

Opinion

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Pleasant vacation in the back yard

FOR YEARS on end, each time summer rolled around, the big question was bound to arise: Where will we spend our vacation?

For awhile, it was fun to tour Upper Michigan, and one year we went as far as Copper Harbor. Other years we spent our time at some of the lakes in the Lower Peninsula. Our favorite was Higgins Lake and the Hotel Burdell, now out of existence.

Then came a time when The Stroller's work took him to summer conventions. That was fortunate because each year the convention was held in a different place. In fact, one year it took us to Honolulu, and what a time we had!

During these annual meetings, we were in almost every state in the Union, but the best was yet to come.

BACK IN 1970, we were invited to head a group from Plymouth, Mich., which was going to Plymouth, England, to help the folks over there celebrate the 350th anniversary of the sailing of the Mayflower. From there, a side trip to the European continent was appealing and enjoyed.

In later years, we found the idea spot on the banks of the St. Clair River at Marine City — the lady's home town.

We were headed there again this year when something unforeseen happened, and the journey to the blue waters of the river had to be canceled.

What now?
It meant we had to stay at home. Lo and behold, the open green space in the midst of the small wooded area has proven to be ideal.

Years ago, The Stroller's mother advised him that if he were going to be a weed puller, he should be a good one. Mother should see him now.

DESIGNING and rearranging the flower beds, along with the planting of the flowers, are more enjoyable than at first suspected.

'Larger reality' is false god of press

IN AN ERA where journalistic integrity is under increasing scrutiny, it is disheartening to read of various scribes who confess to making up and altering details in their stories to provide more dramatic reading.

The latest is Alastair Reid, longtime staff writer for the New Yorker magazine, who tells of changing some details in his stories to make them more harmonious with the total effect he hoped to achieve.

The writer said he did this in the interest of seeking a "larger reality."

FOR EXAMPLE, Reid wrote in one piece about a group of Spaniards in a "small flyblown bar by the harbor, a favorite haunt of mine for some years because of its boyaunt clientele."

He now acknowledges that the bar and its occupants were imaginary. But he said he had talked to many Spaniards and knew what they would say in a bar. "I was reporting on the mood of the country. This was not invalidated by the fact that the bar is or isn't there."

He also said that "I would have 30 or 40 conversations with people. If one followed them exactly, it would be terribly boring for the reader."

Reid's confessions have sparked protests by other writers, magazines and newspapers with most saying they do not condone altering present reality to any degree even for the reward of a "larger reality," whatever that may be.

THE TRUTH is that tampering with facts in any kind of story which purports to be a truthful account is dangerous business.

While knowledgeable readers of the New Yorker might forgive Reid's minor alterations or fabrications, which undoubtedly made his stories somewhat more colorful or slightly more interesting, the writing of such proceedings is bound to be unforgivable and laudable distortions, the kind which cause the public to look upon journalists as barely tolerable nuisances.



the stroller
W.W. Edgar

There is an added interest now. It is getting acquainted with the animal and bird life. More and more each day, he wishes the birds and the squirrels and rabbits could talk. Better yet, he wishes he could understand their motives.

Every morning they are on hand, coming almost to the edge of the beds as if to say, "Good morning." Once in a while, a large pheasant struts his stuff in full view. The wonder of it is that they must be able to tell time as they make their appearance about the same hour each day.

Once in a while, too, we get an unusual caller — an opossum from down in the Bell Creek area. But the real fun comes at dusk. At this hour, the birds come for a drink at the fountain and play a sort of game. It could be their version of softball.

SO AT LONG last, The Stroller has found an ideal spot for a vacation where time can be spent to purpose even better than strolling along a beach or sitting in a chair at river's edge.

The fun of it, at this point, is the fact that The Stroller does not know the names of the flowers. He just visits the nursery or the road stands, picks out the colors he wants, and hustles home to plant them, hoping they will grow as he had designed them in the garden.

