

'Universal pleasure' of fishing leads to weekend of drunkenness, mistakes

By ALLEN JERNIGAN
Photography Editor

I have come to the conclusion that there are but four universal pleasures and that all other pleasures are subsets of the primal four. I refer to the pleasures of sex, drugs, poker and fishing. All pleasures pale beside the latter.

It has been said that the Lord does not subtract from a man's allotted span the time spent fishing. Fishermen die young because they drink so much. A good ole boy and I took our girlfriends to the beach with us fishing last weekend. He and I will die young.

This was not the first time we had braved reports of rain, hurricanes or fallen bridges and struck out for Manteo. The women rode shotgun as we caravanned across eastern North Carolina, sipping PBR and chattering on the CB. Previous treks had been all-male adventures, but we still managed to make the same mistakes. We stopped at the McDonald's in Williamston, ignored the posted speed limit and got rip-roaring drunk.

The rain was only intermittent until we reached Oregon Inlet. By the time the friendly ranger had selected our campsite and we had decided to pitch our tents, the rain had discarded all uncertainty. With the religious fervor of the alcoholic, we determinedly pitched our tents. No, pitched is too kind a word. Anyhow, somehow, the tents got up.

It was raining, and we were wet, but the Coleman lantern still blazed faithfully — the purring beacon of technology. Lighting the lantern, like pitching the tents, we held as a major accomplishment. After an abortive attempt to fashion a picnic table into a lean-to, and a futile debate on the merits of fishing for channel bass in the inlet — at night, in the cold rain of a northeast wind but by the benevolent light of the Coleman lantern — we decided to sit in my tent, the larger and less stable of the two, and tell lies and drink Scotch.

As though we were entering some Buddhist shrine rather than crawling into a sagging tent, we removed our soggy shoes and left them in the sand inside the door. Linda could not get one of her shoes off and sat with one foot sticking out the entrance. I broke the seal on the Scotch, and the rain stopped. I took a hit to celebrate. We all celebrated and stayed in the tent. We knew the rain was waiting to ambush us.

After a more-than-due celebration, the topic of conversation came again to fishing. The ladies argued against fishing, in favor of sleeping. I reminded them that sleeping was neither a primal pleasure nor possible in our condition. Mitch brought up the fact that fishing was probably not possible either, for to fish one must stand or sit, while to sleep one merely reclined.

Mitch and I sat in my car and primed ourselves for the five-minute drive across the treacherous Oregon Inlet Bridge. We realized we might never return. Good ole boys kept reporting over the CB that the bridge had fallen in and that 20-pound bluefish were attacking the hapless victims of the bridge's collapse. What better time to fish. The blues were probably even eating the cars. A bluefish will eat anything, whether or not it remotely resembles a natural food. A bluefish, like a fisherman, just doesn't give a damn.

As we reached the far side of the bridge, Mitch brought up the fact that the bridge hadn't fallen after all. I added that the fishing would probably be the worse for it. Still unimpressed, we drove to the inlet, fired the lantern and rigged our fishing gear.

We had inadvertently parked next to two souls more dedicated, if less intoxicated, than we. They confessed to being Yankees and to never having surf-fished before, and they innocently followed us across the dunes and into a tide pool. As they splashed out of the knee-deep water, we apologized for leading them astray. Somehow Mitch and I had avoided the water.

Having found the surf, we began the serious business of casting. There is an art to casting heavy lures into a high wind, especially when the caster is higher than the



Aulumn Dobies

The author without his catch.

wind. I retrieved my initial cast to find an uprooted sea oat dangling from the business end of my three-quarters of an ounce Mann's grub. At least Mitch's first cast found the water... two or three feet of it, anyway.

"Well, I didn't backlash it," he said confidently. He cast again, and I heard the tell-tale sound of a severed lure singing off into oblivion.

"Good shooting," I said. He didn't reply, pointing instead at the tangled mass of monofilament line rising from his jigmaster reel. A class "A" backlash.

"The fish are all asleep anyway," he said.

Such was the story of our weekend. Whenever we were awake, the fish slept or displayed a foreknowledge of our moves and cunningly avoided us at every turn. But we didn't care, because we were engaged in the pursuit of a primal pleasure, or two or three. What else besides fishing can you do and completely foul up and still have as good a time as if you'd done it right? Next time we'll catch every fish in the ocean or die from a hangover trying.

weekend theatre

'Ain't Supposed to Die a Natural Death'

Ain't Supposed to Die a Natural Death, a jazz-rock-soul musical by Melvin Van Peebles, will be presented at 8:15 p.m. Friday and Saturday in University Theatre on the campus of North Carolina Central University in Durham.

A matinee will be performed at 3:15 p.m. Sunday.

Kenneth Steed is directing the musical and his cast includes NCCU students and Durham residents. The play uses poems set to music to present a portrayal of the 1970s ghetto scene.

For ticket information call 683-6242.

'Cyrano de Bergerac'

Ira David Wood is returning to Raleigh this weekend to recreate his title role in the Theatre in the Park's production of Edmond Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac*.

Four years ago, Wood performed the same role and gave a performance which pleased audiences and critics.

Edmond Rostand wrote the play when he was 26, and it attained instantaneous success when it was performed in Paris in 1897.

Cyrano de Bergerac will run through this Sunday and again next Wednesday through Sunday.

Call 755-6058 for tickets and information.

'Pirates of Penzance'

The Gilbert and Sullivan comic operetta *The Pirates of Penzance* will be performed at 7 and 9 p.m. Saturday in Stewart Theatre on the campus of N.C. State University. The performance will be the final event in the 1977-78 Stewart Theatre Musical Series.

The operetta is being presented by the Durham Savoyards, a group which started 15 years ago performing this same operetta in a high-school auditorium.

Call 737-3105 for ticket information.



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