

OBSERVING SPORTS

'60s Were Golden Days In Observerland

By George Maskin

I'm a sentimentalist. Be it in Detroit or Los Angeles or Miami or London, England, or on television while sitting at home...when I hear the National Anthem I choke up.

It also touches me on that one night a year when the strains of Auld Lang Syne usher out one year and welcome another.

I'm sure it'll be the same Wednesday evening around about midnight when we say goodbye not only to 1969 but the decade of the 60's.

Somehow as I stand there I know so many things run swiftly into my memory book...What's gone by the boards in this fast-fading year...what's happened in the decade known as the Spectacular 60's.

I'm sure again, I'll stand, too, and wonder about what 1970 will hold for us. It's the uncertainties that "get" to one...starting with all-important life itself.

None of us really can plan too far into the future when actually we don't know what the next second or minute or hour will bring.

What about the '60's?

Remember it started with a telegram that your association with the old Detroit Times had ceased. The paper was folding up. Twenty-five years, or more, of service on Bagley had passed into history.

It was then another association almost promptly started...with the Observer-News.

The late Paul Chanin, then the boss of the Observer, wanted somebody to pep up the sports pages. In particular, he wanted better high school coverage.

There were four schools then on the Observer "beat" - Bentley, Redford Union and Thurston. Clarenceville was "half and half" and St. Agatha fell in about the same category.

We're now up to 16 high schools in Observerland with three or four new ones due next fall on a "beat" that stretches from Garden City and Westland up to almost the West Bloomfield Township line.

Thousands of young athletes had paraded on the Observer scene in this past decade. There were some, like Dick Gretzinger, who

starred at Plymouth as a swimmer, who have now come back "home" as a coach. In between, of course, there was college and maybe the military.

Many of the kids whose names have appeared on these sports pages have gone on to stardom in college. I ran into one the other night - Garden City's Ed Pusch. He's just finished his sophomore season at Texas-El Paso where as a flanker he picked up almost 1,000 yards to run 10th nationally.

In retrospect, there are some kids who went on from Observerland to serve their country, and in doing so have paid the supreme price - life itself.

OBSERVERLAND, OF COURSE, has boomed more ways than just athletically in this now departing decade. The population has doubled...maybe tripled.

Stretches of what was empty land, or farm land in the early '60's have now been developed into major housing and apartment subdivisions.

Thousands of us left the big city to live out here...for one reason or another.

We have had our problems in suburbia...the battle of taxes...the battle of paved streets (have they fixed yours, yet, Joe Sparma?)...and what have you.

But by and large one thing we have done is to see to it that our kids have enjoyed the TOPS in education...and we have seen to it that Observerland schools have enjoyed top flight athletic programs.

The sports programs, we might add, are COMPLETE and FULL...There is something for every boy, and often the girls, ranging from cross country and tennis to the "biggies" like football and basketball and baseball.

Our supporting of kids sports has paid off handsomely, not only with winning and successful teams hereabouts, but, as noted, with contributions to college and professional teams around the country.

THE 60's!
There's no question that the athlete who finished the 60's was superior to the one who performed in the

decade's infancy.

Sports have improved. Let nobody kid you. There are those, who crave for the "Good Ol' Days."

The "Good Ol' Days" are the present...and if you disagree check over the schoolboy and Olympic or college records in competition in swimming or track. Just about every mark has been established in the last few years.

Hence you can apply that same geometric expression - "Things equal to the same things are equal to each" -- to baseball, basketball, golf, football, etc.

For if swimming and track are better, so are most of the other sports.

The reasons? Well, the coaching is better. The men who guide teams come better prepared. The techniques have improved. There are more clinics to help the coaches and their athletes.

The equipment is improved.

The athletes have finer facilities at their disposal. Take a look around at all the fine gyms and football and other plants that have popped up in Observerland in the Spectacular '60's.

THE 60's!

There's no question that more of us have been able to come closer and closer to sports -- all sports -- thanks to television.

As Pete Waldmier pointed out in his series in the News last week, TV has become a mighty part of sports, professional and amateur.

We are able to watch four and five football games every weekend in this area. In some communities, they even offer a Prep TV football game of the-week every Saturday.

We sit in our living rooms or den or sprawl out in the bedroom and watch the Lions, the Tigers, the Wings, the Pistons, Michigan, Michigan State.

