

## OBSERVATION POINT



## Great Things In '70s? Who Can Tell?

By Philip H. Power

So we're in a new decade, and how do you make vaguely informative noises about what's going to happen for the next 10 years here in the northwest suburbs?

One answer is clear. You don't. Whatever you say will undoubtedly be proven wrong by the passage of time and by the eccentric occurrence of events. The only correct thing pundits ever predict is that it's impossible to be an accurate predictor.

But it is possible to look ahead into the next decade and more or less accurately identify trends and problem areas.

**THE GROWTH** of population that has been so remarkable in these areas will continue. The Regional Planning Commission people say that this growth will go at an unabated rate for at least another 15 years.

This means the suburbs will continue to increase their political and economic power. They'll get more seats in Washington and Lansing, comparatively, than other areas. They will continue to offer a market richer than any other in the state, and it's easy to predict several more gigantic shopping centers will open up in this area within the next 10 years.

More people means more kids, and more kids means more schools. This in turn means more taxes. They're always with us, and I'm sure that there will be numerous tax revolts at various stages through the '70s.

My guess is also that by the end of the decade we'll have local income taxes in many of the communities here. Plymouth's city fathers are already studying the idea, and there have been hints about the matter dropped in Livonia and Farmington.

**WHILE WE'RE** on schools, I suppose we'd better speculate a little on the generation gap. It's of a particular quality here in the suburbs, since most of the kids have parents wealthy enough to give them spending money, maybe a car, this gives them mobility and dough enough to get into situations quite unlike any their parents know.

Marijuana-taking will increase, I suspect, but I think the kids are going to get smart enough to lay off the harder stuff. Hair will reach absurd lengths and then shorten up a bit, but I don't think we're going to see any return to the crew cut for quite a while.

By the end of the 1970s, particularly in the suburbs, the median age of the population will have dropped sharply. The parents of today will see their children growing up and marrying, and I generation gap.

I wonder, however, what the 18- or 19-year-olds of today will think about the generation gap between them and their kids?

## RACE.

Although efforts will continue to realize the intent of state and national open housing laws in the suburbs, I suspect not much progress will be made. In both the white and black communities the

ideal of integration, so much a part of the civil rights scene in the '60s, seems to be fading out. Blacks, in particular, are concerned about developing themselves in black ways—just listen to some of the arguments about

black power—and well-meaning whites probably won't have much of an impact.

I do not have any prediction about the renewal of violence in the big cities. All I know is that unless we start getting some

effective programs operating in the cities we will wind up with a society so split and hostile that no one will enjoy living in it.

PERHAPS IT'S an odd guess, but if pressed I would have to say

that the key issue of the 1970s in the suburbs will be protection and maintenance of the environment.

More people puts more pressure on nature. And one of the great appeals of the suburbs is that there's more nature out here than in a central city.

But the people who will continue to move into these communities will put any hopes of preserving a beautiful and pure environment to a real test. There is no reason why the Rouge River in Hines Park should be polluted, yet it is. There is no reason why factories in the suburbs should compete with those in Detroit in befouling the air, yet they do. There is no reason why housing developments should strip each and every tree from the face of the earth without planting others in their place, yet it happens.

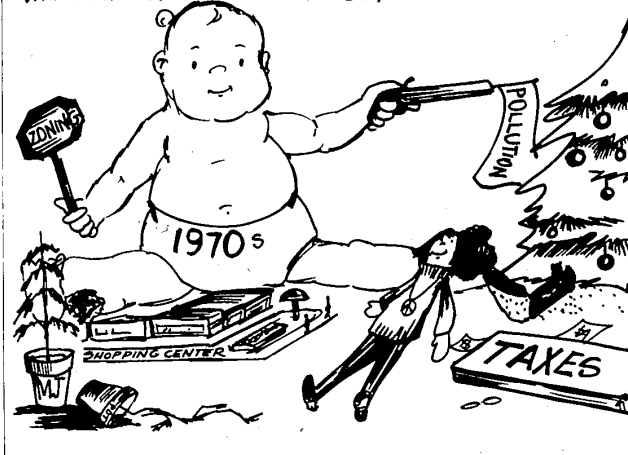
I suspect that more and more people are going to become concerned about this. And I suspect there will be pressure for a new kind of zoning, one which preserves and maintains the environment, and the normal functions of determining land use.

