly, these same chevrons (in yellow and black) were painted on two of the Porter "Sea Hawks", probably by the same fisherman.

I told Mr. Hilton I wasn't sure what these lures were, but I thought they might be important. Saying, "I am willing to roll the dice", I offered him \$100 for both boxes. In any event, my recommendation was that he treat the lures with "a little more respect" if he ever intended to preserve them. He said the Creek Chubs and Paw Paws were his grandfather's, and he really didn't want to sell them. Countering with an offer I hoped he couldn't refuse, I said I would take both boxes, clean and restore everything, check out the identities of the "CAZAZA" and pier baits, and get back to him. With the intention of further substantiating that I was a reputable collector, I threw in a couple of back issues of *FATC News* I had retrieved from my office earlier that morning. Having been convinced of my good intentions, Mr. Hilton agreed to let me take them temporarily.

With a new spring in my step, I put the boxes in my truck and immediately drove back to my office. Thank goodness for Msrs. Brace, Stuart, and Riddle! As I flipped through several volumes of *Florida Lure Makers and Their Lures*, I called fellow collectors Ed, Roth, Larry, Gary, Doug, Bill, Lewis, and Robert. I described my find to them and picked their brains for clues. Their guidance soon directed me to the chapters on "Uncle Charlie" Edwards and Red "The Bus Driver" Hutson. Sure enough, "Uncle Charlie" made the "CAZAZA", and it was rare indeed, especially in the blue and cream color combination! The pier baits were, in fact, "Bus Drivers", though none had been reported with the white chevrons hand painted on them.



Janie Hilton and son, Roddy, taken outside the family home in the early 1970s. Janie and Spoffard both passed a few months apart, in 1975.



William R. "Roddy" Hilton, circa mid 1960s.



Roddy's father Spoffard Roger Hilton.



Taken in 1924, showing a young Spoffard Hilton at age 20.



With this newfound knowledge, a few more days went by and I got busy cleaning, replacing hardware, and restoring the remaining lures for Mr. Hilton. There's a difference between patina and dirt, and his grandfather's lures were doomed to the scrap pile if left "as is". The methods used to restore them will be the subject of another article for *FATC News*. Suffice it to say that, while it was impossible to make them perfect, the lures came back very strong, especially the Paw Paws and the Isle Royal. Going a step further, years of rust and/or grime were removed from both tackle boxes, and the end result was one salvaged presentation piece in excellent condition, which now serves as the storage container for Mr. Hilton's grandfather, Roger Hilton's lures.

Phoning Mr. Hilton, I told him the tackle was ready for delivery. I said, "By the way, I am now prepared to give you \$200 for the "CAZAZA" and the pier baits alone, and would also like to do a story on your lures for an upcoming issue of our magazine." He tried to sound noncommittal, but I could tell he was excited. Driving over to his house, I gave him the box of Paw Paws, Creek Chubs, the Isle Royal, and other miscellaneous baits. He was astounded! He'd never seen his grandfather's lures look this good in his lifetime... I told him about the "CAZAZA" and the story on the "Bus Drivers". Showing him the Florida lure books, he seemed to be very impressed and enthused.

As it turns out, Mr. Hilton's parents, Spoffard Roger Hilton and Janie Hough Hilton, were originally from Bethune, SC, near Camden, SC. They fished around Pawleys Island, and spent many hours trying their luck on the Pawleys Island pier. They owned a vacation home there, which was subsequently sold. The home was destroyed some years later by Hurricane Hazel. In his youth, Roddy had a job making hammocks at the famous hammock company, Pawleys Island Hammocks. He operated a special jig which positioned and drilled the holes in the wooden splines through which the rope netting was inserted.

Roddy still remembers his father sorting through a large barrel of cane poles at the local bait and tackle store on Pawleys. Spoffard would set aside two or three select cane poles at a time, each meeting his specifications. He would affix line guides (eyes) on the cane by wrapping them with thread, then gluing a tip on the pole. He would finish the pole by sliding a rubber handle onto the butt for a grip. Most of his fishing was done

with these homemade poles, rather than commercial fishing rods, and Roddy recalls them being of very high quality.

