

Oakway Symphony support is a sound investment

Two reasons make it imperative that this community support the Oakway Symphony Society as it recruits members for the 1980-81 season.

First, as Antal Dorati put it recently, "A great city needs a great orchestra." He was speaking about Detroit, but his words are true of the Oakway community, which serves Livonia, Farmington, Southfield and Birmingham. The society is the financial arm of the orchestra, which has produced many hours of good music for this area.

During economic hard times, non-profit groups like the society find it rough going, particularly when corporations and businesses cut their contributions. Individual memberships are needed more than ever.

Second, Michigan's recession has forced state officials to slash away at the budget. State funding of the arts may have a more meager future than in previous years.

THERE ARE many reasons we need an institution like the Oakway Symphony Orchestra. Its fine music soothes the soul, and that alone is reason enough for its existence.

The symphony will launch its eighth season this weekend under the baton of Francesco DiBlasi. The orchestra will perform a salute to Rodgers and Hammerstein at 8 p.m. Saturday and 3 p.m. Sunday in Harrison High School, Farmington Hills. Under DiBlasi's direction, the group has provided concert goes with a lively blend of operatic, ballet and stage classics.

There are other reasons to support the symphony. The concerts are close to home. And it's an excellent way to introduce young people to live performances of quality music. There is, after all, a difference between attending a concert and listening to a record. And for a budget-conscious family, it's

an inexpensive way to make the introduction.

The symphony also is a great outlet for local performers who, for one reason or another, were unable to become full-time musicians themselves. They can be, and often are, pretty good at their vocations.

It often is the first showcase for the more talented high school and college musicians — their first opportunity to rub shoulders with adult musicians, to accompany professional soloists, to be heard by someone other than fellow students and parents.

Oakway has established a tradition of encouraging and nurturing a variety of this area's musicians through the young artists competition. This season's competition will be focus on piano and voice artists. Winners will divide a \$3,000 prize awarded by the Michigan Foundation for the Arts.

Finally, the orchestra is a cultural asset, a sign to

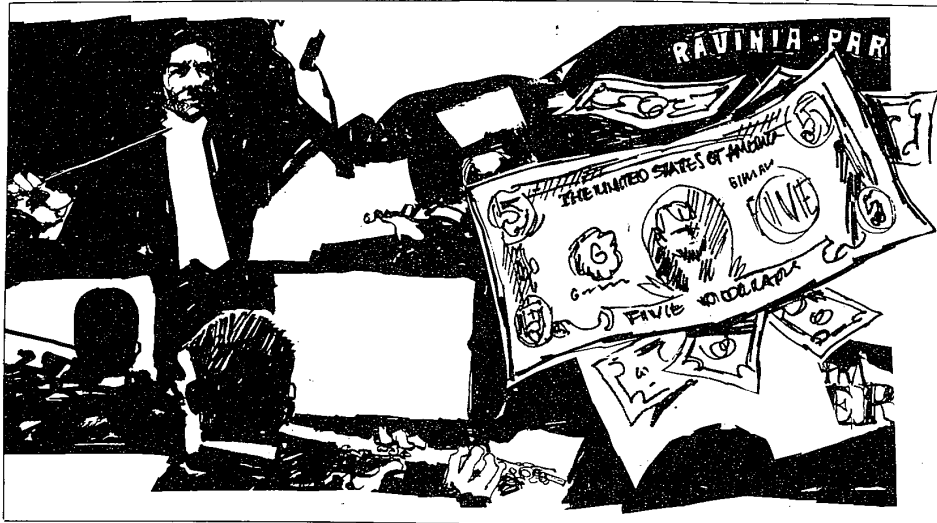
newcomers that here is a community that offers more than a typical "bedroom" suburban existence.

One can always buy a ticket for any one concert. But we encourage interested persons to buy a season membership to all concerts. Besides getting a good deal on the tickets, you will find next April 15 that your contribution is tax deductible. The state cuts you taxes for supporting the orchestra. A donation to the Oakway is money that stays home, and works at home where one can see the results.

It also helps the symphony society in its financial planning by giving it an ample working capital supply at the beginning of the season.

