

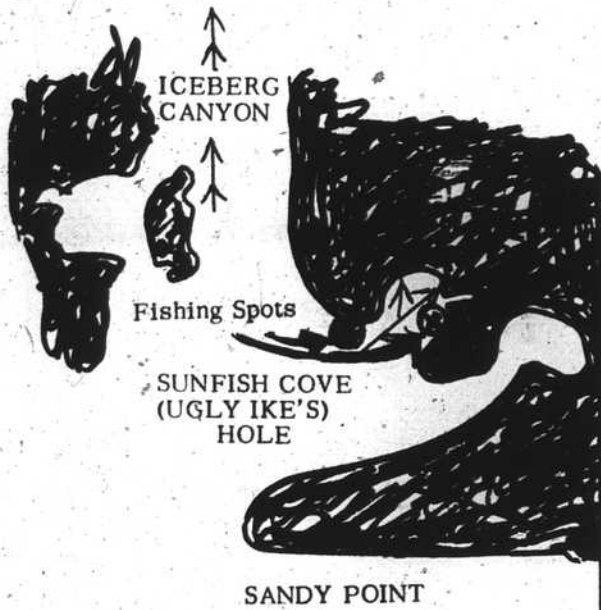
Fishing



"The Crappie Catcher" INFORMATION

BULLETIN!

Crappie averaging more than a pound, and trout over two pounds are filling the boxes of the night fishermen in Ugly Ike's Hole. The map below pin-points the two hot spots in this hole. The fish were staying deep last week. Most were caught about 5 feet off bottom in 25 to 35 feet of water. Reports from several parties fishing this spot were all very good. Each fisherman caught about a box full of Crappie and averaged two Rainbows apiece.



More about Red (Continued from last week)

WE GAVE THE THREE small mackerel to Red, and we made arrangements with him to take us to the far, far place where the cudas lived. I told our native skipper that we would get the speedboat from the American embassy. I knew that my brother had enough juice up on diplomatic hill to get the boat for us the next day. A phone call proved me to be right. We got the OK from the embassy.

The fishing grounds that Red spoke about turned out to be 40 miles up the Atlantic near the Sierra Leone border, in the mouth of the Lofa river. The river itself had been closed to public navigation by the Liberian government because the bed of the river a few miles upstream was said to be paved with diamonds. Fantastic as it may seem, the Lofa river had given up several king's ransoms in precious stones. Frequently native fishermen would offer uncut diamonds for sale. It was many years before the news got out that the natives were finding these stones in the stomachs of the fish they caught in the river. My brother had a rock the size of a nickel which was smuggled out of the Lofa in the belly of a barracuda. I have often wondered what ever became of that gem.

THE WIFE WAS MORE EXCITED than little sister on wedding day with the dream of finding diamonds in the bellies of the fish. Neither hell nor high water could have changed her plans for the trip up the coast to the far, far place where the cudas with diamonds lived. The speedboat we borrowed from the embassy turned out to be

a tin tub with an egg beater tied on its stern for its power. The thought of risking our lives out in the ocean in a thimble didn't dim the little woman's enthusiasm one tiny little bit.

At daybreak on the appointed morning the three of us put to sea in a ten-foot tub. With the grace of the man upstairs, Red navigated three fools in a thimble across the treacherous breakers that roar across the sand bar which guards the entrance of the Meserada river at Monrovia. We had 40 miles of ocean ahead of us. Our egg beater outboard could push us along at a top speed of 12 knots.

With more than a three-hour trip ahead of us, I decided to pass the time by trolling a ten-inch-jointed Heddon lure. I got a strike after about an hour of trolling. I set the hook and started winding in the fish which felt like it was a pretty good one that would go around 5 pounds. Suddenly there was a tremendous shocking jerk on my line, and immediately after this, my line went limp. I continued to wind my line in to inspect the lure, thinking that it had struck some submerged object and become damaged. When I brought the lure aboard, to my astonishment there was no damage to the lure, but there was a fish head hooked to it. The quivering fish head told me that there was something out there that was damned damaging.

Red laughed and seemed to get a big kick out of our amazement. He said, "You can't catch small fish here. You catch only half, and big cuda get the other half."

AFTER CLEANING THE LURE of the piece fish, I cast it over again and let about 300 feet of line run off before setting the brake on my reel. Within a minute, maybe more, maybe less, something smashed into my Heddon lure and nearly pulled both the pole and yours truly right out of the boat. After collecting myself and getting braced, I set the hook with a mighty sweep over the shoulder with my pole. I started pumping the pole, picking up the slack in the line as I lowered it rapidly. A five-foot barracuda broke water about 200 feet astern, and danced an authentic Watusi on its tail as it tried to throw the hook. We brought the monster to gaff after about 15 minutes of pumping, cranking, and sweating. Before Red lifted the cuda aboard he struck it several sharp blows across its head with a piece of pipe which he had brought along just for putting Mr. Cuda to sleep. One look at the crocodile jaws on an Atlantic barracuda is all one needs to account for Red's precaution with the pipe bit.

We caught three more big ones, and more than a dozen pieces of smaller cudas. Red saved all of the heads and pieces. Each time he took the quivering part off the hook, he would say with an ingratiating tone, "He make fine soup-o."

Our cudas evidently had not feasted on the precious stones that lined the river bed upstream. We found no gems in the fish's innards, but I found a welcomed warmth in my own innards. The little woman had to get off my back with the doubting Thomas needling.

THE BARRACUDA really put on a show for the wife that day. They were both big and bad just like I had been telling her for 15 years. To tell the truth, I had started to doubt myself that there really were cudas like I had been talking about. They showed up at the Lofa that day, God bless them, and I didn't have to back down on my fish tale to the boss lady.

★ Last Call For Talent ★

ONLY TWO WEEKS REMAIN for potential contestants to obtain applications for the "SEARCH FOR TALENT CONTEST" to be held January 17-18 and 23 at the Valley High School Little Theatre.

The contest is sponsored by the Las Vegas Recreation Department and the activity is the first one to be held of this nature by the city.

Applications can be obtained from Recreation Supervisor, Nick Sylvester at the City Hall Annex, or by calling 385-1221, ext. 374.

Deadline to have the forms into the Recreation office is 5 p.m., Friday, January 14. The forms must be accompanied by the required entry fee.

Trophies will be awarded to the 4 finalists, with one going to the top contestant in the four age divisions. The divisions are: 9-12, 13-15 years, 16-18 years, and 19 and over.


PRELIMINARIES will be held January 17 for the initial two age brackets, while January 18 will feature the final two age groups.

Finals will be held January 23 at 1 p.m. at the Valley High School Little Theatre.

The "Las Vegas Curtain Timers", the newly formed dramatic group formed by Nick Sylvester, will serve as the preliminary judges, while TOP city officials and TOP show business personalities will head the judging for the finals.

Entry fees of .50 is required for all contestants under 19, and \$1 for all persons performing over 19 years of age.

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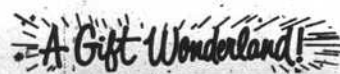


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