Spoffard and Janie spent many years fishing from piers in the Jacksonville Beach area and up and down the Northeast coast of Florida. Roddy believes the "CAZAZA" and the "Bus Drivers" were purchased by them and fished sometime along the way. As for the white chevrons, he did not know if his father painted them, or if they had been acquired with the chevrons already in place. Retiring as a ship builder from Jacksonville Ship Yard, Bellinger and Mayport Divisions, Roddy and his wife, Irmgard, moved to Panama City approximately six years ago, bringing his family's tackle with them. To think it traveled through time and space, ending up four blocks from my house, truly is incredible! While you may have to turn over quite a few rocks to find a prize, it proves you don't always have to search far and wide to find "the good stuff"!

The "CAZAZA" is documented as one of "Uncle Charlie's" scarcest baits. The blue/cream version is one of two known to exist in this color; a third in Bill Stuart's collection having been destroyed by the tragic fire at the Museum of Fishing. By way of a mutually beneficial trade, Bill was the logical recipient of this lure, with Lewis Townsend the proud owner of the other. The three "Bus Drivers" now reside in Scott Watkins' pier bait collection, and represent developing knowledge of their place in Florida tackle history. Rather than repeat documentation that is more comprehensive than this article allows, I urge you to read from *Florida Lure Makers and Their Lures, Vol. I*, pages 111, 112, & 119, and *Vol. VI*, pages 1872-73, & 1907-1916. The possible connection between Red Hutson and Dick Porter, is intriguing to say the least.

I hope more facts can be gleaned on the subject, and that Mr. Hilton's examples expand an already interesting story. This neighborhood journey started with the ZEBCO 33, and it is pleasing to report that it sold in room trading at Daytona for \$20. Oh yes; by now you can tell, Mr. Hilton accepted my second offer, and this article finishes the deal.



Roddy Hilton, almost age three, in his 1942 sailor's uniform; very appropriate for WWII.



Resting on the front fender, Roddy Hilton's father, Spoffard, (wearing the hat) poses for an early Bonnie & Clyde style photo with three unidentified gentlemen.



Spoffard Hilton, lower left, with three of his siblings.

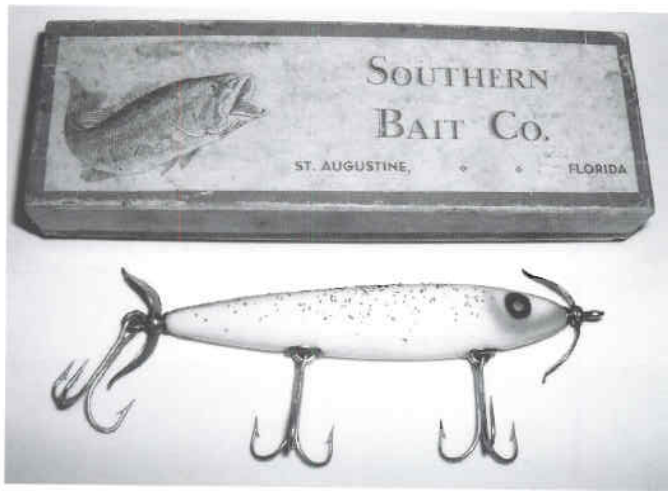


Spoffard's father and Roddy's grandfather, Roger Hilton; the original owner of the family tackle box.

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## Gone Fishing ...



