

polemics of the attack on Rickover and further supported by the author's failure to explain the political pressures which subtend and advance each position.

Thus comes the unappealing idea that the utmost questions of American military strategy are inordinately governed by the narrowest issues—those least attentive to the necessity for naval excellence.

Following a long recollection of his "Z-grams"—his celebrated memos aimed at changing what he called the Navy's "Mickey Mouse" regulations as well as its discrimination against Negroes—Zumwalt examines Secretary of State Kissinger, the wounds of the failing Nixon administration, and the military actions which the Navy took part in from 1970 to 1974. What he finds will not surprise.

Like Adm. Rickover, the Secretary of State is highly successful at bureaucratic infighting. He can charm. He throws darting glances, verbal abuse, and physical objects at inept or disagreeing underlings. Unwilling to discuss the intricacies of SALT in detail, Zumwalt settles for an outline of the accusation that Kissinger exchanged strategic superiority for the political capital of an agreement. He also charges Kissinger with having delayed the vital airlift of weapons to Israel in 1973 in order to "create a new reality." Mr. Zumwalt sniffs at this maneuver for its "laughably academic" approach to a military situation. He overlooks the question of its palpable success. Moreover, Zumwalt is inconsistent with his previous attention to the larger questions of foreign

policy by ignoring the injustice of treating a close ally so badly. Last is a description of the already famous palace intrigues which heralded the twilight of the Nixon administration and coincided with the end of Zumwalt's term as CNO.

Those who have no familiarity with the military will find this book helpful. It is a grim little reminder of the dull, sedulous, and stultifying grip of bureaucracy. *On Watch* also manages to place Zumwalt at a fitting remove from the Nixon administration—something well advised for an aspiring Democrat who once served it—and by its preoccupation with Mr. Kissinger, increases the anticipation with which we regard the publication of his memoirs. □

## THE BOOTBLACK STAND



*Dr. George Washington Plunkitt, our prize-winning political analyst, has accepted a staff position with the House Ethics committee, but he has graciously consented to continue advising American statesmen in these times of troubles. Address all correspondence to The Bootblack Stand, c/o The Alternative.*

Dear Dr. Plunkitt:

The report that Milton Friedman has been awarded the 1976 Nobel Prize for economics is the worst news since the death of Joseph Stalin—a death that has always struck me as curious, coming as it did during the height of the McCarthyite horror. Think of it, the Nobel Prize awarded to a man who publicly consorts with the vilest totalitarian threat of this century, the Chilean junta! I am heartsick and can no longer hold down my sunflower seeds.

In issue after issue *The Nation* has attempted to warn our government of Friedman's "advisory" trips to Chile. Why the State Department and the CIA have yet to step in defies decency. The only explanation for the Nobel Prize Committee's abominable choice is that it has finally capitulated to the United States Chamber of Commerce, or is it possible that Chile's CIA (the nefarious DINA) has reached even into Stockholm? It has controlled Capitol Hill for months. What can *The Nation* do now?

Remember Sacco and Vanzetti,  
Blair Clark  
Editor, *The Nation*

Dear Mr. Clark:

Oh woe, the DREADFUL FIFTIES are with us again (these things are cyclical). To me the most nettling matter in the Nobel Prize committee's award is the obvious fact that the prize has become political. As to your recourse, I suggest you all hand *The Nation* over to its creditors and become a band of urban guerrillas. Hijack a subway and order it to Cuba. The hour grows near! *La lotta continua! Sic semper tyrannus!*

—GWP

Dear Dr. Plunkitt:

Last week Garry Wills and I went to what was supposed to be the largest anti-war rally to be held on the East Coast this year, and we heard some surprising news. According to an unusually reliable anti-war activist the Vietnam war is over! How long it has been over is unclear. The government of course claims that the war has been over since the spring of 1973, but official Washington is of course not to be trusted and my contacts with Hanoi are not as good as they once were. At any rate this

news explains why the turnout at our Christian peace rallies has been so low, and why my letters have not been published in the *New York Times*. Tell me, do you think there is any possibility that we may get into another war again soon? If so, I would appreciate specifics.

Urgently,  
Dan Berrigan, S.J.

Dear Fr. Berrigan:

If the war has ended it is news to me. I read Garry Wills faithfully and he has given no indication the emergency is over. The government is always sending out phony leaks like this. Frankly I think it is best you continue your demonstrations at least for a year or so just to be sure. Garry Wills' syndicated columns must continue to convey the sense of moral urgency that is essential to sustain the feeling of contained neurosis so necessary for a properly humane critique of our ghastly system of macho-capitalisto-militarism. Do not flag or fail.

