

## FATC 2012 Club Lure

by Ed Weston

The FATC 2012 Club Lure will be introduced at the FATC Daytona Beach International Lure Show March 2 through March 4, 2012. It is a beautiful 3 inch wood mouse painted in a gorgeous Sunshine Orange Crackleback paint pattern with white glass eyes. There will be 101 Mice produced with the numbers 000 to 100. The cost will be \$30.00 each and be limited to one per active club membership.



FATC Mice numbered 000 and 001 will be auctioned off at the Daytona Beach Show Saturday Night Auction. FATC Mouse numbered 002 will be auctioned off at Bill Stuart's Show at Bartow, Florida in June and Mouse numbered 003 will be auctioned at the show sponsored by Ed Pritchard and Ed Bauries in South Florida in the Fall.

At the present time you will only be able to purchase the club's Sunshine Orange Crackleback Mouse at the shows. It will be a blind draw to see what numbered Mouse you will receive. What that means is: The numbers are put into a container and you draw your number out of the container sight unseen. However there will be an exception to the rule. If you have a particular number that you would really like to have (and it is not been drawn), you may donate an extra \$10.00 to the club and you get that numbered Mouse.

The FATC Clubs Sunshine Crackleback Mouse is being manufactured by Secret Cove Lure Company and Roth Kemper its sole proprietor. The mice are hand produced and individually hand painted by Roth. Each mouse will have its own individual unique characteristics.

It has been over ten years since the FATC has offered a club lure for sale. The first lure produced was a Chobee Chub by Sam Griffin in 2001. The second lure produced was an Ugly Chugger by Bill Daniels in 2002. There were 300 of each lure made but only sold about 100 lures or each were sold. Unfortunately 400 of these FATC club lures were reduced to ashes in the fire that occurred at Bill Stuart's building in downtown Bartow, Florida. Many do not realize how rare the first two club lures are. Remember we are only producing 101 of the 2012 FATC Sunshine Orange Crackleback Mouse.

Sheila Quinn and Ed Weston will oversee the distribution on the mice at the Daytona Show and will start selling them from their room on Thursday. 

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9040 Hickory Cir  
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Buddy Rejonis  
149 Windtree Ln  
Winter Garden FL 34787

Keith & Margaret Kerns  
1524 Lone Hickory Rd  
Yadkinville NC 27055

## Minutes from FATC Board of Directors

CROWN PLAZA, TAMPA, FLORIDA • OCTOBER 8, 2011

Members present: Dennis McNulty, Ed Weston, Jim Duncan, Mike Hall, Chuck Heddon, Larry Lucas, Paul Snider, Norm Pinardi, Sally Jett, Mike Sims & Sheila Quinn

President Larry Lucas called the meeting to order at 7:39AM.

Secretary's Report: Minutes of June 10, 2011 Board of Directors meeting were presented. Ed Weston pointed out that the line "All agreed Gary Simpson is doing a great job!" was left out in the newsletter. A motion was made by Norm Pinardi and seconded by Dennis McNulty to accept the minutes as corrected. The motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Sally Jett presented the Treasurer's Report. Motion made by Ed Weston and seconded by Jim Duncan to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented. The motioned carried.

Melanie Pleasant found our site here at the Crown Plaza in Tampa and we are very pleased with the location.

Upcoming Shows: Bill Stuart is hosting a show in Bartow, June 15, 16 and 17, 2012. Russ Thorne has agreed to host a lure show in the Panhandle area next year and Ed Pritchard has agreed to host a show in Palm Beach Gardens next fall 2012.

Scott Watkins would like to host another show in Tampa next year but we agreed that we do not want to have shows in the same area two years in a row except for the Daytona Show. Scott has put on a great show!

New Business: We are looking for a Board Member who would like to represent the Tampa Bay Region.

Ed Weston suggested having a Club lure made to be sold starting at the Daytona Show and each show thereafter until they are gone. Roth Kemper agreed to provide 101 mouse lures with boxes for the FATC Club. The lures will be numbered 000 thru 100. The price is \$35.00 sold on a first come first serve basis. 000 will be auctioned at the Daytona show. 001 will be auctioned at the following show. Lure numbers will be determined by a blind draw from a box. If you want a particular number and it has not already been drawn, you will be able to pay an extra \$10.00 to procure your number. Members will be limited to one lure.

Larry Lucas said he has sold 240 tables for the Daytona show and has 100 left to sell. He is investigating the idea of set up beginning Thursday afternoon.

Mike Hall suggested that Dennis McNulty be our Auctioneer. Dennis agreed to do so.

Norm Pinardi commented Larry Lucas has been a great president. Thank you Larry. Chuck Heddon agreed to be appointed Vice President next year.

