

# How The Thumb Is Used For Rides And Adventure

By CORINNE ABATT

They stand clustered on the street corners, most with long hair blowing in the breeze and wearing the uniform of the day -- tattered jeans and a loose fitting jacket. It's hard to discern the sex without a close look at the face or the curve of the jacket.

They are a 1971 phenomena -- the kids who beg for rides with an outstretched thumb--the growing threat of hitchhikers.

IN SOUTHFIELD as in many other communities, the thumb is a way of life for the kids who use it as their principal means of transportation from one point to another -- Northland Center, Cass Lake, Maryland, Florida, Louisiana -- wherever they have a desire to go -- sometimes just up and down Woodward Ave. for kicks.

There has been a radical change in the hitchhiking scene since the days when a few male college students wearing signs giving their destination or bedraggled itinerants were the only ones by the roadside.

Now, not only is the thumb used for cross country travel, it serves as a kind of shuttle service among the community and is a leisure time activity.

Neither has hitchhiking escaped the interest of young women who are exercising new freedom in behavior. There are almost as many girls as boys on the highway and they claim they can get rides faster than the boys.

"It's easier with a girl," says veteran hitchhiker, Mike Harrison, of Southfield.

MANY OF HIS fellow Southfield Lathrup high school students make the same comment. Unlike Mike, the rest didn't want their names used, because their parents object to hitchhiking.

All of the girls who hitchhike regularly said their parents don't like it, but they do it anyway. A couple of the fellows said their parents warn them not to hitchhike at night.

Any number of girls together can get a ride. "As many as will fit into a car," one commented. "Chances are nil for more than two boys together."

Everyone in a group of 14 or more sitting on the high school lawn during lunch hour wanted to relate a hitchhiking experience.

Many told about advances from homosexuals. One of the girls had fended off the subtle advances of an attractive middle-aged lesbian by saying, "I'm not your type."

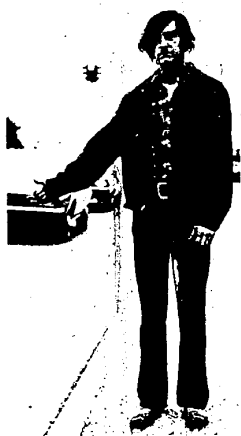
In these cases, all the kids had done the same thing -- they waited until the driver stopped for a light and got out quickly.

THE GIRLS are used to leading questions such as "Wanna get stoned?" "Wanna go to a party?" and "Wanna buy some grass?" from those who pick them up.

One says she usually answers, "Sorry, this is my stop right here."

For all of the kids, hitchhiking is a means of transportation around the metropolitan area when public transportation or private cars are not available.

For some on a Saturday night, it becomes a leisure time sport.



A HITCHHIKER  
Pose Mike Harrison

"Sometimes we just go hitchhiking up and down Woodward for something to do," said one male student.

The girls argued they did the same thing. "We go out hitchhiking just for fun when there's nothing else to do."

To most of the kids, the police who stop them play a fatherly role.

Several reported that the cop who picks them up will give a 10 or 15 minute lecture of the dangers of hitchhiking and then drive them at least part way toward their destination.

MIKE HARRISON has a broader view than many of his contemporaries. He thumbed his way to a rock festival near Baton Rouge, Louisiana, last summer and also to Maryland to visit his grandparents.

The Maryland trip took two days and Louisiana, three and a half.

There is no sleep for Mike on the trips, only a few cat naps when he knows the ride will continue for some time.

He had a girl with him for part of the Louisiana trip and the rides came quickly.

He says, "It's tough hitchhiking in the deep south. You get picked up by a lot of crazy people."

A man who picked up Mike and the girl in Tennessee showed them a silver pistol he kept in the glove compartment, propositioned the girl, but didn't give them any serious trouble.

"But I was scared," Mike admits. On the long rides, Mike listens to the driver's problems--many of them of an intimate nature. "They blab on and on," he says, but doesn't really seem to mind.

