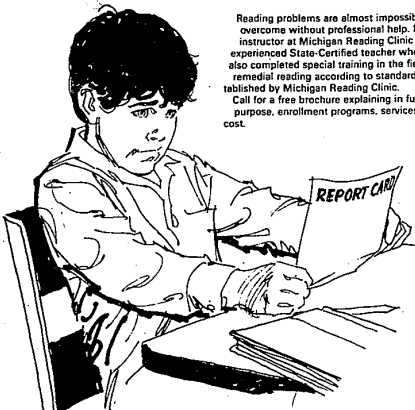


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By W.W. EDGAR

The Stroller Tippling For Votes

'Shades of the past!
We're heading toward another election day - the first one in years during which whiskey and other spirits may be sold while the polls are open - and The Stroller can't help wondering if it will be anything like the days of yore when many a political battle was won in the back rooms of the old fashioned saloons.

These drinking places were a far cry from the cocktail lounges and other embellished drinking emporiums we have today. But they played a leading role in the life of the community.

Those were the days when the corner saloon was a gathering place for the males - women customers were frowned upon even in the back rooms. Usually the bars were long and highly polished, and no bartender was worth his salt unless he wore a nicely twirled mustache and could slide a glass of lager the length of the bar and have it stop in front of the customer. They were uncanny as marksmen.

The bars themselves were unusual in that they had a tiled trough in the front, below the foot rail, and a stream of water flowed all day as part of the ecosystem of the time. This running water covered the sins of the tobacco chewers and the cigar smokers who tossed their "butts" aside while quaffing of the amber brew.

Always gathering places, they took on special importance as election day neared. For it was in the saloons - or the back rooms - that most of the campaigning was done. And lo, the poor candidate who failed to call.

EVEN DURING prohibition days, the "blind pigs" and after - hour drinking places were the focal points of the office seekers. Many a round of drinks was purchased with the thought that each was another vote.

And it was not uncommon for the "ward heeled" to gather up the voters on election day and stop for a drink en route to the polls. And they never were allowed to forget who bought the drink.

One of the most famous areas in the "dry" days was the 22nd ward in Detroit, known among the politicians as the "freight train."

There often comes to mind the election night when Johnny Smith, the former postmaster who was running for mayor, sat in his headquarters after the polls closed.

For a time he was trailing. But he never gave up. "Wait till the freight train comes in," he told all of his helpers. And sure enough, when the "freight" arrived, Johnny Smith was the new mayor.

AND SOMEWHERE down in the coal regions of Pennsylvania, there is a statue hidden away in some corner that stands as a reminder of one of the oddest political battles ever in the saloons of the day.

It is the life size statue of a fellow named "Butch" McDevitt, who made a successful run for the office of sheriff in Luzerne County by one of the most bizarre campaign tricks in the annals of the Keystone state.

An unknown when he announced his candidacy, he toured the county the two weeks before election. He visited every saloon en route. He walked in, shook hands with everyone, then passed the cards of his opponent and left without buying a drink.

It had the desired effect. "That cheap so - and - so," the customers chorused, "I won't vote for him. He won't get my vote."

He and his helpers followed the same pattern on election day. And when the votes were counted Luzerne County had a new sheriff - "Butch" McDevitt.

IT WAS a costly victory, though. Taking his success to heart, he decided there should be a monument erected to him, and he had it done. With the job done, he invited his political aides - those who passed out his rivals' cards during the campaign - to join him in taking the statue to Washington to stand with the nation's Greats.

But Washington would have none of it. So, a disheartened "Butch" McDevitt returned home - and even his fellow townsmen would have none of the statue.

That's why it is standing in some remote corner of the coal regions - a silent reminder of political battles in the old saloon days.

Wonder if they'll be coming back?



JAMES L. JONAS of 32262 Glen Cove, Farmington, has been appointed internal auditor of American Savings Assn., headquartered in Southfield. A graduate of Wayne State University, Jones is a former elementary school teacher in Farmington and became a CPA in 1970. He was previously with the public accounting firm of Ernst & Ernst.



JAY FENNESSEY of Johnstown Rd., Farmington, has been promoted to central district sales manager for the plastics department by Enjay Chemical Co., Southfield. Fennessey, 34, earned a BS degree in marketing from Long Beach (Calif.) State College and joined Enjay 10 years ago. He replaced George Rizzo, who was promoted to a post in Enjay's Houston headquarters.

11 Attended 'Y' Convention

FARMINGTON Eleven Farmington area residents were among the nearly 1,000 persons attending the recent 35th annual national YMCA Indian Guide convention in Pittsburgh.

The Farmington YMCA delegation, which included three Indian Guides and their families, were:

Federation Chief Roger Bisschop, wife Dottie, Candy, 10, Debbie, 9, and R.J., 7, of 30069 De Orr Dr., Farmington; Nation Chief Dick Cramer, wife Mariann, Lisa, 10, and Michael, 6, of West Bloomfield Hills; and Federation Pathfinder Mike Letwinski, wife Lucy, David, 9, Carrie, 8, and Sandi, 5, of 23139 Ashley, Farmington.

The Y-Indian Guides is a YMCA - sponsored father and son organization that stresses importance of a close relationship between father and son during the formative years of ages six to nine.

Highlight of the convention, was a panel discussion on "The Flight of the American Indian" with four full blooded American Indians participating.

Y - Indian Guide membership includes nearly a half a million fathers and sons throughout the country and more than 550 in the Farmington area.

Bisschop says: "The most important part of the national convention was not only the formal discussion sessions but the informal chats with other Indian Guides and their families."

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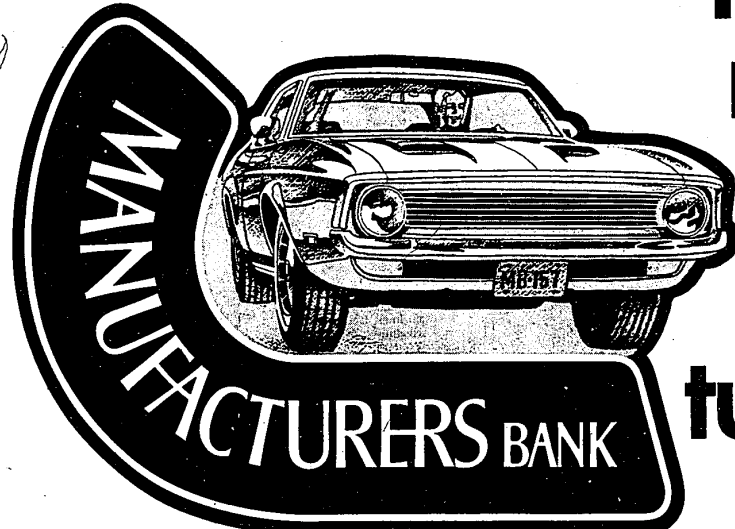
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