

# Monday's Commentary

## Dial-a-thon brings back not-so-hot memories

Back 15 years or so, the family was camping at a state park near Holland, on Lake Michigan. The park was new, built on sand dunes, and almost completely without shade trees.

One afternoon I fell asleep on the beach and when I woke up, my red-hair cursed flesh was flaming. I don't know whether you ever acquired a really bad sunburn while camping on a beach, but let me explain something to you: from that day forward, you will know for sure that it's really true about sand.

It gets in everywhere. Especially when your skin is coated with greasy stuff like Benzocaine in a vain stab at killing the pain.

Oddly enough, I haven't had a really bad sunburn since. Once the blisters on the backs of my knees healed and I could walk again, I started tanning. You might call it freckling, but I don't.

Anyway, where this is all leading to is the Charisma Salon at Five Mile and Newburgh in Livonia. It's a hairdressers. Last week, they installed a box there called "Fastan," a trade-marked name for a

small, bright-metal walled room. The corners of the room fairly bristle with fluorescent tanning tubes.

**JUST THE SIGHT** of it made me neurotically wily away into imaginary sand while dreaming nightmarish visions of Gestapo torture cells.

Except people pay plenty for the privilege of taking off their clothes and stepping into this room — the introductory offer is \$45 for 20 visits, and the visits can be as short as 30 seconds for fair-skinned people making their first attempt.

Owner Richard Asztalos tried to put the money in perspective.

"If you just spent \$3,000 on your vacation and the tan wears off in three weeks, a little bit more (money) might make a difference," says Asztalos, who owns the Livonia salon and another just like it in Ann Arbor. Just like it except it doesn't have "Fastan."

Irritating Michigan skin in March with tanning rays hot enough for Florida in August seems to present some difficulties, which Asztalos acknowledges.



Mike Scanlon

"You can work up to 15 minutes (in the room), but the only guy I've ever seen come close is the manager of a tanning parlor in Amarillo, Texas. He can take 11 minutes," he said.

Raw — if you'll pardon the expression — beginners are classified through a short questionnaire about their tanning history. Depending on their response to queries like whether the tops of their feet have ever been sunburned, their first visit sentences to the tanning room will be between 30 seconds and two minutes. The duration of subsequent visits depends on the user's reactions to the first one.

**WHAT THOSE** reactions might be is still difficult for the folks at Charisma to gauge. The dial to set time exposure in the tanning room has a meter which keeps a running account of how long the room has been in use. It tops off at 99,999.9 hours. Five days after it was installed, there were six-tenths of an hour on the meter, and almost all of that 36 minutes was clocked by employees.

But, the question finally has to be asked, why even bother? Isn't this taking ego gratification to just a tad of an extreme?

That's Richard Asztalos wearing the tan and the goggles. He's wearing the latter to protect his eyes from the lights in the magic box he's standing in. He's wearing the tan because he just got back from Hawaii. Asztalos owns a Livonia hairstyling salon, which added a suntan room last week. (Staff photo by Art Emanuele)

"There's a lot of different reasons why people want a tan. A lot of businessmen want a tan to look prosperous," says Asztalos.

There can be other reasons, too. For instance, the room offers possibilities of a type we will stop short of assigning an adjective. Let it rest with Asztalos, who says "It's an all-over tan. Whatever people want to tan, they can tan. But some areas that have never been exposed might be a little sensitive."

Ouch!



Mike Brudenell

## Death in the afternoon

Alcohol, accidents, illness, war . . . Most of us have lost pals we grew up with.

The shock of a friend's death interrupts our schedule rudely, but the pain passes eventually. Back to the land of the living.

So I believed, anyway, until one day last week, when I read that a friend of more than 15 years was missing — presumed dead.

**Murdered.**

A calculated and expertly executed hit, according to police.

My friend's body is thought to be lying at the bottom of the ocean, thanks to some animal who figured \$20,000 was worth shooting someone for.

I wept when a fellow teammate on the school track team died of stomach cancer. I'm too angry for tears now. Revenge would soothe me.

Since I received the news, I've flipped through an old school yearbook several times. I haven't done that for years; there seemed no reason to before.

Each time I come across my friend's snapshot, I feel cold and sick. I try to imagine the terror he felt when he realized he was about to die. What did he think about? His wife? His kids? The pain? Did he even have the time for thoughts?

