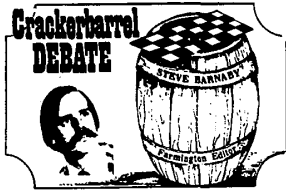


# Park's destruction rekindles bygone era

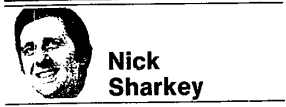
Click, clack, click, clack. I stood in the rain straining to hear that once-familiar sound. Looming before me was a memory soon to be wiped away by changing times. Jeez, how I loved to ride the roller coaster at Edgewater Park. To be sure, it is a relic with its wooden struts and rickety cars. But for thousands of us, Edgewater's coaster was, and is, the supreme coaster ride. Forget the fancy stuff — the loops and weaves of the metal monsters at the big new parks. Every thrill, every scare was built into that antique back in 1928. From the clicking chain up the first steep grade to the stomach-flipping dive down the first hill to the swooping turn that made a rider feel as if the car would plummet off the track into the parking lot down below. And how about the legendary low-hanging beam where it was rumored legions of daredevils were decapitated when standing at the wrong moment? Untrue, of course, but it sure did make for one heck of a scary ride.

It takes a lot for a grown man to get up extra early on Monday morning to pay his last respects to a memory — especially when it's raining. BUT AFTER READING that the old amusement park was going to be demolished to make way for an apartment complex, I had to take one last look. Now don't get me wrong. The last thing I want to be is sappy about this whole thing. After all, an amusement park is just an amusement park. I just thought it would be fun to take a peak. And it was. In those few minutes all the memories came back as I looked at the deserted park. Remember the Bird Bath Club? I was a member along with thousands of other kids. Good old Suppy Sales was its leader. On designated Saturdays Bird Bath members could get in free of charge and ride all day. Of course, the highlight was the appearance by Suppy.



How about nickel and dime day? Now that really tells the story of inflation in America. For a nickel or dime on certain Saturdays you could ride your favorite ride which usually cost a quarter. Teen-agers delighted at the frequent visits by disc jockeys who would broadcast from the park —

Lee Allen, Dave Prince, Tom Clay and, of course, Robin Seymour. We used to hitchhike to Edgewater, all the way from Greenfield and Joy Road to Berg and Grand River. We'd walk from Grand River to the park. In those days, Berg was just a dirt road. Edgewater was on the outskirts of civilization — at least we thought so. TODAY, of course, all that has changed. The magic of Edgewater has been tarnished by the gleam of the big parks in Ohio with their super rides. Still, it seems strange people would drive hundreds of miles to ride a roller coaster, when one of the best was right in the area. Well, come September the coaster and the rest of the park will be just a memory. But that's all right. It was great fun. And it was fun to remember, even if I had to stand in the rain to do it.



## Even without a game, card fans gather

It may have gone unnoticed by most persons, but perhaps the fastest growing hobby is baseball card collecting. Yes, those cards you kept in a box in your bedroom as a kid now have value. Collectors turned out by the hundreds recently at the Plymouth Hilton Hotel for the second national baseball card collectors' convention. Dealers paid \$35 per table to display their wares for shoppers interested in buying, selling or trading cards. Those who participated ranged from amateurs like Dr. Harold Bussey of the Southfield school board to professionals like Jim Kovacs who runs the Baseball Card Store in Lakewood, Ohio. Kovacs said he had sales of \$1,500 one day during the convention. Dealers set up their tables in straight rows throughout the ballroom at the Hilton. They put their cards in neat stacks or in plastic-covered pages. Especially valuable cards were put in glass-enclosed cases. Prices were neatly affixed to each card. Then dealers waited for their customers. Shoppers roamed up and down the aisles trying to bargain for the best price. Many carried price guides which told them the value of any card. Dealers spent much of their time debunking the price guides. "They're usually out of date by the time they're published," one dealer said. "They tend to under-value the cards."

