



## Farming water can be a fishy business

by SUE LAFKY

Gary Brian is a farmer. Unlike many farmers, Brian doesn't hold his breath when the winter freezes come, or pray for rain during the long hot summer. Brian raises rainbow trout. His farm, located southeast of Sandy in the Dover area, is naturally equipped with the most important ingredient for a successful harvest — water — and plenty of it. "If you have water, that's a good start for this business," said Brian, who has both a 300-foot well and a spring on his property. "And, of course, you need the water rights."

What started out as a backyard hobby for Brian's father has turned into a thriving full-time business for his son. Brian's Trout Ranch is the largest and oldest in Oregon, supplying more than 1 million trout annually to businesses and ponds as far as 330 miles away.

Brian manages five acres of ponds on the family's 40 acres of land adjacent to Publishers Paper forest near the North Fork of Eagle Creek. "We're going to put more ponds up the canyon next week or the week after," Brian said. "We still can't raise enough," he noted. "This is one industry that needs competition. It's just like if there was only one strawberry grower around."

Brian graduated from Jesuit High School and earned a degree in business and marketing from Portland State University. He learned about trout from reading the few books available on the subject and working with his father, Lawson Garrett Brian II, who started raising trout as a part-time business in 1958.

Brian's parents still live in the white house overlooking what was once their private fishing pond. The younger Brian lives on Wildcat Mountain Drive with his wife Susan and 7-week-old

daughter Kelly.

Brian worked as a sales representative for Kraft Foods before entering the business full-time in 1970.

"I decided to gamble," he said. "So far it's been fun."

Brian beats nature's odds during the November to March hatching season. Rainbow trout eggs in river gravel beds have around a two percent chance of becoming fingerlings.

"We shoot for a 95 percent hatch," said Brian. "It's almost the complete reverse of what it's like in streams."

"I occasionally even go fishing on the Deschutes. A lot of people can't believe I do that." - - Gary Brian

Every six weeks a semi-truck full of commercial fish feed arrives at the farm. The rainbow trout go through 150 pounds of feed a day in the summer, but their appetites drop off in the winter. "The colder the water, the lower the metabolism."

A handful of feed brings hundreds of shimmering fish to the water's surface. "They'd probably bite a bare hook," observed Brian.

The trout also have a tendency to bite each other. "They're pretty cannibalistic," said Brian, who keeps each hatch in a separate pond.

Brian also works to protect the fish from natural predators like otters, water snakes, heron and an occasional kingfisher.

Brian remembers when the first otters came three years ago from

nearby Eagle Creek. It was December, and Brian had 600 brood fish ready to strip of eggs. "Two days later they were gone," said Brian, shaking his head.

"They come in here five, six... seven at a time," he added. "Each otter eats from 5-7 pounds of fish per day. They'll eat until they're full and then kill for sport."

The farm's busiest season lasts from March to September, when most of the deliveries are made in oxygen-fed tanks loaded in the back of Brian's pick-up.

"It's a rare occasion when we lose

even one fish," said Brian, who usually takes charge of deliveries.

Access to customer ponds is sometimes difficult, so Brian brings a bucket just in case. "That takes quite awhile and the fish try to jump out."

During the winter months Brian can be found stripping his 1,200 brood fish of their eggs. The best eggs, he said, come from fish three to five years old. Brian counts on 1,000 fingerlings for every brood fish. "That's a conservative estimate."

The eggs first float in baskets, and Brian handles the tedious task of picking out the bad eggs with tweezers. "Otherwise, the yolk sac will break," said Brian, adding that bad eggs contaminate the others.

It takes a week to 10 days for the eggs to form, a critical time in the egg

development. The eggs are protected from light and movement. "Even bumping the trough — just the shock could kill every one of them."

When the eggs hatch, the young trout eat their sac. Then Brian makes sure the fish are fed 24 times a day — with an automatic feeding system which keeps Brian from having to come out once an hour when the fish are young.

As the fish grow — "about one inch a month" — Brian reduces feeding time to twice a day.

Brian sells his fish live, and charges by the pound and distance of delivery. A typical cost for 1,000 nine-inch fish is \$700, he said.

Brian usually estimates numbers by weighing instead of counting, and is usually close to what the customer ordered. "We'd be down there a week counting," he noted.

