

OBSERVATION POINT

Milliken Can Cool Hysteria With Appeal

By Philip H. Power
Publisher

Last Wednesday Gov. Milliken said in a state-wide television address that he would appeal Federal Judge Stephen Roth's ruling that legally sanctioned segregation exists in Detroit schools.

Milliken's speech made lots of sense, both for Michigan and for him politically. As the governor himself has said, he made the speech because he was concerned about the wave of emotional reaction which he termed near-hysterical.

But he had a more general point in mind. Quite simply, it was that, unless Judge Roth's ruling was given the full and thorough test of the appeals process of our system of law, no eventual outcome—even though it might involve minimum bussing within the Detroit school district alone—could be accepted by the public.

Milliken said that he would uphold any final court decision on bussing, and that he would not try to block or delay any decision from the Court of Appeals or the U.S. Supreme Court. Clearly, he is hoping that the public, having seen that whatever order comes is given a thorough test in the courts before being implemented, will not react in the same violent way that we now associate with Pontiac.

BUT MILLIKEN'S speech goes farther than that statesman-like goal. For in the most direct terms, the governor faced a political crisis over the bussing issue that he could not afford to ignore. This was particularly so because the strongest protest against bussing came from precisely those areas of the state that had the most to do with his election last year: the suburbs.

Shortly after Judge Roth's ruling, various political forces in the state started taking various positions in reaction to the issue that clearly will be the hottest one to hit the state in some years.

Democratic state leadership, following State Chairman James McNeely (who was trapped into taking a quick position on the issue during a press conference called for quite another purpose), said they were against bussing because it was a bad thing, but felt it was the only way to tackle the problem of segregation then so be it.

State legislators, especially those from the suburbs, said they felt bussing was bad; they overrode blacks in the Legislature and passed resolutions against it.

Sen. Robert Griffin, running for re-election and finding suddenly an issue which looked like it might save his seat, said he was against bussing and that he

was introducing a constitutional amendment to prohibit it.

Atty. Gen. Frank Kelley, who will run for the Democratic nomination for the Senate, said he had mixed feelings about bussing but that he was pretty sure the Supreme Court wouldn't sanction it anyway.

SO MILLIKEN, WHO had been abroad while the whole thing erupted, returned home to

find himself seriously threatened. He took a step which, while not rejecting the idea of bussing itself, met the immediate needs of his Suburban constituents: He would appeal the ruling, which translates as a coded way of saying that in actual fact he is against bussing, too.

The governor's speech has helped everyone off the hook, for the time being. Judge Roth's

order will be appealed, and that will take time, no matter what the result.

During that period, emotions may cool down a bit, and perhaps the court will develop a sensitivity to the feelings of the public which will help them through the tangled legal and ethical issues involved.

In this case, the governor did well by doing good.

Tim Richard writes

Game Time Is Over

Oakland County commissioners will have a chance Nov. 18 to stop playing political games with one of the most important long-range issues facing southeastern Michigan.

The Oakland County board has been sitting on \$104,500 earmarked for the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority, not because it has any quarrel with SEMTA but because it's unhappy with its share of state road funds.

Oakland is fighting with Gov. Milliken and the Legislature and using SEMTA as a pawn in its monetary game. Not that Oakland roads couldn't use some more work—indeed they can!

The county has pretty well got what it wants from the state, and now we'll see if the commissioners come through with the SEMTA funds. If they do, SEMTA can accumulate a \$500,000 regional share and pick up \$950,000 in federal funds.

IT'S A PITY to see anything hold up SEMTA's work.

The six-county agency has taken over a defunct bus line in the eastern suburbs; it set up two "employment express" lines, one to Southfield, to bring inner city workers to waiting suburban jobs; within perhaps a year, it will be able to acquire Detroit's DSR and consolidate a flustered bus systems into a unified package to serve the entire region—no more fussing with invisible municipal boundaries.

Rapid transit is something the Detroit metropolitan area, among major U.S. metropolises, has been almost alone in lacking. But it's about to become a reality.

Groundbreaking for the Woodward corridor rapid rail line is scheduled for 1973, and the first part of the downtown Detroit to Pontiac line is due to begin operation in 1976, on the nation's 200th anniversary.

SEMTA has an experienced

general manager in Thomas Lipscomb, who came here earlier this year from Philadelphia. The former Army general didn't come out here to do studies; he came here to run a balanced transportation system; he means business.

The Woodward corridor isn't the only one that will be getting rapid rail service. The TALUS 1990 plan calls for five lines, one of them in the Schoolcraft Road corridor.

WE'RE CUTTING off our noses to spite our faces if we don't move with SEMTA. Suburbanites who work downtown can save themselves a lot of time and grief on jammed expressways by taking rapid transit.

R.T. Thompson writes

No One Has Come Forward To Tell

It seems incredible in this day and age, in these modern times when we appear to have the answers to everything, the solutions to all problems . . . but Livonia has a case that has defied solution for almost six months.

