

## editorial opinion

# To swim well, swim smart

You read about it at least once every summer, and sometimes more often.

Two fellows are in a boat. Their boat is tipped over, perhaps by a storm, perhaps by the wake of a reckless boater. The craft overturns, but floats.

One who can swim decides to make it 200 yards to shore. He drowns.

The other one sticks to the overturned craft. He is rescued—cold, shaken, but alive.

There are a couple of lessons here. First, the non-swimmer used his head by staying with the overturned craft. Nearly all sailing craft have enough buoyancy, even when three-fourths full of water, to stay afloat and support you.

The boat, after all, isn't holding up your full weight. The water is doing much of that. The boat needs to support only part of your weight, and the water-filled craft can still do that.

If you obey the state law, you have at least one life preserver for every person on board. Thus, every year, hundreds survive upsets.

**ABOUT THAT SWIMMER** who drowned trying to get to shore: He overestimated a number of things.

He overestimated the distance he could swim. He hadn't swum that distance since high school, and even then, it was under ideal pool conditions.

He overestimated his ability to move in cold lake water. He overestimated his own strength against waves.

In the high school pool, he wasn't wearing much. On the big lake, he was fully clothed in underwear, outer wear and shoes. He didn't realize how little buoyancy he had under those conditions.

The second lesson is that a little swimming ability is dangerous.

This almost sounds like people shouldn't learn to swim, but that isn't so. One of the greatest things about modern schools and all their "frills" is that they have pools where kids can learn to swim.

Every kid and adult who enjoys water recreation in Michigan ought to learn how to swim, and swim well. Not just paddle across the pool once or twice, but develop some real ability.

**BESIDES SWIMMING** well, they must also swim smart. Most drownings occur not because someone can't swim but because he made a dumb mistake.

Swimming dumb is the chap who thought he could make it to shore from the capsized boat.

Swimming dumb are the guys who are sitting around drinking beer late one hot night and decide to take a dip in the nearest patch of water they can find.

Swimming dumb is swimming alone.

Swimming dumb is letting someone else swim alone or letting small children swim without adult supervision.

Swimming dumb is horseplay.

Swimming dumb is waterskiing at dusk when you can't see stumps and rocks just under the water's surface.

Swimming dumb is swimming away from shore rather than toward or parallel to shore.

Swimming dumb is attempting a rescue by hand. Those with lifesaving training have been taught differently. If you haven't had lifesaving training, you can still make a rescue by getting a life preserver, oar or rope to the person in trouble.

There are enough schools with pools, enough Red Cross safety courses, enough YMCA's and YWCAs, enough scouting training, enough newspapers and magazines and books so that everyone should know how to swim well and swim smart. Yet every year there are drownings that didn't have to happen. We'll have to keep plugging away.

## Our picnic pal

Wildlife is usually unwelcome at a picnic or around the table of a campground because it's usually in the form of a biting bug or a loose-bowled bird. The exception is the chipmunk.

His red coat at first may be mistaken for a squirrel's. But he's smaller, his tail is less bushy, and he has black and white stripes on his face and back.

He's a solitary dweller, a hermit, mating briefly during the breeding season but otherwise going it alone.

In several days of camping, you can get one almost to eat from your hand. One wonders: Do we treat them like pets because they're so cute and friendly, or are they friendly because we treat them like pets?

The chipmunk lives around trees—not in high branches like the squirrel but in a hole or a den in the roots. He moves in and out with incredible speed. If you scare one, move a few feet away and wait a couple of minutes. He'll poke his head out soon enough.

A chipmunk eats seeds, nuts, fruits and insects. Leftovers that fall from your picnic table are his meat and potatoes. He carries them in his capacious cheek pouches to his lair to enjoy at his leisure.

His wife produces two litters a year, with two to eight young/uns per litter. A fellow that small is food for other animals so he must be prolific for his species to survive.



## Promise 'em weather reform!

Michigan primary elections are only 33 days away and still not a single candidate for any office has included the plank in his or her platform which would guarantee my support at the ballot box.

The noise about the varied tax reform proposals, election reform, school financing reform, welfare reform, and where to bury contaminated cattle is deafening. Knowing it will get louder, I'll tell you the one promise that will get my vote:

### WEATHER REFORM.

That's what Michigan needs most.

