

'Streaming' meant something different in my youth

When I was growing up, young boys made their own entertainment by fishing, swimming, exploring and otherwise seeking adventure around any neighborhood drainage canals that we could reach by bicycle.

One day while fishing a favorite honey hole in a canal passing under a four-lane highway and running alongside a patch of woods across the road, I decided to investigate. Feeling like Daniel Boone, I crossed the road to see what was on the other side. Instead of virgin forests, I discovered a rustic old log home occupied by an elderly widow who loved to care for her flowers.

A long narrow pond with the prettiest black water ran parallel to her boundary fence, probably where the builders dug fill dirt to elevate the property. Anyway, the kindly lady said I could fish her pond as long as I didn't touch her flowers. The pond contained monster bluegills and other fish.

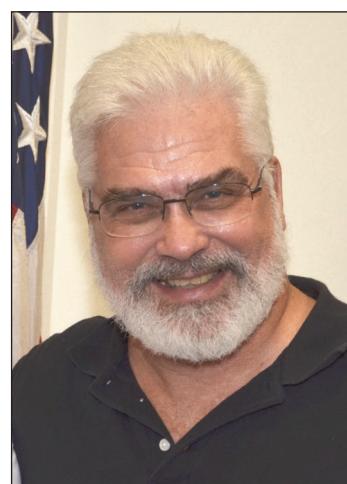
On the last day of school one year, a friend and I made a bet to see who could catch the most fish before school started in the fall. Throughout that summer, my friend and I kept track of each other's piscatorial progress. Sad to admit, he gained a considerable lead over me with just a day or two until school began. One stormy August day right before school started, I headed to that long, black pond deter-

mmed to win the bet. I probably wouldn't have ventured out on such a day otherwise, but with bragging rights at stake, I needed to try.

Unfortunately, the fish didn't cooperate. No matter how I tried, I couldn't get anything to bite with time running out quickly. Then, I noticed schools of minnows swimming near the surface. The rules of the bet simply stipulated that we could catch any fish species by any legal hook and line gear, but not in nets. Every fish we physically touched scored one point. The size or species didn't matter.

I came up with a plan. I tied on the smallest hook I could find and baited it with a sliver of bread from my lunch. I dangled the bread in front of the minnows. When a minnow grabbed the bread, it held onto that morsel as I quickly swung it over to the shoreline. There, I grabbed it, scoring a point, and released it to possibly catch again. In about an hour, I racked up just enough points to win the bet and annual bragging rights!

The canal adjacent to the pond connected to another canal, which ran through a pine forest before it crossed under a new interstate. One day, I decided to follow a trail running along that canal looking for new fishing spots and other



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See **FELSHER**, Page 26



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