

FEAR AND LOAFING

STREET SENSE

Rolling in dough

By Karl Nilsson
special writer



Karl Nilsson

They say war is hell. But you can't possibly know the full meaning of that statement unless you've worked at a fast food pizzeria.

It all started with a few clever ads and cute slogans. Soon, the once peaceful suburbs were caught up in the spicy crossfire of an all out feud. The good-natured rivalry for your discretionary food budget began innocently enough with a simple promise: "We deliver to your home within 15 minutes or the pizza's free." Going one better, the competition countered with "Home delivery within 15 minutes or your next two pizzas free."

As the see-saw battle heated up, so did the advertising claims. "We deliver within 15 minutes or you get free pizza for the rest of your life." Each month, more perks were added. "If we're late, you get unlimited free pizza plus a free trip to Hawaii."

Marketing incentives escalated to new heights. "Free pizza saved on the beach of your very own Polynesian island kingdom, named after you by the U.S. State Department and populated by fun-loving natives who worship you as a god."

Consumers love the free vacations and special offers. What the didn't know was the awful toll it was taking on the troops. At first, the delivery boys were slugged with a financial penalty for late deliveries. Later, they were slugged with a stale breadstick.

As the stakes went up, so did the punishment. A first offense meant stamping your fingers in the pizza oven. A second offense meant strapping a dumpster on your back and crawling six city blocks on your hands and knees, shouting "unclean, unclean." A third offense meant eating anchovies.

AS CUSTOMERS grew bored with trips around the world, different incentives were tried. "If we don't deliver within 15 minutes, the pizza's free, the car's yours and the delivery boy is your slave for life."

With the increased pressure for faster delivery times, frightened pizza drivers careened through neighborhood streets, race fans and bookies lined the curbs to bet on the action. Block clubs set up grandstands and began charging admission.

Cut off from their favorite doughnut shops by the crowds of spectators, police bravely decided to take action. Any car with a pizza sign on the roof was automatically targeted for a ticket. To avoid arrest, pizza jockeys began hijacking ambulances, but later switched to "stealth" cars — innocent looking jalopies with high-performance engines crammed under their battered hoods.

Signs were removed and radar detectors, CB radios and police scanners were installed. Finally, with company helicopters scouting out speed traps, the delivery fleet was once again under the 15-minute deadline.

Unfortunately, there was no way to cover the cost of this high-tech, covert delivery system. Prices couldn't be raised or customers would switch brands. The answer? Cut back on size.

The original extra-large was reduced to fit on a saucer. A large shrunk to the size of a biscuit. To cushion the blow of this down-sizing, euphemistic new names were invented.

To get what used to be a medium now required ordering a "king size, super colossal, big butt special." The old large was now called the "gigantic, stupendous, humungous, international mega meal." Space limitations prevent me from listing the replacement title for extra-larges.

IN RETALIATION, the competition fired back with a three-for-one price special. The predictable response was a four-for-one plan, the inevitable buy-one-get-five free deal.

Offers and counter-offers filled the airwaves and profits dwindled. The only option left was to ration ingredients. Cheese was applied with an eyedropper. Watered-down sauce was misted on with a spray bottle. Spices and dots were cut out with a paper punch. Crusts were pressed so thin that diners complained of paper cuts.

Have a reason to search

Dear Barbara,

I am 39 years old and was adopted at birth. Both of my adoptive parents have recently died. I think I may be interested in trying to find my birth parents, but I am not sure. Do you know anything about the success of such reunions?

Also, do you know anything about how I might go about this job? I have always suppressed any curiosity I might have felt about my natural parents, but since my adoptive parents have died, I feel that I need no longer suppress it.

Although I am not generally unhappy, I have been since my parents' death.

"Joe"

Dear "Joe,"

I sense in your letter that in your quest for your natural parents, you may be anticipating relationships that will provide the same love and

warmth that you shared with your adoptive parents. If it is true, the outcome could be disappointing.

Your search is into the unknown and as such, could have unexpected outcomes. However, if I am wrong and you are without preconceived fantasies, then finding your natural parents could be exciting and enlightening.

There are many disparate views on the emotional impact of such reunions. At one extreme, there are those who believe that one's security is threatened by opening new doors. At the other extreme, there are those who believe that reunions are good even when they cause anger and confusion.

Additionally, there are the feelings of your natural parents to consider. Might they feel infringed upon, if you were to find them?

The subject is controversial as you can see. The right answer can only be known with hindsight. If you enter the process realistically, you will learn something no matter what the emotional impact is.

Should you decide to pursue this quest, a group that might help is the International Soundex Reunion Registry in Carson City, Nev. Call (707) 882-7755. They can match you with your birth parents, if they are registered with them. If they are not, they will make a referral to a social service or search agency that could aid you.

I would like to address the sadness you mentioned that resulted from your parents' deaths. Mourning generally is considered normal when it lasts about a year. If your mourning has far surpassed that time, you may want to find competent help or support.

Barbara



Barbara Schiff

If you have a question or comment for Barbara Schiff, an trained counselor and experienced therapist, send it to Street Sense, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

Stone 'throwing' for fun, fitness

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"To join the family, he had to curl," said Kathy Frankowiak, 26, of husband Bob, 28. Kathy learned to curl as a child, taught by her father and grandfather who were lifelong curlers.

When the Rochester couple wed four years ago, Bob took up the sport. Like many curlers, they golf in the summer.

