

Monday's Commentary

Court orders, human failures keep Waacks' standing

Tinkering Around

by LOUISE OKRUTSKY

"Time waits for no one. And it won't wait for me."

Or so sang the Rolling Stones not too long ago. And somehow it seems appropriate to mention the Stones and Farmington's Waacks' Bar in the same breath. Both are either loved or hated for their rowdy reputations.

But unlike the Stones, time seems to be waiting for Waacks'.

The bar was destroyed by fire last January and the remaining shell celebrated its first anniversary as a full-fledged eyecore just a couple of weeks ago. That happened despite the fact the Farmington Hills City Council condemned the place last Aug. 7 and the zoning department has taken out bids on the job of finishing off Waacks'.

But if the city had good intentions to knock down the walls which sheltered a caved-in roof, the place was kept standing, glued together with red tape and court injunctions.

In 1977, Loraine Waack sold the bar, which had been a south side landmark since 1933, to OJ Enterprises, owned by James Patrick Addison of Grosse Pointe Woods and Eli Orszery of Birmingham.

When the bar was gutted by fire last year, the owners were decidedly unhappy with the settlement their insurance company offered.

THEY WERE SO UNHAPPY with the insurance Co. of North America they went to Oakland County

Circuit Court. That took up almost the rest of the year.

By Aug. 7, 1978, the Farmington Hills City Council decided that the neighbors had looked at the crumbling remains of Waacks' long enough and voted to have it demolished.

That move can be filed away under "Nice Try." That's all it proved to be. The owners of the bar obtained a temporary restraining order Aug. 22 from Oakland County Circuit Court.

The building was left standing so the insurance company's appraiser and a circuit court judge could take a look at it and determine its value.

OJ Enterprises told the city that the court action would be resolved soon and the building would be ready for demolition by early October.

File that under "Nice Try," too.

November saw the end of OJ Enterprises' problems but not the end of Waacks'. The Hills waited until January to consider the restraining order void.

It paid for OJ Enterprises to hold out this long, it seems. They won a settlement of \$88,796 from their insurance company.

AND EARLY LAST WEEK the owners sent out a crew to demolish the rest of Waacks'.

Unfortunately for the neighborhood, we can file that effort under "Nice Try." (Notice how large this file is becoming?)

The crew neglected to purchase a demolition permit for \$25. They also forgot to pay about \$100 in service fees for the utilities to shut off gas lines and water pipes.

That put Zoning Inspector Richard Lampi in an awkward position. For months he tried to have the building torn down. Now when it looked like he was going to get his wish, Duty, that stern mistress, sent him out to stop the demolition.

For even before you want to turn a hole in the wall to be in the ground, you must pay a fee.

"A year I've been trying to get that thing knocked down and now it wasn't legal, so I had to

stop it," he said in exasperation.

The next day Lampi was on the phone again trying to contact OJ Enterprises to notify them of their mistake. He even went so far as to do some of the preliminary work with the utilities.

Add that to our "Nice Try" file. OJ Enterprises are difficult to contact, it seems.

BUT NEIGHBORS OF WAACKS', take heart. The city can demolish the building and bill the work to the owners. All is not lost.

The task for demolishing the place would include the fees for title searches, advertising costs for bids and sending out certified letters of intent.

That comes to about \$4,500.

But don't count on seeing the city run up that bill for the owners of Waacks' just yet.

"We're stuck. We've gone as far as we can with this," Lampi said.

And while the remains of one of Farmington Hills more colorful landmarks sits shimmering in the winter sunlight, it's easy to see that that pile of bricks and old glass offers absolutely nothing for the improvement of the south side. It's had enough to hear about the streets on that side of town turn into vats of mud during the spring. I would hate to hear about how unsafe, not to mention unsightly, good old Waacks' will be after the snow thaws.

I'd hate to add to the "Nice Try" file.

Mary Gniwewk writes

Good points fall to snow

When it comes to winter, most Michigianians are divided into two categories: Those who prefer to curl up in front of a toasty warm fireplace until the spring thaw and those who anxiously await the first real snowfall so they can rush outside and pursue a whole gamut of activities that seem to require sub-zero temperatures and mounds of snow.

I definitely belong to the former group. I can think of a million indoor activities I'd rather pursue than romping eagerly through the snow.

LAST TUESDAY AFTERNOON was an exception. While it by no means encouraged me to join the "other" group, it took me out of my winter shell enough to appreciate some of the beauty I have merely scoffed at in the past.

