



# OBSERVATION POINT

## We're Soiling Our World

By Philip H. Power  
Publisher

Today is Earth Day, a day set aside for nation-wide observances and programs having to do with pollution of our world.

Across the nation, more than 2,000 colleges and universities, 10,000 public schools and 2,000 community groups are planning observances.

Locally, interest is high. The Plymouth schools, which had a full scale teach-in at Plymouth High three weeks ago, plan to take 100 sixth graders from Fairland School to Miller Woods to clean up the road side.

Southfield-Lathrup High School plans an all day teach-in next Monday, featuring programs in 10 different subject areas and a set of class outside speakers, including State Sen. Sander Levin and U.S. Rep. John Dingell.

The Southfield schools even have their own Nader. In this case it's a teacher, Miss Jeanette Nader, who will be discussing harmful detergents in Room 3 at Vandenberg School's "Environmental Do-In" today.

Other programs are planned in virtually all the school systems in this area.

**CLEARLY, POLLUTION** has become a big issue.

A Louis Harris national poll, published over the weekend, indicated that 69% of the public believed that water pollution was serious in their community. Most concern was shown in the suburbs, where 86% of residents felt that their rivers, streams and water resources were becoming rapidly polluted.

When asked whether pollution was becoming worse or better in the past few years, 53% said "worse" in 1970 versus 37% in 1967. The biggest rise was found in the suburbs, where the feeling the pollution is becoming worse increased from 49 to 74% in the same time period.

The pollution issue has considerable political clout. President Nixon is doing everything he can to take the issue away from the Democrats, and in Michigan the estimated 200,000 fishermen who are currently banned from fishing in mercury polluted Lake St. Clair represent a big voter bloc in themselves.

**THE BREADTH** of national concern and the large number of local people involved in various activities today clearly show that pollution is a concern no longer purely the province of the do-gooders.

It's everybody's concern, and plain folks are beginning to get as worked up as the college kids.

It is easy to see why.

We are soiling our world, and the process has gone so far that we can no longer fail to notice it.

Take a local example, this time of air pollution, measured by the University of Michigan in

terms of the number of tons of dust which fall on a square mile per month.

In a study compiled in 1968, the researchers found that in Plymouth, approximately nine tons of dust fell on each square mile of land per month; that's 108 tons per year!

Garden City is somewhat worse, with a dustfall of 15 tons per month, and Livonia registers 17.

But if you think that's bad, take a look at some other communities.

River Rouge hits the scale at 40 tons of dustfall per month, Ecorse has 58, and one of the reporting stations in Dearborn

notched an area high of 155 tons of dust per square mile per month!

**NO WONDER** the housewife complains about constant dusting.

She knows air pollution when she sees it.

So does the fisherman who remembers when he could catch game fish in the Rouge River in Hires Park. Now he catches mostly slime.

The child who cuts his foot on broken glass as he runs along the side of the road is a victim of pollution, just as the birds who used to sing but who are now sick from eating insecticides.

**PEOPLE MOVED** out here to the suburbs for various reasons. Good schools. Racial tension. Space to grow. A home with a yard.

High on the list, however, would have to come living in a place with a sense of country, a feeling of nature, a closeness to the land difficult to find in the center city.

For many years, we in the suburbs have been spoiling our world - ruining one of the reasons we moved here in the first place.

It's time to do something to stop pollution.

Earth Day is a good time to start.

## Apartments Are Answer

By EARL OPPERTHAUSER  
Farmington Twp. Trustee

Your dissent column contained under a heading: "Reader Disagrees With Tax Study," a rather uninformed criticism by Edward Benda of a statement I made in support of such a study to the effect that single family homes provide the poorest tax base, as compared to industrial, commercial and apartment developments.

Mr. Benda, although not questioning the accuracy of my conclusion concerning commercial and industrial developments, claimed that apartments were the worse tax base because they produced a lower assessed valuation per acre than single family homes.

He is wrong, both on that premise, and because he doesn't recognize that with development comes the cost of servicing the development with governmental services.

In support of his contention, Mr. Benda cited the \$5,138,000 assessment for the 159-acre Independence Green Apartment Complex, and claimed that the same area fully developed with single family homes, similar to the nearby Independence Commons development, in the \$50,000 class, would produce \$7,500,000 of tax assessment.

Mr. Benda failed to mention that the

## DISSENT

Views points 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.

Independence Green development is far from completed. When finished, it will have a total tax assessment in excess of \$15,000,000. Thus, this highly desirable apartment complex will bring in twice as much tax revenue as a high-class single family residential development.

