



ED GODFREY'S OUTDOORS

FISHING WITH CADE

A morning on Table Rock Lake to remember



Table Godfrey, 13, of Edmond, catches a bass on Missouri's Table Rock Lake with the help of fishing guide Tony Weldele of Rainbow Chasers Guide Service. (PHOTO BY LINDA LYNN, THE OKLAHOMAN)

My 13-year-old son, Cade, has a lot in common with Jimmy Houston when it comes to fishing. Not so much the catching part, but the kissing part. He is a good fish smoocher. The actual fishing part is a challenge for Cade, who was born with Down syndrome.

The day Cade was born, my wife and I were shocked upon receiving the news of Down syndrome. It felt like I had fallen off a mountaintop. I was so thrilled the day Linda and I found out we were having a son. We already had two daughters and a third would have been great, but deep down I really wanted a boy.

It wasn't just me. My side of the family had experienced a long run of Godfrey girls. Everyone wanted a boy to keep the Godfrey name going.

We got a boy, just not the boy we were expecting, but what a boy he is. After he was born, people told me I would be blessed by having a son with Down syndrome. At the time, I wasn't sure whether to believe them, but they were right.

It is challenging being Cade's dad at times, but over the years I've learned to focus more on the things Cade can do, and not what he can't. And what he can do is bring joy to everyone he meets.

Cade likes being outdoors, but fishing has mostly been a spectator sport for him when we've gone.

During our recent stay at Big Cedar Lodge near Branson, Missouri, the public relations folks

hooked us up with fishing guide Tony Weldele, owner of Rainbow Chasers Guide Service (417-294-7335).

We ventured out on a hot, September morning on Table Rock Lake for a couple of hours to see if we could get Cade to catch his first fish.

The day before, Weldele was part of a large group who guided kids from the "Make A Wish" program for a day of fishing on Table Rock Lake.

Weldele, who lives on Table Rock Lake, grew up in St. Louis and was a Cardinals' baseball fan so we hit it off right away, since I have been a Cardinals' fan since 1967.

He's guided for St. Louis Cardinals baseball players, Dallas Cowboys players, professional golfers and many other celebrities who have enjoyed the amenities at Big Cedar.

I told him none of those fishing trips would be as memorable as this one. Living with Cade is like living with a leprechaun. Fishing with him is a similar adventure.

He would jump in Weldele's seat at every opportunity, want to push the buttons on the console of the boat and tried to steal his cellphone.

Cade tries to take everyone's cellphone. He can navigate one better than his old man. My wife kept a hawkish eye on him to ensure he didn't take the keys out of the boat

and hide them, another trick he likes to pull.

Cade thinks all these pranks are great fun and it is for him. Cade's hijinks usually are for us, too, except for the time a cellphone ended up in the bottom of a lake.

Weldele baited some Canadian night crawlers on some spinning reels in hopes of landing some Missouri fish. We got bites immediately and lost them right away. We even had three fish break the line, which prompted Weldele to ask if we had brought any bananas aboard the boat.

There is an old superstition about bananas being bad luck on fishing boats. A quick check on the internet provides several explanations for this tall tale. Among them are:

- When ships of earlier eras would sink, precious little other than the bananas they had carried would be found floating on the surface, thereby leaving some to conclude conveyance of the fruit itself had led to these naval mishaps.

- Spiders, snakes and other lethal creatures would hitch a ride with the bananas in the hold of ships and eventually infest the other parts of the ship.

- Because speedy vessels were used to get bananas to the their destinations before they could spoil, those attempting to fish from them never caught anything while trolling.

We had not brought any bananas aboard,



Outdoor writer Ed Godfrey, and his son, Cade, show off a largemouth bass caught on Table Rock Lake in Missouri. (PHOTO BY LINDA LYNN, THE OKLAHOMAN)

but we did bring several strawberry banana yogurts for Cade. Such snacks are vital on any kind of adventure with Cade.

We concluded our bad fishing luck surely must be the result of Cade's yogurt of choice. Just like at home, Cade is the first suspect when anything is missing or goes wrong.

