

# A true American dream

SOME FOLKS might think it's reaching to call Mendel Ettinger the embodiment of the American dream. They'd say he wasn't tall enough, didn't have freckles and there's no proof he loved hotdogs and apple pie.

Instead, he came from the camps of Europe after World War I, a solitary human being who had seen his mother and sister killed, looking for a chance, for normalcy.

I can't remember exactly when we met, but there's no doubt where. He came to my parents house on West Outer Drive in Detroit like a dozen or "DPS."

Since there were no formalized organizations back in 1946 for immigrants who had survived the European Holocaust, these guys would meet at our house.

That was because we had our own survivor, Cousin Ben, who lived with us for six years. My parents always had food, always had snacks and always opened their door and hearts to these young men.

Mendel was notable because being one of Ben's closest friends, he was around quite a bit, and we got to know him and appreciate his friendship and sense of humor.



**Shirlee Iden**

TODAY WE READ a lot about Haitians, Cubans, Salvadoreans, Mexicans and such coming into this country and taking jobs away from our good citizens.

It wasn't much different after World War II. Many of the survivors, including Ben and Mendel, had student visas. Legally, they couldn't work.

Since the statute of limitations has probably run out, I can say a significant number of those "students" earned by working in our family supermarkets.

They were an asset, since the stores were in Hamtramck and the boys spoke Polish. Mendel worked behind the meat counter, a job that lasted for many years.

Figuring out what they could study was a trip, too. They came without any facility in English. These youth had been taken from their families when quite young and didn't have much formal education.

Mendel wasn't a high school graduate, had no money or prospects, and almost no family here, but none of that deterred him. He stayed with the Hamtramck job long after most of the boys had gone on to other work.

THAT'S BECAUSE he needed help longer. Starting with so little education, he finished high school and struggled on, year after year.

Mendel served in the armed forces of this country during the Korean conflict, then with great determination, studied further, went on to a school of osteopathic medicine and emerged as Dr. Mendel Ettinger.

Years after he took off the butcher apron and went on to other pursuits, customers would ask about the personable young man.

After the basics were taken care of, Mendel found his love, Fern. Nineteen years ago, they married, settled in Southfield and had three sons: Steven, Scott and David.

From the ashes of war-torn Europe, he came and he labored long to make a life for himself and build a family and career.

The memories of the war years don't ever leave the people caught up in the genocide the Nazis wrought. But Mendel seemed to rise above all of that. He had a family, a profession, a home and friends.

From the sons of us, native-born Americans, the Statue of Liberty is some kind of nostalgia. For Mendel, she was the light. And if you think about it a bit, our friend, now lost to us, was the soul and emodiment of the American dream.

# Farmington Observer

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# comment

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## Will must go; long live 'E.T.'

THIS TIME George Will has gone too far. We have put up his pedantic pontifications long enough. For years he has, in the name of Americanism and right-conservative philosophy, over-analyzed every political, military and budgetary decision, strategem or event in this country and most of the rest of the world.

His ponderous theories and opinions, invariably on behalf of conservatism and Ronald Reagan, appear in newspapers, magazines, almost nightly on ABC's news show Nightline, following every presidential address, and on every TV news talk show.

At times on Sunday he is on two news shows at the same time, as if he is the only conservative in the country worth quoting. You flip the channel selector back and forth thinking there is something wrong with the TV, but no, it is George Will asking questions on one channel and answering his own questions on another.



**Bob Wisler**

But now he has gone too far and it is time to drum him out of our national consciousness. He has committed the ultimate blasphemy. He has attacked "E.T."

From one of his favorite firing positions — a column in Newsweek — Will (if you can't recall him, he has red hair, thick glasses, tight, pursed lips, a perpetually cold countenance and humorless suits, shirts and ties which at one time were labeled by League) has unleashed a salvo of shots at "E.T."

THE MOVIE, he claims, is subversive because it is brimming with ideas to the effect that "children are people," "adults are not" and "science is sinister." Will mainly a children's movie and that children throughout the country are spending the summer inside darkened movie theaters watching dangerous ideas.

"What is bothersome," he complains, is "the animus against science, which is seen as a morbid calling for callous vivisectionists and other unfeeling technocrats."

Will further complains about such things as children being able to express themselves to adults on the theory that children, like soldiers, should not be able to express their opinion to their betters — either elders or officers.

Enough is enough. Will must go. To attack "E.T." to suppose that this wonderfully uplifting cinematic treat can somehow be construed as an anti-science diatribe, merely gives evidence to the theory that conservative and conservative spokesmen are humorless ideologues whose reservoir of feelings for other humans is sadly depleted and whose outlook is stultified by their misery convictions.

