

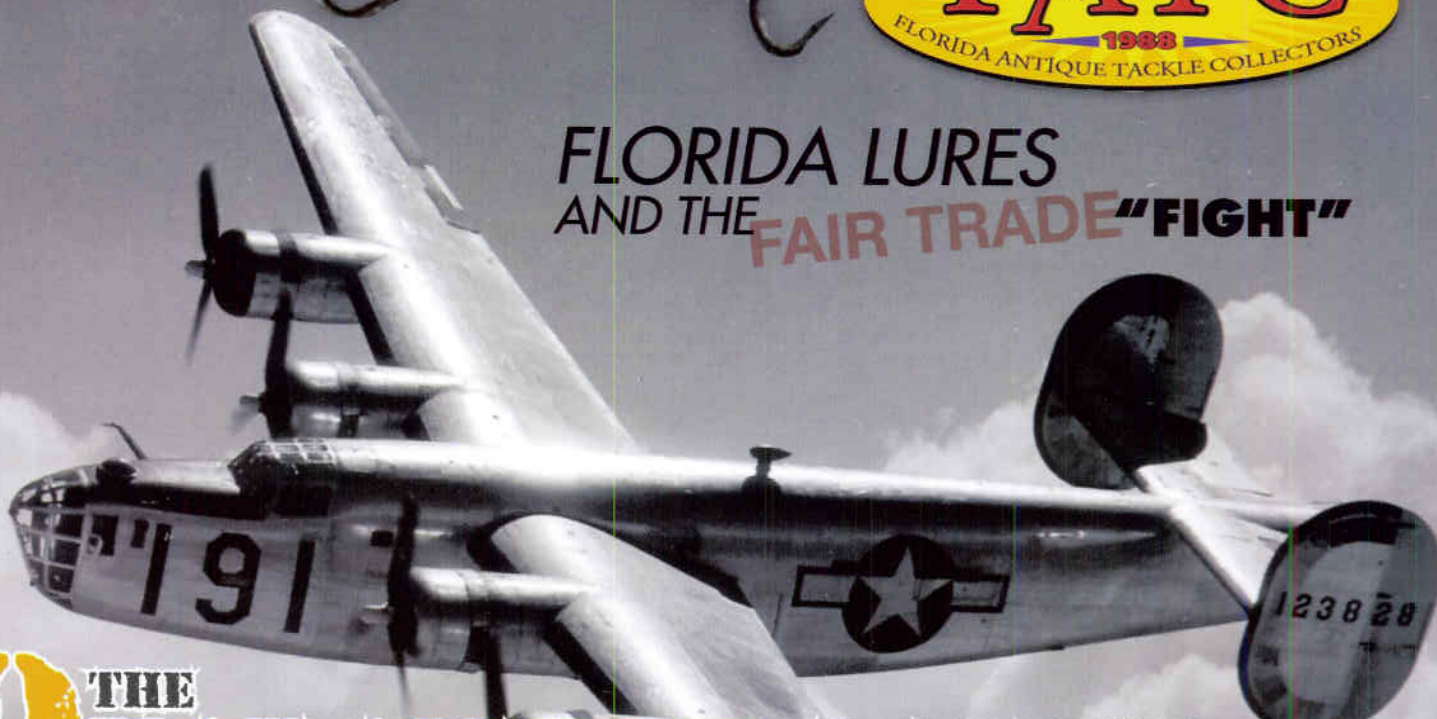
VOLUME 23, NUMBER 3

F.A.T.C. NEWS

Florida Antique Tackle Collectors Quarterly Newsletter



FLORIDA LURES AND THE FAIR TRADE "FIGHT"



“THE QUARANTINE BATT'S”

A TRIBUTE TO MAJOR GREENWOOD GEORGE GAY AND THE 93RD BOMBARDMENT GROUP

Muskie Lures

MADE IN FLORIDA
THE LEN AND BETTY HARTMAN STORY





Savannah photos courtesy of Joe Yates.



EXHIBIT WINNERS:

Carolina Baits
 Rev. Bob Dennis (Buck Perry)

Florida Baits
 Frank Carter (Southern)

Best of Show
 Karen and Arthur Edwards
 (Chippewa & Johnson Auto-Strikers)



F.A.T.C. NEWS

**The Newsletter of the Florida
 Antique Tackle Collectors, Inc.**

August/September 2009

Volume 23, No. 3

Contents

CATC/FATC Savannah Show Pictures 2,3
 President's Message 4
 Deluded (Diluted?) Digressions..... 5,6
 Muskie Lures Made In Florida 9-11
 The Quarantine Baits 12-16
 FATC Board of Directors Meeting Minutes 17
 Florida Lures and the Fair Trade "Fight" 20,21
 Past and Current Notes of Interest 20,21
 NFLCC National in Louisville, Kentucky 2009 22,23

Cover Art: A classic B-24 Liberator graces this cover for the tribute to Major Greenwood Gay and the other pilots and crewmen of the 93rd Bombardment Group. Famous trophy fisherman/lure designer Len Hartman is showcased as his "Muskie Bugs" and "Surface Baits" cascade out of the bomb bay doors of the venerable twin-engine World War II legend, typically an olive drab lady. In addition, Hartman's giant "Hellbender" style muskie plug serves as a backdrop for the newsletter masthead.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Greetings, tackle chasers...

