

Area has a hostile image — NAACP

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What must be determined, Agnew said, is what environment or situation prompted the vandalism, which Farmington investigators believe involved youths. A question that must be answered, Agnew said, is whether the vandalism at the Success' home is an isolated incident or a trend of racism in the community.

Willis told the committee that certain communities, including the Farmington area, are known for

being unresponsive to blacks. He, for one, chose to live in Southfield, Willis said, because he knew there he could be accepted and become a part of the community.

Yet, Agnew, who moved to Farmington Hills with his wife and two young children about a year ago, said he personally has not encountered any bigotry or prejudice in the community. Agnew moved to Farmington Hills from Southfield, where he lived 10 years.

Some committee members expressed disbelief that in the late 1980s, the Farmington community is unresponsive to minorities.

OTHERS SUGGESTED various ways of tackling the apparent attitude problem in the community.

"I think we've got some work on ourselves to do," committee member Jean Dudley said.

She said that she'd have to welcome minorities only for them to be "kicked in the face."

"I'd like us to be ready . . . but I'm not sure we are. I'm not condemning the city. I'm truly not. Many of our people are very sheltered people," Dudley said.

BUT MEMBER Martin Krohner suggested there's no time to lose. Committee members must look into their own hearts and then determine what can be done on a community-wide basis.

"I think it would be naive to be-

lieve a belief system, a community would change overnight," Willis said, making the NAACP available to help the committee.

Several suggestions were prompted from the discussion. Dudley suggested contacting neighborhood associations to determine the racial and ethnic mix of neighborhoods and whether there have been any problems.

"Are they recognizing problems. If they are, are they dealing with the

problems?" Dudley asked.

Krohner, a member of the Council of Homeowners Associations of Farmington Hills, documented the difficulty in gathering information from the individual associations, particularly written surveys. The council is an umbrella organization representing some 45 of the more than 90 subdivisions.

Dudley suggested attending homeowner association meetings to talk about racial issues and the cultural committee. Most associations have annual meetings early in the new year.

Success wants to leave Farmington

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and brick siding of the house were spray-painted with offending graffiti two days before Christmas.

The biracial couple have been

married and living in their Farmington home for past two years.

Symbols of the Ku Klux Klan, a swastika, racial slurs and obscene words, plus warnings to "get out,"

were included in the hate messages on the Success' home.

Derwin Success told committee members that the racially motivated vandalism was only a part of the reason he's considering leaving

Farmington. He has decided to join the ministry.

The racially motivated incidents he and his wife have encountered, Success said, have prompted him to change his life. "I just want to give my life totally to God."

warming to me."

Gary Goss, deputy director of the Farmington Department of Public Safety and a committee member, said that investigators suspect youths were involved in the Success vandalism.

"I just can't imagine that anyone but young punks are involved in this," said committee member Helga Miller. "When I first came to this country, I had swastikas painted on my house because I'm German."

"I'm talking about personal contact," Dudley said. "I don't want to rely on them (written surveys). You get too many unknowns."

BUT SOME members questioned whether residents would provide the committee with honest answers.

"Do you really think people will speak their minds?" member Helga Miller asked. "People aren't going to blow their cover."

Reward

Police eye information on vandalism

Farmington police continue to investigate the racially motivated vandalism that occurred at the home of a biracial couple two days before Christmas. They are seeking tips from the community.

The Oakland County Chamber of Commerce also runs a Silent Observer Reward Program for felony crimes, such as the one that Diana and Derwin Success experienced.

Obscenities and racial slurs were painted on the couple's Shiloh Street house, causing more than \$100 in damage, which constitutes a felony.

The county chamber of commerce offers a reward of up to \$1,000 to anyone who provides information to the police that directly results in a

conviction for felony crimes committed anywhere in Oakland County. If you have information about a crime, or know the people who committed the vandalism on Shiloh Street:

- Call the local law enforcement agency in the area where the crime took place.
- Select a number you can give the police, which will later identify you for a possible reward.
- Identify yourself as a Silent Observer and give the police this number.

"We have paid out over \$70,000 to date and have helped solve approximately 200 major crimes," said chamber president Earl Krebs. "I feel we can do even more to fight crime in our county by increasing awareness of this program."

The Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce is a member of the Oakland County chamber, although it is not directly involved in the anonymous tip program.

Information about the Dec. 22 incident at the Success' home can be given to the Farmington Department of Public Safety at 473-7262, either directly or through the Silent Observer program.

CONTACTING THE Farmington Public Schools was also suggested as a means of promoting cultural and racial awareness. But Dudley said first a program must be prepared before approaching the board of education.

The schools, another NAACP representative said, are a good indication of what the racial and ethnic attitudes are.

IF A conviction is obtained as a direct result of the information, you will be entitled to a reward, according to information from the chamber.

AP — One of the remarkable changes in modern lifestyles is the acceptance of debt, not just for 24 months or so as in the old days, but for life.

Household debt today is ubiquitous and without end, joining taxes as an inescapable and sometimes haunting presence, and consuming hours of effort, often futile, to lessen its imprint on the budget.

In 1980, a total of \$162.2 billion of residential property loans were on the books. Today, there is more than \$2 trillion, or close to 14 times the earlier amount.

Back in 1960 the notion still prevailed that it was wise to pay off the mortgage as soon as you could and have nothing more to do with the bank. To go back for a second mortgage was often viewed as a tragic necessity.

In 1986, the house is a pile of equity to be used at will, sometimes by the simple process of writing a check. Enormous mortgages make it a near certainty that many families will never pay off their loans until they sell.

Consumer credit in 1980 amounted to \$65.1 billion. Today it is more than \$750 billion. Automobiles once financed in two or three years are now carried for five, then the car is turned in for a new one and another five-year loan.

He told the committee that "it's always white males" that bother his family. "It hurts so much, I don't want to look (to determine the age of the name-caller)." But, he added, "the positive is coming out. When the community rallied behind me, it's

"When you plateau on a situation such as relations between ethnic groups, you can't stand still. You either continue to progress or you go backward."

"If it's in the kids you know, it's automatically in the adults. That's where they are getting it from."

Household debt is on the increase

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