Or did he try to escape? He was big and took unarmed combat lessons while in the school cadet army corps. I remember him in uniform. But I suppose you freeze up when a gun is pointed at your skull and you know death is close.

I hope whoever killed my friend did it fast. I hope he was drilled clean and didn't suffer. Quick, I hope it was quick.

Then I think maybe he's alive, kidnapped, well. Maybe he just arranged his disappearance because of financial or marital problems. I wish . . .

I will be wishing for a long time.

## A freeze pone to thawing

Listen up!

This will only be written once.

Wage and price controls have never worked! Wage and price controls will not help solve our present economic problems!

Wage and price controls will never cure economic woes!

An economics professor yelled this at his class eight years ago.

Just eight years ago, back before gas lines, wage and price controls were slapped on this country by a certain all-knowing administration.

Rubbing his bald head, which substituted well for a crystal ball, the economics professor foretold the future with wage and price controls.

First, there would be a lot of tough talk. No increases allowed either business or labor.

Then the appeals would be made. Businesses would moan about needed price rises. The administration would relent to business wishes.

"After all, what's good for XYZ Co. is good for the country, Right?"

Thirdly, the unions would make a plea for higher wages. After all, XYZ Co. was just allowed a price increase.

"Ah, woe to organized labor," the wage and price freeze spokesmen would reply. "We must smother your pay raise because it is against the rules."

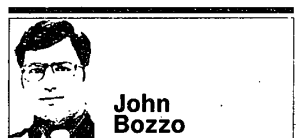
Thus, being unfairly applied, wage and price controls soon fell apart. Inflation will begin anew and rush to greater heights.

Usher in 1980. Does more need to be said?

**AT BEST**, wage and price controls give only temporary relief. When they are lifted, inflation continues at an even more furious rate. The basic causes of inflation have not been addressed, only the result.

Picture a pot of boiling water. The water must be kept from boiling over the edge of the pot. So someone suggests placing a cover on the pot to stop the water from boiling over.

Meanwhile, the burner causing the boiling continues heating the water. Pressures inside the pot now increase at a faster rate.



John Bozzo

Balancing the federal budget, however, will help. Increasing productivity will help.

But, of course, it's easier to just slap artificial controls on the situation. Such immediate action convinces people something's really being done to solve the problem. Some solution.

**IT'S AMAZING** some of the economic policies that come out of Washington, D.C. A sophomore economics class would laugh at the solutions, as the above class laughed at wage and price controls.

Carter wants people to slow the use of credit cards so he calls for an increase in the interest charged. Well, he doesn't really want us to stop using credit cards. He just wants us to pay more for using credit cards.

If he really wanted us to stop using credit cards, he'd try to eliminate the tax deduction for interest paid. When people can't deduct interest payments from their taxes, use of credit will dwindle.

Similarly, legislators want people to save more money. When deductions for interest payments are abolished, how about giving deductions for interest earned by small savers in passbook savings accounts.

Ah, but these bits of wisdom make too much sense.

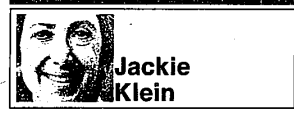
"Let's talk about wage and price controls," spouts the politician who has now become an economics "expert." "That's something I can really sink my teeth into."

Handsome Al, where are you when we need you most?

## New vocabulary's the pits

"Like man, that's cool, out of sight, far out, right on, heavy, bogus, a bummer, gross. Let's hang loose and make the scene but get off my case."

They may sound like gibberish, but it's a small sample of the "way out" language spawned in the 1960s by those long-haired, blue-jeaned kids who called themselves "freaks" and who we called "hippies" or "flower children."



Jackie Klein

If you're a parent who sent your progeny to college to get an education, you may have despaired over the peculiar, pop-art parlance you got for your tuition money. But how many times have you found yourself uttering descriptive phrases like, "I'm so uptight" or "I'm in the pits?"

Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. And sometimes the kids say it better than we do. Also, we tend to try to keep our cool and get with it.

Watergate bred its own stylized language, traces of which still remain. "Early on in the investigation, to the best of my recollection at this point in time" — you have to admit that's pretty gross.

Just when we stopped gritting our teeth, a brand new dialect — much of it pedantic — snuck into the vocabulary. To coin a phrase from the kids, it's a laid back summer which is really off the wall. Don't ask for a translation.

