



Rabbit Tracks

By John Haire

(And anyone else he can get to help)

To me the most bizarre aspect of the case involving the 11-year-old who swiped his grandfather's truck, was his reaction after he was stopped.

All he did was demand to see a lawyer and refused to even tell police his name.

Does that spell too much television to you as it did to me? It also tends to prove that the boob tube may have more effect on young minds than many of us believed.

All of us appreciate praise from our peers. Last week's column was one that drew approval from Jim Sherman, publisher of the Oxford Leader and other assorted papers.

It probably struck a responsive chord because it was about the publishing business. If you thought it was zilch, in all candor, I tend to agree.

The problem with column writing is that you need one every week and some weeks are better than others. That goes for trivial columns like this, too. If it didn't, items like this never would appear here.

Just when I was all puffed up because a washer was sold after it was advertised one week in the Chronicle, the owner informed me that the sale was made to an aunt. Maybe she read it in the Chronicle anyway?

Either the Calka girls are extremely photogenic or have a knack for being at the right place at the right time. About a year ago or so Carla Calka was a guest on one of the network television contest shows.

In the recent Hula bowl in Hawaii the cameras scanned the crowd and zoomed in on Mona Calka. She was spotted by Dave Asher.

For basketball statistic buffs. Before the season started, the prediction was that the Thumb B League would be weaker than normal. That prediction is supported only if you believe that the league is normally stronger than others. For in games to date, league teams are exactly even in games won and lost outside of the loop.

The averages were not helped Tuesday night when Caro, Marlette, Bad Axe and Lakers lost non-league games.

Just because much of this column has been about newspapering, let me say that my nomination for the best local writer appearing in the Detroit dailies is George Cantor. He writes a column for the Detroit News.

DeLong appointed new Novesta planner

The Novesta Township Board Monday night appointed Lucille DeLong as the new township planning director. She had been nominated by the township planning board.

She replaces Jean Clarke, whose resignation was accepted by the township board Monday.

Mrs. DeLong's duties will include issuing permits, attending all planning and zoning meetings and acting as liaison officer between the planning and township boards.

Some minor modifications

to the zoning codes were approved by the board. Tabled until the Feb. 4 meeting was a decision on the planning board recommendation that certain property along Kelly Road in Section 4 be rezoned from industrial to residential.

Appointment of a new sexton was also delayed until the next meeting as David Moody, who had resigned, has agreed to continue until some later date. To date, two applications have been received for the job.



PLUSES AND MINUSES -- Winter has its advantages and disadvantages. A winter scene like this is one of the advantages, though admittedly not enough to outweigh the disadvantages.

Thieves foiled in radio theft try

Thieves apparently trying to steal a radio from a new car parked in the Rabideau Motors lot caused an estimated \$250 damage, but didn't get the radio.

Keith Pobanz reported the damage to Cass City police last Wednesday morning. The dashboard around the radio of the 1979 Chrysler was damaged, plus wires under the dash were pulled away and broken.

Loss was estimated at \$150 when someone stole a citizens band radio antenna from the trunk lid of the car of Kathryn Atkinson of Fairgrove and damaged the lid itself in attempting to remove the mount.

The theft occurred Nov. 15 or 16 while the car was parked at the Charmont, but wasn't reported to Cass City police until Friday, the owner of the vehicle having done so on the advice of her insurance agent.

The antenna and mount was valued at \$50; the damage estimated at \$100.

Glenn Guilds of 6178 Shabbona Road, reported to Cass City police Monday that part of the grill of his car was broken while it was parked at the Charmont late Friday and early Saturday. No monetary damage estimate was given.

Gerald Gatza of 4527 Oak Street reported to Cass City police early Monday that the outside rear view mirror was pulled from his car and that a tire was flat, possibly from a puncture. Damage was estimated at \$40.

The incident took place while the car was parked in front of the Colonial Inn from 11 p.m. Sunday to 2:30 a.m. Monday.

Curt Strickland of the Thumb National Bank Cass City branch reported to village police Jan. 2 that a vehicle or vehicles had been driven over the bank's lawn.

A spruce tree, worth an estimated \$80, was broken off and there was possible

damage to the underground sprinkler system as one of the sprinkler heads was run over. The damage was done Dec. 31 or Jan. 1.

Carol Poplinski of 3101 N. Dodge Road told village officers Sunday that five gallons of gasoline was siphoned from her car's tank while it was parked at the Pizza Villa from 4-10 p.m. Saturday.

Rienstra promoted

Dean D. Rienstra has been promoted to the rank of major in the Idaho Air National Guard.

He serves as assistant flight commander and weapons system officer in an RF-4 reconnaissance jet. Rienstra is co-owner of a restaurant in Boise. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Rienstra of 4543 Oak Street, Cass City.

The Haire Net



Robots will be available for home use this year. That's the word from Quasar Corporation that will offer one for about \$4,000 that will answer the door, sweep the floor, serve drinks and do a couple of other programmed household chores.

That sounds great. If one is invented that will empty the trash, mow the lawn and rake the leaves, I might be first in line to get one.

