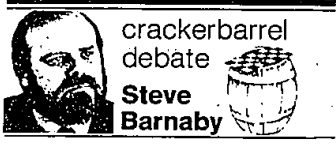


Food lines in suburbia as hunger hits home

A DECADE ago, few covering the suburban beat believed we would be writing stories about mass unemployment, hunger and food distribution points. Those beats were for the papers downtown — in the big city. We were out here to cover what many felt were the singular problems of the suburbs — road paving, zoning disputes, millage elections and septic tanks. In the big picture, these were small problems to be sure — but surprisingly important when it was your road being paved or your neighborhood school being closed. Sure we've had our dramatic moments — cross-district busing, low-income housing and a murder or fire for good measure. Sometimes a crooked politician would pop up to keep us honest.

BUT FOR THE most part, even journalists — a cynical bunch, at best — believed the general run of suburban living was free from the very serious social problems of the large city.



crackerbarrel debate
Steve Barnaby

Some journalists sneer at the affluence surrounding them. Many are young and have a difficult time understanding the concerns of the more established in society. On the other hand, others — the more established scribes — really believe that all that exists to write about in the suburbs are high society and the good life.

Caught in the middle are those journalists who believe the social problems of the big city are those of the suburbs — disguised, for sure, but related. Often they are dismissed by the others as, well, crackpots, "do-gooders" and sometimes even "troublemakers" who are living in the fantasy of big-time journalism. Journalists, you see, reflect the society which they cover. Their opinions are just as diverse and many times just as misguided. BUT TODAY'S REALITY is that food lines are popping up all over the suburbs — in churches and even city halls. Just the other day, Farmington Hills, not exactly a haven for the poor, set up a food distribution center working out of its recreation office — an irony to be sure. What once was solely a planning center for fun has become a headquarters of survival for many who just a year or two ago never would have believed they could be in such economic straits.

Throughout the suburbs, we are beginning to see scenes more reminiscent of a John Steinbeck novel than an Erma Bombeck column. And these troubled times have been shadowing this comfortable suburban world for a long time. The signs existed for all to see. But many chose to deny reality — neither from fear and naïveté born out of parochialism or out of an elitist, devil-may-care attitude. Perhaps it was up to those who knew better, to be more insistent — both those of who are journalists and those who actually live in the community and participate in civic life.

THOSE WHO persist in denying realities, who want to hold on to their fantasies, work hard at insuring others who don't agree are ridiculed and discredited. Many a tragic story exists of persons on city councils, school boards or other commissions who just gave up in frustration or in fatigue. This minority tried desperately to talk of social realities. They simply were crushed under the weight of public scorn. But that's the past. Now we have a chance to bury our misconceptions and work together to deal with the realities of unemployment and hunger and to rebuild a shattered economy.



Tim Richard

'Together,' the senators face right

JAMIE BLANCHARD borrowed a line from Jimmy Carter as he closed his inaugural address as Michigan's governor Saturday. "Together" we shall do this, "together" we shall do that, and "together" the other thing, said Gov. Blanchard. Carter's psychological researchers discovered the word in the 1976 presidential campaign. The theory seems to be that people like the word "together" as much as they used to like "motherhood," "apple pie" and "the flag." But in Michigan government, we don't have togetherness yet — not by a long shot. Blanchard is being hailed as the first Democratic governor since the 1930s to have a Democratic-controlled legislature. In their Nov. 2 victory celebrations and Jan. 1 inaugural balls, the Democrats rejoiced at their clean sweep of statewide offices.

WELL, LOOK again. Blanchard has already looked again. That's why he's being so coy about favoring a state personal income tax increase. Look at the state Senate. Twenty to 18 Democratic, you say?

Look harder, because the Michigan Senate with which Blanchard must deal is one of the most conservative bodies we've seen since the 1950s when Soapy Williams did battle with the Elmer Porters, Paul Prescotts, Lou Christmans and other members of what he termed the Neanderthal wing of the Republican Party.