"We put in a few extra in case we lose a few on the way over."

He remembers one rancher who ordered 2,500 nine-inch trout. "It was way out in the boonies. He kept moving the planks as I went across the bridge."

The rancher wanted Brian to count the fish before the deal was completed.

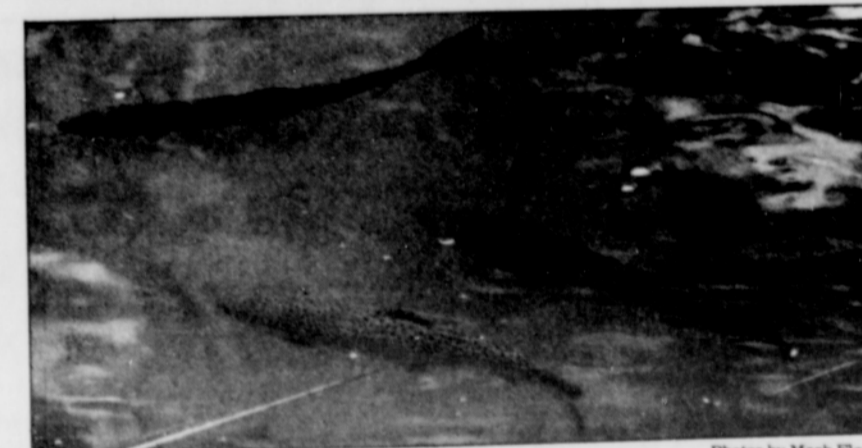
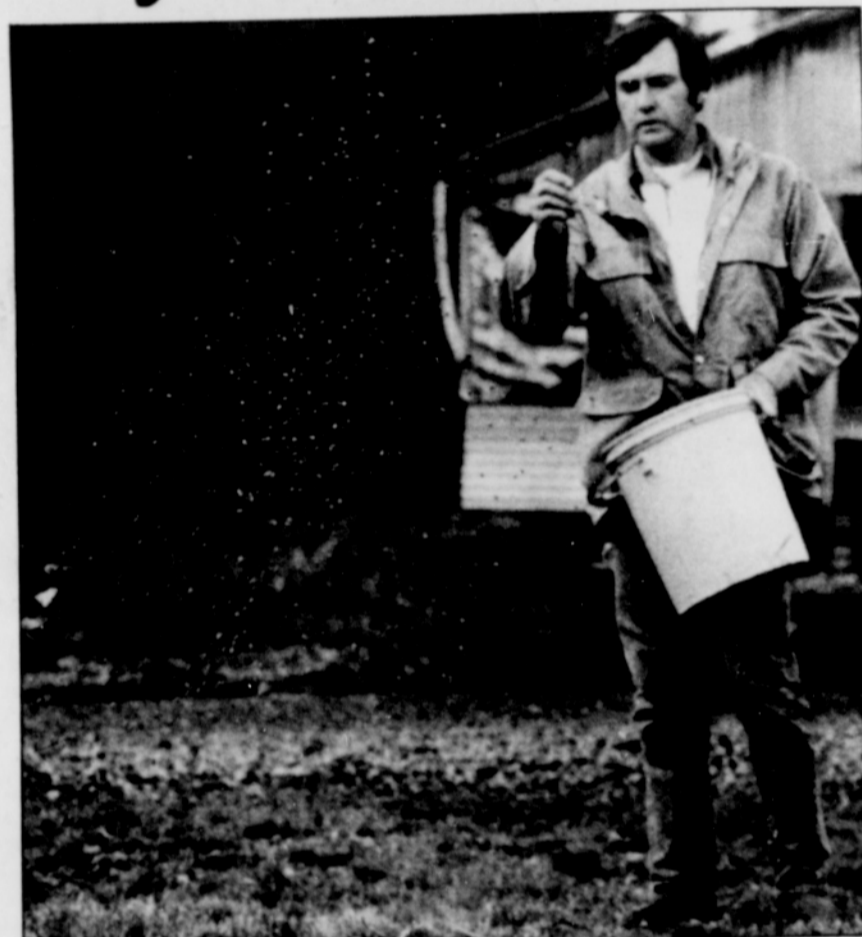
"So I made him a deal. I'd give him the whole load for nothing if the count was under. He'd have to pay \$2 a fish for each one over."

