

Muskie madness mesmerizes



LOON TUNES and OUTDOOR NOTES
by Len Landry

"Four dollars and twenty-five cents!" I exclaimed incredulously. "Yes sir, uh, that's right," the young lady behind the counter said, a little nervous at my reaction. "It's a good price too. They cost more at the other marina further down the lake."

"Well, I guess you can tell that it's been quite a while since I've bought cigarettes. These are for a friend, don't smoke myself," I continued, "but I remember paying three dollars and change for a carton of Rothmans when I used to buy them for Dad." "That's a long time ago," the lady said, smiling and not trying to conceal her habit as she took a long puff on her own cigarette.

"Yeah, long time... thank God he stopped, eh... Too expensive and bad for your health. Hey, you should stop too, you know," I remarked. Again, the lady just smiled. "Will that be all then..." she asked. "Well, um, how are the muskie biting this year..." I inquired. "I only see two on the Molson Big Fish Scoreboard here..."

"That's right," the lady answered. "The bass are biting like crazy though. Yes, and there's some pickerel entered... Very nice one there, an eight pounder..."

Very few muskie, however, I thought to myself, so it looked as if my work was certainly cut out for me. After all, it is said that even the most ardent muskie angler must devote one hundred hours in the water between legal (or keeper-size) fish. Anything under three feet is considered a baby, and should be released. Even larger fish are set free by the true 'lunge fanatic', who realizes how frail is the existence of this mighty golden warrior.

Ah yes, the muskel lunge... the fish of one hundred hours... the fish of ten thousand casts... you have to be a little crazy...

I thanked the lady, she wished me good luck, and I gazed upon the beautiful and rugged shoreline of Kashaog Lake with its pine, maple, oak and birch providing an apron-like effect for the white cliffs of nepheline syenite in the background. The sky was filled with dark, thick clouds; the wind was from the northwest... and it was getting cool, a little relief after several days of searing heat.

"Cold front approaching," I thought. "I don't have much time. A cold front will knock stuffin's out of the fishing. Nope, my best shot is right now. I sure hope that Amy Murdy isn't prone to nicotine withdrawal fits 'cause it's going to take another half hour to troll across the lake... Maybe longer if I have any luck along the way heh, heh, heh."

Since my troll to the marina had been unproductive, I decided to switch lures and reached for a trusty old floating Magnum Rapala, silver and black, nicknamed Pontiac. Remember those old commercials... "You've got it, Pontiac!" Yep, this old lure had caught me almost all of my Kosh Lake muskies over the years, and it deserved the title; like I say, you have to be a little crazy...

I placed the cigarettes, Du Maurier Special Mild, or something like that, on the bench beside me. The lure Pontiac, was smothered with a little Berkeley's Muskie Attractant and the hunt was on. About twenty yards from the last marina dock, and in twenty feet of dark water adjacent to a rocky shoal, Pontiac claimed another prize.

After several minutes of give and take battling and some exciting surface thrashing and splashing, a beautifully coloured, legal muskie was landed, and unhooked. Before being set free, it received the mandatory lecture on how not to be fooled again, by anybody, until it grew up to be a forty pounder, or so, and then Pontiac and I would come a'callin' again.

Crazy... You bet... I continued my troll along a shallow channel, then past a promising weedline, and finally found myself in front of the rocky ledge across from the Murdy cottage; the water here was about ten feet deep, but dropped off quickly to at least fifty or sixty feet.

I could see my family on the opposite shore a couple of hundred yards away. Zac and Sulla, Lennon and Rita were near the beach, along with Amy and Matthew Murdy, and Donna Morrison. Wouldn't it be nice, I thought, to catch a 'lunge just about now, so that my family and some friends would see exactly how exciting that it can be.

"Nah," I thought. "That would be pressing my luck a bit. Another hundred hours coming up, I guess... now, where did those cigarettes go... Amy's probably got the shakes," and as I headed the boat into the deep channel water in order to cross, my lure just ticked on that underwater, unseen rock ledge.

