

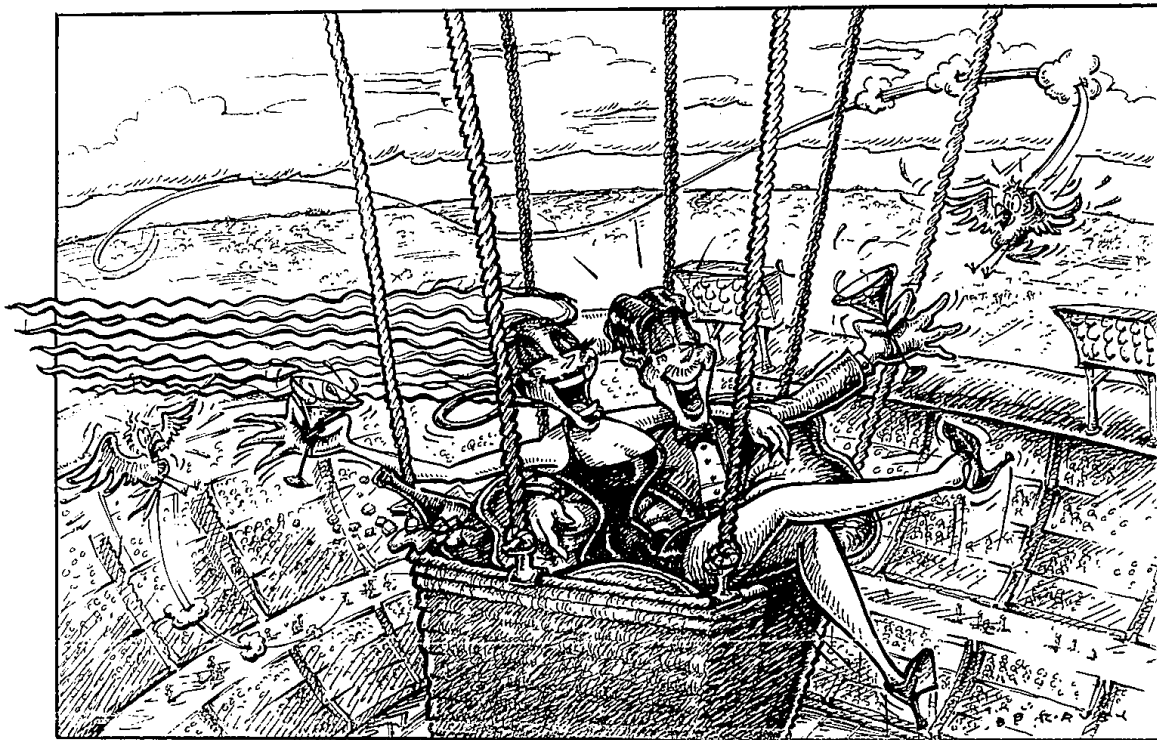
On the road

The counter-culture of the 1960-1970s meant total freedom and for some it was a cross-country journey with stops at assorted "crash" pads. Those years have been revived in a new book, written by an Eastern Michigan University lecturer. See Page 5D.

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★10



Best seat in the house

By Sharon Dargay
staff writer

"Excuse me.
"Pardon me, but you're sitting in my seat."
"Think maybe you could move? Please?"
"Yeah, I know you were here first. Yeah, I know the number on your ticket matches the number on your seat."
"The ticket office must have made a mistake because I always sit here."
"I saw my first he-man log-rolling contest right here. I saw all 118 performances of the flying, flaming Zamboni brothers by covering under this very seat. Took weeks to get the bubblegum out of my hair. I even punked out at a 'Grizzle King' concert and danced on the upholstery."

"Good ole seat 52, row 9. We're like pals. I know it like I know my own *Lazy Boy* back home."
"Look, how about we trade tickets? I'm right over there. See the goofy-looking guy in the front row? Right down there in the VIP seats. See him? Now look past him about about 67 rows. Past the third balcony. Keep going."

"Here, use these binoculars. See the

Not always front row center

emergency roof exit? Try squinting. I'm up there."
"What'd ya mean? It's a great view!"
"Look, if you trade seats with me, I'll give you my subscription ticket to the *Dell* in Dance Dinner Theatre. Or my annual press pass to the *Trout-O-Rama* show? How about a tip on other "best seats" around the metro area? Here, take a look."

THE DUKE SEAT — Center section near the stage is a favorite spot at Meadowbrook Theatre on the Oakland University campus in Rochester Hills.

But Jim Spittle, assistant to the general manager, said his preference is near the back "because you get to look down on the set."
"Traditionally the best seat is the duke seat — a third of the way back and center. It got the name from the Italian Renaissance. The duke from each city — that's where he'd sit. Or he'd sit in the duke box, usually in the center one level up."

Meadowbrook's duke seat is somewhere near the center of the theater in about Row

H. But don't expect to sit anywhere within the first 10-15 rows unless you've got a season ticket.

Spittle's other favorite theater seats include "anywhere" at the Attie Theatre in Detroit, in the "steep" but "great" balcony in Detroit's Music Hall and nine rows from the front of the balcony at Orchestra Hall in Detroit.

"The acoustics are incredible up there (in Orchestra Hall). The sound floats up. If you're stuck under a balcony, you're not hearing everything because the sound is chopped off."

OH MY STOMACH — You want action? Try the front or the back on Boblo Island's two roller coasters, the Sky Scream and Corkscrew.

"We wonder about the people who sit in the middle," laughed Tim Dagg, Boblo spokesman and a member of the American Roller-coaster Enthusiasts.

"If you're sitting in the back you're whipped over the hills, but you don't get to see what's coming. The people riding in the

front feel a pushing sensation. As it peaks over the hill you see where you are going. The ride is smoother in the front seat. It's more rickety in the back."

Dagg, who has ridden 64 roller coasters in 34 different amusement parks, prefers the back seat in Boblo's Corkscrew, a ride that loops upside down.

He said the front seat offers a better view for the Sky Scream.

"The beauty of riding a coaster is not just the ride, but looking at the surrounding area whooshing by."

SEEING STARS — "Even though we try to make sure everyone is given a good view, it does turn out that some seats are better," said Jeff Bass, astronomy coordinator at Cranbrook Institute of Science, Bloomfield Hills.

He said seats along the outermost wall assure a heavenly view in Cranbrook's planetarium.

"If you're closer to the middle the big star projector looms large in the center and it could be obstructive."

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R.U. Syrius

Karlos Barney



Irma's patience is wearing thin as the mysterious men with mallets continue to disrupt the crochet tournament.

Traveler's notebook: Portugal

(First of a two-part series)

By Iris Sanderson Jones
contributing travel editor

I am sitting on the balcony of a small Portuguese inn, looking across the bay to a huge arm of rock protruding into the Mediterranean Sea.

This is the westernmost tip of Europe, that rocky peninsula, and Cape St. Vincent beyond it, are the "end of the world," the Land End, before the sea rolls on across the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas.

It is a soft, clear day here, pale blue sky, reddish brown cliffs, a morning blue sea, all of it wrapped in a light haze and punctuated by the sound of waves and birds.

If I pull my eyes up the cliff from the beach, I see a stone fort and a small village of whitewashed houses



A time-honored tradition endures along the Algarve of Portugal, where men like these residents of the port of Sagres head out to sea to fish.

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