

Champion ash is top smoker

By Craig Piechura
staff writer

"A woman is only a woman but a good cigar is a smoke."

— Rudyard Kipling

That irreverent quote came up more than once Thursday night at the Tobacco Pouch store in Farmington Hills where 14 men kibitzed and competed in a contest designed to see who could produce the longest ash on a premium cigar.

When the smoke cleared, nearly two hours after they all lit up simultaneously in a 60-second end-cutting and lighting ceremony, Jack Caminker of West Bloomfield was declared the winner.

Caminker lost his ash when it reached the unmanageable length of 6 1/2 inches. For this dubious achievement he won \$97.50 worth of Don Tomas Presidente cigars from the Honduras. Six other contestants received lesser amounts of cigars donated by the U.S. Tobacco Co., distributors of the brand and the contest's sponsor. "Nobody took the contest too seriously. One contestant, Sydney Gartenberg of Farmington Hills, even brought his daughter Ellissa, along as cheerleader complete with pompons and snappy cheers.

"The rules weren't decided upon until the contest was already under way. At first store owner Ron Moss

thought the smoker who dropped his ash last would be declared winner. But the consensus among contestants was that would only reward slow smoking and make the contest last past midnight. So it was agreed that all contestants would smoke a 9-inch cigar which would be measured when the ash fell or the cigar went out.

IRONICALLY, the contest was held on Thursday, Nov. 18 — the same day as the national Great American Smoke-out campaign by the American Cancer Society designed to encourage everyone to stop smoking for at least 24 hours.

"It's an absolute coincidence," said store owner Moss when asked why the contest coincided with the smoke-out. "I don't want to come across as that (anti-anti-smoking)." Some of the contestants said they're tired of all the heat they get about smoking cigars, which many non-smokers regard as a vile, smelly vice.

"You ignore them," said Norm Wells of West Bloomfield, who tied for second place prize of \$42.50 worth of cigars with Mark Moss. "I believe in live and let live."

Wells remembers when a woman asked his wife if she resented him stinking up her house with cigar smoke. "My wife said I'd rather he smokes them in my home than somebody else's," Wells told the group.

"The rules weren't decided upon until the contest was already under way. At first store owner Ron Moss

A long lean and a slow draw helped Don Grill capture the 1/2 place prize.

He heard a lot of "here, heres" for that.

"My wife doesn't like it, but I gave her a choice 35 years ago," said Bill Bottle of Livonia, who finished out of the running for prizes but was glad he skipped a board meeting at Meadowbrook to attend the event.

THE BEST COMMENT uttered that evening came from the resident raconteur, John Hand of Dearborn, a member in good standing of the Cigar Smokers of America, Humidor No. 5, who said:

"When I'm done here they'll hang my tongue in Lou's Finer Deli and sell it as smoked tongue."

He wasn't kidding. The rigors of fierce competition showed on the face of contestant Wells, who burned off a piece of his lip in the intense puffing.

Contestant Dick Uday, another member of Humidor No. 5 of the CSA, had to sit out the competition when a sore throat hit him hours before the contest. But most contestants were willing to spill ashes on their three-piece suits for the romance of cigar smoking. And unless you smoke cigars, you'll never know the mystique, said the cabal, who slipped brandy while they smoked in a male ritual.

"In the old days in Cuban cigar factories they had readers who would read the classics to the people who rolled cigars," said Hand. "Literates had 'Les Miserables' read to them so many times they knew it by heart."

One by one the ashes dropped, and the stubs that remained were measured.



staff photo/CRAG PIECHURA



It was all smiles for the winner of the event Jack Caminker (right) of West Bloomfield. Ben Corbin of Detroit joined in the festivities.



Tobacco Pouch owner Ron Moss (right) outlines the rules to the contestants.

They work their way toward parade fest

By Carol Anahid Azizian
staff writer

Just about everyone loves to watch the Thanksgiving Day parade.

But some 160 persons will do more than watch it. They'll be working behind the scenes to make sure the 56th annual Thanksgiving Day parade is a success.

This year, several Southfield and Lathrup Village residents are devoting their spare time to serve as volunteers.

