

# Grown-ups play hooky at marina

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Like school boys waiting to be caught playing hooky, they sit around the heated dock at Big K Marina, fishing lines draped into the murky, green water.

The men poke at each other jovially, "If my boss could only see me ..."

"If my wife knew what I was doing," another starts, a hand constantly resting on his fishing pole bobbing it in a slow, rhythmic manner.

The minutes weigh like hours as quiet hangs over the room, the fishermen mesmerized as they sit staring into the water.

"It gets you out of the house when there's nothing else to do," offers Charlie Lang, who along with Tom McAllister, has driven from Salina twice this week during his time off to test the waters of Milford Reservoir.

Fishermen pay \$2.50 a piece to place their lines baited with minnows or small jigs through the holes in the ice from the heated dock. More importantly, the shelter keeps them away from the sub-zero weather outside which has given the lake the appearance of a desert made up of white sand dunes.

"Normally they start coming around some time in October," says Joe Bruce, an attendant at the marina. "They'll fish here until about the beginning of April. It's just like regular fishing except you do it through the ice."

A dozen or so fishermen

were gathered at the marina on Thursday morning. Usually, the anglers arrive about 7 a.m. when the doors open. They will stay through the morning. With school out, many children join their fathers in pursuit of the scaly prey.

Big K is possibly the only place on the lake to fish now. Although ice does cover the lake, it has not been determined safe enough to venture out on. Last winter sporadic weather kept the ice from ever reaching a safe level.

Fishing has been good lately. Most of the winter angler's time is spent trying to land crappie or an occasional white bass. The fish are found in anywhere from 5 to 15 feet of water. The important thing, oldtimers suggest, is to find some brush where the fish are lying in wait.

"The fish like stuff that stays still so they can grab it," Bruce says. "It's got to be right in front of their nose."

For hours on end the fishermen will stand vigil, waiting, watching, bobbing. Later in the winter when the ice becomes thicker, some will try and bore holes in the ice in the creek areas and take their chances elsewhere away from the heavily fished marina.

The fishing was slow on Thursday as few of the stringers were filling very fast. "You should have been here Tuesday," McAllister says, and they all nodded in agreement, afraid to break the silence.