

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

Bigger from page 4B

troit area. We need sites with 10 to 12 acres.

Home Quarters will compete with Home Depot, Handy Andy, Builders Square and all neighborhood hardware stores for home improvement dollars. Their edge, according to Wing, is on-site child care staffed by professionals in their "Kids Quarters," a tool department with a selection second to none and a "greatly enhanced service level."

Celia Wing
Homequarters

■ We plan to invest \$200 million in the Detroit area. That's \$10 million per store.

national chains wiped out independent retailers of local women's fashions such as Kay Baum, Siegel's and Himel-hoch's.

"These nationals can just get the latest from both coasts out on the shelves so much faster," he said. "And they can also provide greater selections because they are so big. They offer lower prices, too, because they deal in volume."

A local businessman who requested anonymity stopped into the Southfield Office Max store for the first time last week and his comments seem to back Webber's assertions.

"It's an awesome place," he said. "They just have so much stock just piled to the ceiling. You can buy in bulk or just onesies or twosies. The selection of merchandise was fabulous. Why would I go anywhere else again?"

MORAL PERSPECTIVES



RABBI IRWIN GRONER

the welfare of Detroit, and to the point of making real personal sacrifices on its behalf, is because all suburbanites came from the city originally.

Therefore, the argument proceeds, all suburbanites have a debt to repay for the city's parks in which they played as children, for the schools in which they were educated, and for the churches

and synagogues in which they were raised in faith.

The fact of the matter is that a very large percentage of families in the newer suburbs never lived in the city but were born and raised in the older suburbs.

Of the population of the metropolitan area, we wonder how many people count Royal Oak, or Ferndale, or Southfield, or Lincoln Park, or any of the dozen or so nearer suburbs around Detroit as their hometown?

Or in an area whose chief industry employs a national work force, how many people move here from other parts of the country? Thus, if there was an attachment to a city, it might as likely as not be for Cleveland, or Philadelphia, or Chicago and Detroit being a place one heard about but never actually visited.

Those of us concerned for the city's social and economical plight should hope to involve others in these concerns but not for sentimental reasons.

It is a dangerous and blisful assumption that sympathy, compassion and concern for our troubled city and its people can be generated by nostalgia. But there are far better reasons than that for hoping that Detroit will once again be as fine a city to live in or near as some of us remember.

We need to restore the economic and social strength of Detroit because the city alone can provide the vital center for what could otherwise be a group of disparate communities.

Detroit has institutions of art, learning, culture and entertainment which provide for the life of the spirit. Sports activities and ethnic festivals similarly enrich

and diversify the experiences of those who live in a large area around Detroit.

Without a strong center, the spokes of the wheel cannot hold. In much the same way, the legal, professional, commercial and financial establishments of downtown Detroit need to be nurtured, encouraged and enhanced for the benefit of all.

We who live in the suburbs should share in this commitment not because of nostalgia for the past, but rather because the resurgence we bring to Detroit will serve to bless us and our children.

Rabbi Irwin Groner is with Congregation Shaarey Zedek in Southfield. If you have a question or comment for him, dial 953-2047, mailbox number 1862; on a touch-tone telephone.

Ann Arbor's the backdrop for drama



BOOK BREAK
VICTORIA DIAZ

"Sister Water," by Nancy Willard (255 pp., \$21, Knopf).

Nancy Willard, an essayist, poet, children's author, novelist and Ann Arbor native, has chosen her birthplace as the setting for this intriguing little

novel. Willard has created, especially the Buddha Upoor Cafe on Liberty Street.

Into her setting Willard brings a memorable melting pot of quirky characters.

Begin with Jessie, who came to Ann Arbor long ago to attend the University of Michigan. Not long after, she met and eventually married Henry Woolman, proprietor of Woolman Scientific Supply Co., located on the banks of the Huron.

Though the supply company looked to Jessie rather ordinary on the outside, she found it a very unusual place on the inside. Through it runs an underground stream and, in the stream swim "ghostly versions of bluegills and perch."

Now, nearly 60 years later, Henry is gone and Jessie, befuddled with age, is struggling to hold on to what is left of her life. What is left is the old building that still houses the stream, the crumbling house in which she has lived for years, and her family.

Even as she struggles, death seems to become more and more a part of her daily life. Her friends die, she becomes ill, her son-in-law is in a car accident. Even the occasional old man who asks her out can't be counted on

to stay alive long enough to make the date. (Willard's dry humor goes far toward making this story the success that it is.)

As Jessie struggles, her two daughters, Martha and Ellen, and her grandson, Stevie, wrestle with their own demons, all of which involve change and transition: two main themes of this story.

One of the problems they face is a developer named Harvey Mack, who is determined to acquire what's left of the supply company, so that he can destroy it and build (what else?) a shiny new shopping mall on the spot. He also is, by the way, determined to acquire Jessie's widowed daughter, Ellen. One of the more telling scenes in the story occurs when she and son, Stevie, go to dinner at Mack's palatial but grim home and find Mack trying to deal with "a perfect invasion of toads in the kitchen."

Enter Sam Theopollis, an ex-veterinarian of sorts, and a star waiter at the Buddha Upoor, who lands a job as Jessie's live-in caretaker.

A native of Jessie's hometown, Dromping, Ohio, Sam's (linkages and similarities occur throughout "Sister Water" and are an integral part of this story), Sam believes his past experience in lov-

ing and caring for four-legged animals qualifies him for the job. And, as it happens, he's exactly right.

Sam, however, comes with his own troubled past and a set of problems of his own, which are soon magnified and complicated by the discovery of a young woman's body floating in a nearby pond.

"Sister Water" is a story about many things: time, change, loss, pain, aging, love, living, dying, death, where we came from, where we're going.

All weighty matters indeed. But there is nothing heavy or ponderous about this book. And essentially what keeps it flying is Willard's lyricism and her splendid way with words.

"By late afternoon the clouds over Ann Arbor shimmered a pale yellow, darkening quickly like bruised fruit. The air held its breath; parking lots all over the city glistened as if they were melting."

Anyone who knows Ann Arbor will recognize that scene. Somehow, Willard lends it an edge of magic though, and in just the right amount, as she settles in to tell this moving story.

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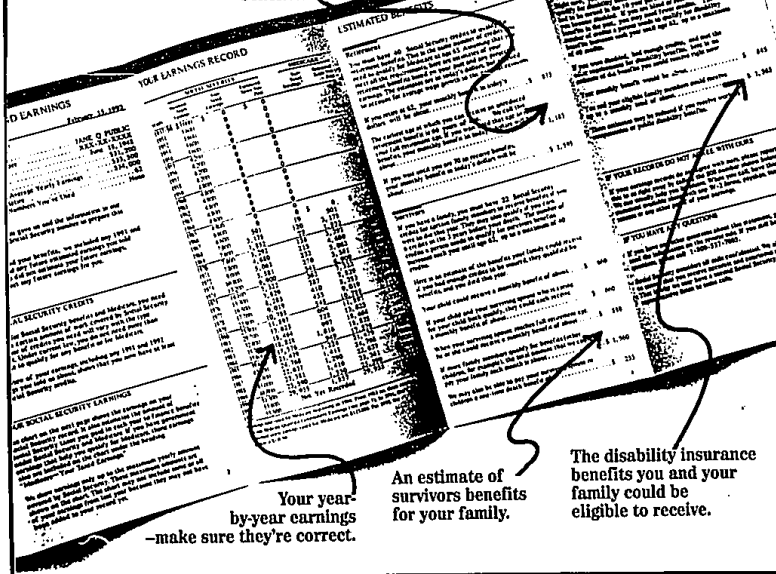
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