

# F.A.T.C. NEWS

Florida Antique Tackle Collectors Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 23, Number 1



## Florida's big fish story

*The Origins and  
Early History of*  
**FATC**  
PART 3

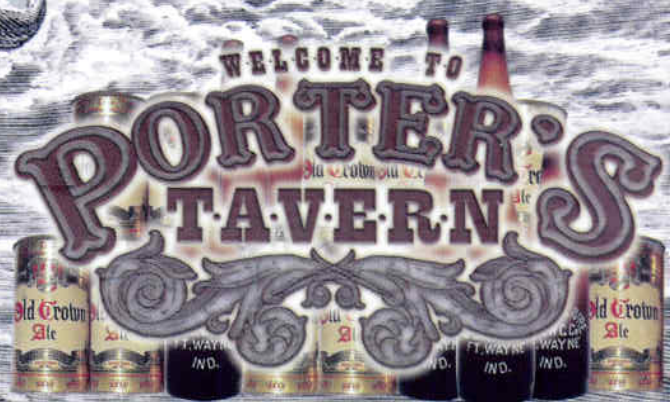
**Fin-Nor Rod Butt  
RESTORATION  
PROJECT**

L. DILG, the Noted Fisherman and Writer, says:

**"Winter's  
Weedless  
Surface Bait**

is a wonderful bait-  
casting lure and will  
undoubtedly take  
plenty of fish."

the modern plug bait-  
for a one-hook





◀ Left: A room with a view, with great tackle displayed



▶ Right: Show Hosts Susan and Mike Mais



◀ Left: Another view of the exhibit area



▶ Right: Doug Brace's impressive Dazy Vance lure display



◀ Left: A nice display of Pflueger reels



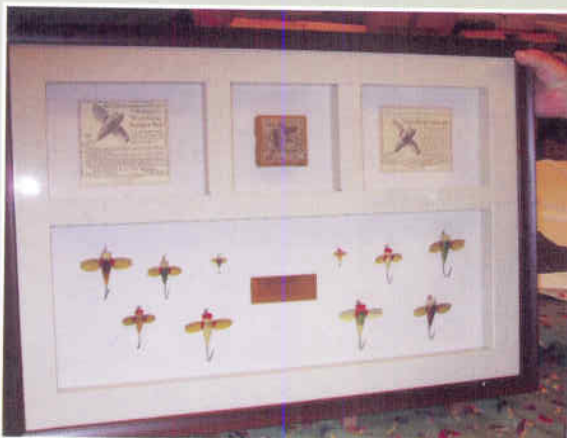
▶ Right: Stephanie Duncan's mouse lures, seemingly mesmerized by the jack-o-lantern



◀ Left: Lloyd Jett's creative Halloween Punkinseed Lures



▶ Right: The jack-o-lantern, seemingly mesmerized by Stephanie Duncan



◀ Left: Gene Meisberger's award winning display of "Winter's Weedless" surface baits (see story on page 16)



▶ Right: Ed Zorzi's beautiful Pflueger reel and lure display



**EXHIBIT WINNERS:**

**Best Educational Lures**

Ed Zorzi (Pflueger)

**Best Topical Lures**

Gene Meisberger ("Winter's Weedless")

**Best Florida Lures**

Luke Pemberton (Florida)

**OUTSTANDING DISPLAY:**

Sam Bryant (Creek Chub)

Russell Griffin (Miscellaneous)

Ed Bauries (Florida)

Stephanie Duncan (Miscellaneous)

Jim Duncan (Creek Chub)

Doug Brace (Dazzy Vance)

Mike Mais (Florida)

Bill Stuart (Pattern Torpedoes)

Gary Simpson (Miscellaneous)

Lloyd Jett (FATC Patches/Lures)

Ed & Marilynn Zorzi (Pflueger)

Jim Pitt (Pfeffer)

Bernie Schultz (Kinney's Guide to Fishing Stantex)



Roth Kemper with his latest Secret Cove lure... it's a whopper!



F.A.T.C. NEWS

The Newsletter of the Florida Antique Tackle Collectors, Inc.