New Awards Chairpersons are needed. Doug Brace and Mike Hall were recommended. Mike Hall accepted. Ed Weston and Chuck Heddon will collaborate with the new Award Chairpersons at the Daytona show.

With no further business, President Larry Lucas adjourned the meeting at 8:07AM.



# Thanks to all who helped with my collection!

*~Chuck*

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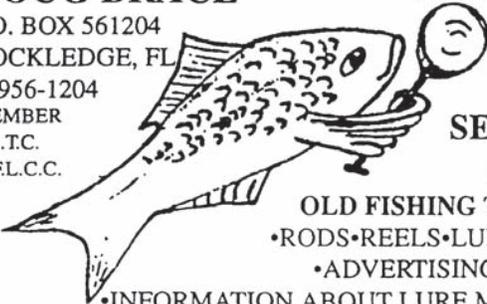
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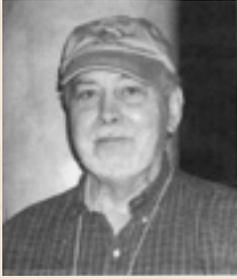


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# GONE FISHING...



## **Billy Crowley 1938-2011**

*Submitted by Harry Matthews:*

Mr. Billy Edward Crowley, age 73 of Griffin, Ga., passed away Tuesday, October 4, 2011 at the Spalding Regional Medical Center.

Mr. Crowley was born August 23, 1938 in Griffin, son of the late Fred Crowley and Mattie Quick Crowley. He was in the National Guard and of the Baptist faith. Billy loved his Lord, his family & friends, dogs, cabin in the mountains, and fishing lures. Billy was known to have never met a stranger, and known for his love for everyone. He enjoyed life and often made the comment that no man could ask for a better life than he had.

Surviving are his loving wife of 50 years, Mary DeLay Crowley having celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on May 5, 2011; his mother, Mattie Crowley; brothers & sisters-in-law, James R. & Sandy Crowley, Richard L. & Sylvia Crowley; sister, Doris C. Breland; sister-in-law, Athelia Richardson and nieces and nephews.

Billy was a fun guy who always helped others with his vast knowledge of lures and more so with the Georgia lures he loved to collect. He was know as the real "OL Skipper" to most of us as he had the largest collection from that company, full of factory pieces that he was able to buy from the family. Billy was working on a lure book on Georgia Lures and had gathered up information on the many manufacturers here in Georgia. Billy was thrilled to get any pieces of paper from any Georgia company, as well as any of the lures, hooks, worms, cricket holders, bobbers, and anything fishing. Billy did collect many other lure companies but since he was from Griffin Ga., the OL Skipper was his favorite. He had a large display at the Nationals with so many different OL Skipper items that you had to wonder how he was able to carry them all to the show.

Billy will be missed by so many and we all know he is in Gods hands now and happy!!!!

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## **Russell Griffin 1931-2011**

*Submitted by James Boswell:*

Russell S. Griffin, age 79, of Powder Springs, Georgia, passed away Monday, October 10, 2011, following a brief illness. Russell was born May 7, 1932 in Chipley, Florida and attended Chipley High School where he played football and basketball. Following graduation he served in the United States Air Force during the Korean War. He worked for AT&T (Western Electric) in several Florida locations and completed his work in Atlanta, where he retired in 1989.



Russell had a wonderful family and was married to Miss Ruth for 51 years. They lived in Powder Springs, Georgia. Russ and Ruth have three children: Kim (Fawcett) Griffin and David Fawcett of Jupiter Florida, Scott and Heather Griffin of Ayden, North Carolina, and Tim and Julie Griffin of Norcross, Georgia. In addition to three children Russell and Ruth have seven grandchildren.

Most of you know Russell loved to joke and tell stories. When he could, he would take his family bass fishing. Most lure collectors go to shows; Russell went to "swap meets". When he started collecting fishing lures, they were not sold, but were traded. In fact, he started collecting lures when most of us only knew they were for fishing. Russell was famous in Chipley, Florida...so famous that when he rode through town, school would turn out for a week. He enjoyed showing off this collection, and many of his friends have seen some wonderful pieces. Russ was always willing to trade you a "good lure", if he had two. Many of his collector friends have a "Special Griffin" lure hand carved and painted by Russell. If he liked you he would give you a "Special" lure and would never let you pay him. Russell was a member of the FATC, NFLCC, and CATC.

We all know Russell is in a better place, but we will surely miss him.



## **Dr. Jim "Leroy" Henderson**

Dr. Jim "Leroy" Henderson, Jr. died at his home at Emerald Isle on October 19th. He was preceded in death by his first wife, Maxine. Dr. Jim is survived by his second wife Christine and his three children Mr. and Mrs. James H. Henderson (Jane), Mr. and Mrs. Steven Henderson (Monica) and his daughter Ms. Susan Henderson, and his two grandchildren.