I often get called a "young guy" by other collectors. I'm 50, so maybe I'm younger than some of you, but you might be surprised to find out I was collecting lures in the 1960s. From the time I was 8 years old, I always had a big fishing net hanging from the wall of my room, filled with old fishing lures. I got a lot of them from my grandfather, his friends, my buddies' fathers, and people I would meet walking the lakes and canals of

Florida, fishing for whatever would hit. In Gainesville, during my first year of college in 1978, a few of us got together every now and then and swapped lures. Nothing was ever sold, and we had no idea of lure values. We simply traded for what we liked. This was, in my opinion, collecting in its purest form.

We each have different ways that we got into this great hobby, and we all have unique motivations for continuing the search. I am very passionate about preserving history and learning the stories from people who actually experienced it. I seldom go out on "field finds", and do very little advertising to bring any tackle my way. My policy is to refrain from making offers on any tackle brought to me for appraisal. It just doesn't feel right to appraise something and then offer to buy it. That is only my self-imposed rule, and should not be forced on others. We all approach tackle collecting differently. Some like to spend hours searching the internet for deals, while others chase down leads over hundreds of miles. Many are content to go to shows and add to their collections with lures found while there. None of these methods are right or wrong, and each of us must discover what works best for our individual personalities. By doing so, we can enjoy the hobby to its fullest.

To my way of thinking, as long as one doesn't break any laws, maintains a good code of ethics, and can look at themselves in the mirror without cringing, they are probably doing the right thing. With our maturing club, we are hopeful of adding younger people to our membership. With them will come new attitudes about tackle collecting. For example, the younger professional fishermen storming the tournament trails are far different from the quiet, professional, tournament anglers I grew up with. They yell and scream and call attention to themselves in ways that make older anglers squirm. They are, however, no less passionate about the sport and their desire to win as are their more seasoned counterparts. New

collectors coming into our hobby have very different backgrounds from the experienced veterans. They are more technologically advanced, and perhaps a little more driven to grab the brass ring. This doesn't make them bad, just different. They deserve patience and the opportunity to figure out the rules on their own, rather than be condemned for their drive to success. Perhaps we should all take an extra dose of "live and let live"...

Speaking of success, I'd like to extend a big thank you to the Carolina Club and our Florida Club for a very successful show in Savannah, Georgia. 155 tables were sold for this first time event, and for a spring show, that is wonderful! The thing I enjoyed most about this show was the chance to meet so many new people. There were collectors in attendance who seldom, if ever, come to a Florida show. They brought new and exciting displays and had fresh tackle for sale. From personal experience, let me assure you that putting a new show together is a daunting undertaking. I commend the Carolina Club for making the commitment and sticking with it. I would also like to publicly thank our Vice President, Mike Mais, for hosting this event from the Florida side. Thanks, also to David Lindsay for taking the reins for the Carolina Club, and to Karen and Arthur Edwards for all their help on site in Savannah. It was a team effort, and I certainly hope we can do it again.

Our next show will be hosted by Chuck Heddon at the Clarion in Altamonte Springs, August 21st-23rd, 2009. The Fall show will be held in Palm Beach Gardens at the Embassy Suites Hotel, right off I-95. Our hosts will be Ed Bauries and Ed Pritchard. You can learn more about these shows and see hundreds of pictures from past shows at our club website, www.fatc.net.

On a somber note, I recently attended the funeral of F.A.T.C. member Jack Funderburk, who was killed in an auto accident last week. I stood in the back of a standing-room-only chapel in Keystone Heights, and listened to the people who knew Jack well. As they spoke about him, it occurred to me that, when we are gone, all that remains is how we treated those we came in contact with. The money, toys and power don't mean a thing if we don't offer compassion and respect to those around us. With that in mind, Jack lived and died a very rich man. A lesson I will try to remember each and every day...

Until next time,

Larry  PRESIDENT

Gone Fishing...

Jack Funderburk was a good friend, and lots of us will sure miss him. Jack died June 10, 2009 when, on his way to work, his pickup struck a semi that was parked in a northbound lane of Highway 301. A Keystone Heights resident, he was 55, and leaves wife Kathy, son Jason, and daughter Kendra. Jack was an avid Creek Chub Bait Co. collector, and we enjoyed trading and comparing notes. He was always joyfully enthusiastic when he made a good "Chub" find.

