

# Monday's Commentary

## Mr. Goodnews brings bad news about Scotch, beer

When was the last time you had a good laugh or even smiled?

To the best of my recollection, my last titter was in 1972, the day before I got the bad news in the mail that my property tax assessment had climbed another 8 percent. It's been downhill ever since.

How can you get your jollies when most of the good things in life are either expensive, fattening, unhealthy, immoral or downright dangerous?

The latest dire warning is that you can no longer drown your sorrows in various brands of Scotch and beer which have joined the long list of possible carcinogenic substances. Of course, that doesn't threaten me because I only imbibe alone, or with someone, to celebrate the sun coming up in the morning and the moon coming out at night, and other special occasions like Mahatma Gandhi's 79th day of fasting.

When I'm off the wagon, I tippie vodka, wine, rum, sterno and White Label Scotch, none of which are suspected by the New England Institute for Life Sciences of having small amounts of nitrosamine — a chemical known to cause cancer in laboratory mice.

IF YOU'RE feeling edgy because you're afraid to open your new six-pack of Schlitz or take a sip of Chivas Regal, you can always buy a pet mouse and serve him booze to see if he dies of cancer before getting stoned.

If you're still bored, get yourself a whole family



### "Around the edge

by Jackie Klein

of rodents and feed them artificial sweeteners, bacon, red food dye, barbecued hamburgers, diet pop and color them with women's hair dyes. If they live through the night with all these allegedly cancer-producing agents, maybe we humans still have a chance.

You can't afford to drown your sorrows in coffee because that'll make you more nervous, keep you up all night and give you acid indigestion. Don't reach for a cigarette because the surgeon general has determined smoking is dangerous to your health. And that's one thing you can't try out on your pet mouse, no matter how well-trained he is.

Stay away from meat and dairy products which could contain lethal PBB. Don't worry if you develop a severe case of protein malnutrition. Nobody as yet has linked that with cancer. Be sure to read the labels on everything you plan to buy at the supermarket. Avoid preservatives like the plague and fill your grocery bags with Granola and alfalfa sprouts.

AS A PRECAUTIONARY measure, try cutting your breathing in half. That'll lessen the risk of polluting your lungs from the air and exposing them to someone else's cigar or cigarette smoke.

If you can't watch a ball game and guzzle your favorite brand of beer, enjoy a leisurely cup of coffee or barbeque a steak which may be tainted with preservatives and PBB, what can you do on Sunday?

In Southfield, an abundance of "no no" ordinances keeps you from having any fun. I remember a man who operated a little business in his garage in the city. He sold sexy books. But his enterprise was zapped by ordinance, and his brain-child was aborted along with his potential fortune.

First of all, you can't operate an adult bookstore anywhere except in a general business zone more than 1,000 feet from the nearest residential district. Even if you were allowed, you'd have to take out a

license, put up a \$1,000 bond and get 51 percent of your neighbors to give their blessing to your enterprise. You have two chances — slim and none.

If that isn't enough to dampen your spirits, another Southfield ordinance regulates garage sales. It costs a buck to get a permit and you could only peddle your books for five consecutive days.

IF BET my rare edition of "Fanny Hill" that Oakland County Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson (Mr. Clean) would padlock your garage the first day of the sale. He'd confiscate all erotic reading material and, at least, he'd have plenty to do on Sunday.

In any event, you wouldn't be able to sell new dirty books. You'd have to raid your basement for old Playboy magazines, "Sex and the Single Husband," "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex and a Lot More," and "The Comfort of Sex by Joy."

If you're bent on catching an X-rated movie in Southfield on Sunday, you can always get a jury to decide if it affronts contemporary community standards by appealing to prurient interests. But don't bother. Obscene flicks have been declared a public nuisance in "no sin city."

I'm still waiting for Mr. Goodnews to lighten my heavy heart. If you can't smoke, drink booze, coffee or diet pop, eat fattening sundaes with whipped cream, hot fudge and peanuts, dine on Michigan meat and dairy products or indulge in a little pornographic pleasure, what's left to smile about?

### And a little girl

## Remembering the bomb

Here's today's tearjerker.

The story starts thousands of years ago with the origin of origami — the Japanese art of paperfolding — and with a legend that says anyone who folds 1,000 paper birds will be freed from pain and suffering.