But there was more than baseball cards at the convention. Yearbooks, pennants, uniforms and autographed baseballs were prominently displayed. Even the wrappers that contained the baseball cards when they were purchased were being bought and sold. In addition to the activity in the ballroom at the Hilton, small conference rooms were used for other convention events. In one room, the highlights of the 1981 Detroit Tiger World Series victory were shown. In another, a seminar on baseball card trivia was held. (Typical question: What year were two crossed bats on the front of the cards?) Baseball heroes like Al Kaline even put in an appearance. All this came for the \$1 admission price. That's not a bad deal.

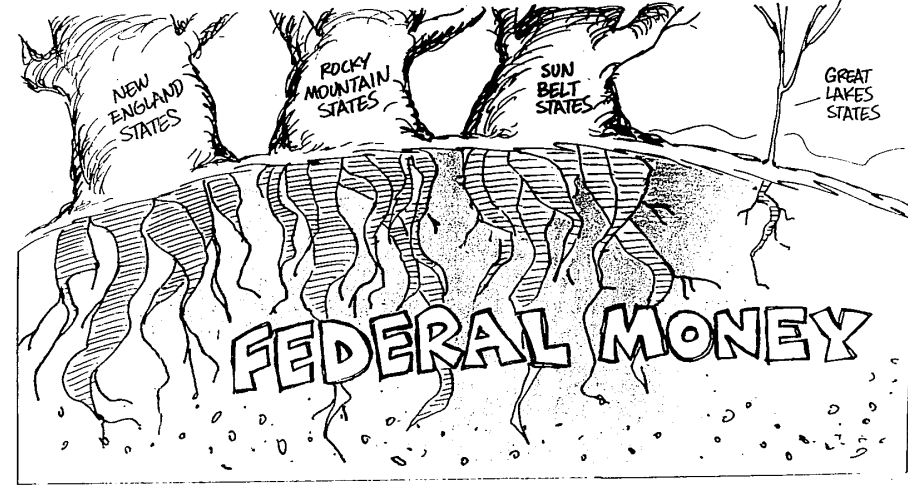
IT SOON became obvious that for all the talk about the value of old baseball cards, few persons were collecting for investment purposes. "If I had to make a living out of this, I'd starve," one dealer said.

Most dealers were enjoying the fun. They were friendly and eager to discuss their hobby. The serious transactions were not going on among the dealers and shoppers on the ballroom floor. But it was taking place among the dealers in their hotel rooms.

Dealers would leave their own tables for a few minutes and inspect another dealer's cards. "Let's meet up in my room at 2 p.m. and I'll be there," one dealer said. "The first dealer would say, 'I can agree on a price.'" The environment in the hotel suggested the atmosphere at a ball park. A concession stand sold pop corn and hot dogs in the finest tradition of baseball. Dealers wore uniform shirts of their favorite teams. Tables were decked out with baseball memorabilia.

One man was even going around to each table trying to sell insurance for baseball cards.

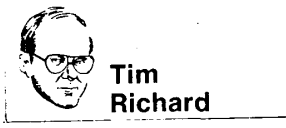
DOES IT sound like fun? Well, if you missed the national baseball card collectors convention, you'll probably have another chance. The Detroit area is the second most rabid part of the country for baseball card collecting. (Los Angeles is first). Watch the sports section of this newspaper for information about future conventions. For the \$1 admission price, you can hardly go wrong.



## Why Lakes states lack political pull

Last week I outlined broadly a proposal from the Greater Cleveland Growth Association that Michigan join in forming a non-profit Great Lakes Economic Policies Council and a companion research institute. Some of the political details also make fascinating reading. The proposal was written by Dr. Nicholas P. Thomas, an Oakland County resident who has been through the political and economic wars in Michigan, Ohio and Washington, D.C. Thomas, 46, has a doctorate in public administration from Syracuse University and other degrees from Wayne State and the University of Detroit. He not only has academic credentials, he has political insight. Let me share some with you.

**WHY PRIVATE** sponsorship for the Great Lakes Economic Policies Council? Why not a public-private partnership? "Past efforts by Great Lakes political leaders to create effective new regional political action entities have failed," he answered, "due to partisanship and petty bickering." He cited attempts to form a Great Lakes Congressional Caucus and the effort by Ohio Gov. James Rhodes to restructure the Midwest Governors Conference into a smaller Great Lakes Governors Conference. "Simply put," said Thomas, "the political leadership must get their own house in order and show that they are capable of regional maturity and discipline. An end to inter-state industrial and busi-



ness 'raiding parties' by the several governors would be a start. Thomas likes understatement. He says there are no simple answers to why Great Lakes leaders have lagged behind other parts of the country in creating regional organizations for political action.

