

editorial opinion



Rock and rollin' returns

A tall, dark stranger rocked and rolled back into our lives last week. She brought with her a copious sun-tan, an advanced case of athlete's feet, three duffle bags bulging with maily clothes and what appeared to be three more inches of height. The stranger was our 17-year-old Lisa home from camp. She has been going for eight years and always seems to keep growing from child to young woman in eight weeks. Usually her face is a study in sadness when she returns, like the waning summer and the freedom she has left behind. But this year is different. For the first time, she was a counselor with responsibilities and a cabin full of 11-year-olds who still haven't stopped calling Lisa on the phone. She will be off to college very soon and we will all have reached another milestone among so many.

WE ARE going through a transition, but Lisa leaves little room for sadness, reflection or remembering. Torrents of words tumble out of her mouth, bumping into each other in the animated process. "I wasn't here for college registration so I'll probably be stuck with courses like advanced Swahili, Polish arts and crafts and Ukrainian basket-weaving," she moans. "With my luck, I'll get Sunday classes in chapel and a

roommate called Prunella Prudence who's a kleptomaniac and will trip off my new stereo. "By the way, are you going to give me a surprise party for my 18th birthday? I'll give you a list of who to invite. Did I tell you I'm going to Florida for Christmas and I'm going to trade my car in for an economy model because I won't be working my first year of college and I might go out west next summer instead of to camp. "THIS IS a typical Lisa conversation with not a single pause for breath. She's always in a hurry for the next moment to capture in her infinite joy of living. She has a weird habit of sometimes leaving in the middle of a sentence. Lisa in many ways is a kid tugging at the bottom of her not quite ready to be. There are signs of maturing. Last year, she broke her collarbone at camp and the year before she was accidentally kicked in the eye and had to have six stitches. This year when she called and said we would be getting a \$75 doctor bill, we shouldn't worry. I was afraid to ask what part of her body was left to sprain, break or cut. But it was only a case of poison ivy, so we're making progress.

LIFE WITH Lisa is one long rock

and roll. When she isn't dashing in and out of the house, her stereo is punctuating our eardrums while she shouts into the phone for hours and watches television at the same time. It was noisier than usual her first day home from camp. Her entire cabin of giggling girls poured into our house to see Lisa because they were so lonesome. A variety of friends have slept over and they disappear before we discover they were here. Lisa is anything but sophisticated, phony, superficial or clothes-conscious. Would you believe green high-top gym shoes, red shorts, cut-off jeans, mechanic's overalls, a blue Three Stooges T-shirt and she's packed for a trip to Florida. She has already informed me it won't take us more than an hour to supplement her extensive wardrobe for college. Two pairs of blue jeans will serve as her going out clothes along with a Bugs Bunny T-shirt and striped socks. Yes, a tall, dark stranger rolled back into our lives last week. When she leaves for college, the house will be quiet and the aura of excitement and expectancy will be gone. But strangers like Lisa with the laughing face come home again and they are welcomed with open arms and grateful hearts.

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"Between the lines"

by Carl Stoddard

Objectively speaking...

A man telephoned a while ago and asked why I had failed to report some of the facts in a school board article I had written.

I did not mention he said that the board was not telling the public the truth.

I suggested that perhaps that was not so much fact as it was his opinion. Fact I pointed out needs substantiated proof.

Well it's a fact that they're lying, he said.

That short conversation points up a subject everyone in journalism wrestles with daily. We were taught early in the game to be objective and keep our own opinions out of what we observe and report. Just about every journalist I know sincerely tries to do that and most think they are able to accomplish it.

Of course they can't. We are all influenced by our own upbringing, our own morals, standards, beliefs, prejudices, likes, dislikes. A reporter at an even time is also influenced by what he or she ate for breakfast, how warm or cold the room may be, the time of deadline, and hundreds of other little things that most of us never think about nor understand.

I'm always reminded when I get into this subject of Howard Gosell.

THE MONDAY Night sports columnist is well known for his bias.

that he "tells it like it is." In truth, Gosell is telling it the way he sees it, which may or may not approach the actual situation.

Journalistic reports can still be trusted. Imperfect as they may be, they are apt to be better than a news account written by a computer. You could always suspect news accounts be checked by some government agency, but I doubt many of us believe this would be much better. It could, however, be much worse.

There's always the camera. A camera doesn't lie, does it?

A camera can lie very easily. Take a photograph of a row of buildings with a long angle lens and the buildings will appear to be practically on top of each other.

Take a picture of a wrinkled person in soft light and deduct 10 years from that person's appearance. Photograph a person in the middle of a sneeze

and you will record a rather ugly individual.

Television cameras lie, too. Take a television camera crew to a demonstration and watch the picketers suddenly come alive, shouting their picket signs high with sudden renewed vigor. News is biased also at the receiving end. Everyone reads a news article with his or her own built-in biases.

Photographs and television news reports are seen in the same light. Is there an answer to this wholesale case of tinted views? No.

Try as they might, journalists may, without realizing it, inject their own biases. It doesn't happen often, it is rarely deliberate, but it will happen. The answer, if there is one, is to be aware of the inexact human ability to observe and report on the affairs of us humans.

And that, at least from this viewpoint, is a fact.

A lone farewell

It's here. His big day has finally come. Ron Garbinski, the one who has roamed your town cities as the roving reporter, sometimes off on a tangent as the Farmington free-wheeler, leaves today.

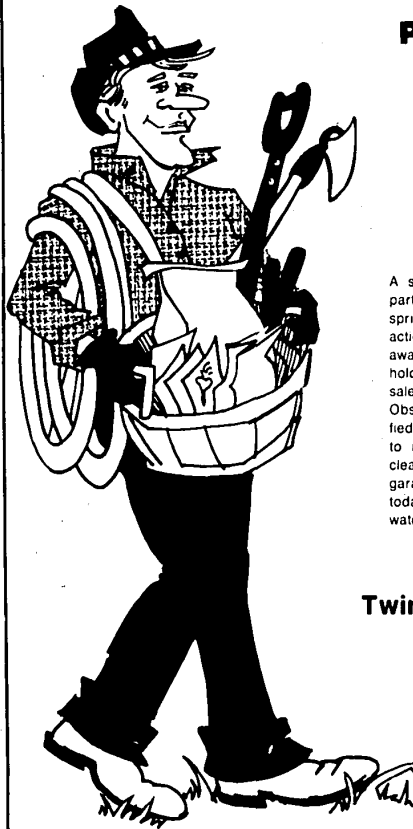
No longer will city employees needlessly worry about him constantly peering over desks, memorizing those "classified documents."

No longer will he spend those leisurely afternoons wandering around town on "feature patrol" with his constant sidekick

Harrison Grant Maubte. No longer will there be a "Well, hello," answering your every call.

No longer will his boss, Mr. Crack-barrel Barnaby sigh at 2:45 p.m. rolls along. No longer.

He's departed on to bigger and hopefully better things. He's off to take over the reins as community editor of the Redford Observer & Eccentric Newspaper. But just because he's gone doesn't mean he's forgotten.



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