

It seemed like an ordinary night as Babe & I entered the 210 Tavern for our weekly 'night out'. However, from the moment we walked in, it was obvious that things were far from ordinary. First, we went to sit at our usual table and it wasn't there. Second, in its place was a banquet table set up complete with table linen, napkins, several sizes of forks and water glasses! I thought that perhaps we had walked into the wrong eatery, especially since our hostess was a slender blond lady, with slight and appropriately applied make-up, dressed in a rather professional looking outfit that seemed rather out of place in the 210. I may not of recognized her from her appearance, but as soon as our hostess yelled out "Hey McSpade, hows about you and Babe parkin yur carcasses over in the corner, I got me some important people comin in here tonight.", I recognized her as Sweet Amy.

I asked Sweets, who the important people were and she replied, "Can't tell ya, yur just gonna havta wait and see.", she said with her disarming smile. "They are paying me big bucks to give them special service, so you and Babe are just gonna have to sorta serve yourselves after the guests arrive," she went on to say.

Babe and I were intrigued, because not only were these special guests to receive the complete attention of the entire 210, they all had presents sitting on the table at their respective seats. I asked Babe, "I wonder how much you have to tip to get this special treatment & presents?" So I ordered up a couple of beers. I normally tip 15%, but tonight I decided to tip a little more. Our beers came and they were \$1.50 each, making our bill \$3. So instead of the usual \$.45 tip I gave Sweets \$4 and told her to keep the change. When she delivered the beers, we didn't get any presents. "Hmm, this might be a little more expensive than I thought", I told Babe. We drank our beers, then we ordered two more. I gave Sweets \$5 this time and told her to keep the change. Still no presents. Now I was out \$9 for four beers and no presents. I was beginning to think that this date was going to be rather expensive.

Then I found out that maybe I was going to have to tip a little more, if Babe and I were to get presents.

Shortly after Sweets delivered our beers, in walked her special guests. You will be shocked to know who they were, as Babe and I were. We now knew why Sweets was so excited. For in walked none other than Malcom 'Big Bucks' Sweeney the downstate millionaire industrialist and 3 major league Hall of Fame baseball players, known to hunt in the area. Babe & I gasped in disbelief. In their party were several others dressed in expensive hunting garb. Could they be the Fords, Karmanos', Illitches? We didn't know, but could only speculate. Something big must be up in the North Country, though. Next in walked our friend and local construction magnate, Willard Dunedon. We motioned him over to our table, he meekly waved to us in mild recognition, moved in our direction and sat at the table with all the special guests! What was up, local businessman, Hall of Fame baseball players, millionaire industrialist who has a summer home in Goneaway, professional sports owners all in Goneway. Well, I didn't just fall off the pumpkin cart. Despite Sweet Amy's silence, all this could only mean one thing. Major league baseball was coming to the north country of Michigan! Babe & I were giddy with excitement, but were content with sitting back and watching the parlaying going on at the next table.

Then, just as suddenly the mood in the bar changed. In walked 'Greasy' Bob. Now Greasy Bob shouldn't be confused with Bob Griese, the football player. No, this is Greasy Bob McFarland and he is, well, greasy. Bob Griese isn't greasy. Like Pig Pen in the Peanuts Comic, only grease instead of dust just sort of follows Greasy around. He is covered with grease from head to toe, shoulder to shoulder day or night. As Greasy walked in, you could here Sweet Amy shout, "Oh Crap!" She tried to block Greasy from coming in, but she was too late. I could tell from Sweets attitude that Greasy sure wasn't going to get any presents no matter how much he tipped.

Now besides being greasy, Greasy is very obnoxious. When he saw the special guests, he pushed past Sweet Amy with his greasy hand, leaving a greasy palm print on her beautiful beige and green outfit and marched right over to the table with the special guests. He managed to pull up a chair and make himself quite comfortable and at home with the Hall of Famers. He extended a greasy hand and calmly introduced himself to the ball players. Then he did the unthinkable (albeit he had already done the unthinkable, but this was even more unthinkable), he removed his greasy hat and passed it amongst the group and had them sign it. Then just as calmly, Greasy got up and went to the bar. Sweet Amy of course was relieved and went over to the table and apologized to the Fords(?), Karmanos(?), and Illitches(?). Everyone settled down and ordered their dinners. While waiting for dinner, they all opened their presents.

Now Babe and I ordered another beer and I gave Sweets a \$10 bill and told her to keep the change, thinking a \$7 tip would ensure we got a free gift.

However, before the beers could be delivered, in walked Mrs. Greasy Mcfarland. Seems that everyone was focused on the Big Table and that no one had noticed that Greasy had called his wife, using of course the 210 phone. She and Greasy calmly went over and sat back at the Big Table and Mrs. Greasy passed around her greasy John Deere hat to be signed. I guess if you live with someone who is greasy, it kind of rubs off on you. Now even Sweets had had enough. She grabbed the hats and tossed them out the door. Of course, the Greasy (not Griese) family followed to retrieve their valuables and were promptly locked out.

Now that everything was back to normal, Sweets delivered our beers, but still no presents. (If you are keeping tabs, that's \$29 for 6 beers and no presents). Finally, I had to ask. "Sweets", I said, "how come those important people are here and they have presents?". "Oh," she replied, "Those are some of Gibby's friends and they were up here hunting. Old Willard decided to entertain them here and give them something to take home from the north country. You never know when somebody will be building a house up here. Old Willard didn't make his money by being stupid."

I was rather stunned. I asked, "You mean, those aren't the Fords and Illitches?". Now she looked stunned. "What on earth would the Fords be doing in a Tavern!," she said.

I, now even more stunned than before and certainly more stunned than Sweet Amy, said "You mean, you didn't give them their presents?"

"No, I didn't", she replied, "you think I'm made of money, Wade?"

“And Major League Baseball isn't coming to Goneaway?”, I asked.

“Are you nuts? Major league baseball, in Goneaway!”, she answered. “We can't get a dozen people to watch a little league game. Wade, I think you've had way too much to drink. I'm cuttin yur carcass off. And by the way, whats with the big tips? You and Babe win the lottery? Keep tippin like this and I might actually give you some friendly service, Ha, Ha Ha.” Needless to say, I didn't leave a tip as Babe and I left the bar. As we left, Greasy was still mulling around and said, “Threw you out too, eh McSpade.”