-Quoted from Gary Simpson, FATC member, Gainesville, Florida.

DELUDED (DILUTED?) DIGRESSIONS

By Steve Cox

Note: The observations, opinions and comments stated in this editorial are only those of the editor, Steve Cox, and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Florida Antique Tackle Collectors Club.

While visiting my wife's hometown of West Suffield, Connecticut, my family was greeted with fantastic cool weather, which was actually 40 degrees lower than the 100+ degree conditions in North Florida. Sitting on the back deck under a covered and screened-in gazebo at my brother-in-law's house, I picked up the June 2009 issue of *Smithsonian Magazine*. It featured a retrospective on the passing of Frank Lloyd Wright and the fifty-year anniversary of his masterpiece, the Solomon Guggenheim Museum in New York City. The article was penned by Arthur Lubow.

With great interest, I absorbed the story about my favorite architect, and it occurred to me how we'd all just recently experienced some commonality with his genius while at the CATC/FATC show in Savannah. Some of you readers may be thinking, here Cox goes again, off on some tangent, writing whimsically about what amounts to...nothing! However, if you will allow me to **attempt** to explain my perspective, please read on...

Question: What does the Holiday Inn in Savannah have in common with Frank Lloyd Wright's stunning architectural designs?

Answer: The roofs leak!

Question: How did each deal with this problem?

Answer: The same way!

When Mr. Wright's well-to-do client (for whom Wright had masterfully designed one of his most famous works, the S.C. Johnson Office Building in Racine, Wisconsin), threw a huge dinner party at his new Frank Lloyd Wright custom home to celebrate the completion of the architect's latest masterpiece, it began to rain. Furious, new owner, Herbert "Hib" Johnson, CEO of the S.C. Johnson Wax Company, called Wright on the telephone, saying something to the effect of: "Wright, the roof is leaking onto my head at the dinner table; what should I do?" To which Wright replied, "Move to another seat."

Well, this is exactly what happened at the Holiday Inn in Savannah. Torrential thunderstorms hit the area and the bottom fell out at the hotel restaurant, while many of the attendees were helping themselves to the "continental breakfast plus." Rainwater cascaded through the ventilation duct in the ceiling, directly onto a dining table and those seated there. Apparently, this had happened before, and the wait staff calmly gathered the table linens, condiments, silverware, and food, replacing them with an over-sized plastic garbage can to collect the rainwater. The scene



Photo courtesy of Ed Bauries

seemed to be lifted straight out of an obscure Charlie Chaplin movie, which could have been filmed on the Caribbean island of Nevis. The garbage can, as the main character, looked like a large cistern resting atop a sugar house.

The staff grabbed the table, replaced the linens and other accessories, and set it up three feet to the right of its previous position, fully expecting the patrons to continue dining as if nothing unusual had happened. For some reason, they had lost their appetite, and the great deal on the price of lodging seemed less than a bargain. Oh well...it's never a good sign when the pool at your hotel is cleaner than the room at your hotel!

By all other measures, the Savannah show proved to be a great success, and the town will be a wonderful venue for a future tackle club gathering. The historic district offers museums, stately mansions, and a variety of other landmarks. Ghost tours, whether on foot or in the strange, convertible surrey topped hearses, make the "after dark" scene even more delightfully spooky! Great food was available in large quantities throughout the city, and the show itself was well attended. I'll definitely be at the next one in Savannah, and I appreciate all the hard work everyone contributed to make it happen. A special thanks is extended to Joe Yates, who took numerous photos at the show, many of which are included in this issue.

The NFLCC National in Louisville, Kentucky, just wrapped up, and it was another rousing spectacle! Room trading is still alive and well at the National, and the Executive Inn had been newly refurbished into a Crowne Plaza property; making it even better. I found one great Barracuda "fat body" carved eye "Topsy Cuda" in frog spot that had the side treble hooks mounted on the opposite side of their traditional rigging (only the second one I've ever seen). It alone is worth more than the cost of my trip!

The annual NFLCC business meeting was a sobering display of the disconnect that often occurs between the Board of Directors of any organization and its membership. A wise man once defined a meeting as "a group of the confused, telling the unwilling, how to do the impossible," and this meeting was no exception. I have been a member of NFLCC for the past twelve years, and enjoy the Club, with its many good efforts in support of the hobby. However, when I believe mistakes are being made, I consider it my duty to call attention to them, in the hope that a positive resolution will be forthcoming.

At the meeting, several controversial topics came up, and "to have life membership or not" was one of them. Several FATC member attendees (who have also been NFLCC members for many years) called for the question on the floor, stating that life membership should be an option, regardless of the cost. Their position was that there would always be some members willing to stroke a \$3,000, \$4,000, or even a \$5,000 check, simply for the convenience and prestige it affords.

