

Newsletter303

## Keith's Corner/McGill News

February 28, 2025

### Prices-1950s -2020s

Last week, I wrote about living on \$1 an hour in the 1950s. I got emails from folks that were stunned by the food prices at the Club 50, also gas prices.

Their reaction stimulated some of the old die hard memory cells that still lurk in the dark areas of that grey convoluted stuff between my ears.

It took me back to 1955-56 during my 2<sup>nd</sup> year at the U. Of Utah. I was living and working as night clerk at the Country Club Motor Lodge, on Parley's Way.



The office is right behind my 51 Chevy .

The sign is for Finn's Restuarant next door. A 5 Star that was way out of my pay range. The owner, Finn Gurhot had a huge following.

I worked the office check in desk, from 5 pm to 10 pm, 6 days a week. The 7<sup>th</sup> day I had a fraternity meeting. That was my social life, i.e. NONE. The pay was \$80 a month and a motel room. I only slept in my room on Mondays, my day off. The office had a small kitchen, bath and bedroom. I ate most of my meals (supper) there. My daily schedule was -a phone call from the head housekeeper to find out how many rooms needed cleaning. Then shower, get dressed, check out the till, do the necessary book work before the boss, Frank McDonald arrived at 6 am. Then I jumped into my trustee Chevy and headed to school. A quick stop at the Loukas Café for a stack of pancakes and coffee. The pancakes were large and cost 25 cents, coffee was 5 cents. Mr. Loukas and his daughter ran the place. There was only a small counter, probably 6 seats. The daughter was studying opera singing and would sing an aria or two. Pretty cheap breakfast with some opera singing for free. There was a dry cleaner next door. It was called Martins. They advertised doing shirts the 'Martinizing Way'. It was a light starch. They charged 15 cents for short sleeved sport shirts. I usually wore Arrow or Van Huesen shirts and got them at Keith O'Briens in Sugarhouse, 3 shirts for \$10.

Lunch was at the Kappa Sigma frat house and cost 50 cents. The cook was an older lady we called Mrs. Mac. If you lived at the house, board and room was \$30 a month and you got lunch and dinner and fresh linen each week. The new pledges were responsible for keeping the house clean and doing the dishes. Pretty cheap place to live, but noisy. My dinners were usually sandwiches or something simple. There were no frozen dinners like there is now days.

My one big treat was eating at Harmon's Café in Sugarhouse on Sunday before working at the motel. I splurged and had their Sunday Blue Plate Special, a small sirloin steak, salad, baked potato, and veggie for a measly \$2.25. Coffee was free with the meal. Then a piece of coconut cream pie. The piece was almost a quarter of a pie and was 15 cents. Total was \$2.40 and I left \$3.00. That was a good tip back then. All in all prices have gone crazy in the last few years.

## McGill News

It is still like summer here. Thenights are cold but no snow. Not much going on. I have been doing some work in the back rooms of the Drugstore, cleaning up shelves of stuff. I will get them clean and then paint them and place some of the old items I have found in boxes. People would never get to see them otherwise.



I put the large doll house in the front window for all to see. To the right of the dollhouse in the far corner, I thought I could see a possible dead black cat. It turned out to be the following.



It was a plastic fake head with a Turban wig on top. Next to it was a plastic leg with support hose on it. I have no idea how the wig was worn. They will be on display soon as I get them cleaned up.