January 2009 Volume 23, No. 1

Contents

Crystal River Award Winners..... 2 - 3  
 Deluded (Diluted?) Digressions..... 5  
 President's Message ..... 6  
 Florida's Big Fish Story ..... 9  
 Welcome to Porter's Tavern ..... 10 - 11  
 Past & Current Notes of Interest..... 12 - 13  
 Fin-Nor Rod Butt Restoration Project..... 14 - 15  
 The "Winter's Weedless" Surface Bait..... 16 - 17  
 The Origins and Early History of FATC, Part 3 ..... 21 - 23

Cover Art: To emphasize Florida's Big Fish Story, the cover offers this antique engraving from 1870 by Gustave Dore, entitled "The Creation of Fish and Birds", published in John Milton's classic work *Paradise Lost*. The menacing sea serpent is impaled on a "Winter's Weedless" fly lure, while appearing to be headed in the general direction of Porter's Tavern!

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**PROUDLY PRESENTS**



# A HISTORY OF *Barracuda*

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# DELUDED (DILUTED?) DIGRESSIONS

By Steve Cox

I was in attendance at one of Bay County's famous dinner gatherings held each month on the banks of Econfina Creek, near my family's homestead of the past 135 years. Everyone was bemoaning the plight of the economy and the uncertainty of the future for our nation, what with the recent upheaval of its financial and political landscape. The conversation then focused on the topic of our own heavy handed local government, and its attempts to snuff out the entrepreneurial spark of a small pizza restaurant owner.

It seems the owner thought it a great idea to hire a young worker to stand by the road holding a sign. The sign read "Buy One Pizza, Get One Free", or something to that effect. Apparently, the scheme was productive, as business picked up... Then, this activity caught the attention of the City of Panama City. Its public servants, being the self proclaimed protectors of the citizenry, noted that this hand held sign violated the city's sign ordinance! City code enforcement S.W.A.T. team lackeys descended upon the restaurant owner and served him with a "Cease and Desist" order, under the threat of heavy fines, if he failed to comply!

Not to be outdone, the ingenious restaurant owner cobbled up a lightweight PVC framework in the general shape of a 5X tee shirt and slipped an equally large garment onto the apparatus, which could then be worn like a huge horse collar or neck brace. Emblazoned on the front and back were, you guessed it, the words saying "Buy One Pizza, Get One Free". The young worker could then walk up and down the roadway advertising pizza specials as part of his clothing, with a sign no longer being necessary, and therefore no violation of the sign ordinance!

It has since been revealed that the city actively encourages all manner of fines, parking tickets, fees, taxes, and any other revenue source it can justify, and at year's end, splits this excess revenue (over budget needs) amongst its employees (including the Mayor, City Commissioners, City Manager, City Clerk, etc.). All this is concealed under the guise of a "gain sharing" program. This shocking misuse of taxpayer revenue was discovered only during recent courtroom testimony in a lawsuit brought against the city. A local radio talk show host revealed it to his audience.

The plaintiffs were property owners who had been fined in excess of \$200,000 by city code enforcement for cutting down trees on their commercial lot without the proper permits. The total fines exceeded the value of the property, and their lawsuit was filed out of desperation at the injustice dealt them by local government. It is no surprise that the code enforcement officer involved was willing to levy ridiculous fines, especially when her ability to participate in the city's year end "gain sharing" bonus provided extra incentive.

All of us at the dinner were impressed with the restaurant owner's creativity and persistence, and applauded another defeat of government tyranny by enterprising capitalism. You may ask, "Where is he going with this?" My point is, in these challenging economic times, we must emulate the restaurant owner by being more creative in how we approach life, our careers, deliver our promotional messages, and even collect tackle.

In the 1990s, the phrases "outside the box", "outside the nine dots", and Stephen Covey's "Paradigm Shift" were in vogue. While they're a bit cliché now, the conceptual lesson is still a good one to remember. To the question, "how can we continue to pursue our hobby?", we must try innovative new approaches. Here are a few ideas for the membership to ponder:

- 1) Schedule a "trade only" day for an upcoming show - no cash has to change hands... and the guys that make a living at these shows, John Mack, Dennis McNulty, etc., could still sell their wares on the other show days. These guys are collectors too, so this might appeal to them as well.
- 2) In May, 1992, at Larsen's Lodge in Kissimmee, FATC held a very successful "mini swap meet" show with very little formal set up, and no auction. Perhaps we could duplicate this with a "room trading only" show. It would require a suitable venue, but could save money for the club and the attendees.
- 3) Revisit silent auctions, spot auctions and other similar efforts as an alternative to a lengthy formal auction.
- 4) Combination shows such as the joint FATC/CATC show in Savannah this May could be exciting! Perhaps other small clubs would be interested in working together with us... What about additional locations in nearby states?
- 5) Bill Stuart suggests trying a show that would open at noon on Friday, giving the members an opportunity to drive to the show that morning, then have the show end at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, affording most members the chance to return home that evening. Our membership could potentially cut out the expense of two nights at a hotel and a loss of a workday, with the club reducing its costs by renting the showroom and providing security for one less day.