The motion gained momentum with a second, and then sank back after some pretzel logic about actuarial tables and how long the average life member might actually be so inconsiderate as to live and enjoy his membership; all at the Club's future expense! The net effect of this debate was to dampen the enthusiasm of all existing life members. These individuals, who had answered the call many years ago by paying money to the Club to relieve its financial straits, were now being made to feel like second class citizens, and little more than a burdensome leech to the Club. This point was further confirmed from the floor, when a long time NFLCC and FATC member insisted that the Club owed the life members an apology for this disparagement. Unfortunately, none was offered.



To further explore the NFLCC Board's premise, please allow me to untangle their assumptions. Some of you know I've owned a life insurance agency for over a quarter of a century and have a modest degree of familiarity with the subject. Admittedly, the Board's analogy to life expectancies, actuarial calculations, and the like, puzzled me. The debate appeared to be headed for a qualifying medical exam or insurance physical requirement to be allowed life membership, with those in the poorest health and advanced age welcomed over their younger and/or less sickly counterparts.

The major life insurance carriers know they must charge enough for their product, or they pull that product "off the shelf". If they cannot improve the effectiveness of their underwriting, their claims losses will be unsustainable. When this happens, they will have to leave the business.

If the Board really wishes to compare membership to merchandising a life insurance product, NFLCC is, or should be, in the business of selling itself to our membership. If it cannot do so, our membership losses may be unsustainable. Give the membership what they want, and price it high enough to justify its place in the product line. Why continue to turn off a significant block of club members, at a time when renewals and new members are so vital to the survival of the organization?

Back to the show floor... additional fodder for defeating the motion was then shoveled up with the revelation that Club funds had taken a significant beating during the ongoing economic downturn. The prospect of too much upfront money (generated by

the life membership sales) being risked by less than conservative deposit vehicles was more than the motion could fend off, and it failed to survive the final vote...curious, at best. At least one prominent West Coast life member confirmed to me that he felt vilified, unappreciated, and perhaps even guilty for having taken unfair advantage of the life membership option, at a time when he thought he was actually helping the Club. He noted with sadness, that other members will never know the peace of mind his life membership provides for him, because as he gets older and his memory gets shorter, he does not have to worry about remembering to keep his membership current.

If this was not enough to stifle morale, Reverend Bob Dennis, the NFLCC chaplain and a veteran NFLCC and FATC member, called attention to another issue needing clarification. As a matter of "old business", Reverend Bob had been trying for over a year and a half to get confirmation that he was still chaplain. He said, "I don't mind being criticized, or even relieved of my duties, but one thing I will not tolerate is being ignored." Whatever the reason for the termination of Reverend Bob's chaplain duties, the Club found it too awkward to let Bob in on the secret. Reverend Bob had even gone to the lengths of returning all the chaplain's supplies, sympathy cards, etc.; without ever receiving an acknowledgement from the Club.

This altercation really "iced down" the mood of the meeting, and as the obligatory "Thanks, Bob" and heartfelt apologies were offered and the next order of business suggested, many of us got up and left. Reverend Bob gave an excellent accounting of himself, and numerous members thanked him for his service to the Club, congratulating him for the way he handled the matter. It struck me that the common courtesy which should have been extended to Reverend Bob is becoming all too **uncommon** these days. Communication is a wonderful thing; perhaps the NFLCC Board should try it sometime. They will get their chance next year in Knoxville, or perhaps the following National in Kansas City (as rumor has it).

Getting back to the Florida Club, because of the FATC Board's decision to reduce publication costs, this issue of the newsletter is running later than previous summer issues. To preserve the content, color, and layout, the magazine will be cut back to three issues per year. As editor, I believe it to be essential for a publication representing FATC to maintain high quality standards. I would rather have three nice issues per year than four mediocre ones. The new schedule for publication will be August/September, December/January, and April/May.

Our summer slate of articles features part one of Dan Basore's awesome chronicle of Len and Betty Hartman. Len made his famous Muskie Lures in Florida, and from the numerous trophies included in the article, his wife, Betty, could out-fish all the experts (including Len)! Frank Carter provides an intriguing piece on the Florida Fair Trade laws and how they sought to control pricing on fishing tackle in the state. A spread of the Louisville National Show photos is also included, and gives those members unable to attend, an idea how large it really was. Finally, some twists and turns on a long distance tackle call result in a historic yarn that provides one part scary, and two parts heroic, giving us a recipe for **COOL** in "The Quarantine Baits." I hope you will enjoy the subject matter, and by the time you read this, I'll have seen you in Altamonte Springs for Chuck Heddon's summer show August 27-29, 2009.