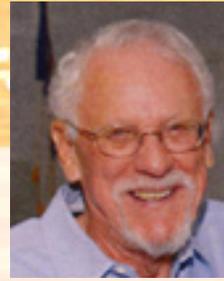
He was the founding president of what was to become Coastal Carolina Community College until he retired after 25 years in 1988. In 2007 Dr. Jim was the recipient of the I. E. Ready Award, the highest honor bestowed by the state Board of Community Colleges.

Dr. Jim was fond of saying that, "A college degree was great. A technical degree was great, but it was a whole lot better if there was a job at the end of it." A building at Coastal Carolina Community College bears his name.

An expert on the writings and life of Ernest Hemingway, and like him, he loved to hunt and fish. His hunting and fishing trips took him all over the country. Regardless of where he was going, he always gave himself enough time to stop at flea markets and swap meets searching for that next great find of a fishing rod or reel or a gun.

He was a past member of the FATC and NFLCC and was a current member of CATC. Dr. Jim attended a number of our shows over the years, especially the Daytona Show and the Bartow Show. His main interests were in Penn and Shakespeare reels and in heavy fishing rods for tuna and marlin.

The late Herb Proctor, called him Leroy, and usually the two were found "running" together at tackle shows. Herb is the one who notified us of Dr. Jim's death and sent me a newspaper article by Jannette Pippin from which some of this information was gleaned. The college provided the photo and an article written by Ed Regan in the November – December issue of Living Power.



## **Herbert Hyman Proctor, Sr.**

Herbert Hyman Proctor, Sr., died on December 4th under the care of Cape Fear Hospice and Life Care Center in Wilmington, North Carolina. He was preceded in death by his wife, Betty Roberson Proctor; his mother, Alice Riggs Proctor; brother Joseph and sisters Bernice, Edna, Mary, and Riggs. Herb is survived by his daughter Marsha Proctor, son, Herbie Proctor and wife Marcia and his two grandchildren Megan and David.

He was born in 1926 in Pitt County. Herb was a veteran of the U. S. Army and proudly served during WWII. After the war, he attended East Carolina Teachers College, now East Carolina University, located in Greenville, North Carolina.

Following college Herb spent some 30 years working in the tobacco industry. When he retired, he moved to Surf City, where he developed an avid interest in collecting antique fishing tackle. Herb was an active member of the National Fishing Lure Collectors Club, the Florida Antique Tackle Collectors, the Carolina Antique Tackle Collectors. Just before his death he attended the CATC's Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, show.

Herb and the late Dr. Leroy Henderson traveled together to many shows. Wouldn't you have loved to be a fly on the inside window of that pickup truck, and picked up on their conversations. While Leroy was looking for rods and reels, Herb was looking for ultra-rare Barracuda brand Torpecuda lures and hard to find Macatawa lures and other North and South Carolina baits. The truth be known, I think that both of them were looking for what they knew the other wanted, so they could then have a trading session after the expedition was over. It is often said of collectors in general that the hunt is more important than the find. With Herb the bargaining for the trade was what he loved the most about collecting.

His profession was not that of a professional story teller, but he sure could spin a good tale. He was always bringing the most eclectic bunch of tackle to the shows to sell and he would just as soon give you something as to sell it to you. Herb was a delightful gentleman. He will be sorely missed by his family and many fishing tackle friends!



by Jesse Furman

Recently at a holiday party I was swapping lies with my uncle when I heard it. My uncle was speaking of another family member when he said, "I don't know why he hasn't developed that *tiquing tingle*." At first I didn't think much of it. But the next day it hit me like a largemouth tracking down a Jitterbug. He was talking about the disease. A disease we can all relate to. You know you have it. If you didn't, you wouldn't be reading this publication. But you are reading it to feed your hunger. To satisfy an urge. To find out more. Hopefully I can help you. For this publication, I will be your dealer, your pusherman, to help you find more ways to tingle in 2012.

In the last F.A.T.C. edition I wrote of a 1927 Florida fishing license I discovered and the tingle I felt finding it in the last place one would expect to find a rare Florida fishing collectable, a remote section of the northeast. Someone who read that article said that I was crazy to divulge specific details of where I found such a treasure. But I strongly disagree. How else can we help this hobby grow and have the next generation feel the tingle like we do? Look at the success of shows such as *American Pickers*, *Pawn Stars*, *Storage Wars* and *Antiques Roadshow* and how they have propelled the antiques industry

into a billion dollar business that has people going into their attics and storage units hungry to find treasures like never before. The nation is starting to tingle...can you feel it?

