

Memorial Day was town's biggest day

MEMORIAL DAY.

This is the day of the year when the Stroller likes to recall the veterans of the Grand Army of The Republic — the men who fought the Civil War and saved the Union.

True, there have been wars since. But for some reason the present-day veterans aren't revered like the men who fought in the famed battles at Gettysburg and Vicksburg.

Back in the days when The Stroller was a youth, he felt it was a privilege to walk down the street with his grandfather, Col. Frank H. Wilson. We would walk down town holding hands and no one was prouder than we were of each other.

There was affection for the Grand Army veterans which wasn't confined to just one day. It was the same each day of the year.

BUT TIMES CHANGE. The only place you find a down-to-earth celebration of Memorial Day these days is in Small Town, America. It is in the little places that Memorial Day takes on real significance.

In The Stroller's early days, there was nothing during our year that could compare with the Memorial Day parade.

It would move up the main street in our little town and then cross the bridge over the Lehigh River to the cemetery where the veterans had their chapel and burial plot.

It was there that tribute was paid to the men who served their country and had their names engraved on the tall monument that overlooked the town.

BECAUSE OUR little town was on the edge of a river, when the procession crossed the bridge en route to the cemetery, it halted and flowers were tossed into the river in tribute to the sailors who had fought the great fight. This was a serious part of the procession for the Grand Army veterans didn't want to ignore any who had served.

It is true that the celebration didn't take up the entire day. In the late afternoon after the solemn tribute was paid to the departed, there usually was a battle royal on the baseball diamonds between our town and the neighboring community.

WHILE THE Memorial Day tribute was important, the veterans in town reminded us on other occasions of the great war. On all holidays they appeared with their Civil War hats, either fedoras or accordion



the stroller
W.W. Edgar

caps. And they were proud to wear them.

It was on occasions such as these that The Stroller, then a youth in knee britches, liked to take the Colonel by the hand and proudly walk down the main street.

Such affection isn't shown today. It isn't that the veterans are forgotten. They never will be. It is just that in the old days the Civil War was the big war that saved the country and folks looked up to those who survived.

Times do change. The old timers can notice this more than ever on Memorial Day.

Trivia king misses shot at the big time

WHEN I SAW in the newspaper that Channel 4 (WDIV) was looking for contestants to appear on the Joker is Wild, I could hear fame, fortune and opportunity all rapping loudly at me door.

Why not? Wasn't I an acknowledged trivia king? Don't I know more useless information than anyone? Ask me a question.

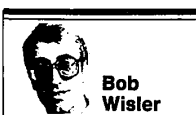
University of Michigan backfield in 1947? Easy — Chappius, Elliott, Weisenberger and Yerges. Last guy to hit .400? Ted Williams, .406. Capital of Turkey? Ankara. Scott Fitzgerald's first novel? "This Side of Paradise." The Hollywood drugstore where Lana Turner was discovered? Shwab's.

I SIT at home watching the game shows on TV and swear I know six out of seven answers. I have spent a lifetime absorbing nonessential in-

formation. From my living room, I coax answers out of perplexed contestants. Come on stupid, Bhuto was from Pakistan. Bhuto from Popeye. Pluto from Mickey Mouse and Tito from Yugoslavia.

What they are really looking for on these game shows is someone who can answer questions, someone who looks presentable, possibly intelligent, but someone who knows all the answers. Right? Wrong, as I found out when myself and 239 other people trooped into Channel 4's auditorium.

To make a long story shorter, I saw an ad in a newspaper saying the producers of the Joker is Wild, were on WDIV weeknights, was looking for Detroit-area contestants to be flown to California to take part in the Joker is Wild or Tic Tac Dough. I mailed in my cleverly-worded card and lo and



Bob Wisler

behold was one of the 300 selected for further consideration — only because my cleverly-worded card was cleverly mailed early the day I saw the ad.

The day we auditioned was a mob scene. It looked like you would expect a casting call to look. Most people were there on a lark, taking a long shot on the chance to win a pile of money and get a vacation to boot. We found out that only two people would be selected. The long shot became longer.

EVERYONE had to take a standard test which measures general knowledge. This eliminated three-fifths of the applicants. The rest of us were to come back in a while so that each person could get up in front of an audience and the show's producer to talk about himself/herself for a 1½ minutes.