—GWP

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## THE GREAT AMERICAN SALOON SERIES

by  
*Kenneth H. Hedrick*



### The Valley House

I should have seen it coming, but it came so relentlessly and swiftly that before I knew it the transformation was complete. The old and venerable country taverns, where one found good cheap food, lager of varying quality and hue, and hardwood elegance, are succumbing to the modern age. Where once there was mahogany, now there is naugahyde. Conversation is next to impossible due to the blare of Muzak, or worse, the inane monotony of "disco music." Not too long ago anyone who sauntered into a backwater Pennsylvania bar clad in double-knits and asking for a Harvey Wallbanger would have greatly offended the local mores and prejudices. Opprobrium would have been heaped on him by the more vocal patrons and sullen looks would have been cast in his direction. But no more. The Zeitgeist has triumphed, and the old provincialism with all of its faults has been chucked out for a breezy, ersatz cosmopolitanism.

My youth was made bright with times of summer and cruising to such waterholes as the Mainland Inn, the Rising Sun Hotel, or the Ridge Road Hotel, all built prior to the administration of Thomas Jefferson. There I would shake the dust from my boots and leave the sticky outside for the dark cool sanctuary of leather stools and foaming mugs of ice cold draft. The pace was somnolent, the company genial; and the conversation ranged over a multitude of subjects, sacred and profane. What I found most appealing was that my fellow patrons respected one another's privacy; no one was expected to mingle in the modern fashion.

But most important was the beer. Budweiser and Michelob usually flowed on tap along with the most disgusting beer in North America, Schaefer's. At the Mainland Inn, an imposing brownstone hotel of impressive age, there was a dark brew called Prior—a little too sweet to be drunk

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*Kenneth H. Hedrick, the psychohistorian, is presently writing a revealing biography of Edward Bulwer-Lytton.*

in quantity but pleasing if you only had time for a glass or two. The food was superb and the ambience right. Stout hardwood floors supported walls cluttered with old photos of local heroes of the baseball diamond. The tranquil, glassy gaze of two stuffed bucks' heads surveyed the assembled throng. Even the chintzy picture behind the bar (where the mirror should be) blended in well. Today the place has been sold and the inside gutted for God-only-knows-what-purpose. My haunt is no more.

The Ridge Road Hotel was run by a stolid son of the Freistadt Bremen who always had Wurzburger on tap. If the dining room was full, you could eat in the living room, which I did on several occasions in company with a friendly dachshund. The Rising Sun Hotel, a proud establishment dating back to the reign of King George I, gradually turned "respectable," and today the owners run an inn where the pace is frantic and elementary courtesies are unknown. The old customs are one with the snows of yesteryear—what with new and mostly absentee owners, inflation, and the introduction of that loathsome social custom, the "singles scene."

In this great blight on institutionalized tipping, the steady older crowd is driven away first by the deafening canned music and second by the neglect they suffer when in need of a refill, so that the new crowd of *soi-disant* studs and fluttery chippies can flock in like buzzards around a corpse. The uniforms worn by the males are depressingly similar. There are the inevitable Johnny Miller leisure suits straight from the Sears & Roebuck catalog. And the uniform is not complete, of course, without a thingamajig around the neck resting on the hirsute chest. Not very long ago, the only men who wore things around their necks were either veterans or Catholics with their dog tags or religious medals. But like the God and Country they represented, they are no longer in vogue and have been replaced by ankhs, totems, chains, and

other junk to dazzle the half-wits who take such things seriously. The studs saunter up to the girl-objects (who are drinking such filth as Brandy Alexanders and Pink Squirrels) to ask blockbuster questions—"What's *your* sign?—and be rewarded by giggles and shrill cackling.

Lest you think the entire scene is stale, flat, and unprofitable, I must inform you that I have stumbled upon a pleasant inn devoted to the welfare and sanity of the drinking public. It is called the Valley House, and it is a dignified brownstone edifice constructed in the halcyon days of President Fillmore. It is doubtful, though, whether the old Whig ever got a snootful at this Skippack, Pennsylvania spa. At any rate, the Valley House boasts a real hardwood bar and a railing twisted by the weight of a thousand farmers, yeomen, insurance agents, and garage mechanics who have bent the elbow to celebrate triumphs and mourn disaster.

The real joy at the Valley House, however, is the availability of thirty-two (count 'em) thirty-two brands of imported brew in all shapes and sizes, good, bad, and indifferent. When last I was there I sampled four bottles at random and a cursory report is as follows: Heineken dark, a rich malty concoction; Pilsner Urquell, a strong and distinctive beverage, alien to the American palate; Molson light, a good and more familiar brew; and MacEwans Tartan Ale, a black substance which explains the great migration of Scots to all four corners of the earth.

There are no funny little signs bedecking the wall behind the bar nor those cheap trianets one picks up on vacation in Atlantic City for Aunt Matilda, but only glasses, steins, helmets, and other silent reminders of other places and times. What solace it is to spend an afternoon or evening away from pompous TV commentators, inane summer reruns, and the countercultural scolds of the *Rolling Stone*; instead to discuss the events of the day and the mysteries of existence amid the peace of a countryside pub. □