Roy Edward Groat, Sr., of Moss Point, Mississippi, passed on March 10, 2009, after a lengthy illness. Roy was born in Redford, Michigan on December 5, 1929. He served in the Civil Air Patrol in the late 1940s, and he and his brother, John, later established Groat Engineering Co., in the mid 1950s, where they designed and manufactured "extreme close tolerance" aircraft parts. Roy moved to Panama City in early 1959 and was employed by Rose Printing Company, before embarking on a successful career in the oil and gasoline industry. Roy was a sales representative for Hess Oil, Murphy Oil and Marathon Oil, and established Groat Petroleum Company in 1964. He was the founder of the Independent Oilmen's Association in 1970-71. Roy was a talented musician, and could play virtually any instrument by ear. He was a gifted "piano man" and keyboardist, and in the mid 1970s moved to Southern California, where he was a top salesman and store manager for Colton Piano and Organ Co. Roy played piano in numerous clubs, and eventually returned to the Gulf Coast, where he performed at several large casinos in Biloxi. Roy was an avid golfer, bowler, and Detroit Tigers fan. He loved boating and fishing on the Gulf of Mexico, as well as camping and hunting. He had a great appreciation for classic automobiles, wooden yachts, quality firearms, and fine tools. Roy was predeceased by his father, Laurence James Groat, Sr., and mother, Grace Malo Groat, brother, Laurence J. (Larry) Groat, Jr., sisters, Margaret L. (Peggy) Harder and Carol G. Bazner, and Roy's former wife, Barbara G. Groat. He is survived by his son, Roy E. Groat, Jr., his stepson, Steven W. Cox and wife Claudia C. Cox, step-granddaughters, Nicole Claire Cox and Haley Victoria Cox, sister-in-law, Susan G. Brown and her husband Brian, brothers, John W. Groat and George Groat and their families, along with numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, and their families. A private memorial service will be held later this year in memory of Roy.

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# Florida Antique Tackle Collectors, Inc.

A NON-PROFIT EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION  
DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF OUR ANGLING HERITAGE

Florida Antique Tackle Collectors, Inc. (FATC) is a non-profit, educational corporation, incorporated in the State of Florida. The purpose of FATC is educational through the collection and distribution of historical and technical data regarding fishing equipment, its development, its inventors and manufacturers from the earliest times through the present day, and to assist other groups and individuals having a similar purpose. In order to enhance the knowledge of these subjects, the collection and preservation of examples of fishing tackle is to be encouraged for the benefit of present and future generations.

FATC was founded in 1987. The founders felt that a statewide organization would provide additional opportunities for residents of Florida and others to learn more about the history of angling in Florida and elsewhere. FATC sponsors four exhibitions, open to the public, annually at different Florida

locations. At the exhibitions members display their collections, interact with the public, and engage in other activities in keeping with the purpose of FATC. FATC publishes a newsletter quarterly, and an annual membership directory. FATC is not affiliated in any way with the National Fishing Lure Collector's Club (NFLCC) or the Old Reel Collectors Association, Inc., (ORCA) but encourages FATC members to support those organizations.

FATC annual membership dues are: \$35 domestic, \$40 Canada, \$45 Foreign or \$700 (Domestic) Life Membership, \$800 (Canada) Life Membership, and \$900 (Foreign) Life Membership (20x annual dues). Please direct membership inquiries or applications (with your dues) to the FATC Secretary listed below. For membership applications visit our web site at: [www.fatc.net](http://www.fatc.net)

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The FATC News is the quarterly publication of the Florida Antique Tackle Collectors, Inc.

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# FATC Member Show Registration Form

## Clarion Inn and Conference Center

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Hotel: 230 W. St. Rd. 436, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714. Phone 1-800 226-4544 & ask for the Florida Antique Tackle Collectors Block. Rates are \$84 (standard) until August 7th.



