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We are in the eighth year of publishing our monthly newsletter with updates on great fly fishing venues, trip reports and insights for our traveling fly fishers. We've been to most locations and pride ourselves in our ability to research new destinations. Whatever unbiased information on timing and locations we can provide comes at the same cost to you as booking direct – i.e., NO EXTRA COST

BIONIC FLY FISHERS OF THE PRESENT (AND FUTURE)

About the age of sixty-five, I began wondering, as I aged, how I would be able to pursue my fly fishing passion. For instance, I knew my troublesome knees would not allow me to walk the streams and rivers of New Zealand forever. At some point, I would be resigned to fishing from a poled skiff (saltwater flats) or paddled canoe (guide powered such as stalking giant brookies on the Minipi River).

As I have begun to learn more about some of our client/friends, I discovered that many of them had already begun the transition to becoming "bionic" fly fishers with artificial replacement knees, hips, etc (the term "bionic" is loosely used here). I was encouraged and enthused by their success at replacing painful body parts and continuing to pursue the same fly fishing interests that were part of my life.

Paul Souza got both knees replaced at the same time, and, together with his friend, John Wilhelm (who had one knee replacement the following year), was back fishing on the Goodnews River for trophy silver salmon and rainbows four months later. Several photos of Paul and John were in the October newsletter from this years Goodnews trip and they continue to maintain a healthy annual fly fishing travel agenda.

Below, l to r: John Wilhelm with rainbow; Paul Souza with Arctic Char in spawning dress; a masked Gary Martin with Golden Dorado; smiling Gary with his guide and a New Zealand brown.



Last year, while fishing for Golden Dorado in Argentina with Gary Martin, he showed me his two new knees – like Paul, both replaced at the same time. An amazing part of Gary's "recovery" included, less than five weeks after surgery, sight casting to large tarpon and landing/releasing a tarpon of over 100 pounds. Gary still maintains his love of New Zealand and is able to walk and wade the beautiful waters there annually as well as doing a lot of hunting and other fishing.

Jerry Saltzgaber still has all his original major joints, but, in addition to surgery on his knee, he has had so many back issues that he has to plan his fly fishing around scheduled surgeries. He has had five different spine surgeries with fusions in the neck and back. Not to be deterred, in recent years he has found his way to Kamchatka, Alaska, Mongolia, Chile, and Argentina, and will be returning to the Ponoj River in Russia next May.

Below: Jerry Saltzgaber with a Kamchatka rainbow; Barbara Renfrew with a New Zealand brown followed by a NZ rainbow; Charlie Renfrew with a New Zealand brown.



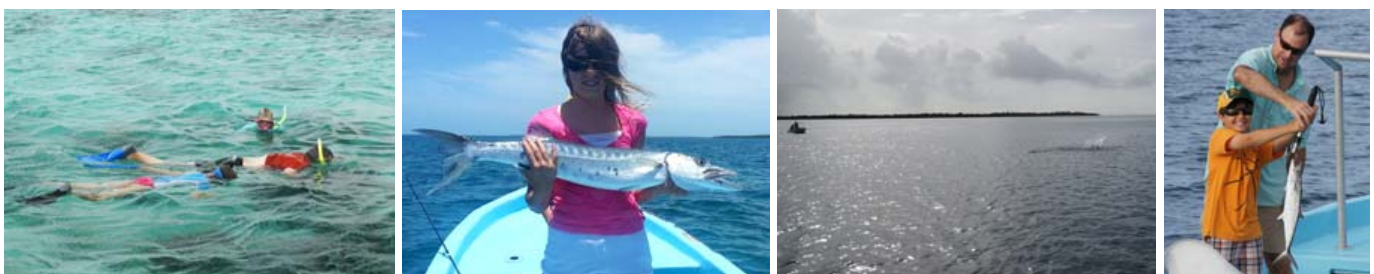
Maybe the most inspiring story of maintaining their pace of fly fishing travel, regardless of age and failing body parts, that I am aware of belongs to Barbara (late 70's) and Charlie Renfrew (early 80's). In spite of an array of replacement parts, they still maintain a very aggressive annual collection of fly fishing destinations which usually include New Zealand, Argentina, Alaska, salt water flats, plus some miscellaneous western USA spots. Charlie has had both hips replaced (one of them twice), a year apart. Barbara, also a year apart, has had both shoulders replaced and is back to her regular schedule of fly fishing in addition to tennis and other activities. When wading the rivers in New Zealand, Charlie has to be more careful about his balance than previously, but he's still do'in it (the "right" guides, who they have fished with for many years, play a large role in continuing their NZ passion)! Barbara says it best regarding maintaining our pace while the years pile up – "Just keep on truck'in".

Inspired by these stories and with a firm resolve to continue my aggressive pursuit of fly fishing around the globe, I took the plunge in August and had both knees replaced. Today, I'm working on an earnest rehab program. What keeps me focused is our upcoming February and March trip to New Zealand and then on to Australia for some salt water flats fishing in a recently developed area. My recovery and rehab progress has been satisfying and, even though I'm ahead of the recovery curve, at five weeks after surgery I could not imagine matching Gary's feat of landing a 100# tarpon. However, I will be ready to walk and wade the rivers and streams of New Zealand in February and at no time during the recovery process have I regretted getting this done. In fact, I wish I had not waited so long.....being a "bionic" fly fisher is a GOOD THING!

With the advances in science and medicine, there are probably some of our younger readers who will be fishing into their 100's and, by the time they reach triple digits, may not have many of their original major joints. I'm sure I have missed some interesting "bionic conversion" stories. If you have such a personal experience you'd like to add, please give me a nudge and we'll save it for the next time we return to this issue.

