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High Time For Action To End Traffic Jams

Thanks to the workings of the Wayne County Road Commission, the cities of Livonia and Plymouth are involved in the greatest traffic snarl in history.

The Road Commission closed Sheldon Road from the C&O Railroad north to Five Mile Road from Five to Six Mile Roads in Livonia.

There was some advance notice of the Sheldon Road closing for widening the highway in that particular area but there was scant notice of the closing in Livonia and the end result is that both cities are faced with horrendous traffic jams during most of the day.

We feel both highway groups should sit down with governmental officials involved and take immediate steps to correct the situation.

When one takes 50 minutes to drive from Plymouth to Livonia, then there has to be something wrong. Such a trip normally takes 20 minutes, driving at a comfortable speed.

When one turns into Merriman or Hubbard Roads in Livonia from Six Mile with the thought of getting to Five Mile Road and then becomes involved with bumper to bumper traffic moving at a snail's pace, then it's high time that Livonia officials step in and take action.

These are actual instances and the jams are getting more and more complicated daily.

In the City of Plymouth, if one is trying to make a turn out of one of the side streets onto Main Street, Mill Street or Starkweather, he had better be a daredevil and take a big chance or become accustomed to long waits.

There just isn't a chance of getting out into the traffic flow unless some Good Samaritan decides to give you a break, slows traffic down and allows you in. But that's only one car coming out of the side street and perhaps there are four or five backed up.

In Plymouth Township, it's worth one's life to try to make a left turn from Phoenix Road into Northville Road. Here again, there is a definite need for a traffic light to keep traffic flowing. Otherwise the present situation of trying to break into the Northville Road traffic is a real problem.

Closing Sheldon Road appears to have more than doubled the traffic on Northville Road which moves into the City of Plymouth generally following a pattern of going down Starkweather and then across Main Street.

This has successfully closed off the side streets and caused tremendous jams at the intersection of Starkweather and Main. Oftentimes the lines stretch from the C&O station to Main Street. This means that none can come out of the sidestreets. And when a train passes—the mess becomes messier.

In the past it was possible to avoid jams by going north on Sheldon, east on Five Mile Road and then follow Northville Road to either Six Mile or Phoenix. That's all eliminated by the Sheldon Road closing.

In the City of Livonia, traffic did move at a normal pace along Farmington Road with jams only at peak traffic times. At the present moment it appears as if there are peak traffic times from early morning to early evening and the temper of drivers is just like the weather—hot and humid.

Livonia is trying to resolve the situation but Public Works Commissioner Robert Shaw told the Observer that there have been no complaints about traffic congestion. All we can say is that Shaw should look out his office window and see what's happening on Five Mile Road—that isn't exactly a Memorial Day parade that has the road clogged. Those are all cars of motorists who are wondering just how the City agreed to such a deal.

The County Road Commission has set up the detours according to Shaw and the Traffic Division under the direction of Lt. Robert Thorne is trying to work with them.

We suggest that Shaw and Lt. Thorne take a drive from Farmington and Six to either Hubbard or Merriman and get involved in one of the traffic jams—then even they will have to admit that there is congestion.

We suggest a traffic light at Hubbard and Six could relieve the trouble. We believe a traffic light at Phoenix Road and Northville Road would aid there and we suggest the "Table and Talk" City Commission of Plymouth do less talking and tabling and do something about the situation that has the city thoroughly tied up most of the time.

This is the time to act, not after harried drivers have put up with such things as 50 minutes between Plymouth and Livonia for weeks on end.

—R. T. Thompson

From the Publisher's Desk OBSERVATION POINT

By Philip H. Power

"SAY. Uh. Did you hear that they're a bunch of motorcyclists going to tear the place up over the weekend. 'Sposed to be a couple hundred, somewhere in Hines Park."

It was the voice of a man tipping off a newspaper. Hesitant. Clumsy. Imprecise, and a little

scared.