It is the hit-run death of teenager Chris Beattie, a member of the 1971 graduating class of Bentley High, who was struck and killed by an unidentified driver just one month before what was to have been the happiest moment of her life . . . high school graduation.

Chris was run down just a block or so from her home while walking along Henry Ruff from her part-time position at a nearby junior high.

THE INCIDENT took place in broad daylight on a late spring afternoon. There were youngsters playing tennis at a court not far from the scene of the fatality.

There were youngsters playing along the street. One has to believe there were adults looking out of windows at some of the homes in the vicinity. It all apparently happened quickly . . . a station wagon traveling south on Henry Ruff, Chris walking along the side of the road . . . then suddenly the noise of a car speeding up and racing away and a girl's body in a heap.

That's all the Livonia police know of the accident. That's all the bereaved parents know. Both the police and the parents would like to have the hit-run death solved. They would like to know the name of the heartless driver who sped away after taking the life of a lovely girl.

But now, just short of six months later, they are no closer to a solution than they were five minutes after the incident.

Since our suburbs (unfortunately) show no sign of allowing racial integration in housing, rapid transit will be a greater necessity for Detroiters who work in the increasing number of offices and factories that are moving out here.

And anyone who has driven in from I-96 or I-94 and seen the brown haze over the region can only applaud the decrease in air pollution that rapid transit can help bring about.

It's unfortunate, when SEMTA faces a number of hurdles, that Oakland County saw fit to play games for so many months. But the county commissioners on Nov. 18 will get a chance to redeem themselves. Here's hoping they'll do it.

FEMININE MEMBERS OF THE FOURTH ESTATE PREFER EARLY NAME TAG



Jackie Klein writes

You Can't Report Without A Name Tag

As I was peeling a name tag off of last year's blue suit this morning, it brought back a rush of memories.

One of the fringe benefits of being a member of the fourth estate is being invited to a variety of luncheons, openings, testimonials, award dinners, victory parties and ad infinitum.

You listen to speeches, scribble platitudes, act charming, sip cocktails, consume calories, respect politicians, introduce your husband and wear a name tag.

A NAME TAG is an integral part of any social function. It serves a definite purpose when you can't remember a name and you haven't forgotten your glasses. More people look at lapels than at faces when introducing others to "what's name? We've been friends for years."

And just think, you can always paper a room with "Hello - My Name Is—" and it goes with any decor.

A bank opening is always a jolly affair. If you're at a loss for words, you can approach the vice president or president or manager or assistant manager and simply, "Are you giving away any samples of \$100 bills?"

The guy in the gray flannel suit and no sense of humor will stare at you from behind horn rimmed glasses and reply, "We can't do that but we'd be happy to present you with an application for a checking or savings account or perhaps a loan with easy payments."

Well, that didn't go over so you accept a bourbon and soda and a cream cheese and olive hors d'oeuvre as you tour the facilities.

If you're a smoker, it presents a problem if you have to shake someone's hand. You invariably drop your napkin, burn a hole in your name tag, say the wrong thing and dash back to the bar for a needed refill.

Ground breakings are other bonuses to be enjoyed. It usually rains or snows or it's muddy. The photographer is usually late. You stand there and brave the elements as your heart palpates waiting for the guy with the camera to show.

Your shoes and stockings are splattered and your hair-do

droops as the smiling mayor wields his shovel. He presents a key to the city to the new developer who's thinking about his tax assessments while city officials are thinking about the tax base and you're thinking about how you're going to describe a hole in the ground without pictures.

THE TESTIMONIAL dinner is a blast. The first speaker who makes the toast and the jokes has it made unless he forgets his notes which happens nine times out of 10.

If he happens to be a politician turned comedian, he's impressing the folks that he's not such a bad guy even though he's a bad joke teller. If he happens to be a comedian trying to be a politician, the results are disastrous.

After introducing 40 dignitaries, he spends the next 10 minutes apologizing for the ones he forgot and in the process forgets the individual for whom the testimonial dinner is being given.

The next speaker has to do an encore and top the first speaker's jokes and in so doing also forgets the recipient of the testimonial dinner. The third, fourth, fifth, and sixth speaker's opening remarks are, "Everything has already been said so there's nothing left to say." It takes them three hours to say it.

The star of the evening accepts his gifts of golf clubs, certificates of appreciation, trophies and keys to the city with a modest smile and a tear in his eye, as he goes into retirement and is quickly forgotten. The new appointee will get the same golf clubs and ulcers a few years hence.

There's always the smiling faces and remarks such as, "That was some article you wrote last week. How come you spelled my name wrong?"

The most fun is the civic group luncheon where everybody is commended for selling tickets, arranging flowers, making phone calls and planning the program, "over and above the call of duty."

Once a forgotten lady in the background protested in a small whine, "But I brought the cookies."

Everybody wants to be recognized—with or without a name tag.

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Sense And Nonsense

An Observerland fine arts group brought in a play from the University of Michigan recently and provided us this synopsis:

"It is not so much about today, as it is of today. The story revolves around the main character's realization of what it means to be a person and the problems he encounters upon acting on this new insight."