WE ALWAYS knew that conservatives were not a fun bunch. But when one of their leading intellectual lights comes out four-square against the movie that has in the space of a few weeks become an American phenomenon, its time to call a halt to their didactic denunciations. I say ban, boycott and burn in effigy George Will.

If you haven't noticed it, yet, Will "E.T." is not the overwhelming success that it is because because it is a children's movie that appeals to children but because it is an adult's movie that appeals to adults.

"E.T."'s enormous appeal stems from its ability to invoke in all of us the recognition that we have and have always had basic and largely unsatisfied yearnings. "E.T." somehow allows us to satisfy at least momentarily our deepest yearnings for absolute love, a metaphysical closeness with another being, a need for acceptance and love from someone else, no matter who we are, nor no matter how badly we may look to ourselves or others.

E.T.'S QUEST for acceptance, understanding, love, protection and help is the same quest we all went through in our younger years and even now are continuing to go through. Longer even than we yearned for romantic love, we yearned for friendship and we yearned for the powerful ones — the adults, our parents — to accept, love and protect us, the weaker ones.

It is in our later years that we recognize how desperate that journey was.

E.T.'s journey is also ours, and even if we don't recognize this, we recognize our need, at the same time, to love someone else as completely as Elliott learned to love E.T., perhaps, as much in spite of what E.T. was, as because of what he was.

We come from this movie having undergone a catharsis and resolving in our hearts, as black as they may be, to try to be a little kinder, a little more loving, a little more feeling when it comes to our relationships with other beings, be they big people, little people, or not people at all.

No, "E.T." is not only a movie which attracts youngsters into theaters. It is a movie for adults. And neither is it a statement against science, although a case can be made against "unfeeling technocrats." In this movie the technocrats are less related to the scientific community than they are to the governmental community.

There is something to be said for making statements against unfeeling technocrats and unfeeling conservative spokesmen who can't even forget their didacticism long enough to comfortably enjoy a movie which at least temporarily makes us feel alive and whole and loving.

Down with George Will. Long live "E.T."

## Hudson's death is a blow

A BIG LUMP formed in The Stroller's throat the other morning when he opened his paper and learned that the J. L. Hudson Company was closing its downtown store.

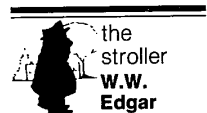
The news wasn't surprising. It had been known for a long time that the store was in deep financial trouble. But like a member of a family who has been sitting for the long time before passing on, the departure, when it comes, is still shocking.

In fact, it was an old friend passing. It began back in 1924 when word got around our little town that Mazie Edgar's boy was going to Detroit to follow his newspaper career.

ON THAT evening, a neighbor who had just returned from a trip to Detroit stopped in for a visit. "You'll like Detroit," she said. "It is a fine place. But there are some things you shouldn't miss and you just have to see the J. L. Hudson store in the downtown area."

The Stroller listened eagerly. On his arrival in Detroit, he passed the J. L. Hudson store on his way to the Free Press. He was mystified by the size of the building.

THE REAL friendship with Hudson's came later. At the time



**the stroller  
W.L. Edgar**

having a charge account at Hudson's was social status symbol. They didn't call them credit cards in those days. They were charge accounts and anyone possessing a Hudson charge account was looked upon as someone in the upper strata.

Then one evening Sam Levinson, the manager of the T. B. Rayl store, asked The Stroller if he had a charge account at Hudson's. When he said "No," Levinson countered, "You better get one — it will help you get acclimated out here."

The Stroller smiled. He felt he was a stranger and had no chance to join the elite charge account customers.

The next day while in Rayl's store, Levinson suggested that The Stroller select some small item and he would charge it. "Then when you pay your bill at the end of the month your credit will be established here. If you apply at Hudson's, they will ask if you have an account anywhere. When they learn

you are accepted at Rayl's, they will give you an account for we all belong in the same association."

AND THAT'S what happened. While other folks waited months and years for a Hudson's card, The Stroller got one the first month he was in Detroit. And it helped immensely to get him started and known among the people in Detroit.

With that start, The Stroller went to higher things. In fact he became sports editor of the Free Press and mostly because of the contacts he had made with his Hudson charge account.

So it was no wonder he had a lump in his throat when he read that the store was leaving the downtown area.

It was the end of an era. More that that it was the parting of a friend who gave him his start with a coveted charge account 60 years ago.

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