All told, the vacation days have taken on a new place in The Stroller's life. He has found a great vacation spot — right in his own back yard.

Talk about "Acres of Diamonds." This is it.



Bob Wisler

Journalism has long held to the tenet that truth is paramount and not something to be dallied with, even at the risk of boring the reader.

Nevertheless, there is occasionally the temptation to insert into a story a statement which was never spoken, a colorful background fact that is unverifiable, a minor fabrication just for the sake of keeping the reader on the hook.

I AM OFTEN reminded of two famous lines in Americana:

• Willie "The Bank Robber" Sutton, who reportedly was asked why he robbed banks and replied, "Because that's where the money is."

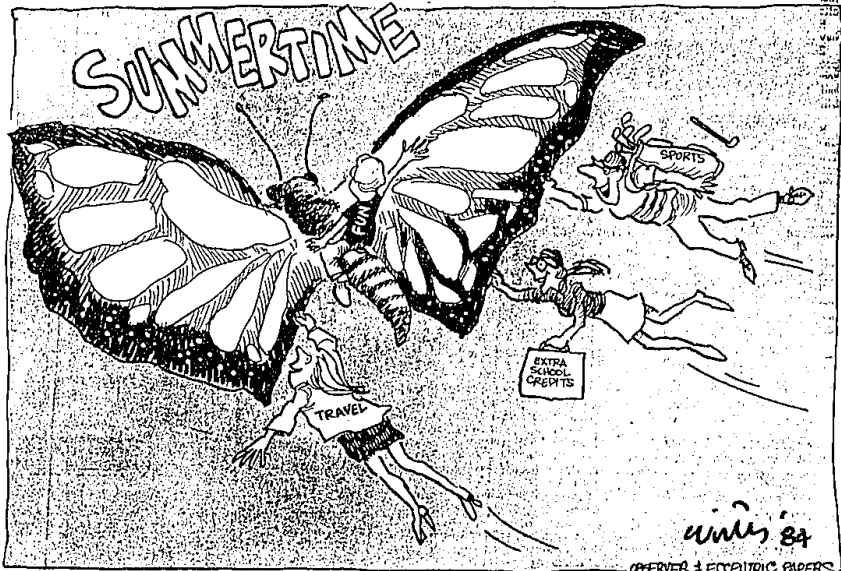
• "Shoelaces Joe" Jackson, who, after being barred from baseball for throwing the 1919 World Series, was approached by a kid who shuffled up with a tear in his eye and said, "Say it ain't so, Joe."

Sutton maintained that he never said the line, that it was fabricated by a reporter who interviewed him in his jail cell. Witnesses to the Jackson event said there was no such kid; he was a figment of the writer's imagination.

NO DOUBT the inventions helped create myths which harmed no one and, even made the participants in the story seem more human and less stereotyped.

But out of such thinking comes such things as the infamous James Cook story, which was a fabrication from the reporting — retrieved by the Washington Post — of what turned out to be a fictional account of a boy's dream.

Perhaps those who maintain that the piece about the boy bought a larger reality and was only a composite of how young drug addicts talk about their addiction.



Grand Prix good for region

VROOM.

Automobile engines will roar in downtown Detroit during the third annual Grand Prix this weekend. On Sunday an international television audience of approximately 80 million in 46 nations will view the car race on the streets of downtown Detroit.

"With good weather, we hope to break all attendance records," said Larry Crane of Detroit Renaissance. Detroit Renaissance sponsors the Grand Prix. Last year 71,000 spectators paid to watch the race from inside course barricades. Another estimated 130,000 viewed the race from downtown highrise buildings.

Detroit is one stop in an international 16-race Formula One circuit. It began in Brazil on March 25 and will conclude in Spain on Oct. 21. The only other U.S. stop is Dallas.

It is fitting that the motor capital of the world has become the site of one of the world's most important races.