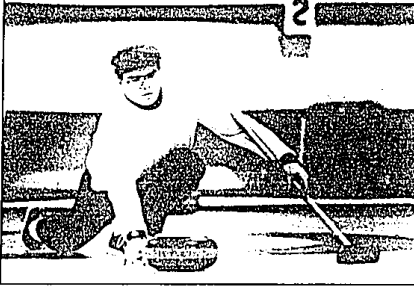
THE TWO sports are similar. During play, each requires intense competition and absolute skill. In the 18 or so countries where there are clubs, curling and golfing are often combined into a single club, like the Roseland Golf and Curling Club in Windsor. Curling is the national sport of Canada.

In addition to the Detroit club, there are four other curling clubs in Michigan, including Lewiston and Sault Ste. Marie. The Jackson Cascades has an outdoor arena and the Midland Granite Club has the only other indoor arena.

Competition between clubs is intense, according to Len Lowen, a West Bloomfield fireman who has been curling four years. The trophy his team won during a Canadian bonspiel for firefighters last winter is proudly displayed in the dining hall of the West Bloomfield arena.

Also in the hall are tables set for eight, room enough for two teams of four players each.

Following each game, "The winners always treat the losers. You always come back and sit with opponents. That's real important," Lowen said.



JOHN STORMZANDI/staff photographer

It takes style, grace and plenty of finesse to place a stone right where you want it in the game of curling.

Curling, a game whose rules were set by the Grand Caedonian Curling Club in 1838 to "unite curlers throughout the world into one Brotherhood of the Rock," is characterized by hospitality and sportsmanship.

Detroit curlers extended such traditions last year when the club hosted national championship competition. Twelve teams competed in the men's 33rd annual competition and nine teams competed in the women's 13th annual competition.

LOWEN and wife Kay, a bus driver for West Bloomfield schools,

curl together in mixed bonspiels Tuesday and Friday evenings. Bonspiels for men are played Monday and Thursday evenings. Women play Wednesday evenings and Tuesday mornings.

STREET SEEN

Our intrepid Street Scene reporter is always looking for the unusual and welcomes comments and suggestions from readers and entrepreneurs. Send those to this column in care of this newspaper, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150, or call 591-2300, Ext. 313.



It's a jungle

Animal prints are making an important fashion statement this season, so go wild over these feline accessories from Roz and Sherman, Telegraph Road, Birmingham. Try a Valentino scarf, leopard print handbag, spotted bracelet with matching clip-on earrings and belt. Anne Klein pumps and a wonderful waist-cinching belt. Prices start at \$42.



Quick recall

How about an electronic memory calculator/dialer? Four major functions are packed into this small pocket-size unit. It is a telephone book, memory pad, calculator and dialer. Made by SHARP, it sells for \$64.99 at Sears.

Touch of glass

Looking for that just right stained glass window to dress up your house? Stained Glass Designs in Farmington Hills may have what you're looking for. It's located at 28859 Orchard Lake Road.



Gift shops offer 'portable' gifts good for giving

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If you have any girls on your list, buy each a charm bracelet and one charm. That will solve your Christmas gift problem for years to come. Don't buy gold unless you plan to buy very expensive gifts as the girl grows to a woman. Actually, charms work for grown women, too, as do good quality souvenir spoons and collector plates.

Every city you visit has an art museum. Some of my best Christmas gifts were bought in art museums — jewelry pieces copied from an art antique, large silver and pewter spoons copied from some 18th-century design, hand-painted scarves, an art poster that can be mailed home.

I never take time to go shopping deliberately, unless it is to a craft store or a specialty shop that makes something exclusive to the area. Handcrafted Christmas decorations are irresistible.

I KEEP MY eyes open as I travel around for certain kinds of shops. For example, a music shop in another area often has a tape of some local music group that will interest friends at home.

For those of you who don't travel much, these ideas can be applied by following my footsteps across the border to Windsor. Hit the post office, coin shop, book store, specialty food aisle, Ontario liquor store, even the poetry store that has hats and cheeses you won't find in Detroit.

Explore china and crystal shops, if you plan to spend a lot on a gift. Or try department stores like Simpsons for wool sweaters, better and cheaper than at home.

If you stay more than 48 hours you can bring back top-brand Scotch from the duty-free store and up to \$100 worth of goods every 30 days.

On a day trip, you can bring back \$75 worth of goods per person. Keep your bills.

Let's say you have tried all these things and you still don't complete your Christmas list on time. There is another sneaky thing you can do. If it's a big gift, buy an airline ticket and stuff it in a stocking. Or give a friend a gift certificate to a local hotel, one that serves business travelers and therefore gives great rates on the weekend.

Or do something unexpected. Buy a bunch of art posters and send them instead of Christmas cards. You can sign them in your hotel room and mail them in a tube before you leave town.

If all else fails, adopt a whale in somebody's name from the Whale Adoption Project, 634 N. Palmouth Highway, North Palmouth, Mass. 12558. All the whales have names and you can pick the one you like.

YOU MAY NOT think that is much of a gift, but it will thrill an environmentalist. One of the best gifts I ever sent home from a trip was a certificate saying that I had planted a tree in a friend's name in Israel.

A word of warning. Never bring big, bulky things home except for yourself. I have a piece of driftwood that traveled 3,000 miles on the front of a trailer and a large Mexican lamp that was hauled aboard several airplanes between Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, and Detroit, but I don't recommend this unless you are really wild about something.

Never buy such troublesome gifts for others. You are the only one who is worth it.

If you have a travel question for Iris Sanderson Jones, send it to Street Sense, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

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