

## OBSERVATION POINT

# Democratic Convention Marks New Party Suburban Strategy

By Philip H. Power  
Publisher

Last week's Democratic national convention has been called one of the most important political events of the past three decades, likened in impact to the 1932 election which built the Roosevelt Democratic coalition and ran the country for the next 30 years.

This year's convention either marked the start of a newly dominant Democratic party or signaled the ruin of the old one, depending on which authority you take to. Which of these views is correct will be known only after this November, but what is clear is that this year's Democratic gathering was extraordinarily important, not least in its effect on the general interests of the suburban section of our nation.

By contrast, the 1932 election marked the start of the rise to predominance of the big cities. The coalition Roosevelt forged (labor unions, blacks, Catholics and Jews, intellectuals, some farmers) consisted of people who lived in center cities who agreed about issues that affected center cities. To some degree, it can be argued that the center city kind of people who rose to leadership in the old Roosevelt-style Democratic party were very different indeed from the people who started moving out to the suburbs in the 1950s.

In fact, I have a hunch that the failure of the Democratic party to put together a political and ideological base attractive to suburban voters was what won Richard Nixon the 1968 election and which led to the unusually good showing of George Wallace and George McGovern in this May's Michigan primary.

**SO WHAT HAPPENED** at Miami Beach that bears on the suburbs?

Critically, the convention was much, much more open and more representative of the grass roots Democratic worker than any convention in the past. As a newspaperman who covered the mass har-kari session the party put on in 1968, reading about this convention was like night and day.

Young people and women -- interest groups particularly important in the demographic profile of the suburbs -- were fully represented for the first time. The big city bosses -- Mayor Daley of Chicago being the best example -- were excluded; these are the kinds of people suburbanites have been fighting for their identity for many years. An astonishing percentage of delegates were attending the convention for the first time, and their prominence gave importance to the previously shutout suburban constituencies they represented. So purely in terms of the

kinds of people who attended the convention and the anti-machine politics views they expressed, this year's convention was a big jump up in suburban influence.

**ON THE ISSUE** of candidates and platform, the lessons seem equally clear.

Senator McGovern, no matter whether you agree or disagree with him, strikes me as a man whose style is keyed to appeal to the suburbs. Quiet, thoughtful and educated, direct, avoiding the verbal and political excesses of an older generation of politicians, he seems ideally tailored to attract the votes of well educated, highly informed suburban residents.

Certainly the failure of George Wallace to get any nomination or, indeed, to significantly affect the convention on the busing issue, will come as a bitter pill to many of his supporters living in the suburbs.

However, the governor was given his due by the party structure; for example, the Michigan convention could have shafted the Wallace forces out of their fair share of delegates, but failed to do it. And it does seem clear that the powerful constituency represented by Wallace has made its voice heard loud and clear in the evolving party.

Hubert Humphrey. Well Humphrey somehow got passed

aside in much the same way as a resident of this area slides by his old west side neighborhood on the way to work in the morning. loved, respected, but somehow hopelessly out of date. And in a way it's nice to see that a man who sacrificed his principles to expediency in the case of the California credentials fight, winding up choosing the wrong expedient and thereby losing everything.

**FROM THE STANDPOINTS** of style, delegates, candidates, platform -- this Democratic convention was sharply different from any that has come before.

The big city bosses and much of the labor movement are deeply offended and sore. It may be that by losing their support, the Democratic Party has condemned itself to fission and ineffectiveness for the future.

On the other hand, the opening of the party to new people and the bold stroke of seizing new issues of change in such a way as to forge a new coalition out of suburbanites, blacks, and intellectuals may have represented a quantum jump in the way a political party can react to change and thereby retain power.

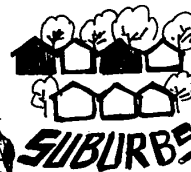
The Democrats captured the big cities with the 1932 election, and they accordingly ran the country for the next 30 years. In

1972, without being explicit about it, the Democrats are trying to capture the suburbs and thereby re-unite their scrambled party

and regain their customary dominance.

It's a suburban strategy with a vengeance.

## BUILDING BLOCKS FOR AN ELECTION



gmr

## Why Livonia Needs Rec Millage Backing

(During the summer vacation period the Observer Newspapers have invited civic and business leaders in Livonia to write guest editorials on the problems of the suburbs. Today's guest is Mayor Edward McNamara of Livonia.)

By Mayor Edward H. McNamara  
City of Livonia

Recreation means different things to different people.

Despite its broad appeal, there is no one way that the entire concept of recreation can be "miniaturized" so that everybody can determine at a glance which aspect they feel best suits them or their families.

What the City of Livonia proposes in the way of extending leisure time facilities and programs ranges from wading pools for toddlers to comfortable lounges wherein the seniors can play whist or chess. And in between that range there likely is available something for everybody else.

So then, why should the City of Livonia find that it faces an uphill battle to arrive at this "something for everybody"?



Mayor McNamara

operational program? Simply because the only way it believes it can best accomplish this is by asking its citizens to pass a one-half mill levy to provide funds.

**THERE WILL BE** those of you who will remind us that we attempted to do this very thing in May and that such a proposal -- to pass the one-half mill levy for recreation -- went down the drain. To be frank, there are many of us in the administration who believe that the proposals on the May ballot were largely misunderstood.

You will recall that the other proposal which was defeated involved the creation of a Department of Finance. That proposal, which called for making our spending procedures more efficient, had broad endorsement across the board.

Why then, was it defeated? We simply do not know. We wonder then, why the proposal to provide operational funds for the city's recreational program also failed.