The assignment was to check out the cross-country skiing program sponsored by the Farmington Hills Recreation Department at San Marino country club. Jump for joy, I thought sarcastically. I get to drive to Eleven Mile and Halsted Road in a slushy mess to watch people get excited about snow. Yeah.

I have to admit that when I parked in front of the small clubhouse at the top of the hill, I was awestruck by the serenity of the scene. An old farmhouse, rustic looking and surrounded by animals, stood to the immediate north and the snow-covered slopes of the golf course completed the rest of the picture.

A SKI INSTRUCTOR inside spoke of the winter sounds in nature: muffled animal noises, wind howling through trees — eerie beauty that only can be appreciated while gliding through the woods on skis. (She definitely belongs to the second group of Michigianians.)

As the season just opened last weekend and it was a weekday afternoon, business was slow. One Farmington Hills woman, accompanied by her Florida born and bred niece, enjoyed full reign over the 75 acre course.

In the clubhouse, recreation supervisor Dave Justus said that cross country skiing is catching on faster than other winter sports. It's cheaper than downhill skiing, and more conveniently located. Just about every city and park site offers cross country skiing now.

The most enticing fact for me was that there was not a human traffic jam congesting the course. Also, there wasn't many tracks in the snow. It looked virtually unspoiled. I had an urge to put on a pair of skis and glide along the hills and valleys. But I wasn't dressed for the occasion and there was a deadline to be met back at the office.

I know I'll never convert to the hardcore winter-lovers side. But I've softened a little. Just maybe one quiet winter afternoon, with a fair amount of sunshine and mild temperatures, I'll go back to San Marino and try to figure out what the winter-lovers are talking about.

Shirlee's sallies

by Shirlee Iden

Women get the short end

Women just couldn't make points on the Washington scene last week.

They lost out with the executive branch when President Jimmy Carter gave the ax to Bella Abzug, whom he had appointed as chair of the National Advisory Committee for Women; and on the basketball court at George Washington University, a team of fortyish congressmen creamed the women's varsity basketball team.

Mrs. Abzug, a former U.S. Representative from New York and the chair of the November 1977 International Women's Year Conference in Houston, lost her leadership position because she insisted on leading.

Following the announcement that she had been forced to resign, more than 20 members of the 40-member committee resigned in protest and solidarity. If you read that the White House insists they have only received four written resignations, don't believe it. I attended a Saturday morning press conference at the Mayflower Hotel in D.C. and heard leaders of eight or nine national women's groups come to the mike and state exactly why they were quitting.

They were representatives such as Carmen Delgado Volav, Bella's co-chair, a Latino, Eleanor Smeal, president of the National Organization for Women (NOW), Sey Chasser, editor of Redbook Magazine, Mildred M. Jeffrey, of Detroit, president of the National Women's Political Caucus, Jill Ruckelshaus, member of the board of trustees of the University of Puget Sound, and Mary Crisp, co-chair of the Republican National Committee.

Others represented the League of Women's Voters, the U.S. Olympic Committee and the American Indian Women's Political Caucus.

Ms. Smeal and Mrs. Jeffrey said they polled the executive boards of their respective groups before resigning and had unanimous approval.

The women called Bella's dismissal "unwarranted" and said she was being used as "a scapegoat in an effort to suppress our independence." They were especially shocked that the president met with them, had a constructive exchange, all the while having decided to fire Bella, which was done afterward.

Bella also used the word scapegoat when she spoke. She told how she was summoned to meet with Carter aides Robert Lifshutz and Hamilton Jordan following the meeting.

Many of the women at the press conference had their say that morning. They said women's issues have been put on the back burner by the Carter administration and they said when you have problems in your job, you go home and kick the dog.

"We're the weakest, so we got it," said Nancy Neuman, second vice president of the League of Women Voters.

CARTER'S MODUS operandi in firing Mrs. Abzug has been questioned and so has the rationale. A Southfield psychotherapist even theorized that it was his frustration with brother Billy that he took out on Bella.

It remains to be seen who the real loser in the skirmish will be.

The Flip Side by craig piechura



Skippy's got your number

To dream of a reporter "denotes scandal and notoriety." Play number 514.

That's the advice of Prof. De Herbert in "The Success Dream Book," distributed by the Skippy Candle and Incense Co. of Detroit.