While we waited everyone discussed how to talk, or look. I began to get an idea in the back of my head that I wasn't going to make it. Nobody talked about intelligence or knowledge.

You should be dressed up, but not too dressed up, one lady said. I had worn tie, white shirt, blue blazer and grey slacks. Presentable, but not desparate. Distinguished. Mine was one of a few dozen blue blazers. Most blue blazers were bottomed out by stylish tan pants, not dull grey slacks. Maybe they weren't noticed.

You shouldn't be too tall, one person said. They don't like tall people. I hunkered down in my coat hoping that no one would notice I was a tad over 6-feet. You can't be old, someone said. They like people between 25

and 35. I brushed back my prematurely greying hair.

YOUR VOICE must be distinctive, loud and clear, someone else said. I mentally began practicing my loud and clear voice. I was sure it would fill the room like a Pavarotti outburst.

When I went to the audition, the spouse snickered. How are you ever going to get exuberant enough to be noticed? she asked. Those game shows like people who jump up and down and throw kisses, she noted. My idea of expressing wild emotion is to arch an eyebrow slightly while mumbling, "You don't say."

We trooped back for the audition. Before I knew it, my number was up. I was brilliant. Not only was I sure that I got 90 percent or higher on the written test, my 1½ minute delivery was superb. Pavarotti voice. Cary Grant elan. All the virtues a game show contestant needed.

I WAS ONE of those cut. I discovered later there are certain attributes game show contestants should have. Knowledge is only one of them.

If you're ever thinking of applying, make sure you aren't too tall, too fat, too thin, too old or under 18. Make sure that your appearance is at least presentable if not noteworthy. Your voice must be loud, clear and preferably melodious. Make sure that you look like you are having the time of your life, that you express emotion easily and often and that you love everybody you have met that day.

Have fascinating anecdotes to tell about your life. Make sure your life has been interesting, even zany. It helps if you have overcome a host of obstacles in reaching your present state of enthusiasm and joy.

To my way of thinking, it was all too much to ask of a Joe Cool cynic. So what if I don't get on Joker is Wild. So what if I don't go to Hollywood, win big money as a contestant, be introduced to starlets. I never did like those game shows anyway.

Media women move ahead

IT'S NOT EXACTLY an "old girls' network" but women are getting their act together.

"Networking" wasn't in anyone's lexicon back in 1909 when a woman named Georginia MacDougall Davis dreamed up the idea of a journalism society for "none but the best" of women writers.

Theta Sigma Phi was founded at the University of Washington in Seattle by seven women determined to both build a national group to safeguard First Amendment freedoms and also help women advance in careers.

In half a dozen years, there were five student chapters and an official publication, "Matrix, A Magazine for Women Who Write."

Theta Sigma Phi carried out its purpose of helping women by establishing essay competitions, honoring Headliners each year, and by growing. Later scholarship programs and employment placement services were added as well as a number of other awards.

In 1972, when Theta Sigma Phi became Women in Communications



Shirlee Iden

Inc. men were admitted to membership for the first time.

Today, WICI has nearly 10,000 members.

Since I knew at age 17 that I would be a journalist, I joined the student chapter at Wayne State University, about 20 years ago.

But WICI didn't really become important to me until I was in the field working as a professional, beginning about 10 years ago.

It is indeed a completely professional group of communicators including print, radio, television, public relations, technical writers, educators, advertising people and others.

In the elegant setting of the Edsel and Eleanor Ford house in Cross Pointe Shores, WICI members and

guests recently gathered for cocktails, dinner, a tour of the home, and then got down to business.

BEING PART of WICI means meeting the top talent, local and national from time to time, being stimulated and provoked and occasionally, entertained.

And what's wrong with breaking bread with your top competition on another paper or TV station? It's refreshing.

Our WICI chapter gave its top honors this year to Beverly Beldaire of PR Associates, a communications counselor since 1963 who will soon become the first female chairman of the Detroit Chamber of Commerce.

Two scholarship applicants were so outstanding that the committee asked for, and got, permission to award grants to both.

Women are moving into the executive ranks at large corporations, newspapers, radio and television. Indeed, we have vice presidents and general managers in our midst.

I was proud last Tuesday. I believe WICI's founder and the early pioneers who helped her would have been also.

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