Surely, there are many other good ideas floating around out there, so be sure to approach your board with them!

We had a great fall show in Crystal River, at least until the Gator/Bulldog game was televised on Saturday afternoon, clearing out attendance at the meet. Oh well, this is the **Florida** Antique Tackle Collectors club, after all... and the Gators are national champs! Daytona is only a few weeks away, and the first-ever Savannah show is a mere three months later, so we've got lots of tackle to view in the first half of 2009.

This issue of FATC News features a rare and enjoyable "Winter's Weedless" surface bait article by Gene Meisberger, an intoxicating trip to Porter's Tavern courtesy of Larry Lucas, and a great little yarn about local sea monsters by our very own Captain Ahab, Bill Stuart. Then, Joe Castillo provides a "How-To" of craftsmanship with his beautiful restoration of a Fin-Nor rod butt. I finish it up with a last look at the Origins and Early History of FATC. Imagine, smorgasbord **and** potpourri, all in one magazine!

Volume 23, Number 1, begins my fourth year as your FATC News Editor. Its been a lot of work and a lot of fun. My friend and fellow Barracuda collector, Roth Kemper, paid me an unusual compliment about my writing. He said, "You're a sick, twisted freak, Cox, but I like the way you think!" What more could anyone ask for? So, hang in there with me and remember... IMDNITBWC (If morale does not improve, the beatings will continue!)

Quit wishin', go fishin'!

Steve 

P.S. If you see a guy standing on the road in front of my office with a big t-shirt which says "Will sell insurance 4 food", its not the pizza man, its me...



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Happy Holidays to all,

As I write this, I have just finished a lunch of leftover turkey soup. Last night was turkey sandwiches and tonight will be turkey casserole. My point is what goes around comes around, and around, and around...

A great example of this came to me by email back in July. The letter was from a lady named

Judy Dandrige, who located me on the FATC web site. Apparently, she found a memory card from a digital camera while she was hiking near a stream in the mountains of North Carolina. She brought the card home and put it in her computer to pull up the photos. On one of the pictures, she saw two women, and by zooming in on their name tags, noticed the letters FATC. In the background was the ocean, and by going to our web site, she learned we had a Daytona show. She could make out the name Patricia, but the other woman's name was impossible to read. She told me she was sure the person who lost the card would be anxious to get it back because it had photos of Christmas and a 90<sup>th</sup> birthday party. She asked me to help her in any way and attached a copy of the photo of the two women.

I replied that I would do everything I could, but privately I was not hopeful that I could solve the mystery. I began by posting the picture on Joe's Old Lure board, [www.joesoldlures.com](http://www.joesoldlures.com), a great resource for tackle collectors, by the way. Within minutes, Randy Moorehead emailed me with who he believed one of the ladies to be. I looked her up in the FATC directory and left a message for her to call me. It took a while to connect with her (and to make her believe this wasn't some kind of scam), but I finally got to put fellow FATC members Patricia and David Roberts in touch with Judy Dandrige. It turns out the Roberts' dropped the card while fishing a stream in North Carolina a year earlier. They were very grateful for Mrs. Dandrige finding it, along with their memories.

Less than a week after this occurred, I lost my wallet. Two days later, I had a nice man from Ormond Beach call to say he found it in the Publix Parking lot. What goes around comes around!

I had another experience recently with an out of state collector. I won't go into details, because it might embarrass him. The bottom line is he did me a big favor; I did something sneaky to pay him back, only to get home and find out he did something even nicer for me. This is why we join clubs and organizations. We meet the greatest people with common interests, and good things come of it.