Quit Wishin'... Go Fishin'

Steve  EDITOR

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

New Members

Butch & Patti Carey

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Key West, FL 33040
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harry.carey@keysenergy.com

Roman & Kim Hunt

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Snellville, GA 30039
770-979-2304
lotsofhotdogs@yahoo.com

Tim & Michelle Cassell

1207 New York Ave.
Lynn Haven, FL 32444
850-248-5055(h)
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tmcassell@yahoo.com

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Jerome Shemechko

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570-568-0941
570-713-7600
fishon1@ptd.net

FLORIDA ANTIQUE TACKLE COLLECTORS

FALL SHOW - OCTOBER 30, 31 & NOVEMBER 1, 2009
TO BE HELD AT THE EMBASSY SUITES, PALM BEACH GARDENS

SHOW LOCATION & HOTEL INFORMATION: The FATC Fall Show will be held at:

The Embassy Suites – 4350 PGA Boulevard – Palm Beach Gardens, Florida

For Reservations call Toll Free: 1-800-362-2779 or Call On Site: 561-622-1000

You can also book your Embassy Suites reservations on-line; visit the FATC web site for the link.

The Embassy Suites (our host hotel) offers a very nice selection of rooms, including suites, with 42 inch flat screen TVs and marble wet bars much like the Plaza in Daytona Beach. The rate is \$99.00 per night when you tell them you are with the FATC. Your per night charge includes a full breakfast buffet with omelets, waffles and a large variety of hot breakfast foods. Your per night charge also includes the manager's happy hour, with an all-you-can-drink bar open from 5:30 to 7:00pm. Rooms must be booked by August 28 to guarantee the special room rates; after August 28 the room prices might increase or rooms might not be available. Reservations can be canceled 48 hours prior to your stay.

MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS NOW!

There are two secondary hotels nearby. Call for rates:

Doubletree Hotel directly across the street – Toll Free – 800-222-8733 ~ Or Call On Site - 561 622-2260

Hampton Inn – 1 mile away – Toll Free – 800-426-7866 ~ Or Call On Site - 561-625-8880

TABLES & REGISTRATION: Registration is \$15.00 per member. Six (6) foot tables are \$30.00 each.

REGISTRATION & SHOW HOST INFORMATION:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone # & E-mail: _____

Registration: _____ at \$15.00 each for a total of: \$ _____

I would like _____ tables at \$30.00 each for a total of: \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Please make checks payable to FATC and send to show host:

Ed Bauries

Home: 561-630-6357

178 Poinciana Drive

Cell: 561-358-1132

Jupiter, Florida 33458

E-mail: tara_ed@bellsouth.net

Or Contact Ed Pritchard: Home - 561-748-7508 ~ Cell – 561-818-1081 ~ E-mail – reeltackle@aol.com

DIRECTIONS FROM I-95 GOING SOUTH: South on I-95 to Exit # 79C Military Trail South. Go South about ½ mile and turn left on PGA Blvd. The Embassy Suites will be immediately on your right.

DIRECTIONS FROM THE FLORIDA TURNPIKE: Get off on Exit # 109, Palm Beach Gardens (PGA Boulevard) and go east about 4 miles to the Military Trail stop light. Go through the light and the Embassy Suites will be on your right hand side.

Payment must accompany registration – Refunds for cancellation must be requested 30 days in advance.
You must be an FATC member to exhibit, trade or buy at the auction.

FLORIDA LURE WANT LIST

Eger Pork Rind Bottle, Reel, Rod, & Spool of Line

Eger Special Muskie, Kingfish & Tarpon Lure

Eger Bass Hawg Box

Eger small Silver Box with Eger printed on top

Jim Pfeffer Sunfish, Pigfish & Mullet

Porter Gator Bait

Early Period Robinson lures & Fly Rod Lures

Dazzy Vance Wooden Box & Lure

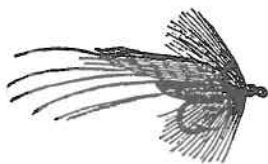
Frenchy Chevalier Wooden Box & Lure

FLY ROD LURE WANT LIST

Francis Fly Co. Catalogs and Fly Rod Lures

E. H. Peckinpaugh Catalogs & Fly Rod Lures

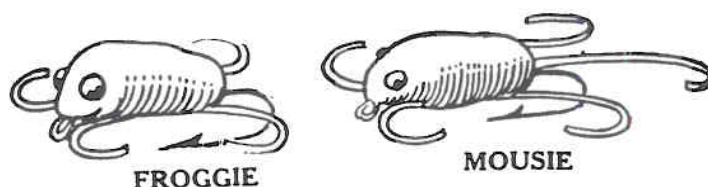
Peckinpaugh Fish Getter Hopper Fly



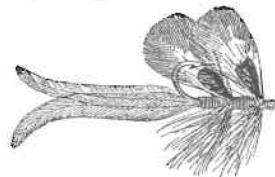
Florida Lure Makers and Their Lures
Price for US delivery Vol. I – V, \$42;
Vol. VI, \$49. Both prices include ph&i

Fly Rod Lure Want List (Con't.)