We marvel as the tube brings us LIVE from England, the British Open golf, or live from somewhere in Europe the Winter Olympics or an auto race.

We are able to appreciate every sport, not just the major ones.

We can see in the flesh every big name in sports...from Joe Willie Namath to Mickey Mantle to Al Kaline to Gordie Howe...to Oscar Robertson...to Arnie Palmer...well, name the guy and you'll see him sooner or later on the tube.

THERE HAS BEEN a feeling in some quarters that all this television of sports will knock out the teams eventually. Nobody will want to come in person to attend events.

Phooey!
If anything, TV has inspired more folks to jam sports arenas so that they can be there to see for themselves what's going on, rather than to sit home and see through the magic of TV.

Attendance figures in all sports are up. This goes for the pros and the amateurs.
More is as true for the high schools as it is for the colleges or the pros. Schoolboy throngs are up...and not just for football and basketball. There's a greater interest in sports like wrestling and swimming and even in baseball.

More of us, too, in the decade of the '60's have turned to becoming participating, instead of just observers, in sports.

More of us have taken to playing golf and tennis, bowling and horseback riding...Skiing has become a major sport, especially in the state of Michigan, where within an hour's drive from

New Dorm Is Planned By Tigers

Construction has started on a \$125,000 de luxe dormitory for the Tigers' minor league Tigertown training base at Lakeland, Fla.

The three-story U-shaped building, designed to accommodate 200 minor league players and Tigertown officials, will replace two wooden structures which were built during World War II and which have been used to house players since the 1953 opening of Tigertown.

A major improvement item was construction of Marchant Stadium, where the Tiger major league club trains, adjacent to Tigertown. Opened in 1966, that facility cost \$300,000.

It is hoped to complete the new Tigertown dormitory by March 1 but other facilities are available in case the deadline is not met.

The fireproof building will be air conditioned with controlled heating; it will include a recreation lounge on each floor, with all rooms carpeted and new furnishings installed before opening.

The dormitory project is being financed jointly by the Tigers and the City of Lakeland, with the city to be repaid for its contributions within 10 years, Campbell said.

N. Farmington Ups Streak In Wrestling

North Farmington High's wrestling team finished its prepolythly schedule with a 3-0 record by downing Berkley, 34-11.

Previously the Raiders had won from Bentley and Redford Union.

Jim Smith (98 pounds), Tom Tooley (125), Terry Giles (130), Steve Wilson (131), Mike Pease (145), and Gary Toomey (185) all won their bouts on decisions while Ken Haller and Mike Haller were awarded victories on forfeits.

Craig Gow, of North Farmington, gained a tie and Mike Lettler pinned his rival to account for the other Raiders' points.

North Farmington resumes action on Jan. 6 against Thurston in a Northwest Suburban League meet.

Michigan State freshman defenseman Dave Roberts was named to 1968 all-tournament team in the 1968 Great Lakes Invitational Hockey Tournament in Detroit.



FORMER LIVONIA BENTLEY High swimmers, Bob Jepson (middle) and Don Trembath, are currently performing with the varsity tank squad at Western Michigan University. Jepson, who captained the 1969 Bentley team, competes in the widual medley and breaststroke and is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Jepson of 28718 Jacquelyn. Trembath was the school's "senior athlete of the year" in 1967. He is a junior breaststroke and is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Wilfred Trembath of 36117 Ladywood. With the pair is Bronco assistant coach Gary Gould, a former prep All-American from Plymouth High.

Harness Racing Makes Amazing Strides In '60s

COLUMBUS O

Harness racing hitched its wagons to a pair of stars in the space-age decade of the 'Sixties and Bret Hanover and Nevele Pride are responsible for a wholesale revision of the trotting and pacing record books in the past 10 years.

The wagons were two-wheeled racing sukkies which Bret Hanover pulled to a mile pacing record of 1:53 3/5 in 1966 and Nevele Pride to a trotting mark of 1:54 4/5 in 1969.

BUSINESS WAS GOOD, too, as harness racing's attendance and wagering totals moved upward each year of the decade and the U.S. Trotting Association predicts 24,435,000 fans wagering \$1,809 million for 1969 by the end of December.

Another three million are estimated to have seen harness racing at the non-wagering Fairs across the nation.

