

SCC acquires 14 weekly papers

Thursday, May 29, 1980

(S.F. 9A, R6-7C)(O)15A

Suburban Communications Corp., parent company of Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, has agreed to purchase the stock of six suburban and outside publishing companies effective June 1.

The announcement was made by Richard D. Agninan, president of SCC, and Richard L. Milliman, president of the companies whose stock SCC has acquired.

The six firms publish 14 newspapers.

Purchase price was not disclosed.

THE ACQUISITIONS are:

- The Livingston County Press, Inc., Howell. It publishes four weekly newspapers — the Livingston County Press in Howell, the Brighton-Harland Sun-Herald, the Pinckney Post and the Fowlerville Review.

- Farmers Advance, Camden, a village in Hillsdale County.
- The Milford Times in western Oakland County.
- Independent Newspapers. The firm publishes the Grand Ledge Independent, Grand Ledge-Delta Reminder, Portland Penny Saver, Portland Review & Observer, and Delta-Waverly This Week.
- Charlotte Republican-Tribune in Eaton County.
- Clinton County News, St. Johns. The firm also publishes the DeWitt-Bath Review.

THESE FIRMS represent most of the publishing holdings of Milliman, who was once press secretary to then-Gov. George W. Romney. He is immediate past president of the Michigan Press Association.

Agninan said Milliman has agreed to continue working closely with Rolly Peterson, former pub-

lisher of SCC's Brighton Argus and new publisher of the Livingston County Press.

Milliman will also serve as consultant for the other papers.

Russ Ketcham has agreed to continue as publisher of the Farmers Advance.

"We intend to continue the fine tradition of excellence that the papers have enjoyed," said Agninan.

Board Chairman Philip H. Power of Ann Arbor owns all the stock of SCC. It publishes 28 semi-weekly and weekly papers — the 12 Observer & Eccentric Newspapers in Oakland and Wayne counties; the Sliger Home Newspapers in Northville, South Lyon, Novi-Walled Lake and Brighton; the Courier and Enterprise newspapers in Ingham County; and Queen City newspapers in suburban Cincinnati.

OCC hopefuls to gather

A "Meet the Candidates" forum featuring the 10 candidates seeking three trustee seats on the Oakland Community College board will be held at 2 p.m. today in the J Building of OCC's Orchard Ridge Campus in Farmington Hills.

The meeting is sponsored by the OCC Faculty Association. The election is June 9.

The Orchard Ridge campus is at

27055 Orchard Lake Road at the I-696 freeway.

There will be also opportunities for informally getting acquainted.

Ten candidates are seeking three six-year terms. They are incumbents Barbara J. Willing and David W. Hackett; and newcomers John J. Yezman Jr., Nancy R. Vangilder, Veronica Sexton, Richard J. Pappas, Margaret M. MacTavish, Mariellen Greenbury, Robert M. Filiault and Theodore Dziurman.

World press views U.S. as untrustworthy

World press saw the 1979 U.S.-China treaty as evidence of America's "untrustworthiness" while attributing the diplomatic groundwork to former President Nixon — not President Carter.

So says a study prepared in a journalism seminar at the University of Michigan, which examined foreign press reaction to two events: the reopening of China in 1978-79 and the Jonestown massacre in 1978 under religious cult leader Jim Jones.

Newspapers abroad were hardly consistent in their view of either event, the study notes. But the dominant reaction to the U.S.-China tie was a questioning of the strength of America's word to its allies, and the Jonestown incident was often seen as a rude awakening from the "American dream" of happiness.

THE REPORT was compiled by 15 students, under the direction of Prof. Charles Elsonrath of the U-M department of communication. The students, many of whom have had experience as professional journalists, monitored a total of 18 newspapers and magazines, in their original languages, from 14 foreign countries.

Their report titled "News from Foreigners" was published by the U-M Marsh Center for the Study of Journalistic Performance.

In light of the impact of the U.S.-China relations on Taiwan, foreign press extensively questioned the sincerity of the United States' alliances, the study says.

