

editorial opinion

Tinkering Around

by LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Culture shock in suburbia

As more and more people move from the cities and into the suburbs, society is bound someday to notice that the newly arrived suburbanite undergoes something akin to culture shock.

Those disbelievers who claim moving into the suburbs presents only a slight change in life style evidently haven't tried to really cross the gap from city to 'burb.

The suburbs are in many ways a reaction against the cities. And in many ways, they are a natural and logical economic extension of those same cities.

That situation automatically sets up differences in the two styles of living and thus leads the newly arrived in a subtle form of culture shock.

They can see it in a drive through their new subdivision. Instead of crowded city blocks and small back yards they find large lawns and plenty of space between houses.

SINCE the idea seems to be to create a distance physically and socially from the city, the large yards suggest rural life. To keep up this facade, sidewalks are discarded and the lawn runs to the edge of the road.

Children don't grow up in the suburbs knowing that the sidewalk and grass near the curb belong to the city and the lawn near the house is family property.

Little kids in city neighborhoods taunt each other by standing on the municipal side of the lawn, singing, "you can't chase me off, this is public property."

Suburban children just don't have that kind of childhood memories. While city children can remember walking to school, a large portion of suburban youngsters don't even remember a family walk. No one walks in the suburbs. Everyone drives.

I'm not the first to notice this. Recently a doctor in the area told a group of suburbanites that if a family were to take a walk in a subdivision most of the neighbors would assume their car was broken.

He was only joking, but think about it. The only persons who look natural on the streets and out of cars are wearing jogging suits.

Now, I must admit, in my old neighborhood, if we saw someone running we would just assume he or she was fleeing the police.

SUBURBANITES don't seem to have acquired that thought pattern yet.

Still, it seems only fitting that the suburbs of the nation's car capital emphasize driving over walking. Not only is it difficult to walk through a suburb without sidewalks, it's high impossible in many cases to find a neighborhood grocery store, drugstore or bank within walking distance.

There are people in the city who never learned to drive and do all their shopping in their neighborhood without any hardship. In the suburbs, a car is practically life blood.

A subdivision president will explain that his association voted against sidewalks because everyone drives and no one walks anymore. No one sees anything amiss with that statement.

One characteristic that has survived intact from the city is the allegiance to a neighborhood. Evidently everyone believes there is safety in numbers. Ask a suburbanite where he lives and he'll give you the name of a subdivision.

Ask a city person the same question and he'll give you the name of the largest intersection near his home or he'll identify his side of the city.

BUT THE SIMILARITY ends there. While in the city, people tend to know their neighbors, suburbanites come home to sleep, eat and be with their families.

Instead of making new friends in the area, I've noticed, many young people commute all over town to socialize.

Another oddity to the city mind is the way everyone tries to be identical in the suburbs. Maybe because many of them are too young to have developed the ethnic and community spirit of some old city areas, suburban neighborhoods give a feeling of sameness to the untrained eye.

But the city is poor, tired, losing people and money. The suburbs are the winners.

Without a doubt, the suburbs are clean, affluent and younger. But try as they may they can't shake loose of the city altogether.

Economically, they're tied to that grey old lady by the river. And with economic ties come social and cultural links. Jobs and culture are in the city, for the most part. Without the city as the link between the suburbs, some of those communities would remain little islands of subdivisions. They'd gravitate toward Pontiac or Southfield.

FOR, although the suburbs are different, they are still a part of Detroit.



by Jackie Klein

"Around the edge"

Phonetically speaking. . .

anyone else to call, she will either "dial a smile," "dial a prayer," or call the weather.

"Dial a Smile's" line is usually busy. That's just as well when you hear knee slappers like "Why did Santa Claus have three gardens? So he could ho, ho, ho."

Lisa used to dial a number and get a recording called "Goldiggers Barn." A sexy voice would answer and purr: "We have girls size 46. We're all out of 46. You all come on down now." Thankfully, that service has been discontinued.

We used to have a phone in the basement for our cat and three kittens, but they weren't listed in the phone book. When I got a busy signal, I just knew those cats knocked the receiver off the hook and were meowing to invisible listeners.

Yes, good old Ma Bell says telephones in Southfield outnumber people. So how come so many say, "I can't stand that telephone. It drives me up the wall. I'd like to go some place where they have smoke signals."

That's how I feel when I'm awakened before 8 a.m. by a voice that says, "Would you care to donate blood for our organization?"

"No thank you, but I could use a

withdrawal." I yawn as I pop a Geritol into my mouth. And when I get an obscene phone call, the heavy breather usually has the wrong number.

DON'T YOU love the long-winded talker who calls you at exactly 6 p.m. and says, "I do hope I'm not disturbing your dinner?"

I've often been tempted to say between bites, "We're very continental. We always eat breakfast at 6 p.m. so we can sleep late in the morning and have a nice long leisurely lunch." Besides the obvious annoyances of the telephone, it made liars out of my kids when they were small. Many times they told callers, "My mother says she isn't home. She says to call her back when she gets here."

Now that Lisa has grown up, she likes to call her girlfriend in New York to discuss important events like, "I just had my hair cut," or "Did you see the movie 'Saturday Night Fever' or I got the grooviest new tape by Seals and Crofts."

She can't understand why our phone bills are as high as \$80 a month. She swears she only talked to her friend in New York for two minutes.

All in all, Ma Bell, you're a real ding-a-ling. Just for spite, we're not going to get that 142nd phone.

Accident lawsuit goes on

Cities fiddle, people burn

By W. MICHAEL MILLER

It is really too bad that Southfield and Farmington Hills and the Oakland County Road Commission are being sued for the second time in a matter of months for the same accident that occurred over a year and a half ago.

