

Been down so long it's beginning to look like up

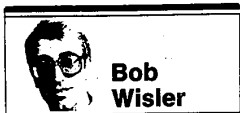
As bad as things have been, there's a suspicion they could get worse. What if present trends continue? A letter to an out-of-towner in a few years might read like this:

Dear Mike:

How are things in Nevada? Probably pretty good, seeing that it is one of the few areas that doesn't have the usual problems of unemployment, blackouts and reactor evacuations. Of course, you do have your worries with the water shortages and having those rotating missiles located near your house.

Still, it's a good thing you moved when you did, before the Sun Belt quotas were established.

Things are a little rough back here. The car company — the New General Ford-Chrysler Co. — is talking about shutting down



Bob Wisler

some plants. We need a new car — our W-car has more than 100,000 miles on it, and the repair bills are running a few hundred a month.

But a new car that seats more than two costs at least \$18,000 and I'm paying off the bunker we put in under the family room.

BESIDES, we don't have as much occasion to go out. I do most of my work on a video terminal at home. We do all of our

shopping by computo-television. It's easier to order by the lists they put on the tube. We watch all the movies on cable TV and watch the church services on TV Sunday mornings.

I even voted by television after watching the candidates on the tube. Now that I think about it, I haven't gotten out of the house but a few times in the last few months.

Once in a while I have trouble with the bank. Last month they billed me for the cost of some party at the Roostertail that the Schoeniths threw. It seems that his consumer number is nearly the same as mine, one digit off. But it was straightened out after a hearing by the Consumer Arbitration Board that handles computo-television billing disagreements.

You know by now that we were in the blackout which shut down the Midwest for three days. We got along fine since we had

already built our blackout-bomb shelter-nuclear evacuation bunker underneath the family room.

WE HAVE it equipped for every emergency and can hold out for four months. I have a friend who is in the shelter business and we financed it at only 23 percent. I figure it is a good investment since the only houses selling these days are those with bunkers. Not that I'm planning to sell or move. I don't have the right kind of occupation for the Sun Belt quotas.

There's no sense moving East — they have it worse than we do. I have a friend in Pennsylvania who had to move three times because of the nuclear plant scares. Each time he was in one of the areas which had to be evacuated. He is really tired of living in resettlement centers.

THE KIDS are fine. They are getting

most of their classes from the television channels operated by the state school district. Most of the school districts around here had to consolidate because of the millage defeats and state and federal cuts.

Tuition is cheaper if the kids get their education over the TV rather than busing to a campus. It gets noisy some times, but then I just tell 'em all to take their stuff to the bunker. Can't hear a thing through these walls.

We're kind of worried right now about the situation in Sri Lanka. I agree with the president. Sri Lanka is a jumping off point for Indonesia, Africa or Australia. We have to make a stand some place. We can't have another defeat like we took in Somalia and before that Syria.

Well, I hope to see you soon. For the most part, everything is pretty good.

Your friend, Roger

We're losing the key to American dream

Ronald Reagan quipped to the media the other day that if he doesn't run for reelection in 1984, he may apply for a football scholarship at Notre Dame. He thinks the prez doesn't have it all in focus.

If the scholarship's on the basis of his scholarship, I wouldn't grade him very high. And if it's on the basis of need, Old Ron just won't qualify. Before extending an academic safety net to Reagan, the good fathers at Notre Dame might look askance at his country gentleman lifestyle and the free designer clothes Nancy dolls up in.

And let's face it, by 1984 — if Notre Dame is in the same shape as the University of Michigan and other institutions — scholarships will be like dinosaurs.

Public colleges may have to put the arm on alumni and other donors just to keep the professors paid and the classes going.

For some reason, Reagan doesn't put education high on his agenda. A real competitor, he'd like America to be first scientifically, technologically and in every way,



Shirlee Iden

yet one of his high priorities has been to eradicate the Department of Education.

EDUCATION always seemed to me the American rainbow that hopeful young people put their sights on. I was brought up to think if there were going to be a pot of gold, it would come at the end of an educational rainbow.

A starry-eyed 17-year-old when I was graduated from Central High School, I remember my father telling me it was all right to apply to any school in the country. If I could get in, he'd send me.

Though I might have gotten into some faraway college with ivy walls and did flirt with the idea of Cornell, where they taught journalism well, my decision was to attend

Wayne State University, a school that put education within the grasp of working folks.

My classmates were the middle class kids I had gone through school with, few preppies or Joe College types in the bunch. Many went to work after school to pay for tuition or help at home.

A diverse group, yet we had a lot in common. We wanted an education, a family, some day a home of our own. And our dreams were valid and in-line hopes at that time.

MOST OF US made those dreams happen and raised children in suburban communities, taxing them to dance classes, scout meetings, and piano lessons in Livonia, Southfield and Oak Park in one of two family cars.

