

OBSERVATION POINT

Stadium Casts Racial Shadow

By Philip H. Power



The following editorial column was widely re-printed after its publication in the Observer Newspapers last March 19. It has been awarded first place in the fall judging by the Michigan Press Association.

I don't know why all the talk about where the new stadium should go has broken out just now. Maybe in view of the Tigers' so far grim Grapefruit League record, it's just as well that public attention stay on stadiums rather than strike outs.

As I understand it, a number of sites have been proposed. Detroit's Mayor Cavanagh has a plan for a site down by Cobo Hall with a nice view of the river. Al Glancy, chief cook and bottle washer over at the Michigan state fair, wants the stadium (predictably) out at the state fair grounds at Woodward and Eight Mile.

Various suburban communities, among them Southfield, Taylor and Walled Lake, have made various kinds of noises indicating they think it would be nice to have a big stadium in their own taxation and business area.

AS USUAL, the argument about where the stadium will go has wandered far off the point.

The number of cars per square mile of available parking area does not seem to be the key matter in deciding just where the entire parking area will be put. Nor does the issue of whether or not the stadium shall have a dome over it seriously affect whether the stadium should be downtown or out in the suburbs. The attitude of the Tigers and

Lions ownership is important, as is the degree of public funding which might come from the state or City of Detroit.

But all these considerations come to piffle when set against the real problem: Racial fear.

PUT SIMPLY, the case for putting the new stadium anywhere else than downtown Detroit rests on fear. People are reluctant of going into Detroit to see a ball game for fear of getting beaten up, or having their car stolen, or being robbed.

By whom? By Negroes of course. So people argue that the solution to the problem is to put the new stadium out in the clean, white suburbs.

I don't agree. For what it's worth, I think the stadium should be built downtown, along the river front site advocated by Mayor Cavanagh.

FOR ONE THING, Negroes are as scared of coming out into the suburbs as white people are of going downtown. Perhaps more.

So what is the racial composition of the crowd rooting for the Lions and Tigers? I don't know. But once you start putting up a stadium in one place or another for racial reasons, (veiled racial reasons, but racial reasons all the same) you start breaking down your fans into blacks and whites. Baseball's got enough trouble right now without having to try to handle that one.

If the big problem is fear of people going downtown, let's design an anti-fear stadium. Than publicize it. Make the parking lot well lighted and put a fence

around it. Hire a lot of guards to stand outside and inside the stadium. Do any number of things the police might suggest.

But don't take the stadium away from the only kind of economic environment that can support it — the city.

Cities have through history served as concentrated marketplaces. They draw people not only from their own city limits, but from larger regional markets.

And they pulled them into the city, to allow development of institutions which would not be supported by anything else.

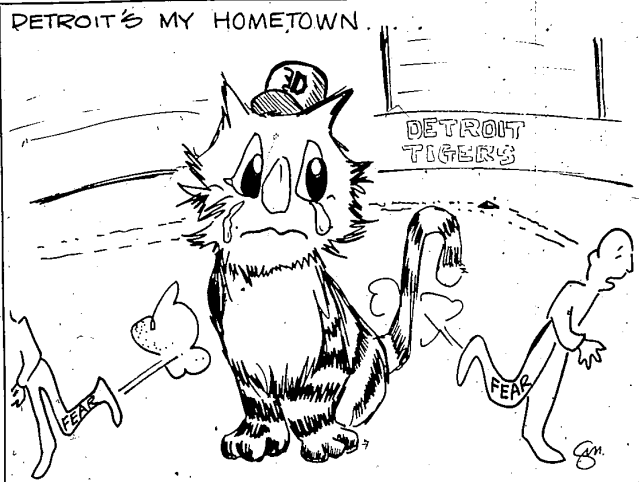
Can the city of Livonia support the Metropolitan Opera visit to Michigan, all by itself? Can Farmington generate enough traffic to keep the Detroit Institute of Arts going? Westland alone populate Tiger stadium, day after day?

Of course not.

The central city of Detroit can do all these things, though.

And because it can do that, a few of the things we regard as being darned important to our culture—the opera, art, the Tigers and Lions — are sustained and flourish.

That's why the argument over the stadium is important. And that's why I think it should be put in downtown Detroit.



'This Is The Week That ...'