Skip ahead to Aug. 6, 1945, when a United States airplane dropped a bomb on Hiroshima, Japan.

We all know the story so I'll spare the details. Encyclopedias now estimate 78,500 people were killed within one minute of the blast, a total of 130,000 people died as a result of it, and 90 percent of the city was leveled.

A 2-year-old girl was found about a mile from the center of the blast and managed to cope with the rebuilding of life.

But nine years later, she was diagnosed as having terminal leukemia, a disease probably caused by radiation from the bomb.

Following the old legend, she frantically raced the clock to finish the 1,000 paper birds that would save her from death.

THIS ALL COMES UP for two reasons. It's the anniversary of the dropping of the bomb (give or take a couple days) and hearing of the origami bird legend seemed to tug at my heartstrings.

Origami is one of my hobbies. The extent of my work in the field has been to flirt with waitresses by making the paper birds out of napkins. Everybody



Dennis Rosenblum

likes them, and I get my little kicks.

It's been a cute, fun sideline in life, nothing more. But back to the little girl. She was too late. After making 954 paper birds, she died.

THE OTHER DAY, 10,000 paper birds were winging their way to the Children's Monument in Hiroshima's Peace Park from children in Pittsburgh as a memorial to the now-legendary young girl.

Others, from around the world, are sent to the monument each day.

I suppose that folding paper birds is the least we can do after wiping out an innocent little girl who believed in legends and knew nothing of wars.

I know a bit about wars, waitresses and paperfolding, but little of legends.

We can all use a little insurance against pain, suffering and bigtime military strategies. I just hope all those waitresses have been holding on to their paper birds.

## The Flip Side by craig piechura



### Weaklings need not apply

Bloomfield Township may have hosted the PGA golf tournament, but neighboring Southfield is no slouch when it comes to big-deal sports events.

This Saturday, Aug. 18, Southfield-Lathrup High School is the site of the Stroh's Open Wrist Wrestling Tournament. Admission is \$5 per person or \$10 to compete.

In addition to the wrist wrestling, there will be a kickboxing fight and a body building exhibition by Bob Saad, former Mr. Michigan.

Laugh if you must. Call wrist wrestling the sport of barflies. Make fun of the body builders by calling them muscle-bound monsters. I'll be happy to pass your name along to some of the champion arm-wrestlers. Before you can say "Uncle" you'll agree with them that wrist wrestling is a major sport worthy of Olympic consideration. If you're still not convinced, the body builders will boil you in the oil they smear all over their bodies.

A little pressure can do amazing things to one's powers of perception.

THE TOURNAMENT is being promoted by Ron Gentry of Rochester. Four years ago, Gentry, a state champion wrist wrestler, convinced Stroh's Brewery to sponsor a team from Michigan to compete in the annual championship held in Petaluma, Calif. This year Gentry said he decided to sponsor a Stroh's Open with "half of the

proceeds" going to benefit the Lions Club's Leader Dog School for the Blind in Rochester.

Local tournament winners will become members of the Stroh Wrist wrestling Team and represent the fire-bred beverage in the Oct. 9 world championship in Petaluma, just outside of San Francisco. Stroh's is picking up the tab on that excursion, and participants will compete for \$5,000 in cash prizes.

Second place prizes are \$75 and third place winners will bring home \$25. And everybody who competes, no matter how badly, gets a commemorative T-shirt. Some consolation for a broken bicep.

This isn't exactly astronomical prize money, but then isn't the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat enough? After all, this sport was almost invented by the ABC's of the World of Sport, a world champion in Petaluma, just outside of San Francisco.

Men will compete in categories of 150 lbs., 175 lbs., 200 lbs and heavy-weight. Gentry is the ranking heavyweight in the state at 6-foot, 6-inches and 240 pounds.

Women compete in two categories — under 135 pounds and over. And a word of warning — they don't like to hear crude comments about their femininity. Some of the strongest women in this griping sport look petite. But one smart remark and you'll resemble the Venus de Milo.

MICHIGAN HAS contributed plenty

of world champions in the sport. People like Joe Rarick of Rapids and Sue Morodite of Grand Rapids.

Many of the wrist wrestling aficionados meet every Sunday at a gym located behind a house at 515 E. Avon, in Rochester. Visitors can catch the action at 2 p.m. Sundays. Call Gentry at 652-7745 for information on either the tournament or the Sunday wrist wrestling clinic.