There are folks, I know, that love manicuring a lawn, growing a garden or trimming a hedge.

To each his own. That's just work. Playing is a golf game, a card game, a fishing stream, a good book or a good show, a good movie. Or just cruising around the country to see the sights.

So you can see just how much a robot would fit in nicely in my plans for how idle time should be used to best advantage. The only trouble is that I don't believe that a robot is ready for the Haire household.

This business of answering the door, for instance, I fail to know how a robot will know that the front door sticks a little in the winter and that it must be jigged just right to open without taking the door jamb.

Or that this same door becomes a shade loose in the summer and that to close it tightly a jiggle directly opposite to the jiggle of winter is required.

When serving drinks how

is that robot to know when it's diet time and anything but diet pop is verboten . . . except on special occasions that pop up when the will power is down.

Maybe these objections can be overcome by the electronic geniuses at Quasar. Anything's possible.

But there's one area in which I know it will fail.

If my wife can direct this mechanical marvel from the other room, how can I keep control?

Now when I want to watch the boob tube and she wants to vacuum the house I have a variety of strategies to keep the machine off and the tube on.

The first and usually successful play is to hide the cord. If that doesn't work I can push the circuit breaker that controls that phase of the current in the house.

If all else fails I can turn up the volume on the tube to compete with the sweeper and if the rug's not too dirty, outlast her.

But how can you outlast a pile of nuts and bolts and electronic circuits?

They'll just go on and on until the rug is spotless and never mind the important issues on the tube. The score could be tied with only 30 seconds to go and it would undoubtedly find a dirty spot directly in front of the screen.

When that happens you would be able to pick up a used (and battered) robot for a ridiculously low price. You could probably get it for nothing.



"If It Fitz. . ." The bus-riding game

By Jim Fitzgerald

Twice every weekday I play a game that even when I win, I sometimes lose. On a recent afternoon, on a Detroit city bus, I lost big.

Because it's only a 20-minute walk, and because walking is healthy, I am willing to walk to work and back on even the coldest days. But if there is a bus available, I feel it is my patriotic duty to take it. Our leaders in Washington say it is good citizenship to conserve energy by riding buses.

That's the game. When I leave home in the morning, I stand at the bus stop across the street and look up at my wife in the window of our apartment on the 26th floor. From that high perch, she can see miles down the street. If she signals there is no bus in sight, I walk to work. If she signals there is a bus coming, I wait for it, and I win the game. What I win is the satisfaction of saving energy for my country by riding the bus.

Sometimes my wife forgets to appear at the window with her semaphore flags, in which case I stand at the bus stop and shake my fist at our blank window in the sky, looking very much like an Iranian outside the U.S. Embassy.

Sometimes a neighbor kidnaps me on the elevator and forces me to ride to work in his car, which is parked in the apartment basement. When I never appear below at the bus stop, my wife thinks I fell down the elevator shaft and she is angry that she got out of bed for nothing.

Some mornings it is foggy and we can't see each other. Separated by 26 floors, we both can't help wondering what was the sense in getting married in the first place.

Fortunately, the game isn't so complicated at the other end of the line. After work, I simply look for my bus at the bus station. If it's

not there, I walk. I'd wait for it, except I'm over 50 years old and probably don't have that much time left.

If my bus is at the station, I am able to conserve energy for my leaders in Washington, and I win the game. But, as previously stated, sometimes there is defeat in victory. Sometimes, for instance, there is a woman on the bus who is cracking her gum and she is sitting next to me.

And sometimes I get the bus driver who parks in front of a grocery store and makes his passengers wait while he goes inside to buy cigarettes. He thoughtfully parks in the middle of the street, even if there's room at the curb, so the nice motorists trapped behind him will have something to honk at.

When this driver gets back behind the wheel, he lights a cigarette and blows smoke at the sign which forbids passengers to smoke.

My worst bus ride occurred when a fellow passenger, a man who'd been boozing, recognized me from my picture in the newspaper. This happens very rarely and I'm always surprised, and embarrassed. Usually, I retain my built-in anonymity wherever I am, even at family parties. There is a woman whom I see at least three times every year and each time she has to hear my name before she remembers I'm her brother.

But this drunk man somehow spotted me and loudly and repeatedly insisted that I was a famous columnist and I should write about him because he was the "brokest man in town." The bus was jammed and people stared.

I retreated to the back of the bus and stepped down into the well in front of the rear exit. The brokest man in town followed right along, telling everyone I was going to write something that would improve his financial

condition. The bus driver hollered for "the man in the brown coat" to get out of the exit well. He meant me . . .

My drunk friend yelled back: "Hey, this here is a famous man. You shouldn't holler at him like that." The bus driver hollered that he'd holler at whoever broke bus rules by standing in his well. From where I stood, I couldn't see if he was smoking.

People who were sitting down stood up to get a better look at me. I wanted to crawl into the pockets of my brown coat. Instead, I got off and walked, thus throwing the game. Let our leaders in Washington save their own dumb energy.

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