Living in South Florida, the tingle can be a tough habit to feed. But there are some places both physical and online that I have found that have made me tingle and as part of my New Year's resolution to share more in 2012, I would like to share them with you, so here are my top 10 in no particular order:

- 1) **ebay** – unless you have been living under a rock for the past 15 years, there is no sense in me trying to explain the worldwide garage sale that is ebay. You can literally find everything there, and although it has become extremely watered down over the past few years, it is still a very valuable resource to buy and sell and advertise to the world. [www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com)
- 2) **Joe's Old Lures** – I just discovered this site a year ago and I have bought and sold quite a bit on it. A wonderful site that deals only in Antique Fishing and is a valuable resource for vintage fishing collectors. Visit [www.JoesOldLures.com](http://www.JoesOldLures.com)
- 3) **Craigslist** – another mammoth website that

has become a virtual garage sale titan over the past few years. It features items for sale in your area, but you can also go to other areas of your state or even the country and look to see what is for sale. But beware, as you don't always know who is selling to you and it is loaded with junk (not the good kind) but you can find the rare gem [www.craigslist.com](http://www.craigslist.com)

- 4) **Lang's Store** – an online store that specializes in vintage fishing. They have listings a few times a year and you can find some rare items on the site. Generally no super bargains to be had, but for the hardcore collector a great site. [www.LangsStore.com](http://www.LangsStore.com)
- 5) **GunBroker.com** – Don't let the name fool you, they have fishing collectibles sold in an auction format. [www.GunBroker.com](http://www.GunBroker.com)
- 6) **Ward's Auctions** – another online auction site that holds a few auctions a year and has some really great items [www.WardsCollectibles.com](http://www.WardsCollectibles.com)
- 7) **Facebook** – a great tool to connect with people. If you are not a member, I highly recommend it. Also F.A.T.C. has a page and if you become a fan of it, you can post shows, ideas, suggestions, rants, raves, etc. [www.Facebook.com](http://www.Facebook.com) search Florida Antique Tackle Collectors then hit the like button

- 8) **Arcadia, Florida** – centrally located in Florida, it is famous for its antique district, and on the fourth Saturday of each month, vendors from all over the state line the streets selling their wares. I have picked up a number of fishing related antiques over the years in Arcadia. [www.ArcadiaAntiques.com](http://www.ArcadiaAntiques.com)
- 9) **Joel Gushee** – a little dealer I met in Maine who has converted his barn into a store that sells antiques. We all know a Joel Gushee, some of you may be one, a man with years of experience, shelves of old tackle and countless hours of stories to tell. They can help us keep this hobby alive and pass knowledge onto us young guys to keep us tingling
- 10) **F.A.T.C. Shows** – Need I say more?

I hope this helps keep you tingling for 2012. I strongly encourage you to share with others this year, both in your everyday life and in the hobby that makes us all tingle. Since our disease has no cure, why not help spread it to others to share in the joy we all feel. Happy New Year! 🐟

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# We were all KIDS once!

by Dick Braun



Well most of us, anyway. And all of us still like to watch a kid catch his or her first fish. To get them started for the last 20-to-30 years, the fishing tackle manufacturers have come up with some really eye-catching/kid-catching rod and reel combos. Zebco was right there with the rest of the field

in bringing kids fishing gear into the stores and in front of the kids.

Of course there were reels, rods, and rod/reel combos; then there were the tackle boxes and bobbers, etc... This article will focus on items I've been able to collect in that regard and hopefully will help some of you in your collecting, or in finding a special outfit for your child or grandchild.

Kids are the future of the sport of fishing and the hobby of collecting fishing memorabilia! We all have given a fishing item to one of the minnows in the club or to the youngster that lives next door or down the street.

My display at the Daytona Show this year is dedicated to the KIDS! Part of the display will be the "Reel of Fortune". This was part of Mr. Frank Carter's display that he took around, giving away prizes corresponding with each number on the wheel. For the Daytona show, Zebco Corporation has been kind enough to supply me with over 40 girls and boys baseball style caps to be given away, and I am also collecting additional Zebco items (tackle boxes, reels, and the like) to be included in this 'Kid's Year' at Daytona.

As far as the Zebco company is concerned, it started with the 1959 issue of the Zebco Jr., which came in a triangular shaped

box. The following year the name was changed to the Zebco 77. The Boy Scout rod/reel combo and the Jr. Field tester combo 202 reel, tackle box, patch and lapel or pocket badge both came out in 1982. The pink and blue "It's a Keeper" 202 combos were produced in 1987. You could send this reel back to the factory and Zebco would engrave the child's name on the reel and send it back to you.

Footnote: This is a direct quote from the 1964 Zebco Product Catalog: "Giveaway Items for the Young Fishermen: Give Zebco Junior Caster Buttons, Membership Cards, Zebco Comic Books."



From the 1959 Zebco Junior to the 2003 Dale Earnhardt Jr., Zebco has produced tackle marketed to youngsters for 44 years so far!

