

## Monday's Commentary

# The Flip Side

by craig piechura



## Fuming about gas crisis

At cocktail parties lately, Larry Troy has been bugged worse than funeral directors about his chosen line of work.

Troy, of Troy, owns one of the highest volume gas stations in the state. It's in Southfield, on the corner of Eight Mile and the Southfield expressway.

Backing the current trend, Troy's Shell station is usually open 24 hours a day and even has a service bay. Remember those? Last year Troy sold 2.5 million gallons of gas from the station and took in more than \$2 million in cash.

Over the years he's been shot at and robbed. He's got a '78 Bronco pockmarked with buckshot to prove it. He figures the only thing that saved him was that he happened to drop a bank sandwich on the ground and was stooping to pick it up when the shot was fired.

It wasn't the first time. An employee of his was gunned down on the driveway in 1975 during a robbery attempt. A tow truck driver was beaten with a chain by a man who was mad because his car wouldn't start.

HE HAS TO put up with people "who all claim to be loyal customers" bringing in "a kid's rotten old bicycle tire."

"I end up putting six patches on it and then I hear 'Are you going to charge me for this Larry? I buy all my gas from you.' Oh, boy, that's terrific. A million people drive on Eight Mile each way every day. I gotta lotta loyal customers. More than I can service."

Troy's used to being reamed out by customers who blame him for the failure of a headlamp. After all, they brought the car in for a tune-up the day before.

But lately Troy's been on the receiving end of a heavy verbal barrage. It comes from customers who aren't happy about filling up their tank and getting a five back in change from a twenty.

No aggravation holds a candle to the heat Troy receives about the high price of gas.

It's not that he doesn't appreciate the business. It's just that he's a little touchy about being blamed for the oil price crisis and the scanty allocations. He's just as mad, maybe more, at the oil companies and federal government over the allocation set-up. After all, it's affecting his livelihood.

IN FACT, Troy nearly filed suit against the Department of Energy last week in an effort to force the feds to release some of the gas set aside for emergencies.

The suit was dropped last week when the feds released 3 percent of the 1974 statewide allocation and ordered equal distribution to the state's service station owners. For Troy, 3 percent equals 8,000 more gallons monthly. "It means I'm open Sundays."

Until the threat of a lawsuit, 5 percent was being set aside for emergencies and dealers had to fill out federal forms to get more than their allocation. Now 2 percent of the 1974 state allocation is being held in reserve for emergency sale to police and fire departments in the state.

Before that action, Troy made a good case for fraud on the part of jobbers. Dealers in the metropolitan Detroit area got suspicious about areas where gas was plentiful, Troy said, and demanded access to public records of gas transactions.

Troy said they discovered one small independent gas station chain in Detroit bought a large purchase from a Flint jobber earlier this year.

Troy says much of the 5 percent that was being set aside for emergencies was ending up in the possession of independent gas suppliers or "jobbers" who made a quick profit on the gas.

By claiming their area dealers were experiencing a hardship supplying public service agencies, Troy says jobbers would receive an increased allocation and end up with more gas than they could sell at the update stations.

The jobber makes 4.5 cents per gallon of gas sold to dealers, Troy said. With an excess 100,000 gallons, they've made a quick \$4,500 bucks in the name of energy conservation.

Because there are only two officials in the Lansing office of the Department of Energy, Troy said the phone number is always busy. Besides, he figures the feds were probably swamped with work and too busy to check out the legitimacy of hardship claims.

He feels the new set-up is fair and "is working a lot better." But Troy is still trying to convince the Department of Energy to establish a system that guarantees at least one dealer in a large city is open on weekends "so the consumer knows somebody'll be out there."

So far he's gotten nowhere on that suggestion. Government officials tell him the mechanics of such a plan would be too unwieldy. Troy laughs and holds up reams of required paperwork and asks how a grocer would like posting a sign on his shelf stating how much he could charge for a can of peas.

# Shirlee's sallies

by Shirlee Iden



## Sentimental? Absolutely

Most parents have their favorite stories about their children's escapades through the years and maybe most kids have stories about their folks. I know mine do.

Recently, Bruce, Lauren and Elaine, my three offspring, tease me by saying: "Careful or she'll quote you."

And let's face it, I'm glibly occasionally using their words to make a point.

