

OBSERVATION POINT

Will the energy crunch spell doom for suburbs?

By Philip H. Power
Publisher

MY REACTION to all this speculation can be summed up by a loud "phooie!"

1) The gas crisis will not last forever (assuming that there is, in fact, a crisis right now, which may or may not be true). After a while, there will be plenty of gas available.

2) Almost surely, this gas will be more expensive than it has been in the past. So people in the suburbs will buy smaller cars with better gas mileage, and the percentage of disposable suburban family income spent on gas will be about what it is now.

3) There will be an effective mass transit system, even in the Detroit area, after a while. The state is now financing mass transit; the auto companies are for it; SEMCOG and the liberals are pushing it. After a few years, if pop has to get downtown to work, he'll be able to do so by mass transit buses or trains.

4) Increasingly, people who live in the suburbs are working in their home town or in a nearby suburb. The notion that the suburbs are merely bedroom communities with all the employment opportunities in the central city is simply false, as anyone can see in a quick drive along I-696 or Schoolcraft Road.

5) Local suburban depression caused by an auto industry collapse? Very doubtful. Edward Cole, GM's President, said this week that the corporation was producing 25 per cent more small cars this year than last, and I suspect that's only the start. Sure there are a lot of layoffs right now, but that's because the auto companies got caught with much, much more production capacity in big cars than public demand now warrants. That will be straightened out in a year or so, and after that everybody who owns a gas-guzzling monster is fair target for a sales pitch to buy a small, low mileage car. Result? A vast increase in auto sales, beginning I suspect in 1975, with perhaps 60 per cent of all automobiles then on the roads economically obsolete.

IT SEEMS to me that the anti-suburb theorists, most of whom do not live in the suburbs, have made a key mistake in predicting suburban gloom and doom.

They have confused the technology which originally made the suburbs possible (good roads, cheap gas, widespread automobile ownership) with the real reasons for living in the suburbs.

These reasons include good schools, single family housing in safe neighborhoods, trees and a back yard and a de-concentrated population pattern, and the chance to rear a family away from the concrete jungle of the central city.

None of these characteristics of suburban living are dependent for their existence on cheap gas or big cars. None will be eliminated by a continued energy crunch.

The suburbs are here to stay as an important part of the American scene. Our national challenge in the days of energy shortage is not to wish the suburbs out of existence, but rather to make both suburbs and center cities into clean, safe, healthy places in which people can freely choose to live.

TV insults, bring back good ol' radio

EDITOR:

Who wants a radio revival? I do! I was brought up on imagination and am sorry most people today cannot exercise their "mental muscle" because of the "boob tube."

The golden age of radio and all of their characters have gone by the wayside. I'm glad nostalgia is trying to make a comeback.

As a kid, I hurried to finish my paper route to listen to "Superman," "Jack Armstrong," and "Captain Midnight." I wish I had all the decoder rings, pedometers, and badges I sent away for then. It was no rip-off, but I sure made the mailman mad each day I asked him if he had a package for me. Those pieces of nostalgia are worth hundreds of dollars today.

Reviewing all the greats (one of which you forgot — Fibber McGee and Molly), what they said then parallels today! How about "Herman's Cave?" "Grand Central Station?"

As for commercials, they

were nothing as compared to tv. Talk about insulting the intelligentsia. Television has most people today cannot exercise their "mental muscle" because of the "boob tube." You have to ride a white horse to use Ajax; you don't dare squeeze rolls of toilet paper! Did you ever see an arm pop out of a washing machine? Or how about your dog chasing a miniature horse and covered wagon through the kitchen and then disappear into the cupboard. Peanut butter is sold by a "Gay Peter Fan"!

that falls out of a kitchen window.

Last but not least, there is one channel that has its lead newscaster shooting up the Wild West dressed all in white and of course rides a white horse.

Give me old time radio anytime. I'm sick of all the explicit violence on tv anyway.

LOU LARICHE
Plymouth

READERS' FORUM

Please type (or write clearly) and limit letters to 300 words.

- Letters must be signed with the writer's address. Names will be withheld only at the writer's request and for good cause.
- The editor reserves the right to reject unsuitable letters.

