

R.T. Thompson Writes

# Youngstown's Lesson: Schools Close Doors

For lack of 12 mills, more than 30,000 schoolage youngsters are walking the streets of Youngstown, O. today — schools closed until after Jan. 2 for lack of operating funds.

And therein is a lesson that every school board should heed, for every single one could face a similar problem in the not-too-distant future — and some well may.

Six times the Youngstown Board of Education presented millage requests to the voters, and six times the issues failed to pass.

The latest vote took place in early November and school officials took heart with the fact that there were 1,400 more "Yes" votes than in the previous elections although the millage request went down the drain just like the five previous polls.

**THE SITUATION** in Youngstown isn't much different from that in most any city in Michigan and in Ohio, as far as that goes.

More and more resistance is building against the millage requests by the schools. More and more homeowners are saying in effect, "Our taxes are high enough, we won't pay any more, and if it means closing the schools — then close them and let the state legislature decide how long the students will be away from classes."

It is a sad commentary, in a period of such high prosperity as we are now going through, that there isn't enough money to operate a school system as large as Youngstown's.

The Youngstown situation is a result of a combination of a number of things. The unions have dropped their support, and

the Catholic voters won't back any measures that will cost them more for education while they are paying privately to send their youngsters to parochial schools.

Those with youngsters in parochial schools believe financial aid should come their way in much the same manner that funds support the public schools.

In just so many words, they are in favor of parochialism, and their recent actions at the polls in Youngstown are an indication that they are going to do everything possible to push through such a program.

**IN THE MEANTIME**, at the time of the year which should be the happiest, the schools in one of Ohio's largest industrial cities have been closed.

Students from K through 12 aren't thinking too much about Christmas and the arrival of Santa Claus. They are wondering when the school bells will ring again.

They are wondering if some miraculous Santa Claus will come from somewhere and provide the necessary funds to get the schools back into operation.

It is a rather bleak outlook for teachers and all employees of the Youngstown School Board who are wondering if they will receive checks between now and Christmas so that they can enjoy the holidays even though payless times are directly ahead.

**THE YOUNGSTOWN CRISIS** should serve as a warning to school administrators throughout the land, and to state legislators, that the time is long past when they can stick their heads in the sand like ostriches and hope the

situation will clear up.

Livonia, which saw a millage request fail last fall, is fast nearing a crisis and could well wind up in the same situation as Youngstown.

Inkster schools are in grave financial difficulties. Plymouth has had difficulty getting voter approval for additional millage. Clarenceville had to go to the electorate twice in less than three months to get approval of much needed finances.

Nankin Mills already has served notice on the State Board of Education that it will be unable to operate after this school year and may have difficulty making it to the end of the school calendar.

**THE WRITING IS** on the wall. The message has struck home in Youngstown, O. It's time for school officials and the state legislators to get together and evaluate the entire situation.

Youngstown voters have shown that resistance is mounting against the requests from school boards for increased millage. There isn't any question that the schools can't operate without adequate financing. There isn't any question that homeowners feel they have reached the bottom of the barrel and they can't afford to pay any more.

The answer? Well, in Youngstown it resulted in the closing of the schools, and that may be the answer elsewhere as similar problems arise. Then it will be up to the state legislature or the federal government to devise some means of making up the deficit.

The sooner the better.



## OBSERVATION POINT

### Suburban Snow

By Philip H. Power

It was wet and by Monday it had turned to slush. But it was snow. The first real snow of the year.

And it said a lot to me about what living here in the suburbs really is all about.

Why? Because I got to thinking about the various kinds of snow as I watched it turn from a few fine flakes to a nice heavy flurry.

There is big city snow, like you see in downtown Detroit.

Beautiful it is... for about five minutes. Then it gets dirty with all the soot in the air. It falls on the streets and for a moment turns them into magic twinkling paths, but then it turns into urban slop, all the more cold and wet because it's so ugly.

Big city people don't seem to like it much. Everybody is busy after a snow trying to get the stuff off their walks or cars. Women hop gingerly over it, like cranes trying to navigate over oily pads. The kids throw an occasional snowball, but then spend most of their time trying to stay dry and out of the way of the slop kicked up by the cars.