**IF ONE** more person tells me "you know where I'm coming from" I'm going to lose my cool. How do I know where people are coming from when I don't even know where they are now?

I can't stand when somebody talks about the "space I'm into." I'm inclined to believe that weirdo is spaced out. The "space" he or she is referring to is really a mental outlook.

When introspective conversationalists are willing to "interface" about where they're coming from and the space they're into, I do my best to avoid this psychobabble. It's simply not my bag.

When the kids used to tell me they were trying to find themselves, I advised them to look in the yellow pages. But what do you tell someone who says "I'm getting my head together" or "I'm getting my act together" and variations on that theme.

"Impacting on or enhancing the quality of life" is among the most overworked jargon of government officials and civic leaders. First of all, nothing impacts on anything else but something can leave an impact like an aching wisdom tooth.

Quality of life and enhancing it have individual interpretations which fall into the category of "different strokes for different folks." Besides, when politicians talk about enhancing the quality of your life, you can bet your bottom dollar you're going to get socked with a tax hike to "upgrade" that quality.

**BEWARE OF** folks who tell you they're going to be "up front" with you. And don't be taken by the new lingo. "I have something to share with you."

Being "up front" means being perfectly candid and holding nothing back. If you're naive enough to believe it, you could be built up to a big letdown. Just ask any newspaper reporter who has missed the scoop of the year by falling for that "up front" promise.

"I have something to share with you" is a phrase coined by psychologists for salespersons and other persuasive types. They make you feel included, wanted, trusted and a part of some exclusive, top secret mission. And then they sock it to you.

How about that "viable lifestyle" or "viable alternative" we hear so much about lately. "Viable" means "living" or capable of sustaining independent life. A "living lifestyle" is redundant. And I've never seen a living alternative so I have no idea what one looks like.

Do you remember the days when city officials asked for public participation and involvement? You may not, because it didn't happen very often. Today, the phrase is "citizen input." It's what every political campaign promises more of until he or she is elected. I

still think "input" is computer language.

"The bottom line" really bugs me. A speech maker can go on and on for hours until he or she finally reveals the key sentence. "The bottom line is that we need money or the project will die." That should have been the top line. The most emotional, heart-rending and idealistic rendition is frozen cold and stiff by that old "bottom line."

**LET ME** share with you a few of the more obscure reports which have crossed my desk and raised my hackles.

For example: "An assertive, dynamic goal-oriented communications program is imperative. The support of and productive rapport with the electric and printed media would serve to enhance Southfield's opportunities of consistently projecting a positive image."

"Dissemination of information and enlistment of public support are integral functions of any municipality or government agency. Management by objective is a concept which is successfully utilized by in-house training in which staff members are taught realistic goal-setting within local parameters."

"Implementation will manifest by promoting the enhancement of the quality of life in Southfield as a desirable place to live, work, play and raise a family. That's the bottom line."

And here's another: "A workshop format could include verbal communication skills, non-verbal communication skills, written communication skills, values clarification, assertiveness training, interpersonal organizational development, conflict resolution, stress management and conflict resolution."

In my objective opinion, that's the pits. And I'm being up front when I say it.

from our readers

## Festival seeks community support

**Editor:**

This letter is in response to your recent article about the Farmington and Farmington Hills Founders Festival. Your concern on behalf of the paper will also bring concern from the community.

It is the community that allows the event. As a member of the executive committee I'm most concerned because this event may see its last time unless we get help.

Each year the community looks forward to this mid-summer event and its with their donated dollars that the festival is put on.

We at the committee are all volunteers individuals that give personal time and effort toward working to provide the best festival with the money donated. In the past the budget has been pre-

**from our readers**

Letters must be original copies and contain the signature and address of the sender. Limit letters to 300 words.

Scholarship Pageant has had combined books with the other events of the festival. This year the pageant will maintain its own books.

Pageant director Patricia Fallon has already submitted her budget which received approval. The events and donations and income equally offset expenses thus leaving the pageant as no expense to the rest of the festival. Ms. Fallon and Fred Huber will be working closely to see that all expenses are watched so that the event breaks even.

Once again on behalf of the Festival Committee I ask that the community please donate. For those who wish to donate please send your donations to the attention of Festival Treasurer, c/o Farmington Chamber of Commerce, 23715 Farmington Road, Farmington 48024.

**FRED HUBER**, Farmington Hills

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