

It's time to put an end to Polish jokes

If there is any justice at all, the courageous stand of the Poles against the Russians should put an end to Polish jokes.

Those who have been sitting around doing little about the Russian menace but finding plenty of time to crack put-down jokes, might be interested to know that this is the second time in 10 years the Poles have stood up to the Russians.

They might also notice that while various dictatorships have been overthrown in the past two decades, none of them were dominated by Russians. Russians play hard ball and it takes real guts to take them on. Imagine what it will mean to the world if the Poles are successful.

And while we're laying to rest the Polish jokes, let's rest at the same time the whole mess of humor that makes one nationality dumber than the



Sherry Kahan

rest. When we laugh at someone else's expense, we forget we could be the butt of jokes if we moved from our safe bit of space to a different turf. A sophisticated city dweller can do so many stupid things on a farm that the farm family regularly has to retire behind the barn to double up in hysterics at his dumbness.

WHAT THE WORLD seems to be crying out for

is a new word to characterize persons who are not too swift. Something like poodies or scumpies. Words that would not step on anyone's toes, but would allow us to hold onto this humor which, if not at someone's expense, can be genuinely funny. The jokes would be almost as good. I say almost because that delicious feeling of superiority at putting down someone else's religion or nationality would be absent.

Now to add a new word to the language is no simple task. Yet it is a job well worth doing. If anyone has any ideas, I'll be glad to hear about them. Think of the fame that will be yours, should the word become internationally significant. It may even reduce international tensions.

So get busy. But before you go, here is a dumb person joke.

THREE FOREIGNERS were convicted of

crimes calling for death in France. The guillotine would be used. Foreigner No. 1 was asked if he were a man or a mouse. Did he want to face up at the blade or did he want to face down? He said he would face down. But lo, when the blade almost reached his neck it stopped. According to this joke, when such a miracle occurs, the prisoner is allowed to go free.

The second man was asked the same question and he too opted to lie face down. Once again a miracle. The blade halted an inch from his neck, and he was released.

Now it was the turn of the dumb person to go under the knife. He announced, "I'm a man, not a mouse, I will look up at the blade."

So there he was, lying down and gazing up. Would the miracle occur (twice)? Suddenly the dumb person pointed up to the scaffold and shouted, "I think I can see what your problem is up there."



Can man fly?

Tim Storch disregards the forces of gravity as he tries to stop a shot on the net during a soccer training session. Storch was an instruc-

tor at Soccertime Soccer Camp recently in Southfield. (Photo by Dwight Cendrowski)



Darlene Stinson

Close encounter with a hurricane of the century

For the people of coastal Texas, Hurricane Allen will go on record as the biggest scare of the century.

With winds of up to 185 miles an hour, Allen bulled its way across the Gulf of Mexico last month with a billing of the second worst hurricane on record.

Thousands of Texans evacuated the coast in an effort to escape Allen's wrath. For most, it was a time of fear and deep concern about their property and relatives who refused to leave their homes.

During those few days in the second week of August, my heart was in Texas — a state I visited only once as a teen.

A relative, ex-Birmingham resident Jerre Stinson, was among the evacuees who spent 15 hours on the road to Corpus Christi to San Antonio, normally a 2½-hour trip.

I talked to Jerre many times during those few days and heard the excitement in his voice turn to fear as Allen set a direct course for his new home.

The lives of thousands were disrupted by Allen. But for awhile at least, it seemed as though the hurricane was an intelligent force with a personal vendetta against me.

WITH A TRIFLE more bad luck, I would have been among the evacuees who fled inland from Allen's wrath.

I was scheduled to arrive in Texas via plane on the day that Allen hit. My destination was Jerre's apartment — located in a flood plain one mile from Corpus Christi Bay.

Vacations are supposed to be a time of rest and relaxation.

But Allen pumped an increasing quantity of adrenalin into my blood as it blew closer and closer to my destined vacation spot.

As it turned out, my scheduled rendezvous with Allen was aborted. I turned in my ticket for a sure stay in a Red Cross hostel and headed for Chicago — then Up North — instead.

But it took days and days to recover from my first near-brush with a hurricane. For awhile, it seemed as though Allen would rage thousands of miles to make an historical appearance in the cold waters of Lake Michigan.

I've never visited Corpus Christi or seen photographs of the coastal town. But anyone who had spoken to me during those few days in August would have thought Corpus Christi was my home.