Sure, we heard about the big outlaw motorcycle invasion (called, neatly, a "drink-in") which was supposed to take place sometime this last weekend. It never came off, but it scared an awful lot of people.

We got some rumors on Thurs-

day, and then a real flood of tips on Friday, mostly from city officials and police officers.

Then when word of the expected rape of the park got out over the radio, we got a lot of calls from people of all sorts.

"What's this about an invasion?"

"Those bastards gonna take over Hines Park, eh. Well, by Christ, I hope the cops beat the daylight out of them."

The cops themselves were none too happy about the whole thing. Not that they were afraid of the bounty that was supposed to be out on their badges (\$50 for a state trooper, \$25 for an ordinary city policeman's), but rather, they were worried that there would be so many spectators crowding around that they wouldn't be able to work effectively to keep the peace. They were right.

PEOPLE seem to have a strange love-hate, attraction-repulsion ambivalent feeling about the outlaw motorcycle gangs.

You'd think running around just to get a look at a bunch of rough looking guys who don't wash much and who just might bash your head in with the business end of a tire iron is hardly a pleasant or amusing way of spending a quiet Sunday afternoon.

But wherever the motorcycle gangs go, they draw better than George Romney or Bobby Kennedy.

Part of the explanation must be obscurely psychiatric.

For example, what draws the nice, middle-class ladies into those crowds? Violence? Sex? Primitive males?

Or brings the men, generally a little fat, who look on half in hatred and half in admiration? Power? Speed? A freedom they never had but know they've lost?

Who knows.

Main simple curiosity is a big part of it.

Out here in the suburbs, where people try to dress nicely and keep their lawns cut and their cars clean; the sight of an outlaw motorcycle club is a real spectacle.

So the curious and the thrill seekers come. They watch.

And the motorcycle gangs delighted to be the center of attention, start acting up.

Why?

"To make people really blow their minds," said one Hell's Angel, quoted in a recent book on the subject.

But why, then, is there so much fear of the gangs? Why do otherwise reasonable men hope the cops will beat the living daylight out of them?

Surely it can't be because they are physically afraid of harm. If the police are around, the chances of anyone getting hurt are very slight.

I THINK part of the explanation lies in that the gangs are a threat, not so much to people's physical safety, but rather to their style of life.

The gangs are tough. They fight a lot, and break the law. They probably take a certain amount of dope, and they certainly drink a lot.

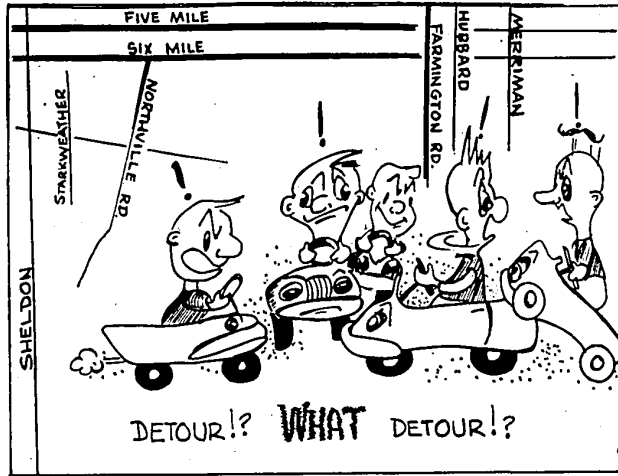
But more importantly, they represent a group of people to whom all the attractions of suburban living—quiet, peace, family, schools, houses with lawns—are totally out of it. To them, suburban living just doesn't count.

So their system, so carefully designed to get people to blow their minds, stands as a living monument to the irrelevance of much of suburban living. And it scares people, while half attracting them.

The next time you're out riding in your car, and see a motorcycle come tearing around you, ridden by a kid whose hair blows in the wind and whose smile is one of pure joy in freedom, think it over.

Just what sort of life are we making for ourselves, out here in the grass and the calm and the quiet?

