

History tied to mansion

Farmington residents are urged to turn out en masse for the Dec. 15 council public hearing and throw support behind city acquisition of the Warner mansion.

The mansion's owners, descendants of Gov. Fred Warner, have graciously offered to donate the historical structure. The family asks only that the city purchase the two adjoining lots for \$30,000 and utilize the mansion publicly — certainly modest demands.

It's a generous offer, considering the mansion would sell for more than \$200,000 on the open market.

But more, much more, is at stake than financial considerations.

The mansion represents a golden era in Farmington's history. It would be a shame to risk the landmark's integrity by selling it to private interests who could alter the structure.

Under city control, the mansion will be preserved

to memorialize the accomplishments of one of Michigan's finest governors. Adopted son of P.D. Warner, who had the mansion built, Warner also was one of Farmington's most successful businessmen and foremost civic leaders.

Some will criticize the acquisition, saying that in these difficult economic times, the city should spend its money on needed services.

True, it will cost more than \$30,000 to maintain the old structure.

BUT THE CRITICS are shortsighted.

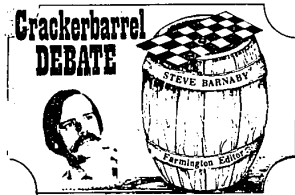
In recent years this city has suffered somewhat from a lethargy — however slight. Nothing could be more healthy than to have a physical mark of pride around which to rally.

It would be the city's official home where adults and children both could come to learn about its proud history.

STEVE BARNABY



Sitting in his Lansing office: Governor Fred M. Warner of Farmington.



Attila the teacher reporting

So I survived — well, sort of.

As you recall, back in September I wrote of an impending nightmare — returning to college as a journalism instructor.

By asking me to teach, the faculty must have been seeking revenge for the difficult times I gave them as a student.

I scorned most instructors. Credentials meant little to me. Graduate instructor or doctor of philosophy, most of them were professional somnambulist. I thought, and I let them know it.

The few teachers I did admire were ranting, two-fisted crazies, more prone to flunking than passing a majority of the class.

ONLY SLIGHTLY do I remember anything about the first night's baptism under fire.

Fortified by a few very dry martinis, I strode into class, armed with a stern look and an authoritarian blue, pin stripe suit.

"So you all want to be journalists, huh?" I growled, reaching back a dozen years for my old Army drill sergeant's voice.

It sounded rusty and hollow. Out of the corner of my eye, I looked for their reaction. Nothing. Just deafening silence and blank stares.

God help me! How would I ever get through the next three hours?

Well, I did get through the next three hours. In fact, I survived the next 10 weeks.

Of course, a few mental scars are etched into my soul.

MY CONTINUAL reference to "you guys" brought down the ire of some of the classes' women students. Imagine, Steve Barnaby, crusader for all that's good and right (or should I say left), staunch ERA supporter, being caught in a moment of chauvinism.

My middle-age ego was jolted up a notch with an out-and-out proposition. And I'm happy to report that for all we hear about changing sexual mores on campus, the propositioner was a female.

I refused, of course.

As the weeks passed, my confidence grew.

I quizzed them mercilessly ("Who was the first woman to hold a cabinet post?") and taunted them unceasingly ("For a moment I thought this was a law class. Everybody, every last one of you, convicted the suspect in your copy.")

I called upon their higher intellectual instincts ("Don't worry about grades. You're here to learn journalism.") and chided them ("Last night I fell asleep while grading your papers.")

I corrected their papers with a vengeance, pointing over every line, many times scribbling indecipherably out of sheer frustration. Other times I would poke holes, literally, in their papers.

God, how I loved it.

I pounded on the walls, drew silly pictures on the chalkboard and made fun of them and myself — anything to help them learn and remember.

AND I'LL REMEMBER all of them for years to come — the quiet ones, Holmes, LaBrenz and Rone; the tired Stiles; the diligent McKusick; the always late Plurto; the puzzled Dugal; the inquisitive Dabey; the worried Hitler; the frustrated Seraphino; the scornful Robinson.

And, of course, a special tribute to the back of the room crowd — the charming P.D. Cunningham; the horrible; the mischievous Toth; and, yes you, Cates, we'll all remember you.

Remember these names, dear readers. Someday one of them could be the editor of your hometown newspaper.

"God rest ye merry, gentlemen..."



Sports: wonderful nonsense

If ever you went on a search for the most bizarre happenings on this dizzy globe of ours, it might be well not to overlook the world of sport.

Down through the years this is the area in which Westbrook Pegler, one of the top sports writers of his day, referred to as the "world of wonderful nonsense." And he spent most of his career obtaining laughs from the activities of the athletes.

What a time he would have if he were living today and had been at ringside several nights ago when Roberto Duran, the welterweight champion, quit in the middle of the fight claiming he was suffering from stomach cramps. That is the biggest laugh of the year.

And whoever heard of a challenger being awarded the title for running away from the defending champion? That was the smile Sugar Ray Leonard got from Lady Luck.