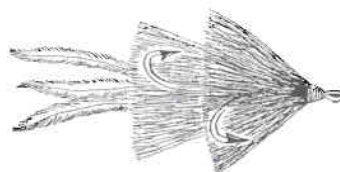
Peckinpaugh Rubber Froggie or Mousie



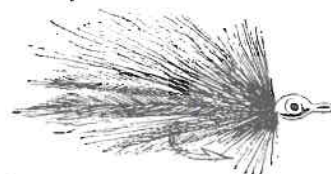
Peckinpaugh Double-Body Bass Fly



Peck's Hickman Fly – note 2 hooks



Peck's Dick Splaine Salt Water Fly NOC
or Dick Splaine Bone Fish Fly NOC



Peckinpaugh Look – Alive Minnow



Peck's Doodle Bug a.k.a. Lucky Bug



Contact Bill Stuart, The Museum of Fishing, PO Box 1378, Bartow, FL 33831; tel: 863-533-7358; email Bstuartmof@aol.com



Betty Hartman displays a 52-pound muskie caught in the St. Lawrence on October 18, 1959.



One of Len Hartman's numerous trophy muskies, whose size exemplifies the competitive spirit that existed between the famous husband and wife fishing duo.

Muskie Lures

MADE IN FLORIDA PART 1

By Dan Basore

It has been my good fortune to have chosen fishing as my life's passion...or did it choose me? No one in my family fished, but I caught the bug very early. Growing up in Indiana, only a few blocks from the Indy 500 race track, at a time when we had no major league sports teams in our entire state, my heroes were a few race car drivers, but mostly people who could catch fish, write about fishing, or make and market neat fishing stuff.

Across from the front entrance to the Indy track was Sutphin's Tackle Shop. Charlie Sutphin, a National Casting Champion, took me under his wing and taught me fishing. I began to collect old fishing tackle in 1957 at age 15, and began to display my lures in a boat store where I worked part time. When the store owner exhibited at a sports show that winter, I was allowed to take my small display of old lures from the boat store and set them up at the sports show.

It was at these sports shows where I got so much of my collection, and met so many of my idols. Buck Perry frequented my exhibit, as did so many others, including Len Hartman. I wrote the "Fishing History" column for *Midwest Outdoors* and articles for *Fishing Facts*, whose Editor and Field Editor were Carl Malz and Spence Petros, respectively. These men fished with the legends like Perry and Hartman, and had many photos, lures, personal accounts of their exploits and other items which I acquired from them.

Later, in his heyday, when Hartman was touted as the greatest "Muskie Man" of all time, he was in high demand at seminars and sports shows. He loved to hang around my Historical Fishing Display™ at these shows, looking at lures, telling stories, and signing autographs with his characteristic heart drawing. He was such a fun guy to be around, and the following is my attempt to tell his compelling story...

Len Hartman came into this world on February 18, 1916. When Len met Betty Fisher, he not only recognized her for having the perfect last name for an angling spouse, he knew she was the one for him because she enjoyed fishing even more than he did. They were married in 1938 and committed to each other and fishing until her disability and eventual death from cancer over 50 years later. The Hartmans were, without a doubt, the most devoted Muskie fishing couple ever!

They were both born and raised in Pennsylvania, and spent most of their time there fishing for trout and bass. However, once they caught a few Muskies, they got the fever! They heard big Muskies lived in Hayward, Wisconsin, so they headed off to the northern midwest.

Betty was game to go whenever and wherever Len thought they could find Muskies. A mobile home, basic cabin, or even a tent was all they required, as long as they could fish. This wasn't just what they did, it was who they were. They tried all the top spots; the Chippewa Flowage of Wisconsin, Minne-

sota's Leech Lake, Vermillion Bay and Eagle Lake in Ontario, Lake Chautauqua in New York, and back home in Pennsylvania at Lake Conneaut.

They lived a simple life, dedicated to fishing, with their summers spent chasing Muskies. As an economic necessity, Len had made his own lures to fish with since the 1930s. Their winters were spent trapping, with the revenue from the furs allowing them to pursue their passion for fishing the rest of the year.

After a stint in the U.S. Army, Len found working to be a drag. "Unemployment was over 20% and a good job would pay only \$2,000 a year", he said. By trapping in the winter, Len could save up to \$900 and fund their fishing for a whole season. After all, bread was only 8 cents a loaf, a new Ford cost \$600, and he and Betty could catch all the fresh fish they could eat!