To me, any community near an ocean has to be a paradise. Envisioning Allen's destructive rage almost was more than I could bear.

FORTUNATELY, the hurricane treated coastal Texas — and Corpus Christi — more kindly than predicted.

Allen veered south of its original collision course with Corpus Christi and glowed its winds before hitting the coast in an unpopulated area north of Brownsville.

It's too bad I've already used my vacation time from work.

"You can't even tell it hit," James Lontos, engineering director for the city of Corpus Christi, told me last week.

"You should come down. The sky is blue, and the water has never been clearer," Lontos said most of Allen's mess already has been cleaned up. He estimated damage at public property alone at \$8 to \$10 million.

Maybe I'll make it next year — before hurricane season.

They offer big help for small offenders

A corporate executive jumps out of bed at midnight in response to an urgent call from a 17-year-old probationer arrested for drinking beer.

The wife of a prominent local educator goes to court to stand by a 19-year-old reformed shoplifter who served her six-month probation term and is rewarded with a clean record.

An attorney takes time out from his busy practice to talk to a runaway high school boy who had stolen food from a supermarket.

These three caring persons have something in common. They're all VIPs, which stands for Volunteers in Probation. They're also Very Important Persons to kids in trouble who are hoping for a second chance.

The dynamic community program under way in Southfield involves 25-30 active volunteers. The program is an offshoot of "Project Misdemeanant," which got its start in Judge Keith Leenhout's Royal Oak courtroom in 1960.

The idea of volunteer probation sponsors began to spread through Michigan. Some judges said the program may be the key to the rehabilitative dilemma.

LEENHOUTS, who became the director of the VIP division of National Council on Crime and Delinquency, came to Southfield a few years ago to speak to volunteers. District Judge Norman Feder introduced Leenhouts as the "Billy Graham of Volunteers in probation."

Leenhouts prefers to use the term "apprehended offenders" to "probationers," because he believes there's a little bit of larceny in all of us. He also strongly believes that rehabilitation fosters positive changes in human beings.

"Despite all the technical jargon available, caring people influence others by loving them," he said. "True love is demanding and sets limits. But, at the



Jackie Klein

same time, it's affectionate, kind and considerate." Leenhouts might have been talking about Kay Damburn of Lathrup Village. She's president of VIP Inc. of the 46th District Court and a volunteer's volunteer. This understanding mother of three describes an ideal VIP as a person who loves and is willing to go outside himself, reach and touch others and be a friend.

Mrs. Damburn doesn't believe there are any bad kids. And the best things VIPs can do for them is to be objective, let them do the talking and get clues about their attitudes and behaviors.

REV. DALLAS GREEN, recipient of the 1978 46th District Court VIP award, counsels young persons in trouble to repay a debt. Green said he was helped by wonderful people through many adolescent crises in his life.

"I was on the borderline and tipping the scale, but I never got caught by the law," he recalls. "I guess you could say I had sticky fingers at the early age of eight or nine. I appreciate the non-professional counseling I got and I always wanted to help someone else to repay that debt."

Green and his clients dig into the past and look into the future. They talk about education, finances, employment, value systems and self-images. But Green maintains the young persons he counsels really solve their own problems and he does a lot of listening.

Arthur Gowens, 45, spent eight years behind the walls of Jackson Prison on charges of murdering his wife. When he got out, he was hired as an employment counselor with the Michigan Department of Corrections. Gowens has also spoken to VIPs in Southfield.

"If you don't get help in your teens, you can become an old man in a penitentiary," he said. "Age is no criteria. Nine out of 10 men were crying for love and nobody listened."

"I don't want to be my brother's keeper, but I want to be his best friend. That's what Volunteers in Probation is all about. They prove you don't have to go out of the world backwards if you understand the alternatives."

THERE WILL always be those who believe probation and volunteering are the ways to go. Others will always maintain rehabilitation is ineffectual pabulum-feeding by the courts to violators who have stepped over the line.

In 1970, when then 46th District Judge S. James Clarkson initiated the city's probation department, he noted that probation provides an opportunity to learn what underlying problems were manifested in a criminal act.

A basis premise of probation isn't to coddle criminals, he said, but to get effective cooperation toward rehabilitation. And, he stressed, a one-to-one volunteer program can be a human deterrent to crime.