Anita Lewis, Southfield, is supervisor of the dressers. She's in charge of getting together 40 volunteers to help put costumes on the some of the 2,000 marchers.

"This is the first year I've been involved in the parade," Lewis said. "It will require a lot of hard work but I'm very excited about it."

Along with other members of Rise Inc., a business sales service organization, Lewis has been active in community service projects for several years. The group recently volunteered to help out with the Montreux/Detroit Jazz Festival.

"It's something we enjoy doing," Lewis said of the organization's volunteer efforts.

LATHRUP VILLAGE resident Mary Ann Perrin

She'll lead the way

When the Thanksgiving Day parade rolls down Woodward Avenue Thursday, Ruth Hinkson of Troy will be working in the wings — but not Mother Goose's.

She'll be nervously coordinating the float and band marshals, who in turn make sure the parade units move smoothly along, stopping when necessary and starting up only at the right times.

To viewers lining the route or those watching from home, it always appears the parade takes a direct steady course toward the foot of Woodward. Not so, said Hinkson, floats and bands stop periodically, in front of the reviewing stand and for the television cameras.

"Like a complex machine, the parade has to have units working in harmony. If characters hop off a float to greet kids on the sidewalks, the float marshal has to make sure the float doesn't start again until all the right people are on board — and no extras.

This year, her volunteers will be dressed in red, white and blue foul weather gear, so they'll be identifiable to one another.

FINDING 45 PEOPLE willing to get up at the crack of dawn and walk along the 2 1/2-mile route in often-times freezing temperatures was easy, said Hinkson. "Most people are very interested in helping with the parade," she said. Whether teacher,

will be downtown at 5 a.m. Thanksgiving day. She's one of the 40 "dressers."

"Everybody's enthusiastic about the parade," Perrin said. "It promotes the city and gets people to go downtown."

Perrin said she enjoys volunteering because "I like to meet people."

An employee of the Automobile Club of Michigan, Perrin originally had wanted to work on AAA's float "The Good Ship Lollipop," but said she wasn't "tall enough."

"When they (parade organizers) said they needed other help, I volunteered to be a dresser."

Southfield residents Robert and Rick Sander are so-called TV spotters. They're in charge of carrying signs that warn parade watchers when television cameras are coming through.

Robert said he enjoys volunteering for the parade because "I like kids and it's a community service."

Besides dressers and TV spotters, there are float and band marshals, banner carriers, grandstand hosts (who help seat people) and marchers.

Jan Tegal, who's in charge of the volunteer effort for Detroit Renaissance, said she's had no problems enlisting people to help with the parade.

Detroit Renaissance is putting on the parade with the help of 23 corporate sponsors.

accountant or social worker, the volunteers harbor a "childhood fantasy about being in the parade," she said, adding "And it's an opportunity to do something different."

But come Nov. 25, there are bound to be hitches, people who don't show for one reason or another or who get lost on the way to the parade. For that Hinkson has a back-up pool who will report for duty in the wee-hours of the morning not knowing what will be in store for them.

Since J.L. Hudson's turned actual planning for the parade over to Detroit Renaissance Inc., volunteers have become more and more an integral part of the event. Although Hudson's still underwrites a major part of the cost, contributions are sought from other major companies — and more financial donations are still needed.

But without volunteers for tasks ranging from guiding floats to wearing those large paper mache heads, the parade might not be possible. Hinkson and her crew will draw their satisfaction, not from a paycheck, but from the faces of children along the street and from the feeling of accomplishment afterwards.

EVEN THOUGH she's been actively working on the parade for nearly three months, Hinkson will be too busy Thursday to see it in action. So she'll have it recorded for viewing later as she enjoys her turkey dinner.

20% off
custom tailoring at
Hudson's new Northland Custom Shop

Now you'll find two Hudson's Custom Shops at your service: Downtown Hudson's and new Northland. And both are offering 20% savings on all custom tailored suits, sport coats, slacks, lapcoats and luxedus by WALTER-MORION, HART SCHAFFNER & MARX, and other famous makers. So come meet our new master tailor, Al Patchak at Northland and master tailor John Kimpe, Downtown. Both will be happy to show you our entire selection and tailor your purchase to fit you perfectly. Sale ends December 4.

hudson's • your christmas world