In 1949, the Hartmans moved to New York, where Len gave up trapping and took a job on the Seaway project. That first year on the job, he worked many seven day stretches. It was common for Len and Betty to fish at night, as soon as he got off from work. Deep blasting was taking place in the St. Lawrence River while the Seaway was being constructed. These explosions stunned or killed huge Muskies, showing the Hartmans that the "big'uns" lived down deep.

Their "Muskie Bug" affliction consumed them, and they knew that most times, fishing the shallows was unproductive. However, they were unable to purchase the larger lures needed to dive and work the depths where they discovered the lair of the trophy Muskies. The Hartmans determined that monster Muskies roamed in water from thirty to thirty-five feet deep, and sought to develop lures and methods for coaxing these giants to strike a lure consistently.

Florida's warm climate brought them south for the winter, where Len made his lures. It may be a surprise to many collectors to learn that Len Hartman was a true Florida lure maker. During each subsequent winter, anticipation drove Len and Betty to work feverishly, perfecting lures for the next season. What developed from their labor were over-sized baits, patterned after Whopper Stopper "Hellbender" lures. Len's very first lure is almost an exact, Muskie sized replica of the "Hellbender" (see the illustration of the only remaining example known to exist).

Excitedly, Len and Betty took the big "Hellbender" replica baits back north. These large baits worked the depths much better than anything available on the market. However, the lures were too big to cast. Therefore, they were trolled to get them to run deep enough. The Hartmans were starting to "hone-in" on a winning pattern for the cautious giants that love to follow a lure for a long time before committing to strike it.



Homer LeBlanc, inventor of the "Swim Whizz", proves that he has an open mind about trying anything in his muskie fishing efforts. Here he displays a Lake St. Clair muskie caught on one of Len Hartman's "muskie bugs".



"Bikini Betty" in her summer guiding outfit, hoists a trophy muskie for the camera!



An assortment of Len's favorite musky plugs brought from his home in Florida where he and Betty have retired. (Next month we'll show you how you can make super deep-divers like his.)



A trio of trophy catches, caught by the bikini lady during the Hartmans' best years of fishing on the river.



Len Hartman and Spence Petros discuss the fine points of musky fishing.
62 / FEBRUARY, 1986

These photos originally ran in the February 1986 issue of *Fishing Facts Magazine*. The publication has allowed the author to reprint them, and others, for this article. The captions speak for themselves.



The Hartmans learned that it was best to use a lighter line to get the baits to run deep, although something needed to be done to help walk the lures over sunken logs and other cover. Could a square lip be the answer? Len could hardly wait to get back to his Florida workshop to try to perfect these big, deep diving lures...

The evolution of Len's Muskie lures had begun! He produced all of his handmade lures in Florida. Over the years, Len and Betty moved from their address at 1612 N.E. 25th Avenue, Ocala, Florida, to Box 1143, Dunnellon, Florida. As their hobby grew into a business, this mobile couple set up shop in other locations around the state. Wherever they went, they always had a workshop nearby, since it was essential to their lure-making season.

The second series of his early baits were crude, at best, and not smoothly finished. He signed each of them, hoping that lost baits would be returned if found by another fisherman. He also numbered the baits to assist in tracking which ones worked best, and which finishes were most productive. The following season, Betty would help to test, perfect, and tune them. Wow, they were on to something! They matched a long, fairly limber spinning rod with 12 pound test monofilament line, as they experimented to find the right combination of tackle for their deep-running lures.

Spence Petros often fished with Buck Perry, and Perry used stiff rods and stout line. Perry could tell the depth of the water by the feel of his rod and the angle of his line. But Petros was amazed that the Hartmans could as well, though they used light line and limber rods. Spence would often test them and their different methods, asking how deep it was. Then he dropped a weight on a marked line, the accepted method for checking depth before electronic depth finders were available. Amazingly, both the Hartmans and Buck Perry were "right on" with the depth.

Back in Florida the following winter, Len produced a larger quantity of these baits. The Hartmans made more than enough for their personal use, selling the extras upon their return to the St. Lawrence River in New York, the next season. Len named this lure the "Muskie Bug", illustrated in the upper right of this page.

Occasionally, good catches could be made in shallow water, which led him to produce a few "Surface" and "Jerk" baits. He also made "Len's Spoon", in plain silver or gold, painted black or striped. As a final step, he sealed the spoons with a coat of clear nail polish to protect the finish.

In 1958, word of the Hartmans' prowess had grown to the point that they began a guiding business. Betty's boat was a 15 foot aluminum "V" bottom with a 15 hp kicker. She named it "Bikini" after the way she liked to dress while fishing in the summer. Demand for their lures soared to such a level that they began to look for someone to manufacture their baits.

The next issue of FATC News will expand on the commercial production of Len Hartman's lures.