The man was embarrassed when he had to fork over \$50 to Brian when the count was finished. Brian had the last laugh on the way home.

"It's fair, I suppose, to question someone. But he's never done it since. He takes my word for it."

When Brian isn't working on the trout farm, he manages some nursery stock. He takes time off to go hunting when the season is right.

"I occasionally even go fishing on the Deschutes," he said and laughed. "A lot of people can't believe I do that."



Photos by Mark Floyd

## Ghosts of last season return to haunt hoopers

This is the first in a series of three articles dealing with Sandy High school's summer teams. Articles on the Pioneer baseball team and girls basketball team will appear in upcoming issues of The Post.

by MARK FLOYD

Summer basketball can be likened to the traditional 'garbage time' at the end of regular season games. There are a lot of fouls, a lot of ball control violations and some of the most unusual shots a coach would hope not to see.

But summer basketball is also revealing. Despite a somewhat undisciplined nature, the summer league held at Columbia High School should be very beneficial to participating coaches. It can help point out general areas of strength and weaknesses a team might have

and reveal some of the points a few individuals might need to work on.

The Sandy High summer basketball team is no exception. Its most recent game was 59-45 loss to Marshall High School, a game which contained some positive attributes but some disturbing likenesses to last year's problems.

Sandy started off well against Marshall, using some crisp passes and a lot of movement away from the ball. Mike Riley drove the lane for the game's opening bucket; Lee Godfrey hit a 20-foot jumper and then Riley found Godfrey and Kent Reick underneath with a pair of picture-perfect passes to give the Pioneers an 8-5 lead in the early going.

So much for the good. The Sandy attack came to a rapid stall after that point, as Marshall awoke from its slumber and some ghosts from

Sandy's past arose to haunt them.

One of those ghosts was foul trouble. Time after time the Pioneers let their aggressiveness get out of control and committed blatant fouls. In fact, several times Sandy players had to be warned by the referees to control their play.

With the fouls came a steady stream to the free throw line. Luckily, the Marshall players were no Rick Barrys from the charity stripe or the final margin might have been greater.

The second ghost arose as Sandy was forced to play catch-up basketball. The Pioneers tried to break downcourt at every opportunity, but often as not, it was a post man that decided to bring the ball across the midcourt line. Sandy was hampered against Marshall by the absence of Rick Martin, who may inherit the point guard position next

winter. Much of Sandy's ragged play offensively should be eliminated by Martin, a good ball-control guard, while the rest could be attributed to the very nature of summer basketball.

The final problem to haunt the Pioneers was a throwback to nearly every league game in which Sandy played last season — giving up to open shot. Marshall scored 30 of its 59 points on wide open shots from outside of 10 feet. The Pioneers choked off the inside attack, but gave up too much on the outside in doing so.

Several other points were given up when a Pioneer defensive player tried to recover from being out of position and committed a foul. Marshall scored 13 points from the free throw line.

Although Marshall went on to control the second half of the game,

some bright spots began to re-emerge for the Pioneers. One of the brightest was the steady play of Mike Riley, the 6-foot-3 forward-center who was Sandy's leading scorer last season.

Riley scored 11 points and swept down a number of rebounds. More important, he played a consistent defensive game and screened out well.

Another pleasant surprise was the outside shooting touch displayed by Scott Weninger. Outside shooting has been a thorn in Sandy's side for a couple of seasons, but the Pioneers appear to have a potentially dangerous outside attack. Weninger hit three shots from outside the 18-foot mark; Godfrey is gaining confidence in his shot and the return of Martin, who is a better-than-average shooter, should give Sandy the shot in the arm it needs.

Another bright spot may be the emergence of Kent Reick as a swing man. Reick, who can handle either the small forward or the big guard position, displayed surprising inside quickness and rebounding ability.

Overall, the Pioneer team is packed with potential. It has four or five 6-3 post men, although no dominating man in the middle. The Pioneers appear to be getting stronger in the backcourt with Martin and Weninger. Allan Lowe should also contribute when recovered from an injury. And Riley is a potential all-league post man.

The basic problems confronting Sandy appear to be defending the outside shot, maintaining discipline and eliminating the silly fouls that have plagued it for the past two seasons.