To dream of a racketeer means you should play the number 911, according to "Skippy's Lucky Lottery Dream Book."

There's no telling what kind of dreams 30-year-old David Adler, president of the Skippy company, has been having lately but chances are they haven't been sweet as his "Sweet Smell of Success" spray.

The lucky incense and candle company has come under heavy fire this week from a group called the Citizens Council Against Crime of Saginaw County for selling tip sheets that give the weekend roundup of illegal numbers in the Detroit and Pontiac number games as well as listing the Michigan lottery results.

Patrick M. Clawson, former investigative reporter and spokesman for the crimes-reporter council, says the Skippy Co. may be violating the law by sending "gambler paraphernalia and fraudulent material through the mails."

They've asked the Justice Department's organized crime strike force to look behind the veil of incense of the Skippy firm and have alerted U.S. postal inspectors to do the same.

Both agencies confirmed that the complaint will be investigated.

AN AD in a dream book offered "six so-called lucky numbers guaranteed to hit within seven days," explains Clawson. So, the Citizens Council Against Crime of Saginaw County mailed in \$5 for a number sure to hit.

"We got back six three-digit numbers rubber-stamped on a piece of paper for \$5. I might add that the numbers didn't come up in the lottery."

Jim Culver, deputy commissioner of

the Michigan Lottery, visited Adler at the Skippy Co. last Wednesday and found him "very cooperative and concerned. He feels he's running a bonafide, legitimate business selling a product and a service."

Culver said the lucky candle and tip sheet distributor cites a Michigan Supreme Court ruling of 1964, "People Vs. Loricchio," as a precedent for printing and distributing tip sheets. Adler cited the same case when called by this reporter.

"The ads say 'Get your lucky number,'" Culver explains. "And they give you a number. I don't know if they have any guarantee, but if it is guaranteed to hit and it doesn't I guess they give you another number."

The citizens crime council blasted Michigan Lottery officials for ignoring or "winking" at the practices of the Skippy Candle and Incense Co.

IT TOOK a press conference, Clawson said, "to get Gus (Harrison, lottery czar) off his duff" and demand that Skippy stop using a facsimile of the daily lottery ticket on the cover of one of the lucky number books.

But what really irks the crime council is that Skippy's green sheets—or tip sheets—are being sold next to the daily lottery machines in stores by authorized agents of the state.

The crime council spokesman argues that agents selling tip sheets listing illegal numbers taint the state game.

Saginaw area lottery agents have been asked to remove the tip sheets, said Deputy Lottery Commissioner Culver, while the attorney general investigates.

Clawson said that when the crime council first contacted Harrison he "gagged him" at the Skippy tip sheets and "didn't think it was all that big a thing."

"I find that an absolutely lousy attitude for a man charged with keeping the lottery clean to have," Clawson said.

The crime council isn't out to ban dream books such as "Prof. Hill's

Ready Reference Rundowns," Clawson said. He compares the dream books with horoscope publications. But Clawson wants authorities to look into the legality of publishing results of the illegal Detroit and Pontiac number games.

CONTACTED by phone at the Skippy headquarters, Adler was adamant and indignant.

He said the "numerology report" in the weekly green sheets are a "reporting of historical information available from any number of individuals and at thousands of locations."

"It is a reporting of history, not the future and does not have underworld ties if that's what you're getting at." Adler was not eager to talk to the reporter who told him he was just doing his job.

"Well, your job has made my job more difficult," Adler said. In closing, after a slew of no-comments, he said "The abuse we've taken in the press all-around has been unfair, uncalled for and unwarranted."

I didn't even get a chance to ask Adler if he was the same David Skippy Adler listed in the Detroit phone directory with the odd address "Foot of Belle Isle."

A strange entry indeed. At the foot of Belle Isle is a Big Boy restaurant and a little to the west is a wonderfully-seedy joint called "M & M Turt News," a place that opens at 4 a.m. and sells gum, racing forms and tip sheets. You can't miss it, there's always an old man with a cheap cigar standing out on the stoop.

Because of the brevity of our conversation, I didn't get to ask Adler how believing in Skippy's "Jinx Sticks," "Gambler Spray," or "Evil Removing Floor Wash" would help my chances in the lottery or numbers racket. I guess I'm supposed to believe. And keep on believing. If the number doesn't come up, maybe I should dub on a little "High John the Conqueror perfume." And may the hoo-doo and voo-doo be with you.

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