

The big one that got away



LOON TUNES and OUTDOOR NOTES by Len Landry

The big fish is waiting for you. It lives in a small bay dominated by a huge, fallen pine, that is now completely covered by the quiet water, save for a small protruding trunk remnant marking its presence.

The big fish bides its time in the shadow of that sunken structure.

This is home, and all is right... except for one thing: the fish is very hungry, and lately, food has been scarce in its cold environment.

It is late autumn... in Ontario, in Kasabong Lake, in 1980, and it is a beautiful and invigorating time for you to be fishing, indeed to be alive.

One moment, it is bright, brilliant with the colors, those pastels that decorate our autumn leaves still clinging to the trees along the row, near-northern shoreline in Nepton, the painted maples have a backdrop in a canvas of green, of spruce, pine and cedar. The magnificent white cliffs of nepheline syenite overlook the entire scene.

The next minute, it is dull, and overcast, with moisture in the air, now dribbling down your face, and isn't it strange... The cold wind always seems to escalate at this time, at that very moment when a rivulet of frigid rain trickles down the back of your neck, somehow escaping underneath that touque of traditional Montreal Canadian colors.

The weather doesn't discourage you; its misery brings no despair, because you are determined. Today, you are going to try to catch a fish... but not just any fish. Today, you are destined to tangle with a true warrior... but not just yet.

No, no, my friend! It's rarely that easy!

This is muskie fishing

It's never that easy...

The rain now intensifies and it is sprinkled with sleet and snow. The mist is heavier. The discomfort increases, but still your spirits are high. You know that a muskie seems to savor these times, as if it can sense your weakness and choose your moment of weakness.

It has been said that you and this particular brand of fish deserve each other.

This is true. After all, you're both quite crazy and alone.

You're just about ready to give up the cause. The sleet is suddenly worsening now; your hands are cold and wet, and can barely grasp the old, tapered-steel rod, and to make matters worse, the small outboard motor is misbehaving a little, as the throttle fails to maintain a good steady trolling speed.

You pass a promising shoal at the outer edge of an inlet, knowing that your trailing, deep-diving, Magnum Rapala will be upon this spot in a few moments. You notice the old stump tip of that fallen giant pine, further back in the bay...

Then... strike!

Strike? No... simply bottom again. The large lure has been stuck on jagged rock, and you circle the boat in order to retrieve it. You look back at the cottage across the grey, windswept water. It looks warm and comfortable, nestled back in a clearing in the woods, with its happy, well-lit interior, and that sheltered

plume of smoke slowly emanating from the roof-top stove pipe. You think that you can hear the echo of laughter... your friends... good company, good food, and drink... cards...

"Euchre!" one yells, you think... or was that just the trumpeting wind again?

"This is madness!" you think, as you prepare to return to the cottage... but a small break in the clouds allows a brief display of warming sunshine, and you decide to try a few last casts... near that stump that marks a giant, fallen pine... and a structure that harbors a large, hungry warrior.

Yes, this is madness; but this is muskie fishing...

You direct the boat to a point near that stump, and for the first time, you appreciate the size of the fallen tree. You cast a perch-Rapala and retrieve it in a path along the length of the sunken trunk.

Then... "thud... stop." No "smash," no "crash." Just "thud... stop."

The golden warrior has grabbed your lure. Now, this muskie will do what it pleases.

You are confused at first, as the line slackens. Then you realize that indeed, you have engaged a large fish, and indeed, it is swimming toward the boat... to check you out.

It moves slowly in the frigid water.

The fish is simply playing with you. You realize this as it passes underneath your craft. The muskie clenches the lure sideways, as is its habit, like a dog with a bone. You see those malevolent eyes; the eerie, perpetual grin; and you think you see that the treble hooks are free of its jaws! The fish has just barely grabbed the dorsal part of the lure.

It's probably not even hooked! But it won't let go...

It's playing with you!

The fish is strong, but moves so sluggishly. Everything seems to be in slow motion! And you have no idea how you're going to land this prize.

You're going to have to fool it.

The muskie makes a couple of runs into the depths near the submerged pine trunk. You apply gentle pressure to keep it away from the entangling branches.

You look helplessly at the cottage, wishing someone was here to help, and believe.

Then you remember... the "dynamic draw."

It's a trick you once read about, and it's worked a couple of times for you in the past. You bury your rod tip deep into the water, always maintaining gentle pressure on the slowly moving fish, and you keep your drag very light. Then, with the fishing pole almost submerged, you direct it, and ultimately the muskie's head, back and forth, side to side, and attempt to gain some line on the fish. This supposedly makes the fish confused and dizzy, and prone to resting alongside the boat for a moment.

