



The Stroller...

Little Al Could Help Rebuild Downtown

By W. W. EDGAR

Shades of Little Al.
It seems that every time a fellow picks up a copy of the daily journals of information, some community is working on a program to revitalize the downtown area or some urban renewal project or bettering the lack of mass transportation.

The City of Plymouth has had a central business loop under discussion from time to time for more than a decade. Farmington, at the moment, is involved in rezoning the downtown section, and Livonia is still dickering on plans for an elaborate section in the exact heart of the city at Five Mile and Farmington Road.

And, during the past week, even the City of Detroit is considering formation of a blue ribbon committee to devise plans for rebuilding the inner city.

Each time The Stroller's eyes hit upon these waitings, he can't help recalling the dynamic little fellow who started it all and who was taken from us before he could finish the job.

The little fellow was Albert E. Cobo, who more than made up for his shortage of stature by the length of his vision.

It was Little Al, then the mayor of Detroit, whose driving force got the expressways started and who demanded that an outstanding convention center be built so that Detroit could attract the nation's largest gatherings and thus benefit the business community.

THE DAYS OF SCRIP

Little Al had come to the mayor's chair with a reputation of being a sort of miracle worker. During the depression of the '30s he was drafted from the Burroughs Corp., where he was employed as an accountant, to guide the city through a financial crisis that had reached such proportions that being used.

Safely through that storm, he was elevated to the treasurer's office and from there to the top administrative post in the city.

When he took over the mayor's chair, he was greeted with plans for such things as expressways and convention halls that had been discussed by previous holders of the office.

He was in office only a short time when he turned to his aides and said, in that smiling way of his:

"If these plans are so good, why don't we go through with them—they aren't any good just lying there."

So, he went to work. He convinced the state Legislature to amend the law to permit financing of the expressways "to bring people into the city." Shortly after, he took advantage of the city's 250th birthday to get started on the big convention hall that now bears his name.

A DREAM COME TRUE

He was a leader, and his confidence was not to be shaken.

He laughed off the fact that many persons referred to the expressways as "Cobo's ditches." And they laughed when he answered, "Some day they won't be big enough."

The Stroller had the privilege of numbering little Al among his close friends and was rewarded with an appointment to the Committee on Design for the convention hall and the Civic Center committee. And it was an experience he'll never forget.

Most memorable is the morning the Committee on Design got together for the first time in the office of the Detroit Bank and Trust Co.

Little Al appeared before the group to set the guide lines and his words served as the beacon of light that eventually made a dream a reality.

"I don't want you to pay any attention to the cost of the proposed building," he said. "I'll have another committee to work on the finances."

Then, with the true spark of a leader, he said: "I never want it said that Detroit could have had this convention if it would have had the proper facilities. Put the facilities in the building NOW and we'll get the conventions."

That's what the committee did. And a building that was expected to cost \$17 million that first morning finally had a price tag of \$67 million when it was finished.

A GOOD QUESTION

Like "Cobo's ditches," the convention hall was considered a "white elephant" for a time. But now it is focal point around which a new inner city is to be built.

The Stroller can't help wondering how far advanced the entire metropolitan area would be had little Al lived. It's better than an even bet that the modern stadium would have been built downtown and the entire suburban area north-east and west would have benefited by his vision.

He would have looked at the plans for the stadium and, no doubt, would have said, as he did about the convention hall:

"If the plan is so good, let's build it." That type of leadership is needed more than ever today—and no suburban area can afford to be without it.

Little Al was a daring little fellow with vision. But he got things done.

Too bad he didn't live to see the finished product.

Assign Army Vet

FARMINGTON—Colonel William A. MacLeod, son of Mr. and Mrs. Harold J. MacLeod of Farmington, has been assigned as deputy commanding officer of the 12-state U.S. Army First Recruiting District.

A 25-year Army veteran, MacLeod arrived at his Maryland assignment from Vietnam, where he was the executive officer of XXIV Corps Artillery in the northern part of that zone.

MacLeod was educated in the public schools of Illinois and Michigan. He graduated from the University of Michigan in 1951 with a bachelor of arts in history.

MacLeod enlisted in the Army in 1942 and served in the Pacific Islands during World War II. His varied career has been highlighted by assignments in Italy, Germany, Turkey and Korea.