We saw that our children completed their educations as well, but this generation is faced with a different reality.

What's tough about trying to make it in today's America is the short ration of hope, rainbows if you will. In my youth, Franklin Roosevelt helped us to believe we were the

best and most hopeful. Later, John Kennedy rekindled that feeling that the American dream was a viable one, plausible for every one of us.

IT'S GRIM out there today. Not only is it an impossible dream for young people to hope to own their own home, for many, the education they struggled for isn't bringing them the promised rewards.

Suburban homes, once empty nests, are bulging again with sons and daughters home because they can't make it without help.

Older citizens who struggled and saved find their rainy day is here before they've picked out the umbrella.

Many Americans listened to the State of the Union Address, eager for hope about unemployment, the economy, interest rates and ease for those living in poverty. Instead, they got "one bold stroke" of shifting responsibilities from "Uncle" to states and local governments.

We need "new federalism" as much as Ronald Reagan needs a scholarship to Notre Dame.



Nancy Walls Smith

Housework is easy when you don't bother

I've got it narrowed down to two rather drastic alternatives — either I give the house a really good cleaning, or we move.

One's about as appealing as the other. This is the longest we've lived in any one place, and I've discovered a very disconcerting fact: If you don't clean behind your stove for five years, the dirt starts to ooze out after you.

My philosophy, with regards to house cleaning, has always been: "What your mother can't see when she comes to visit (and inspect) can't hurt you."

I was wrong. Well, maybe it isn't hurting us, but it makes one feel rather slovenly when the dust balls under the heavier pieces of furniture have reached capacity level and are slowing working their way to daylight.

I THOUGHT I was doing so well, finally conditioning myself to feverishly attacking cobwebs once every four or five months.

But I've always thought that whatever finds its way under the couch or behind the refrigerator is entitled to sanctuary. An escaped convict could hide under our family room couch and be as safe from discovery as he would if he were to leave the country.

It must be time to start thinking about spring cleaning. I love to think about spring cleaning. I hate to do it.

Spring cleaning, of course, takes place in the spring. That's the nice part about it. It's encouraging in the midst of a gloomy February to ponder washing windows with the bright spring sunshine blazing through them.

IT MAKES me look forward — longingly — to those warm lovely days when breezes waft through the screen doors as I rid our home of all the dust, dirt, and grime that has settled in throughout our winter hibernation.

Like I said, it's fun to think about. Getting it done is where I run into problems.

My first step in tackling such a mammoth task is to make lists — lots and lots of lists. I may not get much accomplished, but at least I'm very organized about it. Last spring I taped my "Kitchen Cleaning List" to the side of the refrigerator. It consisted of about 26 unpleasant tasks that were required in order for our kitchen to, once again, shine like I know it should.

It wasn't until late October that I noticed that my list was beginning to yellow with age and the kitchen still was in its same sorry state. It's simply amazing how many diversions can pop up just as you're all set to clean the oven.

THE CHILDREN'S bedrooms present another humongous challenge that I'm rarely up to. How can I polish the wooden floor when I can't even see them.

Frequently, I find myself spending four or five hours in each son's room just picking up and putting away toys, clothes, shoes, papers, books, etc. Unfortunately, as soon as I leave each room it quickly returns to its former state of chaos.

All that cleaning is good for about 15 minutes of neatness. 'Tis frustrating, to say the least!

In fact, as I sit here looking at our vast array of complicated cobweb formations, it occurs to me that perhaps it would be easier to just move.

Psychics reveal all to a skeptical writer

I was "read" by two psychics in the past week or so.

Irene Hughes, who spoke recently at the Livonia Town Hall, based her reading on my birth date and some sort of vibrations she feels.

The other psychic held my turquoise ring in the belief that it holds some kind of fingerprint of the owner.

I wasn't impressed with what they told me. I mentioned this to a friend, and she suggested that maybe the ring reader was reading the fingerprints of the Indian who made it.

The moment I met Mrs. Hughes in the lobby of the Mai Kai Theatre, she asked my birthday and produced an instant evaluation. She said the last two or three months have been difficult because of deaths in the family. Upon seeing my head shake, she shifted to a serious illness. I had some back trouble of late, but wasn't sure I qualified. But which was it, my illness or family deaths? That is quite a variation.

TALKING to her later at lunch she persisted with the family death story. I must have been giving off vibes edged in black. Later she told me that perhaps I should



Sherry Kahan

have gone into music.

I couldn't stand piano lessons and only sing like a nightingale when I'm alone.

The psychic who "read" my ring said I was a sweetheart, meaning that I try to get along (true, I think). I am easily hurt (I think most people are). I can be "willingly gullible and can be manipulated by people I care about" (not sure). I'm extremely sensitive (does he tell this to everyone?) but have a shell of impersonality and a poker face (some truth in that). It is difficult for me to admit I'm wrong (but I have trained myself to do it).

