



## Fort Myers Beach Tarpon Hunters Club

# TARPON TALES

Club Member Newsletter

[www.fmbthc.com](http://www.fmbthc.com)

April 2017

**PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

## The Treasurer puts one in the Bank!

**The 2017 season is off and running** with the completion of our clinic and our first recorded release. **Congratulations to Jerry Stephenson** on his March release. Jerry also receives the carryover cash prize of \$540.00 from last years money hunts. Jerry has journaled his catch and gives us a glimpse of his day on the water. See the next page.

I'm encouraged about the prospects of this season. The water is looking great, water temperatures are climbing into the mid 70s and early reports during warming trends were very positive. The fish are here, maybe not in the numbers yet we historically experience in late April or May, but very fishable.

Our next regularly scheduled meeting will be held at Bonita Bills this Wednesday at 7:00. We have a very busy schedule for April. The **Orientation Hunt** will be held Saturday April 8th. Several new members have expressed interest in this event and its our best opportunity to get them out fishing and learning. Please consider volunteering your boat as we don't want to refuse any new members the opportunity to fish this important event. We also have our **Junior Hunt** scheduled for Sunday April 9th. For our ladies, **The Gena Clarke Memorial Hunt** will be held Saturday April 23rd.

**The McClaran-Thomas Intercub Shoot Out** is scheduled for May 13th. Please let us know at the meeting if you are able to participate. We had 8 anglers release fish last year and we have 10 slots to fill. We will need to get a handle on how deep we need to go to the bench to get our team.

**Membership Applications**– If you have not renewed your membership, this will be the last newsletter you will receive until doing so. Please send in your renewed application as soon as possible or bring it to our meeting. Also, encourage others you know who have a love for tarpon fishing to join us.

### 2017 OFFICERS

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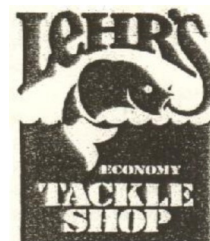
### 2017 BOARD of DIRECTORS

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I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting.  
Kevin



**Anderson's**  
ROD & REEL REPAIR



## A Day in the Life of a Tarpon Fisherman

March Turns Out to be Prime Time for Poons

Well the first trip out started just like any other day going tarpon fishing. I got up around 4am headed down to Andersons to pick up a little starter kit of bait. It's always a good time sharing some small talk with John, he is really building up a nice business. I ran into my neighbor that morning Jess Mesmer at John's shop. He was heading offshore for the day. Boy I really miss those days offshore; I just don't get to go offshore as much as I would like to.

After returning to the house and grabbing a jacket I was ready for the run out to the beach. Early mornings have always been my favorite time of the day for hunting the king. I started off FMB. Set up with the sun against my back as always, it helps me with spotting the fish. After working my way out to around 22 feet and watching lot of birds working the bait pods along the way out, I started to think I needed to go where the fish have been for the last month. The run over was a bit brisk but the water was a sheet of glass. I knew the day was going to be a nice day for hunting the silver kings. I was really hoping that I would get lucky and find some.

After starting out on the west side I worked from the Sun Dial into the beach and out stopping occasionally in the big bait pods to look for fish. After a few hours of working my way west I saw some fish. There were also a few boats working a pretty large area. I decided to sit there and watch what the fish were doing. I did not want to move in on someone else's fish. After a bit, a small pod broke away and started heading to the beach. Two other guides also saw the same thing. I let them move in and take a few shots at them; the fish would go down and pop up still heading to the beach. I set up way inside of the guides only to see the fish go down and never come back up. At that point I worked farther west and back out to 23 feet. I thought I saw some fish around this one boat by itself. I stopped around 200 yards short of them and began a drift. Out of the corner of my eye I saw what looked like shad around 300 yards west with no other boat around. I had to make the move and check this out. After moving down I shut down and set a bait off the stern. I went up to the bow and started to head west looking for what I had seen from a distance. There they were, a large pod of fish. The water was black, there were so many of them rolling around just under the surface, their tails creating boil after boil, just beneath the glassy surface. I was hooked up on the first bait that I threw in. Lost that fish right away. I left my rod off the stern and re baited. These fish had no knowledge of my presence. Again I made a cast into this massive pod of tarpon, instantly I was hooked up. Right away she headed to the boat, around and around the boat she swam before she decided to head to Mexico. She finally broke the water after a long run. She was so big she could only get about half way out of the water, then tried to roll over my line time and time again. After 30 to 45 minutes of her going crazy and pulling me all over the place I was able to get her near the boat. She decided to stick her nose down and started kicking her tail like crazy running away from the boat trying to break my line. I was on my toes, rod over my head and fingers crossed as she made that run. Then I looked up and there was a crab trap and she knew it was there. Off she went right for the trap. I put my rod as deep as I could and laid the heat on her. I wasn't sure how that was going to work out, all I had was 20lb test line and I was deep into a mean and long fight. She rolled backward and upside down, then she was wondering what happened. I was not going to be satisfied with three or four leaders in the eye releases. I needed to look her in the eye. That idea did not work out like I was hoping. She took her tail and covered my new Garmin and motor with water then came around and shook her head and covered me and the rest of the boat with water. Finally I was able to get her to lay on her side beside the boat. After looking into her eyes I could see she felt just like me, defeated.

Looking up I saw a man taking pictures of us. I asked him if he would send me one. He ended up being a member of the Cape club. I believe his name was Tom. As we talked we ended up sharing a few stories. He was a cool guy that has a passion for fly fishing for the silverking. I gave him what bait I had left and called it a day. As I opened a cold beer and made the run back to the beach, I could not help but think about Keg and all the other former anglers that I've had opportunities to share days like this with.

Well that's my story. Best of luck to you all this season, please be safe and courteous on the water this year!

*Jerry Stephenson*

**Be sure to visit our Sponsors and let them know we appreciate all they do for us!**

A Special Thanks to **Bill Semmer** for his continued hospitality for letting us meet at Bonita Bill's.

**Check out our NEW WEBSITE: [www.FMBTHC.com](http://www.FMBTHC.com)**



## The 2017 Tarpon Clinic



**We had a Full House!**



**Lots of Great Speakers!**



**And Lots of Great Prizes!**

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