"The issues that emerged most strongly from the welter of words printed on the subject was the trustworthiness — or the untrustworthiness — of the United States."

Although many publications lauded the reopening of China, editorials in Japanese, Greek, Israeli, Mexican and German newspapers also accused the United States of political fickleness.

"IN AN EDITORIAL, the Greek 'Vradyni' observed that frequently solutions have tragic ironies from which lessons can be learned," the study says.

"The biggest lesson, the editorial suggested, was that the U.S. undertakings to protect small countries would not necessarily be honored if U.S. interests were at stake."

From still another perspective, the report notes, "the West German newspaper 'Die Zeit' declared there was no fear of the U.S. throwing Europe to the wolves, but only because of the immense strategic importance of 'hastion Europe,' and not because of any fundamental 'trustworthiness.'"

In contrast to American newspapers' congratulatory stance toward President Carter at the conclusion of the U.S.-China treaty, foreign publications attributed the crucial diplomatic groundwork to Carter's predecessor Richard Nixon, the study also found.

The Jonestown massacre was contrived by many newspapers as an outgrowth of the failure of America's social priorities, the study says. "Without exception, the Jim Jones saga, with its racial-bias and irrational murderousness, was judged to be inherently American."

Press handling of the Jonestown incident ranged from omission to empathy, on one hand, and condemnation on the other, the study found.

"INTERESTINGLY, papers in Germany and Japan, the two countries most utterly devastated by the Allied powers in World War II (and nations with radically differing social traditions), focused on the apparent corruptibility and emptiness of the American dream."

"Countries with cults of their own generally showed more understanding of Jonestown, and put more emphasis on analysis of why people enter into such convenants." The Australian "Age," Greek newspapers and France's "Le Monde" were in that category.

"Jonestown, 'Le Monde' argued, was not a peculiarly American tragedy. One article declared that Guyana should intimately touch the French with the pain inflicted on a 'Christian culture very close to our own.'"

Among those publications that decried American "decadence," the study adds, many isolated the state of California as the embodiment of that trend.

"Asahi Shimbun" (Japan) labeled California "the hotbed of American madness." "Der Spiegel" leveled a blast at California and even the usually staid "Le Monde" cut loose when it came to anti-Californian invective, characterizing Los Angeles as a city where gurus take the place of psychiatrists and churches are bought and sold like party stores.

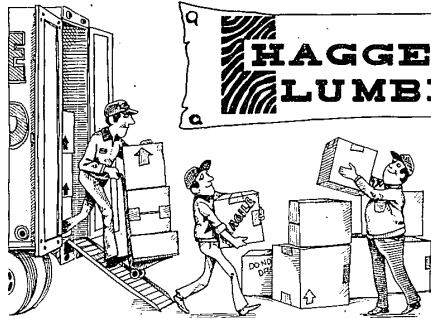
IN THE MELBOURNE Age, Peter Smark wrote "California in the mid-60s was a kingdom of the confused awaiting a plausible prophet. If there was a land bridge between California and Australia," he said with evident horror, "Many of these migratory people would be in Sydney by now."

The study notes that the amount of government control of the press in any given country, as well as the country's world status influenced its portrayal of the two events.

The study concludes that although the Guyana tragedy and U.S.-China relations were "a remarkable opportunity to report on both the private and public 'self' of the United States of America, press reaction was hardly consistent."

"The wildly varying reactions of the world's presses provide one of the messages of the study. Namely, defining news is a task as hopelessly — and intriguingly — broad as defining culture. Asking Who? What? Where? Why? When? merely introduces the subject."

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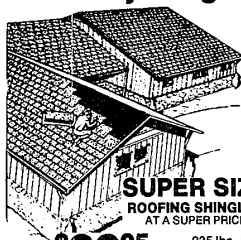
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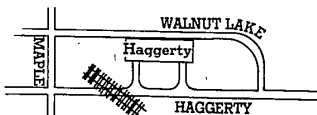
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