Too bad, but rather fitting. The accident happened during the summer of 1976 at the corner of Ten Mile and Inkster Road—an Oakland County intersection that has been piling up fatality statistics for years before this accident that took the life of an unborn baby and a 21-year-old woman.

At the time of the accident and until recently, there was only a flashing signal at the intersection. It flashed red to north and south Inkster Road traffic, and yellow to east-west Ten Mile traffic.

Additionally, it was a blind intersection—vision at the intersection was obstructed by foliage, hills and turns in the road near this "death alley."

Since the accident, the intersection has been redesigned, eliminating some of the vision obstructions and substituting a real downtown-style traffic

signal for the rural atmosphere-style traffic signal that had been so contributory to Oakland County traffic deaths over the last decade.

One only wonders why survivors of accidents at the corner of Ten Mile and Inkster Road would stoop to suing. After all, they should be proud that their loved ones died for such a noble cause as a new traffic signal and a sensibly-designed intersection, both of which should have been there in the first place.

As a footnote, the reason there was no bona fide traffic signal at the corner before is that Southfield, Farmington Hills and the Oakland County Road Commission were fighting over who would pay for an improved traffic signal.

And in the meantime, many people died.

IT'S NOT unusual to find Oakland County involved in such stupid wranglings.

Oakland County Board of Commissioners Public Service Committee recently designated Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak as medical control center for advanced life support units

in Oakland County.

The commission will act on the tentative decision sometime before summer.

At first glance, it seems like a sound decision, but that's not taking into account that Southfield and Providence Hospital have been operating such a program for more than five years.

There is a lot more to it than that, however.

The public service committee voted 5-3 to approve Beaumont, which has no Life Support Unit services at the present, over Providence. All the Republicans on the committee voted for Beaumont.

It will be easy enough to guess how the commissioner vote will come out later this year. The commission is controlled by a 15-12 Republican majority.

If the Oakland County Road Commission doesn't know the difference between a real traffic light and a toy, it should be no surprise that the Republicans on the Oakland Board of Commissioners would disregard the EMS experience of Providence, for whatever small considerations they may have received for their votes.

Decision

Emergency medical care in lurch

Residents of Southfield and Lathrup Village have been very lucky that for the last five years in that the City of Southfield and Providence Hospital have co-sponsored an emergency medical service (EMS) using mobile life support units.

The program has saved many lives in southern Oakland County and will continue to save many more.

Southfield and Providence developed the EMS system, which was the first of its kind in Oakland County, with little or no help from the county government.

Now, Oakland County is considering naming William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak as the county's medical control center for advanced LSUs.

Southfield Director of Public Safety Jerry Tobin articulated the meaning of the possible action best when he said, "The designation of resource hospital is a status symbol, but Providence deserves that title."

Yes, Providence deserves the title, mainly because it was Providence and Southfield that pioneered EMS work in Oakland County and not Beaumont and Royal Oak. Also there is essentially

no difference between how Providence and Beaumont would plan to finance the construction of the \$1.5 million communications center.

Beaumont officials say they would provide the service without cost to the county, but hope for financial support from grants, millages and other sources. While Providence officials say quite openly that funding of the project would be negotiable.

It is clear that Beaumont is treating county commissioners to a carrot-on-the-stick routine, which might work out well for the county budget. But it would still be the taxpayers who would pay in the end.

It is ultimately a question of giving the EMS communications center designation to a hospital with a six-year track record of experience in EMS activities or to an equally respectable hospital, but one with very little EMS experience.

If the county commissioners approve Beaumont as has been recommended by the Republicans on the county's public service committee, it will only prove that a Republican machine, every bit as contemptible as the Democratic machine in Cook County, Ill., runs Oakland County.

Citizens can win

Shoppers do have a choice



By Zina Kramer

With ever-growing food bills, consumers are becoming increasingly conscious of what they buy. Studies linking diet to a number of diseases also serve to make the average person more aware of what he or she is eating.

Shoppers are beginning to realize that when they walk into a market they do have a choice and can opt for greater quality.

The key to all of this is to know what you are buying, to study each purchase. Reading labels may take a few minutes more but it is most worthwhile. Remember that ingredients are listed in descending order of predominance. The ingredients listed first are what there is the most of.

If sugar is listed first, there is more sugar than anything else in the product.

Should I look for products which say natural on the label? Because there appears to be a greater interest in so-called natural foods, there are a number of companies which are using the term in a somewhat deceptive fashion.

There are a number of products which boldly proclaim "naturally flavored" or "natural colors," which may have other kinds of additives. A naturally flavored product may have no artificial flavors but may have artificial colors.

Many foods which are called natural still may be so highly processed or

ting certain additives without being aware of it. Some foods are allowed additives without specifically stating them on the list of ingredients.

Butter, ice cream and cheese may be artificially colored without having to say on the label. Other foods, such as mayonnaise, must contain certain ingredients to meet government standards and therefore are not required to list ingredients.

I have been reading labels and have avoided buying foods with preservatives but I find these things spoil and I have to throw them out. This is becoming expensive. What should I do?

If you are use to bread which remains fresh for two weeks and cheese which lasts for months without becoming moldy, you must gear yourself to different buying and storing habits.

Breads or baked goods without preservatives should be bought in smaller quantities. Freezing parts of a loaf of bread in individual packages may be helpful.

Natural cheeses may form mold which can simply be cut away. Refrigerating other foods such as granola, which may otherwise be stored in a pantry, may also be useful.

Forming new storage and buying habits may be a small price to pay for steering clear of some very questionable chemical additives.

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