Once upon a time, this nation, or what there was of it at that time, had what was dubbed the Know Nothing Party, and politically I must be one of its progeny. But damn it all, what this state has inherited weatherwise in recent years, winter, spring, summer and autumn, ain't worth spittin' on. It's the pits.

A promise of help in that direction would assure a candidate torchlight parades from Iron Mountain to Monroe, from Sault Ste. Marie to New Buffalo.

**LET ME MENTION** another timely detail about Michigan, particularly a page of its history. If you like anniversary get-togethers, this will do as your July 6 excuse to invite some folks over for a cook-out tonight and pop a few corks as a testimonial to the Grand Old Party.

Just 124 years ago today, in 1854, the Republican Party was formally named. It was done in a convention of Michigan thinkalikes who also nominated the state's first Republican candidates for office.

This was accomplished in what now is the city of Jackson, although in 1854 Jackson still was three years away from incorporation. The natives long ago marked the site appropriately as a GOP shrine. Before '54 was over, Republicans in Illinois, Maine, Ohio, Wisconsin and some other states held conventions to rally under the new banner.

The party went to the post in 1856 with its first candidate for president, John C. Fremont, who was nominated in a convention at Philadelphia. He ran against Democrat James Buchanan on a platform which preached that Congress should prohibit slavery and polygamy in the territories. He lost.

Had Fremont promised to do something about Michigan weather, he'd have had my vote even then and it wouldn't have bothered me where he stood on polygamy.

Four years later the Republican management benched Fremont and threw a young fellow from Illinois into the race, which by then had taken on a persistent black hue. His name was Abraham Lincoln and books have been written about what happened next.

**PRESS AGENTS** in what we sports fans know as the Big Ten, if I may stray, have missed a natural angle to whet the thirst for football tickets at those noble institutions of higher learning at Ann Arbor and East Lansing, and even at Madison around the lake. It's an offshoot of my research for this essay which should have come to light years ago.

Assuming those authorities are correct who insist the Republican Party was born 124 years ago today at Jackson, then the devout should call down the wrath of the gods upon the sect which insists the birthplace was at Ripon, Wis., earlier the same year—March 20 to be exact.

Some credit a man named Alvan E. Bovay with suggesting the name "Republican" at a mass meeting at Ripon that day.

If Fielding H. Yost could turn the theft of an

## through bifocals



earthen water jug in 1903 from Minnesota into one of football's most hallowed trophies, then the "Ripon ripoff" could have been worth fabulous attention in Michigan and Wisconsin all these years.

How unfortunate no one among his friends or foes ever nicknamed Bovay "Crazy Legs."

On the other hand, deeper thought brings to mind the possibility of Democrats in the Michigan and Wisconsin legislatures rebelling against such partisan publicity. Included could have been threats of cuts in university appropriations, than which there is nothing more holy in some circles. Wiser heads have prevailed again.

**I CAN'T DISMISS** the class without one more reference to history. It may be accepted as the GOP's birthday, but not that of the elephant in its use as the party symbol.

Thomas Nast, a famous cartoonist of his day for Harper's Weekly, originated the Republican elephant in 1874. To keep this on an even keel, I'll mention that Nast also was the first who used the donkey as a symbol of the Democratic Party. It was in a cartoon published in 1870.

Further research brings to attention the claim that Nast's cartoons helped influence public opinion in favor of the North during the Civil War, helped bring about the defeat of Horace Greeley when the New York publisher was the Democratic candidate for president in 1872, and that he also is credited with starting the present-day idea of Santa Claus in his Harper's Weekly sketches.

Now, why didn't he ever draw cartoons about Michigan's weather? With influence like that, there's a candidate I could vote for.

## World can't allow terrorism

The Roman Empire was supposedly destroyed by the vandals from the north. What really happened was the "glorious days" of the Empire left its people sated and apathetic to the point that they lost their pride and were unable to cope with the aggressors.

Today our civilized world has many of the Roman Empire's problems. We have achieved the highest standard of living the world has ever known, but many nations, including our own have lost their pride.

Since the Vietnam war, we have been patsies internationally.

Our youngsters don't understand why anyone was proud to fight in the Second World War because they grew up in an era where soldiers and national spirit were considered evil things.

**THERE IS NOW** a new enemy on the horizon. We call them terrorists; although history may call them liberators depending on who wins.