The trick works! After several minutes, your fish is lying dormant and dazed within reach of your large net. You have only one chance, so you attempt to corral your muskie, but... the net is too small; the fish flips backward... and escapes slowly.

It leaves your lure dangling in the netting.

"Enough play... time for food..." you imagine it saying...

It's been eight years since you saw your friend that day a day when you were beaten "fair and square" by a golden warrior.

Markou, Whorley fire house league hattricks

Giannis Markou and Jim Whorley each fired hattricks to lead Team II to a big 11-3 victory over Team IV in Georgetown peewee house league hockey action last Saturday.

In the other peewee house league contest last weekend Team III dumped Team I by a 4-1 count with four different players sharing the goals.

Colin King and Brian Hayes each had two goals for Team II while a single was notched by Stephen Clark. Assists for the winners went

out to Steve Trustum, Evan Craighead, Andrew Gray, Stephen Clark and Randy Geerts. For Team IV, Joe Stephens, Mat Lush and David James had the goals with Stephens and Lush also recording an assist apiece.

Cory Evans, Tim Penny, David Zylstra and Jeff Williams scored for Team II in its win while Robbie Wands replied for Team I. Colin Campbell, David Zylstra, Andy Telford and Jeff Williams earned assists for Team III with Brad Davies and Dwayne Balanyk getting helpers for Team I.

MacLeod scores three as McNally's romp

After a disheartening loss to Dundas 6-1 on Saturday night, McNally Construction, Georgetown's Minor Novice AA team, rebounded to defeat Chinguacousy 7-0 in Georgetown on Sunday afternoon.

Georgetown struck early when Robert MacLeod scored twice on his first shift of the game. These two goals seemed to fire up the home team and they never looked back.

The visitors' main threat came when Georgetown's Trevor Rich got a tripping penalty with Georgetown holding a six-goal lead.

The question was: could the home team keep the shutout? Joey Barber, who shared the netminding with Chris Hall, stood tall

while his team was shorthanded and stopped many difficult shots to hold the opposition off the scoresheet.

GEORGETOWN SCORING
GOALS: Robert MacLeod (3), Ryan Smith, Danny Cabral, Mike Madill and Trevor Rich.

ASSISTS: David Markham, Mike Madill, Joe Goodhew (2), Geoff Bahr, and Dan Cabral.

Halton Hills Hockey League up for grabs

After the first three weeks of the Halton Hills Hockey League, there is every indication the top prize is up for grabs.

The new United Rental team appears strong in the early going, with the McGibbon also looking strong. Dodge ReMax have added some new faces to strengthen their lineup allowing them to get off to a quick start. Last year's finalist have yet to get on track, however LePages will be a strong competitor. Station House have had a difficult time switching seasons but are expected to keep the league close. Genoe ReMax have iced a good lineup and should make a run for the top.

Arnie's are showing signs of improvement with some new faces along with the Hawks, who have had trouble getting on track, but should show marked improvement once they come together.

The addition of OHA caliber officials hopefully will strengthen the league allowing an excellent brand of hockey.