In these suburbs, to be sure, we have seen only minor changes. Democratic Leader William Faust from Westland will be back, conservative Republican Robert Geake of Northville is returning, and liberal Democrat Jack Faxon of Southfield will replace liberal Democrat Doug Ross.

And liberal Democrat Phil Mastin of Pontiac is replacing conservative Republican Don Bishop of Rochester.

AFTER THAT, the Michigan Senate takes a sharp right face. Dana Wilson, a Democrat from Ferndale who supported the temporary income tax increase last year, lost a primary and will be replaced by Doug Cruce, a conservative Republican from Troy who didn't support the tax hike. Kerry Kammer of Clarkston, who lost the Democratic primary for governor, will be succeeded by Rick Fessler, a rock-ribbed conservative Republican from Union Lake.

Such conservative Democrats as Gilbert DiNello of East Detroit and James DeSana of Wyandotte will return. Remember DiNello's anti-Detroit income tax drive? Crusty, snarling Joe Mack, a Democrat from Ironwood who is sometimes referred to as "the senator from Cleveland Cliffs (Mining Co.), will be back. Dick Allen, the liberal Republican from Alma who supported public transit, was bumped in his primary by Alan Crosey, the kid from Bob Jones U. who wants creationism taught in science classes. His dad, Harmon Crosey, also moved up to the Senate.

Lovers of the 20th century may have rejoiced when Sen. Jack Welborn of Kalamazoo ran last in the gubernatorial primary, but did you notice who his successor will be? His brother, Bob.

Do you remember last year how Majority Leader Faust got the tax hike through the Senate Finance Committee? He appointed himself and Republican Leader Robert VanderLaan of Kentwood to the committee to create a 4-3 favorable vote. Well, VanderLaan, a moderate of the Milliken-Brickley school, has retired from politics at 50. The new Senate GOP leader will be John Engler, a rip-snortin' Headlineite.

Lots of luck with your "togetherness," Gov. Blanchard.



OBSERVER & ECCENTRIC PAPERS
W.W. Edgar '83

Searching for features

TV changed sports writing

LIKE COUNTLESS others across the land, The Stroller spent most of New Year's Day with his eyes focused on television.

There, in the comfort of an easy chair in his living room, he marvelled at the sights of the Rose Parade in living color. And later in the day, he watched with intense interest as the Michigan football team battled UCLA in the Rose Bowl. It was wonderful to watch every play, oftentimes with a better view than if he had been in the press box.

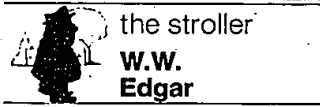
But as the game ended and the final score was flashed on the screen for all the world to see, it dawned on him that this electronic device had changed the sports writer's approach to writing the account of the contest for readers of his newspaper.

IN THE OLD days — and The Stroller is a member of the "old school" — it was mandatory that the final score of the game and the size of the crowd be mentioned in the opening paragraph. And goodness knows what fate was in store if they were forgotten. Today such an approach would be a waste of time and space, for folks already know the outcome, the score and who played the hero's role. They saw it on television.

So today's sports writer must approach the story from a feature angle — something, perhaps, such as strategy, not shown on the screen. Oftentimes the score of the game is not mentioned until the fifth or sixth paragraph, as background, so great has been the change.

No longer does a "daily newspaper produce an "extra" edition. The result has been flashed across the land both by television and radio. Writers now build their reputations on the feature prose they construct in telling the story of the game.

WHAT IS TRUE of football is true of all other sports. There was a time when newspapers flashed extra editions to Tiger Stadium that could be bought at the gate no sooner than the game was over. Now, the folks know the score and have heard the plays through the voices of the radio announcers



the stroller
W.W. Edgar

and TV commentators. Here again, the baseball writer is not confined to telling the score in his first paragraph.

