



DON SOCKEL

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Plot revealed

"I'm through, Don. I'm washed up."

My friend, who is an instructor in the history department, wrenched his hands as he spoke.

He picked up a copy of Thursday's State News and shook it in my face.

"Look at this!" he cried.

I read the underlined portion of a news story that read:

"Robert S. Fogarty, the third instructor (dropped by the ATL dept.), left early Wednesday for Colorado, where he and Edward A. Carlin, University College dean, are representing Michigan State at a convention of the American Studies Association."

"What does this have to do with you?" I asked.

"Alone it doesn't mean a thing," my friend answered. "But added to a chain of other events, it means I'll be fired by the history dept."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Okay, okay. I'll explain it," my friend said fretfully. "First, Fogarty has taught honor classes, right?"

"Right!"

"Second, he gets a \$700 raise in July, huh?"

"Well?"

"Well! Then he gets a contract from a publisher for a book he is writing, he's assigned to teach an American Studies course next term--and then THIS!" he pointed again to the news story.

"So what does that have to do with you?" I searched.

even made me happy, (I didn't know what it meant). He tells me, he says, 'Mr. ___, how'd you like a \$500 raise?' I laughed and said it would come in handy. So he said, 'You've got it!'"

"So that's good, huh?" I said.

"That's what I thought," my friend said, "but there's more. A couple of days later another instructor in the department came to my office and told me he heard I was going to get a couple more honors sections."

"Quite an honor," I said.

"Heh!" my friend sardonized. "So a couple of days later, I get called into the Dean's office again. He wants me to go to New York with him to represent the department at a meeting of the American Historical Society."

"So all this sounds great!" I said. "What's the trouble?"

History's lessons

"Don't you see, Don," my friend pleaded. "The same things are happening to me that happened to Fogarty."

"What?"

"They're phasing me out. My contract runs out next July and they're going to drop me."

"But, what about the honors?"

"Are you dense or something? I'm telling you, that's the same thing that happened to Fogarty. Bestowing honors on faculty members is MSU's way of telling you you're washed up. It's a nice way of saying you don't belong in the community of scholars."

"Listen. If it was just the raise, or just the convention, I'd give a sigh of relief and just figure it's coincidence--maybe watch my step a little in the future. But all these honors together--I can't dismiss that."

"Oh, don't..."

"Don't what? I'm washed up," my friend cried. "I'm telling you that the University doesn't honor you for nothing. They're out to get rid of me."

I finally decided that there was no point arguing with him. We finished our coffee and parted.

Testimonial

To the Editor:

Robert Fogarty, Gary Groat, and Ken Lawless are excellent teachers. They have added immeasurably to MSU's intellectual and cultural life.

We regret very much that they are leaving.

Stephen Badrich

Byron Boyd

Loren Lomasky

Donald Mackenzie

MSU's College Bowl Team

The horrid link

"All right. I thought I've been doing a great job, see? Not a worry in the world. Up until last week I've just been an average, obscure instructor. My students don't hate me, don't love me, and there's always a decent number at my lectures. So what happens last week?"

"What?"

"I got called into the Dean's office Monday. I walk in, he smiles at me and tells me to sit down."

"What happened?"

"Wait, I'm coming to that. Of course I didn't think anything of it at the time. It