His record wait for a ride, somewhere in the outstate hinterlands, is 15 hours. That is why he likes to have a companion, a girl because the rides come faster, or a boy for company when the wait gets tedious.

"It gets pretty lonely by yourself," he says.

ONLY ONCE has Mike been picked up by police. He checked his

baggage and arms for needle marks, warned him to stay off the freeways and then drove him down the road.

"A really nice guy," comments Mike.

Most of the kids are aware that hitchhiking presents some dangers. One of Mike's friends was robbed, and shot through the chest.

He has since made a full recovery. One of the other students was in an accident after being picked up. He suffered a dislocated hip, a concussion and a broken thumb. These stories don't deter them any more than accidents statistics stop people from driving.

"You meet some really nice people," said one of the girls and those around her nodded in agreement. The kids generally like the people they meet on the road and while most often the rides come from drivers in their own age group, there is no one kid who picks up hitchhikers and no stereotype they can pinpoint who will give them a hard time.

The kids who do it regularly say it is simple, cheap and fun.

ONE OF THE GIRLS said that in the rain she has never waited more than a minute for a ride. "People feel sorry for a girl standing out in the rain."

"Yeah," said one of the boys. "But I feel sort of bad getting in a car when I've been in the rain and get the seat all wet."

The lunch period was over, the group got up to go back to their classes.

"One of the girls called back as she walked toward the school door. 'Hey, don't forget, if you see me hitchhiking, give me a ride.'"

## AREA DEATHS AND FUNERALS

**MRS. MARIETTA WHALING.** Services were held for Mrs. Whaling, 78, of 508 Bryn Mawr, Plymouth, were conducted in the Janine Funeral Home in Westlake. O. with burial in Rosier River. O. Arrangements were handled by the Schweder Funeral Home in Plymouth.

Mrs. Whaling died Nov. 27 in St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Ann Arbor. She had moved to Plymouth from Cleveland in 1957.

Surviving are a daughter, Mrs. Richard Marston of Plymouth; a sister, Mrs. Charlotte Rife of Westlake, O.; two grandchildren, Mrs. Robert Calab and Nancy Marston, of Plymouth.

**JOSEPH T. ZERILLI.** Services for Mr. Zerilli, 51, of 11348 Beech Dale, Redford Township, were held in St. John Bosco Catholic Church and the Harry J. Will Funeral Home. Burial followed in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery.

An auto salesman, Mr. Zerilli died suddenly Nov. 9 at Redford Community Hospital. He was a member of Bosco parish.

Survivors include: his wife, Josephine; a daughter, Joann; and four sisters, Mrs. Nicholas Vyski, Mrs. Ralph Survo, Mrs. Lane Scott and Mrs. Joseph Marino.

**ANNA EDMUNDS.** Services for Mrs. Edmunds, 93, of 28090 Brady Ave., Westland, were held at the Thayer Funeral Home with pastor But Rieker officiating. Burial followed in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery.

A member of the Bethany Baptist Church in Livonia, Mrs. Edmunds died Nov. 13 at the Farmington Nursing Home.

Survivors include: a son, Warren E. Edmunds of Livonia; four daughters, Mrs. Lila Alan of Westland and Mrs. Helen Biggers, Mrs. Betty Novak and Mrs. Ruth Jones all of California; 13 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren.

**PAUL K. PETCAU.** Services for Mr. Petcau, 61, of 11609 Malore, Livonia, were held at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church with Father Nicholas G. Harbats officiating. Burial followed in Greenwood Cemetery. Arrangements were made by the Harry J. Will Funeral Home.

Survivors include: three sons, Michael, Dr. Andrew P. Kosta and John Kosta, two daughters, Mrs. Peter Petcau and Mrs. William Hall; a brother and a sister in Australia; and 10 grandchildren.

**ROBERT ALGREN.** Services for Mr. Algren, 81, of Leslie, Ark. formerly of Livonia, were held at the Harry J. Will Funeral Home in charge of Rev. Charles Fox with burial in Rosier River, Berkeley, Mich.