But through the years, their favorite thing to tease me about was that old family anecdote of "mom and the flag."

It's almost 20 years since I was a wet-behind-the-ears student of a Jewish War Veteran Auxiliary. We had about 50 members and I was their "Once and fearless leader."

I was also a budding historian, several years from the degree, but very conscious of this country's history — and of its flag.

The JWW activity gave me a chance to feel good about this deep sentiment for the flag. Americanism was a vital part of our work.

We didn't only give flags to Scout troops and schools, we shared our expertise on the care and display of the flag. And that's where the story begins.

RUNNING around the area on the dozens of chores my presidency and my children generated, I noticed several times that there was no flag flying on the large pole at the Huntington Woods City Offices.

For weeks I watched and became more irritated. A large flagpole at the seat of government in my city — and no flag.

One morning I phoned the city and asked if they had a flag. They did. Then I said: "Then I want to be put on the agenda of tomorrow's council meeting."

That was all right with the secretary. But after making the arrangements, I got a quick call back from the city manager.

He wanted to know what it was I wanted to speak about. And I told him about my distress that the city flew no flag.

City officials explained that they simply had no one personal stick with the job of raising the flag each morning. But I told them they had better find someone — and soon.

They did. And ever since, the American flag flies proudly every day in Huntington Woods. And they have a standing order that my auxiliary will replace the flag when it wears out.

For the first few weeks after my encounter with city officials, every time we got in the car, Bruce, Lauren and Elaine, den 6, 7, and 8, would insist: we go by the city offices.

## Tinkering Around

by LOUISE OKRUTSKY

## It's only a ride: don't worry

Carnival rides are one of the mysteries of civilization.

Persons actually pay for rides which have the same affect on them as a sound beating. In the world of amusement parks such a thing is regarded as funny not felony.

I must have been standing behind the door when they passed out stamina for carnival rides. I size up a ride by taking a poll of the ages of all the persons lined up for it. If the average age is less than 10, I know that ride is for me.

Only persons with squeamish stomachs will appreciate the trouble I have trying to convince someone to go on the merry-go-round with me.

Once you finally find someone to ride the painted ponies with you, it's embarrassing when the carnie won't let you on the merry-go-round because you're too big.

But it's equally embarrassing to admit that you're terrified of just about every other ride in the fair.

Last year a friend of mine cajoled

me into riding on the State Fair's double ferris wheel. When we at long last alighted from the monster, he was sporting a series of half-moon shaped dents in his forearm from my finger-nails. I was the one who was trying not to give into my initial impulse to kiss the earth.

DURING THE RIDE the car had stopped at the top of the ferris wheel.

"Isn't this a great view," my friend said.

"I can't see it," I answered. "Try taking your head out from my shoulder," he suggested.

I cautiously removed my head from its hiding place. Even more cautiously, I opened one eye, caught a quick view of the city lights and then returned to my original scarcely-cat position.

"OK, I saw it. It looks nice," I said.

"Quit rocking the car,"

"That's the wind," he answered.

But for every ride I've gone on and

suffered through, there are two I'm forever grateful I never tried.

There's one ride that resembles a huge drum. By using centrififical force, the riders are plastered against the wall as the drum turns around and around with sickening speed.

Some of the riders get creative about the position in which they torture themselves on this thing. They assume positions normally seen in Egyptian tomb paintings.

One slightly plump man took on the appearance of the Pillsbury doughboy. I became dizzy just watching.

THE TYPE OF RIDE I enjoy actually is very tame. I loved the haunted mansion in Disneyland. Riders were taken through this haunted mansion and got to see cute ghost cartoons projected onto the wall. It was nice.

And no one said I was too big. And no one said I was too old for the ride.

## From our readers

### Right to inquiry

Editor:

The recent letter from Rabbi Halpern requires a reply raising, perhaps for the last time, the concerns reflected by the censure of the Birmingham Temple by the organization of which Rabbi Halpern is president.

The rabbi reveals a critical flaw in his logic and a sad falling of his personal philosophy when he writes, at once, that the Detroit area rabbis, "...respect the right of organizations and individuals to espouse any viewpoint..." but have an objection, "...to an institution...inviting an individual (whose) position is antithetical to the Jewish community." The issue is not now and never was I. F. Stone. The issue is the importance of intellectual exploration of even unpopular ideas.