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Phone: 407-862-7562

Email: [cheddon@mpinet.net](mailto:cheddon@mpinet.net)

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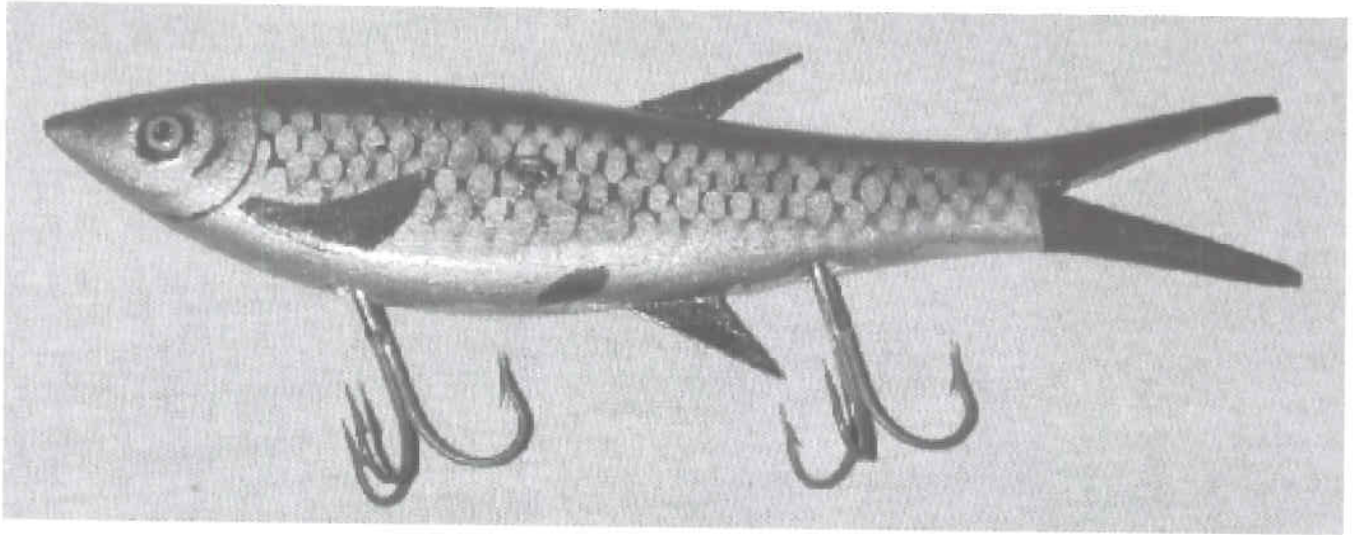
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**More Info?**

Call Chuck Heddon at 407-862-7562





## “THE Quickie”

by: Scott Watkins

I started my day with my normal phone call from Ed Bauries. We shot the breeze about what sold on eBay last night, what we're watching, etc., and proceeded with our regular tackle talk. Ed ended the conversation saying, "You're going to get two Pfeffer Brown Leopard Frog Bananas today on your next tackle call". I said "RIGHT" and ended the call.

While on my way to my neighbor's house to seal some grout, my phone rang. I answered and an elderly lady replied. She said, "I have two army ammo boxes and a plastic tackle box full of old lures. I have put some of my favorite ones in the plastic box and might keep it for memories of my late husband." She continued and said, "Some of the baits say Dillinger on them and are quite pretty"!!!

Well that's all it took, and off to my truck I ran! On my way, I stopped at the 7-11 and got \$100 out of the ATM, thinking "it will just be the same ole' junk". I grabbed a Propel energy drink (as if I really needed one!), and finished the drive to her house.

I walked up and she was sitting on the step smoking a cigarette. I looked down and the two ammo boxes were **just bulging** over the top with nothing but Florida baits. Now my heart jumped out of my skin! I started looking closer, and there were two of just about every bait, in their boxes, and all were in mint condition. The ammo boxes had protected the lures for over fifty years. I got down to the 3rd tray, and there it was... A MINT PFEFFER BANANA IN BROWN LEOPARD FROG. I was shaking in my shoes as I examined the bait...

She just sat there with the plastic tackle box open, which I didn't pay much attention to because I was too excited about what was in front of me in the ammo boxes! I took a quick

glance, knowing she might keep that box. Reaching over the Pumpkinseeds and a few Yankee baits, I grabbed a Heddon River Runt box. Expecting to see a Runt, there, right in front of my eyes appeared another PFEFFER BANANA IN BROWN LEOPARD FROG!!!! I just about died!!!! Ed's prediction was eerily on the money...