I will have an additional 20 different Kids Combos at the show and I look forward to seeing a bunch of KIDS at Daytona—young AND old!!

Until next time, Dick Braun, that-zebco-guy





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**Total Enclosed** \_\_\_\_\_

*Payment must accompany registration – Refunds for cancellations must be requested 30 days in advance. You must be an FATC member to exhibit, trade or buy at the auction. Membership renewal at the show will involve waiting in two lines so pay your membership dues now!*

# Fanatical Insights: The "Diamondback" Bagley

by Johnny Garland



This color has been debated, discussed and even argued. Is it an intentional paint scheme or is it a mistake? Was it ever given a code or was it a "special" order? How did Jim Bagley arrive at this color scheme? The answers to these questions will probably never be known, but the opinions are worth noting.

I found my first "Diamondback" in the mid 1990's, the 5 inch model of the Bang-O-Lure. I have since found an SP5 (spinner version of the 5 inch Bang-O-Lure), a 4 inch Bang-O-Lure and a two hooker in the 7 inch Bang-O-Lure. This leads me to believe it was an intentional paint scheme. However, the one which I found new in the bubble-pack was marked "5-BS" (5 inch Bang-O-Lure in color Black on Silver Foil).

I showed this one to Jim Bagley in 2000 and he felt it was just lightly painted. At that time this was the only one I was aware existed. Since then; Ricky Cox, Craig Comjean, David Apple, Bill Stuart and myself have discussed this color at length with no conclusion.

It has been suggested that the silver foil (which is diamond-quilted) may have been covered with Vaseline then lightly buffed, allowing only the highest part of the foil to attract the paint. After the drying of the paint and the heavier buffing which would remove the lower layer of Vaseline it would produce the diamondback.

Three of the four I have found came from Florida, which may suggest a "Special Order". We know it was an early bait (pre 1980), because of the brass harness in the lure. I also feel it is very likely this color exists in the 2 inch model of the Bang-O-Lure. None of the Balsa B's Kill'r B's or Rat Finks have been found with this paint scheme. However, that does not mean they were never done. These "Diamondback" Bang-O-Lures normally bring between 100 and 150 dollars each. If one found this color in a Rat Fink, Balsa B3 or B4 or (heaven forbid) a Divin' B3, that person could take the entire FATC out to a nice meal.

Good luck – I prefer Bar-B-Que Pork! 🐷

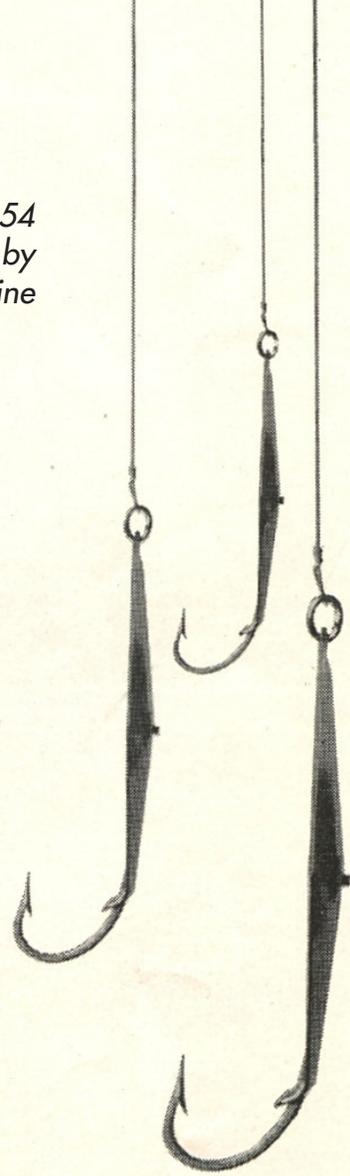




Clark working in his garage workshop. Once he fished for 93 consecutive days testing design changes for his Spoon-Squid.

*This article reprinted from the 1954  
"Fishing Yearbook", published by  
True, The Man's Magazine*

# LONELIEST LURE MAKER OF THEM ALL



*This year, working in his tiny garage-  
factory, James E. Clark of St. Petersburg,  
Florida, will make another 150,000  
fish-catchers. These, he figures, are enough,  
no matter how many the world wants*

**BY ARTHUR GORDON**

Photography by Carroll Seghers II—Black Star

**O**ne memorable day off St. Petersburg, Florida, a fisherman named Theo Curry was trolling in the Gulf for mackerel. He had his outriggers lowered and four lines dancing nicely astern. He'd brought along a young boy, just for company. The weather was fine. Everything seemed set for a nice quiet morning of genteel fishing when suddenly the sea under Theo Curry's keel began to boil—with fish.