If zoning codes, which in the last analysis are the means a community plans the way it develops, could be modified to pay some consideration to the environment, we might have a chance to save our world from becoming a junk yard.

Let's hope so.

And, incidentally, Happy 1970s.

## WHAT WILL HE PLAY WITH FIRST?



R.T. Thompson writes

## Suburbs Face Loss Of Bus Lines

Are the suburbs paying their fair share for services furnished by the City of Detroit?

At the moment, it would seem that most of the suburbs surrounding the City of Detroit, in the area known as "metropolitan Detroit," are obligated for water distribution and bus transportation.

There isn't any question about suburban users paying their fair share of the cost of water. Gerald Remus, general manager of the Detroit Water system, makes certain of that by the simple method of raising rates to the suburbs whenever it becomes necessary.

And the contracts between the particular suburb and the Detroit Water Board are written in such a manner that the suburb must accept the cost without advance notice from the board.

**THE LAST MENTIONED** provision is the reason why the City of Livonia and officials in Redford Township are fighting a recent rate increase—in short, both governmental units believe the hike was unjustified since the additional money was allocated by the Detroit City Council to pay off deficits that have cropped up.

The same provisions, a rate

hike without advance notice, was one of the reasons in the past why the Plymouth City Commission took a dim view of becoming a part of the vast Detroit water system. Commissioners in the past and some of those on the current governing body are reluctant to sign a contract that permits "taxation without representation." In so many words, a rate boost without an opportunity to negotiate. Despite this, they are taking steps toward signing a contract.

Every community in the area covered by the Observer Newspapers has a contract with the Detroit Water Board with the

exception of the City of Plymouth. Whether the commissioners like it or not, it is believed Plymouth will sign up before the end of the new year.

Now suburbs are faced with a loss of bus service unless they agree to help subsidize the DSR (Department of Street Railways), which also is under the jurisdiction of the City of Detroit.

Threat to cut off bus services was made by Robert E. Toohy, DSR general manager, before the Detroit City Council when he pointed out the DSR is losing more than \$1 million a year on its suburban lines.

Apparently the big rub is the recent referendum in which taxpayers authorized a subsidy for the DSR.

It is Toohy's contention that unless suburban residents are willing to pay their fair share of the costs, then the DSR commission should consider discontinuing the service.

Should the bus lines to Observatory be abandoned, then the six communities would be stripped of transportation to downtown Detroit.

**IT WASN'T TOO LONG** ago that Plymouth residents had an opportunity to commute downtown via the C&O railroad. But patronage dropped to the point where C&O officials proved to the Michigan Public service commission that the trains were losing money because of lack of passengers.

Perhaps the same story will be told of bus transportation from downtown Detroit to the suburbs and the suburbs to downtown Detroit.

The fact remains that the DSR reports it is losing money in large amounts with suburban routes and that a boost in prices probably will be necessary to maintain service.

And that probably means that suburbanites should prepare for no bus services. If the DSR lines are losing money now because of lack of patronage, then think what will happen when the ticket prices go up.

We can't offer any solution—but subsidization by the various communities involved appears to be the only immediate answer. The future could be handled by SEMTA which is working on plans for a mammoth transportation system covering all of metropolitan Detroit.

Tim Richard writes

## 'Lame-Duck' Jerry Bows Out In Typical Ungraceful Manner

Jerry Cavanaugh, who had so many good instincts in his eight years as mayor of Detroit, bowed out ungracefully last week with his downtown subway plan.

The subway plan announcement was totally political in intent and

badly thought out as an idea.

It was political because Cavanaugh was a lame-duck mayor when he made the announcement. ... was further political because he made the proposal not directly to the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA) but to a press conference with civic leaders in attendance.

It was badly thought out because Cavanaugh bypassed SEMTA in his thinking. SEMTA is a six-county agency, created by state law to run both bus and rapid transit systems in the region.

**SEMTA'S RESPONSIBILITY** covers Detroit, too, and it was highly improper for the mayor of Detroit to charge off on his own. Not only was it improper, but it was a waste of scarce money for Detroit to duplicate SEMTA's planning efforts.

SEMTA Chairman Wilbur R. Thompson was quite correct in complaining to Detroit officials about not being consulted on Detroit's study.

Cavanaugh cracked that "I think we've had enough studies about rapid transit in Detroit. It's now time to decide whether or not we're going to build it."

