

Old time favorites top the sweet tooth list

It wasn't that long ago—about a dozen years. Gasoline was a quarter a gallon, burgers went for 15 cents apiece, and beer was a buck a six pack.

And you could get a candy bar for a nickel.

Inflation has hit everything, including the cost of the candy bar. What used to cost a nickel now costs 20 cents. And the price isn't likely to decrease.

While the major corporations still enjoy sweet success in terms of money, they do face a number of problems, including rising costs and a decreasing American market.

The cost of the cocoa bean is the main problem, according to an M&M/Mars spokesman. M&M/Mars is the king of candyland, manufacturing five of the nation's top 10 candy bars. But the rising costs have hurt their sales, in more ways than one. In 1976, a pound of cocoa beans (the main ingredient in chocolate) cost 75-80 cents a pound; in 1977 the price had soared to \$2.60 a pound.

"The rising costs of the cocoa bean have forced us to raise the cost of the candy bars," the spokesman said. "Our target price for a bar now is 20 cents. The high cost is discouraging people from buying candy. Instead, they are turning to other snack foods that are cheaper."

It seems to be the "Catch 22" of inflation in the candy business: material costs go up, so the price goes up. Fewer people want to buy the product, so sales drop, which leads to another increase in price.

The spokesman for the M&M/Mars company said there are a number of different things they are looking into as a possible form of income, including the use of artificial chocolate and other forms of filler, such as wafer bars.

"We have test marketed some chocolate substitutes, but as of yet our candy is still made with 100 per cent pure chocolate, he stated, adding, "We are always looking for alternatives."

The cost of the cocoa bean, the major ingredient used in making chocolate, has also affected the Hershey Candy Co. Their solid chocolate bar which for years sold for a nickel has ballooned up to the 20 cent price range.

"We felt, with the rising costs, we had to make a decision between three things," James Edris, a Hershey spokesman, said. "We could either cut our quality, cut the size of the bar, or raise the price."

"We'd never cut quality, so we've



Candy, candy, candy—all different assortments, all of which once sold for no more than five cents. But not anymore; now, the price of the former "nickel candy bar" has soared to twenty cents, and could climb even further. (Staff photo)

Top ten candies

- 1) Snickers
- 2) Reese's Peanut Butter Cups
- 3) M&M Peanut
- 4) M&M Plain
- 5) Three Musketeers
- 6) Milky Way
- 7) Hershey Almond
- 8) Kit Kat
- 9) Hershey Plain
- 10) Butterfinger

been deciding between the other two alternatives. When we raised the price in 1976 to 20 cents, we also increased the size of the bar to 1.35 ounces, compared to its one ounce size of 25 years ago. Since then, we have had to make further decisions, and have twice reduced the size of the bar to its present weight of 1.05 ounces. It's still bigger than it was 25 years ago."

So, while some of the smaller candy companies have fought inflation with size reductions, the two largest producers of candy, M&M/Mars and Hershey both use price increases rather than weight decreases.

UNFORTUNATELY, inflation isn't the only problem facing the candy business. The American public is losing its sweet tooth. In a National Con-

fectioners Association, Commerce Department poll, the per capita candy consumption decreased from 20.3 pounds annually per person in 1968 to 15.4 pounds per person in 1977.

Further studies show that things probably won't improve. The nation's largest age group of candy consumers is from five years old to 17. Population decreases will affect that age group's size, and will continue to do so until the mid-1980's.

And, to complicate matters further, the candy business has gotten a black eye from the health kick that is taking over America. For years now, candy has been described as a food that will rot your teeth and make you fat. With Americans becoming more and more health conscious, candy is one thing they are eliminating from their diets

and replacing with health foods.

"We feel our product has a legitimate place in the average person's balanced diet," Edris stated. "We are the only confectioners to put nutritional labels on all our products. We feel our food has nutritional value."

The M&M/Mars spokesman expressed the same sentiments, adding, "I would warn the public against some of these so called natural foods. If you read their label, some have very little nutritional value."

WHATEVER IS SOURING BUSINESS elsewhere in the candy business, in Farmington it seems that candy sales are up. In a sampling of businesses throughout the area, candy was going as well as ever and doing better this Halloween than last year.

The big sellers were M&M/Mars and Hershey products and, according to Bill Zelewski, assistant manager of the A & P Food Store located at 23300 Farmington Road, the top selling candy bar in Farmington is the favorite nationwide.

And what is the country's favorite candy bar? According to the DEBS Confectionary Marketing Report, which appeared in the August 14 issue of "Business Week" magazine, the number one seller was Mars' Snickers.

