



THE FISHIN' INSIDER

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When I moved down here at the end of the eighties, I started a small publication called South Texas Sport Fishing. On a run to drop off the rag at the local waterin' holes I met Digger Meltabarger and his wife PJ. Boy did we have a few things in common. PJ was and is a successful author of children's books and Digger had been a very successful Captain of the Broker-er owned by Troy Giles. I had a passion to learn how to write and an even worse addiction, how to find and catch blue marlin. PJ gave me a great piece of advice. She told me that if I hadn't learned to punctuate by now I was hopeless and I was in dire need of an editor. Digger told me that if I didn't have a couple of mil in the bank to forget about buyin' an offshore boat, just hit the docks with some ice cold beer and shmoose. Sooner or later somebody would take me along as super cargo. She was right and he was right on. PJ refused to even think about editing but Digger, well he was a priceless fountain of knowledge and a damn good drinkin' buddy. One thing he told me was to always carry a tube of Neosporin

with me when I went offshore. When I asked him why he told me about a trip off Cozumel.

He was fishin' with some of Troy's buddies and they got into the sailfish bite. It got so hectic that he had to come off the bridge to help out in the pit. He wired a sail and shot straight at him and impaled his forearm with its bill. He got the bill out of his arm, unhooked the fish and released it then jammed a tube in the hole and went on down the road. After a couple of weeks, the wound healed, no infection or any other complications. People have been known to lose limbs in situations like this, but not Digger. He was the consummate mariner.

Digger lost a long battle with leukemia up in Llano last week, where he and PJ retired in '93. They'll spread his ashes this Friday aboard Escape out of the Sea Ranch Marina. The boat sails at 9 in the AM sharp. All who knew this wonderful guy are invited, I won't make it cuz of a TP&W shindig up in Corpus but my thoughts will be with ya'll.



DIGGER RIP 2005