

FEAR & LOAFING

Culture gone mad

For years, suburbia's social elite have been forced to travel downtown for their cultural pursuits. From the DSO to the DIA, the big city has traditionally enjoyed a monopoly on highbrow entertainment.

Now, culturally-deprived suburbanites can stand tall, thanks to the debut of the prestigious "Museum of Failed Products" in Farmington Hills. Exhibiting only those cultural milestones conceived in suburbia, the MPB threatens to turn metropolitan green with envy.

Meanwhile, join me for a sneak preview as we take a burb-by-burb look at our hometown inventors:

No. 1. Redford's talented Sister Cordova is the proud inventor of the original "Meat Detector." Developed in the '50s for use by the Catholic Church, this portable electronic sensor helped enforce meatless Fridays on the faithful.

Every Friday, plainclothes nuns would drive past parishioner's homes at dinner time and scan them for meat. If the detector's needle swung into the red, the sisters would surround the house, shouting "Where's the Beef?"

The papal edict lifting the ban on meat spelled doom for the local manufacturer. However, a modified version is still being used by fast-food restaurants to locate hamburger patties too small to see with the naked eye.

No. 2. Next time you nuke a frozen pizza, pause a moment to say "thank you" to Tom Bunker of Troy.

While experimenting with electromagnetic radiation, Tom invented the revolutionary new appliance he dubbed the "Open-Air Microwave Oven." Unlike today's fully enclosed models, this early prototype was open on three sides for easy access.

Sensing the future market for microwave cooking, industry flocked to purchase the rights to Bunker's idea. Unfortunately, before the royalty checks arrived, Tom's family had mutated into alien life forms and slithered off into the storm sewers.

No. 3. Jack Kinsel of Westland had a terrible habit of oversleeping. Finally, to keep from losing his job, he was forced to create the "Alarm Clock from Hell."

Designed for folks who can ignore ordinary snooze alarms, Jack's wake-up call began with the super-amplified sound of fingernails squeaking across a blackboard. If the audio alert went unheeded, jets of water soaked down the bed. If that failed, a dozen electric cattle prods were lowered from the ceiling. If there was still no response, hundreds of needles protruded up through the mattress to suspend the sleeper in mid-air as South Ameri-



Karl Nilsson

can killer bees were released into the room.

Unfortunately, the buzzing of the angry insects lured Kinsel back to sleep and he scrapped the idea.

No. 4. Back in the '70s, Southfield was the hub of discomania. Excitement peaked when local dance champ Conrad Lupanoff was hired to teach John Travolta a few simple moves for Saturday Night Fever. When the lessons failed, Lupanoff constructed the "Automatic Disco Dance."

Using robotics, a set of rods and levers were installed around Travolta's legs. Once the dance steps were programmed in, the motorized splints completely controlled his lower body. With the machinery concealed by bellbottoms, all Travolta had to do was swing his arms and curl his lip to the beat.

After the success of the movie, Lupanoff earned his own place in the record books by winning 14 dance marathons in his battery-powered slacks. Able to dance vigorously while eating or sleeping, Conrad stunned the judges by dancing for eight straight days! Sadly, Lupanoff retired in disgrace when heat from an overloaded circuit melted his polyester suit.

No. 5. Birmingham jogger Bob Mango had a dream of training indoors during the harsh Michigan winters.

Finding traditional "conveyor-belt" treadmills too expensive, the resourceful Mango designed the first ever "Circular Treadmill." By turning an old lawn mower upside down and attaching a giant plywood disc to the driveshaft, Bob devised an exercise witness described "like running in place on a huge record album."

Unfortunately, there was no way to control the speed of rotation and during the trial run Bob was flung off over the horizon, never to return.

Now that you're bursting to run out and visit the Museum of Failed Products, I've got some bad news. The grand opening is being delayed while the curators figure out how to get the Pontiac Silverdome inside.

STREET SENSE

No winners in name game

Dear Barbara,
I am thinking of changing my name to "Kathy Detroit." I have never been fond of my family name and think that "Detroit" as a last name would have a certain excitement that I now lack. I asked my brother what he thought and he was insulted that I wanted to change my name. He says that my father will be insulted and angry too. Any thoughts on this subject.



Barbara Schiff

that this will break his heart and put his "bead in his pants. Never take your favors for granted."
What do you think? I am a divorced woman in my 30s with two children. I lack confidence in dealing with men.

Clawson

Dear Clawson,
Free advice is usually worth what you pay for it. That answer would also apply to my answer to your letter.

Perhaps your friend has had a lot of success with "abuse" make the heart grow bigger." If so, she's talking about sex and not about your first sentence which stressed liking and being liked. It is my experience that the most successful force in getting the right man to love you is for him to know how much you love him. Mature individuals do not play games with each other.

A final suggestion: If you want him to like you, try being a likable person.

Barbara

"In Search of a Name"

Dear "In Search of,"
Acting like a movie star will not make you exciting like one. Without excitement in you, your moniker cannot create it. As for your father and mother, it seems as if all of you may not be able to be happy at the same time. That is often the case with relationships.

Dear Barbara,
I recently met a man that I like and want him to like me. I have consequently asked a lot of acquaintances how I should handle this situation.

One of the women who had the most to say gave me this advice. First, she said, get to know the man. Second, let him see me in situations with other people. Third, arrange for an intimate evening alone but don't be there when he arrives. She said

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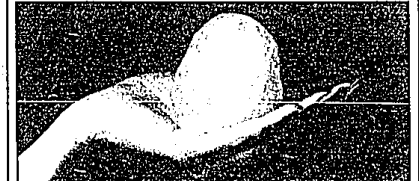
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STREET SEEN Denise Susan Lucas

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, 38251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150, or call 591-2300, Ext. 313.



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