

FEAR & LOAFING

'Deck' the mall

Armchair quarterback claim that our Detroit Lions lack the winning attitude — the "eye of the tiger" — it takes to be champs. I say they just lack the proper incentive.

Instead of motivating players with huge earnings, maybe we should try huge savings — like a flashing blue light special on house slippers. After all, as any holiday shopper knows, the most vicious blocking and aggressive tackling don't occur at stadiums but at the clearance sales.

Talk about action! Nothing is more exciting than watching a 90-pound homemaker emerge from beneath a pile of shoppers, triumphantly clutching the last nose warmer in stock. Couch potatoes would turn their backs on televised football if they ever witnessed the bone-crunching mayhem of a final mark-down.

To see a dozen yuppies fighting over a single mountain bike is to see raw energy and stamina that pro athletes reserve only for contract negotiations. To see a grandfather drop kick another shopper into the pet department is to see the last real bare-knuckle sporting event left in America.

Let's face it. Pro wrestling is fake and boxing is rigged. Baseball's a yawn. Hockey and football players wear so much protective padding you can't tell who's inside. It's just routine and ad beer commercials. In a day when professional sports are ruled by lawyers and accountants, big-time bargain hunting is still played without helmets, without sponsors and without rules.

BUT NOT FOR long. Some of the larger chains are starting to realize the entertainment value of consumer violence. To attract sport fans, one Rochester store is broadcasting blow-by-blow descriptions of key play over the intercom: "Attention, shoppers. Great scuffling at register five. A young mom just fumbled her frozen turkey. It's recovered by a stock boy. Oooh, a flag is down! Illegal ramming with a shopping cart."

During the summer months, freerent shoppers engage in just enough rudeness and hair pulling to stay in shape. These off-season skirmishes are like spring training for baseball players. But the real championship — the world series of greed — occurs between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Faced with product shortages, sticker shock and overcrowded



Karl Nilsson

stores, holiday buyers can turn nasty at the drop of a hat... especially, if the hat goes on sale.

Granted, the minor delays caused by punching the customers used to be irritating. But now, with holiday kiosking to pass the time, I'm never in a hurry to leave the store. In fact, yesterday I skipped the "express lane" and lined up behind a guy using traveler's checks from Sri Lanka just to get the best view.

Anyway, the longer wait at the checkout counter gave me time to scan the gossip tabloids for the big news — news like "Slap Happy Zsa-Zsa Begs for Help!"

"IT'S NOT JUST cops anymore," sobbed the star. "Now, I slap everyone, darling. People on the street. People in stores. I even slapped my Rolls Royce."

According to the article, Zsa-Zsa blames her recent behavior on the Three Stooges. Apparently, the National Pork Council kidnapped the Gabor sisters and forced them to watch a Moe Howard film festival in retaliation for Eva's treatment of Arnold the pig on "Green Acres."

As I read on, festive shoppers all around me leaped over counters and began pulling merchandise down onto the floor. Others smashed steamers to the tune of "Silent Night." While rescue workers tunneled through an avalanche of Nintendo games, I turned the page to another important story — "Tooth Cafe Serves Freeze-Dried Poodle to Diners."

"It wasn't my fault," claimed the chef. "It was one of those television taste tests. They wanted to see if my customers could tell the difference between our fresh ground poodle..."

As wave after wave of humanity pushed me along against my will, I stopped resisting and sank beneath the shoppers, pausing only to read the headline that would give hope to millions this season — "Elvis to Sing at Bigfoot Wedding."

STREET SENSE

Tough love really is tough

Dear Barbara,

My daughter is 16. She has quit school and is working at Wendy's. She has her GED. My ex-husband, her stepfather, was emotionally abusive to her when we all lived together. She blames me for this. She refuses to follow house rules as to curfew and chores. She is paying me \$12.50 a week in rent. We don't get along. She is driving me crazy.

Driving Me Crazy

Dear Driving Me Crazy,

I can appreciate your dilemma. An outstanding child analyst from Vienna once said you cannot tell if an adolescent is crazy or not until they have passed the age. When I give Rorschach (ink blot) tests, it is often difficult to tell if the adolescent is schizophrenic or normal.

There seems to be one consolation in your story. Your daughter is only 16 and maybe she will change by the time she is 20. Also, optimistically, she's almost at the age when she can move out and take care of herself, if she doesn't like living with you.

Not so optimistically, sometimes girls get married in order to get out

of the house and then they bring a baby home after a divorce. I do not mean to depress you. Please accept my apologies. I feel guilty bringing such a scenario up. But for the sake of all the readers, I felt I had to give more than the optimistic response.

Many readers will side with you. Tough love is hard or even impossible to give.