I made her an offer, knowing I had only \$98 cash and asked her in a shaking voice, "Will you take a check?" Of course, she said she preferred cash. So I asked her the location of the nearest bank. I was so nervous, though, I didn't even hear her and drove off, trembling.

Fifteen minutes seemed like ten hours! The entire time, I just knew she was going to back out; someone was going to beat me to the find!! I finally found a bank... but what if they won't give me the money? What if the bank is closed? What if.....? Cash in hand, I raced back before she had a chance to change her mind.

The traffic was horrendous, and I was stuck, waiting to make a u-turn across three lanes of oncoming steel and rubber. "To hell with it!" I thought, and just punched it in front of everyone, racing back to the lady's house. She was still sitting there, exactly where I left her, and I handed her the money. With me still shaking like a leaf, she helped load the boxes into the truck.

Once around the corner, I called Ed, screaming and trying to tell him about the find. I think I stopped three times on the way home, just to take another look at my best tackle call ever! My lesson learned: It's still out there - dream it and the tackle will come!!

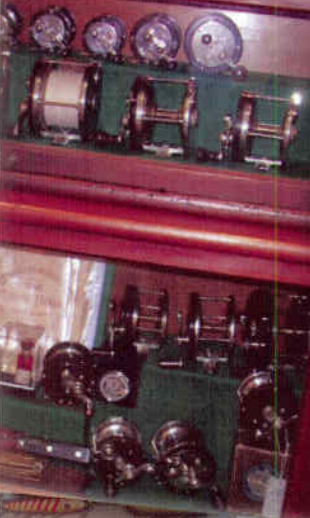


# "PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION" DAYTONA INTERNATIONAL STYLE





PHOTOS COURTESY OF MIKE MAIS AND CRAIG COMJEAN





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## The FATC News

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Jupiter, FL 33468-2877

Published by the Florida  
Antique Tackle Collectors, Inc.  
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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS



## FATC/CATC Spring Show

May 15 - 16, 2009

Holiday Inn, Savannah, GA

912-352-7100 (Hotel), 352-622-2868 (Mike Mais)

Show Hosts: Mike Mais, David Lindsay and

Co-Hosts: Karen and Arthur Edwards

## FATC Summer Show

August 21 - 23, 2009

Clarion Inn and Conference Center

Altamonte Springs, FL 1-800-226-4544 (Hotel)

Show Host: Chuck Heddon

519 Sugar Ridge Ct., Longwood, FL 32779

407-862-7562 email: [cheddon@mpinet.net](mailto:cheddon@mpinet.net)

## FATC Fall Show

October 30 - November 1, 2009

Embassy Suites

Palm Beach Gardens, FL 1-800-362-2779 (Hotel)

Show Co-Host: Ed Bauries

178 Poinciana Drive, Jupiter, FL 33458

561-630-6357 (Home) 561-358-1132 (Cell)

[tara\\_ed@bellsouth.net](mailto:tara_ed@bellsouth.net)

Show Co-Host: Ed Pritchard

561-748-7508 (Home) 561-818-1081 (Cell)

[reeltackle@aol.com](mailto:reeltackle@aol.com)



A preview of the first-ever combined FATC embroidered patch, just in time for the Savannah show. Another first for FATC, a shield shape distinguishes this patch from our traditional round version. This "collector's edition" patch will be available for purchase in Savannah!

## NFLCC Regional Meet Calendar

May 2009, Kansas City, MO... 816-350-0255

July 9 - 11, 2009, The National, Louisville, KY... 502-327-2848

August 22, 2009, Rochester, MN... 763-557-9313 or 262-632-4735

September 25 - 26, 2009, Decatur, AL... 256-355-6726 or 256-565-8191

October 10, 2009, Wisconsin Dells, WI... 715-877-3328

October, 2009, Allentown, PA

October, 2009, Ft. Wayne, IN... 260-824-4680 (one-day show)

November, 2009, Osage Beach, MO... 573-480-3939 or 573-793-3303