Simon Fraser

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT

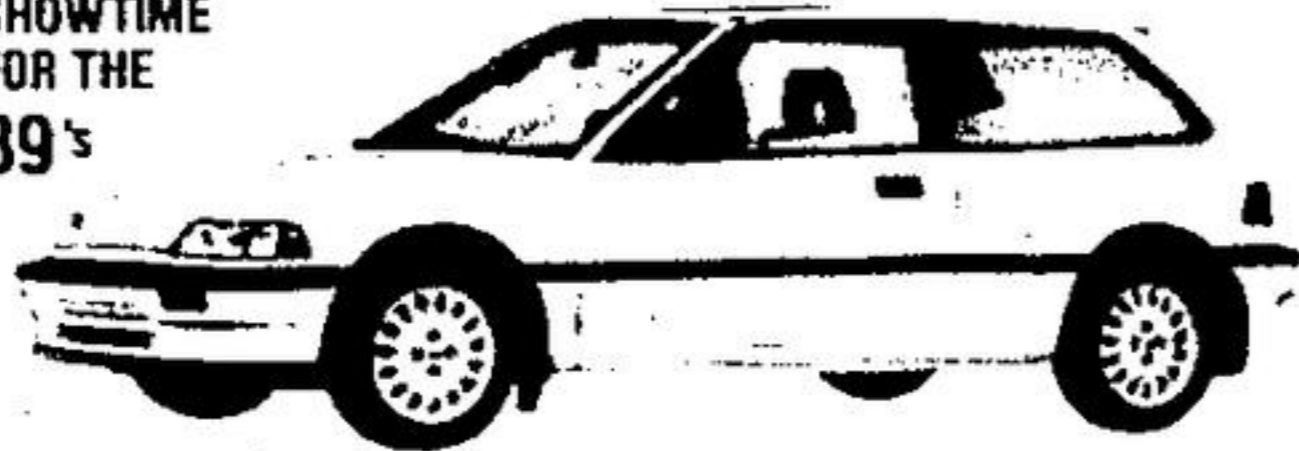
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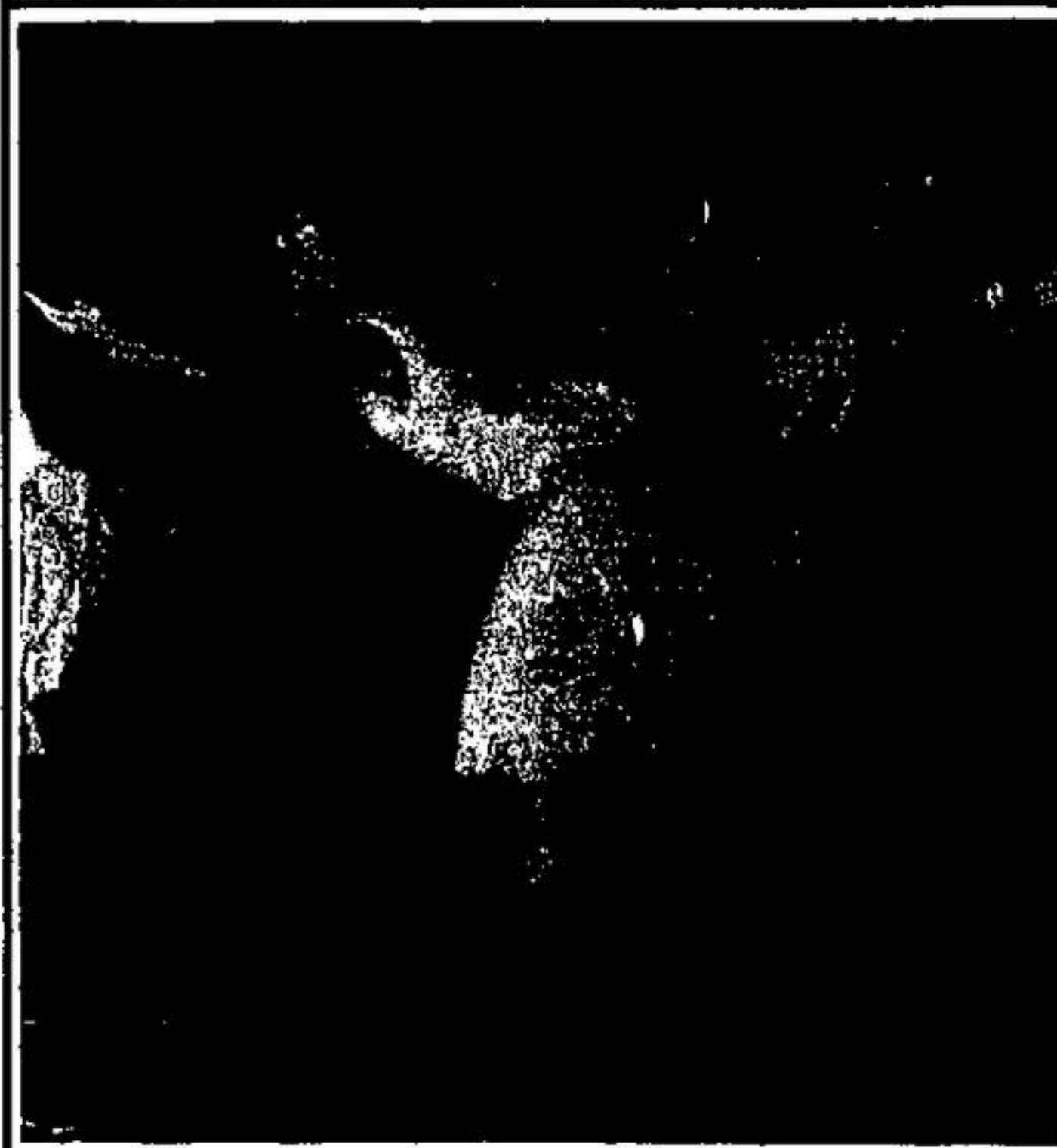
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Talent Night a hit



Lighting the stage

A member of the Halton Dance Company turns an elegant pose during the seventh annual local talent night at the John Elliott Theatre last Thursday night. The dancers wrapped up the evening of entertainment with a performance of The Dreaming Lady with Beth Cameron, Melissa Harrington, Kelly Cotton, Carianne Porritt and Heather Cunningham delivering a pleasing routine. A good crowd was on hand to enjoy the evening's festivities. (Herald photo)



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