Shovel those walks! Kinsolving story offends

EDITOR:

Considering today's gasoline shortage, and since we are urged to reduce our driving, it seems that residents of Westland would exert extra effort to keep the sidewalks in front of their homes free of snow.

For those who do not voluntarily clean their walks, the city ordinance requiring sidewalks to be cleared with 24 hours after the snow stops should be enforced. More of us are walking instead of driving.

But since the recent snowfalls, walking has become too hazardous. About two-thirds of the sidewalks in my area (Ann Arbor) haven't been cleared.

By the way, shoveling helps keep you warm.

CHARLES B. SLAUTER
Westland

Shovel snow before freeze

EDITOR:

Detroit and suburbs have been hit with two large snowstorms within the last month (how could one forget! The last one brought to mind a way of helping others and in the process ourselves.

If homeowners, renters, sons, daughters or whoever would shovel out the section of street in front of their homes before the snow freezes, crusts and ruts, then as two cars approach each other in the center rut, a shoveled space would be available to maneuver.

Pushing autos may be fun but very tiring (also snow shoveling, hire a young person). Now you say Ha! not me — that is a public worker's responsibility. Well, each time I pulled into a shoveled space, I mentally thanked whoever was responsible. Maybe you also have used such a space and never gave it a second thought as you drove on home, dry and comfortable and unstuck!

Also, most Livonians have side drives, yet I observe a lot of street parked cars plowed in. If the driver had pulled out the drive during the worst of the storm, I'm sure a lot of extra work would have been eliminated, not to mention his run-arounds (freeze of Dec. 21, 22).

ROSALIE GISS
Livonia

Law erodes our freedom

EDITOR:

Can I sue Ralph Nader if I have a heart attack?

Recently we leased a '74 Maverick when our family car was unavailable to us. My morning route to work was a shambles. I was a dervish driving an obese, elderly parent to an adult day care nursing center. I was really hit by the seat belt "thing" when I found this car could not be started without the BUZZZ unless both of us were firmly seated belted.

Not being able to reach across my passenger to fasten the belt, the procedure is to pull the belt to its maximum, ask the passenger to keep 't tight while I dash around the car so I can grab it and fasten. But when I get around the car, the belt has slipped back, a fatal six inches because the elderly parent hasn't the strength to keep it tight.

In six degree weather, I made three round trips before we finally got that belt fastened. While this is only one isolated instance of extreme inconvenience, it illustrates my point. I'm all for seat belts and our family does buckle up. However, I feel it is wrong that our right to choose to belt or not to belt has been legislated away from us. This is another instance of Big Brother -ism which erodes away personal freedom.

I plan to write to every legislator in Michigan. Join me, anyone? FLORENCE M. CONRAD
Livonia

Indians had fine Christmas

EDITOR:

Mrs. Hank Chrushal gave me your newspapers' name as a great help in acquiring the shipment of clothes.

I plan to write to every legislator in Michigan. Join me, anyone? FLORENCE M. CONRAD
Livonia

She missed chance to help

EDITOR:

Around 2 a.m. New Year's Day, I was awakened by the doorman being rung over and over again. Because I was not expecting anyone at that hour, I did not answer it.

We have a large, windowed porch on the front of the house, and as I stood by the door, afraid to answer and wondering who was out there, I heard the person leave the outer porch, then saw him run across the yard and down the road. I looked in the direction he was running and saw two cars, one sitting cross-wise in the road and the other in the ditch. To my great relief, a police car was approaching the scene.

I sat at the window and watched the police direct traffic, saw a rescue squad

vehicle arrive and leave. I stayed there until two wreckers came and towed the cars away. One passed in front of the house, and I could see how badly the car was damaged.

All the while I watched, I wondered how badly anyone had been hurt. I felt very guilty (in fact, sick to my stomach) for not having answered my door and offering help. At the time, that person was frantically ringing my doorman, he didn't know help was on its way, and I wonder what was going through his mind.

I want to say to him: "I had a chance to help a fellow man, and I let fear get in my way. I am sorry. Please forgive me."

MRS. JOEL PITTWAY
Plymouth

Fred Dekano writes

Join school band and see the world

If you're old enough, you will recall the enlistment plea: "Join the Navy and see the world." Supposedly the lure of going abroad at the government's expense was something to quicken the pulse of a prospective volunteer, and maybe it actually worked.