Fortunately, Cade had all the strawberry banana yogurt eaten in the first 30 minutes of the trip. Then the fish started biting.

Weldele suddenly landed a bass, handed Cade the rod and reel and

Cade handed me his apple juice. Weldele told me to grab the net but wasn't impressed with my netting skills. In my defense, it's not easy trying to net a fish with one hand while trying not to spill a carton of apple juice in the other.

Cade needed help reeling in the fish, but he got his trophy fish in the boat. Weldele unhooked the largemouth bass for him, and Cade then planted a kiss on its lips that would have made Jimmy Houston proud.

Cade then instructed his mom and dad to start catching fish, like we could do so on command. We caught and

released a few more Missouri bass that morning before calling it a day.

Frankly, I think Cade enjoyed the boat ride more than the fishing. Weldele even let him help steer. Cade must have liked our fishing guide, because the more he pesters you, the more he likes you.

We set out to create a special day for Cade and as usual he made it special for us.

Back at Bent Hook Marina, Cade boasted of catching more fish than anyone. He is such a liar. I guess he really is a fisherman.

OUTDOOR NOTEBOOK

Archery hunting seasons open Monday

Oklahoma's statewide archery season for deer and other big game begins Monday.

Last season, nearly 98,000 Oklahoma bow hunters managed to take 29,084 deer during the 16-week season, the most ever taken during the state's archery season.

Bow hunters accounted for 27 percent of the deer taken during all of Oklahoma's deer hunting seasons in 2017-18: Archery, muzzle-loader and gun.

Archery deer season runs through Jan. 15. The season bag limit is six deer, no more than two of which can be antlered.

Also on Monday, archery seasons open for elk, bear, antelope and turkey.

Archery season for elk on private land runs through Jan. 15 in seven selected zones across the state with quotas on the number of elk that can be taken for each zone.

Last season, 38 bulls and 27 cows were taken by Oklahoma bow hunters in 12 counties.

The archery season in the special southwest zone, — private land in Comanche, Caddo and Kiowa counties — opens Oct. 6 and runs through Oct. 10. It then reopens Oct. 12 and runs through Dec. 12.

There is no quota for the special southwest zone.

Archery season for black bears in four southeastern Oklahoma counties runs through Oct. 21. Last year, 39 bears were taken by bow hunters, about one-fourth coming from public lands.

The archery season in the Panhandle (Cimarron County and the part of Texas County west of SH 136) for pronghorn antelope runs through Oct. 14. Twenty-four antelope were taken by bow hunters last season.

In addition to the archery



Oklahoma's archery deer season opens Monday. (AP PHOTO)

season, rabbit hunting season also opens on Monday and runs through March 15.

Rose State College offers fishing class

Rose State College in

Midwest City is offering a class on fishing techniques to catch striped bass, hybrid bass and white bass in Oklahoma waters beginning Thursday.

The class also meets Oct. 11 and 18.

The class will be taught by five Oklahoma fishing guides who specialize in catching strippers, hybrids and white bass.

The cost is \$89. To enroll, call Rose State College at 405-733-7392.

Fly fishing tourney set for American Horse Lake

The Oklahoma chapter of the national Reel Recovery program will be holding its first fly fishing bass tournament at American Horse Lake on Oct. 7.

The event is a fundraiser to support the chapter's two annual retreats held at Broken Bow.

Reel Recovery is a

national nonprofit organization that provides free fishing retreats for men who have or have had cancer. The tournament fee is \$50.

First place prizes are guided fishing trips in New Mexico and to Beavers Bend State Park in southeastern Oklahoma. The tournament begins at 1 p.m., and anglers can register on-site at noon or online at anglertournament.com.

For more information, go to reelrecoveryoklahoma.org or Reel Recovery Oklahoma's Facebook page.

Free fishing day in OKC on Saturday

Saturday is a free fishing day in Oklahoma City municipal waters.

No city fishing permit is required. Oklahoma City offers a free fishing day the first Saturday of every month.