I am disillusioned with hypocrisy (isn't everyone?) and can't stand to be lied to.

At one time I had killer headaches (I have had maybe three or four headaches in my entire life).

He told me I had been through some heavy-duty religious reversals involving the hell and damnation syndrome. Let's hold it right there. I doubt there is anyone around more distant than I from fire and brimstone religion.

MY CONCLUSION after these two close encounters of the brief kind is that I could probably do just as well as some psychics.

If the person were old, I'd hint at illness or death. If young and yearning no wedding ring, I'd suggest romance. If dressed poorly, I'd probably go on improving circumstances. I'd probably be as accurate as those with a crystal ball, especially if I had practice.

Admittedly Mrs. Hughes was right on the button on a number of things when she made a recent appearance at a Town Hall in Livonia. But judging from reactions of some of those she read, she often said things that made no sense or meant nothing to them.

To me, that makes her unreliable. Sometimes right, sometimes wrong. It's nothing to base your life on. So now I'm faced with the question, what good is it?

What is the value of hearing something

about yourself that you already know, or something so vague you don't know what to think, or which might even be wrong?

WHAT I think is behind the success of these kinds of readings is that their clients find it flattering to be the object of the psychic's complete attention.

Certainly it is not hard these days to predict an earthquake, a falling bridge, a crashing plane. They happen all the time. You can respect the person who names time and place or even the plane number or number of passengers. But storms and weird weather are not that difficult. Irene Hughes, by the way, announced that spring would be "cold and damp."

And when she said that Lech Walesa will die this year, she verbalized a fear that many, many people have. In fact, scads of political predictions made by psychics could be made by those who follow current events.

I don't rule out extrasensory perception. But I think the use of the crystal ball, tarot cards, the stars and other means to learn about ourselves, is a hit or miss situation. They are not something you can rely on.

A misdemeanor punishable by up to 90 days in jail and/or a \$500 fine. First offenders are often placed on probation. If they comply with terms, their records may be expunged, according to some Southfield judge's philosophies.

Could this happen to the young woman? Could she then turn her life around? Would she learn by her mistake?

THE YOUNG woman waited more than two hours in the courtroom. She wasn't aware that the hearing for the 11 defendants had been adjourned until March 10 and could be delayed ad infinitum.

Maybe when the case comes up, she'll get a second chance, like others who have been charged with misdemeanors. It's up to the judge to decide if the punishment fits the crime.

But society is the real arbitrator of justice and morality. The community sets the standards for persons like the young woman nabbed in the raid.

Like the woman said, she was at the wrong place.

down the tubes because of the publicity, she said.

The young woman sat alone in the back row of the courtroom while case after case was heard — larceny in a building, breaking and entering, drunk driving.

Many defendants were repeaters. All had attorneys, most of whom convinced their clients to plead guilty to a lesser charge to avoid stiff sentences.

I THOUGHT about what would happen to that nervous young woman. Would anyone believe her story? Most of us are doubters, and we'd probably think, "Oh, sure, you were just playing in a place which has prostitutes."

Would anyone be convinced she just happened to be at the wrong place at the wrong time?

Is it possible she knew nothing of the activities of men and women who were charged with conspiracy to keep a house of ill fame and accepting the earnings of a prostitute?

These are felonies carrying sentences of five to 20 years in jail. Disorderly person is



Jackie Klein

kind of rotten luck I have. I was only playing backgammon at that apartment. I didn't know what was going on. I'm not one of THEM. I don't even have the same lawyer.

Maybe the man she lives with would lend her the money for legal fees when he gets his paycheck, she mused. Because her name was in a story about the raid in a local newspaper, she figured she's sure to lose her job.

She hadn't been working very much lately, she said. A case of hepatitis and recurring effects of the debilitating illness forced her to take a lot of time off.

She'd been employed recently on a part-time schedule. But that job is probably

A backgammon player suffers a bad roll

The attractive, young Southfield woman's hands were trembling as she tried to light a cigarette.

Dressed in a conservative gray tweed suit, she paced back and forth in the hallway of the 46th District Court last Monday. Her lighter failed to work. She seemed to feel that was one more indignity in her rotten day, and, lately, her unlucky life.

"My lawyer isn't going to show up because he broke his leg," she muttered. "And even if he did, I can't afford to pay him. I already owe him 300 bucks. What a bummer. Maybe I'll have to get a court-appointed lawyer."

It took a few minutes before it became clear that the woman had been arrested in a Jan. 12 prostitution raid in a Southfield townhouse complex.

She was charged with being a disorderly person. The preliminary examination for her was set for Monday. But she said, she wasn't really involved.

"At the wrong place at the wrong time," she sighed. "That's the