

# Monday's Commentary

## Tinkering Around

by LOUISE OKRUTSKY

### Plymouth rock is shrinking

Our Pilgrim forefathers must be rolling over in their graves. Their starched collars must be curling. Plymouth Rock is shrinking. Yes indeed. It's getting smaller and no one has noticed yet except me.

Everyone knows that Plymouth Rock is tall, dark and jagged. Would the Pilgrims tie the boat that held all their possessions not to mention their women and children, to something that resembles an overgrown pebble? Of course not.

Any tourist who views the spot where our country's Pilgrim forefathers touched land should be appalled at the size of the rock. It's shrinking fast.

Of course, the Greek inspired portico which surrounds the rock was built to shelter something much larger than the coffee-table sized pebble which it now holds.

You enter the granite portico which was built on the bay. It's a sunny afternoon. The blue bay water is interrupted

only by the white sails of boats out for the afternoon.

The rock is encircled by a black wrought iron fence. But before you enter near the fence, a host dressed in a holey but colorful rendition of early Pilgrim gear greets you.

IT'S TELLING THAT his peaked sleeves look as if they're held up by thin cardboard straight from an Arrow shirt package.

When you do get near the rock you're forced to look down into a hole. There in the shadows of a pit, rests the rock. It is the size of a coffee table and the top part looks as if it was repaired with plaster.

The only distinguishing mark about this common pebble standing in for a noble piece of stone is that someone has thoughtfully stamped the year 1620 into its side.

It's crushing. To quote Peggy Lee, "Is that all there is?"

Then read the literature the town's

entrepreneurs hand to unsuspecting tourists. For instance, they carefully avoid saying the Pilgrims indeed did land on that rock. Instead they say that a 17th century character who claimed to have known the stories told by the first settlers said that pale pebble was the Pilgrims stepping stone to a new world.

ANY KID RAISED ON Saturday morning commercials can recognize evasion when he sees it.

Finding out that there's no such thing (almost) as Plymouth Rock is of the same caliber as discovering there's no Easter bunny and that your toys don't take on their own life and power after midnight.

It takes a little bit of the romance out of life.

I could have handled it, but I came home only to discover that the Elks don't really roast an ox for the Founders' Festival. It's a steer.

Did you know that?



## Mélange

by Mary Gniewek

### Watching the world go by

Hooray for Dan Harrison.

Hit by a severe case of wanderlust, the former librarian left his Farmington Hills home last month to see the world on a 15-speed bicycle.

He is allowing himself three years for a tour that will include (hopefully) stops in Peru, India, Singapore and a host of other exotic places.

It's like John Steinbeck's "Travel with Charley" on an international level. The famed American author kissed his wife goodbye one year and packed up his dog, Charley, and took to the U.S. highways and backroads to discover America on a grass roots level.

Then there's Paul Theroux who documented his worldwide travels in a book called "The Great Railway Bazaar." Theroux took a train through Europe, Asia, India, the Far East, then back to his starting point — London.

His experiences were incredible. Picture your own life tailored to that type of situation — literally watching the world go by outside your window.

GETTING BACK to Harrison, I wish him the best of luck and very few blisters.

He's going to soak up as much life as he possibly can. It's something many dream about, but very few try to do. I envy him.

To be a free spirit is hard work. It is not with compatible with commitments, like job, career, lifestyle or family. Living on the road is a learning experience that cannot be taught from books or lectures or travel films. Sometimes living on the road is cultural shock.

I once interviewed an artist from Argentina who stopped in Dearborn while driving around the world in his Ford Model T. For the old man, Dearborn was a must stop because it was the home of his hero — auto pioneer Henry Ford.

To say thank you, the artist had painted a portrait of Henry Ford and delivered it to city officials. He had driven his Model T for an unspeakable number of years. Through his interpreter, he told me it was a good and faithful friend.

When the ceremony was over, he hopped back into his car and continued homeward bound for South America. The artist was at least 70 years old. And here he was vagabonding his way across the continent. He was an unforgettable character.

AS THE weather gets ripe for traveling, it sharpens my own fantasies of worldwide bunning. It would have to be a combination of "Travel with Charley" and "The Great Railway Bazaar."

I'd start with a jaunt around the country, from Maine down to Florida, then across the southern states to California.

Then, goodbye domestic travel. Hello, world. The first stop on the next leg of the journey would be Hawaii, then Japan and China. India's out. It sounds too depressing. The Middle East is out. I'd hate to get caught in a war.

Europe is definitely in. From Russia, I'd travel westward through Poland, Germany, France, England and then back home again.

But I think I'll leave the bicycling up to Dan Harrison. I'd rather travel by car or train.