BUT THAT IS not the most bizarre happening that ever took place in the square arena which the fight game refers to as a ring.

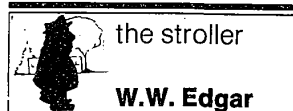
The Stroller remembers sitting at ringside in Chicago when Joe Louis was scheduled to fight one of the Windy City heroes, a fellow named King Levinsky.

The fight had gone only a few moments when Louis landed his fists on Levinsky's jaw and the King hit the floor.

He struggled to get up and finally sat on the lower strand of the ring ropes, held up his hand, and called to the referee, "Don't let him hit me any more."

Talk about a laugh. That was the talk of the athletic world for a long time.

AND WAY BACK in the early days of the original Rose Bowl football game, Roy Reigle, a California back, got his name inscribed indelibly in football history when he picked up a fumble and ran toward the enemy goal line. He would have scored a



touchdown for the opposition if his teammates hadn't tackled him to avoid that embarrassment.

Then there was the Sunday in Tiger Stadium when the Detroit Lions were playing the Chicago Bears, and Coach Harry Gilmer called on Joe Don Looney to take a message in to the Lion quarterback and get this reply: "If you want a messenger why don't you call Western Union."

Joe wasn't a member of the team long after that.

THEN THERE WAS the day that Milt Plum, a Lion quarterback tossed a pass directly to one of the Green Bay players. That misue cost the Lions the game. He didn't last long either.

Yes, the sports world is filled with bizarre moments and some entertaining characters. Who could forget the Dean Brothers — Dizzy and Daffy — when the St. Louis Cardinals were in their prime and defeated the Tigers in the 1934 World Series? They provided a laugh a minute.

One of The Stroller's favorites among the Tigers was Dizzy Trout, who always carried a red bandanna handkerchief with him to the pitching mound.

Asked why, he answered, "Did you ever see a bull fighter at work? When he wants to get the bull mad he just waves the red banner in front of him. I do the same with the batters. When the big guys come up to the plate, I wave the red handkerchief at them. They are like the bulls. They get mad and I slip my fat one by them."

Oh yes, if you are looking for the unusual, you are bound to find it in the area that still provides some wonderful nonsense.



Tim Richard

Potpourri of modest proposals

Some excellent ideas that are too practical ever to be adopted:

At a holiday period, serve the turkey one day prior to the big feast. That will mean leftovers for the main holiday meal.

A group of us concocted this idea the day after Thanksgiving. You can guess what we were eating. And yes, the leftovers tasted better than the main meal.

The main dish that Friday was a casserole of mixed white and dark meat, dressing and mushrooms, all mixed together.

Actually, our group wasn't the first to make this discovery. Huckleberry Finn, when he was being civilized by the widow, noted that her meals were served with the food in separate dishes or on different portions of the plate.

Huck preferred his meals cooked in a single skillet. My old copy of that novel is long gone, but I can remember his words almost exactly:

"The juices slop around together, and things go better."

Ben Franklin, in Poor Richard's Almanac, opined: "Give me yesterday's bread, this day's meat and last year's cider."

Any connoisseur of pea and bean soup knows you make it early in the day, take only a light cup for lunch, don't expect much, try another cup for dinner and expect a bit more.

Next day you and the soup are ready for a big bowl.

Some of the diners at our post-Thanksgiving repast felt cole slaw and potato salad were also better the second day.

One thing that isn't better is warmed-up coffee. Only a few of the most expensive brands hold their flavor when reheated.

"THE WAY most cakes are made," said a friend, "is that there are two inches of cake in a layer and one-third inch of frosting."

"The way a cake should be made," he went on, "is with two inches of frosting and one-third inch of cake."

"HELLO, I'M Selling Junk."

That's the headline on a Mark Bricklin brief in Prevention Magazine of a year ago. Charitable organizations, wrote Bricklin, frequently sell "junk food" — cookies and candy — for their money-raising efforts.

"Why can't they sell useful items like kitchen knife sharpeners, vegetable peelers, brushes and things like that?"

The marketing appeal of a vegetable peeler is certainly limited compared to candy, but his point is well taken. Persons concerned about the economic and nutritional health of America can vote with their dollars by patronizing goods which sell (say) bushels of grapefruit and oranges rather than those which sell junk food.

It's also a good ploy for turning down a group to which you don't care to contribute. Instead of saying, "I gave at the office," tell the sellers, "Candy is bad for you, and I won't have it in my house."

GOOD NEIGHBOR Jim, whose interest in promoting youthful piano performance has been mentioned before in this column, had an original idea worth serious thought but unlikely ever to be adopted.

"Instead of retiring guys in their 60s," he said, "retire them in their 40s, when they're young enough and healthy enough to enjoy golf, fishing and travel. Then when they're 50, let them go back to work for as long as they are able."

The idea has merit in a health sense. It also guarantees most men 10 years of retirement. It would bring into the work force older men with wisdom, experience, fewer family pressures and less inclination toward being-and-sheing on the job.