—Tim Richard



Few Years Do Make Difference; Can't Weld Together Anything

The news out of Africa is just like the news about Michigan's local politics. Eastern Nigeria has formed its

own nation. It seems the head of the Nigerian government forced long-standing irritations to a head when he announced a plan

to divide the entire nation into 12 new provinces—a move that would have split Eastern Nigeria into three sections.

Crux of the problem was that the dominant tribe of Eastern Nigeria would have been separated from the province's oil deposits near the Niger River Delta.

It was like a big city trying to split off an industrial park from a township. The head of Eastern Nigeria reacted in exactly the same way the supervisors reacted in Nankin Township, Farmington Township, Plymouth Township, any township, whenever the city slickers talk about annexation or consolidation.

What's going on in Michigan—namely, resistance to the formation of municipal governments big enough to handle the problems of a geographic area—is going on all over the world. People don't want to Think Big about the extent of government; they want their own "community," their own province, their own tribe.

Strange, how attitudes change in a few short years.

After World War II, everyone was hepped on the United Nations; on carving out big, new nations from former colonies; on expansion.

Today, the U.N. is largely ignored: NATO has lost one of its biggest partners. France: the giant Indonesia is disintegrating: the Communist bloc isn't any more: Egypt and Syria are married and divorced: northern and southern California have been talking for a year or two about going their separate ways: Farmington Township won't join the city in a future government study, and part of the township wants to split off another part: a few tinhorn legislators from Detroit want to divide that metropolis into wards...

It makes you wonder: If the states were to vote all over again, would Goldwater and Wallace and Thurmond want to tie up with Wall Street and Harlem and Foggy Bottom?

"One World?" "One nation, indivisible?" Faugh! It's getting so you can't weld together a good-sized city anymore.

This Is The Week That

... By Don Hoenshell

This is put-up-or-shut-up and the next time the butcher weighs his thumb or there's a three-inch empty space in the top of the cornflakes box let us take some action.

Let us send the whole business, the more perishable and likely to quiver the nostrils the better, to Lansing.

For there exists on the books a year-old law protecting us from all these dastardly things. When it was passed and signed by the governor there was some hoopla about helping the housewife.

That was four months before the general election and wow, m'am, let us help you with that grocery cart.

A Livonian, then Rep. Marvin R. Stempelen, was the author of the Consumer's Protection package. He had the votes then, but see how the mighty have, etc. Come on, Goliath, get up.

The Consumer's Council was created with nine members, three to be appointed by the Legislative Council, three by the governor and three were to be officials, the attorney general and secretary of state and the head of the department of commerce.

To make sure they didn't have the shorts while protecting us

all, the Legislature tossed in a \$10,000 appropriation for use between March 10, when the law was effective, and June 30, when the fiscal year ended.

That \$10,000 could buy a lot of almost anything, except maybe submarines.

The Council was conceived to "formulate and direct a program to protect individual consumers from harmful products and merchandise, false advertising and deceptive sales practices."

It would "formulate and conduct a program of research and education to eliminate fraudulent commercial practices..."

And not only that. When they found us poor taxpayers being bilked at the checkout counter, they were going to glab to the governor, the attorney general and everybody else who would listen.

Great idea, but for now you've got to watch the butcher's thumbs yourself and if somebody sells you an eight-cylinder frantiser with only seven cylinders, too bad, buddy.

Nothing is what has happened.

Gov. Romney hasn't appointed his three, the Legislative Council is more concerned with mailing newsletters and the three ex-officio members are out to lunch. Anytime, they're out to lunch.

Like to have some fun for a nickel?

Write your legislature and ask him about the Consumer's Council. We know a bookie who'll bet you even you'll get a letter back asking "What?"

Also ask what has happened to the \$10,000 in the exchequer, the square name for kitty.

Under the law it's still there, like that \$15 you've stashed in the cookie jar for a hairdo next Saturday. And the law is still there, too.

Like the butcher's thumb. Maybe there's a great thumb lobby in Lansing we don't know about.

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