Early hand made "Muskie Bugs" crafted by Len Hartman in his Dunnellon, Florida shop.



Three very nice, very rare examples of Len Hartmans' surface baits.



Len Hartmans' Muskie sized tribute to the "Hellbender" (above), Whopper Stopper's "Hellbender" (below). See photo on the front cover also.

Greenwood Gay's J&J "Flap-tail Mullet" in a rare, fresh water color for muskies.

PART I

“THE QUARANTINE BAIT'S”

A TRIBUTE TO MAJOR GREENWOOD GEORGE GAY AND THE 93RD BOMBARDMENT GROUP

BY STEVE COX

I received a call from good friend Ed Bauries, the week before Memorial Day, saying he had found an interesting tackle lead on *Craig's List*. The seller's location was Pensacola, Florida, so Ed knew it was over six hundred miles from his home in Jupiter. The advertiser's photos were the equivalent of 40+ lures on a 4x6 index card, and while we could make out some obvious shapes such as Dinger, Dingbat, Crazy Crawler, Tarpon Pokie, etc., most of the photos were not of sufficient quality to grade condition. There were, however, a few lures that looked interestingly like Florida baits, so Ed asked me if I wanted to make the two-hour drive to Pensacola and split the find between us, fifty/fifty.

I lived in Pensacola from 1974 through 1976, graduating from the University of West Florida in 1975. Many people do not realize that Pensacola was settled by 16th century Spanish conquistador, Don Tristán de Luna y Arellano (1519 – 1571), a full six years before St. Augustine was established on the east coast of Florida. A massive hurricane struck Pensacola Bay (later Escambia Bay) less than five weeks after de Luna arrived, and, combined with disease and pestilence, almost wiped out the fledgling village. Despite their best efforts to continue, the small Spanish outpost collapsed in 1561; Pensacola wasn't permanently resettled until 1696. I couldn't think of anything I'd rather do than drive to the first European settlement in what would become the continental United States on a Memorial weekend morning, and the hunt was on!

Ed e-mailed the owner of the lures, Mr. Russell Scarritt, and Russell then contacted me. We set up our appointment for Sunday morning, May 25th. Mr. Scarritt indicated he was asking \$400 for the lures in the photos, and that he had several other tackle boxes full of lures, plus a box of reels. He inherited all of these items from his father's second cousin, Major Greenwood George Gay, a WWII and Korean War veteran fighter pilot with thousands of hours of flying time.

Russell's home, located in the East Hill section of Pensacola, is only seven blocks from the house I rented in the 1970s from my college classmate, Dickey Davis, now a retired U.S. Navy Captain. Pensacola has long been known as one of the cradles of U.S. Naval aviation, so I looked forward to a bit of history, a chance to reminisce, and with a little luck, some provenance to boot...

I stopped by the bank on Friday afternoon, cashing Ed's check for \$300 and picking up another \$300, just in case... Later that evening, the phone rang, and I got one of the surprises of my entire seventeen years collecting tackle. It was Russell Scarritt, and he said "I don't think you should come to Pensacola this weekend..." I asked, "Is there a problem?", to which he replied, "There could be; my son just tested positive for influenza type A, and we're all quarantined at home taking Tamiflu." Well, this was shocking news, but I agreed with Russell, and thanked him for his consideration. It was very nice of him to call ahead, rather than tell me only after I had arrived.

Just when you think you've seen it all, life has a way of proving you wrong, and then emphasizing it for additional effect. The "swine flu" outbreak was in full swing, and never in my wildest dreams did I think something as mundane as an antique tackle call could result in the risk of exposure to a pandemic! This world has certainly turned upside down, where North is now South, left is right, and everyone's compass is spinning like Flight 19's five TBM Avengers lost in the Bermuda Triangle in December, 1945.

Disappointed, I called Ed and told him the bad news, but also the good news. We had dodged a bullet with the "quarantine baits", and Russell would call to reschedule when it was safe. His call came a week later, and Russell said his physician had given his family the "all clear". I quickly made a new appointment to meet him Saturday morning, May 31st.

Russell's directions were perfect, and my wife, Claudia, and I drove to his house without any unnecessary detours. He told me more about Major Gay, whom he used to fish with as a young man. "Greenwood", as Gay preferred to be known, was the co-pilot on a B-24 Liberator shot down behind enemy lines. The shell actually caught on his parachute cord, threading the cord through him and then exploding on the metal panel behind him. The pilot and engineer were killed as the B-24 went down. Apparently, other crew members helped the young flyboy parachute from the doomed aircraft, giving him another chute as they bailed out, and descended into the darkness of the German countryside. He was captured, and Russell recalls Greenwood telling him about packing snow into his wounds to slow the bleeding, and hiding behind some hay bales before being discovered.