



"If It Fitz. . ." No mother-in-law jokes

By Jim Fitzgerald

Through the many years of his married life, the husband has done countless things to indicate he is not too smart. But he has never been stupid enough to tell a mother-in-law joke.

He thought about this in church on Easter. It was a homecoming of sorts. After two years' absence, his wife returned to her hometown to sing again in the choir where she had been a member for 36 years. Her mother was there to hear her.

The husband always encouraged his wife to sing in the choir. It gave him a great excuse for not going to church. "I don't like to sit alone," he explained. He could hardly join her in the choir, as his musical skills are limited to drumming his fingers on a piano bar.

So the only time he went to church during the 25 years he lived in her hometown

was when their children performed in a Christmas play. He did this graciously, realizing a good father should be present to see his favorite bathrobe worn by a nine-year-old Wise Man. The husband never protested these command appearances, not even when the wife embarrassed him by saying he was the first parent in the history of the church to extinguish a cigar in the Sunday school sandbox.

Things changed when they moved into the big city, leaving the children behind to hark their own herald angels. The wife announced her choir career was over, and she didn't want to sit alone in church every Sunday. Again, the gracious husband didn't protest. He quickly became a steady churchgoer, and he hardly whimpers about it anymore at all. This is because he discovered he likes church music. He realizes music isn't the best reason for going to church, but he figures shepherds aren't that particular about a flock's motives, otherwise he'd never have found that sandbox.

Given these musical circumstances, it wasn't surprising that the husband enjoyed being present for the wife's return to her old choir. He didn't even mind sitting alone, which was necessary because there wasn't room for him to sit with his mother-in-law, two daughters, two sons-in-law, and three grandchildren.

Obviously, a few things have happened to the wife since she first sang in the choir, at age 14, and the length of the pews hasn't kept pace with the growth of her family. The only notable absentee on Easter was the former Wise Man who skipped town with his father's bathrobe.

The choir sang the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's "Messiah." The husband loves those loud hallelujahs and he was properly tingled to watch his wife's great pleasure at letting 'er rip with old friends one more time. But he got even a bigger charge from watching the beam on the face of his mother-in-law, the only member of the congregation who remembered her daughter's choir debut, 38 years earlier.

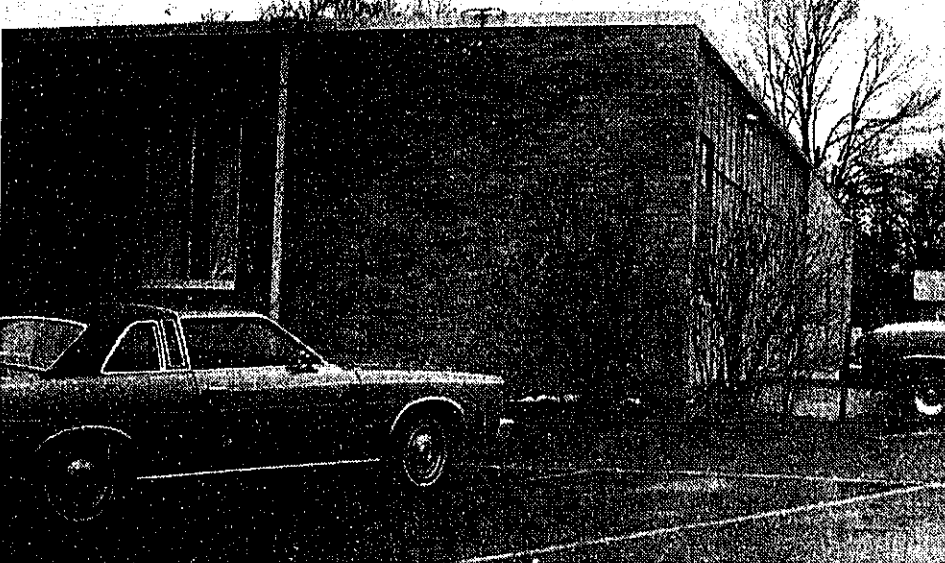
The mother-in-law remembers traveling the roads near that church in a horse-drawn buggy. She is 83 now and gets around unsteadily, with the aid of a cane. Many days she doesn't feel like getting out of bed at all. Her doctor and her children know she shouldn't be living alone, but she doesn't want to leave her home and her possessions, and no one can blame her.