Surviving are a brother, Raymond of Farmington; and a sister, Mrs. Dorothy Person of Harper Woods.

**CLIFFORD JOHNSTON.** Services were held for Mr. Johnston, 56, of 8648 Winston, Redford, at the Harry Will Funeral Home. Burial followed in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery.

Mr. Johnston died Nov. 2 in Grace Hospital. He was employed as salesman for the Moore Furniture Co.

Survivors include: his wife, Isabel; son, Richard; and daughter, Barbara.

**MRS. JUDITH ROBERTS.** Services for Mrs. Roberts, 30, of Northville, were conducted in the Harry Will Funeral Home in charge of Rev. William J. Will.

Mrs. Roberts was a well-known nurse, serving in Livonia and at the Northville State Hospital.

Surviving are: her parents, Mrs. Arlene Grasser of Livonia and William Grasser of Bloomfield Hills; a daughter, Toni; a son, Scott; two brothers, Jay and Daniel Grasser; two sisters, Christine Grasser and Mrs. Kathleen Campbell.

**VIRGINIA D. STALL.** Services for Mrs. Stall, 48, of 11201 Brookfield, Livonia, were held in St. Michael Catholic Church and the Harry J. Will Funeral Home. Burial followed in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery.

A legal secretary for several law firms in the area, Mrs. Stall was dead on arrival at St. Mary Hospital Nov. 6.

Survivors include: two sons, Mr. M. Stall Jr. and E. Kevin Stall; her parents, Mr. and Mrs. James Downing; and four sisters, Mary Downing, Mrs. Jack Frankfurt, Mrs. John Thompson and Mrs. Leonard West.

**JOHN A. WHITNEY.** Services for Mr. Whitney, 74, of 8823 Marwood, Redford Township, were held at the Harry Will Funeral Home in charge of Rev. William J. Will.

A carpenter, Mr. Whitney died Nov. 9 at the Allen Park Veterans' Hospital.

Survivors include: his wife, Lucille; a son, John H. Whitney; two daughters, Mrs. Wallace Haynes and Mrs. Warren Hunt; and 11 grandchildren.

**MRS. JESSIE MILLARD.** Services for Mrs. Millard, 79, of 49041 Ridge Court, Northville Twp., were conducted in the Schweder Funeral Home in charge of Rev. Henry Walsh with burial in Riverside Cemetery.

Mrs. Millard died Nov. 28 in Lansing. She had resided in the Livonia-Plymouth area most of her life, moving to Lansing three years ago.

**VIRGINIA T. COERT.** Services were held for Mrs. Coert, 48, of 22037 Fredrick, Farmington, in the Thayer Funeral Home in Farmington, with Rev. Joseph Innech of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church in Farmington officiating. Burial followed in St. Hedwig Cemetery, Dearborn Heights.

Mrs. Coert died Nov. 16 in the Farmington Nursing Home. She was a resident of the community for 15 years.

Survivors include: husband, Henry; mother, Mrs. Jeanette Demast of Detroit; daughter, Kathleen Ann at home; son, Henry T. at home, and sister, Jean Demast of Detroit.

**HAROLD COWIE.** Services for Mr. Cowie, 46, of 7534 Thornwood, Plymouth Township, were conducted in the Schweder Funeral Home in charge of Rev. Henry Walsh with burial in Assac Park Cemetery.

Mr. Cowie died Nov. 23 in Redford General Hospital. He was a member of the Village Presbyterian Church and Super No. 555, FRAM. He was employed as a truck driver and a real estate salesman.

Surviving are: his wife, Mrs. Ella Cowie of Plymouth; his mother, Mrs. Una Cowie of Plymouth; three daughters, Nancy, Karen and Sharon; and a brother, William of Little Rock, Ark.

**HERMAN WALLER.** Services for Mr. Waller, 81, of 30320 N. Stockton, Farmington, were conducted in the Thayer Funeral Home by Rev. Ralph Rieker and Rev. Stan Nichols with burial in Assac Park Cemetery.