"GENERALLY SPEAKING, the inertia can probably be attributed to the pattern of sharp economic rebounds throughout the Great Lakes from cyclical periods of recessionary declines. "Republican governors of Michigan and New York have seldom shared the same public service views of their Republican counterparts in Ohio and Indiana." (Did you notice last month when the Michigan Legislature directed the Department of Social Services to find out why average welfare checks in Michigan are nearly double those in Indiana?)

"Interstate economic rivalry by political leaders has hindered regional political action," Thomas went on. "Other parts of the country have benefitted from strong, almost dominant partisanship favoring one part over another."

**THE PROPOSAL** looks to heads of 300 corporations to provide leadership for the Great Lakes Economic Policies Council. Is there a role for organized labor? Private sector unions only — not public sector unions, said Thomas.

"Teamster officials have already expressed support for the concept. Cooperative ventures between the United Auto Workers and the AFL-CIO with private interests within southeast Michigan indicate that unified political action can be forged if the issues are carefully drawn."

Thomas is talking about some big-time activity: Issues research, consensus building, political coalition building, cross-regional lobbying, monitoring congressional voting records.

Earlier this year I wrote about how Montana and Wyoming are taxing the living daylight out of coal which we buy for our electric power plants. Thomas notes those states hired a classy consultant to advise them on how to lobby against federal efforts to cut their taxes on energy supplies. The stakes in this game are high.

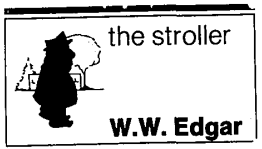
## Express checkout lines lead to nowhere fast

It isn't that he has anything against the young lady at the cash register — The Stroller doesn't want to cost her a job. But after the humiliation and suffering he went through, he is seriously considering leading a move to do away with the express lines in neighborhood supermarkets.

It all started when The Stroller recently took his place at a so-called "express counter." But before he reached the cashier, he already was suffering from fallen arches, high blood pressure, an upset stomach and the loss of appetite for the items in his basket. And all because the folks ahead of him — all women — had two prices on several items in their baskets checked with the manager. Once the price was settled, they took time to write checks. This was the move that put The Stroller on edge.

Not only did they write checks, they had to have them approved, first by identification cards and then while the cashier checked her list to see if the customer was on the list.

In this case, the purchaser had the wrong number on her check. This took up time. All the while The Stroller, who had only four items in his basket, was fuming.



His ankles suddenly started to feel strange. Then he felt his hips touching the floor, and he thought he might have to wear steel supports for the rest of his life. Meanwhile, he wanted to get home in a hurry.

The real blow came when his neighbors, with many, many items, smiled as they passed him by in the regular line.

Nervous and upset, he stood there helpless as the woman in front of him with only four items in her basket stopped to have the price checked on one of them. And then, of all things, she opened her purse and took out a stack of coupons, and checked them out. Find the right ones, and then dug deeper into her purse to bring out a check book.

Express lines? Who are they kidding? Often times they are the slowest in the market. They are enough to upset the calmest of persons.

In his drive to end the express lines or the introduction of special lines for check writers, The Stroller isn't thinking of suing anyone for his suffering.

But that did happen to him once in his younger days. And he still chuckles about it.

One evening when he left work at the Mack Motor Company back home where he was helping to build the famous trucks, the conductor of the street car mistakenly pushed him and he fell to the brick pavement. He suffered a gashed elbow and his knees burst through his trousers.

That night he joined a group that included the town's top lawyer who smacked their lips at the thought of suing the Transit Company.

He worked up a case that included such things as cash for the gashed elbow, a new suit of clothes, and a lot more.

He went so far as to seek damages for the physical suffering, the sleepless nights and the humiliation of it all.

Would you believe it? The Transit Company settled out of court.