Her income is scant but she gets angry when her kids try to help her. She doesn't want to be a bother. She wants to clear the table and wash the dishes and always give more than she's got.

When pressed, she admits it's an unlikely marvel that every one of her several grandchildren and great-grandchildren is a perfect person, but that's what happened. She is so optimistically enchanted by her progeny, for lord's sake, she still thinks sainthood is a probability for the missing Wise Man.

The husband thinks his mother-in-law must be the ideal that God had in mind when He decreed there should be mothers, grandmothers, and great-grandmothers to love the younger people.

This is what the husband was thinking in church on Easter as he watched his wife let 'er rip. Hallelujah! He'll never tell a mother-in-law joke.



THE PROPOSED ADDITION will be constructed onto the rear of the courthouse annex, at right. The building was originally the Tuscola Intermediate School District office, from 1969-76.

County still needs extra office space

Despite the Tuscola County Board of Commissioners' decision last week to do away with living quarters in the county jail for the sheriff as of 1981, that won't eliminate the need for more office space in the proposed addition to the courthouse annex.

With Sheriff Hugh Marr retiring at the end of this year, the board voted April 8 that as of Jan. 1, the new sheriff and those who follow him in office won't live in the jail.

About 1,900 square feet in the jail, built in the mid-1960s, is devoted to living quarters for the county's chief law enforcement officer.

The tradition of the sheriff living there goes back to the days, probably before the turn of the century, when his wife was responsible for cooking meals for the inmates.

According to Commissioner Ben Colton of Caro, chairman of the board's public affairs committee, which includes building and grounds, no decision has been made yet on what use will be made of the newly available space, other than for offices.

The board also hasn't decided whether the new sheriff will get a boost in pay

in lieu of the loss of living quarters.

Despite the gain of the space, the board is proceeding with plans to eventually build a proposed three-story addition onto the rear of the courthouse annex. One story would be the basement.

The building hasn't been designed yet by architects, but being talked about is 3,600 square feet of space on each floor and a cost of \$600,000.

In order to finance it, the board last week authorized the beginning of legal procedures to establish a county building authority.

Once in operation, the authority would issue bonds to finance the construction of the building.

The authority would rent the building to the county, with the revenue used to pay off the bonds.

According to Colton, the board feels the county still needs the annex addition, even with the added space in the jail.

The prime tenant in the addition will be the county Cooperative Extension Service, now occupying cramped quarters in the jail basement.

In addition to that, Colton also mentioned the space needs created by the addi-

tion of a third circuit judge at the beginning of 1979.

In 1978, the board hired a Saginaw architectural firm to conduct a study of the county's future office space needs, projected to the year 1990.

There presently is 20,660 square feet of space in the courthouse, including hallways, entranceways and circulation areas, and 5,320 square feet in the annex.

The architects projected a need for 13,500 more square feet of space, only a little more than would be gained from the annex addition and added space in the jail (total of 12,700 square feet).

Colton expressed hope that it might be possible to start construction of the annex addition before the end of the year.

That hope would appear to be a slim one. Even if a petition drive isn't launched to force a public referendum on whether the building authority should be organized, it still will be late May at the earliest before it is in operation.

An architect must then be hired to design the addition, and the design stage would obviously have to take a few months. After that comes the bidding process, which adds another month or two.

The Haire Net



Cass City School District has received an energy grant to replace windows at three school buildings.

