

Restaurant owners feeling economic loss of smokers

WASHINGTON (AP) — Restaurant patrons who can't light up while sipping after-dinner coffee will stay home and hold back billions of dollars, restaurant owners said Monday.

"Home cooking is still our major competition," Los Angeles restaurateur Biff Naylor said in an interview before testifying at a Labor Department hearing. "Those people will go home."

Labor Department officials said the restaurant industry was overreacting to proposed regulations that would virtually ban smoking in 6 million places where people work.

"In communities where there have been restrictions, the industry, in fact, does quite well," said Mike Silverstein, director of policy for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

OSHA resumed protracted hearings Monday on its proposed indoor air quality standards. New rules would affect a number of issues related to the quality of the air workers breathe at their job sites.

The most emotion generated by the proposal has been a plan to seriously restrict smoking in schools, factories, office buildings, restaurants, bars and other work places. The proposal would require employers to provide separately ventilated rooms for smokers or ban smoking altogether.

"I've suffered all my life because of a reaction to cigarette smoke," said John O'Hare, a government scientist who crusaded for smoking restrictions at his office and in stores and restaurants in Prince Georges County, Md.

The National Restaurant Association said the proposal would mean reduced sales and fewer jobs for an industry that already exists on slim profit margins.

The industry said it stood to lose as much as \$18.2 billion a year, 6.5 percent of estimated food service sales for this year, based on a survey taken in May. Naylor said table service restaurants would suffer most because of fewer visits and dramatically shorter stays, which in turn would result in fewer drink purchases before dinner, wine with meals, coffee and other after-dinner drinks and dessert.

Stick

By Alvaro

TODAY STICK HAS TO WRESTLE CLIFFORD FOR HIS KINESIOLOGY MIDTERM. THIS IS...

NAME: PAUL
HEIGHT: 5'5"
WEIGHT: 125 LB
NICKNAME: STICK

NAME: CLIFFORD
HEIGHT: 12'11"
WEIGHT: 435 LB
NICKNAME: MR. KILL JOY

ARE YOU READY FOR YOUR MIDTERM?
I DON'T NEED TO BE READY. I'M MOVING TO COSTA RICA!

THE INKWELL

By Brad



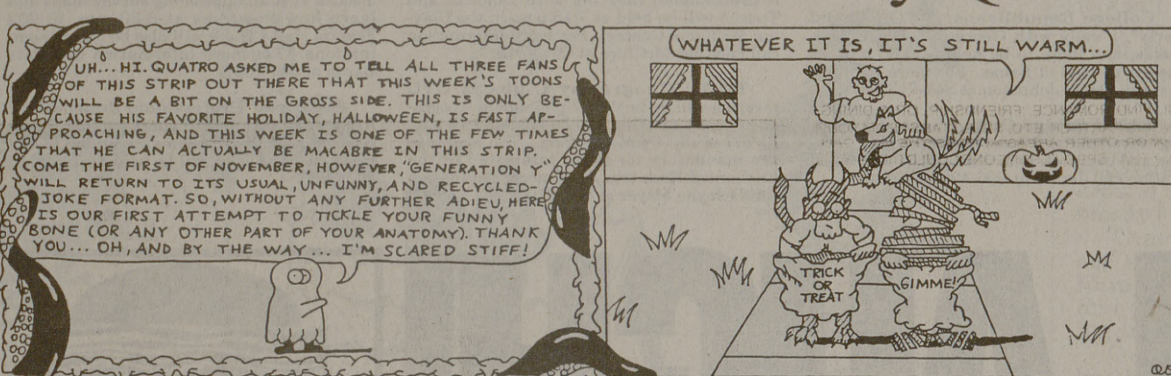
ADVENTURES IN AGGIELAND

By Greg



Generation Y

By Quatro



Elections

Continued from Page 1

those who have little or no interest, the margin for the Republicans grows by about 6 percent."

Polls suggest an extraordinary number of close races. Gary Jacobson of the University of California at San Diego, author of the standard college textbook on congressional elections, is reminded of 1980, when a careful redistribution of 50,000 votes out of 80 million cast would have given the Democrats the Senate.

Instead, it went Republican, 53-47.

To control the new Congress, Republicans would have to take over seven Democratic seats in the Senate and 40 in the House. Normally, the party of a first-term president experiences a loss of 19 House seats and no Senate seats in midterm elections.

"The trend is away from the Democrats," said Charles Cook, publisher of a nonpartisan political newsletter.

Cook said he was "reasonably sure" the Senate will wind up in Republican hands.

Another newsletter publisher, Stuart Rothenberg, expects Republican gains of 30 to 35 in the House, five to seven in the Senate.

"If I had to put money on it, I'd say the Democrats will hold on, but in a way that will make governance very difficult, and it's already hard," added a fourth independent observer, Catherine Rudder, executive director of the American Political Science Association.

Jacobson is predicting a Republican pickup of four Senate seats, but says it could go as high as 11. He sees Republican House gains "in the mid-20s" — lower than a number of other observers.

Much can happen in the next fortnight. Many Democratic candidates are well-financed and experienced enough to avoid the late missteps that can bedevil a campaign under high-noon pressure.

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