

Other taverns paved way for Botsford



Sensitivity is artist's life blood

WHO, ME? Sensitive? Well, let's see. Yes, it's true I still have Scott's little hammer for his birthday present. Fifteen years ago, while I was working under our kitchen sink, I asked Scott if he would hand me a hammer. I heard him eagerly searching through his tools and then the slap of fat little feet as they ran out of the room. Thinking that he forgot, I smiled and thought, "What do you expect from a 14-year-old?" To my surprise a minute or two later, Scott said, "Here, Daddy," and handed me a fluorescent red plastic hammer. Believe it or not, 15 years later there is still a Fisher-Price hammer in my tool box. Now do you call that sensitive?

Of course, I cherish my little plastic Scottie dog Kevin bought me at Santa's secret workshop when he was in kindergarten. One of the purple rhinestone eyes popped off just as I opened up the box. And when I told it up to say, "Now I live in the other eye popped off. By the way, that little plastic dog is the most valued treasure in my jewelry box to this day. Oh, I am very sensitive.

Sensitivity is our life's blood. It inspires us to look, study and express. Expression, however, is sincere if it is not initiated by the personal feelings of the artist. Sensitivity inspires when by definition means "to create life into" and worry knocks the breath out of you. Sensitivity spurs you on to expression and worry stifles you for fear of failure. I promise you that every picture you ever drawn, paint or render forces you through a whole gamut of emotions. First, you are inspired, then you seek expression. In artwork, you next pick a medium that will best meet the demands of your ability and emotion. It is the execution that causes many a picture to end up in the bird cage. During the throes of expression, an artist goes through many emotional highs and lows. There is a good wall to use. It means the act of struggling with a problem, task, etc.

The struggle is to make visual on canvas or paper the emotion that is inside the "task." Sometimes my students will say, "Gee, I wouldn't worry over these pictures if I could draw like you." This is certainly not true because I sweat out every picture just like my students. As a matter of fact, a teacher stands to lose face by a failure more than a student. Probably the difference between the teacher and student is that the teacher is sure that the task is worth whatever effort is required and the student is unsure that the outcome will reflect his emotion or ability.

IF YOUR DRAWING or painting forces you to entertain thoughts of quitting and there isn't an art teacher in sight, here's what to do. First, walk away, have a coffee, change the baby or watch something educational on TV like "Hollywood Squares" or "Green Acres" reruns. Second, when you go back to your artwork, pick it up and hold it in front of a mirror. This will reverse the image and 50 times out of 100 will graphically show your error in proportion, structure or placement of subjects.

Third, squint your eyes. This will increase the contrast that is basic for all artwork. Contrast defines the shapes in black and white pictures and reduces the need for outlines. And in color, rendering contrast is essential for not only definition but balance. Remember contrast is the key to color. Fourth, to make necessary changes, try placing tracing paper over your work and trace only the best of your artwork. Redraw the areas that gave you trouble then, if everything looks good, transfer to a new piece of paper or canvas.

If none of these tips help, then take a large marker and write across your drawing or painting: "You can't enjoy winning unless you occasionally fail." Then pin it up on the wall. It is a good wall to use. It means the act of struggling with a problem, task, etc.

Editor's note: This is the second of a series of excerpts from the book, "More Than A Tavern — 150 Years Of The Botsford Inn," by Joan M. Fox, published by the Botsford Inn in cooperation with the Farmington Hills Historical Commission, 1986, as a sesquicentennial tribute to Michigan's longest surviving hostelry.

By Jean M. Fox
Special writer

Before the Westons built what later became known as the Botsford Inn, there were only two taverns in Farmington. One was kept by Nathan Philbrick (known as Uncle Nathan) on the south side of Section 15 at today's 11 Mile and Power road, but in the 1830s called the Old Detroit road. The other was run by Solomon Walker — known as Uncle Solomon — on the southeast corner of Section 30 today's Grand River and Ten Mile roads and there existed very naturally a rivalry between them, recalled P.D. Warner, writing in the Farmington Herald circa 1905.

"Walker's tavern was the most central, while Niles and Commerce, once a part of Farmington Township, furnished a large portion of the voters, but Mrs. Philbrick, universally known as Aunt Sarah, was a good house-

keeper and splendid cook, and knew just how much Scotch Snuff to put into her pies and cakes so as to season them to the exact taste of her neighbors and friends. Her husband, 'Uncle Nathan,' having two eyes, could see and understand the advantage of a 'social glass' in the maintenance of friendly relations with his neighbors, while 'Uncle Solomon' had but one eye with which to look after the social habits of his townsmen, and his wife, Mrs. W. was wholly ignorant of the secret process by which her rival was able to maintain the great reputation of her cookery. 'These circumstances may explain the reason why it was voted at the previous meeting that the election should be held at the school house instead of Walker's Tavern.'