I am a firm believer in karma. You can go through life with an attitude that it's all about me, and you may be successful. However, I don't believe you will ever understand the real meaning of success until you make your life about those

around you. The rewards reaped when you touch the lives of others in a positive way are far greater than those gained by self promotion. We all get wrapped up in trying to acquire the one elusive lure, reel or rod that would make our collection complete, for a week or two anyway. I was no different. A couple of years ago I took the attitude that if a lure is meant to be in my collection, sooner or later it will be. I am enjoying our hobby a lot more now. I look at other collectors as friends and acquaintances, rather than competitors. I don't overpay for what I collect because I know it (or another like it) will come my way in due time. I don't come home from shows upset because I wasn't able to add anything to my collection. I come home happy that I took time to spend with other collectors, and I'm better educated because of it. This simple step has really made collecting a lot more fun for me. I'm not saying this is for everyone. I know there are club members who live for the hunt and the kill, and my words are never going to change them. They enjoy that aspect of collecting, and I think that's great. It's just not for me anymore.

Something that **is** important to me is working to make our club more successful. In the last issue, I mentioned the joint FATC/CATC Savannah show scheduled for next May. Plans for it are coming along well. More information and a registration flyer is included on the next page. Mike Mais is hosting for our club and David Lindsay is going to be the host for the CATC, with Arthur and Karen Edwards assisting in Savannah. Right now they are working diligently to put all the pieces of the puzzle together. It is a challenge, since a joint venture like this has never been attempted before. Our summer show is set and will be hosted by Chuck Heddon at the Clarion Hotel in Altamonte Springs, (just north of Orlando), Florida. Please mark your calendars for August 21<sup>st</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, and 23<sup>rd</sup>. This is a great, central location, and I expect a strong turnout. The Daytona show is coming along well, and as of this writing (in early December), I have only 18 tables remaining. The Plaza Hotel is filling up fast, as well. If you haven't made your registration yet, I would suggest you do so today!

I wish everyone a very happy Holiday Season and a great New Year. I hope to see you in February.

Larry 

*Gone Fishing...*

FATC received notification that member John Bellflower passed on Father's Day, June 15th, 2008. FATC wishes to extend its sympathy to John's wife, Alanna and his family.



# F.A.T.C. AND C.A.T.C. JOINT ANTIQUE TACKLE SHOW

MAY 15-16, 2009 SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

Come experience the first ever tackle collecting collaboration on May 15th and 16th, 2009, when the F.A.T.C. and the C.A.T.C. combine their clubs in a ground breaking tackle show in the beautiful city of Savannah, Georgia. Since we are exploring new territory with this show, we are going to go a step further and open it up to NFLCC, ORCA and any other tackle collecting club members. Just bring a directory showing you are a current member of a club and you may buy tables or enter the show at our member costs.

The show will be held at the landmark National Guard Armory, 1248 Eisenhower Drive, Savannah, GA 31406 (912) 356-2438. This is just minutes from the historic downtown district, with its fine restaurants, antique shops and one-of-a-kind architecture.

The show hotel is Holiday Inn located at 7100 Abercorn St., Savannah, GA. 31406. Telephone: 912-352-7100.  
**Rate of \$89.95 good till 4/15/2009 (ask for "Antique Tackle Show" block of rooms)**

Show hosts Mike Mais, David Lindsey and co-hosts Karen and Arthur Edwards are doing everything possible to make this a low cost show so you have more money to spend on tackle. Tables will be only \$25, with a \$10 registration. We are expecting to sell at least 150 tables, so this will be a major show that you can't afford to miss. The show will be open to the public on Saturday and we will be advertising heavily in the area.

Show hours will be announced soon. Check the F.A.T.C. and C.A.T.C. web sites for additional information.

**F.A.T.C. Web site**  
www.fatc.net

**C.A.T.C. Web site**  
www.joeyates.com/catc

**F.A.T.C. AND C.A.T.C.**  
**JOINT ANTIQUE TACKLE SHOW**  
MAY 15-16, 2009 SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

## REGISTRATION FORM

Please make checks payable to FATC and mail to:  
Mike Mais  
5009 SW 115th Street Rd.  
Ocala, FL 34476

Name please print clearly: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone # & email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Guest Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Payment must accompany registration.  
Refunds or cancellations must be requested 30 days in advance of the show

Please contact Mike Mais for additional registration information:  
Phone: 352-622-2868 or email mmais68569@embarqmail.com

I'd like to reserve \_\_\_\_\_ tables at \$25 each \_\_\_\_\_

Registration Fee (\$10): \_\_\_\_\_

FATC or CATC Dues if not Paid: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_



