

## Attitude Toward Play Has Changed Since Some Of Us Were In College

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MERTZON — It's hard to keep up with this jet age. Among the most difficult changes to comprehend in our present culture is the official attitude toward recreation.

At this very moment, every government official from the President to the agricultural agent of Texas' most remote county seems to be practically begging farmers and ranchers to provide places in which citizens can relax and play.

This rage to turn our country's bread basket into one big playground has reached such proportions that it probably won't be long until every dirt moving contractor in the land will be well booked with orders for artificial lakes, genuine replicas of the Grand Canyon, or full-size reproductions of the largest known meteoric crater.

The amazing thing about this development is that less than two decades ago my contemporaries were being booted out of colleges by the truckload for trying to show the academic world that a little recreating was what we should be directing our energies toward. We were actively proving this was better than fretting over a mass of musty material concerning Hannibal's trek across the Alps, or how to avoid dangling particples.

We were the real pioneers of the present movement. Our group tried earnestly to show this country's educators and political leaders that there was a greater need to teach the youth of America how to operate an outboard motor or the proper way to relax with a cold beer in a bowling alley than to while away our lives doing calculus or attempting to explain why Custer re-enlisted for his last hitch. No one can deny that we tried to point the way to the modern concept of the good life. We swarmed around the swimming holes and practically took over the public parks at times. We kept the tonk music boxes hotter than a sinner's brow at a camp meeting.

We worked day and night to show the nation that the days of the ant were out and the time of the grasshopper was in.

As with most prophets, we were scorned by older generations. Not one county agent came forth to proclaim us the men and women who could foresee that home economics and animal husbandry courses would soon be replaced by a study in picknicking and a seminar on how to make every weekend last three days.

Now we are a forgotten generation. Not one beer garden displays our pictures, no parks are named after any of us. College deans in their speeches, do not spend one word memorializing the boys and girls of the late 1940s who worked so diligently to show that fun must come before work.

As a result the nation bears a huge financial burden; large sums of money must be made available to provide what we tried to show them was necessary and proper years ago when recreation facilities were much cheaper than now. Farms and ranches now are hastily and at great cost being turned into watering spots and cabana sites.

Fortunately, the sting of being rejected didn't leave us an embittered group. I assume that even though time has slowed down our inclination to frolic and play, we can still, in the name of the patriotism, rally enough strength to see the resumption of a crusade we started quite a while ago.