## Shirlee's sallies

by Shirlee Iden



### Now there was a wedding

Everyone has fantasies and mine's an old one.

For as long as I can remember I've been thinking about a wedding that I didn't attend.

It happened 50 years ago on June 9. The setting was a small village in Poland called Kosowser and it was truly a Polish wedding.

The bride was the eldest daughter of a respected merchant in the town. And I guess when you have six daughters, marrying off the first one is something to be joyful about.

She was a lovely bride, petite and dark-haired, a true beauty. The groom, also dark and handsome, came to the town several weeks before the marriage was scheduled. It was an ecstatic homecoming because he had been gone more than six years.

Only 17 years old when her beloved left for the United States with his mother and sisters, the bride had waited faithfully for him. No arranged match, this was a love affair. She knew in her heart, when he got the coveted citizenship papers in America, he would come back.

Through the years they corresponded faithfully, though he began by writing one letter each day and as the years passed and he became involved in business, the letters became less frequent.

Both bride and groom had many

chances to find other suitable mates, but this was a love affair.

AS THE TIME for the wedding approached, the entire town became involved in the happy proceedings. People opened their homes to the friends and relatives who came from neighboring towns.

The ceremony took place under the traditional canopy outdoors and the dancing and singing and celebration lasted for days.

When the time came for the newlyweds to leave, it was a poignant, difficult time. Surely, she would return in two or three years to visit. But, for now, she was leaving her mother and father, sisters, brother and sister-in-law for a far, far land where she would have to master a new language and learn a new way of life.

The leave-taking was painful. They boarded a train for Warsaw and in a moment there was her father. He had leaped onto the train to ride a distance with her.

From there another train to Paris and the ship Majestic across the ocean. It was a long journey and she would never make the return trip.

Two children were born — a daughter, then a son. And by the time the baby could have traveled, it would have been dangerous for a Jewish Pol-

ish national to enter Poland. She never saw her parents again, nor her brother. Only two sisters survived the Nazi Holocaust.

As the years passed, there were the joys of raising the children as well as the anxious times — the illnesses, accidents, weathering the Depression.

BUT LOVE was forever in this case. And they marked their 20th, 30th and 40th anniversaries, always with the children and other family members.

Three years ago, he returned to Poland with the daughter. His bride of 47 years had vowed never to re-enter eastern Europe where her family had been brutalized. The father and daughter went to Kosowser twice.

He showed her where the wedding had taken place and where her mother's home had stood all those years ago. So many years had passed, and still they found townspeople who remembered that bride's father.

But even though the daughter could visit and try to visualize the lovely wedding in the center of town a half-century before, she can only fantasize about attending her own parent's wedding.

She'll have to settle for watching their faces as their golden anniversary is celebrated. And that will be something. Because it's still a love match.



## "Around the edge"

by Jackie Klein

### How to be a nonconformist

Elissa Jane Karg was a cynical, skeptical junior at Brien McMahon High School in Norwalk, Conn., in 1968 when she wrote and published the book "How to be a nonconformist."

The book is dedicated to her mother whom Ms. Karg claims brow beat her. The author pretenses to be well qualified to speak out on nonconformity because she was an angry and amused observer of her cool contemporaries.

She couldn't include a long list of landmark credits because, at her tender age, this was her first commercially published work. She loved babies, books, art and arguing. She hated anything middle-of-the-road, unconcerned and noncommittal. She also hated everything cool, psychedelic and generally nonconforming.

I wonder where Ms. Karg is today and if she still loves babies, culture and controversy. Is she somebody's wife and mother, cooking, cleaning and washing dishes and wishing she didn't have to conform?

In 1968, Ms. Karg noted in her book that everybody wants to be "in" nowadays. There's a right and wrong way to practice the art of nonconforming, she wrote, and she offered 22 simple steps to success.

"IF THE entire country practices this code until it becomes innate, the United States will be the first totally unique and original society," she predicted, "and I'll be rich."

Nonconforming boys wear their hair long and nonconforming girls wear their hair short, she noted. Their bangs are so long that the probability of their having eyes is questionable, she maintained.

A girl, she conceded, isn't to be condemned for having long hair. Some people just have to be different. A boy's nonconforming uniform is tight pants, a flowered skirt and vest, and any tie that clashes.

"Girls wear mini skirts and often grow flowers on their conspicuous knees," she wrote. "Nonconformists wear pierced earrings — boys wear no more than one. A pseudo nonconformist can easily be spotted by pierced-look earrings."

"When shoes are required, nonconformists wear sandals, even during the winter. A true nonconformist prefers Caesar-type sandals, but it really doesn't matter as long as your toes are cold."