That snide remark was uncalculated for and inaccurate. The fact is that SEMTA has been

progressing steadily in conducting its studies in both the areas of buses and rapid transit.

These aren't pie-in-the-sky, maybe-we'll studies but solid planning for "when," not "if."

Cavanaugh's plan called for a 4.5-mile line in the Woodward corridor from downtown to the New Center area at Grand Boulevard, and its price is estimated at \$102 million.

**BIG AS THAT SOUNDS**, it's small-time stuff when you consider the billion-dollar regional plans that SEMTA people have in mind. Detroit would be unwise to build it—and the federal government stupid to finance it—unless and until it is known that such a subway would fit perfectly into SEMTA's grand design.

Detroit politicians, used to thinking of theirs as being the "central city," should keep in mind that they have only one-third of the 4.4 million persons who live in the total metropolitan area.

Moreover, they must remember that a major purpose of rapid transit is to get Detroiters out to suburban jobs. Rapid transit is a poor place for Detroit to play go-it-alone politics.

The new mayor, Roman Gribbs, says he'll refer the subway plan to a citizens committee. Here's hoping the committee loses it.

## DISSENT

View points expressed in DISSENT do not necessarily reflect those of Observer Newspapers Inc., but are presented in the belief that publication of all segments of thought on a public issue is a prerequisite to understanding and progress.

(The following was written by two Livonia parents who prefer to remain anonymous. They did forward copies to the Livonia Board of Education, Franklin High administrators and to the principal and assistant principals of Stevenson High School.)

This is to voice our dissatisfaction with any attempt to permit or encourage the formation of political action clubs in our school system—senior or junior high schools.

With "confrontations the thing" that many young people are either doing or supporting, such clubs would open the door to a spectrum of irritants and irritators.

No matter how much promoters of such clubs may seek to justify them, the fact is that the complexities of justly monitoring what is happening to these groups and determining what behaviors, standards, philosophies, speakers would be acceptable or unacceptable would be impossible to determine and administer.

**WE BASICALLY OBJECT** to encouraging our youth to expect instant response to their demands, instant reformation and instant participation in power-play as an automatic right rather than a tempered privilege bestowed upon those who, through their maintenance and operation of this planet in ways of service, down-to-earth-experience-in-living and financial underwriting, have earned the privilege. Our youth has already been over-programmed in representation without taxation and reaping without sowing.

As taxpayers with voting power, we forewarn you that we have "had it" with child guidance coming to mean adults being guided by children. It is time educators, permissive parents, the media, psychologists stopped bowing down to the contemporary Baa-like god of youth.

Youth is receiving an outright gift—a gift of education and preparation for life from the taxpayers of this nation. It is time they began saying "Thank you" for that gift through temperate behavior and conscientious achieving in study instead of being encouraged to act like spoiled brats whose main thrust seems to be abusing that which they have received instead of appreciating it and using it with responsibility.

If anyone has a right to be "up tight" about being listened to, it is the fellow who is footing the bill for this educational gift to youth. We suggest you shift the bulk of your concern for "guidance" from the child to the adult where it belongs and help restore a sense of stability and uncommon sense to this nation.

## Sense And Nonsense

The power of Observer Newspapers classified want ads is so powerful that even the opposition watches them carefully.

The editor of an opposition newspaper, who has been looking for greener pastures all along, recently answered an Observer "help wanted" ad for a downtown public relations job. (P.S.: He didn't get it.)

Teachers are badly paid? Detroit schools are starved for money? You wouldn't know it reading the union membership newspaper of the Detroit Federation of Teachers.

It advertised in a recent edition: "Join the DFT Hawaii Tour—nine days—\$449... Come to the Enchanted Islands."

The accent isn't all on youth and revolution. WTAK, the all-talk radio station in Garden City that aroused a lot of political opposition, announces it's shifting to a music format.

It's deliberately seeking a 25-49-year-old audience. More than that, it will feature what it calls "happy music."

That middle-aged group will need it.

## Editorial &amp; 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 Farmington Enterprise & Observer



Published by Observer Newspapers, Inc.

271 S. Main Street, P.O. Box 200, Plymouth, Mich. 48170

Serving the communities of:  
Livonia, Plymouth, Redford, Farmington, Westland,  
Farmington Township, Redford Township, Garden City, Westland.