

editorial opinion

Outdoor fun is just a few minutes away

Michigan folks are fortunate when it comes to recreation and the energy crisis.

A three-year study recently completed by a Michigan State University professor shows us just why that is the case.

The limited availability of gasoline, says Prof. Mike Chubb, will curtail recreational activities that involve long distances by car. It will increase the use of recreational resources closer to heavily populated areas.

A look around metro Detroit shows that we, indeed, are the lucky ones. Within an hour, an outdoor recreational fan can launch a canoe, dip a fishing line, ski, or pitch a tent. That's just the tip of the list.

The combination of local, county, metropolitan, state and federal facilities is almost endless.

IN SHORT, a tank of gas provides many recreational possibilities.

Take the Huron-Clinton Metro Parks system, for instance. We have 10 on which to rely. They are anywhere from minutes to an hour or so away, depending on where you live.

Westersiders are most familiar with Kensington, west of Wixom on the I-96 expressway. You can name your recreational ticket at this facility. Among activities are golf, swimming, sailing, a wildlife nature center and a group campsite. Fishing isn't bad either.

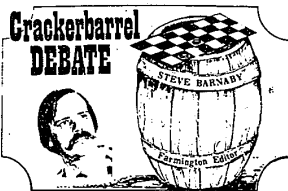
Eastersiders can hit either Metro Beach or Stony Creek for variations on similar activities. Those downriver have Lower Huron, Willow and Oakwoods metroparks. West of Ann Arbor are Hudson Mills, Dexter-Huron and Delhi metroparks.

But that's just the beginning.

A QUICK LOOK at the map shows numerous state recreational areas. The Island Lake State Recreational area connects with Kensington and west of that are the Brighton and Pickney state recreation areas.

The most exciting aspect of the western metro recreation areas is the Huron River. The more adventurous outdoors person can launch a canoe and have a ball paddling and fishing.

Few other major metropolitan areas in this country have such nature accoutrements in this close proximity.



Persons who are a little more daring, and who own good mileage vehicles, can hit the road for half-and whole-day drives to enjoy the state park's system — one of the best if not the best in the country.

A SHORT HOP to the tip of the thumb will take you to two state parks, Fort Crescent and Albert Sleeper. Both are fine camping facilities which offer breath-taking views of Lake Huron and the Saginaw Bay. From Detroit, these parks are only 124 miles away.

A ride-up I-75 will take you to Higgins Lake, which has two state park outlets and plenty of room for campers. This is a super lake for those who enjoy letting loose the sails or revving up the outboard engine. The lake is huge and the sunsets are something to behold. Those who prefer a little more solitude on the big lake should head for the North Higgins Lake State Park. It's much smaller than the South and offers an air of serenity lacking in the larger site.

The drive is approximately 186 miles from Detroit.

The best bet for energy conscious vacationers is to get a good collection of maps and literature on the various parks system and check out for yourself what is pleasing to the recreation palate.



Tim Richard

Pattern hits a great band

"I don't think we could say Detroit doesn't want us," said Helen Rowe, unpaid publicist for the Detroit Concert Band and wife of conductor Leonard B. Smith. "But they are taking us for granted."

When Smith cancelled the band's July 29 concert because picnickers on Belle Isle were playing rock and disco music over a van loudspeaker, a city official dismissed it as "just one of those things."

But it wasn't just one of those things. It was part of a pattern. Helen Rowe won't say it's a plot and denies that the city wants to dump the band. Nevertheless, a lot of things have been happening to the band vis-a-vis the city, and they're all bad.

THE PATTERN looks like this:

- No city police were available to crack down on the van with the loudspeaker although earlier the offender had been asked to turn down the volume. Although police shrugged that "all it would have taken was one little call to us," Miss Rowe points out that the band shell has no telephone because the city has never had one installed.

- This concertgoer can attest that bicyclists, not always sober, have buzzed the Belle Isle audience. There were no fights or threats, but there was clear intimidation — and no police.

- Two other concerts at Belle Isle had to be cancelled this year because earlier events ran much too long. This is particularly annoying to the band because, as Miss Rowe says, "Leonard runs a tight ship," starting promptly at 7 p.m. and ending on schedule.

- In 1976 Joyce Garrett's Detroit Bicentennial Commission put on a "homecoming" program and published a brochure of present and former Detroit musical groups. Miss Rowe noted, "There was no mention that the Detroit Concert Band was ever part of the cultural scene."

- There has been no room in either Ford Auditorium or the Veterans Building for an office for the band.

- There used to be D-DOT bus service from Jefferson at the Boulevard to the Belle Isle band shell for concertgoers. No more.

- The band's two chief sources of money are the Detroit parks and recreation budget and the unincorporated Music Performance Trust Fund, financed by royalties from records. The number of concerts they have sponsored has shrunk from 49 in 1945, when the band was founded, to 27 this year.

AND YET THE Detroit Concert Band continues to be popular.

Its free concerts draw up to 4,000. A July Meadowbrook concert was a sellout in the 6,000 to 8,000 range, even though tickets cost up to \$9.

In 1970 when the BBC filmed a documentary on March King John Philip Sousa, it selected the Detroit Concert Band for live music because its style is closest to Sousa's own.

