

New Job
April 2001

Spring has finally arrived in the North country. We can tell because Elmer has finally let the chickens out of the house and I cut off another finger. You notice I did not say Elmer let the chickens out of the "chicken coop". He let them out of the house so they could go into the coop- a sure sign of spring. No Boom Box Bennie yet, so that means we will probably get another snow storm before we can officially declare the end of winter. Then again, since Bennie's been in love, he's been kind of unreliable as a snow forecaster. Maybe I'll check with Bicycle Bob... Oops I'm getting side-tracked.

Many have written by e-mail wondering why you haven't heard from me. Well, up until the time I cut off my finger, I had been busy at my new job. "New job!" you say. "Hey, Wade I thought you were retired?" Well I am, but you see, I have found the perfect job. And I meant to tell you about it, but then spring came and with it the loss of another finger. So you see, I have not been able to write, but having heard such a loud cry of dismay over not hearing from me, I am writing this with one hand. Yes I really cut off another finger. Well actually it was mostly off with a little bit still on. But for this story we will refer to it as "off". Yes I am typing with one hand and no I have a long way to go before I catch up with fingerless Frank. I used a router this time. The bad news is that a router is not a good way to take off a finger; the good news is that I didn't have to go to the emergency room like last spring. Now as well as "Hey Babe, I see a Robin in the yard" as a signal of spring, Babe is now used to the cry "Hey, Babe I cut off a finger" as a sure sign of spring. As unflustered as usual, Babe managed to get me in to see Doc this time. Old "doc" put the end of my finger back on and without Big Bertha, it wasn't much of an adventure. Painful, but not adventurous. I find out Tuesday if I get to keep my finger. Every time Babe changes the bandage I marvel at what a decorative cut the router makes. My left index finger looks quite like an onion rosette served in Goneaway's more refined eateries.

Now about my new job. Tuesday is Senior Citizens Day at all the area casinos. Consequently, the casinos give us seniors free seed money to induce us to go north from the relative civilization of Goneaway (albeit distant relative), to contribute part of our annuities to the Indian welfare of the "far northern nether" regions of Michigan. You're probably saying "Hey Wade, I didn't know you were 55." Well I'm not and this is what made my job so hard. Every Tuesday morning I arose at 6:00 a.m., to prepare for the hour drive to St. Ignace. First I had to shave, being careful to miss several spots on my cheeks and upper lip. Next, I would put on light blue pants, white shoes, white belt, black socks, and a Hawaiian shirt and pull my pants up past my belly button. Then I would pour Old Spice all over my shirt. (My friends at the 210 Tavern used to make fun of me when I would stop in on my way home from work). But it worked, I passed as a senior citizen. In St. Ignace I would go to the Chippewa Indian Casino to collect my free \$20 in quarters paid to all seniors citizens. Like I said I collected my \$20 in quarters, drank my free coffee then quickly caught the free shuttle to the second Chippewa Casino in Sault St. Marie about an hour up the road. Sault St. Marie was founded by the French and I think it means Saint Mary's Salt. Anyway, in Sault St. Marie (Saint Mary's Salt), I would go to the other Chippewa casino and collect another \$20 in quarters and drink more free coffee. After my coffee I walked down the street to the Ojibwa hotel where I would catch the free shuttle out to the Ojibwa Indian Casino where I would collect another \$20 dollars in quarters and drink more free coffee. After a long bathroom break, I walked the half mile out to the Ottawa Casino to collect another \$20 in quarters. With \$80 in quarters in my pocket, I would tighten my belt to keep my pants up and walk & jingle back to the Ojibwa casino where I caught the shuttle back to Sault St. Marie then back to St. Ignace, and eventually back to Goneaway, arriving home about 7:00 p.m. Now this was a great job, but I knew it wouldn't last. It seems others found out about my career. One day on the shuttle to Saint Mary's Salt, I noticed many more people than usual on the shuttle. In fact, they looked suspiciously familiar. Except for the weird clothes and glasses & bad wigs, they looked an awful lot like, Quick Vic, Big Jake, Digger Dan, Spike, Big Dune, and several other friends from the 210 Tavern. I could never prove this and when confronted they all denied it. But still..... Well anyway, it didn't take long for the casinos to catch on. Pretty soon they lowered the rate of pay on senior's day to \$10 in free TOKENS. Not only did they cut the pay, but you still had to stand in line, not to collect cold, hard cash but to collect tokens. In addition, now you had to stand in line AGAIN to cash out your tokens! I told Babe all that standing in line hardly seemed worth the effort for a free \$40, especially if I had to get up at 6:00 a.m. So I was thinking of quitting my job. Then I cut off my finger. So now instead of quitting, I'm going to file for disability. If they turn me down for disability then I'll quit and file for unemployment. Wow, is this a great country or what?

Here's hoping I don't run out of fingers before I run out of stories.