BELIZE FAMILY TRIP REPORT

Two of our grandchildren celebrate their birthdays during the same week in July. This year, Abby (13) and Nico (9) both celebrated birthdays in Belize while on a trip with their fathers (Jody and Scott), their Grandmother Marte, and Grandpa Don. Headquarters for our trip was the 58' Hatteras mothership, the Rising Tide, enabling us to move to areas with the best snorkeling and fishing possibilities. "Fishing possibilities" for this trip were defined with a primary objective of finding numbers of fish to acquaint Abby and Nico with the joys of salt water fishing.....size was not the issue, it was action we needed. The snorkeling expeditions were led by Grandmother Marte, who's many years of experience on Belize motherships provided the knowledge of where to go for the most spectacular experience.....and avoid the tourist crowds.



Photos above, l to r: Abby, Jody and Grandmother snorkel over coral heads – Belize has the second largest barrier reef in the world; Abby with a barracuda taken off the reef; Nico got the trip started fast hooking a 40# tarpon the first morning and released it on it's fourth (and last) jump; Shortly after, he would land his first salt water fish, a Spanish Mackerel.

Photos below, l to r: small snappers and jacks would be taken and released in large enough numbers to keep fishing interesting; some of the fastest fishing took place off the front of the Rising Tide where Scott assists Nico in releasing a fish; some time was allocated for “adult fishing” and many baby tarpon were jumped with five (to 18 pounds) released.



At right, everyone departs the Rising Tide. Three guide operated skiffs were towed behind the Rising Tide so that the group could split up and go different directions, depending on interests and pursuits. One guide who was an expert at bait fishing and snorkeling was along primarily for the kids. His job was to keep things interesting for the children and he did an excellent job.

The trip turned out to be a memorable time for all. Several large tarpon were jumped, but never made it before the camera. Nico and Abby were captured by the joys and adventure of living on the water in the sheltered inshore waters of Belize. And Grandmother Marte got lots of time snorkeling with her grandchildren.



The most passionate fishermen on the trip turned out to be Abby and Nico. When they were on board the boat, they spent hours each day and evening fishing off the forward deck. If you'd like to see a more complete photo essay with additional photos, click on this link: http://media.wix.com/ugd/02e769_753ccb5789d14935b978a474f4841381.pdf

2014 DATES ON BELIZE MOTHERSHIPS

Here are the open dates as of today for the motherships Rising Tide and Meca in Belize through the end of July:
Rising Tide: 1/16 – 23; 2/21 – 28; 3/31 – 4/7; 5/1 – 8; 6/3 – 10; 6/23 – 30; 7/13 – 20.

Meca: has two open weeks in each month.

Website: has pricing and descriptions of boats www.flyfishbelize.com

JOHN PART CHECKS IN ON HIS NEW ZEALAND TRIP

John Part has gained some notoriety in our newsletter since we published his very well written narrative on why he departs his home in England for about two weeks every October and April and visits New Zealand. The fact



that he has released over 40 trout that weighed over ten pounds on these visits gives his opinions a high degree of credibility. On his October trip, John (at left) had these comments: “I had booked 11 days with my favorite guide from mid to late October. There was a lot of rain, the main rivers in the area were largely unfishable, and I lost 3 days due to flood. In the remaining 8 days we landed 100 trout. A handful were under 3 lbs, most were 5 to 7 lbs (with a 7 pounder nearly every day), and the largest was 8 lbs - no pigs this time.....but still a great trip. The success of this trip was due to great guiding; not just on the river, but in making the calls about where to fish each day, when the options for any real prospect of success were so few. Due to rain and gales in our favorite ‘big fish’ areas, our chances for truly large fish were ruled out.

The few other guides who were out were struggling. But fishing in October gives a skilled guide freedom to choose a great beat each day with the least chance of running into either another fisherman or un-rested water. Their lodgings and ambiance were as friendly, relaxing and spoiling as ever.”

If you'd like to see John's original narrative regarding his description of the uniqueness of New Zealand, just hit reply and ask and we'll forward.

DATES OPEN AT FAVORITE CHILE LODGE

Why is this spot in the Chilean Andes so popular? Start with the spectacular backdrop of the Andes, add in a top notch lodge with excellent service and attention to detail, multiply by an outstanding array of fishing options and variety in the area of Patagonia that is the least pressured, and top it off with outstanding fishing with great guides. There is room for two for the week of Feb 24 – Mar 4. Can tie in with jumping across the crest of the Andes to Argentine Patagonia if you wish. If you'd like more info on this opening, just hit reply.

NOVEMBER MEMORY PHOTO

This permit, held by Billy Lane, is special.....all permit are special, especially the first one taken by an angler on a fly. However, this one is not Billy's first – it's “specialness” comes from the time it was taken and the special meaning it had. Billy is a member of a group of anglers that go to Belize each year on the mothership Rising Tide. For years, they have held a competition on their annual trip which includes a revolving trophy to the winner and some cash. Each species of fish is awarded a point value with considerable added points for tarpon and big bonus points for a permit. Billy took this permit during the last hour of their last day of their trip and it made him the winner of their annual competition. For this group, the honor of “annual winner” is a special acknowledgement.



PHOTO CREDITS: Bionic story – l to r, top to bottom: John Wilhelm, Paul Souza, Gary Martin, Barbara and Charlie Renfrew; Belize – our family; NZ brown – John Part.

Either phone or drop us an e-mail if you have questions or would like more information about any of our destinations.

An enthusiastic traveling fly fisherman,
Don Muelrath

Fly Fishing Adventures

www.flyfishingadventures.org

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