# Florida Lure Makers and Their Lures Vols. I – VI

price for US delivery Vol. I – V, \$42 includes ph&i (Vol. VI, \$49 includes ph&i)

\*\*\*\*\*

## Florida Lure Want List

- Eger Pork Rind Bottle
- Eger Reel
- Eger Rod
- Eger Spool of Line
- Jim Pfeffer Sunfish
- Jim Pfeffer Pigfish
- Jim Pfeffer Mullet
- Porter Gator Bait
- Porter Orange Box
- Early Period Robinson Lures
- Early Robinson Fly Rod lures
- Dazzy Vance Wooden Box
- Dazzy Vance 2pccb Box
- Dazzy Vance Lures

## Fly Rod Lure Want List

- Francis Fly Co. Catalog & other information
- E. H. Peckinpaugh Flies/Lures:
  - Alma bug NOC
  - Fish Getter Hopper Fly NOC
  - Jake Scott Twin Hook Pattern
  - Hickman Fly Pattern NOC
- Floating Night Bug w/ single hook
- Dick Splain Bone Fish Fly NOC
- Dick Splain Salt Water Fly NOC
- Skitter Frog NOC
- Mousie w/ cork body & Rub. Legs
- Froggie w/ cork body & Rub. Legs
- Ted Williams Spin-Pop & Fly-Pop Flies
- Peckinpaugh Doodle Bug (a.k.a. Lucky Bug)
- Pony (any breed)

\*\*\*\*\*

## Bill Stuart

The Museum of Fishing  
PO Box 1378  
Bartow, FL 33831

tele: 863-533-7358

Bstuartmof@aol.com

Can you identify these lures? Reward offered!

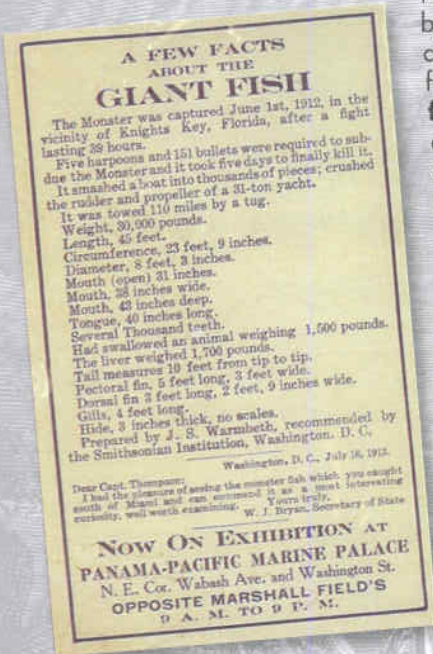






# Florida's big fish story

By Bill Stuart



I expect all guys, and I would believe a lot of gals, have dreamed of catching a monster fish. I mean a **monster fish!** I remember when I was about 6 years old, a group of whales beached themselves near Ft. Myers. They were subsequently loaded on flat cars and taken throughout the state by train. Bartow is not that far from the Ft. Myers area, but my guess is that by the time the train arrived in Jacksonville, it was a fishy smelling exhibition! I recall the train stopping for ten or fifteen minutes so everyone could get a good look at these large and strange denizens of the deep. They were monsters, alright!

Florida's big fish story was first reported on May 3, 1913, in *The Fishing Gazette*. The account read, "A monster fish, so far unclassified, was shown last week at Miami. It was captured by Capt. Charles Thompson a year ago, and measured 45 feet in length and 23 feet in circumference. The fish has set the scientific world wondering, as nothing like it has ever been taken. Capt. Thompson tells the thrilling story of its capture; how he was dragged around the ocean for 39 hours in a small boat, completely at the mercy of the beast."

Two months later, on July 16, 1913, a card was printed entitled, "A Few Facts About The GIANT FISH," and it confirmed that the fish had indeed been captured on June 1, 1912. Among other things, the card reported that the fish had swallowed an animal weighing 1,500 pounds.

Note that the card had a personal message to Capt. Thompson which read, "Dear Capt. Thompson, I had the pleasure of seeing the monster fish which you caught south of Miami and can commend it as a most interesting curiosity, well worth examining. Yours Truly, William Jennings Bryan, Secretary of State (The United States)." Considering the brevity of the message, I assume that it was sent as a telegram. It is likely that Bryan saw the fish in Miami, as I know he had a home there next door to my step-grandmother. I also assume that he was still trying to get his name in front of the American public, as

he was a perennial candidate for President during that period. The card read, "Now on Exhibition at Panama-Pacific Marine Palace, N. E. Cor. Wabash Ave. and Washington St., Opposite Marshall Field's, 9 A.M. to 9 P.M." That address, if I am not mistaken, is in Chicago.