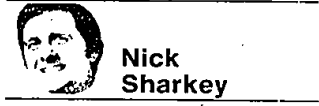
Where the TV cameras limit the imagination of the sports writer is at a major fight. No longer can the writer, sitting at ringside, "dress up" a story by making a torrid battle out of an ordinary fight.

No longer does the boxing writer send a blow-by-blow, round-by-round account. Nor do baseball and football writers wire play-by-play accounts. So the writer must seek a behind-the-scenes feature approach.

OBTAINING THAT feature angle can be difficult. Sometimes it may be found in the fighters' dressing rooms after the final bell. Other times the batlers' boasts before the opening bell can be the cornerstone of the final story for the paper.

TV and radio have taken much of the fun and excitement out of the newspaper offices on fight night. How well The Stroller recalls the days of the "extras" when he spent his time on the afternoon of the fight writing all sorts of alternative opening paragraphs. When the outcome was known that night, quick as a flash, the correct one was placed in the page form and raced to the press. It was always a battle with the rival paper to see which reached the main corners of downtown Detroit first.

Gone are the days of the "extra" and the days when the writer was confined in his approach to the press that would appear in print under his byline. Broadcasting changed them.



Nick Sharkey

The parade belongs to all, benefits all

ON THANKSGIVING morning, there was a little cologne in the air. It's not unusual for a Thanksgiving in this part of the country.

Unfortunately, my 4-year-old daughter was recovering from a cold. So a decision was made to sit out this year's Thanksgiving Day parade.

In the nine years I have lived in suburban Detroit, attending the Thanksgiving Day parade has become a tradition in my family. Usually, a neighbor and I bundle up our children, put them in the back of a station wagon and take off for downtown Detroit.

From our favorite parking spot — the lot at the Wayne State University law school — we walk to Woodward Avenue and view the floats as they stand before the start of the parade.

After that we walk down the curb on Woodward Avenue until we find an opening in the crowd, relax and enjoy the sights and sounds of the floats and bands.

NOW I AM especially sorry I missed this year's Thanksgiving Day parade. It may have been the last.

Detroit Renaissance Foundation, the principal organizer of the parade, announced last week that the parade would be cancelled. It cited a deficit of nearly \$100,000 in expenses over contributions. During the past few years, the parade has been supported by many organizations. The main backer was J.L. Hudson department stores with \$214,000.

Obviously, the decision to cancel the Thanksgiving day parade is another blow to Detroit. The announcement came a few days before the closing of the downtown Hudson's store. Hudson's is expected to lock its doors on the landmark for the final time at the end of next week.

IT'S EASY FOR suburbanites to be detached from the woes of Detroit. But unless Detroit is healthy, its suburbs can't be healthy.

Attending those parades, I was surprised by the many suburban friends I saw. The freeway to the parade was clogged with cars from the suburbs.

The Thanksgiving Day parade belongs not only to Detroit but to suburbanites — an entire metropolitan area. Our lives change when a traditional event like the parade ends or a store like downtown Hudson's closes.

Detroit events — the parade, the Fourth of July fireworks, the Freedom Festival and the Motor City Jazz Festival — enhance all our lives. They also make this area more attractive to those considering moving here.

That can help bring new industry and jobs to southeastern Michigan.

One-time ventures — such as the Super Bowl and the Republican National Convention — bring us national newspaper and television coverage. It gives us a chance to show the nation the positive attributes of the part of the world we call home.

I HOPE A final effort by state House Speaker Gary Owen, D-Ypsilanti, to save the parade will be successful. Owen has asked the state's Commerce Department to assist in gathering corporate support to continue the parade.

Owen suggests that any difference between contributions and costs for the parade be made up through "Say Yes to Michigan" promotional money. He logically argues that the national television coverage of the parade is promotion for the state.

If you agree, act now. A decision must be made within the next few days if a parade will be held in 1983. To keep the parade going, write: Rep. Gary Owen, Room 10, Capitol Building, Lansing 48909. Don't let bad economic times rain on our parade.