They have no use for democracy or personal freedoms or rights, but they operate in an atmosphere where they can ignore the people's rights even as the people go to great lengths to protect the terrorists' rights.

We have seen an athletic team from Israel killed in Germany during the Olympics, yet these athletes hurt no one.

We have seen a former Italian prime minister kidnapped and murdered, yet the leaders of the group that did it were given a fair trial and less than severe sentences for other crimes they had committed.



Tim Richard

## 'Grease' poor '50s portrait

If, in the mid-1950s, someone had asked us what a 1978 movie about the period would be like, we would never have imagined "Grease."

We wouldn't have imagined viewing Hollywood-style nostalgia over leather jackets, turned up shirt collars, peg pants, or "cool" characters.

We would have hardly dreamed that in 1978, "a wop top a loo mop, a lop bam boom" would be considered a refined way of expressing a state of emotion, let alone a state of mind.

Who could have foreseen that the sight of a young female letting cigarette smoke escape from her mouth and breathing it back in through one nostril would be described by a 1978 reviewer as "the screen's definitive sequence on French inhaling?"

Not that any such things didn't occur in the 1950s. They did.

**WHAT YOU ARE** about to see in "Grease" is not the prevailing tone of the '50s but the antics of an underclass.

The cool guys in leather jackets weren't the guys with the dates at the high school football games. They hung around in bachelor packs with maybe one girl—unengaged and unattractive—among them. Their duck's ass collars, plastered into place with Wildroot Cream Oil, weren't that alluring to the chicks.

The chicks dated the squares. Squares weren't social retardates, as Hollywood may view them. They were the leaders, in and out of the classroom. They had short hair and weren't hostile to adult society.

One of the most significant polls of the '50s asked young folks whether their favorite singer was greaseball Elvis Presley or square Pat Boone. This was before Elvis became a patriotic hero by doing time in the Army and before Pat got religion so openly.

The Pat Boone fans had B averages in the classroom. The Elvis Presley fans had flat C averages. In the '50s a person with a flat C average was distinguished at virtually nothing.

In 1955 Time magazine's Man of the Year was Harlow H. Curtice, president of General Motors Corp.

Curtice symbolized the mood of America, old and young, far better than did Elvis or Fabian or even Sen. Joe McCarthy, for that matter. Curtice stood for progress that came from initiative in the private sector, not from government. That idea was the root of the distrust of government that prevails in liberal and conservative circles alike today.

Curtice also symbolized growth. I recall a quoted remark from a GM executive of that era that "we calculate our profit as a percentage of the gross national product."

That may have also been the dark side of the '50s—the emphasis on growth to the point that it became synonymous with wastage of resources. Well, the '50s weren't perfect.

**IN THE '50s** we saw Detroit's population nearing the two million mark. Prosperity was spreading to all races, and we confidently expected prosperity to blur and eliminate racial differences.

Make the pie big enough and we wouldn't have to argue about how wide a slice each one gets. Since 1957 Detroit has become half-depopulated in an undeclared race war. Don't sneer at the '50s.

In the '50s women were expected to go steady by 16, be pinned at 18 and married by 20. Liberation was an unknown word—but not an unknown idea. Ovetta Culp Hobby made it to the Cabinet, Margaret Chase Smith was in the Senate, Althea Gibson made it in athletics, Sylvia Porter in economics. There was a vast increase in the proportion of women who went to college, even if their degree goal was only the Mrs.

The decade of the 1950s was never dominated by anyone from "Grease." No way.



by HANK HOGAN

The high point of this senseless and needless violence occurred last week at the Palace of Versailles outside of Paris where priceless, irreplaceable art treasures were bombed.

Who has mothered these savages that have no respect for life or property?

What possible grievance could these people have against the cultural artifacts there?

**THE PEOPLE CLAIMING** credit for the bombing say they were bringing attention to their cause. Somehow they feel they can justify anarchy because they feel their cause is right.

If we continue to allow these terrorists to operate, we will allow them to destroy eventually our civilization, just as happened to the Roman Empire.

Since they don't understand that with human rights come responsibilities, they do not merit the protection of these rights.

It is always difficult to condone repression of people airing their grievances, but if something is not done anarchy will deprive all of us our rights.

Governments all over the world must crack down on this type of activity and those who won't, or who actually encourage it, must be penalized. The future of our civilization is at stake.

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