"The Big Fish Story" as related by Charlie Carlson in his book, *Strange Florida II*, copyright 2007, gives an account from an unidentified November, 1913, newspaper that was published six months after *The Fishing Gazette* story. It adds to our story that, "Scientists believed it was an inhabitant of the far-down ocean depths, at least 1500 feet below the surface, and that it had been thrown up by some subterranean volcanic disturbance which injured its diving apparatus."

We also learn from the story that a couple of tugboats were called to help bring Thompson's boat and catch into Miami. On arrival the fish appeared dead, but suddenly in a last gasp, it smashed a portion of a dock, destroyed a dock house, and broke a man's leg.

The huge fish was beached, where it became a curiosity until the City of Miami ordered it removed before it got too smelly. The Smithsonian sent taxidermist J. S. Warmbath to Miami to prepare the carcass for preservation and study. Fifteen barrels of formaldehyde were used to embalm the fish. The work was exceedingly difficult due to the three inch thickness of the hide. The skin was mounted on steel ribs to restore the original form, and then the whole thing was put on a flat car and hauled to Atlantic City, where thousands of curiosity seekers viewed it. It was also reported that a millionaire, who had seen the fish, had it transported to Indianapolis so he could prove to his friends that it wasn't just another big fish story.

A February, 1917 *Field & Stream* story by Van Campen Heilner, probably written in the summer of 1916, provides a commentary about the monster fish. The article, entitled *Sailfish and Barracouta at Long Key* read, "At Miami we struck summer, and seeing this is a fishing story, I might as well mention the famous giant fish on exhibition there." The writer also noted that this fish was captured several years before.

Next time you see me, ask me about MY big fish story. I am fortunate to have two. One has a bass as its subject, while the other is about a whale...

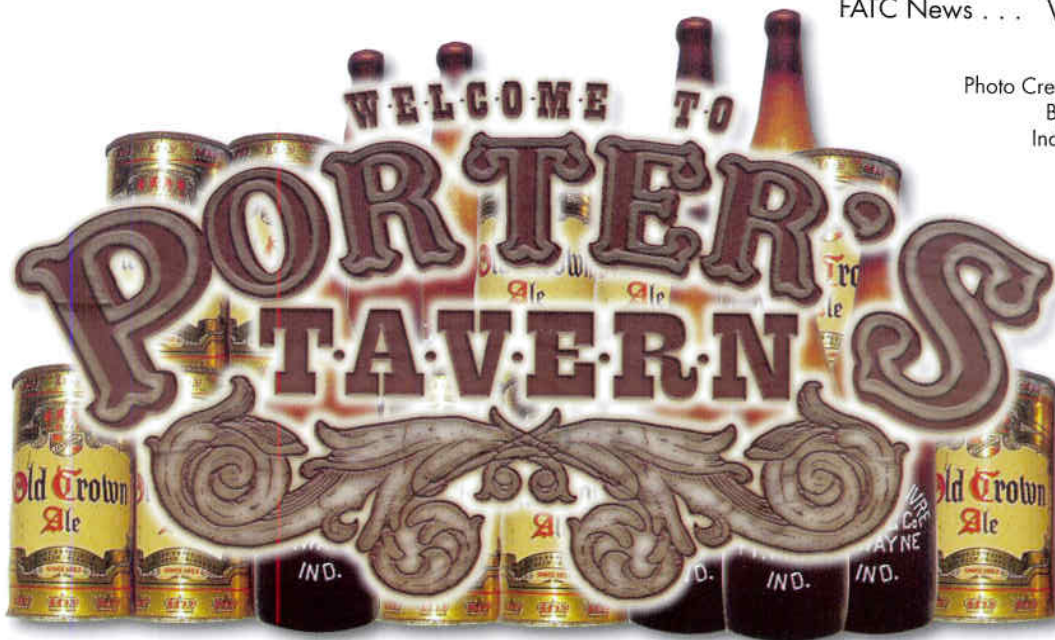


Above: The behemoth is lashed to Capt. Thompson's disabled 30 ton boat, with its rudder and propeller destroyed after being slammed by the fish.



