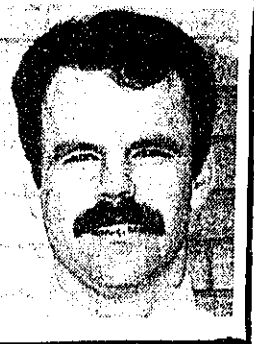


PEDALING AROUND

Those who watch

By Mike Eliasohn



According to my boss, and to his consternation, the top-rated television show of two weeks ago was "The Guyana Tragedy," the two-part episode on the life of Rev. Jim Jones, who led more than 900 of his followers to their deaths.

I guess I wasn't disgusted, because I was one of the millions who watched.

What got me interested in watching is that the reviews beforehand generally said the show was good and gave special praise to the actor who portrayed Jim Jones, Powers Boothe.

Beyond that, I suppose I have a curiosity as to how so many people could so blindly follow a leader who, at least to those of us who like to think of ourselves as normal, was so obviously not normal.

One thing that bothered me is that in being "adapted for television," or whatever the proper phrase is, I didn't know which events actually took place and which were figments of the script writers' imaginations.

I do know, from what I read in the articles published immediately after the Jonestown massacre, that the television production was toned down somewhat, that some things Jim Jones said actually and did were never shown on the screen.

Other than that slight criticism, I thought the program was well done, considering the subject matter. I have to add, everything looks less gory in black and white.

Even if well done, there remains the moral question of whether such a sordid subject should have been broadcast at all.

That is a question the news media often faces, and the answer is there is no answer.

Reporters look on tragic

human events from both sides. They can see the tragedy, but inside their heads, little wheels are turning, which cry out, "Wow, what a great story."

Reporters aren't usually involved, except as observers, which makes it easier to write such stories.

It's even easier when the reporter is working for a big newspaper or television network as there is more distance -- not necessarily in terms of miles, feet and inches -- between the reporter and his subject.

I am writing this on a Friday. I'm sure at this point, the parents of the eight men killed in the disastrous rescue mission attempt in Iran are getting pestered with phone calls from reporters from all over the country.

What can a reporter ask in such circumstances? "Do you feel your son died in vain? Are you made at President Carter?"

Sometimes what I have to do as a reporter does bother me, for instance, doing a story with photographs about a fatal traffic accident, because I wonder how the family of the victim will react when they see it.

Still, I don't question that fatal accidents and other such tragedies are news.

I also suspect that though many persons won't admit it, the little bit of ghoul in (almost) all of us finds such items interesting.

I recall the fatal traffic accident about two years ago at the M-53 bridge over the north branch of the Cass River. The woman most severely injured died a few weeks later.

When I got to the accident, she was still pinned in the car, screaming with pain, her face covered with blood, as the ambulance and wrecker attendants attempted to remove her from the car.

I got close enough to get a photograph -- which didn't show her face -- and not any closer.

Many bystanders, however, got as close as they could to watch what was happening.

Maybe that is why "The Guyana Tragedy" got such a big rating.

Owen-Gage band gets top rating

The Owendale-Gagetown High School band, directed by Laura Witezak, received a top rating -- equivalent to a "1" -- in class C-D at the state band festival Saturday at Walled Lake High School.

Of the three upper Thumb schools that qualified for the festival, the others were Lakers and Bad Axe, Owen-Gage was the only one to receive the top rating.

Qualifying required earning a "1" rating at a district band festival, which Owen-Gage achieved at the District III festival March 15 at Laker High School.

At the state festival, the band performed a required number, a march and one number of its own choosing.

Gaszczyński dies at 59 in Colorado

Chester Charles Gaszczyński Sr., 59, of Castle Rock, Colo., formerly of Cass City, died Wednesday at his home after a short illness.

He was born May 3, 1920, in Detroit, the son of Felix and Sophie (Szczepanek) Gaszczyński.

He married Veronica Danko June 8, 1948, in Detroit. They came to Detroit in 1951 and to Cass City in 1962.

Gaszczyński served in the U.S. Army during World War II in Alaska.

He had attended St. Michael's Catholic church of Wilmot.

He is survived by his wife, who is the owner of Veronica's Restaurant in Cass City; three sons, Chester Gaszczyński and Michael Gaszczyński, both of Cass City, and Leonard Gaszczyński of Littleton, Colo.; three brothers, Casmier Gaszczyński of East Detroit and Stanley Gaszczyński and Alex Gaszczyński, both of Detroit, and one granddaughter, One son, Timothy, preceded him in death.

Funeral services were conducted Tuesday afternoon at Little's Funeral Home, Cass City, with Father Joseph Morales of St. Pancratius Catholic church of Cass City officiating.

Burial was in Elkland cemetery.

Few men are worth the time it takes to get the better of them.

