

Trolley brings nostalgia for senior commuters

(Continued from Page 3A)

Happier occasions to Mrs. Rossow were times her school class would flood onto the street car and start an exciting excursion to Belle Isle for the day.

The conductors would sing out the names of the streets coming up," she said. "It sounded a little like a barber in the circus."

Everyone used the trolley to go shopping, she said, even mothers carrying nursing infants.

"Women nursed their babies on the car," she said. "They would be discrete, but there were no remarks. Everyone knew babies had to be fed."

WALTER SCHWEIZER used to ride in a wagon down Grand River on a plank road, watching the Interurban passenger cars flash by. Also using the tracks were freight cars pulling coal, lumber, cement, lime, plaster and "anything you could think of" into Redford Township, Farmington and Northville.

"They used to bring milk down from Northville and Pontiac in 85-pound cans to take to creameries in Detroit," he said. "They kept ice on it to keep it cool. They had a car with a snow plow on the front to clear away the sides. Sometimes the snow built up so high on either side you could only see the trolley pole."

In Farmington at Grand River near Orchard Lake roads stood the building that produced the juice that kept the cars of the Detroit United Railways making their endless rounds. This company consolidated many of the interurban lines in 1901.

In the book "Detroit's Coming of Age," Don Loebler claimed that by that date "Detroit was America's interurban railway capital, with many extensive radial lines than any other city."

The power house, now the LaSalle Winery, is being renovated for business offices and a restaurant. It once held two dynamos generating electricity.

By 1929, the intense love affair between public transportation and the city of Detroit and its suburbs was over. Trolleys ran no more. By the spring of 1930, the tracks linking the motor city with Redford Township, Farmington, Northville and Pontiac were torn up.

HE REMEMBERS going into Redford on a Saturday night to shoot pool and go to a haircut. "Sometimes you wouldn't get out of the barber shop until midnight. All the young men came down to get a haircut then. It was their only chance."

Redford Township historian Fred Desautels has memories of the line that went to Pontiac from Farmington. Once he returned home from Kalamazoo College on the Interurban, only to find that his family had moved to their cottage near Pontiac. So it was back on the Interurban and up toward Pontiac.

"I still had to walk about three miles to get to the lake," he said.

People from outlying areas used the trolley to travel to the shops in the area around Lahser and Grand River, once called Sand Hill. For fun, they could also commute to Redford Fair, nearby, where there were horse races and articles for sale.

Patsford Tavern on Grand River had a ballroom and was a great place for dancing. Desautels said, "At an earlier time, it had been part of the underground railway bringing slaves north to freedom."

Mrs. Walter Schweizer's children also used the Interurban to venture out to where it was at in those days.

"Our girls went on the street car to the Grandee Ballroom on Joy," she said. "They went in a group. They took the last car home and got there about 1 a.m., getting off right at the house. Any kid doing that today would get mugged."

BOTH MRS. ROSSOW and Desautels remarked about the special funeral car that would slip down the tracks heading for Grand Lawn Cemetery on Telegraph. It was painted black and carried the casket in front. Once it reached the cemetery, pallbearers would carry the casket to the burial spot.

Spiche believes the request should have been given further consideration.

"This is a legitimate request," he said. "If a bargaining group feels they no longer have anything in common with the larger bargaining unit, the board ought to give consideration to the group."

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Albion names honorees

Ten students from the Farmington area have been named to the dean's list at Albion College for the fall semester. To earn this honor, a student must have a 3.4 or better grade point average while carrying a full class schedule.

Those honored were: Randall Amis, 31737 Bella Vista Drive, James Arbut, 28364 Harwich; Patricia Johnesee, 32235 Craftsbury; Karen Straits, 33300 Oakland; Michael Staffes, 27208 Hystone Drive; Michael Morrow, 28573 Green Willow; Jeffrey Lemberg, 33656 Heritage Hills Drive; David Harrison, 34232 Cortland; Sarah Calkins, 23230 Power; and Martha Flaherty, 35991 Drakeshire Place.

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Richardson earns honors

Maren Richardson, 33437 Heritage Hills, Farmington, earned a place on the dean's list at Kent State University.

To be eligible, students must be attending classes on a full time basis and have an academic average of 3.4 or better for coursework during the fall quarter.

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