



## Fort Myers Beach Tarpon Hunters Club

# TARPON TALES

Club Member Newsletter

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

April 2018

Let the 2018 Season Begin!

### PRESIDENT'S CORNER

I'm often asked when does tarpon season start. It's a tough question and one that is answered differently each year. With twenty years of tarpon fishing experience, I just shrug my shoulders and say April through October. My tarpon season starts when I begin to feel the pressure to get out on the water. With that said let's define pressure. Yes, the endless texts and calls sent while at work telling me I need to "get out here." That's the one that has the most direct influence and drives me crazy. It starts every year when someone says they hooked a tarpon while fishing for trout by the powerlines. Then the dreaded, I saw a free jumper at the causeway. It is at this point where a trip to the local tackle store is in order to ready my gear for the season.

For those who know me, you know I don't get all too excited about that early season. I'm an August starter. However, I do like the early season and getting rid of early onset tarpon fever. Here are a few signs I look for that correlate with early tarpon activity.

A warming trend with morning temperatures in the low seventies.  
The appearance of the white butterflies. (Scientific name unknown)  
The Poinciana's are in bloom. That's the tree with orange flowers for you Yankees.

There have been fish around early this year and our friends at the Cape club have recorded releases during the first warming trend last month. Looks like we should see water temperatures rising soon. Surface temperatures are currently in the low seventies.

I wanted to thank all those who helped put together our first annual fish fry and our clinic last month. Also, to all those who fished and provided for the fish fry. Yes, we can catch more than just tarpon.

We start April with our monthly meeting at Bonita Bills on Wednesday the 4<sup>th</sup>. Followed by our orientation hunt on Saturday April 7<sup>th</sup> for new members and the Junior Hunt on Sunday April 8<sup>th</sup>. And let's not forget that the Gena Clarke Memorial Ladies Hunt is scheduled for Saturday the 22<sup>nd</sup> with a weigh in to follow at Bonita Bills at 4:00 p.m.

I hope you all start feeling the pressure and get out there soon. The first release of the year is still up for grabs. Look forward to seeing you at our Wednesday meeting. *Kevin*

### 2018 OFFICERS

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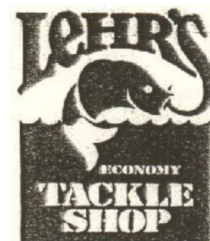
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**Anderson's**  
ROD & REEL REPAIR



# 1st Annual Fish Fry



Thanks to our members who caught the Fish!



Thanks to everyone who made our 1st Annual Fish fry a success!  
A special thanks to Bonita Bills for supplying the clubhouse and Frying up the fish!

# Another Clinic is in the Books



Thanks to everyone who made our clinic a success!  
A special thanks to our speaker Capt. Rob Modys and Bonita Bills for supplying the clubhouse!

## 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 (originally published April 2017)