

# Burd's pond makes good fish story



Bill Henshaw, 65, from Toronto holds his catch for the day at Don Burd's Trout Pond.

**By BRUCE STAPLEY**  
Twenty-five years ago, Don Burd would take off from his Scarborough Bluffs' home to do a little hunting and fishing in the Whitchurch-Stouffville area. But what he ended up catching was the entrepreneurial bug.

When he caught wind of a property with a muddy little pond, just north of Ringwood on Highway 48, he bought it. Twenty four years later, Don and wife Joyce boast one of the most exciting, vibrant recreational businesses in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Don Burd's Trout Pond started out as a hobby for Don, a place where he could satisfy his own desire to outsmart the wily trout. He would stock the little pond with fingerlings, then wile away his spare time pulling them out with his fishing rod.

But passerby motorists couldn't resist the sight of a man bagging one trout after another, and they were soon begging him to let them in on his action. Realizing that most of the local trout streams had been all fished out, Don concocted a scheme whereby he would expand his trout pond, and open it up for trout fishermen

tired of coming up empty in their efforts to find the elusive three pounder.

The house had to be moved back to allow for parking, and contacts were made with a private fish hatchery to stock the pond.

And it was all pretty rustic back then. Customers were on their own with no real assistance offered by Don and his family, who had moved into the house on the property. Don was working at a golf course and had little time for the new venture.

But as time went by, Don came to realize what he had started. The initial trickle of diehard fishermen was becoming a steady stream of couples and families looking for a recreational outing. The prospect of guaranteed success captured the imaginations of would be fishermen everywhere.

Today, Don and Joyce work full time on the operation, with their two children giving as many hours as they can spare. A staff consisting of local young people are at the beck and call of customers, ready to do everything from

worming the hook.

"This has been a boom year," reports Joyce. "With a licence being needed to fish for trout everywhere else, we are in a position to let people fish without a licence, since we are a private pond."

Customers consist of regulars who have been coming since the beginning, as well as a constant crop of newcomers. "We get a lot of groups," reports Joyce. "And for the second year in a row, we held our Senior Citizens Fishing Derby back in July, as part of Whitchurch-Stouffville's Senior Citizen's Week."

The pond was the destination of a recent outing for the kids of the Kew Beach Day Care Centre, a group of 50 children ranging in age from three to seven. "That was a delightful experience," recalls Joyce. "All the kids wanted to take their fish home and put it in the bathtub."

Don prides himself in his ability to come up with methods and machines to facilitate the running of what has become a huge operation. His water wheel has become

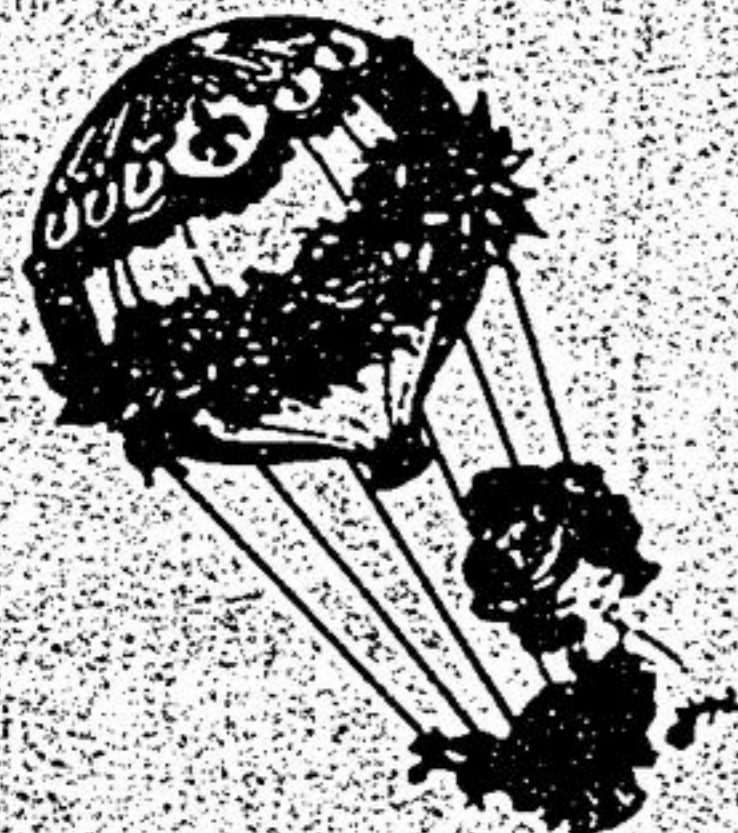
a big attraction, as has his giant "viewing ladder" from which customers can view the fish from above the pond.

There are actually two ponds, the front or "family" pond consisting of pan sized trout, and the back pond, where the fish range from two to 18 pounds.

During peak season, 1,500 two-year-old trout are put into the family pond each week. There are 10,000 fish in the pond at any given time. The larger ones are mechanically extracted and put into the back pond.

Don is particularly proud of his feeding machine, complete with timer.

When it comes to future plans, Don says he's not listening to those people who would have him expand the facility, turning it into a multiple attraction with miniature golf, pinball arcades and what have you. "I'm not in it for the money," he'll tell you. "I just want to be able to enjoy it, and the best way to do that is to keep it under control. I want to make sure my customer catches his fish. That's what I'm here for."



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