



THE FISHIN' INSIDER

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So the octogenarian kicked some serious butt last weekend. Can't really be shocked since he, Tuna Charlie and the author of the club report are semi-teammates aboard Bessie Belle. All of eighty-somethinorother of Frances Knapp fought and released four blue marlin last Saturday and Sunday. I doubt that's a record for the club but it ain't bad for what's generally a short crew. Francis, I tried to get shot of ya and your guys but got sidetracked.

The offshore game is a bit different. It's hard and demanding of those that partake. Most of these folks have been shackin' up for years together to get the drill down so nobody gets hauled off the boat by the fish. The folks on Bessie Belle are a thorn in the side of most member boats, cuz they catch fish, regularly. Tuna Charlie and the gang have been written up regularly in this column over the years because they catch and release fish, and it's rare that anybody gets hurt in the process. They're gonna keep it that way cuz they pay attention to detail. Some of ya'll need to emulate that. The other big hitters last weekend were Producer, three blues released, King's Bounty, Reel Salty and High Cotton with two blues released and a bunch of also rans that I know of. The next South Texas Big Game Fishing Club tournament is September 18th and one hopes the same sportin' blood that the Labor Tournament had will carry over. Congrats Francis, hell of a tournament. We'll see ya on the water next week.

The gent that owns this rag is a genuinely good guy and I'm gonna take some advantage of that. Three years ago this Wednesday those of us that reside on the

Sandspit woke to something more surreal than the horrors of 911. We awoke that morning to a hole in the Queen Isabella Causeway and the fact that we were cut off from the mainland. Mind you this time of year is the height of storm season and there were a large collection of civilians gathered here. Us Isla rats didn't have much of a problem with the inconvenience but the tourists freaked out.

When Mona Murphy opened up shop at the Sea Ranch that morning, the place was jammed with wide-eyed civilians desperate to get to the mainland, thus began the boatlift from hell, free of charge. By two p.m. all the gas stations were sold out of gas cuz the tourists filled up their rentals before parking the cars at the south end of the Island. For the next week or so if you needed gas you had to do the Arkansas credit card thing. What a mess. Eight folks died and three somehow survived the ride down to the water. That's why there's an octagonal monument with three benches at the foot of the bridge. The accident investigation is complete but for some reason the U S Coast Guard won't release its findings to the public. You gotta wonder why. You can thank or cuss Williams Company, depending on your outlook, for sub-contracting Halliburton to rebuild the bridge. What should've taken four to six months to complete was finished in seventy days. The Island was peaceful and fun. Then came Garth Brooks and a blue norther, but that's another story.

This Saturday we got the Jim's Pier 50th Anniversary Tournament. The fun starts Friday with a registration pachanga. Fishin' is Saturday, see ya there.

We welcome your fishin' photos. Drop them by 2600 Padre Boulevard on the Island, or mail them to I.B. Hooked, c/o Coastal Current Weekly, P.O.Box 2429, South Padre Island, Texas 78597. Be sure to include the name of the angler, weight and type of fish, where caught, and name of boat if applicable. Photos with SASE will be returned.