

## A Fish Called Friendly

June 22, 2002, early morning. Fairways Boulevard and the Gazebo.

“Pop-pop, can we stop at the Gazebo?” asked Samantha and Kara, my grandchildren. “Sure”, I said. I was ready to get my behind off the bicycle seat for a while anyway. The two of them set their kickstands on their bikes and like little humming birds went darting up and down the gazebo and in and out the beautiful surrounding gardens. Be careful of the flowers I said to them but they were already behind the Gazebo and down by the outflow of the storm sewer investigating and out of normal speaking range. Suddenly they came screaming and yelling up to me that there was an eel or something in the water. “No there isn’t I told them”, most of the time there is not enough water for anything to live in. “Oh yes there is” they chimed together, “Come down and look.” Down we went and to my amazement, there in a small pool of water was a fish about 10 to 12 inches long. The pool amongst the rocks was about 3’ by 2’ and 5” deep.

I figured the fish had made the trip down from the lake in the storm sewer line during the recent downpours.

“What are we going to do asked Samantha?” I said we aren’t going to do anything. “Oh Pop pop they both cried, we have to save him, he is so cute and friendly”. “That’s his name you know”, they said, “Friendly”. Uh oh, I knew I was in trouble when I heard that the fish had a name but I tried to argue anyway. “I don’t have a net or anything to catch him with” I whined. “You must have something Pop-pop”, you always do. “I don’t know if I can capture him without hurting him” I said. “You can do anything if you want to Pop pop” said Kara. “What will we do with him?” I asked, still trying to figure a way to get out of this. They looked at me wide eyed like I was demented. “We will save him and put him back in the lake”, they said deliberately as if they where talking to a toddler.

I knew from the way they were looking at me that I wasn’t going to change things or sway them.

“Okay”, I said, “let’s go home and get a couple of buckets and see what we can do.”

Ten minutes later with buckets on our handlebars and work gloves in my back pocket we were back at Gazebo with the two girls all excited and walking on rocks around a small pool of water.

I laid one of the buckets on its side in the deeper part and with my hand and the other bucket I guided the fish into the first bucket, pulled it upright and had him on the first try. I was quite pleased with myself and the kids were jubilant. I am not too familiar with fish but this one didn’t look all that happy about the whole thing. I filled the bucket half way and we got on our bikes with my two grandchildren all a chatter about how they saved Friendly the fish and headed for the north lake. “I want to put him in, don’t let his head hit the rocks, don’t fall in, look out for the slippery rocks, will he live, take a picture Pop pop, does he look happy” they were saying all at once to me about a hundred miles an hour, non-stop.

Well we finally got him in safely and had pictures to boot. Someone said later it was a Carp. Two days later I looked behind the Gazebo and sure enough it was as dry as a bone. I called Samantha and Kara and told them, “See”, they said, “Now aren’t you glad we made you save him?”

I’ll never forget that day but even more important I am sure they will never forget the day they were with Pop-pop and saved “A Fish called Friendly”.