Woman smashes up the Midway bar

Sheriff arrests Nation in reenactment

By Tim Horan
Reflector-Chronicle

DETROIT — Smashed glass bottles covered the floor of the Midway Bar and Grill on Old Highway 40 late Wednesday afternoon, which led to the arrest of 55-year-old Carry Nation by Dickinson County Sheriff Gareth Hoffman.

According to witnesses, Nation arrived at the bar and grill with a hatchet in her right hand and her temperance speech in the other at 6 p.m.

Nation was being portrayed by Ellie Carlson whose performance was similar to that of the real Nation who smashed up a liquor establishment in Enterprise believed to have been in 1901.

Ted Pugh, executive vice president of the Dickinson County Bank, brought Carlson to the Midway in Detroit to promote the Carry Nation Museum Saloon and Temperance Tea Room being planned across the street in the bank on Factory in Enterprise.

“Construction is going to start soon in homage of Carry Nation and the history between her and Enterprise, Kansas,” Pugh said. “I thought I would do this to get a little hype going.”

Nation gave her temperance talk on the dangers of alcohol and how her doctor husband was consumed by drink, eventually dying.

But Nation also condemned patent medicine. While she didn’t mention the Dr. A.B. Seelye Medical Company by name, she referred to it and pointed in the direction of Abilene where Seelye made and sold his medicine.

“Some of these patent medicines are no more than some herbs steeped in alcohol and sometimes even strong drugs, ladies and gentlemen,” she said. “What happens is when you get the taste for that, then you buy more. You have one spoon for you, two spoons for your husband and four spoons for your horse and pretty soon you need to buy another bottle.”

She said mothers give the elixirs to their children.

“The poor babes in arms. They might be crying because of toothache or colic and they take Hood’s Saraparilla, or Window’s Soothing Syrup, or some of the other products made right over there,” she said, pointing west toward Abilene.

Nation said her intent wasn’t to scare anyone.

“I want to save you. I want to lift you up. But not as some of my religious brethren,” she said. “Some of my religious brethren are hypocrites, I tell you.”

Carlson, as Nation, said she

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Carry Nation, portrayed by Ellie Carlson, waves her hatchet and smashes bottles at the Midway Bar and Grill on Wednesday.
Temperance advocate Carry Nation, left photo, is escorted following her attacks on a liquor establishment in Enterprise that is believed to be in 1901. Dickinson County Sheriff Gareth Hoffman, right photo, escorts Nation, portrayed by Ellie Carlson, from the Midway Bar and Grill on Wednesday.

**Arrest**

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usually gets arrested when she smashes up a joint. It is believed the original Nation was arrested 30 times.

"I say, 'How can you put me in jail in the state of Kansas because the sale of alcohol is against the law? What are you jailing me for?' And the sheriff told me, 'malicious damage to property,'" she said. "I think you have that sentence wrong. It's damage to malicious property. That's what it is. And they have to let me go because I'm not breaking any law. It's the saloonkeepers and the druggists who are selling the medicine over the counter and the whiskey under the counter. They are the ones breaking the law, not Mother Nation."

Before smashing bottles at the Midway, Nation and a packed house enjoying burgers, sandwiches and beer, sang "The Whiskey Shops Must Go."

At 6:30 p.m. the sheriff showed up and placed Nation in handcuffs, walking her out of the bar.

Photos provided by Dickinson County Historical Society and Tim Horan.

Carrie Nation gives her temperance lecture in front of Ted Pugh, executive vice president of the Dickinson County Bank, which sponsored the reenactment.

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