Hershey's Reese's Peanut Butter Cup was second, with both of Mars' M&M products third and fourth (peanut third and regular fourth). Mars also held the next two positions with the Three Musketeers fifth and the Milky Way sixth, followed by Hershey's Almond seventh, their Kit Kat eighth and their

plain chocolate bar ninth. Butterfinger, made by Standard Products Corp., is the only non-hershey or non-Mars product to crack the top 10.

With ratings like that, it isn't hard to understand why Mars has controlled 30-32 per cent share of the candy market for the past five years and Hershey's has a 22-23 per cent share (both figures according to "Business Week," August 14 issue).

So, while both of the major companies are still making a profit selling their candy, they both agree that it is only because of the higher prices. If the costs continue to rise, they both will be faced with either finding new ways to appeal to America's sweet tooth or to quit trying all together. And that would bring an end to another American institution—the candy bar.

THE INSIDE * ANGLE

WHOOOPS. Sorry Thayer-Rock. Last Monday when we printed the list of winners for the Keep Farmington Beautiful awards luncheon, we inadvertently forgot to credit Thayer-Rock Funeral Home for its winning effort for the renovation in the past year. Sorry about that. The renovation did a lot toward sprucing up downtown Farmington. Many kudos.

STU SHAPIRO. Farmington's own boy wonder when it comes to organizing conventions, is at it again. On Nov. 5, he will be sponsoring a record collector's convention at the American Legion Hall, Twelve Mile and Rochester Road, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission is \$1. Fantasticon, a comic book convention, will be Nov. 19 also at the Rochester American Legion at 1815 Rochester Road. Persons interested in exhibiting at either of these conventions can call Stu at 557-1678 or 569-1580. Tables for exhibition cost \$15. A third convention, for baseball cards, will be Dec. 10 at the Sun Soccer Hall, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Hall is located on Nine Mile and Middlebelt. Cost for tables is \$10 for exhibitors.

BLOOD is always needed by the Red Cross. A bloodmobile will be at St. Gerald's Church, 21300 Farmington Road, on Nov. 4 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. For an appointment, call 477-7470 during blood drive hours. Donations also are accepted at the Oak Park Donor Center, 2590 Greenfield, Mondays and Fridays, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, from 2 p.m. to Saturday, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. To make an appointment, call 988-2255.

A LUCKY WINNER lives in Farmington Hills. Oswald Dewitte, 68, a member of the Elks Lodge and Knights of Columbus, recently won \$10,000 in the Michigan State Lottery.

MARION TOURNAND of Farmington, will be at the Livonia Mall from Oct. 27-31 to present her play "Good Witch." Her free shows will be presented at 4 and 5 p.m. on Friday; 2 and 4 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday; 4 and 7 p.m. on Monday and 4 p.m. on Oct. 31 on the stage in front of Crowley's.

A PUPPET SHOW also will be at the Livonia Mall from Oct. 27-30, presented by Uncle Don. He will conduct a contest for boys and girls who bring him painted pumpkins. On Oct. 31 at 5 p.m., winners will be announced and prizes awarded. Free shows will be presented in the fountain in front of Sears. Show times are Friday and Saturday, from 1-3 p.m. and at 7 p.m.; Sunday, from 1-3 p.m. and Monday and Tuesdays, from 1-3 p.m. and at 5 p.m.

WILLIAM UNKEFER of 32998 Biddlestone, Farmington Hills, has been appointed by Gov. William Milliken to the Task Force on Hospital Capacity. The task force was established by the Public Health Code as a technical work group to address the legal and financial issues associated with a reduction in



hospital bed capacity. Problems related to capital financing and financial equity will receive special attention in the task force final report due next July 1.

COUNT DRACULA. The play that is, will have a local touch to it at Oakland University beginning Oct. 31, when Maureen McDevitt, 25144 Castlereigh, Farmington Hills, plays the role of Mina. The play is based on the classic novel by Bram Stoker. After opening Oct. 31, the play will be Nov. 1-5, 10-12, 17-19 and matinees on Nov. 12 and 19. Curtain time is 8:30 p.m. on weekdays and Saturdays, 6:30 p.m. on Sundays and matinees begin at 2:30 p.m. For ticket information and group reservations, call 377-2245.

DEADLINE. Material submitted for Inside Angle, 22170 Nine Mile, Southfield 48034, should include the name and phone number of the sender and should be typed if possible. Items should be received at least one week before publication.



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something today and receive your VIP collection, 72 units." In Hudson's Aisles of Beauty. Purchase suggestions: Complete Cleansing Lotion, 8 oz., \$5.00 Maximum Moisturizer, 4 oz., \$16 Basic Makeup, \$5.00 *Minimum units available at each Hudson's store while quantities last.

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