It is recorded that in 1829 the annual meeting of the Farmington Township Board was held at Walker's Tavern. This had been built originally as a log structure, a frame structure was soon erected near the original building.

This tavern eventually passed into the hands of Robert Wikom, who increased the size of the inn, and built into one of the better stopping places on the Grand River Road. It was also a stage coach station, with Hubbard and Birrell coaches stop-

ping there on their runs from Detroit to Lansing.

"The frontier raced across Michigan and northern Indiana in the later 1820s and 1830s, and on its vanguard the tavern may invariably be found. The west end of the Detroit-Chicago road, originally an Indian trail, was surveyed by Federal agents in 1825. By 1830 there were outposts on the road as far west as Niles, and Bronson, and Jonesville had already been named after taverners. Between Detroit and Niles the construction of taverns and their enlargement and improvement can be said to have kept pace, perhaps a sort of reluctant pace, with the swelling tide of migration and with the rapidly rising standards of comfort of the traveling public."

A picture of the early Michigan innkeeper emerges from the pen of Alexis de Toqueville, a French nobleman, who in 1831 — wishing to see the true American wilderness — was directed to Pontiac and Saginaw, north of Detroit.

De Toqueville had travelled from New York City, up the Hudson, via the Erie Canal (just six years old) to Buffalo, then across the Lakes to Detroit. It was July 1831; he reached Pontiac, which had two primitive inns. Saginaw was but a frontier settlement amid the wilderness. The educated Frenchman stayed at the

"yellow inn" run by Judge Amasa Bagley.

"... the finest inn in Pontiac ... we were introduced to the barroom; it's a room where you are given to drink and where the simplest as well as the richest traders of the place come in to smoke, drink and talk politics together, on the footing of the most perfect exterior equality."

The master of the shop, or landlord, was a very large man whose face wore that expression of candor and simplicity which distinguishes the Normandy horse traders. He was a man who, for fear of intimidating you, never looked you in the face ... a deep politician, and according to the American custom, a pitiless questioner.

Judge Bagley was astounded at the destination of his visitors.

"You want to go to Saginaw! Saginaw! Bay! Two reasonable men, two well educated foreigners want to go to Saginaw! Bay! This thing is hardly credible. Saginaw is the last inhabited place till the Pacific Ocean ... hardly anything but wilderness and pathless solitudes ..."

But go the two men did. It was de Toqueville's trip through Michigan and Oakland County (where he also stopped in a primitive Troy) which introduced him to the new type, the American pioneer.

Shain Park art fair Sept. 13-14

The 12th annual Art in the Park in Birmingham will be Sept. 13-14 in Shain Park in the downtown area.

The show, with 150 artists working in a wide variety of media, is the major fund-raiser for Common Ground, Oakland County's only 24-hour crisis intervention service. The agency serves more than 20,000 individuals each year from Oakland, Wayne and Macomb counties.

In its decade-plus history, the show has established itself as one of the premier art shows in the state attracting outstanding artists and craftsmen from a wide area. This year's judges for the 10 "best of show" cash prizes are Brad Ivers, photographer; Richard Kozlow, painter; and Graham Marks, head of the Cranbrook Academy of Art ceramics department.

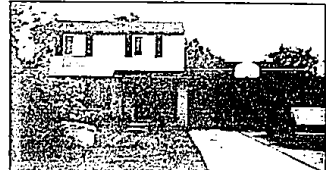
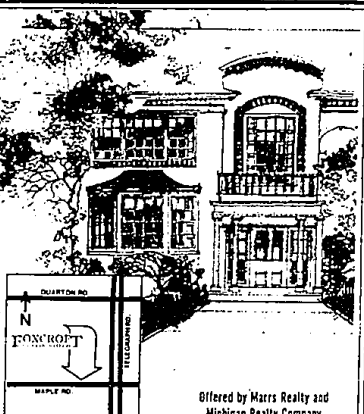
Other attractions include gourmet and festival food booths, a children's art area and musical entertainment. This year's 30-member volunteer committee is headed by Nancy Carty of Royal Oak and Annette Arrington of Birmingham. Another group of more than 200 volunteers will assist during the two days of the festival.

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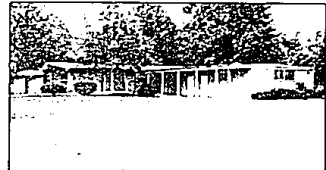
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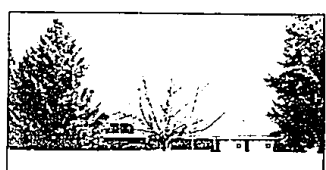
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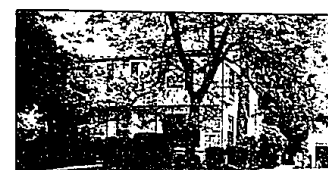
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