Rust'er Rest In Peace

By Don Hoenshell



The Michigan Press Association has awarded third place to the following column, first published in Observer Newspapers on Oct. 16, 1968.

It is time, dear friends, in the softest and most reverent of tones, to inform the next of kin and discuss a suitable memorial in lieu of floral tributes, as we say.

The 1963 Chevrolet died poignantly in a burst of oil and water, as though blessing itself for an honorable life and hedging against the hereafter.

It died trying and gasping at the side of a freeway as a rescue crew worked feverishly to save it, with water-to-radiator resuscitation.

Dearly beloved, it had been ailing in the steering mechanism, and the motor gasped like those anti-cigarette commercials. It had

spent 1,387.6 miles in a coma.

THERE ARE THOSE who would say this beautiful machine of wheels and wondrous things in its gizzard, was martyred. But sainthood takes time and more paperwork than we care to even contemplate now.

At the time of its death on the freeway, this car had traveled life's highway 87,870 miles. It is difficult even to say it was used when it came into my possession. Actually, it wasn't bought. It was adopted. Matter of fact, the first day, it blinked its headlights and said:

"Whither thou goes I will go. Later, when we got fried, and more familiar, it quipped: 'I go where you go, amigo.'"

It didn't want to die, folks. When stricken with its final illness, this car had been rolling along at 85, the wind whistling

defiantly through a rusted door. This car was a fighter.

It had shaken off the stalls, the vapor locks, the battery ailments and other childhood diseases. There was the universal joint that went clunk at top lights.

The muffler was beginning to go, but this car was not a hypocrite. It suffered terribly. It would only accept a tailpipe. Ah-h-h. There wasn't a dry eye in the Midas shop.

Cars like this don't go into a long period of decline.

They die with their boots on, as it were.

And so it was.

THERE WERE premonitions, that we'll discuss at the wake. There was a new noise a few hours before, a kind of braying, like a Volkswagen crying from the junkyard. A siren song, maybe. Somewhere toward the right rear, there was an occasional chime — perhaps a summons to vespers.

Mechanical people will scoff and say a rusted hole in the framan caused the howl and that a beer bottle in the trunk chimed against the jackhandle.

But we who loved her know better.

She leaves friends and a great pride. She wore no man's bumper sticker. The state park fee decal and an outlaid parking ramp sticker were her love beads and she wore them proudly, as a dowager might powder her hair.

There was no false pride or bravado in this car. When she felt badly, she sounded that way.

An honest car. Now it has gone to be with its honorable ancestors in that great automobile showroom in the sky, there to enjoy a serene eternity with the ghostly giants of the past.

Sleep well, friend. There'll never be another you, ever. Rust... er, rest in peace.

Tim Richard writes

Carl Rowan: 'The Blacks Are Coming'

You know Carl Rowan as a syndicated columnist for a daily paper, and his topics are national and international affairs.

Last week, however, Rowan, who is black, put on the hat of a suburban editor and told an audience of people who are actually in that business how he would do it.

Ordinarily, suburban newsmen don't take that sort of stuff from an outsider, but Carl Rowan has pretty impressive credentials.

He has been a "newspaper reporter" in Minneapolis, director of the U.S. Information Service, ambassador to Finland and now a newspaperman again—which is to say, he's been around.

"IF I WERE a suburban editor," he began, "I'd tell my readers: 'The blacks are coming.'"

"This is part of a revolution. There's no hiding place."

A one-year-later follow-up on the Kerner Commission report, he said, showed that the "sense of urgency" after the riots in our nation's cities "hasn't been picked up."

And the Kerner Commission report, he added, "is as unbiased a report as you can get — it was written by whites."

TO THOSE WHO fear integrated schools because their children would be exposed to black kids who haven't had all the "cultural advantages," Rowan had this to say:

"The black family's income is 60 per cent of the white mean income. So if you take a white family with an income of \$10,000 a year, their black counterparts have only \$6,000."

"That means they have \$4,000 a year less to spend on exposing their kids to books, magazines, concerts."

"His (the black kids') lack of culture is in the pocket of whoever the hell has his family's other \$4,000."

"I'M AN INTEGRATIONIST," said Rowan, who has no sym-

thy for either the white segregationist or black separatist points of view.

To the whites he said: "This is not a white middle-class world, hence suburban kids are getting short-changed in their educations if they have no exposure to another race."

To the blacks he said: "You can't hack it against the whites if you're going out in the woods and not know what they're doing."