Today, however, it could well be rephrased to read: "Join your high school band and see the world." Several Observerland high schools offer immediate proof that travel itineraries are becoming as valuable to a musical conductor as the score of a stirring overture.

In the approaching summer, Redford Union and Thurston bands will be giving concerts in Europe. Garden City East is booked for appearances in Ireland, and Garden City West has Mexico City as its destination.

Plymouth already has sent its high school symphony orchestra to Chicago this winter. Over the last four years its band has had its triumphant moments in Chicago, the University of Mississippi and Pasadena, Calif., for the Tournament of Roses parade.

Whenever expeditions like these occur, our youngsters

not only have exposure to cultures outside their own area but invariably find that marching alongside, so to speak, are other units from "back home," like maybe Traverse City, Three Rivers, Sturgis or Ann Arbor.

To this writer, this has been a wonderful development in our educational pattern — and also because what I long have thought to be one of Observerland's foremost interests, namely a love of music.

Development in recent months of the Oakway and Westland Symphonies to play with the already established Plymouth Symphony offers new release to the talents that abound within our communities. But that isn't all.

Our several colleges, our general community support of music is a healthy thing. If nothing else, it is a subconscious acceptance of the belief that in music one finds a common language that transcends all geographic boundaries and the artificial barriers of class distinction.

All this is being done, you understand, not out of the tax dollar you pay to the state, county, city, township, or school district, but by the dint of dedicated fan-faithing efforts by the kids themselves, aided as much as possible by parents and outsiders friendly to the cause. By all means, this is to be encouraged.

state, county, city, township, or school district, but by the dint of dedicated fan-faithing efforts by the kids themselves, aided as much as possible by parents and outsiders friendly to the cause. By all means, this is to be encouraged.

Jackie Klein writes

Just follow tv commercials and ruin your happy life

If you take them seriously, TV commercials can ruin your life.

In case you are pooh-poohing my contention that the boob tube can be a deadly phenomenon, here are some glaring examples.

Try stretching your coffee break with Juicy Fruit gum and you'll be the first gum chewer on the unemployment line.

Use "Soft and Dry" anti-perspirant, Gillette hair spray for the dry look and Pampers for your baby's dry custom fitted bottoms. The wet head may be out along

with damp armpits and soggy bottoms. But it's better than having all your skin fall off.

I gave my cold to Contac and got pneumonia. I came home to the lemony freshness of Feb and my husband walked out on me.

His parting shot was, "You never give me Nyquil and tell me to get into bed. The husband on TV gets some rest, and he lets his wife be couldn't do without her."

The day before, he walked into the kitchen, started sniffling the mold and mildew and used a whole can of Lysol spray. Did I walk out? I took an Excedrin for my headache, a Repoz for my nerves and kicked the dog.

For a genuine slice of life I often watch Mark Welby speeding to the bedside of an Indian who stubbed his toe doing a rain dance. Close on Welby's hurried trail to the reservation is Dr. Kiley on his motorcycle wearing an anxious frown.

Fadout: Commercial. A worried mother is taking her child's temperature, preparing to dose him with Bayer's orange flavored baby aspirin. She knows damn well her doctor doesn't make house calls. And it's pretty dumb of the kid to get sick on Wednesday.

The conflict between waiting for a Welby-type medic to save your life and knowing in your heart that you can't get an appointment with your own doctor for two weeks when the hearse will drive you off at his office is really traumatic.

Your mother "Ultra-Brute" toothpaste because she ob-



G. M. B. AT '74

Editorial & Opinion
OBSERVER NEWSPAPERS, INC.

Philip H. Power, Publisher

The Livonia Observer - The Redford Observer
The Westland Observer - The Garden City Observer
The Plymouth Mail & Observer - The Southfield News & Observer
The Farmington Enterprise & ObserverPublished by Observer Newspapers, Inc.
36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, Mich. 48150

Serving the communities of:

Livonia, Plymouth, Plymouth Township, Canton Township, Farmington,
Farmington Hills, Redford Township, Garden City, Westland,
Southfield, Lathrup Village, Bingham Farms