The band is currently making its 10th recording. The band has drawn enthusiastic crowds to Birmingham's Shain Park the last two years. A large throng is expected at 6 p.m. Aug. 19 for a performance at Livonia's Ford Field, Farmington Road north of I-96.

"Which shows you," said Helen Rowe. "That our audience is in the suburbs."

NO SUBURBAN government, however, could afford to pick up the band's \$200,000 annual budget, though I wouldn't mind being proven wrong.

The band sought funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, but the endowment had no category for an adult professional concert band. "They practically told us to get lost," said Miss Rowe.

She said Smith is thinking about seeking commercial sponsorship. Last year the band played 10 unpublicized Ford Auditorium concerts underwritten by Chevrolet for 10,000 visiting dealers. Pontiac Motors and Michigan Consolidated Gas Co. have donated uniforms in the past.

You wonder: Can a concert band which a city takes for granted survive? Can the suburbanites who enjoy it most come to the rescue?

Eccentricities

by HENRY M. HOGAN, JR.



Good marriage is hard work, a commitment

Marriage used to be such a hallowed tradition. It was a commitment that people took seriously. It was a way of life that was accepted by everyone, and those who avoided it were looked upon as something different.

Today many of the younger generation are not treating it with the respect it deserves. "Til death do us part" has been replaced by "Til one of us gets bored" or "Til something better comes along."

According to statistics, there is no longer a great rush to enter into matrimony. Those special relationships which were created by the marital contract are now enjoyed by any two people who don't want to pay two rents.

THERE IS NO question that a good marriage doesn't just happen because two people fall in love.

After the biological urges have lost their novelty, a good marriage must be sustained by hard work. It requires two selfish people to give for the common good. It requires the development of a companionship that gives great satisfaction from sharing experiences.

The couples who seem to go their separate ways in interests eventually seem to go their separate ways in life.

The earlier years are the hardest. More breakups occur the first year. The other hard years are the seventh year, the 10th year and the 20th year.

The problem with treating marriage lightly is that it won't work. The greatest reward from marriage is the stability and dimension it adds to your life in this era of change.

If the relationship is casual and not looked on as a long-term commitment, you are not willing to invest your whole energies into making it work. You hold back something so you don't get hurt, and the reservations destroy the framework.

TO ME, you get the most happiness in life from sharing experiences. Many times I have seen beautiful things when I was alone — like seeing a sunset — but the experience was somewhat empty because there was no one with whom I could share it.

There are highs and lows in marriage. But the highs are so high and the rewards are so great that those who take them for granted, those who are not willing to make the commitment, probably won't enjoy the rewards.

This last weekend, two things happened in our family. Our oldest child became engaged, and we celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary.

Some will say we are lucky we survived the 25 years. But our hope is that our daughter will make the same commitment we did, so she can have the same happiness we have shared.



• By W. W. EDGAR

The Stroller Drink, drink, drink?

Ordinarily The Stroller takes things as they come as he strolls along life's highway. From childhood he was taught the Presbyterian creed that what's going to happen is going to happen and nothing can be done about it.

But lately a disturbing element has entered his life and it is centered, of all places, in our so-called high class eating establishments.

No, it isn't the price of food, though that is bad enough. Instead, the disturbing element centers on the waitresses and the question has arisen: Are they servers of food or are they liquor salesmen?

But lately, that has changed, and now the question has arisen that has The Stroller disturbed. IT ALL HAPPENED some time ago when The Stroller and the little woman who runs our home decided to dine out at one of our favorite places.

We had enjoyed dining there for years and had a special waitress who seemed to enjoy the very sight of us when we entered the room.

She had known our likes and dislikes for years. But this night it was different. Despite the fact that The Stroller didn't drink — and she knew it — she

asked, "Can I get you anything from the bar?"

Naturally, The Stroller declined. A bit later after taking our order, she returned and informed us that the order would be delayed a bit and then repeated, "Now, can I get you anything from the bar?"

Turned down again, she walked about the room serving at several other tables, and then returned, asking, "Are you sure you don't want anything from the bar?"

Disturbing as it was, The Stroller and the little lady ate our dinner and enjoyed it, as usual. But we couldn't get over the change in the waitress' style.

FINALLY, ONE evening we decided to entertain several guests and returned to our favorite dining room.

As we headed for the table assigned to us and the guests were following the waitress greeted us with her usual smile and then she asked, "Can I get you anything from the bar?" This was too much for the little lady, who turned and said, "Can't you wait until our guests are seated?"

Still that wasn't enough. Our waitress asked again and finally a drink was served. Then she walked away smiling. She seemed to have scored a victory — she had sold a drink.

That's what has The Stroller disturbed. So much so that the last time she asked, "Can I get you anything from the bar?" he answered, "Yes, you can get me a glass of water." And she brought it to him rather reluctantly. But she didn't ask again. What caused the change in a waitress? There never has been a clear cut answer, but The Stroller has his own idea and it concerns the tipping practice.

With drinks at the inflated price they are today, a drink or two around a table of diners, will have an effect on the bill. Don't forget that the waitress, by custom, gets 15 percent.

She can't ask, "Do you want another steak or do you want another dessert, but she has the rather productive choice of asking, "Can I get you something from the bar?"

To my way of thinking, it is her way of getting a raise without dickering with the management.

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