Becoming a member of the Oakway Symphony Society is a relative cultural bargain. Memberships range from \$40 to \$200 and are tax-deductible.

Oakway needs community support to build on the cultural cornerstone it has established.



Facing judgment of youth

In less than two weeks, I'm going to endure a self-imposed nightmare.

On the eve of middle age (a dreadful psychological term for even the most well-balanced among us) I'm going back to school.

Not so unusual, you say. Lots of folks return to the classroom in their middle years.

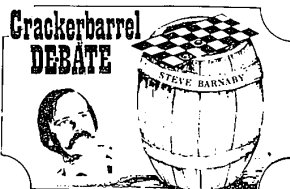
But this is different — very different. I will be unable to sit in my accustomed seat in the back row, hiding from the queries of persistent instructors. No longer will I be able to sit on my pious perch in harsh judgment of the American educational system, a favorite pastime of my college years.

You see, I'm going to be at the head of the class, literally. To be more precise, this class-skipping, coffee-consuming, student union loafer of yesterday is going to be a college instructor.

Sitting in front of me, in all their adolescent pomposity, will be 15 jean-clad, sexually liberated, politically prejudiced, know-it-all college students daring me to tell them something they don't already know.

The thought is nothing short of horrifying. Upon graduating from Wayne State, I vowed never to return to the classroom.

Before entering college, I was filled with visions of halls of ivy and professors who looked and spoke like English actor Ronald Colman.



NEEDLESS TO SAY, there wasn't a Ronald Colman in the bunch, and the ivy had been replaced by concrete and glass — all very disillusioning.

But the years have tempered those feelings, and I am about to make this somewhat unexpected return.

Returning in this role makes a fellow realize that he no longer is part of the younger set. The prospective scrutiny of the above-mentioned 15 students is something to contemplate. After all, it wasn't so many years ago that I graduated, was it? Or was it?

But my female colleagues in this office delight in assuring me that I will, indeed, face the uncompromising scrutiny that only youth can render.

"How old do you think he is?" one coed will say to another.

"Well, he is going bald, so he must be over 30," will come the snide reply.

"Isn't he the cutest thing? He reminds me of my father."

"He certainly would look better if he didn't wear those dumb cardigan sweaters."

I shiver at the thought.

But there are even more far-reaching horrors. I've dreamed them all in the last month.

There's the one where half the students fall asleep and the remainder get up and walk out due to sheer boredom.

ANOTHER INVOLVES some smart punk getting up in the middle of a lecture and telling me I don't know what in the hell I'm talking about and proceeding to tell me, in great detail, where I have strayed.

I know about guys like that. I used to be one.

But recently, I found some relief from these horrors. I traveled up to Michigan State to look over the battleground. It didn't look all that intimidating. After all, it couldn't be that bad. There was ivy growing on the walls.

wondered why it wasn't moving. It soon developed that the housewives in front of us had placed articles on the counter that were bereft of the price tag. So the cashier had to call for the manager. He looked up the price and called back.

Then, of all things, the elderly lady pulled out a check book and started to write a check. She hadn't had it approved. This caused a longer holdup. The check finally was cleared and The Stroller had high hopes of getting out of the market in a few moments.

This was not to be. Would you believe it? Two other ladies in front of us had the same trouble — articles without prices and checks that had to be approved.

It wasn't like that back in the days of the old time grocery store where you knew the owner and every member of his family. You told him what you wanted and he got it for you.

And to top off the shopping tour, you usually visited with the owner for a few minutes and discussed the latest news and small town gossip.

Now those old-time grocery stores are forgotten. In their place has come the monster — the supermarket that would try the patience of Job if he were here to go grocery shopping.



Tim Richard

Housing a good buy — until mid-'81

Almost a year ago, I wrote a column saying it was then a terrible time to buy a house. Housing prices were increasing faster than the general rate of inflation, the industry was one of the most inefficient in the nation, and interest rates were ungodly.

The real estate industry responded with a barrage of vituperative letters. Some even suggested that, since real estate advertising contributes so much to this newspaper's revenues, I had no business writing such things.