Right: Look at the man coming out of the fish's mouth. I wonder how long he was in the fish's belly?

Photo Credit for bottle and can:  
Bruce Mobley  
Indianabeer.com



**Where alcohol related lures from the Porter Bait Company are featured,  
(and everybody knows your name...)**

By Larry Lucas

The first lure showcased is the "Can Opener", or what I prefer to call the "Bottle Opener" lure. Thanks to a box and lure found by Doug Brace, we know this was a promotional item made for the Centlivre Brewing Company of Ft. Wayne Indiana. These were likely made in the mid to late 1930s, prior to the formation of the Porter Bait Company. Richard Porter was making lures for the Dixie Bait Company at the time, but there are very few similarities between the Dixie baits and these "Bottle Openers".

As you can see in the lures displayed, they appear to resemble baits that are attributed to the Southern Bait Company. The frog pattern mimics Porter's, but there are more differences than similarities. You can examine the "Bottle Openers" and the darters, (which almost everyone agrees are Southern), and come to your own conclusions. This leads me to believe one of two things: 1) either the lures were made by the Southern Bait Company and had nothing to do with Porter, or 2) Dick Porter painted lures attributed to the Southern Bait Company. We may never know for sure.

Along with the "Bottle Openers" are two imitation lures. The blue and white example came from a former Porter employee who made it himself. It is rudimentary in its construction and very light in weight. On the other hand, the red and white piece is a very well made lure. It has quality hardware and

a professional paint job. This lure was found in an old tackle box that contained Egers, Barracudas and several early Porters.

Also, the display case contains a real Centlivre bottle opener and a label from a Centlivre beer bottle. The bottle opener is called a "Spinner". According to the story, patrons in a bar would spin the bottle opener to determine who was going to pay for the next round of beer. If you remember the old "spin the bottle" kissing game, which used to be popular at teenage parties back in the day, then you may be old enough to remember the Centlivre beer your dad used to drink!

Next, we have a Porter "Stix" that is stenciled "Plug Black Label". It is unknown if this is in reference to Carling "Black Label" beer or Johnnie Walker "Black Label" scotch, but in researching the name, very little comes up in reference to "Black Label" during the late 1950s. Both companies were involved in marketing to sportsmen, so this remains a mystery.

The Porter "Duz Biz" on the bottom right of the next page is stenciled Schenley, and was most likely made for the Schenley Whiskey Company of Schenley, Pennsylvania. I have never seen another Porter with this stencil, and if you look closely, the lettering is too large for the lure and is not



"Darters" and "Bottle Openers" in three different colors.



Two imitation "Bottle Openers"

painted to Dick Porter's exacting standards. I believe it was most likely made with the intent to be sold to Schenley for advertising purposes, but apparently the promotion never got off the ground. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Schenley was attempting to appeal to sportsmen to buy their whiskey. The hook holder in the case is an example of this promotion.

The other three lures displayed in the case are simply listed as "Happy Hour" baits. The two front halves of a Porter broken back darter with the spinner are rare, with only six or seven known. Dick Porter seemed to be a very thrifty man who made use of every spare part he could find in his building. I've spoken with guys who, as kids, would go by Porter's factory on Main Street to get free lures. They told me if Porter was throwing something away, it was in pretty bad shape.

The lure is a Porter "Spindle 17" with bucktail protruding from the sides. To my knowledge, this is a one of a kind, but I know of a "Pop Stop" with factory added legs. This lure was found in the estate of a Sanford, Florida man, who was a field tester for Porter and several other Florida lure manufacturers. Also included in this estate were about forty other Porter lures, with several being very rare ones. I feel certain the bucktail was added by the factory, perhaps with the encouragement of the gentleman from Sanford.

There you have it... Alcohol consumption was on the rise in America in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. An entire generation survived Prohibition, the Great Depression and WWII. Tackle companies were among the first to capitalize on this growing market of sportsmen that "liked to toss a few back" while they were tossing a line. Since there is nothing displayed here that is known for sure, any ideas or information about the lures featured would be greatly appreciated.

*Cheers!*



These "Happy Hour" baits use rare Porter components



An original Centiliver Brewing Company bottle opener and label



Porter "Stix" stenciled "Black Label"



A "Duz Biz", stenciled "Schenley", with other "Schenley" promotional items