Barbara

Dear Barbara,

I have been married two years. I love my husband and feel happy with my marriage. The area that my husband and I are having the most difficulty working out is the responsibility we both feel to our respective families.

I continue to see my parents a lot (we live quite near them). Especially, I spend a lot of time with my mother. We both enjoy playing cards and play together. My parents also like to have my husband and me over for dinner at least once a week. I don't like to disappoint them, but my husband seems to resent some of these visits.

I have a large, extended family as



Barbara Schiff

well and there are many family reunions and gatherings. Sometimes, trips together. My husband would like us to spend a little more time with his family, but with all this family time, we have very little time alone or for our own friends.

This is a really difficult question for me. I feel so torn and confused. I

hate the thought of anyone being angry at me.

Torn Apart by Divided Loyalties

Dear "Torn,"

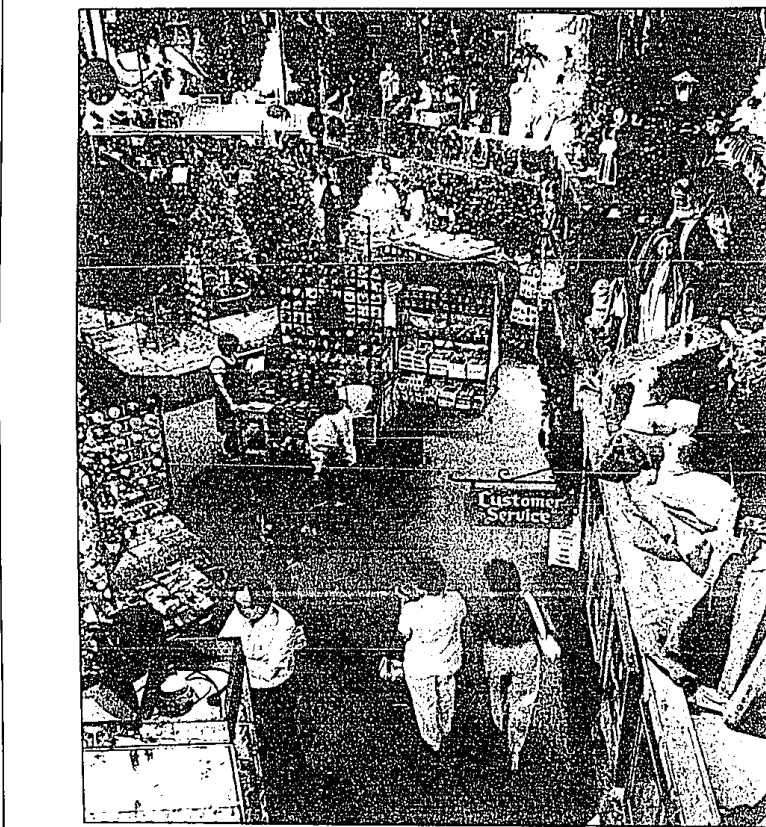
Your signature was excellent and gave me the clue to the right answer. When you get married, the primary relationship is between husband and wife. Their families of origin must take a lower place in their hierarchy of values.

The aim of a woman in growing up is to separate from her mother and become independent in her own right. Your mother may be a charming woman, but an attraction to her will not make you a charming wife.

If you follow this advice, your parents may become angry with you. The meaning of independence is being able to grow and expand oneself, even if you must then tolerate censure from others.

Barbara

If you have a question or comment for Barbara Schiff, a trained therapist and experienced counselor, send it to Street Sense, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.



Bronner's in Frankenmuth is a favorite stop during the holiday season.

Some holiday cheer

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is planting them in rows. Now they plant two-year-old seedlings, let them grow for several years and ship a million Christmas trees, six to eight feet high, around the country every yuletide season.

You can cut your own and drag it home, or you can watch them demonstrate the art of wreath making and tree flocking. Grand Haven has a classic homes tour, complete with flickering candle lights, frosted window panes and Christmas carols.

Holland stages the centerpiece activity, a Christmas pageant production of "Hans Brinker and the Silver Skates" this weekend at Evergreen Commons Auditorium. The play was a logical choice, given the town's Dutch heritage.

The pageant costs \$5 for Thursday, Friday and Saturday night performances, or Saturday matinees the weekends of Dec. 2 and 9.

Meanwhile, back at radio station WHGIN in Grand Haven, station president and general manager Bill Stryk is really pulling the heart strings with his project, Trees for Troops. This is the third year that Christmas trees have been sent to servicemen around the world.

Bill starts campaigning over the air in September, asking listeners to send in the names and military addresses of local service men who won't be home for Christmas.

This list includes soldiers, sailors and Marines in Germany, England,

Italy, Japan, Guam, Hawaii, Alaska and aboard ships at sea.