YOU MAY WONDER what this means to you. Perhaps you live comfortably in a tree-lined suburban neighborhood and never venture into Detroit.

But many of your neighbors are coming to the Grand Prix.

"We don't know where all the spectators



Nick Sharkey

are from," Crane said. "But I'm sure the majority are from Detroit's suburbs."

Also, much money is brought into this area from the Grand Prix. It attracts tourists from throughout the United States and Canada. Many are housed, fed and entertained in the suburbs. Organizers estimate \$12 million will be pumped into the local economy during the Grand Prix.

Most important is that what is good — or bad — for Detroit is good or bad for the suburbs. If you don't believe that, look at the suburbs immediately north and west of Detroit. Problems of urban blight are slowly creeping into these areas. Running away to the suburbs offers no long-term solutions.

And the Grand Prix is good for Detroit. It gives the city a chance to showcase itself not only for 200,000 spectators but also for an international television audience. It demonstrates Detroit is on the rebound.

I vividly recall watching ABC's national telecast during the first Grand Prix two years ago. Beautiful pictures graced the screen of the riverfront area and the Renaissance Center. You can't buy that kind of publicity.

ORGANIZERS ARE OPTIMISTIC that the Grand Prix will continue as an annual event. But that will depend on ticket sales. Detroit Renaissance will give no details but admits it lost many thousands of dollars during the first two Grand Prix races.

Early ticket sales are up this year, and corporations have rented all of the hospitality suites. But ticket sales must be good for the preliminary races on Saturday and the finals on Sunday.

The ticket price schedule is complex varying from a three-day grandstand seat for \$75 to a Free Day on Friday when there is no charge for practice sessions. For more information, call 259-PRIX.

Those attending should not take the freeways directly into downtown Detroit. Streets will be clogged with preparations for the race. Parking is available on the perimeter of downtown Detroit and will require only a few blocks' walk.

Make sure you're there when the engines start up this weekend.

Signs of our congressmen



Tim Richard

Lo and behold, there was a correlation:

• Fire and air signs tended to be liberal. Reading from left to center, these are Leo, Gemini, Sagittarius, Aquarius, Aries and Libra.

• Earth and water signs tended to be conservative. From right to center, they are Taurus, Virgo, Scorpio, Cancer, Capricorn and Pisces.

Now, these were taken as groups. Individuals under any one sign could range from 5 to 95, but within each group there was a cluster. Leos clustered around the 33 mark, Tauruses around 59.

DON RIEGLE, Michigan's senior U.S. senator, started his political life as a Republican, where he was unhappy, and switched to the Democrats, among whom he is still a maverick. Well, Aquarians are left of center and unpredictable.

Rep. Carl Fursell, R-Plymouth, rarely disagrees out loud with the Reagan forces,

but his Sagittarian liberalism shows up in his ACA marks, which are in the 30s.

Rep. Bill Broomfield, R-Birmingham, is a Taurus. His ACA marks have been in the middle 70s, fairly conservative.

As 18th District congressman, Democrat James Blanchard, now governor, ranked 8 to 15 on the ACA index, pretty liberal. You would expect that from a Leo. By the way, Leos are noted for being blustery, showing authority, showing generosity and having gifts for leadership, according to the zodiac literature.

U.S. Sen. Carl Levin is a Cancerian; a sign you would expect to be thrifty, conservative, tight-fisted. Democrat Levin is that indeed with the defense budget. Otherwise he ranks as a relative liberal. As I said, the correlations aren't perfect.

But Bill Ford, the 15th District Democratic congressman from Taylor, there's a Leo for you. ACA ranks him 5 to 14.

The ratings are incomplete on such junior members of Congress as Sander Levin, D-Southfield, a Virgo, and Dennis Hertel, D-Harper Woods, a Sagittarian.

My system has one defender. Gundella the Witch says the mere fact that astrologists don't know how or why something works doesn't mean it doesn't work. A Gemini, Gundella can be very intuitive about these things.