Four mackerel seized the four lures and took off in what seemed to be twenty-four different directions. Curry jammed the wheel over to keep the boat in a tight circle and not run out of the school. Frantically he tried to unsnarl the lines, land the fish, clear the hooks, get the lures back overboard. For fifteen nightmare minutes he struggled, while the Gulf seethed with mackerel begging for a chance to bite.

In the end, with a sulphurous oath, he grimly settled down to fishing as fast as he could with a single handline. Action was so rapid that his lure was rarely in the water more than five or ten seconds. When the sound and fury died away, the exhausted Curry and his bewildered young friend found themselves practically up to their ears in wriggling, snapping, gasping fish. The actual count—913 "head," as the Florida fishermen say, of fine firm Spanish mackerel ranging around 2 pounds apiece.

A nice day's work for a commercial fisherman, which Curry was. One tenth of such a catch would make a banner outing for a boatload of sportsmen. But the question that leaps like a tarpon in the mind of any fisherman, commercial or not, is: What in hell was Curry using for bait?

The man who can give you the best answer is a brown-eyed, calm and

# Loneliest Lure Maker of Them All

[Continued from page 43]

quiet, 43-year-old southerner named James E. Clark. On the ground floor of his small garage apartment in St. Petersburg, Clark runs a one-man factory that each year, to the delight of countless fishermen and the dismay of countless fish, turns out better than a hundred thousand of the slender, diamond-shaped, chromium-plated "Spoon-Squids" that are now being used all the way from Boston to Corpus Christi.

This was the lure—No. 0 with a 3/0 hook—that gave Theo Curry such a lively morning. The same lure—No. 4 or No. 5 with a 7/0 and 8/0 hook respectively—is sudden death for the big king mackerel when they're running; Clark has one cherished and chewed-up Spoon-Squid that accounted for almost three tons of kings before it was honorably retired. Down on the bottom of the Gulf, big-mouthed grouper find it hard to resist one of these lures trolled deep. Off New Jersey it attracts albacore and the hard-hitting blues. And in fresh water, a fast-action version fascinates largemouth bass.

The history of the lure is closely linked to the personal history of Jimmy Clark. When he was 12, his father moved from Elkton, Kentucky, to St. Petersburg and became a charter-boat captain. Whenever school was out, Jimmy made an enthusiastic mate. He was an observant youngster, not content merely to fish. He watched everything, and he thought about what he saw.

It was a time of change on the Gulf fishing grounds. Already the vast schools of mackerel that the old-timers knew were beginning to thin out. No longer could you rig a hook on a piece of chicken bone and catch all the fish you needed. A few bone lures, mostly made in Japan,

were still being used, but they were fragile and tended to break when the hook was wrenched from the fish's mouth. The majority of the commercial fishermen were using two types of metal lure: the old diamond-shaped lead or tin squid, and the newer elliptical spoon.

They had to carry both types, because they never knew which one would kill. Some days mackerel and grouper would hit the squid and ignore the spoon; other days just the reverse. And for no ascertainable reason. The commercial boys used to begin each day by trolling two lines, a squid on one, a spoon on the other, to see which would be more effective.

Fishermen using the lead squid had to scrape off the tarnish occasionally with a knife, but once this was done the diamond shape, with its eight reflecting surfaces, gave a very bright underwater flash. The trouble with the lead squid was that it was heavy and tended to drive straight through the water without much action, or wobble. You got brightness, but not a very lifelike motion.

With the rounded spoon you got plenty of motion, but not so much flash, because a curved surface dissipates light. Why, Clark asked himself, couldn't a lure be designed that would incorporate the advantages of both types? He decided to give it a try.

He began by cutting small wooden blocks, fitting sheet metal over them, and pounding out rather crude handmade lures with a mallet. He had no elaborate theories; he just knew that he wanted to combine the diamond shape of the squid with the concave-convex design of the spoon. The result was a lure that looked as if he had split a squid lengthwise and hollowed out the flat side. Thus he retained the diamond shape with its eight reflecting surfaces, but he had eliminated most of the weight, and he had acquired the characteristics that give a spoon its liveliness in the water.

