

Off the beat



By ETHEL SIMMONS

I always wanted to be called for jury duty, yet when my chance arrived recently, I viewed it as a mixed blessing.

First, I wasn't sure if a newspaperwoman could be a juror, but the Oakland County Circuit Court judge whose courtroom I appeared in said that lots of lawyers would love to have me serve on their jury.

Much of a juror's time is spent sitting and waiting — which isn't very exciting and is actually boring. It's not leisure you can really enjoy because everyone in the group must stay together waiting to be called before the judge.

My group was about 50 individuals, both men and women in a wide range of ages and backgrounds. I played Scrabble with a pleasant young gal, a divorcee with a small child, who was earning her living as a day maid.

THE FIRST morning I worked a crossword puzzle with another juror, with a time-hangs-heavy feeling over my head. In the afternoon, I read a book sporadically, but most jurors just chatted. One avid card-playing group developed.

Each juror wears a numbered badge. In the courtroom, an attendant pulls numbers and if you are chosen, you are questioned by lawyers for both sides of the case.

The first time my group was called, seven prospective jurors were quizzed and all but one accepted. A male juror was challenged "without cause" by the defense lawyer and removed.

My number was pulled next, I passed the questions with flying colors and the jury was formed.

THE QUESTIONS were general and primarily to eliminate anyone with prior knowledge of the civil case or background in auto damage claims or lawsuits. Also, the defense lawyer asked whether there was any reason you could not render his client an impartial verdict.

The jury was taken to a jury room off the judge's chambers, where we gathered in between court sessions. The trial lasted one afternoon, the following day, and wound up the next morning.

At the trial, a young woman sought damages for personal injuries resulting when her car was involved in a collision on Telegraph. This trial presented two lawyers of opposing styles, one flamboyant, the other cool. Both lawyers and the judge treated the jury with extreme politeness — part of the courtroom formality.

ASA JUROR, you are a star, hearing the evidence and weighing it. The judge, the parties to the case, their lawyers all want you to rivet your attention to the case. You feel a responsibility not to let your concentration lag for an instant.

I got to serve as a juror, but I never got to render a verdict. Before the jurors go into the jury room to decide the case, one number is pulled and that extra person removed from the jury. It was my number.

I was disappointed not to be in on this part of the procedure. I felt left out, indeed, to leave the scene.

The jury I served on, however, seemed to be of sensible citizens who would render a fair verdict. Jurors were asked not to discuss the case among themselves prior to its conclusion, so I was not sure where each individual stood.

BUT EACH juror appeared to have common sense in large measure — which is what jury decisions are all about.

Afterwards, when I asked the jurors about their verdict, I felt they didn't want to hear my approval or disapproval. They had decided the case and did not want any questioning of whether they had made the right choice.

When I first visited the Oakland County Courthouse, reporting for jury duty, in response to a summons, it made me feel like I was in school again — somewhere you had to be whether you wanted to or not.

Students test mountain skills

By ROSE WEBER

If you ever have a yen to climb a mountain, the maxi SCAMPers will be delighted to show you the ropes.

A trip around Michigan tested the skills that SCAMPers have been learning all summer in the Bloomfield Hills Schools' special education students' class in mountaineering and survival training.

The social day camp called SCAMP includes exceptional children from 14 school districts in Oakland County.

The camp meets daily from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at West Hills Junior High School in Bloomfield Township.

Dennis Hurley, area expert, instructed older SCAMPers in the art of mountain climbing using actual equipment.

A trip to Grand Ledge earlier in the summer gave them a chance to practice rappelling from 30 to 40 foot rocky cliffs.

"**THEY HOPE** to put the rest of their knowledge to work in the Forcypine Mountains in the Upper Peninsula," said Ron Booth, principal of the summer school program.

A van and two station wagons was donated by Chrysler Corp. for transporting the youngsters and their equipment.

Four staff teachers, Robert Rasmussen, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Murphy and Shelly Shannon as well as three counselors, Dan Chovan and Andy Kelch of Lahser High School and Maryanne Molloy of Andover, also took the special training to accompany the climbers.

Now in its sixth summer the SCAMP program is unique because it is the only day camp for special education youngsters in this area.

Booth said the enrollment had doubled in the last year, with 165 students enjoying the many activities this summer.

THE SCAMP day includes 90 minutes of academics with the balance of the day devoted to fishing, swimming, archery and gym as well as special interest topics.

Many outdoor field trips are planned for young and old SCAMPers who range in age from four to 18.

This year graduates of the program were invited back for a one-week camping trip.

The last day of the session Thursday, Aug. 1, SCAMPers will participate in a summer festival. There will be livestock exhibits from the Bloomfield Hills School farm, a butter churning exhibit, horse rides, hay rides, concerts by the elementary and secondary summer school bands.

There will also be displays by the art, photography and sciences classes, open swimming and one act plays from the "Wizard of Oz" by the regular summer school summer stock cast.



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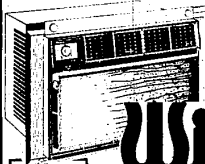
Manufacturers of air conditioners and appliances have announced substantial price increases.

Witbeck Household Appliances feels that it is duty bound to inform its customers and the people of Oakland county and surrounding communities of the coming price increase on air conditioners and appliances.

Any ^{Autumn} room air conditioner or major appliance purchased before August 1st can be bought at our existing everyday low, low prices.

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LAST WEEK SALE

Our big storewide sale ends this Saturday. But there's still a good representation of big price reductions on an exceptional group of famous brand clothing, sportswear and furnishings: H. Freeman, GGG, Bill Blass, Geoffrey Beene, Pierre Cardin, Delton, Sussex, Givenchy, Christian Dior — and many others. Don't be sorry next week that you didn't come in this one.

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