The first "millionaire" horse and the first "millionaire" driver also appeared as Cardigan Bay, a New Zealand import, pushed his lifetime earnings to \$1,000,575 before retiring in 1968 while Stanley Dancer was the first driver to guide horses earning over a million with purse money of \$1,061,538 in 1964.

The growth of the sport is illustrated by the fact that seven drivers are over the million-dollar mark for 1969 with the record standing at \$1,654,172 established by Billy Hauptman in 1966. Dancer is also making a bid to surpass that total in the final weeks of December.

Ten years ago, no driver had ever won 200 times in a single season and Bob Farrington was the first to pass that mark in 1961 with 201.

Farrington raised that to 312 in 1964 but Herve Filion, a Canadian who drives principally in the U.S., shattered all records with 407 victories in 1968 and was flirting with the 400 mark again at the close of 1969.

BRET HANOVER followed Adios Butler to pacing's throne after the latter had opened the '60s with a 1:54 3/5 record in 1960. Bret Hanover lowered this to 1:54 and then to 1:53 3/5, both in 1966 as he earned his third consecutive "Harness Horse of the Year" crown, the first time this ever had been accomplished.

The pacing champion also had a 1:55 as a three-year-old, best ever in that age division and his 1:57 the same year is a race record on a half-mile

track. In three seasons, he earned \$922,516, second only to Cardigan Bay.

Nevele Pride also reared only three years and was "Harness Horse of the Year" from 1967 through 1969, the first trotter to reign for a three-year span. In 1969, he set world records on both mile and half-mile tracks and added another on a 5/8ths mile oval.

His 1:54 4/5 as Indianapolis wiped out one of sport's longest standing records, the 1:55 1/4 by Greyhound in 1938. Only six days later, he flashed around the half-mile track at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1:56 4/5, beating the former standard by almost two seconds, while his 1:56 at Laurel, Md., is best ever on a 5/8ths mile.

THE PAST DECADE also saw the death of Adios, the greatest sire of money-winning horses of any breed. Although he died in 1965, his sons and daughters still are winning and their total earnings had soared to more than \$10.5 million by the close of 1969.

In Canada, in Europe, in Australia and New Zealand and around the world the sport is booming and harness racing's step into the 'seventies is certain to be a long one.

Rogalski Gets Letter At Amherst

Gary Rogalski, a junior at Amherst College and a 1967 graduate of Franklin High School, Livonia, has just been awarded his first varsity letter in football.

As back-up halfback for the Jeff offense and Amherst's leading kickoff receiver, Rogalski was important to the Jeffs as they rolled to a 6-2 season.

The son of Mrs. Dorothy Rogalski of 39857 Edmondton Drive, Plymouth, and the late Walter Rogalski, Gary is an honor graduate of Franklin High School, where he lettered in and captained both varsity football and track.

Custom Car Show Starts On Jan. 23

The 18th annual Autorama, world's biggest custom car and hot rod show, will be held in Cobo Hall for three days starting Friday, January 23.

The annual show, co-sponsored by the Michigan Hot Rod Association and the St. Clair Shores-based Promotions, Inc., attracts custom car builders throughout the nation.

The most imaginative one-of-a-kind creations will fill Halls A, B and C of Cobo Hall. Some 450 entries will set a new record this year.

Autorama offers something for everyone. Custom, rod, motorcycle, bicycle, antique, sports, hand-built, classic, drag, pimped, go-kart, Soap Box Derby and model car competition are among the categories.



DICK BENSEK

Canapes are the little rounds and slices you broil or spread or decorate. Their advantage is that odds anyone used on top of toast bread rounds produce a flower-garden effect on a platter and taste as good as they look. Besides — it empties the ice box. You can use any of your favorite dips on these. How about combining creamed cottage cheese with any flavored, seasoned and cooked fish you like. Make it about half and half. Add 1 tablespoon of lemon juice for each cup of mixture, then stir in seasonings.

For food that tastes as good as it looks come to GARDEN INN, 225 Grand River Avenue, 476-5320. Try our Viking Sword - Marinated Beef, Green Peppers, Onions, Tomatoes, Mushrooms with Rice Pilaf and served on a flaming platter. All of us at Danish Inn wish you and your families a very Happy New Year!!!

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CLOSED
NEW YEAR'S DAY
• • •

HELPFUL HINT: Peel potatoes, carrots and turnips with a metal scouring sponge while holding them under a running tap — easier and quicker.

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