

Fall Fiesta

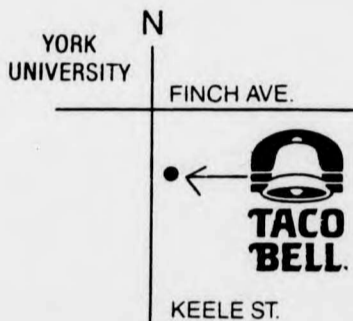


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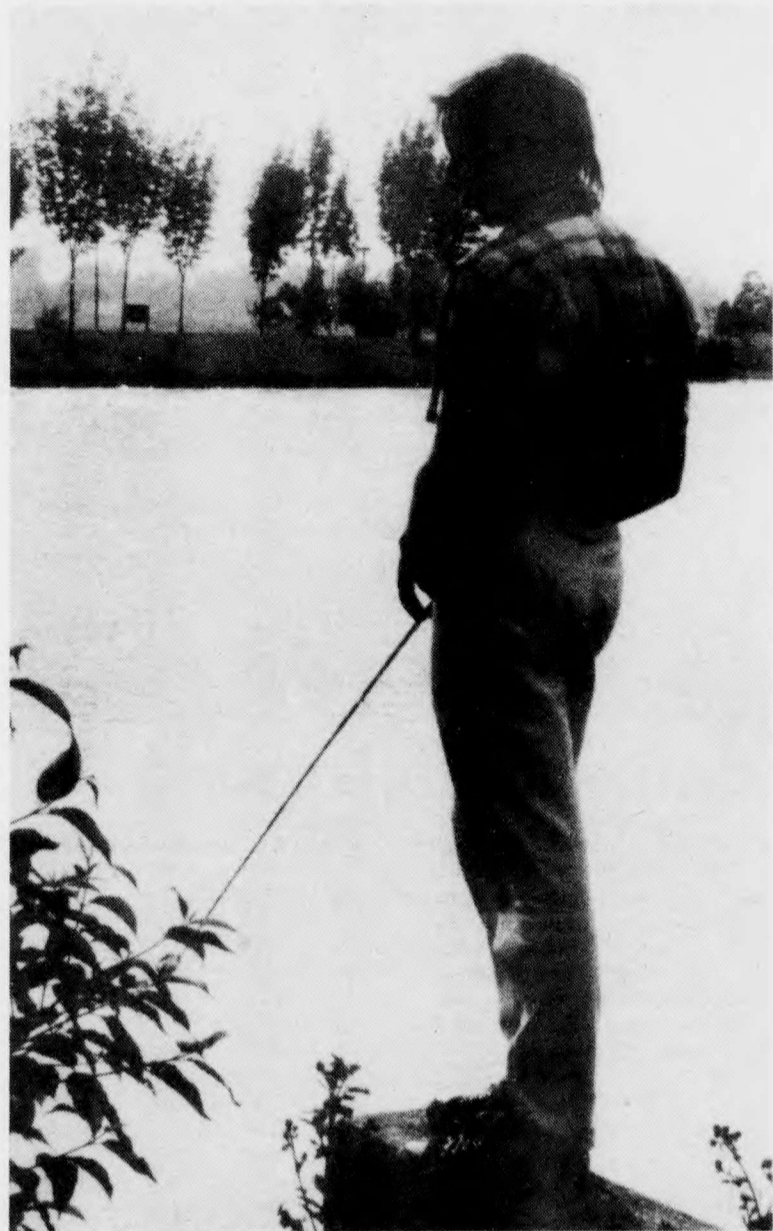
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Excal goes fishing down at Stong Pond



No nibbles for niblets

Hoping to catch a mess o' catfish, last year's managing editor and resident angler, **David Byrnes**, along with ace photographer, **Paulette Peirol**, headed down to Stong Pond to test the waters. But those elusive catfish just weren't biting that day and the intrepid duo had to settle for something a bit smaller.



COMPROMISING POSITION: David "Red" Byrnes casts his rod into the 'lake' in an act of daring that looks suspiciously similar to another favourite pastime.

As it turned out it was a blessing in disguise that my photographer on this assignment ate the bait—a can of Jolly Green Giant corn purchased in Central Square. I had decided to use corn rather than worms because worms have become a symbol of sentience for me, and the act of spearing them with a hook an archetypal cruelty. But after an unsuccessful hour with the Niblets, and returning to the can to re-load my hook only to find it empty, I was forced to go dig up some worms. The first one squirmed in primal pain as I applied the hook, and for this I blame Paulette. To her credit goes the hefty pound-size Stong pond goldfish I reeled in just minutes later.

It had been no small feat catching this fish. I thought back to my first, unsuccessful attempt at this same assignment the previous Friday when I had forgotten my hooks. Then today, first deterred by the *no fishing* signs, then unsuccessful with the corn, and finally having to put up with someone's dog swimming all over the pond and agitating my prey. But patience and perseverance is the wisdom to be learned from this sport, and now I finally reaped my reward. I had accomplished a silly thing, catching a goldfish with a fishing rod, and would no longer have to make embarrassing bus trips up to York, carting rod, net and tackle box with me.

Fortunately the fish was lightly hooked and I was able to release it without causing it too much trauma, and it scurried back to rejoin its friends. But alas, the worm had been



lost, probably torn from the hook by the fish in the throes of battle, and now facing its hellish underwater end.

I've heard of people eating goldfish and as I was unhooking the fish I'm sure the idea crossed Paulette's mind more than once. But a Stong Pond goldfish is about as poor a culinary prospect as one caught from Lake Erie, where in fact they are native and thrive. Like carp, they are

scavengers and reside in anything remotely edible, although Stong Pond goldfish seem to have an aversion to corn. To be honest, our catch was a little pig of a thing, bloated to bursting from over-eating, so that its scales were popping off its sides. Judging from the colour of the water in the pond, the *no swimming* signs and the pollution visible to the naked eye, whatever this fish had been eating must have made it as appetizing as its Lake Erie cousins.

Although serious anglers may be crestfallen to learn of the poor table quality of this Stong Pond fish, on the bright side, despite its tendency to over-eat, the goldfish is a fairly respectable fish to have in the neighbourhood. Fortunately, the pond contains no pike—a creature whose mere mention sends blood rushing to the cheeks of real fishermen everywhere.



RUSTY THE TRUSTY FISHDOG: Excal's superconscious fisherpeople may not have realized it at the time but that dog who was "agitating the prey" was actually luring those goldfish to the surface through hypnotic suggestion learned at Reveen's side.