Avoid socks, Ms. Karg warned. They are the fatal giveaway of a phony nonconformist. Status is owning an old MG. But if you don't own one, it's also cool to complain bitterly about a lack of funds. The money bit is particularly effective if no one will hire you because your hair is too long.

IT'S STATUS to exhibit your paintings in an art show. It's even more status if you don't sell any because no one understands them. Ms. Karg wrote. Nonconformists collect Campbell soup cans as objects of art.

Nonconformists are cynical, questioning, consistently negative and protest everything. Ms. Karg contended. The ultimate goal of a sincere nonconformist is to be socially unacceptable. It's definitely square to be seen with anyone who is not cool — especially your parents.

If you were coming of age in the '60s and you followed these steps, you might have become a bonafide nonconformist. But what are you doing about it now?

If you're a 28-year-old unmarried woman with long hair, no stockings or

make-up, pierced ears and cold, sandal-clad feet, you really aren't a nonconformist. You have plenty of sisters under the skin.

If you're a 28-year-old divorced man who drives an old MG or any other status car, wears tight blue jeans, one earring and one-inch long hair, you're with it, man. That means you are, at best, a pseudo nonconformist.

What is it that makes a man feel like a pair of old brown shoes in a world of tuxedos? Where is the Walden Pond for nonconformists who want to be alone, socially unacceptable, cynical, questioning, negative and grow flowers on their knees?

Maybe Ms. Karg can give these answers in another book. But she's probably too busy being a status symbol, running around with her cool contemporaries and exhibiting her abstract paintings nobody buys or understands.

### Duffer objects to green's shape

Following is an open letter to the Farmington Hills City Council penned by Farmington resident Tom Riordan, who enjoys spending his spare time trying out the various golf courses around the area. He also is this paper's executive editor.

You have the potential in your community for a real jewel — the nine-hole San Marino Golf Club.

But if you don't pay immediate attention to this recreation facility, it's going to end up mighty tarnished.

On a recent Sunday, 330 persons — my wife and I included — played San Marino. That means upwards of \$1,600 in gross receipts. Add to that greens fees for six other days in the week and you have quite a lot of money.

You'd better start pouring a goodly chunk of that back into a San Marino maintenance fund.

At this time of year, golf courses should be looking their best. San Marino is in need of repair.

It needs immediate attention to tees, sand traps (now weed patches), large segments of fairways. Greens, with the exception of No. 5, are in better-than-average shape.

Getting new metal benches at tees and ball washers was a start — but only a start.

San Marino needs fertilizer, weed killer and plenty of water. Persons in this area enjoy playing San Marino. Don't just take their money and turn away.

### Bob Sklar writes

### Danny doesn't beg—he demands

Danny Thomas likes to say he no longer begs for contributions to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. He insists he now demands them.

"Everyone is responsible for the lives of these children," he says, disarming listeners by his spirited devotion to youngsters with catastrophic diseases.

"They have a right to live. They're our tomorrow. How you treat them today is how they will treat others as they grow up."

A love for children, not a desire for publicity, fuels the entertainer's attachment to the Memphis, Tenn., medical facility.

"If 60 million people gave me a \$1 a year for five years, we would never have to hold another fund-raiser again," Thomas says.

Meanwhile, the seventh annual St. Jude Celebrity Golf Classic has been scheduled for Monday, July 2, at Rochester's Great Oaks Country Club.

Thomas, whose professional success belies his hard-luck beginnings, first sought the meaning of compassion in the winter of 1940.

That's when the Deerfield, Mich., native prayed to St. Jude Thaddeus, patron saint of the hopeless. The setting was an east-side Detroit church. At the time, Thomas was depressed and struggling professionally.

IN HIS PRAYER, Thomas asked for rescue from despair. In return, he vowed to develop deeper sensitivity toward the suffering and to build the patron saint a shrine.

Apparently, Thomas's prayer touched St. Jude Thaddeus. Slowly, Thomas's dormant career gained a firm foothold in radio, then in television.

A few years later, the entertainer remembered his vow to the patron saint. He fulfilled the vow by laying the groundwork for the St. Jude Hospital Foundation in the spring of 1946.

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, the shrine that Thomas promised, opened in February 1962. It's now the largest childhood cancer research center in the world.

Since opening, the hospital has extended lifelines to 5,000 youngsters from 36 states and 14 foreign countries. In fiscal year 1978-79, the medical facility treated 3,500 young people, including 640 new patients.

Non-sectarian and interracial, St. Jude has an \$18 million yearly operating budget. Contributions generate 75 percent of the revenue. Grants bring in the other 25 percent.

The estimated annual cost of treating one young person ranges from \$15,000 to \$20,000.

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