Mr. Waller died Nov. 14 in Redford General Hospital of a heart attack. He was a tool setter employed by General Motors.

Surviving are: a daughter, Mrs. Yvonne Paschke of Northville; a son, Ronald Waller of Farmington; four brothers, Monroe, Tina and Donald of Kentucky and John of Detroit; and one granddaughter.

**CLARENCE J. JOHNSON.** Services for Mr. Johnson, 68, of 15529 Leavitt, Redford Township, will be held at 11 a.m. Thursday at the Hammond and Hass Funeral Home, 24501 Five Mile Rd., Redford. Burial will follow in Wilmot Cemetery.

Mr. Johnson died Monday. Survivors include: his wife, Ote; a son, Richard; and three daughters, Doris and Frida Johnson, Mrs. Edith Hutchinson.

**MRS. TERESA BILES.** Services for Mrs. Biles, 45, of 32040 Marwoodhead Drive, Farmington, were conducted in the Harry-Johnson Funeral Home. She was a member of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic parish.

Surviving are: her husband, Marvin; mother, Mrs. Margaret Buckley of Livonia; one son, Michael; two brothers, John Buckley of New York and Walter Buckley of California; and a sister, Mrs. Margaret Howard of California.

**NELLE B. GEORGE.** Funeral services were held for Mrs. Nelle B. George, 74, of 17243 Five Points, Redford Township, who died Nov. 20 in Mt. Carmel Mary Immaculate.

She is survived by her husband, George, Services at the Charles R. Step Funeral Home were followed by a funeral mass in Our Lady of Loretto Catholic Church. Interment was in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery.

**ROY M. MITCHELL, Sr.** Rites were conducted recently for Roy M. Mitchell, 83, of 8376 Northline, Redford Township, who died at the age of 83.

An engineer with Sunnyside Corp., Mr. Mitchell is survived by his wife, Elizabeth; a daughter, Mrs. A.C. (Alice) Bryant; two sons, Emil and Roy M. Jr.; a sister, Mrs. Mary Brandt; and three grandchildren.

The Rev. William Weyer officiated at services held at the Harry Will Funeral Home. Interment was in Oakland Hills Cemetery.

**MILDRED S. SPRAGUE.** Services for Mrs. Sprague, 85, of 30150 Oak Leaf Lane, Franklin, were held at the Henry-Sundquist Funeral Home with Rev. James A. Smith officiating. Burial followed in Franklin Cemetery.

Mrs. Sprague, who lived and taught school in the Farmington-Franklin area all her life, died Nov. 22 at the Henry-Sundquist Funeral Home after an extended illness.

Survivors include: her son, Charles Harmon of Florida, 1; and a sister-in-law, Mrs. Lucie Skarnit of Midland.

**ARCHIE L. WING.** Services for Mr. Wing, 23, of 20748 Heggeness, Southfield, were held in St. Alexander Catholic Church and the Henry-Sundquist Funeral Home with Rev. Albert C. Kolch officiating. Burial followed in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery.

A warehouseman for ABF, Mr. Wing was a member of St. Alexander parish. He died suddenly Nov. 20 at Providence Hospital.

Survivors include: his wife, Mary, a son, Edward L. Wing; his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Hal Wing of Southfield; two brothers, Neil Jr. and John; and two sisters, Denise and Dorcas.

**EDWARD SCHIELDS.** Services for Mr. Schields, of 28515 Florence St., Garden City, were held Friday, Nov. 26, at the R. G. G. R. Harris Funeral Home, Garden City. Officiating was Pastor H. C. Peeding, of the Metropolitan Seventh Day Adventist Church in Killebrew Cemetery in Belleville.

Mr. Schields died Nov. 23 in Garden City Osteopathic Hospital at the age of 76. Before his retirement, he was a tool maker for the Ford Motor Co.

He is survived by his wife, Leona; two sons, Leo and Elmer; a daughter, Mrs. Pauline Blinn; a sister, Mrs. Helen Bushy; eight grandchildren; and his great-grandchildren.

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