

MAY 10, 1984

Most of the morning has been wasted watching a parade down the shoreline of the coastal city of Corpus Christi. The reason I'm here is to go to my oldest son's wedding. From all that a groom's father contributes, I should have rented a float in the big parade. After the rehearsal dinner was over last night, I'll be off duty until another son falls in love.

The parade isn't to honor the wedding. The city is celebrating an event they call Buccaneer Days, honoring the pirates that once sailed the Gulf. On my morning walk about daylight, I saw a number of hombres on the beach that may consider this a family reunion. Judging from their old cars and their costumes and the rusty kids digging in the sand, I saw a striking resemblance between these beachcombers and what swashbuckling sailors probably looked like before Peter Pan was made into a movie.

On the way back to the room, I stopped at the desk and told the clerk that I never had known of a gulf or a bay or an ocean being condemned, but that if she wanted to keep her hotel going, she might ought to cull some of the swimmers I'd seen wading off shore. Desk clerks are a strange lot. She acted like she didn't know what I was talking about. But I'll tell her one thing, if that was my sea water, I'd ask that crowd to go elsewhere lest dead fish began floating to the top for miles around.

Also, watching the pleasure fishing boats loading up reminded me of a score old Captain Skeeze's ship made off me years ago. Included in 80 or 90 bucks worth of tickets for the kids and myself was a record number of massive backlashes from worn-out reels and Olympic style tangled lines and hooks left by overcrowded patrons. I started to ask some modern day captains who finally made Capt. Skeeze walk the plank, but once they caught on that I didn't care to give about \$2 a second to catch waste eels and blowfish, they gave me a cold shoulder that was far out of keeping with the jovial mood they were fronting with their customers.

At breakfast I met my son who is a lawyer in Austin. He has a new daughter and a son 18 months old. I suggested that since I still had more rehearsal dinners to give and that he was going to have to give a wedding someday himself, maybe we'd be smart to buy us a shrimp boat to hedge our expenses.

It was a bad time to talk business. Leaky apple juice bottles and hot cereal splashing around to the tune of a spoon beating on a high chair tray distract from organizing a serious fishing venture. He did say he supposed that I'd want to be the captain of the crew. I told him that I didn't care who the captain was as long as he was selected because of his age.

The wedding is set for 1:30 p.m. At the price the coffee shop has to have on their scrambled eggs, I might go in for laying hens instead of gulf shrimp. We plan on spending the Saturday night in Austin. By then my lawyer son's ambition should be back in balance. I'd forgotten that traveling was so hard on children. They sure must get tired of the way adults act on the road.