



TONYA'S TALES

By Tonya Sprague

The One That Got Away

Now that summer is officially here, many of you are faced with the task of trying to keep the little ones occupied. Instead of letting them lounge around on the couch playing video games, surfing the web, or watching TV all summer long, might I suggest taking them fishing. Fishing isn't just about fish; it's also a time when families and friends make new memories and relax together while at the same time enjoy being outdoors.

Many of my favorite childhood memories are about fishing. I'll never forget those early morning fishing trips my dad would take us on. The memories of those fishing trips with my family will stay with me forever. Dad would wake me and my brother way before sunrise. Mom would be in the kitchen packing a lunch for all of us to enjoy later making sure

to include the Little Debbies and that big thermos of coffee for her and my dad. We would rush to get everything loaded in the car and then head off to my dad's "secret fishing spot".

I often wondered how my dad found his fishing spot to begin with. It seemed to take forever to get there. Once we drove for what seemed like a hundred miles (it always seemed to take longer to get somewhere when I was little), we still wouldn't be there yet. My dad's secret fishing spot was a good thirty minute hike around a river inlet through the woods, then finally out on the other side near a cave where a bunch of rocks seemed to be placed there just for the four of us at the edge of the woods right on the river where we all had plenty of room to fish without crowding each other. There was never any sign of

someone having been there. Many times when you go fishing, unfortunately litter is usually left behind by the people who were there before you. I can't remember a time when litter was at our fishing spot. (Maybe because the hike it took getting there deterred the would-be fishermen).

Part of the fun of fishing with my dad was that we never used lures, we always used live bait. He'd bring worms, minnows and crickets each and every time. I don't remember how old I was, I couldn't have been more than eight or ten, even so, I never could get used to getting those worms or minnows on that hook, it took several lessons, but I eventually got the hang of it. Then after many tries, I got to where I could cast my little red and white bobber pretty far. But then the hardest part of all, waiting for the fish to bite.

Back then, I didn't know much at all about fishing or how to catch a fish. All I knew was what my dad taught me.

When the bobber starts moving up and down in the water, get ready. When it goes under you pull and start reeling. Nine times out of ten that logic seemed to work

for me, and b o y



was it exciting to hook a fish. I always got too excited and would yell, "I got one!" Then my mom would always tell me not to scare the fish. I always

remember the fish I would catch seemed to be much smaller than everyone else's. But I didn't care how big or small, I just enjoyed catching one.

Then there's the one that got away. I remember watching my bobber time and time again go under the water and time and time again, the fish would get my bait. My dad tried to help me catch it after about the fifth time and finally I had him hooked, he was a big one all right! So big, it broke my line. Talk about excitement, I bet I could be heard all the way across the river. It had to be a big fish, because my dad even changed reels with me so I could try it again using a stronger line. A few minutes later, it happened again. I

hooked him and he still broke my line. I remember my dad saying it had to be a big ol' catfish or something to break that line. Unfortunately, I never got the chance to reel him in before it was time for us to go. But every time we went back that was the goal for me. To catch that big one that got away. I nicknamed him Samson.

Now that I'm older, my husband and I enjoy going fishing. We try to go often. I still get excited when I hook a big one, and I try not to yell, but sometimes it can't be helped. I've caught many different types of fish and I have lots of stories of the one that got away. But none will ever top the story of Samson when my dad took us fishing at his "secret fishing spot".

I will catch him one of these days.

Questions or comments about Tonya's Tales? e-mail Tonya at: people4news@aol.com.



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