POINTS OF VIEW

No 'Cheers': It's last call for corner bars in suburbs

n these days of cable television, reruns and nostalgia television, we'll probably never see the end of "Cheera." The episodes will become like well aged bourbon. And in our minds Norm and Cliffy will always be at the end of the bar talking to Woody. There will never be a last call.

The trouble is the corner bar is just about doomed. "Cheera" reruns will become about as reallistic as "Star Trek." The reason is the demise of the corner bar.

Trek." The reason is the demise of the comer bar.
They're falling victim to the Bennigan's syndrome. Corporate America has taken over the pub scene in suburban Detroit, replacing the Sam Malones of the world with a woman with an MBA from Harvard who is nore interested in a spread sheet thant in making a decent martini.

I noticed the near demise after returning to the Detroit area after a 16-year stint outstate where the neighborhood bar is still the gathering spot. My wife and I were at a party in Livonia and she lamented that there wasn't a cheeseburger bar in our neighborhood. She received stares as though she had fallen off planet Mars. It was really off planet Green Hut, a neighborhood bar in Bay City where we had watched the Tigers win the 1934 World Series and where I had taken my sons to watch the college basketball playoffs. Like many outstate taverns, the Green Hut bends state liquor laws to the delight of the locals. Ladles bring in their culinary best to the tavern on nights of big sporting ovents and kids regularly sip Cokes at the bar. This keeps folks on their best behavior.



Having too many martinis and putting the proverbial lamp shade on your head will catch up to you the next day.

The local television station even caught on and would send crews to film the bar action during sporting events.
Unfortunately for me, the crew one night caught me on film hoisting a beer

and showed it on the 11 p.m. news. My excuse to my wife that I was working late washed about as smooth as a shot of William Penn whiskey with a chaser of Blatz beer. It was a rough night. However, it wasn't as dangerous as the afternoon the samural swords

hanging over the entrance way of an-other bar suddenly fell off the wall. Perhaps it was the discussion of Japa-

ness cars.

And then there was the embarassment one night when my wife sent my kids into the bar to drag me out. They were successful. They came in without their mother and started begging me not to spend any more money because the house payment was due.

But these little guys knew how to get into the corner bar. One Mother's Day they decided to run away from home.

Their destination was the Hub Bar where the bartender, Joe, no kidding, always gave them suckers when they sat on the stools. Joe called and we retrieved the young miscreants, but not until after spending a couple of hours toasting Mother's Day.

Somehow life has never been the same again. And it probably won't unless visiting a rural town with a tavernuclast call for Cheers, it's the last call for the corner bar.

Like Norm on the last episode, I want one more beer before calling it quits.

Jeff Counts is the editor of the Plyn outh and Canton Observer newspaper outh and Canton Observer newspapers who sees himself as Sam Malone, but looks more like Norm. He can be reached at 459-2700.

No fashion hipster, he'll just stick with the 'classics'

he news came as quite a shock to me. I heard it first when I was getting my hair cut, but I dismissed it as merely a hair salon rumor. A day or two later, the gruesome truth became much more real to me while watching CNN. The disquieting video images gave credence to the ugly rumors I had heard earlier. Right before my eyes and ears a news report warned of the return of belibottom pants and platform shoes to the World of High Fashion.

I couldn't believe it until a trin to

Fashion.

I couldn't believe it until a trip to the mall confirmed that the Charlie's Angels look was back. Groovy.

Despite having the reputation of not being a major fashion hipster, I do take a keen interest in cultural trends. I never actually participate in them, but I do take an interest. I have never owned a CB radio or a fondue pot, nor have I over had aushi or non-alcoholic beer. My non-involvement notwithbeer. My non-involvement notwith-standing, I like to keep my finger on

the faint and thready pulse of our alling acciety.

The appeal of trendiness has always escaped me, especially when it comes to fashion. I have long held the bolief that today's fashion statement is tomorrow's bad joke. If you doubt what I'm saying, check out some of your old home movies and put the style-o-meter on the dude you were wearing 20 years ago. I know our family movies look a lot like "The Brady Bunch goes paychedelic." The more stylish someone looked at the time, the more foolish he or she looks in retrospect.

Despite the constant pressure to maintain a certain level of sartorial proficiency, it is difficult not to have a grudging respect for these individuals with Fashion Immunity Syndrome.

These are the people who dress in the dark and go out in public completely oblivious to the fashion law violations they are committing.

They have no problem with wearing



a plaid flannel shirt and string tie to a a plaid flannel shirt and string the to a funeral, or wearing their nylons solled down below the knee to a wedding. (Warning to Fashion Immune Women: The rolled-down-nylon look is exteremely difficult to do with pantyhose.) Most of us are not quite so secure in our self-image, so we plod along near the middle of the fashion road, striving more to avoid looking stupid rather than trying to look strilled.

than trying to look stylish. Looking stupid comes in two ex-

tremes: One is the above-described oblivious bumpkin look, and the other is the ultra-chic maven of haute-cou-ture. Some of the ugliest looking stuff I have over seen was displayed at fash-ion shows.

ion shows.

The designers, who usually have names like Salvatore Fraudulenti or Jaques Strappe, drape their incredibly salvators or early like the control of the control o or auto parts. To the untrained eye, this stuff may look absurd, but to those in the know, it is "what the well-dressed woman will be wearing this

season.

Apparently, the designers have run clean out of fresh ideas so they are getting in on the recycling craze. They are simply dredging up old styles and, as usual, changing them just enough that the old belibottoms you have stuck in the closet will not meet today's strict features. fashion requirements.

Worse than the lack of new ideas is the more suspicious notion that these people are merely yanking our chain. I can picture a whole bunch of designers getting together after a fashion show and just laughing their fool heads off.

Despite the pressure to give in, I will remain trend-proof. I've been afraid of being a fashion victim ever since muy brother purchased a Nehru jacket and a red velvet suit, which gave him the slick image of Santa Claus meets the Prime Minister of India.

It was a fashion accident which changed his life forever. It taught me to stoy with my trademark apparel — belibottom shirts and Lardache jeans. Like they say, the classies never go

Like they say, the classics never go out of style.

Gary Belanger, a Rédford Township resident, is a real estate salesman and a school board trustee. To leave a mes-sage for him from a touchtone phone, dial 953-2047 mailbox 1890.



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