MacLeod served as assistant professor of military science at the State University of New York at Albany, as a Turkish anti-aircraft instructor, as an intelligence officer in the Department of the Army, as chief of the first mobile service group and as staff officer in the Developmental Command.

In June 1967, he activated



COLONEL WILLIAM MACLEOD

Daniels Den

By EMORY DANIELS

Farmington residents will not know until early March whether the Oakland County Board of Supervisors will be asked by Circuit Court from setting an election on the question of annexing the southern half of the township to the city.

Three or four months will pass before the court rules on the priority of the State Boundary Commission's rejection of the petition to incorporate the township and both villages into a home-rule city.

Whatever ruling Circuit Court makes, an appeal is certain to be made to the State Court of Appeals either by the township, city or boundary commission.

A few more months will pass if any one of the parties decides to appeal further to the State Supreme Court. "I will enjoy the occasion of Township Attorney Terry Brennan filing an appeal before his older brother, the honorable Chief Justice Thomas Brennan."

While we are waiting the outcome of these legal moves, let's escape boredom by reading a selection from "The States and the Urban Crisis"—a report given last October to the 26th assembly of the American Assembly of Columbia University.

"The States and the Urban Crisis"—a report given last October to the 26th assembly of the American Assembly of Columbia University. President Eisenhower and seeks to reach independent conclusions in matters of vital public interest.

A CHAPTER OF the report entitled "Diffusion of Government Powers" ought to entertain us while we await the outcome of the current boundary snarl.

"The governmental fragmentation of nearly every metropolitan region makes it difficult for individual governmental units to respond to many of today's urban problems. The need for area-wide units of general or multidisciplinary jurisdiction is increasingly recognized."

"Simultaneously, residents of many city neighborhoods fight for some kind of local control, while citizens of small suburban enclaves cling tenaciously to their present autonomy."

"These contrary needs—centralization and decentralization—and the force of their expression have caused most states to abdicate their responsibility for maintaining an effective system of local government. Meeting this responsibility is urgent and inescapable."

"(Good reason for a State Boundary Commission?) 'Necessary local government modernization must recognize the metropolitan facts of life—that there are many powers that have to be exercised and many activities which must be performed on an area-wide basis.'"

"THIS REQUIREMENT must be met in a way which will not eliminate or dilute local community participation in the decision process. Indeed, such involvement must be enhanced, particularly in the large cities where it has been weak or lacking."

"There are many approaches to local government restructuring."

"The desirable course may be consolidation, or federation, or completely new forms of local government."

"Talent will not enter state and local public service in sufficient numbers unless encouraged to do so by decisive action of leaders now in power."

"At this point, temptation is great to add comment on local happenings to the above dissertation. But that temptation will be averted because, after all, we are only entertaining ourselves during the full of court proceedings."

Club Arranges Drug Program

FARMINGTON

Farmington Township Detective Earl Teeples will talk about drug abuse problems. Feb. 5 at an open meeting sponsored by the Franklin School's Women's Club.

The noon meeting will be held in the social hall of St. Colman Church at Middle Belt and 14 Mile Rd.

OTHER PROGRAMS held by the club this year include a trip to Keating Village Aquatic Shop and the Paint Creek Cider Mill.

Last month, members were treated to instant gourmet cooking by Lillian Schwartz during her program entitled "I Hate to Cook."

On March 25, a fun day will be held for 30 members of the club who will attend "Hello Dolly" at the Fisher Theater.

ON APRIL 9, the club will present its 12th annual Fashion Show and luncheon at the Raleigh House in Southfield.

Theme for the show will center on the signs of the Zodiac and is entitled "The Age of Aquarius."

Patrons will be by the Jacqueline Shop with all proceeds going to charity.

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NOTICE OF TAXES

The 1969 County and School taxes in the City of Farmington will be due and payable at the Office of the Farmington City Treasurer through February 14, 1970, without fees.

On February 15, 1970, a collection fee of 4% will be added to all taxes paid through February 28, 1970.

On March 1, 1970 all unpaid taxes will be returned to the Oakland County Treasurer's Office and must be paid there with additional fees.

Payments made by mail must be postmarked not later than February 14, 1970, to avoid penalties.

WINONA WOODS, Treasurer
City of Farmington
2800 Liberty St.
Farmington, Michigan 48024

PUBLISHED Feb. 1, 1970

SAVINGS EARN THE TOP RATE at METRO

4 1/2 %

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