The public saw it differently. Sales plummeted 50 percent beginning late in 1979. Contractors, tradesmen and real estate sales people got zapped good and hard.

If I were the sort who bore grudges, I would have gloated. Actually, it's no fun to see an entire industry suffer, even if its members were wrong when they kept trumpeting that "Now is the time to buy."

LATELY, HOWEVER, conditions have changed. It now appears that the period from now until mid-1981 will be a good time to buy a single-family detached house.

Here's why:

"The average gain in home prices this year is only about 5 percent compared to a previous 10 to 20 percent," according to a release from Martin R. Hemphill, chairman of the Metropolitan Council of Boards of Realtors. The same word comes from John J. Halser, president of the Western Wayne Oakland County Board of Realtors. "For buyers, annual gains in average home prices, which were 10 percent or better in 1977, 1978 and early 1979, have slowed. Thus far this year, they are rising at an annual rate of 4.5 percent."

"An ample supply of mortgage money is available at rates well below the record highs seen earlier this year, and a good supply of homes is on the market in nearly all southeast Michigan areas through most price ranges," said Hemphill.

Realtors are always saying now is the time to buy. But this time they are close to the truth.

THE FUTURE looks grim after mid-1981. You can perceive this by reading between the lines in the real estate industry's optimistic handouts. Said Hemphill:

"Home prices can be expected to rise at an accelerated rate by mid-1981 with growing competition for existing units."

"Funds for mortgage lending are beginning to cost institutions more, which could bring higher rates or reduced availability."

On top of that, Americans will be forming an annual average of 1.6 million new households during the next decades, he said. When you plug that new demand into declining production, it spells trouble.

"Even if production is increased 200,000-300,000 units over projected need of two million a year, it would take three-five years to catch up," Hemphill said. "This is a perfect scenario for a rapid increase in home prices."

WHEN AMERICAN auto companies built too many gas-guzzling dinosaurs, the little Japanese cars captured a quarter of the market.

But there is no subcompact Japanese housing industry to move into the American market. Suburban communities, with their big lot "snob zoning," are making certain the new housing stock will continue to be the big-lot dinosaurs.

Nevertheless, Hemphill predicts developers will offer "smaller units with fewer amenities and greater energy efficiency." For the sake of those new families of the 1980s, I hope he's right.

Meanwhile, if you're thinking of buying, now until mid-1981 is the time. As the real estate people dearly reiterate, it will never be cheaper.

A day at the pokey supermarket

In all the years he has travelled along life's highway, The Stroller has tried to maintain a sense of humor. As they say in the boxing world, he has learned to ride with the punches. But lately, for the first time in his life, The Stroller has developed a hatred — and of all things, against the present-day supermarkets.

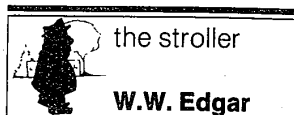
It's not because of the caliber of the food and vegetables. It came because the present-day market has caused the passing of the oldtime grocery store.

For a time The Stroller has tried to take the supermarket in stride. He believed that he had to keep pace with progress and forget the past.

But it hasn't worked out that way.

RECENTLY HE accompanied the lady of our house to the store to help with the shopping. As she leaned over her shopping cart, she would ask The Stroller to help out by getting some article she had on her list. Then the fun began — or the hatred started to build.

Up one aisle and down another he walked, trying to find the articles she wanted. On the way he bumped into elderly ladies with shopping carts, or just abandoned carts in the aisle as another cus-



tomers went on the prowl for some article. Often when he did find the article, it was the wrong size bottle or it wasn't what she wanted. There were misgivings that he even had agreed to aid in the shopping.

But that was only the start. The real pangs of hatred built up when we got to the check-out counter. There one found a series of aisles with sincere-faced cashiers waiting to take your cash while another placed your articles in the bags to take home.

ON ONE PARTICULAR day The Stroller's patience wore thin. It happened at the express counter — you know, where you can supposedly get waited on in a hurry if you have a dozen articles or less.

Well, we got to the line at the express counter and