**OF MUCH GREATER** significance is the fact that approximately 75% of our local property tax revenue is for schools. Thus the important thing for a good tax base is to have property which adds valuation to the tax rolls greater than the burden it creates. More specifically, good tax base avoids adding school children to our school system.

The latest school board figures show the following:

1. Independence Green Apartments contribute only seven pupils to our school system - (there are only 83 pupils in the district from 1743 apartments).

2. A 300 single family home development (such as preferred by Mr. Benda) would add 575 school children to our school tax burden. Based on school board statistics for similar \$50,000 home developments, such as Kimberly where 621 pupils come from 324 homes!

3. The cost per pupil is now \$827.99 per year of which 37% or \$471.96 comes from local property taxes for schools.

Thus, one can easily see that while the Independence Green Apartments contribute an enormous tax revenue to the community - \$150,048 of last year, they sent only seven pupils to the schools and created a local school tax burden of only \$3,303.72. This is a good tax base.

When Independence Green is fully developed, it will have an assessed valuation of over \$15,000,000 which at today's school tax rate of \$37.23 per \$1,000 will produce a school tax revenue base of about \$558,450.

**THIS WOULD COMPARE** to the 200 single family home development in the \$50,000 class for an assessed valuation of \$7,500,000 which would produce at the same tax rate a total school tax revenue of \$279,225.

Thus, the apartment development would produce 275.23 more school tax revenue (twice as much as the single family homes).

In addition to producing more revenue, the apartments (when completed) will contribute about 15 school pupils as compared to the expected 575 pupils that would come from the single family subdivision preferred by Mr. Benda. This would produce a school tax burden of only \$7,079 as compared to a burden of \$271,377 for the single family homes.

Thus the apartments have a net school tax advantage of almost \$500,000 over the single family subdivision. Obviously, apartments, such as these, are a much better tax base.

Let me make this point perfectly clear: Neither I, nor does any member of the Township Board favor an excessive amount of industrial, commercial or multiple home development in Farmington Township.

I believe, however, that each of us is realistic and intelligent enough to know that a proper balance of such developments, properly controlled and located to protect the property values of our residents, not only give us a good tax base and keep our taxes down, they increase the value of our single family homes by keeping them in a low-tax community.

**UNJUSTIFIED ATTACKS** such as Mr. Benda's are a disservice to the community. His letter did, however, although unintended and indirect, serve one purpose by pointing out that fine single family home developments such as Independence Commons are not deterred from locating near well-planned apartment complexes like Independence Green.

The efforts that the City of Farmington is making again to try and annex away the township's industrial park and this apartment complex is dramatic evidence that confirms that informed people know the value of these developments is tax base.

It is indeed an ironic situation. When the township's Republican administration, under Curt Hall, proposed the industrial park development several years ago, the opposition, in their usual unobjective, unimaginative and vindictive way claimed that it would be the ruin of our community. They uttered many vicious things and subjected our officials to a barrage of accusations and investigations.

To their credit, our officials stood firm. This was before my first term as a township trustee, but I have been proud to have been a part of that administration, even though I too have since experienced the smears too often associated with politics.

We on the township board already know which types of properties are good tax bases, and which are not. The purpose of the tax base study being made by our planning consultants is to project our anticipated revenues and expenses into the future in order to determine if there will be a proper balance of these different properties to give us a tax base which will insure that our township will continue to become an even better place to live.

## R.T. Thompson writes

### Discuss Year Round Classes

Is year round use of the schools feasible for districts of all sizes, small and large? Would such a program bring a savings for the school system?

Supt. Raymond Spear of the Northville School District is firmly convinced that such a program can be worked out for systems of all sizes and at considerable savings.

At the moment, he is preparing to present the findings of a study committee from his community to a year round school workshop scheduled for Saturday morning and afternoon in Northville High School.

It appears this could be one of the most important workshops ever presented in this area, one that should attract school administrators, board members and complaining taxpayers from all of the communities covered by the Observer Newspapers.

**THERE HAS BEEN** considerable talk-just talk-on the part of school boards about a year round program. None of the area boards, with the exception of Northville, has gone beyond the talk stage.

Two years ago, Northville started a community study of the plan. A year ago it was one of six communities to receive a grant from the State Board of Education to finance an extensive survey and report the findings.

That report, along with results of the other five studies, will be made at Saturday's workshop.

The school systems involved in the reports are: Okemos-Lansing Haslett, Ann Arbor, Port Huron, Northville, Utica and Freeland.