But this was only the beginning. He still didn't know whether to make his

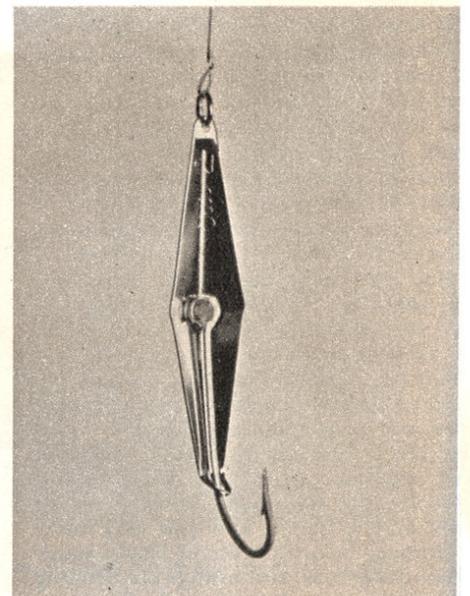
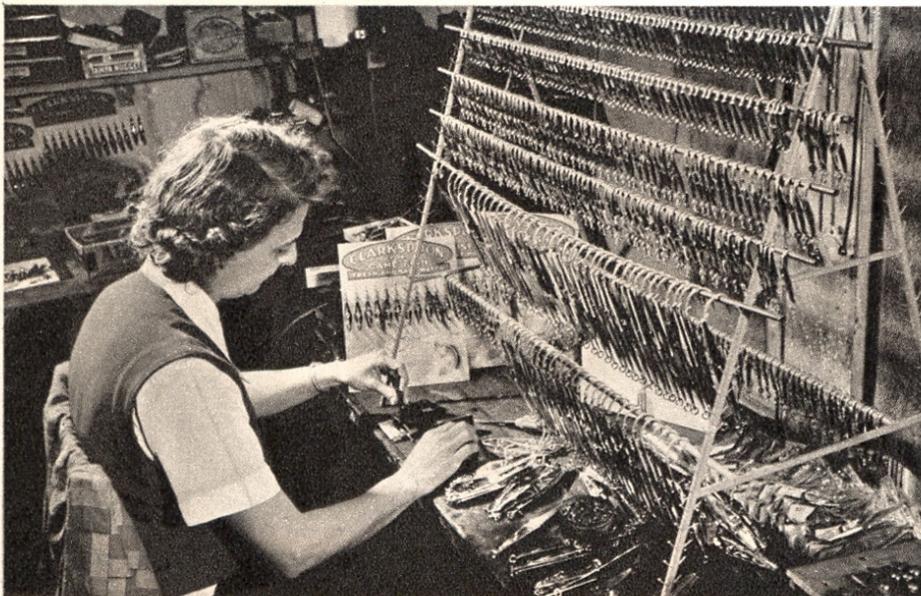
new design long or short, thick or thin, heavy or light. He didn't know which metal to use, or what gauge of that metal. He didn't know exactly where to set the hook, or what sort of finish to use.

There was only one way to find out—try all possible combinations.

He did. Day after day, week after week, he dragged his experimental baits through the green inshore waters of the Gulf, testing them in actual competition with existing lures. For electroplating he rigged up a simple gadget consisting of a battery and a jar. He tried copper plating his metal. Fish would hit bright copper, all right, but only if the light were very strong, usually around midday. He tried nickel, he tried chrome, he tried lacquering polished brass. There was one rugged period when he fished for ninety-three consecutive days in the Gulf. You can get pretty tired after *one* day of mackerel fishing, up at dawn, squinting hour after hour through the glare, absorbing the pounding that the shallow Gulf can give small craft. Tired or not, young Clark would come home, set to work with chisel and plane, making new wooden blocks of slightly different shape, hammering out the sheet metal, cutting it, plating it, adding hooks and trolling rings. Then the next day he would try again.

He didn't rely solely on his own efforts. He pressed the experimental lures on other commercial fishermen, taking no pay, merely asking them to use them and report the results. Like all fishermen, they were willing to try anything once. Also they were interested in any project that might eventually make it possible for them to put to sea with one standard type of lure instead of two or more.

Gradually, by comparing results and discarding less successful designs, Clark developed a lure that more than held its own with any other artificial bait. Still he wasn't satisfied. He had evolved a long slender design on the theory that king mackerel would mistake it for the hound fish—also long and slender—which is a favorite item in their diet. One day



Mrs. Clark can affix 400 hooks an hour, only job for which her husband has been unable to make a machine. Right, a Spoon-Squid.

he decided to shorten and broaden it considerably. The results were electrifying. Maybe the kings now mistook it for a white minnow or a greenback. Anyway, they liked what they saw. Liked it so much that the lure hasn't been changed since. Clark tried other patterns, but he never found one as good.

He called this final version the Spoon-Squid, since it combined the advantages of both. Pretty soon he didn't have to ask the commercial fishermen to use them. The fishermen were calling him up to find out how they could get more.

Clark's father, meantime, had gone into the fishing-tackle business. He tried to persuade his son to become a chemical engineer, and actually Jimmy did make a start at the University of Florida. But the urge to produce fishing lures was stronger than any campus attraction, and when his father sold his business in 1934, Clark got hold of a second-hand lathe and went to work.

He turned out to be an ingenious tool designer and manufacturer. An old German diemaker living in St. Petersburg took a fancy to the young man and agreed to teach him the secrets of the trade, provided Jimmy would first accept his stern precept that "unless a thing is perfect, it's wrong!" The first thing the old man did was send Clark out to buy a micrometer that would enable him to measure dies to an accuracy of better than one thousandth of an inch.