A new CETA program may make more Federal funds available for school workers. A huge grant was authorized for Cass City's sewage disposal plant. One of the principal jobs that Roland Pakonen, assistant principal at Cass City High School, has is to investigate and apply for the various Federally funded projects available.

Chances are that if local taxpayers were given an option nearly all or all of these giveaway projects would be abandoned. It's sure they would if the programs were hinged with a local tax assessment to pay for them.

You don't hear many complaints about these programs. The complaints are saved for the cost of programs that we pay taxes for annually or semi-annually. The taxes that pay operating costs and capital expense costs. The places where we get the most for our dollar.

We get the most for our money because every penny spent must be justified every time it's spent. It's simple. We pay the bill, we have the control.

There's a move afoot by Robert Tisch to cut property taxes some outlandish amount and limit any future increases.

A program like that receives almost instant support. Everybody wants to pay less taxes.

It doesn't make any real sense to believe that taxes can be cut like Tisch suggests. Not and continue to operate.

Tisch's tax cut proposals help in one positive way. It goads politicians into coming up with a reasonable alternative to limit spending and taxation. Several are under discussion now as the politicians squirm to avoid the Tisch disaster.

The reason that Tisch is receiving attention again is the disappointment with the Headlee tax limitation plan. It tied tax increases to inflation and with inflation running upwards to 20 percent, became largely inoperative.

Most of us realize that to cut our tax bill we must curb our spending.

One way that would really help is to do away with Federal funding of school programs. If we could assume control of the purse strings from Washington and Lansing it's sure that there would be a revolution in the cost of operating our schools.

Without sacrificing a single iota of the quality, the amount it would cost to educate a pupil would plunge unbelievably.

But no one has found a way to return to us control of our schools, so we jab away at the only option available, our local taxes.

And all the time more and more of the funding gets away from us and the real villains, taxes and inflation, fueled by spending, continue to erode our standard of living.



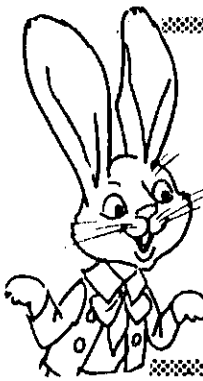
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Rabbit Tracks

By John Haire

(And anyone else he can get to help)

The Chronicle is observing a birthday this week. It's our 74th.

Every year I feel that I should do something to commemorate the long life of the Chronicle, but outside of a trivia item like this I never do.

Maybe next year when we'll be observing our 75th year will be the time.

Fred Pinney clued us in on Jim Brooker, an olympic pole vaulter from Cass City. We were holding the story in reserve until the summer games in Moscow when we planned to review his achievements.

That's gone down the drain now, of course, but one of these days we'll tell you all about one of Cass City's most famous athletes anyway.

Cass City's athletic department underestimated the largess of the Cass City Lions.

The school originally planned to hire a special bus to take players to the quarterfinals of the State basketball tournament, the money coming from the athletic department and donations from others.

The Lions heard about it and volunteered to help. It was thought that the club would pay part of the expense. The item was on Monday's agenda to reimburse the club for part of the cost, but quickly ignored when Supt. Donald Crouse said that the club had paid the entire shot and no money was needed from the district.

Speaking of the Lions, they'll be on the street this week end selling white canes. None of the money collected by members will go towards paying expenses for basketball teams.

It's for something far more important . . . the Lions sight conservation program.

That's the program for which Lions International is justly renowned, and one where most of the money goes for what donors intended. To help the blind. Administration expenses don't skim the cream off the top of this program.

CMU jazz band here Tuesday

The Central Michigan University jazz ensemble "Studio 12" will be performing Tuesday, April 22, in the Cass City High School gym.

The performance, sponsored by the Band Boosters, begins at 7 p.m. and should last about an hour.

Admission is free, however, donations will be solicited to help the Band Boosters defray the cost of bringing the ensemble here.

The jazz band has about 20 musicians and will be performing a variety of big band, jazz and other selections.

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