Clarification

The article in last week's Chronicle about the financial outlook for farmers said farmers not enrolled in last year's federal reserve program can now enter corn and wheat still on hand from last year. The program only applies to corn and ends May 15 or when approximately 295 million bushels have been placed in reserve, whichever comes first.

You're only young once -- after that you'll have to make up some other excuse.

UP AND DOWN -- Why is Blondie, the dog of Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Frederick of Leslie Road, Lamotte township, climbing down this ladder? Simple. After she climbed up it, she had to climb back down. Ladder climbing is not a talent she shares with many dogs.



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Cass City man arrested on drunk driving charge

Ronald L. Roberts, 29, of 4394 Maple Street, was arrested by Cass City police Saturday night on charges of driving under the influence of liquor (2nd offense) and transporting open intoxicants in a motor vehicle after they found his car crosswise in the intersection of Maple and Garfield Streets.

Roberts was taken to the county jail. He was arraigned Monday before District Judge Richard F. Kern, who scheduled a pretrial hearing May 13. He was released on \$2,000 personal recognizance bond.

Sheriff's deputies were called to the trailer home of John Male on Bond Road, Wilmot, April 21, to investigate a break-in in which several hundred dollars worth of items were taken.

Taken from inside the trailer or outside on his property were three car and two truck radiators, \$80 each; two vehicle batteries, total of \$102; alternator, \$80; two radios, total of \$80; color television, \$322; .22 rifle, \$82; 12-gauge shotgun, \$90; air rifle, \$150; battery charger, \$30; bumper jack, \$12; lug wrench, \$4; hydraulic jack, \$28; \$30 in change, 22 silver dollars, and blank checks from the Kingston State Bank and Peoples State Bank.

Dave Bartnik of 6524 Van Dyke Road reported to Cass City police Saturday that the center disks of all four wheel covers of his car had been stolen. They were worth a total of \$20.

Smooth talk usually means a rough time for somebody.

Coming Auctions

Friday, May 2 - Larry Pavalowski will sell farm machinery, feeder cattle and pigs at the place located two miles east and 1 1/2 miles south of Uby on Tyre Road. Ira, David and Martin Osen-toski, auctioneers.

Saturday, May 10 - Mrs. Joseph Lang will sell farm machinery, antiques and other personal property at the place located three miles south of Gagetown on Cedar Run Road. Lorn Hillaker, auctioneer.

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ALSO

First there was Cool Hand Luke then Billy Jack, but there has never been anyone like Seabo.

BUCKSTONE COUNTY PRISON
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The weather

	High	Low	Precip.
Wednesday	61	27	0
Thursday	50	26	trace
Friday	65	26	.13
Saturday	56	32	0
Sunday	69	38	0
Monday	56	42	.44
Tuesday	50	43	.33

(Recorded at Cass City wastewater treatment plant.)

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WEEK NIGHTS 8:00 ONLY
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County files suit to have McNeil house condemned

The Tuscola County Department of Public Works Building Codes Division has filed a condemnation suit against Margaret McNeil in an effort to get her to tear her dilapidated house down.

The covered-basement structure, which has holes in the roof, is located at the corner of Houghton and Brooker Streets in Cass City and hasn't been used for many years. Mrs. McNeil lives in Pontiac.

The action, filed in Circuit Court April 16, orders the defendant to show cause why she should not be ordered to make her basement structure "safe or alternatively, be demolished."

A hearing before Judge Patrick R. Joslyn is scheduled May 19.

The condemnation suit notes that the structure was inspected by a county building official Aug. 29, 1979, who found it to be unsafe. A notice was sent to the owner the next day requesting her to correct the problem.

The replies received from her since then, according to the suit, were "that she does not intend to correct the situation."

The suit asks the judge to issue a preliminary injunction to require Mrs. McNeil to correct the unsafe structure or allow the public works department to demolish it.

According to Chief Assistant Prosecutor Scott Stermer, who filed the suit in behalf of the department, the judge has various options, whether Mrs. McNeil shows up at the hearing or not.

They boil down to he can either give her more time to

comply with the condemnation order (fix the building or tear it down) or he can order it torn down by the DPW.

If the county gets the task of hiring someone to tear it down, Stermer said, it would have to start another legal action in order to get Mrs. McNeil to pay for the demolition job.

The matter of the McNeil house goes back to June, 1977, when the village council ordered her to repair the place or tear it down.

The proceedings dragged on for two years, during which a realtor was brought in at one time to talk to her, but Mrs. McNeil refused to do anything.

Finally, the village's attorney, Clinton House, was about to begin condemnation proceedings, only to learn the state law had been changed and jurisdiction over such matters was in the hands of the county.

At that point, the county DPW and prosecutor's office became involved, which finally led to filing of the condemnation suit.

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