

# editorial opinion

## Police deserve thanks for protecting society

One day my dad walked in the door sporting two black eyes, a welt on the forehead, bleeding knuckles and work clothes torn beyond recognition.

He had a rather queer smile on his face and simply said, "It was sort of a tough day at work."

The next day he put on a new set of work clothes and went off to the job like nothing unusual had happened.

His work clothes were blue. He was a cop.

This is Police Week, a time to honor those persons who risk their lives to protect society against itself. Every year at this time, I think of that incident so many years ago and realize why it is that being a cop is such a crummy job. I also realize why police officers are special kinds of persons who can put up with the strains of their duties.

The public pressures required by the job have an uncanny way of unweaving the personal pleasures that most persons enjoy. Divorce, alcoholism and coronaries rate high on the list of things which make it tough to be a cop.

THE PUBLIC sees police officers as persons who are more honest and dedicated than the average Joe. When a cop goes astray, the public titers in revenge over that last traffic ticket, never realizing that the overwhelming majority of police officers are basically honest persons trying to make society just a little bit better.

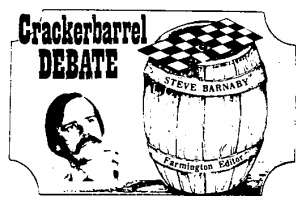
## A loser without class

Abe Lincoln, after suffering one of the many political defeats he endured before winning the presidency, replied that he felt like the boy who stubbed his toe in the dark: He was too big to cry, but it hurt too much to laugh.

The Oakland County Road Commission last week might have heeded that advice, as the late Adlai Stevenson did in 1952. For the road commission suffered one of the most humiliating political drubbings of its existence last week, and it responded with bitter tears.

The board of the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority was considering four possible combinations of rapid transit equipment. Thirteen board members were present.

Now, the road commission itself had offered its own light rail transit plan, with many, many slide shows, and one of the newest SEMTA board members suggested that the road commission's plan



A lot of folks sneer at the police until they have an emergency. Then, suddenly, that blue uniform is the first thing they turn to for safety and security.

Police officers' wives and husbands also should be recognized this week. Often, it is the spouse who bears the brunt of the street pressures and gives that reassuring moral support that spurs on the mate to go back out on the street the next day.

And every day, after noon and night when the loved one walks out the door, that husband or wife wonders and worries if that's the last time he or she will see their mate alive.

Being a cop is a crummy life. But we need them. So the next time you see a police officer, says thanks. They'll appreciate it.

be forwarded to Washington, along with a SEMTA plan, for possible federal funding.

And do you know what? His motion never even got a second. In effect, the road commission suffered a 12-1 defeat.

Instead, the SEMTA board adopted a compromise light rail plan for the Woodward and Gratiot corridors. Oakland County Executive Daniel T. Murphy allowed as to how he didn't get everything he wanted, but he went along with the compromise. Detroit Mayor Coleman Young, no altruistic statesman, failed to get all the money for Detroit, but he went along with the compromise.

Only the Oakland County Road Commission responded with invective, adding an attack on the character of one SEMTA board member.

The road commission just ain't got no class, no way.

## Crime links city, suburbs

The news that a Detroit Recorder's Court jury acquitted a suspect in the murder of Farmington Hills businessman Dave Jones has hit the suburbs like a ton of bricks.

The murder itself, which involved the killing of a suburbanite who had gone into Detroit for an evening's entertainment at Olympia and who had \$4 in his wallet at the time of his death, seemed almost perfectly designed to arouse suburban fears.

The news stories about the indictment and trial indicated the prosecution had a strong case, complete with a witness.

The jury's failure to convict has come as a shock here, particularly when the news of the last couple of weeks has been dominated by jury acquittals in several other sensational cases, including the rapes of two Livonia women last summer at Cobo Hall.

The obvious suburban fear is that juries in Detroit will not convict defendants for offenses committed in Detroit, regardless of the strength of the prosecution's case.

A GOOD DEAL of effort has gone into examining this fear in the past several weeks.

The Detroit Board of Police Commissioners, headed by the thoughtful and intelligent Avern Cohn, looked in considerable detail into the cases. Wayne County Prosecutor William Cahan has commented. And showing initiative, Detroit newspapers have interviewed some members of the juries involved.

The general impression coming out of all this activity is that juries—whether in Detroit or elsewhere—still will convict when the evidence is there to prove guilt beyond reasonable doubt.

But juries will not convict if they believe the case has holes (one juror was quoted saying that he felt the prosecution simply hadn't addressed a number of obvious problems with the case) or where the motives of witnesses are open to question (the witness in the Jones case received immunity on another charge in exchange for his testimony).

This may all be so. But here in the suburbs, it's going to be hard to convince people. The fear is



too great, the suspicion too high.

The only real evidence that will help is a couple of convictions, which means the police and prosecutors are simply going to have to present better cases.

THE POINT IS that the one great binding link—perhaps the only strong one as of now—between the inner city and the suburbs is fear of crime.

It transcends race. Black people in the inner city dislike being ripped off and raped just as much as do white people in the suburbs.

It transcends geography. Eight Mile Road is no barrier to burglars, as many suburban homeowners know too well, just as Dave Jones was murdered near downtown Detroit.

The simple fact is that there is no chance whatsoever of reducing suburban fear and suspicion of Detroit until the crime problem is resolved, just as there is no chance whatsoever of revitalizing the inner city until crime rates there have been slashed.

This is not to say the only place inhabited by criminals is Detroit. There are plenty of folks in the suburbs—including a certain as yet uncaught nut who abducts and kills children—who are a menace to society.