**SUBURBAN SNOW** is different, at least in the way people react to it.

We try just as hard as big city folk to get the stuff off our walks and cars, but we don't have the frank and unceasing aversion to it that you see downtown.

On Sunday, the kids were out in the lawns, frolicking around and throwing the first snowballs of the season. Mothers were out with the toddlers all bundled up in new snow suits, taking them for a short look at the white stuff.

Down in Hines Park, people were out for a walk, including a

wonderful old man in a red and black mackinaw who shouted, "I walk here every day of the year, but in snow's the best!"

You could drive down the quiet residential streets and see people out in the snow, watch the smoke curl up from the fireplace chimneys, and see the lights in the windows wink on as darkness began to fall.

Sure it was wet. But it was clean and it stayed clean. Sure there was slop in the streets, but there was enough space between the streets and houses so that people didn't seem to mind.

We seem to accept the snow—even welcome it—here in the suburbs in a way just not seen in a big city.

#### WHY?

I'm sure there are a lot of reasons. But one has a lot to do with the entire suburban style of life out here.

It isn't the big city here, and there are still bits of untouched country everywhere you look. There are orchards in Farmington Township and working farms in Livonia and Plymouth Township. There are woods and fields with pheasants and an occasional fox scattered through Observation, and the sense of trees and

sky and nature is very strong.

Much stronger than in downtown Detroit, filled with awesome concrete buildings and countless square miles of black-topped streets.

In the suburbs, we have a lawn and perhaps a few trees; in the big city you have a little back yard perhaps and a spindly tree plunked in the sidewalk out in front. In the suburbs we have a place to stretch our arms and legs, to feel the space in the world, and to grow. In the cities you feel the space, but only in an elevator, and people grow in a way substantially untouched by nature.

**NATURE.** That's the big difference. In the suburbs, you can feel it; in the big city, you can't.

Snow is a part of nature and a big one. When we get snow, we know that nature has again turned and winter is on us. And a lot of people wanted to get out in it over the weekend, to feel the snow on their faces and to sense directly that winter was here. They weren't doing that downtown.

So I'll feel just fine to watch the snow fall. Until the day comes when I get stuck and I'm maybe a little less enthusiastic about nature.

Tim Richard Writes

## Advent: Solemn Time Of Restraint

This is the solemn season of Advent, the period of quiet anticipation of Christmas.

All Christian churches and people observe it as a period of restraint in emotion and action. Many prohibit marriages and public amusements during this season. In the Catholic Church, it is also a period of fasting and penance, similar to Lent.

In the western churches, Advent begins about the first of December and lasts four weeks; in the eastern rite, it begins Nov. 11 and lasts six weeks.

Clothing and vestments are somber. Decorations are drab or non-existent.

Advent's four Sundays were supposed to have been introduced into the ecclesiastical calendar by Pope Gregory the Great, and they refer to the four comings of Christ—in the flesh, at the hour of death to faithful followers, at the fall of Jerusalem and on the day of judgment.

This somber tone, the quiet period of preparation, will remain with us until after sunset on Dec. 24, Christmas Eve.

**THEN THE CHRISTMAS** season will be ushered in with joyous carols. On Christmas Day, decorations will blossom in homes, stores, industrial plants and public parks.

The Christmas season lasts for 12 days—from the nativity on Dec. 25 to Jan. 6, when the three kings or wise men from the Orient visited the manger in Bethlehem.

Those 12 days will be a time of merriment and a feasting. People will throw the shop for gifts—and one old custom is that lovers give each other a present on each of the 12 days of the season.

From Dec. 25 until Jan. 6, evergreens will decorate the places that people inhabit. This is an absorption of the custom of pre-Christians, who sought to use greens, a reminder of summer, to chase evil spirits who had longer hours of darkness to prowling about the land.

But that is three weeks in the future. This is the season of meditation and expectation. This is Advent.

What happened?

