

Gone Fishin'

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The reflection of granite peaks and the azure sky invited my lure into the slow moving high mountain stream. The pristine vista assured me that these trout retained their primitive instincts that the planted trout in lower valley waters never knew. It becomes obvious that there are two breeds of trout after they are caught; the original fish are pink-meated fighters with deep earth-toned skin, while the domesticated variety are a much weaker rainbow with pure white meat. Both are a pleasure to catch, but the wild rainbow trout is the one that teaches you how to fish.

I had thought I had experienced trout until I got my first care package from old Alta Breshers. He was in for an adjustment one day and my wife, Anita, must have mentioned something about fishing which made Alta feel sorry for me. The next day he stopped by the house with a bundled-up newspaper, saying that he had more fish than he could use and would I like to take a few off of his hands. I thanked him, and as I took the package, the sheer weight of it made me realize these were no ordinary fish. Inside were three native rainbow trout. The next time he came into the clinic he told me where he caught the fish and invited me to come out with him sometime.

He was coming in for upper back pain and headaches at the time and making good progress after those first two adjustments. I was glad that he appreciated my work enough to go out of his way to establish a life-long appreciation of stream fishing and decided to take him up on his invitation.

As things go, it rained hard the day we were to go out. The spot where he caught the fish is in the rocky canyon where Big Creek empties into the North Powder River, and to get there required a stout four-wheel drive and a belief that the steep tracks that wound down into the arid Bureau of Land Management Reserve actually could afford us a return trip. Alta said that it was tough enough in perfect weather and that during a rainstorm the mud would be too slippery. We canceled the trip.

Each day presented as a lost opportunity to call Mr. Breshers and he was not scheduled to return for another adjustment. In less than a month I had yet to find an opportunity to get out fishing with him. The opportunity never came because during that time Alta had died. He was up scouting in the mountains on a hike, alone, and suffered a heart attack. No one could have designed a more fitting setting for the last moments for this quiet old outdoorsman.

So, I set my mind to find that spot Alta had told me of. I got into my '72 Jeep Commando and took the Catherine Creek Highway out past Medical Springs and Pondosa and took a right at that old dirt road just before the highway crosses the North Powder River. Up that road I traveled until I came to a cattle guard and an old wire gate. The river was not yet in sight, but the sense of it was there. The road became less of a road and more of a trail until I finally came to an untraveled stretch of dry grass that opened into a rocky canyon with just the hint of a road remaining.

I slipped the jeep into four-wheel drive and started down, creeping in the lowest gear and holding the door handle to keep from sliding out of my seat as the wheels followed the steeply pitched mountainside. After crossing a rapids, I reached the destination, wondering why anyone would go through so much to catch a simple fish, and I began to doubt if my jeep could make it back up the

trail to the top.

To most urban dwellers it would be more than satisfactory to catch the domestic trout planted by the Department of Fish and Game at Catherine Creek, near the old general store where you could get some pop and a sandwich. I guess this is true for chiropractic care too. Most patients would never dream of the possibility that there is more to chiropractic than fixing a sore back or neck. They are satisfied with this and expect no more. And that's fine with me. Many of us chiropractors are perfectly happy to leave it at that too.

Except, once in a while, this country chiropractor, who's done chiropractic births and chiropractic deaths and all points in between, still drives down the dangerous roads to reminisce about the days when men and nature accepted their interdependence and enjoyed the struggle. Those were the days.

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