What I am saying, however, is that the single most important item on the agenda for both the suburbs and the inner city is the substantial reduction of crime. Until that happens, we are condemned to live in a society soaked in fear and divided by hostilities.



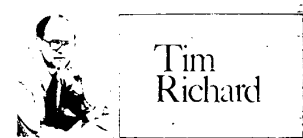
Farmington Police Officer Frank Lauhoff spreads some good will during police week by showing Jeff Laplante (left) and Robert Ditko some of the tools of the trade. (Staff photo)

## History repeats: SEMTA revives the interurban

Progress is not always the law of history. Things can go backward. There were "good old days."

After the dissolution of the Roman Empire, Spanish peasants failed to understand the great aqueducts and believed these magnificent works of civil engineering the work of Satan.

And so if I were to describe an impressive system of pollution-free and cheap transportation between Michigan cities, you should be ready to believe it's no futuristic pipedream. We had one once.



INTERURBAN RAILWAYS they were called. They consisted of one to three cars powered by electricity.

Operating singly in a city, the trolley carried local passenger traffic, but there were also lines running between towns, and they carried some freight, too.

The first interurban line in Michigan was the Ypsi-Ann of 1890. It was popular with men students from the University of Michigan as they traveled to woo female students at the Normal School for future teachers as Eastern Michigan University was called in those days.

In the era of 1900-20 the interurbans reached their peak of development. Detroit was the hub. Lines ran to Port Huron and Mt. Clemens; to Royal Oak, branching out there to reach Pontiac and Flint, Saginaw and Bay City; to Flat Rock and Toledo; and to Kalamazoo via Battle Creek, Jackson and Ann Arbor.

Sam Hudson's history of Plymouth tells of a community picnic where folks traveled by rail to Island Lake State Park.

Farmington was at the end of an interurban line and so has been part of the metropolitan area for several generations.

schedule was such that one had sufficient time for healthy conviviality and to get home at a reasonable hour, but not enough time to get glastered.

Thriving Livonia, now about the fifth largest city in the state, was in those days a suburb of Plymouth and Farmington, but it still had fine public transportation because there was a stop at Newburgh Station.

One of the last examples of an interurban is a line that runs from South Bend through Michigan City and Gary to Chicago. The cars are dingy, but it's a fast, cheap way to get into the Loop, and you beat the parking fees.

WHAT BRINGS this to mind was the decision May 10 of the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority to use "light rail" as the hardware for a metropolitan public transit system.

That decision was the most important single choice a public transportation agency made in the last 50 years, and it set the direction for the next 50 years.

It was an excellent choice, and like many excellent choices it was a political compromise. The board vote was 9-4, and two of the dissenters will swing around and support the decision.

(I also note with distaste that Gov. William Milliken failed to make one of his SEMTA board appointments in time for the biggest single public transit decision in a century, even though the governor has known for nine months that he had an appointment to make.)

What the SEMTA board has opted for is a 21st century version of the early 20th century interurban, an excellent institution.

And what could be more pleasantly ironic than the fact that the first two lines—in the Woodward and Gratiot corridors—follow old Indian trails!

## An economic tale of 2 cities

Over the last decade, we have seen the great northern migration.

Family after family announced that they were through with the rat race and were leaving the big city for the beautiful experience of living up north full-time.

They thought of "up north" in terms of where they spent quiet peaceful vacations among lakes and stands of tall pine trees.

The explosion up north with all these city folk arriving made the natives a little restless. As the "up north" cities got bigger, they began losing the flavor that attracted the city folk in the first place.

Condominiums replaced quaint marinas. Schools became overcrowded and in town parking became a problem.

Once up north, the newcomer started looking for the amenities of living to which he had become accustomed in the big city and started wanting to change things, so his new home would resemble the place he had just left.

The newcomers encouraged business expansion so there were more jobs available.

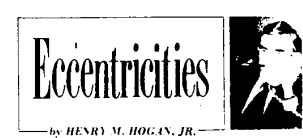
The residents of the northern cities started to rebel and change their zoning so that change would be more difficult. They tried to keep their small-town flavor.

The newcomers found that up north full-time wasn't that exciting because it lacked the cultural and economic advantages of the big city, whether they be opera, good restaurants or a wide variety of stores.

MANY OF the northern pilgrims have started a reverse journey back home, south to the hustle and bustle of exciting big-city life.

In the meantime, the big city has been changing. Industry there has been a welcome partner because it brings jobs.

Some of these industries haven't been very good neighbors and have had smoke stacks that spewed the air with ugly smoke, have created traffic jams at opening and closing times, and have polluted rivers with their wastes.



The city folk were used to this because it meant economic progress. It meant jobs.

Then the environmentalists came along and said this was bad for the country. They felt that in the long run if this continued, we would kill off mankind with polluted air and water.

They convinced government of their point of view and laws were passed, commissions created and steps taken.

Money spent by industry for pollution controls doesn't help production or efficiency. If they were not spending this money to abate pollution, industries most likely would be spending it on new plants and equipment creating more jobs.

The result of this trend is to reduce the amount of heavy industry in heavily industrial cities and obviously reduce the number of jobs available.

THE LACK OF JOBS in the big city has encouraged some people to go out of the city and up north to look for work.

While years ago, northern Michigan communities encouraged things like cement plants to provide jobs, now they are rebelling against growth and pulling in their horns.

Somewhere on those great expressways, there are many disillusioned people, some going, some coming, looking for jobs, the good life, clean air, escape from the rat race, and social, cultural and economic amenities.

Moral: Planning in a vacuum doesn't solve the needs of all people. Compromise, not milliancy, must be the plan of the future.

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