### Sense And Nonsense

The recent election continues to have its overtones. Santa Claus is due to arrive in Plymouth Saturday, among his numerous other stops, and the Chamber of Commerce had arranged for his season's headquarters to be in the same vacant store to which he had served earlier in the fall as base for the Democratic organization.

As soon as someone asked, "Is Santa a Democrat?" the committee in charge arranged to put Santa in a trailer in Kellogg Park across the street. There'll be no partisan tinge to this whistle-stop!

Emory Daniels Writes...

## Street Closings: Much Ado For One Neighborhood

The city official brave enough to close a street must feel schizophrenic, because he immediately becomes both a goat and hero.

Streets are seldom closed without opposition groups forming and groups in favor of closing springing up equally as fast. Close a street, and the immediate result will be a divided neighborhood with controversy reaching a crest and causing a march on city hall.

Such division has been prompted by the closing of Brandt St. in Garden City and closing of Salvadore St. in Farmington.

The division puts officials on a hot seat because both sides won't be pleased regardless of what action is taken, and leaving the street half-open (or half-closed) will leave residents only half-satisfied. Any solution found will still leave officials in their schizophrenic condition.

**IT SHOULD** be realized, however, the controversy over street closings are neighborhood problems and not a general community problem.

The community could care less unless officials blockaded Ford Rd. in Garden City or Grand River, in Farmington's case. The hassle usually boils down to neighborhood convenience ver-

sus neighborhood safety. Residents living outside the community are just not involved.

It's almost too obvious to mention, but it must be, because people who get involved in these squabbles appear unable to grasp a very simple point.

Neighborhood problems require neighborhood solutions.

The community should not be expected or asked to get interested in neighborhood fights. City hall is responsible only for the placing or removal of a barricade—the resulting problems and furor should be solved by the individual(s) lighting the match.

### Sense And Nonsense

Partytyme note: The medical men say coffee doesn't sober you up—just makes you a wide-awake drunk.

A teachers union president in Cleveland says that juvenile problems get wide public attention in city schools and that the "upper and middle classes (in suburbs) cover up" their kids' pranks such as vandalism and dope.

This was solemnly reported as news.

**IF NEIGHBORS** are unable to compromise and reach settlement about their street, then how can city hall be expected to act?

Removal of barricades can't remove backyard squabbles. Neighbors must learn to live with each other, consider common needs and problems and generally behave like neighbors ought to.

City hall will decide if safety demands the barricades stay up or convenience demands they be removed. But neighbors must decide if they are going to act like neighbors—and that is a community problem which cannot be legislated.

### Guest Editorial

## Are Justices Worth A Governor's Pay?

Lansing State Journal

It's human nature to want a pay increase and to try to get one. The trait is understandable, and it exists in private business and industry and among government officials and employees who are paid by the taxpayers.

This characteristic now is being manifested at Michigan's Capitol as the new State Officers Compensation Commission holds hearings as a basis for salary recommendations it must submit.

**AMONG THOSE** who would look with favor upon a pay boost are the justices of the Michigan Supreme Court who currently receive \$35,000 a year.

They feel they should make as much as the governor whose salary is now \$40,000. On the basis of present figures, the justices feel they should have a \$5,000 hike.

But if the governor's salary were to be increased the members of the high court presumably would want more than a \$5,000 boost in order to be on a par with the state's chief executive.

**"WHY SHOULD** the judicial branch get less than the execu-

tive?" asked Chief Justice John R. Dethmers.

We ask a different question: Why should the Supreme Court justices get as much pay as the governor? Our own answer is that they shouldn't.

The work of the Supreme Court, while obviously of great importance to the people of Michigan, is done by seven justices whereas the executive power is vested in one official—the governor who is the chief executive officer of the state and commander-in-chief of its military forces.

In addition to his responsibilities in connection with the legislative process, he is empowered to make appointments to state boards and commissions and may remove for cause the various appointive state officers as well as elective county, city, township and village officers.

He is chairman of the State Administrative Board which has general supervisory control over the functions and activities of all administrative departments, boards, commissions and officers of the state and of all state institutions.

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