"We have to clear the project with agriculture departments of various countries before start shipping," Bill said. "This is live plant material, and every country has its own rules. Some won't allow Scotch pines or cedar or Douglas fir. We pick whatever can be sent, treat and spray it, and pack the tree in a box."

Meanwhile, school children from two dozen area schools are making paper Christmas decorations and practicing their Christmas songs. WHGIN produces a cassette of the Christmas music and packs it, along with the hand-made decorations, in the box that holds the Christmas tree. The station also plays the cassette on the air throughout the season.

"We send about 50 trees a year. We get letters pictures back that bring tears to your eyes. Some rough-and-tumble Marine in Guam will take a Polaroid picture of the tree with all his buddies standing beside it. The letter will say 'This guy is Charlie from New York and this is Joe from Alaska.'"

HENRY FORD Estate at Fairlane in Dearborn is also offering tours 1-4:30 p.m. Sundays through Dec. 23. Special activities will be available during the week between Christmas and New Years. Tours are \$5, \$5 for senior citizens and students.

You can also have a breakfast with Santa, while his helpers tell

Christmas tales Dec. 2 for \$6. Or visit Santa's workshop Dec. 5-17 for \$3. There is a holiday feast for \$35 Dec. 15, luncheon concerts for \$15 Dec. 12, 14, 19. Contact Henry Ford Estate-Fair Lane at 593-5590.

Kids of any age shouldn't miss the Saturday performances of the Detroit Youththeatre at the Detroit Institute of Arts. A classic musical called the Secret Garden Dec. 2; a puppet show, Santa's Christmas Party Dec. 9. Tom Chapin's Holiday Wish, Dec. 16, and an adorable elf in "A Holly Folly Christmas" Dec. 23.

The shows are for youngsters 3 years and older (except Dec. 2, when you must be 5.) Tickets are \$4 each, and show times are 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. The Prince Street Players will do a musical version of the "Wizard of Oz" Dec. 26-30, \$5 a ticket, for youngsters 5 and older.

Santa and his helpers are hosting breakfast with Santa at 9:45 a.m. Tuesdays-Saturdays in the Kresge Court. Weekend visitors have snacks with Santa, and he listens to wishes noon to 3 p.m. The DIA also hosts the Wassail Feast Dec. 7-9 or 12-16, and Noel Night Dec. 6. Call 833-2323 for more information.

THE CHRISTMAS CAROL is back for its annual stage run at Meadow Brook Theater through Dec. 31. If you haven't seen it, you should go and take the kids. Meadow Brook Hall also has its annual Christmas walk through Dec. 10.

Other local Christmas activities include the holiday exhibit through Dec. 10 at Detroit Artist Market, and the annual exhibit and sale through Dec. 30 at Pewabic Pottery.

through Dec. 31 you can see "Children Around the World" at the General Motors Building, go ice skating on Hart Plaza, see outdoor holiday exhibits at New Center, enjoy an exhibit of icons and frescoes from Greece at the DIA, or see the Wilkinson Toy Collection exhibited at the Edsel and Eleanor Ford House.

Christmas will be celebrated as usual at Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village.

A Christmas Flower Show Display is held at the Belle Isle Conservatory through Jan. 14.

You can do a Goodfellows Sing-along at the New Center Dec. 4, or join the moonlight caroling there Dec. 4, 6, 8, 11, 13, 15. They also carol at noon in the Fisher building Dec. 5, 7, 12, 14 and hold the 17th annual Noel Night at the University Cultural Center Dec. 6.

(Don't go away, we're not through the first week of December yet!)

There's the Christmas Carnival Dec. 6-17 at Cobo Hall and the Victorian Christmas Tea and open House at the Detroit Historical Museum Dec. 8. Not to mention the Winter Wonderland with Santa and elves Dec. 9-23 at the Detroit Zoo.

Call the Metro Detroit Convention and Visitors Bureau at 567-11170 before I run out of breath.

STREET SEEN

Our intrepid Street Scene reporter is always looking for the unusual and welcomes comments from readers and entrepreneurs. Send those to this column in care of this newspaper, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150, or call 591-2300, Ext. 313.



Pint-sized pinups

They're called Emily Pins — after the artist's young daughter, but they can be of any youngster. All it takes is a photograph sent to former Bloomfield Hills artist Amy Miller Weinstein. She does the rest — and the result is a lapel pin costing \$25. The photo is returned with the pin. Send the photo with check to the Emily Pin, 508 Broadway, New York, N.Y., 10012. For more information, call the artist at (212) 925-2158.

Everything mom forgot to mention

Everything a man needs to know about the kitchen, but Mum's forgot to tell him. "Eating in Cookbook" by Rich Lippman and Joe McDonada includes entertainment advice, menu planning, step-by-step recipes and the Heimlich maneuver. Only \$3.95 at the Male Room on the Boardwalk in West Bloomfield.