"Ringin' the dinner bell, eh, Pontiac..." I spotted the cigarettes on the floor of the boat, and reached down to get them. At that moment, Pontiac was stopped... cold... dead in its 'tracks'... by something... big...

To Be Continued.....

'Driving Test' offers some surprises

KEEPING YOUR CAR ALIVE



PETER BOHR

By Peter Bohr
Contributing Editor, Road & Track

You're calmly cruising down the highway, listening to some tunes on your stereo, when suddenly you realize the accelerator pedal is stuck open. Besides watching your life flash before you, what can you do?

Or, your car's enveloped in fog, and you can't see more than a few feet ahead of the hood. You turn on your headlights, but do you have the foggiest idea of which to use — the high beams or low beams?

These are just a couple of the questions you'll be asked to answer if you watch the "Valvoline National Driving Test" hosted by actor Christopher Reeve. The program airs Tuesday, Aug. 29, on CBS.

"You'll be horrified to find out all the things you don't know," promised Susan Winston, the program's creator and producer.

Rec help needed

Two recreation programs this fall need your help. Seniors TV Magazine is a monthly show on Halton Cable 4 and has recently purchased a variety of video equipment to help in the production of the show. Your help, ideas and suggestions would be welcomed. Call Ron Masini 877-3495 for more information.

Special Needs drop-in will operate every Wednesday, 12:30 - 4 p.m. starting in September out of the Acton Legion. Anyone and everyone from Halton Hills is welcome to attend, and volunteers are always needed to assist with crafts, games, fundraising, publicity and refreshments. Whether you can help once a week, or once a month or once a year, your support would be welcomed. Call Shirley Raszewski, 875-1531 for more information.

The test itself was designed by a who's who of automotive safety groups, such as the National Safety Council, the Department of Transportation, the Automobile Association of America, Mothers Against Drunk Driving and the Insurance Institute of Highway Safety.

And in trial runs of the test, respondents (including a group of highway patrol officers) didn't do too well, according to Winston.

For instance, nearly 50 percent of the test takers thought that high beams were appropriate in dense fog. In fact, fog tends to reflect the light back from high beams, so low beams are actually more effective in illuminating the way.

Winston was also astounded to learn the remedy proposed by many of the test takers for the stuck accelerator pedal: "They said you should bend down under the dash and loosen the pedal with your hand. But taking your eyes off the road and your hands off the steering wheel when you're speeding down the highway is never a good idea!"

The correct answer? You should apply the brakes, shift into neutral if necessary, work your way over to the side of the road and shut off the ignition. The brakes on modern cars are almost always powerful enough to override an accelerating engine.

"It's not a boring, passive TV program," said Winston. "We'll put viewers in the driver's seat. They'll be able to measure their reaction times in emergency situations. We'll even give them a test on their TV screen for night blindness."

Here's a sneak preview of some other often mis-answered questions from the Valvoline National Driving Test.

• Question: You're on a two-lane road, and an oncoming car wanders into your lane. What should you do?

Wrong Answer: Swerve over into the other lane, or just stop.

Correct Answer: Pull off the road; it's better to chance hitting a tree than other cars.

• Question: What happens when your car's tires are underinflated?

Wrong Answer: They'll give a softer ride.

Correct Answer: They will give a softer ride, but they'll also wear out faster, increase the car's fuel consumption, and most important, greatly increase the car's stopping distances.

• Question: After an accident, your car becomes submerged in water or catches fire. Are you better or worse off if you are wearing a seatbelt?

Wrong Answer: Worse off, because the belt traps you in the car.

Correct Answer: Better off, because it keeps you in a position to open a window or door so you can escape from the car.

• Question: What's the most dangerous time to drive during a rain storm?

Wrong Answer: When it's raining the hardest.

Correct Answer: In the very beginning of the storm when oil and grease on the road interact with the water to make the surface particularly slippery.

• Question: What does a blinking red traffic light mean?

Wrong Answer: Proceed slowly.

Correct Answer: Stop!

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