Starting with nothing but his micrometer and the second-hand lathe, Clark proceeded to design and build the rest of his machinery. Hardened in a controlled-temperature oven and tempered in oil, the dies he makes today punch the blanks for the lures out of a ribbon of three-quarter-inch, 18 percent nickel silver—or, when Clark can't get nickel silver, out of brass. Then the blanks go through a forming die—also built by Clark—which gives them their distinctive diamond shape. Next they are chromium plated, a process in which Clark's knowledge of chemical engineering comes in handy. This type of plating can be tricky, but Clark is not bothered by it. "Wrote to the Bureau of Standards," he says cheerfully. "Got a booklet with everything in it. Everything! The booklet cost me fifteen cents!"

The lures are then tapped for the screw that holds the hook in place. After that, another Clark-designed machine puts in the metal trolling ring. Wire fed through one side of the machine goes through a hole at the end of the Spoon-Squid, is bent into shape, and is closed out in a perfect circle at the rate of 1,800 an hour.

The hook itself has to be put in by hand; so far Clark has not been able to build a machine that will feed the very short screw properly. This job, more often than not, falls to the competent fingers of Mrs. Clark, an attractive lady, once a champion swimmer, who somewhat spoils Clark's contention that he runs a solo show. Working with a tiny screw driver, and apparently effortless speed, she can set 400 screws an hour—once she has her housework done.

Clark's first steady customers were the local commercial fishermen. Word of mouth spread the reputation of the new

lures, and one day the first mail order came in from Palm Beach. "The worst part of those early days," Clark says, "was not being able to fill the orders that poured in. I just wasn't set up to handle 'em."

The salt-water commercial fisherman is still Clark's biggest customer. He can tell from the geographic distribution of the orders that roll in during the spring and fall just about where the big schools of kingfish are at any given moment. Those kingfish runs provide marvelous sport, as anyone will testify who has been in the middle of one—silver torpedoes anywhere from 5 to 30 pounds, sometimes more. It's not uncommon for a charter boat to bring in a thousand pounds of kings, caught just offshore, to be sold at dockside for 15 or 20 cents a pound—and in the markets for three times that much.

If one of his lures has ever taken a record fish, Clark doesn't know about it. Quite possibly a commercial fisherman has done so without bothering to report it. Clark himself caught a 44-pound kingfish once, not a record, but not too far from it. He sold the fish to a man for \$5. The man admired it for a while, then sold it to a natural-history museum. It's on display there now.

One of Clark's biggest problems is whether to expand or not. He can barely keep up with orders as things stand now. Expansion would mean more volume, but it would also mean more headaches. "I may move into a simple concrete-block building," he says, "and let the thing grow. But I'd hold the factory down to ten men, no matter what."

At the moment, operations couldn't be simpler. Clark used to manufacture feather jigs, tin squids and lead sinkers, but he has dropped these in favor of the more profitable Spoon-Squids. He turns these out in eight sizes, ranging from No. 00 with a 2-inch blade and 2/0 hook up to No. 6 with a 6-inch blade and 9/0 hook. He figures he will make about 150,000 this year, doing all the work himself.

People who are their own bosses usually have a good time. The Clarks are no exception. However, they live very simply. They don't go out to restaurants much, or to the movies. Clark is a ham radio enthusiast. He gets his relaxation sitting in front of his dials talking to hams in Hawaii or Buenos Aires.

Clark has great confidence in his product. He will challenge you to fish alongside him with a lure of any other make and do as well. Out of all the hundreds of thousands of lures he has made and shipped, not one has ever been returned as defective. He takes great pride in this. It is also one reason why he hesitates to expand. If he does expand, he will have to rely on the workmanship of other people. He's not sure that he cares to trust his reputation to hands other than his own—the old artisan attitude which is rare in this century of mass production.

He's a happy man, a successful man, an independent man. You can't say much more about anyone nowadays. To paraphrase Emerson, he has built a better fish trap—and the world seems to be beating a piscatorial pathway to his door.

—Arthur Gordon



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### The Florida International Tackle Show

March 2-4, 2012  
Daytona Beach, Florida  
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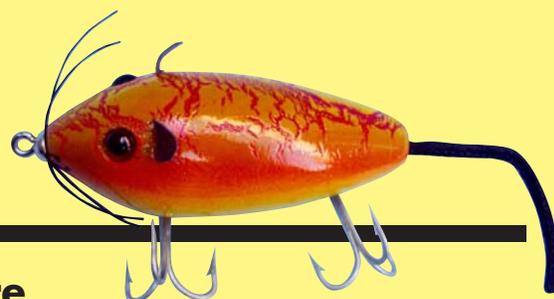
### CATC Spring Show

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