**IF THE MOTIVATION** which prompted our placing this issue on the ballot was grossly misunderstood, then it is the duty, we believe, for this administration to take another shot at it.

If the vote fails again, then we are all going to have to live with the decision and we are going to have to live with cutbacks of some recreational programs and the elimination of others.

In no way is that an overt or implied threat; it is simply stating the facts as we can determine them to be. There just will not be funds available to operate and maintain recreational facilities throughout the city.

Everybody to whom I have

spoken in city government has urged me to put the issue before the people again. So too, have many citizen groups, civic leaders and a great number of individual citizens. We also feel that the May balloting, in that largely involved the emotional issue of voting for a presidential candidate, was lost in the shuffle.

So, for those of you who will say: "Here they come again"; it is for these stated reasons.

**WE HAVE TRIED** to break down the levy to where many people could better understand it. We have told you before, and we will tell you again, that the one-half mill will figure out to about 75 cents a month for most Livonia families.

I do not feel we are taking a "back door" or "Madison Avenue" approach in trying to get our message to the people. A half mill in Livonia amounts to about \$400,000 per year. Broken down, it will amount to between \$6 and \$8 per year for most Livonia families.

Also, under our collection methods, I wish to remind all Livonia citizens that better than 50 per cent of the levy will be contributed by business and industry.

On behalf of every person in Livonia who will be affected by the results of the election on Aug. 8, I sincerely urge you to take a good, hard look at the recreation proposal this time around.

If the vote fails this time, it will have failed for many, many years to come. The city administration realistically will not be in a position to ask for the levy again for years. In the meantime, our recreational and leisure time activities will have been severely cut back or curtailed.

There is a campaign coming our way; we intend to get across the message this time in terms that all Livonia citizens can understand. This campaign will be financed by individual contributions; not one cent of city money will be spent in seeking this "YES" vote on Aug. 8.

We are accepting contributions to the campaign at the mayor's office. If you wish to

contribute, you can make your checks payable to:

LIVONIA RECREATION  
FUND  
c/o MAYOR'S OFFICE  
33001 FIVE MILE ROAD  
LIVONIA, MICH 48154

And everybody is welcome; because everybody will benefit.

This issue, in my opinion, is the most important municipal matter which has come before this administration for action. There is no more important way we can contribute to upgrading our quality of life than to begin with that toddler who can handle a wading pool.

## Loss Of HUD Funds Can Be Bitter Blow

By Wylie Gerdes

The sum of \$1.5 million is only a small part of what the City of Livonia lost in its recent flap with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) over low cost housing.

HUD cut off all HUD-directed federal aid to Livonia because the city has made no special provisions to increase the number of low and moderate income houses available.

**LIVONIA CITY** officials argue that about 300 house units costing less than \$22,000 are sold each year in Livonia. HUD has set \$22,000 as the break-off point between moderate and income housing.

HUD's rationale for its stopping aid to Livonia, which is at least \$1.5 million and could be as much as \$3 million, is that the city has made no plans to encourage low and moderate cost housing.

The loss of the money, which was to be used for a large storm sewer project and parks improvements, will mean that every Livonian will pay for a lack of low and moderate income housing. That's just a small part of the cost, however.

The real cost comes in lost

## Redford Code Has Punch

By W. Edward Wendover

The over 19,000 home delivered copies of the Redford Observer are being distributed twice weekly apparently in violation of a new Redford Township ordinance.

While the intent of the "emergency ordinance" which was passed by the Redford board of trustees at their July 10 meeting was not to restrict newspaper sales, the broad reaching sections, of the act cover everything from the milkman to your Observer carrier.

According to the new ordinance, peddlers conducting any business in the township must obtain a license (at a cost of \$25) for the overall business plus a permit for each person working for the business (\$5 each). In addition, each business must post a \$200 cash bond before it can conduct door-to-door transactions.

The Observer has not obtained a permit -- nor does it intend to.

According to Township Clerk Ruth Sullivan, who proposed the soliciting ordinance, it was needed to curb the activities of a group which had been collecting donations at Redford shopping centers.

But as Trustee Owen Cummings correctly pointed out in voting against the ordinance, it is too all-encompassing.

Similar local ordinances have been applied to newspapers in several Observerland communities and all were ruled as illegal attempts to block freedom of the press.

In Plymouth, a similar ordinance was used to try and stop an underground newspaper being distributed outside the high school. While the youth distributing the paper was arrested, the case was later thrown out.

Certainly Redford Township has no intention of licensing newspapers.

But why must it pass an ordinance that covers Girl Scout cookie sales, veterans' Poppy Day sales, insurance salesmen, -- and newspaper sales?

## Sense And Nonsense

A candidate for the 34th District State Representative seat included the following question in a statement on his candidacy:

"Are we being diluted by our very own representatives?"

opportunity. The cost includes the possibility of having to bus Livonia students to Detroit, a situation which could have been prevented years ago with positive action for low and moderate cost housing in the city. Segregated housing patterns, caused by a lack of low and moderate income housing in the suburbs, is one of the strongest factors supporting busing.

The residents of Livonia and other suburbs pay, not only in higher taxes, but in the values lost from not having neighbors and friends from other social classes. Livonia as a whole suffers from a lack of leaders from low income groups.

HUD's actions in Livonia are sure to be repeated in other suburbs. The suburbs collectively now will pay for years of ignoring Detroit's problem.

It's time for Livonia and other suburbs to grow up and face the problems which surround them. A big first step would be to stand on their own two feet regarding low cost housing. Inaction now, through weak leadership, means a large shock when the inevitable change does come.

## Editorial & Opinion

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