By the way, if you go, don't embarrass yourself by calling the sport "arm wrestling." It'll just get you into trouble. Gentry explains that most people have visions of barroom brawlers bendering each other's arms. Contrary to even some practitioners' belief, Gentry says that's not what wrist wrestling's all about.

"We've had a few broken arms but not that many," Gentry said. "People get in a low position, where they're rolling their arm, instead of their muscles. That's the way to break a bone."

Gentry said he pulled a tendon once wrist wrestling but never broke a bone. But if you plan to compete, Gentry suspects your "bone" is the correct way to wrist wrestle before the weight-in-between 10 a.m. and noon the day of the event. Preliminary competition starts at 1 p.m. Wrist wrestling teams may compete for one large trophy. The Stroh's team will not compete in the company-sponsored tournament.

And may the best man and woman win — hands down.

## Best part of being truck driver: No boss

Out of the setting sun comes riding the modern American hero, the stuff of which song and story are made: Strong, sinewy-forearmed.

And plagued by hemorrhoids.

Meet the truck driver. D. Daryl Wyckoff is a Harvard professor who has met more of them than most of his co-workers. These experiences leavened the responses to a nationwide survey of truckers done in December 1977 and January 1978 and became the basis for his recently-published book, *Truck Drivers in America* (Lexington Books, 176 pps, \$15.95).

The book comes to some rather startling conclusions. Ninety-eight percent of all company truck drivers enjoying union membership were satisfied with their jobs, for instance, along with 85 percent of the non-union members. You don't encounter that kind of job satisfaction level even among \$800,000-a-year baseball players, for God's sake, let alone truck drivers.

And few truck drivers use drugs. The amphetamine, Benzadrine, have-the-wife-get-a-diet-prescription syndrome seems mainly mythical.

Wyckoff, who has a doctorate in transportation, was the author of two previous books on the trucking industry, one on owner-operators and another on how to manage a trucking business. This is the kind of thing you tend to expect professors from Harvard to write. A book just about truck drivers is not.

"Nobody had really sat down and tried to figure out what was on the truck drivers' minds," said Wyckoff when asked what prompted him to write the book. "Including the people who I thought would be most interested — the Teamsters."

Most drivers take the greatest job satisfaction in the fact that they are alone — they are bosses. And, ironically, many truck drivers also find it to be the most difficult part of their work.

"Some of them are pretty darn lonesome," said

Wyckoff. "Some of the questionnaires came back with two or three pages of Holiday Inn stationery — 'God, I'm lonely.'"

JOB SATISFACTION levels weren't nearly as high for owner-operators, or self-employed truckers as for company-employed workers, largely because of finances. And the survey was taken before number two diesel fuel fetched a buck a gallon.

"Some of these guys, really, honestly to God truth, I don't know how they're going to get out of the hole they've got themselves in. Twenty-five percent of one category of driver was over two months behind in their payments (on the big rigs), and boy, these guys are candidates for repossession."

Fifteen percent of them want out of the business, and another 15 percent don't plan to replace their equipment.

Any freeway habitue used to the apparently uncontrollable sadism truck drivers seem seized by at the sight of a subcompact Chevette won't be surprised to hear nearly 87 percent of truckers who haul hazardous cargo have no formal driver training. This may be a good thing.

"It turns out the guys who went to the truck driver schools had worse safety records as a group," Wyckoff said.

And while Wyckoff says the lack of supervision appears to either attract or create "free spirits," he adds "by and large, these guys are pretty solid characters."

"The thing that was a very pleasant surprise, by and large unsafe practices weren't anywhere near as rampant as people think."

I wouldn't know about that. Five years ago I was stuck hitchhiking in the desert 20 miles outside Reno, Nevada, for 28 hours. A trucker picked me up, a guy from Idaho hauling 42,000 pounds of ice cream cartons who had been a Green Beret in the early '60s.



Mike Scanlon

He was wearing panty hose and open-toed sandals.

"I ain't no funny boy," he told me in Georgiawese. "These are just more comfortable."

A couple hundred miles down the road he blew a tire and limped into a service station where — God almighty! — there suddenly arrived about 15 or 20 Hell's Angels, replete with grease-caked, cut-off colors and women who looked as if simply laying eyes on them would require a pencil shot later.

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