And the blacks who think they can set up their own society with black banks and black supermarkets are "deluding themselves," he said. His first-hand evidence: The failure of the Chippewas in his native Minnesota and South Dakota to develop with their own separate reservation society.

Carl Rowan didn't think he'd last more than a year or two as a suburban newspaper editor with editorials like that, but his tenure would have a lot of impact.

Well... maybe. But we see signs of progress. We think he might last a bit longer.

Sense And Nonsense

Seen on the marquee of a suburban theater: "Romeo and Juliet. The Odd Couple."

A State School Board Secretary, Michael Deeb, a Democrat, is sending out questionnaires to state newspapers concerning their views on sex education and campus disorders. There is no room for names of the respondents, indicating that the answers will be anonymous.

But the stamped, self-addressed envelopes Deeb supplies with the questionnaires have a code number on the back. The code number is likely geared to a master mailing list in Deeb's office and tells him who is saying what in the survey.

DISSENT

Viewpoints expressed in DISSENT do not necessarily reflect those of Observer Newspapers Inc., but are presented in the belief that publication of all segments of thought on a public issue is a prerequisite to understanding and progress.

BY MARVIN R. STEMPIEN
State Representative

I am writing to state some of my own observations about Philip Power's opinions published Wednesday, Sept. 17, 1969, under the editorial title "Lansing Gets Another Chance."

We all know Mr. Power is a recent arrival to the Livonia area, having extended his ownership capacity at the Observer to that of an editorial writer some time over two years ago when he moved here from Washington, D.C. However, his journalistic responsibility to this community to be truthful demands not only that he avoid untruth, half-truth and unfair innuendo, but also that he exercise reasonable newsman's diligence to check out his facts before he writes.

His failure to do so would merely underscore his naivete regarding both the newspaper business and public affairs.

MR. POWER THINKS that I should be asked why the legislature is not going to come up with the money to bail out Livonia in the present fiscal year, the implication being that I might not agree with Mr. Power's opinion of the legislature's responsibility for education and taxes.

My public position in this regard since I first became an active candidate for public office in 1964 has consistently been that our schools need more money and that our taxpayers need more equity in the tax burden. I refer Mr. Power to the Sunday, July 27, 1969, edition of his own newspaper on page 6A in which I am extensively quoted as being in favor of both education reform and tax reform in the direction of more recognition of ability of the people to pay taxes.

I have specifically stated many times that I am opposed to the ad valorem property tax and have long advocated a homestead tax exemption for ALL homeowners.

Mr. Power further thinks, "There are no saints in Lansing — only people looking for payday." I presume that Mr. Power includes me within that broad generalization. However, it is no secret to those who are personally acquainted with me that in 1968 I fully intended never to be a candidate again, but did so only after I became very personally involved in the presidential campaign of the late Senator Robert Kennedy.

In spite of the fact that my income was substantially greater as an attorney with a successful private practice, I became a candidate again because I have recognized over the years the enormity of these community problems and feel an obligation to contribute to their solution.

In addition, I have, publicly taken the lead in the battle for education and tax reform as early as 1965 when I even voted with the Republican Party and against my own Democratic leadership to begin to attack these problems in the 1965 session.

THE OBSERVER Newspaper on October 13, 1965 regarding this matter stated at page 1A, "Livonia's Democratic State Representative Marv Stempien increased his stature with local Republicans, independents and many Democrats last week with his vote on fiscal reform in the state legislature."

"Stempien was one of a handful of Democrats who voted to bring to the floor for discussion Gov. Romney's proposals for fiscal reform."

Since that time I have repeatedly taken this controversial position in all public appearances. I am pleased to see that Mr. Power has finally joined those of us who have been shouting the clarion call for the last five years.

Editorial & Opinion

OBSERVER NEWSPAPERS, INC.

Philip H. Power, Publisher

The Livonia Observer • The Redford Observer • The Westland Observer
The Garden City Observer • The Plymouth Mail & Observer
The Farmington Enterprise & Observer



Published by Observer Newspapers, Inc.
271 S. Main Street, P.O. Box 200, Plymouth, Mich. 48170

Serving the communities of Livonia, Farmington, Plymouth, Redford, Westland, Garden City, Westland, Farmington Township, Redford Township, Garden City, Westland.

Don Hoenshell, Editor