Supt. Spear has received preliminary information to the effect that four of the reports support year round school, and two have

reservations and probably will have a dissenting note.

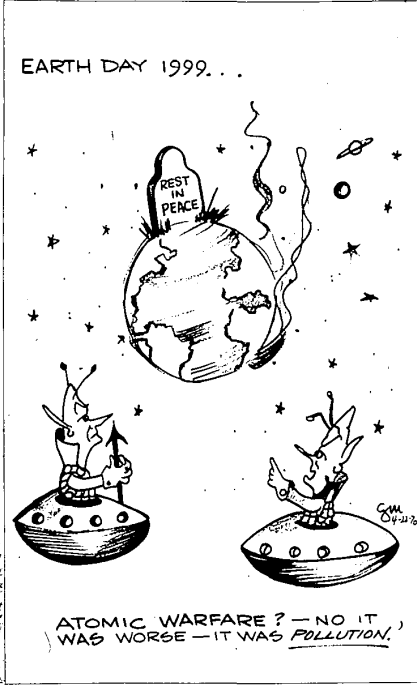
Be that as it may, the workshop is one that persons interested in school financing, operations and use of buildings should attend.

**IF YOU ARE** of the group that believes the schools shouldn't be idle during the summer months and that savings could be made with year round use, then the workshop will provide many of the answers.

Supt. Spear has figures to show that Northville could save millions in building construction over a period of use. He has statistics to show that year round use would enable the system to increase 30% without a need for additional buildings.

His report will show how the adoption of such a program will aid the curriculum, give students a balance of four equal quarters of 60 days each and still not increase costs appreciably.

We recommend that everyone wishing to know more about year round schools attend the workshop-you probably will learn many things that will open your eyes.



## Tim Richard writes

### U-M Recruiters Vs. The Blacks

It's at the point now where if Spiro Agnew says "the sky is blue," certain persons immediately respond, "The sky is orange and you're a fascist, sir."

So let us pretend that Morton Zilch said what Spiro Agnew said about the University of Michigan's racial quota goal, and go on from there.

U-M will recruit to boost its black enrollment to 10% of the total by 1972-73, and it sounds easy at first blush because blacks make up 10 or 12% of the population (no one is quite sure exactly because a lot of blacks, especially men, were missed in the 1960 census).

**UNFORTUNATELY**, the base that U-M will recruit from is actually less than 10% of the population. The base is not the total black population (10% plus), nor is it the black proportion of high school graduates (6%), but the black proportion of high school graduates with the academic stuff to go on to college (3%), says Morton Zilch.

Ironically, U-M's current black enrollment is a shade better than 3%. Thus, without recruiting a single additional black student, U-M is getting its proportionate share of academically talented black high school graduates - right now.

To boost its black enrollment to 10%, then, U-M will have to recruit triple its true share of blacks. It can be done, and there are two ways to do it.

One is to dilute academic standards in order to admit marginal students. Morton Zilch assumes U-M will do this, but he's probably wrong. That university will sponsor a Ku Klux Klan chapter before it dilutes academic standards.

The other method is simply to recruit more than its share of blacks by luring away other schools' shares. That means robbing the potentials of Wayne State University, Wayne County Community College (especially), Michigan State, Eastern, Western, Central and Northern Michigan, Ferris, Oakland and so on.

**IN AGREEMENT** that the U-M should have more than triple its share of black students, the Black Action Movement, President Robben Fleming and the august Board of Regents have united to make a very arrogant assumption-namely, that We university is some sort of Valhalla where all who are lured will be happy.

Some people love Ann Arbor. I'm one. I spent 5 1/2 years in that heady atmosphere and was supremely happy. No school in

Michigan is remotely like it. You'll meet more characters in four years at Ann Arbor than you will in 40 years in "straight" society.

Other students were supremely unhappy. There are a tremendous number of emotional crack-ups on that campus, and a reliable figure I once heard was that one student in four visits the "shrink" at some point in his academic career. The campus is particularly brutal for women, is particularly angry because of its high proportion are pasty-faced, sunken-eyed, stringy-haired, rumped and just plain beat.

It's a campus with a high proportion of East Coast and foreign students and brilliant Jewish kids. It's in a densely populated, crowded, expensive town.

It's not enough to be a high school graduate with good grades. To have a successful career at U-M, you've got to be temperamentally suited for the place.

I have a fear that BAM, President Fleming and the regents will do a grave disservice with the kind of intensive black recruitment campaign U-M must conduct to hit the magic 10% quota. And if that puts me on the side of Morton Zilch and Spiro Agnew - so be it.

## Editorial & Opinion

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