Whether the majority of the Jewish community disagree with Stone or not (and I certainly have no way of knowing: I wonder how Rabbi Halpern is able to be certain) the reason for the Birmingham Temple inviting I. F.

Stone to speak was not because each member agrees with Stone, but that enough members were curious enough about his views to want to learn more. That type of curiosity about even unpopular ideas is essential if one is to continue to grow.

It makes no difference how many — or how few — might agree with I. F. Stone or whether Stone is correct or not. The Birmingham Temple, at least, understands the importance of free inquiry and the difference between listening and concurring. Rabbi Halpern, it seems, would condemn the one as much as the other. That is very sad.

MARK H. COUSSENS, Southfield

## History coverage

Editor:

Speaking as an "old-timer" of Farm-

ington, may I thank you for giving increasing coverage in the Observer to local historical matters? I refer specifically to your recent story on local cemeteries.

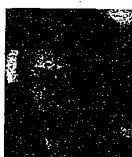
One probably should not expect a paper to dig up all facts with accuracy. You have deadlines to meet and research takes time. May I quarrel with the last couple of paragraphs in the reference story?

Constantine Wood, purported to be the third person buried in Oakwood cemetery, was no woman, as reported by you. Constantine was a man — an unfortunate man. His widow, Lucy (Clark) testified many years after his death that his tombstone had been incorrectly engraved. She stated that he died October, 1825, rather than 1827. The casual reader probably couldn't care less.

Incidentally, did you know that present Oakwood cemetery was originally known as the "Marshground"? Reference source: Nathan Powers' diary.

ROBERT R. COOK, Farmington

## Daniel's Den



By Emory Daniels

## Why this fisherman is optimistic

If it's not raining today, while you are reading this, I'll be sitting in a boat, with a can of night crawlers nearby, drifting off the waves of Indian Lake near Manistiquie.

I left Saturday morning for my annual voyage to the U.P. in quest of the walleye and expect to have much better luck this year, even though the "keeper" size was raised to 15 inches last year.

I'm optimistic for two reasons: First, the gasoline scare is keeping tourists out of northern Michigan and the U.P. The fewer boats on the lake, the better my chances of getting a good catch.

Another reason is a discussion I had last week with Joe Ratke from the Motor Club. Joe also goes up to the U.P. each summer after the walleye. In fact, his hunting grounds are just a few miles to the east of Indian Lake-Manistiquie Lake up near Newberry.

Joe, like a lot of other fishermen, believes the middle of July is the best time for walleye because the water is well warmed by then and they go down into the deep holes for feeding.

I opt for the first part of August, partly because I think the seasonal changes in Michigan are such that we can count on a late spring, late summer each year and are more likely to find mid-July conditions in early August.

But Joe seems to have more luck than I, so he may be right. This year, though, the walleye fishing was a bit slow in July. He had just returned from a couple weeks' fishing when I was talking to him and said most of his catches were the 12-13 inch variety. (Wonder if they'll grow two inches in a month?)

So Joe was going to try his luck on the St. Clair River, also an excellent spot for walleye. But I'll be thinking of Joe today while waiting for some action.

AND PATIENCE is the key to waiting for some action!

The best way to fish for walleyes is to drift over a deep hole with a night crawler harness. The shiny little spoon on the harness attracts their attention, but it doesn't guarantee success.

Just because you pass over a deep spot without a hit, it doesn't mean there's no fish there. It may take several passes to lure a walleye into action. Walleye are a smart fish, unlike their cousin — the pike.

A pike will strike fast if hungry, as soon as anything dangles by his long nose. But a walleye, even if hungry, will play around with your bait. You have to "feel" his presence near your line.

One trouble with walleye fishing, in fact, is that you always run across pike instead. I've caught many northern pike, and thrown 'em all back, while walleye fishing.

Pike are a very bony fish, hard to fillet, and rather flat in taste. But it's easy to come up with a boneless fillet from a walleye, which also is one of the tastiest fish you can catch in Michigan waters.

Actually, yesterday was my first day of fishing up here but today should be The Day. The first day is a time to explore the lake, dabbling here and there to check out the holes, because in a year's time it's easy to forget where they are.

## Farmington Observer

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